

Chapter 3

EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

3.1 Overview

Numerous studies and recommendations have addressed issues related to the current and future pedestrian environment of the Town of Wake Forest. Plans and overviews have addressed transportation issues, greenspace development, downtown revitalization, and land use regulations. All of these documents represent important efforts, provide valuable insight and background, and have influenced the development of this plan. Some of the key studies are summarized below. For further information, please consult the reviewed document in its entirety.

3.2 Transportation Plans

3.2.1 Wake Forest Transportation Plan (2003)

The transportation plan includes a Pedestrian and Bicycle Element. The document recognizes that transportation planning no longer focuses solely on roadway solutions. The pedestrian section covers an existing and planned sidewalk network and is generally optimistic about existing conditions, specifically citing improvements in the downtown area.

Three steps are outlined for improving the non-vehicular environment: 1) Integrating land use and transportation to create a community of neighborhoods that is designed for walking and cycling, 2) Adopting pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly development standards, policies, and guidelines, and 3) Having a proactive attitude toward change. This attitude will be necessary for fulfilling the plan's ambitious goal of eventually having sidewalks on all town center area streets, collector streets, and thoroughfares throughout Wake Forest (except in unusual situations).

Specifically, the plan calls for five-foot wide sidewalks located to create a minimum five-foot verge between the sidewalk and the street curb. In practice, five-foot wide sidewalks are

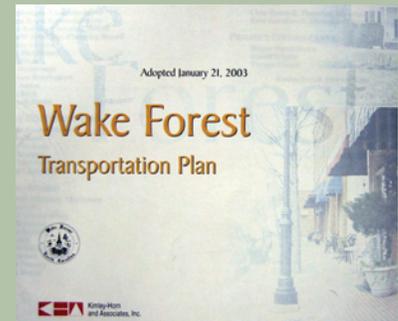


Figure 3(a):
Wake Forest Transportation Plan



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installed one foot inside the right-of-way line. For sidewalk placement on 1) Thoroughfares – sidewalks are required on both sides of the street, unless otherwise specified, 2) Residential Collectors – sidewalks are required on both sides of the street, and 3) Non-Residential Collectors – sidewalks are required on both sides of the street unless otherwise specified. Finally the plan stresses the importance of coordinating pedestrian improvements with other roadway improvements, including the necessary installation of curb ramps to satisfy the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991.

http://www.wakeforestnc.gov/transportation_plan.aspx

3.2.2 Master Plan for the NC 98 Bypass Corridor (2003)

The NC 98 Bypass Corridor Plan was developed by the Town of Wake Forest to outline design guidelines and circulation plans associated with the NC 98 Bypass. One of the four main goals of the plan is “To create an east-west pedestrian and bike route on each side of the corridor, with connections across the highway to trail and sidewalk networks north and south of the corridor.” The Wake Forest Planning Department notes that the plan does not call for pedestrian and bike routes on both sides for the full length of the corridor. The Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation chapter details trails and trail crossings, providing specific trail locations, widths, setbacks, and connections. Some examples noted include the provision of a 10-foot wide paved trail along each side of the Bypass, frequent connections to sidewalk systems in adjacent subdivisions, and connections to the Richland Creek and Neuse River greenways. However, the chapter lacks a plan for pedestrian crossings.

http://www.wakeforestnc.gov/client_resources/Residents/Planning/NC98_Bypass_Corridor_Plan.pdf

3.2.3 NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Transportation projects in North Carolina involving state maintained roads go through a standard process of planning, design, and construction. A list of priority projects from a seven year forecasted list throughout the State is updated each year. Within Wake Forest, TIP# E-4527 calls for the construction of sidewalks along Front Street, Stadium Avenue, Durham Road



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and Tyler Run. These programmed projects were folded into the proposed pedestrian network recommendations of this plan. TIP# E-4928 calls for streetscaping projects along both sides of South White Street from Roosevelt Avenue to Wait Avenue and on the west side from Wait Avenue to Jones Street. Ideas for streetscaping and landscaping are discussed in Chapter 5, Design Guidelines. Additionally, the Wake Forest Bypass Greenways discussed in 3.2.2 is TIP# E-4708.

3.3 Local Plans

3.3.1 Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2005)

The Wake Forest Parks and Recreation Master Plan was updated to “review, refresh and expand the framework for Town leaders and the Parks and Recreation staff to use as they chart the course for programming, maintenance and development of the park system over the next 10 years.” One goal of the plan is to work with Wake County and adjacent municipalities to identify lands that can provide open space linkages. These linkages may provide connections for the residents of Wake Forest to walk to surrounding destinations, specifically to area park facilities. Furthermore, the plan seeks to provide accessible trails that form loops or link to other trails in order to provide long segments that are accessible to a variety of users and abilities.

www.wakeforestnc.gov/residentsparks_masterplan.aspx

3.3.2 Wake Forest Open Space and Greenway Plan (2002)

The Town of Wake Forest developed this plan in order to protect the natural and cultural resources that community residents value the most. One of three principle goals of the plan is to “establish a comprehensive approach that will link greenspace lands and corridors to residential, commercial, institutional and central business areas of the community”. While the key recommendations of the plan focus on park development, the plan’s proposed greenway corridors may serve as a framework for connectivity throughout Wake Forest. The corridors described in the plan include but are not limited to the Smith Creek Corridor, the Richland Creek Corridor, and the Sanford Creek Corridor. The proposed



Figure 3(b):
Wake Forest Open Space and
Greenway Plan



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Figure 3(c):
Wake Forest Renaissance Plan

greenway linkages are located along natural and human-made linear corridors that generally follow streams and roadways within Wake Forest. Each corridor is described in detail in the plan's section on Greenway System Recommendations.

http://www.wakeforestnc.gov/client_resources/Residents/Planning/WF%20OS&G%20Plan.pdf

3.3.3 Renaissance Plan for the Heart of Wake Forest (2004)

This plan was developed by the Town of Wake Forest through a process of intensive public input to provide a clear framework for revitalization of the Downtown Wake Forest as well as for future developments in the surrounding area. The plan provides policy and programmatic recommendations followed by specific development opportunities within three main districts to present a conceptual build-out of the area. Overall, the plan is promoting a livable Downtown with a mix of uses contributing to the development of multiple destinations in a core area. This revitalization effort will ultimately create increased connectivity for Downtown Wake Forest, improving the walkability of the Town's core. The last section of the document outlines specific improvements and identifies the entity for implementation, the level of priority, and provides detailed comments for each project, many of which are directly pedestrian related.

Additionally, the Renaissance Plan for the Heart of Wake Forest addresses the issues of aesthetics and land use as a method of drawing more pedestrians into Downtown. Specifically, the plan encourages a Façade Improvements Grant Program to facilitate the rehabilitation of building facades. The program will promote 1) storefront improvements, 2) the preservation of historic buildings, 3) compatibility for improvements to facades of non-historic structures, and 4) the use of quality materials in the rehabilitation of downtown properties. The appendix of the Renaissance Plan provides examples of how the program could be implemented, including suggested marketing strategies to complement the façade improvements. Programs such as these will augment the efforts of the Town of Wake Forest Pedestrian Plan by providing aesthetic



considerations to improvements within the pedestrian environment.

Other specific pedestrian-related recommendations in the Renaissance Plan include the following: 1) Install pedestrian crossings along East Holding Avenue, 2) Provide streetscape treatments and directional signage to the Arts & Entertainment District along the South Franklin Street extension, 3) Replace existing light poles throughout the Arts & Entertainment District when feasible to provide for more appropriately-scaled pedestrian street lighting, 4) Link the Kiwanis Park Greenway Section to the Adam's Pond property along South White Street, 5) Implement the Downtown portion of the greenway plan, and 6) Hire a wayfinding consultant to assist with developing specialized directional signage for the Town of Wake Forest. The list above represents only the most directly pedestrian-related recommendations; many other recommendations are included in the plan that will enhance the pedestrian environment of Wake Forest, such as those related to the principles of urban design, in-fill development, special district promotion, and logistical items such as parking and maintenance.

www.wakeforestnc.gov/residents/planning_renaissancemasterplan.aspx

3.3.4 Downtown Master Plan: Economic and Market Analysis (2003)

This report was developed to incorporate market conditions into the process and design of a Master Plan for Downtown Wake Forest. While the body of the report focuses primarily upon current and potential future market conditions, the strategies and development guidelines offered at the end of the report provide a framework with which the pedestrian plan can incorporate its marketing element. Additionally, the number one priority identified in the plan calls for the re-establishment of a committee for the Main Street program – a program that promotes, among other things, a lively Downtown pedestrian environment.



3.4 Regional Plans

3.4.1 Wake County Consolidated and Open Space Plan (2003)

This plan was developed by Wake County with the purpose of protecting and conserving county land and water for current residents and future generations. While the primary focus of the plan is on open space, there are themes of connectivity and public purpose that relate to pedestrian planning. The framework of the Open Space Plan is based on the concept of “Hubs and Spokes,” under which residential, commercial, and business landscapes are linked to parks, preserves, and open spaces via greenway corridors. Examples of such linkages are identified for each municipality in the County. For the Town of Wake Forest, the following proposed greenways are identified: the Smith Creek Greenway, Richland Creek Greenway, Horse Creek Greenway, Sanford Creek Greenway, Tom’s Creek Greenway, Wait Avenue Greenway, Purnell Road Greenway, and Jenkins Road Greenway. Additionally, the plan emphasizes the importance of conserving and protecting the small town character of Wake Forest by enhancing the main community thoroughfares (US 1/Capital Boulevard, Durham Road/Wait Avenue, and the new 98 Bypass). Greenway corridors identified in the County plan could also serve as critical connections for the Wake Forest Pedestrian Plan.

3.4.2 CAMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2003, updated 2005)

The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) developed the 2003 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with the vision of convenient, efficient, viable, and safe bicycle and pedestrian travel throughout the metropolitan area. The purpose of the plan is to enable citizens to reach their destinations and recreate safely by walking and biking anywhere in the CAMPO system. The plan also stresses the importance of enabling children to safely walk and bike to school.



The plan presents seven specific policies to achieve CAMPO's goals, each followed by a set of policy strategies. The plan outlines detailed performance measures for engineering, enforcement, educational, and encouragement programs to ensure that improvements will be made as necessary for those citizens who utilize bicycle and/or pedestrian transportation as their primary mode.

http://www.campo-nc.us/BPSG/BPSG_Home.htm

3.5 Land Use Plans

3.5.1 Land Use Management Plan (1997)

This plan was originally approved by the Town of Wake Forest in 1987, and was later updated and approved in 1997. The purpose of the plan is to assess the "characteristics of change" that the Town faces now and in the future in order to influence a pattern and system of land use that is manageable and conducive to the immediate needs and benefits of the Town's citizens. The scope of the plan is broad, but there are elements that relate to pedestrian planning. The "Connections" section focuses on physical and visual links that encourage and accommodate movement through and around Town. Greenway trails, sidewalks, and frequent links to trails from neighborhoods and roads are encouraged in both new and existing sections of Town. Additionally, the plan states that sidewalks or pedestrian ways should be built along all collectors and thoroughfares, along the US-1 service road, and along the 98 Bypass. Finally, the plan recommends that a wayfinding system should be developed and implemented to direct people to interesting destinations throughout the town.

http://www.wakeforestnc.gov/client_resources/Residents/Planning/Land_Use_Management_Plan.pdf



3.6 Pedestrian Statutes and Local Ordinances

Most existing facilities were designed and constructed using the following as guidelines:

- Wake Forest Transportation Plan
- Subdivision Regulations
- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and North Carolina Division of Highways (NCDOH) design manuals
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines, and the Guidelines for Curb Ramps for Disabled Persons
- Town of Wake Forest Municipal Code, Chapter 28, Locational Guidelines

The Wake Forest Transportation Plan (see section 3.2.1) recommends 5' wide concrete sidewalks set back 5' from the back of curb. These sidewalks are required on both sides of the street for thoroughfares, residential collectors, and non-residential collectors. The Transportation Plan also recommends sidewalks on all town center area streets, and discusses multi-use paths as being typically 10' wide, typically setback from the street a minimum of 5' and located such that there is minimal conflict with curb cuts and intersections.

The Subdivision Regulations require sidewalks to be constructed on one side of the street for single-family residences on 10,000 sq. ft. lots or smaller, and on both sides of the streets for multi-family groups. The Subdivision Regulations contradict the Transportation Plan by requiring sidewalks on only one side of minor thoroughfares and all residential collector streets. Furthermore, since Municipal Code supersedes Subdivision Regulations, an amendment

to the Subdivision Regulations is recommended to remove the 'minor thoroughfare/sidewalk location' conflict. The



amendment should call for sidewalks on *both* sides of the street, as stated in the Wake Forest Municipal Code for Sidewalk Location (see chart on page 3-11).

Currently, developers are allowed to install sidewalk on a house-by-house or lot by lot basis within developments, resulting in the fragmented construction of sidewalks. In

- Pedestrians are required to obey street crossing signals, indicating when it is safe to “Walk” or “Don’t Walk”.
- Certain streets and highways contain traffic islands that are specifically placed for pedestrians to use in case they cannot fully cross a road before a “Don’t Walk” signal is displayed.
- When pedestrian signals are not present, pedestrians are required to follow normal traffic signals and signage.
- When sidewalks are present, pedestrians must use sidewalks and not travel on any part of the roadway that is established for vehicular traffic.
- If sidewalks are not present, pedestrians should walk at the extreme left of the roadway facing traffic.
- Pedestrians may not cross or pass through closed railroad barriers.
- Vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians using marked crossings.



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some circumstances, the Town of Wake Forest also offers a payment in lieu of construction for developments with the intention that the Town will install the required sidewalk at a later date. However, the payment in lieu is generally only used in circumstances where the developer cannot install the sidewalks due to barriers such as narrow bridge without room for crossing.

The State of North Carolina follows a standard set of basic pedestrian laws, outlined in a guidebook published by the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

The American Disability Act (ADA) states that cities and municipalities must construct, modify or adapt pedestrian facilities to accommodate individuals with disabilities and accessibility limitations. Below are some basic topics that must be addressed for sidewalks to comply with ADA requirements:

- Curb Ramps provide entry and exit to sidewalks
- Adequate width provides sufficient passing
- Slopes must be realistic to allow travel
- Cross or angled slopes provide unstable conditions
- Overgrown, broken, root laden, or otherwise rough conditions are not suitable
- Ramps provide access to buildings that are not ground level
- Ramps also provide alternative routes around staircases
- Cuts in medians at crosswalks allow travel across divided roadways
- Adjusted crossing times allow for safe travel across wide intersections
- Historic district exemptions should be taken into account



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In chapter 28 of the Town of Wake Forest Municipal Code, locational guidelines for sidewalks are stated as follows: “Sidewalks shall be included as a part of the construction of all streets included in the thoroughfare plan, collector street plan and other access roads. Sidewalks should link residential areas with employment, commercial and public areas and should interconnect the town greenway plan.” (Code 1985, § 16-42)

Wake Forest Municipal Code: Sidewalk Location

Street Type	Sidewalk Location
Major thoroughfare	Both sides of the street
Minor thoroughfare	Both sides of the street
Commercial	Both sides of the street
Frontage road	One side of the street
Collector (residential)	One side of the street
Residential	One side of the street
Collector cul-de-sac	One side if cul-de-sac exceeds 400 linear feet
Residential cul-de-sac	One side if cul-de-sac exceeds 400 linear feet

(Code 1985, § 16-42)

The sidewalk locational guidelines of the municipal code conclude by stating “multifamily and planned developments shall provide sidewalks for interior movement of pedestrians and for the interior to connect to the public sidewalk system”. (Code 1985, § 16-42)

3.7 Key Findings from the Existing Plans, Programs, and Policies

The key findings for the review of existing plans are as follows: 1) Existing transportation plans for Wake Forest clearly support a more pedestrian friendly environment for the Town and encourage the adoption of pedestrian-friendly development standards, policies, and guidelines; 2) Existing Parks, Greenway, and Open Space Plans identify and recommend various linkages, connections, and trails to serve as a framework for connectivity throughout Wake Forest; 3)



Figure 3(d):
Existing planning documents were thoroughly examined during the pedestrian planning process



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Existing Local plans have many recommendations in place that aim to support connectivity and enhance the aesthetic quality of the pedestrian environment, including specific recommendations for pedestrian-related improvements to Downtown Wake Forest; 4) The Land Use Plan recommends pedestrian connections in both new and existing sections of Town, including a wayfinding system to direct people to interesting destinations throughout the Wake Forest; and 5) Existing pedestrian statutes and ordinances offer a strong starting point upon which to base standards for a universally accessible pedestrian environment.



*Figure 3(e):
Unsuitable Pedestrian Crossing
at Wingate Road*

