



## Center Street Streetscape Project Background

### *Brief Project Description:*

Complete renovation of City's historic main corridor designed to address functional, aesthetic, safety, scale and aging infrastructure issues.

### *Scope:*

- Six Blocks of street with 140' of rights-of-way.
- TIGER V Project to complete three blocks with federal/city funds, including the 100 N., 100 S and 200 S. Center Street blocks.

### *Status:*

- Construction of one block (200 N. Center Street) completed by City November 2012.
- TIGER V Project (next three blocks southward) will begin construction in August 2014.
- T. A. Loving is the Contractor for the Project.
- Construction is to be completed in November 2015.

*Jobs/Economic Impact:* In NC, for every \$1M in new construction, 35.9 jobs = 215 jobs created or retained. For every \$1M in new construction, \$721,000 returned to local economy = \$4.326M.

*Project Summary:* At one time, N. C. Railroad Co. had tracks that ran through the heart of downtown, right down the centerline of Center Street or Goldsboro's "main street". Although Southern Railroad was using Center Street, the corridor's owner, N. C. Railroad Co. was not, so the tracks were removed in 1926 to complement the bustling town that the City of Goldsboro was becoming due to the traffic Union Station was accommodating.

The legacy of the trains on Center Street was a 140-foot rights-of-way from building edge to building edge. The City adjusted to the removal of the tracks and the introduction of the motorized vehicles by utilizing the expansive right-of-way to maximize vehicular access. Two one-way pairs run the extent of the street with two lanes of head-in angled parking each way. In the 60's Goldsboro, like many downtowns, experienced the flight of businesses to suburban malls and strip shopping centers, leaving downtown Goldsboro essentially vacant of small business. The perceived need to design the space to the advantage of vehicles rather than pedestrians did not prevent the flight and Goldsboro was left with a main street that negatively impacts economic activity, community image, pedestrian mobility and vehicular safety.

The City of Goldsboro hired a consultant services team to conduct a master plan of the downtown in 2006. The primary purpose was to identify what was needed in the form of public and private investments to support a sustainable, vibrant and economically strong downtown. The intent was to leverage existing assets and plan ways to build upon their strengths through design to create synergy. The consultant was also asked to prioritize the recommendations based on their capabilities to provide the most significant impact or contribution to the vision. The most significant

public investment recommendation that resulted from the Downtown Master Plan of 2007 via public input was the need to redesign this corridor to address its negative impacts to the business community and increase its appeal to the greater community.

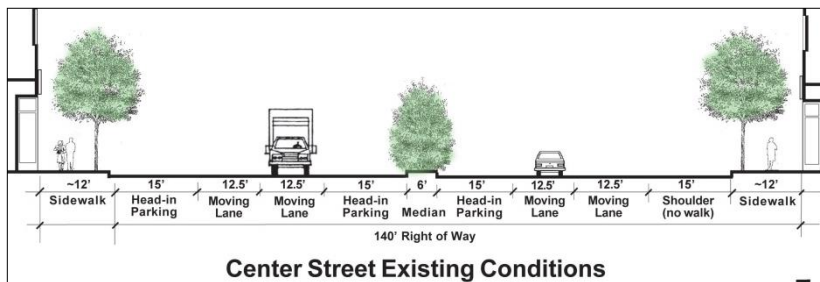
The Plan noted the following observations of our current Center Street design: 1) it is not pedestrian friendly, 2) it creates safety issues for the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles, 3) it is devoted predominantly to vehicular use (70+%), 4) it creates safety concerns for pedestrians due to limited visibility, 5) it discourages pedestrian activity and small business development because of lack of amenities, 6) the lack of shade and dominance of paved surfaces and cars are overwhelming to pedestrians, and 7) the impervious surfaces create excessive polluted storm water runoff into our Neuse River.



Streetscape Rendering of Center Street at the Intersection of Walnut Street

Pictured above/right is a rendering illustrating the transformation that will take place once the streetscape project is implemented.

The image below indicates the current delineation of space. The new design will address the following: the sidewalk width will be increased from 12 to 19 feet to provide increased pedestrian



mobility and allowed space for amenities including sidewalk dining, safer pedestrian circulation, shade canopy street trees and improved visibility and access for merchants and restaurants. The center

median will be enlarged from its current six feet to thirty feet width in the 100% parallel portions and to eighteen feet in the hybrid portions of the street. This space will allow for a safe and comfortable linear green walkway for safe pedestrian access from center parking to the main sidewalks, additional large shade canopy trees, pervious surface and space for event gatherings and vendors. Mid-block crosswalks will be added to each block to further aid pedestrian circulation within the blocks from one side of the street to the other. Utility lines will be placed underground, removing unsightly power poles and overhead wires and allowing for the larger shade canopy trees.

A major benefit of complete reconstruction will be the reduction of the very high crown on the road that has developed over time from multiple resurfacing over the raised railroad bed and street. In some places, a 12-inch drop in elevation exists from the center median to the sidewalk curb, causing safety issues, handicap access and parking issues, and increased storm water runoff. Antiquated underground utilities will also be addressed during the construction, including of terra cotta sewer pipes and cast iron water lines.

The image below illustrates the new design and delination of space. Roundabouts/mast arms will be installed at the intersections decreasing the amount of necessary traffic control systems, decrease traffic congestion, reduce travel times and address the awkward design of the existing mid-intersection stops on Center Street that often cause safety issues. The inclusion of roundabouts will mimic an existing rotary that is located on the northernmost portion of this corridor at Ash Street (HWY 70 Bus.).

Finally, another highlight of the project will include the addition of two 5-foot bicycle lanes (one each way) next to the parallel parking along the main sidewalks. These lanes will be clearly marked and designed to safely move cyclists throughout the corridor, introducing an alternative mode of safe transportation (bike racks will also be provided on each block). The reduction of the space allotted for vehicles and the incorporation of large shade canopy trees will address issues related to scale and provide a much more comfortable environment for pedestrian use.

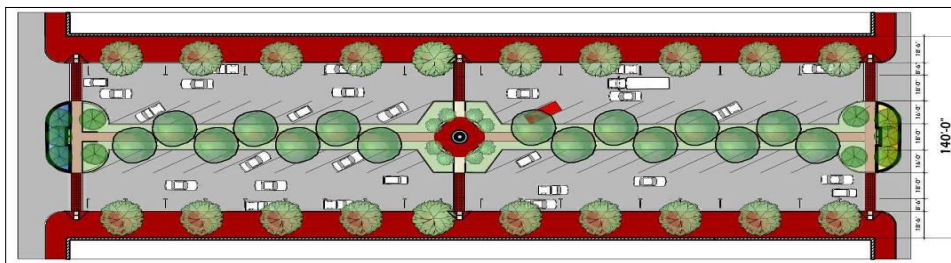
The City funded Phase 1 of the project, the 200 block of North Center Street and began construction in 2011 at a cost of approximately \$2.3M. The project was complete with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in November 2012. Since this time, downtown has realized 25 new businesses.

#### *Benefit/Cost Analysis Summary:*

TIGER Funds would support three additional blocks to complete the portion of the project located in the commercial district at an investment of \$6M. Additional and ongoing costs associated with this project would include general maintenance and landscaping. However, addressing the underground, antiquated infrastructure and replacing these, will save the City money in the long term and also likely save business and property owners the unplanned, and negative impacts when/if major infrastructure issues occur due to their inadequacies.

According to other streetscape projects completed nationwide, the following examples indicate the economic impacts a streetscape project can have in a downtown area:

- Raleigh, NC (population 403,892) –  
Mitchell Silver, Raleigh Planning Director and APA President states: *“Investing in streetscape project downtowns produces huge dividends. If done properly, downtown investment increases property values, it creates an authentic place for residents and visitors to experience and it offers housing and social options for young professionals and empty nesters looking for amenities in walking distance. In downtown Raleigh, a \$10 million investment in Raleigh’s main street produced about \$3 billion in investment in 6 years.”*
- Salisbury, NC (population 33,633) –  
Randy Hemann, Downtown Salisbury Director states: *“The investments the City has made in our downtown streetscape have been hand in hand with private investment and have resulted in business growth, job creation, and an overall understanding that our downtown is a vibrant area that helps economic development in all areas of our City.” “Since our 2001 master plan was*



*adopted and we began addressing streetscape needs, we have seen a \$60M + in investment.*

➤ Franklin, VA (population 8,814) –

In 2009 reported the following statistics resulting from streetscape project:

Streetscape Investment: \$21 million

Net New Businesses: 101

Net New Jobs: 453

Vacancy Rate Start of Project: 43%

Vacancy Rate 3 years after Project: 3%

➤ Odessa, TX (population 96,000) –

Odessa had a very similar scenario with their main downtown corridor: six blocks, extra-wide rights-of-way, two one-way pairs, head-in angled parking, Main Street™ Community, and a desire for mixed-use development. They addressed their issues similarly to Goldsboro through proper downtown urban design elements and claim the streetscape project aided in the following economic benefits: increase in private property exterior building façade renovations, reduction in traffic crashes, inclusion of managed parking providing increased available parking opportunities, occupancy rates doubled for street level spaces, decrease in overall vacancy rates from 45% to 15%, reduction in business turnover, increased residential living, reduction in neglected properties, increase in business sales, increased retention of businesses that expanded and improvements to neighboring streets located downtown.