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City of Florence, SC
Pedestrian Master Plan

City of FLORENCE SOUTH CAROLINA

DRAFT June 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

The project team would like to recognize and express appreciation for the myriad of individuals who participated in the development of this plan. Your passion and vision for the City of Florence are unrivaled.

MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Thank you to the engaged leaders of the Florence community for their continued participation throughout the planning process and for their commitment to furthering the efforts of this Plan.

Thank you to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for support and involvement in the planning process, as well as other local, regional, and state stakeholders including the City of Florence Department of Planning, Research and Development, Francis Marion University, the Pee Dee Land Trust, and the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

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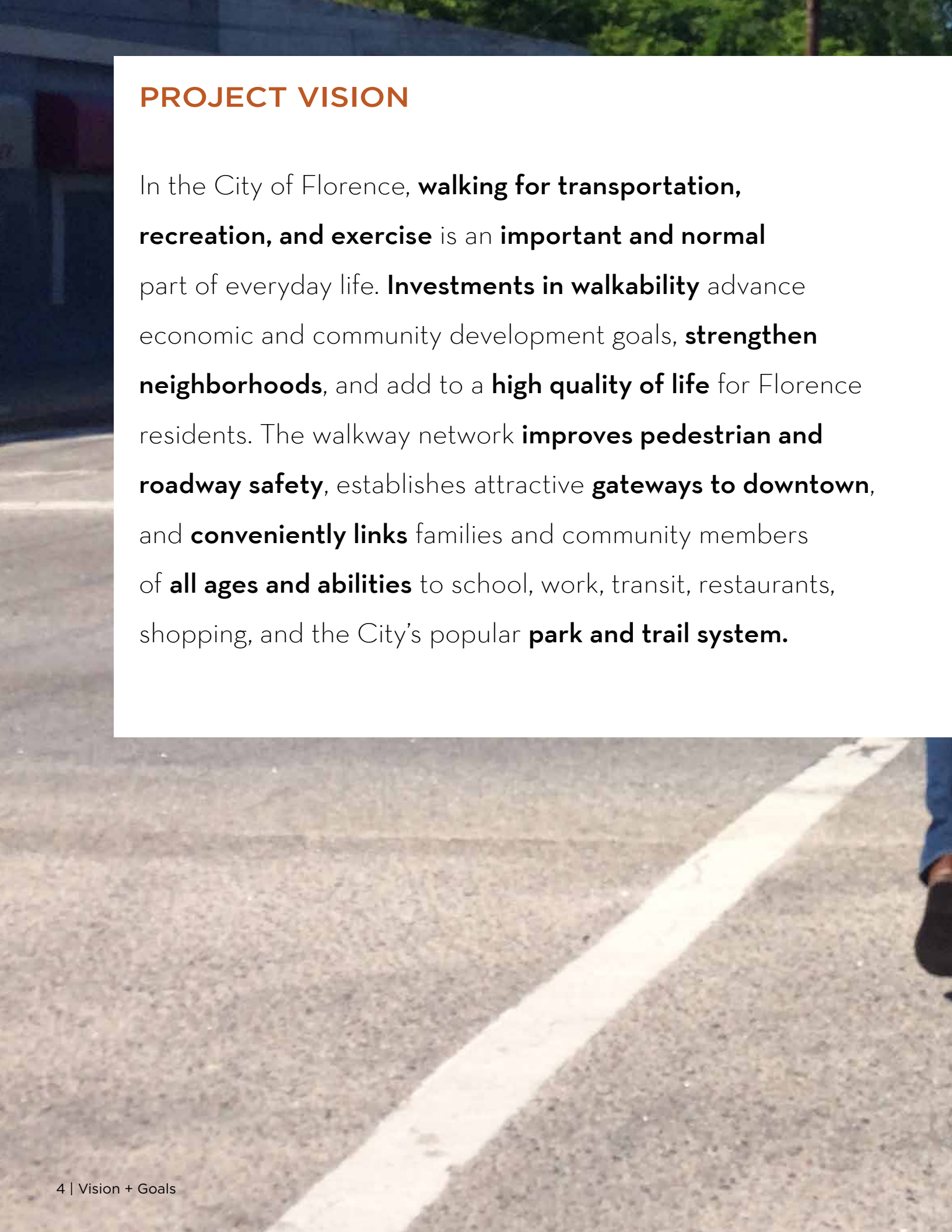
TABLE OF CONTENTS

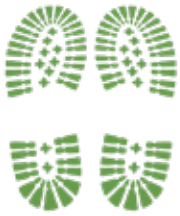


PROJECT VISION

In the City of Florence, **walking for transportation, recreation, and exercise** is an **important and normal** part of everyday life. **Investments in walkability** advance economic and community development goals, **strengthen neighborhoods**, and add to a **high quality of life** for Florence residents. The walkway network **improves pedestrian and roadway safety**, establishes attractive **gateways to downtown**, and **conveniently links** families and community members of **all ages and abilities** to school, work, transit, restaurants, shopping, and the City's popular **park and trail system.**

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve pedestrian connectivity by increasing access to downtown, schools, parks, and grocery stores
- Increase pedestrian safety by improving crossing conditions on major roads and through education and enforcement programs
- Increase the percentage of trips to school and commute trips that are made by walking
- Boost pedestrian activity downtown, recognizing the indirect benefits of lively sidewalks and activated streetscapes
- Develop a pedestrian-oriented wayfinding system to connect major destinations and amenities
- Instill a strong sense of community and pride through place-making, namely community gateways
- Create synergy between healthy food options and the Food Overlay District
- Leverage the existing trail network to better link residents and visitors to parks and trails



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INTRODUCTION

"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

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 Florence is one of the 16 communities to participate in SC PHASE Pedestrian Planning.

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 Carolinian 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.**

Florence's trail system presents the unique opportunity as both a transportation and recreation resource.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The City of Florence is the county seat of Florence County, in the heart of the Pee Dee Region, known for its origins as a major railroad terminal at the intersection of three rail lines. Modern day Florence is a diversified transportation hub with interstate highways I-95 and I-20 nearby, as well as a newly expanded regional airport. As the largest city in the Pee Dee Region with nearly 38,000, people meeting the mobility needs of all residents is a key part of this plan.[1]

Florence has a council-manager form of government, with a 7-member City Council, including the Mayor. There is also a Planning Commission that guides the city's land use and community development. Transportation planning is coordinated through the Florence Area Transportation Study (FLATS), the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Florence urban area. Florence is part of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments, a regional forum that allows local governments to coordinate transportation planning and decision-making across a six-county region.

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

While the Florence community prides themselves on their roots as a bustling railroad terminal and heart of the agrarian Pee Dee Region, the community has also made strides to showcase recent advances in industry and culture. The city has embarked on an extensive revitalization of its downtown district. Florence has also become a regional health care hub and home to both pharmaceutical and financial industries.

It is also home to Francis Marion University and its new Performing Arts Center, along with a symphony orchestra and several ballet companies, making Florence a growing destination for the arts as well as industry.

Recent improvements in downtown Florence have brought renewed investments in walkability, adding value to both properties and quality of life.

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

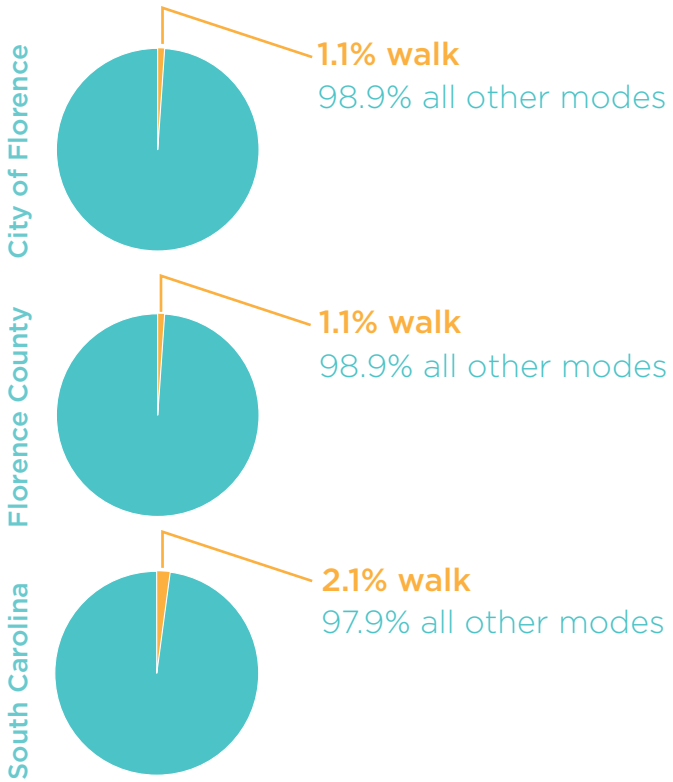
COMMUNITY PROFILE

The racial make-up of **the City of Florence is relatively evenly split between White and Black (or African American) residents** at 53.8% and 45.3%, respectively. For comparison, South Carolina is about 66% White and 28% Black or African American.[2]

The median income for households in the City of Florence is $41,663, a figure slightly below that of the county ($41,910) and state ($44,779). Given this relatively equivalent income level, it is not surprising then that **the city's poverty rate of 19.5% is roughly equivalent to that of the county and state**, 18.1% and 19.8%, respectively.[3]

In terms of mode share across the city, **the vast majority of residents commute to work in private vehicles.** Only 1.1% of the working population walk to work which is equivalent to Florence County as a whole, but 1% less than the state average.

Walking as a percentage of commuting mode share per geography:



However, **1% of residents commute via public transportation compared to 0.4% and 0.6% for the county and state, respectively.** These public transit users may represent additional pedestrian activity as they are most likely walking to the transit stops. With this frequency of pedestrian activity in the community, it is important to ensure that adequate infrastructure exists to support and encourage walking as a healthy and safe mode of travel.

It is important to note that **mode share does not paint a full picture of need and demand.** 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 Florence who do not have access to vehicles (over 11%) and those households with access to only one vehicle (almost 40%) 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.[4]

Safety is key in encouraging and sustaining pedestrian activity. State traffic collision data show that **Florence County has a pedestrian fatality rate of 2.8 deaths per 100,000 people, compared to a rate of 2.3 fatalities per 100,000 people for the state.**[5] Finding ways to lower this rate in the City of Florence will be an important goal for this project.

[2] U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.
[3] U.S. Census Bureau 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
[4] U.S. Census Bureau 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
[5] Dangerous by Design - South Carolina

WHAT IS WALKABILITY?

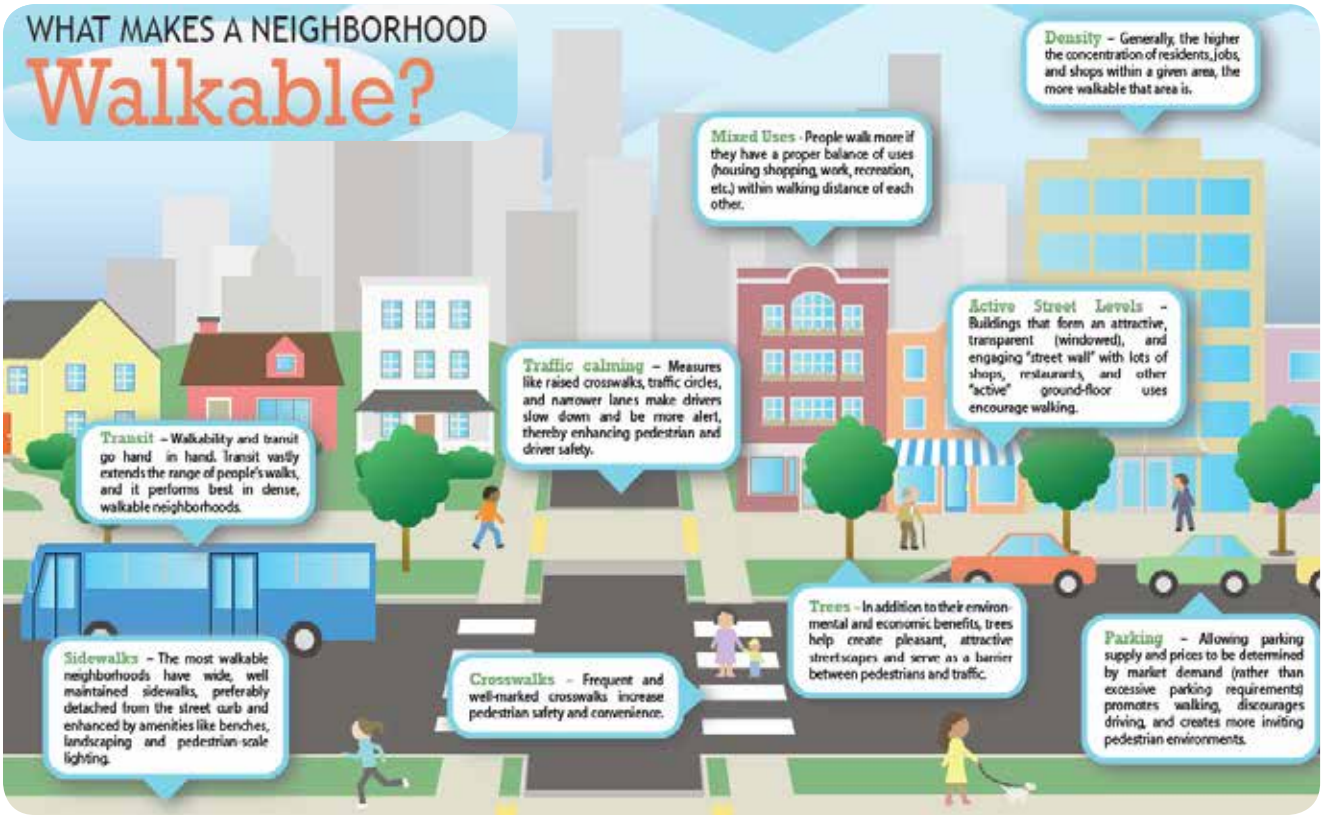
Walkability is more than the ability to walk. It is a holistic approach for evaluating a streetscape or community's design, and a means to understand the factors that influence and encourage pedestrian activity. **The goals of a walkable place** are multi-faceted and context-specific but typically include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

- increase personal mobility by providing alternatives to driving private automobiles
- increase personal mobility 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 inviting street orientations, landscaping, street furniture, 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 Florence has a basis of existing facilities and features that will support and contribute to the City's goal of becoming more pedestrian-friendly. This Plan presents opportunities to build off of those existing resources.



WHY PLAN FOR PEDESTRIANS?

Imagine Florence 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.**

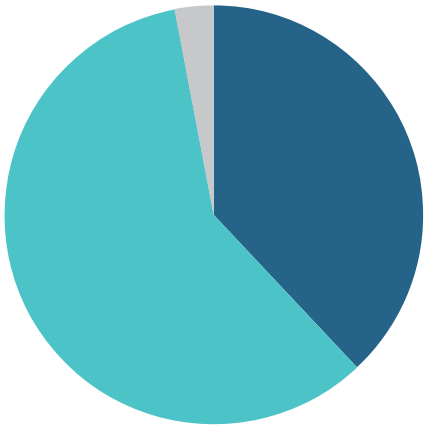
Development is well-designed and accessible so that residents have many of their everyday needs within walking distance. **Pedestrian-friendly streets are prevalent throughout the community**, and parents feel perfectly safe letting their **children walk or bike to school, parks, or other destinations 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 urban and rural 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' Preference for Reducing Traffic Congestion



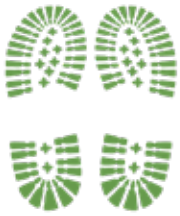
59% **WE NEED TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING TRAINS AND BUSES, TO MAKE IT EASIER TO WALK AND BIKE AND TO REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

38% **WE NEED TO BUILD MORE ROADS AND EXPAND EXISTING ROADS TO HELP REDUCE 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.
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.



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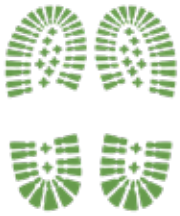

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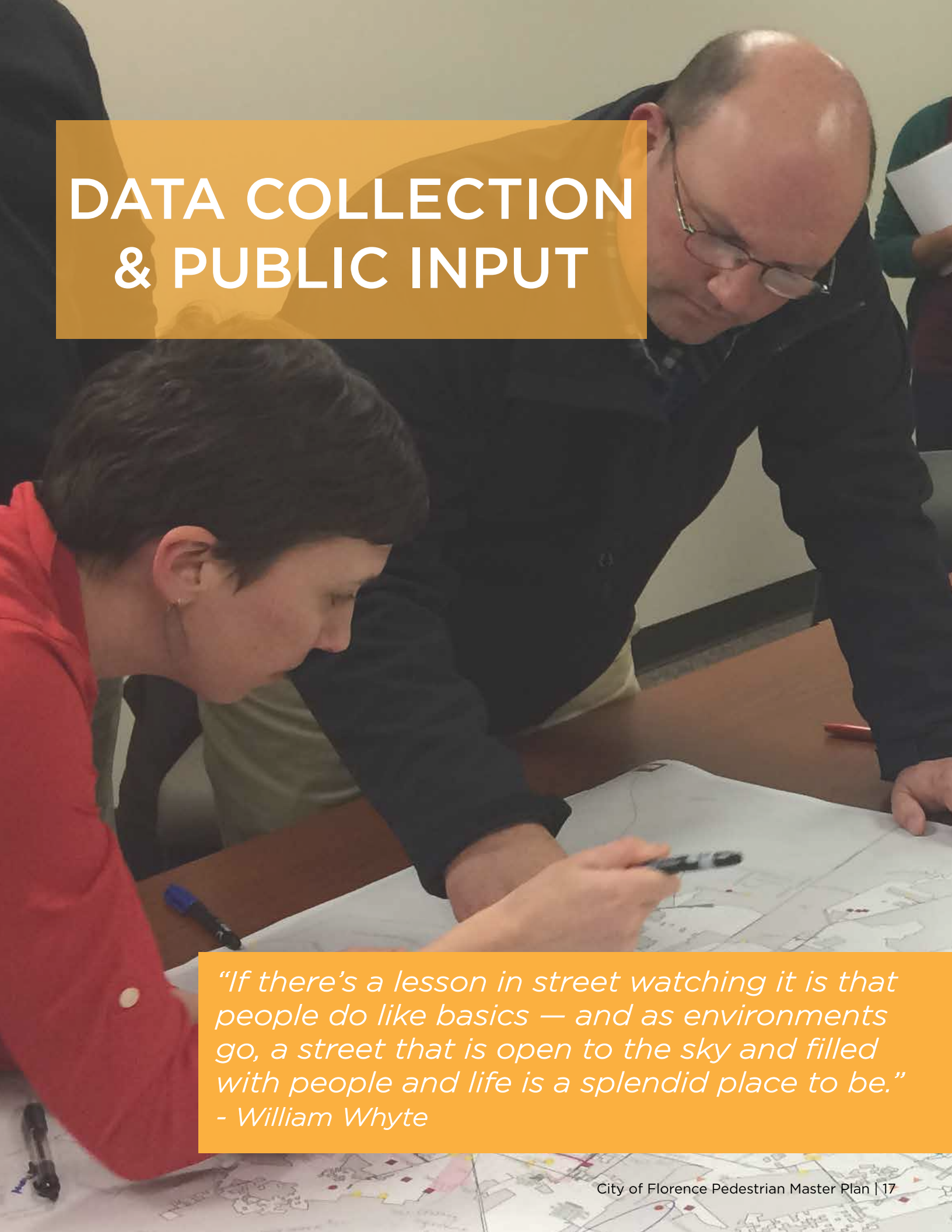


DATA COLLECTION & PUBLIC INPUT

"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 Florence's existing environment for walking. **This includes a review of previous planning efforts and 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 and stakeholder meetings, as well as the project team's field observations, and GIS-based mapping analysis.

This chapter summarizes the information gained and critical outcomes of this assessment and discovery process, including:

- Review of Existing Planning Efforts
- Analysis of Opportunities and Constraints
- Equity Analysis
- Healthy Food Access Analysis
- Pedestrian Safety Analysis
- Summary of Public Input

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

The City of Florence has lead a number of recent planning efforts that offer strategies for community development, access to resources, and continuing to advance the city's quality of life. This section describes recent planning efforts relevant to walkability and transportation in the City of Florence. The City of Florence Pedestrian Master Plan synthesizes, refines, and updates these previous recommendations for pedestrian facilities to present a proposed future network. In particular, this plan will build on the recommendations and priorities of the recent Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, a multi-year effort led by the city with substantial public involvement.

Common themes emerge across the existing plans, signaling how pervasive Florence's needs are. These identified themes center on Florence's need for an improved quality of life through increased accessibility and connectivity for active modes of transportation. Specific walkability recommendations from previous plans address the need to provide:

- a seamlessly connected walking network
- a well-maintained greenway system
- access to alternative transportation
- improved land use and urban design

In addition to the plans described in detail on the following pages, the *2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan* which includes the Regional Transit & Coordination Plan was also reviewed.

Plan	Agency	Year
Florence County Comprehensive Plan	Florence County	Ongoing
Regional Transit & Coordination Plan - Pee Dee Region	SCDOT	2014
Florence Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy	City of Florence	2014
Florence Neighborhood Action Plan	City of Florence	2013
FLATS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan	Florence Area Transportation Study	2012
City of Florence Comprehensive Plan	City of Florence	2011
Design Guidelines for Downtown Florence	Florence Downtown Development Corporation, City of Florence	2005
Florence Area Bikeway Master Plan	Florence Area Transportation Study	2004

FLORENCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The Transportation Element of the *Florence County Comprehensive Plan* provides a review of existing transportation plans and funding strategies for all jurisdictions in Florence County. **The Plan acknowledges dwindling state and federal funding sources for transportation improvements and explores local funding options.** Another focus of the Transportation Element is **careful inter-modal coordination between transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks.**

The Bicycles, Pedestrians, and Greenways section describes user types and existing conditions. The plan organizes recommendations by municipality, however the plan defers to the FLATS 2035 LRTP for specific recommendations.

General recommendations in the transportation element include:

- **Create a bicycle and pedestrian network of both on- and off-street facilities that are inclusive of all ages and abilities**
- Ancillary amenities such as bicycle parking, wayfinding, and benches, should be provided concurrently with infrastructure

REGIONAL TRANSIT & COORDINATION PLAN - PEE DEE REGION

This *Pee Dee Regional Transit & Coordination Plan Update* was prepared as part of the 2040 Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. The original Regional Transit Plan was completed in 2008 so this plan serves as an update to reflect changes within the region and across the state. This plan identifies existing transportation services, needs, and strategies to employ in the Pee Dee Region for the next 20 years in order to meet those needs.

This plan calls attention to the **shrinking budget, and thus service reductions, of the Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority** (PDRTA). This particularly **effects Florence as the 6 fixed routes that run through the city provide a critical link** for residents to reach employment centers and schools.

Specific goals of the plan include:

- Enhance mobility choices of the transportation disadvantaged by **improving coordination and developing alternative modes of transportation**
- Improve the safety and security of the transportation system by **implementing transportation improvements that reduce fatalities and serious injuries**
- Provide an efficient and effective **interconnected transportation system that is coordinated with the state and local planning efforts to support thriving communities**

FLORENCE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

The Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy addresses physical and social aspects of redevelopment through public engagement, catalytic short-term projects, and policy assistance in neighborhoods that have historically received little investment. The plan **outlines specific timelines and deliverables for 10 catalytic project areas**. These are the crux of the revitalization strategy. **Along with the Neighborhood Action Plan, this document is the underpinning for the city's economic development and redevelopment efforts.**

The plan establishes seven goals, each with a series of respective objectives, which **build off of existing planning efforts** aimed at transforming blighted communities:

- Refine a mechanism to **stabilize each of the neighborhoods** and establish a process for ongoing maintenance
- Establish a process to **build the capacity of local residents** as a means of building long-term sustainability in the neighborhood revitalization initiative
- Expand and increase opportunities for affordable housing, ownership, and rentals
- Develop a **marketing and rebranding strategy that builds on neighborhood strengths** and attracts new families
- Leverage the resources of the city through partnerships with the county, federal, state, philanthropic, and private sector agencies
- Design a governance structure to guide the implementation of a **comprehensive neighborhood revitalization project**
- **Select areas for redevelopment that will effectively demonstrate the potential for a fully redeveloped neighborhood**. Outline the process to expand neighborhood revitalization into other parts of the neighborhoods and into the City of Florence

FLORENCE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

The *Florence Neighborhood Action Plan* is the renewal of a previously discontinued neighborhood planning program which develops **improvement strategies for key neighborhoods in need.** The first cohort of neighborhoods in need are East Florence, North Florence, Northwest Florence, and Downtown Florence.

Input from the public, the driving force behind the plan's goals, revealed that **residents desire a strong downtown that is the heart of the community with an emphasis on strong neighborhood communities surrounding the downtown.** Residents in all four communities also **recognized pedestrian-related concerns** like people walking in the streets, lack of lighting, lack of trails and parks, perception that some environments are unsafe, and the need to have people walking downtown.

The *Action Plan* addresses **specific sidewalk recommendations** to combat some of these issues, including:

- Conduct in-field observation to **determine predominate patterns and pathways for pedestrian travel**
- Develop a **priority list of sidewalk improvements**, including locations, width, associated improvements, cost estimates, and responsible jurisdiction(s)
- Coordinate with Florence County and SCDOT to address sidewalks that are adjacent to their facilities

The plan also looks to the **creation of gateways as a means to link neighborhoods and create inviting streetscapes.**

FLATS 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2012 update to the FLATS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) outlines current mobility options of the Florence metropolitan area to **set a vision for a multimodal future.** The plan was developed with input from a mix of residents, SCDOT officials, and members of the Transportation Plan Action Committee. This LRTP reflects a **strong need and desire for improved bicycle and pedestrian amenities** for better local and regional transportation options. Information from the FLATS Long Range Transportation Plan will be incorporated in the transportation element of the Florence County Comprehensive Plan.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian section **evaluates existing pedestrian facilities and recommends improvements to the sidewalk network and trail system.** The plan identifies potential network expansion opportunities, enforcement campaigns, education programs, and encouragement activities to promote walking as a healthy transportation option. Recommended initiatives focus on the **need to connect key activity points with high quality facilities** such as downtown, libraries, retail corridors, medical facilities, parks, Francis Marion University, and the Performing Arts Center.

Overarching recommendations identify the need to:

- support economic vitality
- **increase safety** and security of the transportation system
- **increase accessibility and mobility of people**
- protect and enhance the environment
- **foster connectivity across and between modes**
- emphasize preservation of the existing transportation system

The plan also identifies **Complete Streets as a means to transform vehicle-dominated streets** in the City of Florence into safe and convenient destinations for all users. A Complete Streets section provides guiding principles for creating multimodal streets and cross sections for different street typologies, along with specific opportunities for improving the pedestrian realm.

The public outreach component of the plan included a survey that asked participants to rate the condition of pedestrian facilities. **Sidewalk conditions were rated fair or poor by 75% of respondents.** Survey respondents also identified **expanding greenway networks as a key improvement for increasing walkability.**

Improvements, including lighting, maintenance, and ADA-compliance, were identified for the following five corridors:

- 5 Points
- Hoffmeyer Road
- Magnolia Mall
- Magnolia Trace Apartments
- Maple Park

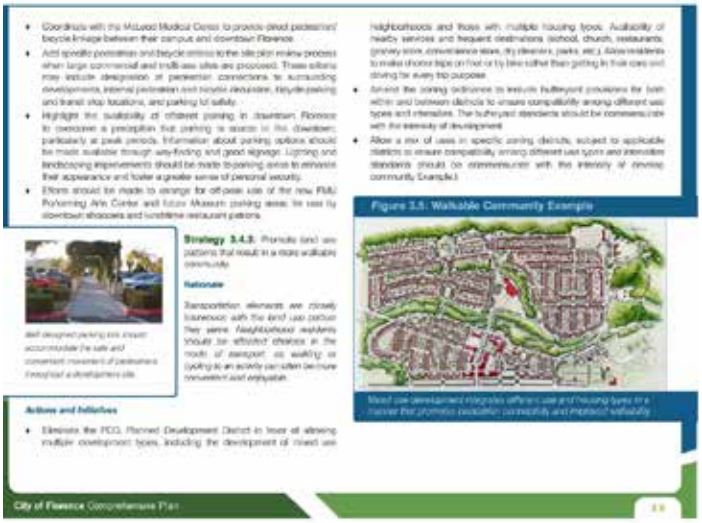
CITY OF FLORENCE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This plan establishes the City's vision for growth, while outlining a plan with realistic goals and strategies. Recommendations grew out of extensive citizen input on topics like housing and neighborhood revitalization, community character and appearance, urban growth, economic development, transportation modes and downtown renewal.

The **chapter on mobility identifies specific transportation issues and presents recommendations to improve mobility.** The chapter also recognizes the **need to balance mode share and give residents travel options.**

Key recommendations of the plan include:

- **Enhance streetscapes** through vegetation, lighting, medians, landscaped parkways, wayfinding, and pedestrian amenities, especially surrounding downtown
- Complete a **community-wide sidewalk inventory to identify gaps in the network**
- Take steps to **acquire easements for future trail developments**
- **Prioritize intersection improvements where pedestrian activity is already high**
- **Target improvements at key areas** like schools, parks, and within the downtown



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DOWNTOWN FLORENCE

The *Design Guidelines for Downtown Florence* were created as a framework not just for the city but also for builders, developers, and homeowners. The document sheds light on **the importance design plays in enhancing character, creating a welcoming downtown, and distilling a sense of place in the community.**

A section devoted to streetscape design guidelines is of particular importance to this plan. In this section there are **specific recommendations for "pedestrian priority" streets**, including:

- Wide sidewalks (10-foot minimum)
- Trees planted with grates over root base
- Well-marked crosswalks and crossing lights if needed
- Pedestrian amenities such as pedestrian lighting, benches, banners, frequent placement of trash receptacles, planters, and directories
- Parallel parking rather than head in parking throughout downtown district
- Street and pedestrian lighting at intersections

One other recommendation is for unit pavers on the sidewalk, though in some contexts, this treatment can pose mobility challenges for people with disabilities.

FLORENCE AREA BIKEWAY MASTER PLAN

The Florence Area Bikeway Master Plan was created for the Florence Area Transportation Study in 2004. The plan highlights **bicycle infrastructure needs, potential projects, and includes a priority recommendations list based on location, estimated demand, and cost.** While the components of the plan are bike focused, the **on-and off-street bikeway recommendations also create improved conditions for pedestrians.** In addition, the policies discussed to create a supportive environment for biking will likely also add pedestrian safety and comfort.

A City of Florence Trail system was also created in 2004 with support from the Parks, Beautification and Leisure Services Commission. **The plan identifies three types of routes with distinct connection intentions**, as well as fitness trails. Rail Trail Connections are health and fitness focus, intended to connect people with environmentally significant and natural areas. Urban Connections focus on connecting the city's parks to its budding cultural center. Freedom Florence Connections serve as environmental protection while connecting on a north-south spine route. The focus for the trail system is Jeffries Creek.

The trail vision is to link natural features, parks, and cultural sites with rail trails and urban connections to provide a "green necklace" around the city. Currently, the only trail from the Bikeway Master Plan that has been implemented is a portion of the Rail Trail Spur, a 10-foot multi-use path.

COMMUNITY BASE MAP DEVELOPMENT

One initial step in evaluating the existing conditions of the City of Florence is the development of a comprehensive community base map. Based on GIS data provided by the City and its partners, the project team created a map illustrating existing facilities. This map can be found on the following page.

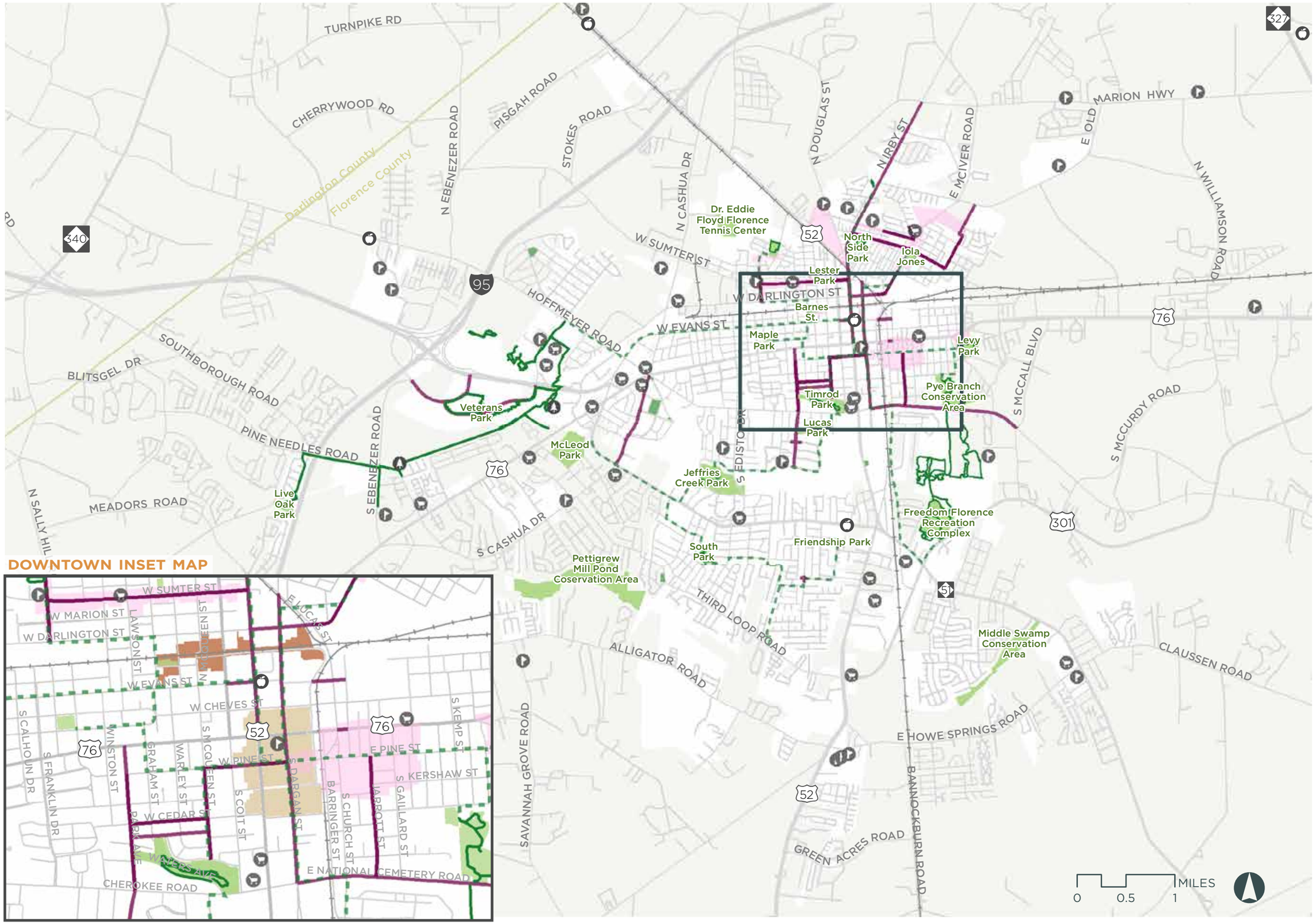
A complete inventory of sidewalk data does not exist and is thus not represented on the map. However, the existing sidewalk network was evaluated for network gaps and other issues in the analysis piece of this plan. The following map reflects other supporting information such as current road improvement projects, trails, schools, parks, grocery stores, and informal food outlets to paint a high-level picture of existing conditions in Florence. The table below summarizes the trail facilities that were developed in the Florence Area Bikeway Master Plan with implementation currently ongoing.

The catalyst projects depicted on the map are action plan areas in North Florence, Northwest Florence, and East Florence as identified in the Florence Neighborhood Action Plan. Improvements to and revitalization within these neighborhoods are intended to activate other investments and improvements across Florence.

Summary Table of Florence Trail System

TRAIL TYPE	*MILEAGE*
Freedom Florence Connections	8.1
Rail Trail Connections	15.9
Proposed Urban Connections	23.2
Fitness Trail	3.0

COMMUNITY BASE MAP



DOWNTOWN INSET MAP

LEGEND

- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Urban Connections
- Road Improvement Project
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

PUBLIC INPUT OVERVIEW

Given the recent Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy which involved extensive public outreach, this effort builds upon the findings of that outreach and is reflective of citizens' comments shared through that process. This plan added to that basis of information with further outreach efforts including focus groups sessions and team stakeholder meetings.

This section summarizes the key findings of the focus group sessions.

FOCUS GROUPS

Based on input from City staff and community leaders, the project team invited a broad and diverse group of citizens to participate in a serious of four focus groups. In total, twenty-five community members participated. Participants were chosen based on residency in Florence 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, leaders from each of Florence's neighborhood association and watch groups were invited to participate.

Specific objectives of the focus groups include the following:

- Identify residents' opinions of walkability in Florence
- 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 Florence

"People want to move to or stay in communities that are connected."

- focus group participant

"We need to provide those visiting or moving to Florence the walkability they see in other cities."

- focus group participant

KEY FINDINGS

Question: What assets exist in Florence? How can the pedestrian master plan build upon or leverage current assets?

- **The Rail Trail**

  The paved rail trail and its unpaved trail connections are heavily used by many residents for running, walking, and biking. It attracts diverse users from all areas of the city. Focus group members described it as a major community asset, however, many participants expressed concerns about personal safety at the trail. Some female focus group participant said they didn't feel comfortable using the trail unless they were in a group.

- **The City Manager**

  Many focus group participants expressed high confidence in City Manager Drew Griffin who was described as a visionary leader who values green space and neighborhood development. They said Griffin's leadership will increase the chances that any proposed pedestrian planning projects will get implemented.

- **Downtown Revitalization**

  The city has made steady progress at revitalizing its downtown district. Focus group members said the entire district is walkable, however, they said perceptions about crime and concerns about safety keep some residents from walking in the district.

Question: What are high priority projects, streets, neighborhoods, or destinations for improved access? Why are they priorities?

- **Downtown**

  Downtown - In order to increase foot traffic in downtown, focus group participants said they would like to see the following:

  Improved walkability between downtown and 5 points - Focus group participants said many people are already walking from the downtown district to the intersection of West Palmetto and Cashua Drive. But they 5 said the route is dangerous due to heavy traffic and limited pedestrian buffers.

  Spaces to congregate - Focus group participants said they want more green spaces and other open spaces that allow people to gather downtown for formal and informal occasions.

  Increased safety measures - Participants want downtown to feel safer with improved lighting, the addition of emergency call boxes, and increased police presence.

- **Civic Center Area**

  Improve the ability for pedestrians to walk to and from hotels, restaurants, the mall, and other stores near the Florence Civic Center. Add crossings, landscaping, and other buffers to increase pedestrian security.

"When people are out walking it creates the 'bump into' factor. You begin to bump into each other and fears go away."

- focus group participant

- **Freedom Florence**

  Focus group members said the city should invest in better signage and lighting to direct people to the Freedom Florence trail on the east side of the city. Participants said the trail is an underused resource because many people don't know about it, and it is hard to find.

- **Neighborhood Parks**

  Participants said that any improvements to the crossings and sidewalks that connect neighborhood parks to the residential areas around them will go a long way toward increasing the number of residents who are motivated to walk in their neighborhoods.

- **East, North, Northwest Florence**

  Focus group participants said they believe that improving lighting and reducing blight would go a long way toward improving walkability in these three areas of the city, where access to active living and healthy eating is limited.

- **Pedestrian and Driver Education**

  According to focus group members, too many pedestrians walk in the streets in both residential areas and in busy commercial districts even when sidewalks are available. They said it is also common for pedestrians to walk on the wrong side of the road and to walk in dark clothing at night. On the rail trail, many walkers seem confused about how to share the space with runners and bicyclists, participants said. At the same time, many drivers are aggressive and do not yield to pedestrians or bicyclists. Participants said they would like the pedestrian plan to include recommendations on educating pedestrians and drivers.

- **Community Gardens**

  Focus group members said the city's community gardening program is improving access to affordable, healthy produce in underserved communities, beautifying neighborhoods, and helping to build community.

- **Connectivity Conversations**

  The city's efforts to revitalize its downtown neighborhoods has raised awareness about the benefits of connecting different sections of the city and making them more walkable, however, it has also increased concerns about safety among some residents of areas that are adjacent to neighborhoods with higher crime rates.

- **Neighborhood Parks**

  Focus group members said that the city is well covered in neighborhood parks, however, amenities at each park and accessibility to the parks vary greatly.

- **Hospitality Industry**

  Florence's hospitality industry is strong and thriving. Focus group members said the city is a popular destination for residents of four smaller towns in the region. They said the Florence Civic Center does a good job of drawing large conferences to the area.

"This is about economic development because connectivity has moved beyond golf courses and tennis courses and pools to the things that home owners are looking for and families are looking for."

- focus group participant

Question: What are the biggest barriers to walkability in Florence?

- **Poor Sidewalk Conditions**

  Participants said that a lack of sidewalks and poor sidewalk conditions are among the greatest barriers to walkability in most parts of the city except for the downtown district.

- **Traffic**

  Aggressive drivers speeding down congested roads is a major problem for pedestrians, focus group members said. They identified the following roads as some of the most dangerous:

  - Palmetto Street
  - Edisto Drive
  - Alligator Road
  - Irby Street
  - Cherokee Road

- **Concerns about safety**

  Many focus group members said that fears related to crime and violence is a major obstacle to getting people to walk downtown, on local trails, and in many downtown neighborhoods.

"The beauty of this is that it can serve some practical purposes in terms of allowing people to get out and walk and connect with a larger community outside of the one they might be confined to. When you do that it begins to break down barriers."

- focus group participant

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EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

"If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places."
- Fred Kent

OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the analysis undertaken to assess walkability as it relates to safety, access, and quality of life. The opportunities and constraints assessment exercise is based on the project team's field observations and GIS-based mapping analysis, as well as the sentiments expressed by residents engaged in the public input process.

The Existing Conditions Analysis Chapter summarizes the information gained and critical outcomes of this assessment and discovery process, including:

- Pedestrian Safety Analysis
- Equity Analysis
- Healthy Food Access Analysis
- Active Space Access 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, Florence County has a pedestrian fatality rate of 2.8 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%

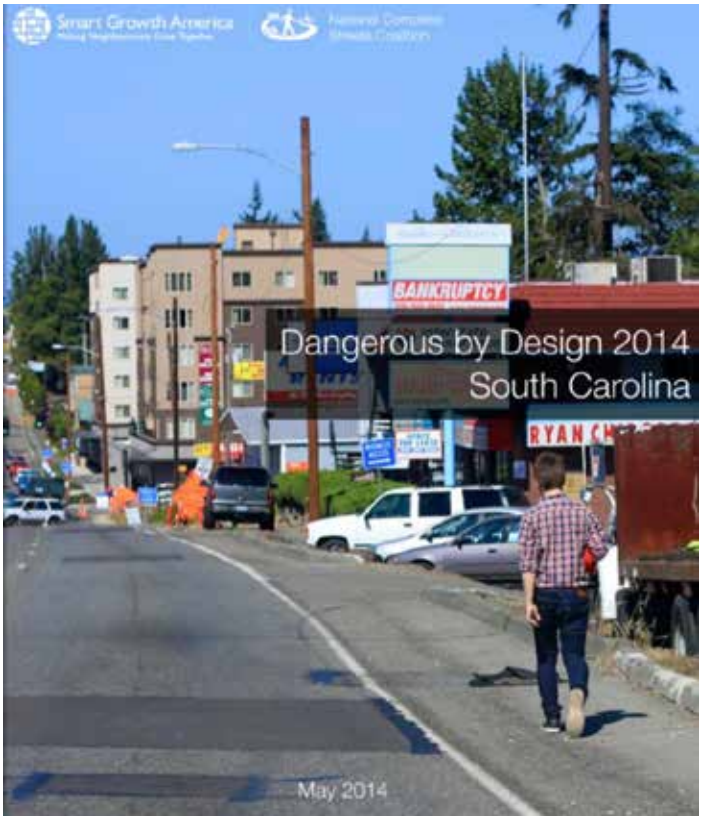
Some populations are disproportionately affected by unsafe walking conditions. Households without access to vehicles are more reliant on walking, yet often live in areas where suburban street patterns and dangerous arterial roads predominate. Older adults require more time at crossings and are more vulnerable 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. They often go unseen by drivers, especially when backing out of driveways.

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 COLLISIONS IN FLORENCE

The map on the following pages depicts pedestrian collision locations and the type of collision that occurred from 2010 to 2014. Collision types include pedestrian fatalities, pedestrian injuries, and property damage only events.

Property damage only events occur when the total property damage of all units (the vehicle, motorcycle, or bicycle) plus any property (things like fences and signs) involved in the crash is greater than $1,000. If the amount is less than $1,000 the collision is not considered reportable, according to South Carolina law. If an injury or fatality occurs, though, the collision is reported regardless of the property damage amount.

Crash locations were geocoded using the existing latitude and longitude coordinates associated with the data.

PEDESTRIAN COLLISION FINDINGS

Nearly 100 pedestrian injuries have been reported in the city and within one mile of the city limits from 2010 to 2014. Pedestrian fatalities in particular are spread intermittently throughout the region, but tend to occur at the outskirts of the city center.

The above heat map uses GIS spatial analysis tools to determine where collisions involving pedestrians are most prevalent.

This density analysis revealed major pedestrian crash hotspots near:

- Highway 52 and North Irby Street
- Highway 52 and I-95

And secondary pedestrian crash hotspots along:

- Highway 76 (East Palmetto Street)
- South Irby Street

The intersection of Highway 52 and North Irby Street has a skewed alignment where two five-lane high-speed arterials converge. The nearby Family Dollar, neighborhoods, parks, and elementary and middle schools all generate foot traffic. However, the intersection has no marked crosswalks leaving pedestrians to fend for themselves.

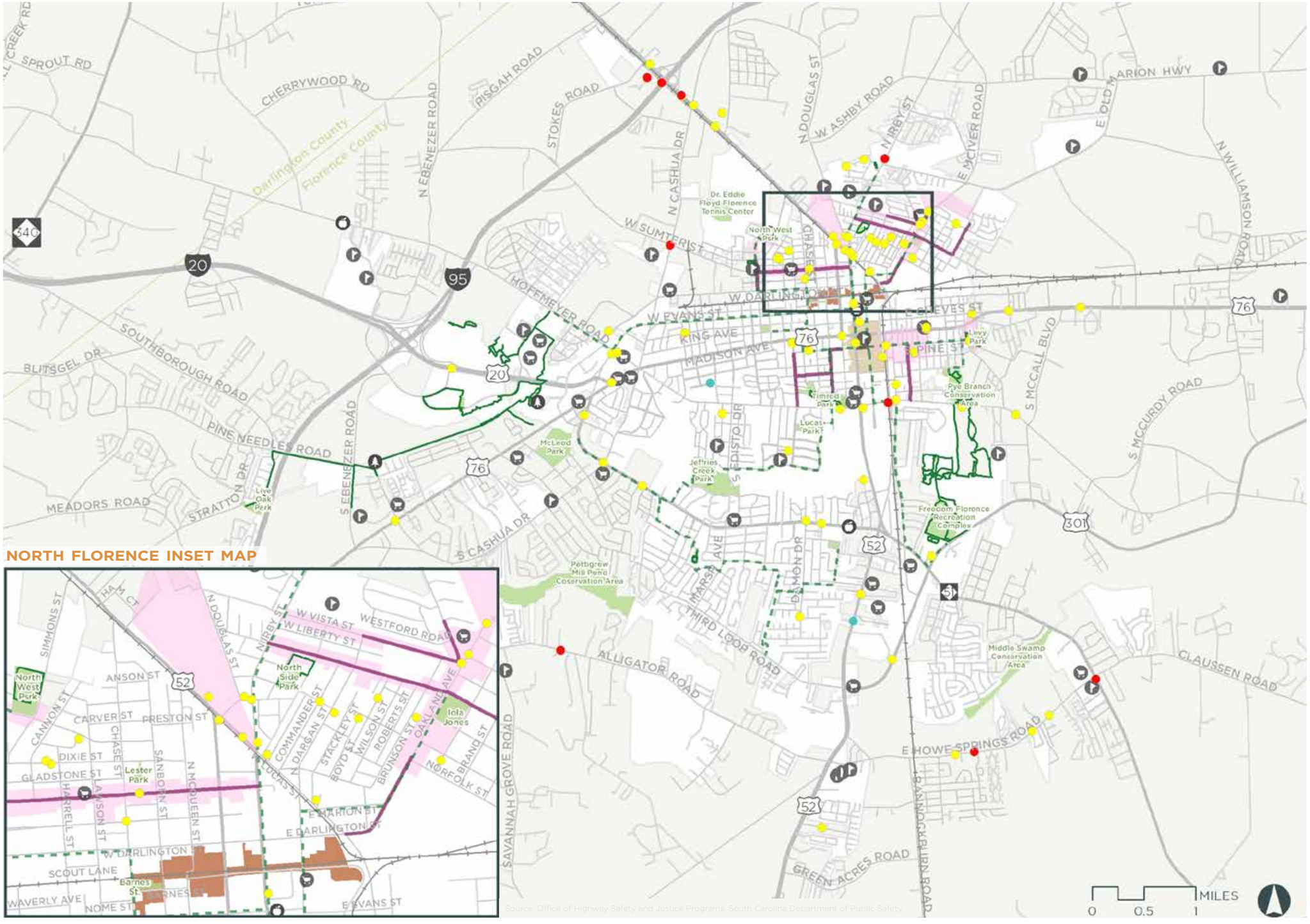
Around the Highway 52 and I-95 hotspot, a number of hotels and businesses surround the interchange but pedestrian connectivity between these activity centers and destinations is poor, leaving pedestrians exposed to the perils of a major arterial, interchange, and wide crossings suited only for vehicular throughput.

The additional hotspot corridors are both busy five-lane arterials lined with businesses. Pedestrian infrastructure is scarce, with few crosswalks for long stretches of the corridors.

The intersection of Highway 52 and North Irby Street is void of pedestrian facilities, making it a serious barrier for people walking or rolling.

The intersection of North Cashua Drive and Highway 52 is wide and uninviting, making it a dangerous obstacle for pedestrians.

PEDESTRIAN COLLISION MAP



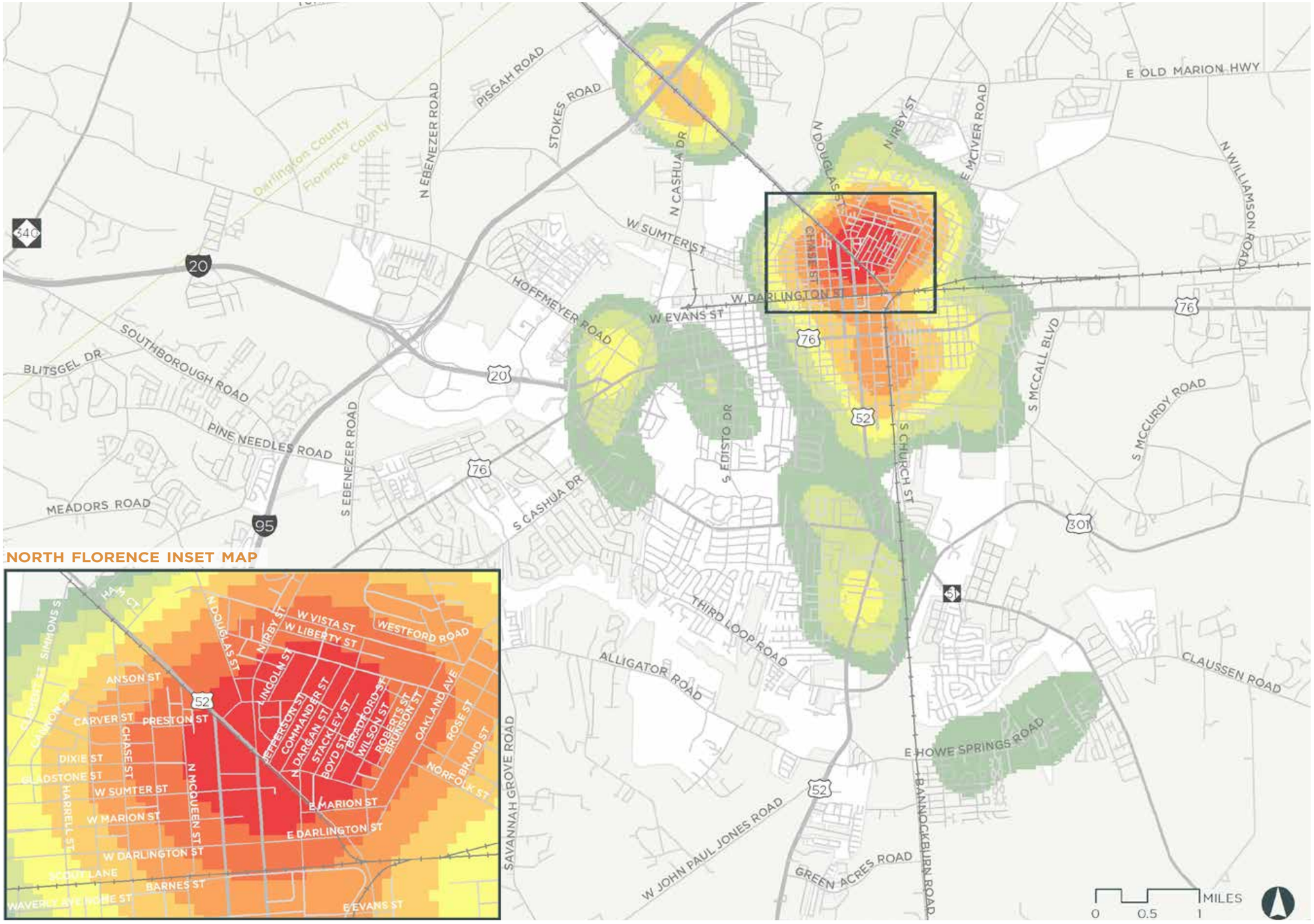
NORTH FLORENCE INSET MAP

LEGEND

Pedestrian Collisions from 2010- 2014

- Fatality
- Injury
- Property Damage Only
- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Urban Connections
- Road Improvement Project
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

PEDESTRIAN COLLISION HEAT MAP



NORTH FLORENCE INSET MAP

LEGEND

Pedestrian Collision Density

- High Frequency of Collision
- Low Frequency of Collision

EQUITY ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

An equity analysis provides insight about the areas of the City of Florence that have higher concentrations of vulnerable populations. When coupled with an overlay of healthy food outlet locations the results of the analysis bring attention to neighborhoods or corridors which may be most in need of improvements. For physical activity, the analysis sheds light on residents' access to resources that are essential to a healthy lifestyle.

This quantitative analysis provides a starting point for identifying priority areas, however, the Plan's recommendations are based on a synthesis of factors, including the equity analysis results, current best practices, stakeholder 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: The urban communities with more racial and ethnic minority and lower-income residents generally 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".

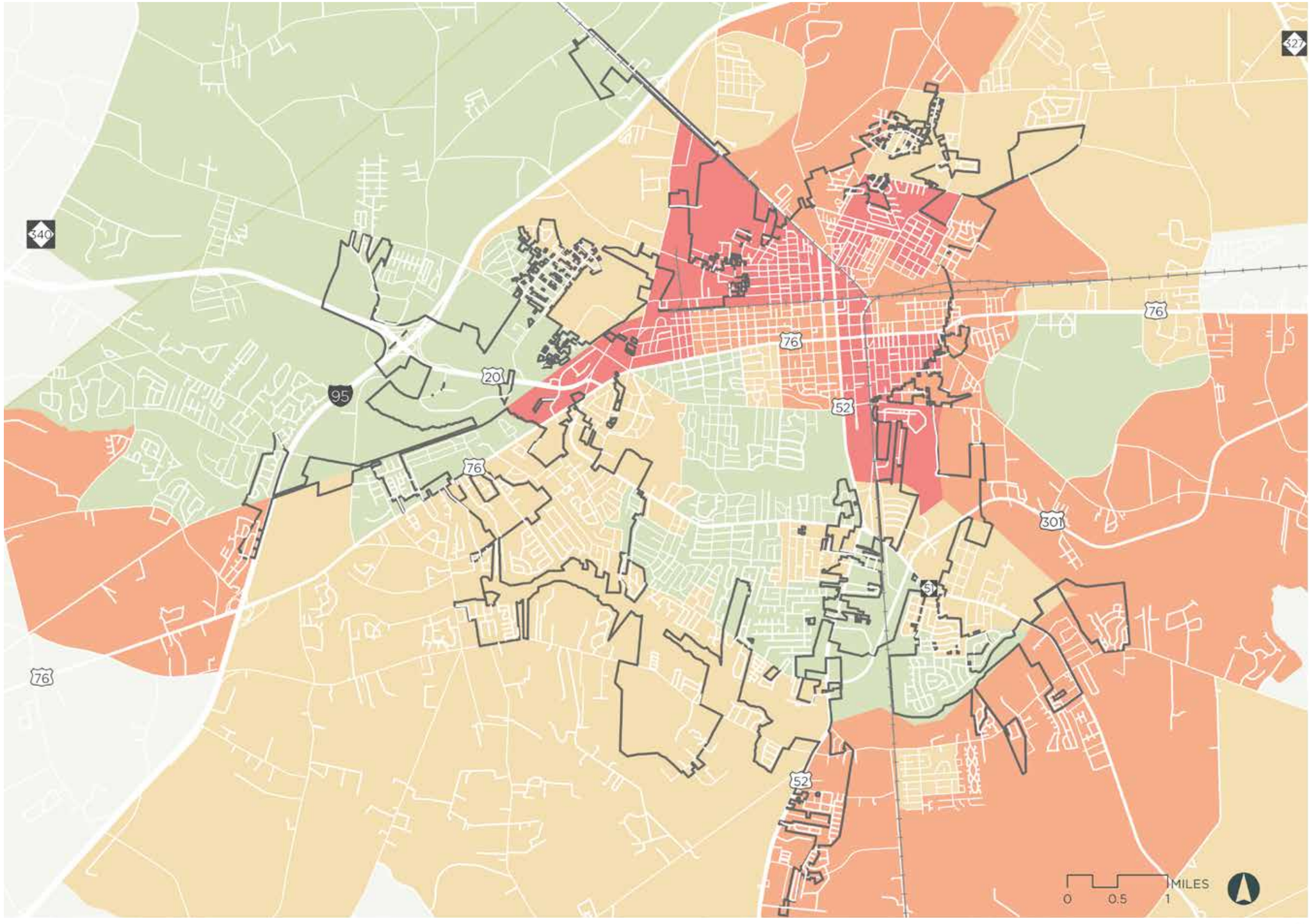
Rationale: Households that are linguistically isolated may have greater difficulty accessing services that are available to fluent English speakers, such as transportation services and social services.

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 limited outreach and education efforts aimed at attracting households that receive SNAP assistance.

COMPOSITE EQUITY MAP



The adjacent map reflect the areas of Florence with greater than average concentrations of the seven vulnerable populations.

Maps of the individual socioeconomic criteria can be found in the Appendix.

LEGEND

Concentration of Vulnerable Populations

- Highest
- Lowest

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HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS

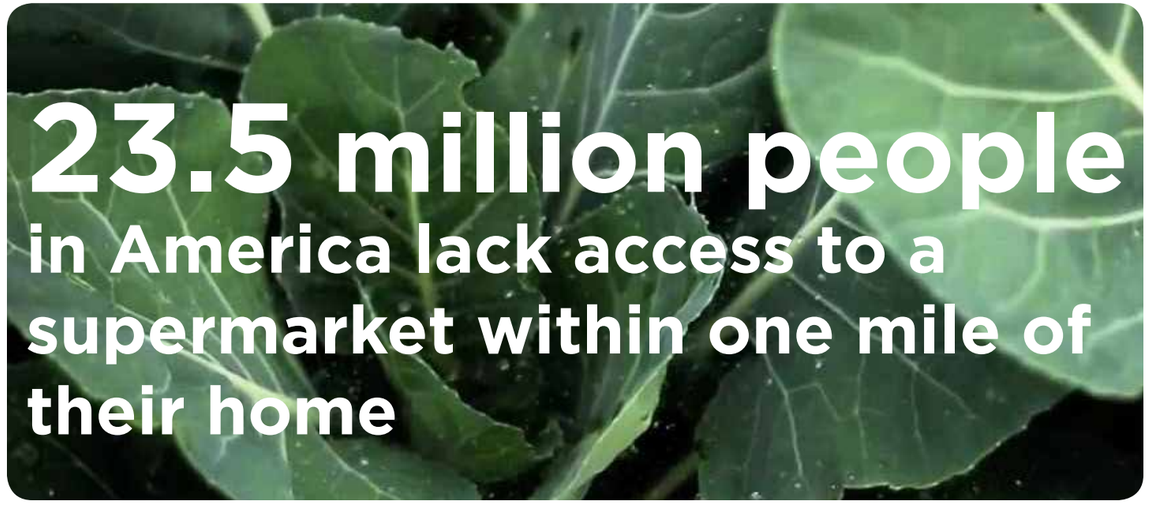
OVERVIEW

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 and economic 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 non-motorized routes such as sidewalks, pedestrian malls, 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.



HEALTH RISKS

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

- **37% of adults in Florence County are obese. This is 5 percent higher than the state rate of 32%. (Obesity is measures as a Body Mass Index [BMI] greater than 30)**
- **Over 15% of adults have type 2 diabetes**
- **37.9% of children are overweight or obese**
- **Almost 49% of adults consume less than one serving of fruits daily**
- **Over 30% of adults consume less than one serving of vegetables daily**

Florence County is considered one of the CDC's (CDC) "Diabetes Belt" counties. 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.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS, continued

FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

Food insecure areas experience reduced quality, variety, and availability of food. Food insecurity can also include a lack of affordable foods to maintain a healthy diet, or when households experience disruptive eating patterns or reduced food intake (hunger).

Food security, as a determinant of health, contribute to health status. In the City of Florence, where residents are food insecure they are more likely to have a poor diet. Poor diet significantly contributes to heart disease, obesity, diabetes, some cancers and stroke.

The City of Florence has four farmers markets and a number of seasonal community gardens, most of which are seasonal. The city also has about 22 grocery stores within or near city limits. Grocery stores are not equally dispersed across the city, however. Nearly all of the full-service grocery stores — the BI-LOs, Wal-Marts, Piggly Wiggly's and Food Lions — are on arterial roads at the city periphery.

The entire North Florence area has only one full-service grocery store. Thus local residents shop at convenience stores and discount variety stores to fill this gap. It is less likely that these informal food outlets sell fresh and nutritious food. Instead, they commonly sell pre-packaged and processed foods in both non-perishable and frozen packages. These types of foods have higher amounts of fat, sodium, sugar and calories.

The table below looks at healthy food opportunities by calculating the density of grocery stores and farmers markets. These outlets are referred to as food retail establishments or FRE. A healthy food outlet density of 0.2 or greater is desirable.

Summary Table of Florence's Food Retail Environment:

Food Retail Establishments (FRE)	26 (22 year round)
People/FRE	1,443
Square Miles/ FRE	0.68
Grocery Stores	22
People/Grocery Stores	1,705
Square Miles/ Grocery Stores	.81
Healthy Food Outlet Density	1.47 (1.24 year round)

The results show that the City of Florence is not considered a food desert. However, accessibility is still a central issue, especially for residents with disabilities or residents with limited access to a vehicle. Another element of expanding accessibility is to encourage Farmers Markets to participate in SNAP. The maps on the following pages shed light on healthy food access for these two vulnerable populations as well as for the composite of all vulnerable populations.

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS, continued

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 and farmers markets. A few of the farmers markets are seasonal so this is a limitation in the dataset.

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 healthy food access map can be found on the following page.

The walkability and food access connection runs along the US 278 and focuses on the southeast section of the town. While this is located in the high risk for health inequity, one of the challenges with this location is the CSX freight line that runs along US 278. This barrier presents an access and walkability challenge to the residents in this area.

The healthy food access map reveals three areas of healthy food outlet clustering. These clusters:

- extend along West Palmetto Street (US 76) in western Florence
- are around downtown Florence and parts of North Florence
- are around South Irby Street in South Florence

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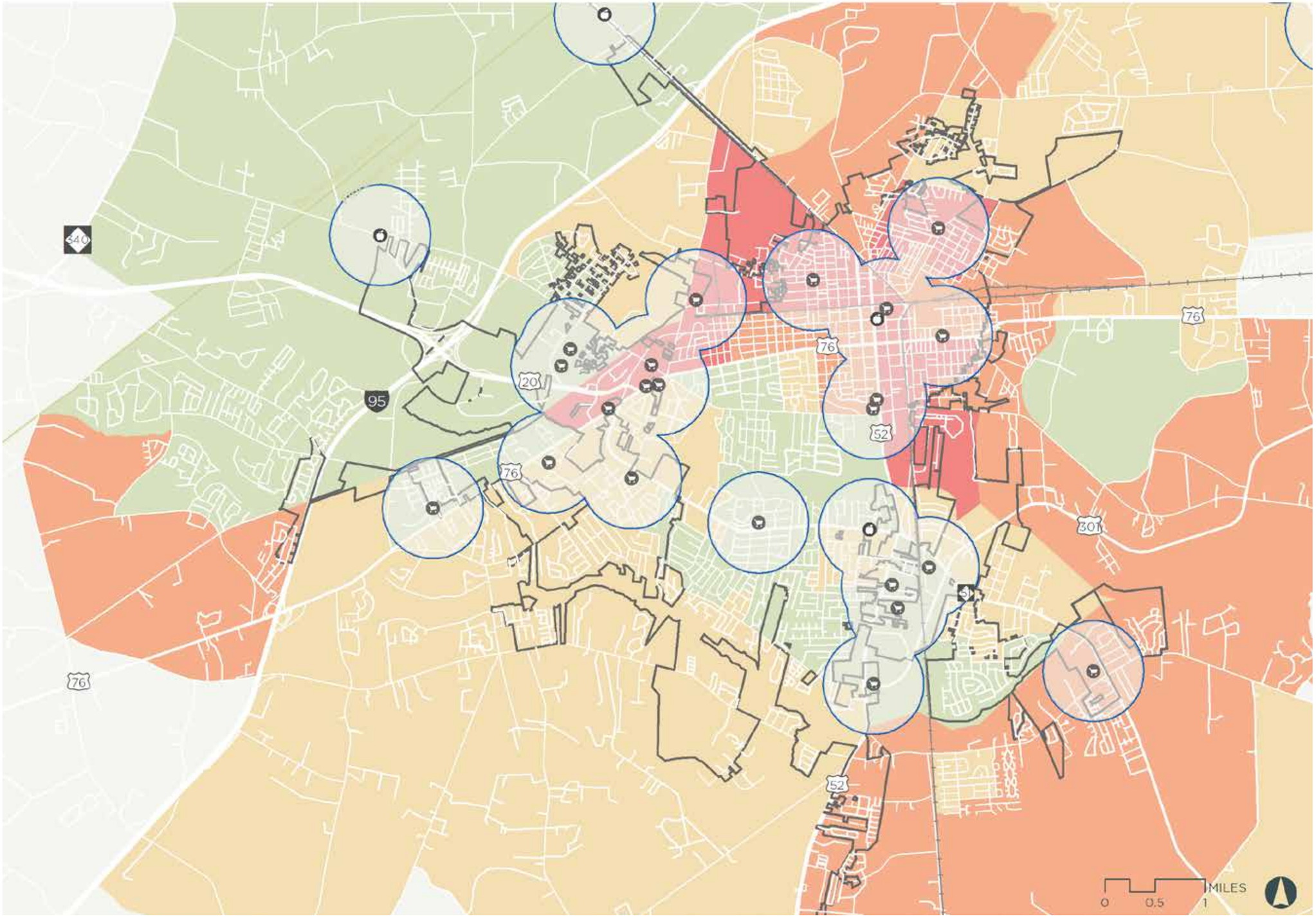
HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS ANALYSIS MAP



LEGEND

Concentration of Vulnerable Populations

- Highest
- Lowest

1/2 mile walkshed around healthy food outlets

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. The parks and recreation facilities in Florence provide ample access to exercise opportunities, however, accessing these destinations on foot is challenging.

County-level physical activity data show that:

- **Women report being slightly less physically active than men**
- **41.1% of all adults meet physical activity recommendations.** This is the same as the state rate but 8.8% lower than the nation.
- Of all South Carolina counties, **Florence ranks 27 out of 46 for health behavior.** Health behavior accounts for figures such as obesity, smoking, food environment index, and physical inactivity.

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

- **Percent of children in poverty is 29.6% in Florence County**, compared to 27% for the state as a whole. This is significant because **children living below the poverty line are 159% more likely to be deprived of recess.**
- **Students who walk to school** every day had **24 more minutes of physical activity per day.**

Obesity rates in Florence have consistently worsened year after year. One way to reverse this trend, apart from diet and exercise, is to expand mobility options. Providing the freedom to walk to places supports a healthy lifestyle. In turn, this boosts not only the city's physical activity level, but also increases mobility, accessibility, and quality of life for all residents.

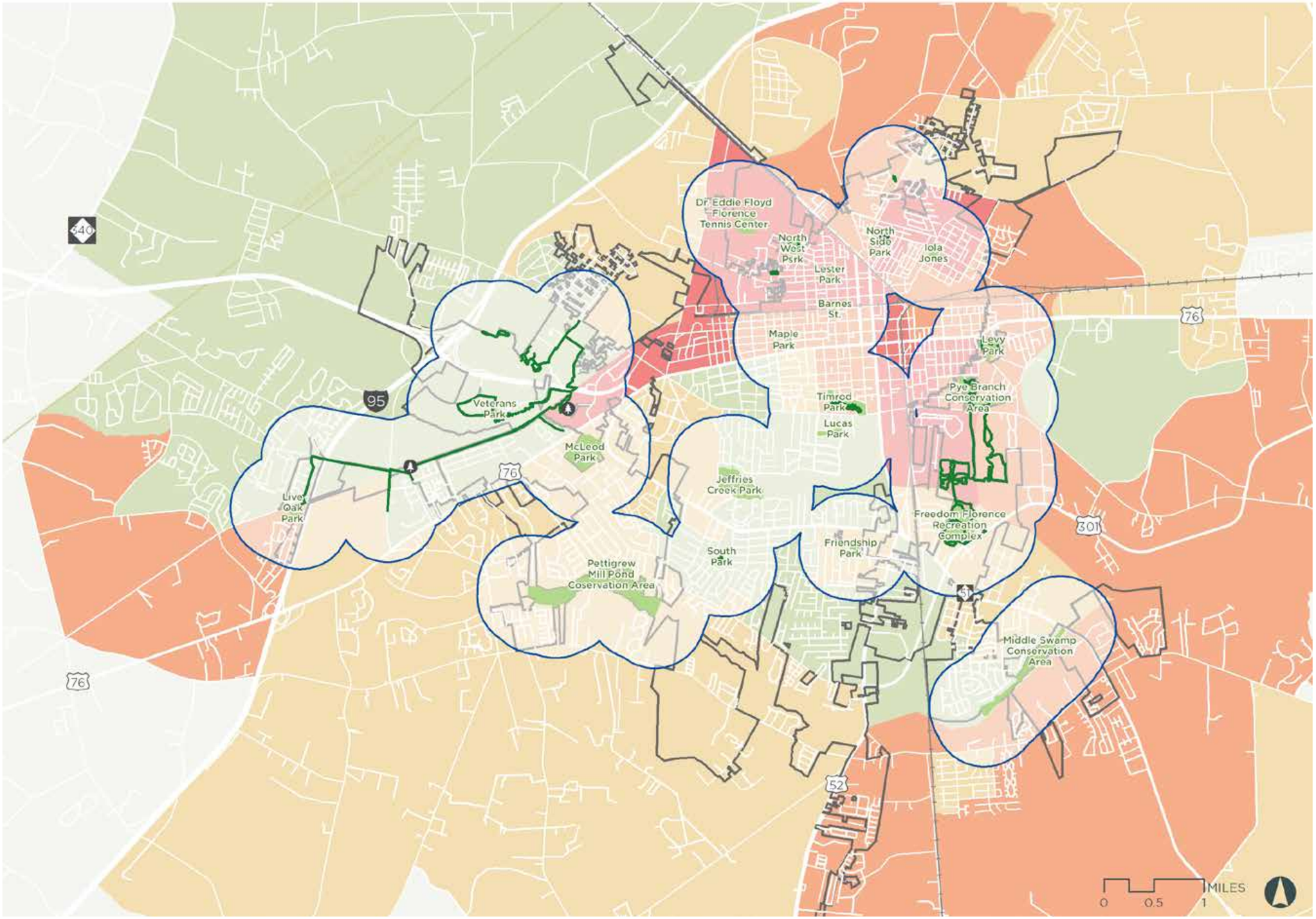
ACTIVE SPACE ACCESS ANALYSIS, continued

The results of the Composite Equity Analysis were also combined with a mapping study of active spaces. Active spaces are defined to include all existing greenspaces, parks, Freedom Florence connections, rail trail connections, and fitness trails. This analysis also uses a half-mile walkshed or 10 minute walk for most pedestrians.

The results of this analysis show that much of the city is encompassed in this walkshed area, and that active spaces are well distributed throughout the city. However, this may not paint a full picture of need due to assumptions and limitations in the data. For instance, linear active spaces like trails may only be accessible through trailheads so a buffer around the entire trail assumes all parts of the trail are accessible. Another limitation is the fact that all parks, no matter the size or facilities offered, create the same walkshed impact.

The resulting map is a starting point for understanding how to link active space destinations to areas of Florence that may be in need of pedestrian infrastructure improvements.

ACTIVE SPACE ACCESS ANALYSIS MAP



LEGEND

Concentration of Vulnerable Populations

- Highest
- Lowest

1/2 mile walkshed around active spaces

OPPORTUNITIES

Community Leadership

A strong group of community stakeholders and town leaders are working hard to improve quality of life for residents and visitors. Efforts include investment in the revitalization of historic downtown, attracting major employers to the area, developing a trail network, and strengthening the urban fabric through a redevelopment district and an arts & culture overlay district.

Ongoing Planning Efforts

The City of Florence's existing planning documents recognize the need for streetscape beautification efforts and pedestrian enhancements. The City is undertaking a number of catalyst projects both at the neighborhood and corridor level. **These catalyst projects, derived from the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy, are intended to transform specific parts of the city into pedestrian-friendly places and spur future investment and redevelopment.** Each project presents a unique opportunity to input this Plan's recommendations and inform design decisions.

Potential Project Partners

The City is fortunate to have schools, particularly **elementary schools, situated in residential neighborhoods.** Developing a partnership with Safe Routes to School means increased funding opportunities related to active transportation, and increased physical activity. Also, a **partnership with PDRTA presents opportunities to further expand residents' mobility** - allowing them to reach more employment opportunities and shopping destinations further out via public transit. **McLeod Regional Medical Center is a tremendous asset and potential partner for the city.** With a mission expression dedication to "improving the health of the community it serves" the organization knows the merits of safe and convenient active transportation.

Downtown Scale & Walkability

Much of Florence's downtown core is built on a relatively dense grid network of streets at a walkable scale. This enables pedestrians to reach key destinations like the City Center farmers market, Francis Marion University Performing Arts Center, and Timrod Park within a 20 minute walk. Historic buildings with short setbacks, attractive storefronts, ample sidewalk, curb extensions which shorten crosswalks, street trees and planters, decorative brick pavers, and pedestrian-scale lighting all contribute to a strong sense of place that is inviting and comfortable to walk. Designing surrounding urban streets with similar engaging features will bolster Florence's walkability and boost activity downtown.

Neighborhood Streets

Residential areas of Florence, particularly neighborhoods adjacent to Edisto Drive and Park Avenue, are **beautiful tree-lined, boulevard style streets with large grassy medians.** This makes for pleasant neighborhood walking conditions. **Preserving this character is key for retaining quality of life.** Adding traffic calming and other slow zone techniques can increase pedestrian safety. These neighborhood streets present the **opportunity to alleviate vehicular traffic that currently speeds through and uses the roads as cut-throughs** to bypass major thoroughfares.

Trail Network

Florence's existing and proposed **trail network has the potential to improve mobility options for residents and visitors.** However, residents and visitors are often unaware of a trail's extent and trailhead location. **Better marketing of the trail system and its benefits will increase its use and garner support for proposed expansion**. A complete trail system, particularly one integrated with on-street facilities that reaches key destinations across Florence, will **encourage walking not only for recreation purposes but also for transportation.**

Neighborhood Food Outlets

As part of a larger beautification effort, the city's Beautification and Facilities Division created several community garden plots. These gardens are located at Northwest Park, Iola Jones Park, Lester Park, Timrod Park, and near the intersection of Pine and Galliard in the East Florence neighborhood. **These raised beds play a vital role in supporting a healthy lifestyle, stirring civic engagement, and strengthening community pride.** Expanding and **directing this effort to include food insecure areas of Florence will increase healthy food options** for those residents. Additionally, the City is creating a **Food Overlay District in downtown that will create a new source for locally-grown, healthy foods accessible to downtown neighborhoods.**

Parks & Recreation Facilities

Florence residents have **15 different park and recreation facilities to enjoy daily, helping to serve their physical activity needs.** Creating safe, convenient, and comfortable ways of accessing these areas on foot can only increase their popularity and increase the quality of life for all residents and visitors. **Adding wayfinding signage is one way to inform residents and visitors of their proximity to these wonderful places, and to inform users of the connections that exist between them.**

CONSTRAINTS

Sidewalk Network Gaps

Walkability diminishes outside of the core due to **large gaps in the sidewalk network, creating significant mobility and accessibility barriers.** Pedestrians are faced with an obstacle course of perils, often having to walk in the road or make their own route. These **desire lines express a true need and demand for pedestrian facilities** (left). Connectivity of the sidewalk network, as well as linkages to existing and proposed trail systems and the transit network, will have to be addressed.

Trail Design in Urban Context

A lack of warning signs, a lack of high-visibility crosswalks, and ill-placed crossings leave **trail users exposed to fast-moving, unaware drivers.** In particular, yellow-stripes that intersect a standard, worn crosswalk for the Florence Rail Trail on a curved section of Woody Jones Boulevard prioritize vehicular speed at the detriment of other users' safety (left). The City should **develop and reference trail design standards** to prevent issues such as these, and to prevent the mixing of the trail with a travel lane (right).

Lack of High-Visibility Crosswalks

Florence has made strides to integrate design features such as brick pavers in crosswalks downtown. However, while these crosswalks may be aesthetically pleasing, they do little to increase the visibility and safety of pedestrians. Additionally, **major corridors on the periphery of downtown lack crosswalks altogether.** Some of these intersections already have important pedestrian facilities like push buttons and pedestrian signal heads but **lack high-visibility pavement markings which alert drivers to a pedestrian's presence.**

Inadequate ADA Compliance

ADA accessibility is a systemic issue in Florence's pedestrian network. The CDC recognizes that walking and wheelchair rolling are rights, not luxuries, that each person should have. As such, **Florence should design and invest in its pedestrian facilities** to encourage safe pedestrian activity and **integrate walking and wheelchair rolling as a normal part of daily life** for people of all ages and abilities.

Wide Roads

Roadway corridors are wider than needed for the traffic volumes they serve, and in some cases, travel lanes are oversized. Along some of these major corridors pedestrians are immediately adjacent to fast-moving traffic. Reducing lane widths and reallocating roadway space, "right-sizing," benefits the pedestrian and can even allow for bicycle facilities. This reconfiguration slows traffic speeds while maintaining throughput, buffers pedestrians, and creates a multimodal corridor.

Perception of Safety

Perception of crime and violence prevents many Florence residents from walking, especially at night. Residents expressed their preference for walking in their neighborhoods on local streets and on Florence's trails. However, **there are few pedestrian-oriented lights to improve their sense of safety so residents forego walking altogether.** Organizing neighborhood watches and partnering with law enforcement to establish recurring walking routes that are monitored can encourage walking, foster community relationships, and deter crime.

Walkability Disconnect

Apart from the downtown core where traffic is calmer and streets are human-scaled, a number of Florence's roads are uninviting cavities of their otherwise urban context. For instance, **there is both a perceived and real chasm between two anchors of the city** — Five Points and downtown Florence — due to wide streets with fast-moving traffic and few safe pedestrian crossings. Narrow sidewalks, high vehicle speed limits, frequent driveway curb cuts, and the lack of ADA accessibility all creating **compounding mobility challenges.**

Road Ownership

South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) owns a majority of roads in Florence, not unlike most other municipalities in the state. As a state agency, this limits local control over what improvements and alterations can happen to a roadway. Coordinating and partnering with SCDOT early on in the planning and implementation process will be an important step in creating positive change.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

"Cities evolve. We create our future one building at a time. So there's no time like the present to start building - and rebuilding - places that are great for people and communities (again)."
- Fred Kent

OVERVIEW

The Florence Pedestrian Plan establishes a community supported vision for advancing walkability in Florence. The recommendations of the Plan provide a 10-year action plan for the City of Florence and its partners to move toward that vision. The proposed improvements reflect national best practices in pedestrian planning as well as input from residents, stakeholders, the Project Steering Committee, and municipal staff, and are based on past planning efforts and the existing conditions analysis.

It is important to note that while this study offers an action plan for creating a more walkable Florence, the recommendations of the plan should not preclude other investments in the pedestrian environment that are not included in this report. This Plan provides a useful framework for proactively seeking funding and advancing projects from concept to implementation. This proactive approach does not, however, lessen the need to consider opportunistic improvements as well, such as the timeliness of capitalizing on a new development or capital project, streetscape enhancement project, SCDOT corridor improvement, upgrade to an intersection, or new trail connection.

FRAMEWORK

Research has shown that a comprehensive approach to walk- and bicycle-friendliness is more effective than a singular approach that would address infrastructure issues only. Recognizing this, the national the Walk Friendly Community program, administered by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, recommends a multi-faceted approach based on the following five 'E's: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. Also, a sixth 'E', Equity, is often included in order to ensure equal consideration for those whom pedestrian improvements may benefit the most.

The infrastructure recommendations outlined in this chapter and the implementation strategies provided in the following chapter represent the "engineering" aspect of that multi-faceted approach. The Appendix provides a summary of recommended strategies for the remaining four "Es" through community programs and policy concepts. While the City and its agency and jurisdictional partners (namely SCDOT, the County, and FLATS) are responsible for infrastructure projects and policy development, community programs can and should be led by outside partners such as nonprofits, advocacy groups, foundations, private sector businesses, and interested citizens.

The recommendations of this plan provide a starting point for community partners to join the City in moving towards a culture of pedestrian friendliness and ultimately increasing walking activity in Florence.

ORGANIZATION

The following sections detail pedestrian infrastructure recommendations for the City of Florence. The intent of these recommendations is to present a vision of walkability priorities, ensuring citywide accessibility and mobility for pedestrians of all ages and abilities. To achieve such a vision, the recommendations are organized as follows:

- **Rationale** — An explanation of the key criteria used in identifying and developing the network recommendations.
- **Citywide Network Recommendations** — A series of maps illustrating the full set of recommendations in the context of previously proposed projects, the equity mapping analysis, and the pedestrian collision mapping analysis

Network recommendations are both spot and linear in nature. Spot improvements include crossing improvements at mid-block, unsignalized intersections, and signalized intersection locations. The table on page 68 helped guide recommendations for unsignalized locations, and can continue to help the City when implementing crossing facilities. Linear improvements span an entire corridor or a piece of a corridor and typically address filling sidewalk network gaps, improving sidewalks in disrepair, reducing speed limits, and adding signage.

A phasing plan and a master table of individual projects can be found in the following chapter, Implementation Plan.

RATIONALE

SAFETY

Most pedestrian crashes typically occur when people are crossing the street. For people on foot, safety decreases as the number of lanes increases, due to higher traffic speeds and longer crossing distances. This is particularly true at intersections, where safety is impaired by multiple turning movements, insufficient pedestrian crossing times, and poor crosswalk visibility. Serious injuries and fatalities often result from a lack of safe mid-block crossings and infrequent crossings on arterials, especially along transit routes where demand is high for crossings.

In Florence, pedestrian injuries and fatalities are concentrated along arterials and major intersections, mirroring state and national trends. In addition to assessing locations of serious injuries and fatalities for safe crossing treatments, prioritization also considered collision frequency, developing recommendations for areas where more than two crashes were reported in close proximity.

PUBLIC INPUT

The focus group and steering committee meetings distilled both widespread pedestrian issues and needs as well as specific network gaps, and corridors and intersections in need of upgrades.

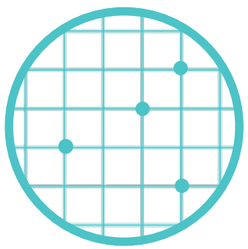
The responses from this plan's public outreach effort largely echoed the findings of the Neighborhood Action Plan and Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. Specifically, residents emphasized the need for pedestrian-scale lighting, neighborhood to neighborhood connectivity, and well-designed streetscapes that meet the needs of all users.

This feedback was confirmation of the city's ongoing efforts to enhance key corridors, and also served as a guide for identifying needs not necessarily located by key destinations or crash hotspots.

NETWORK CONNECTIVITY

This consideration recognizes that while some of the most popular and direct routes may have adequate sidewalks along the length of the corridor, they currently lack safe, convenient, and comfortable crossings. This includes a lack of crossings at signalized intersections, unsignalized intersections, and mid-block crossings. The lack of crossings coupled with a lack of signage and signal coordination, poor facility conditions, and design deficiencies all dissuade pedestrian activity.

Context is key. In walkable areas such as downtown Florence, crossings should be frequently spaced at distances of less than 500 feet. In less dense areas, crossing locations should be prioritized by evaluating factors such as demand, land use, housing density, and pedestrian generators. These generators may include bus stops, grocery stores, schools, senior housing, and high concentrations of vulnerable populations.



ACCESSIBILITY TO KEY DESTINATIONS

Safe walking routes to schools and safe routes to healthy food vendors create a focus for pedestrian improvements that will improve health outcomes for all ages. Locations for improvements are equitably distributed across Florence. Among food vendors, locations that sell healthy, local products are emphasized. Safe crossings and intersection improvements are crucial to enabling access from neighborhoods to schools and healthy foods, particularly across major arterial roads. In addition to crossings, specific corridor improvements related to access to healthy food outlets and access to schools are highlighted on the following linear recommendations pages.

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PEDESTRIAN CROSSING CONTEXTUAL GUIDANCE
AT UNSIGNALIZED LOCATIONS

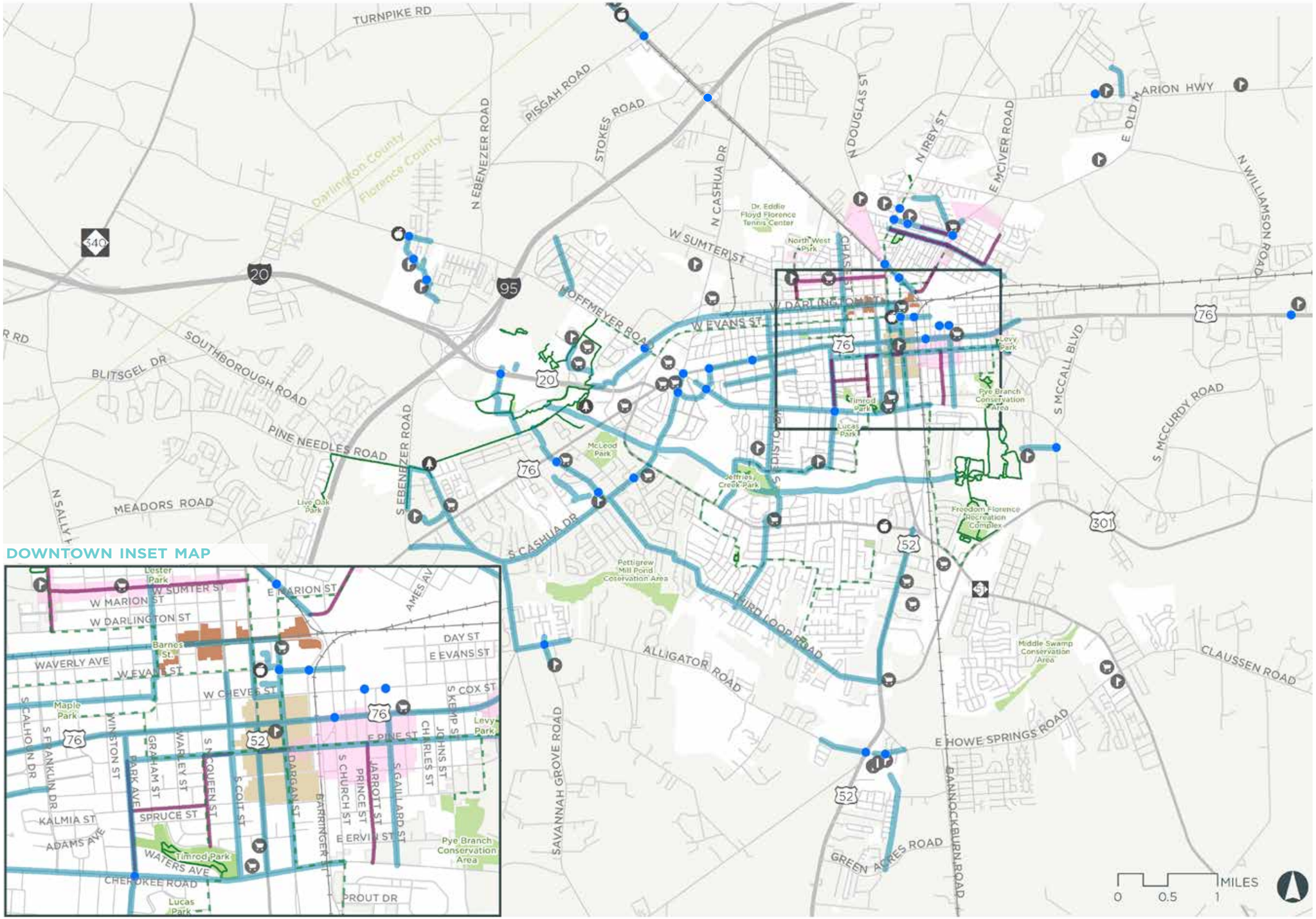
Spot improvement recommendations consist of a range of enhancements to pedestrian crossings. While pedestrian safety must be addressed at signalized intersections, improvements to unsignalized locations (intersections without a traffic signal or at a mid-block location, for instance) warrant additional attention. Choosing the right crosswalk treatment for the street conditions to ensure pedestrian safety and convenience, while increasing the probability that drivers will yield, means selecting a context-appropriate crossing type. Developing a plan for identifying new crossings and where existing crossings should be improved requires careful analysis of street improvement plans and engineering judgement.

The table below describes a high-level recommendations, based on national guidance and research, to consider when selecting crossing facility types.

LEGEND	
MOST DESIRABLE	✔
ENGINEERING JUDGEMENT	●
NOT RECOMMENDED	

FACILITY TYPE	Local Streets 15 - 25 MPH		Collector Streets 25 - 30 MPH			Arterial Streets 30 - 45 MPH							
	2 lanes	3 lanes	2 lanes	2 lanes with median refuge	3 lanes	2 lanes	2 lanes with median refuge	3 lanes	4 lanes	4 lanes with median refuge	5 lanes	6 lanes	6 lanes with median refuge
High visibility crosswalk	✔	✔	●	●		●	●						
Crosswalk with warning signage and yield lines	●	✔	✔	✔	✔	●	●	●					
Active warning beacon (RRFB)		●	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔			
Hybrid beacon			●	●	●	●	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Full traffic signal			●	●	●	●	●	●	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Grade separation			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	✔	✔

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED AND ONGOING PROJECTS

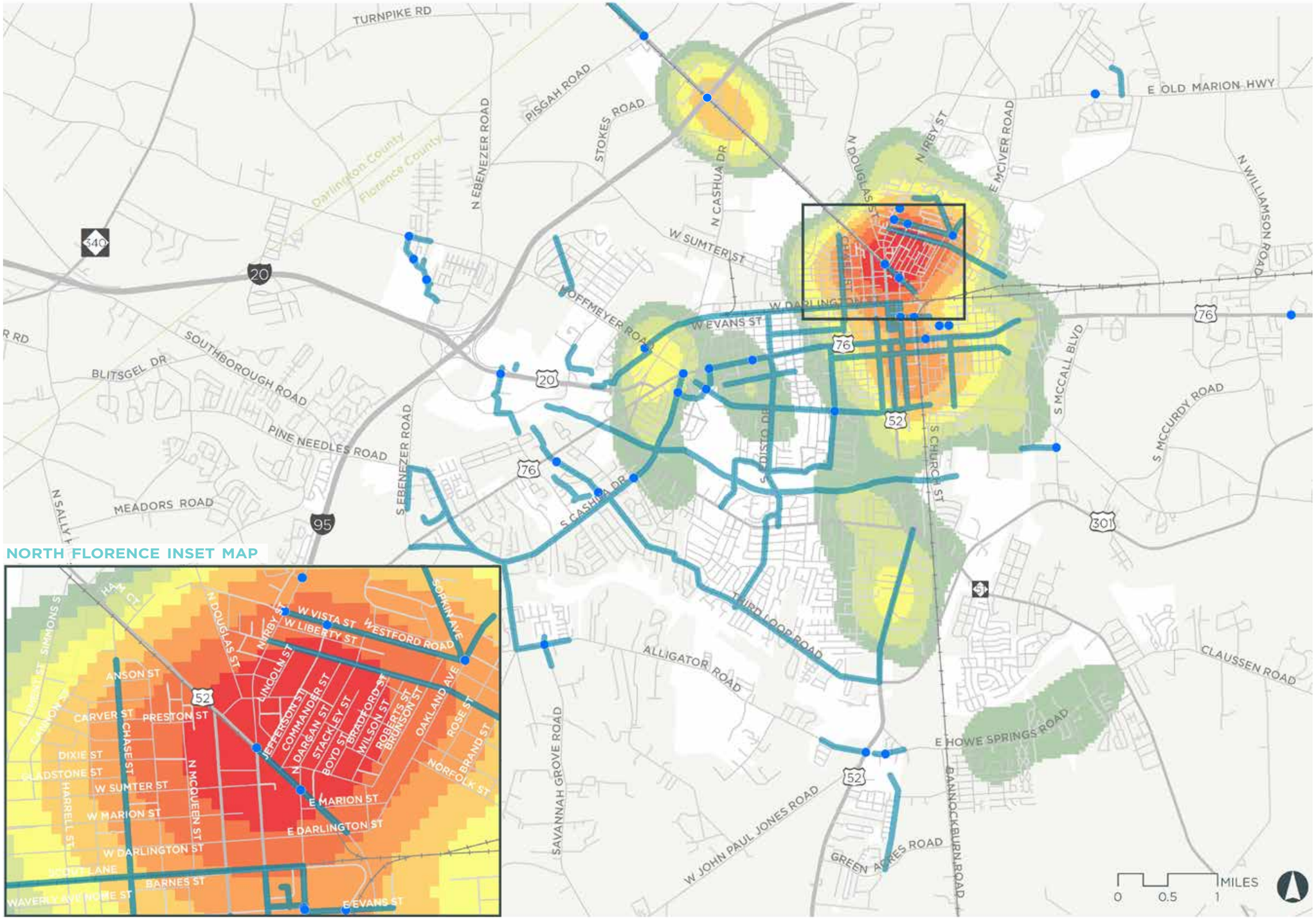


DOWNTOWN INSET MAP

LEGEND

- Spot Improvement
- Linear Improvement
- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Urban Connections
- Road Improvement Project
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH COLLISION HOTSPOT UNDERLAY



NORTH FLORENCE INSET MAP

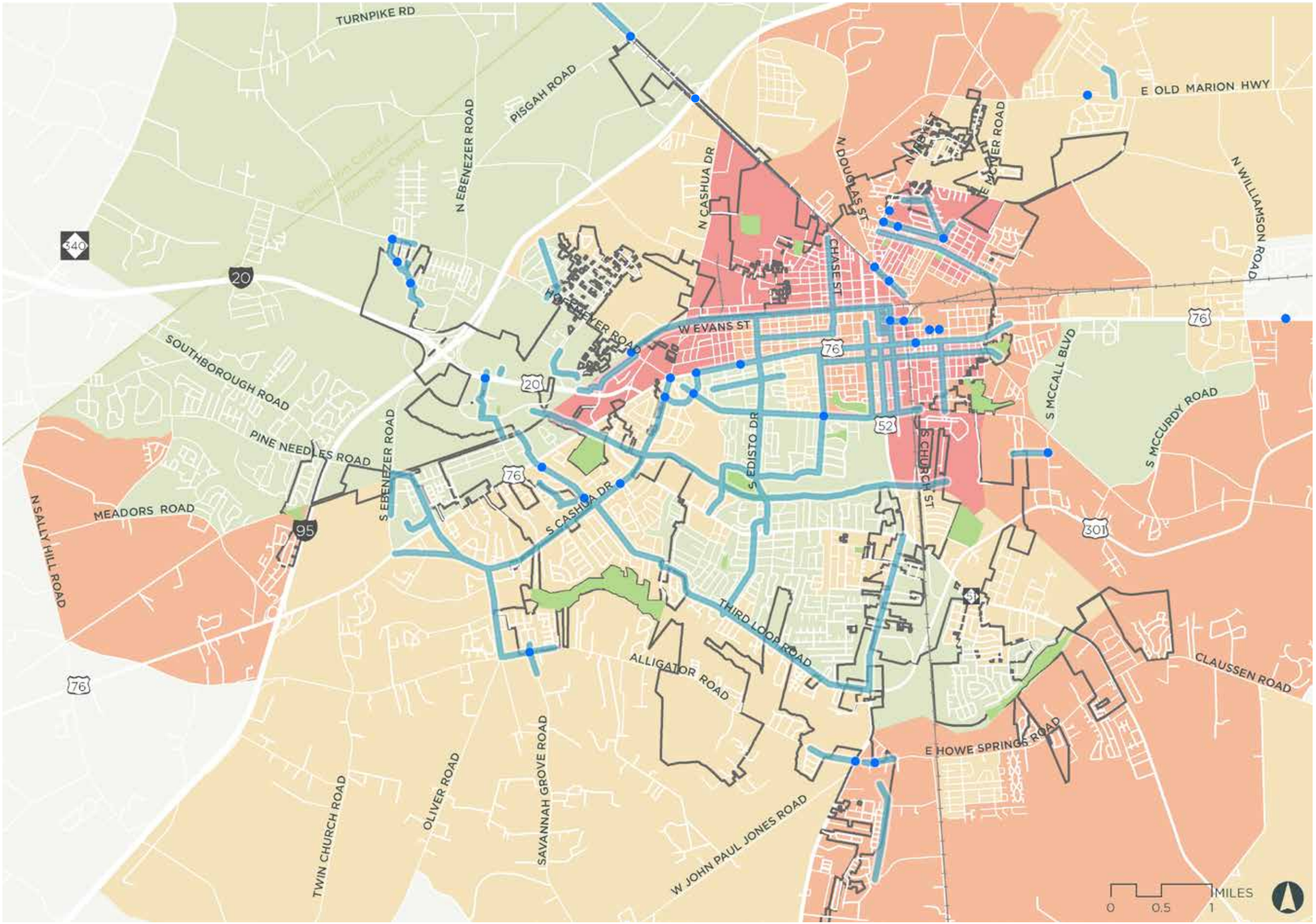
LEGEND

- Spot Improvement
- Linear Improvement

Pedestrian Collision Density

- High Frequency of Collision
- Low Frequency of Collision

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH EQUITY UNDERLAY



LEGEND

Concentration of Vulnerable Populations

- Highest
- Lowest
- Spot Improvement
- Linear Improvement

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IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

"Because trends established today will determine the future of cities for many decades, actions are needed now for the sustainable cities of tomorrow"

- Pedestrian Safety, Urban Space and Health

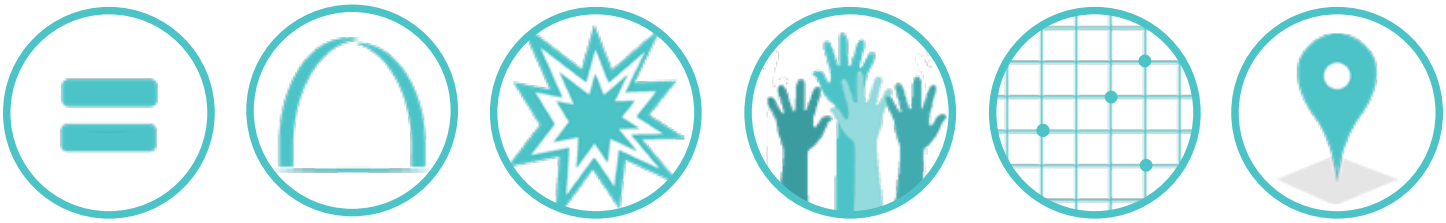
PRIORITIZATION APPROACH

How do we prioritize pedestrian network recommendations?

Six prioritization criteria were used as a set of filters to rank projects and distill a phasing plan for all of the proposed recommendations.

The aforementioned rationale employed to develop city-wide pedestrian recommendations — safety, public input, network connectivity, and access to destinations — continues to carry weight and importance when considering how to prioritize these walkability recommendations. In addition to those four criteria, two more considerations were added — addresses an *equity need* and serves as a *gateway*.

The City of Florence is currently engaged in a number of projects and capital projects that employ the same criteria. The purpose of this specialized scoring criteria for pedestrian improvements is to compliment these ongoing projects, to get a sense of what pedestrian improvements should come first, and to understand which projects are easiest to implement. This process allows the City and its implementing partners to objectively evaluate a project's significance.



PRIORITIZATION RESULTS

KEEP IN MIND...

The results of the prioritization process are a dynamic starting point in the decision making process for creating strategic pedestrian network improvements. *All projects within the proposed network have merit* and should be implemented as timely and cost-effective opportunities arise. The results of the prioritization process are not intended to preclude projects from receiving funding or from being incorporated into a new development or other roadway project.

The prioritization framework is a flexible approach, intended to provide clear direction for proactively seeking project funds and completing design and engineering of the most critical projects, while still allowing for opportunistic implementation of the entire network. This framework recognizes that grant funding, roadway reconstruction projects, and other implementation factors may influence a more nuanced final prioritization list.

With key projects identified, the City of Florence can then pursue next steps like identifying project-specific funding, land acquisition, and communicating with other partners along proposed alignments (such as utility companies, impacted neighborhoods, and large tract property owners).

PHASE 1

Based on the prioritization approach, the first phase of projects focus on creating **slow zone corridors and targeted spot improvements**, specifically in downtown Florence. Neighborhood slow zones increase quality of life through a holistic approach to creating safe and attractive streets. They effectively reduce the frequency and severity of collisions, reduce vehicle cut-through patterns, increase access and safety for all modes, reduce noise levels, and potentially discourage crime through newly generated street life, instilling social control and neighborhood ownership.

As with other linear recommendations, a roadway's setting and its particular issues dictate specific slow zone recommendations. A combination of practices can be employed. Particular recommendations may include:

- Re-evaluating appropriate design speeds
- Speed humps or speed tables
- Raised crosswalks or raised intersections
- Median barriers or center island narrowing
- Forced turn islands or traffic circles
- Neckdowns, chokers, chicanes, or bulbouts
- Traffic diverters (semi or diagonal)
- Street closures (full or half)
- Wayfinding signage

These projects are the "low-hanging fruit," meaning, they are some of the **easiest and least expensive to implement but yield significant and momentous positive outcomes for the pedestrian** environment and pedestrian experience. Phase 1 project types are **the best way to change walkability culture in the City of Florence.** They are a package deal of infrastructure improvements with supplemental elements like wayfinding, gateways, and neighborhood building.

PHASE 2

The second phase of projects focuses on improving and **completing the pedestrian network through sidewalk infill and streetscape enhancements** along key corridors. Phase 2 also targets expanding the pedestrian network to other **nodes of activity, especially grocery stores**, parks, and other high-demand destinations.

For better or worse, surface parking lots are largely a part of America's urban design fabric, including at some of Florence's most popular nodes of activity. Within these vast swaths of asphalt there are few considerations for pedestrian mobility. At big-box stores in particular, parking lot design (or lack thereof) often pit pedestrians against vehicles, creating opportunities for collisions.

Apart from safety concerns, parking lots typically lack connections to the broader surrounding, and lack sidewalk facilities and connectivity within the shopping center. This forces people to resort to their car to both reach the destination and to move within the destination itself. Creating linkages to reverse this behavior and ease this reliance on a vehicle is an important facet of this phase.

Similarly, recommendations for improving access to healthy food outlets were influenced by the built environment and land use practices in Florence, recognizing that major grocery stores were often built in isolation and distant from the urban downtown's walkable form. Well-designed active transportation infrastructure **connecting to healthy food options provides the cobenefit of not only enhancing mobility** and expanding transportation options, but also **encouraging physical activity.** Furthermore, a compounding benefit of shopping at local, accessible healthy food outlets is the **reduction of 'grocery store leakage.'** This term refers to the millions of dollars that are spent at grocery stores outside of the local community.

The City of Florence has made significant strides to **integrate food systems into their planning and zoning practices**, but retrofitting existing healthy food hubs for pedestrian activity are still a necessary reality.

Lastly, in terms of streetscape enhancement recommendations, context is key and each corridor will vary, but each can include a selection of the following improvements:

- filling sidewalk gaps
- adding new sidewalks
- improving sidewalks in disrepair
- reducing speed limits
- adding pedestrian warning signage
- adding pedestrian amenities like lighting, benches, trash cans, and shade trees
- rebalancing the right-of-way to better accommodate people on foot and bike

These improvements, of both corridor and spot improvement type, **forge links between disconnected community anchors and priority destinations** such as 5 Points and downtown, North Florence neighborhoods and downtown, and the Civic Center and the City's trail system.

PHASE 3

While Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects have worked in tandem to increase walkability downtown, the third wave of recommendations hone in on **corridor and spot improvement needs at the city perimeter.** Generally, the purpose of spot improvements is to:

- augment connectivity by **completing missing links** in the network, thus i**ncreasing mobility at critical intersections and crossing points** which may currently lack adequate facilities or may be perceived as barriers
- increase **accessibility to key destinations**, particularly schools, transit stops, grocery stores, and local farmers markets
- **address known safety issues** and concerns, particularly hot spots of fatalities and injuries
- respond to the **mobility and accessibility needs expressed by Florence residents**

Spot improvements also consider the current crossing conditions like street geometry, signal timing, ADA accessibility, and speed limits.

All of Phase 3 projects continue to build out the pedestrian network to create a seamless system that reaches **key periphery destinations**.

PHASE 4

At the core of Phase 4 is establishing **safe, comfortable, and convenient connections to schools.** Over the past 50 years children and adolescents have steadily walked or biked to school less and less. A number of factors for this decline are at play, including suburban sprawl which creates long distances between homes and schools, neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, high rates of car ownership, infrequent and unsafe roadway crossings, high volume and high speed roads, and perception of neighborhood safety. The resounding impact has been a precipitous increase in childhood obesity, diminishing cardiovascular fitness and mental health, increased transportation costs for schools and families, and increased health care costs.

The City of Florence has a number of **schools within walking distance of neighborhoods** and commercial areas which students could walk to if adequate pedestrian facilities existed. These schools and their associated corridors were thus identified as priority connections. The underpinning of these priority connection recommendations is to **address known safety issues, specifically within a 10 minute walkshed,** or approximately a half-mile radius. Safer, calmer streets promote walking and bicycling and are thus invariably conducive for active transportation users of all ages and abilities to enjoy.

Apart from connections to schools, the final phase of this phasing plan emphasizes **closing the remaining gaps** of the pedestrian network, **realizing a linked sidewalk and trail system that logically interfaces with destinations, amenities, and centers of activity** throughout the City of Florence.

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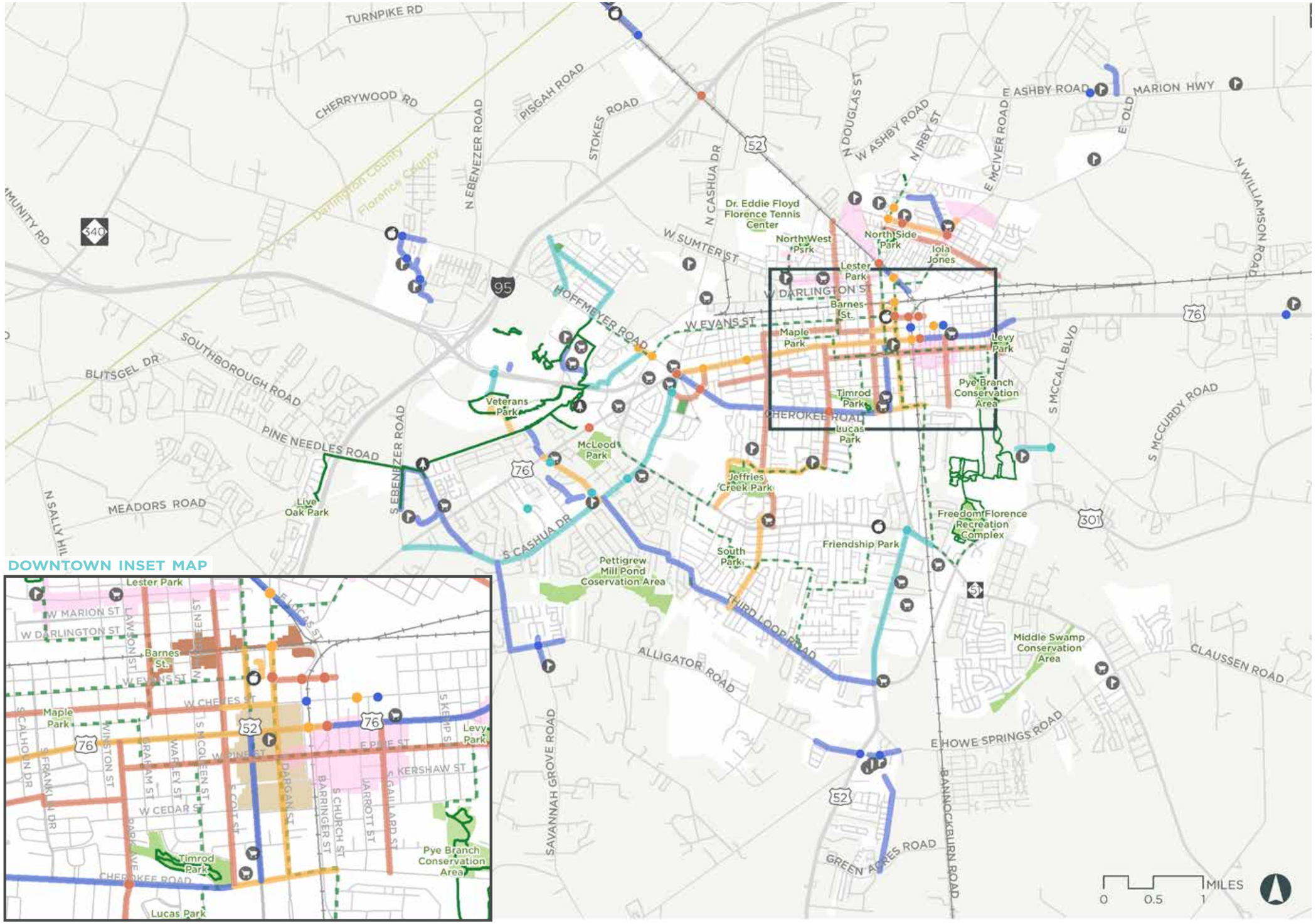
RECOMMENDATIONS BY PHASE



DOWNTOWN INSET MAP

LEGEND

Spot Recommendations
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4

Linear Recommendations
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Phase 3
- Phase 4

- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Urban Connections
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

LINEAR RECOMMENDATIONS MASTER TABLE

OBJECTID	Name	Start/End Point	Miles	Phase	Safety	Connectivity	Public Input	Access to Key Destinations	Equity	Gateway	Recommendation Notes
10	E. Evans Street	S. Dargan Street to S. Ravenel Street	0.29	1	✔			✔	✔	✔	Improve as primary connection corridor between hospital and downtown. Narrow existing travel lanes to 10ft and add bike lanes. Add buffered sidewalks. Add safe, ADA-compliant crossings over Railroad Avenue. Add pedestrian wayfinding signs showing distance from hospital to downtown in walking minutes.
37	Revell Drive/ Pineland Avenue	W. Palmetto Street to S. Cashua Drive	0.56	1		✔	✔	✔			An alternative ped/bike route to reach 5 Points destinations on foot. Add safe crossings at major intersections. Create bike boulevard with signage and lower speed limits. Add pedestrian wayfinding.
43	S. Edisto Drive	W. Palmetto Street to Second Loop Road	1.96	1		✔	✔	✔		✔	Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street.
44	Chase Street	State Route 52 to W. Evans Street	1.00	1	✔				✔		Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street.
45	S. Gaillard Street	E. Palmetto Street to E. National Cemetery Road	0.69	1		✔	✔		✔		Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street.
46	Jackson Avenue/ Chesnut Avenue	Greenway Drive to Park Avenue	1.11	1	✔	✔					Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street.
48	W. Roughfork Street/E. Maxwell Street	N. Irby Street to Hyman Street	1.25	1	✔		✔	✔	✔		Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street.
49	Pine Street	Park Avenue to Levy Park	1.79	1	✔	✔		✔	✔		Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
50	King Avenue/W. Cheves Street	S. Edisto Drive to S. Coit Street	1.11	1	✔		✔	✔	✔		Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
51	Park Avenue	W. Palmetto Street to Wisteria Drive	1.22	1			✔	✔		✔	Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
59	S. Coit Street	W. Sumter Street to E. National Cemetery Road	2.03	1	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	Add pedestrian wayfinding.
69	Kuker Street	W. Evans Street to W. Cheves Street	0.12	1		✔			✔		Add traffic calming, post and lower speed limits, add pedestrian wayfinding.
2	W. Palmetto Street	5 Points to Graham Street	1.61	2		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Rebalance from 4 lanes to 3 with turn lane. Add bike lanes. Lower speed limit to 25 MPH in residential areas.

OBJECTID	Name	Start/End Point	Miles	Phase	Safety	Connectivity	Public Input	Access to Key Destinations	Equity	Gateway	Recommendation Notes
4	S. Irby Street	W N B Baroody Street to W. Cheves Street	0.26	2	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Use Evans Street corridor streetscaping as model for improvements. Rebalance roadway by converting to 3 lanes with center turn lane. Add curb bulbouts especially at crossings to reduce crossing distance. Change existing parallel parking to angled parking. Add mid-block crossing at county services center. Reduce speed limit to 25 mph (downtown zone). Widen and buffer sidewalks.
6	Cherokee Road/E. National Cemetery Road	S. Coit Street to S. Church Street	0.48	2	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		Rebalance roadway to 3 lanes with a center turn lane. Use the extra right of way space to add sidewalk buffers and/or bike lanes.
7	S. Dargan Street	W. Cheves Street to Cherokee Road	0.80	2		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Reduce speed limits from 30 to 25 mph. Add bike lanes by reducing over-sized travel lanes.
8	N. Dargan Street	W N B Baroody Street to W. Cheves Street	0.25	2	✔	✔	✔	✔			Streetscape enhancements. Retain historic storefronts. Consider programmatic compliments to infrastructure improvements such as Popup Shop, Facade Improvements, Build a Better Block, or an Arts Corridor.
30	W. Vista Street	N. Irby Street to Oakland Avenue	0.61	2			✔	✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhood residents with local destinations like the grocery store and schools.
38	Oakland Avenue	E. Vista Street to Royal Street	0.17	2	✔			✔	✔		Add sidewalks to the southbound side of the street
40	Marsh Avenue	Third Loop Road to Edisto Drive	1.10	2			✔	✔			Connect Food Lion to neighborhoods to the south with sidewalks and pedestrian amenities like shade trees, benches, trash cans, and lighting.
42	S. Parker Drive	Palmetto Street to S. Cashua Drive	0.72	2		✔	✔	✔			Connect neighborhoods to Bi Lo and the trail network with connected sidewalk network
52	Deberry Boulevard/ Wisteria Drive	Park Avenue to Cherry Blossom Lane	1.51	2		✔		✔			Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
53	Marsh Avenue	Third Loop Road to Second Loop Road	0.85	2		✔		✔			Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
55	Civic Center Connector	Civic Center to Rail Trail	0.46	2		✔	✔	✔			Create an off-street connection between the Civic Center and the existing trail facility.
58	Parking Lot Access	County Building to W. Evans Street	0.09	2				✔			Add pedestrian walkway connection through parking lot.
61	W. Cheves Street	S. Coit Street to S. Dargan Street	0.24	2	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		Extend Phase 1 W. Cheves Street reocmmendations, including: lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
67	Civic Center Access Path	Civic Center parking lot	0.17	2		✔		✔			Create parking lot access for pedestrians within and around the Civic Center property.

OBJECTID	Name	Start/End Point	Miles	Phase	Safety	Connectivity	Public Input	Access to Key Destinations	Equity	Gateway	Recommendation Notes
70	W. Palmetto Street	Graham Street to S. Church Street	0.87	2	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	Conduct road safety audit (RSA) of corridor to determine detailed safety analysis of state corridor. Upgrade ADA compliance, sidewalk condition, and crossing conditions at intersections. Determine where driveways (to underutilized or abandoned lots) can be closed, particularly near intersections. Rebuild curb where driveways are closed. Lower speed limit from 35 to 30.
72	Hoffmeyer Road	W. Darlington Street to W. Evans Street	0.17	2		✔	✔	✔			Corridor connection between urban connector and trail
1	Alternative Trail Connection	Shopping Center along Dozier Boulevard to Hoffmeyer Road	0.72	3		✔		✔			Off-street shared-use path
11	Cashua Drive	Palmetto Street to 5 Points	3.71	3	✔	✔	✔	✔			Add sidewalks on both sides. Add crossings where demand is highest and where destinations are concentrated.
13	Radio Drive	Trail to N. Dunbarton Drive	0.29	3	✔		✔	✔			Add sidewalks on both sides of the street. Upgrade to safe, ADA-compliant crossings.
14	S. Irby Street	Freedom Boulevard to S. Church Street	1.87	3	✔		✔	✔			Add sidewalks to both sides of street. Add crossings at grocery stores where walkability demand already exists.
25	S. Park Drive	Palmetto Street to S. Cashua Drive	0.72	3		✔	✔	✔			Lower speed limit to 25 mph
32	McMillian Lane	Turner Road to terminus	0.35	3		✔		✔	✔		Add sidewalks to improve walkability to the school.
54	W. Andover Road/N. Chelsea Drive	N. Beaverdam Drive to Hoffmeyer Road	0.65	3		✔					Lower speed limits, add traffic calming, add unique signage.
71	W. Edgefield Road	W. Andover Road to Hoffmeyer Road	1.02	3		✔		✔			Add traffic calming and pedestrian wayfinding
3	E. Palmetto Street	S. Church Street to E. Cheves Street	0.97	4	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	Conduct road safety audit (RSA) of corridor to determine detailed safety analysis of state corridor. Upgrade ADA compliance, sidewalk condition, and crossing conditions at intersections. Determine where driveways (to underutilized or abandoned lots) can be closed, particularly near intersections. Rebuild curb where driveways are closed. Lower speed limit from 35 to 30.
5	Cherokee Road	5 Points to S. Coit Street	2.11	4		✔	✔	✔			Add sidewalks to both sides of the street. Reduce speed limit to 25 mph. Add crosswalks across Cherokee Road approximately every 1000 ft. Add in-street crossing signs and “Watch for Peds” signs at each existing and planned crosswalks.

OBJECTID	Name	Start/End Point	Miles	Phase	Safety	Connectivity	Public Input	Access to Key Destinations	Equity	Gateway	Recommendation Notes
9	W. Lucas Street/State Route 52	N. Irby Street to E. Darlington Street	0.40	4	✔	✔			✔		Improve connectivity between downtown and northeast Florence neighborhoods by: redesigning skewed intersections, providing safer, more convenient crossings, narrowing existing travel lanes, widening center striped area and creating raised medians with refuges and plantings.
12	Irby Street	Palmetto Street to Cherokee Road	0.68	4	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	This stretch is 2/3rds of a mile without any crossings. A study should be done to analyze possibilities for lane rebalancing, reducing speed limits, and adding pedestrian hybrid beacons and high-visibility crosswalks at priority destinations.
15	Third Loop Road	S. Cashua Drive to S. Irby Street	3.44	4		✔					Add sidewalks to both sides of the street
17	Savannah Grove Road	Alligator Road to Savannah Grove Elementary School	0.22	4			✔	✔			Add sidewalks on northbound side (school side)
18	Pedestrian Connection	Pintail Point to Alligator Road	0.07	4			✔	✔			Add sidewalks where desire path currently exists
19	Alligator Road	Walker Swinton Road to Womack Gardens Road	0.53	4			✔	✔			Lower speed limits, add sidewalks.
20	Sneed Road	Old Ebenezer Road to terminus	0.31	4		✔		✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to grocery store.
21	Old Ebenezer Road	S. Ebenezer Road to S. Cashua Drive	1.14	4		✔	✔	✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to grocery store and school.
22	S. Ebenezer Road	Old Ebenezer Road to Sneed Middle School	0.41	4				✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to school.
23	Pedestrian Connection	Kinloch Court to Delmae Heights Elementary	0.16	4		✔		✔			Create off-street facility to connect neighborhood with school.
24	Pedestrian Connection	S. Cashua Drive to Carriage House Neighborhood	0.32	4		✔		✔			Create off-street facility to connect neighborhood with school.
26	Westfield Drive	Hoffmeyer Road to N. Ebenezer Road	0.79	4				✔			Add sidewalks to both sides of the road
27	Pedestrian Connection	Westfield Drive to Quail Pointe Drive	0.08	4		✔		✔			Create off-street facility to connect neighborhood with school.
28	Pedestrian Connection	Westfield Drive to Wrenfield Road	0.03	4		✔		✔			Create off-street facility to connect neighborhood with school.
29	Pedestrian Connection	Power Street to Sopkin Avenue	0.23	4		✔		✔			Use easement to connect Power Street to Sopkin Avenue to better connect neighborhoods to school

OBJECTID	Name	Start/End Point	Miles	Phase	Safety	Connectivity	Public Input	Access to Key Destinations	Equity	Gateway	Recommendation Notes
31	Sopkin Avenue	W. Vista Street to Orange Circle	0.41	4	✔			✔	✔		Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to grocery store.
33	E. Howe Springs Road	South Florence High School Entrance to E. Redbud Lane	0.30	4		✔		✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to school.
34	Alligator Road	S. Woodside Circle to S. Irby Street	0.46	4			✔	✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to school.
35	Pedestrian Connection	Green Acres Road to S. Florence High School	0.97	4		✔					Create trail along easement to connect neighborhoods to nearby middle and high schools
36	Clark Memorial Drive	E. Ashley Road to Quinby Circle	0.32	4				✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to school.
39	W. Lucas Street/State Route 52	Pisgah Road to Florence-Darlington Technical College	0.65	4				✔			Create safe pedestrian connection to Pee Dee Farmer's Market and Adult Learning Center
41	Pedestrian Connection	Rail Trail to Ashley Hall Drive	0.34	4				✔			Connect Rail Trail to Bi Lo
47	S. Knollwood Road	S. Cashua Drive to Alligator Road	1.10	4		✔	✔	✔			Lower speed limits, add unique signage, and add sidewalks to both sides of street
56	Pedestrian Connection	Mall parking lot	0.05	4		✔		✔			Add pedestrian walkway within Magnolia Mall parking lot
65	Hoffmeyer Road	Westfield Drive to Unnamed Road	0.23	4				✔			Add sidewalks to connect neighborhoods to school.
66	Pedestrian Connection	Beltline Drive through Walmart parking lot	0.47	4				✔			Create an alternative trail connection between the shopping centers and along N. Beltline Drive.

SPOT RECOMMENDATIONS MASTER TABLE

OBJECTID	Project Location	Phase	Intersection Improvement	Existing Crosswalk Improvement	New Crosswalk	Pedestrian Lighting	Other Improvement Type	Recommendation Notes
1	S. Church Street and E. Palmetto Street	1	✔					Re-align and widen crosswalks, upgrade sidewalks to ADA compliance, close driveways adjacent to intersection
2	5 Points	1	✔					At a minimum, add crossings to each leg of the intersection. Need for safe pedestrian access from sidewalk through parking lots to businesses. Infill sidewalk network in adjacent areas and add buffer from wide roads and fast moving traffic where possible.
4	Cherokee Road and Park Avenue	1	✔					Add crosswalks and pedestrian signal head timers, remove right-turn only lanes, narrow intersection visually and physically to calm traffic.
5	Dargan Street and W. Evans Street	1	✔					Remove southbound right turn lane on Evans and replace with curb bulbout at crosswalk. Add crosswalk across Dargan where pedestrian signal head already exists. Add traffic calming. Road rebalancing is needed on major thoroughfares to provide safe ped and bike access from neighborhoods to downtown.
6	Irby Street and State Route 52	1	✔					Add sidewalks, improve crossings over railroad tracks, upgrade to ADA compliance, add crossing to west leg of intersection. Move stop bars back 20 ft. Add leading pedestrian indicators for peds crossing on S and E legs of intersection.
11	Cherokee Road and Pineland Avenue/ Revell Drive	1		✔				Add 2 beacon RRFB. Add in-street crossing signs. Add pedestrian wayfinding, note grocery stores.
13	E. Cheves Street and Railroad Avenue/E N B Baroody Street	1			✔			Add raised median refuge islands. Add 4 beacon RRFB across ENB Baroody St (2 beacons on median refuge island)
18	Oakland Avenue and E. Vista Street	1			✔			Add crosswalk and in-street crossing sign
21	E. Evans Street	1				✔		Add features like lighting and public artwork to create an inviting pedestrian passage into downtown
28	W. Vista Street and Fraser Street	1		✔				Add RRFB. Add in-street crossing signs
42	W. Palmetto Street	1						
43	Interstate 95 Interchange	1	✔					Safety need for pedestrians. Requires further study.
7	Dargan Street and State Route 52	2	✔					Unskew intersection to have streets meets as close to perpendicular as possible. Add crosswalks and pedestrian crossing signal heads to all legs. Extend existing raised median islands on State Route 52 further into intersection and add refuge island cut through to shorten the crossing distance. Improve sidewalks, curb ramps over railroad tracks to meet ADA compliance.
9	Saluda Drive and W. Palmetto Street	2		✔				Add two beacon RRFB. If road is converted to 3 lanes, add refuge island in center turn lane with 3rd beacon.

OBJECTID	Project Location	Phase	Intersection Improvement	Existing Crosswalk Improvement	New Crosswalk	Pedestrian Lighting	Other Improvement Type	Recommendation Notes
12	E. Cheves Street and Jarrott Street	2		✔	✔			Add Raised crosswalk (with smooth cement center rather than brick) + 2 beacon RRFB near Jarrott St. bus stop at main hospital entrance
15	W. Palmetto Street and Revell Drive	2			✔			Add pedestrian hybrid beacon under current conditions, RRFB if converted to 3 lanes
19	E. Palmetto Street	2				✔		Add pedestrian-oriented lighting at bridge tunnel
26	W. Vista Street and N. Irby Street	2		✔				Add crosswalks to all legs of intersection. Consider pedestrian hybrid beacon or full traffic signal
27	N. Irby Street and Rice Street	2		✔				Add pedestrian hybrid beacon and median refuge island to existing crosswalk
40	Hoffmeyer Road and W. Darlington Street	2	✔					
41	N. Dargan Street and Railroad Crossing	2	✔					Upgrade to ADA compliance. Improve railroad crossing.
44	W. Evans Street and Hoffmeyer Road	2	✔					
3	Radio Drive and McLeod Boulevard	3	✔					Add crosswalks to all legs. Extend median nose on McLeod Boulevard to use as pedestrian refuge island. Add sidewalks on Radio Drive to connect Civic Center to Magnolia mall
16	S. Cashua Drive and Pineland Avenue	3			✔			Add crosswalk. Consider direct pedestrian connection to Harris Teeter. Add 2 beacon RRFB. Add in-street crossing sign and “Watch for Peds” signage in advance
17	S. Cashua Drive and Third Loop Road	3			✔			Add safe crossing to reach Wal Mart: Add 4 way stop. Add crosswalk with in-street crossing signs and median refuge island in existing center turn lane
23	S. Parker Drive and S. Cashua Drive	3			✔			Add RRFB or crosswalk with crossing guards
29	McMillian Lane and Turner Road	3			✔			Add crosswalks and in-street crossing signs
34	S. Parkerer Drive	3			✔			Connect Bi Lo to neighborhing residential areas
37	Brittany Drive and Willow Trace Drive	3					✔	Create a pedestrian-friendly corridor in this vicinity with mixed-use zoning permissible
38	S. Irby Street and Second Loop Road	3	✔					Corridor is a major commercial node with multiple grocery stores, however few streets connect to either corridor from adjacent neighborhoods and safe crossings are limited. Intersection needs to be retrofitted for safe pedestrian and bike use.
8	W. Lucas Street and Pisgah Rd	4	✔					Add Crosswalks and pedestrian signal heads to all four legs of intersection. Add signage to Pee Dee State Farmer’s Market
10	E. Cheves Street	4		✔				Add 2 beacon RRFB to existing crosswalk

OBJECTID	Project Location	Phase	Intersection Improvement	Existing Crosswalk Improvement	New Crosswalk	Pedestrian Lighting	Other Improvement Type	Recommendation Notes
20	E. Cheves Street	4				✔		
22	Alligator Road and Savannah Grove Road	4			✔			Add stop signs or RRFB. Add crosswalk with median refuge island
24	Westfield Drive and Clark Branch Road	4			✔			
25	Westfield Drive	4			✔			
30	E. Howe Springs Road and South Bruins Lane	4			✔			Add pedestrian hybrid beacon On S. Bruins Ln to connect neighborhood to middle school and high school
31	E. Howe Springs Road and State Route 52	4	✔					Upgrade to ADA compliance. Add crosswalk to all legs of intersection. Add median refuge cut-throughs and extend medians past crosswalk on S. Irby
32	E. Ashby Road and Kings Road	4			✔			Connect Rush Academy to neighborhood. Add RRFB or crosswalk with median refuge island
33	E. Palmetto Street and Theodore Lester Drive	4			✔			Add pedestrian hybrid beacon with median refuge on E. Marion Hwy and Theodore Lester Dr to connect elementary school with neighborhood
39	Westfield Drive and Hoffmeyer Road	4	✔					

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PROJECT GUIDANCE

"A great city, a great community, is truly multi-modal, and has many forms of transportation that work well. . . I want to make sure that people understand that from my perspective, great public transportation, great bikeability, great walkability, is of equal value as those cars on the road."

- Greg Stanton, Mayor of Phoenix

OVERVIEW

The following spreads provide design guidance on three prototypical citywide recommendations — railroad crossing improvements, intersection improvements, and neighborhood slow zones.

Additionally, based on the prioritization process and site visits with City of Florence and SCDOT staff, the project team identified **two other near-term, high-impact projects: a trail underpass connection at Highway 76 and a pedestrian connection improvement at McLeod Boulevard and Radio Drive.**

The area around this intersection generates a significant amount of vehicular and pedestrian activity. Service industry employees, transit users, and visitors staying in at the adjacent hotels all may have limited access to a car. Plus, during certain large events at the Civic Center the Magnolia Mall is used as a satellite parking lot and people travel on foot between the two, often at night. Thus, improvements to the intersection serve a wide need and are critical to the city's pedestrian network.

Beyond safety and access, when the recommended pedestrian overpass is built it will provide a signature, iconic connection to the City of Florence's trail system.

All of these individual projects are crucial catalysts for continued economic development, walkability, and quality of life in Florence. The project cutsheet spreads demonstrate what recommendations can look like, and can also be used in applying for implementation funds as Florence makes strides to make the walkability vision a reality.

Typical Railroad Crossing

Railroads have historically divided American towns and limited at grade crossings for pedestrian and automobile traffic. Wherever possible, it is recommended to improve existing at grade crossings to provide greater accessibility for pedestrians, better inform pedestrians at the crossings, and better separate pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

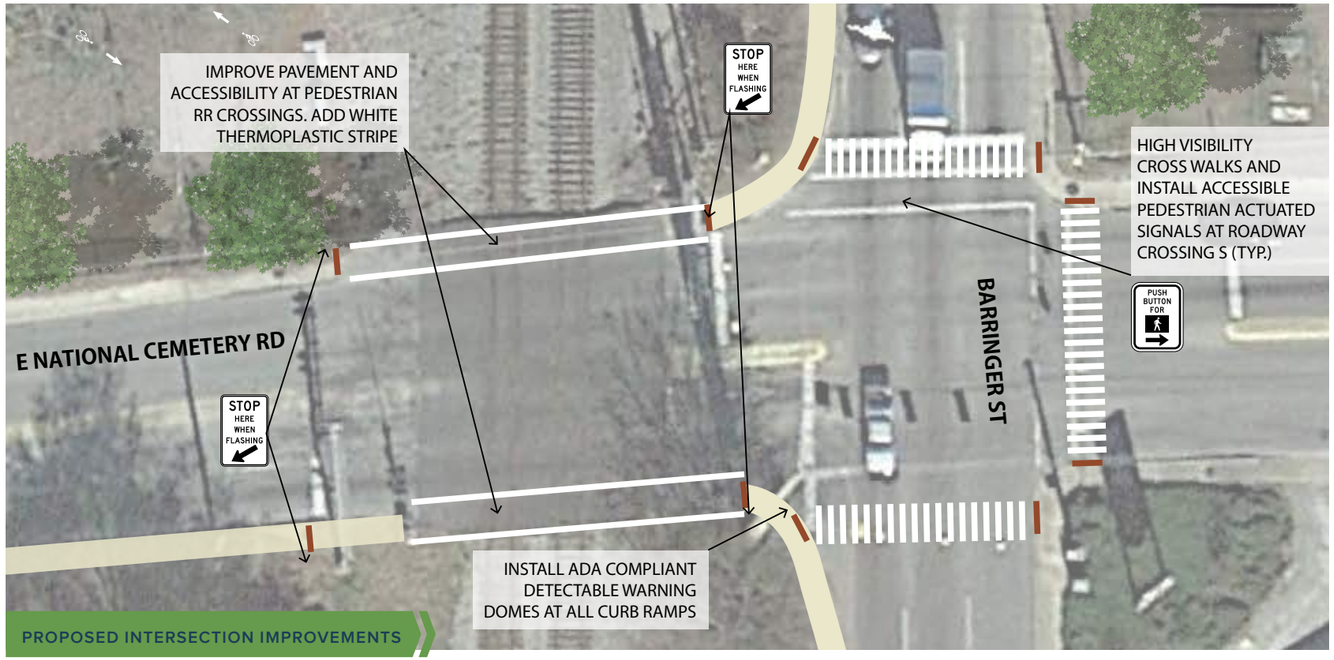
Installing a rubber surface rather than asphalt around railroad flangeways reduces changes in level and other maintenance problems. Proper railroad signage, including railroad warning signs and stop signs are recommended to be installed before and after railroad crossings.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

+ High Visibility Pavement Markings
+ Warning signage
+ Accessible rail road track crossing

Example pedestrian facilities at railroad crossing in San Diego, California

Example railroad crossing in Durham, North Carolina



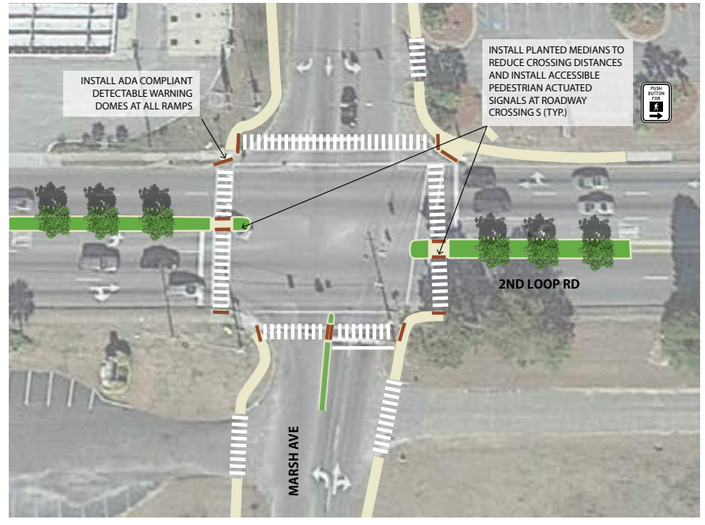
View from Bridge Street Corridor

Typical Intersection Crossing

The map to the right depicts two types of spot improvement recommendations — crossing improvements and intersection improvements — whose purpose is four-fold:

- augment connectivity by completing missing links in the network, thus increasing mobility at critical intersections and crossing points which may currently lack adequate facilities or may be perceived as barriers
- increase accessibility to key destinations, particularly schools, transit stops, grocery stores, and local farmers markets
- address known safety issues and concerns, particularly hot spots of fatalities and injuries
- respond to the mobility and accessibility needs expressed by Florence residents during periods of public outreach

Spot Improvements Map near Downtown



RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

+ High Visibility Crosswalks
+ Pedestrian Refuge Islands
+ Pedestrian Signals

Crosswalk recommendations

View from Marsh Avenue

Neighborhood Slow Zones

The desired outcome of a neighborhood slow zone is an increased quality of life. This is accomplished not simply by implementing traffic calming, but rather through a holistic approach to creating safe and attractive streets that reduce the negative effects that vehicles have on the environment.

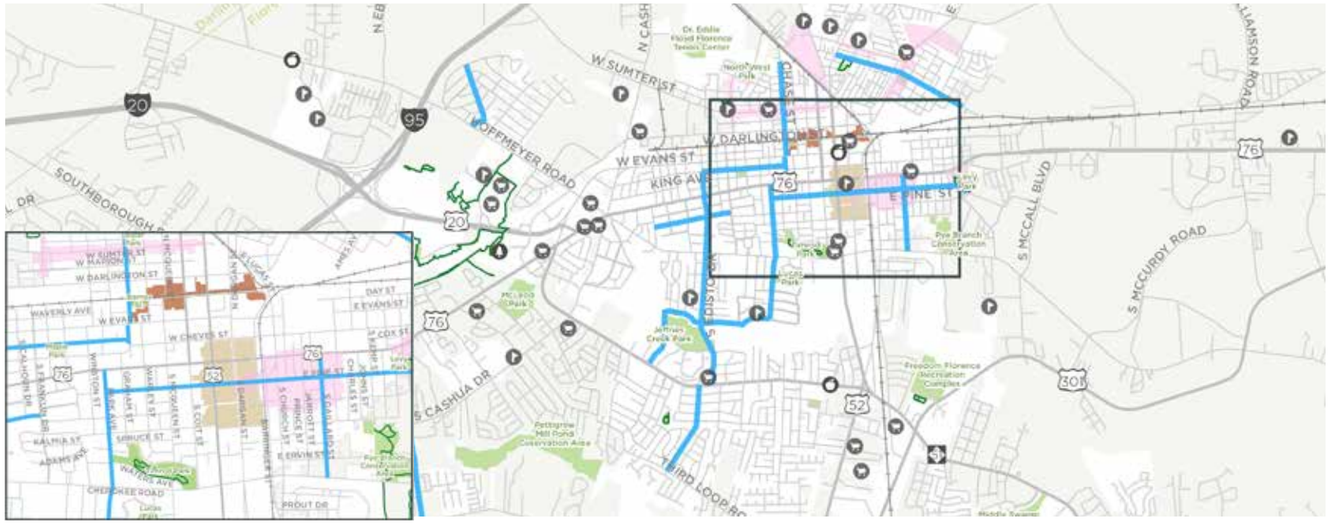
Neighborhood slow zones effectively reduce the frequency and severity of collisions, reduce vehicle cut-through patterns, increase access and safety for all modes, reduce noise levels, and potentially discourage crime through newly generated street life, instilling social control and neighborhood ownership.

As with other linear recommendations, a roadway's setting and its particular issues dictate specific slow zone recommendations.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

+ Wayfinding Signage
+ Re-evaluating design speed
+ Raised Intersections
+ Traffic diverters
+ Chicanes and bulbouts

Raised Crosswalk



Neighborhood Slow Zones in blue

EXISTING

PROPOSED CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

View from Chase Street at Dixie Street

Proposed Trail at Highway 76

The proposed trail extensions and connections are a long-term vision for the City of Florence. Recommendations are intended to build upon the recent efforts by the City to transform Florence into an active and healthy place where trails are used for both recreation and transportation.

The recommendations presented in the adjacent map further flesh out the existing and proposed network of trails, creating key linkages to major destinations like downtown, shopping centers, neighborhoods and parks. The trail network will also supplement and compliment on-street pedestrian facilities, ensuring accessibility across the city.

Trail Extension Location Map

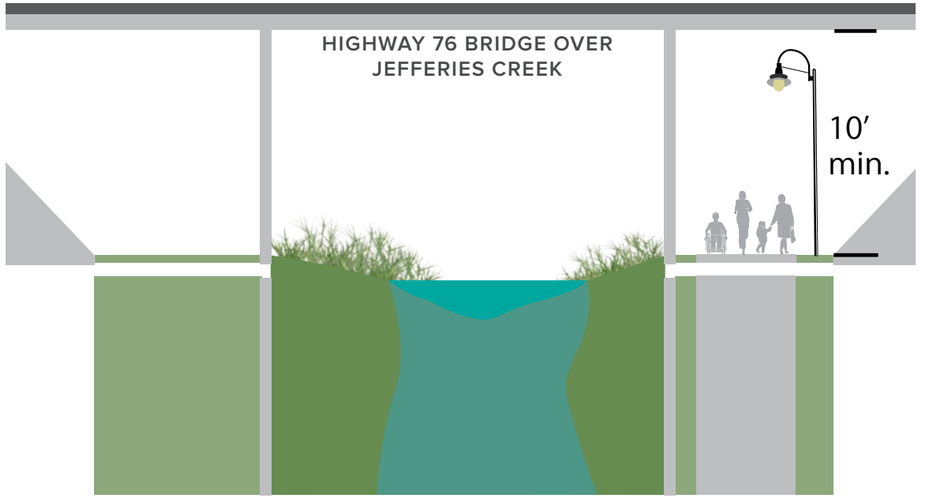
RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

+ Extended Trail Network
+ Connections to destinations
+ Grade Separated Crossings

Feasibility considerations should include the following.

- Required 10’ minimum clearance from trail surface to bottom of bridge deck per AASHTO standards.
- Site distance also needs to be considered - at least 150 feet.
- Horizontal clearances from trail to bridge supports should be 14- foot minimum, not including shoulders.
- Coordination with SCDOT structures, drainage, and bike and pedestrian departments will be required prior to design development.
- Potential for flooding must be managed, for example with advance warning signage.
- Lighting and security measures may be required to enhance both perceived and actual safety risk.
- Overhead protection may be required to protect from highway debris, which could potentially affect stormwater management design.

Example trail underpass: Cane Creek Greenway, NC



PROPOSED INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

View from below Highway 76

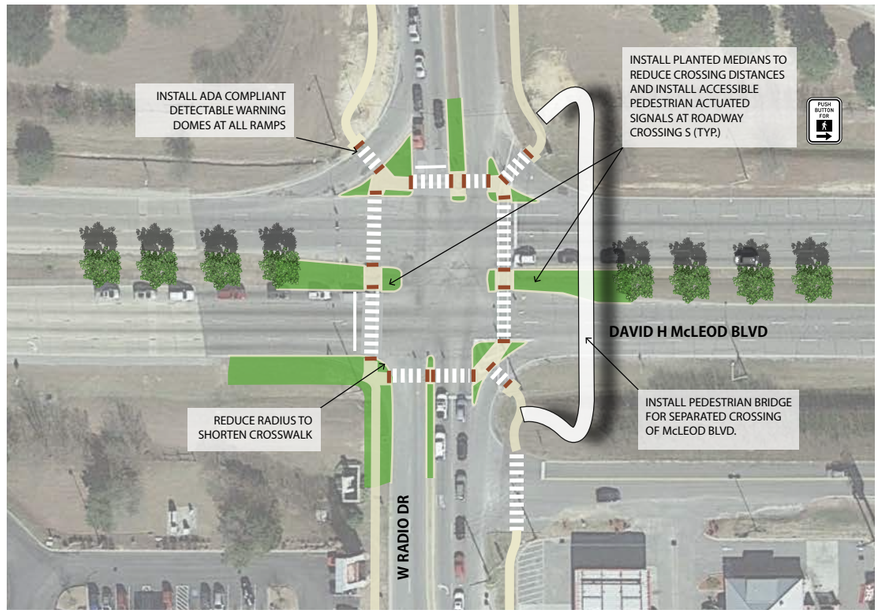
McLeod Boulevard at Radio Drive

The intersection of McLeod Boulevard and Radio Drive currently lacks safe, pedestrian access and crossing facilities. Proposed improvements can be phased in, with a long term goal of providing a separated pedestrian crossing in the form of a standalone pedestrian bridge.

Intersection improvements are distinct from crossing improvements in that the recommendation relates only to signalized intersections and considers additional factors such as street geometry, signal timing, ADA accessibility, and speed limits.

RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

+ High Visibility Crosswalks
+ Pedestrian Signals
+ Pedestrian Refuge Islands
+ Pedestrian Overpass



Intersection Improvements

View from McLeod Blvd

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APPENDIX

"If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places."
- Fred Kent

OVERVIEW

The Appendix Chapter contains key supplemental elements that support the Pedestrian Master Plan. This chapter is organized to include:

- Program Recommendations
- Policy Recommendations
- Focus Group Summary Report

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this section is to provide a set of programmatic recommendations that are tailored to the unique needs of Florence, and will leverage existing transportation and recreational assets. These programmatic initiatives can be undertaken by local agencies and community organizations. They can be implemented quickly and with minimal investment. Successful programmatic efforts are flexible and can demonstrate sustainable long-term infrastructure improvements.

As previously stated, research has shown that a comprehensive approach to walk-and bicycle-friendliness is more effective than a singular approach that would address infrastructure issues only. Recognizing this, the national Walk Friendly Community program, administered by the Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center, recommends a multi-faceted approach based on the following five 'E's: Encouragement, Education, Engineering, Enforcement, and Evaluation. Also, a sixth 'E', Equity, is often included to ensure equal consideration for those whom pedestrian improvements may benefit the most.

The program recommendations outlined in this section are organized according to these E's, with Equity being an integral component of each.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Weekend Walkabouts: Weekend Walkabouts are regularly occurring events that promote walking while also bringing attention to pedestrian infrastructure. They can be held either monthly from May to October or quarterly to include one walk per season, depending on staff availability and marketing opportunities. The events' walking routes should highlight safe and inviting places to walk in the public realm (rather than private or enclosed facilities such as cemeteries or walking tracks) and should be 3 miles or less in length. These events are ideal for families and seniors.

Weekend Walkabouts may be organized based on themes for each walk, such as an architectural tour, a "Steeple Chase" tour (visiting historic churches), or a tour of parks. To generate added marketing potential, community leaders or local celebrities could be chosen to lead each walk. For each event, at least one volunteer or staff member should be positioned at both the front and the rear of the walking group to accommodate different walking speeds. In the spring, a Weekend Walkabout may be planned in conjunction with the annual event known as "Jane's Walks." Inspired by the "people's planner" Jane Jacobs, Jane's Walks occur in early May and involve free neighborhood walking tours developed and delivered by citizens as a way to put people in touch with their environment and each other. In Florence, neighborhood and downtown walks may be coordinated with recurring, existing events such as the downtown Farmers Market as a way to encourage and support access to healthy food.

Resource

- *Jane's Walk*

Open Streets: Open Streets Events are periodic street festivals (typically held on the weekend) that create a temporary park open to the public for walking, bicycling, dancing, hula hooping, roller skating, and other forms of human-powered activity. These programs are known by many names: Open Streets, Ciclovias, Sunday Parkways, Summer Streets, and Sunday Streets. They promote health by creating a safe and attractive space for physical activity and social interaction, and are cost-effective compared to the cost of building new parks for the same purpose. These events can be weekly, monthly, or annual events, and are generally very popular and well-attended.

Open Streets events lend themselves to innovative partnerships and public-private funding. The City of Florence should partner with health care providers, healthy lifestyle organizations, and local health and fitness groups to hold periodic open streets events throughout Florence. Health care providers whose mission includes facilitating physical activity are often major sponsors. Businesses may also help sponsor the event if it brings customers to their location. Activities at Open Streets Events can include a bicycle rodeo to teach children bicycling skills, hula hoop and jump rope contests, wheelchair basketball, yoga or Zumba classes, and prize drawings.

Resources

- *Portland Sunday Parkways Guide*
- *Durham, NC Bull City Play Streets*
- *Sunday Parkways Videos*

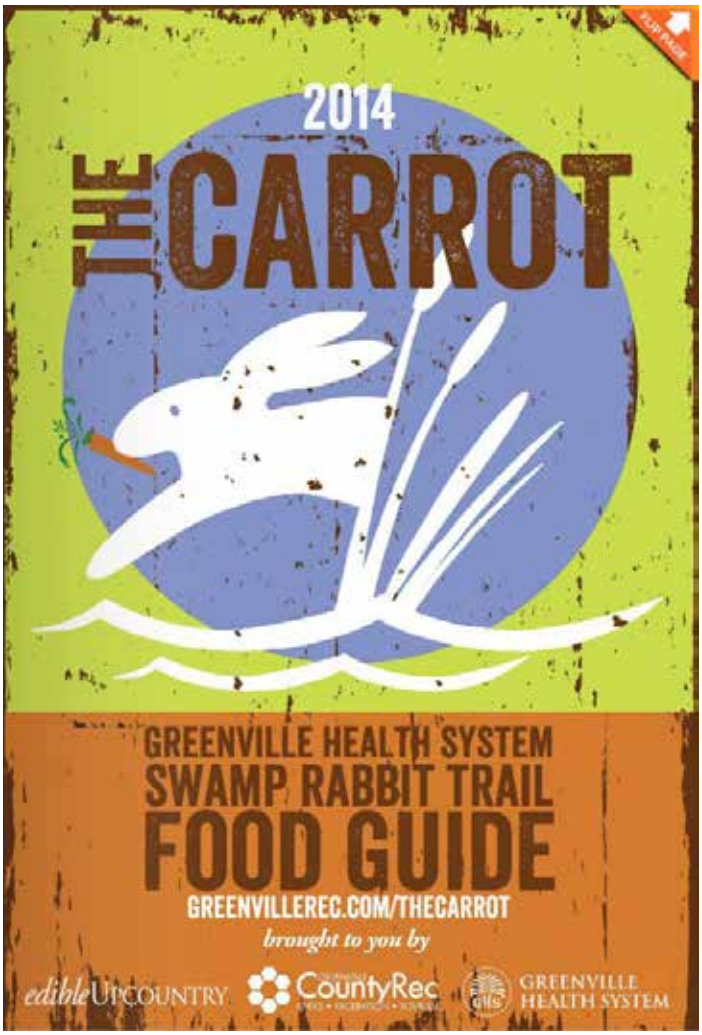
Happy Trails to Healthy Food: Many communities are recognizing the role that both physical activity and healthy eating play in improving overall public health and wellness. This important link can be highlighted in a fun and interactive manner by promoting healthy food outlets along pedestrian and trail networks and partnering with healthy food providers to identify safe routes for active transportation to their locations. Establishing a program to promote 'happy trails to healthy foods' will advance Florence's goal to improve walkability and access to healthy food.

The basic component of the program is the development of a map and guide describing sources for healthy foods along the pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway network. This list can include conventional grocery stores, as well as roadside farm stands, u-pick farms, farmers markets, community gardens, or restaurants and cafes that offer healthy options (depending on the goals of the program this may highlight establishments that offer nutritious meal options, source their ingredients from local growers, or provide organic or specialty food options). Consider seeking financial support from the food outlets that will be listed in the guide. Offer safety tips for traveling safely by foot.

Action Step: Identify key outlets for healthy food along the existing pedestrian and trail network (including routes along roads that are already pedestrian friendly). Seek funding from partners in nutrition and healthy food outlets. Develop a graphically-appealing and user-friendly guide to healthy food outlets with a descriptive map showing how residents can access the outlets on foot or bike. Ensure that the guide is available online as well as in print and distribute widely. Update the map annually to reflect network growth and any new healthy food outlets.

Resource

- *The Carrot Food Guide - Greenville Health System Swamp Rabbit Trail, Greenville, SC*



EDUCATION

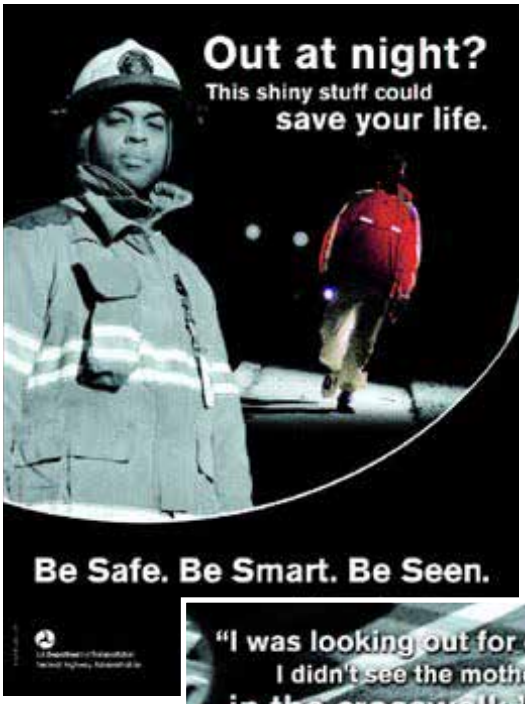
Pedestrian Safety Campaign: A high-profile marketing campaign is an effective strategy for highlighting the importance of respect and shared responsibility on the road between bicyclists, motorists, and pedestrians. This type of campaign is particularly effective when launched in conjunction with other events such as Walk to School Day.

A well-produced safety campaign will be memorable and effective. One good example is the Florida Safety "Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow" campaign. It combines compelling ads with visible education efforts to improve awareness of pedestrian safety laws. The safety and awareness messages should be displayed near high-traffic corridors (e.g., on billboards), printed in local publications, and broadcast as radio and/or television ads.

Action Step: As the pedestrian network is developed and activity increases, create a safety campaign to encourage safe driver behavior. Develop a series of safety tips and safety messages that can be incorporated into printed brochures, postcards, TV and radio ads, and billboards. Seek a media sponsor who can provide local coverage of the campaign and provide air time for public service announcements. The campaign should last one month. Consider giving away safety items at community events during that month, such as reflective materials and pamphlets that visualize pedestrian safety laws.

Resource

- *National Pedestrian Safety Campaign, FHWA*
- *Greenville, SC Lights for Life*
- *Spartanburg "Reflect for Safety" Campaign, SC*



ENGINEERING

Safe Routes to School: Safe Routes to School Programs (SRTS) provide funding for school based programs which encourage walking to school. This typically involves examining conditions around public schools and providing programs to improve bicycle/pedestrian safety, accessibility and use. SRTS efforts include developing and sending flyers with safety information to students' homes, classroom bicycle and pedestrian safety education, organizing a "walking school bus", and school public address announcements that educate students on pedestrian safety. Teachers may conduct periodic in-class tallies to record how students are traveling to and from school, which can help to track trends in student walking rates over time. Communities can also increase their police presence around schools during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal times to enforce school zone speed limits.

Many project recommendations are focused adjacent to schools and can build on existing Safe Routes to School programs to improve access to neighborhoods. Schools in Florence that have participated in the SRTS program include North Vista Elementary, Wallace-Gregg Elementary, and Williams Middle School. SCDOT offer Safe Routes to School Resource Centers to specific regions throughout the state. Florence is within the South Carolina Midlands Region.

Action Step: Register to become a South Carolina SRTS Partner to receive free technical assistance from the SRTS Resource Center. The Resource Center offers four partnership stages – bronze, silver, gold, platinum – with corresponding goals and levels of assistance.

Resource

- *South Carolina SRTS Resource Center*

Parking Lots to Parks: Surface parking lots occupy a significant portion of land in downtown Florence and adjacent neighborhoods. Many of these lots sit empty or are only occupied occasionally, which creates opportunities to transform parking lots into vibrant public spaces. Popup projects such as parks and sporting venues can activate these lots while providing community gathering spaces without a long-term commitment and a big budget.

Ideas for popup parks should be matched with the community need, available resources, and the amount of space available for the demonstration project. Additionally, beautification improvements can be paired with activities that draw people to the space. For example, if space and resources are limited to a couple of parking spaces, than food trucks or activities such as ping-pong, bocce ball, or cornhole can provide the attraction, while chairs, potted plants, and umbrellas can provide a pleasant place for people to enjoy the space. For larger spaces, activities can include temporary basketball courts, soccer fields, or field hockey.

Resource

- *The StreetPlans Collaborative Tactical Urbanism Guides*

Wayfinding: The connectivity of a pedestrian network is contingent upon physically linking pedestrian infrastructure, as well as communicating to network users the connections available. Wayfinding signs direct users along the network and to community destinations. These signs can also include mileage, estimated walk time, and even calories burned. The signs also provide an opportunity for recognition of trail partners and sponsors, where applicable. A "sponsor-a-sign" program may be one avenue for funding the program. Large employers near downtown such as McLeod Hospital present opportunities to create wayfinding programs that encourage walking to downtown as a destination and for recreation.

A pedestrian wayfinding program can connect to the planned downtown Florence wayfinding system. This will create a unified system and improve connectivity between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods as well as walkable destinations.

Action Step: Determine an appropriate strategy for branding the signage so that the signs reflect the downtown wayfinding and provide a consistent, community-wide user experience. Start by implementing the signage along established walking routes through neighborhoods and pedestrian friendly areas and along Safe Routes to School preferred routes. Expand the signage application as new pedestrian networks and destinations arise.

Resources

- *City of Alexandria, VA Wayfinding Program*
- *Arlington County, VA Wayfinding Program*
- *Louisville, KY Loop Signage and Wayfinding Master Plan*

ENFORCEMENT

Crosswalk Enforcement: Crosswalk enforcement actions raise public awareness about the legal obligation of motorists to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks. While crosswalk enforcement actions do result in tickets being distributed, the greater impact comes through media publicity of the event to reinforce the importance of obeying pedestrian crossing laws.

Crosswalk enforcement should be implemented by the Florence Police Department at locations where pedestrians have trouble crossing and where a large volume of pedestrians (especially vulnerable pedestrians such as children and seniors) is expected. High-crash locations may also be candidates for enforcement actions. If locations near schools are selected, the best timing for an enforcement action is the back-to-school window just after school has begun for the year. Locations should be selected by local police departments in consultation with city engineers and planners. Problem crossing locations identified by the public should be considered. School officials will also have valuable input about school crossing locations that would benefit from targeted enforcement.

Once locations have been determined, plainclothes police officers or trained volunteer decoys attempt to cross at corners and marked mid-block crossings. (Decoys may also be notable community members, such as the mayor or a well-known business leader, to increase media interest in the event.) If motorists fail to yield to the pedestrian in the crosswalk, a second police officer issues a warning or a ticket at the officer's discretion.

Crosswalk enforcement actions are more effective when repeated at the same locations at regular intervals. Enforcement actions should be recorded on video to support issued violations should a motorist challenge the ticket. First-time offenders receiving a ticket should receive flyers with information on crosswalk laws and pedestrian right-of-way (as part of the Pedestrian Safety Campaign).

Resources

- *Crosswalk Enforcement Initiatives, Chicago, IL*
- *Cops in Crosswalk, New Jersey*

EVALUATION + POLICY

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 little choice 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 for a single user – the automobile – Complete Streets are designed to accommodate all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, 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 Florence. Municipal code development standards can require Complete Streets design considerations for all new road and road maintenance and improvement construction projects.

Resources

- *South Carolina Complete Streets Toolkit*

Vision Zero: Vision Zero is the concept that no loss of life is acceptable on our roadways. Jurisdictions across the nation and across the world are adopting Vision Zero policies to eliminate preventable traffic deaths.

A Vision Zero policy acknowledges that human life takes priority over transportation mobility and that government bodies, roadway designers, and road users share responsibility for traffic safety. This policy can help develop a holistic program for prioritizing Engineering solutions and using Enforcement, Education, and Encouragement together to support safety outcomes.

The City of Florence has a high pedestrian fatality rate, and establishing a Vision Zero would focus resources on solutions that will save lives, many of which are identified as projects in this plan. Effective Vision Zero policies have widespread political and community support, with specific strategies and goals.

Resources

- *The Vision Zero Network*

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Statewide

- South Carolina Eat Smart Move More South Coalition (ESMMC) 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.

- 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 on their website. Links to a number of programs within the state related to bicycle and pedestrian awareness are also provided, including statewide public safety crash data and health related education awareness programs. 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.

Other

Local non-profit organizations, coalitions, and major institutions should play a leading role in developing, implementing and sponsoring walking programs. Florence already has a network of entities that could partner with local governments to generate community awareness and broad participation in walking programs. The City and County of Florence, Pee Dee Regional Council of Government, and SCDOT are crucial governmental partners in implementation of this Plan. Other potential partners include:

- Agencies, Institutions, Commissions, and Coalitions
- McLeod Hospital
- Regency Hospital
- City of Florence Planning Commission
- City of Florence Police Department
- City of Florence Parks and Recreation Department
- City of Florence School District
- City of Florence Downtown Development Office
- Florence Downtown Development Corporation
- Greater Florence Habitat for Humanity
- Pee Dee Regional Transportation Authority
- Florence County Health Department
- Florence Public Libraries
- University of South Carolina
- Allen University, Benedict College, and other local colleges and universities
- SCDOT
- SCDHEC
- American Diabetes Association local chapter
- AARP local chapter
- YMCA
- ABLE SC

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

A review of the City of Florence Code of Ordinances (Municipal Code), the Land Development and Subdivision Ordinance (also included as Chapter 18 in the Code of Ordinances), and the Zoning Ordinance was conducted with the object of providing policy recommendations that will support plans to make Florence a more walkable community. In addition, the ordinances were reviewed to identify increased opportunities for safe and convenient pedestrian access to healthy foods.

In general, the City of Florence ordinances can accommodate new and improved pedestrian infrastructure as currently written. A few impediments to access to healthy food were noted. The following areas were noted for discussion.

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. This can be accomplished within the framework of the current B-2 Convenience Business District regulations, or a mixed-use zoning district can be created.

In addition, policies that promote optimal opportunities for residential uses within commercial districts should be supported by the regulations.

Residential Mixed-Use and Downtown Revitalization

High concentrations of pedestrians are the critical ingredient in downtown revitalization efforts. Areas of high pedestrian concentrations justify intense pedestrian infrastructure. Therefore, prompting more people to live in the core commercial district should be an objective. Vacant and underutilized core commercial district buildings should be allowed to be repurposed as single family units, apartments, condominiums, townhouses, etc. Where vacant lots exist or dilapidated structures are torn down, consider the construction of new residential units designed in scale and form to blend in with the historic context of downtown. Bringing people back to downtown living greatly adds to the vibrancy of the downtown, supports downtown merchants and restaurants, and increases the opportunity for walking and bicycling to work, shopping, and entertainment. Once a critical mass of people is approached, shops, restaurants, and offices will begin to flourish; thus drawing in more non-residents into the downtown for shopping, dining, entertainment, etc. This process of repopulating the core commercial district has proven successful in Greenville, Charleston, and Columbia. Mixed-use downtown development conserves energy, produces less air pollution, promotes active living and good health, and encourages social interaction.

Urban Agriculture

As agricultural lands are reduced, there is a need to incorporate farming techniques within communities such as urban gardens and farms. Utilization of backyards within residential areas as small-scale farms for egg production, bee-keeping, limited livestock, fish ponds, orchards, and crops is a growing trend, as are community gardens in parks, vacant lots, and other semi-private lands. Grow-your-own is the most immediate access to healthy food. Promotion of this type of accessory use should be allowed and promoted in the City of Florence. Small-scale commercial farms in urbanized areas are also making a comeback; and with proper land use and zoning controls, can blend in harmoniously in the urban fabric while providing a much needed supply of fresh, healthy produce to the urban markets. Measures should be taken to preserve surviving, active farms that are located in areas undergoing urbanization. It is noted that non-commercial greenhouses and horticulture/gardening are permitted uses in residential districts.

Development Standards

Cul-de-sacs

Dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs lengthen distances for travelers, discourage pedestrian travel, and make transit service more difficult to operate and use, while placing an added financial burden on local governments that must provide emergency, safety, and maintenance services. Dead-end streets and Cul-de-sacs result in poor connectivity that often restricts the viability of bicycle and pedestrian transportation, making driving the most attractive travel option.
We recommend limiting where practicable the design of dead end streets and cul-de-sacs, which not only increases vehicle miles traveled (VMT), but which discourages bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Pedestrian Facilities

- Where sidewalks or other paths are required in residential and commercial developments, a system of sidewalks, paths, trails, greenways, or a combination thereof, should be designed such that every lot in the development or building in a commercial development has access to the system. Connectivity of the system to nearby residential developments, schools, businesses, institutions, and other facilities should be provided as applicable and practicable. Where not currently applicable, dedication of right of way should 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.
- Provide for enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities within a 1.5-mile radius of schools within which school bus service is not required.
- Excessive allowable length of blocks in residential districts (without required traffic calming devices) results in increased vehicle speeds, making the streets unsafe for pedestrians, bicyclists, playing children, and the elderly.

Prohibition of Bicycles on Sidewalks and Skating on Sidewalks and Streets

Walkable communities frequently incorporate Complete Streets design and concepts. A "complete street" is designed to provide safe, equitable, and efficient access to all forms of transportation including pedestrian, bicyclist, 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.

PARKING

Current Florence 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, with little consideration 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 underutilized. 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 little choice 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 for a single user – the automobile – Complete Streets are designed to accommodate all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, 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 Florence. Municipal code development standards can require Complete Streets design considerations for all new road and road maintenance and improvement construction projects.

Resource: South Carolina Complete Streets Toolkit

South Carolina Health + Planning Toolkit

The SC Health + Planning Toolkit was developed for use by SC Counties in incorporating health planning principles into their comprehensive plans. Health Planning refers to planning practices and policies that concern Healthy Eating (production, processing, 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, master planning, bicycle/pedestrian/greenway planning, and food systems planning.

The Toolkit consists of 67 best practices in two program areas:

1. Healthy Eating
    - 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 Florence utilize the Toolkit when updating the Florence comprehensive plan and other planning efforts.

Resource: South Carolina Health + Planning Toolkit

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.

Resource: Walk Friendly Organization Website

SPECIFIC REGULATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Private Agriculture

Chapter three of the Code of Ordinances, "Animal Care and Control," and Zoning Ordinance "Section 2.3 Table 1: Permitted and Conditional Uses for Residential Districts" have no provisions for the keeping of animals for food production. We recommend developing regulations for appropriate allowable uses of livestock, poultry, fish, and apiaries; as well as gardens, orchards, etc., for private, non-commercial use and for semi-private community gardens in residential districts.

Conditional use requirements could consider:

- Minimum lot size
- Setbacks from property line
- Placement and size of paddocks, pens, barns, and enclosures
- Limitation on type, size, and number of permitted animals
- Noise and odor

Alternately, the definition of domestic animal shelter (Article 10) and regulations for domestic animal shelters (Article 7 section 7.6-3 4.) of the Zoning Ordinance can be modified to include food producing domestic animals.

Urban Farms

Re-examine the use table (section 2.4 Table II) to conditionally allow more agricultural uses in the business districts. Alternatively, favorably consider rezoning applications to rural zoning for urban commercial farms when not in conflict with Comprehensive Plan land use policies.

Trees and Shrubs

Code of Ordinances "Article VII: Trees and Shrubs" and Zoning Ordinance "Article 4: Appearance, Buffering, Screening, Landscaping, and Open Space Regulations". We recommend reviewing to include a section that will not preclude removal of trees, shrubbery, landscaping, bufferyards by the City, County, or SCDOT, in relation to streetscaping projects, installation of pedestrian facilities, and other Complete Streets type projects.

Code of Ordinances
Chapter 17 - Streets, Sidewalks, and Public Property

Article III: Courtesy Benches

Provisions should be made for the removal, relocation, and/or replacement of permitted courtesy benches in conjunction with public transportation facility improvements, infrastructure, and streetscaping projects.

Code of Ordinances
Chapter 19 - Traffic

Article I General

Sec. 19-14. - Riding bicycles on sidewalk

It shall be unlawful for any person to ride a bicycle or like vehicle along or across any sidewalk within the central business district.

Clarify that this does not apply to pedestrian or multi-use paths or other facilities. Consider amending to prohibit only on streets not provided with bicycle facilities including marked bike sharing lanes (sharrows).

Sec. 19-15. - Skating

It shall be unlawful for any person to use roller skates for skating on any of the cement sidewalks or paved streets within the city, except such area as may be designated from time to time by the police department.

This regulation effectively prohibits the use of skating in the city. 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."

Sec. 19-21. - Limitation on backing vehicles to curb

A vehicle may remain backed up to a curb only long enough to be loaded or unloaded. Clarify that this does not apply to back-in (reverse) angle parking if this option is being considered.

Chapter 19

Article III: Parades, Demonstrations, Public Assemblies, Block Parties, and Picketing

Sec. 19-41. - Definitions.

Public assembly: Any meeting, demonstration, picket line, rally, or gathering of more than fifty (50) persons for a common purpose, as a result of prior planning, that interferes with the normal flow or regulation of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

This definition shall not include outdoor farmers markets which shall require a non-temporary permit issued by the City Manager.

Article V: Subdivision Plan/Plat Requirements

5.1 - Sketch Plan Submittal Requirements

F.2. Proposed street arrangements, including any dimensional information such as rights-of-way widths, cul-de-sac lengths, curve radii, etc., that may be necessary to ensure that the geometric design of the street layout meets the intent of applicable codes and regulations.

We recommend that use-of cul-de-sacs and dead end streets should be restricted and only allowed by the planning commission on a case-by-case, site-specific basis.

Article VI: Minimum Land Planning Standards and Required Improvements for Subdivisions and Other Land Developments

6.2 - Blocks: A. Residential Blocks

Lengths of standard blocks shall not exceed sixteen hundred (1600) feet nor be less than four hundred (400) feet on any side.

Revise to nine hundred feet nor be less than four hundred feet on any side. Refer to policy discussion above.

6.1 - Public Sites and Open Space Dedication

Cross reference Open Space requirements from Article 4 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Add new section:

On public streets where sidewalks are not previously provided, multi-purpose paths, trails, and/or greenways designed to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-automotive traffic shall be required in 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 commercial development has access to the system. Connectivity of the system to nearby schools, businesses, institutions, and other facilities should be provided as applicable and practicable. Where not currently applicable, dedication of right of way should 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.

6.15 - Cul-de-sacs

Revise to:

Cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are not allowed without approval by the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission shall allow cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets on a case-by-case basis according to specific site conditions, including topographical and/or environmental constraints. When allowed by the Planning Commission, permanent dead-end streets shall not exceed 400 feet in length as measured from the centerline of the perpendicular street to the center of the cul-de-sac; they shall be provided with a turnaround having an outside pavement diameter of at least 80 feet and a right-of- way diameter of at least 100 feet. The design must also comply with other applicable codes and regulations.

6.17 - Sidewalks

We recommend a minimum sidewalk width of five (5) feet for all street classifications to ensure compliance with ADA standards.

6.24 - Entrances and Exits

Revise to:

All newly constructed residential subdivisions shall be connected, or make provisions for future connection, to directly adjacent subdivisions, and/or commercial developments, public facilities, etc. (if any) by a pedestrian path. If no adjacent development exists at the time of construction, right-of way shall be dedicated for installation of pedestrian paths in the event of future adjacent development. Connecting streets are encouraged, but not required, by this ordinance in every case. However, connecting streets may be required by the Planning Commission.

ZONING ORDINANCES

Article I: Establishment, Purpose, and Rules for Interpretation of Zoning Districts

R-5 Multi-Family Residential District

This district is intended to accommodate higher density residential development and a variety of housing types on small lots, or in project settings in areas accessible by major streets and in proximity to commercial uses, employment opportunities, and community facilities. It is further intended to permit development flexibility in meeting the demands and preferences of a changing housing market, and doing so in an orderly, compatible manner.

As a matter of policy to promote a more walkable community, it is desirable for all residential districts to be in close proximity and to have pedestrian access to commercial uses, employment opportunities, and community facilities.

B-2 Convenience Business District

The intent of this district is to meet the commercial and service needs generated by nearby residential areas. Goods and services normally available in these districts are of the "convenience variety." The size of this district should relate to surrounding residential markets and the location should be at or near major intersections, in proximity to and/or ~~on the periphery of~~ adjacent to residential areas.

Article II: Zoning District Regulations

B-2 Districts

We recommend revisiting the allowable use in B-2 districts. Some uses would warrant conditional uses that could limit square footage, hours of operation, noise and lighting restrictions, etc. In this manner, more uses would be available to residential districts while protecting the residential areas from potential negative impacts.

Residential Uses in Business Districts

Restricting the types of residential uses allowed in B-2 districts, as well as the other business districts, eliminates live/work opportunities that contribute to the walkability of the city. Consider allowing duplexes and multi-family residences.

Food Manufacturing: Section 2.4 Table II

The prohibition of food manufacturing in all business and rural districts except B-6 and RU-2 precludes bakeries (NAICS 311812) canning jams and preserves, (NAICS 311412), and other small-scale food processing operations in the other districts. We suggest developing conditional use regulations for small-scale operations, and allowing their use in all business and rural zoning districts.

It is noted that the draft Food Operations Overlay District regulations address this issue within the overlay district. We recommend addressing this issue city-wide through the use table.

Food Stores
To provide better access to healthy food, we recommend permitting or conditionally permitting food stores in B-5, B-6, and RU-2 zoning districts.

Bus Stops
The use tables should be amended under Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation (NAICS 485) to allow bus stops (NAICS 485113) in all zoning districts.

Establishing Florence Downtown Overlay Districts (D): Section 2.9-2
(D) Variances for residential uses on any lot or parcel, including mixed use developments, may be permitted within the Downtown Redevelopment District as a Special Exception by the City Board of Zoning Appeals. To ensure conformity to the Consolidated Zoning Ordinance and compatibility with the intent of the overlay district for which that use is proposed, a Certificate of Appropriateness is required from the Design Review Board and a variance must be obtained from the City Board of Zoning Appeals. Prior to submitting a request for a variance from the City Board of Zoning Appeals the owner must first obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness which shall be used to determine that the proposed residential use is compatible with the purposes of the Overlay District for which it is proposed.

Limiting residential uses to residential zoning districts by restricting residential uses in commercial zoning districts restricts live/work opportunities, pedestrian access to goods and services including healthy foods, and inherently decreases walkability. We recommend that residential uses should not require an application for a special exception within the Downtown Redevelopment District or other overlay districts. Certain conditional uses may be appropriate.

Certificates of Appropriateness, Criteria for Issuance: Section 2.9-6
In considering the issue of appropriateness of a particular project, the Design Review Board shall be guided by the Design Guidelines adopted herein by reference.

Design Guidelines should include Complete Street provisions for enhancing the walkability of the downtown overlay districts.

Establishment of Jeffries Creek Protection Overlay District: Section 2.11-4
(F) Variances, waivers, and exemptions shall not be permitted within the Protection Overlay District.

In addition to walking paths and passive recreation allowed in Zone 1, provisions for a variance to construct paths and greenways within other areas of the buffer should be provided. The applicant (or City) should demonstrate that the construction of such paths will not impact the water quality and quantity of stormwater runoff into the creek and will not contribute to creek bank erosion or compromise bank stability. Walking paths within the view shed of water bodies are among the most popular recreational uses.

Article III: Conditional Uses

3.1 Townhouses

Sidewalks not less than three (3) feet in width shall be provided along the front property line of each project building.

Five (5) foot wide sidewalks will ensure ADA compliance.

3.6 Manufactured Home Parks

Multi-purpose paths, trails, and/or greenways designed to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-automotive traffic shall be provided. The system of sidewalks, paths, trails, greenways, or a combination thereof, shall be designed such that every unit in the manufactured home park 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 should 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.

3.7 Accessory Apartments

3.7 (5) Within the R-3 District, minimum lot size shall be at least twice the minimum lot requirement for the district. Florence does not have an R-3 zoning district and accessory apartments are not currently allowed in any residential district, regardless of lot size.

According to the Article 2 use tables, accessory apartments do not appear to be permitted in any zoning district.

Housing demographics show a definite trend towards reduced household sizes with many single parent and single occupant households. At the same time, there is a demand for multi-generational housing as parents are raising children and caring for aging parents under one roof.

Zoning regulations should recognize this trend and accommodate the needs of these segments of the population by allowing accessory apartments, granny flats, apartments over garages, etc. This will ultimately enhance the walkability of the City of Florence.

3.21 Off-Street Parking Requirements

The recommendations in this section are also applicable to Article 6, ARTICLE 6, Supplemental Off-Street Parking and Loading Regulations.

Allowances should be made for providing off-site parking.

Suggested language (e):

If the required automobile parking spaces cannot reasonably be provided on the same lot on which the principal use is conducted, such spaces may be provided on other off-street property, provided such property lies within 500 feet of the main entrance to such principal use. Such automobile parking space shall be legally associated with the principal use and shall not hereafter be reduced or encroached upon in any manner.

Suggested language (n):
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 zoning 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.

Recommended addition to section:
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 zoning administrator shall determine the shared parking allowance, if any.

Additional recommendations for off-street parking regulations

- *Where on-street parking is provided, the Zoning Administrator shall waive on site off-street parking requirements. The Zoning Administrator may waive or reduce on site off-street parking requirements where alternative off-site parking is available.*
- *Maximum off-street parking requirements*
  - *Parking lots of twenty-one (21) to fifty (50) spaces may not have more than 150% of the number of spaces required by Article 2 Table II*
  - *Parking lots of fifty-one (51) spaces or more may not have more than 125% of the number of parking spaces required by Article 2 Table II*
- *Off-street parking design standards 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.*
- *Design standards should include provisions for bicycle parking.*
- *Consider park and ride facilities.*

Bufferyard Requirements

In addition to not interfering with the installation of utilities, required bufferyards and landscaping shall not impede or disrupt the passage of sidewalks, paths, trails, bike lanes, etc., through the bufferyard or landscaping. This also applies to the bufferyard, landscaping, screening, and open space provisions of Article 4.

GATHER
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Florence Pedestrian Plan
Focus Groups Report

Prepared for:
Alta Planning + Design

Prepared by:
Gather Consulting

February 12, 2016

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Table of Contents

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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 Florence in January 2016.

- Specific objectives of the focus groups were to do the following:
  - Identify residents' opinions of walkability in Florence,
  - 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 Florence.

Methodology

Four focus groups were conducted on Wednesday Jan. 13 at 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and Thursday Jan. 14 at 10 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

All four sessions were held at the City of Florence's City Center. A total of 25 community members participated in the four groups.

Focus group participants were chosen to prioritize the following criteria:

- City residents,
- Stakeholders with a vested interest in improving access to active living and healthy eating,
- A diverse mix of residents, business owners, and stakeholders who represent the city's demographics.

To ensure that residents from all areas of the city were represented, at least one leader from each of Florence's neighborhood association and neighborhood watch groups were invited to participate.

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

Question: What assets exist in Florence? How can the pedestrian master plan build upon or leverage current assets?

Focus Group participants named the following assets:

- The Rail Trail - The paved rail trail and its unpaved trail connections are heavily used by many residents for running, walking, and biking. It attracts diverse users from all areas of the city. Focus group members described it as a major community asset, however, many participants expressed concerns about personal safety at the trail. Some female focus group participants said they didn't feel comfortable using the trail unless they were in a group.

- The city manager - Many focus group participants expressed high confidence in City Manager Drew Griffin who was described as a visionary leader who values green space and neighborhood development. They said Griffin's leadership will increase the chances that any proposed pedestrian planning projects will get implemented.

- Downtown revitalization - The city has made steady progress at revitalizing its downtown district. Focus group members said the entire district is walkable, however, they said perceptions about crime and concerns about safety keep some residents from walking in the district.

- Community gardens - Focus group members said the city's community gardening program is improving access to affordable, healthy produce in underserved communities, beautifying neighborhoods, and helping to build community.

- Community-wide conversations about connectivity - The city's efforts to revitalize its downtown neighborhoods has raised awareness about the benefits of connecting different sections of the city and making them more walkable, however, it has also increased concerns about safety among some residents of areas that are adjacent to neighborhoods with higher crime rates.

- Neighborhood parks - Focus group members said that the city is well covered in neighborhood parks, however, amenities at each park and accessibility to the parks vary greatly.

- Hospitality industry - Florence's hospitality industry is strong and thriving. Focus group members said the city is a popular destination for residents of

smaller towns in the region. They said the Florence Civic Center does a good job of drawing large conferences to the area.

Barriers

Question: What are the biggest barriers to walkability in Florence?

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

- Poor sidewalk conditions - Participants said that a lack of sidewalks and poor sidewalk conditions are among the greatest barriers to walkability in most parts of the city except for the downtown district.

- Traffic - Aggressive drivers speeding down congested roads is a major problem for pedestrians, focus group members said. They identified the following roads as some of the most dangerous:
    - Palmetto St.
    - Edisto Dr.
    - Alligator Rd.
    - Irby St.
    - Cherokee Rd.

- Fear of crime and violence - Many focus group members said that fears related to crime and violence is a major obstacle to getting people to walk downtown, on local trails, and in many downtown neighborhoods.

Priorities

Question: What are high priority projects, streets, neighborhoods, or destinations for improved pedestrian access? Why are they priorities?

Focus group participants named the following priorities:

- Hotels, stores, and restaurants near David H. McLeod Blvd - Improve the ability for pedestrians to walk to and from hotels, restaurants, the mall, and other stores near the Florence Civic Center. Add crossings, landscaping, and other buffers to increase pedestrian security.

- Downtown - In order to increase foot traffic in downtown, focus group participants said they would like to see the following.

    - Improved walkability between downtown and 5 points. Focus group participants said many people are already walking from the downtown district to the intersection of West Palmetto and Cashua Drive. But they

said the route is dangerous due to heavy traffic and limited pedestrian buffers.

  - Spaces to congregate - Focus group participants said they want more green spaces and other open spaces that allow people to gather downtown for formal and informal occasions.

  - Increased safety measures - Participants want downtown to feel safer with improved lighting, the addition of emergency call boxes, and increased police presence.

- Freedom Florence - Focus group members said the city should invest in better signage and lighting to direct people to the Freedom Florence trail on the east side of the city. Participants said the trail is an underused resource because many people don't know about it, and it is hard to find.

- Neighborhood parks - Participants said that any improvements to the crossings and sidewalks that connect neighborhood parks to the residential areas around them will go a long way toward increasing the number of residents who are motivated to walk in their neighborhoods.

- East, North, Northwest Florence - Focus group participants said they believe that improving lighting and reducing blight would go a long way toward improving walkability in these three areas of the city, where access to active living and healthy eating is limited.

- Pedestrian & Driver Education: Too many pedestrians walk in the streets in both residential areas and in busy commercial districts even when sidewalks are available, focus group members said. They said it is also common for pedestrians to walk on the wrong side of the road and to walk in dark clothing at night. On the rail trail, many walkers seem confused about how to share the space with runners and bicyclists, participants said. At the same time, many drivers are aggressive and do not yield to pedestrians or bicyclists. Participants said they would like the pedestrian plan to include recommendations on educating pedestrians and drivers.

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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
- Helpful
- Oh boy!
- Progress
- Encouraged
- Information
- Excited
- Optimistic
- Possibilities
- Informed
- Safety for all
- Health and wellness
- The future
- Hope
- Safety
- Body, mind & spirit

APPENDIX B

Direct quotes from focus group participants:

- “The beauty of this is that it can serve some practical purposes in terms of allowing people to get out and walk and connect with a larger community outside of the one they might be confined to. When you do that it begins to break down barriers.”
- “We need to provide those visiting or moving to Florence the walkability they see in other cities.”
- “When people are out walking it creates the bump into factor. You begin to bump into each other and fears go away.”
- “This is about economic development because connectivity has moved beyond golf courses and tennis courses and pools to the things that home owners are looking for and families are looking for.”
- “People want to move to or stay in communities that are connected.”

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City of FLORENCE
SOUTH CAROLINA

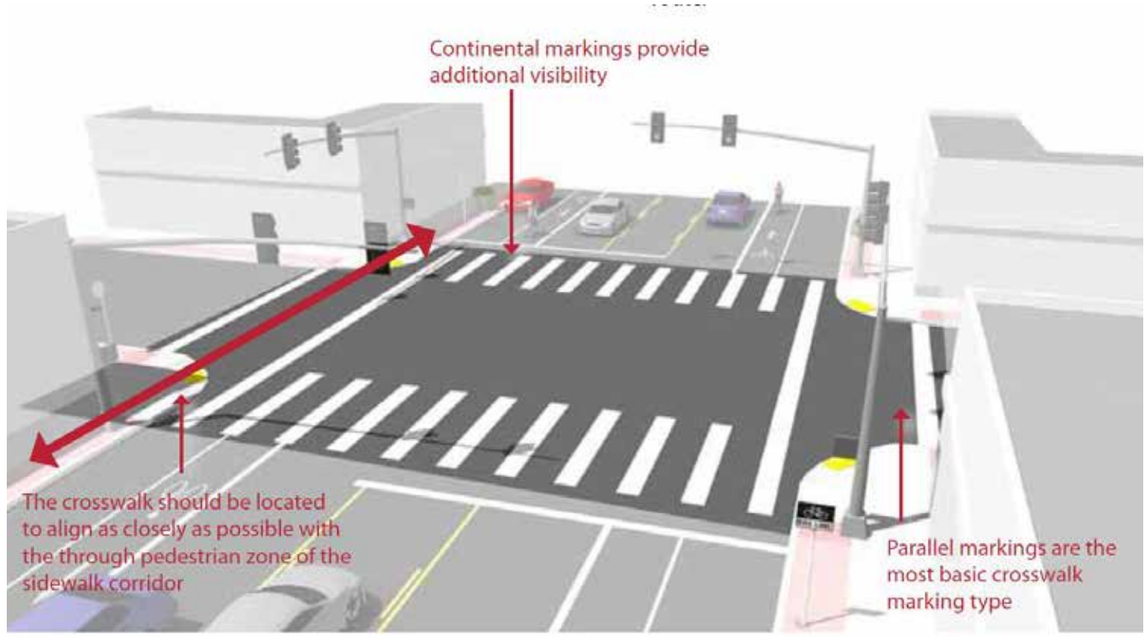
alta
PLANNING + DESIGN

SPOT IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The map on the following page depicts two types of spot improvement recommendations — crossing improvements and intersection improvements — whose purpose is four-fold:

- augment connectivity by **completing missing links** in the network, thus i**ncreasing mobility at critical intersections and crossing points** which may currently lack adequate facilities or may be perceived as barriers
- increase **accessibility to key destinations**, particularly schools, transit stops, grocery stores, and local farmers markets
- **address known safety issues** and concerns, particularly hot spots of fatalities and injuries
- respond to the **mobility and accessibility needs expressed by Florence residents** during periods of public outreach

Intersection improvements are distinct from crossing improvements in that the recommendation relates only to signalized intersections and considers additional factors such as street geometry, signal timing, ADA accessibility, and speed limits. **The map is not an exhaustive representation of pedestrian spot improvements that will be planned or implemented in the City of Florence. Rather, the map identifies priorities based on the aforementioned four considerations.** The following section further specifies the rationale behind those factors.



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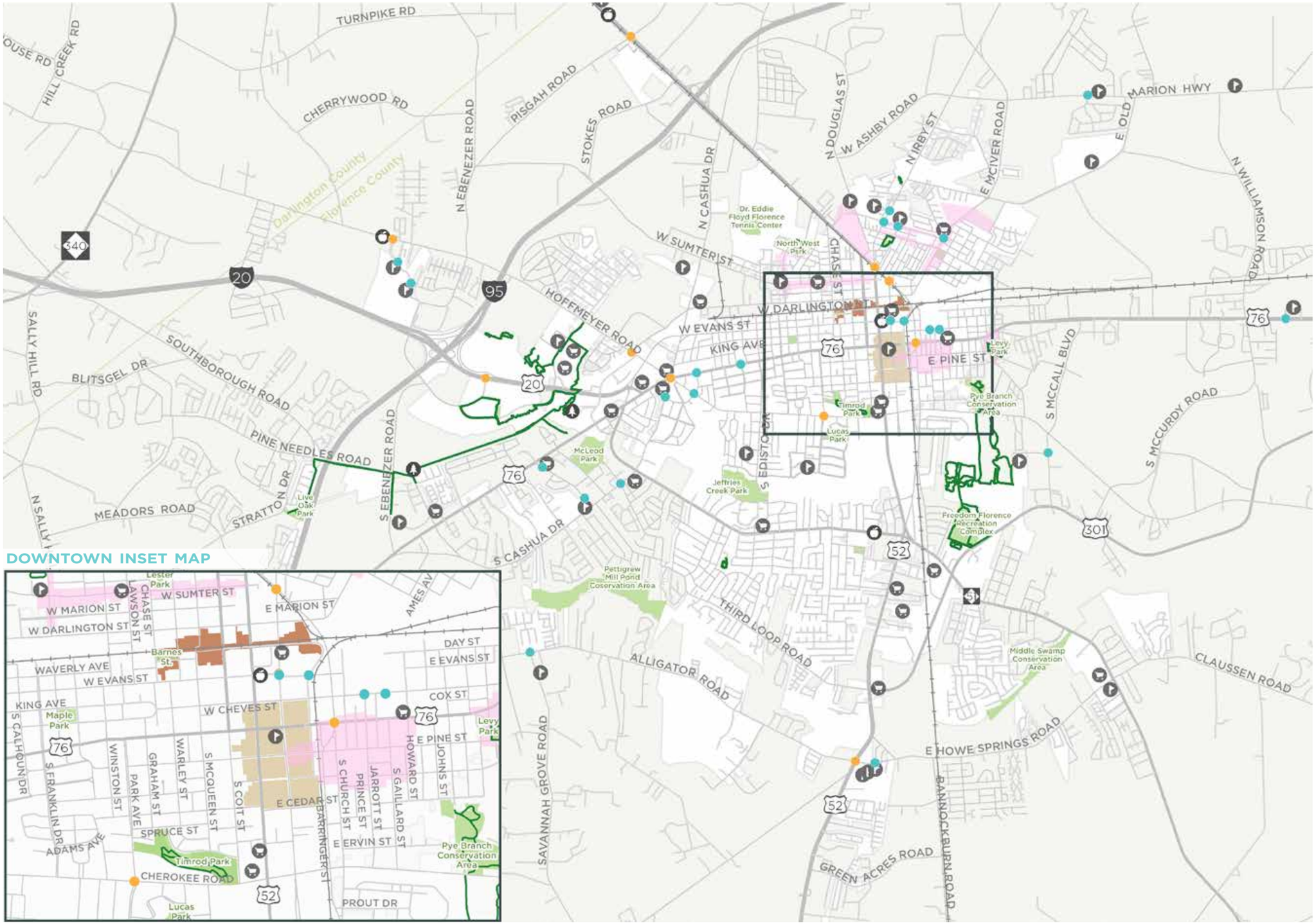
SPOT IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS MAP



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LINEAR IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

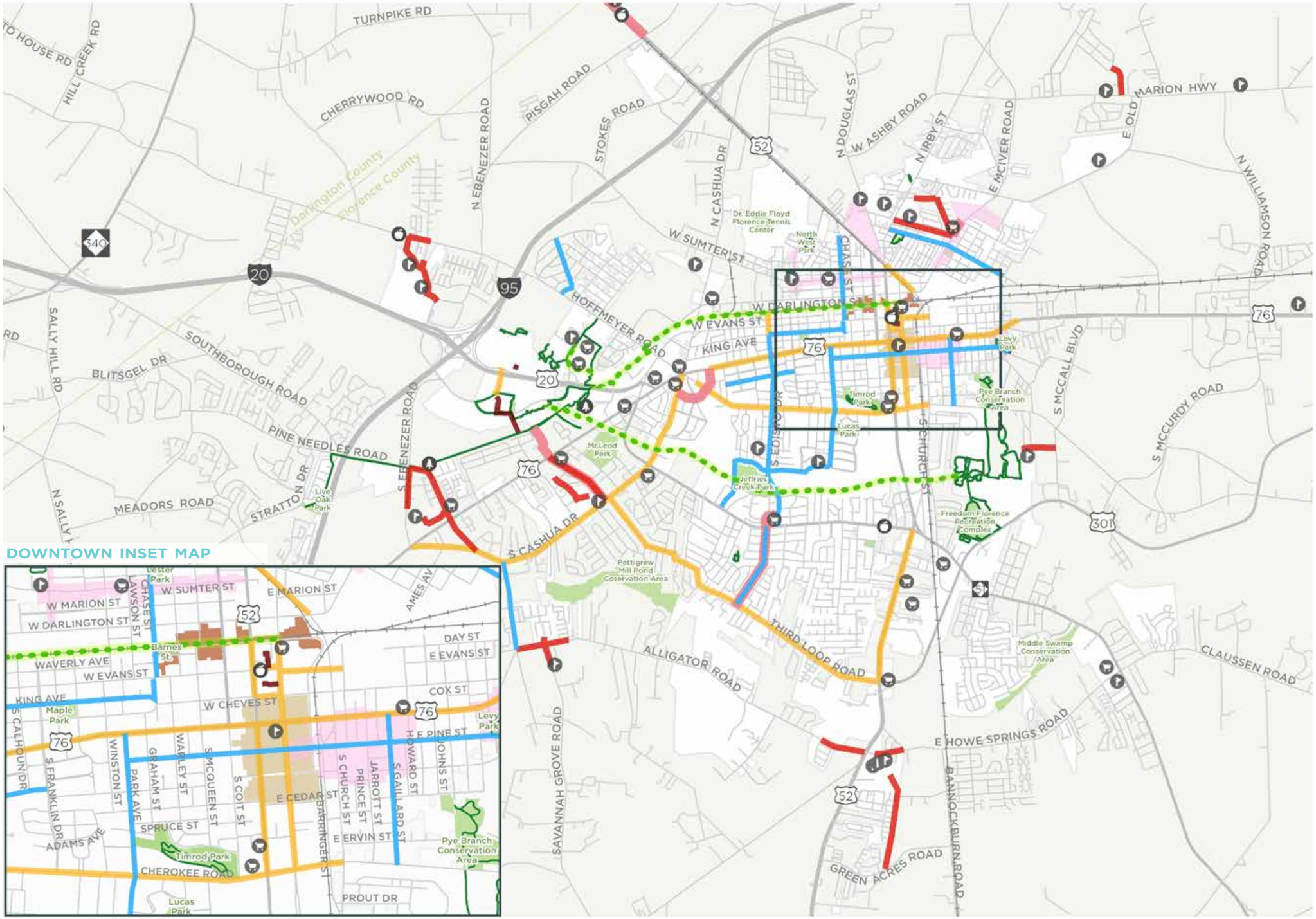
Linear recommendations are focused on major arterials and downtown streets that provide important gateway connections for pedestrians moving between neighborhoods and throughout commercial districts. Public input and field analysis provided additional information used to identify specific access and safety issues.

Recommendations for linear improvements include filling sidewalk gaps, adding new sidewalks, improving sidewalks in disrepair, reducing speed limits, adding warning signage, as well as rebalancing the right-of-way to better accommodate people on foot and bike.

Linear recommendations are organized according to the core purpose the recommendations serve, including:

- corridor connectivity and streetscape enhancements
- access to healthy food outlets
- access to schools
- neighborhood slow zones
- parking lot accessibility

LINEAR IMPROVEMENTS BY RECOMMENDATION TYPE MAP



DOWNTOWN INSET MAP

LEGEND

- Corridor Connectivity and Streetscape Enhancements
- Access to Healthy Food Outlets
- Access to Schools
- Neighborhood Slow Zone
- Parking Lot Access
- Trail Extension & Connection
- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

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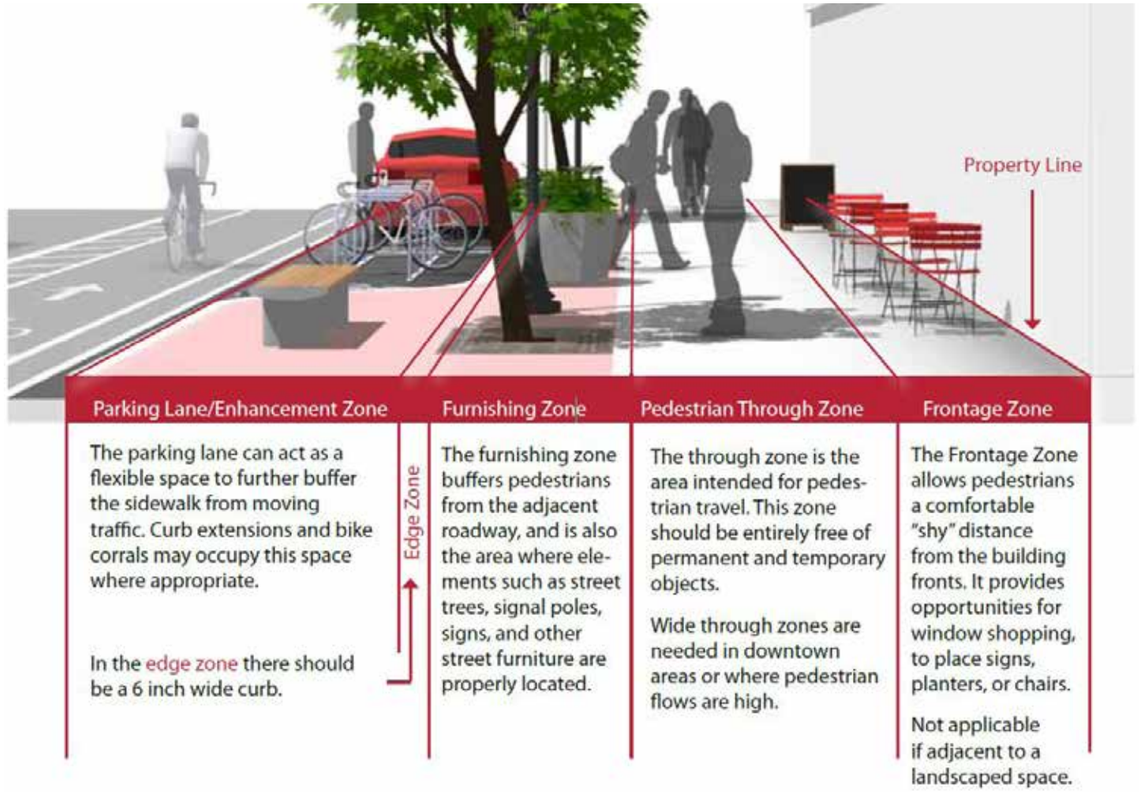
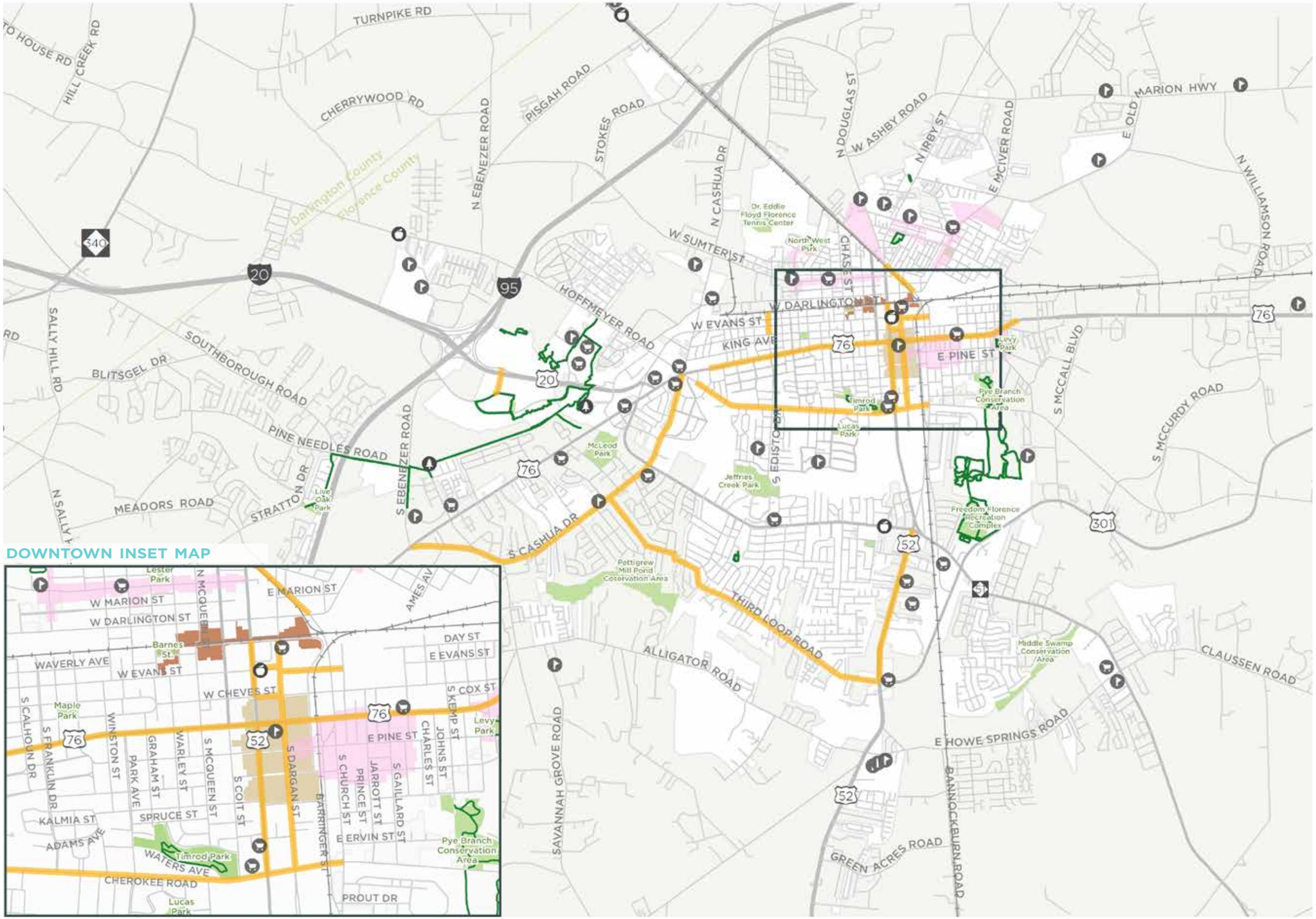
CORRIDOR CONNECTIVITY & STREETSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS

Corridor recommendations are focused on major arterials and downtown streets that provide important gateway connections for pedestrians moving between neighborhoods and commercial districts. Public input and field analysis provided additional information used to identify specific access and safety issues.

Recommendations for corridor improvements include filling sidewalk gaps, adding new sidewalks, improving sidewalks in disrepair, making crosswalks highly visible, reducing speed limits, adding warning signage, and general recommendations to rebalance the right-of-way to better accommodate people on foot and bike.



CORRIDOR CONNECTIVITY & STREETSCAPE RECOMMENDATIONS MAP



DOWNTOWN INSET MAP

LEGEND

- Corridor Connectivity and Streetscape Enhancements
- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

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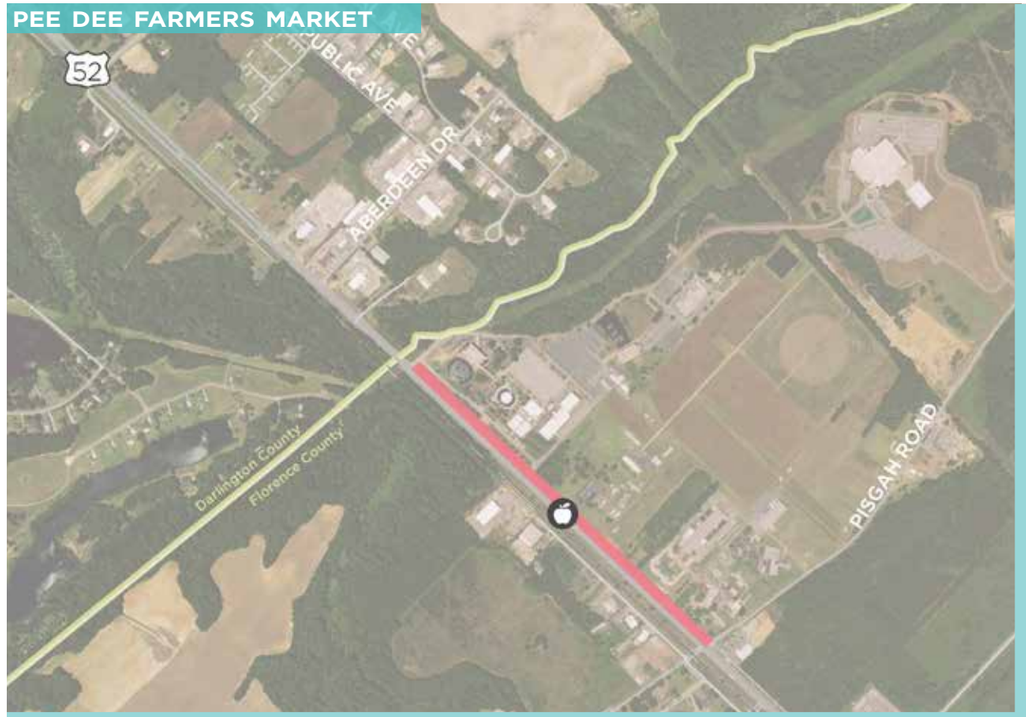
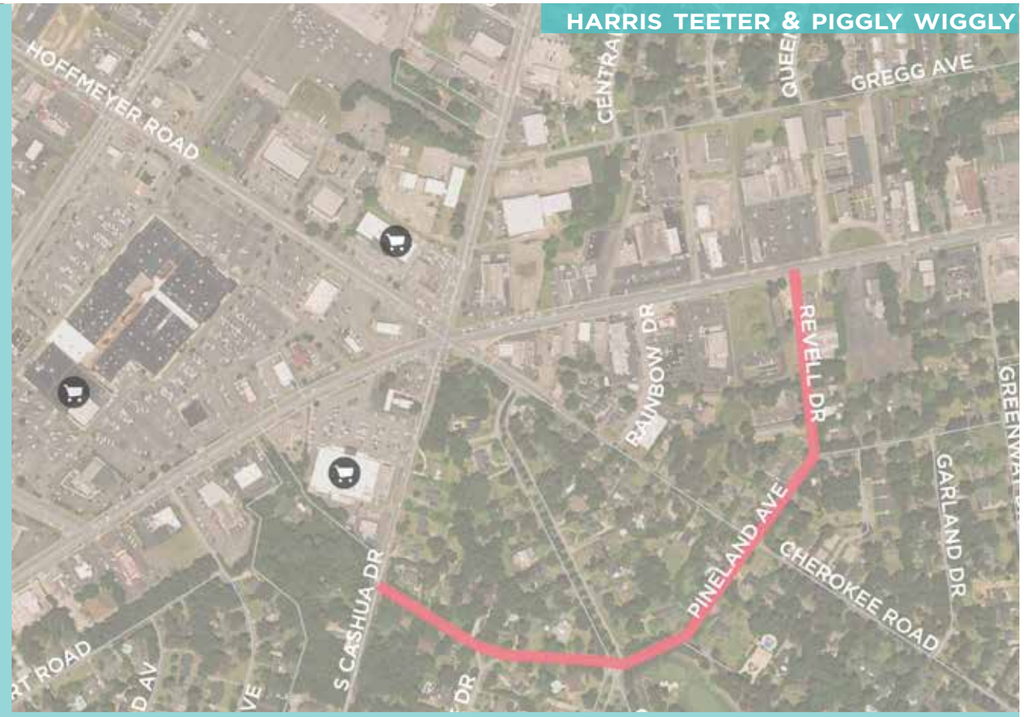
ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD OUTLETS

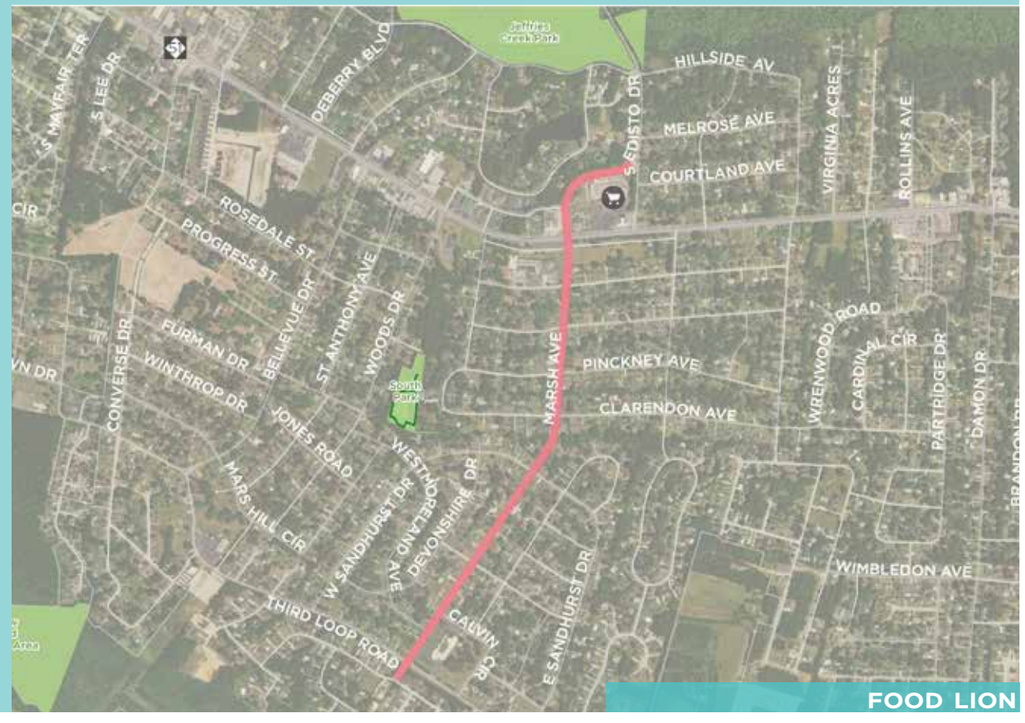
A healthy life requires access to healthy food outlets, among other resources. Well-designed active transportation infrastructure connecting to healthy food options provides the cobenefit of not only enhancing mobility and expanding transportation options, but also encouraging physical activity. Furthermore, a compounding benefit of shopping at local, accessible healthy food outlets is the reduction of 'grocery store leakage.' This term refers to the millions of dollars that are spent at grocery stores outside of the local community.

Linear recommendations for improving access to healthy food outlets were influenced by the built environment and land use practices in Florence, recognizing that major grocery stores were often built in isolation and distant from the urban downtown's walkable form. The City of Florence has made significant strides to integrate food systems into their planning and zoning practices, but retrofitting existing healthy food hubs for pedestrian activity are still a necessary reality.

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD OUTLETS MAPS







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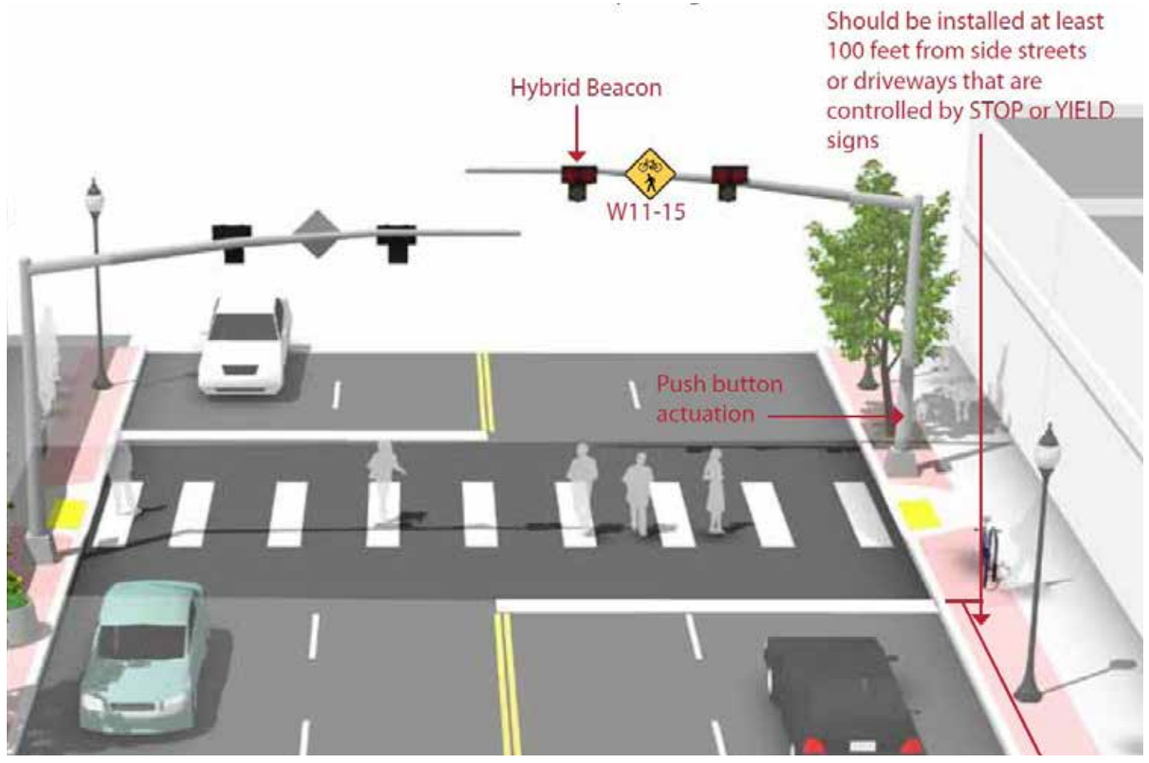
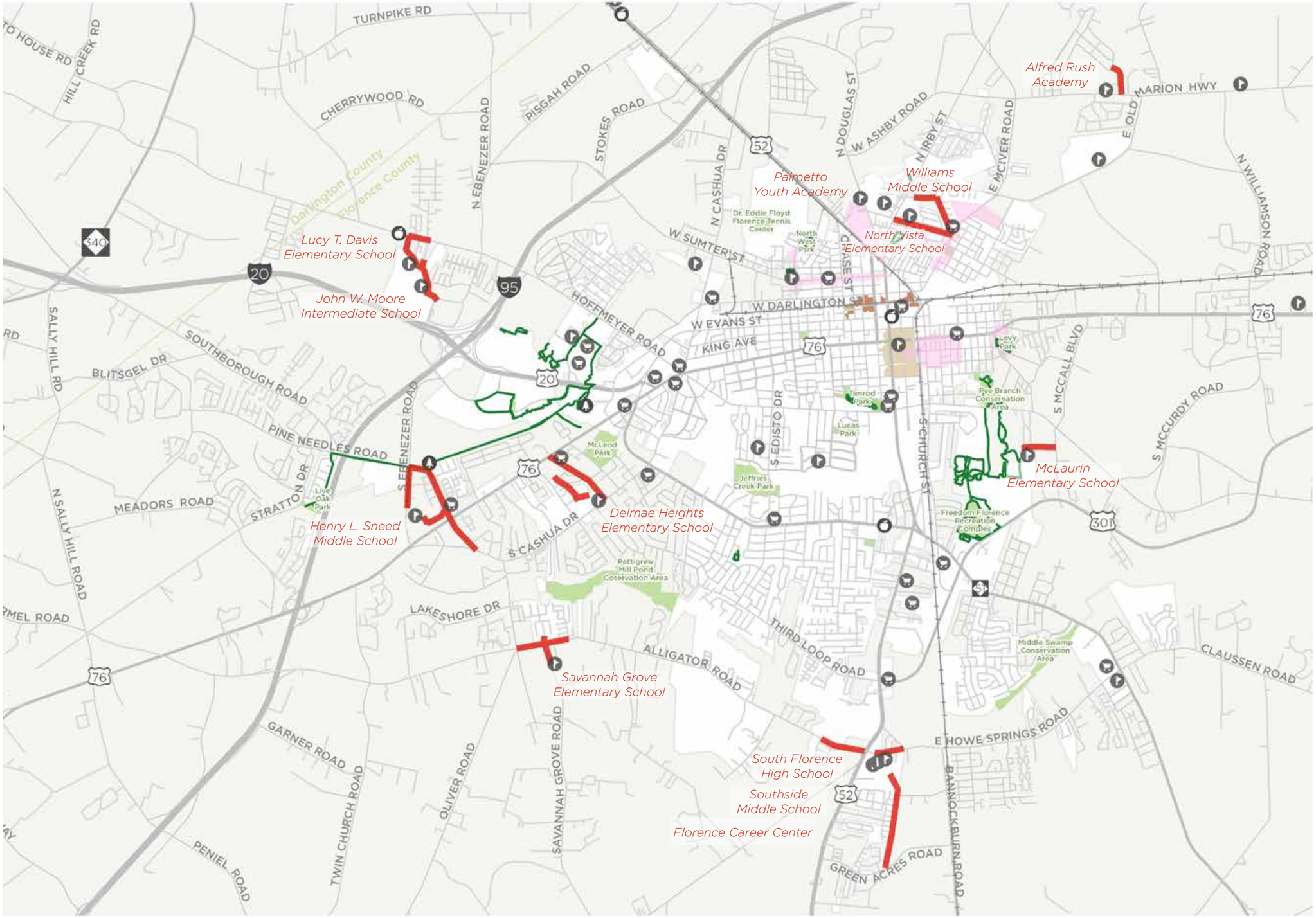
ACCESS TO SCHOOLS

Over the past 50 years children and adolescents have steadily walked or biked to school less and less. A number of factors for this decline are at play, including suburban sprawl which creates long distances between homes and schools, neighborhoods that lack sidewalks, high rates of car ownership, infrequent and unsafe roadway crossings, high volume and high speed roads, and perception of neighborhood safety. The resounding impact has been a precipitous increase in childhood obesity, diminishing cardiovascular fitness and mental health, increased transportation costs for schools and families, and increased health care costs.

The City of Florence has a number of schools within walking distance of neighborhoods and commercial areas which students could walk to if adequate pedestrian facilities existed. These schools and their associated corridors were thus identified as priority linear connections. The underpinning of these priority connection recommendations is to address known safety issues, specifically within a 10 minute walkshed, or approximately a half-mile radius. Safer, calmer streets promote walking and bicycling and are thus invariably conducive for active transportation users of all ages and abilities to enjoy.



ACCESS TO SCHOOLS MAP



LEGEND

- Access to Schools
- School
- Existing Trail
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

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NEIGHBORHOOD SLOW ZONES

The desired outcome of a neighborhood slow zone is an increased quality of life. This is accomplished not simply by implementing traffic calming, but rather through a holistic approach to creating safe and attractive streets that reduce the negative effects that vehicles have on the environment. Neighborhood slow zones effectively reduce the frequency and severity of collisions, reduce vehicle cut-through patterns, increase access and safety for all modes, reduce noise levels, and potentially discourage crime through newly generated street life, instilling social control and neighborhood ownership.

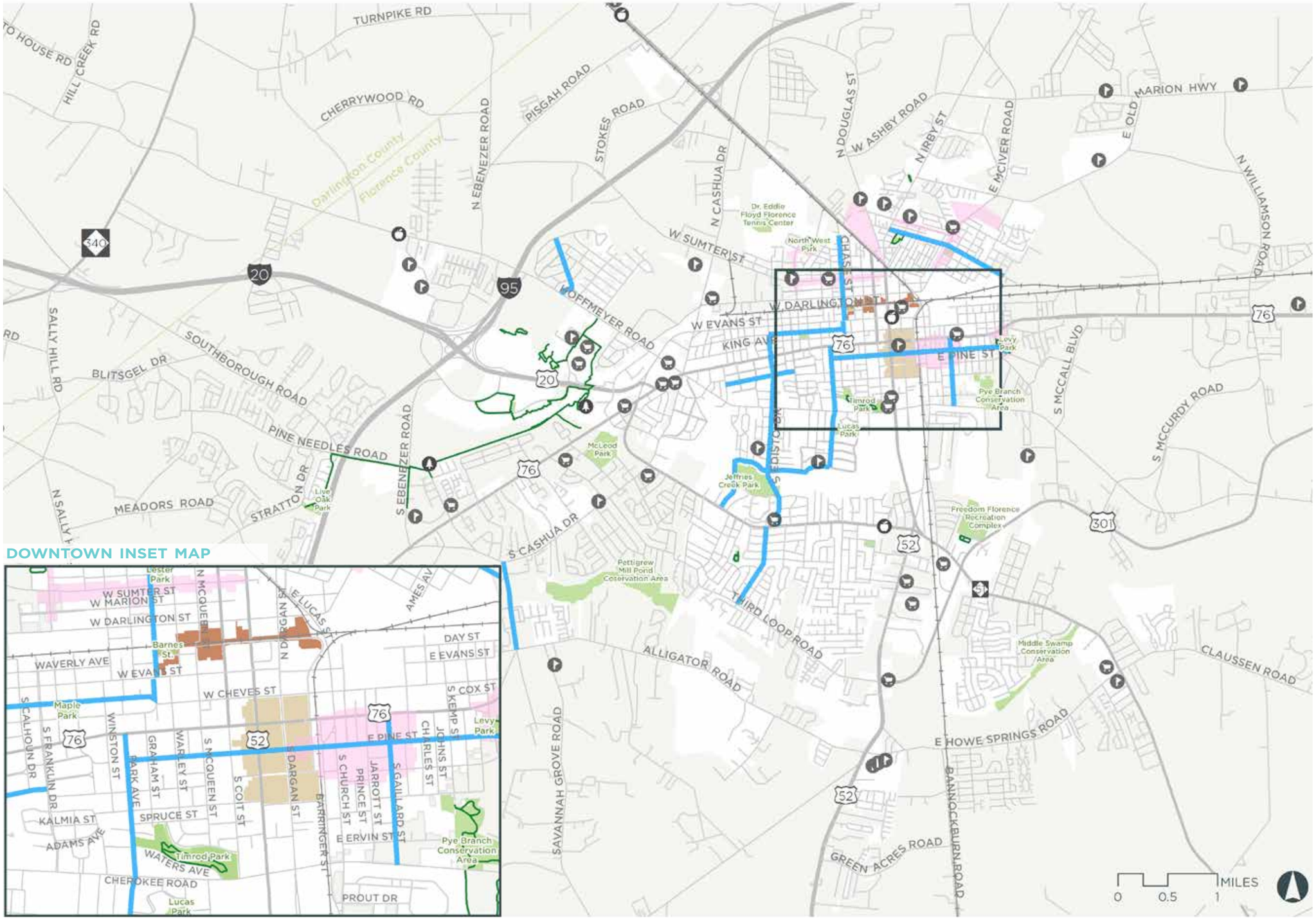
As with other linear recommendations, a roadway's setting and its particular issues dictate specific slow zone recommendations.

A combination of practices can be employed in each identified neighborhood slow zone. Particular recommendations may include:

- Re-evaluating appropriate design speeds
- Speed humps or speed tables
- Raised crosswalks or raised intersections
- Median barriers or center island narrowing
- Forced turn islands or traffic circles
- Neckdowns, chokers, chicanes, or bulbouts
- Traffic diverters (semi or diagonal)
- Street closures (full or half)
- Wayfinding signage

The adjacent map outlines a first tier of priority neighborhood slow zones. Slow zones recommendations can be applied citywide, and the city should consider implementing these recommendations as opportunities arise elsewhere.

NEIGHBORHOOD SLOW ZONE MAP



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PARKING LOT ACCESSIBILITY

For better or worse, surface parking lots are largely a part of America's urban design fabric. Within these vast swaths of asphalt there are few considerations for pedestrian mobility. At big-box stores in particular, parking lot design (or lack thereof) often pit pedestrians against vehicles, creating opportunities for collisions.

Apart from safety concerns, parking lots typically lack connections to the broader surrounding, and lack sidewalk facilities and connectivity within the shopping center. This forces people to resort to their car to both reach the destination and to move within the destination itself. Creating linkages to reverse this behavior and ease this reliance on a vehicle is an important facet of this plan's linear recommendations.

As with other linear and spot recommendations, the proposed improvements are an initial priority list for the City to work from. The City should continue to identify other opportunities and retrofit these parking lots for increased accessibility.

Placeholder for design guideline image

PARKING LOT ACCESSIBILITY MAPS

CIVIC CENTER & MAGNOLIA MALL

Magnolia Mall is one such big-box shopping center where opportunities exist to create a tree-lined walkway for pedestrians, especially those visitors who may be walking from Radio Drive. This improvement should occur in conjunction with an intersection improvement at Radio Drive and Highway 20.

Surface parking lots around the Florence Civic Center presents an opportunity to better connect pedestrians to the existing sidewalk network as well as the rail trail and Florence Veteran Park.

DOWNTOWN

In the urban core setting, two key recommendations were identified. The top L-shaped line forms a connection from the heart of the downtown at Florence Hotel through a well-utilized parking lot that abuts the County Complex. These two buildings, and the parking lot dividing them, attract motor vehicle and pedestrian activity. As such, pedestrians need a walkway connection to safely move through the space.

The other recommendation also serves a parking lot that currently suits only the needs of the car. A pedestrian connection through this parking lot signals a shared space meant for all, and encourages walking through this otherwise inactive space.

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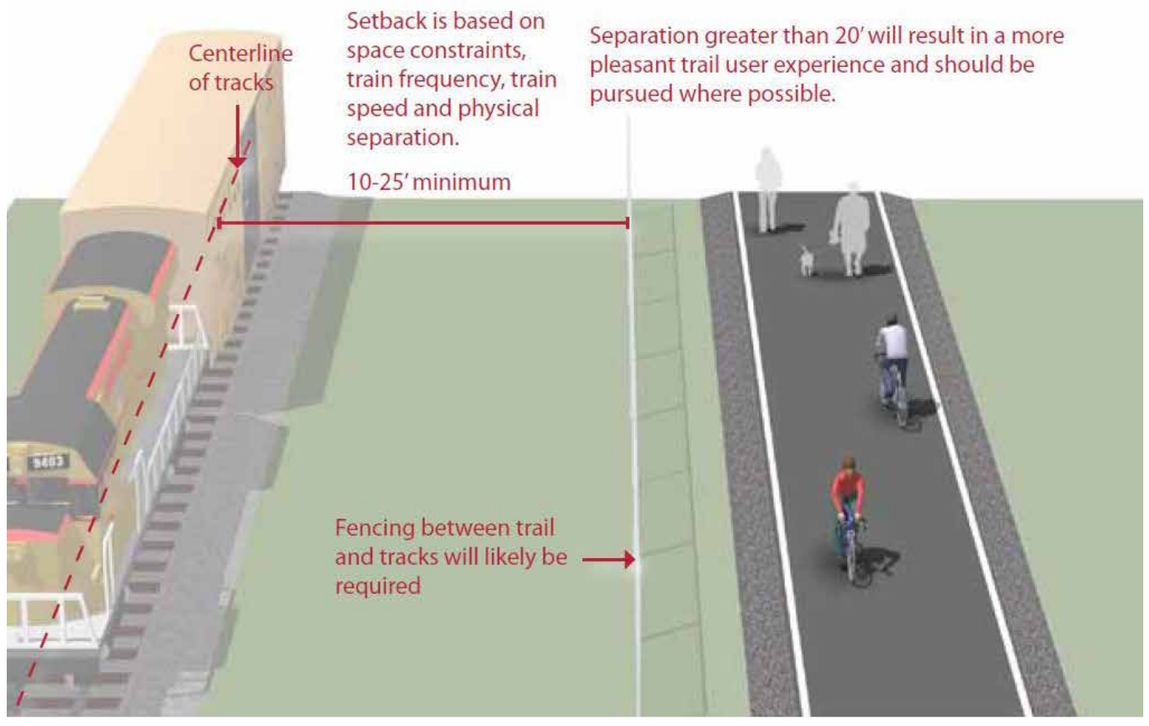
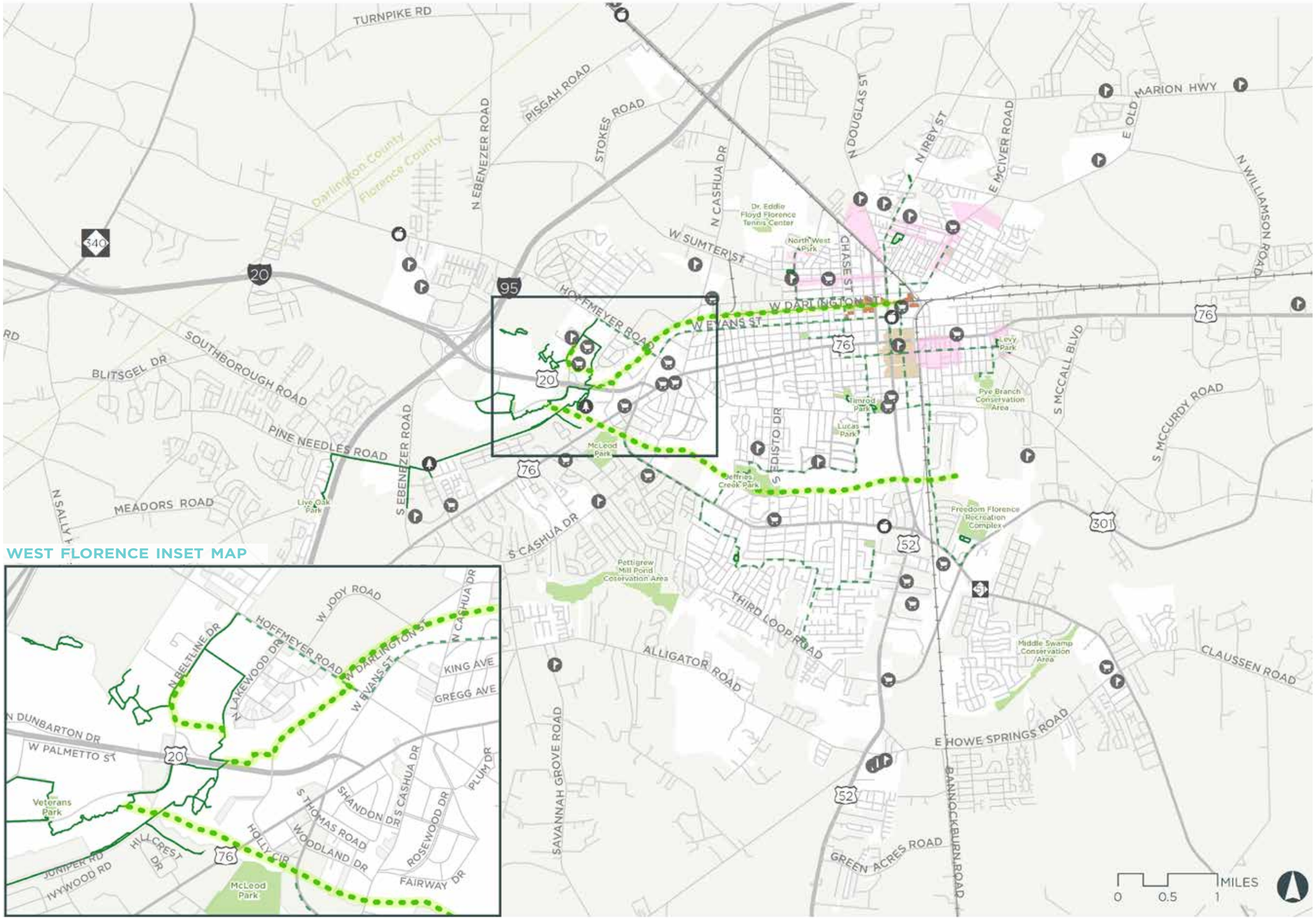
TRAIL EXTENSIONS AND CONNECTIONS

The proposed trail extensions and connections are a long-term vision for the City of Florence. Recommendations are intended to build upon the recent efforts by the City to transform Florence into an active and healthy place where trails are used for both recreation and transportation.

The recommendations presented in the adjacent map further flesh out the existing and proposed network of trails, creating key linkages to major destinations like downtown, shopping centers, neighborhoods and parks. The trail network will also supplement and compliment on-street pedestrian facilities, ensuring accessibility across the city.



TRAIL EXTENSIONS AND CONNECTIONS MAP



WEST FLORENCE INSET MAP

LEGEND

- Trail Extension & Connection
- Farmers Market
- Grocery Store
- School
- Trailhead
- Existing Trail
- Proposed Urban Connections
- Road Improvement Project
- Road
- Railroad
- Catalyst Project
- Food Overlay District
- Arts & Culture Overlay District
- Park
- City of Florence
- County Boundary

Neighborhood Food Outlets

As part of a larger beautification effort, the city's Beautification and Facilities Division created a number of community garden plots. These gardens are located at Northwest Park, Iola Jones Park, Lester Park, Timrod Park, and near the intersection of Pine and Galliard in the East Florence neighborhood. These raised plots play a vital role in supporting a healthy lifestyle, stirring civic engagement, and strengthening community pride. Expanding and directing this effort to include food insecure areas of Florence will increase healthy food options for those residents. In addition to the growth of community gardens, the City is creating a Food Overlay District in downtown that will create a new source for locally-grown, healthy foods accessible to downtown neighborhoods.

Parks & Recreation Facilities

Florence residents have 15 different park and recreation facilities to enjoy daily, helping to serve their physical activity needs. Creating safe, convenient, and comfortable ways of accessing these areas on foot can only increase their popularity and increase the quality of life for all residents and visitors. Adding wayfinding signage is one way to inform residents and visitors of their proximity to these wonderful places, and to inform users of the connections that exist between them.

Trail Network

Florence's existing trail network has the potential to improve mobility options for residents and visitors. However, residents and visitors are often unaware of a trail's extent and trailhead location. Better marketing of the trail system and its benefits will increase its use and garner support for proposed expansion. A complete trail system, particularly one integrated with on-street facilities that reaches key destinations across Florence, will encourage walking not only for recreation purposes but also for transportation.

Downtown Streetscape

Evans Street has a multitude of desirable features which enhance the pedestrian experience. Historic buildings with short setbacks, attractive storefronts, ample sidewalk, curb extensions which shorten crosswalks, street trees and planters, decorative brick pavers, and pedestrian-scale lighting all contribute to a strong sense of place that is inviting and comfortable to walk. Designing surrounding urban streets with similar engaging features will bolster Florence's walkability and boost activity downtown.

Potential Project Partners

The City of Florence is fortunate to have schools, particularly elementary schools, still situated in residential neighborhoods. Further developing a partnership with Safe Routes to School means increased funding opportunities related to active transportation, increased physical activity, and heightened community involvement. Also, a partnership with the Pee Dee Regional Transit Authority (PDRTA) presents opportunities to further expand residents' mobility - allowing them to reach more employment opportunities and shopping destinations further out.

SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRAINTS

Trail Design in Urban Context

A lack of warning signs, a lack of high-visibility crosswalks, and ill-placed crossings leave trail users exposed to fast-moving, unaware drivers. In particular, yellow-stripes that intersect a standard, worn crosswalk for the Florence Rail Trail on a curved section of Woody Jones Boulevard prioritize vehicular speed at the detriment of other users' safety. In other areas, expansive curb cuts have paved over what was once a planting strip intended to buffer trail users from adjacent traffic on wide travel lanes.

ADA Compliance

ADA accessibility is a systemic issue in Florence's pedestrian network. The CDC recognizes that walking and wheelchair rolling are rights, not luxuries, that each person should have. As such, Florence should design and invest in its pedestrian facilities to encourage safe pedestrian activity and integrate walking and wheelchair rolling as a normal part of daily life for people of all ages and abilities.

Wide Roads

Roadway corridors are wider than needed for the traffic volumes they serve, and in some cases, travel lanes are oversized. Along some of these major corridors pedestrians are immediately adjacent to fast-moving traffic. Reducing lane widths and reallocating roadway space, "right-sizing," benefits the pedestrian and can even allow for bicycle facilities. This reconfiguration slows traffic speeds while maintaining throughput, buffers pedestrians, and creates a multimodal corridor.

???? Open to suggestions

Florence residents have 15 different park and recreation facilities to enjoy daily, helping to serve their physical activity needs. Creating safe, convenient, and comfortable ways of accessing these areas on foot can only increase their popularity and increase the quality of life for all residents and visitors. Adding wayfinding signage is one way to inform residents and visitors of their proximity to these wonderful places, and to inform users of the connections that exist between them.