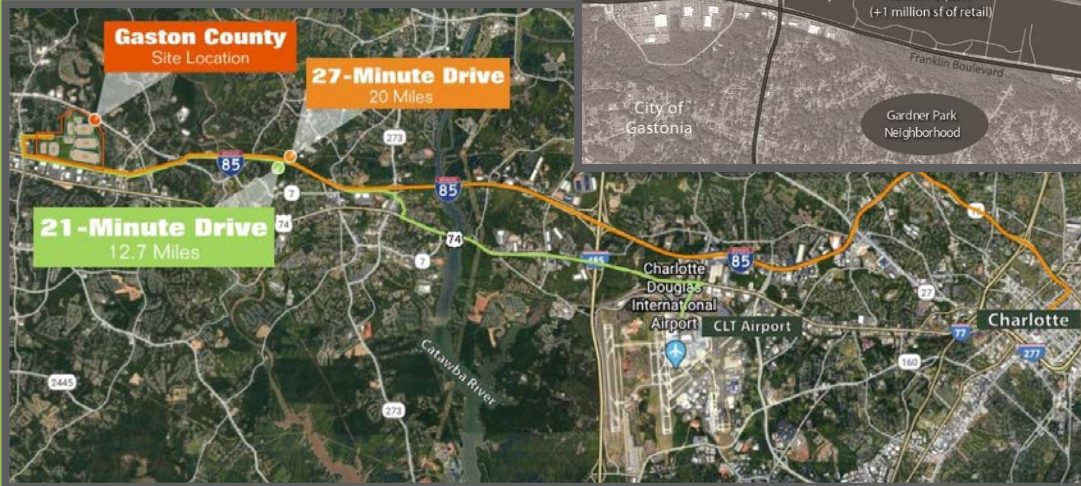
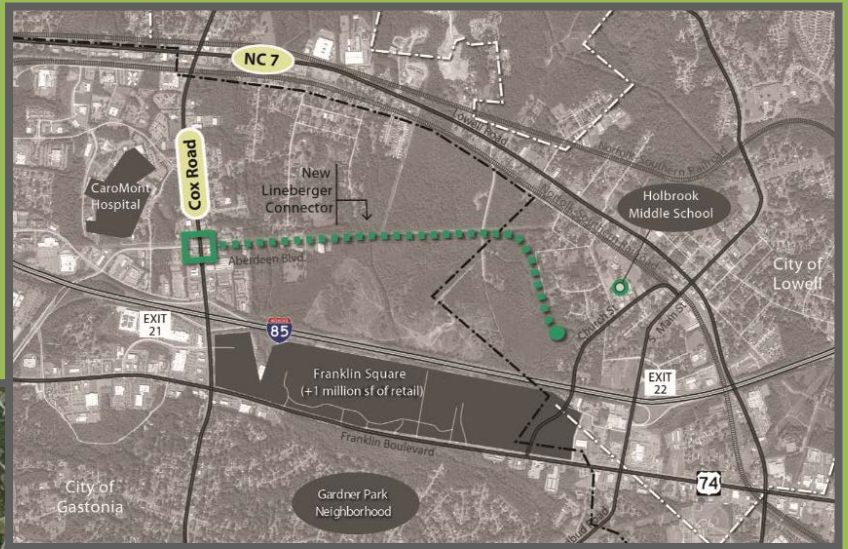




LINEBERGER CONNECTOR RAISE 2021 Executive Summary





LINEBERGER CONNECTOR

The **Lineberger Connector Project** is the extension of Aberdeen Boulevard from Cox Road to the east that will open up access to approximately 400 acres of infill property with superior access to the I-85 corridor. Major improvements to the intersection of Aberdeen Boulevard and Cox Road are also included in the project and utility connections will be made and carried throughout the proposed roadway network.

The City of Gastonia, in conjunction with the City of Lowell and Gaston County, seek \$18,192,385 (58%) in RAISE Discretionary Grant funds to complete the \$31,318,535 package needed to complete the Lineberger Connector Project between the two communities. The City of Gastonia has committed a combination of matching funds from both local and private sources in the amount of \$13,126,150 (42%).

The recession in the late-1990's had a detrimental impact on this region of North Carolina. Between 1995 and 1999, the seven (7) largest industrial utility customers (textiles) and a total of 54 manufacturing plants closed, resulting in the loss of more than 7,500 jobs. In 2000, additional plant closures impacted local tax and utility revenues even more—resulting in more than \$70 million in lost revenues just in water/wastewater. At the end of 2000, Gaston County had lost more than 13,000 jobs. To date, Gaston County's economy has only been able to recover to 45% of its pre-NAFTA economic glory, leaving the county far behind what it once was.



Key Benefits—A Recovery Opportunity

Grows Economy, Creates Jobs, Improves Supply Chain, Saves Lives:

- Located **completely within a federally designated Opportunity Zone** and an **Area of Persistent Poverty**, the Lineberger Connector Project will **unlock ~400 acres** that is prime for local and regional development. The development of this area will provide opportunities for **upward mobility** through proximity to well-paying jobs.
- Gaston County and the City of Gastonia are working together to shape a city where everyone can thrive by advancing equity and inclusion and dismantling systemic inequities.
- The **Lineberger Connector Project will stimulate approximately \$322.5 million in project value** for the Greater Gaston area, assisting these communities to recover from the negative impacts still being felt after massive job losses, specifically in the textile industry, in the 1990's.
- **Over 10,000 permanent new jobs** will be created, with a total **annual compensation of over \$462.5 million**, increasing the total number of jobs in Gaston County more than 10%.
- The Lineberger Connector Project will allow for the construction of **over 3,560,000 square feet** of manufacturing, distribution center, industrial, and warehousing facilities.
- With the ongoing impacts of **COVID-19** highlighting just how critical our nation's **supply chain** is, this project will create an opportunity for distribution and manufacturing to be directly connected to the **CLT Airport** and **Intermodal Center** via I-85.
- With the proposed land use around the Lineberger Connector attracting local traffic to and from Gaston County and away from Mecklenburg County, a **reduction in the total VMT** is calculated to be nearly **38,000 miles**.
- The Aberdeen Blvd/Cox Rd quadrant left intersection will improve the overall operating efficiency of the corridor and will reduce CO2 emissions. An idling **emissions savings** is calculated to be **over \$2.2 million**.
- The **total safety cost savings** with the implementation of the Lineberger Connector with the quadrant left are calculated to be **over \$26.7 million**.

The Lineberger Connector project will be an economic transformation for the region.



There is a strong partnership between the City of Gastonia, City of Lowell, Gaston County, and **NorthPoint Development**, who recently purchased 365 acres between NC Highway 7 to the north, I-85 to the south, Cox Road to the west, and South Main Street to the east for the **Gateway85** project.

Phase 1 of the industrial park is currently under construction and includes Buildings 1 and 2, totaling 900,000 square feet. In addition, Gaston County is actively considering incentives and working on an economic development agreement for **Project Hearth**, which would occupy a third building. This project will result in a total investment of \$135 million made by the end of 2022.

This development will generate a significant volume of large trucks that will need to turn left from Aberdeen Blvd. onto Cox Rd. to access I-85. A Master Development Traffic Impact Analysis has been performed and determined that turn movements will increase to over 500 peak period left turns per day. The existing congestion on Cox Rd. makes this left turn impractical.

The construction of a **reduced conflict intersection** through a **quadrant left** configuration will provide adequate capacity to serve current and future traffic demand and reduce conflicts between vehicles through the elimination of left-turning traffic by taking left-turning movements from westbound Aberdeen Blvd. and converting them to a through movement and a right-turn movement via a new connector roadway. **Without RAISE funding, this project will be severely handicapped.**

For more information, please contact:

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