



TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

# CARRBORO DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

May 13, 2025



- 1** PROJECT TEAM
- 2** PROJECT OVERVIEW
- 3** PLANNING PROCESS
- 4** PLAN OVERVIEW
- 5** NEXT STEPS

# MEETING AGENDA



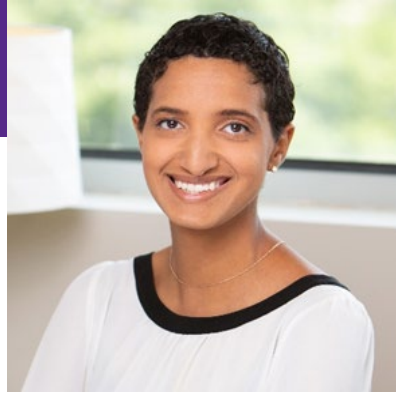
# PROJECT TEAM



Danny Wilson,  
FNI



Gail Ferry  
Katalenas, FNI



Alexis Garcia,  
FNI



Amanda  
Klepper, PSG



Alan Steinbeck,  
PSG



+ Carrboro Town Staff and Advisory Board Members

# PROJECT OVERVIEW

CARRBORO DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN





# PROJECT OVERVIEW

## Why are we doing a Downtown Area Plan?

- Priority project in the **Carrboro Connects** Land Use, Economic Sustainability, and Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Energy & Water chapters
  - Economic Sustainability Strategy 2.1.a



# PLAN FORMAT

## Volume 1:

1. Introduction
2. Master Plan
3. Implementation

## Volume 2:

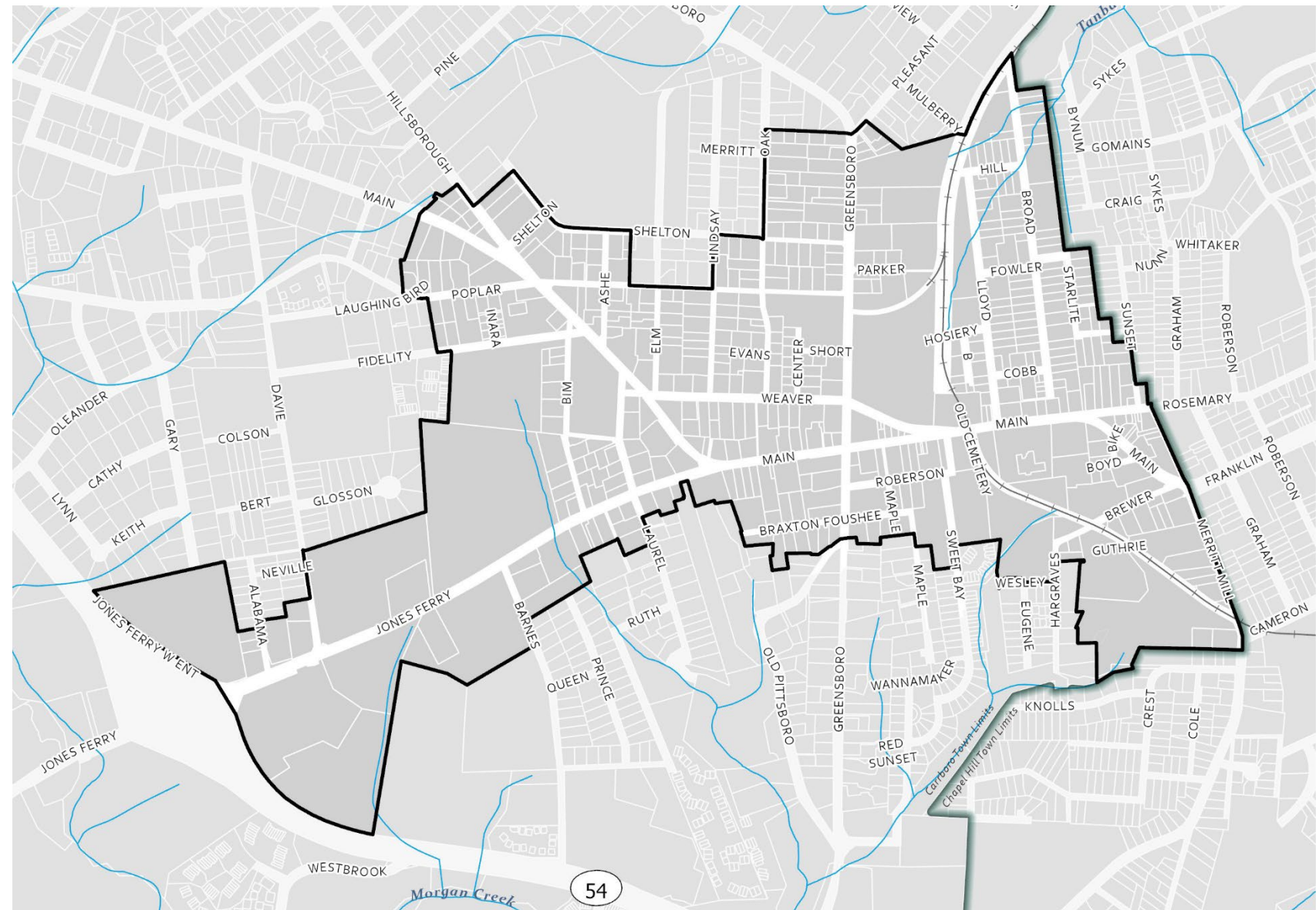
1. Background Analysis
2. Vision & Goals
  - Public Engagement and Input
3. Strategies & Considerations
4. Monitoring & Reporting
5. Appendix





# STUDY AREA

- Downtown Area
  - Main St
  - Greensboro Rd
  - Jones Ferry Rd
  - Weaver St
- Boundary with Chapel Hill





# PLANNING PROCESS

CARRBORO DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



# PLANNING PROCESS

1

EXISTING CONDITIONS  
ANALYSIS

2

VISION & GOALS

3

CHARACTER AREAS

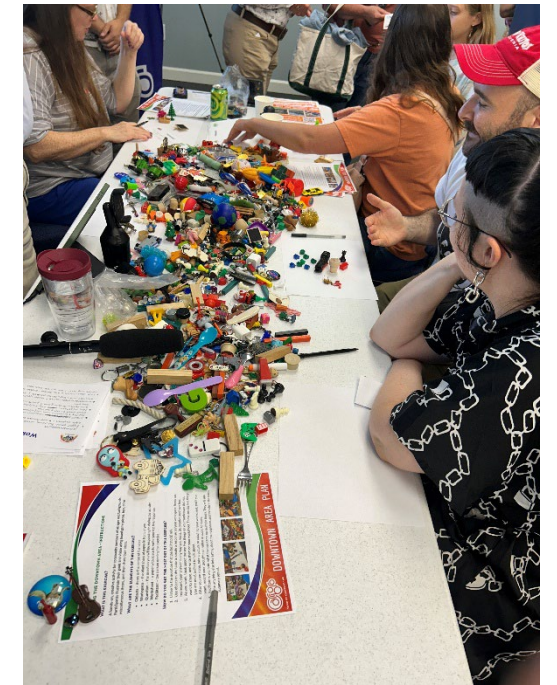
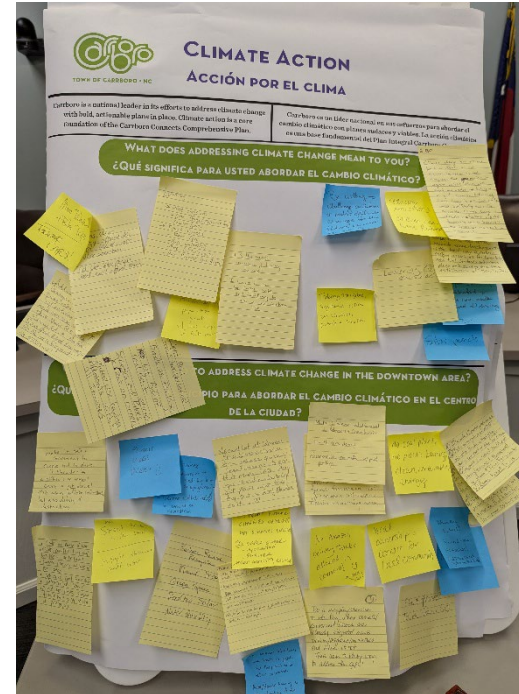
4

REPRESENTATIVE  
RENDERINGS & STRATEGIES

5

IMPLEMENTATION

P  
U  
B  
L  
I  
C  
  
E  
N  
G  
A  
G  
E  
M  
E  
N  
T





# CARRBORO CONNECTS

Numerous Strategies and Projects that apply to the Downtown Area and Plan

- Affordable Housing
- Transportation & Mobility
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Water & Energy
- Economic Sustainability
- Recreation, Parks & Culture
- Land Use
- Climate Action & Environment





# PUBLIC INPUT

Event	Participation (some numbers are estimates)
Community Event 1	100 (estimated)
Community Event 2	42
Community Event 3	30
Stakeholder Meeting Day 1	15 + Town Council
Stakeholder Meeting Day 2	6
Stakeholder Presentation 1	1
Joint Advisory Board Meeting 1	28 (incl. staff)
Joint Advisory Board Meeting 2	48 (incl. staff)
Joint Advisory Board Meeting 3	24 (incl. staff)
Community Survey	286
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>580*</b>

\* plus, the attendance at additional events held by Town staff

# PUBLIC INPUT



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 1**  
**COMMUNITY VISIONING EXERCISE - OCTOBER 9, 2024**  
**EVENT SUMMARY**



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 2**  
**CHARACTER AND CONCEPT PLAN REVIEW - DECEMBER 5, 2024**  
**EVENT SUMMARY**

The Town of Carrboro held the second of four Advisory Board meetings for the Downtown Area Plan.



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 3**  
**CHARACTER PLAN AND RENDERING REVIEW - FEBRUARY 20, 2025**  
**EVENT SUMMARY**

The Town of Carrboro held the third of four Advisory Board meetings for the Downtown Area Plan on Monday, February 20, 2025. The purpose of this event was to provide a project update to the Advisory Board and about the draft Character Plan and renderings showing development examples.

The meeting was held virtually and 24 people were in attendance, including Town staff, Character Plan and character area descriptions, and discussion about the draft renderings, questions which were answered by Town staff and the consultant team. The private realm properties in the study area only to help provide context and consideration, not to indicate they to be changed. The main goal was to discuss specific types of site elements that may be included in the downtown area. The project examples were:

- Private Realm: greenway/multuse path focus with mixed-use development and affordable housing.
- Private Realm: prominent corner open space in a mixed-use development with office.
- Public Realm: public green space that provides a multipurpose pavilion, spray plaza, garden and tree preservation.

Town of Carrboro  
Downtown Area Plan



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: PUBLIC SURVEY**

**SURVEY SUMMARY**  
The Carrboro Downtown Area Plan Public Survey was open from September 1 to November 9, 2024. It was hosted on the Town of Carrboro's public engagement website, Engage.CarrboroNC.gov. The Town also distributed paper copies of the survey, which were entered into the online survey for inclusion in the final results. Survey questions were designed to learn what respondents value about downtown Carrboro, what changes they want to see, why they do or do not spend time in the downtown area, and



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: COMMUNITY EVENT 1**  
**FIESTAS EN LA CALLE (FESTIVAL LATINOAMERICANO) - AUGUST 25, 2024**  
**EVENT CONTEXT**



**ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY: STAKEHOLDER MEETING DAY 1**  
**COMMUNITY VISIONING EXERCISE - OCTOBER 7, 2024**  
**EVENT SUMMARY**

The Town of Carrboro held the first of four stakeholder meetings for the Downtown Area Plan on Monday, October 7. The purpose of this event was to reach out to targeted stakeholder groups within the downtown area and get their input on a vision for the downtown area, along with any needs that could be addressed in the Plan.

This meeting was held as an in-person half-day event with three one-hour meetings with community members and concurrent meetings with elected officials. The three community groups were:

- Downtown business owners and commercial property owners.
- Downtown service organizations.
- Residents within the downtown area.

Throughout the day, we heard from 4 business or property owners, 1 representative of a service organization, and 10 residents. The following section provides a summary of feedback from the stakeholder groups.

**WHAT WE HEARD**

**BUSINESS OWNERS / PROPERTY OWNERS**

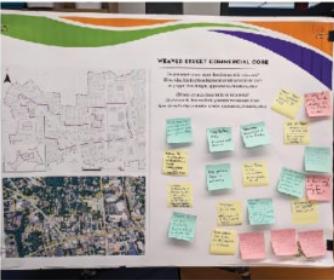
*Improve cohesion of downtown*  
Business owners agreed that downtown Carrboro's development currently lacks cohesion and is not well-connected from one part to the next. One of the stakeholders stated that the disjointed sections of downtown make it apparent that there was not a unified plan during development stages. As a result, visitors face barriers to traveling from one part of downtown to another, which may stand in the way of encouraging visitors to park once and walk to all parts of downtown.

Town of Carrboro  
Downtown Area Plan

Engagement Summary  
Stakeholder Meeting Day 1

## POP-UP EVENTS & OPEN HOUSES

Over the course of the project, the team partnered with community organizations like El Centro Hispano, Marian Cheek Jackson Center, ArtsCenter, Orange County Public Library, CHICLE and Carrboro Farmers' Market to host pop-up events at longstanding town signature events, and standalone open houses and workshops. Additionally, in the Spring of 2025, the draft plan was released in full for a period of public comment before adoption.



DRAFT VOLUME TWO | VISION & GOALS

# PUBLIC INPUT

- Summaries in the meeting packet
- Full data will be included in the appendix of the Plan
- Public input was the central part of this project
- Combining public input as part of this process with the Carrboro Connects Plan goals drove all aspects of this Plan

## RECURRING THEMES

This Plan embodies comments received from residents and visitors across 286 survey responses and hundreds of attendees across public events (note: community members could fill out the survey and come to one or more of the events). The collective vision and goals of this Plan—for an equitable, climate-conscious, and economically sustainable downtown—reflect the outcome of concerted discussions about growth and change in the downtown area. A detailed summary of events and survey responses can be read in the Appendix of this plan.

Through the varying engagement methods, the Carrboro community shared their priorities and vision for the downtown area. When considered holistically, a series of recurring themes become clear.



### PUBLIC SPACES

The community envisions inclusive gathering spaces that provide engaging activities at no cost, creating opportunities for everyone to enjoy.



### MOBILITY, ACCESS AND TRANSPORTATION

The community prioritizes access and safety, through continued improvements and resources for walking and biking, complete streets that manage traffic effectively and safely, and space for visitors who must drive to come to the downtown area.



### AFFORDABILITY

The community desires affordable housing and businesses, with a particular focus on retaining places that meet daily needs and providing more budget-friendly dining options and grocery stores.



### PLANTS AND GREEN SPACE

The community values trees, green spaces, native plants and green infrastructure for shade, aesthetics and ecological and environmental services that address climate change, like air quality and stormwater mitigation.



### ART, MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT

The community desires to continue to foster vibrant spaces like murals, interactive art, color, music and live entertainment to create an engaging atmosphere. Creative expression is a defining feature of Carrboro.



### ORGANIC GROWTH AND HISTORIC IDENTITY

The community emphasizes that new development should be thoughtful and blend with the existing spirit of Carrboro, including a strong interest in maintaining historic buildings, small businesses and local landmarks.



# PLAN OVERVIEW

CARRBORO DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



# VISION & GOALS

*Carrboro's downtown area is a vibrant, walkable and community-oriented space that balances preserving historic charm with thoughtful growth.*

*The downtown area serves every Carrboro resident, with particular attention to BIPOC and marginalized community members; as a place for daily needs, a place to gather with community and a place to live. The downtown area fosters economic diversity, celebrates arts and culture, and ensures accessibility for all.*

1

Build for climate resilience; protect and plant trees, install and incentivize green stormwater features, enhance and establish public green spaces.

2

Ensure a range of housing choices, including affordable and workforce housing, to support economic diversity and prevent displacement, allowing all current and future residents to thrive in Carrboro's downtown.

3

Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion, and expand public transit options to create safe and equitable mobility opportunities for all residents.

4

Support small businesses, entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises by creating affordable commercial spaces, fostering a dynamic local economy, and encouraging inclusive economic opportunities.

5

Maintain the architectural integrity of historic buildings while encouraging sustainable and compatible development that aligns with Carrboro's unique identity.

# MASTER PLAN

## REPRESENTATIVE RENDERINGS

The Carrboro community has expressed a desire for an engaging, inclusive and multi-modal future for the downtown area. There is a desire for outdoor spaces where community members can gather, affordability for housing and businesses, vibrant art and entertainment options, more plants and trees, and a mix of uses to provide the community with safe and convenient access to their daily needs.

Development should include a variety of business types to serve locals and visitors alike while blending with the building character in downtown. Sustainable design practices should be encouraged for buildings, landscaped areas and infrastructure to help the Town achieve its climate action goals.

Downtown Carrboro is a desirable place to live, work, visit and do business. While this is an excellent statement about the quality of the area, it can also drive up costs for land, housing and commercial buildings. It is important that the Town take steps to minimize gentrification impacts and support racial equity and cultural inclusivity in the day-to-day experiences of people in the downtown area.

The following pages describe development considerations, at a high level, for downtown projects and a series of five representative renderings. These renderings are not intended to convey an exact proposed development on a specific site. Rather, they illustrate example site layouts, building and landscape designs, and

the intersection of the public, quasi-public and private realm. These renderings are intended to serve as examples for the Town and private developers to reference during design and development discussions. Each rendering is intended to illustrate a different development focus and context, including:

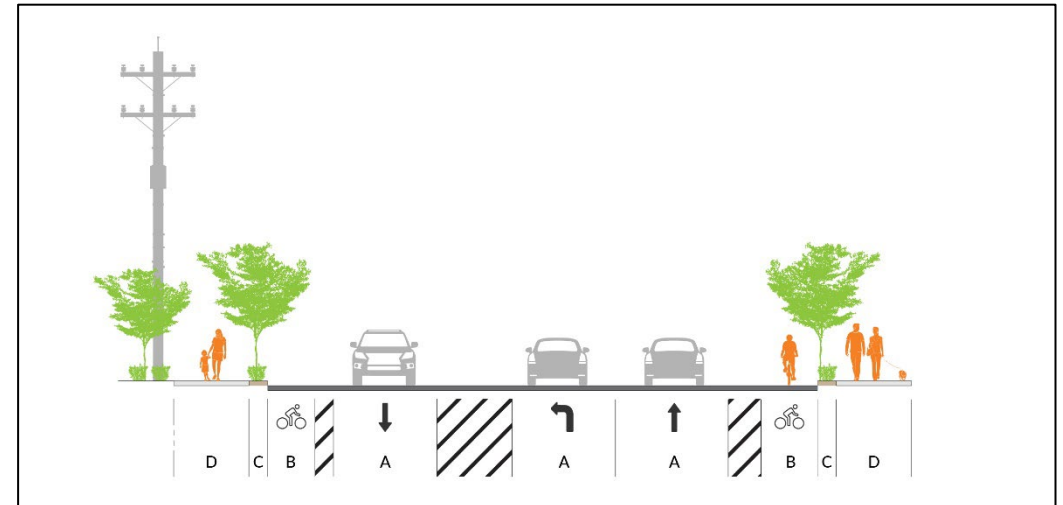
- Mixed-use development with a recreation focus
- Mixed-use development along a greenway

- Context-sensitive development in the downtown core
- Mixed-use development with quasi-public space
- Downtown green space

While there are similar elements found in some renderings, the narrative brings attention to distinctive elements from each rendering that could also be considered on other properties.



- Character Areas
- Representative Renderings
- Streetscape Typologies

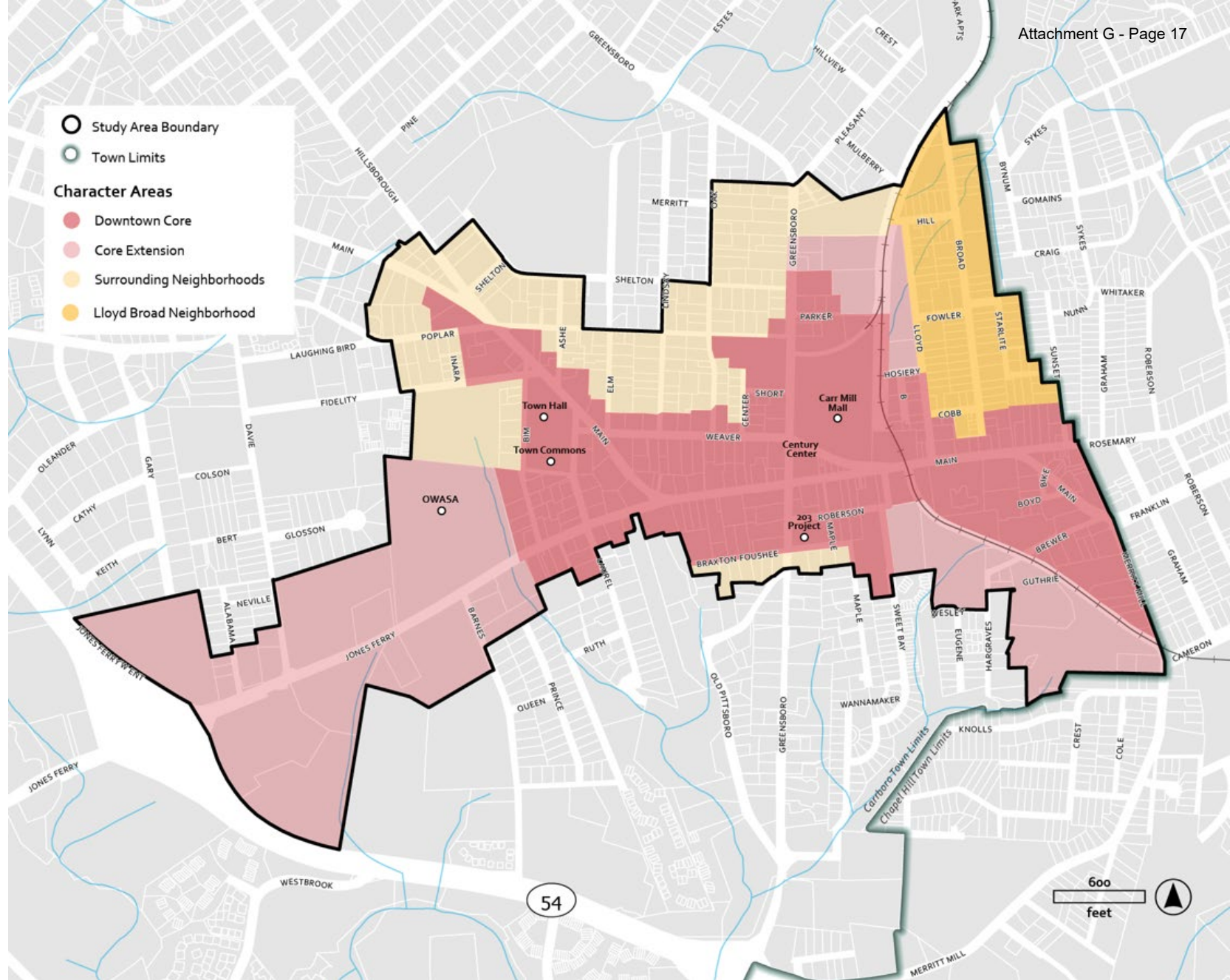




# CHARACTER AREA PLAN

Multiple distinct areas, each  
with a unique character

-  Downtown Core
-  Core Extension
-  Surrounding Neighborhoods
-  Lloyd Broad Neighborhood



# CHARACTER AREAS

- Existing Conditions
- Future Vision
  - Brief Description
  - Intended Uses
  - Building Types
  - Building Scale and Placement
  - Parking
  - Urban Design

## FUTURE VISION FOR THE DOWNTOWN CORE AREA

There are opportunities to further invest in the existing properties in this character area and build on the successful implementation of previous planning efforts, like the Downtown Carrboro New Vision from 2001. The Downtown Core is compact and walkable, strengths that contribute to its character and overall user experience that the Town should continue to enhance. New developments should be multi-story, with special consideration for the historic context and existing adjacent developments. They should be built close to the sidewalk and street and focus on improving the pedestrian experience and streetscape.

<b>Intended Uses</b>	Mix of affordable housing and commercial uses, such as retail, office, restaurants, entertainment, bars, nightlife. Special consideration should be made for businesses at a variety of price points that meet the daily needs of residents.
<b>Building Types</b>	New or redeveloped urban, vertical, mixed-use buildings that fit in the surrounding context and include historic architectural components where appropriate. Neighborhood scale commercial is appropriate adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.
<b>Building Scale and Placement</b>	Two- to five-story buildings aligned along public streets and sidewalks. The height and placement of the building should consider adjacent structures to ensure compatibility.
<b>Parking</b>	Shared surface parking, parking garages or leased off-site parking. New surface parking areas are discouraged. Parking areas should be located away from the street, where possible.
<b>Urban Design</b>	New development should be bike- and pedestrian-friendly and walkable in design, with connected pedestrian paths. Streetscapes should include wayfinding and shade structures such as awnings or street trees. Parks, open spaces, plazas and seating should be incorporated where possible.





# REPRESENTATIVE RENDERINGS

## 5 Renderings

- 4 Private Development & 1 Public Space
  - Affordable Housing/Variety
  - Public/Private Outdoor Space
  - Streetscape Enhancements
  - Native Plantings/Trees
  - Varied Architecture
  - Different Scales
  - Sustainable Elements
  - Art Integration







Mixed-use development with a recreation focus





Mixed-use development along a greenway





## Context-sensitive development in the Downtown Core





Mixed-use development with quasi-public space





Downtown green space



# STRATEGIES & CONSIDERATIONS

- General Information
- Best Practices
- Overarching Strategies
- Considerations

- Development/Redevelopment
- Lot Sizes
- Regulatory Process
- Incentives
- Downtown Transportation
- Infrastructure/Utilities
- Public Art
- Lighting
- Landscaping
- Street Trees
- Building Design/Massing/Placement
- Gateways
- + More



# NEXT STEPS

**1**

PLAN EDITING &  
IMPLEMENTATION DRAFTING

**2**

CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

**3**

ADOPTION  
RECOMMENDATION

**4**

ADOPTION  
CONSIDERATION

[www.engage.carrboronc.gov](http://www.engage.carrboronc.gov)





# QUESTIONS & THANK YOU

