



Division of
Bicycle &
Pedestrian
Transportation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *for the* BELMONT PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

the city of belmont, north carolina | 2009



OVERVIEW

In 2008, the City of Belmont applied for and was awarded a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop this Pedestrian Transportation Plan. This Plan combines past planning efforts with new research and analysis, and includes a full public input process. The result is a complete, up-to-date framework for moving forward with tangible pedestrian transportation improvements.

VISION STATEMENT

Vision statements and project goals were collected through public workshops, project steering committee meetings, input from City staff, and an online survey of local residents. The purpose of this plan is to:

- *“Provide recommendations for making the City of Belmont a place where people can walk safely to their destinations—to schools, places of work, parks—and for daily errands, socializing, and exercise”*
- *“Reduce dependence on motorized travel by connecting the various parts of the city with one another through sidewalks, safe street crossings, and greenways”*
- *“Identify where greenways should be developed and provide strategies to fill the gaps in the existing sidewalk network”*
- *“Have a positive impact on the transportation habits of residents, while improving both the health of citizens and overall quality of life”*

BENEFITS OF PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION

Communities across the United States and throughout the world are implementing strategies for serving the walking needs of their residents, and have been

doing so for many years. They do this because of their obligations to promote health, safety and welfare, and also because of the growing awareness of the many benefits of walking. Walking helps to improve people’s health and fitness, enhance environmental conditions, decrease traffic congestion, and contributes to a greater sense of community. Scores of studies from experts in the fields of public health, urban planning, urban ecology, real estate, transportation, sociology, and economics have supported such claims and have acknowledged the substantial value of supporting walking as it relates to active living and alternative transportation. *See Chapter 1 for details.*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Belmont already features an excellent pedestrian-friendly historic downtown area. This plan expand on downtown’s example of sidewalks and visible crosswalks, bringing such features to other areas of the City. In 1995, the City of Belmont adopted its Land Development Code, which required 5’ wide sidewalks on one side of the street in all new residential developments and 5’ wide sidewalks in front of all new non-residential development. By 2003, the City Council updated its zoning ordinance and required 5’ wide sidewalks on both sides of new residential streets and a 6’ wide planting strip separating the sidewalk from the street. All non-residential development is required to install an 8’ wide sidewalk and a 6’ planting strip along its street frontage. *These efforts and other plans and studies are summarized in Chapter 2.*

THE CITY OF BELMONT, NORTH CAROLINA

This photo visualization provides a conceptual example for pedestrian improvements in Belmont. The intersection shown below is at Park and Wilkinson.



RECOMMENDATIONS

A variety of sources were consulted to develop recommendations: previous plans and studies, existing conditions, a fieldwork inventory, public input, and local destinations. The recommendations consist of sidewalk projects, crossing improvements, and off-road greenways. Together these facilities should be developed or improved to create a safe and connected pedestrian network throughout the City.

IDENTIFYING PROJECTS PACKAGES

A 'Project Package' is a set of recommended facilities or facility improvements that are logically grouped together for purposes of prioritization, funding and implementation. Steering Committee input, public input, and criteria such as sidewalk gap closure and proximity to schools and other destinations were used to develop the five packages. For details on this process, see Chapter 3: Recommendations.

FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 5 describes different construction methods for the proposed pedestrian facilities, covering the following:

- NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program
- Local Roadway Construction and Reconstruction
- Residential and Commercial Development
- Retrofit Roadways with New Pedestrian Facilities
- Bridge Construction or Replacement
- Signage and Wayfinding Projects
- Existing City Easements

FUNDING

Implementing the recommendations of this plan will require a combination of funding sources that include local, state, federal, and private money. Appendix B defines and describes 30 possible funding sources that could be used to support the planning, design and development of pedestrian and greenway improvements.

PRIORITY PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES AND ESTIMATED COSTS

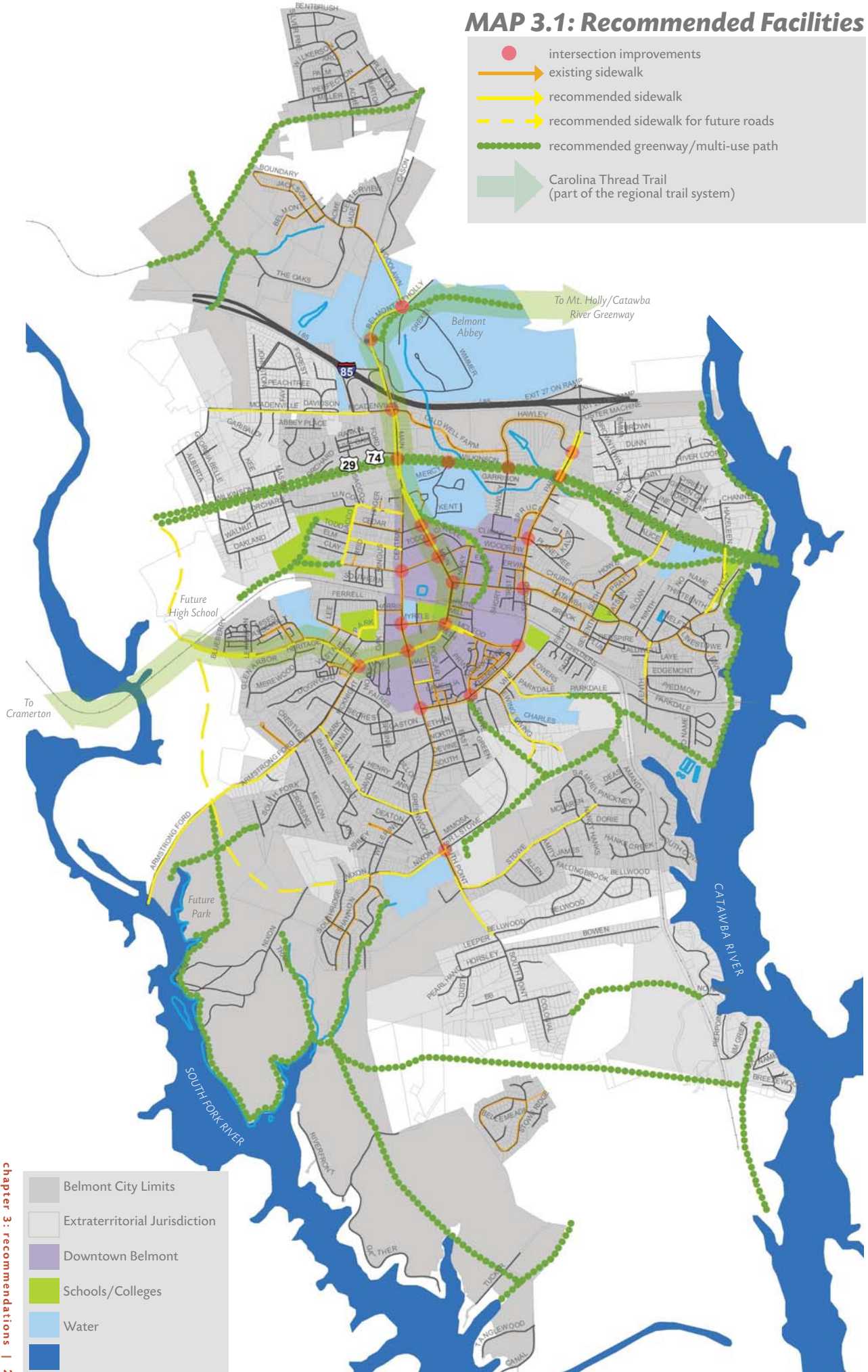
Priority Rank	Project Package	From	To	Facility Type	New Sidewalk or Trail, Total LF	Sidewalk Cost: \$50-\$75/ LF	Trail Cost: \$133/ LF	# of New Crosswalks	New Crosswalks Total LF	\$5.00/LF	Totals
1	Carolina Thread Trail Corridor Improvements	Main Street from Belmont Abbey College in the north	Belmont city limits on Eagle Street to the south and west	New Sidewalk & Crosswalk, Multi-Use Greenway	23,600	\$1,463,000	\$359,100	10	240	\$1,200	\$1,823,300.00
2	Gaston College Greenway	Park St	Catawba St	Multi-Use Trail/Greenway	5,600	\$0	\$744,800	2	48	\$240	\$745,040.00
3	NC 273 Improvements (Park/Keener/Southpoint)	I-85	Stowe Rd	New Sidewalk & Crosswalks	3,700	\$259,000	\$0	8	192	\$960	\$259,960.00
4	City Wide Sidewalk Improvements (Primarily, sections of Central, Myrtle, Nixon, Catawba, Armstrong Ford, McLeod, and S 10th)	Various	Various	New Sidewalk & Crosswalks	11,800	\$826,000	\$0	3	72	\$360	\$826,360.00
5	Wilkinson Improvements	City Limits West	City Limits East	New Sidewalk & Crosswalks	15,000	\$1,050,000	\$0	2	96	\$480	\$1,050,480.00
										Grand Total:	\$4,705,140

Sidewalk linear foot costs: \$75 is used when curb and gutter are included; \$50 is used when curb and gutter are not included.

Crosswalk linear foot costs: \$4.80 assumes high-visibility thermoplastic striping. Greenway trail costs: \$700 per mile is recommended by NCDOT and is used for the table below, although some NC municipalities have built them for less (\$500-\$600K)

MAP 3.1: Recommended Facilities

- intersection improvements
- existing sidewalk
- recommended sidewalk
- recommended sidewalk for future roads
- recommended greenway/multi-use path
- Carolina Thread Trail (part of the regional trail system)



- Belmont City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Downtown Belmont
- Schools/Colleges
- Water
- Water



Images from pedestrian planning workshops in Belmont.



PUBLIC INPUT

Appendix A summarizes the various avenues of public outreach that were employed to gather input during the planning process, including the comment form, two public workshops and other forms of outreach. Below are some key findings, according to the **250+** people who submitted comments through the online comment form:

- 84 percent said that improving walking conditions in Belmont is “very important”.
- People are walking mostly for fitness and recreation, and most are walking a few times per week or more.
- 80 percent identified “a lack of sidewalks and trails” as the top factor that discourages walking; other key factors influencing the choice to walk include “auto traffic and speed” and “pedestrian unfriendly streets and land uses”.
- Main Street was identified as the top roadway corridor most in need of sidewalk improvements.
- The top three walking destinations people would most like to get to are parks, trails/greenways, and restaurants.
- 90 percent said that public funds should be used to improve pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, trails, etc.), including state and federal grants, capital improvements bonds, and existing local taxes.

PROGRAMS + POLICIES

Meeting the goals of the City of Belmont Pedestrian Transportation Plan will require more than construction and installation of recommended pedestrian facilities. It will also require the initiation and continued support of pedestrian-related programs from the local officials, local residents, and community organizations. In addition, the implementation of these facilities and programs will require the adoption and enforcement of new pedestrian-related policies. Chapter 4 outlines recommended programs, policies, and in some cases, policy changes for the City of Belmont.

KEY ACTION STEPS

- 1) Adopt this Plan
- 2) Begin Top Priority Projects
- 3) Improve and Enforce City Regulations
- 4) Support Continued Efforts of the Parks and Recreation Citizen’s Advisory Board
- 5) Take Advantage of All Opportunities
- 6) Seek Multiple Funding Sources and Facility Development Options
- 7) Develop Pedestrian Programming
- 8) Ensure Planning Efforts Are Integrated Regionally