



June 17, 2026, Town Council Meeting

Update on Complete Community Implementation

Overview

This memo summarizes the primary elements of the Town’s Complete Community vision and identifies steps that have been taken towards implementing that vision.

The Town has made significant progress towards implementing the Complete Community vision through efforts to update the Land Use Management Ordinance; the creation and use of a Natural Features Model; continued work on Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways and other mobility projects; ongoing work to implement the Climate Action and Response Plan; and much more.

Background

The Complete Community vision consists of three distinct elements:

1. Complete Community Framework
 2. Complete Community Pilot Projects
 3. Complete Community Strategy
1. **Complete Community Framework:** Town Council adopted the Complete Community Framework on [December 7, 2022](#). The Framework identifies the 33 elements that make up a complete community, notes where Chapel Hill will direct growth, and establishes four high-level goals:
 - Plan for the Future Strategically
 - Expand and Deliver New Greenways for Everyday Life
 - Be Green
 - Plan for Excellence in the Public Realm, Everywhere
 2. **Complete Community Pilot Projects:** At the same time that it adopted the Complete Community Framework, Town Council authorized the Town Manager to begin work on three “pilot projects”:
 - Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways Federal Funding
 - UNC Adjacent to Midtown Plaza and Root Cellar Redevelopment
 - Parkline Redevelopment
 3. **Complete Community Strategy:** Town Council officially incorporated the Complete Community Framework into the Chapel Hill Comprehensive Plan by adopting the Complete Community Strategy on [May 10, 2023](#). The Complete Community Strategy adds some additional context to the

Complete Community Framework and highlights the connections between Complete Community and the various existing elements of Comprehensive Plan.

Complete Community Strategy: Where to Grow?

The Complete Community Strategy (CCS) states that Chapel Hill will direct growth to (1) greenways, (2) transit corridors, (3) large infill sites with existing infrastructure, and (4) smaller infill sites. These priority areas are well-aligned with other elements of the Comprehensive Plan such as the [Future Land Use Map](#) and [Shaping Our Future – A Transportation and Land Use Initiative](#).

New development in Chapel Hill is largely following these patterns. Future updates to the LUMO and zoning map will continue to prioritize development in the areas described by the Complete Community Strategy.

Complete Community Strategy: Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: Plan for the Future Strategically

The first Complete Community goal calls on the Town to:

*“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.”*

Moving Council away from project-by-project decision making – to the maximum reasonable extent – is critical to implementing this goal. Allowing Council to step back from project-by-project decision making requires the Town to have development rules and procedures that more closely align with the Town’s strategic vision. As a result, we have focused heavily on improvements to the Land Use Management Ordinance (LUMO) that streamline decision making and better reflect the Town’s needs.

Action 1A	<p>Implement text amendments prior to LUMO adoption. Town Council has adopted multiple LUMO amendments that further the Complete Community Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Housing Choices – June 21, 2023<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Created additional options for missing middle housing in support of the “smaller in-fill sites” priority growth area.▪ Planning Systems Improvements – November 29, 2023<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Improved procedures related to Concept Plan Review and Special Use Permits.▪ Stormwater Requirements – May 1, 2024<ul style="list-style-type: none">▫ Established a new requirement that all projects subject to a Conditional Zoning or Special Use Permit include stormwater management that addresses a 100-year storm.▪ Rules of Boards and Commissions – June 11, 2025
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Streamlined membership and other procedural requirements for the Planning Commission, Board of Adjustment, and Community Design Commission. ▪ LUMO Omnibus – January 21, 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Further refined multiple development review procedures and expanded opportunities for in-fill housing development.
Action 1B	Adopt the updated LUMO. After several years of staff work and public deliberation, the Town Council is on track to begin consideration of an updated LUMO later this year.

GOAL 2: Expand and Deliver New Greenways for Everyday Life

The second Complete Community goal states:

“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.”

The Town is working to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity while also moving steadily towards long-term investments in the Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways (E2E) network.

Action 2A	<p>Assess the feasibility of an Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways network. The Town’s Office of Mobility and Greenways is leading the E2E Greenways Feasibility Study to lay the foundation for Chapel Hill’s expanded greenway network.</p> <p>This project is being funded by the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant the Town was awarded in 2023.</p>
Action 2B	<p>Connectivity “Quick Wins.” Recognizing the need to both plan for the future and deliver meaningful results in the short term, the Town has identified several “quick win” opportunities to invest in targeted bike/ped improvements.</p> <p>Almost all the projects identified have the following characteristics: in adopted plans, on Town-owned land, already being used (desire paths), involve little to no design and engineering, no required state level permitting, and fill meaningful gaps in the network. Staff is exploring options for doing this work “in-house” to limit costs, speed up project delivery, and build staff capacity for small construction projects.</p>

Action 2C	Implementing priority projects. Funding has not yet been identified for the steps that follow feasibility (design and construction). As part of the E2E Feasibility Study, staff and consultants will begin to outline a funding strategy to construct high-priority greenway segments. This may include federal funding, grants, public-private partnerships, or other creative funding strategies to achieve the vision of a connected community.
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GOAL 3: Be Green and Sustainable (Be Green and Provide Housing)

The third Complete Community goal states that Chapel Hill should:

“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.”

The Complete Community Strategy further explains that:

“To promote this linkage between density and sustainability, purposeful consideration should be given to the coordinated use of greenways 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.”

The Town is pursuing multiple actions across several departments to further this goal.

Action 3A	<p>Natural Features Model. The Natural Features Model is an ever-evolving mapping tool developed by Town staff. It allows users to quickly reference a wide range of conservation and ecological data pulled from a variety of sources.</p> <p>Staff are actively using the model in their review of development projects. The model empowers staff to efficiently assess the potential environmental constraints and assets that may exist on a development site. In turn, this assessment helps to inform staff recommendations regarding site design and potential modifications to regulations that Town Council may consider during a conditional zoning approval.</p> <p>The model can also inform other long-term studies or Town-led investments. For example, the model informed the Town’s recent collaboration with OWASA to assess the feasibility of expanding water and sewer service into the Town’s southern extraterritorial jurisdiction.</p>
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	Staff are continuing to refine the model to best serve the Town’s needs.
Action 3B	Connected Streets Plan. The Town Council adopted the Connected Roads Plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan on June 14, 2023 . The plan identifies opportunity sites where new development projects can provide roadway connections that improve the Town’s overall connectivity.
Action 3C	Stormwater Master Plan and Subwatershed Studies. Adopted by Town Council in 2014, the Stormwater Master Plan is a framework that links the Council-approved program mission and strategic goals to the day-to day stormwater program activities Townwide. It is both a comprehensive strategic plan and operational work plan. The Master Plan calls for Subwatershed Studies to guide decisions about stormwater infrastructure projects, including green infrastructure retrofits, stream stabilization, and nature-based flood storage. After a pause in the work, Town staff have restarted discussions about Subwatershed Studies.
Action 3D	Town Fleet and Facility Upgrades. As staff recently shared with Council on May 20, 2026 , The Town continues to invest in a variety of fleet and facility upgrades to further our sustainability goals. Staff are also currently undertaking the first five-year update to the Town’s Climate Action Plan. Public engagement on the update will begin this summer.
Action 3E	Sustainability Commitments in New Development. On June 14, 2023 , the Town Council adopted a policy regarding sustainability commitments from projects seeking a conditional zoning. Town staff continue to use the policy as the basis for negotiating with developers and have successfully secured numerous commitments for sustainable practices such as the installation of water and energy efficient fixtures, electric vehicle chargers, native and drought-tolerant landscaping, and various other measures.
Action 3F	Home Electrification Program. Town staff are working with the Central Pines Regional Council to launch an electrification program to help residents with weatherization, solar and battery storage, and EV charging station installations.
Action 3G	Maintain a robust pipeline of residential project approvals. Town Council has approved over 4,600 total dwelling units since adopting the Complete Community

	Framework. At least 570 of the units are intended to be affordable to households with low to moderate incomes.
<i>See above</i>	Actions 2A and 2B related to the E2E Greenways and connectivity “quick wins” also directly support the Town’s sustainability goals.

Goal 4: Plan for Excellence in the Public Realm, Everywhere

The final Complete Community goal calls on the Town to:

“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 in mind.”

New standards in the updated LUMO will be the best way to achieve this goal.

<i>See above</i>	Action 1B related to adoption of an updated LUMO is the primary tool for advancing this goal. The updated LUMO will include new development standards focused on creating an inviting public realm.
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Complete Community Pilot Projects

When Council adopted the Complete Community Framework on [December 7, 2022](#), it also authorized the Town Manager to pursue one active transportation and two development-related pilot projects. We have completed the active transportation pilot and moved forward with the development pilots to the extent practical given the inherent limitations of the chosen projects.

Development Pilot 1: Parkline Redevelopment

The scope of this project was originally defined as:

“Master planning for future redevelopment at The Parkline office building. 36 acres and potentially an additional 100 acres of Eastowne. Additional adjacent developments, such as UNC Health across the street could be added.”

Efforts to coordinate development in the “Parkline East” area began in the summer of 2022 in response to multiple unrelated development applications. The development applications were clustered east of The Parkline office building but, apart from their proximity, did not relate to each other in a cohesive way. The Town Urban Designer developed a conceptual framework for the area that highlighted opportunities for stronger coordination between the developments. The work led to incremental, but impactful, updates to the development proposals that likely would not have occurred if each had been reviewed in isolation.

The framework includes the grounds of The Parkline Office Building to demonstrate potential opportunities on that site. However, the owners of that property have not yet expressed interest in participating in more thorough master planning. Town staff will be ready to assist when the property owners express such interest.

Town staff periodically update the conceptual framework for the Parkline East area and present it to Town Council when the Council considers development proposals in the area.

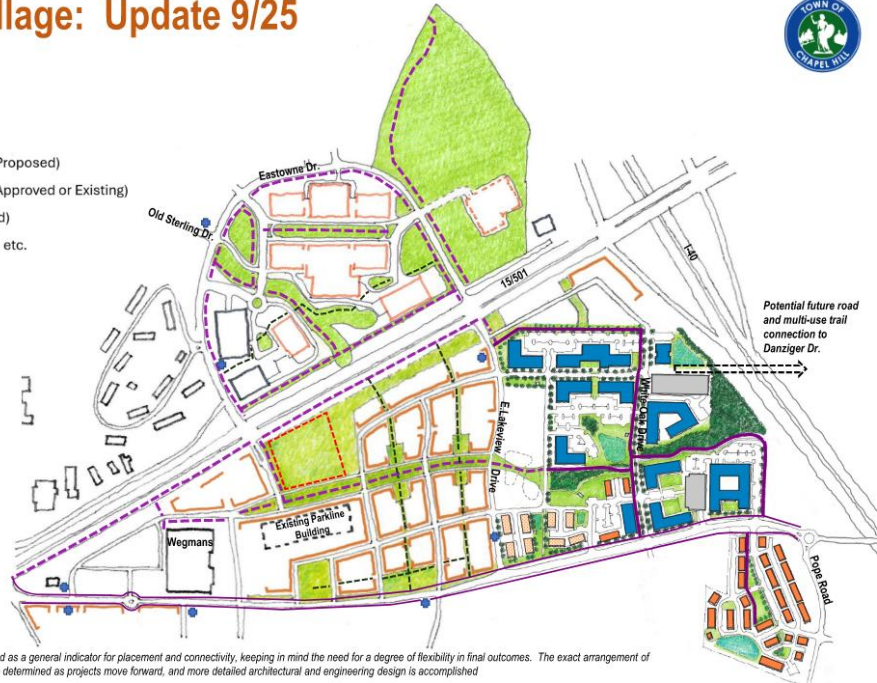
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Parkline East Village: Update 9/25

Framework Diagram



- Pedestrian Connection – Primary/Greenway (Proposed)
- Pedestrian Connection – Primary/Greenway (Approved or Existing)
- Pedestrian Connection – Secondary (Proposed)
- Courtyard, Park, Greenway, Stormwater, RCD, etc.
- - - Possible Community Gathering Space
- Proposed Build-To Edge
- Existing Bus Stop
- Proposed Multifamily Building
- Approved Multifamily Building
- Proposed Townhome Building
- Approved Townhome Building
- Approved Parking Garage



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The Development Framework is envisioned as a general indicator for placement and connectivity, keeping in mind the need for a degree of flexibility in final outcomes. The exact arrangement of buildings, streets, and open spaces will be determined as projects move forward, and more detailed architectural and engineering design is accomplished.

Development Pilot 2: UNC Adjacent to Midtown Plaza

The scope of this project was defined as:

“Master planning and public investment for future redevelopment adjacent to Midtown Plaza and Root Cellar. Two tear-down office buildings on the South side of the Root [Cellar] that are on the market.”

Town staff regularly meet with UNC staff to discuss land use and development issues. We have collaborated with UNC to identify uses of this site that are most closely aligned with the Town’s interests and will continue to advise the University or potential buyers of the site. If UNC chooses to engage in more extensive planning for the site, we will be eager partners.

Active Transportation Pilot 1: Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways Federal Funding

The scope of this project was defined as:

“Pursue Federal funding to build out Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways as transportation infrastructure, to transform mobility in Chapel Hill.”

Town staff applied for and received \$1.3 million in funding from the US Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program. Those funds are being used to support the ongoing [Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways Feasibility Study](#).

There is currently no funding strategy for constructing the E2E network at scale once the feasibility study is complete. Staff are chipping away at individual projects as funding allows. Staff continue to pursue federal funding for greenway projects through grants and the TPO discretionary funding allocations.

Other Active Transportation Projects

In addition to identifying the three primary pilot projects discussed above, the Complete Community Framework also proposed several other potential pilot projects related to active transportation. As discussed below, Town staff have made significant progress towards these additional projects.

<p>Everywhere-to-Everywhere Greenways “Phase 1”</p>	<p>Multiple mid-size greenway projects are in progress (detailed design) and are focused on strategic links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bolin Creek Trail Extension connects Umstead Park to Village Dr and Estes Dr. (50% design) ▪ Morgan Creek West connects Morgan Creek Trail to Smith Level Rd (70% design) ▪ W Cameron Protected Bike Lanes connect Libba Cotten Bikeway to UNC-CH main campus (70% design) ▪ Tanyard Branch Trail Neighborhood Connector connects Broad St to Estes Dr and Tanyard Branch Trace housing (30% design) ▪ Fordham Sidepath connects Cleland Dr. to Willow Dr – bids received, construction starting summer 2026 ▪ Pinehurst Dr bike lanes connect NC54 to Ephesus Church Rd – completed spring 2026 <p>Additionally, staff have identified 11 potential small connectivity projects, or “quick wins”, using existing fund balance and in-house construction capacity.</p>
<p>New Protected Bike Lane</p>	<p>The Cameron Avenue Protected Bike Lane project is at 70% design and is expected to begin construction by mid-2027. Staff look for other routes to protect with flexible delineators, though challenges related to maintenance remain an obstacle to implementation.</p>
<p>Better signs highlighting current greenway connections</p>	<p>Staff from OMG, Sustainability, and Economic Development are working on a bike-ped wayfinding pilot project.</p>
<p>Elevating the role of E-bikes</p>	<p>Staff rolled out an e-bike lending library in 2025, offering residents a free rental for up to 7 days a month. The program is open to all residents and does not have usual barriers like a requirement for a credit card to be kept on file.</p>

	In 2026 staff developed a town staff e-bike program, with e-bikes available for use at 10 locations and serving 15 departments.
Greatly expanding bike-share stations that prioritize low-income groups	Staff shifted from relying on the private sector or partners (UNC) to deliver a bikeshare program and instead launched a free community E-bike lending library, as described above. The program is in partnership with local Chapel Hill bike shops.

Staff are also making progress in advancing the Town’s priorities related to Vision Zero and Safe Routes to School /Wheels of Wellness.

Safe Routes to School & Wheels of Wellness	<p>In 2025 staff used funding from a US Conference of Mayors grant to develop the Wheels of Wellness program, with a goal of increasing bike safety for children and instilling a lifelong love of riding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purchased 56 bikes of different sizes, a bike trailer, and a “bike blender.” ▪ Host ‘bike parties’ at Chapel Hill neighborhoods and other events ▪ Teach children how to ride at Chapel Hill elementary schools and Hargraves after school program
Vision Zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implemented ‘quick build’ safety projects in areas with crash history or crash risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ W. Franklin St. ▫ S. Elliott Rd. ▫ Seawell School Rd. ▫ E. Franklin St. ▪ Installing 2 new protected crosswalks this year on roads with high crash risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ N. Estes @ Halifax ▫ MLK @ Central Park ▪ Won a grant to install a new protected crosswalk on Legion Rd. @ Formosa Ln and conduct outreach to nearby residents, particularly older residents