



WALKABILITY ASSESSMENT

CONDUCTED JULY 27, 2019 ON BEHALF OF

THE TOWN OF HEATH SPRINGS

BY EAT SMART MOVE MORE LANCASTER COUNTY



Background

Eat Smart Move More Lancaster County (ESMMLC) partnered with the Town of Heath Springs to host a walkability assessment. A group of around 20 people showed up to help conduct the walkability assessment on July 27th, 2019. The group consisted of town council members, county council members, residents, and agency partners. The purpose of a walkability assessment is to determine opportunities for safe pedestrian and biking activity and identify any barriers that may exist. This report identifies challenges for safe pedestrian activity on various streets (including streets that make up the Carolina Thread Trail path). Some streets that were observed include Cannon, Perry, Cauthen, College, Hart, Liberty, and North Main Street. Other side streets, neighborhoods, and paths were also observed. The report also provides recommendations for improvement. The recommendations are not exhaustive and are based on the group's experience during the assessment process.

A walkable environment creates a more livable, engaged, and healthier community. Benefits can include increased property values, attracting tourists, and an increased sense of pride for residents. A more walkable community also increases general safety as increased pedestrian activity creates more “eyes on the street.” Walking to destinations rather than driving will increase the physical activity of residents while reducing vehicle emissions, which will improve the overall health of the community.

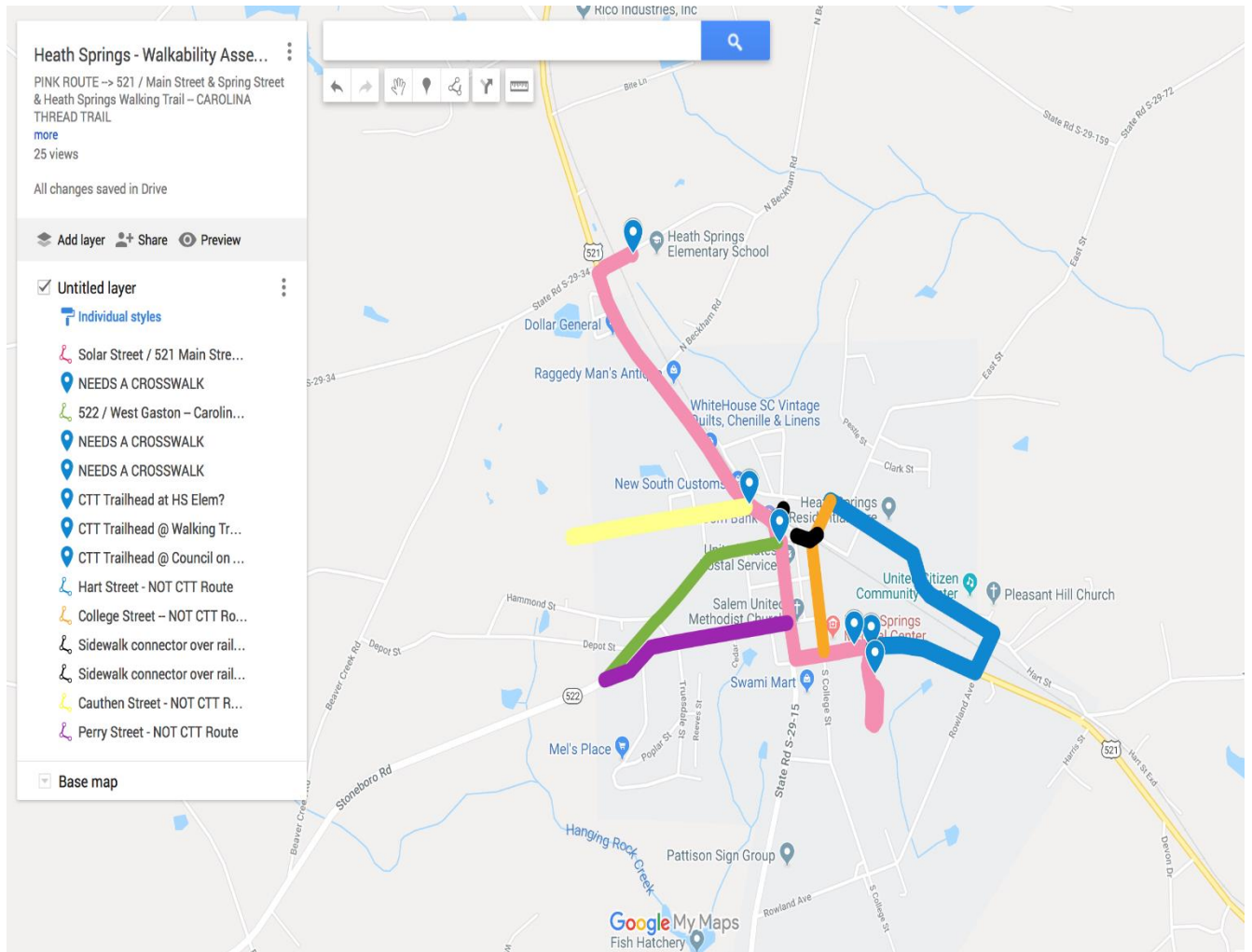
Leveraging the Carolina Thread Trail Network

The Town of Heath Springs is listed within the Lancaster County Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan as part of **Trail Segments N, O, and R**. The town has several unique destinations that showcase the area's natural amenities and historic landmarks.

- Ball Fields: four acres includes one lighted and one unlighted baseball/softball field.
- Soccer: three acres includes one multi-use and one baseball/softball field.
- Town Park: 1.5 acres includes one lighted tennis court, swing set, slide, merry-go-round and picnic tables.
- Walking Track: two acres includes a walking trail and an enclosed picnic shelter with lights.
- Nearby tourist destination: Hanging Rock Battleground is appropriately named for the large, overhanging rock and the surrounding unique rock and boulder features. Two battles during the Revolutionary War took place within a week of one another at Hanging Rock, just south of the Town of Heath Springs.

The route profile assessed within this Walkability Assessment is over 1.5 miles in length of sidewalk, between Heath Springs Elementary School and Heath Springs Town Park. This sidewalk also provides access to downtown Heath Springs. Beyond the Elementary School, the sidewalk provides walkability to nearby Heath Springs Business and Industrial Park. The route provides a vital north-south connector between central and southern Lancaster County.

Assessment Area



Overall Impressions

Overall, the areas accessed have the potential to be very walkable. The neighborhoods felt safe and quiet. Hardly any people were roaming outside and mainly stayed on their porch if they did.

The streets had low traffic flow and minimal noise, except for a few barking dogs in certain neighborhoods. There were a couple cars speeding on Cauthen St. We also noticed only one speed limit sign (35 mph) on East St., but nowhere else in the surrounding areas. On the corner of Cannon St. and Liberty St. we saw one streetlight present. We also saw a couple of fire hydrants, one of them being on the corner of Elder St. and Troop Circle. No white or yellow lanes were visible on the roads to separate traffic lanes. We also found an abandoned lot on Liberty St. that could have potential use for something beneficial in the future.

A nice sidewalk exists along North Main St. and some other streets, but there are areas of concern and maintenance issues. For example, the sidewalk between Perry and Truesdale and Perry and Cedar are almost impassible because of overgrown vegetation. The same applies for the tree limbs and leaves

covering the sidewalks on Cannon St. Something as simple as trimming the leaves or cutting the grass can help to make walking on the sidewalk easier and safer for pedestrians. Better cleanup of vegetation will allow pedestrians to stay off the road and be visible to drivers.

The town does have some Detectable ADA curb cuts with detectable warning surfaces (DWS), but a few need to be maintained better because they are not visible anymore, like the one on the corner of Liberty and Hart St. Some curb slopes should be added as well to make it accessible for those in wheelchairs. Some crosswalks do exist, but are not very visible, like the one on Cauthen St. The Town of Heath Springs has great potential to be walkable. Some streets already have sidewalks, streetlights, and signs noting motorists and pedestrians walking. Overall, doing some maintenance would help to enhance the safety and sense of pride in residents.



Challenges for Pedestrian Safety Activity

The greatest barriers discovered during the walkability assessment were (1) uneven/cracked sidewalks; (2) lack of sidewalk/washed out sidewalks; (3) overgrown vegetation; (4) potholes/cracked road that needs repaving (5) and missing or poorly-graded ADA curb cuts with detectable warning surfaces (DWS) and repainting of signs.

1. Uneven/Cracked Sidewalks



Broken sidewalk- North Main St. from the Depot (Carolina Thread Trail Route #2).



Broken sidewalk by the light pole at Caston and Mill.



Broken sidewalks along the sidewalks surrounding the corner block of Kershaw Camden Hwy and Main Street.



Cannon St. - Near 2 yellow houses with black fence. Raised/uneven and crack sidewalks (other view).



Carolina Thread Trail #2 Route.

Other areas with cracked/uneven sidewalks include:

- Salem St.
- Street across from the Raggedy Man Shop and Lunar Road
- Areas where it's considered Carolina Thread Trail #2
- 115 Caston St.
- 3rd oak tree past Caston and Mobley St.
- Collapsed sidewalk at 104 N. Mobley St.
- Westside of North Main St.
- Broken sidewalk at the oak tree near 521 sign on Caston St.

2. Lack of Sidewalk/Washed Out Sidewalks



Low-lying sidewalk washed out near 319 Caston (also, two loose dogs near 319 Caston).



Washed out sidewalk from 415 Caston to Caston and Perry.



No sidewalks on Elder St.

No sidewalks by soccer and baseballs fields on College St.



Sidewalk ends.

Other areas lacking sidewalks or having washed out sidewalks include:

- Sidewalk on only one side of East. St.
- No sidewalks/dogs barking on Troop Circle
- No sidewalks on Ridge St.
- No sidewalks on Hart St.
- Collapsed Sidewalk at 104 N Mobley.
- Sidewalk ends abruptly in some areas.

3. Overgrown Vegetation



Hart St. – Overgrown trees need trimming to provide more room for walking/ better visibility to see cars and vice versa.



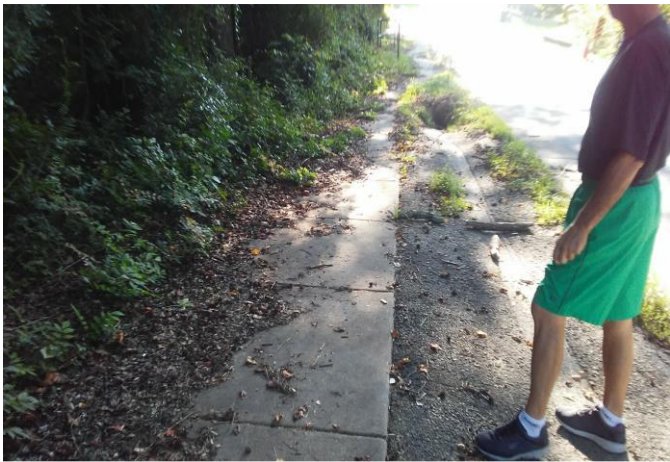
Cannon St. – Overgrown trees on sidewalk. Two views of the same location.



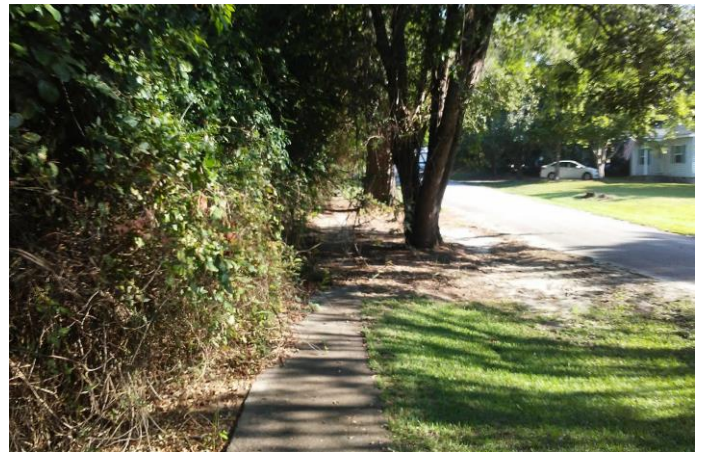
Cannon St.- Vegetation in sidewalk cracks and overgrown grass on both sides of sidewalk. Near two yellow houses with black fence.



Overgrown vegetation on sidewalk 30 feet from broken sidewalk on Caston St.



Sidewalk almost impassable between Perry and Truesdale and Perry and Cedar (also, many aggressive seeming dogs in fenced yard on other side of road).



Vines overgrown entire sidewalk across from 101 N. Mobley.

Vegetation and trash just past Caston and Hammon.



Other areas that need have overgrown vegetation:

- Solar Rd. near Heath Springs Elementary School (low hanging tree limbs; exposed tree roots)
- Overgrown grass by Perry and Caskey.
- Overgrown rose bush going over sidewalk just past Caston and Mill.
- Stump in sidewalk at 106 N Mobley.

4. Potholes and Cracked Roads Need Repaving



Not wheelchair accessible-bumpy concrete.



East St.- Cracked road and potholes.



Corner of Cannon and Liberty St. -Broken road curb. Potential danger for drivers making a turn.



Hart St. – Potholes in front of Lancaster County EMS.

Potholes also on Duncan St. and Intersection of Bridges & N. College Street.

5. Missing or Poorly-Graded ADA Curb Cuts with Detectable Warning Surfaces (DWS) and Repainting of Signs.

Corner of Liberty and Hart St. – DWS is not visible and needs maintenance.



No curb slope on sidewalk.



Crossing Cauthen Street – Could use a cross walk here and/or repaint what is currently there.



A lot of cars pulling into Dollar General - does a crosswalk belong here or is that just for crossing streets?



Crosswalk could use repainting.



Intersection by railroad near Salem Street/Cannon Street/ Caston Street and N/ College Street. Needs repaving of this intersection by railroad.

Other Areas with Missing or Poorly Graded ADA Curb Cuts With Detectable Warning Surfaces (DWS) and In Need of Sign Repainting:

- No ADA cuts at Caston and Mobley St.
- Potential crosswalk/curb cut on Kershaw Camden Hwy and larger sign needed at Town Park.

Positive Observances

- Nice and flat sidewalk in front of cemetery
- Great sign to welcome people into Town of Heath Springs
- Yellow casing on the wires to serve as visible warning
- There is a cross walk with a sign to cross over to get to the school entrance
- There is a good sign noting where the crosswalk is for motorists. We encountered a jogger with a well-behaved dog.
- Some grassy buffers (but needed maintenance)
- Corner of Elder St. and Troop Circle- fire hydrant available (found in a few different streets)
- Big shade trees
- On Hart St. there's a nursing home facility
- Downtown amenities= potential for tourism
- Sidewalks available in some areas
- Ridge St.- Drain Pit made by residents

Other notable observances (recommendations for change)

- Standing water in soccer fields on College St.
- Corner of Cannon St. and Liberty- 1 streetlight present (adding more streetlights)
- Liberty St.-abandoned lot
- No white or yellow lanes were visible on the roads to separate traffic lanes
- East St. had the first speed limit sign we saw on our trail (35 mph)

- Cars exceeding speed limit
- Tree limbs were hanging low onto sidewalk and street (please see images above)
- Protruding cracks. This is the same route the schoolchildren used when they do walking field trips.
- Several inches of height difference on sidewalks
- Upon reaching Solar Rd.
 - Heath Springs Elementary School is currently under construction / visibility was somewhat hampered /observed playground from road seems safely off main entrance
 - Speed limit sign is needed
 - Need extension of sidewalk approaching School Soccer Field
 - Railroad crossing is clearly marked
 - Road leading to school is adequately paved
- North on Main St.
 - Sidewalk damage in large portion on the westside of North Main
 - Uneven pavement (could inhibit walking)
 - Space for sitting benches are available
 - Low hanging tree limbs
 - Exposed tree roots causing buckling in concrete
 - Disability access is available
 - Headed South on North Main portions of roadway needs Bike Lane designation (For preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists)
- Entrance of Council on Aging
 - Needs repaving of sidewalk to driveway entrance to Senior Center. Replacing of signage of Senior Center. Clean up, pressure wash, clear away sediment from staircase.
- Need to replace sign of medical plaza due to long-time neglect and vandalism
- Need repaving of entrance ball fields. Stronger enforcement of parking restrictions due to overnight truckers parking here and damaging parking lot.
- Buffer space on Kershaw Camden Hwy & Main Street
 - Need assessment to measure if the extensive buffer area between roadway and end of street warrant bike lane or harrow signage. Add additional signage for speed limit along downtown or propose an assessment with DOT to lower speed limit.

Recommendations to Enhance Sidewalk Connector:

1. **Become listed and branded** as a Carolina Thread Trail segment:
 - Partner with the Carolina Thread Trail to have this 1.5 mile segment of downtown Heath Springs' sidewalk listed and branded as part of the Carolina Thread Trail network. Through this partnership, the town could receive free or low-cost branding and marketing materials.
 - Use this opportunity to name this 1.5 mile segment of the Carolina Thread Trail something distinctively unique for the Town of Heath Springs (ex. Hillside Connector Path)
2. **Create shared-use agreements** with community partners to create trailhead parking:

- Partner with Heath Springs Elementary School administration to allow weekend use of school parking lot to be utilized for accessible trailhead parking through a shared-use agreement.
 - Promote the Heath Springs Town Park's parking lot as daytime and weekend use for trailhead parking.
 - Partner with Lancaster County Council on Aging to allow evening and weekend use of Senior Center parking lot to be utilized for accessible trailhead parking through a shared-use agreement.
3. **Identify resources to improve sidewalk's walkability:**
- Allocate resources within Town budget to maintain sidewalk landscaping and clearing.
 - Apply for funding through Carolina Thread Trail, Stevens Foundation, J. Marion Sims Foundation, Springs Close Foundation to demonstrate the needs of this sidewalk connector path.
 - Mobilize residents, local businesses, and churches surrounding the Main Street sidewalk connector path to uplift historical 'pause moments' (ex. the outdoor stairs at the Senior Center).

Acknowledgements

Eat Smart Move More Lancaster County would like to thank everyone who was involved in the planning of and participated in the walkability assessment:

Eat Smart Move More Lancaster County, Town of Heath Springs residents, local physicians, the University of South Carolina-Lancaster (USCL), Heath Springs Town Council, J. Marion Sims Foundation (JMSF), Upper Midlands Rural Health Network (UMRHN), Lancaster County Health and Wellness Commission, Lancaster County Council, and Lindsay Pettus Greenway, Carolina Thread Trail (CTT).

Group members:

Irini Guda, ESMM, UMRHN, Lancaster County Health and Wellness Commission

Candra Riley, ESMM, SC DHEC

Lauren Thomas, ESMM, JMSF, Lindsay Pettus Greenway, USCL

Karen Nichols, UMRHN

Chris Bundrick, Lancaster County Health and Wellness Commission, USCL

Mayor Eddie Moore, Town of Heath Springs

Dr. Zora Denson, Town of Heath Springs

Councilwoman Tameka Morrow, Heath Springs Town Council

Councilwoman Peggy Bowers, Heath Springs Town Council

Councilman Allen Blackmon, Lancaster County Council

John Childers, resident of Heath Springs

Norma Childers, resident of Heath Springs

Barbara Moore, resident of Heath Springs

Matt Thomas, local physician, Barnett Family Medicine/Atrium Health

Flossie Williams, resident of Heath Springs

Catherine Huggins, resident of Heath Springs

Del Graicia Shropshire, resident of Heath Springs

