

HIGH POINT PROSPERITY, LIVABILITY, & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 9:00 AM
Municipal Office Building
211 S. Hamilton Street
High Point, NC 27260

Prosperity and Livability Committee - Council Member Monica Peters, Chair

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Monica Peters called the Prosperity, Livability & Safety Committee to order at 9:00 a.m. She explained that the meeting would focus on an update regarding the RAISE Grant and the Urban Greenway project. As the agenda item was presentation-only, the meeting proceeded without a quorum. Chair Peters noted that Council Members McKiver and Johnson were on the way.

Present: *Chair Monica Peters, Council Member Tyrone Johnson (arrived 9:02 a.m.), Council Member Vickie McKiver (arrived at 9:02 a.m.), and Council Member Dr. Patrick Harman*

Absent: *None*

A quorum was present at 9:02 a.m.

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2026-1 **High Point on the Rise - RAISE (BUILD) Grant Presentation**
Staff will present an overview of the High Point on the Rise Project.

Greg Venable, Transportation Director, provided a brief history of the project and explained that the City, in partnership with NCDOT, applied for the federal RAISE Grant in July 2021 and was awarded the grant in November 2021. He noted that the City did not receive a Notice to Proceed from the Federal Highway Administration and USDOT until February 2023, resulting in approximately a 15-month delay during which no project work could occur. Mr. Venable explained that the original obligation deadline required the project to be ready for construction by September 2024, which was later extended to September 2027 through congressional action. He stated that federally funded projects require extensive oversight, reporting, and strict adherence to approved designs, limiting the ability to add elements such as public art during construction, though such features could be incorporated later through separate efforts. Mr. Venable emphasized the complexity of the project and acknowledged the extensive coordination required among federal, state, and local partners. He then introduced Andrew Edmonds, Transportation Planning Administrator, to provide a detailed project update.

Mr. Edmonds thanked staff, project partners, and community members for their support and outlined the scope of the project. He stated that the RAISE Grant provided \$19.8 million in federal funding, with approximately \$9 million in City and community partner contributions, bringing the total project value to approximately \$28 million. He explained

that the project would create a 4.8-mile urban greenway and streetscape connection through High Point and would ultimately contribute to a 16-mile continuous corridor connecting High Point to Greensboro. Mr. Edmonds noted that the project serves areas with limited access to transportation, including communities with higher levels of poverty and households without vehicles, and provides access to the transit hub, hospital, library, Children's Museum, and other community assets.

Mr. Edmonds reported that the Elm Street Streetscape portion of the project is at 100 percent design and has received NEPA environmental clearance, allowing the City to proceed with right-of-way acquisition for that segment. He stated that the Southwest Greenway portion of the project is nearing completion of the NEPA process, with the final review pending federal approval. He noted that an alternate route was previously developed as a contingency due to potential railroad coordination risks, but that option has since been discontinued due to productive and ongoing dialogue with the railroad.

Mr. Edmonds explained that the City is pursuing a rail-banking agreement, which allows the use of inactive rail corridors for public trails while preserving the railroad's future rights if service is ever needed again. He stated that this approach is commonly used nationwide and that discussions with the railroad have been positive. He noted that once NEPA approval and 90 percent design are complete, the City will be authorized to submit an offer letter to the railroad to secure acquisition rights.

Chair Peters commented to clarify that while federal roadway design restrictions limit the inclusion of public art within the grant scope, the City intends to engage creatives and incorporate public art through separate processes, particularly along the Southwest corridor. Mr. Edmonds confirmed that there will be opportunities for non-participatory grant elements, including public art and placemaking features, that reflect the character of surrounding neighborhoods while maintaining consistency with City branding.

Mr. Edmonds reviewed preliminary wayfinding concepts and design renderings, noting coordination with the City's branding efforts and Parks and Recreation Department to ensure consistency while allowing for context-sensitive design. He also described safety features, including pedestrian crossings with rectangular rapid flashing beacons and trail alignments designed to follow natural terrain and enhance the user experience.

During committee discussion, a question was raised regarding the number of property owners affected by right-of-way acquisition and whether costs were included in the project budget. Mr. Edmonds responded that approximately 90 property owners are affected along the Southwest Greenway and approximately 30 along Elm Street, and confirmed that right-of-way acquisition costs are included in the project budget. A follow-up question was asked regarding what happens if a property owner does not agree to grant right-of-way. Assistant City Manager Damon Dequenne responded that while legal tools exist, staff would be reluctant to pursue condemnation and would instead work diligently to reach reasonable agreements, noting the City's strong history of acquiring property without condemnation.

Chair Peters commented on her experience serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee and acknowledged the challenges of working with railroad entities. She commended City staff and senior management, particularly Assistant City Manager Dequenne, for successful engagement with the railroad and expressed confidence in the project's progress.

A question was raised regarding whether the railroad could reclaim the corridor in the future. Mr. Edmonds clarified that under rail-banking agreements, the railroad retains future use rights but would compensate the City if the corridor were reclaimed, and that agreements would be structured to protect the City's interests and trail connectivity to the extent possible.

Chair Peters concluded with remarks reaffirming the City Council's commitment to creativity, public art, and placemaking throughout High Point. She noted that Council and staff would continue to explore mechanisms such as commissions, partnerships, or other initiatives to support public art citywide. She thanked staff, presenters, and attendees for their time and engagement.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Prosperity, Livability & Safety Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Monica Peters, Chair

Attest:

Sandra Keeney, City Clerk