

# Blue Ridge Road Corridor Health Impact Project

## Raleigh, North Carolina

The Blue Ridge Road Corridor Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Project seeks to quantify the effects of adding sidewalks, trails, and other pedestrian improvements on the health of residents, workers, and visitors in the Blue Ridge Road Corridor of Raleigh, North Carolina. This corridor records North Carolina's highest pedestrian traffic counts, due to the presence of the State Fairgrounds and other important attractions, but it lacks safe routes for pedestrian mobility. Raleigh recently commissioned a new plan for the corridor. The HIA will inform this plan by characterizing the potential health risks and benefits of alternative options for improving pedestrian access in the corridor.

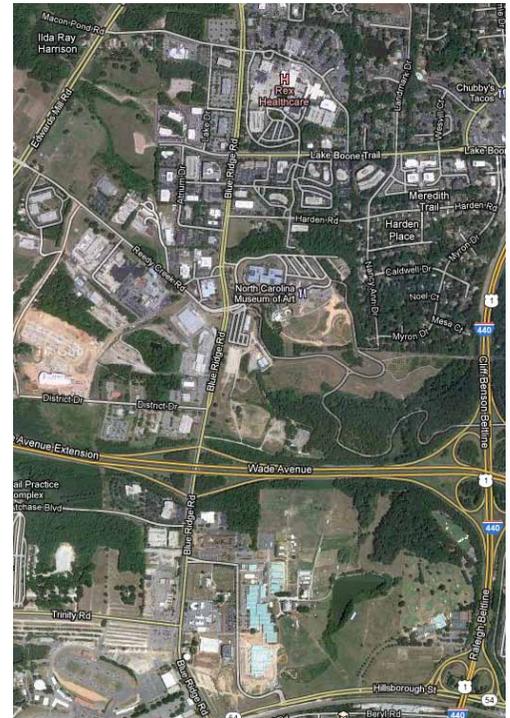
In addition to the State Fairgrounds, the corridor is home to a number of institutions of regional and national prominence, including the NC Museum of Art, NC College of Veterinary Medicine, Carter-Finely Stadium, RBC Center, and Rex Healthcare. These institutions provide strong possibilities for the area as an attractive cultural destination, green recreational venue, and economic engine. However, the area's amenities are accessible only by motor vehicle, and there are no pedestrian connections among them (see pictures). This lack of pedestrian access compromises pedestrian safety, creates undesirable emissions and energy consumption patterns, impedes visiting the area's attractions, and is a barrier to area residents and workers seeking to include physical activity in their daily routines.

A stakeholder group of residents, businesses, and landowners organized over the past four years to address the lack of a clear development plan for the neighborhood drafted the following vision statement:

The Blue Ridge Corridor District is a 24/7 urban place, with distinct activity areas unified by the corridor. The corridor is beautifully landscaped with wide sidewalks and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Bicyclists and pedestrians have easy access along the corridor to the greenway and open space and to the medical, museum, and university zones.

Raleigh recently commissioned an urban design firm to create a plan for transforming the corridor from its current disconnected, underutilized state in order to achieve the community's vision. The Blue Ridge Road Corridor HIA Project will inform this planning process by identifying high-impact opportunities to improve the health of people living in, working in, and visiting the corridor through thoughtful urban design. We will quantify the effects of pedestrian improvements on the health status of residents, workers, and visitors in the corridor. Information about health benefits and drawbacks of alternative options for the corridor's redesign will inform choices and funding decisions for the corridor's redevelopment.

The Blue Ridge Road Corridor HIA Project is a collaboration between the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Gillings School of Global Public Health and the Department of City and Regional Planning, funded by the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina. For more information, please contact Dr. Jacqueline MacDonald Gibson, [Jackie.macdonald@unc.edu](mailto:Jackie.macdonald@unc.edu).



**The Blue Ridge Road Corridor (above) hosts important cultural attractions, businesses, and public institutions but lacks pedestrian connections among them. This increases risks of pedestrian-vehicle collisions, decreases opportunities for physical activity, and discourages visitors from fully using the area's amenities.**