

Town of Sylva



[COMPREHENSIVE PEDESTRIAN PLAN]

Working Paper – May 25, 2010

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Executive Summary

The Town of Sylva has a rich history and is located in a setting that makes it conducive to attracting new residents and visitors from across the Southeast and the United States. Throughout its history, Sylva has taken care to accommodate pedestrians, with sidewalks located along many of its high volume streets, pedestrian connections from its residential areas to downtown, and a new pedestrian bridge connecting the town's park and recreation center to downtown, the pavilion and parking lot. Sylva's park facilities offer residents and visitors a place to walk for recreation and fitness, while the existing sidewalk network offers many opportunities to walk for transportation in order to access local destinations.

Sylva, like many communities across the state, recognizes the importance of a pedestrian-friendly community in attracting residents, businesses and visitors. The undertaking of the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan reinforces this pathway for economic development while intending to improve the quality of life for all residents. In building upon Sylva's previous planning work this Plan addresses unique challenges within and around Sylva by providing policies to guide connectivity of future development to major pedestrian activity centers, while developing innovative and cost-effective strategies for connectivity to and within already developed areas and the historic downtown.

The intent of the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan is to provide guidance for making the Town of Sylva a more pedestrian-friendly community. Partially funded by a grant from NCDOT and matching funds from the Town, the Pedestrian Plan serves several purposes including to:

- Promote a better understanding of the measures that can be taken to create more and safer walking trips in Sylva;
- Identify in the Plan a list of projects, programs, and policies (and associated strategies to implement them) that Sylva and local partners can provide to improve the walking environment;
- Create better awareness of walking, both during and after the planning process, as a viable mode for both recreation and transportation that can serve as a reliable substitute for some trips being made by private auto now; and
- Develop an understanding among elected officials, community leaders, citizens, business owners and educational institutions that walking can contribute to a healthier lifestyle, a stronger economic base for a community, and reduce carbon and other emissions that

are associated with motorized travel and impact air quality in the mountains.

The Town of Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan delineates levels of improvements into short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities and policies so it can be used as a guidebook for engineering staff, planners, NCDOT staff and developers. Further, the planning effort uses extensive public outreach strategies to incorporate diverse viewpoints and build local support for programs, projects and policies recommended in the Plan.

In creating an even more walkable community, Sylva will continue to improve the livability, attractiveness and quality of life of the town. Connecting the downtown area to nearby schools, parks, commercial centers, churches, and community centers via sidewalks and greenways will create an effective pedestrian network accessible to all citizens and visitors. Beyond better and safer pedestrian access to destinations, a more “walkable” community can have positive economic, environmental and health benefits for residents.



The sidewalk along Gridstaff Cove Road abruptly ends at the entrance to the Jackson County Justice & Administration Center, creating a barrier for pedestrian access to the public building.

Source: The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

Oftentimes, the most effective pedestrian facility investment is the easiest to implement, whether it’s a ribbon of asphalt connecting a sidewalk to a crosswalk at a commercial intersection, improved signal timings at a key intersection, or 50 feet of greenway or sidewalk to connect a neighborhood to an elementary school. For example, we heard feedback through the

Pedestrian Planning process and previous efforts that there is a desire to connect a sidewalk to the Jackson County Justice & Administration Center from Grindstaff Cove Road. In other instances, major investments coordinated within a long-term strategy and with numerous partners will be required to fulfill the goals of the Plan. This includes strategies for facilities tied to the growth and redevelopment of “Backstreet” (Mill Street) to create a unique pedestrian environment.

Other initiatives identified through the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan including connecting facilities to link the Town with Dillsboro, Webster and Cullowhee. The Plan has also incorporated the findings of the Jackson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the recently adopted Jackson County Greenways Project Comprehensive Master Plan.

The Pedestrian Plan recommends future pedestrian-related projects and infrastructure improvements throughout the Town, as well as programs and policies that will support a pedestrian-friendly culture and help to further improve local walking conditions. The results of the Plan will be a safe, accessible pedestrian system that includes sidewalks, greenways and safe intersections, in addition to programs and policies that encourage residents and visitors alike to walk for health, recreation, fitness, cost-savings and basic transportation. The vision statement for the Plan is:

“The Town of Sylva will create a more walkable environment by building momentum within the community through maximization of existing facilities and resources; changing public perceptions; defining community needs; and communicating ideas.”

Using this plan as a guide, the Town of Sylva will be able to create a better, safer network of sidewalks, greenway trails and crossings for pedestrians. The Town’s next steps should begin to immediately address the short-term priority program, policy, and project recommendations.

At the same time, the Town should also start to lay the groundwork for the longer term recommendations by developing relationships with potential partners such as the Jackson County Recreation & Parks Department, the Jackson County Health Department, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Southwestern Community College, Western Carolina University, Jackson County Transit, and the Southwestern Commission, among others, and by starting to budget for future projects.

Most importantly, the Town should continue its efforts to raise awareness about the importance of making a community more walkable in order to continue to cultivate support for more pedestrian improvements and programs. Residents, visitors, and local leaders should be familiar with the economic, health, and environmental benefits of a community in which there is less dependence on automobiles and more reliance on foot travel as not only a form of recreation, but also as a form of transportation.

As a mountain community with nearby colleges and a tourism-based economy, Sylva has experienced significant growth in its commercial sectors as Jackson County has grown in population through the construction of many residential communities in nearby towns and unincorporated areas. The imbalance of increased commercial development in Sylva compared to modest residential growth can create several issues the town will need to address in

order to efficiently provide services to existing residents. Creating a more walkable community is one strategy to help stabilize the residential base and entice citizens to locate within the town instead of in nearby communities or unincorporated areas that are not accessible on foot.

Sylva should capitalize on its location and its attractions, including quaint residential neighborhoods, the new Pinnacle Park, historic downtown, the new library and access to institutions of higher learning, to reinforce its existing pedestrian infrastructure with new projects and improvements. With careful planning and coordination with areas stakeholders, deliberate steps and persistence, Sylva can enhance the walkability that already exists within its historic downtown core and extend these walkable features to nearby commercial sectors and residential neighborhoods.

Action Steps for Implementation

Completing the following action steps will help guide the development of the proposed pedestrian network, and create a supportive program and policy environment for a more pedestrian-friendly Sylva.



The Pedestrian Plan can include specific strategies for the enhancement of Sylva's Mill Street (aka "Backstreet").

Source: The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

1) Adopt this Plan. Adoption of this Plan will be the first step to implementation for Sylva. Once adopted, the Plan should be forwarded to regional and state decision-makers, such as the Southwestern Commission and NCDOT Division 14 office, for inclusion in a regional planning and development processes.

2) Form a Bicycle/Pedestrian & Greenways Advisory Committee. The pedestrian planning process has engaged many citizens in visioning and goal-setting for Sylva. Building on this momentum to keep citizens engaged in a permanent committee structure will allow continued citizen involvement in the Plan's implementation. This could be done in conjunction with the County's Greenways Advisory Committee.

3) Secure funding for the top priority projects. In order for Sylva to become a more pedestrian-friendly town, it must have the priorities and the funding available to proceed with implementation. The Town should work to secure funding for implementation of several high-priority projects and develop a long-term funding strategy. This will help reinforce the commitment to the Pedestrian Plan and reaffirm to residents that the Plan is moving forward.

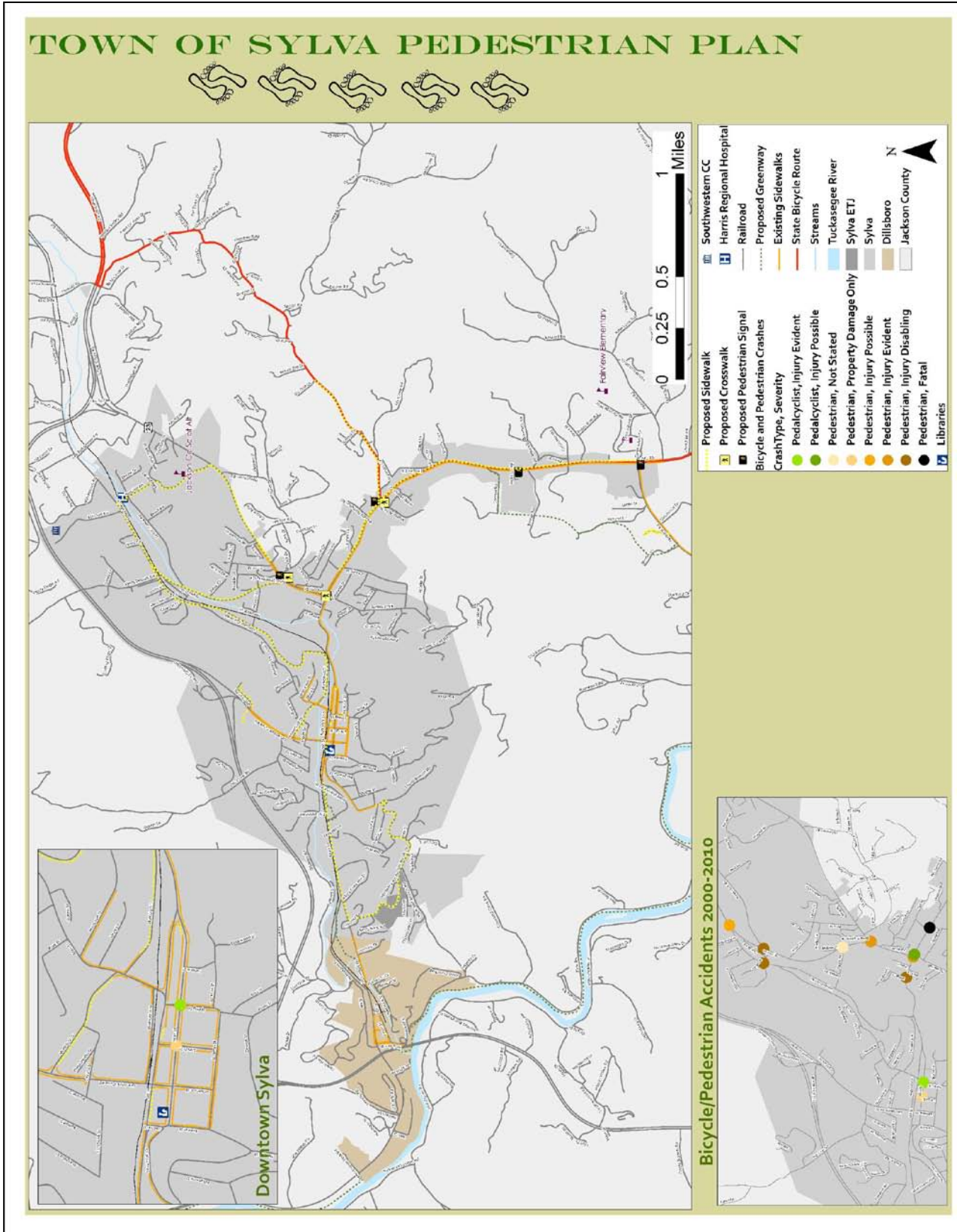
4) Begin work on top priority projects. In addition to committing local funds to high-priority projects in the Pedestrian Plan, the Town is in a unique position to work with NCDOT on local projects to improve intersections and fill gaps in existing sidewalks through annual operating improvements funds provided to Division 14. Sylva should also seek other state, national or private funding sources for continued, long-term success in implementing the Plan.

5) Embark on complementary planning efforts. The Town should incorporate the recommendations of the Pedestrian Plan into future and existing Plans developed and updated at the local, regional and statewide level. For instance, the recommendations of the Sylva Pedestrian Plan should be incorporated into the future Comprehensive Transportation Plan updates, long-range transportation plans and comprehensive planning efforts by the Town of Sylva and Jackson County.

6) Develop supportive education, encouragement and enforcement programs. Pedestrian facilities alone do not make a town pedestrian-friendly. A variety of programs should also be implemented to create and support a pedestrian-friendly culture. Programs and policy priorities should be implemented alongside infrastructure improvements.

NOTE: This section will be finalized with a list of projects, in priority order with costs, once they have been reviewed by the project steering committee. A modified map of these projects will also be included.

Figure 1: Draft Project Map for Sylva Pedestrian Plan



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Section 1. Background, Vision & Goals

The Town of Sylva, North Carolina applied for and received a grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in 2009 to fund a comprehensive pedestrian plan for the Town. NCDOT regularly funds pedestrian and bicycle planning efforts so communities in North Carolina can prepare for creating better pedestrian (and bicycling) environments for their citizens. Sylva's

Visioning is a technique whereby a community determines what it wants to become.

Pedestrian Plan application was coordinated through the Southwestern Commission and included input from Jackson County. Sylva contracted with a professional consulting firm, The Louis Berger Group, Inc., to help the Town prepare the plan, conduct public engagement exercises, and assist with managing a plan Steering Committee comprised of citizens, businesses, Town staff and pedestrian advocates.

The purposes of the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan are to:

- Promote a better understanding of the measures that can be taken to create more and safer walking trips in Sylva;
- Identify in the Plan a list of projects, programs, and policies (and associated strategies to implement them) that Sylva and local partners can provide to improve the walking environment; and
- Create a better awareness of walking, both during and after the planning process, as a viable mode for both recreation and transportation that can serve as a reliable substitute for some trips being made by private auto now; and
- Develop an understanding among elected officials, community leaders, citizens, business owners and educational institutions that walking can contribute to a healthier lifestyle; a stronger economic base for a community; and reduce carbon and other emissions that are associated with motorized travel and impact air quality in the mountains.

The Pedestrian Plan recommends future pedestrian-related projects and infrastructure improvements throughout the Town, as well as programs and policies that will support a pedestrian-friendly culture and help to further improve local walking conditions. As Sylva begins to recognize and achieve the recommendations contained in the Plan, the result will be a safe, accessible pedestrian system that includes sidewalks, greenways and safe intersections, in addition to programs and policies that encourage residents and visitors alike to walk for health, recreation, fitness, cost-savings and basic transportation.

The Plan attempts to capture and address the needs of Sylva's varied population, including those of current and future residents, seniors, students, and tourists. The benefits of the Plan are as varied as the population it serves, including improved air quality, a healthier and more physically active population, reduced traffic congestion, and improved pedestrian safety for children and the elderly. These benefits amount to an overall improvement in quality of life and will continue to make the town attractive to newcomers and visitors, as well as to boost the town's economy and vitality.

1.1 Plan Process

The Sylva Pedestrian Plan was begun in October 2009 and completed in the summer of 2010. To help the Town prepare its plan, Sylva contracted with a professional consulting firm and enlisted the help of area stakeholders who have a personal, professional or business interest in promoting walking as a safe means of recreation and transportation in the area. The consultant and steering committee assisted the Town by conducting public engagement exercises, including two public "Open House" workshops consisting of focus groups and an information session at the Greening Up the Mountains festival in downtown Sylva on April 24, 2010. Additionally, a community-wide survey was conducted as part of the planning process to gather feedback from residents on the vision for the future of Sylva's pedestrian environment. In addition, the project consultant conducted a field inventory of existing pedestrian facilities in Sylva, which combined with public feedback and interviews with staff of Jackson County's Recreation & Parks Department and NCDOT Division 14, led to the identification of project and program needs in the community. Existing conditions analyses and recommended pedestrian improvements were refined through the development of "working papers" reviewed in full by the Steering Committee. A draft of the Plan was presented for public comment at the <<Insert Date>> Open House and the final Plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners on <<Insert Date>>.

1.2 Vision and Goals

Visioning is a technique whereby a community determines what it wants to become ... in a *broad* context. Creating a vision draws from where the community is now (*existing conditions*) and where it wants to go (*future directions*). A shared community vision can provide clarity to a planning process, and having a vision generally makes it easier to implement action planning initiatives.

The first meeting of the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan was conducted October 26, 2009, in part to capture the opinions of the Steering Committee about important guiding principles for the

Plan, but also to establish a community vision to guide the project. The visioning exercise began with a context focus question:

- *“How can Sylva develop a more walkable and bicycle-friendly community over the next 20 years?” Things that will:*
 - Satisfy the needs of existing residents;
 - Reduce barriers to walking (and bicycling);
 - Provide access to important areas & attractions;
 - Make mobility possible for different age groups and abilities;
 - Provide visitors with ways to get around town easily; and
 - Address previous efforts and plans.

Following a visualization scenario relating to the focus question, participants brainstormed vision components, organized these components by categorical relationships, named each categorical group, and lastly reflected about the results. The resultant Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan vision consists of the following five goals, with each goal having sub-components, or objectives, which relate to policy and program initiatives that can guide plan development and community decision-making over the next 20 years. Below is a summary of the results.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Goal #1 | Enhance the Existing Pedestrian Transportation System |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building better crosswalks and enhance features at mid-block crosswalks; • Add features to sidewalks such as benches, greenery, and bike racks; • Ensure universal accessibility; • Use more attractive and comfortable sidewalk materials; • Create a safety barrier in front of the High School between the sidewalks and NC 107; and • Install dog waste stations. |

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| Goal #2 | Improve Policies and Planning to Improve Conditions for Pedestrians |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate driveways along NC 107 and other commercial corridors; • Require construction of pedestrian and bicycle elements in all new construction; • Ensure that buildings abut the sidewalks in new developments; • Construct new sidewalks in existing residential areas; and • Develop central parking areas (i.e. park-and-ride lots) so people can park once and walk to their destinations. |

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| Goal #3 | Create New Pedestrian Connections |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting existing sidewalks by filling in the gaps; • Constructing a path or greenway along Scotts Creek; • Improves buffers and shading on sidewalks; • Cooperate with Jackson County on greenway efforts; • Extend downtown walkability outwards to other residential and commercial areas; • Construction a greenway connection to Fisher/Pinnacle Park; and • Create sidewalk loops on major roads for both recreation and transportation. |

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| Goal #4 | Organize Awareness and Education Efforts to Promote Walking |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate police, pedestrians and motorists on pedestrian laws; • Install signage for signage, identifying walking trail names and distances; • Provide pedestrian and bicycle maps for visitors via the Internet, Chamber of Commerce and area businesses; • Implement walking programs throughout the school system; • Increase public acceptance of pedestrian safety issues; and • Enhance pedestrian interaction. |

| | |
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| Goal #5 | Identify Funding & Partnership Opportunities |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for grant provided by the Rural Center, NC Main Street Program, NCDOT and other agencies; • Conduct community fundraisers aimed at enhancing pedestrian facilities; and • Pursue a travel and tourism authority grant. |

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| Goal #6 | Identify and Fix the Easy Stuff First |
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate simple barriers such as small sidewalk gaps, lack of curb ramps, countdown pedestrian signals, and crosswalk connections; • Construct projects that already have “buy in” from various stakeholders; and • Prioritize projects that can be constructed in a short timeframe. |

From these five broad Goals, a succinct vision for the Sylva pedestrian environment was then developed:

“The Town of Sylva will create a more walkable environment by building momentum within the community through maximization of existing facilities and resources; changing public perceptions; defining community needs; and communicating ideas.”

This is the Vision for how the Town will be viewed, perhaps in 20 years, perhaps over an even longer span of time – but always, the Town of Sylva should be moving towards this Vision and revisiting it at regular intervals to measure progress and adjust to changing needs over time.

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Section 2. Existing Conditions

As part of the recommendation process, an existing conditions analysis was conducted to assess the current pedestrian network and community needs in Sylva. The existing conditions analysis is an important element of the planning process, as it builds the foundation and guides the development of any project, program, and policy recommendations.

To address the needs of pedestrians, the existing conditions analysis considers not only physical conditions, such as roads, parks, and schools, but also less concrete items, such as demographic information, public perceptions, and travel behaviors. This section contains the following items:

- The Context of Sylva;
- Demographic Analysis;
- Existing Facilities Analysis;
- Pedestrian Crash Analysis; and
- Community Concerns and Needs.

2.1 *The Context of Sylva*

The Town of Sylva is situated in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is surrounded by steep ridges along the nearby Tuckasegee River. The town is known for its picturesque beauty, with the historic Jackson County Courthouse as its centerpiece, which is now being renovated to include a new library and public meeting place. Sylva continues to be a draw for tourists and artisans, as its location near Great Smoky Mountains National Park and proximity to Western Carolina University have created a local culture and identity that have led to one of the most vibrant Main Streets in North Carolina.

Transportation has played a major role in the history of Sylva and Jackson County, as the construction of the Western North Carolina Railroad through Sylva in the 1880s led to the eventual relocation of the county seat from Webster in the early 1900s. The construction of the Appalachian Development Highway System beginning in the mid-1900s led to increased access to the region from other metropolitan areas of the southeast, including Atlanta, Asheville, Charlotte and Greenville-Spartanburg.

Today, Sylva has a population of approximately 2,600, but the relatively small population base does not accurately reflect the central role that Sylva plays in the Jackson County economy and for its 37,000 residents. Many of the key economic drivers in the region lie outside of the Town limits, including the Qualla Boundary, Western Carolina University, Southwestern Community College, and

the adjacent Town of Dillsboro. The presence of these external influences has helped create an economic boon for the Town of Sylva but has also placed a disproportionate level of demand for commercial services on the Town and its residents.

The results of this demand have stressed the capacity of transportation corridors in the area, which has led recently to the publicly contentious debate over how to improve NC 107 and its intersection with the US Highway 23 business route. The safe accommodation of pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders has been a focal point of the local community and advocates who are eager to apply multi-modal solutions to help assist in the traffic congestion along this primary artery. In 2008, the Southwestern Commission helped organize a public workshop on the NC 107 corridor to help define the NCDOT project development process and inform stakeholders on potential context-sensitive solutions for the corridor.

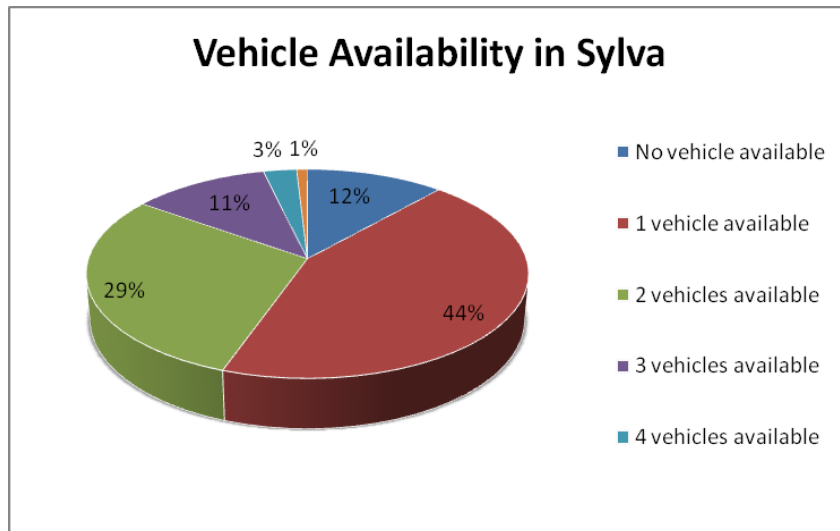
The Town has taken care to accommodate pedestrians, with sidewalks located along many of its high volume streets, pedestrian connections from its residential areas to downtown, and a new pedestrian bridge connecting the town's park and recreation center to downtown, the pavilion and parking lot. Sylva's park facilities offer residents and visitors a place to walk for recreation and fitness, while the existing sidewalk network offers many opportunities to walk for transportation in order to access local destinations. In creating an even more walkable community, Sylva will continue to improve the livability, attractiveness and quality of life of the town. Connecting the downtown area to nearby schools, parks, commercial centers, churches, and community centers via sidewalks and greenways will create an effective pedestrian network accessible to all citizens and visitors. Beyond better and safer pedestrian access to destinations, a more "walkable" community can have positive economic, environmental and health benefits for residents.

2.2 Demographic Analysis

It is important to examine a community's demographics during the development of a Pedestrian Plan because demographic information provides valuable clues about citizen travel behavior and preferences. Characteristics such as age, income, vehicle ownership, and commute time can suggest a population's potential for walking as a mode of transportation. This section includes a summary of the demographic analysis for the Town of Sylva and explains the implications of the analysis for the recommendations made in the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan. One shortcoming of this data is the timeframe in which the

plan was developed. In 2010, we are on the cusp of collecting new information from the Census. Unfortunately, this data will not be available for use in projects like the Sylva Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan. Therefore, data from the 2000 Census was used for purposes of this report and represents a snapshot of Sylva's characteristics a decade ago.

According to 2000 U.S. Census data, the Town of Sylva's population spread is almost evenly distributed among younger people aged 24 and below who make up 30.7 percent of the town's overall



population; people aged 25 to 55 make up 39 percent; and persons older than 55 make up 30.4 percent of the population. Despite the presence of Western Carolina University and Southwestern Community College, the figures for persons under 24 years of age is notably lower than proportions for the state of North Carolina (34.42 percent) and the United States (35.33 percent).

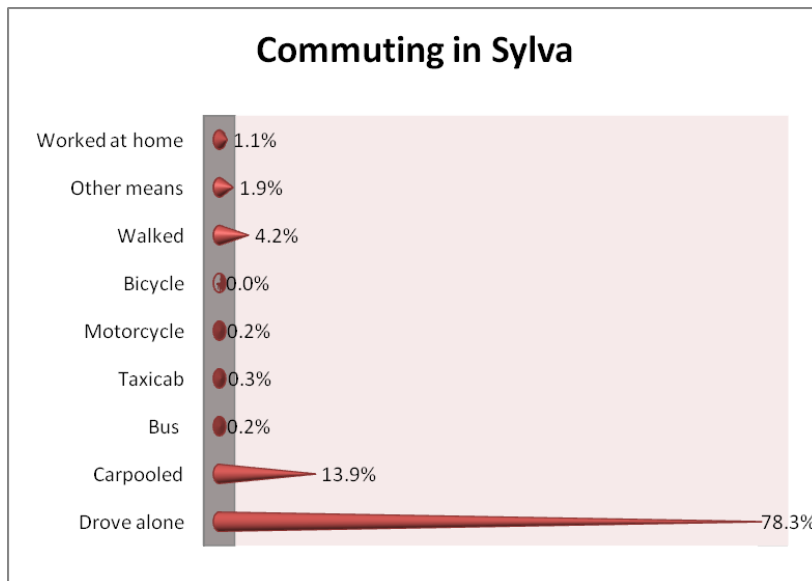
Sylva's population is 89.2 percent Caucasian with no other racial groups occupying a significant share of the population. The second largest group is African-Americans who account for 4.7 percent of the population, much lower than the 21.6 percent and 12.3 percent this population occupies at the state and national level.

Sylva has a Median Household Income (\$26,432) and Median Family Income (\$36,711) below state and national averages which are likely due to the rural nature of the area and lack of major employers, other than the nearby colleges, offering substantial employment and associated higher wages.

Sylva's household vehicle availability statistics reflect the nature of its rural mountain setting with more than 88.4 percent of the population having access to at least one or more vehicles. Of note, however, is the proportion of households with no car availability (11.6 percent), which is notably higher than the 7.5 percent rate for North Carolina. Vehicle availability is indicative of both income level and access to other mode of transportation. The relatively high proportion of households within Sylva without access to a

vehicle suggests there may be opportunities for more citizens to access their destinations via public transportation, walking or a combination of both, given the appropriate institution of project and programs to provide these connections.

Modes to work figures indicate that these residents are likely finding a ride to get to their destinations via carpooling. More than 78 percent of commuters drive alone to work while almost 14 percent carpool. Only 4.2 percent of the population regularly walks to work. It is also interesting to note that the town has no bicycle commuters, according to the 2000 Census data. The demographic analysis also reveals that Sylva has 82.3 percent of its residents commuting less than 30 minutes to work. The location of major employment generators within Sylva reflects these high numbers and also suggests that there are several commuters who may be able to find walking to work as a potential mode, particularly if they work at places such as the



Jackson County Justice and Administration Complex or Downtown Sylva.

Overall, Sylva's demographics suggest there are challenges associated with drawing persons to a walk-to-work mode given the nature of development in the area, as well as terrain and existing transportation options. Major employers such as Western Carolina University, the Jackson County Schools complex, the Hospital and Southwestern Community College are not very accessible due to their location on the eastern fringe of the Town of Sylva and distance between these points and residential areas.

Therefore, the Sylva Pedestrian Plan makes recommendations that focus on improving pedestrian facilities to encourage people to travel to work by foot when this destination is within a walkable distance, but strongly recommends options for persons to take recreational or non-work trips by foot by connectivity key activity centers to pedestrian facilities. In addition to the environmental and air quality benefits of increased walking and decreased automobile use, the effects of adopting these pedestrian

improvements also have the potential ease vehicle traffic congestion in downtown Sylva and help stretch limited resources related to accommodate vehicles within the downtown core.

2.3 Existing Facilities Analysis

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, only 4.2 percent of Sylva residents walk to work, which is likely attributable to the Town's historic development patterns which have led to major employers (schools, colleges, hospital, county facilities) being located on the fringe of the town and along corridors that have created a linear pattern to the Town's corporate limits. Additionally, these destinations are not connected via a complete or accommodating network of pedestrian facilities. Part of the answer as to why so many people walk in Sylva – and why more people don't walk – can be found in the level of accommodation for pedestrians. It is tempting to limit the observations of pedestrian accommodations to sidewalks or greenway trails alone, but the way that intersections are designed; the way that the shops, businesses and homes are located and developed; and the policy environment in the Town, County, and State are all important considerations as well.

Important destinations for pedestrians (and motorists, bicyclists, and so forth) are shown in [Figure X \(map forthcoming\)](#). This map includes an inventory of existing sidewalk facilities in Sylva, most of which are concentrated in the downtown area along the south side of NC 107. As in most North Carolina cities, sidewalks were likely constructed in the historic downtown when automobiles were less prominent in the transportation network, but outside of the downtown area sidewalks are less frequent, reflecting the post 1950's era jump in automobile ownership across America as well as the rural character of Sylva's location. The Town of Sylva and NCDOT have worked cooperatively in the past 20 years to implement critical pedestrian connections along NC 107, US 23 Business and within the downtown area, including many crossing upgrades at intersections where sidewalks existing on either both or one side of the road.

Sylva has a number of pedestrian generators that are within walking distance of downtown and nearby residential neighborhoods. Many of these generators can be accessed via existing sidewalks or along streets with low traffic volumes. These include the historic Jackson County Courthouse, which is being redeveloped as a library and community center; Mark Watson Park, which is approximately 3 blocks west of downtown; Bryson Park along Allen Street and Chipper Curve Road; Poteet Park and

the Sylva Municipal Pool near Town Hall; and churches located east and west of Grindstaff Cove Road.

Mill Street (aka “Backstreet”) has experienced a rebirth in terms of commercial activity over the past decade as storefronts along Main Street remain occupied. New businesses along the Mill Street corridor include a brewery, coffee shops and other businesses that create a vibe consistent with the area that has historically served as a loading zone for businesses along Main Street. This increase in business activity, combined with the long-standing Cope’s Newsstand and development of the new parking area, pavilion and bridge over Scotts Creek north of the railroad tracks, have increased pedestrian demand in this corridor. Filling the gaps in the sidewalk system along Mill Street, as well as upgrading both signalized and un-signalized intersections to accommodate pedestrians accessing the area from south of the railroad tracks and Main Street, are needed to continue to support and promote further economic development along Mill Street.

Finally, connections to major employment destinations and retail areas should be considered further in project selection and prioritization. The new Post Office and Jackson County Administration and Justice Center are within a reasonable walk of downtown Sylva and nearby residential areas, but there are gaps in the sidewalk system along Grindstaff Cove Road and a lack of pedestrian facilities along the driveways accessing these activity centers. As the community grows, the Town should focus on linking outlying commercial developments and residential areas to the downtown area via an expanded sidewalk and/or greenway network.

2.4 Pedestrian Crash Analysis

The North Carolina Department of Transportation maintains a database of accident locations and characteristics. Within this is a listing of reported pedestrian-related accidents that have occurred within or near the Town of Sylva. A pedestrian crash analysis is useful because it can be an indicator of the pedestrian-friendliness of a community, and can also provide information on key locations or educational outreach areas where improvements could be made to enhance safety.

A crash analysis can often indicate popular walking routes, and sometimes illustrate conflict areas between pedestrians and cyclists. Crash data for Sylva was queried for 1990 through 2008; 12 pedestrian crashes and three bicyclist crashes occurred over the course of this period. Given Sylva’s walk rate of 4.2% for work commutes, this crash rate is fairly high.

The NC 107 and Skyland Drive corridors stand out as the major thoroughfares where these crashes occurred; two crashes occurred Main Street in downtown Sylva. This data reinforces the notion that pedestrian amenities are needed along major thoroughfares to improve the safety of pedestrians. The two fatalities occurred along NC 107, where sidewalks exist along one side of the corridor but numerous driveways and lack of regular crossing opportunities hinder the pedestrian environment. Skyland Drive has numerous activity centers and pedestrian attractors, as well as residential properties, but has no pedestrian facilities.

These facts could indicate that one of Sylva's strongest needs is to work to complete sidewalk systems along its major corridors and make safety improvements at intersections, such as pedestrian signalization, crosswalk improvements, and/or signage. These crash types also reinforce the notion that educational outreach could be used to encourage pedestrians to obey traffic signs and signals and use caution when crossing busy streets.

Table 2-1 provides a summary of crashes in Sylva from 1990 to 2008.

TOWN OF SYLVA PEDESTRIAN PLAN
WORKING PAPER - SECTION 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Table 2-1: Location and Severity of Pedestrian & Bicyclist Crashes in Sylva

| <i>On Road</i> | <i>From Road</i> | <i>Toward Road</i> | <i>Crash Severity</i> | <i>Type</i> |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| CHIPPER CURVE RD | ALLEN HENSON CIR | SMITH ST | A-Injury (Disabling) | Pedestrian |
| MAIN ST | BRIDGE ST | MUNICIPAL DR | A-Injury (Disabling) | Pedestrian |
| MAIN ST | LANDIS ST | SPRING ST | Property Damage Only | Pedestrian |
| NC 107 | CHERRY ST | COPE CREEK RD | Fatal (Killed) | Pedestrian |
| NC 107 | CHERRY ST | | A-Injury (Disabling) | Pedestrian |
| NC 107 | CHERRY ST | WOODY HAMPTON | Fatal (Killed) | Pedestrian |
| NC 107 | US 23 | CHERRY ST | B-Injury (Evident) | Pedestrian |
| NC 107 | SUNRISE PARK | | C-Injury (Possible) | Bicyclist |
| OLD DILLSBORO RD | SYLVAN HEIGHTS | DILLS COVE ROAD | B-Injury (Evident) | Bicyclist |
| SKYLAND DR | SCOTTS CREEK RD | RAYMOND ST | A-Injury (Disabling) | Pedestrian |
| SKYLAND DR | US 23 | EAST SYLVA CIR | B-Injury (Evident) | Pedestrian |
| SKYLAND DR | HAROLD ST | | Not Stated | Pedestrian |
| SKYLAND DR | CHIPPER CURVE | | C-Injury (Possible) | Pedestrian |
| SPRING ST | W MAIN ST | LANDIS ST | B-Injury (Evident) | Bicyclist |
| US 23 | DILLSBORO RD | FINCH ST | C-Injury (Possible) | Pedestrian |

2.5 Community Concerns & Needs

Public input has played a critical role in the Town of Sylva Pedestrian Plan through the involvement of the Steering Committee, focus groups, surveys and input from the Greening Up the Mountain Festival. This input helps guide the development of the project list, identify program and policy recommendations, and assist with prioritization.

The process to gather public input has included multiple elements incorporated into the Pedestrian Plan throughout the planning process. At the project onset, a Steering Committee was created to serve a guiding role for the Plan. Members of the Steering Committee included Town staff, County representatives, the Southwestern Commission, citizens and local business representatives. A public outreach effort was developed in parallel with the regular Steering Committee meetings, which included a town-wide survey, public appearances at the Greening Up the Mountains festival and focus groups.

During public involvement activities, participants were provided an opportunity to speak directly with Town staff and their consultants about the vision for the Plan and potential project recommendations. Maps were available for participants to indicate the locations of pedestrian-related issues and desired improvements, and flyers and surveys were distributed.

A summary of the feedback from the Greening Up the Mountains Festival will be included in the Final Plan.

2.5.1 Steering Committee Feedback

At the first two Steering Committee meetings on October 26, 2008 and February 9, 2010 (via involvement with others in focus groups), stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide input on walking conditions and concerns about walking in Sylva.

Specifically, Steering Committee members created an overall vision for the Pedestrian Plan (discussed in Section 1 of this document) and specified areas where they would like to see sidewalk improvements, greenway connections and crossing upgrades. Committee members highlighted major “hot spots” or problem areas for pedestrians, as well as some priority criteria for ranking pedestrian connectivity projects.

The third Steering Committee meeting on May 25, 2010 focused on criteria the committee members felt important in ranking projects for future improvements. These criteria will be listed once identified

by the Steering Committee, and will be used to help prioritize the project recommendations of the Plan.

2.5.2 Survey Results

A Pedestrian Plan survey was developed for the Town of Sylva and distributed through the Town's website, publicity in local newspapers, Facebook networks in the Sylva area, and public events such as the Greening Up the Mountains festival.

The results of the survey will be summarized in the Final Plan.

2.5.3 Public Meetings and Focus Group Feedback

In addition to regular Steering Committee meetings and public outreach through the town website and survey mechanism, the consultants and Town staff organized focus groups on February 9, 2010 to engage attendees in discussions on the Pedestrian Plan process and identify specific pedestrian improvements they would like to see in the community. This activity was conducted in lieu of a traditional Open House in order to encourage dialogue between interested citizens, the project consulting team and the project steering committee.



Focus group participants identified several potential pedestrian improvements and shared their results with the rest of the group.

Source: The Louis Berger Group, Inc.

Focus group discussions are a qualitative research tool that can help to explore, clarify, and validate planning concepts. Nine persons participated in the February 2010 focus groups. The purpose of the focus group was to explore pedestrian connections and relate the connections to design considerations. Participants worked in small groups of 3 persons.

Participants were able to speak with Town staff and planning consultants, and engage in a mapping exercise to identify projects for the Pedestrian Plan. Suggestions that arose during this focus group session were based on the unique perspectives, interests and needs of Sylva's citizens, public sector staff, business leaders, advocates, and elected officials. Feedback from participants has been included in the project, program and policy recommendations of the Plan.

Each focus group worked to identify activity centers within the town, identify major residential areas and employment centers in Sylva, and identify areas with high pedestrian volumes, as well as areas where pedestrian connectivity might be improved. The three groups then came back together into one group and identified

common themes. Together, participants identified pedestrian activity centers in Sylva, where people shop, work, and go for leisure time activities. These were:

- Bryson Park
- Dillsboro
- Downtown
- Hospital Area
- Jackson County Justice Center & Administration Building
- Mark Watson Park
- Old Courthouse / New Library
- Post office
- Shopping areas along NC 107
- Skyland Drive
- Smoky Mountain High School
- Town recreation facilities & pool

Focus group attendees identified “priority” routes for improvement, which included the downtown area, Skyland Drive, NC 107, and the athletic fields near Smoky Mountain High School. The NC 107 corridor south/east of US 23 business was also identified as an area of high concern for pedestrians, as sidewalks exist along only one side of the road.

In addition to particular routes and activity centers, focus group participants helped identify design goals for pedestrian facilities in Sylva. Many of the design considerations discussed at the meeting are links between plan elements that can nurture user experiences and enhance appreciation of the various plan elements. Some of these design considerations are general, and some are more specific.

Generally, focus groups participants discussed the need to connect to the downtown area; a loop walking route along US 23 business and Skyland Drive, connecting to the Hospital area; reducing driveway access points along NC 107; getting to Mark Watson Park; the need to provide for multi-modal uses yet minimize modal conflicts; balance maintenance and safety requirements; and pursue projects in ways that will overcome the Town’s terrain challenges.

The more *specific* design considerations that participants identified included: consider drainage issues and look for alternatives to curb and gutter; identify ways to strategically acquire right-of-way and easements for construction of pedestrian facilities; coordinate with NCDOT; decrease the number of driveways along commercial corridors to reduce exposure to pedestrians; and build sidewalks of

an adequate width to correspond to usage, recognizing that one size fits all is not sufficient.

Focus group participants also identified several concerns/suggestions. Some of their comments are in the nature of *reality checks* to plan-making, and others are *issue-related*. Below is a list of the various concerns/suggestions.

- Lack of sufficient right-of-way;
- Funding limitations;
- Maintenance of existing sidewalks;
- Following state and national legislation;
- Good, thoughtful planning; and
- Diversity of project locations to serve all residents.

Overall, there was a great deal of consistency between the results that each focus group produced. The feedback obtained from the focus group is used to develop project, program and policy recommendations for the Pedestrian Plan.

Section 3: Policy & Plan Review

A review of relevant planning and policy documents were reviewed to identify their particular relevance to the current and future pedestrian system within the Town of Sylva. In reviewing these policies and plans, the pedestrian system related aspects can help identify gaps in the planning framework and help identify potential modifications to existing plans and policies or add to them. A summary of these plans is contained below.

Sylva Smart Growth Plan (2005):

The Town of Sylva's Smart Growth Plan is a short, 15-page document that begins to explore the commercial, residential, and environmental balance of the Town. There are 12 overarching goals for future sustainable development (residential, commercial, industrial), transportation inter-connectivity, and the assessment of existing infrastructure.

This plan identifies two corridors in particular that have the highest need for review based on their development patterns: the Highway 107 corridor and the US 23/74 Bypass and Business Corridor. The focus will be to enhance and encourage connectivity, bicycle and pedestrian treatments, access management, and safety. There are three action items listed at the end of the document that were set to be completed in 2010. An update on the below actions could be the starting point for the next Smart Growth Plan:

- Within 5 years, comprehensive plans for the primary (Highway 107) and secondary (US 23/74) areas should be complete;
- Zoning and appropriate land development standards shall be identified and developed prior to formal adoption of ETJ ordinance;
- Infrastructure assessments and projected expansion/improvement projects shall be identified.

Sylva Subdivision Regulations (2009):

The outcomes of these subdivision regulations are working towards achieving sustainable development. They are:

- Encourage economically sound and stable development in the town;
- Ensure the timely provision and coordination of required streets and highways, utilities and other facilities and services to new land developments;

- Ensure adequate provision of safe and convenient traffic access and circulation;
- Ensure provision of needed community open spaces in new land developments through the dedication or reservation of land for recreational, educational and other public purposes or the provision of funds in lieu of dedication;
- Ensure, in general, the wise and timely development of new areas, in harmony with the land development plan and other official plans of the town; and
- Ensure accurate public records of land ownership, to facilitate land ownership transfer, the effective conduct of public and private business and the protection of private property rights.

Road standards for subdivisions are addressed in Article 3 - Section 3.2. Some of the key regulations that emerge in this section include: subdivision roads shall be designed and built according to the standards in the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Subdivision Roads, Minimum Construction Standards; when feasible and desirable, access will be provided between subdivisions to aid egress and ingress and maximize traffic flow; when feasible or practical, collector roads or reverse frontage roads will be provided parallel to arterials or thoroughfares and; subdivision roads shall conform to the thoroughfare plan, comprehensive transportation plan, or any other plan related to transportation patterns.

Other elements that enhance community character and livability in the regulations include: appropriate lot sizes to maximize density; separation of lots from traffic arteries; land within the subdivision that is not being used for structures, vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or for other approved landscaping shall be provided with grass or other ground cover and; it is required that part of the subdivision site, which is not devoted to lots, associated roads, or utilities is to be set aside as usable open space.

Sylva Zoning Ordinance:

This ordinance describes the land use and development standards for the Town of Sylva, with the intent of preserving the social, economic, cultural, historic and aesthetic conditions of the town. Much of the ordinance focuses on the different district regulations (residential, business, government, industrial, etc). There is mention of sidewalks in Section 205.1, the B-2 and B-3 Business Districts. It states that sidewalks shall be constructed the full length of a parcel,

developed for, or changed to commercial use along public thoroughfares.

There is also mention in Section 206.1, the Professional Business District (PB). It states that sidewalks/walkways, complying with Federal and State Accessibility Standards, shall be provided for all new development and existing development converted to a permitted use. The Planned Unit Development Overlay in Article 1100 allows for Residential Planned Unit Developments and Mixed Use Planned Unit Developments, which is meant to promote higher building densities. In the residential units, pedestrian and bicycle path shall be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks and pedestrian ways shall be designed and constructed in accordance with NCDOT Traditional Neighborhood Development Guidelines.

In the mixed use units, internal streets shall be designed and constructed using the NCDOT Traditional Neighborhood Development Guidelines and Subdivision Roads Minimum Construction Standards and shall contain: pedestrian zone area, travel lane area, center medians if any, and on-street parking.

Sylva Street Plan

The Town of Sylva Street Plan has not been adopted and consists mainly of a series of pictures and maps. The first part of the plan shows the preferred Sylva-Dillsboro Southern Loop, which was chosen based on a feasibility study and is now stalled awaiting the outcomes of other studies in the region.

The second part of the Plan looks at the current transportation system, mainly focused on Highway 107 and the US23 Business Corridors. It was estimated that there are potentially 39,000 trips going through Sylva a day for reasons of business, recreation, industrial, etc. The main attractors in the town are the Wal-Mart, the hospital, the justice center, the downtown area, public schools, SCC, and WCU (which is closeby).

With many of the above-mentioned activities clustered on or around 107 and 23, there needs to be efficient ways to access these locations. Currently, there is not a lot of connectivity on the secondary roads, so this plan looks at ways to connect some of those streets, making it more efficient for people to travel to the activity centers.

Jackson County Greenways Master Plan (2009)

In 2009, the Jackson County Greenway Advisory Committee formed in order to take a holistic approach towards conservation,

recreation, and sustainable development. The goals of the Greenway Committee were to accomplish the following tasks:

- 1) Identify pedestrian, cyclist and commuter needs through public input and participation;
- 2) Collect a comprehensive list of facilities in need of pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- 3) Prioritize the needs of the county and determine feasibility and potential funding for projects;
- 4) Implement design and classification standards which can be used as resources for future county facilities;
- 5) Identify recommended policy changes and projects which would be beneficial to the needs of conservation, recreation and preservation; and
- 6) Maintain strong public support for current and future greenway projects and planning.

This document is a collaborative effort between the towns of Sylva, Dillsboro, and Webster as well as the Village of Forest Hills and the Cashiers Village Council. It focuses on finding ways to connect trails, on-road facilities, multi-use trails, and many other types of greenways in this geographic area. In addition, the planning process sought feedback and input on transportation needs, such as sidewalks and on-road bicycle lanes, which was coordinated with the Jackson County Transportation Task Force (JCTTF) for adoption into the bicycle and pedestrian component of their Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Utilizing a robust public involvement process, the Plan details how the Greenways Committee and engaged citizens created an inventory of key locations for linkages, such as trailheads, parking areas, playgrounds, and other amenities. From there, they took an inventory of conservation, transportation, and recreation plans, which fed into a prioritization list of both on-road and off-road needs.

A key underlying goal of this process was to make every effort to accommodate, connect to, and maintain design standards throughout each jurisdiction, for each project. Coordination at all levels on project design, development status, construction and maintenance will help provide a comprehensive system through and between each community and municipality.

Some of the universal policy recommendations for the on-road projects consisted of bicycle-friendly facility design, such as rumble strips, storm drain grates, curb access, shoulder widths, and others. Other recommendations were slower speed limits, designation of

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bicycle/vehicle shared lanes, and other ways to encourage responsible ridership and vehicle management. It is recommended that each municipal and county board become familiar with these topics and encourage bicycle-friendly road design, planning and land use to the greatest extent possible. The North Carolina Complete Streets Policy and the FHWA Guide to Bicycling and Walking for North Carolina should also be considered prior to planning or implementing any on-road projects.

| Facility Description | Facility Type |
|---|----------------------|
| <u>Greenways Master Plan Recommendations</u> | |
| Tuckasegee River from Webster to Rogers Road Area | Multi-Use Trail |
| Behind NC 107 strip, from Lowe's/County facilities area to downtown Sylva | Off-Road Paved Trail |
| Rails to/with Trails on RR bed from Sylva to Dillsboro and onto Whittier area | Multi-Use Trail |
| Mountain bike trails in Pinnacle Park | Mountain Bike |
| Rails to/with Trails section from Sylva to Balsam/Waynesville | Multi-Use Trail |
| Construct the Tuckasegee River Greenway between Sylva and Cullowhee | Multi-Use Trail |
| Sylva-Dillsboro greenway behind Burger Shack/Harold's, across Shuler rental to Monteith, up Scotts Creek | Off-Road Trail |
| Loop trail at County complex | Loop/Destination |
| Mica Mine history trail at Mineral Springs Drive | Off-Road Trail |
| Pinnacle Park connections to Parkway | Mtn. Biking/Hiking |
| Source: Jackson County Greenways Master Plan (2009) | |

Jackson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2009):

This plan consists of various road projects throughout the county and the transportation issues they face. Each project details the problem statement, a project description, and supporting information (which includes items such as history of the project, land use functions, multi-modal considerations, linkages to other county plans, etc). The *multi-modal considerations* section recommends the potential sidewalk, bicycle lane, or greenway improvements for each project.

| Facility Description | Facility Type |
|--|--------------------------|
| <u>Comprehensive Transportation Plan Recommendations</u> | |
| Harris Regional Hospital to Sylva on Old Asheville Highway | Sidewalk |
| Cope Creek from US 74 to US 23 | Multi-Use Trail/Sidewalk |
| End of Justice Center sidewalk across to the new Post Office | Sidewalk |
| Completion of system along both sides of NC 107 from Fairview to downtown Sylva | Sidewalk |
| Completion of system along both sides of Main Street and US 23 Business in downtown | Sidewalk |
| Crosswalks with traffic lights or other pedestrian safety measures at US 23/ NC 107 intersection and along US 23 Business | Crossing |
| Source: Jackson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2009) | |

Section 4: Project Recommendations

The project recommendations for the Sylva Pedestrian Plan were developed through a series of planning steps aimed at achieving a broad-based level of input from town officials, residents, business owners, other stakeholders and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

These steps included:


- A review of the Town of Sylva's existing pedestrian facilities by the project consultants;
- Initial feedback from the Pedestrian Plan Steering Committee;
- Identification of projects from focus groups;
- Input from citizens through the Greening up the Mountains Festival and an online survey; and
- A detailed discussion with Town of Sylva, NCDOT, Southwestern Commission and Jackson County Recreation & Parks Department staff.


On May 25, 2010, the Pedestrian Plan Steering Committee convened to review the candidate list of potential projects and recommend prioritization factors for evaluating each project.

NOTE: The project recommendations listed below are preliminary, pending prioritization, as recommended by the project Steering Committee, cost estimates and a more detailed review of project specific recommendations once priorities and costs have been identified. Further project details (e.g. distance) once these factors have been identified and they will be finalized in the draft Pedestrian Plan.


| Business 23 & Skyland Drive Intersection | | Priority: |
|---|---|---|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add crosswalks on south and west legs • Install countdown pedestrian signals • Upgrade of curb ramps to ADA standards • May require refuge island • Sylva may submit formal request to Division 14 for inclusion in annual list of upgrades | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping area and restaurants |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| Business 23 from Poplar Rd. to Hospital Rd. | | Priority: |
|--|---|---|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks along both side • Jackson County CTP calls for boulevard treatment upgrade • Add crosswalks, curb ramps, and ped. Signals at signalized intersections | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping center • Hospital |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva, Southwestern Commission, Developers</i> | | Distance: |


| Business 23 from Savannah Dr. to Mark Watson Park | | Priority: Short-term |
|---|--|---|
|  | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks along south side • Project is in progress through Town of Sylva • Construction expected in 2010 (to bid May 2010) • Sidewalk stops at park with proposed trail through park | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball field • Library |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva, Jackson County grant, NCDOT</i> | | Distance: |


| Chipper Curve Rd. from Skyland Dr. to Municipal Dr. | | Priority: |
|---|--|---|
|  | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks • Consider only from Municipal to Harold due to constraint issues • Convert Raymond Street to pedestrian only (possible ped-only crossing of railroad) | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Park • Connection to downtown |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |


| Cope Creek Sidewalks from NC 107 – Slo Gait Lane | | Priority: Long-Term |
|--|--|---|
| <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk/wide shoulder could be put along west side of Cope Creek Rd. • New road section may preclude it in some sections • Requires agreement from County to maintain future sidewalks | | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Park • Residential (including new development about 1 mile up on Cope Creek) |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Jackson County, Developers</i></p> | | <p>Distance:</p> |

| Downtown Sylva Pedestrian Improvements: Main and Mill Streets | | Priority: |
|--|--|---|
|  | <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill sidewalk gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mill St, Spring to Landis gap - Mill St, Schulman to Keener gap (consider RR side due to wall; or through redevelopment) - Main St, short gap near Mill intersection (consider painting as sidewalk) - Landis & Mill crossing from parking lot with signal, including upgrades • New signal at Spring & Mill under construction 2010 • Pedestrian access to courthouse via Keener from Main Street | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown commercial area |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva, NCDOT, Downtown Sylva Association</i></p> | | <p>Distance:</p> |

| Fairview Ave. Sidewalks (Ashe Loop) | | Priority: |
|---|--|---|
| <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade difference between road and creek more conducive to greenway (on school side) • Pedestrian improvements at NC 107/Fairview intersection to include: crosswalks on two legs of intersection, curb ramps, ped signals, and potential relocation of utility/signal poles <p>Ashe Loop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow right of way terrain • Steep slopes • Not very residential • Possibility for hiking trail with parking at school | | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball fields and School • Shopping Center on far side of NC 107 • Future placement of Mill Creek Greenway |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: Jackson County, NCDOT, Schools</i></p> | | <p>Distance:</p> |


| Hospital Road from Business 23 to Skyland Dr. | | Priority: |
|---|---|--|
|  | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks, but curbing is only in some places • Some Terrain Issues • Right of Way Issues • Scotts Creek bridge is being replaced (sidewalks?) | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital • Board of Education • DPH • County Building |
| | <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva, Developers</i> | Distance: |

| Jackson County Justice and Administrative Building Driveway | | Priority: |
|---|---|--|
|  | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalk ends after about 100ft into office complex – there is curb and gutter • Grade an issue • Walking/sidewalk (picnic) area outside facility • Planned intersection improvement in Jackson County CTP | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County office buildings • Jackson Plaza • Nearby residential areas |
| | <i>Responsible Agencies: Jackson County, Town of Sylva</i> | Distance: |

| Jackson Plaza Driveway | | Priority: |
|---|--|---|
|  | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks from Grindstaff Cove up to parking lot of plaza • Pursue through re-development requirements • Crosswalk / pedestrian signal through intersection improvements identified in Jackson County CTP • Sylva was planning to take control of access road in exchange for improvements of sidewalks from developer (in dispute?). | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Office • Bowling Alley • Potentially private development |
| | <i>Responsible Agencies: Developer, Town of Sylva</i> | Distance: |

| Loop Walking Trail at County Complex | | Priority: |
|---|--|------------------|
| <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the sidewalk connectivity in housing area and connect it to senior services building • Add sidewalks from NC 116 up to residential and county building – curb and gutter is already in place • Add crosswalk at bottom on complex, crossing NC 116 to access sidewalk and shopping center on other side <p><u>Side Notes:</u> Get a picture of short sidewalk segment and find out what other lots in this area will be used for.</p> | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Building • Senior Housing Community • Shopping Center Close by | <p>Distance:</p> |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: Jackson County</i></p> | | |

| Municipal Drive, Grindstaff Cove to Chipper Curve | | Priority: |
|---|---|------------------|
| <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks along south side • Sidewalks existing along portion of street, including alongside Town Hall building | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Hall • Rec Building • Ending near downtown (Mill & Main Sts.) | <p>Distance:</p> |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva, Developers</i></p> | | |

| NC 107 Sidewalks, From US 23 Business to NC 116 | | Priority: |
|--|--|------------------|
|  <p><u>Recommended Improvements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add sidewalks along the north side of NC 107 • Includes upgrade of curb ramps to meet ADA requirements • Installation of crosswalks at signalized intersections • Town of Sylva / NCDOT should pursue consolidation of driveways to reduce conflicts | <p><u>Influences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC 107 commercial corridor • Smoky Mountain High School <p><u>Cost Estimate:</u></p> | <p>Distance:</p> |
| <p><i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva, NCDOT, Developers</i></p> | | |

| NC 107& NC 116 Intersection | | Priority: |
|---|---|---|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade curb ramps for ADA compliance • Install countdown pedestrian signals if adding sidewalks to north side of 107 (was in same SRTS application as Jones Street; NCDOT to consider separate project for countdown signals at NC 116) • Install new crosswalk across high school driveway • Sidewalks exist along 116 | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoky Mountain High School • Ingles/Lowes Shopping Center • Fairview Elementary |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| NC 107 & Jones Street Intersection | | Priority: |
|---|--|--|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify sidewalks on south side of 107 for ADA compliance (cross slope driveway crossing) • North side of 107 – improve with sidewalks • Build sidewalks on Jones from 107 – connecting high school area with residential • Existing unfunded Safe Route to School request | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back road to high school • Residential Area |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| NC 107 and Wal-Mart Entry Intersection | | Priority: |
|---|--|--|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include crosswalk and ped. signals on Wal-Mart side to connect existing sidewalks • Include crosswalk on one leg of 107 to connect to adjacent entry road • Upgrade with future NC 107 sidewalks • Include sidewalk from 107 to Wal-Mart's front door (currently stops at entry to shopping plaza) • Wal-Mart entry crosswalk needs to be re-designed to be in front of stop bar | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wal-Mart • Future hotel |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| NC 107 & Cope Creek / Walter Ashe Intersection | | Priority: |
|---|---|--|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South side of 107 – add ped. Signals and ADA compliant curb on southeast corner (pole there) • Crosswalk on one leg of 107 to connect to adjacent entry road • Install pedestrian signals crossing Walter Ashe Road | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large gap between signals on 107 with no crossing capabilities • Cope Creek Road is residential |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| NC 107 & Business 23 Intersection | | Priority: Short-term |
|---|---|---|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded project for signal upgrade to install countdown pedestrian signals on east leg to cross Sunrise Park leg • Small construction project by Division 14 • Construction expected by 2011 | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersection of 2 Highways • Area businesses with parking access |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| Savannah Dr. from Nicol Arms Rd to Cowee St. (consider Elm?) | | Priority: |
|---|--|--|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fix problem areas on existing sidewalks • Difficult terrain past Cowee St. to Elm St. | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential areas • Joggers |
| <i>Responsible Agencies: Town of Sylva</i> | | Distance: |

| Savannah Dr. from US 23 to Nicol Arms Rd. | | Priority: |
|--|--|--|
| | <u>Recommended Improvements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks • Land around Nicol Arms looks to be approved for development • Possible sidewalk extension to Winterhaven Dr. | <u>Influences</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future development |
| <i>Responsible Agencies:</i> | | Distance: |

Skyland Dr. from Hospital Rd. to Business 23

Priority:



Recommended Improvements

- Sidewalks
 - East side of road may be more suitable due to space between road and rail tracks
 - Identify priority end of Skyland (Hospital or 23)
 - Bridge over Scotts Creek has enough width
- Rail along Skyland – potential for Rails to/with Trails (?)
- NCDOT interested in contiguous expansion to make a complete project
- Potential for non-curbed sections with guardrail separation

Influences

- Business areas at both ends of Skyland Dr.
- Rail right of way

Responsible Agencies: NCDOT, Town of Sylva

Distance: