



# HARNETT

## — Horizons 2040 — COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adoption Date: April 29, 2025

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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City Collective  
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STEWART



Harnett  
C O U N T Y  
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## SPECIAL THANKS

A special thank you to the citizens of Harnett County who participated in this planning process through taking the survey and attending stakeholder interviews and public meetings. Also, thank you to the Steering Committee members for their guidance throughout the planning process.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## What is Harnett Horizons 2040?

The Harnett Horizons 2040 Comprehensive Plan is a policy framework that will guide Harnett County's future. It outlines a community vision for the future, as well as policies and recommendations for achieving that vision. The Plan was created through a community planning process that prioritized public engagement to capture the shared vision for Harnett County.

This Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to the 2015 Grow Harnett County Comprehensive Growth Plan. It incorporates recommendations from existing planning documents and strategically plans for the future. The Plan defines a framework for land use and development in different parts of the county and addresses other priorities including housing, economic development and natural resource protection.

## Engagement

Over the course of the planning process in-person and virtual engagement activities involved a variety of citizens and stakeholders. Formal and informal engagement opportunities were facilitated including an online survey that received 1,792 responses, in-person and virtual workshops, stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings, Planning Board and Board of Commissioner meetings.

## Why Plan?

Harnett County is experiencing unprecedented growth due to its proximity to the Research Triangle, Fort Bragg, and Fayetteville. The population of the county

### Study Area Statistics

**46.7%** Population  
Increase From 2000-2020

**17,993** Homes  
Built Since 2000

grew by 46.7% between 2000 and 2020. Projections indicate that growth pressures will continue. With this accelerated growth comes challenges, including increased traffic, accelerating demand for services, and impacts to natural resources and agricultural operations. Major issues and opportunities include:

- 1. Growth Management:** Rapid growth poses challenges in infrastructure, transportation, and public services.
- 2. Natural Resource Protection:** Conservation of land and water resources, including the Cape Fear River, is a priority.
- 3. Economic Development:** Expansion of industries, job opportunities, and commercial growth is needed to increase the tax base and provide local jobs.
- 4. Agricultural Preservation:** Farmland protection is essential as development pressure continues.
- 5. Housing Affordability:** Rising housing costs highlight the need for diverse and affordable housing options.



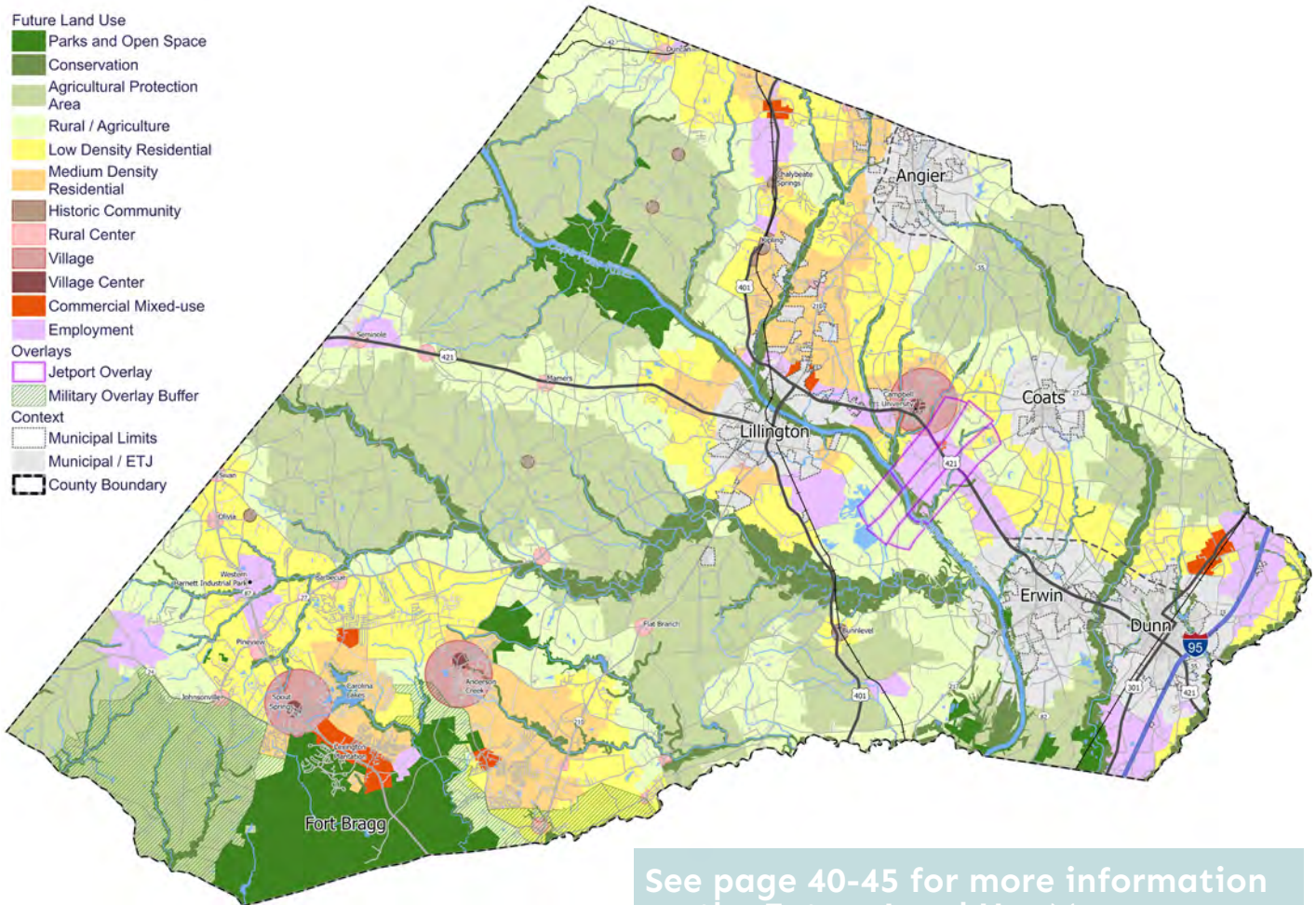
# Future Land Use

**The Future Land Use Map is intended to guide growth and development as well as infrastructure investment and conservation efforts over the next 10-15 years.**

The map identifies 10 unique character areas for Harnett County's jurisdiction. Fort Bragg and municipal areas are also identified. Each character areas indicates a

predominant land use - or set of uses - and other shared design features that contribute to the character of development in that area. These character areas represent an intended development pattern that can assist in accomplishing county goals. The map should be utilized to guide rezonings, development design and updates to the Unified Development Ordinance over the coming years.

## Future Land Use Map



# Goals & Major Recommendations

Plan goals and recommendations are organized under eight topic areas and include a variety of policies and strategies to address priority issues. Major recommendations include:

## Land Use & Development

- Align new developments with the Future Land Use Map.
- Encourage growth in areas with existing and planned infrastructure to prevent sprawl.
- Implement zoning updates to control density, preserve agriculture, support conservation efforts and allow for village districts.

## Housing

- Promote a mix of housing types, including affordable and workforce housing.

See pages 34-115 for detailed recommendations by topic.

- Support conservation subdivisions to balance development with environmental protection.
- Partner with local organizations to address homelessness and housing needs.

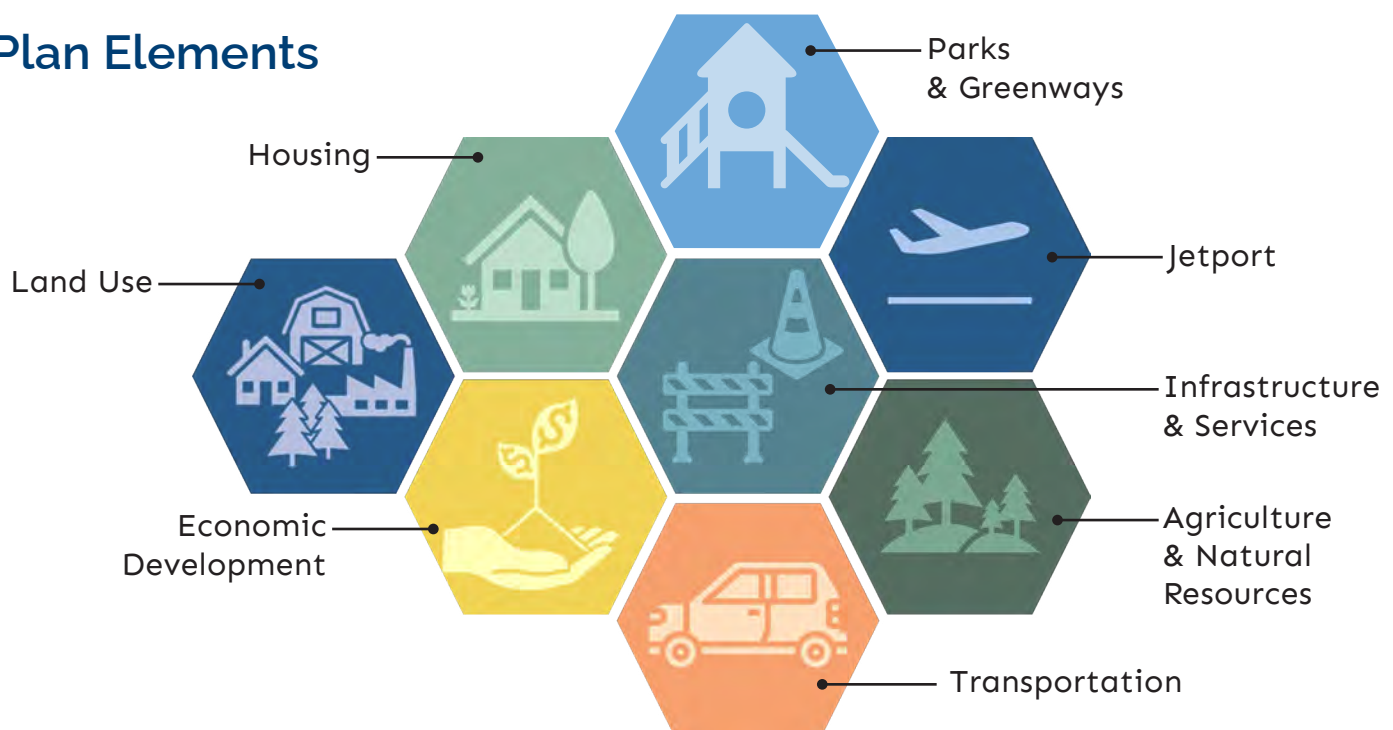
## Economic Development

- Expand market-ready sites and attract new industries.
- Strengthen workforce development programs.
- Promote tourism, agriculture, and local businesses to enhance economic stability.

## Transportation

- Invest in road improvements and multimodal transit options.

## Plan Elements



### Infrastructure & Public Services

- Ensure utility expansions align with projected growth areas.
- Improve public services, including water, sewer, and emergency response systems.

### Jetport

- Plan for the continued expansion and development of the Harnett Regional Jetport.
- Establish a Jetport Overlay that ensures compatible uses in the vicinity of the airport approaches.

### Agriculture & Natural Resources

- Promote and maintain rural character and protect agricultural lands.
- Conserve open space and encourage tree preservation in new development.
- Protect water quality and encourage Low Impact Development techniques.

### Parks & Greenways

- Expand parks, greenways, and recreational facilities.

## Implementation & Action Plan

To achieve these goals, the plan outlines phased strategies:

- Short-term (*1-2 years*): Priority zoning updates including improved standards and refined development options, Jetport Overlay, infrastructure coordination, and new agricultural protection measures.
- Mid-term (*2-3 years*): Expansion of economic development initiatives, additional zoning revisions, transportation planning, and establishment of a farmland preservation program.
- Long-term (*3-5 years*): Implementation of parks and recreation plans, transportation improvements, protection of critical lands, and enhanced public services.

See pages 116-127 for the implementation and action plan.





# INTRODUCTION



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## Overview

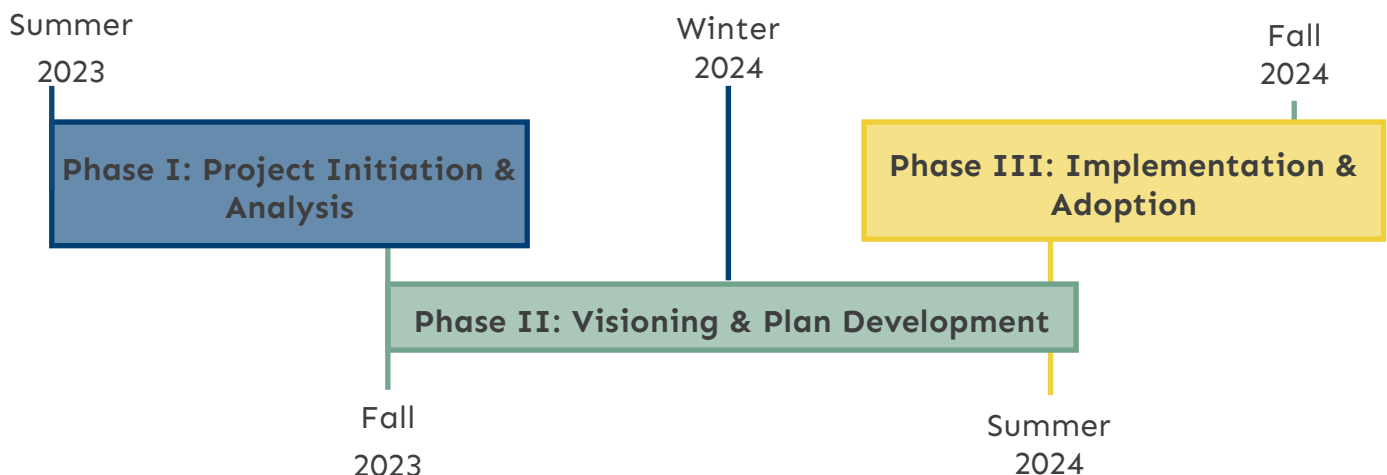
A Comprehensive Plan outlines a community's vision for the future, as well as policies and recommendations for achieving that vision. It provides guidance for land use policy, funding, resource decisions, and infrastructure investment for Harnett County, its staff, and coordinated efforts with municipalities. The Plan was created through a community planning process that prioritized public engagement to capture the shared vision for Harnett County. This Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to the 2015 Grow Harnett County Comprehensive Growth Plan. It incorporates recommendations from existing planning documents and strategically plans for the future. The Plan defines a framework for land use and development in different parts of the county and addresses other priorities including housing, economic development and natural resource protection.

## PROCESS

This process was completed in three phases, these phases include:

- ◆ **Phase I Project Initiation & Analysis-**  
The first exploratory phase included a tour of the community, mapping and demographic analysis, meetings with the Planning Board, Board of Commissioners, staff coordination, and stakeholder interviews.
- ◆ **Phase II Visioning & Plan Development**  
- This phase began with a significant amount of community engagement including a community survey and public workshops, Input received led to the creation of a vision and goals, future land use map, policy recommendations and a draft plan.
- ◆ **Phase III Implementation & Adoption**  
- The last phase included a public open house, review of the plan, drafting of implementation strategies and the plan adoption process.

## Process



## STUDY AREA

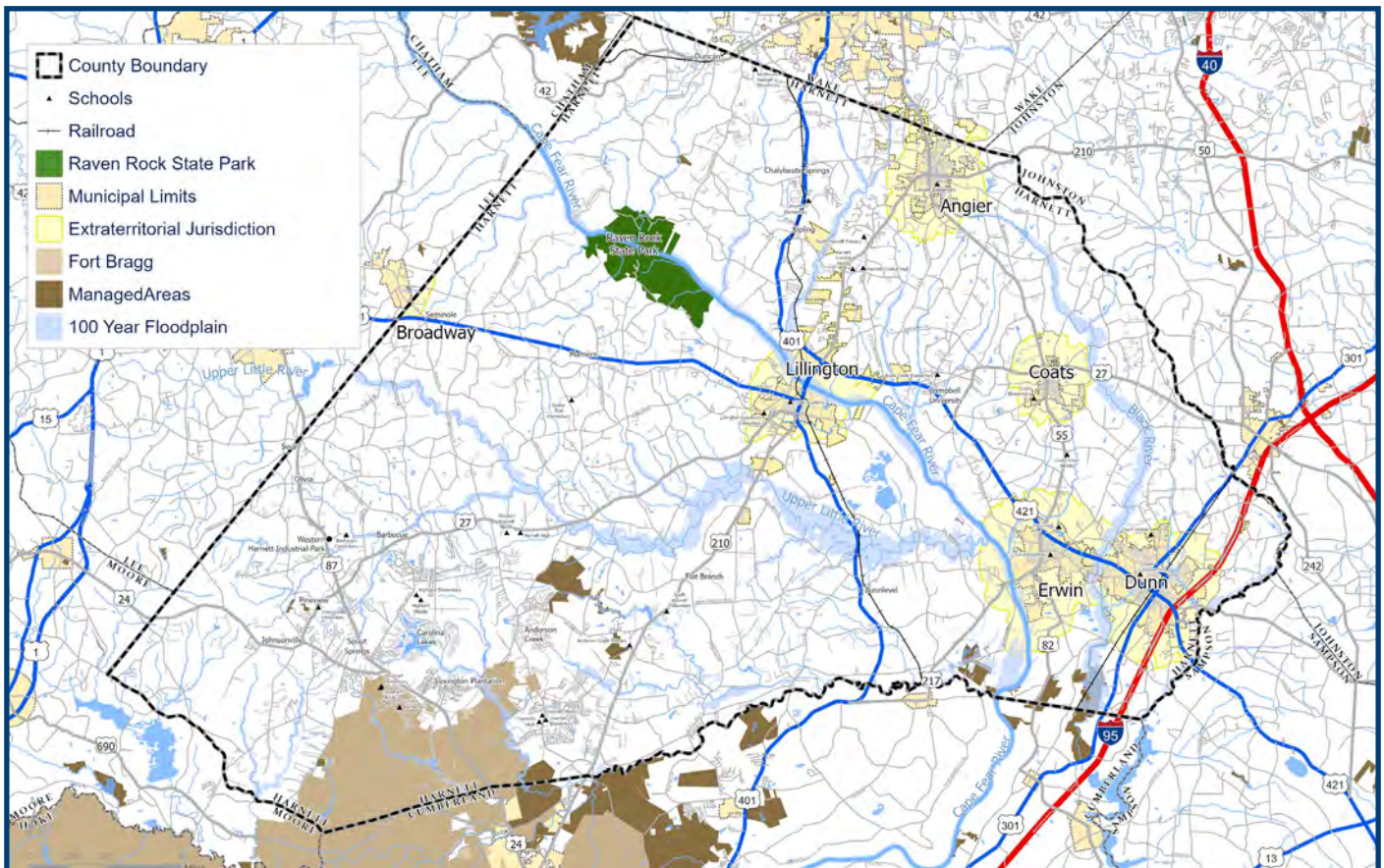
Harnett County is located in Central North Carolina on the south side of the Triangle Region and just north of Fort Bragg and Fayetteville. It is bordered by Wake, Johnston, Sampson, Cumberland, Moore, Lee, and Chatham Counties. Harnett County is 601 square miles, making it the 25th largest county in the state. Within the county there are five municipalities, and a total of seven municipal extraterritorial jurisdiction's, with Lillington being the County seat. Fort Bragg reaches into Harnett County's Southwest area which does not have any municipalities, but has a number of large residential communities including Anderson Creek, Carolina Lakes, Linden Oaks, and Lexington Plantation.

### Study Area Statistics

**601** Square Miles

**5** Municipalities

**7** Bordering Counties



# What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Comprehensive plans can impact the future layout and landscape of a jurisdiction for many years to come. Comprehensive planning is an important tool for planning jurisdictions to guide future development, infrastructure, services and partnerships.



It is an expression of the community's vision for the future with a strategic map to reach that vision.



It is an advisory or guiding document that sets forth a vision and goals for the area's future and provides the overall foundation for land use regulation, development design and approvals.

It is a policy document that shapes land use decisions, but it is not a legal ordinance.

It is required by the State of North Carolina for jurisdictions that want to enforce zoning regulations and must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.



The comprehensive planning process helps communities identify issues before they arise, stay ahead of trends in land use development and redevelopment, and anticipate and navigate community trends and land use patterns.



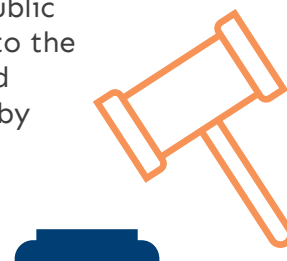
## Input

The creation and adoption of a comprehensive plan should be a dynamic public process that emphasizes collaboration. Public participation is key to broad and ongoing support, brings a variety of information and perspectives, and instills a sense of community ownership in the plan.



## Adoption

The adoption process follows the same requirements as a legislative zoning decision: published notice, public hearing, reference to the planning board, and a motion and vote by governing board to adopt.



# Plan Elements & Organization

Basic requirements for a comprehensive plan are specified by state law. Additional detail on topics of local concern can be added based on input received. The following elements are included in this plan: Chapter

One: Introduction, Chapter Two includes information on public input and analysis gathered during the planning process. Chapter Three includes recommendations for each plan element. Chapter Four includes action steps and Chapter Five includes additional supporting information.



## Land Use

Looks at current land use trends and issues and makes recommendations for desired land use patterns.



## Transportation

Analyzes all modes of transportation, including roads, trails and pedestrian facilities. Includes planning and project priorities.



## Housing

Evaluates housing types, location, age, affordability, and occupancy of the community. Recommends policies and programs to address needs.



## Jetport

Details planned improvements and future needs of the Harnett Regional Jetport.



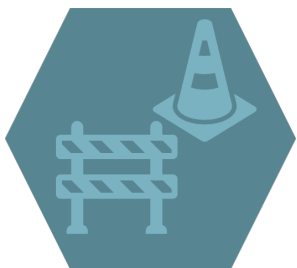
## Economic Development

Describes the local workforce, and key aspects of the local economy. Focuses on how to grow the County's economic base.



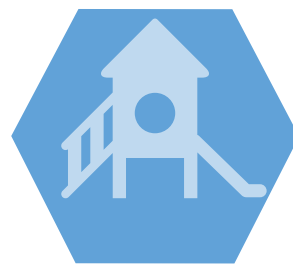
## Agriculture & Natural Resources

Discusses preservation of agriculture and natural resources such as wildlife and their habitats, floodplains, and wetlands.



## Infrastructure

Evaluates community assets regarding utilities, public safety, government, and educational services.



## Parks & Open Space

Describes existing and planned parks, greenways and open space.



An aerial photograph of a sports complex. In the foreground, there are two baseball fields with reddish-brown dirt bases and green grass. To the left of the fields is a large, rectangular green field, possibly for soccer or football. The entire area is surrounded by dense green trees. In the background, there are some buildings and a road. A semi-transparent white banner with the text "ANALYSIS & INPUT" in blue capital letters is overlaid across the middle of the image.

# ANALYSIS & INPUT

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Highlights

### POPULATION

Harnett County has seen a large increase in population from 2000 to 2020 with 42,543 new county residents (*a 46.7% increase*). As of 2020 there were 133,568 residents in the County. According to the NC Office of State Budget and Management (*OSBM*), this growth trend is likely to continue. If projections are accurate Harnett County could see 170,341 residents by 2035.

Some areas of the County are more populated than others. Population density by census block is wide and ranges from 50 residents per square mile to over 1200 residents per square mile. The most populated areas are in the northern part of the County near the Town of Angier where growth has spread south from Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina and Wake County, and the southwest area of the county where residential and commercial growth have been concentrated due to the proximity to Fort Bragg.

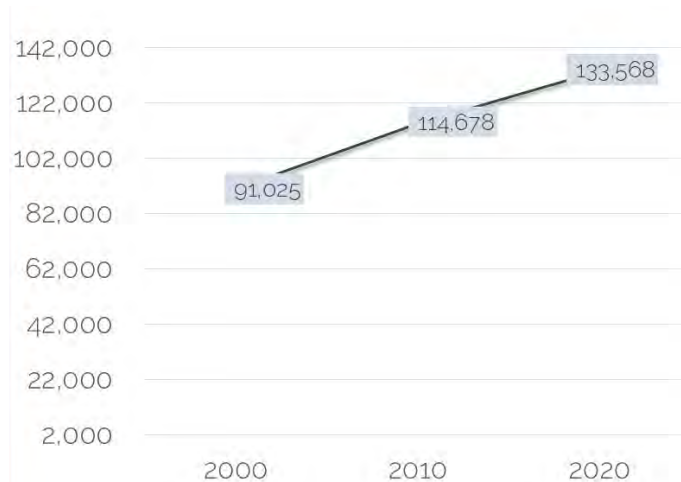
### AGE

Residents of Harnett County have a median age of 34.7 years, up from 32.6 in 2000, and 33.7 in 2010. All age cohorts are growing, however the largest age cohorts from 2020 are ages 30-34, 25-29, and those under the age of 14. The cohort with the largest increase is ages 30-34 with an increase of over 2,000 people in the last ten years.

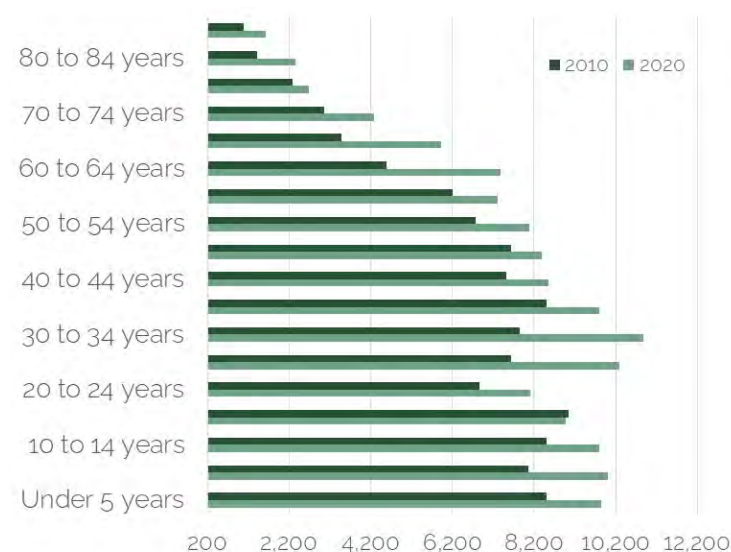
### RACE

Harnett County's racial makeup is predominantly white with 61.3% of the population identifying as such. The Black or African American population makes up

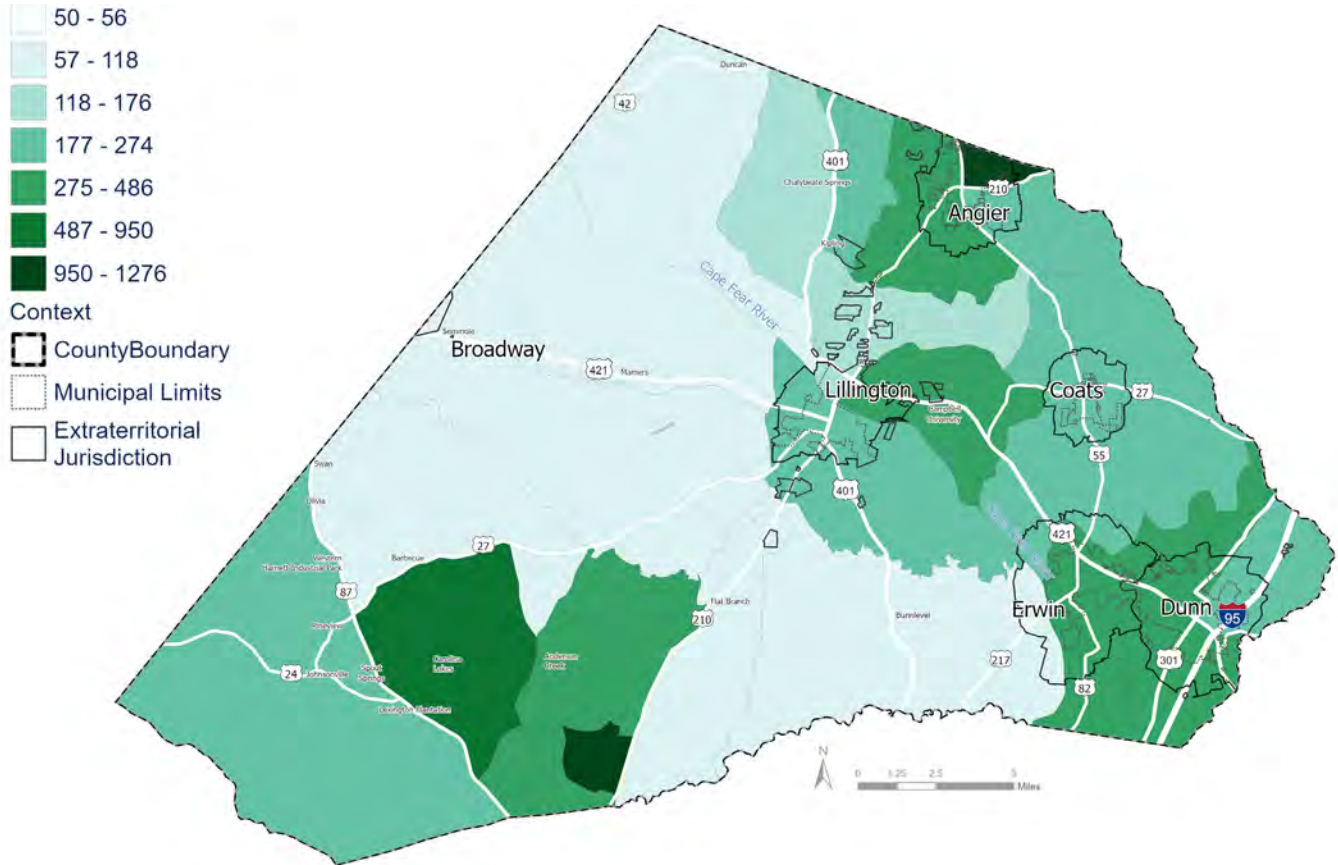
### Population Growth



### Age Cohorts



## Population Per Square Mile (2020)



20.5% of county residents, followed by 8.7% of the population identifying as two or more races. Between 2010 and 2020, the Black or African American population saw an increase of almost 3,500 people, making it the fastest growing individual racial group.

## HOUSEHOLDS

Harnett County has a total of 50,584 households (2020), up from 38,631 in 2010 and 33,837 in 2000. This is an annual increase of 3.2%. Households in Harnett County are on average 2.71 people in size.

The Median Household Income has continuously increased since 2000 and as of 2020 it is \$46,525 however, it is still less than North Carolina's Median Household Income \$56,642.

## HOUSING GROWTH

There has been increase of 7,894 housing units between 2010 and 2020. Escalating housing prices and elevated demand in adjacent urban centers surrounding Raleigh have caused many residents to move south to Harnett County where there have historically been more affordable housing options. Growth has slowed in and around Fort Bragg compared to the early 2010s but remains steady.

Sources: US Census (2000, 2010, 2020)

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through community engagement and research, a set of opportunities and issues emerged.



## Growth Management

Harnett County has grown by 46.7% since 2000, adding 42,543 people to the county (2010, 2020 Decennial Census). With this accelerated growth come challenges, including increased traffic, accelerating demand for services, and impacts to natural resources and agricultural operations. Seventy-five percent of survey respondents were concerned or very concerned about growth.

## Infrastructure Planning

Accelerated residential growth over the last decade has led to increased demands on the County's transportation system and concerns over utility, public safety and school capacity. An opportunity exists to plan for the future and encourage smart growth by coordinating land use with infrastructure availability and planning.



## Natural Resource Protection

Harnett County's natural resources are among its most valuable assets. The Cape Fear River provides a source of drinking water for the region and when combined with the Upper Little River, Raven Rock State Park and Anderson Creek Park, forms a network of recreation opportunities and open spaces that are unparalleled in the Triangle and Sandhills regions.





## Economic Development

Residential and commercial growth, proximity to I-95, Campbell University, the Harnett Regional Jetport and Fort Bragg all present opportunities for businesses and new jobs in the County. Although there are strong healthcare, manufacturing, retail and construction sectors the majority of working residents commute out of the County every day which results in lost revenue. Supporting vibrant towns and potentially new villages that can serve as commercial and civic centers in the county could help increase the tax base and reduce traffic.

## Housing Demand/Affordability

Harnett County has traditionally been an affordable option for those moving to the Triangle. This has been changing due to increasing demand, land and material costs. Median listing price of homes for 2023 was \$339,900 which is unaffordable to many residents. Most of the recent growth in the county has been single-family home development although market demands and demographic trends will lead to an elevated demand for additional options.



## Agricultural Preservation

Farms and forests contribute over \$300 million to the County's economy on an annual basis. Agricultural and forestry lands serve to buffer and maintain the water quality within the Cape Fear River and its associated tributaries, therefore safeguarding our water supply. Agricultural land conversion is on the rise, driven primarily by residential growth. Harnett County faces a pivotal moment as decisions on the horizon will dictate the future of farming in the County.

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## Engagement Overview

Public engagement is crucial to an informed comprehensive plan. As a key part of the planning process, public engagement was intentionally spread throughout all project phases. Prior to the plan update, the project team identified key opportunities for in-person and virtual conversations to gather feedback and learn from residents and stakeholders who know Harnett County best. Opportunities were planned to ensure that everyone who wanted to participate had a chance to get involved. Both formal and informal opportunities were held, including an online survey, virtual workshops, and public meetings at various locations throughout the county. In total, the Harnett County planning process included:

- Six stakeholder meetings

- Five Planning Board (*PB*) or Board of Commissioners (*BOC*) meetings
- Four steering committee meetings
- Four public meetings
- One public survey with 1,792 participants

## Steering Committee

Throughout the project, the Steering Committee, alongside County staff and the project team, were actively involved in the planning process. The Committee was comprised of 20 community leaders and County and municipality staff. Four Steering Committee meetings were held in person and virtually throughout the plan update process. The Committee helped kickstart the planning process by contributing ideas, opinions, and feedback. As the project

## ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

21,361

Website Views

70+

Stakeholders

4

Public Meetings

4

Steering Committee Meetings

5

Updates to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners

1,792

Survey Responses



progressed, the group not only served as a sounding board, but as advocates for the Harnett County community and their interests. Steering Committee members also championed the plan by attending and assisting at public meetings and encouraging community members to get involved by advertising the plan and its events. At the end of the planning process, the Committee reviewed and provided feedback on drafts of the plan and its recommendations.

## Stakeholder Meetings

Six, hour-long meetings with community stakeholders, citizens, and topic area experts were held to inform the plan update. These focused meetings helped the project team gather valuable input, identify priority issues, vet ideas, and learn more about the community's vision for the County's future. The County hosted stakeholder meetings both virtually and in-person on October 30th and November 8th at the Harnett County Development Services Building. Stakeholder groups were categorized by topic and expertise, though discussions were allowed to be free flowing and covered a broad range of related issues. Group themes included the following: Housing and Development (*Developers, Builders, Realtors, HBA, Appraisers, Engineers, Surveyors*), Schools, Governmental Staff and Municipal Representatives, Civic Organizations (*Health, Safety, and Boards*), Transportation and Infrastructure, and Natural Resources and Agriculture. Meeting discussion topics included infrastructure, quality of life, health, new development, and more.



## Public Meetings

Four public meetings were held during the Harnett County plan update process. The first meeting was a Citizen Information Session in October of 2023. During this meeting representatives from Development Services and consultants discussed the Comprehensive Plan, trends and options for how Harnett County can grow in the coming years.

Two open house format public meetings were held in March of 2024. For these meetings attendees circulated around the room to different stations and provided

feedback on various topic areas using poster boards and maps. These meetings introduced the community to the Harnett Horizons 2040 project and provided them with an opportunity to shape its direction. Meeting locations in varying parts of the county were chosen to ensure residents throughout the county had equitable access to attend a meeting. The first public meeting was held from 5:00-7:30pm in the Commons Area, and the second meeting was held at the YMCA from 6-8pm. At these meetings, attendees provided feedback on topic areas such as traffic, infrastructure extensions, environmental and resource protection, and more.

Themes	What We Heard
Development and Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preservation of greenspace and opportunities for commercial and industrial growth.</li> <li>Diversity in housing types is important.</li> <li>Low income housing has a waiting list.</li> <li>Need for affordable housing.</li> <li>Need for low barrier shelters and a good program for transitional housing.</li> <li>Need a formal housing study.</li> </ul>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to prepare for new construction of schools and incorporate meeting rooms and/or parks so they are dual purpose.</li> <li>Schools in western portion of county in need of major updates or need to be replaced.</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of broadband needed.</li> <li>Lillington has seen over 11k residential lots in last 24 months with some small-scale commercial growth.</li> <li>Dunn and Erwin have seen increased infill development.</li> <li>Erwin just adopted their land use plan and is currently working on a overlay for Highway 421.</li> </ul>
Civic Organizations, Health, Safety and Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmland preservation is a major concern.</li> <li>Need for buffering new subdivisions against farmland.</li> <li>Need for more physicians in the county.</li> </ul>
Transportation and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NC 87 intersection project at Nursery Road has been funded.</li> <li>The I-95 widening project will have a large impact on Dunn.</li> <li>Conditional zoning may be a vehicle for encouraging needed public improvements.</li> <li>The US 401 Corridor Study preferred alignment goes around Angier to Lillington.</li> <li>The Northwest Transit study to begin in 2024.</li> </ul>
Natural Resources/ Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural growth zones program beginning soon.</li> <li>Agriculture Advisory Board discussing Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts.</li> <li>NRCS has a Conservation Stewardship Program , this program offers financial incentives to landowners managing woodlands.</li> <li>Need to protect water quality in the Cape Fear River and add more access points to the river.</li> </ul>



The next public meeting was held in November of 2024. At this meeting, the project team introduced draft recommendations and the future land use map that were developed throughout the plan update with input from community engagement.



# Harnett Horizons 2040

Planning a Brighter Future



**PUBLIC MEETINGS**  
Join us at a public meeting and take the survey!  
[www.harnetthorizon.com/hh2040survey](http://www.harnetthorizon.com/hh2040survey)

**Meeting Details**  
**Tuesday, March 5 | 5:00-7:30 pm**  
Commons Area  
309 W Cornelius Harnett Blvd  
Lillington, NC 27546

**Tuesday, March 19 | 6:00-8:00 pm**  
YMCA Saleeby Family Branch  
107 Carletta Cagle Dr  
Cameron, NC 28326



## Project Website and Community Survey

Early in the planning process a project website was created using the PublicInput.com platform. The HarnettHorizon.com website served as an informational platform for the project. The community survey was accessed here, public meetings were announced and links to meeting materials were provided.

The community survey was designed and developed to be distributed throughout the county both online and in print form. The 22-question survey was a mix of multiple choice, ranking, and open-ended response questions to allow respondents to provide more detail about their ideas, goals and priorities for the future of Harnett County. Survey question topics included development priorities, environmental and open space priorities, transportation priorities, and more. The survey also included five demographic questions to determine respondent demographic



Screenshot of the Harnett Horizons website.



data, and the option to provide an email address to receive updates from the County regarding this plan and future engagement opportunities.

The survey opened in January 2024 and closed in May 2024, providing community members with five months to participate. The survey was advertised via flyers, social media, emails, the County’s website, community news outlets, and more. Special efforts were made to provide paper surveys to seniors and citizens from certain districts to diversify those participating.

When the survey closed in May, it had over 1700 participants. Over 96% of survey respondents lived in the county. Of those, 37% had lived in Harnett County for 10 years

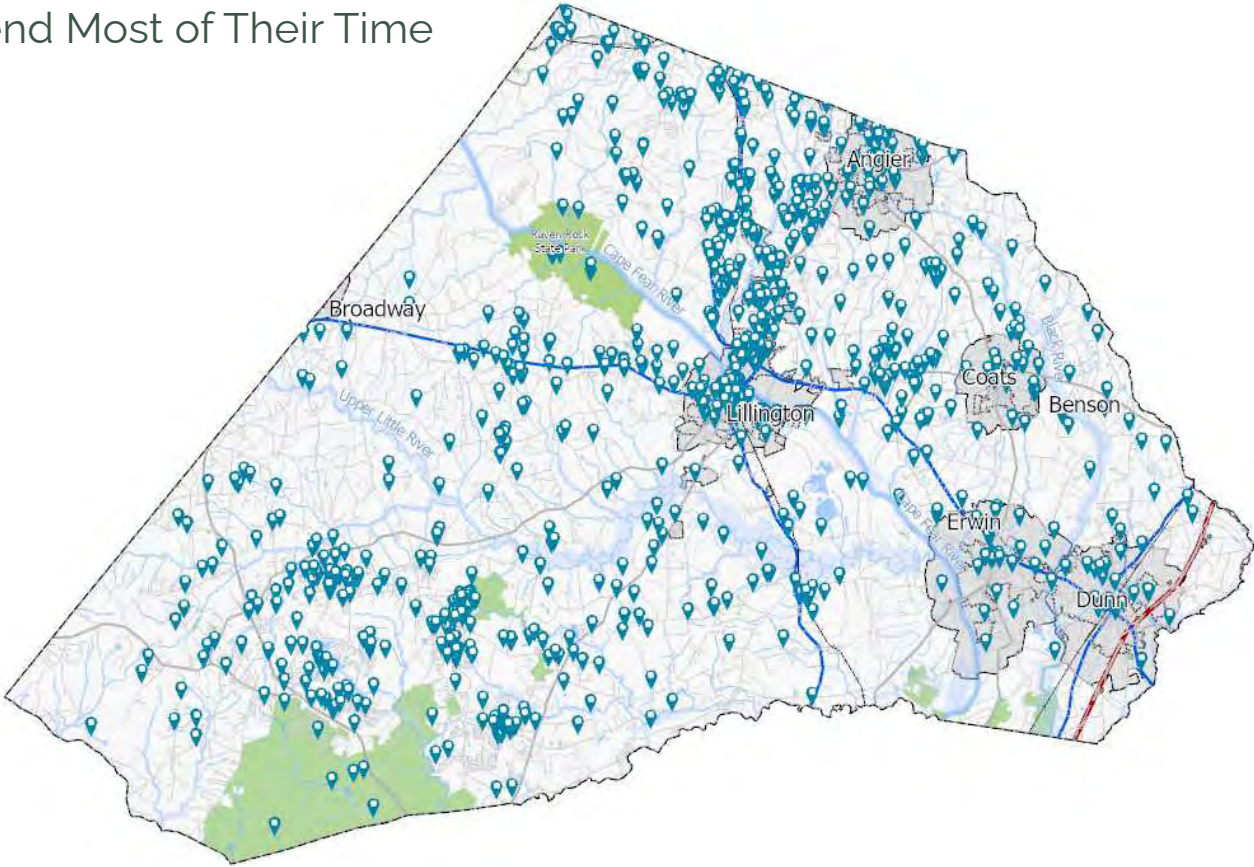
or less, and 60% lived in Harnett County for more than 10 years, representing a range of lived experience in the county. Respondents were able to skip certain questions from the survey, including some of the demographic questions,

Highlights from the survey responses are shown on the following pages. The full results of the survey can be found in the appendix.

1,792

Survey Participants

Where Survey Participants Live or Spend Most of Their Time

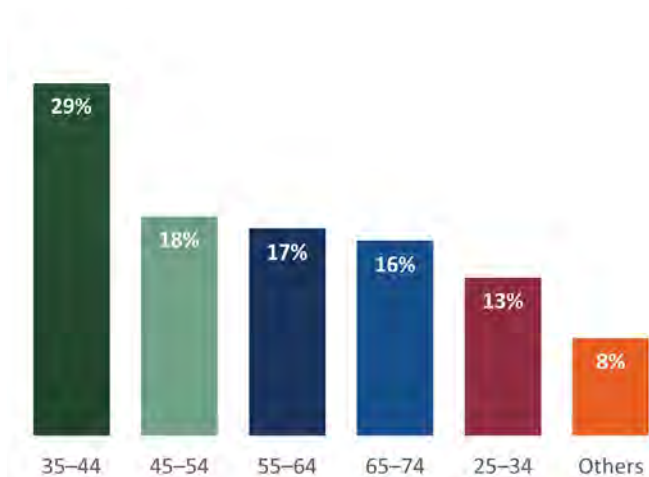


## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

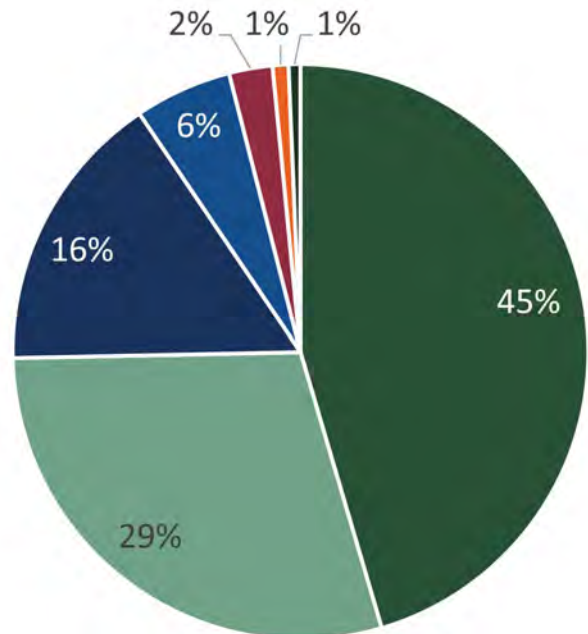
The community survey was open in January 2024 and closed in May 2024. The survey has 1,786 participants. Highlights from the survey include:

- ◆ Digital version and paper copies were distributed.
- ◆ Respondents included all races and ethnicities.
- ◆ All income levels were represented.

### Age of Survey Participants



### How Participants Relate to Harnett County



- Live here
- Own property here
- Work here
- Business owner
- Go to school here
- Other
- I don't live here yet but would in the future

29%

of participants were between  
35 and 44 years of age

43%

of participants have lived  
in Harnett County for more  
than 20 years



### Top Growth Concerns

Traffic and congestion

School capacity and/or quality

Utility and infrastructure

Loss of Farmland

Impacts on natural resources

Public safety and services

### Top Environmental or Open Space Priorities

Unique natural areas and rivers

Agricultural Preservation

Tree preservation/planting

### Top Values

Rural nature/natural resources

Cost of living

Sense of security/safety

### Development Priorities for Historic Crossroads Communities

#1

Limit traffic impacts

#2

Limit scale of development

#3

Modify approval process to allow more community input and dialog

### Residential Development Preference



#1

A house with a large yard



#2

A house with a smaller yard within walking distance of a park or greenspace



#3

Anything that is relatively affordable

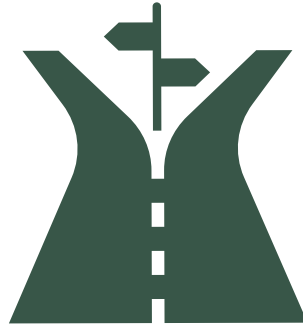
Top growth concerns included traffic and congestion, school capacity and/or quality and utility and infrastructure. Respondents valued the rural nature and natural resources of Harnett County. Residential preferences included homes with large yards and homes with smaller yards but within walking distance of a park or greenspace. Affordability was also a priority.

## Factors for Quality Residential Development



#1

Preservation of natural areas and trees



#2

Road connectivity and infrastructure (e.g. road widths, curb and gutter)

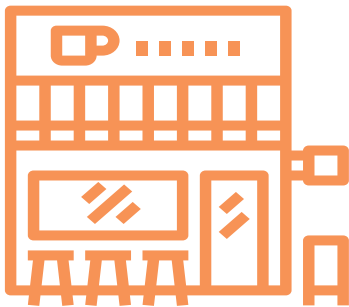


#3

Overall density of development

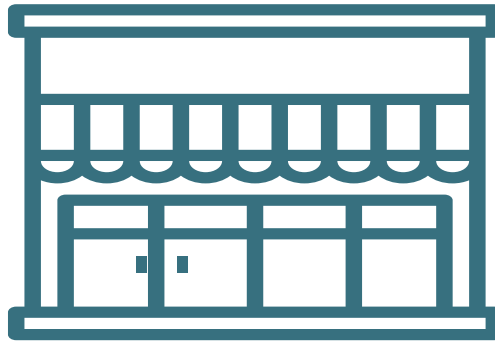
Preservation of natural areas and trees, road connectivity and infrastructure and density were identified as factors that influence quality development according to the survey.

## Development Preference



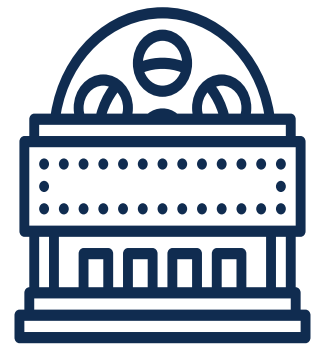
#1

Small-scale retail and restaurants



#2

Large-scale retail and restaurants



#3

Entertainment businesses

## Top Three Economic Development Priorities

Education for young people

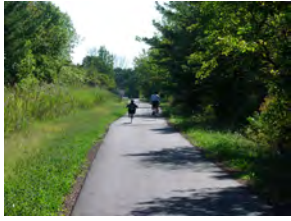
Better paying jobs

Recruitment of new businesses

Development preferences included retail and restaurants and entertainment businesses. Top economic development priorities included education, quality jobs and recruitment of new businesses.



## Parks and Recreation Priorities



**#1**

Greenways and trails



**#2**

Publicly accessible  
natural areas



**#3**

Programming events

## Subdivision Design Preference



**Conventional Subdivisions**



- Typical subdivision design
- Medium sized lots ~ 1/2 acre
- Limited open space



**Compatibility /  
Conservation Design**



- Same number of lots as conventional subdivision but development clustered
- Smaller lots in exchange for more open space (30-40%+) and amenities

**2 to 1**

Conservation  
Design was  
preferred 2 to 1  
in the survey

Based on 1,792  
responses

	Do Not Support	Neutral	Support
Conventional Subdivisions	48%	31%	21%
Compatibility / Conservation Design	24%	32%	44%

# VISION & GOALS

## Vision

Harnett County is a **unified, safe, healthy, and engaged community** that is **culturally vibrant, well-planned** with a **thriving economy** and a **high-quality educational system**, in harmony with its environment and **beautiful natural resources**, and with **strong leadership** ensuring **equitable services** so that all citizens will prosper.

Source: Harnett County 2032 Strategic Plan

## Plan Goals

### LAND USE

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Manage growth in order to protect natural resources, agricultural areas and rural character.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Maintain and Increase standards for new development.
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Preserve prime industrial lands.
- ◆ **Goal 4:** Encourage commercial recruitment (including retail and restaurants) to address leakage trends.
- ◆ **Goal 5:** Provide for limited areas of mixed-use and walkable villages in key locations.

### HOUSING

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Accommodate a mixture of housing types in appropriate areas.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Encourage the preservation and construction of affordable and workforce housing.
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Work with partners to prevent and reduce homelessness.

### AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Encourage compatible land uses in areas with important natural resources.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Maintain and improve water quality.

### PARKS & GREENWAYS

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Provide active and passive recreation opportunities to preserve and enhance quality of life.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Position Harnett County as a destination for outdoor recreation.





## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Grow Harnett County's inventory of market-ready buildings and sites.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Continue and expand business attraction and recruitment efforts.
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Support, grow, and strengthen existing businesses and industries across Harnett County.
- ◆ **Goal 4:** Coordinate with partners on workforce development.
- ◆ **Goal 5:** Support agriculture and tourism and related cultural and natural resources.

## TRANSPORTATION

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Continue to build on transportation planning partnerships and prioritize projects at the regional level.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Develop improved base standards for developments and traffic studies.
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Improve multi-modal transportation options in growing areas of the County.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC SERVICES

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Maintain and improve the utility system.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Prioritize utility capacity upgrades and improved services that support economic development goals and the Future Land Use Map.
- ◆ **Goal 3:** Maintain and improve the resiliency of critical facilities and infrastructure.

## JETPORT

- ◆ **Goal 1:** Plan for the continued expansion and development of the Jetport.
- ◆ **Goal 2:** Minimize potential harm to people and property, protect aircraft operations, and provide for the long-term viability of the jetport.



# PLAN ELEMENTS



# LAND USE - BACKGROUND

## Overview

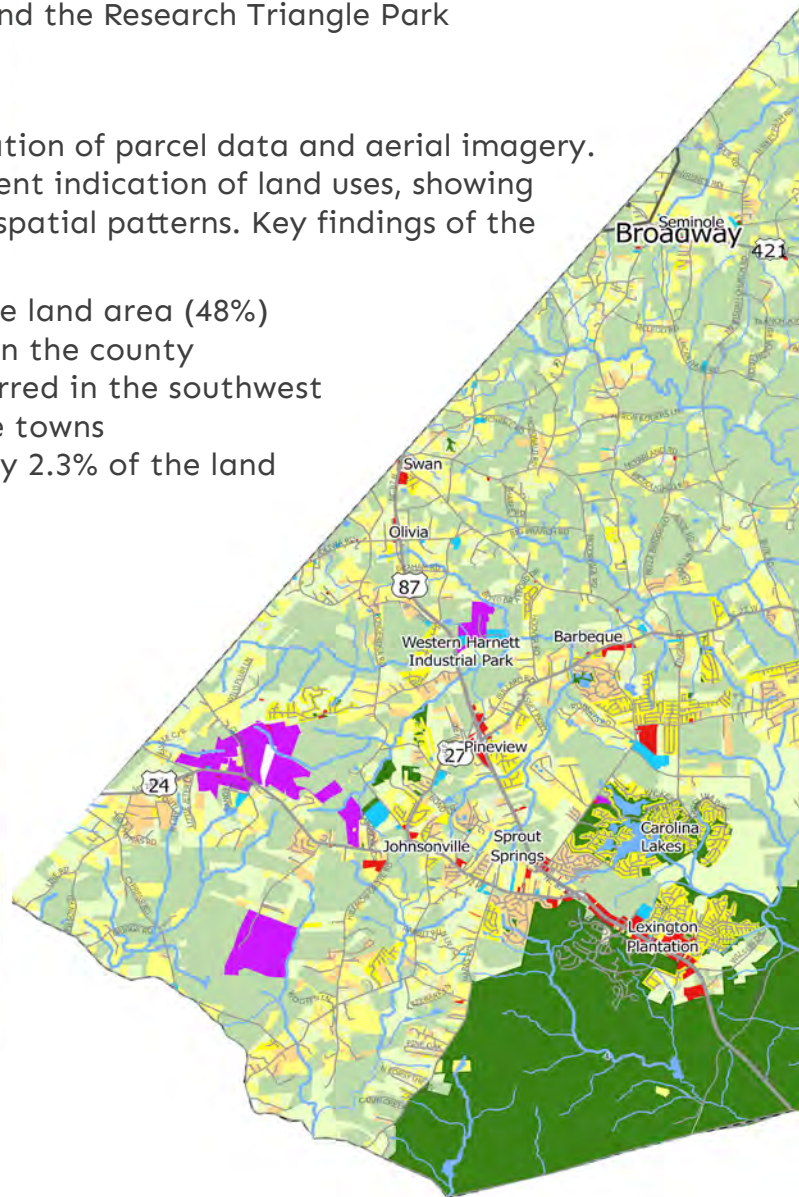
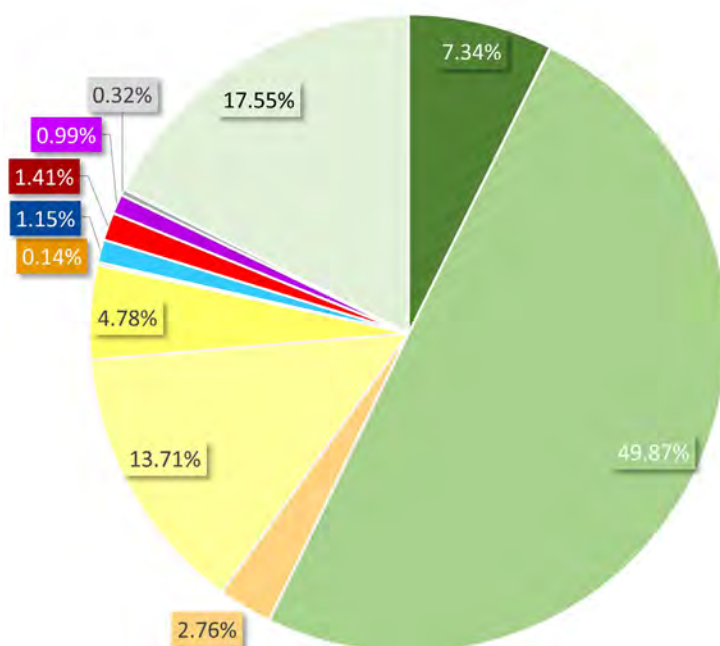
Land use varies considerably in different parts of Harnett County. Forests and agricultural lands cover large swaths of the county and contribute to the rural character and scenic beauty of the county. Historically, most residential and commercial areas were concentrated within and near municipalities including the Town of Lillington, the county seat, as well as Angier, Coats, Erwin and Dunn. However, urban growth has expanded into areas within the county's jurisdiction in recent years. The Base Reassignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative in 2011 led increases in troops at Fort Bragg and to a significant amount of development in the southwest part of the county. More recently residential growth has accelerated in the northwestern part of Harnett County due to housing demand within commuting distance to Raleigh, Wake County and the Research Triangle Park

## EXISTING LAND USE

Existing land use is determined using a combination of parcel data and aerial imagery. As opposed to zoning, it represents a more current indication of land uses, showing both the quantities of individual uses and their spatial patterns. Key findings of the existing land use study include:

- ◆ Agricultural lands make up almost half of the land area (48%)
- ◆ Residential uses total 21% of the land area in the county
- ◆ The majority of residential growth has occurred in the southwest and northwest part of the county and in the towns
- ◆ Commercial and industrial uses make up only 2.3% of the land

Existing Land Use Chart

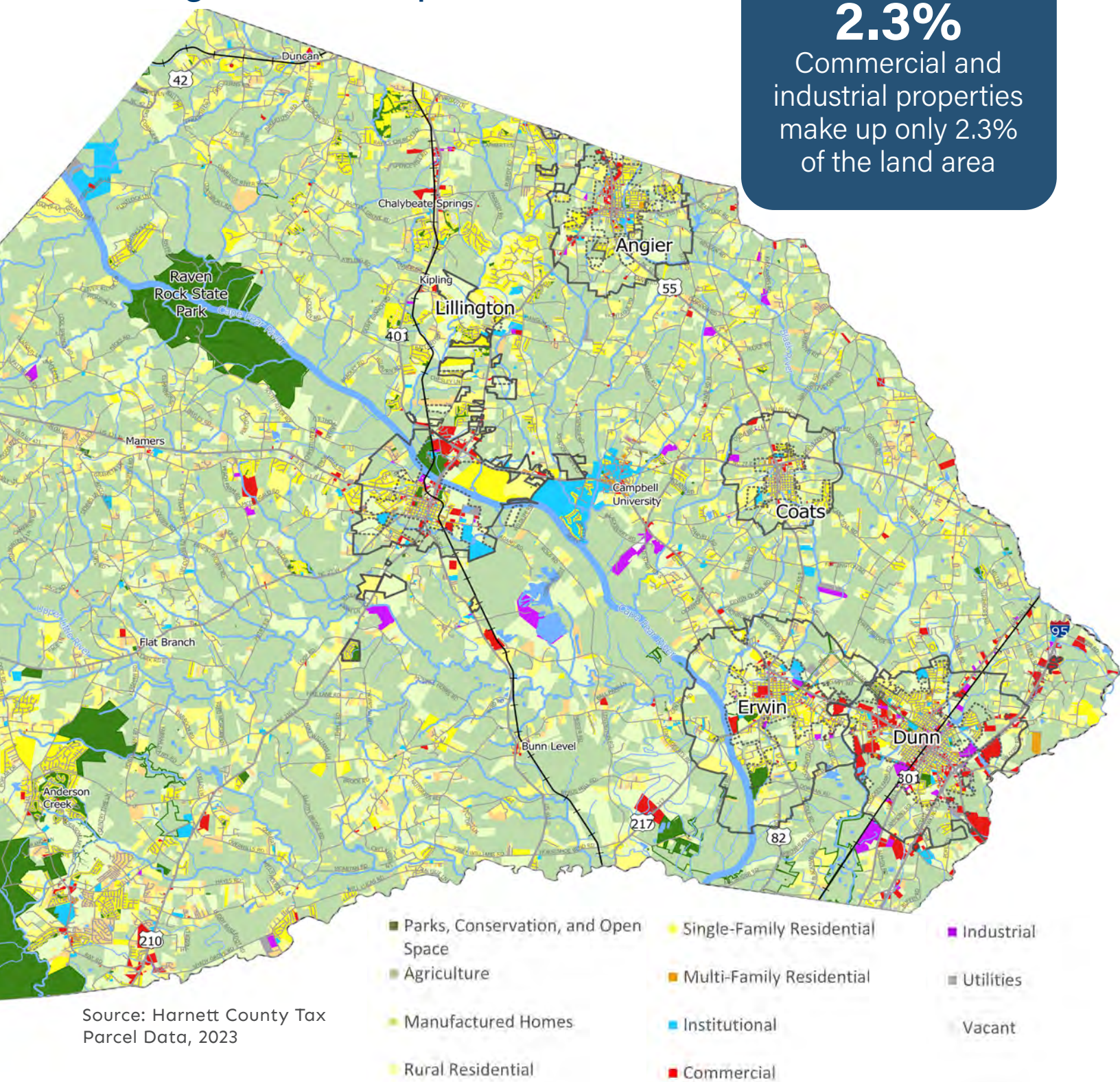




## Existing Land Use Map

**2.3%**

Commercial and industrial properties make up only 2.3% of the land area



# LAND USE - BACKGROUND

## LAND SUPPLY

As part of the existing conditions analysis a land supply inventory was created based on tax records and other GIS data. Land was classified into four categories:

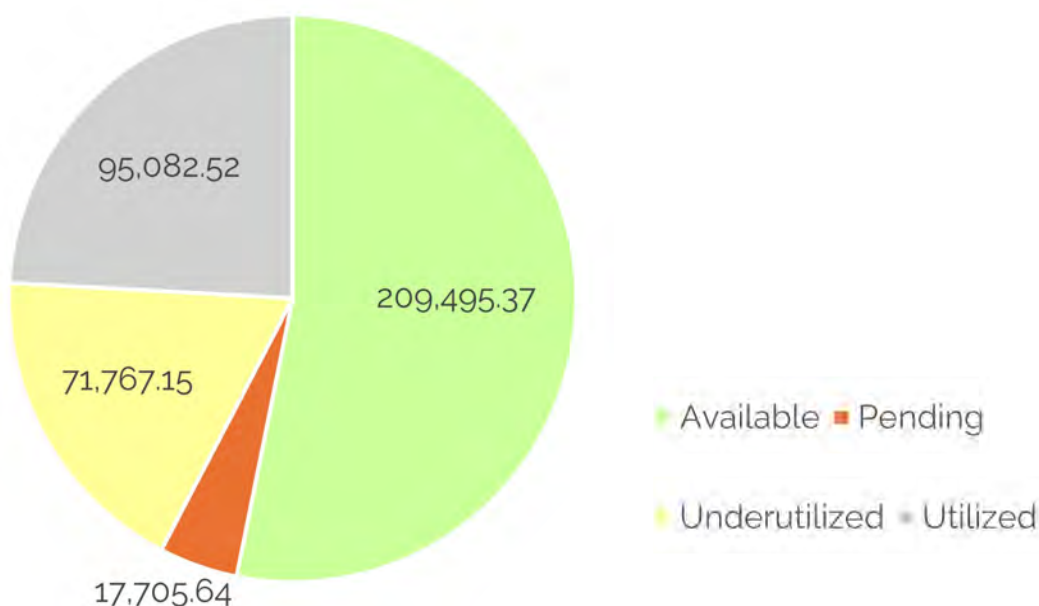
- **Available:** Vacant land or land currently used for agricultural purposes without a significant structure.
- **Underutilized:** Parcels that have a relatively low structure to land value ratio. These properties have the potential for further subdivision and development.
- **Utilized:** Land that has significant structures that may include homes, businesses, churches or schools. Also includes land in conservation and parks.
- **Pending:** Land that is part of a proposed subdivision. These areas include a variety of proposed development that includes minor subdivisions, major subdivisions and commercial development.

Available land, including agricultural lands, make up 53% of the land area or 209,000 acres. Underutilized lands make up 18% of the land area. Utilized or “built” lands make up 24% of the land area or 95,000 acres.

## RECENT GROWTH AND PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

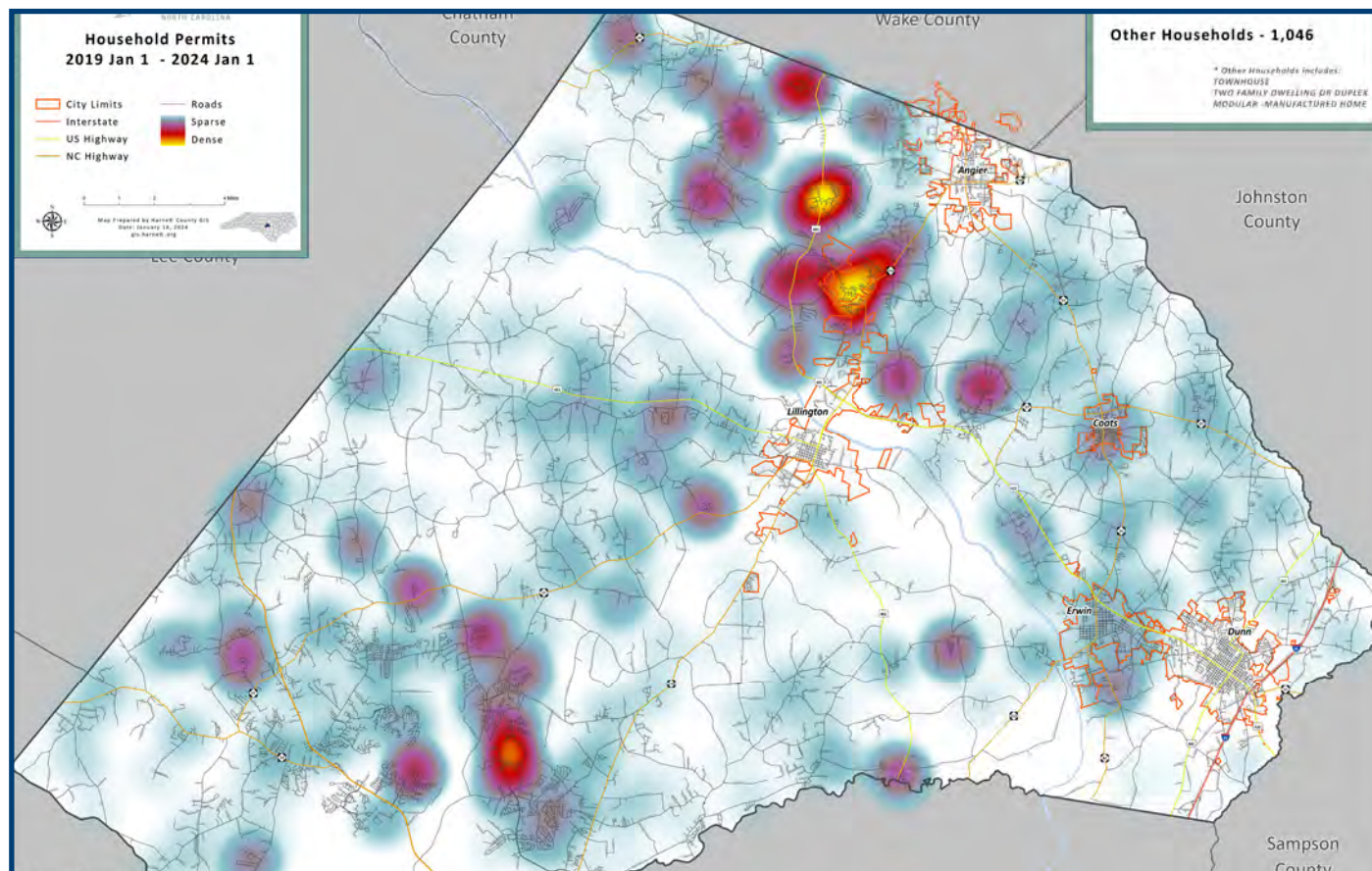
The map on the following page shows new residential permits between January 2019 and January 2024. Concentrations of new permits can be seen in the northwest portion of the county between NC 210 and Duncan and in the southwest near Anderson Creek Club.

Land Supply Chart





## New Residential Permits (January, 2024)

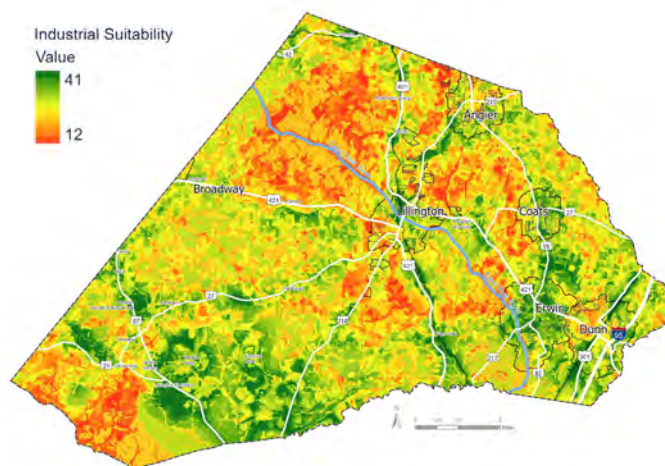


Pending developments, in some status of review or approval, make up over 17,000 acres.

### SUITABILITY

A land use suitability analysis was conducted based on economic and environmental factors. Suitability maps were created for residential, commercial, industrial and conservation. These maps were used, in tandem with citizen, staff and steering committee feedback to make land use recommendations for the Plan.

### Industrial Suitability Map



Sources: Harnett County GIS

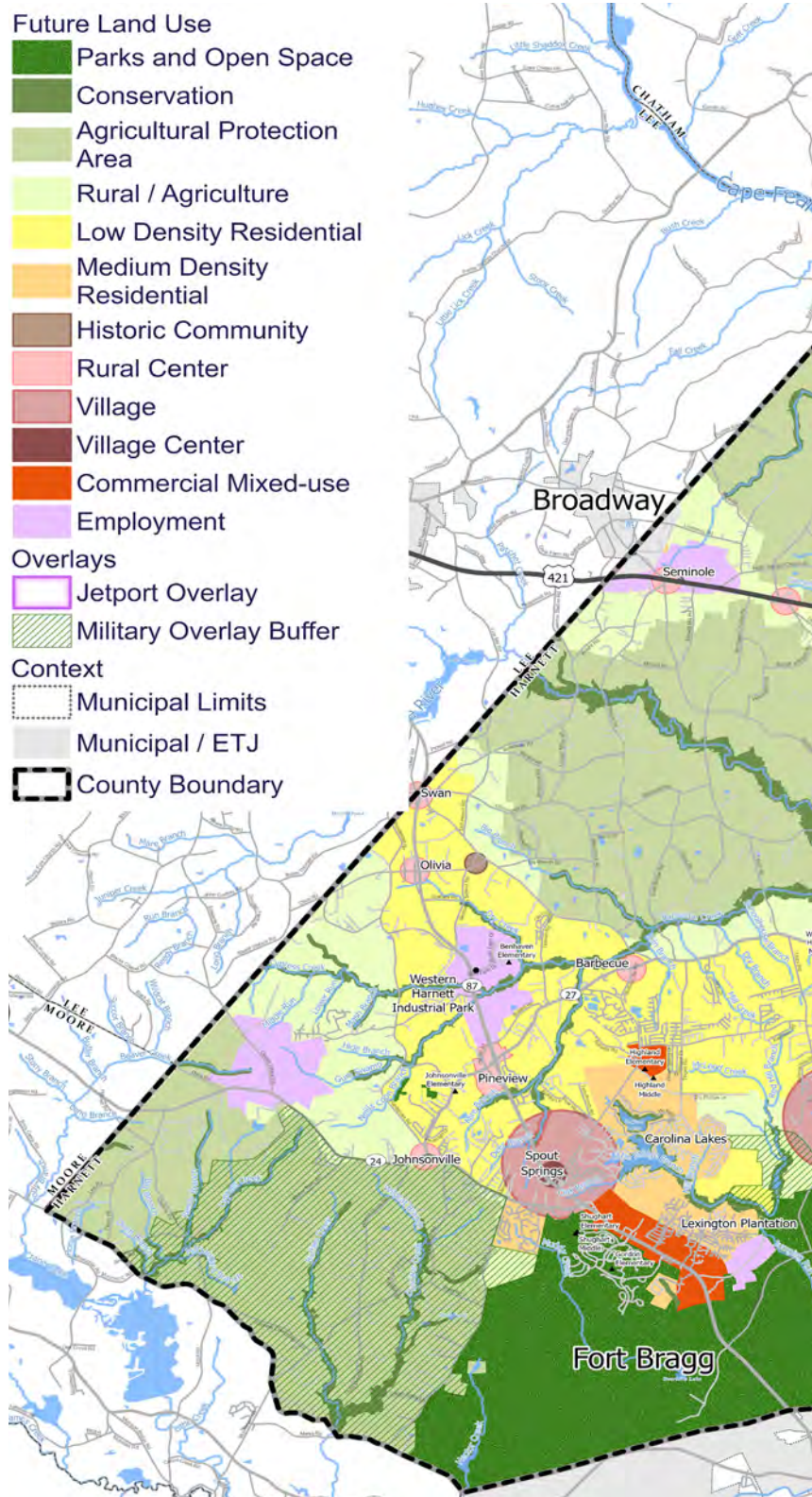
# FUTURE LAND USE - MAP

**The Future Land Use Map is intended to guide growth and development as well as infrastructure investment and conservation efforts over the next 10-15 years.**

The map identifies 10 unique character areas for Harnett County's jurisdiction. Fort Bragg and municipal areas are also identified. Each character area is described on pages 42-45 and indicates a predominant land use - or set of uses - and other shared design features that contribute to the character of development in that area. These character areas represent an intended development pattern that can assist in accomplishing county goals. They do not propose a change in existing development and do not automatically change zoning or entitlements for property. However, the map should be utilized to guide rezoning and land development decisions and changes in zoning may be beneficial to implement the plan.

## Highlights of the Future Land Use Map include

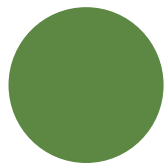
- ◆ Guidance for the management of residential uses and density
- ◆ Identification of strategic Agricultural Protection areas
- ◆ Areas for commercial and mixed-use development including Villages and Rural Centers
- ◆ Defined Employment Growth areas





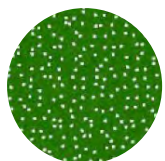
# FUTURE LAND USE - CHARACTER AREAS

## Environmental and Military Areas



### CONSERVATION

Environmentally sensitive areas, including floodplains and areas located in the Conservation Overlay Zoning District. Primary uses in these areas includes recreation, forestry, and agriculture.



### PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and other forms of protected open space, including large conservation easements. This character area also includes Fort Bragg. Primary uses in these areas includes recreation, forestry, agriculture and military operations.

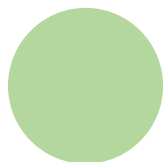


### MILITARY CORRIDOR BUFFER

Areas proximal to Fort Bragg. Proposed development in these areas should be compatible with existing and future military operations. Primary land uses should include working lands, conservation lands, parks, and very low-density residential development.



## Agricultural and Rural Areas



### AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION AREAS

Areas of the county with concentration of agriculture, timber operations and natural resources. Farmland preservation efforts should be focused in these areas. The established low density development pattern and ongoing agricultural activities in these areas contribute to their rural character. This character can be enhanced by encouraging only low intensity uses such as agriculture and support businesses, and very low density single family residential with context sensitive rural design. New residential development should be limited in density and scale. Density should generally be less than 0.5 dwelling unit per acre.





## RURAL / AGRICULTURE

Primarily agricultural and forestry uses with some rural business and rural residential areas. These areas are located outside of existing and planned utility service areas and rely on septic systems for wastewater treatment. The lack of utility and transportation infrastructure should limit the density of development to very low density single family residential up to one dwelling per acre.



## Residential Areas

### LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Single family detached residential intended to remain predominately suburban in character and provide for low density single-family residential development. Gross densities of 1-2 dwelling units per acre depending on zoning, utilities, soils, and character of adjacent development. Smaller lot sizes could be permitted as part of a Compatibility Development, which would also include a higher amount of open space to preserve sensitive environmental areas.



### MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

Located in areas served by current or planned utilities, medium density residential permits a mix of housing types including single family detached homes, small-lot homes and patio homes. Gross densities of 1-3 dwelling units per acre depending on zoning, utilities, natural features and adjacent development. Smaller lot sizes and some attached housing could be permitted as part of a Compatibility Development, which would also include a higher amount of conserved open space to preserve sensitive environmental areas.



# FUTURE LAND USE - CHARACTER AREAS

## Nonresidential and Mixed-use Areas

### HISTORIC COMMUNITY

Historic communities, including Kipling, Chalybeate Springs and Bunnlevel. These communities have structures, including homes, churches and businesses that date to the early 1900s. Future development may include a variety of uses including single family and house-scale attached residential and commercial. Buildings should mimic historical scale and include architectural details. New non-residential building footprints will usually be less than 5,000 square feet in these areas with exceptions for civic and institutional uses.



### RURAL CENTERS

Small-scale commercial centers and nonresidential activity areas. The exact location and extent of the Rural Centers will be market driven, however, the non-residential footprint will usually be less than 30,000 square feet in these areas. Buildings and sites should blend with the character of development nearby. Residential uses include smaller lot homes, patio homes, and some small-scale attached products (such as duplexes or quadplexes), where appropriate.



### VILLAGES AND VILLAGE CENTERS

These areas are meant to be nodes or activity centers for growing areas in the county. They should be located to compliment an existing center or include and be designed around a defined center and integrated greenspace. Villages should have a connected street network with short block lengths and have access to major thoroughfares and utilities. These areas incorporate a variety of small- to medium-scale commercial uses including grocery stores, retail establishments, restaurants and services. Office, civic and institutional uses should complement commercial uses. Residential options may include small lot single-family, townhomes, missing middle housing types and live-work units with residential units above commercial uses. Village Center locations may also include apartments and condos or dorms in the case of Campbell University. Residential uses should be located in close proximity to shopping and service areas and complimented by pedestrian facilities to provide more walking opportunities to internal and external destinations.





## COMMERCIAL MIXED USE

These areas are located along major roads and include a mix of commercial land uses and some residential uses. This character area is home to medium to large-scale retail, services, restaurants, offices and other businesses. Residential uses may include single-family homes, townhomes, missing middle housing types and occasionally apartments.



## EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AREA

These areas are located along major thoroughfares and include prime locations for economic development opportunities. Uses encouraged in the Employment Growth Areas include but are not limited to industrial, warehouse, office, research and development, tech-flex, medical, energy, and distribution. Residential development is appropriate only when not in conflict with existing or future industry or commercial uses or focal development areas.



## JETPORT OVERLAY

Areas proximal to the Harnett Regional Jetport. Proposed development in these areas should be compatible with existing and future jetport operations.



# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Accelerated residential growth in the County has led to a need for growth management, especially in the northern part of the county. Recommendations in this chapter focus on managing the density of new development, improving standards and encouraging a growth pattern that protects agricultural and other natural resources. Additional recommendations address a need for commercial development and business growth in key locations to encourage a balanced tax base.



Residential development in Serenity, a master-planned community located off of Piney-Grove Rawls Road in Northwest Harnett County.

## Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1: Manage growth in order to protect natural resources, agricultural areas and rural character.**

**Strategy 1A:** Review development proposals for consistency with the Future Land Use Map and goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Strategy 1B:** Update and utilize the Unified Development Ordinance to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

**B.1:** Following the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan review and

update references to the Future Land Use classifications in the Unified Development ordinance.

**B.2:** Review and revise zoning districts, permitted uses, standards and processes in the Unified Development Ordinance within 1-2 years to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and improve ease of implementation.

**Strategy 1C:** Discourage large-scale residential development and related rezonings in Agricultural Protection Areas and the Military Corridor Buffer identified on the Future Land Use Map.





## Strategy 1D: Update zoning to reduce density and improve design in Agricultural Protection Areas.

- D.1:** Consider targeted rezonings to more closely match future land use recommendations.
- D.2:** Consider the creation of one or more Agricultural Protection Overlays to allow for only larger lots or lower overall density (less than 0.5 dwelling unit per acre).
  - ◆ This overlay could be targeted at and impact major subdivisions. Optionally the overlay or other amendment could provide incentives for small-scale, low density development (this could be accomplished via a potential

Farmhouse or Rural Cluster option as new minor subdivision type).

- ◆ A conditional zoning process could be set up to provide for additional flexibility for innovative development proposals.
- D.3:** Add requirement for major subdivisions to install or preserve a landscape buffer adjacent to working farmland.
- ◆ See graphic in Agriculture and Natural Resources chapter for more information.

## Strategy 1E: Encourage land use compatible with military operations at Fort Bragg.

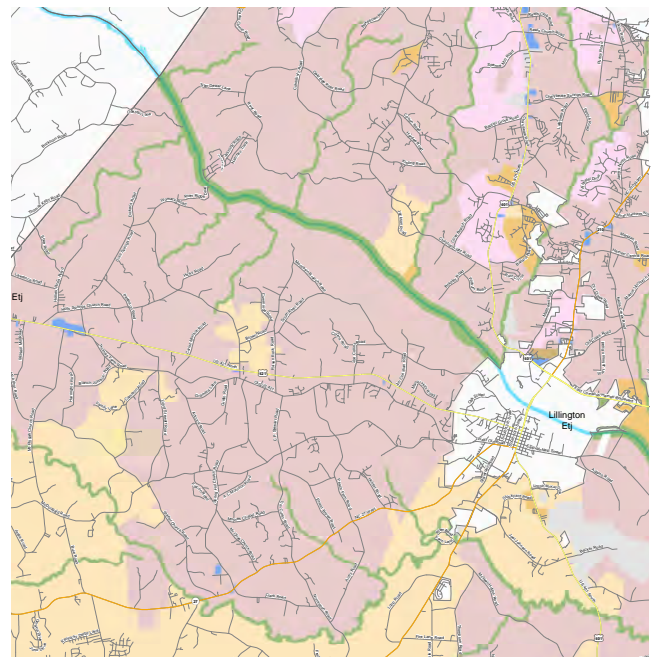
- ◆ See Agriculture and Natural Resources element for more details.

## Zoning Updates Recommended

A major recommendation in the Harnett Horizons 2040 Comprehensive Plan is to update the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to increase development standards and encourage a land use pattern more in line with the Future Land Use Map. Many areas zoned RA-30 or RA-20 should be zoned for lower density and base standards for certain types of residential should be improved.

 Harnett County, COMMERCIAL	 Harnett County, RA-20B
 Harnett County, CONSERVATION	 Harnett County, RA-20R
 Harnett County, INDUSTRIAL	 Harnett County, RA-30
 Harnett County, LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	 Harnett County, RA-40
 Harnett County, OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL	

## Zoning Map



# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

**Strategy 1F:** Encourage growth where infrastructure and services exist.

**F.1:** Encourage growth inside municipal limits and extra-territorial jurisdictions to promote strong towns.

**F.2:** Encourage growth in areas of the county where adequate water and sewer service exists or is planned.

## Goal 2: Maintain and increase standards for new development.

**Strategy 2A:** Improve open space standards for new development in residential zoning districts.

**A.1:** Update open space requirements for residential zoning districts.

- ◆ Base residential zoning districts do not have minimum open space requirements currently. Consider adding an open space requirement (e.g. 10-15%) for RA-20 and RA-30 zoning districts.
- ◆ Consider different recreation and open space requirements based on number of units in a subdivision.

**Strategy 2B:** Encourage conservation subdivisions in areas with sensitive environmental resources through updates to the Compatibility Development Option.

- B.1:** Increase standards for the Compatibility Development / Conservation Subdivision Option.
- ◆ Updated standards should include:
    - ◆ Increased minimum open space requirements
    - ◆ Increased minimum lot size allowances for more rural areas



## Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation subdivisions are designed to cluster development away from key natural resources and have higher amounts of open space than conventional subdivisions. Currently there is a "Compatibility Development" option in the Unified Development Ordinance that allows for smaller lot sizes in exchange for higher open space standards. Conservation design was preferred 2 to 1 in the survey. The current options does not allow or require true conservation design as open space standards are too low and true clustering is not allowed, even in areas with water and sewer.





The preservation of natural areas and trees was the

## #1 Priority for New Residential Development

- ◆ Incentives for conservation subdivisions with 40% open space that includes smaller lot sizes with a maximum overall gross density cap

**B.2:** Consider the creation of a new minor subdivision type that allows “Farmhouse Clusters” as a by-right development type

- ◆ This new minor subdivision type could have a minimum property size of 5 acres, maximum of 10 lots. Other standards could include:
  - ◆ A maximum density of 0.5-1 dwelling units per acre
  - ◆ 30-40% Minimum open space
  - ◆ No minimum lot size and minimal setbacks (i.e. 10' setbacks all sides) to allow for clustering and conservation of open space
  - ◆ Alternative standards for streets

**Strategy 2C: Encourage reserved open space as an organizing element in new development.**

**C.1:** Continue to require the preservation of viewsheds in rural areas.



Preserved trees within a cul-de-sac in Anderson Creek break up the views and assist with stormwater filtration.

**C.2:** Encourage a mix of passive and active open space based on context.

- ◆ Encourage more natural areas in rural areas and areas with sensitive environmental resources.
- ◆ Utilize pocket parks, common greens and plazas as gathering spaces in new neighborhoods.
- ◆ Create standards for mail kiosk areas. Kiosk areas should be located on open space lots, covered, lighted and ADA accessible.
- ◆ Update standards to include incentives for entry features, additional landscaping and tree preservation.

**C.3:** Improve the quality and design of open space.

- ◆ Update the UDO to specify priority areas for open space including riparian areas, floodplains, unique habitats, mature forest, historical areas, greenway corridors and areas adjacent to preserved open space.

# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Require a percentage of open space to be outside of regulated features (i.e. floodplain, stream buffers and wetlands).
- ◆ Require a percentage of open space to be contiguous.

## Strategy 2D: Enhance transportation requirements for large commercial and residential development.

- D.1:** Maintain and enhance connectivity and cross access requirements.
- ◆ Evaluate the threshold for a second entrances based on number of units.
- D.2:** Require large-scale development construct collector streets to disperse traffic away from state highways.
- D.3:** Require sidewalks, curb and gutter and street trees for most

developments with lots under 20,000 square feet.

- ◆ Update sidewalk and street standards for subdivision options.
- ◆ See the Transportation Element for more recommendations.

## Strategy 2E: Promote quality commercial and retail design.

- E.1:** Maintain and customize the Highway Corridor Overlay District (HCO).
- ◆ Continue to specify building design requirements.
  - ◆ Consider expanding the Highway Corridor Overlay overlay district to US 401 North and NC 210.
- E.2:** Improve commercial site design through updates to overlays or enhancing base standards.
- ◆ Encourage landscaped parking areas and consider limiting parking in front of buildings.
    - ◆ Establish a maximum of 2 parking bays in front of buildings.
    - ◆ Wrap large parking lots with buildings on outparcels or trees and landscaping.
  - ◆ Encourage entry features and public space (including landscaped plazas and patio dining).
  - ◆ Require pedestrian connections from parking to entries of buildings, along major roads and to adjacent residential or planned greenways.





### **Goal 3: Preserve prime industrial lands.**

**Strategy 3A:** Support rezonings of land within Employment Mixed Use areas to office, commercial, light industrial and industrial.

**Strategy 3B:** Discourage rezonings that could lead to conflicts with existing or future nonresidential development.

### **Goal 4: Encourage commercial recruitment (including retail and restaurants) to address leakage trends.**

**Strategy 4A:** Encourage commercial and retail development in non-residential and mixed-use areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.

**Strategy 4B:** Encourage context-sensitive site design in and near Rural Centers and Historical Communities identified on the Future Land Use Map.

**B.1:** Consider implementing a zoning overlay or conditional zoning to limit allowable uses, traffic impacts or the scale of new development.



Historic communities generally have a history of residential, commercial and institutional uses. Christian Light Christian Church pictured above is an example of the type and scale of development in these areas.

**B.2:** Modify approval processes to allow for more community input and dialog on proposed commercial developments.

**Strategy 4C:** Encourage investment on potential commercial corridors that will serve as gateways into the County.

- ◆ Major gateways include I-95, US 401, US 421, NC 87, NC 210, NC 55.
- ◆ Other potential gateways could be key entries to proposed village districts.

**Strategy 4D:** Encourage rural businesses while limiting impacts on existing uses.

**D.1:** Allow for a variety of small-scale businesses in rural areas.

# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

**D.2:** Consider supplemental standards for certain types of businesses including event venues and bed and breakfasts.

**D.3:** Consider a conditional zoning district and approval process for rural light industrial and flex space.

- ◆ See Economic Development Element for additional strategies.

## Goal 5: Provide for limited areas of mixed-use and walkable villages in key locations.

**Strategy 5A:** Develop and adopt zoning mechanisms that allow and potentially incentivize mixed-use development.



**A.1:** Create an overlay in the zoning code that allows for village districts in the vicinity of Villages shown on the Future Land Use Map.

- ◆ The overlay could have defined standards for uses and dimensional criteria specific to village style development or could be an optional form-based district that allows for design flexibility in exchange for site and building design standards. Alternatively a conditional zoning process could be established specifically to implement County goals.

**A.2:** Encourage traditional village design techniques to create walkable centers with shopping, services, a mix of housing and shared greenspace.

- ◆ See the Village Districts callout on page 50 for more information.

**A.3:** Participate in and encourage future planning efforts related village district locations including small area plans and infrastructure studies.

**Strategy 5B:** Support the creation of a village district in or near Buies Creek.

**B.1:** Support efforts by Campbell University and the private sector to define and brand the Village of Buies Creek.





- ◆ Support public investment, infill and adjacent development that compliments the university, adds commercial opportunities and addresses the need for a mix of housing in this part of the county.

**B.2:** Support streetscape upgrades along US 421 in the Village of Buies Creek.

**B.3:** Maintain and update the Highway Corridor Overlay (HCO) District to reinforce a sense of place near Campbell University.

- ◆ See the County Village District Guide in the Appendix for more information and detailed recommendations for village districts.

### **Strategy 5C: Support 1-2 Village districts in the southwest.**

- ◆ Candidates include NC 87 and Carolina Lakes and Anderson Creek or a similar location with access to transportation, utilities, proximal residential or planned residential.

### **Strategy 5D: Consider supporting a village in the northwest in the future.**

- ◆ This may not be feasible in the short-term due to transportation improvements that are needed along US 401. However a village district could be considered following a widening of US 401 from the Wake County line to Chalybeate Springs or at least Rawls Church Rd).

## Village Design Precedents



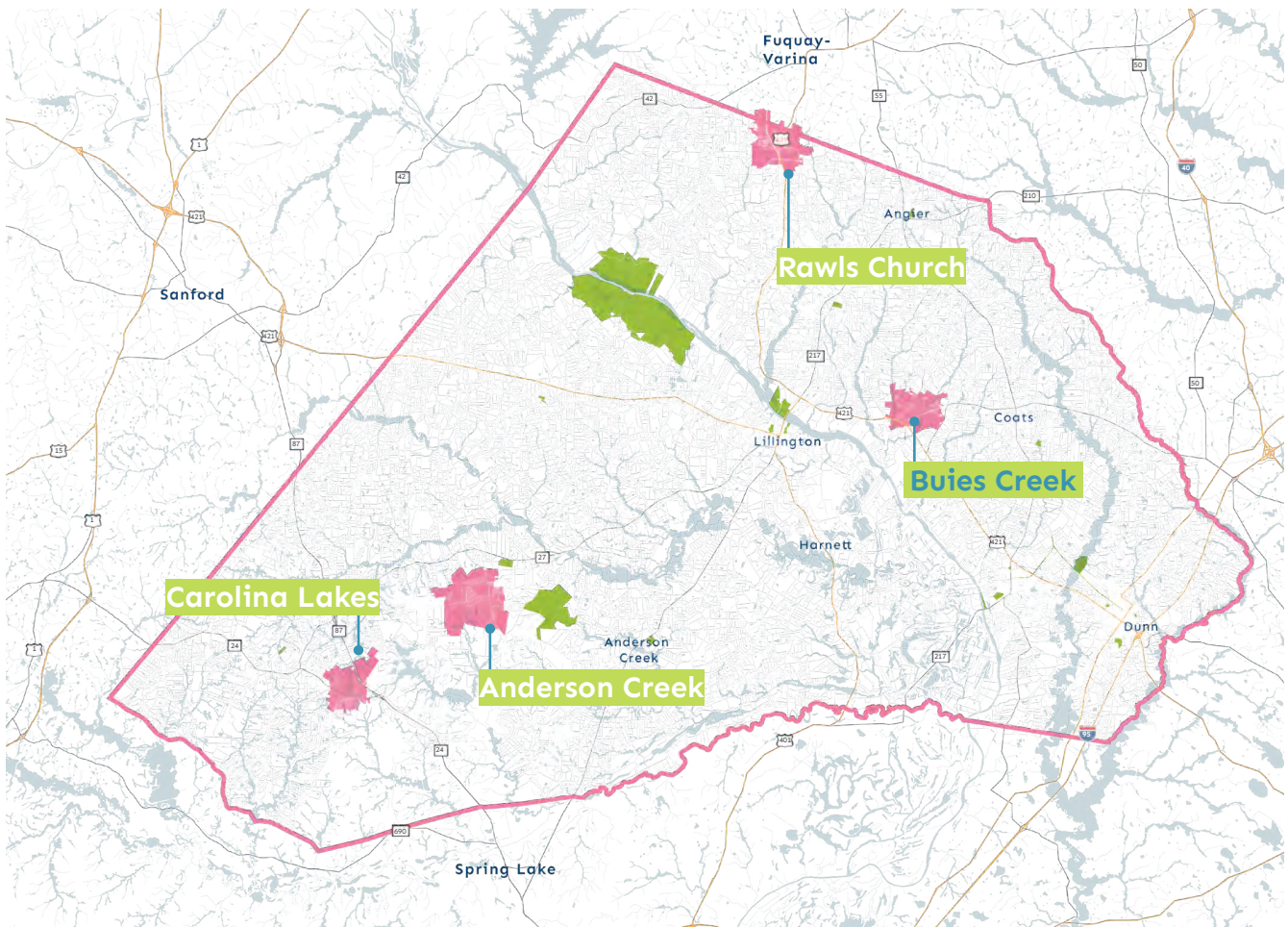
# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Village Districts

The creation of village districts in the county could accommodate a mix of land uses around a defined, walkable center with integrated greenspace. They could build on traditional development patterns in the county and help fulfill shopping needs, recreational, housing and employment options in unincorporated areas.

Four potential County Village Districts have been identified, however only three are shown on the Future Land Use Map. These include Buies Creek, Carolina Lakes and Anderson Creek. The fourth location was identified in the northwest portion of the county, however transportation improvements would be needed on the northern part of US 401 as well as intersections and cross streets to address traffic concerns in the area.

### Potential Village Locations





## Economic Benefits

A study was conducted by City Collective, a consulting firm assisting with the Comprehensive Plan, that analyzed existing development patterns in the county and annual tax revenue and service costs per acre. The study found that large lot single family development requires more County services to support, and ultimately, costs Harnett County over \$1,000/acre annually. Encouraging different patterns of development in key locations, such as Village Districts provides an opportunity to leverage incoming growth to strengthen the economy.

Harnett County's Town Centers and adjacent traditional residential neighborhoods are a large economic boom for the County when considering the annual tax revenue per acre, less the annual services cost per acre. This reinforces previous studies that have shown commercial, industrial and agricultural development provide more revenue than they consume in services.

57% of non-incorporated Harnett County is currently undeveloped. There are fiscal impacts to consider when imagining how different development patterns could impact the County. If 10% of the 223,000 acres of undeveloped land were developed as the different development patterns as outlined to the right, they would provide a wide range of impacts:

- **Town Center Pattern:**  
Net +\$78M annually
- **Town Center Adjacent Pattern:**  
Net +\$34M annually
- **Missing Middle Pattern:**  
Net +\$23M annually
- **Compact Single Family Pattern:**  
Net -\$17M annually
- **Large Lot Single Family Pattern:**  
Net -\$23M annually

## Tax Revenue vs. Costs by Land Use



### Town Center Pattern (+\$3.5k/ac)

Traditional town center development patterns feature a walkable layout with commercial, civic, and residential buildings clustered around a main street. This pattern typically returns >\$3,500/acre in net annual taxes.



### Town Center Adjacent Pattern (+\$1.5k/ac)

Traditional residential development patterns near town centers have grid-like streets and homes close together, within walking distance of downtown. This pattern typically returns \$1,000 to \$2,000/acre in net annual taxes.



### Missing Middle Pattern (+\$1k/ac)

Missing middle development patterns consist of multi-unit housing types like duplexes and townhomes, bridging the gap between single-family homes and apartments. This pattern typically returns \$500 to \$1,500/acre in net annual taxes.



### Compact Single Family Pattern (-\$750/ac)

Compact single-family development patterns feature smaller lots with homes built close together, maximizing space and community interaction. This pattern typically returns -\$500 to -\$1,000/acre in net annual taxes.



### Large Lot Single Family Pattern (<-\$1k/ac)

Large lot single-family development patterns have spacious lots with homes set far apart, offering privacy and extensive outdoor space. This pattern typically returns less than -\$1,000/acre in net annual taxes.

# LAND USE - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Village Design

Design details for districts should include:

- ◆ A short, walkable block network (block lengths less than 500ft)
- ◆ Pedestrian-oriented design of streets and buildings (i.e. active storefronts)
- ◆ Shared amenities that could include village greens or other central public space
- ◆ Access to daily needs including retail, healthcare and other services
- ◆ A diversity range of housing options that could include single family homes, cottages, townhomes and missing middle housing types, live-work units and some apartments

### Campbell's Main Street

Pedestrian improvements, new public spaces, and targeted infill and redevelopment along Main Street could help create a village center in the heart of Campbell University.

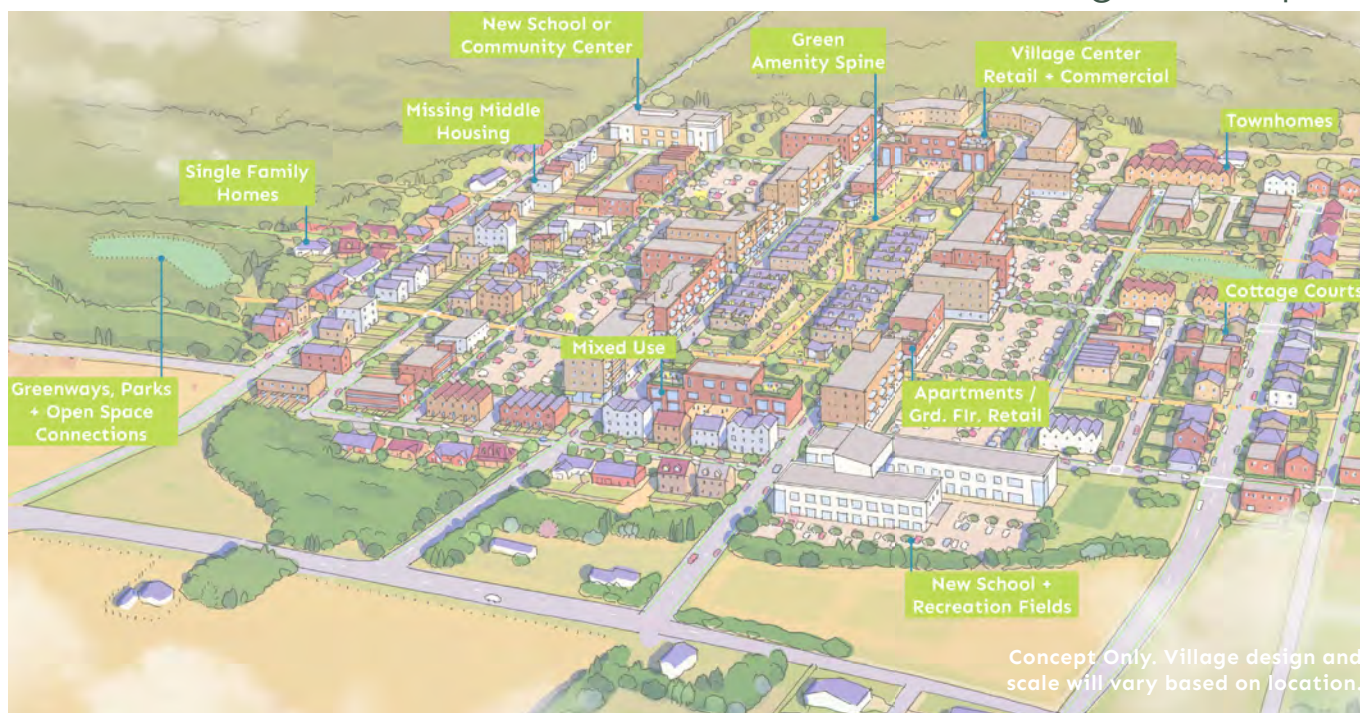




## Implementation Recommendations / Options

The Village District Design Guide located in the appendix of this document explains the potential design strategies within village districts as well as implementation options. The Design Guide includes strategies to create and reinforce village character and includes hypothetical concepts for new development in the Buies Creek area. These concepts are only for illustration purposes and more study is needed to determine next steps. Additional small area planning is recommended and a new mechanism for the development of villages will need to be created. This could be a new zoning district or overlay with defined standards.

### East Buies Creek Village Concept



### East Buies Creek

Key features of this area include contiguous land, compact structure, supported by a network of roads and infrastructure affording a cohesive urban village district design which prioritizes pedestrian access. Any potential site should be structured to support a mixed-use environment where residential, commercial, open space and recreational options are within a short walking distance. Village design should incorporate a mix of housing that is appropriate in the area, encourage active transportation modes and foster a close-knit community atmosphere.

# HOUSING - BACKGROUND

## Housing Trends

There have been nearly 8,000 housing units built in Harnett County between 2010 and 2020. The majority of housing growth has occurred in the unincorporated areas of the county, although Lillington and Angier also saw significant growth during that time period. Since 2020 residential activity has accelerated across the county, in towns and unincorporated areas, and currently there are thousands of lots in various stages of approval or review.

## HOME VALUE AND AFFORDABILITY

In 2020, the median home value in Harnett County was \$160,700, which is up from the median value of \$141,300 in 2010 (*Source: US Census*). While the median home value is one aspect, the listing and sold price of housing units is much higher. The median listing price for a home is \$345,900, while the median sold price is \$320,000 (*Source: Realtor.com*).



*Median Sold Price*  
**\$320,000**

### *Housing Affordability*

Given recent increases in housing prices and interest rates many essential workers cannot afford to live in Harnett County without being "cost burdened" or paying over 30% of their monthly income on rent or a mortgage. For example a young couple has accepted jobs in Harnett County as a fire marshal and a first year teacher with a master's degree. This couple has been smart about their finances, has minimal monthly debt payments, and has saved up a fair amount for a down payment for a house. They have worked hard, and are about to work even harder to be active members of the Harnett County community, but they still can't afford to buy a home despite doing everything "right". Based on starting salaries, a \$20,000 down payment and reasonable other monthly debts (~\$1,000/month) this couple could only afford a home of around \$160,000 which is half the current median listing price for the County.



*Fire Marshal*  
**Salary: \$15.21/  
hour = \$33k**



*Entry Level  
Teacher*  
**Salary:  
\$41,960 –  
Master's  
Degree**





## HOUSING TENURE AND UNIT TYPE

Of the 52,531 housing units in Harnett County, 65.4% are owner occupied, while 34.6% are renter occupied. Since 2000, homeownership rates have dropped 4.9% and rental households rose by 4.9%.

The housing units within Harnett County are predominantly single family detached dwellings making up 69% of the housing units. Mobile/manufactured homes make up 19.3% of the housing units. The remaining 11.2% of housing units are townhomes, duplex, triplex, and multi-family dwellings.

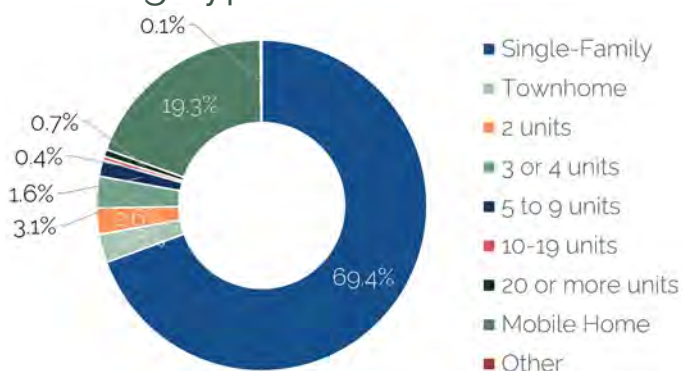
Own/Rent



## COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

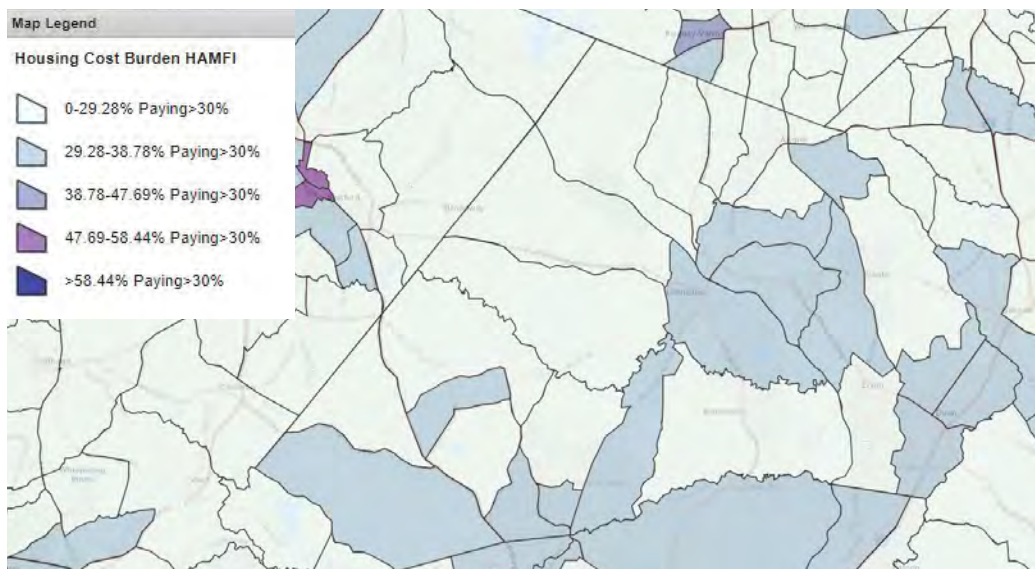
According to the US Census, "households are considered cost burdened when they spend more than 30% of their income on rent, mortgage and other housing needs." This includes, rent or mortgage payments, renters or home insurance, utilities, etc, and it can all add up. In many areas of the county, 37%-47% of the households are paying over 30% of their income on housing and are therefore considered housing cost burdened.

Housing Type



Sources: US Census, 2020

## Housing Cost Burdened Map



# HOUSING - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Harnett County has historically been a relatively affordable place to live. Home prices and interest rates have been on the rise which has impacted affordability. Changes in demographics including a growing population of those 50+ and an increase in people under 30 years of age have also lead to an increased demand for a greater variety of housing types. Based on survey results demand for alternatives to single family homes (e.g. town homes, apartments, etc.) exceeds the availability of these products. Currently almost 20% of the housing stock is made up of mobile homes which provide an affordable option in the county. Housing recommendations in this plan element provide guidance on how to encourage a greater mix of housing while protecting community character, how to encourage affordable and workforce housing and address a growing need to deal with increased homelessness.

## Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1: Accommodate a mixture of housing types in appropriate areas.**

**Strategy 1A:** Ensure zoning policies continue to provide an ample opportunity for a variety of

## Affordability is #1 priority

for 21% of survey respondents when asked about housing options in Harnett County

*Based on 1,792 participants*

housing types.

- ◆ Keeping the market well supplied with housing will moderate the costs of owning and renting, lessening affordability problems and lowering the level of subsidy necessary to produce affordable housing.

**Strategy 1B:** Encourage or require a mix of lot sizes or housing types in new development.

**B.1:** Consider updates to the Planned Unit Development option or a new conditional zoning option in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to require at least two lot sizes or housing products.

**B.2:** Encourage a mix of housing and/or incomes through a new conditional zoning process.





**Strategy 1C:** Remove regulatory barriers to meeting market demand for different housing types.

**C.1:** Consider updating the UDO to allow for smaller lots and/or attached housing types in certain areas or with enhanced design standards.

- ◆ Allow for a mix of housing and reduced setbacks and/or parking requirements in new village districts if defined design criteria is met.
- ◆ Consider allowing duplexes on corner lots in some zoning districts.
- ◆ Establish standards for pocket neighborhoods / tiny home developments.

**Strategy 1D:** Consider an allowance for smaller lots and/or attached housing types as part of conservation subdivisions.

- ◆ Allow for smaller lots and/or up to 15-20% attached housing (duplexes, triplexes, quads or townhomes) in conservation subdivisions with at least 40%+ open space.

**Goal 2: Encourage the preservation and construction of affordable and workforce housing.**

**Strategy 2A:** Continue to allow for secondary residences (accessory dwelling units).



Village residential was a preferred housing type according to input at the public meetings. This type of housing is located near a walkable village center with access to shopping and parks. Housing types could include single family homes on small lots, attached residential and/or live work units with residential above commercial. Barriers to this type of housing include large minimum lot sizes or widths, parking requirements and large street widths. Image source: Bynum Homes

**Strategy 2B:** Conduct a county-wide inventory of affordable housing units and track changes.

**Strategy 2C:** Coordination with municipalities and other partners on projects or studies to preserve or increase affordable or workforce housing.

**Strategy 2D:** Prioritize utility upgrades to serve growth in towns including downtown revitalization projects and housing.

# HOUSING - RECOMMENDATIONS

**Strategy 2E:** Evaluate County-owned sites for affordable or workforce housing.

**Strategy 2F:** Consider incentives for the development of new affordable housing on privately-owned sites.

**Goal 3: Work with partners to prevent and reduce homelessness.**

**Strategy 3A:** Coordinate with partners including Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action, Inc. (JLHCA), the Sanford Housing Authority and the Dunn Housing Authority to distribute information on existing housing resources.

**Strategy 3B:** Dedicate county staff resources to assist with the annual Point in Time (PIT) count of homeless individuals.





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# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - BACKGROUND

## Agriculture

Harnett County is home to a variety of natural and cultural resources that define the county's identity, attract residents and visitors and contribute to our economy. Agriculture is a major contributor to the Harnett County economy.

### PRESENT USE VALUE AND VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURE DISTRICTS

The present use value (*PUV*) program was established in 1973 to protect agricultural farmland through evaluations of property value in a way that would allow for bona fide farms to avoid being taxed at the market value of their property, and instead be taxed at a value determined by soil type and the value of the crops being grown on the land. This allows for farms to continue to operate with more financial options rather than sell the land to someone who would rather develop the land. In addition to the PUV program, Harnett County has also established a Voluntary Agricultural District in order to encourage preservation of farmlands through preservation funding opportunities, and advocacy for farm operations. The establishment of a district also provides an Agricultural Advisory Board which acts as an advising board to the governing board of the County.



### County Agricultural Programs

- ◆ **123,774 Acres of Present Use Value (PUV) Properties** - These properties receive a tax break based on agricultural, forestry or horticultural uses
- ◆ **25,103 Acres of Voluntary Agricultural Districts**

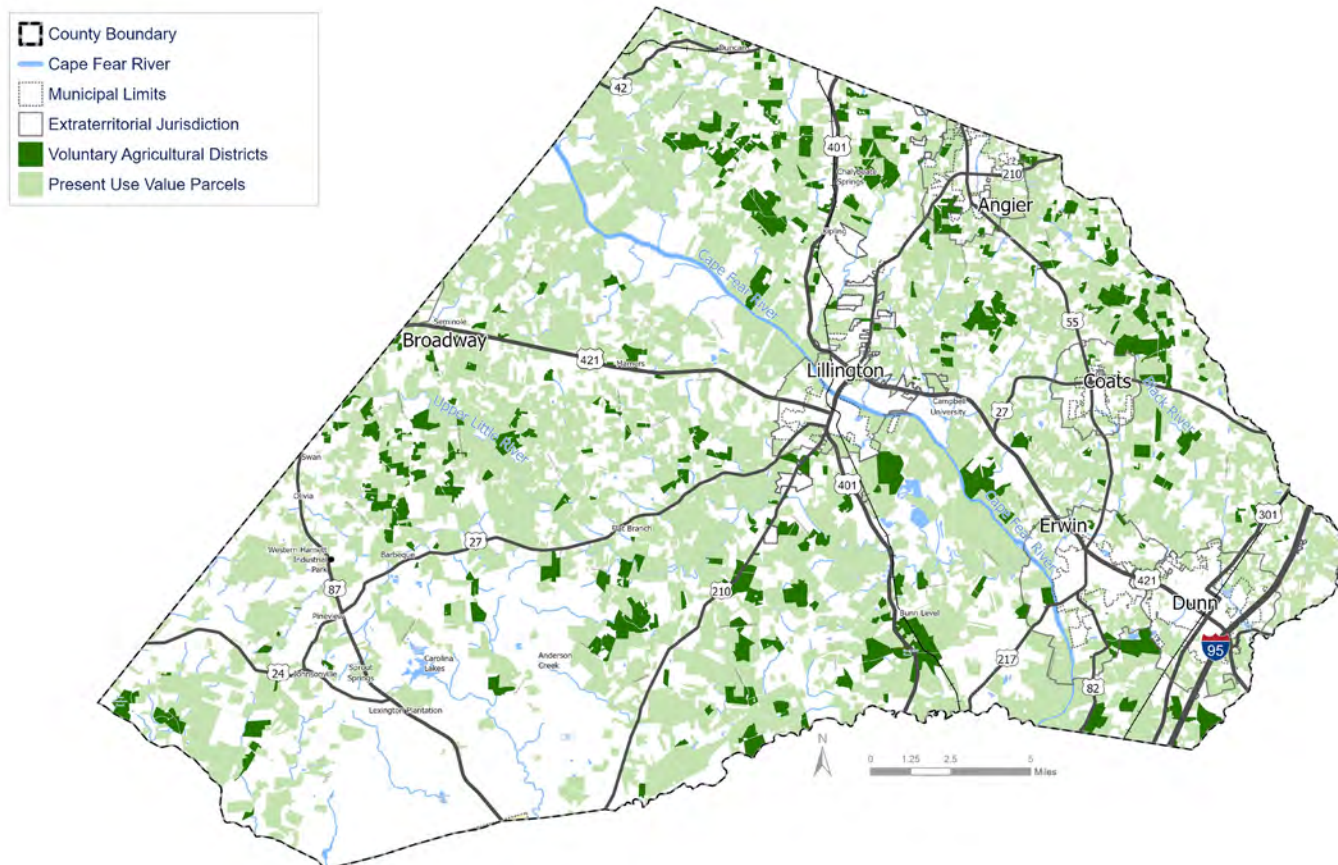
### Census of Agriculture Statistics (2017)

- ◆ **Land in farms: 643 farms with 106,262 acres in farmland**
  - » 19% decrease from 797 farms in 2012
  - » 11% decrease from 119,775 acres of farmland in 2012
- ◆ **145% increase in per-farm net income**
  - » From \$45,764 to \$112,327 average net cash income per farm
- ◆ **7.5% increase in total sales from Harnett County farms**
  - » From \$190 million to \$204 million in total sales from Harnett County farms
- ◆ **Top 3 Agricultural Commodity groups:**
  - » Livestock, poultry and their products (\$132 million)
  - » Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops (\$71 million)
  - » Tobacco (\$39 million)
- ◆ **Farmer Characteristics**
  - » 58 Years: Average Age of Farmers
  - » Approximately 20% With Military Service
  - » Approximately 30% New & Beginning Farmers





## Present Use Value and Voluntary Ag. Districts



### AGRICULTURE IN HARNETT COUNTY

Harnett County is in the top 20% of top agriculture producing counties in the United States as of 2022, which is down compared to 2017 when the County was 135 places higher. From 2017 to 2022, Harnett County has seen a 12% decrease in the number of farms, while also seeing a 23% increase in total agricultural receipts. Livestock makes up 64% of the agricultural receipts, while crops make up 36%.

### Agricultural Production Statistics

- ◆ **Tobacco**
  - » #6 Highest Producing County in the U.S.
- ◆ **Cotton/Cottonseed**
  - » Top 50% of U.S. Counties
- ◆ **Sweet Potatoes/Vegetables/Melons**
- ◆ **Nursery/Greenhouse/Floriculture/Sod**
  - » Top 10% of U.S. Counties
- ◆ **Poultry**
  - » Top 7% of U.S. Counties
- ◆ **Hogs/Pigs**
  - » Top 10% of U.S. Counties

# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - BACKGROUND

## Natural Resources

Harnett County Parks & Recreation maintains a number of parks and greenways for passive recreation opportunities (*i.e. the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail, Anderson Creek Park and Cape Fear River Trail Park*). Reserving land for additional passive recreation and amenities (*nature parks, trails, and greenways*) will be important to preserving the quality of life in Harnett County.

### FOREST COVER

Thirty-nine percent of Harnett County is forested (*NLCD, 2021*). This includes 191,140 acres of privately owned timberland. The forestry sector had a total economic contribution of \$78 million to the county's economy in 2022 (*NC State Extension, 2022*). There have been significant decreases in forest cover over the last twenty years. Harnett County lost 2.59 square miles of forest from 2001 to 2021. The majority of this loss was from logging however new development was also a significant contributor (*NLCD, 2021*).

### CAPE FEAR RIVER WATERSHED

Water quality in the Cape Fear River watershed is valued by residents as seen in the comprehensive plan survey results. Stormwater runoff and sedimentation from development activities can impair water quality in creeks in Harnett County.

Low impact development (*LID*) techniques such as reducing impervious surfaces and retaining vegetated riparian (*stream*) buffers can help improve water quality. The Cape Fear River and Upper Little River also offer great opportunities for tourism. New and improved canoe/kayak launches could allow greater access to these natural resources.

### NATURAL HERITAGE NATURAL AREAS, HABITATS AND RARE SPECIES

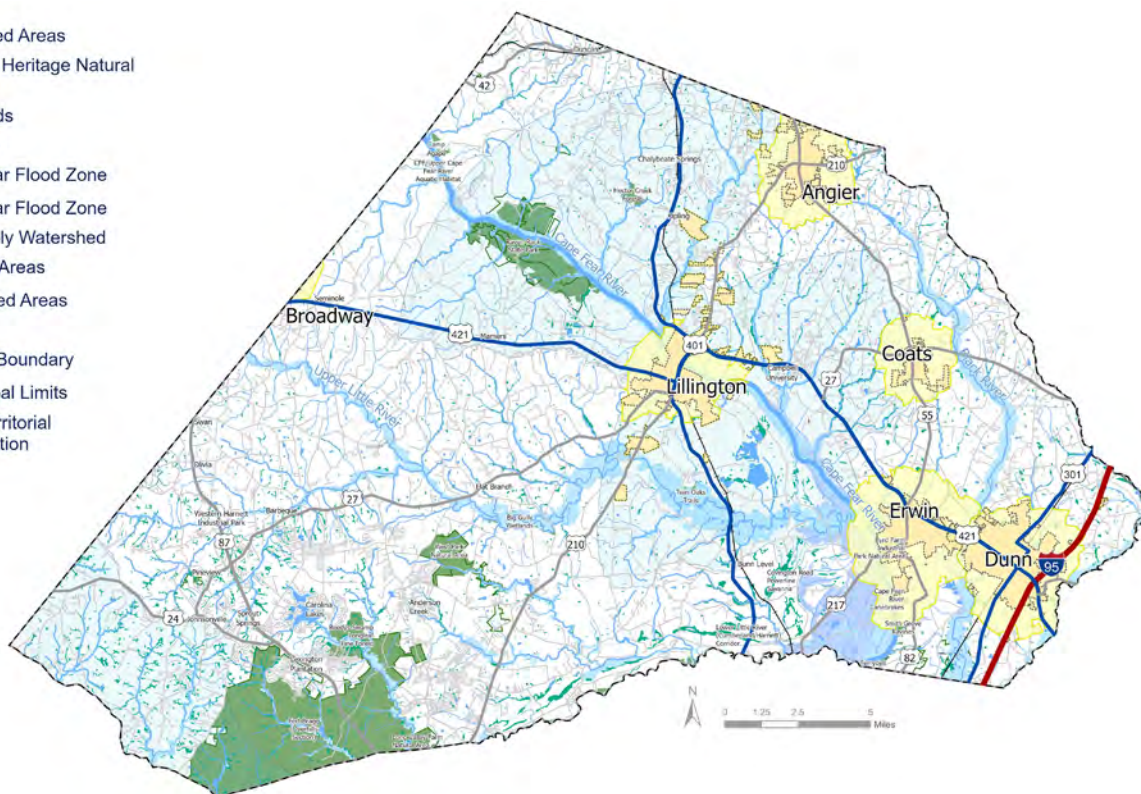
Harnett County is home to areas of moderate-high and very high biodiversity and habitat values. We see these areas concentrated along the Black River, Upper Little River, Cape Fear River, and their tributaries, as well as around Raven Rock State Park, and Fort Bragg. The Cape Fear Shiner and the Rough-Leaved Loosestrife are federally endangered species that call Harnett County home. The Red-Cockaded Woodpecker was recently down-listed from endangered to threatened due to successful habitat conservation and management activities. In addition 22 types of species are listed as Federal Species of Concern. Clean water and connected wildlife corridors and habitats are essential to preserving biodiversity. Through collaborative efforts, the U.S. Army, Fort Bragg, regional, state, and federal agencies have made tremendous efforts to conserve lands and the natural environment to ensure high levels of biodiversity throughout Harnett County and neighboring areas.





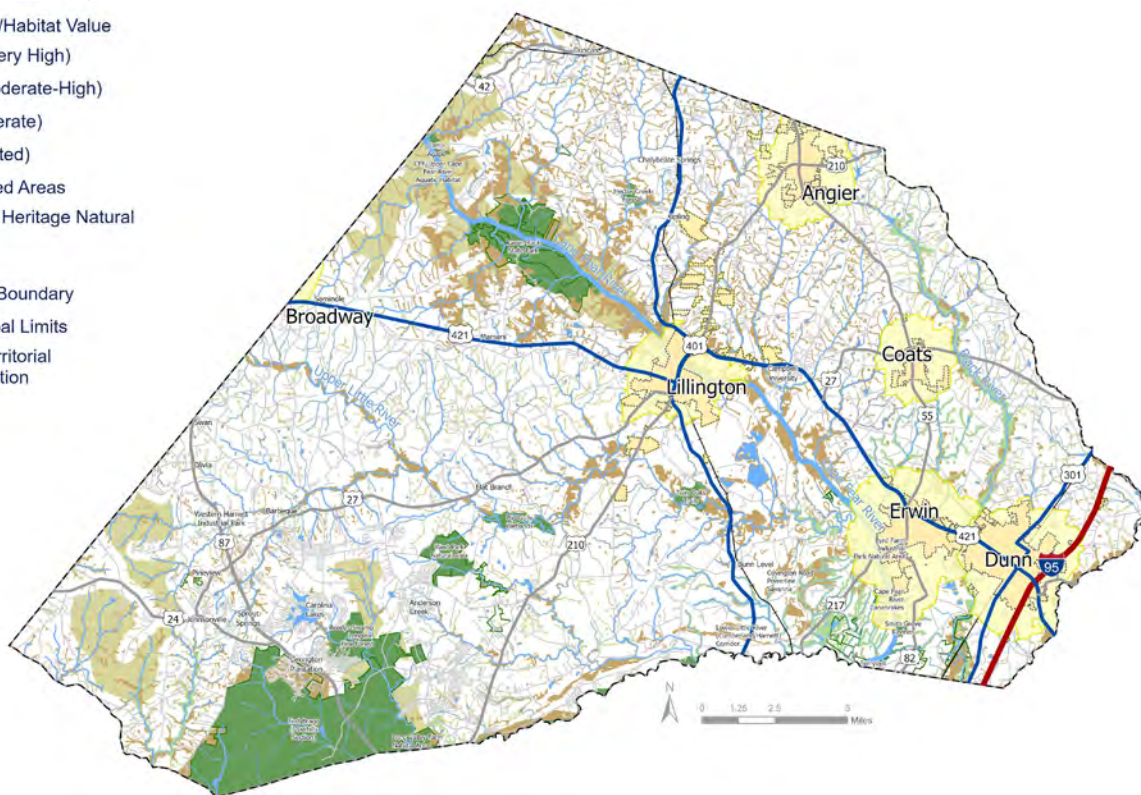
## Natural Resources Map

- Managed Areas
- Natural Heritage Natural Areas
- Wetlands
- Flood Zone
  - 100 Year Flood Zone
  - 500 Year Flood Zone
- Water Supply Watershed
  - Critical Areas
  - Protected Areas
- Context
  - County Boundary
  - Municipal Limits
  - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



## Biodiversity Wildlife Habitat Map

- Biodiversity/Habitat Value
  - 7-10 (Very High)
  - 2-6 (Moderate-High)
  - 1 (Moderate)
  - 0 (Unrated)
- Managed Areas
- Natural Heritage Natural Areas
- Context
  - County Boundary
  - Municipal Limits
  - Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Farm and forest land is an integral part of Harnett County's identity. Many residents and rare species rely on water quality within the Cape Fear River watershed and other parts of the County. As development expands beyond the boundaries of the municipalities, Harnett County must put measures in place to protect its rural character and natural resources that residents value so that agriculture, parks and ecotourism can better coexist with the growing population. This includes requiring more protection of trees in subdivisions, planting more trees within developments, and protecting the land surrounding the County's waters.

Recommendations for supporting agriculture and conserving natural resources are included in this plan element.

## Goals and Strategies

### Goal 1: Encourage compatible land uses in areas with important natural resources.

**Strategy 1A:** Promote and maintain rural character and the agricultural economy.

**A.1:** Limit sewer extensions into prime agricultural areas.



**A.2:** Encourage residential development in areas served by utilities and consider impacts of new development on ground and surface water resources during the development approval process.

**A.3:** Continue the protection of rural views by requiring frontage buffers in new subdivisions.

- ◆ Where buffers are required, provide credits for the preservation of existing vegetation.
- ◆ Buffers should be in fee simple lots, maintained by the HOA.

**Strategy 1B:** Promote voluntary protection of agricultural lands.

**B.1:** Promote conservation easements on existing farmland.





## Strategy 1C: Minimize negative impacts of new development on farms.

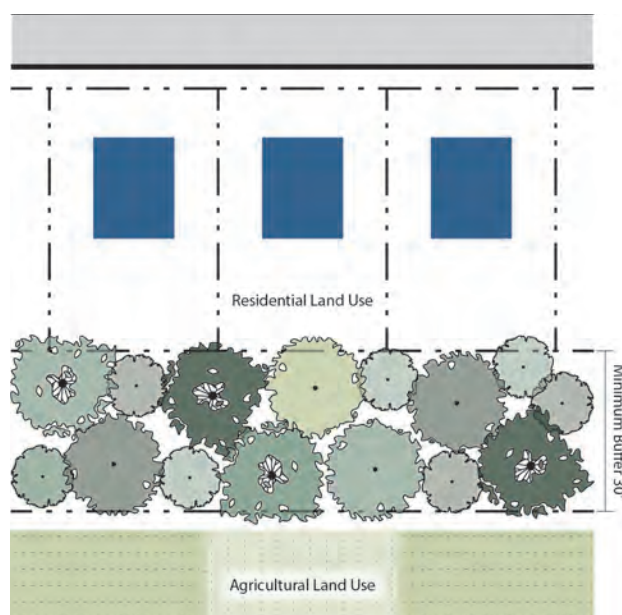
- C.1:** Promote only low density development in agricultural areas.
  - C.2:** Ensure adequate setbacks and stormwater controls for new residential development.
  - C.3:** Consider a requirement of agricultural buffers for major subdivisions in certain zoning districts.
- ◆ Update the Unified Development Code to require the preservation or planting of buffers for major subdivisions that will be located adjacent to working farmland.



Harnett County currently has 109,000 acres in farms according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture which is a slight increase compared to 2017.

## Agricultural Buffers

To reduce impacts to working farmland new subdivisions in certain zoning districts with lots under 25,000 square feet could be required to preserve or install a landscape buffer. This would allow existing farmland operations to continue without potential conflicts from new development.



# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strategy 1D: Promote Agricultural Friendly Design in Rural / Agricultural areas and Agricultural Protection Areas on the Future Land Use Map.

- ◆ See Strategies 1D and 2B in the Land Use Element for more detailed recommendations.

## Strategy 1E: Maintain and promote agricultural support programs.

**E.1:** Promote existing agricultural support programs including the Present Use Value program and the Voluntary Agricultural Districts program.

**E.2:** Support activities of the Harnett County Soil and Water Conservation District and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

- ◆ Consider additional staffing for programs or positions critical to implementing county agricultural goals.

**E.3:** Consider the creation of an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program.

## Strategy 1F: Establish a Farmland Preservation Program and Fund

- ◆ This voluntary purchase of development rights program could utilize local funds to match state and federal funds to protect land in key agricultural areas.



A Farmhouse Cluster Subdivision illustrated above is designed to fit into the surrounding agricultural landscape.

**F.1:** Utilize Present Use Value (PUV) "roll-backs" and/or other sources to fund local farmland preservation program.

- ◆ The PUV program provides a tax break to working farm and forestry acreage. Loss of PUV status results in a payment of three years of unpaid deferred taxes plus interest. Some counties are utilizing these payments to fund farmland preservation.

## Strategy 1G: Ensure agriculture has long-term access to water supplies.

**G.1:** Consider the support of studies that improve understanding of groundwater usage and availability in agricultural areas.





**G.2:** Establish policies that reduce potential conflicts over groundwater.

**G.3:** Establish policies for extending utilities into strategic agricultural areas.

◆ Consider allowances for:

- ◆ Serving villages and mixed-use centers designated on the Future Land Use Map
- ◆ Providing water for agricultural operations and possibly certain types of storage, transfer or processing facilities
- ◆ Service to agricultural-friendly developments with a lower overall density than by-right subdivisions allowed on wells

## **Strategy 1H: Coordinate with Fort Bragg to protect lands critical to military operations.**

**H.1:** Continue to coordinate with and follow the recommendations of the Federal Government and the Regional Land Use Advisory Commission (RLUAC) to ensure development near Fort Bragg is compatible with existing and planned military operations.

**H.2:** Maintain and enforce the provisions of the Military Corridor Overlay District (MCO) in the zoning ordinance.

- ◆ Consider updates to the MCO that provides additional notification,



Training flights paths to and buffers beside Fort Bragg in Southwestern Harnett County should be considered during development review to protect the long-term viability of military operations.

review or approval for structures exceeding 90 feet in height.

- ◆ Factor in imaginary surfaces and/or noise contours related to Pope Field into reviews or regulations.

**H.3:** Encourage land protection in priority areas including undeveloped areas that coincide with priority military buffer areas due to aviation routes, training exercises, farmland and high quality habitat.

# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - RECOMMENDATIONS

**Strategy 1I:** Require the reservation of high-quality, connected open space in new development.

**I.1:** Seek to identify opportunities to conserve open space networks, existing mature tree canopies, steep slopes, floodplains (100 and 500 year), priority wildlife habitats, and significant natural features as part of public and private development plans.

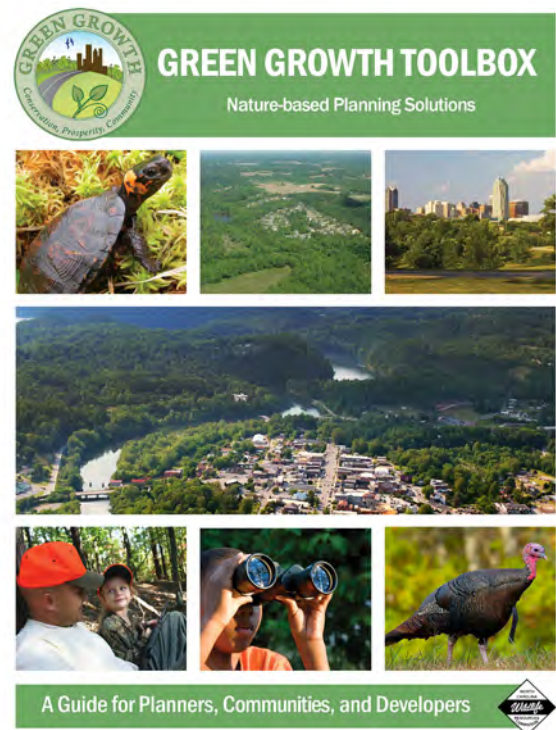
**I.2:** Encourage conservation subdivisions in areas with sensitive environmental resources through updates to the Compatibility Development Option.

**I.3:** Require a site conditions map showing existing natural resources as part of the review process for all or certain types of residential subdivision applications to identify areas that should be protected as open space.

- ◆ Site analysis maps for compatibility developments and/or conditional rezonings should show habitat that could be contributing to rare species including streams, floodplains, wetlands, rock outcrops, seeps, forested riparian areas and/or longleaf pine stands.

## The Green Growth Toolbox

The Green Growth Toolbox (GGT) Handbook is a guide that helps communities grow in a way that conserves natural resources. It is produced by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) and includes information on development design, wildlife threats, habitat priorities, and available data. The GGT Handbook offers a science-based approach to planning and development design. The Handbook provides recommendations for stream buffers, water quality, and habitat needs. Training and seminars are also offered to local government staff, elected officials, members of the public and the development community. More information is available at [ncwildlife.org](http://ncwildlife.org).





- I.4:** Specify how active and passive recreation options can be utilized to fulfill open space requirements.
- I.5:** Encourage new development to reserve land for planned greenways.
- I.6:** Create and maintain an inventory of public and privately preserved open space in the County.
  - ◆ See Strategy 2A.5 in the Land Use Element for recommendations for priority open space types and code updates.
- I.7:** Encourage the utilization of NC Natural Heritage Program GIS data during the development review process.
  - ◆ The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program has developed and maintains the state's most comprehensive database of natural resource information by combining on-the-ground surveys with advanced GPS and GIS technology. See [www.ncnhp.org/data](http://www.ncnhp.org/data) for more information.

Avents Creek drains a large area in Northwestern Harnett County south of Duncan. This creek along with Hector Creek, Parkers Creek, Mill Creek and Coopers Branch are designated as High Quality Waters by the State of North Carolina. Protecting forests and limiting impervious surfaces will help safeguard these streams from degradation common to more developed areas.

**Strategy 1J:** Conduct a green print study (county-wide or for specific areas) to identify key open space preservation areas.

**Strategy 1K:** Raise awareness of the county's unique natural assets.

- K.1:** Develop programs, maps or other information related to local natural resources to educate youth and the general public.
- K.2:** Facilitate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFS) on proposed development in areas with federally listed endangered species.
  - ◆ Listed species with draft consultation areas include the Atlantic Pigtoe Mussel, Cape Fear Shiner and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker.



# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strategy 1L: Establish tree preservation standards or incentives for new development.

- L.1:** Establish a tree preservation requirement for Compatibility Developments.
- L.2:** In areas where buffers are required, allow the preservation of existing vegetation to fulfill requirements.
- L.3:** Take steps to recognize and/or protect heritage trees.
  - ◆ Establish a heritage tree recognition program to designate significant trees of native species in the county.

- ◆ Consider a requirement that all or a portion of trees greater than 24 inches be identified and protected during development in accordance with International Society of Arboriculture requirements for tree protection.
- ◆ Provide a mitigation option for defined exceptions that could include replanting or fee contributions that could fund replanting elsewhere.

## Goal 2: Maintain and improve water quality.

### Strategy 2A: Encourage the protection of water features in new development.

- ◆ Rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, floodplains and wetlands provide a

## Unique Habitats and Rare Species

Harnett County is located on the edge of the Piedmont and Sandhill regions which creates a unique combination of habitats that support a variety of rare species. The rivers and floodplain forests serve as habitat corridors and offer recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, nature photography, bird watching, boating, hunting, and fishing to name a few. The Sandhills supports one of the best remaining examples of the rare and diverse longleaf pine ecosystems which supports the only population of red-cockaded woodpeckers that has met its recovery goal. Other rare, threatened or endangered species in the county include the Atlantic Pigtoe Mussel, Cape Fear Shiner, Northern Pine Snake, Pine Barrens Tree Frog, Northern long-eared bat and the Tricolored Bat.

There are  
**68 Species**  
in Harnett County  
that are considered  
rare, or recognized  
by the state or  
federal government  
as threatened or  
endangered.





valuable stormwater management and ecological, visual, and recreational benefits.

- A.1:** Discourage development in floodplains (100 and 500 year).
- A.2:** Update the extent of the Conservation Zoning District to factor in the best available data.

### **Strategy 2B: Encourage stream buffers that meet and exceed state minimums in new development.**

- B.1:** Review development applications to ensure minimum stream buffers are met.
- B.2:** Continue to require single family dwelling setbacks from rivers and creeks.
  - ◆ Minimum Yard for Cape Fear River: 250 ft.
  - ◆ Minimum Yard for Black River: 150 ft.
  - ◆ Minimum Yard for other creeks: 100 ft.
- B.3:** Encourage stream buffer commitments that exceed state minimums during conditional zonings.
  - ◆ 100ft buffers are recommended along perennial streams without federally listed aquatic species.
  - ◆ 200ft buffers are recommended along perennial streams with federally listed species.



The Cape Fear Shiner is an imperiled minnow species that is endemic (found nowhere else in the world) to the Cape Fear River Basin in Harnett County. These fish prefer clean substrates composed of gravel, cobble and boulders. Increased sediment loads from erosion can have a detrimental impact on existing populations.  
Image Source: Brena Jones, NC Wildlife

- ◆ See the Green Growth Toolbox for recommendations for buffers on intermittent streams.

- B.4:** Incentivize buffers via the Compatibility Development Option in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

### **Strategy 2C: Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in watersheds with High Quality Waters and impaired streams.**

- ◆ LID Techniques include reduced development footprints, disconnected impervious surfaces, and innovative stormwater infrastructure including bio-swales, rain gardens and green roofs.

# AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES - RECOMMENDATIONS

**C.1:** Work with the state to determine innovative approaches (e.g. materials or design alternatives) for development in areas with impervious surface maximums.

**Strategy 2D:** Protect major water supply watershed districts through open space preservation, community programs that promote tree coverage, floodplain preservation, and limits to impervious surface cover.

**D.1:** Preserve habitat and encourage development design that reduces sediment loads on tributaries that drain to the Cape Fear River.

**D.2:** Encourage enhanced stormwater controls and stream buffer setbacks in water supply watersheds, areas that drain to High Quality Waters and/or watersheds approaching or exceeding 10% impervious surface.





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# PARKS AND GREENWAYS - BACKGROUND

## Parks and Greenways

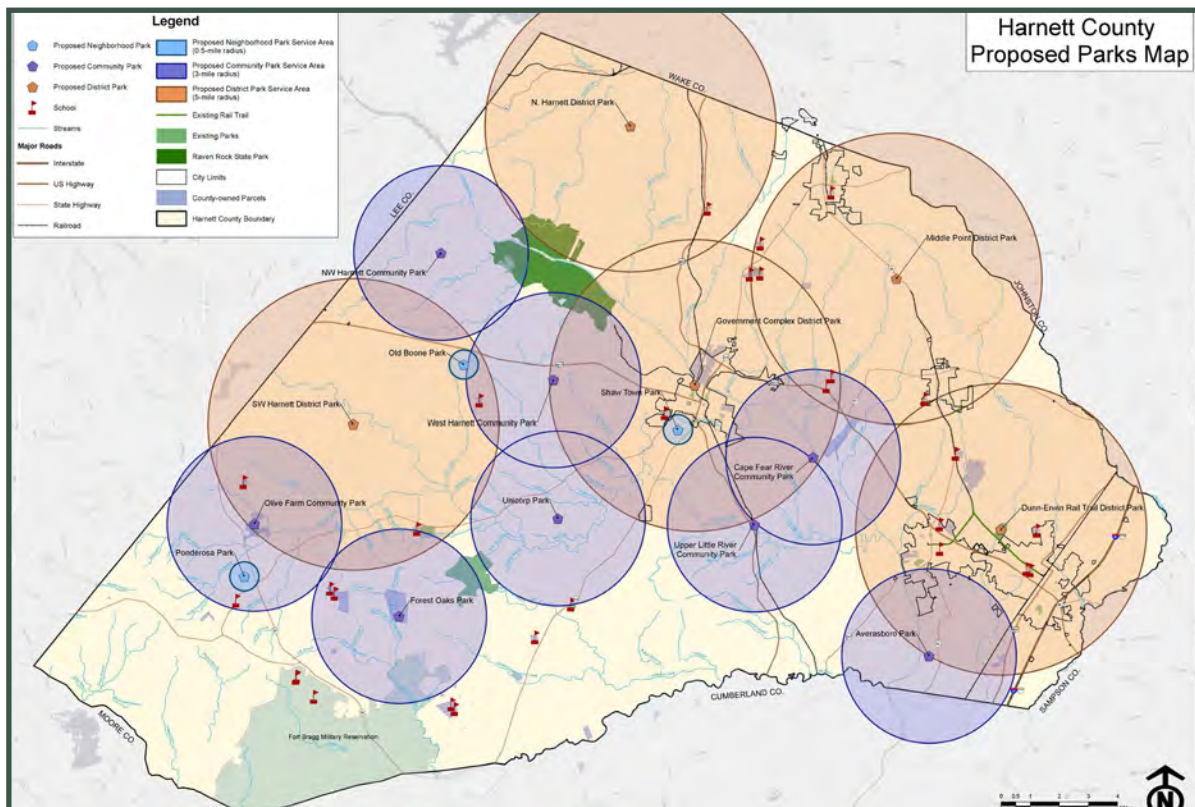
Harnett County Parks & Recreation maintains a number of parks and greenways for active and passive recreation opportunities. In total the County maintains 9 parks, 3 community centers and the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail. Raven Rock State Park provides a variety of outdoor recreation activities including 26 miles of hiking trails, biking, horseback riding, camping, fishing and paddling opportunities.

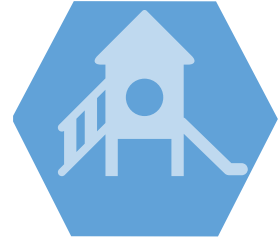
Reserving land for additional active recreation (*sports fields, playgrounds, gyms*) and passive recreation and amenities (*nature parks, trails, and greenways*) will be important to preserving the quality of life in Harnett County. The 2017 Parks & Recreation Master

### Existing Parks and Greenways

- ◆ Anderson Creek County Park
- ◆ Anderson Creek Senior Center
- ◆ Barbecue Creek Park
- ◆ Benhaven Community Park & Gym
- ◆ Boone Trail Community Center & Library
- ◆ Cape Fear River Trail Park
- ◆ Cape Fear Shiner Park
- ◆ Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
- ◆ Neills Creek County Park
- ◆ Patriots Park
- ◆ Shawtown Community Park
- ◆ South Harnett Park
- ◆ Raven Rock State Park

## Planned Park Locations Map





Plan calls for the acquisition of 1,200 acres parkland by 2030.

## PLANNED FACILITIES

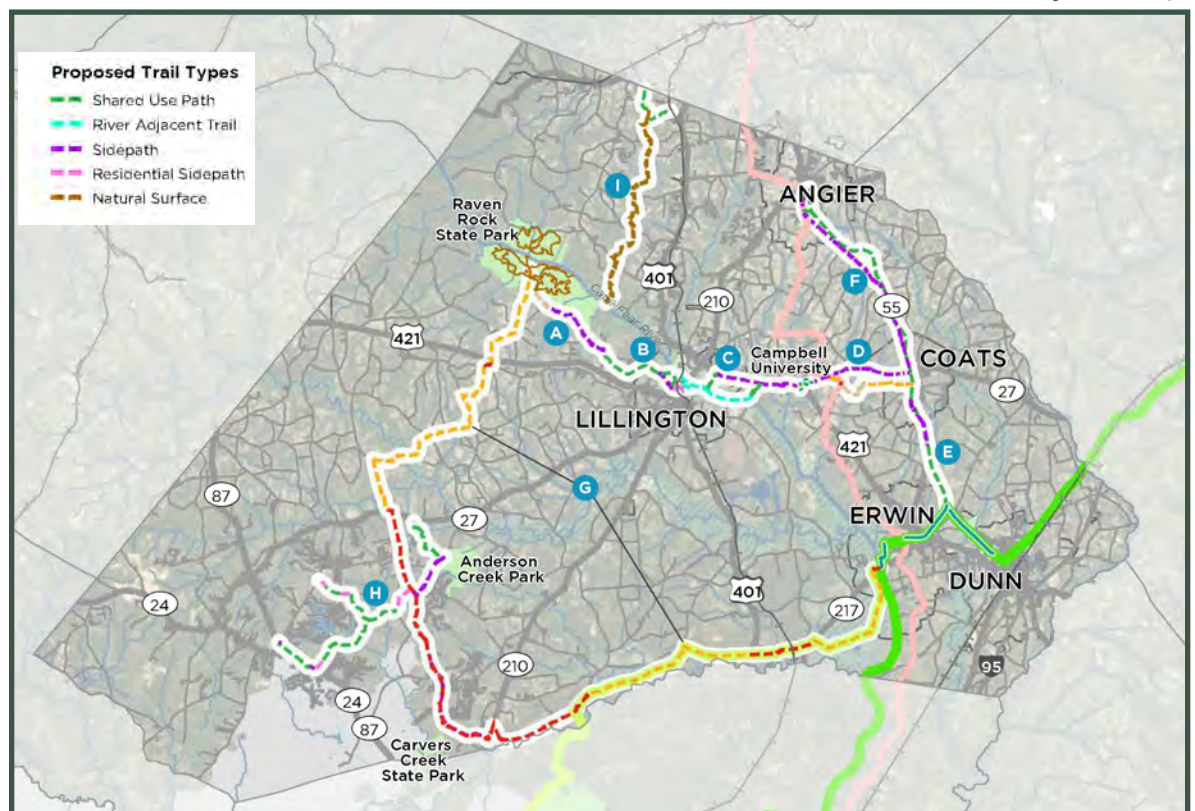
The most recent Harnett County Parks & Recreation Master Plan, completed in 2017, recommended the acquisition of parkland in key areas of the county, an indoor recreation facility and a build out of system of greenways and blueways to increase recreational access.

A Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Plan was completed in 2021 that refined long-term plans for trails and greenways in Harnett County. The plan identified priority projects which included the following connections:

- Raven Rock State Park to the Town of Lillington
- Lillington River Park to Campbell University and eventually Coats
- Coats to the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail
- Coats to Angier Rail Trail
- Southwest Harnett County Bicycle Loop
- Barbecue to Spout Springs
- Hector Creek Trail



Planned Greenways Map



# PARKS AND GREENWAYS - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Parks and recreational opportunities enhance quality of life and support economic development. Recommendations for improving access to parks, greenways, trails and other recreational opportunities are included in this plan element.

**Goal 1: Provide active and passive recreation opportunities to preserve and enhance the quality of life.**

**Strategy 1A:** Continue to build a park and greenway system that is interconnected; protects native landscapes, water quality, and areas of ecological significance, such as priority wildlife habitats, and serve wide range recreational needs of the County residents

**Strategy 1B:** Implement and regularly update the Parks and Recreation Plan.

**B.1:** Support continued maintenance and improvements at existing parks.

**B.2:** Work with public and private partners to acquire land for new parks and nature preserves in land acquisition target areas and growing areas of the county.



**B.3:** Undertake site specific master plans for planned parks.

**B.4:** Work with public and private partners to plan for and construct additional indoor recreation facilities.

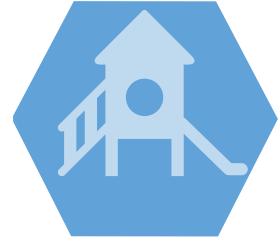
**B.5:** Enhance parks and recreational program offerings based on ongoing citizen input.

**B.6:** Establish a volunteer program within the parks and recreation system.

**Strategy 1C: Improve recreation opportunities in under-served areas.**

**C.1:** Pursue the co-location of parks and school sites in growing areas.





**C.2:** Establish joint-use agreements between schools and the Harnett County Parks and Recreation Department for sites in underserved areas.

**C.3:** Continue to coordinate with municipalities to provide unique and desired recreational opportunities.

**Strategy 1D:** Evaluate and update base requirements for development related to open space, recreation facilities and/or fees.

**Strategy 1E:** Seek increased investment in parks and recreation facilities.

## **Goal 2: Position Harnett County as a destination for outdoor recreation.**

**Strategy 2A:** Pursue the completion of the Harnett County Greenway System.

**A.1:** Regularly evaluate and update greenway and trail priorities.

**A.2:** Participate in feasibility studies to refine alignments, determine right-of-way acquisition needs, plan support facilities and develop strategies for funding and partnerships.



Cape Fear River Trail Park

**A.3:** Seek local, state and federal funding to design, construct and maintain priority greenways.

**A.4:** Consider updates to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to require the reservation of greenway easements or construction of planned greenways in new development.

**A.5:** Encourage or require pedestrian and bicycle connections to existing and planned greenways, parks and other destinations in new developments.

**A.6:** Coordinate with the Triangle Trails Initiative to connect trails in Harnett County to existing and planned trails in Wake County.

# PARKS AND GREENWAYS - RECOMMENDATIONS

**A.7:** Conduct future studies of village locations to determine recommendations for open space and greenway networks.

**Strategy 2B:** Develop and promote the Cape Fear River as a blueway.

**B.1:** Plan for and develop river access points every 4-6 miles along the Cape Fear River.

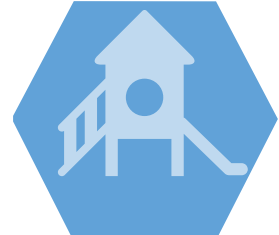
**Strategy 2C:** Improve awareness of parks and greenways in Harnett County.

**C.1:** Update marketing material (online and print) and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and other outdoor recreation destinations.



Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail





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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - BACKGROUND

## Economy

Harnett County is a vibrant, rapidly expanding county located in central North Carolina, strategically positioned between Raleigh and the Research Triangle to the north and Fayetteville and Fort Bragg to the south. The county seat, Lillington, is 30-miles from downtown Raleigh and Fort Bragg. Located along the I-95 Corridor and minutes to I-40, the county offers access to extensive transportation networks, including major highways (*U.S. 421, U.S. 401, and NC 87*), rail lines, and proximity to Raleigh-Durham International Airport (*41 miles*) and the Port of Wilmington (*120 miles*). Moreover, Harnett Regional Jetport serves corporate users and private flights.

Home to over 141,000 residents, Harnett County neighbors three of North Carolina’s largest counties, creating access to a skilled regional workforce of over one million people. The county boasts the most competitive property tax rate in the Triangle Region, a favorable cost of living (*nearly 10% below the national average and 4.4% lower than the state average*), and continued investments in infrastructure, including Harnett Regional Water, a large regional water and wastewater utility that draws from the Cape Fear River.

### KEY INDUSTRIES

According to 2023 data from Lightcast, Harnett County is home to 32,600 jobs and \$3.6 billion gross regional product (*GRP*). Major employers such as ADUSA Distribution, Walmart, Carlie C’s, Rooms To Go, Champion Home Builders, Boon Edam, and Godwin Manufacturing have contributed to the area’s economic growth. Harnett County provides a supportive,

	2020 Top 10 Taxpayers	2020 Top 10 Employers
1	Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC	Harnett County Public Schools
2	Duke Energy Progress	Delhaize America (Food Lion)
3	Rooms to Go	Campbell University
4	South River EMC	Harnett County
5	Delhazie American (Food Lion)	Harnett Health System
6	Central EMC	WalMart Centers
7	ADUSA Transportation LLC	Carlie C’s Operations (IGA)
8	WalMart Real Estate	NC Dept. of Corrections
9	Wincor	Rooms to Go
10	Piedmont Natural Gas Co.	Champion Home Builders

## Industry Sector Growth (2010-2024)

- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services: 69%
- Retail: 64%
- Distribution & Logistics: 58%
- Manufacturing: 38%
- Healthcare: 2%

Source: Lightcast Q3 2024 Dataset





business-friendly environment where key industries - including manufacturing, distribution and logistics, retail and services, and healthcare - can thrive.

## COMMUTE TRENDS

While Harnett County has a large number of jobs, only a small portion of residents live and work in the County. There are 19,300 employees that commute from other counties in to Harnett County for work, and 39,000 employees that live in the county but commute outside of the County for work.

## RETAIL LEAKAGE

Harnett County recently partnered with Retail Strategies, a firm that provides a market analysis, to identify existing gaps in retail and proactively recruit retail partners to the area. Findings from a recent support for a trade area that includes Harnett County include:

- There is more consumer demand than market supply for all retail categories. This amounts to an “opportunity gap” of \$1,976,308,076 in total consumer demand

## Commute Trends



Commute statistics indicate that there is a net outflow of workers on a daily basis.  
Source: Lightcast (2024, Q2)

- Significant shortages exist for auto and parts dealers, building material and garden equipment, food and beverage, and clothing

**Total Market Supply**  
**\$2,412,298,998**



**Total Market Demand**  
**\$4,388,607,073**

**Opportunity Gap**  
**\$1,976,308,076**



## Top Retail Opportunities



Source: Retail Strategies

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Harnett County has a substantial out-bound commuter population, with roughly 39,000 residents traveling outside the County for employment, according to Lightcast (2024, Q2). By attracting more businesses and industries to Harnett County, we can create quality, local job opportunities that reduce commute times, increase local spending, and enhance the vibrancy of our communities as our daytime population grows.

To support this vision, Harnett County is proactively identifying and preparing prime properties for commercial and industrial development, advancing business attraction and recruitment efforts, and furthering our existing business and industry. This strategy will strengthen the County by diversifying the tax base and increasing above average job opportunities for residents. This will not occur overnight, but with planned and continuous activities, more new companies will call Harnett County home and more existing companies will expand locally.



## Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1: Grow Harnett County's inventory of market-ready buildings and sites.**

**Strategy 1A:** Continue to maintain an inventory of available buildings and land on the Harnett County Economic Development website.

**Strategy 1B:** Transition available and candidate sites to market-ready sites through the completion of environmental due diligence activities.

**Strategy 1C:** Pursue grants and annual budget allocations for site readiness, infrastructure improvements and site development activities.





**Strategy 1D:** Seek grants and other funding to construct shell or speculative buildings, and/or partner with developers to accomplish the same.

## **Goal 2: Continue and expand business attraction and recruitment efforts.**

**Strategy 2A:** Create storytelling narratives and leverage multiple communication platforms to support business attraction and expansion activities, and to further our rapport with community, partners and stakeholders.

**A.1:** Engage in outreach activities in conjunction with regional and state economic development partners, and apart from partners.

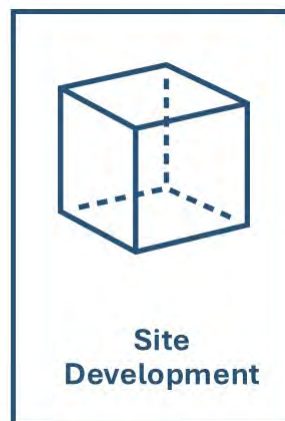
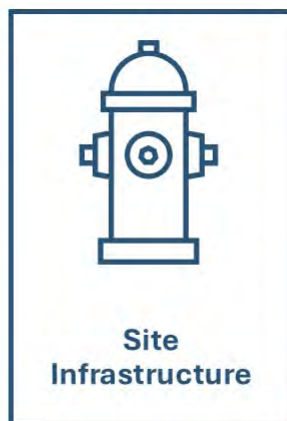
**A.2:** Coordinate with the Triangle Partnership, the North Carolina Economic Development Partnership (NCEDP) and municipal Chambers of Commerce to attract and retain businesses.

**A.3:** Continue efforts to market the County based on competitive advantages including strategic location (proximity to I-95, Wake County and Fort Bragg, Campbell University and Central Carolina Community College (CCCC)), low costs and water and sewer infrastructure.

**Strategy 2B:** Leverage data to inform our economic development team of targeted supply-chain company leads.

**Strategy 2C:** Establish a compelling brand identity through effective

## Economic Development Site Readiness Process



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - RECOMMENDATIONS

communication and engagement to increase Harnett County's visibility and new and expanding company interest.

**C.1:** Build an internal library of print, electronic, and video materials to be used for marketing materials.

**Strategy 2D:** Host an annual event to highlight Harnett County and our available buildings and sites.

**Strategy 2E:** Create attractive and functional development sites for new and growing businesses.

**E.1:** Conduct focused recruitment of retail and restaurants to meet local market demand for new businesses.

**E.2:** Promote new employment, mixed-use development and housing in key area to enhance economic development through zoning and land use regulations, public investments and incentives.

**E.3:** Study potential improvements and tenants for the area surrounding the Harnett Regional Jetport.

**E.4:** Support the continued growth of towns as residential and commercial centers in the County.

## Competitive Advantages of Harnett County

- Strategic Location
- Taxes
- Pro-Business Environment
- Skilled Workforce
- Low Cost of Living
- Infrastructure and Utilities

Source: [Harnettcdc.org](http://Harnettcdc.org)

**E.5:** Protect important industrial land from incompatible uses including large-scale residential development.

**Strategy 2F:** Support neighborhood improvements and reinvestment.

**F.1:** Provide resources through existing and new programs to revitalize targeted under-performing residential and nonresidential areas.

**F.2:** Continue programs to address code enforcement issues such as lack of maintenance and/or abandoned buildings.





Furniture retailer Rooms to Go recently announced plans to expand its 1,450,000 square foot distribution center along I-95.

**F.3:** Consider the establishment of a small neighborhood grant program to fund community improvement projects and reverse conditions of disinvestment and decline.

### **Goal 3: Support, grow, and strengthen existing businesses and industries across Harnett County.**

**Strategy 3A:** Maintain an industry visitation program.

**A.1:** Meet regularly with local business leaders to determine priorities and barriers.

**Strategy 3B:** Support entrepreneurship and business development.

- B.1:** Maintain an inventory of available business resource partners and applicable resources for start-ups, small business, and industry.
- B.2:** Connect, coordinate, and or convene businesses and resource partners as applicable to needs.
- B.3:** Provide training, technical assistance, incentives to foster business growth.
- B.4:** Assist Harnett County's largest employment sectors, including the education, health care, social services, and public administration sectors, to resolve land use conflicts so that they can continue to grow, expand job opportunities, and provide a stable economic base.
- B.5:** Support the diversification of industries including technology and bioscience, energy, and blue collar and green collar jobs.
- B.6:** Work with Harnett County's many higher education institutions to encourage entrepreneurial education and commercialization of research innovations to fuel growth of start-up business.
- B.7:** Support the provision of incubator facilities in targeted areas, as appropriate.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - RECOMMENDATIONS

**B.8:** Support low-impact home based businesses and support “cottage industries” in mixed-use districts, residential areas, and agricultural areas, while reducing negative impacts on adjacent residential areas.

## Goal 4: Coordinate with partners on workforce development.

**Strategy 4A:** Work closely with education and workforce training partners to support immediate and future hiring and training needs of local companies.

**A.1:** Work with the Harnett County Public School System, training providers, and the private sector to ensure that Harnett County’s workforce has the basic skills, literacy, and job-specific training necessary to gain employment.

**A.2:** Encourage coordination between area employers, Campbell University, Central Carolina Community College and Harnett County schools to prepare graduates for high demand careers.

**A.3:** Encourage partnerships with existing organizations that provide training in “soft skills” vocational



Campbell University and Central Carolina Community College provide local opportunities for continued partnerships for workforce development.

skills, child care, and other services that enable people entering the workforce and earn a living wage.

**A.4:** Ensure that training and services are accessible to and located near those with the greatest need.

**Strategy 4B:** Study ways to increase access to job opportunities by providing improved transit to Harnett County’s regional employment clusters.





## **Goal 5: Support agriculture and tourism and related cultural recreational and natural resources.**

**Strategy 5A:** Develop strategies to retain and expand agriculture and agribusiness.

- A.1:** Consider updating the Harnett County Working Lands Protection Plan (2010).
- A.2:** Continue and expand education and marketing efforts.
- A.3:** Consider incentives or specialized programs to recruit or retain agribusiness.
- A.4:** Support expanded agritourism in Harnett County.

**Strategy 5B:** Support a farmers market program including a new venue and special events.

- B.1:** Consider the incorporation of an indoor facility in future phases of a farmer's market that can

be utilized for an exposition or convention center.

**Strategy 5C:** Support Visit

Harnett and coordinate with area chambers of commerce to promote visitation to downtowns, historical sites, parks, and agritourism venues.

**Strategy 5D:** Promote outdoor recreation by providing information on experiences and destinations in the county.

- D.1:** Invest in and leverage parks, leisure, and cultural amenities as integral economic development assets and part of the County's economic development infrastructure.
- D.2:** Study the potential for a Regional Sports Complex.

Visit Harnett along with local government partners provides information on things to do and places to stay in the county. See [visitharnett.com](http://visitharnett.com) for more information.



# TRANSPORTATION - BACKGROUND

## Overview

Transportation in Harnett County falls under the purview of two metropolitan planning organizations (*MPO*) and one regional planning organization (*RPO*) - the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (*CAMPO*) and the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (*FAMPO*), and the Mid-Carolina Rural Planning Organization. Together these organizations work to coordinate with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (*NCDOT*) on municipal and county needs and funding for transportation improvements.

## TRAFFIC VOLUMES

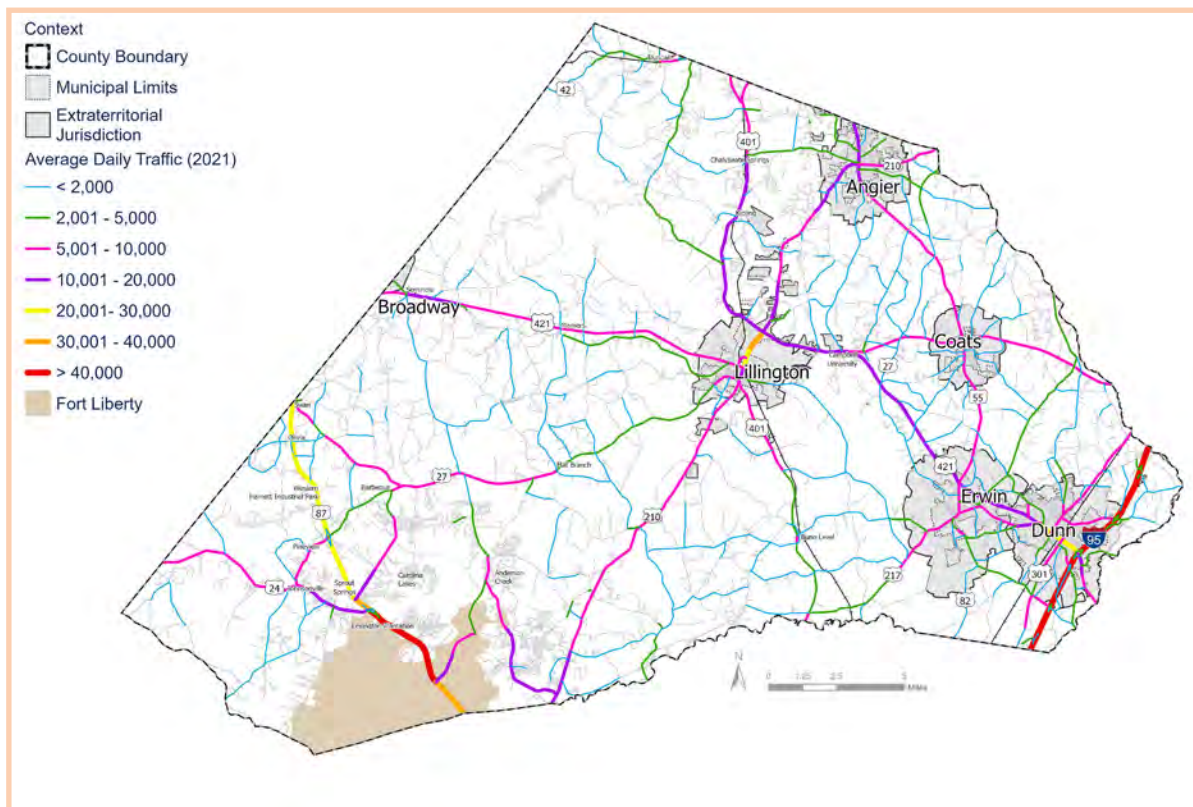
Annual average daily traffic (*AADT*) volume represents the traffic average for a specific

year. The highest traffic volumes in the County are on I-95 east of Benson where 69,000 cars travel on a daily basis (*NCDOT, 2023*). Other high traffic roadways include NC 87 (42,500 cars/day), US 401 north of Lillington (27,000 cars/day) and NC 55 north of Angier (19,500 cars/day). Traffic forecasting models show future volumes increasing on major roadways throughout the County between now and 2045. See AADT and modeled traffic volume maps in the Appendix for more information.

## STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (STIP)

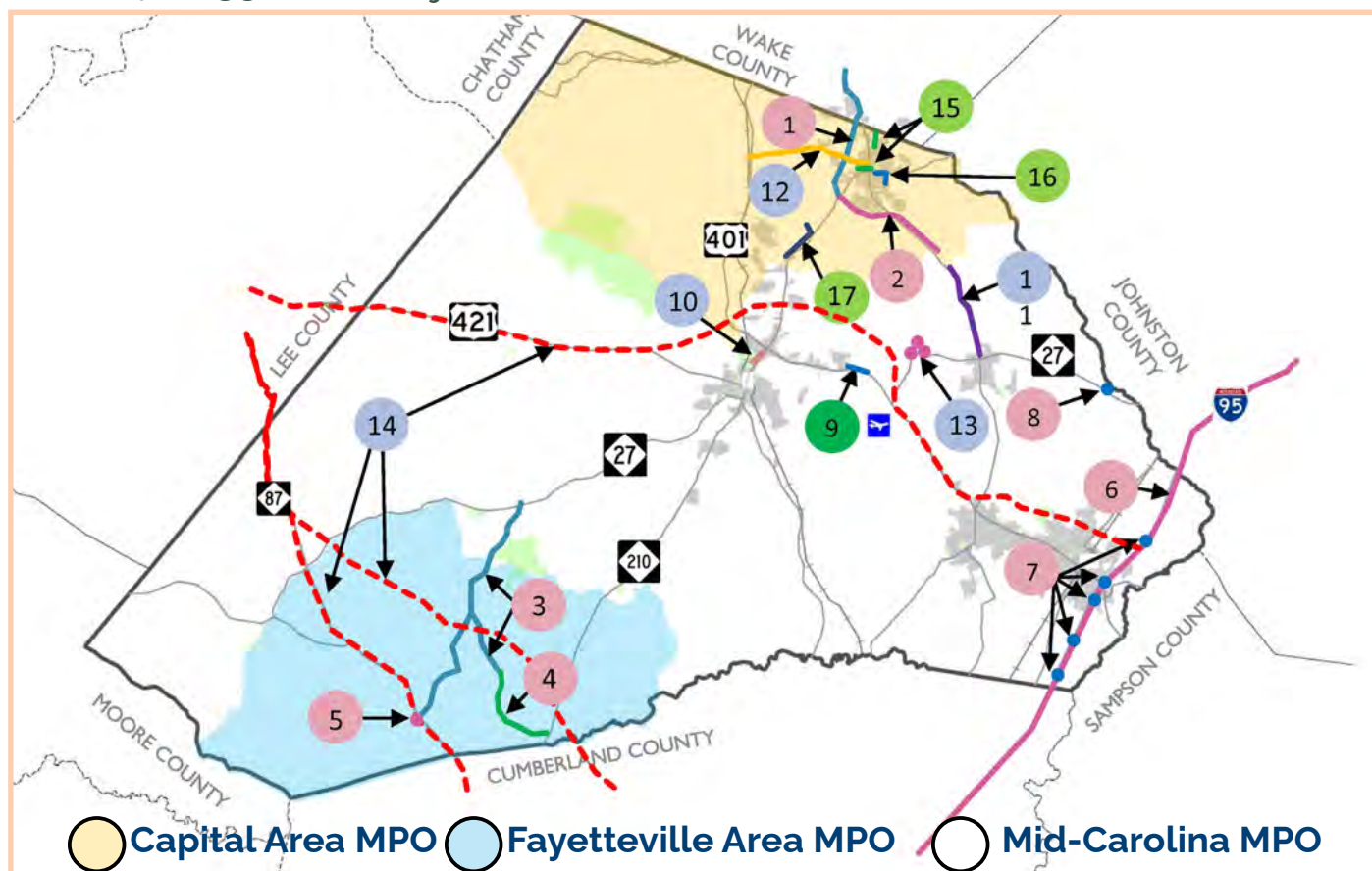
The State Transportation Improvement Program (*STIP*) 2024-2033 identifies transportation projects that will receive funding between 2024 and 2033. The *STIP*

## Average Daily Traffic Map





## 2024-2033 STIP Projects



### Highway Projects Under Construction

- 1 NC 55 (NC 210 to SR 4809 (Jicarilla lane). **Part on new location**. CY: 2023
- 2 NC 55 (Just South of SR 1532 (Oak Grove Church Road) to NC 210. **Part on New Location**.) CY: 2024
- 3 SR 1117, SR 3242, SR 1615. **Widen** Curves and Install Rumble Strips. CY: 2022
- 4 SR 1121 (Ray Road)-NC 210 to SR 1120 (Overhills Road). **Widen** to Multi-Lanes, Part on New Location. CY: ---
- 5 NC 87/24 (SR 1117 (Nursery Road). **Intersection Improvements**. CY: 2023
- 6 I-95 (**Widen** to Eight Lanes) CY: 2019/2020
- 7 I-95 (**Improve Interchanges**) CY: 2020/2022
- 8 NC 27 at SR 1581- **Realignment / Intersection Improvements**. CY: 2022

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects Under Construction

- 9 Campbell University Sidewalk (Wade Stewart Circle to Pearson Road in Buies Creek. **Construct Sidewalk**) CY: 2021

### Highway Projects

- 10 US 401 (North Main Street)--Parker Lane to McKinney Parkway. **Construct Median** CY: Funded for Preliminary Engineering Only
- 1 NC 55 (NC 27 in Coats to SR 1006 (Old Stage Road (North))). **Widen Roadway**. CY: Not Funded
- 12 SR 1441 (Chalybeate Springs Road)- **Curve and Pavement Marking Improvements**. CY: 2025
- 13 NC 27 (**Construct Roundabouts** at two Intersections and **Close** NC 27/SR 1516) CY: 2024
- 14 I-685 **New Alignment** Connecting Sanford and I-95 (Three Alternatives) CY: Not Funded

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

- 15 SR 1501 (Junny Road); North Willow Street; West Lillington Street - **Construct Sidewalk Extensions** CY: 2024
- 16 East McIver Street to South Wilma Street in Angier- **Construct Sidewalk Extensions and Install a Crosswalk**. CY: 2024
- 17 NC 210 -- **Construct a Multi-Use Path** from Harnett Central Road to North Harnett Primary School Road CY: 2024

# TRANSPORTATION - BACKGROUND

covers a 10-year period. In this time frame, there are 16 projects that have been identified for funding in Harnett County. NCDOT updates this plan approximately every two years to accurately reflect the department's current financial situation. The STIP covers funding for projects such as interstates, bridges, bike and pedestrian projects, ferry projects, and aviation projects. Projects that are under construction and future projects can be seen on the STIP Map on the previous page.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANS

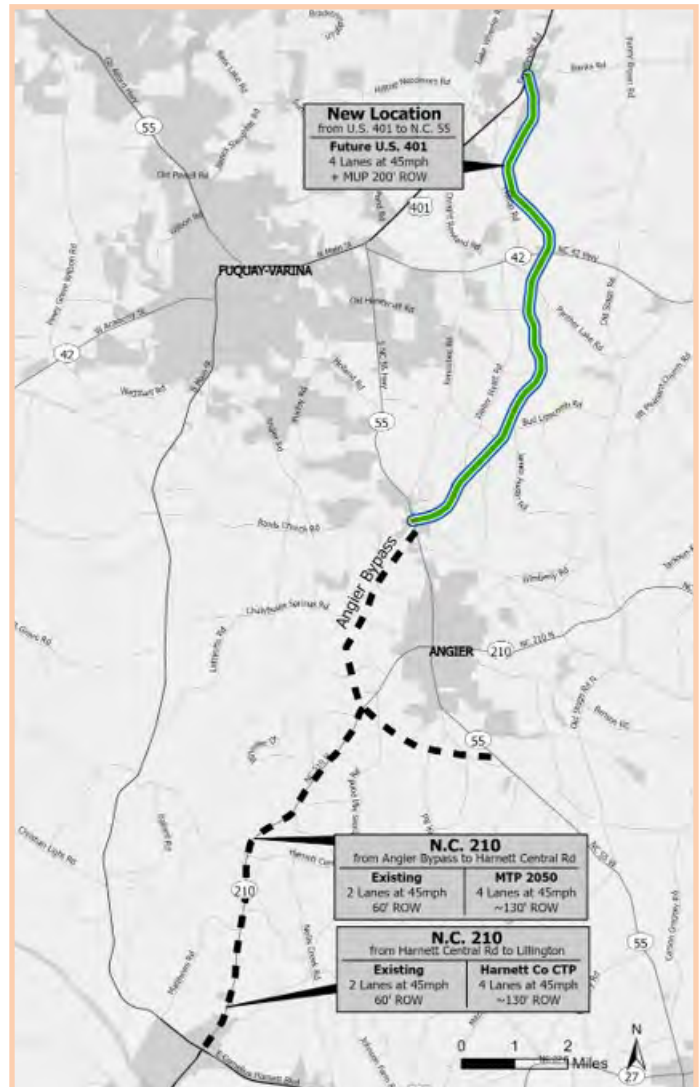
The Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan was originally adopted in 2013, but more recently in 2017 an amendment to the plan was adopted by the County, the municipalities within the county, and the MPO's and RPO's that overlap with the County. The CTP is a cooperative effort between these entities and NCDOT to provide details on the existing roadway infrastructure, as well as information about what could be planned further out past the STIP.

A study was recently completed for the US 401 Corridor between Lillington and Fuquay Varina. Major recommendations included:

- New location roadway in Wake County
- Alignment along Angier Bypass (*under construction*) and NC 210 in Harnett County
- Cross-section will be four-lane median divided with 10' sidepath

Other previous studies, including the Northwest Harnett Area Plan have recommended targeted road and intersection improvements and the construction of collector streets parallel to major roadways in order to disperse traffic and preserve capacity.

## US 401 Corridor Study



The US 401 Corridor Study recommended a new-location road in Wake County that ties into the Angier Bypass and then includes improvements along NC 210.



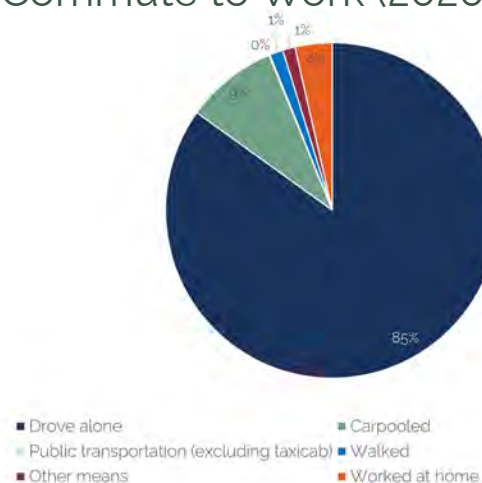


## COMMUTING

The primary mode of transportation for commuters was individual vehicles/driving alone making up 85% of commuters. This is followed by 9% of commuters carpooling, and 4% of residents working from home and not commuting at all. The mean travel time to work is 31.9 minutes, which is also reflective of the large amount of Harnett County residents that work outside of the County.

Households with 3 or more vehicles make up 43.76% of all households, while those with two vehicles make up 37.56%, followed by 16.38% of households with access or only one vehicle, and 2.3% of households without access to any vehicle.

## Commute to Work (2020)



## TRANSIT

The Harnett Area Rural Transit System (*HARTS*) provides transportation for the Harnett community for education, employment, medical and personal trips. Operating hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Services include subscription routes, Dial-A-Ride demand-response service trips. The system also offers daily routes to Senior Citizen Centers and Central Carolina Community College and transportation to nearby counties for medical appointments only on designated days.

A study (*The North Harnett Transit Study*) is currently underway to develop transit service recommendations for the portion of Harnett County that overlaps with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (*CAMPO*) boundary, including Angier, Lillington, Coats, Buies Creek, Raven Rock State Park, and Campbell University.



HARTS is a Community Transportation program that serves the public as well as human service agencies for medical, personal, employment, and education trips.

# TRANSPORTATION - BACKGROUND

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail is the longest greenway in the County. It is a crushed stone trail that runs 5 miles between Downtown Erwin and Dunn. Shorter segments of trails and greenways exist in parks and along major roadways. A number of greenway segments are being built with development. For instance, the Capeton Greenway on the north side of Lillington will be 12,500 ft of new greenway along the Cape Fear River. Sidewalks are required in many new subdivisions, depending on the type of development. Connecting existing greenway segments and sidewalk facilities to planned greenways will provide recreational opportunities and alternative transportation options.

## Improvements and Critical Corridors

Roadway connections within and outside of Harnett County are critical to serving the needs of citizens and connecting them to the places where they live, work, and play. The rate of population growth, however, has strained the capacity of many roads and led to increased traffic congestion and wear on infrastructure. To address these challenges, roadway improvements are essential. Expanding road capacity and enhancing intersections can alleviate congestion and improve traffic flow. Implementing advanced traffic management systems and upgrading existing roadways can also enhance safety and reduce travel times. These improvements are crucial for supporting the county's continued growth, ensuring efficient vehicle movement,



Greenways and trails have been identified as the #1 park and recreation priority on a number of recent County surveys.

and maintaining the quality of life for its residents.

Harnett County is served by several critical routes that facilitate regional connectivity and support local transportation needs. These routes are essential for commuting, commerce, and access to neighboring counties and cities. They traverse the county in various directions, linking communities and providing vital connections to larger urban centers, economic hubs, and recreational areas. A few of the major roads are grouped below by their general geographic orientation within Harnett County.

### East Area:

- NC 421: Runs through Lillington and Dunn, providing an important east-west connection. It supports regional commerce and offers an alternative route to I-40 and I-95 for travelers heading to the coast or central North Carolina. There are numerous educational and medical facilities along this route east of Lillington, as well as the Harnett Regional Jetport.





- NC 55: A north-south route that passes through Angier and Erwin. This road is projected to experience significant growth in the coming years, connects to Research Triangle Park and serves as a critical corridor for commuters and businesses.
- NC 27: Another east-west route connecting Lillington and Coats, extending further to Dunn. This road is crucial for local travel, connecting residential areas to shopping centers and medical services.

#### Northwest Area:

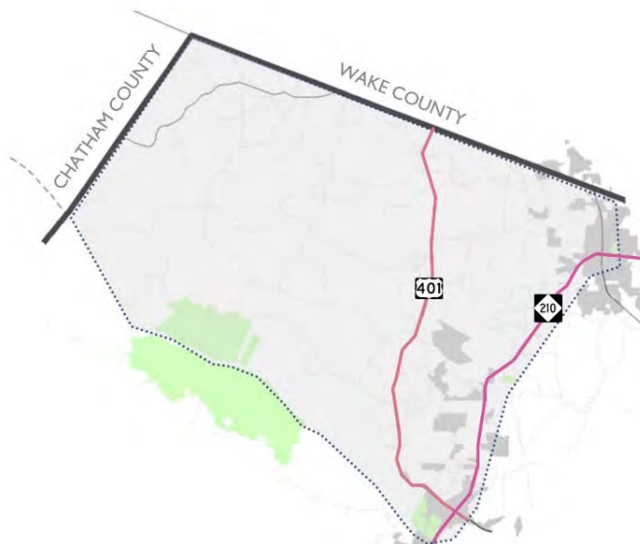
- US 401: A major north-south route that runs through the northern part of the county, connecting to Raleigh in the north. It is a vital route for regional travel and commerce, providing access to major employment centers.
- NC 210: Travels north-south, passing through Lillington and Angier. This road connects to major highways and serves as a critical route for accessing healthcare, education, and commercial centers in the region.

#### Southwest Area:

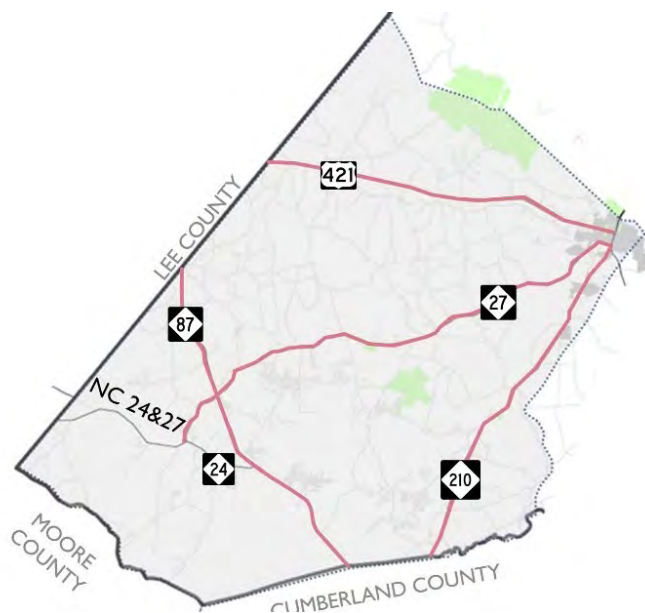
- NC 87: A north-south route, connecting Sanford and Fayetteville. It is a major thoroughfare for both local and regional traffic, supporting economic activities and providing access to major highways like US 1 and I-95.
- US 421: An east-west route, connecting Sanford to Lillington. It is crucial for regional connectivity, linking Harnett County to larger cities and facilitating the movement of goods and services.

These routes are not only essential for everyday commuting and local travel but also play a critical role in supporting the county's economy and linking residents to essential services and amenities.

### Northwest Area Map



### Southwest Area Map



# TRANSPORTATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Transportation recommendations focus on encouraging good development, improving coordination with state and regional transportation stakeholders, and enhancing existing infrastructure. Emphasizing these areas can create a more efficient and sustainable transportation network that addresses both current and future needs. Strategic planning and collaboration will ensure that the county's transportation systems are well-integrated and capable of supporting future development.

Improving the existing transportation network by identifying and prioritizing critical corridors for growth is vital. This includes planning both large road widening projects and smaller intersection improvements to accommodate increasing traffic volumes and enhance safety and accessibility. Targeted investments in key corridors will support economic development, reduce congestion, and improve connectivity within the county and neighboring regions. Proactively addressing these infrastructure needs will prepare Harnett County for future growth and ensure a well-maintained, efficient transportation system.

Harnett County does not own or maintain roadways. The County requires private development

to construct roads to serve new subdivisions and relies on the North Carolina Department of Transportation (*NCDOT*) to maintain roads. Strengthening communication and collaboration with key transportation partners, including NCDOT, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (*CAMPO*), and the Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (*FAMPO*), is necessary to plan for and prioritize needed improvements. Enhancing these partnerships will help the county advocate more effectively for its transportation needs, secure funding through NCDOT's SPOT program, and obtain safety funding for critical crash hotspots.

Additionally, maintaining and supporting current transit services while exploring new transit options is recommended. Conducting studies on fixed-route bus services, express routes, and park-and-ride facilities can provide insights into expanding the transit network. These studies could identify high-demand areas, optimize routes, and explore ways to reduce traffic congestion by encouraging transit use. Investing in a comprehensive transit strategy will enhance connectivity, reduce environmental impact, and offer more transportation options for Harnett County's growing population.





## Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1: Continue to build on transportation planning partnerships and prioritize projects at the regional level.**

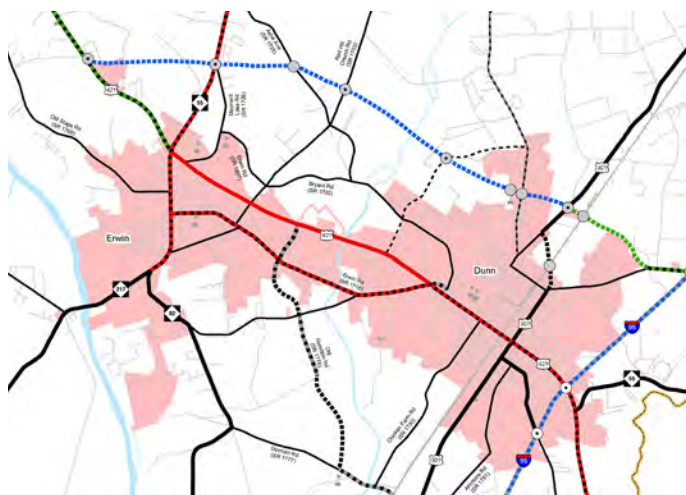
**Strategy 1A:** Collaborate with transportation stakeholders through active participation in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO).

**A.1:** Coordinate with CAMPO and FAMPO to ensure regional travel model updates reflect recent land use trends and approved developments.

**Strategy 1B:** Coordinate with NCDOT to update the Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

**B.1:** During the CTP update or as part of a separate effort clarify future right-of-way needs for key roadways and consolidate and refine collector street plans for growing areas.

**Strategy 1C:** Organize or participate in a US 401 Advisory Group that includes representatives from



The Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) was updated in 2016 and identifies needed improvements to major roads.

### Harnett County, Wake County and Fuquay Varina.

- ◆ The group could coordinate transportation and land use decisions along the corridor and discuss transportation priorities..

**Strategy 1D:** Prioritize improving access into and out of the County from the north.

- D.1:** Support short-term improvements along NC 210 and US 401.
- ◆ Short-term improvements may include the addition of traffic signals or turn lanes at intersections or where new development is planned.
  - ◆ Key intersections include Harnett Central Road, Piney-Grove Rawls Road, Chalybeate Springs Road and Rawls Church Road.

# TRANSPORTATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

**D.2:** Support incremental or long-term road projects to widen NC 210 between Lillington and Angier and US 401, especially north of Chalybeate Springs.

**D.3:** Manage access on NC 210 and US 401, encourage cross access, and create parallel collector streets to preserve roadway capacity.

**D.4:** Implement key roadway and intersection improvements recommended in the Northwest Harnett County Area Plan.

**D.5:** Coordinate with the Town of Lillington on future transportation improvements.

**D.6:** Study transportation improvements, access management and land use along NC 42 through Duncan.

## **Strategy 1E: Prioritize mobility to and from Fort Bragg in the southwestern part of the County.**

**E.1:** Manage access along NC 87 and encourage or require the construction of parallel collector streets or frontage roads to preserve capacity.

**E.2:** Identify corridor and intersection improvements and work with Fort Bragg and FAMPO to help alleviate congestion on

NC 87 and other major corridors including Nursery Road and Overhills Road.

## **Strategy 1F: Plan for roadway and pedestrian improvements in the vicinity of Carolina Lakes, Anderson Creek and other proposed village districts.**

## **Strategy 1G: Prepare for growth in the eastern part of the County.**

**G.1:** Identify corridor and intersection improvements along US 421 and NC 55.

**G.2:** Coordinate with Campbell University to study roadway, pedestrian, streetscape, greenway, and transit improvements needed near Buies Creek Village.

**G.3:** Continue to plan for access improvements in the vicinity of the Harnett Regional Jetport.

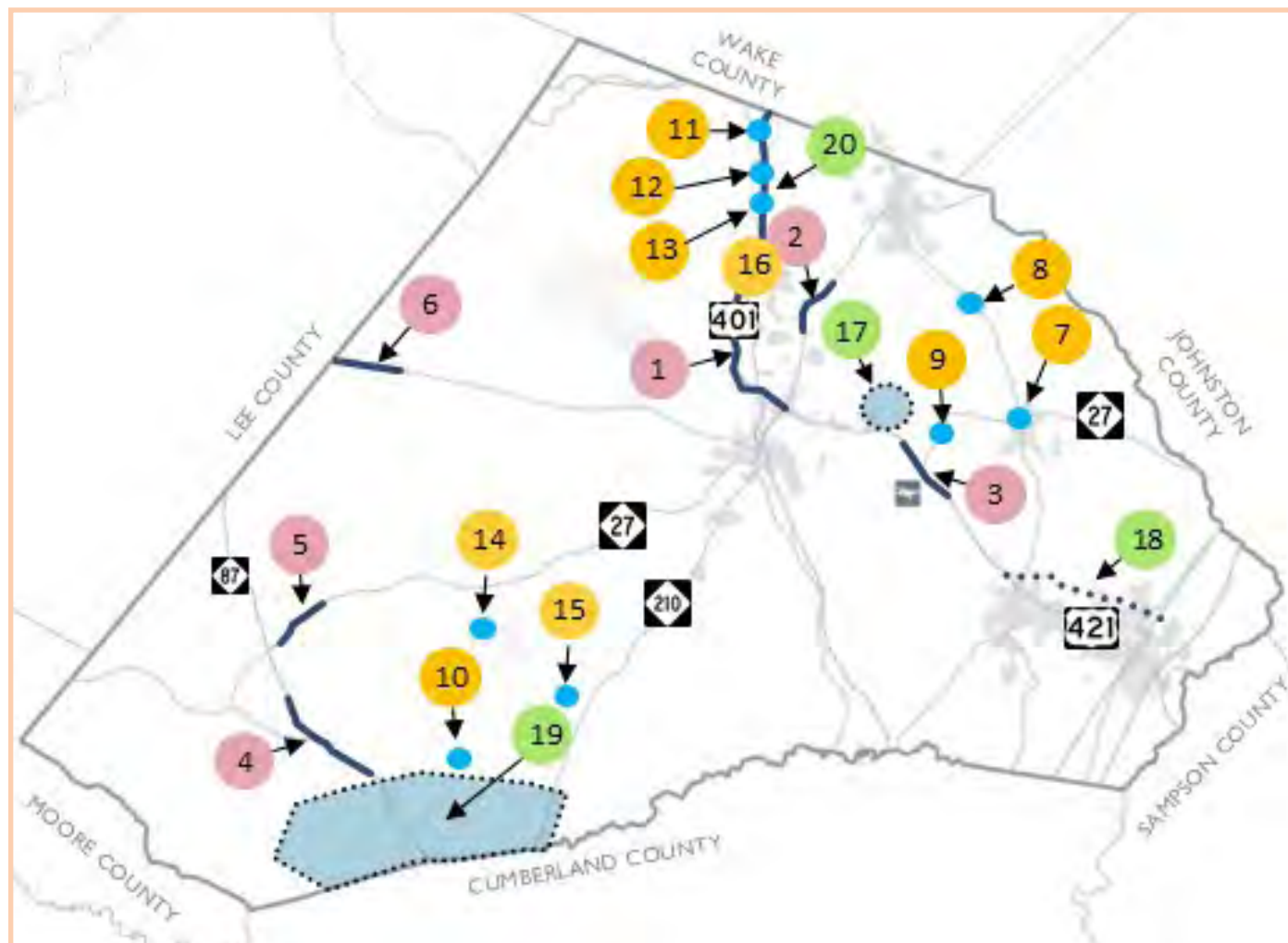
**G.4:** Refine land use, access and transportation plans for the area around the planned US 421 Bypass.

**G.5:** Study potential improvements near I-95 interchanges.





## Priority Transportation Corridors



### Priority Corridors

- 1 US 401 Widening (North of Chalybeate Springs)
- 2 NC 210 Near Harnett Central HS
- 3 US 421 Jetport Area changes
- 4 NC 87 Near Spout Springs
- 5 NC 27 north of NC 87
- 6 US 421 through Seminole

### Priority Intersections

- 7 NC 55 @ NC 27
- 8 NC 55 @ Old Stage Rd
- 9 NC 27 @ Old Stage Rd
- 10 Nursery Rd @ Overhills Rd
- 11 US 401 @ Piney-Grove Rawls Rd
- 12 US 401 @ Rawls Church Rd
- 13 US 401 @ Chalybeate Springs Rd
- 14 Nursery Rd @ Docs Rd
- 15 Overhills Rd @ Anderson Creek School Rd
- 16 US 401 and Harnett Central Road

### Connectivity Priorities

- 17 Buies Creek Village Area Traffic Improvement
- 18 US 421 Bypass (Erwin / Dunn) - (Location not Final)
- 19 Potential Connections to Fort Liberty
- 20 Connections parallel to US 401

# TRANSPORTATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

**Strategy 1H:** Identify locations to recommend for inclusion in SPOT evaluation.

- H.1:** Identify known locations with operational deficiency on an annual basis.
- H.2:** Advance recommendations from the US 401 corridor study.
- H.3:** Consider future traffic demand projects and approved development when prioritizing recommended improvements.

**Strategy 1I:** Identify and study locations to recommend for safety improvement projects.

- I.1:** Identify crash hotspots using NCDOT historical crash data
  - ◆ NCDOT provides statewide crash data online. This data can be used to identify locations with higher than average crash rates, or higher than average severity of crashes. Appropriate countermeasures can then be studied at these locations, including options such as advisory signing, improved intersection control, or speed limit reductions.

## NCDOT SPOT Evaluation

SPOT stands for the Strategic Prioritization Office of Transportation. The prioritization and inclusion of projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (*STIP*) is a critical step in the development of North Carolina's transportation infrastructure. Once projects are ranked through the SPOT process, they must navigate the complexities of funding and resource allocation to move from planning to implementation.

Understanding the funding mechanisms and sources of financial support is crucial for comprehending how the STIP ensures that the state's most critical transportation needs are met. This knowledge directly informs the process of securing and allocating funds to bring these priority projects to life.

Funding for projects in the STIP comes from a mix of federal, state, and local sources. The NCDOT allocates these funds based on the prioritization process, which considers factors like safety and economic impact. Federal funds typically support larger-scale projects, such as highways and major transit systems, due to specific eligibility requirements. State funds, from sources like gas taxes, are crucial for significant projects and maintenance. Local governments also contribute through matching funds or local sources, enhancing a project's appeal and positively influencing its ranking. This contribution helps make projects more feasible and attractive by reducing reliance on state and federal resources. The STIP is updated biennially, allowing NCDOT to adjust funding based on priorities, project readiness, and emerging needs and to address critical transportation challenges and support long-term infrastructure goals.





## Goal 2: Develop improved base standards for developments.

**Strategy 2A:** Continue to enforce and refine tiered subdivision standards based on district and density.

**A.1:** Update requirements and standards in the Unified Development Ordinance related to:

- ◆ Standard street sections
- ◆ Collector streets
- ◆ Driveway spacing along arterials
- ◆ Connectivity requirements
- ◆ Sidewalks
- ◆ Parking standards

**Strategy 2B:** Enhance transportation requirements for large commercial and residential development

**B.1:** Create multiple tiers of traffic impact analysis requirements based on daily trips required by new development projects.

**B.2:** Hire a consulting traffic engineer to advise the County on TIA requirements and reviews.

**B.3:** Require the addition of turn lanes (left turn and right deceleration lane) with appropriate stacking for subdivisions and development projects as needed.

## Traffic Impact Analysis

Establishing clear development agreements, robust standards, and Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) standards are essential. These measures guide developers to align new projects with the County's transportation network, ensuring appropriate infrastructure planning. Setting clear expectations for traffic impact analyses helps manage the effects of new developments on the existing road network, mitigating congestion and ensuring safety. This proactive approach supports orderly growth and enhances residents' quality of life by maintaining an efficient transportation system.

**B.4:** Require the reservation of right-of-way for planned and necessary improvements during the development review process.

**Strategy 2C:** Create a structure within the development review process that enables the creation of development agreements to implement Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies.

- ◆ Consider the use of developer agreements to require that transportation improvements be constructed alongside developments and/or the collection of funds to be used to fund part of a larger transportation improvement project.

# TRANSPORTATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Goal 3: Improve multi-modal transportation options in growing areas of the County.

**Strategy 3A:** Continue to support the incorporation of pedestrian facilities in roadway improvement projects.

**Strategy 3B:** Encourage or require the incorporation of sidewalks and/or greenways in new residential and commercial developments.

**B.1:** Require the reservation of right-of-way or easements for planned greenways.

**Strategy 3C:** Develop a County wide Greenway System.

**C.1:** Continue to build capacity and designate funding for designing, constructing and maintaining public greenways.

**C.2:** Evaluate and update greenway priorities on a biannual basis.

**C.3:** Partner to develop feasibility studies for priority greenway segments.

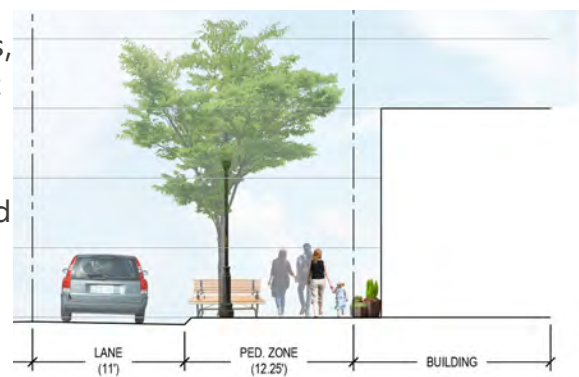
**Strategy 3D:** Promote pedestrian-oriented design in commercial and mixed-use areas.

**D.1:** In Village and Village Center areas allow for and encourage innovative street design including

## Pedestrian-Oriented Design

Pedestrian-oriented design refers to design changes to the built environment that can lead to increased comfort and safety for pedestrians and more pedestrian activity. The following design details are important to increase walkability through pedestrian-oriented design:

- Require short block lengths, connected streets, connected pedestrian facilities and safe street crossings.
- Provide guidance in the Unified Development Ordinance on when planting strips are required on external and internal streets.
- Update commercial site design standards to address building orientation, design and parking location.





on-street parking, alley-loaded homes and shared streets.

**Strategy 3E: Support and market the Harnett Area Rural Transit System (HARTS).**

- E.1:** Continue and expand marketing and outreach efforts.
- E.2:** Study the possibility of reduced or eliminated fares for low-income residents.

**Strategy 3F: Evaluate the feasibility of fixed route and express transit services.**

- F.1:** Partner with municipalities and regional planning organizations to conduct studies on fixed-route bus services, express routes, stop locations, on-demand services, and/or regional rail.

**F.2:** Plan for transit service to areas with high ridership potential including town centers and planned village locations.

**F.3:** Identify locations and work to establish two park and ride locations north of the Cape Fear River on major corridors.

**F.4:** Coordinate with large developments to include park and ride lots or transit stops in appropriate locations.

# JETPORT - BACKGROUND

## Existing Conditions

Harnett Regional Jetport (*HRJ*) is publicly owned and operated by Harnett County, North Carolina. It is a general aviation (*GA*) airport located approximately four miles northwest of the town of Erwin, North Carolina. The Airport is 42 years old as of December 2023, and has a total acreage of approximately 267 acres. With its key location Harnett Regional Jetport plays a significant role in the local and regional economy and in the future this role is likely to increase. The most recent HRJ Master Plan projects the Airport's total annual operations at HRJ will increase from 51,300 to 62,596 in 2040. Using this forecast level of growth, the Airport Master Plan forecast projects operations by aircraft type, with jets notably increasing by over 1,400 annual operations during that time. In addition to more aircraft, larger aircraft will visit more frequently which will likely increase noise contours.



## Expansion Plans

The new terminal building is almost complete. This 7,000 square foot facility replaces a much smaller building. The most recent Jetport Master Plan calls for additional expansion of airport facilities including:

- ◆ Runway Length – An increase in the length of Runway 5-23 from 5,005 feet to 5,505 feet.
- ◆ Runway Width – An increase in the width of Runway 5-23 from 75 feet to 100 feet.
- ◆ Runway Safety Area Increases.
- ◆ Improved Navigational Lighting
- ◆ Expanded parking - The Jetport's automobile parking facilities have a shortage of 35 parking stalls over the 20-year period.

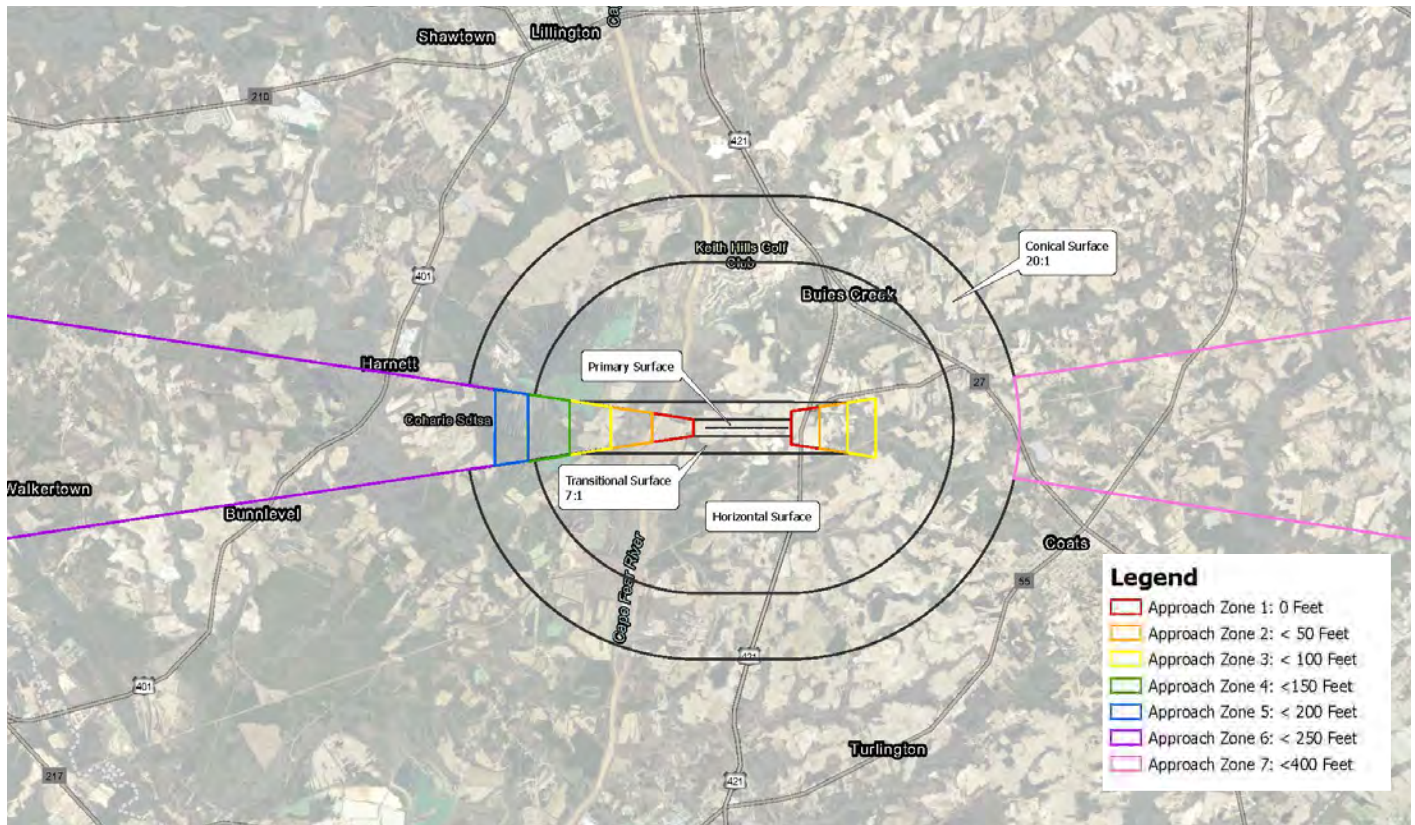
**11,000** additional  
annual operations  
expected by 2040

*Source: Jetport Master Plan*





## Airport Approach Zones



- ◆ Land acquisition for hangars and apron expansion - The anticipated increase in based aircraft would require approximately 25 acres of land acquisition for the following hangar and apron development projects:
  - » Apron expansion by 24,960 square yards, with three additional Tie-downs
  - » 42 T-hangar Units
  - » 12 Small/Medium Hangars (Approximately 39,600 square feet total)
  - » Three conventional Hangars (Approximately 23,600 square feet total)
- ◆ Extension and realignment of Airport Road.
- ◆ Upgrades to perimeter fence (6-8 ft fence to be replaced with a 10 ft fence).
- ◆ Replacement and relocation of fuel tanks.

## Airport Safety

With the extension of the runway aeronautical safety areas will increase in size. The FAA expects airport sponsors (*Harnett County*) to take all appropriate steps available to establish and exercise zoning controls necessary to prevent any new incompatible land uses. Currently Harnett County's Unified Development Ordinance includes height limitations in areas covered by defined navigable airspace zones defined by federal regulations. These areas and aeronautical safety areas will increase with runway expansion. Zoning in the vicinity of the airport includes large areas of Industrial, Commercial, and Residential (*RA-40 and RA-30*) zoning. Additional zoning controls to limit residential development and other potentially conflicting uses may be needed.

# JETPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Harnett Regional Jetport (HRJ) is an economic asset for Harnett County to protect and preserve. The most recent HRJ Airport Master Plan has stressed the importance of the Airport expanding and developing to accommodate the aviation activity demand of its users. Continued implementation of the HRJ Airport Master Plan and updates to county land use policies and standards in the vicinity of the jetport will benefit the local and regional economy.

**\$146 million**

Annual economic  
output of the Harnett  
Regional Jetport

*Source: Insert*

## Goals and Strategies

### **Goal 1: Plan for the continued expansion and development of the Jetport.**

**Strategy 1A:** Support key facility improvements included in the HRJ Airport Master Plan.

- ◆ Planned facility improvements include additional runway width and length, the extension and realignment of Airport Road, aircraft storage hangars, and other airfield developments,

**A.1:** Pursue state and federal funding for jetport facility improvements.

**Strategy 1B:** Consider public-private partnerships to aid in the implementation of the Airport Master Plan.

**Strategy 1C:** Encourage compatible development including industrial, distribution and commercial near the Jetport.

**Strategy 1D:** Plan for the periodic update to the Airport Master Plan.

**Strategy 1E:** Sustain and expand marketing efforts related to Jetport services.





**Goal 2: Minimize potential harm to people and property, protect aircraft operations, and provide for the long-term viability of the airport.**

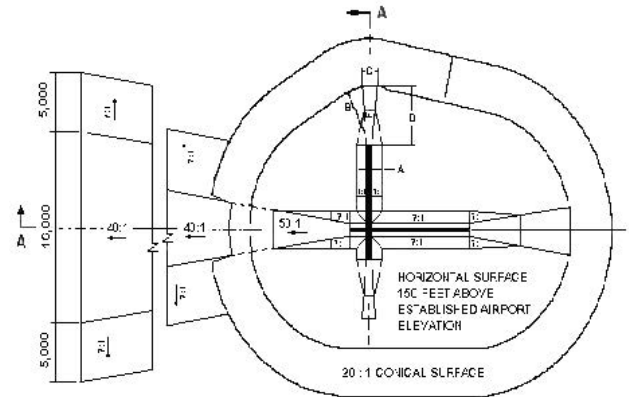
**Strategy 2A:** Continue to limit height of buildings and other structures within designated airport safety zones in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

- ♦ Airport Zone Height Limitations are specified in Section 3.0 in the UDO for areas designated by Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 77. Except where otherwise provided, no structure shall be erected, altered, or maintained, and no tree shall be allowed to grow in any airport zone to a height in excess of the applicable height limit.

**Strategy 2B:** Plan for the expansion of aeronautical safety areas following the extension and widening of Runway 5-23.

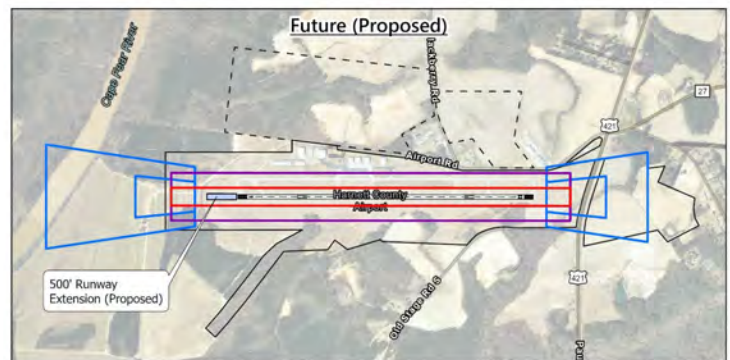
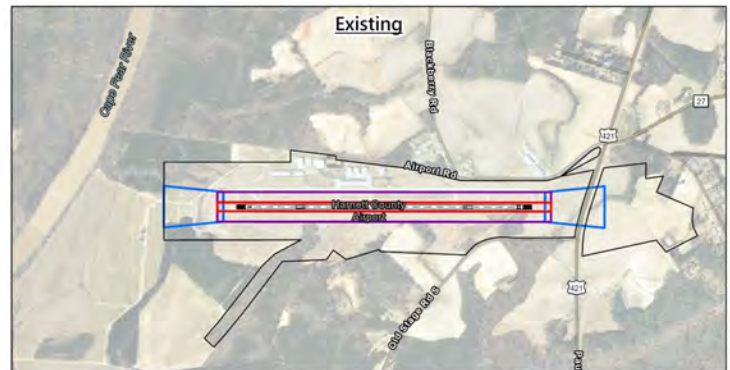
- ♦ Aeronautical safety areas are established by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in FAA Advisory Circular (AC)150/5300-13B, Airport Design.
- ♦ The three main aeronautical safety areas that will require modification include the Runway Safety Area (RSA), Runway Object Free Area (ROFA), and Runway Protection Zones (RPZ).

*FAR Part 77 Surfaces Diagram*



Source: NGS NOAA

*Aeronautical Safety Area Impacts*



**Legend**

- Airport Property Line
- Future Airport Property (Proposed)
- Runway Safety Area (RSA)
- Runway Object Free Area (ROFA)
- Runway Protection Zone (RPZ)

Source: VHB, 2023; HRJ Master Plan Update, 2023

# JETPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Strategy 2C: Establish a Jetport

Overlay that ensures compatible uses in the vicinity of the airport approaches.

- ◆ An overlay with three zones could limit potentially conflicting uses near runway approaches, in areas adjacent to the jetport and in other safety zones.
- ◆ Noise Level Reduction (NLR) measures should be encouraged.

## Jetport Overlay Purpose and Need

There is a need to preserve land around the jetport to allow for continued operations and encourage economic development. Currently Harnett County only regulates height in the vicinity of the Harnett Regional Jetport. Most of the land surrounding the airport is zoned for industrial and commercial uses, however there is some land zoned as Residential/ Agricultural (RA-40 and RA-30) within the defined approach zones. It may be beneficial to apply an airport overlay zone to preserve existing operations and reduce land use conflicts in the future given potential for expanded airport operations. This new overlay could provide flexibility for land owners while discouraging certain types of uses such as schools, churches and higher density residential subdivisions. The map on the next page illustrates potential zones and the text below outlines potential permitted uses and other requirements.

### Zone 1:

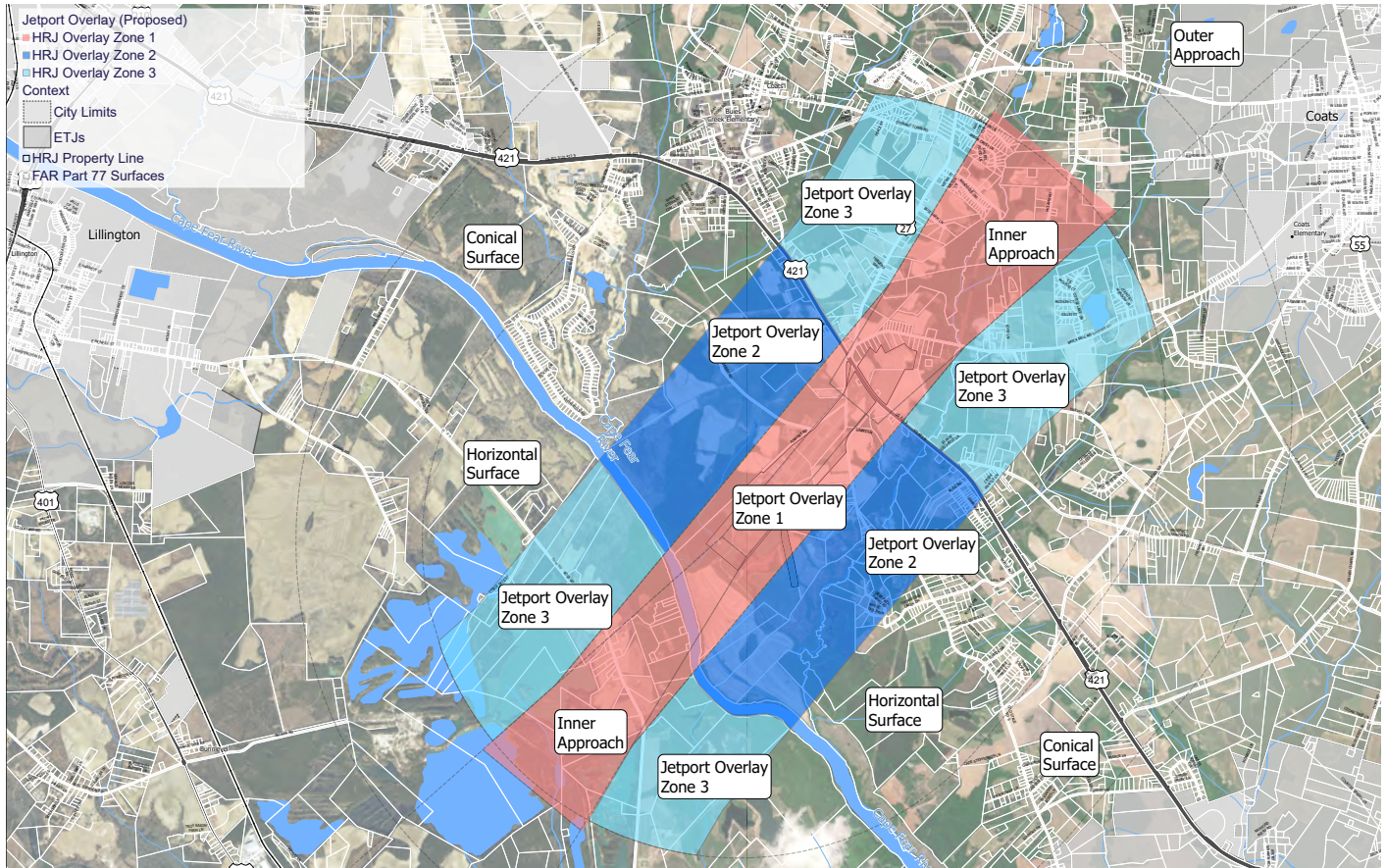
This zone covers the inner approach zones that are beneath the primary flight paths. Regulations should continue to limit height of structures and not permit conflicting uses such as:

- ◆ Glare from solar panels
- ◆ Potential electronic interference from wind turbines
- ◆ Smoke stacks and thermal plumes from industrial operations
- ◆ Wildlife attractants such as certain types of crops, large open water and landfills
- ◆ Institutional uses such as schools and churches
- ◆ Major subdivisions: Some low density residential (minor subdivisions with lots > 1 acre) could be permitted, potentially with a Special Use Permit (SUP). Noise Level Reduction (NLR) measures should be implemented and may be established as a condition for approval.





## Proposed Overlay



### Zone 2:

This zone corresponds with a portion of the horizontal surface within 3,500 ft of the inner approach zones and areas south of US 421 and North of the Cape Fear River. Height should be limited as well as large scale solar installations, wind turbines, smoke stacks and wildlife attractants such as certain crop types, large open water and landfills. In addition, institutional uses such as schools, churches and major residential subdivisions would not be permitted.

### Zone 3:

This zone covers a portion of the horizontal surface within 3,500 ft of the inner approach zones and areas north of US 421 and South of the Cape Fear River. Major conflicts

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES - BACKGROUND

## Overview

Harnett County provides water and wastewater services to the majority of County residents, as well as many of the municipalities and Fort Bragg. Other key services are provided by County departments and other public and private partners.

## Water System

Harnett Regional Water manages the Central Water Treatment Plant, located in Lillington. This plant serves Harnett County as well as customers in the surrounding counties, including towns in Wake and Cumberland Counties. The United States Army base Fort Bragg, located in Cumberland and Hoke Counties, is also a large Harnett Regional Water customer.

The Cape Fear River serves as the water source for the Central Water Treatment Plant. The Plant currently has treatment capacity of 42 million gallons per day (MGD) and an average usage of 22 MGD and a peak usage of 30-32 MGD. Significant increases in capacity have been made due to plant upgrades in the last twenty years. Additional water treatment capacity will be needed in the coming years.

## Sewer System

Harnett Regional Water has two wastewater treatment plants. The North Harnett Regional WWTP is located in Lillington and the South Harnett Regional WWTP is located on the Cumberland County line.

### NORTH HARNETT REGIONAL WWTP

The North Harnett Regional WWTP has a treatment capacity of 16 MGD. The plant was recently upgraded from 7.5 MGD in

2023 to accommodate growth in northern part of County. Sewer service is provided to customers in Harnett County and also the towns of Angier, Fuquay-Varina and Lillington.

### SOUTH HARNETT REGIONAL WWTP

The South Harnett Regional WWTP has a treatment capacity of 15 MGD. This plant covers the entire southern region of Harnett County, but two-thirds of the plant's capacity is committed to Fort Bragg. While this plant has plenty of capacity, the challenge is the ability to serve the NC Highway 87 and Anderson Creek area because of the long distance from the plant. Harnett Regional Water has future plans to enhance the sewer line and other infrastructure to better serve this area.

### STORMWATER

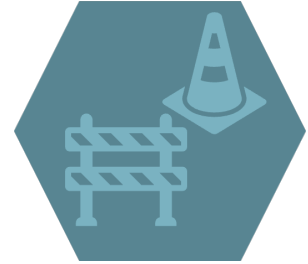
Residential subdivision storm sewers are owned and maintained by the developer or Homeowner's Association. On state-maintained rights-of-way, NCDOT approves and accepts maintenance of stormwater runoff.

## Solid Waste

Harnett County Solid Waste Department is responsible for the management and operation of its landfills and convenience centers. Curbside pickup is managed privately by waste collection companies that serve the unincorporated areas of the County.

Solid waste manages 7 Convenience Centers, located across the County. Additionally, the County's 2 landfills collect construction and demo waste, land clearing debris, bulky items, electronics, metal and tires. The





landfills are Anderson Creek in Spring Lake and Dunn-Erwin in Dunn.

Recycling bins are located at all convenience centers and both landfills.

# Fire and EMS

Harnett County’s Fire Marshal’s office serves as the liaison between the County Administration and the many fire departments and EMS agencies located throughout the County. Both Fire and EMS services have paid and volunteer staff. There are currently 13 stations in the County.

# Emergency Management

The Emergency Management Department is responsible for organizing the response and responding to disasters and emergencies that occur. They work closely with North Carolina Emergency Management and FEMA to ensure that the staff has the proper training, experience, and equipment needed to respond effectively.

# Other Departments and Services

A number of other County departments provide essential services to citizens. These departments include the Sheriff’s Office, Social Services, Tax Department, Veterans Services, the Library, Health Department and others.

Electricity is provided by Duke Energy, Central Electric or South River Electric, while Piedmont Natural Gas is the County’s natural gas provider. Multiple internet providers operate throughout Harnett County.



## Sewer Usage and Capacity

**42 MGD**

Current Water Treatment Capacity

**32 MGD**

Peak Water Usage

**22 MGD**

Average Usage



## Water Usage and Capacity

**42 MGD**

Current Water Treatment Capacity

**32 MGD**

Peak Water Usage

**22 MGD**

Average Usage

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES - RECOMMENDATIONS

## Overview

Significant investments have been made in the Harnett County water and sewer systems in recent years. The County is unique in that the majority of the county is served by water and an extensive sewer system is maintained that also provides service to surrounding municipalities. Moving forward, it will be critical to define expectations regarding future capacity and levels of service to ensure that growth is encouraged where infrastructure and services exist.

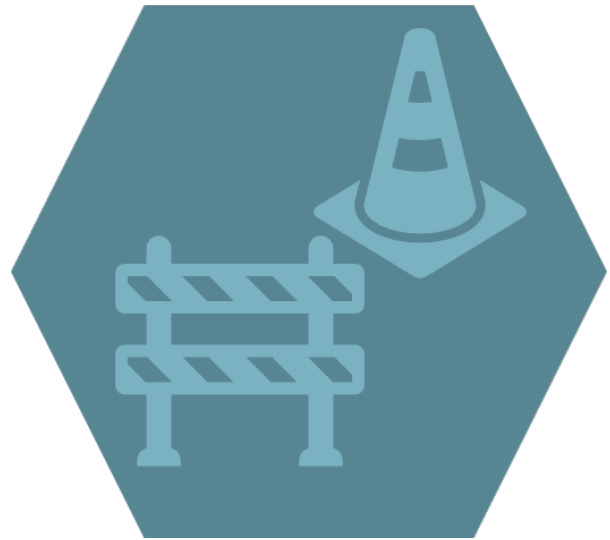
Other utilities, including electric, natural gas and high-speed internet are key to attracting certain types of development including commercial, industrial, professional services, technology and even certain residents. Continued coordination with private utility providers that determine where these services are extended is essential to encouraging economic development.

In addition to utilities a variety of other services including public safety and emergency response, social services, educational services and other key public services are provided by the County. Increasing development in many areas is likely to lead to future personnel, equipment and facility needs to maintain and improve existing levels of service.

## Goals and Strategies

### **Goal 1: Maintain and improve the utility system.**

**Strategy 1A:** Maintain and implement a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).



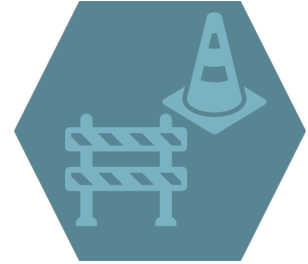
**Strategy 1B:** Regularly evaluate and update fee structure and cost share policies as needed to adequately fund and maintain utility system.

**Strategy 1C:** Plan for efficient sewer service provision.

**C.1:** Continue to pursue consolidation of pump stations where feasible.

**C.2:** Plan for future gravity mains and continue to pursue public/private cost shares and developer agreements for reimbursement of upfront investments in infrastructure that serves future development.





**Strategy 1D: Plan for expanded water treatment plant capacity to serve Northeast Harnett County.**

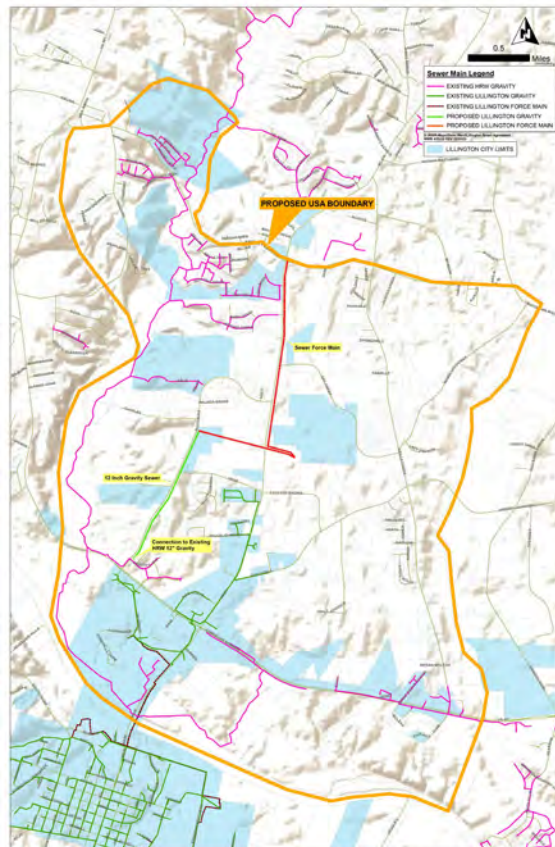
- ◆ A new water treatment plant is planned to be located near Erwin on the Cape Fear River with an expected capacity of 8-10 MGD.

**Goal 2: Prioritize utility capacity upgrades and improved services that support economic development and land use goals.**

**Strategy 2A: Refine plans for water and sewer service to support the development pattern and land uses shown on the Future Land Use Map.**

- A.1:** Plan for targeted upgrades to serve residential, mixed-use and employment areas identified on the Future Land Use Map.
- A.2:** Carefully evaluate extensions or upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure in Agricultural Protection Areas.
- ◆ Increasing utility service capacity in agricultural areas should be carefully evaluated due to potential to lead to increased residential development and fragment agricultural lands.

*Draft Utility Service Area Map for Lillington*



**Strategy 2B: Consider partnerships to extend utility service to potential commercial and industrial areas.**

**Strategy 2C: Coordinate with municipalities to define Utility Service Areas (USAs) in the vicinity of municipal boundaries.**

- C.1:** Update utility agreements with Angier and Lillington and Fuquay Varina to reflect future utility service areas.

# INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES - RECOMMENDATIONS

**Strategy 2D:** Coordinate with other utility providers to support economic development opportunities with natural gas, electric and internet services.

**Strategy 2E:** Maintain and improve public safety services.

**E.1:** Plan for facility, equipment and personnel needs for the Harnett County Emergency Services.

**E.2:** Continue to act as a liaison between fire departments and EMS agencies throughout the County.

**E.3:** Support crime prevention and law enforcement activities of the Harnett County Sheriff's Office.

**Strategy 2F:** Collaborate with Harnett County Schools.

**F.1:** Coordinate with school board to ensure adequate facilities and programs to support economic development efforts.

**F.2:** Enhance communication with Harnett County Schools related to school enrollment trends and capacity issues.

◆ Information related to capacity issues could be provided during the development review or approval process in a standardized format.

**F.3:** Determine future needs and identify target locations for schools in growth areas.

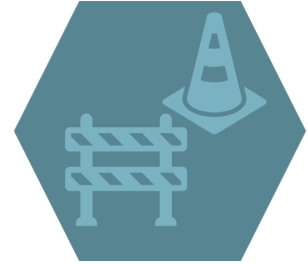
**F.4:** Discourage the location of new schools in the Agricultural Protection Area shown on the Future Land Use Map.

**Strategy 2G:** Maintain adequate government services and facilitate inter-agency coordination.

**G.1:** Monitor demand for services and evaluate needs on an annual basis.

**G.2:** Encourage and facilitate regular coordination between County departments, municipalities and adjacent communities.





### **Goal 3: Maintain and improve the resiliency of critical facilities and infrastructure.**

**Strategy 3A:** Implement and update hazard mitigation plans.

**Strategy 3B:** Maintain and improve the resiliency of critical facilities.

**Strategy 3C:** Pursue state and federal funding to assist with upgrades to vulnerable infrastructure.



# IMPLEMENTATION



# ACTION PLAN

The following table identifies priority implementation actions that can be taken in the next 1-5 years to advance recommendations of the Harnett Horizons 2040 Comprehensive Plan.



## LAND USE & HOUSING

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>1</b>	<b>Update the Unified Development Ordinance to enhance growth management.</b>	Review and revise zoning districts, permitted uses, standards and processes.	Strategy 1B.2 Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Update zoning to reduce density and improve design in Agricultural Protection Areas. • Consider targeted rezonings • Create one or more Agricultural Protection Overlays • Require working farmland buffers	Strategy 1D Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Improve open space standards for new development in residential zoning districts.	Strategy 2A Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Increase standards for the Compatibility Development / Conservation Subdivision Option.	Strategy 2B Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Enhance transportation requirements for large commercial and residential development.	Strategy 2D Short Term (1-2 Years)
<b>2</b>	<b>Promote quality commercial and retail design through updates to overlays or enhancing base standards.</b>	Consider expanding the Highway Corridor Overlay overlay district to US 401 North and NC 210.	Strategy 2E Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Improve commercial site design through updates to overlays or enhancing base standards.	Strategy 2E Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Consider a conditional zoning option.	Strategy 4B, 4D, 5A Short Term (1-2 Years)



Action		Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
3	Enable the creation of village districts in key areas of the county.	Create an overlay or conditional zoning option in the zoning code that allows for village districts and corresponding walkable, mixed-use development.	Strategy 5A	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Participate in and encourage future planning efforts related village district locations	Strategy 5A	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Support efforts by Campbell University and the private sector to define and brand the Village of Buies Creek.	Strategy 5B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
4	Encourage and remove barriers to a mixture of housing types in appropriate areas.	Encourage a mix of lot sizes and/or housing products through the Planned Unit Development option in the UDO or a new conditional zoning process.	Strategy 1B	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Remove regulatory barriers to meeting market demand for housing.	Strategy 1C, 1D	Short Term (1-2 Years)
5	Encourage the preservation and construction of affordable and workforce housing.	Evaluate County-owned sites for affordable or workforce housing or consider incentives.	Strategy 2E, 2F	Long Term (3-5 Years)
		Conduct a county-wide inventory of affordable housing units and track changes.	Strategy 2B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Coordination with municipalities and other partners on projects or studies to preserve or increase affordable or workforce housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply to participate in the Our State, Our Homes program to develop capacity, analyze challenges and implement strategies to address affordable housing issues.</li> <li>• Consider funding an housing study or strategic plan to develop a toolkit to address affordable and workforce housing needs.</li> </ul>	Strategy 2C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
6	Work with partners to prevent and reduce homelessness.	Dedicate county staff resources to assist with the annual Point in Time (PIT) count of homeless individuals.	Strategy 3B	Short Term (1-2 Years)

# ACTION PLAN



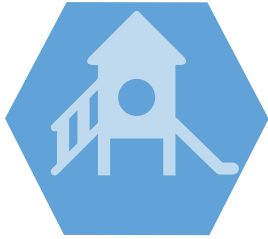
## AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Action		Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
7	Maintain and promote agricultural support programs.	Promote conservation easements, the Present Use Value program and the Voluntary Agricultural Districts program.	Strategy 1B, 1E	Ongoing
		Consider an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts Program.	Strategy 1E	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Support activities of the Harnett County Soil and Water Conservation District and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.	Strategy 1E	Ongoing
		Consider additional staffing for programs or positions critical to implementing county agricultural goals.	Strategy 1E	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Take steps to ensure agriculture has long-term access to water supplies.	Strategy 1G	Long Term (3-5 Years)
8	Establish a Farmland Preservation Program and Fund	Establish a voluntary purchase of development rights program that utilizes local funds to match state and federal funds to protect land in key agricultural areas.	Strategy 1F	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
9	Coordinate with Fort Bragg to protect lands critical to military operations.	Coordinate with and follow the recommendations of the Federal Government and the Regional Land Use Advisory Commission (RLUAC).	Strategy 1H	Ongoing
		Maintain, enforce and consider updates to the Military Corridor Overlay District (MCO).	Strategy 1H	Ongoing / Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Encourage land protection in priority areas including undeveloped areas that coincide with priority military buffer areas due to aviation routes, training exercises, farmland and high quality habitat.	Strategy 1H	Long Term (3-5 Years)



Action		Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>10</b>	<b>Require the reservation of high-quality, connected open space in new development.</b>	Require a site conditions map showing existing natural resources as part of the review process for all or certain types of residential.	Strategy 1I	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Encourage new development to reserve land for planned greenways.	Strategy 1I	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Create and maintain an inventory of public and privately preserved open space in the County.	Strategy 1I	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Conduct a green print study (county-wide or for specific areas) to identify key open space preservation areas.	Strategy 1J	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
<b>11</b>	<b>Establish tree preservation guidelines or standards for new development.</b>	Establish a tree preservation requirement for Compatibility Developments (i.e. a percentage of the overall site or a percentage of required open space).	Strategy 1L	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Take steps to recognize and/or protect heritage trees.	Strategy 1L	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
<b>12</b>	<b>Maintain and improve water quality.</b>	Update the extent of the Conservation Zoning District to factor in the best available GIS data.	Strategy 2A	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Encourage stream buffer commitments that exceed state minimums during conditional zonings.	Strategy 2B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Incentivize buffers via the Compatibility Development Option in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).	Strategy 2B	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.	Strategy 2C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Protect major water supply watershed districts through open space preservation, community programs that promote tree coverage, floodplain preservation, and limits to impervious surface cover.	Strategy 2D	Medium Term (2-3 Years)

# ACTION PLAN



## PARKS AND GREENWAYS

Action		Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
13	Implement and regularly update the Parks and Recreation Plan.	Support continued maintenance and improvements at existing parks.	Strategy 1B	Ongoing
		Acquire land for new parks and nature preserves in land acquisition target areas and growing areas of the county.	Strategy 1B	Long Term (3-5 Years)
13	Implement and regularly update the Parks and Recreation Plan. (Continued)	Undertake site specific master plans for planned parks.	Strategy 1B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Work with public and private partners to plan for and construct additional indoor recreation facilities.	Strategy 1B	Long Term (3-5 Years)
		Enhance parks and recreational program offerings based on ongoing citizen input.	Strategy 1B	Ongoing
		Establish a volunteer program within the parks and recreation system.	Strategy 1B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Pursue the co-location of parks and school sites in growing areas.	Strategy 1C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Establish joint-use agreements between schools and the Harnett County Parks and Recreation Department for sites in underserved areas.	Strategy 1C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Evaluate and update base requirements for development related to open space, recreation facilities and/or the recreation fee schedule.	Strategy 1D	Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Seek increased investment in parks and recreation facilities.	Strategy 1E	Short-Medium Term (1-3 Years)



Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>14</b>	<b>Pursue the completion of the Harnett County Greenway System.</b>	Participate in feasibility studies to refine alignments, determine right-of-way acquisition needs, plan support facilities and develop strategies for funding and partnerships.	Strategy 2A Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Update requirements related to greenways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)	Strategy 2A Short Term (1-2 Years)
<b>15</b>	<b>Develop and promote the Cape Fear River as a blueway.</b>	Plan for and develop river access points every 4-6 miles along the Cape Fear River.	Strategy 2B Long Term (3-5 Years)
		Improve marketing material (online and print) and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and other outdoor recreation destinations.	Strategy 2C Short Term (1-2 Years)



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>16</b>	<b>Transition available and candidate economic development sites to market-ready sites.</b>	Complete environmental due diligence activities.	Strategy 1B Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Seek funds for site infrastructure and site development activities.	Strategy 1C, 1D Short Term (1-2 Years)

# ACTION PLAN

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>17</b>	<b>Support business attraction and expansion activities</b>	Engage in outreach activities in conjunction with regional and state economic development partners,	Strategy 2A Ongoing
		Market the County based on competitive advantages and establish a compelling brand identity.	Strategy 2A Short Term (1-2 Years)
		Host an annual event to highlight Harnett County and our available buildings and sites.	Strategy 2D Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Support neighborhood improvements and reinvestment.	Strategy 2F Long Term (3-5 Years)
<b>18</b>	<b>Support entrepreneurship and business development.</b>	Provide training, technical assistance, incentives to foster business growth.	Strategy 3B Ongoing
<b>19</b>	<b>Coordinate with partners on workforce development.</b>	Work closely with education and workforce training partners to support immediate and future hiring and training needs.	Strategy 4A Ongoing
<b>20</b>	<b>Support strategies to retain and expand agriculture and agribusiness.</b>	Consider updating the Harnett County Working Lands Protection Plan (2010).	Strategy 5A Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Consider incentives or specialized programs to recruit or retain agribusiness.	Strategy 5A Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Support a farmers market program including a new venue and special events.	Strategy 5B Medium Term (2-3 Years)



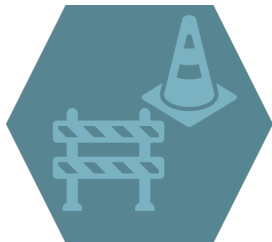


# TRANSPORTATION AND JETPORT

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>21</b>	<p><b>Actively participate in the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO).</b></p> <p>Coordinate with CAMPO and FAMPO to ensure regional travel model updates reflect recent land use trends and approved developments.</p>	Strategy 1A	Ongoing
	<p>Coordinate with NCDOT to update the Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During the CTP update or as part of a separate effort clarify future right-of-way needs for key roadways and consolidate and refine collector street plans for growing areas.</li> </ul>	Strategy 1B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
<b>22</b>	<p><b>Support short-term and long term improvements along priority corridors.</b></p> <p>Support roadway and intersection improvement projects along key corridors in the County.</p>	Strategy 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G	Long Term (3-5 Years)
	<p>Identify and study locations to recommend for safety improvement projects.</p>	Strategy 1I	Short Term (1-2 Years)
<b>23</b>	<p><b>Develop improved base standards for developments.</b></p> <p>Update transportation requirements and standards in the Unified Development Ordinance. Unify terminology in all documents.</p>	Strategy 2A, 2B, 2C	Short Term (1-2 Years)
	<p>Create multiple tiers of traffic impact analysis requirements based on daily trips required by new development projects.</p>	Strategy 2B	Short Term (1-2 Years)
	<p>Create a structure within the development review process that enables the creation of development agreements.</p>	Strategy 2C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
<b>24</b>	<p><b>Improve multi-modal transportation options in growing areas of the County.</b></p> <p>Evaluate the feasibility of fixed route and express transit services.</p>	Strategy 3E	Short Term (1-2 Years)
	<p>Identify locations and work to establish two park and ride locations north of the Cape Fear River on major corridors.</p>	Strategy 3E	Medium Term (2-3 Years)

# ACTION PLAN

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>25</b>	<b>Plan for the continued expansion and development of the Jetport.</b>	Support key facility improvements included in the HRJ Airport Master Plan.	Strategy 1A Ongoing
		Plan for the periodic update to the Airport Master Plan.	Strategy 1D Long Term (3-5 Years)
<b>26</b>	<b>Establish a Jetport Overlay that ensures compatible uses in the vicinity of the airport approaches.</b>	Implement a Jetport Overlay with three zones that limits potentially conflicting uses near runway approaches, in areas adjacent to the Jetport and in other safety zones.	Strategy 2C Short Term (1-2 Years)



## INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Action	Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
<b>27</b>	<b>Maintain and implement a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).</b>	Maintain and implement a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).	Strategy 1A Ongoing
		Plan for expanded water treatment plant capacity to serve Northeast Harnett County.	Strategy 1D Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Refine plans for water and sewer service to support the development pattern and land uses shown on the Future Land Use Map.	Strategy 2A Medium Term (2-3 Years)



Action		Detailed Tasks	Strategy Reference	Time-frame
28	Coordinate with partners to serve municipalities and extend utility service to potential commercial and industrial areas.	Consider partnerships to extend utility service to potential commercial and industrial areas.	Strategy 2B	Ongoing
		Coordinate with municipalities to define Utility Service Areas (USAs) in the vicinity of municipal boundaries.	Strategy 2C	Short Term (1-2 Years)
29	Maintain and improve public services.	Maintain and improve public safety services.	Strategy 2E	Ongoing
		Collaborate with Harnett County Schools.	Strategy 2F	Ongoing
		Maintain adequate government services and facilitate inter-agency coordination.	Strategy 2G	Ongoing
30	Maintain and improve the resiliency of critical facilities and infrastructure.	Strategy 3A: Implement and update hazard mitigation plans.	Strategy 3A	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Strategy 3B: Maintain and improve the resiliency of critical facilities.	Strategy 3B	Medium Term (2-3 Years)
		Strategy 3C: Pursue state and federal funding to assist with upgrades to vulnerable infrastructure.	Strategy 3C	Medium Term (2-3 Years)



# APPENDIX



# APPENDIX

The following materials provide additional information on the comprehensive planning process, analysis results and key recommendations.

## Contents

Village District Design Guide  
Maps\*  
Community Profile\*  
Survey Results\*  
Public Meeting Summaries\*

\*Digital Appendix contents [available at this link.](#)





# County Village District Design Guide

## Harnett Horizons 2040

January 2025





# Harnett Horizons 2040

*Planning a Brighter Future*

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# Introduction

## The Essence of a Village

In North Carolina, a village often represents a small-scale, cohesive community that balances traditional charm with modern functionality. Its design emphasizes walkability, a strong sense of place, and human-scaled development.

The key characteristics of a village include the following:

### Compact and Walkable Layout

Villages are often arranged around a central hub, such as a town square, green, or main street, making amenities accessible on foot or by bicycle. Streets are designed to prioritize pedestrians, with sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic-calming measures.

### Mixed-Use Development

Residential, commercial, and civic spaces are integrated to promote convenience and social interaction. Small shops, cafes, and essential services are often located near housing, reducing reliance on cars.

### Community-Oriented Spaces

A central gathering area, such as a plaza or park, serves as the heart of the village. Design includes spaces for events, markets, and casual socialization.

### Human-Scaled Architecture

Buildings are typically lower in height (1–3 stories) and designed with architectural details that reflect local character and history. Facades and layouts are inviting and oriented toward the street.

### Natural Integration

Villages often incorporate natural landscapes, such as open spaces, greenways, or nearby forests, to preserve a rural or semi-rural atmosphere. Sustainable design practices, like stormwater management and native plantings, are emphasized.

### Connectivity

Streets and pathways are designed to connect neighborhoods and amenities seamlessly. Multimodal options, including bike lanes and proximity to transit, are encouraged.

### Cultural and Historical Identity

Villages reflect the unique cultural, historical, or regional characteristics of their area through design and preservation efforts.

Villages like Pinehurst in North Carolina exemplify these principles, with their historic core, walkable layout, and integration of green spaces. Similarly, newly designed “village centers” in urbanizing areas are adapting these concepts to provide a balance between rural charm and modern needs.





Village Center - Pinehurst, North Carolina



# Introduction

## The Significance of a Village

Villages are vital and play a crucial role in urban planning for several reasons, serving as models of sustainable, human-centered growth while preserving cultural and community identity.

### Promoting Walkability and Reducing Urban Sprawl

Villages emphasize compact, mixed-use development, minimizing the need for extensive travel by car. They reduce urban sprawl by concentrating growth in defined areas, preserving surrounding open spaces and natural resources.

### Strengthening Community Identity and Social Cohesion

Villages often serve as cultural and social hubs where residents can interact, fostering a strong sense of community. Their design reinforces a shared identity, whether through architectural style, public spaces, or local traditions.

### Sustainability and Environmental Benefits

By encouraging higher-density development within a smaller footprint, villages protect agricultural land and natural ecosystems. Walkable designs reduce dependency on cars, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and promoting healthier lifestyles.

### Resilience and Adaptability

Villages often include a mix of uses - residential, commercial, and civic, which support local economies and enhance resilience to economic shifts. Their human-scaled designs are more adaptable to demographic and technological changes.

### Efficient Use of Infrastructure and Resources

Concentrated development reduces the cost of providing infrastructure, such as water, electricity, and transportation. Public investments like schools, parks, and transit systems can be more efficiently utilized in compact areas.

### Economic Vitality and Local Businesses

Villages support small businesses and local economies by creating environments where businesses thrive within walking distance of residents. They attract tourism and new residents by blending modern amenities with charm and character.

### Preservation of Cultural and Historical Heritage

Villages often serve as guardians of a region's cultural and architectural history, maintaining a connection to the past. They are focal points for celebrating local traditions, festivals, and art.

### Human-Centered Urban Design

Villages prioritize the needs of people over vehicles, creating spaces that feel welcoming and livable. Their scale and design make them accessible for all ages, from children to seniors.

### Models for Sustainable Urbanization

As urban areas expand, village-style planning offers a scalable framework for creating livable, sustainable neighborhoods. They demonstrate how growth can coexist with environmental stewardship and community well-being.

Villages represent the harmonious intersection of tradition and progress, offering a template for thoughtful, sustainable development that benefits residents and the environment.

In Section 02 of this Guide, the components of a village are further outlined for planning and design consideration.

In order to guide the development of Village Districts based on existing settlements within Harnett County, Sections 03 through 05 outline the planning and design strategies and interventions to promote village enclaves.

Section 06 explores the opportunities for implementation of the Harnett County Village Districts with careful attention to regulatory and administrative considerations to ensure that development aligns with county policies and goals.





Village Center - Kannapolis, North Carolina

# 01

## Harnett County's 3 Key Opportunities

### 1: Maintain and Celebrate Small Town Character

Harnett County embodies small-town character and charm through its close-knit communities, scenic landscapes, and friendly atmosphere – all stemming from its start with small-town character. We have the opportunity to not only maintain this legacy, but compliment a historical development pattern while filling county needs.

The county's historic downtowns showcase local businesses and quaint shops. The pace of life is slower, emphasizing family, community events, and traditional values. Scenic rivers, parks, and nature trails offer outdoor activities, while the county's agricultural roots are evident in local markets and festivals. The blend of history, natural beauty, and a warm sense of community creates an inviting and peaceful environment for both residents and visitors.

#### Turn of the Century Beginnings

Harnett County, North Carolina, has a rich history shaped by its geographic features and infrastructure. Early settlements often formed near rivers and streams, such as the Cape Fear River and tributaries such as Buies Creek, which provided vital resources for agriculture, trade, and transportation. These waterways supported mills and small farming communities, creating hubs of activity in the otherwise rural landscape. With the arrival of railroads in the late 19th century, towns like Dunn and Erwin emerged as key centers for commerce and textile production, leveraging the rail network to connect with larger markets. Additionally, crossroads such as those at Lillington, the county seat, became focal points for trade and governance, facilitating the growth of small towns that served the needs of surrounding agricultural areas. Together, these natural and manmade elements shaped the settlement patterns and economic development of Harnett County.

Buildings reflect the economic growth of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with a rich supply of tall pines for timber and water for agriculture. Early

European settlements provided strong connections to brick vernacular reflected in civic centers such as houses of worship, recreation and educational facilities. These structures, primarily found in historic village centers, feature styles such as Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Neoclassical. Many buildings are primarily brick and wood, with decorative facades, large windows, and intricate woodwork. The enduring architecture provides a window into the past while adding to the county's nostalgic and charming atmosphere.

#### Legacy of Traditional Main Streets

The traditional main streets are legacies of its historic commercial and social life. These streets born from bustling centers of commerce and community gatherings, lined with general stores, banks, and small businesses that served local residents and travelers.

#### Agricultural Beginnings

Harnett County has its agricultural beginnings, around traditional town centers, in its rich soil, rooted in favorable climate, and geographic features. Early settlers cleared the land for farming, cultivating tobacco, cotton, and corn as staple crops. The Cape Fear River provided essential transportation, allowing farmers to trade their goods. Small farming communities grew around these agricultural activities, with local markets and trading posts becoming vital economic hubs. Agriculture shaped the county's social and economic development, establishing a tradition of farming that still influences the area's culture and community events today.



1 Traditional Farmhouses



2 Downtown Lillington



3 Serenity | Fuquay-Varina

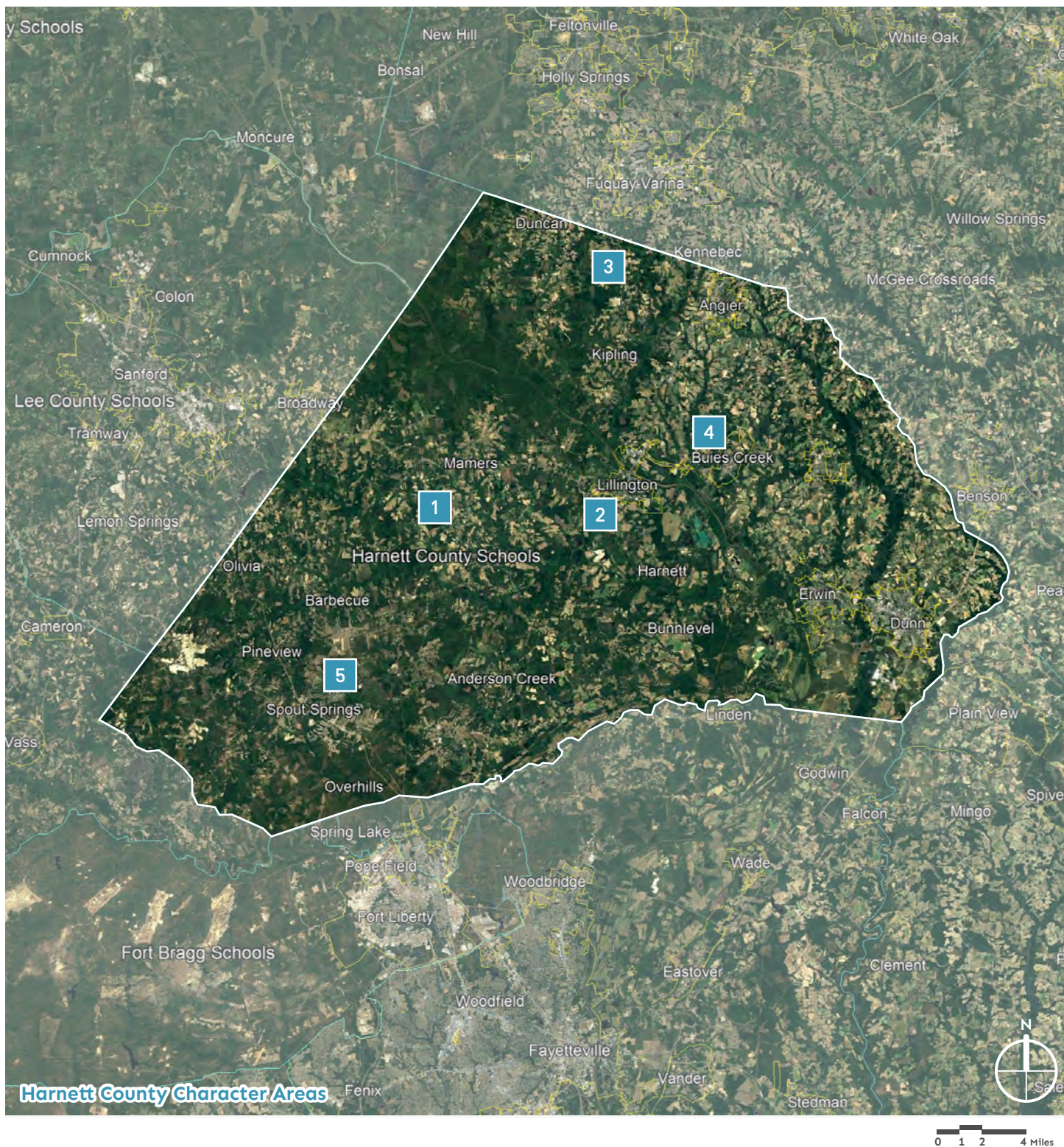


4 Campbell University



5 Large Lot Single Family





# Harnett County's 3 Key Opportunities

## 2: Provide Missing Amenities

Harnett County is in transition. Once a rural-only county is now faced with growing popularity in the form of greatly increased residential population and job growth. This growth, however, has highlighted and exacerbated limited access to key amenities throughout the County. We have the opportunity to position County Villages to thoughtfully provide these key amenities to residents throughout the County.

### Food and Beverage Lacks Options and Variety

The County has limited food and beverage or restaurant options, particularly in its rural areas. Most of the dining scene consists of fast food chains and family-style eateries, while specialized cuisine and diverse dining experiences are scarce. As a result, residents seeking greater variety often travel to nearby urban centers for more eclectic choices, from international flavors to trendy cafes. The lack of diverse culinary offerings creates a gap for locals and visitors who wish to enjoy unique and varied dining experiences without leaving the county.

### Recreation is Clustered Around Incorporated Towns

Recreational activities are often clustered around town centers, creating challenges for residents in more rural areas. Facilities like sports fields, parks, and community centers tend to be concentrated in towns, leaving residents outside these hubs with fewer convenient recreational options. Public transportation limitations and the distances involved mean those living in outlying areas may struggle to access these amenities. As a result, participation in organized sports, fitness programs, and other community activities can be difficult, limiting opportunities for socialization, fitness, and relaxation

### Fresh Food is a Major Challenge

Access to fresh food can be challenging due to the limited presence of grocery stores and fresh produce markets in some rural areas. Many residents must travel significant distances to reach supermarkets that offer a wide selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. In certain parts of the county, especially where public transportation is scarce, this lack of proximity can lead to reliance on convenience stores or fast food outlets, which often provide fewer healthy options. This situation contributes to food deserts, making it difficult for some residents to consistently access fresh and nutritious foods.



#### 1 – Grocery Stores

Grocery stores are key amenities, offering fresh food, household essentials, and health products. They ensure residents have convenient, reliable options to meet daily needs.



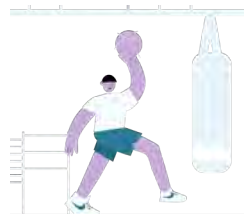
#### 2 – Food and Beverage

Food and beverage establishments are essential, offering varied dining options that cater to diverse tastes. They also foster community connections and provide gathering spaces.



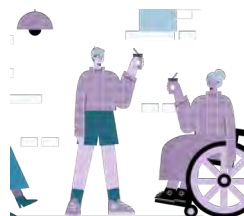
#### 3 – Open Space

Open spaces are essential for recreation, relaxation, and connecting with nature. They boost well-being through exercise and social interaction.



#### 4 – Recreation

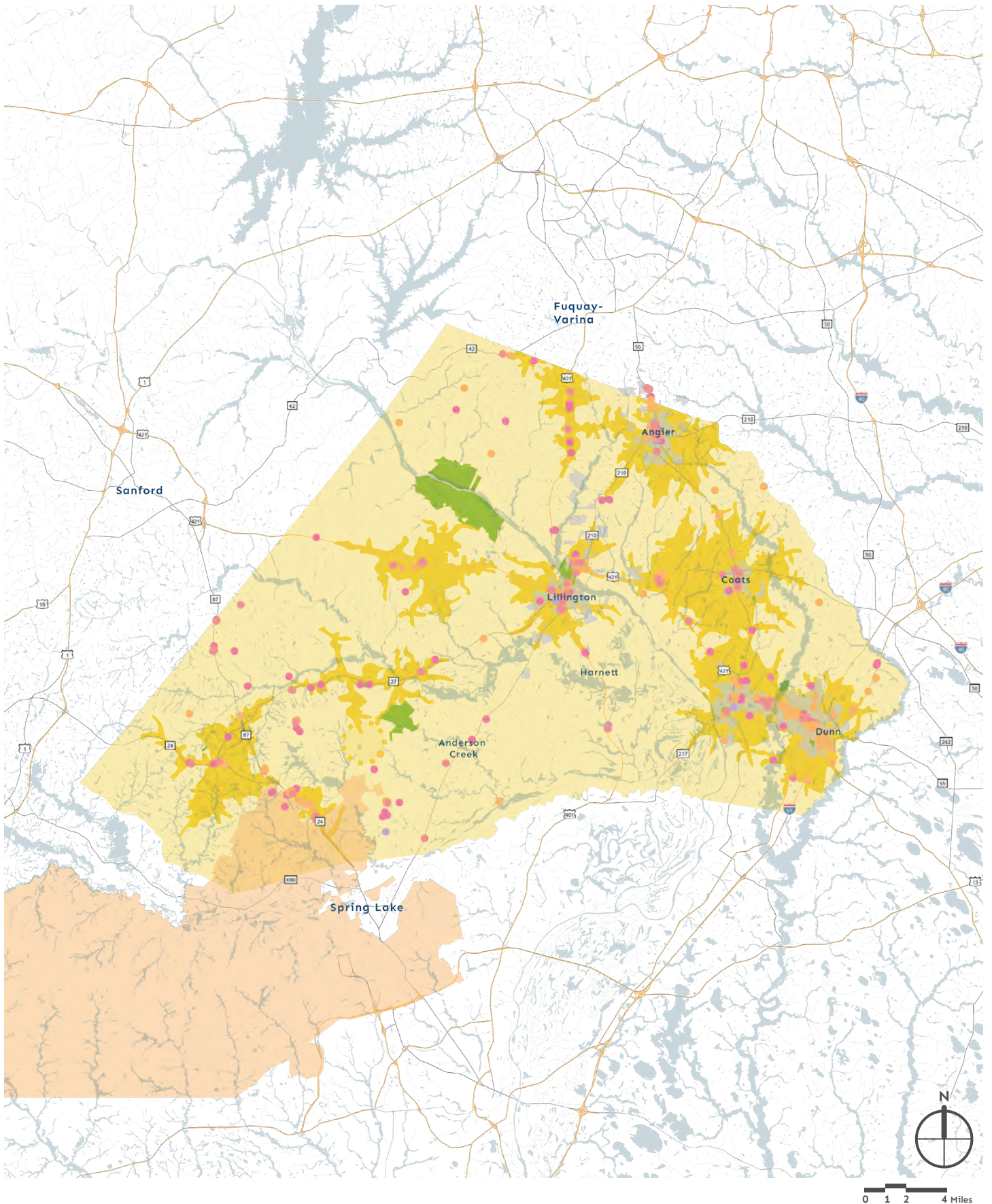
Recreation facilities are crucial, offering spaces for physical activity and leisure. They also foster community through social interaction and shared activities.



#### 5 – Daily Goods

Daily amenities are essential, offering access to healthcare, transportation, and essential services. They meet basic needs and help maintain quality of life for residents.





# Harnett County's 3 Key Opportunities

## 3: Strengthen County Economics

With agricultural beginnings comes larger parcels outside of this historic town centers, and has left an easy conversion to spread out development patterns as pressures grow. This today, however, has translated into many large lot single family patterns, which has required more County services to support, and ultimately, now costs Harnett County over \$1,000/acre annually. We have the opportunity to leverage incoming growth to strengthen our economy, not strain it.

### Compact Development Subsidizes Large Lot Single Family Development

Harnett County's Town Centers and adjacent traditional residential neighborhoods are a large economic boom for the County when considering the annual tax revenue per acre, less the annual services cost per acre. This translates into these patterns greatly subsidizing the swaths of large lot single family development.

### 223,000 Acres are Undeveloped

57% of non-incorporated Harnett County is currently undeveloped. There is an economic question to consider when imagining how different development patterns would change the economic complexion of the County. If 10% of the 223,000 acres were developed as the different development patterns as outlined to the right, they would provide a wide range of impacts:

- **Town Center Pattern:**  
Net +\$78M annually
- **Town Center Adjacent Pattern:**  
Net +\$34M annually
- **Missing Middle Pattern:**  
Net +\$23M annually
- **Compact Single Family Pattern:**  
Net -\$17M annually
- **Large Lot Single Family Pattern:**  
Net -\$23M annually



### Town Center Pattern (+\$3.5k/ac)

Traditional town center development patterns feature a walkable layout with commercial, civic, and residential buildings clustered around a main street. This pattern typically returns >\$3,500/acre in net annual taxes.



### Town Center Adjacent Pattern (+\$1.5k/ac)

Traditional residential development patterns near town centers have grid-like streets and homes close together, within walking distance of downtown. This pattern typically returns \$1,000 to \$2,000/acre in net annual taxes.



### Missing Middle Pattern (+\$1k/ac)

Missing middle development patterns consist of multi-unit housing types like duplexes and townhomes, bridging the gap between single-family homes and apartments. This pattern typically returns \$500 to \$1,500/acre in net annual taxes.



### Compact Single Family Pattern (-\$750/ac)

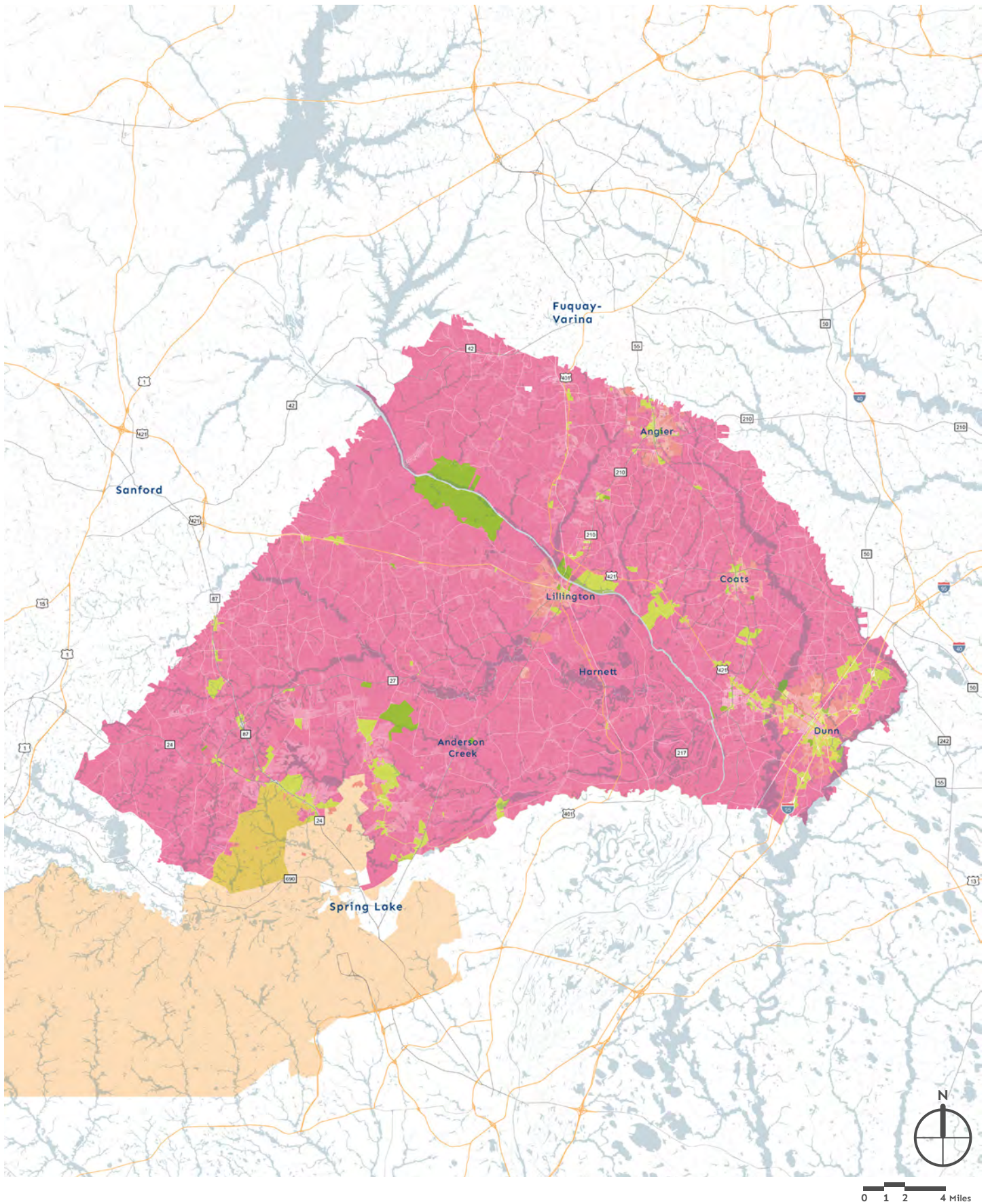
Compact single-family development patterns feature smaller lots with homes built close together, maximizing space and community interaction. This pattern typically returns -\$500 to -\$1,000/acre in net annual taxes.



### Large Lot Single Family Pattern (<-\$1k/ac)

Large lot single-family development patterns have spacious lots with homes set far apart, offering privacy and extensive outdoor space. This pattern typically returns less than -\$1,000/acre in net annual taxes.





# 02 County Village Vision

## Traditional Small Town Village Districts

When curated well, the County Village District not only enables greater opportunity, amenity, walkability, and economic impact – but also unlocks a remarkable district character and charm. The images below illustrate the overall identity, and speak to specific attributes to strive for with individual elements.





# County Village Vision

## Several Village District Candidates Identified

Four potential County Village Zones have been identified. When considering both the potential impact to the County, as well as ease of overall implementation – Rawls Church, Anderson Creek, Carolina Lakes, and Buies Creek jump to the top of the list.

### Buies Creek as a Priority

Buies Creek is a small, unincorporated village in eastern Harnett County, nestled within an agrarian landscape along US Route 421 and the Cape Fear River, between Erwin and Lillington. Known for being home to Campbell University, a private liberal arts institution set on 850 acres, the village has a population of approximately 2,940 residents, bolstered by 2,150 full-time undergraduate students, 1,000 faculty, and 570 staff, totaling around 6,600 people. The University has invested heavily in student services and amenities, but access for the wider community is limited. Essential services like healthcare, dining, and shopping are located six miles away in Lillington, with limited pedestrian access. Buies Creek, with its compact campus and traditional, walkable small-town development, offers a unique opportunity to expand upon its vibrant, inclusive village center.



### Carolina Lakes

Carolina Lakes is a gated suburban community in western Harnett County, adjacent to Fort Bragg. It features about 1,700 homes around seven lakes and offers amenities like boating, kayaking, and golf in a wooded setting. The diverse residents include active-duty military, civilian contractors, retirees, and families with school-age children, who rely on nearby Fayetteville for shopping, schools, and cultural activities.



### Anderson Creek

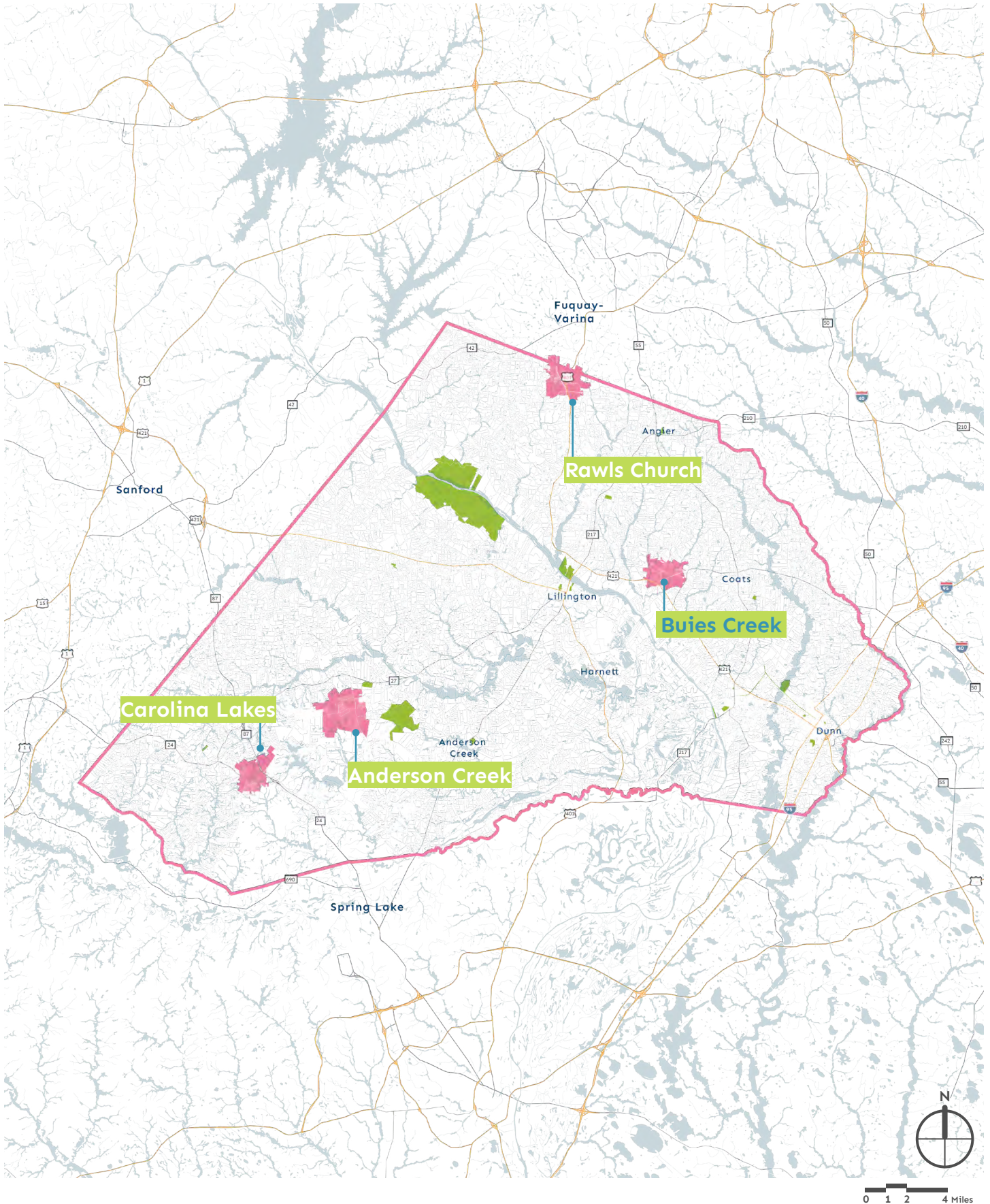
Anderson Creek, located in Spring Lake, NC, is the nearest suburban residential community to Fort Bragg in western Harnett County, close to Fayetteville. This enclave includes Anderson Creek Club and Anderson Crossing, gated communities within 1,700 acres of scenic forest, making it the largest populated township in Harnett County with about 7,450 homes. Each neighborhood offers unique, affordable luxury homes with views of a golf course, lakes, or nature preserves. Amenities include a daycare and preschool, pools, golf course, parks, fitness centers, and walking paths. Fayetteville, nearby, provides shopping, dining, healthcare, and entertainment.



### Rawls Church

Rawls Church, near Fuquay-Varina in northern Harnett County, offers rural charm and easy access to shopping, dining, parks, and cultural amenities. The new Serenity community spans 550 acres of woodland and rolling hills, featuring a clubhouse, pool, play areas, and open spaces along Hector Creek. It includes around 1,200 homes, attracting a diverse range of buyers, from first-time buyers to empty nesters and those 55 and older.





# County Village Vision

## Four Key Components

To realize the vision for the County Village Districts, there are four key components to deploy that shape the development pattern for the place. These key components and tools can be found in traditional development patterns throughout the Triangle, North Carolina, and the broader Southeast of the United States.

### Best Practices

To realize a vision for villages in North Carolina, best practices must be rooted in thoughtful planning and community-centric design. These districts should prioritize walkability by designing compact, interconnected street and block networks that ensure residents can easily access daily needs within a 10-minute walkshed. Integrating green spaces is crucial, creating a balance between built and natural environments while providing public gathering places that enhance community life. A diverse mix of housing types with smart density should be incorporated to cater to different demographics, fostering inclusivity and supporting sustainable growth. Finally, establishing an amenity spine with a central public space anchors the community, creating vibrant hubs for social interaction, commerce, and cultural activities. These practices not only enhance livability but also preserve the unique character and charm of North Carolina's village districts.

### Street, Blocks, and Buildings Work Together

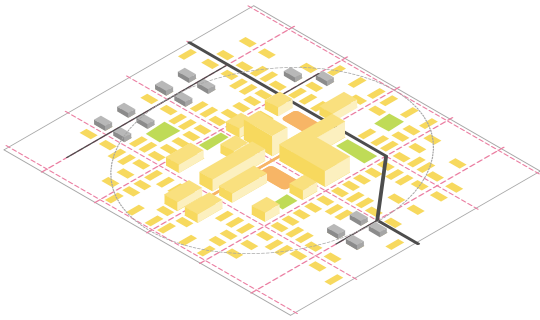
In well-designed villages, streets, blocks, and buildings work in harmony to create a cohesive, vibrant environment that fosters community interaction and enhances the quality of life. Streets are more than just pathways; they are public spaces designed for walking, cycling, and socializing, with pedestrian-friendly features like wide sidewalks, street

trees, and slow traffic. Blocks are arranged in a compact, connected network that promotes walkability, ensuring that homes, shops, and public spaces are easily accessible within a short distance. Buildings are thoughtfully positioned to define the edges of streets and blocks, creating a sense of enclosure and continuity. They vary in scale and function, accommodating a mix of uses that bring life and diversity to the village. Together, streets, blocks, and buildings form a unified urban fabric that supports a lively, inclusive, and sustainable community.

### Policy and Economics are Crucial

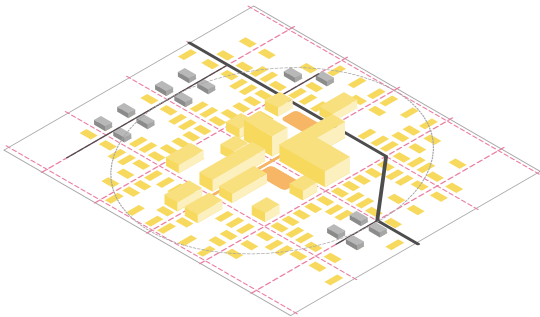
The success of village districts hinges on strong policy frameworks and supportive economic strategies. Policy plays a crucial role in shaping the development of village districts by establishing zoning regulations, design standards, and incentives that encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environments. These policies ensure that village centers remain compact, connected, and vibrant, fostering a sense of community and place. Economics supports this vision by creating sustainable financial models that attract investment, promote local businesses, and provide affordable housing options. By aligning policy and economic strategies, village districts can thrive as hubs of social, cultural, and economic activity, ensuring their long-term vitality and resilience.





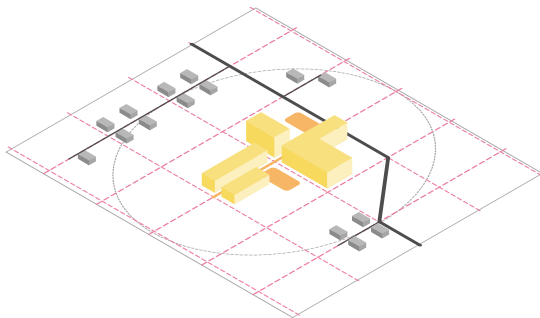
### **Integrate A System of Green Spaces and Defined Edge**

Green spaces strategically placed throughout developments, create natural gathering areas and recreational spaces while a defined edge, such as a green buffer, clearly separates urban village areas from rural or undeveloped land, preserving the landscape and reinforcing community boundaries.



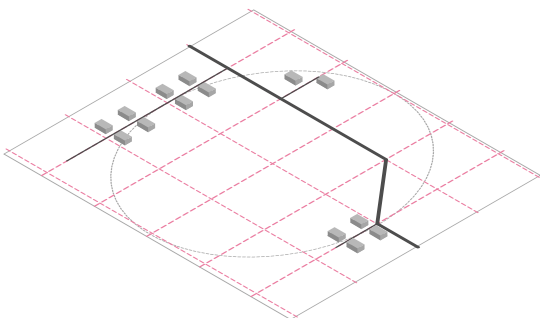
### **Surround with Diversity of Housing with Thoughtful Density**

A mix of housing options, from compact single-family homes to townhouses and apartments, is integrated into neighborhoods, promoting inclusivity and adaptability. Smart density ensures efficient land use while maintaining the character of the community, supporting walkability, and reducing sprawl.



### **Establish an Amenity Spine with Key Central Public Space**

A central corridor or “amenity spine” connects key destinations within a village, such as parks, shops, and schools. At the heart of the amenity spine, a central public space serves as a communal gathering area, fostering social interaction and creating a focal point for the community.



### **Create a 5 min Walkable Street and Block Network**

Streets and blocks are designed to ensure that essential services, amenities, and public spaces are within a 5-minute walk from any point in the neighborhood. A compact, pedestrian-friendly layout enhances accessibility, encourages walking, and fosters a vibrant, connected community.

# 03 Case Study: Buies Creek

## Buies Creek Small Town Character Today

Buies Creek is a small, unincorporated community known primarily as the home of Campbell University. Its quiet, rural setting blends the charm of a close-knit community with the vibrancy brought by the University's diverse student body.

### Campbell's Local Roots

Campbell University was founded in 1887 as Buies Creek Academy by Baptist minister J.A. Campbell. It evolved from an academy to a junior college named Campbell Junior College in 1926, and ultimately became a four-year institution in 1961, adopting the name Campbell University. The university expanded over the years, adding graduate programs, including a law school, pharmacy school, and medical school, establishing itself as a significant educational institution in the region.

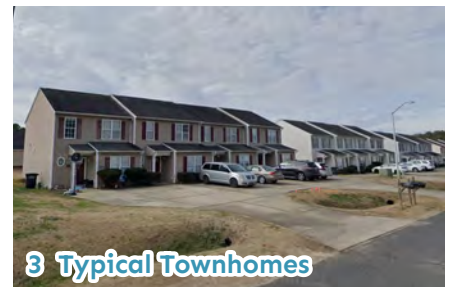
### Campbell Today

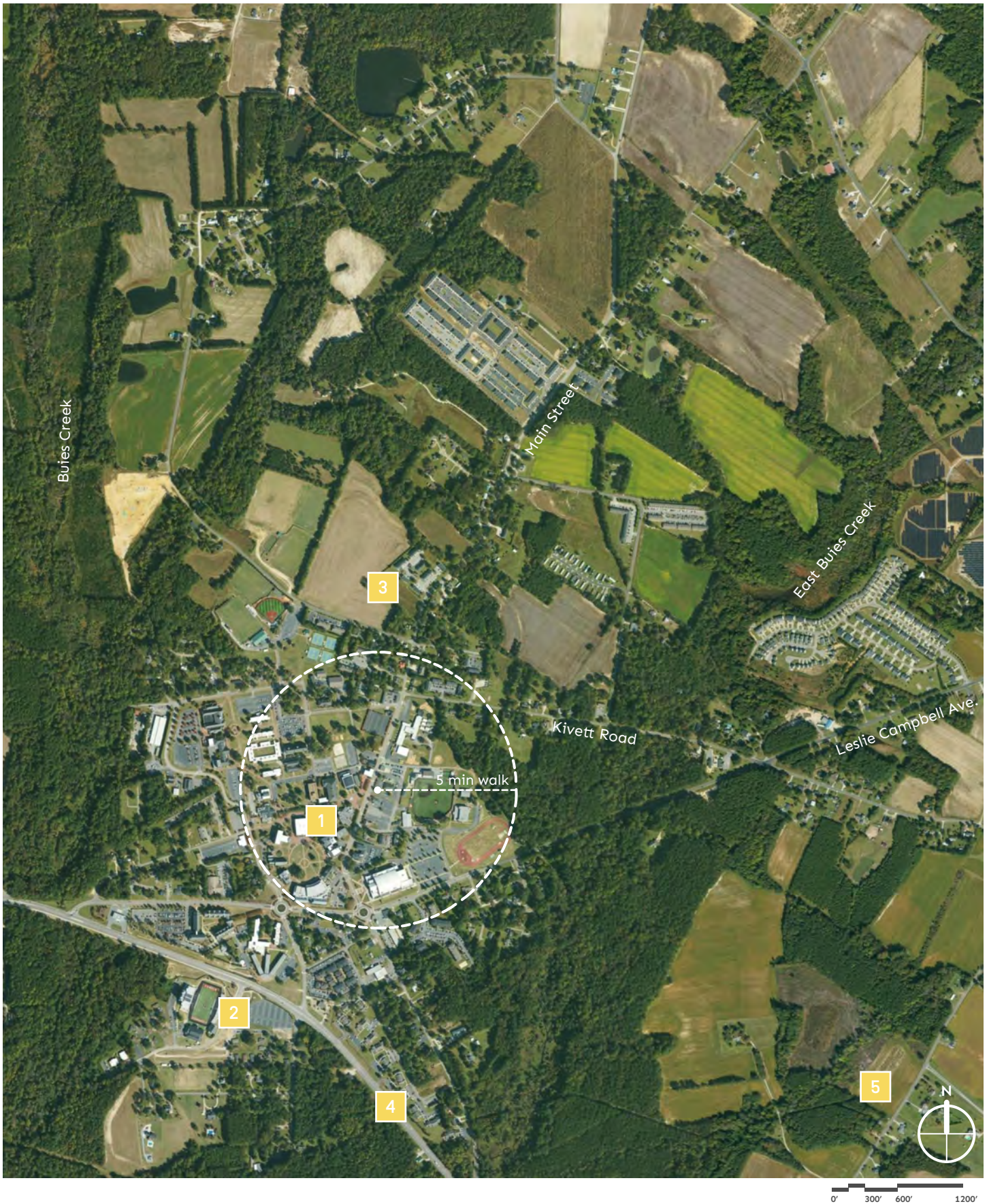
Today, Campbell University is known for its diverse academic offerings and commitment to faith-based education. It includes 11 schools and colleges, offering over 150 undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs in fields like health sciences, law, business, divinity, education, and engineering.

The university excels in health sciences with a medical school, pharmacy school, and physical therapy programs, alongside a well-regarded law school now located in Raleigh. Campus life is vibrant, featuring numerous student organizations, athletics, and community engagement. Campbell emphasizes leadership, service, and faith to nurture graduates for impactful careers, while its peaceful Buies Creek setting provides a serene yet accessible environment.

### Life Beyond Campbell

Outside of Campbell University, Buies Creek remains a tranquil, rural community that embodies a small-town feel with a close-knit atmosphere. The surrounding area is marked by local businesses, residential neighborhoods, and expansive farmlands, reflecting the region's agricultural heritage. Despite the university's presence, Buies Creek maintains its identity as a quiet enclave where residents value simplicity, strong community ties, and the scenic beauty of the North Carolina countryside.





# Case Study: Buies Creek

## Variety of Potential Locations for County Village District

Five potential locations for a County Village District appear when considering impact and ease of implementation with connectivity to surrounding infrastructure and contiguous assemblage of existing parcels. East Buies Creek provides the best combination of impact and ease of implementation.

### Five Potential County Village Districts

When planning for a new Village District, selecting the right location is crucial to ensuring long-term success, community integration, and sustainable growth. Four potential locations were considered - Buies Creek Main Street, Buies Creek North, Kivett, Southeast of Campbell, and Buies Creek East, each evaluated based on their impact and ease of implementation, with particular attention to connectivity with existing infrastructure, surrounding urban village context, connectivity with natural systems, parcel ownership, and the ability to assemble contiguous parcels. Among these, East Buies Creek emerges as the optimal choice, offering the best combination of impact and ease of implementation.

### East Buies Creek Provides the Greatest Impact and Ease of Implementation

The County should support efforts by Campbell University and the private sector to brand the area as the Village of Buies Creek and create infill and adjacent development that compliments the university, adds commercial opportunities and addresses need for mix of housing in this part of the county.

Buies Creek East is ideally situated in close proximity to existing infrastructure, making it a prime candidate for a pilot Village District. Its location allows for seamless integration with the surrounding urban fabric, street network, and natural areas along the Cape Fear tributaries of Buies Creek and East Buies Creek, providing direct and efficient access

to major thoroughfares and nearby neighborhoods. This connectivity not only facilitates ease of movement for residents but also supports Campbell University, a large employment base, and local businesses by ensuring a steady flow of customers, goods and services. Additionally, the presence of established infrastructure, including utilities and transportation links, reduces the complexity and cost of development, allowing for a smoother, faster implementation process.

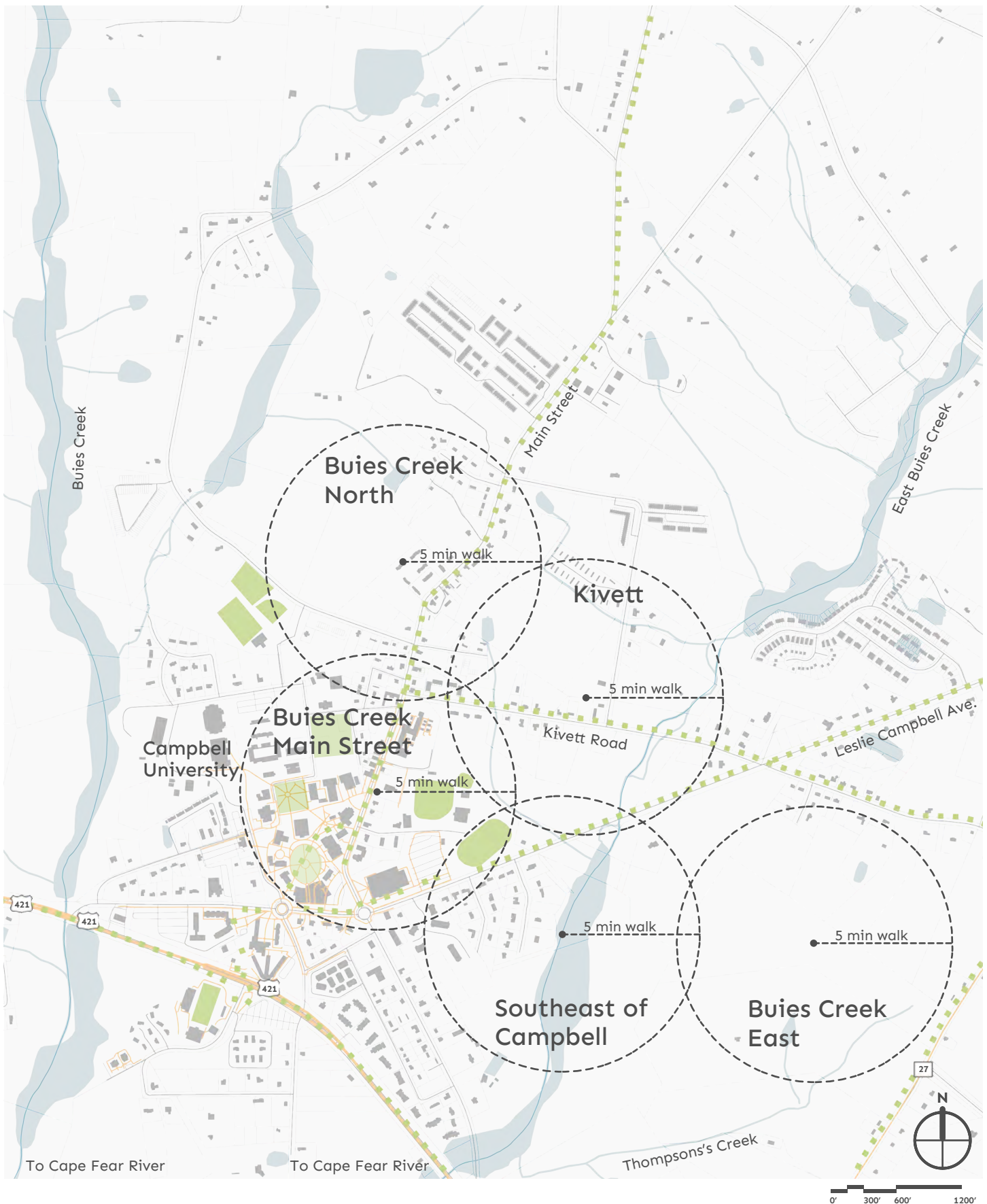
The selection of East Buies Creek as the site for a new Village District will have a profound impact on the local community and the broader region. Reinforcing Buies Creek Main Street as the central hub in this area, the new village development will serve as a catalyst for economic growth, attracting new businesses, residents, and visitors. The district will be designed to be pedestrian-oriented supporting a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational uses, fostering a vibrant, self-sustaining community. This development will create new job opportunities, stimulate local commerce, and enhance property values, contributing to the overall prosperity of Harnett County. Furthermore, by concentrating development in Buies Creek East, the district can serve as a model for sustainable, walkable communities in the region

One of the key advantages of Buies Creek East is the availability of contiguous parcels that can be easily assembled for new development. This allows for a cohesive and well-planned village district, where land can be efficiently utilized to create a balanced mix of diverse housing,

retail, public spaces, civic, institutional and amenities. The ability to assemble these parcels without significant legal or logistical hurdles ensures that the new village district can proceed without the delays often associated with land acquisition in more fragmented areas. This contiguous land assembly also supports the creation of a unified design vision for the district, where public spaces, streets, and buildings are harmoniously integrated to create a strong sense of place and community identity.

The ease of implementation is a critical factor in the successful development of a County Village District. East Buies Creek offers a relatively straightforward path to development due to its existing infrastructure, available land, and supportive regulatory environment. The area's current zoning and land use policies are conducive to the type of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development envisioned for the district. Additionally, the community's openness to growth and development further facilitates the process, reducing potential resistance or delays. The combination of these factors means that East Buies Creek East can move from planning to execution more rapidly than other potential locations, bringing the benefits of the district to residents and the County sooner.





# 04 Case Study: Buies Creek Main Street

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #1: Create a 5-min Walkable Street and Block Network.

A walkable street and block network in Buies Creek would focus on compact, redevelopment of existing Main Street and adjacent village blocks, enhancing the unique small town charm adjacent to Campbell University, and utilizing the natural beauty of Buies Creek as a key amenity. This approach fosters a vibrant, sustainable community that offers both convenience and a strong sense of place.

#### Connectivity with Existing Streets

The foundation of a walkable network begins with establishing strong connectivity with existing streets. The design should aim to extend and complement the current street grid, creating a seamless transition between the new development and surrounding areas. By aligning new streets with existing ones, we enhance accessibility and ensure the network feels like a natural extension of the community. This connectivity reduces travel distances, encourages walking and cycling, and integrates the development into the broader urban fabric, making it easier for residents to access nearby amenities and services.

#### Walkable Assemblage

A walkable assemblage focuses on creating a mixed-use environment where everything residents need is within a short walk or bicycle ride. The village infill design clusters homes, shops, offices, and recreational spaces together, reducing the need for long commutes or car trips. This mix of uses, combined with short block lengths and frequent intersections, creates a vibrant, walkable community. Streetscapes should be designed to be inviting, with wide sidewalks, ample green spaces, and active street-level retail that engages pedestrians. By ensuring that daily needs are within easy reach, the walkable assemblage fosters a lively, self-sufficient neighborhood where walking is the most convenient mode of transportation.

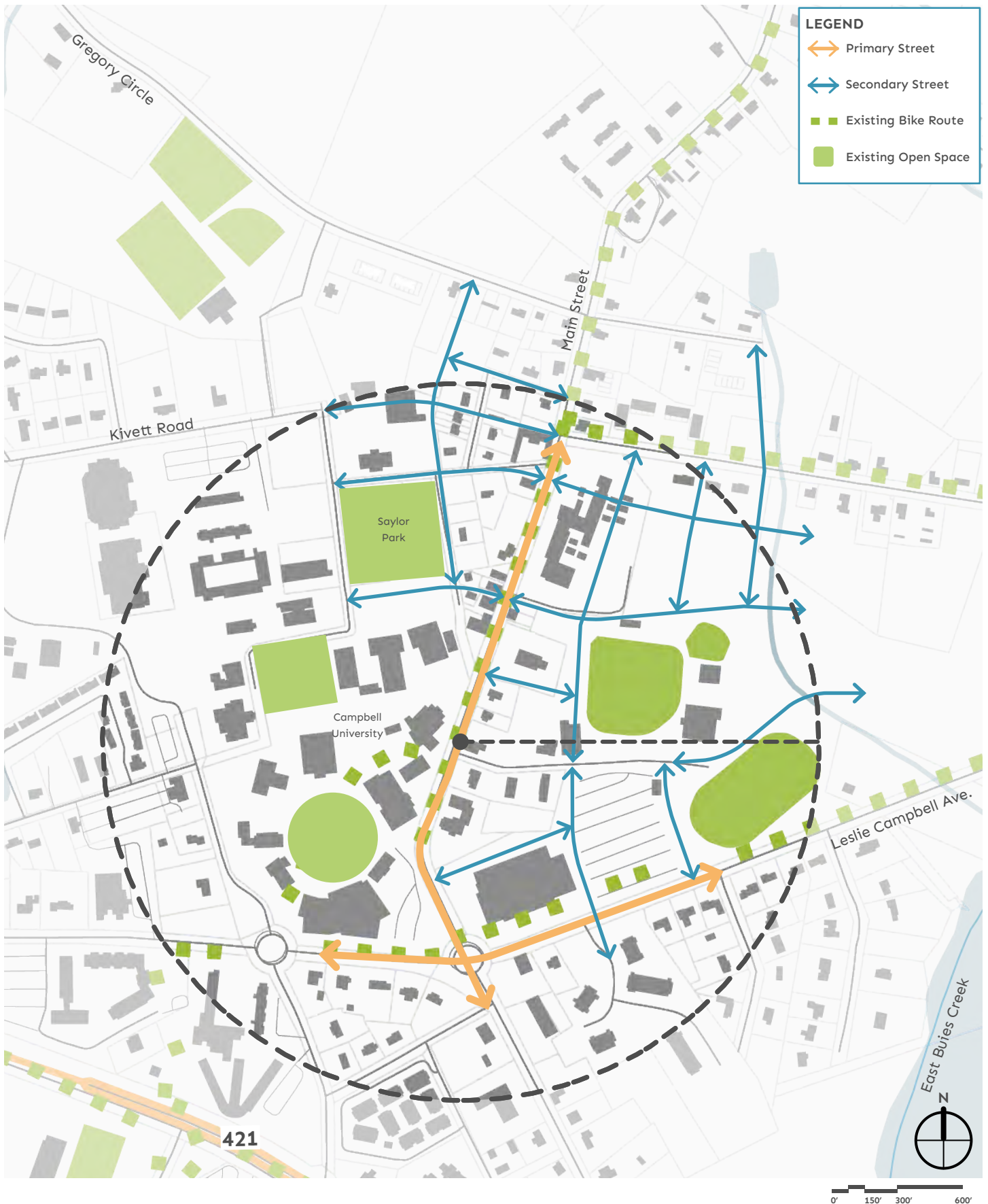
#### 300' x 300' Blocks

The urban village fabric is structured around a typical 300' x 300' block within small regional communities as well as a size chosen for its balance between density and walkability. This block size allows for a compact, grid-like pattern that promotes easy navigation and frequent interaction between different parts of the community. Within these blocks, a variety of building types and uses are integrated, creating a rich, diverse environment. The grid structure also supports flexibility in street design, allowing for the inclusion of public plazas, green corridors, and pedestrian-only streets. This consistent block size reinforces the identity of the area, making it easy to orient oneself and fostering a strong sense of place.

#### Pedestrian-Oriented Streets

The streets within the network are designed primarily for pedestrians, transforming them into vibrant public spaces. Sidewalks are wide and lined with trees, providing shade and comfort for walkers. Traffic calming measures, such as narrow lanes, raised crosswalks, and curb extensions, slow down vehicles and prioritize pedestrian safety. Streets are further activated by ground-floor retail, cafés with outdoor seating, and public art installations, creating an engaging, lively atmosphere. The focus on pedestrian-oriented streets ensures that walking is not just a means of transportation but an enjoyable experience in itself, promoting a strong connection between people and the public realm.





# Case Study: Buies Creek Main Street

## Four Key Design Strategies

**Design Strategy #2:** Establish an Amenity Spine with Key Central Public Space.

### Amenity Spine as Main Corridor

The Village Amenity Spine should be a thoughtfully enhanced Main Street corridor that connects different parts of the village and the University, concentrating key amenities along its length. Serving as the village's primary axis, it links residential areas with commercial, cultural, and recreational facilities. Along this pedestrian-friendly spine, residents will find shops, cafés, local businesses, and community services, all within a short walk from the Village Green. The spine features wide sidewalks, street trees, layered lighting, wayfinding, and places to sit and gather, encouraging strolling, social interaction, and reducing car dependence, fostering a walkable village lifestyle.

### Village Green as Central Public Space

The Village Green is a key central public space designed to be the focal point for community life. This space functions as the "living room" of the village, where residents gather for social activities, events, and daily recreation. The Village Green might include features like a central lawn, shaded seating areas, playgrounds, a pavilion for performances, and perhaps a water feature or public art installation that anchors the space. The design emphasizes openness and flexibility, allowing the Village Green to host a wide range of activities—from farmers' markets and festivals to casual picnics and impromptu gatherings. A welcoming and inclusive design ensures that it is accessible to all, fostering a strong sense of community.

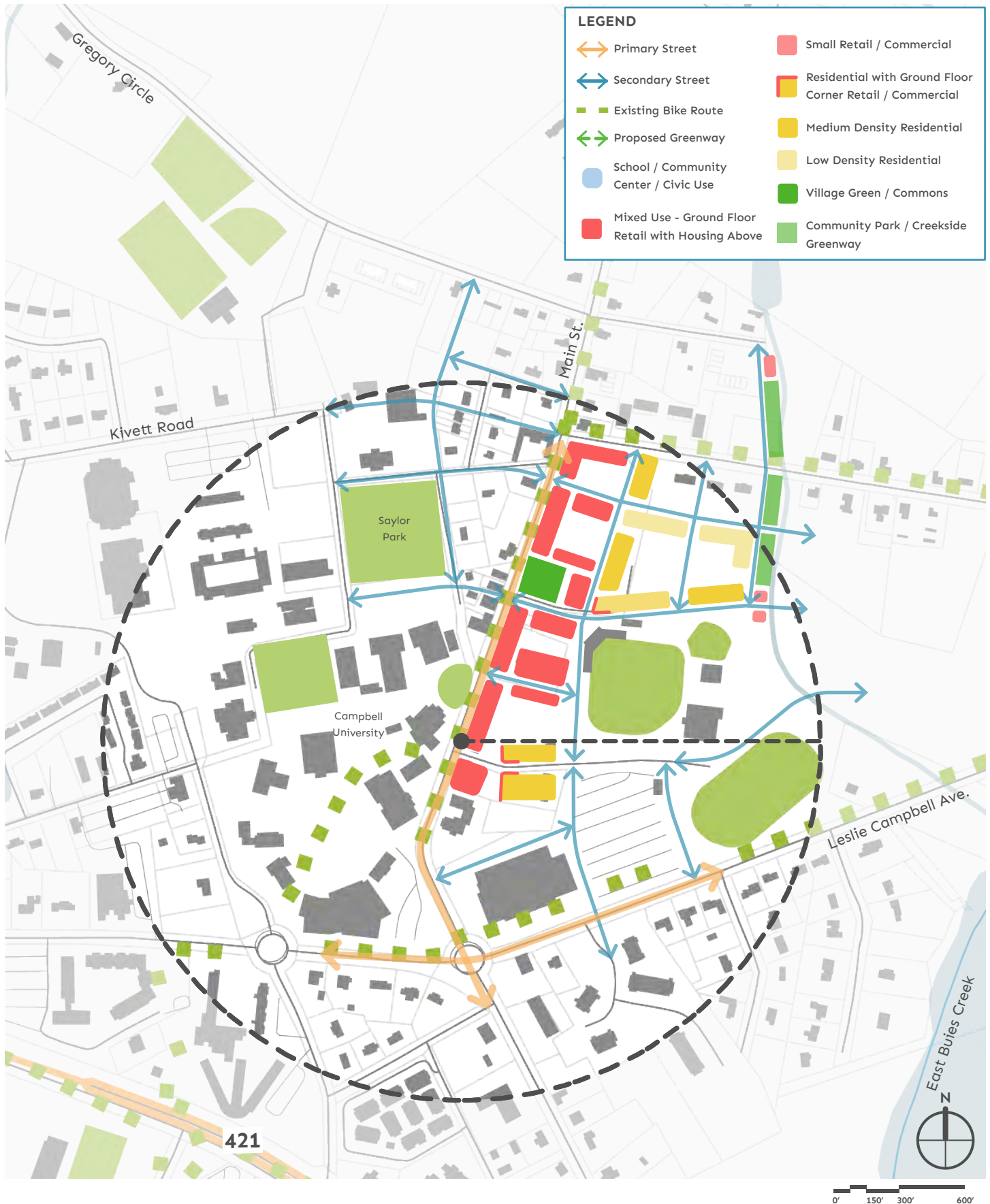
### Integrate Natural & Historic Context

The design of the Village Amenity Spine and Village Green should seamlessly integrate with the natural, historical, and cultural context, enhancing the area's unique character. This involves preserving and highlighting natural features like champion trees, watercourses, & topography, while incorporating landmarks or architectural styles that reflect the village's heritage. Pathways along the spine should connect with creeks or offer views of the landscape, bringing the natural environment into daily village life. Buildings & public spaces along the spine should respect the village's architectural vernacular, creating a cohesive and authentic sense of place for residents and visitors.

### Multi-Use and Layered Experiences

Creating multi-use spaces and layered experiences along the Village Amenity Spine and within the Village Green involves designing spaces that serve multiple functions & can adapt to different uses throughout the day and across seasons. For example, a marketplace along the spine might function as a retail space during the day & transform into a venue for evening events or outdoor dining. The Village Green could host a variety of activities, such as yoga classes, concerts, or seasonal festivals, each drawing different segments of the community & keeping the space lively and engaging. By layering these experiences & uses, the design ensures that the village remains vibrant & active, catering to a diverse population with varied interests and needs.





# Case Study: Buies Creek Main Street

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #3: Surround with Diversity of Housing with Thoughtful Density.

#### Complementary to County Character

The design begins with a deep respect for the character of Harnett County, known for its rural charm, historic roots, and close-knit communities. Any new infill or redevelopment should be carefully crafted to complement this character and scale integrating seamlessly with the surrounding landscape and built environment. Architectural styles reflect local traditions, incorporating materials, colors, and forms that are familiar to the area. Streetscapes are designed to enhance the county's scenic beauty, with tree-lined roads, modest setbacks, and open spaces that echo the small village vernacular. The goal is to ensure that new development doesn't disrupt the existing fabric of Buies Creek and Campbell University but rather enriches it, creating a sense of continuity between old & new

#### Thoughtful Density

Thoughtful density creates a village community that is both sustainable and vibrant. Infill and redevelopment should be arranged in a compact, efficient manner that maximizes land use while preserving open spaces and natural features. This approach avoids overwhelming the existing infrastructure and maintains a human scale, where buildings are proportionate to their surroundings. Density should be focused around key areas - the Village Main Street, a community center, transit nodes, civic or recreation amenities, reducing the need for long commutes and encouraging walking & cycling. This careful calibration of density supports a thriving community life, where people live close to services, amenities, and each other, fostering a sense of belonging and interaction.

#### Diversity of Housing Options

A diverse range of housing options is essential to accommodate the varying needs and preferences of new and existing residents. The design should include a mix of housing types — single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, cottages, apartments & live work that encourage missing middle options —ensuring that people of all ages, incomes, and household sizes can find a place to call home. This diversity also supports a more dynamic and inclusive community, where different generations and demographics can live side by side. Affordable housing options should be integrated seamlessly into the community, without segregating or stigmatizing any group. By offering a range of choices, the village should attract a broad spectrum of residents, contributing to the economic & social vitality of the area.

#### Small Scale, Incremental Development

Small-scale infill development allows for the gradual and sensitive introduction of new housing within existing neighborhoods and the village center. This approach minimizes disruption while making the most of underutilized land, such as vacant lots, underdeveloped parcels, or spaces between buildings. Infill development is designed to blend in with the existing context, respecting the scale, massing, form, style and character of neighboring structures. It adds housing incrementally, allowing communities to grow organically rather than through large, impersonal projects. This method not only increases housing supply but also revitalizes areas that might otherwise be overlooked, enhancing the overall fabric of the community.





# Case Study: Buies Creek Main Street

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #4: Integrate A System of Green Spaces and Defined Edge.

#### Public Places to Gather

At the heart of the community lies a network of green spaces designed as public places for gathering and social interaction. These spaces, whether they are parks, plazas, or pocket gardens, should be thoughtfully distributed throughout the village and surrounding neighborhoods, ensuring that every resident is within a short distance of a welcoming outdoor environment. Each green space is designed to reflect the community's character, offering a variety of experiences—from serene natural settings to more active, programmed spaces for events and recreation. These public places are more than just parks; they are the living rooms of the community, where neighbors meet, children play, and people of all ages can connect with nature and each other. By prioritizing these gathering spaces, the design fosters a strong sense of community and belonging, making the neighborhood a more vibrant and inclusive place to live.

#### Daily Amenities

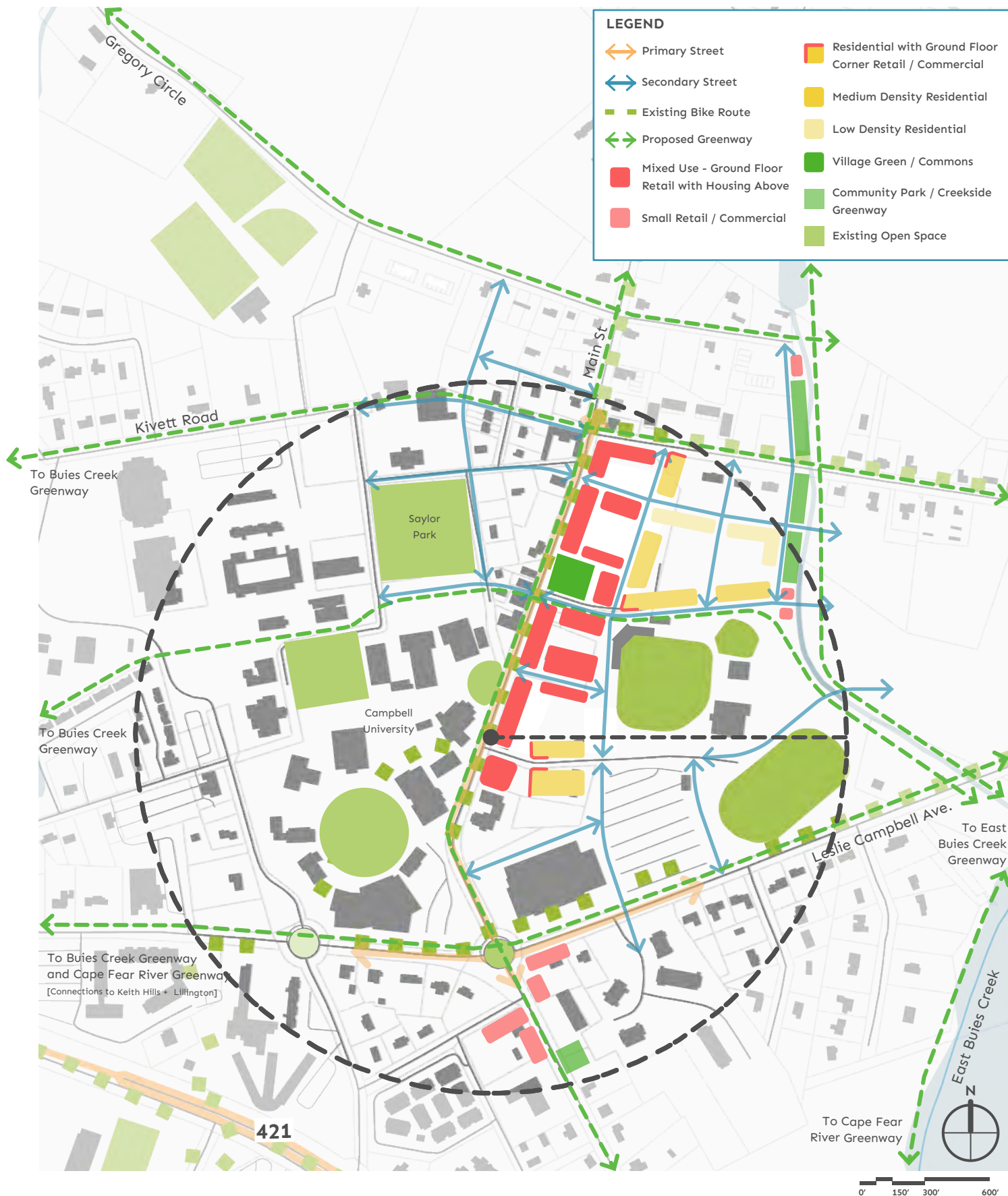
In addition to providing spaces for social interaction, the system of green spaces should strategically integrate with access to daily amenities and services. Small commercial nodes are located at key points along the green space network, ensuring that residents can easily access shops, cafés, healthcare facilities, community center and other essential services without needing to rely on cars. These nodes are designed to be part of the community fabric, with buildings that open onto green spaces, allowing

for seamless indoor-outdoor experiences. For example, a neighborhood café might have outdoor seating that spills into a park, or a small grocery store could be adjacent to a community garden where residents grow fresh produce. This integration not only makes daily tasks more convenient but also enhances the vibrancy of the green spaces by encouraging regular use and interaction throughout the day.

#### Walkable + Bikeable to Daily Needs

A key design element of the village is ensuring that all residents have walkable and bikeable access to daily needs. The green space network is interconnected by a series of pedestrian and bicycle paths that weave through the community, creating a safe and enjoyable environment for non-motorized transportation. These paths are designed to be direct and intuitive, linking homes with green spaces, amenities, and services in a way that makes walking and biking the most convenient and attractive option for short trips. The paths are also designed with comfort and safety in mind, featuring lighting, seating, signage, art and natural shade from trees. By prioritizing walkable and bikeable access, the design reduces the community's reliance on cars, promoting a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle while also reducing traffic congestion and pollution.





# 05 Case Study: Buies Creek East

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #1: Create a 5-min Walkable Street and Block Network.

Creating a 5-minute walkable street and block network in for Buies Creek East involves careful planning to balance development, natural features, and proximity to Campbell University while maintaining a distinct identity.

#### Contiguous, Undeveloped Assemble of Land

The Buies Creek East area was identified as a potential option comprised of approximately 100-acres of greenfield characterized by Piedmont Forest and agricultural heritage land adjacent to the existing village of approximately the same size. Key features of this area include contiguous land, compact structure, supported by an established network of roads and infrastructure affording a cohesive urban village district design which prioritizes pedestrian access. Any potential site should be structured to support a dense, mixed-use environment where residential, commercial, and recreational spaces are within a short walking distance. Options should encourage active transportation modes and foster a close-knit community atmosphere preferably organized around existing neighborhoods or settlements

#### Adjacent to Campbell, but Outside of the "Campus" Identity

While the network should be adjacent to Campbell University, it must establish a distinct identity separate from the campus. This can be achieved through unique built forms, architectural styles, public spaces, and streetscapes that differ from but are complementary to those on campus. The goal is to create a neighborhood that benefits from the university's proximity—like access to student populations, university facilities and events—without blending into the campus. Branding and design choices should emphasize this distinction, making

the area attractive to both university affiliates and the broader community.

#### Leverage Natural Features as an Amenity

Buies Creek's natural features, including its namesake creeks and tributaries along with surrounding conservation land, and proposed greenways and parks should be central to the design creating village neighborhoods connected to the watershed and onto adjacent town centers. These features can be integrated into the walkable network as focal points and viewsheds - such as parks, trails, greenways and riverfront promenades creating alternative transportation modes and connecting urban ecology, sustainable design and natural stormwater management. The creeks should extend the proposed greenway network along the Cape Fear River lined with pathways, seating areas, and natural landscaping to create a serene environment that residents and visitors can enjoy as passive recreation. Leveraging these natural assets not only preserves and enhances the aesthetic as well as environmental quality of the area but also increases property values and promotes a healthy, active lifestyle.





# Case Study: Buies Creek East

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #2: Establish an Amenity Spine with Key Central Public Space.

Designing a walkable extension of the Village requires a comprehensive approach that integrates land use, transportation, public spaces, and community amenities to ensure that all essential services and daily needs are within a reasonable walk from any point in the village districts and their neighborhoods.

#### Street Infrastructure and Connectivity

Working within Buies Creek East, the design of a walkable network builds upon a modest, rural settlement pattern with a limited existing blocks and streets. The major arterials that frame the new village development include Leslie Campbell Ave. to the west, Hwy. 27 to the east and Kivett Road to the north with affording connections with the center of Buies Creek. Key connections extend the current street grid, seamlessly integrating with the surrounding community to create a natural, familiar extension within small dimensional standards. The grid design supports flexibility in multi-purpose hierarchy, allowing for the inclusion of “complete streets”, alleyways, lanes, green streets, public plazas, pocket parks, green corridors, and pedestrian-only streets. The new mobility network reduces travel distances, emphasizes walking, cycling, and micromobility as well as providing the community residents with access to new amenities, services and local employment.

#### Walkable Assemblage

Creating a walkable assemblage in the new neighborhood is essential, with a mixed-use core providing convenient daily goods within a short walk or bike ride. The design clusters homes, shops, offices, schools, and recreational spaces to reduce car dependency, featuring active streetscapes and manageable block lengths for a vibrant community. The Buies Creek East Village Center, near existing small businesses on Kivett Road, will serve as the neighborhood’s heart, with a main street and village square surrounded by key amenities such as a grocery store, cafés, pharmacy, and community centers. Essential services are distributed around the central green

space and smaller neighborhood hubs, ensuring accessibility within a 10-minute walkshed. Public transit should link all districts, reducing short car trips and supporting sustainable transportation options for longer journeys.

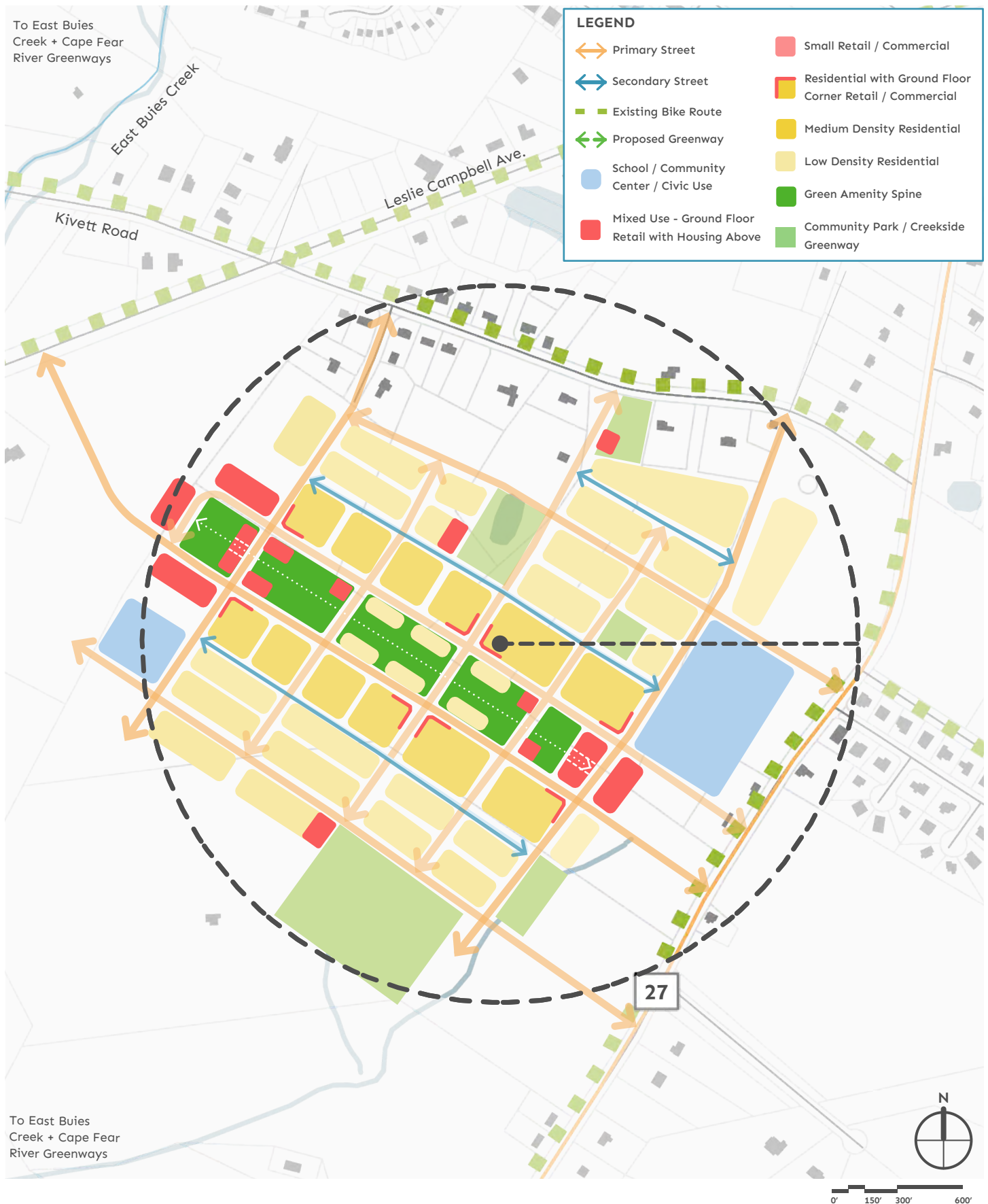
#### 300' x 300' Blocks

The urban fabric is once again structured around a typical 300' x 300' village block chosen for its balance between density and walkability. A compact, grid-like pattern promotes easy navigation and frequent connections to different parts of the community. A variety of land uses and building types accentuated by varied village architectural styles are woven within the blocks to create a rich, diverse environment. Using a consistent block size reinforces the identity of the Buies Creek village districts, providing a comprehensible layout and ease of orientation continuing to foster a strong sense of the village concept.

#### Pedestrian-Oriented Streets

A series of vibrant public spaces define the pedestrian streetscape. Generous sidewalks are lined with shade trees and lighting to provide comfort and safety. Narrow drive lanes, raised crosswalks, curb extensions and bike lanes prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and intentionally slow traffic. Ground-floor retail, civic spaces, senior / community center, cafés with outdoor seating, and public art create social cohesion in an engaging, lively pedestrian public realm. Streetscapes should be designed in a similar style as in center of Buies Creek with warm paving tones, ample street trees, a verdant landscape, comfortable street furnishings, signage, wayfinding and exciting ground floor shops and businesses that engage pedestrians.





# Case Study: Buies Creek East

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #3: Surround with Diversity of Housing with Thoughtful Density.

#### Complementary to Urban Village Character

The new Buies Creek East Village District should reflect the historic Main Street pattern, characterized by modest, human-scaled buildings, a vibrant business district, and a mix of two to four-story structures with ground-floor shops and active storefronts. To create a vital village center, focus on enhancing pedestrian activity and residential density with pedestrian-scale buildings, shade, and local goods and services that reflect the community's diversity. The neighborhood should offer a diverse range of housing types for all ages, incomes, and backgrounds. Civic buildings, such as churches, schools, and libraries, should be situated on squares, plazas, or greens to serve as landmarks and reinforce their cultural significance.

#### Thoughtful Density

Smart density promotes compact, well-connected development that fosters a sustainable, resilient, and comfortable lifestyle. Diversifying housing types—ranging from small single-family homes and auxiliary dwelling units to townhouses, apartments, and affordable housing—supports demographic diversity. In Buies Creek East, density is increased near the village center and along main streets, while maintaining lower- and middle-density residential areas on the periphery. This balance enhances walkability and vibrant community life without straining infrastructure.

#### Diversity of Housing Options

Mixed residential areas are envisioned on either side of the linear green village commons. Land use within the mixed residential areas should be primarily residential, including a range of housing types, densities, and price points, interspersed with a local cafe or corner shop. The range of housing types should address the needs and desires of people of different ages, family sizes, cultures, and incomes. Residential land uses support a broad range of housing types, medium to high densities and developers that support transit use, as well as a convenient walking / cycling environment. Residential land uses should also complement, capitalize on, and orient to the desirable river and greenway open space amenities.

#### Small Scale, Incremental Development

In a rapidly evolving urban landscape, fostering sustainable growth while preserving a community's character and scale is crucial. Small-scale incremental development within a compact urban village offers a balanced approach to urbanization, allowing organic growth while respecting the existing fabric. Instead of creating an entirely new village district, this method enables gradual adaptation, introducing new housing, retail, and public amenities in response to community needs without disruption. An initial phase should focus on the mixed-use core and establish the amenity spine for future expansion. This approach allows for flexible, manageable development, ensuring infrastructure and services keep pace with growth and demand.



Compact Single Family Homes



Cottage Courts



Townhomes + Apartments



Mixed Use - Shops + Flats



Diverse Densities + Housing Types





# Case Study: Buies Creek East

## Four Key Design Strategies

### Design Strategy #4: Integrate a System of Green Spaces and Defined Edge.

#### Public Places to Gather

Green spaces are strategically located to serve as central public gathering places, anchoring the community and providing residents and the community at large with accessible areas for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction. These open spaces form the public realm, whether parks, plazas, streetscapes, greenways, trails or community gardens, act as focal points within the urban fabric, drawing people together and fostering a sense of community. By positioning these green spaces at key locations within the Buies Creek East village district, such as at the intersection of major pedestrian routes or near civic and commercial centers, they become integral to daily life and contribute to the overall identity of the area.

#### Access to Daily Amenities

The green spaces within the village should be interconnected by a network of green corridors that provide direct, safe, and pleasant routes to daily amenities and services. These corridors can take the form of tree-lined streets, landscaped pathways, or linear parks that connect homes with schools, shops, and workplaces. By integrating these green corridors into the urban design, residents are encouraged to walk or bike to their destinations, reducing reliance on cars and enhancing the overall walkability of the village. This network of green spaces not only improves access to vital daily needs and community amenities but also contributes to the environmental sustainability of the development by promoting active transportation and enhancing local biodiversity.

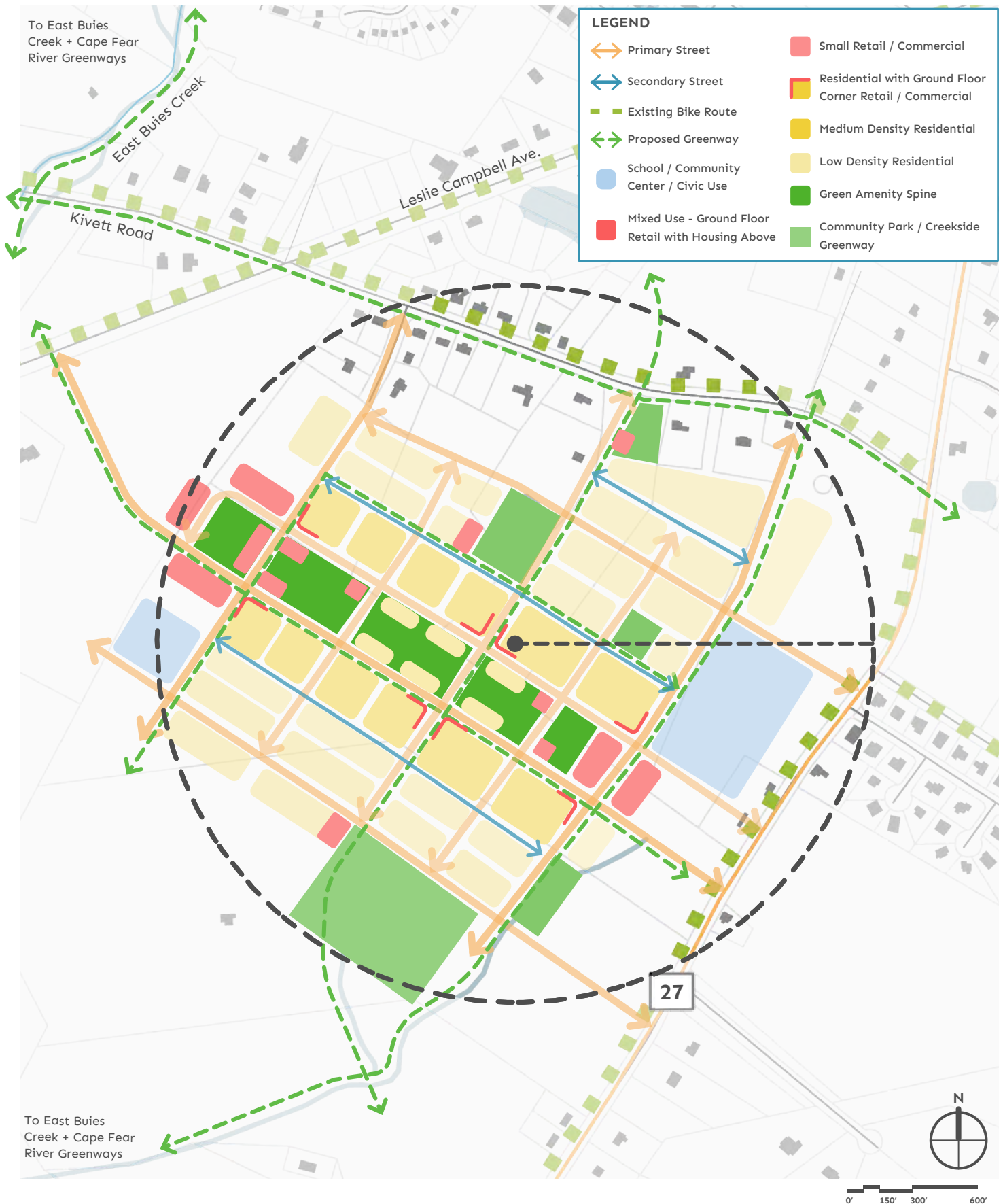
#### Creating a Defined Edge

Establishing a clear, defined edge around the new village district is crucial for maintaining its identity and managing the transition between Buies Creek Main Street, new development, and undeveloped areas. Green buffers like woodlands, wetlands, greenways, or parks can create this edge, serving as natural boundaries that separate the village from surrounding communities or undeveloped land. These buffers protect the village from encroachment, preserve the landscape, and offer recreational opportunities. By clearly defining the development's edge with green spaces, the village integrates better with its natural surroundings, ensuring a harmonious balance between built and natural environments.

#### Walkable + Bikable to Daily Needs

Creating a walkable village where residents can easily access daily needs is key to fostering a vibrant, sustainable community. Walkability starts with a compact, connected, and pedestrian-friendly network of streets and blocks. By placing homes, shops, schools, and public spaces within a short walking or cycling distance, residents are encouraged to walk or bike rather than rely on cars. Access to vital needs—like groceries, healthcare, and childcare—is prioritized by locating these services within the village core or along a central amenity spine. Green spaces and safe, well-lit pathways enhance the walking experience, making the village functional and enjoyable to navigate.



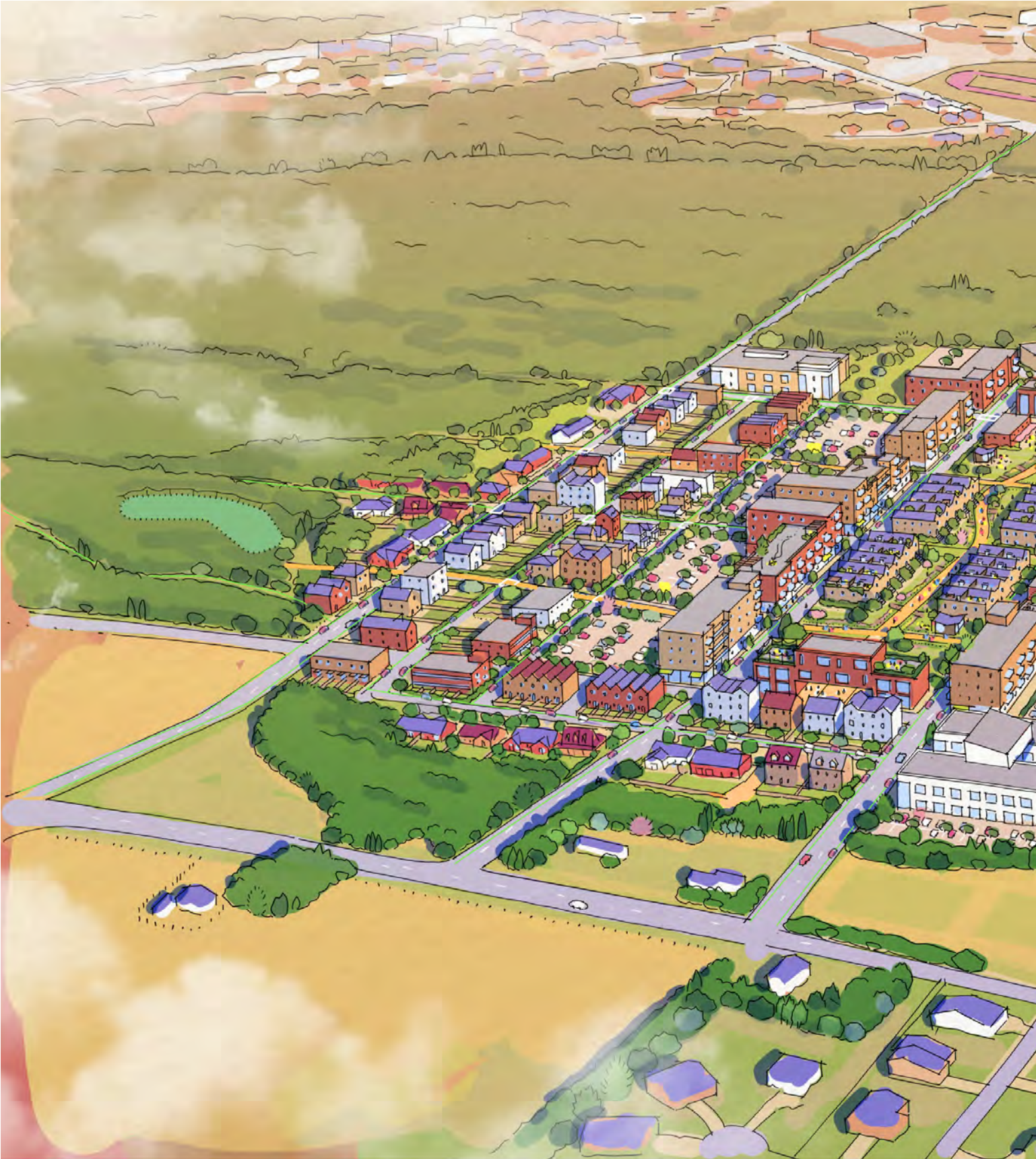


## Case Study: Buies Creek East Village District Concept Plan

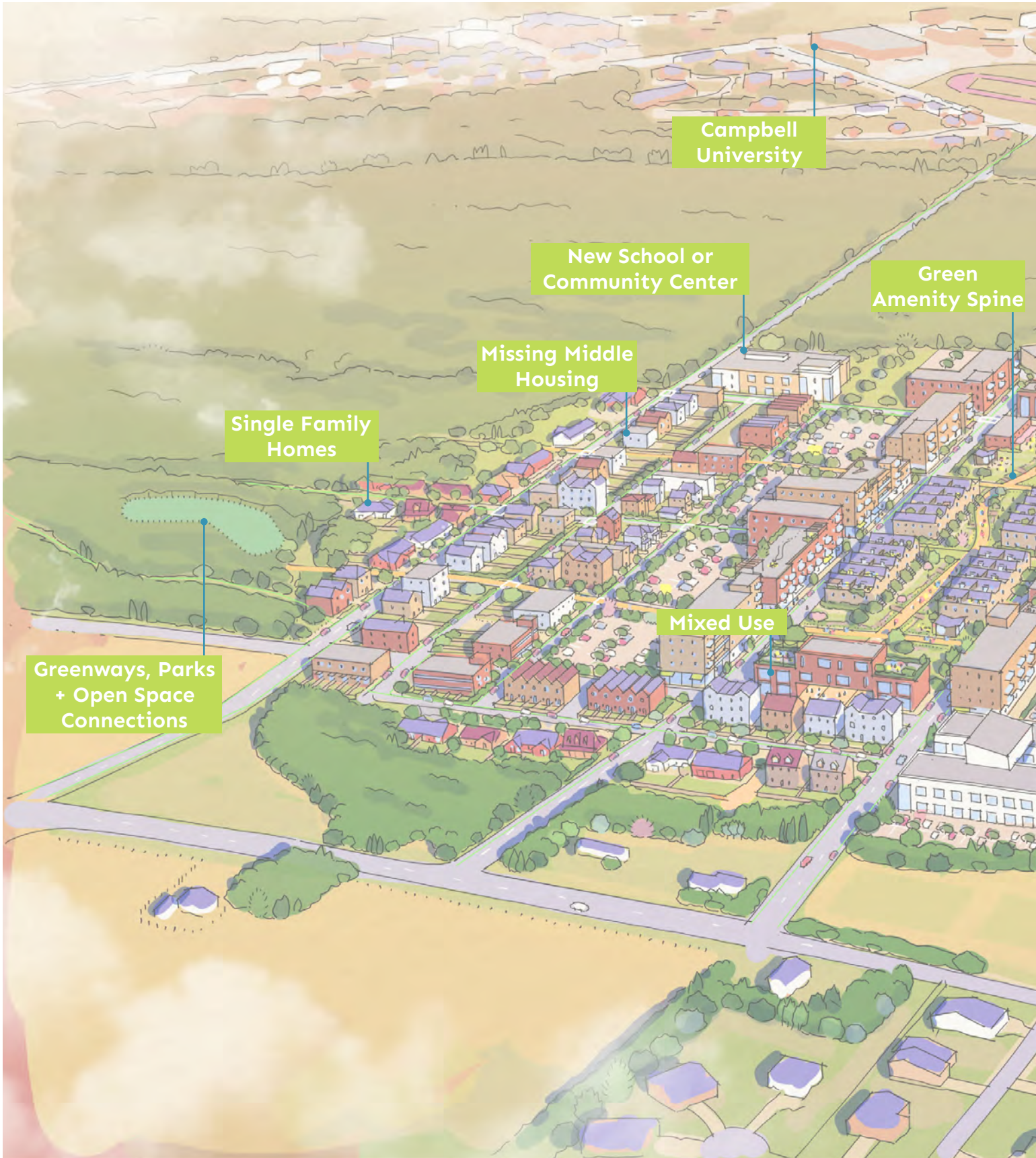
The walkable village concept plan implements the strategies in a scalable and replicable approach. The plan is anchored by a vibrant central community green, supported by density and a highly-pedestrianized public realm. It incorporates essential community amenities such as schools, parks, and light retail, ensuring residents have convenient access to daily needs. The design steps down in scale as it moves toward the existing residential context, aligning with the surrounding character and promoting a cohesive neighborhood environment.















Imagine yourself in the heart of this thoughtfully designed village square, where lush green spaces are seamlessly integrated with surrounding townhomes and cafés. Picture yourself lounging on the grass in the central park, carefully placed to encourage gatherings, or strolling along pedestrian pathways that weave through outdoor markets and local businesses. Every element—wide sidewalks, active edges, and strategically planted trees—creates a space that fosters connection, bringing nature and community life into perfect balance for a walkable, vibrant urban environment.



# 06 Implementation Considerations

## Regulatory

Implementing Harnett County Village Districts requires careful attention to regulatory considerations to ensure that development aligns with county policies and goals.

Regulatory considerations include reviewing and revising County zoning regulations, land use policies, and building codes to accommodate the mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly nature of the village districts. Additionally, regulatory frameworks will need to be updated to support flexible design standards, streamlined approval processes, and the integration of infrastructure improvements. Addressing these regulatory concerns is essential for facilitating smooth and efficient development while maintaining each district's intended character and functionality.

### Complement with Harnett Horizons

This document serves as a non-binding supplement to the Harnett Horizons County Comprehensive Plan, providing additional strategic guidance and detailed recommendations for the development of a County Village District. It complements the broader vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan by offering specific insights and design narratives that support the plan's goals for sustainable growth, community development, and infrastructure integration within Harnett County while focusing on the integration of pedestrian-oriented village districts.

### Mechanisms to be Adopted

Mechanisms for the formal adoption of the Harnett County Village District locations as well as planning, zoning and design guidelines will be incorporated into the County Comprehensive Plan. These mechanisms will outline the necessary steps, including public engagement, stakeholder consultation, and regulatory processes, to ensure that the proposed locations are thoroughly vetted and aligned with the county's long-term vision for sustainable development and community enhancement. Small Area Plans for the Village Districts could be developed to provide detailed planning and zoning guidance and tailored strategies for the unique needs and opportunities within each potential County Village District, ensuring cohesive and context-sensitive growth.

### County Village District Exact Locations Not Formally Adopted

The exact locations and boundaries for Harnett County's Village Districts have not yet been decided nor have they been formally adopted. The potential areas outlined in this document are preliminary considerations based on initial impact and feasibility assessments. Final decisions regarding the village district locations and boundaries will be made following further analysis, public input, and coordination with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with the county's broader planning goals and community needs.



# Implementation Considerations

## Spectrum of Village District Implementation Options

Though several mechanisms for implementation have been considered, the recommendation is for the County to proceed with a series of simple steps that strike the best balance of flexibility to transition over time.

### Next Steps

The essential steps are outlined below:

#### A. Future Land Use Map Revisions

Designate areas on the Harnett County Future Land Use Map (FLUM) as village districts based on the design strategies outlined with in this Harnett County Village Design Guide and context-sensitive development. Additional focus should align Zoning Code revisions to align with updated FLUM designations. Infrastructure planning for necessary upgrades to roads, utilities, and public facilities. Community Engagement sessions to ensure revisions reflect resident and stakeholder priorities.

#### B. Conditional Zoning

Conditional zoning should address a tailored zoning approach that allows specific land uses and development conditions to be customized the village district while ensuring alignment with broader planning goals. The conditional zoning should provide flexibility for innovation while preserving the district's character and meeting community needs.

Customizable conditions provide for specific conditions or restrictions to be applied to a property or projects within a designated village district, such as design standards, permitted uses, or infrastructure improvements. Village character compatibility ensures new development aligns with the cultural, historical, and architectural aspects of the village district. Focus on community engagement provides opportunities for public input and negotiation to address community concerns and priorities. The County can maintain enhanced oversight related to the scale, design, and impact of development projects.

#### C. Village District Small Area Plans

Based on the Harnett County Villages identified, Village District Small Area Plans are detailed, localized planning documents used to guide the development, revitalization, or preservation of specific village districts within a community. These plans shall be designed to reflect the unique character and needs of each of the village areas while aligning with broader municipal or regional goals. Key purpose and features shall include the following:

- **Community-Centric Design:** Emphasize human-scaled development with walkable streets, public spaces, and mixed-use areas. Foster a strong sense of community identity through thoughtful design and land-use planning.
- **Land Use and Zoning Recommendations:** Provide detailed guidance on permitted land uses, building heights, density, and architectural styles. Encourage a mix of housing options, retail, and services to create a vibrant and functional district.
- **Public Realm Enhancements:** Focus on improving streetscapes, parks, plazas, and pedestrian pathways. Incorporate sustainable design elements like green infrastructure and energy-efficient features.
- **Preservation of Character:** Protect historic buildings, cultural landmarks, and natural features that define the area's identity. Balance new development with the preservation of existing community assets.
- **Economic Development Strategies:** Identify opportunities to attract businesses, support local entrepreneurs,

and enhance the tax base. Integrate strategies for tourism, retail, and cultural events to boost economic vitality.

- **Transportation and Connectivity:** Enhance access to public transit, bike lanes, and pedestrian routes. Ensure connectivity between the village district and surrounding neighborhoods or regions.
- **Community Input and Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in the planning process to ensure the plan reflects local priorities.

#### D. Specific Form-Based Overlay

A Form-Based Overlay for Villages may be developed as a complementary zoning tool designed to regulate development in a way that prioritizes the physical form and character of the built environment within a Village District over specific land uses. It aims to preserve and enhance the distinctive qualities of a village while fostering sustainable and community-oriented growth.

A Village Overlay District would be based on a form-based code for areas destined to become new walkable centers. Rather than dictating the use of a building, form-based codes guide the placement, massing and features of buildings so that the sum creates a pleasant, active street. Establishing rules for the look and feel in conjunction with community discussions helps to codify what residents would like to see, which in principle could help them feel more comfortable with change. Buildings within 15-minute villages should encourage multiple uses and flexible spaces such as a municipal permit center some days of the week, and/or perhaps a pop-up shop on other days.

# Implementation Considerations

## Administration

Though several approaches to administration have been considered, the recommendation is for the County to continue developing key relationships within each of the four County Village Districts that have been identified. Cohesive places, like County Village Districts, thrive off of an administration that guides coordination between key constituents, development, infrastructure, policy, place, brand, economics, and ongoing maintenance.

In the future, consideration should be given to forming advisory groups for one or more villages which may necessitate a Village Design Review Board for review and guidance prior to approval by County Planning and the Board of Commissioners.

Other options for consideration in the long term may include the following:

### Option 1: VID (BID/MID) District

A VID (Village Improvement District) is a public-private entity that is originally setup by a County/Municipality, to pool and coordinate ongoing maintenance, vision, and programming of a place. The participation is voluntary, and the funding is usually mostly donations from stakeholders (business owners, developers, etc), and a smaller amount from the public stakeholders.

#### Benefits:

- **Enhanced Public Spaces:** VIDs focus on beautification and maintenance, making the area more attractive and well-maintained.
- **Economic Development:** VIDs support local businesses through marketing and events, leading to increased property values and economic growth.
- **Community Engagement:** Local stakeholders in VIDs have a direct say in spending, fostering collaboration and aligning improvements with community needs.
- **Increased Safety:** VIDs fund public safety initiatives like better lighting and security measures, reducing crime and improving security.

- **Event and Marketing Opportunities:** VIDs organize events and marketing campaigns to attract visitors and create a vibrant community atmosphere.
- **Local Control and Accountability:** VIDs provide tailored solutions, ensuring transparency and accountability in managing funds and initiatives.

#### Drawbacks:

- **Increased Costs for Property Owners:** VIDs impose additional taxes or assessments, which can burden property owners, particularly small businesses, and may lead to perceptions of unequal cost distribution.
- **Potential for Gentrification:** As property values rise, there is a risk of gentrification, leading to higher rents, displacement of long-term residents, and potential loss of the village's original character.
- **Administrative Challenges:** Managing a VID requires complex administration, which can be time-consuming and may lead to disagreements among stakeholders over priorities and management.
- **Risk of Exclusion:** Non-property owners, like residents, may feel excluded from decision-making, and non-commercial areas might be neglected in favor of commercial improvements.
- **Short-Term Focus:** There may be pressure to show quick results, leading to short-term projects that overlook

long-term planning and sustainability, with potential misallocation of funds.

- **Economic Vulnerability:** VIDs depend on the local economy, and during downturns, funding may decrease, straining the district's ability to continue its activities or increasing the burden on struggling businesses.

#### Example:

- **Town of Cary**  
The Cary Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) is part of its downtown redevelopment plan. The BID helps advance the timing of private development in Downtown Cary. Given current success, Town Council refined the criteria of the program to provide Cary greater precision in determining projects that best align with the Imagine Cary Community Plan (ICCP).



# Implementation Considerations

## Administration

### Option 2: MSD District

An MSD (Municipal Service District) is a designated area within a municipality where additional services, improvements, or regulations are applied, funded by special assessments or taxes levied on properties within the district. MSDs are often used to support projects that enhance public infrastructure, beautification, safety, and economic development.

#### Benefits:

- **Enhanced Public Services:** MSDs improve infrastructure and offer targeted services like street cleaning and enhanced public safety, boosting the quality of life for residents and businesses.
- **Economic Development:** By enhancing the environment, MSDs attract new businesses, retain existing ones, and increase property values, driving economic growth.
- **Tailored Solutions:** MSDs allow localized control, enabling custom programs and projects that address the specific needs and characteristics of the district.
- **Enhanced Community Engagement:** MSDs involve local stakeholders in decision-making, fostering community involvement and collaboration on issues like crime prevention and economic revitalization.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** MSDs leverage resources from both the public and private sectors, enabling large-scale improvements and increasing funding opportunities

through special assessments.

- **Long-Term Planning:** MSDs provide a framework for sustained development, focusing on long-term goals like economic diversification and urban renewal, ensuring ongoing investment and strategic growth.

#### Drawbacks:

- **Increased Costs:** Property owners face additional taxes, which can be a burden, especially for small businesses, with potential inequity in cost distribution.
- **Risk of Gentrification:** Rising property values can lead to gentrification, causing displacement of lower-income residents and small businesses, reducing community diversity.
- **Administrative Complexity:** Managing an MSD requires complex governance and administration, which can lead to inefficiencies and bureaucratic delays.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Competing priorities among stakeholders may result in conflicts, perceived favoritism, and delays in project implementation.
- **Limited Flexibility:** Funds must be used within the district, limiting adaptability to broader needs or economic fluctuations, potentially straining finances during downturns.
- **Community Opposition:** Resistance to additional taxes and challenges in gaining consensus can hinder the creation of an MSD, especially if benefits are unclear

- **Economic Downturn Vulnerability:** During recessions, additional costs can strain businesses, reduce revenues, and limit the district's ability to fund improvements.

#### Examples:

- **City of Raleigh**  
The Raleigh Municipal District (Downtown) and the Hillsborough Street Municipal District are two MSDs in Raleigh. The Downtown MSD funds have been used for economic development, public space enhancement, historic preservation and modernization, community engagement and tourism promotion. The Hillsborough Street MSD funds are focused on support for local small businesses, pedestrian Friendly improvements, community programming, urban revitalization as well as cultural and academic connection.
- **Town of Morrisville**  
The neighborhoods of Carpenter Park, The Gables, Huntington Park, Kelton II, and Kelton Square are included in the Municipal Service District in Morrisville. The Morrisville MSD was established to facilitate the conversion of private residential streets into public streets.
- **City of Greensboro**  
The College Hill and Dunleath (formerly Aycock) Historic Districts are MSDs in Greensboro. MSD funds in Greensboro have been used for projects such as landscaping, gateway signs, period lighting, and sidewalk trash receptacles.

# Implementation Considerations

## Administration

### Option 3: TIG or TIF District

A TIG (Tax Increment Grant) district, also known as a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, is a tool used by municipalities to encourage economic development in specific areas by redirecting future property tax revenue increases (the “tax increment”) generated by new development back into the district to fund public improvements or incentivize private investment.

#### Benefits:

- **Stimulates Economic Development:** TIG/TIF districts attract private investment and revitalize blighted areas, reducing urban decay.
- **Public Infrastructure Improvements:** Funds from tax increments can enhance infrastructure like roads and utilities, making the area more appealing and leveraging private investment for broader community goals.
- **Job Creation:** New developments generate jobs and stimulate local economic growth through increased business activity.
- **Increased Property Values:** Development boosts property values, leading to a higher tax base and more municipal revenue after the district expires.
- **Flexible Financing Tool:** TIG/TIF districts are funded by future tax revenue, avoiding upfront taxpayer costs, and allowing customizable incentives aligned with local goals.

- **Encourages Mixed-Use Development:** These districts promote diverse land use, creating vibrant, self-sustaining communities.

#### Drawbacks:

- **Inequitable Benefits:** The benefits may be concentrated among developers and businesses, potentially excluding low-income residents and risking gentrification, which can displace long-term residents and small businesses.
- **Fiscal Impact on Public Services:** Redirected tax revenue may reduce funds for essential services like schools and public safety, and if the district underperforms, the municipality may face budget shortfalls.
- **Long-Term Financial Risk:** The success of a TIF district hinges on increased property values and tax revenue. If development lags or market conditions worsen, the municipality could face debt or underused improvements.
- **Complex Administration:** Managing a TIF district involves significant oversight, including planning, monitoring, and legal navigation, which can be time-consuming and challenging.
- **Potential for Abuse:** There is a risk of misallocated funds, favoritism, or corruption, leading to questions about the district’s fairness and effectiveness.

#### Examples:

- **City of Roanoke Rapids**  
The TIF district was created to finance the construction of the Roanoke Rapids Theatre, aiming to boost tourism and local commerce.
- **City of Kannapolis**  
The TIF district supports the revitalization of its downtown area, focusing on infrastructure improvements to encourage business growth and urban development.
- **Town of Woodfin**  
The TIF district was implemented to fund enhancements such as roadways and utilities, facilitating mixed-use development and community growth.



# Implementation Considerations

## Economic Incentives

The County is interested in establishing and developing one program for economic incentives which is focused on infrastructure improvements. Other options maybe considered in the future either independently or in tandem with this initial program, which can unlock greater development quality and capacity for a longer term ROI in tax revenue and place.

### Infrastructure Improvements

Infrastructure improvements involve the county investing in or upgrading public infrastructure such as roads, utilities, transportation networks, and public spaces. This can create a more conducive environment for private development by reducing the initial investment burden on developers.

#### How It Works:

- **County Investment:** The county might fund improvements to critical infrastructure in targeted development areas, such as extending water and sewer lines, upgrading roadways, or enhancing public transportation.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Sometimes, these improvements are part of a public-private partnership where both the county and developers contribute to the costs.
- **Targeted Development Areas:** Infrastructure improvements are often focused on areas with high development potential or where significant economic impact can be realized.

#### Benefits:

- **Attracts Developers:** By improving infrastructure, the county makes the area more attractive to developers, who can then focus their resources on vertical construction & other site-specific investments.

- **Increases Property Values:** Improved infrastructure often leads to increased property values, which in turn generates higher tax revenues for the county over time.
- **Enhances Quality of Life:** Infrastructure improvements benefit the broader community, not just developers, by improving accessibility, safety, & overall quality of life in the area.

#### Drawbacks:

- **High Upfront Costs:** Infrastructure improvements require significant public investment, which can strain municipal budgets and potentially lead to higher taxes or debt.
- **Uncertain Return on Investment:** The anticipated economic benefits, such as increased development or property values, may not materialize, leaving the municipality with costly infrastructure and limited returns.
- **Risk of Overbuilding:** Investing in infrastructure without sufficient demand can result in underutilized facilities, wasted resources, & maintenance costs without corresponding economic growth.
- **Potential for Inequitable Distribution:** Benefits from infrastructure improvements may be concentrated in specific areas, leading to disparities in development and neglecting other parts of the municipality.

- **Disruption During Construction:** Infrastructure projects can cause significant disruption to existing businesses, residents, and traffic, potentially leading to short-term economic losses and public dissatisfaction.
- **Environmental Impact:** Large-scale infrastructure projects can have negative environmental effects, such as habitat destruction, increased pollution, & changes in land use that may not align with sustainability goals.

# County Village District Design Guide

## Harnett Horizons 2040





# HARNETT

— Horizons 2040 —  
**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**