



COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY



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Amendment to Chapel Hill 2020

Town of Chapel Hill, NC

A Strategy for Where and How to Build Complete Communities in Chapel Hill, NC.

COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the Town of Chapel Hill, NC and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill jointly commissioned a [Projected Housing Needs 2020 – 2040](#) study to assess projected housing needs through 2040. This [Study](#) found that:

- Jobs, not students, are driving the need for additional housing in the Town;
- There has been a lack of diversity in the housing units constructed in the Town. During the 2000s and 2010s, most dwellings units were single-family detached dwellings or large multi-family developments;
- This lack of diversity in housing units fails to meet the needs of many households including seniors, first-time home buyers, families with children, and empty nesters; and,
- Housing production must increase to prevent the housing-jobs balance from worsening, which translates into approximately 485 dwelling units per year.

As a result of the [Projected Housing Needs 2020-2040](#) study, the Town Council led an initiative to determine a new approach toward housing creation in Chapel Hill. This initiative became the Complete Community Strategy that details how Chapel Hill can grow purposefully to accommodate a variety of housing types and increasing numbers dwelling units through 2040.

PROCESS

Development of the Complete Community Strategy was a Council led effort with consultant assistance. Community engagement focused on deep conversations with stakeholders. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with individuals representing Business and Institutional Interests; Equity Advocates; Developers; Housing and Quality of Life Advocates; Environmental Interests; and Pedestrian, Transit, Cycling, and Greenways interests. A total of 51 individuals were interviewed. From June to November 2022, the Town Council met with the project consultants seven times to receive updates and to discuss details of the Strategy. On December 7, 2022, Council passed a resolution endorsing the Complete Community Strategy with the understanding that an amendment to *Chapel Hill 2020*, the Town's Comprehensive Plan, would be required to effectuate the Strategy.

COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

In 2012, the Town of Chapel Hill adopted its current Comprehensive Plan, which is entitled, [Chapel Hill 2020](#). Since its adoption, *Chapel Hill 2020* has been amended ten times with additional planning elements to complement the Themes and Goals in the Plan. These amendments include a [Parks Comprehensive Plan](#), a [Stormwater Management Plan](#), a [Cultural Arts Plan](#), an updated [Future Land Use Map \(FLUM\)](#), and a [Climate Action and Response Plan](#). These amendments reflect the Town’s values and further define the Town’s vision for the future stated in *Chapel Hill 2020* as:

Chapel Hill 2020: Connections. Choices. Community.

Chapel Hill will be a multicultural university town where each day celebrates connections and choice; where a dynamic downtown and networked community inspire connections among people, ideas, the region, and the world; where innovation, technology, discovery, learning, and the arts continually animate a town alive with choices, options, and opportunities to live, work, play, and prosper.

The Complete Community Strategy augments the vision in *Chapel Hill 2020* and weaves together the various plans that have amended *Chapel Hill 2020* since its adoption. As a result, *Chapel Hill 2020* will be further amended with the Complete Community Strategy. With this new amendment, *Chapel Hill 2020* will continue to serve as a road map that guides future decisions about how the Town should evolve over time.

Figure 1 illustrates the fundamental elements and tenets of the Strategy. The diagram places “Place” in the center, and all elements of “Place” radiate from the center. Creating “Place” is one central purpose of comprehensive plans. When the Town adopted the Vision in *Chapel Hill 2020*, the Town described the “Place” that Chapel Hill wants for its future. Therefore, the “Place” at the center of the diagram is the vision articulated in *Chapel Hill 2020*.

Chapel Hill Complete Community Framework



FIGURE 1 - COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Figure developed by the Keesmaat Group

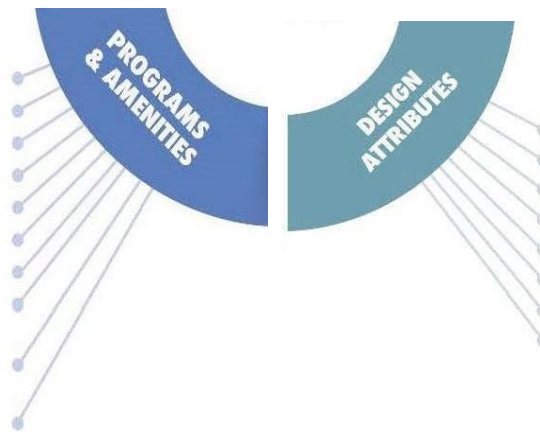
In the Chapel Hill context, a Complete Community means:

Using **Social Equity Drivers** to create a place for everyone that provides equal access to the necessities and amenities that support a healthy, safe, and fulfilling community.



Recognizing the **Assets** of Chapel Hill that make Chapel Hill a unique and desirable place. Decisions about the future should be made to support and enhance these attributes.

Providing the **Programs and Amenities** that people in the community need and desire supports an active, complete, and vibrant place.



Utilizing **Design Attributes** that Chapel Hill possesses and desires to provide more of to the people who live, work, and visit the community. Creating connected, attractive, and human-scaled places utilizing transit and greenways and other sustainable transportation options supports climate goals as well as making an attractive place.

To understand how the Complete Community Strategy amplifies and augments *Chapel Hill 2020* and its amendments, each element of Complete Community Strategy is isolated below with hyperlinks indicating where the tenets of the Strategy are discussed in *Chapel Hill 2020* and its amendments.

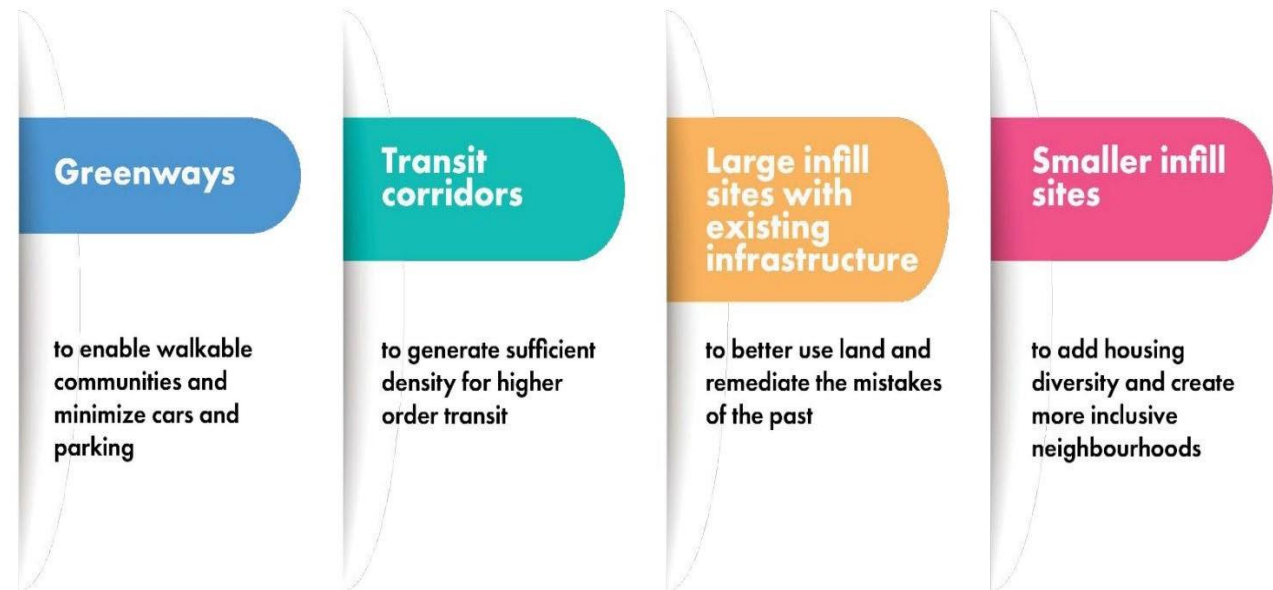




The Complete Community Strategy acknowledges that growth will come to the Town and that growth is necessary to provide a variety of housing units to different types of households. However, the Strategy defines how growth and change should be both accommodated and managed as Chapel Hill works to implement the overall vision found in *Chapel Hill 2020* and the land use principles embodied in the Future Land Use Map.

In Chapel Hill, a Complete Community must be inclusive, sustainable, and economically competitive.

The Complete Community Strategy states that Chapel Hill will direct growth to:



See Appendix A, Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways and Visit the Natural Areas Map (*link will be provided here*)

Visit [SHAPING OUR FUTURE](#) a transportation and land use initiative. See [Transit Oriented Development Plan](#)

See Appendix B, Focus Area Map. Most large infill sites are in FLUM Focus Areas.

See Appendix C, Chapel Hill Future Land Use Map (2050). View areas shown with a Residential Land Use Category

GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

To support this declaration of how to accept and manage new development, the Strategy includes both overall goals and specific objectives for meeting those goals.

GOAL ONE – PLAN FOR THE FUTURE STRATEGICALLY

1. Plan for the Future Strategically

OBJECTIVE 1.0 – USE VALUES TO EVALUATE NEW DEVELOPMENT

Move towards an approach that is directed by an overarching strategic vision to ensure all of Chapel Hill is a complete community. Assess new development through the lens of broader shared objectives to ensure that collaborations will emerge for delivering broader public benefits - including for existing, underserved neighborhoods.

GOAL TWO – EXPAND AND DELIVER NEW GREENWAYS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

2. Expand and Deliver new Greenways for Everyday Life

OBJECTIVE 2.0 – DEPEND ON GREENWAYS FOR TRANSPORTATION TO SUPPORT GROWTH

Alongside developing cycling infrastructure throughout Chapel Hill, build a complete network of greenways that give residents the option to travel from everywhere to everywhere on foot, on a bike or an electric bike, instead of having to rely primarily on cars. In this way, more people and more housing density can be added without adding more cars. Connecting the gaps within the existing greenway system, particularly in underserved neighborhoods and areas with historically marginalized residents, is fundamental to enabling this transformation from greenways as recreation to greenways for transportation.

To support this Objective, the Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenway Map, which is Appendix A, indicates where additional greenways are needed to fulfill this transformation from greenways as recreation to greenways for transportation. In addition, the Natural Areas Maps depicts where stream corridors and watersheds can be utilized and improved to further this objective as greenways for transportation.

Greenways are a critical component for a denser, more sustainable future Chapel Hill.

GOAL 3 – BE GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE

3. Be Green

OBJECTIVE 3.0 – BE GREEN AND PROVIDE HOUSING

Plan a Town that is green and sustainable, alongside a plan to build 485 new homes per year to meet housing needs. To appropriately meet the housing need in Chapel Hill, adding density and becoming more sustainable must be linked, rather than disconnected especially when evaluating development proposals. See Appendix D, a Suitability Analysis-Natural Area Model. This static map and online model graphically indicate where sustainable development is most likely feasible.

To promote this linkage between density and sustainability, purposeful consideration should be given to the coordinated use of greenways (See Appendix A) and linear parks/stream corridors as both green infrastructure and transportation; concentrating development along [transit corridors](#); connected street networks and other design elements encouraging walkability within neighborhoods; inclusion of on-site green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens,

bioretention planters, and bioswales; and “green” buildings which includes Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) and other sustainable building techniques and practices.

GOAL 4 – PLAN FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PUBLIC REALM AND EVERYWHERE

4. Plan for Excellence in the Public Realm, Everywhere

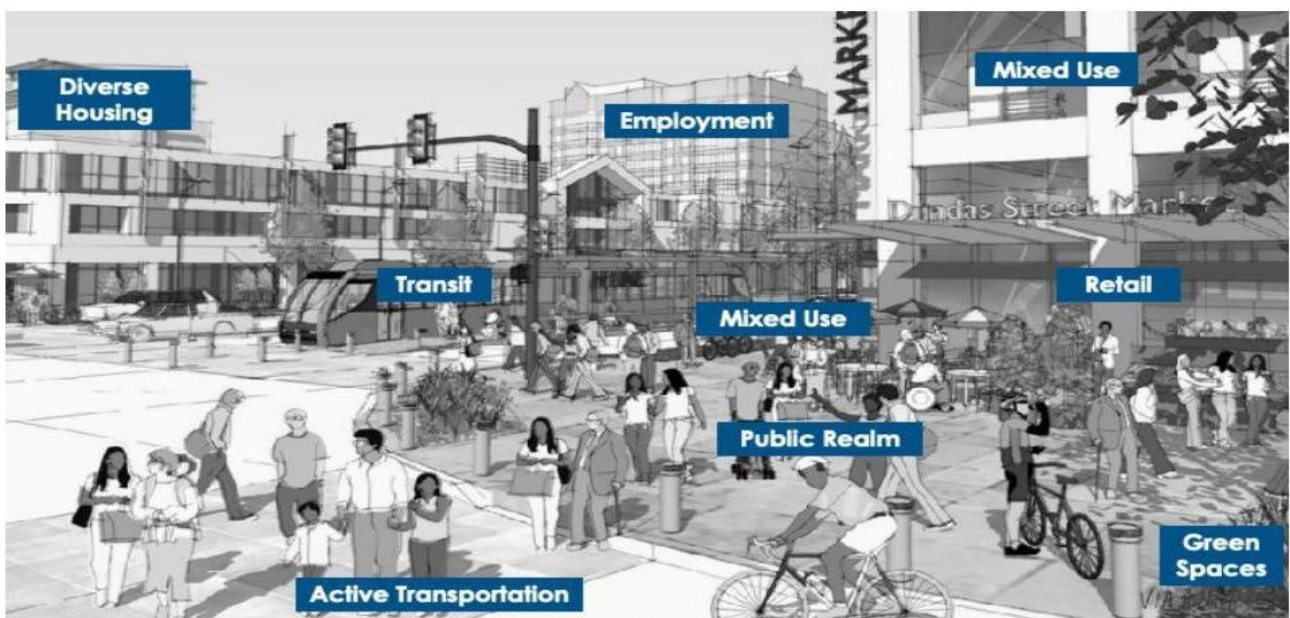
OBJECTIVE 4.0 – HOLISTIC PLANNING

Plan for and expect excellence both in the public and private realms. This excellence can only be achieved if projects are evaluated considering the whole fabric of Chapel Hill. This holistic approach to planning should replace the current myopic approach of project-by-project review. *Chapel Hill 2020*, as amended, and the Complete Community Strategy provide the tools necessary to strive for and achieve excellence if constantly kept front of mind.

AFTER SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING THE COMPLETE COMMUNITY STRATEGY, WHAT DOES CHAPEL HILL LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

When Chapel Hill effectively utilizes a values-based approach to development, all components shown in the graphic below will be present, and Chapel Hill will be a Complete Community that is inclusive, sustainable, and economically competitive.

Anatomy of a Complete Community



APPENDIX

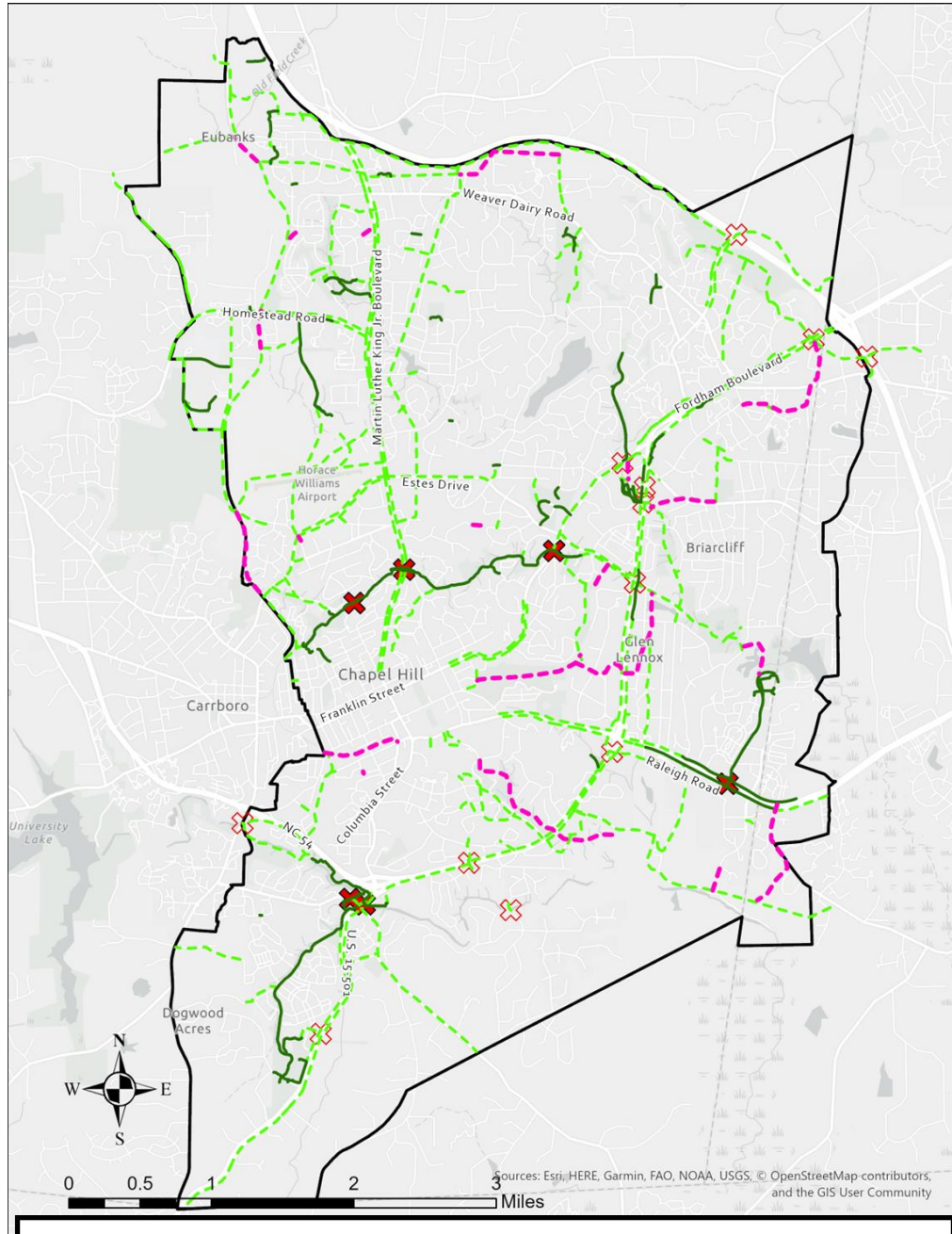
Appendix A – Everywhere to Everywhere Greenway Map

Appendix B – Focus Area Map

Appendix C – Chapel Hill Future Land Use Map (2050)

Appendix D - Suitability Analysis - Natural Area Model

APPENDIX A – EVERYWHERE TO EVERYWHERE MAP

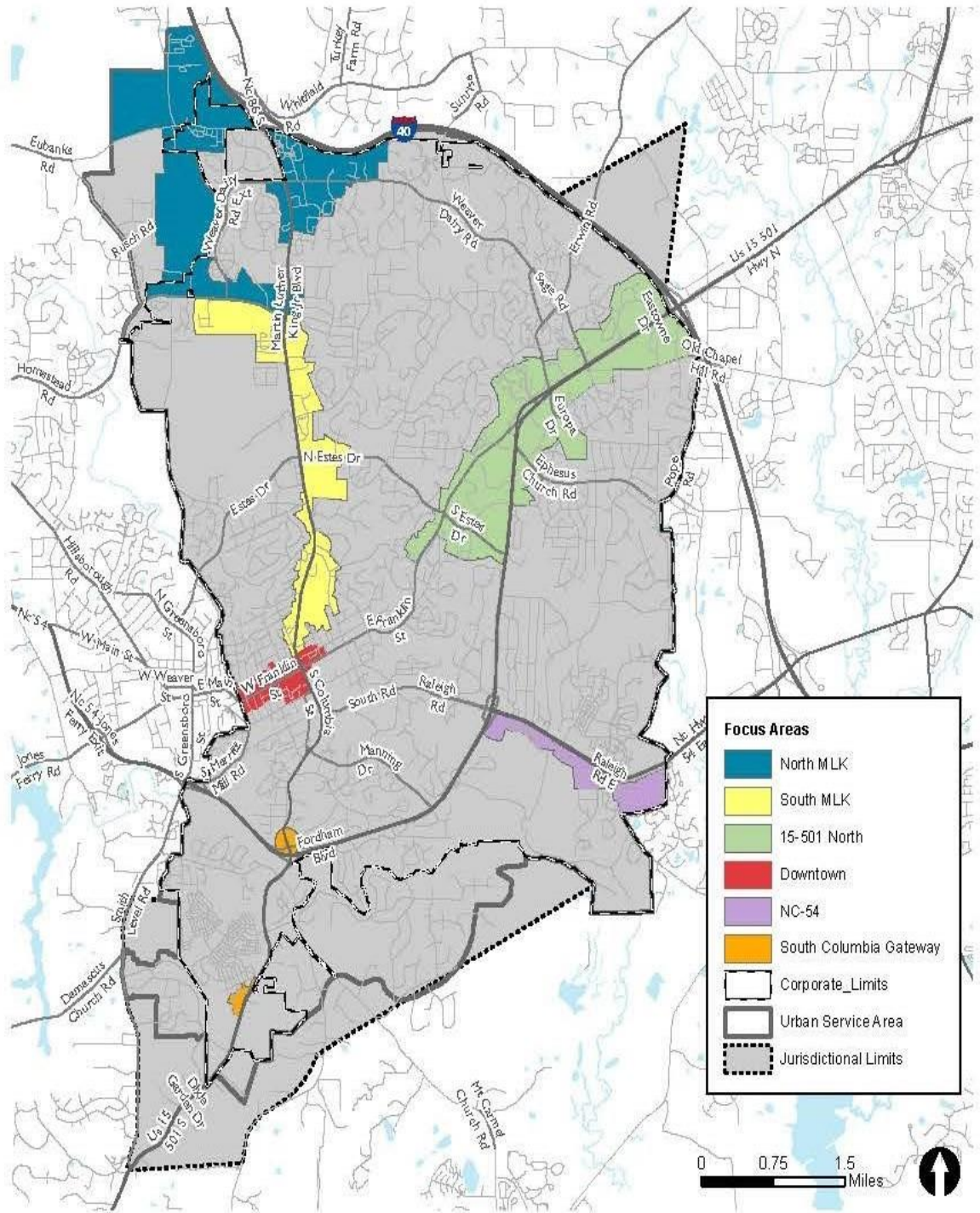


Existing Greenway	
Proposed Greenway – Mobility Plan	
Proposed Greenway – New Addition	
Existing Grade Crossing –	
Proposed Grade Crossing –	

Everywhere to Everywhere Greenways Map

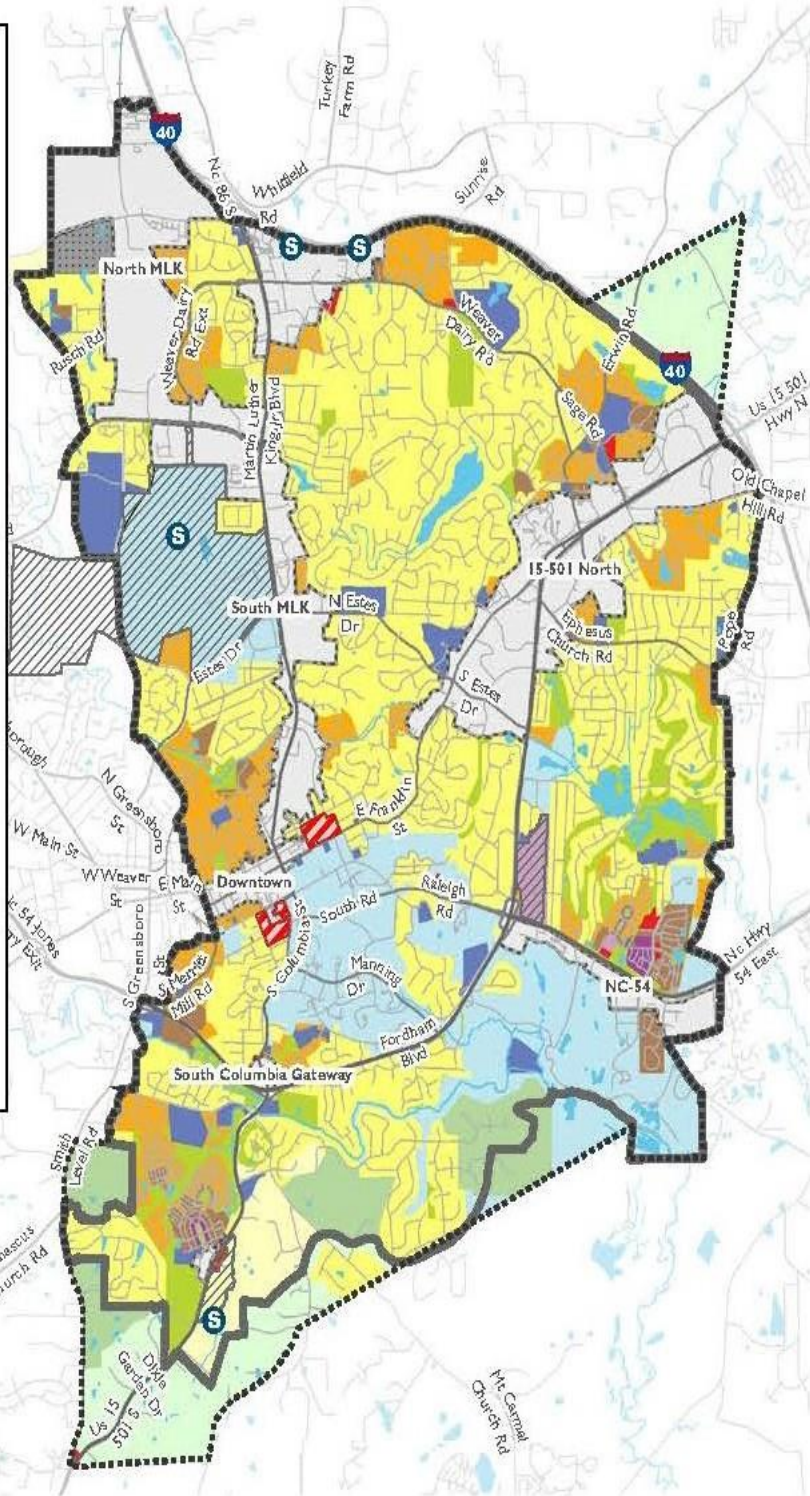
APPENDIX B – FOCUS AREA MAP

Focus Area Map



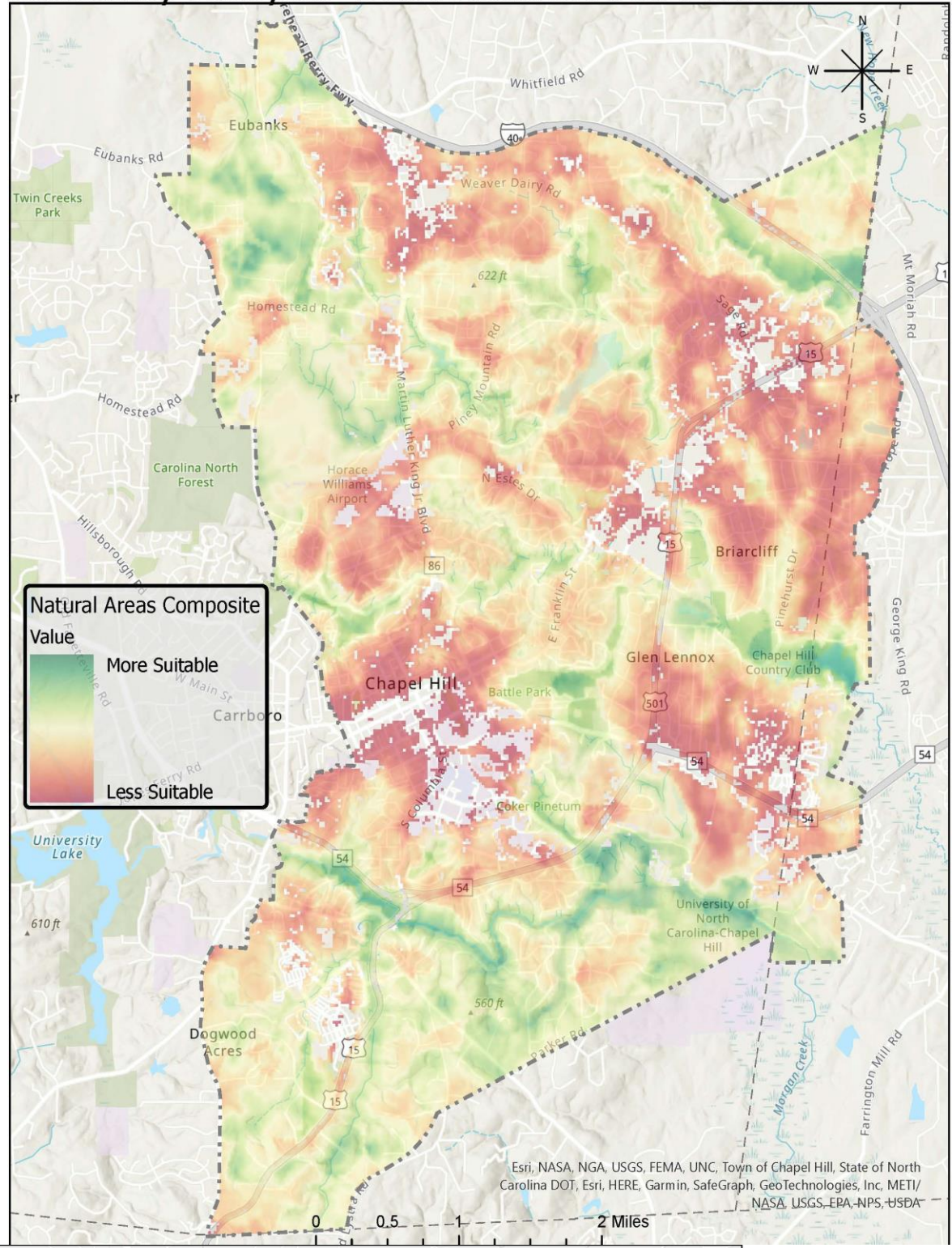
APPENDIX C - CHAPEL HILL FUTURE LAND USE MAP (2050)

Future Land Use Map (2050)



APPENDIX D - SUITABILITY ANALYSIS-NATURAL AREA MODEL

Suitability Analysis- Draft Natural Area Model



DRAFT MAP

