

# 1 • INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING PROCESS

## BACKGROUND: CHAPEL HILL 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In June of 2012, the Town Council adopted the Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan, which is a reflection of the values, aspirations, and ideas of the Chapel Hill community.

The following is the community vision for Chapel Hill:

*Chapel Hill 2020: Connections. Choices. Community.*

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

The Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan identified several areas throughout town as “future focus discussion areas” which are areas that are most likely to change in the future due to vacant land, underdeveloped sites, and their locations along transportation and transit corridors. These areas would require additional community conversations and planning about how the areas would change in the future.

The Central West Focus Area became a priority “Focus Area” during the comprehensive planning process due to the known development pressures in the area.

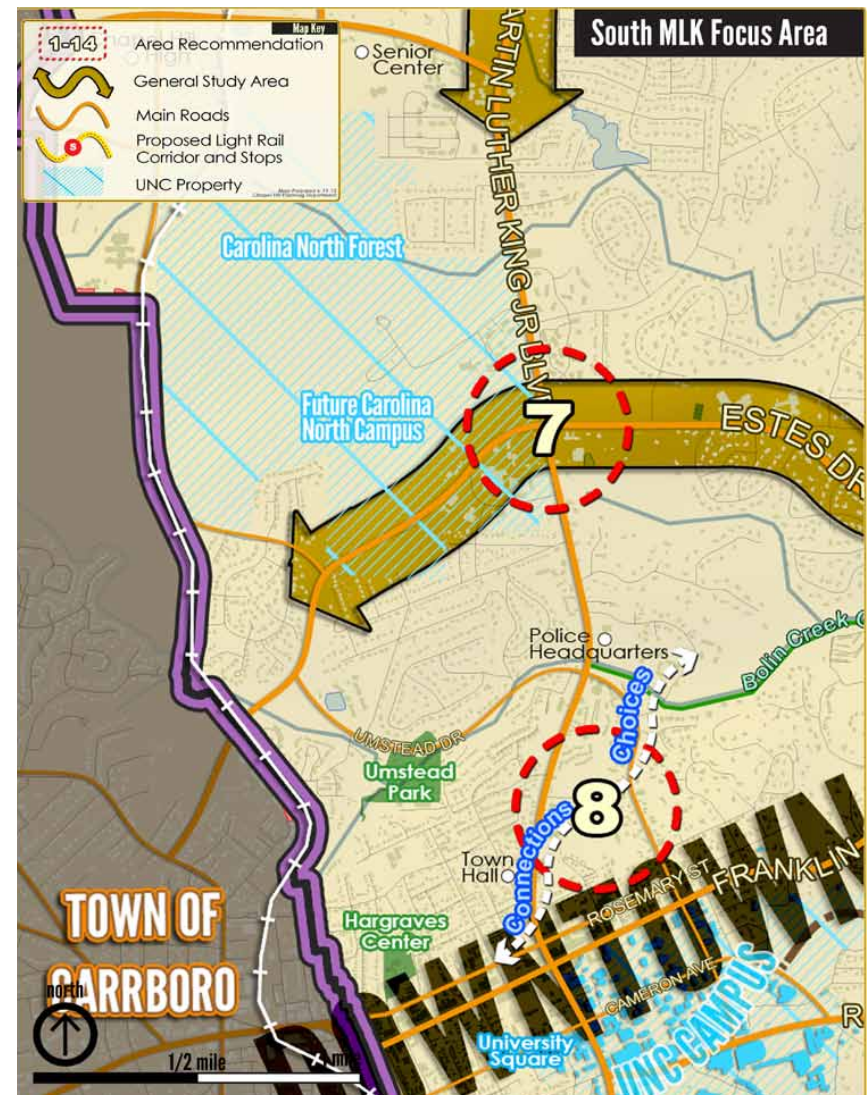


Figure 1.1: Area 3: South Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

The key considerations for this area, as stated in the Comprehensive Plan, were the economic pressure to develop parcels along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive; the addition of the planned Carolina North 250-acre campus in this area; the opportunity for connections for pedestrians, bicycles, buses, and cars; the opportunities presented by the possibility of future transit investment along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard; and the need to understand the potential impacts of future development on the area.

Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan recommended the initiation of a “community-based process to identify the future form of new uses in and near Estes Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard,” with an exploration of Estes Drive as a complete, multimodal street, as well as discussions regarding support for “the potential for redevelopment of the southern end of this corridor with better connections to downtown and the University by encouraging community-based discussion of form, access, environmental conditions, and connectivity.”

The Central West Focus Area Focus Area Process responded to this recommendation through the initiation of a community-based planning process that has explored a variety of options for the area’s future.

## CENTRAL WEST FOCUS AREA PROCESS

Between mid-September and early October 2012, four community meetings were held to develop recommendations that were sent to the Town Council regarding the planning process for this area. During the October 24, 2012 Town Council meeting, the Town Council reviewed the recommendations and provided guidance about the process including the schedule, work product, boundaries, and Steering Committee structure.

## CENTRAL WEST FOCUS AREA BOUNDARIES

The Chapel Hill 2020 Comprehensive Plan identified an area titled “Area 3:

South Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard” as a future Focus Area. Area 3 encompassed an area located approximately between Homestead Road to the north, Rosemary Street to the south, the Carolina North campus to the west, and Hillsborough Street to the east (Figure 1.1).

The Central West Focus Area does not include this entire area; rather, during the October 24, 2012 Town Council meeting, the Town Council more tightly defined the boundaries for the Central West Focus Area into three “impact areas” (Figure 1.2).

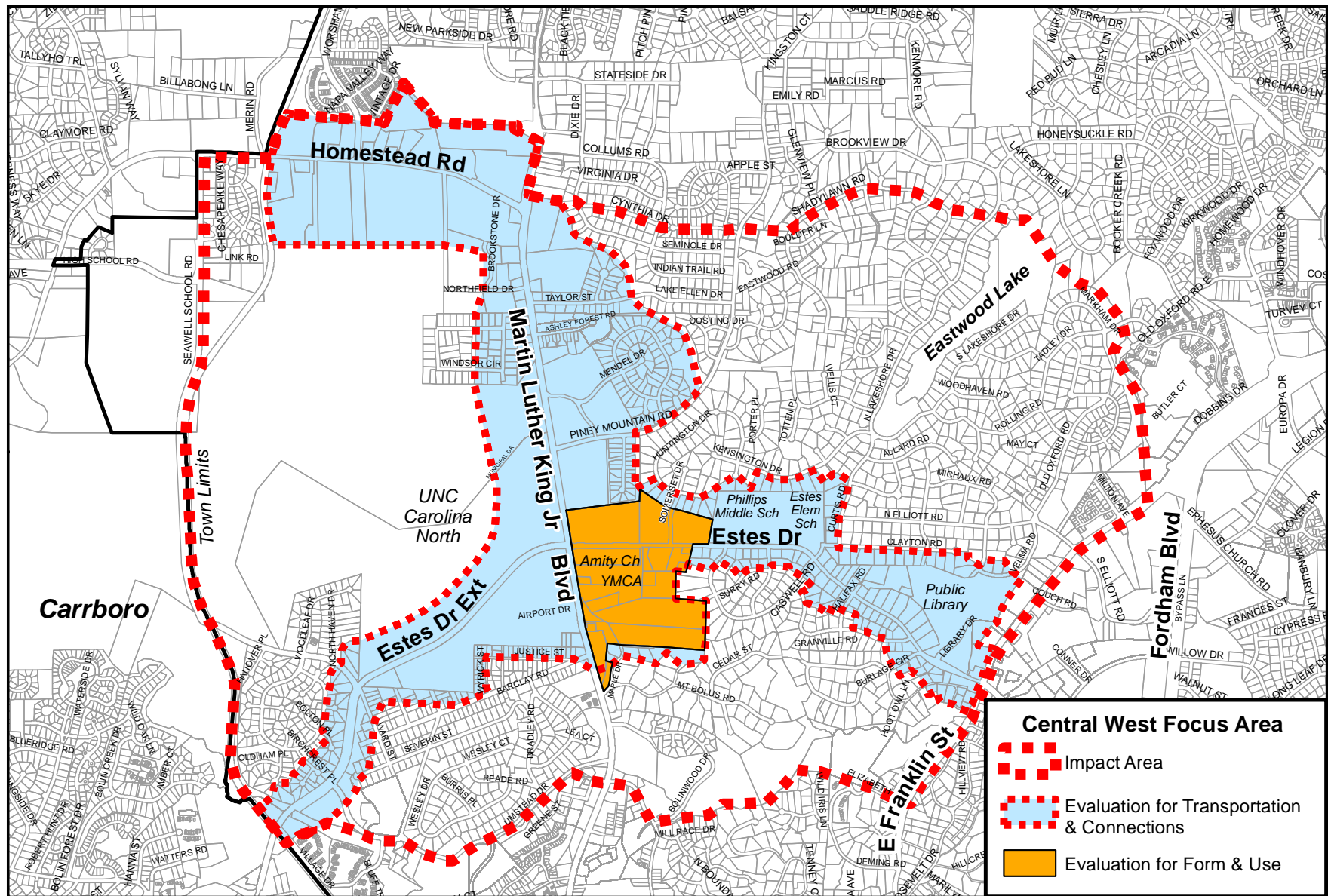
These three areas comprise the following:

1. ***Evaluation for Form and Use*** is a well-defined area located at the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive. This core area has the greatest potential for change given its proximity to the Carolina North campus, its location at the intersection of two well-traveled routes, and its relatively sizable, undeveloped parcels. The Evaluation for Form and Use Area is the focal point for discussions regarding future land use, form and density.
2. ***Evaluation for Transportation and Connections*** includes properties directly accessing Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Estes Drive/Estes Drive Extension, and the segment of Homestead Road to the west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. This area was important for exploring stronger transportation connections and assessing impacts from the area identified for form/use evaluation.
3. ***Impact Area*** encompasses the residential neighborhoods directly to the north and south of Estes Drive/Estes Drive Extension. The potential effects of changes within the Evaluation for Form and Use Area on these surrounding neighborhoods were discussed throughout that process.





## Central West Focus Area Boundaries Adopted by Town Council on October 24, 2012



Source: Town of Chapel Hill

The Central West Focus Area is currently primarily residential in character with neighborhoods that contain single-family dwellings with a few multifamily housing complexes, office buildings and small businesses adjacent to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. In addition, the area contains several major community facilities, including the Town of Chapel Hill Public Library, Estes Hills Elementary School and Phillips Middle School, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA, and Amity United Methodist Church.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The process undertaken in developing a plan for the Central West Focus Area (CWFA) has emphasized an inclusionary, open, community-based effort through the use of a Steering Committee with broad community representation, multiple community workshops and discussions, the public sharing of information and materials throughout the planning process, and opportunities for public comment at Steering Committee meetings and report out sessions.

### CENTRAL WEST FOCUS AREA STEERING COMMITTEE

The Town Council established a Steering Committee with the following purpose:

*Create and deliver a small area plan for the Planning Area for Council consideration; create a schedule for the process and milestones for reporting to the community; and gather the necessary data/expertise for making informed decisions.*

The Central West Steering Committee was comprised of stakeholder representatives who would work together to develop a small area plan.

The Town Council appointed a 17-member Steering Committee that included the following:

- 1 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill liaison – Jeff Kidd
- 1 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools liaison – Mia Burroughs
- 1 Planning Board member – Amy Ryan
- 1 Transportation Board member – Michael Parker
- 1 Bicycle and Pedestrian Board member – Keith Billy (December 2012 to May 2013) and Jared Simmons (June 2013 to November 2013)
- 4 Business owners/ Landowners/Non-profit representatives from the area, including one Chamber of Commerce member – Anthony Carey, Lucy Carol Davis, Bruce Murray, and Whit Rummel
- 7 Homeowner Residents in the Planning and Impact Areas\*– Eric Hyman, Julie McClintock, Sarah McIntee, Firoz Mistry, Mickey Jo Sorrell, David Tuttle, and Buffie Webber
- 1 Renter Resident in the Planning and Impact Areas – Abby Parcell

*\*One of the residents' seats was originally for a Public Housing resident or representative. Since neither a Public Housing resident nor representative applied for a seat, a resident from the Planning and Impact Area was appointed for this seat.*

Also, two co-chairs were elected to guide the planning process and to serve as liaisons between the Steering Committee and the Town staff and consultants. Michael Parker and Amy Ryan were elected as co-chairs by the Steering Committee members.

The Steering Committee met at least monthly, and in many instances bi-monthly, to define, discuss and shape the elements of the Central West Focus Area plan. All meetings were open to the public, and opportunity was provided during the meetings for public comment.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Chapel Hill community was invited to actively participate in the Central West Focus Area planning process through multiple events and ongoing e-communications. These included the following:

### Community Workshops and “Report Out” Sessions

Two half-day community workshops were held during the Central West planning process. The first, held on March 2, 2013, focused on a discussion of perceptions about the Focus Area, concerns and issues related to potential changes in the area, and a range of visions for the future. On May 18, 2013, the second workshop asked for feedback on a large number of potential planning principles and objectives to be used to guide the evolution of a planning concept for the area and explored responses to a series of conceptual land use alternatives. Both sessions were well attended and provided information that was subsequently summarized by the Steering Committee in its development of a final list of Central West Principles and Objectives (presented in Chapter 3), and in the further iterations of concept plans.



Figure 1.2: March 2, 2013 Community Workshop



Figure 1.3: May 18, 2013 Community Workshop

In addition, the Steering Committee organized and conducted Community Report Out Sessions on April 25, 2013 and September 10, 2013—meetings that provided opportunities for community members to consider and provide input on the planning principles and concepts that were being developed by the Steering Committee at various stages in the process. These sessions have provided valuable information that was considered by Steering Committee members in moving forward in development of the Central West Small Area Plan.

In order to inform a broader base of the town’s community, Planning Department staff also set up information booths called a “road show” to gather feedback at the University Mall Farmers’ Market, the University Mall, and the Public Library, and held sessions with high school students, graduate students, and young professionals.



The Steering Committee also provided a report to the Town Council on June 24, 2013, with the purpose of providing an update to the Council about the Steering Committee's work. Community members also spoke at the Council meeting and provided their feedback about the concepts and the process.

### E-Communications

Members of the public who were interested in the Central West process had the opportunity to join a project listserv and were sent notices of all Steering Committee meetings and public events, as well as the written materials that were distributed to the Steering Committee in preparation for all of its meetings.

E-mails from the public that were sent to the Central West project manager were distributed to the Steering Committee and other planning team members as they were received throughout the planning process.

A Central West webpage was established by the Planning Department staff and all materials were posted on this webpage. Information was also shared on the Chapel Hill 2020 blog.

In addition, a "Community Input" webpage was developed by the Planning Department staff, and Steering Committee members could request that information be posted in this webpage.

## 2 • EXISTING CONDITIONS

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In the initial stages of the planning process, the project team compiled a “Resource Data Package,” or a packet of maps, to describe existing conditions within the Central West Impact Area. Mappings of the area included a range of physical, social, infrastructural, and regulatory data which may be grouped into four categories:

- Character of the area
- Current regulatory framework
- Mobility across various modes of transportation
- Demographics, land values, and housing statistics

This collection of existing conditions data also includes plans for the Carolina North campus, and both issues and potential opportunities for the future as identified by the community and the Steering Committee.

### CENTRAL WEST IMPACT AREA TODAY

Currently, the Central West Impact Area is composed primarily of single-family residences, several multi-family apartment complexes, office buildings, churches, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA and small businesses along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard corridor. The Town of Chapel Hill’s Public Library and two public schools—Phillips Middle School and Estes Hills Elementary School—are located on Estes Drive, and there are a number of large public parks within and around the Impact Area.

As the majority of the Impact Area and Evaluation for Transportation and Connections Area are occupied by single-family and multi-family housing, the area is comprised primarily of residents. Other users include public school attendees, library patrons, and travelers en route through the area. Median age and median income in this area are both higher than Chapel Hill averages. Houses are generally set back from the street, and there is significant tree cover around buildings and in undeveloped portions of the area.

Within the Evaluation for Form and Use Area there are very few homes, and thus few residents. People in this area are typically travelers on Estes Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, employees, parishioners and users of Amity United Methodist Church, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro YMCA, the daycare center, various medical providers, and office employees.

### AREA CHARACTER

#### Overall View

The small-scale development and extensive tree cover that characterize the Central West Focus Area are visible in aerial imagery of the area (Figure 2.1). A large portion of the Impact Area is occupied by the Carolina North Forest, and, just south of this, the future site of the Carolina North campus on what is currently the Horace Williams Airport. Within the Evaluation for Form and Use Area boundary, the land on either side of Estes Drive is almost entirely forested, and the topography in the southern portion is steeply sloped along existing streambeds.

The Horace Williams Airport, presently on 1000 acres owned by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, operates under the FAA allowing private planes to use the airport. The Town of Chapel Hill established an

Airport Hazard Zone in the vicinity of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive. The Airport Hazard Zone precludes development in the area.

- Impact Area
- Evaluation for Transportation & Connections
- Evaluation for Form & Use



Figure 2.1: Overall View: Aerial Image of the CWFA



## Neighborhoods

The area of Evaluation for Transportation and Connections includes all of, or a portion of, approximately 17 designated neighborhoods or subdivisions, including the Coker Hills Neighborhood Conservation District Zoning

Overlay (Figure 2.2). The Evaluation for Form and Use Area is not currently associated with an existing designated neighborhood.

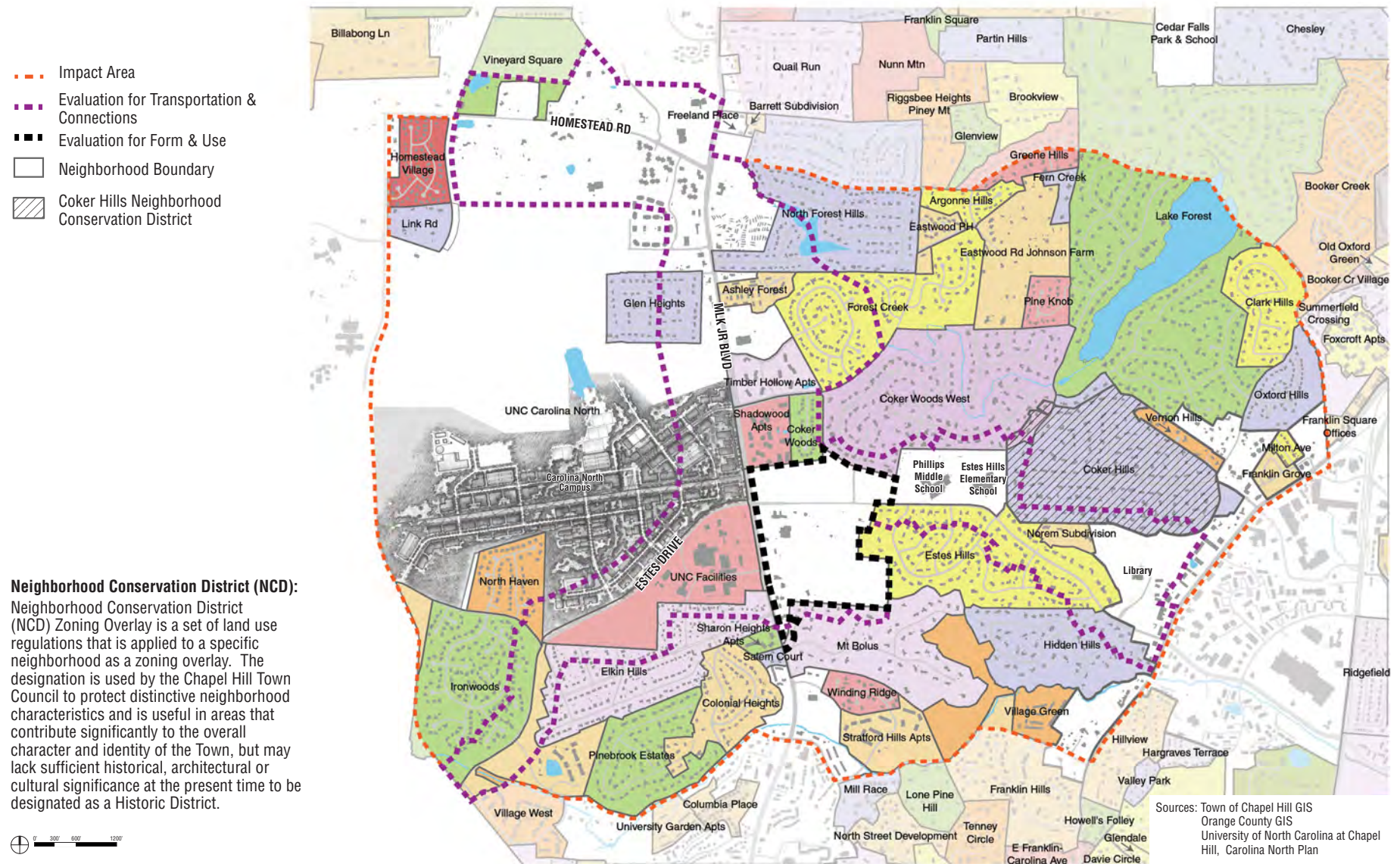


Figure 2.2: Neighborhoods



## Development Patterns

Extensive small-scale single family development is visible in a figure-ground diagram of the Impact Area (Figure 2.3). Relatively more dense development and larger building footprints can be seen within the Evaluation for Transportation and Connections Area along the Homestead Road, Martin

Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and Estes Drive corridors. While several medium- to large-scale structures exist within Evaluation for Form and Use Area, development within the boundary is minimal.



Figure 2.3: Current Development: Figure-Ground



## Public Parks and Green Spaces

There are a number of public parks and other green spaces in the Central West Focus Area (Figure 2.4). Two large parks are located within or just outside of the Impact Area—Prichard Park to the east off of Estes Drive and Homestead Park to the north along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Within the Carolina North Forest and the future site of the Carolina North campus, the University has designated Limited Development Areas where

development will be restricted for the next 50 years. Other sections of the Carolina North Forest have been identified as Conservation Areas according to an assessment of their ecological value. Designation as a Conservation Area permanently prohibits development or unapproved physical disturbance of the environment, though the forest will still be used for recreational and educational purposes. The Carolina North campus offers multiple trails for walking, running, and hiking.

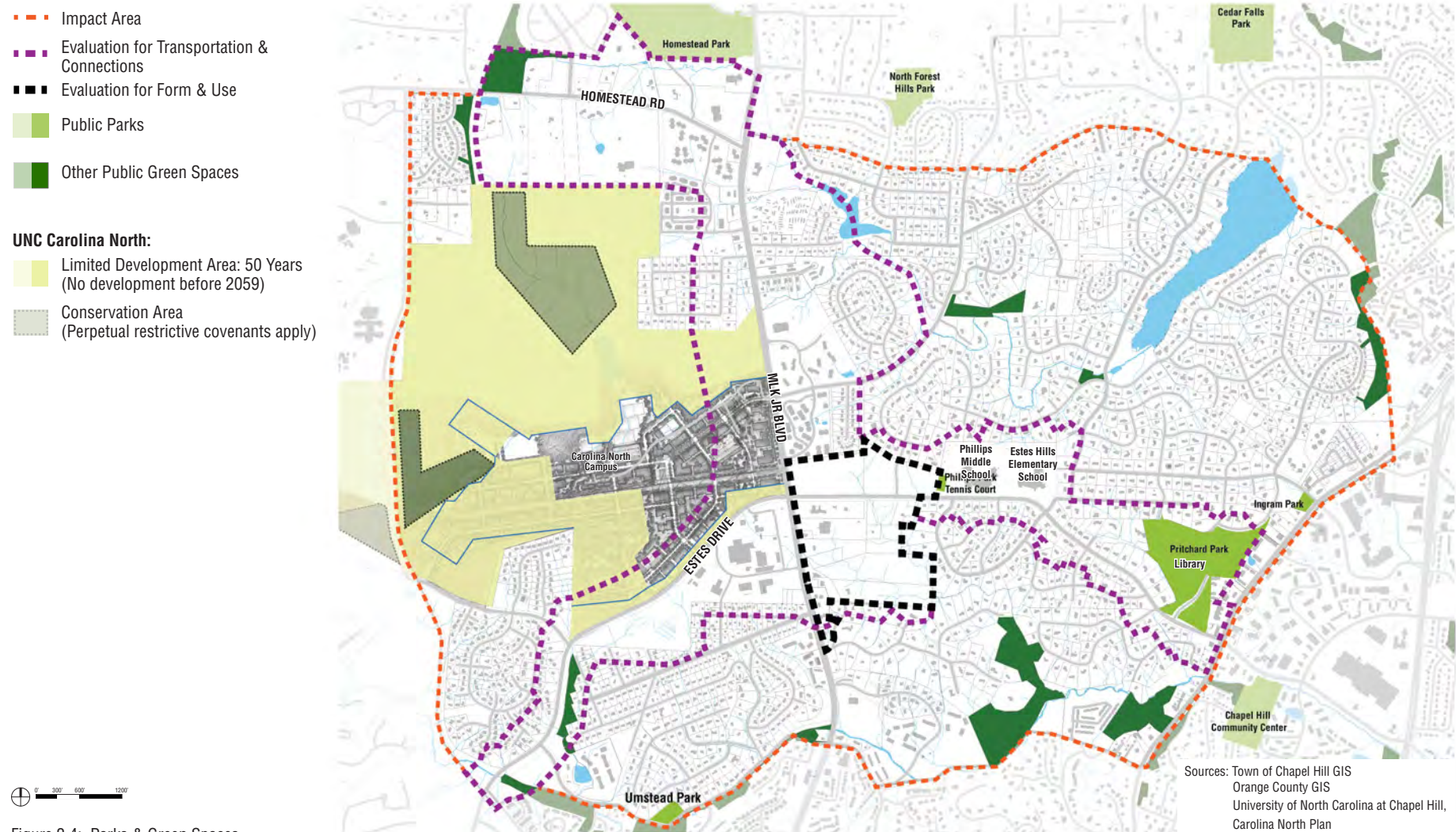


Figure 2.4: Parks & Green Spaces



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Zoning and Land Use

The majority of the Impact Area is zoned as R-1 or R-2 and occupied by low-density residences. Along the transit corridor within the Evaluation for Transportation and Use Area, zoning districts permit higher density

residential uses, along with small areas of commercial and office use. A large portion of the Impact Area is occupied by UNC at Chapel Hill parcels and, as such, is designated for University or institutional use. Several parcels within the Evaluation for Form and Use Area are currently zoned for residential use but are undeveloped (Figure 2.5).

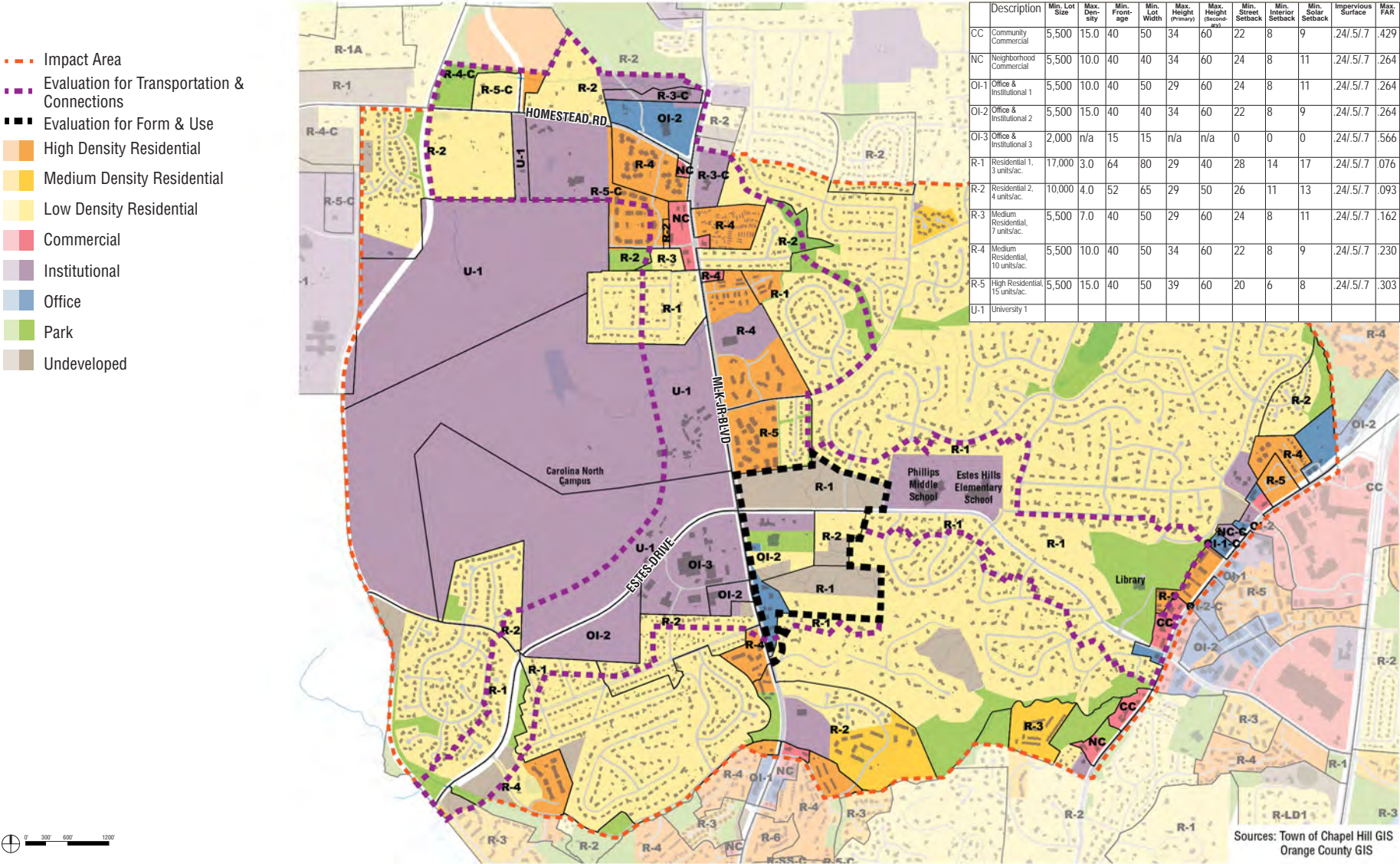


Figure 2.5: Zoning & Land Use



## Watersheds

The Town of Chapel Hill is located within the Cape Fear River Basin, and nine subwatersheds intersect the Impact Area boundary (Figure 2.6).

Additionally, the Town is part of the Jordan Lake watershed and therefore the area is subject to particular stream buffer requirements put in place to protect the environmental quality of the lake (Figure 2.7).

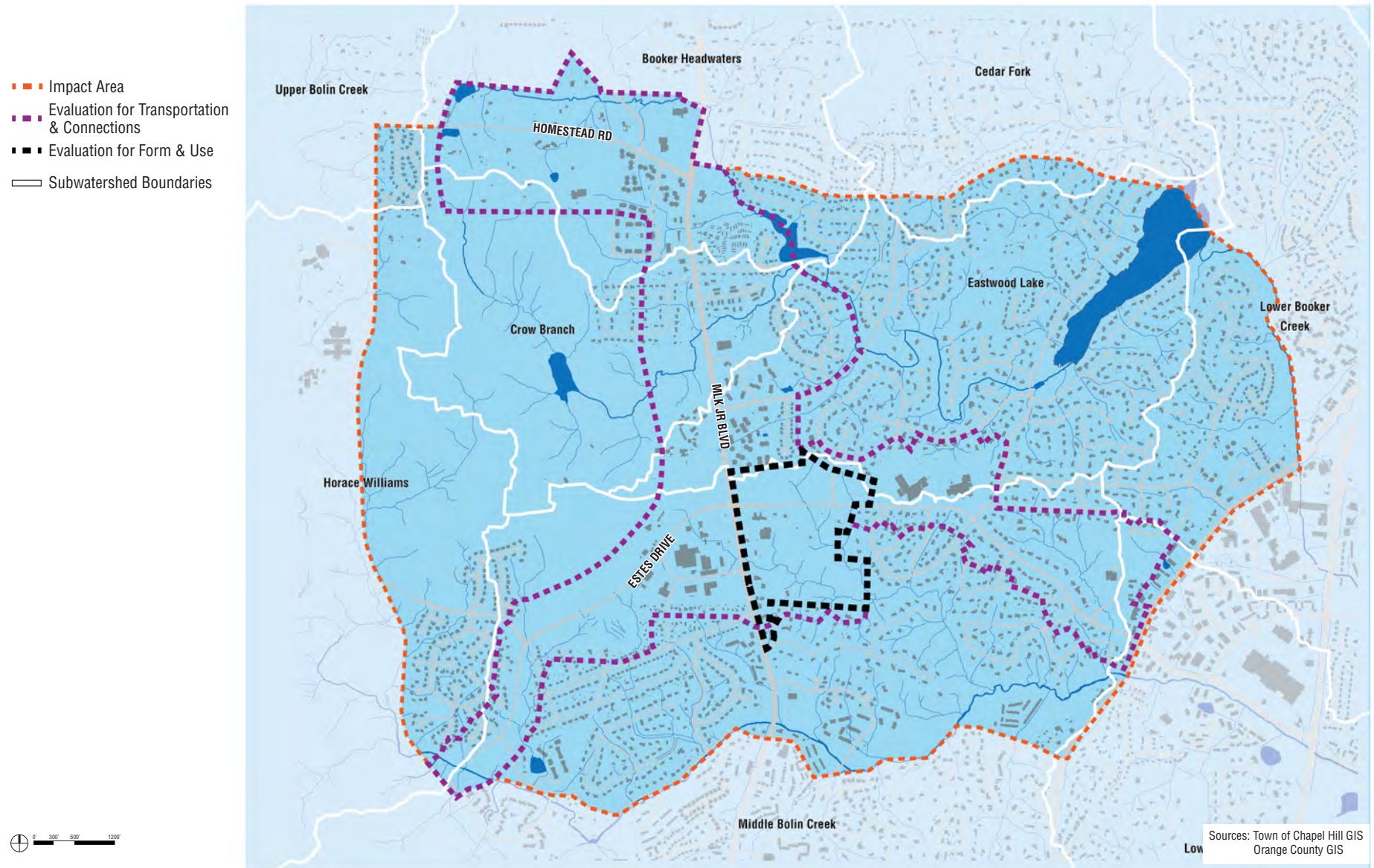


Figure 2.6: Town Watersheds



## Environmentally Protected and Sensitive Areas

As part of the Jordan Lake watershed, development in the Impact Area must follow the requirements of the North Carolina General Assembly's 2009 Jordan Lake Nutrient Management Strategy. Under the Jordan Watershed Riparian Protection Ordinance, all perennial streams, intermittent streams, and perennial waterbodies must have a 50' undeveloped vegetative buffer.

The Town of Chapel Hill also has established a Resource Conservation District (RCD) to protect stream corridors and mitigate property damage caused by flooding (Figure 2.7). RCD buffer regulations require a 50-150' vegetative buffer along streams and waterbodies, as determined by the Town. Limited disturbance in the buffer zone is allowed for stream crossings.

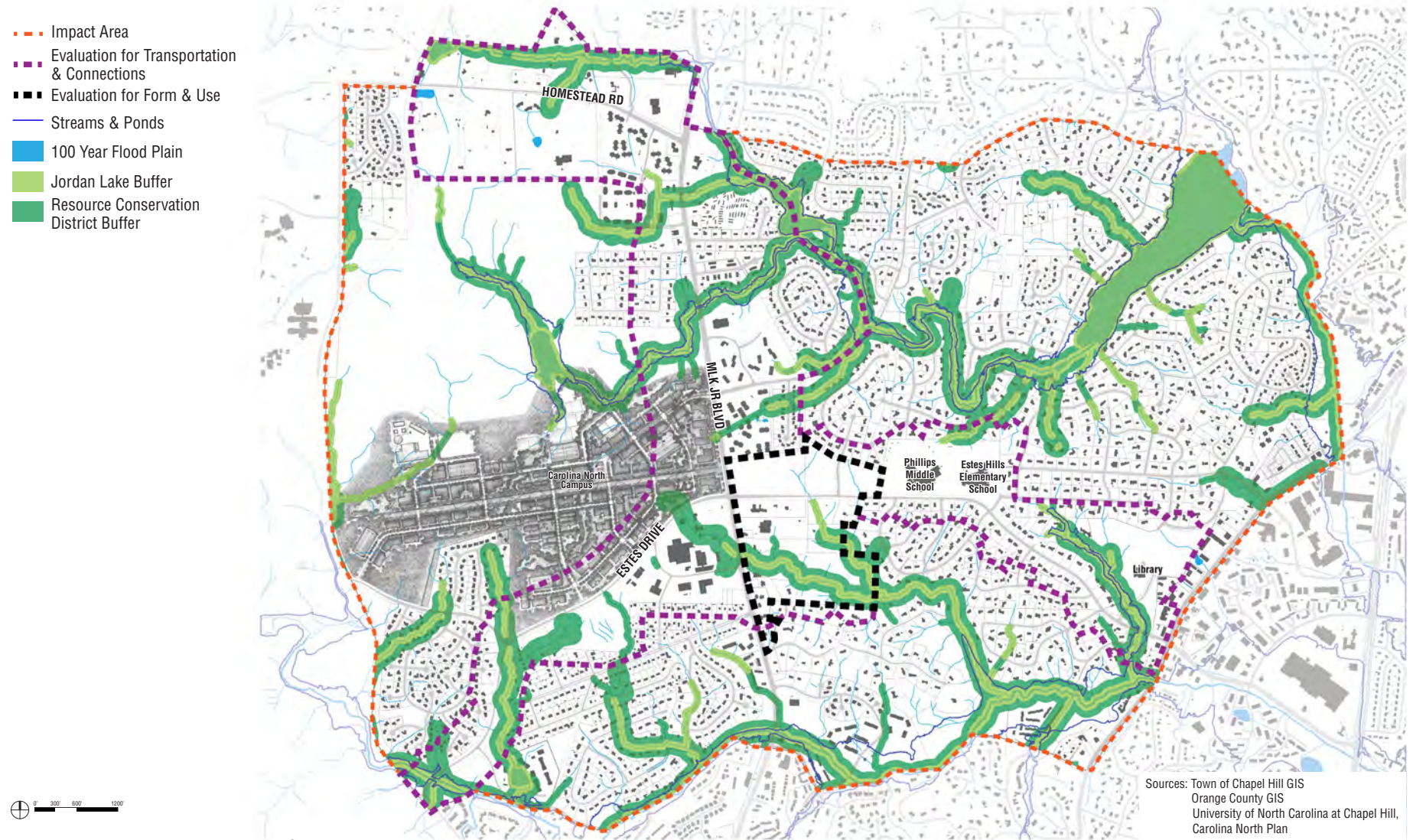


Figure 2.7: Environmentally Protected and Sensitive Areas



## MOBILITY

### Current Traffic Conditions

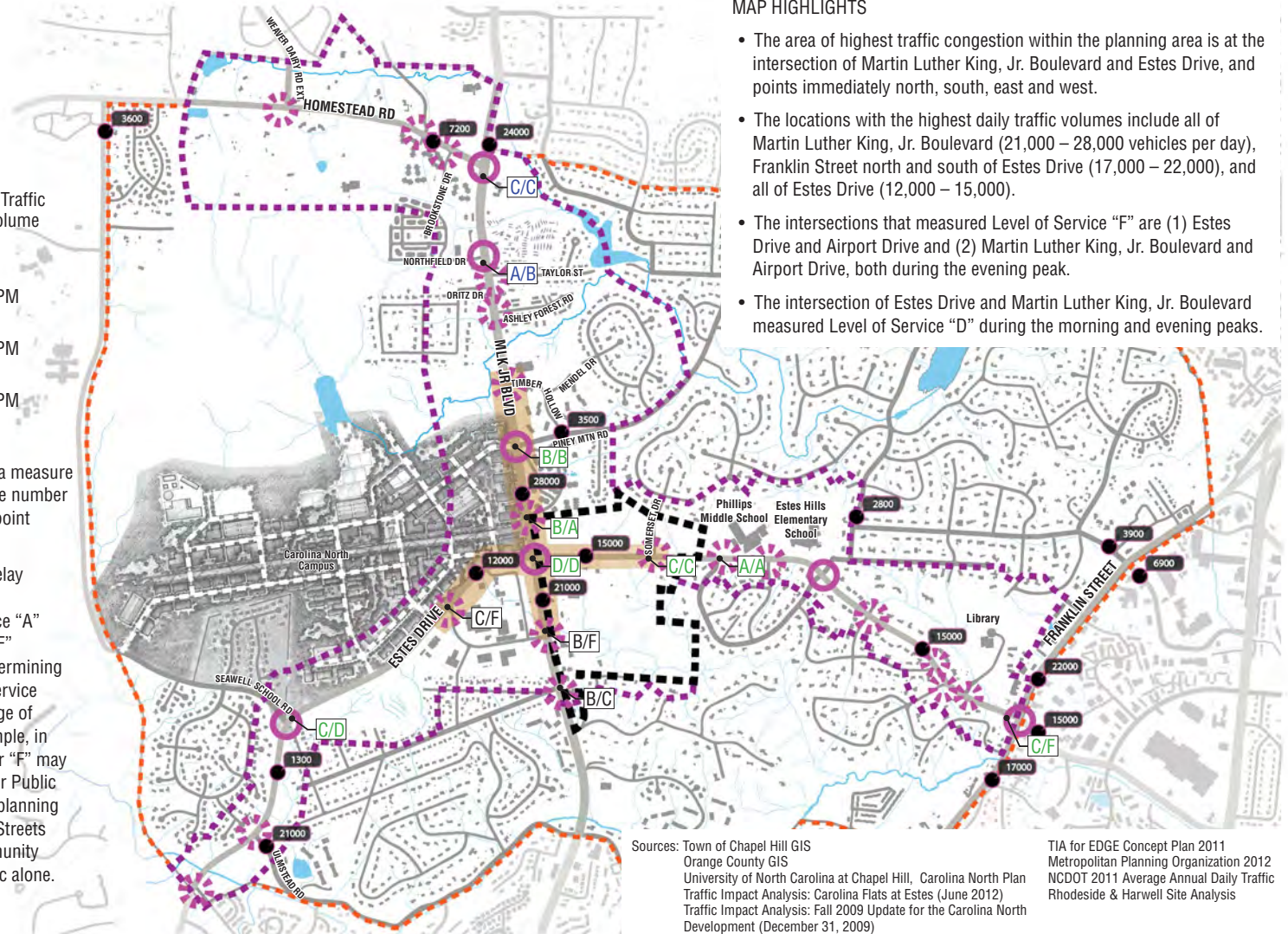
Within the Impact Area, traffic congestion is greatest at the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive, as well as at points in the immediate surroundings. Highest daily traffic volumes are found on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Estes Drive, and Franklin Street north and south

of Estes Drive. Low levels of service were measured at the intersection of Airport Drive with Estes Drive and with Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard during the evening peak and the intersection of Estes Drive with Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard during the morning and evening peaks (Figure 2.8).

- Impact Area
- Evaluation for Transportation & Connections
- Evaluation for Form & Use
- Signalized Intersection
- ✱ Un-signalized Intersection
- 2011 NCDOT Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) measurement points and volume estimates\*
- Highest Congestion Area
- A/B Existing Level of Service(AM peak/PM peak) based on 2009 data#
- A/B Existing Level of Service(AM peak/PM peak) based on 2011 data#
- A/B Existing Level of Service(AM peak/PM peak) based on 2012 data

\* Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is a measure of traffic volume that refers to the average number of vehicles that pass by a measurement point during a 24-hour period in a given year.

# Level of Service (LOS) measures the delay each vehicle experiences at a particular intersection, ranging from Level of Service "A" (free flowing traffic) to Level of Service "F" (average delay exceeds 80 seconds). Determining what constitutes an acceptable level of service depends on the local context and the range of transportation options available; for example, in some urban areas, Level of Service "E" or "F" may be considered acceptable. The Project for Public Places, and other highly regarded urban planning organizations, promote the principle of "Streets as Places" urging street design for community livability rather than for free flowing traffic alone.



#### MAP HIGHLIGHTS

- The area of highest traffic congestion within the planning area is at the intersection of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive, and points immediately north, south, east and west.
- The locations with the highest daily traffic volumes include all of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard (21,000 – 28,000 vehicles per day), Franklin Street north and south of Estes Drive (17,000 – 22,000), and all of Estes Drive (12,000 – 15,000).
- The intersections that measured Level of Service "F" are (1) Estes Drive and Airport Drive and (2) Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Airport Drive, both during the evening peak.
- The intersection of Estes Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard measured Level of Service "D" during the morning and evening peaks.

Sources: Town of Chapel Hill GIS  
Orange County GIS  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Carolina North Plan  
Traffic Impact Analysis: Carolina Flats at Estes (June 2012)  
Traffic Impact Analysis: Fall 2009 Update for the Carolina North Development (December 31, 2009)

TIA for EDGE Concept Plan 2011  
Metropolitan Planning Organization 2012  
NCDOT 2011 Average Annual Daily Traffic  
Rhodeside & Harwell Site Analysis

Figure 2.8: Current Traffic Conditions



## Current Transit Services

The Evaluation for Form and Use Area is served by a total of five bus routes, while three additional routes serve the Evaluation for Transportation and Connections Area. Routes within the Evaluation for Form and Use Area follow primary roads only and do not pass through surrounding neighborhoods. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard is served by two bus routes north of Estes Drive and five bus routes south of Estes Drive.

Estes Drive is served by two bus routes west of and one bus route east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Based on bus boarding data, the greatest number of boardings occurs near multifamily residential development along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard north of Estes Drive. Bus stops with the greatest number of boardings are located between Northfield Drive and Homestead Road and between Piney Mountain Road and Estes Drive (Figure 2.9).

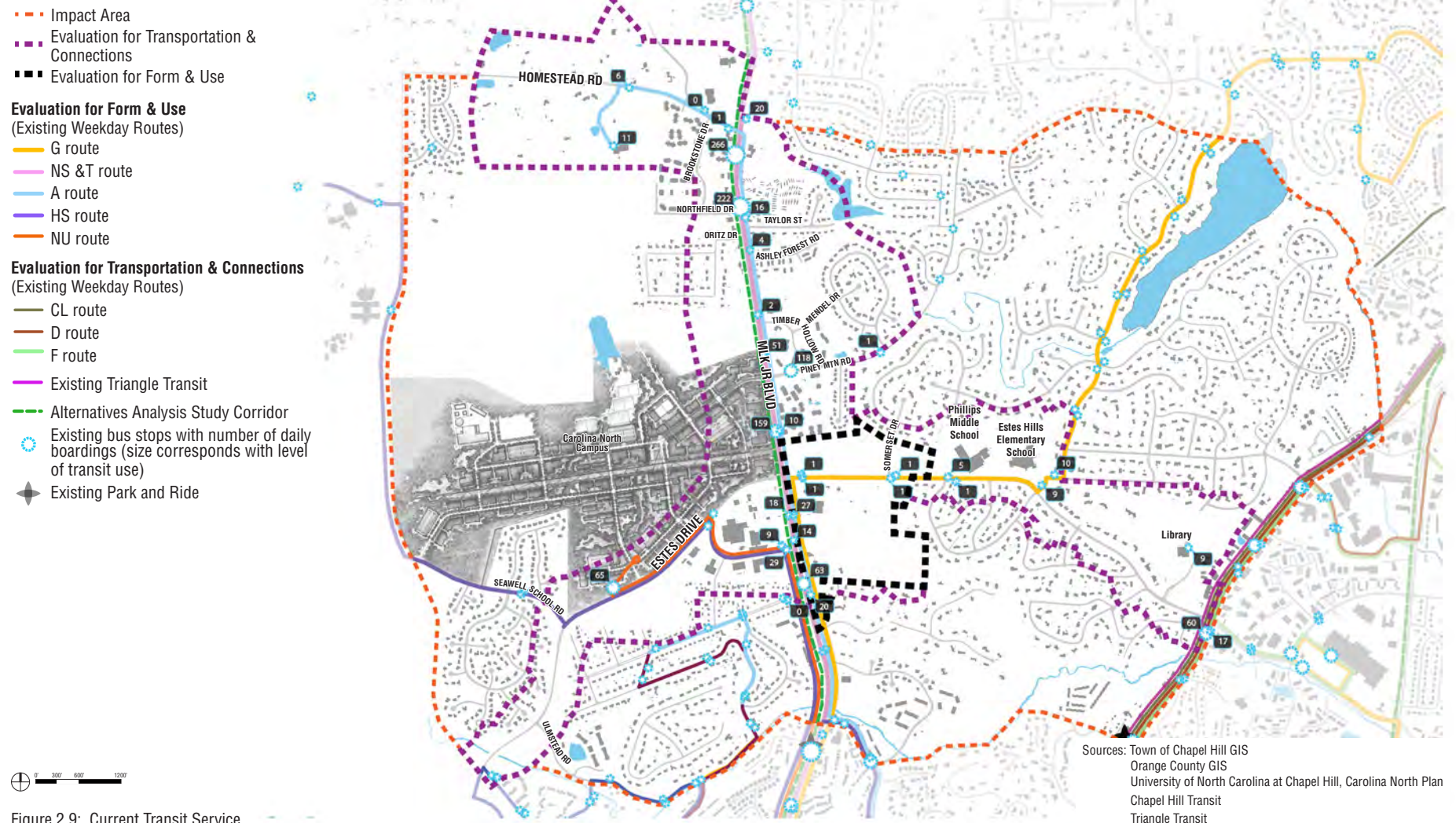


Figure 2.9: Current Transit Service

## 2009 Long Range Transit Plan

In 2009, the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro collaborated to investigate strategies for managing the transportation impacts of population and employment growth without adding or widening roads. The Towns developed a Long Range Transit Plan to assess future travel demand, consider how public transit could help to alleviate traffic and avoid expansion of the road system, and study land use policies that would contribute to the viability of the transit system (Figure 2.10 and Figure 2.11).

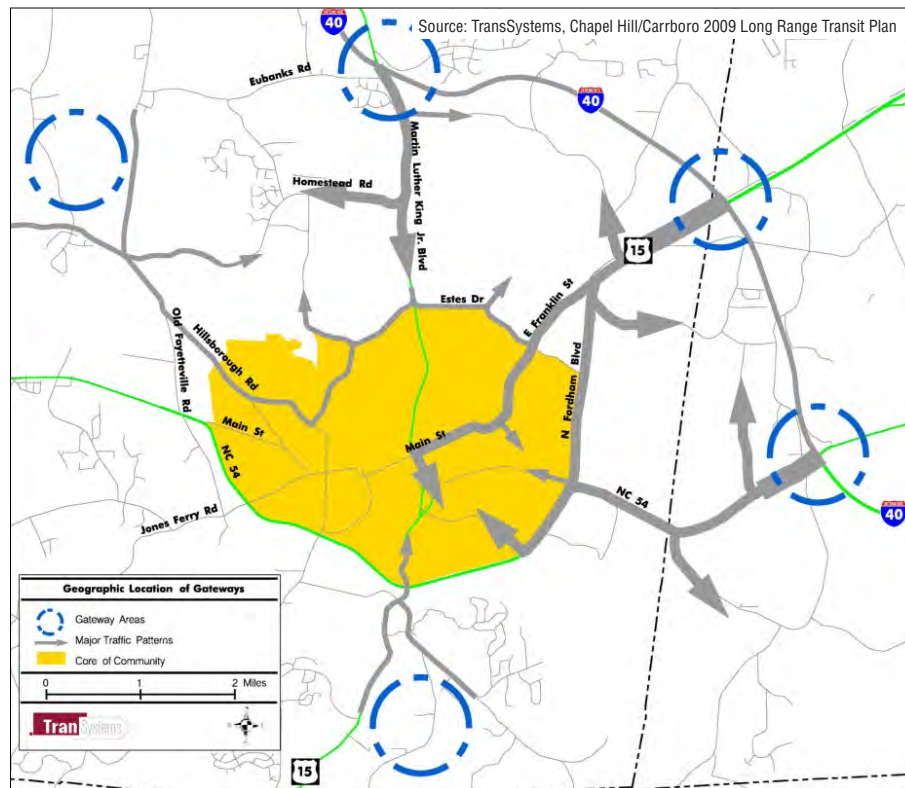


Figure 2.10: Initial Geographic Locations of Gateways

Source: Chapel Hill/Carrboro 2009 Long Range Transit Plan

Chapel Hill/Carrboro  
Long Range Transit Plan

September 2009

### Section 0: Executive Summary

The Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro are nationally recognized as great places to live, work and go to school. While boasting world-class educational opportunities, the small town ambience of these enviable communities is threatened by increasing traffic congestion. As a result of general population and employment growth including continued expansion of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's (UNC) main campus and anticipated development of the University's Carolina North campus, community leadership initiated a long range transit plan to seek alternatives to building more and wider roads.

This Study seeks to:

- Assess the impact of anticipated future population and employment and resulting growth in travel demand
- Identify the role public transit could play in mitigation of future congestion and potential roadway expansions
- Suggest land use policies and guidelines that support and complement the viability of the transit system.

Through the guidance of the Transit Study Policy Committee<sup>1</sup>, this Chapel Hill Long Range Transit Plan (LRTP) provides a vision of the community and the public transit system in 2035. The LRTP recommends:

- Introduction of higher level transit services along six "gateway" corridors
- Expansion of local bus service to support the gateway services
- Further study of impact of parking policies and land use policies to support transit growth

The Transit Study Policy Committee has reviewed the analysis and recommends the proposed Plan be submitted for a thorough public review process. The Committee acknowledges that the Plan outlines a broad strategy and includes a menu of transit options for further consideration. A series of intermediate actions will be necessary to support these long term strategies. As this process proceeds some options eliminated by the Policy Committee may be reconsidered.

The Committee also recognizes that the Plan should be consistent with the adopted Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan. The Policy Committee believes that the Chapel Hill Long Range Transit Plan that emerges from public review and input should be adopted by the governing bodies of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and the University of North Carolina.

This executive summary highlights the LRTP in these sections:

- Overview of the Community and Plan Assumptions
- Findings which lay the foundation of key aspects of the LRTP
- Overview of the Recommended Plan
- Next Steps

#### 0.1 The Community and Plan Assumptions

As seen in Figure 0-1, the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, North Carolina are part of the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC MPO) area which is located in metropolitan Raleigh-Durham North Carolina. As shown in Figure 0-2, the community is also home to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with 30,000 students and faculty and the North Carolina Hospital. Combined, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro community has a population of nearly 70,000 people. According to regional projections, the combined community population is

<sup>1</sup> The Transit Study Committee is composed of elected officials of the Towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro as well as senior management of the University of North Carolina.

0-1



Figure 2.11: Long Range Transit Plan Executive Summary



The Plan's recommendations included adding higher level transit services along six gateway corridors, expanding local bus service to support gateway transit services, and further investigating how land use and parking policies can support transit growth (Figure 2.12 and Figure 2.13). The 2009 Long Range Transit Plan has not yet been adopted.

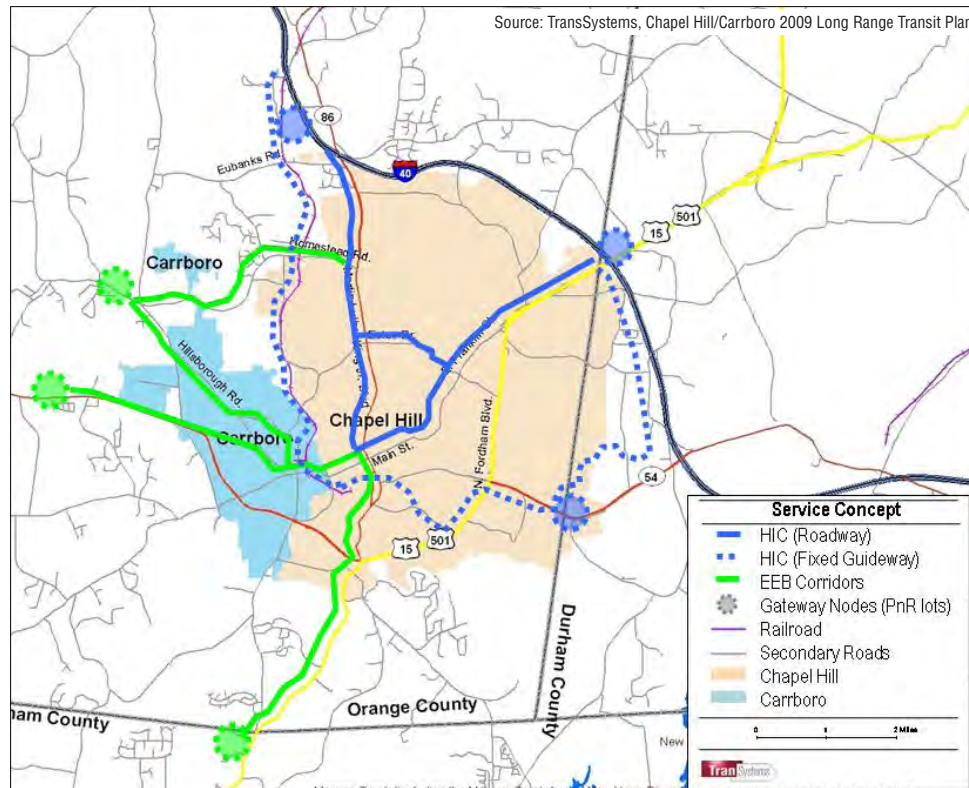


Figure 2.12: Preliminary Gateway Service Concept

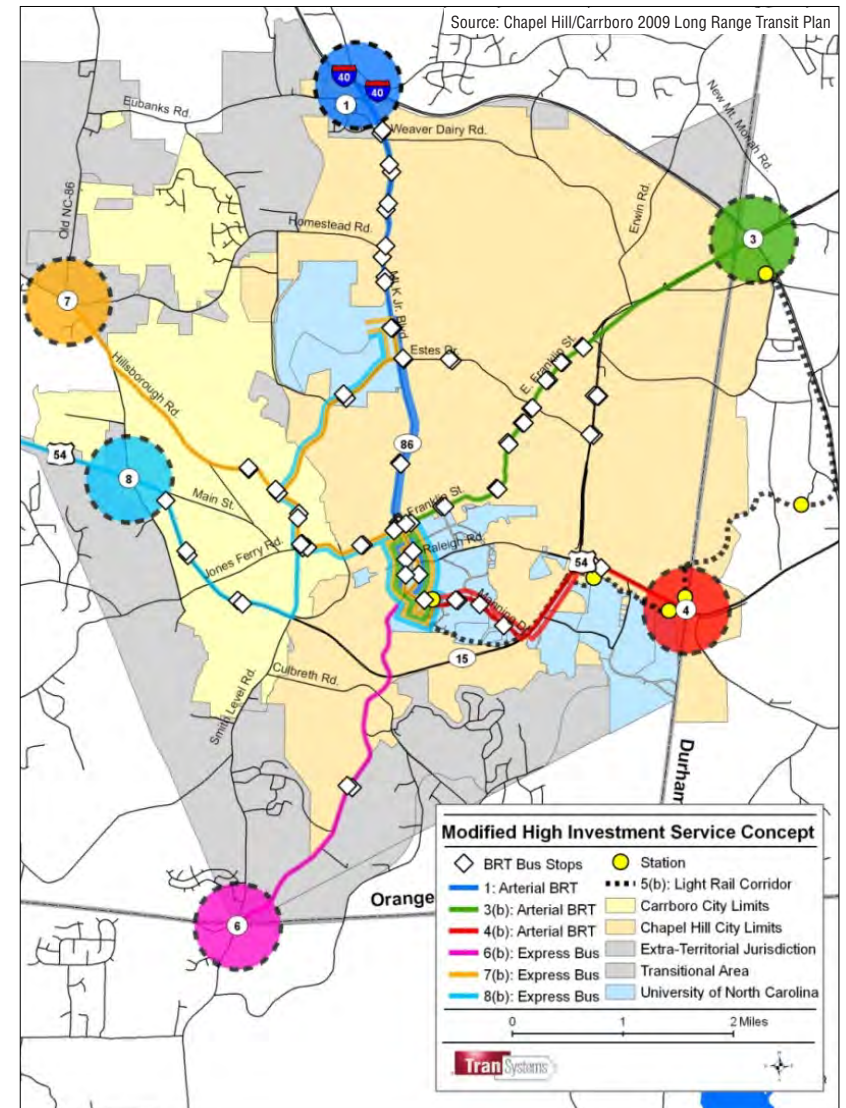


Figure 2.13: Modified High Investment Service Concept



## Street Connectivity

Primary roads within the area of Evaluation for Transportation and Connections include Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Estes Drive, and Homestead Road. Secondary roads include Piney Mountain Road, Caswell Road, Seawell School Road and Umstead Drive. The Evaluation for Form and Use Area currently contains no secondary, tertiary or residential roads, other

than a portion of Somerset Drive. The planning area is characterized by a low degree of street connectivity overall, particularly in the area east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Many residential and tertiary roads, especially those east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, terminate in cul-de-sacs. This street network pattern reduces the number of potential alternative routes and directs local traffic onto primary roads (Figure 2.14).

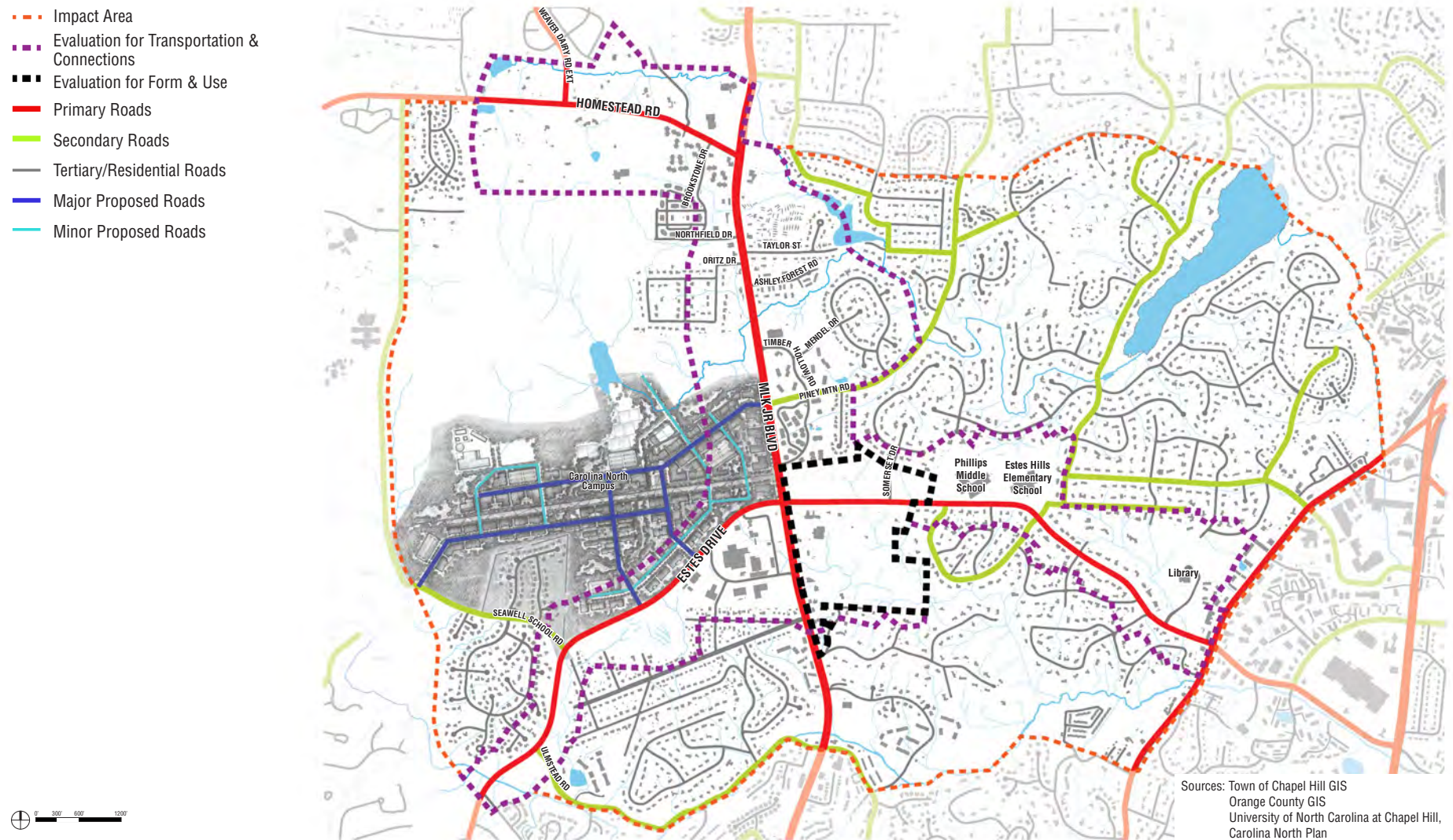


Figure 2.14: Street Connectivity



## Bicycle and Pedestrian Access, Open Space, and School Walk Zone

In the Impact Area, the sidewalk network is uneven and fragmented, with many roads lacking sidewalks along one or both sides of the roadway. Residential neighborhoods generally lack sidewalks, except along some roads connecting to primary and secondary roads, and the area does not have a connected network of bicycle routes. Designated bicycle routes are limited to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard north of Estes Drive (bicycle/

pedestrian shared path), and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard south of Estes Drive (shared bicycle/car lane). While the Evaluation for Transportation and Connections Area does not include existing greenways, a planned greenway network on the Carolina North campus will connect to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Figure 2.15 shows existing and proposed bicycle and pedestrian access, open space, and an overlay of the school walk zone.

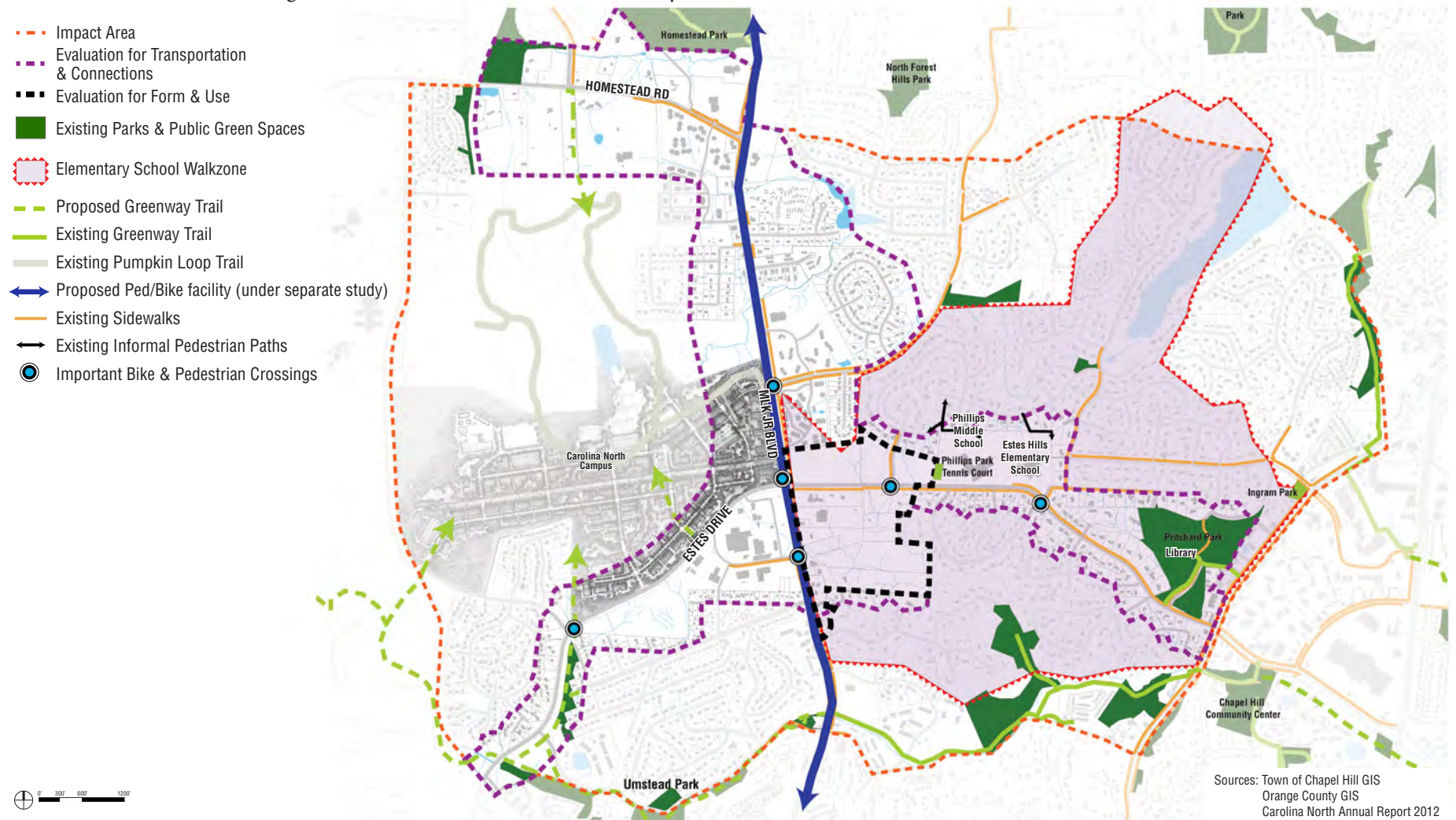


Figure 2.15: Existing & Proposed Bicycle and Pedestrian Access, Open Space, and School Walk Zone



## THE AREA BY THE NUMBERS

### 2010 Population Estimates

Population estimates by traffic analysis zone (TAZ) show a range of population densities within the Impact Area. Several locations along the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard are more densely populated than

surrounding areas further from the main transportation corridors. The Carolina North parcels are minimally populated at this time. These TAZ estimates also demonstrate the general size of the population within the Impact Area (Figure 2.16).

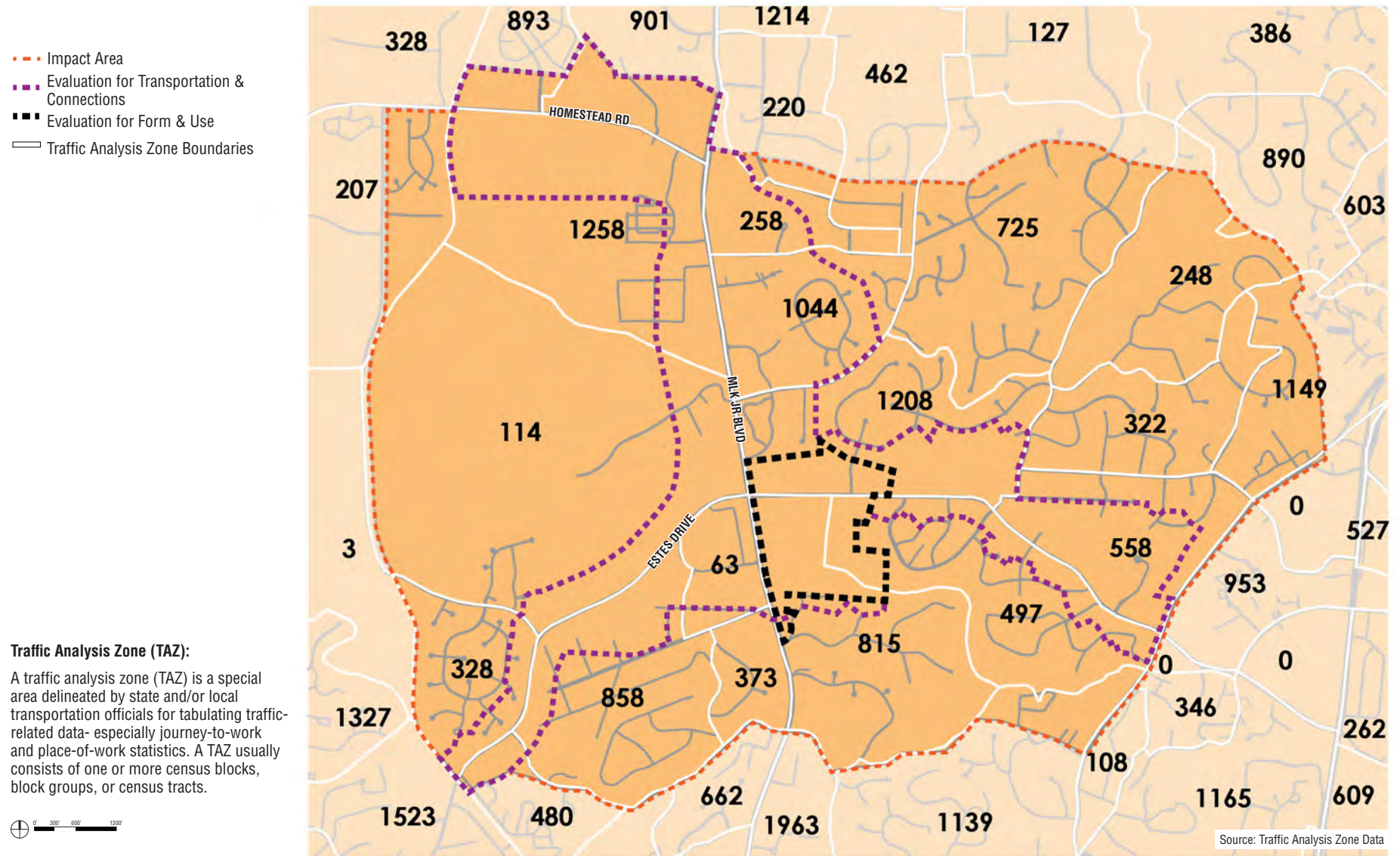


Figure 2.16: 2010 Population Estimates

## 2010 Household Estimates

Similar to population estimates, household estimates by traffic analysis zone (TAZ) show where households are more or less concentrated within the study area. As with the population estimates, these estimates show higher

household numbers along the east portion of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, lower numbers on the Carolina North parcels, and give a general sense of the number of households currently in the Impact Area (Figure 2.17).

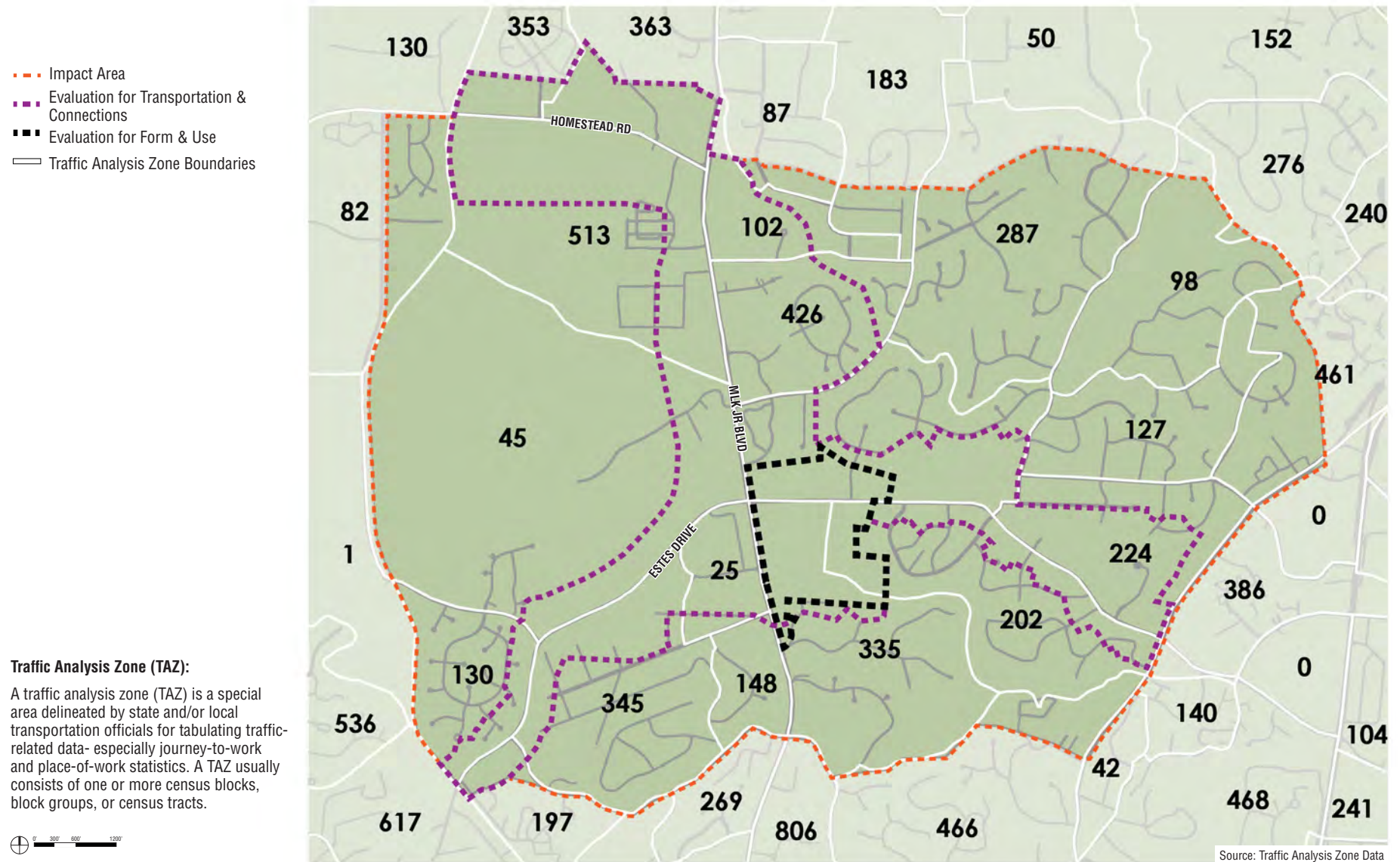


Figure 2.17: 2010 Household Estimates



## Median Age

In general, residents in the Impact Area are slightly older than those in the Town of Chapel Hill as a whole. The median age in the Impact Area is 30-35, as compared to a median Town age of 25.

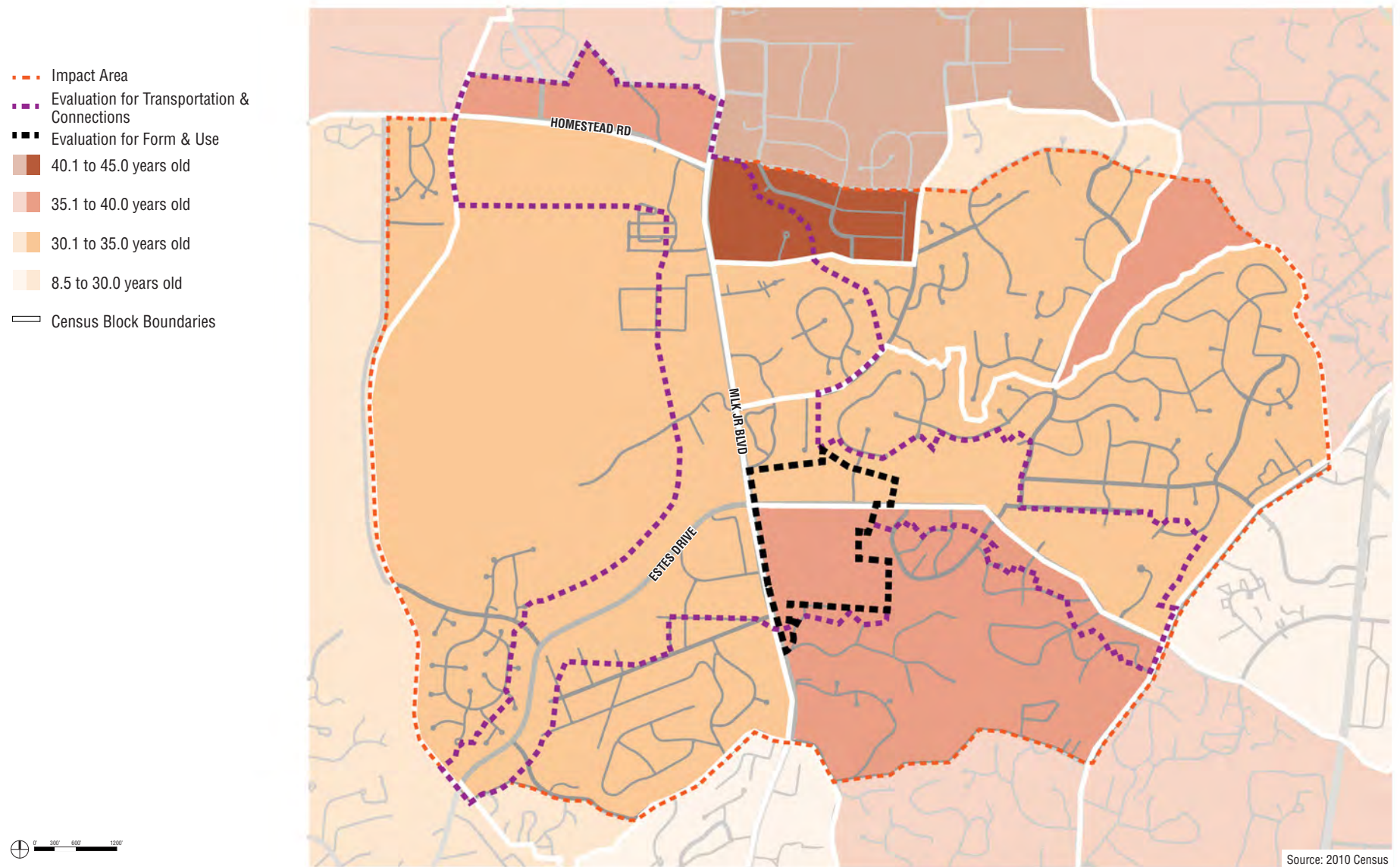


Figure 2.18: Median Age

## Median Household Income

The median household income within the Impact Area is between \$41,000 and \$70,000 (Figure 2.19). The median household income for the Town overall is \$58,400.

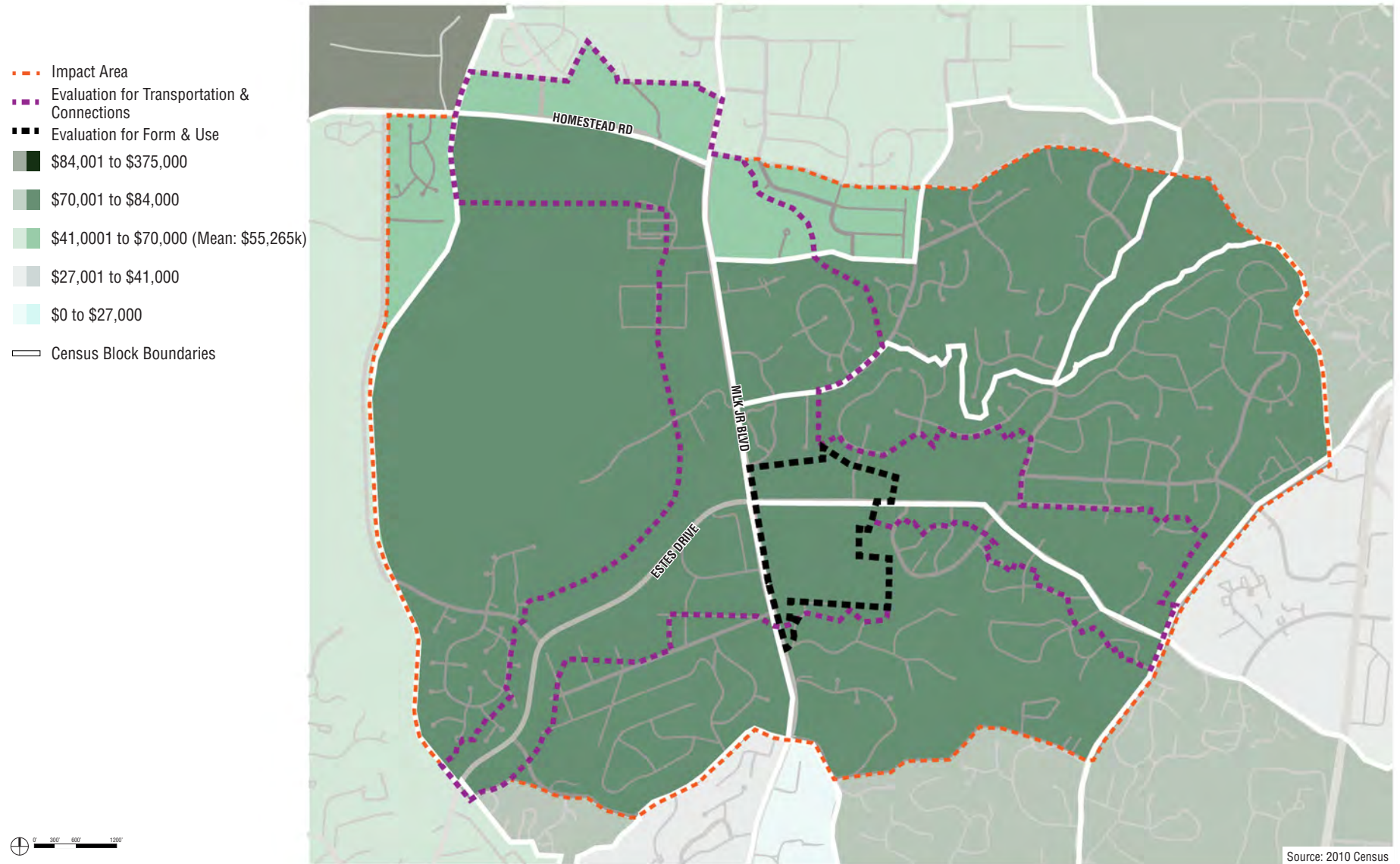


Figure 2.19: Median Household Income



## Median Home Value

The median home value within the Impact Area is between \$220,000 and \$390,000 (Figure 2.20). The median home value for owner occupied housing in the Town overall is \$368,200 (2007-2011).

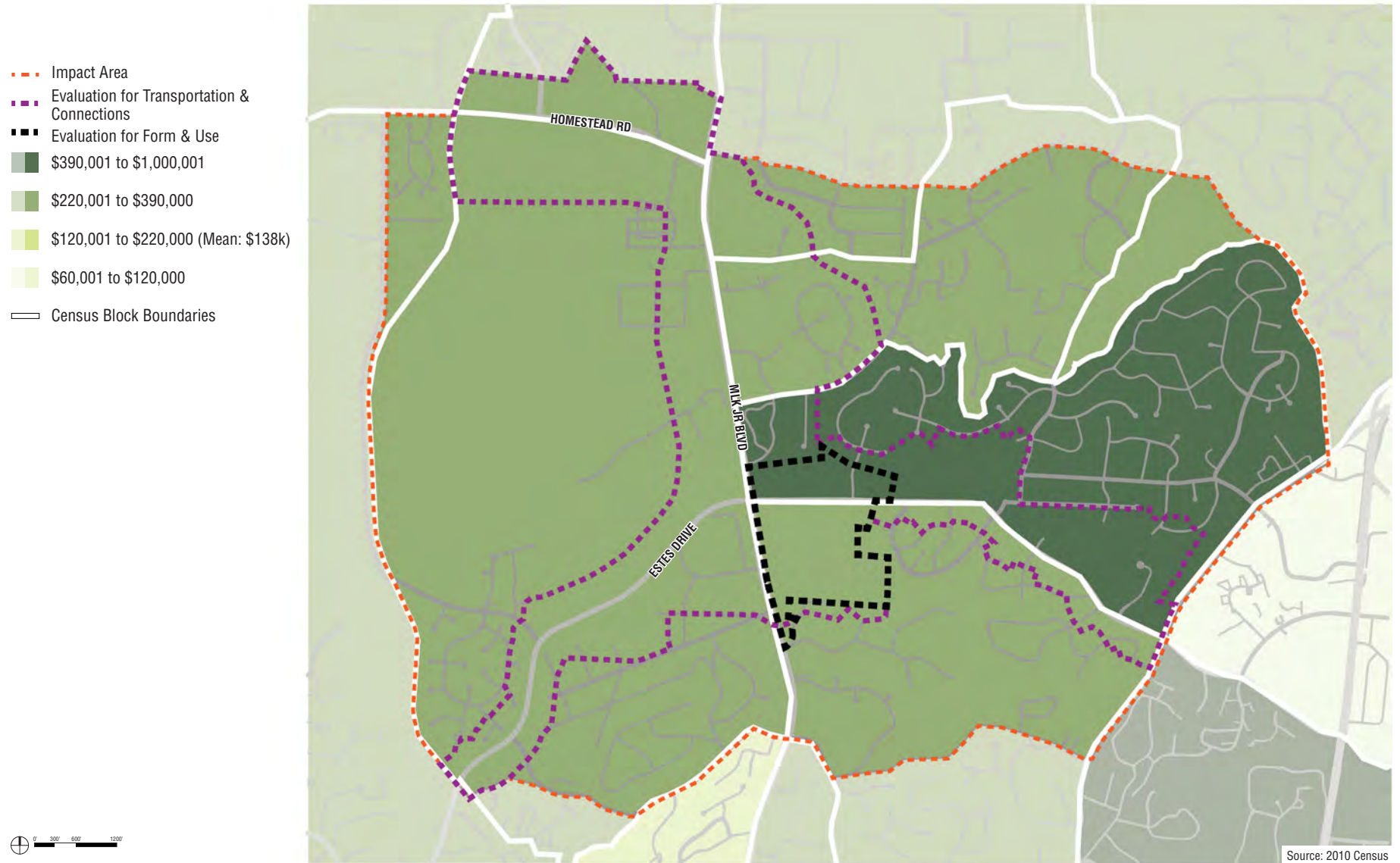


Figure 2.20: Median Home Value

## Land Value

The majority of land within the Impact Area is valued between \$150,000 and \$500,000 per acre. Land values are lower (<\$150,000 per acre) in the northwest portion of the Impact Area and the southeast part of the Evaluation for Form and Use Area. Land value is higher (\$500,000 - \$750,000 per acre)

on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard south of Homestead Road, and in the vicinity of the Estes Drive-Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard intersection. Higher land values are also found at and around Eastwood Lake (\$500,000 - \$1.75 million per acre), and along Franklin Street at the eastern edge of the Impact Area (\$1.75 million per acre - \$2.75 million per acre) (Figure 2.21).



Figure 2.21: Land Value per Acre



## Housing Affordability Index

A mapping of housing affordability shows that homes in the Impact Area east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard—areas in grey—are considered “unaffordable” according to the Housing Affordability Index (Figure 2.22).

In the portion of the Impact Area west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard—areas in blue—housing is considered “affordable” or “very affordable” for a family earning the median income for the area.

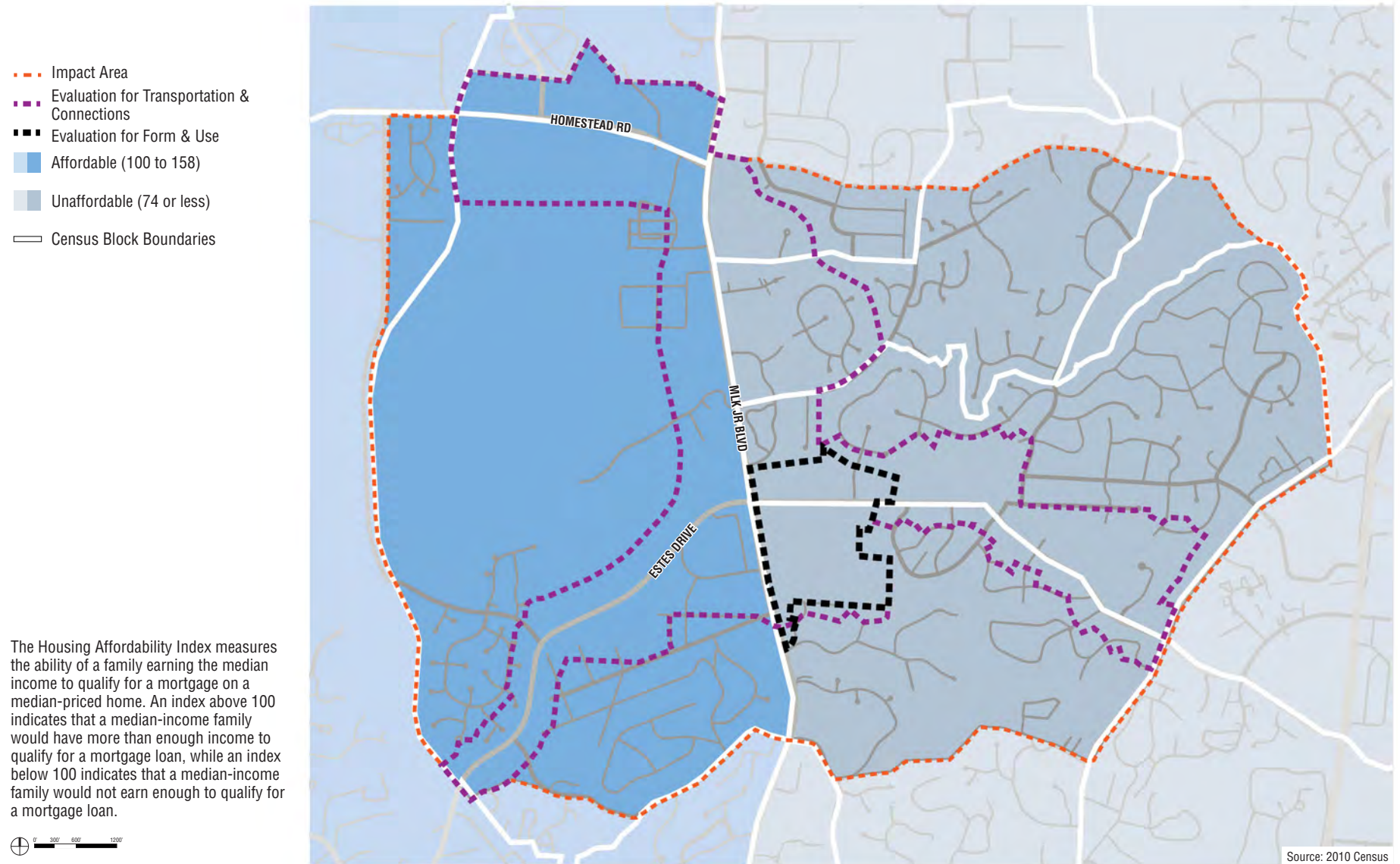


Figure 2.22: Housing Affordability Index

## Public Housing

Two public housing communities are located inside the Impact Area boundary: the 32-unit Eastwood community on Piney Mountain Road and the 26-unit Airport Gardens community on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

south of Estes Drive. Additionally, the 44-unit South Estes Drive community is located near but outside of the Impact Area, adjacent to Fordham Boulevard to the east (Figure 2.23).

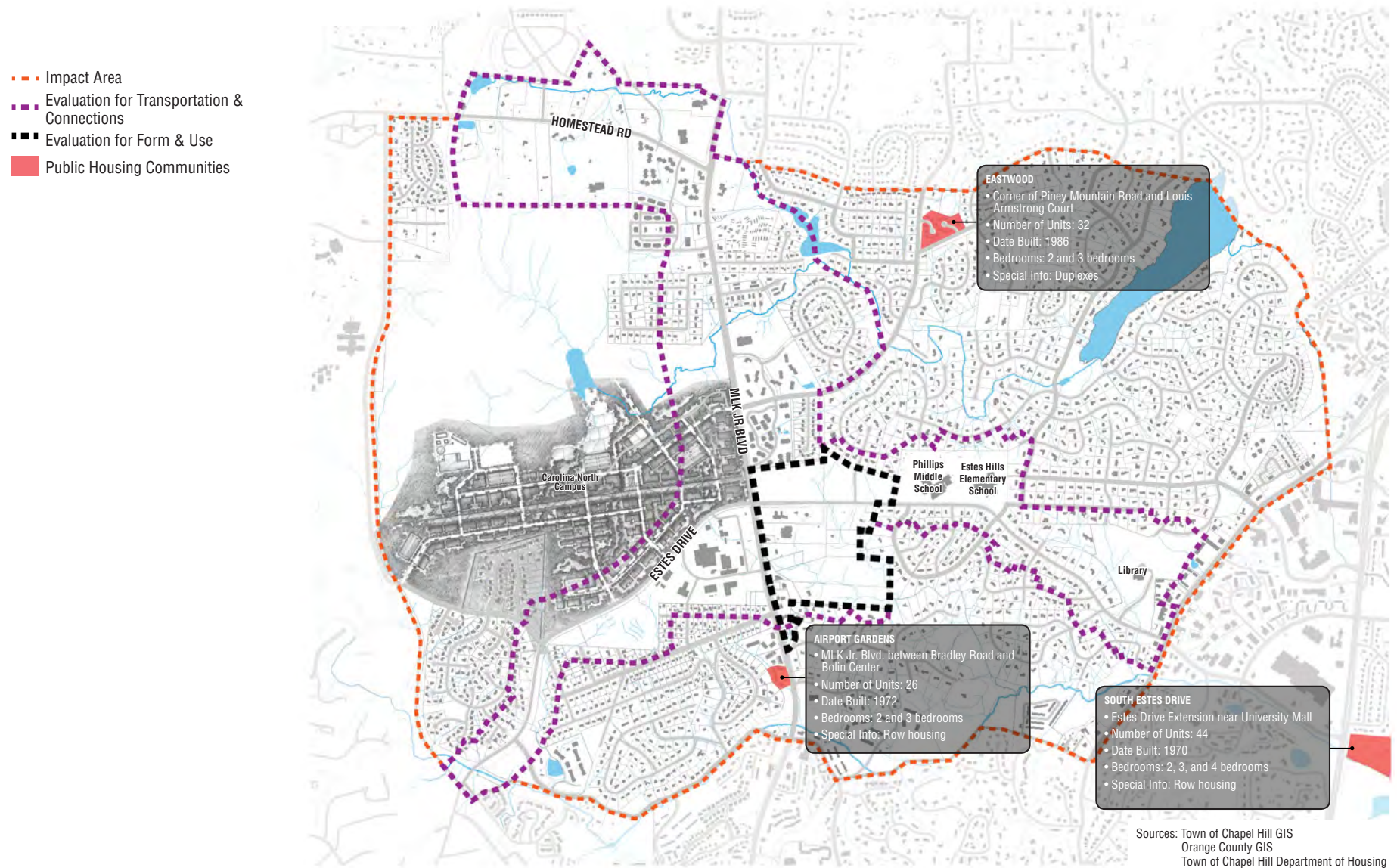


Figure 2.23: Public Housing



# CAROLINA NORTH CAMPUS: THE FUTURE

## OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT

As outlined in the Carolina North Agreement and plans which were approved by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill in June of 2009, UNC Chapel Hill's Carolina North campus will cover a

250-acre footprint west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and north of Estes Drive. The campus will offer new facilities for research, education, supportive functions, and housing for both students and faculty.

Development is set to occur incrementally over the next fifty years. Plans for initial development of the first 800,000 square feet of buildings are shown below in Figure 2.24.

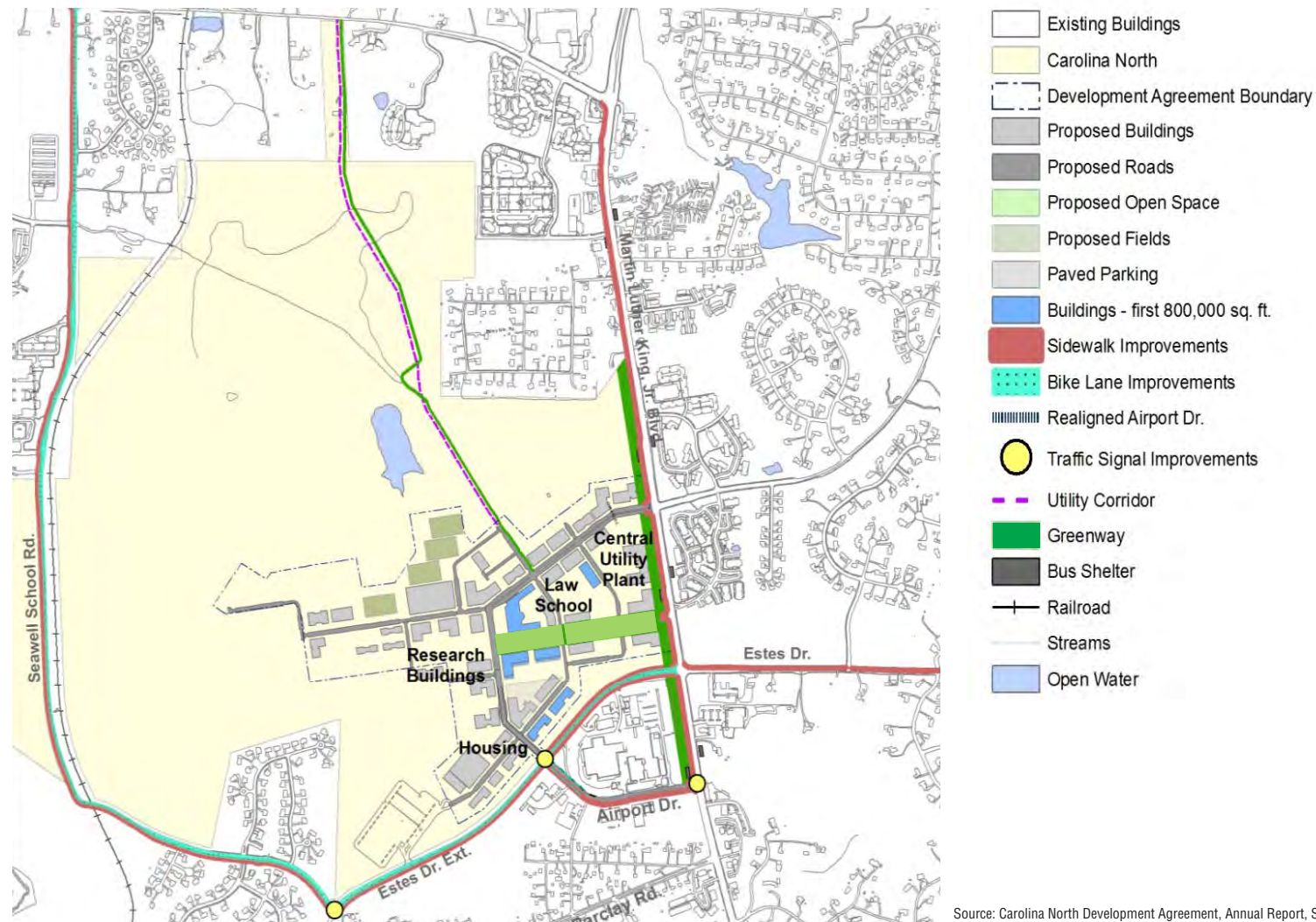


Figure 2.24: Project Development: First 800,000 SF

Source: Carolina North Development Agreement, Annual Report, Sept. 1, 2012

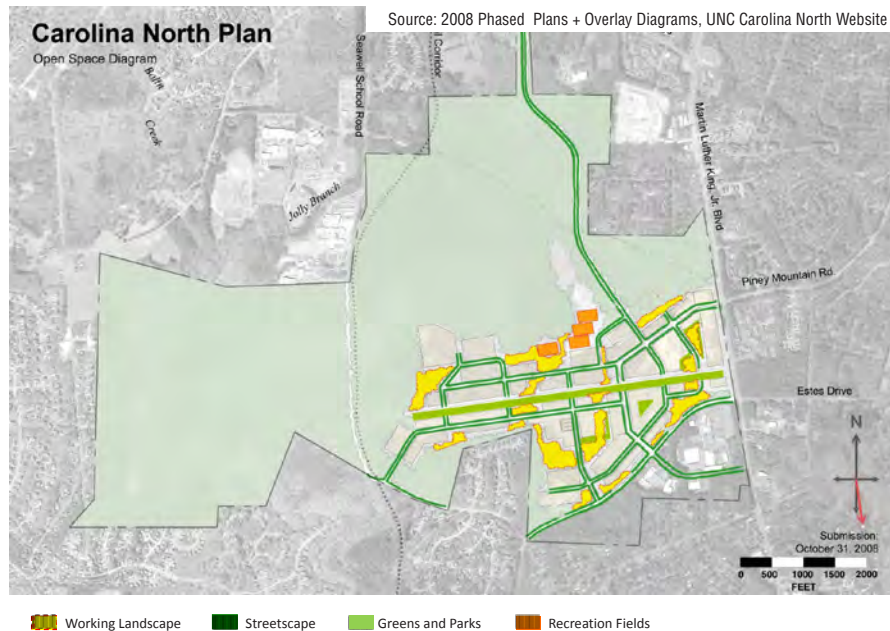


Figure 2.25: Open Space Diagram

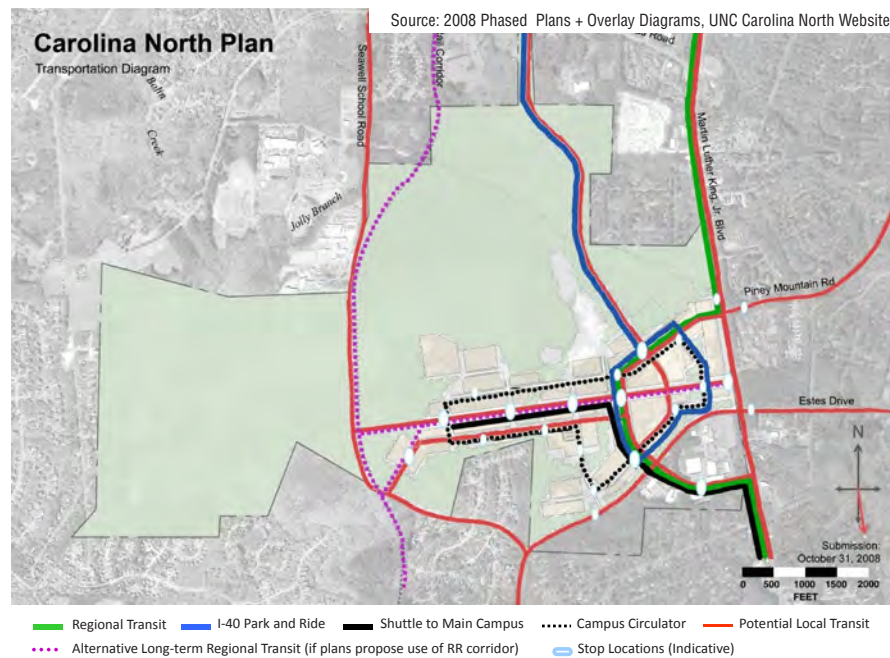


Figure 2.26: Transportation Diagram

## CHARACTER & USES

Carolina North will be arranged around an open space network that includes campus frontage along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, an entry drive from Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard into the campus, a central pedestrian and transit greenway, and a working landscape that can be used for stormwater management, ecological research, or other educational functions. The open space network and streets within the campus will support pedestrians, bicycles, and transit, and will provide connections to recreational trails as well as the adjacent community. Material and vegetative elements are to be drawn from the main campus and the Chapel Hill region. Figures 2.25-2.27 present the overall vision for open space, transportation, and connections.

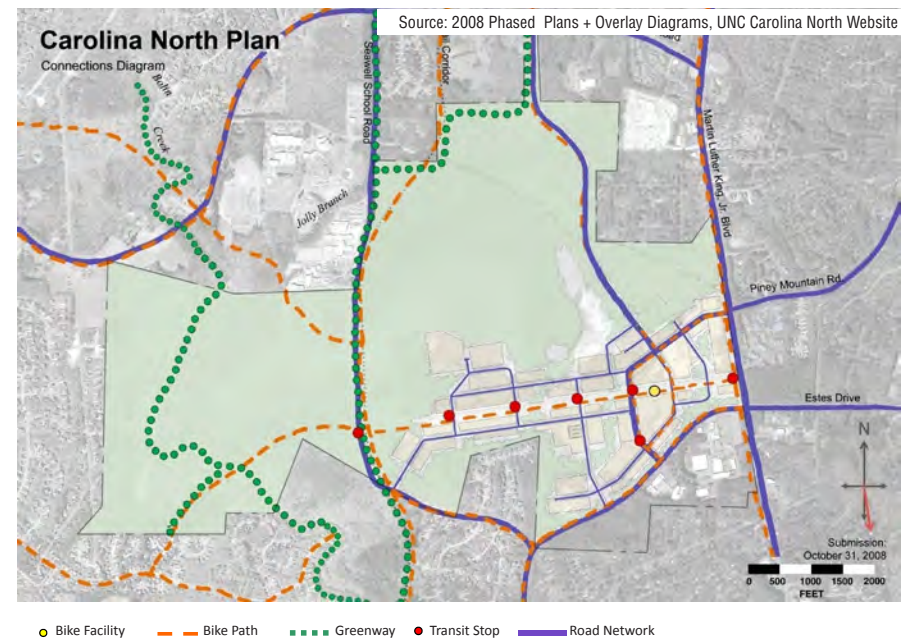


Figure 2.27: Connections Diagram



As a large part of the campus site is currently occupied by the Carolina North Forest, development limitations have been established for portions of the land (Figure 2.28).

The 20-year development area—currently approved for development—encompasses the planned building footprints and open space network.

50-year Limited Development Areas cannot be developed until 2059, and 100-year Limited Development Areas cannot be developed until 2159. Development is permanently prohibited on designated Conservation Areas, selected for their high ecological value. Physical disturbance of the conservation area is limited to maintenance and forest management, though these areas will be open for education and recreational use (Figure 2.28).

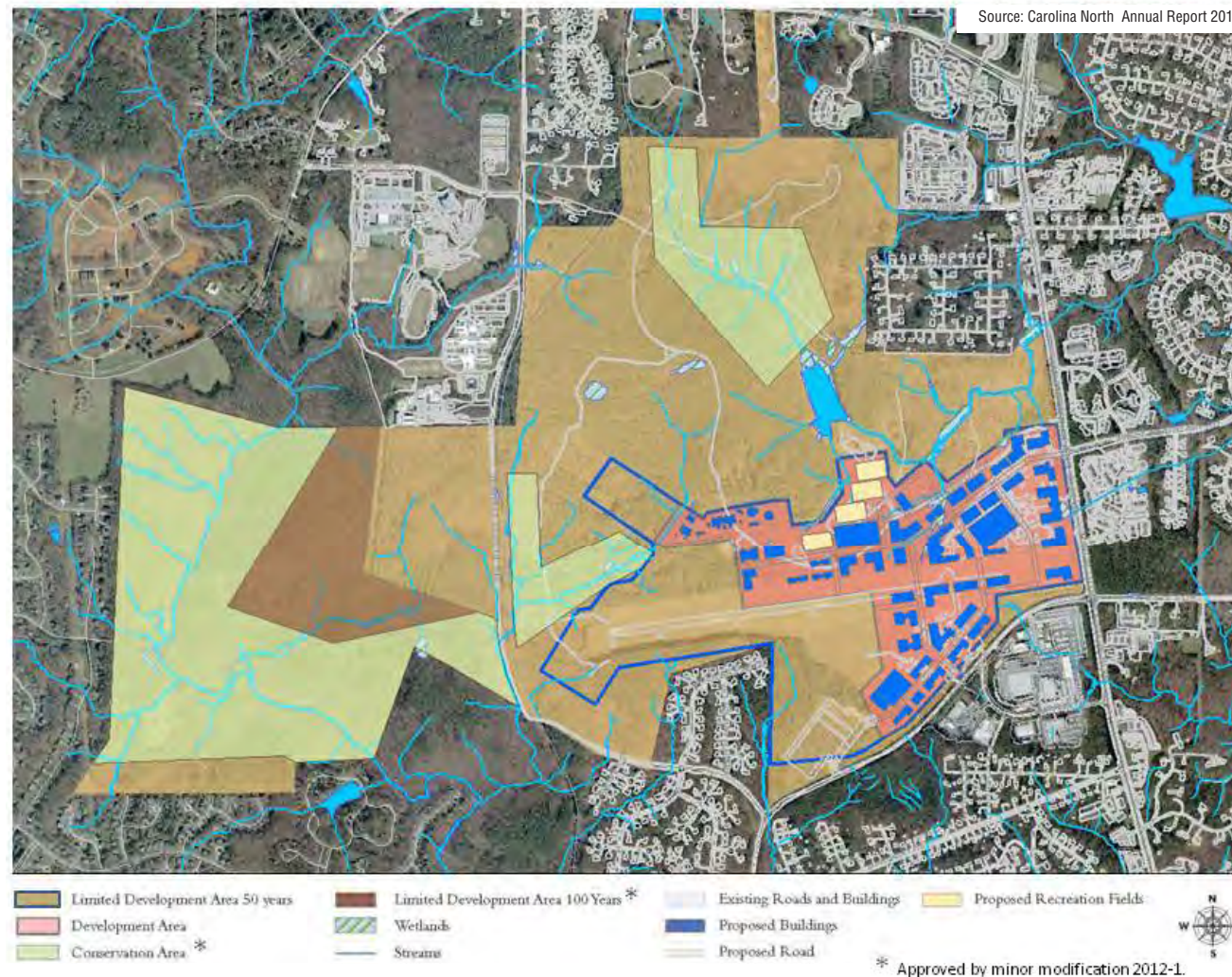


Figure 2.28: Development and Conservation Areas





# 3 • PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

## PURPOSE AND PROCESS

During the Central West Focus Area planning process, the Central West Steering Committee developed planning principles and objectives that guided the development of the Concept Plan and the overall Central West Small Area Plan.

The planning principles define the Steering Committee's priorities and a long-term vision and goals for the area. The objectives complement the principles by detailing specific actions to achieve the planning principles.

Recognizing the value of strong principles and objectives for the Central West Focus Area, the Steering Committee committed a significant amount of time to writing, discussing, and refining the principles and objectives. This included multiple meetings in break-out groups for focused consideration of each principle and associated objectives, and the establishment of a sub-committee to further refine the principles and objectives. Community members were also given the opportunity to provide feedback about the principles through a Community Report Out Session and the second Community Workshop.

This chapter documents the Central West Focus Area principles and objectives as written by the Central West Steering Committee.

## PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTIVES

### PRINCIPLE 1: Create a Strong Sense of Place

The Central West Focus Area plan will promote the creation of a vibrant sense of place, respecting its character as a comfortable, tree-lined residential community, home to important Chapel Hill institutions, and a major gateway to Carolina North.

#### Objectives for Principle 1

- A. Recognize Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard as a primary gateway into town and provide a plan that develops it into an attractive, tree-lined, boulevard with a median, where the pedestrian and cyclist realms are protected by bollards, islands, and cycle-track curbing.
- B. Establish different characters for the Estes Drive and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard street frontages. In order to enhance the unique character of each of these streets, create cohesive and distinct street profiles.
- C. Establish a local architectural vernacular appropriate to Chapel Hill that relates to the architecture proposed at Carolina North. Encourage the use of materials and plants native to North Carolina.
- D. Recognize and enhance the distinctive zones along Estes Drive: Estes Drive Extension, Estes Drive on the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, the school area, the single-family neighborhoods in the area, and lower Estes Drive between the Public Library and Franklin Street.

- E. Encourage locally based businesses in the commercial area that provide services to the surrounding community.
- F. Develop building and road/streetscape design standards that extend north and south on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard through the Impact Area.
- G. Place buildings along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, especially near to Estes Drive, that architecturally enhance the entranceway to the Carolina North campus. Connect the Carolina North pedestrian mall to a complementary, tree-lined lane on the east side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.
- H. Plant trees at street edges and in medians.
- I. Enhance community space with colorful, attractive features, such as sculpture, tile-work, fountains, awnings, flower plantings, and trees.
- J. Minimize the visual impact of parked motor vehicles with, for example, structured parking, screening, and location.

## PRINCIPLE 2: Ensure Community Compatibility

Development will provide a graceful transition between the existing residential and institutional uses and the new uses evolving around the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Estes Drive intersection near the Carolina North campus.

### Objectives for Principle 2

- A. New development will minimize negative aesthetic and environmental impacts to neighborhoods.
- B. Build variable heights and densities that respond to existing land uses and natural features such as site specific terrain, tree height, and tree stands.

- C. Design gradual height and density transitions between new development and existing residential and institutional uses.

As of August 19, 2013, the following objectives will be reviewed by a subcommittee and provided to the Steering Committee for their review and possible adoption:

- D. Integrate new development seamlessly with the existing neighborhoods. Match existing single family character, where it exists, by making multi-family duplexes, quad-plexes, etc., resemble single-family homes.
- E. The existing neighborhoods, especially near the new development, may consider ancillary apartment/cottage development on existing properties to increase density, for complete visual integration, while preserving single family character.
- F. The first line in every new development, adjacent to old neighborhood buildings will match the character of the old neighborhood edge before transitioning to different style or housing type.

## PRINCIPLE 3: Create Social Connections

Development should create places that foster a strong sense of community and allow people to meet, both formally and informally.

### Objectives for Principle 3

- A. Encourage new retail and/or civic spaces and uses in the area that will promote social connections.
- B. Include a variety of public spaces for all ages (indoor or outdoor) at a variety of scales, with trees/vegetation, shade, and places for sitting.
- C. Locate retail and mixed use developments around public gathering spaces.



- D. Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections that encourage interpersonal connections to public gathering places and throughout the area.

#### PRINCIPLE 4: Improve Physical Connections

Multiple means of moving within and through the Planning Area should be incorporated into new development; explore improving physical connections between the Impact Area and the Town as whole.

##### Objectives for Principle 4

- A. Ensure interconnectivity among all modes of transportation (e.g., bike to bus transfers).
- B. Within the Impact Area create improvements to the pedestrian realm, to the extent possible, such as narrow vehicular lanes in contrast to wide greenways, bike tracks/lanes, and sidewalks/footpaths. The pedestrian realm is to be more connected, permeable, and dominant than the car realm.
- C. Create public spaces and buildings that are visible and easily accessible from streets, paths, and sidewalks.
- D. Provide a clear and coordinated place, speed, and way-finding communication system.
- E. Establish a connected street and trail network within new development.
- F. Provide vehicular access to Carolina North from Homestead Road to relieve traffic on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive.
- G. Make bicycle and pedestrian movement between Carolina North across Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and Estes Drive to its eastern and southern neighbors easier and safer.
- H. Tie new paths and greenways into the Carolina North and town greenway systems and the Campus to Campus Connector.

#### PRINCIPLE 5: Minimize Vehicular Traffic Impacts

Recognize the limited capacity of the existing road network and favor developments that minimize negative impacts on vehicular traffic and quality of life in the area.

##### Objectives for Principle 5

- A. Calm traffic using a variety of means such as streetscape design, additional crosswalks, and landscaping, especially in the school walk zone.
- B. Improve Estes Drive to ensure safe orderly flow around stopped buses, utility trucks, and delivery vehicles.
- C. Plan significant improvements along Estes Drive to improve traffic flow and safety along its length, recognizing that different solutions will be needed for different segments of the road.
- D. Synchronize traffic signals to maximize vehicle flow at reduced speeds.
- E. Develop neighborhood retail (pharmacy, coffee shop, dry cleaner, etc.) in the area to capture neighborhood business, encourage walking, and reduce car use.
- F. Explore regional solutions for preventing Estes Drive from becoming a major commuting route for Carolina North.
- G. Where new streets are built, they should accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, vehicles and transit, recognizing that different streets will accomplish this in different ways.
- H. Encourage developers to mitigate the traffic that new development will cause.
- I. Consider reducing the speed limit along Estes Drive.

## PRINCIPLE 6: Enhance the Pedestrian/Bicycle Experience

Build a high quality bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway system that ensures safe, comfortable, and convenient access to school, residences, and other destinations for those of all ages and abilities.

### Objectives for Principle 6

- A. Create local destinations that make biking and walking in the area desirable, safe, attractive, and convenient.
- B. Ensure access to local destinations by creating (in the Planning Area) ADA-compliant public byways that, where necessary, are protected by barriers or landscaped buffers.
- C. Provide a network of bike and pedestrian paths, with a variety of types and surfaces, from paved trails near major roads to nature trails through wooded stretches.
- D. Create a network of off-road, downlit multiuse paths through the area to connect residences, institutions, and other uses. Use solar lighting when possible.
- E. Pursue Safe Routes to School strategies and funding and work with the schools to minimize car trips to school within the walk zone.
- F. Ensure that all pedestrian crossings in the Impact Area are safe and well marked.
- G. Provide a paved sidewalk on at least one side of Estes Drive from Franklin Street to Carrboro.
- H. Provide paved sidewalks along both sides of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard throughout the Impact Area.
- I. For new development and as streets are retrofitted, provide a planting

median between sidewalks and the road and physically segregate bicycle lanes from automobile traffic.

- J. Ensure adequate widths for pedestrians and cyclists on sidewalks and bike paths.
- K. Over time, enhance bike and pedestrian safety of existing neighborhood streets.

## PRINCIPLE 7: Improve the Transit System

Encourage uses and densities that will support improvements in transit service such as increased frequency, duration, and access.

### Objectives for Principle 7

- A. Support new development in the Central West Focus Area with expanded hours and frequency, convenient bus stops, and destinations as density warrants, and explore expanded cross-Town service and service to locations with jobs and retail.
- B. Support sufficient transit ridership by putting high density land uses nearest bus stops.
- C. Increase housing and mixed use density along existing bus routes, especially along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.
- D. Create useful destinations (such as retail community activities) that are accessible to and integrated with the transit system.
- E. Promote types of development that encourage and provide incentives for the use of public transportation and limited parking.
- F. Provide bus stops every quarter of a mile, preferably, fully furnished with benches, shade/shelter, and bicycle racks.



G. Place crosswalks and traffic calming devices at all bus stops. Use devices such as pedestrian activated stop lights if there is not a traffic light to stop traffic. Put an island, or bollard refuge, mid-street if crossing more than two lanes.

### PRINCIPLE 8: Encourage a Diverse Mix of Uses

Create a new mix of land uses that encourages walkable destinations.

#### Objectives for Principle 8

- A. Encourage retail uses that meet the needs of the local community.
- B. Foster a blend of services that promotes day-night uses.
- C. Encourage the design of buildings with flexible floor plans suitable for a variety of purposes.

### PRINCIPLE 9: A Diverse Population

The area shall serve a broad socio-demographic range of Chapel Hill residents, students, workers, and visitors.

#### Objectives for Principle 9

- A. Ensure flexible plans that will recognize and address the needs of future generations of Chapel Hillians as they develop.
- B. Encourage residential and other uses that will accommodate the affordable, workforce, and market rate populations.
- C. Provide housing and amenities to attract a variety of ages, income levels, multigenerational family options, and ability groups.
- D. Provide a range of housing types (e.g., apartments, condominiums, townhomes, single family homes, retirement/senior housing, workforce and affordable housing, and rental and for sale) in the Planning and Impact Areas.

### PRINCIPLE 10: Respect Existing Neighborhoods

Development patterns will respect the integrity of the well-established neighborhoods and enhance their character and quality of life.

#### Objectives for Principle 10

- A. Require graceful transitions between new development and existing neighborhoods including green/landscaped buffers between different building types.
- B. Locate greatest densities and heights in the areas towards to Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard transitioning to lower densities and heights near existing single-family neighborhoods.
- C. Favor development that does not increase vehicular traffic through existing single-family neighborhoods. Maintain safety for foot and bicycle traffic.
- D. Encourage multifamily housing to be designed in a manner that is compatible with adjacent residences.

### PRINCIPLE 11: Employ Environmentally Sound Practices

Development will emphasize environmentally conscious design, maintenance, and operation of buildings and sites.

#### Objectives for Principle 11

- A. Maintain (or reestablish if needed) riparian buffers along streams with sufficient allowance for wildlife corridors.
- B. Minimize light, noise, air, and water pollution from development.
- C. Require new development to capture additional run-off on site and have landscape designs that use low-impact techniques for controlling stormwater and site water, such as rain gardens.

- D. Plan for maintaining a tree canopy cover in the Central West Focus Area. Plant new trees where necessary, especially to shade parking lots and paved areas, conserve soil, and provide other environmental services.
- E. Promote green building and construction standards. Encourage alternative low-carbon technologies, pervious pavement, and consider solar orientation and shading in all building design.
- F. Bury utility and power lines in new developments.
- G. Encourage the removal of invasive species and replant with native and non-invasive plant species and replanting unstable banks with native species.
- H. Minimize the “heat island” effect by avoiding dark, unshaded surfaces and employing such techniques as reflective roofs.

### PRINCIPLE 12: Feature, Repair, and Enhance Natural Resources

Development will protect and relate to the area’s significant and character-contributing natural features.

#### Objectives for Principle 12

- A. Enhance environmental assets by protecting steep slopes and waterways.
- B. Provide open space amenities, such as walks and trails, through the natural areas to connect the developed areas and provide recreational experience. Where necessary, build boardwalks and bridges for access across environmentally sensitive areas such as eroded, sloped, denuded, wet marshy areas, and clay soils.
- C. Use best management practices for handling and treating stormwater to maintain water quality and keep it on site to reduce erosion into creeks.

- D. In ecologically sensitive areas, encourage dense, clustered development, minimizing building footprints to preserve existing natural features.

### PRINCIPLE 13: Consider Economic Impacts in Development Decisions

As part of the planning process, consider the fiscal impact and economic viability of proposed development in the area.

#### Objectives for Principle 13

- A. Design for commercial success. Cluster retail development to create enough critical mass for the shops to succeed.
- B. In making land use recommendations, recognize the importance of economic viability for those who will build.
- C. Assess the impact of the plan on the Town’s fiscal health.
- D. Assess the impact that development in the area will have on the Chapel Hill–Carrboro School System.