

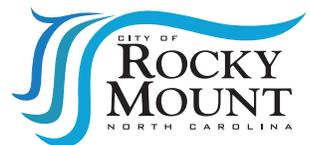


# MOVE Rocky Mount

Creating **M**ultimodal **O**pportunities through **V**alue **E**ngineering



TIGER Grant Application 2016  
April 29, 2016  
City of Rocky Mount, North Carolina





Creating **M**ultimodal **O**pportunities through **V**alue **E**ngineering

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Introduction.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Project Highlights .....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Project Description.....</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Project Location.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Project Parties.....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Grant Funds and Sources.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Selection Criteria .....</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Results of Benefits and Costs Analysis (BCA).....</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Project Readiness .....</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Required Approvals.....</u>	<u>23</u>

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Rocky Mount, North Carolina is pleased to submit *MOVE Rocky Mount* for consideration in the eighth round of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program Grant. *MOVE Rocky Mount* is a multimodal transportation project which will positively transform the existing conditions in and around adjacent neighborhoods that are home to approximately 5,000 residents. *MOVE Rocky Mount* is about creating **M**ultimodal **O**pportunities through **V**alue **E**ngineering. Value engineering is an examination of function that employs critical thinking, innovation, and vision to existing structures in order to achieve the best and highest use. *MOVE Rocky Mount* is a visionary approach to street improvements and adaptive reuse of an abandoned rail line to revitalize the core of our City.

Rocky Mount is located one hour east of the capital city of Raleigh at the intersection of Interstate 95 and US Highway 64 (designated future I-495) and is a participant of the White House Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. *MOVE Rocky Mount* aligns with the City's mission to advance community well-being, safety and quality of life by delivering exceptional public services.

In the 19th century, Rocky Mount was founded on transportation, textiles, and tobacco. Like many other industrial towns, the City experienced an economic downturn in the 1990's. However, over the last several years, there has been significant investment in and around our Downtown core. The *MOVE Rocky Mount* project will move traffic from US 64 into our Downtown and better connect amenities along our investment corridors. *MOVE Rocky Mount* will unite recent investments and support catalytic redevelopment to make Downtown, once again, a prosperous economic engine for our community.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

 **"Monk to Mill" Trail**  
Creation of the Monk to Mill Trail as a part of *MOVE Rocky Mount* will connect area residents and their families with a safe, non-motorist route to Center City destinations. Multimodal opportunities along retail corridors will spur the local economy and provide an attractive amenity the City currently lacks.

### Complete Streets on Gateway Corridors



Complete Street enhancements will be implemented on Falls Rd, Peachtree St, Church St, and Atlantic Ave which serve as transportation to and from destinations in and around Downtown Rocky Mount. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists will enjoy improvements such as new bicycle lanes, sidewalks, bus shelters, and traffic calming devices. The *MOVE Rocky Mount* project will consolidate the number of traffic lanes to slow down drivers and utilize the additional space for sidewalks, dedicated bicycle lanes with buffers, and on-street parking around retail centers.

### Greenspace Development

 *MOVE Rocky Mount* includes the addition of urban open space along the Monk to Mill Trail and the Complete Street improvements. The development of greenspace areas in the commercial district will be a quality of life enhancement for residents and visitors.

### Roundabout at US HWY 64 and Falls/Peachtree Off-Ramp



For safer and easier maneuvering, the *MOVE Rocky Mount* project will incorporate a roundabout off of the US 64 exit at Falls Rd and Peachtree St. Motorists exiting the highway will not have to face two lanes of traffic to make a left-hand turn.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Overview

The goal of *MOVE Rocky Mount* is to improve livability and continue to build opportunities for jobs and investment in the core of Rocky Mount by enhancing multimodal transportation connections between previous successful investments such as the Helen P. Gay Train Station Renovation, Braswell Library, the Imperial Centre, the Sports Complex, the Douglas Block Redevelopment, the Main St Streetscape, and Jack Laughery Veterans Park. The completion of *MOVE Rocky Mount* will also support current and future redevelopment projects such as the Rocky Mount Mills redevelopment, Edgecombe Community College’s Biotech Building, OIC Clinic, Happy Hill neighborhood redevelopment, Discovery Park, the new Southern Bank Headquarters, redevelopment of the New Southern Cottonseed Plant site, and the Rocky Mount Downtown Community Facility (RMDCF), a 165,000 square foot indoor sports facility and community event center. *MOVE Rocky Mount* is broken down into two main project elements:

#### “Monk to Mill” Trail

1. Rocky Mount Mills Railroad from the Tar River to Main St
2. Washington St from Thomas St to Monk St

#### Multimodal Complete Street Enhancements

3. Falls Rd from US 64 Bypass to Franklin St
4. Peachtree St from US 64 Bypass to Thomas Street (via Franklin St)
5. Atlantic Ave from US 64 Bypass to East Raleigh Blvd
6. Church St from US 64 Bypass to Falls Rd



The users of *MOVE Rocky Mount* include citizens of our community who live in the nearby neighborhoods, employees of the central commercial district, college students in downtown venues, patrons of restaurants, and visitors to Rocky Mount attractions. Whether walking, biking, riding a bus, driving an automobile, or simply living in the area, this project will positively impact all users.

Rocky Mount citizens frequently ask for safe biking facilities and additional sidewalks and want to revitalize Downtown Rocky Mount. Downtown and Rocky Mount Mills investors want to enhance the travel experience along the connecting corridors. Many people in the area, who must walk or bike for basic transportation, are seeking safer travel conditions with slower traffic. The *MOVE Rocky Mount* project will address all of these concerns from the various stakeholder groups.

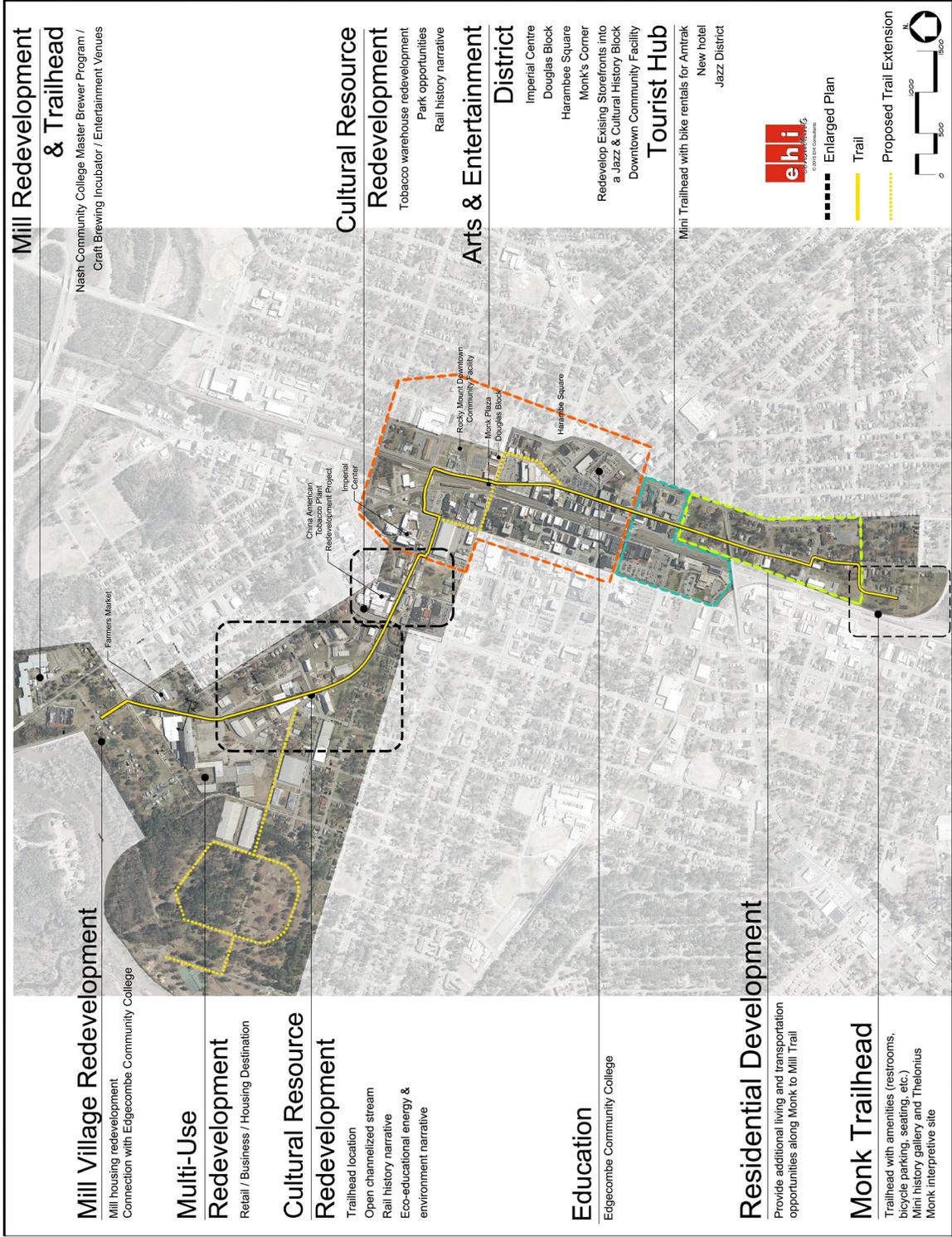
### **Monk to Mill Trail**

The TIGER grant will be used to construct a greenway and urban trail project, which will bring new life to an underutilized former industrial area and connect existing greenway and parks infrastructure. In North Carolina, as well as throughout the nation there have been conversions of inactive railroad corridors to multi-use trails. Nationally, this movement is known as “Rails to Trails”. These conversions have transformed vacant disparaging landscapes to vibrant linear parks for the pleasure and service of community citizens. The City of Rocky Mount “Rails to Trails” project, first identified in the 2007 Rocky Mount Bicycle Plan (see appendix), has come to be known as the “Monk to Mill Trail” (Trail). The name “Monk to Mill” refers to a city park dedicated to Thelonious Monk and the Rocky Mount Mills, the second cotton mill built in North Carolina. The primary anchor points of the Monk to Mill Trail are Monk Park, Downtown, and Rocky Mount Mills. The Trail will connect many activity centers, public facilities, and points of historical note.

The Monk to Mill Trail between Rocky Mount Mills and Main St will provide an off-road bicycle and pedestrian connection between Rocky Mount Mills and Downtown. The Monk to Mill Trail will reactivate the railroad spur right-of-way that served industries such as Rocky Mount Mills, New Southern Cottonseed Oil, Rocky Mount Lumber Company, China American Tobacco and Imperial Tobacco. Where the railroad spur ends at Grace St, the Trail will transition into an “urban trail” that continues along Main St and Washington St until it reaches Monk Park.

The Trail will function as a transportation facility in the inner City where many people do not have vehicles. There are only 1,693 registered vehicles for the nearly 5,000 residents living in the project area. The Trail will connect with the City sidewalk system, proposed bicycle routes and the public transit service, Tar River Transit (TRT). The TRT has ordered a fleet of new buses equipped with bicycle racks. The Trail will also enhance adjacent neighborhoods and encourage residents to walk the Trail for exercise, pleasure, and as an alternate method of transportation.

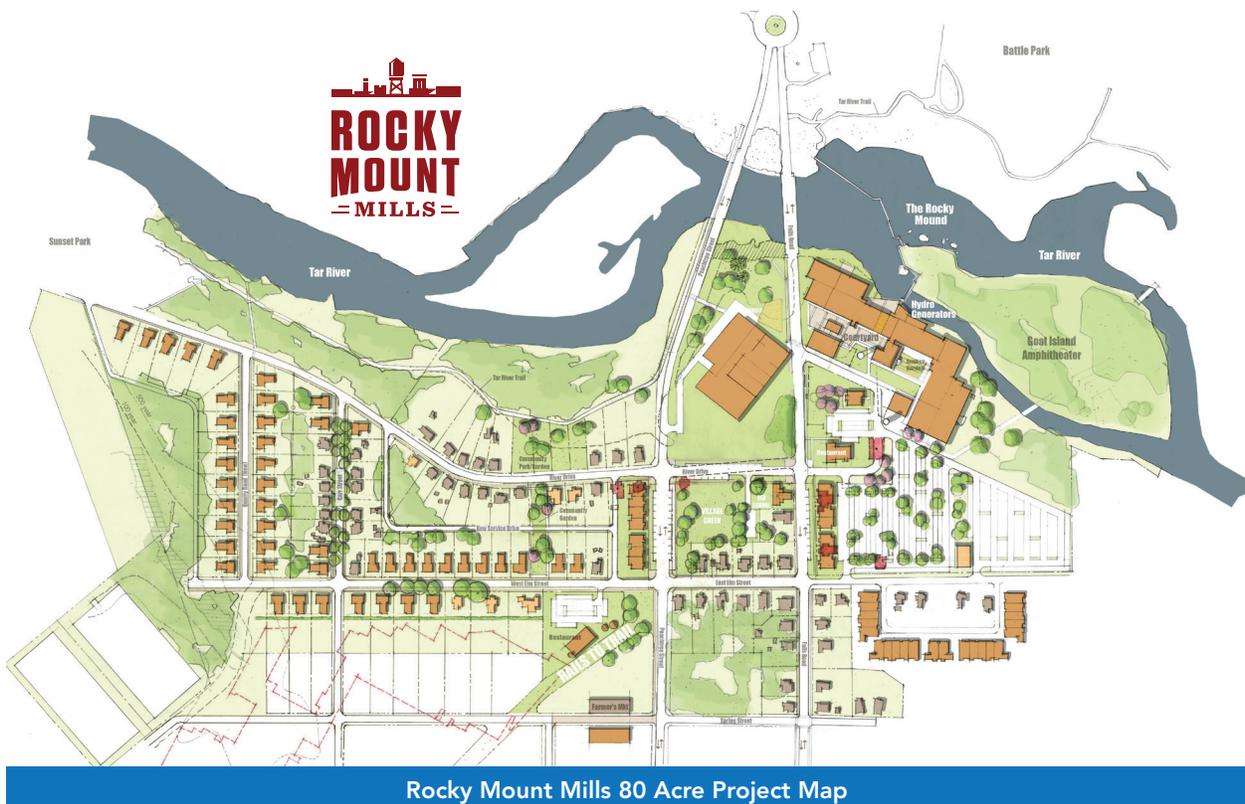
The new Trail will connect the commercial downtown area with the arts and sciences resources of the Imperial Centre and the Tar River Trail at Battle Park. Additionally, the Trail will provide connection to the Farmers Market and the Veterans Memorial at Jack Laughery Park. The City is also pursuing federal funding opportunities for a bicycle share program allowing visitors to the Sports Complex, Rocky Mount Downtown Community Facility, and transit passengers to use the Trail and visit the Mill, Imperial Centre, and future attractions.



Monk To Mill Aerial Map

## The Trailheads

Rocky Mount Mills, the northern trailhead of the Monk to Mill Trail, is undergoing an exciting transformation courtesy of Capitol Broadcasting Company who envision the Mill and Mill Village site as space for a craft-brewing incubator, a co-working space for entrepreneurs, single-family homes and apartments, office, and retail. Capitol has attracted a group of beer artisans and new residents who would not only work in microbreweries inside the former textile mill, but live in the renovated Mill Village houses as well. Benefits of this redevelopment include the creation of jobs and tax base growth, as well as the attraction of more tourists and entrepreneurs to the area. The first brewery of the Brewmill opened January 2016 and the grand opening of the second brewery is set for late spring 2016. Currently, there is no designated walking trail from the Mill Village to Downtown, which is a missed opportunity for visitors of Rocky Mount Mills to easily commute to other area attractions and a commercial district.



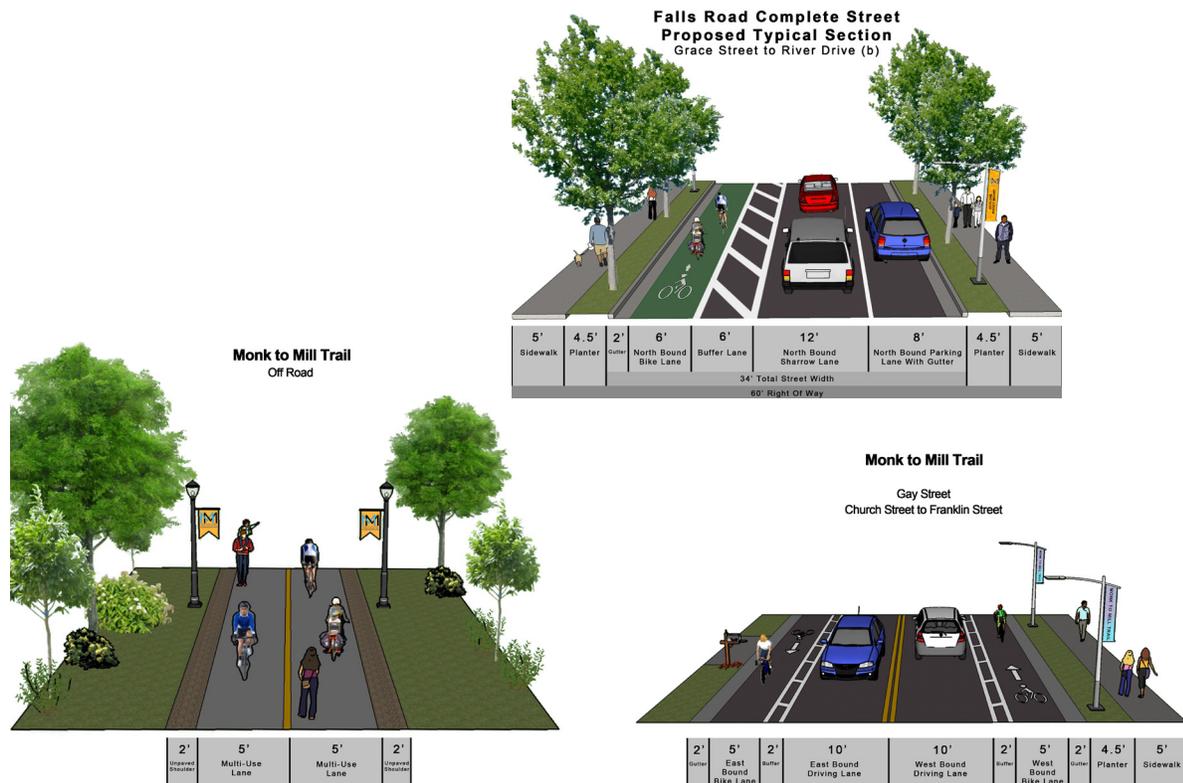
Downtown Rocky Mount and specifically current and future public facilities like the Imperial Centre of Arts and Sciences, the RMDCF, Veterans Memorial Park, and Depot Park indicate the central anchor point of the Trail. Complemented by a \$6.5M investment in streetscape improvements in 2011, Depot Park is the transformation of a CSX railroad loading dock into a multi-use public–open space, ideal for outdoor covered markets and concerts. The current shed will undergo a roof replacement, renovations for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, lead paint encapsulation, and landscaping upon receipt of TIGER funding.



Monk Park, located in the Around the Wye neighborhood (also known locally as Around the "Y") is a five-acre park that includes a playground, picnic pavilion, lighted basketball court and multi-purpose field. Thelonious Monk Park was founded in 1989 and was so named for the Rocky Mount native son who is often regarded as one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time and a pioneer of modern jazz. Monk Park is the southern trailhead of the Monk to Mill Trail.

### Multimodal Complete Street Enhancements

This project element encompasses four of the primary corridors connecting US 64 to Downtown Rocky Mount and connects major educational, health and wellness opportunities, employment, housing redevelopment target areas, and cultural centers within the center city. *MOVE Rocky Mount* will improve multimodal capacity, reduce speeds, and enhance safety and aesthetics of the corridors. Such augmentations include streetscape enhancements, sidewalk improvements, pedestrian signals and crossing improvements, bus shelters, bicycle racks for buses, bicycle safety measures, drainage improvements and various other measures to improve safety and livability. At present, the roads identified for *MOVE Rocky Mount* are primary roads in and around Downtown that have no bicycle lanes. The Complete Streets conversion would help reduce speeds and provide recreational opportunities for residents in adjacent neighborhoods such as the Mill Village, Holly Street, Happy Hill, and Around the Wye. Residents within these neighborhoods will be provided with more inviting alternatives for commuting to work, religious and educational institutions, shopping and dining. Specific details about the work proposed for each corridor can be found in the Detailed Statement of Work (see appendix).



## Ladders of Opportunity

As a community of approximately 58,000 residents, we continue to address the impact of the Great Recession, facing a 20% poverty rate, which is 3 percent higher than the state average of 17.2%, and an 8.1% unemployment rate in February 2016 compared to 5.5% for the state. In the project area, most households were making less than the median household income, approximately \$48,000 in 2015.

In 2009, Forbes Magazine identified Rocky Mount and the Twin County area as one of the Most Impoverished Areas in the United States, serving as a wakeup call for our leaders to increase economic development efforts and quality of life. A regional visioning and planning process identified quality of life in disadvantaged neighborhoods and health as to important areas of work, which will be improved by the *MOVE Rocky Mount* project.

We are making strides to create a new reality, and ensure our survival and future economic prosperity by working through the challenges below:

- Dilapidated historic infrastructure;
- Brownfields and extensive vacant properties both residential and industrial;
- Underutilized and blighted Downtown conditions;
- Demographic shifts in the region;
- High unemployment and low labor market participation
- Regional economic and educational disparity;
- Out-migration of skilled workers and talented youth



**Connect:** The proposed street improvements, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes, additional bus shelters, and improved pedestrian crosswalks, will provide multiple forms of access for young people and adults without cars to access the existing and developing amenities and services in central Rocky Mount. Currently, the lack of safe bicycle lanes, high-speed one-way streets, and a lack of pedestrian accommodations make it unsafe or impractical to travel on foot or by bicycle from some of Rocky Mount's most economically distressed neighborhoods to Downtown Rocky Mount. Streets and trails included in this proposal will connect people to healthy activities and a wide range of economic and social opportunities from healthcare, education and groceries to Boys and Girls Club facilities, YMCA, Sports Complex, parks, greenways and the Tar River Paddle Trail.

**Work:** Improved transportation options in these corridors will also connect more residents to both new and existing employment opportunities. The proposed Downtown Community Facility will provide 19 new full-time facility operations jobs and has the potential to create 71 additional ancillary jobs. Rocky Mount Mills and new college facilities will also bring additional jobs into the Central City. Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) offers a regular Transportation Construction Class supported by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the City of Rocky Mount. This is a ready group of local low-income residents who can be hired for roadway and trail construction jobs.

**Revitalize:** A historic shift is taking place in Rocky Mount regarding the location of post-secondary education. Edgecombe Community College recently completed a 45,000 square foot classroom building on its Downtown campus in March 2016. Many of the healthcare related programs that are currently housed on the Tarboro, NC campus, 15 miles away, will be relocated to Downtown Rocky Mount. Nash Community College, whose main campus is outside of the western boundary of the city, plans to house its newly created brewing program within the city limits, on the Rocky Mount Mills site. In addition to the Brewing Institute, Nash Community College is in the process of moving entrepreneurial programs to Downtown's Main St including a retail learning laboratory and restaurant where their cosmetology and culinary students can demonstrate their skills. North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount's only four-year college, is also actively exploring options to relocate student housing and academic programs to Downtown. This convergence of educational institutions in a central location provides increased access for inner city residents, and provides a more inclusive approach to revitalization. The influx of residents and foot traffic will provide viability for Downtown storefronts and will therefore generate interest and investment in these vacant retail spaces.



OIC Highway Construction Class



Dr. Monique Brown Downtown Storefront



Braswell Memorial Library

## PROJECT LOCATION

Rocky Mount, a member of the Rocky Mount Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, straddles the Edgecombe and Nash County line, which is defined by a railroad track that runs through Downtown. Edgecombe and Nash Counties form the Rocky Mount Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The MSA population is 153,000. Residents within the city limits experience an average commute to work of 19.2 minutes.

Components of *MOVE Rocky Mount* include four arterial corridors with a total length of 4 miles, Washington St, and the inactive Rocky Mount Mills railroad. Elements of *MOVE Rocky Mount* occurring in both counties are outlined below:

Edgecombe County – urban street portion of the Monk to Mill Trail and complete street improvements on Atlantic Ave.

Nash County – rail to trail portion of the Monk to Mill Trail, complete street work on Falls Rd, Peachtree St, Franklin St, and Church St, and the roundabout on Peachtree St.

- Atlantic Ave (NC 97) is a major north-south arterial roadway with four travel lanes (35 mph), curb and gutter, and limited areas of sidewalk.
- Church St (US 301 Bus) is a major north-south arterial roadway with two travel lanes and a turn lane (25 mph), curb and gutter, and sidewalk on two sides for the majority of the street.
- Falls Rd (NC 43 Bus North) is a one-way arterial street from Downtown, which is paired with Peachtree St with two travel lanes (35 mph), curb and gutter, parking, and sidewalk.
- Peachtree St (NC 43 Bus South) is a one-way arterial street into Downtown, which is paired with Falls Rd with two travel lanes (35 mph), curb and gutter, parking, and sidewalk.
- Franklin St (US 301 Bus South) is a major southbound arterial roadway with three travel lanes (25 mph), curb and gutter, and sidewalk on two sides for the majority of the streets. Franklin St and Church St operate as a one-way pair with Church St traffic northbound.
- Rocky Mount Mills railroad was constructed and owned by the Rocky Mount Mills in the mid 1800's. In 1840, the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad (at the time the world's longest railroad) was constructed about one mile east of the Rocky Mount Mills. Development along the new railroad and between the railroad and the Mills set the stage for present day Rocky Mount.
- Washington St is a local street in Downtown Rocky Mount. It generally parallels the north-south CSX railroad. The north end of Washington St starts at the commercial area of the Douglas Block. Monk Park is located at the south end of Washington St in a residential neighborhood at the railroad wye.

## PROJECT PARTIES

MOVE Rocky Mount not only encompasses a sizeable land area, but it also impacts a large group of diverse agencies and organizations representing various income levels, demographics, and interests. Some project parties will have a direct involvement and others have a limited participation, but all have an interest in the success of this TIGER proposal. The following list identifies stakeholders involved in this project application; each supporter or partner has written a letter of support that can be found in the appendix.

Agency	Interest Description	Relevance
City of Rocky Mount	Lead Agency, Financial Participant, Local Government	The City of Rocky Mount prioritizes the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community for its citizens
US Congressman G. K. Butterfield	Supporter	Major sponsor of Main St Streetscape Renovation
Secretary Susan Kluttz	Supporter	Secretary of NC Department of Cultural Resources
Rocky Mount Metropolitan Planning Organization	Partner	Lead transportation planning agency responsible for area transportation plans
North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)	Partner	Ownership of state road system
Tar River Transit	Partner	Provider of public transit in Rocky Mount, Edgecombe and Nash Counties
Capitol Broadcasting Company	Partner	Major investor in the Rocky Mount Mills redevelopment and Mill Village Neighborhood along the Monk to Mill Trail
Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Brownfield Consortium	Partner	Administration of grant funding for environmental assessments on brownfield sites in the project area

### Supporters



## GRANT FUNDS AND SOURCES

The TIGER grant request is for \$15,039,000 which includes a pre-construction amount of \$3,688,000 and an \$8,901,000 match to fund the design and construction of various transportation enhancements to improve the appearance and safety of the gateway corridors to Downtown Rocky Mount for all modes of transportation through implementation of the Complete Streets model. The design, remaining right-of-way (ROW), acquisition and construction are to be funded through the TIGER grant. The City is leveraging 37.2% of the total project cost to cover the cost of undergrounding electric lines on Church St, Fall Rd, and Peachtree St, lighting enhancement along corridors, parking enhancements, corridor enhancement reserve account, and Thelonius Monk Park renovations.

### Project Cost

The City of Rocky Mount understands that TIGER projects can be partially funded. If *MOVE Rocky Mount* is not funded as a whole, aspects of the project will not be carried out as quickly and the project will not be the economic catalyst we are proposing if all aspects could be done at once. The \$8,901,000 match for *MOVE Rocky Mount* will come from \$2M in public parking construction and roadway improvements to support the RMDCF and \$800,000 in gas and transportation revenue allocations, NCDOT Powell Bill funds. The 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan allocates \$200,000 in the City’s Capital Improvements Plan for renovations to the playground at Thelonius Monk Park and for ADA accessibility by completion of *MOVE Rocky Mount*. The remainder of match funds (\$5.9M) will come from the City’s electric fund. The City stands by the transformative nature of the entire scope of work described and presents the budget costs for the project components in the table below. For a more detailed cost breakdown, see “Project Budget” in the appendix.

PROJECT ELEMENT	TOTAL
<b>Monk to Mill Trail</b>	
Greenway and Urban Trail	\$1,290,000
Greenspace Development and Stream Restoration	\$950,000
Downtown Parking Enhancements	\$2,160,000
Railroad Park	\$150,000
Thelonius Monk Park Renovations	\$200,000
<i>Total Monk to Mill Trail</i>	\$4,750,000
<b>Complete Streets Project</b>	
Fall Rd/Peachtree St/Franklin St	\$7,100,000
Church St	\$3,650,000
Atlantic Ave/Arlington St	\$8,440,000
<i>Total Complete Streets</i>	\$19,190,000
TOTAL PROJECT	\$23,940,000
<b>Grant Amount Requested</b>	<b>\$15,039,000</b>
<b>Local Match</b>	<b>\$8,901,000</b>

## SELECTION CRITERIA

Receipt of a TIGER grant would significantly impact the City's ability to implement several key strategies identified as regional areas of emphasis as well as address the Department of Transportation's longtime priorities.

### State of Good Repair

Without the proposed capital investment, roadway conditions will remain unchanged. There will be no multimodal or vehicular safety improvements to enhance the mobility and safety of the traveling public and efforts to enhance mobility options for underserved populations surrounding the project area will remain unaddressed. Furthermore, as traffic volumes increase over time, the safety and mobility issues to be addressed by *MOVE Rocky Mount* will become more acute and further inhibit economic growth in the urban core.

Initial capital investment for *MOVE Rocky Mount* is sufficient to construct the project in conformance with City and NCDOT standards. Roadway and sidewalk conditions are monitored through regular condition surveys and prioritized for maintenance based on the results of the surveys. Signal systems follow a regular preventative maintenance program prescribed by NCDOT and industry standards.



Bicycle and pedestrian corridor enhancements will be maintained by NCDOT and the City through traditional transportation funding mechanisms and existing municipal agreements. Project investments will generally reduce maintenance cost through renewal of existing assets and will require no change to the current funding structure.

Landscape enhancements on the corridors and the Monk to Mill Trail will be added to the current inventory of assets maintained by the City's Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. As with similar existing assets, maintenance funding will be through a combination of the City's General Fund and NCDOT's Powell Bill.

*MOVE Rocky Mount* includes drainage improvements to address historical street flooding on Franklin St between Church St and Falls Rd. Frequent localized flooding make streets impassable and require emergency closure. Flooding depths can be in excess of 18 inches across the entire street threatening nearby structures and impeding emergency response.

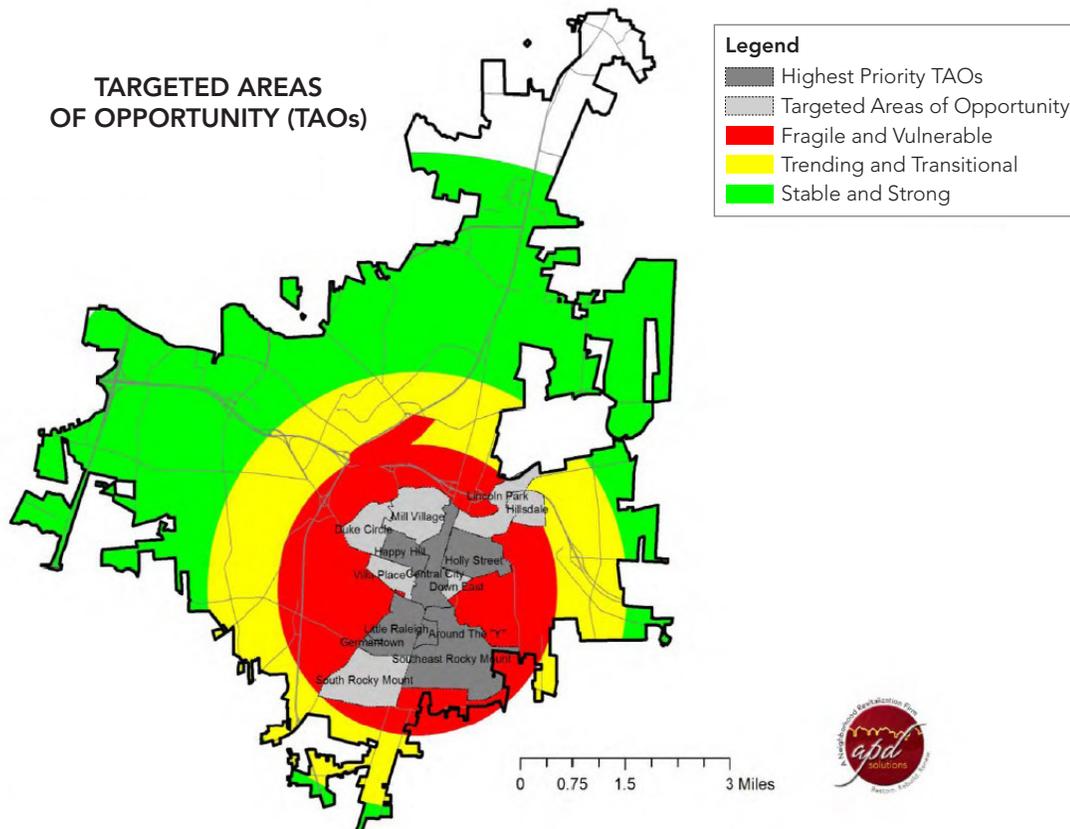
## Economic Competitiveness

The Monk to Mill Trail and proposed street improvements connect two areas of economic redevelopment and job creation: Downtown Rocky Mount and Rocky Mount Mills. These two areas of intense economic activity, located only 1.5 miles apart, provide the greatest opportunities for job growth and increased post-secondary education in Rocky Mount. *MOVE Rocky Mount* has the potential to create an increase in jobs in the center city. Most of our job creation in the City in past years has happened on the fringes, not readily accessed by low income persons. *MOVE Rocky Mount* should attract businesses and in turn, employment to Downtown. *MOVE Rocky Mount* also contributes to the economic productivity of land, which will help to increase property values in and around the project area.

Rocky Mount has also adopted the NC Main Street Four-Point Approach, a comprehensive revitalization process designed to improve all aspects of a downtown, producing both intangible and tangible benefits. Adoption of this proven concept is a demonstration of the City's commitment to economic development in Downtown.

## Quality of Life

Rocky Mount seeks to raise the quality of life for its citizens through an equitable development approach that makes investments in the human, social, physical, and economic capital of disadvantaged communities. This approach will amplify the efforts of existing programs and leaders. In the 2015 Housing Study (see appendix) conducted by the City, three of the project's most populated adjacent neighborhoods, Around the Wye, Happy Hill, and Holly Street, were identified as Targeted Areas of Opportunity (TAO).



MOVE Rocky Mount will help to spark more opportunities in and around these neighborhoods. One of the factors evaluated in the Housing Study was an average of educational attainment levels in each neighborhood. On an index ranging from 1 to 5, where 1=not a high school graduate, 2=high school graduate, 3=some college, 4=college grad, and 5=graduate degree, Around the Wye, Happy Hill, and Holly Street, neighborhoods scored 2.2, 1.9, and 2.2 respectively. The improvements proposed as a part of this project will make travel to locations like Braswell Memorial library, where one can complete their GED, and Edgecombe and Nash Community Colleges, where residents can pursue post-secondary opportunities, more accessible.

### Environmental Sustainability

MOVE Rocky Mount introduces an alternate means of transportation for almost 5,000 residents in the four surrounding neighborhoods of the project area, Mill Village, Happy Hill, Holly Street, and Around the Wye. It is expected that projected use of the new pedestrian friendly roadways and the Monk to Mill Trail will reduce the carbon footprint of some of these residents who may choose to walk or bike or ride the bus to destinations in and around Downtown rather than drive. The gateway corridor enhancements will also include the creation of green infrastructure such as pocket parks, trees, stream restoration, and other landscaping along roadways. A section of the Monk to Mill Trail will be on the New Southern Cottonseed Plant brownfield, which recently underwent an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded Phase I and Phase II environmental assessment. This productive reuse of brownfield land will turn wasted land into an asset.

The City has a commitment from CSX railroad to donate the tobacco loading dock for which a structural evaluation and preliminary renovation budget was completed in 2013 (see appendix). Renovations will include lead paint encapsulation, making the dock less of a risk to public health. There are no major technical hurdles for the renovation of this loading dock into Depot Park.

There are no technical concerns with the balance of the greenspace development which will consist primarily of structure removal, landscaping and drainage enhancements to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

### Safety

The MOVE Rocky Mount improvements will encourage more people to walk, bike, and take transit to their destinations and thereby reduce the number of automobiles on corridors in the project area. The conversion to walking, biking, and transit trips will reduce the number of crashes and transportation-related injuries. As a result of MOVE Rocky Mount there will be dedicated multimodal accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists which will alleviate the dangers users experience while sharing the same lanes with motorists and non-motorists.

MOVE Rocky Mount will particularly address excessive speed concerns along the Falls Rd and Peachtree St corridors. The City of Rocky Mount Police Department receives frequent complaints about speeding along Falls Rd and Peachtree St where the speed limit is 35 mph. City police have had to implement regular speed enforcement by their patrol division along those corridors. Over the past year, officers issued an average of almost 12 citations per month. Speed data collected in

early April 2016 revealed that the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed for motorists was 42.9 mph on Falls Rd and 47.6 mph on Peachtree St.

By implementing the Complete Streets model on Church St and Atlantic Ave, the potential for rear-end incidents will decrease. Currently, there are no medians along these 4-lane corridors to limit left turn movements. With the additions of medians, sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes, these corridors will become 3 lane divided corridors and will improve accessibility and maneuverability for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

After careful study (see Benefits and Cost Analysis in Appendix), this *MOVE Rocky Mount* will contribute to crash reductions due to:

- Limited movements with the addition of medians;
- Decreased vehicular volumes as more people convert to walking, biking, and bus transit;
- Improved and safer facilities for pedestrians, particularly those requiring ADA accommodations, and bicyclists;
- Reduced speeds associated with road diet techniques

### *Secondary Selection Criteria*

#### **Innovation**

*MOVE Rocky Mount* will integrate the Complete Streets concepts into all four of its Downtown gateway corridors in order to create an intersection of creative places and economic development. Large implementation of Complete Streets concepts on a broad scale will enhance economic opportunity, incent redevelopment, and improve connectivity to multiple public and private redevelopment projects and attractions.

Unique to our community dynamics, *MOVE Rocky Mount* will not only transform and improve upon current infrastructure, but will also provide a bridge across the historic and political divisions along the county line railroad tracks. Development of the Monk to Mill Trail will connect residents on both side of the county line with neighborhoods that are currently considered foreign and off limits.

#### **Partnership**

Within the City, there is an unprecedented ongoing interdisciplinary effort among Engineering, Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Downtown Development to work on *MOVE Rocky Mount* and the implementation of the TIGER grant. Capitol Broadcasting Company, a private partner of *MOVE Rocky Mount*, will grant ROW access on Rocky Mount Mills property to be used as a part of the Trail. Capitol Broadcasting Company will also make a significant investment towards additional lighting in and around their Rocky Mount Mills project. This increased lighting will enhance the usability and safety along the Trail. The Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments (UPCOG) Brownfield Consortium recently administered approximately \$85,000 in EPA funding for environmental assessment work at the RMDCF site and along Falls Rd. The UPCOG has committed approximately \$30,000 of additional EPA funding through the Brownfield Consortium for environmental assessments within the Monk to Mill Brownfield Redevelopment Zone (see project map in appendix). Due to the strong partnership between the City and UPCOG, further grant funding is anticipated in future years.

## RESULTS OF BENEFITS AND COSTS ANALYSIS (BCA)

MOVE Rocky Mount incorporates improvements to four street corridors and the Monk to Mill Trail project. All of these components move people between the commercially viable developments and highway access points at the periphery of Rocky Mount into the core of the City, a core that has seen substantial public and private reinvestments in recent years.

Highlights of the benefits and costs from the proposed action are expected to occur in four broad areas through a project lifecycle that extends to 2045:

1. **Benefits from Increased Motorized Mobility.** Rocky Mount's citizens and business customers will realize an immediate and ongoing benefit from travel time reductions due to safety improvements (and the subsequent reductions in crash-related delays) made on Atlantic Ave, Church St, and Falls Rd/Peachtree St. Additional travel time benefits are realized from improved access to transit made on these streets that will encourage more people to walk and bike to their destinations.
2. **Benefits from Improved Safety.** The improvements constructed as part of the project will also result in substantial reductions to crashes and transportation-related injuries due to improved provisions for pedestrians and automobile operators and bicycle riders alike. These benefits are estimated to be \$466M (3% discount rate; \$251M at a 7% discount rate) for the life of the project.
3. **Benefits from Improved Aesthetics and Walkability.** The project will add trees, sidewalks, improved transit stop facilities, bicycle lanes and lighting that will collectively improve both the economic viability of the streets and walk access to improve public transportation facilities in both primary corridors and in the vicinity of the Monk to Mill Trail.
4. **Environmental Benefits from Reductions in Pollution.** The Monk to Mill Trail project creates a new pedestrian corridor for residents, as does the pedestrian and biking improvements along the streets in this corridor. This element of the project will greatly benefit those most in need of transportation access to the economic opportunity represented by the core commercial district and educational facilities located at each end of the corridor. Benefits were calculated as a reduction in mobile source emissions from reductions in crash-related delays as well as conversion of automobile trips to walking, biking and transit trips. Additionally, a one-time property value benefit point transfer was conducted, similar to that conducted for the full project but tailored for impacts from greenway construction.

The overall benefit-cost ratio is positive (18.5:1 at the 3% discount rate; 8.7:1 at the 7% discount rate), with a modified internal rate of return (MIRR, exclusive of private-side benefits) of 69% and a payback period of less than 2 years. The full Benefits and Costs Analysis can be found in the appendix.

## PROJECT READINESS

MOVE Rocky Mount is supported by several studies completed by the City including a 2012 Corridor Plan, a 2012 Pedestrian Plan, the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the 2016 Monk to Mill Trail/Falls and Peachtree Complete Streets Feasibility Study. Completion of conceptual plans for the Monk to Mill Trail and Falls Rd/Peachtree St/Franklin St corridors, funded by an EPA Office of Sustainable Communities (EPA/OSC) grant, is scheduled for May 2016. The pavement marking plan for Falls Rd and Peachtree St is currently under contract and a detailed study for the roundabout is also underway with scheduled completion for July 2016. The City of Rocky Mount is working through the Metropolitan Planning Organization to advance local projects for greenway and trail improvements and Complete Street implementations. Several projects of this nature have already been submitted for review and evaluation to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). A rail to trail project has been submitted as part of the Monk to Mill Trail, and Atlantic Ave and Church St were submitted as a Complete Streets project. A zoning modification proposal that can be found in the appendix has been drafted for the industrial area of the Monk to Mill Trail to encourage mixed-use development. The City has conducted two public meetings to date and there is another scheduled in May 2016, so far there has been overwhelming positive feedback for the project.

### Previous and Current Economic Development Investment Projects

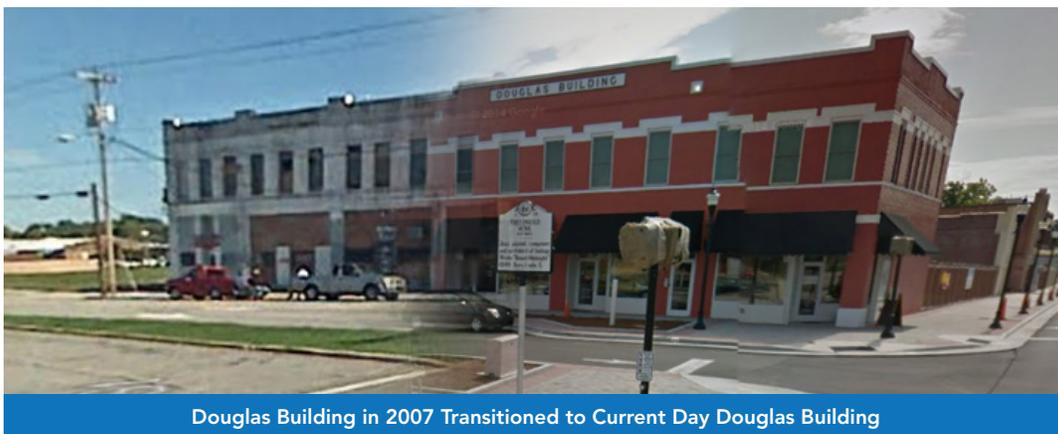
Addressing our community's needs after Hurricane Floyd, the City turned to recreational and cultural tourism strategies for economic development and began to aggressively address brownfields by redeveloping them as attractions. The brownfields became the Rocky Mount Sports Complex, Douglas Block, Imperial Centre, Edgecombe Community College Biotechnology Center parking, and now the Monk to Mill Trail. In 2006, there was the addition of a 143-acre Sports Complex equipped for tournaments and local competitions. Since opening in 2006, the Sports Complex has doubled its attendance and continues to grow. The Sports Complex attracts over 90,000 individuals to the area each year, which spurs retail, restaurant, and hospitality sales especially on weekends which brings roughly \$8.5M in annual economic impact. The entrance of the Sports Complex is accessible off of Church St, only 1 mile from Downtown.



Also in 2006, the Imperial Tobacco Factory was repurposed into the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, a premier cultural facility. The Imperial Centre houses the Maria V. Howard Arts Center, Children’s Museum and Science Center, planetarium and community performing arts theatre. The Imperial Centre has attracted many visitors, both children and adults, since it opened in January 2006. In 2014 alone, attendance was over 58,000. The Centre also includes Milton and Miles, a successful gourmet sandwich and coffee shop.

Rocky Mount’s economic development vision hinges on continued Downtown development. In addition to the Imperial Centre and the Sports Complex, the City of Rocky Mount has invested over \$75M in Downtown public facilities in recent years. These investments have led to economic development, educational advancements, and improvements to quality of life. Major projects include:

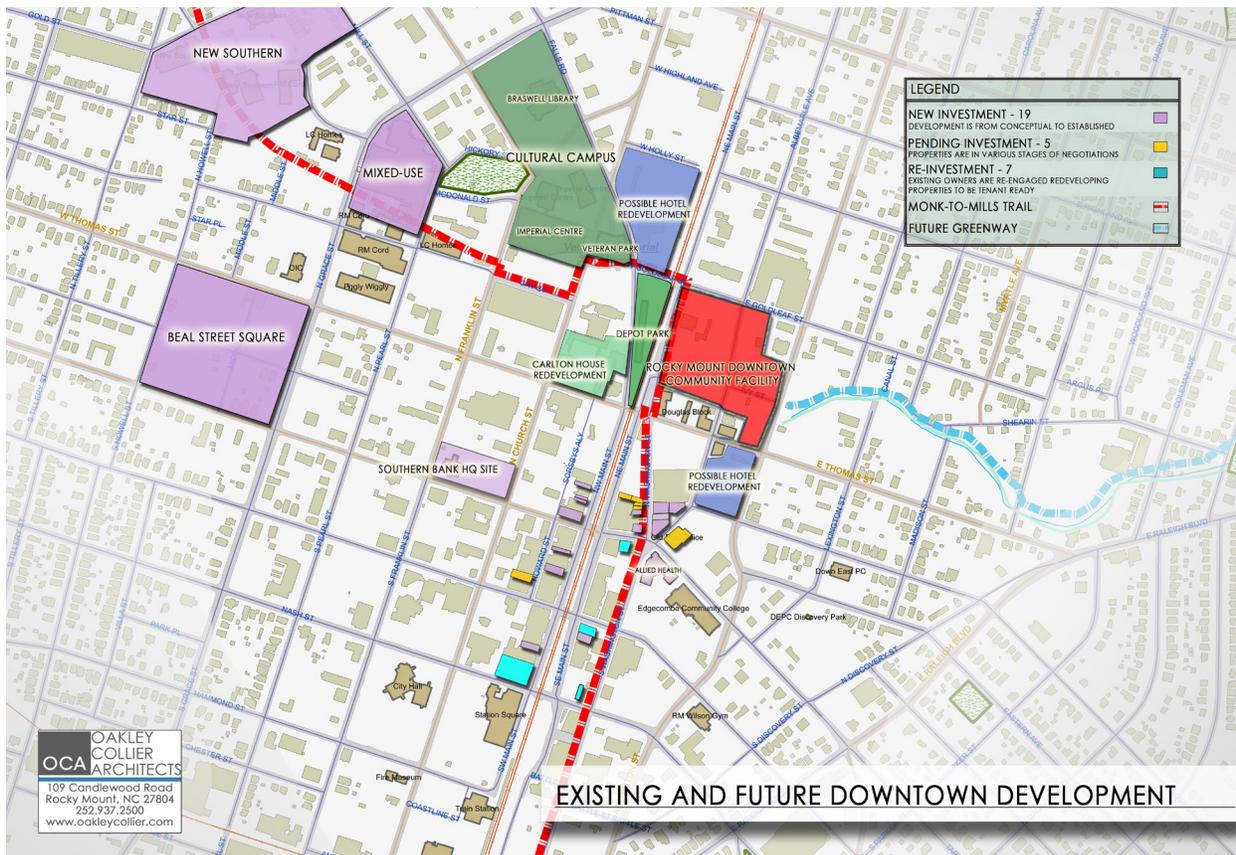
- In 2011, the City completed renovations to the Douglas Block, a historic African American commercial district. On the Douglas Block project we received funding through Historic Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits, the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Commercial activity has blossomed with two standouts that are wildly popular, The Bath Place and Prime Smokehouse restaurant. The Douglas Block also features rental apartment units and the renovated Booker T. Theatre, which is available year-round for meetings, events, and community theatre productions.



- Southern Bank is building a new 18,000 square foot \$5M headquarters along Church St in Downtown Rocky Mount and renovating an adjacent building as a direct result to the investments made to the Central City area. Southern Bank estimates 50 employees will work and travel to and from their new location. The City will expand its offices into the former Southern Bank building.
- Since opening in 2008, the Nash County Farmers Market located on Peachtree St provides an opportunity for local area farmers and entrepreneurs to have a storefront for their products. The Farmers Market helps to promote entrepreneurship in the community as well as supports the farming community and has been used as a venue for community events and fundraisers.

- Edgecombe Community College’s biotechnology and simulation center, a 45,000 square foot classroom building, was recently completed in March 2016. At least 100 students and professors are anticipated during the first enrollment cycle, which will mean increased pedestrian traffic for commercial businesses and put many students within walking distance of work, school, and home. The Biotech Center also provides an educational means of advancement for residents of the community who desire to pursue a career in the medical profession and improve their economic status.

The enhanced connections we are proposing will allow the City to build on the successes of the existing investment projects and spur new investment projects. These strategies will re-establish Rocky Mount’s Downtown as a regional hub of commerce and entertainment, complementing regional assets outside of the Downtown footprint.



### Future Economic Development Investment Projects

In addition to all the recent investment in Downtown, there are many conceptual and near future plans for Downtown retail locations. For instance, PNC Bank will renovate their existing Downtown Rocky Mount facility to accommodate roughly 200 employees as the Eastern North Carolina headquarters. Due to the mixed-use zoning of Downtown, many investors are interested in retail concepts such as pizzerias, coffee and sandwich shops, and co-working spaces for entrepreneurs on street levels with residential units above ground. Directly behind the Douglas Block and across from the new Edgecombe Community College Biotech Center, the early 20th century Post Office is a major source of interest for

redevelopment in the downtown area. Concepts by a prominent Raleigh, NC design firm has produced conceptual designs for this building which includes a Monk Cultural Center, a Bier Garten and a music venue. Downtown Rocky Mount has also attracted attention for its recent growth and historically significant architecture. Preservation and downtown revitalization organizations have expressed interest in holding upcoming conferences in the Rocky Mount Downtown Community Facility once completed.

The RMDCF will build off of the success from the outdoor Sports Complex and further Rocky Mount's position as a sports tourism destination with a new indoor facility. This facility will be unlike any other in northeast North Carolina. The RMDCF is a \$32M, 165,000 square foot amateur sports and community facility planned for completion in January 2018. The pro-forma developed by Sports Facilities Advisors projects annual visitation of over 400,000 with a 10-year direct-spend economic impact of \$264M. The RMDCF will utilize New Market Tax Credits and will address a region-wide demand for a venue that can accommodate trade shows, graduations, recreation, and other community gatherings such as large family and high school reunions.



Outside of the Downtown core, the China American tobacco warehouse has recently been acquired and the owner/developer has expressed plans for mixed use development. The New Southern Cottonseed Plant has undergone Phase I and Phase II environmental testing. Once all environmental hazards are mitigated, the owner and investors have plans to develop a restaurant, an amphitheater, and retail space on the almost 9 acre property that runs directly along the Monk to Mill trail.

The envisioned Rocky Mount Downtown Community Facility has served as a catalyst for renewed interest and investment in Downtown. Prospective developers feel that the RMDCF, in conjunction with Rocky Mount Mills, are "development anchors" for their investment in Downtown Rocky Mount and along the Monk to Mill Trail.

## Technical Feasibility

It is reasonable to understand that *MOVE Rocky Mount* will successfully construct the Monk to Mill Trail and implement the Complete Street enhancements on the corridors of Falls Rd, Peachtree St, Church St and Atlantic Ave. Conceptual planning and engineering studies for these work items have been completed, and further detailed studies are in progress now. The estimated cost figures for *MOVE Rocky Mount* have incorporated latest data available from City records and NC Department of Transportation cost history. Generally accepted engineering and design fee percentages have been added with normal provisions for unexpected contingencies added to the cost. Refer to the detailed statement of work in the appendix for additional details on feasibility for work proposed.

Monk to Mill Trail, Falls Rd, and Peachtree St: The Monk to Mill Trail/Falls Rd and Peachtree St Complete Streets Feasibility Study has been funded through the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities and is underway with a scheduled completion in May 2016. While the formal analysis is not complete, no major technical problems are expected. Corridor improvements and utility undergrounding will be within existing ROW and no major modifications to the existing street are anticipated.

For the greenway section of the Monk to Mill Trail, approximately 50% of proposed ROW is publicly owned and 25% is controlled by the developer of Rocky Mount Mills which has provided a letter of support for *MOVE Rocky Mount*. For access to the remaining 25% of the spur line, the City is actively engaging private property owners about their willingness to participate in the creation of the Trail and the City is encouraged that cooperation is likely. In the case that some or all remaining ROW is unworkable, the City has determined an acceptable alternative route within existing ROW.

Church St and Atlantic Ave: Corridor Plan and Feasibility Analysis for these corridors was completed in February 2012 by Alta/Greenways (see appendix "Gateway Corridor Plan"). Undergrounding of utilities will result in significant construction disruptions on Church St, but there are no major technical issues to overcome and the majority of the improvements will be in the existing ROW.

## Assessment of Project Risks and Mitigation

Generally, *MOVE Rocky Mount* is low-risk and beneficial to all stakeholder groups. As a precaution, the City has considered concerns that the improvements involved with *MOVE Rocky Mount* may change the character of the neighborhoods involved, particularly those within the historic districts (Falls Road, Mill Village, and Central City). However, because of their historic status, the City plans to adhere to all regulations in place to preserve the character in these neighborhoods and districts.

Similarly, gentrification and displacement could be a potential concern with a project of this depth and scope. However, the City is proactive in considering and evaluating a remedy and has built in mitigation for *MOVE Rocky Mount* by focusing on redevelopment of the existing neighborhoods. Beal Street Square Apartments is an 80-unit affordable multifamily housing development in the Happy Hill neighborhood. The developer will break ground in May 2016. Beal Street Square Apartments are funded in part by a loan made from the City to the developer.



The Rocky Mount Housing Authority recently completed construction on 14 additional affordable housing units in the Happy Hill neighborhood. The Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation (RMECDC) also recently completed 8 affordable housing units in the Holly Street neighborhood.

## Project Timeline

CRITICAL DATES	
Submit TIGER Grant Application	April 29, 2016
Complete Environmental Approvals	June 30, 2019
Complete Design and Right-of-Way	June 30, 2019
Obligation Deadline to Execute an Agreement for the Grant	September 30, 2019
Expenditure Deadline to Complete Spending of Funds	September 30, 2024
TIGER Grant Project Implementation	
Begin Environmental Review (NEPA)	June 2017
Complete Environmental Approval (NEPA)	December 2018
Begin Design and Right-of-Way	June 2017
Complete Design and Right-of-Way	December 2018
Begin Construction	April 2019
Complete Construction	October 2021

## REQUIRED APPROVALS

The *MOVE Rocky Mount* conceptual plan has been endorsed by the Rocky Mount City Council, Engineering, Planning, Parks and Recreation, and Downtown Development departments, Rocky Mount MPO, and NCDOT. Upon preliminary review, the City anticipates that there are no endangered or protected habitats or endangered biological resources along the project area. NEPA approval is necessary and is expected to be obtained by December 2018 (see project timeline).

The City understands that it is obligated to ensure all laborers and mechanics of projects funded by or assisted in whole or in part by and through funding appropriated by the Act are paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality as determined by subchapter IV of Chapter 31 of Title 40, United States Code (Davis-Bacon Act). A signed Federal Wage Rate Certification has been submitted with the application (see appendix).



Monk to Mill Urban Trail Rendering at Washington Street



New Southern Cottonseed Plant Conceptual Plan

