



WALK & BIKE
ALEXANDER
COUNTY

Multimodal Transportation Plan

THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE READING THIS PLAN

Transportation planning involves a range of terms and concepts that help describe how people move through a community and how infrastructure supports that movement. This section introduces key ideas and commonly used terms to help you better understand the recommendations and strategies outlined in the plan for Alexander County.



Multimodal Transportation

Multimodal transportation refers to the variety of travel options available to people, such as driving, walking, biking, public transit, and rail. In Alexander County, this includes roads, sidewalks and bus services provided by Greenway Public Transportation. These options work together to support a more accessible and sustainable transportation system.



Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to human-powered travel modes such as walking, biking, and using mobility devices like wheelchairs. These modes promote health, reduce environmental impact, and are supported by safe and accessible infrastructure.



Transportation Network

A transportation network is the system of interconnected streets, sidewalks, trails, and transit routes that allow people and goods to move throughout a community. A well-designed network makes it easier and more efficient to travel using different modes—whether by car, bike, foot, or bus.



Connectivity

Connectivity describes how well a transportation system links people to the places they need to go. A connected system offers smooth, direct, and convenient routes. Features like trailhead parking, continuous sidewalks, and accessible paths to key destinations help encourage walking and biking as everyday travel choices.



Transportation Facilities

Facilities are the physical components that make walking and biking safe and practical. These include sidewalks, shared-use paths (greenways), bike lanes, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals. Together, these elements create an environment that supports active transportation for people of all ages and abilities.

Note: The term “pedestrian” includes anyone who travels on foot or uses a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair or similar device.

This document is intended for planning purposes; and findings, recommendations, cost estimates, and commentary are based on preliminary data and conditions that may change over time. Further analysis and engineering may be needed before implementing any recommendations. Geographic and mapping data are provided for general reference and may not be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. McAdams does not provide guarantees regarding the accuracy or completeness of the data or resulting recommendations.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Transportation planning often uses specialized acronyms to describe agencies, facilities, programs, and concepts. To make this plan easier to read, we've included a list of commonly used abbreviations and their meanings. Refer to this section as needed while reviewing the recommendations and strategies for Alexander County.

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic The average number of vehicles passing a point on a roadway each day over a year.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act Federal law requiring accessible facilities for people with disabilities.
HMIP	Highway Maintenance Improvement Program NCDOT's program for planning and delivering routine roadway maintenance projects such as resurfacing, shoulder work, and drainage improvements that can also create opportunities for sidewalk and crossing upgrades.
HSIP	Highway Safety Improvement Program A federal and state program that funds data-driven safety projects such as crosswalk enhancements, pedestrian signals, traffic-calming, and other measures aimed at reducing crashes involving all road users.
NCDOT	North Carolina Department of Transportation State agency overseeing transportation infrastructure.
PHB	Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon A traffic control device that helps pedestrians cross busy streets.
ROW	Right-of-Way Publicly owned or controlled land used for transportation infrastructure.
RRFB	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon Flashing lights at crosswalks to alert drivers to pedestrians.
STIP	State Transportation Improvement Program NCDOT's schedule of funded transportation projects.
TDI	Transportation Disadvantage Index A measure of transportation equity based on socioeconomic factors.
WPCOG	Western Piedmont Council of Governments The regional planning agency serving Alexander County and neighboring jurisdictions that provides transportation, land use, and community development support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alexander County faces challenges to walking and bicycling, including hilly terrain, a largely rural development pattern, and limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure along the corridors that connect neighborhoods with schools, parks, and businesses. Despite these obstacles, the county has a strong potential to expand active transportation options. Taylorsville’s compact, walkable downtown and growing interest in outdoor recreation offers a foundation for future improvements. Existing sidewalks in and around downtown already provide valuable connections to local destinations. In addition, the county’s scenic landscape and broad community support for greenways and shared-use paths present exciting opportunities to enhance connectivity and promote walking and biking as safe, healthy, and convenient ways to get around.

PLAN OVERVIEW

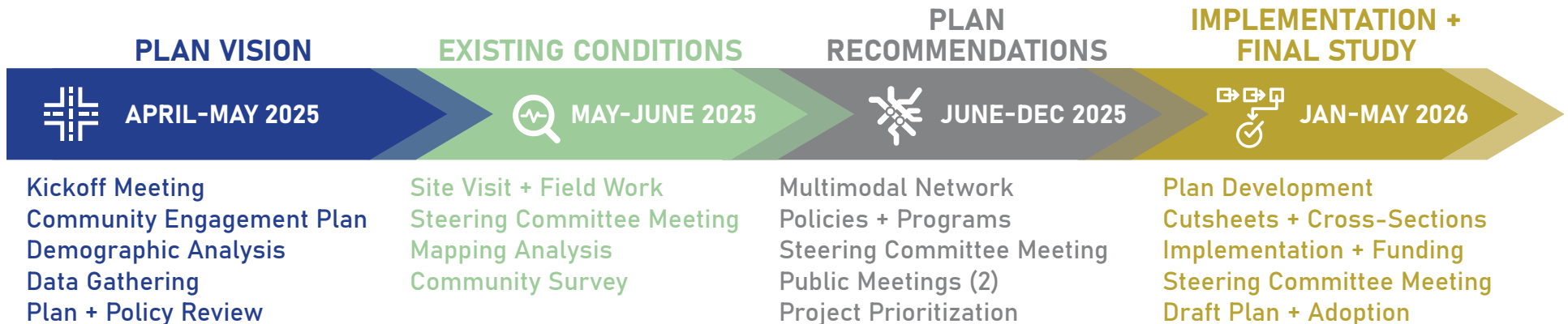
The Walk & Bike Alexander County Multimodal Transportation Plan presents a long-term vision for a safer, more connected, and more accessible bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the county. The plan outlines recommended infrastructure improvements, supportive policies, and programs to improve walkability and bikeability across both established communities and rural areas.

THE PLAN...

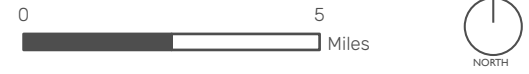
- Establishes a clear vision, goals, and guiding principles
- Assesses existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities
- Reflects community input and local priorities
- Recommends a countywide pedestrian and bicycle network
- Offers policy, programmatic, and design guidance
- Provides a phased implementation strategy

As Alexander County continues to grow and change, this plan serves as a roadmap for making strategic investments in active transportation. By strengthening links between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial destinations, the plan seeks to make walking and biking not only more feasible but also more enjoyable.

Figure 1. Project Timeline



Map 1. All Project Recommendations



The proposed network uses sidewalks, bikeable shoulders, shared-use paths, and safer crossings to create a more connected system. These improvements remove key barriers and make it easier and safer for everyone to walk or bike. They support everyday active travel and strengthen community health and safety.

- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Bikeable Shoulder
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Recommended Sidewalk
- Existing Shared-Use Facility
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

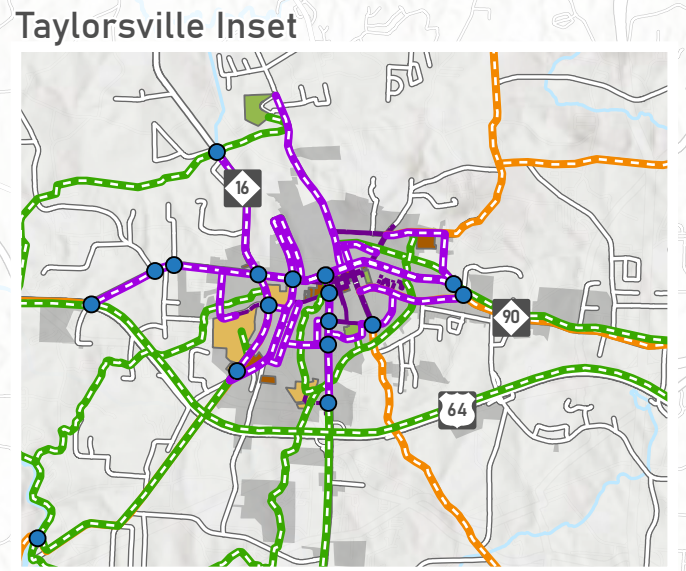
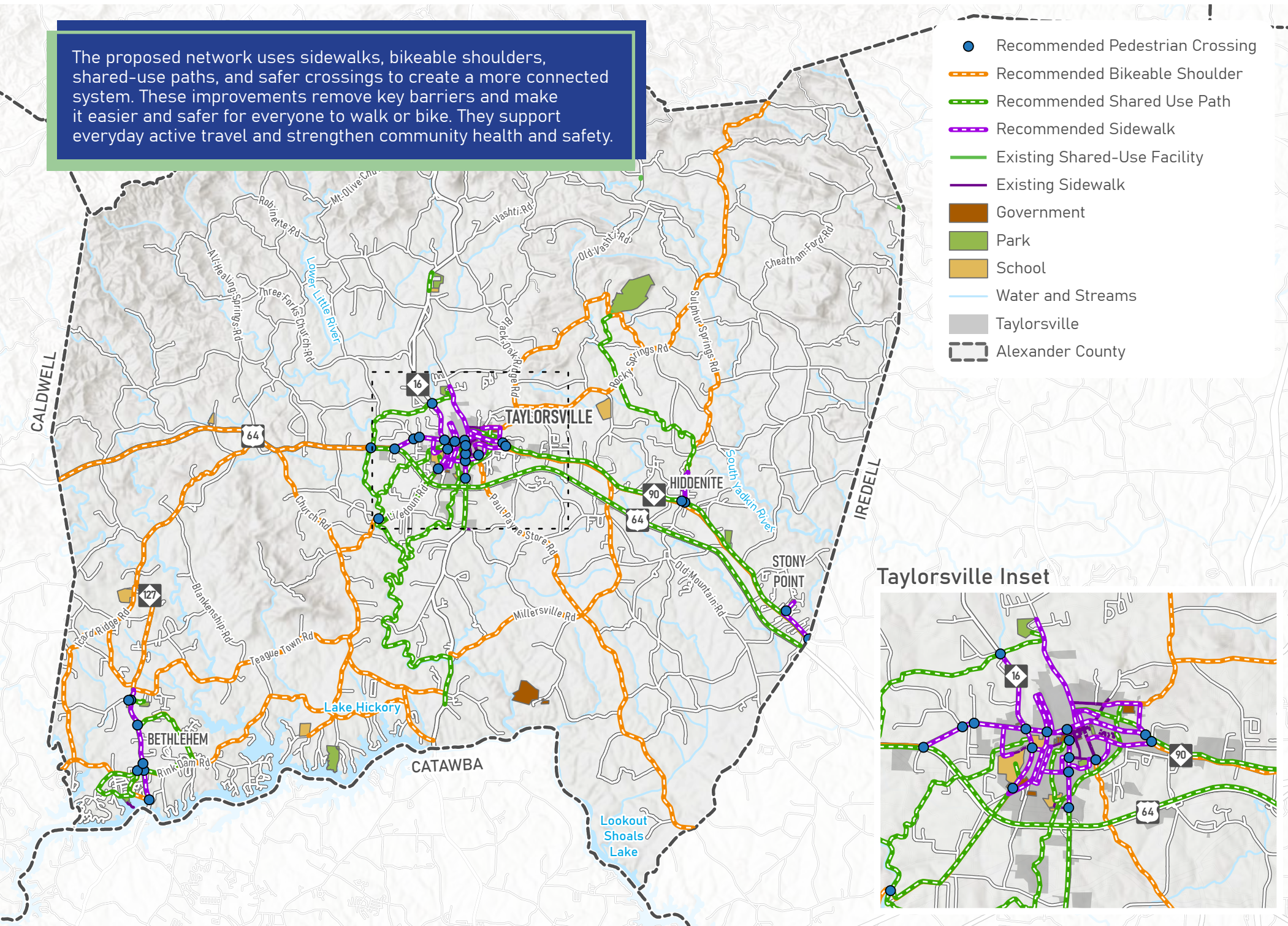




Image Source: Ken Thomas

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW + CONTEXT

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Alexander County is a rural community in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in western North Carolina, home to approximately 36,000 residents. Its landscape features rolling hills, farmland, forested areas, the Town of Taylorsville, and unincorporated communities like Hiddenite and Bethlehem that reflect the county's rich heritage and strong sense of place. The only municipality and county seat, Taylorsville, has just over 2,200 residents and serves as the region's commercial and civic hub.

The county is experiencing some reinvestment and change, driven by interest in outdoor recreation, local business development, infrastructure improvements, and continued growth pressure from the nearby Hickory metropolitan area. Recent expansions to parks and greenways suggest community interest in these investments and their potential impact on quality of life.

As interest in walkability, public health, and sustainable travel grows, improving infrastructure for walking and biking is critical to ensuring equitable access, safety, and mobility, especially across Taylorsville and the county's rural crossroads.

“

I would love to ride my bike or walk (not in traffic) and feel safe doing it.

”

- Survey Respondent

Challenges

Despite strong community assets and scenic appeal, Alexander County faces a number of transportation challenges. These include the following:

- Limited sidewalk coverage outside of Taylorsville
- Few dedicated bicycle routes or facilities
- Unsafe or incomplete pedestrian crossings
- Accessibility barriers, even in the existing sidewalk network

These gaps make it difficult for people - especially children, older adults, and people without access to a vehicle - to safely walk or bike to key destinations such as schools, parks, local businesses, and public facilities.

Opportunities

Public input throughout the planning process revealed strong support for expanding sidewalks, greenways, and shared-use paths to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and town centers more effectively. There is a growing interest in active transportation, fueled by a desire for safer travel, healthier lifestyles, and more recreational opportunities. Recent local projects, including park improvements and trail investments, suggest that even modest infrastructure enhancements can make a meaningful difference in Alexander County's rural communities by improving access, safety, and quality of life without fundamentally changing their character.

This plan builds on that momentum, providing a roadmap for identifying priorities, aligning resources, and preparing for future investments. Taylorsville and Alexander County partnered with the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) to fund the county's first long-range multimodal transportation plan focused on walking and biking.

PLAN PURPOSE

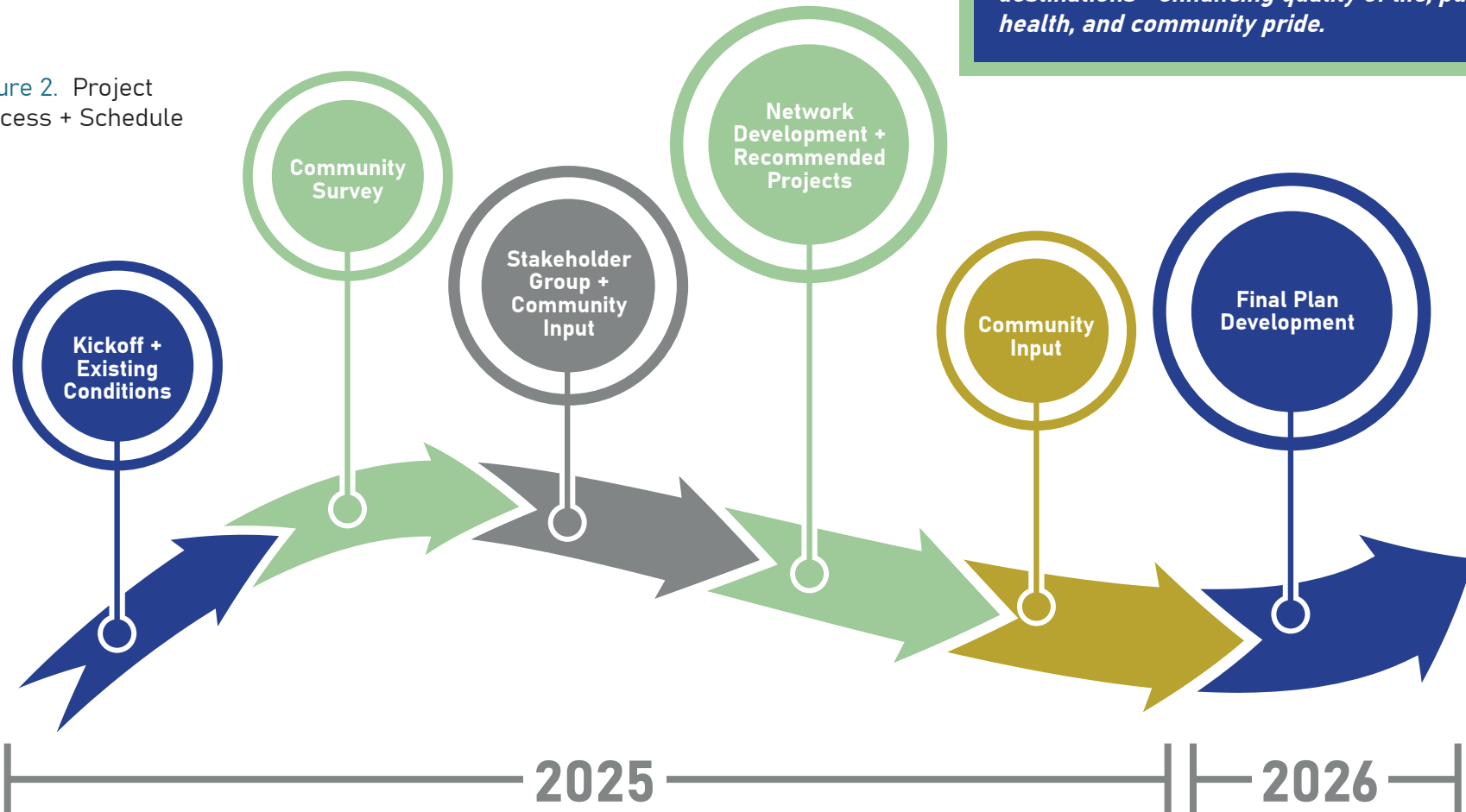
Walk & Bike Alexander County sets forth a vision for a safer, more connected network of sidewalks, bike routes, and trails that meet the needs of residents throughout the county. By expanding mobility options, the plan aims to:

- Enhance safety and accessibility
- Improve public health and quality of life
- Strengthen local connections and economic opportunity
- Position the County to secure state and federal funding

VISION STATEMENT

Alexander County envisions a future where walking and biking are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone. A connected network of sidewalks, greenways, trails, and bike-friendly streets will link people to parks, schools, jobs, and everyday destinations—enhancing quality of life, public health, and community pride.

Figure 2. Project Process + Schedule



GUIDING GOALS

These five goals provide the foundation for decision-making and project prioritization:



IMPROVE SAFETY FOR ALL USERS

Reduce crashes and injuries by enhancing crossings, managing vehicle speeds, and designing roads for all users.



EXPAND CONNECTIVITY

Create a seamless network linking communities, neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial areas.



SUPPORT HEALTH + EQUITY

Encourage physical activity and reduce health disparities by improving access, especially in underserved areas.



ENHANCE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Invest in trails and bikeways that attract visitors, support local businesses, and connect people to jobs and services.



RESPECT RURAL CONTEXT

Apply design solutions that align with Alexander County's rural landscape while balancing safety, function, and scenic character.

LAND USE + TRANSPORTATION CONTEXT

Alexander County's development is primarily rural, with dispersed housing, small communities, and scattered recreational sites. This low-density pattern makes multimodal connectivity especially important, as distances between destinations are often too great to walk or bike without safe, continuous facilities.

Taylorsville is the most walkable area in the county, but other communities like Bethlehem, Hiddenite, and Stony Point serve as population and activity centers. Improving walk/bike access around these hubs can reduce car dependence and increase travel options for residents of all ages and abilities.

In areas where vehicle access is limited or financially burdensome, walking and biking infrastructure offers low-cost, reliable alternatives for daily trips.

Image 1. East Main Avenue in Downtown Taylorsville

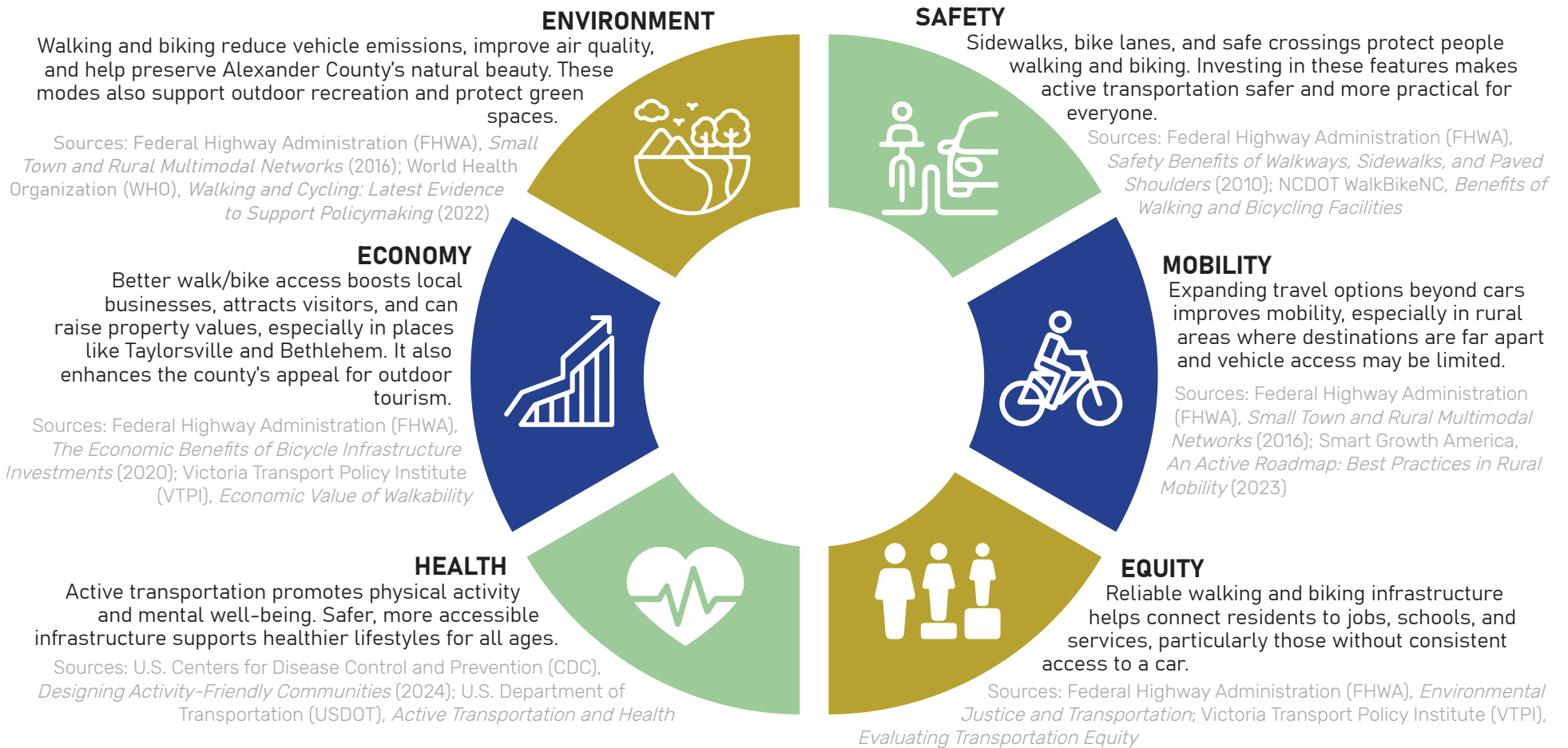


Downtown Taylorsville features sidewalks, on-street parking, and crosswalks. In walkable areas like this, thoughtful infrastructure design can support safer, more accessible travel for all modes.

Image Source: McAdams

WHY THIS PLAN MATTERS FOR ALEXANDER COUNTY

Figure 3. The Benefits of Active Transportation



With over half of all U.S. trips under three miles, walking and biking are viable transportation options, even in rural counties like Alexander. Improvements to active transportation infrastructure can reduce household transportation cost, increase access to essential services, support tourism and outdoor recreation, and improve public health outcomes.

SAFETY

Gaps in infrastructure like missing sidewalks, narrow roadways, or unsafe crossings can create serious hazards for people walking or biking. Rural areas with high-speed roads and no pedestrian accommodation are particularly dangerous. Investments in safer street design, traffic-calming measures, and complete sidewalk or shoulder networks can reduce crash risk and support increased use of the system.

MOBILITY

A connected active transportation system offers more freedom and flexibility for daily travel, especially short trips to school, work, parks, or shops. These improvements can produce the following results:

- Reduce congestion and emissions
- Improve access in underserved communities
- Maximize the impact of existing infrastructure investments

HEALTH

Trails and walkable places generate economic benefits by increasing tourism, encouraging local spending, and supporting small businesses. Even modest investments in greenways and paths can drive regional interest and add value to local communities. Alexander County's scenic beauty and small-town charm position it well to capitalize on the growing outdoor recreation economy.

Image 2. Walking Path at Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area



Image Source: McAdams

Rocky Face Mountain's trails support physical activity and attract visitors—showcasing how outdoor recreation boosts health and drives local tourism.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Transportation is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. Expanding walking and biking may have the potential to reduce vehicle trips and support environmental benefits like stormwater management, green space preservation, and habitat protection. Alexander County's rich natural resources may provide opportunities for combining infrastructure investment with environmental stewardship.

EQUITY + ACCESSIBILITY

Safe walking and biking infrastructure is especially important for residents who do not drive or own a car, including older adults, youth, and people with disabilities. Expanding these networks improves access to jobs, healthcare, education, and daily needs. Investing in equitable infrastructure also helps close gaps in communities and strengthens resilience across the county.

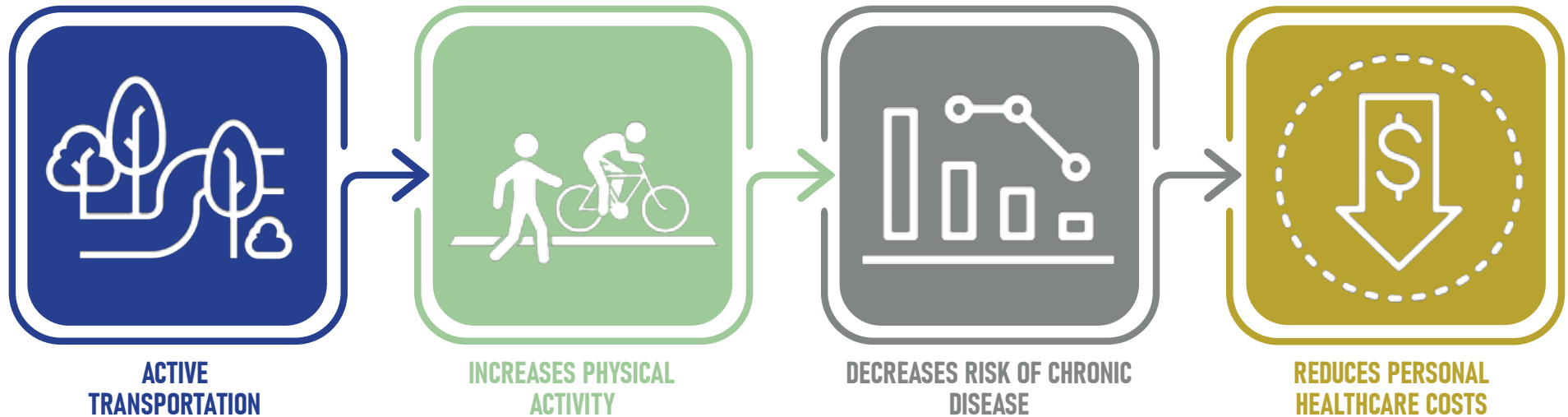
Image 3. Sidewalk Along NC 127 in Bethlehem



Image Source: McAdams

A sidewalk with a generous buffer improves comfort but without crossings or sidewalks on the opposite side, connectivity and safety remain limited.

Figure 4. Active Transportation Health Savings



FUNDING + POLICY SUPPORT

Potential Funding Sources

Communities that are successful in building their active transportation networks seek funding from many sources. Some examples include the following:

- Local funds from the Town of Taylorsville and Alexander County
- NCDOT funding through the Complete Streets policy
- Federal grants targeting rural transportation and recreational access
- Partnerships with nonprofits and land trusts to support trail development

Policy Tools

Updated zoning codes and subdivision regulations can require sidewalks or trail connections in new development. Adoption of complementary policies such as Complete Streets or greenway master plans can improve grant competitiveness and guide coordinated, long-term planning.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Trails, greenways, and walkable downtowns may contribute to local economies by attracting visitors, encouraging local spending, and potentially increasing property values. In rural counties, modest trail investments have the potential to contribute to job creation and tourism revenue. Alexander County's natural scenery, rural charm, and outdoor appeal may offer potential advantages for trail-based economic development.

The following pages showcase some rural North Carolina communities that recognize the economic value of greenways and are leveraging partnerships to implement projects successfully. These examples show how a rural community can deliver visible near-term wins and grow toward a regional trail vision without losing small-town character.

“ *I walk in the park...not on the roads with heavy traffic...* ”
 - Survey Respondent

Image 4. Trail through Matheson Park in Taylorsville



Trails like this one at Matheson Park support active transportation, with links to Taylorsville's sidewalk network, while preserving green space, managing stormwater, and enhancing natural beauty.

Image Source: McAdams

THERMAL BELT RAIL-TRAIL - COUNTY-LEVEL MOMENTUM + REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The Thermal Belt Rail-trail is a 13.5-mile, 12-foot-wide paved rail-trail in Rutherford County, NC. It connects Rutherfordton, Spindale, Forest City, Ruth, and Gilkey, with multiple trailheads and downtown access. The project launched with major philanthropic support and strong intergovernmental cooperation; RHI Legacy Foundation provided \$4.25 million toward construction, and municipalities coordinated on trailheads and amenities. The corridor was completed in 2019 and continues to anchor new investments.

RAISE Grant Collaboration (Rutherfordton + Spindale)

Building on the trail's success, Rutherfordton and Spindale partnered with NCDOT to secure a \$20M federal RAISE award for U.S. 221A (Charlotte Rd/Main St) to become a 2.5-mile Complete Street with a 10-foot multi-use sidepath, safer crossings, bus stop upgrades, and EV charging stations. The roadway improvements will be a major rural safety and mobility upgrade, closing multimodal gaps between the towns, linking neighborhoods to jobs, the hospital, transit, and trail access. This corridor investment complements the Thermal Belt Rail-trail's role as the spine of active transportation in the county.

Continued Regional Partnerships

Forest City has been a core partner on the rail-trail and continues advancing complementary corridor and trailhead projects, sustaining countywide momentum. Meanwhile, the Foothills Regional Commission and its partners advanced a feasibility study to extend the Thermal Belt Trail east from Forest City to Ellenboro and the proposed Colfax Gin Park, evaluating both on-road and off-road options for a continuous sidepath and rail-trail connection. The region also began early coordination on a future extension toward the Peavine Trail corridor in Marion, building on this same spine to support long-range trail connectivity and a stronger multi-county network. Continued collaboration among local governments, Foothills Regional Commission, and NCDOT will be essential to carry this next phase of the regional trail vision forward.

Image 5. Thermal Belt Rail-trail Crossing



Image Source: Alesha Guard

Image 6. Thermal Belt Rail-trail Rural Trailhead



Image Source: Alesha Guard

SPOTLIGHT: SPINDALE, NC

Spindale completed streetscape improvements, with wider sidewalks, street trees, lighting, and crosswalks that connect downtown directly to the Thermal Belt Rail-trail, positioning the town as a primary stop along the corridor. Adjacent to the trail, the North Slope Skate Park & Pump Track opened as a high-profile recreation anchor, designed as a trail-facing amenity that pulls visitors into downtown.



Image 7. Improved Trail Access in Spindale (top)

Image 8. Skatepark & Pump Track Adjacent the Trail (bottom)

ELKIN, NC: TRAILS AS A CATALYST FOR A RURAL TOWN

Elkin is a small trail-town in the Yadkin Valley that leaned into greenways, rail-trails, and river access as a core strategy for revitalization and outdoor tourism. Local partners connected downtown to parks and regional trail systems, including the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, while steadily building out in-town links like the Elkin & Alleghany Rail-Trail and park-to-park connectors.

Image 9. Elkin Alleghany Rail-Trail



Trails in Elkin now link downtown to parks, river access, and regional routes, making walking and biking part of daily life and visitor itineraries.

The town and its nonprofit partner, Elkin Valley Trails Association, prioritized phased, doable segments with wayfinding, trailheads, and downtown improvements. This allowed residents to see benefits early while the regional network took shape. The program explicitly used trails as place-based economic development, pairing access improvements with small-business-friendly downtown upgrades and a marketing push positioning Elkin as a weekend trail destination. The strategy supports local spending and heritage tourism while keeping projects modest in scope and cost, an approach that fits rural contexts.



Image Source: Alexander County

CHAPTER 2

EXISTING CONDITIONS + NEEDS ASSESSMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Alexander County's transportation system reflects the challenges and opportunities of a rural, low-density area anchored by a small-town center. Like many rural communities, its roads were built primarily for motor vehicles, leaving limited infrastructure for people walking or biking. Today, there is growing interest in outdoor recreation, public health, and mobility access, leading to conversations about improving the transportation system across the county.

This chapter provides an overview of current conditions for walking, biking, and public transit in Alexander County, highlighting infrastructure gaps, key barriers to active travel, and priority needs to support a future where walking and biking are safe, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone.

HISTORY OF ALEXANDER COUNTY

Established in 1847, Alexander County developed as a rural agricultural region in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Early settlement patterns centered around small farms, mills, and crossroads communities like Stony Point and Hiddenite. Roads were originally unpaved and connected farms to the county seat in Taylorsville and to regional markets.

Railroads later supported industrial development and freight movement and, in the early 20th century, also provided limited passenger service prior to the widespread adoption of automobiles. Over time, state highways, most notably US 64, US 321, and NC 16/90, became the county's primary transportation corridors. Development remained modest throughout the 20th century, resulting in a land use pattern defined by low-density housing, farmland, and scattered community centers.

This history has shaped a transportation system that is heavily car-dependent, with limited pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure beyond the county's core development nodes. Most of the county

Image 10. Original Alexander County Courthouse in Taylorsville



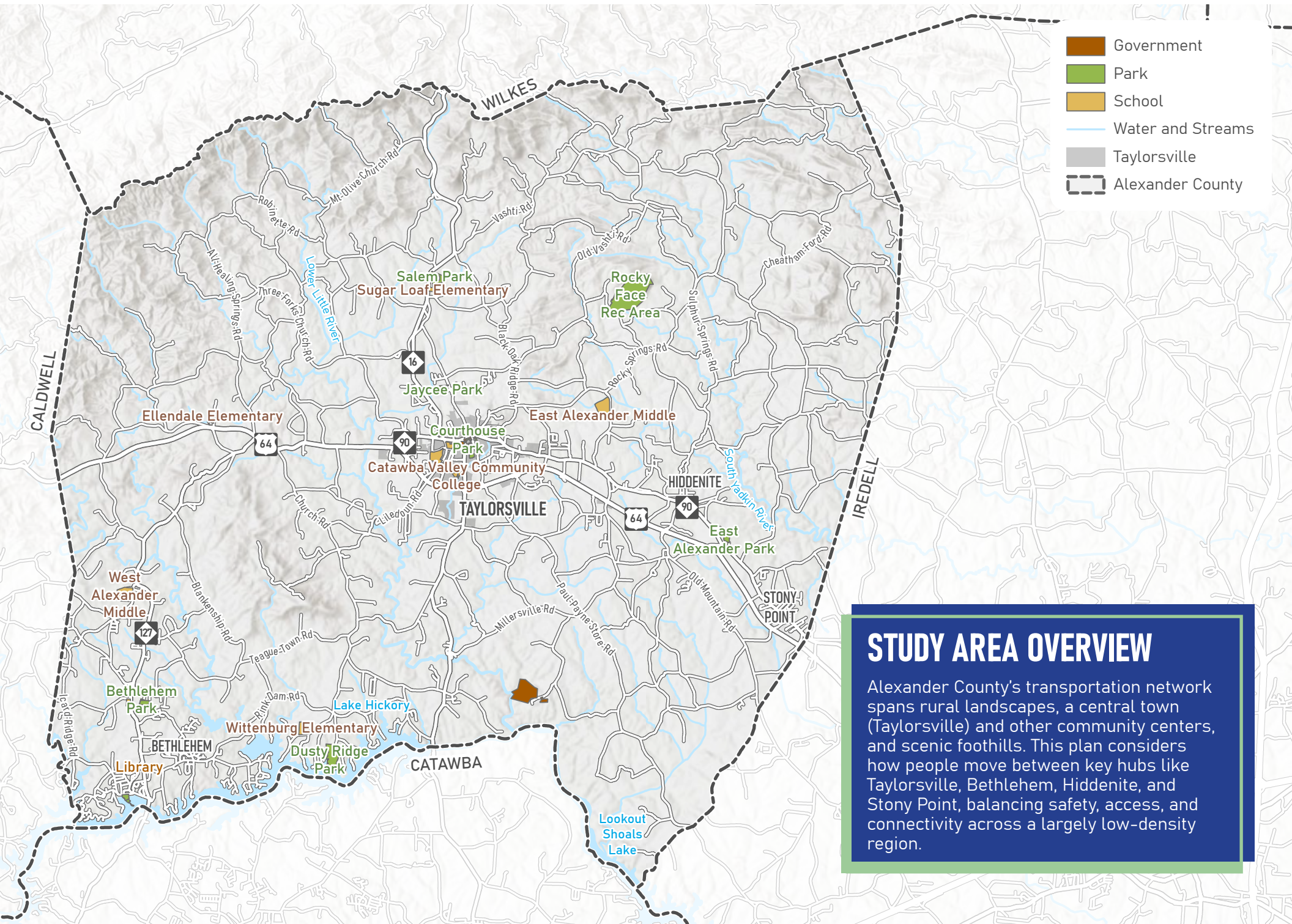
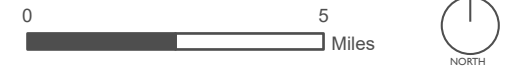
The Alexander County Courthouse has long served as the civic heart of Taylorsville—anchoring transportation, commerce, and community life since the county's founding in 1847.

remains rural, with a mix of forests, farmland, and single-family homes. Denser population centers such as Taylorsville, Bethlehem, Hiddenite, and Stony Point serve as local hubs for schools, civic life, and shopping. However, the distances between these nodes, and the lack of continuous walking or biking infrastructure, limit opportunities for non-motorized travel.

While Taylorsville and other small community centers show promise for more walkable development, walking and biking today are used primarily for recreation rather than everyday transportation. For some residents, however, including those without reliable access to a vehicle, walking and biking are not a choice but a necessity. Limited infrastructure and long distances make these trips challenging and, in many cases, unsafe, underscoring the need for improvements that support both recreational use and essential daily travel.

Image Source: State Archives of North Carolina

Map 2. Study Area



- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

STUDY AREA OVERVIEW

Alexander County's transportation network spans rural landscapes, a central town (Taylorsville) and other community centers, and scenic foothills. This plan considers how people move between key hubs like Taylorsville, Bethlehem, Hiddenite, and Stony Point, balancing safety, access, and connectivity across a largely low-density region.

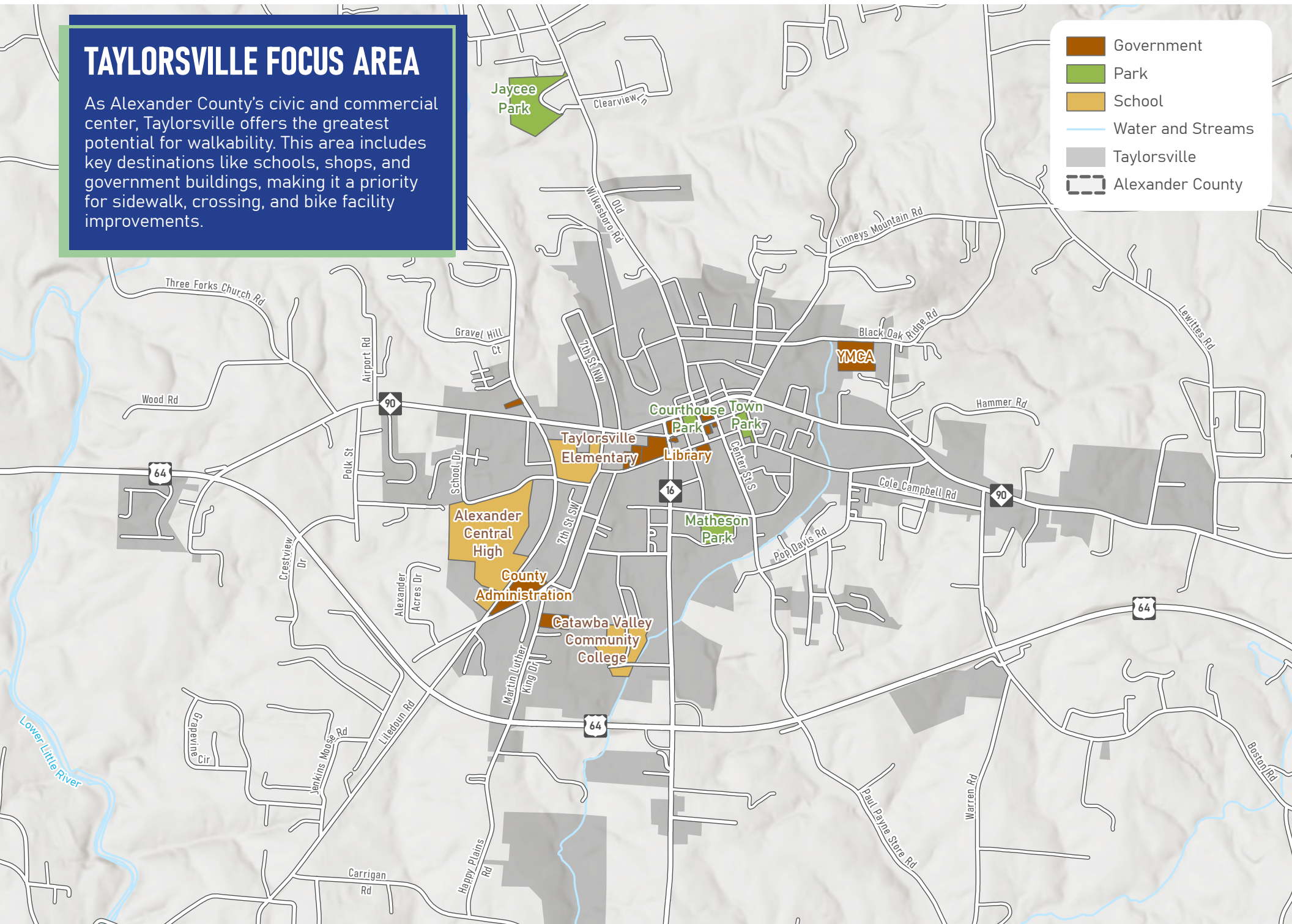
Map 3. Study Area (Taylorsville)



TAYLORSVILLE FOCUS AREA

As Alexander County's civic and commercial center, Taylorsville offers the greatest potential for walkability. This area includes key destinations like schools, shops, and government buildings, making it a priority for sidewalk, crossing, and bike facility improvements.

- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County



DEMOGRAPHICS

Alexander County has approximately 36,400–36,500 residents, reflecting very modest change since the 2020 Census and continued population stability over the past several years. The median age is 43.8, notably higher than the North Carolina median (about 39), which reflects an older population than surrounding urbanized counties. Approximately 20.6% of residents are age 65 or older, while about 19% are under age 18, both age groups that particularly benefit from safe, comfortable walking and biking options.

The population is predominantly White (approximately 86%), with smaller proportions identifying as Black or African American (about 4%), Hispanic or Latino (about 5–6%), Asian (about 1%), and two or more races (about 3–4%). While Alexander County remains less diverse than the state as a whole, the Hispanic and multiracial populations have gradually increased over time.

Table 1. County Demographics Snapshot

County	Population	Median Age	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	Average Commute Time
Alexander	~36,700	43.8	\$65,300	12.5%	25.6 minutes
Catawba	~160,600	42.1	\$70,600	15%	25 minutes
Iredell	~186,700	41.1	\$85,000	10.2%	26 minutes
Wilkes	~65,900	~47	\$53,200	15.5%	25.3 minutes
Caldwell	~80,600	~45	\$58,200	14.5%	25.6 minutes

The median household income is approximately \$65,300, which is slightly below the North Carolina median but represents steady growth over the past decade. The poverty rate is approximately 12.5%, closely aligned with statewide and national averages. These economic conditions highlight the importance of affordable transportation options, including the ability to safely walk, bike, or access transit for daily needs.

SPOTLIGHT: BETHLEHEM

While Bethlehem is a growing residential area with several community destinations, there are no continuous sidewalks connecting homes to places like the library, post office, or Bethlehem Elementary School.



Image 11. NC 127 in Bethlehem

Image Source: McAdams

Taylorsville, the county seat, has about 2,200 residents and a much higher population density than the county overall. With a median age of about 56 and a poverty rate near 28%, the town likely has greater reliance on walking, biking, and transit for some residents, particularly older adults and households with limited vehicle access. As the county's primary civic and commercial hub, it also has strong potential for walkability.

Average commute times in Alexander County are about 25 minutes, reflecting travel to jobs outside the county. While low-density development limits multimodal travel overall, community centers such as Taylorsville, Bethlehem, Hiddenite, and Stony Point present clear opportunities for targeted walking and biking improvements.

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Alexander County's transportation system consists of a network of state-maintained highways, rural secondary roads, and local streets. The primary corridors include the following:

- NC 16, a major north-south spine that connects Taylorsville to Wilkes County in the north and to Conover, Newton, and Charlotte via US 321 to the south.
- NC 90, a key east-west route linking Taylorsville with Hiddenite, Stony Point, and Iredell County.
- US 64, which runs west to east across the county and provides regional access to Lenoir, Statesville, and beyond.

Most of these roads are two-lane undivided highways with narrow or nonexistent shoulders and posted speed limits between 45 and 55 mph, though actual travel speeds may be higher, particularly in rural stretches. Signalized intersections are rare, and even fewer corridors offer crosswalks, pedestrian signals, or pedestrian-scale lighting outside Taylorsville. Roadside drainage ditches, steep slopes, and limited right-of-way further constrain the feasibility of adding sidewalks, bike lanes, or paved shoulders without significant investment.

Traffic volumes are highest along NC 16 south of Taylorsville and on NC 127 in the Bethlehem area, where residential and commercial development is densest. Elsewhere, traffic tends to be lighter but faster, posing serious safety concerns for pedestrians and cyclists. In hilly or curving segments, limited sight distance further increases risks for non-motorized users.

This automobile-oriented system can make walking or biking for everyday trips challenging in many parts of the county. Narrow shoulders, high speeds, and long distances between destinations discourage active transportation for practical purposes. Still, recreational cyclists use some scenic low-volume roads, and opportunities may exist to leverage underutilized right-of-way along key corridors such as NC 16, NC 90, or near schools for sidepaths or shared-use paths.

Improvement priorities for a safer and more connected multimodal network include the following:

- Filling sidewalk gaps in and around town centers
- Enhancing crossings along high-speed corridors
- Adding paved shoulders or sidepaths on key connector roads

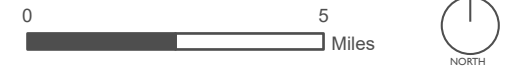
A more accessible transportation network would support short trips to schools, parks, businesses, and community facilities, while also promoting outdoor recreation and tourism.

Image 12. Intersection of Golf Course Lane with US 64



This image highlights the absence of sidewalks and safe crossings along major roadways in Alexander County—despite wide pavement, pedestrian infrastructure is lacking.

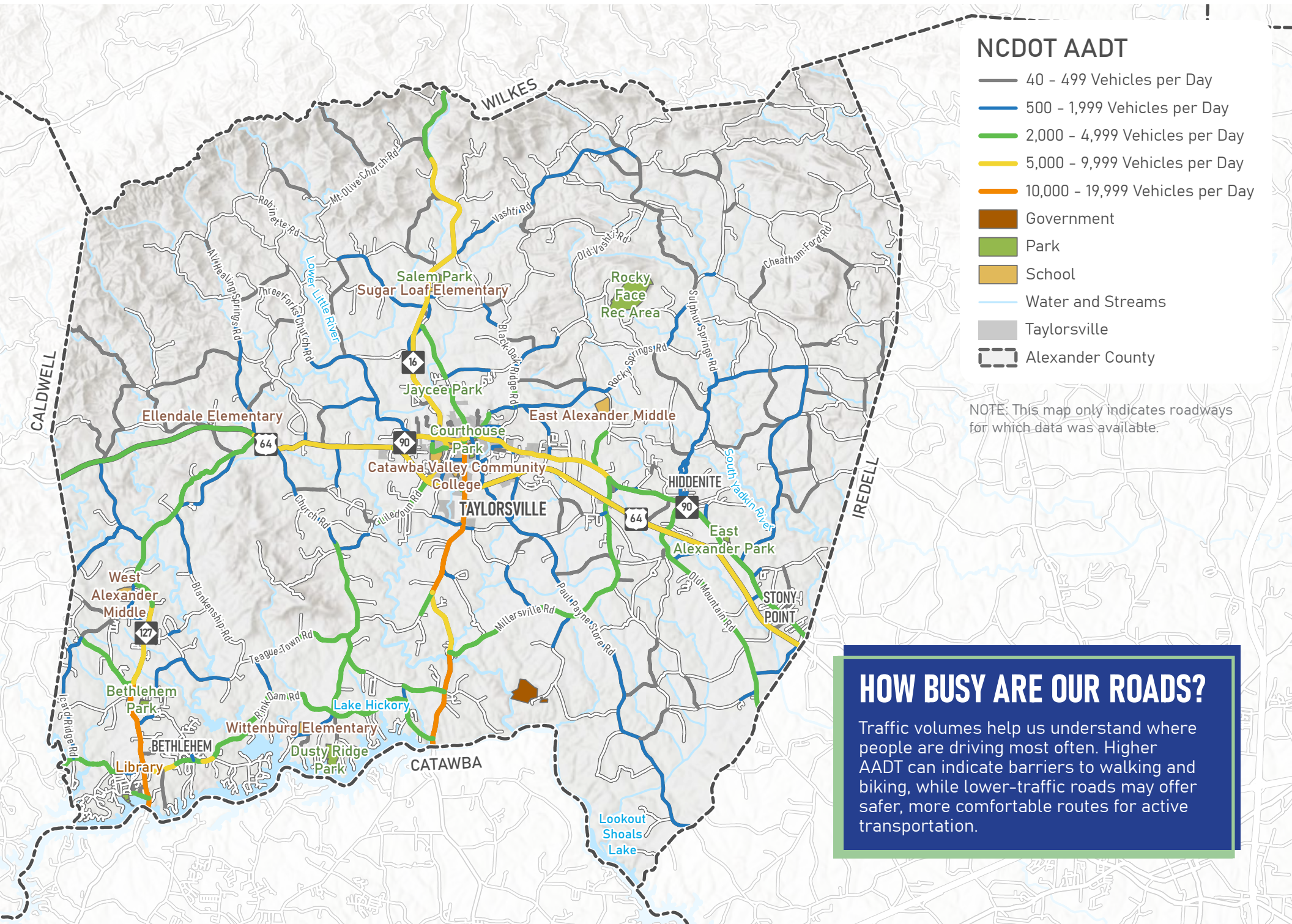
Map 4. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)



NCDOT AADT

- 40 - 499 Vehicles per Day
- 500 - 1,999 Vehicles per Day
- 2,000 - 4,999 Vehicles per Day
- 5,000 - 9,999 Vehicles per Day
- 10,000 - 19,999 Vehicles per Day
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

NOTE: This map only indicates roadways for which data was available.



HOW BUSY ARE OUR ROADS?

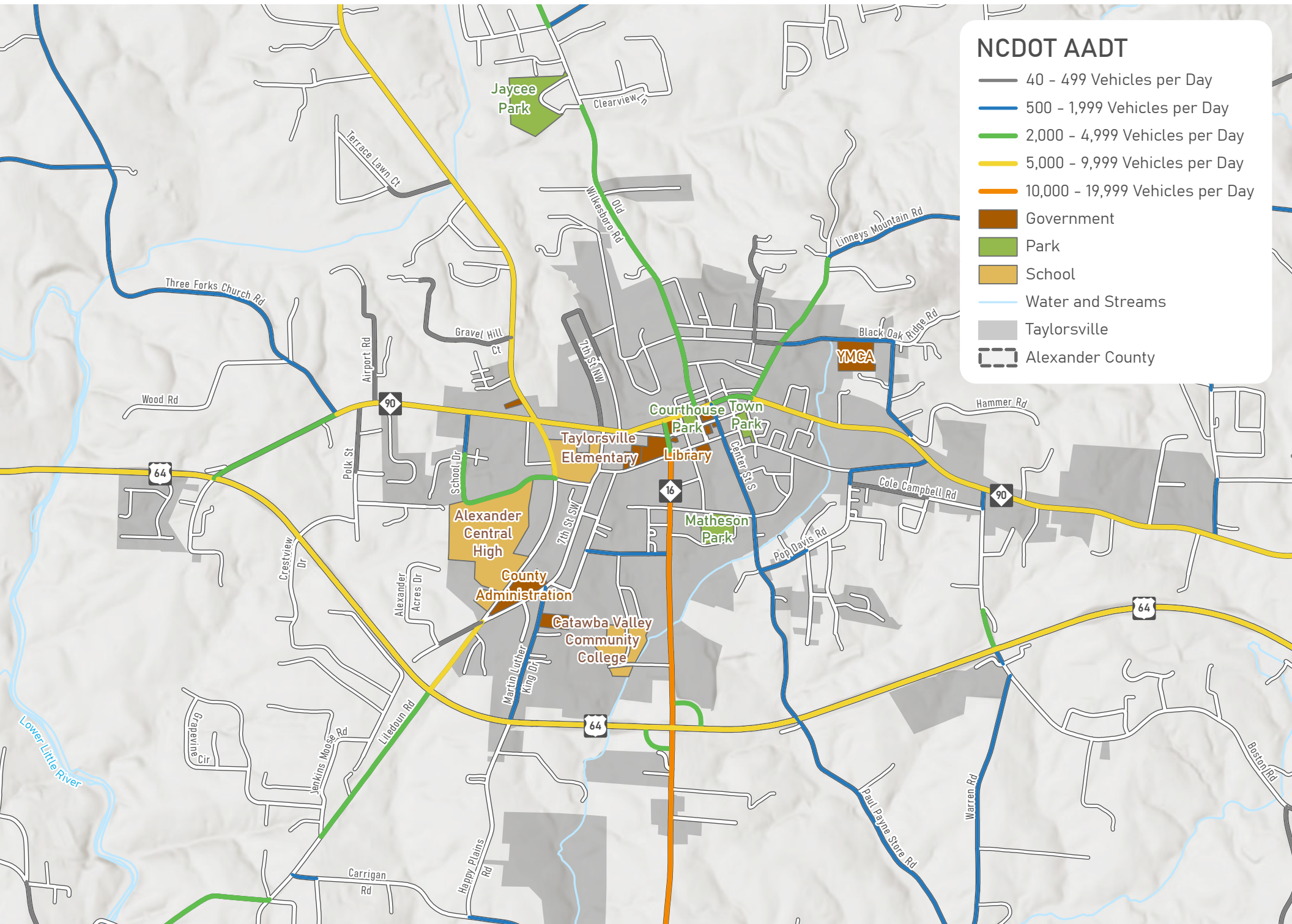
Traffic volumes help us understand where people are driving most often. Higher AADT can indicate barriers to walking and biking, while lower-traffic roads may offer safer, more comfortable routes for active transportation.

Map 5. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) (Taylorsville)

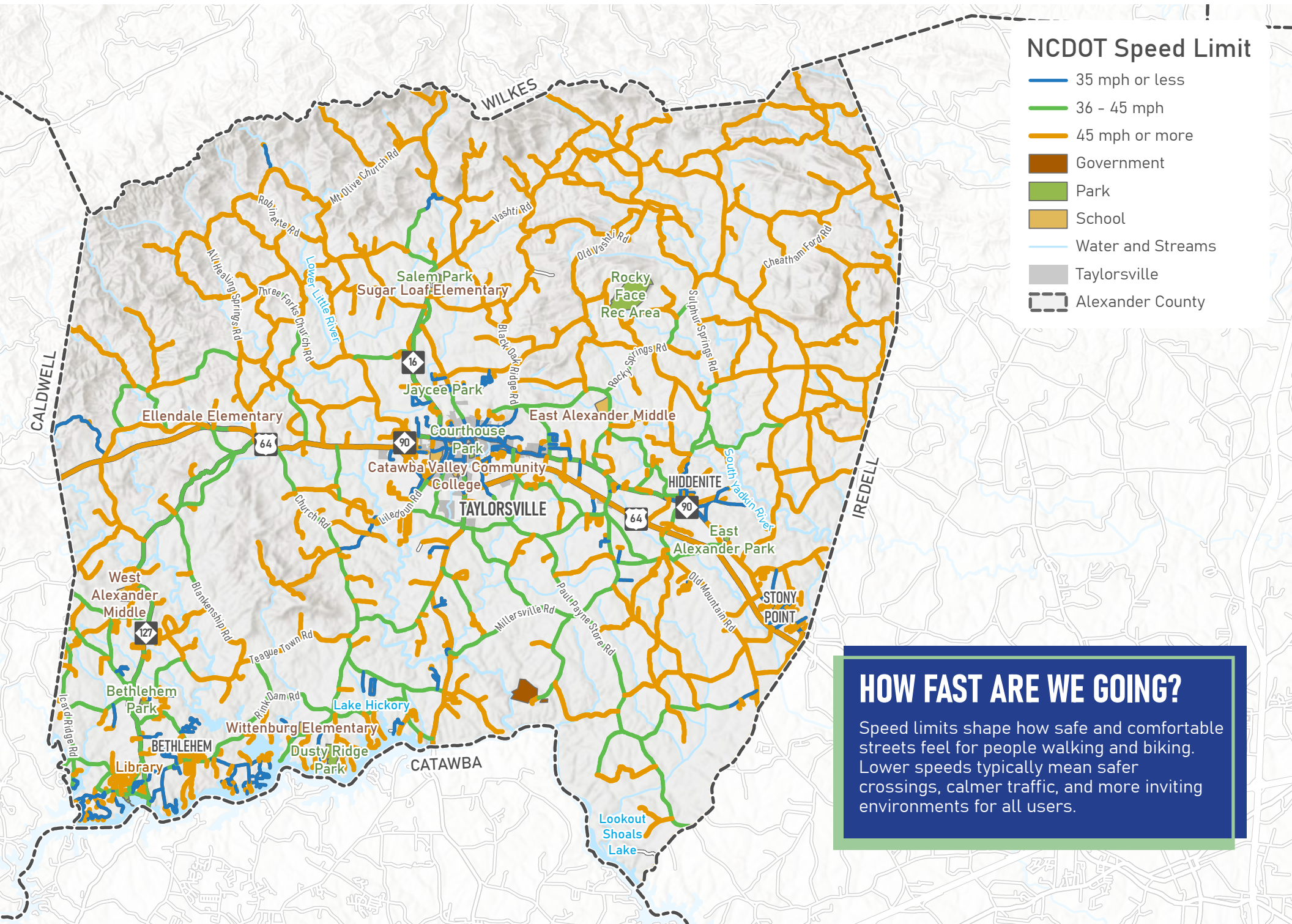
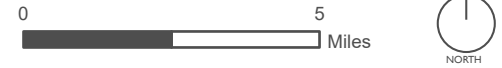


NCDOT AADT

- 40 - 499 Vehicles per Day
- 500 - 1,999 Vehicles per Day
- 2,000 - 4,999 Vehicles per Day
- 5,000 - 9,999 Vehicles per Day
- 10,000 - 19,999 Vehicles per Day
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County



Map 6. Roadway Speed Limits / Miles Per Hour (MPH)



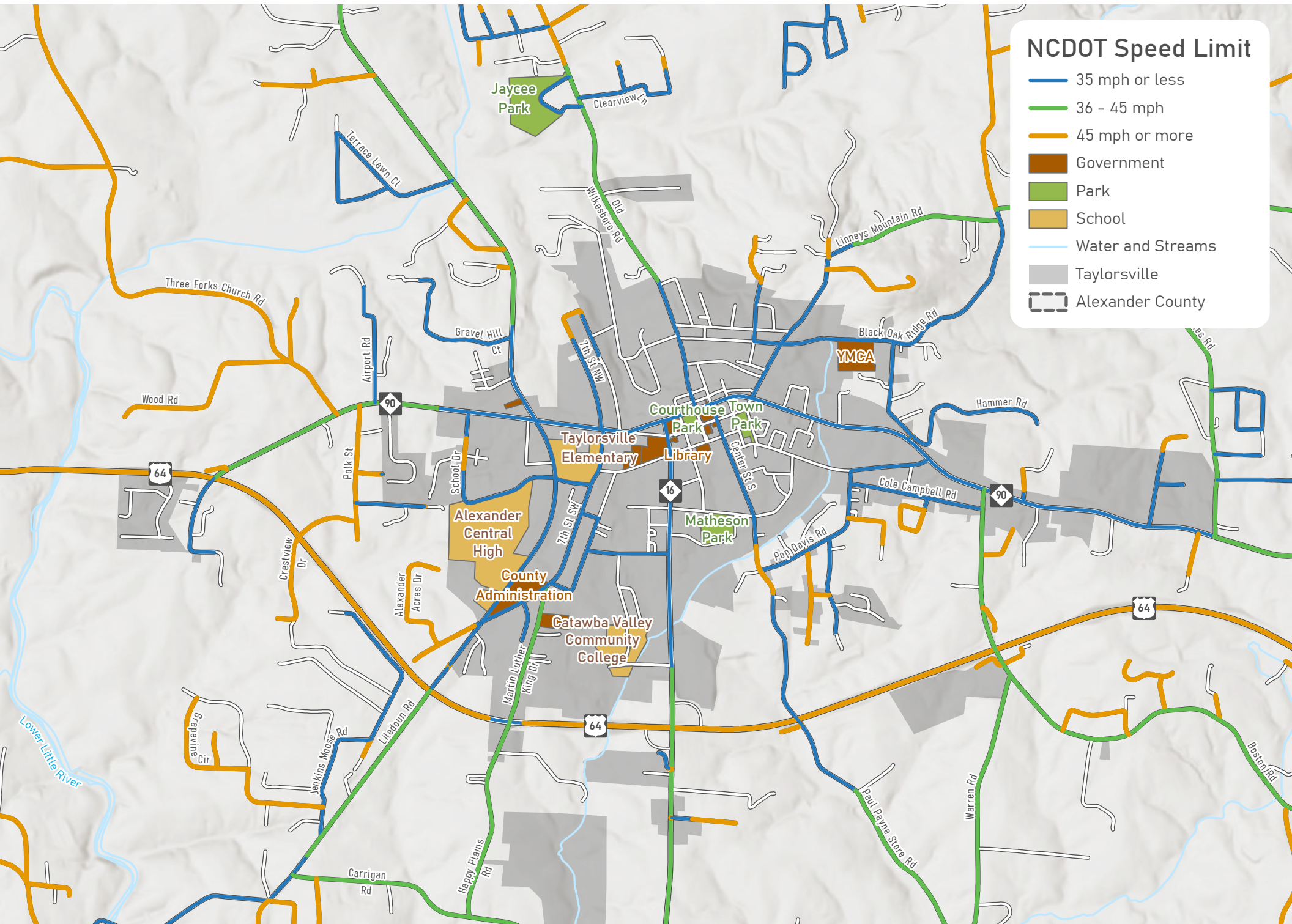
NCDOT Speed Limit

- 35 mph or less
- 36 - 45 mph
- 45 mph or more
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

HOW FAST ARE WE GOING?

Speed limits shape how safe and comfortable streets feel for people walking and biking. Lower speeds typically mean safer crossings, calmer traffic, and more inviting environments for all users.

Map 7. Roadway Speed Limits (Taylorsville)



NCDOT Speed Limit

- 35 mph or less
- 36 - 45 mph
- 45 mph or more
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

SAFETY + CRASH DATA

Crash data show that bicycle and pedestrian crashes are relatively infrequent in Alexander County. Between 2007 and 2024, the county recorded 49 pedestrian crashes and 8 bicyclist crashes on public roadways. These incidents are dispersed across the county, occurring not only in Taylorsville, where foot traffic is highest, but also along rural roadways with little to no pedestrian infrastructure.

While the overall number of crashes is low, this should not be interpreted as an absence of risk. Over that timeframe, seven crashes were fatal and eight resulted in serious injuries, all involving pedestrians. Most crashes occurred on rural roadways and under dark or unlit conditions, where higher vehicle speeds, narrow or missing shoulders, and limited visibility increase the risk for people walking or biking. Even isolated crashes on these roads highlight the potential severity of conflicts and the importance of proactive safety measures.

Recent data suggest a modest uptick in non-motorist crashes. Between 2020 and 2024, Alexander County experienced 16 pedestrian crashes and 4 bicyclist crashes, accounting for roughly one-third of all pedestrian crashes and half of all bicyclist crashes reported since 2007. During this five-year period, one fatal and six serious-injury crashes were reported, again all involving pedestrians.

In addition to crash locations, NCDOT's Corridor Section Safety Scores identify roadway segments with elevated crash risk based on frequency, severity, and crash rates relative to traffic volumes. While these scores are not specific to pedestrian or bicycle crashes, they help highlight corridors where roadway design and operating conditions may contribute to broader safety concerns.

Ultimately, crash data tells only part of the story. Factors such as traffic volumes, number of lanes, lighting, roadway geometry, and posted speeds all influence both real and perceived safety. Addressing these conditions is essential to creating streets where people can comfortably and safely walk and ride throughout Alexander County.

SPEED VS. SAFETY

Most roads in Alexander County have posted speed limits between 45 and 55 miles per hour (mph), particularly in rural areas where there are no sidewalks or shoulders. At these speeds, the risk of fatal injury for pedestrians and cyclists rises sharply. Even though Taylorsville and school areas like Hiddenite and Stony Point have lower speed zones (as low as 20–25 mph), the majority of the county's roads remain higher-speed and often lack safe space for people walking or biking.



Reducing speed alone isn't always enough. The design of rural roads plays a major role in safety outcomes. Targeted improvements like paved shoulders, crossings, and signage can make these higher-speed corridors safer for everyone, even when speed limits remain unchanged.

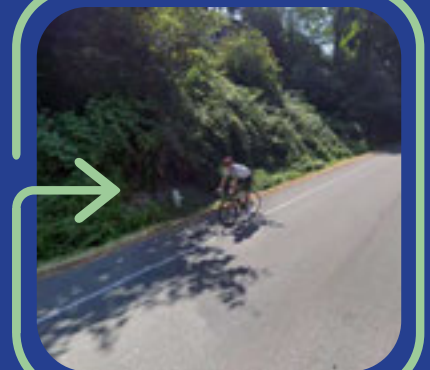
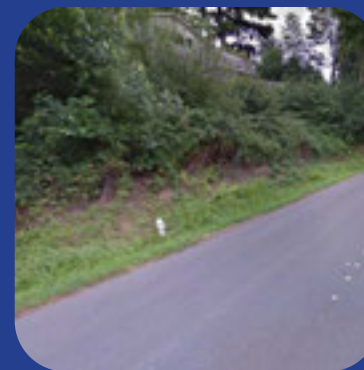
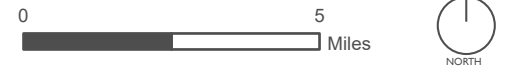


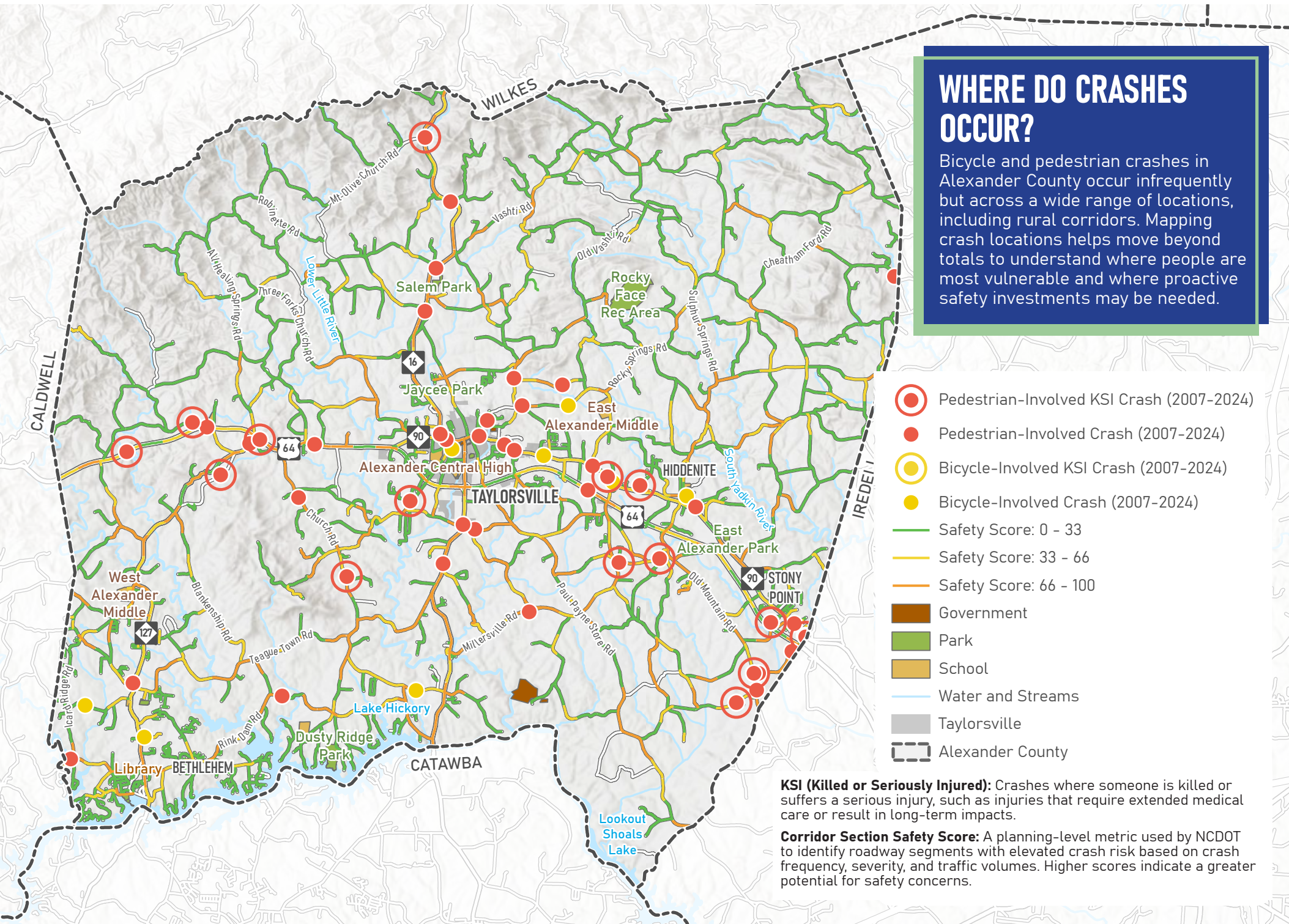
Image 13. Rural Road Shoulder Improvement Example

Map 8. Crash History + Corridor Safety Scores



WHERE DO CRASHES OCCUR?

Bicycle and pedestrian crashes in Alexander County occur infrequently but across a wide range of locations, including rural corridors. Mapping crash locations helps move beyond totals to understand where people are most vulnerable and where proactive safety investments may be needed.

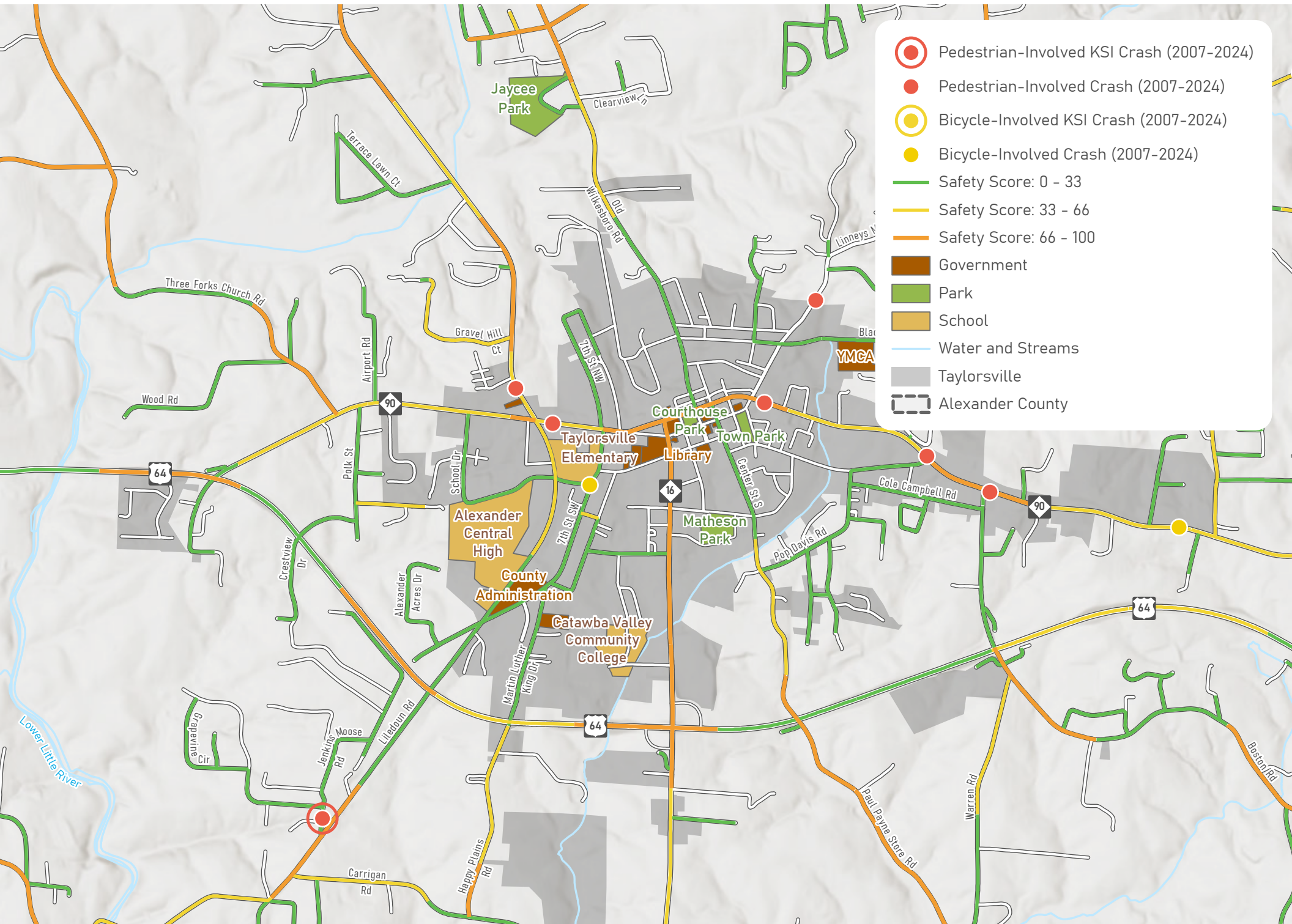


- Pedestrian-Involved KSI Crash (2007-2024)
- Pedestrian-Involved Crash (2007-2024)
- Bicycle-Involved KSI Crash (2007-2024)
- Bicycle-Involved Crash (2007-2024)
- Safety Score: 0 - 33
- Safety Score: 33 - 66
- Safety Score: 66 - 100
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured): Crashes where someone is killed or suffers a serious injury, such as injuries that require extended medical care or result in long-term impacts.

Corridor Section Safety Score: A planning-level metric used by NCDOT to identify roadway segments with elevated crash risk based on crash frequency, severity, and traffic volumes. Higher scores indicate a greater potential for safety concerns.

Map 9. Crash History + Corridor Safety Scores (Taylorsville)



- Pedestrian-Involved KSI Crash (2007-2024)
- Pedestrian-Involved Crash (2007-2024)
- Bicycle-Involved KSI Crash (2007-2024)
- Bicycle-Involved Crash (2007-2024)
- Safety Score: 0 - 33
- Safety Score: 33 - 66
- Safety Score: 66 - 100
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

TRAVEL BEHAVIOR + COMMUNITY NEEDS

According to recent census data, most Alexander County residents commute by car.

- 93.4% drive alone or carpool
- 5.4% work from home
- Fewer than 1% walk to work
- No reliable data is available for bicycle or transit commutes

The average one-way commute in Alexander County is about 27.7 minutes, slightly below the state average. Still, 9% of residents commute an hour or more; and more than half travel to jobs in other counties. These patterns highlight both the regional nature of commuting and the limited local employment options, reinforcing the county's reliance on personal vehicles. At the same time, they point to opportunities for shorter walking and biking trips within community centers like Taylorsville, Bethlehem, and Hiddenite.

A well-connected active transportation network can expand mobility for residents who do not drive or cannot drive due to age, income, disability, or other factors. Strategic investments in sidewalks, trails, crosswalks, and bicycle facilities would improve access to jobs, schools, parks, and services while supporting a more inclusive and age-friendly transportation system. Although most residents currently drive, public input shows strong demand for safe, convenient alternatives. Across surveys, public meetings, and stakeholder discussions, people consistently said they would walk or bike more if the infrastructure felt safer and more connected.

“ Honestly, I don't bike because there are no bike paths. ”
- Survey Respondent

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly half of all trips in the U.S. are three miles or less; and the majority are under five miles, distances that could be walked or biked if safe, comfortable infrastructure were in place.



Image 14. 3rd Avenue SW (Near Matheson Park) in Taylorsville



Traffic calming measures like speed humps help create safer, more comfortable walking environments, especially in areas where destinations like parks are within walking distance of housing and downtown. When streets are designed for people, walking becomes a viable and inviting mode of travel.

WALKING + SIDEWALK INFRASTRUCTURE

Sidewalk infrastructure in Alexander County is limited and fragmented, concentrated mainly within the Town of Taylorsville. The downtown core features some walkable blocks with sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and compact storefronts; but pedestrian infrastructure quickly becomes sparse outside the central business district. Many streets do not have sidewalks at all, and others have narrow widths, missing curb ramps, uneven surfaces, or steep grades that hinder accessibility.

Even within Taylorsville, sidewalk conditions are inconsistent. Gaps in the network, poorly marked crossings, and aging infrastructure make walking difficult or unsafe, particularly for children walking to school, older adults, and people with mobility limitations. Despite these challenges, sidewalks remain a vital part of the transportation system, supporting short trips, independent travel, and recreational activity for people who don't drive.

Outside Taylorsville, sidewalk infrastructure is virtually nonexistent. In communities like Bethlehem, Hiddenite, and Stony Point, residents often walk along grassy shoulders, unpaved paths, or the edge of the travel lane to reach local schools, churches, post offices, or shops. While these areas may not appear walkable today, they generate many short trips that people could make safely and comfortably on foot with basic infrastructure improvements like sidewalks, sidepaths, or widened shoulders.

“ All intersections need crosswalks. ”
- Survey Respondent

“ Safe walking places in Alexander County are not readily available for most of the population. ”

- Survey Respondent

SMALL GAPS, BIG IMPACT

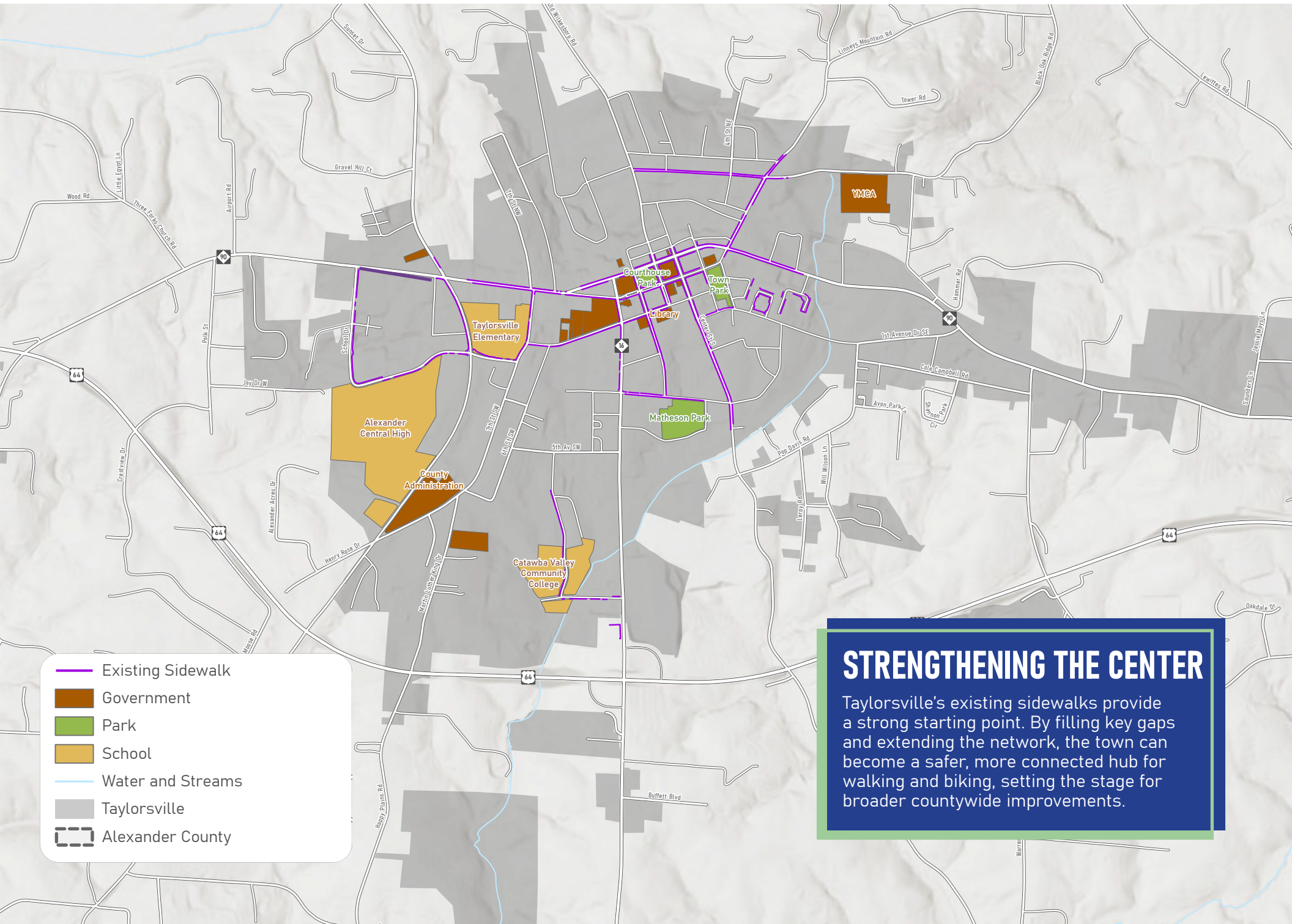
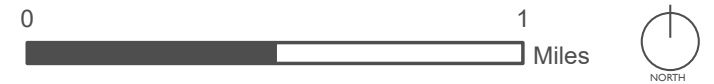
A missing sidewalk segment near a school or clinic can discourage walking entirely, especially for residents with strollers, wheelchairs, or limited mobility. Filling these gaps is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve access and safety.



Image 15. Main Avenue Drive in Taylorsville

Image Source: McAdams

Map 10. Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure (Taylorsville)

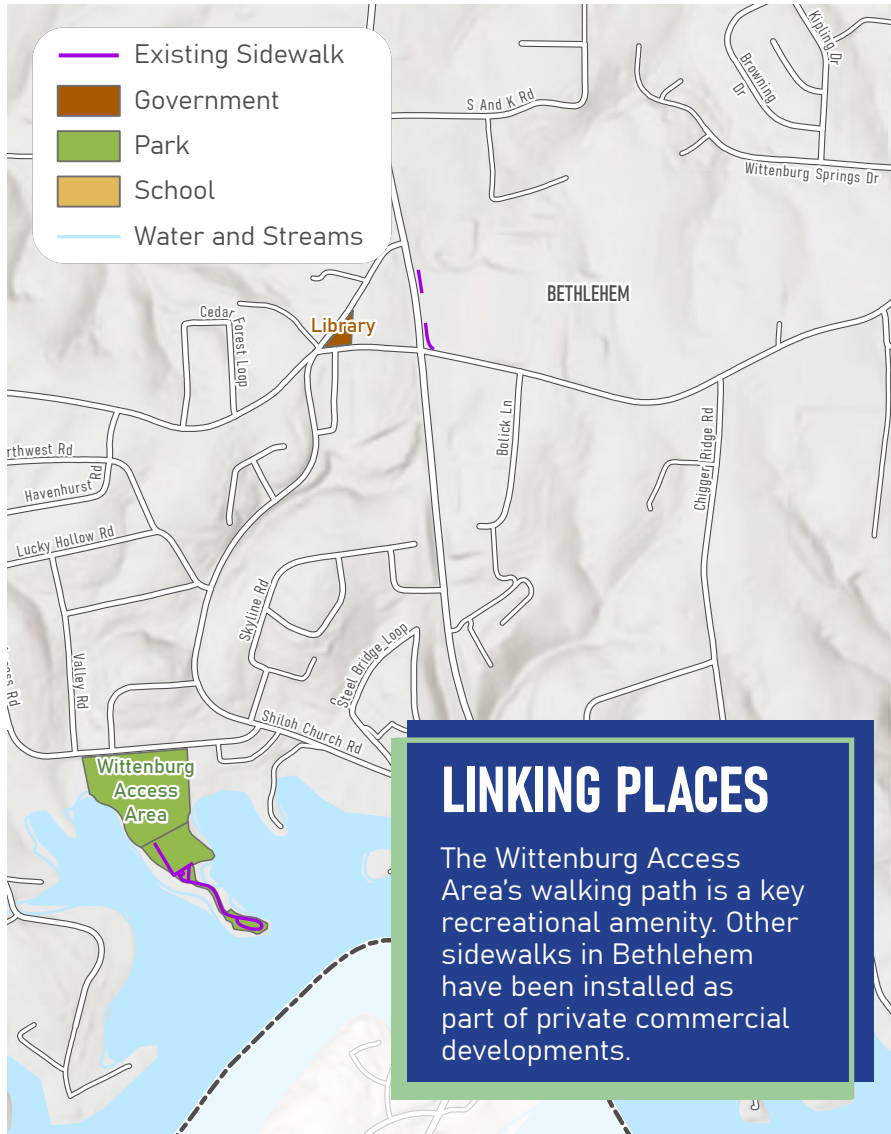


- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

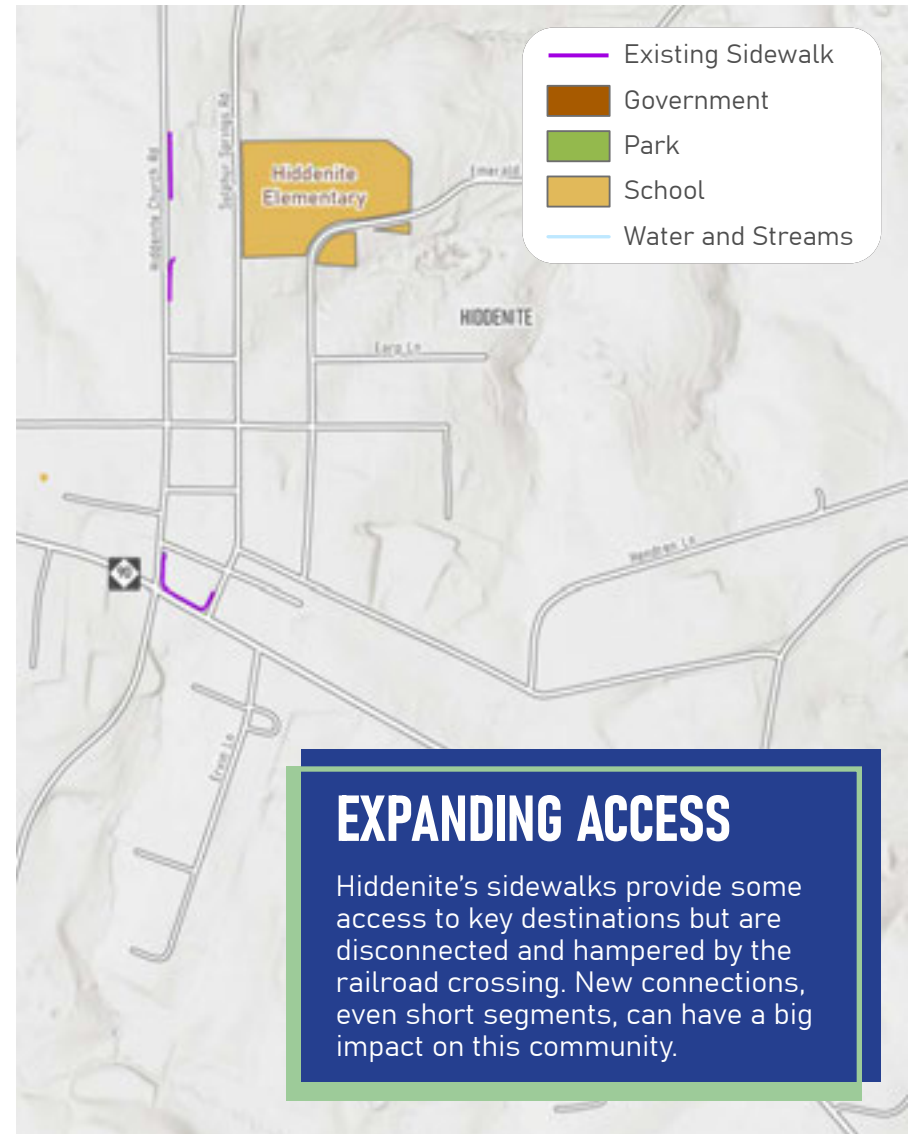
STRENGTHENING THE CENTER

Taylorsville's existing sidewalks provide a strong starting point. By filling key gaps and extending the network, the town can become a safer, more connected hub for walking and biking, setting the stage for broader countywide improvements.

Map 11. Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure (Bethlehem)



Map 12. Existing Pedestrian Infrastructure (Hiddenite)



BICYCLING CONDITIONS

Alexander County currently lacks dedicated bicycle infrastructure such as bike lanes, paved shoulders, or off-street multi-use trails. As a result, nearly all bicycling occurs on rural roads shared with motor vehicles. These roads often have narrow lanes, no shoulders, and limited visibility, making them uncomfortable and potentially hazardous, even for experienced cyclists.

High vehicle speeds on state-maintained roads and the absence of pavement markings, signage, or bike parking further discourage cycling as a practical transportation option. Without clear cues or designated space, the system does not expect or accommodate cyclists, leaving people riding bicycles to navigate roads designed exclusively for cars.

Despite these barriers, recreational bicycling is growing. North Carolina Bicycle Route 2 (Mountains-to-Sea) runs through Taylorsville, connecting the town to a statewide network that spans over 700 miles from Murphy to Manteo. This scenic corridor brings visibility to long-distance cycling and introduces potential for local tourism. Residents and visitors also use low-volume rural roads, particularly along NC Bike Route 2, for weekend rides; and there is increasing interest in mountain biking near Rocky Face Mountain and Wittenburg Access Area.

These recreational activities are an encouraging sign of interest, but they do not replace the need for safe, on-road or off-street infrastructure that supports everyday biking for commuting, errands, or school trips. With targeted investments, bicycling in Alexander County could become a safer, healthier, and more affordable transportation option, especially for short- to medium-distance travel within community centers.

WHAT'S A COMPLETE STREET?

A complete street safely accommodates everyone, whether you're walking, biking, driving, riding a Greenway Transit bus, or using a mobility device. In rural areas, this might mean paved shoulders or sidepaths instead of curbs and sidewalks; but the goal is the same: safety and access for all.



Image 16. Bethlehem Elementary School



Our schools are not designed with walking or bicycling in mind. Multiple driveways and expansive parking dominate the landscape, while sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways are nowhere to be found.

GREENWAYS, TRAILS, AND PARKS

Alexander County is home to a growing network of parks and natural areas that support walking, hiking, and outdoor recreation. These assets offer a strong foundation for expanding safe, off-street walking and biking opportunities across the county.

Key destinations include:

- **Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area**, a regional attraction featuring approximately six miles of hiking trails, scenic overlooks, climbing areas, and picnic shelters.
- **Wittenburg Access Area**, with a paved one-mile Heron Point Trail, lake access, and waterfront walking paths.
- **Matheson Park** and the **Alexander County Courthouse Park**, both centrally located in Taylorsville and offering accessible walking loops and family-friendly amenities.

Recent improvements have enhanced several of these sites. Wittenburg Access Area now includes paved, ADA-accessible walkways that improve usability for all ages and abilities. Bethlehem Park has also seen significant upgrades, including new ADA-compliant paths, resurfaced courts, improved restrooms and concessions, lighting, and a modernized playground.

Despite these improvements, the overall greenway and trail system remains fragmented. While many parks feature internal loops or nature trails, such as the walking track at the YMCA or the shaded trail at Matheson Park, there are few safe, off-street connections between parks, neighborhoods, schools, and town centers. Many residents must drive to access a park or trail, which limits opportunities for spontaneous walking or biking.

SPOTLIGHT: ROCKY FACE PARK

Featuring approximately 6 miles of hiking trails, ADA-accessible walking loops, picnic shelters, and climbing routes, Rocky Face is an important resource already used for active recreation countywide.



Image Source: Alexander County

Image 17. Rocky Face Mountain Recreational Area

“ I would love to have bike trails so that I could ride safely. ” - Survey Respondent

LOCAL PARKS + RECREATION AMENITIES

Matheson Park: Located just outside downtown Taylorsville, this park includes a 2,000-foot walking trail, picnic areas, and playgrounds.

Courthouse Park: This park offers a paved walking loop, splash pad, play areas, and an outdoor stage, all accessible on foot or by bike in the heart of Taylorsville.

Dusty Ridge Park (Wittenburg): This park features a 1-mile natural trail, multi-use fields, and access to boating and fishing.

East Alexander Park (Hiddenite): This park offers a 1/4-mile paved walking loop, ball fields, and a soccer field.

Bethlehem Park (Bethlehem): This park offers tennis and pickleball courts, ball fields, and a playground. Upgrades were completed to improve ADA access and walkways.

Rocky Face Park: This park is known for 6 miles of hiking trails, rock climbing routes, and natural playground.

Wittenburg Access Area: This park is home to a nature trail, seasonal swim beach, and boat access on Lake Hickory.



Community input reflects strong demand for a more connected system of greenways and trails that link everyday destinations rather than just looping within individual parks. Residents want:

- Safe, family-friendly trails suitable for walking and biking
- Improved signage and wayfinding to help navigate between destinations
- Infrastructure that supports all users, including those with disabilities or limited mobility

With its scenic landscapes and community support, Alexander County has the potential to build a countywide greenway and trail network that may promote recreation, tourism, transportation, and long-term community well-being.

Image 18. Path at the Wittenburg Access Area



Parks can serve as anchors for expanded trail and greenway connections—linking neighborhoods, schools, and destinations through safe, off-street routes.

Image Source: Brandon Brumley

TRANSIT

Greenway Public Transportation, operated by the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA), serves Alexander County as well as Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties. While transit ridership is relatively low, Greenway provides an essential service for residents without access to a personal vehicle, particularly seniors, individuals with disabilities, and lower-income households.

Transit options include the Taylorsville Flex Route, a fare-free weekday service connecting key destinations such as shopping centers, healthcare facilities, government buildings, and schools. Riders may board at designated stops or flag the bus along the route, and can request deviations for curb-to-curb service up to 3/4-mile from the route. All buses are equipped with front-mounted bike racks, allowing riders to combine biking and transit.

In addition, demand-response (Dial-a-Ride) service is available countywide, offering door-to-door transportation by reservation. This is an especially valuable option in rural areas where fixed-route service is limited or infeasible.

Despite this coverage, Greenway's effectiveness is hindered by limited operating hours and a lack of supporting infrastructure such as bus shelters, benches, or sidewalks near major stops. Many transit locations are along high-speed roads without shoulders, crosswalks, or safe pedestrian access, making it difficult and in some cases dangerous to reach transit on foot, particularly for those with mobility challenges.

As part of a broader multimodal strategy, improvements to the sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle infrastructure in Taylorsville would not only expand mobility options for transit-dependent populations but also help make public transportation a more attractive, viable choice for a broader cross-section of the community.

Image 19. A Greenway Bus Rider



Image Source: Lisa Price (The Paper)

Fare-free public transit supports equitable mobility by reducing financial barriers to essential travel. Riders benefit from improved access to goods, services, and opportunities—strengthening community resilience and reducing dependence on personal vehicles.

MAKING TRANSIT MORE ACCESSIBLE

To improve the utility and accessibility of transit across the county, there is potential for modest yet impactful improvements, such as the following:

- Enhancing sidewalk infrastructure around bus stops
- Developing shared-use paths and greenways that connect neighborhoods directly to transit corridors
- Installing shelters, signage, and benches to improve comfort and visibility

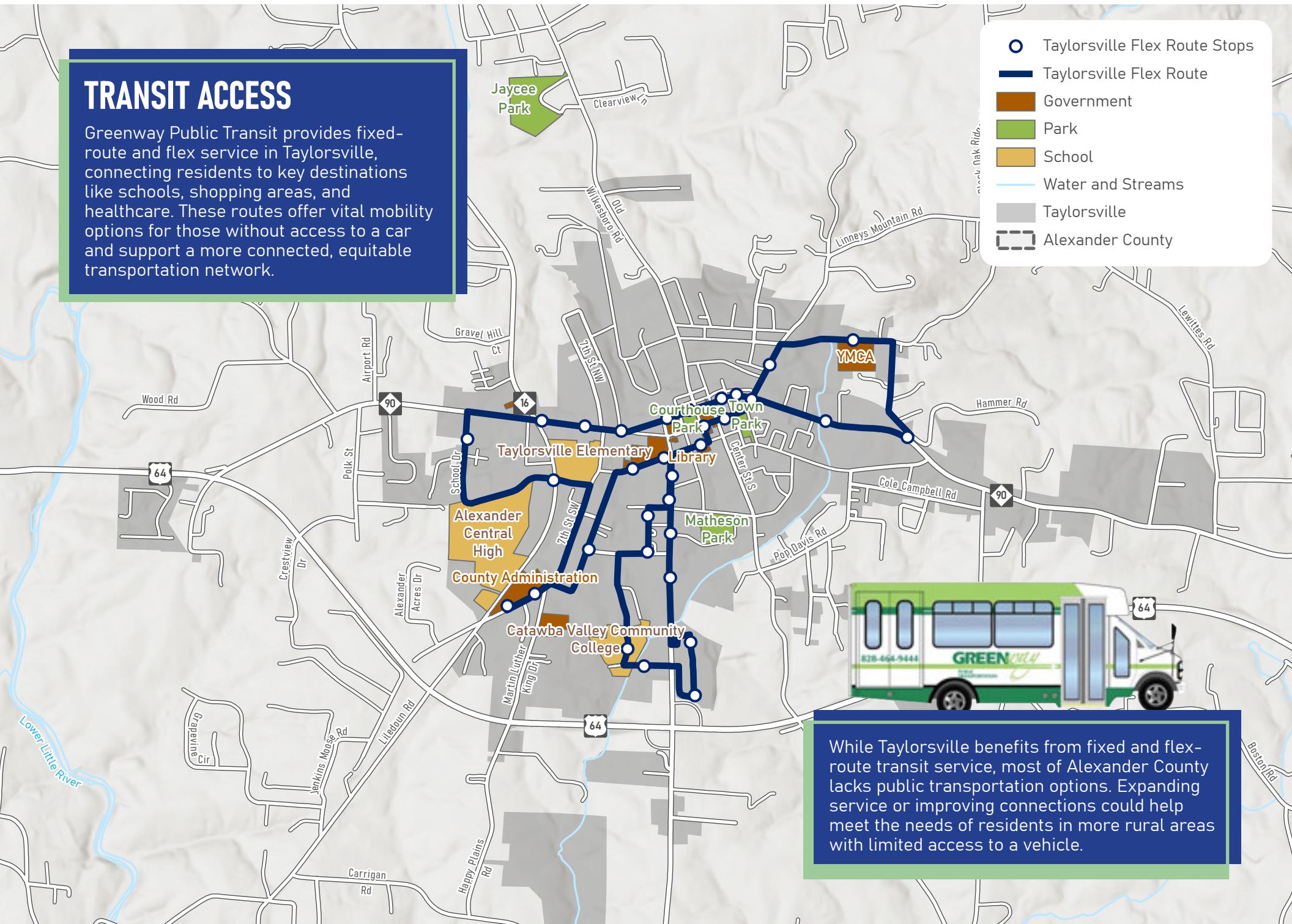
Map 13. Greenway Transit Route + Stops



TRANSIT ACCESS

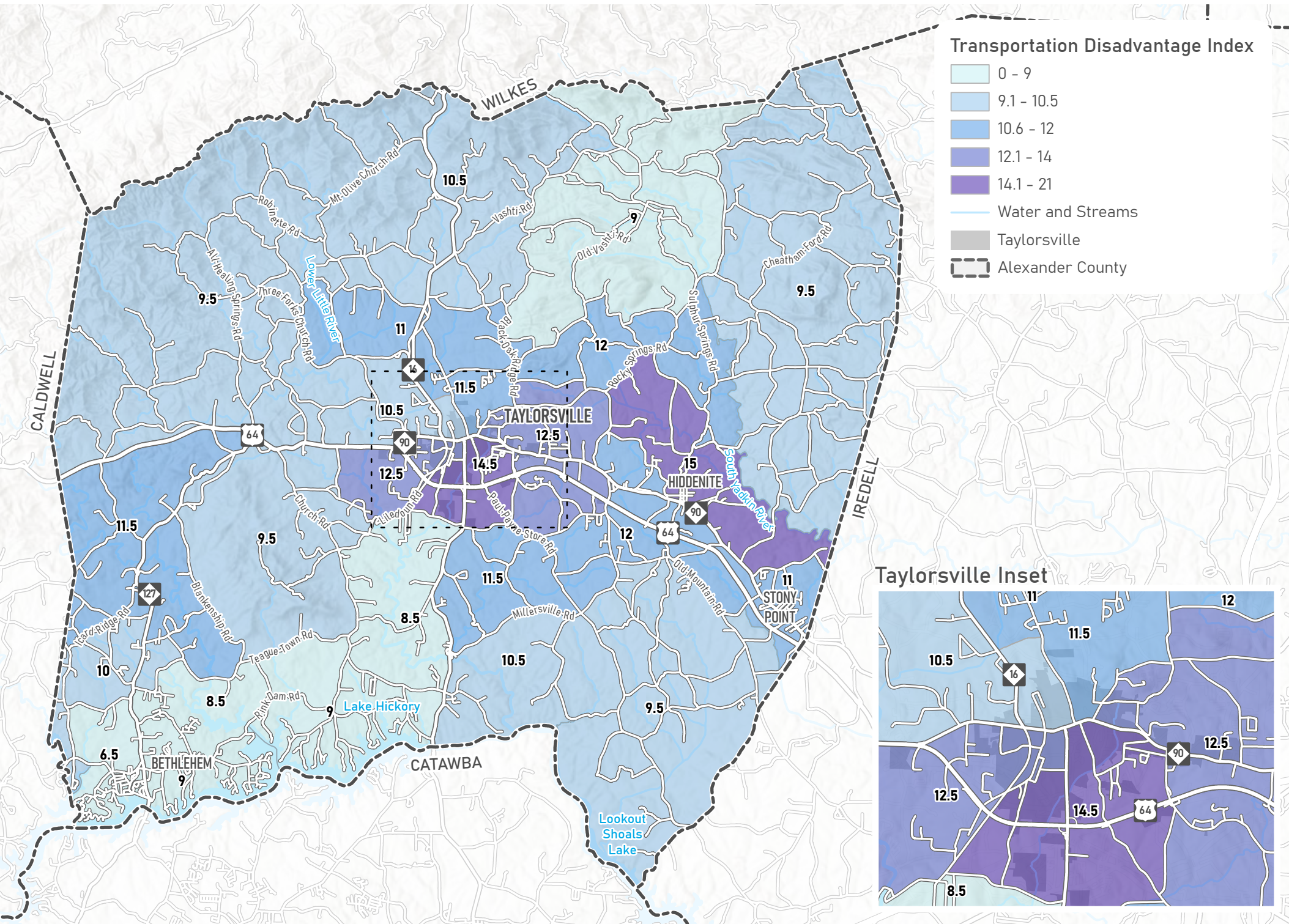
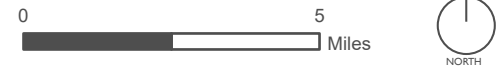
Greenway Public Transit provides fixed-route and flex service in Taylorsville, connecting residents to key destinations like schools, shopping areas, and healthcare. These routes offer vital mobility options for those without access to a car and support a more connected, equitable transportation network.

- Taylorsville Flex Route Stops
- Taylorsville Flex Route
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County



While Taylorsville benefits from fixed and flex-route transit service, most of Alexander County lacks public transportation options. Expanding service or improving connections could help meet the needs of residents in more rural areas with limited access to a vehicle.

Map 14. Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI)



TRANSPORTATION ACCESS + EQUITY

For some residents, walking, biking, or using transit is not just a choice — it's a necessity. Older adults who no longer drive, households without reliable vehicle access, and kids traveling to school all depend on safe, walkable routes and accessible transit to reach essential destinations. Unfortunately, these same groups are often the most impacted by inadequate infrastructure.

In Alexander County, many lower-income or rural neighborhoods are disconnected from key destinations such as schools, grocery stores, clinics, and churches. Without sidewalks, bike facilities, or transit connections, residents may face barriers to opportunity, mobility, and independence.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's Transportation Disadvantage Index (TDI) helps identify communities where residents may experience compounded barriers to mobility. The TDI incorporates indicators such as zero-vehicle households, poverty level, age (youth and seniors), mobility impairments, and racial/ethnic minority status to assess relative transportation disadvantage. These data-driven insights support more equitable planning and investment decisions by highlighting areas where infrastructure gaps may disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Designing for accessibility is a critical component of equitable transportation planning. Infrastructure improvements should prioritize universal design principles to ensure that sidewalks, crossings, and transit stops include curb ramps, tactile indicators, and appropriate grades and widths. These features not only support compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but also enhance safety and usability for all travelers, including those with mobility challenges, parents with strollers, and older adults. By embedding accessibility into every project, communities can create a more inclusive transportation network that serves everyone, regardless of age or ability.

SUMMARY OF KEY NEEDS

Improving walking and biking in Alexander County will require coordinated investments in infrastructure, safety, and accessibility. Priority needs include:



COMPLETE SIDEWALK NETWORKS

Fill gaps near schools, neighborhoods, parks, and civic buildings—especially in Taylorsville, Bethlehem, and Hiddenite.



RURAL ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Widen shoulders, calm traffic where feasible, and add signage or markings to support safer rural bicycling.



EXPANDED TRAILS + GREENWAYS

Develop continuous, multi-use paths linking communities and key destinations, with clear signage and accessible design.



CROSSING ENHANCEMENTS

Install marked, visible, and protected crossings at high-traffic intersections or near key generators like schools and libraries.



SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESS

Make it easier and safer for people to walk to transit stops by adding sidewalks, safe crossings, and amenities like shelters and benches.

PROGRAMS, EVENTS + COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

A culture of outdoor activity is growing in Alexander County, anchored by county parks, a popular hiking venue, and community partners like the YMCA. While the county’s programming is not yet extensive, existing efforts offer a base to build on, especially for family friendly events at existing facilities.

- **Y Ride (County promoted route/event):** The County publishes a detailed “Y Ride” full course route map, a 63.8 mile road ride using scenic county roads. While not a recurring event, this is a ready platform for an annual community ride or charity event with safety escorts, rest stops, and short route options.
- **YMCA programming:** The Alexander County Family YMCA in Taylorsville operates youth programming, group exercise, an outdoor track, and community wellness initiatives. The branch is a natural partner for family bike skills days, walking clubs, and “first time rider” clinics in the parking lot or track.
- **County parks as activation sites:** County facilities like Courthouse Park (splash pad, stage, lawn), Dusty Ridge Park (1 mile trail), East Alexander Park (paved quarter-mile walking track), and Rocky Face Park (6 miles of hiking, climbing) provide ready venues for pop up walks, bike skills rodeos, and other events.
- **Walk/Bike to School opportunities:** Alexander County Schools do not widely publicize regular Walk/Bike to School events, but statewide “Walk to School Day” and “Bike to School Day” are promoted by NCDOT Safe Routes to School, with toolkits and non-infrastructure support that local schools can adopt quickly. These programs could be piloted at Taylorsville Elementary and rotated among other schools.

Image 20. East Alexander Park Walking Path



Image Source: Scott Densmore

Facilities like this paved path loop at East Alexander Park could be used for walking and bicycling events and could tie into future network additions like the proposed nearby trail along the rail line.

PROGRAMMING IDEA STARTERS

1. Relaunch the Y Ride as a spring community ride with 5–15–30–60 mile options
2. Walk to School Day in October and Bike to School Day in May with the Safe Routes to School toolkit
3. Quarterly Bike Skills Rodeos at Courthouse Park or school lots
4. A “Parks Passport” walking challenge using the ¼ mile track at East Alexander Park and the 1 mile Dusty Ridge loop

POLICIES THAT SHAPE WALKING + BIKING

Private development and roadway projects play an important role in shaping everyday walking and biking conditions in Alexander County. Most new development and subdivisions are governed by the Alexander County Land Development Code (LDC), which consolidates zoning and subdivision standards, including roadway design and access requirements. The Town of Taylorsville contracts with Alexander County for zoning permits and enforcement. The Town has also adopted county zoning ordinances, including street and sidewalk provisions. As a result, most private development reviews flow through Alexander County Planning and Development, with coordination from the Town for projects located within the corporate limits.

Together, these county and town regulations are the primary tools for implementing plan recommendations that rely on private development or routine roadway work. They influence when and where sidewalks are installed, how streets are designed, whether bicycle parking is provided at new destinations, and how accessibility improvements such as curb ramps are incorporated.

Several opportunities exist to build on the current policy framework. Sidewalk requirements could be clarified or expanded within subdivision standards in growth areas, particularly near schools, parks, commercial centers, and other community destinations. Simple bicycle parking expectations for new commercial or multifamily development could help support short walking and biking trips for daily needs.

Because zoning administration is shared between the County and the Town, early coordination is critical. Strengthening alignment between these regulations and the goals of *Walk & Bike Alexander County* can help ensure that incremental development contributes to a safer and more connected multimodal network.

ALEXANDER COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Primary tool: Alexander County Land Development Code, which governs zoning and subdivision standards countywide.

Key opportunity: Use subdivision and roadway standards to support sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle parking in growth areas.

Administration: Alexander County Planning and Development oversees permits, enforcement, and code updates.

TOWN OF TAYLORSVILLE REGULATIONS

Zoning administration: Zoning permits and enforcement are handled by Alexander County under contract.

Local standards: Town subdivision regulations and street and sidewalk provisions guide local design.

Implementation role: Town standards support coordination on sidewalk construction and ADA curb ramp upgrades during NCDOT resurfacing.

Ultimately, zoning and subdivision regulations are some of the most effective tools for turning planning recommendations into built improvements. By aligning the County's Land Development Code, the Town of Taylorsville's subdivision standards, capital planning efforts, and ongoing roadway maintenance programs, Alexander County can make steady, incremental progress toward a safer and more connected walking and biking network as growth and reinvestment occur.

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Understanding the existing policy and planning landscape ensures that *Walk & Bike Alexander County* builds on local, regional, and state goals. Reviewing adopted and ongoing plans helps identify shared themes, address gaps, align with funding priorities, and avoid duplication. Many of these plans offer valuable guidance related to multimodal transportation, land use, recreation, public health, and infrastructure investment. Tying this plan’s recommendations to those established policies strengthens funding competitiveness, supports implementation, and helps build local consensus.

Across recent planning efforts, a clear vision emerges: improve connectivity, safety, and quality of life through expanded parks, stronger multimodal access, and transportation upgrades. Countywide goals emphasize creating a connected sidewalk and greenway network, expanding pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and integrating active transportation into broader land use planning.

Each community brings its own priorities. Bethlehem highlights multi-use paths and sidewalks along NC 127 and nearby roads such as Shiloh Church Road and Hubbard Road to form walkable loops. Taylorsville focuses on stronger sidewalk and bike links to parks like Matheson Park and Courthouse Park, with an emphasis on ADA compliance and neighborhood connectivity. The Comprehensive Plan unites these ideas by calling for a dedicated countywide bicycle and pedestrian plan, endorsing Complete Streets principles, and promoting development patterns that improve long-term safety, access, and livability.

Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan (2019, updated in 2025)

This is a regional bicycle planning framework for Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties. The plan promotes safety, connectivity to destinations, and integration with health and economic development goals. It also recommends that municipalities develop their own bicycle plans to complement regional efforts.

- Recommends regional bike route links, including NC-2 (Mountains-to-Sea).
 - 9.84 miles of 4-foot shoulders along US 64 (between Taylorsville and the county line).
 - 6.95 miles of 4-foot shoulders along Springs Road and NC 16.
- Promotes bike signage, wayfinding, and greenway development.
- Supports access to schools, parks, and employment centers.
- Connects active transportation to public health and tourism goals.

The plan outlines specific goals and policies to promote safe and efficient bicycling.

1. **Safety and Engineering** - Improve bicycle safety and promote bicycle-friendly amenities.
2. **Transportation** - Connect key bike routes to communities and ensure access to destinations.
3. **Recreation** - Encourage diverse bicycle use through events and trail promotion.
4. **Health and Education** - Highlight health benefits of cycling and promote physical activity.
5. **Economic Vitality** - Emphasize the economic benefits of being a bike-friendly community.

“ I would absolutely love a greenway in our county! ”
 - Survey Respondent

Alexander County 2045 Comprehensive Plan (2024)

A long-range vision document emphasizing multimodal connectivity, parks and recreation, and coordinated land use, this plan promotes sidewalk infill, ADA access, and trail development throughout the county.

- Makes countywide sidewalk infill and expansion a top priority.
- Promotes bike lanes, greenways, and pedestrian trails.
- Highlights the importance of providing ADA accessibility.
- Encourages integrated planning with NCDOT and regional partners.
- Supports mixed-use hubs, recreation, and tourism as growth strategies.

Alexander County Land Development Code (2024)

The County’s Land Development Code establishes requirements for sidewalks, internal trails, and pedestrian connections in new developments. The code encourages multimodal design and outlines developer responsibilities for maintenance and design standards.

- Requires interior pedestrian infrastructure for large subdivisions (generally 100 units or more), such as sidewalks or internal trails connecting homes to common areas, but does not require exterior sidewalks unless the development is adjacent to or near an existing sidewalk network. All new commercial and industrial developments are required to provide sidewalks.; lacks further strategies for retrofits.
- Expects bike facilities along collector streets in Planned Development Districts but lacks detailed design standards.
- Encourages trail connections between homes and common areas.
- Connectivity and maintenance guidelines could be strengthened.

Town of Taylorsville Land Use Plan (2025)

This plan guides growth and infrastructure decisions in Taylorsville, with a strong focus on multimodal access, connectivity between destinations, and high-quality public spaces. It includes policies for sidewalk gaps, park access, and ADA compliance.

- Supports NC Complete Streets and multimodal design.
- Emphasizes sidewalk and bike path construction on key corridors.
- Prioritizes connectivity between parks, schools, and neighborhoods.
- Includes goals for ADA facilities, beautification, and mixed-use development.
- Encourages grant funding for infrastructure and placemaking.

ALEXANDER COUNTY 2045 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TRANSPORTATION GOALS



GOAL 1

Improve aesthetics, function, and capacity of community gateways and corridors.



GOAL 2

Enhance the county’s infrastructure to support active transportation, such as walking and biking.



GOAL 3

Enhance public transportation options in appropriate areas of Alexander County.



GOAL 4

Make strategic investments and secure NCDOT funding for known transportation issues throughout the county.

Image 21. Conceptual Rendering of NC 127 + Rink Dam Road Intersection (Bethlehem Community Plan)



Image Source: Bethlehem Community Plan

This conceptual rendering from the Bethlehem Community Plan shows a reimagined intersection of NC 127 and Rink Dam Road, with buffered sidewalks, a multi-use sidepath along NC 127, and crosswalks. This plan highlights an opportunity for the community to work with NCDOT on proposed roadway improvements in this area, making Bethlehem much more walkable and bike-friendly.

Bethlehem Community Plan (2019)

This plan presents a community-driven vision for walkability, safety, and recreation. It proposes sidewalk and multi-use path development, safer intersections, and new recreational amenities to support active lifestyles.

- Prioritizes NC 127 corridor improvements and trail linkages.
- Proposes multi-use paths on Hubbard, Shiloh Church, and Richey Roads.
- Supports ADA upgrades and safer pedestrian crossings.
- Recommends coordination with county recreation planning and grant pursuit.

Alexander County Parks Plan (2020)

This parks plan outlines phased trail, greenway, and bike infrastructure improvements across the county. It highlights recreation access, tourism potential, and connectivity between parks and neighborhoods.

- Proposes bike lanes and trails on NC 127, Shiloh Church Road, Richey Road, and more.
- Recommends sidewalk loops and greenway corridors linked to sewer easements.
- Supports expanded blueway access and trailheads.
- Identifies park-to-park and park-to-community connections.

Greater Hickory MPO 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (updated 2024)

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a regional transportation vision focused on safety, equity, growth, and multimodal connectivity. The MTP highlights the need for active transportation investments across the four-county region, including Alexander.

- Identifies urgent sidewalk and bike lane needs, especially in rural areas.
- Emphasizes ADA compliance and underserved community access.
- Supports regional greenways, “Bikes on Buses,” and emerging micromobility.
- Encourages project selection based on safety, equity, and connectivity.

NC Great Trails State Plan (2022)

The Great Trails State Plan is a statewide blueprint for creating a connected trail network across North Carolina, integrating greenways, blueways, and long-distance bicycle routes, including NC Bike Route 2, which passes through Alexander County.

- Recognizes NC Bike Route 2 as a key long-distance corridor through the county.
- Supports trail development that aligns with state and regional networks.
- Promotes greenway expansions that link to blueways and natural assets.
- Encourages multimodal coordination and local-state collaboration.

A VISIONARY PLAN FOR NC

Decades in the making, through hundreds of local plans and initiatives, the Great Trails State plan, for the first time in the state's history, identifies a proposed network of trails that would accomplish the following :



- **Connect all 100 counties throughout the state.**
- **Create lasting investments in rural and urban areas.**
- **Provide a return on investment of \$1.72 annually, for every \$1 of initial trail construction, from local businesses' sales revenue, sales tax revenue, and health- and transportation-related benefits.**
- **Provide opportunities for healthy, active transportation (responding to a surge in trail use during the COVID-19 pandemic).**
- **Provide infrastructure to support North Carolina's \$28 billion outdoor recreation industry; and** · **Improve health, safety, mobility, recreation, environment, and economic development, benefiting North Carolinians for generations.**

NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (2024–2033)

The STIP identifies funded transportation projects statewide, including sidewalk, multi-use path, and transit-related investments in Alexander County. Projects are evaluated using criteria such as safety, mobility, and equity.

- Includes STIP R-3603A (NC 127) with sidewalk/multi-use path improvements.
- Supports integration of bike/pedestrian facilities in major road projects.
- Encourages project readiness and local match planning.

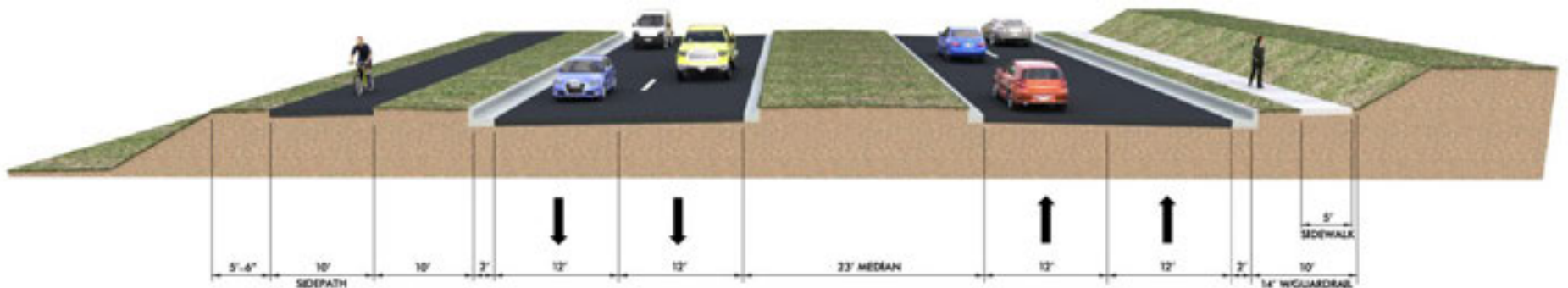
Aligning *Walk & Bike Alexander County* priorities with the STIP can improve grant competitiveness.

Image 22. NCDOT STIP Project R-3603A (NC 127 Improvements) Design in Bethlehem

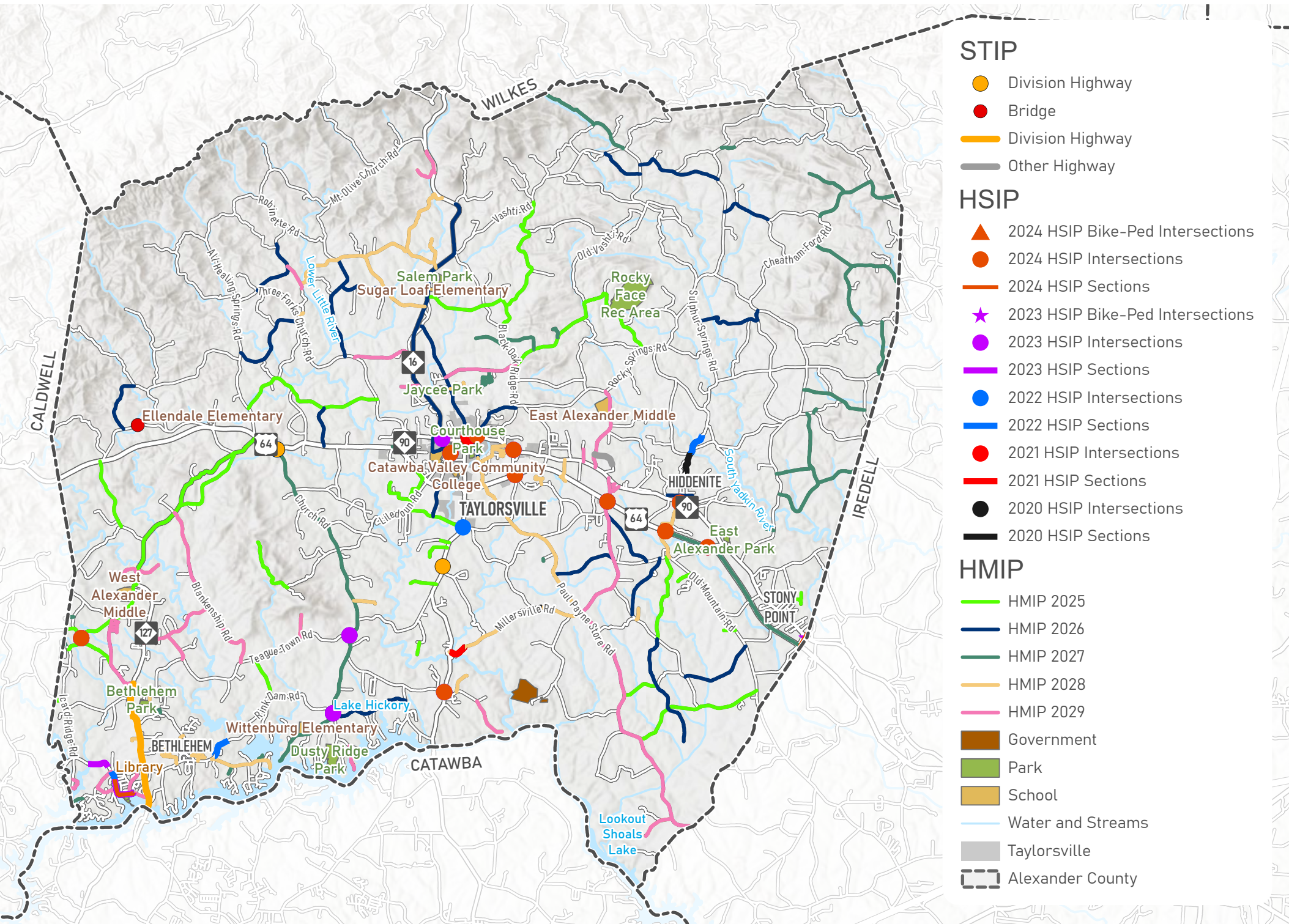
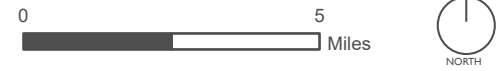


The conceptual cross-section for STIP Project R-3603A illustrates a context-sensitive design approach that balances regional mobility with local access. Proposed improvements include widened travel lanes, a planted median, and accommodations for pedestrians and cyclists. New pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, including a multi-use sidepath on the west side and a sidewalk on the east, enhances safety and comfort for people walking to nearby destinations like parks.

Image 23. NCDOT STIP Project R-3603A (NC 127 Improvements) Cross-Section



Map 15. Programmed Projects (HMIP, HSIP, STIP)



STIP

- Division Highway
- Bridge
- Division Highway
- Other Highway

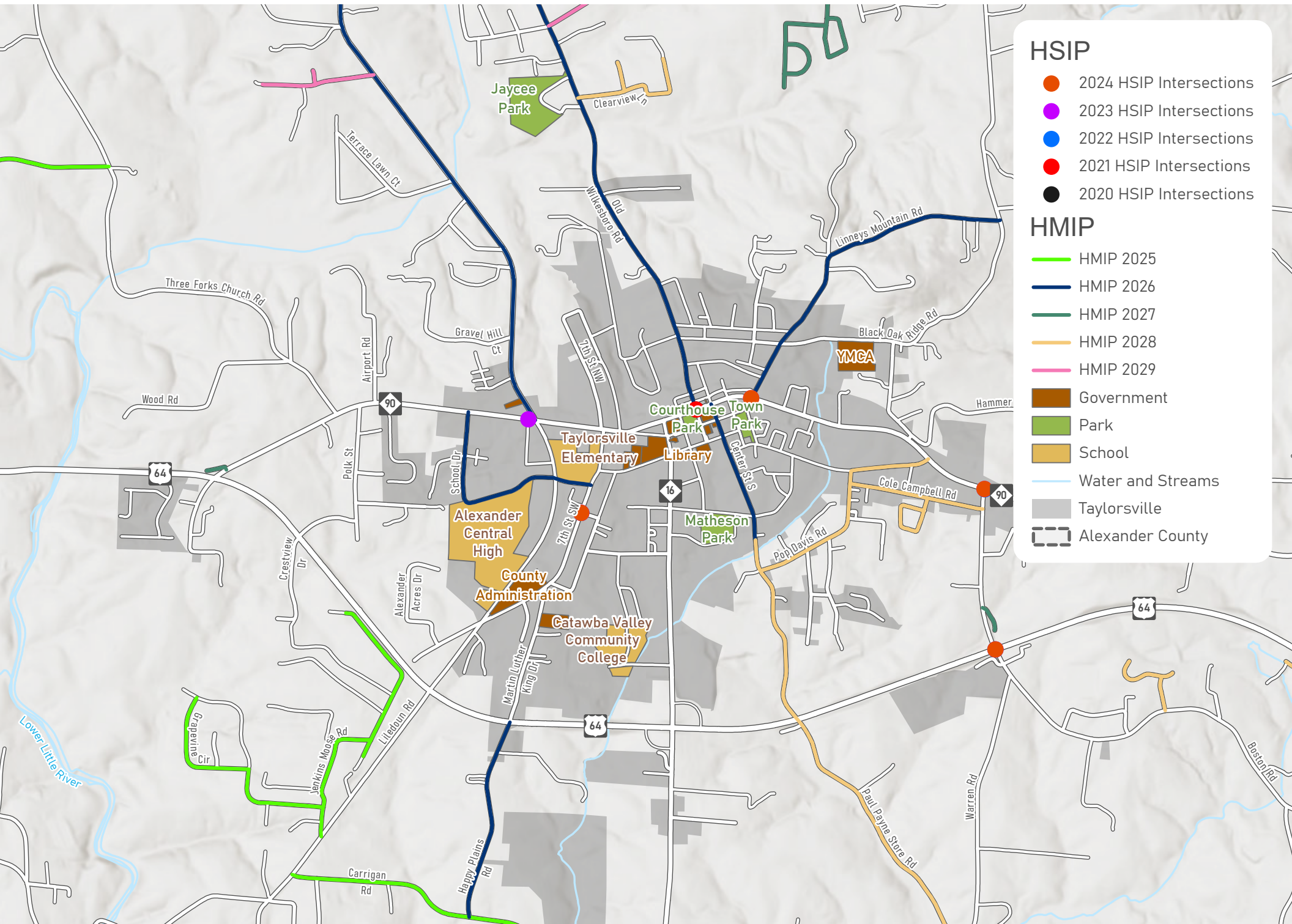
HSIP

- ▲ 2024 HSIP Bike-Ped Intersections
- 2024 HSIP Intersections
- 2024 HSIP Sections
- ★ 2023 HSIP Bike-Ped Intersections
- 2023 HSIP Intersections
- 2023 HSIP Sections
- 2022 HSIP Intersections
- 2022 HSIP Sections
- 2021 HSIP Intersections
- 2021 HSIP Sections
- 2020 HSIP Intersections
- 2020 HSIP Sections

HMIP

- HMIP 2025
- HMIP 2026
- HMIP 2027
- HMIP 2028
- HMIP 2029
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

Map 16. Programmed Projects (HMIP, HSIP) (Taylorsville)



HSIP

- 2024 HSIP Intersections (Orange dot)
- 2023 HSIP Intersections (Purple dot)
- 2022 HSIP Intersections (Blue dot)
- 2021 HSIP Intersections (Red dot)
- 2020 HSIP Intersections (Black dot)

HMIP

- HMIP 2025 (Light green line)
- HMIP 2026 (Dark blue line)
- HMIP 2027 (Green line)
- HMIP 2028 (Orange line)
- HMIP 2029 (Pink line)

Landmarks and Features

- Government (Brown rectangle)
- Park (Green rectangle)
- School (Yellow rectangle)
- Water and Streams (Blue line)
- Taylorsville (Grey area)
- Alexander County (Dashed black line)

NCDOT Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) (2025-2029)

The Highway Maintenance Improvement Program (HMIP) identifies planned roadway resurfacing and maintenance projects across North Carolina's state-maintained roadway network. While not a planning document in the traditional sense, the HMIP presents a critical opportunity to implement low-cost bicycle and pedestrian improvements during routine resurfacing.

These improvements may include shoulder widening, bikeable edge striping, upgraded crossings, and curb ramp upgrades, which are required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when roadways are resurfaced. Alexander County and its partners can coordinate with NCDOT Division 12 to review upcoming HMIP projects and advocate for enhancements that align with Walk & Bike Alexander County recommendations.

Leveraging resurfacing schedules is a cost-effective way to advance multimodal goals, improve accessibility for people of all ages and abilities, and address bicycle and pedestrian needs without requiring major capital projects. The following roadways are scheduled for resurfacing in the near future:

- NC 127, between Little River and Ellendale (2025)
- NC 16, north of Taylorsville (2026)
- Linneys Mountain Road (2026)
- Old Wilkesboro Road (2026)
- Rink Dam Road, east of Church Road (2026)
- Church Road (2027)
- US 64, east of Hiddenite (2027)
- Millersville Road (2028)
- River Hills Court (2028)
- White Plains Road (2029)
- Shiloh Church Road (2029)
- Cemetery Loop (2029)

These documents demonstrate a commitment to safer, more connected, and health-conscious community design. They promote forward-thinking, inclusive strategies that integrate active transportation with land use, public health, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Across plans, there is consistent support for strategic investments in sidewalks, greenways, bike lanes, and transit infrastructure, particularly near schools, parks, downtown areas, and underserved neighborhoods.

The Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code work together to encourage sidewalk and bike lane requirements in new developments, while local land use plans identify connectivity gaps, ADA access needs, and opportunities for public-private partnerships to enhance the pedestrian realm. Recreational planning efforts further reinforce these goals by proposing greenways and bicycle networks that link neighborhoods with natural spaces and community amenities.

LOOKING AHEAD

The findings in this chapter lay the groundwork for the recommendations outlined in this plan. With targeted investments, Alexander County can create a more inclusive, healthy, and connected transportation system that serves all residents regardless of where they live, how they travel, or the challenges they face. By aligning land use with multimodal planning and prioritizing accessible infrastructure, the county is preparing for a future that balances mobility, livability, and rural character.

These goals go beyond physical design; they aim to strengthen the county's social and environmental fabric, attract new residents and businesses, and enrich daily life. Through thoughtful policy updates, grant-seeking efforts, and collaborative implementation, *Walk & Bike Alexander County* advances a shared vision where walking, biking, and recreation are not afterthoughts but essential elements of a vibrant and resilient community.



Image Source: McAdams

CHAPTER 3

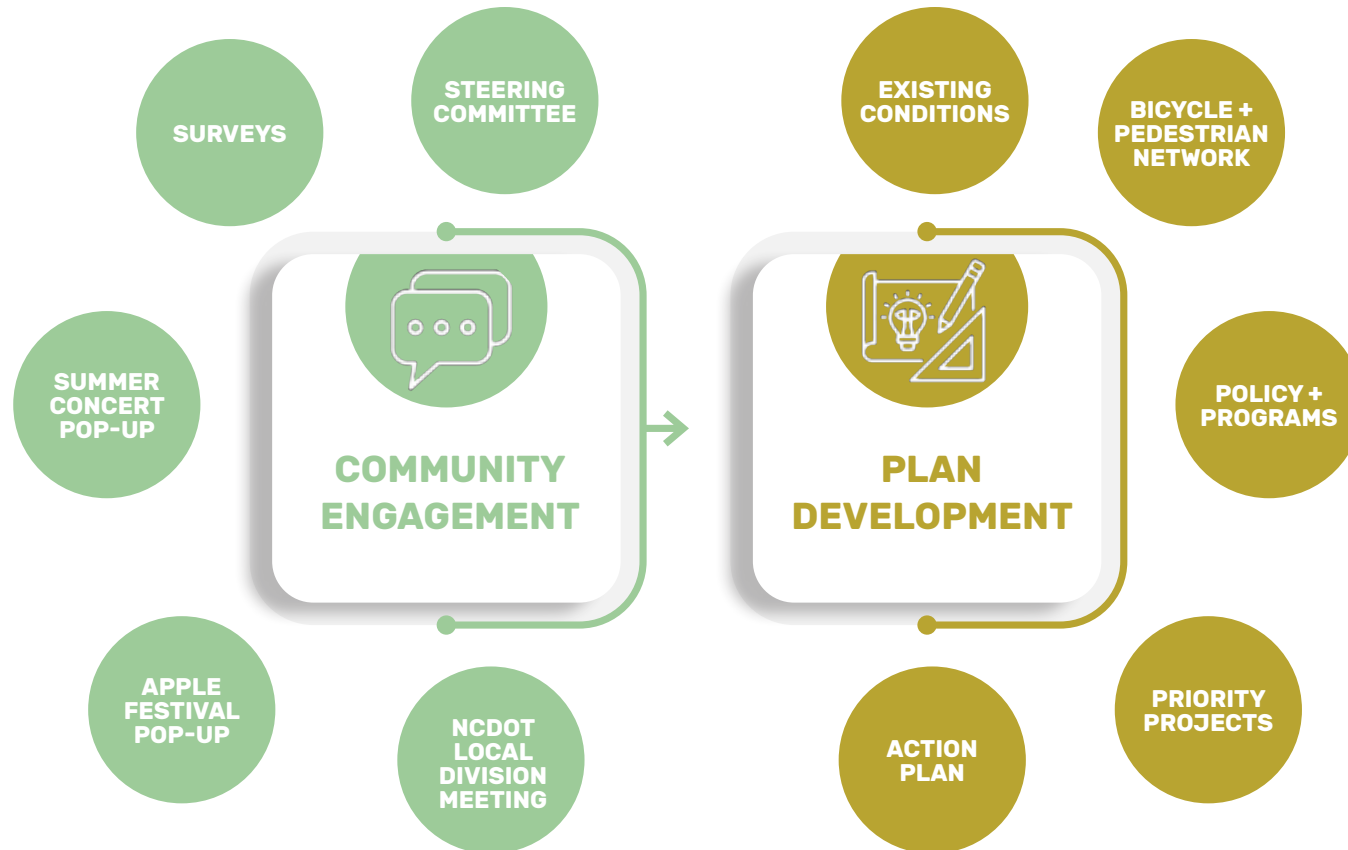
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

LISTENING, LEARNING, AND PLANNING TOGETHER

The *Walk & Bike Alexander County* planning process was rooted in community engagement throughout 2025. Residents played a central role in shaping the plan’s vision, identifying local needs, and prioritizing strategies. Input was gathered through online surveys, in-person events, targeted outreach, and direct coordination with local leaders. These efforts ensured that the recommended network, programs, and policies reflect local values and priorities.

As the plan evolved, community feedback guided every major decision, from identifying priority corridors to shaping design concepts for top-scoring projects. Local voices helped refine recommendations and ensure that proposed improvements are practical, equitable, and aligned with long-term goals. By listening closely and working together, the planning team and residents built a roadmap that reflects both current needs and a shared vision for a more walkable, bike-friendly Alexander County.

Figure 5. Plan Development Through Community Engagement



STEERING COMMITTEE

A dedicated Steering Committee provided guidance and oversight throughout the planning process. Members represented local government, health and wellness organizations, transportation providers, and community groups. The committee met at key milestones to shape goals, review community feedback, and refine draft recommendations. Members also served as project ambassadors, helping to promote public participation and ensure the plan reflects a diverse range of perspectives.

STEERING COMMITTEE

- **Matt Cooksey**, Habitat for Humanity
- **Marissa Cooper**, Taylorsville Business Owner
- **Glenn Deal**, The Rotary Club of Taylorsville
- **Kaity Graves**, Alexander County Health Department
- **Kristy Hunt**, Alexander County Senior Center
- **Priscilla Jenkins**, The Bridge Community
- **Kaylan Kelley**, Greenway Public Transit
- **Josh Lail**, Alexander County Commissioner
- **Dianne Little**, The Rotary Club of Taylorsville
- **Melanie Millsaps**, Emergency Services
- **Tamara Odom**, Taylorsville Town Council
- **Averi Ritchie**, Greater Hickory MPO
- **Chad Ritchie**, Alexander County Media Coordinator
- **Gary Sain**, Bethlehem Business Owner
- **Paul Sink**, Taylorsville Presbyterian/Rotary Club
- **Alex Starnes**, Alexander County Parks Director
- **Michael Worley**, Alexander County Economic Development

Image 24. Steering Committee Meeting #1



Image Source: McAdams

Steering Committee members collaborate during the project kickoff meeting, sharing ideas and priorities to guide the Walk & Bike Alexander County plan.

Steering Committee Meetings

Meeting #1 – May 27, 2025

Focus: *Project kickoff and goal setting*

- Introduced of project team and committee members.
- Discussed why the plan is needed and its overall purpose.
- Reviewed project overview, including schedule, facility types (bike, pedestrian, greenway), network development approach, prioritization/scoring process, and example cutsheets and content for the final plan document.
- Outlined community engagement strategy, emphasizing the online survey and outreach logistics.
- Identified next steps: public engagement plan, GIS database setup, and existing conditions analysis.
- Closed with brainstorming session on opportunities, challenges, and initial project ideas.

Meeting #2 – September 22, 2025

Focus: *Draft recommendations and prioritization*

- Recapped planning process, project scope, and timeline.
- Shared public engagement summary, including in-person outreach highlights, key survey findings, and community priorities/themes.
- Presented draft network recommendations for pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway projects; gathered feedback.
- Reviewed draft prioritization methodology for evaluating and ranking projects; discussed and sought consensus.
- Outlined next steps: Apple Festival outreach event, project scoring/re-scoring, development of cutsheets for 6–10 top-priority projects (cost estimates, cross-sections, renderings), coordination with NCDOT, and preparation of the draft plan.

Meeting #3 – March 25, 2026

Focus: *Final review and implementation*

- Reviewed full draft plan document.
- Discussed implementation steps, including funding strategies, phasing, and coordination with local/state partners.

Figure 6. Public Engagement Milestones



“ People want to walk and bike. They just need safe, accessible places to do it. ”
 - Survey Respondent

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2025, the project team worked to meet people where they are, both online and in person, creating multiple opportunities for residents to share ideas and shape the plan. Engagement efforts ranged from digital tools such as an interactive survey to hands-on outreach at popular community events, ensuring feedback came from a broad cross-section of the county. These activities helped capture local priorities, uncover barriers to walking and biking, and build momentum for a connected, safe, and accessible transportation network.

ONLINE SURVEY

The online public survey launched immediately after the first steering committee meeting and drew strong participation, shaping early network concepts and revealing key trends:

- **Who Responded:** Most participants live in unincorporated areas (70%) or Taylorsville (21%). Bethlehem was the most frequently mentioned community.
- **Travel Patterns:** Nearly all respondents rely on personal vehicles; walking (30%) and biking (13%) are far less common. Recreational walking is frequent, but walking or biking for errands is rare.
- **Top Barriers:** Lack of sidewalks and bike facilities (77%), poor lighting, unsafe intersections, and narrow roads. Safety concerns were widespread; almost half reported a crash or near-miss in the past three years.
- **Safety Hotspots:** NC 16, NC 127, NC 90 corridors, Rink Dam Rd, and other narrow rural roads.
- **Desired Improvements:** Strong support for greenways (80%), sidewalks (69%), and bike lanes (39%). Residents want better access to parks, schools, and downtown Taylorsville, plus safer crossings and improved lighting.
- **Future Priorities:** Bike lanes and greenways, more sidewalks and crosswalks, and expanded park access ranked highest.

Image 25. Online Survey Promotional Materials



Project outreach in action: a flyer displayed on a local bus and yard signs placed throughout the county encouraged residents to take the online survey and share their ideas for Walk & Bike Alexander County.



355 PARTICIPANTS

1,400+ COMMENTS

Overall, the survey underscored a clear message: residents want safer, more connected options for walking and biking and they're ready to use them if provided.

Image Source: McAdams (L) Greenway Public Transit (R)

Figure 7. Online Survey Comments



IN-PERSON OUTREACH EVENTS

To meet people where they are, the planning team and Steering Committee promoted the survey and gathered input at community events across Alexander County:

- **MedAssist Event – May 30, 2025**
This event focused on health equity and mobility needs while promoting the online survey.
- **Wittenburg Beach – July 4–31, 2025**
Survey information was available throughout July, reaching residents and visitors during peak summer park use.
- **Transit Bus Promotion – July 4–31, 2025**
Survey flyers displayed on Alexander County buses helped reach transit riders who often rely on walking for access to services.
- **Summer Concert Pop-Up – July 19, 2025**
An informational booth at a free outdoor concert connected with families and individuals of all ages.
- **Apple Festival Booth – October 8, 2025**
This major downtown event allowed the team to gather location-specific ideas and discuss potential greenways and the rail-trail concept.

AGENCY + LEADERSHIP COORDINATION

The planning team worked closely with key agencies and local leaders to ensure recommendations align with existing policies, funding opportunities, and long-term priorities. These conversations helped build consensus and prepare for successful implementation.

- **Alexander County Planning Board – May 14**
Presented the draft plan and recommendations for discussion and formal recommendation to the Board of Commissioners regarding plan adoption.
- **Alexander County Board of Commissioners – June 1**
Presented the draft plan and recommendations to elected officials for feedback prior to adoption.

Image 26. Summer Concert Pop-Up Event



Consultant team members engage with residents at the summer concert pop-up booth, gathering ideas and answering questions about the plan.

Image Source: McAdams

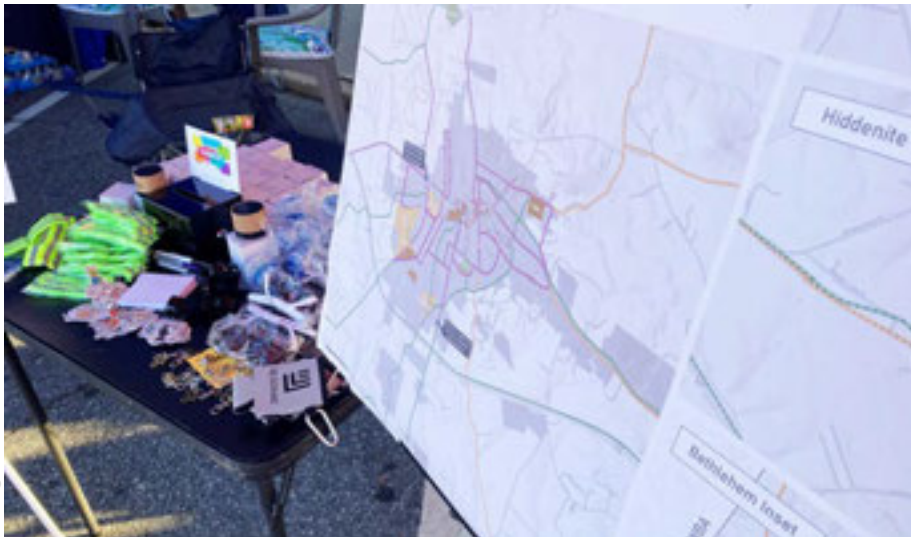
Image 27. Summer Concert Pop-Up Event



The summer concert booth featured project information, giveaways, and survey details to encourage community participation.

Image Source: McAdams

Image 28. Apple Festival Pop-Up Event



Apple Festival booth display with maps and posters showcasing proposed sidewalks and greenways, inviting feedback from attendees.

Image 29. Apple Festival Crowds



Crowds at the 2025 Apple Festival provided an opportunity to connect with hundreds of residents and gather input on walking and biking priorities.

KEY COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Residents consistently highlighted the following needs and opportunities for improving walking and biking in Alexander County:

- **Safer Rural Roads:** People want to bike on country roads but need paved shoulders or bike lanes for safety.
- **Recreational Spaces:** Walking and running for exercise is common. Residents want more trails and greenways for recreation.
- **Connections to Parks & Schools:** Strong interest in linking neighborhoods to parks, schools, and other community destinations.
- **Safe Crossings:** High-traffic intersections need marked, signalized, or enhanced crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Access to Everyday Destinations:** Better walking and biking routes to places like Walmart, Food Lion, the YMCA, and downtown Taylorsville.

“ I believe that greenways would greatly benefit our county. ”
- Survey Respondent

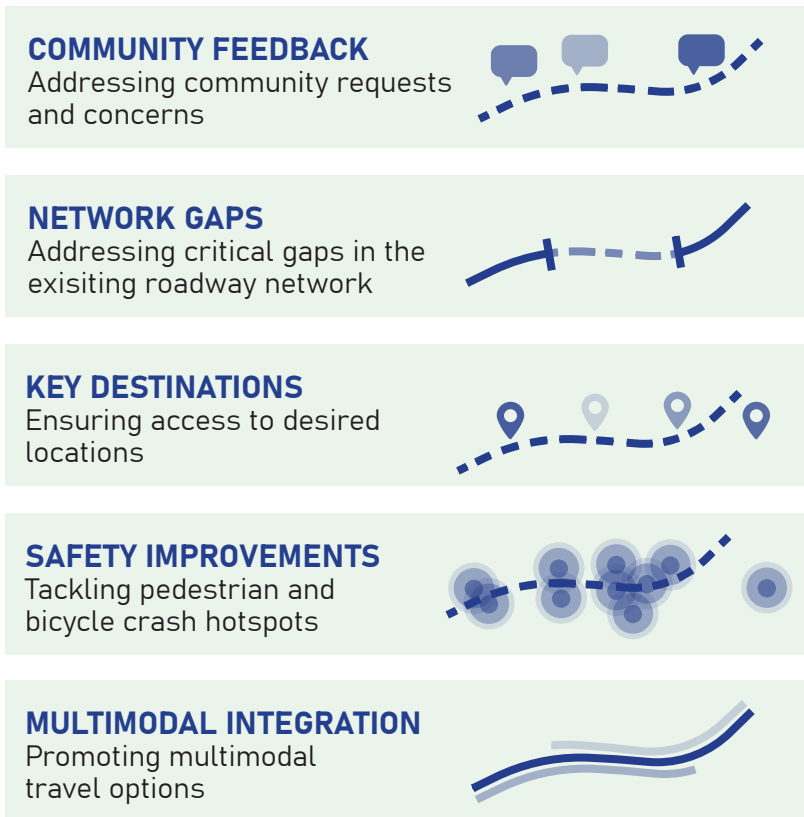


Image Source: Canopy MLS

CHAPTER 4

PROPOSED NETWORK

Figure 8. Multimodal Network Development Layers



FOCUS ON HIGH-IMPACT CORRIDORS

Many of the highest-need opportunities for improvement lie along NCDOT-maintained highways, which serve as the county’s primary transportation corridors. These roads carry higher traffic volumes and connect major destinations but often lack basic pedestrian or bicycle facilities. While local streets are generally slower and more walkable, state highways tend to present greater safety risks and connectivity barriers—making them critical focus areas for investment. By prioritizing these high-impact corridors, the plan seeks to reduce crash risks, close network gaps, and improve access for residents who walk, bike, or rely on transit.

BUILDING A CONNECTED NETWORK

The recommended pedestrian and bicycle network extends access from existing infrastructure to key destinations including neighborhoods, schools, parks, and commercial centers. Proposed sidewalk segments fill critical gaps to support walkability between nearby destinations, while priority crossings are identified at locations where speed, volume, or crash history presents a safety concern.

For bicyclists, the plan identifies safer corridors for long-distance recreational rides and targeted improvements near community centers and business districts. Design recommendations aim to improve rider comfort and protection to encourage residents to consider biking as a reliable, convenient mode of travel.

Image 31. NC 16 at Walmart



Entrance to Walmart on NC 16, where heavy traffic and missing sidewalks create barriers for pedestrians. Community feedback strongly supports adding a sidewalk connection from downtown to this key destination.

Image Source: Google

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

Community feedback played a central role in shaping this plan. Residents shared location-specific ideas for improvements such as new sidewalks on key streets, safer crossings near schools, and better connections to parks and neighborhoods. This input, along with previous planning efforts and data-driven analysis, helped generate a robust list of potential projects across Alexander County.

Because resources are limited, not every project can be built at once. Some improvements may remain long-term goals due to physical, financial, or administrative constraints. For example, projects along high-speed corridors may require extensive coordination with NCDOT, right-of-way acquisition, or costly utility upgrades.

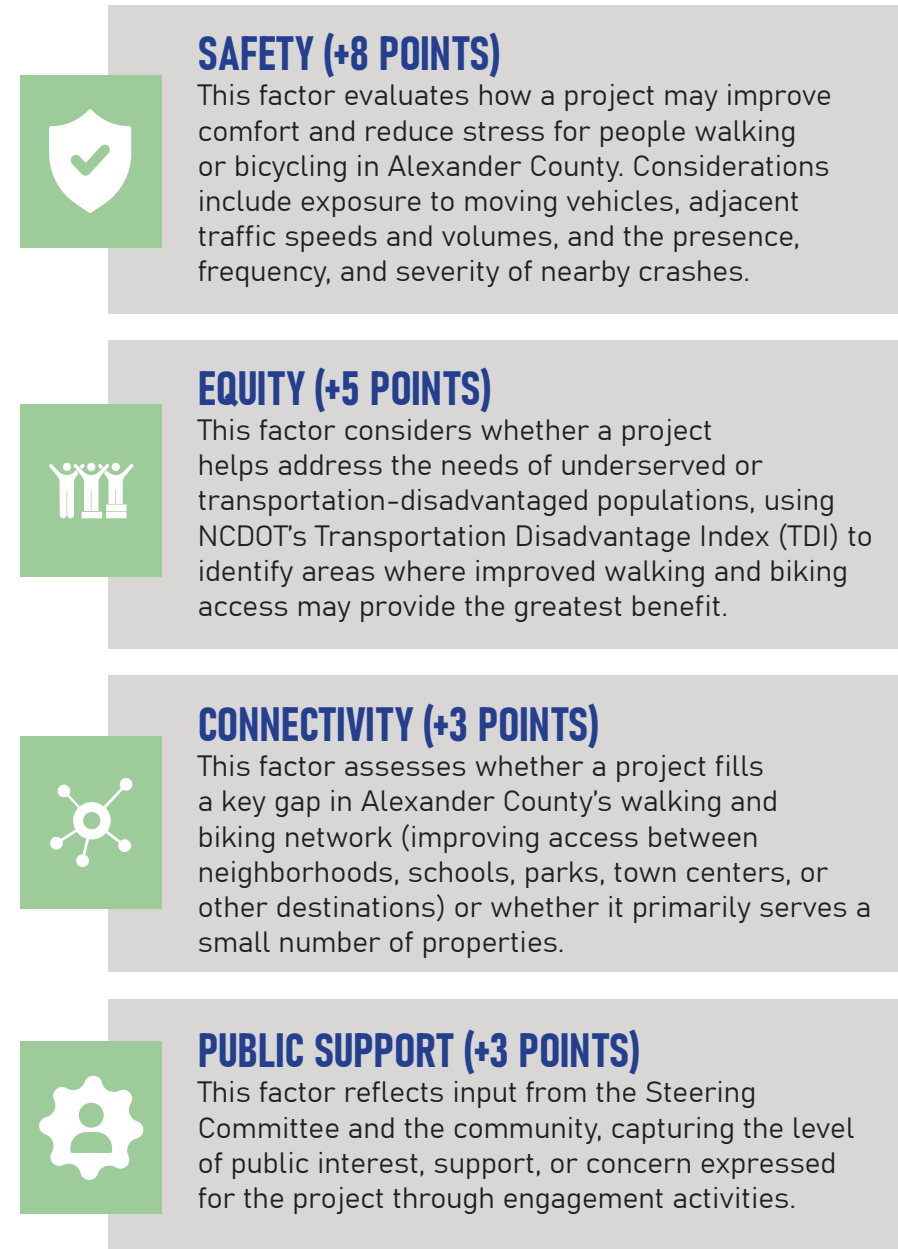
To guide progress, the plan identifies short-, medium-, and long-term priorities based on feasibility and impact. The project team developed a scoring system aligned with plan goals and consistent with NCDOT's Strategic Prioritization framework for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

How scoring was applied:

- Sidewalk projects were evaluated using criteria for Safety, Connectivity, Equity, and Public Input. (see Figure 9)
- Greenway projects were scored on Connectivity and Public Support, reflecting their role in recreation and destination access.
- Crossings and bikeable shoulder recommendations were not scored, as these improvements are typically tied to roadway projects and require separate feasibility considerations.

This approach highlights the most impactful and achievable projects for near-term investment while preserving a long-term vision for a connected active transportation network. Detailed scoring criteria and methodology are provided in the Appendix.

Figure 9. Sidewalk Project Ranking Criteria



WALK & BIKE ALEXANDER COUNTY

FACILITY TYPES

This plan recommends a range of facility types tailored to different land use patterns and road conditions across Alexander County. These include sidewalks in town centers, sidepaths along busier corridors with multiple destinations, bikeable shoulders on rural roads, and greenways where off-road connectivity is feasible. Each type of infrastructure plays a distinct role in creating a comprehensive active transportation network that can serve all users, from students walking to school to older adults biking to the grocery store or families enjoying a recreational stroll.

SIDEWALK

Sidewalks are essential in areas with higher density development, providing a designated, protected space for pedestrians and people using mobility devices.

- Typically located within a roadway's right-of-way, separated from the street by a curb or planting strip
- Most appropriate in town centers (e.g., Taylorsville), near schools, libraries, churches, and parks
- Can be enhanced with amenities like lighting, benches, street trees, and ADA-compliant curb ramps



Image Source: McAdams

GREENWAY/SHARED USE PATH

Greenways are off-street trails that support both transportation and recreation. They are often located along natural corridors like creeks, rivers, or utility easements.

- Physically separated from roads, making them safe and attractive for people of all ages and abilities
- Can connect neighborhoods to parks, schools, and downtowns

- while preserving scenic / ecological value
- Usually follow streams, floodplains, or rail corridors—providing long-distance connections across the county
- Often used for walking, jogging, biking, dog-walking, and other activities



Image Source: McAdams

MULTI-USE SIDEPATH

Sidepaths are two-way shared-use paths for both bicyclists and pedestrians, running adjacent to roadways, typically with a buffer or green strip between the path and the street.

- Suitable for roads with higher speeds or volumes, where an on-road bike lane may not be appropriate
- Often used near schools, public facilities, or commercial areas where both walking and biking traffic are expected
- Safer for less experienced cyclists or families riding together



Image Source: Google

BIKEABLE SHOULDER

Bikeable shoulders are wide, paved areas on the side of rural roads that provide space for bicyclists to ride out of the main travel lane.

- Suitable for Alexander County's rural two-lane roads, where traffic speeds are higher and right-of-way is limited
- Cost-effective compared to sidepaths or bike lanes and feasible to implement during repaving or widening projects
- Typically unmarked, but can be enhanced with signage, rumble strip placement, or striping to alert drivers to bicyclists' presence



Image Source: Clay Dolan

CROSSING TREATMENTS

Safe, visible crossings are essential for a connected walking and biking network. They link sidewalks, greenways, and sidepaths across busy roadways and are especially important near schools, parks, shopping areas, and other destinations where walking and biking are more common. This plan identifies locations where crossing improvements may be needed based on safety concerns, traffic conditions, and network gaps.

Final design and installation decisions will be determined by NCDOT or the Town of Taylorsville during project development and may be implemented as part of larger roadway projects or coordinated with new sidewalk or greenway construction. The appropriate crossing treatment will vary by location and depend on factors such as traffic speed, traffic volume, roadway width, and surrounding land use. When applied thoughtfully, these treatments can reduce crash risk, improve accessibility, and increase comfort and confidence for people of all ages and abilities.

Image 32. PHB Crossing with Refuge Island Rendering



Potential treatments include:

HIGH-VISIBILITY CROSSWALKS

Ladder-style striping to alert drivers and define legal crossing points.



Image Source: WTOP News

ACCESSIBLE CURB RAMPS

Smooth transitions for people using wheelchairs, strollers, or mobility devices.



Image Source: City of Portland, OR

PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

Push-button activated signals and countdown timers at signalized intersections to provide dedicated crossing time.



Image Source: Caleb Oquendo

PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLANDS

Raised medians that allow people to cross one direction of traffic at a time on wide or higher-speed roadways.



Image Source: Google

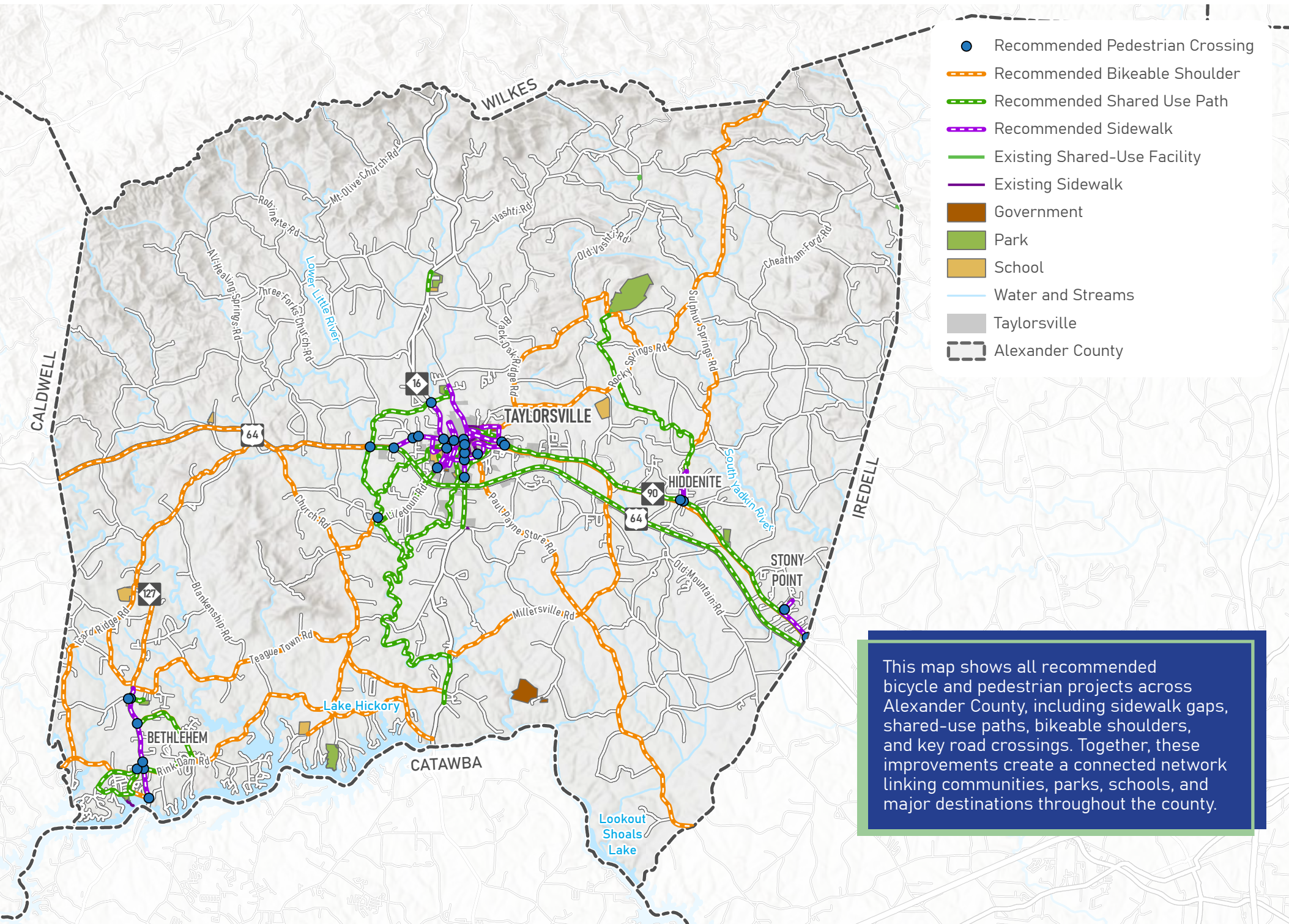
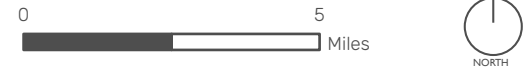
RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACONS

Pedestrian-activated flashing beacons that improve driver yielding at uncontrolled crossing locations.



Image Source: TAPCO

Map 17. All Project Recommendations



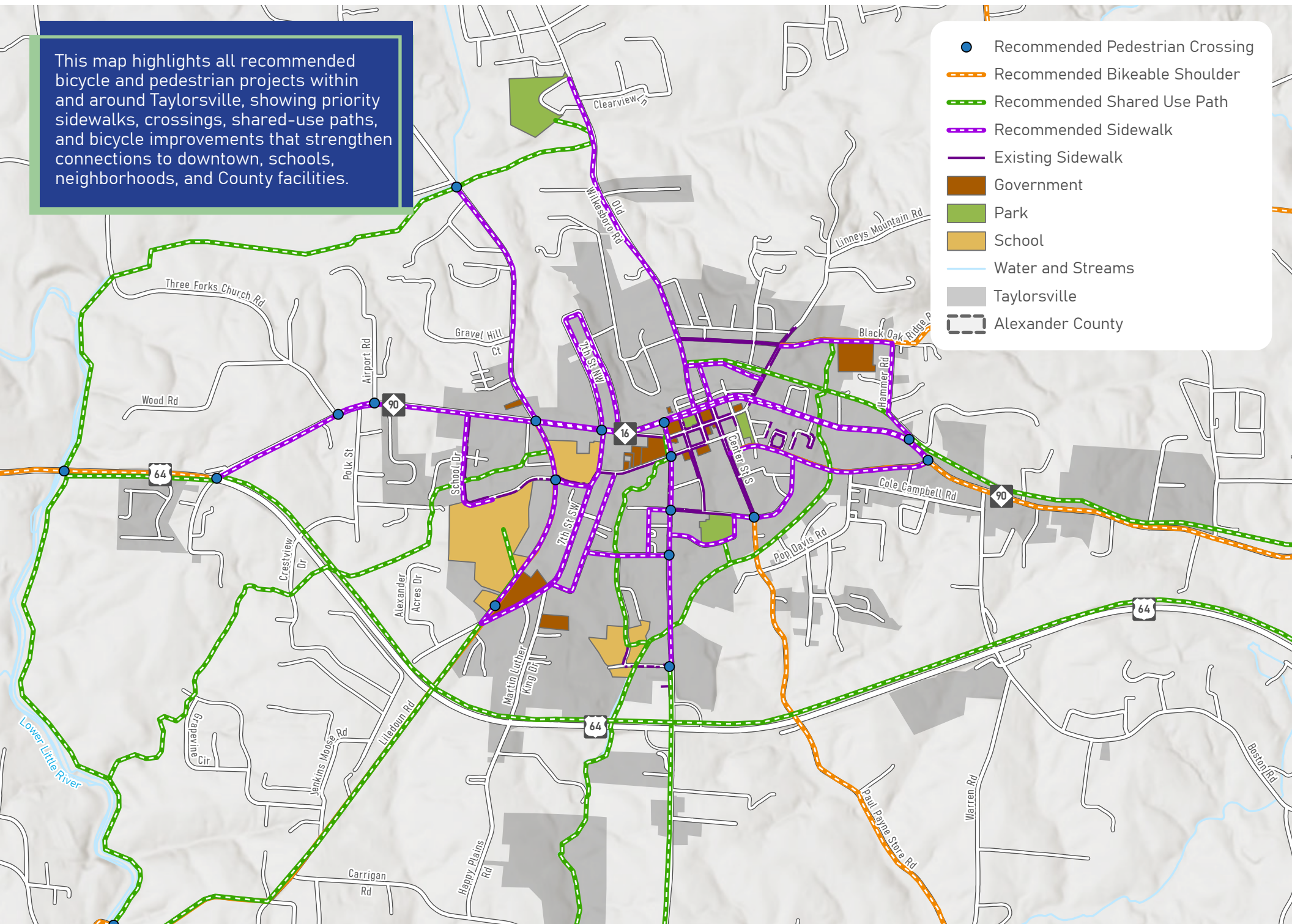
This map shows all recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects across Alexander County, including sidewalk gaps, shared-use paths, bikeable shoulders, and key road crossings. Together, these improvements create a connected network linking communities, parks, schools, and major destinations throughout the county.

Map 18. All Project Recommendations (Taylorsville)

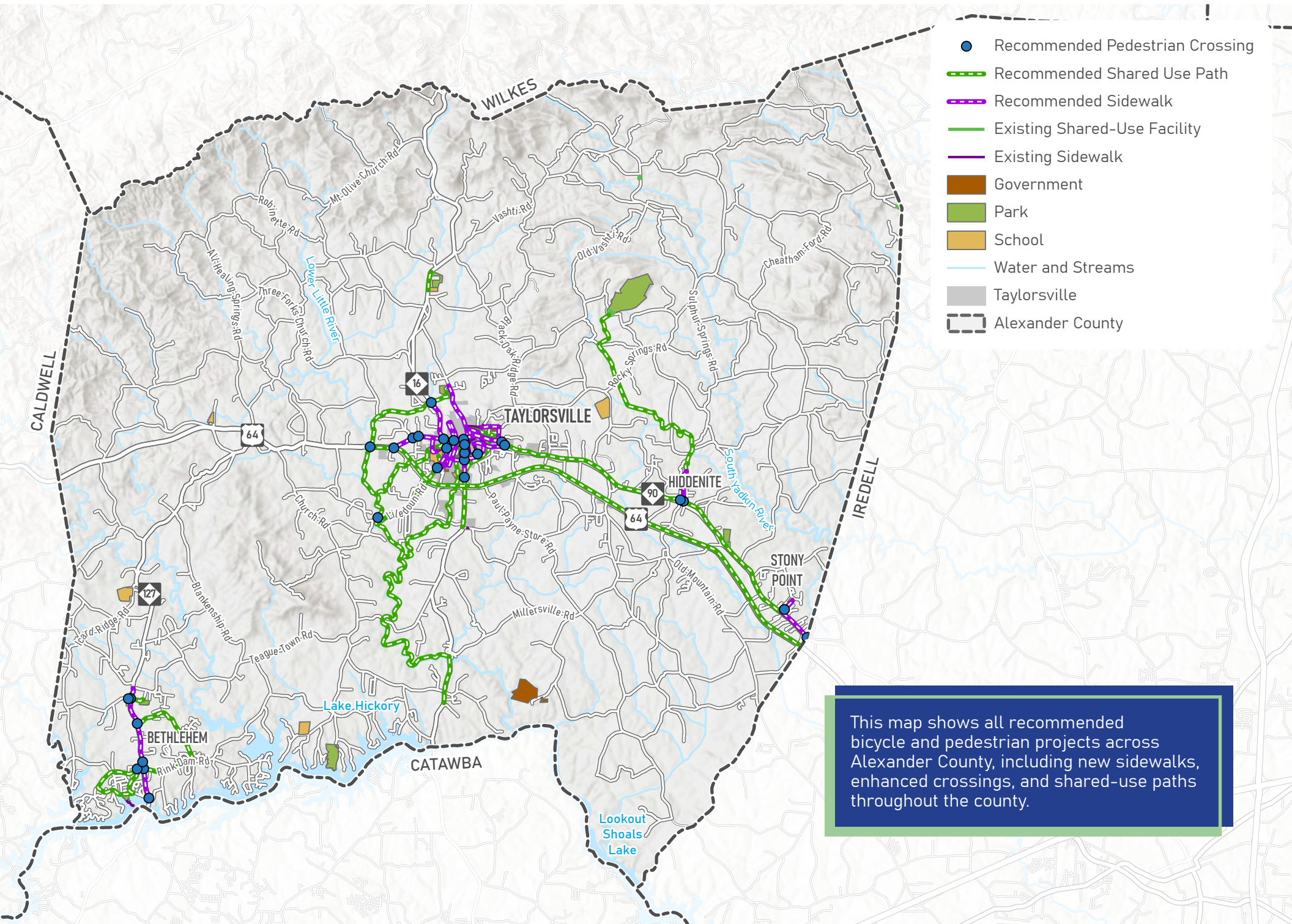
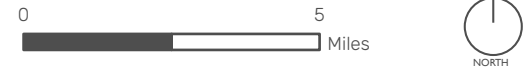


This map highlights all recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects within and around Taylorsville, showing priority sidewalks, crossings, shared-use paths, and bicycle improvements that strengthen connections to downtown, schools, neighborhoods, and County facilities.

- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Bikeable Shoulder
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Recommended Sidewalk
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County



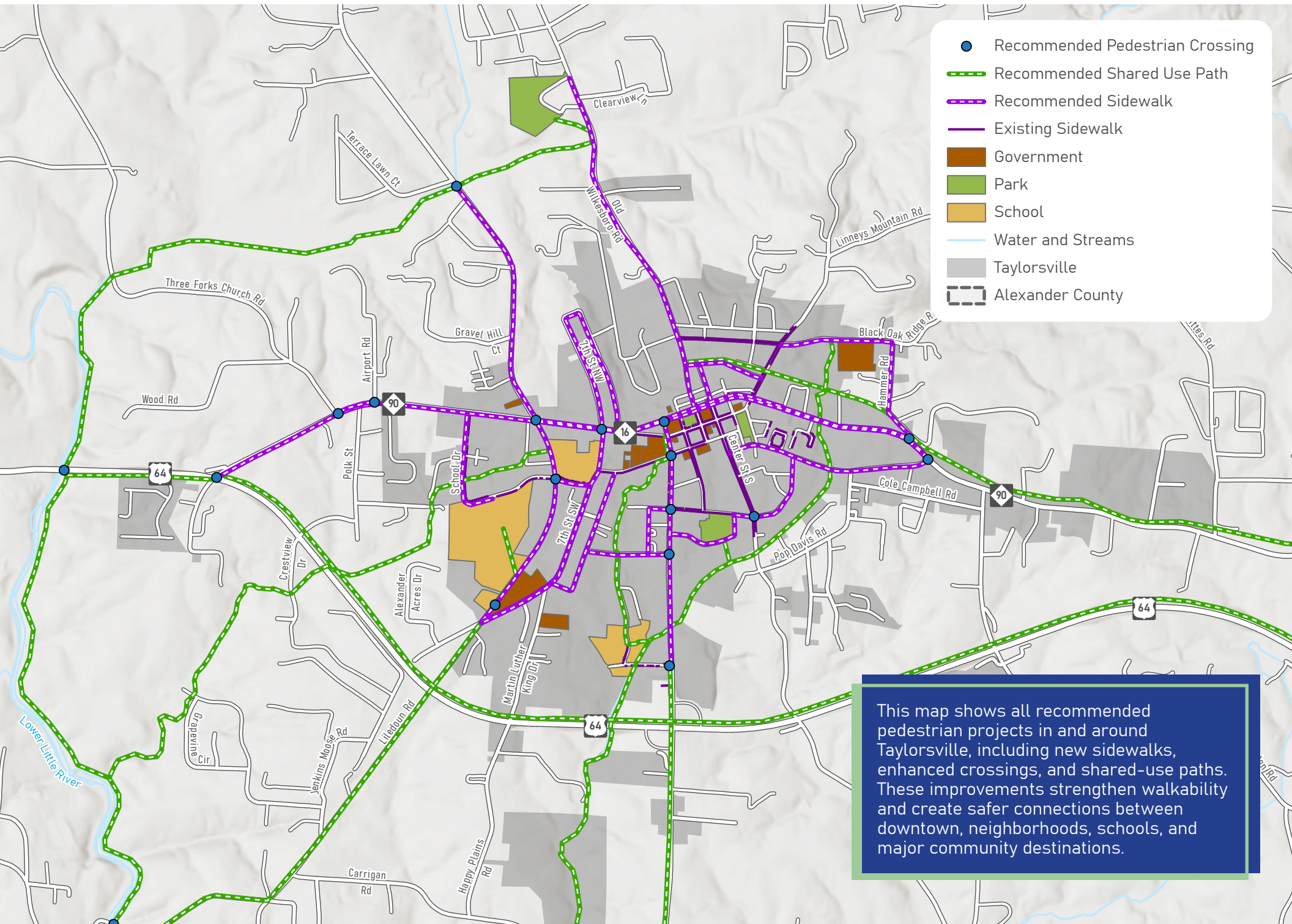
Map 19. Pedestrian Project Recommendations



- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Recommended Sidewalk
- Existing Shared-Use Facility
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

This map shows all recommended bicycle and pedestrian projects across Alexander County, including new sidewalks, enhanced crossings, and shared-use paths throughout the county.

Map 20. Pedestrian Project Recommendations (Taylorsville)



- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Recommended Sidewalk
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

This map shows all recommended pedestrian projects in and around Taylorsville, including new sidewalks, enhanced crossings, and shared-use paths. These improvements strengthen walkability and create safer connections between downtown, neighborhoods, schools, and major community destinations.

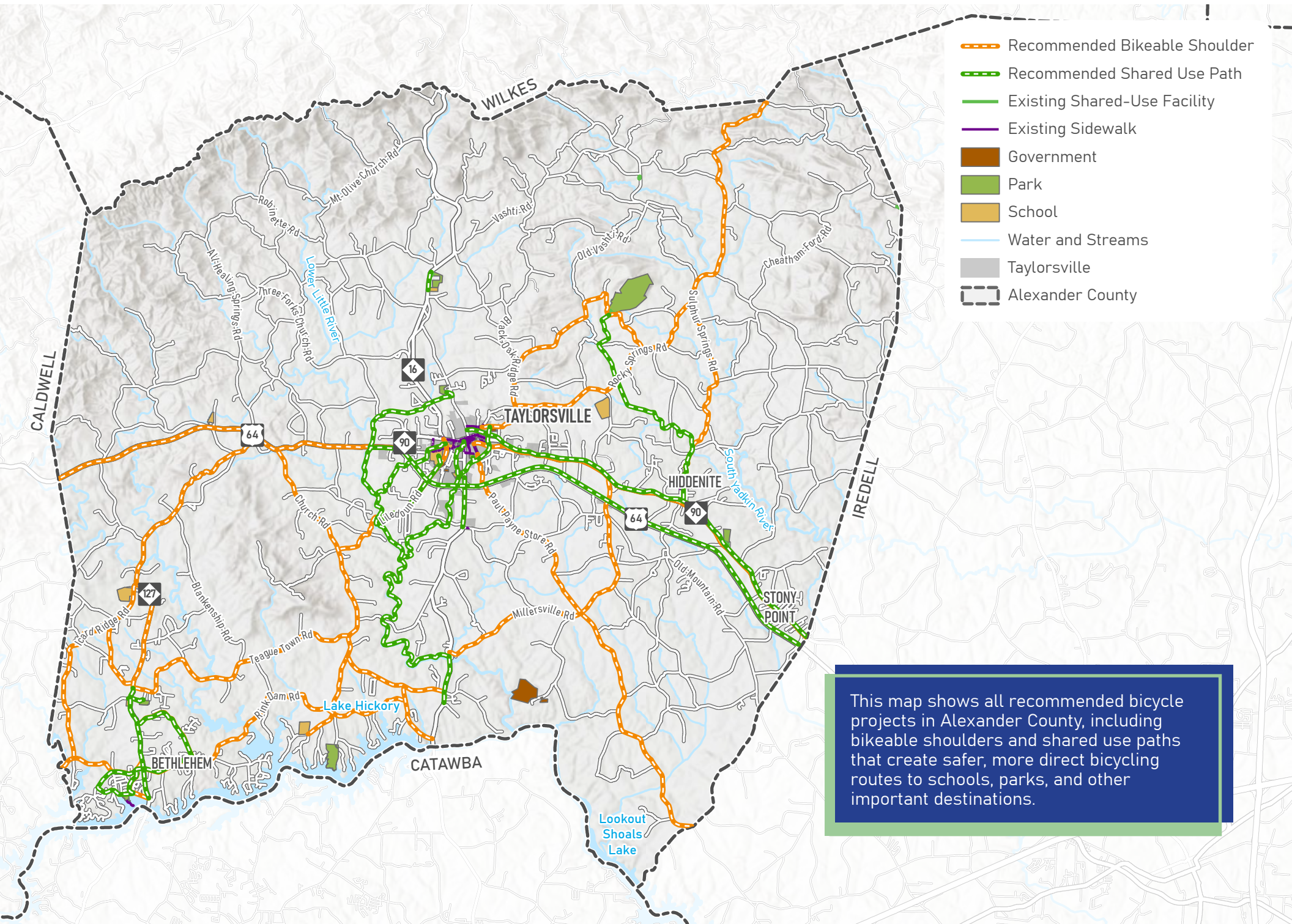
Table 2. Pedestrian Project Recommendations (Sidewalks)

ID	Roadway / Project Name	Facility Type	Sidewalk From	To	Total Score
59	NC 16 (both sides)	Sidewalk	3rd Ave SW	Commercial Park Ave SW	16
36	Liledoun Rd (both sides)	Sidewalk	W Main Ave	7th St SW	14
42	NC 90 (south side)	Sidewalk	Golf Course Ln	NC 16	14
37	7th St SW (west side)	Sidewalk	Liledoun Rd / Cougar Ave	Liledoun Rd	13
46	7th St SW (east side)	Sidewalk	W Main Ave	Liledoun Rd	13
35	NC 16 (both sides, infill)	Sidewalk	W Main Ave	3rd Ave SW	12
41	E Main Ave (both sides)	Sidewalk	Junebug Loop	1st Ave Dr SE	12
44	Old Wilkesboro Rd (west side)	Sidewalk	4th Ave N	Jaycee Park Loop	12
75	W Main Ave / E Main Ave (both sides, infill)	Sidewalk	NC 16	June Bug Loop	12
39	3rd Ave SE (south side)	Sidewalk	Matheson Park Ave	1st Ave Dr SE	11
40	1st Ave Dr SE (south side)	Sidewalk	S Center St	E Main Ave (NC 90)	11
69	School Dr (west side)	Sidewalk	NC 90	Existing sidewalk (High School)	11
72	N Center St (east side)	Sidewalk	2nd Ave NW / NE	E Main Ave	11
34	"Bethlehem Connector" / NC 127 (east side)	Sidewalk	Teague Town Rd	Shiloh Church Rd	10
43	Old Wilkesboro Rd (both sides)	Sidewalk	4th Ave N	W Main Ave	10
45	5th Ave SW (south side)	Sidewalk	6th St SW	NC 16	10
49	Sulphur Springs Rd (east side)	Sidewalk	NC 90	Emerald Hollow Mine Dr	10
50	Stony Point School Rd (west side)	Sidewalk	Ruritan Park Rd	Stony Point Elementary School	10
51	Ruritan Park Rd (north side)	Sidewalk	Stony Point School Rd	Calhoun Rd	10
56	Matheson Park Ave (north side)	Sidewalk	NC 16	3rd Ave SW	10
57	Hammer Rd (west side)	Sidewalk	Black Oak Ridge Rd	NC 90	9
76	NC 90 (north side)	Sidewalk	Three Forks Church Rd	Airport Rd	9
47	6th St SW (west side)	Sidewalk	1st Ave SW	7th St SW	8
52	Rink Dam Rd / Shiloh Church Rd / NC 127	Sidewalk	NC 16	NC 16	8
38	Black Oak Ridge Rd (south side)	Sidewalk	Linneys Mountain Rd	Hammer Rd	7
48	4th Ave SW / 3rd Ave SW (north side)	Sidewalk	5th Ave SW	NC 16	7
63	NC 16 (both sides)	Sidewalk	Terrace Lawn Court	W Main Ave	7
68	7th St NW (east side) & 6th St NW (west side)	Sidewalk	W Main Ave	W Main Ave	7
71	2nd Ave NE (south side)	Sidewalk	Old Wilkesboro Rd	Linneys Mountain Rd	6

Table 3. Pedestrian Project Recommendations (Crossings)

Roadway Intersection	Possible Improvement(s)
NC-127 at Bethlehem Park/Elementary Crossing	PHB and island in unused center turn lane.
NC-16 at CVCC / Commercial Park Ave	Pedestrian signal and marked crosswalk improvements.
NC-16/Liledoun Road at W Main Ave	Pedestrian signals and crosswalks across all legs.
NC-90 at Calhoun Road	Railroad crossing improvements; all-way stop control.
W Main Ave at NC 16	High-visibility pedestrian crosswalk.
NC 16 at 5th Ave SW	High visibility pedestrian crossing; pedestrian refuge island.
NC 16 at 3rd Ave SW	High visibility pedestrian crossing.
NC 16 at 1st Ave SW	Signalized pedestrian crossing.
Liledoun Rd at School Dr / Cougar Ave	Signalized pedestrian crossing (all legs)
Liledoun Rd at Alexander County Head Start	RRFB controlled and marked pedestrian crossing.
Bethlehem School Rd at Bethlehem Elementary School	RRFB controlled and marked pedestrian crossing.
NC 127 at Heritage Farm Rd	High visibility crosswalk; pedestrian refuge island.
NC 127 at Rink Dam Rd	Signalized pedestrian crossing (all legs).
Shiloh Church Rd at Hubbard Rd / Rink Dam Rd	Intersection reconfiguration (all way stop, roundabout) with pedestrian crossings.
NC 127 at Shiloh Church Rd	Pedestrian crossings (all legs).
NC 127 at Shiloh Church Rd / Chigger Ridge Rd	Signalized pedestrian crossing.
Liledoun Rd at Lower Little River Bridge	RRFB pedestrian crossing at proposed Lower Little River Greenway and Liledoun Rd MUP.
US 64 at Lower Little River Bridge	Crossing underneath bridge or over with signalization.
NC 16 at Muddy Fork Creek	RRFB pedestrian crossing for greenway connectivity and sidewalk connection.
NC 90 at US 64	Signalized pedestrian crossing to link proposed MUPs to proposed sidewalk.
NC 90 at Three Forks Church Rd	High visibility pedestrian crossing.
NC 90 at Airport Rd	High visibility pedestrian crossing.
Stony Point School Rd at Lee Rd	High visibility pedestrian crossing.
Sulphur Springs Rd at proposed rail-trail crossing	Pedestrian crossing (with RRFB) for proposed rail-trail continuity.
Hiddenite Church Rd at proposed rail-trail.	High visibility crossing (with RRFB) for proposed rail-trail continuity.
W Main Ave at 7th St SW	Signalized pedestrian crossing (one leg).
S Center St at 3rd Ave SW	High visibility crosswalks (all legs) for park connectivity.
E Main Ave at Hammer Rd	Intersection improvements (signalization, crosswalks).
E Main Ave at 1st Ave Dr SE	High visibility pedestrian crossing with refuge island.

Map 21. Bicycle Project Recommendations



- Recommended Bikeable Shoulder
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Existing Shared-Use Facility
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

This map shows all recommended bicycle projects in Alexander County, including bikeable shoulders and shared use paths that create safer, more direct bicycling routes to schools, parks, and other important destinations.

Map 22. Bicycle Project Recommendations (Taylorsville)



This map shows all recommended bicycle projects within the Taylorsville area, including bikeable shoulders and shared-use paths that create safer, more direct bicycling routes to downtown, schools, parks, and County facilities.

- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Bikeable Shoulder
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

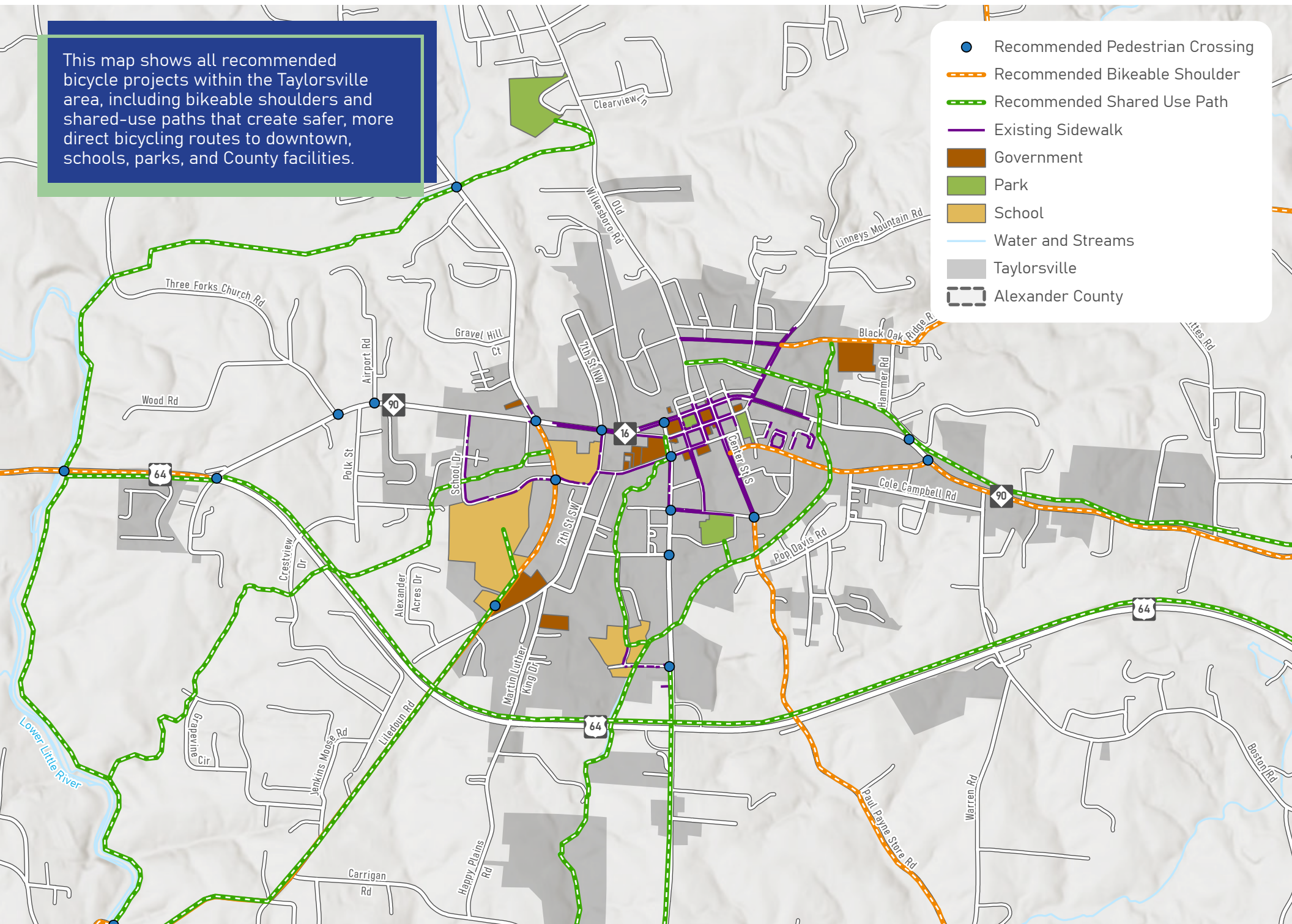


Table 4. Bicycle Project Recommendations (Bikeable Shoulders)

ID	Roadway / Project Name	Facility Type	Sidewalk From	To
1	Black Oak Ridge Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Linneys Mountain Rd	Rocky Face Church Rd
2	Hubbard Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Shiloh Church Rd	County line
3	Liledoun Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 90 (W Main St)	Church Rd
4	Church Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	US 64	Bible Camp Ln
5	Teague Town Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 127	Church Rd
6	Sulphur Springs Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Brushy Mountain Rd / Linneys Mill Rd	Hiddenite Church Rd
7	Rocky Springs Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Sulphur Springs Rd	Black Oak Ridge Rd
8	Rocky Face Church Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Black Oak Ridge Rd	Rocky Springs Rd
9	Rink Dam Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 127	Wayside Church Rd
10	Millersville Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 90	NC 16
11	Shiloh Church Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 127	NC 127
12	Richey Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Icard Ridge Rd	NC 127
13	NC 90	Bikeable Shoulder	S Center St	Calhoun Rd (county line)
14	NC 90	Bikeable Shoulder	Golf Course Ln	County line
17	NC 127	Bikeable Shoulder	US 64	Teague Town Rd
61	Friendship Church Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Church Rd	NC 16
62	Icard Ridge Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 127	Hubbard Rd
64	Wayside Church Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	Friendship Church Rd	NC 16
65	Heritage Farm Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	NC 16	Rink Dam Rd
66	Paul Payne Store Rd	Bikeable Shoulder	3rd Ave SW	County Line Rd (county line)

“ ALL of Alexander County is dangerous for bike riders! ”
- Survey Respondent

Table 5. Bicycle + Pedestrian Project Recommendations (Shared Use Paths)

ID	Roadway / Project Name	Facility Type	Sidewalk From	To
18	Bethlehem Park-Elementary School Connector Greenway	Shared Use Path	Bethlehem Elementary	Bethlehem Park Ln
19	Bethlehem Connector / NC 127 Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Teague Town Rd	Shiloh Church Rd
20	NC 16 Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Yorks Bluff Dr	Friendship Church Rd / Wittenburg Rd
21	Salem Park to Sugar Loaf School Connector	Shared Use Path	Salem Park	Sugar Loaf Elementary School
22	Greenway Connector: Hiddenite to Rocky Face Park	Shared Use Path	Rocky Face Church Rd	Sharpe Ln
23	Rail-with-Trail: Taylorsville to Hiddenite	Shared Use Path	Old Wilkesboro Rd	Hiddenite Church Rd
24	Rail-with-Trail: Hiddenite to Stony Point	Shared Use Path	Hiddenite Church Rd	Calhoun Rd (county line)
25	Liledoun Rd Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Alexander Central High School	Lower Little River (proposed greenway)
26	Muddy Fork Greenway	Shared Use Path	US 64	Old Wilkesboro Rd (Jaycee Park)
28	Lower Little River Greenway (Phase 1)	Shared Use Path	NC 90 / Golf Course Ln	Liledoun Rd
53	Lower Little River Greenway (Phase 2)	Shared Use Path	Liledoun Rd	Stirewalt Creek (proposed greenway)
27	Lower Little River Greenway (Phase 3)	Shared Use Path	Stirewalt Creek (proposed greenway)	NC 16
30	Stirewalk Creek Greenway (Phase 1)	Shared Use Path	Industrial Blvd (CVCC Campus)	YMCA
54	Stirewalk Creek Greenway (Phase 2)	Shared Use Path	Industrial Blvd (CVCC Campus)	Minnigan Ln
29	Stirewalt Creek Greenway (Phase 3)	Shared Use Path	Minnigan Ln	Lower Little River (proposed greenway)
55	Wildlife Access Loop Sidepath	Shared Use Path	From NC 127 at Rink Dam Rd along Cemetery Loop, Hubbard Rd, Wildlife Access Rd, and Shiloh Church Rd	
58	NC 16 Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Commercial Park Ave	Macedonia Church Rd
60	NC 16 Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Lower Little River Greenway	Friendship Church Rd / Wittenburg Rd
67	Creekside Greenway	Shared Use Path	Lower Little River	Liledoun Rd
70	Industrial Blvd Sidepath	Shared Use Path	Stirewalk Creek Greenway (proposed)	Main Ave Dr SW
73	Heritage Farm Rd / Rink Dam Rd Sidepath	Shared Use Path	NC 127	NC 127
74	US 64	Shared Use Path	NC 90 (W Main Ave)	Smith Farm Rd (county line)

PRIORITY PROJECT #1: NC 16 SIDEWALKS

NC Highway 16 is a high traffic corridor serving retail, healthcare facilities, transit stops, and downtown Taylorsville; yet it lacks continuous and accessible pedestrian infrastructure. This project would close sidewalk gaps, upgrade signalized intersections to include pedestrian phases, add high visibility crossings at key intersections, and select mid block locations between Commercial Park Avenue and Main Street. Together, these improvements would create more comfortable walking connections between major destinations while improving access to transit and downtown.

Location: NC Highway 16 from Commercial Park Avenue to Main Street in downtown Taylorsville.

Total Length (Approximate): 0.9 miles

Facility Type:

Near Term: Continuous buffered sidewalk (minimum 6 feet wide, with minimum 4 foot buffer) on one side of NC 16, with marked pedestrian crossings at intersections and select mid block locations.

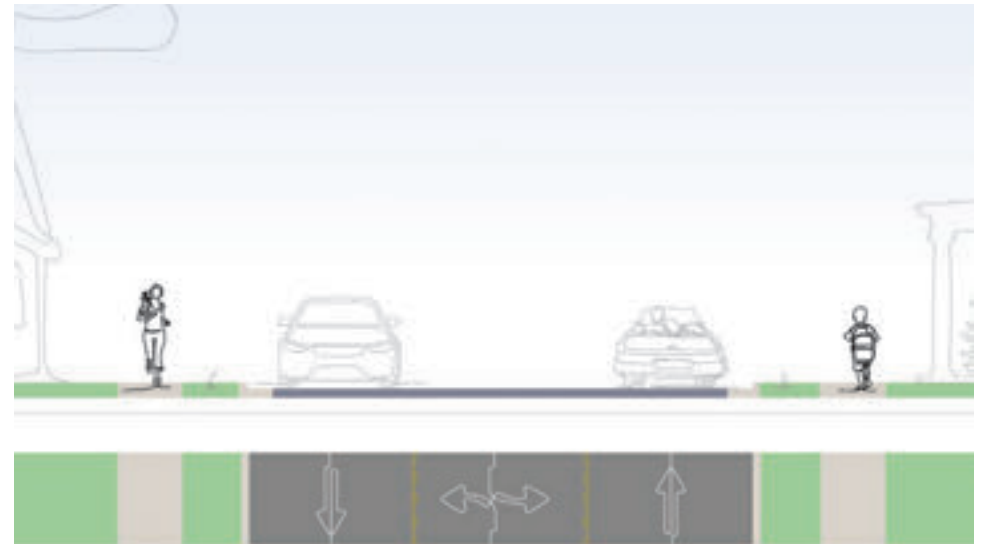
Long Term: Continuous buffered sidewalks on *both* sides of NC 16.

Intersection Treatments:

- High-visibility crosswalks at Commercial Park Ave, 5th Ave, 3rd Ave, 1st Ave, Main Ave Dr, and Main Ave.
- Pedestrian signal upgrades at all signalized intersections.
- ADA-compliant curb ramps, including replacement of non-compliant ramps.

Implementation Partners: NCDOT, Town of Taylorsville, Alexander County, local property owners and businesses.

Image 33. NC 16 Proposed Cross-Section (Long Term)



(If major roadway reconstruction occurs, the long-term facility is the ideal condition.)

Table 6. Priority Project #1 Planning Level Cost Estimate (Long Term)

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,712,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$278,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$339,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Construction)	\$254,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$2,583,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 23. Priority Project #1 - NC 16 Sidewalk

- Priority Project
- Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
- Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
- Proposed Sidewalk Projects
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

Improves walkability to / from downtown Taylorsville.

Provides access to public transit stops along 5th Ave SW, Industrial Blvd, and NC 16.

Provides opportunity to install a pedestrian refuge island at this crossing, using the existing center turn lane.

Creates a connection to Early College and CVCC campus.

Creates connection here to the proposed Stirewalk Creek Greenway.

Crossing creates access to a major destination (Walmart).

A proposed multi-use sidepath providing access farther south along NC 16.

PRIORITY PROJECT #2: LILEDOUN ROAD SIDEWALKS

This project would add continuous sidewalks on both sides of Liledoun Road from Henry Rose Drive and 7th Street to Main Avenue, improving pedestrian access to downtown Taylorsville, the Alexander County Board of Education, and nearby schools. Due to the skew at the Liledoun Road, 7th Street, and Moose Road intersection, additional modifications will be required to accommodate pedestrian crossings. The project includes future intersection upgrades, targeted mid block crossings, and signal improvements at key locations to enhance safety, accessibility, and network connectivity.

Location: Liledoun Road from Henry Rose Drive and 7th Street to Main Avenue in downtown Taylorsville.

Total Length (Approximate): 0.8 miles

Facility Type: *(if major roadway reconstruction occurs, the long-term facility is the ideal condition)*

Short Term: Continuous sidewalks (minimum 6 feet wide) on both sides of Liledoun Road, with marked pedestrian crossings at select signalized and mid block locations.

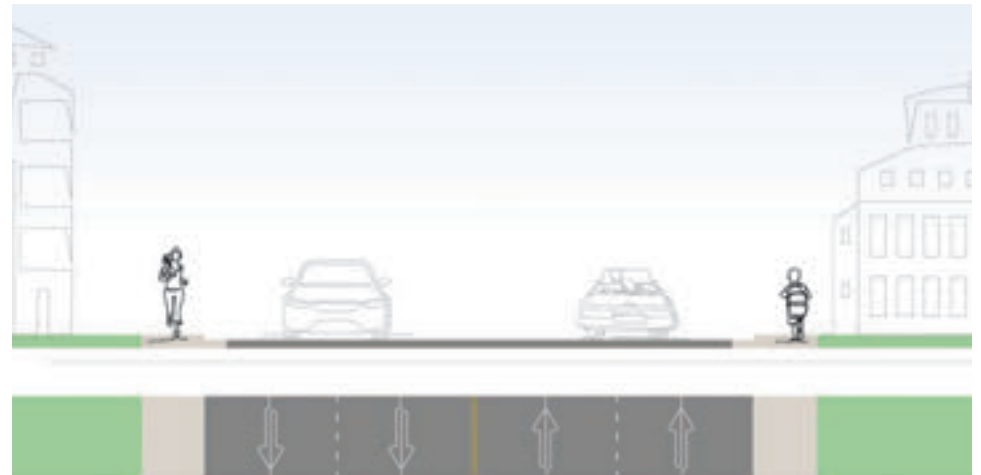
Long Term: Sidewalks *and* bike lanes (minimum 5 feet wide) on both sides of Liledoun Road.

Intersection Treatments:

- RRFB controlled and marked pedestrian crossing across Liledoun Rd at the north end of the south entrance to the Alexander County Board of Education.
- Signal upgrades to support all-way pedestrian crossings at School Dr / Cougar Ave and Main Ave / NC 16.
- High visibility crosswalk markings, advance warning signage, and ADA-compliant curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces at all crossings.

Implementation Partners: NCDOT, Town of Taylorsville, Alexander County, Alexander County Schools, adjacent property owners.

Image 34. Liledoun Road Proposed Cross-Section (Short Term)



(If major roadway reconstruction occurs, the long-term facility is the ideal condition.)

Table 7. Priority Project #2 Planning Level Cost Estimate (Short Term)

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,489,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$241,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$295,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Contingency)	\$221,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$2,246,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 24. Priority Project #2 - Liledoun Road Sidewalks

- Priority Project
- Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
- Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
- Proposed Sidewalk Projects
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

Signal upgrades to include pedestrian crossings.

Proposed greenway along the creek.

Provides access to public transit stop.

Long-term roadway improvements to include bikeable shoulders.

Proposed multi-use path direct connection to High School entrance.

Provide a mid-block crossing with RRFB to improve access between County facilities.

Combine with proposed sidewalk on 7th St SW to create a loop.

Proposed multi-use path and bikeable shoulders.

PRIORITY PROJECT #3: BETHLEHEM PARK TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONNECTOR

This project would create a shared-use path connecting Bethlehem Park and Bethlehem Elementary School through an approximately 700-foot wooded corridor, requiring an easement across private property. The project includes a signalized pedestrian hybrid beacon crossing of NC 127 with a raised pedestrian refuge island and an RRFB-controlled crossing of Bethlehem School Road, creating a safe, direct walking and bicycling route for students, recreation, and after-school activities.

Location: Connection between Bethlehem Park and Bethlehem Elementary School, including a crossing of NC 127.

Total Length (Approximate): 700 feet

Facility Type: Shared use path / greenway (10–12 feet wide) with a signalized pedestrian crossing of NC 127 and an RRFB crossing of Bethlehem School Road.

Intersection Treatments:

- Signalized pedestrian crossing at Bethlehem School Road and NC 127, using a pedestrian hybrid beacon (or comparable treatment).
- Conversion of the existing painted median on NC 127 to a raised pedestrian refuge island.
- RRFB controlled and marked pedestrian crossing across Bethlehem School Road to provide direct school access.
- High visibility crosswalk markings, advance warning signage, and ADA-compliant curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces at all crossings.

Implementation Partners: NCDOT, Alexander County Schools, Alexander County, adjacent property owners.

Image 35. Park to School Connector Proposed Cross-Section



Table 8. Priority Project #3 Planning Level Cost Estimate

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,315,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$215,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$261,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Contingency)	\$195,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$1,986,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 25. Priority Project #3 - Bethlehem Park to Elementary School Connector

- Priority Project
- Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
- Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
- Proposed Sidewalk Projects
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

Pedestrian hybrid beacon with refuge island for crossing NC 127.

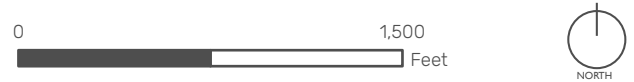
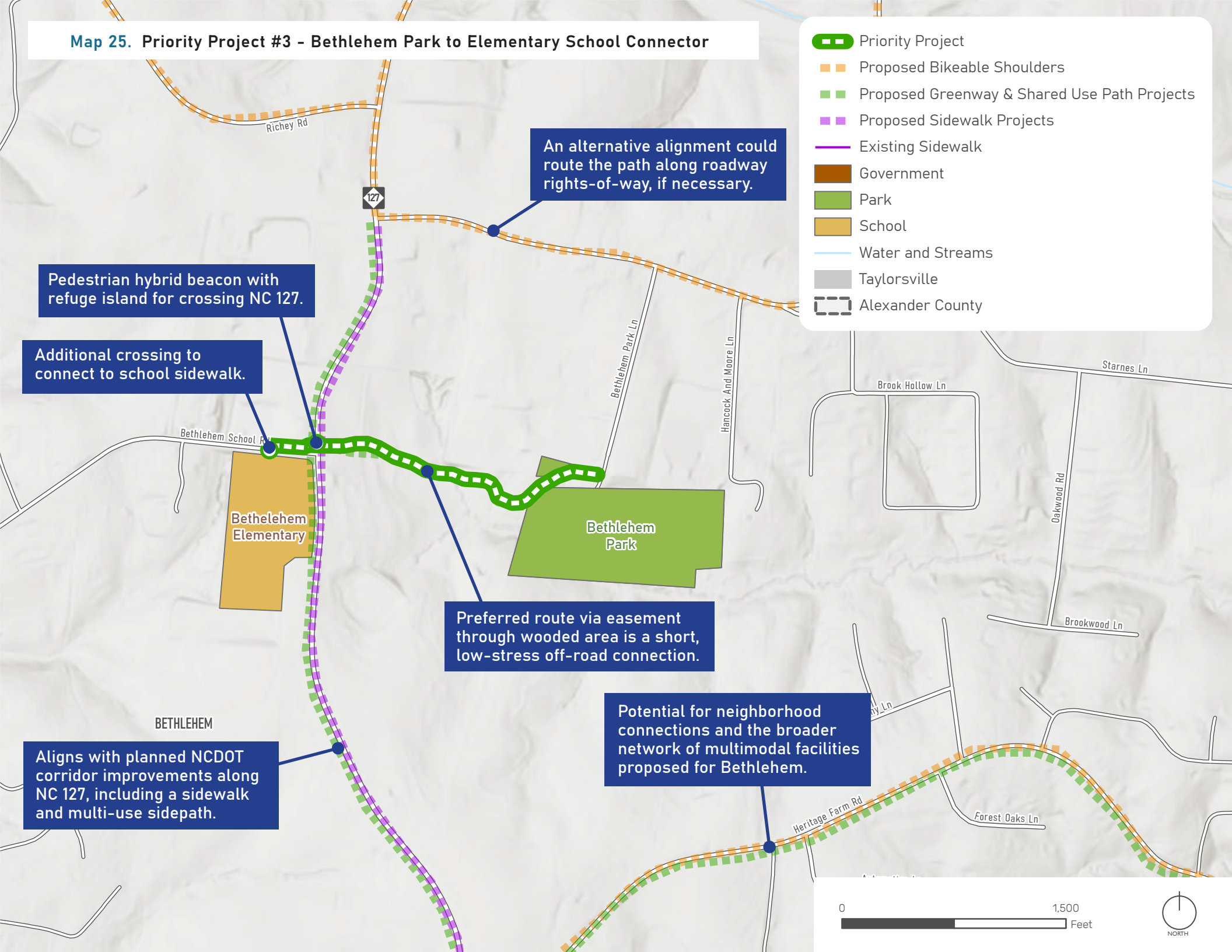
Additional crossing to connect to school sidewalk.

An alternative alignment could route the path along roadway rights-of-way, if necessary.

Preferred route via easement through wooded area is a short, low-stress off-road connection.

Potential for neighborhood connections and the broader network of multimodal facilities proposed for Bethlehem.

Aligns with planned NCDOT corridor improvements along NC 127, including a sidewalk and multi-use sidepath.



PRIORITY PROJECT #4: STONY POINT ELEMENTARY TO COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

This project would construct a new sidewalk connection linking Stony Point Elementary School to the surrounding community, improving safe walking access in an unincorporated area that currently lacks pedestrian infrastructure. The project includes sidewalks along Stony Point School Road and Ruritan Park Road, with a marked crossing at Lee Road, creating a safe and direct route that supports walking to school and nearby neighborhood destinations.

Location: Stony Point School Road from Stony Point Elementary School to Lee Road, continuing along Ruritan Park Road to Calhoun Road

Total Length (Approximate): 0.5 miles

Facility Type: Continuous sidewalk (minimum 6 feet wide) along Stony Point School Road and Ruritan Park Road, including a marked pedestrian crossing of Stony Point School Road at Lee Road.

Intersection Treatments:

- Marked pedestrian crossing of Stony Point School Road at Lee Road to transition pedestrians from the west side to the east side of the roadway.
- High visibility crosswalk markings and advance warning signage at the Stony Point School Road crossing.
- ADA compliant curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces at all crossing locations.
- Driveway apron upgrades as needed to maintain sidewalk continuity along the corridor.

Implementation Partners: NCDOT, Alexander County, Alexander County Schools, Local property owners and businesses.

Image 36. Stony Point School Road & Ruritan Park Road Proposed Cross-Section

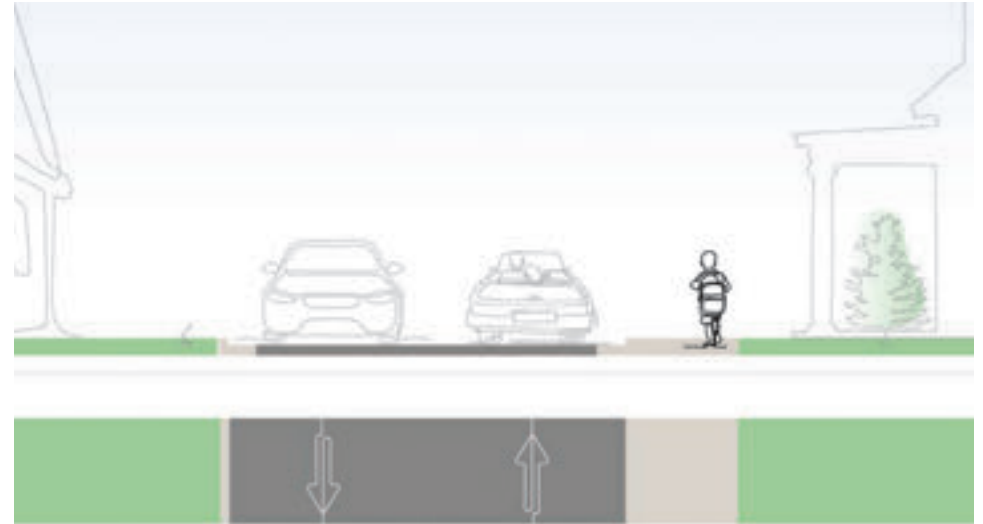


Table 9. Priority Project #4 Planning Level Cost Estimate

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,719,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$271,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$339,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Construction)	\$255,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$2,584,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 26. Priority Project #4 - Stony Point Elementary to Community Connector

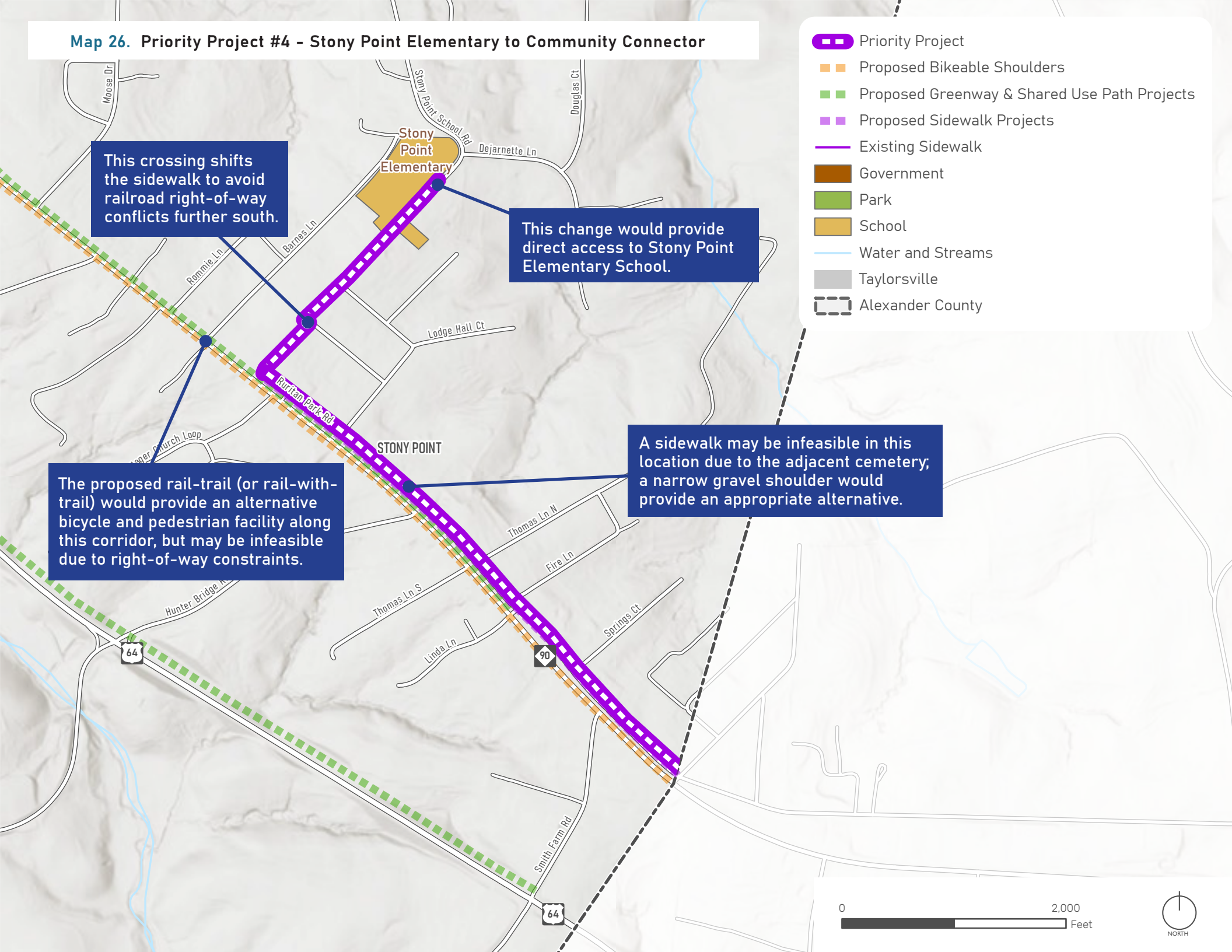
- Priority Project
- Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
- Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
- Proposed Sidewalk Projects
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

This crossing shifts the sidewalk to avoid railroad right-of-way conflicts further south.

This change would provide direct access to Stony Point Elementary School.

The proposed rail-trail (or rail-with-trail) would provide an alternative bicycle and pedestrian facility along this corridor, but may be infeasible due to right-of-way constraints.

A sidewalk may be infeasible in this location due to the adjacent cemetery; a narrow gravel shoulder would provide an appropriate alternative.



PRIORITY PROJECT #5: NC 90 SIDEWALK (GOLF COURSE TO DOWNTOWN)

The NC 90 corridor functions as a higher-speed suburban roadway transitioning into a lower-speed downtown gateway approach but it currently lacks continuous sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings. This project would construct new sidewalks along key segments of NC 90, closing gaps in the pedestrian network and improving access to downtown Taylorsville. The project emphasizes sidewalk continuity, improved safety at side street crossings, and identification of future intersection upgrades that could support all-way pedestrian crossings once complementary improvements are implemented.

Location: NC 90 from Golf Course Ln / US 64 to NC 16 / Liledoun Road / Main Avenue in downtown Taylorsville.

Total Length (Approximate): 1.2 miles

Facility Type:

Short Term: Continuous sidewalks (minimum 6 feet wide) along the south side of NC 90, with a short sidewalk segment along the north side, and marked pedestrian crossings at side streets and select intersections.

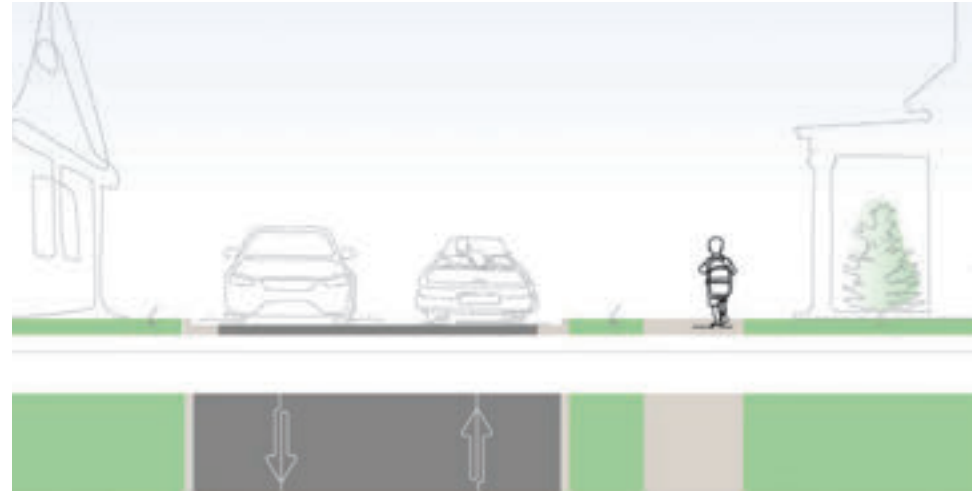
Long Term: Continuous sidewalks and bike lanes along *both* sides (or a multi-use sidepath along one side).

Intersection Treatments:

- High-visibility crossings across NC 90 at 3 Forks Church Rd and Airport Rd intersections.
- Marked crosswalks across side streets at stop-controlled intersections to maintain pedestrian continuity along the corridor.
- ADA-compliant curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces at all crossings.
- Future consideration for intersection upgrades at NC 90 / US 64 to support all-way pedestrian crossings.

Implementation Partners: NCDOT, Town of Taylorsville, Alexander County, local property owners and businesses.

Image 37. NC 90 Proposed Cross-Section (Short Term)



(If major roadway reconstruction occurs, the long-term facility is the ideal condition.)

Table 10. Priority Project #5 Planning Level Cost Estimate (Short Term)

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,506,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$244,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$298,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Construction)	\$223,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$2,271,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 27. Priority Project #5 - NC 90 Sidewalk (Golf Course to Downtown)

- Priority Project
- Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
- Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
- Proposed Sidewalk Projects
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

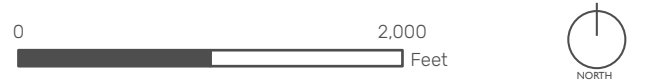
Opportunities for future connections to proposed greenways along US 64.

Crossings providing access to residents on Three Forks Church Rd and Airport Rd.

Signalized pedestrian crossing across Liledoun Rd.

Gives students more of an opportunity to walk to school.

Enables residents to walk to downtown Taylorsville.



PRIORITY PROJECT #6: 7TH STREET SW SIDEWALKS

This project would construct new sidewalks along both sides of 7th Street SW, improving pedestrian access between downtown Taylorsville, Alexander Central High School, Taylorsville Elementary School, and several key County facilities, including the Senior Center, Administration Offices, and Department of Social Services. Several crossings are proposed to reduce walking distances and enhance safety along the corridor. The western sidewalk would connect to the existing sidewalk network at Cougar Avenue SW, helping complete a continuous pedestrian route to downtown.

Location: 7th Street SW from Liledoun Road to Main Avenue.

Total Length (Approximate): 0.7 miles

Facility Type:

Short Term: Continuous 6' minimum sidewalk along the west side of 7th St SW, with shared road bicycle treatments; marked pedestrian crossings at select side street locations and upgraded pedestrian signal equipment at Main Ave.

Long Term: Sidewalk on *both* sides of 7th St SW, with shared road bicycle treatments.

Intersection Treatments:

- Pedestrian crossings across 7th Street SW at College Road Extension, 6th Street, and 4th Avenue SW.
- Marked crosswalks across side streets at stop-controlled intersections to maintain pedestrian continuity along the corridor.
- Upgraded pedestrian signal equipment and marked crosswalks at the intersection of 7th Street SW and West Main Avenue.
- High visibility crosswalk markings and advance warning signage at all crossings.
- ADA-compliant curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces at crossing locations.

Image 38. 7th Street SW Proposed Cross-Section (Long Term)














(If major roadway reconstruction occurs, the long-term facility is the ideal condition.)

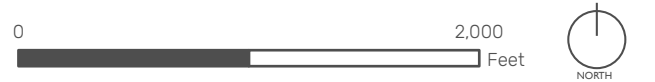
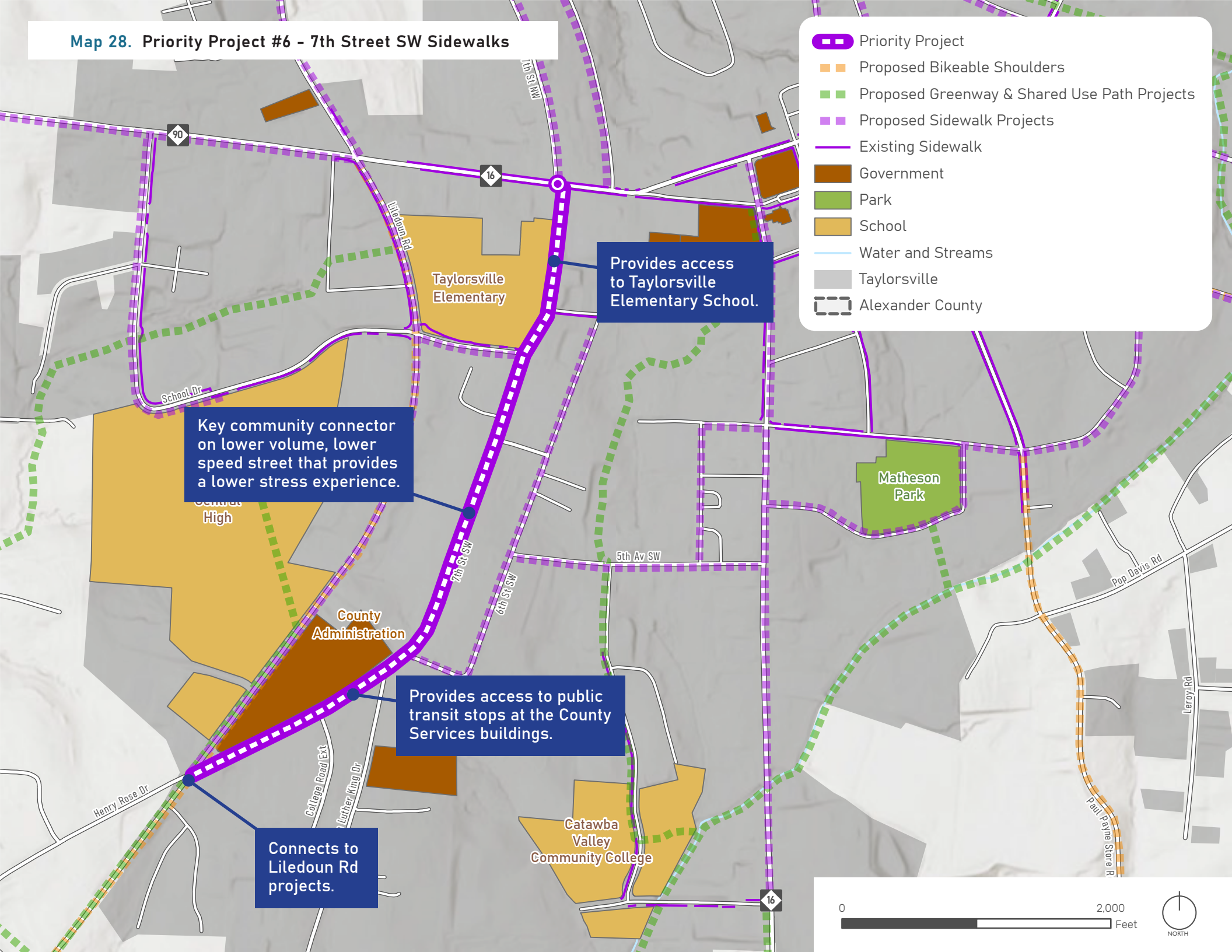
Table 11. Priority Project #6 Planning Level Cost Estimate (Long Term)

	Cost
Baseline Construction (2026, incl. Baseline Contingency)	\$1,489,000
Escalation to 2029 (5% for 3 Years)	\$241,000
CEI (12%) + 5% Contingency	\$295,000
Survey & Design (20% of 2026 Baseline Construction)	\$221,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$2,246,000

Opinion of Probable Construction Cost represents the typical construction costs in 2025 dollars and is based on preliminary linear feet of the proposed facility type. Cost does not include escalation, ROW, engineering, survey, construction administration, landscaping, etc. These additional costs can vary greatly based on project complexity and funding source. See cost estimate summary in Appendix for additional details.

Map 28. Priority Project #6 - 7th Street SW Sidewalks

-  Priority Project
-  Proposed Bikeable Shoulders
-  Proposed Greenway & Shared Use Path Projects
-  Proposed Sidewalk Projects
-  Existing Sidewalk
-  Government
-  Park
-  School
-  Water and Streams
-  Taylorsville
-  Alexander County



DEVELOPING GREENWAYS: FROM VISION TO REALITY

In Alexander County, the idea of a greenway network is just beginning to take shape but its potential is promising. While no formal greenways currently exist, this plan lays the groundwork for a future system that connects communities, showcases the county's natural beauty, and offers safe, scenic routes for walking, biking, and recreation.

The proposed network includes greenways along major creeks and rivers, as well as a signature rail-to-trail or rail-with-trail corridor that could link multiple communities along an existing rail line. These corridors would offer a new kind of mobility for Alexander County, connecting homes, schools, parks, and important services while encouraging healthy activity and outdoor exploration. But turning greenway ideas from a line on a map to a real trail requires long-term vision, collaboration, and persistence.

FEASIBILITY FIRST

The first step in greenway development is understanding what's possible. Feasibility studies are needed to evaluate route options, drainage and floodplain issues, necessary bridges or culverts, rail corridor ownership, and potential trailhead locations. These early studies help determine costs, partners, and phasing.

PARTNERSHIPS + COORDINATION

Proposed routes that follow active or inactive rail lines will require coordination with NCDOT's Rail Division and/or the owner of the line, while riverside alignments must consider floodplain regulations and environmental permitting. Success also depends on working closely with utility providers, adjacent property owners, and local jurisdictions.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Building trust with residents, especially landowners near proposed greenways, is key. Community outreach helps address concerns, answer questions, and foster a sense of ownership and pride in the project. Engaging schools, churches, and civic groups early can build the broad base of support needed to move a project forward.

FUNDING + MOMENTUM

Greenways are often built in phases, with funding from a mix of federal, state, local, and private sources. Successful trail systems often benefit from local champions or nonprofit partners such as a future "Friends of the Greenway" group to help raise funds, write grants, and advocate for progress. These grassroots efforts can keep the project moving, even during long planning or permitting periods.

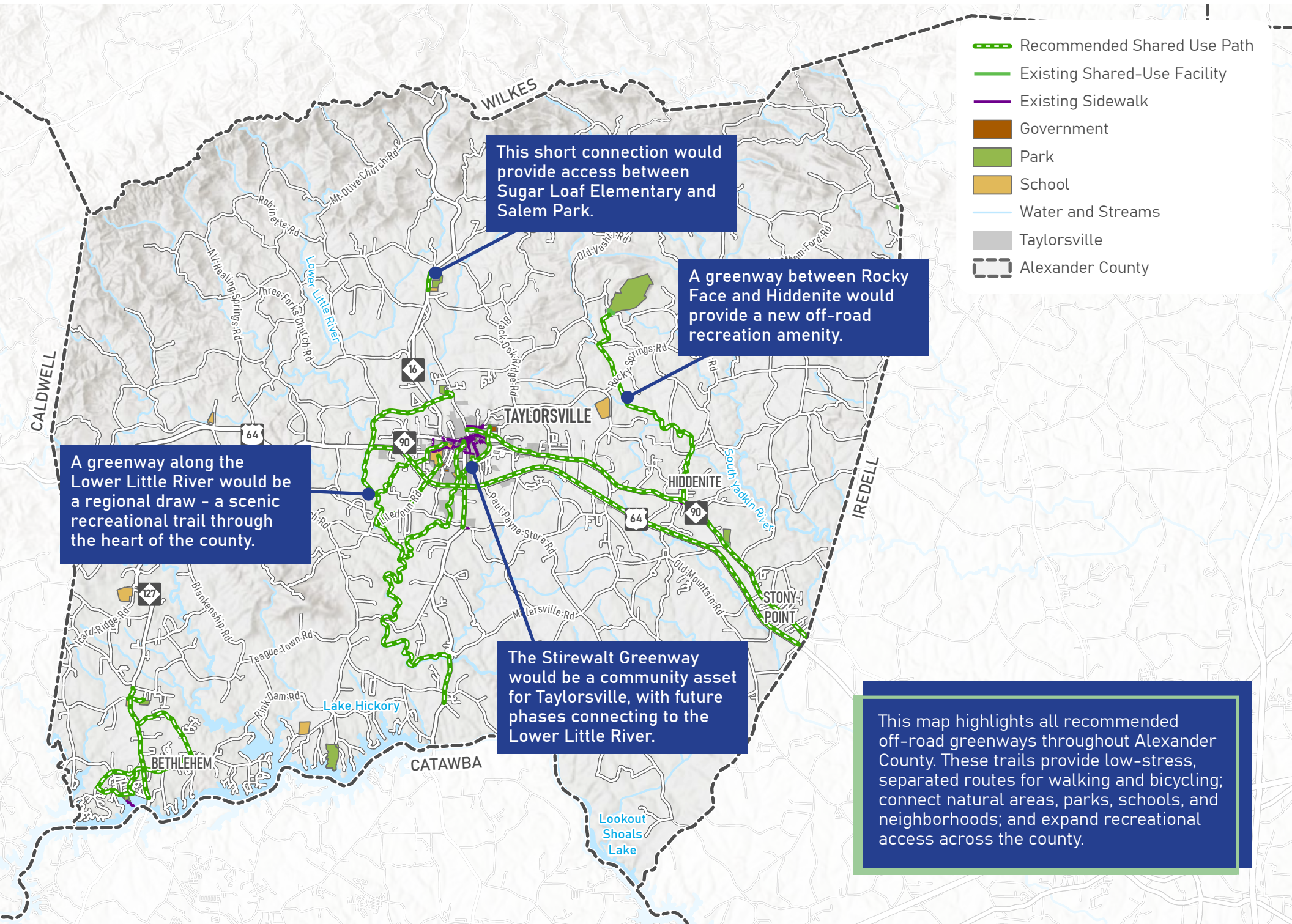
Image 39. Existing Greenway at the Wittenburg Access Area



The greenway at Wittenburg Access offers a quiet, scenic out-and-back walk to a lakeside dock, with parking, a beach area, and lush natural surroundings.

Image Source: McAdams

Map 29. Proposed Greenways



- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Existing Shared-Use Facility
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- Alexander County

This short connection would provide access between Sugar Loaf Elementary and Salem Park.

A greenway between Rocky Face and Hiddenite would provide a new off-road recreation amenity.

A greenway along the Lower Little River would be a regional draw - a scenic recreational trail through the heart of the county.

The Stirewalt Greenway would be a community asset for Taylorsville, with future phases connecting to the Lower Little River.

This map highlights all recommended off-road greenways throughout Alexander County. These trails provide low-stress, separated routes for walking and bicycling; connect natural areas, parks, schools, and neighborhoods; and expand recreational access across the county.

BUILDING A CONNECTED BETHLEHEM

Bethlehem is growing and already has great places to go: Wittenburg Access (beach and walking trail), Bethlehem Community Park, Bethlehem Library and Post Office, and a cluster of shops and services along NC 127. These destinations are close together, but there are almost no sidewalks, shoulders, or safe crossings to link them. Residents asked for safe ways to walk and bike; and existing plans say the same. With more homes and businesses on the way, this is the time to put in the connections that will serve today's trips and tomorrow's growth.

Walk & Bike Alexander County recommends a number of multimodal infrastructure improvements in the area, including the following:

1. A low-stress bike network on rural roads with bikeable shoulders.
2. A greenway between Bethlehem Community Park and the elementary school.
3. A figure-eight loop or multi-use paths that tie neighborhoods to the NC 127 commercial core and provide a link to the Wittenburg Access Area.
4. Sidewalks or sidepaths around the area that include the post office, library, and Starbucks.
5. Coordination with NCDOT's planned NC 127 project to deliver a complete corridor (multi-use path and sidewalk, with improved crossings).

COMMUNITY + LAND USE

Bethlehem residents are engaged in planning for how and where growth should occur. Sidewalks, sidepaths, safe crossings, and improved shoulders will serve existing trips now and prepare for future housing. As more homes and services arrive, more people will want to walk for short trips and some will choose to bike. The County can guide this by partnering with residents on a shared vision, coordinating closely with NCDOT on NC 127, and ensuring parks and community spaces are reachable without a car.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Opportunities

- Destinations are relatively close together, which makes walking and short bike trips viable.
- Strong public support exists for safer walking and biking on rural roads with no shoulders.
- A park, a school, the lake, and the commercial core create natural anchors for a connected network.
- An upcoming NCDOT project on NC 127 can carry a large share of the corridor upgrades if coordinated early.

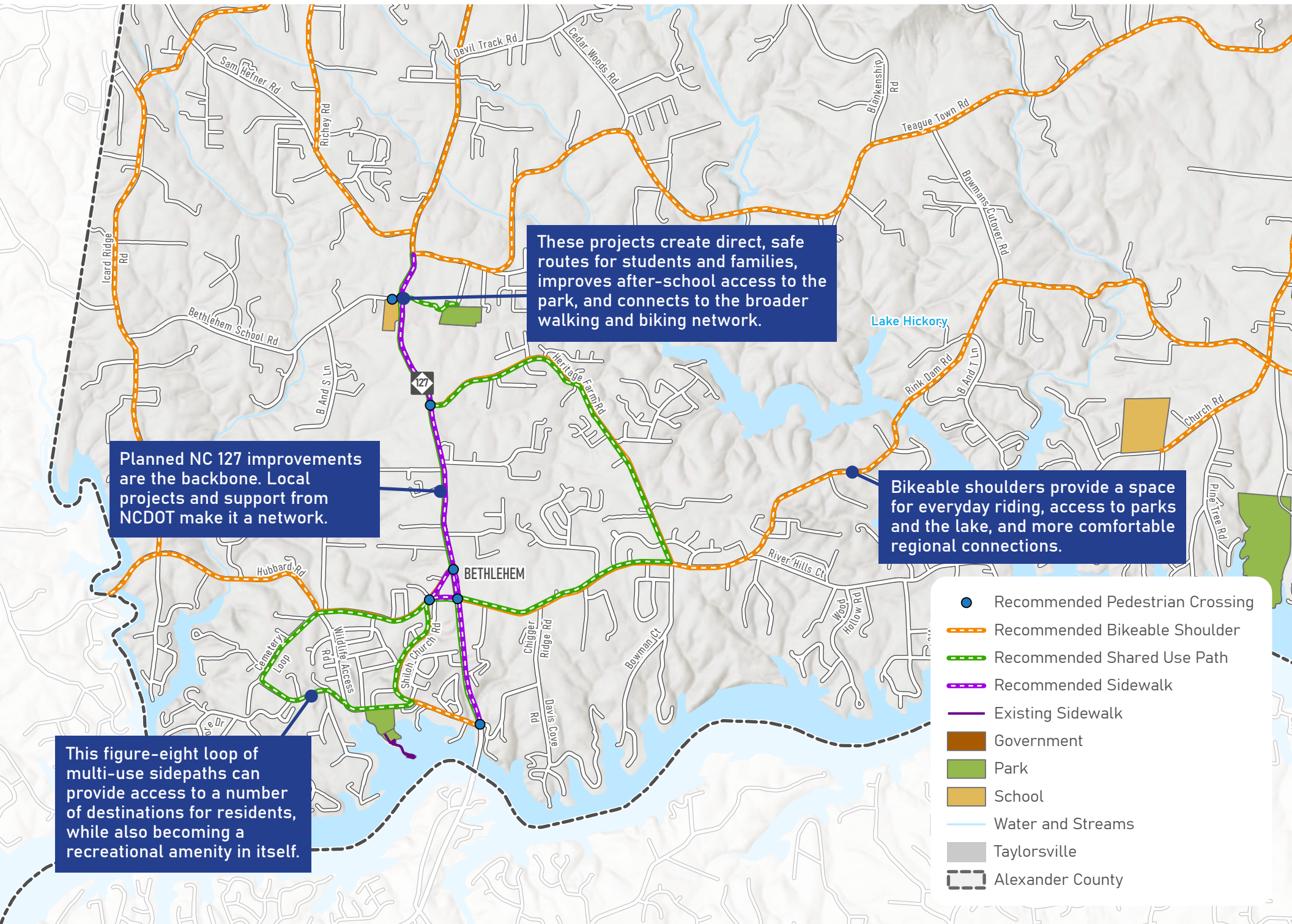
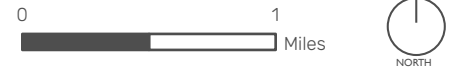
Challenges

- Today there are almost no shoulders on key rural roads, limiting safe bicycling.
- High driveway density and wide entrances along NC 127 can interrupt sidewalks and sidepaths.
- Crossing NC 127 requires careful design and signal timing.
- Growth pressures will add more trips unless safe walking and biking options are built.

“ I would love to see more access to outdoor areas with walking trails. ”

- Survey Respondent

Map 30. Bethlehem Area Projects



These projects create direct, safe routes for students and families, improves after-school access to the park, and connects to the broader walking and biking network.

Planned NC 127 improvements are the backbone. Local projects and support from NCDOT make it a network.

Bikeable shoulders provide a space for everyday riding, access to parks and the lake, and more comfortable regional connections.

This figure-eight loop of multi-use sidepaths can provide access to a number of destinations for residents, while also becoming a recreational amenity in itself.

- Recommended Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Bikeable Shoulder
- Recommended Shared Use Path
- Recommended Sidewalk
- Existing Sidewalk
- Government
- Park
- School
- Water and Streams
- Taylorsville
- - - Alexander County

BIKEABLE SHOULDERS: A RURAL STRATEGY FOR SAFER CYCLING

In rural counties like Alexander, traditional bike lanes are often impractical due to limited road width, lower population density, and the cost of full roadway reconstruction. However, providing safe, comfortable space for people to bike remains essential, especially as interest in recreational cycling grows and more residents seek alternatives for short trips. That’s where bikeable shoulders come in.

WHAT ARE BIKEABLE SHOULDERS?

Bikeable shoulders are paved areas alongside the main travel lane that provide space for people biking or walking, particularly on roads without sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes. Unlike marked bike lanes, bikeable shoulders typically have the following characteristics:

- Do not require signage or striping designating them as official bike lanes
- Can be used by pedestrians where sidewalks are absent
- Can be built incrementally as part of resurfacing or widening projects
- Still serve as crucial space for people biking to maintain separation from fast-moving traffic

Table 12. Bike Lanes vs. Bikeable Shoulders Comparison

Feature	Bike Lanes	Bikeable Shoulders
Marked and signed?	Yes	No (optional)
Urban or rural use?	Urban and suburban	Rural and low-density areas
Required width	Typically 5 feet or wider	Minimum 4 feet (5+ preferred)
Cost and feasibility	Higher (requires design changes)	Lower (often added during repaving)

Image 40. Paved Shoulder Conceptual Rendering

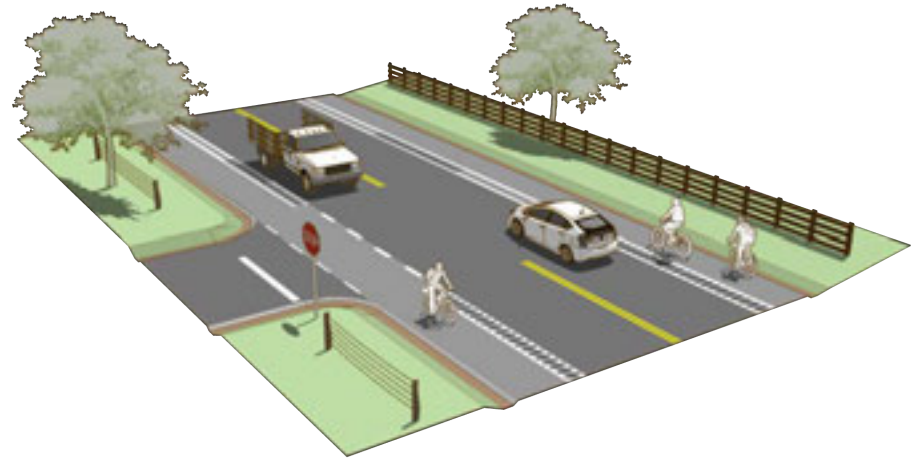


Image Source: FHWA

“ Most roads have no shoulder, so it is less than safe to walk or bike. ”
 - Survey Respondent

Image 41. Paved Shoulder Cross-Section

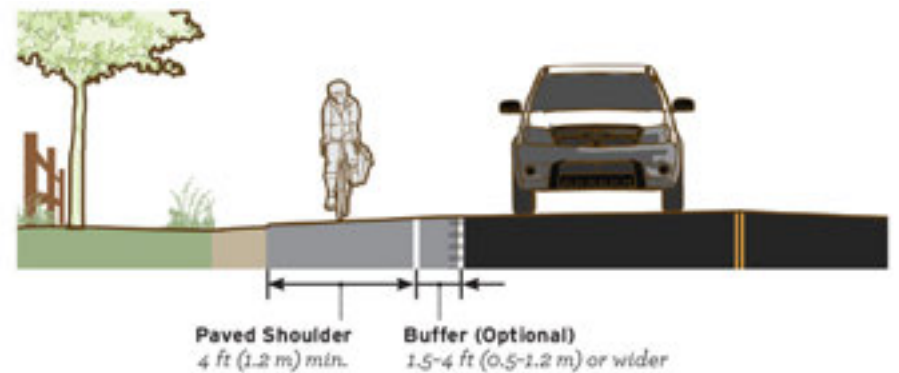


Image Source: FHWA

WHY BIKEABLE SHOULDERS WORK FOR ALEXANDER COUNTY

Alexander County's roadway network consists primarily of two-lane rural highways and local roads, many of which carry higher-speed traffic. On these corridors, the following conditions often apply:

- Conventional bike lanes may require roadway widening, new striping, and ongoing maintenance, which are not always feasible or cost-effective in rural settings.
- Paved shoulders can often be implemented more easily, particularly during routine resurfacing, rehabilitation, or maintenance projects.
- Bikeable shoulders support both recreational and everyday trips, especially travel between small communities, schools, parks, and rural destinations.
- Bikeable shoulders improve safety by providing clearer separation and recovery space, giving both drivers and cyclists more time and room to react.

This approach aligns with best practices for rural transportation used across North Carolina and the United States, particularly in counties where bicycling is increasing but urban-style infrastructure may be challenging to implement.

Image 42. Paved Bikeable Shoulder



Image Source: Mike Rudelt

Paved shoulders give people a dedicated space to bike along rural roads, helping create conditions for everyday biking.

PAIRING WITH SIDEPATHS

While bikeable shoulders are ideal for rural roads with lower development densities, they can be paired with sidepaths in more developed or high-activity areas such as near schools, parks, and community facilities. Sidepaths are paved, off-street paths (usually 10+ feet wide) that run parallel to a road, accommodating both walkers and cyclists in a shared space.



Image Source: FHWA

Image 43. Sidepath to Shoulder Conceptual Rendering

BUILDING A SAFER RURAL NETWORK

By incorporating bikeable shoulders into road improvement projects, Alexander County can take a cost-effective, context-sensitive step toward a safer active transportation network. These facilities provide the following benefits:

- Safer options for people biking in rural areas
- Room for walkers or runners where sidewalks don't exist
- Added roadway resiliency and maintenance benefits, like reduced edge erosion

WALKING + BIKING TO SCHOOL |||||

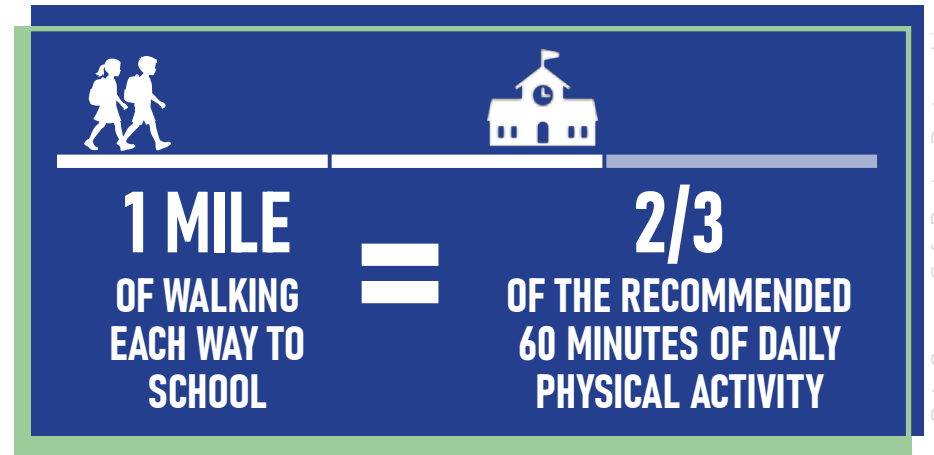
Safe walking and biking routes to school are among the most impactful investments a community can make. They give students and families more choices for how to reach their destinations, support daily physical activity, and reduce traffic around schools. Even short walks from nearby neighborhoods, parks, or community centers are linked to better physical health, improved focus during the school day, and stronger mental wellbeing. For many families, simply having the option to walk or bike is as important as the trip itself.

Alexander County’s schools are often close to parks, neighborhoods, and community amenities; however, direct and comfortable walking and biking connections are limited. Sidewalk gaps, missing shoulders, and a lack of protected crossings make even short trips feel uncomfortable. This plan identifies targeted improvements, including short greenways, new sidewalks, shoulder upgrades, and safer crossings, that create realistic opportunities for students to walk or bike for part or all of their trip.

Image 44. Walking to School in Taylorsville



Students walking to school in Taylorsville, illustrating the need for safe crossings and continuous sidewalks.



Data Source: Safe Routes Partnership

TYPES OF SCHOOL ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Safe routes to school come from a mix of improvements that work together to create comfortable, predictable paths for students and families. Short greenways and shared-use paths provide low-stress links between schools and nearby destinations, especially where wooded corridors or public land create natural alignments, such as the planned Bethlehem Park–Bethlehem Elementary connector. Continuous sidewalks near schools help students travel safely from homes, daycares, churches, and after-school programs; and they also make “park and walk” or “park and ride” trips easier during busy drop-off and pick-up times. Where students must cross higher-speed roads, treatments like high-visibility markings, refuge islands, RRFBs, and pedestrian signals can make wide or busy roadways easier to navigate. In more rural areas where sidewalks aren’t feasible, bikeable shoulders offer a practical alternative by creating space for bicycling, adding a buffer from traffic, and linking outlying neighborhoods to schools and community destinations.

Selecting the right facility in each context requires coordination with NCDOT and Alexander County Schools to understand traffic speeds, sight distance, and student travel patterns. This ensures improvements fit real-world needs and support safe, active travel for students and families.

Image 45. Crossing at Alexander Central High School



Sidewalk access is important for students to be able to get to school on foot, and crossings help ensure they can access the campus safely.

SUPPORTING PROGRAMS + PARTNERSHIPS

Improving bike and pedestrian access to schools requires a combination of infrastructure, education, and collaboration. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs help communities make walking and biking safer and more appealing by pairing infrastructure upgrades with activities such as Walk to School Days, bike rodeos, and walking school buses. Even small programming efforts can build comfort and awareness as new facilities come online. NCDOT also supports school travel safety through education and equipment initiatives, including helmet giveaways and bike safety demonstrations, which can enhance and reinforce new infrastructure.

Effective school access projects rely on strong partnerships. Alexander County Schools can help identify student travel patterns and key safety needs; NCDOT Division 12 can review and approve crossing treatments, signals, and shoulder improvements on state-maintained roads. Meanwhile, Alexander County can support project development and easement coordination, and integrate school connections into greenway planning. Local civic groups and community organizations can also support events, safety education, and outreach that encourage families to walk and bike.

Image 46. Walking School Bus Route Map Example



Schools in Taylorsville and across Alexander County can organize "walking school bus" groups, where students meet at set points and walk to school together. A teacher, staff member, or parent can serve as the route leader to help coordinate times and communication. Even one day a week can build confidence, encourage healthy habits, and help students make use of new sidewalks and safer crossings.

IMPLEMENTATION + FUNDING

Projects near schools often perform well in competitive funding programs. Key sources include SRTS funding for education and small infrastructure, NCDOT divisional and spot safety funds for crossings and sidewalk infill, and federal programs such as CMAQ, TAP, RAISE, and SS4A. Local partnerships can also help secure easements or construct short connector paths. Many projects can be built in phases, beginning with lower-cost crossings or path segments before expanding into full sidewalk or greenway connections. Prioritizing access to schools ensures that improvements benefit students, families, and surrounding neighborhoods, creating a safer and more connected network for Alexander County's next generation.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR WALKING + BIKING

Creating a safe and connected walking and biking network in Alexander County goes beyond building trails, sidewalks, and bikeable shoulders. It also means ensuring that the design, comfort, and accessibility of the system work for everyone, across all ages, abilities, and communities. This section highlights additional infrastructure and policy considerations that support the success of the larger network.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

Everyone, whether walking, using a wheelchair, pushing a stroller, or navigating with limited vision, should be able to move safely and confidently throughout Alexander County. That requires designing and maintaining walking and biking infrastructure that meets ADA standards and removes physical and navigational barriers. As Alexander County invests in new projects and retrofits existing ones, attention should be paid to these important factors:

- Follow best practices from PROWAG (Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines)
- Audit and map existing barriers to accessible travel
- Integrate accessibility into all new designs from the outset, not as an afterthought

These improvements address compliance requirements but also provide essential quality-of-life benefits. For residents with mobility challenges, accessible sidewalks, safe crossings, and thoughtfully designed public spaces are vital connections to healthcare, education, jobs, and community life. Designing for universal access helps create a system that works for everyone, whether they are walking, rolling, using a mobility device, or pushing a stroller.

WHAT IS ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination and requires sidewalks, crosswalks, parking areas, transit stops, and other public facilities to be accessible to people with disabilities. It includes features such as curb ramps, level routes, detectable warnings, and parking spaces that allow people with mobility or vision impairments to move safely and independently.



Image 47. Accessible Parking at Alexander Courthouse Park



Alexander County has already made meaningful progress by providing ADA-compliant parking spaces and access routes at many County parks. Continuing this commitment in future sidewalk, greenway, and roadway projects will ensure that people of all ages and abilities can use the walking and biking network comfortably and confidently.

Image Source: McAdams

ACCESS TO TRANSIT

Although most of Alexander County is rural, public transit remains an essential service for older adults, people with disabilities, and residents without access to a personal vehicle. The Greenway Public Transportation system, including its “Around Town” route in Taylorsville, offers valuable connections to major services such as grocery stores, clinics, and government offices. To strengthen the link between walking, biking, and transit, Alexander County can...



LINK BUS STOPS WITH SIDEWALKS

Improve pedestrian access to bus stops, especially near medical facilities or shopping.



INVEST IN AMENITIES

Add amenities such as benches, shelters, and lighting at key bus stops.



ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY

Make sure every bus stop is ADA-accessible, with curb ramps, paved pads, and clear signage.



CONNECT GREENWAYS TO TRANSIT

Locate future trails or bike routes near transit hubs to create multimodal connections.



MAKE BIKE PARKING EASY

Provide bicycle parking facilities near bus stops to enable truly multimodal trips.

Image 48. Accessible Bus Stop Example



An accessible, comfortable bus stop with an ADA pad, sidewalk connection, bench, and bike rack, supporting safe and convenient transit access.

Image Source: Sustain Charlotte

GREENWAY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROVIDES
250,000+
TRIPS PER YEAR TO RESIDENTS LIVING IN
ALEXANDER, BURKE, CALDWELL, AND CATAWBA
COUNTIES.

Data Source: Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority



Image Source: McAdams

CHAPTER 5

PROGRAMS + POLICIES

SUPPORTING A CULTURE OF WALKING AND BIKING

Building safe and connected infrastructure is essential, but infrastructure alone isn't enough. Programs and policies that promote walking and biking help create a culture of active transportation, encourage community engagement, and ensure that investments in sidewalks, greenways, and bikeable shoulders are well-used and well-supported.

This section outlines recommended programs, speed management strategies, and policy approaches Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville can use to reinforce safe, inclusive, and multimodal transportation.

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS FOR TAYLORSVILLE + ALEXANDER COUNTY

These programs are grouped into four categories to help identify actions that align with community goals, available resources, and local capacity.



EDUCATION PROGRAMS



ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAMS



PROJECT-BASED PROGRAMS



EVALUATION + MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Educational efforts help people walk, bike, and drive more safely by increasing awareness, sharing best practices, and promoting mutual respect on the road.

NC Friendly Driver Program

This free, statewide workshop offered by BikeWalk NC teaches drivers how to safely share the road with people walking and biking and is especially valuable for municipal staff, school bus drivers, and delivery vehicle operators.

www.bikewalknc.org/safety-education/

NCDOT Bicycle Safety Education

NCDOT provides statewide bicycle safety information, including rules of the road, best practices for motorists and cyclists, and instructional materials used by schools, law enforcement, and community groups. These resources support safer interactions and promote consistent behaviors.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/cycling-safety.aspx

Image 49. BikeWalk NC Friendly Driver Program Outreach



This safety message helps remind drivers that people biking are simply traveling from place to place, just like anyone else. Education campaigns like this build understanding on the road and support the community's long-term goals for safer, more comfortable walking and biking.

Image Source: BikeWalk NC

Let's Go NC! Pedestrian + Bicycle Safety Curriculum

This pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum, created by NCDOT, helps children learn safe walking and biking skills through easy-to-use lessons, videos, and activities. The program promotes healthy, active lifestyles while reducing traffic injuries.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/lets-go-nc/Pages/default.aspx

Watch for Me NC

Watch for Me NC is a statewide education and enforcement campaign focused on improving safety for people walking and biking by raising awareness among drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists through outreach, training, and community partnerships.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/watch-for-me-nc.aspx

Cycling Safety Videos

The NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division partnered with BikeWalk NC to produce short, easy-to-understand videos that teach safe bicycling practices, rules of the road, and tips for how drivers and cyclists can safely share space.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/cycling-safety.aspx

Bicycle Helmet Initiative

The Bicycle Helmet Initiative distributes free helmets across North Carolina to reduce head injuries and fatalities among bicyclists, especially children. Community groups, law enforcement agencies, and schools may apply for helmets to support safety education efforts.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/bicycle-helmets.aspx

“ *Bike racks would be amazing for those who ride and need a safe spot to lock up their bikes.* ”

- Survey Respondent

Image 50. NCDOT Bicycle Helmet Giveaway



Image Source: McAdams

NCDOT's bicycle helmet giveaways help more children ride safely and confidently. Programs like this support community safety, reduce preventable injuries, and encourage families to choose active transportation.

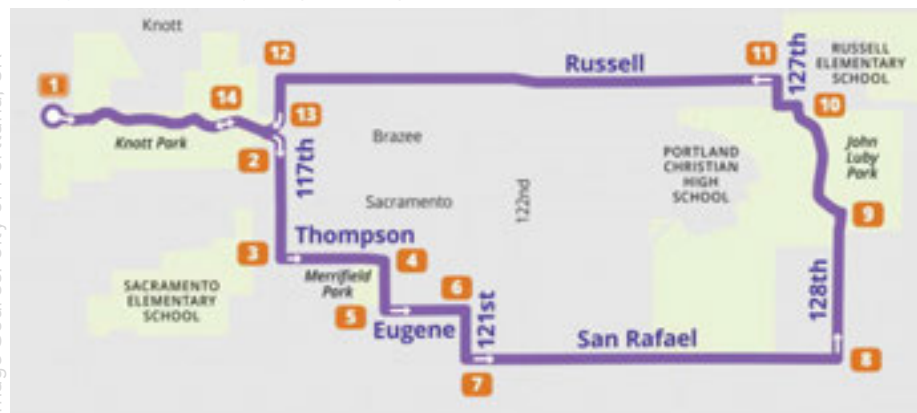
ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Encouragement programs help increase the visibility of walking and biking, build community enthusiasm, and support a culture where active transportation is a normal part of everyday life.

Local Walking + Biking Maps

User-friendly maps that show sidewalks, bikeable shoulders, sidepaths, and greenways can help residents and visitors identify safe, comfortable routes and better understand local connections.

Image 51. Walking Map Example



Example walking map showing a safe, connected route between parks and schools, helping people identify comfortable options for short everyday trips.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programming

Safe Routes to School is a national and statewide program that supports safer, more appealing environments for children to walk and bike to school. The program includes events, planning assistance, and local projects that reduce traffic congestion near schools, improve safety, and promote active transportation. School-based activities also help teach safe walking and biking habits while engaging parents and educators.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/safe-routes-school.aspx

Image 52. Multimodal Data Collection



A volunteer collecting walking and biking counts, a simple way to involve residents in data gathering while building community support for active transportation improvements.

Walk + Bike Counts / Community Data Days

Community walk and bike counts invite residents to participate in documenting when and where people are walking and biking. These efforts can raise awareness, build local ownership, and provide useful information over time about facility use.

“Share the Road” License Plate

North Carolina’s “Share the Road” specialty license plate generates funding for the Bicycle Helmet Initiative and helps broaden statewide awareness of bicycle safety. Plate purchases directly support programs that improve bicyclist safety.

www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/safety/Pages/share-road-plate.aspx

Community Walks or Rides

Group walks or bike rides organized by schools, churches, or civic organizations can encourage participation in active transportation while supporting recreation, fitness, and short everyday trips.

Open Streets Days

Open streets events temporarily calm or restrict vehicle traffic on selected streets, creating shared spaces that highlight opportunities for walking, biking, and community interaction near parks, schools, or downtown areas.

Image 53. Open Streets Event (Macon, GA)



Image Source: Bike Walk Macon

An open streets event creates a relaxed, car-free space where people can walk and bike comfortably, highlighting how temporary street closures can showcase the benefits of safer, more people-focused streets.

PROJECT-BASED PROGRAMS

Project-based programs focus on temporary or small-scale improvements that demonstrate how changes to the built environment can support safer walking and biking.

Neighborhood Slow Zones

Neighborhood slow zones typically use temporary signage, pavement markings, or small traffic-calming elements to reinforce lower speeds near schools, parks, or residential areas.

Wayfinding Pop-Ups

Temporary wayfinding signs showing walking times to parks, schools, and community destinations can help people visualize distances and highlight how closely connected local places are.

Image 54. Temporary Pedestrian Wayfinding Signs



Image Source: Richard Masoner

Temporary, community-led wayfinding signs showing simple walking routes, an easy and inexpensive way to help people explore their town and build support for permanent pedestrian improvements.

Community Crosswalk Paint Days

Community crosswalk painting projects, coordinated with NCDOT and or the Town of Taylorsville, can improve visibility at crossings while building local ownership and interest in pedestrian safety.

Image 55. Crosswalk Beautification



Image 56. Crosswalk Beautification Participant



A community-led crosswalk painting project that adds visibility, celebrates local identity, and draws attention to places where safer pedestrian crossings are needed.

EVALUATION + MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS

Evaluation and maintenance programs help support long-term system quality, safety, and performance as walking and biking networks expand.

Walking Audit Programs + Bus Stop Access Reviews

Walking audits around schools, parks, and downtown areas can identify issues such as damaged sidewalks, faded crossings, or overgrown vegetation. Similar reviews at bus stops, coordinated with Greenway Public Transportation, can help assess ADA pads, sidewalk connections, and amenities.

Parking Lot Pedestrian Route Reviews

Reviews of pedestrian circulation in parking lots at parks, schools, and County facilities can identify locations where marked walkways would improve safety and clarity for people walking.

Community Reporting Tool

Simple online reporting tools allow residents to share information about missing sidewalks, damaged curb ramps, or unsafe crossings, helping local agencies track issues and prioritize responses.

“ One place that could use a sidewalk is from the Walmart shopping center to in town. I see a lot of people walking NC-16 into town. ”

- Survey Respondent

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A WALKABLE, BIKEABLE COMMUNITY

Creating a truly walkable and bikeable Alexander County requires more than individual projects. It depends on a coordinated policy framework that shapes how streets are designed, how development occurs, and how public agencies work together. Incorporating pedestrian and bicycle considerations into local planning, ordinances, and development standards ensures that safety and accessibility are not treated as optional upgrades but as central components of how the county grows. Strong policies guide private development, support public investment, and help make active transportation part of everyday life.

Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville already have several foundational tools in place, including the Land Development Code, subdivision standards, and long-established relationships among County Planning, Town staff, and NCDOT. These tools determine when sidewalks are built, how streets connect, where curb ramps are installed, and whether new development contributes to a safer network. Strengthening these policies will help ensure that incremental growth results in meaningful, lasting improvements to walking and biking conditions.

“Traffic congestion is caused by vehicles, not by people in themselves.”

- Jane Jacobs, urbanist and author

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION POLICIES THAT SUPPORT WALKING AND BIKING

Compact, Mixed-Use Development Nodes

Alexander County's Land Development Code and Comprehensive Plan already direct growth to designated Urban Services areas. Building on this framework, continued emphasis on compact, mixed-use development in places such as Taylorsville, Bethlehem, and Stony Point can help ensure that new growth supports walkable and bike-friendly patterns. Focusing higher-intensity development near schools, parks, civic facilities, and commercial centers makes it more practical to provide sidewalks, shared-use paths, and safe crossings, and reduces the need for long vehicle trips. Over time, reinforcing these patterns supports aging in place, public health, and economic vitality while making it easier to connect new development into the county's active transportation network..

Connected Infrastructure Requirements

Current development standards already require pedestrian infrastructure in commercial development and in larger residential subdivisions. As growth continues, the County may consider whether existing thresholds effectively support connectivity in all contexts, particularly for smaller developments located near schools, parks, community facilities, or along corridors identified in *Walk & Bike Alexander County*. In these locations, even modest residential projects can contribute to closing network gaps when pedestrian connections are provided during development, reducing the need for costly retrofits later.

Equity in Mobility

Equitable mobility focuses on directing walking and biking improvements to places where residents have fewer transportation options and greater day-to-day needs. In Alexander County, this includes older neighborhoods in Taylorsville, unincorporated communities such as Hiddenite and Stony Point, and areas near schools, public parks, and transit service. Examples include prioritizing sidewalk infill in established neighborhoods, improving

pedestrian access to schools and parks, and ensuring transit stops have basic amenities such as ADA-accessible pads, sidewalk connections, and safe crossings. By focusing on these locations, the County can ensure that investments benefit residents who rely most on walking, rolling, bicycling, and transit for essential daily trips.

Greenway and Sidepath Integration

Policies can support long-term greenway and sidepath development by encouraging new developments to anticipate and accommodate planned connections. This may include dedicating easements along creeks, utility corridors, or property edges identified in adopted plans; aligning internal streets and open space toward future trail routes; and providing stub-outs or short connector paths where development borders schools, parks, or planned greenways. These measures allow small, incremental links to be built over time, forming the backbone of a connected countywide greenway and sidepath network and reducing the need for costly retrofits later.

Complete Streets Alignment

Ensure that County and Town of Taylorsville development standards and street and subdivision practices consistently reflect NCDOT's Complete Streets policy. This includes coordinating pedestrian and bicycle features during roadway projects, incorporating ADA-compliant curb ramps and crossings, evaluating the need for mid-block crossings, and considering traffic-calming approaches on Town-owned streets and in residential and school areas.



ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Strengthening Existing Codes

Most development reviews flow through Alexander County Planning and Development, with coordination from the Town of Taylorsville inside the corporate limits. This shared framework can be leveraged to better support pedestrian and bicycle needs by..

- Emphasizing exterior pedestrian connections from subdivisions and large sites to adjacent neighborhoods, public facilities, and existing or planned sidewalk, greenway, or sidepath networks, in addition to already required interior pedestrian connections.
- Adding bicycle parking requirements for commercial, civic, and multifamily sites.
- Encouraging early consideration of trail and sidepath alignments in subdivision design, including easements, stub-outs, or preserved corridors where future connections are identified in adopted plans.

Tying Policies to Capital Improvements

Subdivision and land development requirements can closely align with capital planning efforts, including the following:

- ADA curb ramp upgrades during resurfacing.
- Sidewalk infill in growth areas.
- Greenway trailhead access improvements.

By linking private development standards with public capital planning, the County and Town can consistently advance the multimodal network over time.

ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS FOR A MULTIMODAL COUNTY

A Unified Active Transportation Checklist

Create a simple internal checklist for reviewing all County and Town public projects. Even routine work such as drainage improvements, resurfacing, or shoulder stabilization can provide opportunities to add crosswalks, extend sidewalks, or improve ADA access.

Development Review Support

Provide guidance to developers on meeting required sidewalk standards (including the County's 6-foot minimum width), as well as on contexts where wider sidewalks or enhanced pedestrian treatments may be appropriate. Guidance on crossing treatments, greenway alignments, and bicycle parking can help clarify expectations, streamline approvals, and ensure quality outcomes.

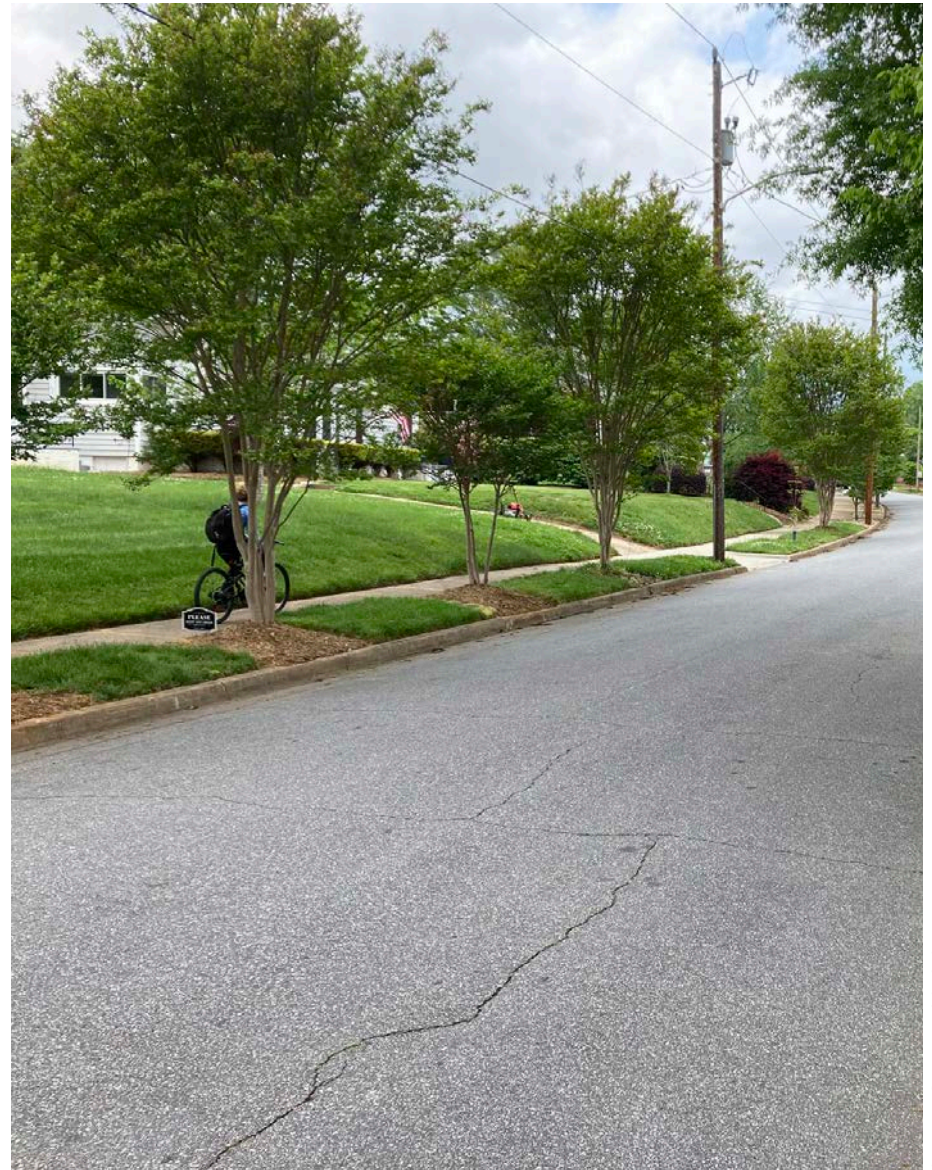
School and Park Coordination

Coordinate with the school system and Parks and Recreation to ensure new sidewalks, crosswalks, and greenways align with school entrances, playgrounds, and the locations where students and families actually walk.

Ongoing Code Updates

Review zoning and subdivision regulations every few years to reflect new best practices and project priorities. This keeps policies responsive to growth in Bethlehem, Taylorsville, and unincorporated areas of Stony Point and Hiddenite.

Image 57. Bicyclist on a Sidewalk in Taylorsville



A bicyclist riding on a sidewalk, a common choice where on-street conditions feel uncomfortable, underscoring the value of policies that support safe walking and biking connections to schools, parks, and other everyday destinations.

Image Source: McAdams

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION REVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist is provided as optional guidance to help County and Town staff identify opportunities to support walking, biking, and accessibility during projects coordinated with NCDOT, such as resurfacing, drainage, or roadway improvements. It is not intended to create new requirements, but to serve as a consistent screening tool that highlights low-cost opportunities to advance *Walk & Bike Alexander County* where feasible within the scope of planned work.

Table 13. SAMPLE Active Transportation Review Checklist

Topic Area	Screening Questions
Project Context	Is the project a resurfacing, safety, drainage, bridge, or shoulder improvement project under NCDOT jurisdiction?
Pedestrian Facilities	Are sidewalks present along the project corridor, and are there gaps or missing segments that could be addressed during construction?
	Are there existing or potential pedestrian crossings that could be added, refreshed, or upgraded as part of the project?
ADA Accessibility	Are curb ramps present at intersections within the project area, and do they meet current ADA standards?
	Does the project create an opportunity to add or upgrade ADA curb ramps, pedestrian signals, or detectable warnings?
Transit Access	Are there transit stops within or adjacent to the project limits?
	Could bus stop access be improved through ADA pads, sidewalk connections, lighting, or safer crossings?

Table 13. SAMPLE Active Transportation Review Checklist (Cont'd)

Topic Area	Screening Questions
Bicycle Considerations	Does the roadway include shoulders that could be improved to support bikeable shoulders through restriping or pavement work?
	Are there opportunities for signage or markings that would improve bicycle safety or visibility?
Safety + Speed	Are there known crash concerns, speeding issues, or limited sight distance affecting people walking or biking?
	Are schools, parks, senior housing, or community facilities nearby that generate pedestrian activity?
Connections to Plans	Is this corridor identified in <i>Walk & Bike Alexander County</i> for sidewalks, crossings, bike routes, or greenways?
Coordination + Follow-Up	Should coordination occur with NCDOT, Parks and Recreation, Greenway Public Transportation, or Alexander County Schools?
	Are there notes or opportunities to track for future project phases or capital planning?

THE PATH AHEAD

Zoning, subdivision standards, and coordinated planning are among the strongest tools Alexander County has to bring the *Walk & Bike Alexander County* plan to life. By strengthening these policies, aligning them with capital planning, and ensuring new development contributes to the pedestrian and bicycle network, the County and Town can make consistent, measurable progress toward a safer, healthier, and more connected community. When policies reinforce everyday walking and biking, the result is a transportation system that supports all residents, in every community, at every stage of life.

Table 14. Suggested Code Amendments

Current Code Language / Practice	Suggested Amendment to Support Walking + Biking
Sidewalk requirements apply only in some subdivision contexts and are sometimes less effective in rural areas.	Require sidewalks or sidepaths in growth areas, near schools and parks, and along Collector roads. Allow alternative treatments (bikeable shoulders, short connectors) in rural contexts.
Subdivision standards require street connectivity but do not explicitly require pedestrian or bike connections to nearby destinations.	Add a requirement that all new subdivisions provide pedestrian or bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas when feasible.
No formal process for completing sidewalk gaps during development or redevelopment.	Add a “connectivity contribution” or gap-closure requirement when development occurs along corridors identified in <i>Walk & Bike Alexander County</i> .
Limited standards for mid-block connections or cut-through paths.	Require short shared-use paths or easements when blocks are long or developments abut community destinations (parks, schools, greenways).
Bicycle parking is not addressed in existing codes.	Require short-term bike parking for commercial, civic, and multifamily projects, especially near parks, schools, and transit stops.

Table 14. Suggested Code Amendments (Cont'd)

Current Code Language / Practice	Suggested Amendment to Support Walking + Biking
Curb ramp upgrades occur inconsistently during resurfacing projects.	Coordinate with NCDOT to require ADA curb ramp upgrades and crosswalk restriping during resurfacing within Taylorsville and priority community centers.
Transit stops rely on voluntary improvements by developers.	Require sidewalk connections, ADA pads, and space for basic amenities (bench, pad for shelter) for any development adjacent to a designated transit stop location.
Current Code Language / Practice	Suggested Amendment to Support Walking + Biking
Greenway and sidepath easements are negotiated case-by-case.	Update subdivision and zoning standards to encourage dedication of greenway easements along streams, utility corridors, and other planned routes.
No reference to traffic calming in local street design standards.	Add guidance allowing speed cushions, mini-traffic circles, visual narrowing, or curb extensions on local streets in school zones and neighborhood centers.
Parking lots generally lack designated pedestrian routes.	Require marked pedestrian paths through large parking lots, especially at civic uses, schools, and commercial centers.
Limited requirements for lighting near sidewalks and crossings.	Add minimum pedestrian-scale lighting standards for sidewalks, crossings, and internal pedestrian routes in new developments.
Inconsistent internal coordination between County and Town during development review.	Establish a shared active transportation review checklist used by both agencies for all subdivision and site plan applications.

Figure 10. How Policy Decisions Shape the Walking + Biking Network

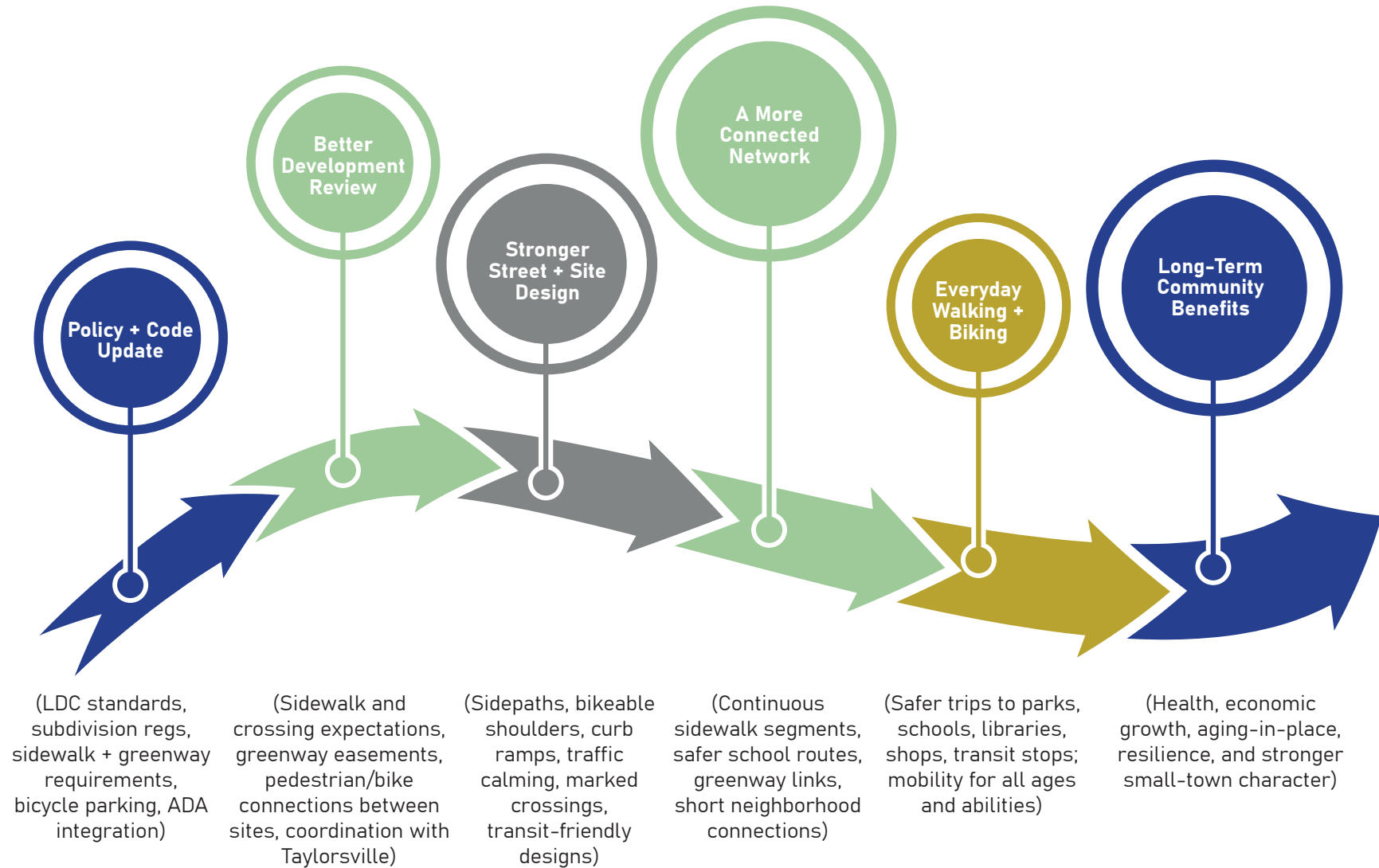




Image Source: Canopy MLS

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION

FROM PLAN TO ACTION

Walk & Bike Alexander County presents a vision for improving safety, connectivity, and active transportation across the county. But transforming ideas into real-world infrastructure requires more than a plan on paper; it calls for leadership, persistence, strong partnerships, and strategic investments over time. This chapter outlines the tools and strategies to guide implementation: who needs to be involved, what steps to take, and how to align priorities with funding opportunities. It also introduces a flexible multi-year Action Plan designed to evolve as new needs and partnerships emerge.

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The plan recommends infrastructure, policies, and programs across multiple timeframes, including short-term (0–3 years), medium-term (3–5 years), and long-term (5+ years), as well as ongoing tasks that are recurring or need persistent effort. These recommendations are designed to be scalable based on available resources, community readiness, and momentum. The Action Plan framework provides local leaders with a clear path to...

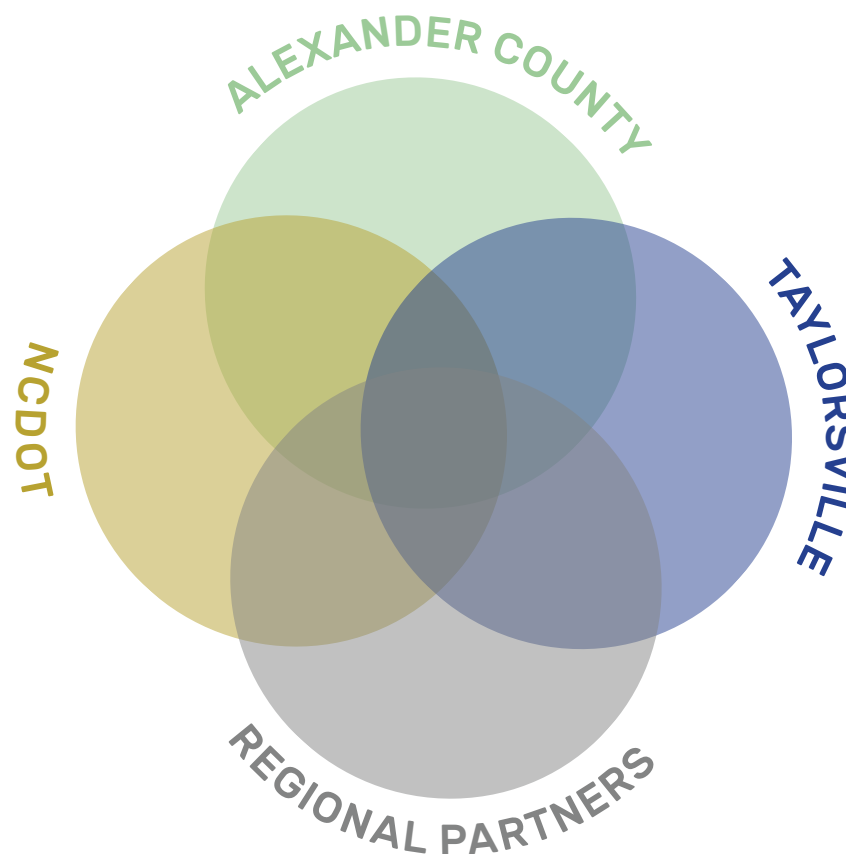
- Prioritize and fund shovel-ready projects
- Align with NCDOT's planning and programming cycles
- Engage residents and stakeholders
- Leverage quick wins and pilot projects
- Build the case for long-term investment

“ I think more green spaces with trails would be a fantastic improvement. ”
 - Survey Respondent

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Delivering this vision will require collaboration across local, regional, and state partners. Each brings critical capacity, knowledge, and funding to support the design, development, and long-term success of walking and biking investments.

Figure 11. Key Implementation Partners



Alexander County

Primary Role: Regional collaborator and land use authority

As the lead agency for *Walk & Bike Alexander County*, the County plays a central role in policy, coordination, and implementation across municipal and unincorporated areas.

- Adopt and incorporate the plan into county ordinances, development policies, and capital planning efforts
- Coordinate with NCDOT and the Greater Hickory MPO (GHMPO) on project prioritization, funding, and STIP alignment
- Support sidewalk, bikeway, and greenway projects that extend beyond municipal limits
- Align land use and development decisions with active transportation goals
- Pursue grants and engage landowners to advance priority greenway and trail segments
- Promote trails and access to natural resources through tourism and economic development efforts
- Integrate active transportation into County public health programming and initiatives

Town of Taylorsville

Primary Role: Project champion and municipal implementation lead

As the County's only municipality, Taylorsville is a key partner for delivering on-the-ground walking, biking, and transit improvements where activity is most concentrated.

- Adopt and incorporate plan recommendations into local ordinances and development review processes
- Oversee design and construction of sidewalks, crossings, traffic calming, and downtown projects
- Coordinate with NCDOT and GHMPO on funding, prioritization, and implementation within town limits
- Pursue grants and support landowner coordination for greenways
- Lead public outreach and integrate projects with Town events, placemaking efforts, and community initiatives

Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO)

Primary Role: Technical advisor and funding advocate

GHMPO connects local priorities in Alexander County to regional and state transportation decision-making.

- Assist with submitting bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects for STIP prioritization
- Ensure regional transportation plans reflect local walking and biking needs
- Provide technical support for project prioritization, scoring, and long-range coordination

NCDOT (Division 12 & Integrated Mobility Division)

Primary Role: Infrastructure partner and funding provider

NCDOT, through Division 12 and the Integrated Mobility Division (IMD), is a critical partner for improvements within state-maintained rights-of-way.

- Implement Complete Streets policies and multimodal design guidance
- Review and approve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements on state roads
- Coordinate resurfacing, safety projects, and cost-effective multimodal enhancements
- Provide planning support and funding through IMD-administered programs

Alexander County Schools

Primary Role: Safe Routes to School partner

Schools play a vital role in improving safety, access, and education for young people and families.

- Help identify walking and biking gaps near school campuses
- Support education, encouragement, and safety programs
- Encourage student and family participation in active travel initiatives

Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA)

Primary Role: Transit operations and accessibility partner

WPRTA operates local transit service and supports multimodal access across Alexander County.

- Collaborate on bus stop inventories, ADA access reviews, and amenity improvements
- Coordinate installation of signage, seating, shelters, and bicycle parking at transit stops
- Support transit education and outreach efforts, including integration with Safe Routes to School programs
- Partner on mobility hubs and strategies that connect transit with walking and biking networks

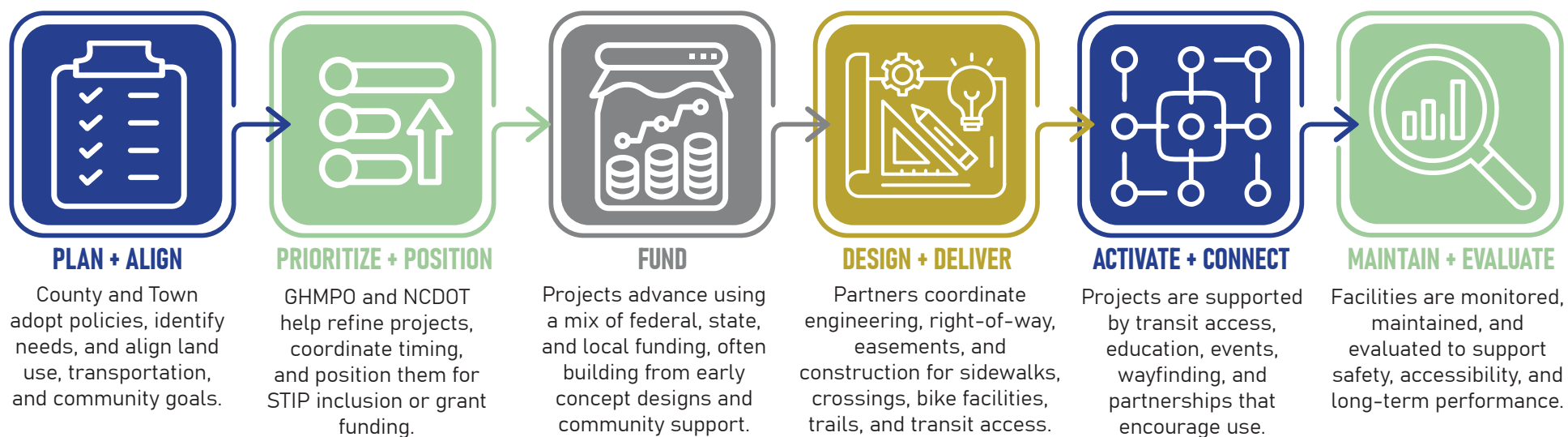
Land Trusts and Conservation Organizations

Primary Role: Greenway and trail implementation partners

Land trusts play a critical role in advancing long-term greenway and trail connectivity in Alexander County, particularly where projects rely on voluntary landowner participation or conservation-based approaches.

- Identify and evaluate potential greenway, rail-trail, and trail corridor opportunities
- Support landowner outreach, relationship-building, and easement negotiations
- Assist with securing funding for land acquisition, easements, or corridor preservation
- Help balance recreation, connectivity, and environmental stewardship
- Support equitable access to outdoor recreation and natural areas

Figure 12. How Partners Work Together



Business Community & Merchants

Primary Role: Economic development and placemaking partners

Local businesses benefit from and help support a more walkable and bikeable community.

- Support pedestrian and bicycle access near storefronts and employment centers
- Partner on downtown beautification, wayfinding, and placemaking efforts
- Participate in sponsorships, promotions, and community events

Private Developers

Primary Role: Contributors to network expansion

Private development plays a key role in closing gaps and expanding connectivity.

- Construct required sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and greenway connections
- Dedicate easements or participate in fee-in-lieu programs where direct construction is not feasible
- Design sites that support a connected, safe active transportation network

Community Organizations & Residents

Primary Role: Local champions and ambassadors

Local organizations and residents are essential to building support, visibility, and long-term stewardship.

- Promote walking, biking, and trail use through events, cleanups, and advocacy
- Participate in volunteer maintenance or adopt-a-trail programs
- Support public engagement, fundraising, and community-based grant efforts
- Help foster a culture of active living across Alexander County

TURNING IDEAS INTO PROJECTS: PHASING & DELIVERY

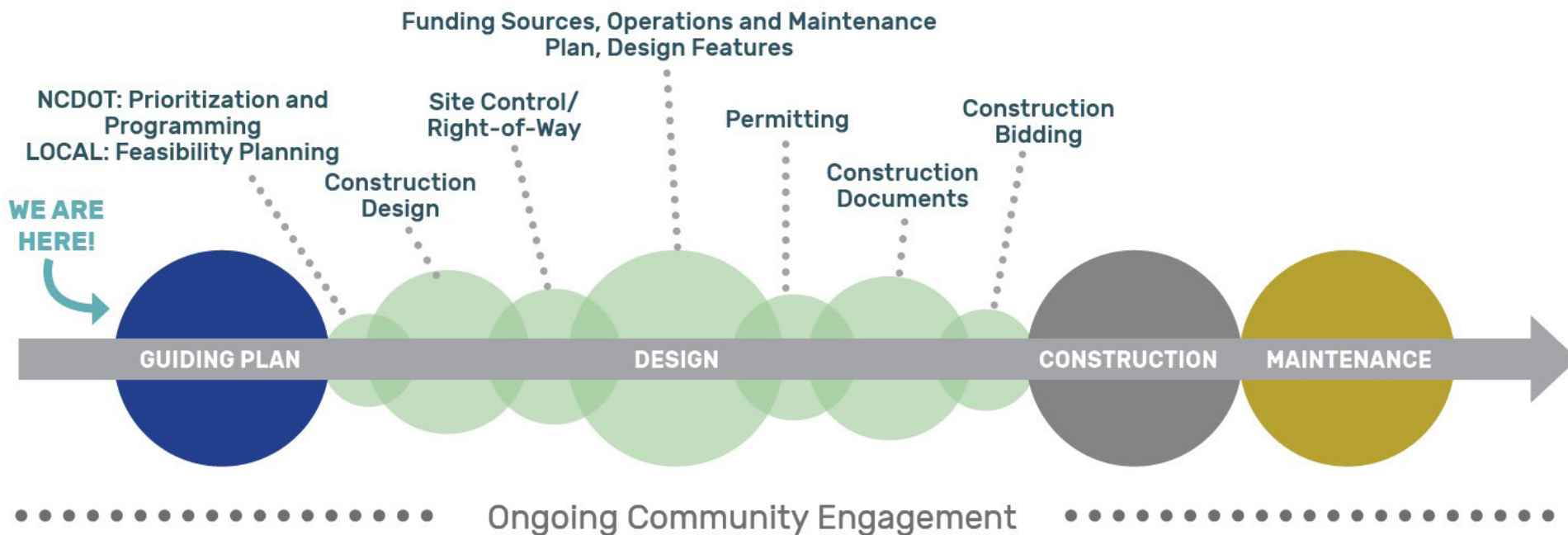
Implementing *Walk & Bike Alexander County* will require moving ideas from vision to construction through a clear and coordinated process. Some improvements can be delivered quickly through routine maintenance or small capital projects, while others such as greenways, sidepaths, or corridor-scale improvements may advance over multiple years. Understanding the typical lifecycle of a project helps partners identify next steps, coordinate responsibilities, and position projects for funding and delivery.

Project Lifecycle Overview

Most walking, biking, and transit projects progress through a series of common stages. Not every project will move through each stage in a linear way, but these steps provide a useful framework for advancing projects over time:

- **Planning & Prioritization:** Identifying needs, confirming feasibility, and evaluating project readiness based on safety, connectivity, and community goals.
- **Conceptual Design:** Developing early layouts or sketches to explore alignment, constraints, right-of-way needs, and order-of-magnitude costs.
- **Funding Identification:** Pursuing federal, state, and local funding sources such as grants, cost-share opportunities, or partnerships.
- **Community Engagement:** Sharing concepts with residents, property owners, and stakeholders to gather feedback and refine designs.
- **Detailed Design & Permitting:** Preparing engineering plans, coordinating right-of-way or easements, and securing required approvals and permits.
- **Construction & Maintenance:** Building the project and establishing responsibilities for long-term operation and upkeep.

Figure 13. Lifecycle of a Transportation Project



LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES

Coordination with NCDOT Resurfacing

NCDOT regularly resurfaces state-maintained roads through programs such as the Highway Maintenance Improvement Program. By coordinating early with NCDOT Division 12, Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville can incorporate cost-effective walking and biking improvements as part of scheduled resurfacing projects.

These opportunities may include...

- Adding or restriping crosswalks
- Narrowing travel lanes to reduce vehicle speeds
- Creating bikeable shoulders or short sidepaths
- Improving visibility near schools, parks, downtown, or transit stops

Advance coordination is critical, as resurfacing timelines are set well in advance.

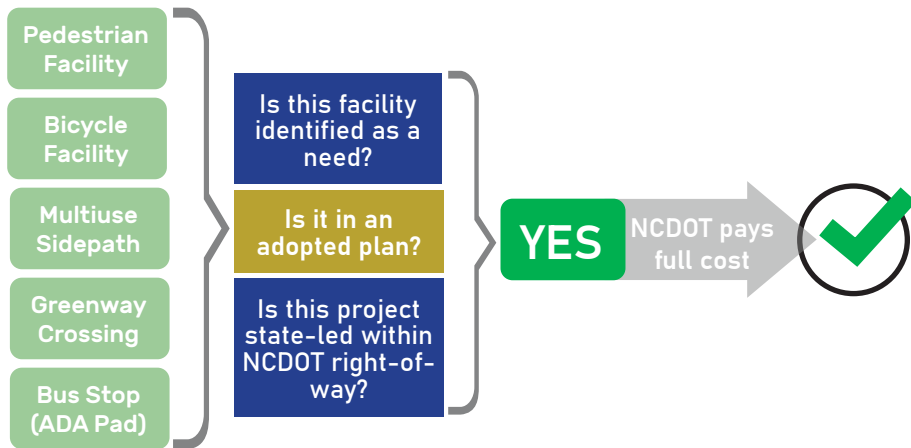
NCDOT'S HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HMIP)

Access the latest HMIP schedules and maps through NCDOT's HMIP Interactive Map: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=e15e55f6b2a1454ca4f24e346ff0b139>

Complete Streets Implementation Opportunities

For state-maintained roadway projects, bicycle and pedestrian facilities identified as part of NCDOT's Complete Streets evaluation and supported by an adopted plan are typically funded by NCDOT with no local match. When a county or municipality requests enhancements beyond the identified need, those elements may be treated as betterments and may require a locally negotiated cost share. However, grant programs such as Transportation Alternatives or Safe Streets and Roads for All can help offset costs. Integrating multimodal improvements into state roadway projects whenever possible can reduce local financial barriers and accelerate implementation.

Figure 14. NCDOT Complete Street Implementation Guide



Early coordination with NCDOT is critical to ensure these elements are scoped, funded, and delivered as part of roadway projects. Local governments remain responsible for long-term maintenance and may choose to contribute local funds to unlock additional grants or enhance project features.

IMD'S PROJECT EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

In 2022, NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) introduced the Project Evaluation Methodology (PEM) to support consistent, data-driven decisions about pedestrian and bicycle facilities within public rights-of-way. The PEM is used during the development of NCDOT-led roadway projects to help planners and engineers evaluate multimodal needs and select appropriate facility types that align with state standards, safety objectives, and funding processes.

For Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville, the PEM provides an important framework for coordinating with NCDOT on projects along state-maintained roads. The methodology evaluates factors such as pedestrian and bicycle demand, traffic volumes (AADT), roadway configuration, and vehicle speeds to determine where sidewalks, sidepaths, bikeable shoulders, or other facilities are appropriate. By ensuring that recommended improvements are reflected in adopted plans and evaluated through the PEM, the County and Town can better position projects for implementation and reduce uncertainty around design and funding. Additional information about the PEM, including a summary of evaluation criteria, is provided in the Appendix and can be found at this [website link](#).



Integrated Mobility Division
N.C. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Funding Active Transportation

The Appendix includes a detailed list of potential funding sources. Key opportunities include the following options:

- **Federal programs:** Transportation Alternatives, RAISE, Safe Streets and Roads for All
- **State programs:** NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division programs, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
- **Local options:** General funds, developer contributions, sales tax revenue, and partnerships with local organizations


Competitive funding applications are strongest when paired with clear priorities, early concept designs, community support, and coordination with regional and state partners. Maintaining a pipeline of ready-to-advance projects allows Alexander County and Taylorsville to respond quickly as funding opportunities arise.

QUICK WINS FOR BIG IMPACT

Low-cost improvements that build momentum and make walking and biking safer and more visible can be implemented with relatively little planning or investment. These types of projects often fit within existing maintenance schedules, small capital budgets, or partnerships with NCDOT; and many can be completed by County or municipal staff. They are especially useful early in implementation because they show visible change, respond directly to community feedback, and help build trust that larger projects are on the way. In a county as rural and dispersed as Alexander County, these small steps also demonstrate that progress can happen across different communities, not only in the highest-priority corridors. By delivering quick, noticeable upgrades, the County can improve safety right away while laying the groundwork for longer-term sidewalk, greenway, and roadway projects identified in this plan.

QUICK WINS FOR BIG IMPACT

Examples of Quick Wins in Alexander County might include:

-  High-visibility crosswalks at schools, parks, and civic buildings.
-  Bike racks at popular destinations like Matheson Park, the YMCA, and county office.
-  Wayfinding signs to guide walkers and bikers to trails, parks, and town centers.
-  Curb ramp upgrades to improve accessibility for older adults and people with disabilities.
-  School walking routes marked with signs or stencils to support Safe Routes to School.
-  Trail signage and mile markers at Rocky Face, Matheson Park, and the Courthouse Park Trail.
-  Shoulder striping on low-volume roads to define walking/biking space.
-  Temporary pilot projects, such as pop-up trails or demonstration crossings, to test ideas before full investment.

Tip: Pair Quick Wins with community events (like Walk to School Day or park trail cleanups) to raise awareness and get residents involved.

THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan on the following pages outlines concrete next steps to implement the vision of *Walk & Bike Alexander County*. It identifies actions across five focus areas, including infrastructure improvements, supportive programs, policy updates, partnerships, and ongoing administrative efforts needed to move the plan forward.

Strategies are organized by timeframe to reflect differences in complexity, funding readiness, and coordination needs, and each action identifies a lead entity, potential partners, and key measures to support accountability. Together, these recommendations guide implementation through coordinated projects, programs, policies, and partnerships with groups such as NCDOT, the Town of Taylorsville, schools, nonprofits, and other stakeholders. The Action Plan is intended to serve as a living document.

Table 15. Action Plan

Recommendation	Lead	Partner(s)	How to Measure Success
Short-Term Actions (0-3 Years)			
Adopt the <i>Walk & Bike Alexander County</i> Plan and share with regional and state partners to support coordination and funding alignment.	Alexander County	Town of Taylorsville, GHMPO, NCDOT Division 12, NCDOT IMD	Plan adopted and formally circulated
Establish a Transportation Advisory Committee to support plan implementation, community engagement, and coordination across agencies.	Alexander County	Residents, Steering Committee, Local Organizations	Committee formed and meeting regularly
Establish baseline data for walking and biking activity, safety, and facilities (e.g., crash data, trail counts, sidewalk mileage).	Alexander County	NCDOT, GHMPO, Health Department	Baseline dataset documented
Coordinate annually with NCDOT Division 12 to review resurfacing schedules and identify opportunities for shoulder widening, striping, curb ramps, and crossings.	Alexander County	NCDOT Division 12, GHMPO	Annual coordination meeting held
Coordinate with GHMPO to ensure plan recommendations are reflected in the CTP and STIP prioritization submissions.	Alexander County	GHMPO, NCDOT	Recommendations included in regional plans
Identify funding sources and submit at least one grant application for a priority sidewalk, sidepath, greenway, or bikeable-shoulder project.	Alexander County	GHMPO, Land Trusts, NCDOT IMD	Grant application submitted
Implement low-cost demonstration and engagement projects (e.g., pop-up greenways, walk audits, paint-the-pavement events).	County Planning Dept.	Schools, Nonprofits, Local Artists	At least one temporary project completed
Develop and adopt a County Greenway & Trail Easement Policy to guide landowner discussions and long-term corridor development.	Alexander County	Landowners, Land Trusts, Planning Board	Policy adopted and publicly available
Partner with NCDOT to add bikeable shoulder striping during rural resurfacing projects where feasible.	Alexander County	NCDOT Division 12, GHMPO	Striping added on one or more segments
Provide printed transit maps and schedules at key community destinations.	WPRTA	Alexander County, Town of Taylorsville	Materials distributed at 5+ locations

Table 15. Action Plan (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Lead	Partner(s)	How to Measure Success
Mid-Term Actions (3-5 Years)			
Advance design and construction of at least one high-priority walking or biking infrastructure project.	Alexander County	NCDOT, GHMPO, Private Landowners	Project reaches design phase
Conduct feasibility studies for priority greenway, rail-with-trail, or long-term corridor candidates.	Alexander County	Land Trusts, NCDOT, GHMPO	Feasibility study completed
Conduct pedestrian crossing audits countywide and upgrade at least two high-priority locations.	Alexander County	NCDOT, GHMPO	Two or more crossings improved
Launch Safe Routes to School programming at one or more schools.	Alexander County Schools	Alexander County, Law Enforcement	Program launched
Pilot a rural Safe Routes to School infrastructure project near one school.	Alexander County	School District, NCDOT	Pilot implemented and evaluated
Inventory all transit stops to assess pedestrian access, ADA compliance, and amenities.	WPRTA	Alexander County, Town of Taylorsville	Inventory completed
Install bus stop signage and bicycle racks at priority Taylorsville Flex Route locations.	Town of Taylorsville	WPRTA, Alexander County	Improvements installed at multiple stops
Improve pedestrian crossings adjacent to key transit stops based on safety data and community input.	Town of Taylorsville	NCDOT, Alexander County, WPRTA	Crossings upgraded
Integrate transit stop access and amenities into development review for sites adjacent to transit stops.	Town of Taylorsville	Developers, WPRTA	Policy or standard practice established
Launch a Rural Walk/Bike Access Pilot serving Social Services and Health Department destinations.	Alexander County	DSS, Public Health, Transit	Pilot routes identified and improved
Long-Term Actions (5+ Years)			
Update the <i>Walk & Bike Alexander County</i> Plan based on completed projects and new priorities.	Alexander County	Steering Committee, GHMPO	Plan update initiated
Develop a Countywide Greenway Master Plan or Trail Connectivity Strategy.	Alexander County	Land Trusts, Landowners, GHMPO	Plan adopted
Construct priority greenway, rail-trail, or sidepath segments as funding becomes available.	Alexander County	NCDOT, Partners	Miles of facilities built
Partner with surrounding counties to advance regional trail concepts and rail-trail initiatives.	Alexander County	Catawba, Caldwell, Iredell Counties; GHMPO	Regional partnership established

Table 15. Action Plan (Cont'd)

Recommendation	Lead	Partner(s)	How to Measure Success
Design and install bus shelters with seating and lighting at priority locations.	Town of Taylorsville	WPRTA, Property Owners, County	One or more shelters installed
Develop a Taylorsville Transit Access Plan addressing pedestrian and bicycle access within ½ mile of stops.	Town of Taylorsville	WPRTA, Alexander County	Plan adopted
Pilot a rural mobility hub that integrates transit, biking, and park-and-ride functions.	Alexander County	Town of Taylorsville, WPRTA, NCDOT	Pilot site developed
Integrate active transportation into public health campaigns and programming.	Health Department	Alexander County, Nonprofits	Campaigns launched
<i>Ongoing & Recurring Actions</i>			
Track implementation progress through an annual report or public-facing project tracker.	Alexander County	GHMPO, Advisory Committee	Annual update completed
Coordinate with developers to ensure required sidewalks, trails, and connections are built.	Alexander County Planning Board	Developers, NCDOT	Facilities constructed
Install and maintain bicycle parking at public buildings, parks, trailheads, and transit stops.	Alexander County	Town of Taylorsville, Businesses	Bicycle racks installed
Coordinate with NCDOT and GHMPO on long-term funding and STIP alignment (including NC 127).	Alexander County	GHMPO, NCDOT	Projects submitted
Incorporate resiliency and sustainability features into walking and biking projects.	Alexander County	NCDOT	Features included in designs
Provide regular updates to County Commissioners and Town Council on implementation progress.	Alexander County	Town of Taylorsville	Briefings delivered
Support recurring encouragement events that promote walking and biking countywide.	Alexander County	Schools, Businesses, Community Orgs	Events held annually
Periodically update development standards to strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity requirements.	Alexander County	Planning Board, Developers	Ordinances updated

TESTING IDEAS TO BUILD MOMENTUM

Pilot projects provide a practical, low-risk way to move from planning to action while building toward long-term implementation. Temporary installations such as painted curb extensions, pop-up crossings, interim wayfinding, or short trail connections allow Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville to test concepts in real-world conditions before committing to permanent construction. These projects can be delivered more quickly and at lower cost, making them especially useful for demonstrating progress while larger projects advance through design, funding, or coordination with NCDOT.

Beyond testing design concepts, pilot projects generate valuable data that supports future investment. Observations, short-term counts, safety feedback, and public input gathered during pilot phases help demonstrate demand, identify needed refinements, and document measurable outcomes. This information aligns closely with NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division priorities, which emphasize data-driven decision-making, safety improvements, and scalable solutions. Pilots can also strengthen grant applications by showing readiness, community support, and a proven track record of implementation.

Pilot projects help build momentum by making proposed improvements visible and understandable to the public and decision-makers. Experiencing changes firsthand can increase confidence in unfamiliar designs and encourage broader use of walking, biking, and transit facilities. Over time, successful pilots can transition into permanent infrastructure, providing a clear and logical progression from concept to construction while positioning Alexander County and Taylorsville as strong, competitive partners for state and federal funding opportunities.

PILOT PROJECTS AS STEPPING STONES

Short-term demonstration projects, such as temporary curb extensions, pop-up bike lanes, or creative crosswalks, can test ideas, build public support, and deliver quick wins.



Image 58. Temporary Curb Extension Installation

Image 59. Temporary Cycletrack Installation

Image Source: The Journal of Minnesota

Image Source: Parks & Trails New York

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Performance measures track progress toward the goals of *Walk & Bike Alexander County*. By monitoring these indicators over time, Alexander County, the Town of Taylorsville, and NCDOT can evaluate improvements to safety, accessibility, connectivity, and quality of life. These measures support data-driven decisions, inform adjustments during implementation, and help strengthen future funding applications. To be most effective, performance monitoring should be shared across agencies and reviewed regularly as projects move forward and conditions change. Coordinated data collection with partners such as NCDOT, Greenway Public Transportation, and the Town of Taylorsville helps ensure facilities remain safe and accessible over time while aligning local investments with regional and state priorities.

USING PERFORMANCE MEASURES EFFECTIVELY

Monitor both condition and use. Tracking the quality of sidewalks, trails, crossings, and bicycle facilities is just as important as tracking how often they are used. Maintenance needs such as cracked pavement, faded markings, overgrown vegetation, or damaged curb ramps should be documented and addressed.

Pair data with lived experience. Community feedback from walking audits, transit stop reviews, and resident reporting tools can highlight issues that may not be visible through counts or crash data alone.

Review metrics annually. A simple annual review supports course corrections, helps communicate progress to elected officials, and keeps walking and biking visible as ongoing priorities.

Support equity and access goals. Performance measures can help identify gaps in access to sidewalks, greenways, schools, parks, transit, and essential services.

Strengthen future funding applications. Clear documentation of needs, progress, and outcomes improves competitiveness for state and federal grants.

KEEP THE NETWORK WORKING

Ongoing monitoring of existing bicycle, pedestrian, and transit infrastructure helps the County identify problems early, understand where people are walking and biking, and prioritize reinvestment where it will have the greatest impact. By committing to consistent maintenance and routine evaluation, Alexander County can protect its investments, support long-term safety, and keep the walking, biking, and transit network welcoming for all users.

Image 60. Walk Audit in Downtown Taylorsville



Image Source: McAdams

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

As projects are implemented, performance measures can be used to evaluate how well recommendations are working and whether the *Walk & Bike Alexander County* plan is meeting community needs. Alexander County, Taylorsville, and NCDOT can use this information to refine project designs, improve programs, highlight successes, and support grant applications.

-  Reduction in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-related crashes (fatalities and serious injuries)
-  Number of upgraded or new high-visibility crosswalks
-  Comparison of posted speed limits and actual observed vehicle speeds
-  Percentage of pedestrian routes meeting ADA accessibility standards
-  Miles of continuous sidewalks, sidepaths, and bike facilities
-  Miles of high-comfort facilities (e.g., sidepaths, separated bike lanes)
-  Number of schools, parks, or public buildings accessible by walking or biking
-  Percentage of residents within a 5-minute walk (0.25 miles) of a sidewalk, greenway, or bus stop
-  Percentage of residents within a or a 10-minute bike ride (approx. 2 miles) of a greenway, bike route, or transit service
-  Number of bike racks, benches, and shade structures installed at bus stops
-  Availability of secure bicycle parking at civic and commercial destinations
-  Percentage of students walking or biking to school (as measured by surveys or counts)
-  Participation in walking, running, or cycling clubs and community events
-  Number of community-led or pilot projects (e.g., open streets, tactical urbanism)
-  Dedicated annual budget allocation for pedestrian, bicycle, or greenway projects
-  Number of grant applications submitted and funded for active transportation projects
-  Frequency of performance data collection and reporting (e.g., annually, biennially)
-  Recurring events or campaigns promoting active transportation (e.g., Walk to School Day, Bike Month)



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WALK & BIKE
ALEXANDER
COUNTY

Multimodal Transportation Plan

