

2016

West End Walk & Ride



FINAL REPORT

A Kentucky Department for Public Health, Healthy
Communities Grant Study

6/30/2016

PROJECT PARTNERS

City of Bowling Green Public Works, Neighborhood & Community Services, Parks & Recreation

Greenways Commission of Bowling Green and Warren County

City County Planning Commission of Warren County

Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO)

Barren River District Health Department

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

WellCare Health Plans

West End Community

BRIGHT Coalition

GO BG Transit

The West End Walk and Ride Study was funded by a Kentucky Department for Public Health, Healthy Communities Grant with a local match provided by the Barren River District Health Department and WellCare Health Plans. This program awards grants to local health departments and their partners to develop community pedestrian plans that support accessible and affordable active transportation options for all users.

WEST END WALK AND RIDE: FINAL REPORT

Study Background

The purpose of the West End Walk and Ride Study was to evaluate alternative transportation facilities in the West End area of Bowling Green to identify gaps in the system in order to create a safe walking and bicycling environment for all users. Agencies responsible for transportation planning formed a steering committee who reached out to stakeholders in the neighborhood to identify sidewalks, greenways, transit routes, highways and bicycle facilities. Several public events were held in the targeted project area to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

Study Purpose

Leaders in the Bowling Green and Warren County community have accomplished much in terms of increasing access to a built environment that supports active modes of transportation. In the West End neighborhoods, however, transportation needs are less centered on the automobile, with more residents depending on walking, bicycling, and transit for access to daily activities beyond recreation. The West End neighborhoods are characterized by high rates of poverty, low educational attainment, low English proficiency, a large minority population including recent immigrants, and by a large number of older homes that are rental property. Within the West End, many sidewalks and Greenway trails have been constructed, and three transit routes provide transportation to other parts of the city. However, significant gaps in the infrastructure prevent residents from safely walking or bicycling to daily destinations and transit stops, including schools, shopping, work, parks and other places.

Study Area

The study area extends from the Jennings Creek at the west to Riverview Drive at the east, from Barren River/ Boatlanding at the north, the CSX railroad at the southeast, and Morgantown Road at the southwest (see Figure 1). Within the study are three elementary schools (Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School, St. Joseph School, and Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School), four parks (Lampkin, Pedigo, West End, Boatlanding, and Hobson Grove), community service centers (Foundry, Salvation Army, Delafield Community Center, Parker-Bennett Community, Graham Avenue Public Library, Housing Authority office), numerous small pockets of commercial development, and places of worship. Adjacent to the study area educational activity centers (Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College, Warren Elementary School, Warren Central High School, and Western Kentucky University). Also located adjacent to the study area are the Walmart Super Center and the downtown business district.

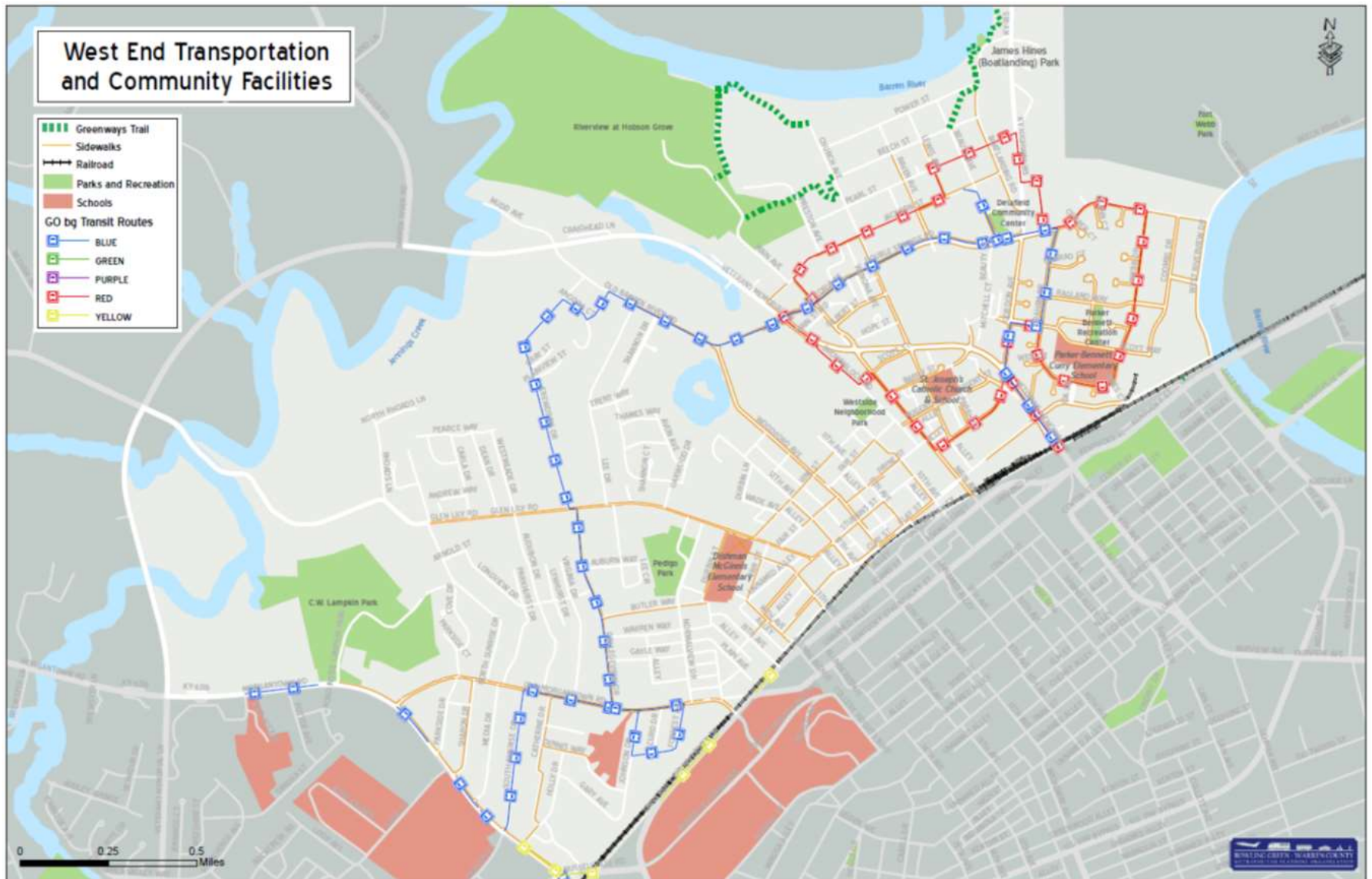


Figure 1 - Map of Study Area

The existing network for walking and bicycling is present, but not continuous (see Figure 1). Several stand-alone segments of the county-wide Greenways system within and adjacent to the study area are associated with Hobson Grove Park, Boatlanding, Park, Walmart and the Railpark. Sidewalks in the study area were integral to development of the oldest neighborhoods, but not included in the “newer” neighborhoods developed since the 1940s in the western portion of the study area. Many older sidewalks are in need of repair or replacement to meet standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The study area is served by two transit routes (see Figure 2). The red transit route connects the eastern end of the study area into downtown and the Medical Center campus to the southeast. The blue transit route connects from downtown through the entire study area to connect to the activity centers on Morgantown Road and Veterans Memorial Lane to the southwest. The yellow transit route runs along the southeastern edge of the study area, connecting it to downtown. All three routes meet at the transit center downtown, providing transfer to the rest of the transit network.

The West End neighborhoods are bisected by the major arterial US68 (Veterans Memorial Lane). KY185 (Gordon Avenue) is a major urban collector separating the Boatlanding area from the Housing Authority area. KY2665 (Glen Lily Road) and Old Morgantown Road are minor collectors. While the construction of the US68 loop in the 1990s reconnected this neighborhood to the rest of the city by providing safer railroad crossings, the five-lane roadway interrupted the existing commercial and residential fabric of Church Street and Main Street. The reconstruction of Old Morgantown Road fifteen years later as a “complete street” was the first example of context sensitive design in this study area. It was designed and built as a three-lane roadway with sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, pedestrian-scale street lighting, signage, and landscaping. This was a departure from the initially proposed five-lane widening of Old Morgantown Road, and set into motion a new vision for the West End.



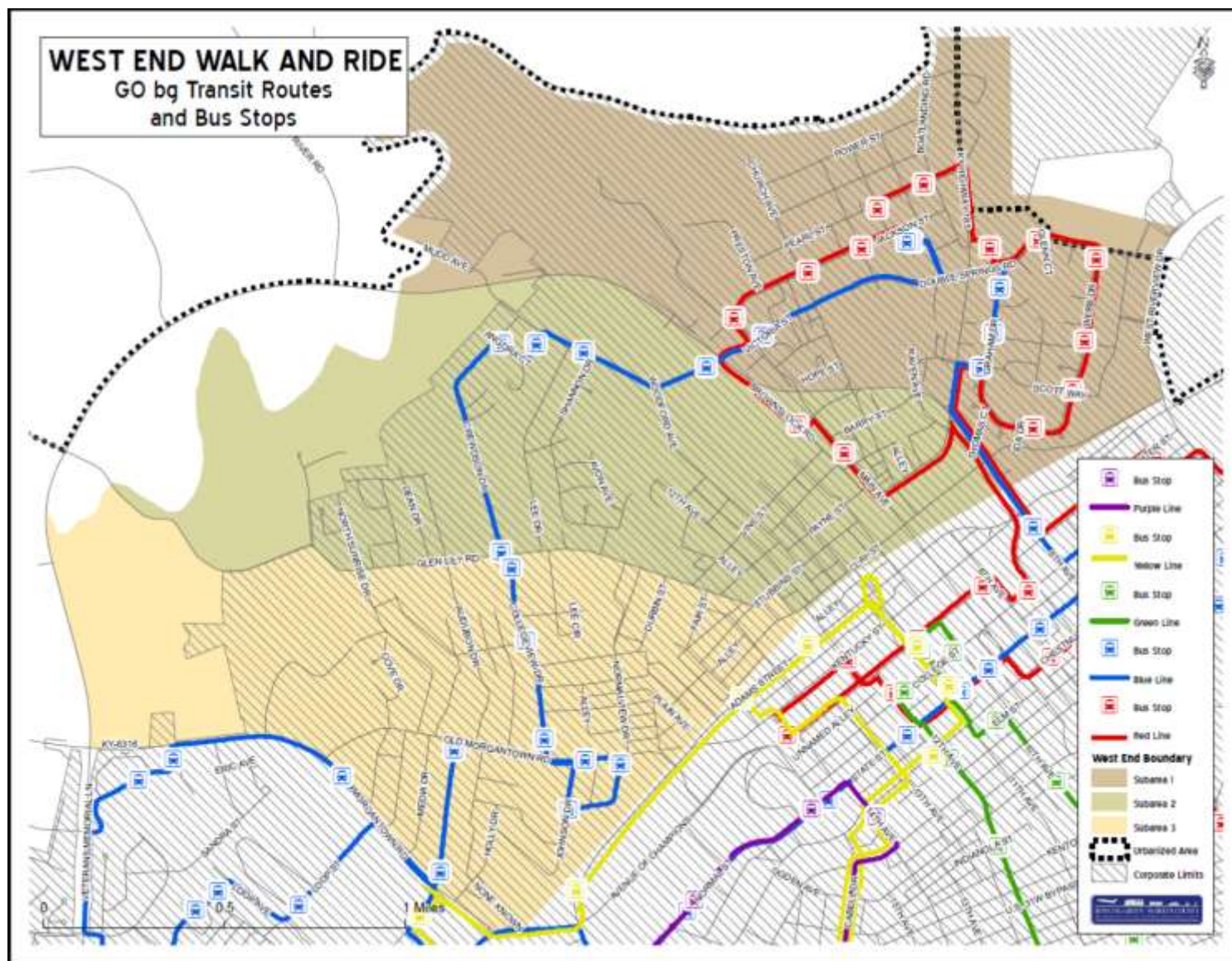


Figure 2 - Transit Map

Mapping and Data Collection

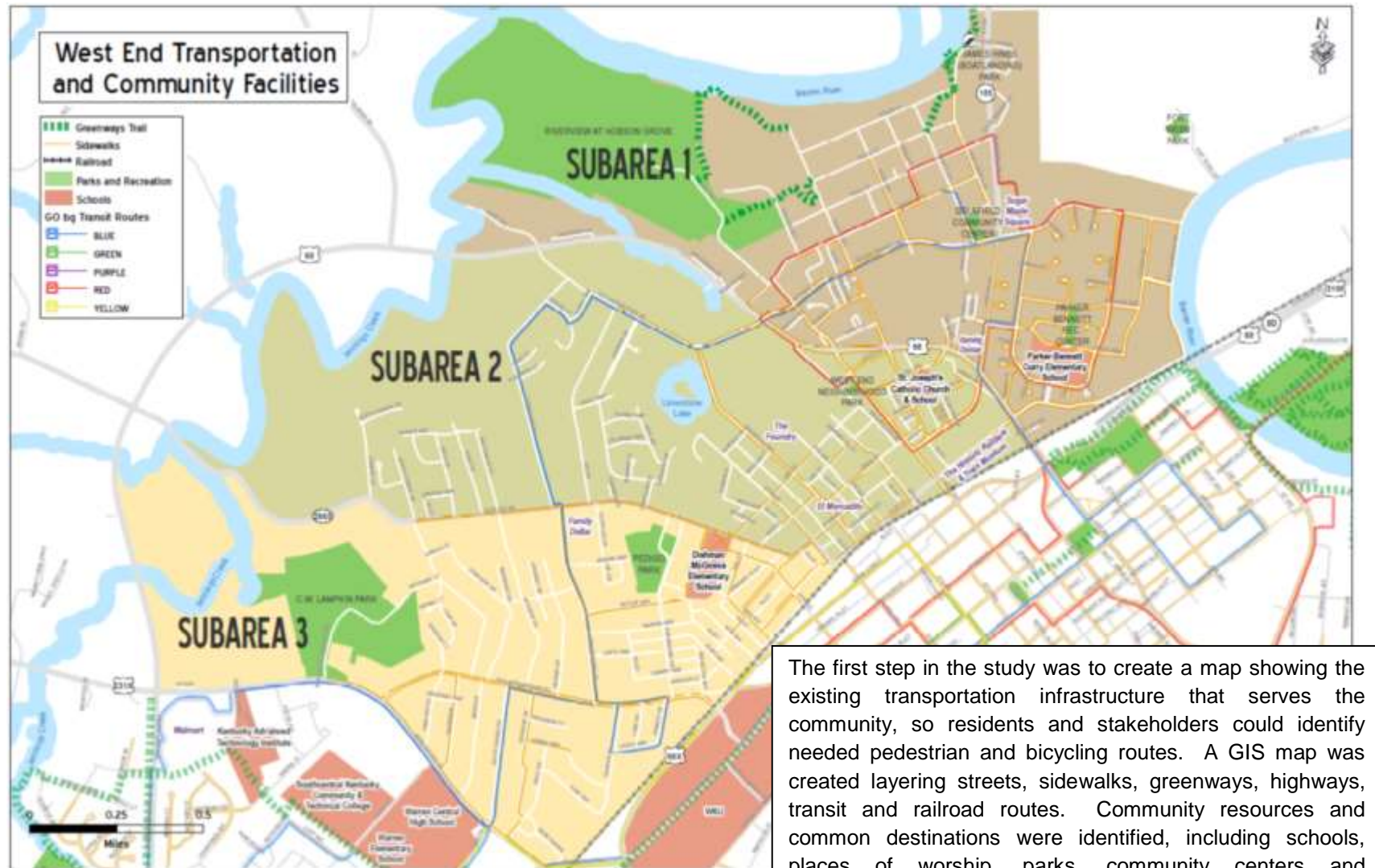


Figure 3 - Subarea Map

The first step in the study was to create a map showing the existing transportation infrastructure that serves the community, so residents and stakeholders could identify needed pedestrian and bicycling routes. A GIS map was created layering streets, sidewalks, greenways, highways, transit and railroad routes. Community resources and common destinations were identified, including schools, places of worship, parks, community centers and commercial uses. Based upon neighborhood character and cohesion, the study area was divided into three subareas.

Community Engagement

Participants at two community workshops in February provided specific feedback for the three subarea maps. Based on their feedback, the steering committee identified four independent small projects to improve pedestrian safety and access. Each linkage was named based upon some of the central features along the route.

Using the input from the community workshops, the study team developed four independent linkages (see Figure 4). The revised map illustrating these linkages was presented at four community meetings between March 8 and May 10 and thirty one respondents provided comments. In collaboration with the Barren River District Health Department and City of Bowling Green, a survey was developed and made available in English and Spanish, with both versions available in hard-copy. An electronic version of the survey was also made available and twenty seven respondents provided input through this version of the survey.



Public Workshop, February 2016



Community Event, March 2016

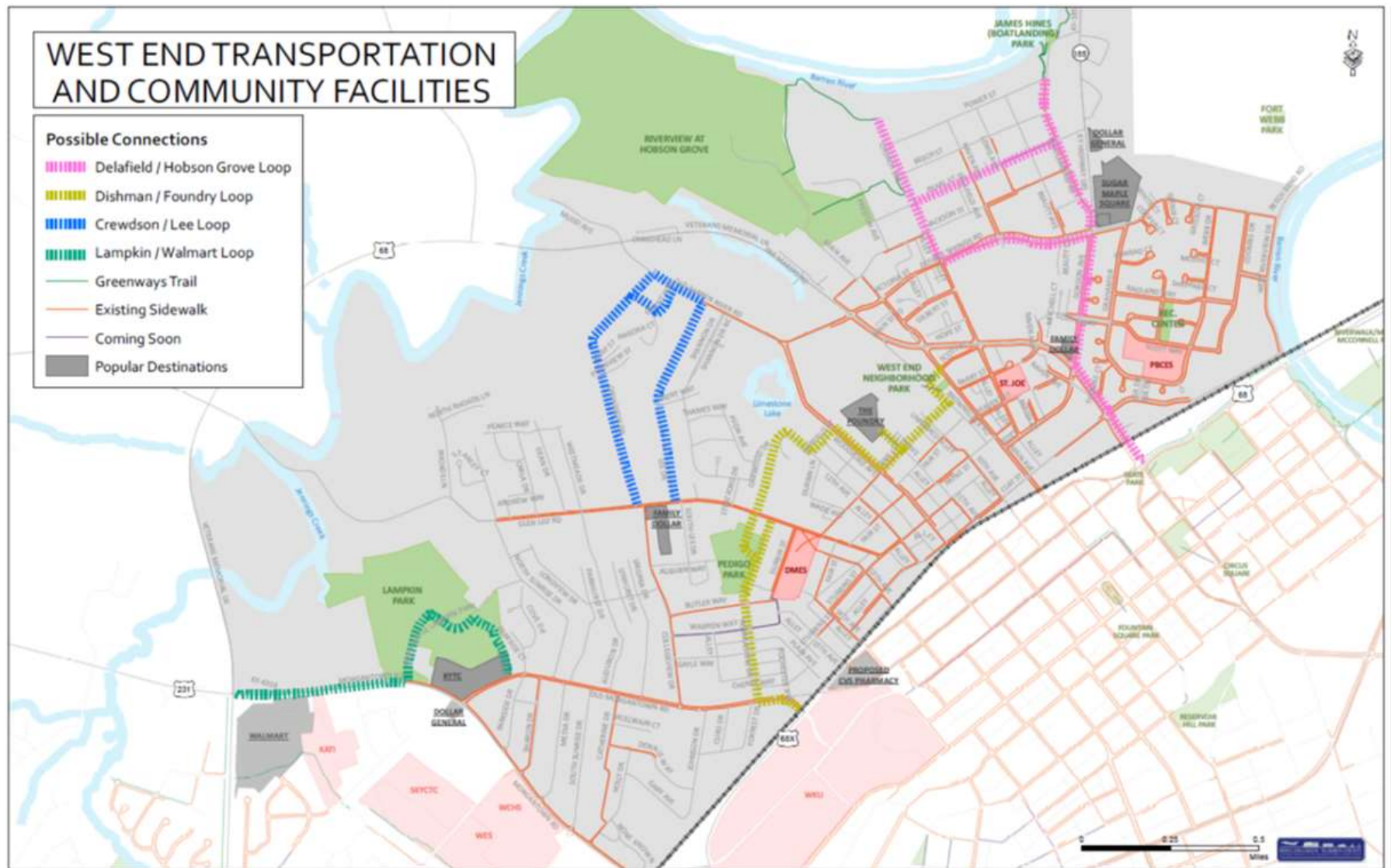


Figure 4 - Proposed Linkages

<i>Linkage</i>	Lampkin/ Walmart Loop	Crewdson/ Lee Loop	Dishman/ Foundry Loop	Delafield/ Hobson Grove
<i>Total linkage proposed (approximate miles)</i>	1.07	1.69	1.85	2.43
<i>Existing and funded bike/pedestrian facilities within linkage</i>	0.60	0	0.49	2.12
<i>% Funded/ Complete</i>	42%	0%	27%	85%
<i>Proposed to complete gaps in linkage</i>	0.81	1.69	1.31	0.38

Table 1 –Characteristics of Proposed Linkages

Study Recommendations

<i>Linkage</i>	Dishman/ Foundry Loop	Lampkin/ Walmart Loop	Crewdson/ Lee Loop	Delafield/ Hobson Grove
<i>Ranking</i>	First	Second	Third	Fourth
<i>Total Points</i>	130	79	50	35

Table 2 –Ranking Based on Public Input, in order of priority

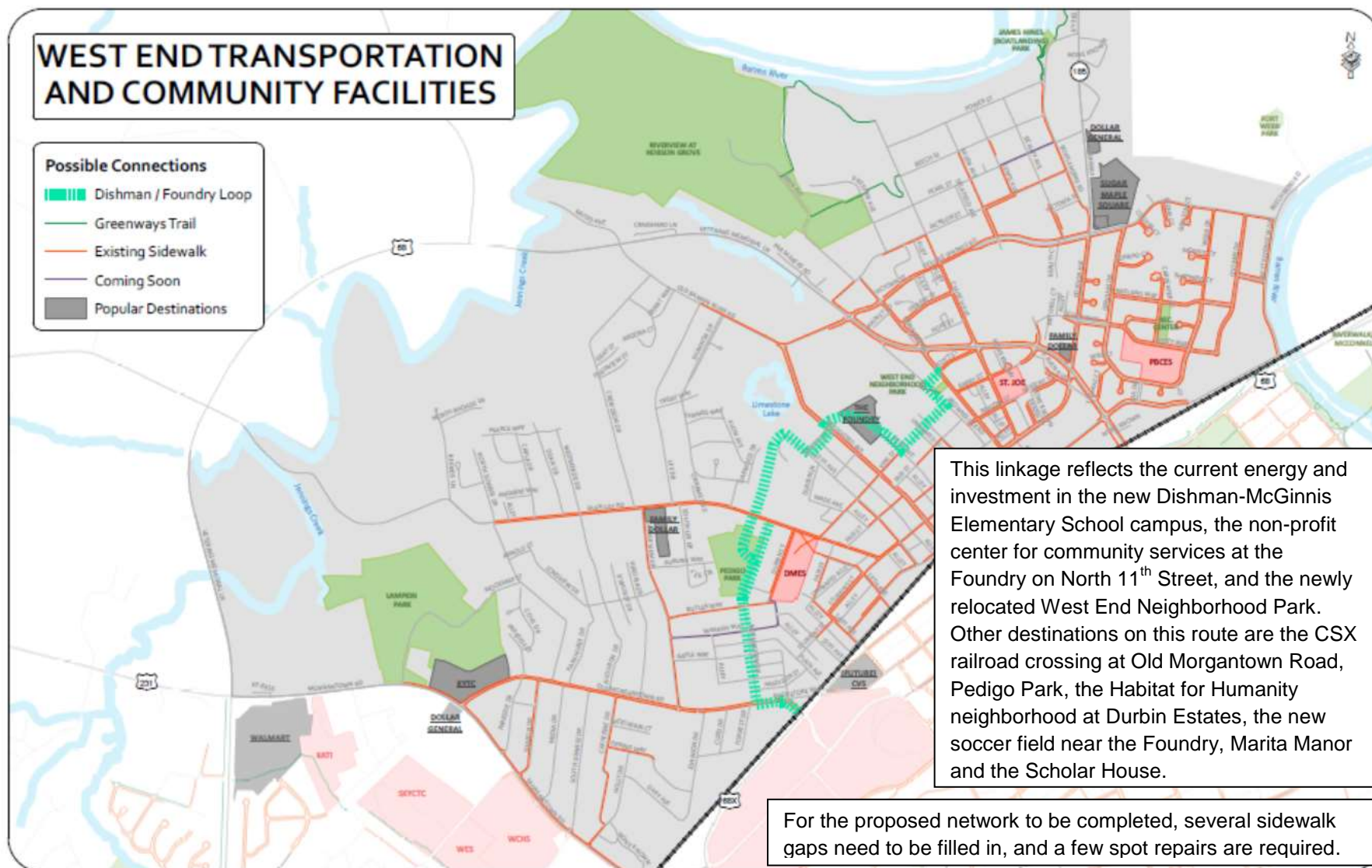


Figure 5 - Priority One: Dishman/Foundry Loop

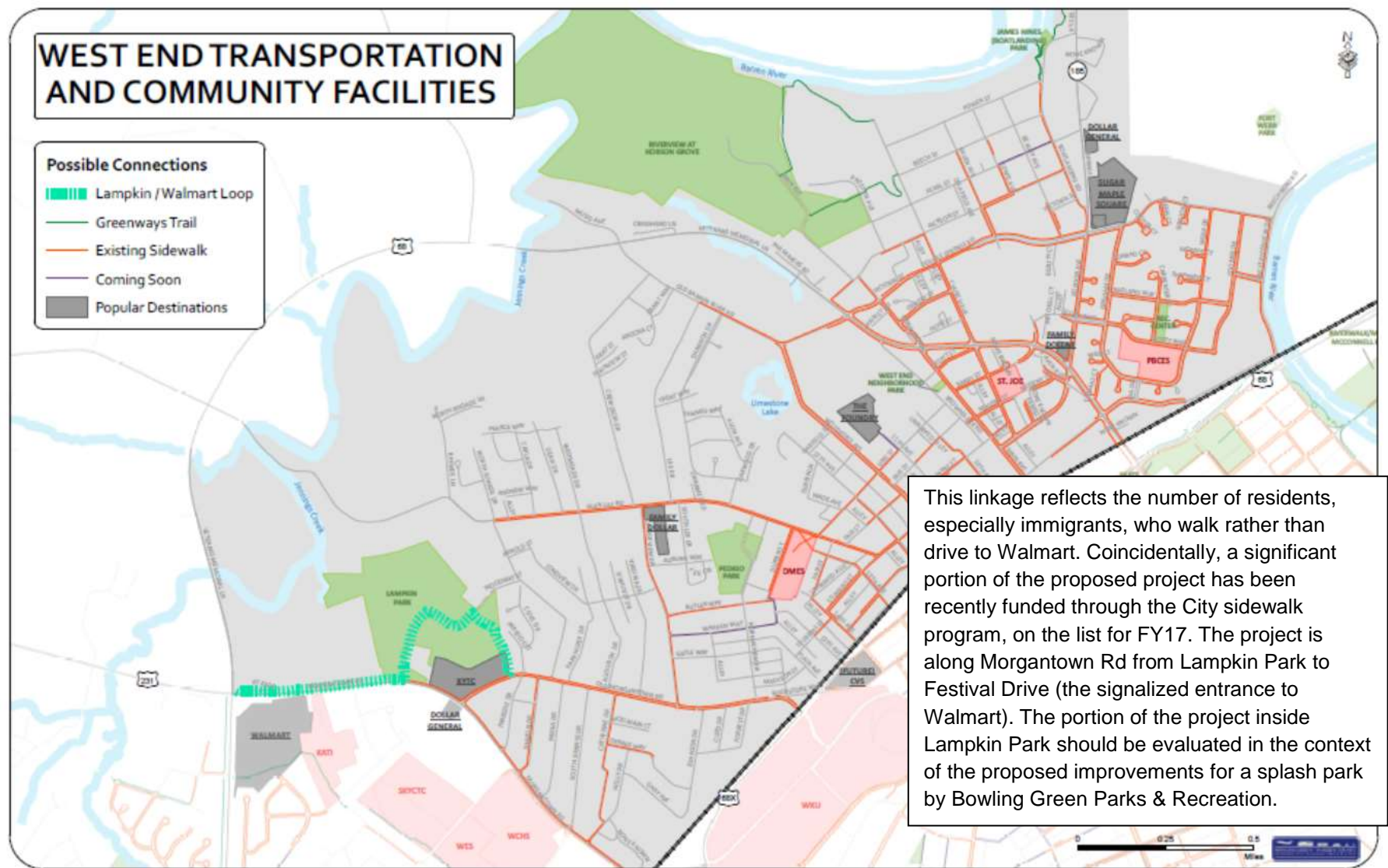


Figure 6 – Priority Two: Walmart/Lampkin Loop

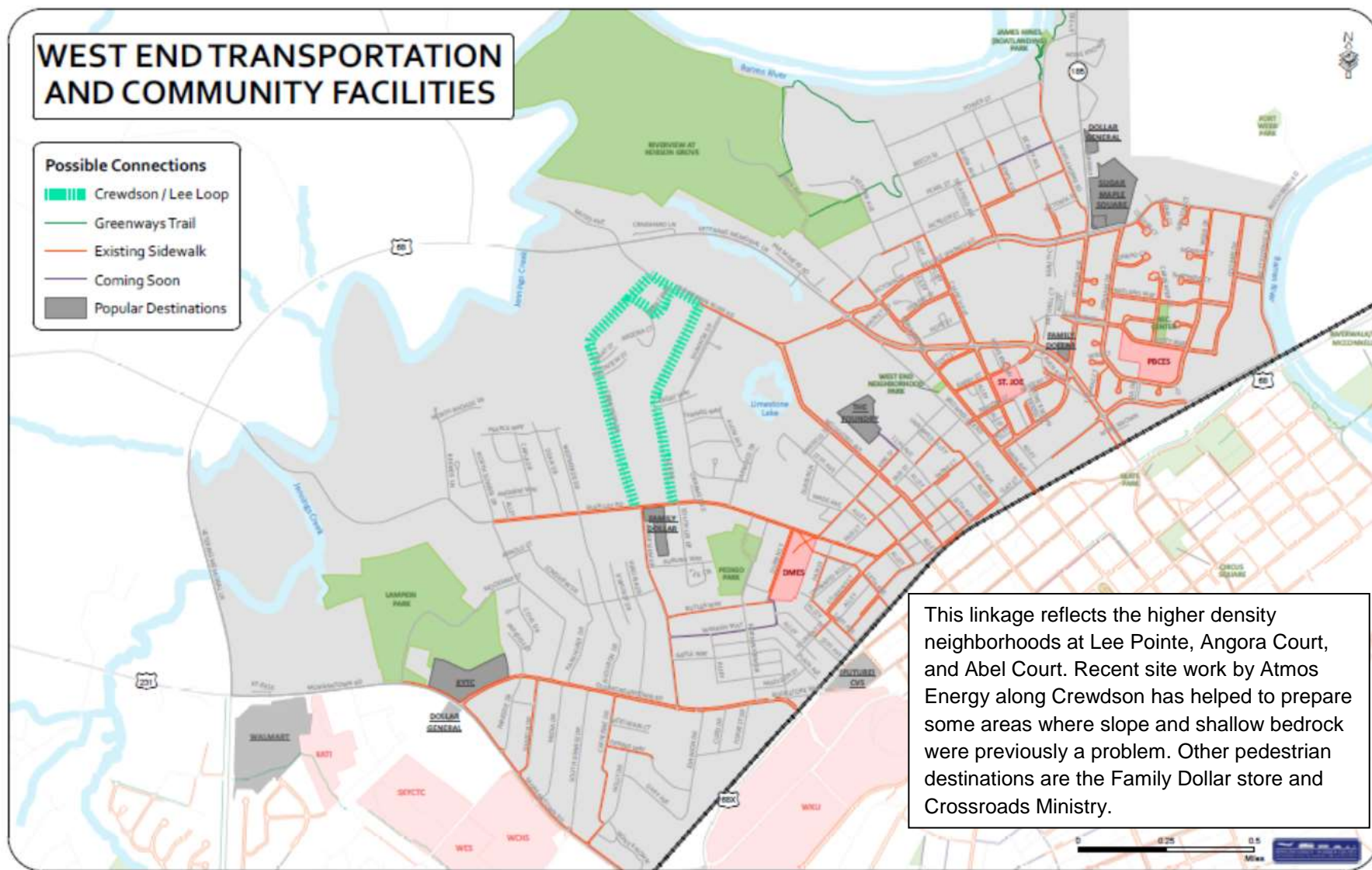


Figure 7 – Priority Three: Crewdson/Lee Loop

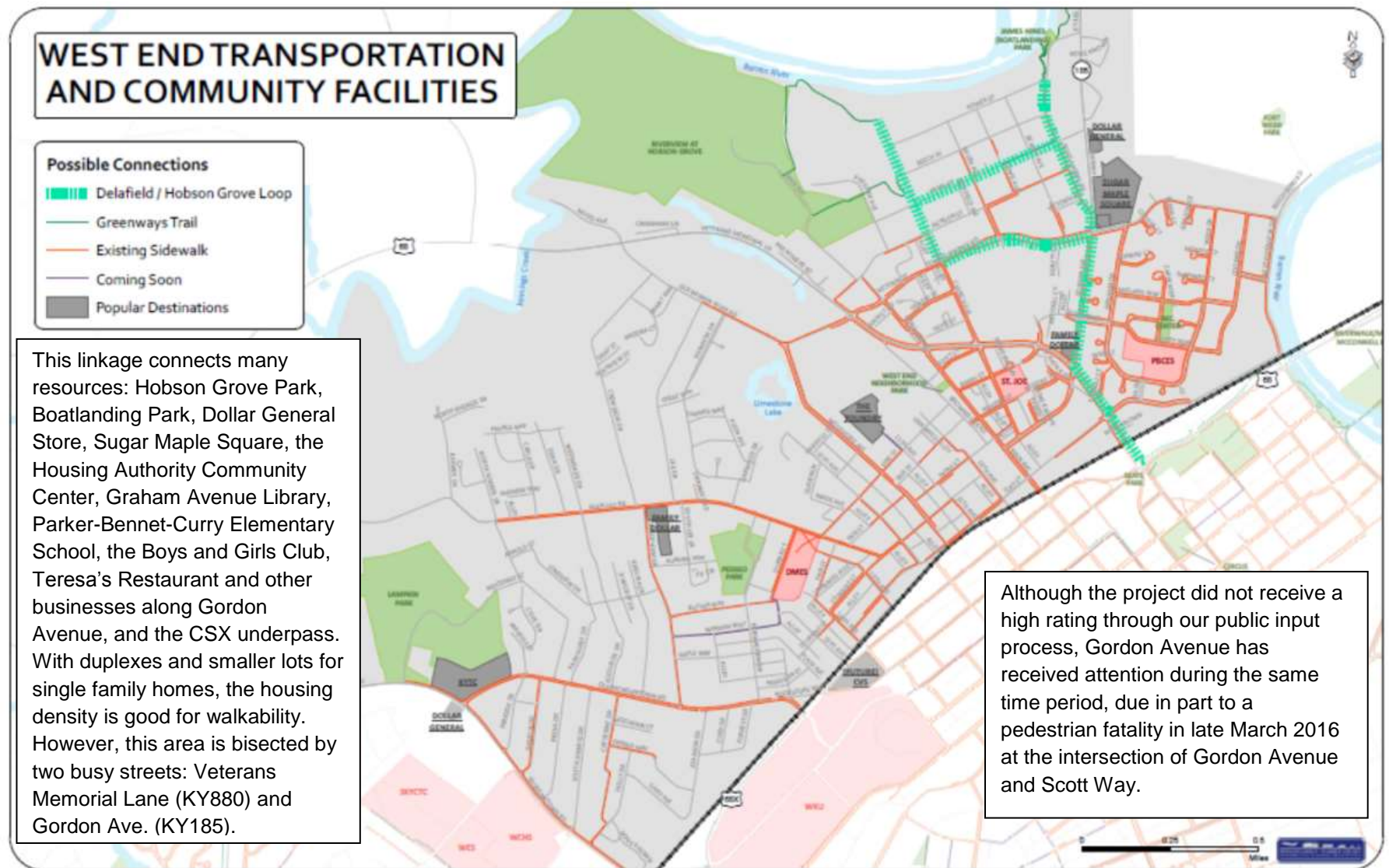
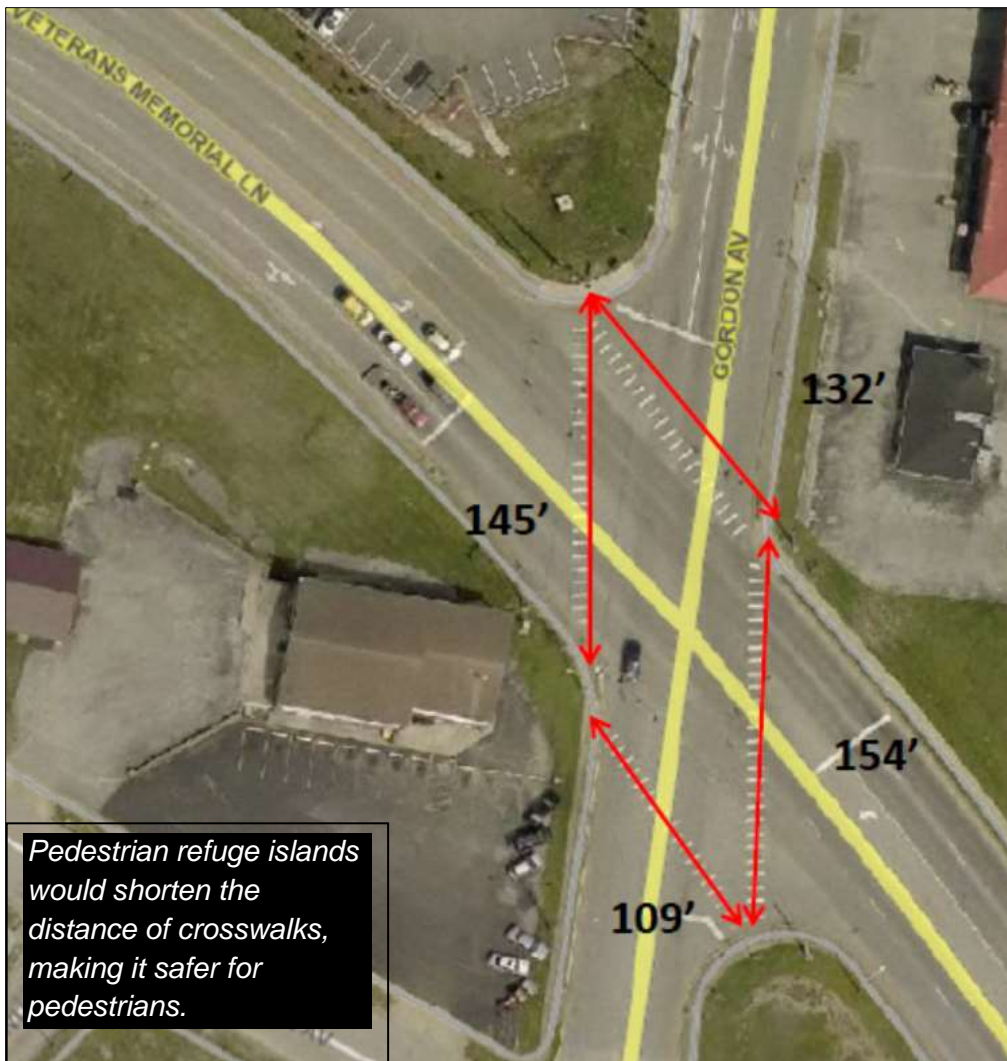


Figure 8 – Priority Four: Delafield/Hobson Grove Loop



During the course of this study, a pedestrian fatality involving a student from Parker-Bennet-Curry Elementary School occurred near the intersection of Scott Way and Gordon Avenue (KY 185). In response to this tragic incident, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) conducted an engineering study to determine improvements which could be implemented to address pedestrian safety concerns along Gordon Avenue. In June, 2016, the KYTC announced a plan to convert Gordon Avenue from the intersection with Veterans Memorial Lane (US 68) to the intersection with Double Springs Road from its current four lanes to three lanes which includes a center two-way left turn lane. This type of improvement is often referred to as a "road diet". Gordon Avenue will be narrowed to only two lanes at the Scott Way intersection crossing, with pedestrian crossing signs and a raised "refuge" area in the middle so that pedestrians only have to cross one lane at a time, thus limiting their exposure to traffic. This crossing will feature push-button flashing lights that pedestrians can activate prior to crossing Gordon Avenue.

Figure 9. Veterans Memorial Lane and Gordon Avenue Intersection.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to the linkages identified within this study, two other efforts which will improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the West End have been identified and recommended.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Educational Program

Through the Paul Nye Grant program, funding has become available to develop and conduct pedestrian and bicycle safety education programs. The schools and resource centers in the West End will be a target audience for these programs as they become available. Complementing the West End Walk & Ride Study is a Greenways Bicyclist and Pedestrian Public Education program funded by the Paula Nye Memorial Grant program of the Kentucky Bicycle and Bikeway Commission. Several components to the program will be used in the West End neighborhoods to educate residents about safe walking and bicycling. A Public Service Announcement to be aired on local media and posted on social media sites will detail information about laws and tips for pedestrian and bicycle safety. A Bicycle Skills Clinic program is being developed using a “bike rodeo kit” with a manual that community groups can use to educate children on safe bicycling practices. A Transportation Safety Classroom Curriculum, named “Petey Possum” developed by the KYTC, has been updated and will be used in neighborhood schools and summer programs.

Bicycle Comfort Level Map

Finally, a 2006 bicycle comfort level map is being updated to rate streets as to how comfortable and safe they are to ride a bicycle on. The ratings are based on roadway characteristics: speed limit, lane width, and average daily traffic (ADT).



Bike Rodeos can be held to teach children bicycle safety skills

Conclusions/Next Steps

One of the benefits of the West End Walk & Ride Study has been the partnership between the various organizations that influence multimodal transportation planning in the neighborhood. This coordination helps to avoid duplication of efforts as well as opportunities to collaborate to improve multimodal connectivity in the target area. This final report will be posted on the websites of each of the participant organizations and will be distributed throughout the West End Study area. Bowling Green Public Works will continue to take the results of this study into consideration when prioritizing sidewalk projects. The Greenways Commission will use the study to demonstrate need and support for greenway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities when seeking funding. This study has helped to provide the neighborhood context for transportation planning regarding highways that pass through the neighborhood. Go BG Transit will consider the recommendations when planning transit routes and stops. The recommendations will be taken into consideration in an upcoming FY2017 Multimodal Plan being funded through the MPO scheduled for completion by summer 2017.

The West End Walk & Ride Study will be a template for communities in the BRIGHT (Barren River Initiative to Get Healthy Together) area to conduct bicycle and pedestrian studies. The BRIGHT Coalition was formed in 2011 to improve overall health status and quality of life in the 10-county Barren River Area Development District. One goal adopted by the BRIGHT Coalition is to “improve access to safe, appealing and accessible routes for alternative transportation and active recreation.” The West End Walk & Ride Project represents a commitment by local community leaders to achieve this goal.



APPENDICES

- A. Workshop Flyer
- B. Daily News Article
- C. Public Survey
- D. Survey Results
- E. Junior Transportation Planner: Certificate of Achievement
- F. Project Partners

A. Public Workshop Flyer

West End Walk and Ride

Dishman McGinnis Elementary School Library
375 Glen Lily Road, Bowling Green, KY
Thursday, February 11th from 4-6pm

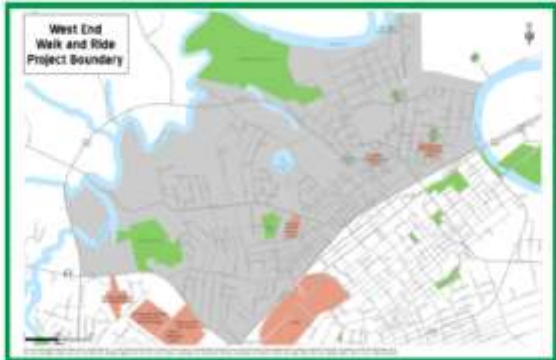
We are requesting input from neighbors and stakeholders like YOU to create a comprehensive Pedestrian and Bikeway Plan for the West End of Bowling Green. The target neighborhood extends from the Jennings Creek at the west to Riverview Drive at the east. We will have neighborhood maps at the Open House, and we need YOU to help with local information such as:

- Do you or your neighbors walk or bike to school or work?
- If transit is used, can you get to the bus stop safely?
- What roadways or shortcuts need a sidewalk?
- Where can we improve safety for walking and biking?








We would like to reach other neighbors at special events this spring. We plan to attend the Book Fair and Dance at Dishman McGinnis Elementary School on Feb. 12. Where else should we go to reach neighbors? Please share the event information, and we will add it to our Outreach Calendar.

For more information about this event please contact Project Director, Helen Siewers, at helen.siewers@gmail.com or call Miranda Clements, Greenways Coordinator, at (270) 842-1953.

Find this event by visiting the Health Department's Facebook at www.facebook.com/barren.district.



West End Walk and Ride Project Boundary



This project is made possible by the Kentucky Department for Public Health Healthy Communities Grant Program with local funding from the BRIGHT Coalition and WellCare.

B. Daily News Article – February 12, 2016

West end residents discuss area's needs with officials Gaps in sidewalk a concern at forum for west side improvements

JACKSON FRENCH jfrench@bgdailynews.com

Updated Feb 12, 2016



Miranda Pederson/photo@bgdailynews.com

Officials and community members look at one of three maps detailing the west end of Bowling Green on Thursday at Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School.

Officials and community members use stickers to mark different businesses and west end neighborhood needs Thursday, Feb. 11, 2016, at Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School. The Greenways Commission, the Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Barren River District Health Department held a community meeting to get input from community members about improving safety and pedestrian walkways.

Representatives of the Greenways Commission, the Bowling Green-Warren County Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Barren River District Health Department took suggestions Thursday from residents of Bowling Green's west end about how to improve the area's sidewalks, roads and public transportation.

Roughly a dozen residents came to the event at Dishman-McGinnis Elementary School, where they spoke with officials. Participants could highlight or write on maps of the west end, which were stationed at three wooden tables in the school library.

The area that was examined is situated between railroad tracks, Morgantown Road and Barren River, Greenways coordinator Miranda Clements said.

The main point officials learned from residents is that Veterans Memorial Lane cuts the area in two, effectively isolating them, she said. "It kind of had the unintended consequence of dividing the neighborhood, as far as walking goes," she said.

Veterans Memorial Lane is a high-speed, high-volume road that's dangerous to cross, Clements said, adding that this may have resulted in a lack of input from people who live north of the road.

"I don't know if we've had any residents from this area (attend)," she said.

The commission will likely have to host a similar event at Parker-Bennett-Curry Elementary School, which is north of Veterans Memorial Lane, to get a full local perspective on what the area needs, Clements said.

The Greenways Commission initiated the project, which seeks to improve public transportation in the area, by applying for a \$3,000 grant from the Kentucky Department of Public Health's Healthy Communities grant program, she said. This grant required that a local health department act as the fiscal agent and match the grant, she said.

WellCare, an insurance agency, also matched the grant, Clements said, bringing the total funding capacity for the project to \$9,000.

Ken Meredith, public transit coordinator for Community Action of Southern Kentucky's GO bg, was especially focused on finding gaps in the area's sidewalks at the forum.

"A lack of sidewalks in any form really degrades the access to public transit in the community," he said.

A gap in a sidewalk system can make it difficult or unsafe for disabled people to get to a bus stop, Meredith said.

"One length of sidewalk means everything to an individual that lives on that street," he said.

The forum at Dishman was unique because it gave officials a chance to look at all the small sections of missing sidewalks that, taken together, form a major concern, he said.

“With this study, we’re hoping that we can identify the missing links that are quick fixes and help coordinate those fixes,” Meredith said.

Closing gaps in local sidewalks would be a boon to residents who need to travel but don’t have a vehicle and for GO bg Transit, which provides assistance to people with disabilities, he said.

“We want to do the most economically feasible service that we can,” he said.

Project manager Helen Siewers said the information gathered at the forum will be used to formulate plans for renovations based on the area’s needs.

“We’ll take the notes that we’re collecting today and we’ll assemble them into a single master map and take that information and see if we can present it at community events in this area and come back, develop some priorities to make recommendations to the city,” she said.

Judy Hodges, a resident of Normalview Drive off Glen Lily Road, said she’s concerned about the lack of sidewalks near her home.

“We don’t have a sidewalk and that is a busy area,” she said.

Many people in the neighborhood cross the road to get to Western Kentucky University or walk beside it to reach the Family Dollar store, Hodges said.

“It’s a straight stretch of road and people drive down it like maniacs,” she said.

Her biggest concern, though was not in the neighborhood but that bus stops near the Graves-Gilbert Clinic and The Medical Center don’t have benches for disabled or elderly people.

“That’s terrible,” she said. “It’s disgraceful.”

Despite her issues with sidewalks and public transportation in the area, she said she has faith that Greenways and the MPO were going to develop the area.

“It seems like they’re going to make a lot of improvements and it’s very encouraging,” she said.

— Follow reporter Jackson French on Twitter at twitter.com/Jackson_French or visit bgdailynews.com

C. PUBLIC SURVEY

West End Walk and Ride: Public Survey Instructions

Teachers:
Please give this survey to all 4th and 5th grade students to take home to their families to complete. Deadline to return surveys is Friday, May 13. All students who return the survey will receive a "Junior Transportation Planner" Certificate of Achievement and a small prize.

The survey takes about 2 minutes to complete.

The input will be used to develop a plan to identify gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian network in the West End area of Bowling Green and to set priorities for sidewalks and greenways.

The survey is part of a grant project funded by the Kentucky Department for Public Health Healthy Communities Grant Program with local funding from the BRIGHT Coalition and WellCare. Project partners include the Barren River District Health Department – BRIGHT Coalition, City of Bowling Green, City-County Planning Commission, Greenways Commission, Metropolitan Planning Organization, GO by Transit and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.



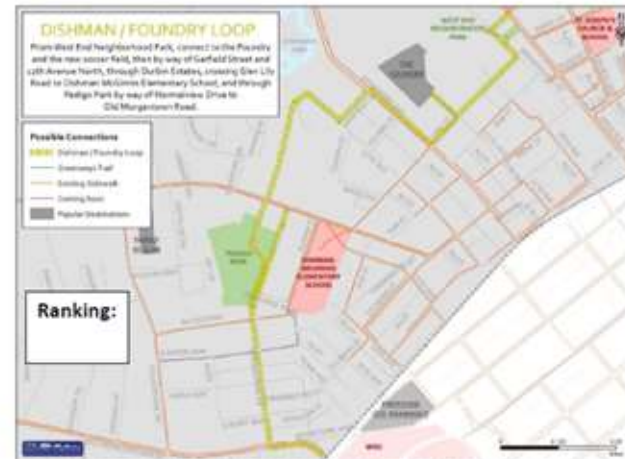
West End Walk and Ride: Public Survey

We need your help to make walking and biking safer in your neighborhood. With the help of your neighbors, our team has identified four possible connections to help walkers and bikers (see neighborhood map). All the possible connections are important, but we cannot pay to build them all at once. Which one should be built first? Please rank the four projects by marking your preferred project as #1, and so on.



All the possible connections are important, but we cannot pay to build them all at once. Which one should be built first? Please rank the four connections by marking your preferred connection as #1, your second preferred as #2 and so on.

Please rank the four projects by marking your preferred project as #1, and so on.





Please provide your comments on how walking/bicycling in your neighborhood could be improved?

Thank you for taking this survey!
Please return to your teacher by
Friday, May 13, 2016

For survey results and more information about this and other greenways projects, please visit:

www.warrenpc.org/greenways

Contact: Helen Siewers, Project Director at WestEndWalkRide@gmail.com

or

Miranda Clements, Greenways Coordinator

City County Planning Commission

270-842-1953

Miranda.clements@bgky.org



D. PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

School Surveys	Ranking Lampkin/Walmart	Score* Lampkin/Walmart	Ranking Crewdson/Lee	Score* Crewdson/Lee	Ranking Dishman/Foundry	Score* Dishman/Foundry	Ranking Delafield/Hobson/Grove	Score* Delafield/Hobson/Grove	Total Respondents
1	2	8	0	0	5	20	1	4	
2	4	12	2	6	2	6	0	0	
3	2	4	5	10	1	2	0	0	
4	0	0	1	1	0	0	7	7	
On-line Survey									
1	4	16	1	4	3	12	1	4	
2	0	0	3	9	3	9	3	9	
3	2	4	3	6	2	4	2	4	
4	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	
# Survey Respondents	17		17		17		17		17
Foundry Event									
1	8	32	3	12	15	60	1	4	27
2									
3									
4									
Marital Manor									
1		0		0	4	16		0	4
2									
3									
4									
Total Points		79		50		130		35	48
Priority		Second		Third		First		Fourth	
*Ranking Converted to Score First place ranking received four points, Second place ranking received three points, Third place ranking received two points, Fourth place ranking received one point									

E. JUNIOR TRANSPORTATION CERTIFICATE



F. PROJECT PARTNERS

