



FY2023 RAISE Grant Application

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS CROSSROADS:

Reconnecting Historic Neighborhoods
Through Active Mobility

SAFETY • ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY • QUALITY OF LIFE
MOBILITY+CONNECTIVITY • ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS+OPPORTUNITY
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR • PARTNERSHIP • INNOVATION

PROJECT SUBMITTED BY:



PROJECT PARTNERS:



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Project Description, Goals + History

The Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads: Reconnecting Historic Neighborhoods Through Active Mobility RAISE project creates a 3.16-mile urban trail that traverses a pivotal landscape in America's Civil Rights Movement. The project's footprint is located in an area that was once one of our nation's most prominent Black commercial centers with a high concentration of Black business ownership. The proposed trail corridor took center stage in a walkable, thriving community, but the area no longer resembles its past. While much of downtown Birmingham has started to revitalize, many low-income and underserved neighborhoods surrounding downtown have not experienced the same level of investment in transportation or public spaces. These neighborhoods actively involved the Civil Rights Movement, including Graymont and Smithfield, are separated from downtown—and therefore from necessary everyday destinations—by unsafe roadways and major highways I-20 and I-65. This project will provide an essential multimodal connection from some of Birmingham's most underserved and under-invested neighborhoods to essential services downtown.

GOALS



A safer community through new midblock crossings, separation of cyclists/pedestrians/vehicles, and traffic calming



Improved access to services



Economic revitalization of Birmingham's historic Civil Rights District



A comfortable built environment with street trees, separated facilities, and reduced speeds

The project is broken down into two primary components:

- 1 Complete Streets / Transit Corridor**
- 2 Urban Trail / Multimodal Corridor**

COMPONENT 1: Complete Streets / Transit Corridor

The proposed 2.48-mile Complete Street would use a road diet to establish a two-way cycle track, the first of its kind in the city, along Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N., and 4th Ave. N. This project would convert fast-moving roads into Complete Streets—hubs for public life, transit, and active transportation. The reduced road width will slow traffic speeds and create shorter intersection crossing distances for bicyclists and pedestrians. The project includes improved ADA access, sidewalks, and other Universal Design elements for accessibility. The project directly connects visitors to the A.G. Gaston Hotel, a prominent Civil Rights Monument on 5th Ave. N.

1a | Graymont Ave. Complete Streets / Transit Corridor

The cycle track along Graymont Ave. and 5th Ave. N. will provide the first separated bicycle facility that connects residents from Smithfield, under I-65, and into downtown. Conceptual 10% design plans at intersections have been completed along Graymont Ave. as part of the Red Rock Trail Action Plan (Fall 2022). Two sites of the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) are either immediately adjacent to Graymont Ave. or within 1,000 feet. Component 1a includes the following:

- **Connections to parks, recreation, schools, and everyday needs along the corridor:** The project improves access to central neighborhood corridors, Legion Field and McClendon Park, a grocery store, and numerous churches.
- **Economic revitalization:** Allied project partners plan to foster existing and new business to grow a more thriving commercial and civic hub that will draw more users.
- **Safety and accessibility improvements:** A road diet on Graymont Avenue will remove a travel lane, resulting in reduced crossing distances for bicyclists and pedestrians, lower traffic speeds, and address accessibility concerns.
- **Transit improvements:** This project proposes up to nine new floating transit islands along Graymont Ave. with improved accessibility for users.
- **Innovation and connectivity:** Graymont Ave. will feature a mobility hub near Center St. that will offer a small pocket park with a micromobility station for scooter and bicycle charging, an electric vehicle charging station, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, and a direct link to a bus shelter and the cycle track.
- **Green streets:** This project will incorporate new street trees and vegetated swales.

1b | 6th St. W. Bicycle Boulevard

At the western extents of the project, a short neighborhood greenway is proposed as a bicycle boulevard and a critical connection to the Red Rock Trail System.

1c | 4th Ave. N. Complete Street

4th Ave. N. is considered Birmingham's "Black Main Street" and has a heavy economic development and revitalization

focus today. This is an extension of the Graymont Ave. and 5th Ave. N. road diet and Complete Street. Component 1c includes the following:

- **Connectivity and accessibility:** A Complete Street allows for a cycle track from 16th St. N. to 20th St. N., which connects to the existing bike lanes (Birmingham Green Refresh) on 20th St. N. The project includes ramp and intersection upgrades along with other Universal Design elements to create a fully accessible corridor within the heart of downtown.

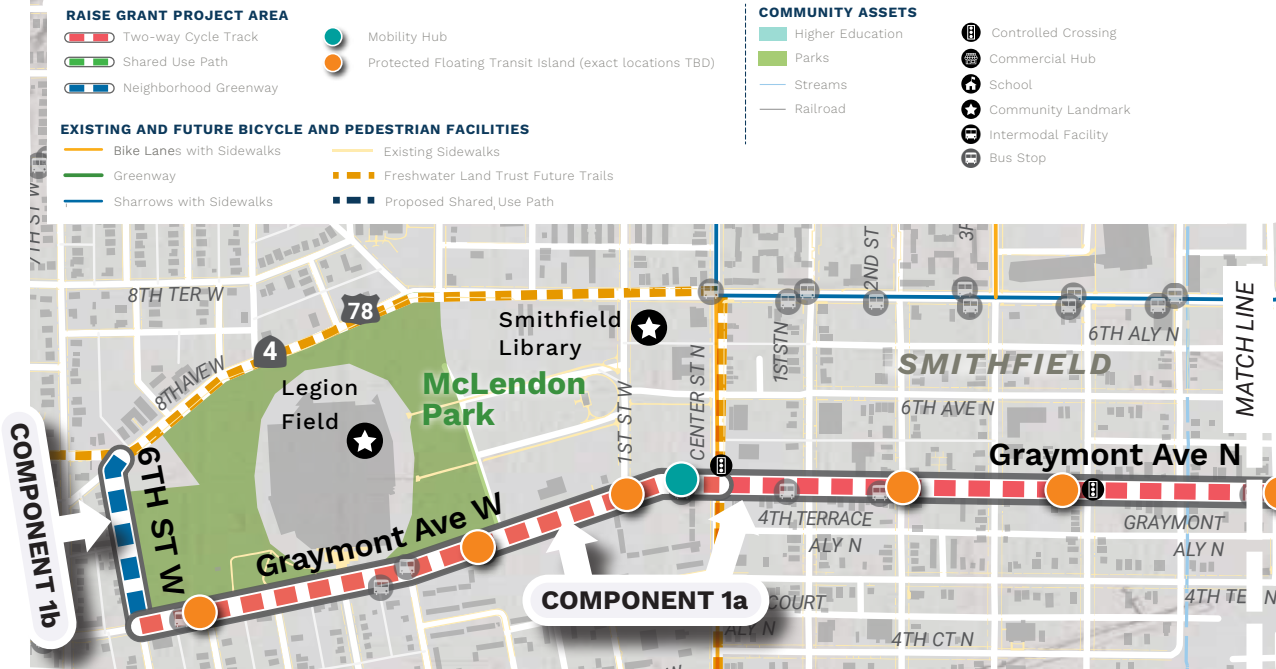
COMPONENT 2: Urban Trail / Multimodal Corridor

The proposed 16th St. N. urban trail extends 0.68-miles between City Walk BHAM and Morris Ave to create a multimodal corridor of active transportation. 16th St. N. contains the National Park Service's Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, including the 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, and Kelly Ingram Park. The proposed urban trail includes: a 12-foot wide, separated multi-use path; interpretation; and art. This trail provides connectivity for residents and visitors while highlighting the cultural significance of this area where protesters once marched. Component 2 includes the following:

- **Urban revitalization and connectivity:** Empty parcels line the north part of 16th St. N. where the neighborhood was divided by interstate development. The project proposes an urban trail to create opportunities for neighborhood-led economic revitalization.
- **Green streets:** The Multimodal Corridor will include green infrastructure such as street trees and stormwater control measures.

Project Synopsis

Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads connects Smithfield and Graymont, some of Birmingham's poorest and most underserved neighborhoods, to everyday necessities and downtown by creating Complete Streets that are livable, fun, and safe for all people—regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation.



Location

City of Birmingham,
Jefferson County, Alabama
100% within Area of Persistent Poverty



Total Mileage

3.16 miles of improvements
Combination of multi-use paths, sidewalks, streetscape, + bicycle lanes



Estimated Completion Date

December 2029

Project Cost: \$29,436,550

Local Match + CMAQ Funds: \$7,755,244

RAISE Request: \$21,681,306

Benefit Cost Ratio: 3.24 : 1

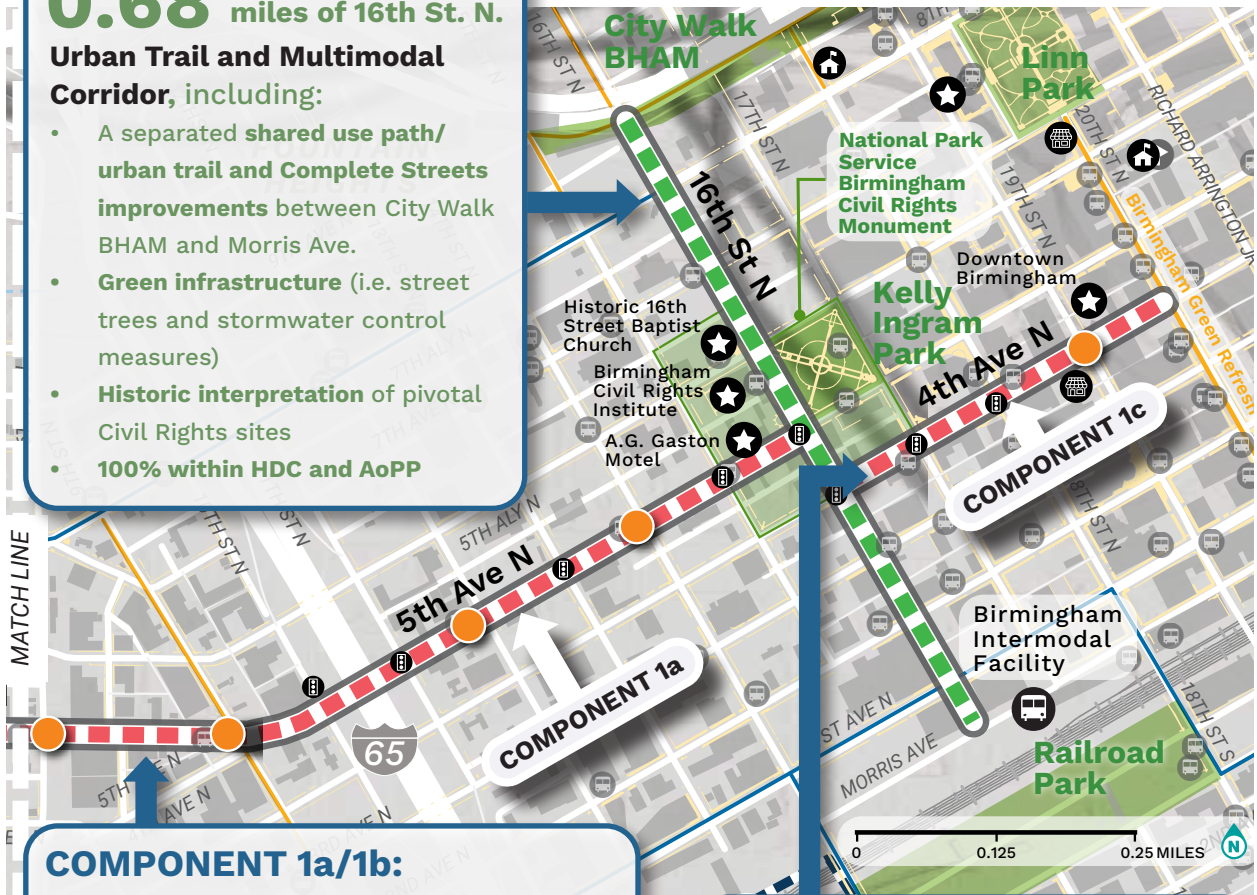
The project's main goals are to improve connectivity, increase safety, enhance quality of life, improve public health, and revitalize the city's underserved neighborhoods in the Civil Rights District, Black Main Street (4th Ave. N.), and neighborhoods west of downtown. This project re-imagines Graymont Ave., 16th St. N., 5th Ave. N., and 4th Ave. N., by implementing a road diet that will transform the car-centric street grid into a Complete Street and Transit Corridor that prioritizes pedestrian and bicyclist safety, improves transit accessibility, and provides residents with multimodal transportation. The new streetscape will encourage increased foot traffic, creating more opportunities for local businesses to thrive and the district to recruit new ones. Additionally, the redesign will provide opportunities to create more resilient communities through green infrastructure that will combat Birmingham's urban heat islands and manage stormwater.

COMPONENT 2:

0.68 miles of 16th St. N.

Urban Trail and Multimodal Corridor, including:

- A separated **shared use path/urban trail and Complete Streets improvements** between City Walk BHAM and Morris Ave.
- **Green infrastructure** (i.e. street trees and stormwater control measures)
- **Historic interpretation** of pivotal Civil Rights sites
- **100% within HDC and AoPP**



COMPONENT 1a/1b:

2.12 miles of Complete Streets/
on Graymont Ave. N., 5th Ave. N. and
6th St. W. composed of:

- A road diet to include 1.95-miles of a separated two-way cycle track (the first of its kind in the city!)
- Transit, ADA, and sidewalk improvements
- Street trees
- 50% within HDC and 100% within AoPP

COMPONENT 1c:

0.36 miles of Complete
Streets/Transit Corridor
on 4th Ave. N., including a road diet
with a separated two-way cycle track and
improved transit stops. The component is
100% within HDC and AoPP.

This project will create new connections between vulnerable and low-income communities in Areas of Persistent Poverty (AoPP) and enable the City to provide safe, sustainable, and equitable access for downtown and the Smithfield and Graymont neighborhoods. The project is located within Census tracts (29, 30.2 and 27) that are all considered Areas of

Persistent Poverty (AoPP). Tracts 30.2 and 27 also fall within the Historically Disadvantaged Community (HDC) Tracts. When looking at a 0.5-mile radius of the project, a typical walkable distance, two Census tracts are located within or partially in both the AoPP and HDC.

Project Website

www.birminghamal.gov/transportation/RAISE

Community Context

The project area is home to Birmingham's Civil Rights Movement, a place of human perseverance, but today revitalization and infrastructure to increase livability is needed. This year marks the 60th anniversary of a crossroads of American and Birmingham history. The bombing of the A.G. Gaston Motel and 16th Street Baptist Church happened within this project area and during that time Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was imprisoned nearby where he wrote the famous "Letter From Birmingham Jail."

This corridor will celebrate, honor, and revitalize Smithfield, the west side of Birmingham, and the Civil Rights District. It will be the spine of a growing multimodal transportation network, providing safe and equitable options via an urban trail and Complete Streets. This project will weld together inclusivity, equity, mobility, opportunity, and safety, addressing the wrongs of redlining and interstate development that still devastate Black communities today. The project connects many neighborhoods of western Birmingham to downtown and will one day be a main spine to the Red Rock Trail System, Birmingham's regional urban trail network.

Background image: A drone shot of 16th St. N. at the future urban trail.

Community Support

The project area and roadways have been identified by various past planning efforts and regional collaboration efforts as priority projects for improving safety, increasing accessibility, and revitalizing communities. As part of the 2022 *NW Downtown Quadrant Master Plan* and the 2015 *Western Area Communities' Framework Plan*, the City of Birmingham engaged with the public on their needs and concerns related to active transportation in the western portions of downtown. The 2019 *B-Active Plan*, the Active Transportation Plan from the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and Freshwater Land Trust's 2022 *Red Rock Action Plan* identify the project corridors as priority projects to connect downtown and Smithfield and increase neighborhood connectivity. The proposed project is powered by close partnership between the City, Freshwater Land Trust, economic development nonprofits, Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, and more. Various community organizations, including REV Birmingham and Urban Impact actively support the proposed project and are ready to collaborate and provide resources to support programming, new infrastructure, and local entrepreneurship. Residents have been actively engaged through recent planning efforts, including the recently submitted the Smithfield Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program by the City and HABD. This project continues this collaboration, actively reaching out to the community by coordinating with neighborhood improvement districts, the housing authority, nonprofits, businesses, and underrepresented groups to gather feedback.

02 PROJECT BUDGET

Sources + Amount of Funds

The Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads project is estimated to cost **\$29,436,550**. **This proposal requests \$21,681,306** in RAISE grant funding to implement project improvements that would increase equity, safety, sustainability, quality of life, and health in downtown Birmingham and the Smithfield neighborhood. Projected construction costs were calculated based on 2026 dollars in line with the anticipated construction timeline.

Table 1 shows the overall cost and funding breakdown for the project by component. Total local match funding is at 22% of total cost and does not include federal funds (with exception of ARPA funds which can be used as a local match). Additional federal leverage funds are available, to make an additional match/leverage of 3% of the total project cost. Table 2 on the following page shows the breakdown of the match/federal leverage funding.

Detailed budget cost estimates are provided as a supplement to this narrative.

How Funds Will Be Spent

The following is a detailed description of how all funds will be spent. Any scheduling stipulations for these funds have also been included in the project schedule.

RAISE federal funds: Funds will be spent on construction and design fees for both components of the project.

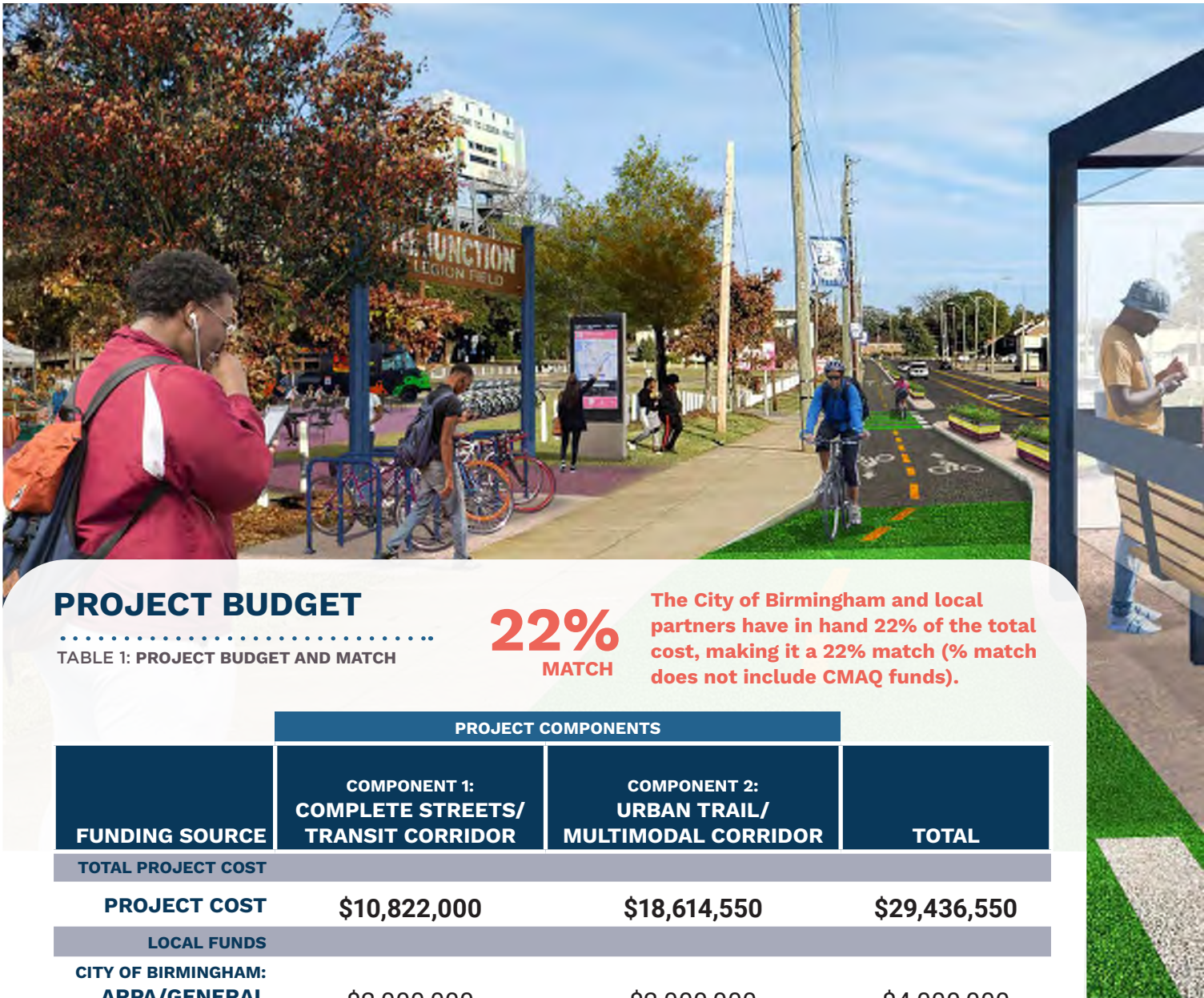
City of Birmingham ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Funds will be spent on design, permitting, and construction. Funds must be expended by December 31, 2026 per U.S. Department of Treasury regulations. **In the event the timeline cannot be met, the City of Birmingham will contribute general fund dollars to meet the remaining match commitment.**

City of Birmingham Resurfacing Funds: The City dedicates annual general funds to resurfacing. In the past six years, the City has spent anywhere from \$3.6 to \$12.6 million a year on resurfacing. The City is committed to \$634,155 of resurfacing funds to aid in costs for Component 1 of this project.

Freshwater Land Trust (FLT) funds: FLT is committed to \$2 million in match through private funding that does not have any completion or schedule stipulations.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grant: The City received a grant that will be dedicated to portions of 16th St. N. These funds do not have a set deadline for obligation or expenditure.

Background image: A crowd of Civil Rights protesters and local community members stand next to police near the project area.



PROJECT BUDGET

TABLE 1: PROJECT BUDGET AND MATCH

22%
MATCH

The City of Birmingham and local partners have in hand 22% of the total cost, making it a 22% match (% match does not include CMAQ funds).

FUNDING SOURCE	PROJECT COMPONENTS		TOTAL
	COMPONENT 1: COMPLETE STREETS/ TRANSIT CORRIDOR	COMPONENT 2: URBAN TRAIL/ MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR	
TOTAL PROJECT COST			
PROJECT COST	\$10,822,000	\$18,614,550	\$29,436,550
LOCAL FUNDS			
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM: ARPA/GENERAL FUNDS	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM: RESURFACING FUNDS	\$634,155		\$634,155
FLT	\$1,500,000	\$500,000	\$2,000,000
FEDERAL FUNDS			
CMAQ (FEDERAL FUNDS)		\$1,121,089	\$1,121,089
MATCH TOTAL	\$4,134,155	\$3,621,089	\$7,755,244
MATCH MINUS FEDERAL FUNDS	\$4,134,155	\$2,500,000	\$6,634,155
FEDERAL REQUEST (TOTAL COST MINUS ALL MATCH)	\$6,687,845	\$14,993,461	\$21,681,306



TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF MATCH/LEVERAGED FUNDS

JURISDICTION/ AGENCY	CONTRIBUTION
CITY OF BIRMINGHAM (ARPA/GENERAL AND RESURFACING FUNDS)	\$4,634,155
FLT	\$2,000,000
CMAQ (FEDERAL FUNDS)	\$1,121,089
Total Match/Leveraged Funds	\$7,755,244

COMPONENT 1: The proposed project will reduce Graymont Ave. by one lane and establish a separated cycle track connecting users to improved transit opportunities and downtown Birmingham. A mobility hub, located at Center St., will provide access to micromobility options that are adjacent to a new transit shelter.

State of Cost Estimation

The cost estimates for these projects were developed at the planning stage but were updated by engineers specifically for this grant application to include updated unit costs and account for inflation. A contingency of 30% is included to account for the fact that these are planning level estimates.

Addressing Cost Overruns

Both the City and its nonprofit partners are committed to addressing overruns. The City will have additional funds to pull from if needed. Nonprofit partners involved in this application are also committed to find additional funds through fundraising. These partners have a track record of being able to mobilize fundraising with private donors quickly.

Image: Children's Crusade on 16th St. N.

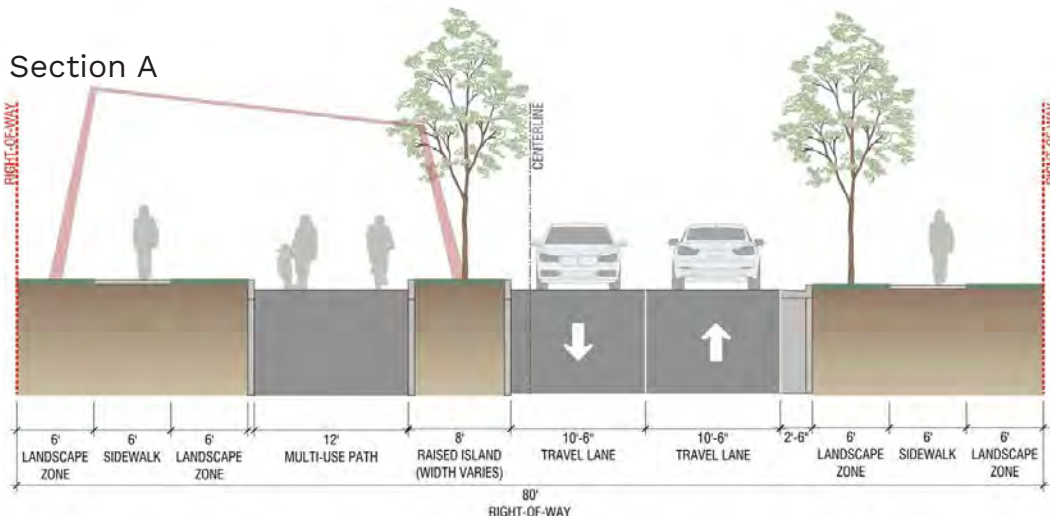
Cost By Census Tract

Table 3 shows a breakout of cost per Census tract. The entirety of the project is within Areas of Persistent Poverty tracts. Tracts 27 and 30 are Historically Disadvantaged Community tracts.

TABLE 3: PROJECT COST PER CENSUS TRACT

CENSUS TRACT	COST PER CENSUS TRACT
27	\$22,335,906.35
29	\$4,652,799.91
30.2	\$2,447,843.74
Total Project Cost	\$29,436,550

COMPONENT 2: URBAN TRAIL/ MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR: Conceptual imagery shows what the trail could look like in the historic district, interspersed with existing imagery. The lower graphic shows the conceptual design of one of the nine blocks conceptualized in the 16th St. N. Apple Study.



BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The Birmingham Crossroads project will provide comprehensive benefits for residents of Smithfield and downtown Birmingham. Benefits from these projects will not only strengthen economic recovery, but provide real transportation choices for those who need them most.

This benefit-cost analysis (BCA) weighs the costs (capital and maintenance) and benefits (environmental protection, quality of life, economic competitiveness, safety,

and state of good repair) that would accrue during construction and over a 20-year evaluation period after completion of the Birmingham Crossroads project. See Table 4 for a cumulative summary of project benefits, using the high estimates. For the complete BCA methodology and results, see the BCA summary memo uploaded as an attachment of this narrative and on the project website. www.birminghamal.gov/transportation/RAISE

TABLE 4: BCA SUMMARY

RESULTS	
TOTAL DISCOUNTED BENEFITS	\$43,250,000
TOTAL DISCOUNTED COSTS	\$13,350,000
NET PRESENT VALUE	\$29,910,000
BENEFIT-COST RATIO	3.24 : 1
SAFETY*	
SAFETY BENEFITS	\$125.8M
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR*	
VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED REDUCED	\$585,700
QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS	\$15,640,000
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR BENEFITS	\$41,000
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS*	
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS BENEFITS	\$307,000
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION*	
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS	\$31,500
COSTS*	
CONSTRUCTION COSTS (2021 DOLLARS)	\$20,893,167
MAINTENANCE COSTS	\$1,400,000

*All benefits are undiscounted in this summary. The BCA memo and final ratio include discounted benefits and costs.

03 MERIT CRITERIA

MERIT CRITERIA EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE 1: CRITERIA SUMMARY

MERIT CRITERIA	HOW THIS PROJECT ADDRESSES THE RAISE MERIT CRITERIA
SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesigns the roadway into a connected, multimodal corridor for walking, biking, accessing transit, and connecting to essential services. Reduces fatal collisions and traffic speeds through separated pedestrian and cyclist facilities, a road diet, and traffic calming. Addresses disproportionate instances of collisions among the African-American population within the city.
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces vehicle emissions and improves air quality by encouraging mode shift to walking, biking, scooting, and riding public transportation. Reduces urban heat island effect and flooding, while also improving water quality through the planting of trees, enhanced landscaping, and upgraded stormwater features.
QUALITY OF LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages greater physical activity in a safe environment for underserved communities that are experiencing high rates of health disparities. Provides a connected walking and biking network for all ages and abilities, reducing the need for a car and associated cost burden of vehicle ownership. Directly connects neighborhoods to downtown and essential services like health care, food, schools, and more.
MOBILITY + CONNECTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A first-of-its-kind investment in the City improving access to transit and micromobility, while also reshaping the City's western active transportation network. Improves transit stops to Universally Designed shelters and comprehensively addresses accessibility concerns and barriers. Transforms both components of the project into safe, healthy, and comfortable connections for people.
ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spurs long-term economic investment in a mixed-use corridor, fostered by project partners Urban Impact and REV Birmingham. Creates jobs for minority business enterprises, including during the project construction. Better serves workers without vehicles. Builds wealth in the Civil Rights District and Graymont Ave. corridor and increases tourism, businesses, revenues, and property values. Promotes greater public and private investments in land-use productivity, including urban main street revitalization or locally driven density decisions that support equitable commercial and mixed-income residential development.
STATE OF GOOD REPAIR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes existing right-of-way by improving aging infrastructure: road surfaces, stormwater inlets, and accessibility. Lowers the City's maintenance burden by reducing vehicle trips and speeds.
INNOVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financing of the project includes considerable private investment, partner-led and regional funding campaigns, including assistance in a project maintenance endowment. Incorporates and allows for future innovative technologies at micromobility hub and transit stops (electric charging stations, digital transit timing board, Wi-Fi).
PARTNERSHIP + COLLABORATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowers a partner alliance with the City, Freshwater Land Trust, economic development nonprofits, Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority, and more. Collaborates with neighborhood improvement districts, nonprofits, businesses, and underrepresented groups to garner support. Coordinates closely with nearby new public housing development, commercial business revitalization, and local entrepreneurs.

a | SAFETY

CHALLENGE:

Crash History + Prioritization of Automobile/Speed in Underserved Communities

Within the project study area, there is a documented safety problem. Out of 951 reported bicycle and pedestrian incidents within Jefferson County between 2016 and 2020, **356 of the incidents, representing 37% of all incidents, occurred within a three-mile buffer of the project area.**

Twenty of those crashes resulted in a fatal or incapacitating incident. Over a third of these incidents occurred in populations with high percentages of minority populations (87% African American). Many of these accidents occurred within downtown and major east-west corridors into downtown, similar to Graymont Ave. According to the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham's Technical Assistance for Safety Project Planning program, approximately 50% of fatal and serious injury crashes in Alabama occur on locally maintained roads. This project will address this problem by giving vulnerable road users dedicated infrastructure separate from auto traffic. Nearby neighborhoods in Census Tracts

29 and 32 report between **36% and as high as 60% of zero vehicle households.**

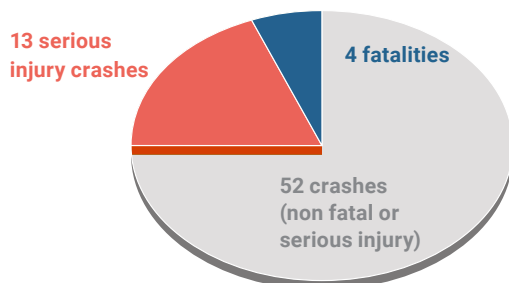
The entire project area falls within Areas of Persistent Poverty or Historically Disadvantaged Communities¹. **Most of the project area is considered transportation disadvantaged²** per the Justice 40 criteria. These neighborhoods have been negatively impacted by a history of redlining, lack of investment, and an interstate highway designed to intentionally divide the community.

Graymont Ave. and 5th Ave. N. are four-lane roadways that lack bike infrastructure and quality transit stops. Per the 2019 B-Active Plan, they were ranked among the second most uncomfortable roadways for active transportation users. The current design features straight, 45-mile-per-hour one-way roads that encourage motorists to speed. A 2022 study conducted by the City of Birmingham reported top speeds between 72 - 84 MPH. The combination of high traffic speeds and absence of separated walking and biking infrastructure has resulted in a dangerous environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

69 *bicycle + pedestrian crashes within 1/4 mile of the project.*

37% *of all Jefferson County bicycle and pedestrian crashes happen within 3 miles of the project.*

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASHES WITHIN A 1/4 MILE OF THE PROJECT AREA



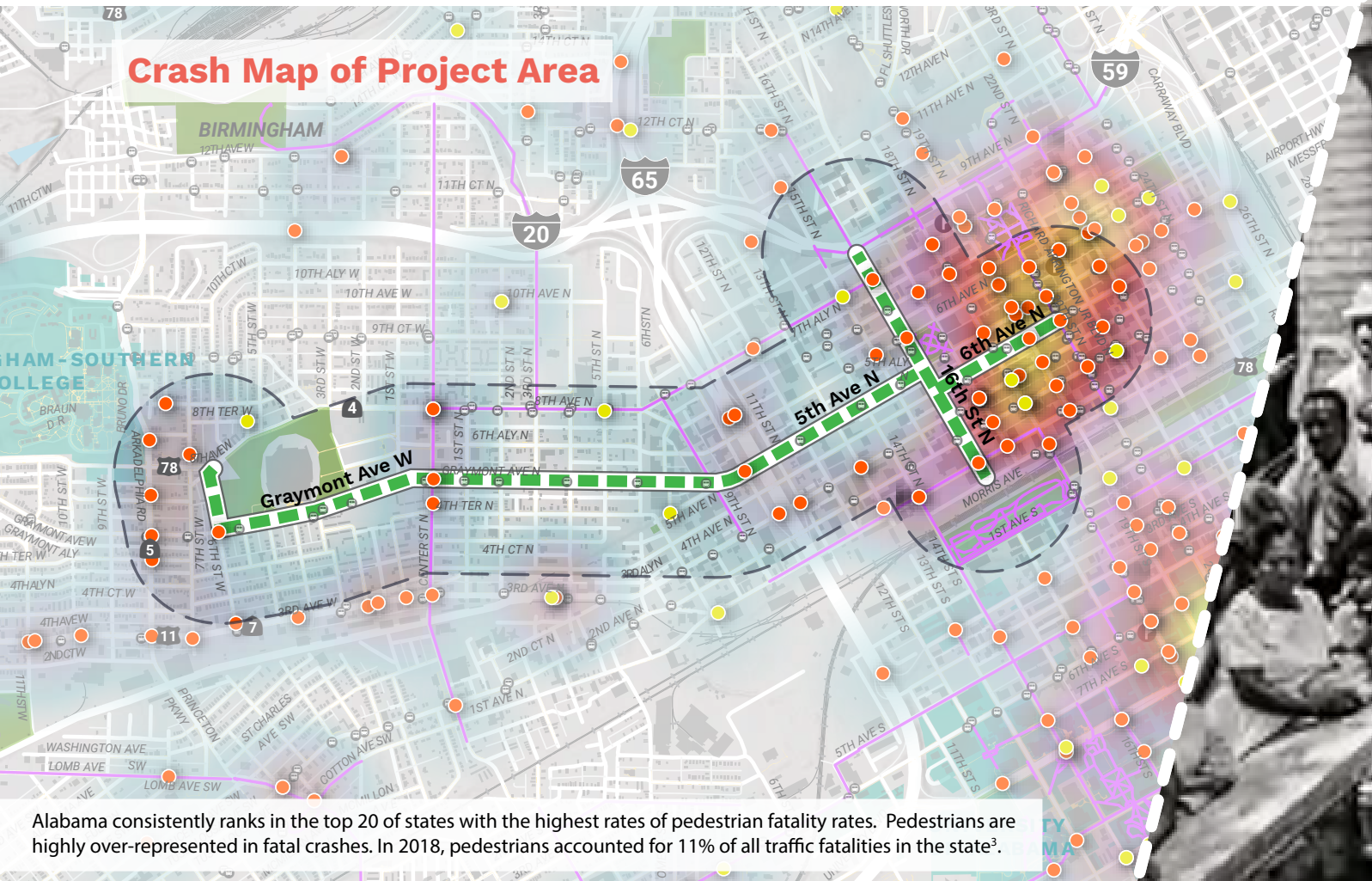
19% *resulted in serious injuries.*
(13 crashes)

6% *resulted in fatalities.*
(4 crashes)

¹<https://maps.dot.gov/BTS/GrantProjectLocationVerification/>

²<https://usdot.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/d6f90dfcc8b44525b04c7ce748a3674a>

Crash Map of Project Area



Alabama consistently ranks in the top 20 of states with the highest rates of pedestrian fatality rates. Pedestrians are highly over-represented in fatal crashes. In 2018, pedestrians accounted for 11% of all traffic fatalities in the state³.

	Building Footprints		Existing Bike/Ped Infrastructure		RAISE Project Alignment	CRASH DENSITY Sparse Dense
	Higher Education		Existing Sidewalks		1/4 MI Project Buffer	
	Parks		School		Bicycle Crash Locations	
			Bus Stop		Pedestrian Crash Locations	

The project will result in



\$125 million of safety benefits

over 26 years per the BCA calculations considering the crashes within a quarter-mile of the project area.

On this page: Crash density map with locations of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

Left: Drone photo of Legion Field along Graymont Ave.

Above: Parents attending the Children's Crusade at the 16th Street Baptist Church

³ <https://www.fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/States/StatesPedestrians.aspx>

a | SAFETY

SOLUTION:

Reclaim and Improve Roadway and Safety for Pedestrians, Bicyclists, and Transit Users

The proposed separated two-way cycle track, Complete Streets, and updated transit facilities will provide designated and separated spaces for pedestrians, cyclists, and residents traveling with mobility devices. Specifically, the project infrastructure will improve the safety and quality of life in some of Birmingham's most underserved neighborhoods and would address one of the City of Birmingham's priority traffic calming corridors through:

- Narrowing travel lanes resulting in reduced vehicular speeds and providing natural traffic calming services
- Shorter intersection crossing distances for pedestrians and cyclists
- Intersection improvements resulting in enhanced visibility of pedestrians and cyclists

Combined, these measures have been shown to improve overall corridor safety and reduce conflicts between vehicles and people using modes of active transportation. Additionally, these measures align with the crash reduction goals of the Alabama 2022 Highway Safety Plan and the Birmingham Regional Planning Safety Planning Initiative.

CHALLENGE:

Incomplete Networks for Sidewalks + Bikeways

Many of the safety concerns that exist in Birmingham's western neighborhoods stem from an inadequate and disconnected network of walking, biking, and rolling infrastructure. Specifically, Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N., and 4th Ave. N. lack any form of bicycle facility, do

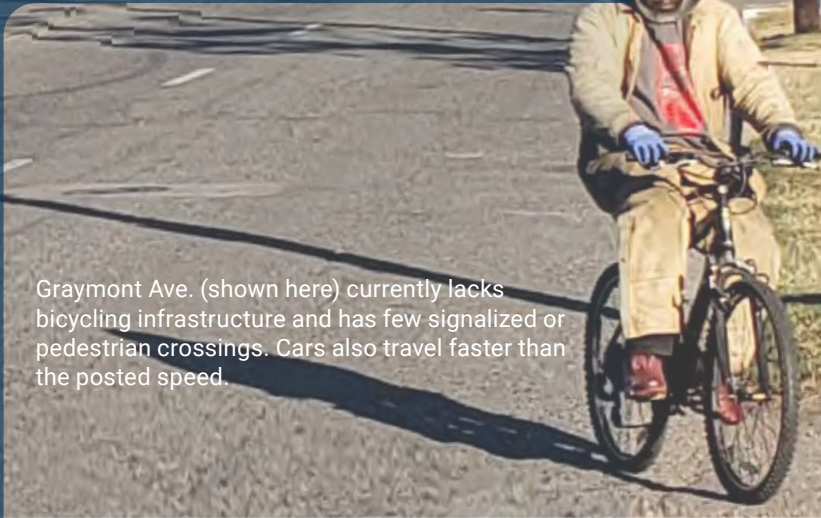
not have a contiguous sidewalk network, and are disconnected from neighboring communities, the Civil Rights District, and downtown.

The proposed redesign of Graymont Ave. will bridge a critical bicycle and pedestrian infrastructural gap, noted in the Red Rock Trail System Action Plan, creating a more robust and reliable transportation network. The 16th St. N. improvements will result in a safer and more accessible corridor for users of all ages and abilities.

SOLUTION:

Provide Safe and Separated Accommodations for Active Transportation Users

The proposed project will address identified community needs through the creation of a connected active transportation network in an underserved part of the City that has suffered from lack of public investment for many generations. The proposed facilities will create safe and separated facilities for a range of users accessing everyday destinations within their neighborhoods and essential services located downtown. Furthermore, the proposed infrastructure will support Safe Routes to Schools and the current Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant application, improving access to A.H. Parker High School.



Graymont Ave. (shown here) currently lacks bicycling infrastructure and has few signalized or pedestrian crossings. Cars also travel faster than the posted speed.

b | ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

CHALLENGE:

Problem: Emissions and Air Quality in Underserved Communities

A lack of walking and biking infrastructure has led to a street grid that can only safely accommodate cars, resulting in increased vehicular traffic. Due to the high number of vehicular trips, residents are exposed to significant levels of transportation-related air pollution. The project area is located in an area of Moderate Air Quality with PMs measuring above 2.5 and putting those sensitive to air pollution at risk (EPA AirNow). When compared to other parts of the city, residents living in the project's footprint are at heightened risk due to the area's classification as having the lowest air quality in the City of Birmingham.

Additionally, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool indicates that the Census tracts surrounding the project area rank high (97%) for asthma, which can be exacerbated by air pollution.

SOLUTION:

Reducing Vehicular Trips through New Active Transportation, Transit Infrastructure, and Urban Design That Increase Mode Shifts

The proposed facilities provide residents with a safe, convenient, accessible, and high-quality walking, biking, and transit corridor. The redesigned transportation corridors and public spaces will create walkable communities with more attractive greenspaces. This project

builds on efforts by local climate and environmental justice advocates like the Greater Birmingham-Alliance to Stop Pollution (GASP), which identified vehicle trips as a significant contributing factor to poor air quality. The proposed facilities will result in a mode shift of 13.3% (see BCA memo for approach information) greatly reducing vehicle trips, improving air quality in underserved communities, and reducing carbon emissions.

CHALLENGE:

Climate Change: Heat Island and Stormwater Events

Wide, paved roadways within the City of Birmingham have created high urban heat island zones, as defined by the Trust for Public Land, that are disproportionately affecting low income and underserved communities. Large areas characterized by impervious surfaces and inadequate stormwater infrastructure have caused significant flooding issues in the Smithfield and Graymont neighborhoods. Changing climate patterns and extreme weather events including intense heat waves and large rain events pose a significant threat to these communities.

Note on source: Trust for Public Land's 2021 Urban Heat Island dataset shows where Landsat 8 satellite imagery thermal reflectance values are hotter than 1.25 degrees over the average of the whole boundary (city/town, or urban area).

URBAN HEAT ISLAND

Heat islands, defined as areas experiencing intensified heat that causes discomfort, occur when concrete, asphalt, and buildings greatly outnumber trees and green spaces. Urban cooling features help offset the heat island effects.

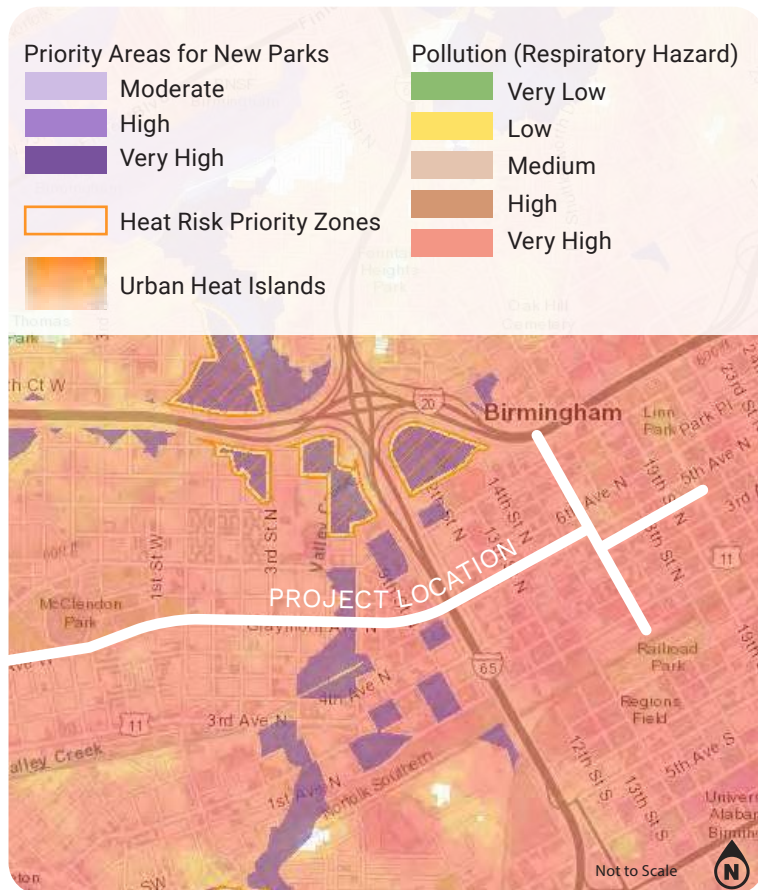
b | ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (cont'd)

SOLUTION:

Reducing Pavement and Adding Urban Cooling Features to Improve Resilience

With the opportunity to redesign the roadway corridor with low-impact design techniques and green infrastructure, the project will add more permeable surfaces and new stormwater infrastructure to capture and control water from flood events. The streetscape will be lined with a 30% increase of street trees and native plantings, addressing shade equity, adding cooling elements to the built environment, and providing green infrastructure. The factors improve resilience to extreme storm events and reduce the urban heat island effect.

URBAN HEAT ISLAND AND POLLUTION IN PROJECT AREA



Source: TPL ParkServe

c | QUALITY OF LIFE

CHALLENGE:

Lack of Access to Jobs, Health Care, Schools, Shopping, and Recreation

Major employers including the University of Alabama at Birmingham, multiple hospitals, public services, recreation, and amenities are located downtown. Many recreation and green space hubs, including City Walk BHAM, Railroad Park, and Kelly Ingram Park, are located in the heart of downtown but disconnected from neighborhoods to the west by I-65. Residents in the Smithfield and Graymont neighborhood can only access downtown via east-west roads, like Graymont Ave., that cross under I-65. Graymont Ave. is not safe to travel by foot or bike, lacks curb ramps and accessibility considerations, and serves as a barrier to residents accessing essential services and recreation opportunities located downtown.

SOLUTION:

Connect Neighborhoods to Downtown and Everyday Needs/Services

The proposed facilities improve access to transit and expand active transportation infrastructure that enable residents to access jobs, recreation opportunities, health care, libraries, and downtown services. Additionally, the project provides increased access to amenities like parks, exercise classes, pools, and multi-purpose fields that enhance quality of life. The project also improves neighborhood connectivity and access to schools.

C | QUALITY OF LIFE (cont'd)

CHALLENGE:

Lack of Community Investment (Transportation and Public Space) in Communities of Color and Underserved Populations

The project proactively addresses equity issues in predominately African American/Black (87%), redlined communities with historically low levels of City investment in development and neighborhood improvements. As of January 2023, the City of Birmingham reapplied for a CHOICE Neighborhoods Implementation Grant to address dilapidated homes and water infrastructure. Residents report water leaks and failing infrastructure.

See more details about the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant on the Birmingham RAISE website:

www.birminghamal.gov/transportation/RAISE

SOLUTION:

Creating New Opportunities for Affordable Housing, Transit, Multimodal Options, and High Performance Public Spaces = Economic Development and Sustained Economy

This project brings active transportation infrastructure, improved transit, and multimodal connectivity by expanding travel choices in communities that have been historically disadvantaged and in Areas of Persistent Poverty. The re-envisioned multimodal corridor will encourage new land uses and economic development in tandem with updated transportation facilities. If selected, the \$50 million-dollar Choice Neighborhoods

Implementation Grant will provide 1,100 new residences, individualized personal development plans, new green spaces, and updated infrastructure to revitalize the Smithfield, College Hills, and Graymont neighborhoods. With a strong emphasis on new affordable housing, new mix of land uses, and connected, multimodal transportation options, the project will spur long-term economic revitalization along with new job and housing opportunities for residents.

CHALLENGE:

Public Health Disparities and Lack of Access to Healthy Food, Medical Services, and Recreation Amenities

The Smithfield neighborhood and surrounding communities are considered food deserts. **Additionally, 2021 ACS Data indicates that over a third of the population is affected by a disability (compared to a disability rate of 14.8% throughout Jefferson County)** and nearly a quarter of the population is over 65 and in need of improved access to health care. In some of the neighborhoods within a half-mile of the project area, **only 36% of the population report car ownership, leaving over 64% of the population dependent on active or public transportation.** Finally, many of the most popular recreational amenities available to Birmingham residents are located downtown, significantly limiting access for these communities that were historically and purposefully cut off from downtown.

C | QUALITY OF LIFE (cont'd)

SOLUTION:

Active Transportation for Exercise and Access

The project includes the development of a multimodal corridor with walking, biking, and improved transit facilities, using Universal Design principals, to better connect users of all ages and abilities to healthy food options and exercise opportunities. The project corridor will connect western Birmingham residents to fresh food options like Publix and farmer's markets, including the Birmingham Central Market and the Market at Pepper Place, all of which accept SNAP benefits. The improved streetscape will also create a connective active transportation network that will tie popular parks and public spaces together, making it easier for residents to access exercise opportunities on an everyday basis.

CHALLENGE:

Transportation and Housing Cost Burdens

Currently, many households around our study area, between 15-63%³ in the various block groups around the project, do not own a vehicle and rely on active transportation or transit to access everyday needs. The lack of a connected network of walking and bicycling facilities and inaccessible transit stops creates a heavy burden, leaving residents without many options. Rising housing costs puts additional financial pressure on families as well. **In the Graymont neighborhood, the community ranks at the 97th percentile for housing cost burden where the households are making less than 80% of the area median family income and are also spending more than 30% of their income on housing⁴.**

SOLUTION:

Re-imagined Corridor with Multimodal Transportation and New Affordable Housing

The proposed project will create an accessible corridor with improved sidewalks, bicycle facilities, improved transit, and new micromobility options. These new facilities provide efficient and safe transportation options for residents of all ages and abilities, greatly reducing the existing transportation burden created by limited options. Additionally, the new activated streetscape create ideal conditions to create new affordable housing adjacent to mixed-use development that supports and energizes transit, walking, and biking streetscapes.

d | MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

CHALLENGE:

Lack of Transportation Options and Network Gaps

Residents walking, biking, accessing transit, or traveling via a mobility assistive device experience significant accessibility barriers, including sidewalk gaps, inadequate road crossings, missing ramps and pedestrian push buttons, and dangerous intersections along Graymont Ave., 16th St. N., 5th Ave. N., and 4th Ave. N. To improve accessibility, the entire corridor requires Universal Design upgrades.

³EPA Smart Database (Census tracts 29, 30.2, 27)

⁴Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool

d | MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY (cont'd)

All of these roadways lack separated bike facilities. While there are a few sharrows and bike lanes in downtown, there are currently no dedicated bike/pedestrian facilities that extend into and provide connectivity west of downtown into the Smithfield and Graymont neighborhoods. The Birmingham Intermodal Facility—located squarely in the middle of downtown on Morris Ave., between 16 St. N. and 19 St. N.—serves as the Central Station for MAX bus services, includes a stop for the Birmingham Xpress (BRT services) and is served by Greyhound bus service, Megabus service, and Amtrak passenger rail. Residents living west of downtown are disconnected from the city's central intermodal facility by intentional interstate development (I-65) and vehicle-dominated roads.

SOLUTION:

This Corridor Will Be a Major Mobility Spine for This Sector of the City, as a Much-Improved Transit, Micromobility, and a Connected Active Transportation Network

Through various planning efforts, the City of Birmingham and allied partners have identified Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N, and 16th St. N. as major corridors in need of active transportation and Complete Streets improvements and are ready to begin implementation. These future active transportation corridors are an essential component needed to complete a citywide trail system and will serve as the downtown spine, providing opportunities for future trail connections. The project proposes a full reinvention of these corridors for active transportation, transit connectivity, and micromobility options. These measures will enable residents to complete the first/last

mile of accessing transit and destinations and provide affordable transportation options. Transit will be front and center with upgraded features (accessibility, shelter, and connectivity) along this corridor. Improvements along Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N., and 16th St. N. create a seamless, connected corridor between the neighborhoods west of downtown to the Birmingham Intermodal Facility and the neighborhoods north of downtown through the Civil Rights District.

CHALLENGE:

Lack of Accessibility in Underserved Communities of Color and Aging Population

Many of the residents living in neighborhoods surrounding Graymont Ave. are African Americans/Black over the age of 65 with high rates of disabilities. Up to 60% of these households do not own a vehicle⁵; however, the surrounding streets lack safe, multi-modal transportation options despite many residents relying on transit or modes of alternative transportation.

SOLUTION:

Comprehensive Corridor Accessibility Improvements and Universal Design

Upgrading these roadways with active transportation options and new transit facilities will provide an opportunity to address challenging and inaccessible intersections and sidewalks. The project will develop Complete Streets with Universal Design elements, improved signalization, safety measures, spot improvements, and lighting.

⁵EPA Smart Database (Census tracts 29, 30.2, 27)

e | ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY

CHALLENGE:

Historic Disinvestment in Communities of Color

The project area falls completely within Areas of Persistent Poverty and over half within Historically Disadvantaged Community tracts. The entire project area has experienced historically high barriers to accessing home loans, evidence of a history of redlining. With the interstate highway development, these communities were intentionally divided by both I-20/59 (east-west) and I-65 (north-south). There has been a lack of investment throughout generations of residents. Downtown is seeing unprecedented growth and redevelopment, and it is critical that we reconnect these neighborhoods to the vibrancy and amenities located in the city center.

SOLUTION:

Encouraging New Land Use and Long-Term Economic Growth

The proposed streetscape will create new opportunities for affordable housing, transit, and multimodal options. The project will develop high performance public spaces along the project corridors, especially 16th St. N. and 4th Ave. N., which was once a thriving neighborhood full of businesses and residents. The mix of land uses and increased foot traffic in a lively streetscape will support the establishment of new businesses and rehabilitation of longstanding community enterprises, creating a sustained economy, supported and driven by residents. The project will work alongside the current Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant application to bring a mix of land uses to Smithfield and surrounding neighborhoods. If awarded, these investments will spur

new opportunities for residents to own businesses, encourage robust job creation, promote long term economic growth, and foster local wealth building. This project will also better serve workers without vehicles or reduce the need and cost burden of vehicle ownership.

CHALLENGE:

Lack of Opportunities for MBE (Minor Business Enterprise)

There is currently a lack of opportunities for MBE enterprises.

SOLUTION:

Encourage MBE Status

Competitive proposals are encouraged to incorporate work from a primary consultant, subconsultant, or supplier with MBE status totaling 20% of the contract value. The City will ask contractors to indicate the total percentage of the budget and detail the work that will be performed by a business with MBE status.

CHALLENGE:

A Catalyst of Revitalization for the Civil Rights District and Black Main Street (4th Ave. N.) Is Needed to Draw More Locals and Tourists

Much of the project area is located in Birmingham's Civil Rights District with many historic destinations. 4th Ave. N. was once a "Main Street" for the Black population but is now a fast moving one-way road without the streetscape to draw window shopping. The once walkable and lively neighborhood has been converted into a vehicle dominated corridor that is less inviting to tourists looking to explore the Civil Rights District's historic destinations on foot or bike. The resulting streetscape fails to communicate

e | ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY (cont'd)

the area's historic significance and rich character. The year 2023 marks the 60th anniversary of the 1963 Birmingham Civil Rights Movement. The Birmingham Crossroads project presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the movement's long-standing results through a project that looks towards a more prosperous future. For more information about the anniversary, visit: <https://www.birminghamal.gov/forgingjustice>

SOLUTION:

Improve Corridor to Attract Investors, Residents, and Tourists as a Long-Term and Far-Reaching Revenue Source

The project recognizes and respects the significance and sacredness of the historic sites within the project area and the investments that have been made to preserve these historic treasures. Improvements will allow visitors to experience the district with enhanced accessibility without distracting from the power of the place. The proposed project improvements create an attractive and safe place to walk, bike, and explore destinations, providing the infrastructure to market the destination for tourists coming to experience Civil Rights Movement destinations. The project location serves as a gateway to other shopping and dining destinations downtown. Allied project partners plan to foster existing and new business to grow a more thriving commercial and civic hub that will draw even more users. These initiatives build wealth in the Civil Rights District and corridor, increasing tourism, businesses, revenues, and property values. As shown by the nearby Jones Valley Trail development, new trails in Birmingham have encouraged new locally-owned

businesses and increased property values. Much of this corridor property is still locally and Black owned, providing wealth building opportunities for current residents.

CHALLENGE:

What Was Once a Thriving and Walkable Mixed-Use Black-Owned Business District and “Main Street” Has Become Auto Dominated and Dissected by an Interstate

With emphasis on fast flow of car travel, Graymont Ave., 4th Ave. N., 5th Ave. N., and 16th St. N. have been designed for quick movement of car traffic and lack amenities and infrastructure for a thriving, walkable streetscape. Graymont Ave. and 5th Ave. N. are main links within and into downtown Birmingham and lack parks, green spaces, and community-oriented design. The introduction of Interstate 65 further dissected the Smithfield and Graymont community to their commercial and civic core. Once Birmingham's Black business district, 16th St. N. currently does not have the infrastructure to support active transportation or a thriving tourism center.

SOLUTION:

Revitalization of the Corridor into a Mixed-Use, Human-Scaled, and Thriving Economic Center

The corridor becomes human-scale again with improved sidewalks, updated transit facilities, micromobility options, and Complete Streets. Mixed-use zoning currently allows for redevelopment, and this investment will incentivize new business, retail, mixed-use, historic preservation, and affordable housing.



f | STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

CHALLENGE:

Outdated and Unsafe Infrastructure Not Serving the Vulnerable Residents

Currently, the project roadways have been designed to move cars quickly through neighborhoods to connect to the interstates. The roadway corridors do not serve vulnerable and underserved communities that rely on transit or active transportation to reach every day needs. There is a need to reinvent the roadway for active transportation, Complete Streets, and transit while addressing aging sidewalks, failing stormwater infrastructure, and inaccessible ramps and barriers. The roadway surface, transit accessibility, and an aged and auto-centric streetscape is not serving the community's needs or encouraging economic development. This project seeks to reprioritize walkable communities for vulnerable residents over fast roadways by improving infrastructure to safely accommodate people walking and biking.

SOLUTION:

Modernized Corridors for Multimodal Transportation

The project proposes a road diet and Complete Streets overhaul to create a connected bicycle and pedestrian network, accessible and enhanced transit stops, and improved intersections with new signalization. The project utilizes existing right-of-way, prioritizing improvements within the existing footprint, and will not require land acquisition. With the new streetscape improvements, the project will provide the infrastructure for electric vehicle charging stations and micromobility options to create a fully modernized corridor that supports all modes of mobility. The City of Birmingham will leverage planned resurfacing to coincide with the project and address sidewalk gaps, degrading pavement conditions, and accessibility issues currently present. Additionally, this project will upgrade transit infrastructure through improved and Universally Designed transit stops.

CHALLENGE:

Aging Stormwater Infrastructure

Over the past couple of decades, there have been high numbers of flooding incidents in underserved communities. Rain events have become more severe without the infrastructure capacity to manage the water. The City of Birmingham has identified a need to replace the failing stormwater infrastructure.

SOLUTION:

Green Infrastructure

The proposed new streetscape will require significant reworking of the corridor which presents an opportunity to undergo major improvements to stormwater infrastructure at the same time. With this proposed project, the City of Birmingham aims to greatly improve current drainage conditions, restore catch basins, and replace strategic areas of pavement with green infrastructure.

f | STATE OF GOOD REPAIR (cont'd)

CHALLENGE: High Maintenance Needs

The current design of the project corridors encourages significant high vehicle use and high speeds. The high traffic volumes and speeds are wearing down the roads surface, resulting in significant repaving and maintenance costs.

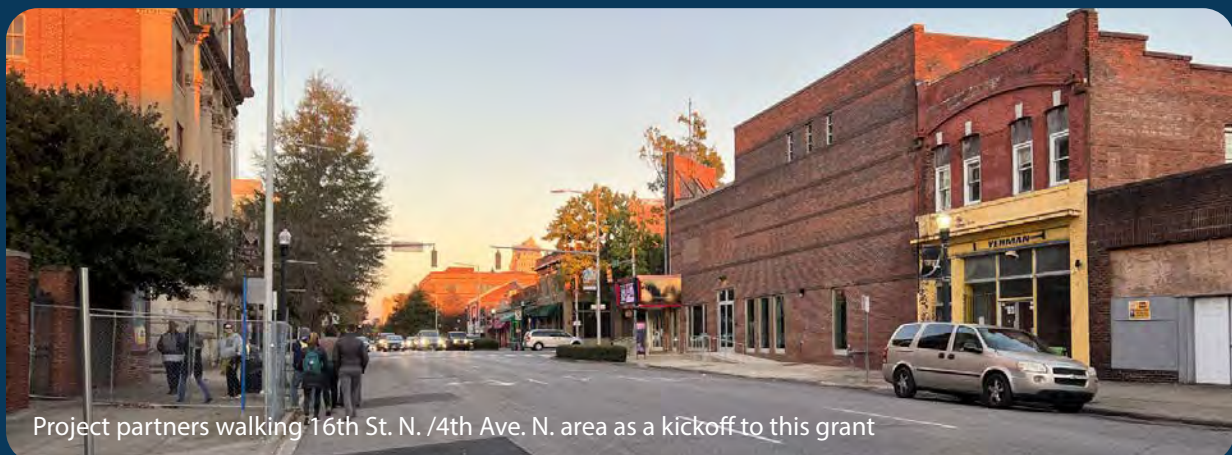
SOLUTION: Promoting Active Transportation and Reducing Roadway Wear

With the proposed project infrastructure, the corridor becomes an attractive and safe place to walk or bike and promotes a mode shift from vehicular trips to active transportation travel by 13%. This results in \$585,700 in benefits from a reduction in vehicle miles traveled through the 26-year life of the project analysis.

g | PARTNERSHIP

This project will foster connectivity throughout Birmingham, linking residents to resources within their neighborhoods and downtown. Through collaboration on recent regional and city bicycle, pedestrian, and neighborhood improvement planning, Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N., 16th St. N., and 4th Ave. N. have been consistently identified as priority projects by numerous community organizations, partners, and members of the public. These roadways have been identified by the 2021 *B-Active Plan* and the 2022 *Red Rock Action Plan* as high priority roadways for active transportation and multimodal improvements. This project will provide vital connections to existing greenways and future bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as identified in these plans.

The City of Birmingham, as the lead applicant, will work closely with the Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) to address transit stops and neighborhood connectivity. They will work across multiple departments to bring about a project that holistically improves transit and “last mile” connectivity while creating new public spaces and high quality urban design that supports a mix of land uses. The proposed improvements on 16th St. N. will directly connect to BJCTA’s new intermodal facility along Morris Ave.



Project partners walking 16th St. N. /4th Ave. N. area as a kickoff to this grant

g | PARTNERSHIP (cont'd)

The City will work directly with community partners including Urban Impact, REV Birmingham, Civil Rights stakeholders, and the National Park Service to identify community development opportunities, job generation, and business revitalization in tandem with streetscape improvements.

The City of Birmingham, in collaboration with Freshwater Land Trust, REV Birmingham, and Urban Impact have developed a public-private partnership to spearhead urban revitalization efforts, including new streetscape projects, and attract new businesses downtown. Birmingham's 20th St. N. is an example where the same private/public partnership implemented a successful Complete Streets. The City of

Birmingham will coordinate closely with nearby new public housing development, commercial business revitalization, and local entrepreneurs. The City will work with local health initiatives to promote active living and provide the necessary education and programming to encourage increased walking, biking, and healthy activity. Throughout the process, the City and local partners will continue to engage the local residents with events, meetings, programming, and engagement tools via social media and a website. The City will engage with Lakeshore Foundation and AARP especially on programming and services for the elderly and disabled population within the project area. Per 2021 ACS data, Census tracts surrounding the project area report between 17 to 23% aging population (65 and older).

TABLE 2: PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS

Name	Type of Entity	Role and Benefit
City of Birmingham	Local government	<i>Project applicant, grant administration – experience and capacity/resources</i>
Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority	Regional transit authority	<i>Project support and design input</i>
Freshwater Land Trust	Land trust/Nonprofit	<i>Funder, fundraising, public and donor outreach, and input on design and maintenance</i>
Urban Impact	Nonprofit	<i>Community and business outreach and liaison to corridor, collaboration and leadership in economic development and revitalization of the corridor, and grants and loans for corridor businesses</i>
REV Birmingham	Nonprofit	<i>Community outreach, economic development coordination, revitalization assistance, and input on design</i>

h | INNOVATION

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The project proposes the first two-way cycle track in the City of Birmingham to serve as an example for future bicycle improvements and traffic signalization to better serve bicycle traffic. Floating transit islands featuring digital bus timing information and Wi-Fi will better serve transit riders. A mobility hub near Graymont Ave. and Center Street will offer micromobility options, like bikes and scooters, and electric vehicle charging stations. Additionally, the project will incorporate Silva Cells, low impact design, and green infrastructure. The City of Birmingham will work with local organizations including Freshwater Land Trust, REV Birmingham, Urban Impact, and local entrepreneurs to establish new events, programs, and businesses to activate the corridor and create a lively district where people want to live, work, and play.

INNOVATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY

This grant application, along with previous planning and development efforts, brings

together an impressive number of local and regional partners including the City of Birmingham, Freshwater Land Trust, REV Birmingham, and Urban Impact. In particular, the public-nonprofit partnership between Freshwater Land Trust and the City of Birmingham has supported the development of the Red Rock Trail System Plan, a master plan for active transportation and greenways that span the City.

INNOVATIVE FINANCING

Financing of the project includes considerable private investment through the help of partner-led and regional funding campaigns, including eventual assistance in a project maintenance endowment. Project partners have committed nearly \$2 million from private sources. Private partners include businesses, local philanthropies and nonprofits, private landowners, and local investor developers.

The City of Birmingham is committed to this project to help mitigate risks if they arise. Verification of Financial Capacity of project's match and availability is included for presentation of a complete funding package.



Example of a mobility hub

Background: Rendering of a conceptual floating transit island and mobility hub on Graymont Ave.

04 PROJECT READINESS

Overview

Project partners of the Birmingham Civil Rights Crossroads project have a demonstrated history of successfully planning and implementing significant infrastructure projects and initiatives through regional cooperation. These strong and established working relationships put the project partners in an ideal position and readiness to complete the proposed scope of work in a timely manner. For example, the City of Birmingham played an important role in the development of the 2022 *Red Rock Trail System Action Plan* and has worked closely with REV Birmingham on urban revitalization projects including the 20th Street N. Refresh, a Complete Streets and streetscape improvement project.

Environmental Risk

REQUIRED APPROVALS

State + Local Approval

State and local permitting will be addressed at the next stage of design. Stakeholders related to the Birmingham Civil Rights National Historic Monument have been engaged through in-depth planning and engagement and will be involved as design progresses. Other agencies will be engaged during the permitting process and are listed in this section.

NEPA

It is anticipated that the project merits a Categorical Exclusion (CE), which will be completed alongside project design. Thus, no delay associated with NEPA is expected. The main consideration for this project is the treatment of the project through the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. The City is proactively working with preservation architects to establish guidelines for project improvements before design and engineering begins. A report has been provided to the City, which is available at www.birminghamal.gov/transportation/RAISE

Traffic Studies

Traffic capacity analysis may be required for the proposed lane reductions, particularly on Graymont Ave., 5th Ave. N., and 4th Ave. N. where travel lane removal will be required for the cycle track. Minimal traffic impacts are anticipated for the 16th St. N. corridor since the roadway is maintaining existing two-lanes in both directions; however, intersection capacity reduction will occur with the removal of strategic turn lanes. These streets are City operated, easing process and approval. The City may determine studies are not needed.

Permits

The following permits are anticipated:

- ALDOT Grading Permit : Required for construction work within ALDOT right-of-way, which will occur along Graymont Ave. under I-65, 16th St. N. under I-59, and where 16th St. N. crosses State Route 4 (3rd Ave. N.) and US11/US78 (1st Ave. N.).
- Flood Hazard Area Development Permit (City of Birmingham Department of Planning, Engineering and Permits) : A block of Graymont Ave. between Center St. and 1st St. N. is within the floodplain Zone AE of Valley Creek, which may require a permit for concrete island, curb ramp, and minor grading work within the floodplain. There is no floodway.
- National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit (Alabama Department of Environmental Management) : Required for disturbing greater than 1-acre of earth, which is expected for the pavement removals, pavement placement, and buffer work.

Utility Conflicts

The City anticipates some effects on utilities, most likely stormwater. Cost estimates anticipate some work to connect the proposed design into the existing stormwater system. The project should not have a major impact on power lines as they are outside of the area of impact.

Right-of-Way Acquisition

This project utilizes public road right-of-way throughout both corridors. Minor

permanent and temporary construction easements of private land may be pursued along the sidewalk construction, but can be feasibly kept within the right-of-way if land acquisition becomes problematic on private parcels.

Federal Funding Process + Requirements + Technical Capacity

The City of Birmingham and partners are extremely familiar with the federal funding process and requirements including NEPA, certification, etc. The City has utilized federal funds regularly and delivered full capital construction projects through federal funds.

The City has an extensive track record of securing and distributing federal, state, and private grant funds. As of this writing, the City's Grants Division oversees over 50 federal, state, and private grants totaling over \$190 million, not including ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). The City is currently distributing ARPA Emergency Rental Assistance I & II funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury, with nearly \$9 million distributed since April 2021. Beyond grant sources, public-private partnerships are central to how the City advances its agenda.

Examples of the City's ability to manage large grants include:

- Good Jobs Challenge Grant from the Economic Development Administration (\$10.8 million)
- TIGER Grant for Bus Rapid Transit (\$20 million)

Public + Stakeholder Input

Multiple planning efforts have occurred over the past five years for these projects. The general public supports a more walkable and bikeable downtown area and has contributed towards the prioritization of these projects as most critical in these planning initiatives.

Any community impact issues that may arise in the future before, during, and after construction will be mitigated through clear and continuous communication with the public. A full table of public processes and engagements leading up to this point is provided below.

TABLE 1: RECENT PLANNING EFFORTS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

PLANNING EFFORT	ADOPTION / FINALIZED DATE	IMPACT ON PROJECT	PUBLIC/STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT
16TH STREET APPLE STUDY	2023	Developed concepts for Component 2 (16th St. N.) as a multimodal corridor.	Three public meetings were held, and stakeholders along 16th St. N. were engaged.
CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD GRANT	Submitted- yet to be awarded	The grant would provide neighborhood resources and revitalization, including affordable mixed use housing along the corridor.	Grant pending. As part of the application, the City solicited and received feedback from many partners/stakeholders.
RED ROCK ACTION PLAN	September 2022	Identifies the project corridors as priority projects to connect Smithfield with downtown and increase neighborhood connectivity.	Stakeholder engagement including interactive surveys, ConceptBoard Mapping, and open discussion, followed by small group meetings
NORTHWEST DOWNTOWN QUADRANT PLAN	January 2022	Identifies the need for walkability and an awareness of the desires of the community.	3,600 website visitors, 125 online survey respondents, 81 stakeholder interviews, and 6 community roundtables with over 115 participants
BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTER MASTER PLAN	March 2020	Provides suggestions for streetscape improvements along 16th St. N. (Civil Rights - Innovation Connector).	1,118 online survey responses, 120+ stakeholder interviews, and 4 public engagement events attended by 275 people.
AUBURN URBAN STUDIO COMMUNITY PLAN	2020	Identified the 5th Ave. N. corridor as a key connection between Smithfield and Kelly Ingram Park	Engagement with the community and businesses
B-ACTIVE	March 2019	Helped to identify the corridors as priority projects.	Public online surveys, pop up meetings and intercept surveys, over 1,600 website visitors, and more than 10 TV interviews
WESTERN AREA COMMUNITIES' FRAMEWORK PLAN	May 2015	Targeted the western portions of downtown as an area that needed attention.	17 public meetings

Risk + Mitigation Strategies

TABLE 2: RISK AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

RISK	MITIGATION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	A NEPA categorical exclusion is expected. The City plans to proactively address how the project within the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument will have minimal impact to the cultural landscape through sensitive design solutions. A preservation architect is currently advising on this.
RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITION	Minimal ROW is needed, as this is within public ROW, with exception of a few temporary construction easements.
FEDERAL FUNDING PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS	The City has a cadre of experienced staff to support the management and implementation of this grant. See more about this above.
PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT	Several iterations of public input have provided support for this project. The City and partners continue to connect with community leaders, especially within the Historically Disadvantaged Community tracts to solicit support and keep residents abreast of the project. A full list of previous public engagement is on the previous page.
SCHEDULE RISK	The project schedule allows for flexibility that includes sufficient time to address potential issues, including any utility replacement portions of the project. Even with the extra time built in, the project is anticipated to complete construction by 2029, ahead of the federal deadline for expenditures.



Images: Stakeholder engagement around Component 2/ Urban Trail/Multimodal Corridor, as part of the 16th Street APPLE Study

Project Schedule

Upon receipt of the RAISE grant obligation notice, the components will be ready to complete initial designs with construction to follow in 2027. The project readiness is illustrated in the project schedule below.

Matching funds for the project do not have any schedule restrictions or stipulations so are not shown as part of this schedule.

TABLE 3: PROJECT SCHEDULE

	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031				2032																											
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																								
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Image: View of The Civil Rights Historic District, including 16th St. N., the Civil Rights Institute, and Kelly Ingram Park.