

## Information Item

**Date:** March 23, 2018

**To:** The City Manager

**From:** Evan Raleigh, Director of Business Inclusion and Advancement

**Subject:**

Request for funding by Wake Forest Innovation Quarter for Consulting Services to Evaluate the Feasibility of a North-South Streetcar Route

**Strategic Focus Area:** Economic Vitality and Diversity

**Strategic Objective:** No

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** No

**Key Work Item:** No



The City has received a request for \$50,000 to assist in funding a feasibility study of a north-south streetcar route. Wake Forest Innovation Quarter (WFIQ) has engaged WSP, a Canadian-based global engineering and professional services firm, to study the feasibility of a north-south streetcar route in an effort to create a streetcar connection along the rail corridor that encompasses, in part, WFIQ's Rails to Trails project now known as Long Branch Trail. The original corridor runs from just south of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to just south of Smith-Reynolds Airport.

The concept under study is whether the streetcar rails can be extended south to connect Winston-Salem State University and west to connect Whitaker Park, BB&T Field and the Wake Forest University campus. The consultants will be charged with evaluating a number of factors including: 1.) the cost of repairing the rail corridor, bridges and other associated infrastructure required to support the streetcar; 2.) the routes and costs to extend the streetcar rails both south and west; 3.) the cost to operate the streetcar system; and 4) any potential flaws in the concept. Working with NCDOT Rail, WFIQ envisions the concept of streetcars transporting people between the campuses. The feasibility study is estimated to cost between \$100,000 and \$125,000 and Wake Forest University and WFIQ have agreed to contribute \$25,000 each toward the cost. In addition to the City, funding support is being sought from Winston-Salem State University and the Winston-Salem Foundation.

If deemed feasible, the long-range plan would involve pursuit of federal funds to pay for the project which is estimated to cost between \$35 million and \$40 million. The funding requires a 20% match from the community, a large portion of which would be made up of the value of the rail corridor which NCDOT Rail has agreed in principle to contribute. The value of the rail corridor is estimated to be between \$6 million and \$7 million.

A map depicting the proposed streetcar route is attached for your review.