



The Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan map, Transit Plan map, and Bicycle and Pedestrian System Plan map collectively represent a network of current and future facilities that provide guidance on what is likely to be suitable for long term growth, connectivity, recreation, and multimodal travel. The Transportation Plan does not provide a schedule for implementation, nor does it set aside funding for improvements. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider a proposed amendment to the Transportation Plan at East Williams Street and future Jessie Drive, in order to make a decision. This public hearing is continued from August 8, 2023.

Proposed Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan Map Amendment

The proposed amendment to the Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan map is to remove the future interchange at East Williams Street and future Jessie Drive, as shown in Figure 1.

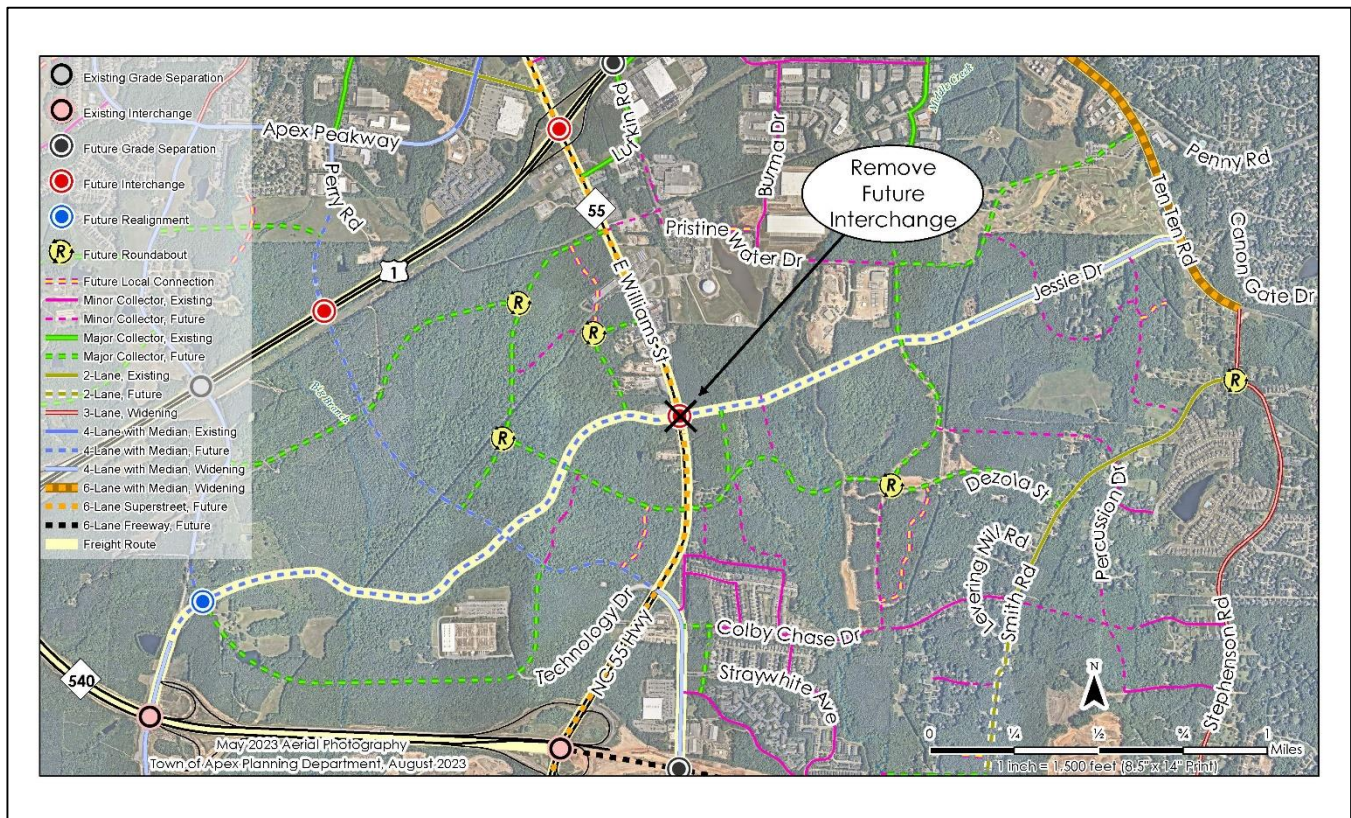


Figure 1. Proposed amendment to the Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan map

Staff received requests to bring forward this amendment from development interests on the east side of East Williams Street. Reasons cited include: the impact on future development of right of way dedication needed to accommodate an interchange, the impact of an interchange on access for future development, and the anticipated lack of available funding for a future interchange in this location. In addition, it was noted that the Jessie Drive Capacity Analysis report developed by Kimley Horn for the Jessie Drive Feasibility Study (available at: <https://www.apexnc.org/371/Transportation-Projects>) indicates a reduced conflict intersection (RCI, similar to project HL-0007, improvements at NC 55 and Technology Drive) would operate acceptably in the 2045 Build Scenario.

Staff Recommendation:

This public hearing was continued from August 8, 2023 at the request of the engineer. The continuance was requested to provide an opportunity for additional traffic analysis to inform the staff recommendation and Town Council decision. Additional analysis was received on August 17, 2023 and is currently under review by the Town's traffic engineering staff. An updated recommendation was not available to include in the staff report by the deadline, but will be provided during the staff presentation.

The following recommendation is from the previous staff report:

Planning staff recommend denial of the proposed amendment. This recommendation is supported by staff representing Transportation, Infrastructure and Development; Fire; Police; and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources.

Staff do not have sufficient information to support a recommendation of approval and suggest that it may be premature to proactively remove this interchange from the Town's plans. Based on historical annual growth in traffic, staff anticipate that the capacity analysis completed for the Jessie Drive Feasibility Study underestimated annual growth. While the study anticipated 0.5% annual growth in traffic along the corridor, historical growth between 2005 to 2021 has been 1.5%. If this growth trend continues, superstreet operations at future Jessie Drive would fail. Failed traffic operations and resulting congestion on an important corridor may create an issue for emergency services and travel in general. There is little to no connectivity or alternate routes to East Williams Street at this time, and while the impact of the completion of NC 540 has been included in models, the way it will function in reality has not yet been tested. In addition, while planning-level concepts for an interchange at this location have been considered through the Southwest Area Study, there is no functional design available that informs the actual land area impacts. Finally, while the potential for a future interchange in this location may discourage or alter opportunities for development, staff do not have enough information about the community's or Town Council's tolerance for congestion along this section of East Williams Street as a potential tradeoff.

Planning Board Recommendation:

The Planning Board supported the staff recommendation in a vote of six in favor and two against at their July 10, 2023 meeting.