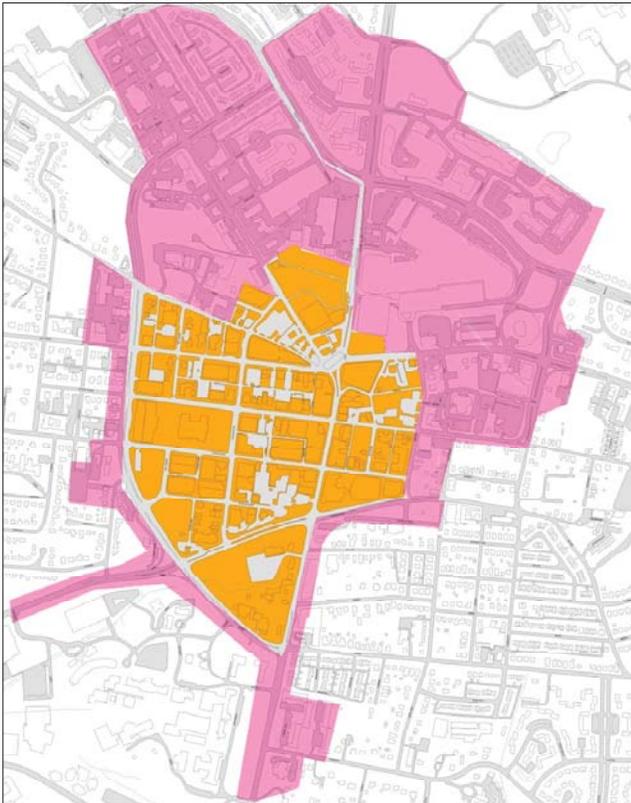


Walkable District Expands

Early on, the charrette team determined that the Walkable District proposed by the UDAT process and subsequently embraced by Tomorrow's Towson should be expanded. In looking at the Towson core and its surroundings, the team found several areas outside the original District that would benefit from being included. The areas fell into one of the following three categories:

- an area with a relatively high amount of pedestrian activity but poor conditions;
- an area with a high potential or latent demand for greater walkability;
- an adjacent edge or corridor that could provide better connectivity to other walkable parts of Towson.

The areas that were added to the District are shown in magenta. They include the area around Towson Town Center mall, the area of high rises south of Joppa Road, the areas that lie between the downtown area and the two universities, and the emerging area of high-density residential housing northwest of the mall along Fairmount Ave. These areas are included as part of the overall plan area and in the plan recommendations. If Towson is to realize its full potential as a walkable place, it is essential that these areas be integral parts of the Walkable District.



Pounding Pavement — County staff gather data on downtown streets and sidewalks in support of the Walkability Index.

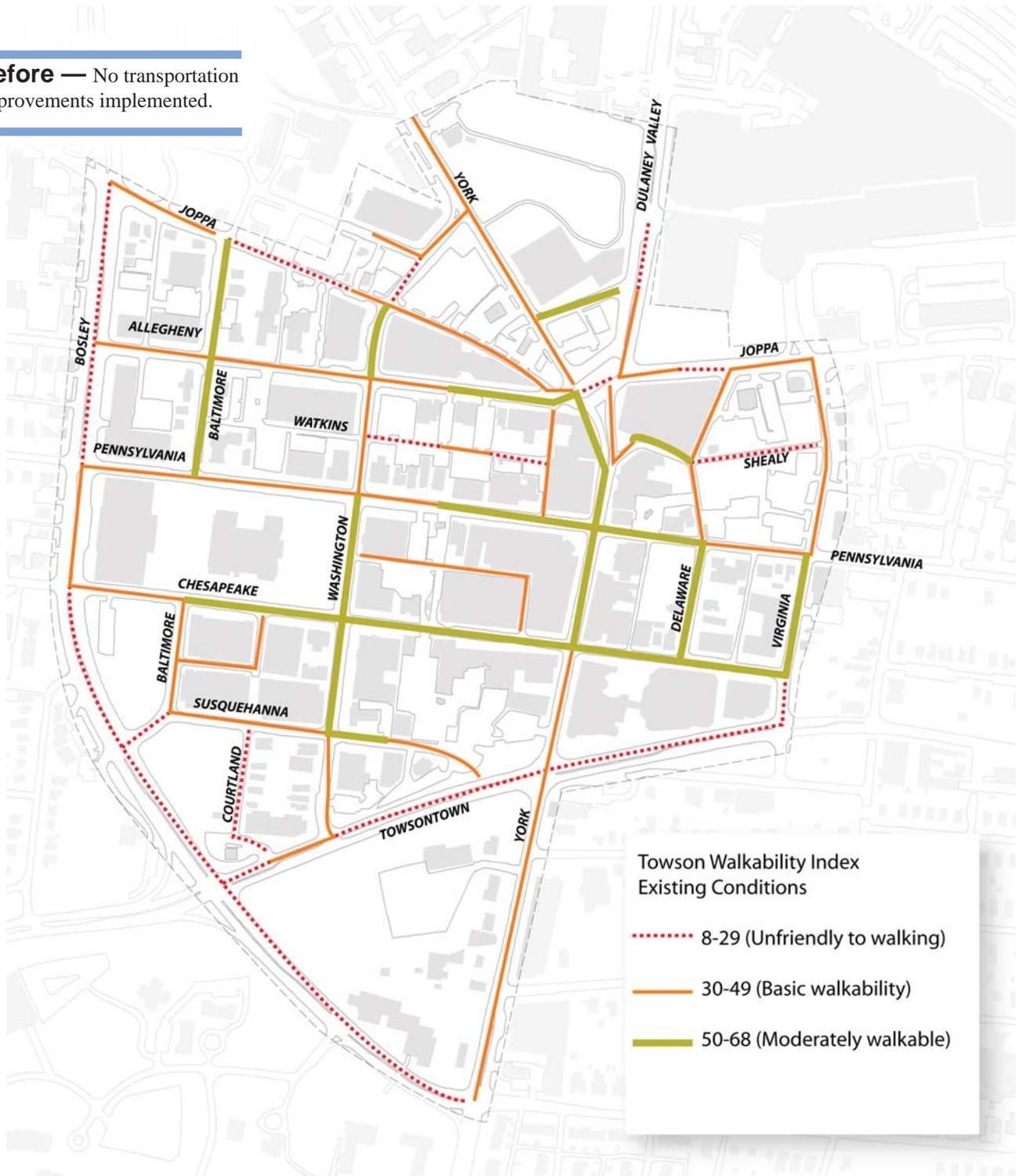
The Walkability Index

Hall Planning & Engineering has developed a Walkability Index to measure the extent to which a given community provides a pleasing, functional environment for pedestrians. This innovative tool was put to work in Towson prior to the charrette. County staff went into the field to collect data for the entire plan area. The results were tallied and given to the team for analysis. Ten walkability factors were measured to indicate the quality of the walkable environment:

1. *Traffic speed at non-peak hours*
2. *Street width at each pedestrian crossing*
3. *Presence of on-street parking*
4. *Sidewalk width*
5. *Pedestrian connectivity, involving the distance between street intersections or mid-block crossings*
6. *Presence and quality of pedestrian features such as benches, lighting, street trees, etc.*
7. *Street enclosure, which involves building height and the distance between building faces*
8. *Presence of land uses that attract pedestrians*
9. *Building facade design*
10. *Transit and/or bicycle features*

The Walkability Index developed by Hall Planning & Engineering was ideally suited for the Walkable Towson Plan. After county staff collected data within the UDAT area, scores were given to each street segment. These scores were then entered into a mapping system and geographically displayed with the scores color coded from highest (forest green) to lowest (broken-line orange). As the diagram shows, no street segments achieved the highest level of walkability. The results show that walkability is relatively limited within the Walkable District. This is particularly evident along major roadways such as Bosley Avenue and Towsontown Boulevard, which are newer roads that were not designed with walkability in mind.

Before — No transportation improvements implemented.



Transportation Projects Improve Walkability

The graphic below shows projected improvements in walkability that would be achieved if only the team's transportation recommendations were implemented. Most, but not all, of those recommendations are included in the Short-Term Recommendations section. Key projects reflected in these results include: redesign of York Road; Chesapeake Ave. and Pennsylvania Ave. converted to two-way; redesigned roundabout; enhanced crosswalks, signage and traffic calming; and new gateway features.

After — With transportation improvements implemented.



Full Transformation Strengthens Walkability

The graphic below shows projected improvements in walkability that would be achieved if all of the team's recommendations — including those found in the Full Transformation section — were implemented.

