



TOWN OF CARRBORO

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

DRAFT SEPTEMBER 2025



DRAFT

Volume 1: Master Plan

DRAFT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the Town of Carrboro's elected and appointed officials, the Town staff, Joint Advisory Board, community members, and stakeholders who provided knowledge, assistance, and invaluable insight throughout the process of developing this Downtown Area Plan.

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Introduction

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OVERVIEW

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Downtown Area Plan (Plan) is organized into two volumes. **Volume 1** includes the overarching vision and plan for the downtown area, including character areas, representative renderings, streetscape typologies and the implementation action plan. **Volume 2** contains the background analysis, a summary of how the vision and goals were developed, overarching strategies and considerations, guidelines for monitoring the implementation of the Plan, and an appendix with complete engagement summaries.

ABOUT THE PLAN

This Downtown Area Plan was prepared as a priority project in the implementation of the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan. In particular, this project helps achieve the goals identified in the Land Use and Economic Sustainability sections of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Advancing the Town's Race and Equity and Climate Action efforts are key considerations for this project and are reflected in the Plan recommendations. See the **Volume 2, Background Analysis, Previous Planning Efforts** section for more information about the relationship between this project and the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan.

The Downtown Area Plan includes analysis, assessment and recommendations for the study area. These elements were formed from objective analysis, assessment of existing plans and ongoing projects, community engagement and feedback, appointed and elected official input, Town staff direction and professional planning best practices.

Over the years, the Town has worked hard to make the downtown area a thriving, diverse and welcoming space. This Plan intends to help build upon those successes without recommending monumental changes that could disrupt the carefully cultivated space that already exists.

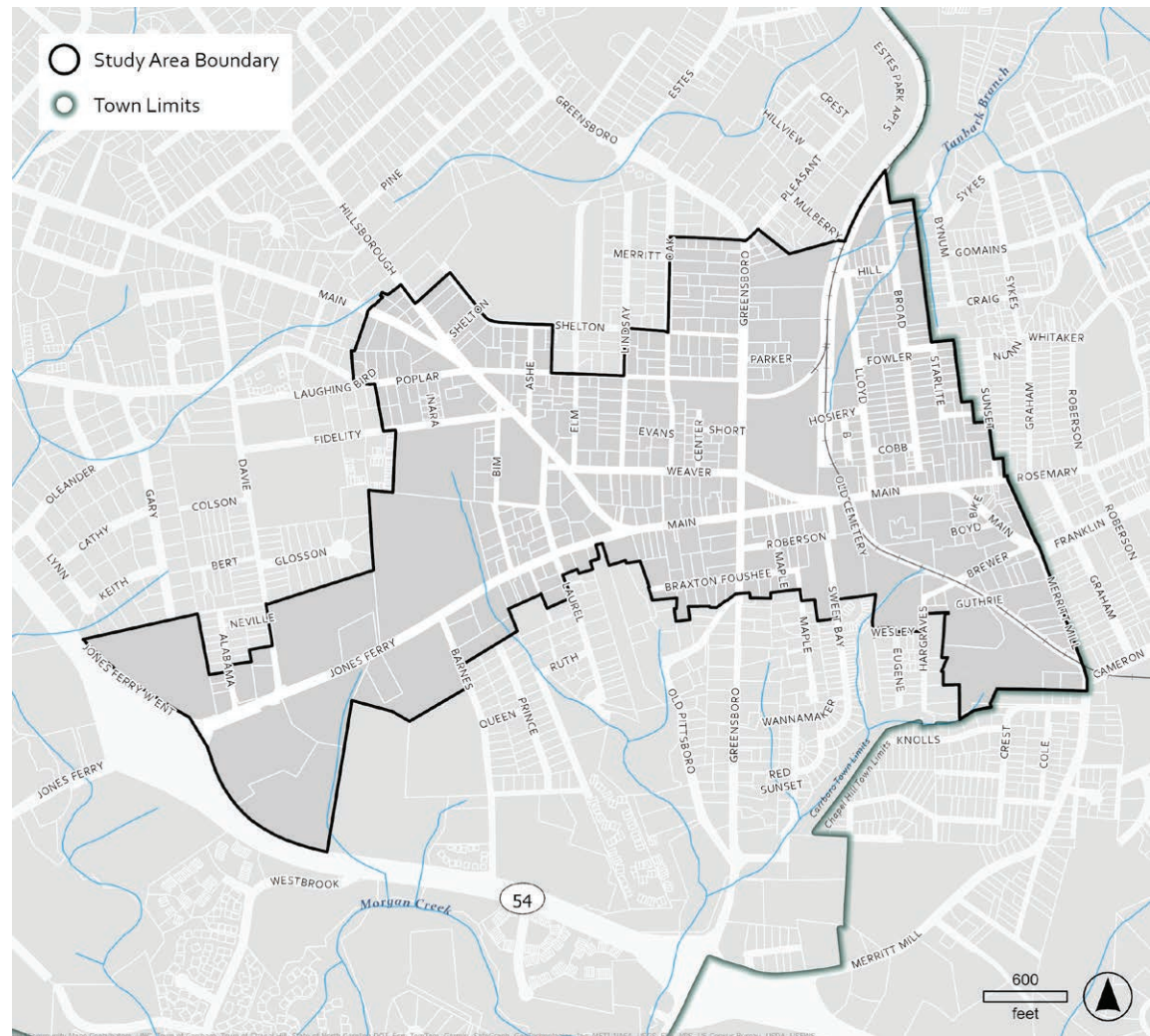


STUDY AREA

The Downtown Area Plan looks at the area highlighted in the adjacent map ("study area"), including the downtown central business district, Jones Ferry Road, surrounding neighborhoods and the Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood. Carrboro Connects calls for a study that looks at downtown and Jones Ferry Road together, to achieve a balance that acknowledges the present character of the places in the study area with new opportunities.

The study area is located south of the Town's geographic center, with its eastern edge abutting the Town of Chapel Hill. The study area offers a multi-modal environment with many destinations that serve as focal points for community life. See the **Volume 2, Background Analysis** chapter for further information about the location, context and characteristics of the study area.

Map 1. Downtown Area Plan Study Area



MAKING THE PLAN

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process included five general phases and 12 months of close coordination with Town staff and elected and appointed officials. An advisory board made up of various existing appointed board and commission members served as a sounding board during the process. A robust community engagement process included opportunities for different types of engagement during each phase of the project. Specific community engagement information is detailed later in the **Volume 2, Vision and Goals** chapter, and individual engagement event summaries are located in the appendix.

The introductory analysis phase included a study area tour, extensive review of previous planning efforts, and an analysis of existing demographics and the downtown area context. Community engagement included multiple community events, an online public survey, multiple

pop-up events around the Town and many opportunities for public feedback. The community was given opportunities to voice their experience with the current downtown area and how they would like to see it evolve over time.

During the visioning phase, the planning team started to analyze community and Town feedback to-date and summarize common themes rising to the surface. This information was used to develop a draft vision and goals intended to provide a guiding framework for Plan recommendations developed later in the process. Two advisory board meetings, a stakeholder listening session and another community event were held to gather feedback on more specific design and transportation considerations. The planning team created draft character areas and streetscape typologies based on the feedback received.

Figure 1. Planning Process



The master plan phase included development of five renderings to illustrate representative site layouts, building and landscape designs, and outdoor gathering spaces that could serve as examples during further development processes and discussions. The character areas, streetscape typologies and renderings were reviewed with stakeholders and the advisory board during a series of meetings. Based on feedback received, the planning team developed a series of considerations, best practices and overarching strategies for the Town to consider.

The final two phases of the Plan included the strategies and considerations and implementation plan. The strategies and considerations section includes a range of strategies to support plan implementation and achieving the vision and goals that were identified during the planning process. Multiple community meetings and a Town Council meeting were held to review this information with the public.

The implementation plan section outlines detailed steps that the Town can follow to advance the Plan's goals. Beyond these steps, it also includes metrics and reporting methods to monitor progress- helping to track changes over time, assess community impact and evaluate whether the Plan is being effectively put into practice. While the implementation plan is closely connected to the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan, it is tailored specifically to achieve the objectives unique to the downtown area. All strategies and action steps relate directly to public feedback gathered throughout the process, as well as to best practices designed to help achieve the desired outcomes.



Community Event #1



Community Event #2

VISION STATEMENT

The following vision statement comes from community members' thoughts and ideas and from input from Advisory Boards, Town Council, community partners and residents.*

It embodies the collective aspiration heard from the community and serves as the foundation for moving forward and is built directly on Carrboro Connects and its commitments to advancing racial equity and addressing climate change.

This statement guides the formation of goals and implementation strategies that make up the Strategies and Considerations, Master Plan, and Implementation chapters.

**All data, comments and other inputs can be seen in the Appendix.*

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.

GOALS

The following goals provide overall direction for the downtown area of Carrboro to achieve the community's direction, vision and aspirations. The goals serve as the ultimate basis for the Plan's recommendations and implementation. They also provide a framework to evaluate changes, challenges, opportunities and issues that were not anticipated by this Plan, allowing it to function as a living document responsive to future needs.

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

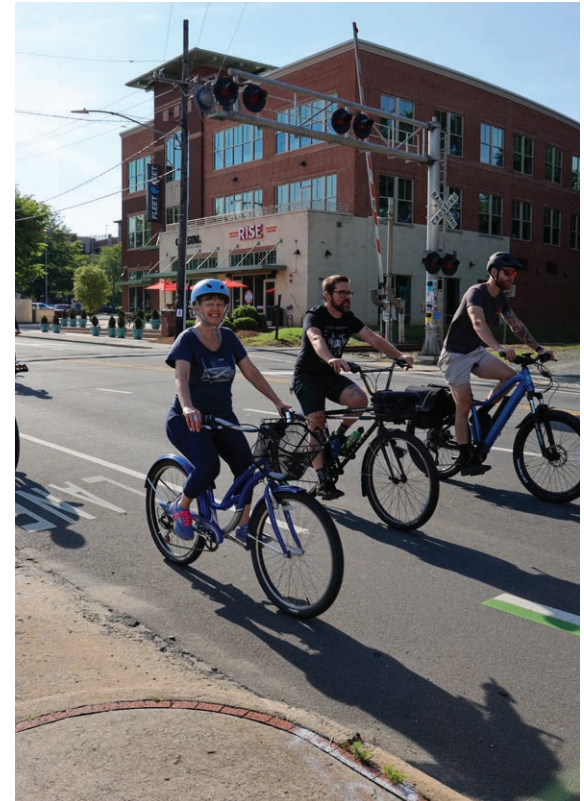
Improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, reduce traffic congestion, and expand public transit options to ensure safe and equitable mobility for all residents.

4

Support small businesses, entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises by ensuring 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

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CHARACTER AREAS

The Plan analyzes the commercial section of downtown Carrboro, surrounding residential areas, and the Jones Ferry Road corridor. These distinct places each present a different look and feel. To capture the nuances of these differences, the Plan divides the study area into “character areas.” Each character area includes important elements in the existing land uses, urban form, building types and the physical realm that define that sub-area as unique. Each highlights the key character-defining elements that should remain in place as new development and infill development occurs. Recommended types of activities, building types and development standards that are appropriate within each location as development and land use patterns change are identified. A map of these character areas follows on the next page.

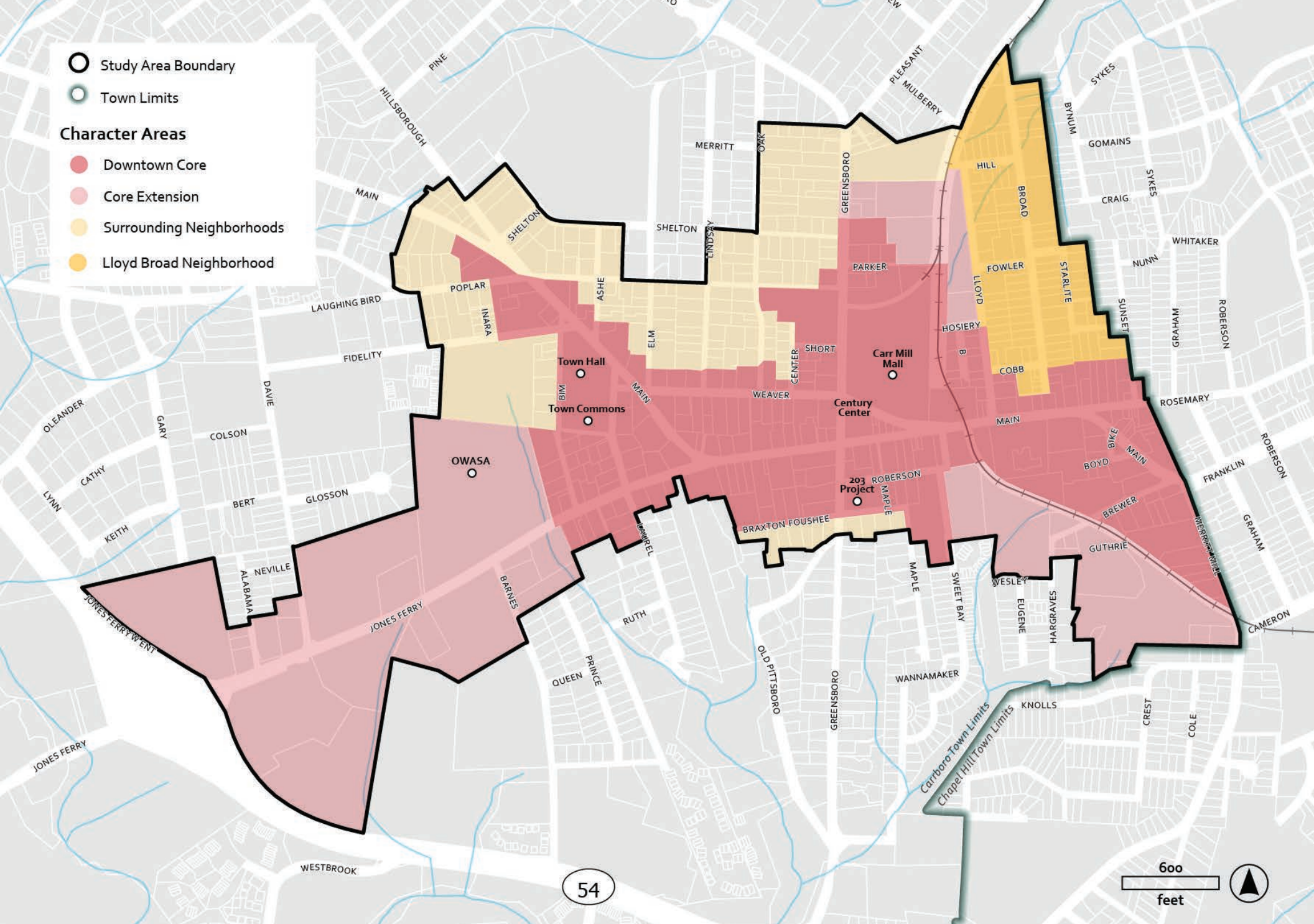
The four character areas and their associated objectives are:

- **Downtown Core** - Enhance the thriving commercial sector.
- **Core Extension** - Expand the mixed-use development patterns and integrate the look and feel with the commercial core.
- **Surrounding Neighborhoods** - Maintain the existing dense residential character, while finding opportunities for infill development of affordable housing
- **Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood** - Protect the historically Black and African American neighborhood, provide equitable access, and minimize burdens and unintended consequences of nearby infill development and re-development.

Because of the proximity of character areas and the relatively small size of the downtown, context and the need for a transition from one character area to another are important. For example, a prominent building that is more appropriate in the center of the Downtown Core, may not be appropriate at the edge of the character area, next to smaller residential homes in the surrounding neighborhoods.

See the following pages for an assessment of the existing conditions, examples of the scale of future development appropriate for each area, and other development considerations.





Map 2. Character Areas

DOWNTOWN CORE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Downtown Core includes the primary commercial districts within the downtown study area generally along Jones Ferry Road, Main Street, Weaver Street and Greensboro Street.

This area is largely developed and includes three National Register Historic Districts: the Carrboro Commercial Historic District, the Alberta Mill Complex and the Thomas F. Lloyd Historic District. It also includes individual historic buildings such as Town Hall, the Century Center, Carr Mill Mall, Cat's Cradle, the Strayhorn Houses and St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church. Other prominent buildings include CommunityWorx, 300 East Main, Shelton Station and the Drakeford Library Complex.

Buildings range from one to five stories in height, and are generally positioned along a sidewalk. This area includes a variety of uses such as retail, offices, restaurants and entertainment, as well as important civic uses, places of worship and centrally located community services provided by Interfaith Council (IFC), El Centro, Club NOVA and other community organizations.

While many residents consider East Main Street and East Weaver Street as the traditional downtown area, established commercial and mixed-uses are present along West Weaver Street, West Main Street, Roberson Street and Greensboro Street.

These commercial areas are concentrated along the major road network that brings residents and visitors to, and through, downtown: Greensboro Street as a north-south thoroughfare, and both Weaver Street and Main Street as east-west thoroughfares. Several of these roads contain dedicated bicycle infrastructure, including bike lanes and bike boxes. Sidewalks on both sides of most primary and secondary roads provide pedestrian access and connectivity to private businesses, public spaces and two off-street multi-use pathways (Libba Cotten Bikepath and PTA Bikepath) which serve as an east-west network for pedestrians and cyclists.



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. These strengths contribute to its character and an 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.

	Intended Uses	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.
	Building Types	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.
	Building Scale and Placement	Two- to five-story buildings aligned along public streets and sidewalks. The height and placement of the buildings should consider adjacent structures to ensure compatibility.
	Parking	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.
	Urban Design	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.



CORE EXTENSION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This character area includes the Jones Ferry Road corridor and the active railroad corridor just outside of the Downtown Core. These areas have a mix of developed and undeveloped properties, including businesses and single-family and multi-family homes.

Buildings in this area are currently one to three stories in height, and are typically set back from the street, with large surface parking lots. Notable landmarks include the Town's water and sewer utility provider (OWASA), access points to two historically Black and African American neighborhoods (Alabama Avenue and Lincoln Park), the Collins Crossing apartments and street corner gathering places for nearby residents, including food trucks off Barnes Street and the taquería near the Collins Crossing bus stop, where many shift workers gather for lunch and catch the bus.

The Jones Ferry section of the Core Extension serves as a major transit corridor with access to the downtown area from NC-54, including a GoTriangle route to Durham from a park-and-ride lot. The existing network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities provide multi-modal options for a high population corridor, and connect residents to everyday uses and needs.

Parcels of land in this area are generally larger than those found in other character areas presenting opportunities for larger-scale development projects. Impacts to the Alabama Avenue, Lincoln Park and Glosson Circle neighborhoods should be considered.



FUTURE VISION FOR THE CORE EXTENSION

The Core Extension provides an opportunity to expand the existing character of the Downtown Core along the major corridors to create a continuous experience and transition to the adjacent areas. This area should include commercial uses like retail, office and entertainment, as well as recreation uses in a mixed-use design that meets the daily needs of the community. A range of medium- to high-density housing options should be provided for families and households at different income levels.

	Intended Uses	Mix of commercial uses, including office, retail, restaurants, entertainment, bars, nightlife, as well as public recreation facilities and affordable housing of all types. Special consideration should be made for businesses at a variety of price points that meet the daily needs of residents.
	Building Types	New or redeveloped urban-style mixed-use development, with both vertical and horizontal mixed-use integration. Residential developments of all types, including single-family, duplex, townhome and apartments. Commercial spaces of varied masses that allow for diverse businesses and everyday uses.
	Building Scale and Placement	Two- to five-story buildings aligned along public streets and sidewalks. The height and placement of the building should consider adjacent structures. Taller buildings may be appropriate in some instances, where design can mitigate externalities of development to areas that do not change for a long time—like where large properties abut longstanding neighborhoods, or where building height impacts shading, access to potential for solar and/or pedestrian experience.
	Parking	Shared surface parking and parking garages. Parking structures are encouraged. Generally, parking areas should be located away from the street and behind the building. However, due to the high mode split, there are opportunities to orient parking infrastructure close to alternative modes of transportation to support mode shift strategies like park and ride.
	Urban Design	New development should be bike- and pedestrian-friendly and walkable, with connected pedestrian paths. Streetscapes should include street trees and other pedestrian amenities, and seek to complement and connect to streetscapes in the Downtown Core. Building design does not have to be as prescriptive nor as influenced by the historic building design and development patterns of the Downtown Core; however, it should still be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.



SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

This character area includes the existing neighborhoods directly adjacent to the central commercial area in the Downtown Core. This area is predominantly residential and includes single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, apartments and other multi-family units. Some homes date to the early twentieth century mill period. Building heights largely range from one to two stories. These areas generally do not include nonresidential uses; however, home occupations may exist.

Notable buildings include mill homes along Shelton and N. Greensboro, and the White Oak and Cedar Court townhomes. This character area includes access points to Carrboro Elementary, and access to the PTA and Frances Shetley Bikepaths.

The streets within this area are intended for low-speed, local traffic and have narrower rights-of-way (ROWs). The Surrounding Neighborhoods character area includes the transition areas of West Main, Hillsborough and Greensboro Streets as they move from residential land use patterns toward gateways into the Downtown Core and Core Extension character areas.

Pedestrian and bike facilities vary from street to street; the existing network provides safe routes to Carrboro Elementary School and connections to the Frances Shetley Bikepath. The character area provides access to the Downtown Core and other areas by foot, bike or vehicle.



FUTURE VISION FOR THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

Many residents like the character of the quirky downtown neighborhoods that are walkable and support locally owned businesses. It is important to maintain this character while encouraging new infill development over time. New residential development should reflect the dense neighborhood pattern and complement the size and scale of existing homes. Bikeability and proximity to downtown are features of the area that make it an attractive place to live. Community priorities in this area focus on improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure and preserving and planting street trees.

	Intended Uses	Mix of housing options, medium density residential (smaller setbacks, small lots with efficient footprints, 5-10 units per acre) and home occupations. Neighborhood-scale commercial businesses may be appropriate.
	Building Types	Accessory dwelling units, single-family homes, duplexes, quadplexes, cottage homes, townhomes and other cluster development types. Special attention should be paid to the adjacent properties to support compatibility with the existing homes and neighborhoods.
	Building Scale and Placement	One- to two-and-a-half stories. New and infill residential structures should match the setback of the surrounding properties.
	Parking	As of 2023, the Town instituted residential parking maximums, recognizing the proximity of many residences to downtown. Parking needs for infill properties should take into consideration accessibility needs of residents seeking to age in place, ROW constraints limiting on-street parking and affecting emergency service delivery, and potential conflicts with cyclists.
	Urban Design	Neighborhoods should be designed to be pedestrian- and bike-friendly with connected streets, pedestrian paths and the incorporation of green spaces where possible. New and infill development should be consistent with the design of surrounding properties. Streetscapes should continue to include street trees and sidewalks where ROW widths are wide enough to allow.



LLOYD-BROAD NEIGHBORHOOD

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood encompasses the historically Black and African American neighborhood along Lloyd Street, Broad Street and Starlite Drive. This area is predominantly residential, with some long-time businesses, the Piedmont Community Health Center and Henry W. Baldwin Park.

The Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood is also part of the Northside Neighborhood Initiative and the Good Neighbor Initiative. These interlocal efforts of Black and African American community members, who are long-time residents, and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center seek to land bank and prioritize access to housing for Black residents in Carrboro-Chapel Hill. This is further reinforced by the Town's Lloyd-Broad overlay district designed to retain the existing neighborhood scale.

The Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood is in close proximity to the Downtown Core, and next to businesses on Main and Lloyd Streets. The area is bounded by the Town limits to the east and the railroad to the north and west, limiting access to only two roadways—Lloyd Street and Starlite Drive. The streets within this area are intended for low-speed, local traffic with a narrower ROW. Sidewalks along Lloyd, Broad and Cobb Streets provide access to nearby businesses and services. The Town is currently exploring pedestrian connections from the eastern edge of the neighborhood into Chapel Hill.



FUTURE VISION FOR THE LLOYD-BROAD NEIGHBORHOOD AREA

Protecting and preserving this historic neighborhood is a key goal of the residents and the Northside Neighborhood Initiative. Growth in this area should foremost maintain its existing character and support the provision of affordable housing opportunities and land banking work of community groups. As the downtown area continues to grow and develop, impacts and unintended consequences to this area should be carefully considered. These include how circulation pattern changes could exacerbate congestion at the entrance/exit of the neighborhood, how the scale of new development impacts the affordability and quality of life of the area, the ability of long-time residents to age in place, and other considerations.

The Town reports on the impacts of the Lloyd-Broad Overlay District every 18 months. These updates should incorporate any measured and observed impacts from changes in the Downtown Core, and continued consideration should be given to the existing protections for the Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood and its long-time residents to evaluate if it is meeting the equity needs expressed by neighbors. Efforts should be made to increase connectivity to the Downtown Core and surrounding areas through pedestrian paths and connections to the greenway trails.

	Intended Uses	Medium-density residential (smaller setbacks, small lots with efficient footprints) and limited neighborhood-scale businesses.
	Building Types	Single-family homes, duplexes, quadplexes, cottage homes. Structures built or transferred in partnership with local affordable housing organizations.
	Building Scale and Placement	One to two stories. New and infill residential structures should match the setback of the surrounding properties.
	Parking	As of 2023, the Town instituted residential parking maximums. Due to access to the neighborhood along Lloyd and Starlite, on-street parking may exacerbate concerns voiced by neighbors about congestion and circulation. Consideration of how off-street parking impacts pedestrian and cyclist safety must also be considered.
	Urban Design	Neighborhoods should be designed to be pedestrian-friendly and walkable, with connected streets, pedestrian paths and green spaces where possible. New and infill development should match the design of surrounding properties. Narrow ROWs present additional constraints in installing street trees and sidewalks. Existing and new public spaces should incorporate design elements to celebrate the neighborhood's history.



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, affordable housing and business spaces, 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 (see the **Volume 2, Strategies & Considerations, Property Development** section for more information).

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, such as affordable housing and commercial spaces, the narrative brings attention to distinctive elements from each rendering that could also be considered on other properties.



DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN DOWNTOWN

IMPACT OF LOT SIZE

Small lot sizes (less than 1.5 acres) are viable for small-scale residential infill, but most commercial or mixed-use developments will require larger lots than are found in many areas throughout downtown in order to be financially viable. There are a few larger lots (1.5+ acres) within the study area that could potentially support a larger-scale project if they are developed or redeveloped at some point. Otherwise, many commercial, multi-family or mixed-use developments will likely require consolidation of multiple parcels. While a minimum of 1.5 acres is ideal for an affordable housing development due to the residential density needed for financial feasibility, opportunities for mixing in scattered affordable housing throughout the study area should be pursued.

CONTEXT MATTERS

The aesthetic and scale of development in the study area varies from unique, small single-story structures, to a more urban five-story hotel, to large-scale apartment complexes with a more suburban character. As infill and redevelopment occur throughout the area, it will be important to consider and respect the context of surrounding development including land uses, building scale and character, and building placement on the property as it relates to adjacent properties and the ROWs. Context-sensitive development considers adjacent existing buildings to create a more harmonious feel and should be encouraged to help preserve the existing character of Carrboro that the community loves.

QUASI-PUBLIC SPACE

The community has voiced a strong desire for additional outdoor public gathering space in downtown. Due to minimal Town-owned land and relatively narrow ROWs, it will be important for quasi-public space to be encouraged and provided as part of private development projects. Quasi-public space refers to privately owned areas that are accessible to the public. These spaces can be designed to encourage social interaction, provide aesthetic value to the project and enhance the urban environment, and often include plazas, courtyards and certain types of parks or gardens within private developments. They serve as transition zones between fully public spaces (like streets and sidewalks) and private spaces (like homes and businesses).

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sustainable building and design practices should be encouraged in the downtown area. This includes solutions such as solar panels, rain gardens, pervious pavement, green roofs, water reuse, building and material reuse, promoting bicycles and electric vehicles to reduce emissions, and geothermal heating. Many of these features are appropriate at both the residential and commercial scale. Through an incentive program and aiding in grant access, the Town can help support these elements and encourage the private market to embrace their use. As these strategies are not one-size fits all, careful consideration and evaluation will be needed to evaluate the long-term benefits of implementation.

LAND AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

The vast majority of parcels within the study area are already developed. This means that while a limited number of infill projects may be possible, most changes will need to be accomplished through redevelopment. If properties redevelop, strategies should be taken to minimize residential and business gentrification and help residents and business owners remain in the downtown area, if that is their desire.

EQUITY

The importance of retaining the existing welcoming and diverse atmosphere should be conveyed to entities looking to develop and redevelop property in the downtown area. This atmosphere is created, in part, through opportunities for residents to meet daily needs through the variety and type of businesses and supportive attitude from business owners and residents alike. These efforts can also be supported by creating a wide variety of spaces for residential and commercial uses, including spaces that are for sale and for rent and those that are less than 1,000 square feet. Supporting small businesses and businesses that provide residents the ability to meet daily needs in an affordable manner is critical to maintain and expand the livability of the downtown area.

See the **Volume 2, Strategies & Considerations** chapter for further information about development considerations in the study area.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT WITH RECREATION FOCUS

This rendering depicts a dense mixed-use development with retail and commercial spaces and a community recreation center on the first level. Upper levels feature residential units of various sizes to accommodate different price points. The example development strives to blend a dense, urban development into a more suburban context by incorporating expanded green space along the street frontage and pedestrian connectivity to the surrounding area. While this image illustrates approximately 7.5 acres of land with ample space for a large-scale development, it showcases elements that can also be adapted for smaller sites, such as:

- Sustainable building practices like solar panels and green roofs.
- Parking garages with multi-purpose (e.g., movie projection) or artistic exterior walls.
- Multi-functional outdoor spaces (e.g., a splash plaza that doubles as an event space).
- Dense building design to preserve space for outdoor gathering and landscape areas.
- Enhanced landscaping and paved areas between buildings and streets to create extended pedestrian spaces beyond the ROW.
- Convenient transit and bicycle access integrated into the development design.
- Non-vehicular connectivity between quasi-public spaces and nearby residential areas.
- Activated ground floor frontages (e.g., outdoor cafe seating) to create a welcoming pedestrian realm.





A	Retail/commercial spaces with outdoor seating
B	Recreation center with outdoor seating
C	Residential units of varying sizes and price points
D	Shaded and accessible resident amenities
E	Parking garage with multi-purpose wall space for outdoor movies
F	Parking garage screen wall for improved aesthetics
G	Shaded, multi-purpose splash plaza and gathering areas
H	Shaded, accessible playground
I	Flexible open space
J	Bus stop and enhanced streetscape
K	Stream buffer with native plantings
L	Enhanced landscape and pedestrian areas
M	Solar panels
N	Green roof
O	Pedestrian connection to central courtyard from adjacent residential area
P	Separated vehicular access and parking

Figure 2. Representative Rendering of Mixed-Use Development with Recreation Focus

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT ALONG A GREENWAY

This rendering envisions a 3- to 4-acre mixed-use development next to a greenway, featuring a large central gathering space between the buildings. The ground floors include commercial, retail and office spaces with active outdoor areas like dining and seating. Upper floors offer residential units of various sizes and prices. A parking garage at the rear is wrapped by these uses, minimizing its visual impact. Equal prominence is given to access from adjacent roadways and the trail, ensuring safe and inviting routes for all travel modes. The community indicated support for taller development in suitable locations within the study area, so this site includes buildings up to six stories.

Elements from this rendering that could be incorporated elsewhere include:

- Parking primarily located on the site's exterior to preserve a non-vehicular core.
- Design elements like awnings, repeating ground floor windows, varied building materials, murals and nearby seating add a human scale to tall buildings.
- Prominent wayfinding signage and art by local artists.
- Diverse native plantings for aesthetics, habitat, interest and to reduce the heat island effect.
- Blend of colorful, modern building materials with the historic brick aesthetic of the downtown area.
- Retail and commercial fronting a greenway to provide convenient non-vehicular access to everyday destinations.





A	Retail/commercial space fronting a greenway
B	Office space fronting a central courtyard
C	Residential units of varying sizes and price points
D	Wrapped parking garage
E	Greenway/multi-use path
F	Pedestrian/bicycle access to development
G	Wayfinding signage
H	Enhanced native plantings
I	Seat walls around decorative plantings
J	Central courtyard with flexible gathering space between the buildings
K	Opportunity for local art
L	Unique colors and building design elements

Figure 3. Representative Rendering of Mixed-Use Development Along a Greenway

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE

This rendering illustrates a 2- to 3-acre context-sensitive mixed-use development. The road on the left is a major thoroughfare, while the road at the bottom leads to a residential area. Buildings near the thoroughfare are taller and step back above the second story, gradually decreasing in height toward the residential area. Outdoor dining and seating areas enhance the ground floor commercial spaces. A pedestrian corridor between the buildings provides access to rear parking.

Features from this example that could be used in other areas include:

- Urban building character with traditional materials (e.g., brick, fiber cement siding).
- Building heights that step down to transition between larger and smaller structures and maintain the look and feel of the streetscape in relation to the building height for pedestrians.
- Buildings close to the sidewalk with extensive windows to create a consistent, engaging frontage and urban feel.
- Shaded outdoor seating to encourage community interaction and patronage of local businesses.
- Street trees along wide sidewalks to provide shade and encourage slower vehicle speeds by narrowing the visual perception of the road.
- Rear parking to maintain a pedestrian-focused frontage.

A	Retail/commercial spaces with outdoor seating under colonnade
B	Second-story office/commercial space with outdoor seating
C	Residential units of varying sizes and price points on upper stories
D	Townhomes that blend into surrounding residential homes
E	Pedestrian access to parking at rear of buildings
F	Wide sidewalk with street trees





Eye-level vantage point showing the pedestrian experience adjacent to the building

Inset A

Figure 4. Representative Rendering of Context-Sensitive Development in the Downtown Core

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT WITH QUASI-PUBLIC SPACE

This rendering showcases an approximately 2-acre mixed-use development featuring commercial, office and residential spaces, with a prominent quasi-public area at the corner. Ground floor commercial spaces include outdoor seating and shade trees between the building and the ROW to expand the pedestrian space. Second floor office spaces open onto a rooftop seating area and upper floor residential units have individual balconies. The buildings blend colorful, modern materials with the brick aesthetic found in various places in Carrboro. The large outdoor gathering area includes a variety of spaces, preserved large shade trees, and a mixture of pervious pavement types and native plantings to create diverse outdoor experiences.

Elements from this rendering that could be applied in other contexts include:

- Building materials that are inspired by local architectural character.
- Site layout that preserves and celebrates large shade trees.
- Native trees planted just outside the ROW in areas where ROW constraints limit street trees (e.g., narrow ROW, overhead utilities).
- Varied outdoor seating for different size groups.
- Pervious paving for stormwater infiltration.
- Flexible outdoor spaces for events or casual use.
- Prominent placement of outdoor gathering space.





A	Retail/commercial space of varying sizes and price points
B	Office space with balcony seating
C	Residential units of varying sizes and price points
D	Shaded seating and pedestrian space extending streetscape into private realm
E	Enhanced native plantings
F	Flexible gathering area/plaza with pervious pavers
G	Shaded seating with pervious decomposed granite
H	Preserved large shade trees
I	Mural by local artist

Figure 5. Representative Rendering of Mixed-Use Development with Quasi-Public Space

DOWNTOWN GREEN SPACE

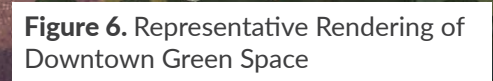
Downtown green spaces offer many benefits, such as improved air quality, reduced urban heat, reduced impervious surface coverage and enhanced biodiversity. They also promote mental and physical health and can boost traffic to local businesses. This rendering shows a 0.4-acre public park with a multi-purpose pavilion, walking paths, a splash pad, picnic areas shaded by trees, interactive art, ornamental native plantings and play features integrated into the landscape. Depending on the park's size and location, restrooms may be needed (not shown here). The site's context, including surrounding uses, topography and natural drainage patterns, can influence the choice of ground materials like grass, artificial turf, mulch, garden beds, pavers, play surfacing and/or pervious pavement.

Elements from this rendering that could be incorporated elsewhere include:

- Diverse shaded areas from structures or tree groves.
- A multi-purpose pavilion for Town events, party rentals and informal daily use.
- Accessible play features of various sizes and styles to encourage imaginative play (e.g., play mounds with tunnels).
- Ornamental native plantings with educational signage about their benefits.
- Accessible seating areas for people of all abilities.
- A rain garden to support stormwater management.
- Engaging public art, such as interactive or kinetic installations, to attract visitors.



A	Multi-purpose pavilion
B	Accessible seating/gathering areas
C	Flexible event space
D	Splash pad/plaza
E	Ornamental native plantings with educational signage
F	Preserved large shade trees
G	Rain garden between the street and sidewalk
H	Bicycle parking
I	Engaging public art (e.g., musical, moving)
J	Interactive play area
K	Wide sidewalks for enhanced pedestrian connectivity
L	Pedestrian connectivity to nearby residential areas



STREETSCAPE TYPOLOGIES

The streets in Carrboro's downtown area mainly fall into three typologies:

Core Primary Streets	Primary Streets in the Core are places where people experience social life in Carrboro. Pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles share limited space.
Non-Core Primary Streets	Primary Streets outside the Core carry people and vehicles into and out of the Downtown Core Area. They tend to be wider than those in the Core and have more room for separated lanes for different travel modes.
Secondary Streets	Secondary Streets provide vital connections between neighborhoods and the Downtown Area. Many have sidewalks on only one side, and bikes must safely share road space with slow vehicle traffic.

The typology of each street is determined by the street's location and function in the community, as well as the characteristics of the street (such as speed and width) and the characteristics of the buildings on the street (such as design and distance from the street.) The Streetscape Typologies Map on the following page shows the locations of these typologies on Carrboro streets. The following pages describe each typology and provide recommendations for street cross-sections, facilities for all applicable modes of transportation, and street-side building regulations.

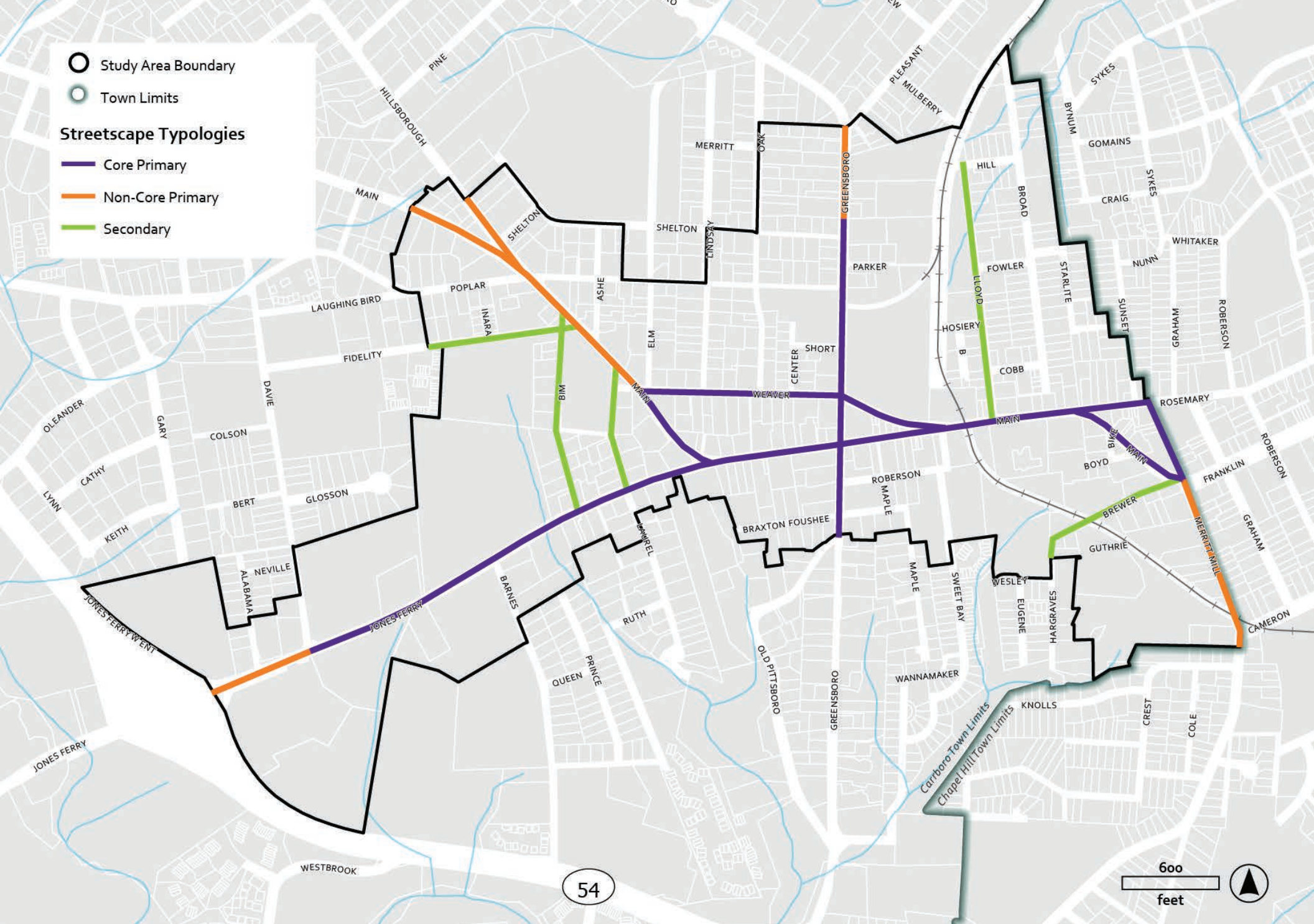
The remaining streets, which are mainly local neighborhood streets, are diverse and have a variety of characteristics, and will be discussed in a separate section with more generalized recommendations. In addition, Roberson Street has unique recommendations and will be discussed in its own section.

Streetscape recommendations are shaped by how much space is available in the ROW, the amount of space that is dedicated for public street use. ROWs have multiple functions – they carry vehicles; have sidewalks and bike lanes for pedestrians; provide access to homes, businesses, and transit; and provide stormwater drainage. All of these functions must be considered when designing streetscapes. The recommendations in this section provide a long-term vision for Carrboro's streets. As Carrboro's Primary Streets (other than Weaver

Street) are owned and maintained by NCDOT, the Town will continue to partner with NCDOT to add bicycle and pedestrian amenities to those streets. Where the Town has identified amenities needed on Town-owned roads, they will be implemented during resurfacing projects. Due to wide-ranging street conditions, recommendations are not always possible at every location. Individual street segments will be studied in more detail as opportunities arise to ensure all people and modes of transportation are served with high-quality infrastructure.

Some of the recommendations for streetscape improvements can be implemented quickly and at lower cost using temporary means such as paint and removable barriers. This allows an opportunity to test the impacts of projects and make improvements before committing to more costly permanent changes. Opportunities for pilot projects have been identified throughout this section.

These recommendations build upon the work that the Town has done and is currently working on to improve Carrboro's streetscapes. These efforts include, but are not limited to, recent planning efforts such as the Carrboro Bike Plan (2020 Update) and capital improvement projects including re-striping on East Main Street, re-striping lanes on Jones Ferry Road and North Greensboro Street to include bike lanes, and sidewalks on South Greensboro Street.



Map 3. Streetscape Typologies

CORE PRIMARY

Primary streets in the downtown area's core are at the heart of activity. These streets are places where people experience social life in Carrboro. They should feel safe and welcoming for pedestrians. People are prioritized, whether they are on foot, wheel, or bike. Vehicles can travel along these streets to access downtown parking and businesses, but they must move slowly and carefully. Design elements should be incorporated that slow traffic, such as narrow lane widths, bulb-outs, bollards, or alternative road surfaces (e.g. bricks or pavers). Buildings are oriented toward the sidewalk, with frontages that create opportunities for interaction and engagement with people walking past. The table below includes a variety of elements that could be incorporated for Primary streets in the downtown area's core. Items in **bold** are opportunities for pilot projects (i.e., short-term improvements for long-term change).



East Main Street

Vehicle Lanes	10-foot maximum travel lane width to encourage safe vehicular speeds. Left-turn pockets where new development causes increased need to avoid undue congestion.
Intersections	Traffic signals should be calibrated to minimize pedestrian delays, and evaluated periodically to adjust for changes in vehicle and pedestrian movement patterns. Pedestrian signals should always be on – no “beg button” – and use a 5-second leading pedestrian interval. Consider the conversion of some signals to all-way stops. Compared to signals, all-way stops maximize pedestrian priority at intersections, encourage eye contact between road users, reduce idling at times of low traffic, and reduce energy usage in line with Carrboro's commitment to climate action. They also remove the need for left turn lanes, which creates an opportunity to repurpose road space.
Bicycle Infrastructure	- Protected bike lanes where there is sufficient space. The interaction of bikes and vehicles at curb-cuts needs to be considered. - Where there is not space for protected bike lanes, other options include dedicated bike lanes (i.e., striping only) or sharrows where traffic is slow enough for bikes to share the lane with cars.
Pedestrian Infrastructure	- Sidewalks on both sides as wide as space allows. The Land Use Ordinance requires 10-foot sidewalks in the Downtown Core. - Continue to use the decorative brick treatment that already exists on some sidewalks downtown. - Minimize driveways across sidewalks as much as possible. - Pedestrian-scale street lighting. - Benches that incorporate art. Mid-block art crosswalks designed by local artists collaborating with transportation officials.
Transit Infrastructure	Shelters should be provided where space allows.
Buildings ¹	- Buildings set back zero to 10 feet from edge of sidewalk. Space between the building and sidewalk could include plantings, space for tables, signage, art, benches, and other elements that encourage interaction. - Constructed awnings (wood or metal) for shade and rain protection (example: Orange County Social Club awning). - Encourage string lighting for patios, and other off-street spaces. Lighting should be dark-sky compliant to reduce impact on wildlife.
Plants and Landscaping	- Street trees where space allows. - Pervious strips to build on existing curbline and narrow road width, or to create bulb-outs at crosswalks.

¹ West Weaver Street is a Core Primary street for street design purposes, but its building context is more like a Secondary street.



Art crosswalk on West Weaver Street



Wooden awnings and brick sidewalk treatment on East Main Street



Seating provides an opportunity to add art to the streetscape



Pervious strips capture and slow runoff



String lighting



Pedestrian-scale streetlights 10-14 feet tall, add charm and a welcoming glow after dark

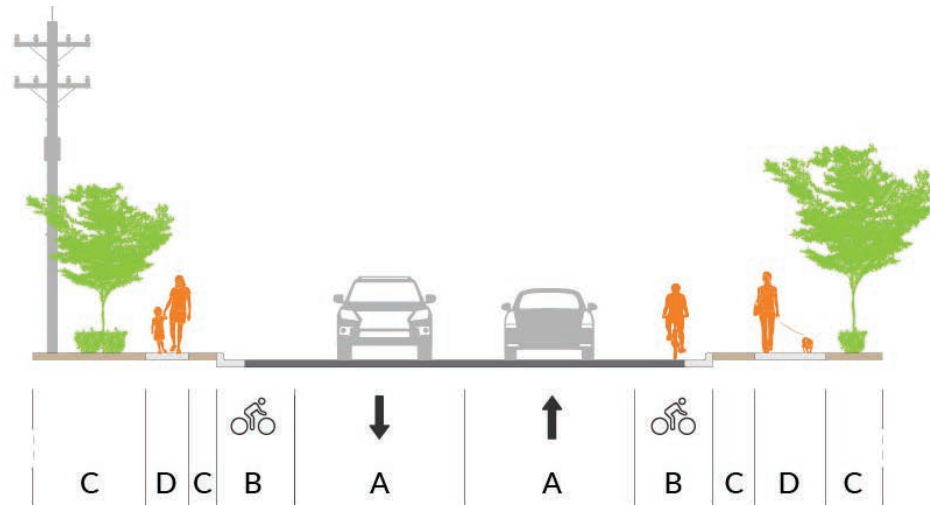
EXAMPLE: NORTH GREENSBORO STREET

EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

The existing cross-section on North Greensboro Street between Poplar Avenue and Shelton Street has the following characteristics:

- 11-12 foot vehicle lanes.
- Painted bike lane on the southbound side and part of the northbound side.
- Narrow sidewalks.
- Some trees between sidewalk and buildings.

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	12 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5.5 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip	2-8 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	3-5 ft.	Concrete



North Greensboro Street Existing Cross-section



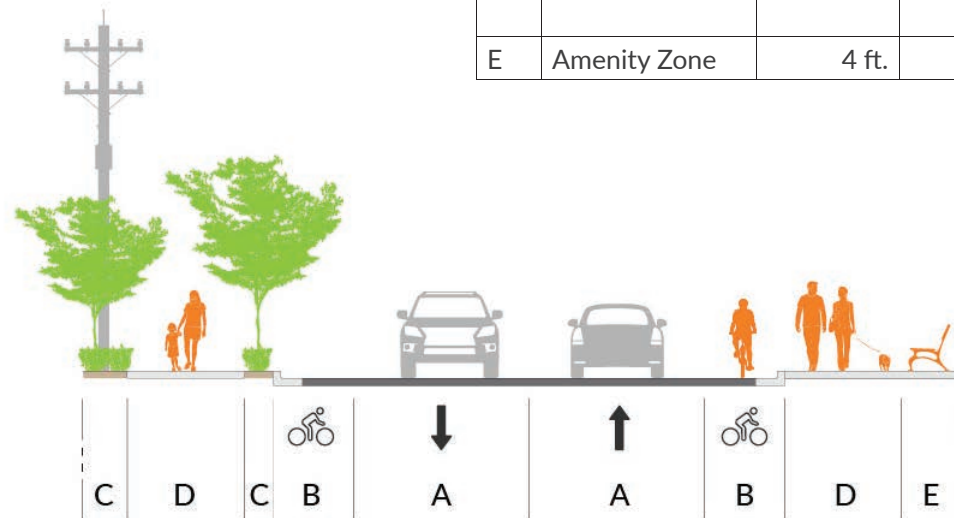
North Greensboro Street south of Parker Street

POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION

The Town uses a multi-prong approach to reducing vehicular speeds in the downtown area which includes partnering with NCDOT on state resurfacing projects, such as North Greensboro Street, to narrow travel lanes to slow vehicles and to add, when possible, improved infrastructure for cyclists/ pedestrians. In addition to bike lanes, wider sidewalks should be incorporated to allow space for street trees and other pedestrian amenities. A potential cross-section for North Greensboro Street as a Core Primary streetscape includes the following enhancements:

- Wider sidewalks on both sides where space allows.
- Additional shade trees in tree wells on sidewalk.
- Benches.
- Redevelopment of surface parking lots.

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	10-12 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5.5 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip	2-5 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	8 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents
E	Amenity Zone	4 ft.	Concrete



North Greensboro Street Potential Cross-section

EXAMPLE: JONES FERRY ROAD (EAST OF DAVIE ROAD)

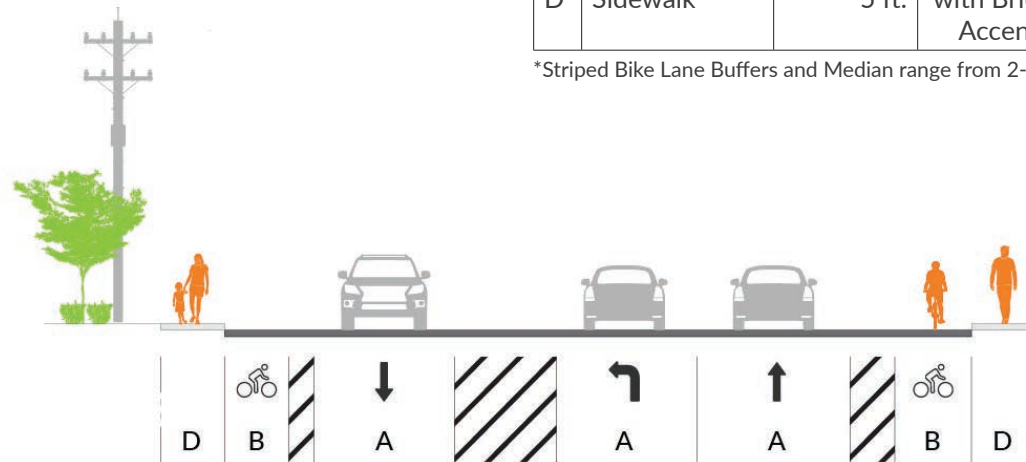
EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

The Town of Carrboro completed a resurfacing and re-striping project on Jones Ferry Road, in partnership with NCDOT. The lanes were narrowed from 12 feet to 11, and a buffered bike lane with flexposts was added on the westbound side. (There was already one on the eastbound side.) The existing cross-section on Jones Ferry Road east of Davie Road has the following characteristics:

- 11- and 12-foot vehicle lanes, a left turn lane, and a striped median.
- Buffered bike lanes on both sides with flexposts in some locations.
- Narrow sidewalk on one side.

Element		Size	Material
A	Drive Lane/ Turn Lane	11-12 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5-6 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip	0 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	5 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents

*Striped Bike Lane Buffers and Median range from 2-8 ft.



Jones Ferry Road (East of Davie Road) Existing Cross-section



Jones Ferry Road near Davie Road

POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION

Because Jones Ferry Road was recently re-striped to add new bicycle infrastructure, the main focus for this location is on improving the pedestrian experience. There is very little additional ROW along Jones Ferry Road. Therefore, as development occurs, the Town may wish to seek additional ROW to support wide sidewalks and trees along both sides.

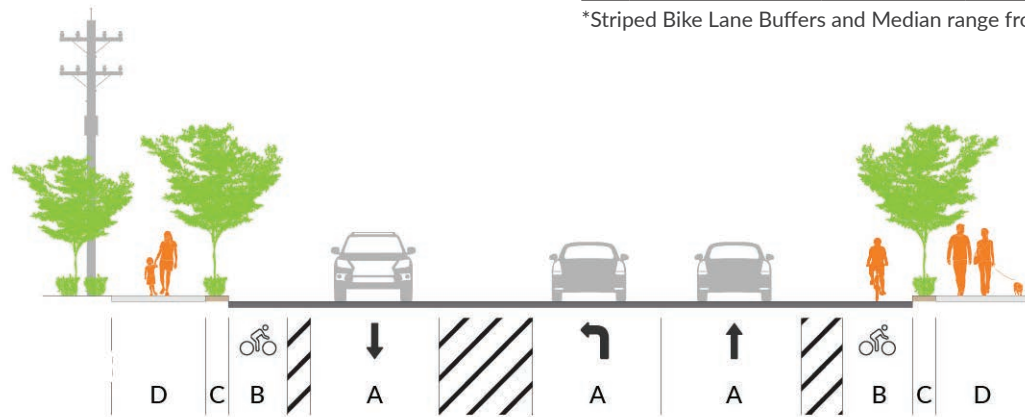
The potential cross-section for Jones Ferry Road as a Core Primary streetscape could include the following enhancements:

- Bike lanes on both sides with buffers and physical protection from vehicle traffic.
- 10-foot sidewalks where space allows.
- Shade trees in tree wells along street side of sidewalk.
- New pedestrian-friendly development that is oriented to the sidewalk.

Jones Ferry Road serves several bus lines, including the J route, which is a popular connection between Carrboro and Chapel Hill / UNC, and the GoTriangle 405 commuter route to Durham. There is potential for this wide section of Jones Ferry Road to include additional bus infrastructure, such as a bus priority lane in one or both directions. Additional study would be required to determine the benefits and requirements of these improvements.

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane / Turn Lane	11-12 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5-6 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip/ Street Trees	2 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	8 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents

*Striped Bike Lane Buffers and Median range from 2-8 ft.



Jones Ferry Road (East of Davie Road) Potential Cross-section



Chapel Hill Transit Bus

Non-Core Primary

Primary streets outside the downtown core carry people and vehicles into and out of downtown. They are likely locations for shared or public parking facilities serving downtown businesses. These streets tend to be wider than those in the core and have more room for separated lanes for different travel modes. They have some commercial activity, but at a lower density than in the Core. Even so, these streets should be safe and comfortable for pedestrians and people on bikes and provide an interesting and pleasant walk to and from the Core. As on Core Primary streets, design elements should be included to encourage vehicles to travel at a safe speed. The table below includes a variety of elements that could be incorporated for primary streets outside of the Downtown Core Area. Items in **bold** are opportunities for pilot projects (e.g., short-term improvements for long-term change).



Jones Ferry Road

Vehicle Lanes	• 10-foot maximum travel lane width to encourage safe speeds. • Re-evaluate the need for full-length center turn lanes, and consider maintaining left turn pockets only where needed to avoid undue congestion. • Consider opportunities to repurpose road space to add on-street parking, as a strategy to slow traffic and reduce the need for surface parking lots. Parking should be located on the outside of the bike lane to add protection for bikes. This is known as “parking protected bike lanes.”
Intersections	• Improve pedestrian crossings at side streets (e.g., reduce crossing distances, add striped crosswalks).
Bicycle Infrastructure	• Bike lanes separated from traffic with painted buffers. Physical barriers, such as flexposts, bollards, or planters, should be used to the extent feasible to provide more physical separation.¹ • Alternatively, shared-use paths on one or both sides (like those on Estes Drive in Chapel Hill).
Pedestrian Infrastructure	• Sidewalks on both sides (6 to 8 feet wide where there are on-street bike lanes, or wider when designed to be shared with bicycles). • Benches. • High-visibility crosswalks. • Pedestrian refuges in raised central medians. • For mid-block crossings, consider rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB) where speed limits are higher than 25 mph on Jones Ferry Road or North Greensboro Street.
Transit Infrastructure	• Shelters. • Pull-outs where space allows, and where they can be designed to coordinate safely with bike lanes. • Potential for dedicated transit lanes in some locations.

¹ Provision of physical barriers depends on the width of the buffer and the frequency of driveways and bus pull-outs on the street segment.

Buildings ²	• Buildings set back 10 to 20 feet from edge of sidewalk. Space between the building and sidewalk could include shade trees, plantings, porches or patios, tables, art, and other elements that enhance the streetscape. • No off-street parking in front of buildings.
Plants and Landscaping	• Street trees in planter strips, tree wells, or encouraged on private property. • Planter strips (with native species) between sidewalk and curb where space allows, but not at the cost of sidewalk width.

2 Hillsborough Road is a Non-Core Primary street for street design purposes, but its building context is more like a Secondary street.



A protected cycle track with planters is another option for wide streets



High-visibility crosswalk



Bus shelter on North Greensboro Street



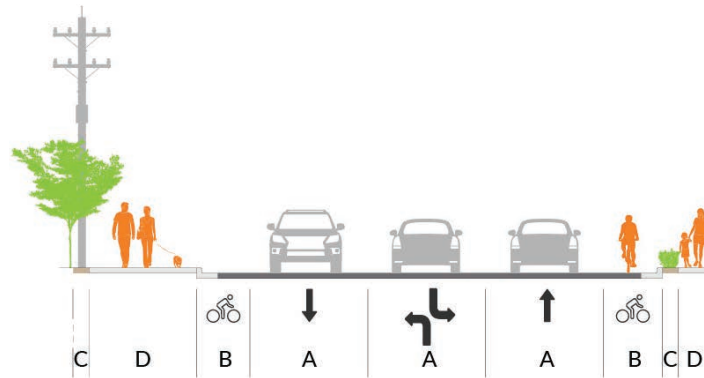
This parking-protected bike lane in Tampa, FL was installed as part of Tampa's QuickBuild program

EXAMPLE: WEST MAIN STREET (SOUTH OF POPLAR AVENUE)

EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

The existing cross-section on West Main Street south of Poplar Avenue has the following characteristics:

- 11-foot vehicle lanes and a center turn lane.
- Painted bike lanes on both sides.
- Narrow sidewalk on one side.



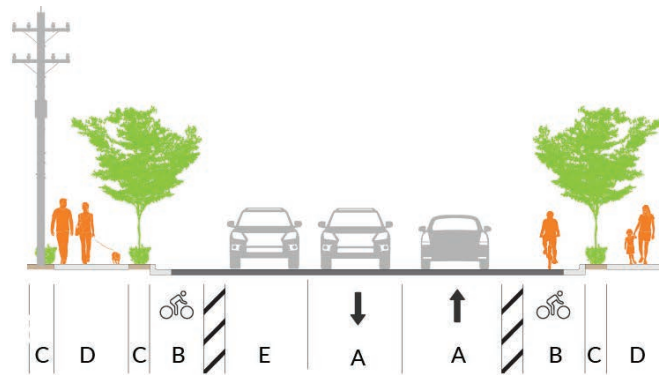
West Main Street (south of Poplar Avenue) Existing Cross-section

Element		Size	Material
A	Drive Lane/ Turn Lane	11 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip/ Utilities	1.5 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	3-10 ft.	Concrete

POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION - OPTION 1

One potential cross-section for West Main Street as a Non-Core Primary streetscape includes the following enhancements:

- Removal of the center turn lane.
- Bike lanes on both sides with buffers and physical protection from vehicle traffic.
- Wider sidewalks to the extent possible on both sides where space allows.
- Additional shade trees where space allows.
- Pedestrian-friendly design for new development.



West Main Street (south of Poplar Avenue) Potential Cross-section - Option 1

Element		Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	10 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip/ Utilities	1.5-3 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	6 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents
E	Parking	7 ft.	Asphalt

*Bike Lane Buffer is 2 ft.



West Main Street south of Poplar Avenue

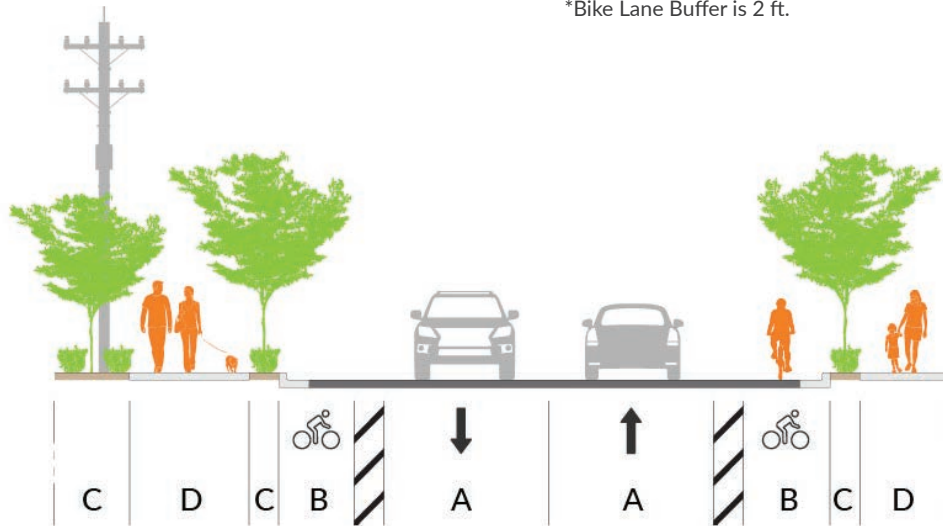
POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION - OPTION 2

Instead of adding on-street parking, West Main Street could support a linear park along one side to create a fun and safe space for children on their way to and from Carrboro Elementary School. This can include a wide planted section along one side with butterfly gardens and educational signs. The Town could work with new development to create additional space along the eastbound side.

- Vehicle lanes narrowed to 10 feet to reduce speeds.
- Removal of the center turn lane.
- Bike lanes on both sides with buffers and physical protection from vehicle traffic.
- Wider sidewalks on both sides.
- Expansion of the sidewalk area on the eastbound side to allow additional space for planting trees and flowers.
- Trees in tree wells on the westbound side.
- Pedestrian-friendly design for new development.

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	10 ft.	Asphalt
B	Bike Lane	5 ft.	Asphalt
C	Planting Strip/ Utilities	2-5 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Sidewalk	6-8 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents

*Bike Lane Buffer is 2 ft.



West Main Street (south of Poplar Avenue) Potential Cross-section - Option 2

SECONDARY

Secondary Streets are mainly residential streets with currently limited commercial activity, though commercial use could increase over time. These streets provide vital connections between neighborhoods and the various parts of the downtown area. Speed limits on secondary streets are 20 or 25 miles per hour, and they have a sidewalk on at least one side. Design elements should discourage speeding and ensure that bikes can safely share the lane with cars, as many of these streets do not have space for bike lanes. For example, the lack of centerline striping on most secondary streets should be maintained to help provide space for bikes and maintain lower vehicular speed.

Many Secondary Streets have very long block lengths and lack connectivity between them, where local streets do not connect all the way through. To improve accessibility, off-street bike and pedestrian connections can be made where opportunities exist to connect these streets through neighborhoods. This can result in a transportation network where the most direct route is by walking.



Wide crossing distance on Poplar Avenue where it intersects West Main Street

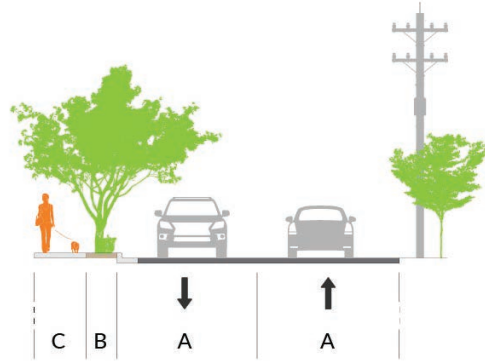
Vehicle Lanes	• 10-foot maximum travel lane width to encourage safe speeds. • No turn lanes except at intersections with primary streets, if needed to maintain access from neighborhoods. If not, remove turn lanes to reduce pedestrian crossing distances. No additional centerline striping, except where necessary for safety (e.g., on sharp curves).
Intersections	• Stop-controlled, except where there are existing signals. Evaluate signal timings to ensure vehicles exiting neighborhoods onto primary streets are given enough time. • Minimize crossing distances at intersections.
Bicycle Infrastructure	• Bike facilities are context-dependent. Sharrows on narrow streets, painted lanes on wider streets.
Pedestrian Infrastructure	• 6-foot wide sidewalks on at least one side, both sides where space allows. • High-visibility striped crosswalks. • Find opportunities to increase pedestrian connectivity between streets.
Transit Infrastructure	• Shelters where space allows. No bus pull-outs due to space constraints.
Buildings	• Buildings set back 10 to 30 feet from edge of sidewalk. Space between the building and sidewalk could include shade trees, plantings, porches or patios, tables, art, and other elements that enhance the streetscape. • No off-street parking in front of buildings. Parking at rear or to the side (for future redevelopment).
Plants and Landscaping	• Street trees where space allows in ROW or encouraged on private property.

EXAMPLE: BREWER LANE

EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

The existing cross-section on Brewer Lane east of East Main Street has the following characteristics:

- Approximately 13-foot vehicle lanes with sharrows.
- A sidewalk on only one side of street.
- Additional ROW available on one side.



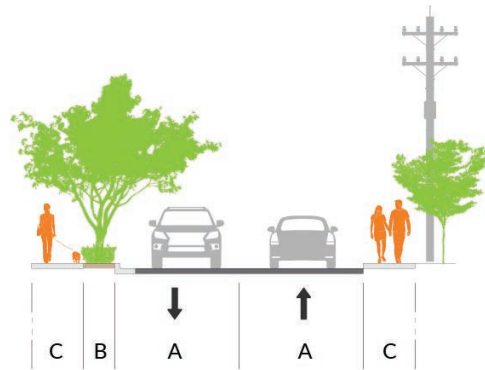
Brewer Lane Existing Cross-section

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	13.5 ft. - 13.7 ft.	Asphalt
B	Planting Strip	3 ft.	Native Vegetation
C	Sidewalk	5 ft.	Concrete

POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION

The Brewer Lane streetscape would be enhanced by having sidewalks on both sides. As development occurs, the Town may wish to seek additional ROW to support enhanced bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Vehicle lane widths are maintained as-is, to ensure larger vehicles (e.g., concrete trucks and tour buses) are able to access industrial uses in this part of the downtown area. Maintaining the existing widths is not ideal for non-motorized users; however, in this context it necessary for the street to continue functioning properly. A potential cross-section for Brewer Lane as a Secondary streetscape could have the following characteristics:

- Vehicle lanes maintained at current width.
- Street trees and sidewalk added to northbound side, in coordination with private landowners.



Brewer Lane Proposed Cross-section

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane	13.5 ft. - 13.7 ft.	Asphalt
B	Planting Strip	3 ft.	Native Vegetation
C	Sidewalk	5 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents



West Main Street south of Poplar Avenue

OTHER STREETS

The remaining streets in the downtown area are local neighborhood streets and are widely varied throughout Carrboro. For instance, many neighborhood streets are very narrow and do not have sidewalks, such as Lindsay Street, and some have a sidewalk only on one side, such as Broad Street. Part of the character of these neighborhoods includes slow traffic with streets that are safe for walking, biking, and playing.

When streets are resurfaced, it is an opportunity to reimagine the space and add enhancements that reduce through traffic, improve safety for people to walk and play in the streets, and improve drainage. These enhancements may include:

- Sidewalk on one side, if residents want a sidewalk.
- Consider the application of traffic calming to discourage through traffic and encourage slow speeds while prioritizing people on foot and on bike on the full length of the street, such as:
 - » Chicanes
 - » Speed tables
 - » Mini traffic circles
- Street trees should be added wherever possible. There may be an opportunity to collaborate with residents by providing trees for planting at the street edges of front yards.
- Crosswalks can be added where they are needed, such as at intersections where there are sidewalks.



Lindsay Street



Broad Street

TRAFFIC CALMING DEVICES

CHICANES

Chicanes reduce vehicle speeds by requiring drivers to steer through a series of horizontal shifts in the roadway. Chicanes should be considered on wide, low-volume, local streets (maximum of two moving lanes) with demonstrated speeding issues. Avoid on transit routes, truck routes, and major bike routes.

SPEED TABLES

Speed tables are a mid-block traffic calming device that reduces traffic speed by raising the entire wheelbase of the vehicle and are longer than speed humps. Speed tables can be considered on collector streets or emergency routes and are usually used in conjunction with curb extensions.

MINI TRAFFIC CIRCLES

Mini traffic circles are used at minor intersections along roadways with lower speeds. They can be installed with simple markings or raised islands and are most ideal for uncontrolled intersections. Consideration should be made for the available lane width and vehicle turning radius requirements.

The downtown circulation study analyzed potential locations for the application of mini traffic circles within the downtown area. Future implementation includes a mini roundabout, also known as a mini traffic circle, on Inglewood Street.



A neighborhood traffic circle like this one in Durham, NC, calms traffic and adds unpaved space for planting and stormwater management



A speed table on High Street in Carrboro



A chicane with crosswalk in Hendersonville, NC

ROBERSON STREET

Roberson Street presents a unique opportunity for Carrboro. This street runs parallel to Main Street and provides access to parking behind Main Street's historic commercial buildings. It connects the new Drakeford Library Complex to the ArtsCenter and the Libba Cotten Bikeway. It will provide access to the new parking garage behind the Drakeford Complex. Roberson Street is envisioned as a “festival street,” a shared space where pedestrians and bicycles are prioritized, and vehicular traffic must travel slowly. This could have “sidewalks” that are at the same level as the street, to indicate the free movement of pedestrians throughout the corridor. The road surface should be something other than asphalt, such as bricks or pavers, serving as a visual cue to traffic that Roberson is not an ordinary street. Trees, flowers, and other vegetation could be added to create a linear park along Roberson Street, and art installations could be added to celebrate Carrboro's history and rich art scene to tie in with the ArtsCenter at the eastern end.



Wall Street in Asheville, NC is an example of a festival street

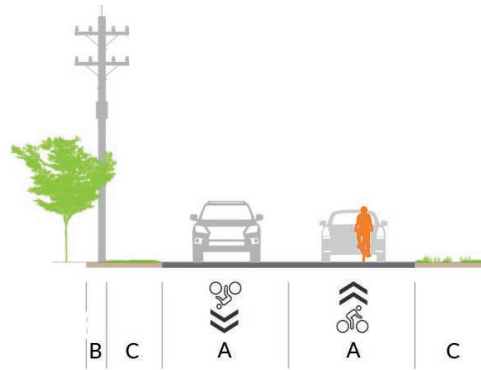


The ArtsCenter, Libba Cotten Bikeway, and art crosswalk on Roberson Street

EXISTING CROSS-SECTION

The existing cross-section on Roberson Street has the following characteristics:

- Roadway of varying widths (25 feet is a typical width), with additional space in the public ROW on both sides (total of 40 feet).
- Two-way traffic, no striping, and sharrows.
- No sidewalks.



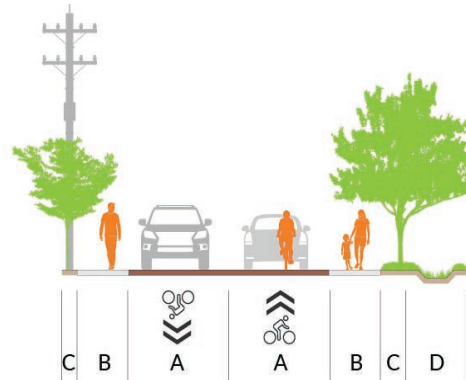
Roberson Street Existing Cross-section

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane / Sharrow	12.5 ft.	Asphalt
B	Utilities	2 ft.	Varies
C	Planting Strip	5.5-7.5 ft.	Native Vegetation

POTENTIAL CROSS-SECTION

A potential cross-section for Roberson Street as a festival street includes the following enhancements:

- Paving with a material other than asphalt, such as brick or stone.
- Curbless “sidewalks” delineated with paving, paint, bollards, or other elements.
- Elements that create interest along the eastbound side to create a linear park or art trail between the Drakeford Complex and the ArtsCenter.



Roberson Street Proposed Cross-section

	Element	Size	Material
A	Drive Lane/ Sharrow	10 ft.	Stamped Concrete, Brick or Stone
B	Sidewalk	5 ft.	Concrete with Brick Accents
C	Street Trees/ Utilities	1.5-2.5 ft.	Native Vegetation
D	Planting Strip/ Rain Garden	6 ft.	Native Vegetation



Roberson Street Existing



Implementation

DRAFT



INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the implementation plan, followed by metrics that can be used to monitor the progress of Plan implementation over the next 20 years. As explained in **Volume 1, Introduction**, the Downtown Area Plan is intended to help advance the goals of the adopted Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan, as well as the Town's Race and Equity and Climate Action efforts, within this Plan's study area (see Map 1 on page 9 in Volume 1). Recommendations in this Plan are intended to focus on the study area, rather than town-wide efforts identified in Carrboro Connects. While some recommendations are similar to those in Carrboro Connects, they are listed here to allow for closer tracking of implementation in the downtown area. Additionally, while targeted to the downtown area, some recommendations may also offer benefits that extend to the broader community.

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN GOALS

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 ensure safe and equitable mobility for all residents.

4

Support small businesses, entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises by ensuring 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.

CARRBORO CONNECTS PLAN GOAL CATEGORIES



Affordable Housing



Climate & Environment



Transportation & Mobility



Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Energy & Water



Economic Sustainability



Recreation, Parks & Culture



Land Use



Public Services & Communication

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan is organized into three categories:

- Built environment
- Operational and programming
- Policy and regulatory

Recommendations are designed to help propel the downtown area toward the community's desired vision for the future. These items are not intended to be viewed as mutually exclusive and should be used together to create a combined strategy to achieve the desired outcomes in Carrboro.

The implementation plan for each category includes:

- A reference number to easily identify the implementation recommendation.
- A description of the recommendation with a page reference listing the most prominent area in the Plan that provided background information on the topic.
- The Carrboro Connects and Downtown Area Plan goal(s) it supports.
- The time frame in which the project is recommended to be initiated (with the understanding that some of these projects may take months and even years to be fully implemented).
- The entity or organization who would lead (as designated with an *) and support the effort.
- Impacts to the Town's Climate Action and Race and Equity goals - identified as negative, neutral, and positive.

- An overall anticipated magnitude of cost. Further refinement of project scopes and designs are needed to determine more specific cost estimates and align with funding sources. Several of the recommendations necessitate the coordination with private developers and land owners to achieve successful implementation.
- Funding source that identifies the most common way to cover costs associated with the implementation step. Funding sources are identified by abbreviations that are listed on the following pages, which are used in the implementation table (e.g., Municipal Service District is listed as MSD)

The implementation plan includes recommended initiatives and actions the Town should consider to achieve the goals of the Downtown Area Plan, while also furthering the goals in Carrboro Connects. As with all actions, careful consideration of impacts to Race and Equity and Climate Action should be assessed prior to implementation of each item to evaluate current conditions and maintain alignment with the Town's core values.

Although the Plan encompasses five distinct goals, each one holds significant value, even if the implementation steps are not distributed equally among them. By recognizing the unique importance of each goal, the Plan takes a comprehensive and balanced approach to progress, regardless of how resources and actions are allocated to each specific goal.

Implementation items are not listed in a prioritized order. Rather, they are listed in alphabetical order within each initiation time frame.





CONNECTION TO OTHER STRATEGIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

While the implementation plan includes numerous recommendations, additional strategies that can be carried out on their own or in conjunction with the recommendations in this chapter are found in **Vol. 2, Strategies & Considerations**. For example, recommendations BE-02, BE-04, BE-05, BE-06, BE-09 and OP-05 can incorporate multiple strategies found in the Intersections and Pedestrian Safety Strategies section on page 152.

There are many other actions that can be taken by the Town, non-profit organizations and the private sector to help further the goals and ideas of this Plan which may not be explicitly listed in this chapter. The Town should use the implementation steps identified in this chapter, identified strategies listed in the Plan, the examples provided throughout the Plan and the overall vision of the Downtown Area Plan when evaluating other ideas, concepts and opportunities that may arise to determine how to best steer those opportunities to achieve the community's goals.

In addition, the renderings contained in this Plan depict how a site can be developed or redeveloped to include elements that help achieve many different aspects of this Plan, such as affordable housing, affordable commercial spaces, green infrastructure, quasi-public spaces, activated streetscapes, non-motorized transportation, impervious coverage reduction, green energy, tree plantings, and many others. The renderings should be used to help inspire the private sector when development is being considered.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

GENERAL FUNDS (GF)

The Town can set aside funds within its annual general fund as part of the normal operating budget. These can be used for a variety of projects on an annual basis.

CAPITAL FUNDS (CF)

Capital funding is used for larger, specific projects rather than day-to-day operations. The Town can include projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to plan for these projects and set aside sufficient funds for project completion.

LOW INTEREST LOANS/SUBORDINATION (LIL)

The Town may issue low interest loans for the purpose of encouraging investment within neighborhoods. Loans are typically granted to small businesses that may have a harder time qualifying for affordable financing.

BONDS (BO)

Bonds are debt securities issued by the Town to fund projects. In this case, funds could be used to fund capital projects, which could include affordable housing, transportation projects, park projects or other projects that provide public benefit. Money is lent to the bond issuer in exchange for a promise of regular interest payments and the return of the original investment.

MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT (MSD)

An MSD is a special district in which owners pay a supplemental assessment with their taxes. The MSD uses those funds for additional services such as marketing, landscaping, lighting, street cleaning and recreational improvements.

INCENTIVES FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS (IN)

Small business owners promote the local economy by providing local goods and services and creating a sense of place. Incentives may include small business loans, technical assistance and/or expedited permitting.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides CDBG funds for a variety of projects to eligible communities. The program provides financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities and other physical development projects. Funding for these projects can be through annual allocations from HUD, competitive grants or low-cost loans.

TRANSPORTATION GRANTS (TG)

Many grants and funding opportunities exist for transportation projects that may be from federal or state sources. The Town could continue to work with the Triangle West Transportation Planning Organization and NCDOT on aligning potential projects with appropriate funding sources.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT (TIF)

A TIF is a special district where any increase in tax revenues caused by new development and higher property values is paid into a special fund to finance improvements. The purpose of a TIF is to finance new public improvements in the area in which the funds originated. Potential improvements include wider sidewalks, utilities, public landscaping, lighting, environmental remediation and historic facades, etc.

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (P3)

A P3 is a joint agreement between the Town and a private entity to provide public benefit through the development of land, which could include affordable housing development, public parking deck construction, park development or many other actions that further Town goals. The Town may use development agreements to coordinate these types of projects.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Private development is the development of land under private ownership by a non-governmental entity. This development is typically driven by market demands and can be used to achieve a variety of goals, such as creating commercial spaces, building affordable housing and increasing the use of green infrastructure.

PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PARTF)

PARTF grants are awarded by North Carolina to eligible local governments for development of park facilities, land acquisition for new parks and renovation of existing public parks.

NON-PROFIT AGENCY FUNDING (NAF)

Funding from nonprofit agencies can include grants, donations, corporate sponsors and revenue from services provided. These funds can be used for varying purposes to meet community needs.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

BUILT ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The built environment will provide the most visual impact on downtown area users. These recommendations include improvements such as streetscape enhancements, public gathering spaces and aesthetic improvements, among others. Through these implementation items, the Town can continue supporting a lively downtown area with improved pedestrian and vehicular experiences, and encourage the development of a high-quality mixed-use area.

Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-01	Construct Pocket Parks Convert several smaller properties or pursue acquisition or easements for several smaller properties to create pocket parks scattered throughout the downtown area for spaces with amenities such as benches, swings, interactive art, native plantings, shade trees and rain gardens. This Plan's renderings show example parks/green spaces at multiple scales. <i>Page References: p. 34, 157</i>	1 3 4	    	1-3	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$	GF, CF, PARTF, P3
BE-02	Develop Streetscape Pilot Program Begin a pilot program to test improvements using temporary measures (such as striping, cones, barrels, and/or hay bales) to demonstrate how permanent modifications to the transportation system may operate. This is a lower-cost way to test higher-cost projects before committing to full implementation. <i>Page References: p. 40-55, 147-153</i>	1 3	 	1-3	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Neutral	\$	GF, CF, TG

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Improved Mobility

4

Economic Sustainability

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Carrboro Connects



Affordable Housing



Climate & Environment



Transportation & Mobility



Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Energy & Water



Economic Sustainability



Recreation, Parks & Culture



Land Use



Public Services & Communication

Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-03	Enhance Accent Lighting Throughout Add and/or enhance accent lighting to public buildings in the study area, including Drakeford Library Complex, Century Center and others to increase evening ambiance and highlight unique architectural elements. Support similar efforts for other entities such as religious buildings and cultural institutions. This Plan's renderings show some examples of accent lighting. <i>Page References: p. 170</i>	  	  	1-3	Town*, Duke Energy	Neutral	Neutral	\$	GF
BE-04	Improve Neighborhood Streets Continue working with residents and property owners in the residential neighborhoods to determine the desired level of street enhancements (i.e., traffic calming, sidewalks, curb/gutter installation) for the neighborhood streets. <i>Page References: p. 52</i>	 	 	1-3	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$	GF, CF, TG
BE-05	Improve Sidewalk Network Identify sidewalk gaps, narrow sidewalks and areas in need of repairs to create a sidewalk enhancement plan to systematically make improvements to the sidewalk network. <i>Page References: p. 148</i>	 	 	1-3	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$	GF, CF, TG

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Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-06	Install Primary Corridor Decorative Crosswalks Install decorative crosswalks on primary streetscape corridors (such as the plans for resurfacing and painted crosswalks on Roberson Street), including creative crosswalks in select locations, to enhance pedestrian safety and celebrate arts and culture. Decorative crosswalks (e.g., painted patterns or colorful art) help improve the visibility of pedestrian crossing locations to drivers. These can be implemented on Town-owned roads and the Town should collaborate with NCDOT to evaluate options to install these on NCDOT roads. The crosswalks also support the design of decorative sidewalk elements that are already in place. <i>Page References: p. 38-55, 152, 164</i>	3 4	    	1-3	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Positive	\$	GF, CF, TG
BE-07	Build Downtown Gateways Design and install primary and secondary gateways. Gateways should use a combination of landscaping, public art and signage to provide greater visual indication to visitors that they are entering a unique area of the Town. Gateways should blend with the aesthetic of the Town's proposed Wayfinding Program. <i>Page References: p. 158, 164</i>	3 4	    	4-6	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF, CF

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Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-08	Construct Downtown Area Park Convert an existing parcel or pursue acquisition of a parcel to create a centrally located park in the downtown area. This space can help support having a park within a 15-minute walk for all residences. The parcel should be a suitable size for the design and installation of small neighborhood park amenities such as shaded play areas, shade trees, picnic amenities, restrooms, native plantings and a spray plaza (approximately 0.4 - 1.5 acres). This Plan's renderings show an example of a downtown area park. <i>Page References: p. 36-37</i>	1 4		4-6	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$	GF, CF, PARTF, PF, P3
BE-09	Continue Implementing Complete Streets Continue working with NCDOT, where necessary, to implement complete streets throughout the downtown area to improve all core primary, non-core primary and secondary streets, as described in the Vol. 1, Master Plan chapter. To the extent possible, include streetscape enhancements, narrowed travel lanes to increase the space available for non-motorized transportation, and appropriate lighting, while reducing the number of curb cuts to create a comfortable and safe street environment for all users. This may require working with private property owners to obtain easements for sidewalk expansions. This Plan's renderings show an example of complete streets. <i>Page References: p.40-55, 147-153</i>	1 3 4		4-6 (Ongoing)	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$\$	CF, TG, BO

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Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-10	Create Bike and Pedestrian Only Spaces Continue to explore the conversion of downtown streets, like East Weaver Street or Roberson Street, to bike- and pedestrian- only/plaza space. <i>Page References: p. 54, 120, 130</i>	  	     	4-6	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Neutral	\$\$\$\$	CF, TG
BE-11	Enhance Streetscapes Incorporate interactive public art, street trees, native landscaping, rain gardens, seating, trash cans and other enhancements that support a visual appealing public right-of-way and encourage pedestrian usage. This Plan's renderings provide examples of enhanced streetscapes. <i>Page References: p. 26-55, 147-155</i>	  	     	4-6	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Neutral	\$\$\$	GF, CF, TG
BE-12	Evaluate Communal Stormwater Control Measures Evaluate feasible locations and create designs to install communal stormwater control measures (e.g., retention ponds, detention basins and rain gardens) that the Town can manage to help support downtown area businesses and the redevelopment of small lots, while also improving stormwater runoff from the area. <i>Page References: p. 154-155</i>	  	        	4-6	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$\$	GF, CF, P3, DA, TIF, MSD

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Figure 7. Built Environment Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
BE-13	Improve Bus Stops Work with Chapel Hill Transit to design, replace and/or install new (where applicable), unique downtown area bus stop improvements for enhanced user comfort and safety, as well as specialized branding and integration of public art. <i>Page References: p. 28-29, 450-51, 153</i>	  	     	4-6	Town*, Chapel Hill Transit	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$	GF, CF, TG
BE-14	Retrofit Parking Lots Work with property owners to retrofit existing parking lots to reduce impervious surfaces, encourage tree and plant diversity, and incorporate rain gardens to help clean stormwater runoff. <i>Page References: p. 154-155, 163</i>	  	    	4-6	Town*, Private Sector	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF, CF, PD, P3
BE-15	Reduce Overhead Utility Lines Work with Duke Energy and telecommunication companies to eliminate redundant poles and consolidate lines onto one set of poles. It is also recommended to work with Duke Energy to explore where utility lines can be moved underground. This would reduce visual clutter, improve accessibility, remove poles and provide more opportunities to plant street trees. <i>Page References: p. 156</i>	 	  	7-10+	Town*, Duke Energy	Neutral	Neutral	\$-\$\$\$\$	CF, P3, TIF, MSD

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OPERATIONAL & PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Operational and programming recommendations relate to the day-to-day activities, support for local businesses and special events. Successful implementation of the vision for the downtown area may require coordination with many entities, targeted branding and promotional marketing, and additional programming. The following operational and programming actions are recommended to support implementation.

Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-01	Build Out Volunteer Networks Build out volunteer networks to assist with plantings, beautification efforts, art installations and other aspects of this Plan. Volunteers can help support both commercial and residential areas for equitable opportunities for beautiful landscaping. This will allow some tasks to be divided between volunteers rather than relying entirely on staff support to accomplish programs. An example program is the “Keep Durham Beautiful” organization. <i>Page References: N/A</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$	GF
OP-02	Continue to Increase Promotion of Downtown Continue to develop new promotion strategies for downtown. Evaluate past strategies on an annual basis; continue successful promotions, discontinue less successful ones, and develop new strategies to try. <i>Page References: N/A</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$	GF

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-03	Create a Public Art Plan Create a Public Art Plan to determine strategic locations for permanent and/or temporary public art installations in both small- and large-scale spaces in the downtown area. The Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Advisory Board should play a crucial role in the development of this plan, and the plan should inform future public art decisions. The Town could also consider creating a public art program that dedicates a certain percentage of project budgets to a public art fund. <i>Page References: p. 158</i>	4	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$	GF
OP-04	Create a Public Tree Master Plan Create a public tree master plan for the downtown area that includes public and private properties. This plan can examine locations for new tree plantings where room allows, as well as strategies for retaining the existing tree canopy that exists today. <i>Page References: p. 161-162</i>	1 3 4	     	1-3	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$	GF

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-05	Develop Interim Pedestrian Improvement Program Develop a program for interim pedestrian improvements throughout the downtown area, such as crosswalks enhanced with public art painted on the pavement, painted intersection bulb-outs with planters and delineators to define the space, etc. These improvements will allow near-term enhancement to the pedestrian experience without requiring heavy public investment and can help improve accessibility. This also allows improvement strategies to be “tested” prior to more costly permanent installation. Other Town plans, policies and programs also contain information that can help direct this program. <i>Page References: p. 38-55, 147-153</i>	1 3 4	          	1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*, NCDOT	Positive	Positive	\$\$	GF, CF, TG

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-06	Enhance Public and Mural Arts Program Including Rotating Displays Based on the Public Art Plan (see OP-03), enhance public art throughout the downtown area, including interactive art and murals. In addition, seek funding to provide grants and design assistance to artists in an effort to create more opportunities for artists to place murals and other forms of art on public and private property throughout the Town. The use of rotating displays allows for temporary installations and an ever-changing art atmosphere to create interest and continued visitation. <i>Page References: p. 158</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$\$	GF, CF
OP-07	Evaluate Property Redevelopment Opportunities Work with property owners who own larger parcels in the study area to envision property redevelopment opportunities and support the transition into new development, when feasible, that includes affordable housing and affordable and diversified commercial spaces. These projects should include elements identified as part of the renderings in this Plan and also create quasi-public spaces. The evaluation process may occur during site plan review and discussions with the property owner when plans are submitted to the Town for review. <i>Page References: p. 16-37, 142-171</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*, Private Sector	Positive	Positive	\$	GF, CF, LIL, P3, PD, TIF, MSD

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-08	Host Arbor Day and Earth Day Tree Planting Events Increase tree canopy coverage on private property by providing free trees to residents and property owners and having a group of volunteers to plant the trees and provide care instructions. Additional tree canopy helps support the Town's climate action efforts. Trees to be planted can be obtained by the Town at low cost from the Arbor Day Foundation or through a local plant nursery partnership. <i>Page References: p. 154, 161-162</i>	  	     	1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*, Non-profits	Positive	Positive	\$\$	GF
OP-09	Regularly Develop, Assess and Update Downtown Events To keep the success of Town events growing, regularly assess the following: • Estimated attendance • The purpose/intent of the events • Impact to sales (through surveys of stakeholders) • The best organizations to lead each event • If events that serve the entire Town population are being held. <i>Page References: p. 130</i>		 	1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$	GF, MSD

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-10	Strengthen and Celebrate Supporters Strengthen and celebrate partnerships and sponsors through events and programming such as annual dinners and support for other organizations. This encourages continued partnerships, which can help the Town meet a variety of goals, including affordable housing, environmental and other goals. <i>Page References: N/A</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$	GF, MSD
OP-11	Support Lloyd Broad Neighborhood Improvements Continue supporting the Lloyd Broad Neighborhood with home repair grants and neighborhood assistance (such as street tree planting, native plant planting, house painting, porch repair, weatherization, and drainage improvements along the street). <i>Page References: p. 24-25, 155</i>			1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$	GF, CF, CDBG, P3, PD
OP-12	Assist with Temporary Downtown Business Relocation Provide temporary relocation assistance for downtown businesses that are being displaced due to redevelopment activities either through use of a publicly owned/leased space or through grant assistance to help offset business expenses. <i>Page References: p. 27, 134</i>			4-6 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$\$\$\$	GF, CF, LIL, IN, MSD

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-13	Continue Regular Business Outreach, Enrichment and Networking Collaborate with the Carrboro Business Alliance (CBA) and/or Chamber of Commerce to determine strategies to further enrich the business community. This could include strategies such as more frequent meetings, additional speakers addressing current challenges faced by local businesses, feedback opportunities, etc. Inviting people who are thinking about opening businesses in downtown can help them develop relationships and resources. Example meeting topics could include: • Developing an online marketplace and web presence • Social media strategies and brand management • Storefront design and displays • Approaches to point-of-sale management and equipment • Retail and service trends and emerging opportunities • Planning and permitting process and UDO changes <i>Page References: p. 27, 134</i>	4	   	4-6 (Ongoing)	Town*, Chamber	Neutral	Positive	\$\$	GF, MSD

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-14	Develop Curb Appeal Idea Books Develop “idea books” to support improvements to curb appeal, such as recommended color palettes based on architectural style, approaches to landscaping, and similar do-it-yourself techniques that encourage resident pride. An example of a similar publication is used by the City of Hopewell, VA to provide guidance to property owners for ways to help improve property appearance and curb appeal. <i>Page References: p. 157-171</i>	5		4-6	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$	GF
OP-15	Expand Current Walking Tours Expand the Town’s current self-guided walking tour with variable distances, themes from different eras and perspectives of Carrboro’s history, interpretive signage, and route designations using sidewalk medallions. These tours should feature key people and events in addition to architectural history. Creating an art walk can also increase interest to other members of the community. <i>Page References: p. 158</i>	1 3 4 5		4-6 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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Figure 8. Operational & Programming Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
OP-16	Increase Downtown Staffing Resources Increase staffing resources as needed to effectively implement this Plan and other Town goals for the downtown area. Increased staffing should support climate action, race and equity, business management, marketing, communications, entrepreneurship and economics. Staffing could be incorporated into several different Town departments, based on desired organization, structure and focus. <i>Page References: N/A</i>	4	     	4-6 (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF, MSD
OP-17	Develop and Maintain a Pop-Up Storefront Using a vacant or underutilized building, create a pop-up space to allow entrepreneurs to “test the waters” on a new business concept at reduced risk. This may involve the Town renting or purchasing a space. <i>Page References: p. 27, 134</i>	4 5	     	7-10+ (Ongoing)	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$\$\$\$	GF, CF, TIF, MSD, CDBG

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POLICY & REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and regulatory recommendations are intended to promote downtown activation and define clear expectations for the private development community and business owners. The area's success is tied to its appeal to residents, visitors and businesses. Having proactive policies that describe desired outcomes and are easy to understand and implement help to support this success. Many of these recommendations impact the ongoing update of the Unified Development Ordinance; these actions start with "UDO Update" in the following table.

Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-01	Establish Parking Lot Joint Agreements Continue proactively reaching out to parking lot property owners to enhance the properties through a joint agreement for adding landscaping and LID stormwater techniques for existing and future parking lots and decks. The agreements can include provisions for the Town to make the improvements if the property owner maintains them. Additionally, while some joint-use agreements exist for public parking today, the Town should continue working on an as-needed basis to establish additional joint-use agreements for public parking to maintain a sufficient amount of public parking in the downtown area. All parking areas should meet ADA requirements. This Plan's renderings show an example of shared-use parking decks that can support both on-site parking needs and general public parking needs. <i>Page References: p. 26-37, 150, 153, 163</i>	1 2 3 4	     	1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*, Private Sector	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF, P3, PD

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-02	Maintain a Bicycle and Pedestrian Crash Report In order to support bicycle and pedestrian safety in the downtown area, the Town should generate an annual report for vehicular/pedestrian and vehicular/bicycle crashes in the study area. This report can identify hot spots for safety concerns and be used to help track bicycle and pedestrian safety. <i>Page References: p. 152</i>	3	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$	GF
PR-03	UDO Update - Activate the First Floor As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that require first floor activation in all multi-family and mixed-use projects in the downtown area. This can include locating commercial businesses and amenities for building residents on the first floor. <i>Page References: p. 169</i>	4 5	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-04	UDO Update - Address Building Heights As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to set both minimum and maximum building heights in the downtown area that align with the Character Area descriptions in this Plan. Maximum building height exceptions should be included for affordable housing and affordable commercial space inclusion in projects as an incentive. <i>Page References: p. 16-35, 166-167</i>	2 4 5	  	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-05	UDO Update - Encourage Affordable Commercial Spaces As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to encourage affordable commercial spaces in all commercial and mixed-use developments through incentives that increase the number and variety of affordable commercial spaces in the downtown area. <i>Page References: p. 16-21, 26-35, 146</i>	4	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$\$	GF
PR-06	UDO Update - Encourage Affordable Housing As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to encourage affordable housing in all private developments through incentives that increase the number and variety of affordable housing units in the downtown area. Additionally, an upcoming Affordable Housing Strategy project will help guide future implementation of affordable housing strategies in the downtown area. <i>Page References: p. 16-35, 145-146</i>	2	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Positive	\$\$	GF

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-07	UDO Update - Encourage Green Building As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to encourage the use of building green techniques in all private developments through incentives that support renewable energy and green building techniques, such as LEED. <i>Page References: p. 27, 153-156, 160-163, 170</i>	1 5	  	1-3	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-08	UDO Update - Incorporate Quality Open Spaces As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that require private developments to incorporate quality, functional open spaces that interface with the public realm. These spaces should include plazas, greens, pocket parks, gathering spaces and other types of open space, as shown in the renderings included in this Plan. <i>Page References: p. 26-37, 157</i>	1 4	   	1-3	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-09	UDO Update - Increase Tree Canopy and Native Plantings As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that require robust tree planting and preservation requirements, as well as limit plantings to native and beneficial species for trees, shrubs and ground covers. <i>Page References: p. 27, 161-162</i>	1	  	1-3	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-10	UDO Update - Preserve Historic Buildings and Properties As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that preserve historic buildings and properties in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. This may include the use of an overlay district and the creation of a Historic Preservation Commission. <i>Page References: p. 171</i>	5	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-11	UDO Update - Reduce Stormwater Runoff As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to reduce stormwater runoff through the use of high-quality and robust stormwater control measures and reduce impervious surface coverage for all private developments. <i>Page References: p. 27, 154-155</i>	1	  	1-3	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-12	UDO Update - Support Appropriate Parking As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that limit surface parking lots in the downtown area and allow them in locations based on the Character Area as described in the Plan. <i>Page References: 26-37, 150, 153, 163</i>	1 3 4	    	1-3 (Ongoing)	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-13	UDO Update - Support Green Infrastructure As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions to require the incorporation of green infrastructure as part of all private development, including rain gardens, native plantings, LID techniques and robust stormwater control measures. <i>Page References: p. 26-35, 146, 154-155</i>	1	  	1-3	Town*	Positive	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-14	UDO Update - Support Mill House Neighborhood As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that support and preserve the Mill House neighborhood's look and feel through an overlay district. <i>Page References: p. 22-23, 32-33, 166, 171</i>	2 5	  	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF
PR-15	UDO Update - Support Mobile Vendors As part of the ongoing UDO project, the Town should include provisions that support mobile food vending and provide opportunities for small business startups using mobile operations in the downtown area. <i>Page References: p. 27, 134</i>	4	 	1-3	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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Figure 9. Policy & Regulatory Recommendations (cont.)

Ref. #	Recommendation	Goals Supported		Time Frame (Yrs)	Entities	Climate Action	Race and Equity	Est. Budget	Funding Sources
		Downtown Area Plan	Carrboro Connects						
PR-16	Update Urban Design Guidelines Update the Town's urban design guidelines to facilitate consistent streetscape design and incremental enhancements to public spaces. Guidelines should designate updated design standards for elements such as street furniture, lights, rain garden planting information and typical sidewalk treatments. Conceptual approaches of enhancements for primary and secondary streetscapes are contained in this Plan. This Plan's renderings show elements of urban design techniques that could be included in the updated guidelines. <i>Page References: p. 157-171</i>			1-3	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$	GF
PR-17	Create Land Bank Program Create a land bank program to purchase, hold and sell property for affordable housing and to encourage businesses that support everyday needs, as well as provide for a range of affordable commercial spaces. <i>Page References: p. 144</i>			4-6	Town*	Positive	Positive	\$\$\$\$	GF, CF, TIF, MSD, BO
PR-18	Continue to Evaluate Establishing a Municipal Service District (MSD) Establishing an MSD creates a recurring revenue source to help with staffing, marketing and built environment improvements in the downtown area. <i>Page References: N/A</i>			7-10+	Town*	Neutral	Neutral	\$\$	GF

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METRICS & REPORTING

The previous action items and metrics in Figure 10 have been developed to support implementation of the recommendations laid out in this Plan. Metrics demonstrate progress toward achieving the vision and goals set forth in the Plan, while the recommendations outline the steps and resources needed to see progress within the metrics.

The metrics allow the Town to track the success of the Plan as it is implemented. The Town will need to track and analyze certain data points in order to accurately track the progress of each defined metric. Recommended metrics are described in Figure 10. On an annual basis, metrics should be tracked by appropriate Town departments and the results consolidated in a report prepared for Town Council.

Based on the philosophy of continuous improvement (i.e., aim to improve regardless of whether you have already met a target), each metric includes the desired trend (up, down or maintain). Alternatively, the Town could establish current baseline conditions for each metric and set a defined target. However, if a target is set, it is recommended to reassess routinely to “move the goal post,” as appropriate.

Some of the metrics are similar or identical to those in Carrboro Connects. They are repeated or supported here since tracking them within the Plan’s study area will be helpful to gauge the effectiveness of Plan recommendations and progress toward Plan implementation.

Figure 10. Downtown Area Metrics

Metric (within study area) Tracked Annually	Desired Trend	Additional Context
Number of small businesses	Up	Increasing numbers of small businesses helps to indicate that localized conditions are attractive and conducive to sustaining a small business operation. The Town should determine an appropriate definition of “small business” in the downtown area context.
Number of minority-owned businesses	Up	Increasing numbers of minority-owned businesses helps to support the Town’s Race and Equity efforts.
Business closings	Down	Tracking the number of business closings helps to monitor impacts of changing conditions and costs to operate a business in the downtown area (e.g., lease, access to personnel).
Number of vacant storefronts (i.e., ground floor, street facing businesses)	Down	This measures the activation of ground floor, storefront spaces. An occupied storefront contributes to an engaging pedestrian experience and overall downtown vibrancy.
Number of commercial building permits for new development, expansion and rehabilitation of existing spaces	Up	This metric helps gauge the business community’s interest in investing in the downtown area as a viable business environment.

Figure 10. Downtown Area Metrics (cont.)

Metric (within study area) Tracked Annually	Desired Trend	Additional Context
Number of housing units (entire study area and within each character area)	Up	This makes it possible to monitor where growth is happening over time and to evaluate policies more effectively. For example, if one character area is adding new housing while another is not, it may indicate the need to explore why that difference exists.
Number of additional affordable housing units (entire study area)	Up	Increasing affordable housing in the downtown area is important to the community. Tracking the number of new affordable housing units helps monitor progress toward this goal. Carrboro Connects identified an affordable housing gap town-wide. As this gap is addressed, the study area should absorb its proportional fair-share of additional affordable housing units considering its population compared to the rest of the Town.
Linear feet of constructed bike lanes	Up	This helps monitor progress on implementation of the dedicated bike lanes recommended on the core primary and non-core primary street typologies identified in this Plan.
Number and location of vehicular/ pedestrian and vehicular/bicycle crashes	Down (or Maintain if already zero)	Tracking the number and location of crashes can identify hot spots for priority safety improvements, as well as monitor the overall safety for pedestrians and cyclists within the study area.
Linear feet of sidewalk	Up	Additional linear feet of sidewalk indicates a more connected sidewalk network.



Figure 10. Downtown Area Metrics (cont.)

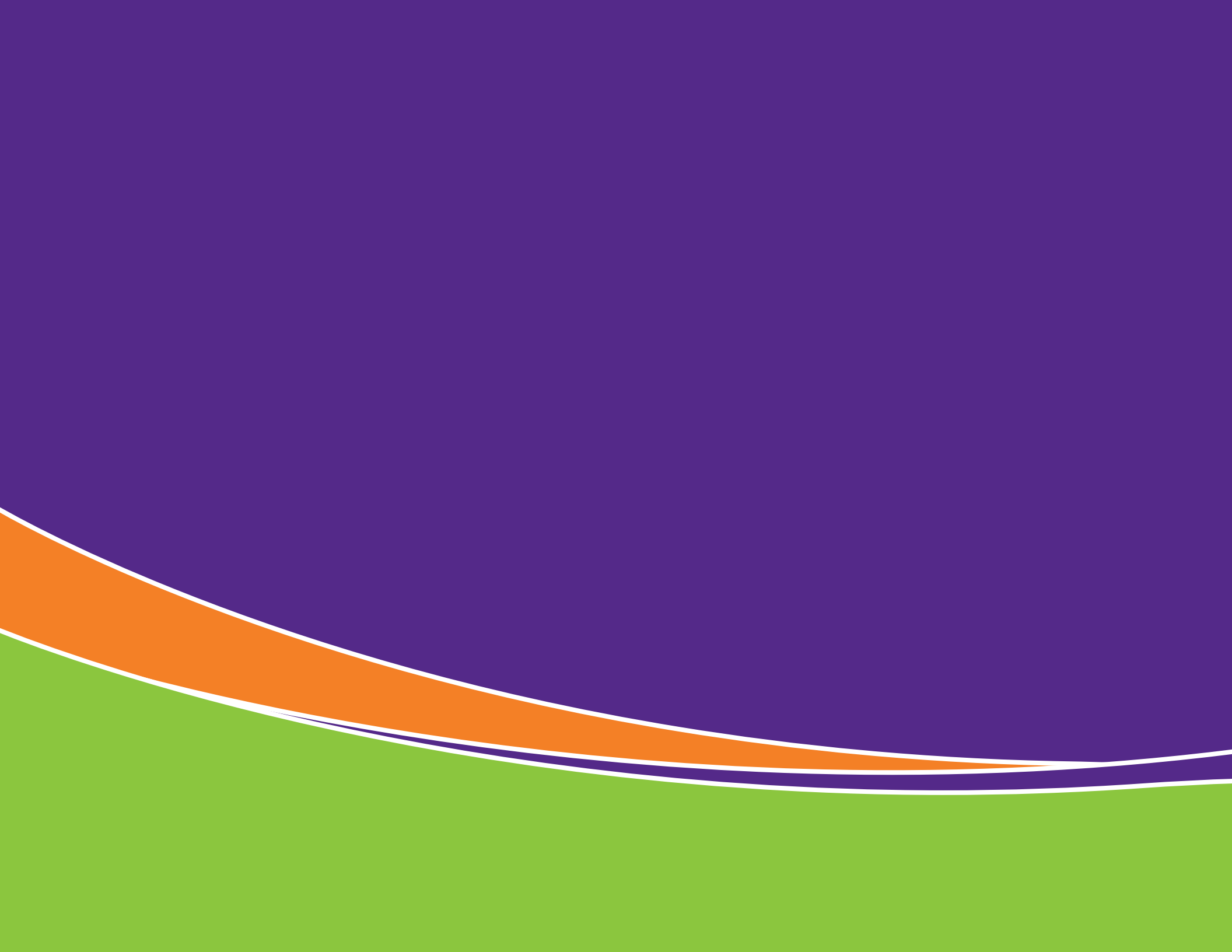
Metric (within study area) Tracked Annually	Desired Trend	Additional Context
Square footage of impervious cover	Down	Reducing impervious cover in the downtown area supports the Town's Climate Action goals. Notably, increasing the number of housing units (as identified as desired trend in this table), does not necessarily mean a total increase in impervious cover within the study area. Retrofitting parking lots, adding downtown area park(s), using parking decks instead of surface lots, adding tree canopy, installing regional stormwater control measures, and other approaches can all contribute to a reduction in impervious coverage.
Percentage of tree canopy	Up	As identified in Carrboro Connects, an increase in tree canopy coverage is desired. Tracking this within the study area helps identify how this area is supporting the Town's Climate Action goals. This metric can be tracked as the area of tree canopy coverage as a percentage of the total study area.
Number of public art installations	Up	The community voiced an interest in additional public art installations in the downtown area. Tracking this metric helps to monitor progress toward this goal.
Estimated attendance at Town-led community events	Up	This helps to evaluate if Town-led events in the study area are engaging and well-received. If participation trends decline, it signals the need to explore ways to modify the events.



Figure 10. Downtown Area Metrics (cont.)

Metric (within study area) Tracked Annually	Desired Trend	Additional Context
Square feet of green infrastructure installations on public and private property	Up	Additional green infrastructure installations will help support the Town's Climate Action goals. The Town can establish a green infrastructure registration program, which will allow private property owners to obtain recognition for installing green infrastructure and help with tracking this metric.
Number of green energy installations (e.g., solar panels, geothermal)	Up	Additional green energy installations will support the Town's Climate Action goals.
Number of buildings using green building techniques (e.g., LEED)	Up	Additional buildings using green building techniques will support the Town's Climate Action goals.





Volume 2: Background Analysis

DRAFT



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Background Analysis

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PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Previous local and regional planning efforts should be considered when developing a downtown area plan to ensure coordinated recommendations for the study area. This section provides an overview of relevant plans and their applicability to this Downtown Area Plan.

CARRBORO CONNECTS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2022)

The Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan was the first official comprehensive planning process undertaken by the Town. Significant community input was obtained throughout the engagement process, even as the plan was developed through the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan was developed with a specific foundational focus on addressing climate change and advancing racial equity and included the following key takeaways which have a direct connection to the downtown area:

- Support affordable housing through a variety of efforts, including increased density, reduced parking and commercial property redevelopment for mixed-use projects.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable design practices to conserve and restore watersheds, ecosystems and native plant communities.
- Utilize green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) to support Low Impact Development (LID) practices and ecosystem recovery efforts.

- Support a multi-modal community by improving walkability, increasing pedestrian safety, reducing vehicular speeds, increasing bicycle facilities and improving transit infrastructure.
- Increase downtown street trees and tree canopy coverage through a variety of efforts, including the planting of canopy trees in public spaces.
- Inspire well-designed, mixed-use developments in downtown that incorporate higher densities and support other plan goals by providing small business spaces and affordable housing.
- Incorporate public artwork throughout downtown to enhance the built environment and create a more beautiful, vibrant community.
- Enhance civic spaces and directional signage in downtown to support business opportunities for local businesses and encourage tourism.
- Host numerous community events and festivals in downtown to continue the tradition of community celebration.
- Encourage commercial investment in public amenities, such as sidewalks,



landscaping and tree canopy coverage.

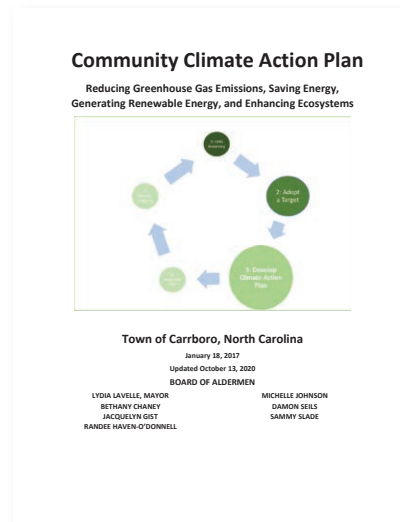
- Facilitate new growth with higher densities along active transit routes and near identified development nodes to reduce car dependency.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN (2020 UPDATE)

The Community Climate Action Plan Update was a continuation of the Town's commitment to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that are causing global climate change. The purpose of the plan was to provide community-scale recommendations to meet the Town's emissions reduction goal.

The plan provided recommendations based on six main topics: community integration, building energy efficiency, transportation, renewable energy, ecosystem protection and enhancement and food choice. Several of the plan recommendations include elements that directly involve or impact the downtown area:

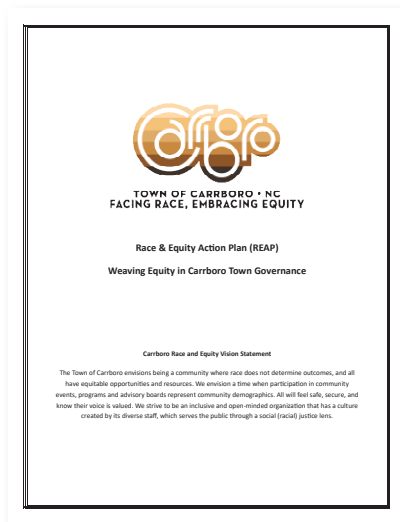
- Reduce community-wide emissions by 80% by 2030 by encouraging more efficient buildings and bringing older buildings up to code.
- Enhance existing transit service to ensure a more comprehensive system and provide better access to downtown from all parts of Carrboro.
- Establish GoTriangle carpool/vanpool parking areas located in downtown to improve access for commuters.
- Research and implement a bike-sharing system downtown.
- Pursue efforts to implement land use and development policies that help ensure destinations for daily needs, such as school, work and shopping, are within convenient bicycling distance from home.
- Pursue geothermal heating and cooling in downtown and explore the creation of a geothermal district.



RACE & EQUITY ACTION PLAN (2023)

The Race & Equity Action Plan is a framework for advancing the Town's race and equity efforts to ensure a culture of equity and inclusivity for all residents of Carrboro. The plan aims to normalize the conversation around racial equity to recognize the bias that exists and review Town initiatives through a racial equity lens. As the Downtown Area Plan is developed, the Town should work to provide an equitable environment that aligns with the Town goals:

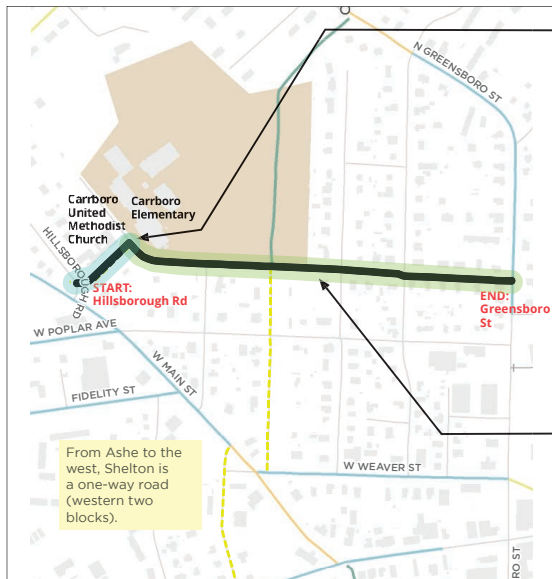
- Continue leading using the GARE Model of Change Approach – visualize, normalize, organize and operationalize.
- Educate Carrboro Town employees and residents about the importance of advancing racial equity.
- Serve as a change agent and a resource to identifying and removing structural bias and inequities in Town policies, practices, procedures, programs and services.
- Reduce racial disparities within Town government.
- Work to ensure Carrboro is a model employer and service provider by embedding racial equity in daily and long-term operations.
- Work with community and partners to ensure safety, sense of belonging and that everyone is valued.
- Help all residents live in a more just and equitable community.
- Update the Town Council agenda template to provide additional background information centering on race and equity.
- Work to ensure that the intentions of all departments connect with equitable impacts.



BIKE PLAN (2020 UPDATE)

The 2020 Updated Bike Plan built upon the 2009 Bicycle Plan and established a new vision for bike infrastructure in the future, focusing on ensuring equity, increasing ridership and serving riders of all ages. The plan engaged the community and a steering committee to identify key strategic priorities to support infrastructure projects. The plan resulted in strategic priorities for recommended infrastructure improvements throughout Carrboro. Five of the recommendations were selected as key recommendations with techniques for implementation. Three of the key recommendations located in or directly supporting the downtown area are listed below, including diagrams from the Updated Bike Plan. Additional key projects not detailed in the plan include the Elm Street/Laurel Avenue Neighborway and West Braxton Foushee Street Neighborway.

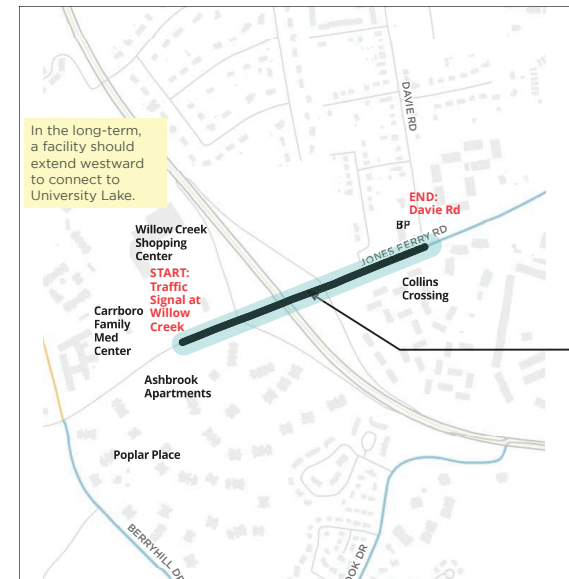
- **Shelton Street Contraflow Lane** – The introduction of a contraflow bike lane on Shelton Street between Hillsborough Road and Greensboro Street. The design of this project has now been funded by the Regional Flexible Fund.
- **West Main Street Bike Lane and Intersection Improvements** – This includes intersection improvements and bike lanes on both sides of the street along West Main Street between Laurel Avenue and Jones Ferry Road.
- **Jones Ferry Road Separated Bike Lanes** – Provide separated bike lanes along Jones Ferry Road on both sides of the heavy commuter corridor from the signal at Willow Creek to Davie Road. The Town completed this work in line with NCDOT resurfacing in summer 2024.



Shelton Street contraflow lane locations



West Main Street bike lane and intersection improvement locations



Jones Ferry Road separated bike lanes location

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic analysis in this section draws on data from various sources, including the U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS), Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Carrboro Economic Development Department, and Esri, to present information at the most detailed level and using the most recent data available for the data type, at the time of the drafting of this report. Where applicable, this data uses U.S. Census Bureau decennial Census data for 2010 and 2020, ACS 5-Year Estimates by block group or Town-wide, Esri forecasts for 2024, and LEHD data for 2021. Where ACS data is used, the applicable year is identified.

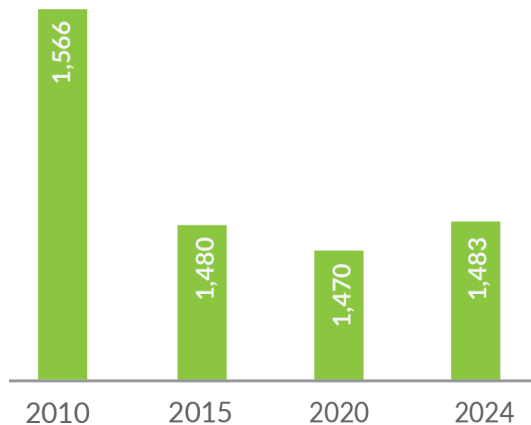
The boundaries of the study area do not align with standard geographies such as town limits, census tracts, or block groups established by the U.S. Census. Due to this difference, some of the analyses presented in this section rely on data by the block groups that are fully or partially located within the study area boundaries. Additionally, using Esri's Business Analyst tool, the data has undergone further apportionment to provide greater detail specific to the study area. Data apportionment involves the summarization or aggregation of data, which enables this analysis to utilize available census data by block group to more accurately calculate information for the defined study area.



POPULATION

Since 2010, Carrboro has grown by 11%, adding over 2,000 new residents. Over that same period, the downtown area population experienced a change of -5.3% representing a reduction of approximately 83 residents. In 2024, approximately 1,483 residents lived in downtown and the immediate surrounding area, representing approximately 7% of the population of Carrboro.

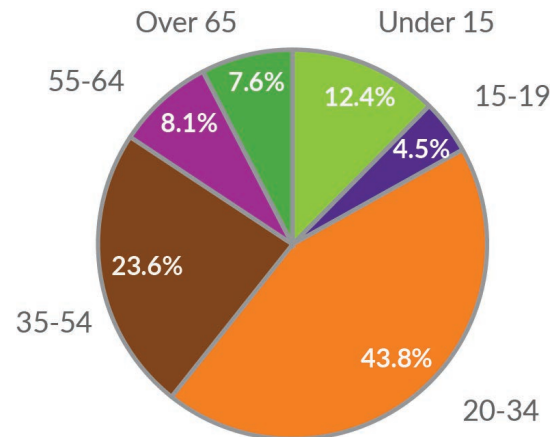
Figure 11. Downtown Population Change



AGE

In 2024, more than half the population in the downtown area was between 20 and 54 years of age, and approximately 251 people are under 20, making up 16.9% of the residents in the downtown area. The median age in downtown is 30.3 years of age which is similar to that of Carrboro at 33.1 years.

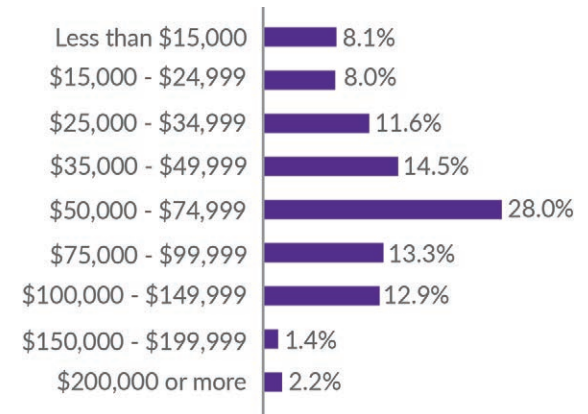
Figure 12. Downtown Age Distribution



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In 2024, the median household income for the downtown area was \$54,664, lower than the median income for the Town of Carrboro, which was \$85,927. The Downtown Household Income Chart below shows the distribution of the downtown population by income level. The household income statistics can impact the types of business options that will be attracted to this area of Carrboro.

Figure 13. Downtown Household Income



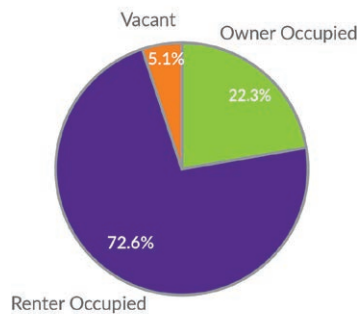
Housing

In 2024, there were approximately 727 housing units in the downtown study area. Of these units, around 22.3% were owner-occupied, while 72.6% were renter-occupied.

The Map 2 illustrates housing costs as a percentage of household income based on 2023 ACS data. While much of the cost burden falls within the range of 21%–40%, there is a noticeable increase in the cost burden of 41%–60% in the eastern and northern portions of the area. These regions are historically home to BIPOC communities, which may have faced systemic barriers to homeownership and equitable economic opportunities.

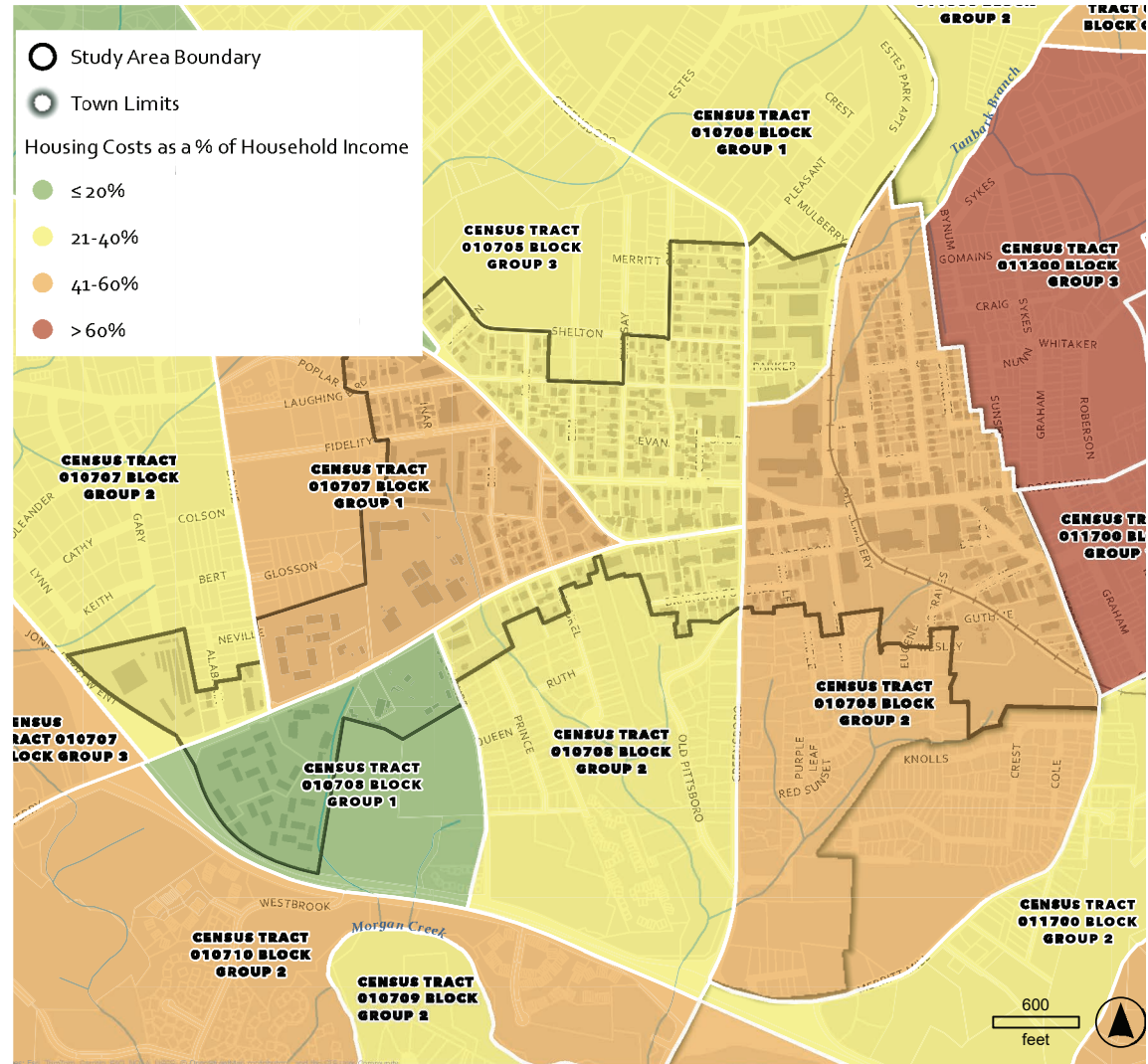
Considering the median household income of \$54,664 and the significant portion of the area that is renter-occupied, the increased cost burden presents a notable challenge for residents. This can disproportionately impact residents in historically underserved neighborhoods and may signal a need for expanded affordable housing options in the downtown area.

Figure 14. Owner/Renter Occupied Units



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029. U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census in 2020 geographies.

Map 4. Housing Cost as Percentage of Household Income



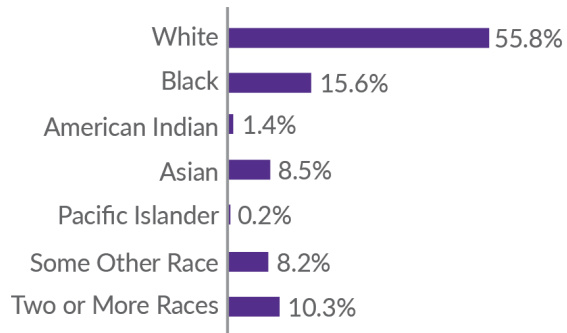
Source: 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In the downtown area, the largest percentage of residents is White, comprising 55.8% of the population. The remaining 44.2% includes residents of diverse racial backgrounds, with 15.6% identifying as Black. The Map 3 provides an overview of racial demographics within the downtown area by identifying the predominant race by block group. Most of the area is shown as White, however, one block group highlights Black residents or other people of color as the primary population.

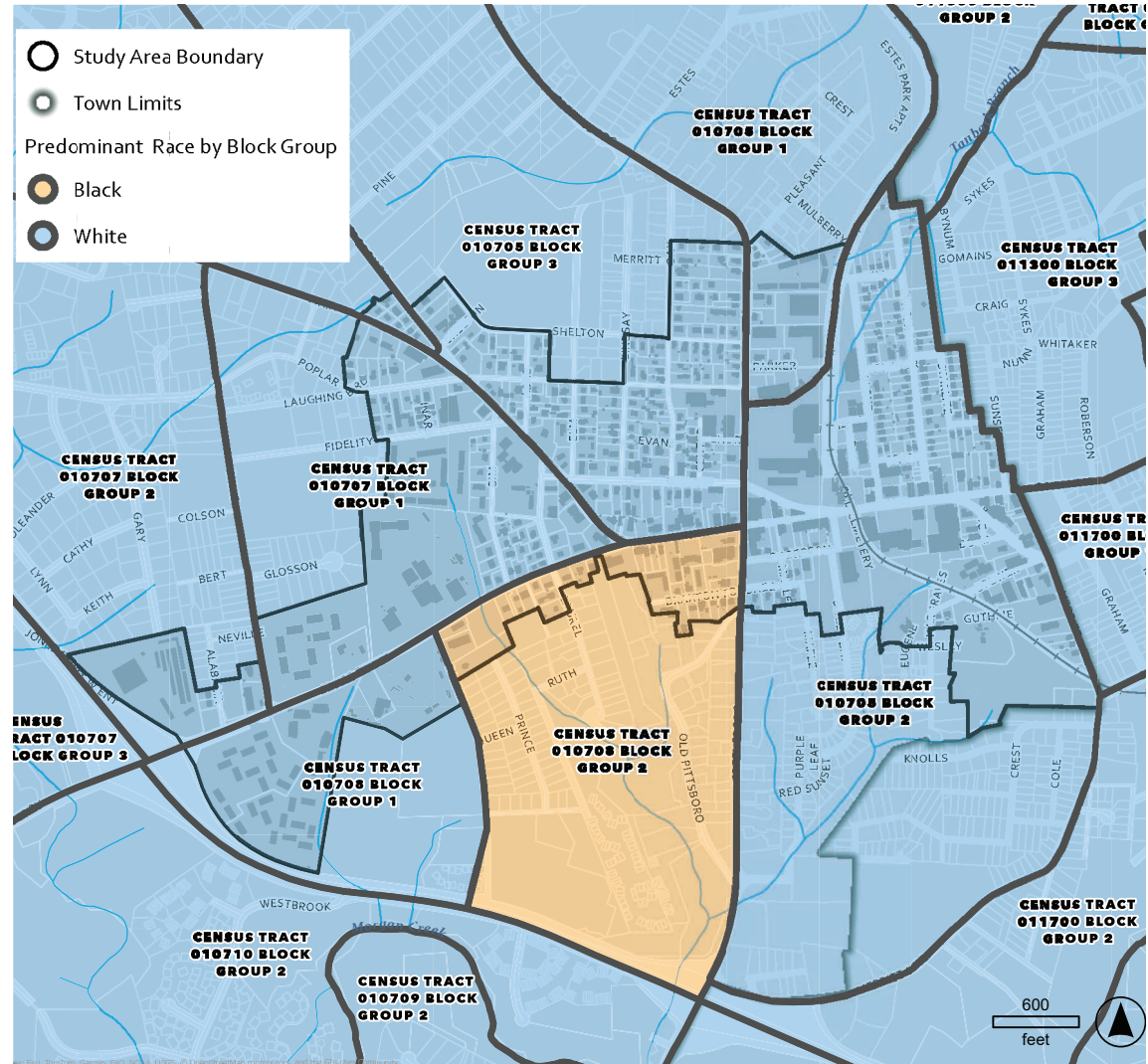
It is important to acknowledge that historically Black neighborhoods, such as the Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood, are not indicated as Black on the map. This discrepancy may stem from the aggregation of populations in larger demographic areas beyond the downtown boundaries. As this Plan is developed, efforts will be made to address and mitigate any potential disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities. The focus will remain on fostering equity, inclusion and representation to create a downtown area that serves all residents, prioritizing historically marginalized groups.

Figure 15. Downtown Race Distribution



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029. U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census in 2020 geographies.

Map 6. Predominant Race by Block Group



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Esri forecasts for 2024 and 2029. U.S. Census Bureau 2020 decennial Census in 2020 geographies.

COMMUTING

According to the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), in 2021, for the population over the age of 16 that are employed, the majority (nearly 99%) of people employed in the downtown area lived outside the area and commuted in for work. Conversely, 95% of those living in the downtown area work outside the area. This means very few people both live and work in the downtown area. Over 42% of downtown workers commute less than 10 miles to work, but many live or work nearby, while only 16.9% commute more than 50 miles. According to 2018- 2022 ACS 5-Year estimates, approximately 15.8% of the downtown area employed population age 16 and over commuted by public transit, 12.9% by walking, 8.9 % by biking, and 6.7% carpooled.

Figure 16. Distance Traveled to Work

Distance Traveled to work	Percent
Less than 10 miles	42.2%
10 to 24 miles	28.1%
25 to 50 miles	12.8%
Greater than 50 miles	16.9%
Total All Jobs	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2021).

Figure 17. Commute to Work by Mode



Source: 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Figure 18. Origin-Destination Employment Statistics

Inflow/Outflow Analysis	Percent
Employed in the Study Area	100.0%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	1.3%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	98.7%
Living in the Study Area	100.0%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	4.7%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	95.3%



Map Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2021).

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

According to the Carrboro Economic Development Department, more than 190 businesses are in the study area. The most prevalent business types are restaurants, food and beverage establishments, miscellaneous retail, and consumer services. A highly diverse business community helps to support a thriving downtown, and Carrboro is already experiencing some of what this success means.

Figure 19. Downtown Carrboro Businesses

Industry	Number	Percent
Automotive	5	3%
Banking	3	2%
Broadcast Media	1	1%
Civic & Social Organization	7	4%
Construction Services	6	3%
Consumer Services	19	10%
Creative Professional Services	8	4%
Entertainment	6	3%
Health, Wellness and Fitness	11	6%
Hospital & Health Care	8	4%
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	5	3%
Misc. Retail	38	20%
Professional Services	16	8%
Real Estate	8	4%
Restaurants, Food & Beverages	45	23%
Technology	5	3%
Veterinary	1	1%
Total	192	100%

Source: Carrboro Economic Development Department



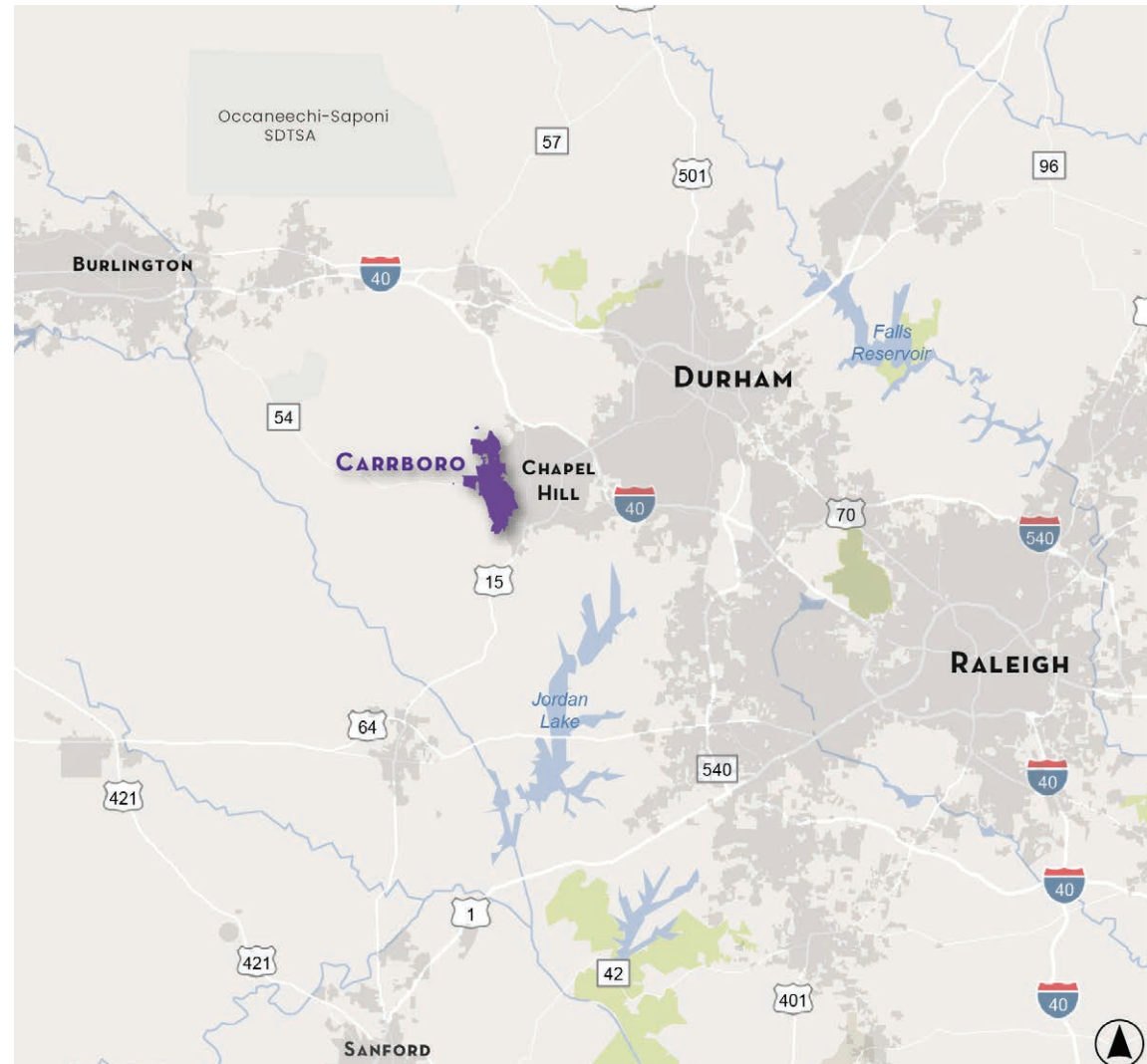
EXISTING CONDITIONS

REGIONAL CONTEXT

Carrboro is in Orange County, North Carolina. It is located west of Chapel Hill and approximately 30 miles from Raleigh and 18 miles from Durham. Carrboro has evolved from its historic roots as a mill town into a cultural and economic hub. The Town is well known for its diverse population and culture. The Town's close proximity (approximately 1.5 miles) to the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill and Durham, and their varying associated attractions (e.g., cultural, educational, medical, sports), influences Carrboro's economy and culture. The Town has a vibrant, youthful energy with small-town charm.

Downtown Carrboro is located south of the Town's geographic center and just east of its population centroid. It offers a walkable/bikeable environment with many destinations that serve as focal points for community life, such as Carrboro Farmers' Market, Carrboro Century Center, ArtsCenter, Weaver Street Market, Cat's Cradle, the Town's only hotel, multiple religious centers, restaurants, local service businesses and extensive music venues and support activities. The area will grow in regional significance with the upcoming opening of the Orange County Southern Branch Library at the Drakeford Library Complex.

Map 7. Regional Context Map



POLICY & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

When examining a place, it is important to look at it through a variety of frameworks to ensure that recommendations will be contextually appropriate. The Town has approved a number of plans, policies, ordinances and other regulatory documents over the past 40 years. In particular, two have profound impacts on the downtown area and Jones Ferry Road corridor, as follows:

LAND USE ORDINANCE

The Carrboro Land Use Ordinance (LUO) was originally adopted in 1980 and includes numerous updates through 2024. The LUO regulates land use, development patterns and building forms throughout the Town of Carrboro. This ordinance includes requirements for all development in the Town, including the downtown area and Jones Ferry Road corridor, and is the basis for how the built environment looks and functions. The allowable location of uses, buffering/separation of different uses, sign sizes and appearances, building architecture, tree planting requirements, and many other provisions contained in the LUO are what drive the feeling of the built environment. In the very near future, the Town will begin a major rewrite of the LUO to modernize the standards and achieve the goals identified in the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Carrboro Downtown Design Guidelines were adopted as policy in 1992. These guidelines are intended to encourage a high-quality built environment in Carrboro's Downtown Business District. The guidelines split downtown into four subdistricts: East Main Street, Historic/Commercial, West Main/Weaver Street and Old Industrial/Commercial. Each subdistrict includes specific guidance on

what should be encouraged, considered and discouraged to integrate new development into the existing community. Several identified overarching goals in the guidelines include the following:

- Promote the development of an identifiable downtown center that is filled with lively, economically viable activity.
- Improve the quality of the physical environment in the downtown by creating a high level of expectation in the quality of downtown development at all scales.
- Create a distinctive and continuously landscaped street and open space character.
- Strengthen the pedestrian character of the downtown and create new pedestrian linkages.
- Improve maintenance and encourage small scale improvements to existing buildings and sites.

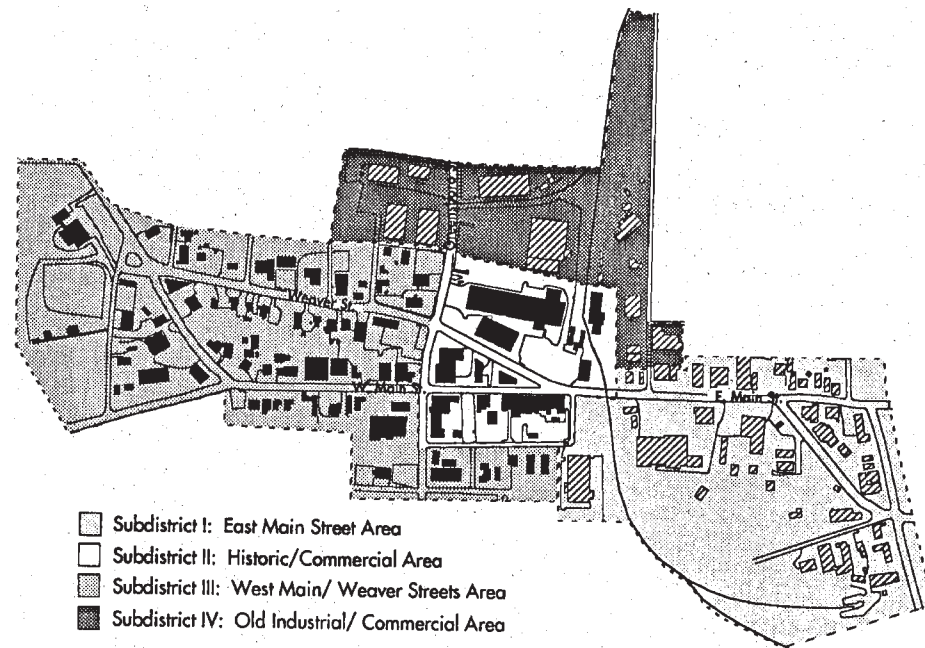


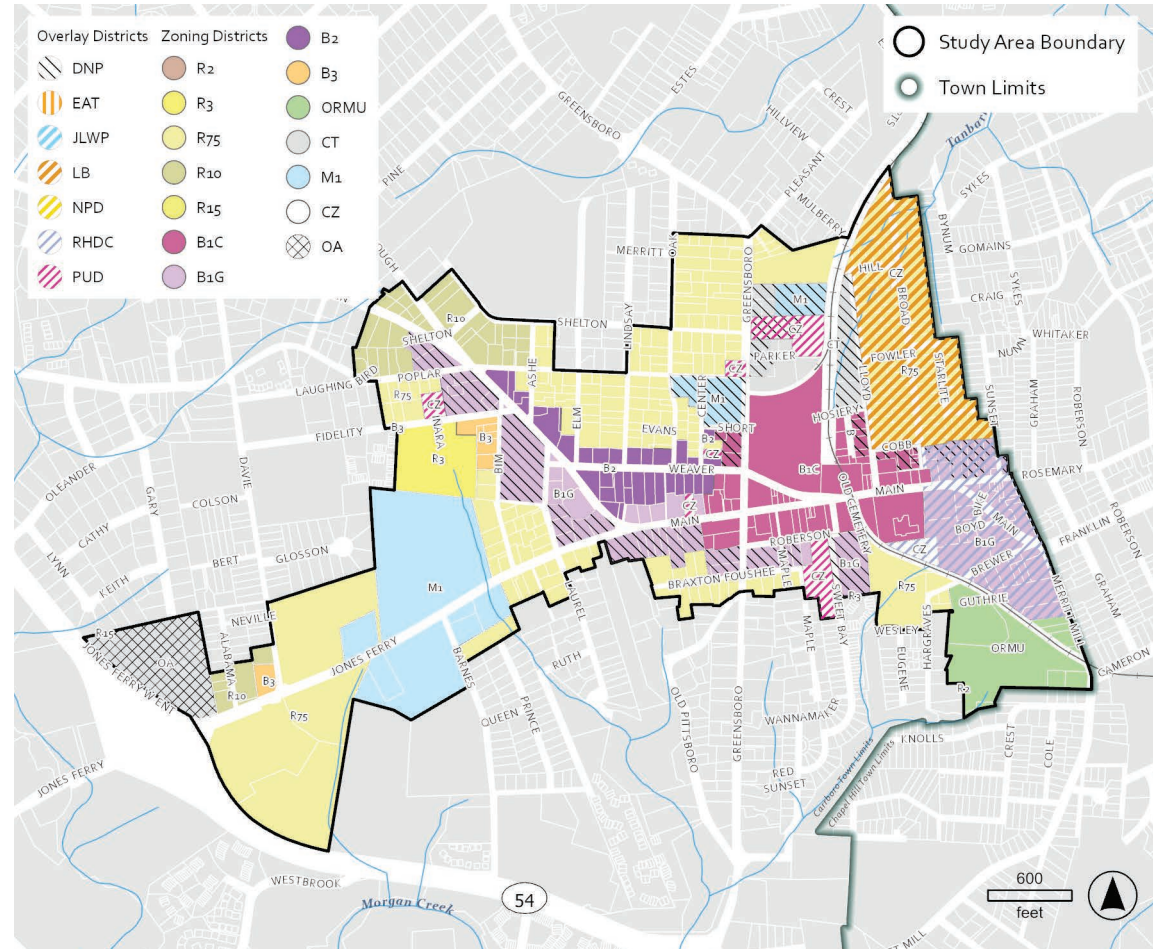
Figure 20. Downtown Design Guidelines Subdistricts

ZONING

Zoning in the study area includes a number of different base districts and overlay districts. The following districts are included in the downtown area and the Jones Ferry Road corridor:

- Lloyd-Broad Overlay district that protects and preserves the character of the Lloyd-Broad neighborhood.
- General Business district that accommodates a broad range of business uses.
- Light Manufacturing district that accommodates limited industrial uses and provides primary job opportunities.
- Office/Assembly district that provides for office, administrative and other professional industries close to arterial streets.
- Fringe Commercial district that provides a transitional area for commercial uses in a more residential form to support a mix of residential and commercial uses.
- Town Center Business district that encourages a unified, compact, contiguous and pedestrian-friendly shopping and entertainment area.
- Downtown Neighborhood Protection Overlay district that guides compatible transition between downtown Carrboro and adjacent residential uses.

Map 8. Zoning Map



Zoning Districts

R2 - Residential
 R3 - Residential
 R10 - Residential
 R15 - Residential
 R75 - Residential
 B1C - Town Center Business
 B1G - General Business

B2 - Fringe Commercial
 B3 - Neighborhood Business
 CT - Corporate Town
 CZ - Conditional Zoning
 M1 - Light Manufacturing
 OA - Office/Assembly
 ORMU - Office-Residential Mixed Use

Overlay Districts

DNP - Downtown Neighborhood Protection
 EAT - Restaurant District
 JLWP - Jordan Lake Watershed Protection
 LB - Lloyd/Broad
 NPD - Neighborhood Preservation
 RHDC - Residential High Density and Commercial
 PUD - Planned Unit Development

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

The physical framework looks at circulation patterns, points of interest, buildings and utility infrastructure in the study area. This helps to determine the characteristics that create the physical experience of the downtown area. While much of Carrboro has a robust urban forest, portions of the study area are lacking in tree canopy. Increasing tree canopy in this area will help to advance climate action goals and increase pedestrian comfort.

MOBILITY NETWORK

A mobility network is a system of transportation options available in an area. This includes roads, bike lanes, sidewalks and public transit. The purpose of a mobility network is to make transportation easy, safe and accessible for everyone, whether driving, biking, walking or taking public transit. When different transportation methods are well-connected, it can help reduce traffic, improve air quality and improve people's lives through mobility choice.

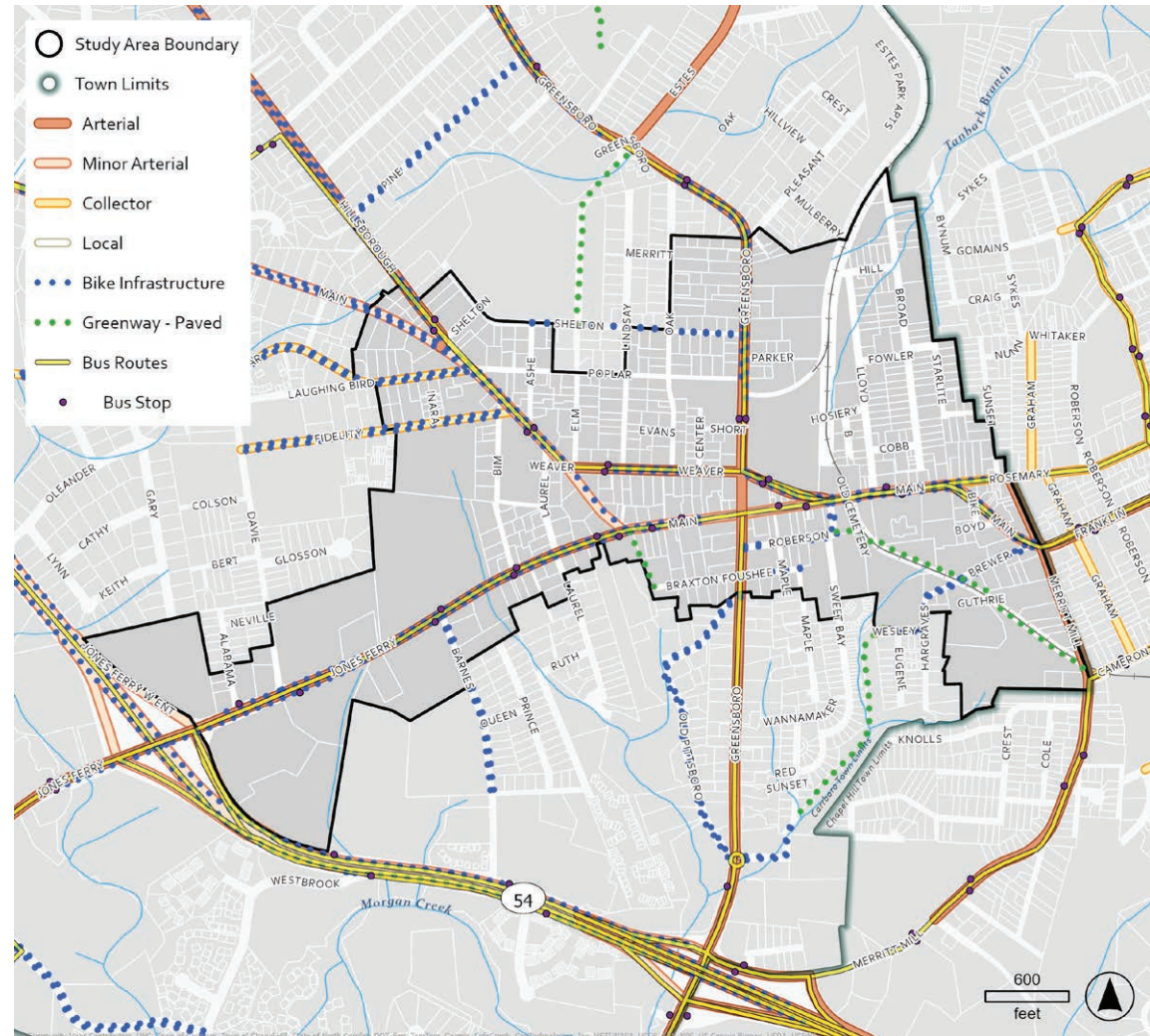
The mobility network in the study area includes arterial, minor arterial, collector and local streets. Notably, most arterial and minor arterial roads are owned by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and changes to these street cross-sections require a higher level of jurisdictional coordination.

A notable amount of bicycle infrastructure provides access to and through the study area. These facilities are further detailed on the next page.

Chapel Hill Transit provides bus service within the study area, with three primary routes: the F, CW and J routes. Bus stops and routes are depicted on the adjacent map.

The existing mobility network contains a wide range of landscaping enhancements and street tree coverage, providing a mixed experience for users throughout the study area.

Map 9. Mobility Network

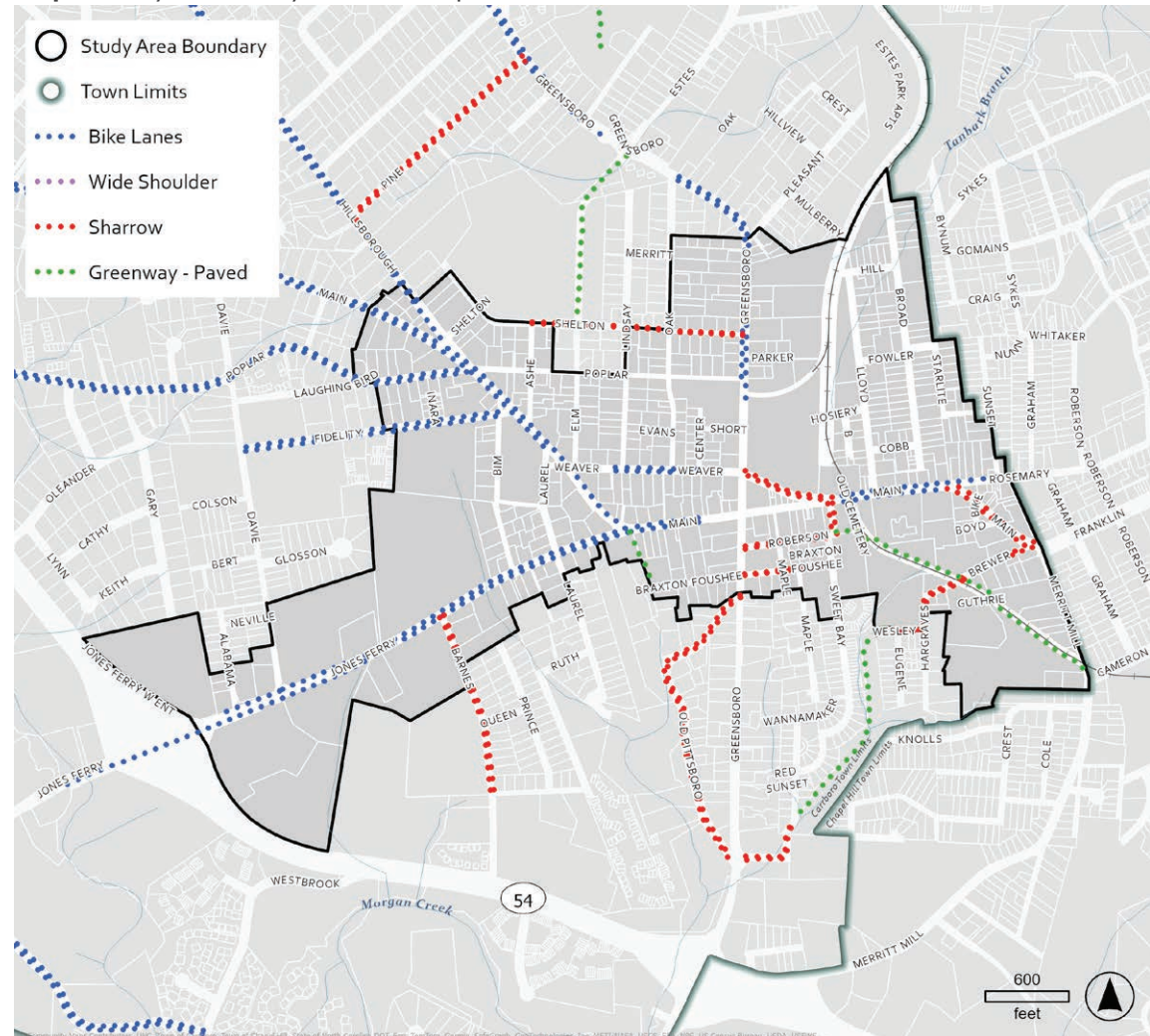


BICYCLE MOBILITY NETWORK

Bicycle infrastructure aims to provide safe, convenient and accessible routes for cyclists, thus allowing more people to choose biking over driving. Providing a complete, comfortable network of bicycle infrastructure creates a real option for people to get around the community and satisfy their daily needs without the use of a vehicle. By integrating bike infrastructure into the broader transportation network, the Town can reduce traffic congestion, lower carbon emissions and promote healthier lifestyles among residents.

The bicycle mobility network in the downtown area includes on-street facilities such as bike lanes, wide shoulders and sharrows, as well as off-street paved greenways shared with pedestrians. There are two primary greenways in the study area: the Libba Cotten Bike Path, which largely runs parallel to the Southern Railroad, and the Roberson Place Bike Path, which runs along a creek corridor between Wesley Street and Purple Leaf Place.

Map 10. Bicycle Mobility Network Map



PARKING

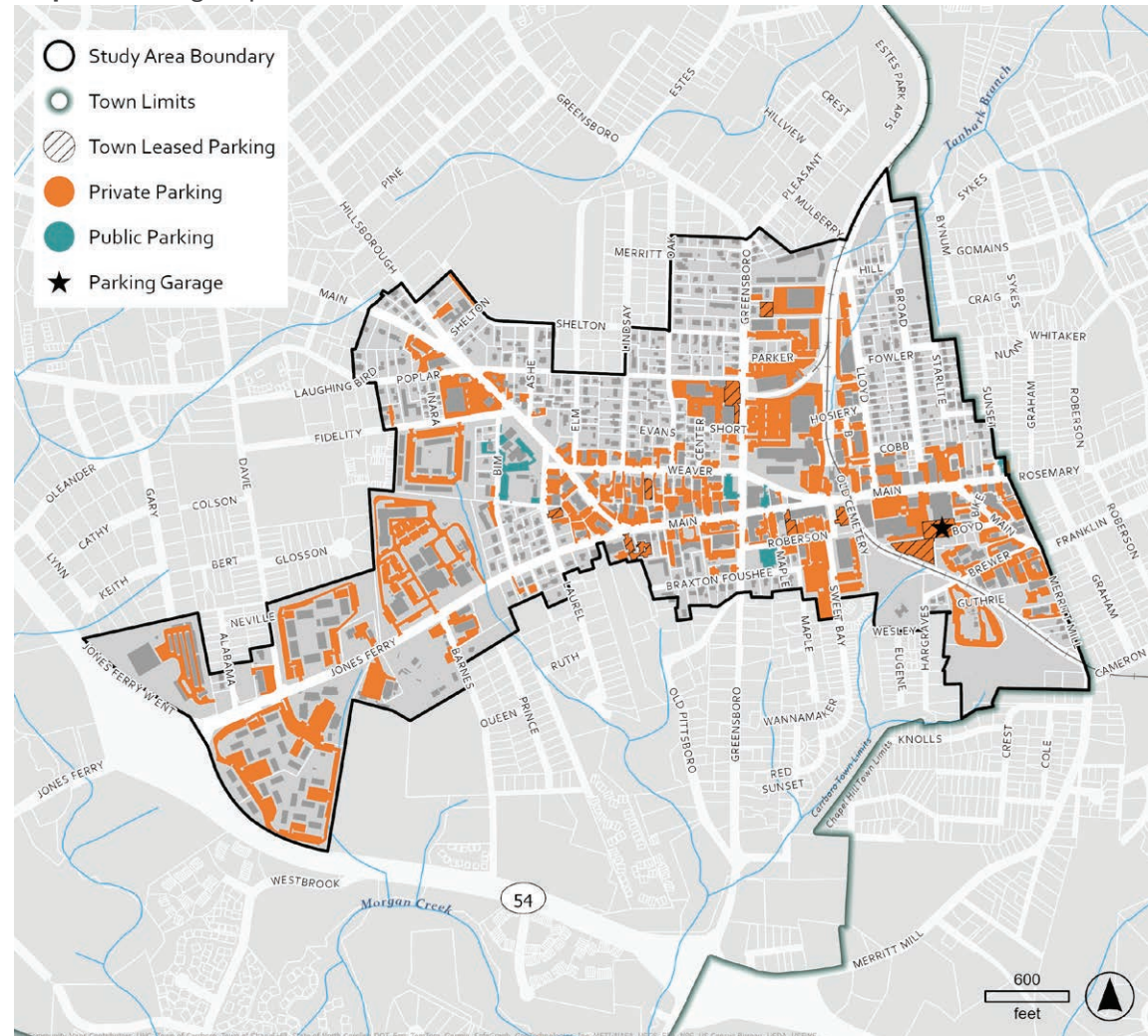
Parking is a critical component of a downtown area. In many downtowns, there is a perception of insufficient parking, even when sufficient parking is available within a short walking distance of most destinations. This can often be addressed by enhancing pedestrian corridors that connect parking areas and destinations to be more safe, comfortable and welcoming.

The parking map illustrates the distribution of public and private parking, as well as lots leased by the Town within Carrboro's downtown area. Due to narrow rights-of-way, most parking is located off-street. Notably, off-street, surface parking areas comprise approximately 20% of the study area. Of that acreage, the majority of parking areas are private or reserved parking.

As the downtown area continues to develop, additional parking areas may be needed. If that is the case, the location and quantity of new parking will need to be carefully considered. Depending on the density and intensity of the surrounding area, structured parking may be a more efficient use of land and is sometimes a better option than surface parking areas. When structured parking is used, the location of accessible parking spaces and accessible routes from the garage to points of interest needs to be considered.

Improved parking wayfinding systems would also help maximize the efficiency of parking resources, ensuring convenient access to businesses and attractions. The Town developed a Wayfinding Program in 2020 and is working on implementation.

Map 11. Parking Map



Note: The Town completed a Downtown Parking Plan in 2017. The boundaries of that planning effort were different from the study area boundary of this Downtown Area Plan, so calculations in the description on this page will differ from those in the 2017 Downtown Parking Plan.

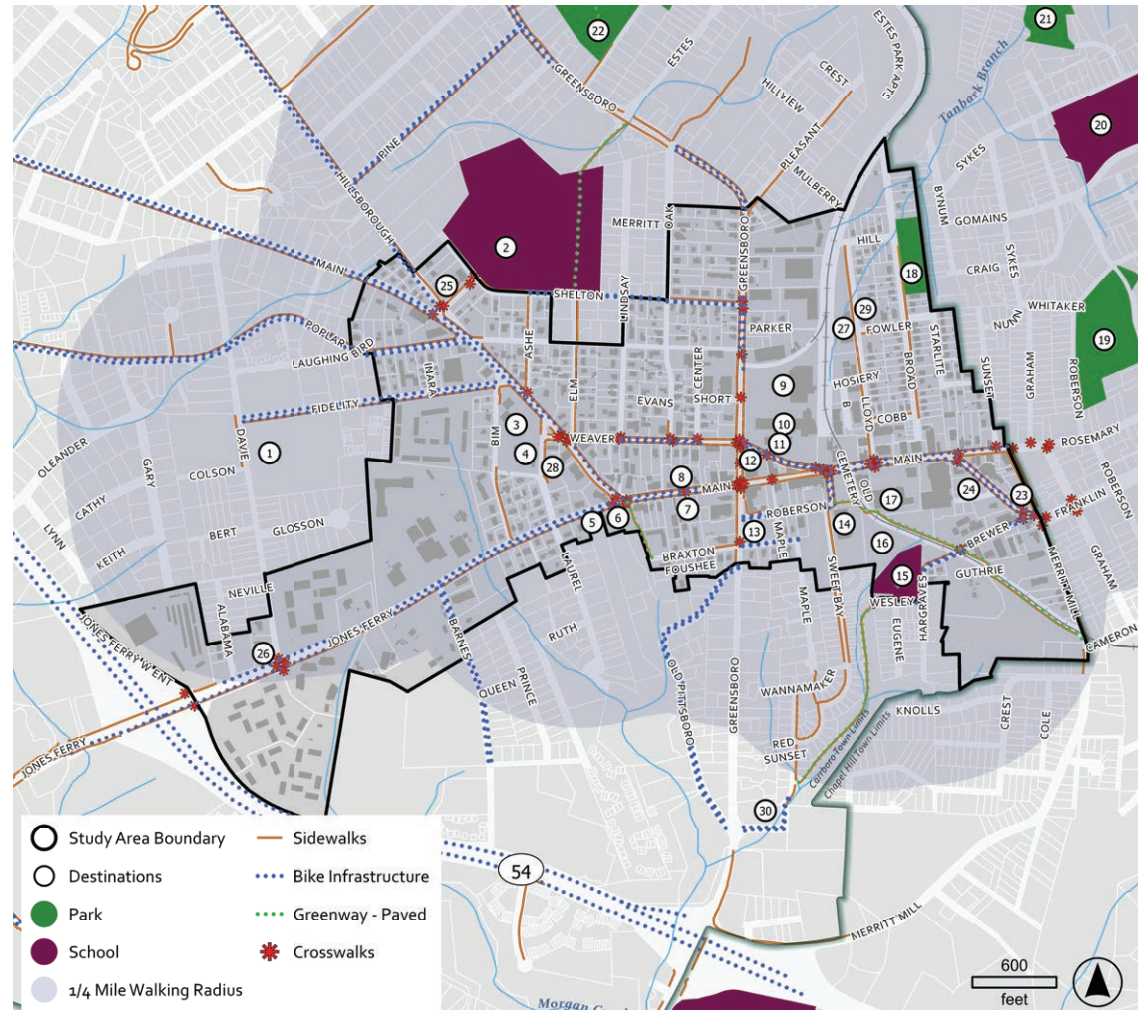
DESTINATIONS & WALKABILITY

This map highlights some of the destinations that draw residents and visitors to the downtown area. These destinations include, but are not limited to, parks, schools, cultural institutions, community service locations, destination businesses and Town Hall. Many of the destinations are close together and within walking/biking distance of one another. The map also shows the pedestrian and bicycle network, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure and greenways, as well as a quarter-mile buffer from the center of each destination. The quarter-mile buffer represents approximately a five-minute walk.

The sidewalk network in the core of the study area is nearly complete, contributing to a walkable downtown. Sidewalk connectivity varies in the surrounding area, with some streets having complete connectivity and others having gaps. The quality, design and width of sidewalks vary, as does the level of pedestrian comfort and perceived safety. In some areas, narrow sidewalks associated with narrow rights-of-way constrict the pedestrian flow.

Accessibility for populations with physical disabilities also varies, creating unique challenges for experiencing downtown. Special consideration should be made for accessible parking and routes, including clear wayfinding so everyone feels comfortable and welcome to visit downtown.

Map 12. Destinations & Walkability Map



1	Westwood Cemetery	7	Mill Superintendent's House/ Club Nova	13	Drakeford Library Complex	19	Hargraves Community Center	25	Carrboro United Methodist Church
2	Carrboro Elementary School	8	Inter-Faith Ministries	14	The ArtsCenter	20	Northside Elementary School	26	The Pantry
3	Town Hall Complex	9	Harris Teeter	15	Community School for People Under Six & Adjacent Mini Park	21	Umstead Park	27	Piedmont Health
4	Town Commons/Carrboro Farmers Market	10	Carr Mill Mall	16	Old Cemetery	22	Wilson Park	28	Montessori Academy
5	Strayhorn Houses	11	Weaver Street Market	17	Cat's Cradle	23	St. Paul AME Church	29	Clay Centre
6	CommunityWorx	12	Century Center	18	Baldwin Park	24	Church of God	30	South Green

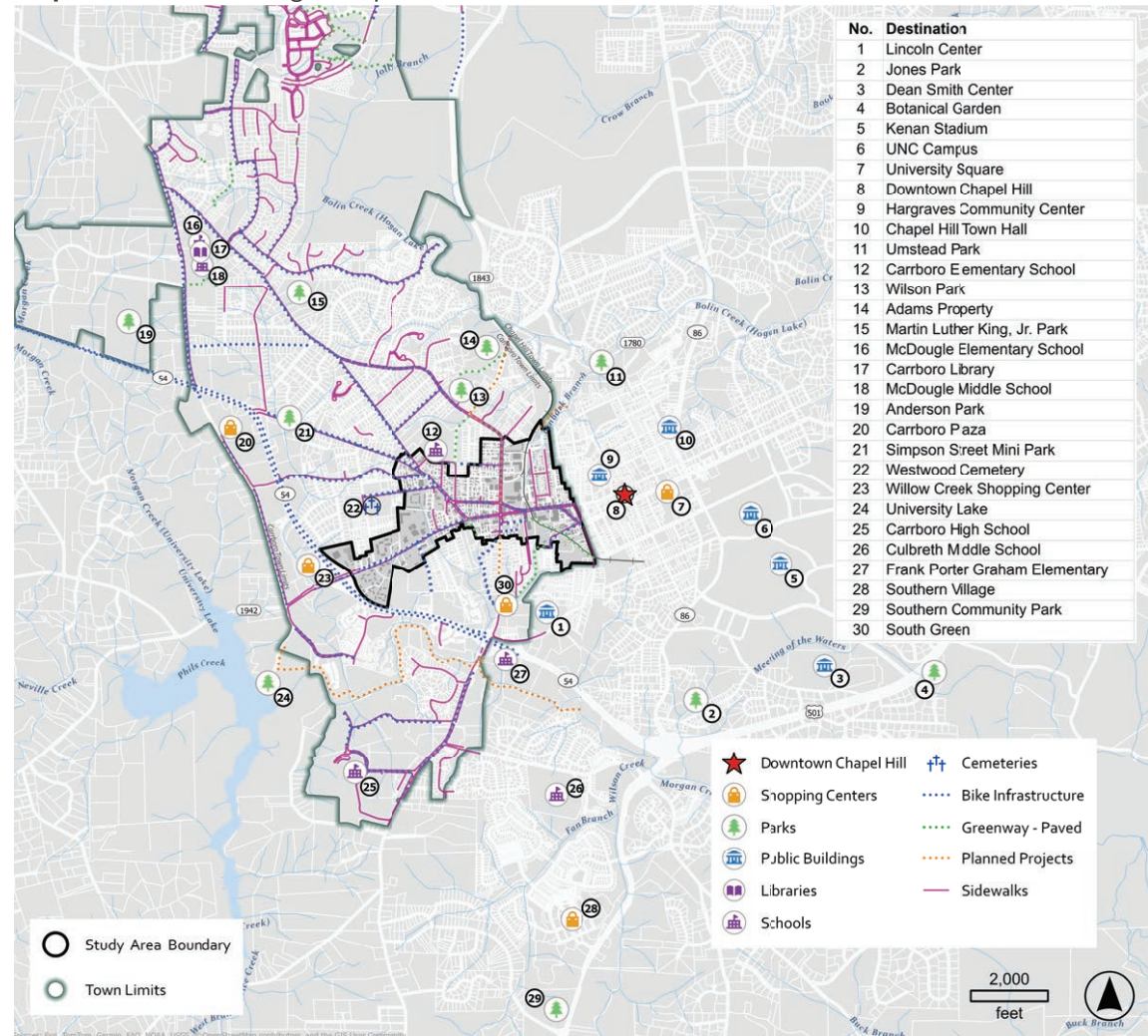
POTENTIAL LINKAGES

There may be opportunities to connect to various points of interest outside the study area. These include shopping centers, parks, public buildings, libraries and schools. Downtown Chapel Hill is directly east of the study area, and the UNC at Chapel Hill is a seven-minute drive or short bike ride from downtown Carrboro. In addition to the Chapel Hill Transit routes previously noted in the Mobility Network section, Go Triangle route 405 provides regional bus connectivity to Chapel Hill and Durham.

As seen on the adjacent map, the Town already has substantial pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connecting the surrounding areas, some of the identified points of interest and the study area. While not within the study area (or depicted on the map), the Fan Branch Greenway is located southeast of the study area and provides connectivity to Southern Village and Southern Community Park.

Further expanding convenient bicycle, pedestrian and transit access to the study area will help draw people downtown, encourage frequent visits, and support a vision of creating a car-optional downtown.

Map 13. Potential Linkages Map



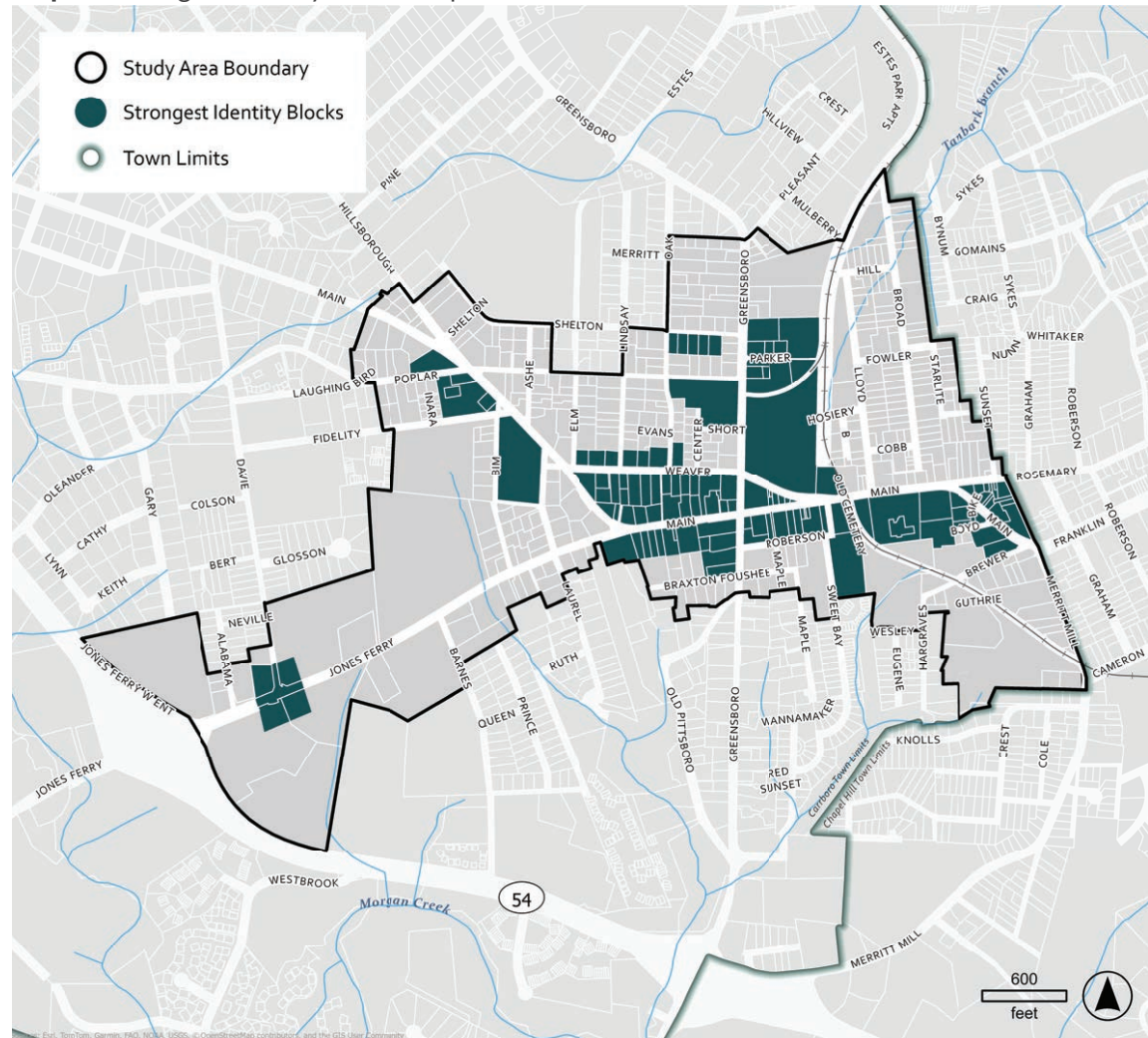
STRONGEST IDENTITY BLOCKS

This map illustrates blocks with the strongest existing identity and investment based on an observational survey of current conditions. Identity relates to an area's character, look, feel and general level of foot traffic. The destinations in these blocks typically draw many people to the study area.

While the strongest identity blocks are spread throughout the study area, the most dense concentrations are located along Main, Greensboro and Weaver streets.

Having complete pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to these areas, as well as sufficient bicycle parking, can help to diversify how people choose to travel in the downtown area. In addition, these areas are already successfully attracting people to downtown. Building on the successes in these area, with potential development or redevelopment in the vicinity is one way to organically expand the areas of interest within the study area, thus attracting more investment and interest into the downtown area.

Map 14. Strongest Identity Blocks Map



UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Carrboro's water and sewer infrastructure is provided by Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA), a regional public utility that provides water and sewer service to Orange County, Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC at Chapel Hill. The OWASA water treatment plant is located within the Plan's study area along Jones Ferry Road.

Ample water and sewer are available throughout the downtown area and Jones Ferry Road corridor to support existing and future growth opportunities. OWASA also supplies reclaimed water to portions of the service area, and there are opportunities to expand the use of this resource to support more sustainable water usage. While ample water and sewer supply are available in the study area, the efficient use of these resources should still be considered and carefully planned to support long-term sustainable practices.

The Town's electrical service is provided by Duke Energy, a private electrical supplier for many portions of North Carolina. Electrical power transmission and distribution lines are located overhead on poles, generally along road corridors. Due to numerous challenges and physical constraints on relocating these lines underground, it is unlikely that the Town will see existing overhead lines buried. Being mindful that the existing poles and wires will likely remain is an important consideration for the built environment.



Overhead utility lines along Jones Ferry Road



OWASA Jones Ferry Road Water Treatment Plant

PLANNING & OWNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

The planning framework looks at the study area's existing land use, public/institutional owned land and vacant land. The ownership framework also examines the land values and ease of assembly. This analysis highlights areas that may be available for development or redevelopment and could build on the success of existing activity.

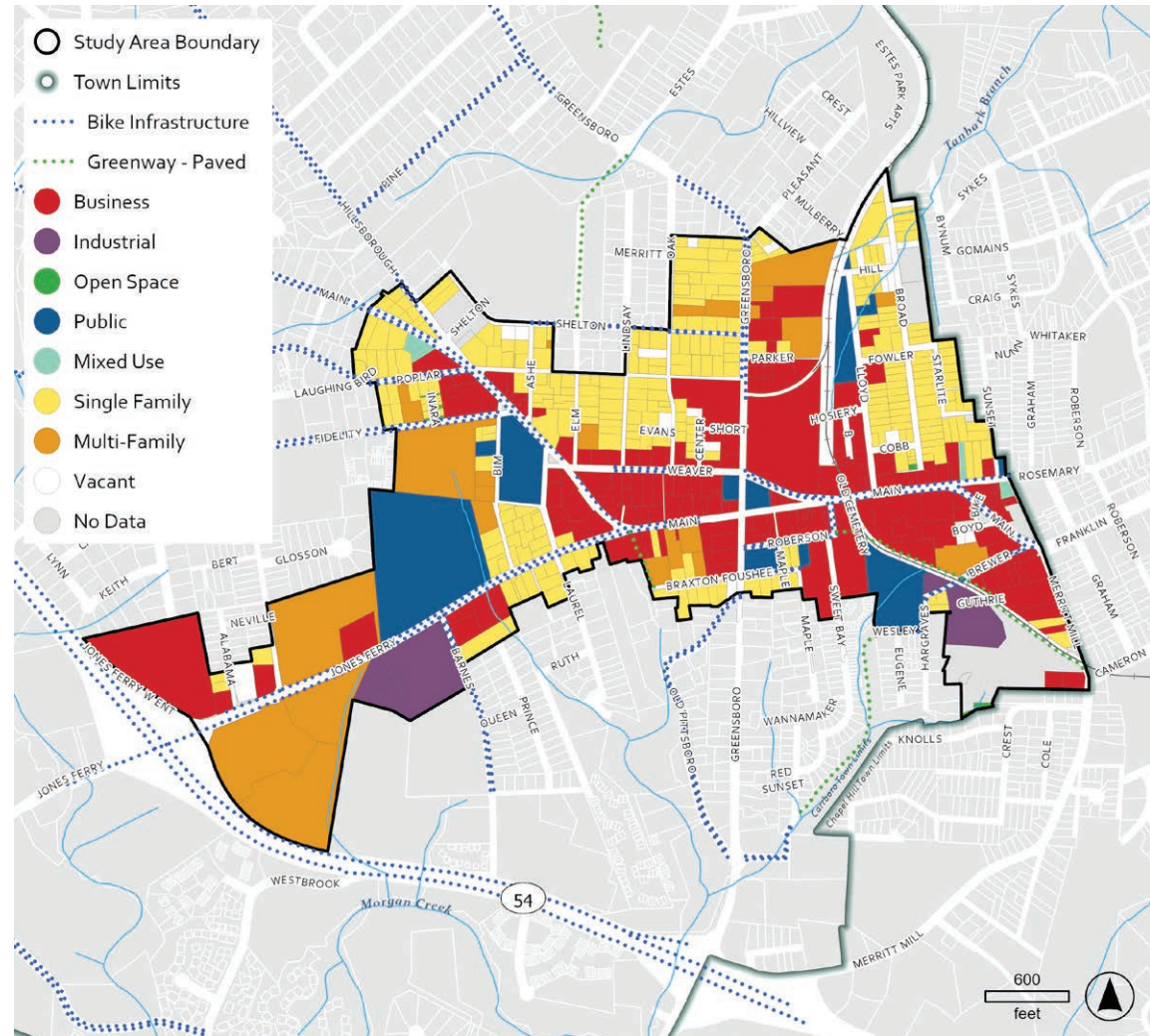
EXISTING LAND USE

This map depicts the existing land uses in the study area. Land use is a critical ingredient in determining the way people live and work. Two factors to consider when designating land use are how land is currently being used and how it could potentially be used in the future. In many cases, the existing active land use on a property remains unchanged. For undeveloped property, there are opportunities to shape the way land can be developed in the future to better meet Town goals.

The study area's two most prevalent land uses are commercial and residential. While these uses complement each other, the interface between them must be thoughtfully considered.

Of note is the limited parks/open space land use in the downtown area and few vacant parcels that could easily be converted to public open space.

Map 15. Existing Land Use



PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL OWNED LAND

Public facilities in downtowns are often activity generators. People visit Town Hall to seek support from their local government, take care of permits and attend various meetings, among other things. Town Commons is home to the successful Carrboro Farmers' Market and many local festivals. Other Town-owned parks provide daily recreational opportunities.

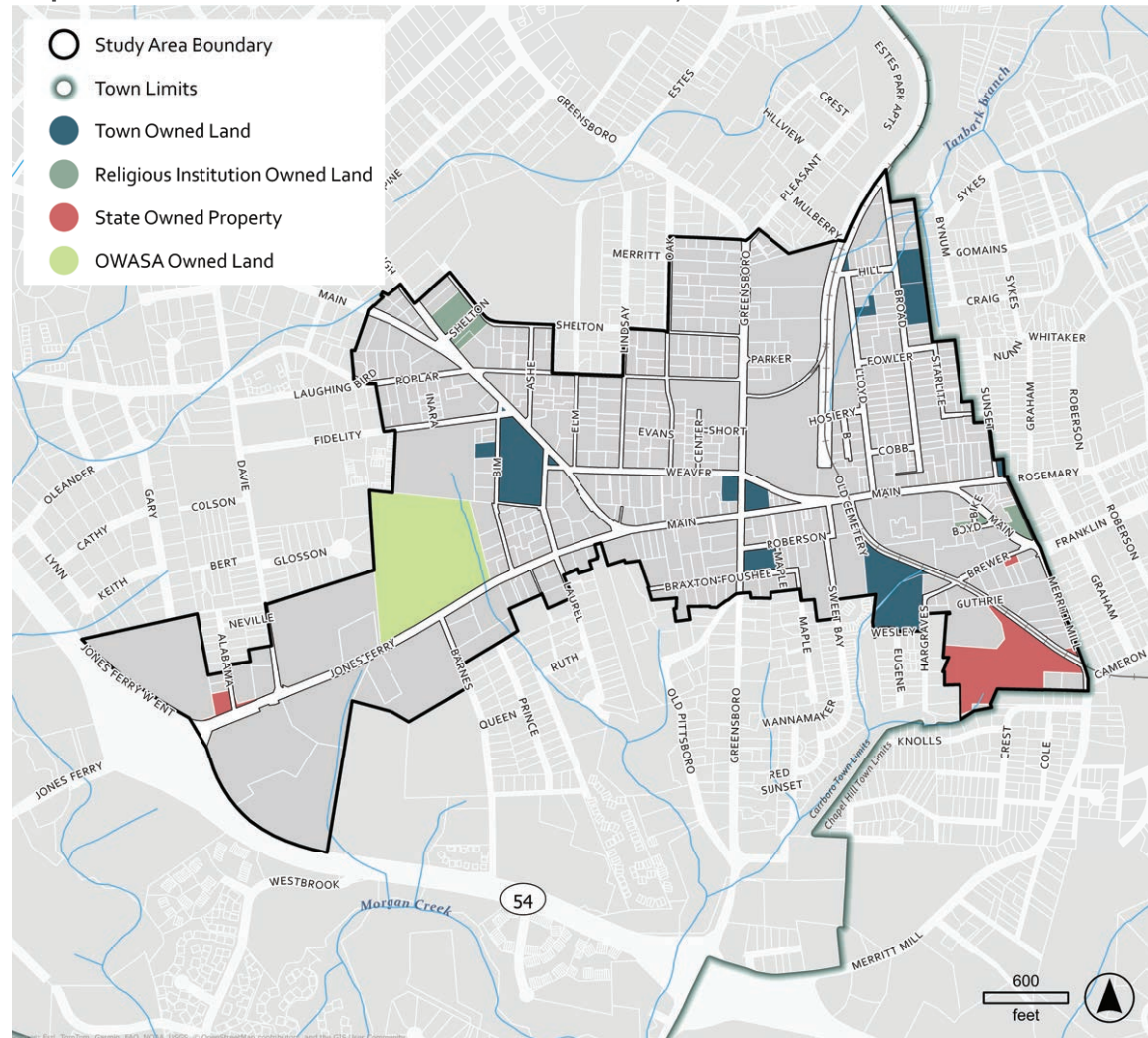
Religious institutions are often filled at certain hours but empty at other times. If a partnership was created between the Town and religious institutions, the parking lots at these facilities could provide overflow parking locations during non-peak times.

The state of North Carolina owns a few properties downtown, most notably the study area's largest vacant lot located at the southeast corner of the study area. Converting this property to a taxable use could provide additional tax revenue for the Town and a sizable development opportunity.

The OWASA water treatment plant is prominently located along Jones Ferry Road. The property's frontage is well maintained and the plant is not anticipated to relocate.

Some of these public and institutionally owned parcels help to draw people to the study area and most are unlikely to change uses or ownership in the near future.

Map 16. Public and Institutional Owned Land in the Study Area



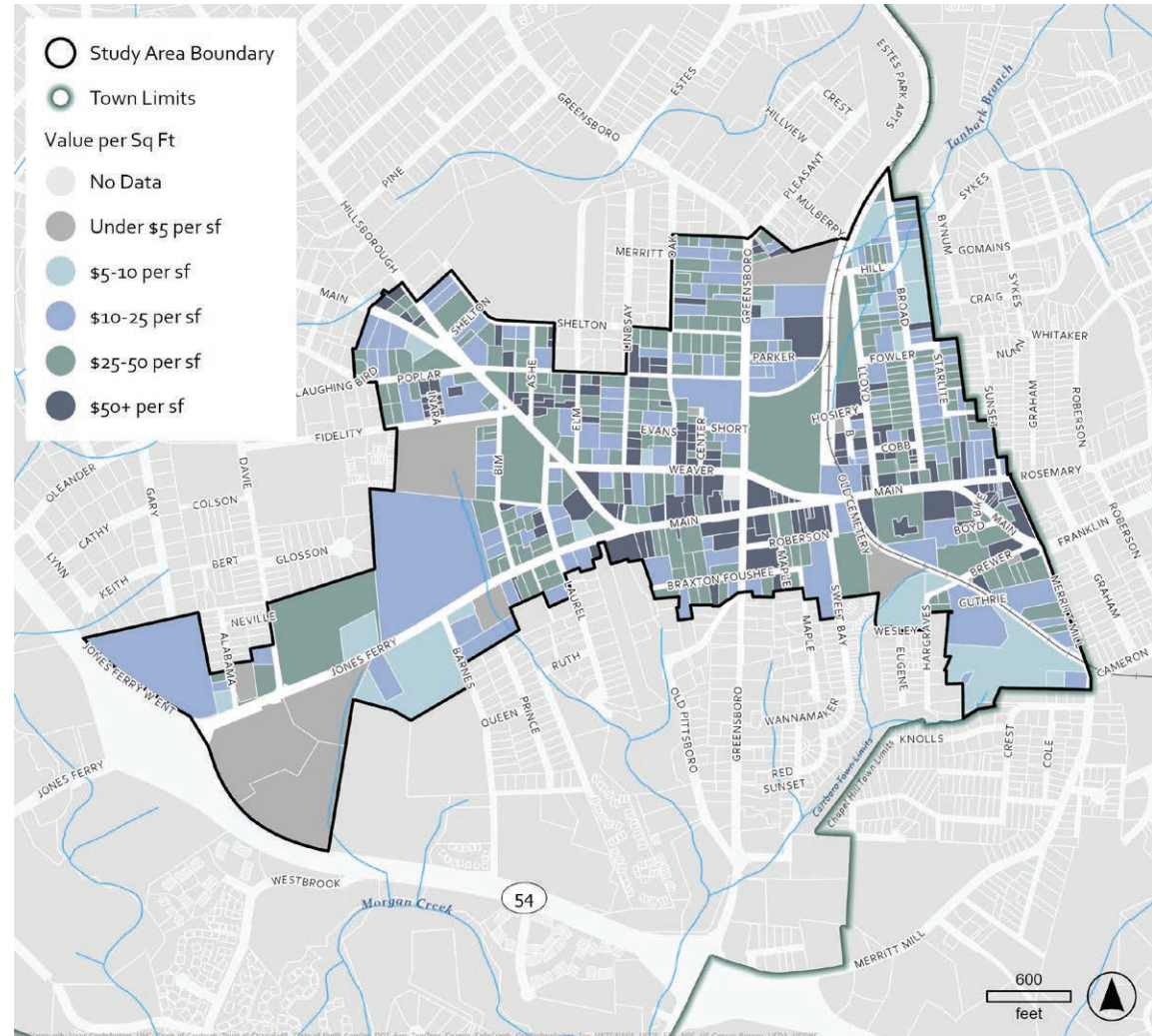
LAND VALUES

Examining the land values within the study area provides baseline data that can set the stage for future development. It identifies locations where redevelopment is unlikely to occur based on high values while simultaneously identifying nearby areas that don't currently have a high land value but can build off the momentum generated by the high land value parcels. The land values in Map 18 are based on price per square foot (excluding building value) and do not represent market values, the owners' expectations or taxable values.

It is important to consider that certain property types, such as those owned by government or religious institutions, are exempt from property tax.

The study area includes all land value increments. However, a high concentration of land values of more than \$25 per square foot is situated along Main Street. This is expected since this is the primary thoroughfare through the heart of downtown Carrboro. Parcels valued at under \$10 per square foot tend to be on the periphery of the study area. Having a wide range of land values helps maintain a diverse local economy and housing options. Naturally occurring affordable housing and affordable business spaces are retained through having lower land values.

Map 18. Land Values Map



Land values were determined by dividing the parcel valuation (from parcel data) by the parcel area.

EASE OF ASSEMBLY

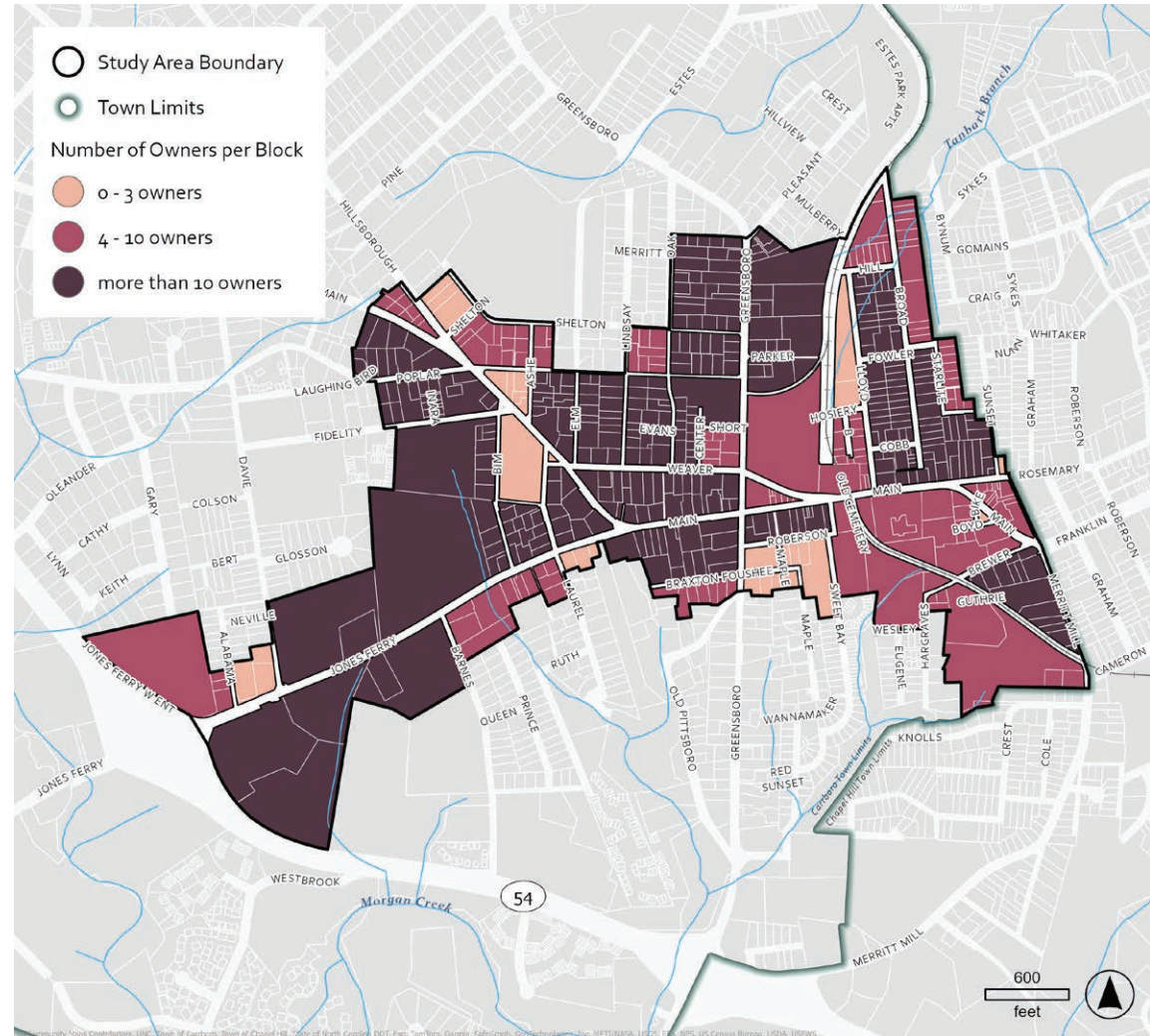
The ease of assembly assessment examines how many property owners are in a specific area. For this study, a “block” refers to a piece of land usually separated from other blocks by streets, alleys or railroad tracks. (Some blocks extend beyond the study area boundary, but only the portion within the study area is identified on Map 19.)

Blocks with fewer than three owners and/or large parcels have the greatest potential for future development or redevelopment because they may not require as much effort to combine properties into a bigger site. Blocks with four to 10 smaller landowners can still be developed, but it may be more complicated as some owners might not be interested in selling or developing their land. These blocks, however, can be ideal for infill development projects which can attract smaller or more creative developers. Blocks with more than 10 small landowners often pose the most significant challenge for consolidation.

While having some larger parcels available for redevelopment allows for needed larger-scale projects, Carrboro has seen incredible success with smaller spaces supporting local businesses, so maintaining numerous small parcels in the downtown area also provides opportunities for more incremental growth.

Most blocks in the study area have four or more owners, which may limit the viability of and/or add extra challenges for larger-scale development. However, due to the street layouts within the study area, some of the blocks include an extensive area (e.g., the

Map 19. Ease of Assembly Map



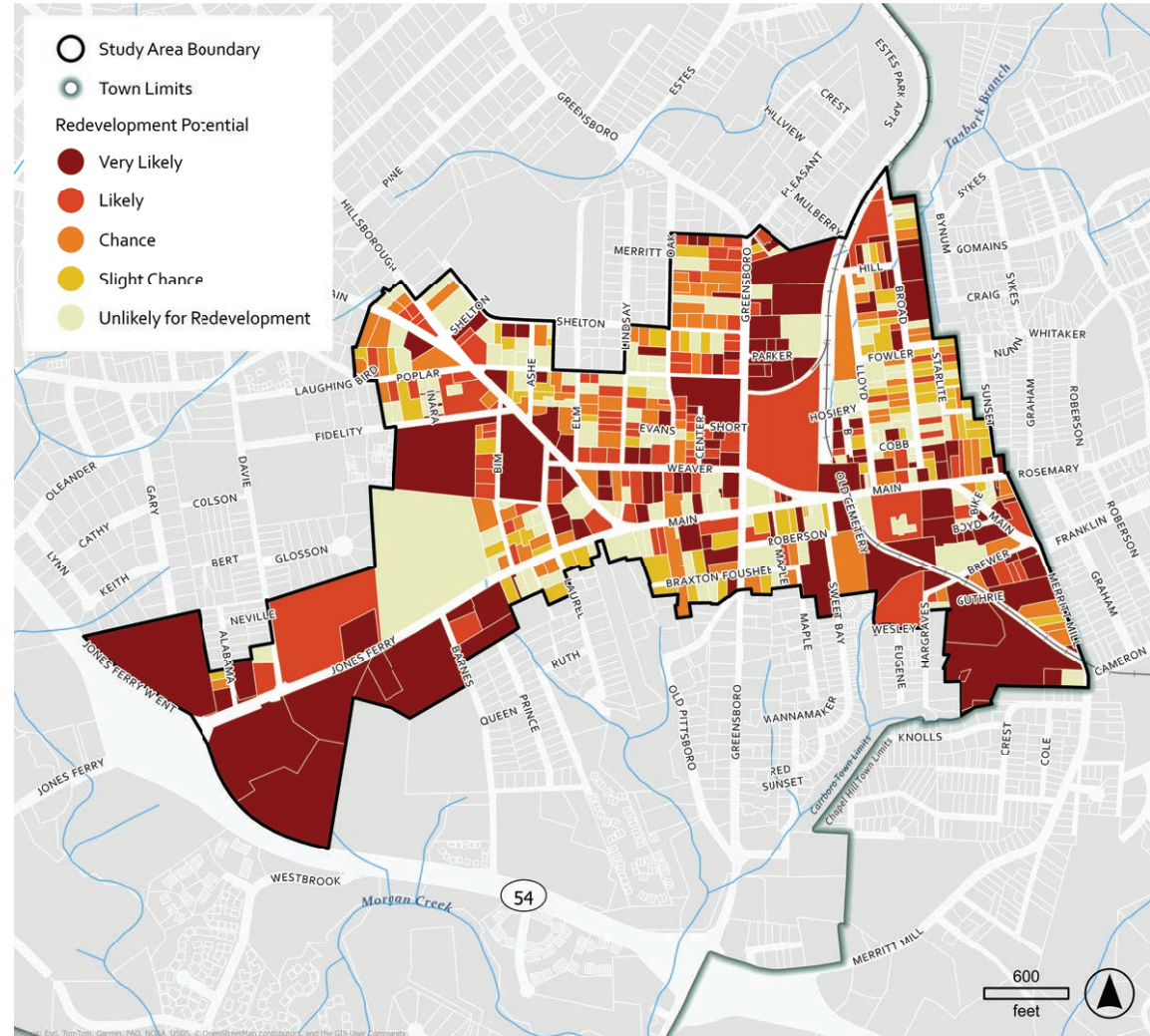
Jones Ferry area). So while there may be more than 10 owners, some of those owners have a very large property that would not require additional land assembly.

IMPROVEMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY ANALYSES

These analyses provide a snapshot of development opportunities on a larger, district-wide basis and are each one factor of many in determining the outcome and potential of redevelopment on a specific parcel. These maps do not indicate any one parcel will be redeveloped but are helpful in identifying clusters for further analysis of opportunities before additional steps are taken.

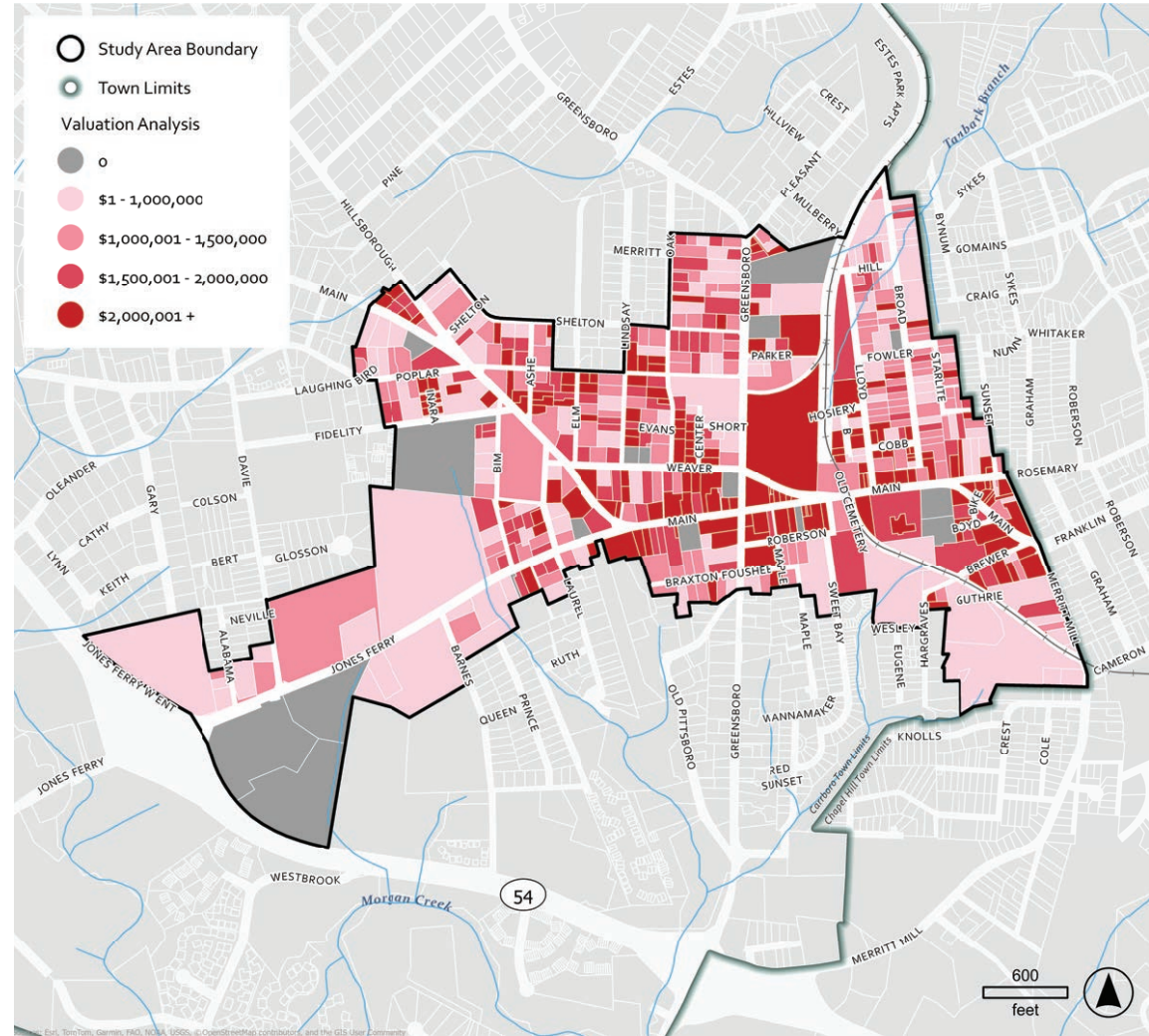
The Improvement Analysis helps identify parcels that may be opportunities for redevelopment. The analysis produces a ratio from the improved value and land value of a property. Essentially, a parcel where the land is a greater portion of the property value than the improvements on the property present a lower ratio indicating the availability for more or higher value improvements. Any property with a value less than one meets this criterion and the lower the ratio, the more likely it would be an opportunity for redevelopment.

Map 20. Improvement Analysis Map



The Productivity Analysis identifies how productive or fully utilized a parcel may be within the district. This analysis is produced by analyzing the total property value to the size or acreage of the parcel. Higher values are the goal. In the context of a commercial district, this often means that a parcel is more fully utilizing all portions of the parcel for productive purposes for its size. For example, a large lot that is half parking lot with a few smaller buildings on it would produce a lower value indicating that has low productivity and, therefore, may be an opportunity for redevelopment.

Map 21. Productivity Analysis Map



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Through analysis of existing conditions, including the frameworks described in the previous pages, a variety of development opportunities and challenges have been identified. These elements and the specific data discussed in this chapter will help to inform the recommendations for the study area.

As future improvements and projects are considered in the study area, existing conditions will present various opportunities and challenges to development and redevelopment. Some of the key opportunities and challenges are illustrated on Map 22 on the next page. While the map does not present every development consideration, the illustrated elements are some of the most important to consider in greater detail while creating this Plan's recommendations. It is important that any improvements ultimately made be contextually appropriate when considering the existing site and surrounding uses.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- While the study area has a relatively small amount of vacant land, those areas provide the greatest opportunity for infill development or additional open spaces.
- Land owned by the Town will be the most accessible area for the Town to improve.
- There are a variety of successful, diverse destinations in the study area, with a concentration along Main and Greensboro Streets. Many of these destinations are already within comfortable walking distance of each other, and future development should continue to expand the offerings within walking distance of other destinations.

- Existing primary access points into the downtown area have the potential to be enhanced to create strong visual cues (i.e., gateways) and a sense of place as people enter the area.
- Activated storefronts and streetscapes easily engage passersby. Sometimes, this includes elements such as outdoor gathering areas, visibility into buildings and uses that attract people throughout the day. Numerous areas, primarily along Main Street and Weaver Street, are already well-activated. The addition of further enhanced streetscapes and activated building uses can help expand this existing success in the downtown area.
- With the desire to be a multi-modal community, having a substantial network of sidewalks and bikeways/greenways is crucial. The study area already has a strong bicycle and pedestrian network that can be expanded to further the Town's goal of multi-modal transportation.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- The study area is home to various public and institutional entities (e.g., OWASA, religious institutions, and the state). While Town-owned land is easier to consider for redevelopment, other public and institutional entities may have various challenges to resolve that may prevent reuse or redevelopment potential. For

this reason, these areas are highlighted as potential challenges.

- Narrow rights-of-way inhibit the addition of on-street parking throughout the downtown area. This, in turn, leads to an extensive amount of private off-street parking throughout the study area, most of which is reserved for a single or small number of establishments. Easily accessed and well-dispersed public parking is a strong factor in the level of visitation a downtown receives. The quantity of private or reserved parking areas in the study area limits public parking opportunities.
- Most of the primary and minor arterials in the study area are owned by NCDOT. In many instances, these are the roads most appropriate for enhanced streetscapes. Close coordination with NCDOT will be required for enhancements to be realized. Narrow rights-of-way along all roads will also limit the streetscape elements that can be successfully integrated into the downtown area.
- While not depicted on the map, the study area has a relatively small number of outdoor gathering areas. Welcoming and inclusive spaces where people can enjoy the area without needing to visit a specific establishment are an important part of a lively environment. Finding areas for such new spaces may be a challenge.



DRAFT VOLUME TWO | BACKGROUND ANALYSIS



Vision & Goals

DRAFT



DRAFT

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

As with the Carrboro Connects Comprehensive Plan, the engagement process for this project was guided by the Town's commitment to advancing race and equity and incorporating values of inclusivity and representation. A broad range of engagement and outreach tools were used throughout the process, improving on what was successful during the creation of Carrboro Connects, as well as what the Town has learned since then through its growing toolbox of race and equity tools. The Downtown Area Plan aims to build on and reinforce the community's trust that their voices are being heard and that the Town is dedicated to implementing a community-based vision for the future of the downtown area. The planning process officially began in the summer of 2024. Three key principles were observed while developing this Plan's engagement strategy and approach.

1. Coordinate with Other Projects and Efforts

- Build on the vision of Carrboro Connects.
- Strengthen the connection of this project to other implementation projects of Carrboro Connects.
- Incorporate previous work, such as parking and circulation analyses, the Bike Plan, the Community Climate Action Plan, and the 2001 Downtown Carrboro New Vision.

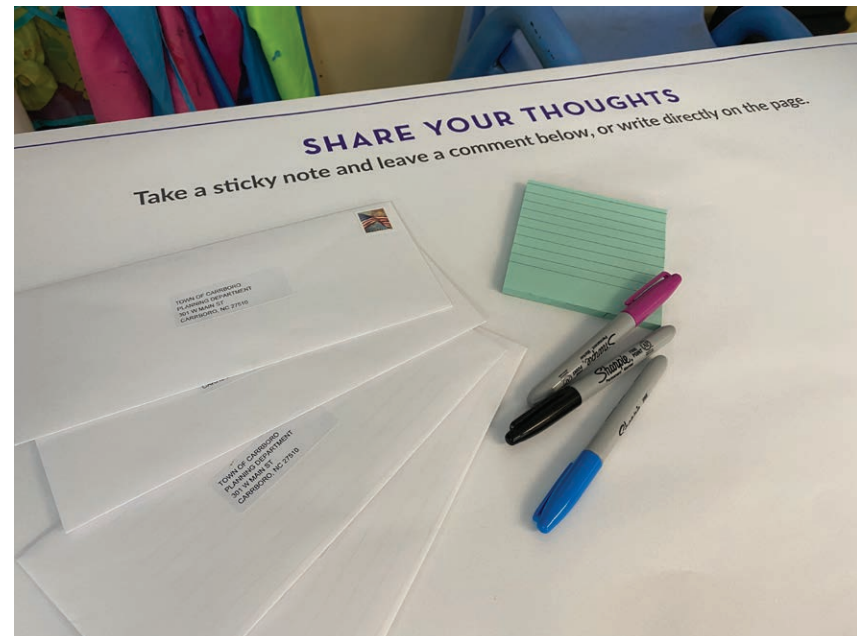
2. Use Inclusive Carrboro Engagement Principles

- Listen to gain understanding.
- Represent and report comments, input and feedback transparently.
- Be open, timely and responsive, and follow through on commitments.
- Recognize not all community members will engage with digital tools, nor be able to come to a one-time public meeting and provide multiple opportunities and means for engagement and outreach.

3. Advance Race and Equity and Prioritize Climate Action

- Collect demographic information at every event to understand who has not been heard from and adjust outreach as needed to address gaps in representation.
- Provide all engagement materials in English and Spanish and provide translation services at events.

- Coordinate with local community organizations to understand how to best include the voices of community members they serve, including Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), Hispanic/Latino and low-income residents.
- Limit single-purpose vehicle trips: plan events in places that are accessible by transit, walking and/or biking as well as by car. Host events at times when community members are already downtown and provide virtual alternatives where possible.



HEARING FROM RESIDENTS

Promotion of the Plan and getting the word out to community members included the launch of Carrboro's new outreach platform Engage Carrboro—where the project website was housed. Banners and flyers were placed strategically throughout the downtown area. The team brought opportunities to engage with the community to a variety of events including large Town events like the Fiestas en la Calle (Latin American Festival) and Open Streets, as well as small pop-ups at local businesses and the Farmers' Market. Town staff sent postcards and hand-delivered invites and information to residents' doorsteps in the Lloyd-Broad, Tin Top, Lincoln Park, Alabama Avenue and Glosson Circle neighborhoods, as well as mailing postcards and letters to every resident and property owner in the downtown area. The team conducted small group listening sessions with council members and stakeholders, several dedicated workshops, and other community and neighborhood events.

These ongoing efforts, in tandem with the visioning survey administered both digitally and physically in multiple languages, and word of mouth, sought to facilitate having Carrboro residents lead the planning process, as well as creating opportunities for the team to hear as much as possible from those who face barriers to participating in planning conducted solely through public Town Council meetings.



COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER & ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

A series of small group meetings and discussions were held during the project, including business owners, developers, residents, elected officials and non-profit community organizations. By offering both in-person and virtual options for these meetings, the team was able to speak with over 30 community members throughout the project who offered a diverse array of expertise and lived experience at each step of the Plan's drafting. Participants discussed the things they loved about Carrboro, the places for opportunity and potential change, and helped lay the foundation of the vision for downtown Carrboro for the next 20 years.

In addition to small community member and stakeholder meetings, the project team met with advisory boards and commissions several times throughout the process to pull from their expertise and experiences, gather feedback on iterations of the draft, and verify that the Plan was accurately reflecting the vision of the community and Town.

BREAKOUT ROOM 2

- Imagine you left for 20 years and came back to Carrboro- what do you hope is still here? What do you hope has changed?
- In a few words, describe your vision for the downtown area of Carrboro, including the Jones Ferry Rd area.
- What would encourage you to stay longer in downtown or visit more often?

You can add summary ideas/points here

Would love to see a pedestrian street in 20 years

Parks, including Dr. MLK attracts people to the area.

Recurring events – smaller than larger? Piggyback on existing

Pedestrian street, gathering place that makes me want to linger

Echo interest from CC re open space and making more

Physical building of Town Hall – tangible, old bricks, part of the Town's history. Hope there is a way for them to maintain as long as in good repair.

Would love to see a diversity of people in 20 years

Would love to see E. Main Street (between Weaver and Chapel Hill) is more welcoming, more hospitable in 20 years

Really, really free market. To have a culture that produces the free market requires things of Carrboro to make it friendly to hosting this event.

Use of the farmers market is wonderful. A variety of public uses in the space

Shaded places for people on foot and bike, to support staying longer. Being downtown in summer expected to be hotter in the future

Jones Ferry needs same TLC, attention as comments for E. Main

VISIONING QUESTIONS

1. Imagine you left for 20 years and came back to Carrboro- what do you hope is still here? What do you hope has changed?
2. In a few words, describe your vision for the downtown area of Carrboro, including the Jones Ferry Rd area.
3. What would encourage you to stay longer in downtown or visit more often?

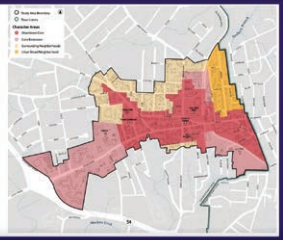
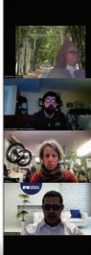


Virtual Advisory Board meeting

CHARACTER AREA PLAN

Downtown Core

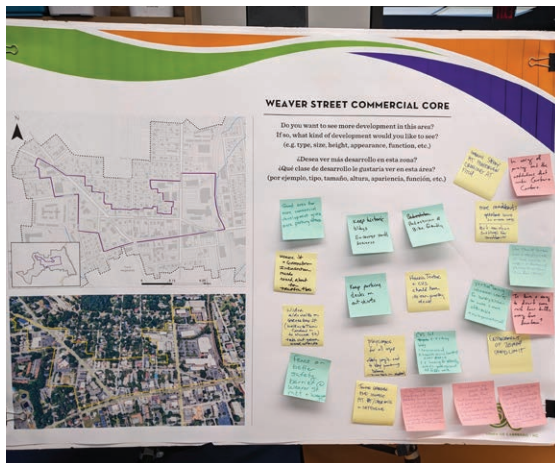
- Intended to include future uses, such as:
 - Affordable housing
 - Mixed use
 - Commercial (retail, daily needs, entertainment, etc.)
- Urban building form that is sensitive to surrounding properties
- 3-5 stories in height
- No new surface parking lots

Virtual stakeholder presentation

POP-UP EVENTS & OPEN HOUSES

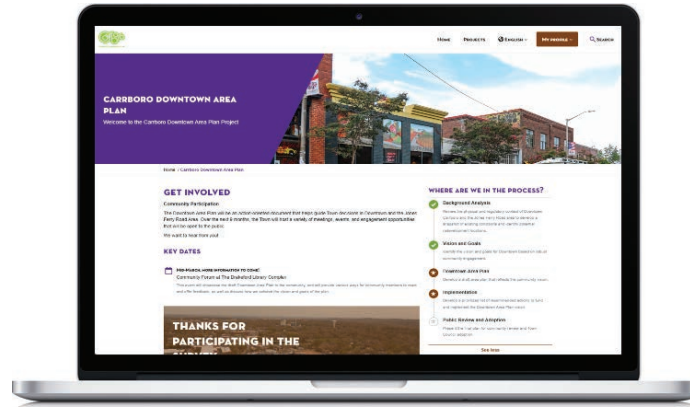
Over the course of the project, the team partnered with community organizations like El Centro Hispano, Marian Cheek Jackson Center, ArtsCenter, Orange County Public Library, CHICLE and Carrboro Farmers' Market to host pop-up events at longstanding Town signature events, and standalone open houses and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



PROJECT WEBSITE & VISIONING SURVEY

ENGAGE CARRBORO WEBSITE

Engage Carrboro was launched in parallel with this project and served as a hub for early open discussion and visioning, and the survey. With the ability to translate the site into the six most spoken languages locally, as learned from engagement while creating Carrboro Connects, the website provided a virtual space where community members could read about the Plan, participate in a variety of ways, stay up to date on progress, watch videos of meetings and share their ideas.

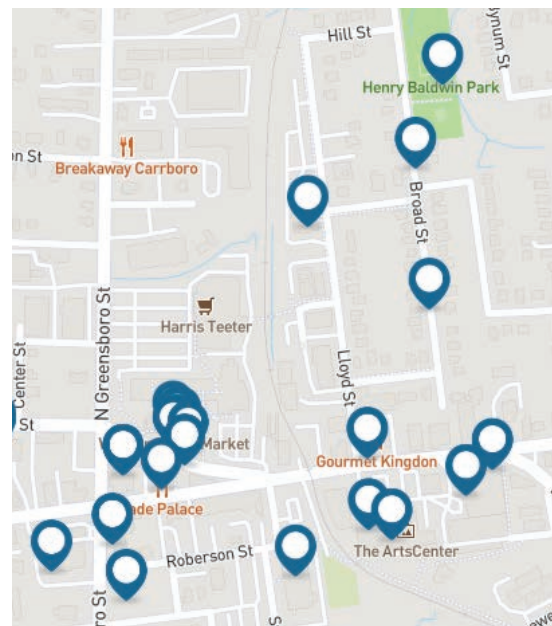


**2,000+
SITE VISITS**

**800+ MAP
RESPONSES**

SURVEY OVERVIEW

An online public survey was launched to gather input from the community regarding downtown priorities, existing conditions in the area and opportunities for the future of downtown Carrboro. The survey was open from September 1 to November 8, 2024 and received 286 responses. The survey was promoted through community events, the Town's website, email blasts and social media. Partners at the Refugee Community Partnership, El Centro Hispano and the Marian Cheek Jackson Center also helped distribute and administer paper surveys to residents and/or administer the questions in Spanish. Highlights of survey results are described on the following pages, with complete, detailed results included in the Appendix.



VISIONING SURVEY SUMMARY

RACE, EQUITY & REPRESENTATION

As part of the team's commitment to race and equity, as responses were being collected, staff and the consultant identified a difference between respondents' self-identified race as Black or African American (4%) and Carrboro's population (14%, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates). The survey period was extended and Town staff attended neighborhood meetings and reinforced relationships with Lloyd-Broad and Alabama Avenue residents. This was done in an effort to include Black and African American residents' voices in the visioning process and keep them involved through the remainder of the project.

Survey demographics are provided on this page and represent part of a larger spread of voices heard throughout the project. For in-person events where self-identified demographics were collected, please see the Appendix.

Figure 23. Survey Demographics - Age

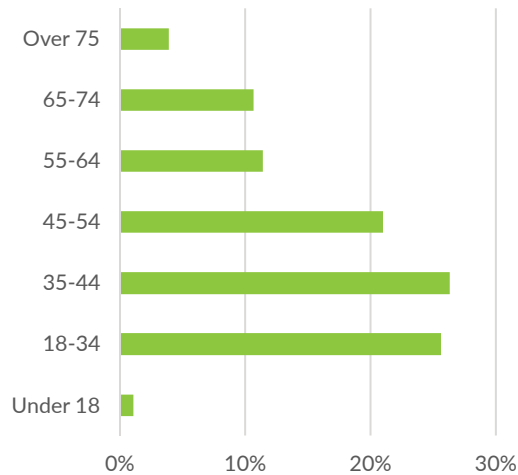


Figure 24. Survey Demographics - Home Ownership

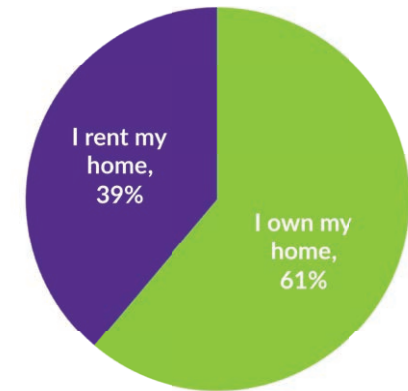
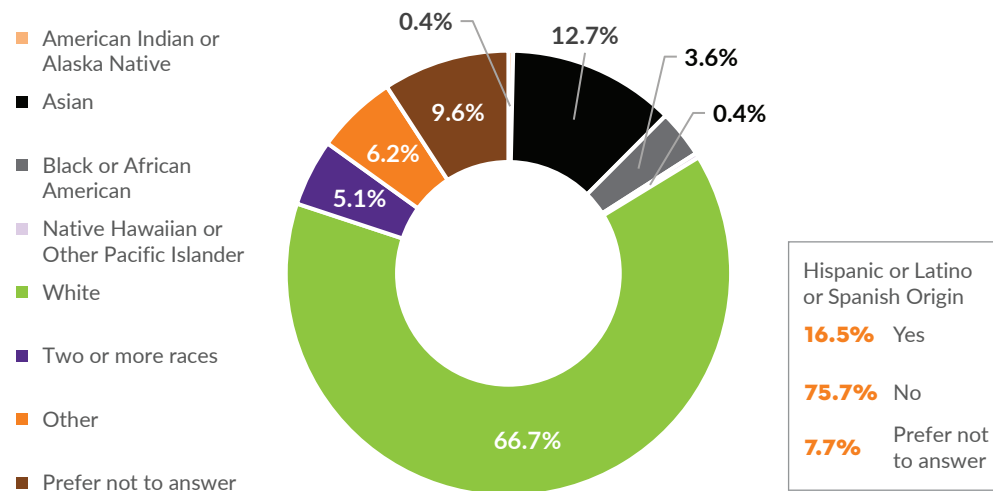


Figure 25. Survey Demographics - Race and Ethnicity



WHAT DO YOU HOPE IS STILL HERE IN 20 YEARS?

Survey respondents expressed a deep appreciation for the vibrant community spirit embodied by downtown Carrboro. Weaver Street Market emerged as a focal point, celebrated for its central role in community gatherings. Similarly, the Carrboro Farmers' Market is cherished for its local produce and social atmosphere. Cat's Cradle, a cornerstone of the local music scene, is beloved for its cultural contributions.

Residents praised the variety of parks and green spaces like the Town Commons, which offers recreational opportunities and hosts community events. The presence of small, local businesses adds a unique charm to downtown, with many enjoying the diverse range of dining and shopping options. The Town's walkability and bikeability were also highlighted, with respondents valuing the ease of navigation and dedicated paths.

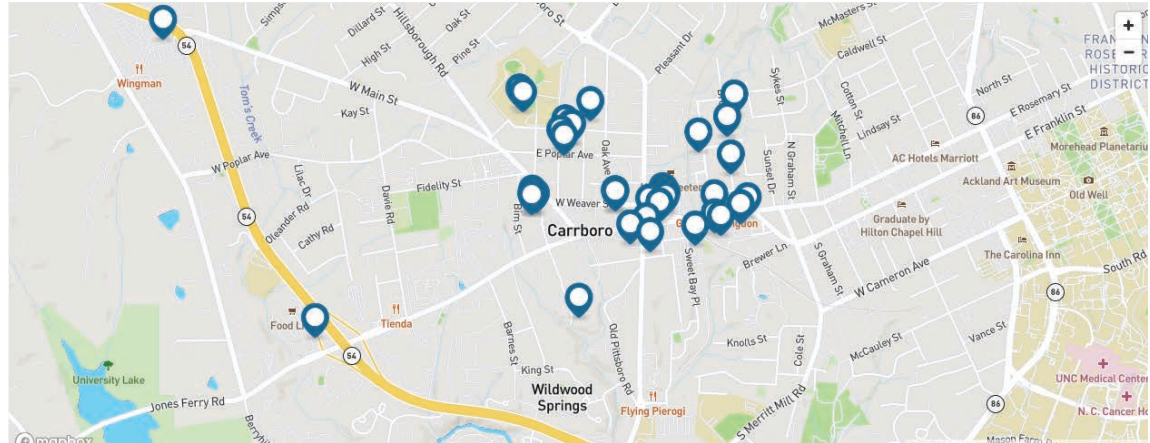
The historic and unique buildings of Carrboro were mentioned fondly, with a call to preserve the architectural character that sets the Town apart.

Community events and activities, such as festivals and markets, contribute to a lively and engaging downtown atmosphere. Additionally, venues like The ArtsCenter play a crucial role in supporting local arts and culture.

Overall, the map responses reflect a strong sense of community pride and a desire to maintain the welcoming, inclusive and vibrant nature of downtown Carrboro.

1 In 20 years, what do you hope is still here? This could be a business, a landmark, a neighborhood, or even an experience.

Map | Skipped: 77 | Answered: 209 (73.08%)



Map from online survey showing a sampling of comments

As our town grows I'd love for Carrboro to build more community spaces downtown. Parks, gathering spaces, recreational use, picnic spaces, art spaces, splash pad.

A vibrant downtown area with businesses that appeal to all sorts of people and more 'third spaces' where we can gather, people-watch, share experiences

General walk and bikeability.

Add places for small businesses that are affordable by allowing for more space, maybe going up in height of existing commercial space.

Respect the historic district and protect it.

How People Spend Time in Downtown

84% of respondents visit the study area at least a few times a week.

When asked about how they spend time in the downtown area (with respondents selecting all that apply), respondents indicated a variety of activities, ranging from meeting daily needs, to socializing, education and entertainment activities. The team asked for more details about the types of places visitors go, to also understand about the kinds of uses are successful and most sought in the study area to date.

These existing activities help illustrate what draws people to the downtown area today, showcasing the wide range of activities and services available that create a lively, active downtown area that supports live, play and work experiences.

Figure 26. How People Spend Time in Downtown

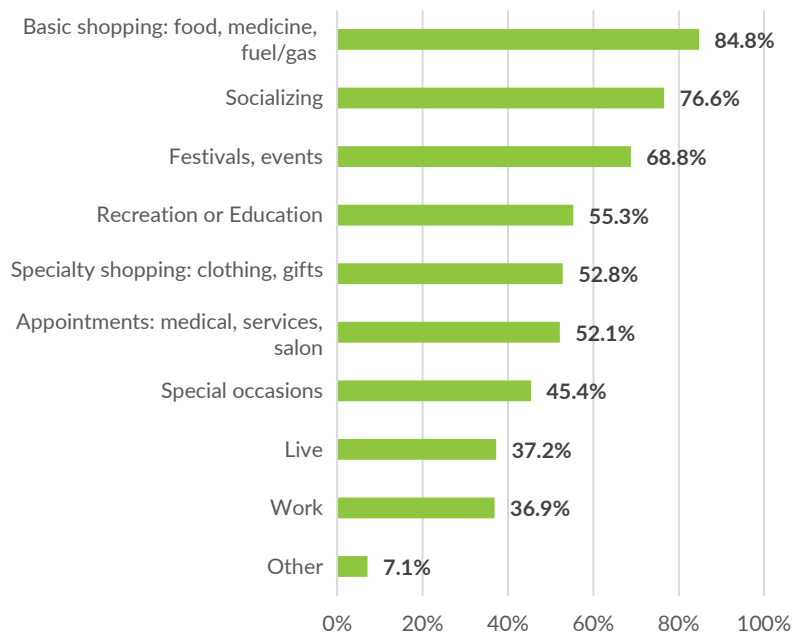


Figure 27. What Activities People Do or Places They Visit

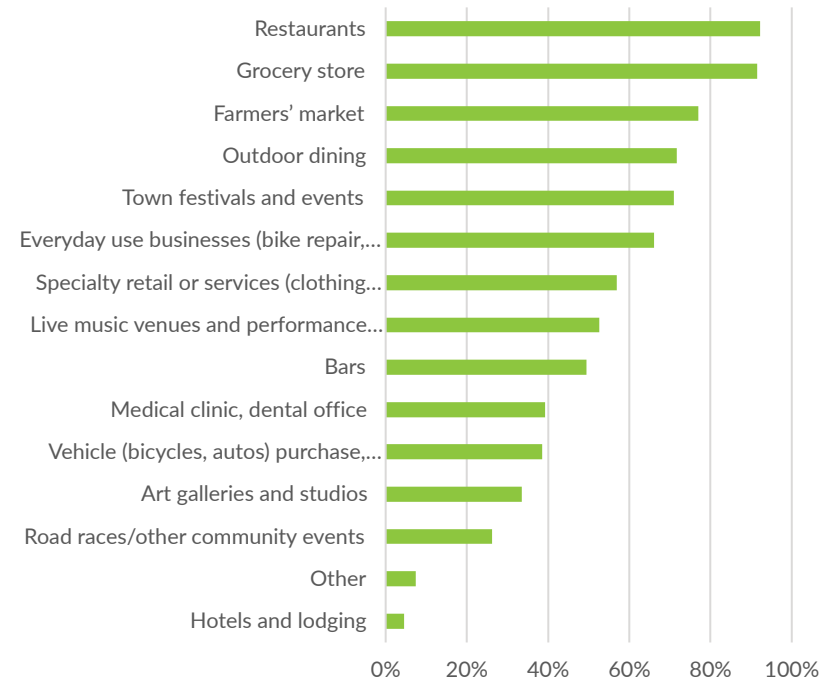
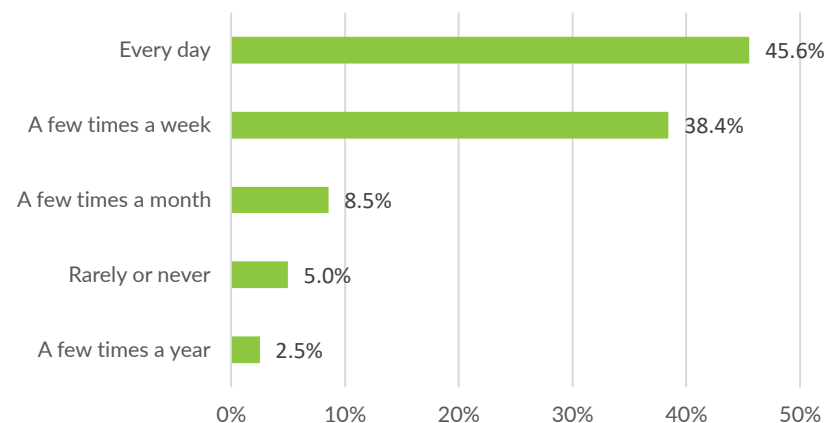


Figure 28. How Frequently People Visit the Study Area



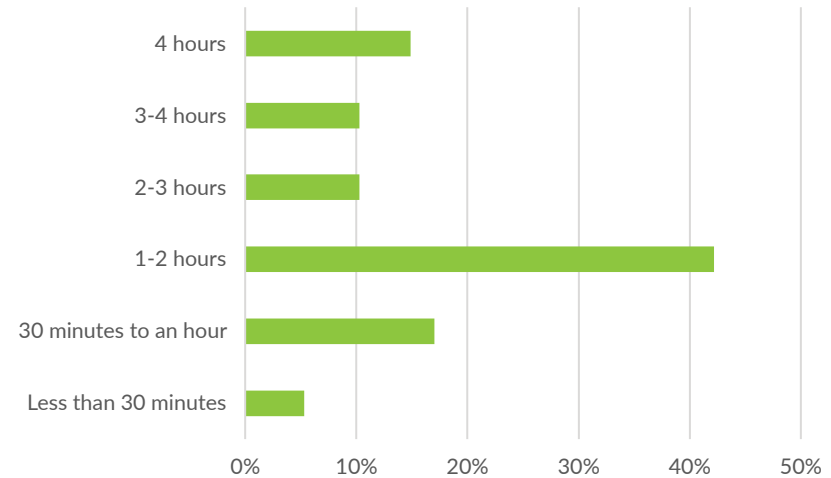
GETTING TO AND STAYING IN THE DOWNTOWN

ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO STAY LONGER

Over 40% of survey respondents indicated that they stay in the study area for 1-2 hours when they visit. 67% responded with ideas for what would encourage them to stay longer. The most common themes were:

- More public seating, shaded areas and outdoor spaces to spend time in and with the community without needing to spend money. Suggestions include parks, benches, plazas and other small public spaces, particularly beyond Weaver Street Market to create more opportunities for visitors to walk and stop at places throughout downtown.
- Improved circulation, access and safety for all modes of travel – exploring ways to mitigate pedestrians, cyclists and cars on the road, bus service later into the evening, more public parking and friendlier parking policies on private lots.
- Extended business hours and a greater diversity of dining and shopping options, noting a desire for more global cuisine that represents and caters to a variety of community members, helping them to feel welcome.
- More frequent community and cultural events and additional public amenities (e.g., public restrooms, robust Wi-Fi network).
- Spaces and festivals that provide things to do for all ages. Some respondents commented that many businesses seem to cater to students and younger crowds.

Figure 29. How Long People Typically Stay in the Study Area

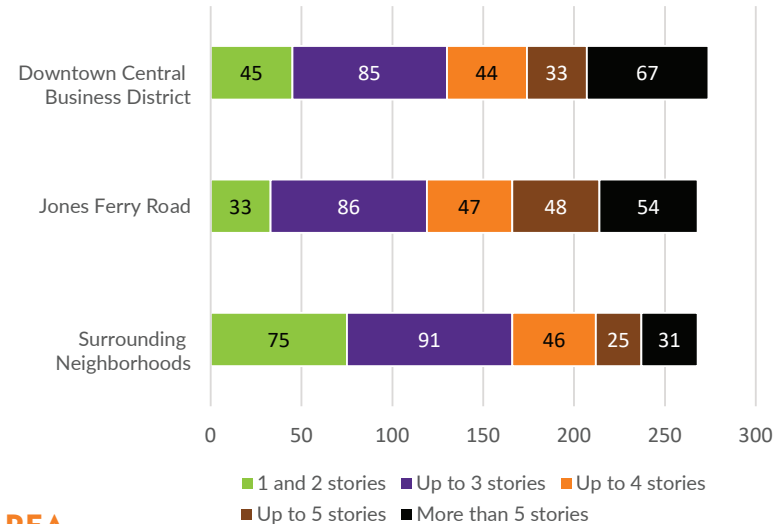


IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN CARRBORO

MAXIMUM BUILDING HEIGHTS IN THE STUDY AREA

Respondents were asked what they think the maximum building heights should be in the Downtown Central Business District, Jones Ferry Road area and the surrounding neighborhoods. Most respondents indicated that up to three stories was the most appropriate for all locations. The second largest ranking for the Downtown Central Business District and Jones Ferry Road was more than five stories, while the surrounding neighborhoods were one and two stories.

Figure 30. Maximum Building Heights



WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE MORE OF IN THE STUDY AREA

Survey respondents were asked what types of things they would like to see more of in the study area and were able to choose five priorities. The most popular priorities were:

- Trees and shade.
- Safe bicycle and pedestrian spaces.
- Public gathering spaces, parks, plazas and/or pavilions.
- Affordable housing.
- Vehicular and traffic flow improvements.

The least common specified priority was buildings or places where people exclusively work (rather than mixed-use where people can live and work), with 10% of total responses.

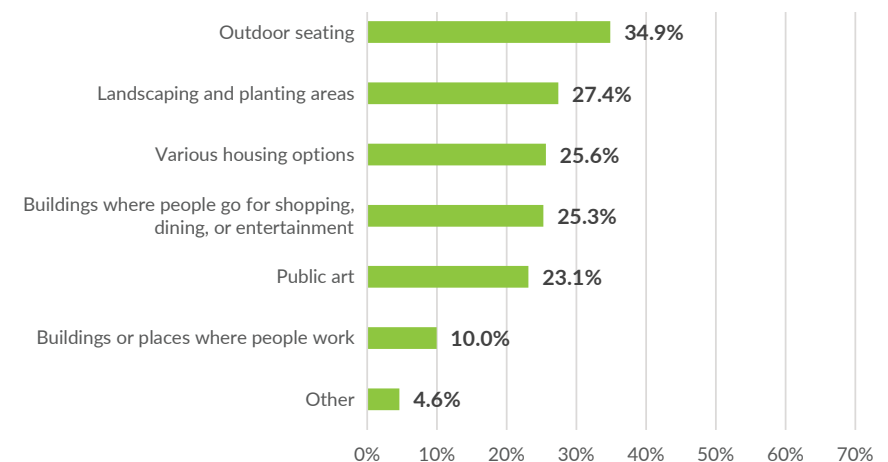
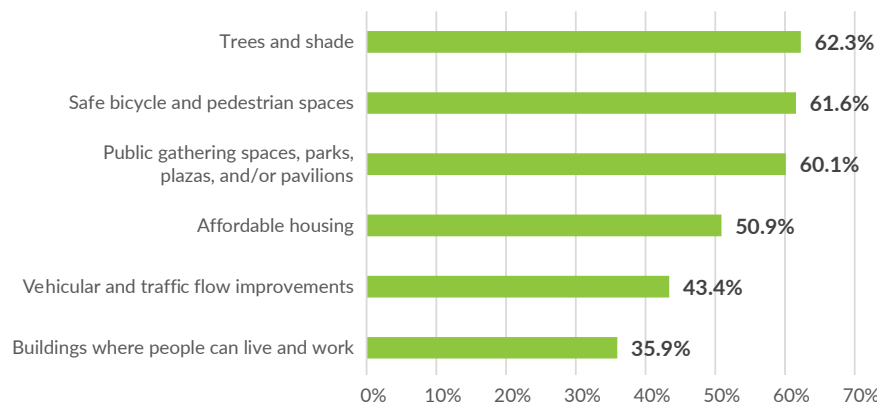


Figure 31. What People Want to See More of in the Study Area

WHAT DO YOU HOPE HAS CHANGED IN 20 YEARS?

Residents and visitors envision a downtown transformed into a safer, more representative, more accessible and community-centric space.

Desired changes include improvements in traffic circulation and transportation options, with an emphasis on safer streets, more available public transportation and enhanced walkability and bikeability. Safety and connectivity are key parts of this vision, notably continued build-out of the bike and pedestrian network to help people easily and safely navigate the area.

Affordable housing is a major concern, with many expressing a need for increased availability of housing options that cater to all levels of low-income households (30%, 60%, and 80% Area Median Income).

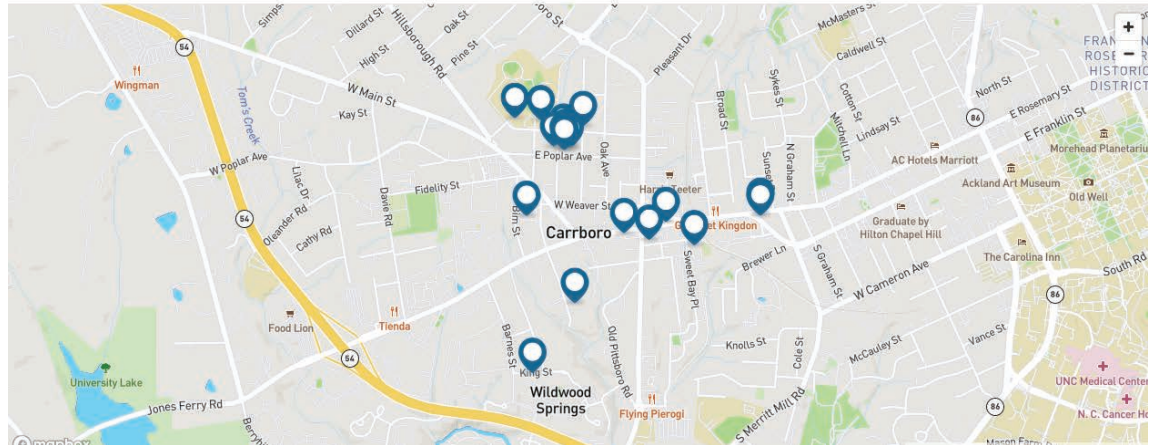
Respondents call for stronger support for the local arts, music and culture scene(s); encouragement of small business growth; and more diverse dining establishments to enhance the unique character of Carrboro.

People desire a climate-resilient future calling for sustainable and eco-friendly improvements and interventions, such as green building and environmental conservation efforts.

Finally, there is a strong emphasis on community-centric development, with suggestions for youth centers and spaces that enhance the well-being of residents. People desire more parks, green areas, recreation facilities and general spaces to foster a sense of community and provide places for the community to gather.

2 In 20 years, what do you hope has changed? This could be a business, a landmark, a neighborhood, or even an experience.

Map | Skipped: 98 | Answered: 188 (65.73%)



Map from online survey showing a sampling of comments

As we build more density we add to the heat dome affect in town. We need more water feature parks for kids and dogs to cool off in.

Affordable, dense, housing on Jones Ferry toward OWASA.

I hope we will continue to prioritize making the town as bike- and pedestrian-friendly as possible.

Add flashing lights to these and other crosswalks across Greensboro.

I hope E Weaver is closed to motor vehicle traffic either full time, or from 7 am to 10 pm.

Work with property owners and stakeholders to redevelop for greenway oriented high density and mixed use.

RECURRING THEMES

This Plan embodies comments received from residents and visitors across 286 survey responses and hundreds of attendees across public events (community members could both fill out the survey and come to 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.





VISION

The following vision statement comes from community members' thoughts and ideas and from input from Advisory Boards, Town Council, community partners and residents.*

It embodies the collective aspiration heard from the community and serves as the foundation for moving forward and is built directly on Carrboro Connects and its commitments to advancing racial equity and addressing climate change.

This statement guides the formation of goals and implementation strategies that make up the Strategies and Considerations, Master Plan, and Implementation chapters.

**All data, comments and other inputs can be seen in the Appendix.*



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.

GOALS

The following goals provide overall direction for the downtown area of Carrboro to achieve the community's direction, vision and aspirations. The goals serve as the ultimate basis for the Plan's recommendations and implementation. They also provide a framework to evaluate changes, challenges, opportunities and issues that were not anticipated by this Plan, allowing it to function as a living document responsive to future needs.

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.



Strategies & Considerations

DRAFT



DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to identify pertinent elements of the built environment in the downtown area, including considerations, best practices and overarching strategies that can help the Town achieve this Plan's vision and goals. This chapter touches on elements related to the following:

- Property development
- Downtown transportation and infrastructure
- Branding and urban design
- Buildings and frontages

Incorporating best practices for the elements in the downtown area will help support the goals of this Plan and the Town's racial equity and climate action goals. Each new project proposed for the downtown area should be evaluated against the considerations in this chapter to determine how well the project fits with the desired character and future vision of the community.

There are many other considerations when developing in Carrboro; however, the items in this chapter are tailored to be most applicable to the downtown area. Creating a unique, interesting, pedestrian- and bicycle-focused, affordable, and welcoming downtown area takes careful planning and implementation.

The strategies contained in this Plan are overall ideas of how to achieve the Plan's goals. As each strategy could be achieved through a variety of policies, further discussion and decisions are necessary to create policy initiatives. These discussions should include funding and other practical considerations.



PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN THE PRIVATE MARKETPLACE

Carrboro is able to focus on a market-driven approach for the downtown area due to its prime development location. This approach allows the Town to work with developers and business owners to focus on efforts that will have positive impacts on the downtown area and continue enhancing racial equity. Opportunities for redevelopment will be most likely to occur, as the study area is already mostly built-out. As such, supporting high-quality redevelopment is necessary to achieve the goals of this Plan. Key strategies to consider include the following:

- Provide clear guidance on desired redevelopment elements to help developers understand what is expected of them when undertaking projects in the downtown area.
- Support redevelopments in prioritizing building reuse and expansions rather than replacement, where appropriate.
- Find ways to reduce impervious surface coverage through redevelopment to help with overall stormwater management.
- Encourage diverse businesses such as music and performing arts, restaurants, and those meeting daily needs of residents as well as mixed-use development.



CONSIDERATIONS AND STRATEGIES

LOT SIZES

A factor contributing to Carrboro's strong small business environment is the numerous small lots that are in the downtown area. Small lot sizes allow for a variety of local business opportunities to remain in the downtown area and provide room for startup businesses. Smaller buildings can help keep monthly business ownership expenses lower; however, not all businesses can thrive in small spaces, so there is also a need for larger buildings and leasable spaces. Larger spaces also allow startup businesses a place to grow into, while remaining in the downtown area. Creating an atmosphere that allows for a variety of lot sizes and building spaces helps maintain a diverse residential and commercial mix. Encouraging a diversity of spaces can help the Town continue its racial equity efforts by creating opportunities and spaces for all. Key strategies to consider include the following:

- Allow more intensive development to occur on smaller lots to maximize the usability of small sites.
- Encourage a variety of spaces or flexible spaces inside buildings when redevelopment projects are proposed.
- Support residential infill and increased densities, particularly on smaller lots, through expansions of ADUs, duplexes, quadplexes and other similar housing types.
- Support property recombination to create larger parcels for new development opportunities.
- Create a land banking program to acquire, consolidate, hold and sell property for targeted development.
- Consider creating guidelines for the best strategy to retain larger parcels to encourage diverse development, as there are a large number of existing smaller parcels in the downtown area.
- Work with property owners to find the appropriate balance of small and large lots to maintain a variety of spaces in the downtown area.



Small lot development in Carrboro



Large lot development in Carrboro

GENTRIFICATION

Gentrification is the loss of historic, typically disadvantaged businesses and residents. This loss is regularly due to increased rent, increased ownership costs or shifts in local demographics that result in a loss of business revenue. Retaining rich cultural heritage and diversity in the local community means combating gentrification is an important element of having a livable and comfortable downtown area. Key strategies to consider include the following:

- Consider opportunities to expand the Town's economic base without increasing property taxes and balance property revaluation increases at the county level with local tax cuts.
- Expand affordable housing efforts to support the retention of an economically diverse community.
- Support minority-owned businesses to preserve the community's diverse cultural heritage and provide opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations.
- Assist businesses with temporary relocation during construction.
- Create a Town-managed flex space to support local businesses. This could include incubator space to help small businesses launch and/or swing space for businesses to move to while their existing location is being renovated.
- Encourage business owners and homeowners to join existing or organize new business owners or neighborhood associations to provide a stronger voice for the community.
- Establish criteria for balancing economic growth with community preservation efforts.

CASE STUDY: FLEET FEET LOCATION CONSOLIDATION

At the time of this event, Fleet Feet's corporate headquarters were split between two buildings in downtown Carrboro. To consolidate operations into a single location, the company considered relocating to another community.

To support both Fleet Feet's consolidation and the expansion of Kalisher—an art production and curation company also based in downtown Carrboro—the Town took two key actions:

- **Parking Support:** The Town agreed to lease and sublease parking spaces, enabling Kalisher to meet the minimum parking requirements needed to move into one of the buildings that Fleet Feet was occupying.
- **Property Purchase:** The Town committed to purchasing a condominium unit owned by Fleet Feet.

These creative financing and supportive efforts from the Town provided Fleet Feet with the necessary cash flow to relocate into a new building and remain in Carrboro. As a result of the Town's creative incentive, Fleet Feet retained 40 jobs and kept its corporate headquarters in the community.

Today, Fleet Feet employs approximately 130 corporate staff and hosts hundreds of vendor visits annually at its downtown Carrboro headquarters. Although Kalisher has since relocated elsewhere, the Town's support allowed them to expand and remain in Carrboro for a time. Fleet Feet continues to grow in its current location. The Town still leases parking, but eventually sold the condominium unit at a small profit.





REGULATORY PROCESS

The Town is currently undergoing the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) project and will be updating the regulatory process that has been in place for years. Local zoning and land development regulations are major drivers for the built environment, so it is critical that the Town's UDO rewrite supports the goals of this Plan. The recommendations for regulatory process changes in the Carrboro Connects Plan also apply to the downtown area; however, additional specifics are included in this Plan. Key strategies to consider include the following:

- Streamline the approval process for development that meets certain requirements by allowing these developments to move forward with by-right approvals.
- Ease regulations for developments that incorporate affordable housing and affordable commercial spaces.
- Include optional development incentives in the UDO that encourage environmentally sustainable development, affordable housing and commercial spaces, and specifically help achieve the vision and goals of this Plan.
- Create outreach materials to assist applicants in understanding applicable Town processes and expectations.
- Consider the different character areas when developing new standards to help achieve the desired vision for each area.

INCENTIVES

To encourage desired development and redevelopment in the downtown area, the Town can incentivize desired options through a variety of means. The Town should focus on incentivizing development that includes environmentally sustainable practices, incorporates the Town's history, retains existing businesses, provides affordable rent or ownership opportunities, and creates a variety of spaces that can help the Town achieve goals set forth in this Plan. Key strategies to consider include the following:

- As affordability is one of the most important elements in maintaining an inclusive downtown area, allowing buildings with affordable units to exceed height maximums will help support this goal.
- Evaluate the creation of a Municipal Services District to support downtown and create a recurring revenue source.
- Support business owners with public parking arrangements to reduce on-site parking needs.
- While updating the UDO, consider additional optional incentives to achieve the desired development outcomes (e.g., affordable housing, environmentally sustainable development) through increased density and height, reduced parking minimums, a faster approval process, and staff-level approvals.
- Create public-private partnerships (P3s) for the Town to jointly develop property with a developer to create affordable housing and commercial space.

DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Streetscape typologies were discussed in the **Volume 1, Master Plan** chapter. This section introduces other transportation and utility considerations to keep in mind as the downtown area continues to grow and redevelop. With the limited space in the public ROWs, the Town will need to work closely with NCDOT and private property owners during development and redevelopment to help support innovative and Carrboro-specific transportation and infrastructure goals.

This section includes information about:

- Downtown mobility
- Intersection and pedestrian safety strategies
- Opportunities for transportation infrastructure improvements associated with potential future redevelopment/development
- Utility considerations



DOWNTOWN MOBILITY

Streets are an integral part of the public realm and often make up a large portion of public lands, and, as such, they should be designed to accommodate a range of users, including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Streets should also be designed and used to achieve Town goals by using strategic elements, such as stormwater management techniques, public art, habitat creation, and pilot projects that demonstrate the Town's commitment to its goals and values. Complete Streets are designed to provide equitable access for all travelers and all modes of transportation.

SIDEWALKS

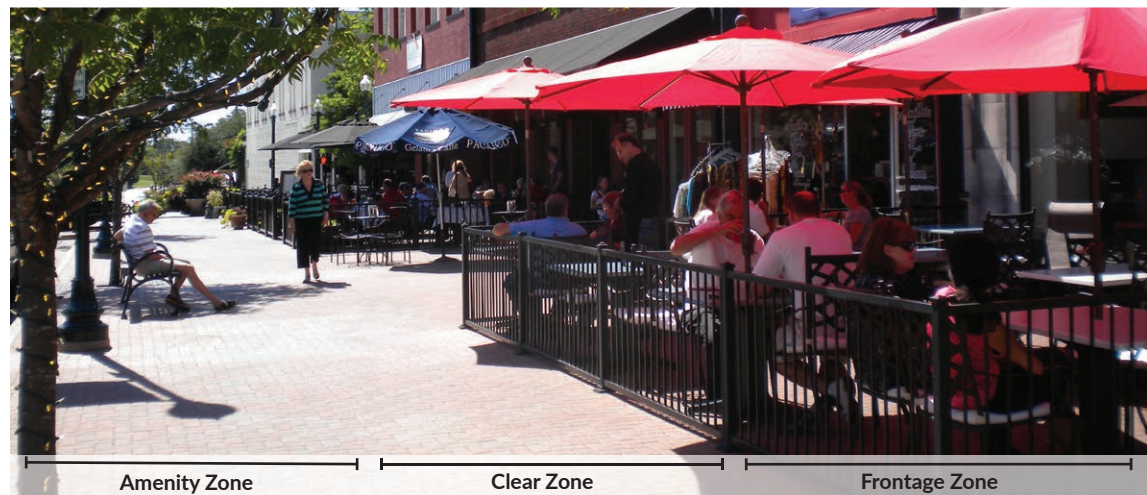
Sidewalks play a vital role in communities, are a critical element of a complete street and have been found to enhance public health and maximize social capital. They facilitate pedestrian safety, movement and access and promote overall community connectivity and welfare. Safe, accessible and well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental and necessary investment for the Town. It is critical that sidewalks provide enough width to accommodate the expected amount of pedestrian traffic, or else people might need to step off the sidewalk into potentially dangerous situations.

Sidewalks in the downtown area are especially valuable as they encourage visitors to spend more time engaging with their local community and businesses.

Urban sidewalks have three zones that are sometimes indistinguishable in looks, but are important to understand from a functional perspective.

1. The “frontage zone” is the portion of the sidewalk up against the building frontage. This area is usually at least 2 feet wide and is where entry doors open out into the sidewalk. This is where the public and private realms merge and can be used for café seating or other activation elements.

2. The “pedestrian clear zone” is the portion of the sidewalk that is clear of obstacles and where pedestrians can walk freely. This area is preferably 6 feet wide, but can be reduced to 4 feet for small portions in urban, more constrained settings. Keeping the clear zone free of obstructions is an important aspect of ADA accessibility for the downtown area.
3. The “amenity zone” is the area along the back of curb where there is space for benches, lighting, trees, etc. This zone varies in width depending on the space available within the ROW and acts as a buffer between vehicles and pedestrians.



Sidewalk activity zones

LANE WIDTH

Lane widths allocated for motorists, transit and bicycles are a crucial aspect of street design. Lane widths should be considered within the overall assemblage of the street. Narrower streets are typically recommended in the downtown area, are proven to naturally reduce vehicle speed, create a more comfortable experience for pedestrians and cyclists, and provide more ROW space for a variety of uses. Reducing travel lane widths using striping allows for visually shrinking the street without the expense and time necessary for demolition and reconstruction.

CURB EXTENSIONS

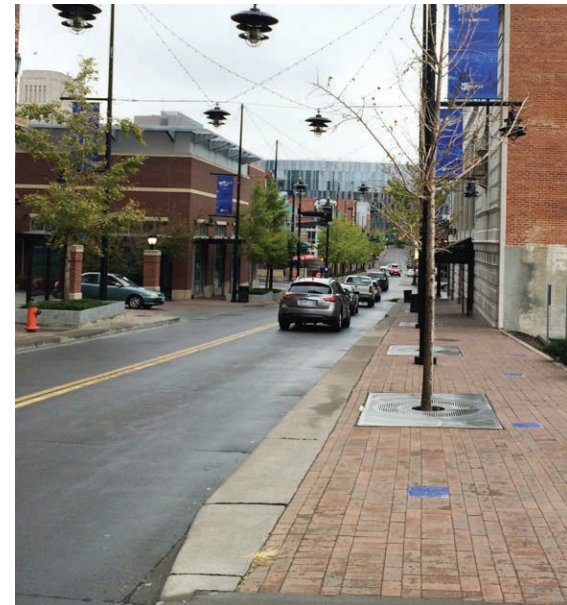
Curb extensions are a traffic calming measure primarily used to visually and physically narrow roadways at crosswalks and extend the sidewalk for pedestrians crossing the street. Shortening the crossing distance improves pedestrian safety and visibility. Curb extensions may also be implemented to help allocate more space for street furniture, landscaping, innovative



Temporary curbside seating



Curb extension



Narrow drive lanes

stormwater treatment or street trees in areas in ROWs. These are also referred to as “bump-outs.”

PARKING

Parking is an inherent functional piece of most places. With downtowns in particular, it is important that the pedestrian experience between parking areas and points of interest is safe, comfortable and interesting. Connecting parking lots to destinations in the downtown area with a connected sidewalk network can help provide a comfortable experience for visitors, residences and business owners. Private parking reduces overall parking efficiency and the financial performance of downtowns. In some instances, creating joint-use parking agreements can allow otherwise restricted parking areas to support downtown functionality beyond the hours of peak use by the owning entity (e.g., allowing public parking at religious institutions outside of their busy hours).

In a downtown, good urban form tends to locate parking on-street or toward the fringe of the core in communal lots or structures, allowing focus to remain on pedestrian



Carrboro parking sign



Consolidated downtown parking area



Existing parking garage in downtown

space and activity. Many communities have eliminated minimum parking requirements in their downtowns.

BICYCLES

With low traffic speeds in the downtown area, investment in bicycle infrastructure is ideal, as slower vehicular speeds help encourage bicycling. As bicycles will be riding on the streets with vehicles, all roadways should be designed with the intention of slowing vehicle speeds and encouraging shared lanes or dedicated bicycle lanes. A public education program for both cyclists and motorists may help people navigate these shared spaces more safely.

On-street bicycle infrastructure, such as dedicated bicycle and buffered bicycle lanes, can help create a comfortable environment for cyclists to travel along the streets. In addition to on-street bicycle infrastructure, the use of greenways or multi-use paths is highly encouraged wherever possible, as spaces dedicated to non-motorized modes of transportation (walking, bicycling and rolling)



Libba Cotten Bike Path

create a more comfortable experience for people who do not want to be on the road with vehicular traffic.

TRANSIT

Bus service to and from the downtown area is provided by Chapel Hill Transit (locally) and GoTriangle (regionally), which creates opportunities for transit to meet daily needs for residents. The existing park and rides near the downtown area help support transit riders and carpooling, thus reducing the need for automobiles and large parking lots. Continuing to have a transit system that provides reliable transit can help reduce the number of vehicles on the street and be used on a daily basis for residents, workers, visitors and business owners to reach destinations for daily needs. As the community continues to grow, regular assessment of the transit routes, infrastructure and ridership demand is important to help maintain transit as a high-quality transportation option in the future.



Bus stop



Buffered bicycle lane

INTERSECTIONS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY STRATEGIES

The downtown area should be a highly pedestrianized environment and bicyclist and pedestrian safety and comfort should be balanced with vehicular traffic needs. Strategies to enhance safety that may be appropriate for the downtown area include elements such as:

- Narrow lanes that require motorists to drive slowly and pay attention to their surroundings.
- Shorter block lengths that help maintain slower vehicular speeds.
- Bump-outs or curb extensions at crossings and intersections that make pedestrians more visible to drivers and create pinch-points for cars, thus slowing them down.
- Raised crosswalks that keep the crosswalk at the same elevation as the sidewalk make it more convenient and safer for the pedestrian, as well as act as a speed hump for cars.
- Well-marked and signed crosswalks with proper warning signs and high visibility pavement marking, such as specialty paving or decorative markings at crosswalks, act as a visual signal to drivers to watch for pedestrians.
- Building frontages that address the street, streetscape elements and active sidewalks to generally create an environment that encourages slow speeds.
- Vehicle turning speeds and pedestrian crossing distances are directly impacted by corner radii. Maintaining smaller corner radii is critical to creating compact intersections that encourage safe vehicular turning speeds. While 10-15 feet are considered standard curb radii, in urban settings many communities use corner radii as small as 2 feet.
- Lighting and bollards at crossings and intersections to notify both pedestrians and cars to pay attention. Bollard locations help signify non-vehicular areas and need to comply with ADA accessibility requirements.
- Reduced driveway curb cuts to limit cars crossing the sidewalk and reduce pedestrian conflicts.
- Sight triangles clear from obstructions to allow drivers to see clearly.
- Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons and Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons installed at high-volume crossings to improve pedestrian safety.
- Downtown slow zone that reduces vehicle speeds to increase pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Leading Pedestrian Intervals to provide pedestrians an advance start on crossing a street before vehicles can go.



Raised crosswalk with bollards



Sidewalk buffered from drive lanes by plantings



Enhanced crosswalk paving

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ASSOCIATED WITH POTENTIAL FUTURE GROWTH

The downtown area should prioritize transportation options and choices that support a wide variety of travel modes for residents, business owners and visitors. From bus transit to bicycle to vehicular to pedestrian options, all modes of transportation should be accounted for. The following are some specific approaches that can help enhance transportation options for the downtown area:

- Continue working closely with transit providers to identify locations to co-locate bus stops with new development.
- Include bike racks, bike corrals, bike lockers and bike shelters in new development and throughout the downtown area.
- Encourage the continued installation of EV charging infrastructure.
- Create interlocal bike-share program between Carrboro, Chapel Hill and UNC.
- Invest in innovative solar panel usage, such as shade structures for electric bikes or scooter charging.
- Support an expansion of the fixed bus routes to ease daily usage for residents in the downtown area and increase ridership.
- Explore public-private partnership (P3) opportunities for shared parking garage facilities to reduce the need for surface parking.
- Construct more greenway/multi-use pathways that will connect residents, businesses and green spaces.
- Encourage land uses and site designs that promote walking and biking to help reduce future vehicular traffic.
- Designate rideshare pick-up and drop-off zones near high-frequency destinations to support micro transit options.



Bike share program



EV charging infrastructure



Long-term bike storage

Image source: <https://groundcontrolsystems.com/products/long-term-bicycle-parking/>



Existing bus service

UTILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Utility design and implementation decisions have a substantial impact on day-to-day experiences and the environmental footprint of a downtown. As development and/or redevelopment occurs in the downtown area, the Town should consider the following utility strategies.

INNOVATIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

In natural areas, stormwater is either slowly absorbed into the soil or gradually moves toward the lowest points and channels before reaching ponds, low-lying wetlands or waterways. In urban areas, a significant portion of the land is covered by buildings, pavement and other surfaces that do not allow the water to seep into the ground, known as impervious surfaces. This causes a greater quantity and velocity of water to run off into adjacent areas and waterways. Incorporating innovative stormwater management into the built environment helps restore the natural environmental functions of absorbing and cleaning stormwater.

Stormwater management should remain of critical importance due to the vast impacts it has on local water quality and wildlife. Encouraging the use of innovative stormwater management techniques can help reduce impacts on the natural environment. Properly designing, installing and maintaining stormwater infrastructure can also help reduce flooding and property damage from major rain events.

As part of innovative stormwater management techniques, protecting water quality using green infrastructure is important. Infrastructure should be designed and built

to minimize localized runoff and treat the first inch of stormwater through conservation of natural areas, green infrastructure, use of pervious surfaces and other stormwater control measures (SCMs). These low-impact approaches offer multiple benefits, including improved quality of life, enhanced built environments, and effective stormwater and water quality management.

The use of natural systems and processes to treat and retain stormwater is referred to as green infrastructure. Green infrastructure strategies can be accomplished at the regional, community and site scale. In a downtown environment, implementation of green infrastructure interventions should be done where possible. By working together, a network of small-scale facilities in the downtown area can generate a large benefit.

Some overall approaches for managing stormwater and using green infrastructure in the downtown area include:

- Add rain gardens along streetscapes and on private sites.
- Install bioswales incorporated into larger green spaces.
- Use native and adapted plantings in no-mow zones.
- Install street trees, where space allow, to add tree canopy which helps intercept stormwater before it hits the ground.

- Add green roofs, which can capture and use rain that falls on the roof.
- Use permeable paving in parking or other paved areas.
- Reduce impervious surface through retrofitting existing development and by limiting impervious surface on new development.
- Maintain existing stormwater facilities and infrastructure to get their maximum effectiveness.
- Encourage on-site infiltration and designs that mimic pre-development site conditions for stormwater management.
- Install educational signage and incorporate art informing the public about stormwater.
- Continue to require buffers along streams, ponds and other waterbodies to maintain a vegetated space between development and the water.
- Continue to provide resources on the Town's stormwater website about ways residents can help improve the quality of stormwater runoff entering local waterways.
- Continue to expand the Town's proactive stormwater program with retrofits, enhancements, educational events and enforcement of environmental regulations.

Opportunities that are more specific for each of the Character Areas include:

DOWNTOWN CORE

- Retrofit and redevelop existing parking lots and building lots to include underground stormwater management facilities, bioswales and rain gardens to treat and slow surface runoff. Additionally, use rain barrels or cisterns to capture rainfall before it becomes runoff.

DOWNTOWN EXTENSION

- Incorporate SCMs that enhance new development and redevelopment of sites, which may include rain gardens, designed wetlands, beautified wet ponds or other amenities that are an integral part of the site design.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

- Convert swales into bioswales.
- Consider incorporating several neighborhood stormwater management systems to help manage and clean neighborhood stormwater.
- Encourage installation of rain gardens on private property.

LLOYD-BROAD

- Convert swales into bioswales.
- Utilize open land and park space to help manage and clean neighborhood stormwater.
- Encourage installation of rain gardens on private property and connection with residents.

These strategies are especially important for the downtown area given its proximity to Morgan Creek and Lake Jordan. The use of innovative stormwater management and green infrastructure adjacent to roadways and parking areas can be especially effective at capturing and filtering out pollutants commonly found in runoff before it enters local waterways. These improvements can be implemented in conjunction with visual upgrades to existing surface parking lots and as part of roadway improvements.

Correct design, installation and maintenance of green infrastructure facilities is of utmost importance; this is especially true for innovative stormwater practices where plants serve functional purposes. Vegetated stormwater facilities do not necessarily require more maintenance; in fact, they should generally require less. However, they must be properly designed, installed and maintained to function effectively.

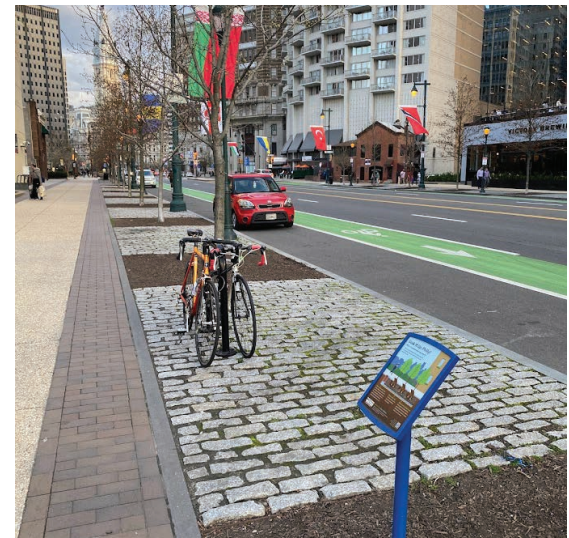
RAINWATER HARVESTING

Using cisterns, rain barrels and other rainwater harvesting techniques can help reduce stormwater runoff, while also providing water for on-site use. Using reclaimed water from Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) can also help reduce environmental impacts by reducing the use of potable water for non-drinking purposes and flushing needs. In addition to intercepting rainwater through harvesting techniques and utilizing reclaimed water, reducing water consumption through low-flow fixtures and drought-tolerant plantings helps reduce the overall demand for freshwater consumption. These approaches not only help reduce stormwater runoff, but

also help reduce environmental impacts of using treated, potable water for non-potable needs (such as irrigation or flushing toilets).



Bioswale designed into a parking lot



Curbside rain garden

OVERHEAD UTILITY LINES

Overhead power lines and telecommunication lines are part of modern life. Having overhead lines in or adjacent to the ROW creates certain challenges for street tree placement and keeping sidewalks free of obstructions. This Plan does not envision the undergrounding of overhead utility lines due to the expense and practicality of installing utility lines underground in the downtown area. However, if the chance arises, the Town should work with Duke Energy and other utility providers to install as many lines underground as possible.

UTILITY BOX LOCATION

The location of ground-level utility boxes should be carefully planned to avoid conflicts with sight triangles, pedestrians and street trees. Utility boxes offer an opportunity for use as a canvas for public art and can be themed to reinforce the various parts of the Town. For

instance, historic-themed utility boxes could be located in the historic district and nature-themed utility boxes could be located in areas on the edge of the urban fabric.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY GENERATION

Innovative energy generation techniques can help reduce the reliance on greenhouse-gas generating electricity and make projects more resilient to power outages. The incorporation of solar and geothermal throughout the downtown area can help demonstrate the Town's commitment to climate action. Having solar lighting and solar electric bike charging stations are small-scale examples. Larger projects, such as solar roofs and geothermal heating systems can be incorporated into redevelopment projects based on their infrastructure needs. Sustainable practices in the downtown area should also include energy conservation efforts to reduce the

amount of energy needed. Both small-scale implementation and large-scale projects are needed to help the downtown area be more climate-conscious. As there can be competing goals between strategies, a case-by-case evaluation will be necessary to assess which strategy is most appropriate for a given site. For instance, taller buildings provide higher densities but also create larger shadows, which may impact opportunities for solar collection.

SUSTAINABILITY HIERARCHY

As the Town considers utility strategies, particularly those related to water and energy, it is valuable to consider a sustainability hierarchy. Best practices would included the following priorities for utility strategies:

1. Reduce the need (efficiency first)
2. Rely on alternative sources (e.g., solar or rain cisterns)
3. Recycle, if applicable (e.g., water)



Utility box art



Small scale solar application



Residential scale solar application

BRANDING & URBAN DESIGN

PUBLIC SPACES

The design elements seen and experienced in public spaces such as parks and plazas create a lasting impression on people who visit the area. These are also the spaces where people can gather or spend time in the downtown area without patronizing a business. Parks and open spaces are often where you will see families spending time in urban spaces. Downtown Carrboro already has one great public space at Carrboro Town Commons and a variety of popular quasi-public spaces. There is community desire for more public and quasi-public spaces in the downtown area.

As the Town considers strategies for additional public and quasi-public spaces, it is recommended to include a mixture of space types, scales, amenities and experiences. A large, open grass area like the Town Commons is great for events and general play, but its location is removed from the daily visitors to the commercial core. Paved areas with movable furniture offer flexibility since the user can configure seating as they desire. Water features (e.g., fountains, splash plaza) attract people and can provide cooling opportunities, but the associated safety and maintenance must be considered during design. Smaller, scattered spaces help to create user options as they move through the area. Incorporating shaded seating, a variety of plantings, engaging art installations, universal accessibility for people regardless of their abilities or disabilities, event infrastructure and clear

signage will help create exciting experiences and welcoming spaces for all in downtown. Safety and cleanliness should be prioritized in all public/quasi-public spaces.

Branding and urban design elements outlined on the following pages can be used to unify the Downtown Core and Core Extension character areas described in the **Volume 1, Master Plan** chapter. Similar design elements may be used on a less intensive scale in the Surrounding Neighborhoods and Lloyd-Broad Neighborhood character area. For example, decorative paving patterns that may be used for an entire block in Downtown Core and Core Extension areas could be used only at intersections in the other character areas. Using branded street name signs could be done throughout all character areas to help unify the greater downtown area.



Small-scale quasi-public gathering area



Urban public space featuring water play, multiple seating types and shade trees



Art park space with interactive elements

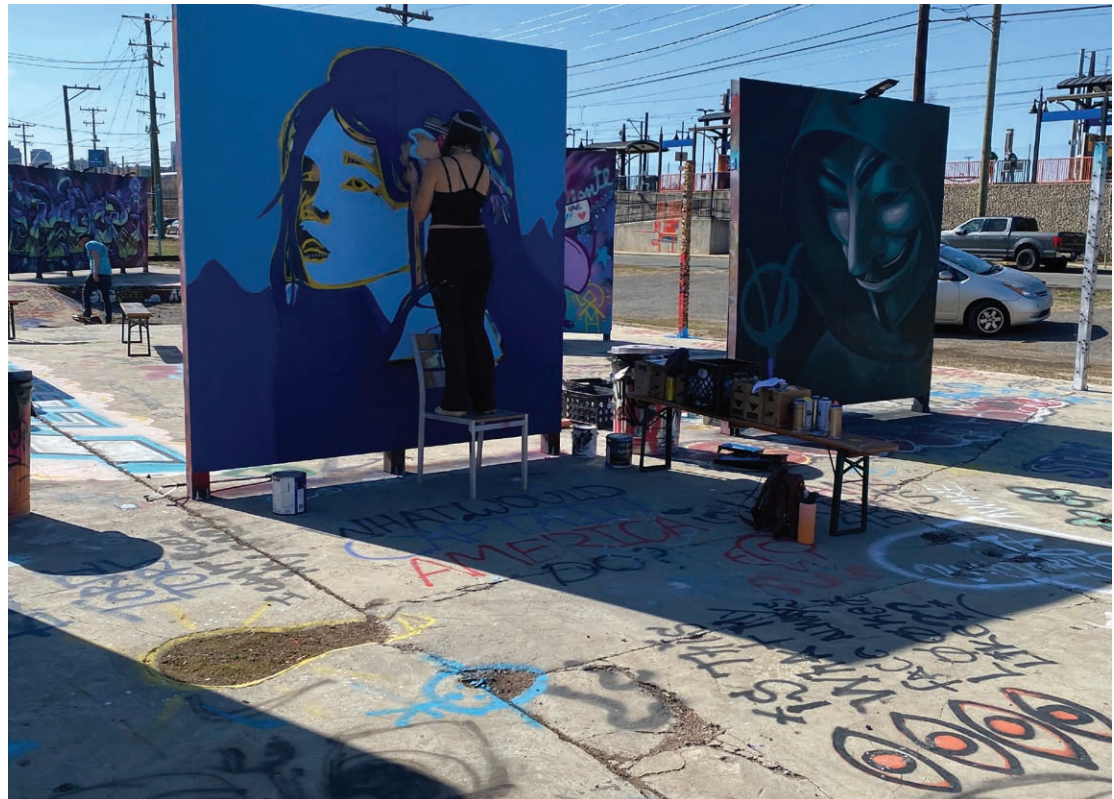
PUBLIC ART

Public art can provide many functions and benefits in a downtown setting. Public art provides opportunities to celebrate local history, culture and artists. It can be used to effectively enliven buildings, parking lots and other spaces lacking visual interest or a sense of place. Public art can be visual, educational and interactive, taking forms such as gateways, signage, murals and sculptures. Even functional elements like paving, benches, trash cans and screening fences can be turned into distinctive art pieces.

The Town should consider creating a public art plan to identify strategic locations for permanent and/or temporary art installations in both small- and large-scale spaces. Art in public spaces should encourage people to stop and enjoy it with adequate space to allow for this. Interactive art is encouraged as it creates a unique experience while engaging viewers as active participants. Examples include musical or sound elements, light and shadow play, and art with movable components.

The Town could consider various ways to showcase rotating art exhibits around the downtown area, perhaps by creating a dedicated art trail or by setting aside some private space to host rotating art pieces. Temporary art can be used to expand public art without the expense of permanent installations, while also drawing visitors for new experiences. The Town could also consider creating a public art program that dedicates a certain percentage of project budgets to a public art fund.

Vandalism of public art can be an issue. Potential solutions could include temporary art or providing a “graffiti wall” to give people a legitimate outlet for graffiti.



Public graffiti wall



Small-scale art installation



Educational public art

SITE FURNISHINGS

Site furnishings include elements such as seating, waste receptacles, planters, screens, shade structures and tree grates. These elements should be visually appealing, commercial-grade, durable and made of vandal-resistant materials. They offer a chance to reflect the desired character of the downtown area, whether it be historic, contemporary, eclectic or another style. Furnishings can maintain a consistent aesthetic or allow businesses to express their unique identities through varied styles, colors and designs along a block. The heat conductivity of materials should be carefully considered when selecting benches, tables and other surfaces that people will touch during summer months.

The Town should consider both movable and accessible mounted furniture in public spaces, while seating along a streetscape and at bus stops should be mounted to the pavement. Trash and recycling receptacles should be located at regular intervals along the street, at bus stops and in all public spaces to make it easy and convenient for people to clean up after themselves. Bike racks should be placed at regular intervals along the street, at all public facilities, at key points of interest (e.g., grocery store, event venues) and at bus stops.

The Town's 1990 Downtown Design Guidelines included examples of benches, trash cans and bike racks. The Town may consider updating those guidelines with preferred furnishing families including benches, tables, litter receptacles, light poles and luminaries, and planters, as well as clearly determining where the rules may be "broken" to allow for creativity and interest.



Unique wood benches



Existing furniture in downtown



Metal café seating

LIGHTING

Effective lighting sets the mood, enhances safety and adds visual appeal during evening activities. It can help draw attention to art, benches and other elements that help create a quality space. It also serves as an architectural feature that can either highlight the historic charm of a downtown area or contribute to a modern, contemporary look. Lighting should be integrated into the overall urban design guidelines to ensure that its materials and aesthetics align with the downtown branding strategy. Thoughtful implementation is key, addressing different scales and complementing the surrounding context. This includes incorporating lighting for vehicular areas along streets, placing bollards at intersections and introducing pedestrian-focused lighting along key pedestrian pathways.

Lighting can also be used as art itself and for the sole purpose of highlighting special building or landscape elements. Decorative and accent lighting should be used sparingly, on iconic buildings and in major public spaces, to preserve the impact when it is used.

The downtown area primarily has vehicular focused lighting along the streetscape. Due to limited ROW, this may be the only option in many locations. The Town could consider more ornamental, pedestrian-scale lighting in gathering areas. The use of a distinctive light pole or color could be used as a visual cue that people have entered downtown.

All lighting should follow Dark Sky principles to protect the nighttime sky and avoid negative impacts of lighting. Quality lighting is also important to create a safer nighttime environment by illuminating pedestrian crossing areas and reducing dark areas that may feel uncomfortable for people. Providing a well-lit pedestrian experience is key to increasing people's feeling of safety in a downtown environment.



Landscape accent lighting



Pedestrian bollards at an intersection



Decorative street lamp with banner

STREET TREES

During community engagement, the desire for additional shade trees in the study area was frequently voiced. Street trees provide multiple benefits such as shade, heat island effect mitigation, air quality mitigation, traffic calming, aesthetics, stormwater management and habitat, among other things. Providing shade along sidewalks greatly increases pedestrian comfort and, even along primarily vehicular corridors, shade can help reduce the ambient heat caused by paved surfaces. Ideally, shade is provided by street trees of shade-tree species. Ornamental trees can also be used in select locations to provide visual interest but do not have as large of an impact on shading. All tree species used should be native, selected for disease resistance, adapted to the climate, and appropriate for the context or setting in which they are being planted. Ideally, street trees should include multiple different species to create a more sustainable urban forest.

Providing adequate soil volume is an important factor in determining the fate of street trees and allowing them room to grow large enough to provide shade. Today's best practices suggest 1,000 cubic feet of soil volume is necessary to support a thriving street tree in an urban environment. Soil volume can be provided in planting areas, tree wells/pits or underneath walking surfaces with the use of suspended pavers. Based on limited ROWs in some areas, the provision of street trees would likely require coordination with and an easement from adjacent private landowners to plant trees on their property. High-quality soil and room for root growth are critical to street tree success and should be prioritized.



Examples of street trees

LANDSCAPING

Similar to street trees, the community expressed a desire for additional plants and landscapes downtown. Landscape plants provide many functions in a downtown. Landscaping along a street and in public spaces helps to improve the micro-climate and the aesthetic of the area. Shade trees provide shelter while shrubs can function as buffers between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Ornamental trees can be used to highlight pedestrian corridors, public art, monuments or places of respite.

Plant materials should be selected for function, a species' ability to withstand and thrive in an urban context and the local climate, and the maintenance requirements. Plant materials such as shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses should include native species selected to provide year round interest during all seasons by selecting plants that vary in color, bloom, shape and texture. The use of planters with enhanced annual plantings should be focused in high-traffic pedestrian areas.

In an urban setting, landscaping should allow for unobstructed pedestrian movement and visibility.

Much of the property in the downtown area is privately owned, so having a robust landscape and tree preservation ordinance in place is critical to maintaining existing vegetation. In addition, many communities create programs to support tree planting on private properties to enhance the tree canopy.



Examples of urban landscape design

PARKING LOTS

As previously noted in the Plan, there is very little opportunity for on-street parking within the study area and essentially all parking in the commercial area is concentrated in surface lots and parking garages. Providing space for cars to park is an important part of a downtown's economic success as there will always be some people who cannot conveniently and/or feasibly access the area otherwise. However, parking lots do not need to be simply a large swath of impervious pavement. A traditional parking lot (e.g., lot at Sweet Bay Place and Roberson Street) largely lacks vegetation and shade, contributes to the heat island effect and prevents stormwater absorption. There are multiple ways to improve a parking lot for aesthetics, stormwater functionality, temperature regulation and user comfort.

Increasing vegetation in and around parking lots can improve their aesthetics and help to mitigate the impacts listed above. Shade trees and low-growing ornamental plants along the perimeter, in planting islands and/or between rows of parking, can make an impactful difference. Trees with extensive surface roots, weak wood, or that drop a lot of fruit, branches and/or large leaves should be avoided. Low-growing plants should grow to a max of 30-36 inches to preserve sight lines for drivers.

Using pervious pavement in parking lots can help to manage stormwater and reduce the heat island effect. The lot's location and site context (e.g., drainage patterns, soil type, etc.) will help determine which types of pavement would be most beneficial and where in the lot (e.g., parking stalls) to use the pavement. Combining pervious pavement

with green infrastructure, such as rain gardens or bioswales, can enhance the stormwater management functionality.

Lastly, the exterior treatment of parking garages can enhance their aesthetic and ecological functionality. The addition of murals/artwork, colorful lighting and/or parking garage screen walls can make garages more visually appealing, preserve airflow and provide an opportunity to coordinate with the local art community. Incorporating plants and green walls can similarly add visual appeal while also helping to improve air quality. Solar panels can be placed on the roof and/or on top of shade structures to integrate with rooftop parking.



Parking lot landscaping



Pervious pavement in parking stalls



Decorative parking garage screen wall

GATEWAYS AND SIGNAGE

Gateways and signage play a crucial role in downtowns by enhancing wayfinding, ensuring visitors can easily navigate and discover key attractions and services. They also contribute to the area's identity and aesthetic appeal, creating a welcoming atmosphere that attracts visitors.

Gateways create an enhanced entrance into an area and help people understand that they are entering a special district. Public parking and directional signs are helpful in creating a comfortable space for visitors and can help support local businesses by encouraging tourism.

The Town adopted its Wayfinding Program in 2020 (see Figure 32) which includes recommended locations for signage throughout the downtown area (not mapped here). This Plan recommends the addition of downtown gateways that reflect this aesthetic.

Gateway design elements often include signage, architectural elements, enhanced landscaping, lighting and public art to create robust visual entrances. A series of primary and secondary gateways are proposed to create improved entrances to the downtown area. Secondary gateways will be smaller in scale,

but should use similar branding, plant palette and design aesthetics as primary gateways.

PRIMARY GATEWAY LOCATIONS

- N. Greensboro Street @ Pleasant Drive
- S. Greensboro Street @ Old Pittsboro Road
- W. Main Street @ Hillsborough Road
- E. Main Street @ N. Merritt Mill Road
- Jones Ferry Road @ NC-54 On/Off Ramp

SECONDARY GATEWAY LOCATIONS

- W. Rosemary Street @ N. Merritt Mill Road
- S. Merritt Mill Road @ W. Cameron Avenue

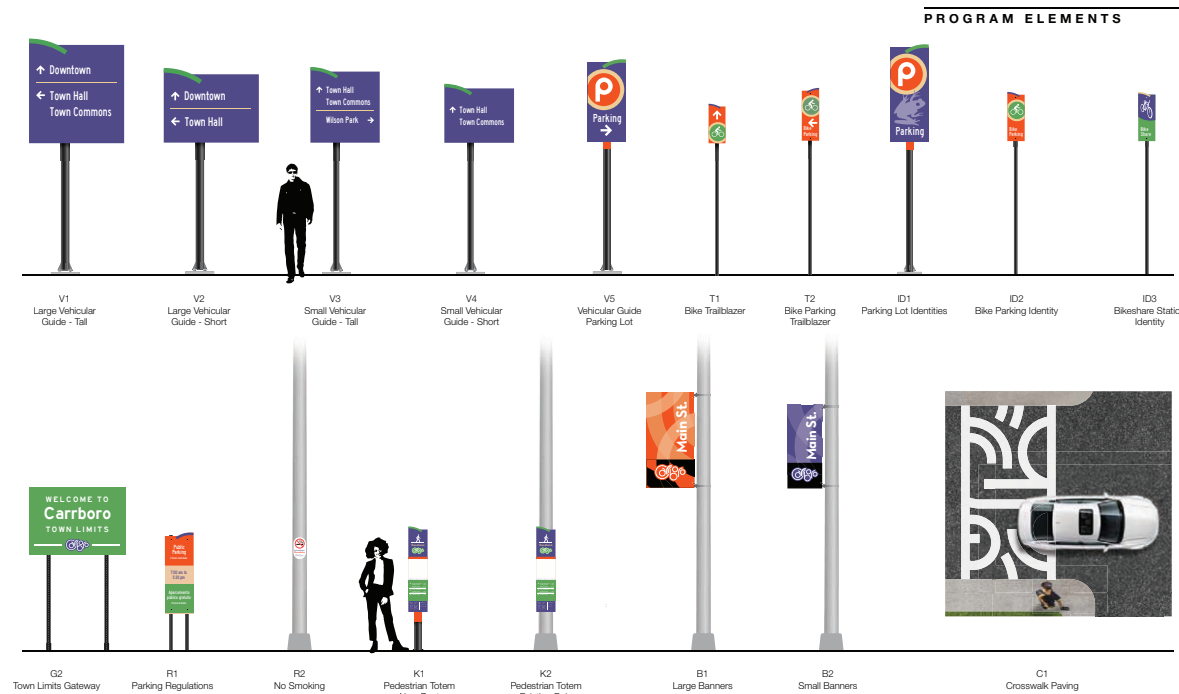


Figure 32. Town of Carrboro Wayfinding Program - Family of Sign Types (Design by Others)

Map 23. Downtown Gateways

BUILDINGS & FRONTAGES

The creation of good public spaces does not end at the boundary of the public ROW. The form of the surrounding buildings and the context they create for the public realm have an immense impact on the character of the space and its success in a community. Building form should also respond to the type of street environment and configuration that exists or is to be created over time. Street design and building form go hand-in-hand and must be aligned to create a harmonious and vibrant public realm. See Figure 33 and Figure 34 on the following pages for illustrations of some of the principles described below.

HEIGHT, MASSING & SCALE

The height, massing and scale of a building should be reasonably proportional to surrounding buildings and the streetscape so that they do not overpower the public realm. Buildings must be designed and sculpted to create a comfortable experience, especially in highly pedestrianized environments. The height, massing and scale of buildings need to be balanced with the size of surrounding or adjacent ROWs and open spaces. Buildings and the elements that contribute to their facades should have a proportion and scale that are welcoming for pedestrians. Considerations in massing include, but are not limited to, creating a sense of enclosure or openness, sunlight and shadows, reinforcing views, and wind patterns. The downtown area has a variety of existing building heights, and it is recommended that any new buildings should be two-to-five stories in height (as identified in the character areas described in the **Volume 1, Master Plan** chapter). This is enough height to create downtown appropriate densities and allow for a variety of uses without overwhelming the existing community fabric.

BUILDING PLACEMENT

Buildings in pedestrianized areas should be located at or near the front property line, in order to reinforce the streetscape and create a quality pedestrian experience.

For residential uses, the building placement will depend on the type of residential building being proposed and the context. Townhomes and multifamily buildings should be located at or near the property line to ensure the proper proportions are created for the public realm. Where single-family dwellings are appropriate, they should be set back 8-15 feet from the property line, close enough to engage the sidewalk but providing some buffer for the home. Encouraging units to be located closer to the street reinforces the streetscape, creates a quality pedestrian environment and opportunities for socialization.

For mixed-use and commercial buildings, the building placement should be setback 0-20 feet from the property line, depending on the street typologies on which the building fronts, and include a wide sidewalk between the building and public sidewalk. Larger setbacks should only be used in order to incorporate additional pedestrian space or enhance the

pedestrian experience, such as the elements noted in the renderings in the **Volume 1, Master Plan** chapter.

BUILDING FACADES

Enhancing building facades with inviting features not only enriches the pedestrian experience, but also enhances the overall scale and appeal of the structures. It is crucial to steer clear of long, monotonous walls devoid of windows or entrance features. Architectural elements like balconies, porches, patios, colonnades, awnings and light fixtures should adorn facades along the street. All buildings, whether residential, mixed-use or commercial, must prioritize prominent entry features that have direct connections to public sidewalks.

ENCROACHMENTS

Encroachments are building elements that protrude across the property line into the public ROW. Given the limited space along the downtown area streets, encroachments in the form of overhangs could be a good strategy to provide sidewalk shade where there is not sufficient space for street trees.

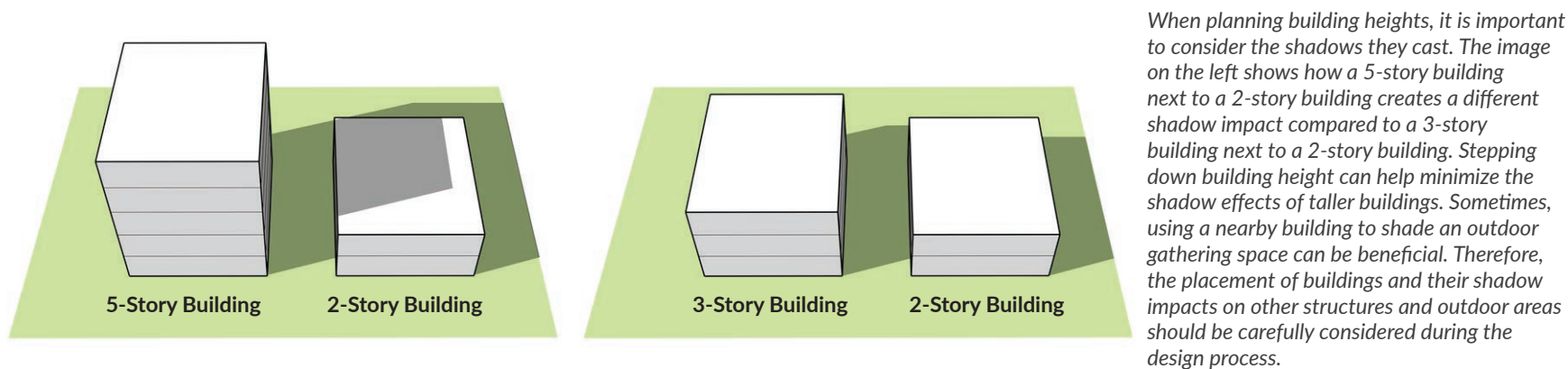
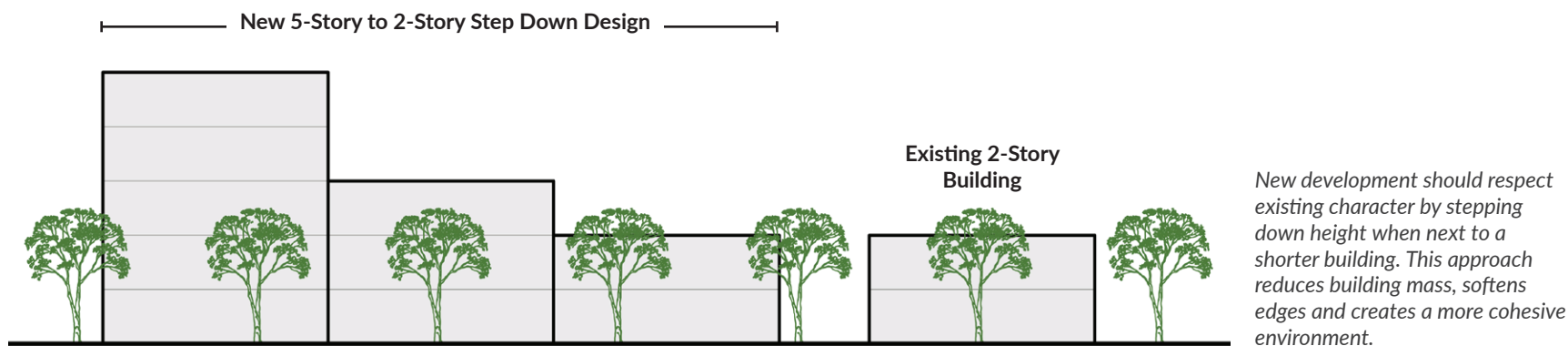


Figure 33. Compatible Building Heights and Shadow Impacts

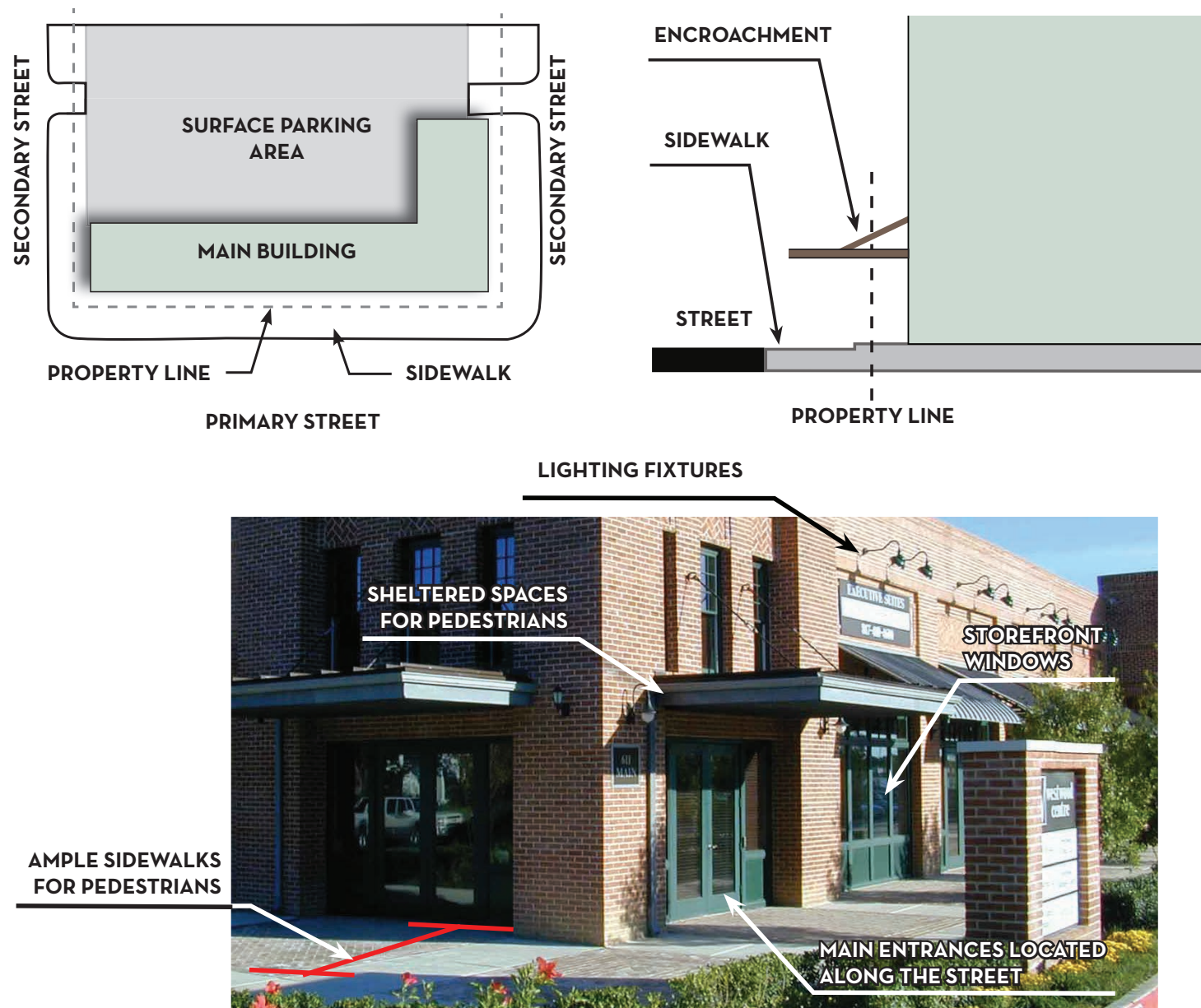


Figure 34. Strategies to Address Urban Design Using Building Form

STOREFRONT AND WINDOW ACTIVATION

To maintain a successful downtown, it is crucial to actively engage pedestrians with their immediate surroundings. Storefronts play a crucial role in serving as the seam between the public and private realms. Appealing, well-lit and lively storefronts play an essential role in supporting a downtown.

While motorists driving through a district will notice if the majority of storefronts are inactive (thus signaling a struggling area), pedestrians are even more sensitive to these types of details. For example, visitors walking in a downtown may turn around and return to their cars if there are several empty storefronts in a row.

Activation strategies to encourage pedestrians include:

- Outdoor café seating
- Pop-up signs and sidewalk sales
- Window displays
- Potted plants and flower boxes
- Seasonal decor and displays

As discussed in the downtown mobility section on page 148, a “frontage zone” of at least 2 feet along building frontages is helpful to allow room for activation elements, door swings, etc.

Empty buildings and frontages are inevitable for any retail area. Activation with a pop-up shop, seasonal use, public/civic use, art installation or even just interesting window

displays can help fill the space temporarily until a more permanent use comes in. These are also strategies that can be used for privately owned buildings that do not currently have an active use on the ground floor.

Activation also means that businesses are actually open when visitors are expecting to patronize them. This includes being open during reasonable hours during most days of the week and into the weekends and evenings.



Plants help to enliven a sidewalk



Outdoor café seating



Art in a vacant storefront

BUILDING AND SITE LIGHTING

Improving storefront lighting encourages exploration on foot, draws attention from passing motorists and encourages business/property owners to improve their displays. Storefronts should be lit from inside and out, where possible, irrespective of whether the building is vacant or open.

It is recommended that the Town work with property owners to maintain a database of buildings to include interior and exterior lighting and assess the costs of making improvements. Outside of keeping properties in good maintenance and curating tenants, this is perhaps the most important step property owners can take to benefit their individual properties and the downtown area as a whole.

All lighting should follow Dark Sky principles to reduce light pollution and be cognizant of lighting's environmental impact. The Town can take two main approaches to help reduce light pollution in the downtown area.

The first is retrofitting existing lighting. This would be a Town-led, proactive approach to replacing existing lighting with full cutoff fixtures, changing out bulb type to adjust the color of light to decrease the amount of blue light being emitted, and modify lights to operate on timers which turn off at some point during the night.

The second approach is to require all new exterior light installations to limit light pollution by including full cutoff fixtures, limit blue spectrum light colors, limit lighting intensity, set maximum fixture heights and have time limits in place for lighting to turn off.



Roofline lighting example



Illuminated channel letter sign example



String lights example

SIGNAGE

Signage is an important element of the urban environment and, if well done, can be a major asset for the community. Businesses rely on clear and visible signs, so the Town should work closely with the business community to balance signage needs and visual distractions. Signage in the downtown area should be pedestrian-scaled and focused with interesting detailing and unique branding.

Using external illumination, temporary A-frame sidewalk signs, neon and other smaller-scale sign options will help support an attractive environment. Signs that are meant for vehicular traffic, use internal illumination and incorporate bright LED lights are incompatible with the environment envisioned for the downtown area and should be avoided.



Pedestrian-scale business signage conveys the business brand in an inviting manner

BLENDING NEW BUILDINGS WITH EXISTING HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The Town has well-maintained historic properties, such as the historically significant Strayhorn House, and three National Register historic districts that should be celebrated and preserved for the future generations to enjoy. Historic properties also help cultivate a unique sense of place and can support a high-quality built environment and aesthetic. Carefully balancing the maintenance of historic buildings (e.g., building upgrades to meet fire code) with new development is an important aspect of allowing the downtown area to continue to grow without losing the existing community fabric.

Blending the scale, mass and architecture of new construction with the existing buildings can help ease the transition from old to new. Careful architectural detailing and roof type and pitch help not only align new construction with older building techniques, but also provide interest for pedestrians.

From mill-era housing to modern architecture, Carrboro has embraced a wide variety of architectural styles, materials, colors and design aesthetic. This variety should be continued in the downtown area, but when building immediately adjacent to a historic property, the design choices should be more reflective of the historic resource for compatibility. Elements more reflective of historic design can include brick facades with frieze banding or smaller-scale residential buildings with porches and simple roof lines.



A new building that reflects the historic building materials in the area