



EXISTING CONDITIONS

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2.0 OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an inventory of existing conditions related to pedestrian planning and pedestrian facilities in the Town of Pittsboro, North Carolina. Much of the information presented below originally appeared in the Town of Pittsboro's pedestrian planning grant application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Additional research and all mapping was developed specifically for this chapter, including the results from the online public comment form, and intersection inventory and analysis.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

Incorporated Pittsboro is a small community, comprising three square miles, with an extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of 44 square miles. Thus, Pittsboro is potentially very walkable because distances between destinations are minimal. Aside from the 2009-estimated population for the Town of Pittsboro (3,175 within the town limits and 2,820 in the ETJ), most of the demographic information in this section relies on data from the 2000 Census. As of the writing of this plan, this data is dated, yet remains the best source of broad demographic data for the Town.

In 2000, the racial/ethnic distribution was 64% white, 27% African-American, and Hispanics represented 9% of the population. Pittsboro had a median age of 39.3 and many new families with children were moving to town, spurred on by new residential developments. Pittsboro had been experiencing annual growth rates of 3.5% until recently; a more realistic growth rate projecting out from now would be 5% (or higher).

Also in 2000, 12.7% of households had someone who was 65 or older. The many older residents with limited mobility options could better "age in place" if the town was more pedestrian-friendly. The town hosts three assisted living facilities with a total population of 245 people and an autism center with a resident population of 15. Other user groups include Hispanics, who have recently arrived in large numbers in Chatham County. Many of these new residents do not drive and must walk out of necessity. Important user groups also include children who could walk to/from school if the street system was safer, visitors who shop in town on weekend, and employees of downtown offices.

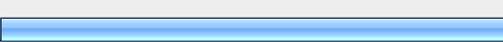
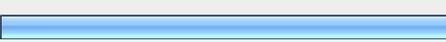
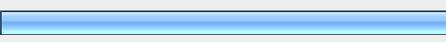
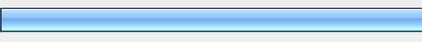
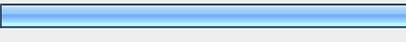
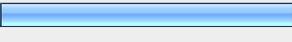
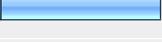
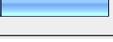
2.2 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Pittsboro’s street landscape is changing as it grows. Several recent residential subdivisions, Chatham Forest and Potterstone Village continue to build-out and will reach a total of 389 homes. Another large mixed-use subdivision, Powell Place, is in the early phases of development and will ultimately host 1010 housing units. In addition, four other developers hope to receive approval and begin construction of large subdivisions within the next two years, which would add 15,000 new residents in Pittsboro over the next ten years inside the corporate limits. These new developments will bring opportunities to improve the pedestrian network in addition to the influx of new pedestrians and vehicles.

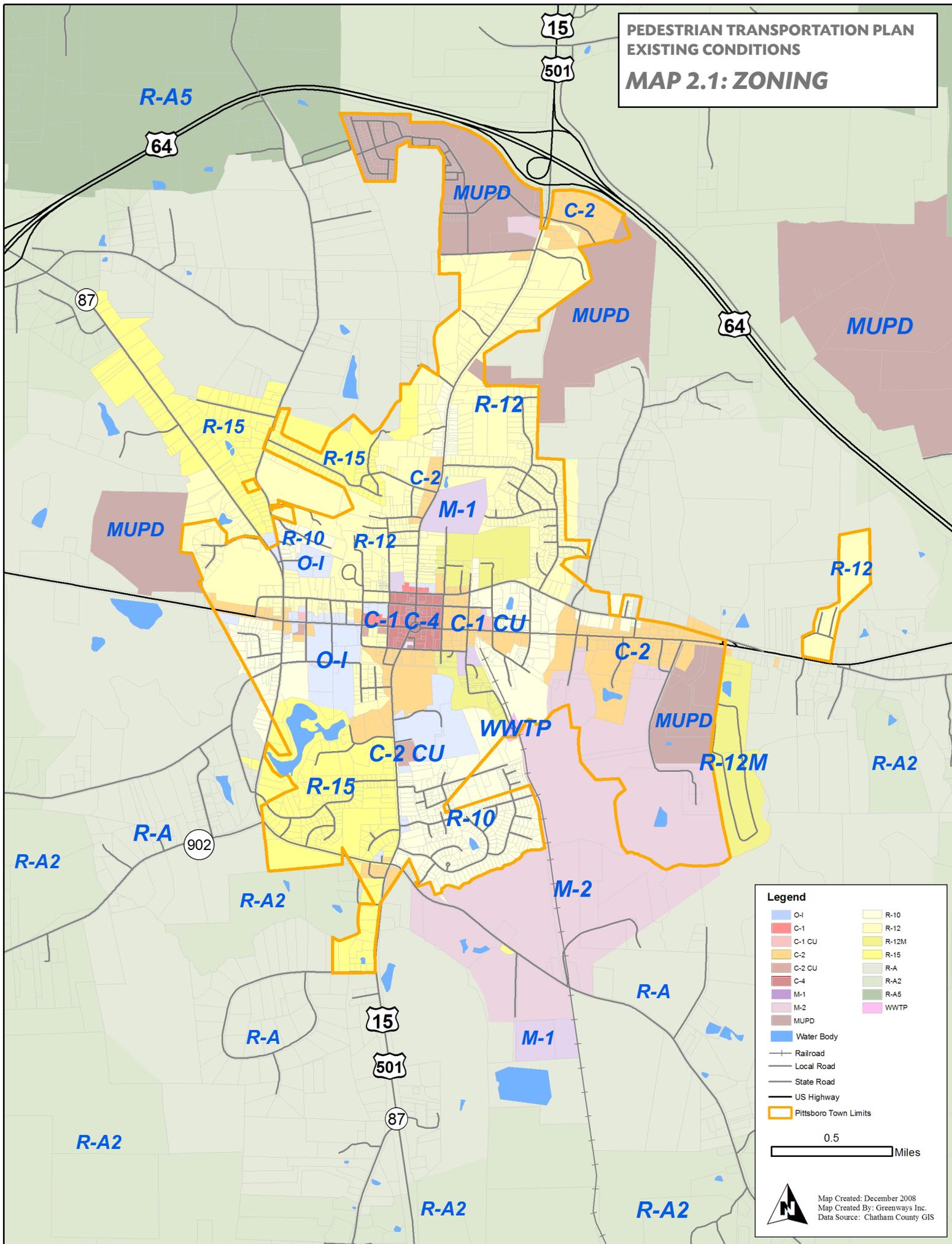
2.3 TRIP ATTRACTORS

Pittsboro is the seat of Chatham County and serves as headquarters for county government. Pittsboro Elementary School, Horton Middle School, and Central Carolina Community College are located in Pittsboro, serving as routine destinations for students of all ages (Northwood High School is separated from town by US 64, and less accessible). Pittsboro’s downtown is also known as a regional tourist destination because of its concentration of antique shops, galleries, and restaurants. Other businesses, services, and shopping destinations are located in downtown, which generate many trips - and opportunities for conflicts – for motor vehicles and pedestrians. In the center of Pittsboro, at the convergence of US 64 and 15-501, sits the Chatham County courthouse within one of the region’s few traffic circles, providing a welcoming vista for arriving motorists.

The chart below is from the online comment form (see Appendix A for full results), which shows walking destinations (a.k.a. ‘trip attractors’) people would most like to get to in Pittsboro.

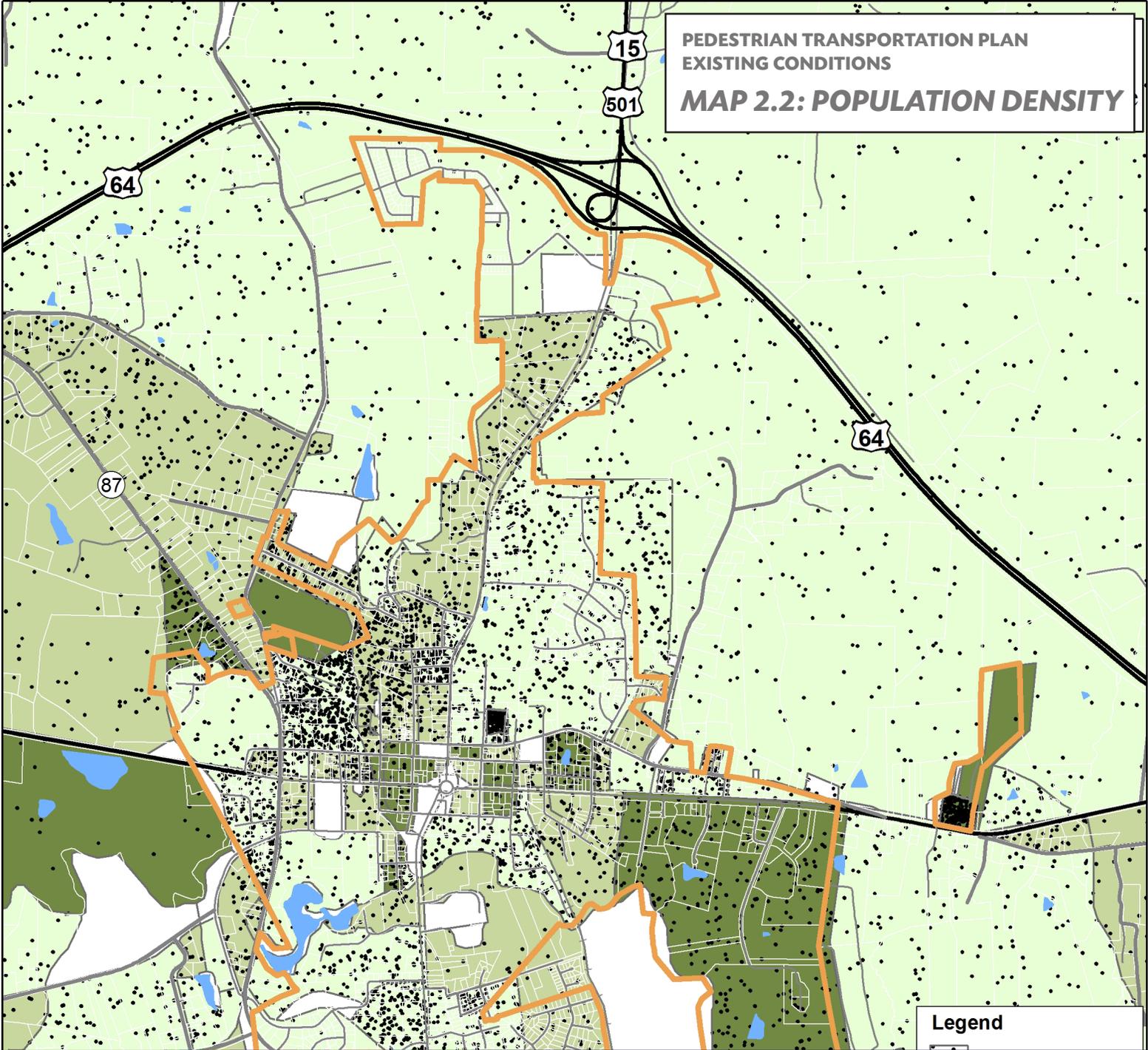
What walking destinations would you most like to get to? Select all that apply.			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Restaurants		82.6%	109
Shopping		73.5%	97
Trails and greenways		73.5%	97
Parks		68.9%	91
Libraries or recreation centers		67.4%	89
Entertainment		47.7%	63
Public Transportation		28.8%	38
Place of work		25.8%	34
School		17.4%	23

**PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS
MAP 2.1: ZONING**



PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS

MAP 2.2: POPULATION DENSITY



Legend

Insert 11x17 fold-out:

MAP 2.8: EXISTING PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS

*Note: This page was intentionally left blank to
accommodate the 11x17 fold-out map
for the previous page.*

2.4 PEDESTRIAN CONDITIONS

Pittsboro has a minimal and incomplete sidewalk network and few town-owned off-road pathways. Some sidewalks are in place but, overall, they are disconnected and limited to a few arterials and collectors. In recent years, the town has required developers to install sidewalks but they are characterized more as piecemeal sections than a network. This has left many important destinations not well served by a pedestrian system, including the community college and most residences. Few intersections in town have either marked crosswalks or pedestrian signals. The primary routes through downtown – 15-501 and US 64 – are both difficult to cross for pedestrians, especially during daylight hours.

Town officials and NC DOT have made an effort to improve the sidewalk network in recent years. In 2003, as a result of enhancement and local match funding, 4,110 feet of new sidewalks were constructed on Thompson Street and Pittsboro Elementary School Road. NC DOT has also included 7,300 feet of new sidewalk extensions along US 15-501 North in the 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Plan. Town Lake Park has approximately one mile of unpaved trails and Central Carolina Community College hosts a one mile paved walking loop on its campus. This popular amenity is heavily used by walkers and joggers of all ages but it is disconnected – blocks away from the nearest sidewalk. Other barriers include a lack of adequate public right-of-way in key locations, such as on NC 87 just north of the intersection of US 64 and nearby to the community college (*note: funding was recently established for sidewalk improvements on NC 87, north from US 64*).



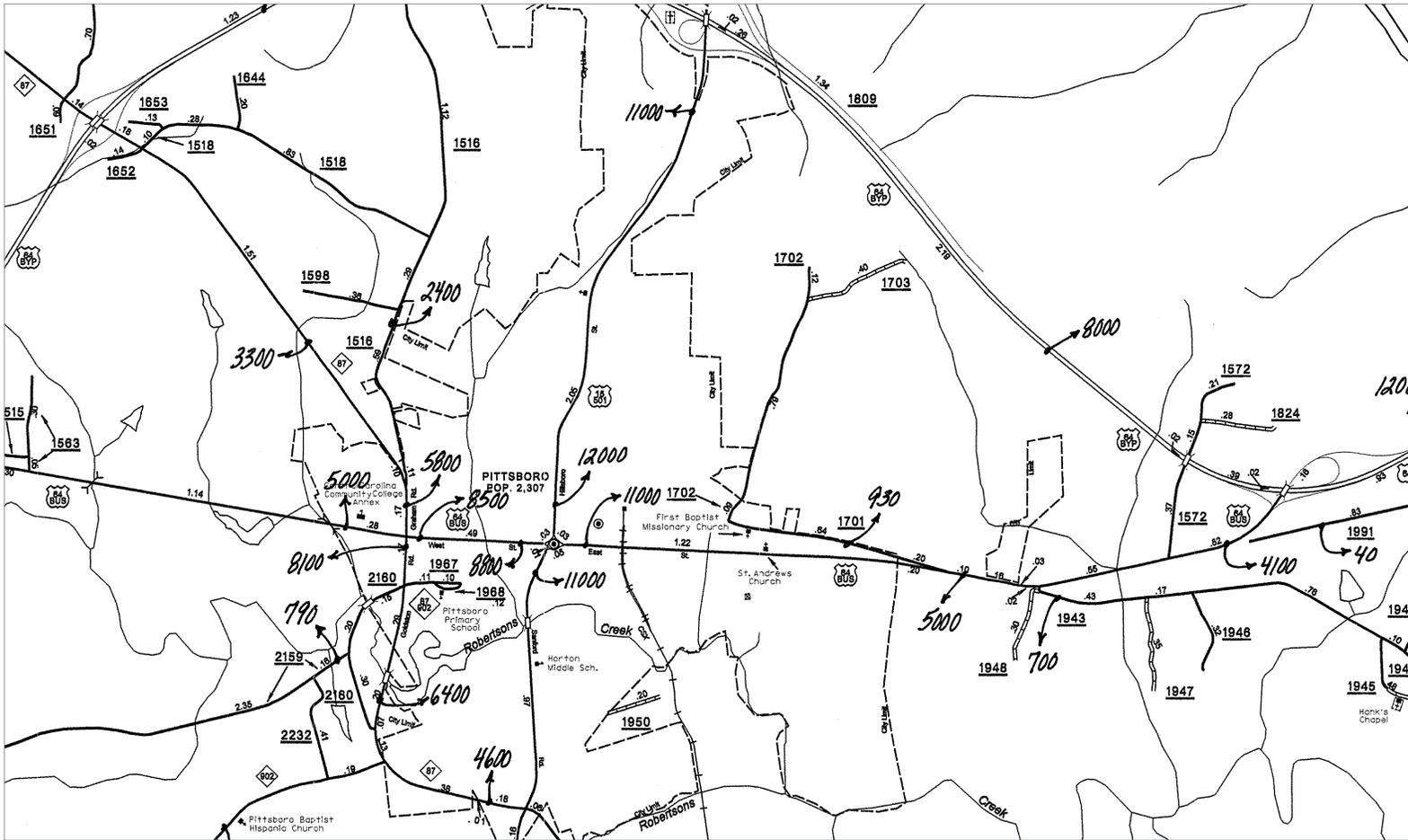
Pedestrian conditions are good in many areas of town, but could be greatly improved with simple additions (such as placing crosswalks along US 64, shown above).



The trail at Central Carolina Community College is a resource for pedestrians that could be better connected to downtown Pittsboro.

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADTs)

This map shows the estimated daily traffic volumes on roads in the Town of Pittsboro (NCDOT, 2006)



NCDOT Crash Data

The following statistics are from North Carolina police-reported bicycle and pedestrian crashes (NCDOT, Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, 2008).

<i>Pedestrian Crash Type - Pittsboro, NC</i>	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	<i>Totals</i>
Dart-Out	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Exiting/Entering Parked Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Motorist Left Turn - Opposite Direction	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pedestrian Failed to Yield	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Walking on Road w/traffic; from behind	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Totals	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	7

<i>Chatham Co. City & Rural Pedestrian Crashes</i>	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	<i>Totals</i>
Goldston	1								

<i>Pedestrian Crash Type, Chatham County</i>	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	<i>Totals</i>
Backing Vehicle - other/unknown	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Backing Vehicle - parking lot	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Dart-Out	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Dash	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Disabled Vehicle-Related	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
Driverless Vehicle	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	4
Emergency Vehicle-Related	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Exiting/Entering Parked Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Motorist Left Turn - Opp. Direction	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Off Roadway - parking lot	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Other - non-intersection	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Other - standing in the roadway	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
Pedestrian Failed to Yield	0	3	1	2	0	1	1	2	2	12
Pedestrian on Vehicle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Play-Vehicle Related	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
School Bus-Related	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Vehicle-Vehicle/Object	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	5
Waiting to Cross: vehicle action unkn.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Walking on Road; against traffic; from behind	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Walking on Road; against traffic; from front	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Walking along Road; position unknown	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Walking on Road w/traffic; from behind	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	3	2	9
Walking on Road w/traffic; from front	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Working in Roadway	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
<i>Totals</i>	4	11	3	9	4	8	12	9	6	66

<i>Injury Type</i>	<i>Totals</i>
K Killed	12
A Type Injury (disabling)	11
B Type Injury (evident)	16
C Type Injury (possible)	27
O No Injury	4
Unknown	2
Totals	72

2.6 CURRENT PEDESTRIAN USE AND NEEDS

Citizens are interested in quality of life issues particularly in relation to their personal health and fitness. The Town of Pittsboro views this as an important goal to work towards in providing safe pedestrian sidewalks and walkways to enjoy and to experience healthy lifestyles.

Information about current pedestrian use and needs was gathered through an online comment form. Appendix A summarizes the various avenues of public outreach that were employed to gather input during the planning process (including the comment form), and features charts and graphs that outline the findings. Below are some key findings, according to the 140+ people who submitted comments through the online survey:

- 94 percent said that the goal of creating a walkable community is “very important”.
- People are walking for both transportation and recreation, but most are walking only a few times per month.
- 82 percent identified “availability of a safe route” as the top factor in whether or not they choose to walk; other key factors influencing the choice to walk include “the need for exercise” and “weather”.
- The lack of sidewalks and trails, unsafe crossings, and deficient sidewalks were identified as the top factors that keep people from walking in Pittsboro.
- Conversely, the top needs identified include crossing improvements, improved greenway and trail systems, new and improved sidewalks, and pedestrian-friendly land uses.
- 15-501 and US 64 were identified as the top roadway corridors most in need of sidewalk improvements.
- The top three walking destinations people would most like to get to are restaurants, shopping, and greenways.
- 95 percent said that public funds should be used to improve pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, etc.), including state and federal grants, capital improvements bonds, and existing local taxes.

2.7 SUMMARY OF EXISTING DOCUMENTS + PLANNING EFFORTS

This Plan will build on past pedestrian planning efforts in the Town of Pittsboro. In particular, the contributions of the Safe Roads Committee and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee are valuable to the process and are summarized below. Existing planning documents are also summarized in this section, only as they relate to pedestrian planning. Recommended amendments to these plans are not included in this chapter, but can be found in Chapter 4: Programs and Policies.

Safe Roads Committee

In 1999, Pittsboro town officials convened a task force of citizens known as the Safe Roads Committee. This group conducted a comprehensive assessment of transportation safety issues through surveys, crash reports, and by inventorying sidewalks and pathways in town. The committee used assessment findings to propose a sidewalk map/plan for the town. In subsequent years, Pittsboro was awarded TEA-21 enhancement grants and District 8 discretionary funding to construct sidewalks along key corridors in town. Residents are now benefiting from the addition of several sidewalks resulting from the citizen led process.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PARAB)

In 2006, the town council formed the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PARAB), a group of citizens from Pittsboro and the ETJ that is staffed by the town manager and advises the Town on parks- and recreation-related issues. The PARAB has initiated projects to improve not just parks and programming, but is addressing other quality of life issues, including pedestrian transportation, bicycle transportation, land use planning, and policies that will result in a more livable community. Timing for this grant is very good. PARAB members will be involved in an upcoming process to reconsider language that could influence pedestrians in the Comprehensive Plan. The committee also plans to assess the quality of current ordinances, design standards, and other policies.

Goals of the PARAB include influencing new development in town to include connected and walkable residential subdivisions. In addition, new parks will be built as part of a connected transportation system that serves the needs of all users, including pedestrians and bicyclists.

Some PARAB members also served on the Pedestrian Plan Steering Committee, attending meetings (left) and conducting public outreach (right).



Land Use Plan (2002 +2008 Update)

The existing Land Use Plan contains supporting statements about making Pittsboro a walkable town. It contains a recommendation that the zoning ordinance be amended to require sidewalks in new non-residential development. In addition, subdivision regulations require new projects to include sidewalks.

The 2002 Plan is being updated to reflect recent changes in the region and current and future growth and development, using the transect model for guiding growth in according to defined set of development intensity tiers (see map on following page). Recommendations from the update support the needs of pedestrians.

Left: Example summary sheet for one of seven development tiers defined in the Land Use Plan Update.

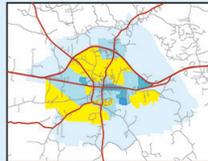
T4 GENERAL NEIGHBORHOOD



Note the restaurant and shop on the upper left corner. Amenities and services are within easy walking distance in the General Neighborhood District, thus reducing the number of cars on the road in these areas, which protects air quality.

Where would the General Neighborhood be located in the Transect Development Tier Map Scenario?

(General Neighborhood areas are in yellow)



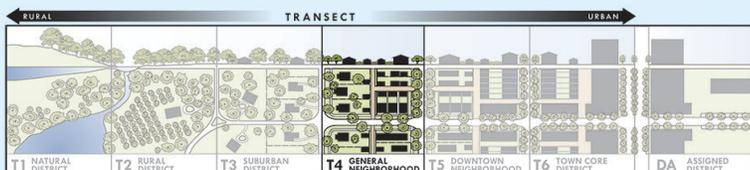
Development Focus Group Scenario - Created by Land Development Partners & Builders

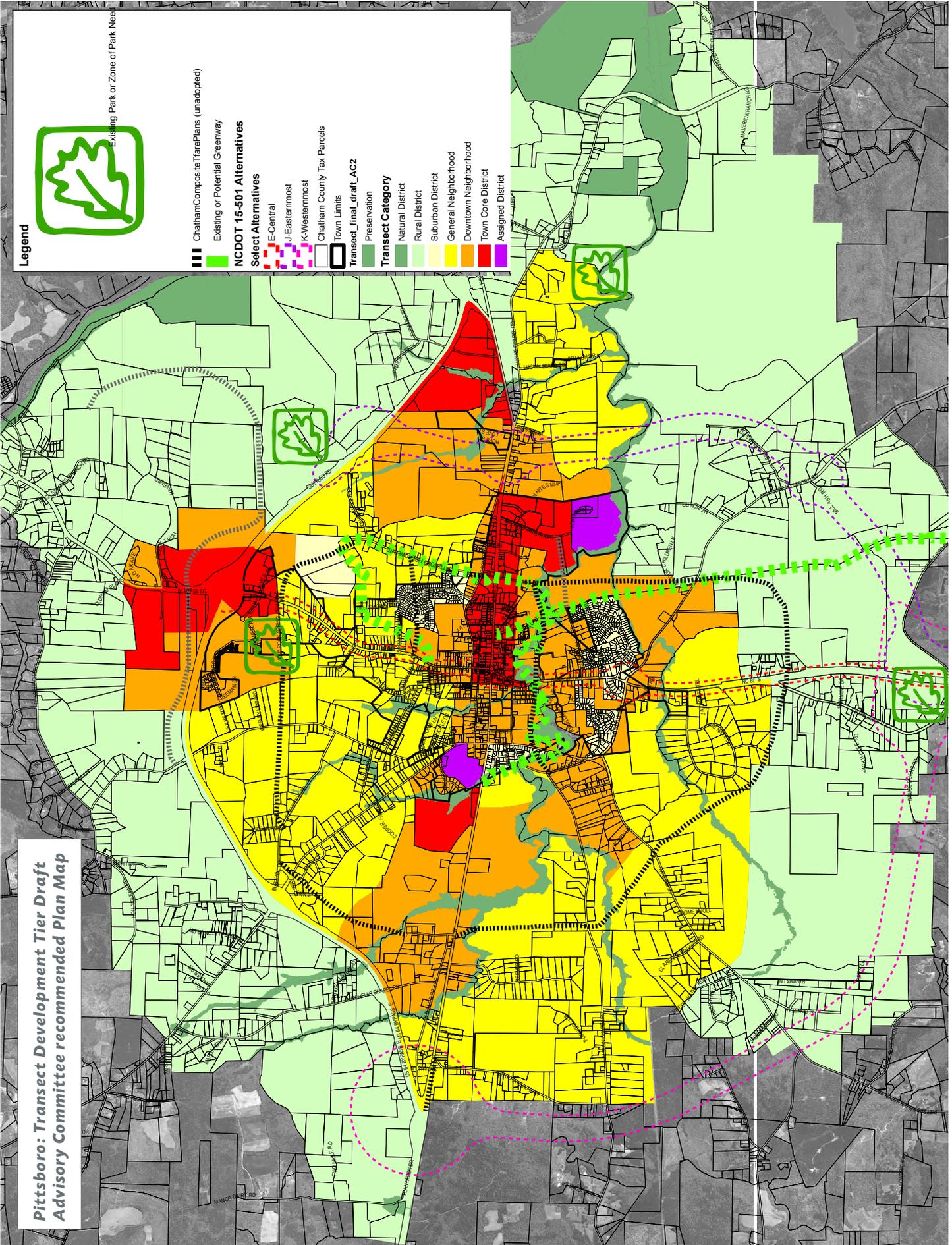


The General Neighborhood District (GND) provides places for the town to grow into that are generally more than a quarter-mile from the Town Core. The GND seeks to promote communities centered around their own small "neighborhood centers" so that amenities and services associated with being "in-town" are within reasonable walking distance. There should also be enough households within walking distance to support these neighborhood centers.



Site design is extremely important to control the walkability and functionality of the neighborhood as well as creating a strong distinction between public (schools, pocket parks, streets, etc.) and private spaces.





Zoning Ordinance (1994, amended 2007)

Some language within the Zoning Ordinance is supportive of pedestrian accommodations. However, there are opportunities for improvement in terms of policy that enhances the development of pedestrian-friendly environments. The policy section of Chapter 4 highlights specific recommendations for text amendments.

Subdivision Regulations (1993)

Pittsboro’s Subdivision Regulations define street classifications, without mention of the words “pedestrian”, “sidewalk”, “multi-modal”, “bicycle”, etc. Simple updates of street and street element definitions could be an opportunity for incorporation of ‘Complete Streets’ concepts.

Section 6. “Suitability of Land” and section 6.5 b “Easements, Dedications, and Reservations”, could include stronger language for greenways and greenways trail dedication and could be tied to recommended greenways in the Pedestrian Plan.

Section 6.2 “Streets”, should include requirements for pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks and crosswalks and could be tied to design standards of the Pedestrian Plan.

For more on ‘Complete Streets’ and other policy recommendations, see Chapter 4: Programs and Policies.

Chatham Parks and Recreation Plan

The Chatham Parks and Recreation Plan serves as a guide for the prioritization of recommended park upgrades, expansions and land acquisitions. The Plan emphasizes the potential for ‘connectivity’ of proposed projects with existing parks, schools, and greenways, and it recognizes the importance of alternative transportation systems in encouraging more active lifestyles. The plan also contains survey results (representing approximately 945 persons) indicating an overwhelming desire for increased walking, jogging, bicycle trails and open space (in the context of a full range of other recreational facilities available for survey respondents to choose from). Chapter Four of the Parks and Recreation Plan states that, “It is very clear from the [public] remarks that the participants want trails for hiking, walking, biking and horseback riding. The participants also support the idea of greenway trails that link various destination points within and without of the County.” Such a high level of countywide support for trails and greenways is a step in the right direction for regional pedestrian connectivity.

Town of Pittsboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Draft Planning Stage)

The PARAB and the Town of Pittsboro are currently working on drafting the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Town that will be more suited to the needs of existing and projected Town and ETJ parks and recreation facilities.

Town of Pittsboro
North Carolina

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Adopted: May 23, 1994
Effective Date: August 1, 1994
Amended: July 24, 2006
Amended: February 26, 2007

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“It is very clear from the [public] remarks that the participants want trails for hiking, walking, biking and horseback riding. The participants also support the idea of greenway trails that link various destination points within and without of the County.”