# EAST GATE CITY BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN

**City of Greensboro Planning Department**

# Executive Summary

This plan was initiated to coordinate new growth and investment along East Gate City Boulevard, so that they reinforce each other and benefit local neighborhoods. The road is a significant entrance into Greensboro, home to a number of important institutions, and a primary transportation route for many nearby neighborhoods. In particular, the area is significant for many reasons:

- The upcoming and significant public investment in the Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC) project;
- Being a major thoroughfare for east Greensboro;
- Previous investments in Barber Park, Gateway Gardens, Gateway Research Park, Downtown Greenway, and the Union Square Campus;
- As a key entry corridor to get in and out of the City and Downtown; and
- In conjunction with West Gate City Boulevard as a connection to many of the City's major institutions.

The corridor itself is predominantly residential with two prominent activity centers on either end of the corridor boundary, and a third emerging in the middle (WCNCC). These activity centers are home to a number of key institutional uses, such as Union Square Campus, Gateway Research Park, and Hayes-Taylor YMCA, Gateway Gardens, and Barber Park complex.

The East Gate City Boulevard Planning process was a collaborative effort between the City's Planning, Housing & Neighborhood Development, Parks & Recreation, Libraries, and Transportation departments, and is a proactive approach to ensure cohesive and positive growth along the East Gate City Boulevard corridor. Having this corridor plan in place will guide future conversations about how residents get around, what new land uses they are comfortable with being introduced, and how to keep community dialogue healthy and consistent.

The creation of this and other specific area plans is part of the implementation of the ***GSO****2040*, the City's comprehensive plan, which help bring the plan to life by offering. The recommendations in this plan are objectives that fit into the framework of the Goals and Strategies of ***GSO****2040,* the City's comprehensive plan. These objectives cover the following topics.

- Encouraging non-residential uses to suitable locations within the established ***GSO****2040* activity centers.
- Increasing the access to non-automobile transportation options and enhancing physical connection within our neighborhoods.
- Establishing consistent community dialogue among the various neighborhoods, institutions, and the City.
- Working with residents to maintain strong, quality housing, and to create a consistent housing frontage along East Gate City Boulevard.
- Creating a unified identity to be celebrated and promoted that highlights the history of the area.

Participation in the planning process was strong, and included stakeholder interviews, online surveys, discussions with area neighborhoods, interdepartmental coordination meetings, and four separate open house opportunities with associated follow-up surveys. The three open houses took place in December 2021, May 2022, and two separate opportunities in September 2022. In total, the open houses had approximately 200 attendees with over 600 individual touchpoints of input.

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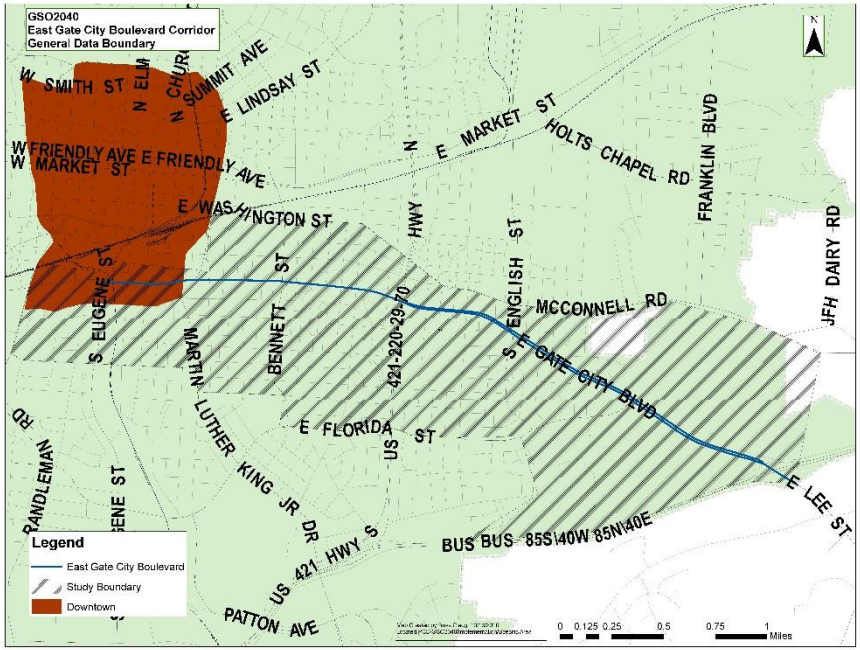
# Introduction




The East Gate City Boulevard Plan covers the Boulevard from the intersection with Eugene Street on the west to the I-40 interchange 3.4 miles to the east. The plan's study area incorporates neighborhoods to the north and south, bounded generally by Washington Street and McConnell Road on the north and Florida Street and adjacent property lines to the south.

Located in the heart of east Greensboro, the corridor traverses downtown, historic neighborhoods, well-established public facilities, and activity centers. The predominant characteristic of the corridor is residential, but interspersed are a wide variety of institutional and community uses, with a strong presence of higher education facilities nearby. The street is one of the major gateways into Greensboro for visitors and residents.

The recommendations in this plan are focused primarily on East Gate City Boulevard. However, when planning for a corridor the concerns of communities adjacent to the corridor need to be included and addressed. For that purpose, the "study boundary" shown on the map was established to set a boundary for data gathering, identify community anchors such as churches and schools, find neighborhood associations to speak with, and to notify residents of upcoming meetings. Some recommendations are also broadly applicable to this area.

This planning process started after the adoption of the ***GSO**2040* comprehensive plan, continuing a history of working in areas in need of more detailed study and planning. These small area plans will help bring ***GSO**2040* to life with recommendations that are more detailed and specific to particular locations across the City. After an in-depth analysis of candidate areas to initiate small area plans, the East Gate City Boulevard corridor rose to the top due to a number of reasons.

- **Investments:** The corridor is home to numerous new and upcoming investments. The Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex. This upcoming, major investment is a joint project between the Parks & Recreation Department and the Libraries Department to combine the Vance-Chavis Library and the Windsor Recreation Center into a state of the art, first of its kind, joint facility located in east Greensboro. The initial estimates have the project costing approximately $70 million over 10 years. The western end of the corridor is in a growing section of downtown, and the eastern end has Gateway Research Park, the YMCA, Gateway Gardens, and the Barber Park complex. This seeks to build on this momentum, create synergy between these projects, and ensure that surrounding neighborhoods benefit from this new investment.

- **Areas of Need:** East Greensboro has been a focus of revitalization and reinvestment efforts in Greensboro in recent years. East Gate City Boulevard corridor is one of the most impactful opportunities for changing the perception of east Greensboro and will serve as a platform for improvements that benefit surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Institutions:** The corridor is home or close to a variety of strong, well-established institutions including the YMCA, Gateway Research Park, Gateway Gardens, Nocho Park, Historic Magnolia House, Bennett College, and NC A&T State University. City staff felt as though there was great potential for collaboration, creativity, and community building between these institutions not yet realized, and that a plan in this area may help connect these key stakeholders.

The planning process started in the fall of 2021. In total over 250 individual participants gave input during this initiative, which lasted through November 2022. Input was focused on what participants want the corridor to be known for, what challenges it faces, and what they cherish about the area.

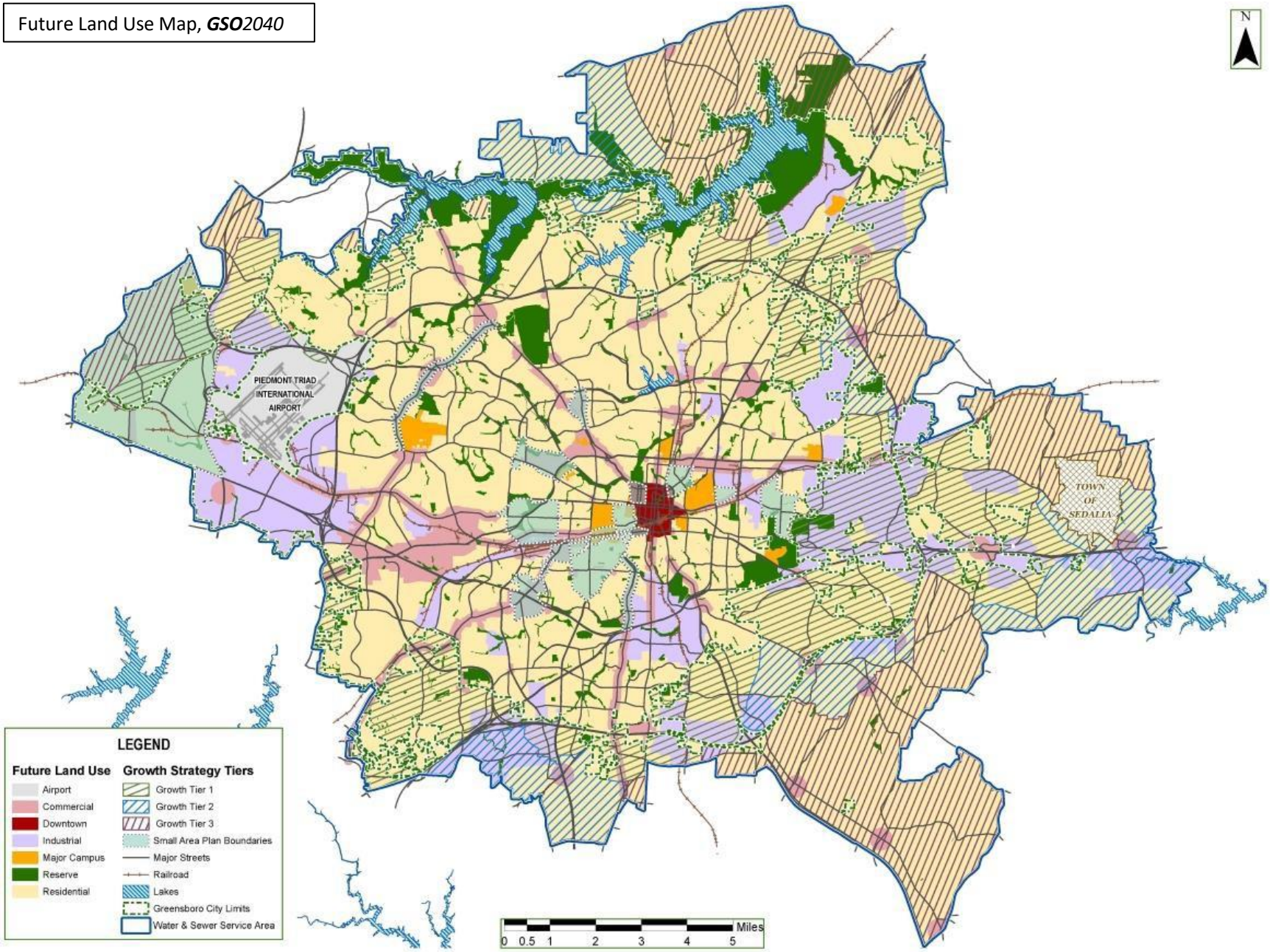
## *GSO2040*

The recommendations in this plan are aligned with the goals and objectives of ***GSO**2040,* the City of Greensboro's comprehensive plan, which serves as the roadmap and guide to a shared vision for the future. Adopted in June 2020, the plan provides a common touchpoint to align projects, programs, and policies with the community's vision for the future.

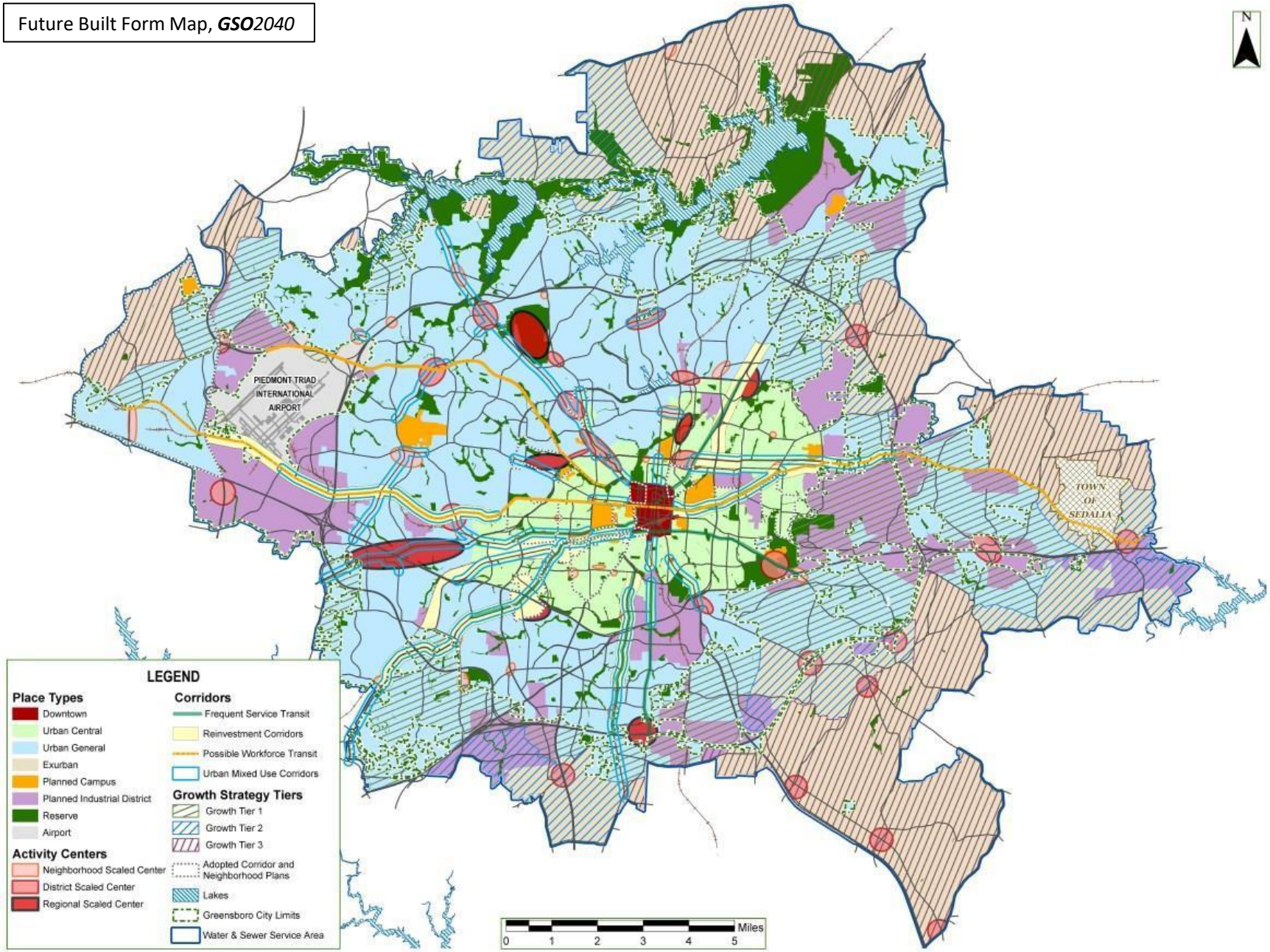
Six Big Ideas provide a framework for ***GSO**2040*, encompassing topics such as land use, housing, transportation, and the environment, in an effort to facilitate coordinated action across City departments and the community as a whole. To maintain consistency with ***GSO**2040*, the East Gate City Boulevard plan and other small area plans are couched within the language of the comprehensive plan. Each recommendation and goal area within the East Gate City Boulevard Plan (EGCBP) makes connections to the Six Big Ideas, so that the recommendations carry weight as an implementation of the overall vision and aspirations of the City. For instance, the "Getting Around" section of this plan is focused on transit and transportation and furthers the goals and strategies of the ***GSO**2040* Big Idea of "Becoming Car Optional".

In addition to being nested in the policy framework, plans for specific areas reference the Anticipated Growth Maps that are found in ***GSO**2040.* These two maps work together to illustrate how Plan policies can be applied across the geography of Greensboro and provide guidance to residents, decision makers, and the public when making land use decisions. The Future Land Use Map broadly describes land uses; the Future Built Form Map describes how development and land uses fit together and designates areas into distinctive place types, as well as activity centers and corridors. The EGCBP includes a recommendation to designate the area around the future Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex as a district-sized activity center, but does not recommend any other changes to the existing Anticipated Growth Maps. More information on this can be found in the "Growth" recommendations section starting on page 17.

Future Land Use Map, ***GSO**2040*



Future Built Form Map, ***GSO**2040*



## What is a Small Area Plan?

The City of Greensboro has engaged in neighborhood and corridor planning since the late 1970s, giving property owners, neighbors, and businesses an opportunity to shape the characteristics and physical features that enhance the living environment and quality of life directly around them.

While a comprehensive plan establishes a broad and long-range vision for the city as a whole, Greensboro also recognizes the need for neighborhood and community level planning that reflects the special characteristics of smaller, cohesive subareas and corridors.

In creating a small area plan, the public engagement during the process is just as important as the outcome the plan provides. Through direct outreach with residents in the area, the community provided input that shaped a shared vision and priorities for the future. The East Gate City Boulevard study area traverses several neighborhoods and institutional campuses, each with varying characteristics and needs; this plan aims to connect those interests through a set of strategies for the entire study area.

## Existing Context

The East Gate City Boulevard corridor stretches 3.4 miles from downtown across eastern Greensboro all the way to the I-40 interchange. The area is home to a number of historic neighborhoods, city facilities, educational facilities, institutions, and parks. The boulevard itself is a 4-lane roadway that currently primarily serves automobile use but has sections of sidewalks and bus stops. The predominant characteristic of the area around the roadway is low-density residential dwellings, with slightly more intensive uses closer to East Gate City Boulevard.

Like many major thoroughfares in Greensboro, East Gate City Boulevard is owned and maintained by the state of North Carolina, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation has final approval for any changes or improvements to the road.

Assessing the existing condition of an area is a vital first step in any planning process. It establishes the baseline of data that is referred to throughout the process. Information collected and analyzed typically includes the areas development history, prominent institutions, demographics, housing, city service provision, commercial investment, and streets, sidewalks and other City infrastructure.

It was important when reviewing the current information about the corridor to consider the history of the area. In particular, when talking about the current housing stock and home prices within the corridor, it is important to understand the effect that historic redlining had on these communities and the "why" behind the "what" of the data. Understanding the history is key to identifying and addressing the issues of key importance to the community.

There were four key findings that came out of the East Gate City Boulevard Existing Conditions Report:

1. **Understanding the Area's History Helps to Understand the Corridor**. The report takes into account the history of the corridor when looking at data about the institutions and neighborhoods in the study area. This is true in any area, but particularly so in east Greensboro.
2. **Excellent Road Access, Limited Walkability.** East Gate City Boulevard provides quick vehicular access to downtown, parks, and highways. Travel within the larger study area can be more difficult due to an inconsistent street network, especially for pedestrians, transit riders, and cyclists. It is clear that past development in this area prioritized driving as the primary mode of transportation.
3. **Rich in City and Community Resources.** Many City facilities and historical community resources are spread throughout the study area.
4. **Predominantly Residential, but Diversity of Uses.** The corridor is primarily residential in nature, but there are other land uses primarily located in activity centers throughout the area.

# Community Involvement

Community engagement for this planning process was thorough, and the themes and concerns identified were consistent between different stages. Community interest in the corridor remained high throughout the process, which started with conversations with key stakeholders made up of various institutional leaders from the corridor including:

- North Carolina A&T State University
- Gateway Research Park
- Gateway Gardens
- Magnolia House
- Downtown Greenway
- Shiloh Baptist Church

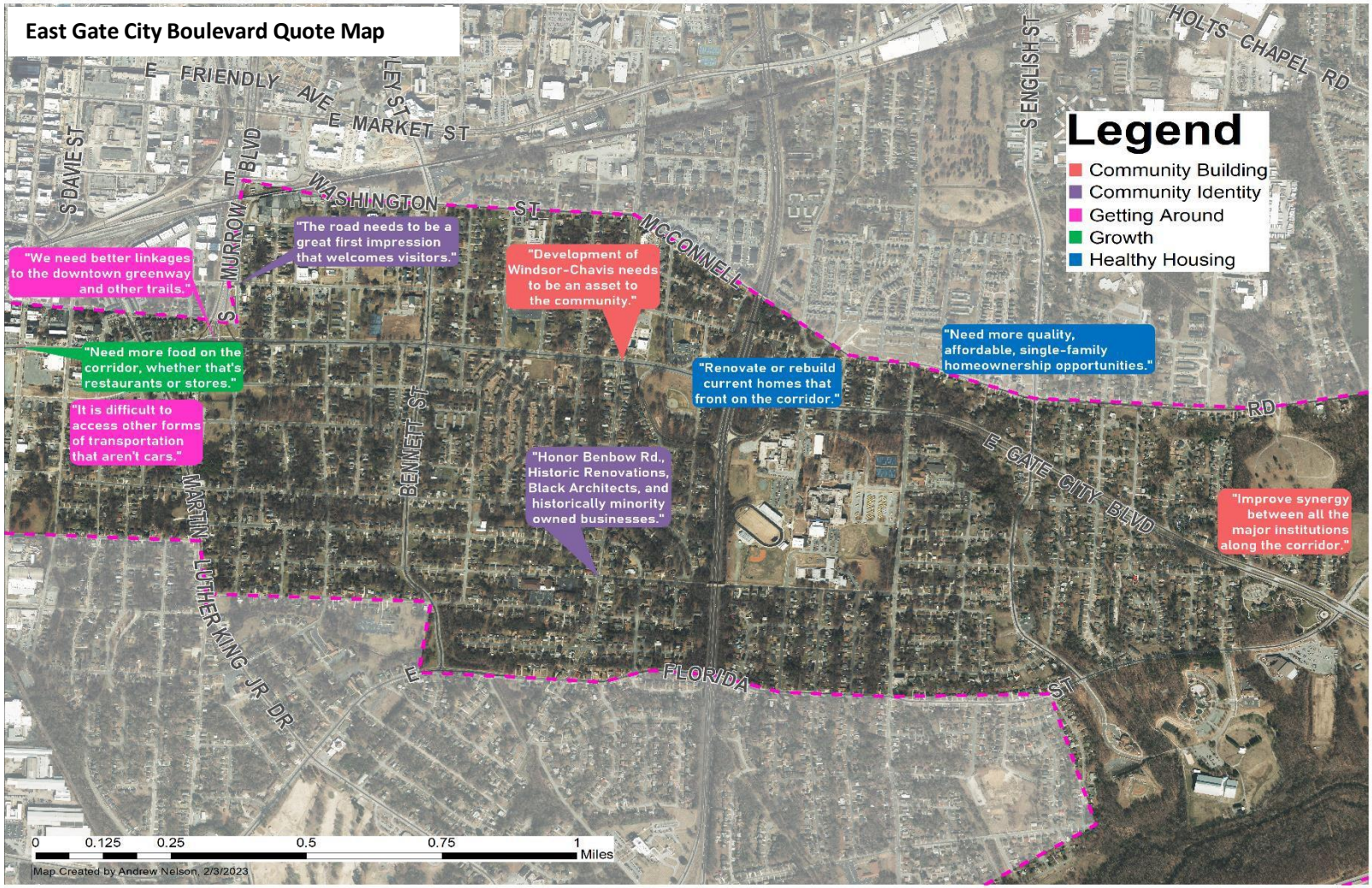
The interviews allowed staff to see if the findings of the Existing Conditions Report lined up with the perceptions of community leaders, gave the stakeholders an opportunity to express their hopes for the process, and identified themes that they expected to be important to the broader community. These conversations set the stage for the way in which the public was engaged and what issues to address.

Four key themes emerged from the stakeholder conversations that helped build the framework of the initial public input questions that staff used at the first public meeting:

- **Aesthetics.** Stakeholders expressed a desire for the corridors appearance to be of high quality, to have a more consistent appearance, and to represent the City in the best way possible. This includes addressing both dilapidated private property and unappealing public infrastructure.
- **Connectivity.** The desire was for easier and more meaningful connections within the area, including physical, social and emotional connection. Areas for improvement identified by the stakeholders included walkability, public transit, and accessibility as well as broader community building.
- **Investment.** The topic of investment was brought up frequently, with a desire to be more clear about how new investments will integrate into the community and respect the established character of the area. There were additional concerns identified about "pushing people out" and the need for growing in an inclusive way. The stakeholders expressed that while investment is generally desired, it needs to be done so in a controlled and responsible way.
- **Identity.** For some, the East Gate City corridor lacks an identity. The interviews showed an expressed desire to better define and market the corridor. The corridor needs to be a strong first and last impression for folks coming into and leaving Greensboro, and would be a crucial step to redefining perceptions of East Greensboro.

Stakeholder interviews were concluded in Fall 2021, and set the stage for going out to the broader public. The backbone of the public input for this process were the three Open Houses held to gather input from the community.

1. **Open House (Electronic)** *December 2, 2021*
2. **Open House** *May 19, 2022*
3. **Open House(s)** *September 27 and 29, 2022*


East Gate City Boulevard Quote Map
Legend
Community Building
Community Identity
Getting Around
Growth
Healthy Housing
E FRIENDLY AVE
E MARKET ST
S DAVIE ST
S MURROW BLVD
WASHINGTON ST
MCCONNELL
S ENGLISH ST
HOLTS CHAPEL RD
E GATE CITY BLVD
BENNETT ST
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DR
E FLORIDA ST
"We need better linkages to the downtown greenway and other trails."
"The road needs to be a great first impression that welcomes visitors."
"Development of Windsor-Chavis needs to be an asset to the community."
"Need more food on the corridor, whether that's restaurants or stores."
"It is difficult to access other forms of transportation that aren't cars."
"Renovate or rebuild current homes that front on the corridor."
"Need more quality, affordable, single-family homeownership opportunities."
"Honor Benbow Rd., Historic Renovations, Black Architects, and historically minority owned businesses."
"Improve synergy between all the major institutions along the corridor."
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles
Map Created by Andrew Nelson, 2/3/2023

Multiple residents attended each open house, and some even showed up to all three, which reflected their commitment and buy-in to the process. To date there have been at least 564 total touchpoints, defined as the total instances of engagement in the course of creating this plan. The majority these touchpoints were gathered at the three Open House events. The remaining touchpoints were gathered from online surveys that mirrored the input activities that were facilitated at the public meetings.

1. **1st Open House (via zoom) – December 2, 2021**

   This was the first major public input session. Since COVID-19 was still prevalent at the time, it was held via Zoom. Approximately 60 residents attended the Zoom meeting. The beginning of the meeting was primarily informational, with staff detailing some of the background information, details from the Existing Conditions Report, and the reasons that the planning process was initiated. Afterwards, participants were broken up into five different breakout groups where a staff person led a small group discussion about the East Gate City area focusing on three questions:

   1. "We just presented a lot of information; what are your initial reactions to the process/presentation or what issues are top of mind?"
   2. "What do you hope for the future of the corridor?"
   3. "From all the things discussed this evening, is there anything major we are missing and need to pay particular attention to as we move forward?"

   Each breakout group had an assigned a person to capture the comments of the participants. These captured comments were the first group of public input for the process. After the meeting was concluded, a corresponding online survey was sent out to participants and neighborhood associations that allowed folks who were unable to attend and wanted to provide input or for folks who did attend and thought of additional comments after attending the meeting. The meeting was recorded and made available via the dedicated City webpage for the planning effort. Approximately 10 residents took advantage of this survey tool.

   This meeting had approximately 60 attendees and 93 touchpoints.

## 2. 2nd Open House – May 19, 2022

The second public input session was held in person at the Windsor Recreation Center. As with the previous public meeting, after the meeting was concluded a corresponding online survey was sent out to participants and neighborhood associations that allowed residents who were unable to attend to provide comments. Approximately 75 residents attended the open House and approximately 20 online surveys were completed. At this point in the planning process, draft goal areas were established. Each of these goal areas had been the focus of a specific City department; Parks & Recreation focused on the "Community Building" draft goal area, Transportation Department worked with the "Getting Around" goal area, and Housing and Neighborhood Development focused on "Housing". These departments manned stations at the open house with information about those goal areas. Participants made their way through the different stations providing feedback at each. Some examples of the questions asked are below:

1. "As the corridor grows, what are your concerns related to retention of current residents?"
2. "What historical landmarks, neighborhoods, or facilities should be better identified and recognized through signage and branding?"
3. "What type of recreation center programming would most benefit your community?"

The meeting had approximately 75 attendees and 288 touchpoints.

### 3. 3rd Open House – September 27 and 29, 2022

This set of public meetings were the last physical public input opportunities for the process. These Open Houses were again facilitated held at the Windsor Recreation Center. The two meeting formats were identical to each other, to provide two opportunities for residents to provide input and discuss the corridor with City staff and each other. An online survey was sent out that mirrored the activities held at the Open Houses. This allowed residents who were unable to attend to provide input.

Approximately 65 residents over the course of two days attended the Open Houses and 12 online surveys were completed. This particular public input opportunity allowed participants to review specific draft goal language.

### 4. Online Review of Draft Plan Document

The final public input opportunity came in the form of a two week window in March of 2023 where residents and stakeholders were able to review the draft plan document online and provide suggestions and comments to staff. There were only three electronic comments provided during this review period, mostly related to grammatical corrections or formatting suggestions. These changes were incorporated and the final draft reflects those changes.

## Vision, Goals, and Strategies

The vision, goals, strategies, and objectives described here are organized under the same framework as the City's comprehensive plan. Portions of all the Six Big Ideas from ***GSO**2040* are brought into this plan based on the relevance of their goals and strategies to objectives specific to East Gate City Boulevard. These objectives reflect the ideas and priorities voiced by the community, combined with the planning team's analysis of conditions and future opportunities. For each objective within this plan, there are gray callout boxes that are excerpts from the ***GSO**2040* comprehensive plan that show direct links to the East Gate City Plan. This connection is important as it highlights how the Comprehensive Plan is being implemented through the language of this corridor plan.

# Growth

New growth and investment will be encouraged to locate primarily to activity centers and will avoid negative impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, which remain home to the residents that have established them.

## Examples of input from public meetings:

- "Current residents need to be able to stay."
- "Be wary of the influx of outside investors."
- "Need more food on the corridor, whether that's restaurants or stores."
- "Great need for more medical facilities and daycare along the corridor."
- "Huge opportunity for technology based businesses to invest and partner."

## ***GSO2040* Big Idea:** *Filling in Our Framework*

**Goal A—Greensboro is recognized and admired for its attractive, walkable, and compact mixed-use activity centers where people live, work and enjoy life.**

**Strategy 1**

*Encourage higher density, mixed-use, walkable infill development throughout the City of Greensboro. Successful mixed-use infill development requires different tools and approaches depending on its size and context. In historically underserved areas of east Greensboro, create an infill program that supports and incentivizes walkable, mixed-use developments which coordinate with housing programs and high-frequency transit service. Focus areas include: walkable, neighborhood-scale commercial development that serves surrounding residential areas, done in an incremental manner as new development occurs that builds on the existing character of the area; commercial corridors in coordination with increased, higher-frequency transit service; large, underutilized or vacant sites in commercial or light industrial areas; and along the boundaries of college campuses and other large, institutional uses.*

***Strategy 2***

*Ensure that mixed-use projects both strengthen and add value to the community. Architecture and urban design should be of high quality and should complement existing development. Projects should be coordinated with transit services and offer multiple mobility options. Additionally, new services and housing should augment, not displace, existing neighborhood-scale commercial development.*

***Strategy 3***

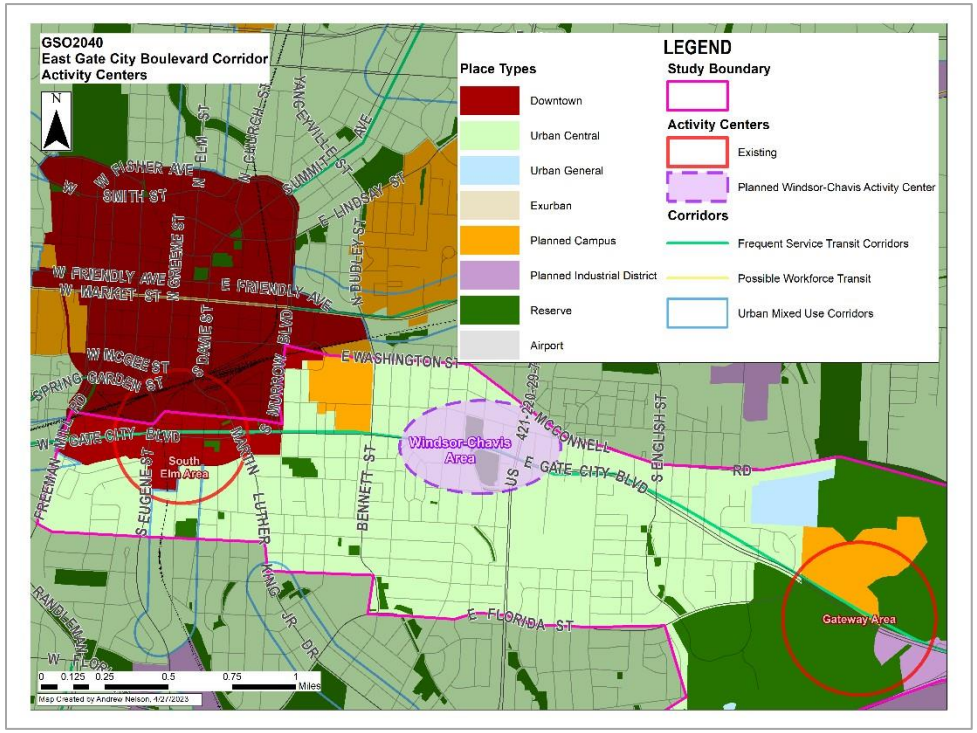
*Identify areas for walkable, mixed-use activity centers for future study and land-use planning.*

## Objective 1

### Strengthen activity centers and consider non-residential uses there, and encourage land uses that are missing from the area, in particular those that improve access to food, childcare, and medical facilities.

Activity centers are vibrant community hubs where people shop, work, meet, relax, and live. ***GSO****2040* defines three levels of activity centers, based on the area that they serve: Neighborhood, District, and Regional. The plan further states that centers have a common structure, with their most intense use at the heart of the center, which transitions to less intense uses as they move towards surrounding communities. They have gateways and landmarks that help define them, and usually have more than one point of access.

Within the East Gate City Boulevard corridor there are three discernable activity centers at varying stages of development. The two existing centers are regional in scope and the Winsor-Chavis-Nocho activity center will be at the district scale. As they develop it will be important to consider the needs of adjacent communities.




- **South Elm Activity Center:** This activity center is anchored by the Union Square Campus, a joint nursing school facility between GTCC, NC A&T, and UNCG. Planned future development of this activity center includes the South Elm Redevelopment Area which will see a grocery store and residential development. This activity center is in our downtown, and is in a mixed-use, highly walkable environment and includes a section of the Downtown Greenway. The area is poised for more office, retail, and multi-family residential development and is a part of downtown that attracts a lot of use.
- **Windsor Chavis Nocho Activity Center:** This activity center will be anchored by the new Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC), which will serve as a hub for a variety of uses within the new building itself. The facility will house a number of community oriented services including a library, recreation, and programming opportunities. Additionally, it will serve as a connector for multiple modes of transportation, and spaces for community meeting that encourages residents to use and stay within the facility. Additional uses that would fit in this area include food service, medical services, and childcare. This area is not currently listed as an activity center in ***GSO**2040*, but adoption of this plan by City Council will establish this area as an activity center in ***GSO**2040*.
- **Eastern Activity Center:** This center is anchored by three well established community facilities and an innovative institution with a strong presence in the community: the YMCA, Gateway Gardens, Barber Park, and Gateway Research Park. While these uses are open and well-received by the community, there are two primary reasons to better connect these facilities as an activity center:

1. To make it easier to walk or bike from place to place and generally more easier or safe for pedestrians to navigate; and
2. Placemaking, which is a concept built around fostering a vibrant collection of different uses coming together to create a unique and vibrant place that people want to return to. This is in contrast to a collection of individual facilities with no relation to each other and which operate in isolation. This activity center would benefit from multi-family residential development, and other non-residential uses like restaurants, retail, and childcare services.

The beneficial effects of this activity center would provide a variety of opportunities to benefit the adjacent residential areas by increasing walkability, providing meeting spaces, and creating a more community oriented focus on existing uses. The long term success of these three activity centers are tied to the long term success and perception of the corridor; by reaching their full potential they will be a catalyst for other changes in the corridor. The City will look to have these three activity centers be the focal point for leveraging city resources in the area, in an effort to produce positive impacts in the surrounding neighborhoods, and ultimately produce a more vibrant and connected East Gate City Boulevard.

If rezonings are proposed as part of the evolution or the corridor, it will be important to use the elements in this plan to inform the interpretation of the Anticipated Growth Maps and the questions found on page 74 of ***GSO**2040.* The more detailed examination of the area and the sentiments gathered in public input will inform future land use conversations with a higher level of detail than in most zoning cases.

## *GSO2040* Big Idea: *Creating Great Places*

**Goal A—Greensboro's citywide network of unique neighborhoods offer residents of all walks of life a variety of quality housing choices.**

**Strategy 2**

*Meet housing needs and desires with a sufficient and diverse supply of housing products, prices, and locations. Find opportunities to add to the variety of housing types and price points that are close to downtown, employment centers, community services, and public transit. Use housing programs and small-area plans to create walkable infill and provide a range of housing options near transit hubs and other amenities and find opportunities to add public and private amenities in neighborhoods receiving support for housing. Increase options for residents to stay in the community as they age.*

## Objective 2

### Look for opportunities to diversify the housing stock, particularly along the corridor to provide a more consistent frontage.

A majority of the corridor's "face" is composed of single-family homes although the setbacks and orientation vary widely from block to block. Having a strong and consistent street frontage along the corridor will improve the appeal of the corridor, and create a stronger sense of place. This is also an opportunity to add variety to the housing stock, and provide housing types such as duplexes and small apartment buildings that can support and take advantage of any improvements to the transit system and the construction of sidewalks and bike lanes. Having the ability to walk out the front door and connect immediately to a sidewalk, or a trail, or a bus stop would help residents of the corridor to be "Car Optional". Increasing the appeal of the corridor increases the chances of folks getting out of their car to enjoy it and take advantage of everything the area has to offer.

Missing-middle housing, which is a broad category of housing between detached single-family homes and large apartment complexes, should be prioritized as the corridor grows. As the transportation network improves and expands, it will make more sense to have a mix of housing types that is oriented to the street while still keeping a strong delineation of uses that protects specific neighborhood's character and identities.

## GSO2040 Big Idea: *Growing Economic Competitiveness*

**Goal A—Strategic public investments in historically underserved areas of Greensboro attracts private investment and sets the stage for revitalization without displacing current residents.**

**Strategy 1**

*Work with City-funded economic development partners to address the needs of economically distressed areas. City funding of economic and community development is intended to improve conditions throughout the city, and can impact social inequity and economic disparity by focusing public investments and services in areas of greatest need. Without focused effort, these areas and residents are likely to continue to struggle economically.*

**Strategy 2**

*Support the addition of a variety of housing types and price points in coordination with investment in historically underserved areas. Providing additional housing options will increase the likelihood that residents are able to stay in the neighborhoods they love and will provide greater opportunities to attract new investment.*

**Strategy 3**

*Create land-use plans that involve neighborhood residents and other stakeholders and coordinate public and private investment, and use a variety of tools and funding sources to leverage incentives and finance transformative projects in areas of disinvestment. Market strategic sites and recruit retail uses that are economically sustainable, meet neighborhood objectives, and attract other investment. Commercial development that is sustainable and compatible with neighborhood objectives should be encouraged.*

## Objective 3

### Leverage existing partnerships to help current residents stay in the area and continue to have a voice as new investment occurs.

Based on the input received as part of the public engagement process for this plan, the community awaits public and private investments, such as the Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC) with cautious optimism. This unique, new facility will be a great asset but there are concerns about possible displacement of existing residents that this and other new investments may spur due to higher housing costs.

The housing market is driven by a range of factors, and a local market is effected by regional trends. A mix of housing programs that support new housing units, homeownership programs, and rental assistance programs can work together to address a variety of needs and still promote new

investment and economic opportunity in the community. Investment in neighborhoods and improvements to neighborhood conditions can occur without the displacement of current residents.

Many of the programs that can aid in this are included in the "Healthy Housing" goal area. Additional support can include the following.

- **Promoting infill development on vacant land**
  The City owns properties within this corridor, particularly in Redevelopment areas like Ole Asheboro and Willow Oaks, which will be used to creatively fill in the gaps of vacant property.
- **Bolster rental assistance programs**
  Over the past months, rents have been rising in communities across the country, including Greensboro. The City and our partners can continue to grow and publicize available support to those in need of affordable housing, while continuing to monitor best practices in the field and implement those tools in Greensboro where applicable.
- **Focused education campaigns for homeownership programs**
  Educational and marketing efforts can help make residents are aware of resources that City and non-profits provide for homeowner education and assistance. This can include working through existing partnerships with neighborhood associations and community groups, using mailers, and the use of social media such as Nextdoor and Facebook.

- **Ongoing community conversations**
  Creating a standing group of stakeholders and neighborhood association will help to create a more consistent avenue for communication. The City's Communications & Marketing Department can assist with frequent City updates for the corridor.

# Getting Around

Take advantage of opportunities to update East Gate City Boulevard as a multimodal connector, providing options for more than just automobiles, and create healthy options for connecting surrounding communities to each other, and to the facilities along the Boulevard.

**Examples of input from public meetings:**

- "Improve traffic safety along East Gate City Boulevard."
- "It is difficult to access other forms of transportation that aren't cars."
- "We need better linkages to the Downtown Greenway and other trails."
- "Make the corridor more easy and pleasant to travel."
- "Need more seamless connections among and around neighborhoods."

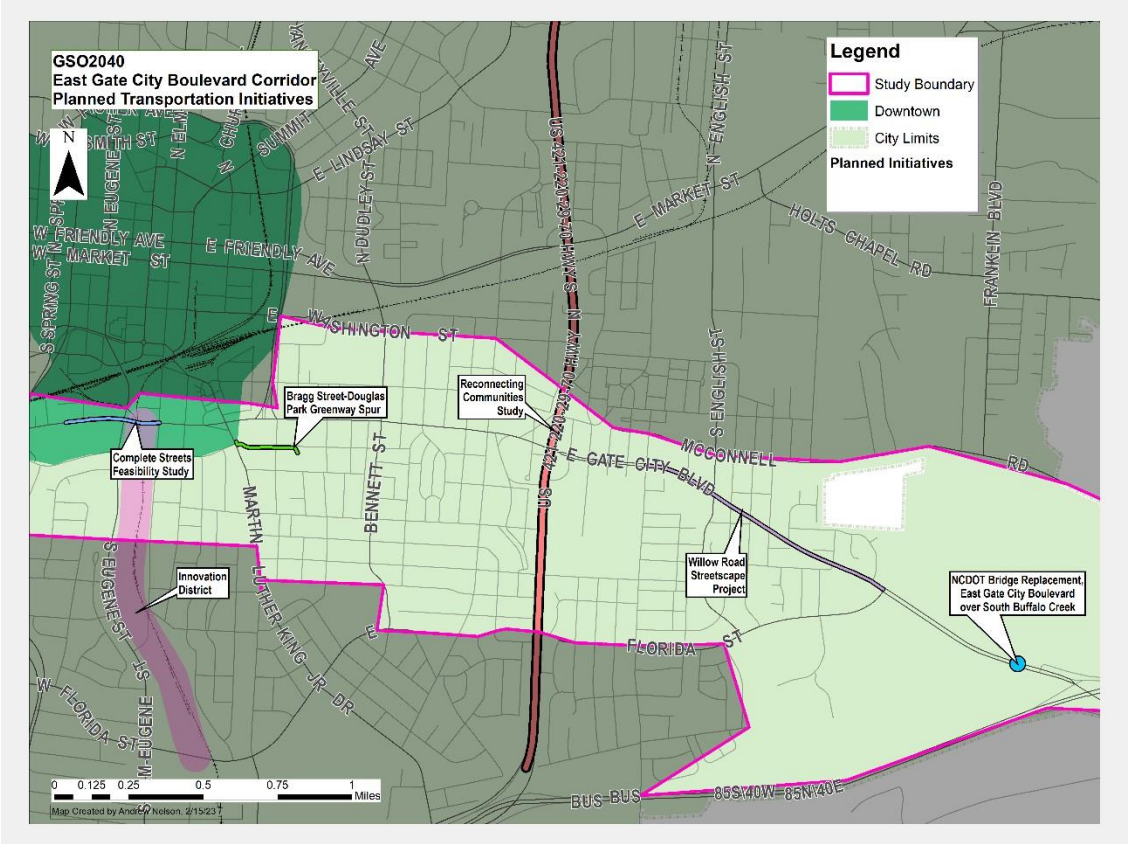
## GO2040 Big Idea: *Becoming Car Optional*

**Goal A—Greensboro has unrivaled pedestrian, biking, transit, and road networks that provide safe, comfortable, and convenient transportation options.**

**Strategy 1**

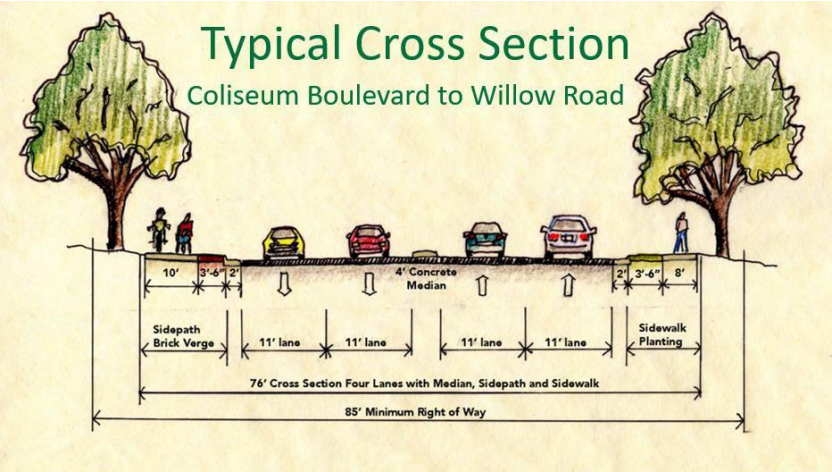
*When designing and reconfiguring streets, continue to build on programs and policies that consider the existing and future land use of the surrounding area. A variety of road features such as street width, degree of straightness, cross walk design, and curb design at intersections are important in creating an environment that supports the intended intensity and scale of adjacent land uses.*

There are a number of ongoing and planned transportation initiatives along East Gate City corridor that precede this planning process, which this plan supports, enhances, and supplements through the recommendations outlined in the following section. The map below illustrates the locations within the corridor.




- **Complete Streets Feasibility Study**
  This feasibility study is being conducted on West Gate City Boulevard that overlaps with the western boundary of the East Gate City corridor. The feasibility study will assess potential infrastructure and traffic operations changes to ease traffic and make the road more transit, bicycle, and pedestrian friendly.
- **Innovation Corridor**
  This project received federal funding to develop an innovation corridor from Gate City Boulevard on the north, to Florida Street on the south. The grant funding will be used to provide streetscape and site readiness improvements for future development.
- **Douglas Park Spur**
  This project will provide a greenway connection from the Ole Asheboro's Douglas Park to the Downtown Greenway.
- **Reconnecting Communities Study**
  This grant request was submitted to USDOT in collaboration with NCDOT to analyze the negative impacts that US-29 has on communities, and provide recommendations to lessen those impacts as improvements to US 29 are planned. Announcements of awards under this program are expected in spring 2023.

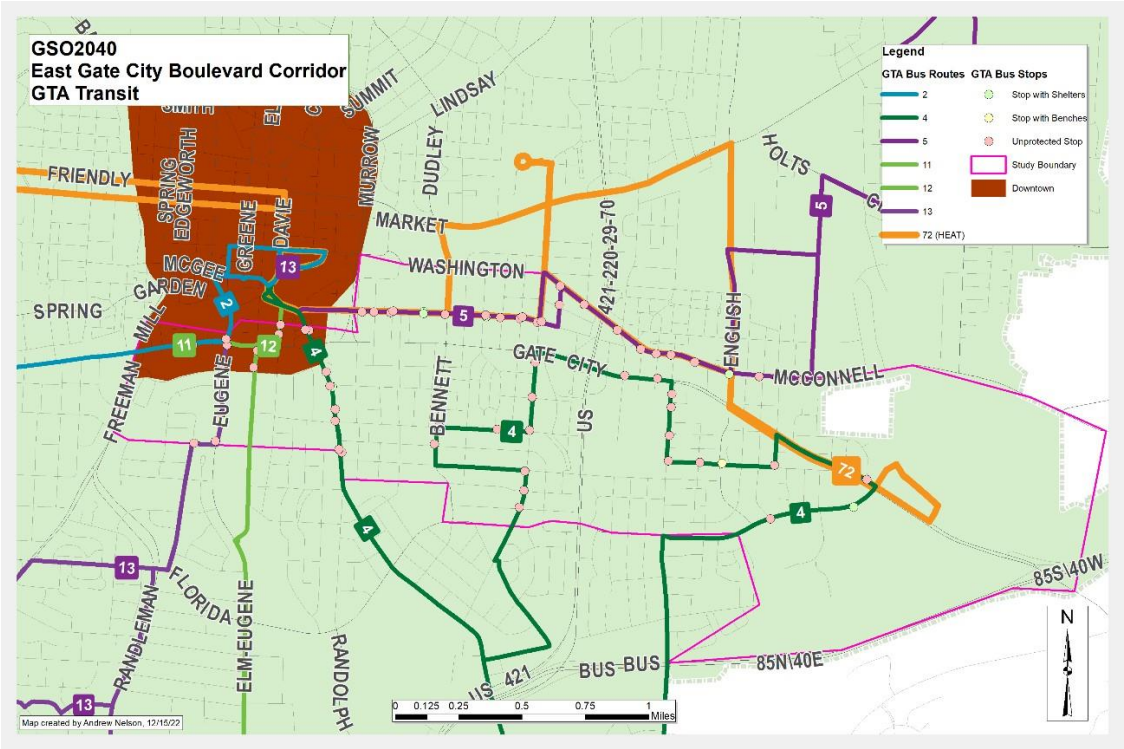
- **Willow Road Streetscape:** This project will provide general streetscape improvements along Willow Road. The images below illustrate potential improvements to two different sections of Willow Road, as it relates to the streetscape project.



- **Buffalo Creek Bridge Replacement:** This NCDOT project is underway. The project will replace the Buffalo Creek Bridge on Gate City Boulevard.

## Objective 1

### Create Mobility Hubs at activity centers to connect different travel options and create a unique sense of place.




Mobility hubs are places to transition from one way of getting around to another. Typically the focus is a major transit stop with strong sidewalk connections, bike facilities, parking facilities, or access to micro-mobility such as scooters. In addition to providing better transportation options, when incorporated with other uses they can help create unique places that serve as community gathering spots and access points for public service. Mobility Hubs help multiply the benefits of enhanced and more frequent transit service. For the East Gate City Boulevard Corridor, the plan envisions three suitable locations nestled into the identified activity centers identified more fully in the "Growth" goal area.

- **South Elm & East Gate City Boulevard**
  The South Elm and East Gate City Boulevard activity center is part of the larger activity center that is Downtown Greensboro. It is the anchor of the west side of the corridor, serving as an entryway to both the corridor and Downtown. A mobility hub at this activity center would build off the existing pedestrian-friendly environment and development activity of downtown, and encourage wider transportation options to adjacent neighborhoods to the south and east. In particular, a connection between the Downtown Greenway and existing trail system could be a potential link to strengthen. This block currently houses a higher education facility, Union Square Campus. In addition to this facility, south of Union Square is a planned Mixed-Use Multi-Family development, and across Elm Street to the east, a Grocery Store use, LIDL, will be built within 3 to 4 years.

- **Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex**
  The planned Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC) near the intersection with Benbow Street will be a new activity center and is one of the focal points of the planning area and corridor. A mobility hub at this activity center will help get residents to the Center, increase transit use, and provide access to alternative modes of transportation.

- **Eastern Activity Center**
  The Eastern Activity Center shown currently in ***GSO**2040* serves as the anchor on the eastern end of the corridor and is home to a number of key institutions including: Gateway Research Park, the YMCA, the Barber Park Complex, and Gateway Gardens. In addition to these key institutions is the close proximity of the Interstate 40 highway and several walking trails. Together, these elements create an opportunity to implement a mobility hub that better connects these institutions to each other, and to the surrounding communities, but will also serve visitors from across the region that frequent these facilities. The site also has room for additional development, which should be built to take advantage of a range of transportation choices. An example of an already planned improvement that moves this recommendation forward is the future east Greensboro greenway connection from this area of the corridor to the Cottage Grove neighborhood.

## GSO2040 *Big Idea: Becoming Car Optional*

**Goal A—Greensboro has unrivaled pedestrian, biking, transit, and road networks that provide safe, comfortable, and convenient transportation options.**

### Strategy 3

*Multiple transportation options should be considered when designing streets. Choosing transportation other than a private car should be safe, convenient, and comfortable. If some streets are not able to safely handle multiple forms of transportation, routes should take advantage of quieter parallel streets. This includes supporting programs for Complete Streets and for traffic calming when appropriate and in coordination with assessments of adjacent land uses.*

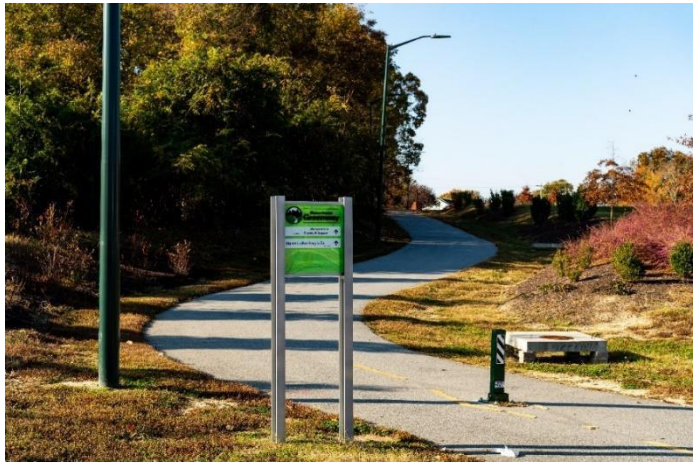
## Objective 2

### Make East Gate City Boulevard into a Complete Street to improve non-automobile connections both along the corridor and at intersections that create north to south connections across the corridor.

Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. The US Department of Transportation says that "Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders." Possible improvements include an enhanced sidewalk system, more frequent transit service, and bike lanes on or parallel to the corridor.

In addition to changes along the corridor, there are several intersections with cross streets that merit particular focus due to their volume of traffic or generally higher levels of activity.

- **Bennett Street & East Gate City Boulevard**
  Bennett Street is one of the key north to south connectors within the area, connecting longstanding neighborhoods like Gorrell Street, institutions like NC A&T, and East Market Street. In addition to addressing the intersection, the portion of Bennett Street north of East Gate City Boulevard could be studied for a "road diet", which when repaving occurs in the future, will continue the design for the southern portion of the road.



- **South Benbow Road & East Gate City Boulevard**
  This intersection will be where the new Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC) will be located. Improvements to the immediate intersection and road that occur as part of the new facility should take into account the future mobility hub.
- **O. Henry Boulevard & East Gate City Boulevard**
  O. Henry Boulevard (US-29) is an important north to south highway, with the most robust north to south connections along the corridor. In its current form it also is barrier between neighborhoods that cuts through the heart of the corridor. Particularly as the outer loop is completed, and more long-distance and heavy truck traffic is diverted away from O. Henry Boulevard it can become less like a limited-access highway and more like a city avenue, which will allow more crossings east and west. The City is actively pursuing grants to reinvent O. Henry Boulevard in an effort to have it better serve area residents, and the City as a whole.

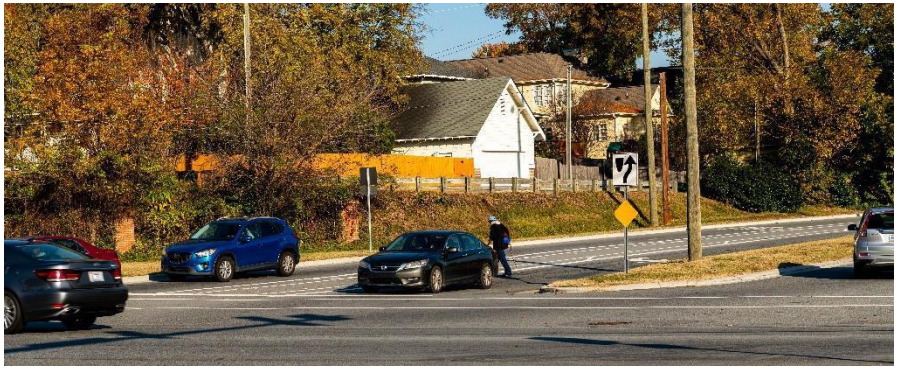
- **Lincoln Street & East Gate City Boulevard**
  This intersection serves Dudley High School and Lincoln Academy. The high volume of pedestrian crossings lends itself to crosswalk improvements; and cycling to both campuses could be encouraged by making this crossing point easier to navigate.

## Objective 3

### Enhance connections along streets between neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor.

Studying the following streets that serve as connections between neighborhoods along the corridor for pedestrian and cycling safety will foster a more unified collection of neighborhoods. These streets should be prioritized for future street improvements within the corridor:

- Tuscaloosa Street runs east to west in the southern portion of the study area and is one of the few roads that crosses O. Henry Boulevard. Neighborhoods in the area include Ole Asheboro, Nocho Park, and Ray Warren Homes.
- McConnell Road runs east to west in the northern portion of the study area and crosses over O. Henry Boulevard. Neighborhoods along McConnell Road include Willow Oaks, Eastside Park, the Ole L Richardson community, and Cottage Grove. A key planned improvement for this thoroughfare is the installation of a roundabout at the corner of Gillespie Street and McConnell Road.
- Gorrell Street runs east to west in the northwest quadrant of the study area. Neighborhoods along Gorrell Street include Bennett Street, Bennett College, NC A&T, the Gorrell St Neighborhood, the Southside Neighborhood, the Downtown Greenway, and Downtown. Recommended improvements include improved striping and evaluation of bicycle improvements in conjunction with future resurfacing.



- Florida Street runs east to west along the southern boundary of the study area and crosses over O. Henry Boulevard. Neighborhoods and institutions along the corridor include institutions such as Ole Asheboro, Nocho Park Community, Dudley Heights, Barber Park, Gateway Gardens, the YMCA, the Barber Park complex, and the Gateway Research Park.

## *GO2040* Big Idea: *Becoming Car Optional*

**Goal B—Everyone loves our interconnected greenspaces, which provide recreation and transportation opportunities, promote active living, and protect our natural environment.**

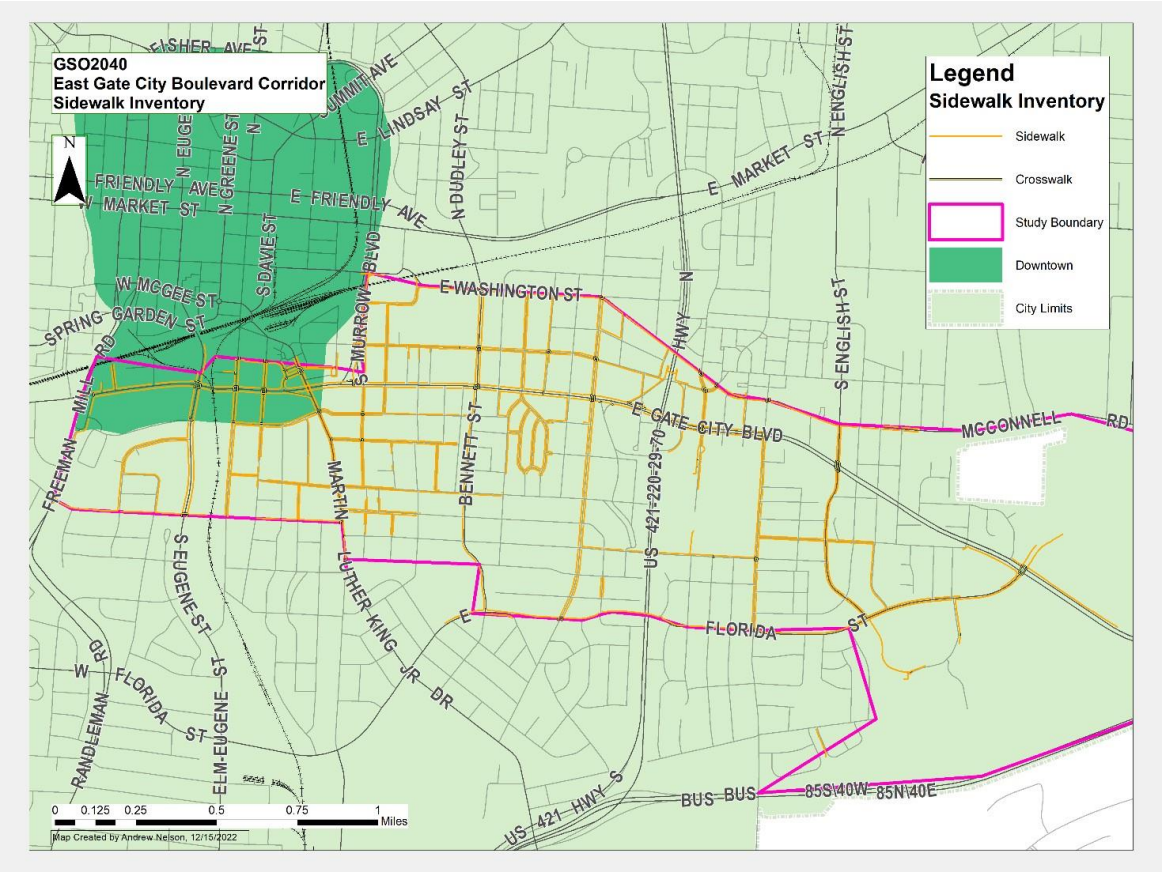
**Strategy 1**

*Expand the greenway network to connect all parts of the city as a key element of the transportation system. Develop a variety of parks and park programs to make vital and unique public places in neighborhoods that promote healthy living and social interactions.*

## Objective 4

### Enhance trail connections between neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor.

Trail connections can be a functional part of the transportation network as well as providing recreational benefits. Trails to study for improvement include the Southeast Greenway, Bluford Connector, and Barber Park Trail. A new greenway connection between Barber Park and the Downtown Greenway should be studied. In addition to neighborhood connectivity, this would provide access to public parks and gardens, two Historically Black College or University (HBCUs), the planned Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC), Historic Magnolia House, and the J. Douglas Galyon Depot, a multi-modal transportation center.



# Community Building

The facilities and neighborhoods in the corridor work in partnership to address local needs and be a force for positive change.

## Examples of input from public meetings:

- "Development of Windsor Chavis needs to be an asset to the community."
- "Interested in what is going on, and need more opportunities to get involved."
- "Improve synergy between all the major institutions along the corridor."
- "We need to get beyond our artificial boundaries and make connections."

## *GSO2040* Big Idea: *Prioritizing Sustainability*

**Goal B--Greensboro embraces social equity, ensuring all residents benefit from fair and just treatment in the distribution of public services and have a voice in governance.**

**Strategy 1**

*Evaluate impacts to vulnerable populations and communities when reviewing existing and considering new public policies, projects, and services. Where past decisions have resulted in disparities in the distribution and quality of public services and facilities, be proactive in working to eliminate them to improve quality of life outcomes. As part of this strategy, maintain a vigilant focus on intergenerational equity, so that future generations are able to live as well as, or better than, current Greensboro residents.*

**Strategy 2**

*Work to ensure that all Greensboro residents have meaningful opportunities to participate in public decision-making processes… Additionally, collaborate with and help strengthen community organizations, such as neighborhood associations and civic organizations, to foster active participation in shaping Greensboro's future.*

## Objective 1

### Leverage the planned Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex development as an activity center and mobility hub to be a gathering spot aimed at connecting area neighborhoods, and ensuring ongoing community involvement of the Complex.

The Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex (WCNCC) will take an innovative approach that fully integrates the library and recreation center into one facility with a wide array of services, programs, and resources. The WCNCC will be the focal point of a new, District-Scale Activity Center as described on page 72 of ***GSO****2040*. As a mobility hub, more fully described on page 27, the WCNCC will connect transit and a variety transportation types within the corridor. Additionally, the facility will provide meeting and gathering space as an innovative, new facility which will likely attract residents from across Greensboro to visit the area.

Though a lot of public input went into the initial planning for the new center, during this planning process residents expressed concerns that the new facility may be “not for them” with a greater emphasis on serving residents from across the City and not adjacent neighborhoods. With consistent communication and programs offering opportunities for involvement, these concerns can be quelled and will keep the facility seen as a strong community partner. Programs that include job training, adult education, homeownership, afterschool programs, daycare, and others of interest to the local community will build trust.

Continuing the City’s intentional approach to engagement used during the planning for the WCNCC will help the City to stay in touch with the needs of the local community. This would include a clear avenue for community members to provide input, along with the broader community discussions at a regular interval. This will also help to effectively promote programs to adjacent neighborhoods. In addition to the regular outreach done by Parks and Recreation and Libraries, due to the scale of the new center it may be helpful to implement regular meetings with a community board, or with community liaisons representing different neighborhoods.

## Objective 2

### Strike an appropriate balance between local and regional service provision at facilities within the corridor, such as Barber Park and Gateway Gardens, so that they continue to be resources for the local community, while they grow as regional attractions.

Barber Park, Gateway Gardens, and the YMCA are part of a regional Activity Center and offer programs that bring people from across the City and region. Similarly to the WCNCC, residents expressed concern that these facilities may focus more on serving the broader region than on adjacent neighborhoods. Efforts to support local use of these facilities and a focus on community engagement will foster support and buy-in and could include:

- Discounts for residents in adjacent neighborhoods
- Promoting local scale events at regional scale events
- Partnering more closely with the YMCA to assist with neighborhood support, childcare, and pop-up medical/food access events.
- Facilitating community outreach events using the identified facilities as venues.

## Objective 3

### Assist the corridor's key stakeholders in establishing a regularly scheduled community meeting that would result in a collective voice that can more effectively advocate on the corridors behalf.

A regular forum made of up of corridor stakeholders would create a stronger collective voice to advocate for the needs of the corridor. A number of long-standing, well recognized and community-focused institutions are on or adjacent to the corridor, including Bennett College, NC A&T, and numerous churches. Additionally, the corridor houses an eclectic, historic, and rich inventory of residential neighborhoods. Most of these institutions and neighborhoods have boards and neighborhood associations, and there is an opportunity to strengthen their voices by

having regular communication between them. This unified voice would be a strong advocate at City Council meetings, rezoning hearings, and community town halls.

Initially, it may be helpful for the City to facilitate the development of this organization by coordinating stakeholders and finding meeting space. Over time, the City's role would phase out of the logistical responsibilities as the working group became established. Some examples of what this group would address would include:

- Regular updates about City activity in the corridor to help prioritize plan implementation;
- Collaboration on community events; and
- Comprehensive reports on investment, crime, and other indicators of the health of the corridor.

As context, the West Lee Street and High Point Road Plan, developed in 2008 for what is now West Gate City Boulevard, included the formation of a residents' oversight committee to guide plan implementation. To some extent the success of this group was possible due to the participation of commercial property owners with significant presence on the corridor, which is not the case on East Gate City Boulevard. While this portion of East Gate City Boulevard has less of a business presence, the group could be championed by existing neighborhood groups and institutions that would be more community oriented.

# Housing

Housing in the corridor will contribute to neighborhood quality and residents' health; residents will be empowered to work in partnership with the City to improve their neighborhoods.

**Examples of input from public meetings:**

- "Renovate or rebuild current homes that front on the corridor."
- "Make sure that boarded up homes have a path to become useful."
- "Quality housing and a clean environment inspire wellness."
- "Need more quality, affordable, single-family homeownership opportunities."

## *GSO2040* Big Idea: *Building Community Connections*

**Goal E: Everyone does their part to maintain stable, attractive, and healthy places to live and raise families**

**Strategy 1**

*Build upon successful community initiatives to improve housing conditions while encouraging community involvement and participation. Work to ensure the quality, quantity, and diversity of housing choices across and between neighborhoods.*

**Strategy 2**

*Build neighborhood association capacity to work collaboratively, assess conditions, and effect change. Strengthen neighborhood planning tools and coordinate City programs and funding initiatives to support public and private efforts to protect and improve all neighborhoods. Create and foster partnerships among and between neighborhoods to strengthen the social fabric of Greensboro.*

**Strategy 3**

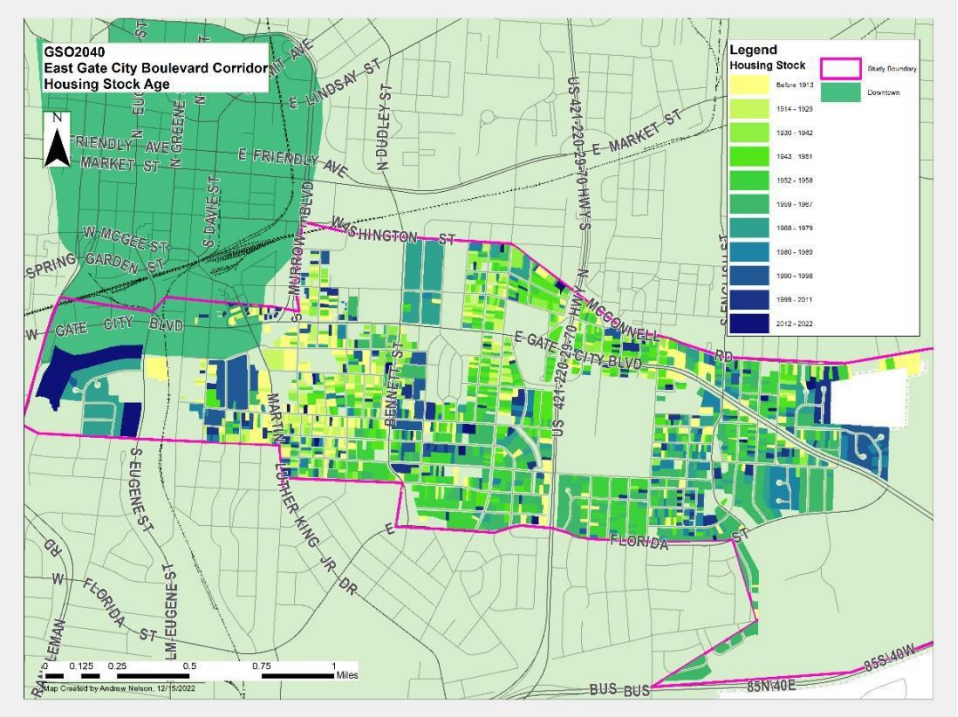
*Improve the city's housing through effective use of code enforcement and the strategic leveraging of resources. Encourage local collaboration between nonprofit organizations and health providers that highlight the importance of housing conditions and their impacts on public health.*

## Objective 1

### Launch a focused education campaign about available opportunities for housing repairs, home buying, and maintaining homeownership.

Concerns about homeownership rates were expressed throughout the planning process. The City and its partners have a range of programs focused on assisting homeowners, including down-payment assistance programs and education programs for new homeowners. Extra down-payment assistance is available in active Redevelopment Areas, which includes Willow Oaks and Ole Asheboro.

The City's underlying policy for this effort is Housing GSO. Program elements include the following, taken from the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development's website.




- **Homeownership Education & Outreach***:* Free eight-hour, first-time homebuyer classes covering topics on family budget management, homeowner insurance, fair housing, working with a Realtor, home inspection, mortgage financing, closing on a home, home maintenance, and rights and responsibilities.
- **Free Workshops (such as handling heir property):** Community events that will help empower potential homebuyers to make informed choices in selecting and buying a home.
- **Homeownership Counseling:**
  - One-on-one advisory sessions to guide potential homebuyers through the home buying steps and provide ongoing support.
  - Post-purchase counseling on maintaining and keeping the home, including delinquency guidance, loan modifications, and conversions on City-funded loans
- **Homebuyer Assistance Program:** Housing GSO's homebuyer assistance program is a source of financial assistance for first-time homebuyers purchasing homes within Greensboro city limits.

- **Homeownership Collaborations:** Housing GSO services are provided by City staff and local nonprofit housing service agencies. Housing & Neighborhood Development also collaborates with North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and local lenders to ensure affordable financing.

## Objective 2

### Help neighborhoods have an organized approach to Code Compliance related issues.

Code Compliance covers a range of problems that can impact quality of life and property values, which over time can create a disincentive for other property owners to maintain their properties, or to invest capital. The City's codes address abandoned and junked vehicles, front yard parking, overgrown vegetation, general neglect of property, illegal dumping, and minimum housing standards. These are meant to ensure minimum property standards, but when used together, they create a powerful tool to address neighborhood problems.

Code Compliance relies on complaints called in by the public. Code Compliance staff will work with neighborhoods to help coordinate action to focus on long-term nuisance properties, and where code enforcement will have the most effect. Although this is a complaint-driven enforcement system, consistent focus on problem areas and problems on the edge of areas that have shown improvement, can have a more positive impact than a scattered approach.

## Objective 3

### Capitalize on momentum of Housing GSO Plan Reinvestment Area activities.

Housing GSO is Greensboro's 10-year housing plan, adopted in October of 2020. The plans goals are to:

- Provide affordable rental homes
- Reinvest in neighborhoods
- Provide access to homeownership
- Provide supportive housing

Of particular importance to this corridor plan, Housing GSO identifies five neighborhoods as "reinvestment areas" where public investments will have the most potential to establish a healthy housing market. Neighborhoods were selected by looking for areas in need of investment but that also had a high level of civic engagement, some private residential market activity, an existing housing stock with the potential to attract new buyers, and neighborhood amenities and investment.

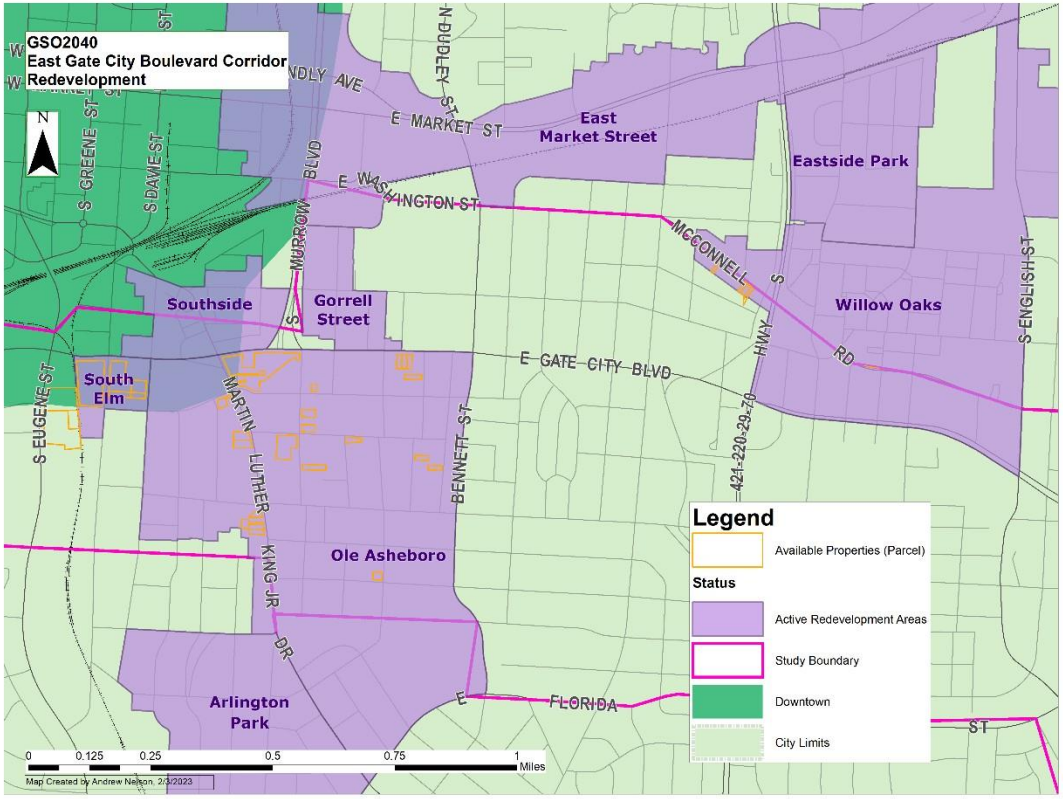
The Dudley Heights area was one of the five selected neighborhoods, and is within the corridor's study boundary. As this program is implemented, the resulting improvements can be built upon to continue the spread of the improvements to adjacent neighborhoods.

## Objective 4

### Commit to completing existing Redevelopment Area activities within the corridor.

There are multiple neighborhoods in the corridor that are Redevelopment Areas, and where activities have been completed for some decades. Redevelopment Areas are designated under North Carolina Redevelopment statutes which allow the City to focus federal, state, and local resources to these neighborhoods.

There are several neighborhoods in the corridor study area where the city is actively working. That includes Willow Oaks, Ole Asheboro, and South Elm. Along with the new reinvestment areas and other new initiatives, the City will continue to work in these areas until the elements in their plans are fully implemented.



# Identity

As the corridor continues to grow and evolve it will develop a unique identity, both as a collection of activity centers with their own sense of place, and with surrounding neighborhoods that have their own history and culture.

**Examples of input from public meetings:**

- "We want to build community AMONG neighborhoods."
- "Make the corridor welcoming to tourists and visitors."
- "Honor Benbow Rd., historic renovations, Black architects, and historically minority-owned businesses."
- "Signs explaining the history of the area and significant people."
- "The road needs to be a great first impression that welcomes visitors."

## *GSO2040* Big Idea: *Building Community Connections*

**Goal A--Greensboro is a thriving, dynamic, and livable city that people love to visit and call home.**

***Strategy 3***

*Comprehensively delineate and create land-use plans for the areas around significant gateways that define key entrances to the City, and continue to build a program that creates design elements that clearly indicate to visitors that they have arrived in Greensboro and that make a positive and memorable first impression.*

**Goal C--Greensboro treasures its history, honors its role in the civil rights movement, and celebrates its diversity through engagement and inclusion.**

**Strategy 1**

*Actively celebrate Greensboro's rich history. Market the fact that Greensboro is a place that "makes history" for tourism, economic development, and college recruiting. Continue to celebrate Greensboro's role in world-changing events like the Battle of Guilford Courthouse and the Greensboro Sit-ins.*

### Objective 1

Strengthen and enhance wayfinding along the corridor, primarily through supporting Greensboro's Comprehensive Wayfinding Plan, to mark this as a significant corridor and identify key destinations in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

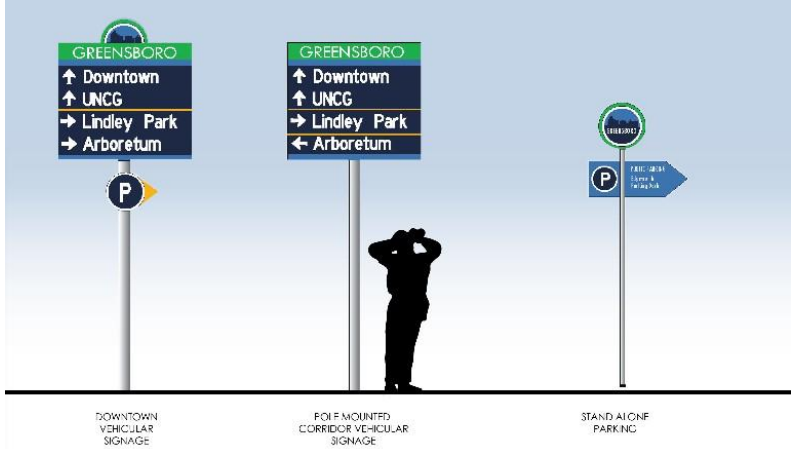
Gate City Boulevard is a major entrance into Greensboro, and connects multiple regional destinations. It is one of Greensboro's "front doors" and for many, provides a first and last impression of Greensboro and for east Greensboro in particular. This goal area references two opportunities, one to identify the corridor itself and the other to better orient visitors to other attractions.

Greensboro's Wayfinding Plan is a comprehensive plan aimed at establishing a clear, concise, and consistent methodology for visitors to navigate around a city through signage. The plan identifies seven reinvestment corridors that connect directly into downtown, one of which being Gate City Boulevard.

Opportunities to enhance signage and wayfinding along the corridor will primarily take direction from the City's recently adopted Wayfinding Plan, which described successful wayfinding program as "…signs that are clear and concise, with a simplified message and text to maintain the motion of the user". Improved general wayfinding along the corridor will be aimed at attracting visitors using the I-40 interchange, and also more effectively highlighting the corridors assets like the prominent institutions, community oriented facilities, and historic neighborhoods.

Wayfinding can help identify the assets in the area, making visitors more aware of what is there while helping to create the sense of place through techniques like recognition and honoring of historical sites and events. The Wayfinding Plan specifically identifies some strategies that would benefit the corridor signage:

- That drivers see as they get off the I-40 interchange promoting the corridors amenities;
- That indicates how many miles away from downtown and the Downtown greenway;
- Recognizing landmarks such as Magnolia House, Windsor Center, Nocho Park, and historical features.




An additional strategy to be considered, but not specifically identified in the Wayfinding Plan may include:

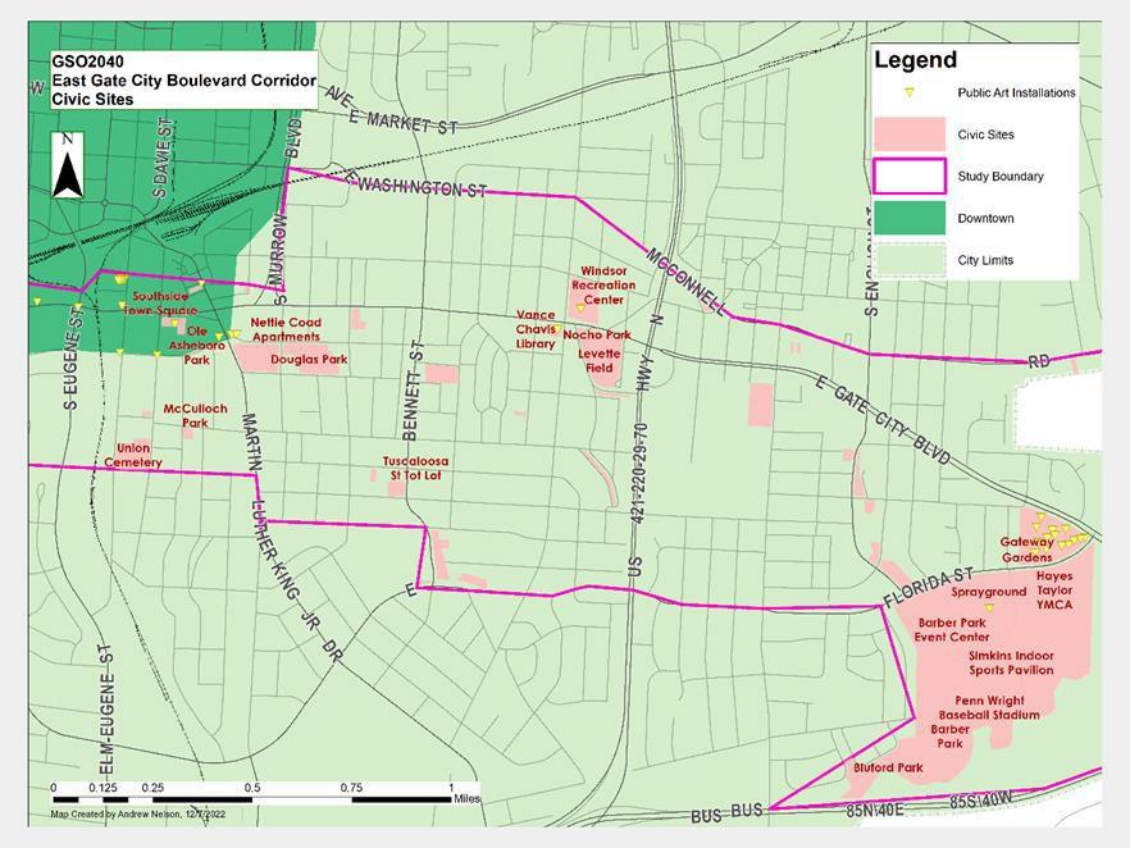
- Signage that better indicates what is included in the activity centers identified in the ***GSO**2040* comprehensive plan and the emerging activity center around the Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex.

The City's current wayfinding program focuses on signage but there are emerging wayfinding best practices that the City will consider utilizing. For instance, the recently developed story map of modern architecture in the area, using standalone kiosks that provide information to pedestrians, and art installations that create a sense of place through local, unique landmarks.

## Objective 2

### Expand the awareness of the area's history with public art in strategic locations, identifying important sites, and the use of technology.

The East Gate City Boulevard corridor is to home to a rich inventory of assets, history, and strong neighborhoods. Public art and technology can expand awareness of and honor this history. Public art humanizes the built environment, invigorates public spaces, connects different uses through a common focal point, and offers a chance to recognize the trailblazers and innovators of the corridor's past. While most may think of a monument or a statute when they think of public art, it can also include murals, architectural landscaping, digital media, festivals, music, and spoken-word performances. Not all public art needs to be permanent, there are opportunities along the corridor for temporary or pop-up installations as well.



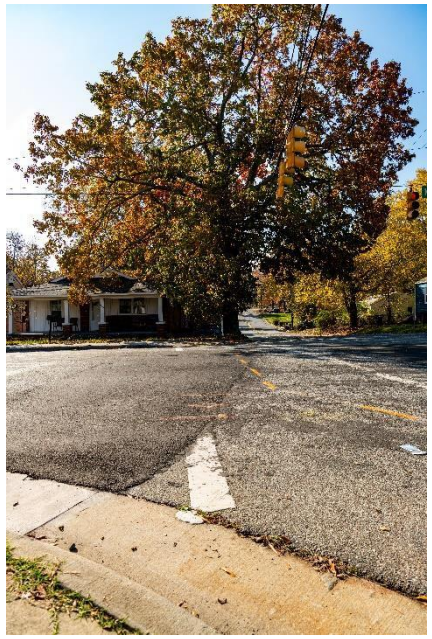

The City can play a role in public art by finding locations, soliciting community feedback, and assistance with installations, but ultimately it is important for the City to let an artist's creativity thrive. The City can provide a thoughtful process that leads to opportunities for artists, with the content created by the artist and the community. The City's primary role is to ensure the process moves forward, that the installation doesn't create any safety hazards, and ongoing maintenance after installation.

The creation of art within the corridor helps create easily identifiable landmarks for the different neighborhoods and activity centers. Though the corridor is long, public art can be a glue that creates connections outside of transportation, a unifying thread that residents use to identify where they live. Some general areas to consider art installations include but are not limited to: Downtown Greenway, Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex, Ray Warren, Eastern Activity Center, Nocho Park, and the Magnolia House.

Additionally, as we continue to bring connectivity and different uses are introduced to the corridor, the different activity centers within the corridor can become unique and identifiable places, particularly as it relates to public art. For instance, the activity center at the eastern end of the corridor that includes Gateway Research Park, Gateway Gardens, Barber Park, and the YMCA needs a name or a brand that encapsulates these uses and establishes a functional, district-scaled identity.

# How to Use This Plan

## Use Guide



The plan is centered around a section of East Gate City Boulevard between South Elm and the I-40 Interchange. It focuses on coordinating improvements to the Boulevard and how they can best be leveraged to support each other and have a positive impact on the surrounding communities. This plan is intended to be a resource:

- for City staff when allocating resources for transportation and park improvements,
- when considering land use changes and other issues that affect quality of life and development in the area, and
- for the community when advocating for the area.

Many of the recommendations will require further study to be carried out, and all will require additional commitment and funding. By adopting this Plan, the City intends to follow through on key investments and to refer to this plan when considering changes to this area, and when considering capital investments. Since a large amount of the recommendations will be affected by the proposed development of the Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Center facility, some of the Plan's recommendations may need to be refined as the development of that facility moves forward.

It is also important to note that the adoption of this plan does not establish funding for any particular recommendation, or put them on a departmental work plan. The recommendations will be carried out by

different City Departments with different funding sources, and this adopted plan can help prioritize and advocate for specific recommendations to get funding. The implementation of the Plan depends on coordinated work between the community, local decision makers, City Council representatives, and City staff.

This Plan should be used for guidance when a rezoning is proposed along the corridor. As this plan is directly connected to ***GSO**2040,* our comprehensive plan, the "Ten Questions to Determine if a Rezoning Request is Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan" on page 74 of ***GSO**2040* should be a guide for decision makers, the community, and interested investors when considering changes to the area. The policies of this Plan provide more detailed, local guidance to be used in conjunction with the questions, policies, and maps of ***GSO**2040.* This includes where best to introduce new uses, at what intensity, and how to create proposals that are more compatible with the surrounding community.

## Key Pieces to Guide Implementation

Though this plan covers a range of possible implementation steps, including possible private investments, there are several City investments that will have a positive impact on the corridor.

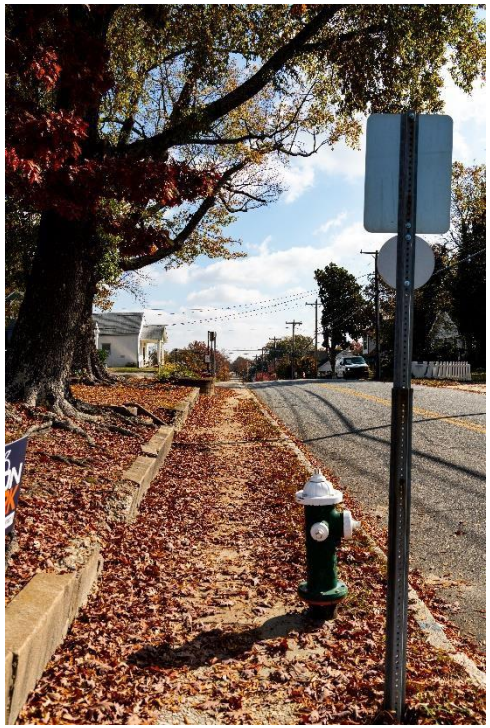
The primary focus for transportation and transit improvements is to improve the Boulevard with additional transportation options, while providing better connections across the Boulevard and between neighborhoods on parallel streets. Some of these improvements have been committed to already, though without identified funding or timeframes. As these plans evolve and the Recreation Center project is underway, remaining projects can be prioritized within other infrastructure plans, the Bi-Ped Plan, and Capital Improvements Budgets.

| Planned Investment | Project Description |
|---|---|
| Windsor Chavis Nocho Community Complex | Scheduled to start in the next five years |
| Complete Streets Feasibility Study | This is focused on the West Gate City Boulevard, but has important implications for how this work can be used on East Gate City Boulevard |
| Douglas Park Spur | This current project will connect the Downtown Greenway to Douglas Park in Ole Asheboro |
| South Elm Redevelopment Area | Construction of the apartments on the east block should start in the early fall of 2023; construction of Lidl on the west block will start when apartments are substantially complete |
| Willow Road Streetscape | Street improvements will occur with a state-funded repair of the bridge over US29; will include bike lanes |
| Repaving of North/South Thoroughfares | Repaving the north/south thoroughfares listed in the plan provides opportunity for road diets and the installation of bike lanes |

The intent of the Community Building section aims to be a catalyst for community organizing along the corridor. Ideally, community groups, neighborhoods and institutions along the corridor can build off the momentum of the Plan to meet regularly to discuss Plan implementation and their similar issues. This group would not be a plan implementation team, but rather a working group that will foster community dialogue along the corridor. This group would then serve as a representative body for this area, and would be a more effective advocate as a group, than as individual voices. A tentative celebration of the adoption of the plan is planned that will serve as a launching pad for the formation of this community group and establish a more informal relationship. As stated in the plan, the City can play a facilitator role for the initial meetings of this group but for long-term success, the City can be a resource and partner, but not the organizer or leader of the group.

The health and quality of housing in the neighborhoods adjacent to the corridor will continue to be a focus for the City. In the long term, the frontage along East Gate City Boulevard can be the location for different housing options and provide a more consistent frontage along the corridor. In the short term, there are two main areas for implementation:

- working to complete the existing Redevelopment Plans and selling City-held property for development, and
- expanding and promoting a variety of programs from Housing and Neighborhood Development that promote homeownership and neighborhood quality.



Signage and branding along the corridor should take direction from both the City's Wayfinding Plan and the updated Thoroughfare Plan. Strategies in the Thoroughfare Plan that are specific to this section of the City should be prioritized for funding as other projects are being designed and built. Increasing the presence of public art in the corridor will require an intentional partnership between City departments, local arts organizations, and corridor neighborhoods and institutions to make a reality. The City can help provide locations and access to programs.

## Conclusion

A plan is as strong as the will of the residents that it serves. Ideally, this plan will empower community members and decision makers alike, to point to a plan that represents their collective voice. A document that can be used to advocate for funding and assistance for areas, projects, and facilities specific to this corridor. This is a proactive planning document that helps guide future conversations about growth, encourages more community dialogue, and helps the corridor better promote its identity by redefining perceptions.

ITEM# 2023 - **5Y.]**
RESOLUTION# **/£1JJ-Z..1,**
BOOK&PAGE# ---

AGENDA ITEM# **+It **

COUNCIL SIGNATURE

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE *EAST GATE CITY BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN* WHICH INCLUDES THE ADDITION OF AN ACTIVITY CENTER TO THE *GSO2040* FUTURE BUILT FORM MAP.

WHEREAS, the City of Greensboro worked with residents, businesses and property owners in the East Gate City Boulevard study area, generally between McConnell Road and Florida Street, to develop a shared Vision for the area based on community input that can be used by both public and private entities to guide future decisions;

WHEREAS, a series of community meetings and surveys was conducted in 2021 and 2022 to gather stakeholder input for the planning process;

WHEREAS, a plan was developed with a set of specific Objectives, organized within the framework of the Big Ideas, Goals, and Strategies from the adopted ***GSO2040*** *Comprehensive Plan;*

WHEREAS, said Objectives focus on issues related to: Encouraging non-residential uses to suitable locations within the established ***GSO2040*** activity centers, increasing the access to non-automobile transportation options and enhancing physical connection within our neighborhoods, establishing consistent community dialogue among the various neighborhoods, institutions, and the City, working with residents to maintain strong, quality housing, and to create a consistent housing frontage along East Gate City Boulevard, and creating a unified identity to be celebrated and promoted that highlights the history of the area.

WHEREAS, the Plan includes the addition of an activity center to the ***GSO2040*** Future Built Form Map at the site of the proposed Windsor/Chavis/Nocho facility generally at the intersection of East Gate City Boulevard and Benbow Road.

WHEREAS, the *East Gate City Boulevard Corridor Plan* and accompanying amendments to the Future Built Form Map were unanimously recommended for approval by the Greensboro Planning and Zoning Commission on May 17, 2023; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENSBORO:

That the *East Gate City Boulevard Corridor Plan* is hereby adopted as recommended, including the addition of an Activity Center to the ***GSO2040*** Future Built Form Map.

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENSBORO ON THE 2nd DAY OF AUGUST 2023.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

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CITY ATTORNEY