



Agenda Action Form Overview

The Board is requested to receive a presentation on the 2026 Bike + Walk Plan and to provide feedback regarding its strategic direction. The planning team anticipates returning in March to present the final plan for adoption.

Background/Justification

The 2026 Bike + Walk Plan update builds on the City's 2017 Bike + Walk Plan and other planning efforts including the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, 2011 Trails and Greenways Master Plan, 2021 Trails Implementation Plan, 2025 Triangle West Vision Zero Plan, and 2022 Great Trails State Final Report. As this is the first time the County has been involved with the planning effort, the scope has been expanded to include comprehensive recommendations for sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and greenways beyond City limits throughout Durham County.

As part of this planning effort, staff carried out two phases of community engagement to inform the 2026 Bike + Walk Plan. Phase 1 engagement, conducted in fall 2021, gathered community input on opportunities and challenges related to walking and biking. This feedback, combined with a modeling and scoring process, resulted in a list of 150 potential priority projects shared during Phase 2 engagement in summer 2025. Based on community input and technical analysis, the list was refined to 75 priority projects: 25 corridor projects, 25 intersection projects, and 25 microgap projects. These will serve as the focus of the next wave of walking and biking infrastructure investments planned for implementation within the next 5-10 years. From the 75 priority projects, staff identified five key County-focused priority corridor projects using community input and technical data. Technical data included the High Injury Network, land use patterns, school proximity, and connectivity. These five County priority corridors represent critical links for improving safety and access in areas in the County.

In addition to the 75 priority projects planned for the next 5-10 years, the plan sets a longer-term vision where every resident can safely walk or bike from their front door to any destination in Durham through the Comprehensive Network. This network serves as a framework integrating bicycle and pedestrian facilities into future land development and transportation projects, ensuring connectivity and accessibility across the City and County. The plan also includes several policy recommendations, described in the “Policy Impact” section below.

The plan is currently in its final phase of public engagement, which runs from January 26 through February 9. This phase is conducted online and features the full draft plan posted on the project website: ([Durham Bike+Walk Plan Update | ENGAGE Durham](#)).

Policy Impact

The 2026 Bike + Walk Plan introduces guidance for two new and critical County roles: regional greenway coordination and sidewalk maintenance. Within the Durham County Regional Greenway section, the plan recommends Durham County adopt a structured approach, modeled off of other NC counties, leading strategic planning, securing diverse funding sources, and formalizing agreements with municipalities for design, construction, and maintenance. Regional greenways include projects that span the City and County, connect to other counties, and are part of state and national greenway networks.



As another key policy update, the plan addresses sidewalks found outside city limits that currently lack a designated maintenance agency. These sidewalks have been inventoried at approximately 6 miles. The plan recommends implementing a joint City-County maintenance strategy supported by interlocal agreements and updated development standards to prevent future ambiguities regarding sidewalk maintenance. These measures are intended to clarify responsibilities, enhance safety, and ensure consistent maintenance of sidewalks throughout the County. This recommendation represents an update to the 2015 Limited Sidewalk Maintenance Policy, under which the County agreed to maintain approximately 130 feet of sidewalk near Forest View Elementary School.

Lastly, throughout the planning process, staff have collaborated with the Durham City-County Planning Department to align County transportation updates with the new Unified Development Ordinance. To promote strategic sidewalk development, the plan recommends requiring bicycle and pedestrian facilities for new developments located within the Urban Growth Boundary and for projects specifically identified in an adopted County plan, such as the Bike + Walk Plan.

Procurement Background

N/A

Fiscal Impact

There is no associated cost for the approval of this plan. The plan itself cost \$360,000 through a combination of County, City, and TW TPO funding. Durham County contributed \$24,000 to the plan's cost.

Each of the priority projects within the document includes a planning-level cost estimate which will require funding to design and build. These projects will be funded through a mix of sources. Larger projects typically rely on federal grants such as the Transportation Alternatives Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, and Surface Transportation Block Grant, which require local matching funds. State programs through NCDOT may also provide support, and NCDOT may include facilities as part of larger highway projects. Smaller projects and maintenance would generally be funded through City and County budgets. Additional funding may come from developer contributions under updated development standards, interlocal agreements for shared responsibilities, and partnerships with private or nonprofit organizations. Once built, these facilities will require ongoing maintenance, which may mean new agreements and dedicated funding.

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Board receive a presentation on the 2026 Bike + Walk Plan and provide feedback and input on the plan's direction. The Board's input will be used to refine the plan further before it is finalized and presented for formal adoption at an upcoming meeting, anticipated for spring 2026.