



WALK CHESTER

Pedestrian Master Plan

June 2016



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to the residents of Chester who participated in this planning process and their passion for improving the place they call home.

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The background image shows a street scene with a large tree on the left, a building with a striped awning, and a road with white lane markings. The scene is bright and sunny.

PROJECT VISION

The Town of Chester will be a place where a connected network of comfortable and convenient pedestrian facilities are provided to people of all ages and abilities; where citizens enjoy walking as a means of transportation and recreation; where increased walkability benefits the local economy; where all residents can easily access healthy food and recreational areas on foot; and where everyone enjoys a high quality of life.

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve sidewalk connectivity by filling in gaps in the sidewalk network.
- Increase pedestrian safety by improving crossing conditions, especially on major roads.
- Increase pedestrian activity downtown, recognizing the indirect benefits of a lively sidewalk and activated storefronts.
- Increase the percentage of commute trips that are made by walking.
- Identify local champions to work with the stakeholder committee on moving recommendations to implementation.
- Create synergy through low-cost, easy-to-implement tactical projects that involve community members to make fast and fun improvements that enliven the streetscape.
- Improve the perception of public safety through programs and partnerships with area law enforcement.



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INTRODUCTION



Transportation is about more than asphalt, concrete, and steel. Ultimately, it is about providing people with the opportunity for a safer, happier, and more fulfilling life.

- Rodney Slater
Former US Secretary of Transportation

A white sign with black text listing various vegetables and products: 'GREENS', 'SWEET POTATOS', 'OKRA', 'COLLARD', 'MUSCADINE', 'ARTISAN & MORE'.

GREENS
SWEET POTATOS
OKRA
COLLARD
MUSCADINE
ARTISAN &
MORE

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Through a recent grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is leading an effort to increase pedestrian planning efforts throughout South Carolina. The effort is part of the DHEC South Carolina Prevention and Health Across Systems and Environments (SC PHASE) Pedestrian Planning Project.

SC PHASE Pedestrian Planning is a 3 year project to develop pedestrian plans for 16 communities in specific counties throughout the state. Beyond the basic tenets of walkability and pedestrian safety, key elements of the program initiative are:

- Equity-based planning
- Community engagement
- Safe pedestrian access to healthy foods

The City of Chester is one of the 16 communities to participate in SC PHASE Pedestrian Planning.



A Chester resident traverses neighborhood streets via motorized wheelchair. This plan sets out to address the pedestrian access needs of all ages and abilities.

Pedestrian plans and policies play a critical role in fostering more walk-friendly communities by creating the conditions that support and encourage safe walking environments. Such policies can establish a new social norm where walking is seen as practical and appealing for people of all ages and abilities by providing for the infrastructure, programs, and amenities to support healthy choices and active transport. With 25.1 percent of South Carolina adults reporting no leisure-time physical activity, and 56.6 percent of high school students reporting not being physically active on five or more days, **finding ways to support more walking as an accessible and convenient form of physical activity will be vital to improving the health of South Carolina's residents.**

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The City of Chester is the county seat of Chester County, in the northern Midlands Region of the state. Chester is a community of approximately 5,600 people, located less than an hour's drive from Charlotte, NC; Spartanburg, SC; and Columbia, SC.

The City of Chester is governed by a mayor and an 8-person City Council, along with a Planning Commission and Zoning Board, which guide the city's land use and community development. In addition, Chester is part of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments, a regional forum that allows local governments to coordinate transportation planning and decision-making across a four-county region, including Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York Counties.

Like many small, Southern textile mill towns, Chester has seen a decline in economic activity in the late 20th century, but with the recent opening of two large manufacturing plants in the county, Chester is looking towards renewed prosperity.



Reference map of the City of Chester within Chester County and the state



Chester County Historical Society & Museum;
Henry Orion Nichols Collections

Historical photo of a passenger engine passing through Chester County.



National Park Service
Digital Asset Management System

Historical photo of Chester's City Hall and Opera House building located at the corner of Main Street and Center Street

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The racial make-up of the City of Chester is predominantly Black (or African American) — with 67.4% of the 5,600 residents identifying as such. For comparison, Chester County is 37.6% Black or African American, and South Carolina as a whole is 27.7% Black or African American.

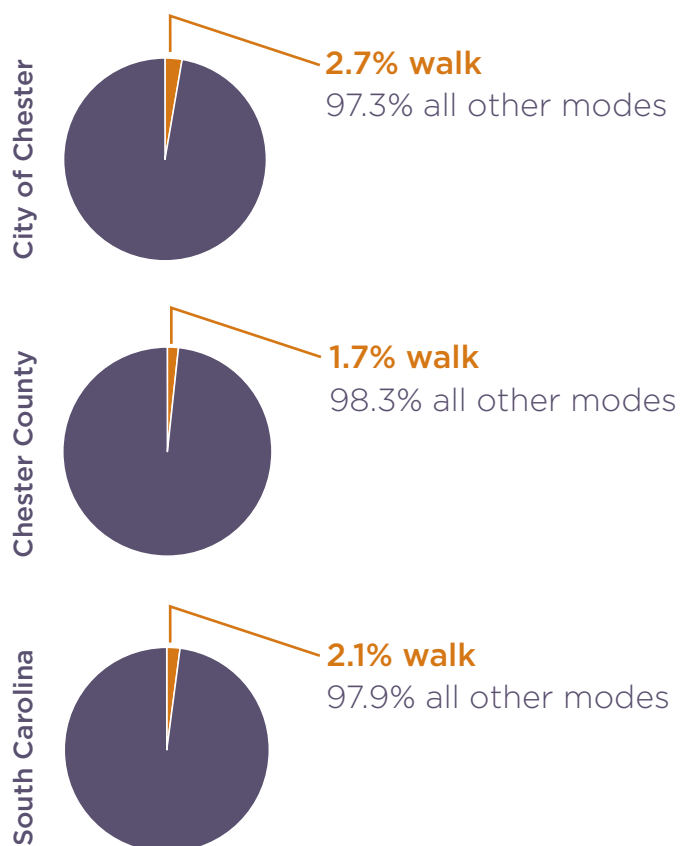
The median income for households in the City of Chester is \$22,639, a figure less than half of the median income for all of South Carolina (\$45,033). Over a quarter of all families (25.7%) in the City of Chester are headed by single females, compared to 19.8% and 15.6% for the county and state, respectively. Households with only a single income may contribute to the lower median household income.

Unemployment levels for the city are also higher than county and state levels. Chester's unemployment level is at 23.9%, compared to 17.0% and 11.4% for the county and state, respectively.

Given this lower income level and higher rate of unemployment, it is not surprising then that **39.1% of people in the City of Chester live below the poverty level**. The City of Chester has more than double the state's poverty rate of 18.3%, and a considerably higher rate than Chester County (25.3%).

In terms of mode share across the city, the vast majority of residents commute to work in private vehicles. Approximately 2.7% of the working population walk to work compared to just 1.5% for Chester County and 2.1% for South Carolina. Slightly less than one percent of residents commute via public transportation, which is on par with the county and state. Since most people walk to transit stops, it is important to ensure that adequate pedestrian facilities are in place in order to support transit access.

Walking as a percentage of commuting mode share per geography:



It is important to note that mode share does not paint a full picture of need and demand, however. Mode share data is collected through an American Community Survey question which asks for the “primary” way a resident gets to work. This excludes walking commutes that occur as a secondary mode (for example, walking to a bus) and also excludes trips to destinations other than work. Moreover, those **households in the City of Chester who do not have access to vehicles (nearly 16% — three times the county rate) and those households with access to only one vehicle (30%) may walk out of necessity**, and residents who currently drive would opt to walk to work if a safe and comfortable walking environment with adequate facilities existed.

Safety is key in encouraging and sustaining pedestrian activity. State traffic collision data show that Chester County has a pedestrian fatality rate of 2.1 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to a rate of 2.3 per 100,000 people for the state. While lower than the state average, finding ways to draw this rate closer to zero in the City of Chester will still be an important goal for this project.



Obstacles within the sidewalk, such as the lamppost pictured here, create barriers for pedestrians, particularly people with disabilities. Identifying and rectifying these problems will increase access and mobility for Chester's residents and visitors.



WHAT IS WALKABILITY?

Walkability is more than the ability to walk. It is a holistic approach for evaluating a streetscape or community's design, and a means to understand the factors that influence and encourage pedestrian activity. The goals of a walkable place are multi-faceted and context-specific, but typically walkable communities strive for the following:

- Increase personal mobility by providing alternatives to driving private automobiles
- Increase personal accessibility with ADA-accessible streetscapes
- Stimulate vibrancy in commercial and social realms of a community
- Increase access, proximity, and convenience to more destinations through a well-connected network of sidewalks, crosswalks, and walking trails
- Create an attractive place with pedestrian-oriented landscaping, streetscapes, and architectural design

There is no single, catchall walkability definition or one specific metric for measuring walkability. However, across the various attempts at a comprehensive definition, common themes emerge. Apart from the potentially obvious features that encourage walkability, like sidewalks and frequent, visible crossings, **walkable places also incorporate the following key principles:**

- Human-scaled environment
- Strong sense of place
- Physical access
- Connected walkways and street pattern
- Mix of land uses
- Density and location of facilities
- Managed parking

The City of Chester has many of the features of a walkable community, however, there are issues of connectivity and access that will need improvement in order to achieve the City's goal of becoming a more pedestrian-friendly place. This Plan presents opportunities to build off of these existing features.



"What Makes a Neighborhood Walkable?" graphic from WalkDenver, a pedestrian advocacy group.

WHY PLAN FOR PEDESTRIANS?

Imagine Chester in 20 years...

as a place where people choose to walk — not out of necessity, but because it is a convenient and enjoyable transportation choice.

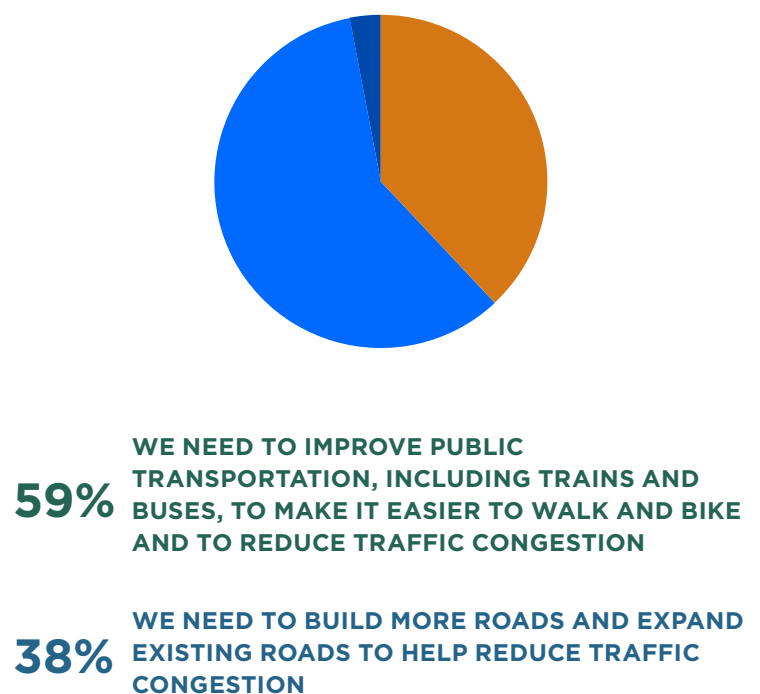
Development is well-designed and accessible so that residents have many of their everyday needs within walking distance. Pedestrian-friendly streets are prevalent throughout the community, and parents feel perfectly safe letting their children walk or bike to school, parks, or other destinations by themselves, or as part of an enjoyable and healthy family outing. Older adults who no longer drive can easily access grocery stores and medical appointments. Because the streets are safer and a growing pedestrian network connects more people to more places, people are walking in record numbers. Obesity rates decline, and families in all parts of the community can easily access healthy food. Serious pedestrian collisions have dropped substantially.

The cumulative result of this environment has resulted in substantial savings for the community and taxpayers. Road maintenance is less expensive as fewer cars are on the roads, and residents save money on gas while the air quality improves for everyone. Downtown attracts more local businesses that want to invest in a vibrant, active community and cater to the growing population.

An increasing number of communities and their leadership are seeing the potential of a future like this one; a future where better active transportation environments are critical parts of transforming and revitalizing our communities, making them more desirable places to live, work, and visit. This movement is a direct result of the nationwide demand for more livable communities and transportation options.

In 2010, Transportation for America conducted a nationwide survey that showed 59% of Americans in rural and urban areas preferred a transportation future that “[improves] public transportation and making it easier to walk and bike over building more roads and expanding existing roads.” See Figure 1.1 below. And 73% [of respondents felt] they ‘have no choice but to drive as much as they do’, with 57% desiring to spend less time in the car.”

Figure 1.1 Americans' Preferences for Reducing Traffic Congestion



SUMMARY TABLE OF WALKABILITY BENEFITS

ECONOMIC BENEFITS	
Public infrastructure savings	Compact, walkable communities save costs on road building, maintenance other public infrastructure.
Attracts businesses	Walkable communities have lower vacancy rates and increasingly attract businesses that want to offer convenient amenities and short commutes.
Reduces individual transportation costs	Residents of walkable communities save money on costs associated with transportation, including vehicle ownership costs, operating costs, and parking costs.
Magnet for millennials and baby boomers	Demand for walkable communities is growing, especially among millennials and boomers – both generations that wish to drive less and be able to easily reach destinations on foot.
Increases housing values	Walkable communities have higher housing values and have higher stability than auto dependent communities during a recession.
Improves socioeconomic mobility	Walkable areas have concentrated amenities such as jobs that are easily accessible to low-income residents and provide greater opportunities for economic mobility.
Attracts visitors	Walkable communities attract tourist dollars with lively streets, engaging storefronts, short distances between attractions and a unique sense of place.
Attracts recreation spending	Walkable communities are great places for outdoor recreation. Multi-use trails and safe streets can attract bicyclists and events such as triathlons that pump money into the local economy.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Improves physical health	Places that encourage walking have lower rates of chronic disease related to physical inactivity such as diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis. A simple walk improves balance, limits sickness, strengthens muscles and builds bone mass, as well as burns more fat than jogging. People who live in walkable neighborhoods are two times as likely to get enough physical exercise as those who do not.
Improves mental health	Walkable communities can prevent the onset of cognitive decline and improve mental function. Walking can also prevent and reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety, stimulating a sense of well-being through released endorphins.

SAFETY BENEFITS

Improves safety for all road users	Streets that are designed for pedestrians have safety benefits for all users of the road, including bicyclists and drivers. Sidewalks, medians, and traffic calming have particular direct effects. Safety in numbers - more people walking and biking - has proven to be an indirect safety improvement that reduces the risk of a collision.
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ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Improves air quality	By reducing the distance to amenities and increasing the safety of walking to destinations, more trips can be made by walking while reducing emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.
Preserves open space and greenspace	Compact, walkable development allows for more green space, water sources, and wildlife habitat to be preserved.

SUMMARY INFOGRAPHIC OF WALKABILITY BENEFITS

The walkability infographic, below, notes ways in which improved active transportation can have a positive impact on the economy, health metrics, and fostering a sense of community. These benefits offer a powerful statement regarding Chester's potential return on investment for implementing the recommendations in this Plan.





DATA COLLECTION & PUBLIC INPUT

As a fish needs to swim, a bird to fly, a deer to run, we need to walk, not in order to survive but to be happy.

- Enrique Peñalosa
Mayor of Bogotá, Columbia

OVERVIEW

The Walk Chester Pedestrian Plan is shaped by data collected from previous plans and the feedback received during public input. The public input process was crucial for understanding Chester's primary needs and identifying specific programs, projects, and policies that address those needs. The graphic below describes the planning process and the various inputs used to create the Walk Chester Plan.

From January 5th to 6th, the project team led a multi-day field visit during the first phase of the Walk Chester pedestrian planning process. The visit included facilitated focus group sessions, a kick-off meeting with project stakeholders, and field work by the consultant team.

This chapter provides an overview of the major data collection and public input components that shaped the recommendations of this Plan. Each section describes the information gained and the critical outcomes of that process.

Sections include:

- Review of Previous Planning Efforts
- Results of Data Collection
- Public Input Overview
- Focus Group Summary



REVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

This section provides a summary of recent pedestrian and greenway planning-related efforts in the City of Chester. Five relevant plans exist. The five plans reviewed are listed chronologically in the table below and are described in further detail on the following pages.

The *Walk Chester Plan* combines, updates, and refines previous recommendations for sidewalks and greenways to present a proposed future network. Common themes emerge across the different plans. These themes center on Chester's need for an improved quality of life, including active transportation and safe pedestrian access to recreation. To achieve a vision for walkability, the plans include the following recommendations:

- Provide a seamless, connected walking network
- Provide a well-maintained greenway system
- Promote access to alternative transportation
- Improve land use and urban design to enhance walkability and quality of life

Plan	Agency	Year
Walkability Assessment for the City of Chester	Eat Smart Move More Chester County, Chester City Council, Organic Helpers	2015
Rural Transportation Planning Work Program	Catawba Regional Council of Governments	2014 - 2015
Catawba Regional Transit & Coordination Plan Update	South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT)	2014
Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Chester County Communities	Catawba Lands Conservancy	2009
Chester County Comprehensive Plan	Chester County Planning Commission	2005

WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR THE CITY OF CHESTER

This multi-agency study identified barriers for safe pedestrian activity in the City of Chester's four wards. The study also identified means and opportunities to increase and encourage pedestrian travel. Overall, the study revealed that the city has great potential to become a walkable community with some investment and improvements to existing and lacking facilities.

Common challenges identified across all four wards were:

- Lack of marked crosswalks
- Overgrown shrubbery, weeds, and grass blocking walkways
- Broken or cracked sidewalks
- Sidewalk narrowing

Key recommendations in the plan include:

- Consistently mark crosswalks to provide safe and easy crossings.
- Maintenance of overgrown shrubbery, grass, and weeds on all sidewalks
- Repair all broken and cracked sidewalks
- Install proper pedestrian-scaled lighting along sidewalks
- Add signage to increase driver awareness of pedestrians
- Organize street and neighborhood clean-ups
- Meet with SCDOT to determine responsibility of the municipality in sidewalk maintenance and upkeep

RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING WORK PROGRAM

This annual document is intended to evaluate major transportation planning and related activities within the rural areas of the Catawba Region. It is the basis for federal, state, and local funding assistance for transportation planning activities. A regional coordination effort is important in order to develop an integrated multimodal transportation system for the region and the state.

Key recommendations in the plan include:

- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for (motorized and) non-motorized users
- Increase accessibility and mobility
- Improve quality of life
- Enhance integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes

CATAWBA REGIONAL TRANSIT & COORDINATION PLAN UPDATE

This plan functions as a stand-alone supplement to the *SCDOT Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan* (MTP). It is an update to the 2008 version. This plan identifies existing public transportation services, needs, and strategies for the next 20 years.

The plan echoes some of the same goals for mobility, safety (bicycle and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries in particular), infrastructure conditions, and economic/cultural vitality established in the MTP.

Key recommendations in the plan include:

- Enhance the mobility choices if the transportation disadvantaged by improving conditions and developing alternative modes
- Better connect seamlessly between providers, especially to ensure that rural riders are not at an economic or social disadvantage
- Expand community access to transportation
- Better integrate safety improvements for non-motorized modes
- Encourage local governments to adopt bicycle and pedestrian master plans

Map of the adopted Carolina Thread Trail greenway connections for Chester. The pink line is primary adopted alignment, the green line marks secondary opportunities for greenway alignments.

CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL MASTER PLAN FOR CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITIES

To prepare for and contribute analysis pieces to the *Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan*, the City of Chester conducted a needs assessment survey in 2005, which revealed that residents most desire walking, jogging, and biking paths. This community-specific plan strives to follow the planning goals outlined for open space and greenways, while weaving community facilities and infrastructure into the land use pattern.

Key recommendations in the plan include:

- Chester County should adopt a greenway master plan to provide clear direction for developing paths and trails in a cohesive and integrated manner
- City of Chester should continue to provide recreational programs and services that will enhance the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of all residents and attract visitors
- City of Chester should update zoning ordinance to include trail dedication requirements outlined in greenways master plan



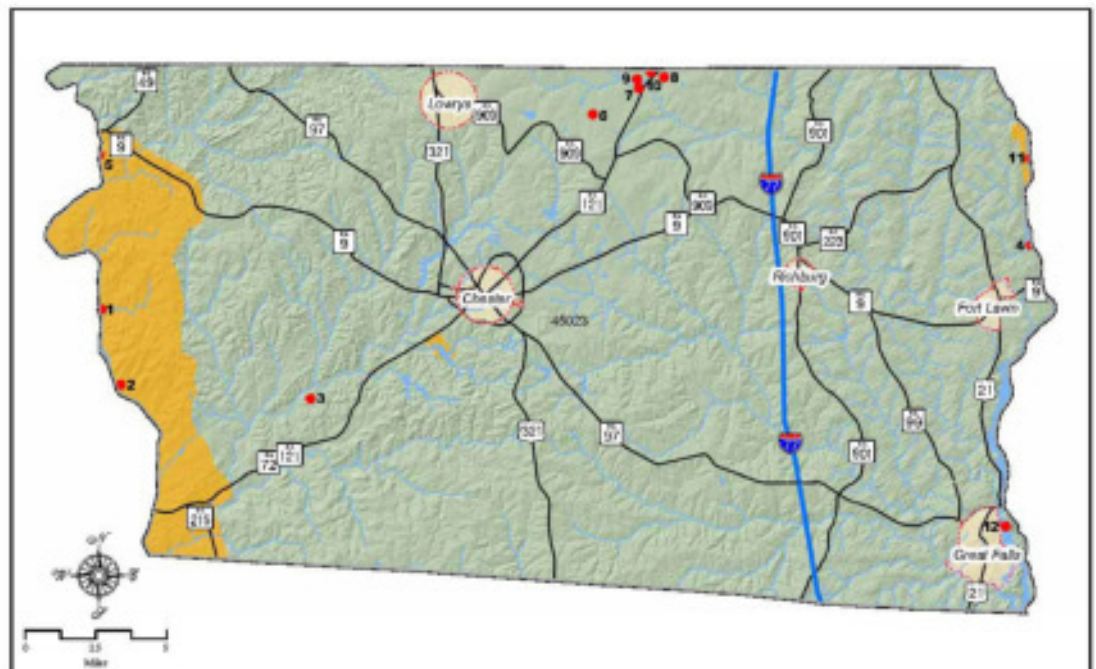
CHESTER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Chester County Comprehensive Plan* sets out to assess population trends and projections, economic conditions, and land use context culminating in a blueprint to guide their vision for growth for the next twenty years. The County is entering a time of rapid change due to its situation on the periphery of one of the fastest growing regions, the Charlotte Metropolitan region.

Key recommendations in the plan include:

- Provide recreational opportunities, specifically community centers, family-oriented facilities, and more recreational facilities in rural areas
- Encourage respect for and the preservation of the natural environment through a natural resources element implementation strategy
- Provide adequate lands for both passive and active recreation
- Preserve prime farmland and recognize their importance to the local economy
- Support trail development efforts such as the Great Falls Trails Plan

Map of the public lands and natural resources from the Chester County Comprehensive Plan.



Map 4
Chester County
Public Lands
Natural Resource Sites



Map Produced By:
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Catawba Regional COG disclaims any responsibility for
changes in liability that may arise from the use of this
map. All efforts have been made to ensure accuracy.

Catawba Regional
Catawba Regional Council of Governments

RESULTS OF DATA COLLECTION

A first step in evaluating the existing conditions of the City of Chester is the development of a comprehensive **base map**. Based on GIS data collected by the project team, a base map was created to illustrate existing sidewalks, as well as key supporting information such as schools, parks, community library, grocery stores, farmers market, and other food retailers.

Pedestrian Network

- Sidewalk
- Carolina Thread Trail
- Grocery Store
- Informal Food Outlet
- Farmers Market
- Community Garden
- School
- Cultural
- Library
- Recreation
- Road
- Highway
- City Maintained Road
- Railroad
- Park
- Water Body
- City of Chester
- Chester County



PUBLIC INPUT OVERVIEW

Public outreach is essential to developing a city-wide pedestrian plan that addresses the needs of community members. This section provides an analysis of public input acquired through community outreach efforts, including:

- Three focus group interviews,
- Survey (hard-copy and online),
- Two public outreach site visits,
- Project team meetings,
- Attendance at community events, and
- A project website with the opportunity for comments submission.

The outreach efforts provided opportunities to identify issues and priorities related to walking in the City of Chester. Invaluable input was provided during the focus group interviews through the participation of Chester community members, and public officials provided their insight during our Project Team meetings.



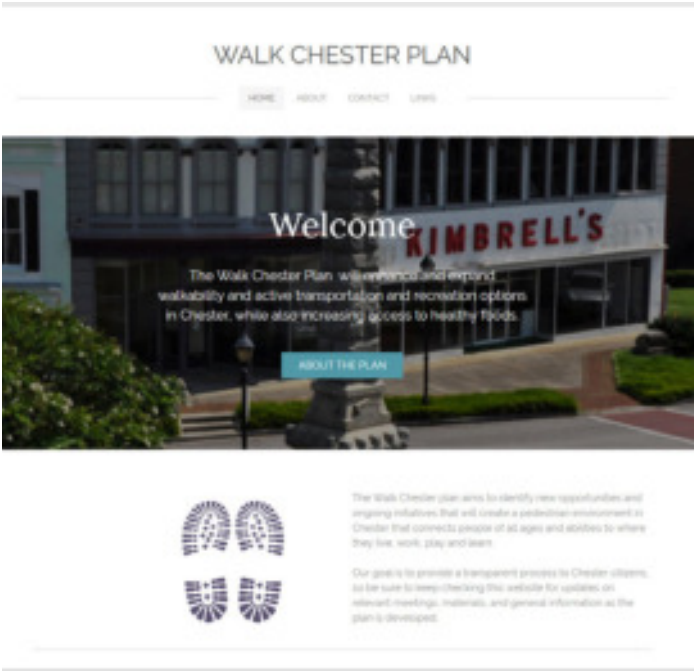
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OUTREACH TOOLS

A **project website** was developed as a tool to inform the public about the project and to provide a central location for disseminating information. This website, walkchester.weebly.com, has background information about the project, links to related reports on the important connection between pedestrian planning and health, and a link to the public survey.

The **public survey** was designed to gather information from Chester residents regarding community needs and priorities related to walking for exercise or transportation. It was available to the public from January through April 2016, during which time a total of 43 surveys were completed. Online surveys were available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/WalkChester, and hard copies of the survey were made available at community outreach events and were also distributed to community leaders to share throughout the community. Informational placards with directions for filling out the survey were dropped off at approximately 10 locations throughout Chester. Drop boxes to return the hard copy surveys were located at City Hall and the Chester County Library.

A summary of the results is provided on the following page.



The project website provided information about the project and offered citizens a chance to submit comments.

“Chester is beautiful which makes walking fun. However, we need better sidewalks and more of them in all neighborhoods..”
- Survey respondent

SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 43 surveys were completed. Most respondents either live, work, or own property in the City of Chester; about 10% of respondents were just visiting (shopping, dining, using local services). People of all ages completed the survey, however, over 40% of respondents were between the ages of 40 and 64.

This summary section highlights key findings — a full report of survey results can be found on page 108 in the Appendix.

Over 70% of respondents believe improving walking conditions is very important

- When asked to indicate primary purposes for walking trips, **90% of respondents indicated they walk for exercise**
- **34% of respondents** indicated their second-most popular purpose for **walking is for recreation.**

- Respondents expressed a **preference to walk to the following key destinations:**
 - **Downtown Chester- "the Hill"**
 - **YMCA**
 - **Chester Farmers and Artisan Market**
 - **Chester County Library**
 - **Chester City Hall**
 - **Wylie Park**
- Respondents expressed a **preference to walk along the following streets:**
 - **Columbia Street**
 - **West End Street**
 - **York Street**
 - **Main Street**
- The top three factors that discourage walking in Chester were:
 - **Lack of sidewalks**
 - **Personal safety concerns**
 - **Unsafe street crossings**



5%
of survey respondents walk to buy
their groceries

PROJECT TEAM

The WalkChester project team included members from throughout the community and from various levels of government agencies. The members of the project team included:

- Cynthia Curtis, Grants Administrator, City of Chester;
- Melody C. Reid, Prevention Director, Hazel Pittman Center, co-chair for local Eat Smart Move More campaign;
- Shelly Copeland, Prevention Specialist, Hazel Pittman Center;
- Elizabeth Gerndt, DHEC HEAL Coordinator, Midlands Public Health Region, SC Department of Health & Environmental Control;
- Candra Riley, Midlands Public Health Region Community Team, SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
- Robin Currence, Clemson University's Chester County Cooperative Extension, co-chair for local Eat Smart Move More campaign.
- Theodore Feaster, Chester Farmers & Artisans Market

Two meetings were held with the project team, in January and April 2016, to discuss the community's needs and resources related to the pedestrian environment and to strategize on how best to engage, inform, and gather input from the public about the project. At the first meeting, team members discussed how and where to distribute and collect the public

survey.

They also identified key community stakeholders to bring onboard as the project moves forward, including representatives from the school district, utility companies, railroad companies, public safety, the Chamber of Commerce and local businesses, SC Department of Transportation, the Catawba Regional Council of Governments, Chester Parks & Recreation Department, Public Works, and United Way.

The team also discussed the need to coordinate this plan with previous pedestrian planning efforts, including the recent Walkability Audit that was conducted by the city. The Catawba Regional Council of Governments was working to create a map of the recommendations from the Walkability Audit in January/February 2016, and this map is to be incorporated into this Walk Chester Pedestrian Plan. A charrette that was done in 2008 by an outside consultant was also discussed. The plan that came out of this charrette has never been implemented, and the team expressed the need for this current planning effort to focus on projects that can be implemented. Discussion then followed on how best to prioritize projects and secure funding

"Would love to see better walking conditions, sidewalks not so close to the road that one step off the path your life is endangered. Would love to see dedicated bike paths for the children. Would love to see a safer Chester.."

- Survey respondent

for them.

Funding sources and opportunities were discussed, and local and regional philanthropic foundations were identified to pursue when necessary. The team members emphasized that funding sources should be included as a section of the final plan report. (See resulting Potential Funding Sources Matrix on page 90.)

Other priorities that were identified by the team included:

- Focusing on railroad crossings and crosswalk improvements,
- Connecting areas of need to the downtown hub,
- Promoting tourism with historic attractions and healthy food opportunities, and
- Addressing child and school safety (through Safe Routes To School planning, for example) in response to the pedestrian fatality on Ashford Street in October 2015.

"Seeing more people out walking changes the feel of the community... it gives a good sense that there *is* community."

- Focus group participant

"I see value in enhancing the quality of life in Chester."

- Focus group participant

"I want it to matter. I want where I live to be a nice place."

- Focus group participant

"If it's not my idea, it's not worth it."

(An opinion on how people feel about implementation in the community.)

- Focus group participant

"Greenspaces...help the community get to know one another.."

- Focus group participant

"Nobody really cares about us."

(An opinion on how members of the Brooklyn community feel.)

- Focus group participant

FOCUS GROUPS

In January 2016, three focus group interviews were conducted at City Hall in order to gather public input on the walking conditions of Chester. The focus groups were led by Gather Consulting, an consulting firm that specializes in collaborative community engagement. In total, fifteen community members participated in the three groups. Participants were chosen based on residency in Chester as well as interest in improving access to active living and healthy eating. To ensure that residents from all areas of the city were represented, members from each of Chester's four wards were invited to participate.

Specific objectives of the focus groups include the following:

- Identify residents' opinions of walkability in Chester
- Explore residents' perceptions of pedestrian safety issues
- Seek input from residents on priority pedestrian planning projects and destinations
- Seek residents input on the level of accessibility to active living and healthy eating in Chester

"Overall, we need to embrace walking as a culture."

- Focus group participant

KEY FINDINGS

Through the course of the focus groups conversations and the subsequent analysis of the discussion points, the following key findings have been highlighted to help create a vision of what the residents want to see as part of the Walk Chester pedestrian plan:

The pedestrian plan should build upon the following community assets and amenities:

- The **Chester Farmers' and Artisans' Market** on Columbia Street is a popular and well-run community venue and event, but it is under-utilized and few people walk to it despite adequate sidewalks in the area.
- **Heritage Park**, the planned city project that will upgrade the backlot between Columbia Street and Cadz Street into a pedestrian pavilion.
- Chester's nationally registered **Downtown Historic District**, and the accompanying walking tour available throughout town;
- The **Carolina Thread Trail**- a 15-county network of greenways and trails in North and South Carolina that includes the trails behind Wylie Park;
- **Downtown Chester** and its already-walkable streets

"I want to see results!"

- Focus group participant

Focus group participants identified the following issues as barriers to walking in Chester:

- Absent sidewalks,
- Fear of crime and violence,
- Lack of streetlights, and
- Lack of connectivity between popular locations.

The following streets, neighborhoods, and destinations have been identified as high needs or high priorities for pedestrian improvements:

- **Ashford Street** in the Brooklyn neighborhood is a priority location for improvements because of drastic speed changes, inadequate lighting, lack of signage, and large numbers of children at play. Concerns have been especially heightened since a school child was fatally hit by a vehicle on Ashford St. while waiting for the bus.
- **Chester High School:** Students who live in city neighborhoods that are within 1.5 miles of the high school must cross the busy J. A. Cochran Bypass to get to and from school. Focus groups participants said that creating a protected crossing for students should be one of the top priorities of any pedestrian plan.
- **Wylie Park:** The City of Chester maintains this 48-acre recreation complex on West End Street. Focus group participants said the park facility is in great condition and provides a variety of options for individuals and families to walk, run, and play, but efforts need to be made to make the park more accessible by foot for a greater number of residents.

- **Carolina Thread Trail:** Focus group participants said they believe that more people will utilize the thread if it is maintained better.
- **City Pool:** Many focus group participants suggested that the city extend and improve the sidewalks near the city pool.
- **Streetlights:** Focus group participants said that lighting is inadequate throughout the city and suggested that lights be added or improved near all city parks, near Memorial Park Pool, and on Reedy Street.

Another issue raised by the focus group participants was the **lack of access to grocery stores within the city**. Participants were concerned that there are no grocery stores within the city limits and thus none within walking distance to neighborhoods. As a result, residents who do not have access to cars must rely on the Dollar General store and convenience stores to buy food. Increasing access to healthy food options within the city and within walking distance needs to be addressed.

Finally, focus group participants felt that many Chester residents are disconnected from each other and disengaged from efforts to improve the city. They hope that efforts to connect neighborhoods physically to community centers and facilities via pedestrian improvements would in turn lead residents to feel more socially connected to each other and invested in efforts to make Chester a more vibrant community.

OUTREACH EVENTS

Several outreach efforts were held in coordination with community events in order to promote awareness about the Walk Chester Plan, as well as to gather public input from the community on the existing conditions and needs related to the pedestrian environment. Project staff attended several community events, including the 2nd Thursday Blues MLK Jr. Blues Festival, the Old Fairgrounds Sports Complex Planning Community Meeting, and a City Hall Open House meeting, where they had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the community; share project materials and links to the project website and survey; and to collect community surveys.

PUBLIC INPUT MAP

Large poster-sized maps were provided at the outreach events, where community members could write comments and mark areas of concern. On the following page, a summary of those comments and mark-ups is provided as the **Public Input Map**. Through this process, community members identified:

- Street crossings and intersections that need improved pedestrian markings,
- Recreation facilities that need better pedestrian access,
- Popular walking routes for reaching key destinations, and
- Areas of safety concerns related to street lighting and poor sidewalk infrastructure.

These areas of concern help inform the prioritization of recommendations for pedestrian projects and programs that are outlined in the following chapters.



PUBLIC INPUT MAP

At right is a map showing input received from the community during focus groups and project team meetings. Residents and city officials identified areas of concern related to sidewalk conditions, pedestrian crossings, and railroad crossings. Popular walking destinations were also identified.

Public Input Notes

- Walking Destinations
- ✕ Street Crossing: needs improvement
- ✕ RR Crossing: needs improvement

Pedestrian Network

- Sidewalk
- Carolina Thread Trail

- 🛒 Grocery Store
- 🍷 Informal Food Outlet
- 🌿 Farmers Market
- 🌳 Community Garden
- 🎓 School
- 🏛️ Cultural
- 📖 Library
- 🏃 Recreation
- Road
- Highway
- City Maintained Road
- Railroad
- 🌳 Park
- 💧 Water Body
- 🏙️ City of Chester
- 🗺️ Chester County



The background image shows a street scene from a low angle. Two people are walking away from the camera on a crosswalk. The person on the left is wearing a grey hoodie and jeans, carrying a backpack. The person on the right is wearing a red hoodie and khaki pants. The street is paved with asphalt and has white crosswalk stripes. On the left side of the street, there is a building with a sign that says "KI KARATE" and a yin-yang symbol. On the right side, there is a brick building with a sign that says "Phone-2-Go ACCOUNTS PATROL TAX PREPA 803-899-...". There are trees and bushes along the sidewalks, and a clear blue sky in the background.

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

If there's a lesson in street watching it is that people do like basics — and as environments go, a street that is open to the sky and filled with people and life is a splendid place to be..

- William Whyte

OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the major components of the City of Chester's existing environment for walking. **This includes an assessment of the primary opportunities and constraints that exist for the development of a safe and connected pedestrian network.**

The assessment is based on public input that was solicited during focus group sessions, stakeholder meetings, and public meetings, as well as the project team's review of existing plans, field observations, and GIS-based mapping analysis.

Fieldwork, in combination with quantitative analysis, create a more complete picture of the pedestrian environment that exists in Chester, and informs specific recommendations for improving that environment. The following sections describe the information gained and critical outcomes of that process:

- Pedestrian Safety Analysis
- Equity Analysis
- Healthy Food Access Analysis
- Active Space Analysis
- Analysis of Opportunities and Constraints

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ANALYSIS

Pedestrian fatalities are on the rise.

Between 2003 and 2012, 47,025 pedestrians were killed walking on streets in the U.S. In 2012 alone, 4,743 pedestrians died, an increase of 7% over 2011. Meanwhile, the number of vehicle drivers and passengers who died in traffic crashes declined by a third during this period. The rise in pedestrian fatalities while overall traffic fatalities declined means pedestrians now account for more than 15% of all traffic fatalities.

Pedestrian safety is a growing concern in South Carolina. Pedestrian fatalities in the state rose 23.8% between 2008 and 2012, outpacing national trends. The table below summarizes fatality figures for the state during this time.

South Carolina ranks 45th in the nation for levels of walking mode share, yet ranks 2nd in the nation for walking fatality rates. As previously mentioned, Chester County has a pedestrian fatality rate of 2.1 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to the state rate of 2.3 deaths per 100,000 people.⁶

While reasons for the increase in pedestrian crashes are difficult to pinpoint, demographic shifts, more people walking, and higher numbers of pedestrians on dangerous, high-speed arterials all likely play a role. A number of factors impact pedestrian safety. Visibility, driver behavior, time of day/year, access to safe crossings, and traffic volume all play a role. However, key factors such as speed, the number of traffic lanes, and roadway design disproportionately affect safety for vulnerable roadway users.

According to Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, **58.8% of all pedestrian deaths in South Carolina were on arterials** — wide, high speed roads rarely built with pedestrian safety in mind. Similarly, **78.8% of South Carolina's pedestrian fatalities occurred on roads with a speed limit of 40 mph or higher.**⁶

Pedestrian Fatality Figures for South Carolina:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change
Pedestrian Fatalities	101	89	90	113	125	23.76%
Pedestrian Fatality Rate per 100,000 people	2.23	1.94	1.94	2.41	2.65	18.83%
Pedestrians as Percent of all Traffic Fatalities	10.97%	9.96%	11.12%	13.65%	11.6%	5.74%

Some populations are disproportionately affected by unsafe walking conditions. Households without access to vehicles are more reliant on walking, yet often live in areas where suburban street patterns and dangerous arterial roads predominate. Older adults require more time at crossings and are more vulnerable to injury when a collision occurs. Older adults are also more susceptible to other non-collision events which do not involve a motor vehicle but which can cause injury. These “pedestrian only” events such as tripping on sidewalks and slipping on curbs, are not typically captured when discussing pedestrian safety but are important considerations in this plan.⁷

Children are also disproportionately affected by unsafe walking conditions. Children often walk to schools built along unsafe arterial or major roads, putting them at higher risk. Just last year, the Chester community was devastated by the loss of a 5th grader who was killed by a passing vehicle while waiting at his bus stop.

Nearly one-third of all Americans do not drive.

This includes all children who are not of age, 21% of all seniors over 65 years-old, and those who cannot afford automobiles.⁸

Beyond pedestrian fatalities, pedestrian injuries occur at a higher rate. Official crash statistics, however, do not capture a significant portion of these collisions. Collisions that go unreported and near miss incidents are not reflected in most collision statistics, and thus may not be fully representative of safe walking conditions. This is especially true when accounting for whether a pedestrian injury occurred in the roadway (1.7 times more likely to report than

non-roadway locations), the severity of the injury (1.3 times more likely to report when hospitalized), and the age of the pedestrian (ages 15-24 are significantly less likely to report a collision even after controlling for location and severity).⁷

In recent years, a series of successful national campaigns have targeted drunk driving, seat belt use, and distracted driving. For people in vehicles, the resources and focus dedicated to safety has saved thousands of lives. A similar dedication to creating safe streets for pedestrians will encourage walkability, improve health outcomes, and improve livability for all residents.



Dangerous by Design is a report issued by Smart Growth America's National Complete Streets Coalition. The Smart Growth organization also issues state-specific versions with nuanced relevant data. The report documents preventable pedestrian fatalities and details measures that can be taken to make streets safer for all road users.

⁶ Dangerous by Design - South Carolina

⁷ Federal Highway Administration Office of Safety - Bike/Ped Documents
*Police-reporting of Pedestrians and Bicyclists
Treated in Hospital Emergency Rooms*

⁸ Smart Growth America Senate Fact Sheet

PEDESTRIAN COLLISION MAP

In the City of Chester, three pedestrian injuries were reported between 2010 and 2014. A handful of pedestrian injuries occurred just outside the city limits and are also included on the collision map. No pedestrian fatalities were reported during this period, though the aforementioned fatality of a school child occurred in 2015 and is included on the map.

This pedestrian fatality occurred at the intersection of Dye Street and Ashford Street where no curbs or sidewalks exist. An 11 year-old boy was killed by a passing vehicle while waiting at his bus stop.

One known injury occurred at Columbia Street and Ella Street, adjacent to a T-shaped intersection, and along a four lane, undivided road. There are no crossings on Columbia Street in the immediate vicinity. Another injury occurred along Gadsden Street near the intersection with Hudson Street. This is at the edge of a busy pedestrian-oriented commercial district where more than five streets converge. A third injury occurred on Saluda Street near Oak Street and the railroad. Pedestrian accommodations here are poor, with a number of driveway curb cuts, skewed intersections, and disconnected sidewalks. There are also no crosswalks on Saluda Street in the vicinity.





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EQUITY ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

An equity analysis provides insight about the areas of Chester that have higher concentrations of vulnerable populations. This information, coupled with an overlay of healthy food outlet locations and active space locations, can also distinguish which neighborhoods may need improvements the most.

This quantitative analysis gave the project team a starting point for identifying priority areas, however, recommendations were ultimately based on a synthesis of factors, including the equity analysis results, current best practices, public input, existing conditions analysis, and the pedestrian collision analysis,

This section describes the equity analysis process in more detail, and includes the following:

- Equity Analysis Methodology
- Equity Analysis Results
- Healthy Food Access Analysis
- Active Space Access Analysis

METHODOLOGY

The equity analysis incorporated the following seven socioeconomic criteria:

- Seniors
- Children
- Non-white populations
- Low-income households
- Vehicle access
- Linguistic isolation
- SNAP recipients

The measure and rationale for each criteria are further described below.

Seniors

Metric: Senior citizens are defined as those who are 65 years old and older. This follows the *2010 Census Brief - The Older Population*.

Rationale: Walkable neighborhoods help seniors remain active, healthy, social and free to move around. Older adults socialize more when living in walkable neighborhoods, because regular social interaction is possible, convenient and more frequent. In a walkable neighborhood the senior citizens are more likely to know their neighbors, participate in politics, engage socially and even trust people.

According to Center for Disease Control and Prevention survey, 32.5 percent of Americans over the age of 65 don't have regular physical activity. There are many health benefits of walking, especially for people older than 50. Elderly adults who walk are less likely to suffer mental deterioration or dementia and physical activity may actually add years to their life. Therefore, living in a walkable neighborhood gives options for walking right out your front door.

A survey by AARP Public Policy Institute found that people over age 50 listed lack of walkability part of barriers to walking.

“Older adults perceive poor sidewalks, the absence of resting places and dangerous intersections as barriers to walking.”

Thus, walkable environment benefits seniors, keeping mind and body healthy through their surroundings and neighborhoods.

Children

Metric: Children are defined as individuals 14 years old and younger. This threshold was determined based on the legal age for driving in South Carolina. At age 15, young adults are eligible for a learner’s permit, and after 180 days young adults are eligible for a provisional driver’s license. While conditional, even a permit and provisional driver’s license broaden a young person’s mode of choice, and significantly increase their mobility.

Rationale: As parents, physicians and policy makers look for ways to curb childhood obesity, they may need to look no further than a child’s own backyard. Studies show that children are less likely to be obese if they live in a neighborhood that is safe and within walking distance of parks and retail services.

The U.S. has been experiencing a growing trend in overweight and obesity among youth and children and recent evidence shows that approximately 32 percent of youth are overweight or obese. Physical inactivity impacts weight and in an effort to curb the growing obesity epidemic there is an increasing research that has examined associations between local

area environmental factors and physical activity among youth. Greater availability of outdoor play/sports areas and parks, and access to commercial physical activity-related facilities have been associated with higher levels of youth and children physical activity.

Neighborhood design can also influence physical activity levels in youth and children. However, perceived environmental barriers, such as lack of access to these types of settings such as low connectivity street networks, have been associated with lower income neighborhoods. Whereas, high walkability (grid street network) neighborhoods have shown to have more physical activity and hence, less obesity among youth and children.

Non-White Populations

Metric: Non-white is measured as the percentage of all races, excluding those that identified as white. This includes Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race.

Rationale: Communities with more racial and ethnic minorities and lower-income residents often lack specific features that support walking, such as clean and well-maintained sidewalks, trees and nice scenery and safety. Such deficits may undermine the generally favorable effects of walkable neighborhood design. The presence of parks, open space and other recreational facilities is consistently linked with higher physical activity levels among children and adolescents. However, many studies show that lower-income groups and racial and ethnic minorities have limited

access to well-maintained or safe parks and recreational facilities, and more crime and traffic.

The low leisure-time physical activity rates and high risk of obesity among racial or ethnic minority children, and those living in lower-income areas, can be partially explained by their generally poor access to parks and private recreation facilities. In light of this growing evidence, policy makers should pursue strategies that improve walkability, access to parks, green space and recreational facilities, and neighborhood safety.

Low-Income Households

Metric: Low-income is measured as the percent of the population living below two times the federal poverty level. 2015 Federal Poverty Guidelines identified \$48,500 as the threshold for a four-person household. American Community Survey (ACS) data groups income by increments of \$4,999 so this analysis captures all household incomes at or below \$49,999.

Rationale: The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines low income households as households earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Very low income households earn less than 50% of AMI.

These groups of people are the least likely to have access to a car and may depend on walking to reach work, school, public transportation, or other destinations. People with lower incomes are more likely to live in areas with high crime rates, perceive their neighborhoods as less safe, and report physical and social disorder in their neighborhoods, such as broken windows, litter, graffiti, loitering and public drinking. These environmental variables may be why, in some cases, a higher proportion of lower-income children tend to be less active than their peers, overweight or obese. Walkable and safe access to healthy food outlets would support both nutrition and physical activity needs of low-income populations.

Vehicle Access

Metric: Vehicle access is measured from a question on the American Community Survey about whether a household has access to a car, truck, or van of 1-ton capacity or less.

Rationale: Access to private vehicles can be an indicator of mobility and access, particularly access to healthy food options and active spaces.

Linguistic Isolation

Metric: Linguistic isolation is measured as percentage of households in which those over the age of 5 speak English “not well” or “not at all”.

Rationale: Households that are linguistically isolated may have greater difficulty accessing services that are available to fluent English speakers, such as transportation services and social services.

SNAP Recipient

Metric: SNAP recipients measures the percentage of households who have received SNAP assistance in the past 12 months.

Rationale: Current regulations require food retailers who accept SNAP to stock three varieties of foods in each of the following four food groups: fruits and vegetables, dairy, breads and cereals, and meat, poultry and fish. While a new rule requiring seven varieties in each food group was proposed in February of 2016, SNAP recipients still travel farther to access their food and are more likely to be affected by diet-related diseases. Additionally, only 0.02% of SNAP funds are redeemed at farmers markets indicating an opportunity for outreach and education efforts aimed at attracting households that receive SNAP assistance.



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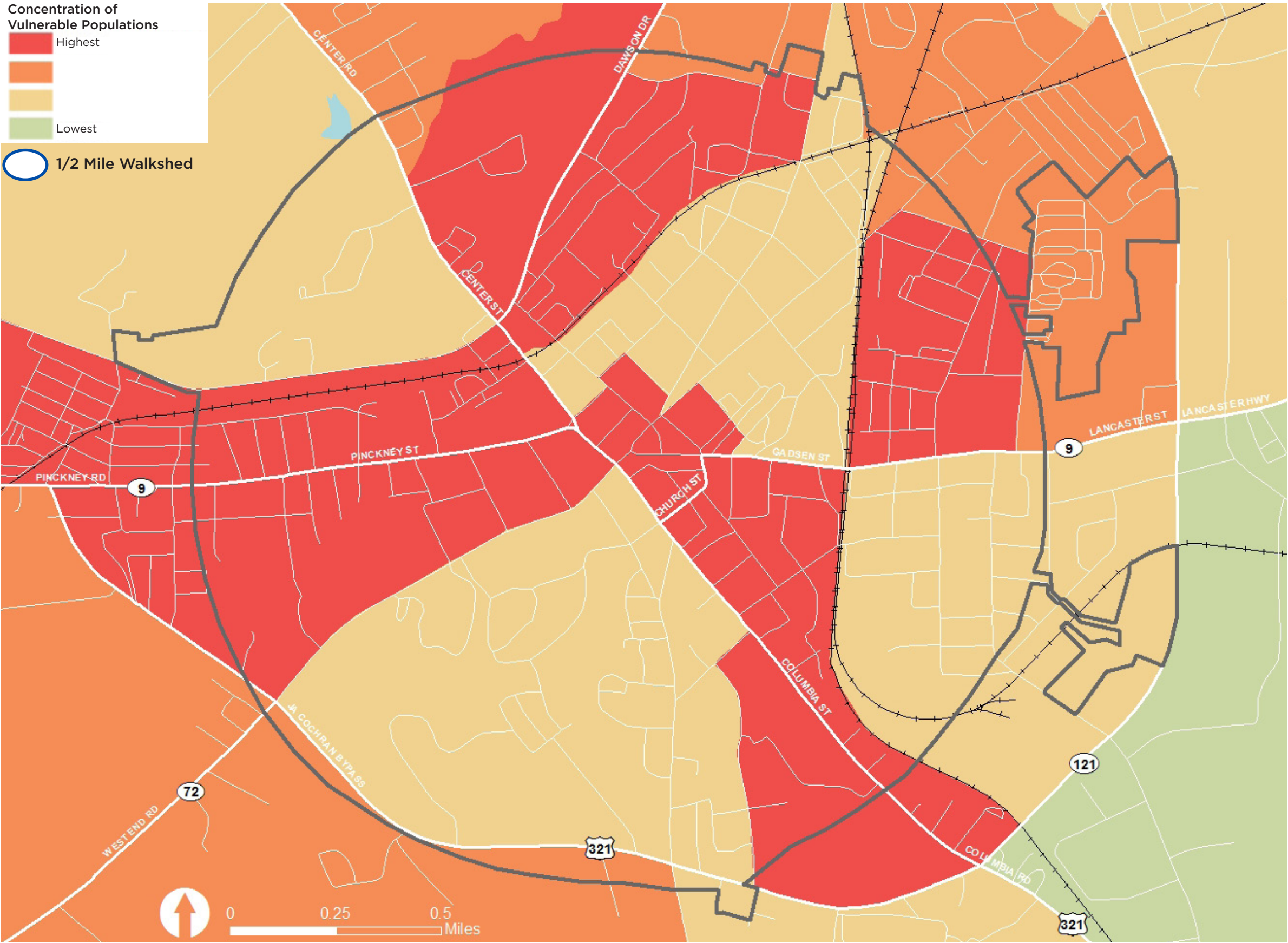
EQUITY ANALYSIS MAP

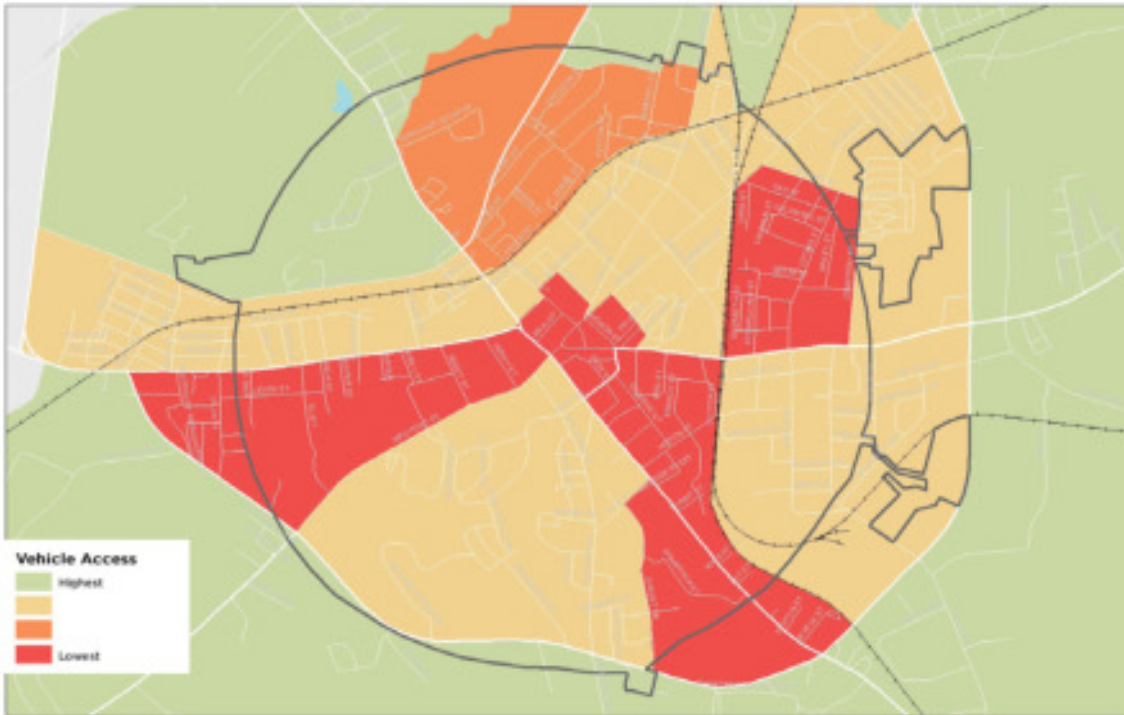
The adjacent map reflects the areas of Chester with greater than average concentrations of seven vulnerable populations by census blocks. These subpopulations are more vulnerable to health disparities related to economic and physical access to healthy foods and lifestyles and thus represent populations ideal for targeted interventions to improve access. These vulnerable populations include:

- Senior citizens
- Children
- Low-income households (at or below 200% Federal Poverty Level)
- Households without access to a vehicle
- Households with limited English-speaking proficiency
- Households who receive SNAP benefits
- Non-white populations

The red equity tier represents a high concentration of vulnerable populations, thus an area requiring more need and a priority area for pedestrian improvements. These priority areas span the northern corridor along the J.A. Cochran Bypass, the western corridor along Pinckney Street, and southern corridor around Columbia Street, and the neighborhood north of Lancaster Highway east of the railroad tracks.

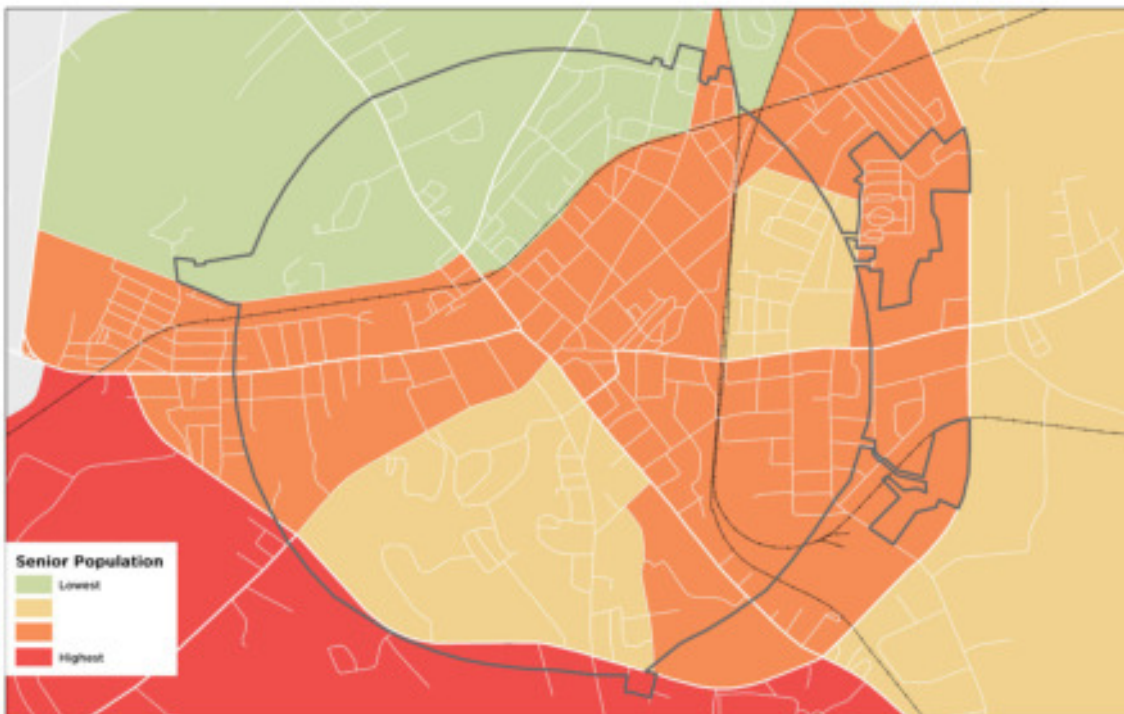
Maps of the selected individual socioeconomic criteria are found on the following page; all others can be found in the Appendix.





VEHICLE ACCESS

The map above identifies the area where more households have limited vehicle access, which is basically West of SC Highway 9 and the Norfolk Southern rail line. The low vehicle access area is not within the “walkable” zone (0.5 mile around a healthy food outlets) for healthy food access, as illustrated in the subsequent pages.



SENIOR POPULATION

In terms of age, seniors are a vulnerable population for food security. In Chester City, a higher concentration of seniors is located on the east, south east and south west part of town. These areas of high concentration of seniors also happen to be low vehicle access area and also outside the “walkable” zone around a healthy food outlets.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

Walkable and safe access to supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers markets, and specialty markets is important, because they give consumers access to a variety of fruits and vegetables. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables offer a number of health benefits and have been linked to a lower prevalence of obesity.

Most Americans, especially those with a low income, consume far fewer fruits and vegetables than recommended by current dietary guidance. Communities with limitations in resources, disposable income, language proficiency, and transportation often have restricted access to, and knowledge about, a variety of healthy food options.

While there is general agreement that consumption of fresh, healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are necessary for health and nutritional well-being, many communities across the region have negative health consequences caused by a lack of access to high-quality food. Grocery stores, farmers markets, and community gardens tend not to be as readily available to people in low-income, low-access communities. The result is an over-dependence on neighborhood convenience stores with limited offerings of fresh foods sold, frequently for a high price. This leads to myriad health and nutritional and long-term sustainability implications.

Therefore, creation of active transportation routes such as sidewalks, and bicycle paths between all neighborhoods and grocery stores, farmers markets, or other healthy food outlets can ease this disparity in accessibility, and help lower rates of chronic disease and lower levels of obesity.



23.5 million
people in America lack access to
a supermarket within one mile of
their home

HEALTH RISKS

Specific health risk data at the city level does not exist, however, county level data show that:

- **43% of adults in Chester County are obese.** This is 11 percentage points higher than the state rate of 32%. (Obesity is measured as a Body Mass Index [BMI] greater than 30.) Projections for **adult obesity rates are only getting worse** in Chester County.⁹
- **19.7% of Chester County children are obese.** This is almost 3 percent higher than the state rate of 16.7%. (Children are measured as those between the ages of 2 and 17.)⁹
- **43.8% of adults consume less than one serving of fruit per day** in Chester County.⁹
- Over **13% of adults have type 2 diabetes** in Chester County.¹⁰
- **Diabetes is the third leading cause of death** in Chester County. **The county ranks 10th for diabetes mortality** in the state.¹⁰

Chester County is considered one of the CDC's "Diabetes Belt" counties.¹¹ According to the CDC:

People who live in the diabetes belt are more likely to have type 2 diabetes than people who live in other parts of the United States. People who do not already have diabetes can reduce their risk by being physically active and, if they are overweight, losing weight. Obesity and inactivity account for nearly a third of the increased risk for type 2 diabetes that scientists noticed in people living in the diabetes belt.

9. SC DHEC. (2013). "2013 Chester County Obesity Fact Sheet." Available at <https://www.scdhec.gov/Health/docs/Epi/obesity/Chester.pdf>.
10. SC DHEC. (2012). "Chester County Health Indicators." Available at <http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/Docs/CHIT/Chester.pdf>
11. CDC. (2011). "CDC Identifies Diabetes Belt." Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/diabetesbelt.pdf>



FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

Food security, as a determinant of health, contribute to health status. Food security addresses the affordability, availability and accessibility of healthy foods. In Chester, many residents are food insecure and more likely to have a poor diet. Poor diet significantly contributes to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, some cancers and stroke.

Chester has three full-service grocery stores, IGA, Walmart, and Bi-Lo. Only one of these (Walmart) is technically within the city limits, but it is as geographically isolated from the downtown as the other two grocery stores, Bi-Lo and IGA, which are not inside the Chester city limits. Two grocery stores, Food Lion and Save-a-Lot, have recently closed. They are still included in the analysis, since, according to community input, these sites may open with new food retail venues in the future.

The City has a seasonal farmers market, the Chester Farmers and Artisan Market, which is open in May of each year. It operates on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday every week. Hours are 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM each market day. Saturday market days also include special events sponsored by the City of Chester Parks and Recreation Department, and other local organizations focusing on health and wellness. The market is located at 111 Columbia Street, directly behind City Hall. Chester also has a seasonal community garden located on the back of the farmers market lot

While residents have grocery stores just outside the city limits, a large number of residents purchase groceries from the Dollar General, a discount variety store. It is common for these type of retail outlets to sell pre-packaged and processed foods in both non-perishable and frozen packages. These types of foods are more

Summary Table of Chester's Food Retail Environment:

Number of Food Retail Establishments (FRE)	20
Number of People/FRE	280
Square Miles/FRE	0.325
Number of Grocery Stores	3
Number of People/Grocery Stores	1,869
Square Miles/Grocery Stores	1.5
Healthy Food Outlet Density (# outlets/mi²)	0.615 (0.461 year round)

likely to have higher amounts of fat, sodium, sugar and calories. However, it is less likely these stores sell fresh and nutritious foods.

During the community workshop, residents expressed concern about the accessibility of the grocery stores. Residents complained that all of the grocery stores are outside city limits, across railroad tracks, and difficult to access for those without access to a vehicle.

The table above details the analysis of grocery store density and the availability of healthy food opportunities for Chester. There are a total of four healthy food retail establishments in the Chester area, the three grocery stores and the farmer's market. However, only the grocery stores are available year-round.

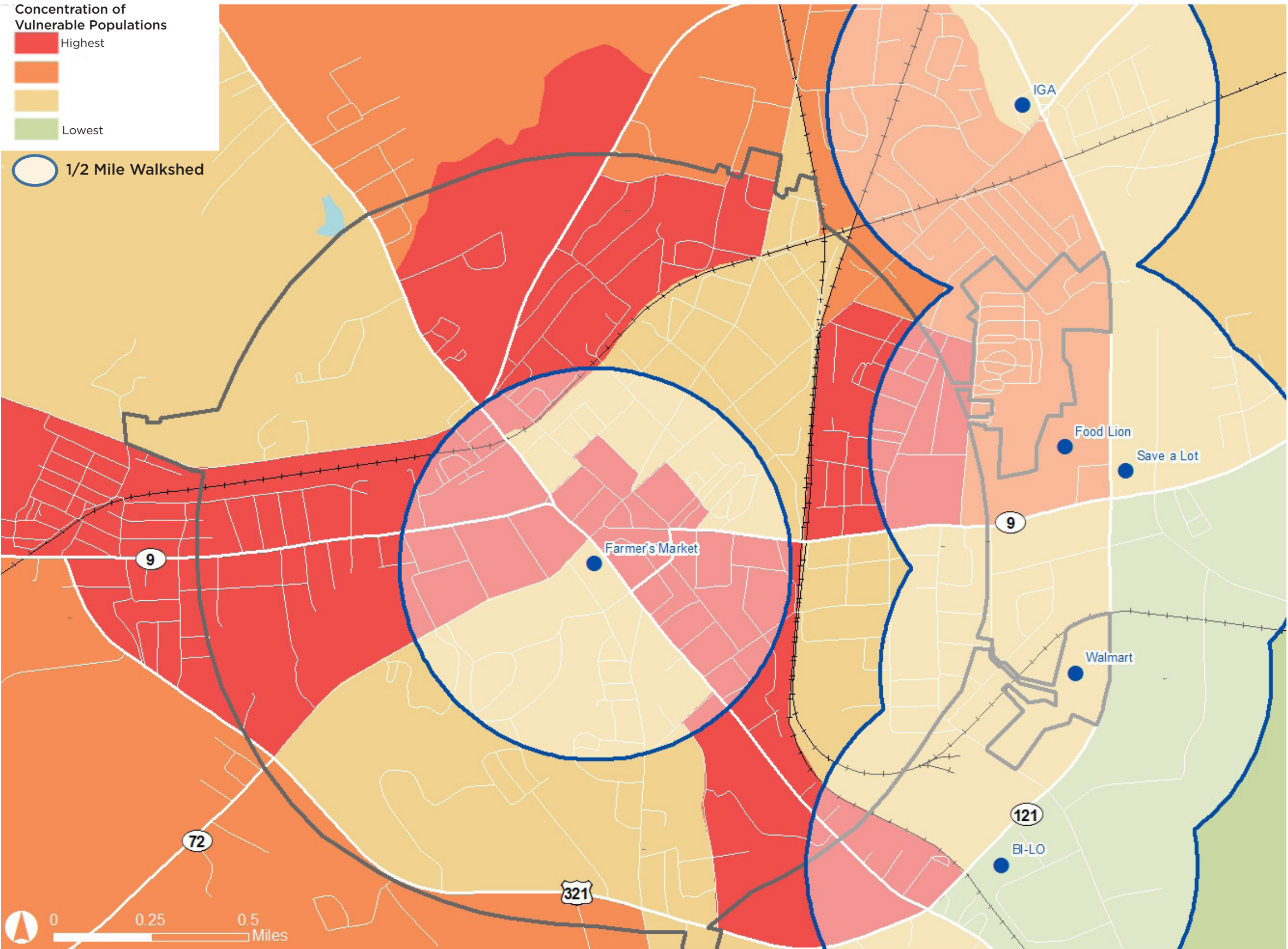
For the Healthy Food Outlet Density, a value of greater than 0.2 is desirable. So the City of Chester is technically not defined as a food desert. However, what is remarkable is the accessibility. In Chester, all of the grocery stores are located in the east, leaving many of the residents on the west side far from healthy food outlets.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS MAP

The results of the Composite Equity Analysis are combined with a mapping study of the locations and walkability of healthy food outlets. Healthy food outlets are defined to include all grocery stores, farmers markets, and community gardens. The farmers markets and community garden are seasonal.

A half-mile walkshed is a widely accepted catchment area for pedestrian analyses. A half-mile is about a 10 minute walk for most pedestrians. This distance also serves as the Federal Transit Authority's (FTA's) designated catchment area for pedestrian improvements that are eligible for transit enhancement funds. This diameter presumes that, barring barriers to mobility and accessibility, individuals within the catchment area would be willing to walk to these activities and destinations. **Walksheds, in combination with equity data, assess connectivity and reveal opportunities where infrastructure improvements may have the greatest impact.**

The walkability and food access connection runs along the J.A. Cochran Bypass Corridor to the east of the city and around the farmer's market in downtown Chester. While the farmer's market is located near areas at high risk for health inequity, the seasonality and limited offerings of the market make it less viable as a primary food outlet for residents. The pedestrian accessibility of the healthy food outlets on J.A. Cochran Bypass is drastically limited by the geographically limited concentration on one side of the city, creating long travel distances for residents in the west (who are already disadvantaged along other measures of equity); high traffic volumes and speeds along the corridor; the absence of sidewalks on this road; and the railroad tracks that separate residences from the shopping centers.

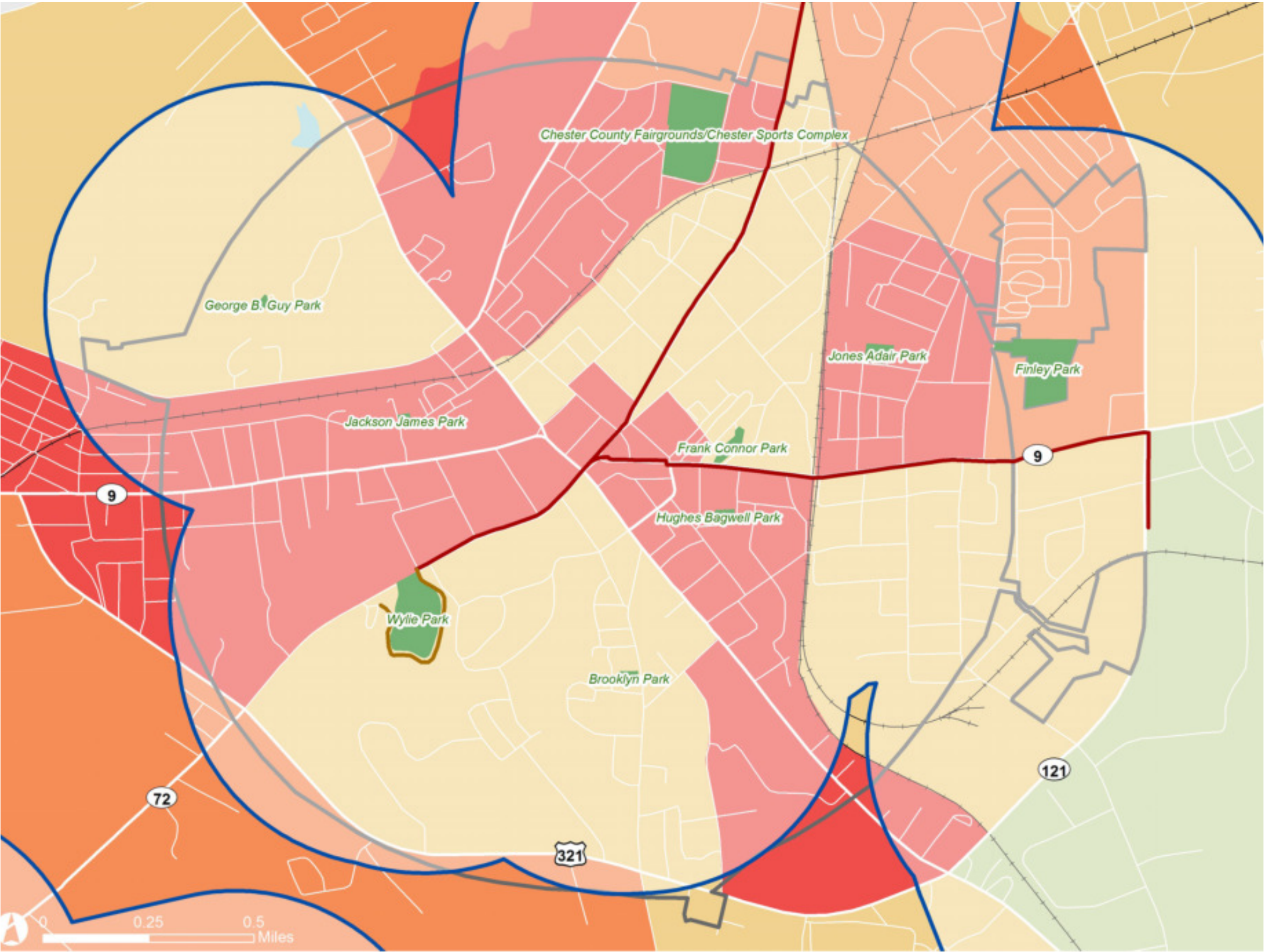
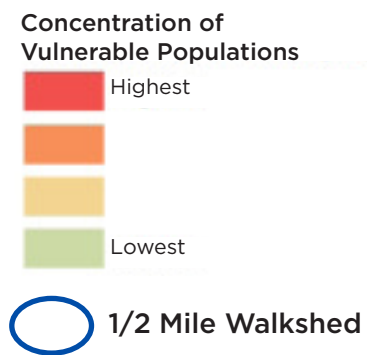


ACTIVE SPACE ACCESS ANALYSIS MAP

The results of the Composite Equity Analysis were also combined with a mapping study of the locations and walkability of active spaces. Active spaces are defined to include all existing parks, trails, greenspace, and the recreation centers.

This analysis again uses a half-mile walkshed or 10 minute walk for most pedestrians. **The resulting map is a starting point for understanding how to link areas in need to active space destinations through pedestrian infrastructure improvements.**

The walkability and active space access connection covers much of the city and areas to the east. However, the actual pedestrian accessibility is hindered by the lack of sidewalks on most streets immediately surrounding city parks, the lack of safe crossings at major intersections and park locations; high traffic volumes and speeds along major corridors, and barriers created by railroad track crossings that lack clear pedestrian paths.



ACTIVE SPACE ACCESS ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

Walking can be a critical form of transportation, particularly for older adults who no longer drive, young people who cannot yet drive, and for people who do not have access to a vehicle. Apart from walking as a means for transportation, however, walking serves a vital role in maintaining and improving one's health.

The CDC recommends 60 minutes of physical activity for children per day, 150 minutes of physical activity for adults per week, and 150 minutes of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity per week. Access to exercise opportunities in Chester County are limited.

County-level physical activity data show that:

- **Women report being less physically active than men.**¹²
- **22% of all Chester County residents are physically inactive.** This is slightly less than the state rate of 26%.¹³
- Of all South Carolina counties, **Chester ranks fifth to last for health behavior.**¹⁴

Additionally, **data on youth physical activity show that:**

- **74.1% of children (ages 2-17 years) in Chester County are not physically active** for 60 minutes or more on a daily basis.⁹
- **38% of children in Chester County are below poverty**, compared to 27% for the state. This is significant because **children living below the poverty line are 159% more likely to be deprived of recess.**

Obesity and physical inactivity rates in Chester County have worsened year after year for residents of all ages. One way to reverse this trend is to expand mobility options by providing safe and comfortable pedestrian facilities in Chester to support healthy lifestyles.

12. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. (2015). "US County Profile: Chester County, South Carolina." Available at http://www.healthdata.org/sites/default/files/files/county_profiles/US/County_Report_Chester_County_South_Carolina.pdf.
13. SC DHEC. (2011). "South Carolina Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Fact Sheets, for Youth and Adults." Available at <http://www.scdhec.gov/library/cr-009958.pdf>.
14. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. (2015). Chester County Health Rankings. Available at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/south-carolina/2015/rankings/Chester/county/outcomes/overall/snap-shot>



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The project team conducted thorough, on-the-ground field assessment of the pedestrian environment. This research included an inventory of intersection conditions, a photographic inventory, and on-foot exploration of Chester's neighborhoods, parks, and downtown core. The purpose of this research was to identify opportunities for connections between neighborhoods, key destinations, healthy food outlets, and recreation areas with active spaces. The following sections provide an overview of the opportunities and constraints that exist for walking in Chester.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Existing pedestrian planning efforts recognize the need for streetscape beautification efforts and pedestrian enhancements.** Focusing on the improving the quality of sidewalks and crosswalks to make walking a more attractive and safe travel mode to access and energize Chester's downtown businesses will be critical to improving quality of life in the town.
- **Chester has a number of wide, tree-lined boulevards** with sidewalks on many downtown corridors as well as some residential streets. The sidewalks are typically separated by a grassy buffer from the street. This makes for pleasant neighborhood walking conditions.
- **The scale of Chester is very conducive to walking.** The town size is approximately a one mile radius, enabling pedestrians to reach key destinations like parks within a 20 minute walk.
- **Historic downtown lends Chester a unique character.** Some of these older buildings have been preserved, and many more can be restored or re-purposed.
- **A strong group of community stakeholders and town leaders are working hard to improve health outcomes.** Efforts include historic walking maps, a seasonal farmers market, an Eat Smart Move More committee, and a community advocacy group working to address pedestrian safety issues related to students' school commute.

CONSTRAINTS

- **The two primary commercial corridors – Columbia Street and J.A. Cochran Bypass – are wide streets with fast-moving traffic and few safe pedestrian crossings.** Key destinations, such as the YMCA and grocery stores, are located along these corridors, and the narrow sidewalks, high vehicle speed limits, lack of curb cuts, and lack of crossings create accessibility challenges.
- **Difficult railroad crossings** mean residents in some neighborhoods have to walk further to reach destinations. The railroad tracks run through the heart of Chester. These tracks established the town as an early settlement and provide economic connections today. However, the tracks also separate parts of town and reduce connectivity.
- **Many vacant storefronts and empty lots** within the downtown core result in few destination options for residents and visitors.
- **Perception of crime prevents many Chester residents from walking**, especially at night. There are few streetlights to improve safety, and few people or activities in the downtown area to deter criminal activity.
- **Streetscape and sidewalk maintenance needs are not being sufficiently addressed.** While the overall condition of existing sidewalks is good, many walkways are not kept clear of debris or shrubbery. Similarly, crosswalks are poorly maintained or non-existent, yet are integral to the livability of Chester's neighborhoods. Little public information is available regarding sidewalk maintenance responsibility.
- **There are large gaps in the sidewalk network**, particularly within neighborhoods. Curb cuts are present in few areas, which makes accessibility difficult for people with disabilities.
- **Schools are located outside the Chester city limits.** The schools are located on J.A. Cochran Bypass and on Lancaster Highway, a few miles from downtown Chester, and along routes currently difficult to reach safely by foot or bike. Additionally, there are currently no Safe Routes to School projects or programs in Chester County.

SITE SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following photo inventory presents opportunities and constraints identified during field work. Observed opportunities are shown with **green** borders and constraints are shown with **red** borders.



Chester has **wide, tree-lined boulevards**. This makes for **pleasant streetscapes and a unique sense of place** while setting an example for future streetscape improvements on major corridors.



Lapsed maintenance and upkeep have resulted in cracked and **uneven sidewalks and poorly visible crossings**, which makes the pedestrian experience **unwelcoming and difficult to traverse**.



J.A. Cochran Bypass and Columbia Street are the **two main corridors which contain many of Chester's key destinations**, including schools. These wide high-speed thoroughfares **can be re-designed to allow for expanded sidewalks, ADA-compliance, and safer vehicular speeds**.



Rail lines cut across several major roads in Chester and prevent safe, convenient pedestrian access from one side of town to the other, particularly to the grocery stores and schools.

SITE SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS (CONTINUED)



Chester has an active community dedicated to improving health outcomes and walkability.

Recommendations can build off of previous efforts, such as the Chester Walkability Audit, conducted in 2015.



There are few ADA-accessible curb ramps except for a handful of primary intersections. Some streets that have sidewalks do not have accessible curb ramps, which can **isolate pedestrians with disabilities and exacerbate mobility issues.**



Historic buildings line the corridors of downtown Chester. Many are currently vacant but **present adaptive reuse possibilities.**



Vacant lots and buildings outnumber existing businesses in many areas, and the **lack of street activity** further contributes to a **perception that walking in Chester is unsafe.**

SITE SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS (CONTINUED)



Wylie Park is a half-mile from downtown Chester and is popular with to many residents. **Opportunities exist to better connect residents to Wylie Park with sidewalks, safe crossings, and lighting.**



Heavy traffic makes for an unsafe and unpleasant pedestrian experience along a number of key corridors throughout the city, including Columbia Street, J.A. Cochran Bypass, and Center Street.



Short stretches of **well-designed streetscapes in the downtown core** set a great example for future improvements. **Smooth, wide sidewalks and a landscaped buffer zone with streetlights and trees make the street inviting and safe.**



Few safe crossings exist on the major corridors in Chester. Many residents walk to destinations such as IGA and Dollar General, seen here. Adding safe crossings at frequent intervals along these corridors will slow traffic and improve overall safety for all road users.

IV. INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs... To keep the city safe is a fundamental task of a city's streets and its sidewalks.

- Jane Jacobs
Author of *The Death and Life of
Great American Cities*

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the proposed pedestrian network improvements that were identified through input from the community, the project team, field work, and the equity analysis.

The proposed improvements are intended to **make walking safer and more accessible for everyone** in Chester.

Recommendations are based on the existing conditions analysis, field work, and public input collected between January and March 2016.

During the project team visit to Chester, **draft recommendations were presented to the stakeholder committee, and subsequently to the community via interactive posters and a presentation** at the public input meeting.

Following the stakeholder committee meeting and public input meeting, recommendations were further refined and finalized.

This chapter includes:

- Description of the types of pedestrian facilities included in these recommendations
- Review of the recommendations by type (pedestrian network, intersection improvements, and railroad crossing improvements)
- Map of the recommendations
- Tables outlining recommendation specifics by type
- Cutsheets that graphically portray infrastructure upgrades with a map showing a specific location, a plan and a photo simulation of the proposed infrastructure recommendation. The four types that are displayed in the cut sheets are: railroad crossing, railroad underpass, intersection treatments,

Chester residents and stakeholders review infrastructure recommendations at the Open House in June, 2016



PEDESTRIAN FACILITY TYPES

SIDEWALKS

Sidewalks are the most fundamental element of the walking network, as they provide an area for pedestrian travel that is separated from vehicle traffic. Sidewalks are typically constructed out of concrete and are separated from the roadway by a curb or gutter and sometimes a landscaped planting strip area. Sidewalks are a common application in both urban and suburban environments. Attributes of well-designed sidewalks include the following:

- **Accessibility:** A network of sidewalks should be accessible to all users.
- **Adequate width:** Two people should be able to walk side-by-side and pass a third comfortably.
- **Safety:** Design features of the sidewalk should allow pedestrians to have a sense of security and predictability. Sidewalk users should not feel they are at risk due to the presence of adjacent traffic.
- **Continuity:** Walking routes should be obvious and should not require pedestrians to travel out of their way unnecessarily.
- **Landscaping:** Plantings and street trees should contribute to the overall psychological and visual comfort of sidewalk users, and be designed in a manner that contributes to the safety of people.



- **Drainage:** Sidewalks should be well graded to minimize standing water.
- **Social space:** There should be places for standing, visiting, and sitting. The sidewalk area should be a place where adults and children can safely participate in public life.
- **Quality of place:** Sidewalks should contribute to the character of neighborhoods and business districts.

SIDEPATH

Multi-use paths along roadways, also called Sidepaths, are a type of path that run adjacent to a street. Because of operational concerns it is generally preferable to place paths within independent rights-of-way away from roadways. However, there are situations where existing roads provide the only corridors available. When designed correctly, these facilities have the ability to provide a high level of comfort for pedestrians (and bicyclists). However, the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities cautions practitioners of the use of two-way sidepaths on urban or suburban streets with many driveways and street crossings. Where implemented, sidepaths should be coupled with strict access management regulations or improvements.



PEDESTRIAN PATH CONNECTORS

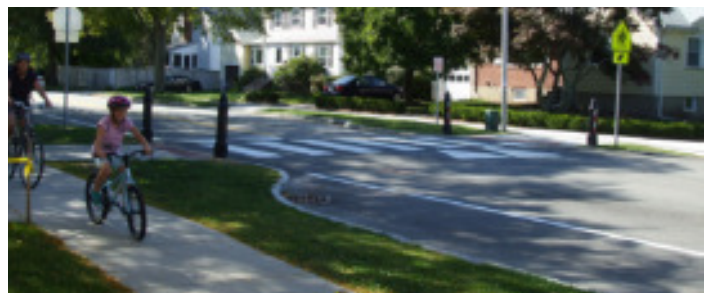
Pedestrian path connectors provide residential areas with direct pedestrian access to parks, trails, greenspaces, and other recreational areas. They most often serve as small path connections to and from the larger pedestrian network, typically having their own rights-of-way and easements.

Additionally, these smaller paths can be used to provide pedestrian connections between dead-end streets, cul-de-sacs, and access to nearby destinations not provided by the street network. Qualities of well-designed pedestrian path connectors include:

- Pedestrian path connectors should remain open to the public.
- Path pavement shall be at least 8' wide to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles, meet ADA requirements and be considered suitable for multi-use.
- Path widths should be designed to be less than 8' wide only when necessary to protect large mature native trees over 18" in caliper, wetlands or other ecologically sensitive areas.
- Paths should slightly meander whenever possible.

INTERSECTION TREATMENTS

There are a variety of intersection treatments that can be applied to make a safer and more comfortable crossing environment for pedestrians. As seen in the examples below, push button signals, reduced curb radii, raised crosswalks, and refuge islands can help guide pedestrians to safe crossings, and help motorists predict where pedestrians will be.



RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Railroad crossings present certain difficulties for pedestrians and are particularly hazardous to those who rely on wheeled devices for mobility (railroad crossings have flangeway gaps that allow passage of the wheels of the train, but also have the potential to catch wheelchair casters and bicycle tires). In addition, rails or ties that are not embedded in the travel surface create a tripping hazard.

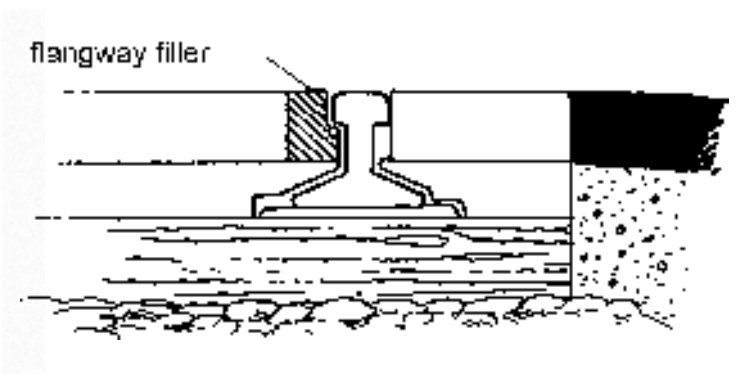
Guidance for improving railroad crossings include:

- Make the crossing level: Raise approaches to the tracks and the area between the tracks to the level of the top of the rail.
- When roadways and pedestrian facilities cross railroad tracks at grade, the roadway should ideally be at a right angle to the rails.
- Use Multiple Forms of Warning: Provide railroad crossing information in multiple formats, including signs, flashing lights, and audible sounds.
- Clear Debris Regularly: Perform regular maintenance to clear debris from shoulder areas at railroad crossings.
- Fill Flangeway with Rubberized Material or Concrete Slab: Normal use of rail facilities causes buckling of paved-and-timbered rail crossings. Pavement buckling

can be reduced or eliminated by filling the flangeway with rubberized material, concrete slab, or other treatments. A beneficial effect of this is a decrease in long-term maintenance costs.



Installing a rubber surface rather than asphalt around railroad flangeways reduces changes in level and other maintenance problems.



The “flangeway filler” eliminates the gap in the path of travel for pedestrians crossing railroad tracks. The filler, consisting of a rubber insert, will deflect downward with the weight of a train and does not affect railway function.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended improvements to the pedestrian environment have been made based on a thorough review of previous planning efforts; field work and an analysis of the current pedestrian environment; and input from the community about their concerns and needs. The recommendations fall into three categories:

- Pedestrian network improvements
- Intersection improvements
- Railroad crossing improvements

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

The existing pedestrian network is relatively extensive, with sidewalks covering many of the main corridors in Chester. As such, pedestrian network improvements focused primarily on closing gaps and fixing problem areas in the sidewalk network; connecting to key destinations, such as parks, schools, and food outlets via sidewalks, sidepaths, and pedestrian path connectors (see facility descriptions on previous page); and extending the pedestrian network into areas where pedestrian activity is high and/or access to vehicles is limited.

Table 3.1 on the pages 63-64 outlines the specific locations of the sidewalk and sidepath network improvements that are also mapped on the facing page in the Recommendations Map.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Pedestrian access and mobility will be greatly improved in Chester through improved crossing conditions. Many intersections within the downtown core have crosswalk markings, but those outside of the immediate downtown area do not. Increasing the visibility of existing

crossings with fresh paint and adding new crosswalk at more intersections that do not have marked crossings is a relatively low-cost improvement that can go far in improving pedestrian safety by promoting predictable crossing behavior. Adding pedestrian-actuated crossing signals with count-down timers can further improve crossing conditions at busier intersections, especially those intersecting J.A. Cochran Bypass and other major thoroughfares.

Table 3.2 on page 65 specifies the locations and recommended improvements to intersections in Chester.

RAILROAD CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS

There are eight railroad crossings in Chester with varying degrees of pedestrian safety and comfort issues. In general, there is poor access across railroad tracks. At-grade crossings are the most common type of crossing throughout Chester, and many of these are dangerous for pedestrians because of the uneven surfaces with the roadway and tracks (not to mention the hazards they cause for people with strollers, wheelchairs, or walkers). Each of the railroad crossings has been evaluated in terms of how smooth the crossing is for pedestrians to cross and whether there is a clear path for pedestrians to follow safely across. The findings of this evaluation are summarized in Table 3.3 on page 66.

RECOMMENDATIONS MAP

At right is a map showing recommendations for improving the pedestrian network, intersections, and railroad crossings in order to meet the project goals of improved pedestrian access and connectivity to healthy food and physical activity. On the following page, the recommendations are laid over the equity map in order to show how they address issues of accessibility. These draft recommendations were refined based on public input during project team meetings and a public engagement event in April and June 2016.

Pedestrian Network Recommendations

Existing / Proposed

- Sidepath
- Sidewalk
- Pedestrian Path

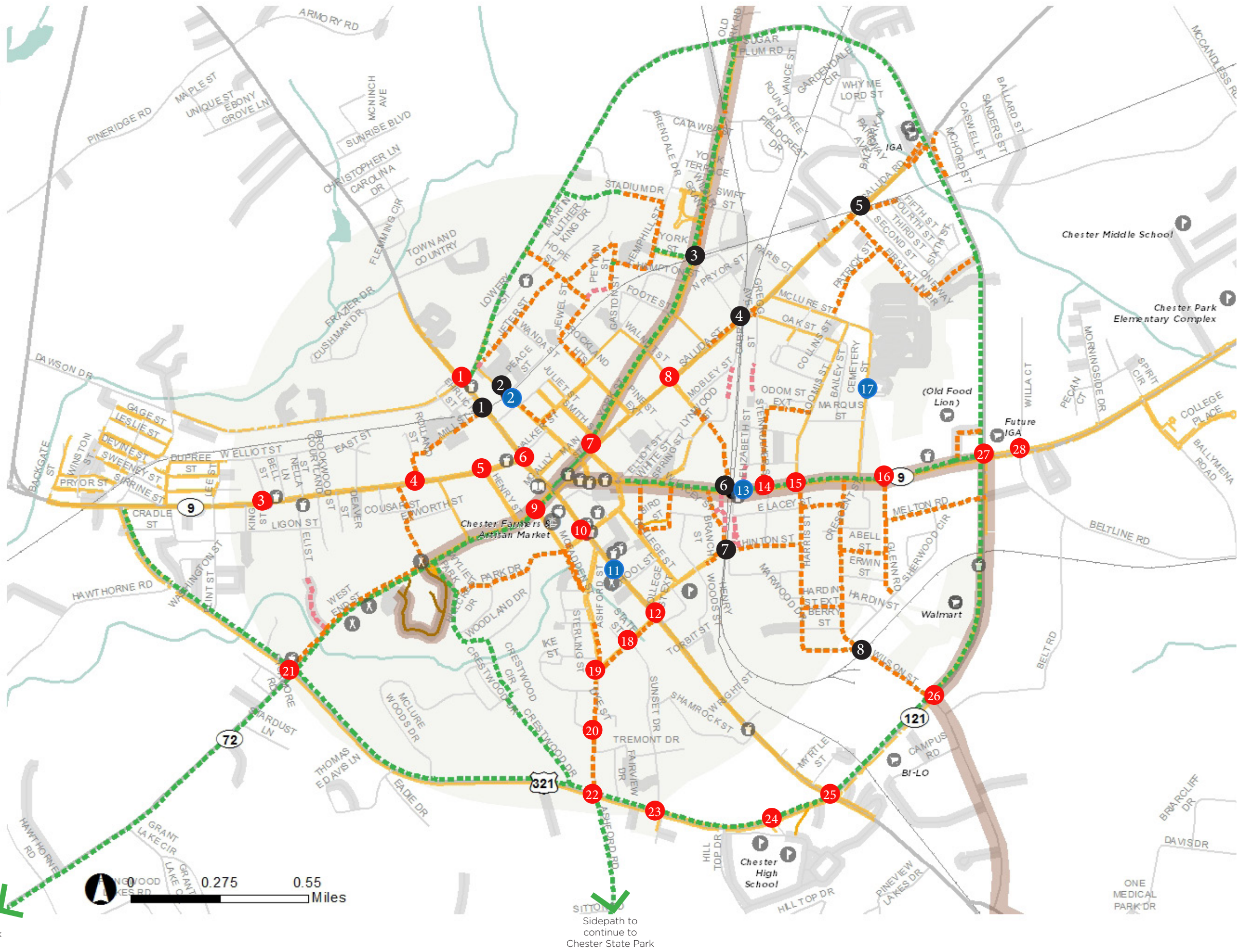
Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

- Street Intersection (#'s coincide with intersection recommendation Tables 3.2 and 3.3 on pages 65 and 66, respectively.)
- RR Crossing
- midblock crossing

- Grocery Store
- Farmers Market
- 206
- Community Garden
- School
- Library
- YMCA
- Trail
- Carolina Thread Trail alignment
- Road
- Highway
- City Maintained Road
- Railroad
- Park
- Water Body
- City of Chester
- Chester County

Sidepath to continue to Chester State Park

Sidepath to continue to Chester State Park



RECOMMENDATIONS + EQUITY MAP

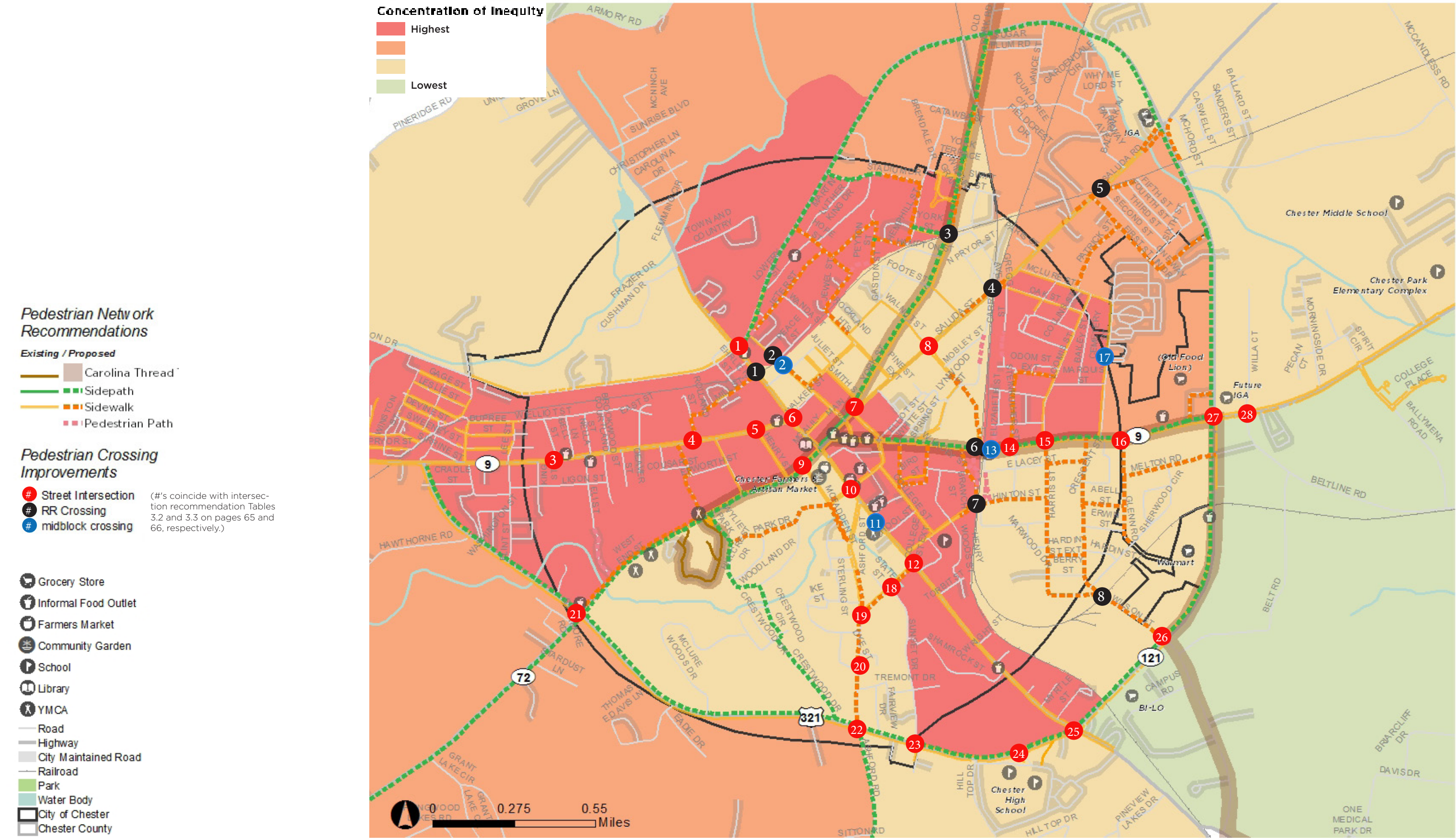


Table 3.1 Recommended Pedestrian Network Improvements

	BEGIN/END	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION
West End Street	Columbia St./J.A. Cochran Bypass	Continue sidewalk on north side of West End St. from Dewey St to J.A. Cochran. Also add wide sidepath on south side of West End St. from Columbia St. to J.A. Cochran Bypass to connect to Wylie Park
Dewey Street	Pinckney St./ West End St	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to Wylie Park
Mill Street	Center St./ Pinckney St.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to Jackson James Park
Wylie Street	Academy St./ CSX RR tracks	Continue sidewalk along east side of Wylie Street to complete network and connect to Chester Transportation Museum
Academy Street	Smith St./ Wylie St.	Continue sidewalk along south side of Academy Street to complete network
Jeter Street	Wylie St./ Hope St./ Peyton St.	Create a pedestrian path that cuts through from Wylie St. to Jeter St. and a sidewalk that continues the length of Jeter St. to Peyton St. on one side to improve access to the Fairgrounds
Hope Street	Jewel St./ J.A. Cochran Bypass	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to the Fairgrounds
Park Drive	McFadden St./ West End St.	Sidewalk on one side from McFadden St. to Hillcrest Dr., and wider sidepath from Hillcrest Dr. to West End St. to improve access to Wylie Park
McFadden Street	Park Dr./ Ashford St.	Sidewalks on both sides to accommodate heavy pedestrian activity and improve access to Brooklyn Park and downtown
Ashford Street	Starnes St./ J.A. Cochran Bypass	Sidewalk on east side of Ashford from Starnes St. to Ella St. to complete network in high pedestrian traffic area. Continue sidewalk on one side all the way to J.A. Cochran Bypass to improve access to Brooklyn Park and improve pedestrian safety along this busy corridor.
Ella Street	Columbia St./ Ashford St.	Complete sidewalk network along south side of Ella Street.
Saluda Road	Foote St./ J.A. Cochran Bypass	Fill in gap in sidewalk on north side of Saluda Rd. between Foote St. and the RR tracks, on south side of Saluda Rd. between the Norfolk Southern RR tracks and Oak St., and on the north side of Saluda Rd. between Railroad Ave. and the CSX RR tracks. Sidewalks on all sides of the street at the intersection of Saluda Rd. and J.A. Cochran Bypass would improve pedestrian access to Chesterville Commons shopping center.
Walnut Street	Mobley St./ Gadsen St.	Complete network along Walnut, both sides of the street between Mobley St. and Lynwood St., and just one side of the street between Lynwood St. and Gadsen St.
Cotton Street	Gadsen St./ Hinton St.	Sidewalk on one side of the street will improve pedestrian safety on a corridor that is already highly traveled.
Hinton Street	Cotton St./ Harris St.	Fill in gaps leading up to Norfolk Southern and Chester & Lancaster RR crossings and then continue network across RR tracks to improve access to Clack's Grocery/Convenience Store
Harris Street	Wilson St./ Lancaster Hwy.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access between Lancaster Hwy. and J.A. Cochran Bypass.
Wilson Street	Wilson St./ Lancaster Hwy.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access between Lancaster Hwy. and J.A. Cochran Bypass.
Patrick Street	First St./ McLure St.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access between neighborhoods and parks
First Street	Saluda Rd./ J.A. Cochran Bypass	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to neighborhood
York Street	CSX RR Tracks/ Swift St.	Fill in gaps in sidewalk on east side of York St. Additional gaps exist along this corridor near Catawba St. and the Norfolk Southern RR crossing
Church Street	Columbia St./ Oakland Ave.	Fill in gap in sidewalk on north side of Church Street from corner of Oakland Avenue to mid-block where sidewalk exists

Continued on next page

Table 3.1 (continued) Recommended Pedestrian Network Improvements

	BEGIN/END	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION
W. Lacy Street	Gadsen St./ Bird St.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to Hughes Bagwell Park
Bird Street	Aiken St./ W. Lacy St.	Sidewalk on one side to improve access to Hughes Bagwell Park
J. A. Cochran Bypass	Pinckney St./ Center St.	Sidepath along the entire length of the J.A. Cochran Bypass, on side closest to City of Chester to improve pedestrian safety along this busy corridor
Crestwood Drive/ Crestwood Circle	J.A. Cochran Bypass/ Woodlawn Dr.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Wylie Park
Woodlawn Drive	Crestwood Cir./ Hillcrest Dr.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Wylie Park
Hillcrest Drive	Woodlawn Dr./ Park Dr.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Wylie Park
Gadsen Street/ Lancaster Highway	J.A. Cochran Bypass/ Hudson Street	Sidepath on one side to improve access to downtown district
York Street	Hudson Street/ J.A. Cochran Bypass	Sidepath on one side to improve access to downtown district
Pine Street	York St./ Jewel St.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
Jewel Street	Pine St./ Hope St.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
Stadium Drive	J.A. Cochran Bypass/ Brendale Dr.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
Peyton Street	Jeter St./ south terminus	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
Forest Avenue/ Hemphill Street	Peyton St./ York St.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
Brendale Drive	Stadium Dr./ Forest Ave.	Sidepath on one side to improve access to Fairgrounds
-	Eli St./ West End St.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting Eli St. to West End St. along what is now an informal path
-	White Oak St./ Lancaster Hwy.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting White Oak St. to Lancaster Hwy. along what is now an informal path
-	Steinkulher St./ Lancaster Hwy.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting Steinkulher St. to Lancaster Hwy. along what is now an informal path
-	Steinkulher St./ Carr St.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting Steinkulher St. to Carr St. along what is now an informal path
-	Jewel St./ Peyton St.	Create a pedestrian path connecting Jewel St. to Peyton St. to increase pedestrian access to the Fairgrounds
-	Lynwood St./ Mobley St.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting Lynwood St. to Mobley St. along what is now an informal path
-	Wylie St./ Jeter St.	Formalize a pedestrian path connecting Wylie St. to Jeter St. along what is now an informal path

Table 3.2 Recommended Intersection Improvements

	ROAD 1	ROAD 2	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION
1	Center Street	Dawson Drive	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signal
2	Wylie Street	N/A (mid-block)	Marked crosswalk to connect to the Chester Transportation Museum
3	Pinckney Street	Bell Street	Crosswalk across Pinckney Street
4	Pinckney Street	Mill Street	Marked crosswalk across Pinckney Street
5	Pinckney Street	Henry Street	Marked crosswalk across Pinckney Street
6	Center Street	Pinckney Street	Marked crosswalks, traffic signal?
7	Main Street/Saluda Street	York Street/Hudson Street	High-visibility (raised?) crosswalks, pedestrian-actuated count-down signals for all crossings
8	Saluda Street	Walnut Street	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals, restripe high-visibility crossings
9	West End Street	Oakland Avenue	Marked crosswalks across West End Street and Oakland Avenue
10	Columbia Street	Church Street	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals, restripe high-visibility crossings
11	Columbia Street	N/A (mid-block)	Marked crosswalk with pedestrian-actuated RRFB across to the YMCA
12	Columbia Street	Ella Street	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signal across Columbia Street
13	Lancaster Highway	N/A (mid-block crossing)	Marked crosswalk to Clack's Grocery/Convenience Store
14	Lancaster Highway	Steinkulher Street	Marked crosswalks across Lancaster Highway
15	Lancaster Highway	Loomis Street/Harris Street	Marked crosswalk across Lancaster Highway
16	Lancaster Highway	Glenn Road	Marked crosswalk across Lancaster Highway and Glenn Road
17	Cemetery Street	N/A (mid-block crossing)	Marked crosswalk to Finley Park
18	Ella Street	Sunset Drive	Marked crosswalk across Ella Street
19	Ashford Street	Ella Street	Marked crosswalks across Ella Street and Ashford Street
20	Ashford Street	Dye Street	Caution sign indicating "School Bus Stop Ahead" from both directions
21	J. A. Cochran Bypass	West End Street	Marked crosswalk in all directions, pedestrian-actuated signals
22	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Ashford Street	Marked crosswalks , pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals across J.A. Cochran Bypass
23	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Sunset Drive	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signal across J.A. Cochran Bypass
24	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Chester Senior High Drive	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signal across J.A. Cochran Bypass
25	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Columbia Street	Marked crosswalks, pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals in all directions
26	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Wilson Street	Marked crosswalks, pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals on all sides
27	J.A. Cochran Bypass	Lancaster Highway	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals in all directions
28	Lancaster Highway	Willa Court/Beltline Road	Pedestrian-actuated count-down crossing signals across Lancaster Highway

Table 3.3 Recommended Railroad Crossing Improvements

	ROAD	RAILROAD	CURRENT CONDITION	POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION
1	Center Street	CSX	Underpass, sidewalks are narrow, not ADA compliant -stairs on one side, (overall rating = OK)	Widen sidewalks and remove steps
2	Wylie Street/ Peace Street	CSX	Intersection of 2 roads, bumpy crossing (overall rating = OK)	Striped pedestrian path to clarify legibility of safe crossing
3	York Street/ Forest Avenue/ Brawley Street/ Gregg Street/ Babcock Street	CSX	Busy intersection of 5 roads, but smooth RR crossing, (overall rating = GOOD)	Striped pedestrian path
4	Saluda Road/ Brawley Street/ Gregg Street/ Oak Street/ Mobley Street	Norfolk Southern and Lancaster & Chester	Intersection of 5 roads, significant potholes and wide span to cross 3 RR tracks, (overall rating = BAD)	Smoother crossing, striped pedestrian path
5	Saluda Road/ 2nd Street/ 5th Street	CSX	Intersection of 3 roads with lots of pedestrian activity, crossing is smooth, (overall rating = GOOD)	Striped pedestrian path
6	Gadsen Street/ Lancaster Highway	Norfolk Southern and Lancaster & Chester	Busy and bumpy exchange with heavy traffic and wide span to cross 4 RR tracks, (overall rating = BAD)	Smoother crossing, striped pedestrian path
7	Hinton Street/ Cotton Street/ Hamilton Street	Norfolk Southern and Lancaster & Chester	Intersection of 3 roads, significant potholes and wide span to cross 5 RR tracks, (overall rating = BAD)	Smoother crossing, striped pedestrian path
8	Wilson Street	Lancaster & Chester	Intersection of just 1 road and 1 RR track, RR track looks to be non-operational, (overall rating = GOOD)	Striped pedestrian path



Railroad Crossing

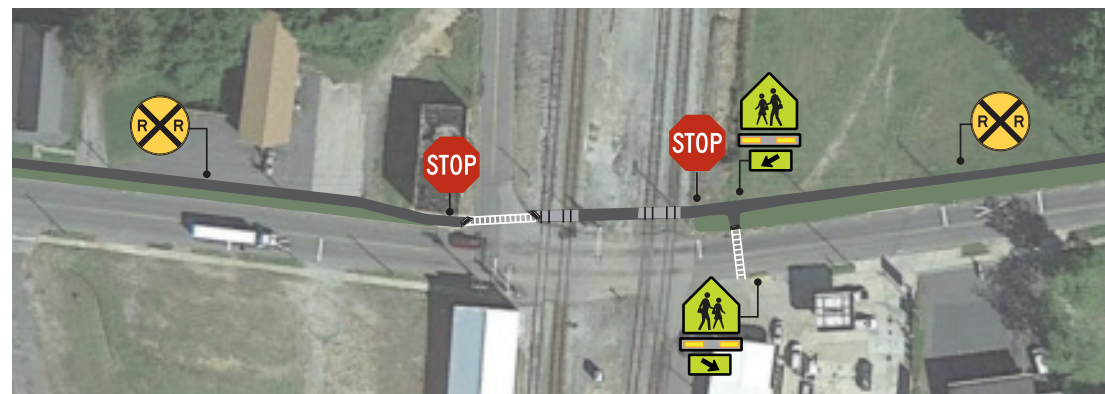
Lancaster Highway is one of the main arterial streets in Chester and it connects residences in West Chester to the town center where the commercial and civic areas are located.

Because Lancaster Highway/Gadsden Street leads to Chester's main street, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and facilities would be desirable upgrades to the existing roadway because they will offer residences to the west access to the shops and public facilities that line Main Street and Gadsden Street. In order for users to feel more comfortable walking and biking along the 35 mph rural Lancaster highway into central Chester a separated side path is recommended.

Because the separated side path would cross two railroad tracks the path would have to be smoothed out to allow for accessible crossing. Installing a rubber surface rather than asphalt around railroad flangeways reduces changes in level and other maintenance problems. Proper railroad signage, including railroad warning signs and stop signs are recommended to be installed before and after railroad crossings.

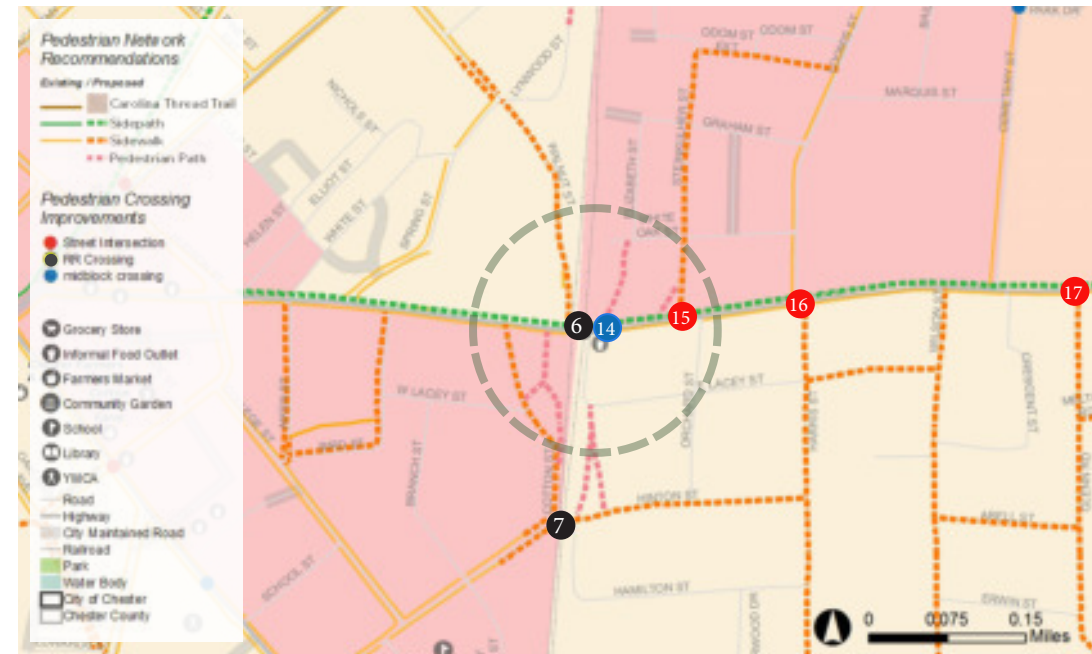
RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

- + Smoother Railroad Crossings
- + Active Warning Beacons (RRFB) at Crossings
- + Marked Crosswalks to Grocery and Convenience Stores
- + Separated Side Path



Lancaster Hwy. Railroad Crossing

* Proposed plans are preliminary and must go through proper engineering consultation, design, and review before implementation



Lancaster Hwy. Railroad Crossing

At A Glance

• **Project Mileage:** 1.1 miles

• **Average Daily Traffic:** 6,900

• **Population:** 2,635

• **Destinations:**

Clack's Convenience Store

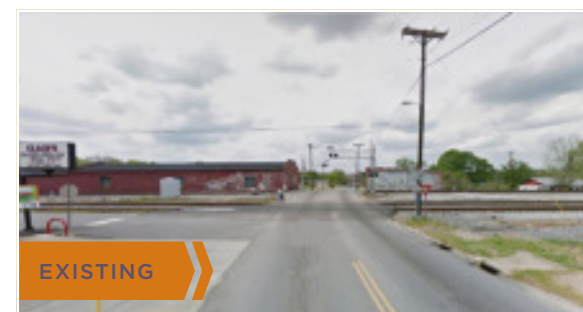
Frank Conner Park

Anna's Arbor

Gene's Restaurant

Los Magueyes

Umi Japanese Restaurant



EXISTING



PROPOSED CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Lancaster Hwy. Railroad Crossing

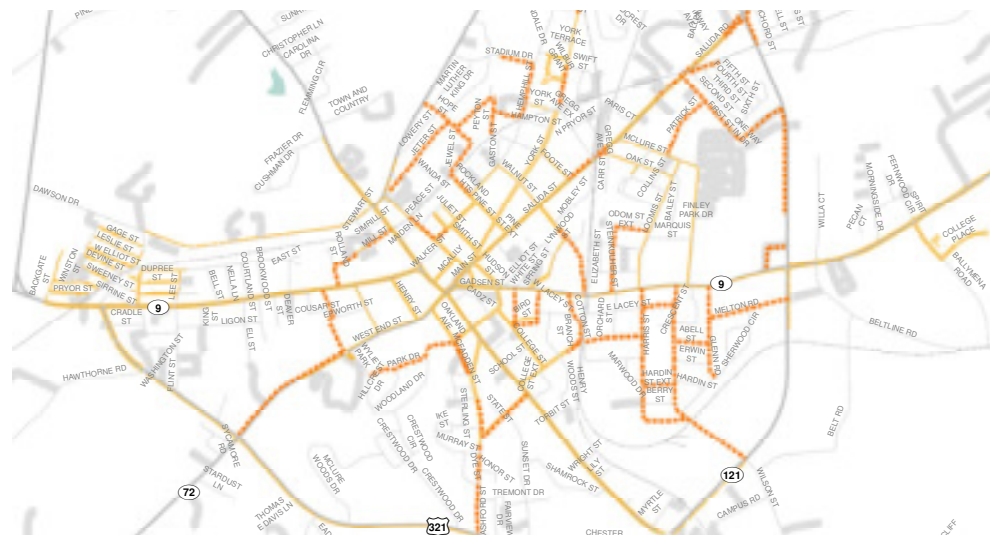


Sidewalk Repair

Accessible and connected sidewalks are essential in the establishment of a cohesive pedestrian network.

In order to create a connected sidewalk network, repairs must be done to existing sidewalks. Connecting existing sidewalk infrastructure will also go a long way in encouraging people to walk around town, when they know they will be able to do it fluidly without interruption in safe walking conditions.

The map below highlights linkages in the sidewalk network and the images show current sidewalk conditions in need of repair.



RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Existing/Proposed

— Sidewalk



Sidewalk Repair example



Sidewalk Repair example



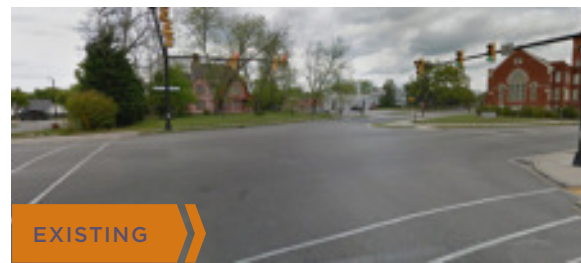
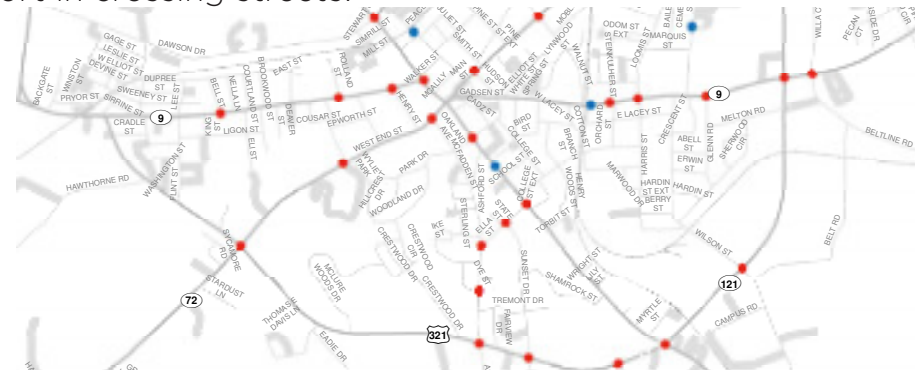
Intersections

Intersection improvements such as; high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian count-down crossing signals, and pedestrian warning signs allow pedestrians to safely cross the street.

Intersections are the points of high interaction between people and cars and need to be improved to allow safe transport for all parties. Currently there are many mid-block crosswalks that could simply be updated to high-visibility to allow pedestrians more comfort in crossing streets.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvements

- Street Intersection
- midblock crossing



Main St./ York St./Saluda St./ Hudson St. Intersection Proposed Improvements

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Locations



Pinckney St. at the intersections of Bell St., Mill St., Henry St., Center St.

West End St. at the intersections of Dewey St., Oakland Ave.

Columbia St. at the intersections of Church St., Ella St.

Lancaster Hwy. at the intersections of Steinkulher St., Loomis St., Glenn Rd., Willa Ct.

J.A. Cochran Bypass at the intersections of West End St., Ashford St., Sunset Dr., Chester Senior High Dr., Columbia St., Wilson St., Lancaster Hwy.,



Railroad Underpass

Where Pine St. turns into Jewel St. a railroad underpass crosses over the road cutting off the existing sidewalk infrastructure. There are many railroad underpasses throughout town and creating a connected pedestrian pathway underneath them will create a strong, walkable community.

In the example of Pine Street, continuing the sidewalk connection is key in allowing nearby residences access to Chester's main street. It also sets an example of how other underpasses can be treated. Often times utilities and culverts are in the way of continuing the sidewalk, but an engineering consultant could aid in offering solutions as to where a sidewalk can be located such as nudging it off the road and/or slightly elevating it.

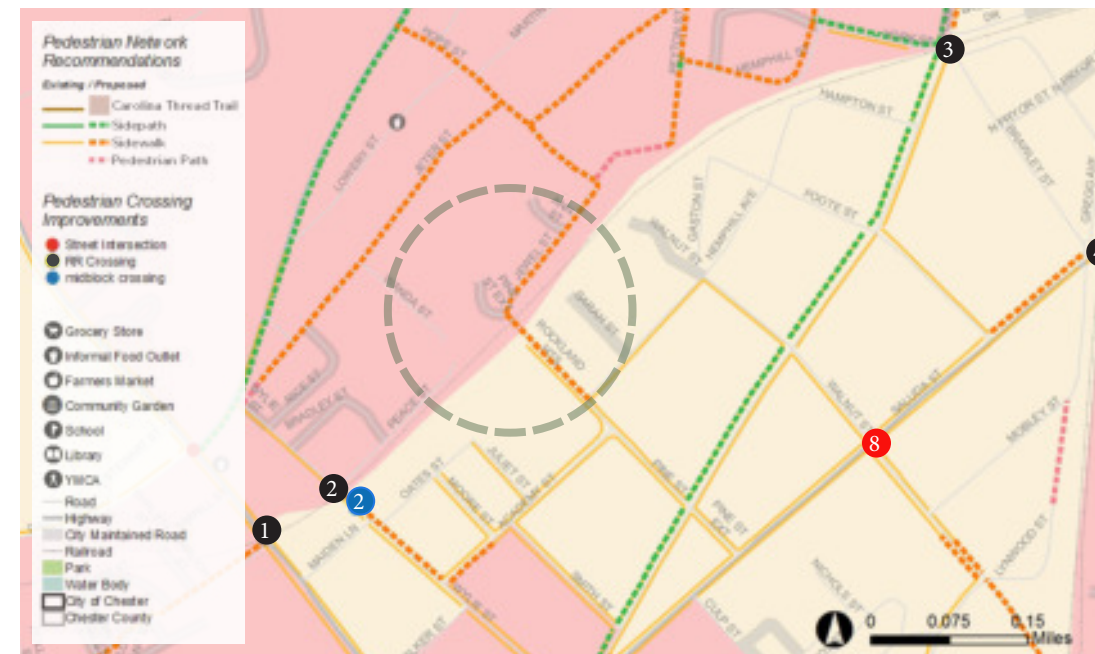
RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

- + Continue existing sidewalk
- + Pedestrian crosswalk sidewalk
- + Railroad Underpass



Jewel St. Railroad Underpass

** Proposed plans are preliminary and must go through proper engineering consultation, design, and review before implementation*



Jewel St. Railroad Underpass

At A Glance



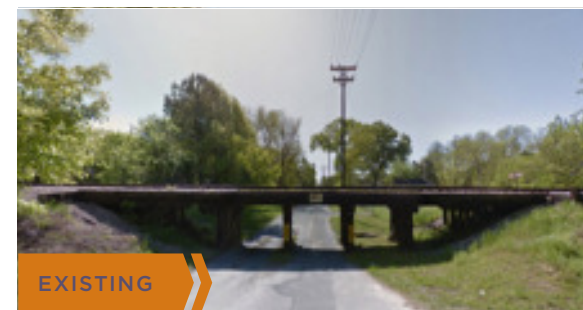
- **Project Mileage:** 0.51 miles
- **Population:** 1,430
- **Destinations:**

Magnolia Inn Bed and Breakfast

York Technical College

Chester Transportation Museum

Chester County Fairgrounds/ Sports Complex



EXISTING



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Jewel St. Railroad Underpass



V.

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The conventional wisdom used to be that creating a strong economy came first, and that increased population and a higher quality of life would follow. The converse now seems more likely: creating a higher quality of life is the first step to attracting residents and jobs.

- Jeff Speck
Author of Walkable City

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the recommended programs and policies that will complement the pedestrian network improvements recommended in the previous chapter.

As with the network recommendations, these programs and policy recommendations are based on public input collected between January and March 2016, as well as best practices from similar communities throughout the region, state, and nation.

The project team presented **draft program and policy recommendations to the stakeholder committee, and subsequently to the community via interactive posters and a presentation** at a public input meeting. Following the stakeholder committee meeting and public input meeting, program and policy recommendations were further refined and finalized.

This chapter includes:

- Program recommendations
- Programs toolkit

Currently, recommendations include:

- **Priority Program Recommendations**

Summarizes four priority programs topics for implementation with specific program ideas under each topic. Feedback from the Stakeholder meeting and Public Input meeting will determine the final list of program recommendations. Program recommendations include detailed cut sheets with information on community benefits, estimated cost, funding mechanisms, timeline, and program champions that will help carry a program through to implementation.

- **Policy Recommendations**

summarizes existing local and state policies related to pedestrian facilities, land use and urban design, and open-use agreements. Policy recommendations are specifically tailored to address needs of Chester.

Programs can leverage Chester's creativity, existing resources, leadership, and community spirit to build interest in walking. Program recommendations can be implemented quickly and with minimal investment. Additionally, programs provide a clear direction for the Walk Chester Stakeholder Group to generate immediate progress and short-term goals.

Successful programmatic efforts are flexible and can demonstrate sustainable long-term infrastructure improvements. Programs can often provide an opportunity to develop partnerships with other organizations that may have similar goals.

EXISTING & POTENTIAL PARTNERS

WALK CHESTER TEAM

The WalkChester project team included members from throughout the community and from various levels of government agencies. Several team members from organizations like those listed below are already working to improve pedestrian safety and health in Chester.

EAT SMART MOVE MORE, SC

Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMM SC) is a statewide coalition that offers resources about healthy lifestyles and advocacy for active living to local groups. In particular, the “Options for Action” toolkit offered by the organization is a best practices guide for community campaigns that promote bicycling, walking, and access to healthy foods.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Program provides a guide of safety tips for bicyclists and pedestrians, as well as state route maps and links to a number of pedestrian and bike awareness programs on their website. SCDOT additionally houses the state’s Safe Routes to School program. Regional Safe Routes to School offices serve the role of “resource center” and collaborator for communities advancing Safe Routes to School initiatives.

SAFE KIDS PROGRAMS

Safe Kids Chester County is led by Office of the District Attorney, Chester County, which provides dedicated and caring staff, operation support and other resources to assist in achieving our common goal: keeping your kids safe. Based on the needs of the community, this coalition implements evidence-based programs, such as car-seat checkups, safety workshops

and sports clinics, that help parents and caregivers prevent childhood injuries.

CAROLINA THREAD TRAILS

The Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) is a regional network of greenways, trails, and blueways that connects a 15-county area that spans both North and South Carolina. With the Catawba Lands Conservancy and the Foundation For The Carolinas, the CTT offers local communities access to funding through a grants program and other public and private funding sources. It also creates trail building capacity through education and technical assistance.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

South Carolina’s Department of Health & Environmental Control is lead agency for this pedestrian planning effort, which is part of a larger initiative, Prevention and Health Across Systems and Environments (PHASE), to improve the physical activity and chronic disease profile of South Carolina’s residents. Continuing to partner with DHEC, and tapping into other program opportunities will be vital to continuing to increase opportunities for incorporating physical activity and healthy eating habits into the lives of Chester residents.

ORGANIC HELPERS

The Organic Helpers are a local grassroots community organization, whose vision is “to create a food system where all future generations experience and value fresh, local, and organic fruits, vegetables, and meats.” Their involvement in the community and this planning effort, and their commitment to social change on many fronts, make them a powerful partner in Chester’s efforts to become more walkable.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following priority recommendations were developed after extensive community input during a technical training workshop on program development. During this training, residents and city staff brainstormed and developed ideas and action plans for three programs that address priority needs related to pedestrian safety and access, as well as community development and the development of a "walking culture" in Chester.

Chester residents and stakeholders participate in a Program Development training in June, 2016





Safe Routes to School

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

For high school students, meeting at a common place and walking in groups can encourage safety in numbers and following safe routes. Since middle and elementary schools are not within walking distance in Chester, the focus can be around safe walking trips to the bus stop with adult supervision.

With limited ability to walk to school in Chester, walking at school can offer another chance to increase how much they walk during school hours and teaches the benefits of an active lifestyle. Children are encouraged through competitions, prizes, goal setting, and other activities.

Issues addressed

- + Pedestrian safety concerns, safety in numbers
- + Improved health outcomes for youth
- + Community awareness



Crossing Guard Training

A Crossing Guard Training Program can be implemented to train local residents and/or police officers to assist students while crossing J. A. Cochran Bypass.

Estimated Cost >> \$\$

High-Visibiliy Crossing Signal

The installagion of a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the crosswalk to Chester High School will also increase safety. RRFBs are pedestrian activated flashing signals that warn drivers of pedestrians crossing.

Estimated Cost >> \$\$



HOW TO:

Implementation Strategy

Form a SRTS Committee

Work with the Chester Police Department to select appropriate Training Program. Coordinate with School Resource Officer program.

Work with SCDOT, School District to get RRFB approved & installed

Conduct count of walkers to high school

Potential Partners

Chester Co. School District

Eat Smart Move More Chester Co.

Organic Helpers

Chester Police Department

Resources

Safe Routes to School Resource Center



Walk This Way Chester

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Get to know your neighbors and get to know your community by walking in your community and to events in the area. Organize groups to follow the “Walking Tour of Historic Chester, SC”, or another walking route around the city (see Wayfinding Signage, at right). Challenge your neighbor, co-worker, or family to a pedometer challenge, scavenger hunt walking tour, or walkathon to encourage increased rates of physical activity.

Holding an “Open Streets” event is also a popular way that entails closing a road (or several) to automobile traffic, and allowing pedestrians, bicyclists, and all other non-motorized forms of transport to have free reign on the streets as a way of reclaiming streets for the people, not just cars.

Issues addressed

- + **Demystifies walking as a viable form of getting places**
- + **Creates opportunities for community engagement**



Wayfinding Signage

Creating a temporary wayfinding signage system can be a cost-effective and fast way to promote walking in Chester. By clearly marking walking routes and loops with signs that specify distances and times to walk to key destinations helps people say “Yes!” to walking. With the help of high school art students and teachers to design the signs, this can be a great way to engage the community and build a culture around walking.

Estimated Cost

\$



Tactical Wayfinding Signage, Atlanta, GA

HOW TO:

Implementation Strategy

Identify approximately 12 key destinations (preliminary suggestions include: Farmers Market, YMCA, Transportation Museum, Chester Co. Historical Museum, Arts Council of Chester Co.

Partner with school district to explore partnership with Art Department.

Map out locations, distances, times.

Seek donations for signage production.

Potential Partners

Chester Co. Health Dept.

Chester Co. Library

YMCA, Relay for Life

Historical Society, Arts Council

Resources

WalkYourCity.org

OpenStreetsProject.org



Meet Me at the Market

The Chester Farmers Market is an easily accessible, centrally located resource of healthy food options for community residents. Building on this resource to make it a gathering place for social activity, **a tactical urbanism campaign can be used to create spaces where people can gather.** Pairing that with promotional efforts to encourage walking to the market, and events that take place at the market, such as walking tours, healthy cooking classes, or yoga, **will help support a healthy lifestyle while contributing to a growing sense of community.**

Issues addressed

- + Brings energy and positive use to derelict or under-utilized spaces
- + Improves health outcomes for Chester's younger residents
- + Brings all of Chester together around a fun community project
- + Creates opportunities for beautification



Tactical Urbanism

Tactical Urbanism is a **low-cost, short-term** means of changing the built environment on a small scale to create more livable places. Project can successfully garner public support and political buy-in for long-term project implementation. Examples include: creating pop-up shops/cafes, repurposing parking spaces as parks, installing benches/chairs/swings to create places to rest and gather, putting up a community chalkboard/chessboard.

Estimated Cost

\$



HOW TO:

Implementation Strategy

Identify a location and the appropriate type of project that will add to the space's appeal and livability.

Coordinate with city staff for proper permitting or permission.

Seek donors for materials.

Form a team of "Tacticians" who will build and install the project.

Potential Partners

Chester Farmers Market

Scout Troops

Chester Rotary Club

Organic Helpers

Resources

Next Generation of New Urbanists' *Tactical Urbanism* report

VI STEPS FOR MOVING FORWARD



Few actions can do more to make urban areas safer, healthier, prettier, and more environmentally balanced than setting aside corridors or trails for walking, biking, wildlife watching, and just plain breaking up the monotony of cars and concrete.

- James Snyder
Publisher, Environment Today

Now that priority programs and projects have been identified, what are our next steps?

The implementation of the Walk Chester Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations will require a comprehensive approach that includes multiple sources of funding, partnerships, design, construction, and management. It will also require the dedication of town staff and a commitment to the vision established by the steering committee and this plan.

As best practices for pedestrian facility design is a rapidly-evolving field, the recommendations in this plan should be re-evaluated at least every five years to ensure that these still constitute best-practices and still reflect Chester's long-term vision for an active, walkable community.

Achieving the vision that is defined within this plan requires a stable and recurring source of funding. Communities across the country that have successfully implemented pedestrian programs have relied on multiple funding sources to achieve their goals. No single source of funding will meet the recommendations identified in this plan. Stakeholders will need to work cooperatively across a range of private sector, municipality, state, and federal partners to generate funds sufficient to implement this network. A descriptive list of potential funding sources can be found in the appendix.

The resources provided herein — the pedestrian safety analysis, the access to healthy foods assessment, program and infrastructure recommendations, coupled with the following appendices resources — can serve as a daily reference material for the City of Chester and its implementing partners.

The City of Chester should strive to follow the priority recommendations, as each program, project, and policy was selected based on public input, need, and potential impact. However, the town should also look for opportunities to coordinate pedestrian enhancements with regularly-programmed maintenance activities, new developments, and large roadway construction projects, regardless of whether enhancements occur on priority corridors or intersections.



The following steps provide direction to ensure the Chester Pedestrian Plan serves as a valuable and accessible resource for the community.

1

CONTINUE THE STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE

A team effort is required to move the plan forward. The stakeholder committee process includes citizens and community leaders that can partner to make programs and projects a reality. Capitalize on this momentum, and formalize the committee as a Chester Walkability Commission that meets quarterly, at a minimum.

2

PROGRAM AND FUND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

To kickstart the funding conversation, partner with the Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) to identify eligible projects. The funding analysis included in this plan (see, appendix) provides a resource for matching grants with programs and projects. Additionally, capitalize on this plan itself to garner regional, state, and federal funding.

3

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT ONE PROGRAM AT A TIME

Programs have a big impact on walkability and are easy to accomplish without a major investment. A variety of community partners can assist by funding efforts or volunteering their time. Convene "Program Champions" as part a steering committee meeting to develop a list of communications strategies to promote each program and attract volunteers. Make a goal to implement each program within six months of announcing the program.



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IV. APPENDIX

There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.

- Jane Jacobs

CITY OF CHESTER POLICY REVIEW

A review of the City of Chester's Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance was conducted with the object of providing policy recommendations that will support plans to make Chester a more walkable community. In addition, the ordinances were reviewed to identify increased opportunities for safe and convenient pedestrian access to healthy foods.

Chester Municipal Code

In general, the Chester Municipal Code can accommodate new and improved pedestrian infrastructure as currently written. There are a few areas that warrant discussion:

Prohibition of Bicycling and Skating on Sidewalks

Walkable communities frequently incorporate Complete Streets policy design and concepts. A "complete street" is designed to provide safe, equitable, and efficient access to all forms of transportation including pedestrian, bicyclist, public transit, and automobile. Accommodation for wheelchairs, skate boards/roller skates, segues, etc., is also considered. While pedestrians sharing narrow sidewalks with bicyclists and skaters may be a concern, the safety of bicyclists and skaters on automobile-dominated roadways is also a concern. Regulations incorporating Complete Streets concepts consider and accommodate all modes of transportation.

Prohibition of the Sale of Fruits and Produce

The Code prohibits the sale of fruits and produce on public streets, sidewalks, parking lots, or other public property in the city except at designated farmers markets. Promoting the availability of fresh produce is both a health benefit to the citizen/consumer and a support to local farms. Alternatives to this regulation can include

expansion of the Chester Farmers and Artisans' Market operations, the addition of more farmers market locations, and regulations for the allowance of produce vendors.

Development Standards

We recommend to amend the Municipal Code to require the construction of sidewalks and/or multi-use paths for new residential and commercial developments, or during residential and commercial revitalization and redevelopment projects.

Chester Zoning Ordinance

The following areas of the Chester Zoning Ordinance should be reviewed with the objective of creating a more pedestrian-friendly community:

Neighborhood Commercial Uses

Small-scale commercial uses suitable for Neighborhood Commercial (NC) zoning are businesses or offices that are manned during business hours, do not require large-scale deliveries, and do not produce excessive levels of light or noise. Examples include shops, cafes, bakeries, and other types of service businesses. Integration of such service-oriented businesses into residential zoning districts will give community members the option of walking rather than depending on an automobile, and can result in reduced automobile traffic on the city's road system. The promotion of small-scale neighborhood commercial establishments, such as corner grocery stores easily accessed by walking or biking, can also help increase access to healthy foods where otherwise an (possibly unavailable) automobile trip to a supermarket would be required. Such small-scale commercial businesses also generate light daytime activity in neighborhoods, which can help to reduce crime during the hours when many

homeowners are typically at work. Zoning regulations should allow small NC establishments not only in nearby residential areas, but adjacent to, and perhaps within, residential neighborhoods/developments. The use of such establishments should be expanded to other zoning districts.

Parking

Chester parking regulations typify parking standards prevalently in use today. These regulations were designed to accommodate the maximum number of automobiles needed for each zoning district use category. Little consideration is given for shared parking, carpooling or alternative methods of travel, shift changes, number of employees, or the unique needs of individual businesses or industries. The result is expansive parking lots which increase impervious surfaces, make walking prohibitive, increase ambient temperatures, contribute to stormwater run-off, and are often under-utilized. Valuable real estate can be more wisely utilized.

On-street parking integrated into Complete Streets design can greatly improve pedestrian and bicycle crossings at intersections and serve as a buffer between traffic and bike lanes and sidewalks. On-street parking also encourages visitors to commercial districts to park once and walk, greatly increasing the exposure of business storefronts to potential shoppers.

General Policy Recommendations

Complete Streets

For several decades, the prime consideration in road design and construction has been the automobile. This has led to a road system that is unsafe, if not unusable, for walking and cycling and is automobile- dependent for transportation to work, food, shops, and any other destinations. Retail and commercial development is often accessible

only by automobile along roads that have the heaviest traffic. Potential shoppers are left with fewer choices but to fill up the tank and drive. Complete Streets is a different way to think about designing, building, and using our streets. Instead of being designed for a single user -the automobile- Complete Streets are designed to accommodate all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit, and the automobile. Complete Streets make for livable, walkable, healthy communities. Consider adopting a Complete Streets policy for streets owned by the City of Chester. Municipal code development standards can require Complete Streets design considerations for all new roads, road maintenance, and improvement construction projects. The S.C. Complete Streets Toolkit may be found at: <http://www.pccsc.net/pdfs/PCC%20Toolbook%20FINAL.pdf>

The South Carolina Health + Planning Toolkit

The SC Health + Planning Toolkit was developed for use by S.C. Counties in incorporating Health Planning principles into their comprehensive plans. Health Planning practices and policies concern Healthy Eating (production, process, distribution, access, and consumption of foods that limit the risk of diet-related chronic disease) and Active Living (a way of life that integrates physical activity, such as walking and biking, into daily routines). Although the Toolkit was developed for counties, it may also be used for municipal comprehensive planning as well as master planning, bicycle/pedestrian/greenway planning, food systems planning, etc. The Toolkit consists of 67 best practices in two program areas:

1. Healthy Eating - Food production, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption

Rural, urban, and private agriculture

- Food processing
- Grocery stores
- Farmers markets

- Restaurants

2. Active Living

- Bicycle/pedestrian connectivity
- Land use and transportation
- Support facilities, policies, and programs

Implementation strategies and program evaluation tools are given for each program area. We recommend that the City of Chester utilize the Toolkit when updating the Chester comprehensive plan and other planning efforts. The SC Health + Planning Toolkit can be found at this link:

<http://eatsmartmovemoresc.org/pdf/SCHealthyToolkit.pdf>

Walk Friendly Communities

“Walk Friendly Communities is a national recognition program developed to encourage towns and cities across the U.S. to establish or recommit to a high priority for supporting safer walking environments. The WFC program will recognize communities that are working to improve a wide range of conditions related to walking, including safety, mobility, access, and comfort.” – Walk Friendly Communities website: <http://www.walkfriendly.org/>

CITY OF CHESTER SPECIFIC REGULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated, a review of the City of Chester Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance was conducted with the objectives of providing policy recommendations to support plans to make Chester a more walkable community. In addition, the ordinances were reviewed to identify opportunities to increase safe and convenient pedestrian access to healthy foods. The following recommendations can provide the regulatory framework for implementing these policies.

Municipal Code

Chapter 28 – Streets, Sidewalks, and other Public Property

Sec. 28-5. - Fruit and produce sales on public streets, parking lots, and other public property.

It shall be unlawful for any person to sell fruit or produce on the public streets, sidewalks, parking lots or other public property in the city except at farmers markets designated by the city and in accordance with the rules, regulations, and guidelines promulgated by the city council.

OBJECTIVE

Promoting the availability of fresh produce for the health benefit of the citizen/consumer and to support local farms.

ALTERNATIVES

- Expand farmers market operations. Currently Chester Farmers and Artisans' Market is open year round, but only on Saturdays from 8:00 – 2:00. Consideration can also be given to additional farmers market locations.
- Seasonal roadside produce stands – Seasonal roadside produce stands can be defined as: any trailer, tent, non-operable motor vehicle, or other facility or structure, not erected on a foundation that is erected and operated for the sale or solicitation of seasonal sale of agricultural products. Such facilities are considered “agricultural facilities,” and as

such are governed under the SC Right to Farm Act, Nuisance Suites Related to Agricultural Operations, SC 46-45-10 through 80, and SCDHEC regulations adopted pursuant to the Act. Basically, this means local jurisdictions, through zoning regulations, may allow or disallow such facilities; but if allowed, the local jurisdiction cannot set or enforce any other regulations such as setbacks, appearance, hours of operations, etc. Therefore, seasonal roadside produce stands may not be a viable option for urban locations.

- Produce vendors – A vendor can be broadly defined as: “any person who sells or solicits sales of food, drink, or other merchandise from a self-contained pushcart, bicycle cart, or other cart, operable motor vehicle, wagon, sled, or carriage propelled by human, animal, or mechanical power.” If desired, vendor regulations could be included in Chapter 22: Peddlers, Solicitors, and Transient Merchants. Vendor regulations could therein meet the objectives of promoting the availability of fresh produce for the health benefit of the citizen of Chester, supporting local farms, and also address any concerns the City may have, such as:
 - o Appearance
 - o Location
 - o Competition with farmers markets

Sec. 28-18. - Skating on streets.

It shall be unlawful for any person to skate on any roller skates or similar device on any of the streets of the city.

Sec. 28-19. - Skating on sidewalks.

It shall be unlawful for any person more than ten years of age to engage in roller skating, skateboarding, or activity using similar devices, on any of the sidewalks within the city; provided that no person, regardless of age, shall skate on any of the sidewalks embraced in the core commercial

zoning district.

These two regulations effectively prohibit the use of skating in the city. Some consider skating a mode of pedestrian transportation. Skating is a healthy physical activity and prohibition of skating does not conform to the principles of Complete Streets. Consider alternate regulations, such as: “Skating in the downtown district is allowed only in designated facilities (multi-use paths, bike lanes, etc.) when provided.” Similar language can be written for [section 28-20](#) concerning bicycles.

Development standards – sidewalks and multi-purpose paths

Standards for new development, revitalization, and redevelopment projects to promote walkability can be added to the Municipal Code:

Design standards for both new and revitalized residential developments should provide for bicycle and pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes that will facilitate safe and enjoyable walking or biking commutes to these neighborhood commercial establishments, as well as encourage physical activity. Where sidewalks are not provided, multi-purpose paths, trails, and/or greenways designed to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-automotive traffic shall be provided in all residential and commercial developments. The system of sidewalks, paths, trails, greenways, or a combination thereof shall be designed such that every lot in the development or building in the commercial development has access to the system. Connectivity of the system to nearby schools, businesses, institutions, and other facilities shall be provided as applicable and practicable. Where not currently applicable, dedication of right of way shall be given for the installation of sidewalks, paths, trails, greenways, or a combination thereof, for connectivity to future nearby schools, businesses, institutions, and other facilities.

These standards should apply to residential subdivisions, mobile home parks, Planned Development Districts, and commercial developments.

Zoning Ordinance

Division 3 Sec. 2-603.2. Neighborhood Commercial District purposes

NC Neighborhood Commercial District. This district is intended for commercial and service uses oriented primarily to serving the needs of persons who live or work in adjacent and nearby areas. R-8 residential uses are permitted. Commercial uses permitted are intended to be relatively small in size and service area.

Small-scale commercial uses suitable for NC zoning are businesses or offices that are manned during business hours, do not require large-scale deliveries, and do not produce excessive levels of light or noise. Examples include shops, cafes, bakeries, and other types of service businesses. Integration of such service oriented businesses can provide community members the option of walking rather than depending on an automobile, and can result in reduced automobile traffic on the City’s road system. Such small-scale commercial businesses also generate light daytime activity in neighborhoods, which can help to reduce crime during the hours when many homeowners are typically at work.

[Division 5] Sec. 2-605.12. - NC Neighborhood Commercial District Uses.

NC PERMITTED USES	SIC CODE	SIC DESCRIPTION	PARKING SPACES REQUIRED
a) Retail business - sale of merchandise on premises including but not limited to: 1) drug store or pharmacy; 2) small convenient-type grocery food store; small grocery store 3) package liquor store; 4) florist shop; 5) antique store; 6) book, magazine, newspaper shop; bakery.	5912 5411 5921 5992 5932 5942, 5994 5461	Drug store. Convenience food store, grocery store, Liquor, packaged-retail. Florist. Antiques, used goods. Book store; newsstand. Retail bakery.	One (1) for each 200 square feet of retail floor space

[Division 5] Sec. 2-605.14. - NCH Neighborhood commercial historic district uses.

Recommend allowing small grocery stores and eating establishments.

FARMERS MARKETS

We recommend specifically adding farmers markets as a permitted, conditional, or special exception use in NC, CC, HC, LI, BI, and PB zoning districts.

[Division 6 D Parking] Sec. 2-606.9. - Off-street parking.

GENERAL

We recommend Chester to revisit parking standards which encourage or require overly large and under-used parking lots. Such standards discourage bicycle and pedestrian access, consume valuable space, and contribute to storm water runoff.

Consider maximum parking standards as opposed to, or in addition to, minimum parking requirements. An easy to implement maximum parking plan could be:

Maximum Parking Standards

- Parking lots of twenty-one (21) to fifty (50) spaces may not have more than 150% of the number of spaces required by Division 5 District Regulations off street parking requirements
- Parking lots of fifty-one (51) spaces or more may not have more than 125% of the number of parking spaces required by

Division 5 District Regulations off street parking requirements

Other parking regulations to consider:

- Park and ride facilities
- Include provisions for bicycle parking
- Off-street parking plans should include safe and clearly-defined lanes for pedestrian passage. And, where applicable, a pedestrian circulation pattern that allows customers to park once and visit several locations on foot.
- Parking lot landscape regulations provide needed shade in hot parking lots, aid in storm water run-off, and provide a more pleasant, safe, and welcoming experience for pedestrians passing through and/or utilizing the parking facility.

Sec. 2-606.9. - Off-street parking

~~c. Combined parking areas serving two or more principal uses shall contain spaces equal in number to the total of spaces required for all principal uses served. (Ord. No. 23, § 2-606.9, 5-12-1997)~~

- In determining the parking requirements for multiple occupancy sites such as shopping centers, strips, or malls, the intent shall be to provide enough on-site parking to accommodate the majority of traffic

generated by the range of uses which might locate at the site over time. Therefore, the required parking numbers shall correspond to broad use categories as allowed in the respective zoning district, not specific uses. The total minimum number of required parking spaces shall be determined by the codes administrator. A change of tenants and/or use of a unit within an existing multiple occupancy site shall not require an alteration in parking requirements.

- Shared Parking Plan for multiple occupancy sites - The applicant shall submit sufficient data to indicate the principal operating hours of the uses. If the data supports that the peak parking demands of the various uses will not overlap such that sufficient parking can be available during all hours of operation, the codes administrator shall determine the shared parking allowance, if any.

POTENTIAL HEALTH-ORIENTED FUNDING SOURCES

Funder	Grant Name	Funding Description	Funding Amount	Open Date	Close Date	Funding Cycle	Notes
Aetna	Cultivating Healthy Communities	"The Cultivating Healthy Communities program will support projects that benefit underserved, low-income, and minority communities. We are interested in projects that address the social determinants of health and participants' physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being. "	up to \$100,000	20-Mar-16	April 15, 2016 (Stage 1)	N/A	Stage 1 application is due April 15 and if invited stage 2 application is due June 10
W.K. Kellogg Foundation		<p>"Focus areas include: Educated Kids, Healthy Kids, Secure Families, Community and Civic Engagement, Racial Equity. We work alongside communities – especially those facing health inequities – to support community-based approaches in four key areas: maternal and child health, oral health, breastfeeding (breast milk as the optimal first food), and continued access to good food and active living throughout a child's early development.</p> <p>In our national grantmaking and investments in priority places, WKKF supports efforts to improve the health of mothers and families; to increase breastfeeding rates; to provide innovative, community-based oral health care and to transform food systems so children and families have healthier foods in child care settings, in schools and in their communities."</p>	high: \$8,000,000; low: \$600			<p>The Kellogg Foundation does not have any submission deadlines. Grant applications are accepted throughout the year and are reviewed at our headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan, or in our regional office in Mexico (for submissions focused within their region).</p>	<p>"Once we receive your completed online application, an automated response, which includes your WKKF reference number, will be sent to you acknowledging its receipt. Our goal is to review your application and email our initial response to you within 45 days. Your grant may be declined or it may be selected for further development.</p> <p>As part of review process you may be asked to submit your organization's financial reports and/or IRS Form 990. While this information may be required, it is not intended to be the overall determining factor for any funding. You will not be asked to provide any financial reports or detailed budget information during this initial submission. We will only request this information later if needed as part of the proposal development."</p>
SunTrust Foundation		The foundation supports programs designed to help generations achieve their full potential; promote job growth and financial education that leads to stability; help people get access to the care they need to live healthier lives; and advance the arts and culture in the communities.					Will need to contact someone with SunTrust; the website gives minimal information.

Funder	Grant Name	Funding Description	Funding Amount	Open Date	Close Date	Funding Cycle	Notes
Michael and Susan Dell Foundation		"Childhood Health in the US The program is working to reverse the trend of children suffering from obesity and early onset of Type 2 diabetes through its childhood obesity prevention and wellness programs that promote healthy eating behaviors, and better access to both healthy foods and safe environments for exercise. Other U.S. health initiatives focus on: 1) Applied pediatric research into the origins of chronic diseases that are a leading cause of premature death; 2) Basic health services for under- and uninsured children; and 3) Childhood safety for neglected and abused children."	high: \$1,800,000; low: \$5,000			Appears to be year around	"Important: Please be prepared to furnish us with contact and financial information (including total revenue and fiscal operating expenses) for your organization, as well as a detailed description of the project for which you are seeking support. To complete the application, you will also need: - amount you are requesting - project budget - the number of children your project will reach - problem statement (500 character limit) - project description (1500 character limit) - brief description of how the requested funding will be used (500 character limit) - brief description of proposed success metrics (500 character limit)" http://www.msdf.org/assets/grant-planning-worksheet-2-7-2008.pdf
Anthem Foundation	Healthy Generations Program	The foundation supports programs designed to create a healthier generation of Americans. Special emphasis is directed toward healthy hearts, including preventative initiatives that minimize controllable cardiovascular diseases and strokes, smoking, obesity, hypertension, and stressful and sedentary lifestyles; healthy cancer prevention, including lifesaving cancer-prevention and early-detection; healthy maternal practices, including initiatives that encourage first trimester prenatal care and help at-risk mothers commit to reduce the numbers of low birth-weight babies; healthy diabetes prevention, including programs that stem the spread of diabetes through lifestyle changes and physical activity; and healthy active lifestyles, including initiatives that raise awareness, education, and encourage new behaviors.			"Cycle One 2016: Applications are due no later than Friday, February 19, 2016. Cycle Two 2016: Applications are due no later than Friday, August 19, 2016." "	Applications are reviewed twice a year.	"You must submit your grant proposal online; no exceptions will be made. All applicants will be notified of the Foundation's receipt of grant proposals via e-mail. Typically, our review process lasts four to six months. Please do not call the Foundation for status updates. Due to the high volume of requests we receive, we cannot respond to such phone calls. CONTACT US anthem.foundation@anthem.com"

Funder	Grant Name	Funding Description	Funding Amount	Open Date	Close Date	Funding Cycle	Notes
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org)	Culture of Health	<p>"Health Systems Catalyzing fundamental changes in health and health care systems to achieve measurably better outcomes for all.</p> <p>Healthy Kids, Healthy Weight Enabling all children to attain their optimal physical, social and emotional well-being, including growing up at a healthy weight.</p> <p>Healthy Communities Creating the conditions that allow communities and their residents to reach their greatest health potential.</p> <p>Health Leadership Engaging a diverse array of leaders in all sectors with the vision, experience, and drive to help build a Culture of Health."</p>	Varies by grant program	varies by grant program		Check website for Call for Proposals	
Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina Foundation		<p><i>Access to Care:</i> Support adult safety net providers to provide primary physical and mental health care. Implement evidence-based or innovative delivery models to improve health</p> <p><i>Improving Health and Health Care Quality and Value:</i> Support quality improvement projects that yield cost and resource efficiencies through innovative approaches that develop solutions in the health care delivery system</p> <p><i>Investing in SC Children:</i> Improve health through innovative collaborations. Support projects that target childhood obesity risk factors. Increase access to mental health services. Support easily accessible health care services to meet the health care needs of at-risk children and adolescents</p> <p><i>Research/Special Projects:</i> Projects to inform, influence and support our investment strategies and/or our mission. These projects may fall outside of an established area of focus, yet would generate value-added information and data relevant to our mission and vision.</p>				Fall Cycle begins July 1, 2016	<p>"Apply for a Grant We have developed a two-phase approach to make the review process more effective and efficient. This approach lets us determine which programs are potentially the best matches for our investment strategies and preferred areas of focus. If you are interested in receiving funding from the Foundation, your first step is to submit the two-page Letter of Intent form. We will review it carefully. If we decide your organization is a good match, you will be able to complete the second phase. We will invite you to submit a full application."</p>



GATHER
STRATEGY + ENGAGEMENT

Chester Walks Focus Group Report

Prepared for:

Alta Planning + Design

Prepared by:

Gather Consulting

January 29, 2016

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OVERVIEW

Background and Objectives

- Alta Planning + Design contracted with Gather Consulting to conduct focus groups with residents of the City of Chester in January 2016.
- Specific objectives of the focus groups were to do the following:
 - Identify residents opinions of walkability in Chester,
 - Explore residents perceptions of pedestrian safety issues,
 - Seek input from residents on priority pedestrian planning projects and destinations,
 - Seek residents input on the level of accessibility to active living and healthy eating in Chester.

Methodology

Three focus groups were conducted on Tuesday, Jan. 5 at 5:30 p.m. and Wednesday Jan. 6 at 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All three sessions were held in council chambers at Chester City Hall. A total of 15 community members participated in the three groups.

Focus group participants were chosen to prioritize the following criteria:

- Area residents,
- A diverse mix of residents who represent the city's demographics,

Limitations: The focus group methodology used for this study is qualitative in nature. The exact wording of each question and the discussion of each question area varied across groups. Also, the limited number of respondents involved in this type of research means the study should be regarded as exploratory in nature. Results should be used to develop directions rather than quantitatively precise or absolute measures.

KEY FINDINGS

Assets

Q 1: What assets already exist in Chester? How can the pedestrian master plan build upon or leverage current assets?

- The Chester Farmers and Artisans Market. Focus group members said the farmers' market is a popular, well-run community venue and meeting place. However, they said it is underutilized and few people walk to it even though the sidewalks in the area are in good condition. Focus group participants said the city should invest in educating the public about this important asset.
- Heritage Park. In 2014, county residents voted to continue a one-cent sales tax. Approximately \$45,000 of the revenue will go to the city to upgrade the backlot area of downtown. The area will be branded as Heritage Park and serve to connect the farmers' market and the Cestrian Square business district – which includes one of the only areas in the city with a concentration of stores and offices. The city is planning to create a walkable district by adding crosswalks, lighting, walking paths, and other infrastructure to the area. Focus group participants said they hope the pedestrian master plan incorporates and builds upon these planned improvements.
- The Downtown Historic District. Chester's nationally registered historic downtown district comprises numerous churches, homes, and other buildings. Walking tour brochures are available in boxes throughout town. Focus group members said they would like to see the pedestrian plan used to highlight Chester's rich history.
- The Carolina Thread Trail. Both the city and county of Chester include portions of the Carolina Thread trail, a 15-county network of greenways and trails in North and South Carolina. Focus groups participants described the local sections of the trail as "hidden gems," and "under-used." Some participants said they think the trail needs to be maintained better, but they emphasized that it is "a great resource that few people are using."
- Downtown Chester – Most of Chester's downtown business district is walkable, has good lighting, and has sidewalks that are in good condition. However, many of the neighborhoods adjacent to it are not. Focus group participants said improving pedestrian access between those neighborhoods and downtown should be a priority and would go a long way toward increasing the number of people who walk in the city.
- Grassroots Advocacy – Focus group members said that many Chester residents are passionate about community health and safety and actively

working to improve the city. For the past several years a group of Chester residents who are members of the group Organic Helpers have been advocating for safer routes for students walking to Chester High School. Last year, Organic Helpers collaborated with the Chester chapter of Eat Smart Move More to conduct a walkability study of the city. This past October when a 10-year-old boy was fatally killed by a vehicle while standing at his bus stop in the Brooklyn community, many community members held meetings and forums to discuss possible solutions.

Barriers

Q 2: What are the biggest barriers to walkability in Chester?

Focus group participants identified the following issues as the biggest barriers to walking in Chester:

- Absent sidewalks,
- Fear of crime and violence,
- Lack of streetlights,
- Lack of connectivity between popular locations.

Priorities

Q 3: Where are high needs or high priority streets, neighborhoods, or destinations for improved pedestrian access? Why are they priorities?

- Ashford Street – Focus group participants said Ashford Street in the Brooklyn neighborhood is a priority location for improvements because of drastic speed changes, inadequate lighting, lack of signage, and large numbers of children at play.
- Chester High School - Students who live in city neighborhoods that are within 1.5 miles of the high school must cross the busy J Cochran Bypass to get to and from the high school, which is in the county. Focus groups participants said that creating a protected crossing for students should be one of the top priorities of any pedestrian plan.
- Wylie Park – The city of Chester maintains this 48-acre recreation complex on West End Street. Focus group participants said the park facility is in great condition and provides a variety of options for individuals and families to walk, run, and play. They said they want to see efforts made to make the park more accessible by foot for a greater number of residents.
- Carolina Thread Trail – Focus group participants said they believe that more people will utilize the thread if it is maintained better.

- Memorial Park Pool – Many focus group participants suggested that the city extend and improve the sidewalks near the city pool.
- Streetlights: Focus group participants said that lighting is inadequate throughout the city. They suggested that lights be added or improved in the following areas: near all city parks, near Memorial Park Pool, on Reedy Street.

Other issues

- There are no grocery stores in walking distance to neighborhoods within the city. Focus group participants who did not have cars or who know people who do not have cars said they rely on the Dollar General store and convenience stores to buy food at times when they cannot get someone to drive them to the grocery store.
- Focus group participants said they believe that many Chester residents feel disconnected from each other and disengaged from efforts to improve the city. They said they hope that efforts to connect neighborhoods to social centers and community facilities would lead to residents who feel more connected to each other and invested in efforts to make Chester better.

APPENDIX A

At the end of each focus group session, participants were asked to share one word that described how they felt about the issues discussed during the meeting. Participants used the following words to describe their feelings:

Hopeful

Excited

Grateful

Change

Possible

Community

Informed

Interesting

Potential

Accessible

Growth

Unity

Challenging

APPENDIX B

The following are direct quote from focus group participants:

“I want it to matter. I want where I live to be a nice place.”

“If it’s not my idea, it’s not worth it.” (An opinion on how people feel about implementation in the community)

“I see value in enhancing the quality of life in Chester.”

“Nobody really cares about us.” (An opinion on how members of the Brooklyn community feel)

“I want my opinion to matter. Not [to] feel like a number, but a person.”

“Greenspaces...help the community get to know one another.”

“Seeing more people out walking changes the feel of the community...it gives a good sense that there *is* community.”

“Walking enhances community spirit.”

“I want to see results.”

“Overall we need to embrace walking as a culture

APPENDIX C

Participants: Focus Group 1 - Jan. 5, 5:30 p.m.

Participants	Affiliation
Bridget Trammel	Community Member, Ward 3
Guy Fitzgerald	Community Member, Ward 4
Jackie Heuermann	Community Member, Ward 1
Michael Hallsley	Community Member, Ward 3
Sharhonda James	Community Member, Ward 1
Bob Smith	Planning Commission Chair, Ward 1
Linda Smith	Community Member, Ward 1
Facilitators and Observers	Affiliation
Rochelle Williams	Gather Consulting
Josillia Johnson	Gather Consulting
Jennifer Baldwin	Alta Planning + Design
Heather Seagle	Alta Planning + Design
Elizabeth Gerndt	South Carolina DHEC

Participants: Focus Group 2 – Jan. 6, 10-11:30

Participants	Affiliation
LeTanya Williams	Community Member, Ward 3
DeeDee Hinton	Business Owner
Karen Nichols	Upper Midlands Rural Health Network
Kathy Brewer	Upper Midlands Rural Health Network
Penney Winslow	Farmers' Market Vendor
Nanette Austin	Downtown business owner

John Wells	Manager, Chester State Park
Facilitators and Observers	Affiliation
Rochelle Williams	Gather Consulting
Josillia Johnson	Gather Consulting
John Cock	Alta Planning + Design
Elizabeth Gerndt	South Carolina DHEC

Participants: Focus Group 3 – Jan. 6, 5:30-7:00

Participants	Affiliation
Dr. WT Holmes	Community Member, Ward 2
Debra Singleton	Community Member, Ward 4
Facilitators and Observers	Affiliation
Rochelle Williams	Gather Consulting
Josillia Johnson	Gather Consulting
Candra Riley	South Carolina DHEC
Robin Currence	Eat Smart Move More Chester



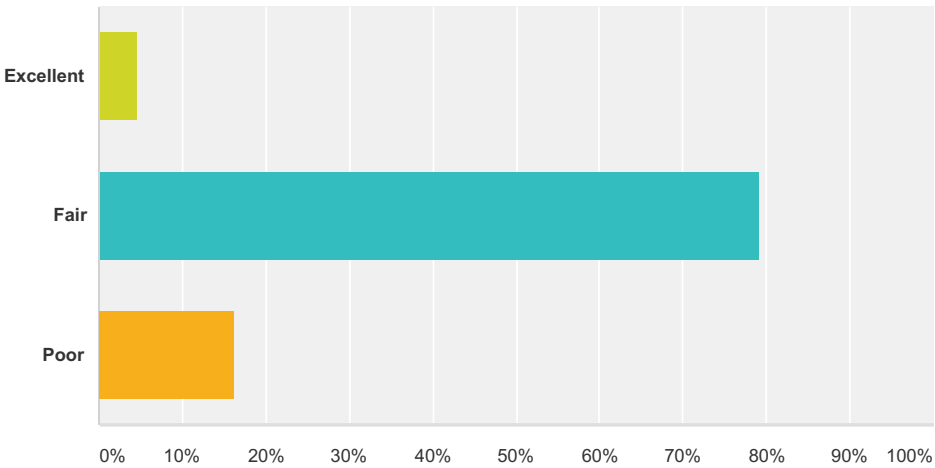
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WALK CHESTER SURVEY RESULTS

Walk Chester Plan

Q1 How do you rate walking conditions in Chester?

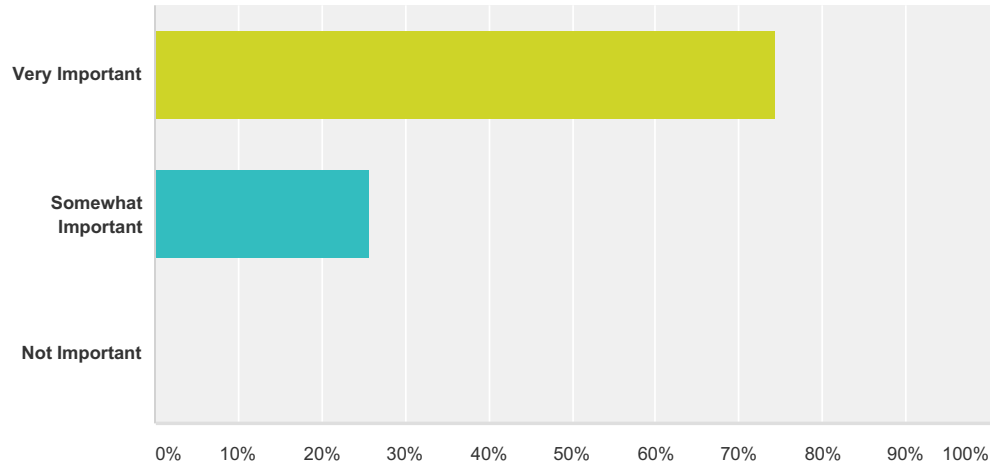
Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	4.65%	2
Fair	79.07%	34
Poor	16.28%	7
Total		43

Q2 How important to you is improving walking conditions in Chester?

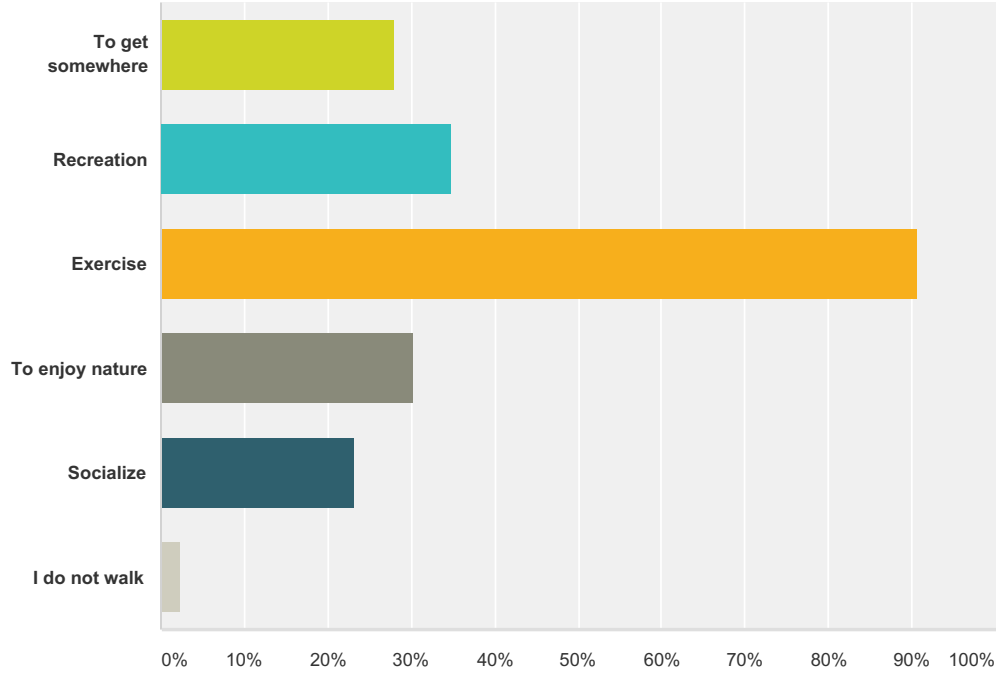
Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very Important	74.42%	32
Somewhat Important	25.58%	11
Not Important	0.00%	0
Total		43

**Q3 When walking in Chester, what is (or would be) the primary purpose of your trip?
(check all that apply)**

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0





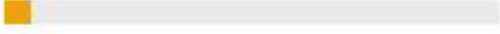


Answer Choices	Responses	
To get somewhere	27.91%	12
Recreation	34.88%	15
Exercise	90.70%	39
To enjoy nature	30.23%	13
Socialize	23.26%	10
I do not walk	2.33%	1
Total Respondents: 43		

Q4 What are your favorite places or streets to walk? (Please note specific streets or destinations)

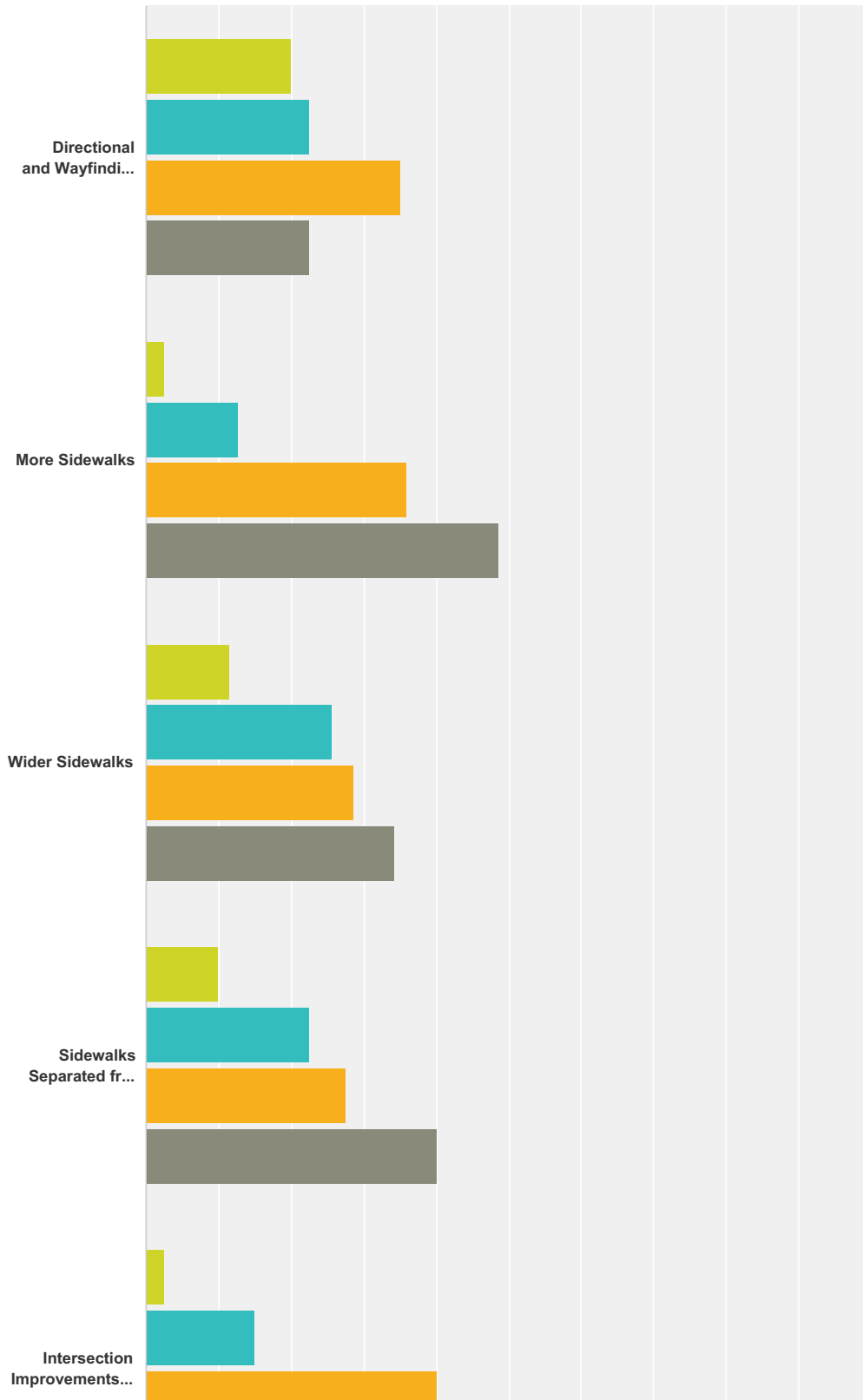
Answered: 38 Skipped: 5

Answer Choices	Responses	
Location 1	100.00%	38
Location 2	68.42%	26

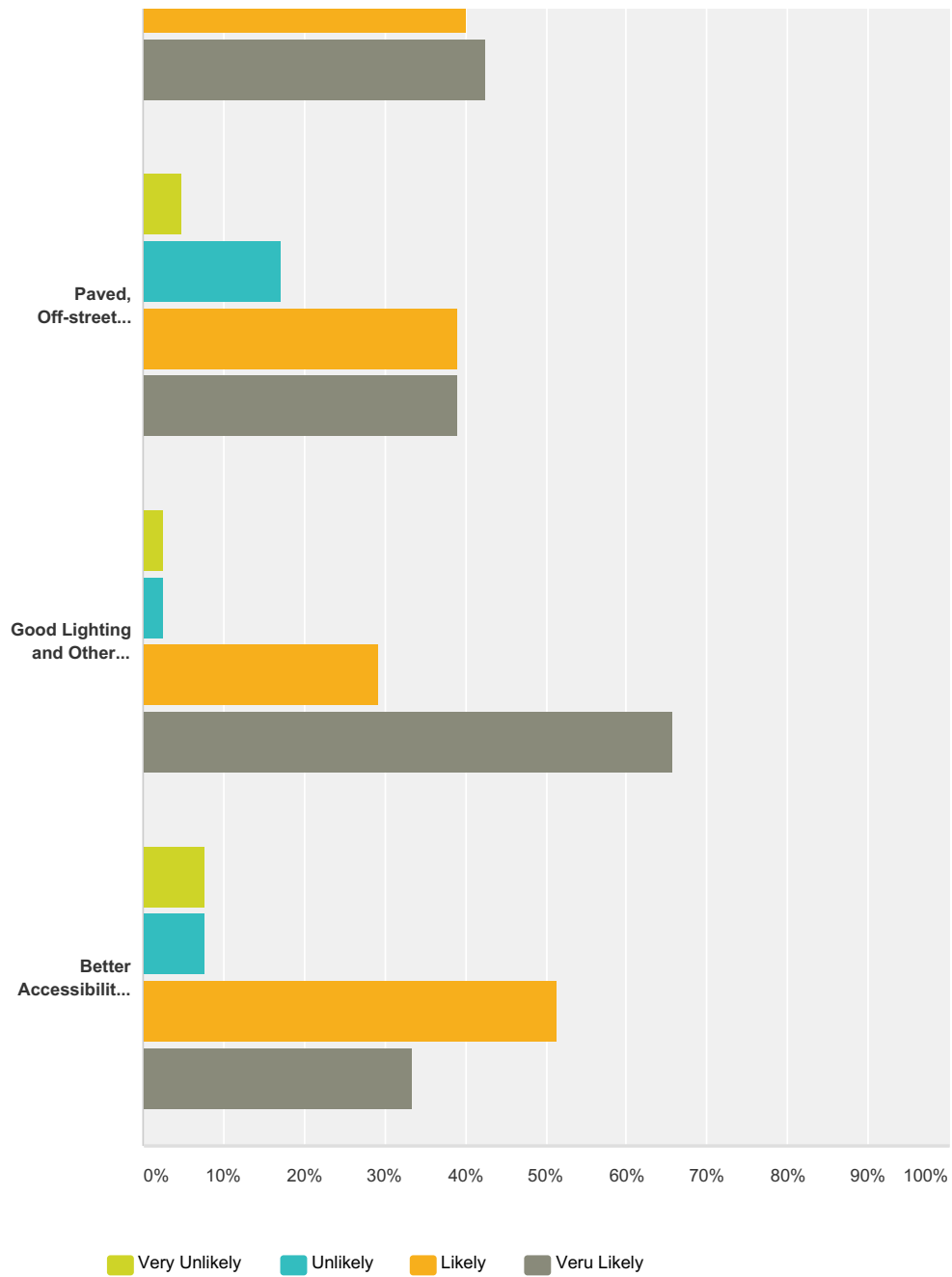
York Street		28.95%	11
Downtown		15.79%	6
Hill		7.89%	3
Columbia Street		5.26%	2
Wylie Park		5.26%	2

Q5 What would encourage you to walk more often?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



Walk Chester Plan



	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Veru Likely	Total
Directional and Wayfinding Signage	20.00% 8	22.50% 9	35.00% 14	22.50% 9	40
More Sidewalks	2.56% 1	12.82% 5	35.90% 14	48.72% 19	39
Wider Sidewalks	11.43% 4	25.71% 9	28.57% 10	34.29% 12	35
Sidewalks Separated from Traffic	10.00% 4	22.50% 9	27.50% 11	40.00% 16	40
Intersection Improvements (Crosswalks, pedestrian signals, etc.)	2.50% 1	15.00% 6	40.00% 16	42.50% 17	40

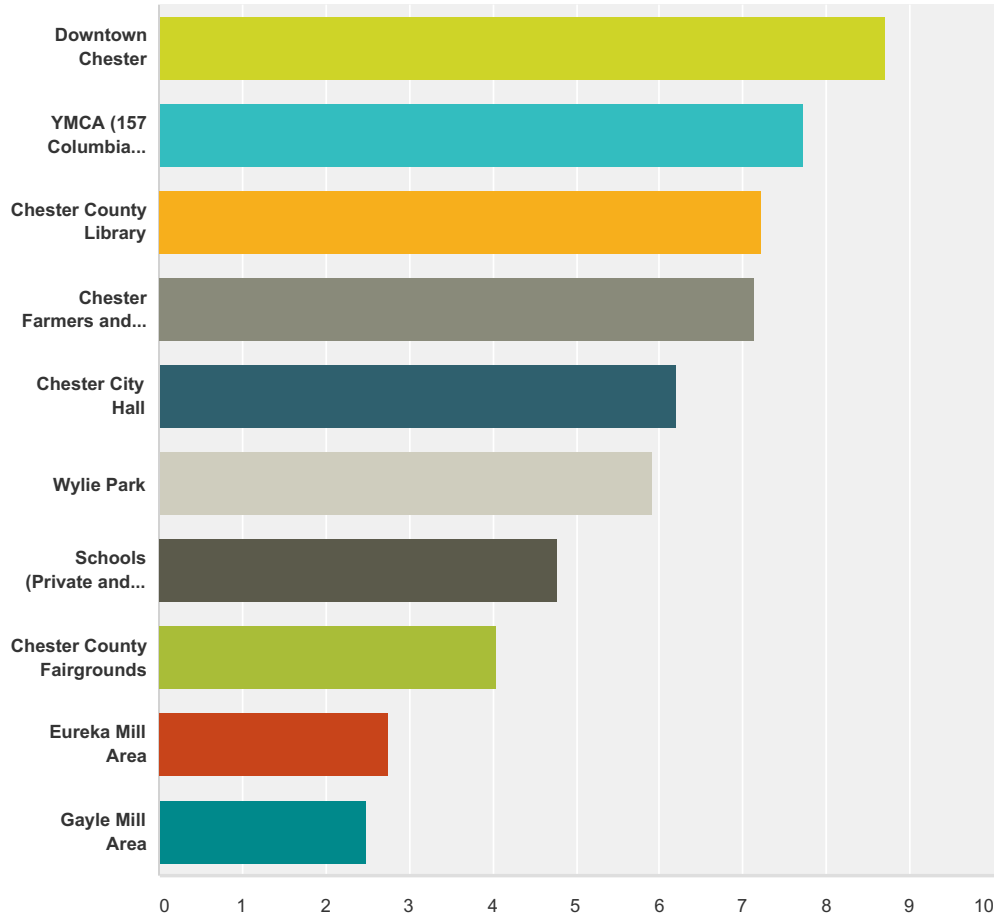
Walk Chester Plan

Paved, Off-street Paths	4.88% 2	17.07% 7	39.02% 16	39.02% 16	41
Good Lighting and Other Security Features	2.44% 1	2.44% 1	29.27% 12	65.85% 27	41
Better Accessibility (Curb ramps, even surfaces, etc.)	7.69% 3	7.69% 3	51.28% 20	33.33% 13	39

Walk Chester Plan

Q6 What destinations would you most like to be able to reach by walking? Please rank (1 = most like to reach, 10 = least like to reach)

Answered: 40 Skipped: 3



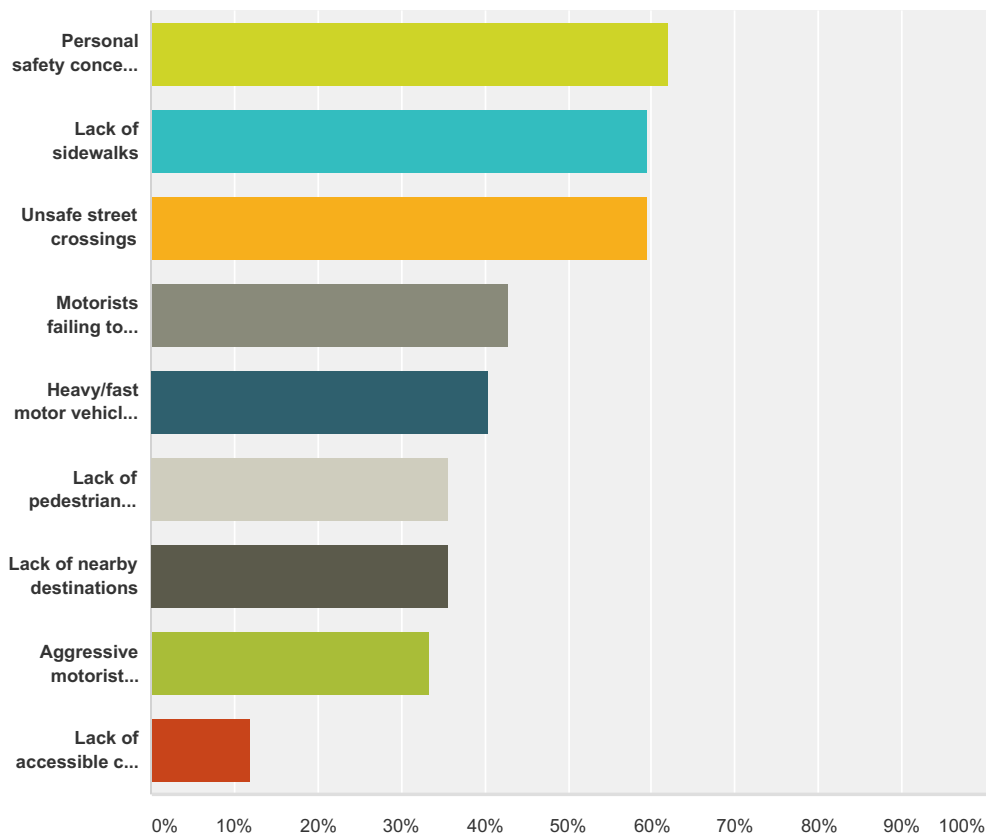
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Score
Downtown Chester	62.96% 17	14.81% 4	0.00% 0	7.41% 2	7.41% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.70% 1	3.70% 1	27	8.70
YMCA (157 Columbia Street)	17.24% 5	17.24% 5	24.14% 7	13.79% 4	20.69% 6	3.45% 1	3.45% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	29	7.72
Chester County Library	11.54% 3	26.92% 7	19.23% 5	11.54% 3	0.00% 0	11.54% 3	15.38% 4	3.85% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	26	7.23
Chester Farmers and Artisan Market (115 Columbia Street)	6.45% 2	22.58% 7	19.35% 6	19.35% 6	16.13% 5	6.45% 2	3.23% 1	3.23% 1	0.00% 0	3.23% 1	31	7.13
Chester City Hall	3.85% 1	11.54% 3	19.23% 5	23.08% 6	11.54% 3	3.85% 1	7.69% 2	11.54% 3	0.00% 0	7.69% 2	26	6.19
Wylie Park	12.90% 4	6.45% 2	9.68% 3	6.45% 2	16.13% 5	22.58% 7	3.23% 1	16.13% 5	3.23% 1	3.23% 1	31	5.90

Walk Chester Plan

Schools (Private and Public)	6.25% 2	3.13% 1	15.63% 5	9.38% 3	3.13% 1	9.38% 3	15.63% 5	12.50% 4	6.25% 2	18.75% 6	32	4.78
Chester County Fairgrounds	3.85% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	7.69% 2	11.54% 3	11.54% 3	23.08% 6	19.23% 5	11.54% 3	11.54% 3	26	4.04
Eureka Mill Area	4.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.00% 2	12.00% 3	24.00% 6	24.00% 6	28.00% 7	25	2.76
Gayle Mill Area	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	0.00% 0	10.34% 3	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	13.79% 4	34.48% 10	34.48% 10	29	2.48

**Q7 What do you think are the factors that most DISCOURAGE walking in Chester?
Please select up to five factors.**

Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Personal safety concerns (other than traffic)	61.90%	26
Lack of sidewalks	59.52%	25
Unsafe street crossings	59.52%	25
Motorists failing to yield to pedestrians	42.86%	18
Heavy/fast motor vehicle traffic	40.48%	17
Lack of pedestrian signals and crosswalks	35.71%	15
Lack of nearby destinations	35.71%	15
Aggressive motorist behavior	33.33%	14
Lack of accessible curb ramps	11.90%	5
Total Respondents: 42		

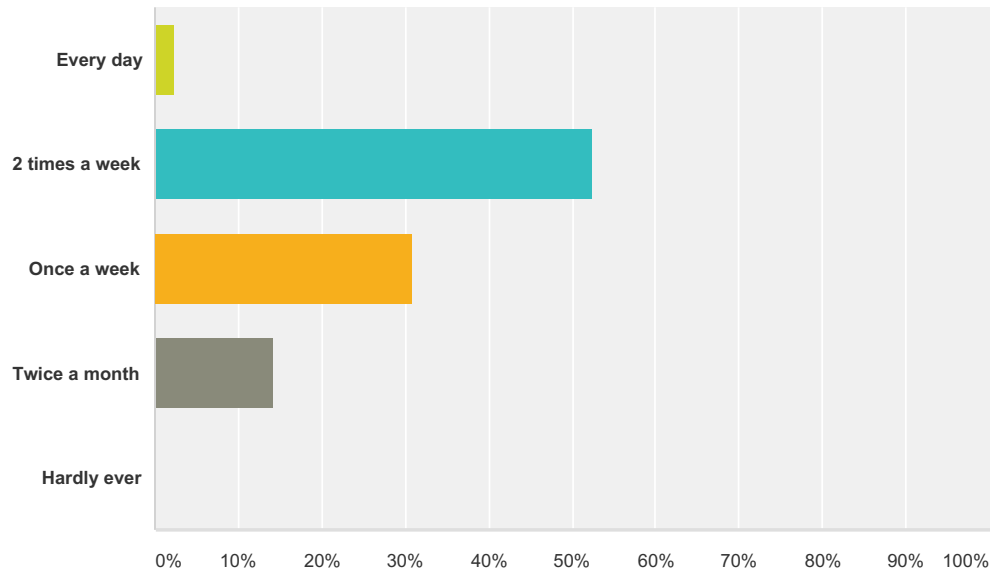
Q8 Where do you go to buy your groceries?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 2

Wal Mart	<div><div></div></div>	48.78%	20
Bi-Lo	<div><div></div></div>	48.78%	20
IGA	<div><div></div></div>	7.32%	3

Q9 How often do you go the store to buy food?

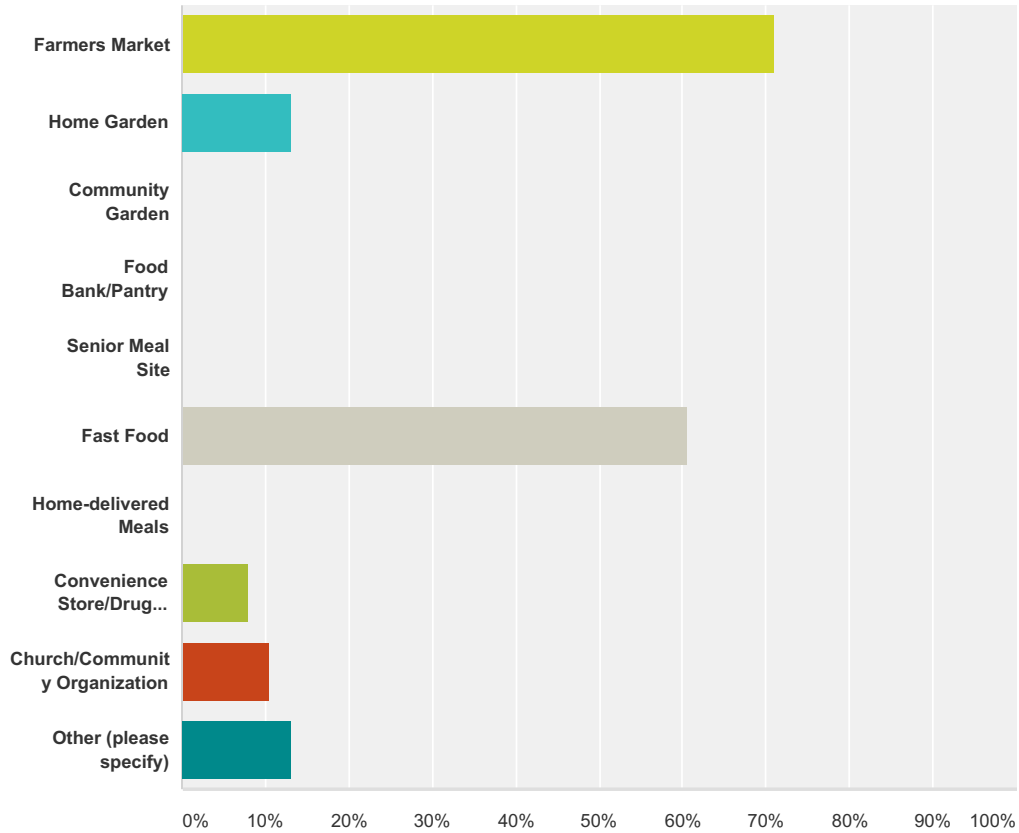
Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Every day	2.38% 1
2 times a week	52.38% 22
Once a week	30.95% 13
Twice a month	14.29% 6
Hardly ever	0.00% 0
Total	42

Q10 Besides grocery stores, where else do you get food? (Check all that apply)

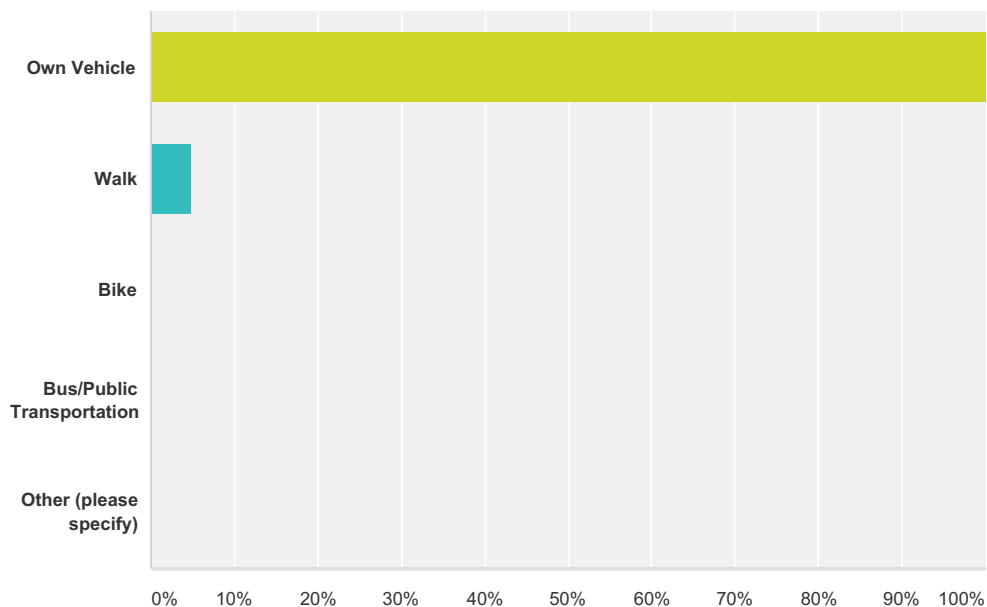
Answered: 38 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses	
Farmers Market	71.05%	27
Home Garden	13.16%	5
Community Garden	0.00%	0
Food Bank/Pantry	0.00%	0
Senior Meal Site	0.00%	0
Fast Food	60.53%	23
Home-delivered Meals	0.00%	0
Convenience Store/Drug Store	7.89%	3
Church/Community Organization	10.53%	4
Other (please specify)	13.16%	5
Total Respondents: 38		

Q11 How do you get to the locations where you get your food?

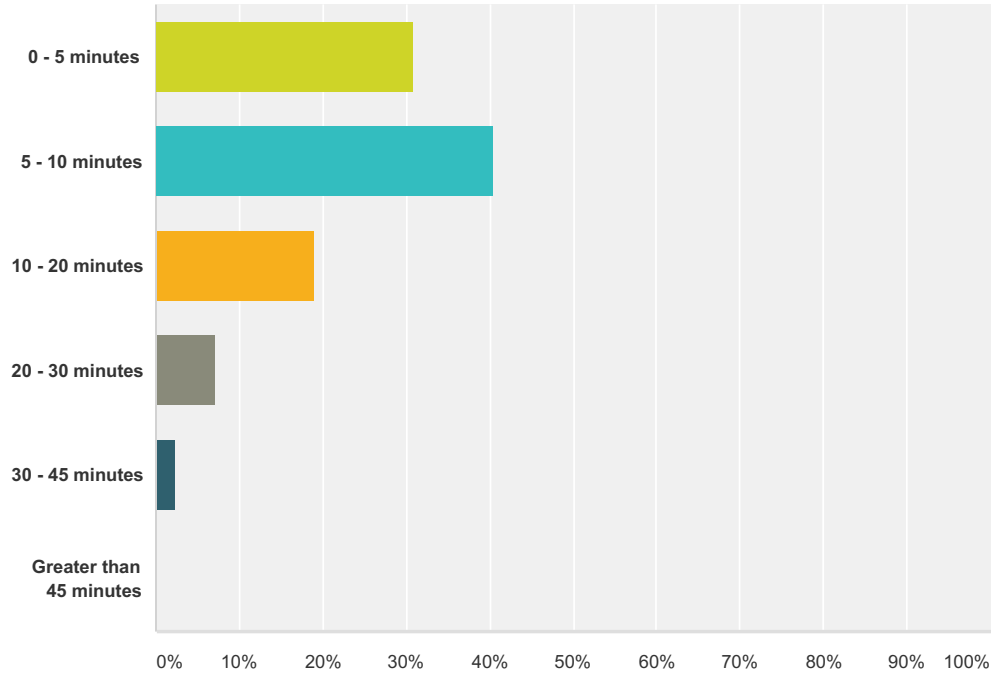
Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Own Vehicle	100.00% 42
Walk	4.76% 2
Bike	0.00% 0
Bus/Public Transportation	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 42	

Q12 How long does it take you to get to your usual grocery store? (distance one-way)

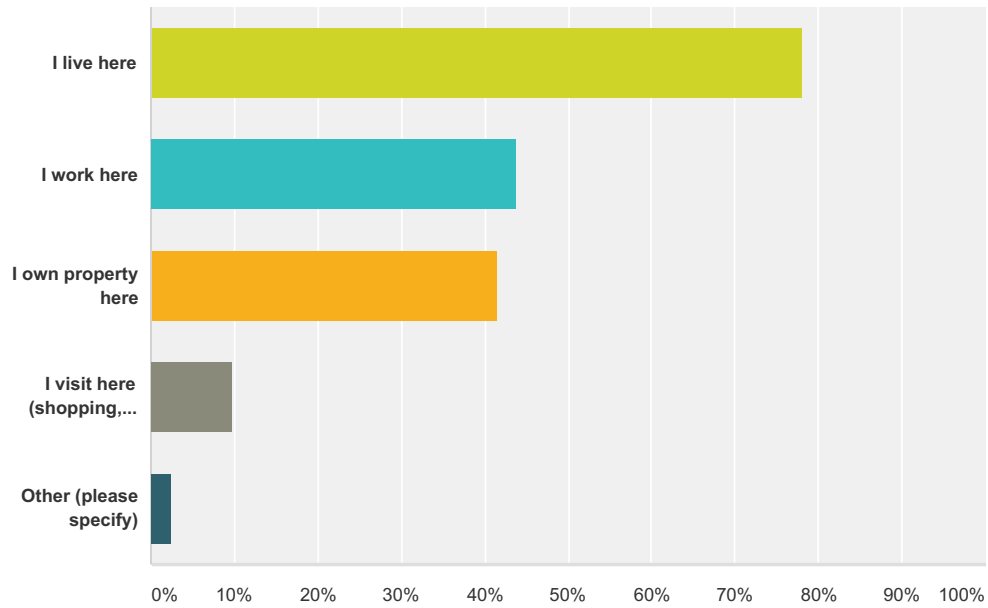
Answered: 42 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
0 - 5 minutes	30.95%	13
5 - 10 minutes	40.48%	17
10 - 20 minutes	19.05%	8
20 - 30 minutes	7.14%	3
30 - 45 minutes	2.38%	1
Greater than 45 minutes	0.00%	0
Total		42

Q13 What is your relationship to Chester?

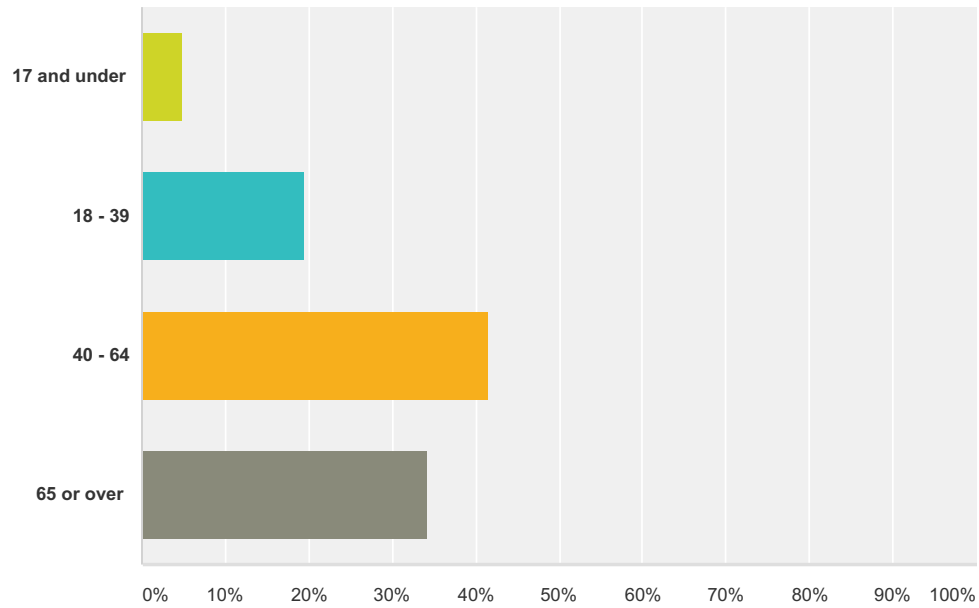
Answered: 41 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	
I live here	78.05%	32
I work here	43.90%	18
I own property here	41.46%	17
I visit here (shopping, dining, local services)	9.76%	4
Other (please specify)	2.44%	1
Total Respondents: 41		

Q14 What is your age?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses
17 and under	4.88% 2
18 - 39	19.51% 8
40 - 64	41.46% 17
65 or over	34.15% 14
Total	41

Walk Chester Plan

Q15 Any additional comments?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 30

#	Responses	Date
1	Have you interviewed the Silver Sneakers Club at the Y?	5/10/2016 8:57 PM
2	Chester is beautiful which makes walking fun. However, we need better sidewalks and more of them in all neighborhoods.	2/3/2016 10:20 AM
3	Street Scaping needs a lot of attention	2/3/2016 9:43 AM
4	Would believe a walking path around the city would generate walking.	1/23/2016 7:01 PM
5	Urban planning would make a serious difference	1/20/2016 1:31 PM
6	Chester needs to clean up existing sidewalks! Grass is growing over sidewalks, curbs need to be cleaned. Chester as a whole needs to be cleaned up. It is a town with beautiful possibilities but town needs to be have landowners clean up properties, town needs to have workers clean up parks and sidewalks.	1/20/2016 10:51 AM
7	I live in the county 8 miles out. Come in to go to church, shop, exercise at the Y and walk around town, and take grandchildren to parks when visiting.	1/19/2016 9:45 PM
8	Great survey which lets me know that someone is interested in the well being of Chester residents.	1/19/2016 2:24 PM
9	NA	1/14/2016 1:25 PM
10	Chester is a beautiful little town. We just need more businesses in downtown.	1/6/2016 7:50 PM
11	I'm concerned about the deterioration of the sidewalks. Much neglect. Very hazardous. When I do walk I have to look down the whole time to make sure I don't trip or stump my toe.	1/6/2016 7:43 PM
12	Would love to see better walking conditions, sidewalks not so close to the road that one step off the path your life is endangered. Would love to see dedicated bike paths for the children. Would love to see a safer Chester.	1/6/2016 1:06 PM
13	Would like to see bikeability; connection of Carolina Thread Trail	1/6/2016 11:42 AM

Q16 Thank you for your time! If you would like to receive updates on the plan's progress, please enter your email here (survey results are anonymous):

Answered: 17 Skipped: 26



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