

Planning and
Development

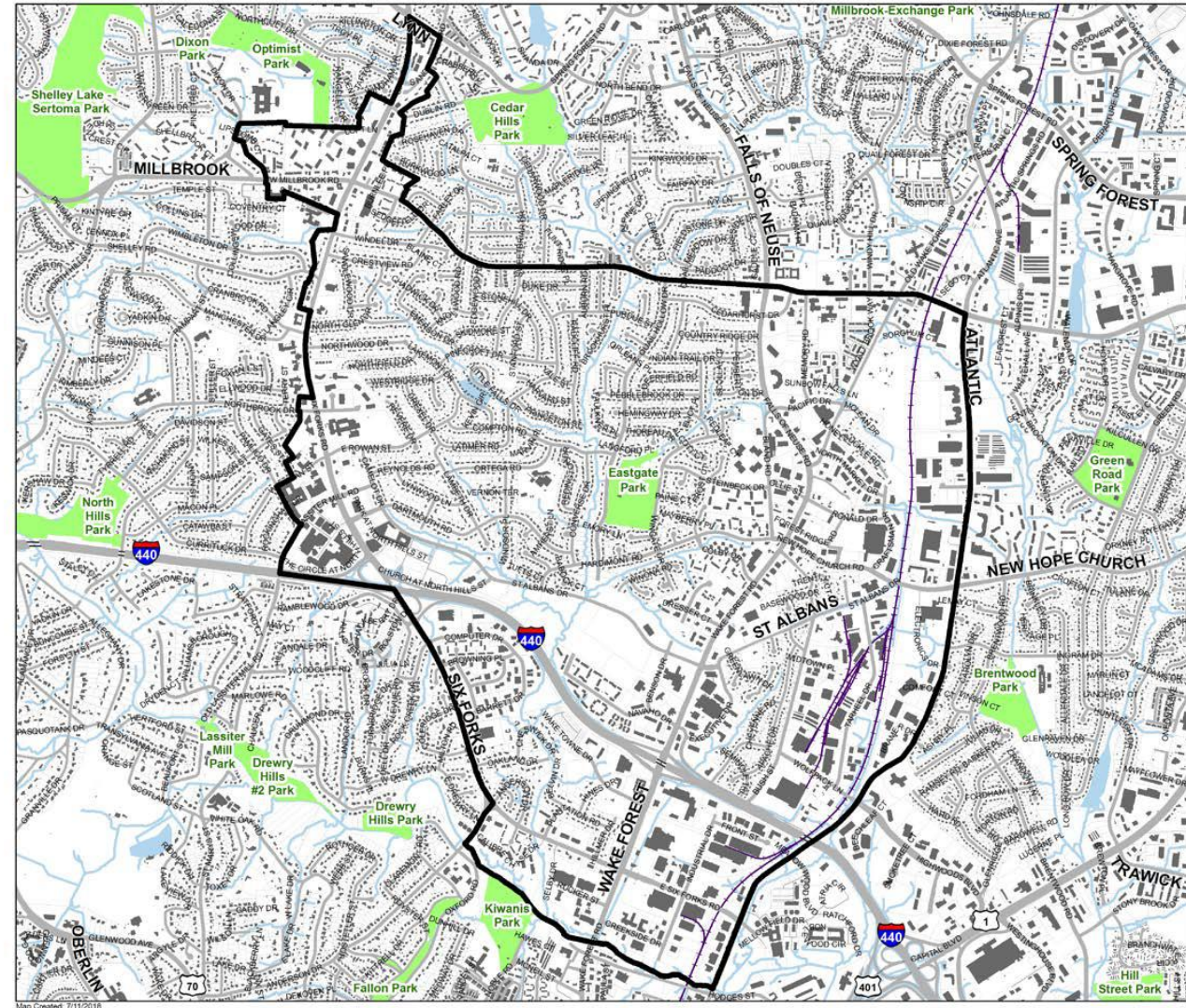
Walkable Midtown: The Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan

Planning Commission
Committee of the Whole
Sept. 24, 2020



About the Plan

- Area centered on North Hills, extends south to Crabtree Creek, north to Millbrook Road
- Process considered transportation, parks, stormwater, housing/land use
- Public emphasis on improving walkability, height transitions, stormwater, housing options, traffic on neighborhood streets



Plan Process

- Began in 2018 with visioning efforts
- Formal plan events took place in three phases in 2019
- Several hundred participants took part in each phase
- Final report published in 2020
- Input process overseen by “Confirmation Group” of representative stakeholders (residents, institutions, businesses)



Plan Process: Initial Visioning

May & June 2018 Public Meetings & Online Survey

- Beginning of the process
- Short staff presentation
- Participants marked up maps in small groups to highlight areas with assets and issues

Goal of the Meeting:

- To create a rich base of community-sourced knowledge about the area



Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan

What issues do you most want to see the plan address? Put dots beside your top 3.

Creating or improving parks and public spaces

Housing (types of housing, location of housing, affordability) ●●

Land uses (what land uses should go where)

Streetscape improvements (street trees, benches, lighting, etc.) ●●●●

Stormwater ●●●●

The design of new development ●

Transitions from commercial to residential areas

Transportation: Getting around by car ●

Transportation: Getting around on transit ●●●●

Transportation: Walking or bicycling

Transportation: The effect of traffic on local streets (please name specific streets below) ●

Other (write it below) connectivity ST Albans across IAAO to Rainton ●

Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan: Your Thoughts

Things I like about the Midtown area:	Things that need help:	In 2040, I hope the Midtown area will be ...
<p>Midtown is a diverse community & it's nice to see it stay that way</p> <p>Shopping & entertainment - restaurants, parking at night</p> <p>Parks</p> <p>Landscaping</p> <p>Tree line on St. Albans</p> <p>Quality overflood</p> <p>Like not all businesses at night</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Easy access to all parts of town & county</p>	<p>BRIDGE OVER SIX FORTS</p> <p>Still all transit so pedestrian accessible</p> <p>NO TRAFFIC</p> <p>St. Albans remains vibrant & has a good mix of commercial/residential & residential</p> <p>Millennials/Gen Y want infrastructure - need transit</p> <p>Affordable middle housing - townhomes, row houses, etc.</p> <p>Electrical - bring down</p> <p>Connectivity - need to be able to get from one part of town to another - making connectivity to main roads/streets</p> <p>Integration of St. Albans - hope to see neighborhood - need to be able to get from one part of town to another</p> <p>Need transit!!!</p> <p>High density - need to be able to get from one part of town to another - making connectivity to main roads/streets</p> <p>Stormwater - need to be able to get from one part of town to another</p> <p>More area activities</p> <p>If you have a car, please don't use it! Use public transit!</p> <p>Please don't become a parking lot! Use public transit!</p> <p>Schedule - need more</p>	<p>Economically diverse (including mix of housing options), currently diverse</p> <p>Still beautiful & tree lined</p> <p>Easier transportation access</p> <p>A great place to raise kids (young schools, activities)</p> <p>Pres. The East Side Home Center</p> <p>Better access to the Greenway</p>

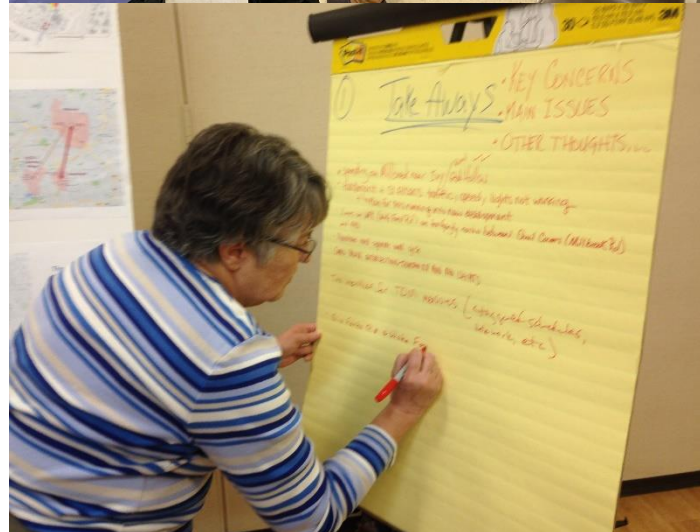
Plan Process: Understanding the Area

December 2018 Public Meetings and Online Survey

- Short Presentation
- 7 Timed activity stations to identify key issues and opportunities
- Staff and participants wrote down notes on maps and notepads.

Goal of the Meeting:

- To understand what people like and don't like in the area.



Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan – Feedback Form

Are the traffic/land use/development issues described during this meeting the same issues that you experience? (Describe why or why not) Yes. Particular problems getting out of neighborhood onto Six Forks + Millbrook. Left-hand turns impossible (requires road-about route) and even right turns can be challenging.

Which issues resonate the most with you? (List your top three) Neighborhood quality (tear down McMansions), improved transit.

Was anything surprising to you? Proposed greenway along Creek near Quail Hollow - great idea, but I don't like there.

What issues are missing? Affordable housing - including maintaining affordability of existing neighborhood.

(continue on back if needed)

Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan – Feedback Form

Are the traffic/land use/development issues described during this meeting the same issues that you experience? (Describe why or why not) Yes, although not sure all connections are being made between loss of trees and green space and effects on noise, neighborhood heat and stormwater.

Which issues resonate the most with you? (List your top three) ① Effective egress from neighborhood, including through biking and greenway access. ② Tree cover, ③ ~~Cost-effective~~ Affordable Housing.

Was anything surprising to you? _____

What issues are missing? Noise and heat island effects of planned development.

(continue on back if needed)

Plan Process: Choosing a Path

May 2019 public meetings & online survey

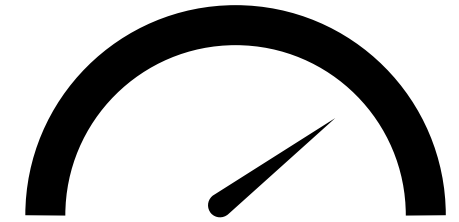
- Drop in meetings with “rolling presentations” on the hour
- Meetings spread across area and two weeks with shorter pop-ups
- Online survey for those unable to attend physical meetings

Outreach Goal:

- Capture feedback on proposed improvement concepts



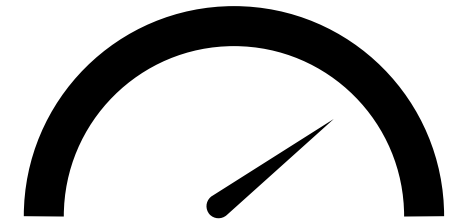
Green Street Locations



Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

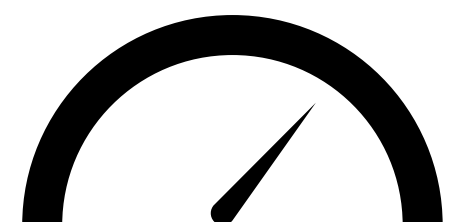
Midtown Ring on Walk/Bike Use



Strongly Unlikely

Strongly Likely

Housing Options & Affordability



Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

Plan Process: From Ideas to Action

Sept. 2019 public meetings & online survey

- Two “main” meetings
- Supporting “pop-up” events
- Online survey for those unable to attend physical meetings






Outreach Goal:

- Ensure consensus on final recommendations and prioritize projects

Prioritization Exercise – Step 1

- Objectives
 - > Understand *what the community priorities are*
 - > Understand *why those are priorities*
- Format
 - > Small table groups
 - > Step 1: As a table, select your top seven (7) projects. Record your results. ~15 minutes

MSA
I-440 Multimodal Bridge Navaho Dr- Barrett Dr at Big Branch
Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan

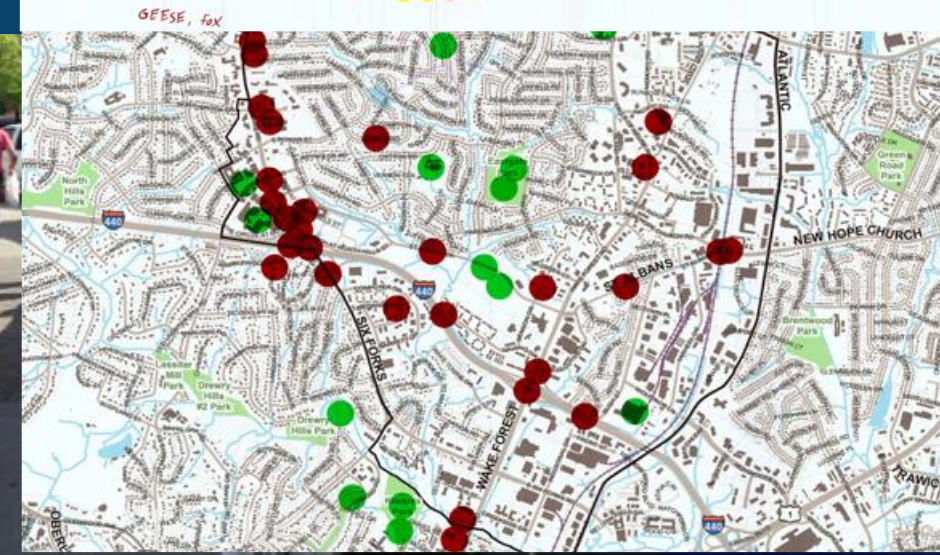
<p>RELATIVE COST</p> <p>\$\$\$</p> <p>RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PROJECTS</p> <p>This project depends on the realignment of Navaho Drive and Barrett Drive.</p> <p>PROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Improved comfort  Shorter connections  Enhanced transit access and efficiency  More bike & pedestrian options  Carbon reduction <p>CONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Acquire private property 	<p>Description</p> <p>This project is a new bridge over I-440 that connects Navaho Drive and Barrett Drive. This bridge has two vehicle lanes, sidewalks, and bike lanes, is intended for vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The bridge provides another option for residents and visitors to cross I-440 without using the interchanges at Wake Forest Road or Six Forks Road, and it reduces traffic at critical interchanges and intersections.</p>  
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Plan Process: Other Highlights

- Several thousand mailings sent for each phase
 - Spanish-language surveys
 - Presentations or updates at 20+ CAC meetings (Midtown, Atlantic, North)
 - Informal drop-in events at locations in the plan area
 - Outreach to employers and apartment buildings
 - Two interim reports
 - Social media
 - One million dots placed on maps*
- *Informal estimate

Midtown-St. Albans Area Plan

What issues do you most want to see the plan address? Put dots beside your top 3.



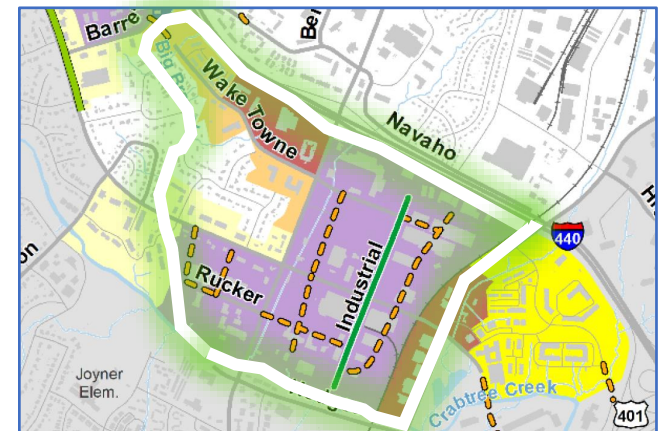
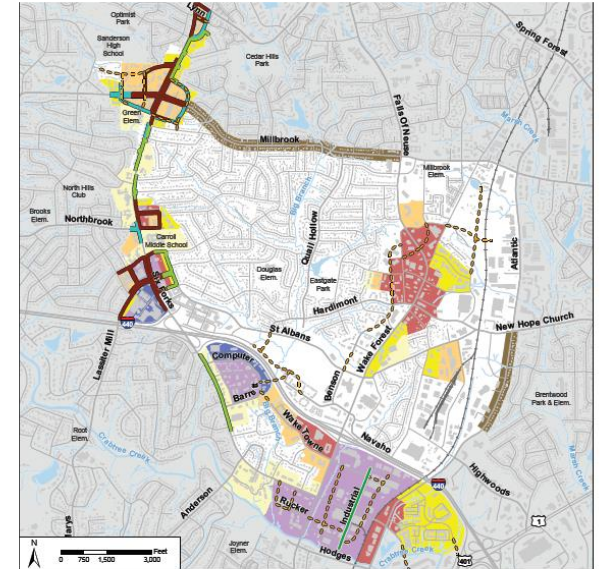
About Area Planning/Future Land Use

	What it does	What it doesn't do
Overall	Create a broad vision for the future of an area	Initiate specific public projects
Transportation/ parks/other public projects	Identify project that serve overall goals; determine basic feasibility; prioritize key projects	Allocate funding; design/engineer projects
Future Land Use Map	Provides guidance for property owners who pursue a rezoning	Change zoning. Existing zoning remains. The FLUM would be used in evaluating requested changes
Other policy recommendations (frontage, affordability, etc.)	Create policy guidance that would be used in any future rezoning requests	Change the regulatory requirements for specific properties

Affordability

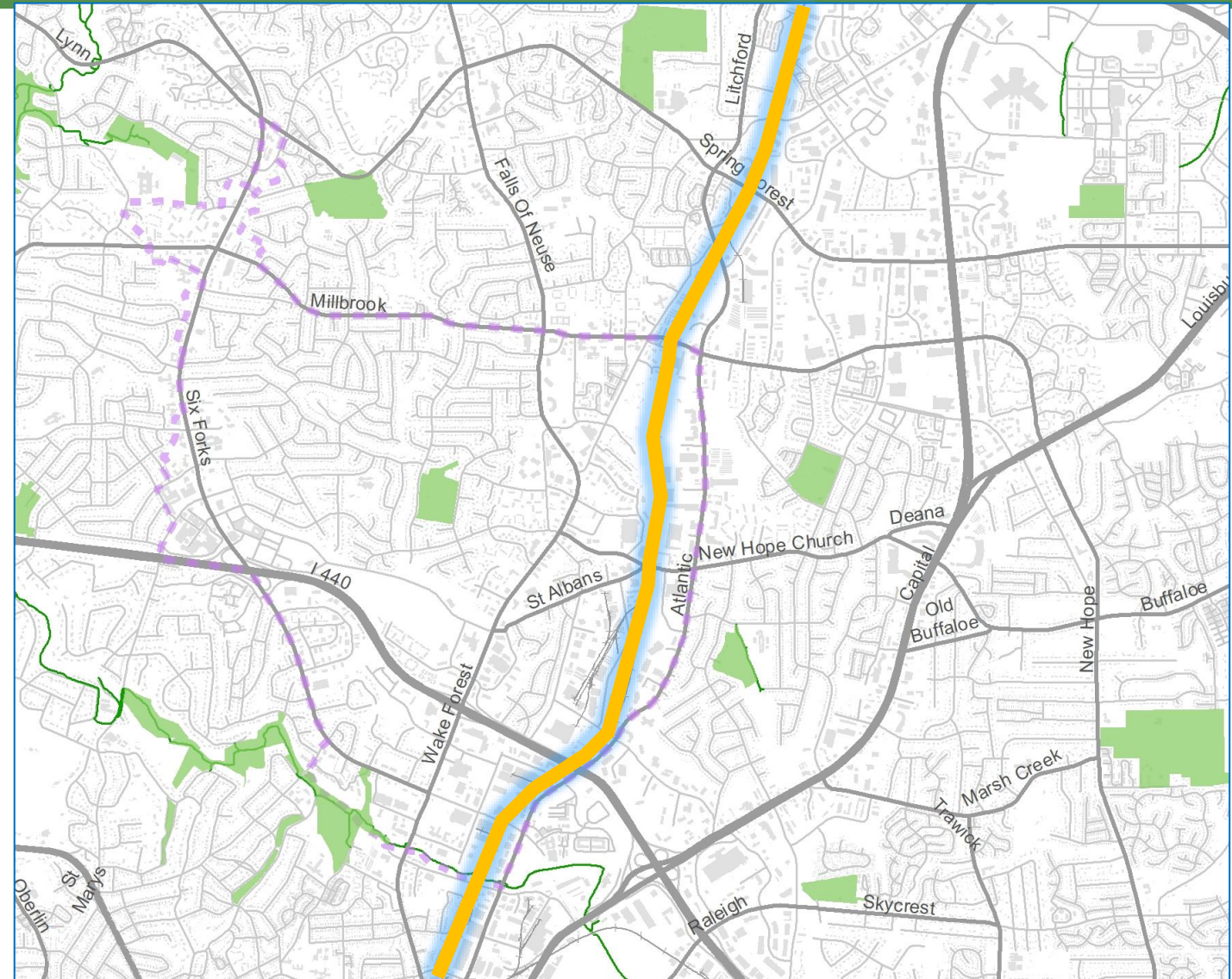
Two approaches

- General approach – applies anywhere in study area. Rezoning proposals that request seven or more stories in height should include units affordable to residents at 80 percent of AMI
- Specific approach – applies to Waterfront District. Acquire land for affordable housing within the waterfront district and/or support private efforts to develop affordable housing within the district.



Rail Transit Potential

- NCDOT received a \$47 million federal grant last week to purchase the S-line, which runs through Midtown
- Publicly-owned rail will now connect from Raleigh to Richmond and on to DC
- Sets up possibility for commuter rail, intercity rail at higher speeds
- Plan is supportive of rail transit, with grade separation projects along the line
- Potential for future rail transit station at Six Forks/Atlantic/Industrial area

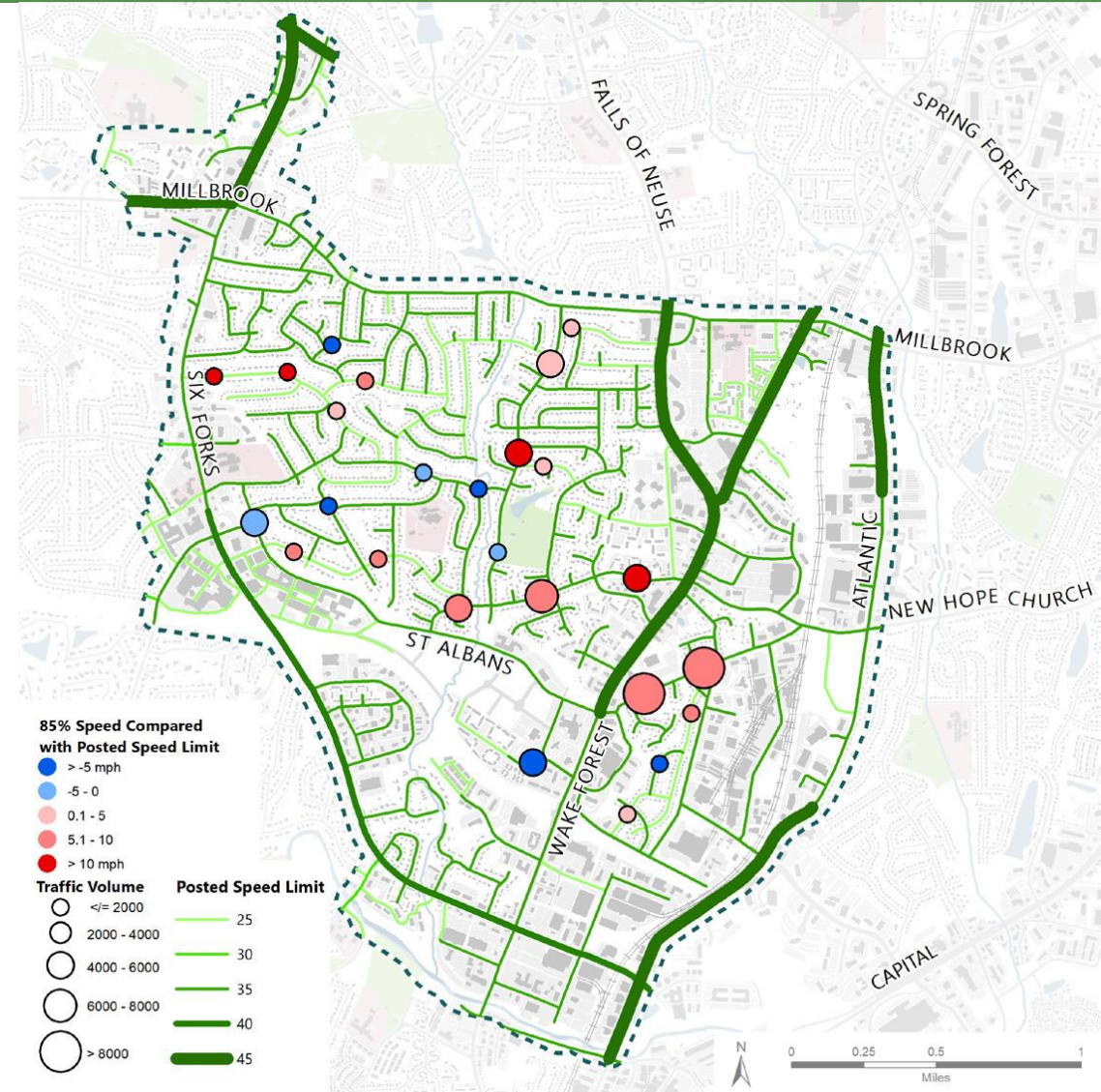


Examples of Cost Estimates

- Detailed estimates would follow design/engineering
- Overall, largely smaller projects, with a broad range of costs
- Multimodal bridge: \$13 million
- Ped/Bike bridge: \$3 million
- Bush Street green street: \$317,000
- Six Forks and Anderson pedestrian improvements: \$70,000
- By comparison: 440 widening - \$475 million
- Project prioritization takes place on a citywide basis, with equity between various parts of the city a factor

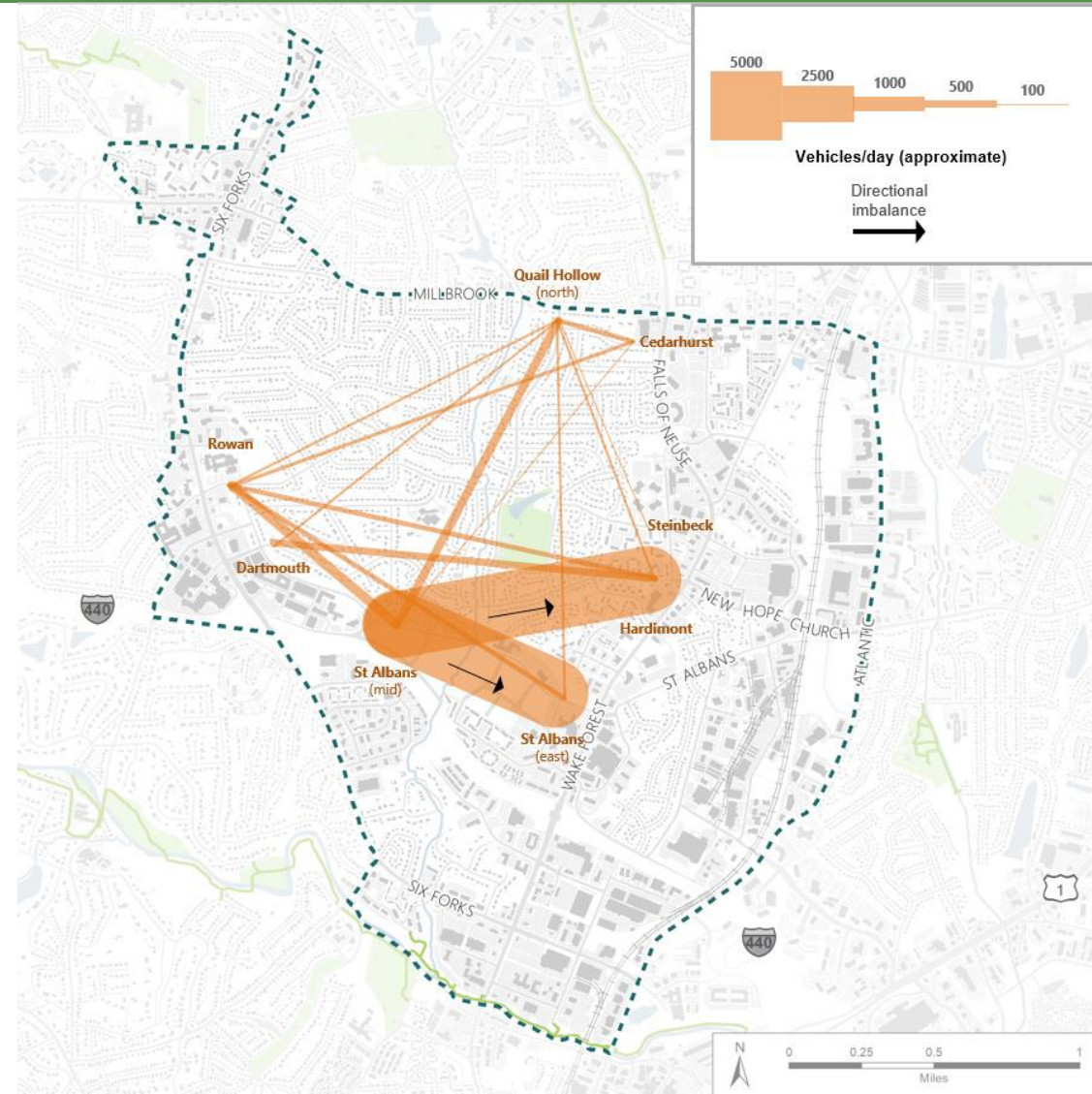
Transportation Analysis

Areas with higher speeds
Part of Green Streets concept



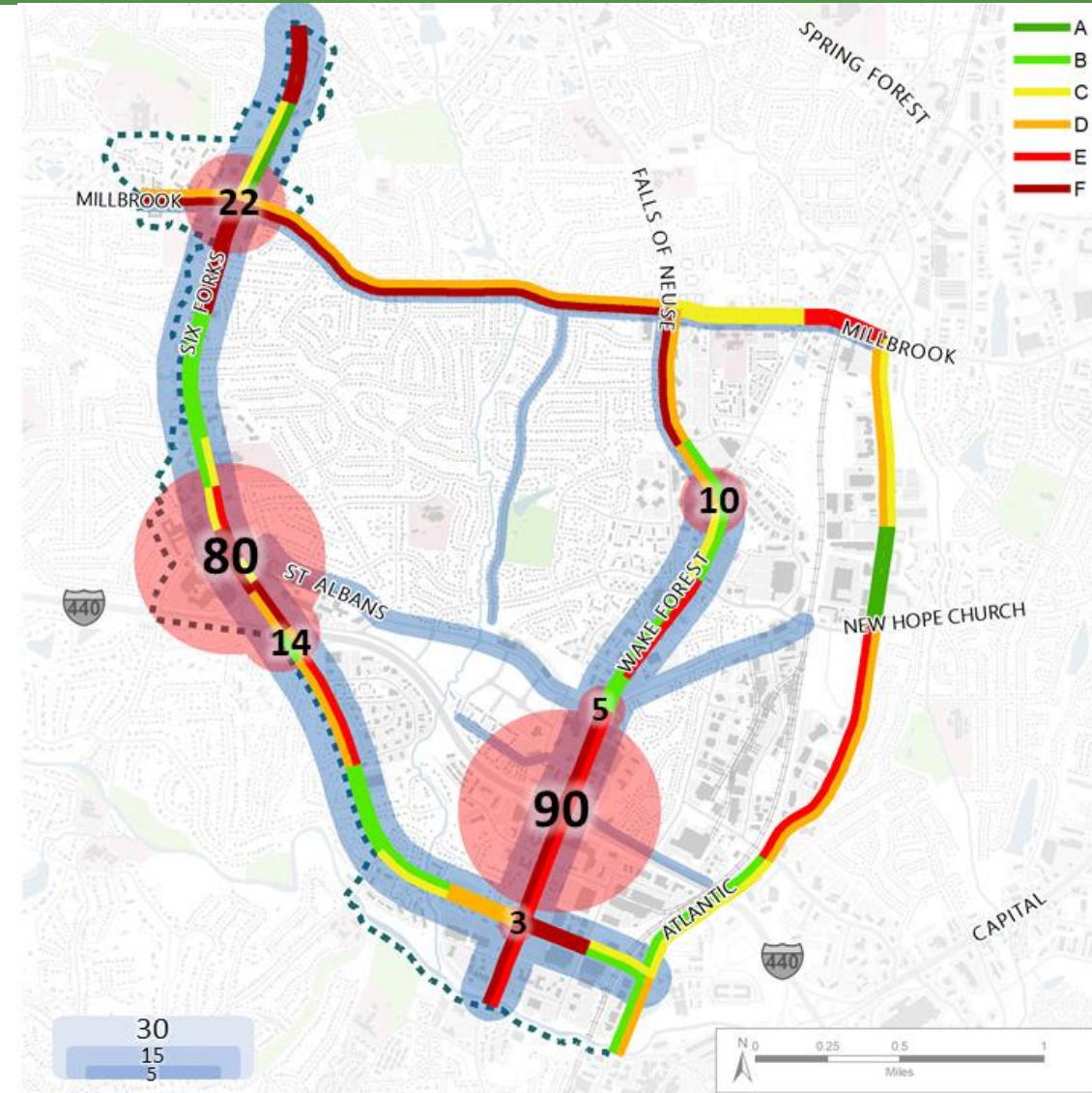
Transportation Analysis

Non-arterial street volumes



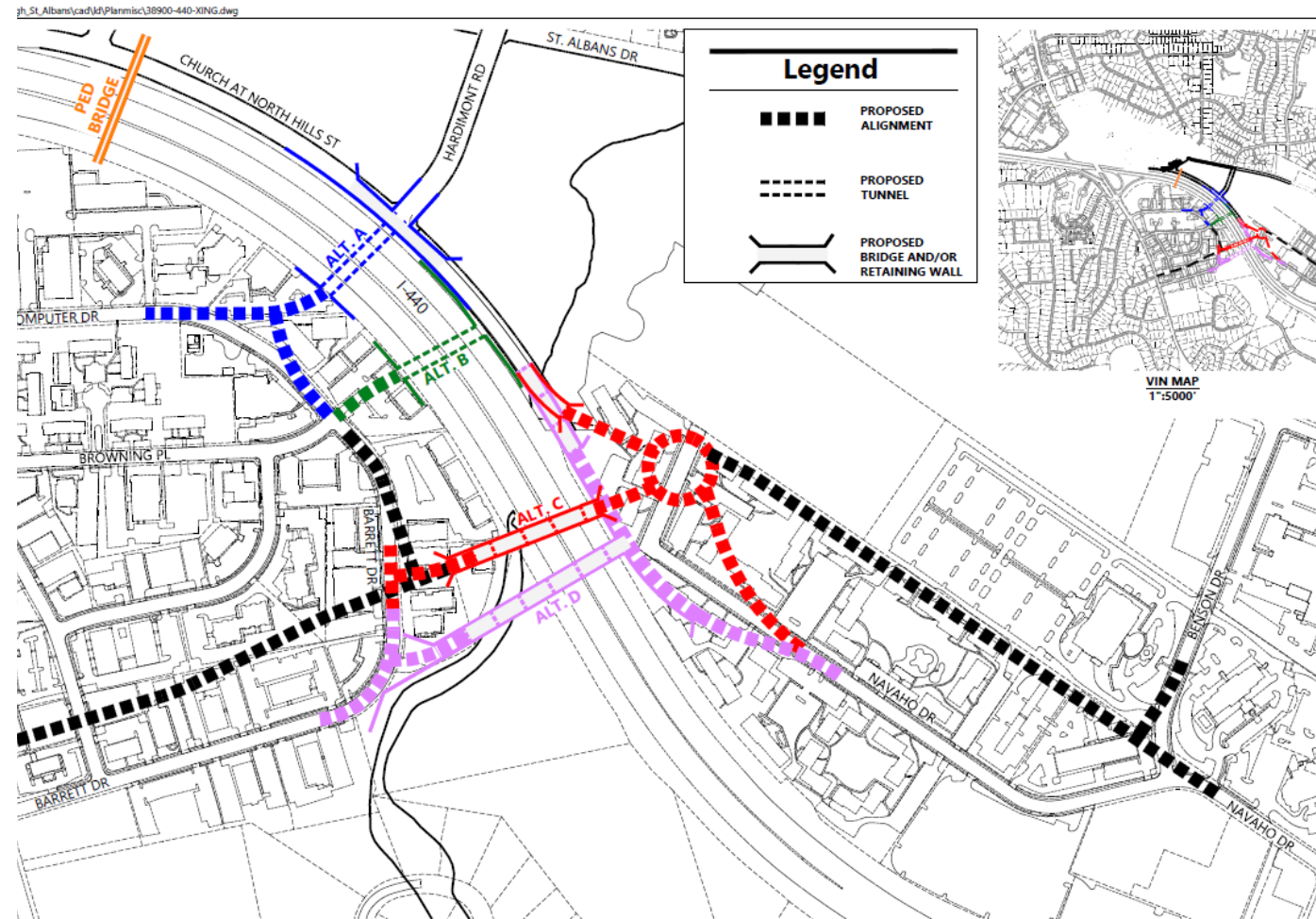
Transportation Analysis

- Current conditions/Crash analysis
- Led to 440 bridge, alternative street network, transit, pedestrian improvements

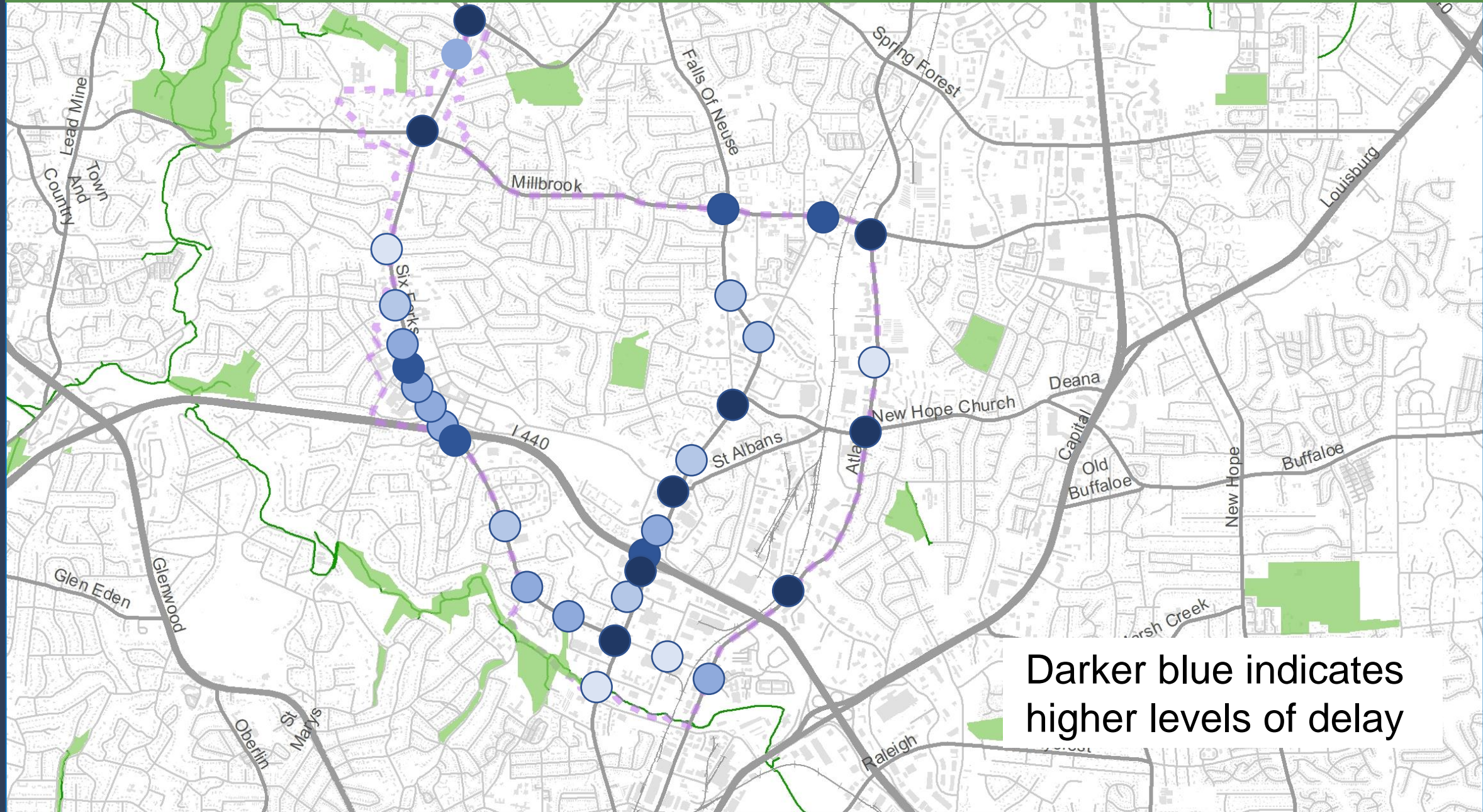


Transportation Analysis

440 crossing analysis
 Bridge v. tunnel
 considered
 Bridge less
 expensive and
 generally preferred



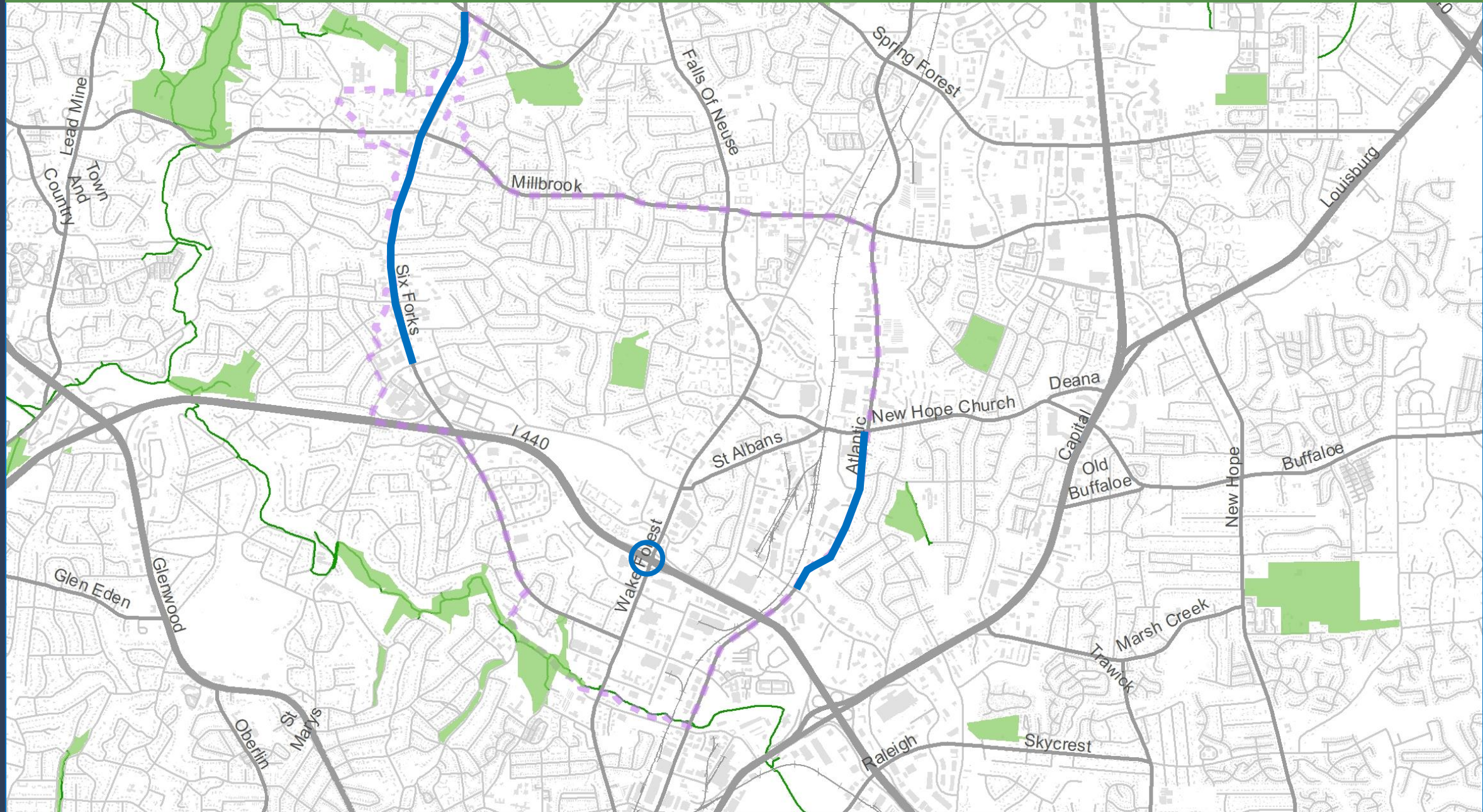
Future Conditions



Darker blue indicates higher levels of delay



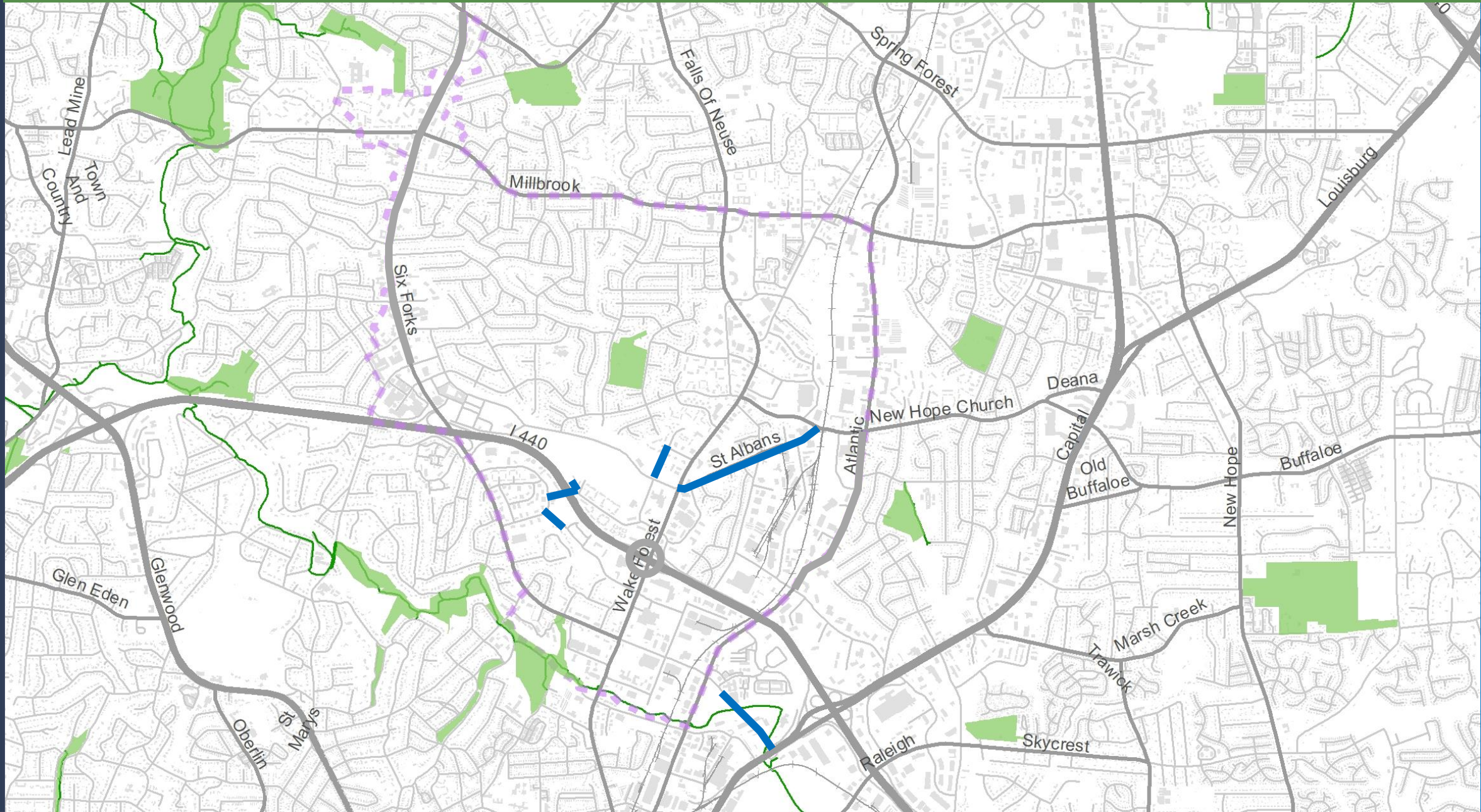
Funded Projects



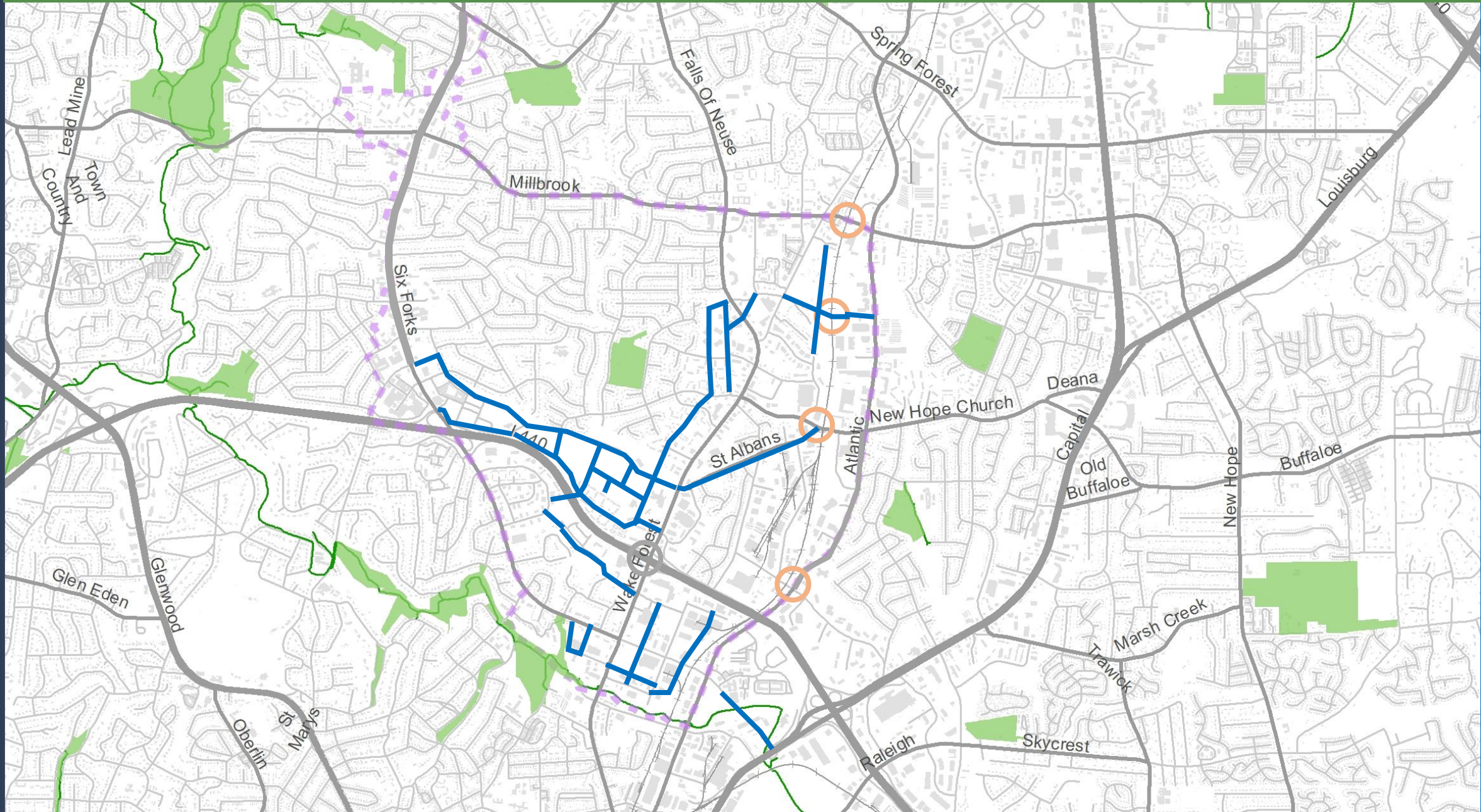


Raleigh

Future City/State Projects

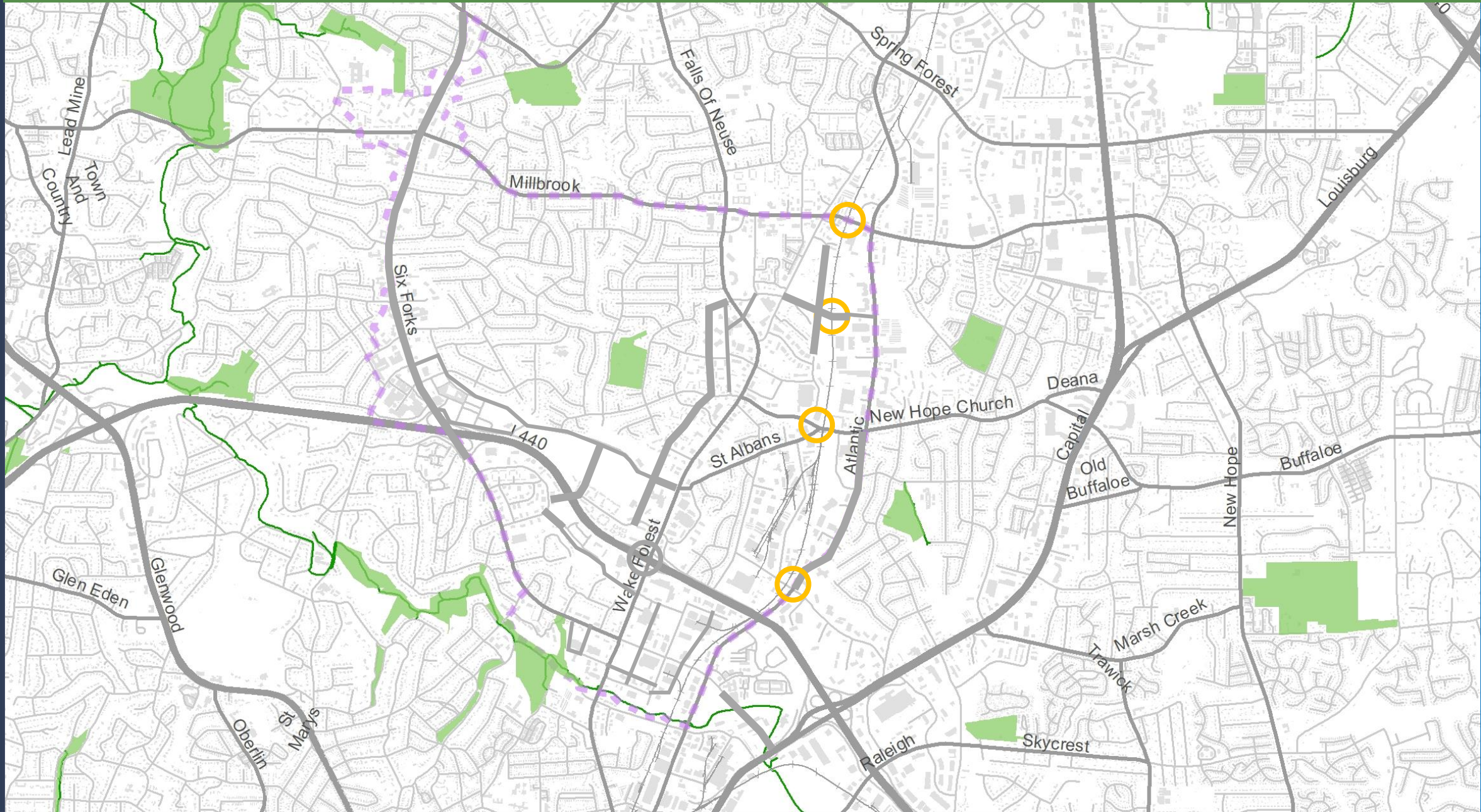


Full Future Grid





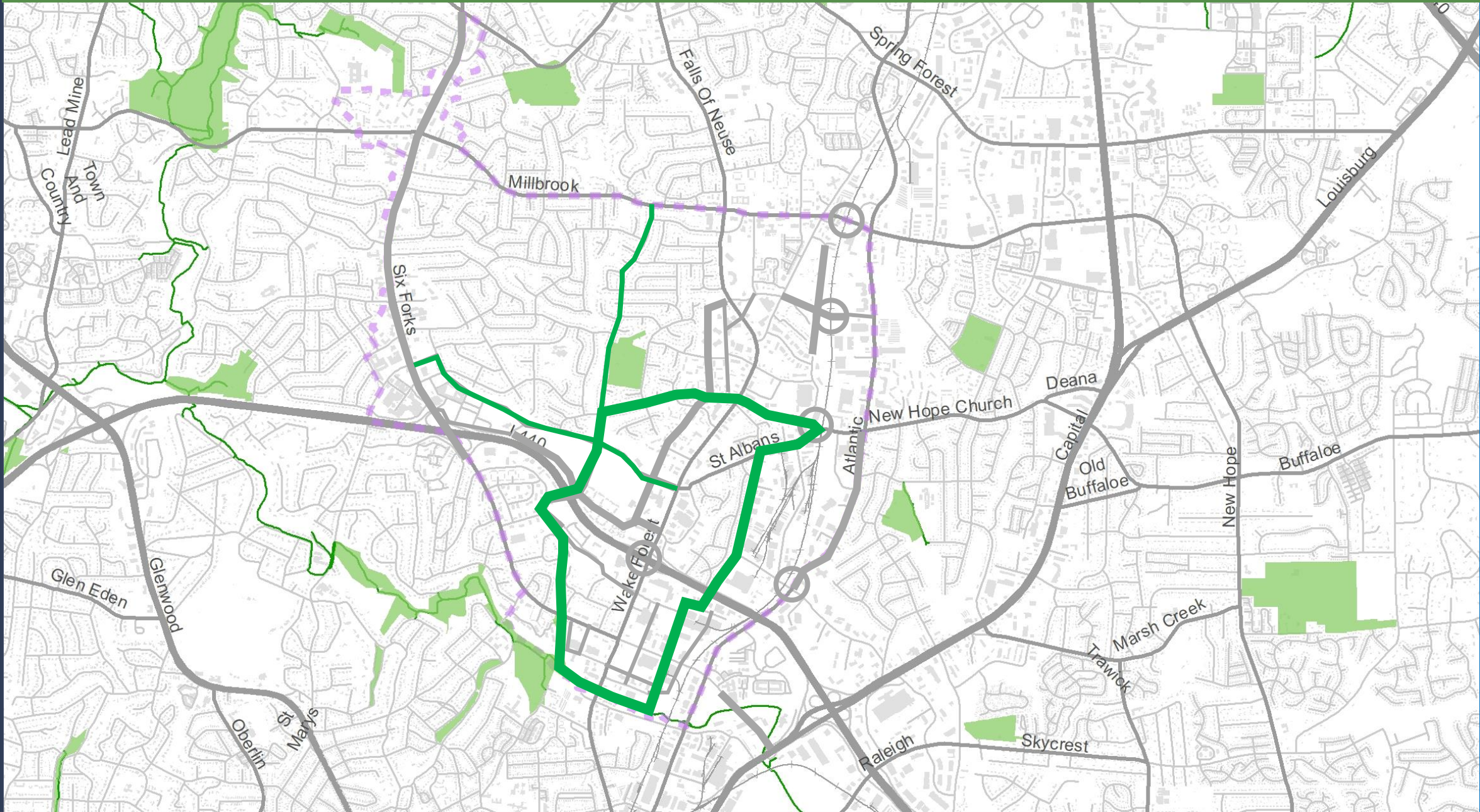
Railroad Grade Separations



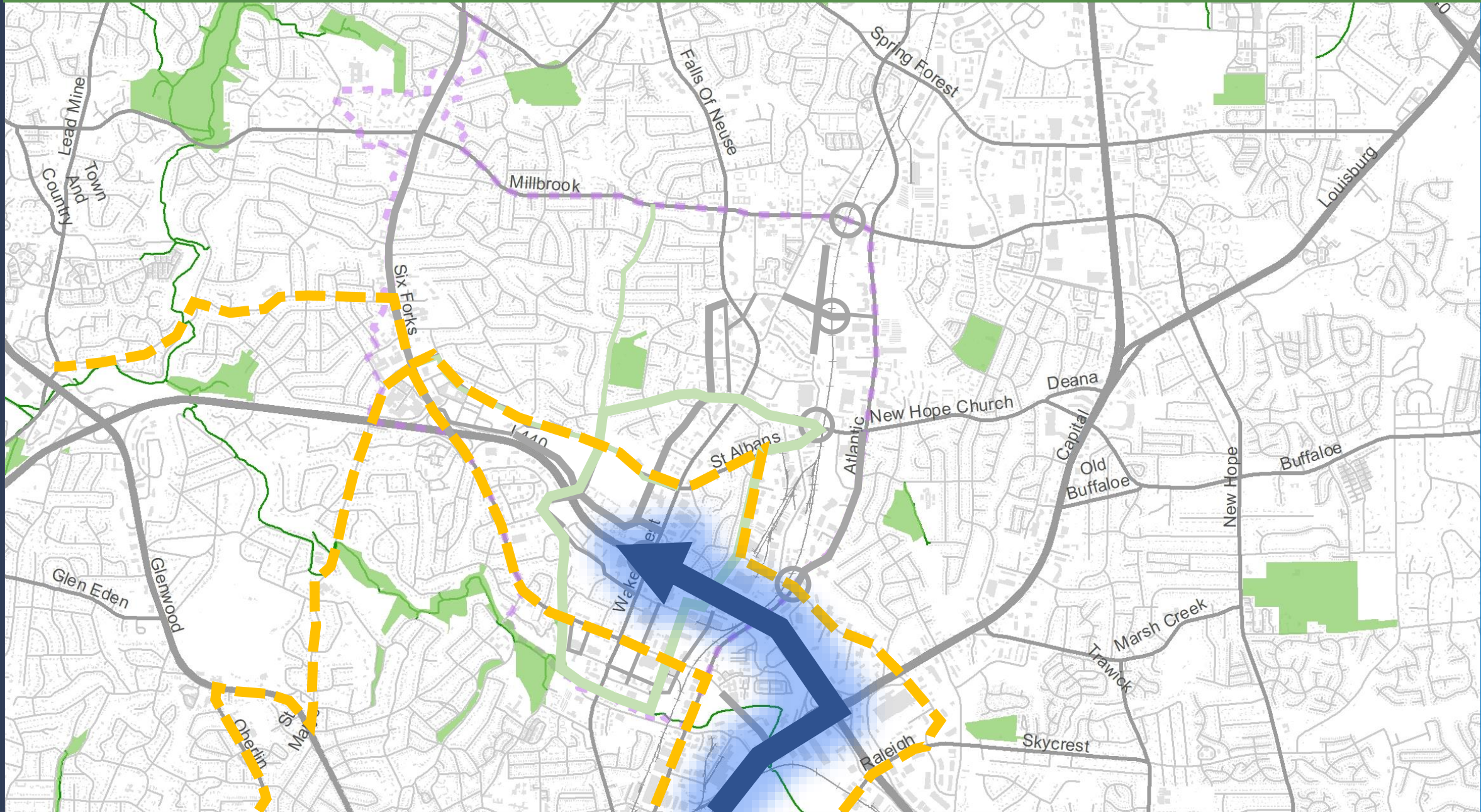


Raleigh

Midtown Ring

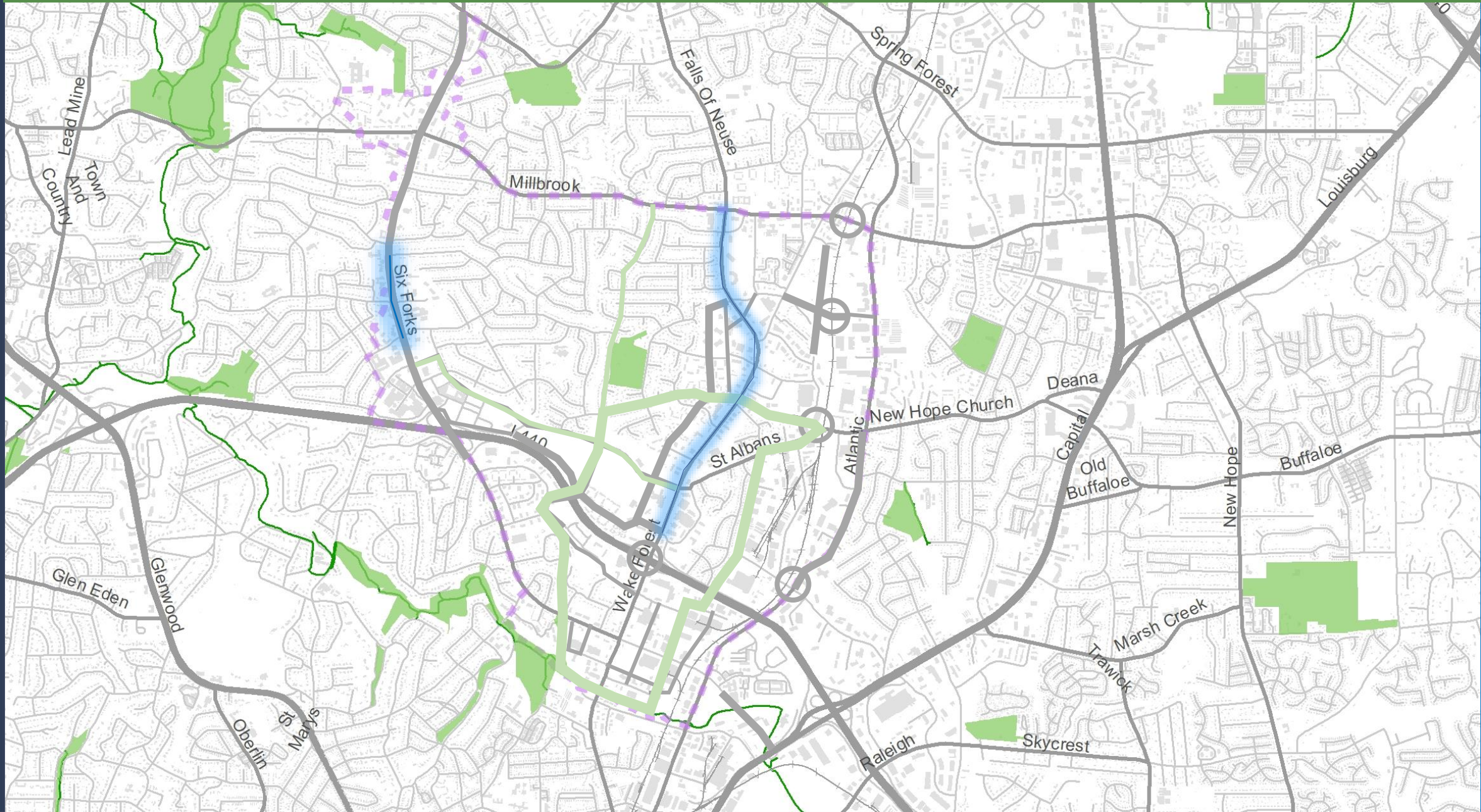


Transit Projects

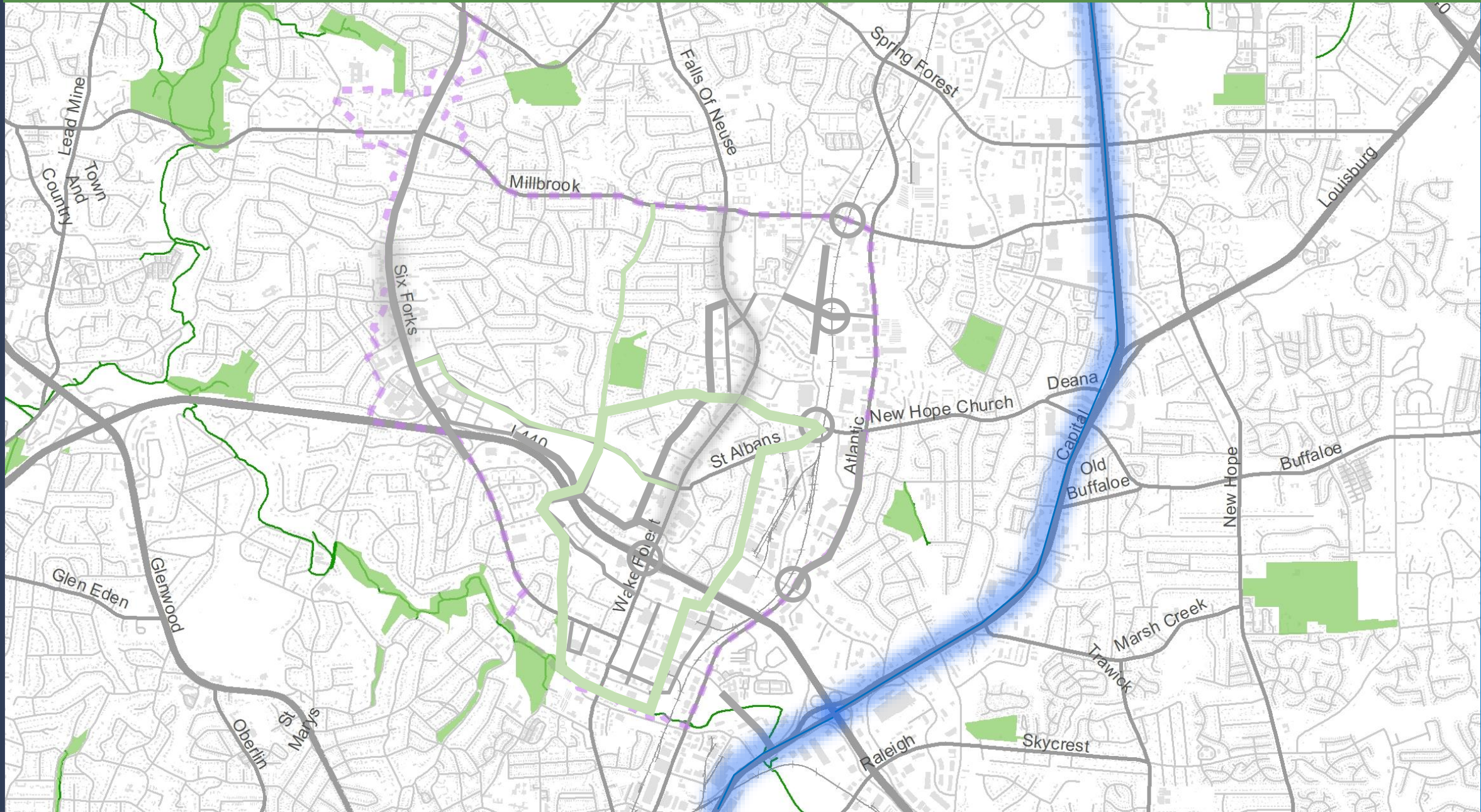




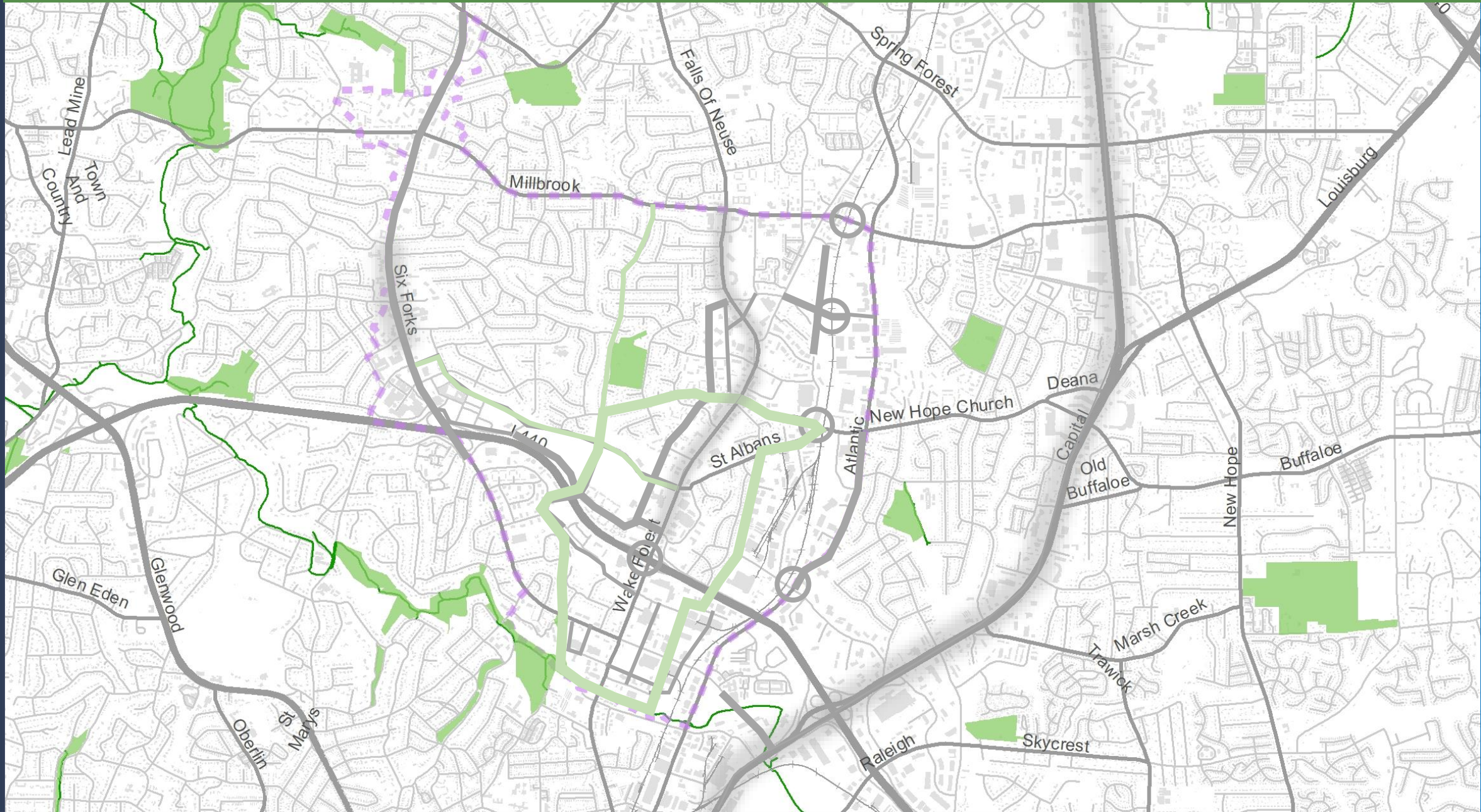
Near-Term Studies



Current Studies



All Projects



Transportation Results



- Pedestrian safety improves – walking (and biking) trips a larger share of future trips



- Transit service improves – transit trips a larger share of future trips



- Generally maintains status quo for driving in future, accounting for additional housing and employment in the area and beyond



- Projects improve intersection level of service in future conditions



- Additional study is needed on Wake Forest Road, although potential permanent shifts in transportation due to COVID may mean traffic levels decrease in the future



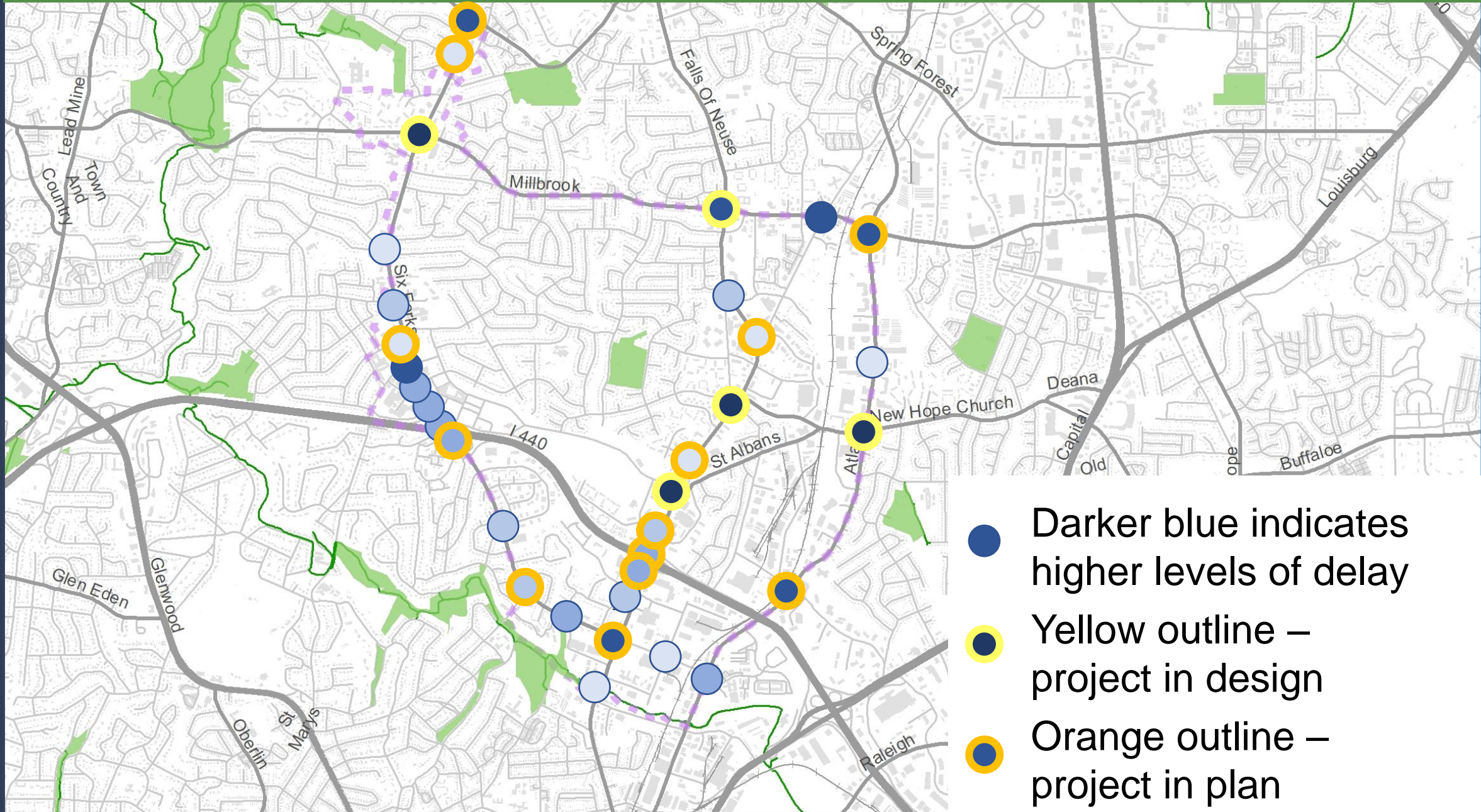
- Overall, per capita carbon conditions decrease and health and activity levels increase

Future Conditions





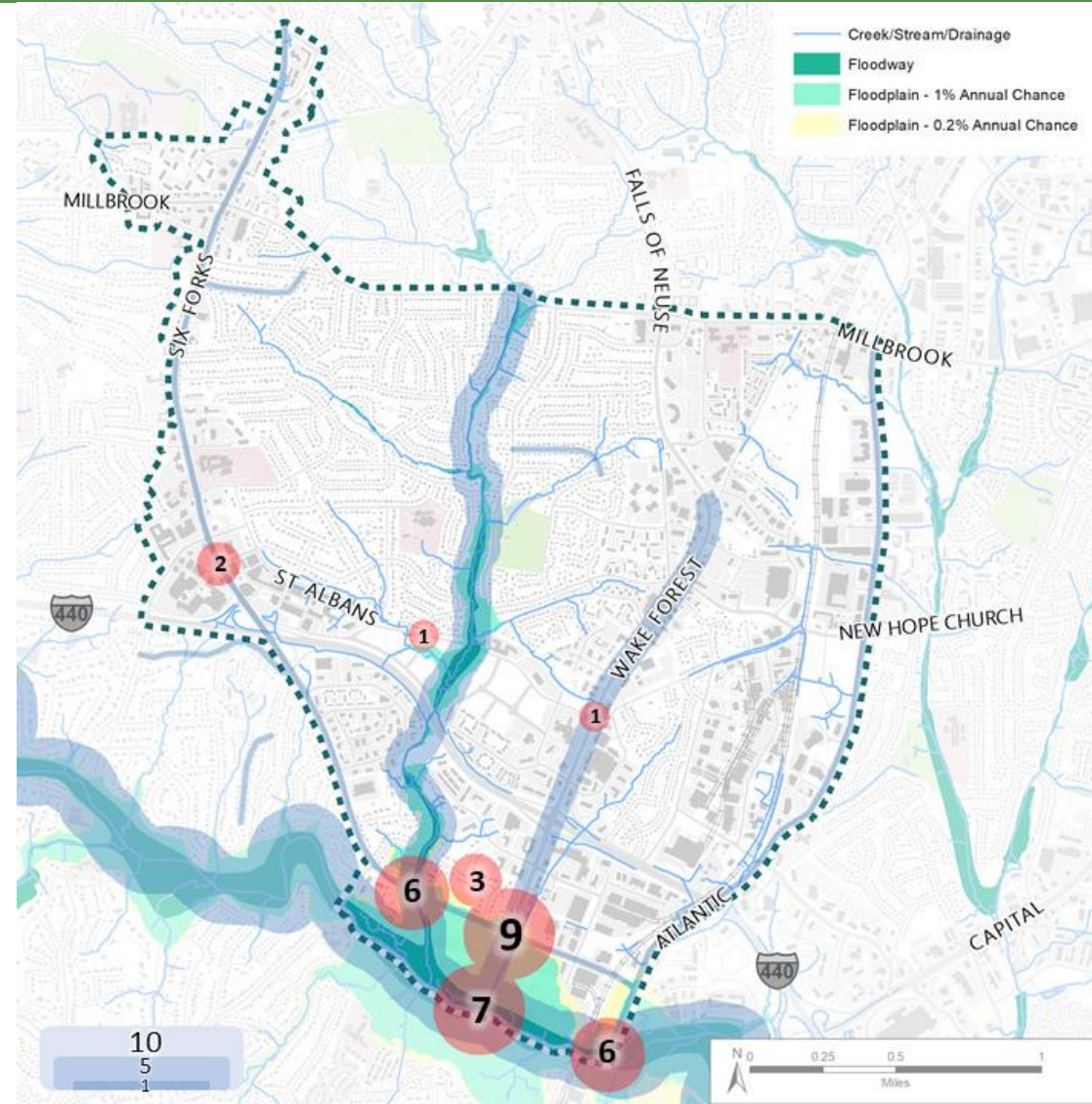
Future Conditions With Improvements



- Darker blue indicates higher levels of delay
- Yellow outline – project in design
- Orange outline – project in plan

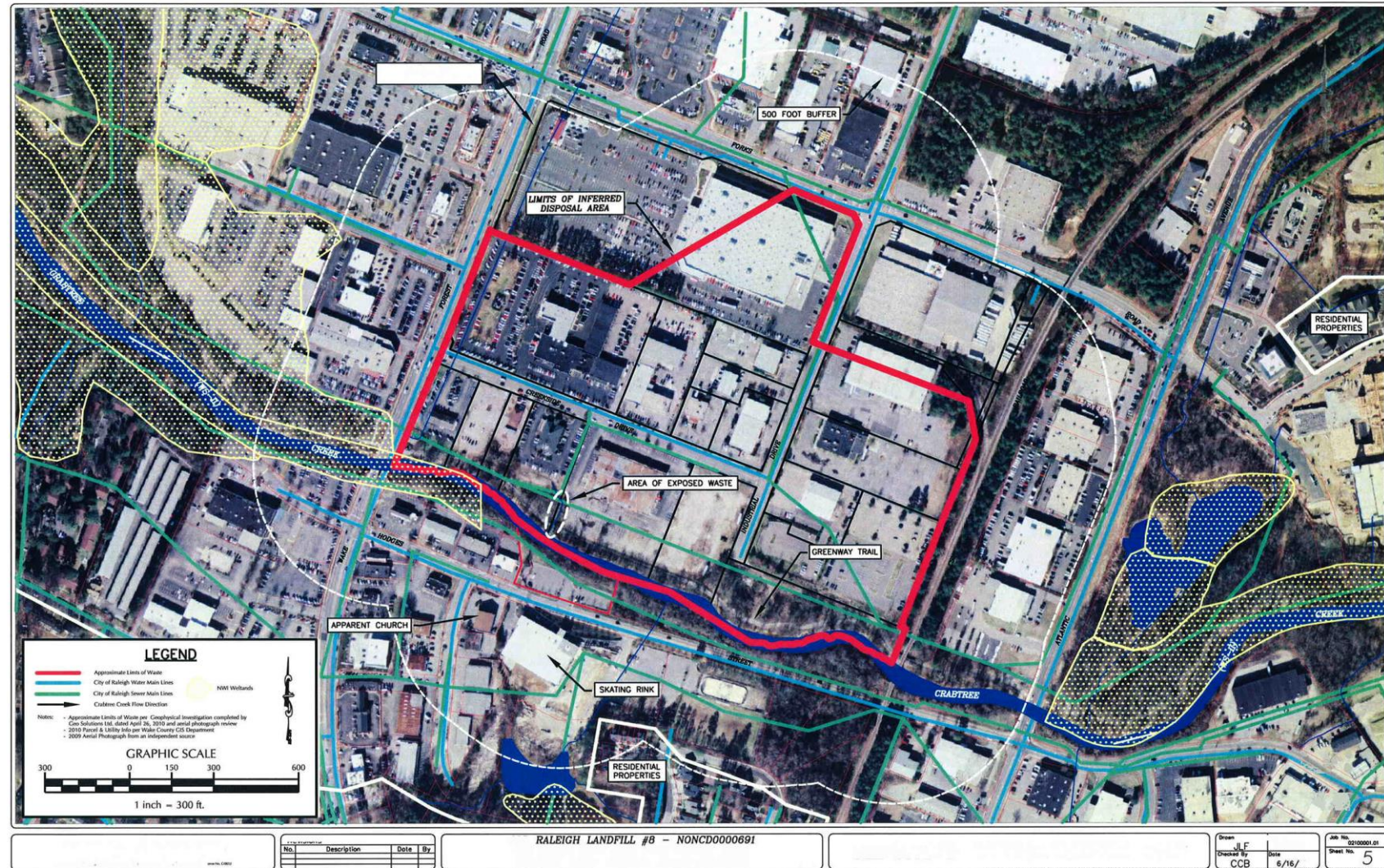
Stormwater Analysis

- Issues along Crabtree and Big Branch
- Led to Green Streets and resilient/stormwater-absorbing Waterfront Park



Stormwater Analysis

Extents of prior city construction landfill



Stormwater/Park Analysis

Atlanta's Fourth Ward Park provides an example of reclaiming a former landfill/industrial site



Stormwater/Park Analysis

- Atlanta's Fourth Ward Park provides an example of reclaiming a former landfill/industrial site
- Midtown plan calls for a study of park possibilities and other strategies for creating a lively waterfront district



Stormwater/Park Analysis

- Atlanta's Fourth Ward Park provides an example of reclaiming a former landfill/industrial site
- Midtown plan calls for a study of park possibilities and other strategies for creating a lively waterfront district



Comments from August COW

Comment: 20 stories is too tall along Six Forks Road

Plan principle: Allow more housing/employment in walkable center served by transit

Feedback: 61 percent average positive rating on online survey (88 responses)

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation
2. Revise to recommend 12 stories



Comments from August COW

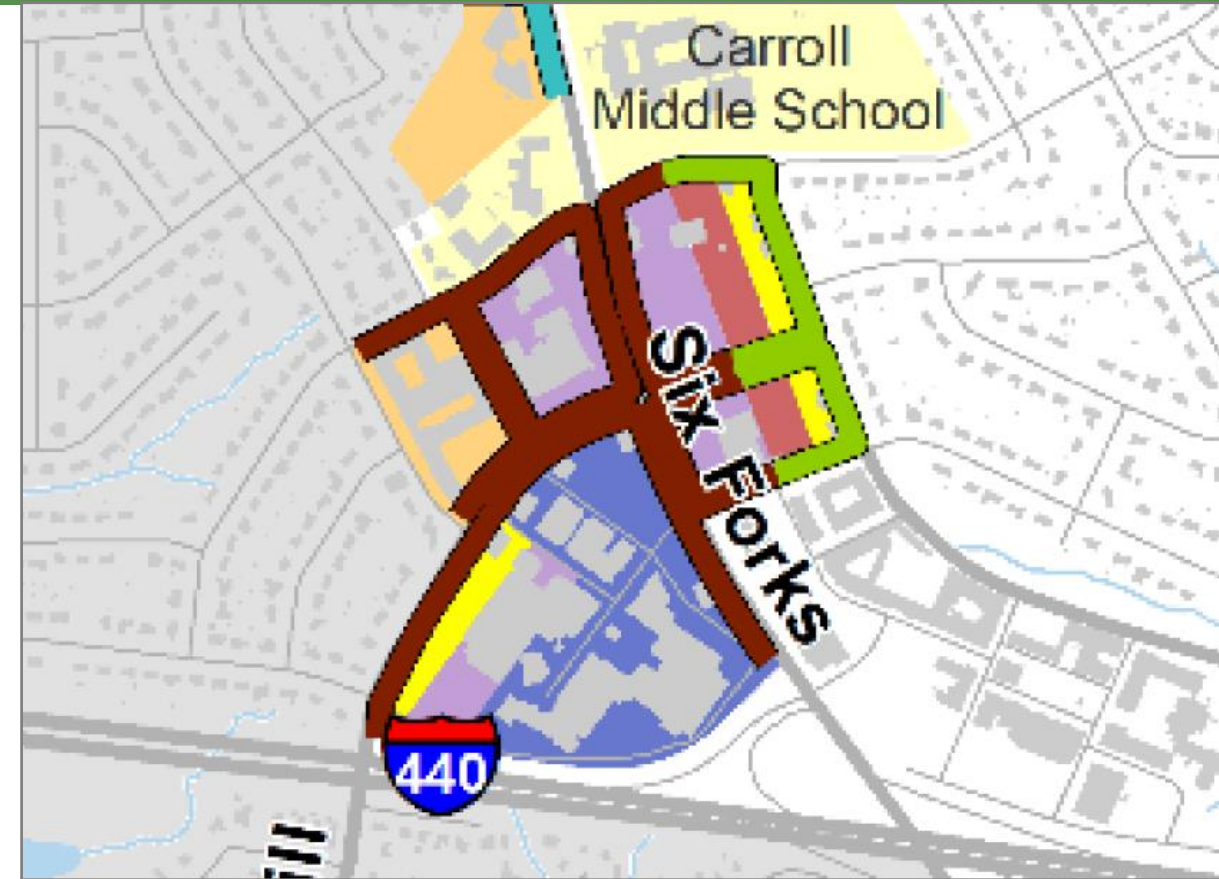
Comment: Six Forks should not have an urban frontage

Plan principle: Create more walkable places, include building entrances on street

Feedback: Little specific input, but reflects a primary input theme

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation
2. Revise to recommend a less urban frontage



Recommended Zoning Frontage

- Green
- Urban Limited
- Parking Limited

Comments from August COW

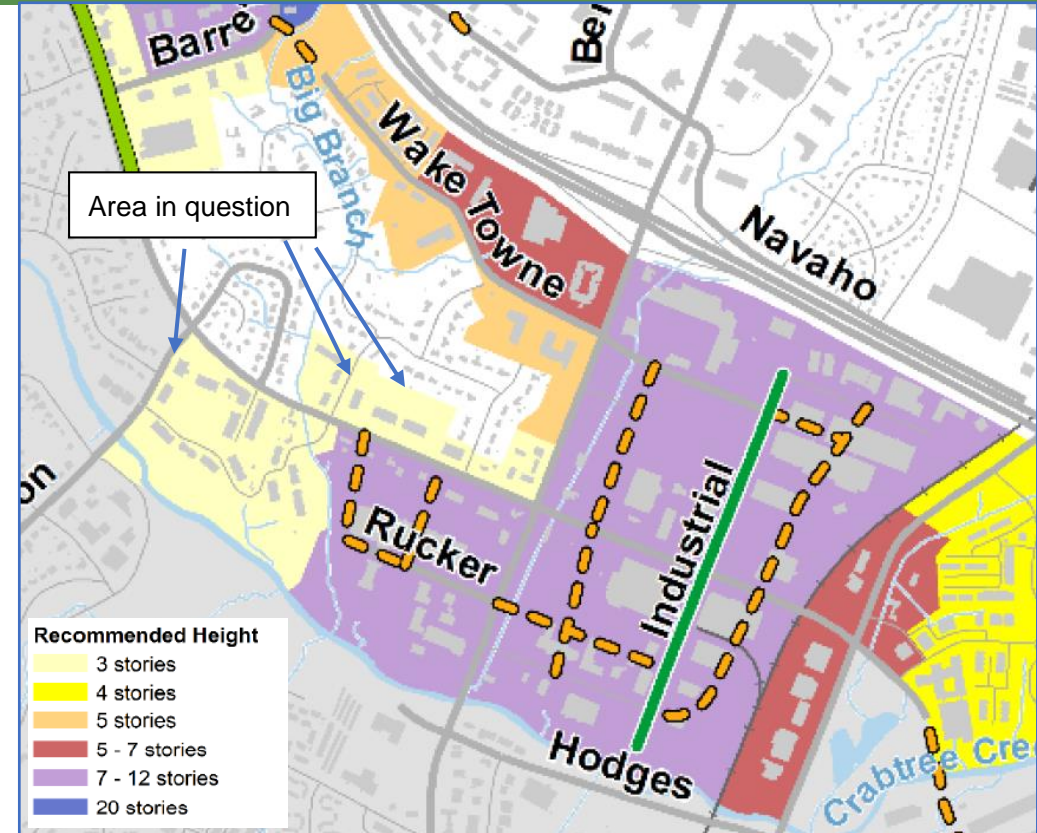
Comment: At least four stories should be allowed on Hobbs/nearby properties on Six Forks. Plan recommends three. Current zoning is three stories; current height guidance is 4/5 on north, 4 on south

Plan principle: Transition from taller mixed use area east and south

Feedback: Survey illustrated transitions from 12 stories at core of the Waterfront area to three stories on the edges. 75 percent favorable

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation
2. Revise to reflect general guidance of four/five stories



Comments from August COW

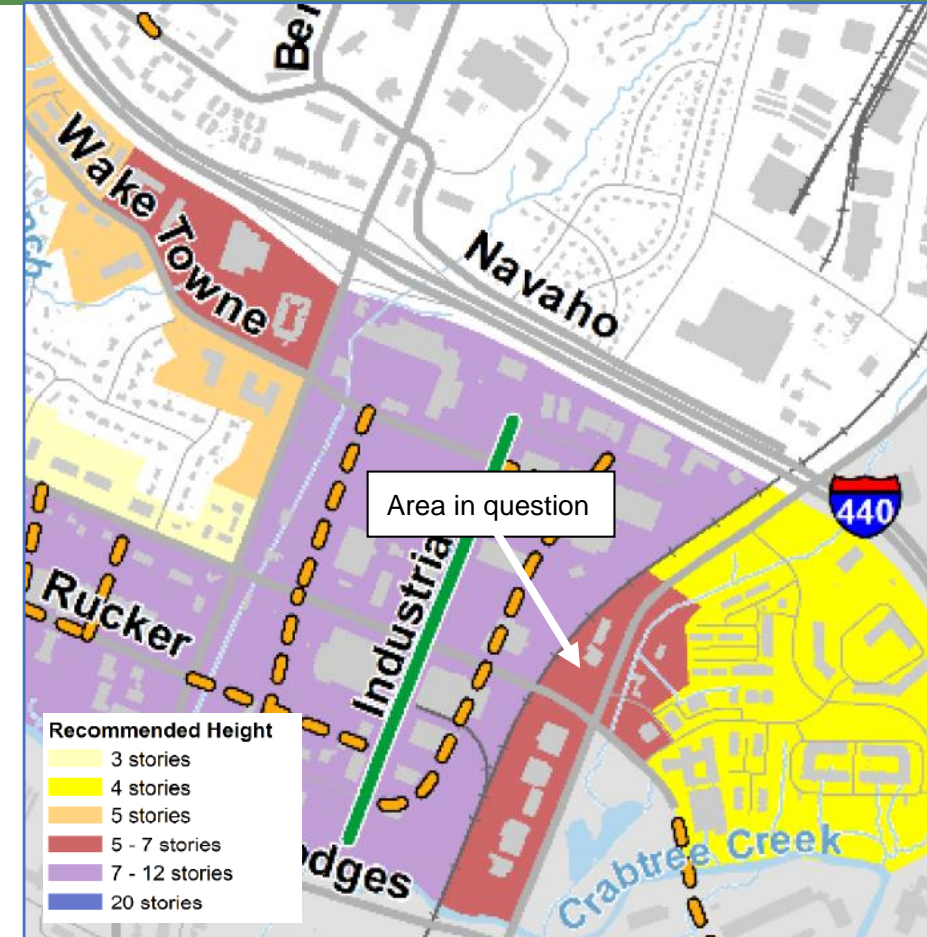
Comment: At least four stories should be allowed on Hobbs/nearby properties on Atlantic. Plan recommends 5-7. Current zoning is three stories; current general height guidance is five stories.

Plan principle: Allow more housing/employment in a walkable center

Feedback: Survey illustrated transitions from 12 stories at core of the Waterfront area to three stories on the edges. 75 percent favorable.

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation
2. Revise recommendation. Additional height beyond that explored by the plan process ideally should involve a new process



Comments from August COW

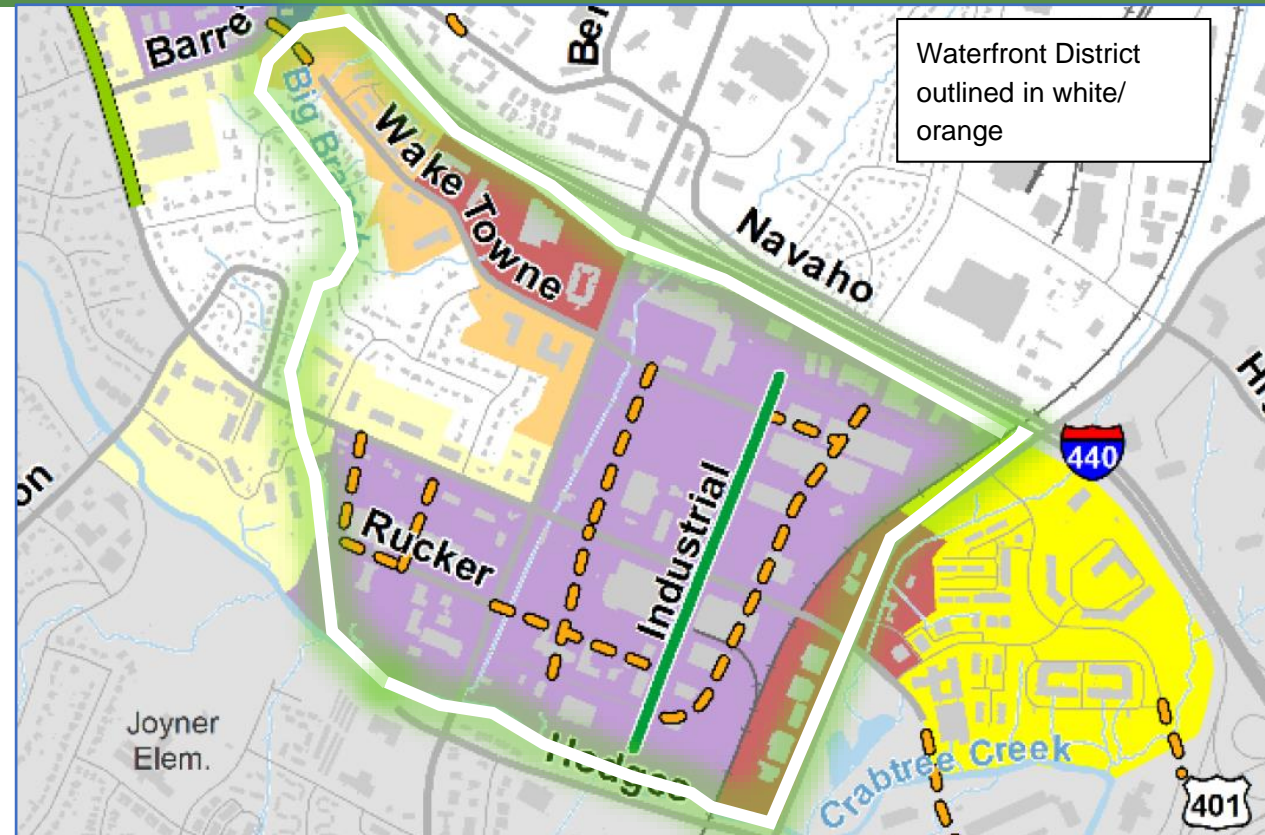
Comment: Parking should be allowed between the building and street in the Waterfront District

Plan principle: Allow more housing/employment in a walkable center

Feedback: Not specifically asked, but a key part of the core concept of a walkable waterfront/Main Street concept (82 percent positive, 136 responses to this question) and overall input

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation of no parking between building and street
2. Revise recommendation to allow some parking (hybrid frontage)

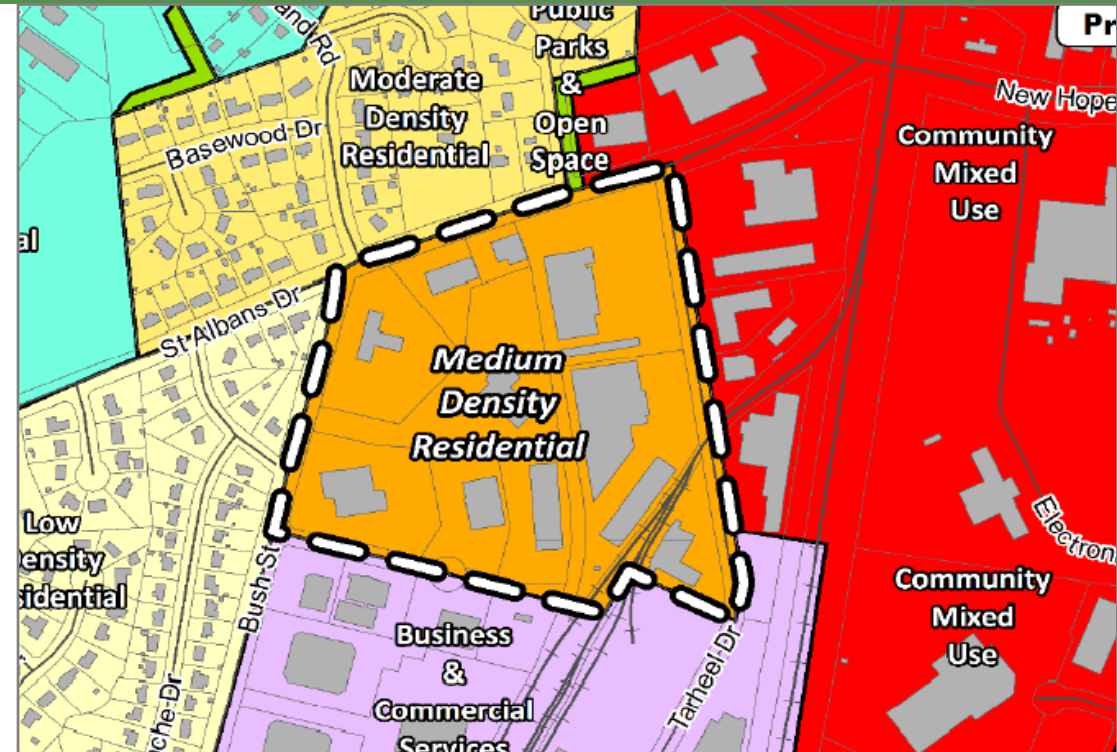


Comments from August COW

Comment: FLUM for St. Albans/Bush area should support office/other commercial uses

Plan principle: Allow more housing opportunities and create a transition to residential area to north

Feedback: 69 percent favorability as a way to accommodate more housing choice (120 respondents)



Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation of Medium Density Residential
2. Revise recommendation to a category that better facilitates housing while also supporting office and retail uses. Office and Residential Mixed Use or Neighborhood Mixed Use
3. Revise recommendation to retain adopted Business and Commercial Services

Comments from August COW

Comment: More height (12 stories) should be allowed in the St. Albans/Bush area. Plan recommends 4/5.

Plan principle: Avoiding stark transitions to lower-scale areas

Feedback: Not asked separately from FLUM change; 69 percent favorability as a way to accommodate more housing choice (120 respondents)



Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation of 4/5 stories
2. Revise recommendation to retain existing height guidance of three stories
3. Revise to allow additional height. Additional height beyond that explored by the plan process or current height guidance ideally should involve a new process.

Comments from August COW

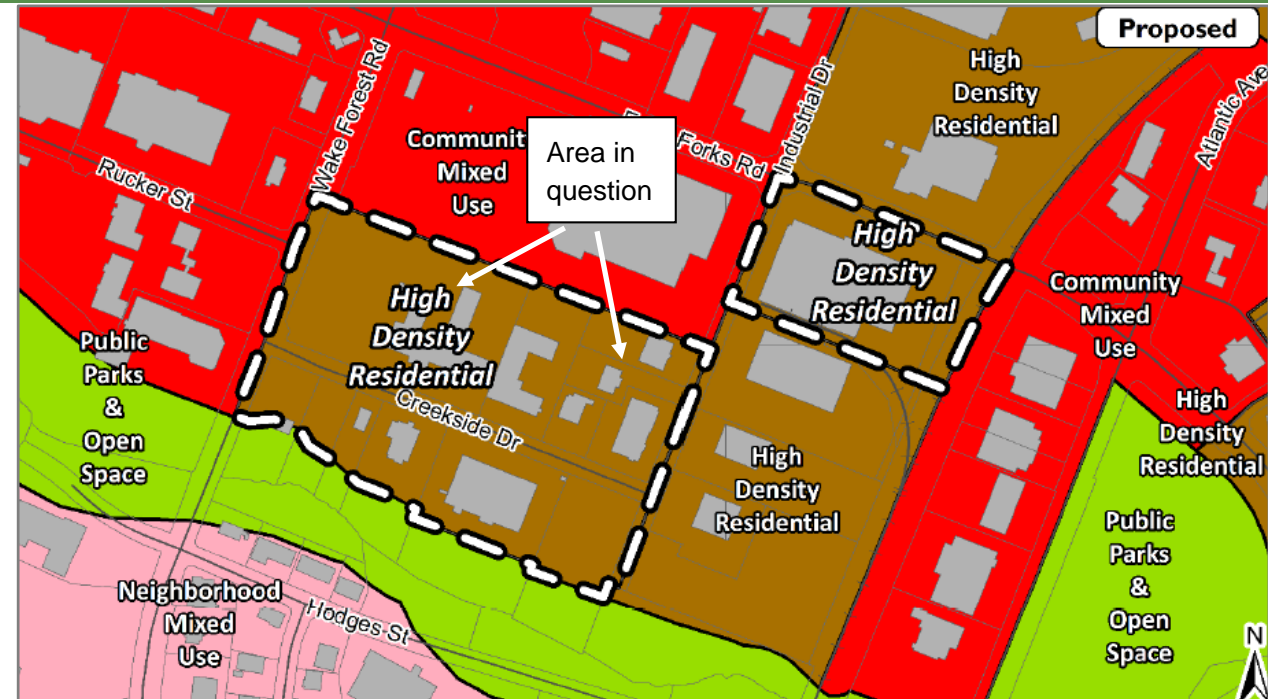
Comment: Leave Thompson properties (car dealership) as Community Mixed Use on FLUM. Plan recommends High Density Residential

Plan principle: A more lively Waterfront District by adding residential uses, encouraging a balance between commercial/residential uses.

Feedback: 77 percent average support (125 respondents)

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation of High Density Residential
2. Revise recommendation to designate as a category that avoids higher impact commercial uses but still allows a mix of housing, office, and retail, such as Neighborhood Mixed Use or Office and Residential Mixed Use.
3. Revise recommendation to retain existing Community Mixed Use designation.



Comments from August COW

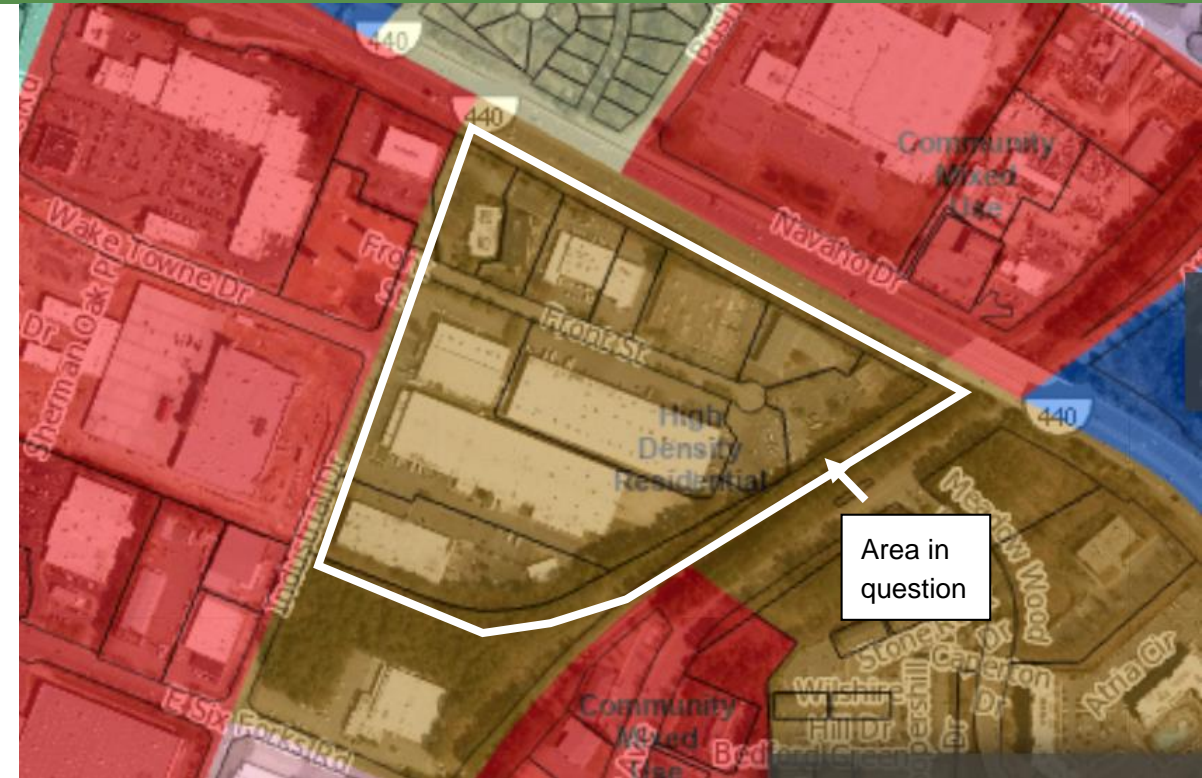
Comment: Commercial Mixed Use is an appropriate designation for Industrial/Front street properties

Plan principle: The plan does not propose a change from HDR, which envisions commercial uses on ground floor. The plan does amend that guidance by supporting office uses in the district

Feedback: Land use vision for Waterfront District received 77 percent favorability (125 respondents)

Options:

1. Retain current designation of High Density Residential
2. Create a recommendation to revise to a category that avoids higher impact commercial uses but still allows a mix of housing, office, and retail, such as Neighborhood Mixed Use or Office and Residential Mixed Use.
3. Revise to Community Mixed Use designation, which does reflect existing zoning.



Comments from August COW

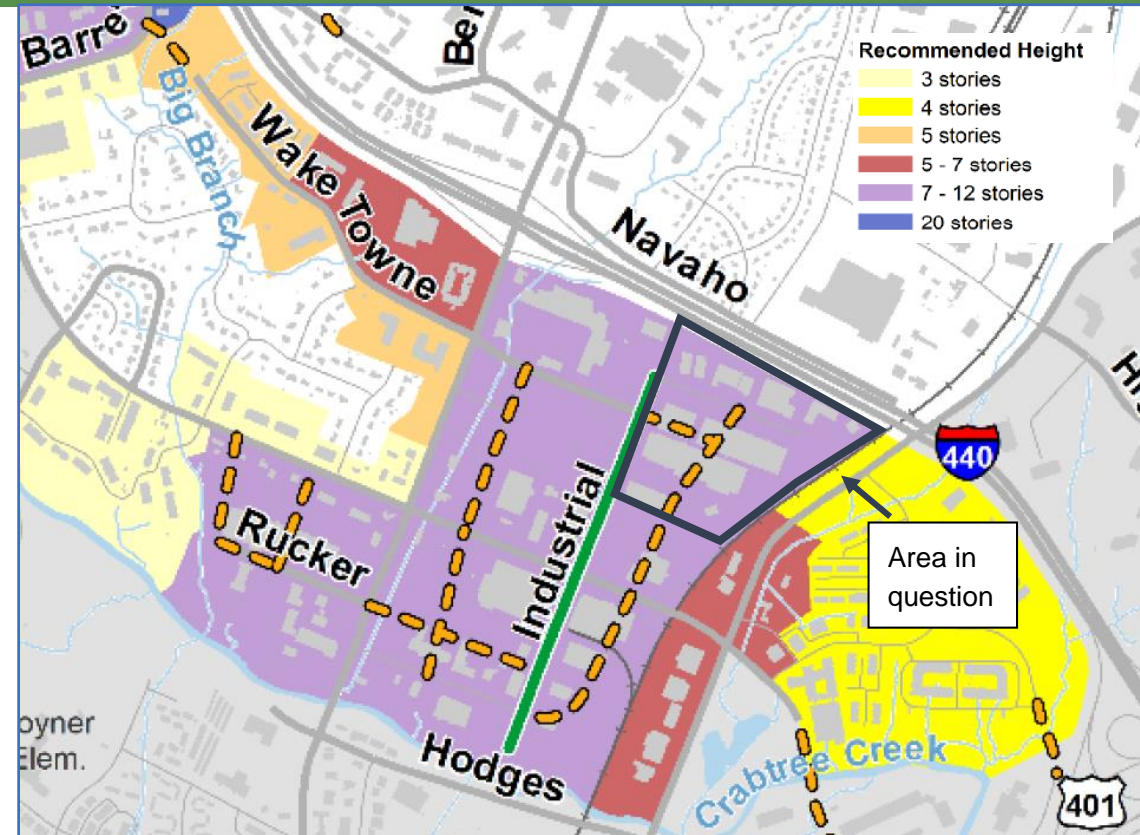
Comment: More height (20 stories) should be allowed in Industrial/Front area. Plan recommends up to 12.

Plan principle: The plan's tallest recommended heights of 20 stories are at/near the core of the Midtown area, with tallest existing buildings and highest levels of planned frequent transit

Feedback: Survey asked about transitions from 12 stories at core of the Waterfront to three stories on edges. 75 percent favorable average. (115 responses)

Options:

1. Retain Plan recommendation of 12 stories (existing general height guidance in either the High Density Residential or Community Mixed Use categories also is up to 12 stories)
2. Additional height beyond that explored by the plan process or current height guidance ideally should involve a new process. Any property owner or resident may request a FLUM change.

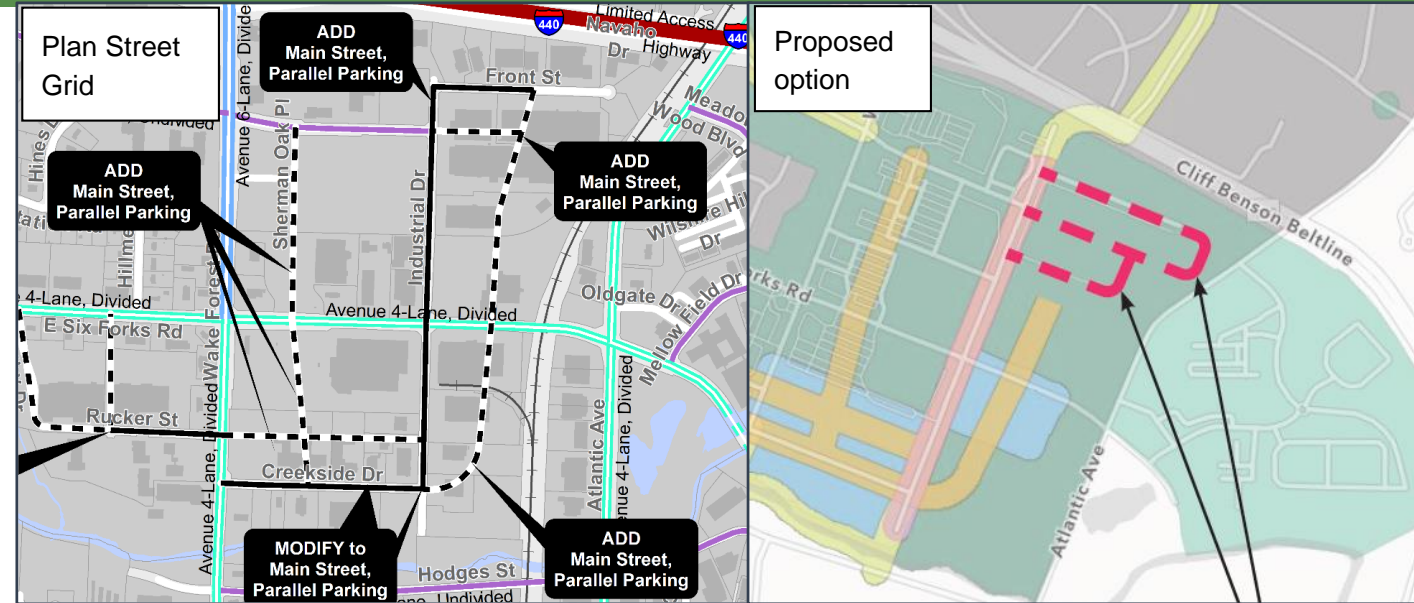


Comments from August COW

Comment: Amend street plan recommendation at Industrial/Front

Plan principle: A connected grid is essential for walkability

Feedback: Not asked specifically, but a desire for walkability was a core input theme



Options:

1. Retain existing proposal for Street Plan
2. Recommend alternate proposal, with provision that it connects to Creekside Drive extension
3. Recommend alternate proposal

Next Steps

- Recommendation to City Council
- Council will hold a public hearing on the plan amendments
- Commission can make recommendation on plan as a whole and on specific elements of the plan
- Today: Public Comment and Committee deliberation