

# 3 Planning Process

## Introduction

The planning process for the master plan was designed with town staff to identify and engage as many stakeholders as possible. This provided the project team insight into local knowledge, wants and needs of the community. This process also created a sense of ownership in the project which should prove beneficial, as the system is implemented. Through this process the project team has developed a master plan that is very specific to the Town of Zebulon reflecting community input.

In addition to the feedback from various stakeholders and the community, the project team gathered critical data from Wake County GIS, the Town of Zebulon's Planning Department, Public Works Department, and Parks and Recreation Department.

All of the data that was gathered was then field verified through site visits, GIS information and aerial photography.

## Planning Jurisdiction

The planning limits for the master plan was the Town of Zebulon's ETJ. While the ETJ defined the limits for the master plan the project team took into account a greenway plan completed by Wake County in 2002 as well as greenway and pedestrian plans being made by neighboring communities including Wendell, Knightdale and Raleigh. Several of the corridors identified inside the ETJ directly relate and would be an extension of the trails identified by the 2002 Wake County plan.

## Initial Mapping

The planning process began with the review of existing mapping and relevant documents including the town's Transportation Plan and the 2002 Wake County Greenway Plan.

Base maps for the master plan were created based on Wake County GIS information.



*Greenway Information Booth at Christmas Parade*



*Upper Neuse Greenway - Raleigh, NC*



*Field Investigation - Wedgewood Neighborhood to Gannon Ave.*



Zebulon Farmers Market - photo courtesy of Debbie Wheless

## John Rex Endowment

The Zebulon Greenway Master Plan was funded by a John Rex Endowment Grant under the project name “Watering the Zebulon Food Desert”. The grant was awarded in June 2014. The Town was labelled a food desert and the purpose of this grant is to fight this label by creating an environment that promotes healthy options within the underserved community to increase access to local fresh foods and address the lack of pedestrian sidewalks and transportation downfalls. The grant also provided technical assistance and guidance from Active Living by Design (ALBD). Throughout the process the town provided ALBD interim and final reports.

## Community Engagement

Engaging the residents of the Zebulon community throughout the process took several forms. It was determined early on that multiple opportunities should be made available to keep the community informed, solicit input and get the community involved in the process. To that end, the project team developed several methods for the community to receive information and provide input. Three community meetings were held during the process. The first two meetings were held on the same day. One was in the morning and the other at the end of the day. During these meetings site information was exhibited and discussed. The evening open house was better attended. The third was also held in the evening and at this meeting the project team had preliminary corridors illustrated for comment and feedback.

In addition to the open house sessions, the public was provided opportunities to comment via surveys handed out at meetings and available at town hall as well as the community center. These surveys were also available on line, via a dedicated project website and through a link on the town’s website. There was a dedicated email or the project as well as dedicated project email. Social media was not incorporated into the process. The determination was that it would not be effective given the overall age of the community. The effort to engage the public and get initial comment began at the town’s Christmas Parade where the project team set up a booth at either end of the parade route to begin the education and awareness process prior to the actual planning process.

Town staff worked with local business to partner in getting the word out including Arbys, which placed flyers on their serving trays and a local Papa John’s Pizza, that taped flyers to the tops of their pizza boxes.

Informational flyers were sent out to Town residents in their utility bills and notices for public meetings

## Meetings

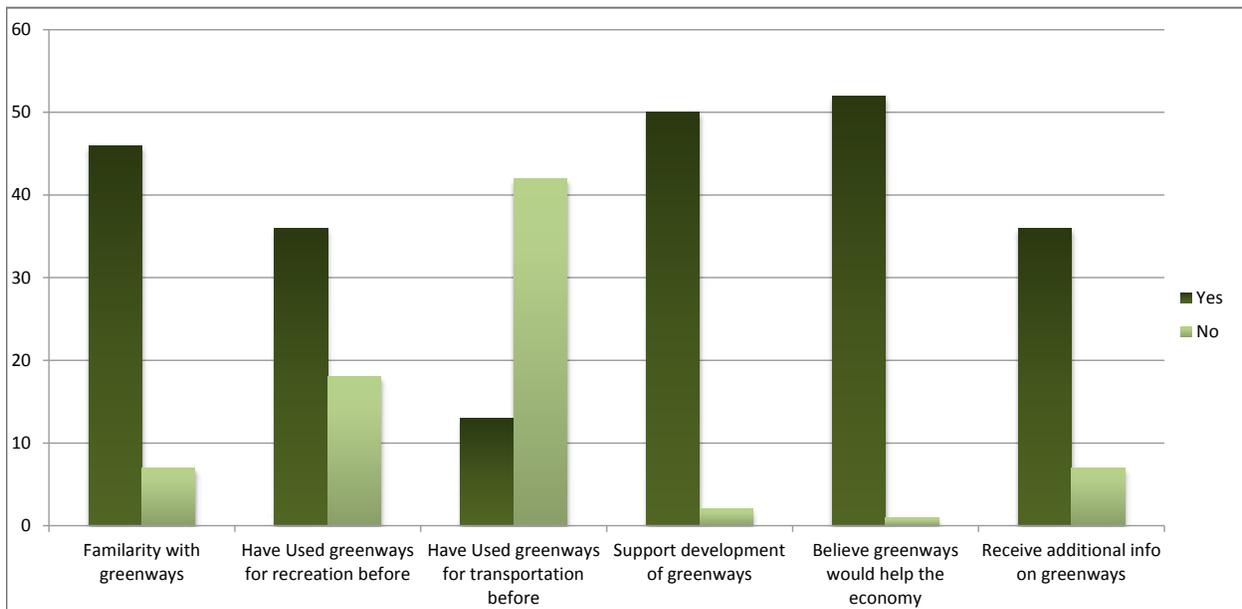
The project team met with various community groups and organizations as well as presented regularly to the Greenway Advisory Committee and Board of Commissioners.

In addition to input received from the community, the project team met with several other stakeholders and groups during the process including:

- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
- Zebulon Youth Council
- Representatives of Weaver’s Pond development
- Representatives of the Triangle East Business Park development
- Active Living by Design



Community Open House



Graph of Survey Summary

## Survey Summary

Over the course of the planning process 54 surveys were filled out by residents. Most of these were filled out at the Open House public meetings and others were picked up at the Community Center, and Town Hall. Surveys were also distributed at the Christmas Parade.

The surveys defined the communities familiarity with greenways, asked what amenities people were interested in seeing along a greenway, and what outdoor recreation activities the community currently participates in. Overwhelmingly the surveys demonstrated widespread public support for greenways and bicycle / pedestrian improvements.

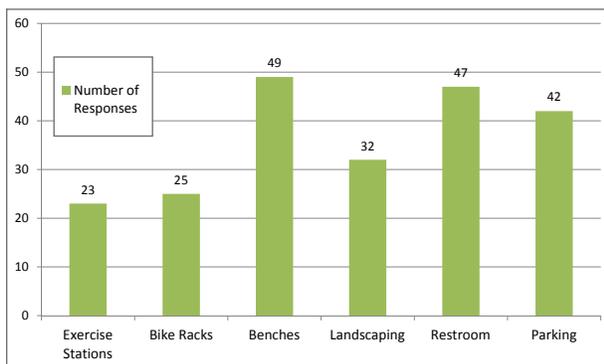


Chart of Requested Amenities

## Website

During the planning process residents could access surveys and review updated documents as they were developed on a project website accessed directly at [www.zebulongreenway.com](http://www.zebulongreenway.com) or through a link on the Town of Zebulon's web site. This enabled residents to keep up to date on the project, find out about upcoming meetings and review proposed plans.

## Site Investigations

Once potential corridors for greenway trails were identified using GIS mapping and aerial photography, site investigations were conducted. The project team and town staff rode and/or walked each of the identified corridors as well as the street network to determine recommended locations. These site investigations brought to light the actual experience one might have on the greenway trail or on a multiuse path adjacent to a major road or through a neighborhood. Further, these visits provided the project team further insight as to current conditions and level of construction requirements for each corridor.

Preliminary analysis of the corridors and potential trail / bike / pedestrian improvements included the need for easements, and right of way acquisition. In addition to the need for easements or other land dedication, the master plan provides information on widths of easements required to construct and maintain the trail as well as providing amenities and potentially protecting open space. This information will help guide the town in acquisition of access easements, land or right of ways and the development of each greenway segment.

**Corridors**

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Grant Objectives - Access to Food	1	1	3	5	1	2	2	2	2	1
Grant Objectives - Healthy Living	4	3	5	4	3	4	1	3	4	4
Potential Cost - Construction	2	1	5	1	1	3	3	2	3	3
Potential Cost - Easements	4	4	5	3	4	4	4	2	3	1
Usage - Potential for Immediate Use	4	2	5	5	2	4	2	2	2	2
Usage - Access to Nature	4	4	3	4	2	3	2	1	3	4
Potential for Private Partnership	4	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	5	4
Private Property Impact	3	4	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>

**Top 4 Priority Corridors**

*Matrix of Prioritization of Trail Corridors*

## Prioritization

Following the identification of the ten greenway corridors the project team and town staff conducted an evaluation of each corridor to determine which of the corridors best met the evaluation criteria as defined by the Rex Endowment grant as well as the project objective of connecting destinations. The criteria used in this evaluation included the following questions:

- Grant Objectives / Will the trail and other improvements provide access to food and promotion of healthy living?
- Potential Costs / What will be the costs associated with trails and improvements including both the cost of construction as well as the cost of acquiring easements?
- Potential for Use / Will the trail or pedestrian improvements be immediately effective?
- Private Participation / Are there opportunities to partner on the implementation of the trail or improvements?
- Nature Access / Does the trail or other improvements provided residents access to nature?
- Property Impact / Will implementation negatively impact adjacent properties?

While not overly scientific, this evaluation helped quantify the attributes and challenges associated with greenway development in each corridor.

The corridors that satisfied the evaluation criteria to the greatest extent were corridors 3, 4 and 6.

This evaluation and the selection of the top three priority corridors was subsequently presented to the Project Advisory Committee for comment and approval.

It should be noted that within a particular corridor there can be several projects. These projects can be a combination of trail as well as pedestrian / bicycle improvements along existing roads and streets. Two projects are identified in the Implementation section of this report and are evaluated as to potential cost of construction.