

# Town of Burnsville

# East Main Street Sidewalk Feasibility Study



March 2024

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## Executive Summary

The Town of Burnsville is proposing to construct a sidewalk along East Main Street from Longview Road west to existing sidewalks near the intersection of US Highway 19E (US 19E). The proposed project would also include a sidewalk along Pensacola Road from East Main Street to existing sidewalks near US 19E. The proposed sidewalks would close a gap in the sidewalk network and allow pedestrians to travel from downtown Burnsville to the eastern end of town, and to businesses along US 19E.

The project was first identified in the 2023 *Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Implementation Plan* as a priority project (identified as project Ped-30). The project description indicated that the project would “Improve access for pedestrians to downtown Burnsville and businesses and neighborhoods along East Main St by adding a new sidewalk link along the south side of East Main Street from Long View Road to Depot Street.”<sup>1</sup>

The *East Main Street Sidewalk Feasibility Study* is led by the Town of Burnsville and the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s Integrated Mobility Division and will help move the project from the conceptual phase to prioritization and project programming. The study will look at the feasibility of sidewalks along East Main Street, as well as determining on which side of the road the sidewalk will be constructed. It will also look at where crosswalks would be located, and challenges related to right-of-way and utilities. The study also includes cost estimates and an implementation plan that would help guide the town through construction.

The study was led by a steering committee, which met twice during the feasibility study. The steering committee was comprised of town representatives, town residents, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) representatives, and a representative from Partners Aligned Toward Health (PATH - a non-profit organization that identifies opportunities to improve the health of children and families in Yancey County). The first steering committee meeting took place on August 7th, 2023, at the Burnsville Town Center. Committee members and project team representatives identified two alternatives for additional study. The second steering committee meeting was combined with a public input session and held on November 2, 2023, at the Burnsville Town Hall. Attendees reviewed the two alternatives developed in the first steering committee meeting and selected a preferred alternative.

### *Preferred Alternative*

Members of the steering committee and public took an informal vote of the two alternatives, and Alternative 2 was selected as the preferred alternative. Alternative 2 would be mainly constructed on the north side of East Main Street, however it would begin at the western end on the south side of the road. At Long View Road, a crosswalk with pedestrian activated rapid flashing beacons would allow pedestrians to cross to the south side of East Main Street. The sidewalk would continue along the south side of East Main Street to Meadow Road and would connect with the sidewalk on both sides of Pensacola Road using a high-visibility crosswalk. A crosswalk with pedestrian activated rapid flashing beacons located just to the east of Pensacola Road would cross pedestrians to the north side of East Main Street to avoid a box culvert that is located near the road. The sidewalk would continue on the north side of East Main Street until the project terminates at the intersection of Depot Street and US 19E. A mid-block crossing with rapid flashing beacons would be added just east of the intersection of Indian Trail allowing pedestrians to cross to Lil’ Smoky’s and added next to the Prescription Pad pharmacy to allow pedestrians to safely cross East Main Street. Figure ES-1 shows the preferred alternative.

The feasibility study used the design criteria that is outlined in the November 2023 NCDOT Roadway Design Manual. The minimum sidewalk width is 5 feet with a vegetated buffer between the road and sidewalk of at least 3 feet, although sidewalks can be placed on the back of the curb in areas where topography and right-of-way is limited. Because there is no curb and gutter along East Main Street, curb and gutter would need to be constructed as part of the project to accommodate stormwater runoff.

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Burnsville/NCDOT Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Implementation Plan. January 2023

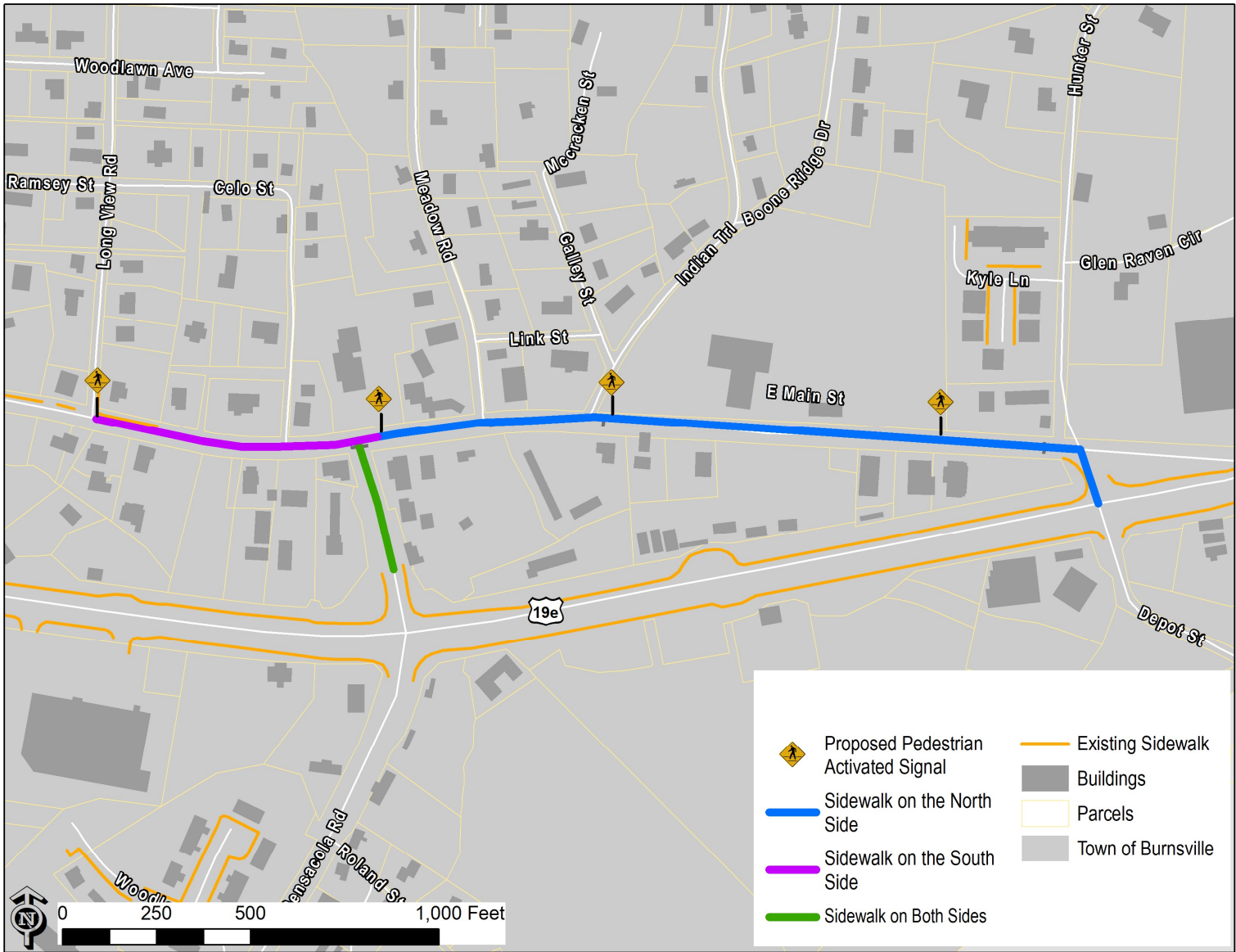


Figure ES-1: East Main Street Preferred Alternative

## *Implementation*

The implementation section of the study includes information on project partners, action steps, and potential funding sources for moving the project through construction. Implementation of the East Main Street sidewalks will require coordination and collaboration with multiple partners and stakeholders at all levels. Maintaining and developing the partnerships will be crucial to project development. Key partners include:

- Town of Burnsville (project lead)
- High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO)
- NCDOT Division 13
- NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)

The section also discusses action steps, including coordinating with NCDOT and High Country RPO to prioritize the project corridor to submit through the NCDOT Strategic Transportation Prioritization (SPOT) submittal process. Another action step is to search for funding sources, and the implementation section includes potential funding sources for moving the project forward. The implementation section also includes a cut sheet for the project, and contains the following information:

- Project description
- Project length
- Intersection crossings
- A discussion of real estate acquisitions and easements needed.
- Cost estimates, including current year and escalated construction costs for anticipated build year, right-of-way cost design service costs, construction engineering and inspection services costs, and total budget recommendation.

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Study Background

The town of Burnsville is a community of 1,618 residents (as of 2022) and is the only municipality in Yancey County, North Carolina. Located in the Black Mountains, Burnsville is a popular tourist destination with outdoor recreation opportunities, mountain views, and small-town charm.

Burnsville is bisected by U.S. Highway 19E (US 19E), and much of the town's development is located to the north of US 19E and around Main Street – Burnsville's commercial corridor. East Main Street is a two-lane roadway that travels east out from the center of town and provides access to key destinations and residential areas. East Main Street is an NCDOT-maintained road and aside from US 19E, is the most heavily trafficked roadway in the town. All of West Main Street has sidewalk on at least one side of the road; however, the sidewalk on East Main Street ends just after Long View Road. This portion of East Main Street not only connects the eastern part of Burnsville to the town center, but it passes several community sites such as a pharmacy, laundromat, restaurants, retail establishments, and several single- and multi-family developments. The lack of pedestrian infrastructure creates a dangerous environment for people who walk as a means of transportation, exercise, or recreation. The lack of a sidewalk on East Main Street poses safety concerns, as evidenced by a pedestrian crash that resulted in a fatality near the intersection of East Main Street and Hunter Street<sup>2</sup>. The absence of multi-modal infrastructure also raises equity concerns in a town where nearly 15 percent of households do not own a vehicle and 26 percent live below poverty level (compared to around 6 percent and 14 percent in the State of North Carolina, respectively).

The *Burnsville 2021 Comprehensive Land Use Plan*<sup>3</sup>, *2023 Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Plan*, and Yancey County's *2021 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)*<sup>4</sup> all identify pedestrian improvements along East Main Street as a priority. This feasibility study was initiated to evaluate the implementation of sidewalk along the 0.53-mile (2,800-foot) segment of East Main Street (State Route [SR] 1428) that extends from Long View Road to Depot Street. The objective of this feasibility study is to assess the potential for a 5-foot sidewalk with a 3-foot buffer from the roadway to create a seamless sidewalk network along the length of East Main Street.

The outcomes of the feasibility study will provide the town with the necessary guidance to move the project forward into construction.

## 1.2 Study Guiding Principles

The objective of this feasibility study is to comprehensively evaluate alternatives for improving multi-modal access along the project area of East Main Street and provide safer and more seamless access across the commercial corridor. As part of this effort, the town has identified the following four categories of goals:

1. Public engagement: Engage the neighborhoods, businesses, and stakeholders in the project area to identify an approach that best meets the needs of the local community. This effort would build on engagement that was done for the 2023 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
2. Cost understanding: Leverage a quantity-based approach to produce a detailed cost estimate that can be used to pursue funding opportunities such as grants.
3. Design: Comprehensive designs for the project will allow the town to have a clear idea of the final project which can inform the bidding process.

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<sup>2</sup> Town of Burnsville/NCDOT Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Implementation Plan. January 2023 <https://townofburnsville.org/wp-content/uploads/Burnsville-Bike-Ped-Accel-Plan-10-6-22.pdf> (draft version)

<sup>3</sup> Burnsville 2021 Comprehensive Land Use Plan <https://townofburnsville.org/wp-content/uploads/Burnsville-Comprehensive-Land-Use-Plan-Draft.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Yancey County's 2021 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) [https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CTP-Details.aspx?study\\_id=Yancey+County](https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CTP-Details.aspx?study_id=Yancey+County)

4. Project implementation: An action plan will identify the permitting, right-of-way needs, project partners, and funding sources that will help to move the project into implementation.

### 1.3 Study Process Overview

The project began with an assessment of the existing conditions along the proposed project location. The project kick-off meeting and first steering committee meeting provided additional information about the community needs, project area, and desired outcomes (see Section 4.2). The project team developed two preliminary, draft conceptual designs, which were discussed at the second steering committee meeting and at a public meeting (see Section 5.1). A preferred alternative was selected based on feedback, and the design was further developed and refined. Cost estimates were calculated for the final conceptual design, and the team drafted an accompanying report to guide future implementation of the project. Table 1-1 reflects the schedule for the feasibility study.

*Table 1-1: Feasibility Study Project Schedule*

Task	Timeline
1. Inventory and evaluation of current conditions	August 2023
2. Project kick-off meeting, first steering committee meeting	August 2023
3. Develop draft conceptual designs	October 2023
4. Second steering committee meeting/public meeting	October 2023
5. Finalize conceptual designs, develop cost estimates	November 2023
6. Implementation plan and report	January 2024

### 1.4 Prior Studies and Plans

The *2021 Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)* proposes projects that address county-wide identified transportation needs through 2045. The plan put forward a multi-modal vision for the Town that states the plan will provide: "...a safe and accessible multi-modal transportation system that connects its residents and visitors to key destinations within the county and regionally where an emphasis is placed on alternative modes." The plan notes that East Main Street is a heavily traversed route that is crucial for realizing this vision. Recommendations associated with East Main Street focused on pedestrian enhancements along the north side of East Main Street, extending toward US 19E. The community's input from the Yancey County CTP Survey highlights the significance of completing the sidewalk along East Main Street.

*The Burnsville, NC Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2021)* is intended to guide land use decisions over the next 10- to 15-year period. The plan identifies gaps in the existing sidewalk network compared to concentration of address points within the town. Based on this information, the plan indicates that extending the sidewalk along the length of East Main Street is a priority that would serve the existing population and support future growth along the corridor.

*The Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Implementation Plan (2023)* was developed to "guide stakeholders and Yancey County residents in constructing improvements to programs, policies, and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure programs." The plan primarily focuses on improving the infrastructure in the town that supports bicycling and walking, as well as providing safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. To enhance pedestrian and cycling experiences within the town, the plan identified numerous projects that would meet the goal of providing safe, connected facilities in the town. Among the recommendations were East Main Street sidewalks from Long View Road to Depot Street at US 19E (referred to as project Ped-30).

*The High-Country Bike Plan (2014)*<sup>5</sup> was designed to create safer cycling mobility and reinforces the need for enhanced bicycle infrastructure. Its goals align with the broader aim of improving multi-modal transportation and connectivity within the region. The Burnsville East Main Street sidewalk project serves as a pivotal element in addressing pedestrian safety concerns, which align with the recommendations in the 2014 High Country Bike Plan.

Those recommendations include fostering safe pedestrian access, which contributes to regional connectivity and reinforces the goals set forth by existing plans to enhance multi-modal transportation and improve accessibility within Yancey County.

## 1.5 Project Benefits

Construction of a sidewalk along East Main Street would provide pedestrian connectivity from East Main Street to US 19E allowing for safe pedestrian access to key community features situated along US 19E, such as a pharmacy, government services, shopping center, financial institutions, and the town's only full-service grocery store. The project will transform eastern Burnsville and the town as a whole, by increasing access to businesses and potentially spurring private investment and increasing property tax revenue. Both the town and county are interested in the revitalization of East Main Street as evidenced by a new County Sheriff's Office 911 center which is planned for East Main Street and Indian Trail.

Sidewalks will increase connectivity, and connectivity in the East Main Street corridor of Burnsville will serve a largely underserved community whose population includes low-income households, female-led households, disabled persons, and seniors aged 65 and over. NCDOT's Transportation Disadvantaged Index (TDI) uses block group data to compare these underserved communities to larger areas such as counties and the state. Burnsville's 2022 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan found that the East Main Street corridor had a TDI composite score of 20 out of 20, meaning that affordable housing is located within ¼ mile of the project and is in an area with at least four Transportation Disadvantaged populations.

There are many benefits of active transportation planning and the resulting programs and infrastructure projects. By working to develop walkable and bikeable communities, municipalities are investing in an increased sense of community through the promotion of improved health, economic resources and activity, sustainable transportation systems, and environmental consciousness. Planning and developing active transportation facilities also creates a valuable resource for future generations to use and expand upon.

WalkBikeNC, the statewide bicycle and pedestrian plan, established a vision for North Carolina centered around the following five key benefits: safety, health, economic, mobility, and stewardship. The statistics and benefits discussed in this section were compiled from several sources: the *WalkBikeNC* plan; the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center based at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center; the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Report; and the North Carolina Pedestrian Crash Facts Summary Report by the NCDOT IMD.

### Health



Active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks, shared use paths, and trails promote active living and improved health by providing residents with opportunities to exercise and integrate physical activity into their daily lives. Programs such as Active Routes to School provide education and encouragement for more physical activity. Improving health is of critical importance in North Carolina where 35.6 percent of adults are overweight, and 34 percent of adults are obese according to data from the CDC.

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<sup>5</sup> High Country Bike Plan, 2014. NCDOT and High Country Council of Governments  
<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/High%20Country%20Bike%20Plan.pdf>

According to Yancey County's *2022 State of the County Health Report*,<sup>6</sup> heart disease was the leading cause of death in the county between 2016 and 2020. The report also notes an increased need for developing healthy habits with kids as an emerging issue in the community.

The CDC also reported data that shows the percentage of North Carolina students in grades 9 to 12 who are obese jumped from 12.5 percent in 2013 to 16.4 percent in 2015 and has stayed above 15 percent since. This shows an undesired positive trend in obesity rates. In 2019, 15.4 percent and 16 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 were classified as obese or overweight, respectively. This indicates that the need to decrease these numbers and promote active and healthy lifestyles remains imperative in North Carolina.<sup>7</sup>



### **Economic Competitiveness**

Investing in pedestrian infrastructure returns economic benefits to communities through increased property values, patronage of local businesses, and tourism. Improving transportation choices in a community encourages better connectivity between people and places and is closely tied to public health, access to jobs and resources, and business opportunities. Providing access to and connectivity between local businesses are important incentives for economic development, as convenient and appealing active transportation facilities can encourage the movement of people and increase their access to economic resources. A complete sidewalk connection between downtown and residences and businesses along the eastern entrance to town will help promote businesses along the corridor.



### **Safety**

The need to improve safety for pedestrians is urgent. Between 2010 and 2019, an average of 2,997 pedestrian crashes occurred across the state, annually, for a total of almost 30,000 pedestrian crashes. In the same timeframe, an average of 194 of these crashes caused fatal injury per year and an average of 227 of these crashes likely caused serious injury per year.<sup>8</sup> Between 2010 and 2019, Yancey County reported 16 crashes that involved pedestrians. Sadly, three of the crashes resulted in a fatality, with one of such incidents taking place along this project corridor in the Town of Burnsville (see Section 2.3 for additional information).<sup>9</sup>



### **Mobility**

Mobility describes the effectiveness of the transportation system, which includes roads, rail, public transit, and bicycle or pedestrian facilities, to move people and goods safely and quickly. As roads become increasingly congested, one way that communities can improve transportation efficiency is by offering active transportation alternatives to automobiles and designing 'Complete Streets' that accommodate all modes of transportation. Providing the most appropriate types of transportation facilities can also improve transportation efficiency. In areas with multiple resources within proximity of one another, providing active transportation facilities can reduce the number of short motor vehicle trips.

<sup>6</sup> 2022 Yancey County State of the County Health Report. Retrieved from <https://embed.clearimpact.com/Container/Embed?id=10019603>.

<sup>7</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2019), Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity: Data, Trends and Maps - North Carolina Category: Obesity / Weight Status. Retrieved from [https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpao\\_dtm/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DNPAO\\_DTM.ExploreByLocation&rdRequestForwarding=Form](https://nccd.cdc.gov/dnpao_dtm/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=DNPAO_DTM.ExploreByLocation&rdRequestForwarding=Form)

<sup>8</sup> North Carolina Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Dashboard (NCDOT) <https://ncdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/78046d11cabd4658a4d45b88c52ab8af>

<sup>9</sup> Connect NCDOT, Crash Data and Maps. Yancey County Crash Profile



## Sustainability

As of 2019, transportation is responsible for 37 percent of carbon dioxide emitted nationally, of which 40.5 percent of emissions for the sector are attributed to passenger cars.<sup>10</sup> Active transportation infrastructure encourages stewardship of our natural resources by providing residents with a fossil fuel-free mode of transportation. Results of facilitating and encouraging bicycling and walking as a standard mode of transportation include the following: fostering an appreciation for nature and protecting natural resources, reducing fossil fuel consumption and vehicle emissions, and encouraging overall energy conservation and land use planning that promotes diverse modes of transport and mix of land uses.

While reducing vehicle miles travelled in general yields environmental benefits, shorter trips are more polluting than long trips on a per-mile basis. This is due to the high levels of emissions caused by “cold starts” and the first few minutes of travel before pollution control devices work effectively, which are responsible for 60 to 80 percent of emissions that occur while the vehicle is operating.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, consolidating the number of vehicle trips is an important environmental goal.<sup>12</sup>



## Quality of Life

Quality of life is influenced by factors that include but are not limited to the following: commute options, access to recreation including parks and trails, safety, and economic competitiveness. Bicycle and pedestrian amenities positively contribute to the overall quality of life of a community as such amenities encourage residents and visitors to be active, social, and enjoy more travel choices.

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<sup>10</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, 2019. Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2022 <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/inventory-us-greenhouse-gas-emissions-and-sinks>

<sup>11</sup> Tarulescu, Radu & Tarulescu, Stelian & Olteanu, Ciprian. (2014). Vehicle Pollution for Cold Engine Functioning. Annals of the Oradea University. Fascicle of management and Technological Engineering. XIII(XXIII). 10.15660/AUOFMTE.2014-1.3015. <https://imt.uoradea.ro/auo.fmte/files-2014-v1/Tarulescu%20Radu-VEHICLE%20POLLUTION%20FOR%20COLD%20ENGINE%20FUNCTIONING.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (2015). [https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/factsfigures/facts\\_environment.cfm](https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/factsfigures/facts_environment.cfm).

## 2.0 Study Considerations and Alternatives Development

### 2.1 Planning Level Considerations

American Community Survey (ACS) data was reviewed to understand the socioeconomic characteristics of the community around the proposed project as well as Burnsville and Yancey County. The entirety of the proposed project falls into a single block group, Census Tract 9602 Block Group 1 (referred to as the Demographic Study Area, or DSA).

According to the 2021 ACS, population in the vicinity of the proposed project has shrunk since 2011, albeit at a slower rate than Burnsville as a whole (-8.1 percent for the area around the project versus -9.5 for Burnsville as a whole). As shown in Figure 2-1 the population has a higher rate of minorities (22.7 percent) compared to Burnsville (18.0 percent) and Yancey County (7.7 percent).

Figure 2-2 shows the Hispanic population breakdown of the area. There is a higher rate of Hispanic residents (17.2 percent) in the area around the proposed project than the comparative areas of Burnsville and Yancey County (12.6 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively). Not surprisingly, given the greater number of Hispanic residents, there is a higher concentration of Spanish speaking populations in the vicinity of the project compared to Burnsville and Yancey County as shown in Figure 2-2 (4.1 percent compared to 2.7 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively). The ACS also indicates that poverty rates among the residents around the project (26.6 percent) are equal to Burnsville as a whole (26.4 percent), and higher than Yancey County (14.7 percent).

While ACS data can provide a general understanding of demographic data in the vicinity of the project, it is important to note that the size of the block group is large enough that it includes information about residents who are unlikely to use the proposed sidewalk. In addition, more geographically precise demographic

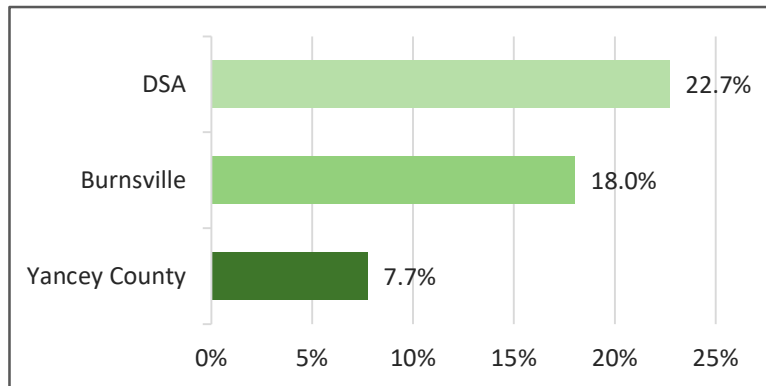


Figure 2-1: Minority Population

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2017-2021), Table B03002, "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race."

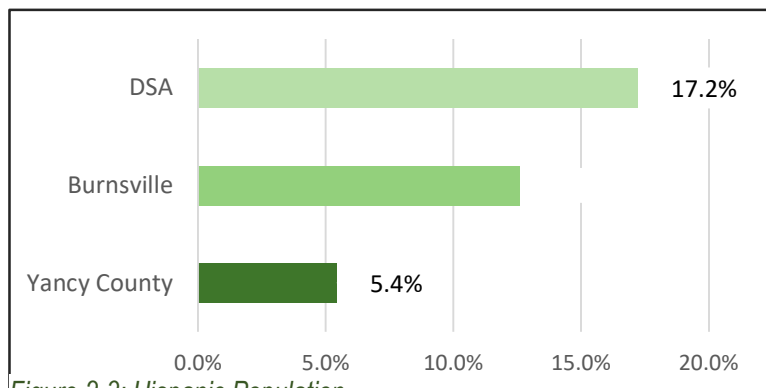


Figure 2-3: Hispanic Population

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2017-2021), Table B03002, "Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race."

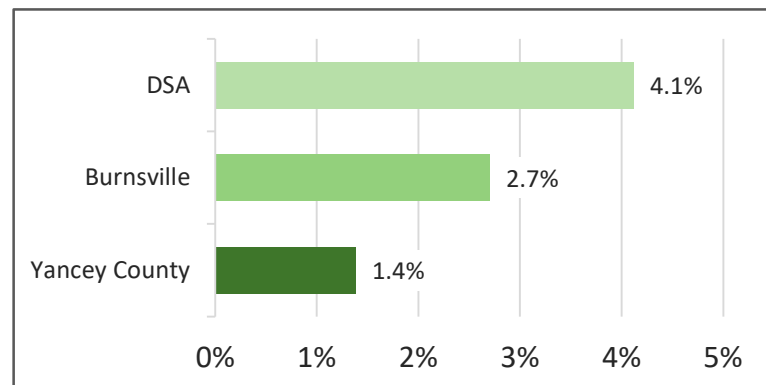


Figure 2-2: Limited English Proficiency (Spanish Language)

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2017-2021), Table B16004, "Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over."

information about the neighborhoods surrounding the East Main Street corridor comes from a survey done by the High Country Council of Governments for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for a sewer replacement. The door-to-door survey included 69 homes and a total of 117 residents located to the north of East Main Street along Meadow Road and Indian Trail. Both roads will be directly served by the proposed East Main Pedestrian Connector. In total, 73 percent of the homes surveyed had annual median incomes that were categorized as low-income according to guidelines from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Among the homes falling in the low-income category, 56 percent fall into the extremely low category (equating to 30 percent of the Area Median Gross Income).

The survey also identified 21 elderly persons, 29 female heads of households, and 15 disabled persons living in the surveyed area. Two public assistance housing projects are also nearby the proposed sidewalk extension including Indian Trail Apartments (32 units) at 301 Indian Trail and Hunters Run Apartments (20 units) at 20 Kyle Lane.

Existing land uses immediately adjacent to the East Main Street corridor include a mixture of commercial, retail, and residential land uses. North of the corridor, land uses are largely residential while south of the corridor land uses are largely commercial and retail. A Yancey County Sheriff's Department facility is planned on a vacant parcel north of East Main Street, along Indian Trail. The facility will be accessed from Indian Trail.

There are several employers along East Main Street as well as other notable regional destinations. Glen Raven Custom Fabrics has a plant on US 19E at the eastern end of Main Street, and some driveways associated with the plant are on East Main Street (see Figure 2-6 on page 2-5). There are also numerous small businesses located along East Main Street. Other notable destinations along the corridor includes Lil' Smoky's Drive-In Restaurant, Prescription Pad of Burnsville (a pharmacy), and the Shell Station at the eastern end of East Main Street, which shares a building with a laundromat.

## **2.2 Natural Environment Considerations**

The natural environment plays a large role in the way humans connect with and/or shape the environment and can play an important role in the designs of a sidewalk. Main Street runs parallel to the Little Crabtree Creek, and some of the proposed project is within the 100- and 500-year floodplain (see Figure 2-1: Natural features). Natural features such as terrain, floodplains, water bodies, and creeks were considered during the design process.

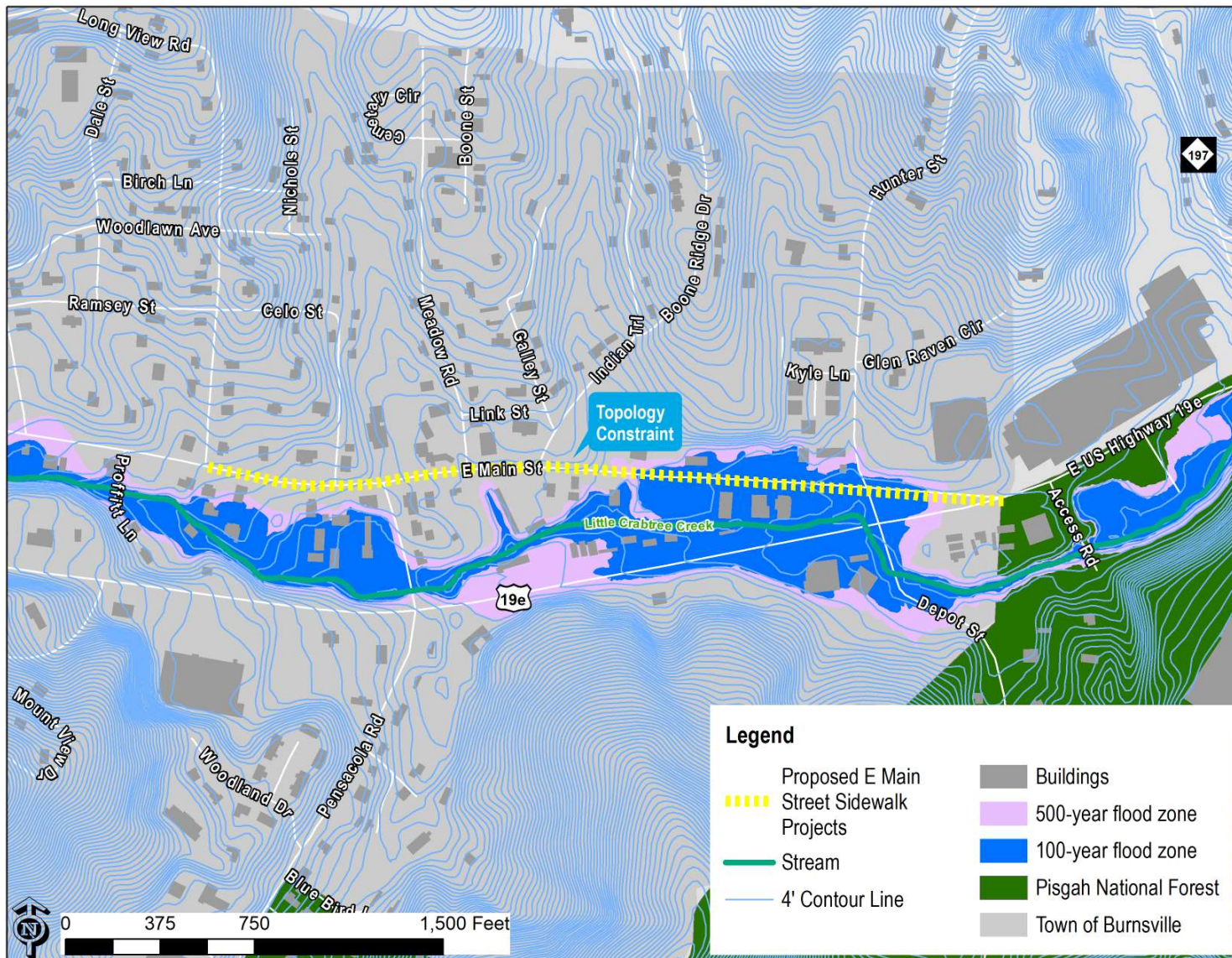


Figure 2-4: Natural Features

## 2.3 Human Environment Considerations

East Main Street from Long View Road to US 19E is a two-lane road with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic for this segment of road is approximately 6,100 vehicles per day between Long View Road and Pensacola Road, and 4,800 vehicles per day between Pensacola Road and US 19E. Most of the corridor does not have curb and gutter, the exception being for an approximate 500-foot segment of the road in front of the Shell Station on the east side where there is curb and gutter on both sides of the road. There are numerous driveway access points along the corridor serving businesses and residences. There is approximately 175 feet of a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of East Main Street from Long View Road heading east, which terminates abruptly. There are no other bicycle or pedestrian facilities along the corridor, nor are there any transit facilities.

NCDOT bicycle and pedestrian crash data from 2011-2021 shows that two pedestrian crashes occurred along the project corridor on East Main Street, one of which resulted in injuries to the pedestrian, and another resulted in the death of the pedestrian. In addition, data used in a previous version of the town's pedestrian plan adopted in 2006 found that three pedestrians were struck by cars along East Main Street with two resulting in fatalities. Both fatalities occurred in the vicinity of Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home. This area now has a painted crosswalk and flashing beacon visible to westbound traffic heading towards downtown.

The East Main Street corridor includes utility poles on both sides of the road that are owned by French Broad Electric Membership Corporation. GIS data obtained from the town also indicates that there is a 6-inch water main on the north side of the road and several fire hydrants. There is a large, 48-inch cement culvert under East Main Street just east of the intersection of Meadow Road that drains into a ditch just south of East Main Street (see Figure 2-2).



*Figure 2-5: Culvert at East Main Street and Meadow Road, Looking West*

The Yancey County 911 Communications office dispatches for Yancey County Sheriff's Department, Burnsville Police, Yancey Rescue, Yancey Emergency Medical Services, and all eight Volunteer Fire Departments within the county. In 2023, the office was awarded funding for a new 911 call center. The call center will be located on Indian Trail north of East Main Street and will be accessed from Indian Trail. There are no other proposed or planned developments or any NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) projects within the corridor.

Human environment considerations are shown in Figure 2-3 on page 2-5.

## 2.4 Field Observations

A field visit was conducted on August 7, 2023, the same day as the first steering committee meeting. Project team members walked the corridor and noted the transportation issues associated with the project, including high traffic speeds; terrain issues; the number of various utilities along the corridor; any existing culverts; and surrounding land uses. Additional photos taken during the site visit are shown below, including East Main Street from Pensacola Road (left), the pedestrian signal and crosswalk on East Main Street at Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home (center), and the West Main Street/Celo Street intersection (right).



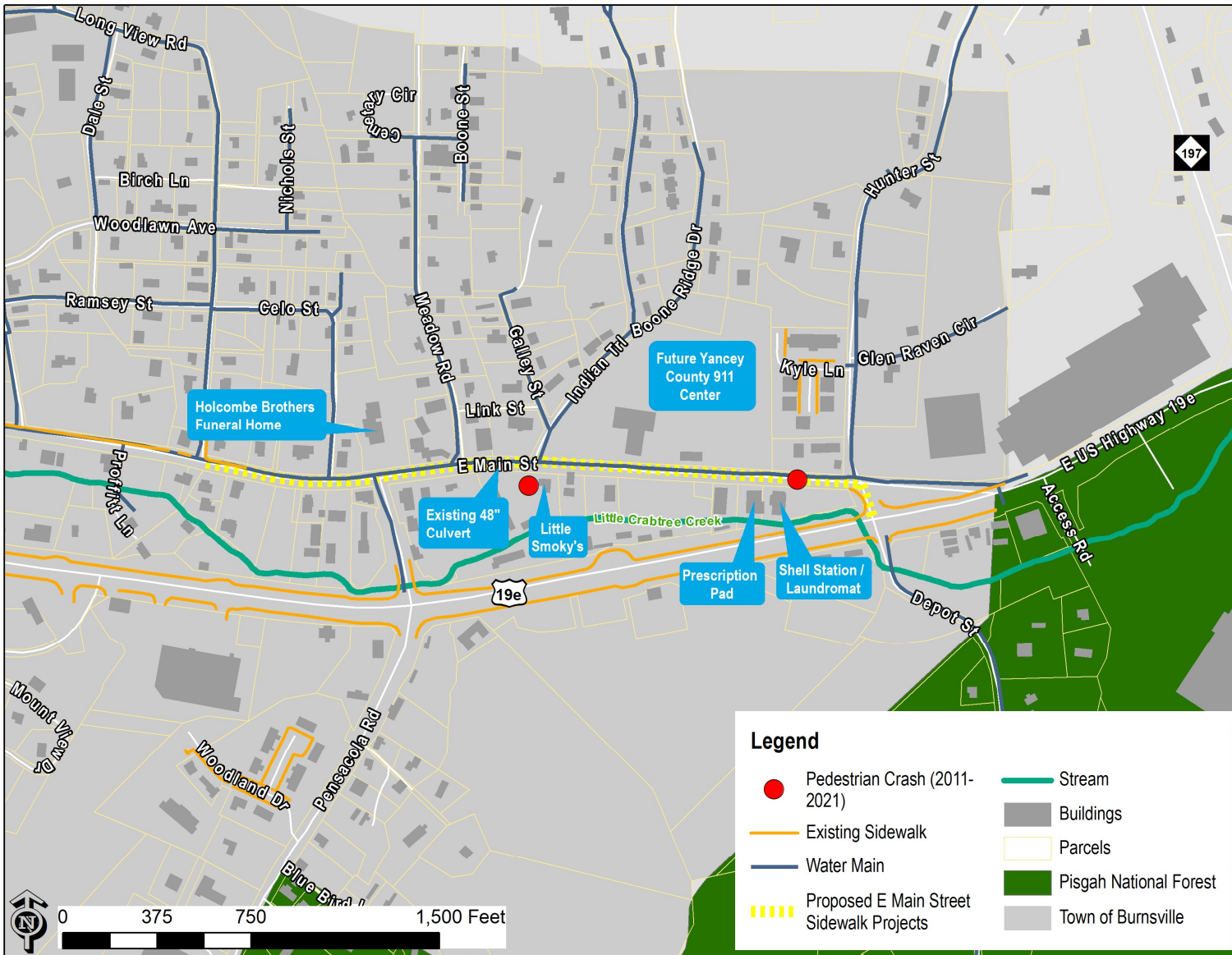


Figure 2-6: Human Environment Considerations

## **3.0 Alternatives Development**

### **3.1 Selected Design Criteria**

The design criteria that were used to analyze the feasibility of the project is the criteria outlined in the November 2023 NCDOT Roadway Design Manual, and all designs conformed to the manual. This criterion was selected because of the right-of-way challenges along the corridor, as well as topography constraints, most notably on the north side of East Main Street just west of Indian Trail. The minimum sidewalk width is 5-feet with a vegetated buffer between the road and sidewalk of at least 3 feet, although sidewalks can be placed on the back of the curb in areas where topography and right-of-way is limited.

### **3.2 Potential Connections and Access Areas**

The proposed project would provide connections to the existing sidewalk on the north side of East Main Street and would provide seamless east-west pedestrian connectivity from downtown Burnsville to US 19E at the eastern end of town. The project would also include sidewalks on Pensacola Road that pedestrians could use to access existing sidewalks on US 19E. The proposed project would also provide access from neighborhoods north of the corridor to businesses along East Main Street and downtown.

### **3.3 Preliminary Modeling Results**

The project is intended to add sidewalks along an existing two-lane roadway and did not require traffic modeling. There are also no bridges, and the project will avoid any impacts to flood zones or floodplains.

## 4.0 Community Involvement

### 4.1 Past Community Involvement

The *Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2021)* recommends sidewalk along the project segment of East Main Street. The CTP development involved robust community engagement, including community and public meetings, paper and online surveys (in English and Spanish), and information sharing through a study website, press releases, and coverage in local newspapers. The survey had 367 responses, and adding sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure was identified as the top priority.

The *Town of Burnsville Bicycle and Pedestrian Project Acceleration Implementation Plan (2023)* identifies East Main Street as a priority corridor, and the 12 priority projects identified in the plan include the installation of a sidewalk along East Main Street. The plan development process included an online public feedback survey and an in-person pop-up engagement opportunity during a popular annual event. The need for sidewalks along East Main Street was specifically noted by members of the community at the engagement event. Furthermore, the online survey – which received 267 responses – indicated a desire for continuous sidewalks and general increased walkability throughout the town.

### 4.2 Project Steering Committee and Stakeholders

Public involvement was instrumental in developing the alternatives to be considered in the feasibility study and informing the evaluation of those alternatives. The project was led by a steering committee, which met twice during the feasibility study. The steering committee was comprised of town representatives, town residents, NCDOT representatives, and a representative from Partners Aligned Toward Health (PATH - a non-profit organization that identifies opportunities to improve the health of children and families in Yancey County). Meeting materials associated with the steering committee meetings are found in Appendix A.

### 4.3 First Steering Committee Meeting

The first steering committee meeting took place on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Burnsville Town Center. Prior to the meeting, project team members walked the corridor to collect data and make observations to aid in design and enhance meeting discussion. At the meeting, the project team noted that the project would be designed to meet NCDOT standards, and that the typical section for the sidewalk would be a 5-foot sidewalk with a 3-foot landscaped buffer.

The steering committee discussion also included the following observations related to the corridor:

- Many of the utility poles along the project corridor will have to be relocated or replaced at a future date due to their condition. Utility relocation could be phased after this project. However, the sidewalk will not meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance if it is not 5 feet in width. Not meeting ADA compliance could limit funding opportunities.
- A 6-inch water main runs under the pavement on the north side of East Main Street. The water line is being redesigned, but the town has not seen the designs yet.
- There is a large culvert on the south side of East Main Street near Lil' Smoky's that must be avoided for this project. Because the culvert is so close to the roadway, there is not enough space for a sidewalk on the south side of the road in this area. If the sidewalk is located on the south side of the road, pedestrians will have to cross to the north side of East Main Street at this location. A pedestrian bridge is not feasible for the goals of this project.
- On the west side of Bud's Auto Parts (722 E Main St), there is a creek that floods the building at this location. This location has a drainage pipe. The pipe can be extended here to still allow sidewalk on this side of East Main Street.

- Steering committee members noted that vehicles do not yield to pedestrians in the project area.
- There is limited sight distance along the curve from Depot Street. to East Main Street. These sight distance issues and the lack of proper crossing space at this location have resulted in a fatality. Sidewalk on Hunter Street with a crossing to the south side of East Main Street could help pedestrians from Kyle Lane safely access the businesses.
- This project should connect to the existing sidewalk on both sides of Pensacola Road.

The steering committee discussed two alternatives that would be developed by the project team. The first alternative would include constructing a sidewalk on the south side of the road, except in the vicinity of the culvert near Lil' Smoky's, where the sidewalk would be located on the north side (pedestrians would cross the road at crosswalks using pedestrian activated signals). The second alternative would construct a sidewalk on the south side of East Main Street, crossing to the north side at Meadow Street, and remain on the north side until US 19E. The two alternatives are discussed in further detail in Section 5.1.

### Second Steering Committee Meeting

The second Steering Committee meeting was combined with a public input session and held on November 2, 2023, at the Burnsville Town Center. Attendees reviewed the two alternatives developed in the first steering committee meeting and made the following comments on the designs presented by the project team.

- The crosswalk at the eastern end of the project both alternatives should be moved further west, away from US 19E because of people speeding who turn off US 19 and continue speeding on East Main Street.
- The crosswalk should be located closer to the laundromat building, with sidewalks on the north side from Hunter Street to the laundromat (for Alternative 1).
- The western crossing for both alternatives should be moved to Pensacola Road where an existing crosswalk is in the vicinity of Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home. This crosswalk was constructed to assist people crossing East Main Street to the funeral home from overflow parking on the south side of the road.

After discussion of the two alternatives, the group indicated that the Alternative 2 would be the preferred alternative that would be further developed by the project team.

## 4.4 Public Engagement Results

There was one public engagement opportunity for residents and business owners during the feasibility study. Residents and business owners were invited to attend the combined steering committee and public input session on November 2, 2023, at Burnsville Town Hall. Members of the public who attended the meeting were able to provide input and express any concerns about the project, as well as provide input on which alternative would move forward as the preferred alternative. There were four members of the public in attendance at the meeting. The names of all attendees can be found in in Appendix A.

## **5.0 Evaluation and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Alternatives**

Two potential concepts were identified in the first steering committee meeting that the project team developed into alternatives for the second steering committee meeting. The main difference between the two alternatives was the location of the sidewalk east of Indian Trail. Alternative 1 would have sidewalk on the south side of East Main Street and Alternative 2 would have a sidewalk on the north side. The two alternatives are described below and cost estimates for both alternatives can be found in Appendix B.

#### **5.1.1 Alternative 1**

At Long View Road, a cross walk would cross pedestrians to the south side of East Main Street. The sidewalk would continue along the south side of East Main Street to Meadow Road and would connect to the sidewalks on both the east and west sides of Pensacola Road. At Meadow Road, a crosswalk with pedestrian activated rapid flashing beacons would cross pedestrians to the north side of East Main Street to avoid the box culvert. The sidewalk would continue on the north side of East Main Street to Indian Trail where pedestrians would cross back to the south side of East Main Street using a crosswalk with pedestrian activated rapid flashing beacons. The sidewalk would remain on the south side of East Main Street until the project terminates at the intersection of Depot Street and US 19E.



### 5.1.2 Alternative 2

At Long View Road, a cross walk would allow pedestrians to cross to the south side of East Main Street. The sidewalk would continue along the south side of East Main Street to Meadow Road and would connect with the sidewalk along both the east and west sides of Pensacola Road. A crosswalk with pedestrian activated rapid flashing beacons would cross pedestrians to the north side of East Main Street to avoid the box culvert. Alternative 2 would require a substantial cut on the north side of East Main Street just to the east of Indian Trail Lane (on the property owned by Yancey County) to address a topology constraint. The sidewalk would continue on the north side of East Main Street until the project terminates at the intersection of Depot Street and US 19E. A mid-block crossing with rapid flashing beacons would be added just east of the intersection of Indian Trail allowing pedestrians to cross to Lil' Smoky's, and next to the Prescription Pad pharmacy to allow the residents of Kyle Lane to safely cross East Main Street. Figure 5-2 shows Alternative 2.

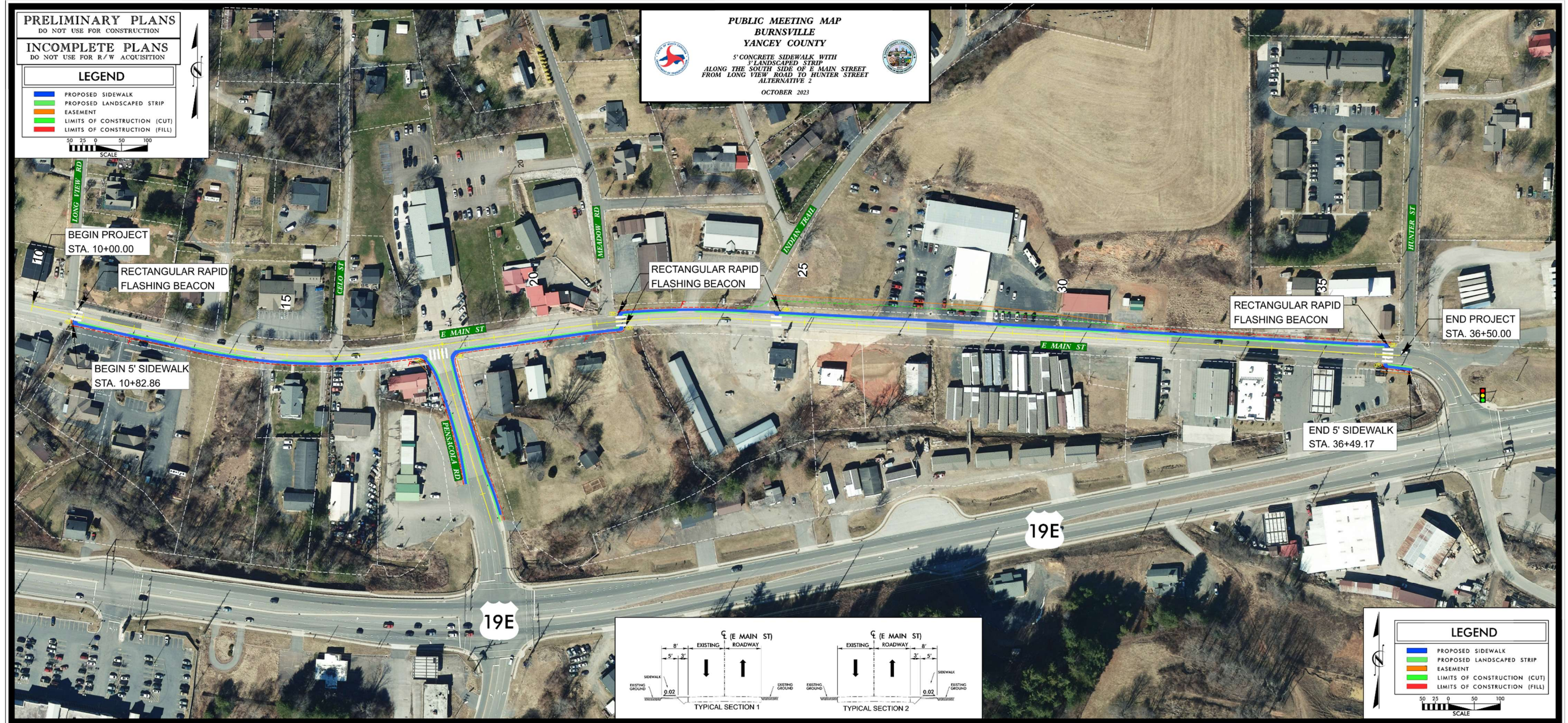


Figure 5-2: Alternative 2

## 5.2 Methodology for Evaluation of Alternatives

The primary criteria that the project team used for evaluating alternatives were:

- Limiting the need to purchase right-of-way.
- Limiting impacts to utilities
- Avoiding the culvert under East Main Street just east of the intersection of Meadow Road
- Providing additional pedestrian access to businesses along East Main Street
- Improving pedestrian safety throughout the corridor.

### 5.2.1 Alternatives Evaluation

At the second steering committee meeting, which was combined with a public input session, Alternative 2 was chosen as the preferred alternative. While both alternatives would require limited additional rights-of-way and have similar impacts to utilities (including to the culvert east of Meadow Road), the steering committee noted that Alternative 2 would provide the same amount of access as Alternative 1, while eliminating one of the crossings of East Main Street (at Indian Trail) that would be needed to follow the sidewalk continually from downtown to US 19E. This would increase safety for pedestrians.

Two changes were recommended to Alternative 2. The first was to move the western crossing of East Main Street from the east side of the intersection with Meadow Road to the east side of the intersection of Pensacola Road, where an existing crosswalk is located (see Figure 5-3). This crosswalk could be used by people crossing East Main Street to the Holcombe Brothers Funeral Home from the overflow parking area on the south side of the road.



Figure 5-3: Changes to Western End of Project

The second change was to move the crossing of East Main Street at the eastern end of the project back from US 19E to cross where the Mountain Energy Convenience Store and Laundromat is located. Figure 5-4 shows where the crosswalk would be moved to. The intention of this move is to increase pedestrian safety as observed speeds along Main Street in this area are high. Sidewalks would be located on both sides of the road from the crosswalk to Hunter Street on the north side, and to existing sidewalks on the south side.

In addition to the changes, committee members noted that planters and street trees should be included in planting strips where there is space.

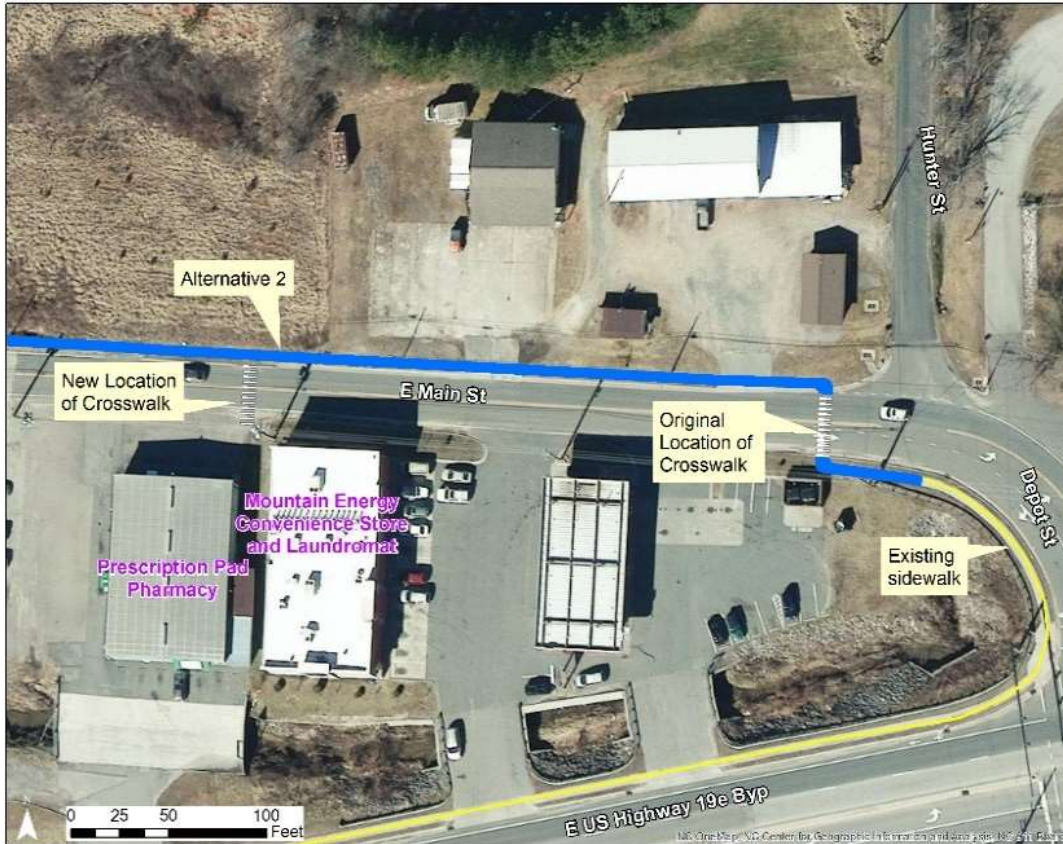


Figure 5-4: Changes to Eastern End of Project

## **6.0 Implementation**

The previous sections of this report discussed the background of the project, as well as evaluation of alternatives including how the preferred alternative was identified. This section discusses the recommended next steps, project partners, and funding sources needed to construct the preferred alternative sidewalk along East Main Street in Burnsville.

### **6.1 Implementation Strategy**

Sidewalks along East Main Street can be constructed all at once, as a single project, and the implementation discussion in this section reflects a single project.

### **6.2 Project Cut Sheet**

The following cutsheet is based on Alternative 2 which was chosen as the preferred alternative by the steering committee and the public at the meeting held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. The cut sheet includes information on the length of the project, crossing information, connections, areas where rights-of-way acquisition may be needed, and high-level cost estimates.

*East Main Street Sidewalk*

**Project length:** 0.53 miles (2,800 feet)

**Project description:** The East Main Street sidewalk project would construct a sidewalk (see Figure 6-1) along East Main Street from where it currently ends at Long View Road, west to existing sidewalks at the intersection of US 19 E. The project would also extend sidewalks south on Pensacola Road from East Main Street to existing sidewalks just north of US 19 E. The project would provide continuous east-west pedestrian connectivity from downtown Burnsville to the western end of town and provide a crucial network connection by closing a sidewalk gap in the town. The project would begin on the south side of East Main Street at Long View Road and would include a pedestrian activated signal and crosswalk across East Main Street to connect to an existing sidewalk on the north side. The sidewalk would continue west, crossing Pensacola Road. On the west side of Pensacola Road, pedestrians would cross East Main Street, using a pedestrian activated signal and crosswalk, before continuing west on the north side of East Main Street. The sidewalk would continue on the north side, crossing back over East Main Street at the Prescription Pad/Shell Station to meet existing sidewalks on the southeast side of the road (see Figure 6-2).

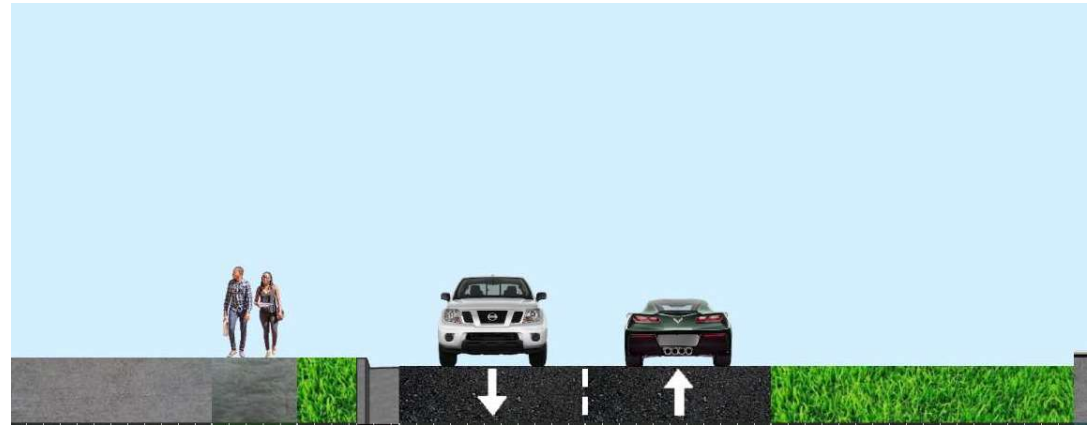


Figure 6-1: 5-Foot Sidewalk Cross-Section

**Road crossings:**

- East Main Street (1st crossing)
- Pensacola Road
- Meadow Road
- Indian Trail
- East Main Street (2nd crossing)

**Potential real estate acquisitions:**

The project is expected to be constructed within the NCDOT right-of-way, but two easements from two property owners will be needed:

- Charity House Mission (502 East Main Street)
- Yancey County parcel (713 East Main Street)

**Potential Permitting Needs:**

Utility Easements; NCDOT Encroachments; 401/404 Permit; Erosion and Sediment Control; Floodplain Encroachment; General Construction Stormwater Permit

Estimated Costs	
2024 Baseline Construction Cost Estimate*	\$ 916,900
Design services cost	\$ 43,361
Construction engineering and inspection services cost	\$ 28,907
Contingency	\$ 269,070
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$ 1,258,238</b>

\* Includes ROW/easement costs



Figure 6-2: Preferred Alternative

### 6.3 Organizational Framework

Implementation of the East Main Street sidewalks will require coordination and collaboration with multiple partners and stakeholders at all levels. Maintaining and developing the partnerships will be crucial in project development. Key partners include:

- Town of Burnsville (project lead)
- High Country RPO
- NCDOT Division 13
- NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division (IMD)

Table 6-1 proposes key steps and a timeline for implementation of the East Main Street sidewalks, which is meant as a general guide and can be modified as necessary.

Table 6-1: Key Action Steps

Action	Description	Stakeholder	Timeline
Adopt the <i>East Main Street Sidewalk Feasibility Study</i> .	Present the Plan to Town Council of Burnsville for adoption so that the plan can become an official planning document.	Town Council and town staff	Spring 2024
Establish a project committee	Form an advisory committee of stakeholders (potentially from the steering committee members from this plan) who will help lead the project through project development, including identifying additional partners and potential funding sources,	Town staff	Spring 2024
Amend the <i>Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan</i>	Amend the Yancey County Comprehensive Transportation Plan to include recommendations in the <i>East Main Street Sidewalk Feasibility Study</i> , including the preferred alternative language, which includes sidewalk on the south side west of Pensacola and on the north side east of Pensacola.	High Country RPO, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch	Spring/Summer 2024
Include East Main Street sidewalks in the NCDOT SPOT submittal process.	Coordinate with NCDOT and High Country RPO on prioritizing the project corridor to submit through the NCDOT SPOT submittal process.	Town staff, High Country RPO, NCDOT Division 13, NCDOT IMD	Ongoing
Sidewalk designs	Coordinate with NCDOT Division 13 on the design of the sidewalk. Design plans should be guided by the recommendations developed through this study	Town staff, NCDOT Division 13, NCDOT IMD	Based on project schedule
Landowner outreach	Develop a plan to work with current landowners and future developers within	Town staff	Summer 2024, ongoing

	the corridor to acquire easements and needed rights-of-way for the project.		
Project funding	Identify funding sources for future phases of project development. Consider developing a grant procurement and fundraising plan using cost estimates developed through this study to identify steps in securing funding to design and construct the sidewalk.	Town staff, High Country RPO, NCDOT IMD	Ongoing

## 6.4 Funding Sources

This section discusses the state funding process as well as federal and other funding sources. Although funding is available from outside sources, it is highly recommended that the town establish a source of local matching funds for potential grants. Even small amounts of local funding are essential for matching and leveraging outside sources. Local matching funds can be achieved through allocations to a reserve fund from the capital budget. In addition, many grants allow in-kind matching (e.g., local staff time).

### 6.4.1 State Funding Process for Transportation Improvements

In June 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly overhauled the process for funding state transportation projects with the Strategic Transportation Investments law (House Bill 817). This law establishes the Strategic Mobility Formula to allocate funds through a competitive process based on quantitative criteria and local input. The formula is intended: “to maximize North Carolina’s existing transportation funding to enhance the state’s infrastructure and support economic growth, job creation and high quality of life.” This formula is applied in creating the STIP, which is NCDOT’s ten-year transportation improvement plan for the state. The STIP is updated every two years and includes projects across six transportation modes: highway, aviation, bicycle/pedestrian, public transportation, ferry, and rail.

Active transportation projects that are submitted through the NCDOT project prioritization process as part of a roadway project must meet the following requirements based on the latest round of prioritization (Prioritization 7.0: <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/pages/prioritizationresources.aspx>):

- Minimum project cost of \$100,000 for stand-alone pedestrian (or bicycle) projects (this does not apply for active transportation elements that are part of a roadway project)
- According to the 2019 Complete Streets Policy, if the bicycle and pedestrian facility is included in an adopted local plan, the town will not be responsible for the cost. If the pedestrian project component is not included in a plan, the town will have to provide a local match.
- Must be included in an adopted plan (pedestrian plans, bicycle plans, greenway plans, Safe Routes to School action plans, CTPs, and long-range transportation plans)
- Right-of-way must be secured prior to receiving federal construction funding.
- The formula funds projects according to the three following categories:
  - Division Needs (30 percent)
  - Regional Impact (30 percent)
  - Statewide Mobility (40 percent)

Bicycle and pedestrian projects that are independent of larger roadway projects are only funded through the Division Needs category. Projects in this category compete against all six transportation modes within the division. Selection

is based on 50 percent on the quantitative score and 50 percent on local input. Local input is split evenly between the NCDOT division and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or RPO. The public may comment on the local input point assignment, which the Division Engineer will review prior to final local input point assignment. The MPO or RPO also provides a public comment period.

NCDOT also administers several other sources of funding for statewide projects, including those identified in Table 6-2.

## Other State Funding

Table 6-2: Sample State Funding Sources

Funding Source	Description	Details
<p><b>Complete Streets Policy – NCDOT</b>            Source:  <a href="https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx">https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Pages/Complete-Streets.aspx</a></p>	<p>NCDOT has a “Complete Streets” policy that requires the department to consider and incorporate multi-modal transportation facilities to new projects or when improving existing infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT will pay the full cost of bicycle and pedestrian improvements when the improvement is included in specific plans and the need is identified during the Complete Streets evaluation process.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For Section 1.1 and full policy details: <a href="https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Documents/Complete%20Streets%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf">https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/BikePed/Documents/Complete%20Streets%20Implementation%20Guide.pdf</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Funding Sources</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Reserve Fund</li> <li>• Community Crowd Funding</li> <li>• Impact Fees</li> <li>• General Obligation Bonds</li> <li>• Special Tax District</li> <li>• Tax Increment Financing</li> </ul>		

## Federal Funding

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) - was signed into law on November 15, 2021, and authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation and infrastructure initiatives across the country. The law further designates that \$550 billion of the spending go towards new programs and investments. The law builds on existing federal funding sources and creates new opportunities for a diversity of transportation projects, including those to promote active modes of transportation. Select federal funding sources are provided in Table 6-3.

Federal grant funding search tool: <https://www.grants.gov/search-grants>

Table 6-3: Sample Federal Funding Sources

Funding Source	Description	Details
<p><b>Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant</b></p> <p>Source:  <a href="https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/rebuilding-american-infrastructure-sustainability-and-equity-raise">https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/rebuilding-american-infrastructure-sustainability-and-equity-raise</a></p>	<p>Funding is for capital investments in surface transportation that will yield a significant local or regional impact - particularly in underserved communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive/discretionary grant</li> <li>• The Federal cost share may not exceed 80% for urban projects that are not either located in an Area of Persistent Poverty or a Historically Disadvantaged Community. However, federal cost share may exceed 80% for projects that are rural, or located in an Area of Persistent Poverty, or located in a Historically Disadvantaged Community.</li> <li>• The Merit Criteria are safety, environmental sustainability, quality of life, mobility and community connectivity, economic competitiveness and opportunity, state of good repair, innovation, and partnership and collaboration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program</b></p> <p>Source:  <a href="https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/promoting-resilient-operations-transformative-efficient-and-cost-saving">https://www.transportation.gov/rural/grant-toolkit/promoting-resilient-operations-transformative-efficient-and-cost-saving</a></p>	<p>Supports planning and construction projects that improve surface transportation and community resilience to natural hazard and disasters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive/discretionary grant</li> <li>• Federal share is generally up to 80% but the federal cost-sharing will be higher if the eligible entity develops a resilience improvement plan (or is in a state or area served by an MPO that does) and the state or MPO incorporates it into its long-range transportation plan.</li> <li>• Only 40% of award funds can be used for construction of new capacity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant Program</b></p> <p>Source:  <a href="https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rcnprogram">https://www.transportation.gov/grants/rcnprogram</a></p>	<p>Funds planning and construction projects that remove, retrofit, or mitigate transportation facilities to improve mobility, access, and remove barriers to community connectivity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive/discretionary grant</li> <li>• The cost-share for construction grants is 50%, but applicants may use other federal funds to supplement their contribution for a maximum federal cost-share of 80%.</li> </ul>

Funding Source	Description	Details
<p><b>Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program</b>  <i>Source:</i>  <a href="https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A">https://www.transportation.gov/grants/SS4A</a></p>	<p>Funds initiatives that prevent death and serious injury on multimodal roads and streets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive/discretionary grant</li> <li>• Federal cost-sharing for planning grants is 80%; applicants must provide the remaining 20% using non-federal funds (in-kind contributions are allowed).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program</b>  <i>Source:</i>  <a href="https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg">https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg</a></p>	<p>Provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, and counties. The funding supports the development of housing and projects that transform communities by improving economic opportunities with an emphasis on low- and moderate-income persons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligible activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The construction of Construction of public facilities and improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The North Carolina Department of Commerce allocates the State’s share of CDBG funding to municipalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg">https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation Alternatives (TA) - Set-aside of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program</b>  <i>Source:</i>  <a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/</a></p>	<p>Provides funding for smaller-scale transportation projects, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TA Set-Aside is designed to allow eligible entities to apply for funds through competitive project selection processes that may be carried out at the state or sub-state level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For NCDOT, eligible projects must be submitted to the STIP.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For most TA Set-Aside projects, the federal share is generally 80% with a 20% state or local match, but states can use a number of flexibilities discussed below, including some new ones under the BIL, to increase the federal share for specific projects to 100%.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)</b>  <i>Source:</i>  <a href="https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/">https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/</a></p>	<p>Provides funding for State and local governments to carry out transportation projects and programs that help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As under the FAST Act, the BIL directs FHWA to apportion funding as a lump sum for each State then divide that total among apportioned programs.</li> <li>• <a href="https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CongestionMitigationAirQualityNC.aspx">https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/Pages/CongestionMitigationAirQualityNC.aspx</a></li> </ul>

Funding Source	Description	Details
<b>Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)</b> Source: <a href="https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip">https://highways.dot.gov/safety/hsip</a>	Provides funding for projects that will result in a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/safety/Pages/NC-Highway-Safety-Program-and-Projects.aspx">https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/safety/Pages/NC-Highway-Safety-Program-and-Projects.aspx</a></li> </ul>

### 6.5 Management and Maintenance

Following construction, the proactive management and maintenance of the sidewalk will support safe, reliable, and equitable access for pedestrians to reach surrounding destinations. Regular maintenance of the sidewalk can also avoid the need for unexpected major repairs and yield cost-savings over the long term and extend the useful life of the infrastructure. The Town should prioritize the creation of a management and maintenance plan to ensure a mechanism is in place immediately following the project implementation.

The following are examples of tasks that will help to establish a thorough management and maintenance plan:

- Identify routine maintenance needs and larger improvements. Each should also have an indicated schedule, responsible entity, and estimated cost.
- Identify a process to monitor the sidewalk conditions.
- Monitor the facility to ensure needs continue to be met – both in terms of demand (which could inform future/additional infrastructure needs) and in terms of condition (e.g., for damage, vegetation overgrowth, flooding).

While the specific maintenance needs and management plans may vary, Table 6-4 identifies potential tasks, schedules, and responsible entities.

Table 6-4. Potential Maintenance Needs, Schedule, and Management

Maintenance Need	Schedule	Responsible Entity
Short term sidewalk repairs (e.g., wedging, patching, mud-jacking, overlays)	As needed with repairs typically lasting 1 to 5 years	Town of Burnsville
Long term sidewalk replacement	As needed with the typical concrete sidewalk having a 25-year lifespan	Town of Burnsville and/or NCDOT
Seasonal Maintenance (e.g., removal of debris, vegetation management, preparation for snow/ice)	Throughout the year, as needed	Town of Burnsville and/or adjacent property owners
Sources: USDOT FHWA, "Guide for Maintaining Pedestrian Facilities for Enhanced Safety Research Report", <a href="https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/fhwasa13037/research_report/chap2c.cfm">https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/fhwasa13037/research_report/chap2c.cfm</a> USDOT FHWA, "6 Construction Techniques to Lessen Maintenance for Sidewalks and Paths", <a href="https://highways.dot.gov/safety/pedestrian-bicyclist/guide-maintaining-pedestrian-facilities-enhanced-safety/6-construction">https://highways.dot.gov/safety/pedestrian-bicyclist/guide-maintaining-pedestrian-facilities-enhanced-safety/6-construction</a>		

## Appendix A

### Meeting Materials/Public Outreach

Steering Committee Meeting #1 – August 7th, 2023

#### Agenda

### Agenda – First Steering Committee Meeting

August 7, 2023, | 2:00 PM

#### 2:00 PM INTRODUCTIONS

**A) Introductions**

Town staff, Steering Committee, NCDOT, and the AECOM team.

**B) Meeting Agenda**

Introduce the project and the purpose of the meeting.

#### 2:10 PM PROJECT OVERVIEW

Discuss the project, including the role of the steering committee, the project vision and goals, and project outcomes.

#### 2:30 PM WORK SESSION

The steering committee will be asked to participate in a working session using maps that are intended to identify opportunities and constraints.

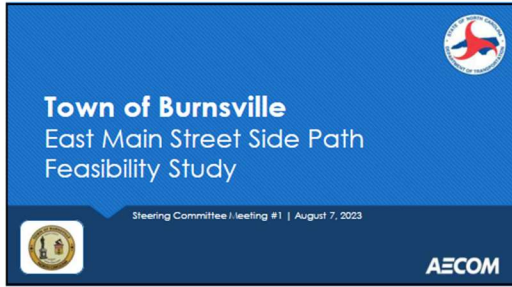
#### 3:00 PM WRAP UP

The project team will review and summarize outcomes from the work session, discuss next steps/project schedule, and allow time for any questions.

**Presentation**

Steering Committee Meeting No. 1

8/7/2023



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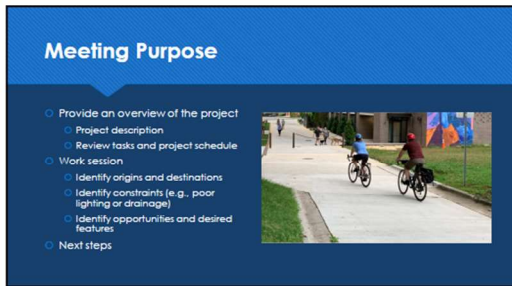
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Town of Burnsville

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### Project Description

- Extend existing East /Jain sidewalk from Long View Road to Depot Street at US-19E
- Project length is approximately .53 mile
- Previously identified in the bicycle and pedestrian plan, comprehensive plan, and long-range transportation plan
  - Identified a 5-ft sidewalk with a 3-ft buffer (from roadway)



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### Schedule

Task	Timeline
1. Inventory and Evaluation of Current Conditions	August 2023
2. Project Kick-off / meeting, First Steering Committee / meeting	August 2023
3. Develop draft conceptual designs	October 2023
4. Second Steering Committee / meeting/Public / meeting	October 2023
5. Finalize conceptual designs, develop cost estimates	November 2023
6. Implementation plan and Report	December 2023
7. Third Steering Committee / meeting (if needed)	January 2024

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### Role of the Steering Committee

- Attend Project Kick-Off
  - Identify needs, opportunities, and constraints
- Review the conceptual plans
- Attend two additional steering committee meetings
- Serve as champions of the project



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**Working Session**

- Exercise 1:
  - Identify key origins and destinations (e.g., community features)
- Exercise 2:
  - Identify sidewalk gaps and other constraints (e.g., poor lighting, safety issues, or drainage)
  - Identify new sidewalk, trail, and bicycle connections



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**Next Steps**

- Project team will begin developing the conceptual designs
  - Gather additional data
  - Coordinate with Town staff and NCDOT
- Second steering committee meeting/public meeting (October 2023)
  - Review conceptual designs
  - Discuss implementation
- Third steering committee meeting (if needed) (Winter 2024)



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**Thank You**

Kory Wilmoř, AICP | AECOM  
Kory.wilmoř@aecom.com

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**Meeting Minutes:**

## **Town of Burnsville Sidewalk Feasibility Study**

Steering Committee Meeting #1 at Burnsville Town Center

August 7, 2023, 2:00 PM

Attendees

Kory Wilmot – AECOM

Nathan Chapman - AECOM

Sarah Hartshorn – AECOM

Hart Evans – NCDOT, IMD Statewide Plan and Programming Branch

Heather Hockaday – Town of Burnsville, Town Administrator

Chad Fox - Town of Burnsville, Town Clerk

Shane Dale – Town of Burnsville, Public Works Director

Judy Buchanan – Burnsville Town Council Member

Schell McCall - PATH

Stacey Laughrun – Town Resident/French Broad Electric Membership Corporation

Ron Powell – Town Resident

Meeting Minutes

- 1) Kory presented a slide deck with key information about the project including the project vision and goals, role of the steering committee, and project schedule.
- 2) Kory, Nathan, and Sarah walked the project site prior to the meeting to collect data and make observations to aid in design and enhance meeting discussion.
- 3) Nathan presented the potential design location of the sidewalk, identifying key project areas of concern, and invited input from the steering committee.
  - a) The sidewalk typical section was discussed.
    - i) There will be a 5' sidewalk with a 3' landscape buffer.
    - ii) The sidewalk and buffer will be flush with the road. It will not be raised with curb and gutter.
    - iii) Driveways will be set along the project with the sidewalk clearly delineated so that vehicles will know where to look for pedestrians.
  - b) The group discussed utilities on the project site.
    - i) The utilities on the project are all owned by French Broad Electric Membership Corporation.
    - ii) Due to proximity, many of the utility poles will have to be relocated or likely replaced at a future date due to condition. Utility relocation could be phased after this project. However, the sidewalk will not meet ADA compliance if it is not 5' in width. Not meeting ADA compliance could limit funding opportunities.

- iii) The water main runs along the north side of E Main St. The water line is 8" in diameter and is currently under the pavement. The water line is being redesigned, but the Town has not seen the designs yet.
  - iv) There is a large culvert on the south side of E Main St. near Lil' Smoky's that must be avoided for this project. Heather informed the committee that the wall is to be repaired and replaced, but the culvert will not be lengthened. Pedestrians will have to cross to the other side of E Main St. at this location because a pedestrian bridge is not feasible for the goals of this project.
  - v) On the west side of Bud's Auto Parts, there is a creek that floods the building at this location. This location has a drainage pipe. The pipe can be extended here to still allow sidewalk on this side of E Main St.
  - vi) The house at 412 E Main St., to the west of Randolph's Garage, also experiences drainage issues.
- c) Numerous concerns were brought up about pedestrian safety at crossings.
- i) Steering committee members noted that vehicles do not yield to pedestrians in the project area.
  - ii) There are many residents who live on Kyle Ln. that access businesses along E Main St. There is limited sight distance along the curve from Depot St. to E Main St. These sight distance issues and the lack of proper crossing space at this location have resulted in a fatality. Many of the residents from Kyle Ln. who access E Main St. use motorized wheelchairs. Sidewalk on Hunter St. with a crossing to the south side of E Main St. could help these pedestrians safely access the businesses.
  - iii) Nathan noted that NCDOT prefers all crosswalks to be at intersections. If a crosswalk is added where there is no intersection with a side road, it is considered a mid-block crossing. These require extra signing and marking because cars are not prepared to stop in the middle of the road. Mid-block crossings will be a more significant cost than traditional crosswalks at an intersection.
  - iv) Most of the points of interest along this section of E Main St. are on the south side. Keeping the pedestrians on this side of the road helps reduce conflict points at crossings.
- d) Remaining project areas of concern were highlighted.
- i) This project should connect to the existing sidewalk on both sides of Pensacola Road.
  - ii) The Prescription Pad has a drive-thru that will need to maintain access.
- e) After discussion, it was decided that two design alternatives will be created to accommodate the town's vision and goals.
- i) Alternative 1: At Long View Road, a cross walk will cross pedestrians to the south side of E Main St. The sidewalk will continue along the south side of E Main St., connecting with the sidewalk on both sides of Pensacola Rd., to Meadow Rd. A crosswalk with flashing beacons will cross pedestrians to the north side of E Main St. to avoid the box culvert. The sidewalk will continue on the north side to Indian Trail where pedestrians will cross back to the south side of E Main St. via a crosswalk with flashing beacons. The sidewalk will

remain on the south side of E Main St. until the project terminates at the intersection of Depot St. and US 19E.

- ii) Alternative 2: At Long View Road, a cross walk will cross pedestrians to the south side of E Main St. The sidewalk will continue along the south side of E Main St., connecting with the sidewalk on both sides of Pensacola Rd., to Meadow Rd. A crosswalk with flashing beacons will cross pedestrians to the north side of E Main St. to avoid the box culvert. The sidewalk will continue on the north side of E Main Street until the project terminates at the intersection of Depot St. and US 19E. A crosswalk with flashing beacons will be added across from Prescription Pad to allow the residents of Kyle Lane to safely access this area.

**Agenda**

**Agenda – Second Steering Committee Meeting/Public Meeting**

November 2, 2023 | 3:30 PM

**3:30 PM INTRODUCTIONS**

**A) Introductions**

Town staff, Steering Committee, NCDOT, and the AECOM team.

**B) Meeting Agenda**

Introduce the project and the purpose of the meeting.

**3:40 PM PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Discuss the project, history and the desired outcomes.

**3:45 PM WORK SESSION**

The steering committee will be asked to participate in a working session using maps that are intended to identify opportunities and constraints.

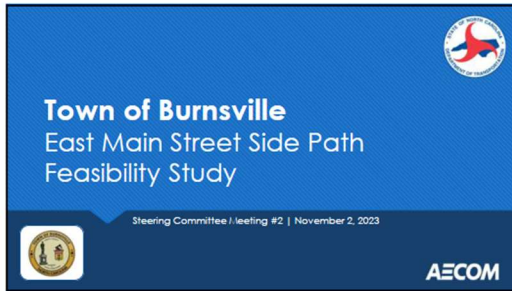
**4:30 PM WRAP UP**

The project team will review and summarize outcomes from the work session, discuss next steps/project schedule, and allow time for any questions.

**Presentation**

Steering Committee Meeting No. 1

8/7/2023



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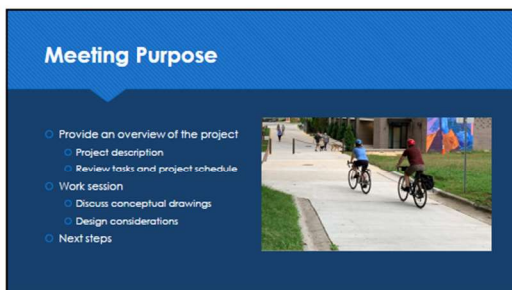
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Town of Burnsville

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### Project Description

- Extend existing East / Main sidewalk from Long View Road to Depot Street at US-19E
- Project length is approximately .53 mile
- Previously identified in the bicycle and pedestrian plan, comprehensive plan, and long-range transportation plan
  - Identified a 5-ft sidewalk with a 3-ft buffer from roadway



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### Schedule

Task	Timeline
1. Inventory and Evaluation of Current Conditions	August 2023
2. Project Kick-off / Meeting, First Steering Committee / Meeting	August 2023
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5. Finalize conceptual designs, develop cost estimates	November 2023
6. Implementation plan and Report	December 2023
7. Third Steering Committee / Meeting (if needed)	January 2024

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### Working Session

- Discuss the options
- Design considerations



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**Next Steps**

- Review conceptual designs
- Discuss implementation
- Develop cost estimates
- Develop feasibility plan
- Present to council



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**Thank You**

Todd McAulliffe, AICP | AECOM  
[Todd.mcaulliffe@aecom.com](mailto:Todd.mcaulliffe@aecom.com)

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## Meeting Minutes

# Burnsville Sidewalk/ Sidewalk Feasibility Study

## Public Meeting

In-Person at Burnsville Town Hall and Online via Microsoft Teams

November 2, 2023, 3:30 PM

### Attendees

Todd McAulliffe – AECOM

Nathan Chapman – AECOM

Kory Wilmot (via Microsoft Teams) – AECOM

Sarah Hartshorn (via Microsoft Teams) – AECOM

Shruti Rathod (via Microsoft Teams) – AECOM

Grady McCollum (via Microsoft Teams) – IMD Statewide Plan and Programming Branch

Heather Hockaday – Town of Burnsville

Brian Buchanan - Town of Burnsville

Chad Fox - Town of Burnsville, Town Clerk

Shane Dale – Town of Burnsville, Public Works Director

David Graham – High Country RPO

Stephen Sparks – NCDOT Division 14

Jeanne Martin – Burnsville Resident

Stacey Laughrun – Burnsville Resident

Martha Tyner – Burnsville Resident

Suzanne Armstrong – Burnsville Resident

### Meeting Minutes

Todd gave a brief introduction of the project, and then Nathan shared the two proposed design alternatives and opened the meeting for comments from the public.

In general, Option 2 is better because people don't have to cross the road as much.

Much of the discussion involved the eastern end of the project. The crosswalk for both options should be moved further west, away from US 19E because of people speeding who turn off US 19 and continue speeding on East Main Street.

The crosswalk should be located closer to the laundromat building, with sidewalks on the north side from Hunter Street to the laundromat (for Option 1).

The western crossing should be moved back from Meadow Road to Pensacola Road

Several attendees noted that additional aesthetic treatments should be considered such as planter boxes and trees. However, given the limited space and NCDOT design requirements, those may not be feasible.

After discussion, a vote was take as to which Alternative should be moved forward as the Preferred Alternative, and meeting attendees chose Alternative 2.

**Appendix B**  
**Cost Estimates**

**Alternative 1**

**Project: Town of Burnsville Sidewalk Feasibility Study**  
**Alternative 1**  
 From: Long View Rd to Hunter St

Planning County: Yancey

<b>CONSTR. COST</b>
<b>\$ 963,025.00</b>

Typical Section: 5' Sidewalk with 3' Landscaped Strip

				<b>Roadway</b>
				<b>\$ 649,650.00</b>
Description	Quantity	Unit	Price	Amount
Grading	1	LS	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00
4" Concrete Sidewalk	2,900	LF	\$ 90.00	\$ 261,000.00
4" Concrete Driveway (High Early Strength)	250	SY	\$ 178.60	\$ 44,650.00
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Erosion Control	3	Acre	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Pedestrian Signals	8	EA	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Thermo and Markers	1	LS	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Misc. Utilities (5%)	1	LS	\$ 32,500.00	\$ 32,500.00
<b>Construction Contract Cost</b> .....				\$ 682,200.00
<b>Contingency (30%)</b> .....				\$ 204,660.00
<b>Right of Way Cost</b> .....				\$ 20,000.00
<b>Surveying, Engineering, Public Involvement, &amp; Contingency (15%)</b> .....				\$ 33,699.00
<b>Construction Engineering and Inspection (10%)</b> .....				\$ 22,466.00
<b>Alternative 1 Full Project Implementation Cost</b> .....				<b>\$ 963,025.00</b>

The Consultant has no control over the cost of labor, materials, equipment, or over the Contractor's methods of determining prices or over competitive bidding or market conditions. Opinions of probable costs provided herein are based on the information known to Consultant at this time and represent only the Consultant's judgment as a design professional familiar with the construction industry. The Consultant cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction costs will not vary from its opinions of probable costs.

**Alternative 2**

**Project: Town of Burnsville Sidewalk Feasibility Study**  
**Alternative 2**  
 From: Long View Rd to Hunter St

Planning

County: Yancey

<b>CONSTR. COST</b>
<b>\$ 1,258,237.50</b>

Typical Section: 5' Sidewalk with 3' Landscaped Strip

				<b>Roadway</b>
				<b>\$ 854,100.00</b>
Description	Quantity	Unit	Price	Amount
Grading	1	LS	\$ 250,000.00	\$ 250,000.00
4" Concrete Sidewalk	3,505	LF	\$ 90.00	\$ 315,450.00
4" Concrete Driveway (High Early Strength)	250	SY	\$ 178.60	\$ 44,650.00
Traffic Control	1	LS	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
Erosion Control	3	Acre	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Pedestrian Signals (at signalized intersections)	8	EA	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Thermo and Markers	1	LS	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Misc. Utilities (5%)	1	LS	\$ 42,800.00	\$ 42,800.00
<b>Construction Contract Cost</b> .....				<b>\$ 896,900.00</b>
<b>Contingency (30%)</b> .....				<b>\$ 269,070.00</b>
<b>Right of Way Cost</b> .....				<b>\$ 20,000.00</b>
<b>Surveying, Engineering, Public Involvement, &amp; Contingency (15%)</b> .....				<b>\$ 43,360.50</b>
<b>Construction Engineering and Inspection (10%)</b> .....				<b>\$ 28,907.00</b>
<b>Alternative 2 Full Project Implementation Cost</b> .....				<b>\$ 1,258,237.50</b>

The Consultant has no control over the cost of labor, materials, equipment, or over the Contractor's methods of determining prices or over competitive bidding or market conditions. Opinions of probable costs provided herein are based on the information known to Consultant at this time and represent only the Consultant's judgment as a design professional familiar with the construction industry. The Consultant cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction costs will not vary from its opinions of probable costs.	
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