



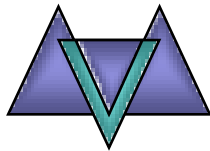
THE CITY OF REIDSVILLE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE ACTION PLAN

JANUARY 2006



***The City of Reidsville
Community Appearance Action Plan***

January 2006



Piedmont Triad Council of Governments



– The City of Reidsville Community Appearance Action Plan –

The action plan was developed by the Community Appearance Task Force consisting of community volunteers, and members of the Reidsville Appearance Commission, Planning Board, City Council and City staff. Funding for the plan was provided by the City of Reidsville. Project design, facilitation and documentation were provided by the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments (PTCOG). The plan provides recommendations for strategic actions to address key community appearance issues in Reidsville.

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Executive Summary

Chapter 1: Action Plan – Purpose and Background – The purpose of the *City of Reidsville Community Appearance Action Plan* is to identify practical ways to improve the city's appearance. The Action Plan serves as a guide for elected officials, municipal advisory board members and staff, community leaders and citizens in addressing appearance issues in the City of Reidsville. The Reidsville Appearance Commission was established in 1994, and has worked diligently over the past 12 years to identify and address a wide range of appearance issues throughout the community. In response to multiple citizen inquiries and requests, the city initiated and funded this strategic planning process to focus attention on the issue and to provide some positive, practical steps for the community to take. A Task Force was established to devise an action plan for future community appearance improvement efforts.

Chapter 2: Action Plan – Process – The Community Appearance Task Force used the following five-step strategic planning process to accomplish its mission:

- Step 1 – Identify Key Community Appearance Issues
- Step 2 – Study and Photograph Specific Examples
- Step 3 – Prioritize Key Issues and Opportunities
- Step 4 – Identify, Select and Refine Solutions
- Step 5 – Write and Refine Action Plan Recommendations

Chapter 3: Action Plan – Recommendations – The Community Appearance Task Force organized its recommended top-priority strategies into three categories, based on the primary parties responsible for implementing each strategy:

- Appearance Commission Strategies:
 - Establish a Community Pride Speakers Program.
 - Reformulate & Reinvigorate the Reidsville Appearance Commission.
 - Create a letter-writing pilot project to encourage compliance with appearance regulations and to offer assistance in meeting community standards.
 - Provide a mandate for city staff to review & enhance enforcement efforts.
- Municipal Strategies:
 - Continue to review & enhance existing ordinances and enforcement policies.
 - Undertake a community appearance pilot project to abate abandoned vehicle violations using a retired inspector and/or off-duty police and fire officers.
 - Investigate grant opportunities for long-range use of abatement officers.
- Community-Wide Strategies:
 - Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan.
 - Pursue a community appearance pilot project on North Scales Street.

Chapter 4: Action Plan – Implementation – Additional work elements to provide greater specificity & substance and practical strategies to implement the plan:

1. Action steps for a more proactive nuisance abatement program
2. Identify and set priorities for future entranceway corridor projects
3. Action steps for developing entranceway corridor master plans and design sketches for the proposed North Scales Street Entranceway Corridor pilot project.

Chapter 1: Action Plan – Purpose and Background

Purpose

The purpose of the *City of Reidsville Community Appearance Action Plan* is to identify practical ways to improve the city's appearance. The Action Plan serves as a guide for elected officials, municipal advisory board members and staff, community leaders and citizens in addressing appearance issues in the City of Reidsville. The plan outlines key appearance issues in six general categories and provides a variety of photographic examples to illustrate some of the community's specific challenges and opportunities. Potential solutions to address top-priority appearance issues are presented within three general categories: Programs, Pilot Projects and Policies. The plan recommends specific actions steps to carry out strategic solutions in three key categories: Appearance Commission Strategies, Municipal Strategies, and Community-Wide Strategies. The timeframe, responsible parties and necessary resources or actions are provided for recommended solutions in each category.

Background

The city established the Reidsville Appearance Commission in 1994. The 8-member Commission has worked diligently over the past 12 years to identify and address a wide range of appearance issues throughout the community. In response to multiple citizen inquiries and requests, the city initiated and funded this strategic planning process to focus attention on the issue and to provide some positive, practical steps for the community to take. A 19-member Community Appearance Task Force was established to devise an action plan for future community appearance improvement efforts.

Maintaining and improving community appearance is a key quality of life issue. It is also an important economic development issue. Community-wide efforts to improve the city's appearance can play a key role in attracting and retaining new residents and business investors.

Throughout the strategic planning process Task Force members emphasized the importance of finding creative ways to improve the city's appearance while, at the same time, being sensitive to the financial challenges of many residents and business owners in the community. Over a third of Rockingham County's 6,230 job losses since 1995 have occurred in Reidsville. The North Carolina Department of Commerce shows 2,187 jobs affected by downsizings, layoffs and business closings in Reidsville over the past decade. Task force members emphasized the importance of striking a balance between protection of the public good (i.e. the general health, safety and welfare of the whole community) and respect for private property rights and the financial ability of owners to adequately improve and maintain their property. Task force members also focused their emphasis on fostering community pride and encouraging voluntary citizen involvement through a variety of creative and compelling programs and projects, and placed less emphasis on the creation and enforcement of regulations.

Chapter 2: Action Plan – Process

The Community Appearance Task Force used the following five-step strategic planning process to accomplish its mission:

- Step 1 – Identify Key Community Appearance Issues
- Step 2 – Study and Photograph Specific Examples
- Step 3 – Prioritize Key Issues and Opportunities
- Step 4 – Identify, Select and Refine Solutions
- Step 5 – Write and Refine Action Plan Recommendations

Step 1 – Identify Key Issues

At their first meeting in February 2005, Task Force members participated in a brainstorming workshop designed to build a common understanding of key strategic community appearance issues that need to be addressed. The focus question for the workshop was: “*What are the key community appearance issues in Reidsville?*” Key issues were clustered and named by the group and are summarized in *Table 1 – Key Issues – Meeting #1 Workshop Results*. Task Force members identified the following six clusters of key issues:

- Make Reidsville More Pedestrian Friendly
- Foster Community Pride
- Enhance city Entranceways
- Improve Maintenance of Private Property
- Revise and Enforce Ordinances
- Control Littering and Loitering

Following their workshop, Task Force members discussed the common themes they identified and the need for a strategic plan to address these issues. Members were surprised by how much common ground there was among the varied interest groups represented on the Task Force, and were especially pleased the city is so interested and supportive of community efforts to address community appearance issues.



There are multiple opportunities for improving Reidsville's community image along its key entranceways.

**TABLE 1 – Key Issues – Meeting #1 Workshop Results
City of Reidsville Community Appearance Action Plan**

Make Reidsville More Pedestrian Friendly	Foster Community Pride	Enhance City Entranceways	Improve Maintenance of Private Property	Revise & Enforce Ordinances	Control Littering and Loitering
Make Reidsville a more walkable community – to improve mobility, safety and community image	Provide creative ways to improve appearances while being sensitive to the financial challenges of many in our city	Improve the appearance of South Scales St (strip development)	Clean up the Historic District & enforce existing appearance regulations	Address perpetual yard sale syndrome – through permit system	Institute a general city clean-up campaign
Extend the <u>downtown</u> main street project (lighting, paving, under-ground utilities, trees)	Improve community pride & awareness and encourage citizenship & responsibility	Work with NCDOT & others to beautify US29 Interchanges	Improve appearance of empty buildings (vacant windows / full of junk)	Address issue of multiple items stored in private yards	Address the loitering issue – to improve safety and community image
Establish or improve a “Sidewalk Program” to repair or replace old sidewalks, build new sidewalks, and maintain all streets & sidewalks (e.g. remove weeds)	Educate citizens about the importance and value of improving community appearance (providing a positive image) and their responsibility to follow appearance ordinances.	Improve landscaping around city Welcome Sign(s)	Identify & enforce responsibilities of owners to maintain their business (e.g. Penn Rose Mall)	Address issue of multiple vehicles parked &/or stored in private yards (e.g. junk cars)	<i>Establish or expand an annual “Clean Sweep” program to pick up trash in our community</i>
Establish bike lanes on city Streets connected to sidewalks & pedestrian trails	Create a positive identity for ourselves (e.g. “All American City”	Add more / better lighting (especially along major roads and entranceways)	Improve appearance of Reidsville High School (dumpsters & parking lot)	Address issue of visual clutter - too many signs grouped together (e.g. at gas stations)	<i>Develop a public education campaign to prevent &/or report littering</i>
Complete remaining portions of the Greenway Master Plan – to improve pedestrian safety and mobility, and to make our city more inviting	Make improvements to Reidsville's parks	Address unsightly results of clear cutting (e.g. brush piles & stumps): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freeway Drive ▪ South Park Drive ▪ Lawsonville Avenue 	Identify & enforce responsibilities of absentee landlords to maintain their residential & commercial rental property (e.g. Scales St)	Clean up or remove neglected signs	<i>Establish or improve a community policing program to involve citizens in reducing loitering & illicit activities</i>
<i>Add sidewalks and crosswalks to existing streets</i>	<i>Undertake beautification projects to plant trees & flowers in strategic locations around town</i>	<i>Undertake specific landscaping, lighting & sign projects to beautify city entranceways</i>	Improve the appearance and maintenance of Appearance Commission sites (or remove signs)	<i>Encourage or require more landscaping by establishing or revising a landscaping ordinance</i>	<i>Seek grant money to remove & replace loitering sites with positive / productive uses</i>
<i>Encourage or require sidewalks & crosswalks on new streets</i>	<i>Start annual community appearance awards program for residential and commercial sites</i>	<i>Make planning or zoning changes to better control placement & appearance of uses & buildings along entranceways</i>	Improve maintenance of <u>downtown</u> planters		
	<i>Organize & encourage participation in service projects to help our neighbors make property improvements</i>	<i>Create a grant or loan program to encourage businesses to make appearance improvements</i>	Improve maintenance of <u>downtown</u> alleyways		

[NOTE: Items above shown in italics are suggested by the facilitator for Task Force consideration]

Step 2 – Study and Photograph Specific Examples

At the end of their first meeting Task Force members were given disposable cameras and asked to take pictures of what they like & dislike most about Reidsville's appearance. They were asked to include examples from each of the issues identified in their brainstorming workshop. At their second meeting in March 2005, each Task Force member reviewed the photos they took and selected 6 to 8 photos that best represented the community appearance issues they thought most important. These photos were placed on one of the six "Key Issues Worksheets" and members provided the following information about where each photo was taken, the key issue each photo represents, and whether the photo represents a positive (+) or negative (-) community appearance example:

- Pedestrian Friendliness (12 photos) -downtown, sidewalks, greenways, bike lanes:
 - Lack of adequate sidewalks (e.g. North Scales)
 - Freeway Drive – 5 lane cross-section is ugly & unsafe / would prefer planted median
 - Blank walls on the side of building
 - Market Street – Abandoned business
 - + Attractive downtown building – Belvedere Building
 - + Wentworth & North Scales – model comfortable old neighborhood with sidewalks!
 - + Harrison Street clean-up project – an excellent example
 - + Existing greenway from Cypress to Jaycee Park
 - + Gilmer Street & Main – very attractive business with extra landscaping and brick wall
 - + Existing crosswalks



The sidewalk system in the city's older neighborhoods serves as a model for connecting schools, parks and shopping centers.

- Community Pride (19 photos) - citizenship, education, responsibility, image:
 - Poorly maintained Appearance Commission sites (e.g. Cypress & South Park)
 - Back of downtown buildings / alleys – needs maintenance, repairs, junk removal
 - Some downtown businesses look junky (e.g. Gilmer Street needs some attention)
 - Downtown street trees – dead trees need to be replaced
 - +/- Downtown gazebo is asset but needs some improvements
 - +/- Downtown landscaping is good but needs better maintenance
 - + High quality new construction near the city's excellent community hospital
 - + Attractive public buildings – Police Department & City Hall
 - + Good city landscaping (e.g. Market Street)
 - + Civil War Monument – an asset and landmark
 - + Most of downtown looks clean & well-maintained

- + Excellent up dates on some downtown buildings
- + Good landscaping in some private businesses (e.g. Ball Corp, SECU, Trent Building)
- + Clean and well-maintained businesses (e.g. Market Street)
- + Well-maintained residences (e.g. HPC home at Main & Lindsey)



The city's rich architectural heritage, municipal landscaping efforts and Main Street improvements are a source of civic pride.

- City Entranceways (20 photos) - strips, interchanges, welcome signs, lights, clear cuts:
 - North Scales Street – needs improvements
 - Poorly maintained residences along Business 29
 - Multiple curb-cuts & shortage of curbing along Scales Street near downtown
 - Lack of landscaping / planting strips between sidewalk & street (e.g. South Scales)
 - Ugly construction materials along entrance to City Lake Recreation Area (Waterworks)
 - Vacant lots need clean-up along Barnes Street
 - Barnes Street sidewalk needs to be replaced
 - Key interchanges need landscaping & clutter removal (e.g. South Scales & Freeway)
 - Abandoned lot needs clean up along Way Street
 - Clear cutting needs clean-up & replanting (e.g. Freeway, Richardson, Lawsonville Rd)
 - Lawsonville Road railroad underpass needs improvements
- + Existing business with good lighting at night (e.g. Patrick Henry)
- +/- Welcome Signs – Many are very nice / some need repair & better maintenance.



City entranceways provide a lasting impression of the community and need to be carefully monitored, maintained and improved.

Maintenance (23 photos) – empty buildings, private & public properties, downtown

- Downtown businesses in need of maintenance
- Downtown parking areas in need of clean-up and re-design
- Junk vehicles and equipment in private yards / public view
- Arlington / Wentworth & Bradley – junk, trash and junk cars in public view
- Private residences – in need of painting, repairs, junk removal, condemnation
- Private residences – abandoned & occupied by vagrants
- School with dumpsters in the front
- Strip development businesses needing repairs / maintenance
- Historic buildings – in need of better maintenance
- Abandoned commercial buildings
- Commercial uses with merchandise in front of store
- Appearance Commission planting areas in need of maintenance



Junky yards, abandoned cars and dilapidated structures indicate the need for improved property maintenance in some areas.

- Ordinances (16 photos) – yard sales, junk cars, clutter, neglected signs, landscaping
 - Perpetual yard sales & junk in front yards
 - Multiple signs and clutter (e.g. Freeway Drive)
 - Junk & trash on abandoned site / Abandoned junk car
 - Junky looking sign
 - Above-ground fuel tank
 - Too much merchandise on sidewalk in front of downtown business
 - Poor maintenance of public rights-of-way
 - Burned-out residence
 - Unattractive accessory buildings & carports
 - Neglected private residence
 - Apparent landfill area with fill dirt & construction materials
 - + Attractive setbacks and greenspace
 - + Nice business landscaping



Visual clutter from an over-abundance of signage and junk can be addressed through appearance regulations.

Littering & Loitering (14 photos) – clean-up, safety, image, education, clean-sweep

- Turner Drive & Railroad – trash & litter
- North Scales & Wentworth – litter
- Ware & Vance – litter
- Business on Market – overflowing trash dumpster
- South Scales businesses – trash in parking lot
- Business – litter along fence and around dumpster
- Loitering around public restrooms in Downtown area
- North Scales – abandoned tires
- North Scales – piles of tires along side and in front of business
- Behind Business – old appliances
- Hall Street – loitering (potential illicit activities)



Efforts to address littering and loitering issues can make a big difference in Reidsville's community appearance.

The photo-taking exercise and workshop provided Task Force members an opportunity to study the Reidsville community in some detail and to record both positive and negative examples of the city's overall appearance. Task Force members reflected on the photo workshop and provided the following thoughts:

- Some members noted they were uncomfortable having to make value judgements about the personal preferences of private property owners – especially knowing that some owners are poor &/or elderly.
- Others noted that many of the members noticed and took pictures of the same issues – Trashiness & clutter seemed to be a common theme, pointing to the need for improving our sense of community pride, good citizenship and civic responsibility.
- Some members expressed concern about potential over-emphasis on regulatory tools to address appearance issues. The city currently has two officers to enforce appearance ordinances on a complaint basis. Shifting to a more pro-active emphasis is likely to require additional staff and financial resources. Regulations are a form of “police powers” designed to protect the public health and safety of our community – not to impose personal preferences. Due process is a key component of any legitimate code enforcement program. Members posed the following questions and suggestions concerning regulatory solutions:
 - Is there sufficient community support to increase code enforcement activities?
 - Could citizen volunteers become a more active part of the code violation and enforcement process?

-
- If property owners in violation of appearance regulations are poor and/or elderly and not able to pay for legitimate health & safety improvements – how can our community help them rather than punish them?
 - Greater emphasis should be placed on community education & pride and less emphasis placed on regulations. We need to break appearance problems down and be very selective about appropriate solutions.
 - Our community could establish a “Good Samaritan Group” to find out the reasons behind selected issues and problems, and work cooperatively with land owners and various resource agencies to find mutually agreed-upon solutions and funding to implement these solutions.
 - We need to be very careful about what we say & do concerning specific properties – especially if they are struggling businesses. Rather than being too nit-picky and making a bunch of unreasonable demands, we need to strike a balance and provide encouragement and support to help folks improve the appearance of their business.
 - Some people will simply not change their attitude, no matter how much the community encourages, persuades, supports, or even regulates them. How can we change people’s attitude?
 - The way to start changing people’s attitude is to get everyone in the community involved and engaged in the issue:
 - Establish a public education and awareness program & campaign.
 - Provide positive reinforcement by establishing an awards program with special prizes for “most improved residential property”, “most improved rental property”, “most improved commercial property”. Get local businesses to provide the prizes (e.g. dinner and a movie for two, a free tree).
 - We need to strike a balance between the public good and private property rights. Landowners are provided certain rights to use their land as they choose. However, when the use or neglect of a private property negatively effects other individual adjacent properties and the community as a whole (e.g. along key major entrances into the city), the community has a legitimate right to protect the rights of adjacent property owners and the health and well-being of the community as a whole.

Step 3 - Prioritize Key Issues and Opportunities

At their third meeting in April 2005, Task Force members reviewed the six key issue clusters identified in meeting #1 and voted to select the following top five issues to address with various tools and solutions:

- Make Reidsville more pedestrian friendly by establishing a sidewalk program
- Improve community pride & awareness / encourage citizenship & responsibility
- Identify & enforce owner & landlord responsibilities to maintain their property
- Establish or improve a general citywide clean up program / campaign
- Reduce visual clutter & extraneous signs / clean up or remove neglected signs

Step 4 – Identify, Select and Refine Solutions

Following their prioritization of key issues, Task Force members formed three small groups to identify potential tools and solutions for use in addressing their top five issues and opportunities. One group focused on potential programs. Another group discussed potential pilot projects. A third group looked at potential policies, guidelines and regulations for addressing key issues. All three groups considered the following list of potential tools and solutions, and added their own ideas throughout the workshop:

- Potential Programs – Community Education & Awareness Program; Community Volunteer & Involvement Program; Awards Program; Business Façade/Streetscape Grant &/or Loan Program; Burned & Abandoned Residence Program; Community Development Block Grant Program to repair and improve sub-standard housing, Urban Forestry Program to plant street trees.
- Potential Pilot Projects – Gateway Corridor &/or Streetscape Improvement Study; High School Design Workshop (involve high school students and use A&T or NCSU Landscape Architecture students); Downtown Improvements Project(s) based on downtown survey & task force recommendations (e.g. redesign of parking area to include greenspace, fountains, benches, sidewalks, clock tower, pocket parks and pedestrian access ways to downtown shops); Citywide Pedestrian Facility Inventory & Assessment to identify and prioritize strategic sidewalk, greenway trail, and bike lane improvement projects, etc.
- Potential Policies, Guidelines & Regulations – Community Appearance Policy Recommendations (for City Council consideration & adoption); Review & Amend Existing Zoning & Subdivision Regulations (landscaping, outdoor storage, setbacks & buffers, signage, parking, etc); Review & Amend Code Enforcement Policies & Practices; Review & Amend the Development Review Process (to help prevent future problems); Establish Community Appearance Guidelines (for use by City Council, Planning Board, City Staff, Main Street Staff; Appearance Commission, Chamber of Commerce, businesses, developers, citizens); etc.

After considering and discussing a wide range of potential tools and solutions, each group selected its top one or two solutions, and worked together to generate strategic recommendations for addressing top issues. Each group outlined the specific purpose and/or place of the tool (why and where), the timeframe and priority for carrying out the solution (when), the parties responsible for pursuing the solution (who), and the resources needed to successfully implement each strategy (how).

Step 5 – Write and Refine Action Plan Recommendations

Chapter 3: Action Plan – Recommendations

At their fourth meeting in May 2005, Task Force members reviewed and refined their top-priority action plan strategies and approved the organization and presentation of these strategies into the following three categories, based on the primary parties responsible for implementing each strategy:

- Appearance Commission Strategies
- Municipal Strategies
- Community-Wide Strategies

Reidsville Appearance Commission Strategies

Task Force members identified the following four top-priority action steps the Reidsville Appearance Commission will take primary responsibility for pursuing:

- Establish a Community Pride Speakers Program
- Reformulate & Reinvigorate the Reidsville Appearance Commission
- Create a letter-writing pilot project to encourage compliance with appearance regulations and to offer assistance in meeting community standards
- Provide a mandate for city staff to review & enhance enforcement efforts

Table 2 provides specific recommendations concerning the purpose, timeframe, responsible parties and resources needed to carry out top-priority Reidsville Appearance Commission strategies.

TABLE 2 – Top-Priority Reidsville Appearance Commission Strategies				
Tool / Solution	Purpose & Place	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Resources Needed
<u>Community Pride Speakers Program</u> – to address civic groups, clubs, churches, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To increase pride and awareness and to encourage citizenship & responsibility ▪ To reinvigorate the Reidsville Appearance Commission (RAC) and gain new members ▪ To build excitement about the possibilities and opportunities to improve our city's appearance. 	Short-term (Year 1)	Reidsville Appearance Commission (RAC) Members and Action Plan Task Force Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trained speakers ▪ List & schedule of presentation opportunities to speak (e.g. civic clubs, community watch program) ▪ Power point Presentation ▪ Public Service Announcements on Radio and Public Cable Channel (39) ▪ Newspaper Stories ▪ city Mailings
<u>Consider reformulating the RAC as the "Community Pride Commission"</u> – based on staff discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reinvigorate & get members for RAC ▪ To help RAC re-focus & raise expectations ▪ To define RAC roles (programs, projects, policies) and how it fits into city functions ▪ To give opportunities for RAC to advise Planning Dept. on appearance issues 	Short-term (Year 1)	RAC Members The City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on strategic plan implementation ▪ By-Laws ▪ Staff support ▪ Funding

<u>Letter Writing Pilot Project</u> – asking for help from landowners, businesses & landlords (and offering help) (the “carrot”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To encourage and motivate landowners to clean up property ▪ To organize service projects and provide resources to help make improvements 	Short-term (Year 1)	RAC Members RDC Members Community Groups Municipal staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Postage ▪ Insert in water bills ▪ Produce brochure
<u>Provide a Mandate for City Staff to Review and Enhance Existing Ordinances and Enforcement Policies</u> (the “stick”)	To provide a broad base of community support for city staff to enhance community appearance regulations and enforcement policies	Short-term (Year 1)	RAC RDC Chamber of Commerce Comm. Development Planning Board City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education ▪ Joint resolution of support from multiple entities (including the chamber of commerce)

Establish a Community Pride Speakers Program: The Reidsville Appearance Commission will utilize the Action Plan power point presentation and script to share the strategic plan process and recommendations with civic and school groups throughout the city. The purpose of the speakers program is to increase community pride, awareness, citizenship and responsibility. Audience members will be encouraged to get more actively involved in efforts to improve the city’s appearance by, for example, serving on the commission and participating in recommended pilot projects.

Reformulate & Reinvigorate the Reidsville Appearance Commission: The Reidsville Appearance Commission will utilize its recommended speakers bureau as a key means of attracting community support and members. In addition, the Commission will work with city staff and other community leaders to more clearly define its roles and responsibilities in relation to municipal functions and advisory boards, and to “raise the bar” concerning expectations for the Commission. The Commission will also focus on building partnerships and working together with community groups, churches and municipal staff to implement other top-priority action plan strategies.

Undertake a Letter-Writing Pilot Project: The Reidsville Appearance Commission will undertake a letter-writing project designed to encourage private property owners to comply with appearance regulations and to offer referrals and/or assistance in meeting community appearance standards. The positive tone and focus of these letters will be on education and voluntary compliance. In addition, potential partnerships with civic groups, church groups and non-profit agencies may provide the labor and/or funding necessary to help elderly, disabled and low-income residents bring their properties into compliance, increase their property values and improve the city’s overall community appearance. For example, more than 400 youths from the *Group Workcamps Foundation* recently provided home improvement work in Lexington, NC as part of a week-long volunteer effort to assist elderly homeowners (see *APPENDIX A - Example of Volunteer Community Appearance Efforts*).

Provide an Ordinance Enhancement and Enforcement Mandate: Through its recommended speakers bureau and educational campaign, the Reidsville Appearance Commission will build the community-wide, grassroots support necessary for city staff to take a more proactive role in identifying and addressing community appearance violations threatening the city’s public health, safety and general welfare.

Municipal Strategies

Task Force members identified the following three top-priority action steps the city will take primary responsibility for pursuing:

- Review and enhance existing ordinances and enforcement policies
- Undertake community appearance pilot project to abate abandoned vehicle violations using a retired inspector and/or off-duty police and fire officers.
- Investigate grant opportunities for long-range use of abatement officers

Table 3 provides specific recommendations concerning the purpose, timeframe, responsible parties and resources needed to carry out top-priority municipal strategies.

TABLE 3 – Top-Priority Municipal Strategies				
Tool / Solution	Purpose & Place	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Resources &/or Actions Needed
<p><u>Continue to Review and Enhance Existing Ordinances and Enforcement Policies</u></p> <p><u>Investigate grant opportunities to fund abatement officers through Police, Fire or Planning Departments</u></p> <p><u>Undertake a community appearance pilot project to abate abandoned vehicle violations using a retired inspector and/or off-duty police and fire officers*</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To improve the maintenance of private property. ▪ To reduce visual clutter of too many signs &/or non-compliant signs. ▪ To reduce visual clutter caused by clear-cutting ▪ To improve the enforcement of <u>existing</u> appearance regulations to better address visual clutter, sign violations, junk cars, etc. 	Short-term (Year 1) and Mid-Range (Years 2 – 3)	<p>City Staff Planning & Zoning Bd. City Council NC / DENR (clear cuts)</p> <p>Community Watch Groups or other grassroots efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate & seek additional authority ▪ Be more proactive (beyond complaint-driven mode) ▪ Instruct <u>code officers</u> to ID infractions & pursue solutions ▪ Educate & encourage <u>citizens</u> to ID and report infractions ▪ Intern for inventory & recommendations ▪ Enforcement intern ▪ Budget Increase* ▪ Additional staff ▪ Allocation of staff time and focus (e.g. dedicate 1 day per month & increase to 1 day per week) ▪ Citizen education & involvement efforts

[* The city recently approved the Planning Department budget to include \$10,000 for this proposed community appearance pilot project]

Continue to Enhance Existing Ordinances and Enforcement Policies: The city will continue ongoing efforts to address nuisances (see APPENDIX B - Nuisance Definitions and Abatement Measures) and take a more proactive role in addressing community appearance violations as a grassroots community-wide mandate is provided.

Undertake Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Pilot Project: The Planning Department budget includes \$10,000 for a community appearance pilot project to abate abandoned vehicle violations using a retired inspector and/or off-duty police and fire officers.

Investigate Abatement Officer Grants: The city will also continue to seek grant funding to support the continued use of an abatement officer to identify and address violations of the city’s community appearance regulations.

Community-Wide Strategies

Task Force members identified the following two top-priority action steps that partners from throughout the entire community will pursue together. The city will take a key leadership role in helping to organize these two recommended pilot projects:

- Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan
- Pursue a Community Appearance Pilot Project on North Scales Street

Table 4 provides specific recommendations concerning the purpose, timeframe, responsible parties and resources needed to carry out top-priority community wide strategies.

Tool / Solution	Purpose & Place	Timeframe	Responsible Party	Resources Needed
<u>Sidewalk Master Plan Pilot Projects</u>	To conduct inventory, assessment & gap analysis to identify and set priorities for sidewalk repairs & for new sidewalks & crosswalks, and connections to the greenway system	Short-term (Year 1)	City Staff Task Force members PTRPO staff NCDOT / ITRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds & Time ▪ Guidelines ▪ Then funding to implement the plan
<u>North Scales Street – Community Appearance Pilot Project*</u>	To improve safety, pedestrian mobility and aesthetics by adding sidewalks, landscaping and lighting to address multiple appearance issues and build community pride.	Short-term (Year 1) and Mid-Range (Years 2 – 3)	The City NCDOT Walmart, Lowes, Food Lion & other businesses Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate citizens ▪ News releases ▪ Grants ▪ Educate government ▪ Taxes ▪ Budget*

[* The recently approved city budget includes \$30,000 for engineering work to be done along North Scales Street to include curb and gutter and sidewalks on at least one side of the street.]

Develop a Sidewalk Master Plan: City staff will take a leadership role in pursuing funding to support a comprehensive sidewalk master planning process. This process will include an inventory and assessment of the city’s existing sidewalk system. It will also include a gap analysis to identify and set priorities for repairing or replacing existing sidewalk, and for building new sidewalks and crosswalks and connections to the city’s greenway system. An *Overview of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative* administered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and Statewide Planning Branch is provided in *APPENDIX C*, along with a *Recommended Outline for Developing Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans* and an *Application Form* from the 2005 Call for Proposals. More up-to-date information on this funding program, and other bike and pedestrian planning programs may be available on the NCDOT (www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/) or ITRE websites (www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/documents/). The City of Reidsville recently received a \$910,000 grant from the Annie Penn Community Trust to finance a series of greenway trails through the city. The \$1.8 million project calls for two new trails and the extension of the Jaycee Park trail, completing a circuit that will cover about six miles from Courtland Park to Lake Reidsville (see *APPENDIX D - Newspaper Article on Greenway Grant*).

Pursue the North Scales Street Community Appearance Pilot Project: The city will take a leadership role in pursuing funding for the recommended North Scales Street Community Appearance Pilot Project.

The city's recently approved budget includes \$30,000 for engineering work to be done along North Scales Street to include design drawings for recommended road improvement, curb and gutter and sidewalks on at least one side of the street. In partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and a variety of community businesses (e.g. Walmart, Lowes, Food Lion) and civic groups, the city will seek funding to improve public safety, pedestrian mobility and aesthetics by improving the roadway, and adding sidewalks, landscaping and lighting to address multiple appearance issues. Another key goal of this recommended pilot project is to build community pride. Opportunities will be identified along the corridor for civic groups and churches to help their neighbors make improvements on private property (e.g. repairing and painting fences, removing trash, planting trees). This pilot project can serve as a model to be replicated in other neighborhoods and along other street corridors throughout the city.



The existing North Scales Street corridor.



Rendering of potential streetscape improvements along North Scales Street.

Chapter 4: Action Plan – Implementation Strategies

At their fifth meeting in July 2005, Task Force members reviewed a draft report and power point presentation and agreed additional work was needed to add greater specificity about how to implement the plan. The project scope of work was expanded to include the following work elements:

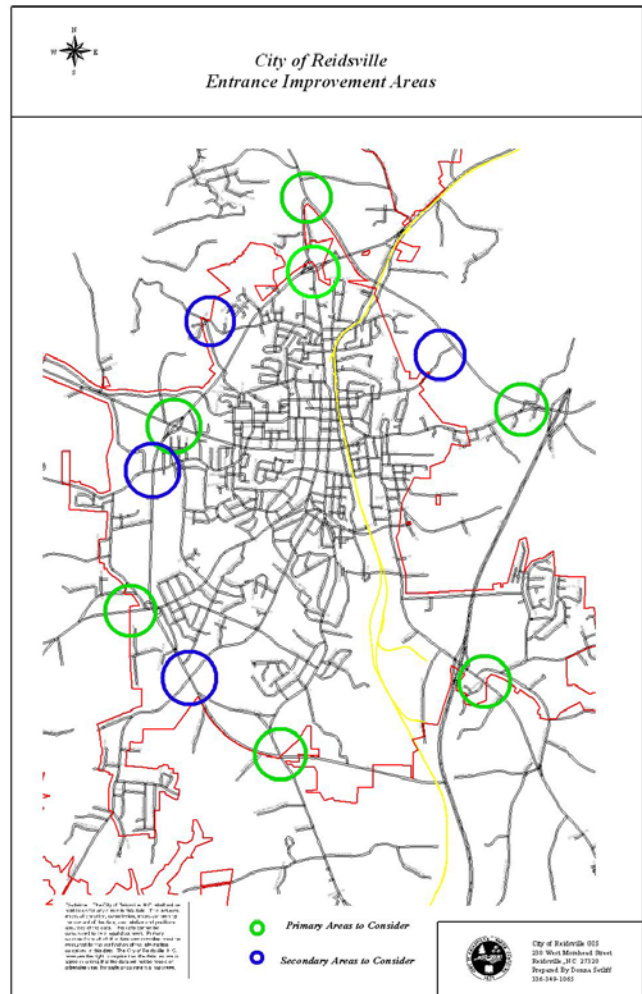
1. Outline action steps for a more proactive nuisance abatement program
2. Identify and set priorities for future entranceway corridor projects
3. Outline action steps for developing a conceptual master plan for proposed redevelopment target areas along top-priority entranceway corridors and provide some conceptual site design sketches to generate interest in & support for the proposed *North Scales Street Entranceway Corridor Pilot Project*.

Identify and Set Priorities for Entranceway Corridor Projects

At their sixth meeting in September 2005, Task Force members participated in a workshop to 1) identify & map future entranceway corridor study areas; 2) identify key issues to be addressed within each corridor, and; 3) set priorities for potential future corridor studies. Members reviewed an NCDOT map illustrating the number of average daily trips (ADT) along major roads. Members also reviewed a map generated by City staff and concurred with staff recommendations concerning the location of primary and secondary “gateway” intersections for future community appearance improvement efforts (see [Map 1 – Entrance Improvement Areas](#)). In addition to the number of average daily trips, members used safety, economic development & marketing, visibility and appearance as criteria for setting corridor study priorities.

Task Force members agreed the City should concentrate future appearance improvement efforts along radial road corridors leading into the City core and Central Business District (CBD) rather than along Freeway Drive. Most appearance issues along Freeway Drive will be addressed as part of an impending widening project scheduled for 2010.

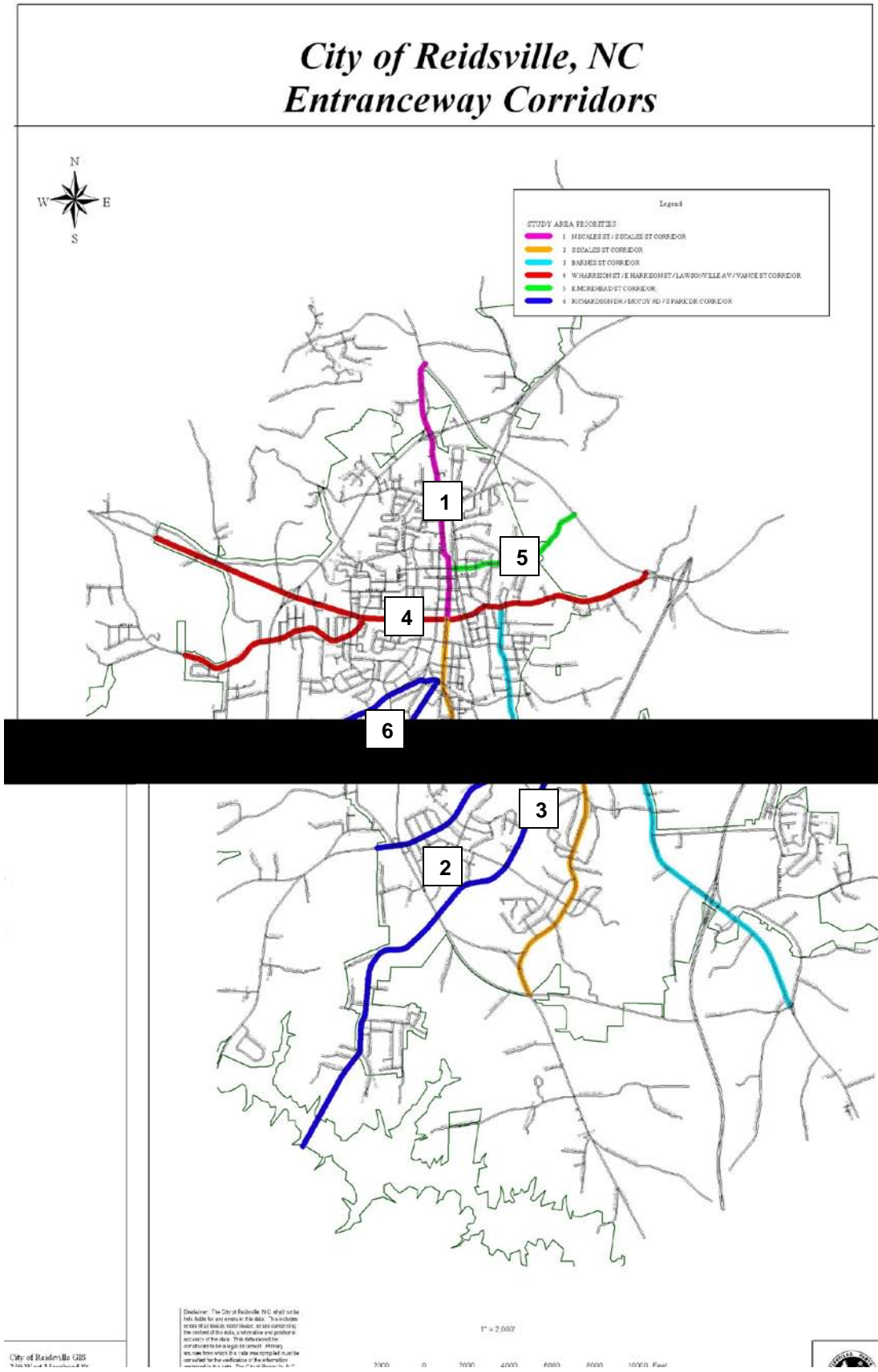
Map 1 – Entrance Improvement Areas



Results of the entranceway workshop are presented in Table 5 – Entranceway Corridor Issues & Priorities & Map 2 – Entranceway Corridor Study Area Priorities below.

TABLE 5 – Entranceway Corridor Issues and Priorities		
Priority	Corridor Name (and Location)	Key Issues
1	<u>North Scales Street</u> (from NC14 south to Harrison Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sidewalks / curb & gutter (especially north of Wentworth) ▪ focus areas at intersections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Morehead Street - Wentworth & Madison Street - Freeway Drive & NC14 ▪ expand CBD south to Harrison
2	<u>South Scales Street</u> (from Harrison Street south to Lake Reidsville)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sidewalks / curb & gutter ▪ lane markings ▪ signage & clutter control ▪ way-finding signs (to the lake) ▪ drives / access management ▪ landscaping ▪ property maintenance
3	<u>Barnes Street</u> (from Harrison Street south to industrial park east of US29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sidewalks (south of Richardson) ▪ curb & gutter ▪ drives / access management ▪ landscaping / street lights ▪ property maintenance
4	<u>NC87 / West & East Harrison Street / Lawsonville Road</u> (from Skeezi Road to US29) <u>Vance Street</u> (especially around public works facility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Freeway Drive intersection needs aesthetic controls ▪ sidewalks (especially from Barnes Road east to NC14) ▪ curb & gutter ▪ property maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Montgomery St RR underpass - convenience stores - fences ▪ signage & clutter control ▪ clear-cutting ▪ loitering / better policing ▪ landscaping
5	<u>East Morehead Street</u> (from North Scales Street east to NC14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sidewalks? / curb & gutter? ▪ trash in vacant areas / policing ▪ streetlights ▪ property maintenance (especially near CBD) ▪ clear-cutting
6	<u>US158 / Richardson Drive</u> (from Ironworks Road? to South Scales?) <u>McCoy Road and South Park Drive</u> (from Lake Reidsville north-east to Richardson Drive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sidewalks & bike lanes? ▪ signage & clutter control ▪ way-finding signs (to the lake) ▪ drives / access management ▪ trash (especially from welcome sign to Freeway Drive) ▪ landscaping ▪ property maintenance

Map 2 – Entranceway Corridor Study Area Priorities



Outline Action Steps for Developing an Entranceway Master Plan

At their seventh meeting in October 2005, Task Force members reviewed and approved the attached Table 6 - Recommended Action Steps for Developing an Entranceway Master Plan. Task Force members added Step 3 and requested that it be emphasized in this report to help City staff succeed in getting the support necessary to establish a more proactive code enforcement program, especially along major entranceways.

Identify Improvement Projects for Entranceway Target Areas

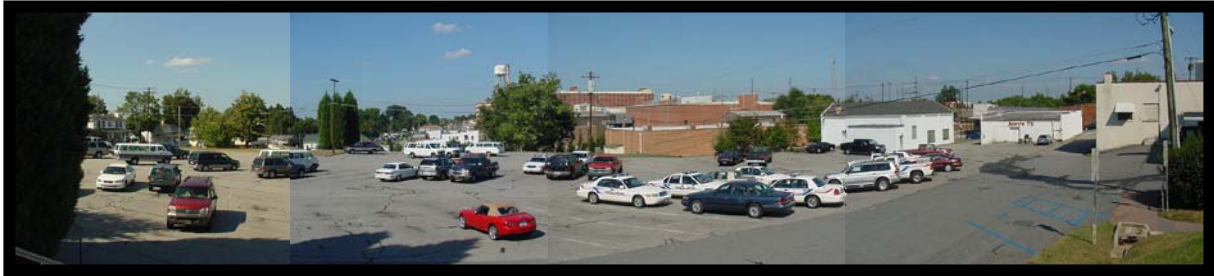
Task Force members then formed three small groups and participated in a workshop designed to: 1) identify key issues & opportunities within three target areas along the North Scales Street entranceway corridor; 2) identify redevelopment & improvement ideas and strategic partners for each target area, and; 3) summarize improvement ideas for each target area. The North Scales Street workshop serves as a model for similar redevelopment efforts along other entranceway corridors in the future. A summary of workshop results is provided below, along with maps showing key issues and suggested potential improvements within each redevelopment target area. Task force ideas were graphically enhanced for use in building interest and support for the proposed *North Scales Street Corridor Improvement Pilot Project*.



North Scales Street near Wentworth Street.

Review, Refine and Approve Action Plan Recommendations

Task Force members reviewed and approved the final draft of the Action Plan and power point presentation at their November 2005 meeting. Task Force members presented their recommendations to City Council in a work session in January 2006. The Action Plan was approved by City Council on _____ 2006.



Potential redevelopment site in municipal parking lot behind City Hall.

TABLE 6
Recommended Action Steps for Developing an Entranceway Master Plan

Step 1 – Identify & Prioritize Potential Entranceway Study Corridors

Step 2 – Generate a Preliminary List of Key Issues to be Addressed in Each Corridor

Step 3 – Establish More Proactive Code Enforcement Policies

- Emphasize the importance of proactive code enforcement, especially along entranceway corridors
- Provide funding & staff to adequately address code enforcement, nuisance abatement & RAC support

Step 4 – Identify Proposed Improvement Target Areas in Entranceway Corridors

- Identify potential revitalization target areas & strategic intersections needing improvements

Step 5 – Identify Key Stakeholders to Participate in the Planning Process

- City Council members, Planning & Zoning Board Members, Reidsville Appearance Commission members, City staff members, key property owners, community &/or neighborhood representatives, and other key interest group representatives: Chamber, Main Street, Downtown Merchants, Board of Realtors, etc.

Step 6 – Hold an Initial Stakeholder Workshop

- Present & review Corridor Study Area Map and preliminary Target Improvement Area Map(s) to include: ortho-photos; parcel lines, ownership & acreage; road names; municipal limits; and topographic contours.
- Tour the Corridor & Target Areas / Take Notes & Photos
- Form Work Groups (One Group for Each Target Area & one for the entire corridor):
 - Individually brainstorm key issues, opportunities & challenges
 - Individually brainstorm redevelopment / improvement ideas
 - Share issues & ideas with your group members & list on flip chart
 - Work together to sketch group's improvement ideas on the basemap
 - Provide solutions to problems & challenges
 - Provide creative ideas to maximize functional & aesthetic improvements
 - Note strategic partnerships for success

Step 7 – Draft a Conceptual Master Plan (Consultant & Staff)

- Provide corridor & site-specific analysis (opportunities & constraints)
- Outline design program elements & options
- Provide alternative conceptual designs and recommendations for preferred option(s)
- Illustrate conceptual design elements in plan view and some section &/or 3-D sketches

Step 8 – Hold Follow-up Stakeholder Workshop(s)

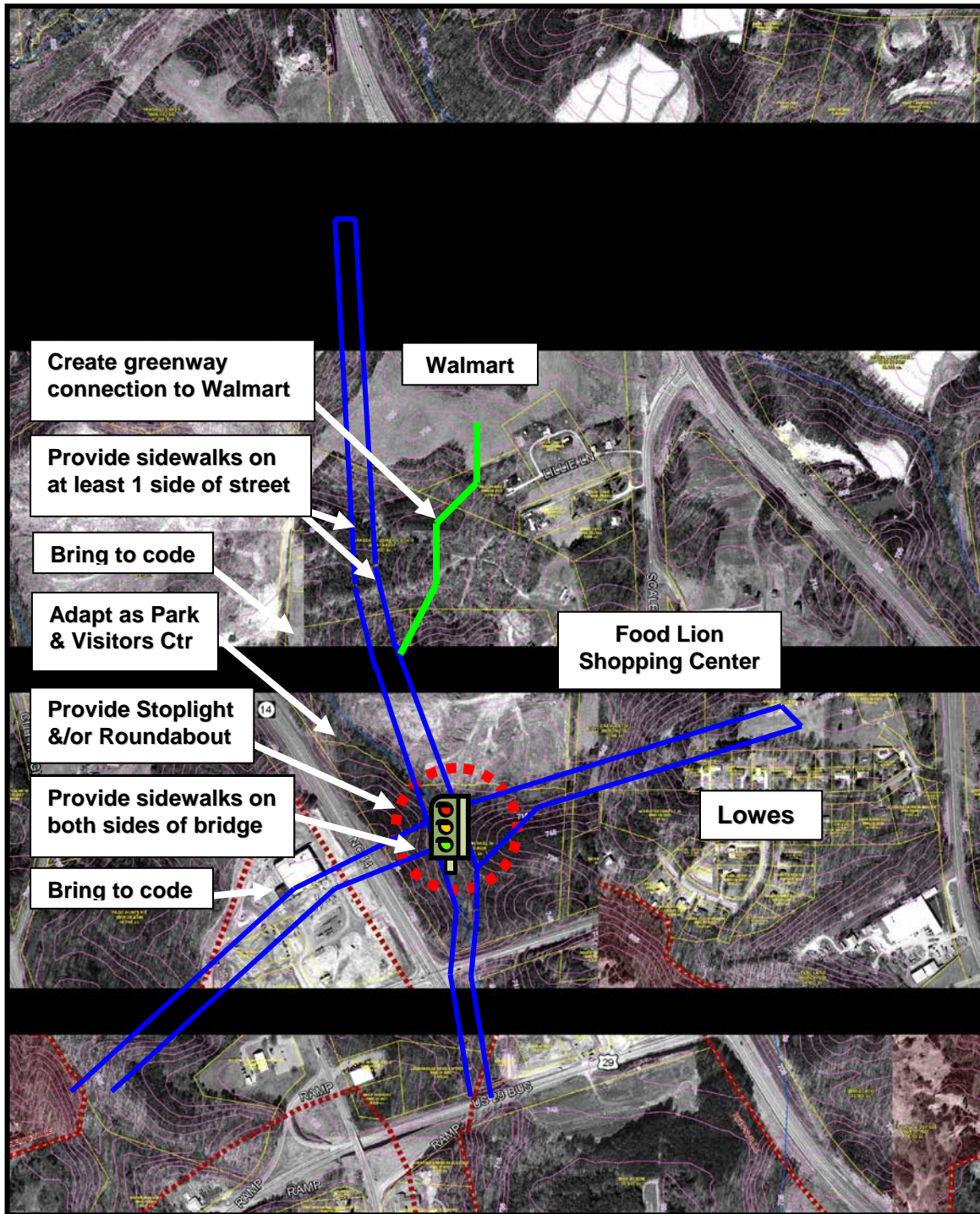
- Review & Refine Draft Conceptual Master Plan (a vision of what success will look like)
- Brainstorm Strategic Action Steps for implementing the conceptual master plan:
 - Timeline of tasks and events
 - Outline of resources needed (construction drawings, cost estimates, budget, etc.)
 - Identification of responsible parties & specific responsibilities
- Brainstorm & devise strategic partnerships for success
 - Opportunities for community & neighborhood involvement & implementation
 - Opportunities for businesses to sponsor & support implementation & maintenance

Step 9 – Finalize Conceptual Master Plan & Strategic Implementation Plan

Step 10 – Hold Public Events (e.g. Kick-Off Events, Periodic Up-Dates and Ribbon-Cutting Celebrations) - to maximize citizen participation, interest and awareness, and to honor & encourage local "heroes".

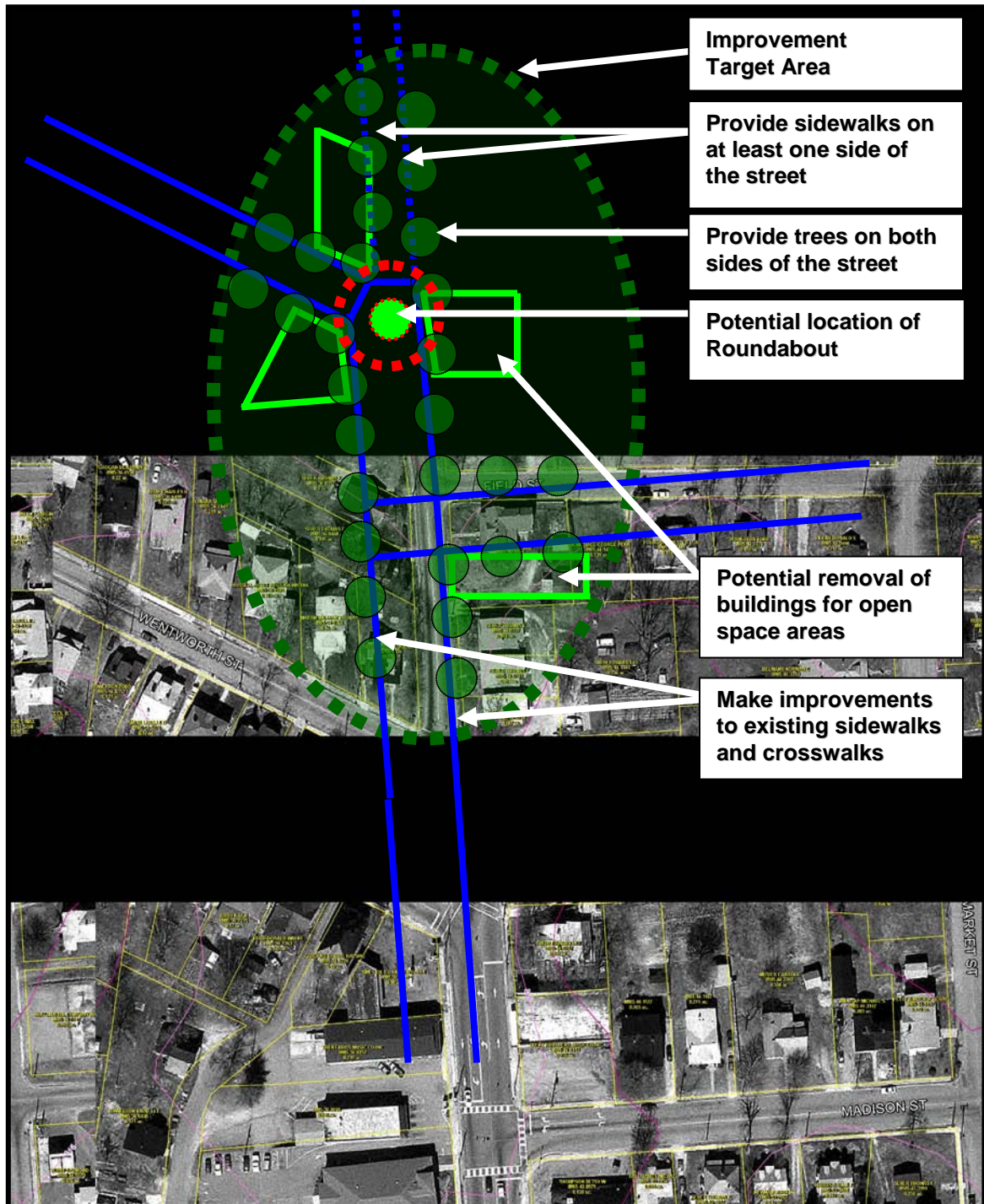
Improvement Projects for Target Area 1 – North Scales Street & Freeway Drive:

- Key Issues, Opportunities & Challenges: add sidewalks, curb & gutter, streetlights & a bike path; address pedestrian safety & access along ramps, across the bridge, in front of the shopping centers, and across Freeway Drive.
- Redevelopment & Improvement Ideas / Solutions: build sidewalks on at least one side of Freeway Drive, the bridge and North Scales Street - funded by multiple partners; use Highway Patrol site as a visitors' center, Chamber office & park; provide plantings around interchange & ramps; provide a stoplight or round-about at interchange, develop a greenway to provide pedestrian access to the new Walmart.
- Strategic Partners: NCDOT, key merchants (Walmart, Lowes, Food Lion, Church, Chamber of Commerce, Parks & Recreation Department, other private property owners).



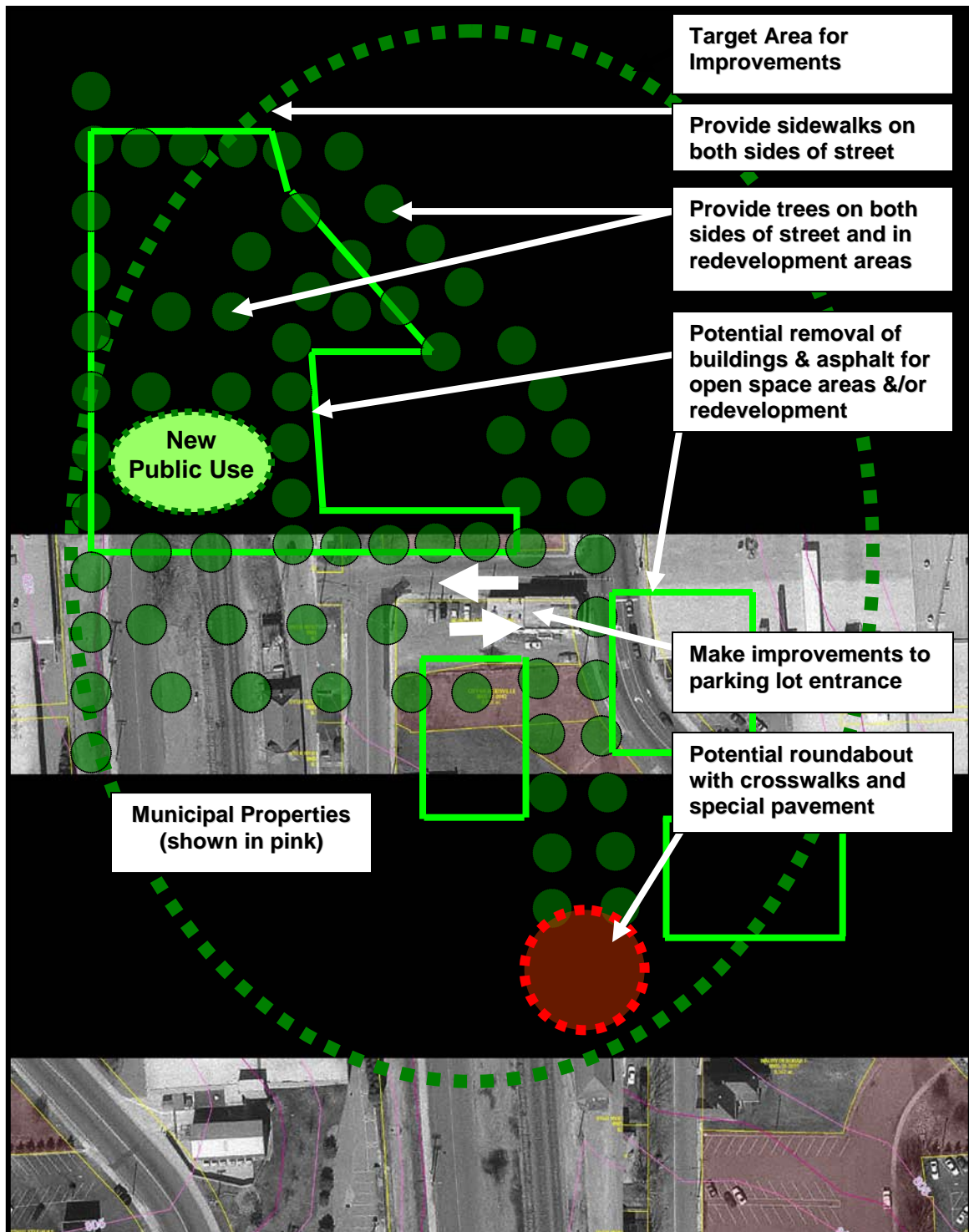
Improvement Projects for Target Area 2 – North Scales Street and Wentworth Street:

- **Key Issues, Opportunities & Challenges:** mixture of uses; angles & off-set of Wentworth & Madison Streets cause problems with both vehicular & pedestrian safety; poor condition of building exteriors.
- **Redevelopment & Improvement Ideas / Solutions:** improve alignment of Wentworth & Madison Streets & potentially add round-about; add sidewalks on North Scales Street and improve existing sidewalks; remove several buildings as necessary (e.g. house beside bakery); add open space & plantings in parking lots & at key corners; make exterior building improvements (e.g. bakery & business buildings).
- **Strategic Partners:** business and home owners, the City, NCDOT



Improvement Projects for Area 3 – North Scales Street and Morehead Street:

- Key Issues, Opportunities & Challenges: re-use or replacement of County buildings (library & EMS station); possible removal of derelict buildings; too much asphalt – reduce size of City parking lot & use for other public purposes (e.g. city square, park, amphitheater)
- Redevelopment & Improvement Ideas / Solutions: remove derelict buildings; remove portion of city parking lot & use for other purposes; add street trees, plantings & lights; improve city parking lot driveway; remove driveway near cleaners; add plantings along Sprinkle Street.
- Strategic Partners: Chamber; County; DDC; property owners; City; Rural Center



APPENDIX A – Example of Volunteer Community Appearance Efforts

Article published Jun 15, 2005

Volunteers Begin Work on Lexington Homes

BY Robert Cooper

The Dispatch

Youths from the Group Workcamps Foundation have begun home improvement work in Lexington as part of a week-long volunteer effort to assist elderly homeowners. More than 400 students were broken up into small groups and tackled painting and carpentry tasks for residents aged 62 and older while sharing a devotional message. "We're trying to make a significant impact on the community," said Matt Zafirorski, 19. "You have to start small. We're starting by affecting a single resident."

The volunteers come from various youth group organizations across the country and are staying at Lexington Senior High School while in town. The youths are stationed at one house for the entire week and given a prioritized list of tasks to complete. If any group finishes all of their tasks, they help other volunteers with their unfinished tasks. Most of the volunteers are untrained, so directors gave a brief safety tutorial in the morning at the high school. At least one adult supervisor is stationed at each house to assist with tasks that are more dangerous.

Students are using any experience to help with their work this week. Bob Bilinski, 17, has taken shop classes, which helped him install a door frame and repair a deck for a wheelchair-bound resident. Several other volunteers have participated in the Group Workcamps Foundation before. "I've done it three times and every time, I'm painting," said Kirk Zafirorski, 18, whose two brothers and mother all came on the trip with him. Mike Goode, 59, from Charles Town, West Virginia, was cutting boards to length while the five youth volunteers hammered away at two-by-fours for Paulene Hogan's new porch. Youths at Hogan's house were building a new porch for her, and spent 40 minutes sharing a devotional message with her. "We're blessed to be here," said Reid Cox, 13. "We're not just working, we're meeting other people." Hogan was also glad to hear the message the volunteers were sharing with her. "God puts us together," Hogan said. "I thank God for every one of them. I can't wait - when the sun goes down, I'm going to sit on my new porch." Hogan, 77, is a breast cancer survivor whose front porch has been too rotted to use for the past five years and her house is still in need of more repairs. The volunteers will also replace a rotted floor, the result of a broken washing machine leaking water onto the floor.

This is not the first time volunteers have come to Hogan's house, she said. The last Workcamps group to visit installed new paneling in her living room. All of the volunteers come with the theme "Living Inside Out" branded on their shirts. Volunteers said that theme stands for sharing a heartfelt message. "We're sharing the word of God with others and sharing the goodness of your heart," said devotional leader Mindi Reeve, 15.

Robert Cooper can be reached at 249-3981, ext. 241 or at robert.cooper@the-dispatch.com.

APPENDIX B - Nuisance Definitions and Abatement Measures

Nuisances: Nuisances are any situation that present a public health or safety hazard. Nuisances are defined in the City of Reidsville Code of Ordinances as:

1. Any condition which constitutes a breeding ground or harbor for rats, mosquitos, harmful insects, or other pests;
2. Is a place of dense growth of weeds or other noxious vegetation over 12 inches in height;
3. Is an open place of concentration of combustible items such as mattresses, boxes, paper, automobile tires and tubes, garbage, trash refuse, brush, old clothes, rags, or any other combustible materials or objects of a like nature;
4. Is an open place of collection of garbage, food waste, animal waste, or any other rotten or putrescible matter of any kind;
5. Hides, dried or green, provided the hides may be kept when thoroughly cured and odorless;
6. Any furniture, appliances, or metal products of any kind or nature openly kept which have jagged edges of metal or glass, or areas of confinement;
7. Any condition which blocks, hinders, or obstructs in any way the natural flow of branches, streams, creeks, surface waters, ditches, or drains, to the extent that the premises is not free from standing water.

Steps to Abate a Nuisance (notification step based on state law):

- Upon receiving a complaint for a nuisance, the inspector goes out and looks at the property.
- If the complaint is valid and there is a nuisance as defined above, the inspector will determine the property owners name and address and send a certified mailing telling the owner they have 10 days from the receipt of the letter to abate the problem.
- If they don't, the city has a person that we use on a regular basis to go out and clean up the mess or cut the yard, whatever is necessary. The property owner is charged the cost of the abatement plus a \$50.00 administrative fee.
- If the property is obviously heir property or has an out-of-state owner, the city will post the property with a notice similar to the letter that is sent so that if the owner does not accept the certified letter the city can go ahead with the clean-up.

Performance Measures for the Reidsville Community Development Department:

The city sets goals for itself as to how fast it can get started on abating these types of nuisances. The city cannot set goals on how fast it gets the situations cleaned up because each one has its own set of challenges. The information below shows how the city has done on its goals since July 2003.

Goal: To continue to provide effective enforcement of City Nuisance Ordinances by responding to service requests for nuisance complaints within 24 hours, 95% of the time.

- For FY 04/05, Inspectors have received 129 requests for service.
 - Inspectors responded to 127 requests within 24 hours, or 99.1% of the time.
 - Inspectors responded to 62 requests within the same working day, or 48% of the time.
 - Inspectors responded to 11 requests within 1 hour, or 8.5% of the time.
- For FY 03/04, Inspectors received 213 requests for service.
 - Inspectors responded to 211 requests within 24 hours, or 99% of the time.
 - Inspectors responded to 175 requests within the same working day, or 82% of the time.
 - Inspectors responded to 50 requests within 1 hour, or 23% of the time.

Since July 1, 2001, the city has spent almost \$32,000 cleaning up nuisances. The Finance Department bills the owners for this work and, if not paid, places a lien on the property.

Housing Condemnations

The City of Reidsville has a minimum housing code and a non-residential maintenance code. When problem properties are brought to our attention, the inspector goes out and inspects the property. If the property has structural problems or has enough less serious problems to warrant condemnation the inspector begins a lengthy and involved legal process. The City Attorney does a title search to tell us the names and addresses of any owners and lien holders. The inspector notifies owners and lien holders by certified mail that a hearing will be held to inform them of the problems that we found. If the owners refuse to pick up the letter then we publish a notice in the paper and post a notice on the property regarding the hearing. At the hearing the inspector tells the owner and lien holder that the city has found one of the following two things:

1. The inspector finds the property to be “deteriorated”, which means that the cost of repairs is less than 50% of the value of the building, and orders the property repaired or boarded up, or;
2. The inspector finds the property to be “dilapidated”, which means that the cost of the repairs is more than 50% of the value of the property, and orders the property repaired or removed.

The property owner must be given an opportunity to comply with the inspector’s order and the minimum time by state law is 60 days for non-residential and 90 days for residential property.

If after the time period the property has not been repaired, removed or boarded up as the case may be, the Director of Community Development prepares an “Ordinance to Vacate and Board up or to Demolish” and takes it to City Council for approval. Once the City Council approves the ordinance, the Director has a contractor remove the building or board it up. If a building stays boarded-up for 6 months, then the Director can request the City Council to approve an “Ordinance to Remove”. The owner gets another 90 days to comply with this order.

The city bids out demolitions prior to City Council meetings so that if a demolition ordinance is approved, a contractor is ready to remove the building as soon as possible.

- Since the fall of 2002, the city has had 46 houses either torn down or demolished through this process. The city has had to demolish 17 houses, but the property owner has either improved the dwellings or demolished it themselves 29 times.
- Since the fall of 2002, the city has spent over \$107,000 on the removal of these problem properties.

APPENDIX C – Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative

2005 Program Overview – Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and Statewide Planning Branch

The North Carolina Department of Transportation announces the 2005 call for proposals is now open for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative. This is the second annual cycle for a program that encourages the development of comprehensive municipal bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. A total of \$400,000 is available for the 2005 call. All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply.

Program Purpose

In recent years, communities throughout North Carolina have begun to place more emphasis on providing facilities for biking and walking. A desire for better modal choices, the demand for more walkable and bikeable communities and a focus on smart growth initiatives have combined to highlight the need for better, more complete bicycle and pedestrian transportation systems. Comprehensive planning documents are an integral part of developing these systems, and can guide both local and state efforts to improve conditions for bicycling and walking.

To encourage the development of comprehensive local bicycle plans and pedestrian plans, the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the Statewide Planning Branch (SWP) have created a matching grant program to fund plan development. This new program was initiated in January 2004 and is currently administered through NCDOT-DBPT and the Institute of Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) at NC State University. Eighteen municipalities out of 49 applicants were awarded grants last year to develop either a bicycle plan or a pedestrian plan. Funding granted for 2004 totaled \$394,818. Funding is secured for 2005 at \$400,000. Additional annual allocations will be sought for subsequent years. This is a cost reimbursement program.

Who Can Apply

All North Carolina municipalities are eligible and are encouraged to apply for a bicycle or pedestrian planning grant. Due to the limited amount of funding in 2005, regional and county governments are not eligible to apply, nor are colleges/universities or other non-municipal entities. Applications submitted and received for the 2004 grant cycle do not carry over — municipalities must re-apply for 2005 to be considered within the current process. Please note that the application form for 2005 has been changed and applications must be submitted using this new form.

Municipalities that were awarded grants in 2004 may also apply for 2005, but those currently developing bicycle plans may only submit proposals for pedestrian plans and vice versa. Proposals for development of a combined bicycle/pedestrian plan will not be accepted, as the considerations, issues, needs, facilities and programs for each user group are different. Municipalities may choose to apply for funding to undertake either a bicycle plan or a pedestrian plan in any given fiscal year. Municipalities may apply for funding for the other type of plan in subsequent years. Funding is intended to support the development of a comprehensive, bicycle or pedestrian transportation plan. Submitting an application for bicycle or pedestrian planning funds is a competitive process. As this is a program only in its second year of implementation, an effort will be made to award grants based not only on the merit of the proposal but to achieve statewide geographic distribution as well. Consideration will be given to funding a cross-section of municipality types.

The Role of MPO's and RPO's

Although regional plans will not be funded in this cycle, the relevant approval processes and procedures of MPO and RPO organizations should be followed by any municipality applying for funding. A resolution by the local MPO, if applicable, will be required prior to awarding funds. A resolution by the RPO, if applicable, is strongly encouraged. It is desirable for MPO and RPO planners to be part of the local team/task force guiding development of the plan.

Important Dates

Awarded municipalities will have eighteen months to complete their plan, starting when the NCDOT issues a formal Notice to Proceed. Key dates for the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Initiative are shown below.

Activity	Date
Issue Call for Proposals	October 1, 2004
Application submission deadline	5:00 pm December 3, 2004
Awards Committee makes recommendations	February 25, 2005
Board of Transportation gives approval	April 6, 2005
Notify municipalities of award	April 8, 2005
Execute Municipal Reimbursement Agreement	May-June 2005
Municipalities receive Notice to Proceed	July 2005
Plan completion deadline	December 2006

Plan Development

Plans may be developed by staff, by consultants or by a combination of both. It is strongly recommended that a task force/steering committee be formed to oversee development of the plan. This group should include relevant local staff, regional planning staff, advocates and representatives of stakeholder groups. The level of funding provided to a municipality for plan development will be determined by estimated cost, matching grant formula and NCDOT funding cap, if applicable. Any plan developed with these funds must be comprehensive in nature and be a stand-alone bicycle or pedestrian plan. While NCDOT encourages the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in local comprehensive plans, transportation plans, land use plans, recreation plans, greenway and open space plans, etc., applications for funding to develop such elements is not within the scope of this grant.

A plan outline and expanded template have been developed as guides to assure that plans are comprehensive in nature and to help the municipality identify all bicycle or pedestrian needs, priorities and opportunities for improvements. (See <http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/guide.html> for either of these documents.) These tools will assist communities to address not only the infrastructure needs of users but also to develop construction project priorities; review local policies and guidelines and recommend favorable changes; identify opportunities for the implementation of education, enforcement and safety programs; and to develop encouragement and awareness initiatives. In addition, the plan will identify projects that can be integrated into the state's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and potential TIP and Enhancement projects.

Other resources for plan development may be found on our Resources page, which contains links to planning and design guidelines, safety and education programs and initiatives, exemplary plans, and current research and development for bicycle and pedestrian planning.

<http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/links.html>

Matching Grant Formula

Grant funds will be provided on a sliding scale, based on municipal population, as shown in the table below. A funding cap (see below) will be applied, based on estimated costs of plan development. Neither in-kind services nor other state or federal funds from NCDOT can be used for local participation.

Municipal Population	DOT Participation	Local Participation
Less than 10,000	80%	20%
10,000 to 50,000	70%	30%
50,000 to 100,000	60%	40%
Over 100,000	50%	50%

Estimated Costs / Funding Cap

Average costs associated with the development of comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans vary greatly depending on whether the plan is prepared by a consultant, by a combination of consultant and staff or entirely in-house. A range of estimated costs for plans developed by consultants is shown below. Costs for plans that are developed by staff or with limited assistance by consultants would cost less. For plans that cost more than the averages listed in the table below, the municipality must agree to pay the amount over the NCDOT cap, also shown below.

Population	Estimated Consultant Costs		NCDOT Funding Cap	
	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>	<i>Bicycle Plan</i>	<i>Pedestrian Plan</i>
Less than 10,000	\$10,000-25,000	\$10,000-20,000	\$20,000	\$16,000
10,000 to 50,000	\$25,000-50,000	\$20,000-35,000	\$35,000	\$24,500
50,000 to 100,000	\$50,000-75,000	\$35,000-50,000	\$45,000	\$30,000
Over 100,000	\$75,000-150,000	\$50,000-75,000	\$75,000	\$37,500

Staff costs and in-house services are not eligible for reimbursement with these grant funds. Allowable expenses include consultant costs associated with plan development and delivery; GIS/mapping services, as appropriate; preparation of technical illustrations and graphic design/layout of plan undertaken by consultant; non-staff costs associated with data collection and public involvement activities; and, printing/copying of plan and maps. All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality.

Selection Process

DBPT and ITRE staff will conduct a preliminary review of all applications for completeness and general appropriateness. Applications that pass the initial screening will then be reviewed by the Awards Committee. This group will include DBPT and ITRE staff and individuals with professional experience in developing, administering, and/or implementing bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. These individuals will represent municipalities of varying sizes, MPO's and RPO's, COG's and other appropriate agencies and organizations. The Awards Committee will review each proposal and evaluate it based on the stated vision, goals and needs of the municipality; comprehensiveness of scope; understanding of issues and opportunities; level of local commitment; and, feasibility of successful plan completion. The Awards Committee will forward their recommendations to the NCDOT for final approval.

Selection Criteria

The Awards Committee will consider the following elements in evaluating applications for bicycle and pedestrian planning grant funds. Successful proposals will address the following:

- Identify critical municipal needs for planning and/or implementation of bicycle or pedestrian improvements
- Demonstrate an understanding of needs of the particular modal user (bicyclist or pedestrian)
- Recognize the need to serve diverse populations
- Focus on the development of a comprehensive bicycle or pedestrian transportation system
- Assure assignment of appropriate level of staff to oversee / undertake plan development
- Consider policy issues and describe how bicycle or pedestrian transportation needs will be incorporated into municipal processes
- Recognize the value of developing education, enforcement and awareness initiatives
- Demonstrate widespread local support:
 - Include a strong local endorsement to undertake plan
 - Demonstrate commitment of elected officials and senior staff to carry out recommendations of plan
- Demonstrate an understanding of interrelationships with other plans:
 - Recognize opportunities to integrate with Comprehensive Transportation Plan
 - Identify potential projects for state funding

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- Identify opportunities to coordinate with other municipal, county, regional and state plans
 - Demonstrate involvement of local, regional and state organizations:
 - Involve appropriate local and regional agencies and organizations in plan development
 - Appoint or utilize a local steering committee / task force
 - Identify valid partnerships for various plan development and implementation elements.
 - Include letters / endorsements that reflect type, variety and strength of support from partnering agencies, organizations and individuals
 - Promote current transportation plans and initiatives:
 - Build on existing municipal or regional initiatives; coordinates with regional or neighboring community plans
 - Communicate potential for implementing existing goals and policies
 - Develop realistic aspirations:
 - Show an awareness of / describe a realistic plan implementation strategy
 - Identify tasks and include a realistic time line for plan development
 - Address development of modal interconnectivity (where applicable)

Conditions of Project Award

A funded municipality must be willing to execute a legal agreement with the NCDOT prior to receiving funding. This agreement will outline the responsibilities of each party, the terms of reimbursement and the deliverables. The target date for these agreements is June 30, 2005. Selected municipalities will receive a formal Notice to Proceed from NCDOT. Costs incurred before this time are not a reimbursable expense.

Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. The maximum amount of the award is based on the sliding scale, tied to population, and the NCDOT funding cap shown in the table above. Municipalities receiving awards will be reimbursed for the stated percentage of actual expenditures, not a lump sum, up to the funding cap maximum. Invoices for partial completion of the plan may be submitted after completion of the first draft and the final draft. One-third of the total NCDOT allocation will be withheld until the completed plan with all maps and related materials is submitted to NCDOT and approved by the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Awarded communities will be required to complete a survey and/or interview after plan is completed. Awarded municipalities will have eighteen months from the date of receipt of an NCDOT written Notice to Proceed to complete the plan. Quarterly reports describing accomplishments and expenditures will be required. Changes in project schedule must be approved by the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. Unspent funds may be withdrawn from municipalities that fail to meet timely benchmarks in the plan development process. Municipalities must credit the North Carolina Department of Transportation for project participation in the plan document, in all press releases and other announcements and promotional materials related to the project. All electronic files, maps, technical illustrations, etc. produced with these funds will become the property of the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and the funded municipality.

Administration / Technical Assistance

Staff from the NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT) and the NCSU Institute for Transportation Research and Education (ITRE) will be available to answer questions and provide guidance in soliciting proposals from consultants, developing plan elements, conducting public involvement meetings and providing access to technical resources. DBPT staff will assist in consultant selection and will give final approval on selection. NCDOT and ITRE staff will also attend meetings and public hearings, as appropriate. A plan outline and expanded template have been prepared to guide municipalities in the development of their plan. See the Planning Guides information on the web site for these documents. (<http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/guide.html>)

How to Apply

The application deadline is 5:00 pm, December 3, 2004.

1. Two versions of the application form are available, MS Word and PDF. The application is designed so that applicants who use MS Word can download and save the application form, then complete the form electronically and print out for submittal. Interested applicants without access to MS Word should download the PDF file and type in their information. Handwritten applications will be accepted, but are not preferred. In either case, please use only the space provided to answer the questions. Go to the Application information on the web site to download either application form. (<http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/application.html>)
2. The signature of an authorized municipal staff member is required in the space provided on the first page of the application for the proposal to be eligible for consideration (e.g. Manager, Administrator, Mayor, etc.). Please print the name and title of this signatory in the space provided.
3. A resolution from the municipality is required. A resolution from an MPO, as appropriate, will also be required of awarded municipalities before execution of Municipal Reimbursement Agreement is finalized. RPO resolutions, as appropriate, are strongly encouraged.
4. Please submit one signed original and ten (10) copies of the completed application, including attachments. If possible, please include an electronic version of the completed form on CD-ROM or floppy disk (signature not required on electronic version).
5. Go to the Submittal Information on the web site for specific information on how each application packet should be formatted. (<http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/submittal.html>)
6. Applications submitted on-line or via email will not be accepted.
7. Mail to:
David Bender, AICP
NCDOT Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
1552 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1552

Or hand-deliver to:
David Bender, AICP
Transportation Building, Room 304
1 South Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC

Recommended Outline for Developing Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans 2005 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and Statewide Planning Branch

The outline below reflects the suggested organization and content for development of a comprehensive municipal bicycle or pedestrian plan. This outline was developed as a guide to municipalities preparing a plan with funds received through the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative. A more detailed planning template has also been developed to provide additional guidance on plan content. To access this template go to <http://www.itre.ncsu.edu/PTG/NCDOT/guide.html>.

Section 1 - Introduction

- Vision statement
- History
- Goals and objectives
- Scope and purpose of plan

Section 2 - Evaluating Current Conditions

- General overview
- Community concerns, needs and priorities
- Bike/ped friendliness of local transportation system
 - Street and highway system access
 - Bike/ped system access
 - Transit interface
- Current usage / user demographics
- Inventory / assess existing facilities
- Bike/ped statutes and local ordinances

Section 3 - Existing Plans, Programs and Policies

- Review relevant local, regional and state plans and guidelines
- Current programs and initiatives
- Policies and institutional framework

Section 4 - Develop Bicycle / Pedestrian System Plan

- System overview
 - Current
 - Future
- Corridor identification
- Identify opportunities
 - Current
 - Future
- Special focus areas
 - Current
 - Future

Section 5 - Facility Standards and Guidelines

- General guidelines
- Typical cross-sections
- Sample cost estimates

Section 6 - Ancillary Facilities / Programs

- Mapping and signing projects
- Spot improvements
- Bicycle parking
- Maintenance programs
- Traffic calming initiatives
- Transit interface
- Safety education programs
- Enforcement programs
- Encouragement and promotions

Section 7 - Project Development

- Identify potential projects and preferred treatments
- Prioritize projects
- Review funding opportunities
- Identify special funding opportunities
- Identify supporting policies/guidelines
- Develop evaluation/monitoring process

Section 8 - Maps and Illustrations

- System map
- Proposed projects
- Project priorities
- Transportation Plan overlay

Section 9 - Recommendations

- Project descriptions
- Policy recommendations
- Standards and guidelines recommendations
- Funding recommendations
- Staffing / committee recommendations
- Local ordinance recommendations

Section 10 - Implementing the Plan

- Plan approval / adoption process
- Project planning and implementation process

Appendices

APPENDIX D – Newspaper Article on Greenway Grant

City Gets Grant for Greenways

Michael Pucci
Staff Writer – The Reidsville Review
Friday, May 13, 2005

Joggers, walkers and bicyclists, take note - within six years, you'll have much more opportunity to exercise around Reidsville. The Annie Penn Community Trust's board of directors approved a grant of about \$910,000, the largest grant the Trust has ever made to join Reidsville in financing a series of greenway trails through the city.

"This puts quality of life on the front burner," said city Councilman James Festerman. City Manager Kelly Almond announced the grant at Wednesday's council meeting, barely trying to mask his enthusiasm for a project finally brought to fruition after almost 10 years of trying. "We thought this would be a pie-in-the-sky when we started," Almond said. "This sets our community aside from other communities our size."

The \$1.8 million project calls for two new trails and the extension of the Jaycee Park trail, completing a circuit that will cover about six miles from Courtland Park to Lake Reidsville. Almond said construction on the Jaycee Park extension should begin by late fall. The trail leads from the park to the Reidsville High School parking lot. The proposed half-mile extension would join the existing trail to the lower Jaycee Park on South Scales Street. A new trail along Sherwood Drive will be built in two sections, beginning in 2006. The first will be a 1.48-mile path extending from Courtland Park to Sherwood Drive, with an offshoot that leads to the St. James subdivision. The second section extends the trail from Sherwood Drive to Freeway Drive. Construction will begin in 2010 to coincide with the sidewalks the North Carolina Department of Transportation is building during Freeway Drive's expansion to four or five lanes.

Michael Pearce, Reidsville's director of community development, said the project initially called for a trail that wended through town, from Courtland Park to Reidsville High School, but developers could not discern a way to build around obstacles such as the Pennrose Park Country Club golf course. "When the DOT talked to us about the Freeway Drive expansion, we asked if it was possible to build a sidewalk that could serve to connect these trails, and they thought it was a great idea," he said.

The 2.90-mile Lake Trail will connect the Jaycee Park Trail to Lake Reidsville, at a cost of \$1 million. The design calls for a more difficult trail that incorporates the area's terrain. The trail will be suitable for mountain bicyclists. Construction is expected to begin on the Lake Reidsville greenway in 2008.

Skip Balsley, chairman of the Annie Penn Community Trust, said the purpose of the walking trails is in keeping with the Trust's mission statement to improve the health and wellness of the community. "Once this project is complete, it will be here for a long time," Balsley said. "This is a program that will benefit all citizens of the Reidsville area and will be available for everybody to use."

City officials conceived the greenway project as far back as 1996, when the city council formed a committee to develop a plan that outlined five specific trails in the community. For those efforts, Pearce's department received an award from the North Carolina chapter of the American Planning Association in 1997 for best small-town plan. But the first greenway built at Jaycee Park cost \$250,000, and Pearce said the project became too big an investment for a city this size with other budget concerns. "When we're cutting positions and trying to balance budgets, greenways don't float to the top often," he said.

Last year, the city applied for a grant from the Annie Penn Community Trust and was turned down, but Trust handlers maintained their interest in the project. Finally, in April, the Trust's board agreed to a plan to offer funds over an extended period of time. The Trust will contribute about \$91,000 in each of the next 10 years. Reidsville's half of the bill will come either from the city's undesignated fund balance or from other revenue sources. "I'm confident we'll be able to secure other grants because of the step the Annie Penn Community Trust has taken," Almond said, adding that any other grants raised would be used to reduce the city's and the Trust's financial commitment to the project.

Contact Michael Pucci at 349-4331, ext. 16

