



**RESOLUTION TITLE: RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT CITY OF GASTONIA'S APPLICATION TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S 2023 RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM**

- WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation's ("USDOT") Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods ("RCN") Program provides grant funding for planning and capital construction to address infrastructure barriers, restore community connectivity, and improve peoples' lives; and,
- WHEREAS, Project CHANGE – Connecting Highland: Access, Neighborhood Growth, Equity, a.k.a. the Downtown Gastonia Reconnector Project, was identified as a project in the NC-7 Corridor Study and Plan, completed in January 2018 by the City of Gastonia and the Gaston Economic Development Commission; and,
- WHEREAS, Gaston County supports the City of Gastonia's application seeking a RCN Grant from USDOT to complete a feasibility study to cap the railroad ditch that runs through Downtown Gastonia, which creates a barrier to mobility, connectivity, access, and economic development to the transportation disadvantaged communities to the north; and,
- WHEREAS, over the last 30 years, the decline of the neighborhoods north of the railroad corridor are a direct indication of the lack of connectivity and accessibility; and,
- WHEREAS, this project is imperative as the City of Gastonia, along with many community partners, strive to address and reduce the inequities that the railroad ditch has caused in the neighborhoods to the north, hampering mobility and community connectivity; and,
- WHEREAS, the feasibility study will address issues including physical mobility and connectivity, as well as community needs and identity, health disparity, race and social equity, and economic development potential; and,
- WHEREAS, the City of Gastonia and community partners are working together to shape a community where everyone can thrive by advancing equity and inclusion and dismantling systemic inequities; and,
- WHEREAS, the City of Gastonia is committed to collaborating with community partners to facilitate a coordinated and innovative approach to this work; and,
- WHEREAS, Project CHANGE is transformational and RCN funding is critical to advance this project by the completion of a feasibility study to understand the technical and financial feasibilities of capping

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CBrown	CCloninger	AFrale	BHovis	KJohnson	TKeigher	RWorley	Vote
2023-274	08/22/2023	KJ	TK	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	U

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RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT CITY OF GASTONIA'S APPLICATION TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION'S 2023 RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN)  
PROGRAM

Page 2


the railroad ditch while looking to maximize public benefits by way of better mobility and connectivity, and assessing various development opportunities; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners hereby declares support for the City of Gastonia's application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2023 RCN Program to complete a feasibility study for Project CHANGE.

Adopted this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 2023.

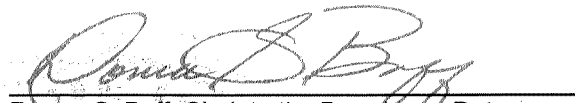
  
Chad Brown, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the Board

Certificate

The undersigned duly qualified Clerk of Gaston County certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 2023.

  
Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the Board      Date

(SEAL)

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Dr. Kim Eagle, County Manager

**From:** Randi Gates, GCLMPO, Principal Transportation Planner

**Thru:** Matt Blackwell, Assistant Director, Budget & Strategy

**Date:** August 3, 2023

**Subject:** Item for August 22, 2023 County Commissioners Meeting

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### **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT APPLICATION TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S 2023 RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS (RCN) PROGRAM**

#### **Background**

The City of Gastonia, with support from Gaston County, is seeking a Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant to complete a feasibility study to cap the railroad ditch that runs through Downtown Gastonia, which creates a barrier to mobility, connectivity, access, and economic development to the transportation disadvantaged communities to the north.

Over the last 30 years, the decline of the neighborhoods north of the railroad corridor are a direct indication of the lack of connectivity and accessibility. The neighborhoods to the north of the rail corridor were once part of Downtown Gastonia, but are now segregated. Postcard images from before the railroad was ditched show a level of development equal to that along Main Avenue today, but unfortunately, the character of this area today has been completely altered from its previous self. The range of uses that once thrived to the north of the rail corridor point to a vital and active collection of urban, mixed use neighborhoods.

Project CHANGE – Connecting Highland: Access, Neighborhood Growth, Equity, a.k.a. the Downtown Gastonia Reconnector Project, was identified as a project in the NC-7 Corridor Study and Plan, completed in January 2018 by the City of Gastonia and the Gaston Economic Development Commission.

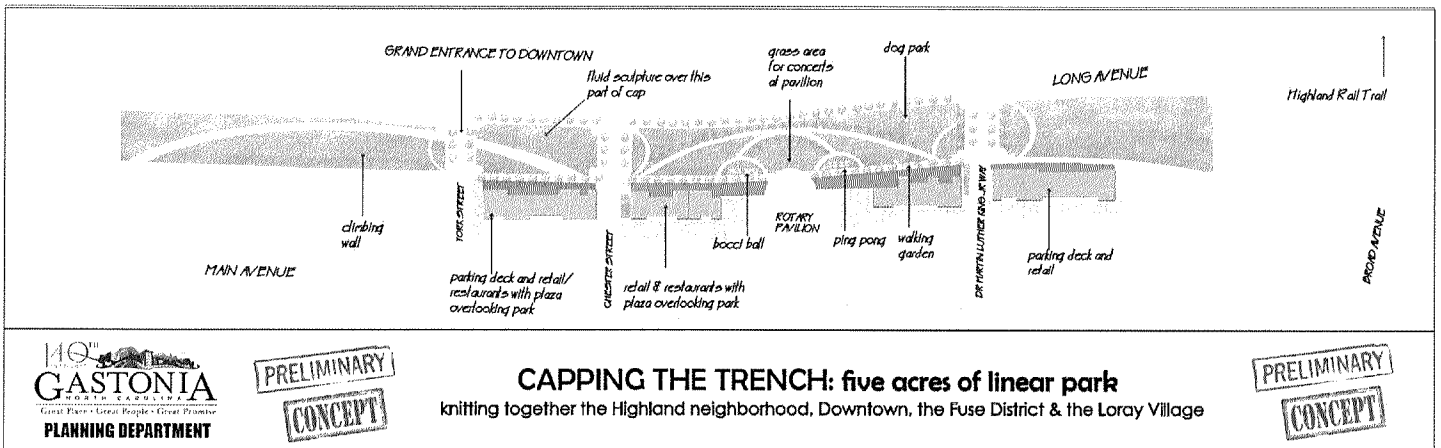
Project CHANGE is transformational and RCN funding is critical to advance this project by the completion of a feasibility study to understand the technical and financial feasibilities of capping the railroad ditch while looking to maximize public benefits by way of better mobility and connectivity, and assessing various development opportunities.

#### **RCN Grant Application Submittal**

The U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Program provides grant funding for planning and capital construction to address infrastructure barriers, restore community connectivity, and improve peoples' lives.

Funds for the FY 2023 RCN Program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that advance community-centered connection transportation projects, with a priority for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, by improving access to daily needs such as jobs, education, health care, food, nature and recreation; fostering equitable development and restoration; and reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including to mobility, access, or economic development.

Applications must be submitted by Thursday, September 28, 2023.



## Recommendation

Approve the attached Resolution of Support for the City of Gastonia's Application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's 2023 RCN Program.



# Gaston County

Gaston County  
Board of Commissioners  
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## County Manager

## Board Action

File #: 23-392

Commissioners Keigher and Johnson - County Manager - To Support the City of Gastonia Application to U.S. Department of Transportation's 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program

### STAFF CONTACT

Dr. Kim Eagle - County Manager - 704-866-3101

### BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

### BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

### BACKGROUND

The City of Gastonia is seeking community support for their application to the U. S Department of Transportation' s 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program to complete a feasibility study to cap the railroad ditch that runs through Downtown Gastonia, which creates a barrier to mobility, connectivity, access, and economic development to the transportation disadvantaged communities to the north. Over the last 30 years, the decline of the neighborhoods north of the railroad corridor is a direct indication of the lack of connectivity and accessibility. Postcard images from before the railroad was ditched show a level of development equal to that along Main Avenue today, but unfortunately, the character of this area today has been completely altered from its previous self. The range of uses that once thrived to the north of the rail corridor point to a vital and active collection of urban, mixed-use neighborhoods. The Downtown Gastonia Reconnector Project (Project CHANGE - Connecting Highland: Access, Neighborhood Growth, and Equity) was identified as a project in the NC-7 Corridor Study and Plan, completed in January 2018 by the City of Gastonia and community partners including the Gaston County Economic Development Commission. The Downtown Gastonia Reconnector Project is transformational and RCN funding is critical to advance this project by the completion of a feasibility study to understand the technical and financial feasibilities of capping the railroad ditch while looking to maximize public benefits by way of better mobility and connectivity and assessing various development opportunities.

(Continued on Page 2)

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A=AYE, N=NAY, AB=ABSENT, ABS=ABSTAIN, U=UNANIMOUS

Commissioners Keigher and Johnson - County Manager - To Support the City of Gastonia Application to U.S. Department of Transportation's 2023 Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) Grant Program  
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The U. S. Department of Transportation' s (USDOT) Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Discretionary Grant Program provides technical assistance and grant funding for planning and capital construction to address infrastructure barriers, restore community connectivity, and improve peoples' lives. Funds for the FY 2023 RCN Program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, by improving access to daily needs such as jobs, education, health care, food, nature and recreation; fostering equitable development and restoration; and reconnecting communities by removing, retrofitting, or mitigating highways or other transportation facilities that create barriers to community connectivity, including mobility, access, or economic development and other planning activities.

The County Manager is requesting approval of this Board Action and the attached Resolution to Support the City of Gastonia application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's City of Gastonia application to the U. S. Department of Transportation' s 2023 RCN Grant Program to complete a feasibility study for the Downtown Gastonia Reconnector Project.

**POLICY IMPACT**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS**

Resolution; Memo