



# Winterville Quick-Build Projects Benefit from Community and State Department of Transportation Involvement

**C**ommunities use low-cost, quick-build projects for a variety of reasons, including the need to address immediate safety concerns or introduce new street designs to the community. The Town of Winterville, North Carolina (NC), located in the eastern part of the State, implemented three quick-build projects near two schools for both reasons. Winterville

received a \$10,000 grant from the National Center for Safe Routes to School made possible by General Motors, to build low-cost, quick-build infrastructure improvements where children walk and bike. The town engaged the community throughout the process and established a partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) that will last beyond this project.

With a growing population of 11,000 people, Winterville is working to expand its transportation network to meet increasing demand. As a first step, town staff assessed opportunities for improvement in the existing network. In recent years, Winterville officials have taken steps to improve active transportation networks by adopting a Vision Zero resolution, establishing a Safe Routes to School program, and increasing the number of safe crossings near local schools.

Winterville focused improvements on three key intersections near AG Cox Middle School and WH Robinson Elementary School that serve as crucial access points for students and families.

The two schools have a combined enrollment of 1,510 students—all of whom qualify for free lunch under the National School Lunch Program.<sup>1,2</sup> These project locations also served to improve connectivity for the 76.7 percent of the town's population, who are concentrated along the Main Street corridor, making it easier for children and families to move between green spaces, recreation centers, and schools in the heart of Winterville.

Beyond immediate safety benefits, the quick-build projects also strengthened Winterville's partnership with NCDOT. Since many roads through communities in North Carolina are state-controlled, this collaboration demonstrates how local and state agencies can work together to implement safety improvements, serving as an example of the value for cities and the State to work together.

The improvements consisted of bump outs using paint, tubular markers, and reflective tape at the intersections of Main Street and Church Street, Cooper Street and Church Street, and Cooper Street and Academy Street. Additionally, town staff coordinated with the NCDOT to install high-visibility crosswalks at Main Street and Church Street and Cooper Street and Church Street.

## Engaging the community in planning and installation

Planning began with convening a coalition that included Winterville's planning staff and Police, Fire, and Parks and Recreation Departments. County organizations, including Safe Kids Pitt



Above: The town identified three intersections for quick-build bump outs.

Left: NCDOT installed high visibility crosswalks three days after meeting about the quick build ideas.

Source: Katherine Dale

County, Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation, and Greenville Urban Area Municipal Planning Organization, also participated in these conversations. After identifying several potential locations, coalition members and community members ranked their preferences using an online survey created by Winterville's Safe Routes to School program. The coalition met with three staff members from NCDOT Division 2: A traffic engineer, the lead engineer, and a planning engineer, to review potential treatment options at priority locations. This initial meeting led to the rapid installation of high-visibility, ladder crosswalks at two intersections in the project area. After considering various traffic calming options, the town chose a combination of bump outs and high-visibility crosswalks along the stop-controlled sides of intersections.



## Installation

Town staff saw this project as an opportunity to engage community volunteers in installation efforts. Over the course of a single week, 17 community volunteers helped paint and install bump outs at the three intersections. The town promoted community workdays through yard signs at each intersection, the town newsletter that accompanies monthly utility bills, Winterville's Facebook page, and Winterville Civitan, a service-oriented community group. Winterville Public Works played a key role in ensuring the safety of volunteers, managing traffic, and facilitating installation. Following the volunteer events, Public Works staff and the town's Safe Routes to School coordinator installed traffic tape and tubular markers to complete the project.

## Data Collection and Results

### Driver behaviors

Observational data on driver behaviors were collected at three time points: 1 - 6 weeks before installation, 3 - 6 weeks post-installation, and 5 - 7 months post-installation. Data collection focused on stopping at stop signs and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks. Motor vehicle speeds were collected using pneumatic tubes in proximity to the project locations before project installation and again five weeks after installation.

A combined total of 1,098 driver observations were collected (475 before installation and 623 after installation), with results suggesting that the treatments either increased or maintained the rate of stopping at stop signs and yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks comparing the before and after periods. At some sites, short-term improvements were not sustained and observed in the long-term, suggesting that additional work may be needed to achieve long-term success.

Speed data was collected from 53,064 motor vehicles before the project and 44,591 motor vehicles after the project. Findings suggest that these projects helped reduce average motor vehicle speeds and high-end speeds in the vicinity of the project sites, and that these reductions were further supported by the placement of temporary speed feedback signs.



*Town of Winterville Public Works staff and volunteers worked together to paint the bump outs. Source: Katherine Dale*



*Community engagement efforts culminated in a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by town staff, town council members, and project partners. Mayor Ricky Hines cut the ribbon. Source: Town of Winterville*

## Community feedback

To gather community feedback, the project team developed an online survey and invited community members to participate. Outreach efforts included signing at the project intersections, postcards mailed to 500 nearby households, posts on the town's and a school's Facebook pages, notices in utility mailings, and in-person tabling at several community events. The project team received 58 survey responses.

Overall, feedback was slightly positive towards the project. Pedestrians reported feeling safer and more visible while crossing the street, while drivers reported that they slowed down and had better visibility of pedestrians. In open-ended responses, supporters of the project expressed interest in wider bump outs, a greater appreciation of the project after learning about its purpose, and support for efforts to improve safety for children. Critical feedback included concerns about drivers needing to make excessively wide turns, use of funds, and the lack of prior fatalities or injuries at these locations to merit installation.

# Leveraging the Project

The project's success and future improvement plans will help strengthen the town's ability to collaborate with NCDOT on future treatment opportunities. Notably, during the project the Town of Winterville physically extended an existing sidewalk 340 feet to the intersection of Cooper and Academy Streets and the Town is now leveraging its successful partnership to facilitate the installation of a high-visibility crosswalk. The Town of Winterville continues to prioritize a safer, active transportation network by including dedicated funds for sidewalk repairs and infill in its 2024-25 fiscal year budget, prioritizing safety improvements during street resurfacing/restriping projects, and developing a



Community Safety Action Plan through a Safe Streets and Road For All grant. The town launched its formal Vision Zero task force in March 2025.

- 1 National Center for Education Statistics. (2025). *Common Core of Data*. W.H. Robinson Elementary School. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>
- 2 National Center for Education Statistics (2025). *Common Core of Data*. A.G. Cox Middle School. <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>

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