

IMPLEMENTATION

Realizing The Vision

Implementing the recommendations within the Conover Pedestrian Transportation Plan will require leadership on the part of the City of Conover and a dedication to the development of a pedestrian friendly community.

Sidewalk and greenway facilities were prioritized by the facility segment's ability to provide connectivity, serve areas in need, and improve safety in areas of concern. Each sidewalk segment in need of improvement is ranked with custom-designed criteria for Conover, based on public input, and existing conditions data collected in the field. A map and cost estimates are provided for the Top 11 sidewalk segments.

Implementing the recommendations of this plan will require a combination of funding sources that include local, state, federal, and private money. It will be necessary for the City of Conover, other area governments, and the NCDOT to secure the funding necessary to undertake the short-term, top priority projects and develop a long-term funding strategy to allow continued development of the overall system. Community foundations and revenue-generating programs for pedestrian facilities should also be utilized to raise funds for development and maintenance.

Action steps were developed as guidance for the City and include:

- Adopt this plan
- Begin top priority projects
- Create pedestrian-friendly landscape with Broyhill Development
- Improve and enforce City regulations
- Create a Bicycle/Pedestrian/Greenway Commission
- Take advantage of cost-effective opportunities for sidewalk and greenway construction (roadway reconstruction or development)
- Seek multiple funding sources
- Develop pedestrian programming (especially Safe Routes to School)
- Ensure planning efforts Are integrated regionally
- Take maintenance steps
- Work with NCDOT Division 12
- Apply for NCDOT Bike Plan Grant
- Integrate pedestrian facility design guidelines



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

Creation of a successful Pedestrian Network will involve more than facility improvements. The long-term success of the network will also depend on use and support of sidewalk and greenway facilities. It will be critical for the City of Conover, the surrounding communities, and the State to **educate** pedestrians and motorists about safe behaviors in a multi-modal roadway environment, to **enforce** laws that make pedestrian travel safer, and to **encourage** people of all ages and abilities to use the sidewalk and greenway facilities. It will be equally important to promote and develop programmatic activities that encourage physical activity and healthy living. Programs can include Safe Routes to School, community-wide messages encouraging physical activity, walkathons, and Walk to Work Days. These programs enhance the overall health and wellness of the community by promoting, teaching, and enforcing safety.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Pedestrian facility design guidelines that adhere to national standards were provided in this Plan. The treatments and guidelines put forward in this Plan are important because they represent the minimum standards for creating a pedestrian-friendly, safe, accessible community.



CONOVER PEDESTRIAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007, the City of Conover was awarded a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to complete a comprehensive pedestrian transportation plan. The City is making a strong statement through this Plan to improve pedestrian facilities and pedestrian safety. By offering choices and improved safety, the City of Conover can create an integrated, safe, and convenient multi-modal transportation system.

The City of Conover and a specially constituted project Steering Committee, worked closely with the public to support the vision and preparation of this Comprehensive Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

This Plan represents a comprehensive evaluation and program of action for addressing the immediate and long-term needs for pedestrian facilities. The Plan provides a set of phased recommendations for facilities, programs, and policies.

The benefits of a more walkable community include reduced auto dependency, increased health and physical activity, reduced traffic congestion, increased economic vitality, enhanced community aesthetic, and improved quality of life.

PROJECT GOALS

- Improve connectivity between residential areas and new development into Downtown.
- Provide connectivity to all destinations, including schools, transit stops, parks, places of work, commercial and residential areas.
- Improve intersection crossing for pedestrians.
- Provide long-term strategies for improving connections to underserved outlying areas.
- Prioritize the pedestrian facility improvements.
- Update current policies to address pedestrian improvements such as sidewalks and greenways.
- Enhance community commitment to programming (engineering, education, encouragement, and enforcement) of walking.
- Design and maintain streets, roads, and trails to encourage walking.
- Create more public awareness of economic and health benefits of walking.
- Ensure that pedestrian facilities are considered part of an overall transportation system.
- Dedicate funding for pedestrian improvements.



EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

Background

In order to propose a comprehensive pedestrian system for the City of Conover, the existing conditions such as demographics, land use, trip attractors, and current pedestrian conditions were examined. A comprehensive approach consisting of intensive research, analysis, fieldwork, GIS organization and analysis, and Committee meeting discussion was conducted to examine existing conditions. The City's geographic, population, and development characteristics significantly affect transportation, the environment, and everyday decisions by motorists and pedestrians.

Use Of GIS

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) allowed for the layering of mapped information for the City of Conover. GIS was used to examine roadways, existing pedestrian sidewalks, and land uses in order to analyze connectivity between such places as parks, schools, waterways, and commercial areas. Pedestrian crash data from 1990-2006 was also mapped to allow for analysis of these sites.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork was a critical element of existing conditions analysis. Gaps in the existing pedestrian system, possible off-road greenway corridors, and intersections were examined and inventoried. A digital photo inventory was collected for locations throughout the City of Conover. Fieldwork allowed for the direct experience of being a pedestrian in the City.

Intersection Inventory

A thorough examination of key intersections throughout Conover were inventoried for their existing pedestrian facilities. Most significant, signalized intersections were in need of some form of improvement. Safe crossing conditions are critical because they are the places where motorists and pedestrians interact (75% of all police-reported pedestrian crashes involve pedestrians crossing roadway travel lanes). This inventory set the stage for crossing improvement recommendations.

Existing Plans

Numerous plans, guidelines, ordinances, and strategies have addressed issues related to pedestrian planning in Conover such as transportation, development, and land use. These were examined and integrated into the development of this Plan.

PUBLIC INPUT



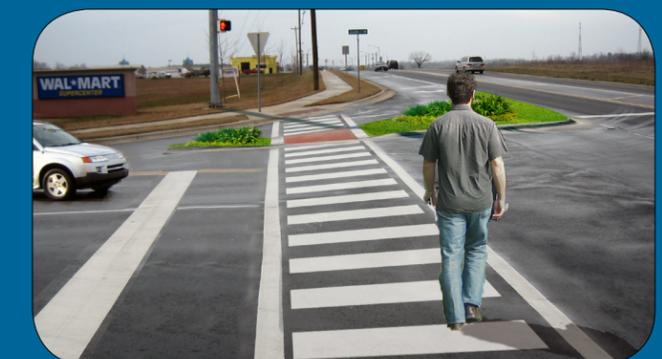
Significant public input was gathered from multiple efforts throughout the planning process, which helped shape the outcome of a majority of the recommendations in this Plan. Public input was solicited via two public workshops, public outreach, paper opinion forms, and an online interactive version of the opinion form. Approximately 90 people provided input at the two workshops (held at the YMCA) through map markups, direct conversation with Client and consultant, and comment forms. 114 residents completed either the online comment form or hardcopy comment form distributed at the workshops.

PEDESTRIAN NETWORK



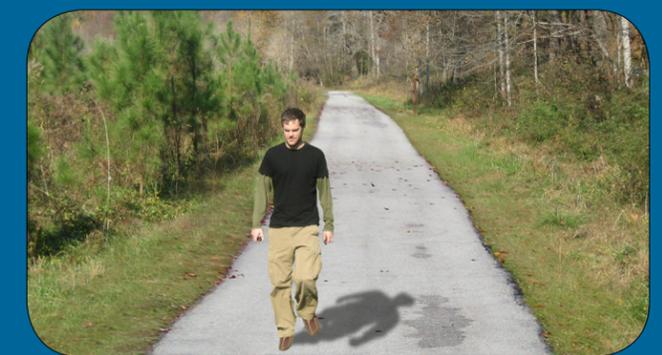
SIDEWALK CORRIDORS

Approximately 22 miles of sidewalk exists currently throughout the City of Conover. Still gaps in the sidewalk system create a lack of connectivity in some areas. County Home Road is an example shown above where sidewalk could connect areas north of I-40 to Downtown.



CROSSINGS

16 intersections were inventoried in the City with some form of improvement recommended for all of them. Ladder crosswalk markings (shown above at the NC 16/Zelkova Court exchange near Wal-Mart) create a more highly visible crossing. Also, refuge islands create a safe space for pedestrians in their journey across an intersection.



GREENWAYS

Greenways in this Plan refer to off-road, multi-use, paved pathways for both recreation and transportation. The greatest opportunity in the City of Conover is the Lyle Creek Greenway corridor. The picture above shows an existing, cleared, and graded easement near County Home Road presenting a tremendous opportunity.