

1. INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Catawba County Comprehensive Plan is the fundamental policy document that will help guide the County's growth and development over the coming decades. The Plan provides a vision for how the County should look in the future and recommends policies to explore in an effort to realize that vision. The Plan identifies the development patterns that should be encouraged in various areas throughout the county and provides general guidance on where infrastructure investments should be considered in support of those land use patterns. It establishes a roadmap for how the County should change - and how some aspects of the County should remain unchanged. This comprehensive plan will serve as a guide for developing land use regulations and capital improvement plans that encourage and support orderly growth and development well into the future.

According to North Carolina General Statutes, every local government must have a long-range plan which describes policies for land use and growth management. Catawba County partnered with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to assist in the development of this Comprehensive Plan.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Catawba County Comprehensive Plan was developed with oversight by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, a 9-person group consisting of citizens appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The Committee conducted a 15-month community outreach, education, discussion and strategic thinking process which resulted in a draft version of this Plan, which was presented to the Catawba County Planning Board and, ultimately, to the Board of Commissioners. At the heart of the Plan is a series of recommendations in the areas of land use, transportation, public services, economic development, and natural and cultural resources. Upon adoption of this Plan by the Board of Commissioners, next steps include evaluating, prioritizing, and implementing the strategies proposed in this document, as appropriate.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee consisted of Paul Beatty, Guy Cline, Tamara Coley, Jon Gladden, Linda Greenwell, Vicki Matthews, Joe Sigmon, Mitzi Story, Kim Wallace, Planning Director Chris Timberlake, and Assistant Planning Director Laurie LoCicero.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Several meetings were held to provide opportunities for citizen involvement in the development of this Plan. Early in the process, five public meetings were held to gather citizen input:

Balls Creek Elementary School	June 1, 2023	6:00-7:30 pm
Sherrills Ford Elementary School	June 6, 2023	6:00-7:30 pm
Oxford Elementary School	June 8, 2023	6:00-7:30 pm
Webb Murray Elementary School	June 15, 2023	6:00-7:30 pm
Blackburn Elementary School	June 27, 2023	6:00-7:30 pm

At each meeting, participants were asked to share their perspectives on what aspects of life in the County are most important to them, what assets and weaknesses need to be built upon or addressed, and what their vision for the County's future entails. Results from the meetings are provided in Appendix A.

An online survey was also conducted to gather additional public comment. The results of the public survey are provided in Appendix B. Near the conclusion of the planning process, three more public meetings were held to provide citizens with the opportunity to review the draft plan that reflected their feedback:

Blackburn Elementary School	February 22, 2024	5:30-7:00 pm
Catawba County Government Center	February 27, 2024	5:30-7:00 pm
Sherrills Ford Elementary School	February 29, 2024	5:30-7:00 pm

At these meetings, citizens reviewed the maps and recommendations in the draft plan and provided additional input. Formal public hearings held at both the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners’ meetings provided additional opportunities for citizen input.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

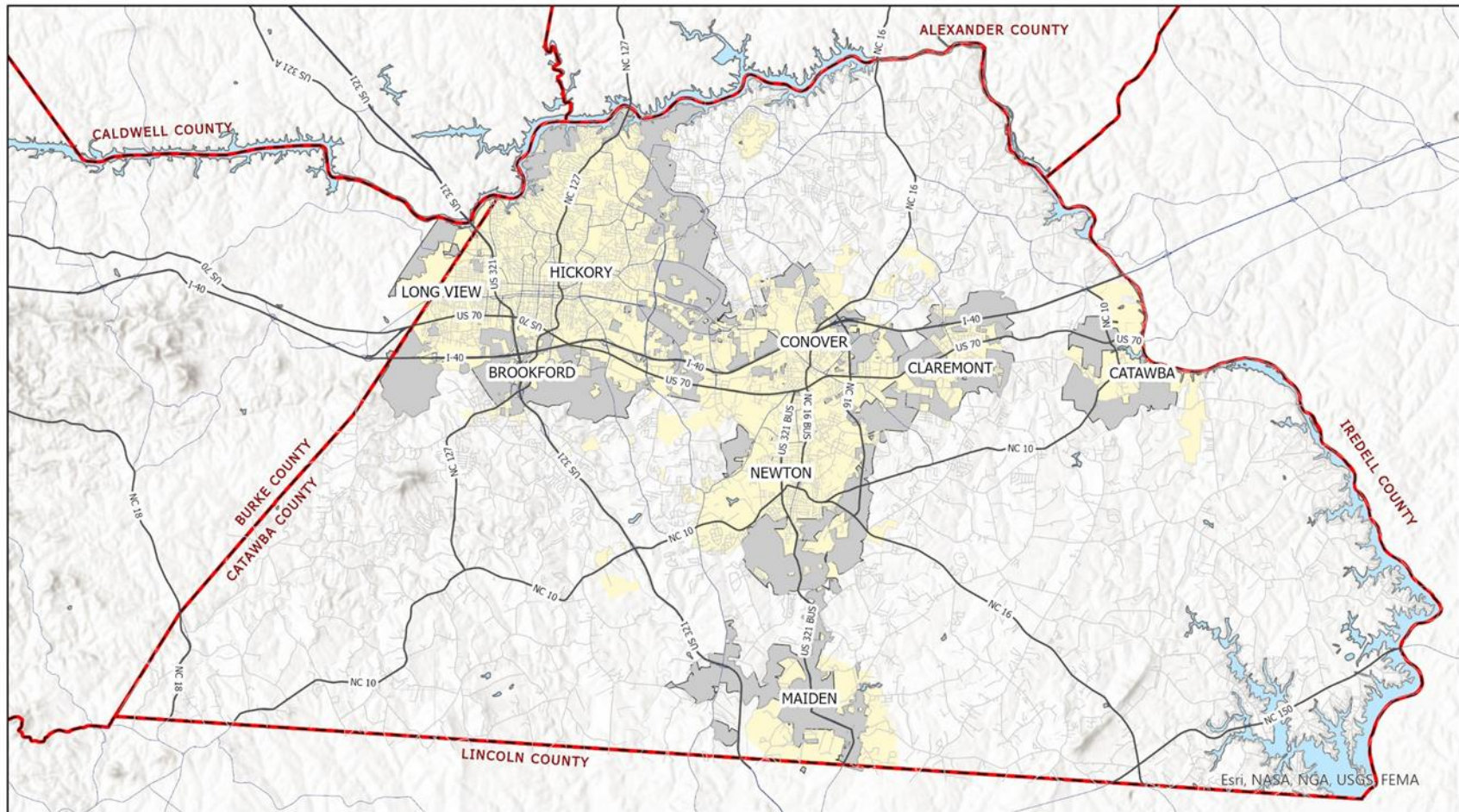
The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee was presented the draft plan on March 11, 2024. The plan was presented to the Planning Board on March 25, 2024, for recommendation. The draft plan was then reviewed by the Board of Commissioners, and a public hearing was held prior to adoption of the plan at the Board of Commissioners’ April 15, 2024 meeting. The plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners on April __, 2024.

PLANNING AREA

The geographic area included in this Plan includes land located within the County’s borders which is outside of the municipal limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs) of any town or city. Feedback gathered from citizens includes those who live in both the unincorporated County and incorporated municipalities. (See Figure 1-1: Planning Area).

NEXT STEPS

Upon adoption of this Plan, appropriate changes will be made to the County’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in order to bring the UDO into alignment with this Plan. Comprehensive plans are intended to be living documents. Revisions of this Plan may be necessary based on state law and changing economic conditions



County of Catawba Planning Area

Legend

- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Major Lakes
- Major Roads
- Roads

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



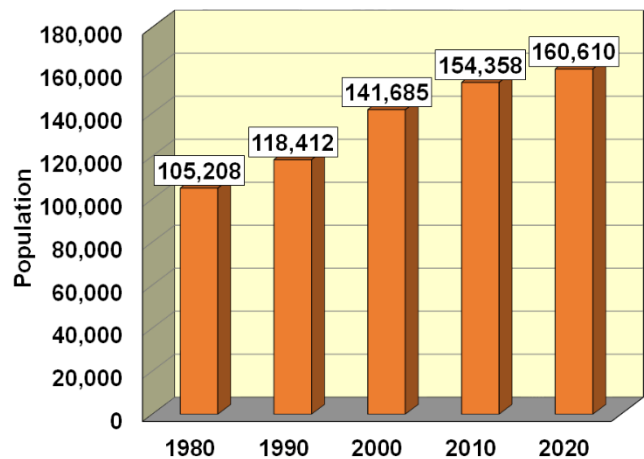
This map was created on November 14, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.

2. CATAWBA COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

The Census count in 1980 for Catawba County was 105,208 (Figure 1). As of 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau shows the population of Catawba County is 160,610. Table 1 shows population changes between 2000 and 2020 for Catawba County, Alexander County, Burke County, Caldwell County, the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties), Iredell County, Lincoln County, North Carolina and the United States. Catawba County gained 12,672 people between 2000 and 2010, an increase of 8.9%. Estimates from the US Census Bureau indicate Catawba County gained population between 2010 and 2020. The 2020 Catawba County population estimate (160,610) is higher than the Census 2010 population count (154,358). Since 2010, Catawba County experienced a population gain of 6,252 people, a 4.1% increase. This growth rate dropped from nearly 19.5% between 1990 and 2000, and almost 9% between 2000 and 2010. From 2010 to 2020, the population of the Hickory MSA decreased 0.1%. North Carolina's population grew 9.5% between 2010 and 2020 to 10.4 million while Catawba County's population only grew 4.1% during this time period. The number of persons in the United States increased 7.4% from 308.8 million in 2010 to 331.5 million in 2020.

Figure 1.
Catawba County Population, 1980-2020



Source: 1980-2020 Census, US Census Bureau and WPCOG Data Center, 2023.

Table 1.
Population Comparison, 2000-2020

Location	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change 2000-2010	% Inc.	2020 Census	Change 2010-2020	% Inc.
Catawba County	141,686	154,358	12,672	8.9	160,610	6,252	4.1
Alexander County	33,603	37,198	3,595	10.7	36,444	-754	-2.0
Burke County	89,145	90,912	1,767	2.0	87,570	-3,342	-3.7
Caldwell County	77,708	83,029	5,321	6.8	80,652	-2,377	-2.9

Hickory MSA	341,851	365,497	23,646	6.5	365,276	-221	-0.1
Iredell County	122,660	159,437	36,777	30.0	186,693	27,256	17.1
Lincoln County	63,780	78,265	14,485	22.7	86,810	8,545	10.9
NC	8,049,313	9,535,483	1,486,170	18.5	10,439,388	903,905	9.5
US	281,421,906	308,745,538	27,323,632	9.7	331,449,281	22,703,743	7.4

Sources: 2000, 2010 and 2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Whites are the largest race group in Catawba County, comprising over 74% of the County's population (Table 2). Between 2010 and 2020, the number of Whites fell by 7,205 persons to 118,946. Hispanic is the County's largest minority group (10.8% of Catawba County's population in 2020). The County's African-American population decreased from 13,041 persons in 2010 to 12,835 (or 8.0% of Catawba County's population) in 2020. Since the 2010 Census, Catawba County's two or more races (or mixed race) population has increased by 8,324 persons to 11,201 as of 2020. Over the last ten years, Catawba County has become more ethnically and racially diverse.

Table 2. Catawba County Population by Race/Ethnic Group, 2010-2020						
Race/Ethnic Group	2010 Census	% of Pop.	2020 Census	% of Pop.	Change 2010 to 2020	% Change 2010 to 2020
Total Population	154,358	100.0	160,610	100.0	12,672	4.1
White	126,151	81.7	118,946	74.1	-7,205	-6.1
African American	13,041	8.4	12,835	8.0	-206	-1.6
American Indian	489	0.3	1,023	0.6	534	52.2
Asian American	5,405	3.5	7,117	4.4	1,712	24.1
Two or More Races	2,877	1.9	11,201	7.0	8,324	74.3
Some Other Race	6,395	4.1	9,488	5.9	3,093	32.6
Hispanic (Any Race)	13,032	8.4	17,377	10.8	4,345	25.0
White, (Not Hispanic)	120,388	78.0	116,120	72.3	-4,268	-3.7

Sources: 2010 and 2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Age group population data for Catawba County from the 2010 Census to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) is displayed in Table 3. Some age groups gained population between 2010 and 2022, while others experienced declines. Some of middle to older age groups in Catawba have had significant population gains since 2010. The number of people in the 65 to 74 age group grew by 6,282 between

2010 and 2022 to 18,631 persons. The population of 75 to 84 cohort increased 49.3% from 6,850 in 2010 to 10,224 in 2022.

Table 3.
Catawba County Population by Age Group, 2010 Census to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)

Age Group	2010 Census	2022 Estimate	Change 2010 Census to 2022 ACS	% Change 2010 Census to 2022 ACS
Under 5 Years	9,670	8,235	-1,435	-14.8%
5 to 9 Years	10,310	8,592	-1,718	-16.7%
10 to 14 Years	10,429	9,835	-594	-5.7%
15 to 19 Years	10,322	10,835	513	5.0%
20 to 24 Years	8,574	10,775	2,201	25.7%
25 to 34 Years	18,023	19,892	1,869	10.4%
35 to 44 Years	22,086	18,359	-3,727	-16.9%
45 to 54 Years	23,355	21,900	-1,455	-6.2%
55 to 59 Years	10,145	11,575	1,430	14.1%
60 to 64 Years	9,671	11,260	1,589	16.4%
65 to 74 Years	12,349	18,631	6,282	50.9%
75 to 84 Years	6,850	10,224	3,374	49.3%
85 Years and Over	2,574	2,929	355	13.8%
Total	154,358	163,042	8,684	5.6%

Source: 2010 and 2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

The largest population loss between 2010 and 2020 was in the age 35 to 44 group, which decreased from 22,086 in 2010 to 18,359 in 2022. This is a concerning trend because these age groups are an important sector of the County's workforce. The population of the under age 5 group in Catawba County fell 14.8% between 2010 and 2022, while the population of the 5 to 9 cohort dropped 16.7% to 8,592. Significant population growth, meanwhile, occurred in the age 20 to 24 and 25 to 34 cohorts. The number of persons in these groups grew from 8,574 in 2010 to 10,775 in 2022 and 18,023 in 2010 to 19,892 in 2022 respectively.

The impacts of the increasing older labor force (age 60 to 64) and elderly (age 65 to 84) populations on Catawba County's median age can be seen in Table 4. Between 2000 and 2010, the median age in Catawba County rose by 3.5 years to 39.6. Catawba County's median age has increased 5.3% since 2010 to 41.7 years (2022 American Community Survey). The County's median age is currently lower than the Alexander County, Burke County, Caldwell County, Hickory MSA, and Lincoln County median age, but is higher than the Iredell County, North Carolina and United States median age.

Table 4. Median Age, 2000 Census to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)					
Location	2000 Census	2010 Census	% Change	2022 ACS*	% Change
Catawba County	36.1	39.6	9.7	41.7	5.3
Alexander County	37.0	40.8	10.3	43.7	7.1
Burke County	36.9	41.2	11.7	46.8	13.6
Caldwell County	37.9	41.3	8.2	45.7	10.6
Hickory MSA	36.7	40.5	10.4	44.2	9.1
Iredell County	36.7	38.9	6.0	40.9	5.1
Lincoln County	36.7	40.4	10.1	44.3	9.7
NC	35.3	37.4	5.9	39.2	4.8
US	35.3	37.2	5.4	39.0	4.8

Source: 2000-2010 Census and 2022 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

*Alexander County data is from the 2017-2021 ACS.

Table 5. Catawba County Population by Age Group, 2022-2042				
Age Group	2022 Estimate	2042 Projection	Change 2022-42	% Change 2022-42
Under 5 Years	8,235	9,583	1,348	16.4
5 to 9 Years	8,592	9,690	1,098	12.8
10 to 14 Years	9,835	10,498	663	6.7
15 to 19 Years	10,835	10,925	90	0.8
20 to 24 Years	10,775	10,078	-697	-6.5
25 to 34 Years	19,892	21,377	1,485	7.5
35 to 44 Years	18,359	23,789	5,430	29.6
45 to 54 Years	21,900	23,784	1,884	8.6
55 to 59 Years	11,575	10,860	-715	-6.2

60 to 64 Years	11,260	11,292	32	0.3
65 to 74 Years	18,631	23,009	4,378	23.5
75 to 84 Years	10,224	17,007	6,783	66.3
85 Years and Over	2,929	6,916	3,987	136.1
Total	163,042	188,808	25,766	15.8

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2023

The NC Office of State Management and Budget has generated age group projections for Catawba County (Table 5). The population of the 65 to 74, 75 to 84 and 85 years and over age cohorts will continue to increase over the next 20 years as the “baby boomers” grow older. The loss of 25- to 44-year-olds in the County from 2000 to 2010 will lead to population declines in the age 55 to 59 group through 2042. The population of the age 20 to 24 cohorts is anticipated to decrease by 6.5%, while the population of the age 25 to 34 group is predicted to increase 7.5% between 2022 and 2042.

Household Income

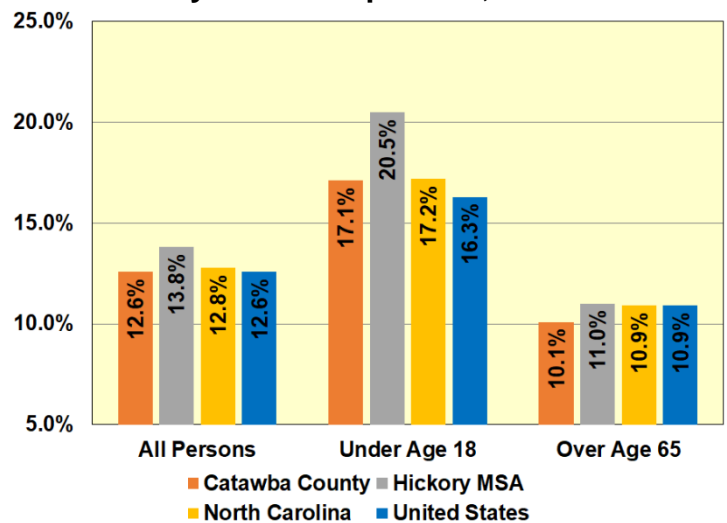
Catawba County household income data from the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) is revealed in Table 6. Catawba County has experienced a 52.1% increase in median household income from \$41,420 in 2012 to \$62,981 in 2022. Catawba County’s median household income is \$2,772 more than the Hickory MSA median (\$60,209), but is \$4,500 less than the State median (\$67,481), and \$11,774 less than the US median (\$74,755). About 16.6% of Catawba County’s households in 2022 earned less than \$25,000 a year, while 22.5% of households earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year. Another 34.3% of households had incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year. About 27 percent (26.6%) of Catawba County’s households make more than \$100,000 per year.

Table 6. Catawba Income Statistics, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)		
Households	2022 ACS	% of Households
Total Households	67,237	100.0
Households Earning Less than \$25,000	11,159	16.6
Households Earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000	15,161	22.5
Households Earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000	23,034	34.3
Households Earning more than \$100,000	17,883	26.6
Median Household Income	\$62,981	

Source: 2022 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

According to the Census website, the Bureau “uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family’s total income is less than family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty.” Results from the 2022 American Community Survey for Catawba County show that 20,022 persons, or 12.6% of the population, were at or below the poverty level (Figure 2). The County’s all persons’ poverty rate was lower than the Hickory MSA or North Carolina all persons poverty rate. The Catawba County poverty rate for children under age 18 was similar to the North Carolina under age 18 poverty rate and lower than the Hickory MSA under age 18 poverty rate. The Catawba County poverty rate for persons over age 65 was lower than the Hickory MSA, North Carolina, and United States over age 65 poverty rate.

Figure 2.
Poverty Rate Comparison, 2022 ACS



Source: 2022 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Employment

Employment by industry of Catawba County’s residents from the 2022 American Community Survey is shown in Table 7. About 25% of total employment in 2022 was in the Manufacturing Industry. Another 17.8% of employed persons worked in the Education and Health Care Industry. About 11.5% of workers were in the Retail Trade Industry.

Table 7.
Catawba County Employment by Industry, 2022 ACS

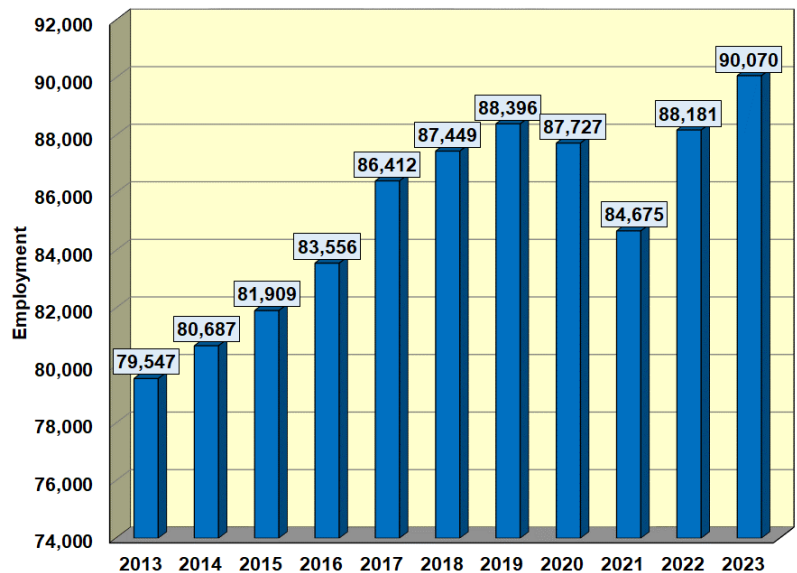
Industry	2022 ACS	% of Employed Population
Employed Population	79,848	100.0
Agriculture	222	0.3
Construction	5,434	6.8
Manufacturing	20,008	25.1
Wholesale Trade	2,384	3.0
Retail Trade	9,201	11.5
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	4,256	5.3
Information	1,377	1.7
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate	2,130	2.7
Professional Services	6,906	8.6
Education and Health Care	14,189	17.8
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	6,517	8.2
Other Services	4,171	5.2
Public Administration	3,053	3.8

Source: 2022 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Between first quarter 2013 and first quarter 2020, Catawba County employment grew from 79,547 to 87,727 (Figure 3). From first quarter 2020 to first quarter 2021, Catawba County employment decreased by 3,052 positions to 84,675 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since first quarter 2021, employment in Catawba County has recovered to 90,070 as of first quarter 2023.

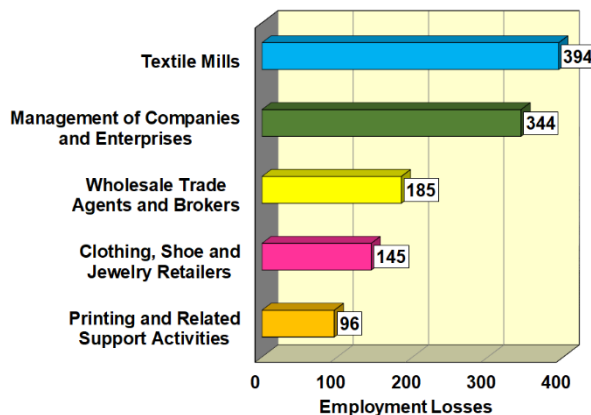
Since first quarter 2013, the biggest employment losses in Catawba County have occurred in textile mills (394), management of companies and enterprises (344), and wholesale trade agents and brokers (185) (Figure 4). The largest employment gains occurred in warehousing and storage (1,546), plastics and rubber products manufacturing (1,266) and ambulatory health care services (1,218) (Figure 5)

Figure 3.
Catawba County Employment, First Quarter



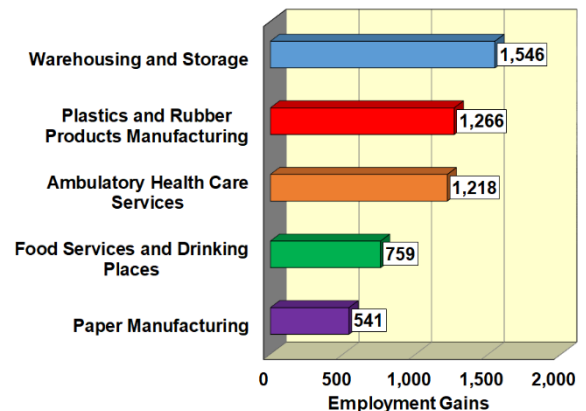
Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2023.

Figure 4.
Catawba Co. Employment Losses by Industry Sector, 1st Qtr. 2013-2023



Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2023.

Figure 5.
Catawba Co. Employment Gains by Industry Sector, 1st Qtr. 2013-



Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2023.

One of Catawba County's success stories over the past decade is the dramatic drop in its unemployment rate. The County's unemployment fell from 5.2% in September 2015 to 3.1% in September 2023 (Figure 6). The number of employed Catawba County residents grew from 71,079 in September 2015 to 77,990 in September 2023. Also note that there are about 13,000 less working residents in Catawba County than the number of Catawba County jobs. This is due to in-commuting workers from Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Iredell, and Lincoln Counties seeking employment in Catawba County (Figure 7).

Figure 6: Catawba County Employed Residents and Unemployment Rate, September 2015 to September 2023

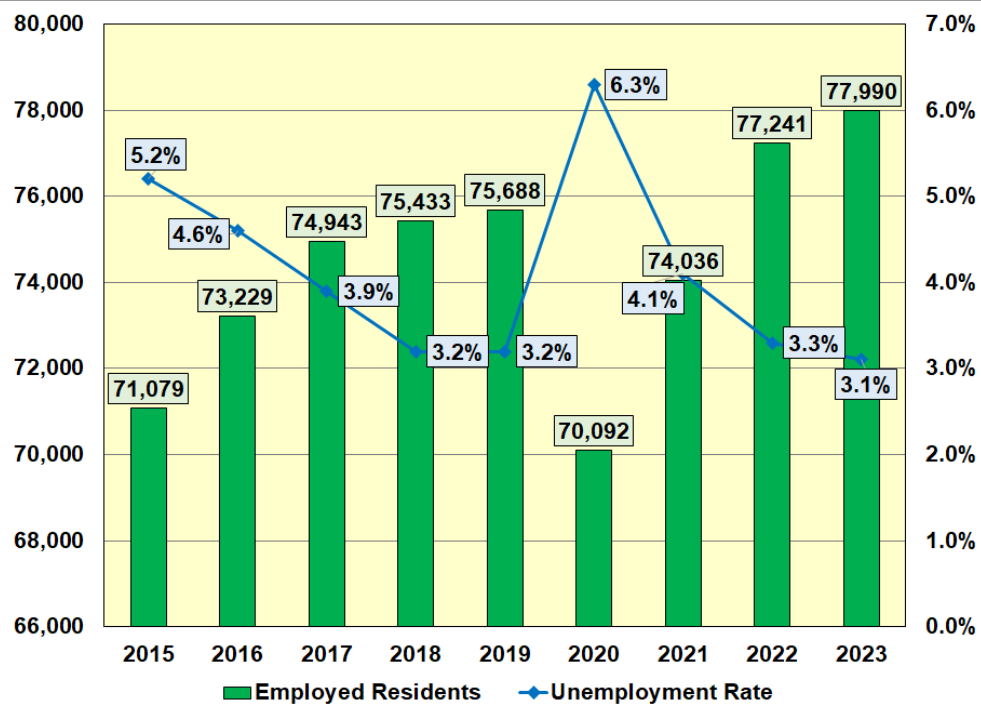
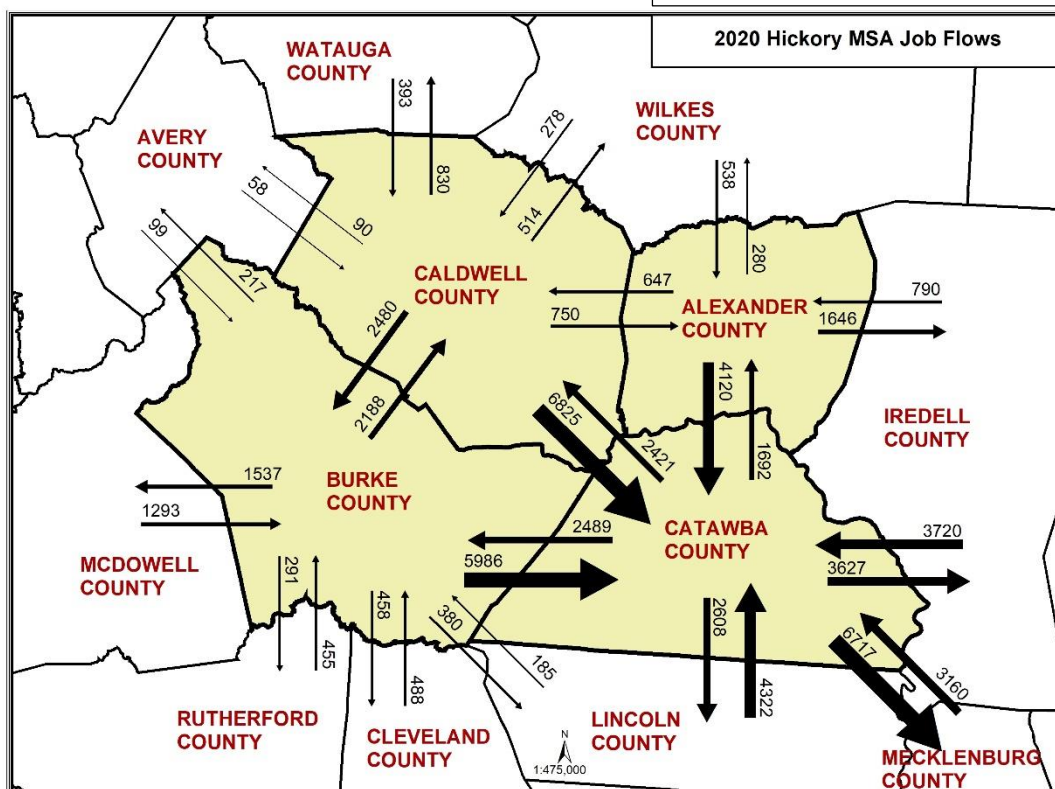


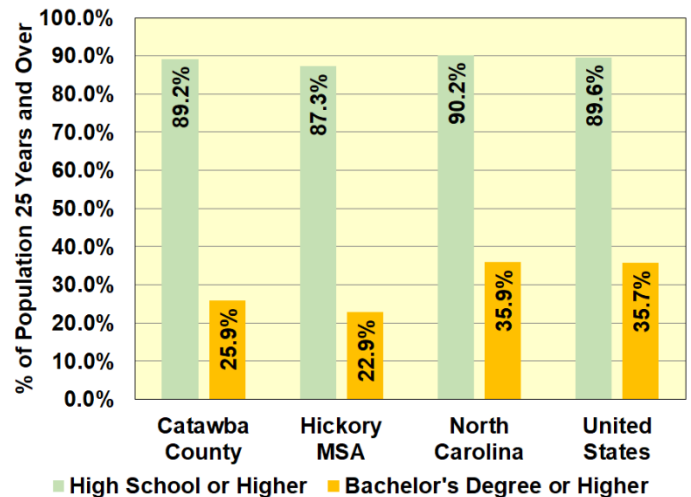
Figure 7:



Educational Attainment

Educational attainment levels of the population age 25 and over for Catawba County, the Hickory MSA, North Carolina, and the United States are shown in Figure 8. Data from the 2022 ACS indicates that 89.2% of Catawba's population age 25 and older has an educational attainment level of high school (or equivalent) or higher with 25.9% having a bachelor's degree or higher. Catawba County has a higher high school or higher (over age 25) educational attainment percentage than the Hickory MSA, but a lower high school or higher educational attainment percentage than North Carolina and the United States. Catawba County also had a higher Bachelor's Degree or higher (over age 25) education attainment percentage than the Hickory MSA, but a lower Bachelor's Degree or higher educational attainment percentage than North Carolina and the United States. The population of Catawba County has become more educated over the past decade. According to the 2020 Census and the 2012 and 2022 ACS, the population over 25 holding an Associate's Degree has increased 44% between 2012 and 2022. Over that same time, the population over 25 holding a Bachelor's Degree has increased 58.2%.

Figure 8.
Educational Attainment, 2022 ACS

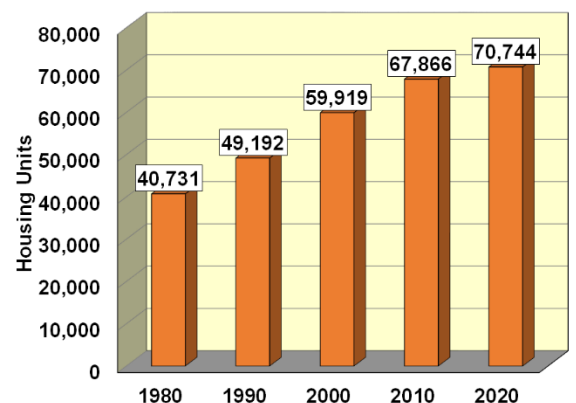


Source: 2022 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Housing

The number of housing units in Catawba County increased from 40,731 in 1980 to 70,744 in 2020 (Figure 9). Housing growth occurred at a steady rate from 1980 to 2020, with a noticeable slow down between 2010 and 2020. From 2000 to 2010, 7,967 housing units were added in Catawba County (Table 8). This includes units added in municipal districts. Catawba County's 13.3% percentage housing growth between 2000 and 2010 was more than Burke County, Caldwell County, and the Hickory MSA, but was less than Alexander County, Iredell County, Lincoln County, North Carolina, and the United States. Catawba County gained 2,858 homes between 2010 and 2020 for a total of 70,744 housing units. This lower growth rate for housing reflects the impact of the financial crisis recession on dwelling unit construction. The County's housing growth rate (4.2%) between 2010 and 2020 was better than Alexander County, Burke County, Caldwell County, and the Hickory MSA, but was lower than Iredell County, Lincoln County, North Carolina, and the United States percentage increase.

Figure 9.
Catawba Housing Units, 1980-2020



Source: 1980-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Table 8. Housing Units, 2000-2020							
Location	2000	2010	Change 2000- 2010	% Inc.	2020	Change 2010- 2020	% Inc .
Catawba County	59,919	67,886	7,967	13.3	70,744	2,858	4.2
Alexander County	14,098	16,189	2,091	14.8	15,960	-229	-1.4
Burke County	37,427	40,879	3,452	9.2	39,525	-1,354	-3.3
Caldwell County	33,430	37,659	4,229	12.7	36,931	-728	-1.9
Hickory MSA	144,874	162,613	17,739	12.2	163,160	547	0.3
Iredell County	51,918	69,013	17,095	32.9	79,372	10,359	15.0
Lincoln County	25,717	33,641	7,924	30.8	37,170	3,529	10.5
NC	3,523,944	4,327,528	803,584	22.8	4,708,710	381,182	8.8
US	115,904,641	131,704,730	15,800,089	13.6	140,498,736	8,794,006	6.7

Source: 1980-2020 Census, US Census Bureau.

Data in Table 9 reveals that the percentage of renter-occupied units in Catawba has slightly grown between 1990 Census and 2022 American Community Survey. The percentage of renter-occupied housing in Catawba County rose from 25.2% of all occupied units in 1990 to 26.6% in 2022. As of 2022, Catawba County had a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing than Alexander County, Burke County, the Hickory MSA, and Lincoln County, but a lower percentage of renter-occupied units than Caldwell County, Iredell County, North Carolina, and the United States.

Table 10 shows a significant increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Catawba between the 2000 Census and the 2012 American Community Survey (26.4%). Catawba County median housing value rose another 80.6% to \$235,100 between the 2012 ACS and the 2022 ACS. Median home values gained 80.2% and 86.9% in the Hickory MSA and North Carolina respectively from 2012 to 2022.

Table 9. Percent Renter-Occupied Units, 1990 Census to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)				
Location	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census	2022 ACS*
Catawba County	25.2	25.5	26.6	26.6
Alexander County	17.7	19.5	22.4	18.6
Burke County	25.2	25.9	27.7	21.4
Caldwell County	25.2	25.1	26.1	26.7
Hickory MSA	25.3	25.7	26.6	25.2
Iredell County	24.9	24.6	26.9	28.9
Lincoln County	21.1	21.5	24.0	19.1
NC	28.6	27.2	33.3	33.3
US	35.8	33.8	34.9	34.8

Source: 1990-2010 Census, 2022 ACS, US Census Bureau *Alexander Co Data from ACS.

The 2022 ACS median housing value in Catawba County was more than the Alexander County, Burke County, Caldwell County and Hickory MSA median housing value, but was less than the Iredell County, Lincoln County, North Carolina and United States median housing value.

Table 10. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2000 Census to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS)					
Location	2000	2012 ACS*	% Change	2022 ACS*	% Change
Catawba County	\$103,000	\$130,200	26.4	\$235,100	80.6
Alexander County	\$95,600	\$121,400	27.0	\$149,900	23.5
Burke County	\$85,900	\$107,000	24.6	\$197,300	84.4
Caldwell County	\$86,700	\$101,900	17.5	\$189,700	86.2
Hickory MSA	\$93,500	\$116,900	25.0	\$210,700	80.2
Iredell County	\$116,100	\$163,300	40.7	\$331,800	103.2
Lincoln County	\$104,500	\$144,200	38.0	\$276,100	91.5
NC	\$108,300	\$150,100	38.6	\$280,600	86.9
US	\$119,600	\$171,900	43.7	\$320,900	86.7

Source: 2000 Census, 2007-2011 and 2017-2021 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

*Alexander County data is from the 2007-11 and 2017-2021 ACS.

3. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a crucial component of comprehensive planning, influencing the way land is developed and serving as the backbone of accessibility and mobility, enabling people and goods to reach destinations easily. Efficient transportation systems are integral to economic development, facilitating the movement of goods and services, attracting businesses, creating job opportunities, and contributing to overall regional economic growth.

The close link between transportation and land use planning is a cornerstone of comprehensive planning. This link has the potential to create sustainable, efficient, and livable communities by reducing congestion, enhancing connectivity, and promoting walkable, bike-friendly, and transit-oriented spaces. Well-designed transportation systems can enhance public safety by minimizing traffic accidents and providing safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Considerations for traffic flow and signage should be included in the planning phase of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

During this Plan's development, all stakeholders expressed a strong desire for an improved transportation system capable of supporting the growing population of Catawba County. Transportation planning typically includes three key pillars: land use planning, travel demand modeling, and safety considerations. This overview provides a glimpse into the significance of these three elements in shaping the transportation landscape in Catawba County.

Land Use Patterns, Density, and Transportation Planning

Urban, suburban, and rural areas each pose unique challenges and opportunities for transportation planning, requiring innovative strategies to address varying population densities. In Catawba County, unincorporated areas are predominantly suburban and rural, with current and anticipated horizontal expansion, particularly in the Southeastern region. As the county continues to grow, shifts in population density and land use will trigger adjustment of transportation strategies.

Rural areas of Catawba County are characterized by low population density and longer travel distances, which present transportation challenges. Personal vehicular travel is essential due to the financial impracticality of establishing traditional multimodal connectivity. While traditional transit systems and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure are economically prohibitive, new transit systems and services like micro transit, which provide on-demand transportation services, reduce reliance on full-sized busses for service provision and allow for targeted public transportation. To meet the demand for personal vehicle transportation in Catawba County's areas of low density, modernization and safety improvements to existing local roads and minor collectors may be strategies worth pursuing.

In existing and densifying suburban areas, transportation planning aims to balance transportation demands while preserving the character of lower-density residential and commercial zones. Promoting mixed-use development is a strategy to reducing the need for long-distance travel.

However, current employment and commuting trends indicate growing demand on regional transportation corridors, as residents increasingly work outside their county of residence. As rural and suburban areas develop, connections between existing and anticipated residential hubs and regional travel corridors should be proactively considered, ensuring minor collectors and local roads can accommodate increased demand. As demand rises, improvements to collectors and local roads may become necessary to address safety and congestion issues.

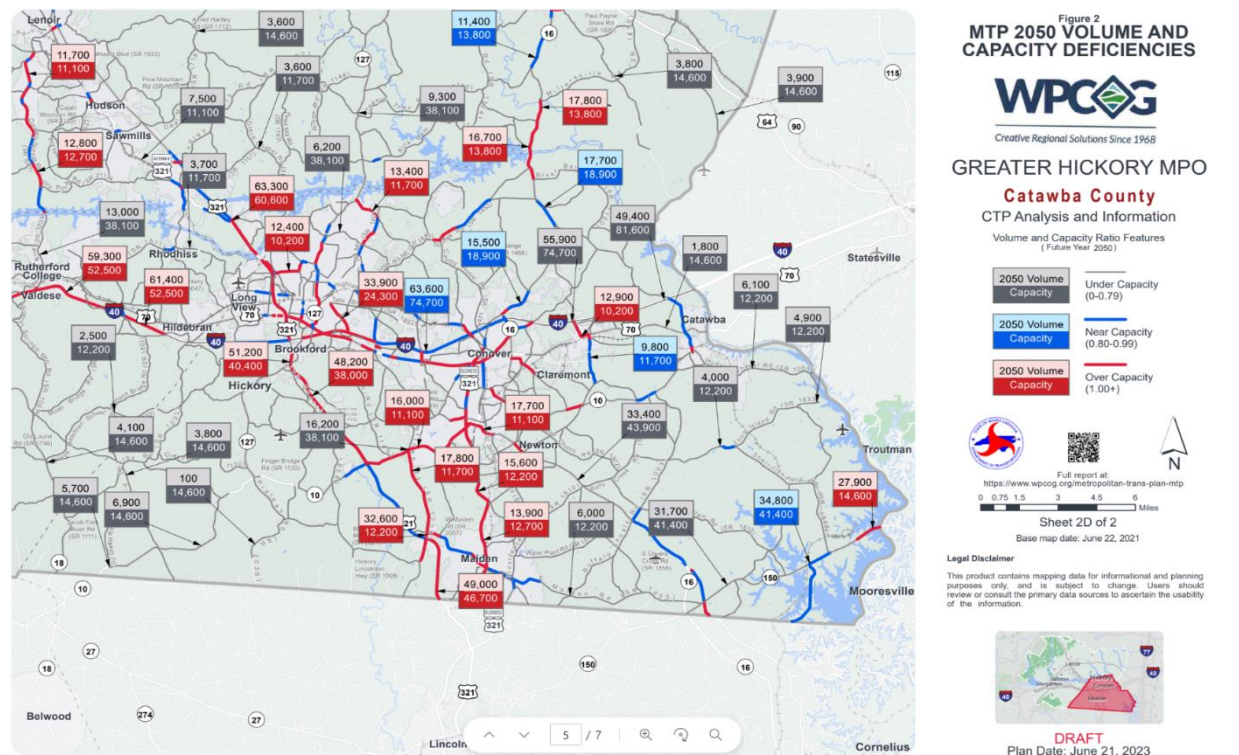
Travel Demand Modeling

In coordination with NCDOT and local planning staff, the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) conducts Travel Demand Modeling for the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Area. Travel Demand Modeling directly informs the transportation decision-making process. Travel demand modeling is a systematic approach used in transportation planning to estimate the future travel patterns and demands within a region. It involves the use of statistical models to predict the likely movements of people and goods, considering various factors such as population growth, economic development, land use patterns, and transportation infrastructure.

Travel demand modeling impacts transportation investment decisions by forecasting future transportation needs, assisting with infrastructure planning and design, optimizing transportation investments, and integrating land use and transportation considerations.

In 2023, the GHMPO met with planning staff from all 28 local governments and NCDOT to update the regional travel demand model. One of the primary products of the Travel Demand Model are deficiency maps, which provide a visual representation of projected transportation system deficiencies. Map **X-X** illustrates a projection of the transportation system in the Greater Hickory Planning Area by the year 2050, assuming all projects in the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan are completed by that time.

The Travel Demand Model projections highlight several critical corridors in Catawba County that will be at or near capacity in the year 2050. Key corridors include segments of: US-321 Business, US-321, Startown Road, I-40, and NC-16. The TDM directly influences the MPO



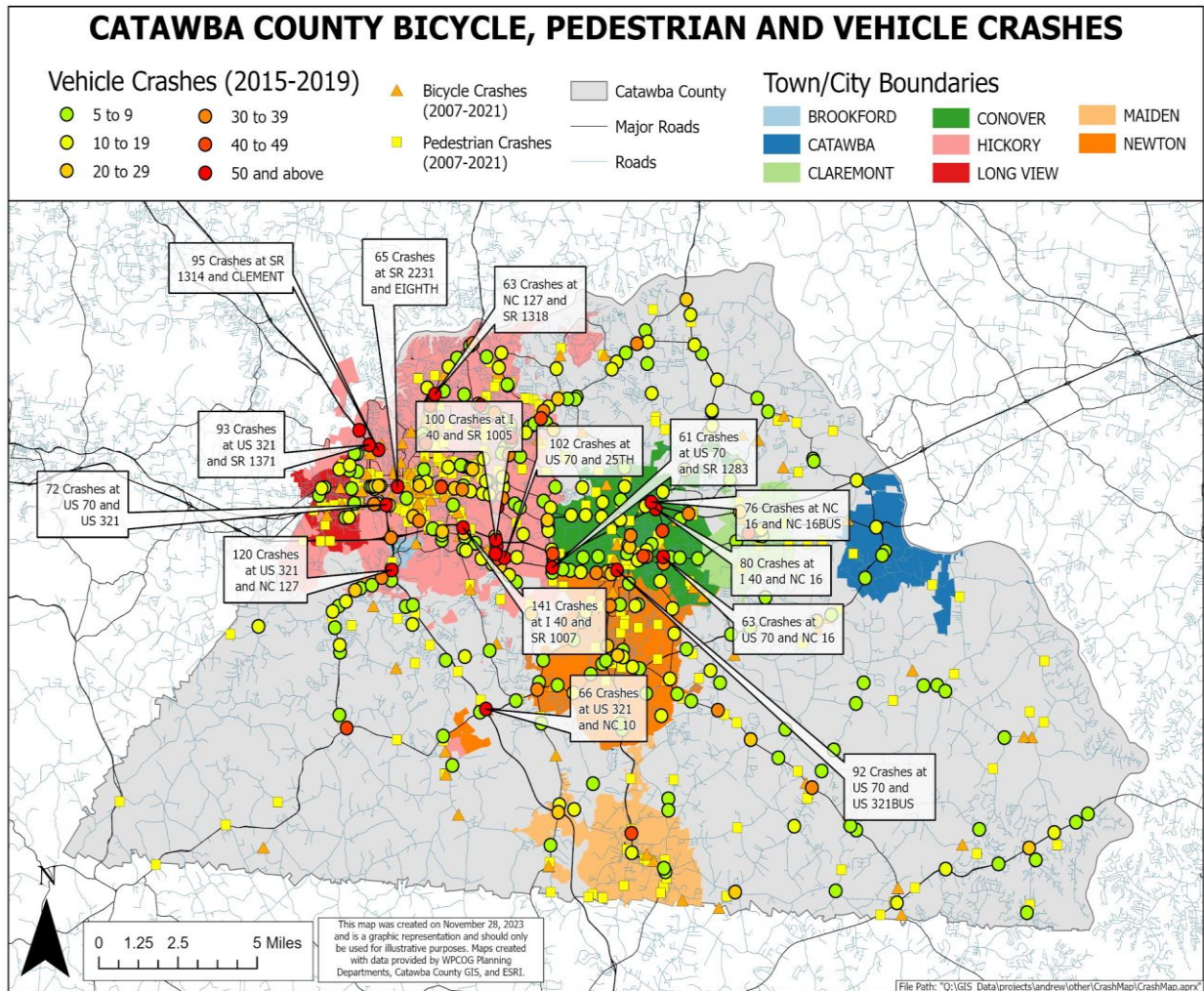
transportation planning process, and many currently documented proposals address these deficiencies.

Safety and Transportation Planning

Safety is an important aspect of transportation planning. The safety of a County's transportation network may be affected by growth and new development.

In addition to general maintenance projects, safety improvement projects can include the construction of new turn lanes, the straightening of curves, the installation of rumble strips, and other improvements. These projects are often referred to as "modernization projects" by NCDOT.

Map X-X shows Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Vehicle crashes in Catawba County from 2015 to 2019. This information should be evaluated when considering intersection improvements, bicycle and pedestrian projects, and other transportation improvement projects. These maps can also be used to evaluate requests for additional transit service, new developments and/or land use changes. Based on GIS analysis, the majority of high-volume crash locations are within municipal limits.



Community Health and Transportation Planning

Community health is impacted by where we live, learn, and work. Catawba County's transportation system makes up a large part of the physical environment, and is therefore a major determinant of the community's overall health.

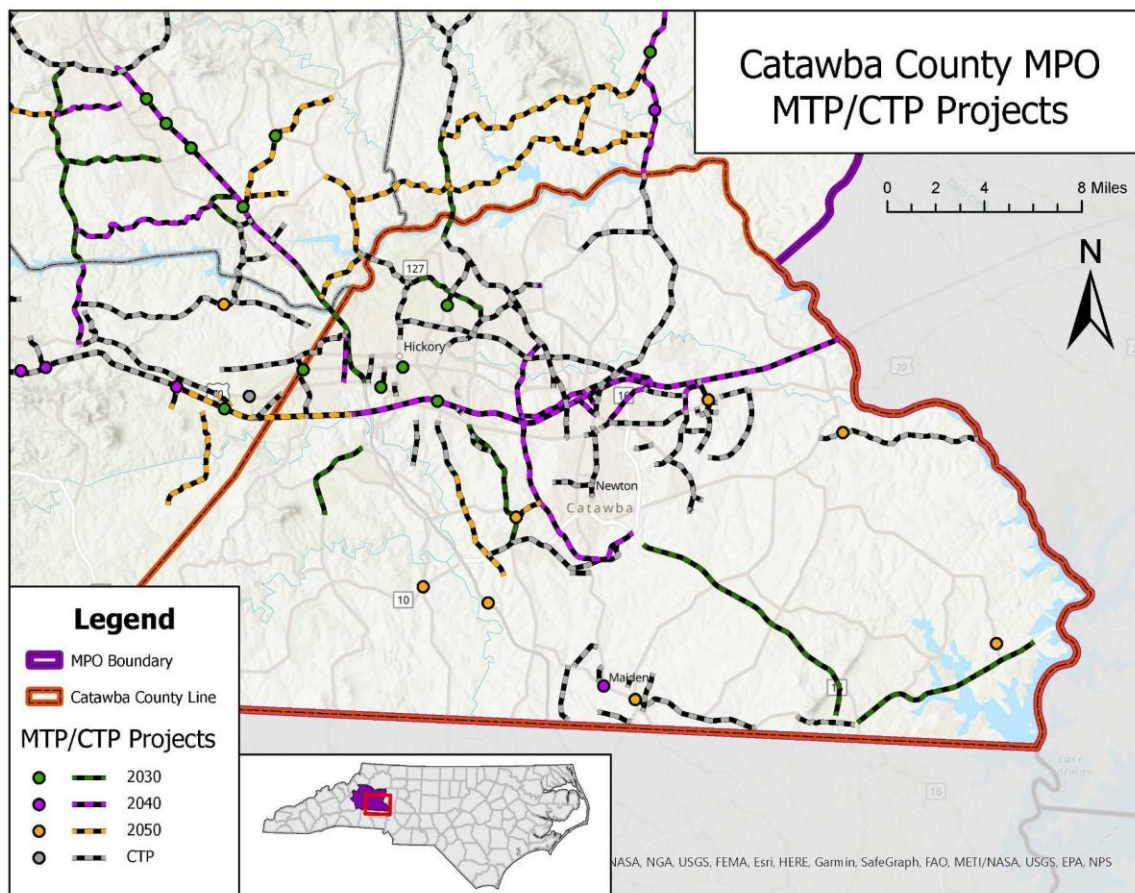
Improving Area Transportation Systems

Based on a comprehensive planning process, the GHMPO makes recommendations for potential roadway projects for Catawba County. Jointly adopted in 2023, the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) are developed by the GHMPO, in close consultation with locally elected and appointed officials, Catawba County staff, and NCDOT. The MTP is a document that identifies transportation projects in the region within a 25-30 year time frame. It is "fiscally constrained", meaning that the cost for projects identified in the MTP must not exceed forecasted state revenues. The CTP looks much farther into the future (30+ years), and identifies projects in a more general way based on projected

long-term growth trends and anticipated land use changes. Unlike the MTP, there are no cost constraints in the CTP – it is considered a long term vision.

***Note:** Projects with a “STIP” identifier are included in the North Carolina State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The first five years of the STIP are fully funded, meaning, each project in the first five years has dedicated funding for all aspects of project implementation. Projects in the latter five years are considered developmental. These projects must be reprioritized through NCDOT and may only have funding for preliminary engineering.

Map **X-X** Illustrates all Catawba County MTP & CTP Projects



MTP Recommended Projects

The following projects are separated by horizon years. Horizon years indicate estimated funding in ten year increments. They do not indicate completion dates. Most projects are currently unfunded. Projects with dedicated funding include right-of-way or construction years.

Horizon Year 2030

US-321 (Burke, Caldwell, & Catawba Counties)

- STIP project U-4700A improves US-321 from North of US 70 in Hickory to US-321A. This highway is a major north-south facility serving the Western Piedmont area of North Carolina. It is listed as Project U-4700 (A, B & C). It also includes B-4450 which is the widening of the bridge over the Catawba River to 6-lanes. The U-4700A segment of this project is scheduled for construction in 2026.

NC 127 (Alexander & Catawba Counties)

- STIP Project R-3603A upgrades the existing two lane facility between Cloninger Mill Road and Richey Road. NC 127 is a major north-south radial serving the Hickory-Mountain View-Bethlehem area and is one of only two major crossings over Lake Hickory from Alexander County, making it a critical link for the travel between the Counties. The existing cross-section of NC 127 varies from 2-3 lanes south of Zion Church Road to 5 lanes through Brookford (SR 1008) and 4-5 lanes in Hickory. The cross-section narrows back down to 2 lanes in the area north of Cloninger Mill Road (SR 1400). Currently, traffic volume is reaching capacity at the 2 lane section through Mountain View and north of Cloninger Road. The problem will increase in the future as the traffic volume increases. Several recommendations are suggested to ease these traffic problems. On the north side, it is recommended that NC 127 be widened to a 4 lane divided boulevard with grass median from Cloninger Road to Rink Dam Road in Alexander County. R-3603A will also include bicycle and pedestrian improvements, notably a multi-use path and sidewalk. Construction is scheduled for 2026.

NC-127

- STIP Project U-2530A widens NC-127 to multi-lane from Huffman Farm Road to Zion Church Road. NC 127 is a major north-south radial serving the Hickory-Brookford-Mountain View area. The existing cross-section of NC 127 varies from 2-3 lanes south of Zion Church Road to 5 lanes through Brookford (SR 1008) and 4-5 lanes in Hickory. On the south side, U-2530A sets NC 127 to be widened to a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median from Huffman Farm Road to Zion Church Road. This recommendation is included in the TIP as Project U-2530A. Construction is scheduled for 2027

NC-150

- STIP Project R-2307A. East of SR 1840 (Greenwood Rd) to Relocated NC 16 (TIP R-2206). NC-150 is widened to multi-lane with Intersection improvements at Greenwood Road. NC 150 is a major east-west route between Shelby, Lincolnton, and Mooresville (I-77). A small portion of NC 150 goes through the southeast corner of Catawba County. NC 150 is recommended to be widened from 2-lanes to multi-lanes from NC 16 in Catawba County to I-77 (R-2307). Right of way is scheduled for 2027.

NC-16

- Widen NC 16 to four lanes from SR 1895 (Tower Road) To SR 1801 Claremont Road southeast of Newton. NC-16 is a major north-south radial serving the Newton-Conover area as well as eastern Catawba County. It also serves as a valuable link to the Charlotte urban area and Alexander County. This project is complete.

NC-127 South

- This project widens NC-127 from Huffman Farm Road to NC Highway 10. NC 127 is a major north south radial serving the Hickory-Brookford-Mountain View area. The existing cross section of NC 127 varies from 2-3 lanes south of Zion Church Road to 5 lanes through Brookford (SR 1008) and 4-5 lanes in Hickory. On the south side, NC 127 is recommended to be widened to a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median from Zion Church Road Huffman Farm and then extend to NC 10. This recommendation is included in the TIP as Project U-2530. This project is unfunded.

Horizon Year 2040

I-40

- This project widens I-40 to six-lanes from the Iredell County line to NC-16. I-40 is anticipated to reach capacity in the near future. This project increases capacity in order to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes. I-40 is the region's major east-west interstate highway. Interstate expansion presents the opportunity for an improved commercial corridor, based on the high volumes of traffic that the interstate produces. This project is unfunded.

I-40

- STIP Project I-5991A widens I-40 from four lanes to six lanes from US 321 to Fairgrove Church Road. I-40 is the region's major east-west interstate highway. Interstate expansion presents the opportunity for an improved commercial corridor, based on the high volumes of traffic that the interstate produces. This project is unfunded.

I-40

- STIP Project I-5991B widens I-40 from Fairgrove Church Road to NC 16. I-40 is the region's major east-west interstate highway. Interstate expansion presents the opportunity for an improved commercial corridor, based on the high volumes of traffic that the interstate produces. Potential shopping districts may benefit from the proximity to major transportation, as identified by Hickory By Choice 2030. This project is unfunded.

Startown Road

- STIP Project R-5113 widens Startown Road from US-70 to NC 10. This project accommodates projected traffic volumes, and also addresses safety issues along the corridor. Bicycle and Pedestrian accommodations align with the Hickory by Choice 2030 complete streets vision. This project is funded for Right of Way in 2028 and Construction in 2031. Recent land use development in relation to Startown road comes in the form of Trivium Corporate Center, formerly referred to as Park 1764. The total area of this park will consist of approximately 300 acres of land area and access to I-40 and US-70.

Horizon Year 2050**NC 16**

- This project modernizes NC 16 from I-40 to Springs Road. NC 16 is a major north-south radial serving the Newton-Conover area as well as eastern Catawba County. It also serves as a valuable link to the Charlotte urban area and Alexander County. This project is a focus section of the larger I-40 to Catawba River modernization project. This project is unfunded.

NC 16

- This project is the second focus area of the above project. This project modernizes NC 16 from Springs Road to the Catawba River. This project is unfunded.

Slanting Bridge Road / Sherrills Ford Road

- This project constructs intersection improvements at the Slanting Bridge Road and Sherrills Ford Road intersection. Safety data and line of sight suggests that improvements may be needed. This project is unfunded.

US 321 / Rocky Ford Road

- This project constructs a new interchange at US 321 and Rocky Ford Road. This project is unfunded.

Robinson Road

- This recommended multi-lane facility extends southward from a location approximately 2000 feet north of NC 10. Paralleling Startown Road, this facility will connect back to the existing West Maiden Road at a location just west of the West Maiden/Startown Road intersection. This facility was proposed to provide

continuity and to add capacity for travel in the area. When complete, the Robinson Road Extension will provide the missing link for a continuous travel between the Catawba Boulevard/Valley Hills regional commercial center of Hickory and the Town of Maiden. The route will provide additional capacity to disburse the traffic that will be generated from the anticipated growth in the area east of US 321 freeway. This project is unfunded.

Conover Startown Road Extension

- This project is an extension of the previously mentioned Conover Startown Road project. Currently, this 2-lane facility serves western Newton by providing a connection between Startown Road and US 70. The proposed extension to Section House Road will facilitate the travel between the anticipated residential growth in western Newton and the Conover West Industrial Park off of US 70 as well as other industrial centers off of US 70-A in Conover. In addition, the combination of this facility with the Section House Road-Kool Park Road-Cloninger Mill Road will form a major north-south corridor serving the entire central part of the planning area. A multi-lane cross-section is recommended. This project is unfunded.

Hickory Lincolnton Highway / Zion Church Road

- This project will construct intersection improvements. Anticipated increases in traffic volumes of southeastern Catawba County support the need for safety improvements at some locations. This project is unfunded.

CTP Recommended Projects (Beyond Horizon Year 2050)

Cloninger Mill Rd. (SR 1400/Kool Park Rd).

- Widen Cloninger Mill and Kool Park Roads to 4-lanes with a landscaped median from NC 127 North in Hickory to Springs Road. This project is unfunded.

East Maiden Rd (SR 1855)

- Construct safety improvements to East Maiden Rd (SR 1855) from US 321-B (Island Ford Road) to NC 150. This is an unfunded project.

North Crosstown Loop

- Construct a new multi-lane facility from NC Hwy 127 in Hickory to NC Hwy 16 in Conover. This is an unfunded project.

Robinson Road Extension

- Extend roadway to Rocky Ford Rd (SR 2019). This is an unfunded project.

Section House Road and Extension

- Modernize Section House Road from US 70A to Conover Startown Road. This is an unfunded project.

Southern Corridor

- Constructs new four lane divided facility from I-40 to US 321 Business, mostly on new location and partially using existing facilities, including Bethel Church Road (SR 1176), River Road (SR 1144), and Settlemyre Bridge Road (SR 1165). This is an unfunded project.

Upper Springs Road

- Widen to a 4-lane divided facility from Sulphur Springs Rd NE to NC 16. This is an unfunded project.

Hudson Chapel Road

- Widen Hudson Chapel Road from NC 10 to the Catawba River. This is an unfunded project.

NC 16 Business (Newton)

- Widen NC 16 Business to multi-lane facility from NC 10 east of St. James Church Road (SR 1880) to NC 16. This is an unfunded project.

Funded Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

The following projects are included in the current State Transportation Improvement Program, and have committed funding for completion. Many of these projects are funded through the GHMPO's Locally Administered Project Program. Each year, the GHMPO awards discretionary funding to applicants within the region for transportation projects including bicycle and pedestrian projects. Map **X-X** illustrates existing bicycle sharrows (shared vehicle/bicycle lanes), bike lanes, greenways (or multiuse paths), sidewalk, as well as proposed projects. All proposed projects and many existing projects shown on the map are funded out of Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP).

Catawba County Complete Streets Multimodal Accommodations:

Through NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy, which requires NCDOT Planners and Designers to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities in the design and improvement of appropriate projects, several regionally significant transportation projects with potential multimodal accommodations are set to take place in Catawba County.

NC 127 (R-3603A)

- STIP Project R-3603A widens NC 127 from Cloninger Mill Road in Catawba County to Rink Dam Road in Alexander County. This project includes multimodal accommodations, featuring a multi-use path and sidewalk. These multimodal accommodations create regional multimodal connectivity.

US 321 (U-4700A)

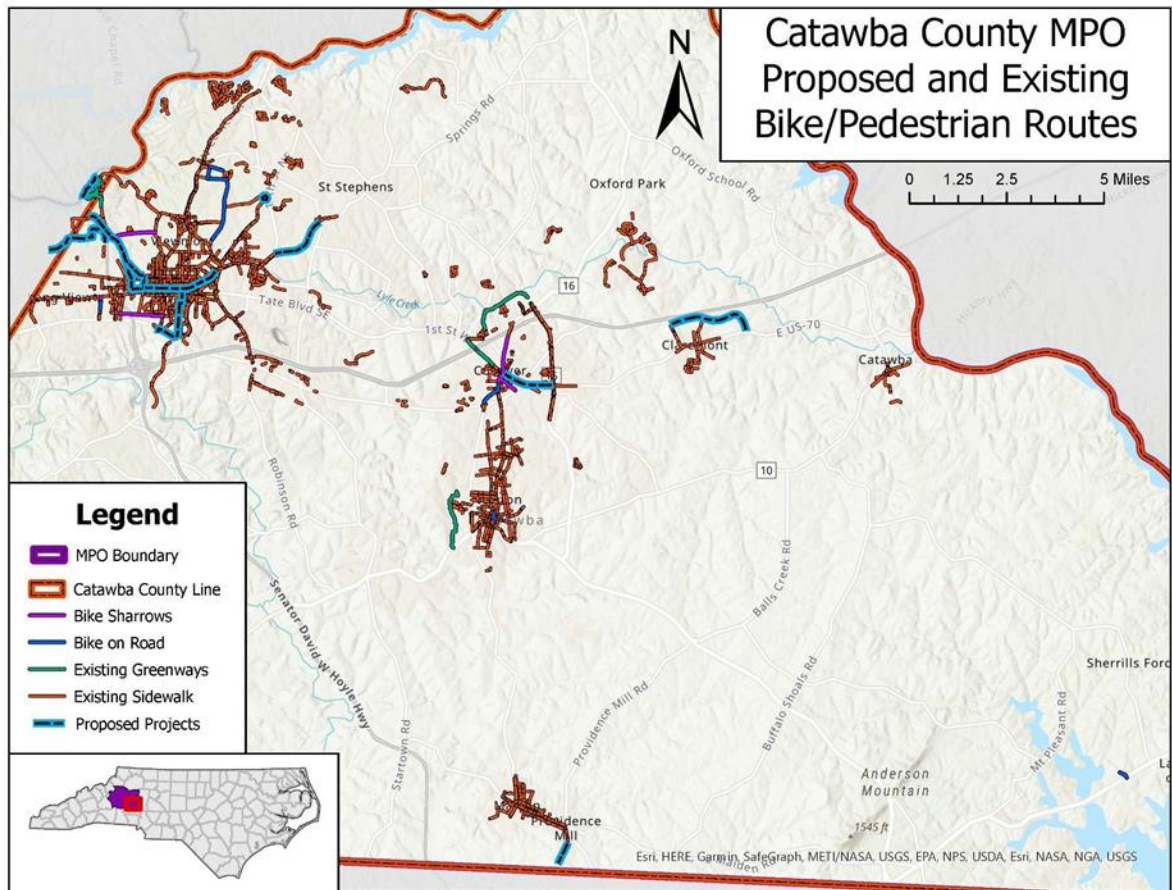
- STIP project U-4700A improves US-321 from north of US 70 to US-321A. This project will include multimodal accommodations. Current designs include a multiuse path from Lake Park Drive to Alex Lee Boulevard. This project is regionally significant with potential for future regional multimodal connectivity.

NC 127 South (U-2530A)

- STIP Project U-2530A widens NC 127 South from Huffman Farm Road to Zion Church Road. This project will include multimodal accommodations, however, final designs are not complete.

NC 150 (R-2307A)

- STIP Project R-2307A widens NC 150 from NC 16 to Greenwood Road. No multimodal accommodations are currently featured in designs, but current project designs do meet NCDOT standards for rural multimodal shoulder width. Catawba County has entertained the possibility of entering into a cost-share agreement for multimodal improvements.



Transportation and Design Policies

Transportation policies help guide which improvements are made to existing roadways and also set standards for new projects. Policies are in place that require streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe and convenient travel for all users – regardless of their mode of transportation or ability.

Table X-X: State and Regional Transportation Policies

Policy	Policy Description
Complete Streets Policy	This 2019 policy requires NCDOT planners and designers to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities in the design and improvement of all appropriate transportation projects in North Carolina. Examples of multimodal facilities include sidewalks, multi-use paths and bike lanes.
Greenway Accommodations	In 2015, NCDOT approved guidelines for the accommodation of future greenways under bridges. The guidelines include a decision-making approach and cost-sharing recommendations.
Bicycle Policy	This policy details guidelines for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of bicycle facilities and accommodations.
Pedestrian Policy Guidelines	These policies allow NCDOT to work with local governments to add sidewalks in coordination with highway improvement projects. State funds are available on a sliding scale to match funds provided by the local government, which will be responsible for maintaining the sidewalk.
Administrative Action to Include Greenway Plans	In 1994, NCDOT adopted administrative guidelines to consider greenways and greenway crossings during the highway planning process. This policy was incorporated so that critical corridors, which have been adopted by localities for future greenways, will not be severed by highway construction.
Bridge Policy	NCDOT's Bridge Policy establishes design elements for new and reconstructed bridges on the state road system. It includes requirements for sidewalks and bicycle facilities on bridges, including minimum handrail heights and sidewalk widths.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Complete Streets Policy

By coordinating with the GHMPO and NCDOT planners and designers, NCDOT Complete Streets Policy makes bicycle and pedestrian improvements a possibility.

NCDOT's Complete Streets Policy requires NCDOT planners and designers to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities in the design and improvement of all appropriate transportation projects. Examples of multimodal facilities include roads with sidewalks, side paths, bike lanes, and safe access for all users.

When a state-maintained road is identified for improvements through the project prioritization process – and a locally adopted plan contains specific recommendations for complete street facilities on that road, NCDOT will fully fund the cost of designing, acquiring right of way, and constructing those facilities (not including elements identified as betterments). However, NCDOT must find the recommendations feasible. *The local government is required to enter into a long-term maintenance agreement for all complete street improvements.*

Complete Street Cost Share			
Facility Type	In Plan	Not in Plan, but Need Identified	Betterment
Pedestrian Facility	NCDOT pays full	Cost Share	Local
On Road Bicycle Facility	NCDOT pays full	NCDOT pays full	Local
Separated Bicycle Facility	NCDOT pays full	Cost Share	Local
Greenway Crossing	NCDOT pays full	Cost Share	Local
Transit Facility*	NCDOT pays full	Cost Share	Local

If an improvement is identified during the project prioritization process but is not included in a local plan, a cost sharing arrangement can be implemented. The amount of cost share is based on the local government's population:

Cost Share Formula		
Jurisdiction Population*	Cost Participation	
	NCDOT	Local
> 100,000	80%	20%
50,000 to 100,000	85%	15%
10,000 to 50,000	90%	10%
< 10,000	95%	5%
*For counties, the non-municipal county population, OSBM		

Transportation infrastructure requirements should be considered when evaluating requests from developers to alter existing land use and zoning plans. Because projects that are potentially eligible for complete street improvements are identified during the project prioritization process the County should work closely with the GHMPO through all phases of that process. The prioritization process evaluates new transportation projects every two years. The N.C. Department of Transportation uses a transparent, systematic and data-driven process for prioritizing making investment decisions to the major transportation system in North Carolina..

Projects are evaluated based on their merit through an analysis of the existing and future conditions, the benefits the project is expected to provide, the project's multi-modal characteristics and how the project fits in with local priorities.

Public Transportation

The Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority (dba Greenway Public Transportation) provides public transportation in Catawba County. Greenway Public Transportation operates a traditional fixed-route system in Catawba County, with seven different routes currently serving Catawba County communities.

Route 1: West Hickory

- Provides public transportation connection to: US 70/Walmart Neighborhood Market, Hilltop Apartments in Long View, and the West Hickory Senior Center, among other points of interest.

Route 2: NC 127/Springs Road

- Provides public transportation connection to: NC 127 North, the St. Stephens area of Catawba County, Silver Springs, and Lenoir-Rhyne University.

Route 3: Hickory/Newton/Conover via US 70 (Outbound)

- Provides public transportation connection to: Lenoir-Rhyne Boulevard and Salvation Army, Valley Hills Mall, CVCC Main Campus and CVCC East Campus, Walmart in Hickory, Catawba DSS, Catawba Valley Medical Center, Fairgrove Area, Newton neighborhood market, Catawba County Justice Center.

Route 4: Hickory/Newton/Conover via US 70 (Inbound)

- Provides public transportation connection to: Downtown Newton, Sandalwood Court Apartments, Catawba Pines Apartments, Pin Station, Boundary Street, Catawba Valley Medical Center, Catawba DSS, Ridge Crest Apartments, Walmart in Hickory.

Route 5: US 70/Conover (Outbound)

- Provides public transportation connection to: South Center Street, Walmart supercenter, Zion Hill, Goodwill, Food Lion, Neighbors Network, Walmart in Conover.

Route 6: US 70/ Conover (Inbound)

- Provides public transportation connection to: Walmart in Conover, Downtown Conover, Conover School, Walmart Supercenter, South Center Street.

Route 7: Tate Boulevard/ NC 127

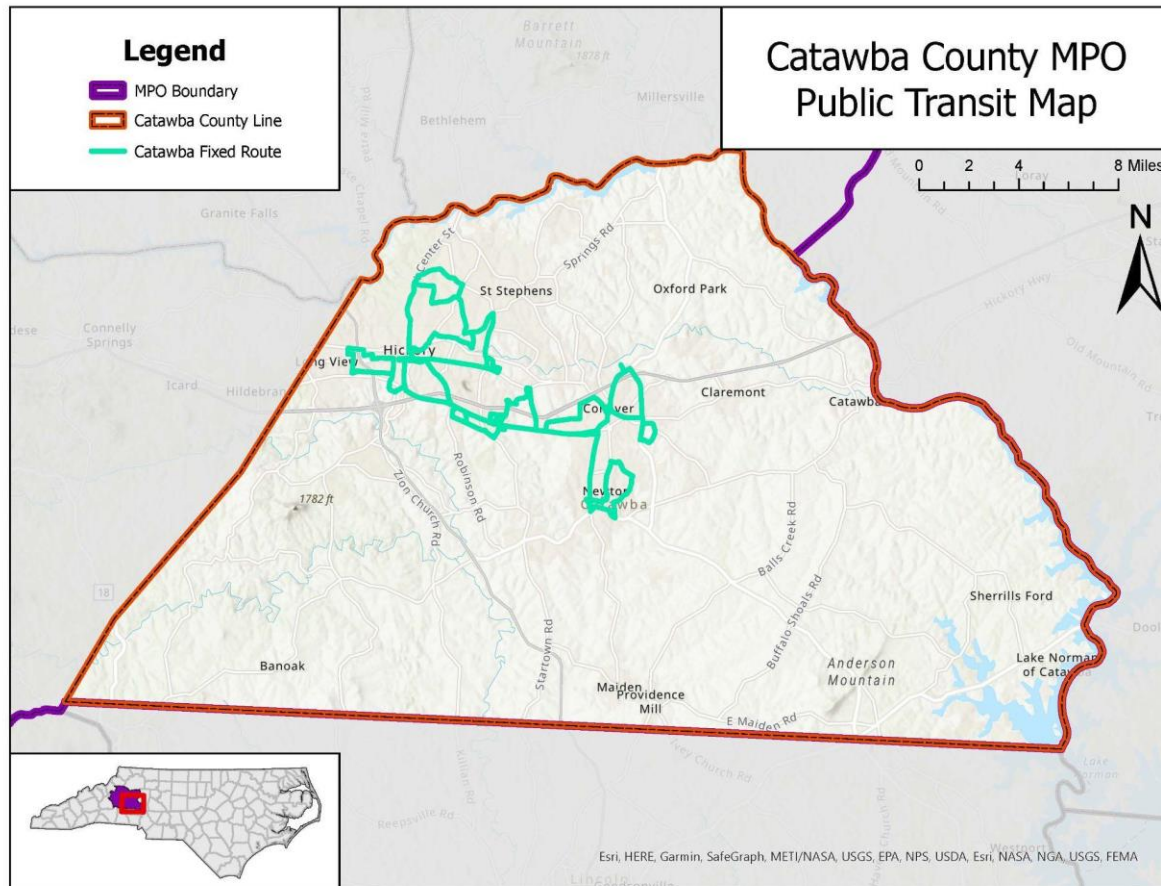
- Provides public transportation connection to: Tate Boulevard, Graystone Eye, Hickory VA, Walmart Neighborhood Market, Sandy Ridge Plaza, Pinecrest, NC 127.

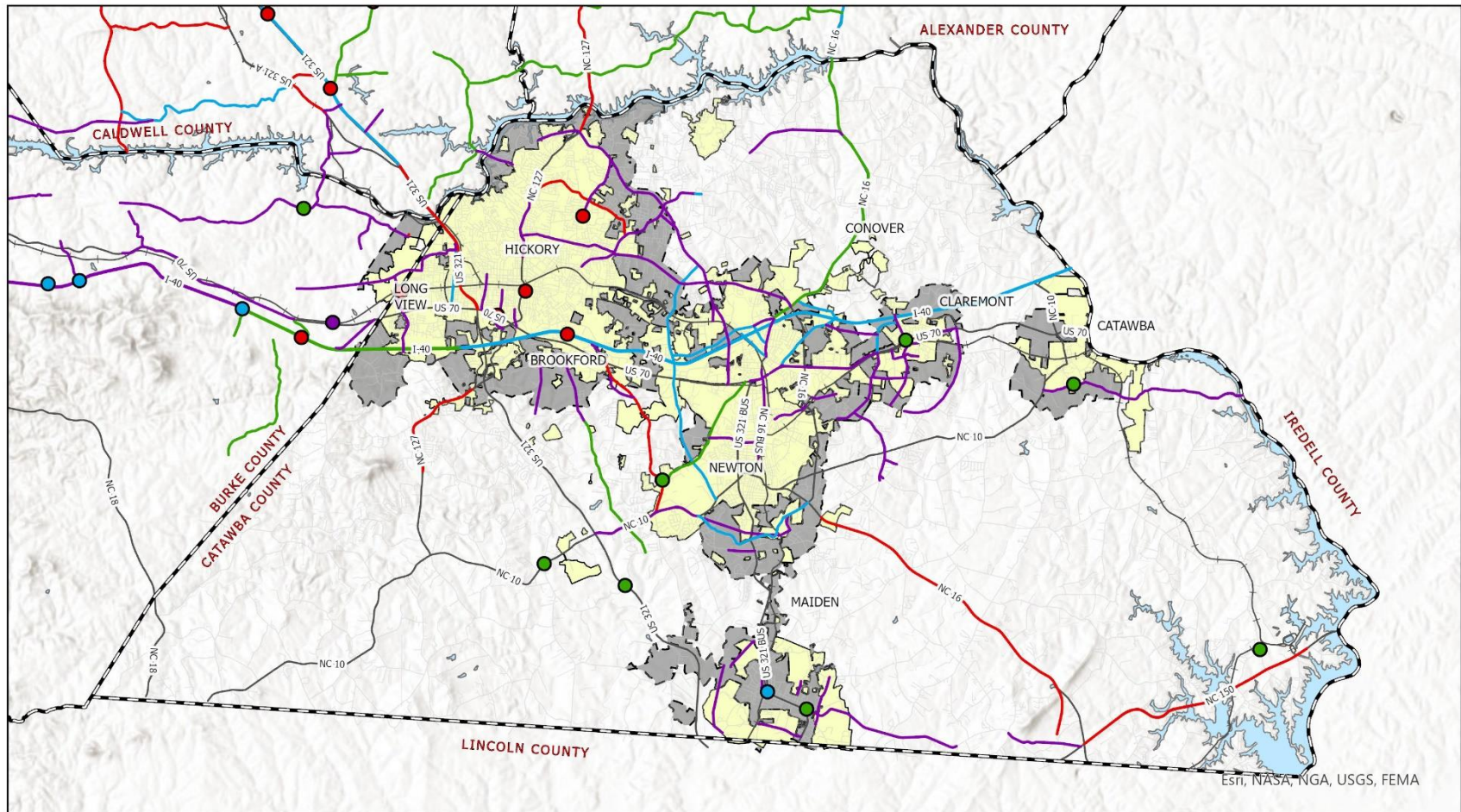
Future Connection

Map **X-X** illustrates the current connectivity between each of these routes. Based on demographic data collected in 2022, the GHMPO anticipates considerable population growth in the eastern portion of Catawba County. Catawba County, Greenway Public Transportation, and the GHMPO should monitor population trends in eastern Catawba County to determine potential need for expanded public transportation services.

In 2024, the Greenways Board of Directors initiated a Comprehensive Operational Analysis to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of these routes, and to explore the possible applicability of micro-transit and other well-established trends in transit service within the Greenways system. As this analysis concludes and results are implemented, future opportunities for service expansion and enhanced

connectivity should be evaluated, specifically in areas of projected population growth.





catawba county

WPCOG

**Catawba County
Metropolitan Transportation
Plan Projects**

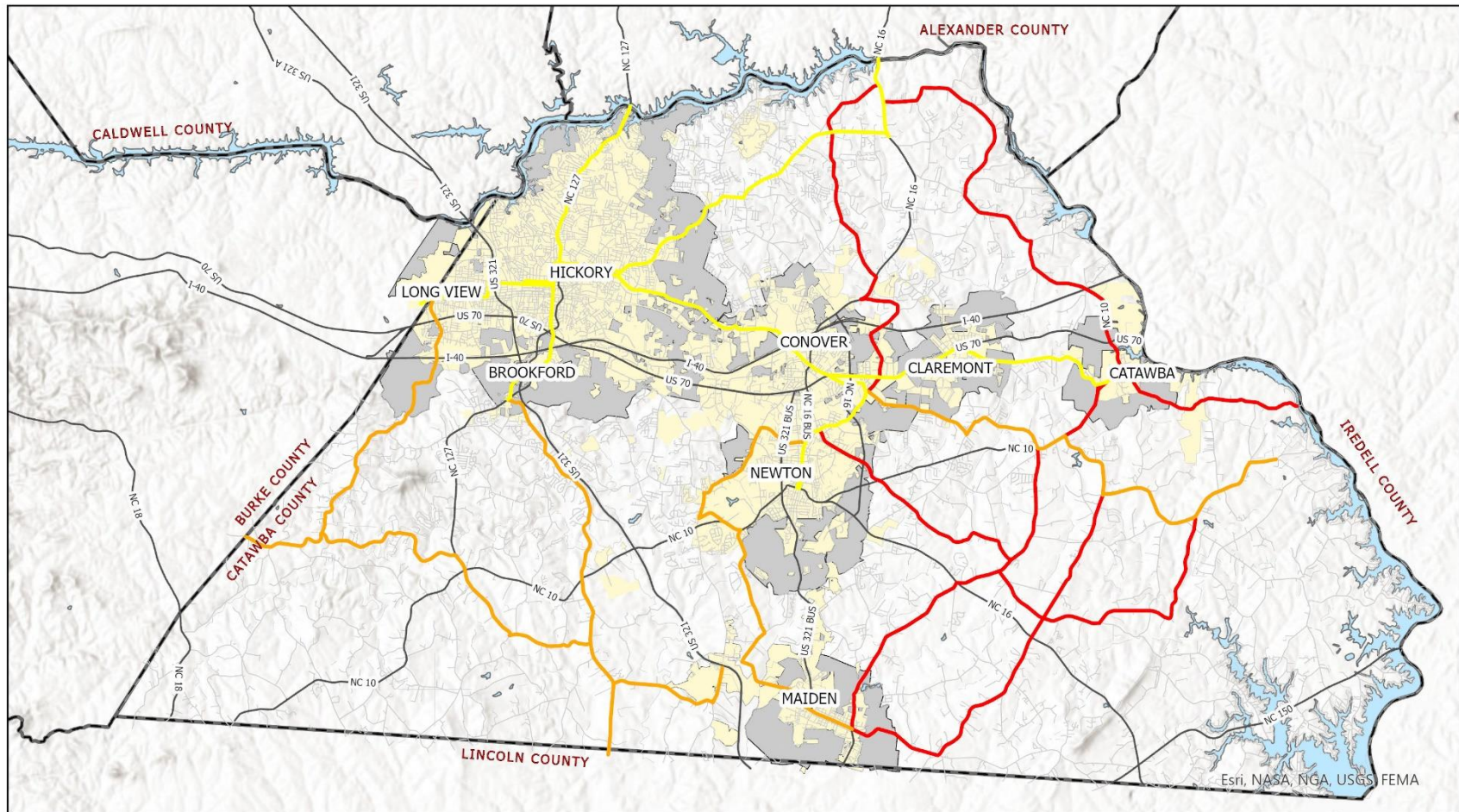
Legend

- 2030
- 2040
- 2050
- CTP
- County Boundary
- City Limit
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
- Major Lakes
- Major Roads
- Railroad

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on December 6, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.



County of Catawba Western Piedmont Bike Plan Network

Legend

- Major Roads
- Roads
- ▭ County Boundary
- ▭ Major Lakes
- ▭ City Limits
- ▭ Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)

Network Tiers

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Tier 3

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on December 8, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Evaluate the opportunity to strengthen connectivity requirements within new developments and between new and existing developments.
2. Consider requirements for limited access onto major thoroughfares through controlled curb cuts.
3. Plan for future connector roads to reduce traffic congestion.
4. Explore opportunities for rail-to-trail and rails-with-trails conversions, as appropriate.
5. Identify Catawba County's road and transportation improvement project priorities, and advocate for favorable funding and schedule considerations through the Greater Hickory MPO and NCDOT.
6. Consider potential transportation system impacts when evaluating proposed developments, and work to focus new development in proximity of existing employment, educational, residential, and recreational hubs.
7. Look for opportunities to incorporate considerations of multi-modal connectivity into planning efforts, including bicycle, pedestrian, and trail connections and amenities.
8. Explore opportunities to enhance transit services focused on increasing access of underserved populations to essential services.
9. Actively participate in regional transportation planning activities coordinated through the Greater Hickory MPO and NCDOT, including Travel Demand model updates, Metropolitan Transportation Plan updates, Regional Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan updates, etc.

4. RESOURCES & SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICES

SUMMARY

A diverse array of services is required in support of a vibrant community that continues to grow and thrive. Catawba County contributes to the quality of life of its residents by offering a range of public services through various County departments. Several departments address the physical environment, such as Planning, Parks, Utilities and Engineering, Solid Waste, Water and Sewer, Soil & Water Conservation, and Cooperative Extension Services. Catawba County partners with the three local Boards of Education (Catawba County Schools, Hickory City Schools, and Newton-Conover City Schools) to support public K-12 education throughout the county. The County provides public safety and emergency services through 911 communications, animal control/shelters, EMS, Fire & Rescue, and the Sheriff's Office.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Providing services to support land development is a responsibility of the county. Various departments within the County collaborate to process development projects, including Planning, Utilities and Engineering, Environmental Health, the Register of Deeds, and GIS Services. Some of the other public services Catawba County offers that touch land use are Cooperative Extension, the Soil and Water Conservation District, Water and Sewer, and Solid Waste.

The **Planning** Department is responsible for processing development projects of citizens and developers. Planning staff answer land use questions, handle rezoning and special use permit applications, and review and approve subdivision plats before the process moves to the Register of Deeds, where the plats are recorded. After recordation, subdivisions are mapped in the County's land records unit, and the digital data is made available to the public through the County's online GIS system. Planning is also responsible for approving zoning permit applications for property owners and developers.

Utilities and Engineering consists of several units: Erosion Control and Stormwater, Building Services, Water and Sewer, Solid Waste, and Local Code Compliance.

Erosion Control and Stormwater is responsible for plan review, permits, and site inspections for land disturbance activities. This unit monitors small site construction projects when disturbing less than once acre with Small Site Erosion Control Permits, as well projects disturbing more than one acre that require Erosion Control Permits.

Building Services administers the NC State building code regulations. Building Services does plan review and inspections for commercial, multi-family, and residential projects in the unincorporated areas of the County and for each of the County's eight municipalities. The Permit Center processes building permit applications and coordinates the building permit review process.

Water & Sewer manages access to public water and sewer services for residential and nonresidential developments within the County's jurisdiction, outside of municipal service districts. Through agreements between Catawba County and various municipalities, public water and sewer services are available in parts of the unincorporated County. These local governments work together to provide water and sewer services to citizens within Catawba County in designated areas.

Solid Waste operates and maintains the Blackburn Landfill and the Landfill Gas to Energy program. It also provides educational outreach about recycling and waste reduction throughout the County. The Blackburn Landfill is permitted for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). The Landfill also operates a Treatment and Processing Site where wood/yard waste materials are received and ground into compost or mulch. The amount of space available at the landfill is estimated to last the County roughly another 70 years. The next cell expansion is planned for construction in 2025 and should be ready to begin receiving waste in 2028.

The County offers residential curbside collection services for a monthly rate through an exclusive Solid Waste Management Franchise Agreement with Republic Services throughout the unincorporated county. There are also five convenience centers located throughout the County for solid waste disposal and recycling services for residents without curbside pick-up.

Environmental Health is part of Catawba County Public Health. This unit administers rules and regulations issued by the NC Department of Environmental Quality. Its aim is to protect and promote the health of the county's residents through timely, thorough review of well and septic plans, and inspections of facilities, restaurants, public swimming pools, tattoo parlors, hotels and other public spaces.

Catawba County **Soil and Water District's** mission is to ensure a quality urban and rural environment with clean water, protected soil resources and properly managed forests and wildlife, and an environmentally, economically and culturally viable agriculture community. This department works closely with federal, state, and local agencies, such as the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Carolina Land and Lake Resources Conservation and Development, Division of Water Quality, Corp of Engineers, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Farm Service Agency, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, and North Carolina Forest Service, on natural resources concerns.

Catawba County Cooperative Extension Service, a part of North Carolina State University, provides research-based information to the citizens of Catawba County. This system empowers farmers, ranchers, and communities of all sizes to meet the challenges they face, adapt to changing technology, and improve nutrition and food safety. Some of the core areas that the Catawba County NC Cooperative Extension handles are Livestock, Local Food, Health and Nutrition, and 4-H Youth Development.

PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Catawba County is responsible for establishing service levels and providing for public safety and emergency services throughout the unincorporated County. Primary responsibilities include 911 communications, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, law enforcement services (provided by the Catawba County Sheriff's Office), and fire protection and rescue services. Catawba County contracts with an array of public safety response agencies to provide consistent, reliable service. Catawba County is also fortunate to have a publicly owned hospital, Catawba Valley Medical Center, in its community to serve residents of the County and the region.

Catawba County's **911 Communications Center** provides the region with unified emergency communications dispatch. The Communication Center dispatches over 35 different agencies and departments within the County. This includes the Catawba County Sheriff's Office, municipal police and fire departments, and rural fire districts and rescue squads throughout the county.

Catawba County **Emergency Medical Services** provides a full array of pre-hospital medical care including advanced life support, basic life support, specialty care transports, non-emergency transports, and specialty teams. Catawba County EMS has 12 bases located throughout the county operating nine 24-hour units, three prime-time units, and two non-emergency units.

Fire & Rescue: Fire protection in Catawba County is provided by both paid and volunteer firefighters. There are fourteen fire departments placed throughout the county along with four rescue squads that provide emergency medical services to residents. Fire protection services are provided through the county, municipalities, or special fire districts.

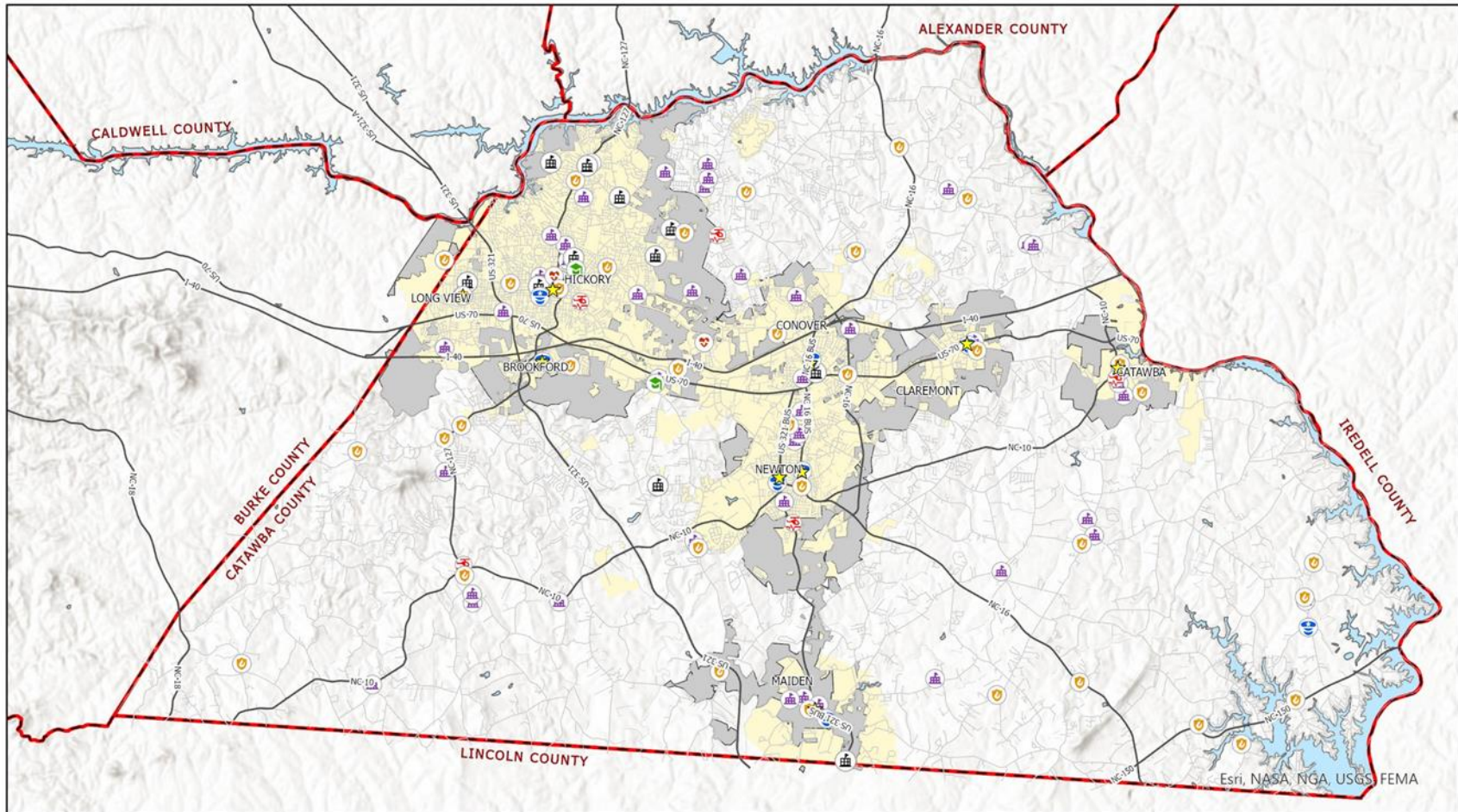
Law Enforcement: The Catawba County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services in the unincorporated areas of the County and operates a detention facility. Each municipality is served by its own municipal law enforcement agency. The North Carolina State Highway Patrol has a presence in Catawba County as well.

Animal Services consists of two primary units: Animal Control and the Animal Shelter. Animal Control operates in the unincorporated areas of the County to investigate animal cruelty reports, promote responsible pet ownership, and protect the public from diseased & dangerous animals. Animal Control also provides citizen outreach to promote positive outcomes for both residents and animals. The Animal Shelter is responsible for housing strays and surrendered animals and facilitating adoptions.

Catawba Valley Medical Center serves as the region's largest non-profit community-owned hospital. The hospital provides citizens with access to critical surgical procedures, cancer treatment, critical care (ER), diabetes, heart, imaging, infectious diseases, maternity care, nursing, orthopedics, psychiatry services, rehabilitation, sleep disorders, stroke, surgery, wound healing/hyperbaric services and many more. They operate with the goal of promoting a healthier community, while also providing healthcare to all of those who need it.

EDUCATION

In Catawba County, there are three public school districts: Catawba County Schools, Hickory City Schools, and Newton-Conover City Schools. All three of these school systems are governed by independently elected governing boards, separate from Catawba County Board of Commissioners. The County works with each school system to fund capital expenses (buildings and maintenance) to ensure the public school systems can serve our residents and maintain a high quality of life. Current expense funding is also provided, along with funds to support local pay supplements for teachers. These school systems contain numerous schools, which consist of twenty-four elementary schools, eight middle schools, eight high schools, and four other schools. Catawba County also has one community college (Catawba Valley Community College), two public university campuses (Appalachian State University & Western Carolina University), and one private university (Lenoir-Rhyne University).



County of Catawba Community Facilities

Legend

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| ★ Town Hall | — Major Roads |
| 🚒 Fire Stations | — Roads |
| 🚑 EMS Bases | 🔴 County Boundary |
| 🏥 Hospitals | 🟦 Major Lakes |
| 👮 Law Enforcement | 🟡 City Limits |
| 🎓 Colleges | 🟤 Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs) |
| 🎓 Private Schools | |
| 🎓 Public Schools | |

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on November 29, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.

RESOURCES & SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Strategically plan any public infrastructure expansion to be consistent with Future Land Use maps for more intense commercial and industrial uses and higher density residential uses.
2. Communicate regularly with school systems, partner public safety agencies, and other key service providers regarding growth trends and development patterns to anticipate and skillfully plan for future service needs.
3. Prioritize corridors for County water and sewer infrastructure investment, consistent with Future Land Use plans and in support of land use and economic development goals.
4. Maximize existing utility investments by supporting infill development and redevelopment opportunities, in collaboration with municipal partners. Focus more intensive residential, commercial, and industrial uses in areas with infrastructure sufficient to support those uses.
5. Ensure water and sewer system is financially solvent, and plan to sustainably address routine system maintenance expenses and life cycle replacement costs through development-driven fee structure.
6. Evaluate opportunities for farmland preservation in agriculturally productive areas of the County in collaboration with appropriate partners.
7. Encourage diversification of the County tax base through mixed commercial, industrial, and residential uses.
8. Plan and implement a range of solid waste management services that meet Catawba County's current and anticipated future needs.
9. Ensure efficient, effective, predictable, and timely development services throughout Catawba County through continually evaluating development processes, procedures, use of technology (ePermitting), and communication between relevant departments and jurisdictions.
10. Continuously evaluate public safety response (Sheriff, EMS, Fire) to ensure they meet service levels established by the Board of Commissioners.
11. Monitor potential grant opportunities from the federal and state government, as well as nonprofit organizations to help with infrastructure improvements.
12. Promote citizen outreach to grow awareness and understanding of County services and resources.

5. PARKS & RECREATION

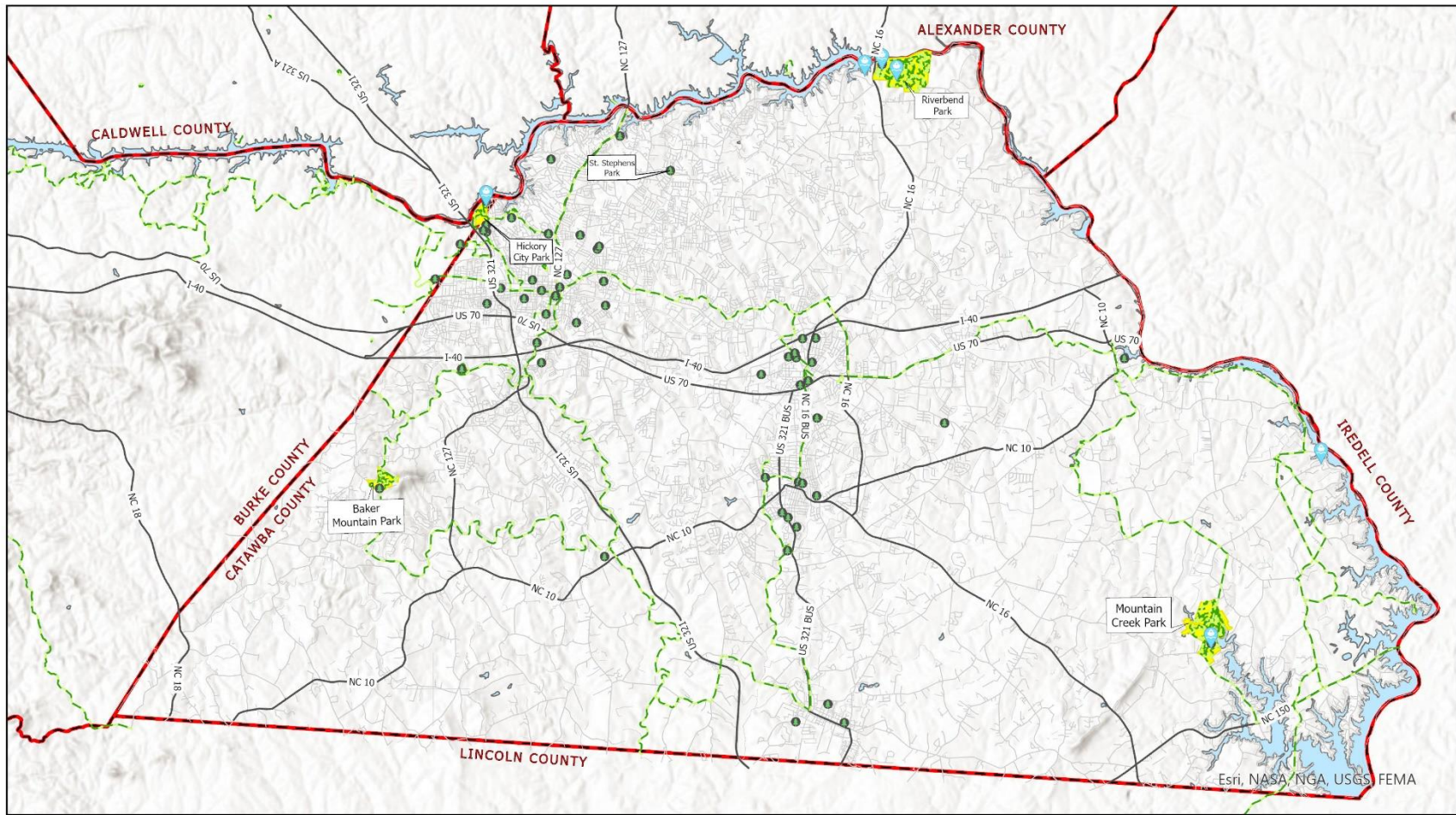
EXISTING FACILITIES

The Catawba County Park System preserves nearly 1,500 total acres of scenic, diverse habitat and gives patron access to recreation in the county's great outdoors. The County owns and operates four parks: Bakers Mountain, Mountain Creek, Riverbend, and St. Stephens. Riverbend and Bakers Mountain Parks were created using matching fund grants from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). Riverbend Park offers hiking, biking, paddle access, fishing, wildlife and habitat observation, education, dog park access and orienteering. St. Stephens Park offers a hiking trail, LITeracy Trail and Garden Walk, playground and cornhole boards, picnicking, access to a large and small dog park, and wildlife and habitat observation. Bakers Mountain Park offers hiking trails, a LITeracy Trail, picnicking, wildlife and habitat observation, and education. (LITeracy Trails include stations that trace the storyline of different children's books and offer opportunities for alternative exercise and exploration.) Mountain Creek Park is the newest park. Park amenities include an adventure playground, pickleball courts, large and small dog parks, fishing pier, paddle launch, nature center, outdoor classroom, and biking and hiking trails, pump tracks, and picnicking.

Catawba County completed its most recent Comprehensive Parks Master Plan in 2015, with an update planned for 2025. The Master Plan includes recommendations and opportunities for consideration regarding priorities for park system investment and future development. The Board of Commissioners' Strategic Plan, first created in 2016-17, includes a focus area specific to fully leveraging the County's natural, environmental, and cultural amenities. The Strategic Plan is undergoing update in 2024, and the results of that update will provide useful policy guidance and direction for incorporation into the Parks Master Plan. In addition to the County's parks, Catawba County residents and visitors both have access to municipal parks in nearby cities and towns, and also to regional recreational amenities like state parks, wilderness areas, Duke Energy's Federal Energy Relicensing Commission (FERC) public amenities, the Wilderness Gateway State Trail, and Carolina Thread Trail, to name a sampling. Planning activities will seek to integrate strategies to optimize these various recreational amenities for maximum public benefit.

PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLING, GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY

The recreational opportunities offered by Catawba County Parks play a role for residents and visitors alike. Residents of Catawba County see the linkage between recreational opportunities and quality of life. One aspect of quality of life that could potentially be enhanced is increased pedestrian and cycle accessibility to the parks. Identifying gaps in sidewalk infrastructure, trails, greenways, and multi-use paths could provide a focus for pursuing public-private partnerships. This plan recommends encouraging developers to provide connectivity between public facilities, and also work with nonprofit groups, such as Carolina Thread Trail, to develop trail connectivity where possible. The Parks Master Plan will explore this concept more thoroughly.



catawba county



County of Catawba Parks and Recreation

Legend

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Parks | Major Roads |
| Lake/River Access | Roads |
| Trails | County Boundary |
| Recreation Areas | Major Lakes |

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



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PARKS & RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Through the Parks Master Plan update programmed for 2025, establish and advance a vision for the future of park offerings in Catawba County that capitalizes on the area's natural amenities and incorporates a range of recreational opportunities.
2. Partner with community organizations, other local governments, and nonprofits to build, maintain, and enhance parks that provide for quality of life and healthy lifestyles along with wildlife habitat.
3. Evaluate opportunities to attract large-scale recreation projects as a strategy to promote tourism and yield economic impact.
4. Analyze the possibility of establishing recreation and development connectivity as an essential element of residential and commercial development.
5. Maintain and enhance existing recreational facilities in the County.
 - a. Continue to follow the recommendations established in the Catawba County Comprehensive Parks Master Plan.
 - b. Continue to pursue grant opportunities for recreational funding.
 - c. Increase ADA accessibility at new and existing parks.
6. Promote land uses and site designs that make walking/bicycling convenient and enjoyable.
7. Link the park system with greenways, paths and trails.

6. NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

CATAWBA NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural topographic features and environmental characteristics strongly influence human settlement patterns. For example, flat terrain may lead to the development of agricultural, residential, or industrial land uses, while areas subject to flooding or steep slope areas might have development limitations governed by specific regulations. This chapter evaluates the County's existing natural characteristics and its built environment, including cultural resources.

The Catawba River is an important natural resource in the County. The Catawba River and its chain of lakes provide drinking water for Catawba County residents and our neighbors to the south, including the fast-growing Charlotte region. Protecting this resource and its tributaries is an important role of land use planning. This chapter will review water quality, watershed and floodplain considerations, along with natural heritage, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources in the County.

WATERSHEDS

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, or stream. It is separated from other watersheds by high points on the land such as hills or ridges. A water supply watershed is an area where water drains to a point and is collected and held then used as a public drinking water source.

Watershed regulations, which are established by the State of North Carolina, protect the County's drinking water supply by limiting the amount of impervious surface that can be developed within a watershed in order to reduce the velocity and amount of direct runoff that enters streams or lakes. Impervious surfaces (paved roads and parking lots, rooftops, sidewalks) prohibit water from percolating into the ground and facilitate the flow of pollutants such as oil and road salt into nearby bodies of water. Allowing stormwater to infiltrate through vegetation and soil can filter some contaminants out of drinking water supplies.

The County's streams and creeks drain into the Catawba River, which then drains into Lake Hickory, Lookout Shoals Lake and then into Lake Norman, within the Catawba River Basin. There are also bodies of water that run south into the South Fork Catawba River. A portion of the planning jurisdiction of Catawba County is subject to the Water Supply Watershed regulations. (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). The lake is the source of drinking water for a significant number of people throughout the region. More stringent development regulations are imposed in the Protected Areas and the Critical Areas. The regulations are a requirement of the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality, and are administered by Catawba County. The density of proposed development is governed by these watershed regulations. Developers may apply for the right to develop more property if they install engineered controls to mitigate stormwater runoff. In general, development on lands that are closer to drinking water sources have a higher design standard to address water quality.

Water Supply III (WS-III) are waters used as sources of water supply for drinking, culinary, or food processing purposes where a more protective WS-I or II classification is not feasible. WS-III waters are generally in low to moderately developed watersheds. The Jacob Fork River is the primary water source for the City of Newton's drinking water. It is labeled as a WS-III Water Supply.

Water Supply IV (WS-IV) are waters used as sources of water supply for drinking, culinary, or food processing purposes where a WS-I, II or III classification is not feasible. WS-IV waters are generally in moderately to highly developed watersheds or Protected Areas. There are numerous water intakes throughout the Catawba River chain of lakes. A significant portion of eastern Catawba County has been designated as WS-IV area.

There are two levels of regulation for WS-IV designated spaces: Critical Area (CA) and Protected Area (PA). The CA is the area immediately adjacent to a water supply intake or reservoir where risk associated with pollution is greater than risk associated with pollution from the remaining portion of the watershed. The boundary of a CA is defined as extending 1/2 mile in a straight-line fashion upstream from and draining to an intake located directly in a river, or extending 1/2 mile in a straight line fashion upstream from and draining to the normal pool elevation of a reservoir in which an intake is located.

Protected Area (PA) is the area adjoining and upstream of the critical area in a WS-IV water supply in which protection measures are required. The boundary of a PA is defined as extending 10 miles in an as-the-river-runs manner upstream from and draining to an intake located directly in a river, or extending five miles in an as-the-river-runs manner upstream from and draining to the normal pool elevation of a reservoir in which the intake is located.

FLOODPLAIN

Floodplain regulations are another example of locally-enforced, state-mandated laws. Both the County and the State have an interest in discouraging development in the floodplain for public safety reasons. In Catawba County, floodplain areas can be found primarily along major waterways, including Lake Hickory, Lookout Shoals Lake, Lake Norman, South Fork of the Catawba River, Jacob Fork, Camp Creek, Henry Fork, Balls Creek, Clark Creek, McLin Creek, and Lyle Creek. and their tributaries (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). Within Catawba's planning jurisdiction, there are two types of designated flood zones with distinct sets of rules: the Floodway and the Special Flood Hazard-AE Zone.

The County participates in FEMA's Flood Damage Prevention and Insurance Program as outlined in the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Floodplain management is generally defined as a comprehensive program of preventative and corrective measures to reduce losses associated with flooding. Floodplain management measures may include land use regulations (including new development and construction policy), construction of flood control projects, flood-proofing, floodplain preservation, acquisition of flood-prone properties, education, and implementation of early warning systems.

The floodway is the channel of a river, or any waterway, and the adjacent land that must be reserved in order to pass the base flood discharge without increasing the identified base flood elevation (BFE). To avoid the risk of sediment, construction, or plant debris being swept downstream, the floodway is classified as a “non- encroachment area” (NEA), meaning that no land-disturbing activity should occur there without the completion of a detailed hydrologic study which proves that the activity will not affect downstream water levels. As a general rule, no structures, other than public bridges, are allowed in the Floodway.

The Flood Hazard-AE Zone denotes areas that have a one percent probability of flooding in any given year. New structures are allowed within the AE Zone if a floodplain permit is obtained. A floodplain permit requires all new construction to meet certain standards. New construction and substantial improvements to an existing structure must be designed to meet the County’s regulatory flood elevation.

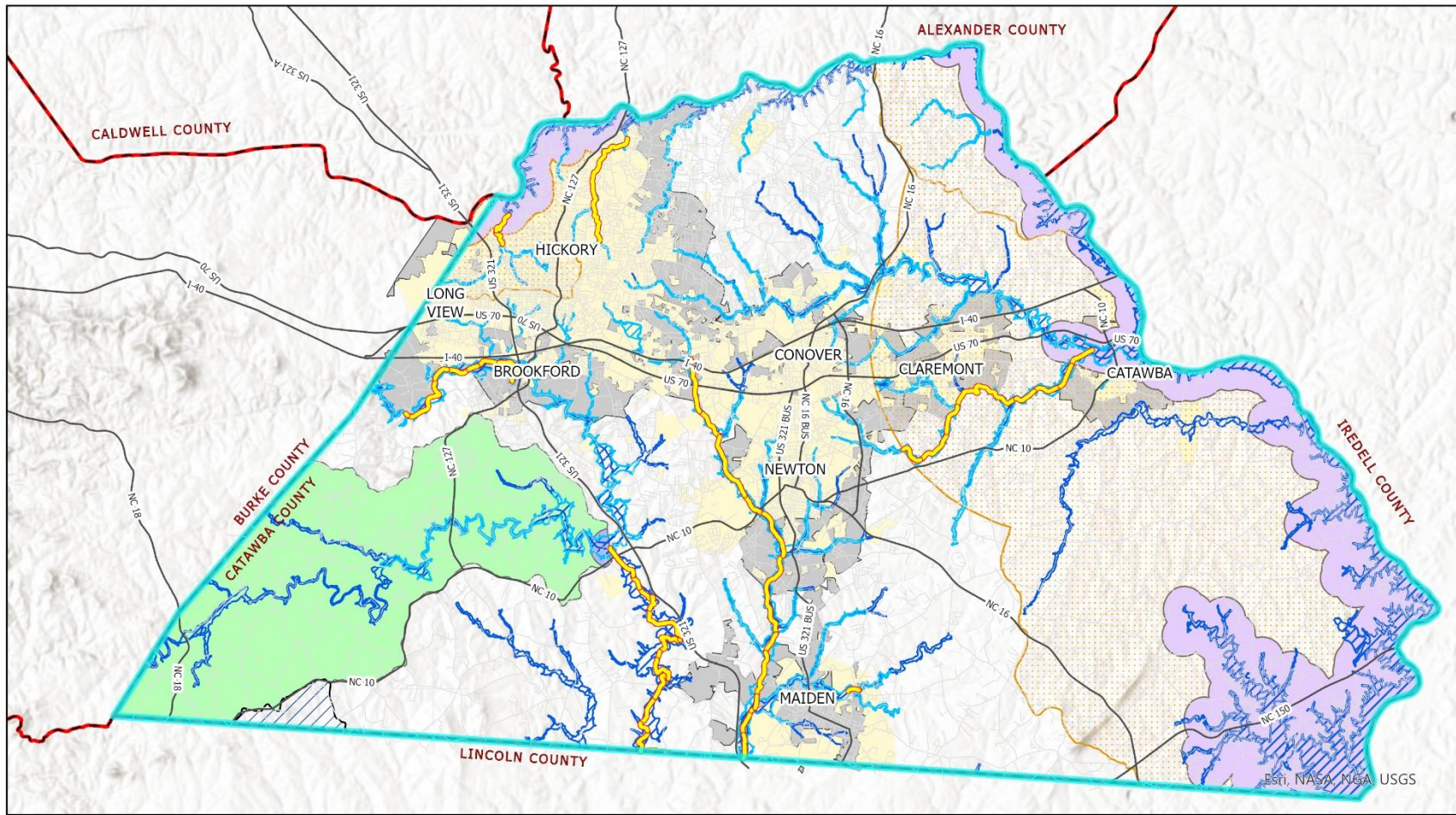
CONSERVATION / AGRICULTURE / ENVIRONMENT

There are a number of large agricultural tracts of land throughout Catawba County that may be suitable for conservation easements or other methods of agricultural preservation. Overall, the County allows for low-density residential development and associated uses that still provide adequate protection for environmentally-sensitive areas. Cluster or conservation subdivisions are an option for developers to help preserve wildlife habitat, protect viable working farms, maintain the integrity of rural viewsheds, and limit the amount of potential property damage associated with existing natural hazards. That area – and other wooded tracts – can follow the conservation approach to residential development by identifying and preserving sensitive wildlife and timber areas before development begins.

IMPAIRED STREAMS

The phrase “Impaired Water Body” refers to a body of water (a stream, river or lake) whose water quality has been compromised due to the presence of pollutants. The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NC DEQ) is required, under Section 303(d) of the 1972 federal Clean Water Act, to evaluate the health of the state’s waters. Water bodies that do not meet specific water quality standards are placed on the department’s Impaired Water Bodies List. These streams could suffer from excess sedimentation, degraded habitat for aquatic organisms, fecal coliform bacteria contamination, excessive stormwater flows, and pollutants such as nutrients, metals, and other toxicants from various non-point pollution sources.

Impaired streams in the unincorporated area of Catawba County include a portion of McLin Creek in the eastern part of the county, Clark Creek and a small portion of Maiden Creek in the southern part of the County, and Lake Norman in the southeastern part of the County.



Catawba County Water Resources

Legend

- Major Roads
- Roads
- Major Lakes
- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Impaired Waters

Water Supply Watersheds

- WS-IIIC
- WS-IIIP
- WS-IIP
- WS-IVC
- WS-IVP

Flood Zones

- Flood Hazard Zone - 0.2 PCT Annual
- Flood Hazard Zone - AE

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on November 28, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.

LAND DONATIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides grants to local governments for the acquisition of land to be used for public recreational use. Additionally, PARTF grants can be used to protect natural and scenic resources or to renovate older park facilities. The County has used these funds in the past and will continue to pursue PARTF funds as a strategy to advance its natural resource, recreation, and environmental planning goals.

Similarly, the NC Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) provides grants to local governments for projects that specifically address water pollution problems. NCLWF may fund projects to acquire land that “represents the ecological diversity of North Carolina”. Catawba County regularly monitors applicability of the NCLWF program from the perspective of possible assistance in achieving its natural resource and environmental objectives.

CATAWBA CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's preservation-worthy historic places. The Register includes significant properties, which are further divided into buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. The National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) carries out many historic preservation responsibilities including surveying, evaluating and nominating properties for inclusion in the National Register.

If a property meets the criteria to be on the National Register, the National Park Service designates the property as “Determined Eligible” for listing. However, a property so designated will not yet be formally listed in the Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register, but not listed, do not qualify for federal rehabilitation tax incentives, federal tax incentives for preservation easements on historic buildings and sites, or National Park Service grants.

In North Carolina, the placement of a property or district on a "Study List" constitutes the first step toward nomination to the National Register. The Study List identifies properties and districts that are likely to be eligible for the National Register, giving the green light to sponsors and staff to proceed with a formal nomination with reasonable assurance that the property can be successfully nominated.

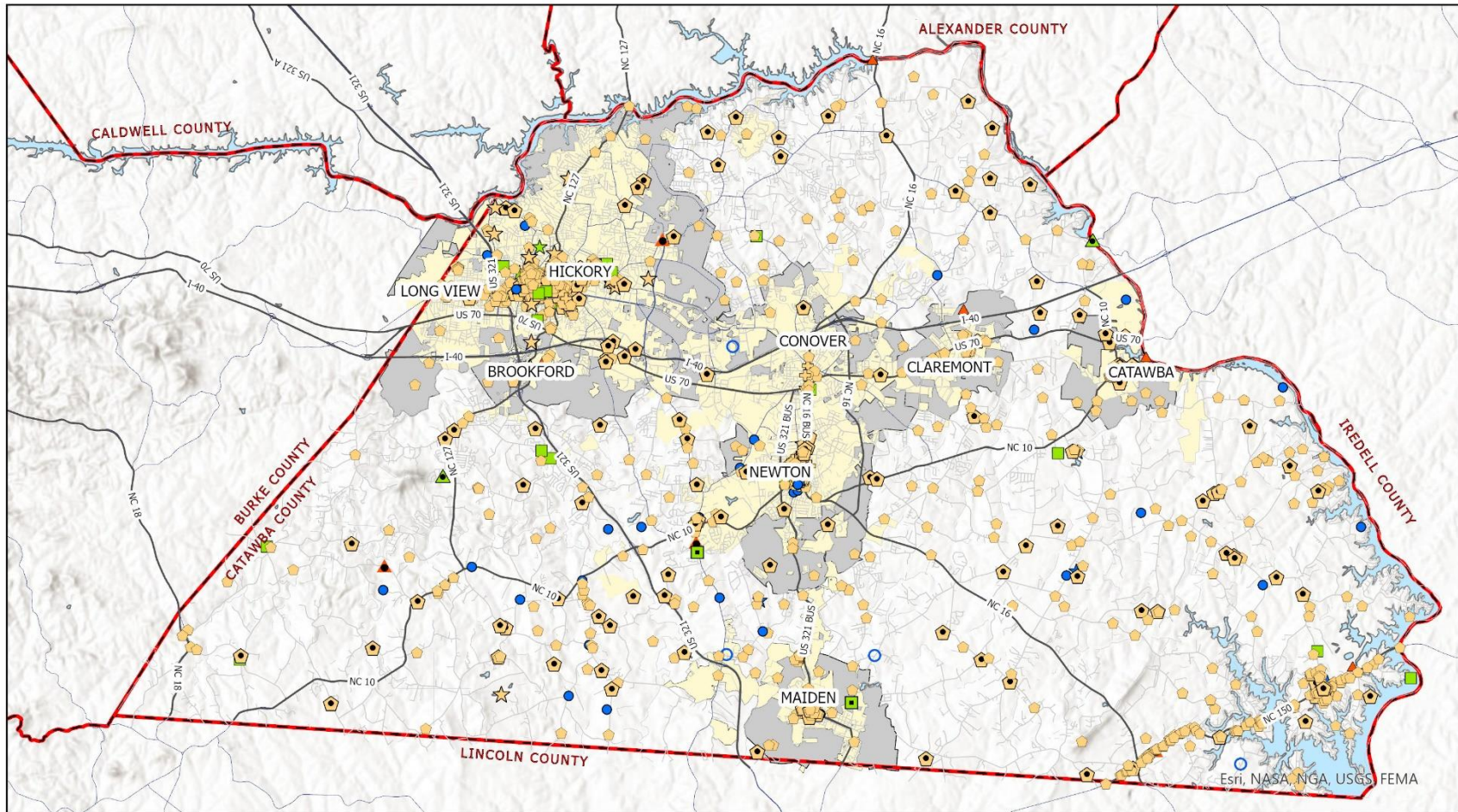
According to the State Historic Preservation Office, there are thirty-four (34) sites in Catawba County that are either listed in the National Register, Determined Eligible or are on the Study List. Figure 6-4: Historic Sites illustrates where those places are located, and Table 6-1 below indicates their description and status.

TABLE 6-1: HISTORIC SITES

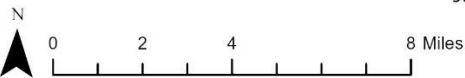
National Register (NR) Individual Listing		
Site Name	Description	Year Listed
Powell-Trollinger Lime Kilns	1865 3 stone structures	1974
Weidner Rock House	18th C. 2-story stone house	1973
Highland School	1921 2-story brick school	1990
St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Cemetery	1808 2-story log church	1971
Foil-Cline House	1883 Italianate 2-story frame house	1990
Self-Trott-Bickett House	1883 Italianate brick house	1990
Catawba County Courthouse	1924 Neoclassical courthouse	1979
Miles Alexander Sherrill House	1886 Stick style 2-story house	1990
Abraham Anthony Farm	1877 Greek Revival 2-story brick house; outbuildings	1990
Balls Creek Campground	Mid 19th C. camp meeting ground	1990
Shuford House (Maple Grove)	1875; 1883 Italianate 2-story frame house	1973
Perkins House	1790 Federal 2-story brick house	1974
(former) Ridgeview Public Library	1951 1-story brick African American library	2011
Hollar Hosiery Mills - Knit Sox Knitting Mills	c. 1930 and c. 1940 2-story brick-veneered textile mill	2012
Grace Union Church and Cemetery	Mid 19th C. Greek Revival brick church	1990
Hickory Municipal Building	1921 Neoclassical with Tuscan portico; C.C. Hook, architect	2000
Clement Geitner House	1882 2-story 2-pile brick	1985
Keever-Cansler Farm	1879 2-story brick farmhouse	1990
Lee and Helen George House	1951 1-story Modernist house, stone and wood	2012
Whisnant Hosiery Mill	1930-1967 1 1/2-story brick mill	2013
Propst House	1881 Second Empire cottage	1973
Houck's Chapel	1888 frame church	1985
Wilfong-Wilson Farm	1830 Federal farmhouse	1990
Elliott-Carnegie Library	1922 1-story brick	1985
John Lentz House	1890 Classical Revival 2-story frame house	1985
Joseph Alfred Moretz House	1917 2-story brick house	1985
Alexander Moore Farm	1843 vernacular farmhouse	1990
Neill-Turner-Lester House	Early 19th C. Federal/Italianate house	1990
Rock Barn Farm	19th C. farm, rock barn	1990
St. Paul's Reformed Church	1904 frame Gothic Revival	1990
Sharpe-Gentry Farm	1903 Queen Anne house & farm	1990
Shuford-Hoover House	c. 1840 Federal/Greek Revival cottage	1990

Warlick-Huffman Farm	1820 vernacular Federal	1990
Memorial Reformed Church	1887 brick church	1990
Bost-Burris House	1810 Federal 2-story farmhouse	1990
Lyerly Full Fashioned Mill	1930-34 brick textile mill	2007
Harris Arcade	1938 commercial arcade	2008
First Presbyterian Church	1905-6 Romanesque Revival	1985
Dr. Glenn R. Frye House	1937 Colonial Revival 2-story stone house	2009
Rudisill-Wilson House	1821 2-story frame house	1973
William Pinckney Reinhardt House	1845 Greek Revival house	1990
Wesley's Chapel Arbor and Cemetery	Late 19th C. religious complex	1990
Bunker Hill Covered Bridge	1895 covered bridge	1970
Grace Reformed Church	1887-88 Gothic Revival church	1990
Piedmont Wagon Company	1889 2 1/2-story brick indus	1985
Munday House (Gone)	19th C. small log house. Painted interior sheathing of parlor now at Catawba County Museum of History, Newton	1975
David F. Propst House (Gone)	c. 1887 2-story side gable light orange-brown brick house w/ 1-story hip roof front porch	1990
Miller-Cansler House (Gone)	1820 2-story frame farmhouse	1990
George Huffman Farm (Gone)	1810 Federal house	1990
National Register Historic District (NRHD)		
Site Name	Description	Year Listed
Bandy Farms Historic District	Mid-1880s 2-story farmhouses	1990
Oakwood Historic District	Late 19th C. neighborhood	1986
Murray's Mill Historic District	1880s frame grist mill, store, houses	1979
Claremont High School Historic District Boundary Increase	1900-1959 residential	2009
Claremont High School Historic District	Late 19th - early 20th C. residential, school	1986
Long, McCorkle, and Murray Houses	1910s bungalow; 1890 Queen Anne; 1920 bungalow	1990
Terrell Historic District	Late 19th-early 20th C. rural crossroads community	1986
Kenworth Historic District Boundary Expansion (2 Areas)	20th C. residential	2005
Hickory Southwest Downtown Historic District	1885-1930 commercial buildings	2005
Bolick Historic District	19th-early 20th C. buggy shop; house	1990
Franklin D. Reinhardt & Harren-Hood Farms	1908 late Victorian house and farm	1990
Kenworth Historic District	Early 20th C. residential district	1985

Oakwood Historic District (Boundary Increase)	1905-1966 residential neighborhood of Queen Anne, Bungalow, Tudor Revival & Colonial Revival houses	2019
Catawba Historic District	19th C. commercial and residential district	1986
North Main Avenue Historic District	Late 19th-early 20th C. residential/commercial district	1986
Newton Downtown Historic District	c. 1895 to c. 1960 commercial district	2012



County of Catawba Historic Sites



Legend

- Major Roads
- ▬ County Boundary
- Major Lakes
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)

State Historic Preservation Office Point Status

- National Register (NR) Individual Listing
- ★ NR Historic District Center Point
- NR, Delisted
- Study List (SL) Individual Entry
- ★ SL Historic District Center Point
- ▲ SL and Determined Eligible
- SL Entry, Gone
- ▲ SLDOE, Gone
- ▲ Determined Eligible (DOE)
- ★ DOE Historic District Center Point
- ▲ DOE, Gone
- ★ Surveyed Area
- Surveyed Only
- Surveyed Only, Gone
- Blockface
- Local Historic District Center Point

This map was created on November 14, 2023 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consider standards to maintain the existing tree canopy during development process.
2. Include consideration of Carolina Thread Trails (secondary routes) and Wilderness Gateway Trail connectivity in design and construction during the subdivision development processes.
3. Continue to protect Catawba County's natural resources through incentives and ordinances designed to help preserve Catawba County's rural heritage and safeguard the environment.
 - a. Continue to enforce Water Supply Watershed Regulations to manage storm water and improve drinking water quality.
 - b. Evaluate potential land acquisitions that may be eligible for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) or NC Land and Water Fund grant funding.
 - c. Support extension and advancement of greenways and other trail systems.
 - d. Enhance development standards concerning viable and useable open space and allow for a cluster development approach to set aside habitat or other significant areas of preservation.
 - e. During planning and development processes, be mindful of areas that have water quality issues and impairments and consider practices that will not further impact the water quality.
4. Protect the historic fabric of Catawba County.
 - a. Encourage property owners to maintain structures of value that are listed, determined eligible, or on the study list for the National Register of Historic places.
 - b. Encourage the historical society to identify, inventory historic/cultural facilities along with promoting properties on the National Register.
 - c. Support preservation efforts by promoting historic events and places.

7. AGRICULTURE

CATAWBA COUNTY AGRICULTURE

Catawba County has strong agricultural ties with an ongoing desire to keep agriculture an active part of the County's economy. Agencies such as Cooperative Extension use education and awareness as tools on an ongoing basis and are in direct contact with the public to provide assistance. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture conducted by the US Department of Agriculture, Catawba County ranks 44th in the state in terms of total sales with total market value being about \$77 million. There are 638 farms, 63,530 acres, in the County which is 9% fewer acres than the 2012 census. Livestock, poultry, and other similar products are 72% of the share of sales type, crops make up the other 28%. The top crops sold in Catawba County are grains, dry beans, cotton, and vegetables/potatoes/melons. Top livestock and poultry sold in the county are poultry, eggs, cattle, milk, and pigs. Of the 638 farms noted in the census, 75% have internet access and 95% are family farms.

Catawba County participates in two major agricultural programs, the Present Use Value (PUV) tax deferral program and the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program. The County's VAD program and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) program is a county-level ordinance program that contributes to preservation and protection of existing farmland. The PUV program is part of the NC tax code and offers up to 90% tax deferment for private eligible landowners in North Carolina. There are numerous programs, including Agricultural Cost Share program, through the National Resource Conservation Service, to help support agriculture and resource management.

Agriculture uses are permitted in all zoning districts in the County's jurisdiction. The Unified Development Ordinance allows a Rural Conservation district with a minimum five-acre lot size. This district is established in areas characterized by large lots, agriculture uses, open lands and remote from existing development. The Residential R-80 district also requires a larger lot size (80,000 square feet). These districts are available for property owners to request and may be an option to encourage property to remain in active agriculture use.

Acknowledging the County's agriculture heritage is very important. Although there has been a reduction in the number of acres in agriculture use by the 2017 Census, it is still an important contributor to the County's economy. Having a vibrant and supported agriculture segment is a community value which adds to rural character.

Farm and Food Sustainability Plan

In 2013 Catawba County adopted the Farm and Food Sustainability plan. The main objective of Catawba County's Farm & Food Sustainability Plan is to enhance agriculture with a focus on agricultural economic development to recruit younger farmers and provide tools for farm transitioning in the County. The Plan also includes efforts to ensure local food sustainability by developing a robust "Farm-to-Fork" initiative, where local food producers link up with local

food distributors and restaurants to ensure the availability of fresh, locally-produced food within Catawba County. The Plan included 66 action items that were determined to be short, mid, and long range goals. Additionally, the 66 action items were split into 5 categories; education, farm preservation, advancing traditional agriculture, alternative agriculture enterprises, and local foods. Many of these objectives have been accomplished, and many more are currently underway. The recommendations below are meant to complement the objectives of the Farm and Food Sustainability Plan

Agricultural Recommendations

1. Evaluate possible flexibility for agricultural support services in agricultural areas and evaluate opportunities for agriculture support industries in residential areas.
2. Encourage agribusiness through programs and policies that support generational farms, growers, and sustainability.
3. Continue implementation of the Farm and Food Sustainability Plan strategies.
4. Encourage integration of agricultural education lessons throughout K-12, and support County departments' active participation in these activities.
5. Support County departments working to ensure sustainability of agricultural resources for succeeding generations; continue to have large-lot zoning districts (RCon and R-80) as options in the Unified Development Ordinance.
6. Continue offering relevant educational sessions such as farm contingency planning, farm management, productions, safety, marketing, stewardship, integrated pest management, etc.
7. Continue to support Voluntary Agriculture District (VAD) and Present Use Value (PUV) programs.
8. Support innovative approaches to forest resource management.
9. Support programs to increase access to healthy food. Coordinate with local, state, federal, and nonprofit partnerships to fund and expand healthy food initiatives.
10. Monitor grant opportunities for farmland preservation from Federal, State and nonprofit sources.

8. HOUSING

CATAWBA COUNTY HOUSING

A robust housing market is vital for sustaining a strong workforce and providing adequate living spaces for families to contribute to the vibrant communities in the area. The housing landscape in Catawba County witnessed a flourishing period of production during the early 2000s, with a substantial number of single-family residential permits, along with manufactured homes. In Catawba County, nearly 8,000 housing units were added from 2000 to 2010. However, a pivotal shift occurred after the financial crisis of 2008, with fewer residential permits in the subsequent years. Over the next ten years, less than 3,000 housing units were added. This slowdown of housing construction, coupled with the loss of population of 35 to 44 year olds and 45 to 54 year olds, has negatively impacted our local economy (2000 - 2020 Census and 2022 ACS, US Census Bureau).

The housing slowdown was felt nationwide and the reduction of built housing units was also realized in Catawba County and throughout the surrounding region. However, since 2018, the County has experienced an uptick in residential construction while surrounding counties continue to struggle with a housing shortage. Catawba County and its municipalities are experiencing significant residential development indicating the demand in the residential housing market as more people are moving into the County. Between 2021-23, over 4,200 dwelling units have been permitted in the municipalities and in unincorporated Catawba County.

Since 2015, over 5,400 new residential units in Catawba County's jurisdiction have been authorized through the rezoning process. There are 800 units associated with a project which was rezoned in 2007, for an approximate total of 6,200 intended units. These projects cover a variety of housing types, with over 1,700 of the dwelling units considered to be multifamily units. The multifamily units include apartments, condominiums, and townhomes. As of December 2023, 1,747 dwelling units of the 6,200 units had received zoning permits allowing for construction. The 6,200 units do not include residential units built on existing parcels or new parcels that did not need rezoning approval. Between 2021-23, nearly 400 permits were issued for those smaller residential projects which did not require a zoning change.

No community will have the same density across its entire planning area. The housing density of a town, city or county will change depending on its context, with areas of higher densities transitioning to slightly lower densities, and then further down to fully rural areas of countryside, forest and farmland.

The densest areas having the highest dwelling units per acre and the highest concentration of multifamily housing, are typically located in an area where infrastructure and other public services are located. In a municipality, this would be in a central business district or a similarly concentrated area, such as near a hospital or college. As one moves further from this core area, densities begin to drop, until the transition is complete into an agrarian landscape.

Partnering with two of the local municipalities, Catawba County made investments to expand water and sewer infrastructure in certain key corridors and locations. The NC Highway 150 corridor was a strategic expansion of these public utilities in an effort to facilitate development in an area of the County that was attracting new residents. Access to public sewer increases the potential for more intensive residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

A healthy market should create high-quality housing through the mixing of many different housing types. This includes some lower-impact multifamily homes, like duplexes, but it also includes detached single-family homes of varying sizes. Small bungalows, ranches, and two-story homes can all work together to create a vibrant neighborhood.

Single-Family Detached

Single-family detached homes are the most commonly zoned housing type in the United States, and are a vitally important part of this toolkit. Detached homes provide an equity stake for owners and bring important quality-of-life benefits.

Manufactured Housing

Manufactured homes approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are considered an affordable type of housing. HUD has regulated the manufactured home under the Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards since 1976. Since that time, manufactured homes have been recognized as more durable and less mobile. Manufactured homes that become real property have potential to appreciate in value.

Duplexes

Duplexes are single buildings that hold two distinct living units. Duplexes are of a similar size and scale to single-family houses, and in some cases are virtually indistinguishable from them, making them excellent candidates for low-impact housing production. Duplexes are some of the more commonly-built multifamily housing types because the costs to finance them are similar to building traditional single-family homes.

Cottage Courts

Cottage Courts are collections of smaller units, usually detached and between one and two stories, which form a cohesive site on a small lot. These units have a shared green space or “court” that is visible from the street. The shared green space acts as a front yard or plaza which can be shared by the residents in the neighborhood. The houses and their entrances are positioned to encourage a sense of community and shared space. Cottage courts can help to provide affordable housing because they can be developed on small or oddly shaped lots which may otherwise be uneconomical.

Low-Rise Apartments

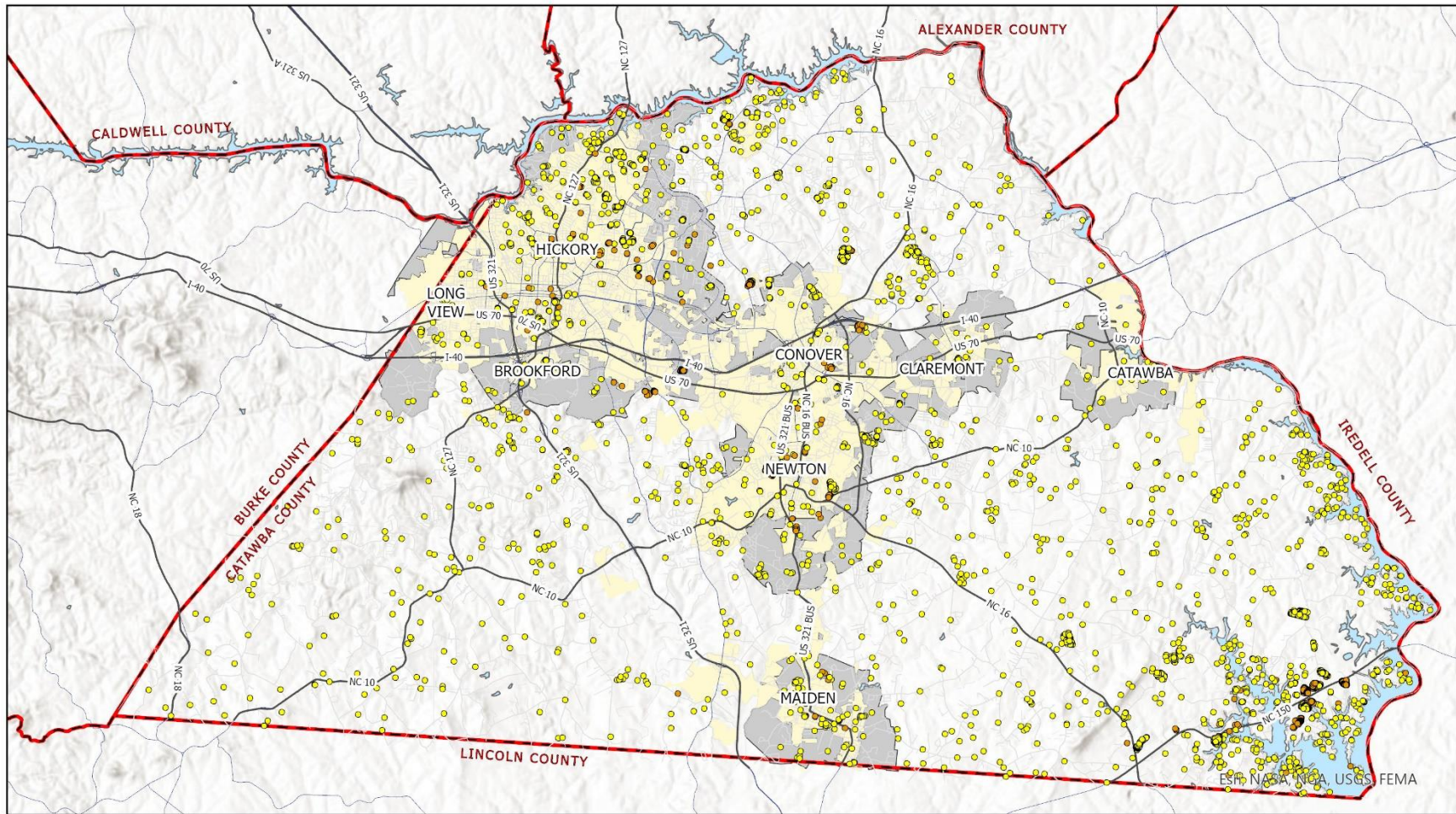
Low-rise apartments are some of the most common and most variable forms of multifamily housing. They are the starting limit of what many think of as “apartments,” and tend to be buildings between two and three stories with two to three dozen units. They can take many forms, from courtyard U-shaped complexes to boxy garden apartments to designs which look very much like large mansion homes or townhomes. They can function well in many different parts of town, depending on their design.

Townhomes

Townhomes (also called townhouses, row homes, row houses and brownstones), are multi-story attached units that share a common wall. There are many configurations, but usually at least four units will share a common block. Each unit has its own dedicated entrance, often including a small patio or dooryard. Townhouses are usually owned individually, and often on their own platted lots (though the actual resident may rent). Town homes can provide significant new housing capacity at a lower fiscal impact to the local government, as units share services, while still providing a neighborhood feel.

Mixed Use

Mixed-use developments are the combination of two or more uses in the same building or on the same lot. Typically, the uses are residential and commercial. Mixed use developments are often found in or near downtown pedestrian-friendly areas which offer access to work, home, retail or services with ease. The commercial uses are usually found on the ground floor for visibility and access to shoppers, with living space above. In some cases, the ground floor will have a retail use, the floor above will have office spaces for businesses to rent, and the rest of the floors will have housing. In rarer cases, the residences may be directly adjacent to a commercial use, sometimes on a corner. With many of the projects in Catawba County, the residential and commercial uses are mixed horizontally, with multifamily units located behind a commercial use that is located along a corridor.



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Catawba County Residential Development 2019-2023

Legend

- Major Roads
- Roads
- Major Lakes
- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- New Multi Family
- New Single Family

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on February 8, 2024 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI. Created by KC.

HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Provide density maximums for multi-family residential uses and Planned Development single-family developments.
2. Modify subdivision design standards to address characteristics such as lot configuration, landscaping, tree canopy, block length, pedestrian facilities, and open space integration to enhance sense of place for new residential developments.
3. Provide opportunity for manufactured home parks only within the Double-wide manufactured home overlay district and where water and sewer are available. Consider further design criteria for manufactured home parks to improve recreation, sanitation, access, and other quality of life measures.
4. For new residential developments, require the designated open space to preserve habitat, floodplain, tree canopy, wetland, steep slope, rural vistas or similar environmentally or culturally impactful land.
5. Consider lowering the threshold for Planned Development (PD) zoning districts relative to lot numbers.
6. Provide for a variety of housing opportunities to support a broad range of income levels, ages and lifestyles.
7. Evaluate connectivity requirements within new developments and connections to existing developments to reduce demand on major thoroughfares and create alternative routes.
8. Encourage cluster development where utilities exist or community well and septic is achievable.
9. Focus residential density where utilities exist or are planned.
10. Integrate consideration of transportation in planning for residential developments, especially higher density projects, to locate near alternative modes of transportation to increase citizens' transportation options.
11. Encourage rehabilitation of existing housing stock.
12. Continue participation in such programs as the urgent repair program and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

9. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is the process by which the local economy and the socio-economic well-being of the citizens are improved. Local governments can work with the private sector to create the kind of conditions that lead to economic growth. For example, local governments can invest in infrastructure to entice major employers to locate in suitable areas, work with existing businesses to encourage growth, or create opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

Catawba County has enjoyed significant success in economic development, with over \$4.3 billion in private investments and just under 5,000 jobs committed by private industry since 2017. This success has consumed substantial real estate and utility capacity. Community desires for place-making, the growth of the Charlotte Economic Zone, and changing workforce dynamics are all influencing the quality and quantity of workers available to fill jobs in Catawba County. Catawba County's educational attainment lags peer counties. A legacy culture of manufacturing, pushes towards industrial diversification, traditional industry sector dynamics, primarily low- to mid-tech industrialization, and the dynamics of utility availability will all factor into development of sustainable strategies for moving forward. Catawba County leads the State in worker upskilling facilities and assets; efforts toward educational alignment and talent development are underway. The Catawba County Economic Development Corporation and its partner local governments are in the midst of a study to identify current, emerging and future industry sectors which Catawba county could target and successfully recruit, with results anticipated in mid-2024. This analysis will position the County to architect a sustainable economic development strategy for moving forward that capitalizes on the County's assets and addresses its deficiencies.

Catawba County EDC identified the positive momentum private sector growth in Catawba County is due to the educational and training assets, existing infrastructure, and proximity to large cities. This could potentially be slowed by an aging population, the rapid growth due to Charlotte, and older business owners closing their shops due to lack of succession planning. The County experienced a decrease in the populations of 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 year olds between 2010 and 2022. These age cohorts are of prime working age. The NC State Demographer's office projected by 2031, there will be more people 65 and older than 17 and younger in the state. There is also a 32% projected population growth in NC by 2050. This can be overcome with Catawba County's capacity for growth, collaborative partnerships in place, and a history of perseverance and solutions. Because North Carolina is projected to undergo a 32% population increase by 2050, Catawba County has the potential to attract a portion of those new residents.

Due to the aging population, there will be a rising need for recruitment of the age group 20-40. Examples of this would be to identify services that would increase quality of life, recruit and retain residents that grew up in the area, and create programs that assist aging employers to implement a succession plan.

TOP EMPLOYERS IN CATAWBA COUNTY

Company Name	Industry
Catawba County Schools	Educational Services
Catawba Valley Medical Center	Health Care and Social Assistance
Target Stores Div	Transportation and Warehousing
Corning Optical Communications LLC	Manufacturing
Commscope	Manufacturing
Human Resources Dept	Public Administration
Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade
Dlp Partner Frye LLLC	Health Care and Social Assistance
Gkn Driveline Newton LLC	Manufacturing
Pierre Foods Inc	Manufacturing

EDUCATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

There are many options for education in Catawba County and region. Lenoir-Rhyne University, the Appalachian State University Hickory Campus, and Catawba Valley Community College allows for higher education and professional development opportunities. Additionally, CVCC is in the midst of building a regional Workforce Innovation Center. NC Works connects employers and residents for employment opportunities. A campus of the North Carolina School of Science and Math is located in Morganton, in close proximity to Catawba County.

Catawba County should continue to develop partnerships with Catawba Valley Community College to advance programs that support new and existing local industries and businesses. This can be done by working with the EDC in assessing industry hiring needs and corresponding those needs with programs offered at CVCC. The EDC may be able to assess hiring and technical needs of their businesses by looking at the common open positions found within their community. Furthermore, Catawba County through the EDC can link new and expanding businesses to training and small business resources offered by CVCC.

Transportation corridors are important for the flow of goods to and from Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Asheville. As the County becomes more accessible, it is reasonable to conclude that Catawba County will experience growth in other sectors, including housing and services. Transportation corridors that are within proximity or within the County include:

- Interstate 40
- Interstate 77
- NC Highway 16
- NC Highway 150
- NC Highway 321

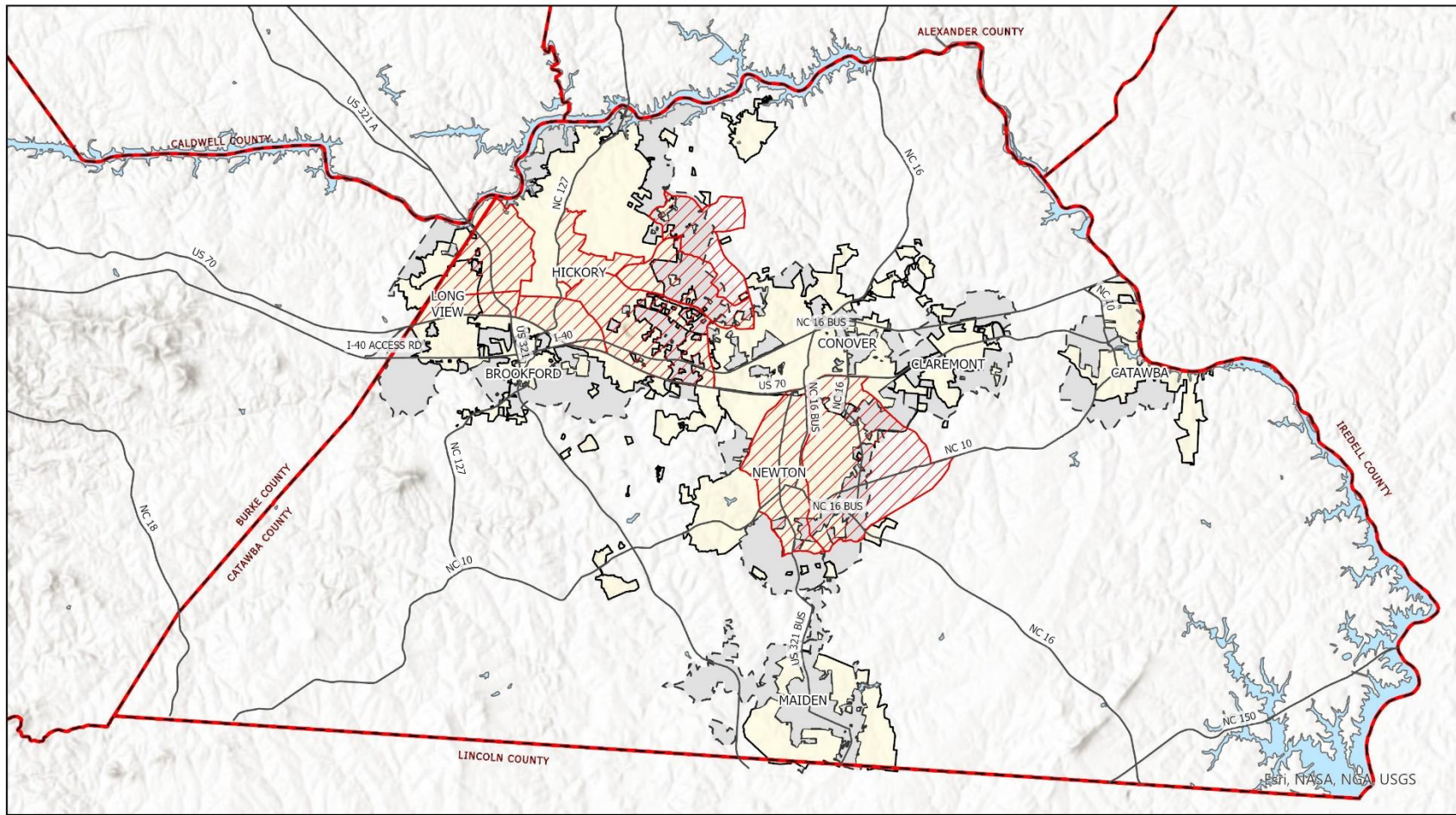
The County also has three regional airports within 45 miles including Hickory Regional Airport, Statesville Airport (26 miles) and the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport (43 miles).

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Opportunity Zones Program (Sec. 13823) provides tax incentives for qualified investors to re-invest unrealized capital gains into low-income communities throughout the state, and across the country.

Low-income census tracts are areas where the poverty rate is 20 percent or greater and/or family income is less than 80% of the area's median income. Investments made by qualified entities known as Opportunity Funds into certified Opportunity Zones will receive three key federal tax incentives to encourage investment including:

- Temporary tax deferral for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Step-up in basis for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Permanent exclusion from taxable income of long-term capital gains
- New market tax credits



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County of Catawba Opportunity Zones

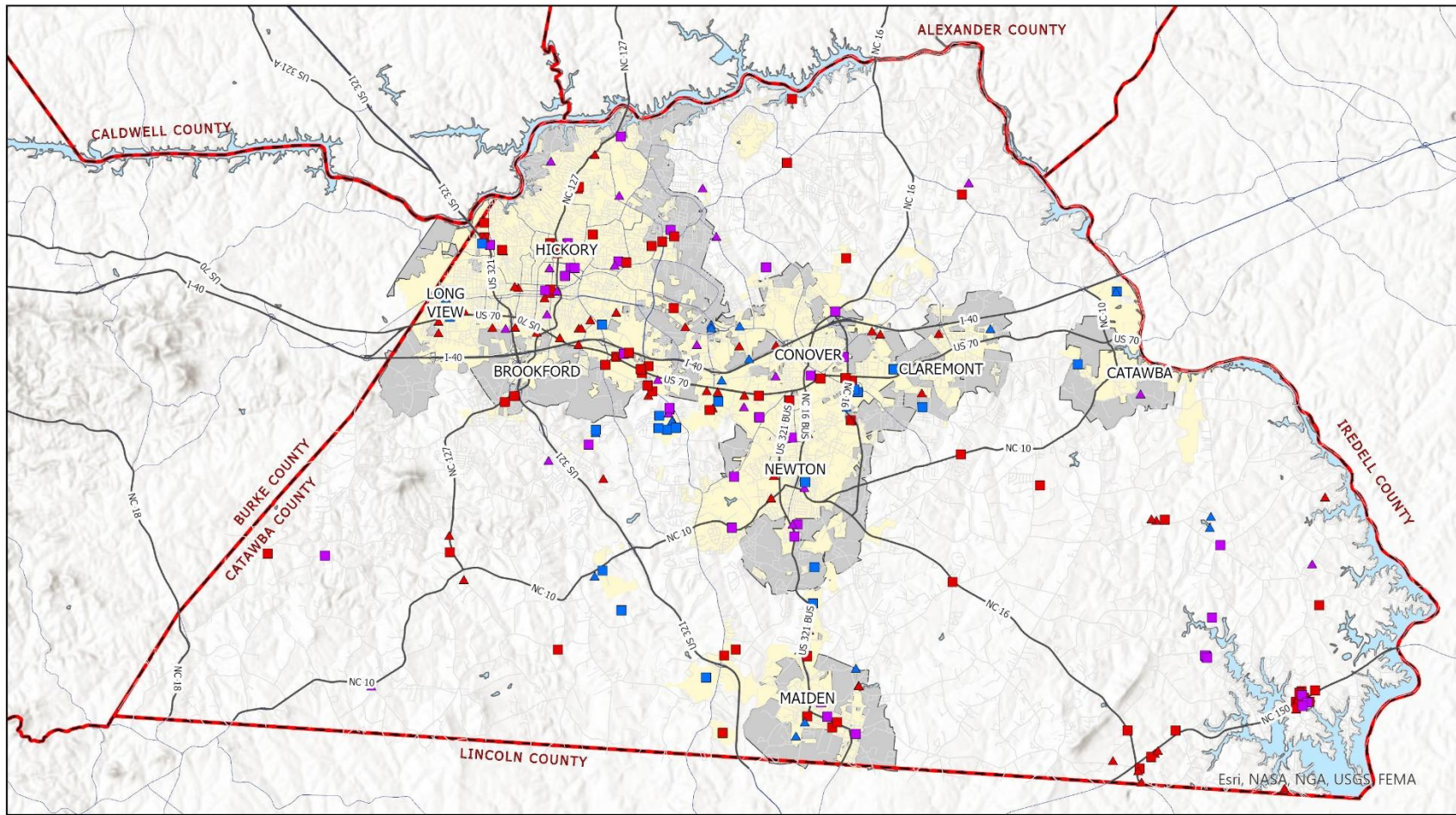
Legend

- Opportunity Zones
- Major Lakes
- Major Roads
- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



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Catawba County Nonresidential Development 2019-2023

Legend

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| — Major Roads | ▲ Commercial, Addition |
| — Roads | ● Commercial, New |
| ■ Major Lakes | ▲ Industrial, Addition |
| ■ County Boundary | ● Industrial, New |
| ■ City Limits | ▲ Institutional, Addition |
| ■ Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs) | ● Institutional, New |

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map was created on February 8, 2024 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI. Created by KC.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Utilize the future land use map to promote economic development by identifying sites and buildings based on input from Catawba County EDC.
 - a. Ensure land use is compatible with economic development goals to allow flexibility for a diverse and sustainable industry.
2. Continue to collaborate with the Catawba County EDC on marketing and outreach for Catawba County to attract to attract businesses, new residents, and visitors to the County and to retain existing residents and businesses.
3. Provide support for existing industries through programs and policies tailored to meet their specific needs, including partnerships with area higher educational institutions and K-12 school systems.
4. Continue to address quality of life aspects to entice new businesses or business sectors to the area.

10. LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The core component of the Catawba County Comprehensive Plan is land use. Catawba County desires well planned growth and development, adhering to a community vision, and defined by a clean environment and the preservation of community character. Effective land use planning determines where certain land uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial development are appropriate, and provides specific directives for land development design that ensures water quality, environmental health, and the preservation of community character.

How land is currently being used, the availability of land suitable for future development or redevelopment, and Catawba County's land use regulations each play a part in determining which type of land use will occur in each zoning district. The County's overall responsibility is to ensure that land is developed in the most effective and appropriate way to promote the health, welfare and public interest of Catawba County residents and stakeholders.

ZONING DISTRICTS

Of the nearly 235,917 acres in Catawba County, it has planning jurisdiction over the areas outside of municipal limits and municipal Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJ), which consists of approximately 177,557 acres. Land in Catawba County's planning jurisdiction is predominately zoned for residential use, which accounts for approximately 94% of the County's total zoning jurisdiction. The remaining 6% of the County's jurisdiction is zoned for industrial, commercial, planned development, etc.

Residential Districts

The R-80, R-40, R-30, R-20, R-15, R-12, R-10 and R-7 districts – These districts have dimensional standards and use restrictions consistent with single-family residential development and less than three two-family (duplex) units on separate lots planned cumulatively.

Rural conservation (RCon) - The rural conservation (RCon) district is available in areas that are characterized by large lots, agricultural uses and open lands. These areas may include prime farmland and unique topographical or environmental restrictions that are remote from existing developed areas. This district promotes rural development patterns.

Commercial / office-institutional zoning districts

Rural Commercial (RC) Zoning District - This district provides small areas for offices, services, and retail uses, all designed in scale with surrounding residential uses. The district regulations are designed to protect and encourage the transitional character of the district by permitting uses and building forms that are compatible with the rural areas of the county. This district establishes setback and area standards that are compatible with residential neighborhoods.

Highway Commercial (HC) Zoning District - This district provides areas for regional highway-oriented business, office, service and civic uses. The district regulations are designed to protect and

encourage the transitional character between districts by permitting uses and building forms that are compatible with the surrounding area.

Office-Institutional (O-I) Zoning District - The O-I district provides for office, institutional, civic, or other low intensity commercial uses. This district may buffer single-family residential neighborhoods from higher intensity residential neighborhoods or adjacent commercial districts.

Industrial/Warehouse Districts

Light Industrial (LI) - The light industrial (LI) district permits light manufacturing, processing and assembly uses, warehousing, distribution and servicing enterprises and limited office activities. This district supports the county's policies to promote economic development opportunities.

General industrial (GI) - This district provides for intensive manufacturing, processing and assembly uses. This district promotes the county's policies to promote economic development opportunities. The uses permitted in this district may be very intensive, with their impacts controlled by performance or design standards.

Overlay Districts

Overlay districts are intended to impose different requirements on certain properties within the underlying conventional or conditional districts. These districts may impose greater restrictions, require higher standards, prohibit certain uses or require additional approvals to address a specific circumstance.

Catawba River Corrido Overlay (CRC-O) requires higher standards for development of areas within 500 feet from the high water elevation of Lake Hickory and Lookout Shoals and mainstem of the Catawba River and 1000 feet from Lake Norman's high water elevation. These higher standards are in place to maintain the river corridor for present and future residents and visitors.

Floodplain Management Overlay (FPM-O) maintains compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program to reduce flood hazard. This district requires a higher building standard to ensure the safety of development in the floodplain.

Mixed-Use Corridor Overlay (MUC-O) district allows for multifamily, mixed use and commercial development along certain corridors and specific locations with standards for building form, design, signage, landscaping, parking access management and appearance related to pedestrian-scale development.

Doublewide Manufactured Home Overlay (DWMH-O) established a doublewide or multi-section overlay district to provide for the siting of affordable housing and implement recommendations regarding the placement of manufactured housing.

Mountain Protection Overlay (MP-O) establishes criteria to avoid the hazards of steep slope development and to preserve the unique landscape of the mountains in the County while allowing reasonable use of land within the district.

Watershed Protection Overlay (WP-O) provides regulations to limit the exposure of watersheds of drinking water supply water bodies within unincorporated Catawba County to pollution and contaminants.

Economic Development Overlay (ED-O) addresses development along the US Highway 321 and Interstate 40 corridors within the County’s jurisdiction. These standards are intended to promote well-planned, economically viable development of all types to have orderly interchanges and to avoid strip development.

Special Districts

Planned Development (PD) district is established to encourage the master planning of large scale, multiple and/or mixed-use development patterns.

Planned development-industrial parks (PD-IP) - Planned development-industrial park (PD-IP) districts are planned development districts for establishment of complementary groupings of related manufacturing, processing, assembly, research activities, and related uses.

Village Center (VC) district sets standards for development with modest size scale that accommodates and promote pedestrian access and walkable communities generally to serve a trade area within a three-mile radius.

321-Economic dDevelopment district (321-ED(I) and (321-ED(MX)) is established to promote high-quality development through well-planned, well-designed development along the US 321 corridor for new nonresidential and multifamily development.

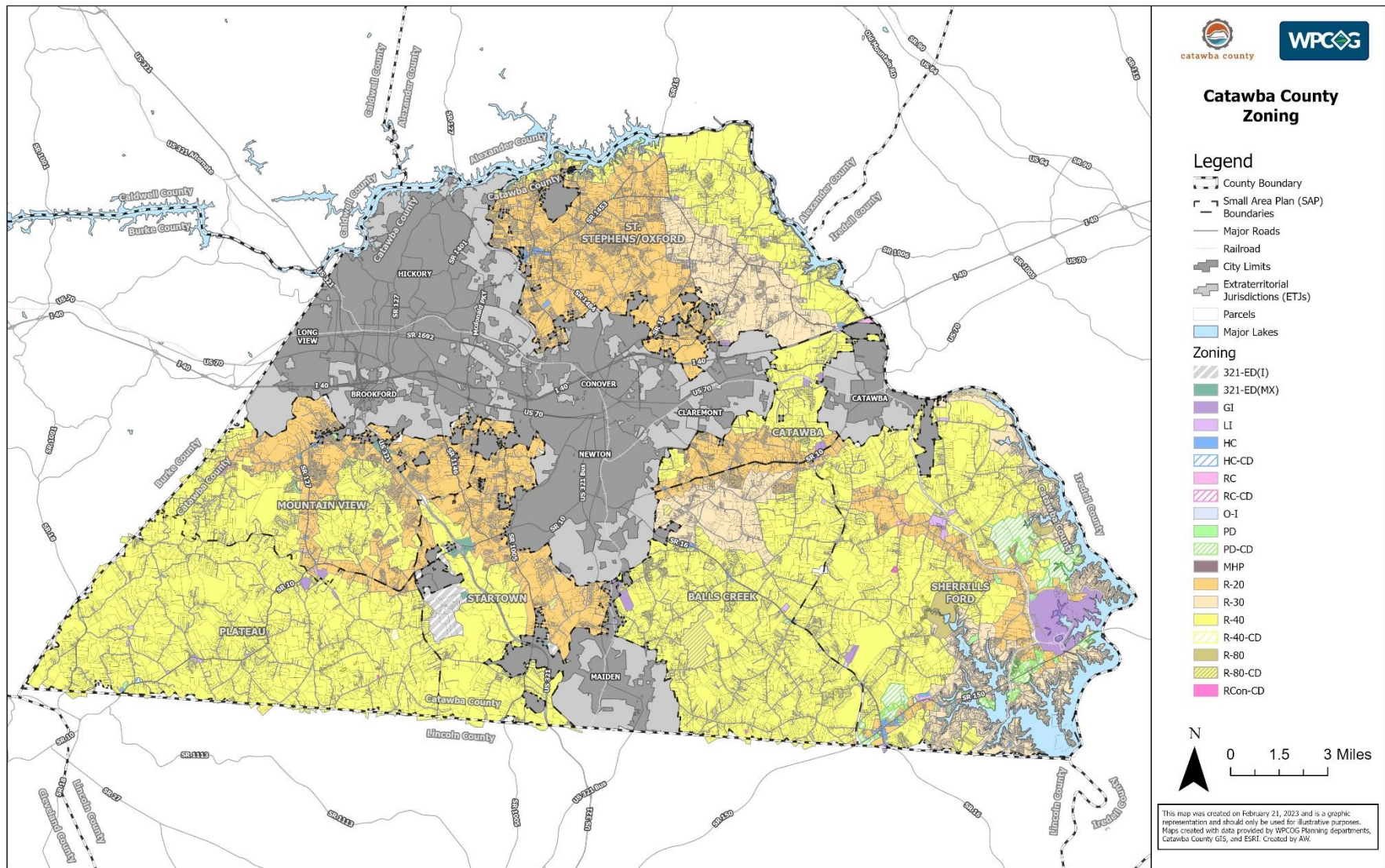
Manufactured Home Park (MHP) district set standards for the creation of new manufactured home parks. These standards address the orderly layout of new parks, safety from fire, floods, congestion and other dangers, adequate light, air and open space in the parks, and they ensure facilities for transportation, parking, water, sewer, and recreation are provided to residents of new parks.

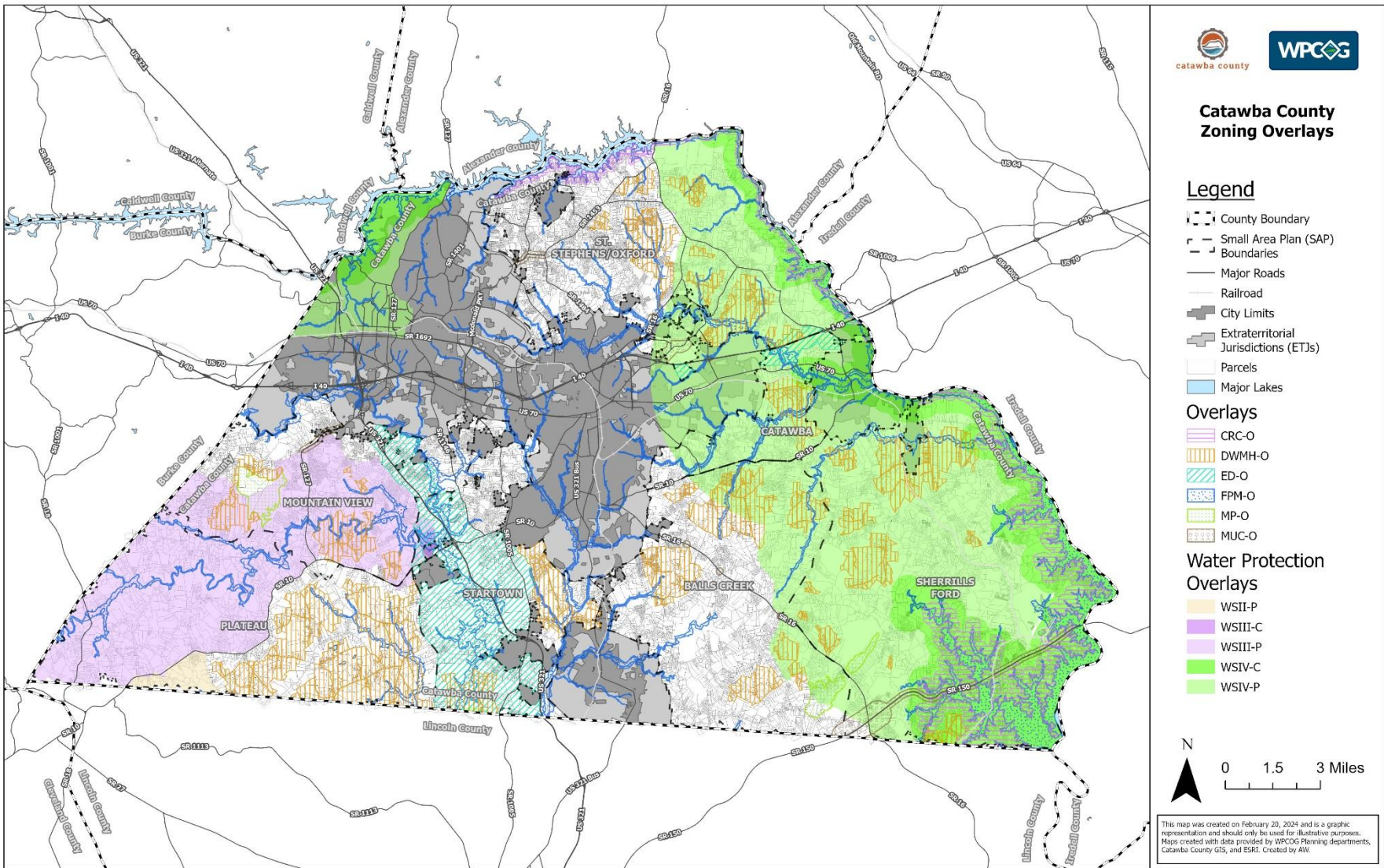
As shown in Figure 8-1: Catawba County Zoning Districts, the current County zoning districts closely reflect existing land use patterns in most of the County.

TABLE 8-1: CATAWBA COUNTY ZONING

Zoning	Total Area (acres)	% Total Area
R-20	40316	22.71%
R-30	17968	10.12%
R-40	109763	61.82%
R-40-CD	46	0.03%
R-80	710	0.40%
R-80-CD	890	0.50%
RC	253	0.14%
RC-CD	17	0.01%
RCon-CD	14	0.01%
PD	319	0.18%
PD-CD	2539	1.43%
321-ED(I)	1196	0.67%
321-ED(MX)	265	0.15%

GI	2353	1.32%
HC	540	0.30%
HC-CD	13	0.01%
LI	306	0.17%
MHP	13	0.01%
O-I	36	0.02%
Total	177557	100.00%





EXISTING LAND USE

A land use survey of all properties in the Catawba County Planning Area was completed in 2023. Land uses were categorized according to the following primary uses:

<i>Residential</i>	A parcel containing a residence.
<i>Office or Institutional</i>	A parcel containing any type of medical use concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, and care of human beings. This category also includes public services, and may be operated by a federal, state, or local governments, public or private utilities, public or private schools or colleges, churches, public agencies, or tax-exempt organizations.
<i>Commercial</i>	A parcel containing any type of activity involving the sale of goods or services for financial gain (commercial activity), but does not include parcels containing home occupations or medical offices.
<i>Industrial or Warehouse</i>	A parcel containing any type of business use or activity at a scale greater than home industry involving manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, warehousing, and/or storage.
<i>Open Space or Park</i>	A parcel designated for recreation or deemed open space.
<i>Agriculture or Undeveloped</i>	A parcel not in use or containing agriculture and/or abandoned buildings.
<i>Undeveloped</i> (*Federal, State, Local, or Private Ownership)	A parcel that is undeveloped, owned and maintained by a Federal, State, or Local Government, or private organization dedicated to protecting and conserving lands.

Land use in Catawba County’s planning jurisdiction is mainly “residential” or “agriculture or undeveloped”. These land use patterns are consistent with the County’s rural and agricultural history. Figure 8-2: Catawba County Existing Land Use displays types of land use across the County; a quick glance reveals the overwhelming amount of land either developed as residential or agricultural or designated as undeveloped protected lands. The majority of land in Catawba County – almost 53% of the nearly 235,917 acres in the County – is undeveloped. Residential uses occupy the second largest percentage of land use at 43%. The remaining 4% is divided between commercial, industrial or warehouse, and institutional land uses. Table 8-2 summarizes these land uses by acreage and number of parcels.

TABLE 8-2: EXISTING LAND USE

Land Use	Number of Parcels	Total Area (in Acres)	% Total Area (in Acres)
Commercial	388	2404	1%
Industrial/Warehousing	152	4330	2%
Multi-Family Residential	187	398	0%
Public/Institutional	348	4076	2%
Single-Family Residential	37275	100757	43%
Undeveloped/Agriculture	14542	123952	53%
Total	52892	235917	100%

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in Catawba County has primarily been focused within municipal jurisdictions, in clusters along the Catawba River, and near Lake Norman in the Sherrills Ford and Terrell area. The majority of residential development has been single-family construction, with 3,059 new single-family homes. This area has been popular for multifamily projects compared to 989 multi-family residential units constructed between 2019 and 2023. These projects are planned developments which include townhomes, low rise apartments and modified cottage courts. During this time, 56% of all new single-family residential development and 59% of all new multi-family development has occurred outside city limits and ETJs.

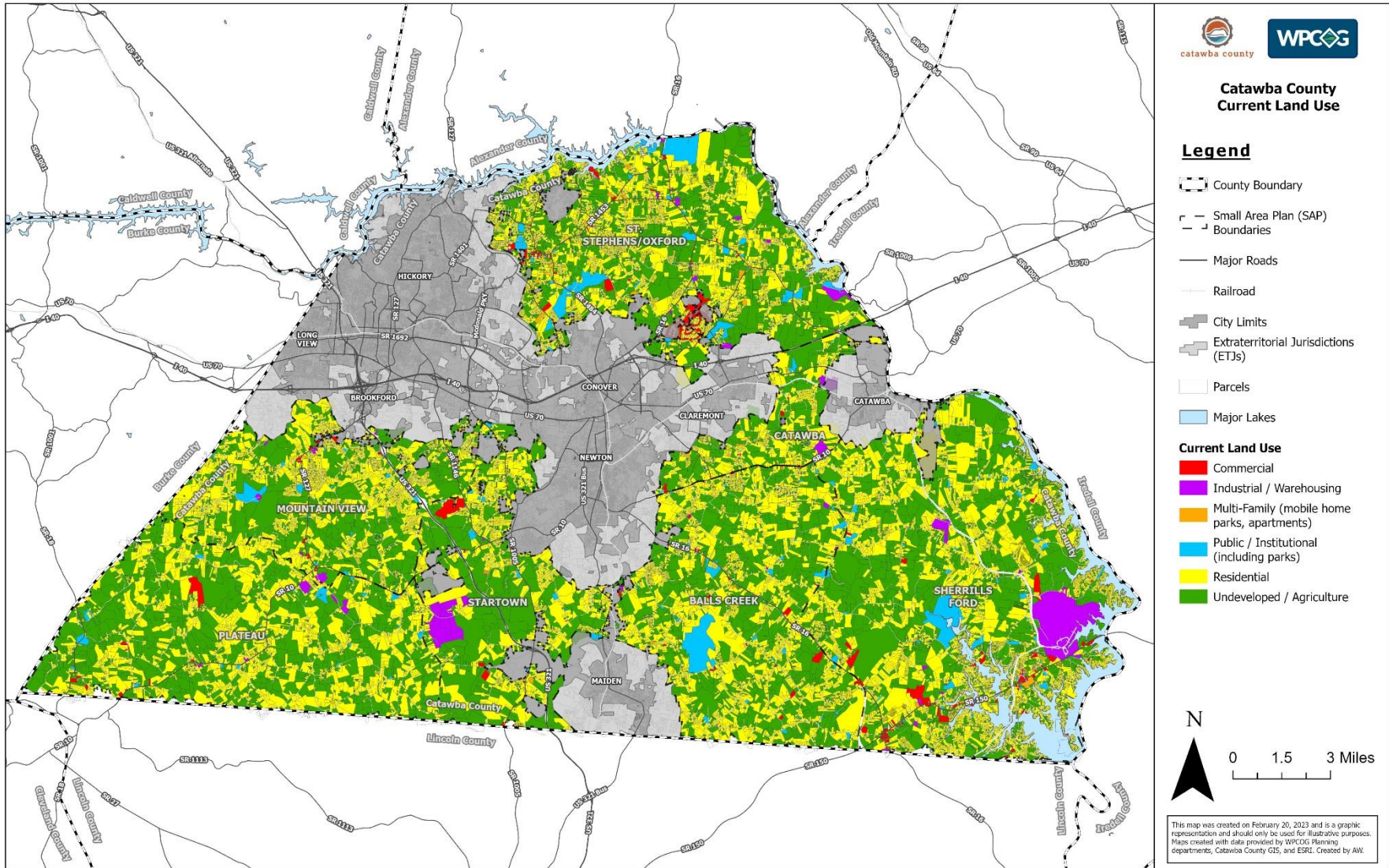
TABLE 8-3: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2019-2023

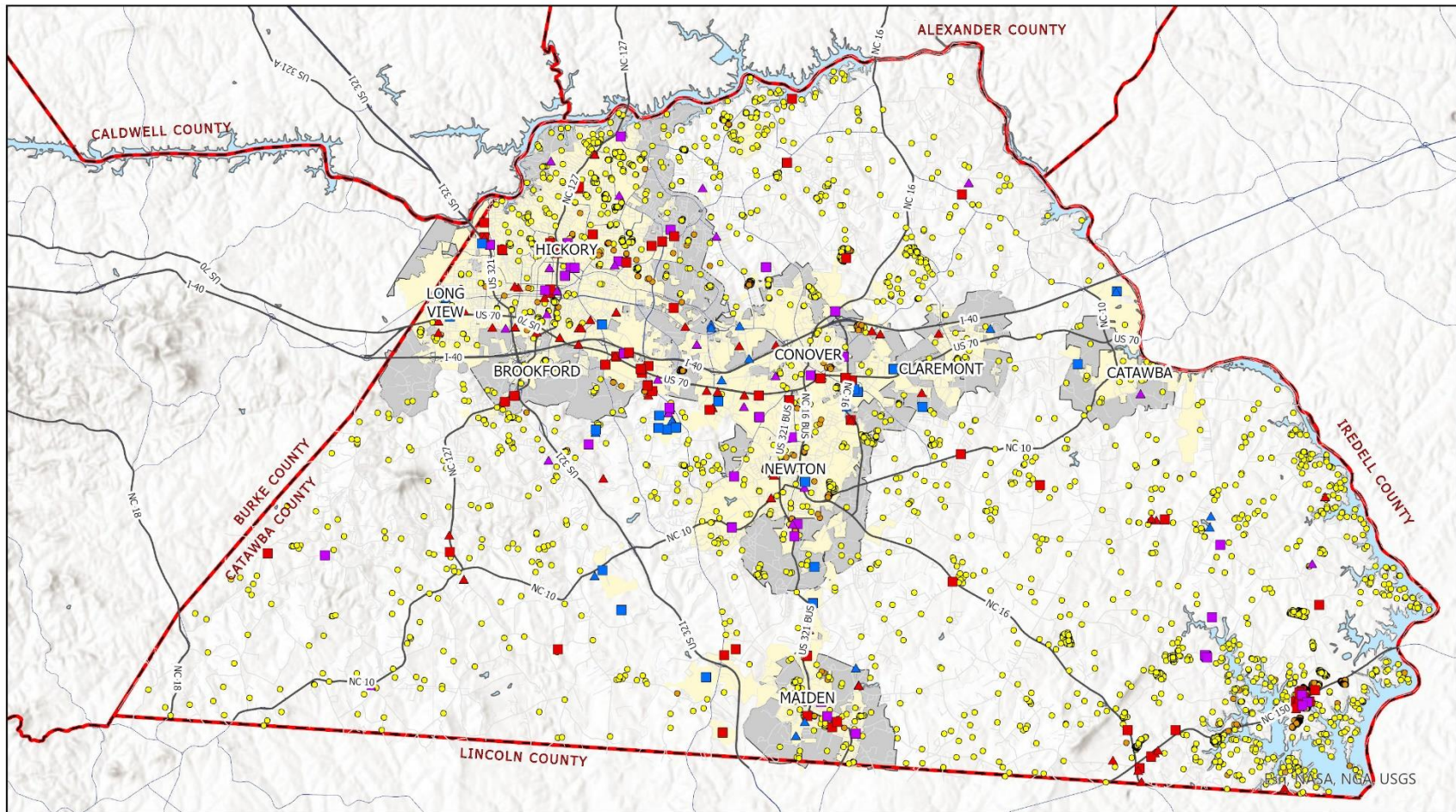
Residential	Whole County	Inside Town Limits	% Inside Town Limits	Inside ETJ	% Inside ETJ	Outside Town Limits and ETJ	% Outside Town Limits and ETJ
Single-Family	3059	1216	40%	118	4%	1725	56%
Multi-Family	989	392	40%	9	1%	588	59%
Total	2178	1608		127		2313	

From 2019 to 2023, new non-residential development primarily occurred along NC Highway 150 (See Figure 8-3: Residential & Nonresidential Development, 2019-2023). There were 296 non-residential construction permits issued between 2019 and 2023, of which 156 were new construction and 140 were additions to existing structures. From these permits, 84 of all non-residential development occurred outside city limits and ETJs.

TABLE 8-4: NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2019 - 2023

Non-Residential	Unincorporated County	Inside Town Limits	% Inside Town Limits	Inside ETJ	% Inside ETJ	Outside Town Limits and ETJ	% Outside Town Limits and ETJ
Commercial, Addition	87	60	69%	10	11%	17	20%
Commercial, New	84	49	58%	3	4%	32	38%
Industrial, Addition	22	17	77%	0	0%	5	23%
Industrial, New	23	19	83%	1	4%	3	13%
Institutional, Addition	31	20	65%	1	3%	10	32%
Institutional, New	49	32	65%	0	0%	17	35%
Total	296	197		15		84	





catawba county



Catawba County Development 2019-2023

Legend

- Major Roads
- Roads
- Major Lakes
- County Boundary
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Commercial, Addition
- Commercial, New
- Industrial, Addition
- Industrial, New
- Institutional, Addition
- Institutional, New
- Multi Family
- Single Family



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Project File Path: Q:\Planning\Planning Division\Catawba Co Comp Plan\NovDec2023_Update\GIS\Development

FUTURE LAND USE & GROWTH

An analysis of existing land use, zoning, recent development patterns, subdivision density, traffic counts, public comment and surveys was performed to identify areas within Catawba County’s planning jurisdiction that are potentially poised for future growth. Members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee were asked to aid in the determination of what types of future development would be appropriate for Catawba County, where development should be located, and the standards development needs to meet.

The Future Land Use Map following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County’s comprehensive land use vision. Catawba County relies upon the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning and infrastructure needs.

FUTURE LAND USE NODES

To identify development patterns and to provide for single-family and multi-family housing, and commercial development, the Future Land Use Map establishes five (5) types of land use nodes to be established at key intersections and along corridors throughout the County. The nodes/corridors are:



**RURAL
COMMERCIAL**

This district provides small areas for offices, services, and retail uses, all designed in scale with surrounding residential uses.



**OFFICE-
INSTITUTIONAL**

This district provides small areas for offices, schools, and lightly traveled commercial uses, all designed in scale with surrounding residential uses.



MIXED USE

The Mixed Use nodes is intended for multifamily, mixed use and commercial development around specific locations with standards for building form, design, signage, landscaping, parking access management and appearance related to pedestrian-scale development.



**HIGHWAY
COMMERCIAL**

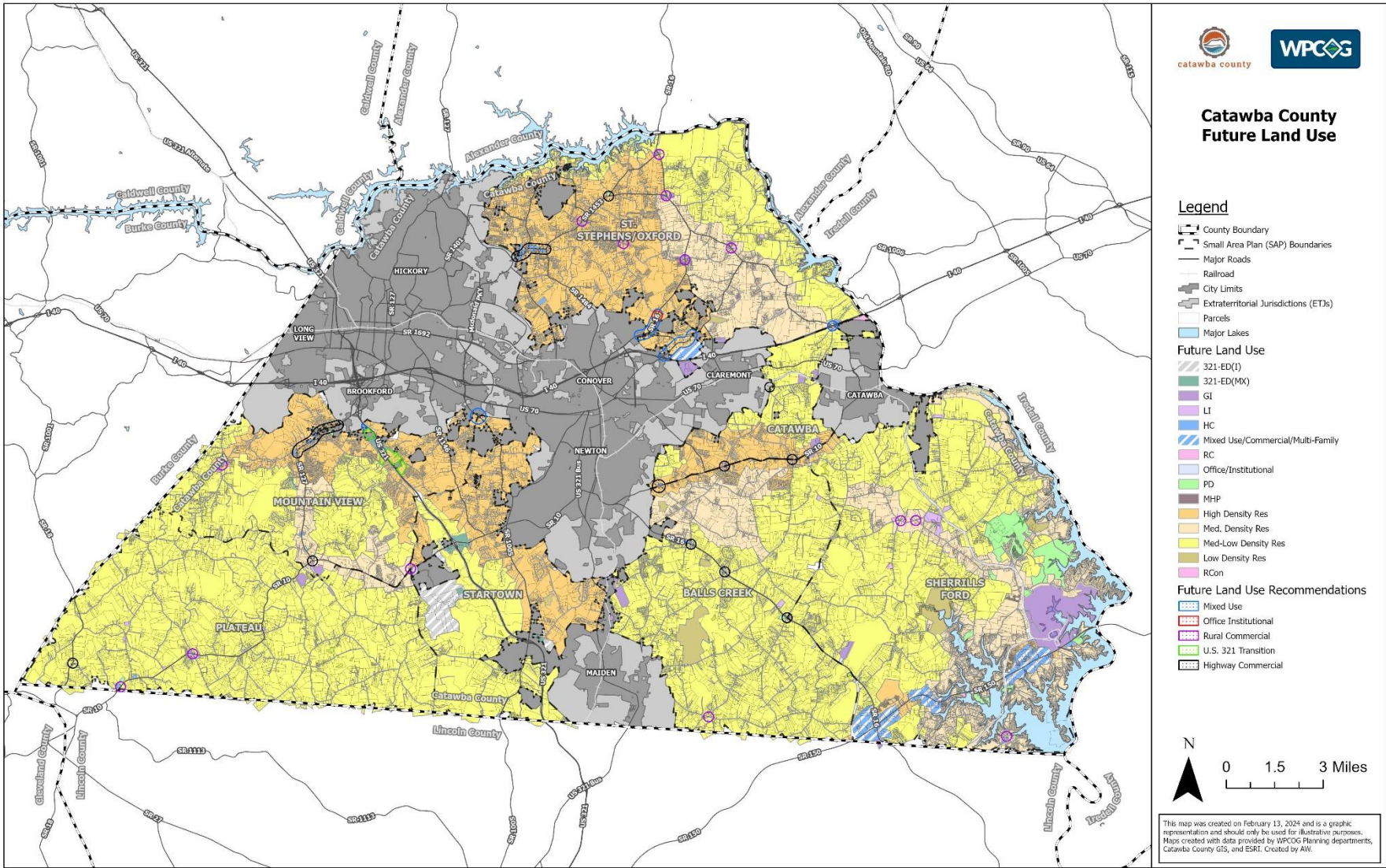
This district provides areas for regional highway-oriented business, office, service and civic uses.

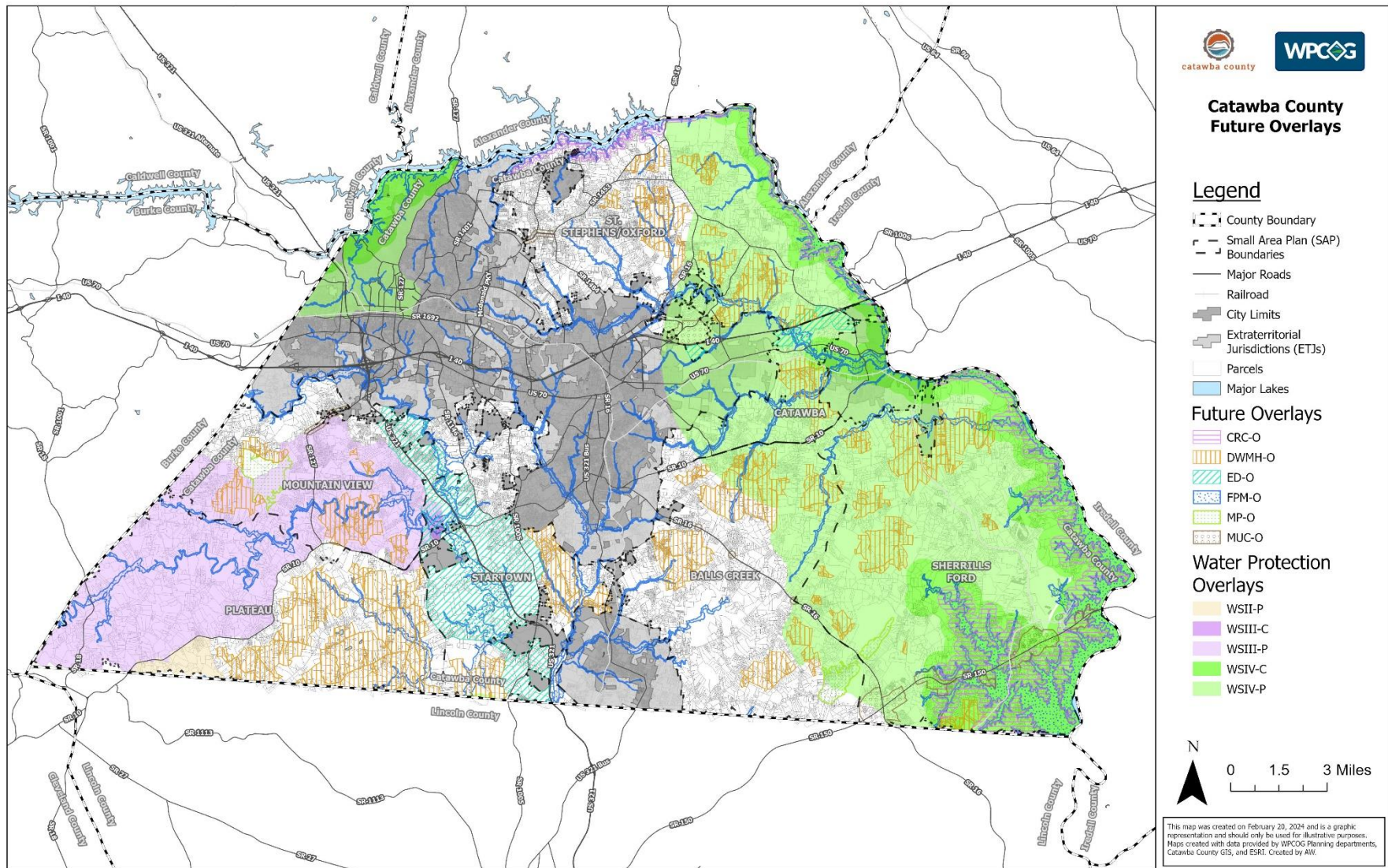


**US 321
TRANSITION**

This district provides areas for regional highway-oriented business to transition with a focus on maintaining compatibility between different land uses.

The boundaries of these nodes are not strictly defined. Land use decisions for the nodes may be based on the type of development proposed and the impact that it would have on the community in relation to the characteristics of the node. Generally, Rural Commercial nodes will allow a maximum of 10 acres per node and Highway Commercial nodes will allow a maximum of 10 to 25 acres per node. Each node contains intention as to location, characteristics (size), and development intensity), Once the appropriate zoning is in place, the regulations within the Unified Development Ordinance will guide development to meet the goals of the node. These proposed zoning districts are not new districts; they are already defined and adopted in the Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance.





FUTURE GATEWAY CONCEPT

Community gateway projects can help foster a unique sense of place and make a lasting first impression on visitors. Gateways are often used to reinforce branding and marketing strategies and can also be used to highlight the county's status as a destination for commerce and tourism. Many gateways incorporate elements of local history, while also seeking to convey a sense of modernity, pride, and community identity.

Potential gateway locations could include NC 16 near the Lincoln County line, Interstate 40 near the Burke and Iredell County lines, NC 150 near the Iredell County line, and US 321 near the Lincoln and Caldwell County lines. Other locations could also be considered. These gateways seek to convey to visitors the feeling that they have entered a new and different location – one that values its manufacturing heritage while also welcoming innovation.

GENERAL LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support mixed-use development where water, sewer and higher classified transportation facilities exist or are planned.
2. Provide opportunity for neighborhood and regional commercial development at appropriate major intersections.
3. Require perimeter buffering for all new major residential subdivisions.
4. Encourage a partial degree of improvement to nonconforming lot configurations.
5. Provide for commercial and industrial growth along growth corridors (I-40, NC 150, US-321, NC 16, NC 10 (pockets), Startown Rd. (Trivium, US-321 area).
6. Work with municipal partners to identify areas where infrastructure exists to facilitate coordinated land use across jurisdictional boundaries.
7. If transition zones are located on future land use maps, recommendations for rezoning should correspond to adjacent surround zoning districts. Modifications to zoning districts within a transition zone should be determined based on G.S. 160D-605.

11. ST. STEPHENS/OXFORD SMALL AREA PLAN

The St. Stephen/Oxford Small Area encompassed much of the northern and northeast region of the county. The boundary follows the Catawba River to the north and east; the municipal limits of Catawba, Claremont, and Conover and I-40 to the south and the municipal limits of Hickory to the west. The total area covered includes 30,846 acres, or over 48 square miles.

The St. Stephens/Oxford area boasts a rich history intertwined with the Catawba River, shaping the community in various ways. The significance of the river is evident in its historical and practical roles, contributing to the development and character of the region. The construction of the Oxford and Lookout Dams marked a pivotal moment in the area's history, providing a source of electricity for the community. This development not only facilitated modernization but also played a crucial role in supporting local industries and enhancing the overall quality of life. The dams not only generated electricity but also served a vital function in controlling flooding along the Catawba River. By mitigating the destructive impact of floods on homes and farms, the dams helped safeguard the community and its agricultural assets.

The St. Stephens/Oxford area has a deep-rooted agricultural heritage, with rural vistas, pastures, and farmlands shaping the landscape. The fertile lands along the Catawba River have been instrumental in sustaining generations of agricultural practices, contributing to the area's economic and cultural identity. Preserving and celebrating this heritage is important for maintaining the cultural richness of the community. The religious community plays a significant role in the lives of residents, fostering a sense of community and shared values. Churches serve not only as places of worship but also as hubs for social connections.

In the western portion of this Small Area, closer to the municipal jurisdictions, residential development is denser and more compact. Often in this area there is access to public water and, in specific areas, access to public sewer, along with other public services. There is also a significant amount of commercial uses in this area, especially along Springs Road, near the City of Hickory's jurisdiction.

The intertwining of the Catawba River with the history, economy, and culture of the St. Stephens/Oxford area underscores the importance of natural resources in shaping and sustaining communities. The area's commitment to harnessing the river for both practical and recreational purposes reflects a balance between progress and preserving the unique character of the region. The river and waterways have also provided a source of recreation and sustenance. Residents engage in fishing activities, paddling and enjoying the natural beauty and resources offered by the Catawba River. The waterways serve as a recreational escape, fostering a connection between the community and the environment.

Historic sites, such as the Rock Barn, add depth to the cultural tapestry of the St. Stephens/Oxford area. These landmarks serve as reminders of the community's past, preserving the stories and heritage that have shaped its identity.

Residents in the St. Stephens/Oxford area place a high value on a set of key elements that contribute to the character, identity, and well-being of their community. These values reflect a commitment to

preserving the rural charm while addressing concerns related to development, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life. The residents highly value the scenic beauty and openness of their surroundings. In addition to these other elements, residents emphasize the importance of CVCC/ASU and other higher education opportunities, affordability of the area, and job growth. These services contribute to the overall well-being and safety of the community.

Community feedback from the area focused on food deserts, concerns about managing growth pressures, potential traffic congestion stemming from lack of DOT funding, large chains hurting local business and lack of community involvement. Residents want to ensure that commercial development aligns with the rural atmosphere and is aesthetically pleasing. Balancing economic growth with the preservation of sense of place is a key consideration.

The St. Stephens/Oxford Small Area Plan Recommendations \ present a comprehensive and thoughtful approach aimed at striking a balance between accommodating growth, preserving the sense of place, and enhancing the overall quality of the community.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision. Catawba County will rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning, and infrastructure needs.

St. Stephens/Oxford Current Land Use

Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

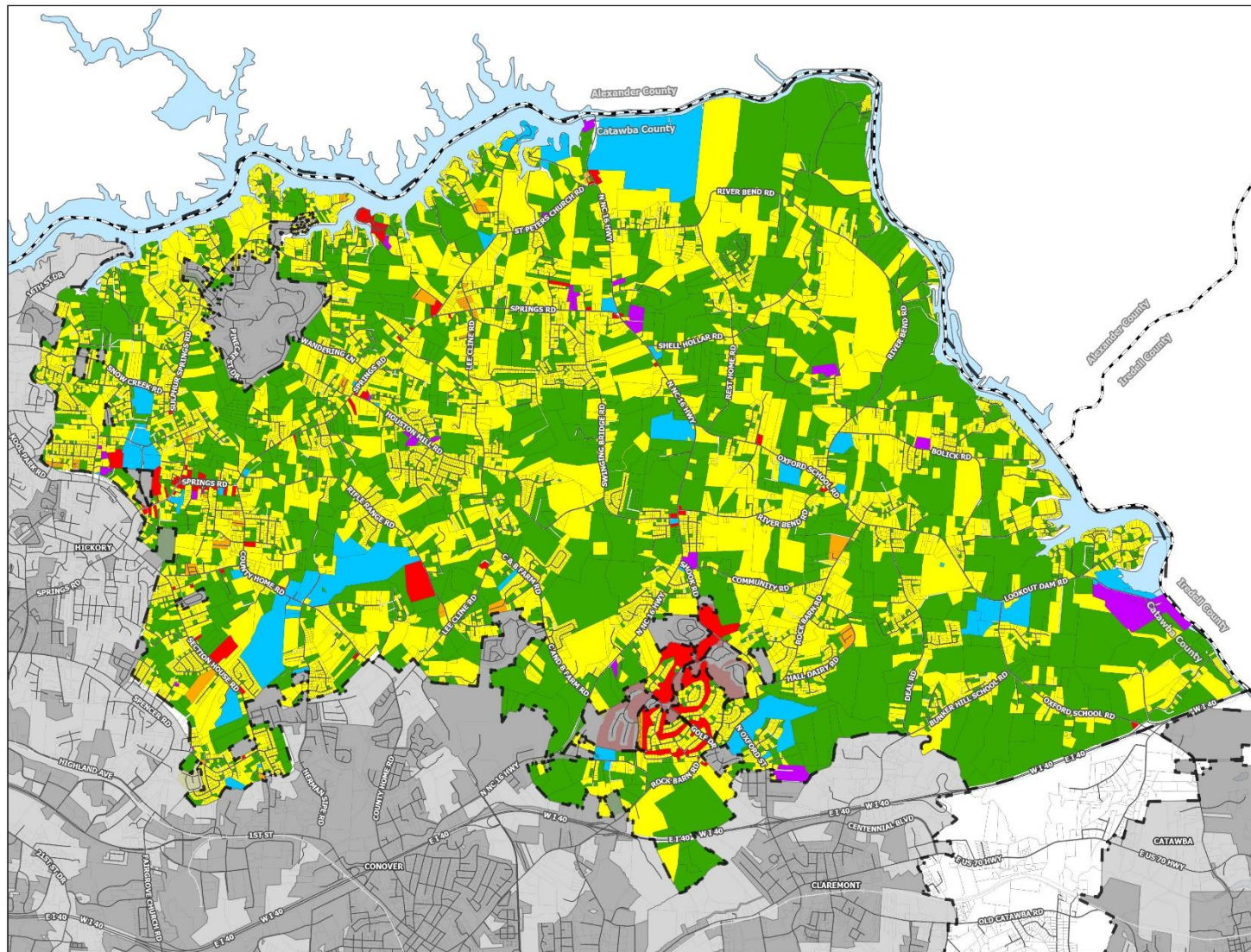
Current Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



0 1.5 3 Miles

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St. Stephens/Oxford Zoning

Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

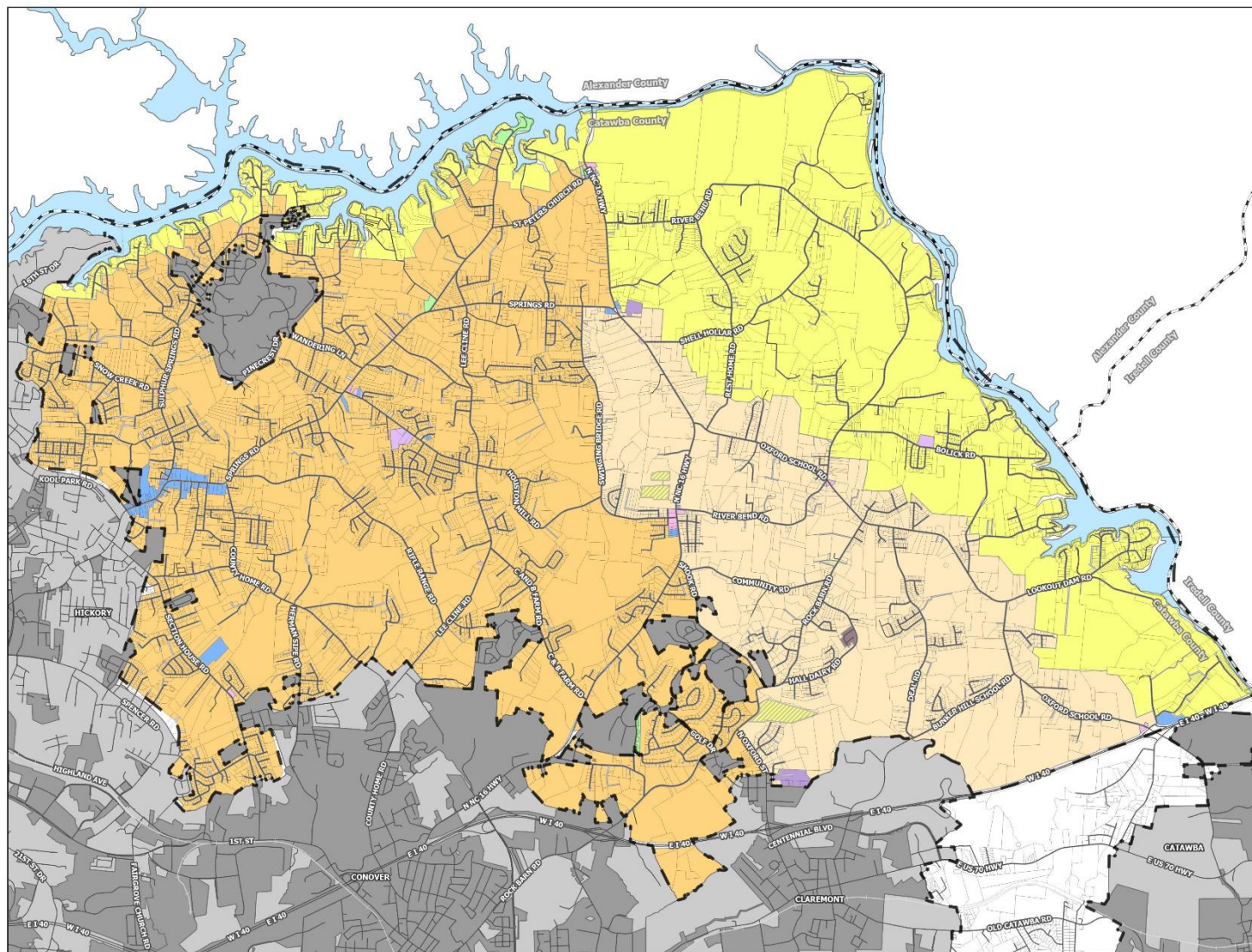
Zoning

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- HC-CD
- RC
- RC-CD
- O-I
- PD
- PD-CD
- MHP
- R-20
- R-30
- R-40
- R-40-CD
- R-80
- R-80-CD
- RCon-CD



0 1.5 3 Miles

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ST. STEPHENS/OXFORD RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential

1. New subdivisions are recommended to have further design standards in areas such as buffering/landscaping, signage, and tree protection to increase a sense of place and lessen the impact on the area's rural character.
2. Balance growth with preserving rural character.
3. Keep higher-density housing development (R-20) opportunity as currently identified, generally west of NC 16; medium-density housing (R-30) as currently identified, east and west of Oxford School Road and low-density housing (R-40) east of Oxford School Road as identified on current zoning maps.
 - Preserve quality open space.
4. Clustering subdivisions are encouraged to save open space
5. Maintain the Catawba River Corridor Overlay standards that offer water quality protections through medium-density residential (R-30) zoning within the water supply watershed critical area.
6. Multifamily developments should be limited to mixed-use village areas.

Recommendations for Commercial/Mixed Use/Industrial

1. Maintain commercial nodes where limited commercial can be located, if feasible with utilities
2. Recommend increased design guidelines and preservation of rural character through limiting commercial growth areas to the following:
 - a. Mixed Use
 - i. The interchange at I-40 and Oxford School Road
 - ii. South of St. John's Church Road to the study area boundary and east to Rock Barn Road
 - iii. South of Rock Barn Road (mix of neighborhood businesses and office-institutional)
 - b. Rural Commercial
 - i. Lee Cline Road and Houston Mill Road
 - ii. NC Hwy. 16 and St. Peters Church Road / Springs Road / and Swinging Bridge Road

- iii. Oxford School Road and Riverbend Road;
 - iv. Spring Road and Houston Mill Road.
- c. Highway Commercial
 - i. St. Peters Church Road and Springs Road
- d. Commercial Corridor
 - i. Springs Road from County Home Road west
- e. Industrial
 - i. South of Oxford School Road to I-40. South of Interstate 40 and north of US Highway 70 between Rock Barn Road and North Oxford Street
- f. Mixed-Use Corridor
 - i. Rock Barn Road from the planning jurisdiction of the City of Conover, north of the intersection of St. Johns Church Road.
 - ii. NC Hwy. 16 North from the planning jurisdiction of the City of Conover, north of the intersection of C & B Farm Road
- g. Office – Institutional
 - i. NC Hwy. 16 and C&B Farm Road

Recommendations for Recreation

1. Consider the possibility of a multi-jurisdictional greenway along the Catawba River beginning at Riverbend Park and extending downstream.
2. Consider the possibility of a trail connection from the Oxford access on Lake Hickory to Riverbend Park.
3. Consider the possibility of a midway access point, for paddling, between Riverbend Park and the Lookout Access.
4. Identify bona-fide historical sites.

12. CATAWBA SMALL AREA PLAN

The Catawba Area is situated between I-40 to the north and Highway 10 to the south. It is bordered by the cities of Newton and Claremont to the west and extends to the Town of Catawba's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and town limits to the east. The total area covered by the Catawba Small Area Plan is 7,352 acres, which is approximately 11.5 square miles. The area's boundaries, nestled between major transportation routes and bordered by cities and natural features, influence its development potential and planning considerations.

The general characteristics of the Catawba Area highlight a mix of residential, historical, and natural features, along with limited commercial and industrial activities. Residential uses and open space dominate the vast majority of land in the Catawba Area. This suggests a community with a focus on housing, agriculture and preserving open and natural areas. Historic sites, such as the covered bridge, and natural sites like Lyle Creek, are highly valued. These landmarks contribute to the cultural and environmental richness of the area, serving as points of interest for residents and visitors alike. Churches are noted as strong assets to the community. This highlights the significance of religious institutions in fostering a sense of community and contributing to the social fabric. The Catawba Area experiences very limited commercial and industrial activity. This suggests a more residentially focused community with fewer commercial and industrial developments. Housing developments are starting to grow, particularly around Newton, Conover, and Catawba. This growth may indicate an increasing demand for residential properties in proximity to these municipalities.

The siting of manufactured home communities alongside site-built subdivisions suggests a diversity in housing types, catering to different preferences and needs within the community. The combination of residential dominance, appreciation for historical and natural features, the strength of the church community, and limited commercial and industrial activities characterizes the Catawba Area. The growing housing developments, especially in nearby municipalities, indicate ongoing changes in the region and potential shifts in population and housing trends. These general characteristics provide a foundation for understanding the unique identity and dynamics of the Catawba Area.

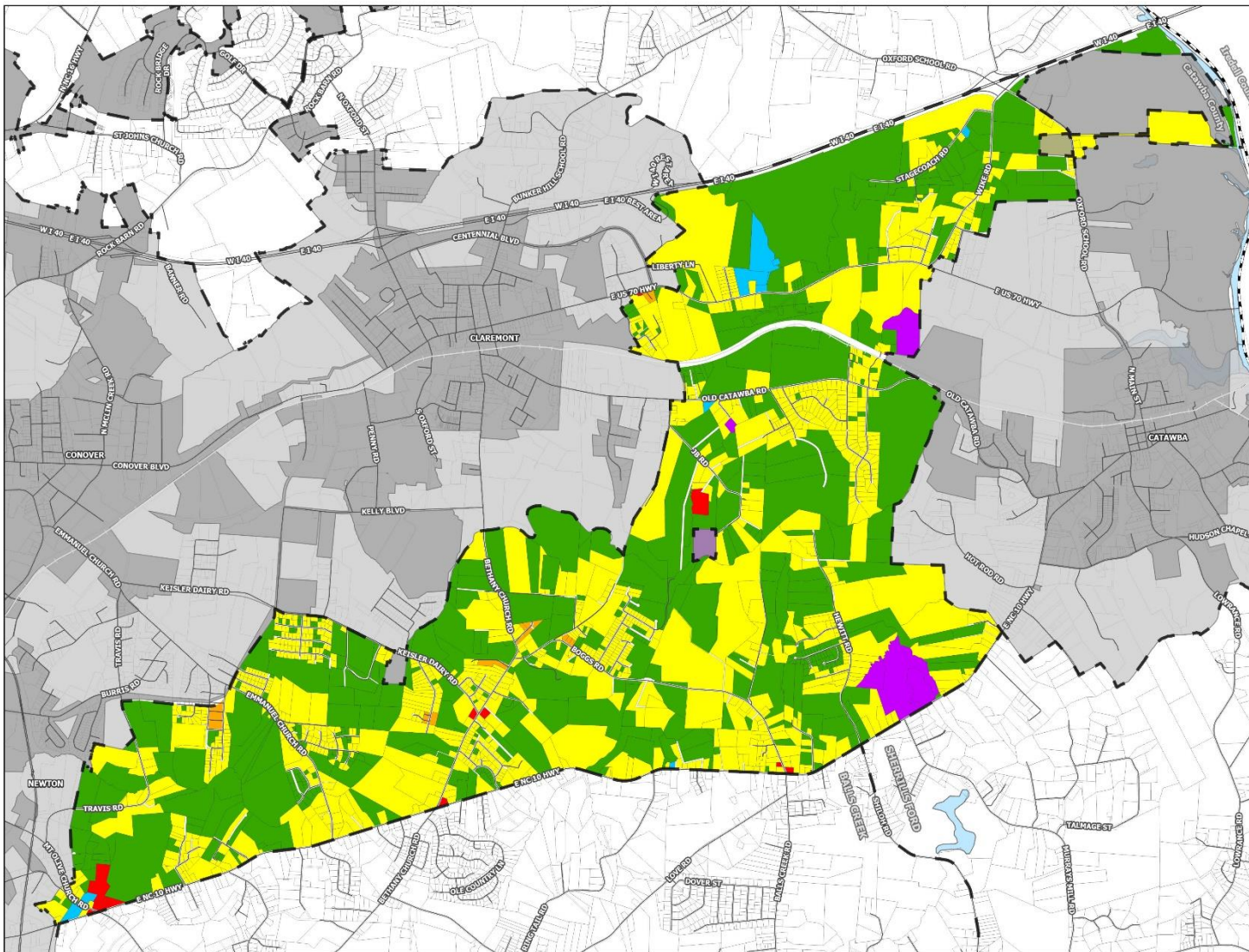
Residents have emphasized a preference for maintaining the natural character of their surroundings. Historic sites and heritage, such as the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge, are important to residents, reflecting a desire to preserve and celebrate the community's history and cultural identity. The proximity to I-40, US 70 and NC 10 for ease of travel is valued, suggesting a recognition of the importance of transportation infrastructure for connectivity and convenience. Residents emphasized the importance of rural and open farm land, their location to cities and mountains, farmland preservation, CVCC/ASU and other higher education opportunities, affordability of the area, and job growth. These services contribute to the overall well-being and safety of the community.

The residents are concerned about food deserts, potential traffic congestion stemming from lack of DOT funding, and lack of community involvement. Balancing growth with the need to maintain smooth traffic flow is crucial for preserving the quality of life in the area. The potential loss of farmland and transformation of rural character due to residential developments are concerns. Residents want to ensure that commercial development aligns with the rural atmosphere and is aesthetically pleasing. Balancing economic growth with the preservation of the rural character is a key consideration.

These values and concerns collectively reflect a community that appreciates its rural and historic attributes, prioritizes accessibility and good public services, and is mindful of the potential challenges associated with development. Balancing growth pressures with the preservation of the Catawba area's unique qualities emerges as a key consideration for residents and community planning initiatives.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision. Catawba County will rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning, watershed regulations, and infrastructure needs.



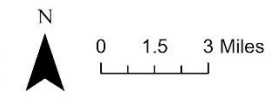
Catawba Current Land Use

Legend

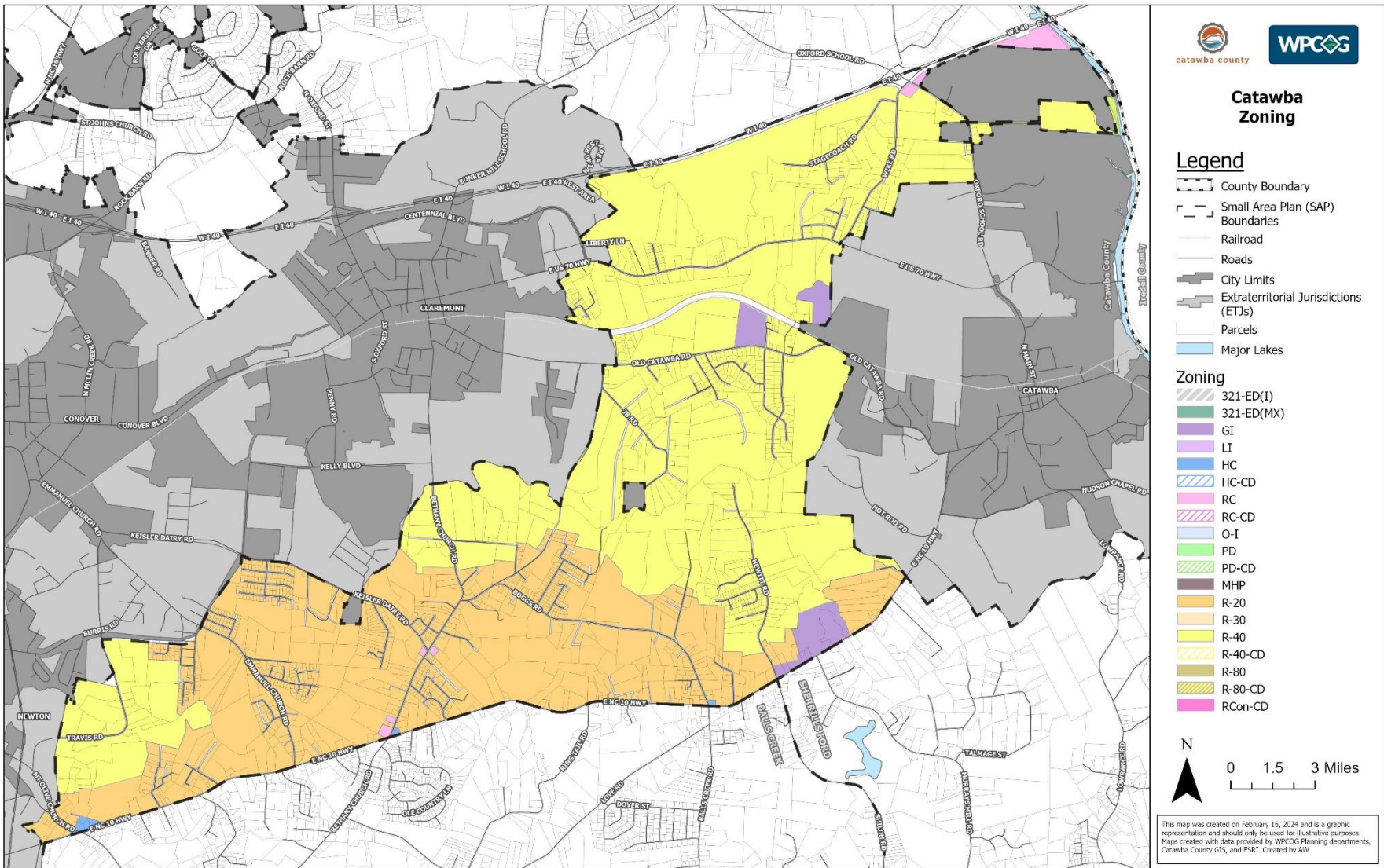
- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

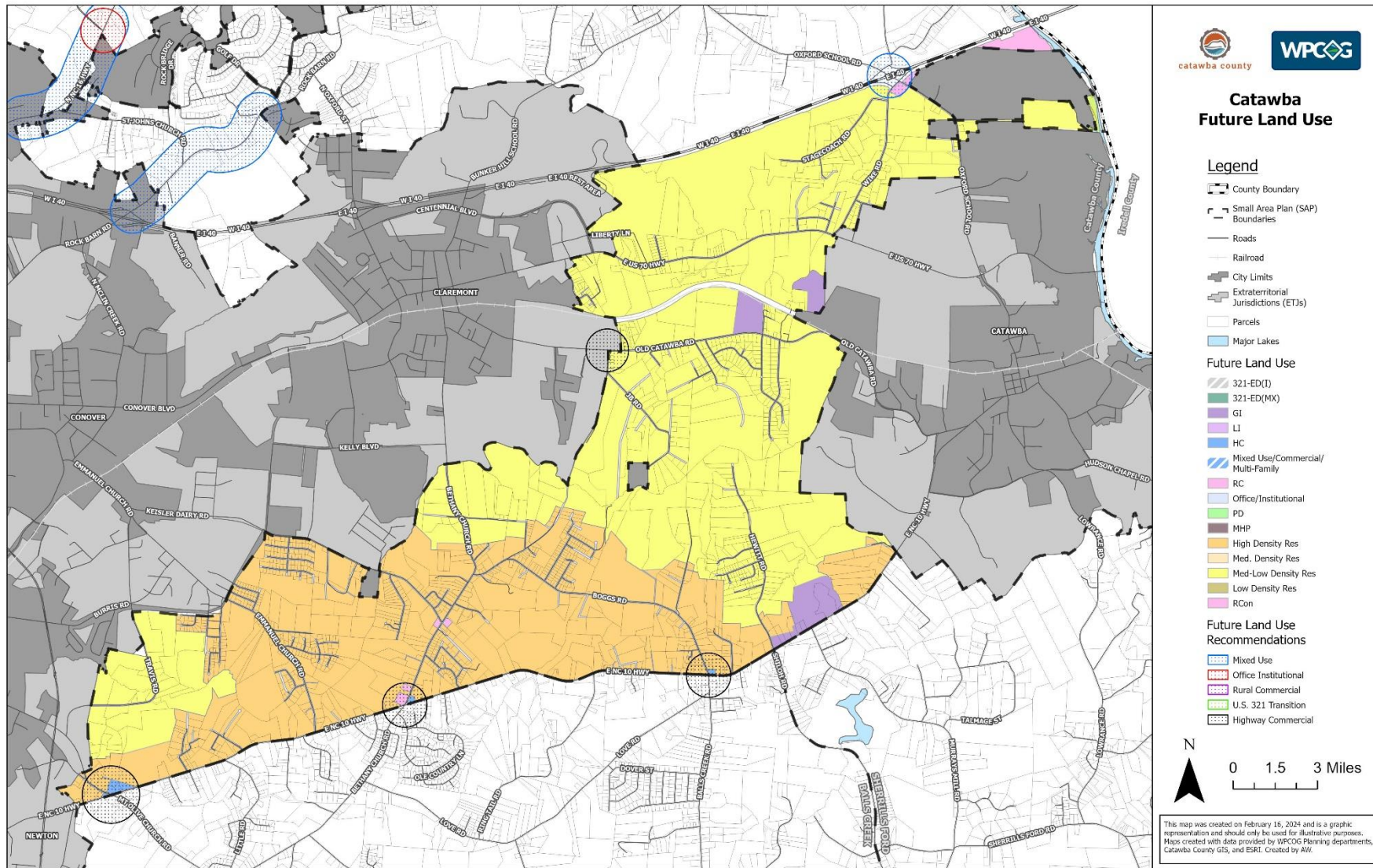
Current Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



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CATAWBA SMALL AREA PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential

- New subdivisions are recommended to have further design standards in areas such as buffering/landscaping, signage, and tree protection to increase a sense of place and lessen the impact on the area's rural character.
- Maintain the current zoning of R-20 and R-40 across the area.
- Maintain the Catawba River Corridor Overlay to protect the watershed
- Limit driveway cuts along roads and prefer rear alley entrances for new homes fronting higher classified roads.

Recommendations for Commercial/Mixed Use

- Recommend a gateway to Catawba County with signage at the I-40 exit on Oxford School Road.
- Maintain landscaping standards for businesses, require sidewalks and rear parking lots to encourage walkability in mixed use projects.
- Maintain commercial nodes at certain areas, where mixed commercial and residential could be located:
- Nodes at
 - Balls Creek Road and NC Hwy 10
 - Bethany Church Road and NC Hwy 10
 - Mt. Olive Church Road and NC Hwy 10
 - Old Catawba Road and B&B Road
 - Interstate 40 and Oxford School Road/NC Highway 10

Recommendations for Industrial Uses

- Provide opportunity of a light industrial campus/business park, south of I-40 from Claremont to the River. The park would include zoning for a mixture of commercial, office, industrial and light industrial, with landscaping and an internal street network.

Recommendations for Transportation

- Study the possibility of NCDOT completing the Claremont Loop from Centennial Blvd to Old Catawba Road and on to Boggs Road at Cinderella Lane.
- Study the possibility of the Scenic Highway designation for NC 10 through Catawba down to Murrays Mill, and on Highway 70 between Catawba and Claremont.
- Widen Boggs Road to allow safer bicycle traffic.
- Request NCDOT consider safety improvements along Bethany Church, Mr. Olive Church, and Boggs Road, and others, and replacement of bridges on these routes.

Recommendations for Recreation and Services

- Through Parks Master Plan process, explore the possibility of establishing a greenway from Bunker Hill Covered Bridge to Catawba and to the I-40 Rest Area were suggested for recreation.
- Require open space in new subdivisions for recreation.

13. SHERRILLS FORD SMALL AREA PLAN

The Sherrills Ford Area is a large and diverse area with a mix of natural features, transportation infrastructure, and evolving land uses. The Sherrills Ford Area encompasses a substantial land area, covering 45,412 acres, which is approximately 71 square miles. This makes it the largest Small Area by area in the region. The eastern and northern boundaries of the district are formed by Lake Norman and the Catawba River extending to the Town of Catawba's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The southern boundary is defined by the county line with Lincoln County. To the west, the district is bounded by NC Highway 16, Buffalo Shoals Road, Murrays Mill Road and NC Highway 10. The presence of Lake Norman and the Catawba River contributes to the unique character of the district. These water bodies influence the local environment, recreational opportunities, and overall aesthetics. This area's close proximity to Lake Norman also makes it popular for residential communities. The influence of major highways such as I-40, I-77, NC Highway 150 and NC Highway 16 provide a significant transportation presence connecting the district to broader regional networks.

While much of the district is described as open space, the influence of the lake, river, public utilities, and major highways contribute to development pressures. Sherrills Ford Road, Long Island Road, Little Mountain Road, Buffalo Shoals Road are noted as still characterized by large undeveloped lands. Increasing residential neighborhoods and ongoing development shift a portion of land use. The coexistence of rural and more developed properties underscores the importance of strategic planning to balance growth and preserve the district's unique qualities. Historic sites, such as Murray's Mill, are considered key assets. These sites hold cultural and historical significance, adding to the district's character and providing a link to its past.

The Sherrills Ford Area stands out for its land use diversity compared to some other areas. It encompasses low intensity land use patterns in some areas (where agricultural uses continue), significant density along the lake, where housing has increased over the last two decades, and industrial and commercial uses, which may be less common in certain parts of the county. This diversity in land use adds to the complexity and vibrancy of the district.

Much of the land in the Sherrills Ford area is residential, indicating a predominant focus on housing development. Wooded and agricultural land added to the diverse landscape, reflecting a balance between development and preservation of natural features. There were notable areas of commercial and industrial use, showcasing a mix of land uses in the region. The NC 16 By-pass, NC 16 Business and NC 150 area is identified as a major commercial node, suggesting a concentration of commercial activities in this area. Smaller commercial areas were noted at other key intersections. Commscope, Prodelin, and the Marshall Steam Station were noted as significant industries in the area. This provides a mix of manufacturing, technology, and power generation activities contributing to the local economy.

Residents highly value the sense of place and community feel of the area, emphasizing a desire to preserve the open and natural character of their community. The abundance of trees and natural beauty is a significant value, indicating an interest in environmental conservation and an appreciation for the scenic landscape. The small-town atmosphere and sense of civic spirit are cherished, highlighting the importance of community connections, local identity, and shared values. Clean water and recreation opportunities at the lake are priorities, underscoring the importance of preserving water quality and maintaining access to recreational amenities. The citizens do appreciate the close proximity to available services in larger cities.

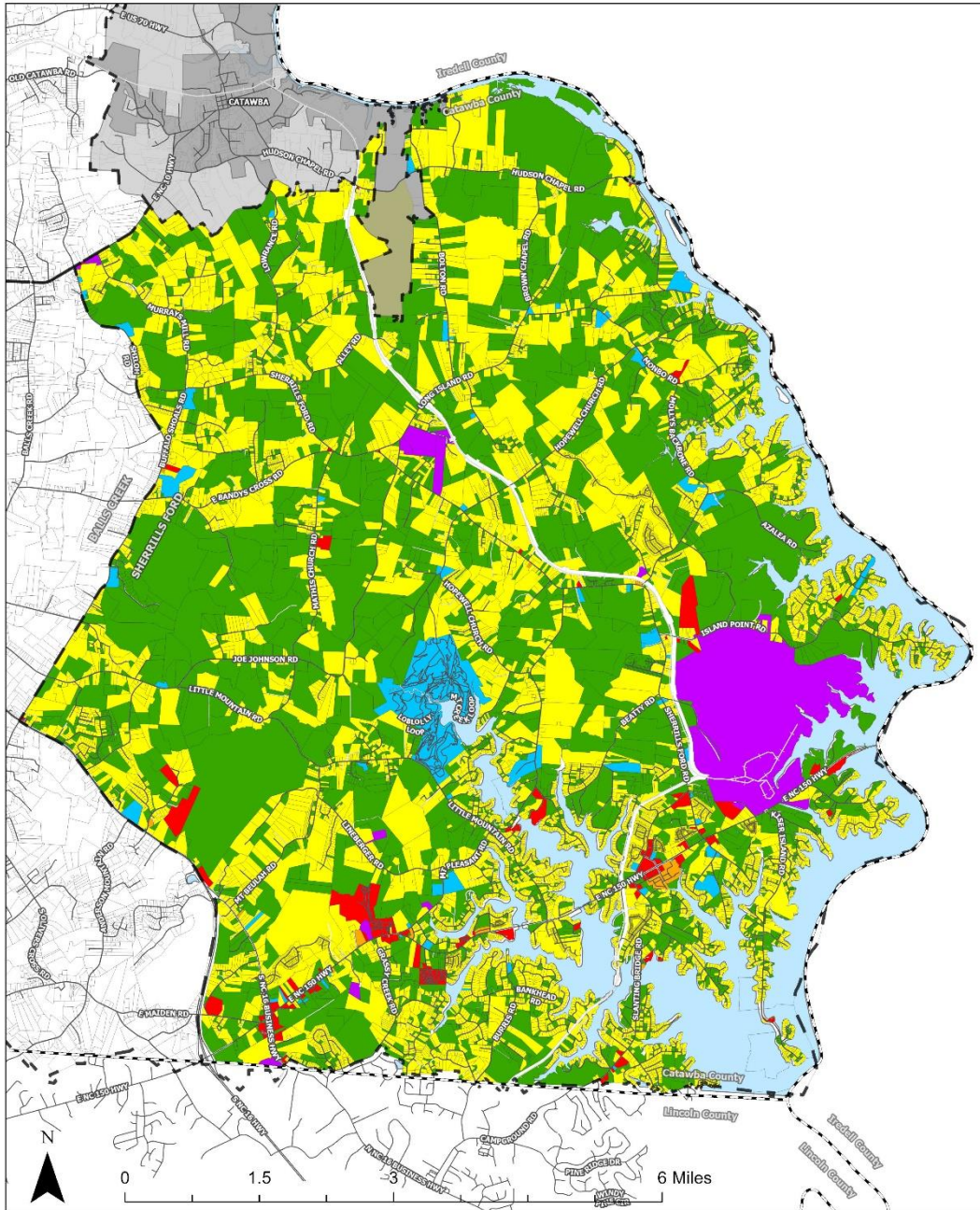
Apprehensions about multifamily and industrial development reflect a desire to control and guide growth, ensuring that it aligns with the community's vision and values. The residents are concerned about congestion as it relates to NC Highway 150, school capacity, sufficiency of transportation infrastructure, and ensuring adequate future public safety response. The goal of pacing further commercial development indicates a desired careful approach to economic growth, with a focus on maintaining the community's character.

Sherrills Ford has experienced growth pressures, particularly along the lake. This increase in population are driven by factors such as residential development, appeal of the lakeside location and lower tax rates and quality education. The road network along and around NC Highway 150 doesn't always mitigate traffic congestion. Dead ends instead of a connected network can contribute to traffic challenges. Island Point Road was specifically noted for its potential impact on congestion, suggesting that transportation infrastructure was a focal point of concern.

The combination of population growth, transportation challenges, diverse land use distribution, and the presence of significant industries illustrates the complex and evolving nature of the Sherrills Ford area. Balancing residential development with infrastructure needs and preserving the character of the region is a key consideration for community planning.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision. Catawba County will rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning and infrastructure needs.



Sherrills Ford Current Land Use

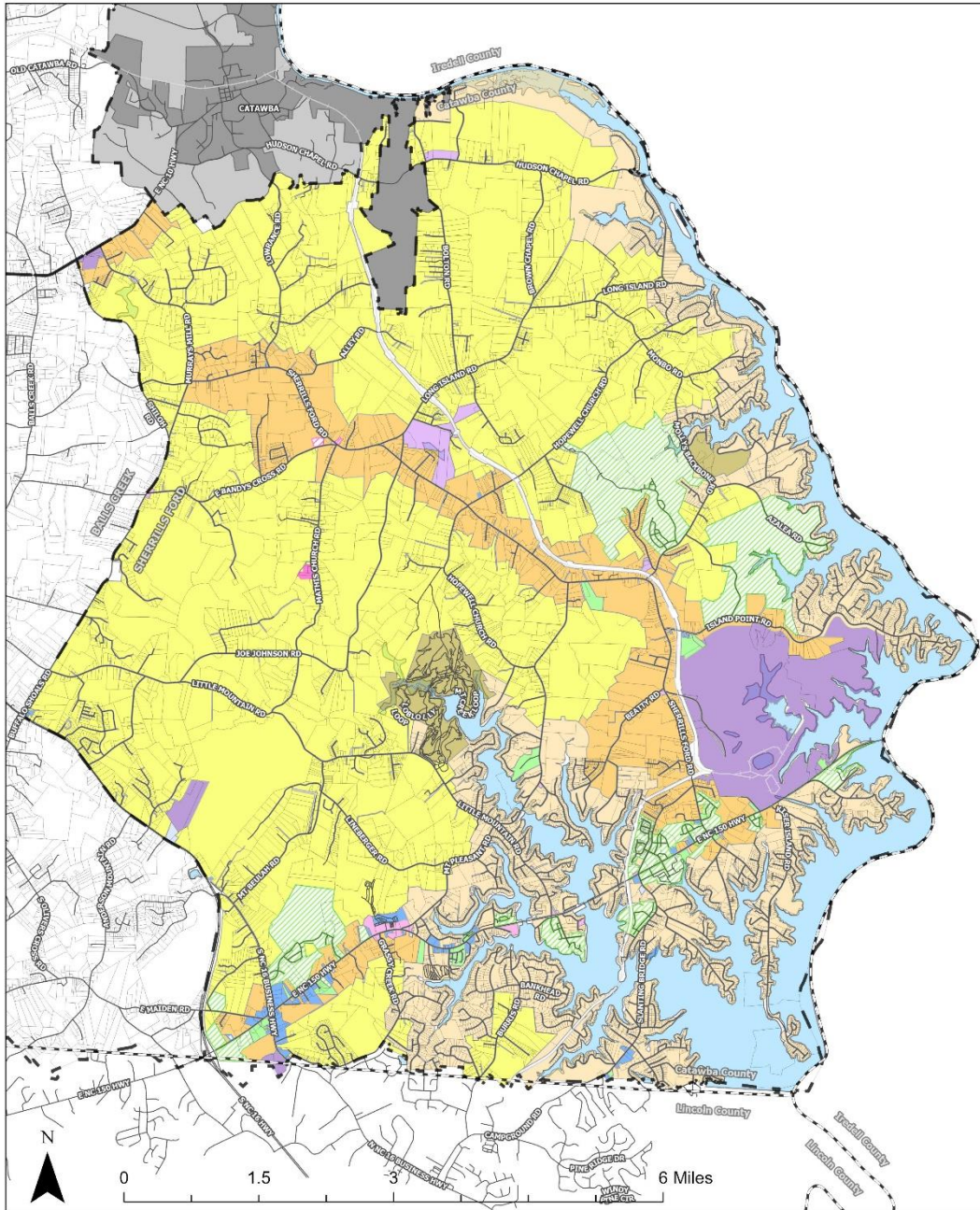
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Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Current Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



Sherrills Ford Zoning

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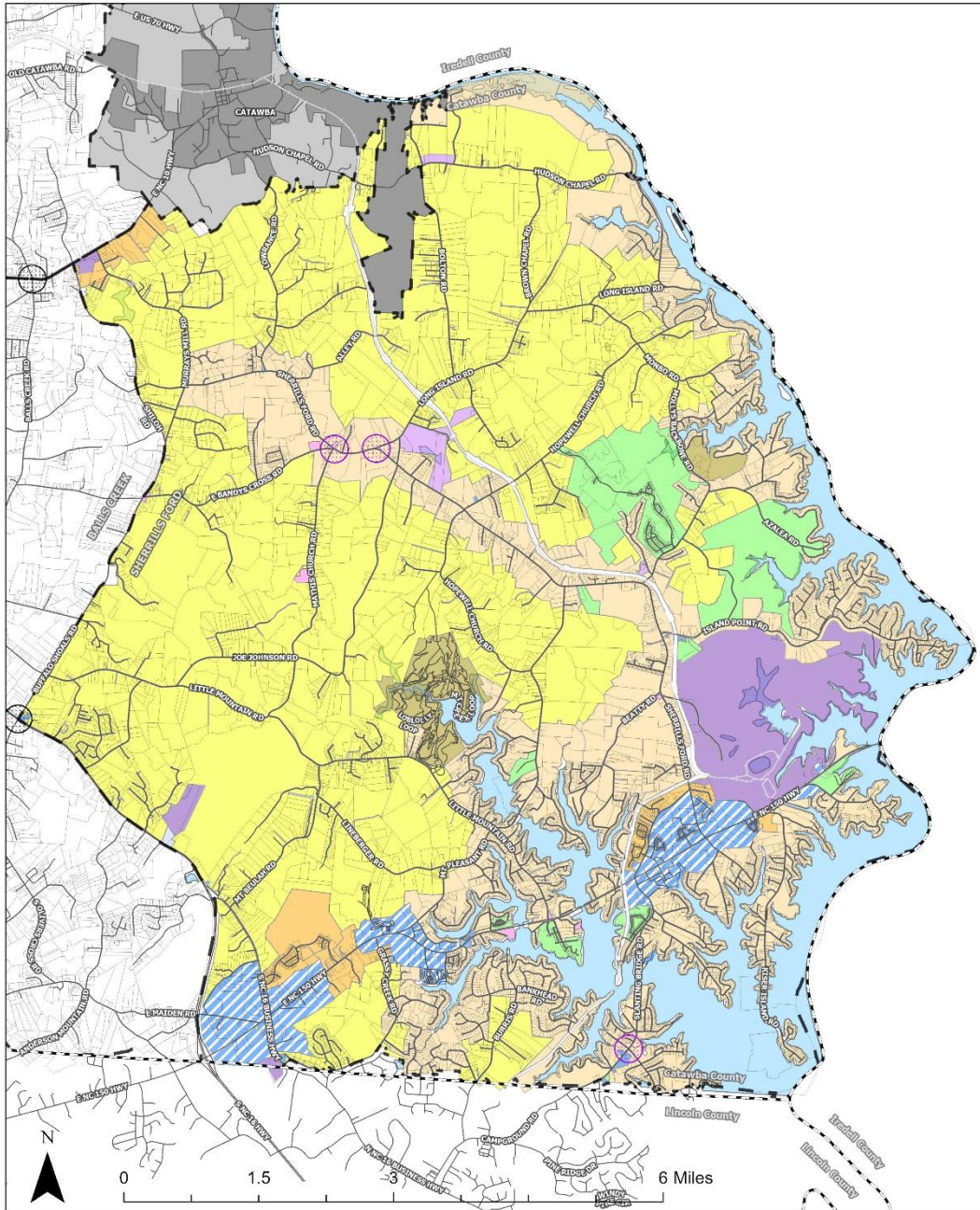
Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Zoning

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- HC-CD
- RC
- RC-CD
- O-I

- PD
- PD-CD
- MHP
- R-20
- R-30
- R-40
- R-40-CD
- R-80
- R-80-CD
- RCon-CD



Sherrills Ford Future Land Use

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Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Future Land Use

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- Mixed Use/Commercial/Multi-Family
- RC
- Office/Institutional
- PD
- MHP

- High Density Res
- Med. Density Res
- Med-Low Density Res
- Low Density Res
- RCon

Future Land Use Recommendations

- Mixed Use
- Office Institutional
- Rural Commercial
- U.S. 321 Transition
- Highway Commercial

SHERRILLS FORD SMALL AREA PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential

1. Modify the R-20 high-density corridor (1/2 acre minimum) to a R-30 medium-density corridor (3/4 acre minimum), approximately half-mile wide, on Sherrills Ford Road, Beatty Road and Island Point Road.
2. Modify the mixed-use corridor overlay consistent with the recommended mixed use, commercial, and multi-family areas identified in the Highway 150 Corridor Plan.
3. Maintain the R-30 medium-density 1000-foot strip around Lake Norman with ¾ acre lots due to water supply watershed location to assist in protecting the water supply.
4. Maintain the remaining area as a rural area of 1 unit per acre, with design standards for new subdivisions including buffering and open space requirements.
5. Focus multifamily development in the mixed use corridor overlay where water and sewer are available and higher classified transportation facilities are present or planned.

Recommendations for Commercial/Mixed Use

1. Continue the efforts of a “village center” at the Sherrills Ford Road/Hwy. 150 intersection of approximately 750 acres, to include a mixture of commercial, office and mixed-residential uses.
2. Continue the efforts of a “regional commercial center” that may include a diversity of uses such as medical, business park, Class A industrial park, commercial and retail at the intersection of the existing Hwy. 150/16 and the new Hwy. 150/16 interchange.
3. Designate a “highway commercial center” on a smaller scale, at the intersections of Hwy. 150 and Mt. Pleasant Road and Hwy. 16 and Buffalo Shoals Road.
4. Additionally, even smaller scale “rural commercial nodes” were suggested at the following locations to serve the surrounding areas with limited commercial services.
 - a. Sherrills Ford Road/Long Island Road
 - b. Sherrills Ford Road/E. Bandys’ Cross Road
 - c. Hudson Chapel/Kale Road
 - d. Slanting Bridge Road/Keistler Store Road
 - e. Remove the rural commercial node at Buffalo Shoals Road/East and West Bandys Rd

Recommendations for Transportation

1. Work through the MPO and with NCDOT for various safety and connectivity projects throughout the area, including improvements of Raccoon Tract Drive from Island Point Road to Molly’s Backbone Road and improving the intersection of Mt. Pleasant Road

and Little Mountain Road, Sherrills Ford Road at Island Point Road / Sherrills Ford Elementary, and others.

2. Continue support for widening of Highway 150, favoring a four-lane divided highway with landscaped median, now planned for right-of-way acquisition in 2027 and construction in 2030.
3. Support roadway improvements to include bike and pedestrian facilities where recommended according to existing plans (i.e. Lake Norman Bicycle Route).

Recommendations for Services and Recreation

1. Coordinate with school planners to identify potential new school sites.
2. Continue expansion of public utilities in line with the other recommendations in the plan.

14. BALLS CREEK SMALL AREA PLAN

The Balls Creek Small Area Plan (BCSAP) study boundary follows the Maiden and Newton town and city limits and their respective Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) boundaries to the west; NC Highway 10 on the north; Murrays Mill Road/Buffalo Shoals Road to the east; NC Highway 16 south of Buffalo Shoals Road to the Catawba/Lincoln County line on the east and then follows the County line west to the Maiden ETJ boundary.

The Balls Creek SAP study area encompasses 30,802 acres. Balls Creek stands as a testament to the connection between the community and land. The verdant fields of Balls Creek illustrate a community deeply rooted in farming and livestock production. This agricultural foundation sustains the local economy and serves as a source of pride for the community, symbolizing resilience and a commitment to sustaining a way of life.

Murrays Mill Pond, the Mill itself, and the commanding presence of Anderson Mountain are not just geographical features but cherished landmarks that residents are dedicated to protecting and preserving. These iconic elements serve as visual anchors, grounding the community in its history and providing a sense of continuity in the face of change.

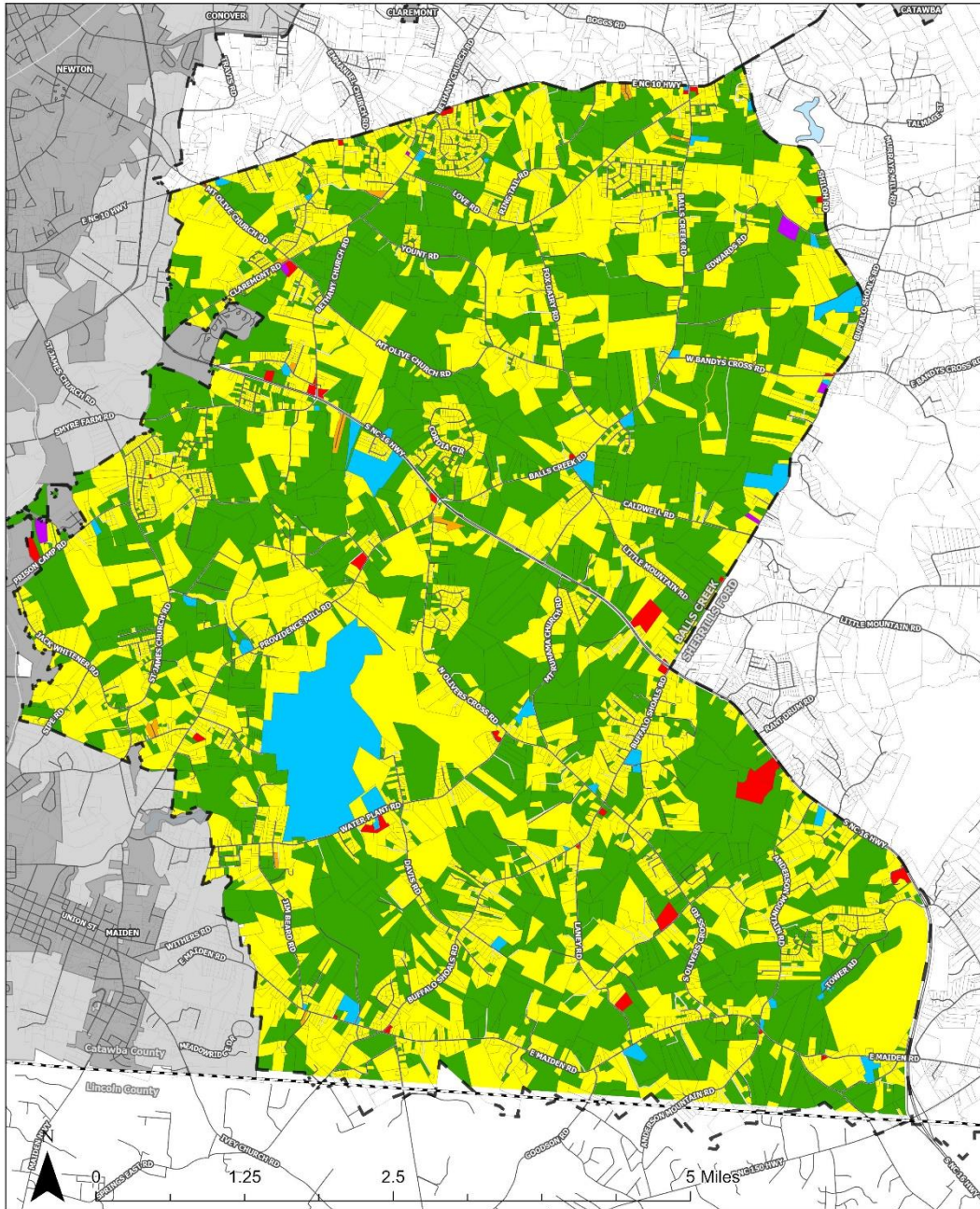
Balls Creek, with its agricultural roots and dedication to preserving its cultural and natural heritage, stands as a model of community resilience and pride. The interplay between farming traditions, community institutions, and iconic landmarks forms the tapestry of Balls Creek's identity. The rural ambiance and setting of Balls Creek are highly valued by residents. The tranquility and connection to nature associated with a rural environment contribute to a sense of peace and well-being. The presence of open spaces and actively farmed land is appreciated. The importance of education is reflected in the value placed on good schools being located in the community. Residents prioritize the well-rounded development and education of their children and efforts to maintain a secure living environment.

Citizens in Balls Creek have concerns about the changes being brought about by development in other areas of Catawba County, including loss of farmland and the threat this presents to the rural feel and way of life. There are also concerns about young families leaving farming as a career, threats to wildlife habitats, congestion on NC Highway 150, loss of affordability, lower quality commercial development, and higher burdens on infrastructure and emergency services. These shared values create a strong sense of community cohesion and contribute to the overall well-being of Balls Creek.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land

use vision. Catawba County will rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning and infrastructure needs.



Balls Creek Current Land Use

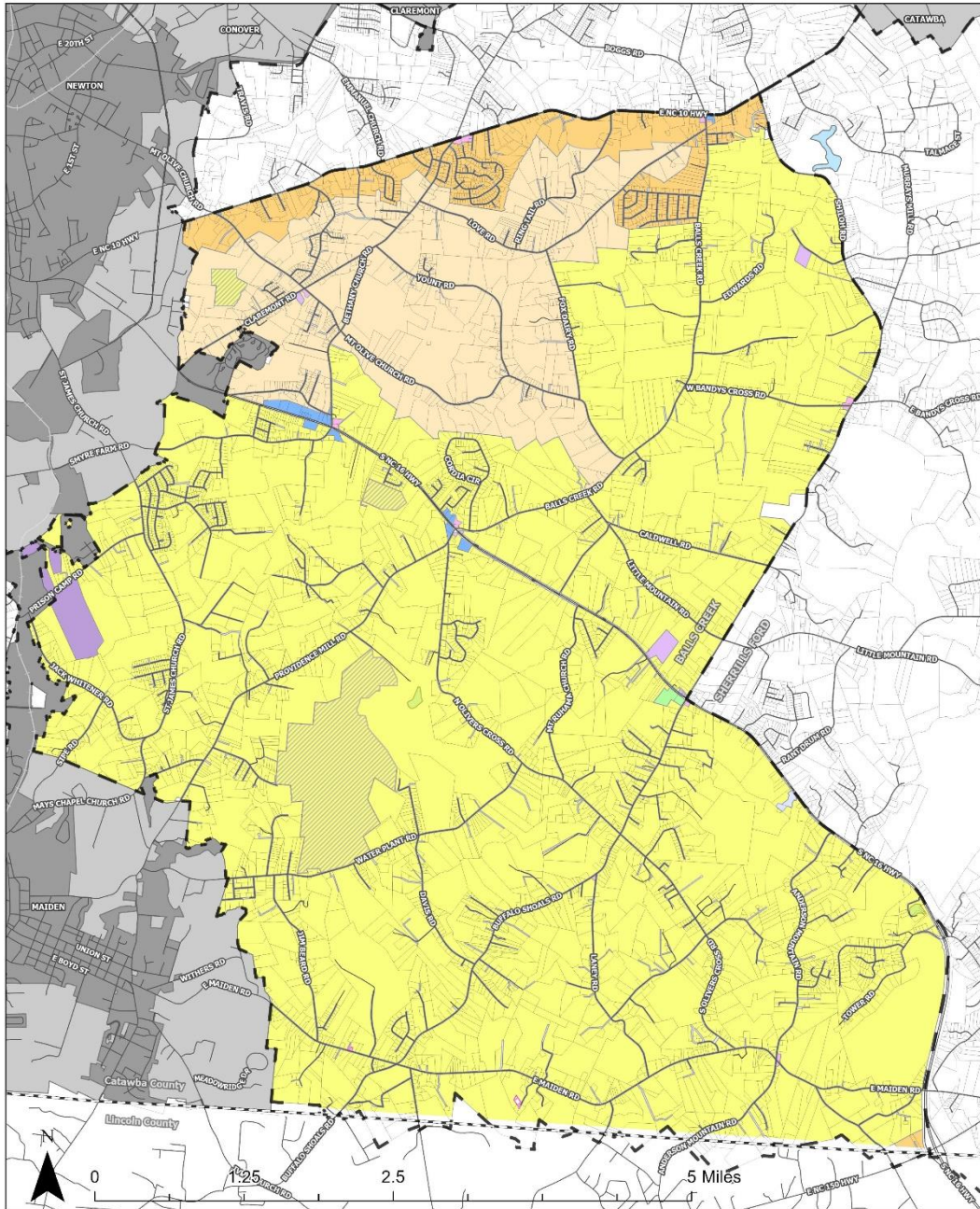
This map was created on February 23, 2024 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI. Created by AW.

Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Current Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



Balls Creek Zoning

This map was created on February 23, 2024 and is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning departments, Catawba County GIS, and ESRI. Created by AW.

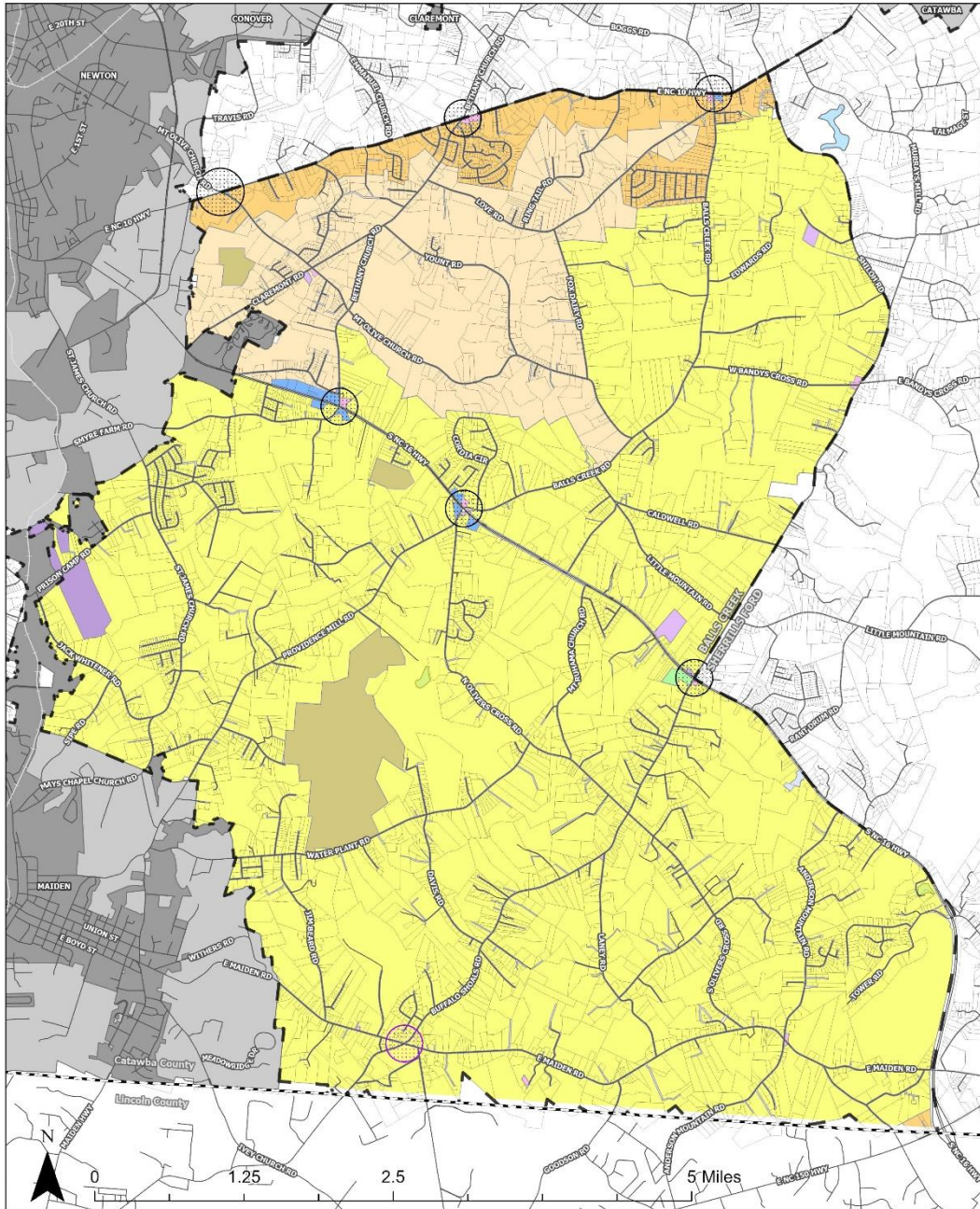
Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Zoning

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- HC-CD
- RC
- RC-CD
- O-I

- PD
- PD-CD
- MHP
- R-20
- R-30
- R-40
- R-40-CD
- R-80
- R-80-CD
- RCon-CD



Balls Creek Future Land Use

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Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Future Land Use

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- Mixed Use/Commercial/Multi-Family
- RC
- Office/Institutional
- PD
- MHP

- High Density Res
- Med. Density Res
- Med-Low Density Res
- Low Density Res
- RCon

Future Land Use Recommendations

- Mixed Use
- Office Institutional
- Rural Commercial
- U.S. 321 Transition
- Highway Commercial

BALLS CREEK SMALL AREA PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential / Open Space

1. New subdivisions are recommended to have further design standards to address areas such as buffering/landscaping, signage, and tree protection to lessen the impact and increase sense of place.
2. Balance growth with the community's sense of place.
3. Continue allowing a range of minimum lot sizes to facilitate affordable housing options for people in all stages of life.
4. Reserve quality open space in new subdivisions.
5. Preserve quality open space, pastures and scenic views.
6. Maintain the primarily residential character of Balls Creek.
7. Support and encourage agricultural uses.
8. Protect natural resources.

Recommendations for Commercial/Industrial/O-I

1. Commercial
 - a. Remove the rural commercial node at Buffalo Shoals Road/East and West Bandys Rd.
 - b. Focus commercial growth at identified growth nodes, where infrastructure is available, and in locations consistent with adjoining municipal plans.
 - c. Provide opportunity for quality community-oriented businesses within specified non-residential nodes.
 - d. Require higher design standards for commercial uses to increase aesthetics.
 - e. Buffer commercial uses from residential areas.
 - f. Continue to provide for commercial growth at the three commercial nodes along NC Highway 16.
2. Industrial
 - a. Focus industrial growth within the study area to locations where infrastructure and higher transportation facilities are available and where consistent with adjoining municipal plans.
3. Office-Institutional
 - a. Focus office-institutional uses within nodes along NC Highway 16 corridor.

- b. As with commercial uses, require higher design standards and buffers from residential areas to increase aesthetics.

15. STARTOWN SMALL AREA PLAN

The Startown Small Area Plan community is situated centrally in the County, west of Newton's and Maiden's boundaries, south of Hickory's jurisdictional limits and extends to the Lincoln County line. US Highway 321-Business and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway define the boundaries of the area, providing important transportation links within the region. US Highway 321 bisects the area, enhancing transportation infrastructure and connectivity. It facilitates easy connections between Catawba County and I-85, offering convenient access to Charlotte and points beyond. These routes contribute to the community's interconnected geography.

The Startown area encompasses a substantial land area, covering 19,428 acres. The South Fork of the Catawba River flows through this area, into Lincoln County, contributing to the area's natural beauty. The strategic positioning of the Startown area, along with its transportation infrastructure and natural features, suggests a region poised for development and connectivity.

Closer to the municipal areas, the landscape of Startown shows denser residential development and more intense commercial uses. The landscape opens to more agriculture and woodland properties west of US 321 and in the southern portion of the study area. The rural nature of the Startown community suggests a setting characterized by open vistas, farmlands, and a connection to the land. The enduring agricultural heritage indicates farming traditions and practices have played a pivotal role in shaping the community's identity. The preservation of these elements is a priority for community members as they navigate the balance between maintaining their heritage and adapting to evolving needs and changes in the community.

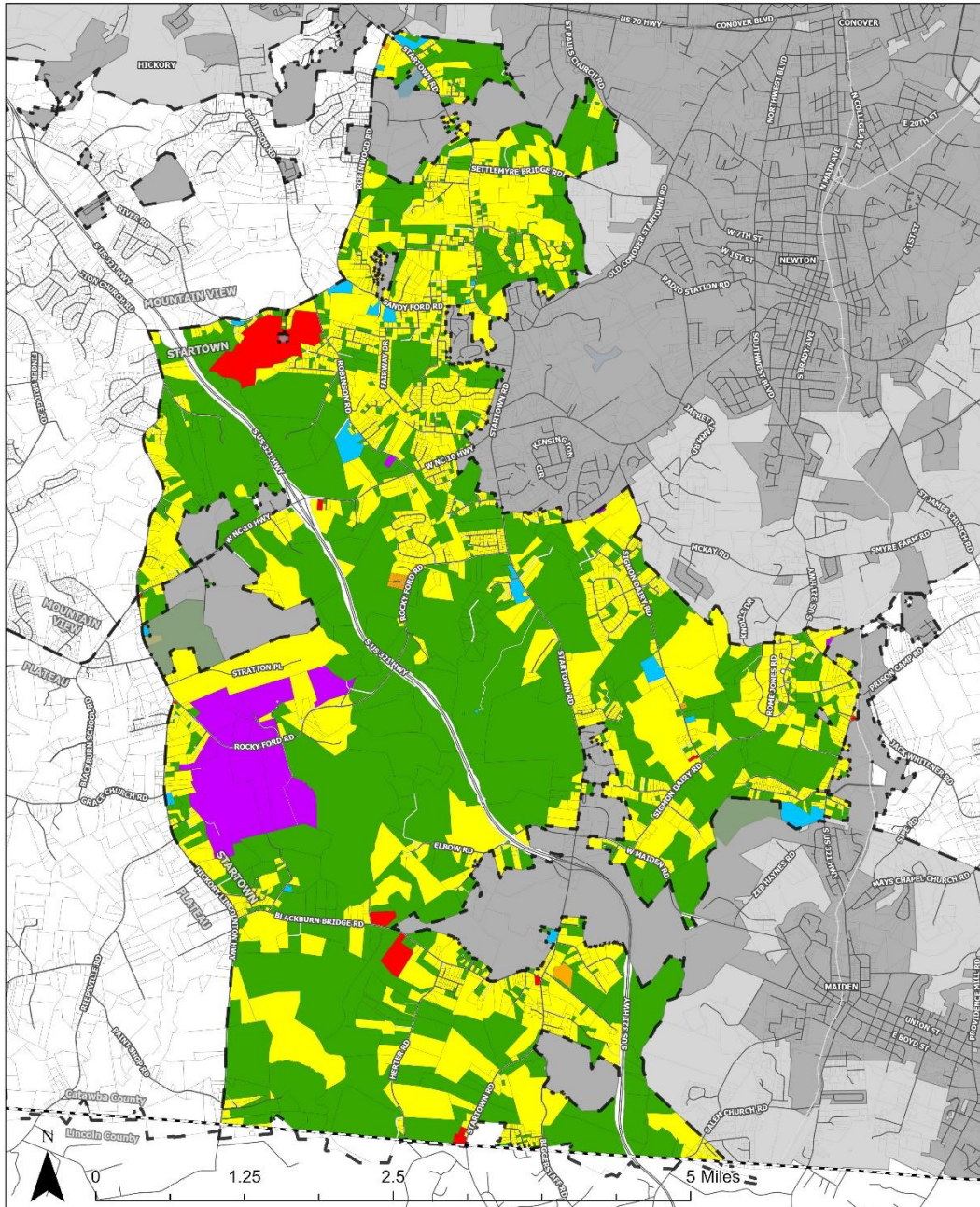
The values expressed by citizens in Startown reflect a strong commitment to maintaining the sense of place and community-oriented character of the area. Citizens place importance on environmental conservation and agricultural heritage. A lack of congestion is valued. Access to good transportation routes, especially US Highway 321, is important for connectivity and convenience. Quality public services including schools, fire services, and other community amenities are valued for the well-being of residents. The importance of schools reflects a commitment to providing quality education for the community's children.

Concerns about traffic, particularly on Startown Road, highlight the need for NC Department of Transportation to address congestion issues that could impact the community's peaceful atmosphere. The fear of losing farmland and open space underscores the importance of maintaining the agricultural and natural features that define the community. The need to balance growth pressures with rural qualities reflects a careful approach to development, aiming to preserve the community's unique character. Other concerns of the Startown community include increased property tax and affordability, lack of wi-fi and cell service, loss of family owned businesses and agriculture, lack of road maintenance, and young people leaving due to lack of affordability.

Residential uses and open space occupy the majority of the land in the Startown study area. Residential subdivision growth in the adjacent municipal areas is occurring where public water and sewer lines are extended. Industrial activity is anticipated in the Startown area along US 321, where the highway provides the necessary infrastructure to support industrial uses.

The US 321 Corridor Plan anticipates industrial growth by imposing more stringent development standards compared to other parts of the county. This suggests a strategic approach to managing development along this corridor. Nonresidential uses are expected to increase along US Highway 321, indicating a potential shift towards more diverse economic activities along this transportation corridor.

These points collectively paint a picture of a study area undergoing development and experiencing a mix of residential, industrial, and commercial growth. The strategic planning, especially along the US 321 corridor, reflects an effort to guide and manage growth while preserving the sense of place of other parts of the community. The extension of infrastructure, including water and sewer lines, is identified as a factor influencing future growth patterns.



Startown Current Land Use

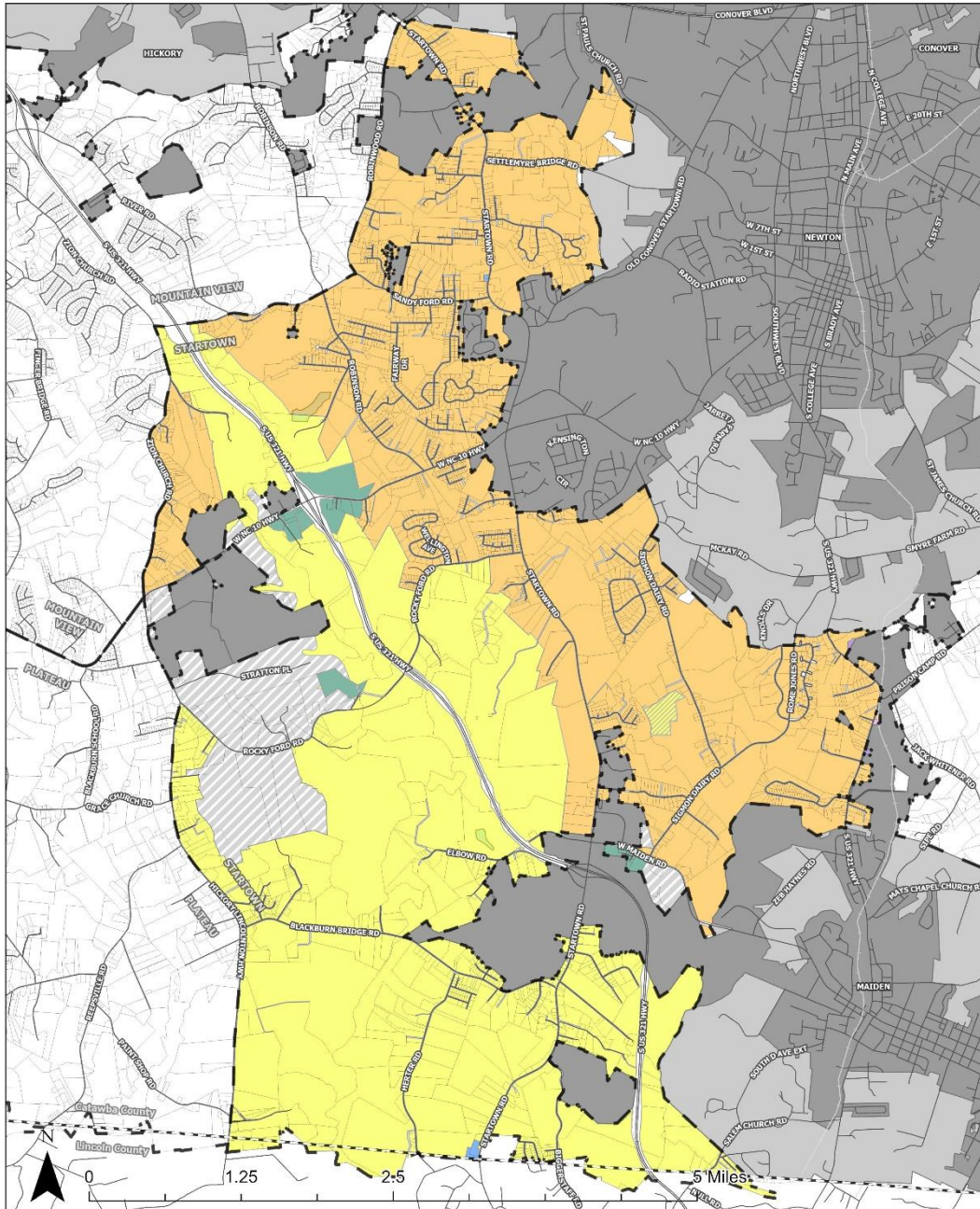
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Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Current Land Use

- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



Startown Zoning

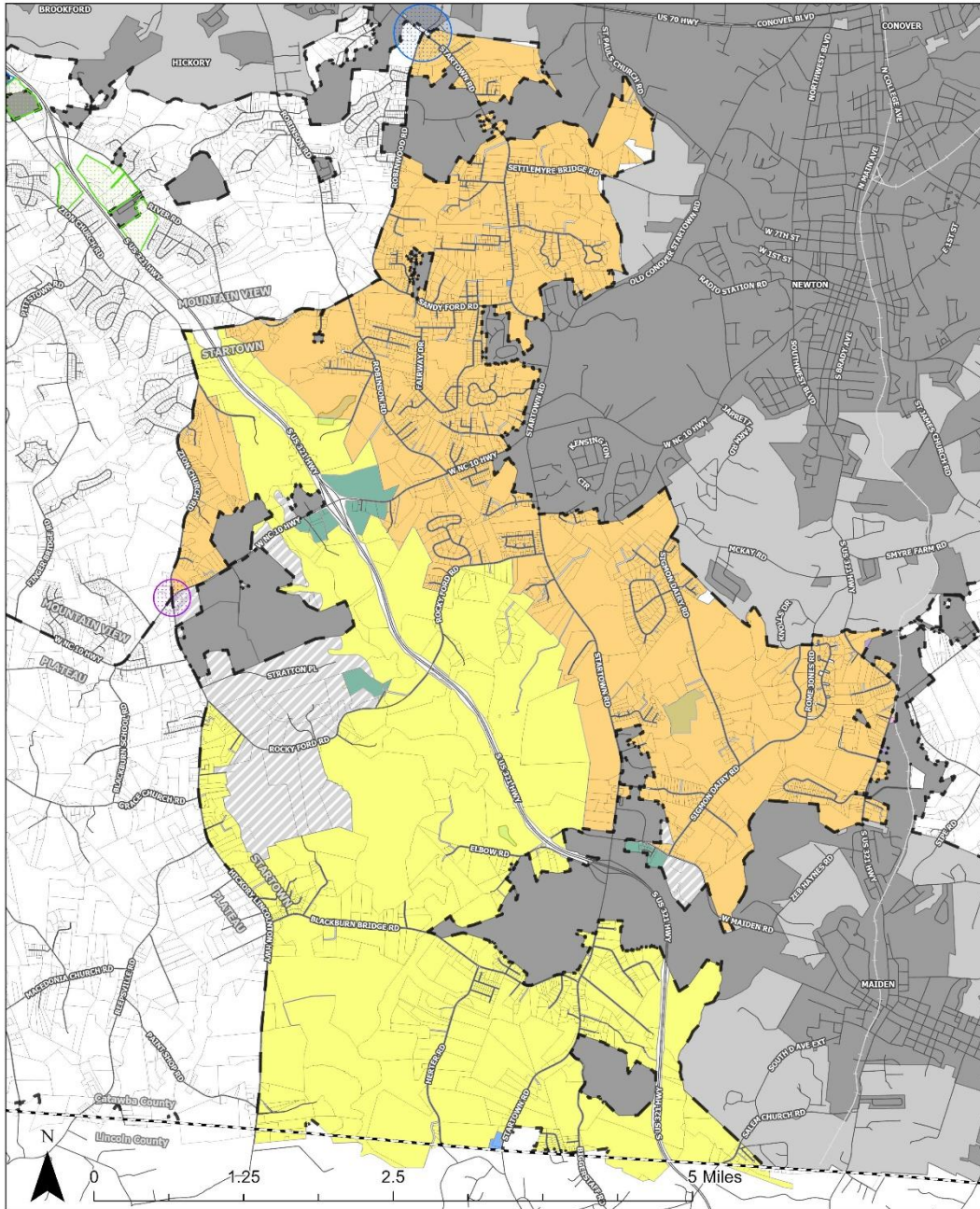
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Legend

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- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Zoning

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- HC-CD
- RC
- RC-CD
- O-I
- PD
- PD-CD
- MHP
- R-20
- R-30
- R-40
- R-40-CD
- R-80
- R-80-CD
- RCon-CD



Startown Future Land Use

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Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Roads
- Railroad
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

Future Land Use

- 321-ED(I)
- 321-ED(MX)
- GI
- LI
- HC
- Mixed Use/Commercial/Multi-Family
- RC
- Office/Institutional
- PD
- MHP

- High Density Res
- Med. Density Res
- Med-Low Density Res
- Low Density Res
- RCon

Future Land Use Recommendations

- Mixed Use
- Office Institutional
- Rural Commercial
- U.S. 321 Transition
- Highway Commercial

STARTOWN SMALL AREA PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential / Open Space

1. New subdivisions are recommended to have further design standards in areas such as buffering/landscaping, signage, and tree protection to increase a sense of place and lessen the impact on the area.
2. Residential
 - a. Balance growth with the community's sense of place.
 - b. Continue allowing a range of minimum lot sizes to facilitate affordable housing options for people in all stages of life.
 - c. Provide residential design qualities that do not negatively impact air quality, including pedestrian options such as sidewalks, walking trails, and bike paths.
3. Open Space
 - a. Preserve open space, pastures, and scenic views.
 - b. Support and encourage agricultural uses.
 - c. Protect natural resources.
 - d. Develop options for passive recreational uses.

Recommendations for Commercial/Industrial/O-I

4. Commercial
 - a. Focus commercial growth in Commercial Development Nodes, rather than strip development along highways in the Startown area.
 - b. Require more aesthetically pleasing designs for commercial uses.
 - c. Continue requirements for buffering commercial uses from residential areas.
 - d. Encourage quality mixed-use development on appropriate sites.
5. Industrial
 - a. Target industrial growth within the study area to specific, appropriate sites.
6. Office-Institutional
 - a. As with commercial uses, require more aesthetically pleasing designs and buffers from residential areas.

16. MOUNTAIN VIEW SMALL AREA PLAN

The Mountain View area covers a significant portion of the western region of the county, and is defined by specific geographical boundaries. The area is south of the municipal boundaries of Long View, Brookford and Hickory, extends west to the border between Burke and Catawba counties, and north of NC Highway 10. The eastern boundary follows Robinson Road, Robinwood Road and Sandy Ford Road. Portion of Greedy Highway and NC Highway 10 serve as the southern boundary. The Mountain View Small Area Plan covers a substantial land area, totaling 20,035 acres, which is equivalent to over 31 square miles.

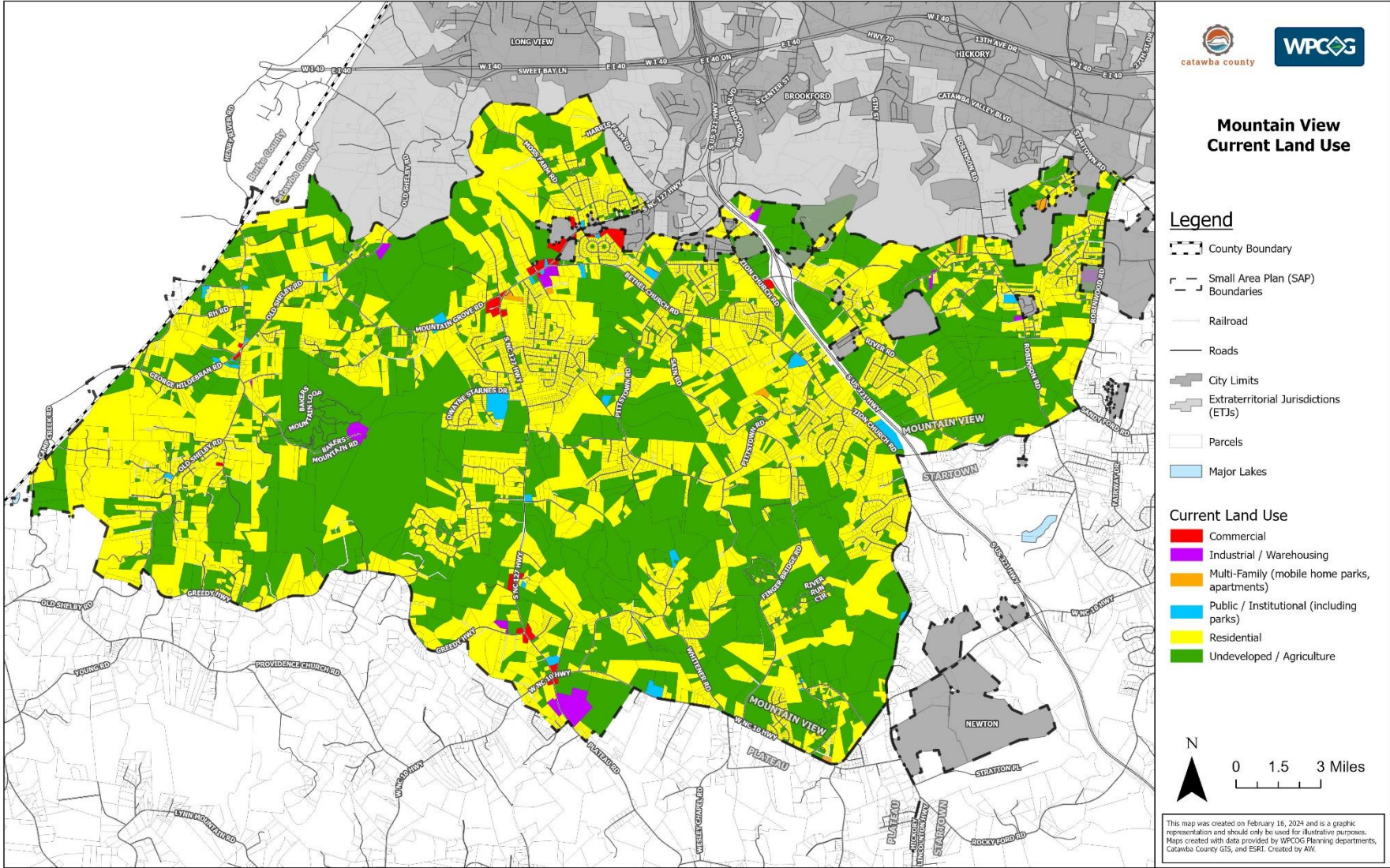
The Mountain View community has a rich and significant history, playing a crucial role in the development of the area and serving as a melting pot for diverse communities. Within the Mountain View area is the Jacob Fork community, one of the earliest communities in the area. The Jacob Fork community has influenced the development and cultural heritage of the broader region. The Jacob Fork community's history is a tapestry woven with threads of cultural diversity, educational and religious institutions, and connections to the broader landscape, including Bakers Mountain, a prominent geographical landmark in the area. Understanding these historical aspects provides insight into the roots and development of the community, shaping its identity over time.

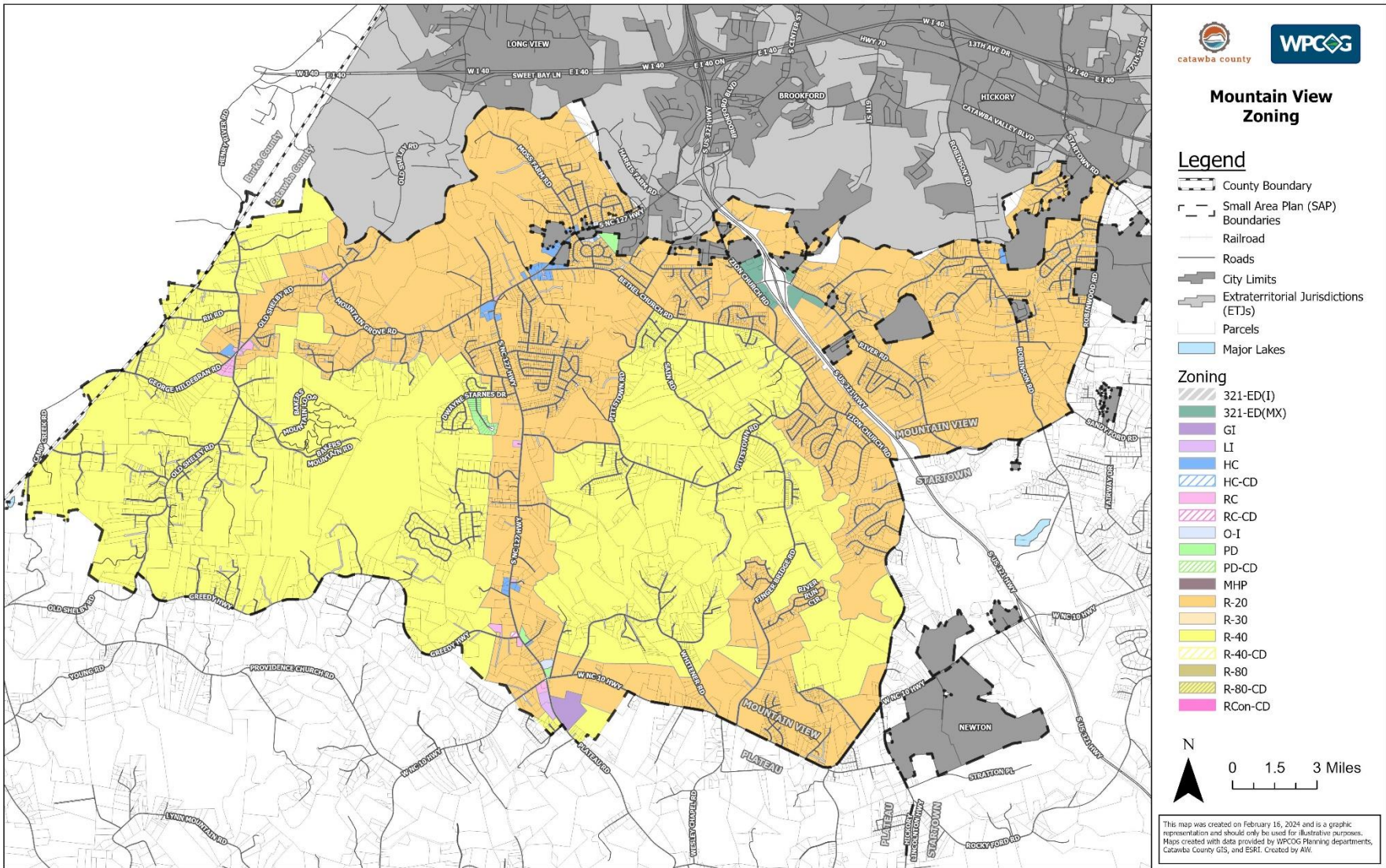
Residents in Mountain View highly value the rural scenery and open spaces that define the Mountain View area and have a desire to see balanced growth in the community. Preserving the natural landscape and maintaining a sense of spaciousness are key priorities. The location's proximity to Hickory and major highways is appreciated, offering both accessibility to urban amenities and the convenience of transportation infrastructure. Residents prioritize access to high-quality public services, including schools, fire departments, and vibrant church communities. These services contribute significantly to the community's well-being. Quality public services, including schools, fire services, and other community amenities are valued for the well-being of residents. The importance of schools reflects a commitment to providing quality education for the community's children.

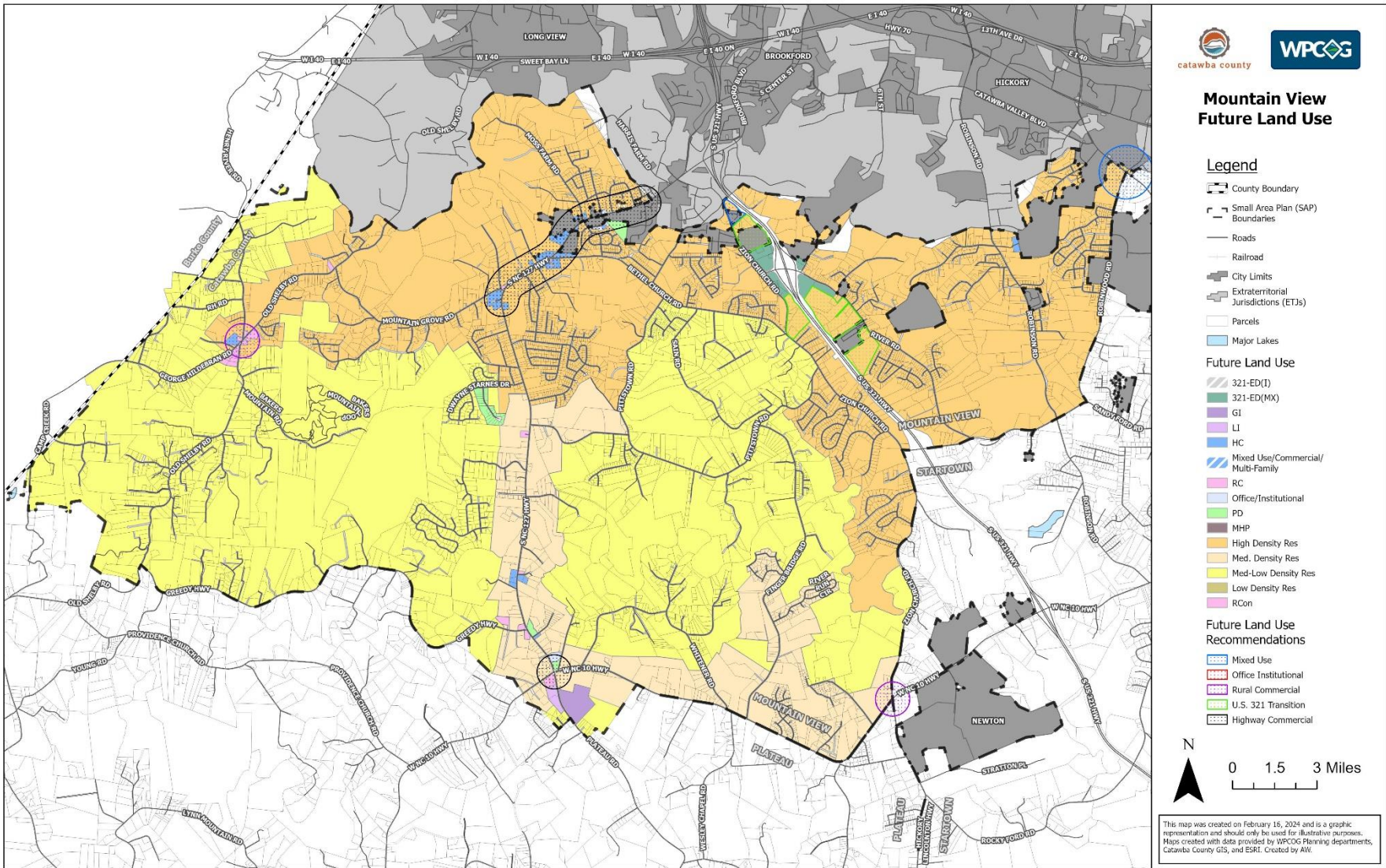
Development patterns along NC Highway 127 are a concern for residents, as they have cited the resulting traffic and concerns around unattractive development as primary issues. School capacity is a notable concern. Residents expressed a desire for more recreation opportunities (programs and facilities) to meet the leisure and wellness needs of the community. Residents voiced concerns that development will disrupt scenic views of Bakers Mountain, underscoring the importance of preserving natural landmarks and maintaining the visual appeal of the area. Other concerns include increased property tax and affordability, lack of wi-fi and cell service, loss of family-owned businesses and agriculture, lack of road maintenance, and young people leaving due to lack of affordability.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision. Catawba County Planning staff, Planning Board and County Commissioners rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning and infrastructure needs.







MOUNTAIN VIEW SMALL AREA PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential

1. Establish lower-density housing developments along NC Highway 10 and NC Highway 127 shifting from R-20 to R-30.
2. Explore modifying the land use code to create more opportunities for senior and retirement housing.
3. Balance growth with preserving rural character.
4. Subdivisions and multifamily development (along the 321 corridor if utilities are available) should have additional design criteria such as increased setbacks, limited driveways, and increased landscaped standards.
5. Pedestrian plans and sidewalk ordinance should be required within the new residential development. Connect to existing sidewalks and bicycle lanes.
 - a. Provide opportunity for multifamily development along the US 321 corridor and River Road interchange dependent on infrastructure availability.

Recommendations for Commercial/Mixed Use/Industrial

6. Recommend commercial nodes at certain areas, where limited commercial and multifamily could be located, if utilities are available.
7. Recommend increased design guidelines and preservation of rural character through limiting commercial growth areas to the following:
 - a. Highway Commercial
 - i. Propst Crossroads
 - b. Rural Commercial
 - i. Advent Crossroads
 - c. Highway Commercial Corridor
 - i. NC 127 (just beyond Mt. Grove Rd.)
 - d. US HWY 321 Transition
 - i. US 321/River Rd frontages (office and institutional/commercial/mixed-use)
8. Heavily monitor nonconforming industrial and heavy commercial uses to prevent expansion (Industrial)
9. Continue the Mountain Protection Overlay to protect Bakers Mountain.

Recommendations for Recreation

10. Consider expansion of Bakers Mountain Park and keep standards that protect areas around Bakers Mountain through height and density restrictions.
11. Preserve green space and current open spaces.
12. Create scenic and wildlife corridors by utilizing rivers, such as the Henry Fork and Jacob Fork, and floodways for open space planning.

17. PLATEAU SMALL AREA PLAN

The Plateau Area, located in the southwestern corner of the county, represents a substantial geographical area. East to west, the area spans from Hickory-Lincolnton Highway to the Burke County line. North to South it extends from Greedy Highway to the Lincoln County line. Highway 10 serves as a significant transportation artery within the Plateau Area. Bisecting the region, this highway plays a crucial role in connectivity and accessibility for residents and businesses within the area. The Plateau Area encompasses an area that totals 32,854 acres, or slightly over 51 square miles.

The Plateau area, with its distinctive characteristics, showcases a blend of natural beauty, agricultural heritage, and historical significance. The presence of the Jacob Fork River is a defining feature of the Plateau area. This waterway flows through the region, contributing to the local landscape and providing both scenic beauty and potential recreational opportunities. The Jacob Fork River has historical importance as it forms upstream and later joins with the Henry Fork to create the South Fork of the Catawba River. This confluence, located in the Startown area, serves as a key geographical and hydrological feature in the western portion of the County. The Plateau area has a deep agricultural heritage, reflecting a connection to the land that has been passed down through generations. Active farming is a vital aspect of the community's identity. The presence of key sites related to Catawba Valley pottery traditions is culturally significant to the area. This heritage reflects the historical craft and artistic traditions that have thrived in the Catawba Valley. This area is also home to Cat Square, a culturally significant landmark to the Plateau community.

The Plateau area is characterized by expansive open spaces. Natural sites, including fields and small waterways, contribute to the area's overall aesthetic appeal and environmental diversity. The inclusion of historic sites, such as Hart Square Village, adds depth to the cultural tapestry of the Plateau area. These landmarks serve as living museums, preserving and showcasing the historical and architectural heritage of the region. The combination of open spaces, natural sites, and small waterways contributes to the rich biodiversity of the area.

Citizens in the Plateau area demonstrate a range of interests and concerns that reflect their commitment to preserving the unique character and quality of life in their community. Residents value the rural scenery and open spaces that define the Plateau area. Preserving the natural landscape is a priority for maintaining the area's aesthetic appeal and quality of life. The deep-rooted farming heritage is a source of pride for citizens. The continuity of agricultural practices and the preservation of farmlands contribute to the cultural identity of the community. The interest in arts, crafts, and pottery traditions underscores the cultural significance of these activities in the Plateau area. Residents prioritize access to high-quality public services, including schools, and fire departments. Quality public services, including schools, fire services, and other community amenities, are valued for the well-being of residents. The importance of schools reflects a commitment to providing quality education for the community's children.

Residents are interested in managing and mitigating traffic-related issues, particularly along Highway 10, to ensure safe and efficient transportation in the area. The potential loss of farmland and rural character due to residential development is a concern. Residents aim to balance growth with the preservation of the area's agricultural and rural identity. The desire for recreational programs for children indicates a community interest in providing engaging and constructive activities for the younger generation. Citizens express a concern about the limited commercial development and options in the area. Balancing economic growth while maintaining the rural atmosphere is a key consideration. Concerns about nuisance issues, such as junk cars and houses, highlight the residents' interest in living

in a well-maintained community environment. Other concerns of the community include increased property tax and affordability, lack of wi-fi and cell service, loss of family owned businesses and agriculture, lack of road maintenance, and young people leaving due to lack of affordability.

The plan's strategy of limiting commercial and industrial development to areas where water and sewer infrastructure are available reflects a strategic approach to preserving the rural atmosphere. This approach has contributed to the preservation of open spaces and agricultural heritage of the Plateau area.

The Catawba County Existing Land Use map following this chapter, displays types of land use across small area.

The Future Land Use Map for the small area plan following this chapter was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision.



Plateau Current Land Use

Legend

- County Boundary
- Small Area Plan (SAP) Boundaries
- Railroad
- Roads
- City Limits
- Extrateritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)
- Parcels
- Major Lakes

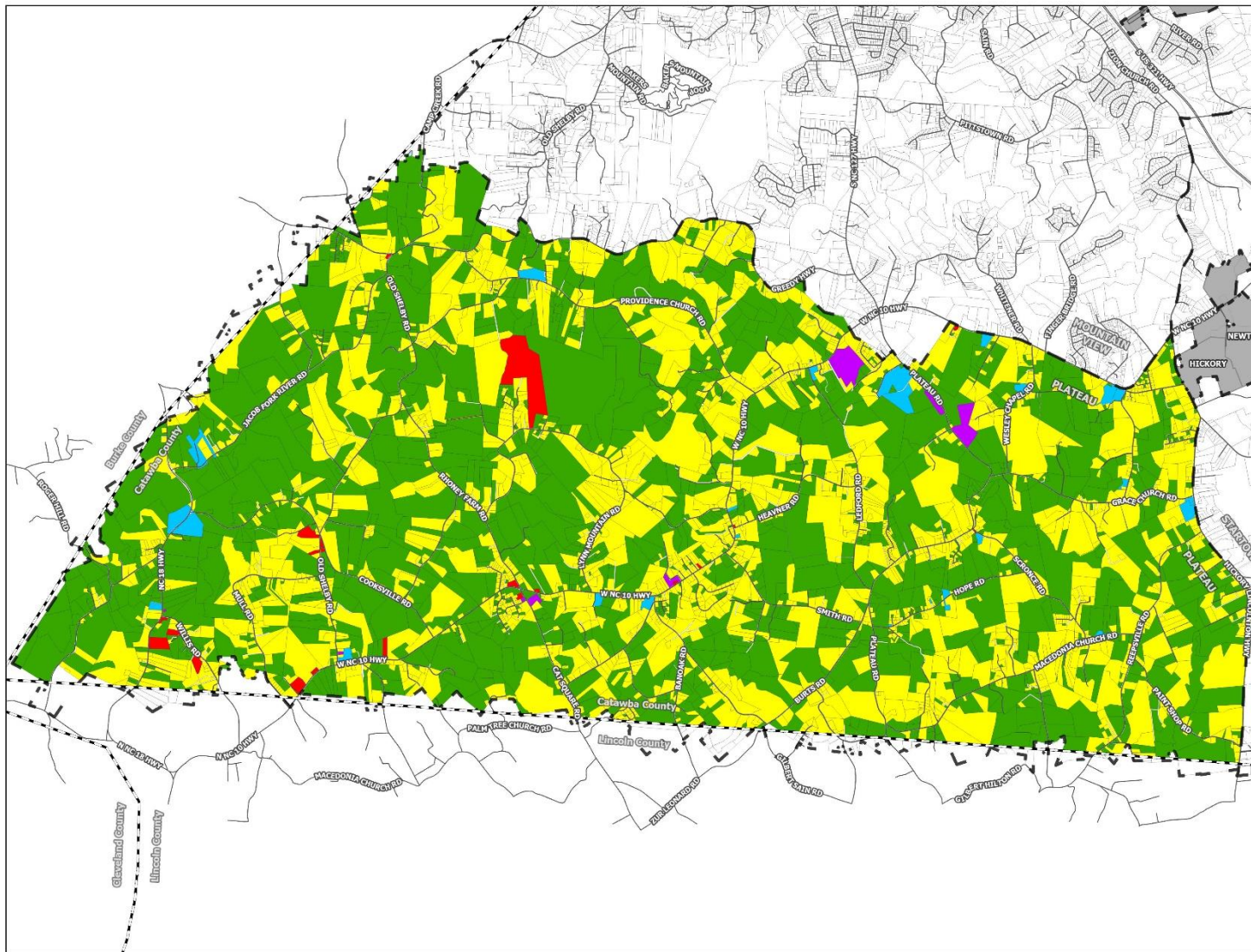
Current Land Use

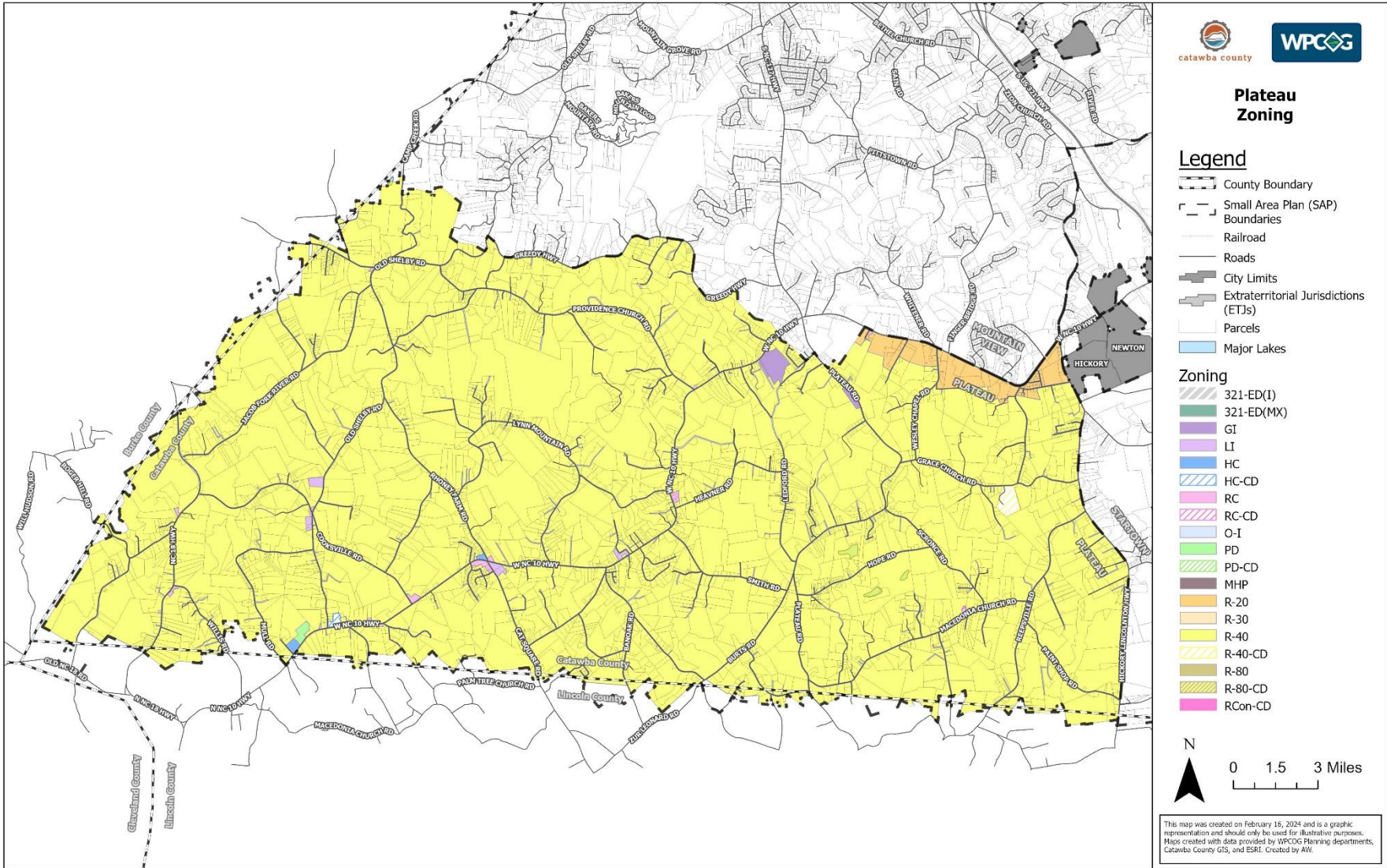
- Commercial
- Industrial / Warehousing
- Multi-Family (mobile home parks, apartments)
- Public / Institutional (including parks)
- Residential
- Undeveloped / Agriculture



0 1.5 3 Miles

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PLATEAU RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Residential

1. Establish lower-density housing developments along NC Highway 10 and NC Highway 127 shifting from R-20 to R-30.
2. New subdivisions are recommended to have further design standards to address areas such as buffering/landscaping, signage, and tree protection to increase a sense of place and lessen the impact on the area.
3. Balance growth and preserve sense of place.
4. Encourage clustering of homes where public water/sewer are available to preserve open space.
5. New subdivisions are recommended to provide open space for preservation and recreation.
6. Evaluate larger lot size requirements for duplexes.

Recommendations for Commercial

7. The plan recommended commercial nodes at certain areas, where limited commercial could be located, if feasible with utilities.
8. Nodes at:
 - Highway 18 and Willis Road (Rural Commercial)
 - Highway 10 and Hickory Lincolnton Highway (Highway Commercial)
 - Highway 10 and Rhoney Farm/Cat Square (Rural Commercial)
 - Highway 10 and old Honey's Supermarket (Rural Commercial)

Recommendations for Recreation

9. Capitalize on Jacob Fork River as a blueway for watercraft access, working with landowners and North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission or other partners on access.
10. Recognize the "Pottery Trail" along Plateau Road, highlighting the pottery heritage of the area.
11. Highlight Hart Square Village.
12. Consider adaptive re-use of historic properties if possible.