



Henderson Street & Logan Street **Corridor Study**



DATE: SEPTEMBER 2023 **CITY OF MARION NC**

Acknowledgments

This corridor study was prepared by Stantec and would not be possible without the help from residents, town staff, regional planning commission staff, and working group members, including:

- **Alan Toney**
Foothills Regional Commission
- **Jerry Stensland**
Foothills Regional Commission
- **Bob Boyette**
City of Marion
- **Heather Cotton**
City of Marion
- **Steve Little**
City of Marion
- **Vance McNees**
City of Marion
- **Freddie Killough**
Marion Business Association
- **Hannah Cook**
NCDOT Division 13

Thank you!

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Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| AASHTO | American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials |
| FHWA | Federal Highways Administration |
| FRC | Foothills Regional Commission |
| FTA | Federal Transit Administration |
| ITE | Institute of Transportation Engineers |
| MUTCD | Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices |
| NCDOT | North Carolina Department of Transportation |
| SPOT | Strategic Prioritization Office |
| STIP | Statewide Transportation Improvement Program |
| TIP | Transportation Improvement Program |
| USDOT | United States Department of Transportation |





Introduction

01

Introduction.



About an hour east of Asheville, tucked in at the foot of the Appalachians, you'll find Marion. The picturesque setting is such an ever-present part of Marion that the city describes itself as "where Main Street meets the mountains." And with a vibrant Main Street, revitalized in recent years through streetscaping and downtown reinvestment, Marion's historic core is bustling.

Henderson and Logan Streets play important roles in Marion's development, connecting residents to Main Street, and travelers from Main Street to points north and west of town. But as Marion – and downtown Marion – have evolved, these streets have failed to keep pace. Downtown Marion is a place for people, but these streets' designs don't match this function.

New development is occurring downtown and regional tourism development is focused on trails, biking, walking, and active living. To integrate Henderson and Logan Streets into Downtown, they need to support bicyclists, pedestrians, deliveries, freight, and other users. That is, to support Marion into the future, the next version of Henderson Street and Logan Street must be Complete Streets.

This Chapter Covers:

- Background & Purpose
- Planning Process & Timeline
- Plan Review
- Demographics
- Guiding Principles



Background & Purpose

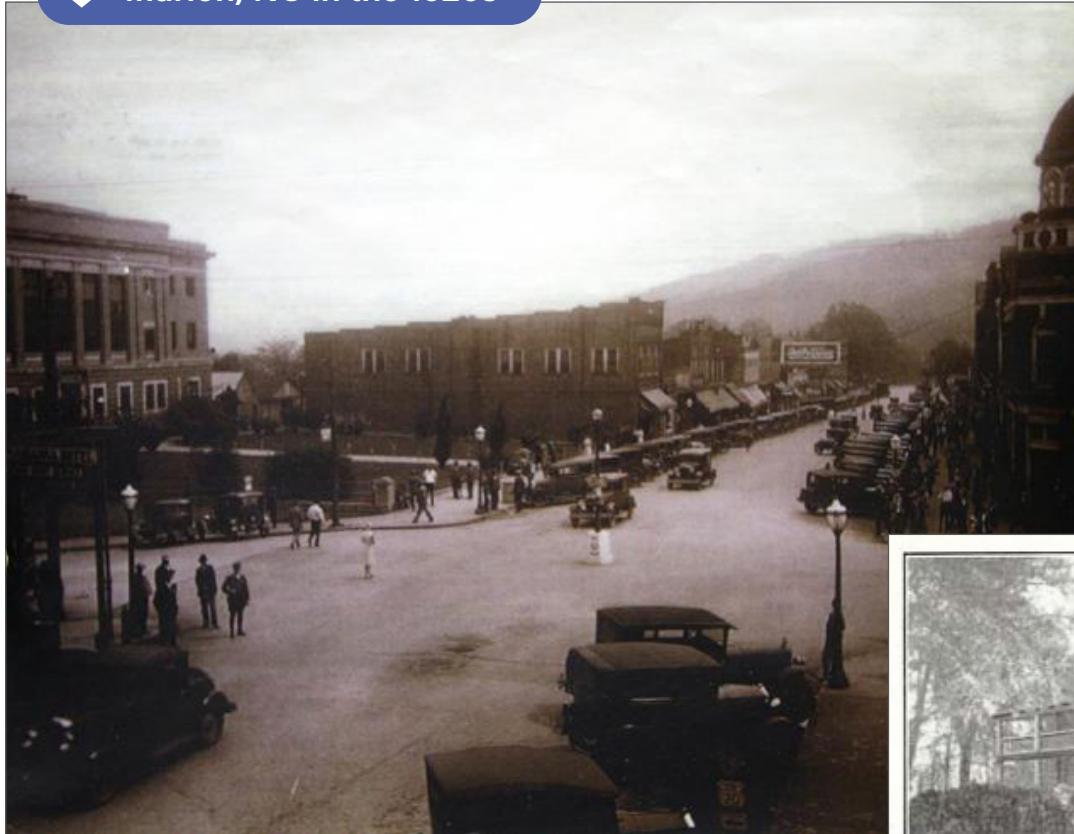
Marion is a community invested in its growth and preserving its small town character. Today, Marion's Main Street is an example of the positive benefits that streetscaping and orienting downtown streets to pedestrian activity can bring. Improvements brought about by its 2016 Downtown Streetscape Plan have created a downtown environment that is promoting new, local shops, restaurants, and activities, and helping to draw tourism to the City and region.

As a gateway to downtown, Henderson Street creates one of the first impressions residents and visitors form of the community, yet it lacks the same streetscaping features that have recast Main Street. Furthermore, its roadway design invites faster-moving traffic and discourages walking, biking, and activities that encourage slower vehicle speeds. This has limited the development of thriving businesses in what should be a strong, downtown setting.

This Plan is the first step in the process to remaking Henderson Street and Logan Street as "Complete Streets," rebalancing their design to better meet the mobility needs of residents, visitors, and downtown businesses while promoting a more walkable development pattern.



Marion, NC in the 1920s



The Carson Mansion, McDowell
County's First courthouse pictured in
Our State Magazine, early 1930s.



The famous Carson Mansion is pictured above. For several generations it was the home of one of western North Carolina's leading families. Erected almost 125 years ago, it was McDowell County's first courthouse.



Planning Process & Timeline

The planning process was divided into **three distinct phases** (Figure 1.1):

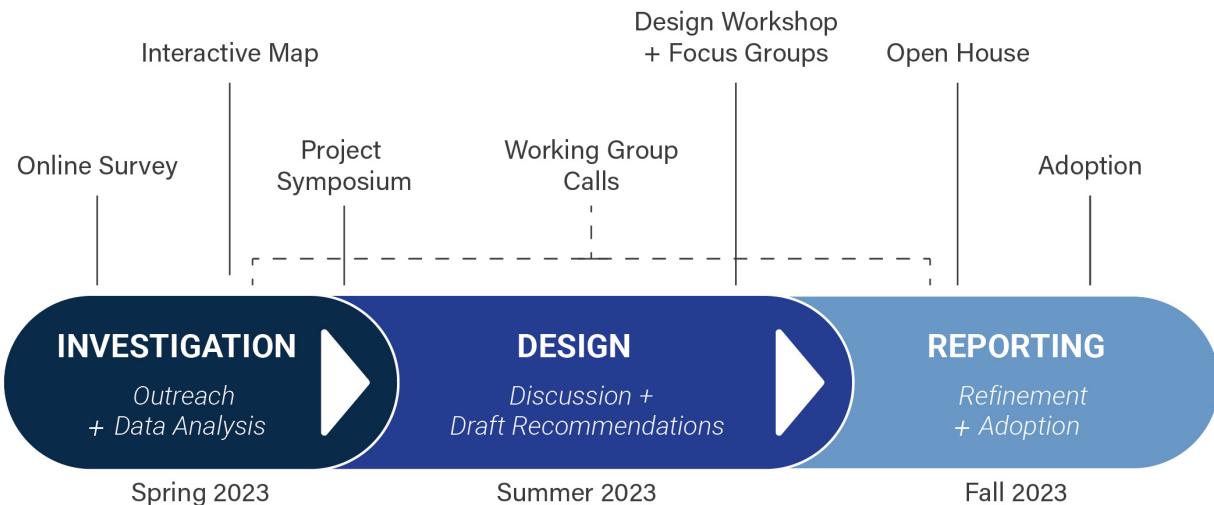


Figure 1.1: General process schedule with public outreach opportunities identified.

■■■ *PHASE 1: Investigation*

The first phase centered on data collection, preliminary study of the corridor, and beginning the public engagement process. The team worked with stakeholders to define the Study's purpose and goals. The project website, survey, and online maps were launched to begin collecting public comments. This phase culminated with the Project Symposium in May 2023, where initial analyses and takeaways were presented and community input sought. Key takeaways derived from this phase culminated in the development of the Preferred Access Plan (PAP), the foundation for future design work.

■■■ *PHASE 2: Design*

The second phase began immediately following Investigation. The team condensed data, public input, and background information to inform preliminary planning, engineering, and design recommendations. Many of these recommendations were developed during the multi-day Design Workshop in June 2023, a large, interactive planning event that provided stakeholders and the general public opportunities to review and influence concept designs in real-time. During this phase, the concept design for the corridor was first developed and refined.

■■■ *PHASE 3: Reporting*

The final phase documented the whole of the planning process. Using plans, materials and designs produced throughout the study, the final report documented both the design recommendations, the data and analysis informing the recommendations, and the planning process itself. This document will guide the City of Marion and stakeholders in subsequent design and engineering phases on the path to a Complete Street. The Open House was held during this period to present the final recommendations, close the project and cap a productive collaboration between the community and local planning agencies.



Plan Review

Marion is a community invested in its growth and preserving its small town character, particularly in and around its downtown. This Plan takes place in the context of the City's previous planning efforts, and in particular four prior efforts by the City, County, and NCDOT with their respective visions for the transportation network:

Destination McDowell Tourism Master Plan (McDowell County, 2022)

The Destination McDowell Tourism Master Plan creates a county-wide vision for the development of tourism infrastructure through McDowell County and its constituent communities. The Plan identifies "Main Street Communities" as a core asset for tourism, one of which is downtown Marion, along with natural resources and outdoor recreation.

The Plan makes specific recommendations for the streetscaping of West Henderson Street and Logan Street, with the goal of creating an improved pedestrian experience and a safer environment for downtown visitors through a road diet. The Plan creates two context zones: the West Henderson Street Gateway and the Logan Street zone.

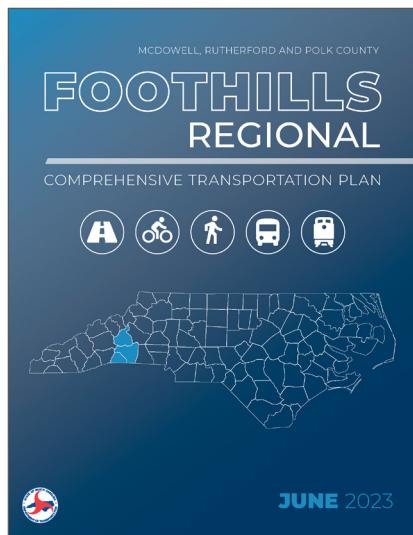
Key design features include:

- Center medians
- Left turning movement restrictions
- Streetscaping enhancements
- Curb extensions and sidewalk widening
- Safe pedestrian crosswalks
- Gateway signage

Other recommendations include entrance plazas to the Municipal Event Center and a pedestrian bridge across West Henderson Street.



Comprehensive Transportation Plan (NCDOT, 2022)



The Foothills Regional Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) coordinates transportation planning and projects for Marion and other communities within the FRC planning area and acts as the initial step in the state transportation funding process. CTPs identify mobility needs in the transportation system in order to support growth over a 25 to 30 year time frame.

The Plan, completed in 2022, calls for several improvements along Henderson Street and Logan Street that are relevant to this Study. First, it incorporates the recommendations of the Bicycle Plan, calling for a road diet as a roadway improvement for the section from Railroad Street to Burgin Street.

WEST HENDERSON STREET (HIGHWAY):

- From (To): US 221 (Burgin Street) - 0.64 miles
Reduce from 4 lanes to 3 (center turn lane) to improve safety and mobility; add sidewalks and bike lanes throughout; multi-use path from US 221 to Railroad Street.

This recommendation is consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Recommendations of the CTP, which contain three projects relevant to the study area:

M14/M59: WEST HENDERSON STREET (BIKE/PED):

- From (To): Burgin St (Main Street) - 0.21 miles
Bike lanes are recommended.
- From (To): Railroad St (Burgin St) - 0.32 miles
Bike lanes and sidewalk are recommended as part of road diet. For sidewalk, fill in gaps where it does not exist on both sides of road. This is part of highway project along West henderson Street (left).
- From (To): US 221 (Railroad St) - 1.44 miles
Bike lanes and sidewalk are recommended as part of road diet. For sidewalk it is advised to fill in gaps where it does not exist on both sides of road. All as part of highway project along West henderson Street (left).



Figure 1.2: Bicycle & Pedestrian Recommendations, Marion.
Source: Foothills Regional Commission.



Downtown Streetscape Plan & Main Street Streetscape Map (2016)

The 2016 Streetscape Plan laid the foundation for this planning effort by creating a cohesive visual language for wayfinding in Marion, as well as creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape design for Main Street. While most of the signage is oriented to motor vehicles and not bicyclists or pedestrians.

Accompanying the Streetscape Plan is a proposed design for an improved Main Street, which includes a portion of Henderson Street and the study area.

Important elements of a pedestrian- and bike-friendly streetscape are presented, including wider sidewalks, traffic calming through on-street parking and curb extensions, high-visibility crosswalks, and slower traffic.

Key Destinations Identified

- City Hall
- Fire Department
- Courthouse
- Post Office
- MACA
- Library
- Farmer's Market
- Community Centers
- Marion Depot
- Public Parking
- Visitor's Center

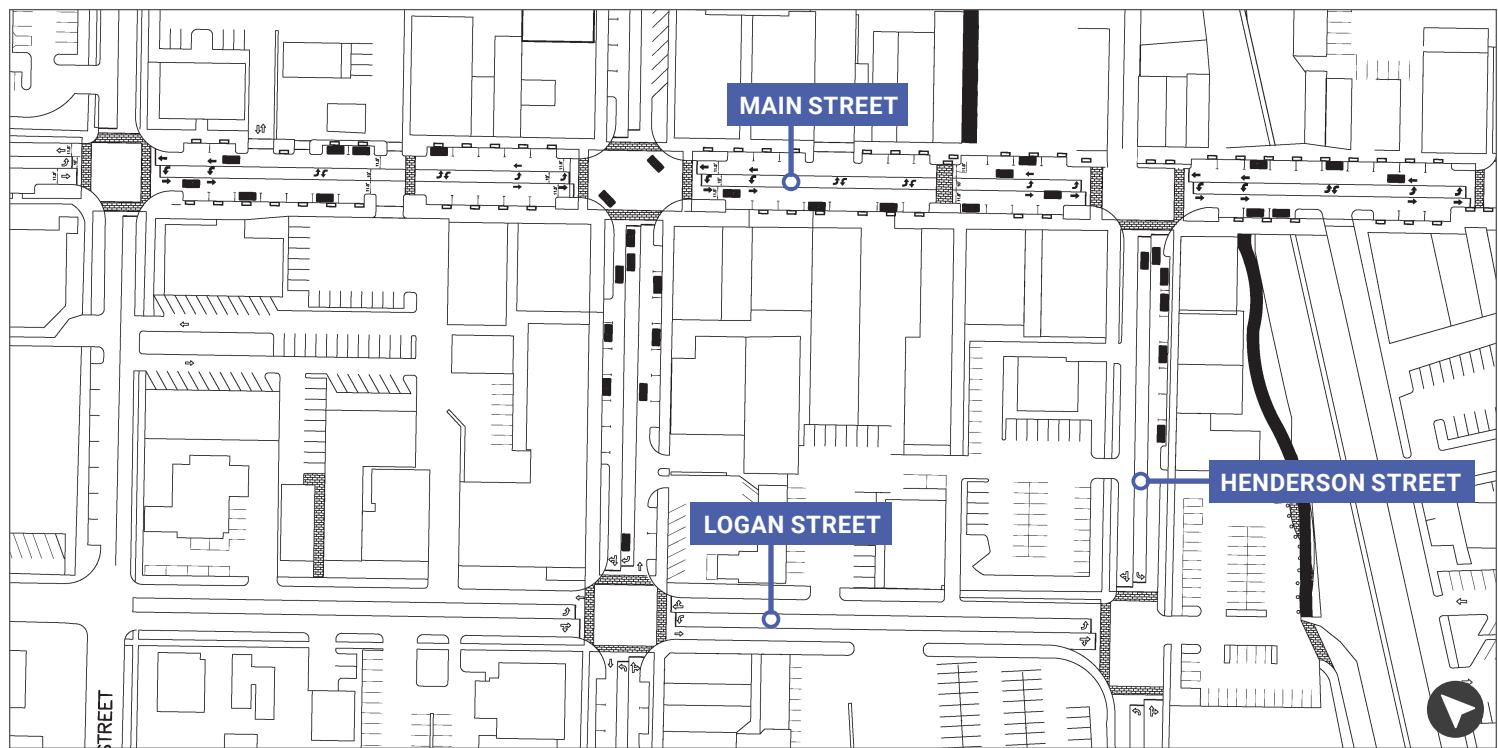


Figure 1.3: Downtown Marion Streetscape Plan Map.



Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2016)

The Bike Plan identifies a comprehensive and cohesive bicycle facility network for Marion, with the vision of creating a bike-friendly community that is safe, convenient, and accessible to all users and links neighborhoods with desired destinations. The Plan makes several noteworthy recommendations in its network map:

- Henderson Street is recommended for a road diet to incorporate bike facilities**, though the plan does not identify the specific facility type. Speed and volumes for the corridor suggest a separated facility, whether within the curbs (i.e., a buffered bike lane) or above the curb (i.e., a sidepath).
- Shared Lane Markings ("Sharrows")** are proposed for Railroad Street, Main Street and Court Street, all of which intersect with Henderson and Logan Streets.
- A sidepath** is proposed for North Main Street, with which Logan Street connects outside of the study area.

Henderson Street is designated as **priority investment #4** in the Bike Plan and receives special treatment. It calls for a corridor study in order to coordinate multiple stakeholders and to determine the feasibility of reducing travel lanes.

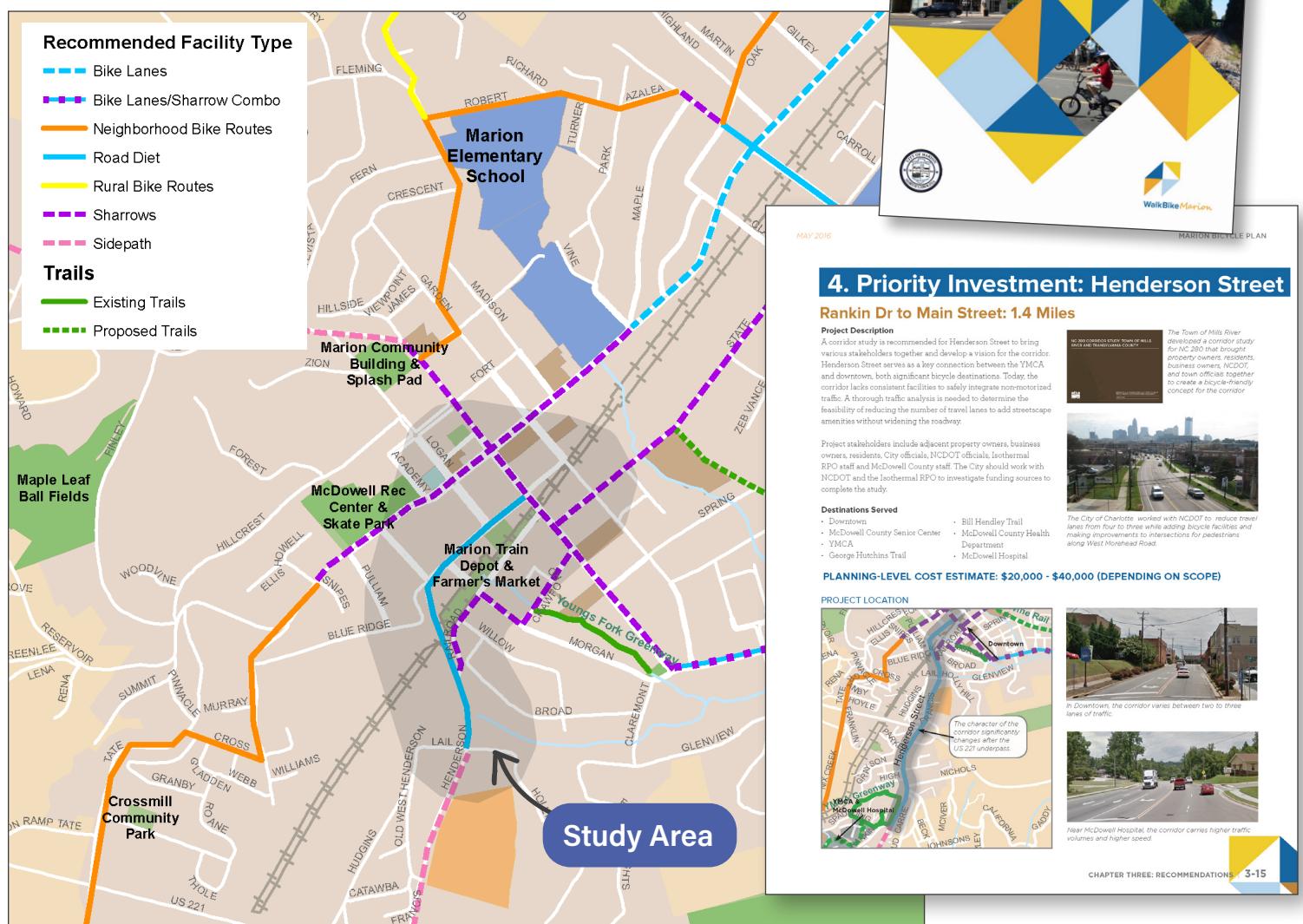


Figure 1.4: Comprehensive Bicycle Plan recommendations.



Marion Land Use Plan (2012)

The Plan coordinates land use, transportation, and economic development growth in accordance with the Town's overall vision. **Key goals include:**

- Preserve small town values and protecting community assets
- Improve the historic downtown
- Encourage more mixed-use development throughout the Town
- Protect and strengthen property values
- Engage in strategic investments to better the community
- Promote the Main Street philosophy community-wide

Evaluation of existing conditions shows few constraints along the corridor. Some environmental considerations existing at the westernmost extent of the corridor near the Railroad and Railroad Street. There are three established neighborhoods that abut the study area, including Wiseman, Grandview Park and Morgan. These neighborhoods largely feature single-family housing, but in higher densities than much of Marion (between 3-5 units per acre).

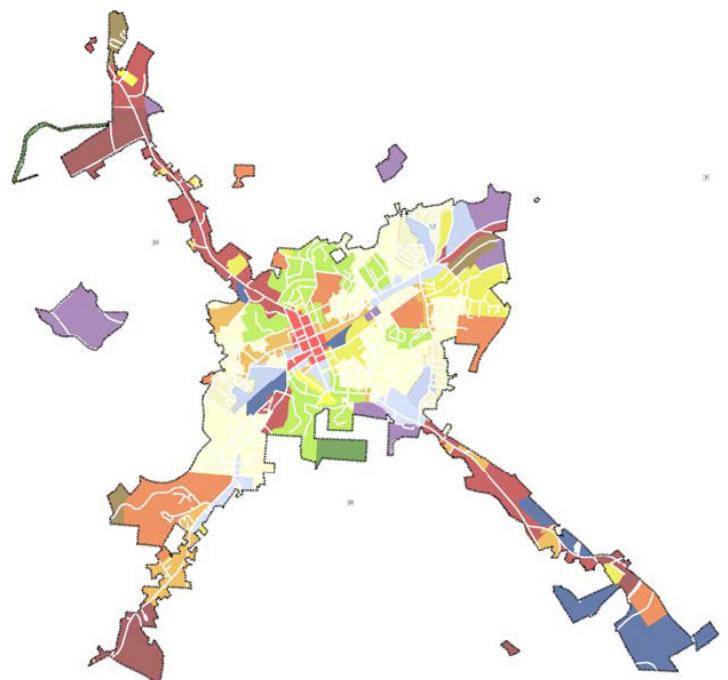
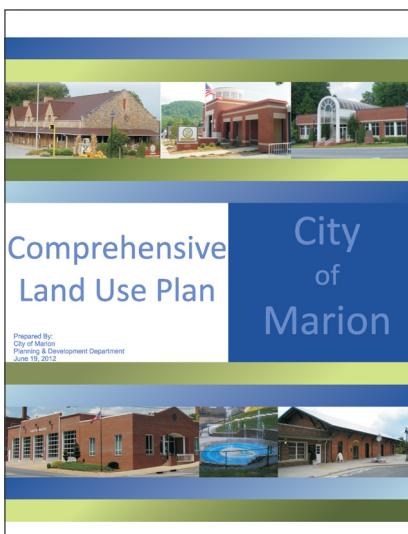


Figure 1.5: Future land use & proposed zoning changes.

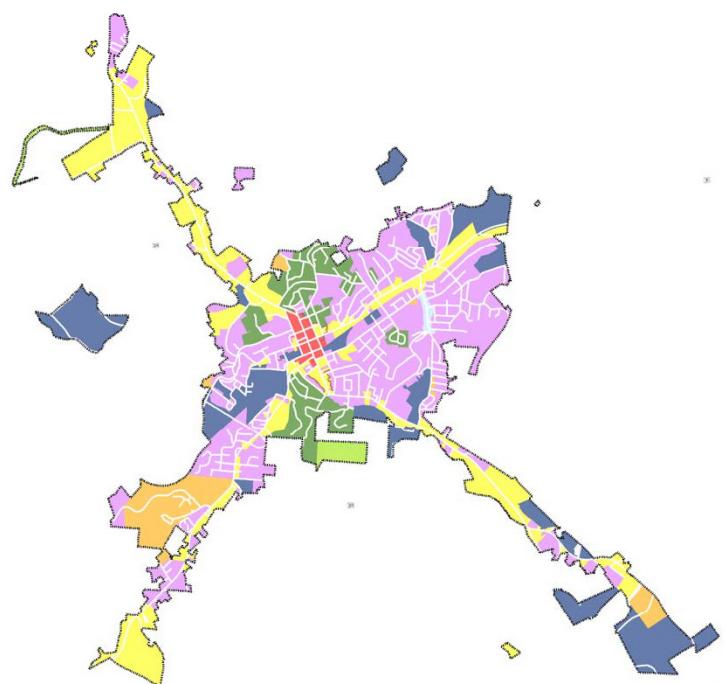


Figure 1.6: 2012 land use map.

Demographics

Henderson Street and Logan Street are part of Marion's identity. These streets are right next to Main Street and provide important destinations for the people who live in Marion. Henderson & Logan Streets have the potential to become part of Marion's downtown, but this requires meeting the needs of Marion's residents.

Marion's residents are more likely to live below the poverty line. 21% of Marion residents have income at or below the poverty line, compared with 13% of all North Carolinians. Nearly 40% of all renter households are considered rent-burdened—meaning they pay a higher percentage of their income for housing than the national or state average.

Marion's residents typically commute by car.

96% of Marion residents drive to work. The second most popular commute option is to work from home (4%), which means few if any residents are walking or biking. Most people have a commute less than 20 minutes long (54%) and one in five people have a commute of under 10 minutes.

The area surrounding Henderson and Logan streets has many residents that cannot easily travel to where they need to be. According to the North Carolina Department of Transportation, two census tracts (see below) feature communities that disproportionately lack access to mobility needs, including a higher proportion of zero-car households.

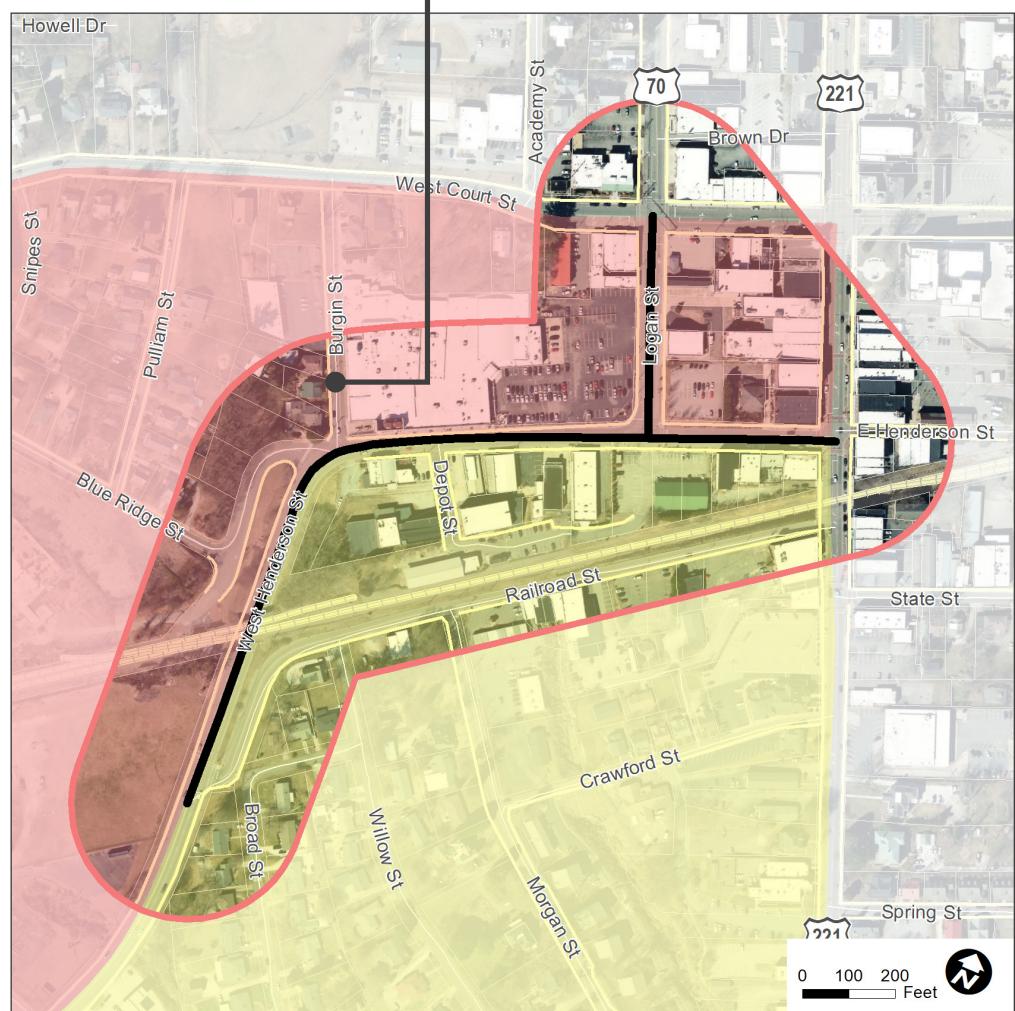
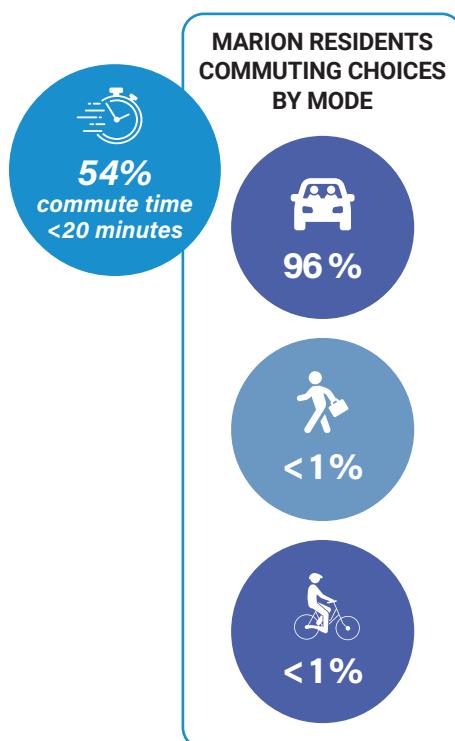


Figure 1.7: Transportation-Disadvantaged Communities in the Marion study area.
Source: NCDOT Transportation Disadvantaged Index.



Guiding Principles

As the function of Henderson Street and Logan Street has changed, so too should its design. Leading the project team in the planning and design process are Guiding Principles, derived from the continuous input, perspectives, and directions provided by the Marion community through public participation from surveys, interactive mapping, symposiums, focus groups, and stakeholder outreach. The recommendations of this plan, developed through the Design Workshop, will be guided by and reflect these Principles.



Principle 1:
Right-size Henderson and Logan Streets with maintainable infrastructure.



Principle 2:
Priority must be given to pedestrians & bicyclists.



Principle 3:
Safety of ALL users is a must.



Principle 4:
Integrate Henderson and Logan Streets into downtown Marion and its surroundings.



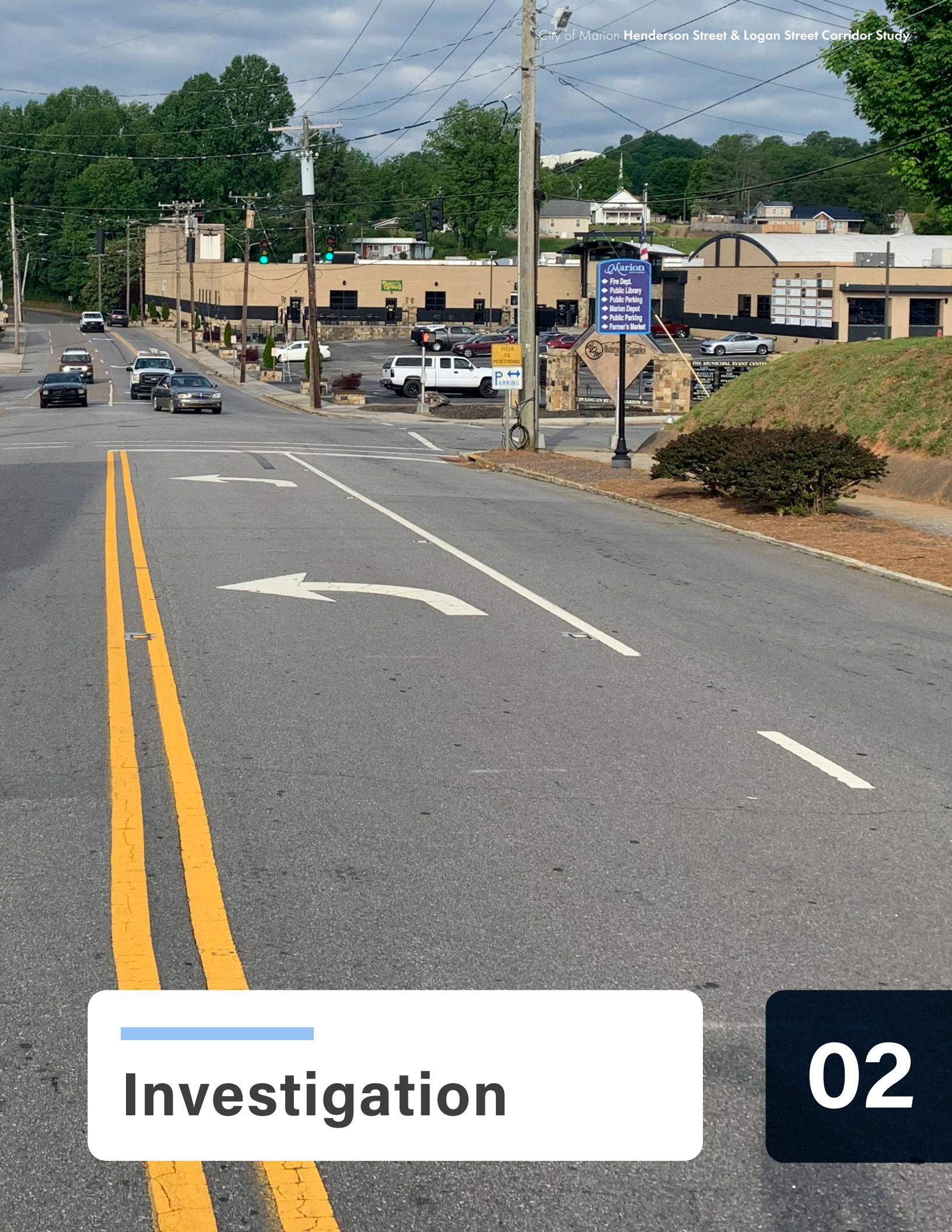
Principle 5:
Support surrounding uses through attractive design and human scale.





Investigation

02



Existing Conditions.



»» *Planning efforts can only tell us so much about its context.*

Creating a street that is safe and efficient for all users, whether on two feet, two wheels or four, is accomplished only through understanding the road's current performance, from current infrastructure to safety and operations.

The study area for this Plan encompasses just under ½-mile of streets in and near downtown Marion – Henderson Street from Railroad Street to South Main Street, and Logan Street from Court Street to Henderson Street. North of this area, Logan Street reconnects to US 221-BUS as it heads north towards Boone; Henderson Street, meanwhile, connects residents to West Marion, US 221, and I-40. These streets are at once a core part of Downtown Marion, as well as vital connections between Marion, its region, and the state.

This Chapter Covers:

- Existing Conditions
- Public Engagement
- Key Takeaways



Key Destinations

As downtown streets, Henderson and Logan Streets are home to prominent community features, and nearby to others, that generate activity and influence travel patterns within Marion and the study area. These key destinations are important to understand how and where Marion residents and visitors are stopping to work, live, or play, and to how Henderson and Logan Streets “fit” within Downtown Marion and the City’s broader transportation network.

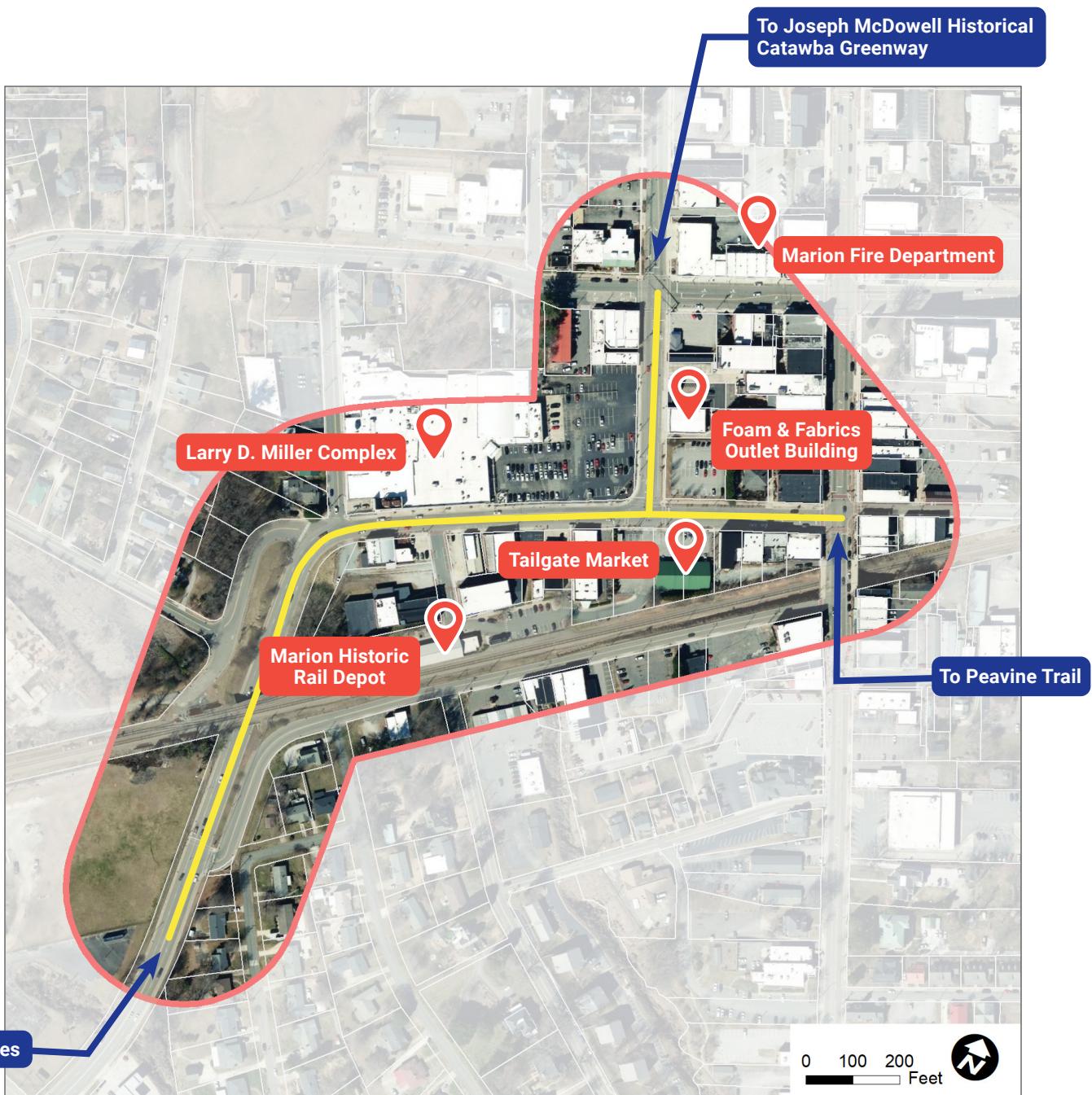


Figure 2.1: Map illustrating key destinations.



Corridor Profile

The Corridor Profile for Henderson Street & Logan Street weaves together data on its built environment, transportation context, and streetscaping to reveal trends and patterns in its design and use, highlighting areas and topics of concern.

Information Analyzed

- Right-of-Way Width
- Pavement Width
- Laneage
- Block Length
- Sidewalks
- Bike Facilities
- Traffic Volumes
- Crashes
- Street Trees
- Land Use
- Building Frontage



Corridor conditions with higher speeds and wide-cross sections undesirable for biking.

Topics of Concern:

1. An uninviting streetscape.

For a downtown corridor, both Logan and Henderson Street are uninviting to visitors. Large sections of both streets are dedicated to surface parking lots, and few buildings front the corridor. Utility poles are abundant and can be found in the middle of sidewalks. A lack of shade trees, coupled with large asphalt areas, creates areas that are unappealing to walk, both for visual interest and for comfort.

2. Crashes may not be the greatest safety concern.

This stretch of Henderson Street has a crash rate higher than state averages, yet there are no fatal or severe injury crashes in the study area. Safety is a concern, but speeding issues caused by an outdated cross-section and a lack of safe crossing opportunities may represent the greater concern for these streets. Likewise, a lack of pedestrian-level lighting leaves both streets poorly lit during night and evening hours.



Corridor conditions with higher speeds and wide-cross sections undesirable for biking.

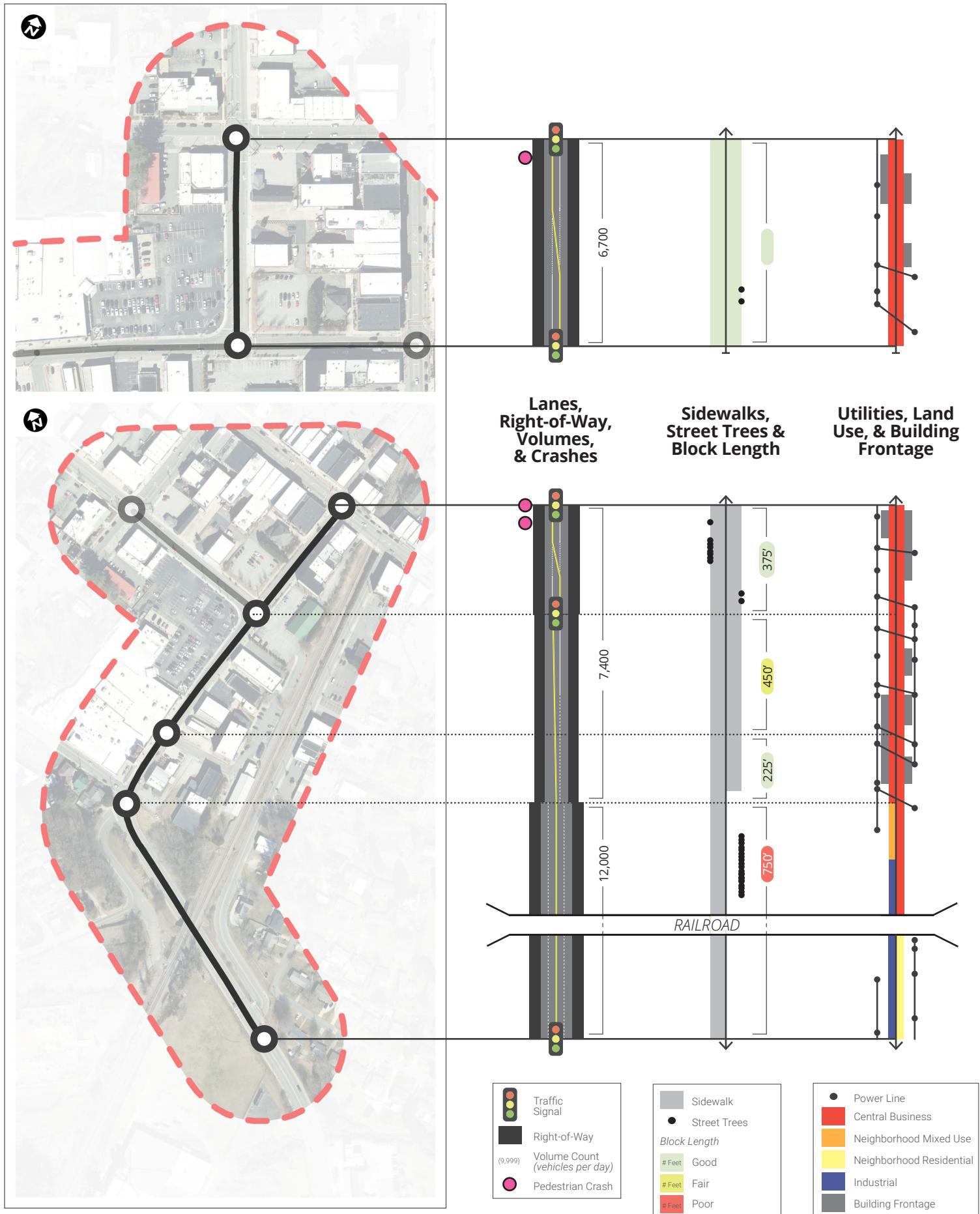


Figure 2.2: Corridor profile.





High-quality pedestrian amenities on Main Street.



Corridor conditions with higher speeds and wide-cross sections undesirable for biking.



Varying sidewalk conditions throughout the corridor.

Land Use & Urban Form

Main Street Marion sets the bar for downtown walkability in town, but the amenities and streetscape features that make Main Street inviting are missing along Henderson and Logan Streets, just one block over.

On both Henderson and Logan Streets, properties are zoned as downtown commercial, inviting higher-intensity, local retail uses and mixed-use development. However, few buildings and storefronts face the street, leaving large facades with little visual interest to passers-by. In fact, **no buildings front the north (eastbound) side of Henderson Street** for the entirety of the corridor. Large surface parking lots dominate the streetscape, including a 600 foot stretch of Henderson Street between the Main Street intersection and the Miller Business Complex entirely devoted to parking. This large break in the urban form adds to the perception that these streets are not for walking or biking, but exclusively for vehicle travel and storage.

Within the pedestrian realm of the streetscape, Henderson Street and Logan Street feature some elements to support walkability. Both feature wider sidewalks (of varying maintenance) 7 feet or greater in width, and landscaping adds to the appeal. However, trees and vegetation on both streets contribute little to no shade or verticality. **Verticality and shade help to slow vehicles and cool surface temperatures** that make summer temperatures more tolerable for pedestrians. At intersections, wide turning radii create large crossing distances: curb extensions can help to create space for shade trees and green infrastructure, creating a more walkable environment.

Multimodal Conditions

While drivers may experience relatively comfortable conditions, circumstances are different for bicyclists and pedestrians attempting to walk or bike in the study area. With no bike facilities present along Henderson or Logan, bicyclists must move with traffic. Higher speeds of 35 miles per hour and a wide cross-section on Henderson Street create conditions that prevent most from riding a bike in a shared lane with vehicles, and so **the road's design may be suppressing biking activity**. For those who bike by necessity, travel along Henderson Street may only be a last resort.



Pedestrians experience only slightly improved conditions. While sidewalks are present along Henderson Street and Logan Street, they differ in comfort and condition. Along Henderson Street, where vehicle speeds and volumes are highest, narrow sidewalks at the back-of-curb may not provide separation from traffic at the back of the curb. Along both streets, condition of the sidewalk varies, with some concrete in poor shape.

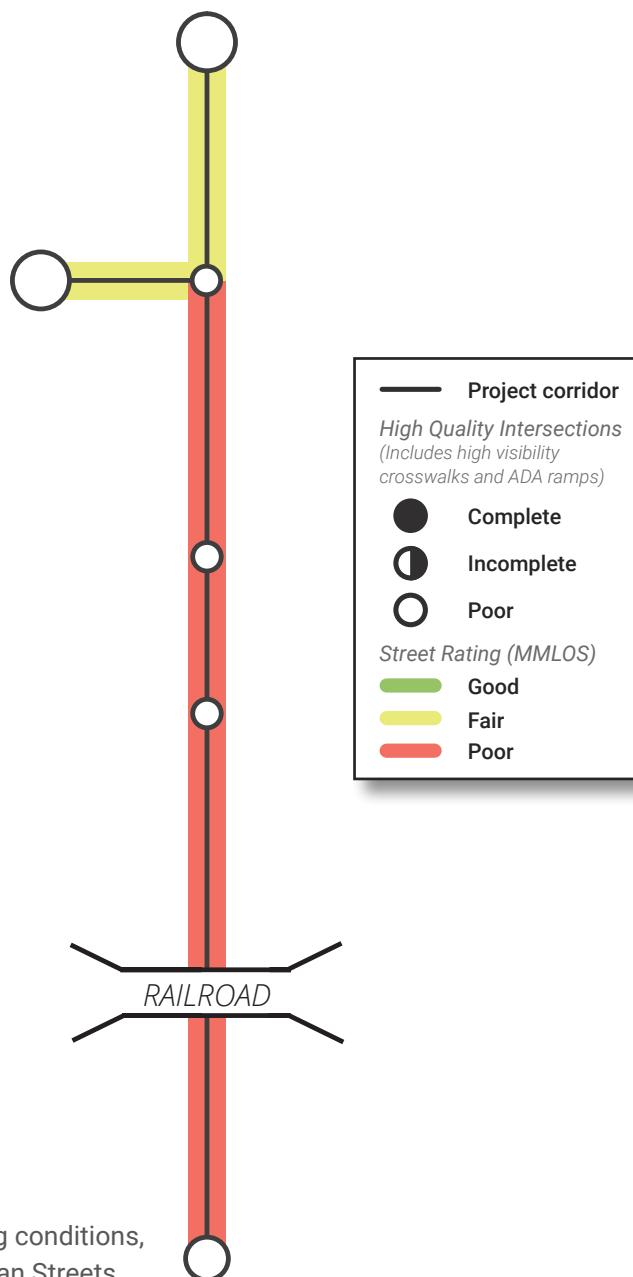


Figure 2.3: Biking conditions, Henderson & Logan Streets.

Most importantly, crossing these streets is a challenge. There are **few crosswalks along the corridor**, even fewer that are easily visible to drivers, and only some intersections feature ADA-compliant curb ramps. A wide cross-section on Henderson Street means that the crossing distance for those traveling on foot may feel insurmountable. Improved pedestrian features such as curb extensions and high-visibility crosswalks may help to improve these conditions.

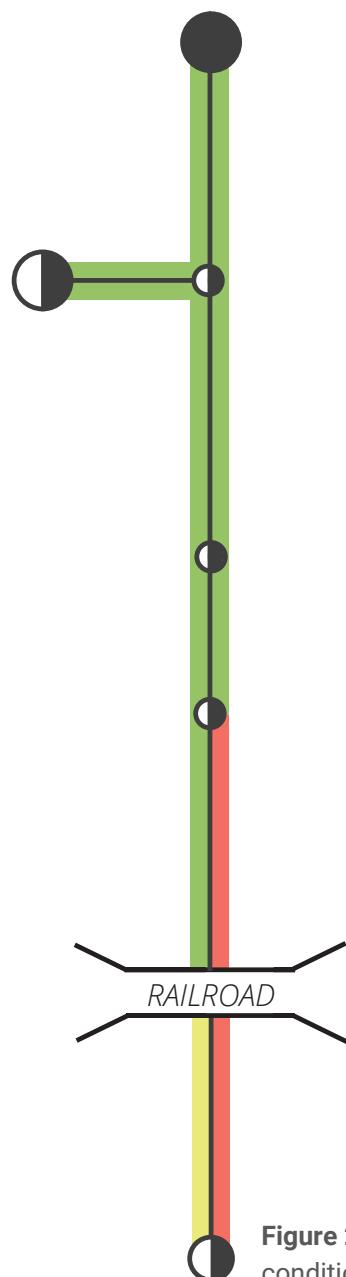


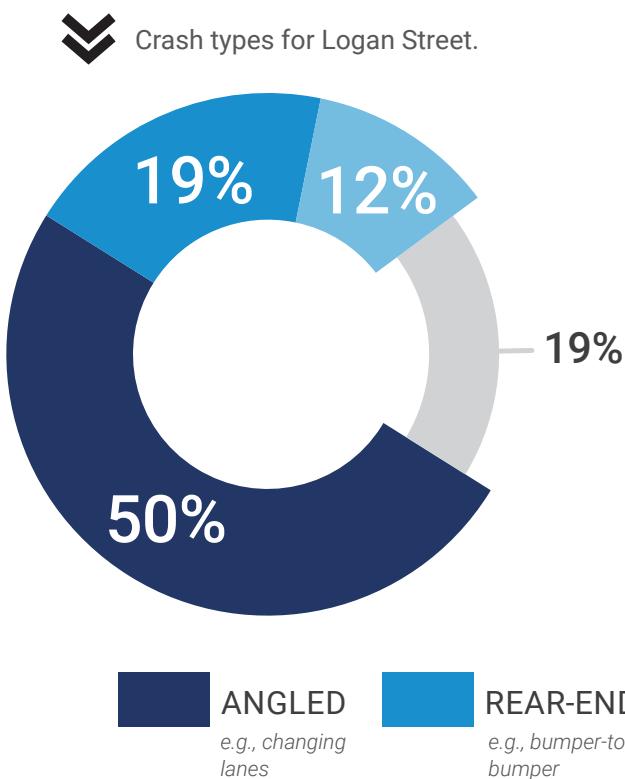
Figure 2.4: Walking conditions, Henderson & Logan Streets.



Vehicle Conditions

Crashes & Safety

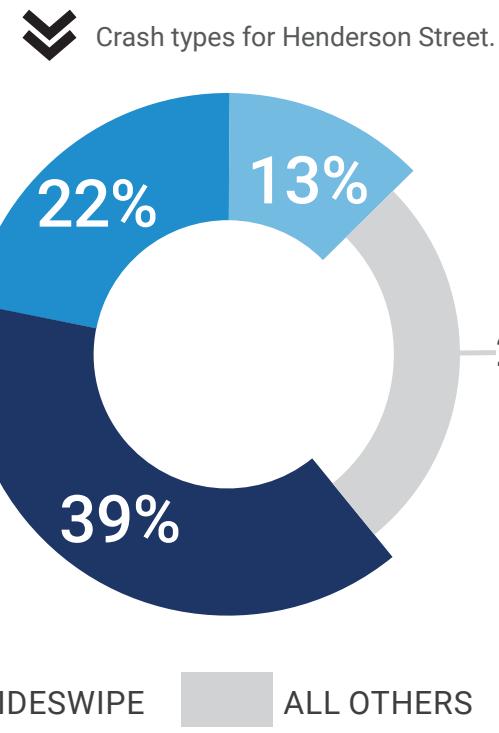
Crashes present something of a concern along Henderson and Logan Streets. Although there are no fatal or severe injury crashes in the study area, Henderson and Logan Streets experience crashes at a frequency **1.35 times that of similar streets in North Carolina**. Crashes in the study area involve either minor injuries (10) or, more prevalently, property damage only (66). These may involve cars backing in or out of on-street parking spaces, turning movements from parking lots or side streets (like Depot Street), or rear-end crashes at stop lights. In fact, **61% of crashes on Henderson Street and 68% on Logan Street** are either angled (turning movement) crashes, or rear end crashes where cars are slowing or stopping. For all years observed, only three pedestrians and zero bicyclists have been involved in a crash: for an area where higher volumes of biking and walking are expected, this suggests that **the corridor's design is suppressing this kind of activity**.



Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) categorizes corridor functionality for motor vehicles based on congestion and movement. Considering traffic speed and volume, roadway capacity, and other factors, LOS ranks users' perceived satisfaction with using the facility, helps to understand the differing conditions impact motorists, potentially identifying areas of concern for users.

Drivers and passengers on Henderson Street and Logan Street experience comfortable conditions traveling along the corridor, which are designed to carry higher volumes than the road currently experiences. At its widest, the corridor can carry approximately 22,000 vehicles per day, yet at its highest volume location it sees only around 10,500. This means congestion – as a result of the corridor's design -- is rarely if ever present in the study area. High volumes of turning movements and poor signal timing may create delay at intersections; study area operations may be improved through a signal study to adjust phases.



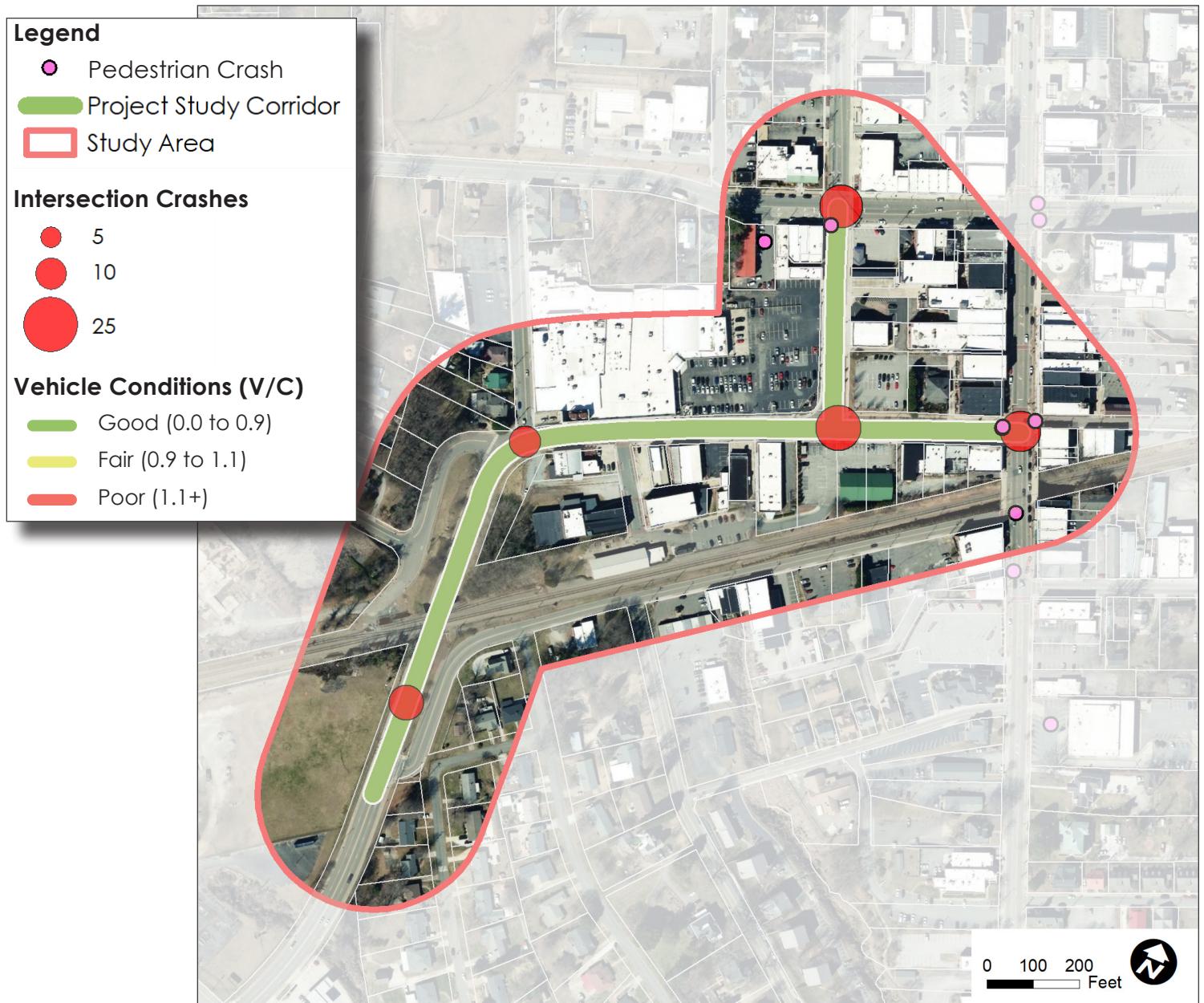


Figure 2.5: Vehicle Conditions & Crashes.

Volume over Capacity (V/C): calculated as the current traffic volume divided by the capacity of the roadway. V/C ratios < 0.9 are considered 'under capacity', and V/C ratios > 1.1 are considered 'over capacity'.

Public Engagement.

Public engagement plays an integral role in any design or study, as its results will impact the daily lives of community members and local businesses. Planning for a community of any size is not as successful as planning with the community; meaningful engagement means stronger results, tighter community bonds, and its implementation is harder fought for. Furthermore, engagement provides invaluable feedback to planners, engineers, and designers regarding current conditions and problems that might not be fully understood looking at data alone; the human element and a diversity of perspectives helps to reframe the project team's view of the issues and provide better suggestions for improvement.

Henderson & Logan Streets Corridor Study: Public Survey

Hello!

You are invited to participate in our community survey for the Henderson & Logan Streets Complete Streets Study. In this survey, you and other members of the community will share your thoughts, as well as identify problem areas and possible solutions, as a user of the Henderson Street corridor from Railroad Street to Main Street, and of Logan Street from Court Street to Henderson Street. Visit to learn more.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you are free to exit the survey at any time. Your answers are strictly confidential, and data from this survey will be reported only in the aggregate.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Your perspective is a valuable resource in making our community's transportation system safe and convenient.

Whenever you're ready to begin, click the **Continue** button below.

Start

Views of the project website and survey. Engagement opportunities and results were posted regularly.

Project Website

Early in the process, the Town worked with the Foothills Regional Commission to create a project website so residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders could access information and provide input on the discussions surrounding the plan's development. The website (<https://foothillsregion.org/regional-development/isothermal-rural-planning-organization-rpo/marioncompletestreets/>)

FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING ORG. MENU

AREA AGENCY ON AGING **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** **HOUSING PROGRAM** **RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

FOOTHILLS REGIONAL PLANNING ORG.

Committee Meetings
Prioritization
RPO Documents
RPO Resources
Safe Routes to School
Transportation Projects
Carbon Reduction Program
Marion Complete Streets Study

Marion Complete Streets Study

The Foothills Regional Commission and the Town of Marion are working together on a study of the Henderson Street and Logan Street corridors in Marion. These streets are vital to the growth of Marion's downtown and serve a variety of needs for local mobility and economic development. This corridor study will help the community develop a new guiding vision for the future of Henderson Street and Logan Street.

This study will take place on a quick timeframe. Work began in March 2023, with public meetings and workshops taking place through late spring and early summer. We anticipate completing the study this summer. Check back for project updates and opportunities to get involved!

Public Survey

Do you work, play, or travel along Henderson & Logan Streets? Maybe you don't now but would like to? If so, we would love to hear from you! Your knowledge is a valuable resource, and the following survey is critical to understanding what works and what doesn't along these important streets. This survey should only take about 10-minutes to complete. Please also share with your friends, family, and neighbors. The survey can be found [here](#).

Interactive Map

The interactive map allows you, the community, to identify issues that need attention, and opportunities to improve! On the map, you'll be able to leave comments about problem areas and points of interest. Tying your comments to specific locations is important feedback as we seek to understand challenges and opportunities along the corridor! The interactive map can be found [here](#).




Online Survey

The goal of the survey was to understand the community's feelings about Henderson and Logan Street. This helped the project team understand the best and worst parts of the corridor.

The survey had 13 questions related to traveling conditions, needed improvements, safety, and growth. These broad questions laid the foundation for the detailed discussions with focus groups.

These are the main takeaways from the survey.

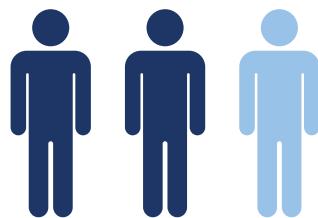
Total number of responses:

70

People are already using Henderson and Logan Street for downtown activities.

90%

of respondents visited the corridor at least once a week.



2/3

used the corridor to get to downtown.



1/2

used the corridor for shopping/errands.

People want a more appealing environment.

*"[make it] more **aesthetically pleasing**"*

*"Much opportunity to bring **foot traffic from main street**"*

*"Turn it into a **pedestrian-friendly town**"*

*"**encourage foot traffic** and reduce litter"*

Walking is currently unappealing to most people.

There is a high need for safety and comfort.



2/3

do not feel safe walking in the corridor at night.

People want beautification.



Behind only safety, poor aesthetics was a top issue in the corridor.



Interactive Map

The interactive map illustrated the public's collectively-identified problem areas and points of interest within the corridor. Using ArcGIS Online mapping capabilities, respondents identified a variety of features, including needed intersection improvements, safety hazards, lighting issues, barriers to walking or biking, among others, portrayed as points and icons on the interactive map. The web map provided a different and needed perspective on these corridor-level issues that could not be fully captured through traditional survey methods or focus group discussions. Representative comments can be seen below.



Project Symposium

The Symposium offered the first opportunity for the public to collaborate with the project team. In so doing the team received vital feedback on project principles and objectives, which was used to refine key themes and principles that guide subsequent design phases of the planning process. The Symposium was held in-person on May 9, 2023.

"As much as I use this road, it is a safety hazard. This road should become a walkway or corridor for food trucks. Close the street to thru traffic and incorporate into downtown improvements."

- Member of the public





PUBLIC SYMPOSIUM
MAY 9TH, 2023

What is this project?
The Town of Marion and the Foothills Regional Commission are working to provide multimodal and streetscape improvements to Henderson Street & Logan Street, in Downtown Marion.

Visit the Website & take our quick survey!

Project Website  **Public Survey** 

SCAN ME

Stay tuned for future meetings and opportunities to contribute!

Public and Stakeholder Participation (Above), Digital flyer for the project Symposium (Right).



Design Workshop

The Design Workshop, held in June 2023, was the largest and most coordinated effort for the Study. During the Workshop, a multidisciplinary team of planners, urban designers, and engineers collaborated to create new concepts for redesigned, reimaged Henderson and Logan Streets that responded to the concerns identified through data analysis and public engagement. Held over three days at the old First National Bank Building in downtown Marion, public-facing sessions were regularly held to present concepts and receive feedback from stakeholders and the public. Meetings with stakeholders allowed the team to drill down into design nuances, while evening presentations invited the entire public to attend, provide feedback, and see the influence of their participation on designs over the course of the workshop. Following the workshop, **all materials produced during the week were viewable through the project website.**



Citizen input was especially valuable during the Design Workshop in July 2023. Attendees over two days provided input on the design as it was being developed.

Focus Groups

During the Design Workshop, focus group interviews were held with representatives comprised of community stakeholders, including residents, agency representatives, community leaders, advocates, and elected officials. Listening sessions were held as a series of one-hour interviews centering on a single topic. Group members were identified by the steering committee and project team for their ability to provide different perspectives on the topic at hand representing different facets of the community. **In total, three focus groups were conducted:**

- Downtown Businesses
- Fire & Emergency Services
- Neighborhoods

15 Attendees Total

Open House

The final public meeting of the planning process, the Open House, was held September 12, 2023. As with the Symposium and Design Workshop, the meeting was held virtually and across lunch and evening sessions. Key feedback from those in attendance included **support for wide sidewalks, support for traffic calming along Henderson & Logan Streets and immediate need for crossing improvements.** This feedback helped inform final decisions on implementation and phasing of subsequent design and construction.



text

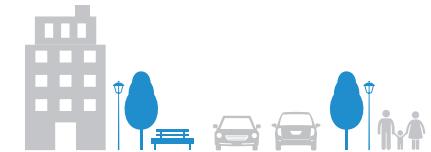


Key Takeaways.

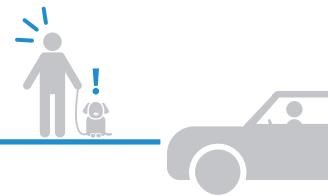
This investigation chapter examined the corridor's current operations, as well as the public perception of Henderson Street and Logan Street Corridor, providing the project team with insight on how the corridor serves its residents. From this data, a select number of important issues and observations emerged. These issues, summarized below, represent the key takeaways of this investigative phase.



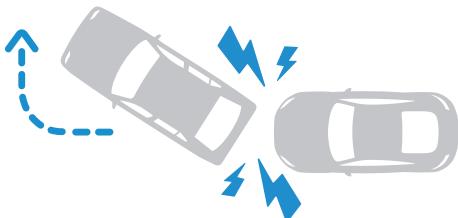
Henderson and Logan Street are downtown, but they do not feel like part of downtown.



They do not feel like downtown because they need streetscaping and lively storefronts.



Walking is uncomfortable at best, and dangerous at worst. This is especially true at intersections.



Henderson and Logan Street have safety problems because of poor roadway design.





Recommendations

03

Recommendations.



View of proposed roundabout at Railroad Street.

Through the Complete Streets process, the recommendations have been developed to transform Henderson Street and Logan Streets into safe, active, and attractive community assets.

This Study envisions new corridors that embrace and support active transportation choices, promote the safety and well-being of its residents and patrons, and attends to the needs of all users regardless of their mode of travel. Through this planning process, the Marion community has created a holistic vision for transforming these vital downtown streets, creating attractive, vibrant, people places.

This chapter lays out the conceptual designs and planning recommendations for the new Henderson Street and Logan Street. It identifies the study area context zones, illustrates recommended improvements, and highlights potential redevelopment catalyst sites.

This Chapter Covers:

- Design Priorities
- Principles of Complete Streets
- Preferred Access Plan
- Concept Design

Guiding Principles & Design Priorities

The Henderson Street & Logan Street Corridor Study envisions a new corridor that embraces and **supports active transportation choices, promotes the safety and wellbeing of its residents, and attends to the needs of all users** – whether on two feet or two wheels. It is the Complete Streets process that has led the project team to the following recommendations, a process requiring the involvement of property and business owners, the immigrant community, emergency services, the development community, City representatives and elected officials. Public input, technical analyses by the project team, and the physical realities of Henderson & Logan Streets all influenced the final elements of the corridor design. Through this process, the Marion community has created a **holistic vision** for transforming this important corridor into a safe, active and attractive community asset.

The retrofitting of Henderson & Logan Streets was led by five key objectives reflected in the **Guiding Principles**. These principles were borne from both the quantitative analyses conducted as well as the key takeaways that emerged from public engagement. The descriptions at right illustrate how the design team addressed stakeholders' concerns while respecting the desire to maintain an overall vision and physical "constructability" space for a separated multiuse path.

The concept design for Henderson & Logan Streets integrates all of the data received, whether through corridor travel analyses or public engagement. From this data emerged key themes, which, in combination with Complete Streets principles, led to the creation of Guiding Principles for this project:



Right-size Henderson and Logan Streets with maintainable infrastructure.



Priority must be given to pedestrians & bicyclists.



Safety of ALL users is a must!



Integrate Henderson and Logan Streets into downtown and its surroundings.



Support surrounding uses through attractive design and human scale.



Principles of Complete Streets



Complete Streets are streets designed for everyone. According to the National Complete Streets Coalition:

"They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities."

A Complete Streets version of Henderson & Logan Streets would make it easier to cross the corridor, walk to businesses, and bike to and from locations along the street without feeling unsafe. These improvements would benefit everyone, from visitors looking for a bite to eat to families with children walking to the Tailgate Market. **A Complete Streets approach is not one size fits all – it's a process.** A Complete Streets redesign of an existing roadway must be tailored to existing and future travel demands, surrounding development and land use, and to that specific community. What a Complete Street looks like in a small town will be different from an urban center - and it should be. The same is true for Complete Streets within the same town or city. For example, what might work along US 221 might not work along Logan Street.

A Complete Streets approach **considers every aspect of the roadway**, from the perspective of both policy and the physical construction. It is not just concerned with what occurs between curbs, but also what happens between and behind the walls of the buildings facing the street. A street that becomes safer to walk along and cross is **a street for all ages and abilities**: where kids can walk to school safely, older adults can retain independence if their driving ability is impaired, and those with physical or visual impairments can walk safely.

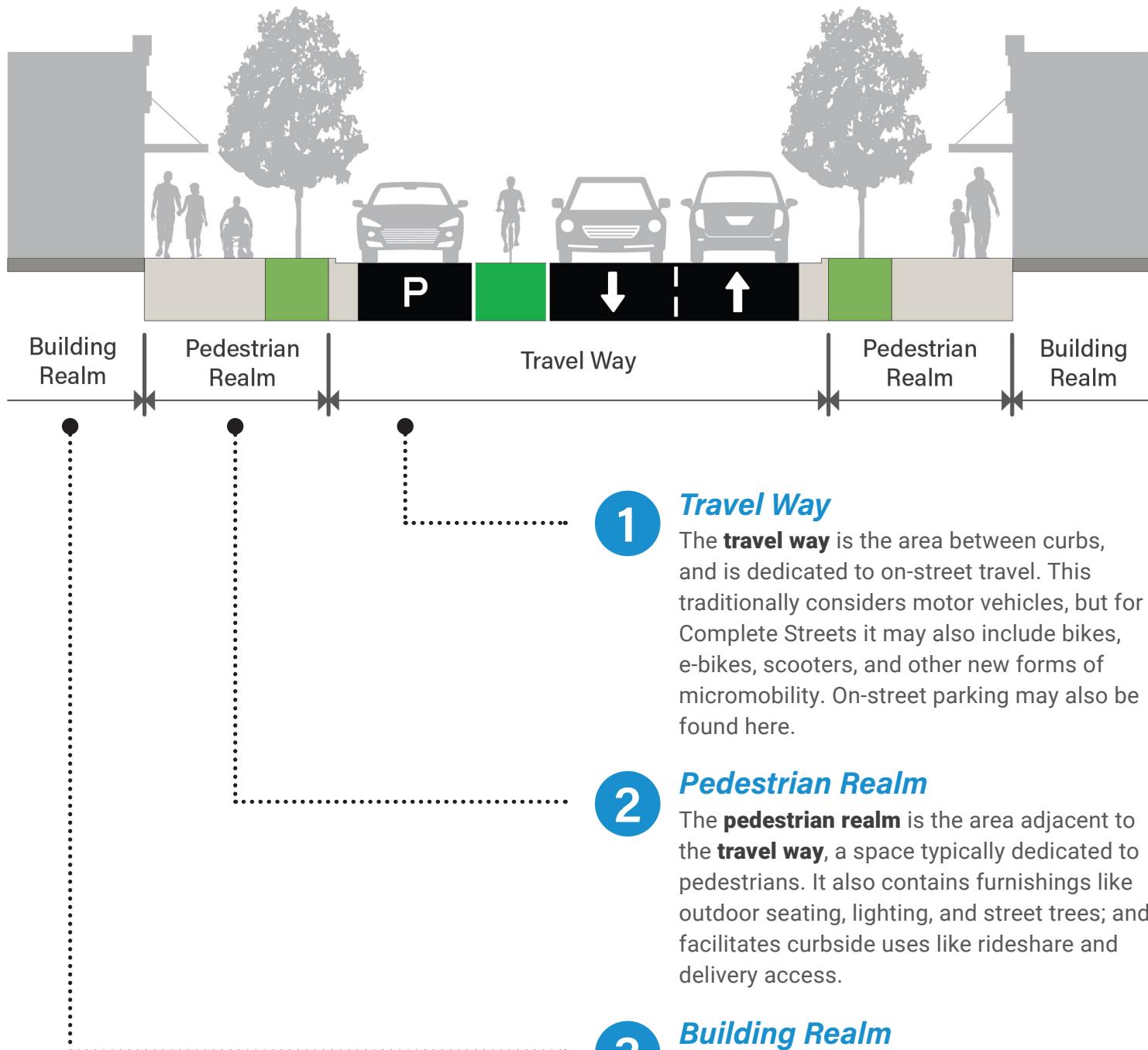
A Complete Street:

- Considers **all modes** and users
- Provides, safe travel options for users of **all ages and abilities**
- Accommodates both **present and future needs**
- Contributes to a community's environmental **sustainability and resiliency**
- **Values public spaces** and real estate holistically, considering both direct and indirect costs
- Is a vibrant, attractive people place in all seasons and contributes to an **improved quality of life**.



Elements of a Complete Street

A Complete Streets approach breaks all streets into three zones, reflected in the graphic below: the **travel way**, the **pedestrian realm**, and **building realm**. Each of these zones serves different users and needs, with vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities responding to these needs.



1 Travel Way

The **travel way** is the area between curbs, and is dedicated to on-street travel. This traditionally considers motor vehicles, but for Complete Streets it may also include bikes, e-bikes, scooters, and other new forms of micromobility. On-street parking may also be found here.

2 Pedestrian Realm

The **pedestrian realm** is the area adjacent to the **travel way**, a space typically dedicated to pedestrians. It also contains furnishings like outdoor seating, lighting, and street trees; and facilitates curbside uses like rideshare and delivery access.

3 Building Realm

The **building realm** is adjacent to the **pedestrian realm** and home to the businesses, residences, and public spaces that give Henderson & Logan Streets their identity.



Example Complete Streets Treatments



HIGH-VISIBILITY CROSSWALKS

- Use solid white lines, 6 inches to 2 feet in width
- Ladder, zebra, continental markings preferred
- Minimum 6 feet width of walkway, and wider than the pedestrian facility it connects with



ON-STREET PARKING

- Lane width of 7 to 8 feet recommended
- Striped parking show drivers proximity to parked cars
- Creates “side friction” and reduces traffic speeds when parking meets demand



SIDEWALKS

- Minimum 8 - 12 feet pedestrian through zone recommended in downtown areas
- Wide space provides room for street trees, benches, bike racks, and other enhancements that separate pedestrians from traffic



PEDESTRIAN-LEVEL LIGHTING

- Install lighting on both sides of streets
- Use uniform lighting intensity
- Place lights in advance of midblock and intersection crosswalks on both approaches
- Space approximately 50 - 75 feet apart



CURB EXTENSIONS

- Extends sidewalk into the roadway to narrow crossing width
- Used with on-street parking to create protected parking bays with a lane reconfiguration
- Tighter curb radii reduces turn speeds at intersections



STREET TREES

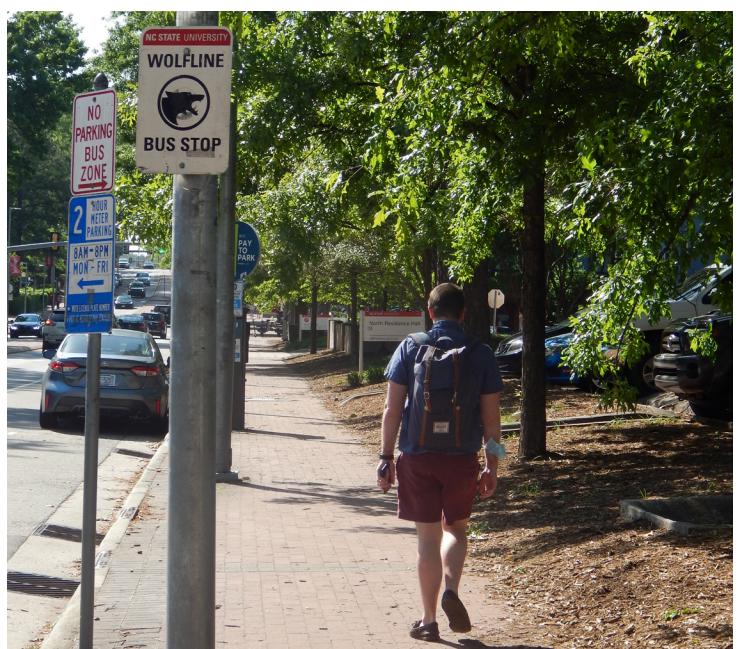
- Space approximately 15 - 30 feet apart
- Shade cools the biking and walking environment
- Verticality creates “side friction,” slowing vehicle speeds
- Use tree wells and soil cells at back of curb to prevent root damage to sidewalks



View of a Complete Street - Hillsborough Street in Raleigh, NC.



High-visibility crosswalk and pedestrian refuge.



Street trees.



Recommendations.

The pages that follow present the conceptual design for a Complete Henderson Street and Logan Street, as well as the steps in the design process leading to these recommendations. The redesign of Henderson Street and Logan Street was developed based on both the feedback received from the Marion community including public staff, key stakeholders, and Marion residents, as well as corridor analyses and seeking consistency with local and regional planning efforts.

The recommendations presented are sensitive to the different contexts present in the study area: both the transition from automobile-oriented commercial and residential areas along Henderson Street west and south of downtown Marion -- the “gateway” to downtown -- and the downtown core already developing on Henderson Street and Logan Street.

Many of the recommendations for Henderson Street are focused on right-sizing the roadway to better accommodate the changing needs of the downtown community. The corridor cross-section is currently a mix of three to four lanes with limited treatments for bicycle, pedestrian and parking. This design no longer appropriate for its current traffic and creates new problems like high vehicle speeds and wide crossing distances for pedestrians. Along Logan Street, recommendations focus on improvements to the pedestrian experience, with medians, sidewalk improvements and streetscaping. Through changes to the streets' cross-sections, its current problems can be addressed and overcome.

Preferred Access Plan

The Preferred Access Plan (PAP) forms the conceptual basis or “blueprint” for the concept design, providing **the overall framework for how the entire corridor design treatments work together.**

At a high level, this perspective reflects key design elements like connectivity, median treatments, driveway consolidation, and key nodes that create a continuous pedestrian walkshed. These nodes are intersections that are recommended for high quality intersection treatments, such as high visibility crosswalks, pedestrian countdown timers, ADA-compliant curb ramps, and pedestrian-level lighting.

Walksheds are important to any downtown: at a 1/8-mile distance (approximately 90 seconds), these identify the distance and time to reach **opportunities to cross the roadway safely.** When applied to the entire corridor, this means that a person looking to cross the road will not need to walk more than 90 seconds to get to a safe crossing.

“We need sidewalks on both sides so it’s safer for pedestrians.”

- Symposium Attendee

“Need sidewalks on east side of Henderson!”

- Interactive Map Comment



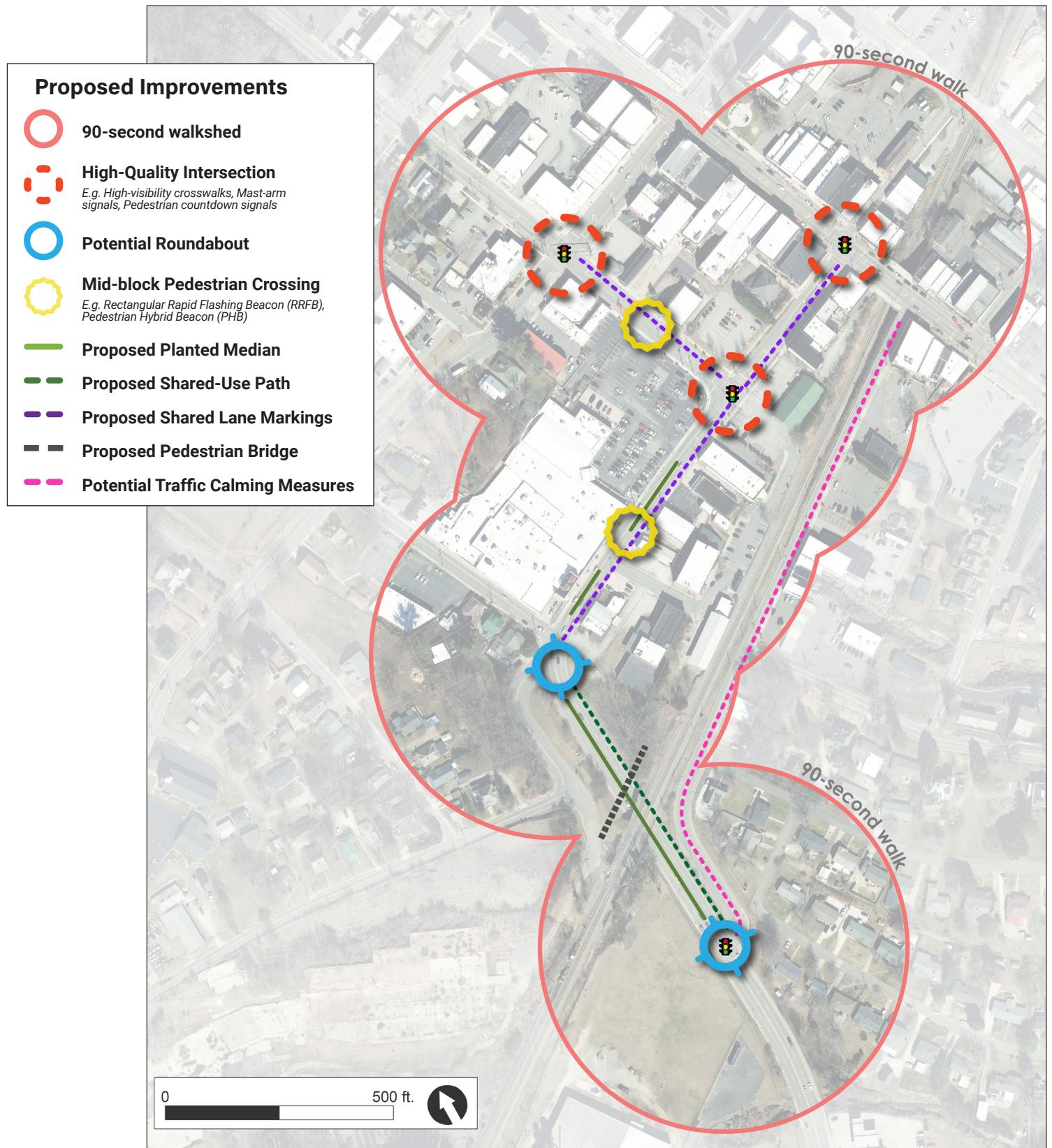


Figure 3.1: Preferred Access Plan.



Context Zones

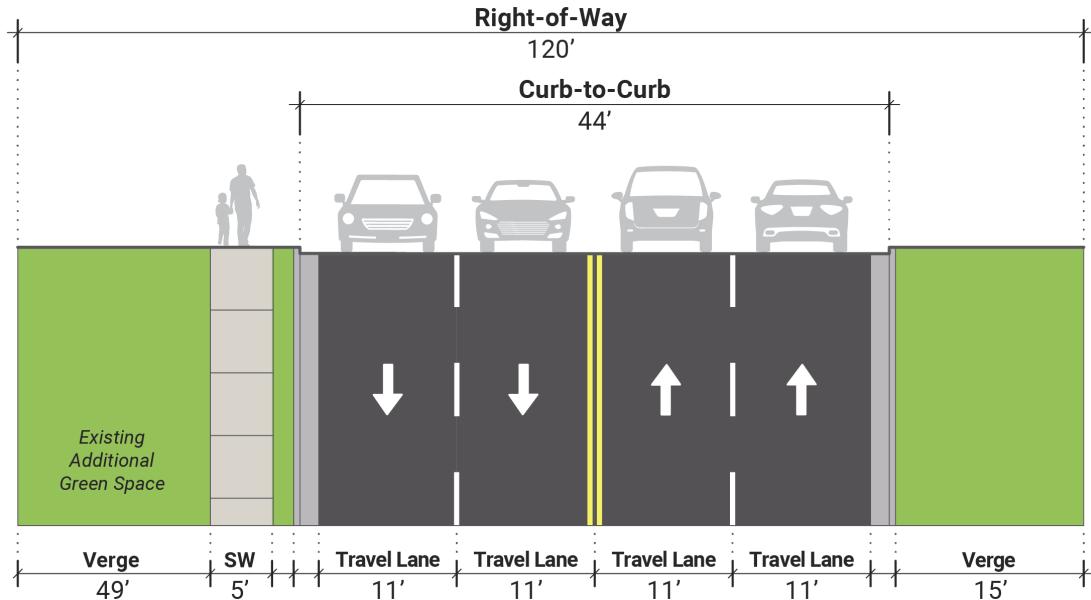
For a study area comprising less than 1/2-mile of roadway, Henderson & Logan Streets feature different contexts that are worth of consideration. These context zones represent the transition from busy regional thoroughfare, automobile-oriented and designed to prioritize throughput and minimize vehicle delay, to a dense, mixed-use, active downtown environment. Design treatments in these zones differ according to right-of-way and pavement width, volumes, speeds, and its function making the transition between these two contexts safely for all users.

West Henderson Street Gateway

This gateway zone, first identified in the Destination McDowell Tourism Master Plan, extends from the Railroad Street intersection to Depot Street. This section of the corridor is approximately 1/4-mile in length and sees the highest traffic volumes at around 10,500 vehicles per day. It also features a four-lane existing cross-section and few driveways or access points due to the Norfolk Southern railroad bridge, which limits access in this section. With little access, land uses along this corridor are limited, with single-family housing transitioning into the downtown core at Burgin Street and the Depot Street intersection. The wide cross-section, lack of driveways, and straight profile of the corridor all contribute to speeding issues in this section: design treatments to slow vehicle speeds and create a transition to a slow-speed, walkable downtown are preferred.

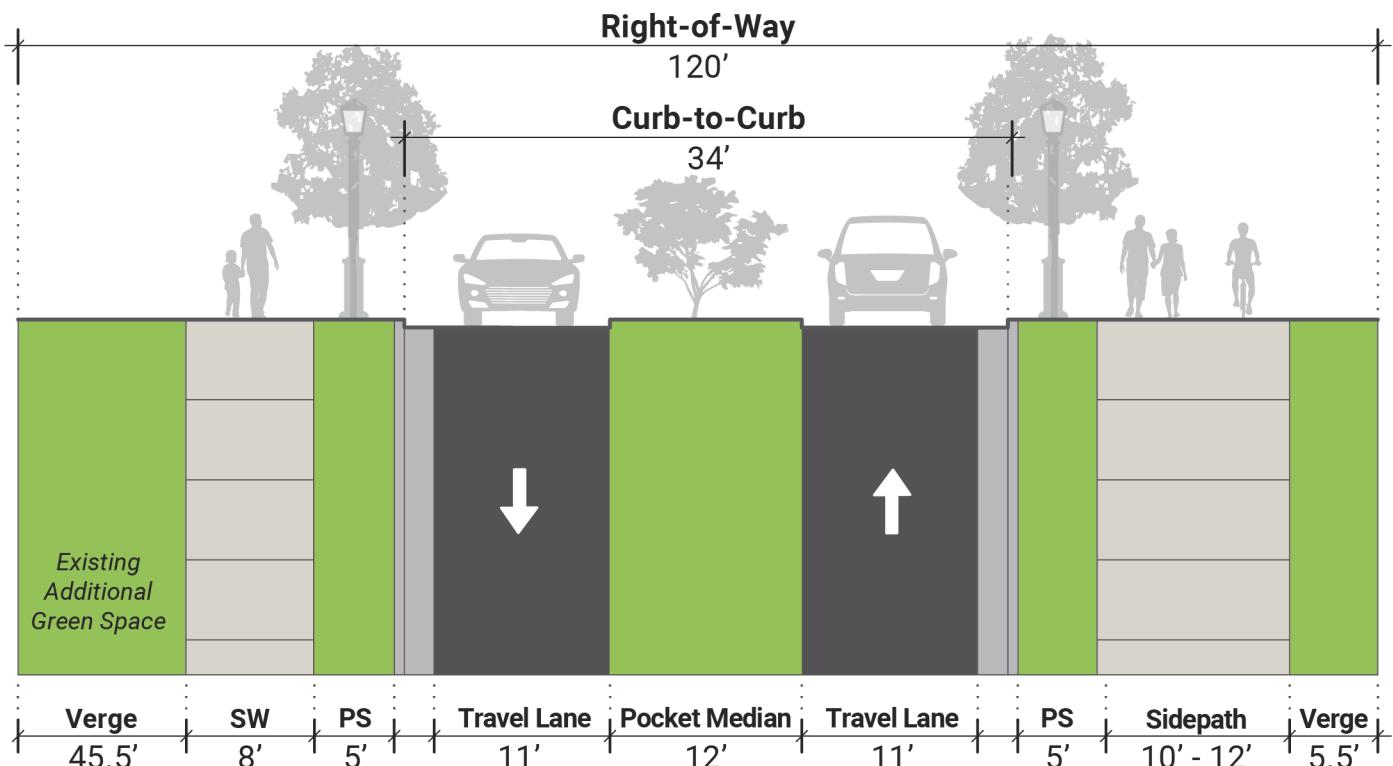


Railroad Street to Main Street Existing Cross-Section



Railroad Street to Main Street Proposed Cross-Section

The proposed cross-section for this gateway area reimagines space within the existing right-of-way and constraint imposed by the railroad bridge. With more needs than space, trade-offs must be made, and the new cross-section repurposes excess pavement dedicated to automobiles by moving the curb lines inward. This new curb line creates new space for a shared-use path that can be tied into future facilities along Henderson Street, along with widening the existing sidewalk. The center median and space for planting creates room for street trees to create shade during hot summer months.

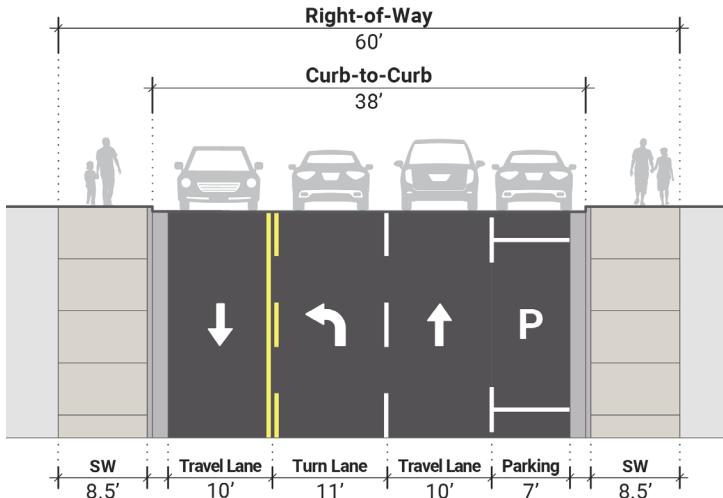


Henderson & Logan District

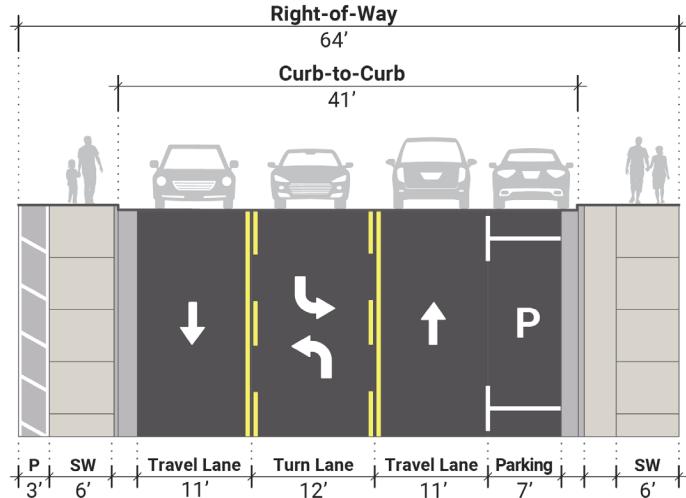


As West Henderson Street “rounds the bend” at Burgin Street, both the street cross-section and urban context shift. A narrower street and active commercial uses face Henderson and Logan Streets as users enter Downtown Marion. On-street and surface parking lots along both streets see vehicles turning out into traffic, while shorter block lengths and storefronts encourage pedestrian and biking activity. The current streetscape is uninviting and may discourage biking and walking, with old and/or poorly-maintained sidewalks, a lack of shade trees, and utilities creating obstacles in the right-of-way. However, this is an area in which vehicles should slow down, and biking and walking should be encouraged. Design treatments in this zone reinforce the downtown context, inviting drivers to slow down through traffic calming measures, while creating environments in which bicyclists and pedestrians can operate safely and conveniently.

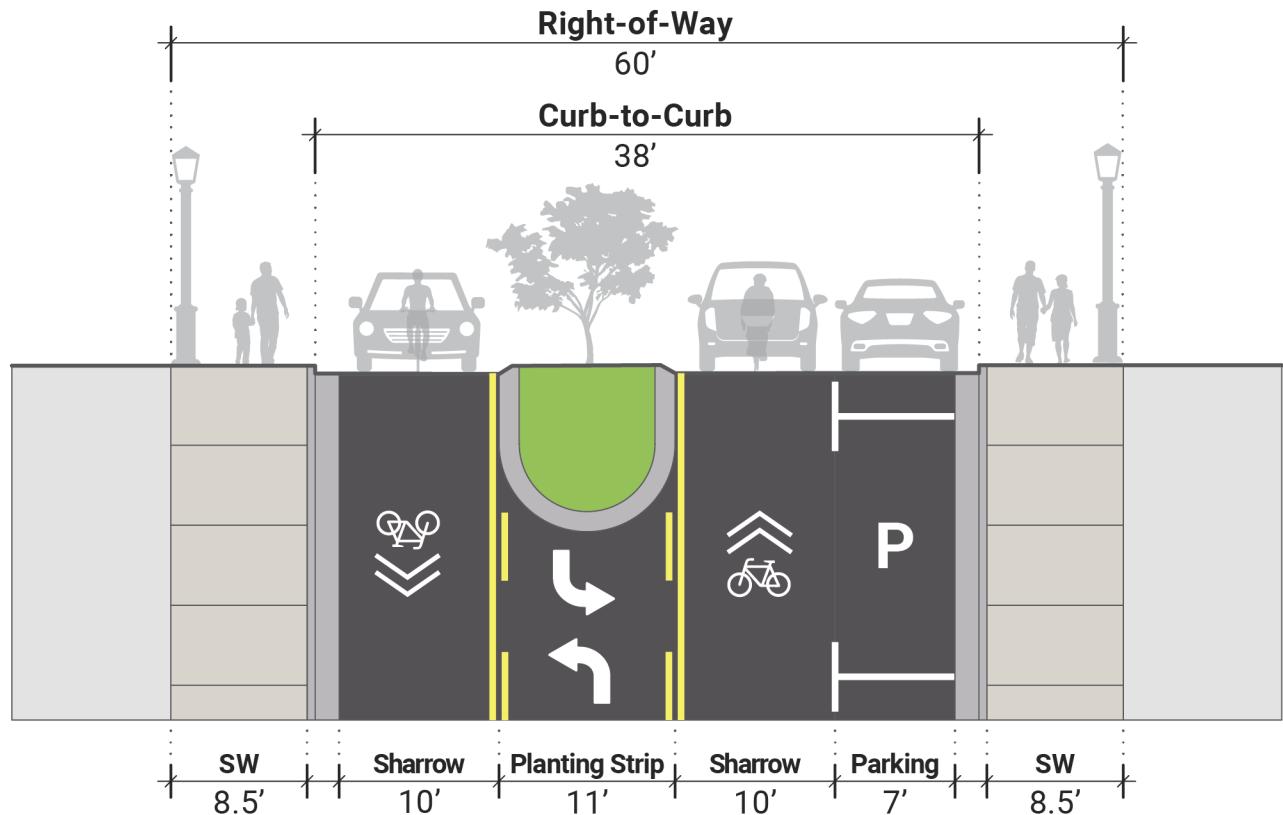
Burgin Street to Main Street Existing Cross-Section



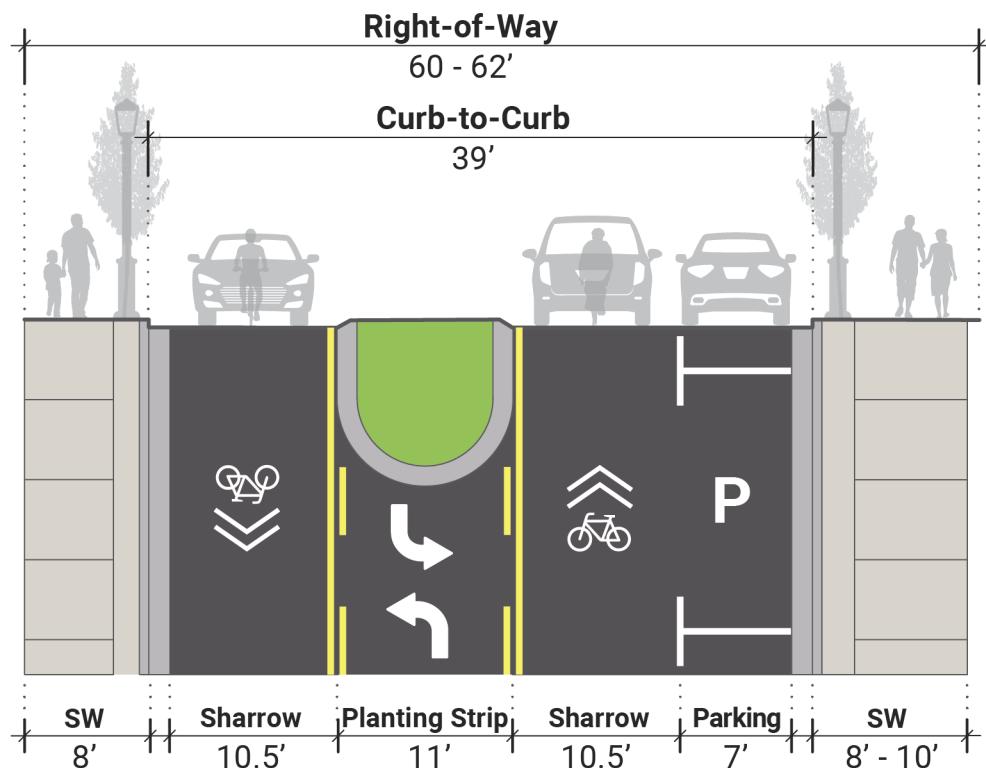
Court Street to Henderson Street Existing Cross-Section



Burgin Street to Main Street Proposed Cross-Section



Court Street to Henderson Street Proposed Cross-Section



Concept Design.

The design considerations for the entire study area are described first, followed by the concept design (15% level of detail), engineered using MicroStation software. This section shows graphically how the proposed cross-sections create a context-sensitive and seamless set of design solutions that address the specific needs of both corridors. This concept is designed to scale so that the physical footprint and potential impacts to utilities and ROW can be determined. It also provides specific intersection details. Photo simulations and Complete Street-oriented development opportunities follow the concept design. These visuals provide street-level perspectives of what the proposed results might look like, as well as imagery of built examples, where applicable.

Design Considerations & Specifications



Design Vehicle: WB-50 (Tractor-Trailer)



Posted speed limit recommendations:

Henderson Street

- Railroad Street to Depot Street
- Depot Street to Main Street

Logan Street

- Court Street to Henderson Street



High-quality intersections: featuring mast arm or strain pole signals, high-visibility ladder-style, continental or brick-stamped crosswalks, pedestrian signals and ADA ramps:

- Henderson Street at Logan Street
- Henderson Street at Main Street
- Logan Street at Court Street



Roundabouts: Henderson Street at Railroad Street



Intersection redesigns: install concrete, brick paved and/or brick stamped center median with mountable curb. Convert intersection to right-in, right-out movement only.

- Henderson Street at Blue Ridge Street & Burgin Street



Mid-Block crossings: Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB):

- Henderson Street at Depot Street
- Logan Street at Foam & Fabrics Outlet Building



Bike Facilities:

- Shared-Use Path: Railroad Street to Depot Street
- Shared Lane Markings: Logan Street, Depot Street to Main Street



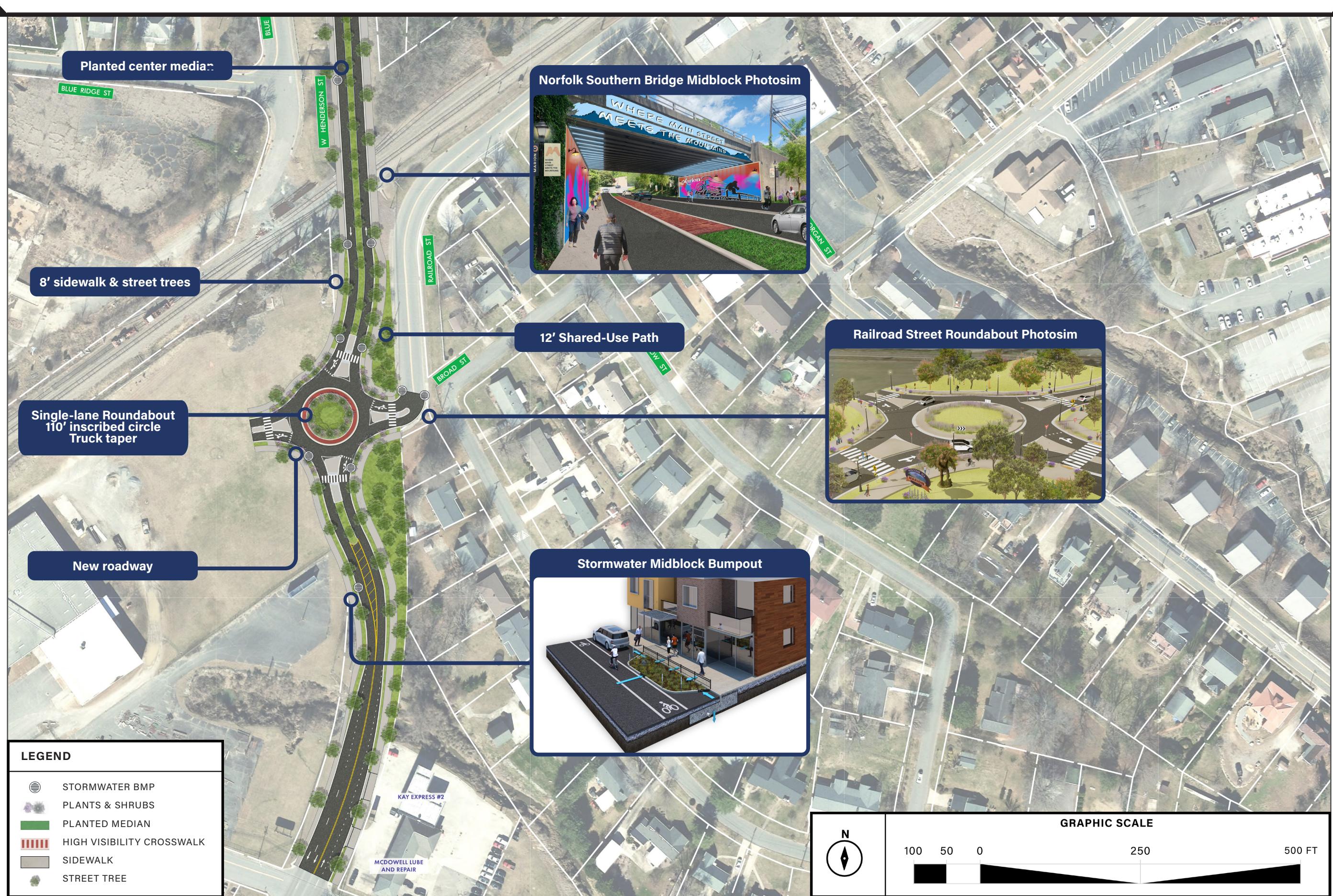
LOCATION: HENDERSON STREET FROM RAILROAD TO BURGIN STREET,
HENDERSON STREET FROM BURGIN TO MAIN STREET,
& LOGAN STREET FROM HENDERSON TO COURT STREET

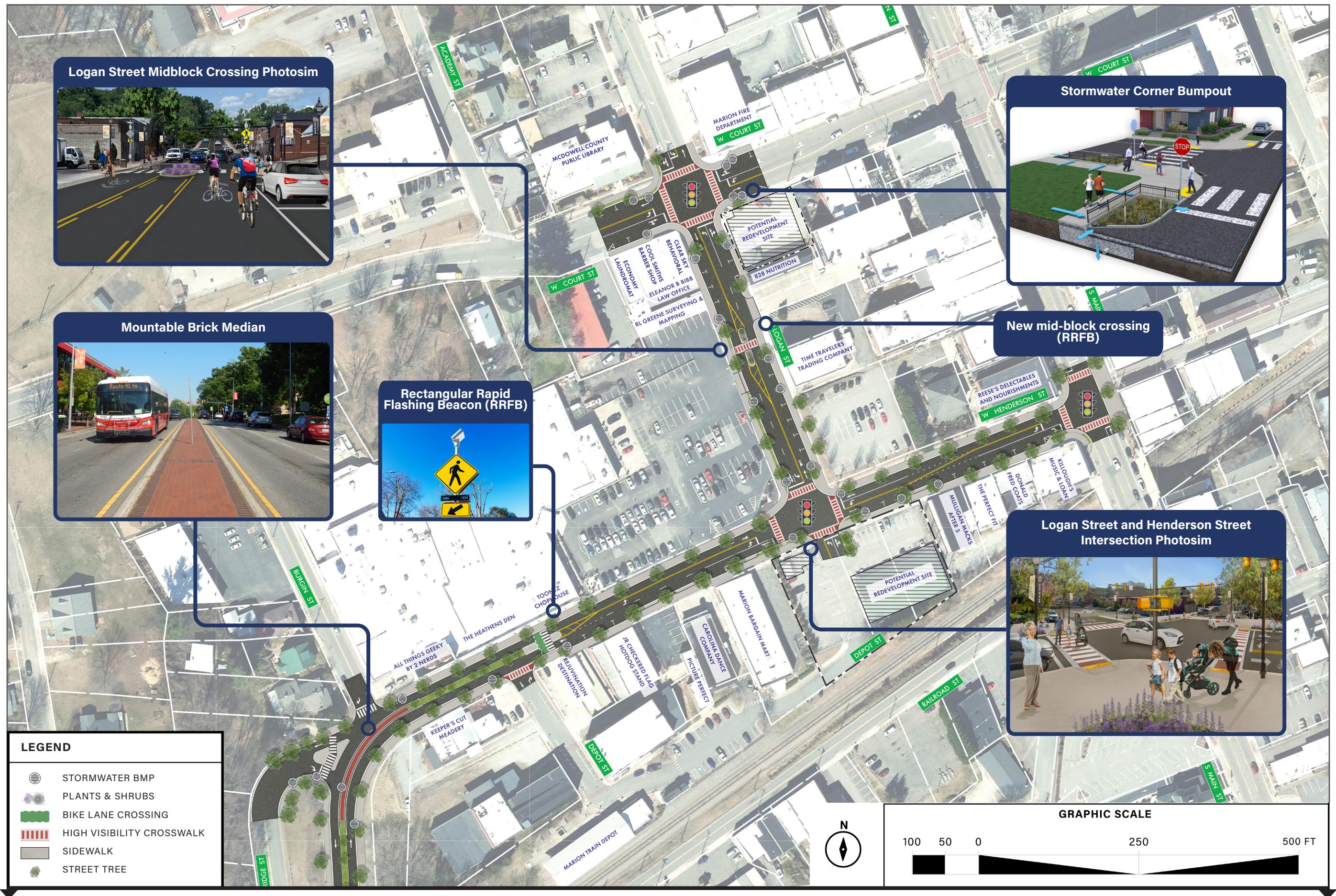
COUNTY: MARION, NORTH CAROLINA

DESIGNED BY: STANTEC

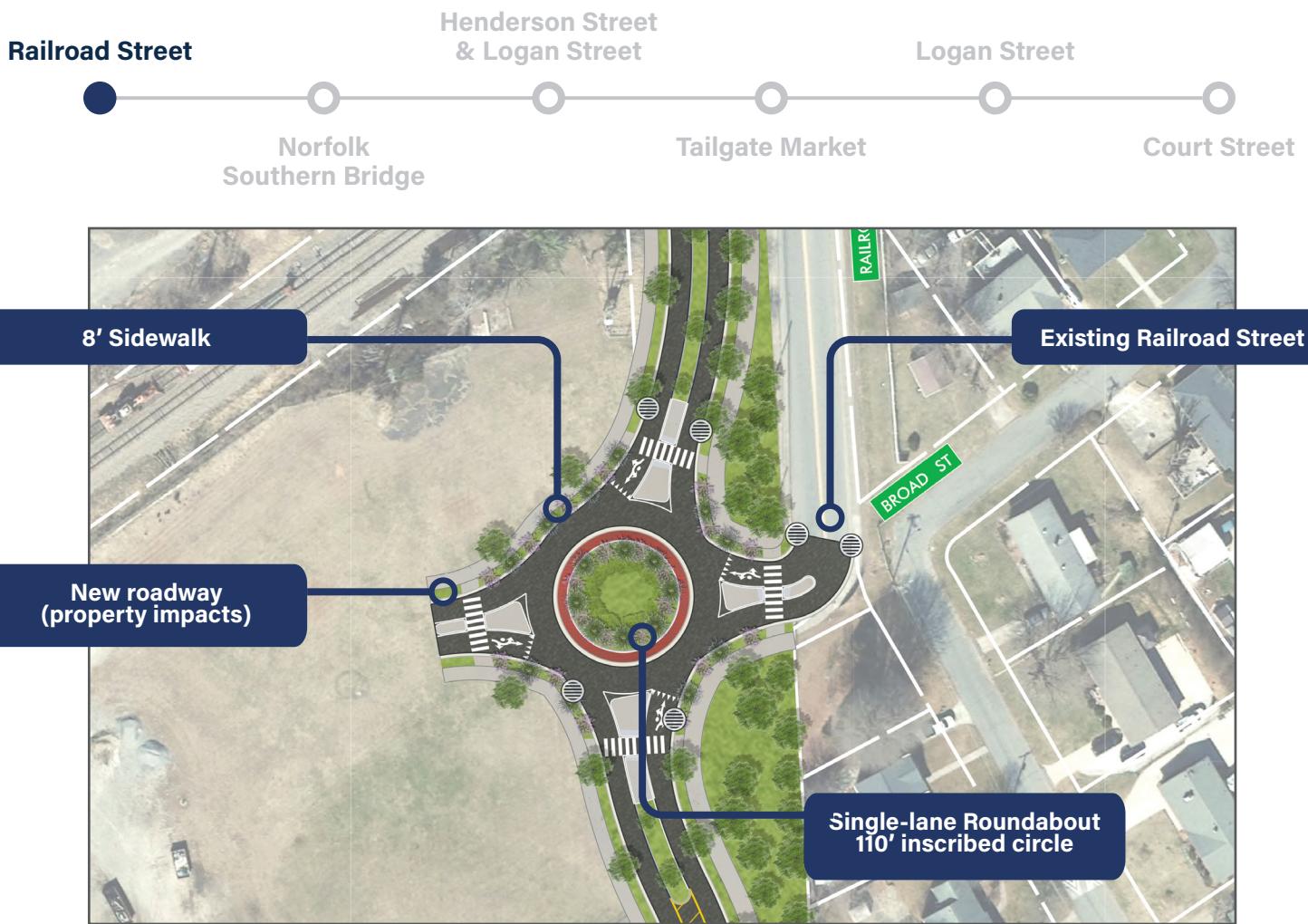
DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION







Railroad Street (Roundabout)



Recommendations

Roundabout: Henderson Street at Railroad Street

- One lane roundabout, 110' inscribed circle with truck taper
- Realign Railroad Street approach
- Median splitter islands on all approaches

Sidewalks: construct 8' sidewalk along west side (southbound) of Henderson Street

Shared-Use Path: construct 10' to 12' shared-use path along east side (northbound) of Henderson Street

Crossing Amenities: construct high-visibility crosswalks (continental) on all approaches

Streetscape: Consider gateway monument or public art in Roundabout. Planting strip and shade trees recommended where appropriate:

- Street tree location should conform to NCDOT Guidelines for Planting within Right-of-Way
- Trees to conform to City of Marion tree and plant species guidance (see Appendices)
- Gateway sign/monument in southeast quadrant of roundabout



👀 Looking NORTHWEST
Conceptual design of:
RAILROAD STREET ROUNDABOUT



Norfolk Southern Bridge (Midblock)



Recommendations

Road Diet: Construct three lane cross-section, two 11' travel lanes with center median

- Median constructed with brick-stamped treatment through rail bridge underpass

Sidewalks: construct 8' sidewalk along west side (southbound) of Henderson Street

Shared-Use Path: construct 10' to 12' shared-use path along east side (northbound) of Henderson Street

Streetscape: Planting strip and shade trees recommended where appropriate:

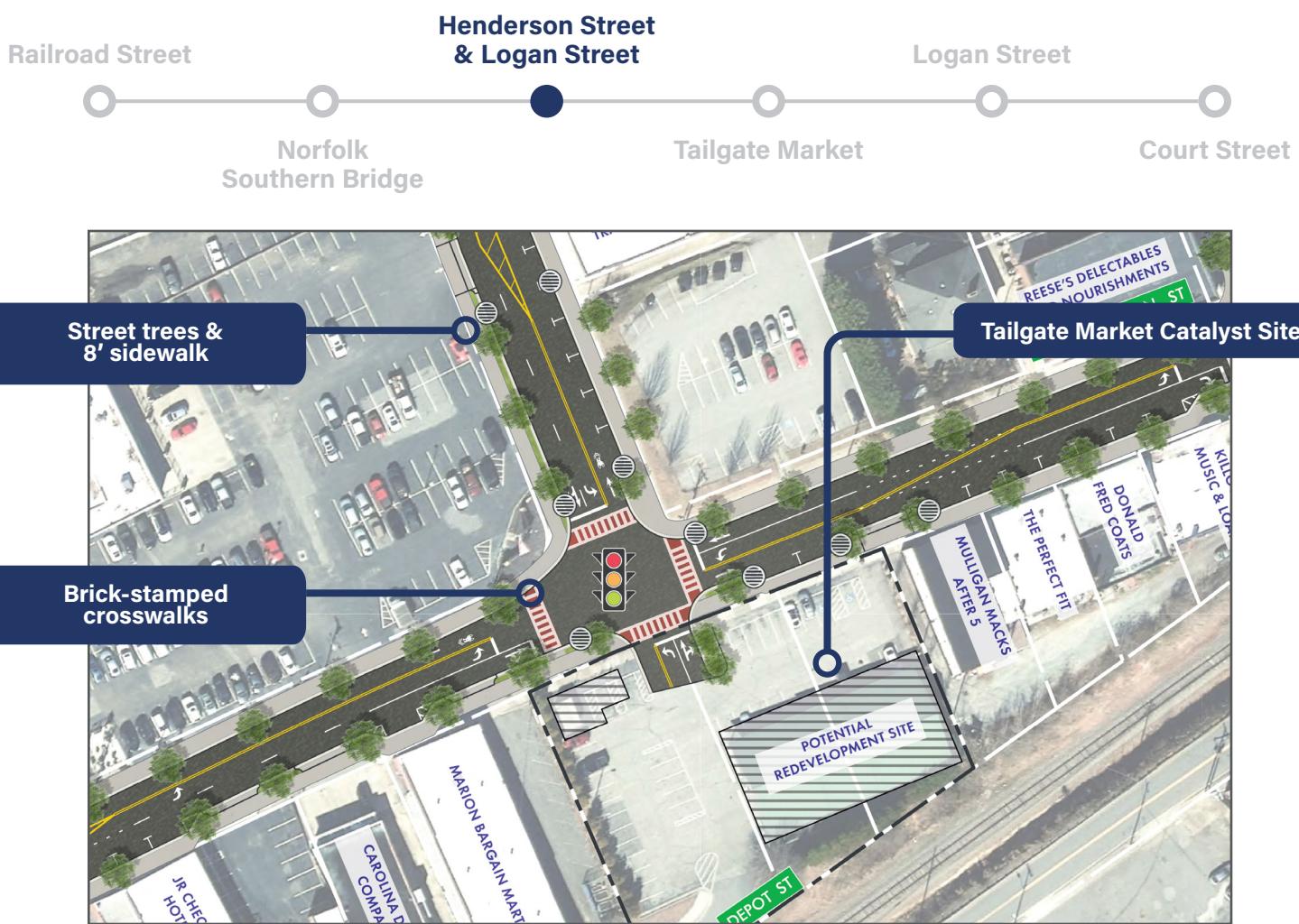
- Street tree location should conform to NCDOT Guidelines for Planting within Right-of-Way
- Trees to conform to City of Marion tree and plant species guidance (see Appendices)



👀👀 Looking NORTHEAST
Conceptual design of:
NORFOLK SOUTHERN BRIDGE



Henderson Street & Logan Street (Intersection)



Recommendations

High-quality intersection: featuring mast-arm or strain pole signals, high-visibility ladder-style or brick-stamped crosswalks, pedestrian signals and ADA-compliant curb ramps

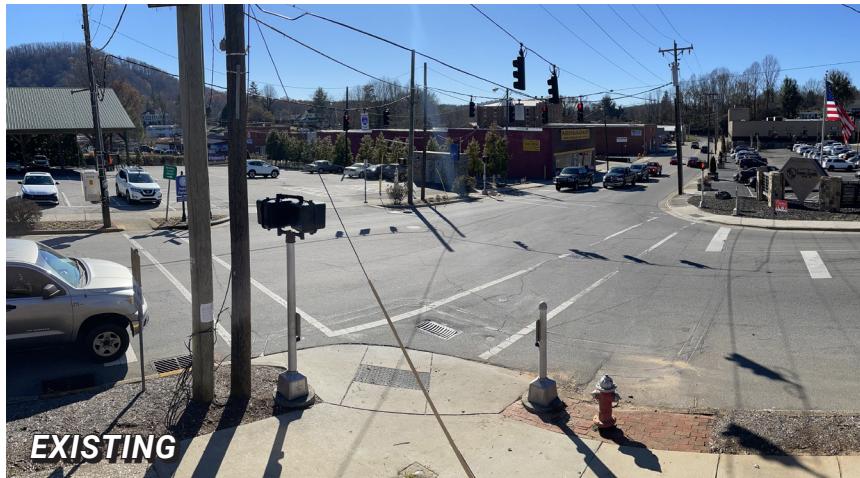
Sidewalks: construct 8.5' sidewalk along both sides of Henderson Street; 8' sidewalk along both sides of Logan Street

Bike Facilities: construct shared lane markings along both Henderson Street and Logan Street

Crossing Amenities: construct high-visibility (ladder-style or brick-stamped) crosswalks on all approaches

Streetscape: Pedestrian-level lighting with appropriate spacing recommended. Planting strip and shade trees recommended where appropriate:

- Street tree location should conform to NCDOT Guidelines for Planting within Right-of-Way
- Trees to conform to City of Marion tree and plant species guidance (see Appendices)



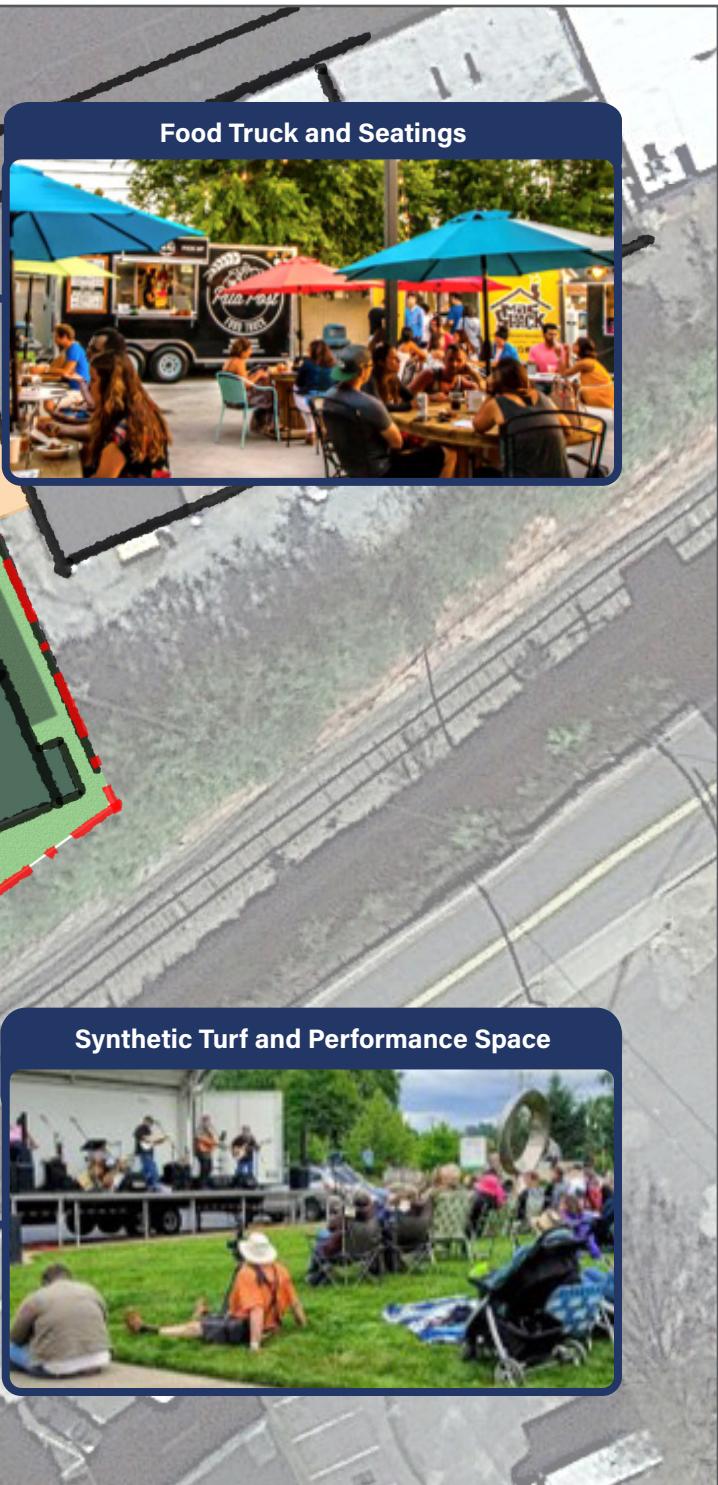
Looking SOUTHWEST
Conceptual design of:
**HENDERSON STREET & LOGAN
STREET INTERSECTION**



Tailgate Market (Conceptual Redevelopment)



Creating a pedestrian-friendly environment on these downtown streets is as much a product of the streets as it is the businesses and land uses along them. The Tailgate Market site was chosen to illustrate what a more activated farmer's market space *could* look like. This is only an example of the type of activation that could take place, and is not intended to convey any actual redevelopment plan or proposal.



CATALYST SITE - TAILGATE MARKET

Public Plaza Programmed for Activities and Restaurant / Ice Cream Pavilion with Public Restrooms

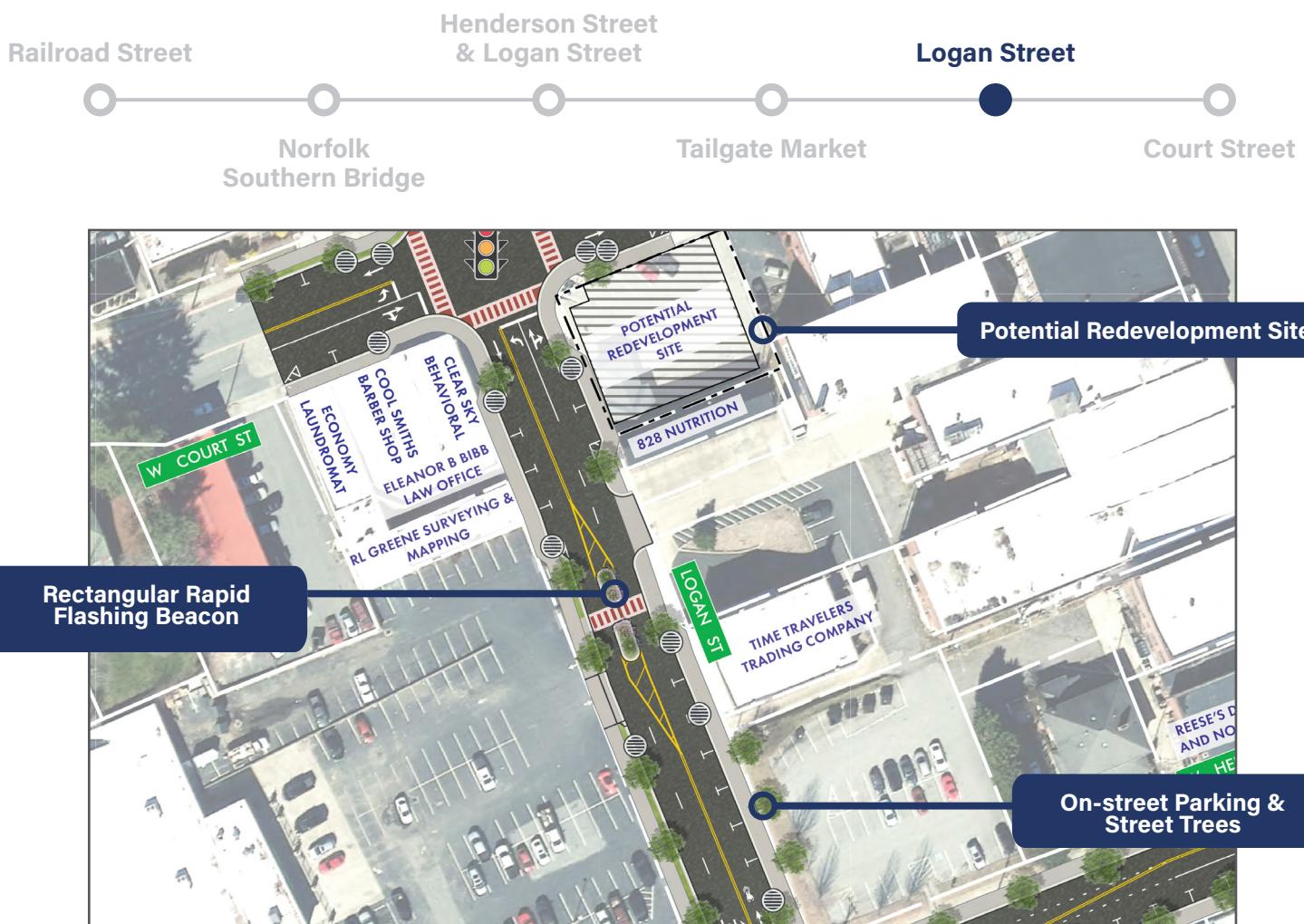
**RESTAURANT / ICE CREAM
PAVILION**

500 - 800 Sq. Ft.

Recommendations

A potential activated tailgate market could incorporate spaces for programming throughout the week, without detracting from market space itself. Placing seating and space for food trucks at the front of the property brings people to the front of the property and close to the sidewalk. A portion of the parking lot is repurposed for a small pavilion space, which could be used by a number of businesses. Finally, a small bandshell or performance space near seating creates opportunities for concerts, plays, and other performances throughout the week.

Logan Street (Midblock)



Recommendations

Mid-Block crossings: Construct Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB) at Logan Street at Foam & Fabrics Outlet Building.

- Realign driveway to parking as needed.

Sidewalks: construct 8' sidewalk along both sides of Logan Street

Bike Facilities: construct shared lane markings along Logan Street

Intersection: replace angled mast arm signal pole with two mast arm poles to allow for a pedestrian countdown in the Southwest quadrant

Crossing Amenities: construct high-visibility (ladder-style or brick-stamped) crosswalks at mid-block crossing location

Streetscape: Pedestrian-level lighting with appropriate spacing recommended. Planting strip and shade trees recommended where appropriate:

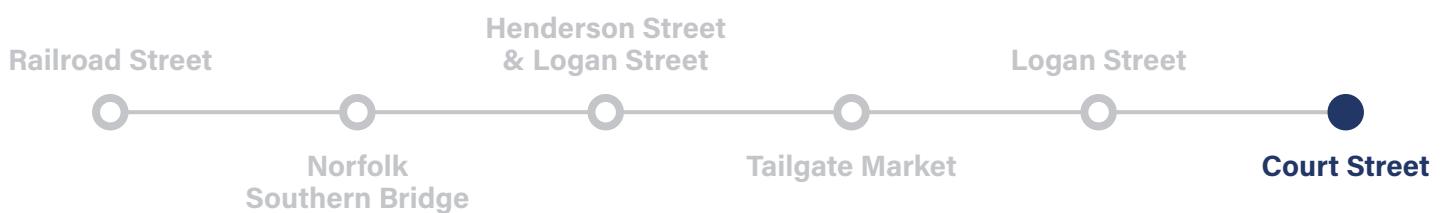
- Street tree location should conform to NCDOT Guidelines for Planting within Right-of-Way
- Trees to conform to City of Marion tree and plant species guidance (see Appendices)



👀 Looking NORTHWEST
Conceptual design of:
LOGAN STREET MIDBLOCK



Court Street (Conceptual Redevelopment)



Private reinvestment often follows public investment in roadways. The former bank site at Logan Street and Court Street was chosen to illustrate what this might look like along Logan. This is only an example of the type of redevelopment that could be possible and is not intended to convey an actual redevelopment plan or proposal.



Private Roof Deck for Residents



CATALYST SITE 1 - BANK SITE

3-Story Mixed-Use Building with Commercial / Retail and Parking Garage at the Ground Level

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| RESIDENTIAL | 12 Units |
| COMMERCIAL / RETAIL | 2,000 Sq. Ft. |
| GARAGE PARKING | 12 Spaces |

Recommendations

A potential future redevelopment of this site could involve a small mixed-use building with both apartments and small retail shops existing in tandem. Aligning the building to front the street and parking moved to the rear could represent an opportunity for an active, mixed-use (commercial and residential) walkable development node, with new facilities able to support both existing and new businesses.



CITY OF MARION, NC



Implementation

04

Implementation.



The ultimate success of this Study rests on Marion and NCDOT leaders' ability to implement its recommendations, turning a vision into reality.

This Chapter Covers:

- Implementation
- Funding
- Next Steps

Phasing & Cost Estimates

During the planning process, constructible project sections with logical termini were identified to implement the proposed roadway design in phases. The suggested project sections (next page, Table 4.1) also align with the two context zones.

As these sections were identified, projected construction quantities were developed based on the concept design, using measurements taken through CAD (design) details. These quantities formed the basis for construction cost estimates, using standard unit cost values from similar corridor projects.

A WORD OF CAUTION:

There will be unforeseen site conditions, right-of-way acquisition costs, and additional material costs identified during the engineering design stage. Right-of-way acquisition costs may vary greatly based on local real estate conditions and individual property owners, and were not included. A 15% design fee and 35% contingency are assumed. These estimates are for 2023 costs and subject to change following full surveys and final design computations.

Total Project Cost:

» 14.8 MILLION

Table 4.1: Proposed sections for construction.

| SECTION/EXTENT | DESCRIPTION | LENGTH |
|--|---|---------------------|
| SECTION 1: <i>RAILROAD STREET ROUNDABOUT</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct one-lane roundabout with 110' inscribed circle Realign Railroad Street approach to roundabout Construct 10' shared-use path along east side of roundabout Construct 5' sidewalk along west side of roundabout Street trees and pedestrian-level lighting | - |
| SECTION 2: <i>HENDERSON STREET: RAILROAD STREET TO BURGIN STREET</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce roadway to two 11' travel lanes with 10' to 12' center median Construct 10' shared-use path along east side of roadway Construct 5' sidewalk along west side of roadway Construct center median with mountable curb and median diverter at Blue Ridge Street & Burgin Street intersection Street trees and pedestrian-level lighting | 0.3 MILES |
| SECTION 3: <i>HENDERSON STREET: BURGIN STREET TO MAIN STREET</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce roadway to two 11' travel lanes with 11' center turn lane Construct shared lane markings Construct Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) midblock crossing at Depot Street intersection with bike facility markings and high-visibility crosswalk Street trees and pedestrian-level lighting | 0.2 MILES |
| SECTION 4: <i>LOGAN STREET: HENDERSON STREET TO COURT STREET</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce roadway to two 11' travel lanes with 11' center turn lane Construct shared lane markings Construct Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) midblock crossing with high-visibility crosswalk Street trees and pedestrian-level lighting | 0.1 MILES |
| SECTION 5: <i>LOGAN STREET: COURT STREET INTERSECTION</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct curb extensions at all approaches Install mast-arm signals Install pedestrian countdown signals, ADA-compliant curb ramps and pedestrian-level lighting Construct high visibility crosswalks (continental or brick-stamped) at all approaches | - |

| SECTION/EXTENT | DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION COST | CONTINGENCY + FEES | COST TO BURY UTILITIES |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| SECTION 1 | \$1,450,000 | \$925,000 | - |
| SECTION 2 | \$3,800,000 | \$2,500,000 | \$1,900,000 |
| SECTION 3 | \$2,050,000 | \$1,325,000 | \$1,275,000 |
| SECTION 4 | \$1,050,000 | \$700,000 | \$575,000 |
| SECTION 5 | \$625,000 | \$400,000 | - |
| TOTAL | \$8,975,000 | \$5,850,000 | \$3,750,000 |

Table 4.2: Cost estimated per section.

Policy Recommendations

Table 4.3 outlines some policy items that could be used by Marion to continue to improve downtown. These recommendations could be applied through ordinance revisions, design standards development, or other policy modifications. This would require partnership between landowners, developers, the City of Marion, Foothills Rural Planning Organization, and NCDOT.

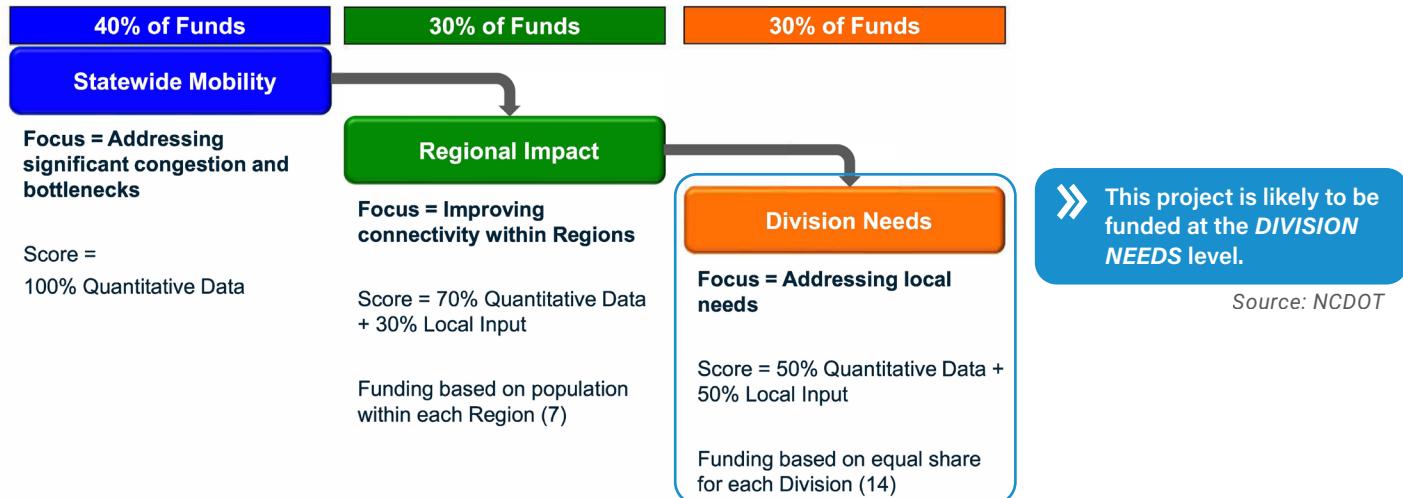
| Category | Recommendation |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Driveways | Review your requirements for driveways. Reduce the number of curb cuts allowed. |
| | Require smaller turn radii to encourage slower speeds for vehicles. |
| | Use sidewalk material (preferably at sidewalk height) across the curb cut. This signals to drivers that they are in the pedestrians' space, not the other way around. |
| Parking | Consider ways to improve the efficiency of existing parking spaces. Shared parking and parking management can both be helpful for achieving this. |
| | Remove minimum parking requirements downtown. |
| Density | Review your ordinances—make sure your codes do not ban mixed-use development downtown. If they do, remove these bans. |
| | Review your ordinances to see if any residential density restrictions could be relaxed to allow for more housing. |
| | Review minimum square footage requirements. Consider relaxing these restrictions to allow smaller-scaled development. |
| Sidewalk & Storefront Activation | Develop a volunteer program to maintain street trees. |
| | Develop a maintenance standard for pedestrian-scale lighting replacement. |
| | Use zoning to encourage buildings to be at sidewalk level, with the parking to the side or back. |
| | Require new buildings to put their main entrance at the sidewalk. This prioritizes pedestrians. |
| | Use wide sidewalks (over 8 feet) to create a comfortable space for people to walk. |
| | Incorporate street trees and public seating as part of your roads and sidewalks. |
| Financing & Economic Development | Require buildings to use window storefronts where possible. |
| | Consider tax revenue by the acre instead of by the project. Ask yourself if a project can generate enough revenue to sustain its maintenance. This can help ensure that there will be a good return on a public investment. |
| | Consider a downtown Business Improvement District. |

Table 4.3: Policy recommendations.



Funding

To build the items recommended in this Study, Marion and the Foothills Regional Commission must fund design and construction. There is no dedicated source of funding for Complete Streets, but there are other funding sources that can fund part or all of a project. Implementing Complete Streets is possible when you use a combination of funding strategies. The following section describes some funding options.



State Funding: North Carolina's STIP Program

The North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) long-range transportation plan – called the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) – identifies the construction funding and schedule for state transportation projects over a 10-year period. NCDOT updates the STIP approximately every two years.

STIP/STI:

Strategic Transportation Investment Law

Funding Entity:

NCDOT

Application Entity:

To be part of the STIP, a project must be part of a comprehensive transportation plan. The Foothills Regional Commission will submit a project to NCDOT for scoring.

Additional Details:

Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) Law allows NCDOT to fund transportation projects. NCDOT uses a scoring technique to prioritize funding. This scoring technique is called the Strategic Mobility Formula. The projects that are scored with the STI are within the current State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP identifies funding information and scheduling for transportation projects statewide.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

While the improvement proposed in this plan are not likely to score well in North Carolina's STI prioritization process as a whole, it is likely that some smaller intersections, segments, or sidewalk/shared use path projects from this plan could compete successfully. Marion should coordinate with NCDOT and Foothills Regional Commission to align appropriate projects onto the STIP. To be competitive, NCDOT may require a local match.

To learn more about the prioritization process:
 >> <https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/planning/pages/prioritizationresources.aspx>



How to provide a local match: Local funding options

Shifting revenue from existing taxes or fees, Marion could set aside funds and accumulate the total amount needed to implement a capital improvement project like Complete Streets. However, with other urgent local needs it could take a long time to accumulate the necessary funds. To speed up the process, Marion could increase the rate of revenue sources like taxes up to the state limit (7.5% for sales tax, \$15/1,000 for property tax) or create new revenue sources.

Some of the most successful methods for raising revenue for similar projects in North Carolina are the Municipal Service District (MSD, also known as Business Improvement Districts (BID) or Special Assessment Districts (SAD) and Tax Increment Financing District (TIF). Both Municipal Service Districts and TIF Districts expire after a certain period of time. Depending on how quickly they are able to meet their objectives, these programs can be retired early or extended.

Create a Municipal Service District

What is an Municipal Service District (MSD)?

- A property tax district
- Also known as Business Improvement Districts (BID) or Special Assessment Districts (SAD)
- Adds another tax to the properties within the district
- The additional revenue is only used to fund services or projects in that district

Why use one?

- Pay for street beautification, sidewalks, construction, and other capital costs
- An opportunity to create a brand for part of your city and make it feel special
- The landowners (those who benefit the most from the improvements) are the ones paying for it

How do you start one?

- Hold a vote by affected landowners (required by law)

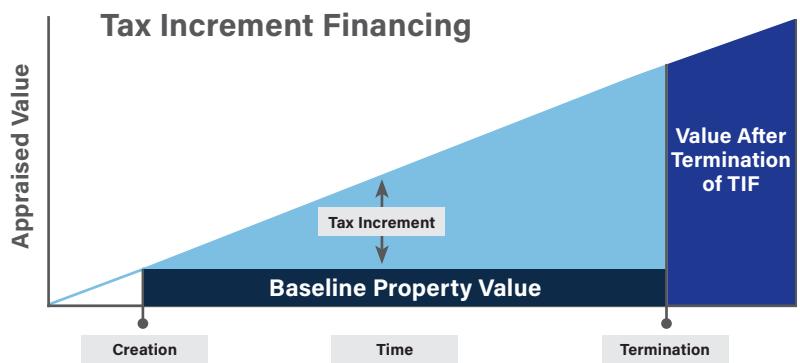
Use Tax Increment Financing

What is Tax Increment Financing (TIF)?

- Local government issues bonds to pay for public improvements, intended to attract private development
- After the development occurs, property values go up in the area
- The higher property tax revenue is used to pay off the original bonds

Why use it?

- Help develop a certain area for commercial use
- Delays the cost of building a successful commercial area until it's built and can generate money



Source: Planning Tank, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) | Public Financing | Types of TIF.
<https://planningtank.com/business-finance/tax-increment-financing-tif-types-tif>



How do you start?

- Demonstrate both public and private interest in a TIF district
- Follow NC law to designate a TIF district (Called “Project Development Financing” in NC law. N.C.G.S. Chapter 159, Article 6)
- Note: TIF does not require a voter referendum, but it does require a public hearing

Non-Federal Funding Sources

Before seeking highly competitive federal grants, investigate the following funding sources. These sources are smaller, more regional, and more likely to understand Marion’s unique challenges. Some of these sources have a local application, even if the money originates from the federal government. Please note the difference between “Funding Entity” (who the money comes from) and “Application Entity” (who you apply to).

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP)

Funding Type:

Grant, 20% local match

Funding Entity:

United States Department of Transportation,
Federal Highway Administration

Application Entity:

Foothills Regional Commission

Additional Details:

This grant program seeks to expand transportation choices, reduce transportation-related emissions,

reduce environmental impacts, and improve system performance. Applications are submitted through Foothills Regional Commission, and the most competitive ones will be submitted to the state.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

To be funded, a project must be consistent with Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Emphasize how this project makes transportation less carbon-intensive—more people walking and biking means less people driving.

Community Challenge Grants

Funding Type:

Small-Scale Grant

Funding Entity:

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Application Entity:

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)

Additional Details:

This funding program gives out small grants that help a community become livable for people of all ages. Potential projects could: improve walkability, create public spaces, support different transportation options, and/or improve community health.

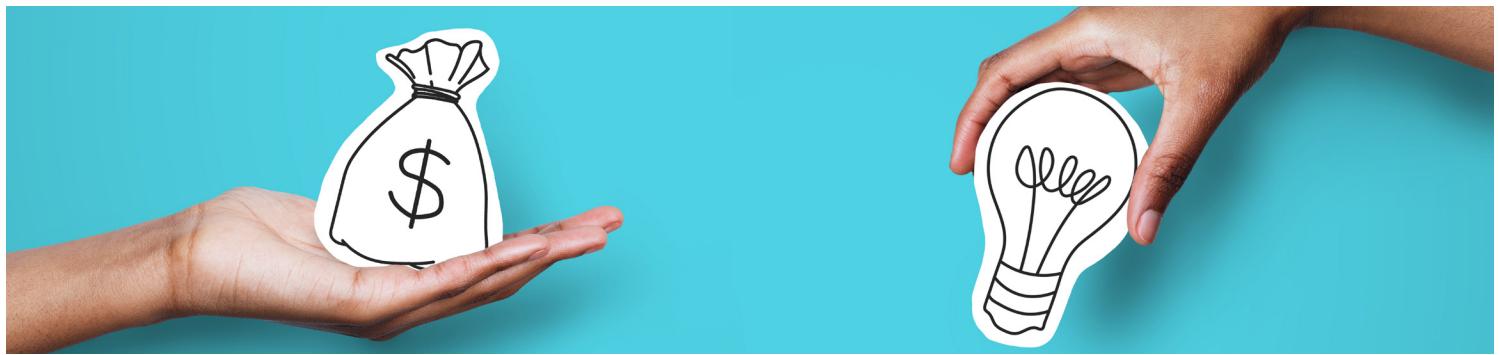
MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

The community challenge grants are smaller awards, so this plan would be most competitive in small chunks. Pick out a few pieces that would make the biggest impact for walkability and apply for these each. For example, one crosswalk, pedestrian signal, or safety improvement.

» USE THIS TO FUND PILOT/ POP-UP STYLE IMPROVEMENTS

This grant has no match requirement, but does not offer much money. The most that this program may offer is \$50,000. Consider using this grant to fund pilot/pop-up style improvements. These kinds of improvements can improve safety and create a more beautiful street.





Community Development Block Grants Economic Development Funds

Funding Type:

Grant

Funding Entity:

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

Application Entity:

North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division

Additional Details:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to local municipal or county governments for projects to enhance the vitality of communities by providing decent housing and suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities. State CDBG funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to the state of North Carolina.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

These grants primarily serve persons of low- and moderate- incomes. The economic development component of the CDBG Program is administered by the Rural Economic Development Division within the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Reach out to your local Appalachian Region office to learn more

» **USE THIS TO FUND BEAUTIFICATION, SAFETY, AND GROW YOUR FUTURE TAX BASE**

This funding source does not always require a local match. This program can fund things like: building rehabilitation/reuse (example: catalyst sites), water/sewer facilities, and street improvements. This project's beautification and safety elements may qualify, since they reduce blight and will spur downtown development. Since this project aims to expand Marion's successful downtown, this funding source would be a good place to start.

Community Facilities Direct Loans, Grants, and Loan Guarantees

Funding Type:

Grants and Loans (local match as low as 15% depending on qualifications)

Funding Entity:

United States Department of Agriculture

Application Entity:

Local Rural Development office

Additional Details:

This program provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is a facility that provides an essential service to the local rural community.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

Contact the local Rural Development office to learn more about what parts of this project may be eligible. Commercial or business projects are not eligible. The development of public space and parks may count for this funding source.



Complete Streets Process (NCDOT)

Funding Type:

Cost-Share

Funding Entity:

NCDOT

Application Entity:

n/a

Additional Details:

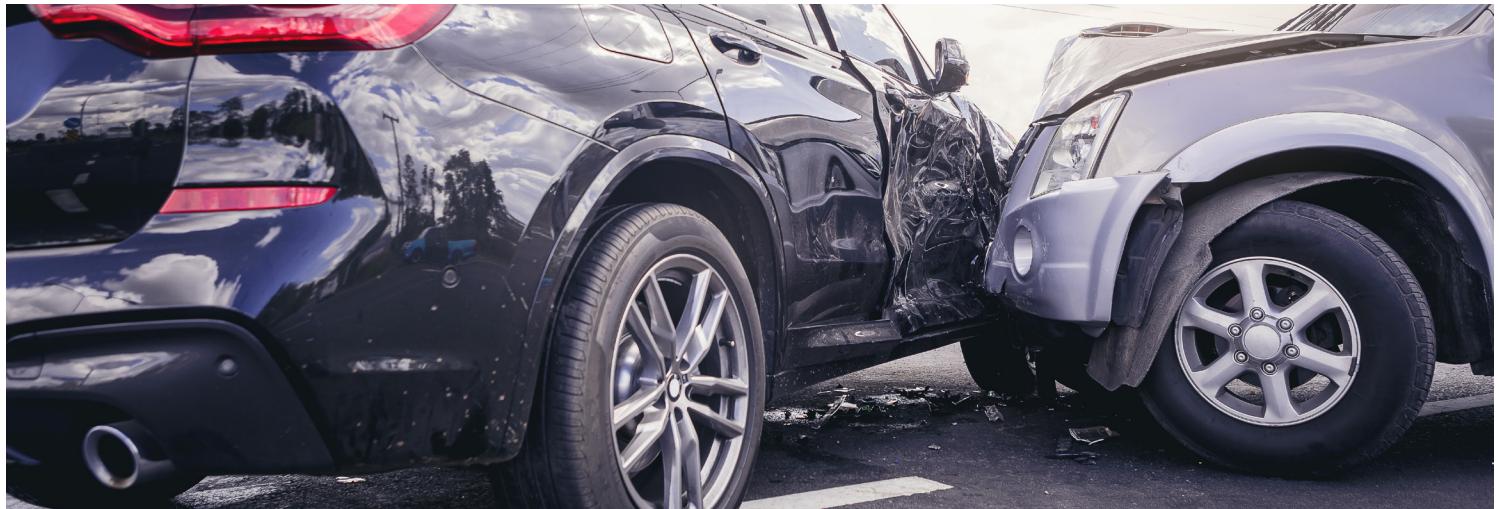
NCDOT offers a complete streets evaluation process for state-owned roads. NCDOT can fund some basic roadway and sidewalk improvements through this process.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

The closer Marion's design is to NCDOT's design recommendations, the more NCDOT will fund. It is possible to cost share, where NCDOT funds the portions that adhere to their standards, while Marion covers the cost of additional features.

» **USE THIS TO FUND THE BASICS, SUCH AS SIDEWALKS AND CROSSWALKS**

NCDOT can pay up to 100% of the costs through this process, but they will only do so if you use their design. Many items in this plan will probably be considered a "betterment" (i.e.: something beyond NCDOT's suggested design) and will require a different funding source. Some basic plan elements, however, may be able to be built through this process.



Spot Safety and Hazard Elimination Fund

Funding Type:

Small-scale grant

Funding Entity:

NCDOT

Application Entity:

NCDOT Division 13

Additional Details:

The Spot Safety and Hazard Mitigation funds smaller project types (i.e., intersection safety, corridor access management, etc.) that do not necessarily require significant funding or acquisition of right-of-way. NCDOT uses a cost-benefit analysis to justify specific projects.

MAKING MARION COMPETITIVE:

Split the project up into several pieces for this fund. The maximum funding per project is \$400,000. Emphasize how this project will improve safety.

» **USE THIS TO FUND SAFETY-SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS, SUCH AS:**

Mid-block crossings, curb extensions, crosswalks, and traffic calming.



| PROJECT ELEMENT | FUNDING SOURCE | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|---------|------|-------|
| | RAISE | RCP | PROTECT | SS4A | RURAL |
| Traffic calming | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Road Diets (pedestrian and bicycle portions) | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Crosswalks for pedestrians, pedestrian refuge islands (new or retrofit) | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Sidewalks (new or retrofit) | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Landscaping, streetscaping (pedestrian/bicycle route; transit access); related amenities (benches, water fountains); usually part of larger project | + | + | \$ | + | + |
| Lighting (pedestrian and bicyclist scale associated with pedestrian/bicyclist project) | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Signs, signals, signal improvements | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Shared use paths / transportation trails | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Barrier removal for ADA compliance | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Curb ramps | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Stormwater impacts related to pedestrian and bicycle project impacts | \$ | \$ | \$ | + | \$ |

\$ = Eligible + = May Be Eligible

Table 4.4: Eligibility for funding, various treatments.

Competitive Federal Grants

Competitive federal grant programs are the most difficult source of funding to administer on this list. It takes significant time and money to put a federal grant application together, with more restrictions on how the money can be spent.

Attempt to get funding through state and local programs first, but if the above strategies do not work out, the following federal programs may help fund this project.

Making Marion Competitive:

Where possible, use local funding in combination with state funding. Federal grant programs are more competitive, more expensive to apply to, and more restrictive. State funding programs are more likely to understand Marion's challenges as a small North Carolina town.

Before applying to a grant, reach out to the agency to confirm that Marion is a good fit for the program. This will help reduce the cost of applications, as Marion will only be applying to grants that it stands a chance of winning. This will also help Marion tailor its application to the program, increasing the chances that Marion will win the grant.

Many of these grant programs also require a local match. The strategies described under **“How to Provide a Local Match: Local Funding Sources”** on page 64 are still applicable for federal grant matches.



Next Steps.

- 1. **Endorse** this Plan
- 2. **Update** the Foothills Regional Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- 3. **Confirm** funding eligibility & secure local match
- 4. **Obtain** letters of support



Appendices - Available Digitally

A: Public Engagement

B: Working Group Meetings

C: Conceptual Designs and Cost Estimates

D: Funding Opportunities



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