

CITY OF LORETTO PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

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GRESHAM
SMITH AND
PARTNERS

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CITY OF LORETTO

PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) established the Community Transportation Planning Grant (CTPG) program to assist Tennessee's small and rural communities in developing transportation plans to address transportation, land use, and growth management issues. The program is designed to better integrate multimodal transportation systems with local land use objectives and achieve statewide transportation goals. A significant portion of this study was supported with State Planning and Research (SPR) funds provided to TDOT by the Federal Highway Administration.

The City of Loretto is one of ten grant recipients during the CTPG program's 2016-2017 grant cycle. This report documents the findings and recommendations of the City of Loretto Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

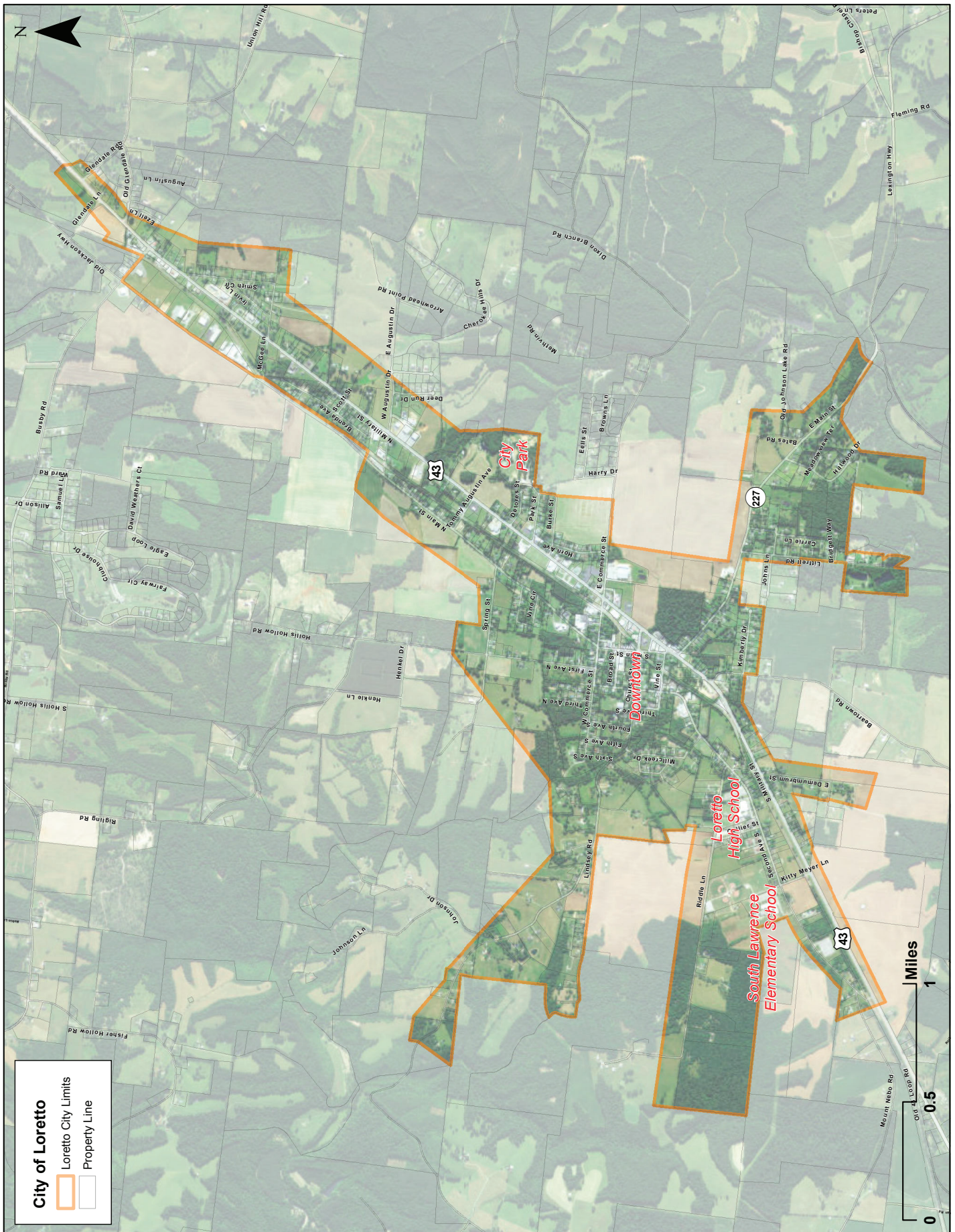
1. OVERVIEW

The City of Loretto (Figure 1-1) serves as a center for civic, educational, and commercial life in south Lawrence County, Tennessee. The city offers a high quality of life with its convenient downtown, schools, and parks and close proximity to Lawrenceburg, Tennessee to the north and Florence, Alabama to the south. As middle Tennessee and northwest Alabama continue to grow, Loretto is attracting new residents and businesses eager to enjoy the benefits of small town living.

Bisected by US 43/SR 6 (Military Street), the City of Loretto has a unique opportunity to continue improving

the city's quality of life through new pedestrian and bicycle facilities. With downtown Loretto, Loretto High School, South Lawrence Elementary School, and Loretto City Park located within a two-mile corridor along Military Street, expanding walking and bicycling facilities will simultaneously strengthen daily travel for people of all ages and abilities and help position Loretto for new residents, businesses, and visitors. The Loretto Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan establishes a framework for building new connections and, in the process, provides a strong foundation for Loretto's future.

Figure 1-1. Study Area



2. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Walking and bicycling facilities allow communities to reinforce familiar public spaces like downtowns and neighborhoods while also integrating new growth and development into the larger community. In addition to the many individual benefits of walking and bicycling – including safe and affordable access to work, schools, and shopping and better health, projects throughout the United States demonstrate the enduring and increasing economic impact of walking and bicycling infrastructure.

According to a 2017 National Association of Realtors report:



Walkable neighborhoods are driving economic growth as employers and businesses recognize the value of locating in these places to attract employees and customers.”

For the City of Loretto, walking and bicycling issues and opportunities center on both the need to strengthen downtown and link neighborhoods, schools, and parks.

Figure 2-1. US 43/SR 6 at Commerce Street



The following are the **key issues and opportunities** identified through a series of stakeholder and public meetings in Loretto:

- A.** Improve connectivity between downtown Loretto and Loretto City Park;
- B.** Enhance access across US 43/SR 6, especially the intersection at Commerce Street;
- C.** Strengthen connectivity between South Lawrence Elementary School, Loretto High School and downtown; and
- D.** Add walking and bicycling facilities along N. Main Street.

EACH OF THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IS DISCUSSED IN GREATER DETAIL IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

A IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN DOWNTOWN LORETTO AND LORETTO CITY PARK

The segment of US 43/SR 6 between Park Street and Commerce Street was identified as a priority area for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. The segment connects the primary residential areas in the city and the downtown district to a retail cluster and the city’s principal recreation facility. In addition, sidewalks along N. Main Street between W. Commerce Street and Spring Street could provide an alternative to walking and bicycling on US 43/SR 6. There is a vacant parcel on the east side of N. Main Street near Spring Street that could be used as a pedestrian easement to connect N. Main Street to US 43/SR 6, where a mid-block crossing could provide access to the park.

Figure 2-2. US 43/SR 6 and Commerce Street Intersection



**B ENHANCE ACCESS
ACROSS US 43/SR 6**

The intersection of US 43/SR 6 and Commerce Street was identified as a major priority for pedestrians. The existing intersection is signalized, but lacks pedestrian facilities including sidewalks, pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and lighting. Pedestrian activity is common as people walk between the residential neighborhoods on the west side of the street to businesses on the east side, but pedestrians seldom wait for a traffic signal change if they perceive it is safe to cross during gaps in traffic. In addition to improved and safer connectivity across US 43/SR 6 at Commerce Street, pedestrian connections between Commerce Street and S. Main Street along US 43/SR 6 were also identified as a need.

**C STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY
BETWEEN SOUTH LAWRENCE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LORETTO
HIGH SCHOOL AND DOWNTOWN**

The City of Loretto recently completed a Safe Routes to School project linking Loretto High School and South Lawrence Elementary School with a new sidewalk, approximately 0.28 miles, and plans are in place to extend the sidewalk an additional 0.29 miles north of the high school to Riddle Lane. Plans are also in place to reconstruct and add sidewalks in downtown Loretto. To close the gap between downtown and the schools to the south, additional pedestrian improvements are needed between Riddle Lane and downtown. Improvements could include sidewalks along Second Avenue South and/or off-street walking trails between Riddle Lane and Third Avenue South at Vine Street with sidewalks extended to Church Street.



Figure 2-3. Second Avenue South near Riddle Lane

D ADD WALKING AND BICYCLING FACILITIES ALONG N. MAIN STREET

Closely related to the first issue and opportunity, N. Main Street is often used by people walking, running, and bicycling in Loretto, and traffic during peak and lunch hours associated with industrial development on the north end of the city can create unsafe conditions through increased pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. An easement adjacent to the existing Tennessee Southern Railroad railway should be considered for a shared-use path between Commerce Street and McGee Lane. The shared-use path would provide a safe facility for bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between downtown Loretto and the city's north side, and could also extend to the south and connect to the high school and elementary school.

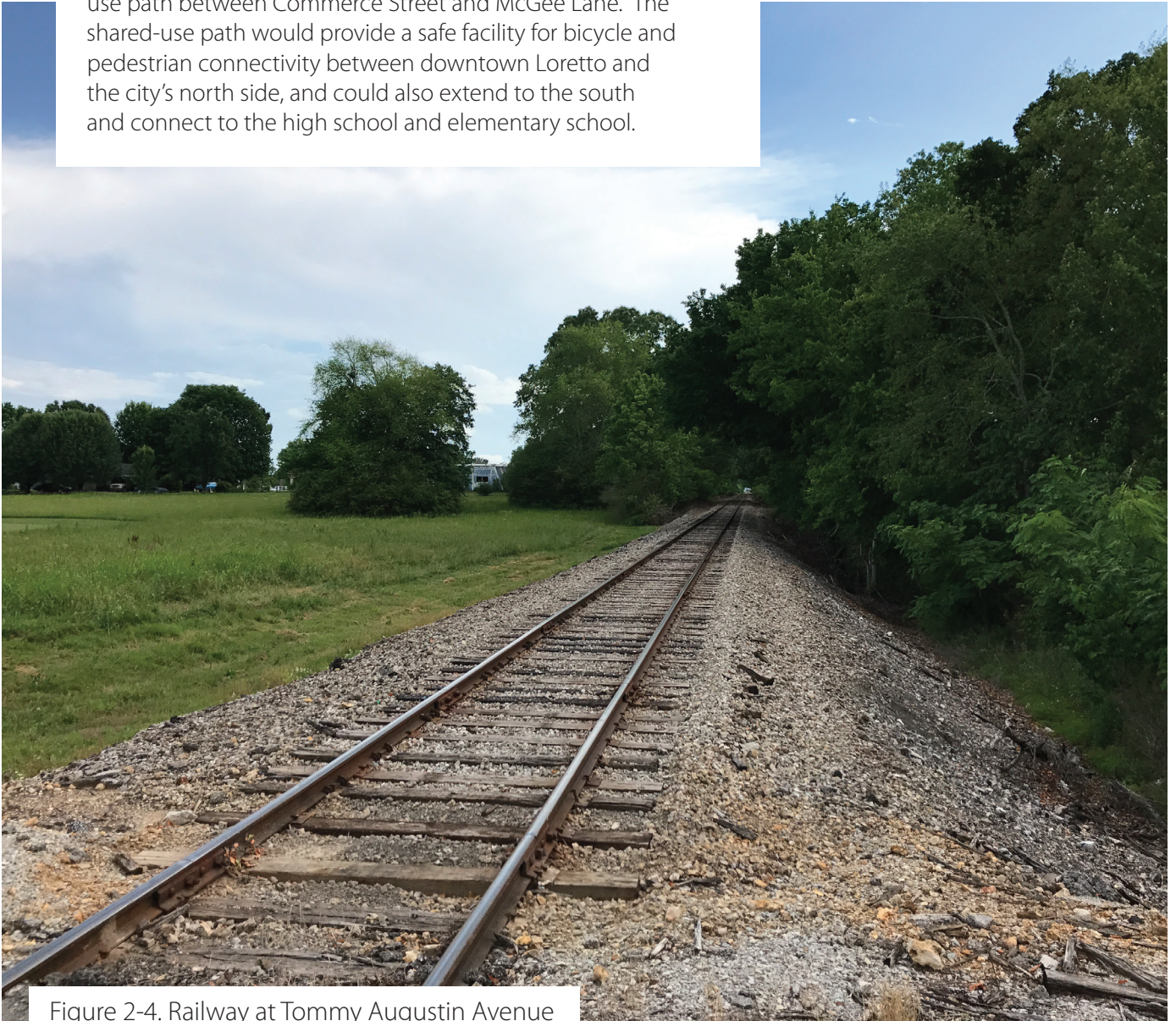


Figure 2-4. Railway at Tommy Augustin Avenue

3. DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

In addition to the identified issues and opportunities, the first public workshop on May 18, 2017 also included a series of visual preference surveys that addressed the following five questions:

1. What type of pedestrian or bicycle elements would you like to see along US 43?

2. What type of elements would you like to see for a pedestrian crossing of US 43 at Commerce Street?

3. What type of pedestrian and bicycle elements would you like to see along N. Main Street?

4. What type of pedestrian and bicycle elements would you like to see along Second Avenue to Downtown?

5. What type of pedestrian and bicycle elements would you like to see along the Tennessee Southern Railroad?

The identified issues and opportunities and visual preference surveys formed the basis for the proposed improvements. The second public workshop, held on August 1, 2017, focused primarily on reviewing different options to address each of the issues and opportunities (Figures 3-1 through 3-3). Following is a summary of public input regarding the different options.

- **US 43/SR 6 (N. Military Street):** The preferred option (Option B, Figure 3-1) adds sidewalks on both sides of US 43 between Commerce Street and Park Street. Additionally, a number of people emphasized the importance of adding street trees along US 43 between Park Street and S. Main Street to reinforce to travelers that they have entered Loretto and to

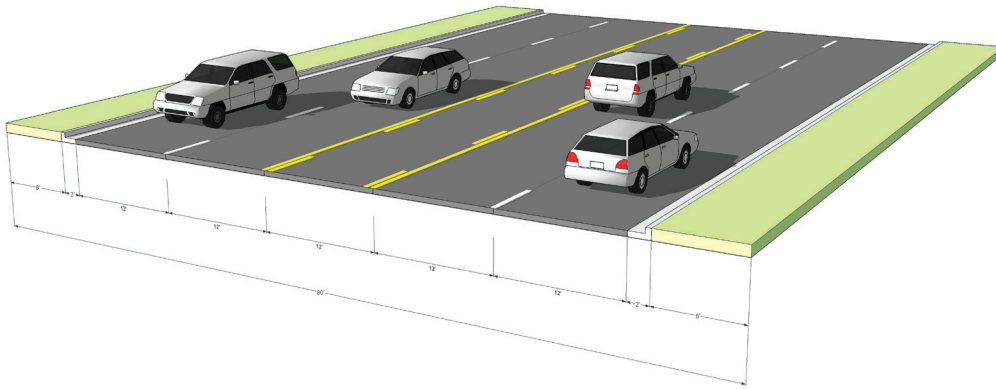
calm traffic speeds. Concerns with Option B included maintenance of the planting strip separating the sidewalk and the highway shown on the west side in the option and potential conflicts with utilities. Several people recommended that street trees should be located at the back of the sidewalk and outside of the right-of-way, which would involve either working with adjacent property owners or ensuring that local land development regulations require applicable landscape improvements.

- **Rails-with-Trails:** The initial option (Option A in Figure 3-2) focused on the rail corridor between Commerce Street and McGee Lane. Workshop attendees stressed the importance of extending the Rails-with-Trails concept south to Kitty Meyer Lane, linking downtown to the high school and elementary school. The major issue to be addressed for the Rails-with-Trails concept and the primary concern among workshop attendees is securing the right-of-way either through easements with the railroad and/or adjacent property owners or through property acquisitions or dedications.
- **N. Main Street:** Given the relatively narrow right-of-way and shoulder and ditch cross section, options for introducing dedicated pedestrian and bicycle facilities on N. Main Street are limited. While some workshop participants generally preferred Option A (Figure 3-3), which consists of building a boardwalk over the existing shoulder and ditch section within the available right-of-way and preserving the street drainage, others suggested that additional options should be considered.

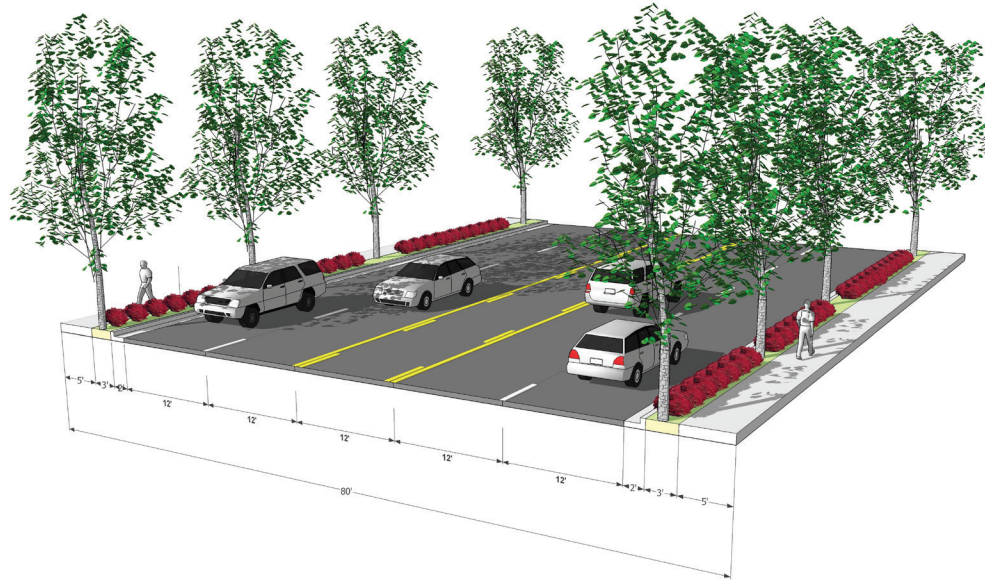
In addition to comments on the above options, several meeting attendees expressed interest in improving pedestrian safety along W. Commerce Street between US 43 and N. Main Street including new street trees and plantings.

Figure 3-1. US 43/SR 6 Alternatives

EXISTING



OPTION A



OPTION B

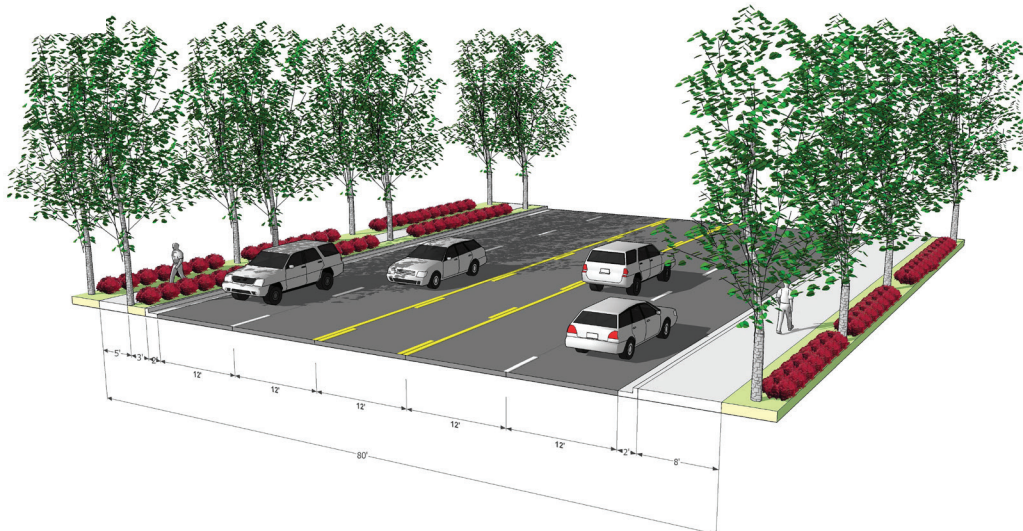
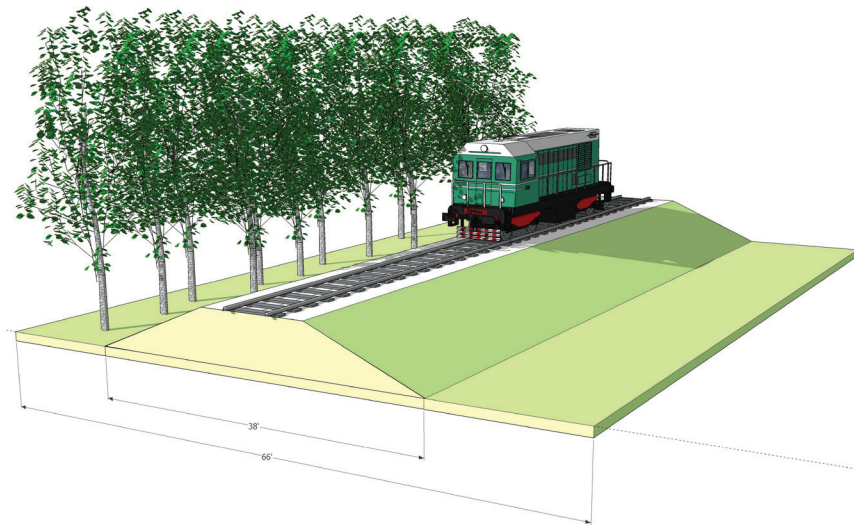
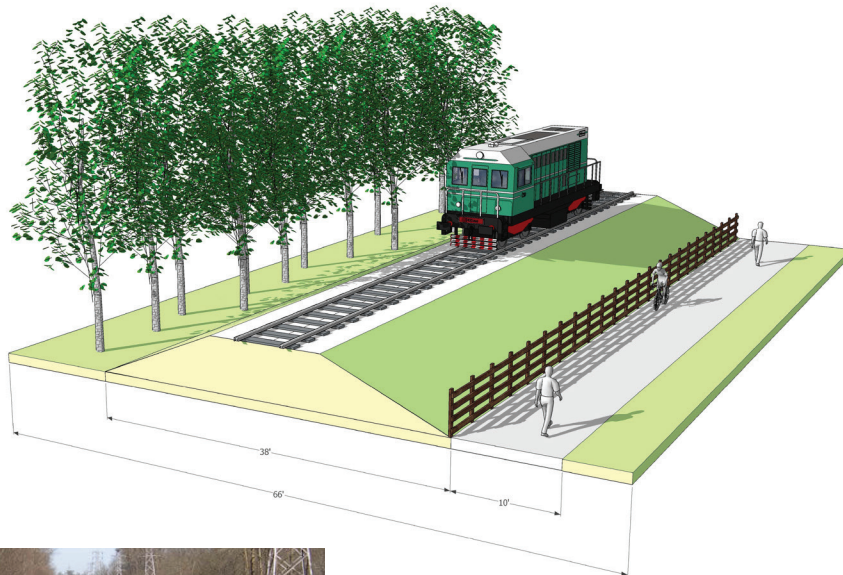


Figure 3-2. Rails-with-Trails

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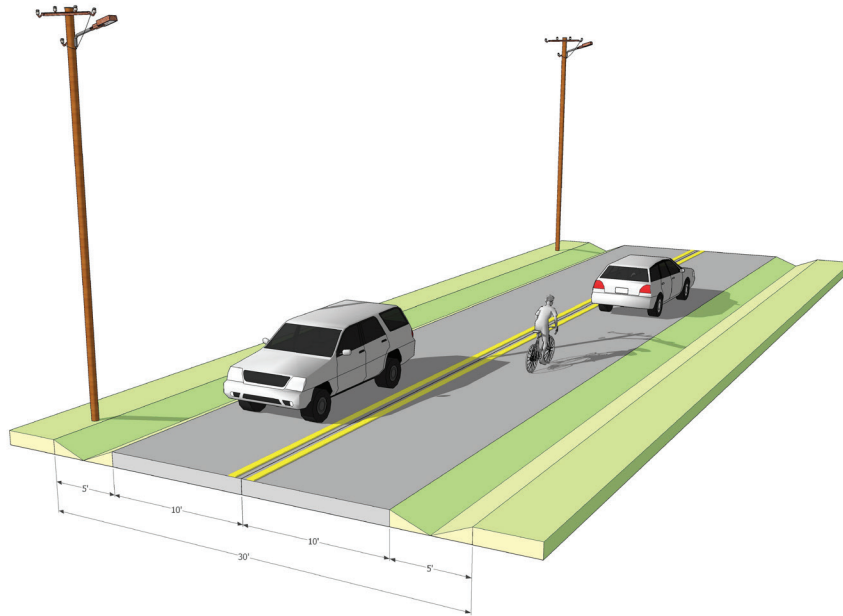
OPTION A



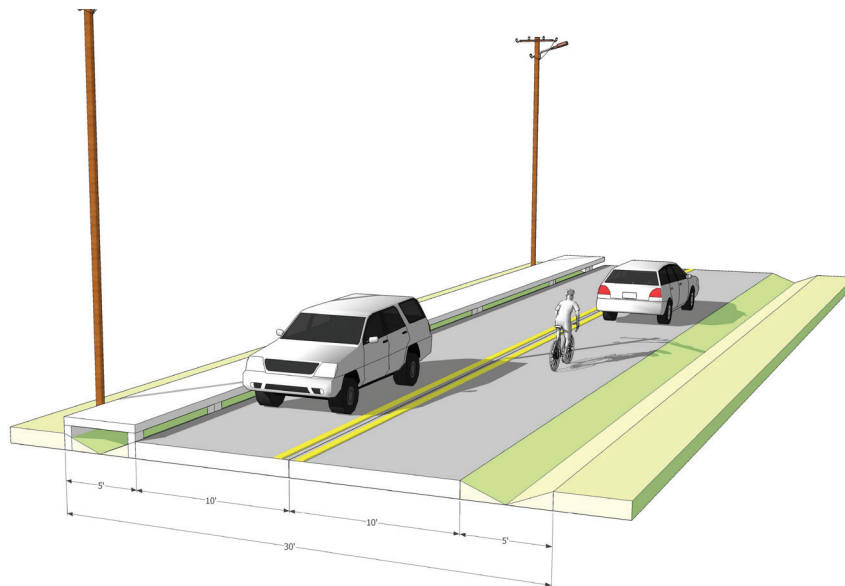
EXAMPLES

Figure 3-3. N. Main Street

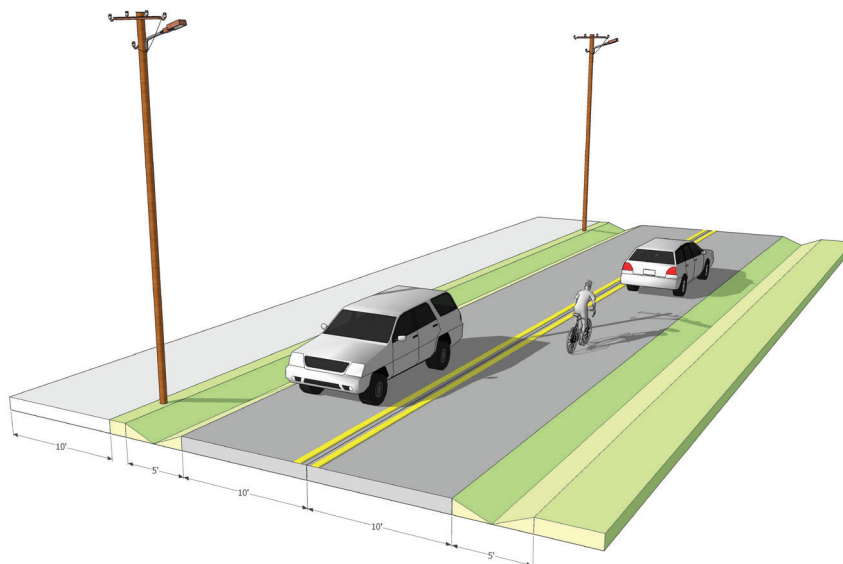
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OPTION A



OPTION B



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The master plan (Figure 4-1) reflects a strong desire in the City of Loretto to strengthen the link among three important activity centers – downtown, the high school/elementary school area, and the city park. Importantly, as proposed, the master plan recommendations would not only establish new connections among the activity centers, but would also create a network of walking and bicycling facilities that would provide multiple options to travel within and between the centers. Finally, the proposed improvements on US 43, in particular, offer the City of Loretto an opportunity to define the heart of the community between Park Street and S. Main Street and integrate downtown and US 43.

The master plan recommendations include the following principal improvements.

- **US 43/SR 6 (Military Street):** The master plan calls for adding sidewalks on the east and west sides of US 43/SR 6 between Park Street and S. Main Street. In addition, over time, sidewalks should extend on the west side of US 43/SR 6 to the Loretto City Hall at Tommy Augustin Avenue. Based on comments at the second public workshop, the recommended street cross section (Figure 4-2) includes 8-foot sidewalks on both sides of the street and proposes street trees, shrubs, and pedestrian lighting behind the sidewalk.
- **Rails-with-Trails:** Stretching from McGee Lane on the north to Kitty Meyer Lane on the south, the master plan recommends introducing a shared use path adjacent to the Tennessee Southern Railroad railway. The 12-foot paved path (Figure 4-3) would accommodate the full range of users, and importantly provide a safe and convenient walking and bicycling connection to both Loretto High School, the South Lawrence Elementary School, and the Loretto Lions Sport Complex. As noted earlier, the principal challenge for the Rails-with-Trails project is determining property ownership along the railway and evaluating the options to secure the necessary right-of-way for the trail.
- **N. Main Street:** To provide safe access along N. Main Street, the master plan also recommends adding a colored paved walkway adjacent to the roadway. As shown (Figure 4-4), the paved walkway with a covered trench drain to capture stormwater runoff would extend from approximately Spring Street south to W. Commerce Street on the west side of N. Main Street. Depending on funding availability – and the viability of the proposed Rails-with-Trails project in that area, the recommended walkway offers additional flexibility to make the connection between downtown and the City Park, particularly if an easement can be secured between N. Main Street and US 43.
- **W. Commerce Street:** While one of several important east-west links, W. Commerce Street between US 43 and N. Main Street carries greater responsibility as the primary gateway to downtown Loretto. The master plan calls for W. Commerce Street to be reimagined as a safe, comfortable, and attractive street for daily walking trips (Figure 4-5) and for visitors experiencing Loretto for the first time.
- **Proposed Pedestrian Crossings:** New or improved pedestrian crossings on US 43 are recommended at Park Street, Commerce Street, and E. Main Street. The two northern crossings, in particular, will play an important role in making a safe and comfortable experience between schools, downtown, and the park. The Park Street pedestrian crossing (Figure 4-6) includes high visibility crosswalks, advanced stop lines, a pedestrian median island, reduced curb radii, and a pedestrian hybrid beacon system (HAWK signal). At Commerce Street (Figure 4-7), the improvements include high visibility crosswalks, advanced stop lines, pedestrian signal countdown heads, and leading pedestrian intervals on traffic signals.

Figure 4-1. Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

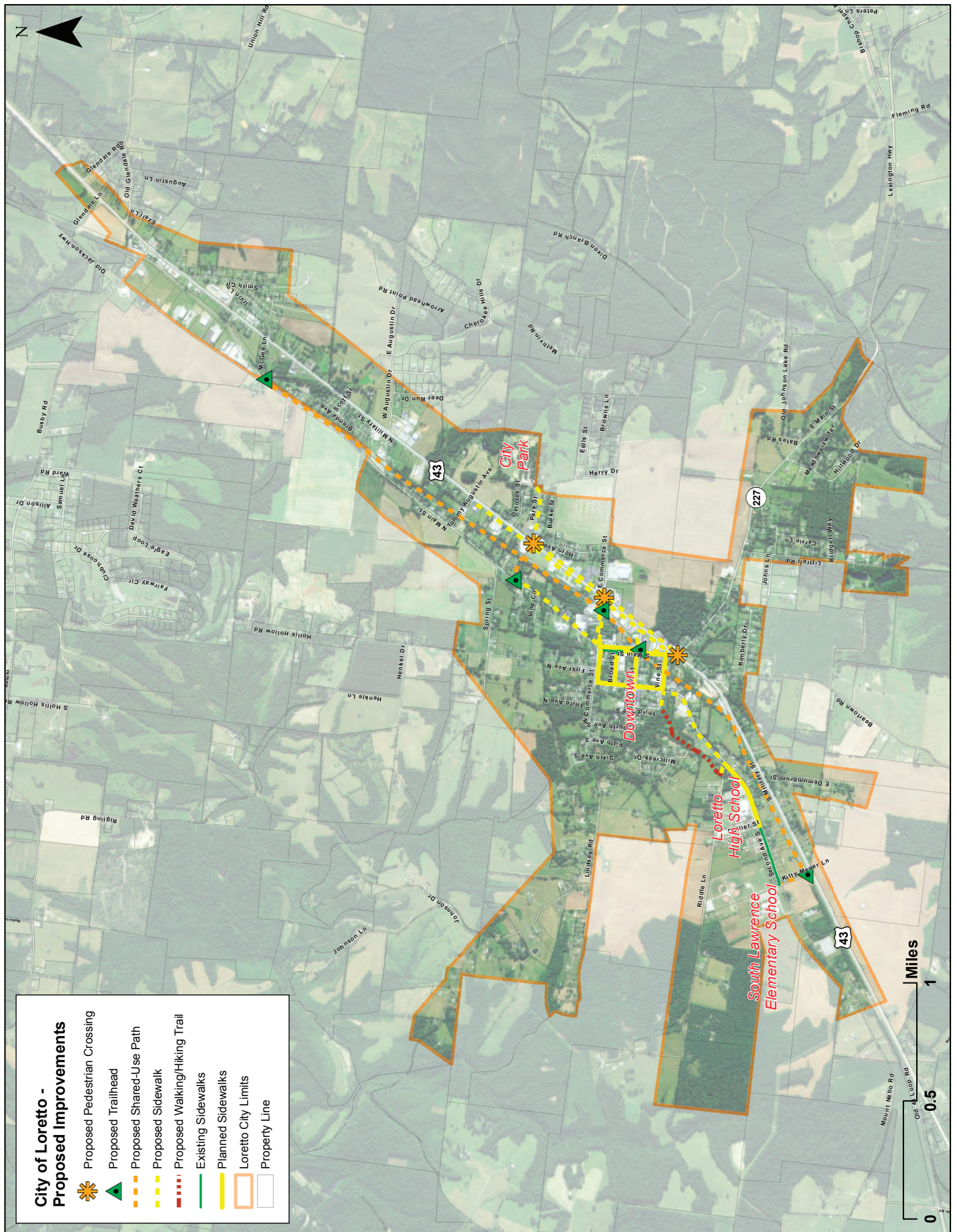


Figure 4-2. US 43/SR 6 Proposed Typical Section

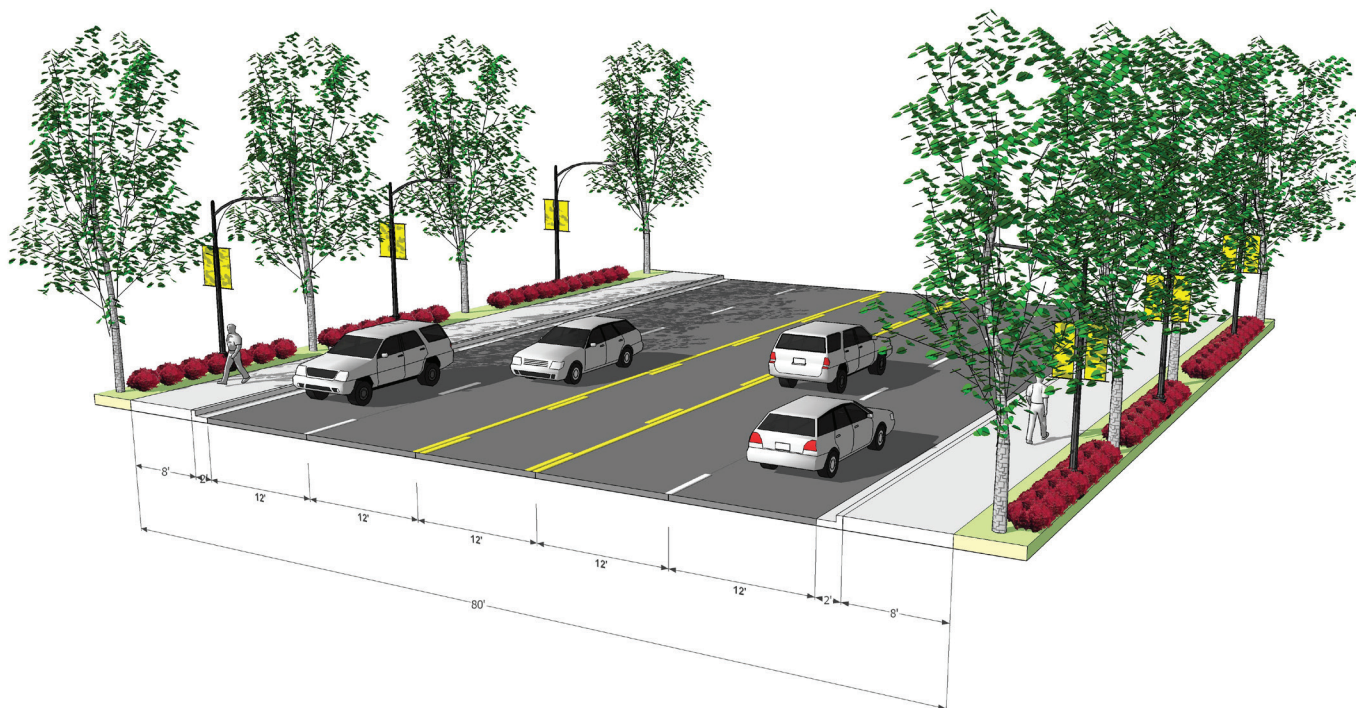


Figure 4-3. Rail-with-Trails Proposed Typical Section

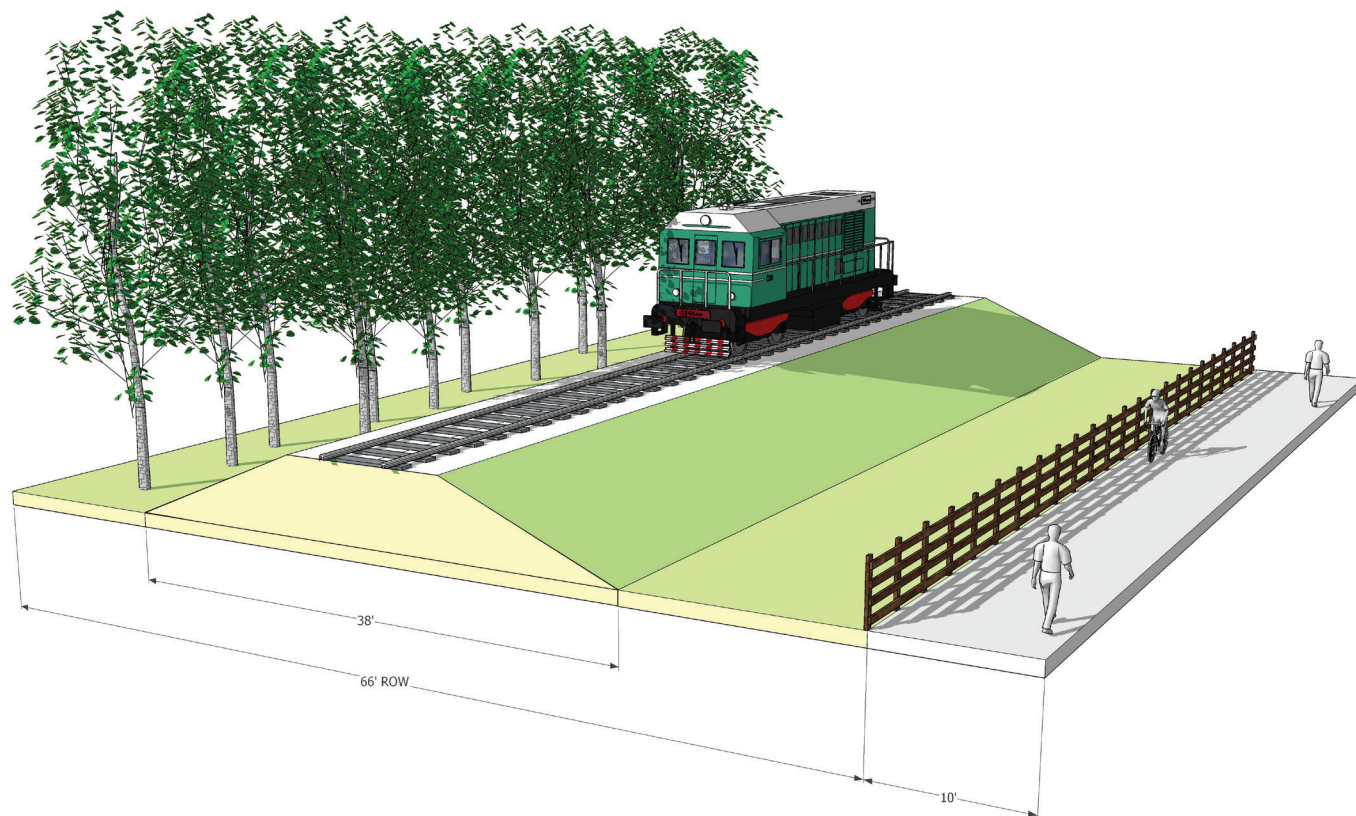


Figure 4-4. N. Main Street Proposed Typical Section

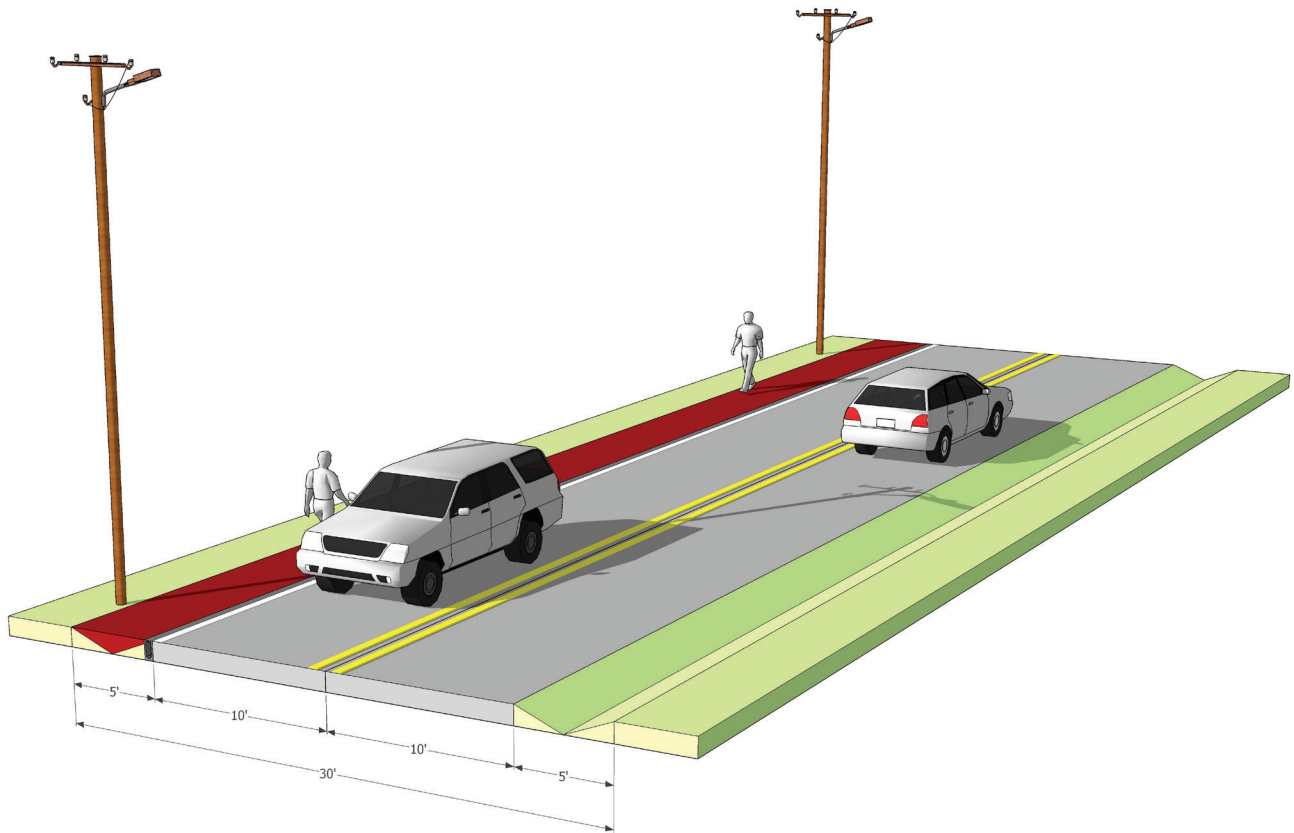


Figure 4-5. W. Commerce Street Proposed Typical Section



Figure 4-6. Park Street Pedestrian Crossing: Conceptual Improvement

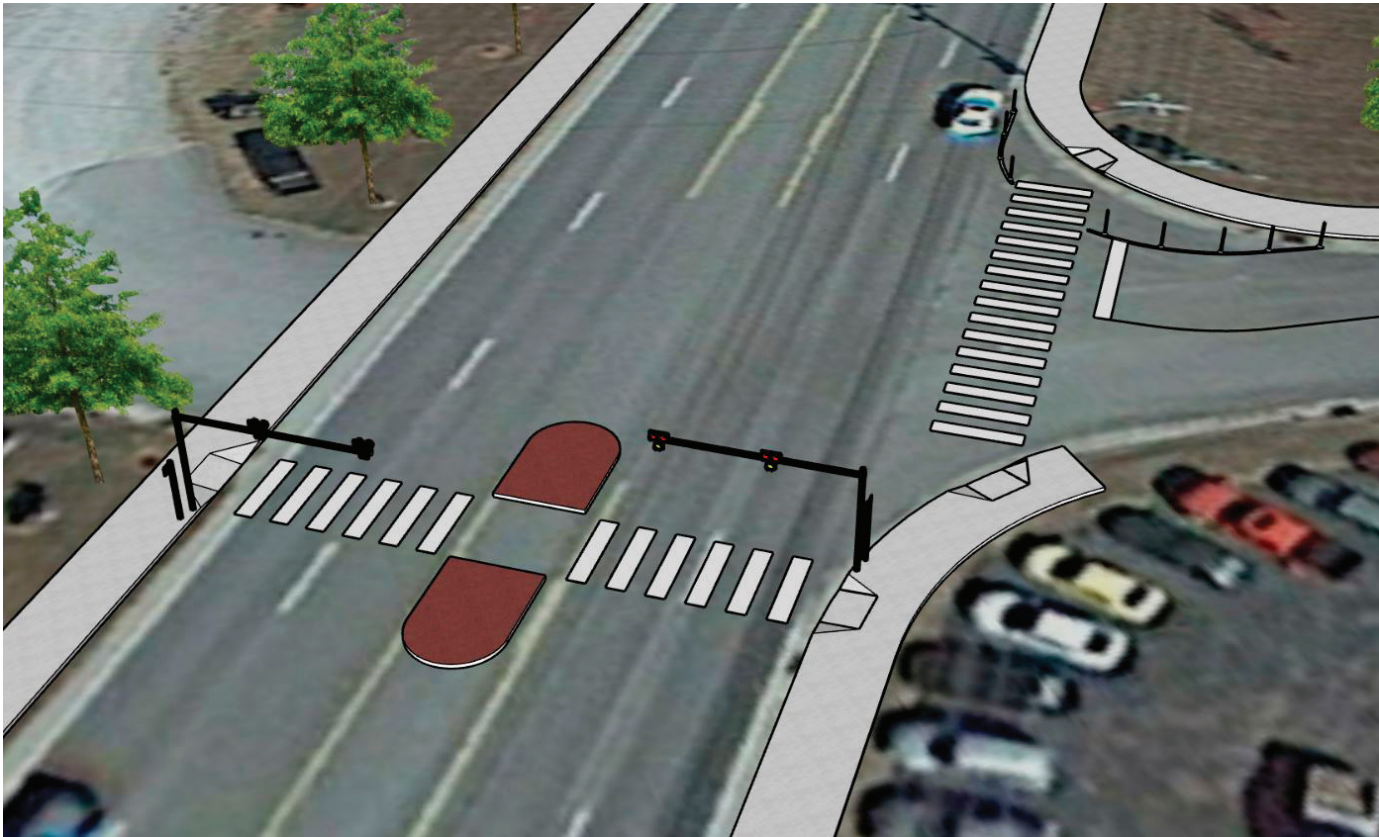
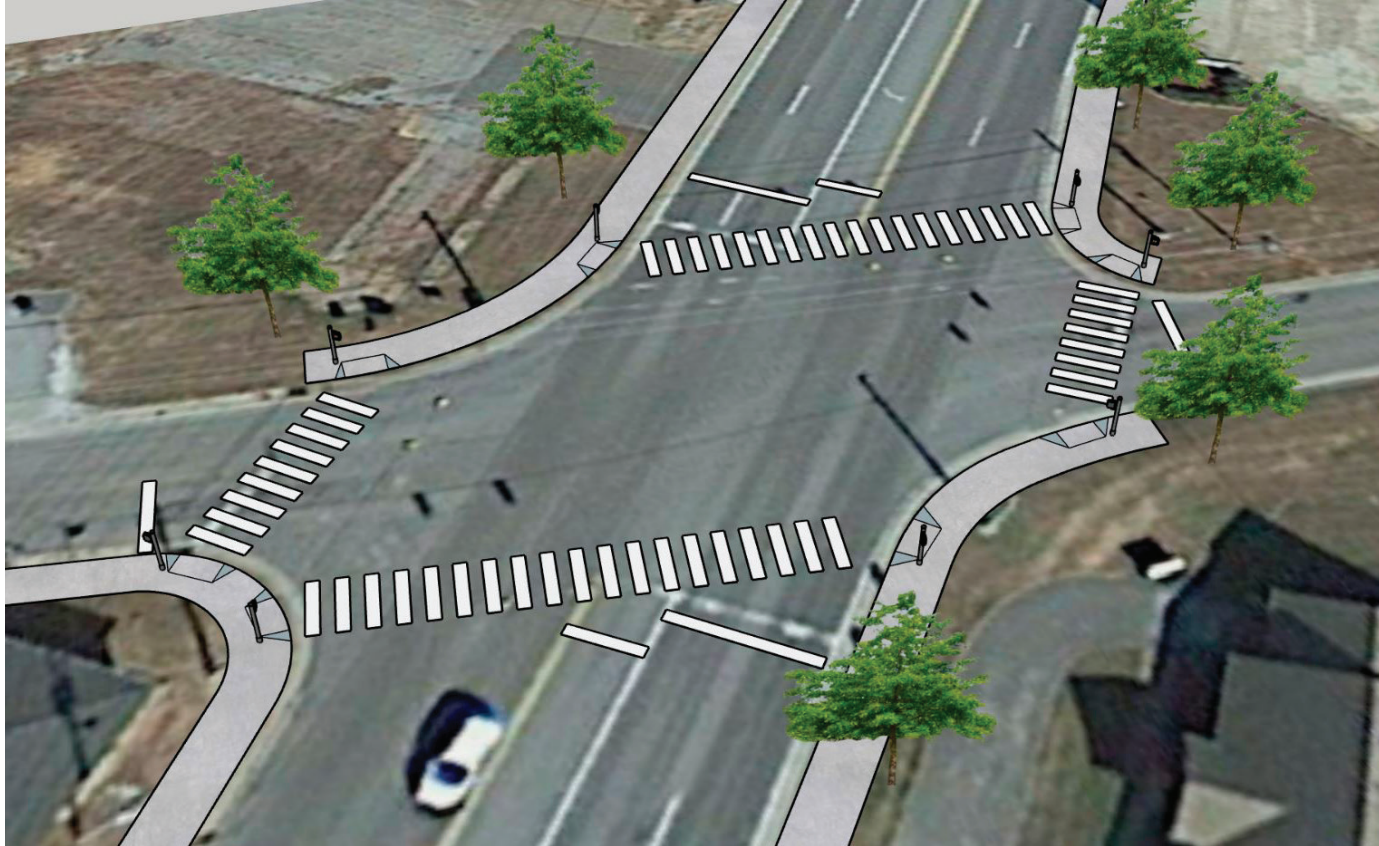


Figure 4-7. Commerce Street Pedestrian Crossing: Conceptual Improvement



5. IMPLEMENTATION

The master plan provides an overall framework for pedestrian and bicycling improvements in Wartburg. Importantly, within the overall framework, there is a great deal of flexibility in terms of project scoping, phasing, and funding.

A PROJECT COST ESTIMATES

The cost estimates are planning level assessments for the four primary improvement areas. It is important to note that although the cost estimates cover the entire extent of the street and crossing improvements proposed in the master plan, each improvement can be further separated into smaller projects as needed, for example, a single block length for a street improvement or a single crossing. Table 5-1 summarizes the cost estimates, and for planning purposes, indicates the required local match if the project received federal funding.

At approximately 1.1 miles in length and \$3.4 million in costs, US 43 represents the most expensive recommended improvement area. Again, though, the improvements can be phased along US 43 in much smaller and targeted segments. For example, adding sidewalks on the east side of US 43 between Commerce Street and Park Street would cost approximately \$667,300. The three other improvement areas range in cost from approximately \$545,900 to \$2,460,204.

B PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

While project prioritization and phasing are driven by funding availability in many instances, there are other important project selection criteria that can help inform the decision-making process. Other criteria or factors include:

- **Safety** (e.g., documented or perceived high crash/risk locations);
- **Access and mobility** (e.g., network connectivity gaps or barriers); and
- **Quality of life** (e.g., proximity to activity centers).

Evaluating, even at a high level, the principal recommendations in the master plan against the criteria suggests that the US 43 and W. Commerce Street improvements should be considered high priorities. If one incorporates cost into the prioritization criteria and determines that pedestrian access to businesses on US 43 is less important, however, the Rails-with-Trails project may be a viable alternative to some of the US 43 improvements. Table 5-2 provides an overview of the proposed improvements relative to safety, access and mobility, and quality of life.

Table 5-1. Planning Level Cost Estimates

Project Name	Termini (From)	Termini (To)	Environmental/ Preliminary Engineering	Design Engineering/Right- of-Way/Utilities	Construction/ Mobilization/Admin	TOTAL
US 43/SR 6	E. Main St.	Tommy Augustin Ave.	\$105,000	\$220,630	\$3,096,668	\$3,422,300
					Federal Funds	\$2,477,334
					Local Match	\$944,964
Rails-with-Trails	Kitty Meyer Ln.	McGee Ln.	\$80,000	\$142,000	\$2,238,204	\$2,460,204
					Federal Funds	\$1,790,563
					Local Match	\$669,641
N. Main Street	W. Commerce St.	Vines Circle	\$26,000	\$42,300	\$477,561	\$545,900
					Federal Funds	\$382,049
					Local Match	\$163,812
W. Commerce St.	N. Main St.	US 43	\$30,000	\$46,000	\$703,040	\$779,000
					Federal Funds	\$562,432
					Local Match	\$216,608

C POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

While walking and bicycling facilities are typically included as part of larger public infrastructure and private development projects, increasingly, communities are undertaking targeted bicycle and pedestrian improvements to retrofit commercial districts and neighborhoods for economic and community development purposes. Following is a brief overview of several potential funding sources.

- **Multimodal Corridor Projects:** The most cost-effective way to implement the recommendations in the master plan is to coordinate walking and bicycling improvements with either local or state road projects during the project planning and programming processes. Opportunities for coordinating projects include:
 - » Corridor resurfacing;
 - » Corridor reconstruction;
 - » Intersection and safety improvements;
 - » Drainage improvements; and
 - » Utility projects.
- **State/Federal Transportation Grant Programs:** There are also grant opportunities at the state and federal levels aimed at bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Table 5-3 summarizes several programs, including eligible activities.

D SUMMARY

The City of Loretto is already taking steps to improve the community’s quality of life by making it safer to walk and bike throughout the city. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan builds on the recent efforts and defines a network of walkways and bikeways that can grow flexibly and incrementally to meet the city’s needs. Some improvements are, perhaps, more visionary in nature, for example, the citywide Rails-with-Trails, while others, such as sidewalks along US 43, can be developed over time in smaller segments. Regardless, targeting investments that simultaneously achieve economic and community development goals will largely determine the success of the master plan. Cities and towns are made up of multiple centers – including commercial areas, civic places, school campuses, and neighborhoods. Improving the safety, convenience, and comfort of each of these centers for walking and bicycling and the connections between them will help strengthen the local economy and allow Loretto to sustain its long-term vision as a great place to live.

Table 5-2. Potential Prioritization Criteria

Project Name	SAFETY (high crash/high risk locations)	ACCESS & MOBILITY (network gaps or barriers)	QUALITY OF LIFE (proximity to activity centers)
US 43/SR 6	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
Rails-with-Trails	MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH
N. Main Str.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
E. Commerce St.	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH

Table 5-3. Federal and State Grant Programs

Program Name/ Administering Agency	Examples of Eligible Activities	Funding	How to Apply
Transportation Alternatives Program/Tennessee Department of Transportation	On- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and safe routes to school projects.	80 percent federal with a 20 percent non-federal construction share. Non-federal share must be provided as a hard cash match, and all preliminary engineering (PE), design and right-of-way expenditures are solely the responsibility of the local governmental agency.	"Application cycle is open from July 1 to October 3 each year. Application materials can be accessed on the TDOT website: www.tn.gov/tdot/topic/tap "
Multimodal Access Grant/Tennessee Department of Transportation	Pedestrian crossing improvements, sidewalks,paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, ADA, multi-use paths, and pedestrian lighting.	95 percent state with a 5 percent local match. Total project costs must not exceed \$1 million.	Previous application cycle closed on January 15, 2016. Application materials can be accessed on the TDOT website: www.tn.gov/tdot/topic/multimodal-multimodal-access-grant
Spot Safety Improvement Program/Tennessee Department of Transportation	Signalization, school flashing signals, and flashing beacons on state routes or at intersections with state routes only.	Depending on the type of work, 80 percent to 100 percent federal with corresponding local match.	Application materials can be accessed on the TDOT website: www.tdot.tn.gov/PublicDocuments/LocalPrograms/FundingGuidance/SpotSafetyGuidelines.pdf
Recreational Trails Program/Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation	Land acquisition for trails, trail maintenance, trail construction, trail rehabilitation and trail head support facilities.	80 percent federal with a 20 percent non-federal match. Maximum award is \$200,000.	Previous application cycle closed on April 22, 2016. Application materials can be accessed on the TDEC website: tn.gov/environment/article/res-recreation-educational-services-grants
Access to Health through Healthy Built Environments/Tennessee Department of Health	Greenways, trailhead signs, sidewalks, bikeways, crosswalks, and pedestrian/bicycle traffic signs/signals.	100 percent state with a maximum award of \$85,000, including a maximum of \$80,000 for design/construction. All applications must include an evaluation framework.	Application announcement is in the fall of each year. Materials from the prior year can be accessed on the TDH website: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/funding-opportunities/RFA__Access_to_Health_34301-17618_Final_Posting.pdf
Project Diabetes/Tennessee Department of Health	Greenways connecting schools and neighborhoods and park walking trails.	There are two levels of Project Diabetes funding. Category A grants are funded for up to 3 years for a maximum amount of \$150,000 per year. Category B grants are funded for up to 2 years for a maximum amount of \$15,000 per year	Current funding cycle is for 2016-2019. Additional information can be accessed on the TDH website: www.tn.gov/health/article/project-diabetes