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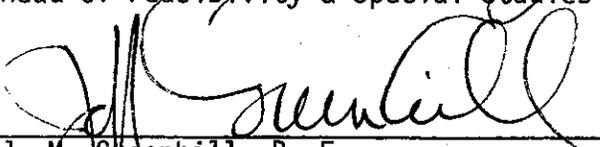
FEASIBILITY STUDY

US 52, Albemarle
Bikeway From W. Main Street to Salisbury Avenue
Stanly County
U-2401

Prepared by
Planning and Research Branch
Division of Highways
N. C. Department of Transportation


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I. DESCRIPTION

This report covers a preliminary study of providing a new bikeway alongside the subject highway. General location of the bikeway, approximately 0.8 mile in length, is shown on Figure 1. This project is included in the 1988-1996 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for feasibility study and/or right of way protection. It is also included in the bicycle section of the TIP as an independent project with an estimated cost of \$92,200 (100 percent federal funding) and construction schedule of Fiscal Year 1990.

II. PURPOSE OF PROJECT

Existing Conditions Along US 52

US 52 is a multi-lane crosstown route passing on the west side of the central business and industrial area of Albemarle. The existing roadway width varies from 48 to 59 feet face to face of curbs, providing four through lanes with a fifth lane for left turns at major intersections. No sidewalks exist along the highway, and no provisions were made for future sidewalks. Berms behind the curbing generally are 5 feet wide. Existing right of way varies from 60 to 120 feet.

Development adjacent to US 52 is heavy density residential to the west and recreational and industrial to the east. On the immediate east side of US 52 are two ball fields, tennis courts, parking lots, an electric substation, and vacant woodland. Farther eastward and parallel to US 52 are a stream, railroad track, and a string of industries extending between W. Main Street and Salisbury Avenue (See Figure 2).

Need for Project

The City of Albemarle has strongly requested a bicycle path that can also be used as a pedestrian sidewalk along the east side of US 52 between W. Main Street and Salisbury Avenue. The bikeway would provide safe route for bikers and pedestrians along the City's major thoroughfare. It would enable children and adult users, especially those residing east of the industrial and central business area, to commute safely to the recreational areas east of US 52. Currently, bike and pedestrian access to the recreational facilities from the east is limited to West Main Street and Salisbury Avenue. Access to the park between the two major streets is restricted by the mill development, railroad tracks, and a creek. Easy and safe access from the west side of US 52 are provided by parallel residential streets and a protected pedestrian crossing at the Efird Street intersection.

The City of Albemarle has a very active and extensive recreational program. Use of the Carolina Avenue Park ball field and tennis courts, Optimist Park and field, and related areas is heavy during the warm seasons. Prominent activities are Little League baseball, American Legion baseball, and high school baseball. Most of the young people of Albemarle use the parks which are lighted for night activities.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the potential for significant bike and pedestrian use associated with recreational facilities adjacent to a major highway, provision of a separate pathway along US 52 between W. Main Street and Salisbury Avenue to accommodate bike and pedestrian traffic is a justifiable transportation improvement. In addition, it would reduce the potential for bike and/or pedestrian accidents on a heavily used, high speed road.

The logical location for a bikeway is the immediate east side of US 52. To provide a bikeway separated from the US 52 roadway, widening of the existing berm behind the road curbing would be necessary. Most of the berm length is on fill ranging up to 10 feet above natural ground. American Association of State Highway and Transportation Official (AASHTO) standards for a shared two-way bikeway is a desirable 12-foot pavement (10-foot minimum) with generally 5-foot separation from the existing road curbing. Special signing and striping may be required to minimize conflicts between bikers and pedestrians. Estimated construction cost for a 12-foot bikeway extending for approximately 4300 feet is \$215,000.

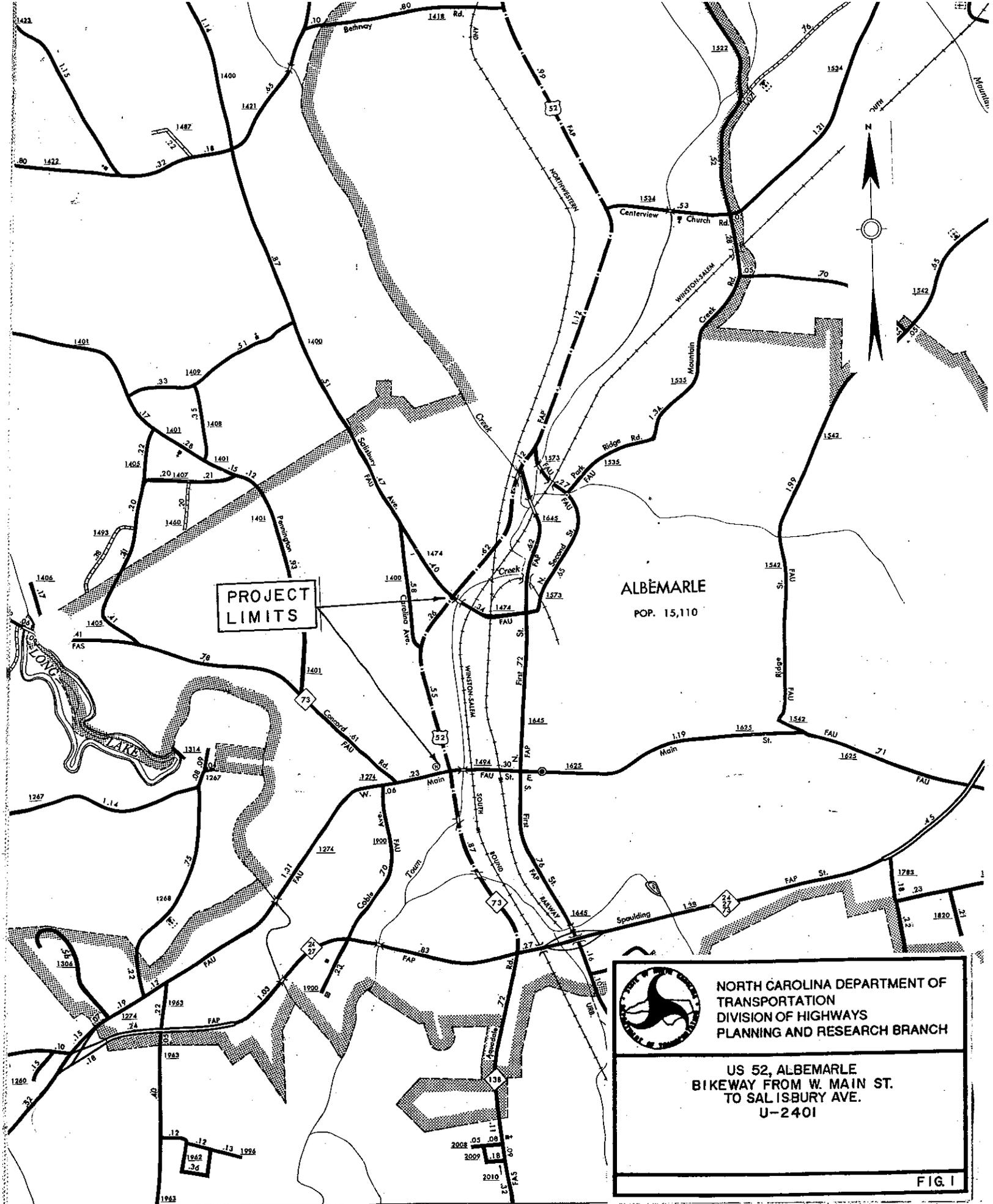
Additional right of way to accommodate the bikeway construction would be required on approximately 60 percent of the project length. The remaining project length has sufficient existing right of way to contain the minimum or desirable design construction. No cost has been estimated for the additional right-of-way; however, donation of any necessary right of way should be the responsibility of the City of Albemarle..

IV. OTHER COMMENTS

No other alternative to the bikeway construction was found to be more feasible or desirable. Provision of bike lanes or wide outside travel lanes on US 52 is not possible due to the limited existing width of the US 52 roadway. Also, consideration was given to a possible greenway path for bike and pedestrian use farther away from US 52. Although such a greenway system would provide greater safety to all users, it is precluded by numerous obstacles such as a Duke Power substation, tennis courts, ball field, and a parallel stream and, thus, is not recommended.

The bikeway project should have no significant impact on the environment. The project may encroach on the floodplain of Little Long Creek in the vicinities of W. Main Street and Salisbury Avenue.

RGD/plr



ALBEMARLE AND VICINITY

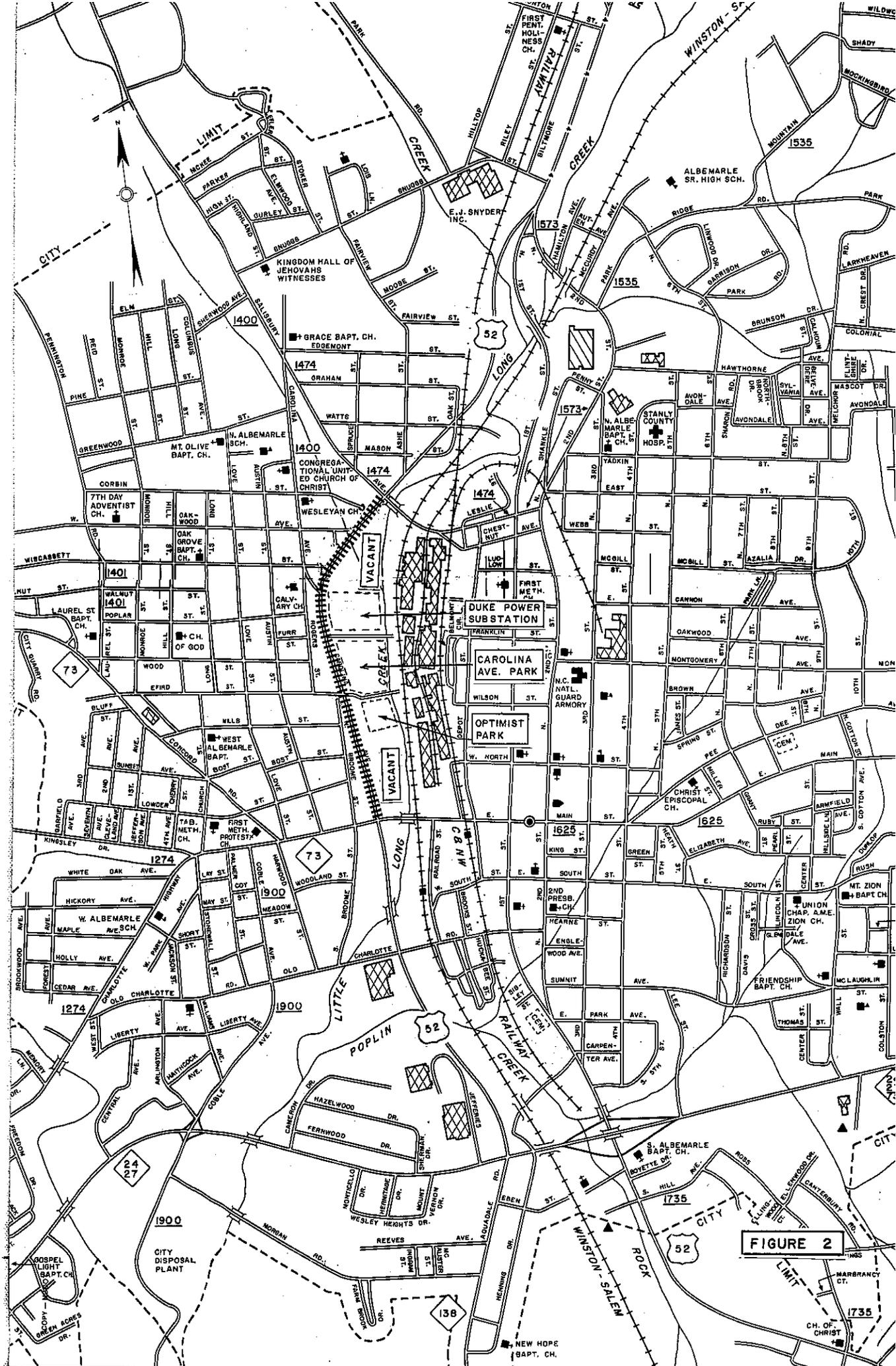


FIGURE 2