Mebane City Beat: The Future of Cameron Lane

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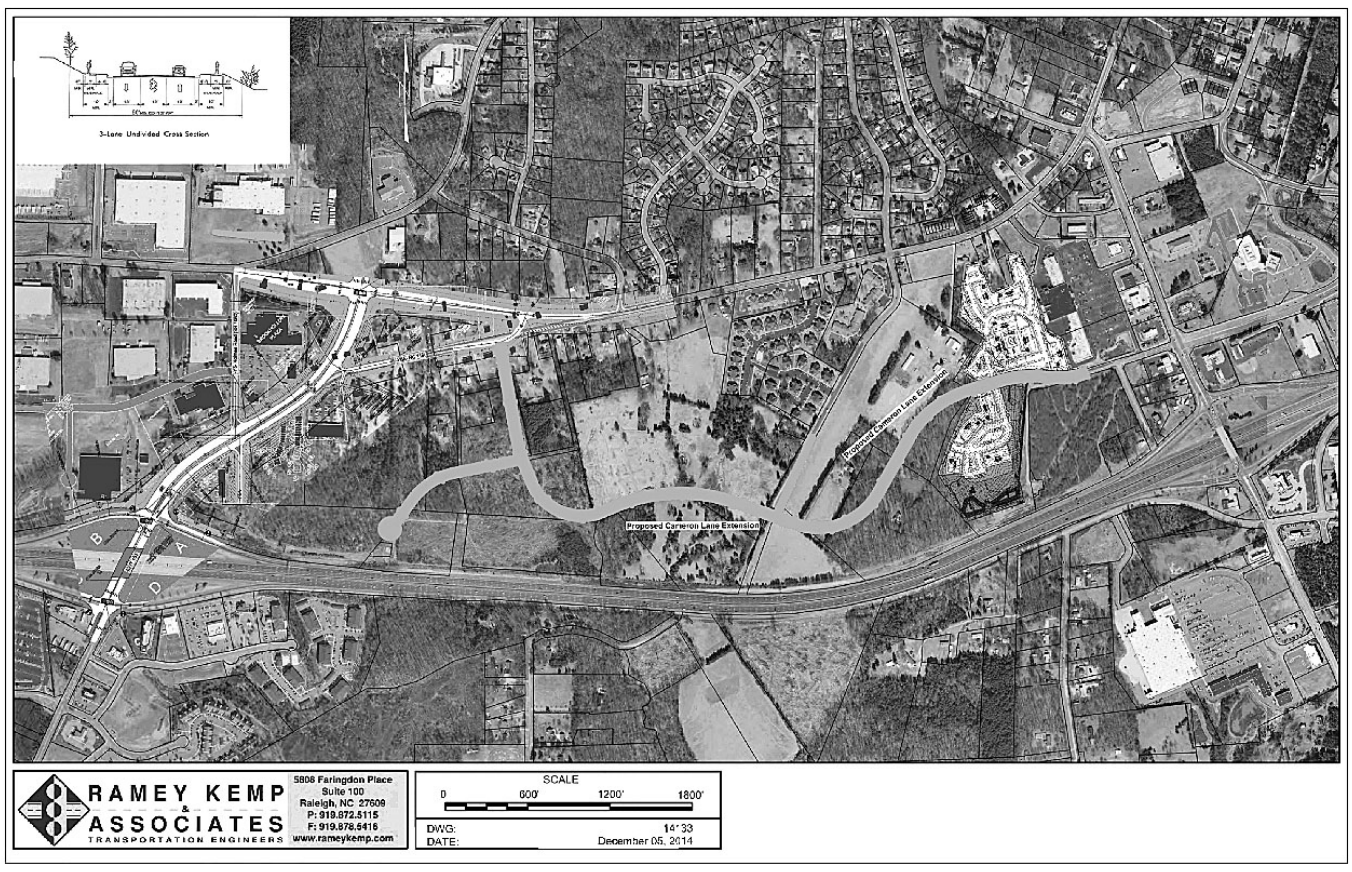
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS OF ORANGE



COURTESY OF THE CITY OF MEBANE

Are you a Mebane resident who frequently uses Cameron Lane? Imagine if Cameron Lane connected directly to NC 119. How might that connection affect your daily commute or the way you travel through the City?

The City of Mebane is working to update its December 2014 Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan to explore new roadway connections from Lake Latham Road to the NC 119 Bypass. These potential connections could provide additional travel options and improve mobility throughout the City.

In 2014, increased development activity in the area north of Interstate 40/85, between Mebane Oaks Road and NC Highway 119, led City staff to explore the need for a thoroughfare plan. Thoroughfare planning is the process public officials use to identify and promote an appropriate major street system that meets existing and future transportation needs.

A thoroughfare plan provides a functional network of major streets that allows residents and visitors to travel between destinations with greater directness, ease, and safety. As the City grows and changes, these plans may need to be updated to reflect new development, changing travel patterns, and the needs of the community.

The Cameron Lane Extension proposed in 2014 was intended to help address the effects of increased traffic on the existing roadway network, particularly South Fifth Street. The extension was designed to provide a more efficient route for new developments and businesses in the area bordered by Mebane Oaks Road to the east, Interstate 40/85 to the south, South Fifth Street to the north, and NC 119 to the west.

The City Council authorized Ramey Kemp & Associates, Inc. to study the area, prepare traffic projections, recommend street standards, and assist with informational meetings for nearby property owners.

The resulting Small Area Thoroughfare Plan proposed extending Cameron Lane between Mebane Oaks Road and NC Highway 119 and designating the proposed roadway as a thoroughfare for planning purposes. The plan recommended a two-lane divided roadway with a center median, designated bicycle lanes, and sidewalks to accommodate anticipated traffic and support future transportation needs.

Fast-forward 12 years, and the City is now exploring an update to the Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan to better reflect current conditions and the transportation needs of Mebane residents.

The adopted Mebane 2045 Comprehensive Plan, approved on December 8, 2025, identified updating and creating small area plans for new roadway recommendations as a key goal. This work includes updating the Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan and developing a new plan to explore roadway connections from Lake Latham Road to the NC 119 Bypass.

As Mebane continues to grow and evolve, so do the City's planning efforts. The Mebane Planning Department and City Engineer's Department will host a public input session on Thursday, September 17, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Mebane Arts and Community Center. Residents are encouraged to drop in, share their feedback, and hear from City staff about the process to update the Cameron Lane Thoroughfare Plan.

A public survey will also be available in the days following the input session for residents who are unable to attend in person. The survey will be available online through the City of Mebane's website and social media channels, so be sure to check those frequently so you don't miss an opportunity to give your two cents. City staff will review the feedback, make adjustments to the plan as appropriate, and move the updated plan through the review board process.

Thoughtful transportation planning will help ensure the City's roadway network keeps pace with future development while providing residents with safe, efficient, and convenient ways to travel. Your feedback will help shape that process.

ENDSWELL

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be able to go from that gallery space and then into this main area that will also have artwork. We're thinking very beautiful and softly end-of-life themed art. We'll be on the art walk route, and we've met with other local galleries. We're going to hire a part-time gallery manager who will help procure pieces and do calls for art."

While Endswell may be the first funeral home to incorporate an art gallery into its space, the space itself is not new to the local arts scene. The Greenbridge property previously was used by Cindy Sparia's LIGHT art gallery and the offices of a website developer.

The new art gallery will be called AfterLight as a tribute to the space's former business and its owner.

"When Veronica and I came up with that, it was like, 'OK, this is amazing,'" Hunter said. "We're paying homage to the 15-year gallery that was here."

The new space is modern, open and airy, with gigantic windows at both ends. There's wood flooring just inside the glass entrance, with steps and a ramp that lead to a sunken level with painted concrete floors. Much of the lighting is recessed and ambient. Hunter said a retractable projection screen will be installed above the large windows at the back end of the main space.

In another area are offices where other staff will work; restrooms, a break room and space for the owners' two dogs. Even with the excitement of the art gallery, Hunter said more space for the funeral home drove the decision to purchase the Carrboro site.

"When we opened in Hillsborough, all we could afford was that 3,000-square-foot building," Hunter said. "We made it work in every way possible. We have our main urn gallery there, one private office."

Including part timers, Endswell has a staff of nine people. It also operates So Loved Pets, which provides end-of-life services for pets. Every day, the company is releasing urns to families, signing documents and meeting with families to plan memorial and funeral services.

"So, we needed more space and a bigger space for memorial services," Hunter added. "Most of our clients, even if they're choosing burial, or a natural burial with Blue Stem, they want a memorial service with some wine and food and a slideshow. This location allows us to easily accommodate 100 people. But finding a building in general commercial where we could put a funeral home that also had parking, and that was newer and didn't need a full renovation, proved very challenging."

Another perk of the new location is that it is across the street from the owners' residence.



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Endswell Funeral Home's new 6,000-square-foot location in downtown Carrboro features large windows, high ceilings and will be home to the AfterLight art gallery.

"Veronica and I can just walk to work," Hunter said.

In 2022, when Endswell opened in Hillsborough, their hook in the community and the funeral industry was its offering of aquamation technology, a more environmentally conscious form of processing that uses water and potassium hydroxide to break down the body. Endswell was the region's first and only aquamation facility. Thanks to a solar panel installation, it's the nation's only carbon-neutral aquamation funeral home. But, as the couple soon would learn, bringing something new to the funeral industry doesn't often find quick success.

"A year into business, I was not sure we were going to make it," Hunter said. "We were hemorrhaging money. I opened thinking aquamation was going to be the future of end-of-life care. This is not a decision a lot of people make right when death has occurred — to go with the newest, hippest, most eco-conscious thing. There's a lot of pre-planning involved. A lot of education. I'm not sure we'd still be in business if we were not offering everything. We typically offer cremation more than we do aquamation."

Endswell owners also learned the importance of establishing a relationship with its community.

"This is not a business that can pop up in the community, be there for five years, and then pack up, say 'thanks,' and close its doors," Hunter said. "This is a business that has to be here for 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years to serve the community. People plan decades in advance. We were struggling the first year, and then we became a full-service funeral home. Now we're helping more people per month than funeral homes that have been around for 50 to 100 years."

Endswell has continued to embed itself in the Orange County community by offering educational opportunities, like providing meeting space for Death Cafés, offering workshops on green burials, and medical aids in dying. Hunter said Endswell provides 100 workshops in a given year, free for the community.

"So our idea is that a funeral home can be an educational resource for the community, and now will be an art gallery, and we'll have activity and people coming in during art walks and other gallery-related events," he said. "And they'll learn a little bit about what we do in the process."

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