



LENOIR

NORTH CAROLINA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Friday, August 23, 2019

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City, Google building more greenway in Lenoir

The City of Lenoir and Google are working on projects that will expand the greenway in the city. The new sections will connect more places in town and provide more opportunities for residents to go for a walk or bike ride.

Earlier this month, Google started construction on a section of greenway along the company's property on Morganton Boulevard.

The Google greenway extension will start at the intersection of Harrisburg Drive SW and Lynhaven Drive. The path will cross Lower Creek onto City property and then run west along Google property to the old railroad track. Earlier this year, the City purchased property at the intersection of Morganton Boulevard and Harrisburg Drive SW. The City property will serve as a trail head for the greenway.

The new trail will connect to the existing greenway that runs between the former Lenoir mall and Harrisburg Drive SW. The section will add about .3 miles to the system including a pedestrian bridge over Lower Creek.

On the north side of town, the City Public Works Department will start paving the Rail Trail. The Rail Trail is the old railroad that runs through town from Morganton Boulevard north to Sealed Air located on NC 90.

The City will pave the Rail Trail from North Main Street to Willow Street. Public Works Director Jared Wright said the City may even be able to pave the Rail Trail all the way to Harper Avenue this year. The City is using federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pave the Rail Trail.

"We're stretching those dollars pretty well on this project," Wright said.

The Rail Trail is part of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and will be certified as a National Historic Trail by the National Park Service.

The Morganton Boulevard/Rail Trail project started in 2013. The City of Lenoir and Caldwell County Pathways applied for grant funding from the NC Trails Program to build the new section. As part of the grant, Google agreed to help fund the trail and provide easements.

At the same time, the City and Pathways were working with the Surface Transportation Board to “railbank” the old railroad in the city. Railbanking preserves the right-of-way for a railroad, but allows cities to build greenway on the old line. The railroad has been out of service since 2007.

The goal is to safely connect more residents in Lenoir to more recreational centers and amenities in the city.

In 2017, the City finished the section of trail that runs from the former Lenoir mall to Harrisburg Drive SW. Staff is currently working to get easements to build greenway in front of the the property.

The next step will be to work on a pedestrian crossing across Morganton Boulevard. Planning Director Jenny Wheelock said the crossing could be a signalized crossing that stops traffic. Or it could be a mid-block crossing that doesn’t stop traffic but has a pedestrian refuge.

“We’ll coordinate with NCDOT and see what works on the highway,” Wheelock said. “That’s a pretty busy thoroughfare and we’ll need to make sure the crossing is safe and works with the other intersections nearby.”

When complete, the Morganton Boulevard/Rail Trail will add more than 2.3 miles to the City greenway system. Lenoir residents will have access to more than 11 miles of greenway path.

“The Rail Trail/Morganton Boulevard section is a critical link in our greenway system,” Wheelock said. “That section will provide a lot of connectivity for city residents.”

Check out the City of Lenoir Greenway map online at www.cityoflenoir.com/greenway.



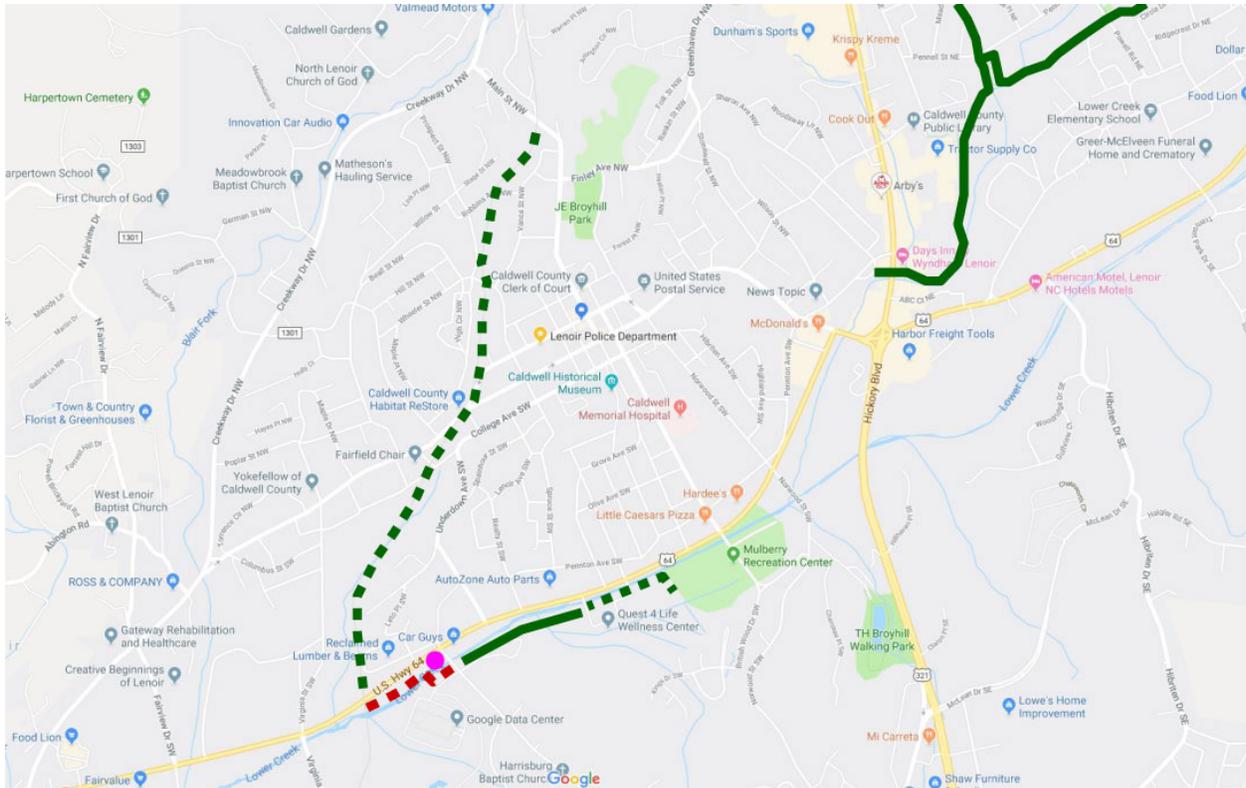
A construction crew was working on footings for the pedestrian bridge that will cross Lower Creek in front of Google. Google is building a greenway extension along the company property on Morganton Boulevard in Lenoir.



The City of Lenoir Public Works Department has placed stone base on the Rail Trail in preparation for paving. The City plans to pave the Rail Trail from North Main Street to Willow Street and possibly all the way to Harper Avenue.



The graphic above shows the alignment of the greenway extension along Morganton Boulevard.



The solid green line is existing greenway. The dotted red line is the Google greenway extension. The dotted green lines are future greenway extensions. The pink dot is the trailhead location.