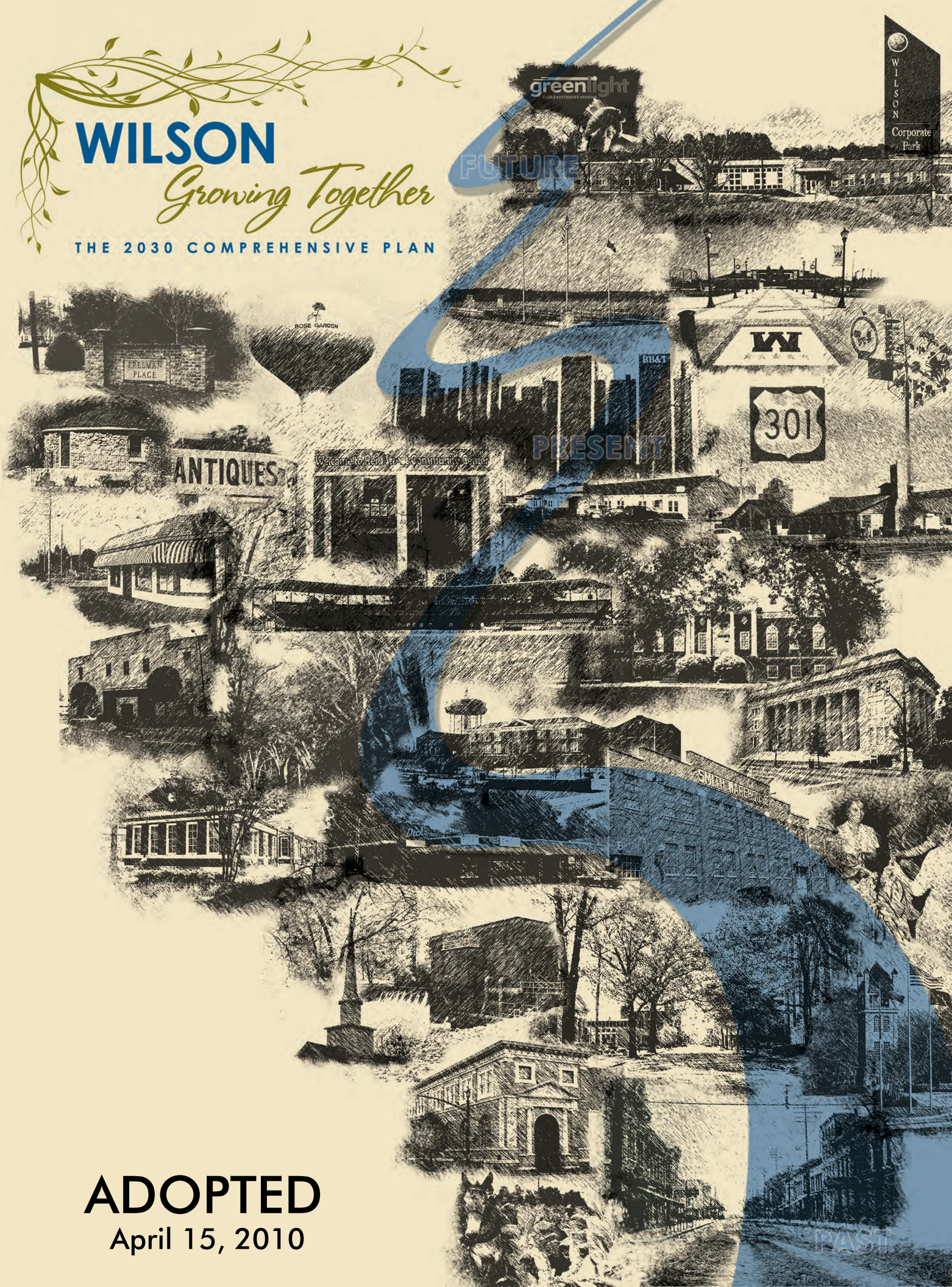
WILSON

Growing Together

THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



ADOPTED

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Leadership

C. Bruce Rose, Mayor
A. P. Coleman - Council District 1
Gwen C. Burton - Council District 2
Bill Blackman, IV - Council District 3
James M. Johnson, III - Council District 4
Donald I. Evans - Council District 5
Logan T. Liles - Council District 6
Willie J. "Bill" Pitt - Council District 7

Grant W. Goings – City Manager
Harry Tyson – Deputy City Manager
Dathan Shows – Assistant City Manager
Agnes Speight – Assistant City Manager

Special Thanks to former Council members Doris Jones and Bob Thaxton, retired Deputy City Manager Charles W. Pittman, III, and retired Assistant City Manager Alice Freeman.

Plan Steering Committee

Robert Bartlett
Michael Bell
Dorothy Brunson
Tom Corbett
Tom Curran
Sue Dail
Randy Davis
Thomas Eatmon
Luella Gunter
Gloria Hammonds
Michael Holt
Sandra Homes
Norval Kneten
Becky Stachura
Rusty Stephens
Kelly Vick
Jack Wiggins

Plan Forum

David Allgood
Alice Artis
Bruce Beasley
Barbara Blackston
Dale Breedlove
Fred Bunn
Greg Coley
Will Corbett
Tom Cozart
Veronica Creech
JoAnn Daniels
Joe Davis
Mark Eldridge
Ken Elliot
Hattie Ellis
Ed Etheridge
Gary Farmer
Monty Garrish
Milo Gibbs
Gary Hamilton
James Haney
Garland Homes
Jay Hood
Cindy Ingram
Edward Jagnandan
Mark Johnson
Howard Jones
Larry Lytle
Ivy Marzo
Zette McArn
Lynne Medlin
Nadia Minniti
George Mitchell
Richard Oteri
Dennis Patton
Larry Price
Debbie Raper
Judi Runkle
Toshika Smith
Denise Stinagle
John Sugg
James Thomas
Elmo Walls
Joni Welfare
David West
Cynthia Whalen
Robin Williams
Will Winslow
Alan Winstead

City Planning Board

Kelly Vick, Chair
Tyron C. Conti
John Hoofnagle
David C. Wilhelm
Edward R. Jagnandan
A.C. Joyner
Hyman W. Peters
Bobby Williams
Selby Brewer, III
Donn Holt

Organizational Assistance

Wilson Downtown Development Corporation
Wilson Downtown Properties
Wilson Visitors Bureau
Land Use Planning Class, Spring 2008, East Carolina University

City Staff

Rodger H. Lentz – Planning Director
Denise Boswell – Project Manager

Joe Ausby
Kathy Batts
Pat Borelli
Brian Bowman
Leigh Ann Braswell
Jason Brown
Will Deaton
Janet Holland
Jack Jones
David Lee
Kevin Medeiros
Lu-Ann Monson
Kevin O'Brien
Justin Oakes
Arnold Raynor
Kimberly VanDyk

Consultants

Clarion Associates
- *Roger Waldon*
- *Leigh Anne King*

Martin/Alexiou/Bryson
- *Than Austin*

Warren and Associates
- *Frank Warren*
- *Jessica Rossi*

The Walker Collaborative
- *Phil Walker*
- *Keith Covington*
- *Lee Jones*

Benchmark CMR, Inc. (for Photo Simulations)
- *Jason Epley*

A special thanks to the citizens of Wilson who participated in the process to develop this Plan.
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WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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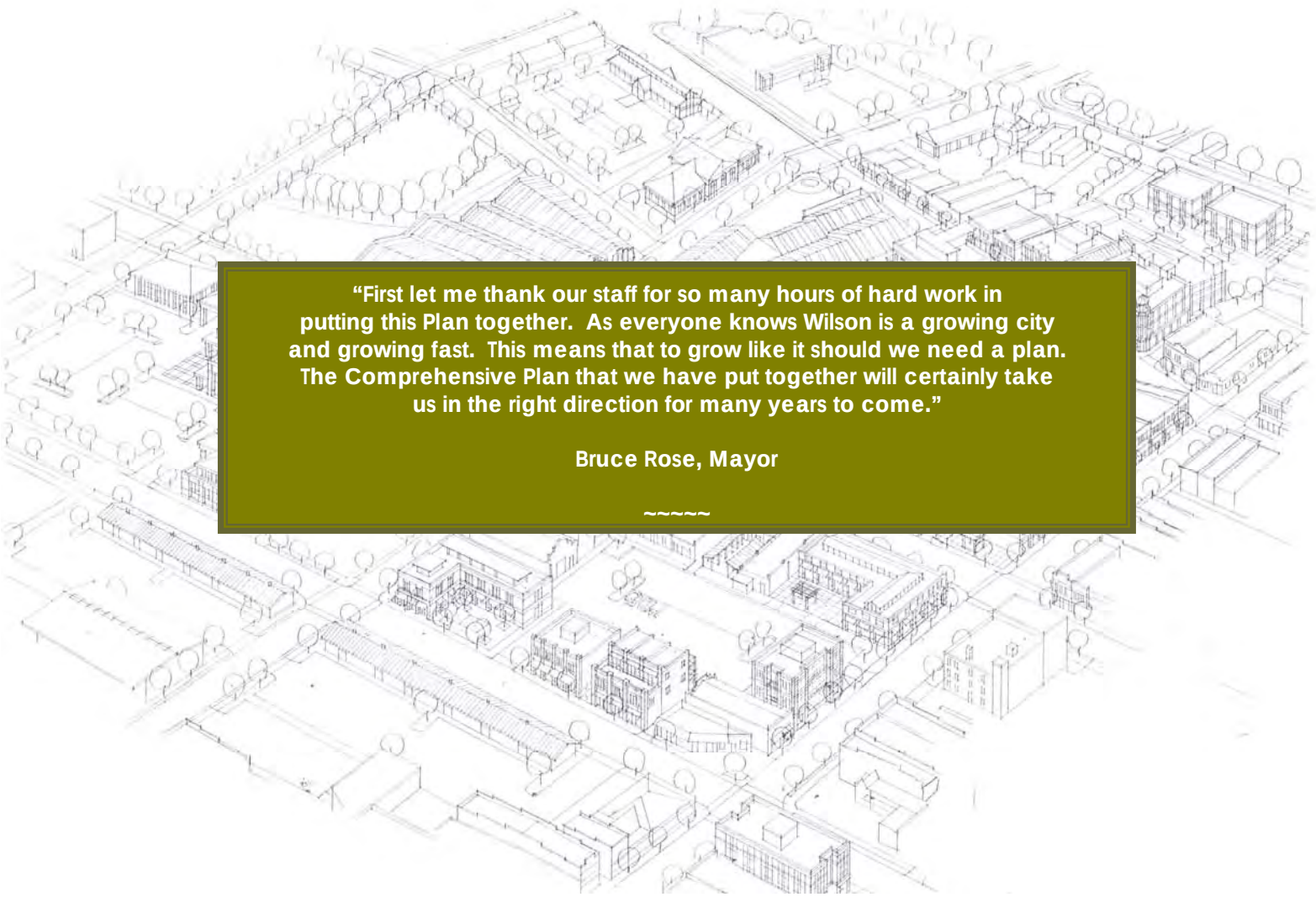
PART 1: SETTING THE STAGE

"A Day in the Life of Wilson" Adult Gold (1st Place) Photo
Taken by Tracy Mooring



"First let me thank our staff for so many hours of hard work in putting this Plan together. As everyone knows Wilson is a growing city and growing fast. This means that to grow like it should we need a plan. The Comprehensive Plan that we have put together will certainly take us in the right direction for many years to come."

Bruce Rose, Mayor

~~~~~

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan – Wilson's first Comprehensive City Plan – can be summarized in a phrase…

~ One Wilson, Growing Together ~

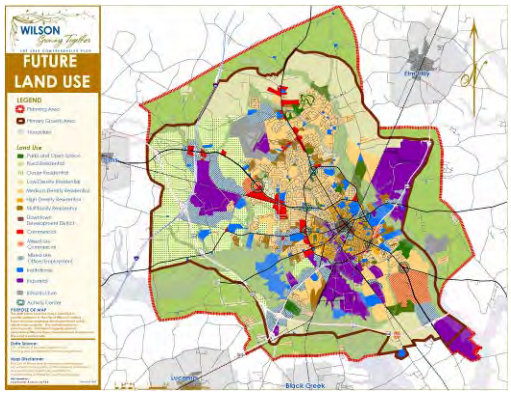
Spawned by the goals of the Wilson 20/20 Vision initiative, our community worked tirelessly to develop a roadmap for Wilson's future that puts the vision into action. Guiding us into 2030, this Plan sets out bold new strategies for improving our quality of life and our built environment, expanding our vibrant local economy to capitalize on regional growth, and becoming a more sustainable 21st century community. As we grow together in the coming years, this Plan will guide our policy decisions, our community investments, and our partnerships with our neighbors to create "One Wilson" that is resoundingly stronger than ever.

The Plan's Roots

Growing together as a community requires community consensus on what we want Wilson to be in 20 years. The process to develop this Plan began with the county-wide Wilson 20/20 Vision effort as a starting point and used community and stakeholder input to build a truly grassroots Plan. It upholds the guiding principles of the Triangle Region's Reality Check planning initiative, includes critical components of Wilson County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan, and incorporates recent City planning efforts, such as the 2008 Bicycle Master Plan. The architects of this Plan, the Plan Steering Committee, Plan Forum, and general public, have engaged and collaborated numerous times to develop this final product.

Community Planning Priorities

This Plan is truly comprehensive and sets out 51 goals, more than 100 policies, and 90 implementation actions to be achieved. While all are important, several planning priorities rise to the top and are foci for the Plan:



- **Sustainable Planning –** Wilson is undertaking a new planning paradigm, one that focuses on a more sustainable future through compact and low-impact development, green design, development of new parks and greenways, and revitalization of existing developed areas. These principles are infused throughout the Plan.
- **Future Land Use –** The City will use the new Future Land Use map to manage growth and development over time. This new Plan identifies nodes for mixed-use activity center development, new opportunities for housing, employment, and commercial development within a compact growth pattern that protects critical environmental areas and makes prudent use of land and existing public infrastructure.

- **Revitalization of Downtown and Center City –** A critical component of this Plan is investing in what we've got through revitalization of Downtown and the neighborhoods and commercial developments in the Center City area. (See illustration below.)
- **Community Design –** Developed through two community-wide design workshop efforts, this Plan provides the City with models for how Downtown, neighborhoods, aging commercial corridors, and community gateways should be redesigned and enhanced to improve the aesthetic quality of Wilson and make these places more vibrant, safe, and accessible.
- **Enhanced Transportation System –** Through development of a new Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Wilson is embarking on providing greater connectivity throughout the City and more transportation options through multi-modal transportation improvements that allow drivers, bikers, and walkers to share the road and have safe access to destinations.
- **Regional Collaboration –** Wilson will strengthen partnerships with local and regional neighbors to leverage efforts and resources needed for Plan implementation. Wilson County, Wilson 20/20, Wilson Community College, and Barton College are important partners with which the City has already established mechanisms for collaboration.

Envisioning Downtown

Land use and design solutions for the Downtown area will convert vacant and blighted areas into an active public realm.

Implementation Priorities

This Plan sets out a specific plan for action, focused on 12 priority action items and 78 secondary actions. The Action Plan Chapter outlines the entity responsible and the timeframe for initiating the action. The priority action items include:

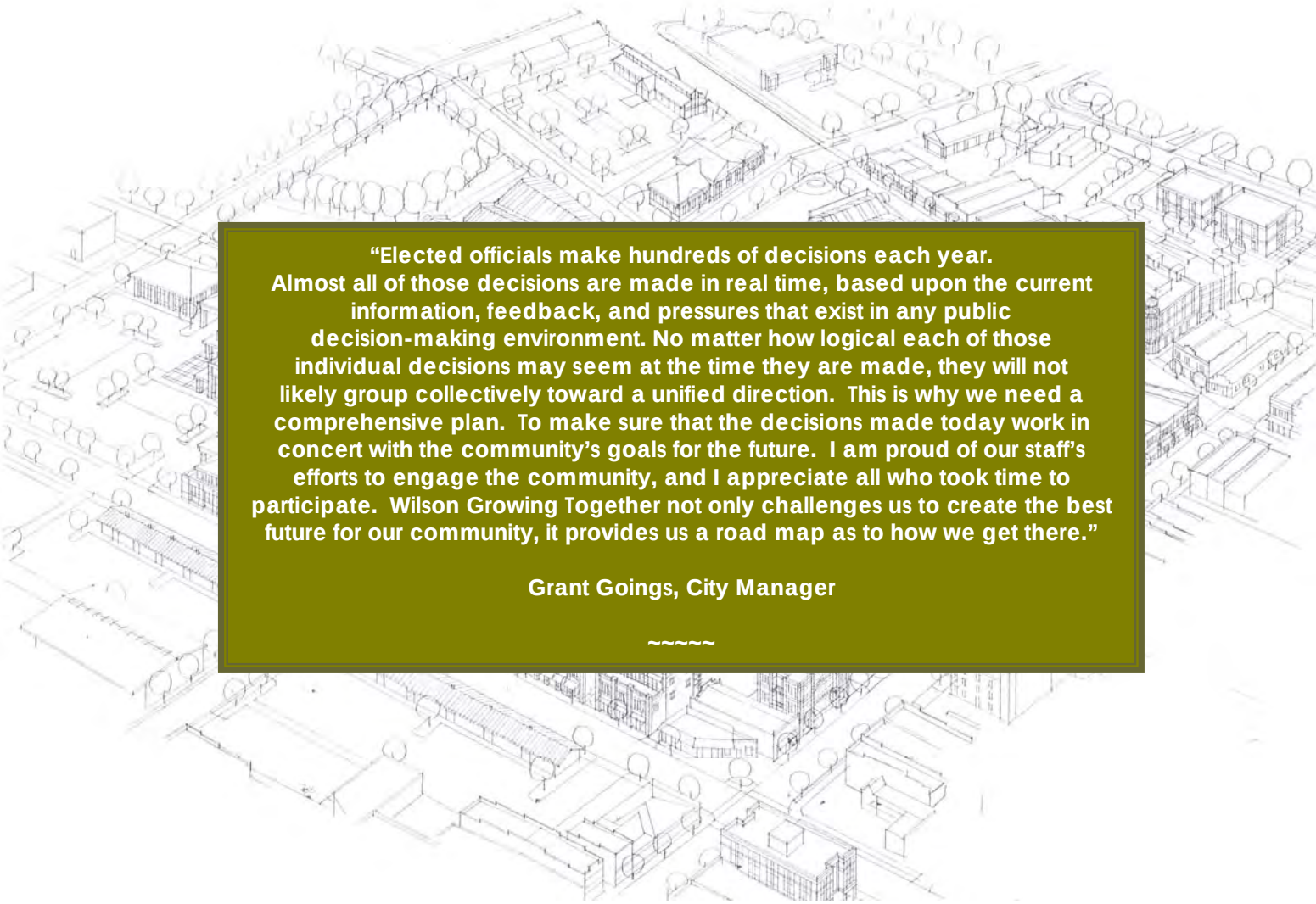
- Working with Wilson County to Establish a Tiered Growth System
- Amending the City's Land Development Ordinances
- Promoting Revitalization of Downtown
- Establishing a Neighborhood Planning Process
- Supporting and Facilitating Center City Catalyst Redevelopment Projects
- Establishing a Vacant Properties Initiative
- Redesigning and Improving the Highway 301 Streetscape and Roadway
- Assisting with the Implementation of the Barton College Master Plan
- Promoting Green Workforce Development Initiatives and Sustainable Practices with Wilson Community College, and Assisting with the Implementation of the College's Master Plan
- Establishing Sustainable Performance Standards and an Energy Conservation Strategy
- Conducting a Feasibility Study for a Downtown Civic Center
- Developing a Formal Agreement with Wilson County Schools on Topics of Joint Interest

ILLUSTRATING IMPLEMENTATION

These before and after photos depict how the Plan will work to achieve vibrancy in the Highway 301 Corridor – through redevelopment partnerships, capital improvements, and streetscape enhancements.

Highway 301 Today

Improved Highway 301



"Elected officials make hundreds of decisions each year. Almost all of those decisions are made in real time, based upon the current information, feedback, and pressures that exist in any public decision-making environment. No matter how logical each of those individual decisions may seem at the time they are made, they will not likely group collectively toward a unified direction. This is why we need a comprehensive plan. To make sure that the decisions made today work in concert with the community's goals for the future. I am proud of our staff's efforts to engage the community, and I appreciate all who took time to participate. Wilson Growing Together not only challenges us to create the best future for our community, it provides us a road map as to how we get there."

Grant Goings, City Manager

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PLAN OVERVIEW

Introduction

Wilson has changed in many ways since the original City of Wilson and Wilson County Joint Growth Plan was developed and adopted in 1990. More people have moved to the City, new industries and jobs have developed in Wilson, and the City's corporate limits have expanded to incorporate this new growth.

This Plan, the Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan, is intended to ensure that in the future, Wilson develops and grows in ways that enhance the community's vitality and overall quality of life. It builds on the existing conditions and trends in the community, and serves as the road map for achieving the goals laid out in the Wilson 20/20 Community Vision. Comprehensive in nature, this Plan addresses numerous facets and ambitions of the community, including neighborhood preservation and revitalization, widespread economic opportunity, a transportation system that serves everyone's needs, development of parks and recreation facilities for people of all ages, and the protection of natural resources and environmental quality.

The Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan will serve as the community's blueprint for the future. Its maps will help to shape and influence the City's form and character, and its goals, policies, and action strategies will help guide future decision-making on a range of topics such as land use, development, design, and public investment priorities.

2030 Comprehensive Plan Contents

The Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan is divided into five main parts, each described in detail below.

Part 1: Setting the Stage

The chapters contained in Part 1 provide an overview and background information about the Plan. It contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Executive Summary
- Chapter 2: Plan Overview
- Chapter 3: Vision Statement and Plan Themes

Part 1
Setting the Stage

Part 2
Key Issues

Part 3
Design and Revitalization

Part 4
Implementation and Monitoring

Part 5
Background Information

Part 2: Key Issues

The chapters contained in Part 2 organize the key elements of the Plan. Each chapter is organized in a similar manner, beginning with a discussion of key issues facing the community, followed by a summary of existing conditions. Next, each chapter contains a framework of goals, policies, and action strategies to guide future decision making and actions. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of how the goals and policies relate to topics within the realm of sustainable planning.

Part 2 contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 4: Land Use
- Chapter 5: Economy
- Chapter 6: Transportation
- Chapter 7: Neighborhoods and Housing
- Chapter 8: Public Infrastructure and Services
- Chapter 9: Parks and Recreation
- Chapter 10: Quality of Life
- Chapter 11: Intergovernmental Collaboration

Goals are statements about what the City aims to achieve over the next 20 years. Goals give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the City's intended direction.

Policies provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in the Wilson. Policies describe the specific intent of community goals.

Action Strategies specify the tasks to be undertaken to employ policies and achieve community goals.

Part 3: Design and Revitalization

Like the chapters contained in Part 2, the chapters in Part 3 address key issues and existing conditions, and set forth goals, policies, and strategic actions to guide future decision making and actions. Likewise, the chapters in Part 3 have sections to address the links between the chapters' policies and goals and sustainable planning topics.

The chapters within Part 3 also detail the process and outcomes of two community charrettes. The Downtown chapter correlates with the Downtown-focused charrette, and includes the Downtown concept plans and recommendations for different areas. The Community Design chapter corresponds with the Gateways, Highway 301, and Neighborhoods-focused charrette and features concept plans and principles for future community design and development.

Part 3 contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 12: Downtown
- Chapter 13: Community Design

Part 4: Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Part 4 provides strategic guidance and identifies priorities for implementing the Plan, and addresses monitoring and updating the Plan over time. It contains the following chapters:

- Chapter 14: Action Plan
- Chapter 15: Plan Monitoring and Updating

Part 5: Background Information

The appendices contained in Part 4 provide the background information used to prepare and inform the Plan. The following appendices are included:

- Appendix A: Glossary
- Appendix B: Maps

Comprehensive Plan Defined

A Comprehensive Plan is a roadmap that provides guidance on where and how the community will grow and change over a given period of time. The primary emphasis of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide long-term policy direction to property owners, residents, and decision makers on land use and community issues, such as where future development and redevelopment should occur, and at what scale and densities.

Comprehensive Plans typically consist of maps, vision statements, goals, policies, and action items to address a number of issues related to growth and land use, economic vitality, transportation, neighborhoods and housing, public infrastructure and services, parks and recreation, historic preservation, and community character and aesthetics.

Comprehensive Plan Basics

A comprehensive plan should generally answer three main questions for a community:

- Where are you?
- Where do you want to be in the future?
- And how do you get there?

Planning in North Carolina

Wilson's ability to adopt and implement a comprehensive plan is drawn from its state authorized general police power to "define, regulate, prohibit, or abate acts, omissions, or conditions detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of its citizens" per North Carolina General Statute § 160A-381-392.

In North Carolina, municipal zoning enabling statutes have long required that zoning be "in accordance with a comprehensive plan." However, neither the North Carolina statutes, nor case law mandate preparation of comprehensive plans, define their elements, or set a mandatory procedure for their adoption. Local governments can choose to develop or not to develop a plan.

In 2005, the state zoning statutes were amended to strengthen the role of adopted plans where they do exist. This new law requires that Planning Board review of proposed zoning amendments include written comments on the consistency of the proposed amendment with the comprehensive plan and any other relevant plans (such as a small area plan, a corridor plan, or a transportation plan) that have been adopted by the local government's city council. The council is also required to adopt a statement on plan consistency before adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment. These written comments are required, but do not limit the council's discretionary power to adopt or not adopt zoning amendments.

History of Planning in Wilson

Although the Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan is technically the City of Wilson's first official Comprehensive Plan, many planning efforts have been accomplished by the City and in cooperation with Wilson County over the years. A summary of the City's major growth planning and individual planning efforts is provided on the following pages.

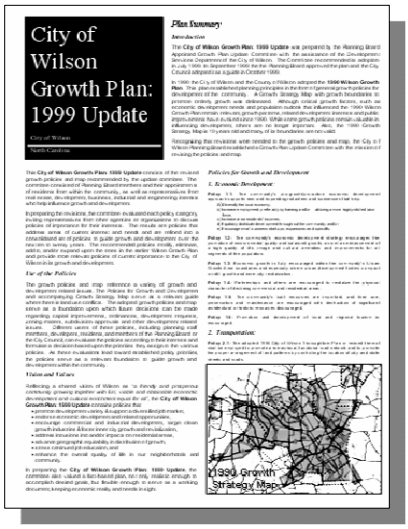
1990 Joint Plan

In 1990, the City of Wilson and Wilson County developed a joint City-County Growth Plan. The Plan designated areas surrounding the corporate limits of Wilson as a primary growth area. Although not officially called a comprehensive plan, the Growth Plan set out policies for a broad array of planning factors, including economic development, transportation, water and sewer service, industrial development, commercial and office development, housing, and others. This effort illustrated that the City and County could successfully collaborate to plan for future growth.

1999 Growth Plan

Due to changing growth patterns, new development interests, and public improvements in Wilson, the City updated the Growth Plan in 1999. The 1999 Growth Plan amended the primary and secondary growth areas for Wilson based on proposed service extension, road improvements, and local development interests. The Plan's vision included values to achieve the following:

- Promote development variety;
- Foster inner city growth and revitalization;
- Address intrusions into and/or impacts on residential areas;
- Advance geographic equitability in distribution of growth; and
- Enhance the overall quality of life in Wilson's neighborhoods and community.



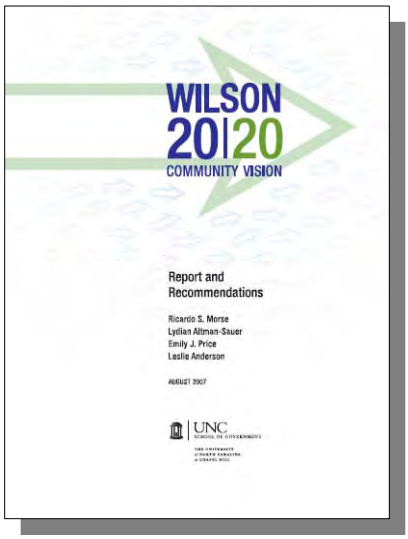
A decade later, many of the policies contained within the 1999 Growth Plan are still relevant. This Comprehensive Plan acknowledges this previous effort and builds on its solid foundation of goals and policies.

Wilson 20/20 Community Vision

The Wilson 20/20 Community Vision Report, adopted in August 2007, was prepared for Wilson County and the City of Wilson by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government. The report established a vision statement for the community and specific goals for future improvements. The planning process used to establish the vision and goals was dynamic and widespread, involving many facets of the greater Wilson community. This 2030 Comprehensive Plan incorporates the vision and goals of the Wilson 20/20 Community Vision and sets out an approach for implementing the vision through strategic actions.

The overarching vision statement generated through the Wilson 20/20 visioning process is forward-thinking and representative of how residents see the future in Wilson. The vision statement, provided below, is complemented by a series of long-range targets to achieve the vision:

> *The Greater Wilson Community is dynamic and vibrant, with a diversified, entrepreneurial economy and inclusive, compassionate culture, enriching all with an unparalleled quality of life.*



Future targets of the 20/20 Vision for the City included becoming a regional employment center, managing growth, providing educational excellence, maintaining a high quality of life, offering opportunities for wellness and healthy lifestyles, working to become "one community, " and improving coordination and collaboration.

Research Triangle Reality Check Visioning Process

Concurrent with development of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, leaders within the Triangle conducted a collaborative visioning process to address critical questions facing the region: where should new growth occur, which areas should be protected from growth, how should this development be managed, and what communities will receive a portion of this growth. Organized by the Urban Land Institute and Triangle for Tomorrow, the Research Triangle Reality Check Visioning Process brought together stakeholders from the region to hold a dialogue about how the region should grow through the year 2030. The mission of the process was to "decide how growth in the region should be accommodated in ways that are economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable so that every new household enhances the quality of life of every citizen in the region." The process resulted in a set of three guiding principles, which were formally adopted by the Wilson City Council via resolution on February 18, 2010. These guiding principles for quality growth are as follows:

- **Transit** – Improve regional transit, matching land use decisions with transit investments
- **Vibrant Centers** – Reinvest in city and town centers, promote compact development, density and mixed use, including a balance of jobs and housing
- **Sustained Green Space** – Define appropriate growth and preservation areas to protect open space, agricultural land and resources, especially water supply and quality

Individual Plans

1993 Parks and Recreation Master Plan

In 1993, the City and County of Wilson jointly developed and adopted the Wilson Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Many of the eight specific recommendations of the Plan have been implemented, including establishment of the Buckhorn Reservoir and development of a senior center. This Comprehensive Plan serves as an update to the Master Plan and addresses existing and future needs for recreation and parks.

2005 Housing Improvement Action Strategy Plan

In 2005, and 80-member citizen-based committee led the development of the Housing Improvement Action Strategy Plan for Wilson. The Plan included strategies for tenant and landlord accountability, improving the housing complaint and enforcement process, providing educational opportunities to tenants and landlords, improving affordable housing ownership, improving safety in neighborhoods, code improvements, and other strategies. The next phase of the Plan includes addressing the status of its implementation strategies.

2006 Pedestrian Plan

The 2006 Pedestrian Plan focuses on developing safe walking environments that link destinations. Its goals, objectives, policies, and implementation recommendations are addressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

2008 Cost of Land Uses Fiscal Impact Analysis

In 2008, TischlerBise prepared the Cost of Land Uses Fiscal Impact Analysis report to help the City of Wilson determine what type of growth pays for itself. It determined that four of the five assessed non-residential land uses (industrial park, office, big box retail, and hotels) resulted in

net revenue surpluses for the City. The only non-residential land use that resulted in a deficit for the City was community shopping center development. This study also concluded that residential property valued at $250,000 pays for itself, and that infill development does not require an increase in service cost. The study suggests that with the present revenue structure, the City cannot continue to provide current levels of service to certain types of new development without finding new revenue sources.

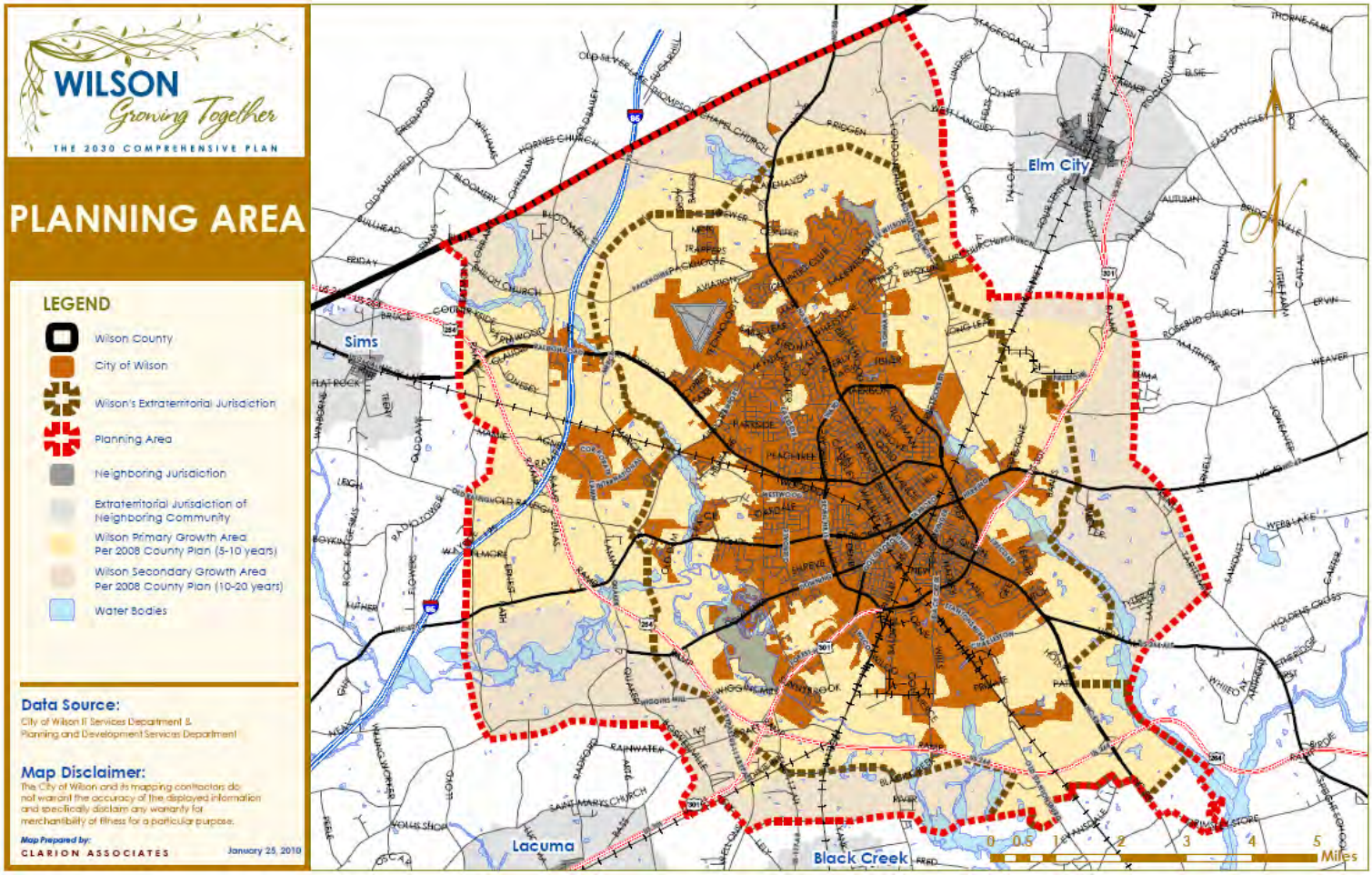
2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan

The 2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Master Plan is an up-to-date Plan that provides specific guidance on the development of bicycle and greenway systems in the City. Specific initiatives from the Plan, such as the development of a bike registration program and helmet program, and long-term goals such as the development of a greenway network and the Safe Routes to School program, are influential elements within this Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Area

The planning area for the Wilson Comprehensive Plan encompasses approximately 58,420 acres (or more than 90 square miles) and includes the City's corporate limits, unincorporated lands within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and portions of unincorporated Wilson County that were identified in the recently updated 2025 Wilson County Comprehensive Plan as the City's primary and secondary growth areas. Figure 1, on the following page, illustrates the boundaries for the planning area, the City of Wilson's ETJ, and the corporate limits.

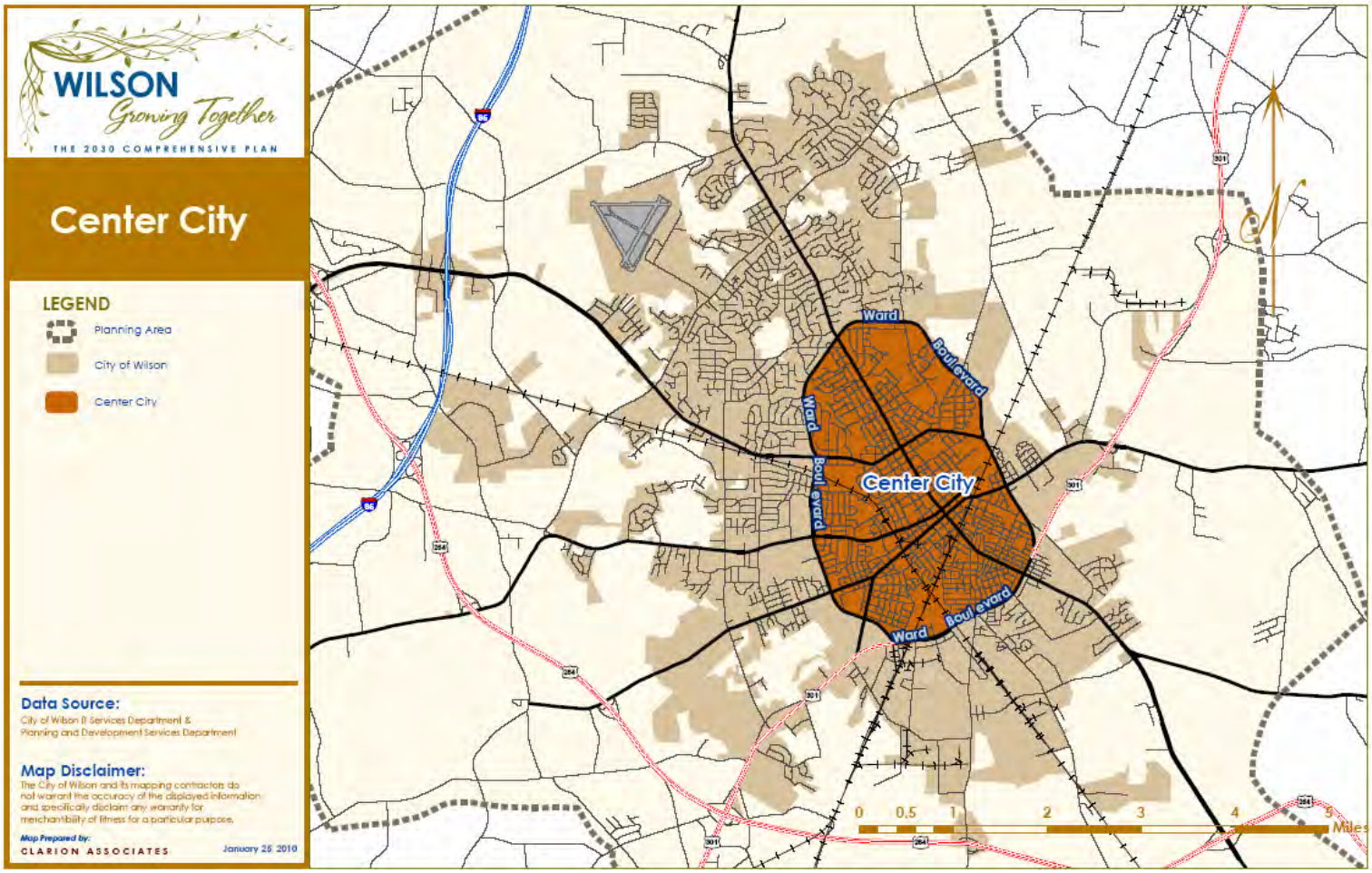
Figure 1: Planning Area
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Center City

Many of the initiatives included within the Plan are focused on revitalization of the Center City area. This encompasses the area within the Ward Boulevard loop and includes not only Downtown but many neighborhoods, such as Elvie Street, Washington Carver Heights, Cavalier, Five Points, and others. Figure 2: Center City, shown on the following page, illustrates the location of Center City within the City limits.

Figure 2: Planning Area
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Planning Process

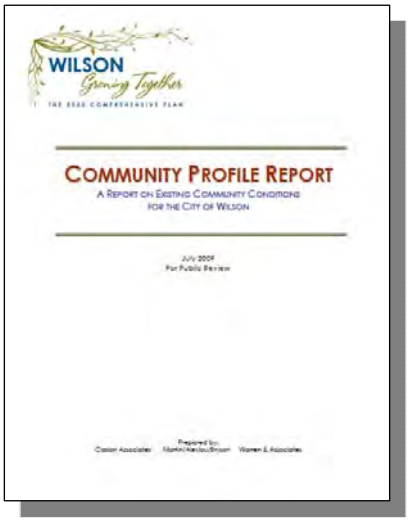
The planning process used to develop the Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan engaged a diverse group of community stakeholders, residents, and elected and appointed officials, and provided extensive opportunities for participation and involvement throughout the process. Throughout the process the project had dual focus: a future growth strategy focused on efficient and sustainable development patterns to enhance economic opportunities and local quality of life, as well as a focus on the Center City, with close attention paid to design, preservation of community character, and appropriate redevelopment.

This section summarizes the tasks completed in order to develop the Plan, and defines the roles and responsibilities of different participants and groups involved in the planning process. It also summarizes the public engagement opportunities and techniques used to gather feedback, and it highlights the website and media coverage of the project.

Process Tasks

1. Existing Conditions and Planning Analysis

The first step in the planning process involved identifying preliminary issues, and assembling physical map data and other planning influence information that would later form the basis for the Plan. During this task, the planning team reviewed existing plans and documents, and worked with key stakeholders and the Steering Committee to identify the key issues for the Plan to address. This information was compiled into a report entitled *Planning Themes*.



Next, the planning team conducted inventories and analysis of the existing conditions related to land use, transportation, land demand and capacity, and economics. This task culminated in the development of a *Community Profile Report*, a summary of existing conditions document which was used to help inform the next steps of the planning process. These reports can be found on the City's Comprehensive Plan website.

2. Plan Framework and Future Land Use

During this task, the Plan Framework was developed in order to provide the organizing structure for the Plan and the foundation for future action. It was built upon the vision and goals identified in the Vision 20/20 Report, as well as the adopted "Wilson City Council Vision" and community input. The Plan Framework contained vision, goals, policies, and strategic actions, which were used to shape Chapters 4 through 13 of this Plan.

This task also included the creation of a series of maps: Growth Areas, Tiered Service Areas, and Future Land Use. These maps depict the ideal scenario for growth and development for the Wilson Planning Area. These maps were based on the consideration and evaluation of differing scenarios for future development. The recommended scenario was presented to the Steering Committee and the public for review and comment, and then refined to incorporate their feedback.

3. Implementation Strategies

The identification of strategies to implement the goals and policies of the Plan built upon research of best practices in other communities, Steering Committee input, as well as the ideas from elected and appointment officials, and other key stakeholders and community members. This task also included the delineation of priorities, responsibilities, timing, and specific actions to be taken following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

4. Draft and Final Plan

The final task in the Plan development process was the compilation of all the previous Plan products, including the vision, goals, and policies, the draft future land use map, the implementation strategies and other supporting elements into a complete Comprehensive Plan document. The draft Comprehensive Plan was reviewed by the Planning Board and public, and ultimately went before the City Council for public hearing and adoption on April 15, 2010.

Roles and Responsibilities

Public

Wilson residents and business owners were charged with providing thoughtful and thorough community input throughout all phases of the planning process. The general public was invited and encouraged to attend and engage in community meetings, review and comment on draft work products, and was asked to ultimately support the adoption and implementation of the Plan.

City Council

Wilson's City Council supported the development of the Plan by providing policy guidance at key points during the planning process. The City Council was responsible for adopting the Comprehensive Plan and will be responsible for implementing the Plan's recommendations.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was comprised of 15 diverse members, appointed by the City Council, to lead the development of the Plan's components and provide guidance on policy direction and public outreach. The committee included representatives from the City's Planning Board, a County representative, representatives from neighborhood and business organizations, representatives of the Wilson Economic Development Council, members of the local development community, leaders from the Wilson 20/20 Vision project, Chairs of existing Advisory Boards, and representatives from Barton College and Wilson Community College. The Steering Committee reviewed community input and data, and assisted the planning team with the development of the policy framework, future land use map, and implementation strategies. The Steering Committee members served as the Plan's ambassadors, supporting its development and encouraging others to partake in the process.

Plan Forum

A group of approximately 40 City of Wilson and Wilson County leaders was organized to provide additional feedback on the Plan content at key points during the process and to help distribute information to the Wilson community. The Plan Forum reviewed and commented on draft work products before they were released to the greater community, and Forum members also encouraged community involvement and engagement. The Plan Forum was comprised of representatives from area neighborhoods, the Chamber of Commerce, non-profit organizations, local real estate and economic developers, the tourism bureau, representatives of City boards and commissions, Wilson County Schools, other organizations in Wilson, and citizens of Wilson.

Plan Staff

City of Wilson staff members were responsible for facilitating the planning process and overseeing the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff tasks included facilitating meetings, organizing information and data, conducting analysis, coordinating with the Steering

Committee to develop work products and materials, publicizing events, conducting outreach, and managing the consultant team.

Consultant Team

The consultant team, comprised of Clarion Associates, Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, Warren and Associates, and The Walker Collaborative was hired through the City of Wilson's competitive bid process to assist staff in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Engagement

Community Meetings

To kick off the process for developing the Comprehensive Plan, the City of Wilson hosted a public event called the "Symposium of Ideas" in December 2008. All members of the community were invited to attend the event, and in total more than 140 people participated. At the symposium four experts presented topics including lessons learned from other communities about commercial corridor and historic downtown revitalization, how to protect and preserve neighborhoods, and how to implement plans to jump-starting new development. A Group Feedback Session following the presentations captured individual ideas and topics to be explored further during the planning process.

In September 2009, the City hosted a Public Open House to present the draft policy framework and growth and future land use maps. Input provided by participants was used to amend interim Plan products.

Community Meetings

The Symposium of Ideas drew a large crowd of residents, business owners, neighborhood activists, and community stakeholders.

Focus Groups

A series of 10 focus group meetings were held early in the planning process in order to generate feedback from the Wilson Leadership Team, business owners, local developers, neighborhood representatives, Wilson's youth, Spanish-speaking members of the community, and Wilson 20/20 representatives. These focus groups provided vital feedback regarding aspirations and concerns for Wilson.

Neighborhood Summit

In March 2008, the City hosted a Neighborhood Summit and invited neighborhood leaders to come together and develop a vision for the City's neighborhoods. At this summit, participants provided input to develop the "Top Ten Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood." This list will be used in future neighborhood planning efforts to identify action strategies needed to help neighborhoods achieve these characteristics.

Charrettes

Two community charrettes, conducted in March and May 2009, provided significant opportunities for collaboration and public feedback. The first charrette addressed the topics of Wilson's gateways, Highway 301, and neighborhoods. The second charrette covered Downtown Wilson. At these events, participants were given the opportunity to take pen to paper and design the future of the City. Outcomes of the charrettes included draft Concept Plans for different areas of the community, as well as specific principals and recommendations for future improvements.

Parks and Recreation Survey

To gain a better understanding of what parks and recreational facilities City residents frequently use, think are in need of improving, and would like to have access to, the City prepared and distributed 2500 surveys to City residents and provided the survey online. This survey results provide baseline information for development of the goals, policies, and action strategies included in Chapter 9: Parks and Recreation.

Public Outreach

A significant public outreach effort was undertaken by City staff in order to spread the word about public meetings and the planning effort. Methods of outreach included radio and television reports, newspaper articles in the Wilson Daily Times, email notifications, the distribution of flyers, phone calls, and word of mouth advertising. A "Friends of the Comprehensive Plan" email distribution list kept over 300 interested citizens up-to-date on the process and outcomes of the Plan.

Public Outreach

Community charrettes provided extensive opportunities for hands-on involvement in the planning process.

Website and Media

City Talk – Comprehensive Plan Episode

As a lead-in to the planning process, the City of Wilson featured the Comprehensive Plan on its 30 minute *City Talk* video that aired on the City's website and local channels in December 2008. The purpose of the video was to educate Wilson's citizens about the purpose of the Plan, the process for developing the Plan, and ways that the public can engage in Plan development.

Website

The City of Wilson's website had a special section devoted to the Comprehensive Plan. The website featured general planning process information, draft work products, and news and announcements.

Photo Contest

During the latter stages of the planning process, the City of Wilson held a contest soliciting photos to use in the Comprehensive Plan. The contest called for original amateur photographs showing "A Day in the Life of Wilson", depicting what photographers like best about Wilson and what makes the City of Wilson a great place to live. The contest was advertised on the City of Wilson website, and through numerous news releases.

A total of 27 photos were received, with prizes awarded to four winners selected from the adult and youth divisions. Winning photos and other entries are showcased throughout this Comprehensive Plan document.

Photo by Wendy Ferguson

Photo by Michael Herring

Photo Contest

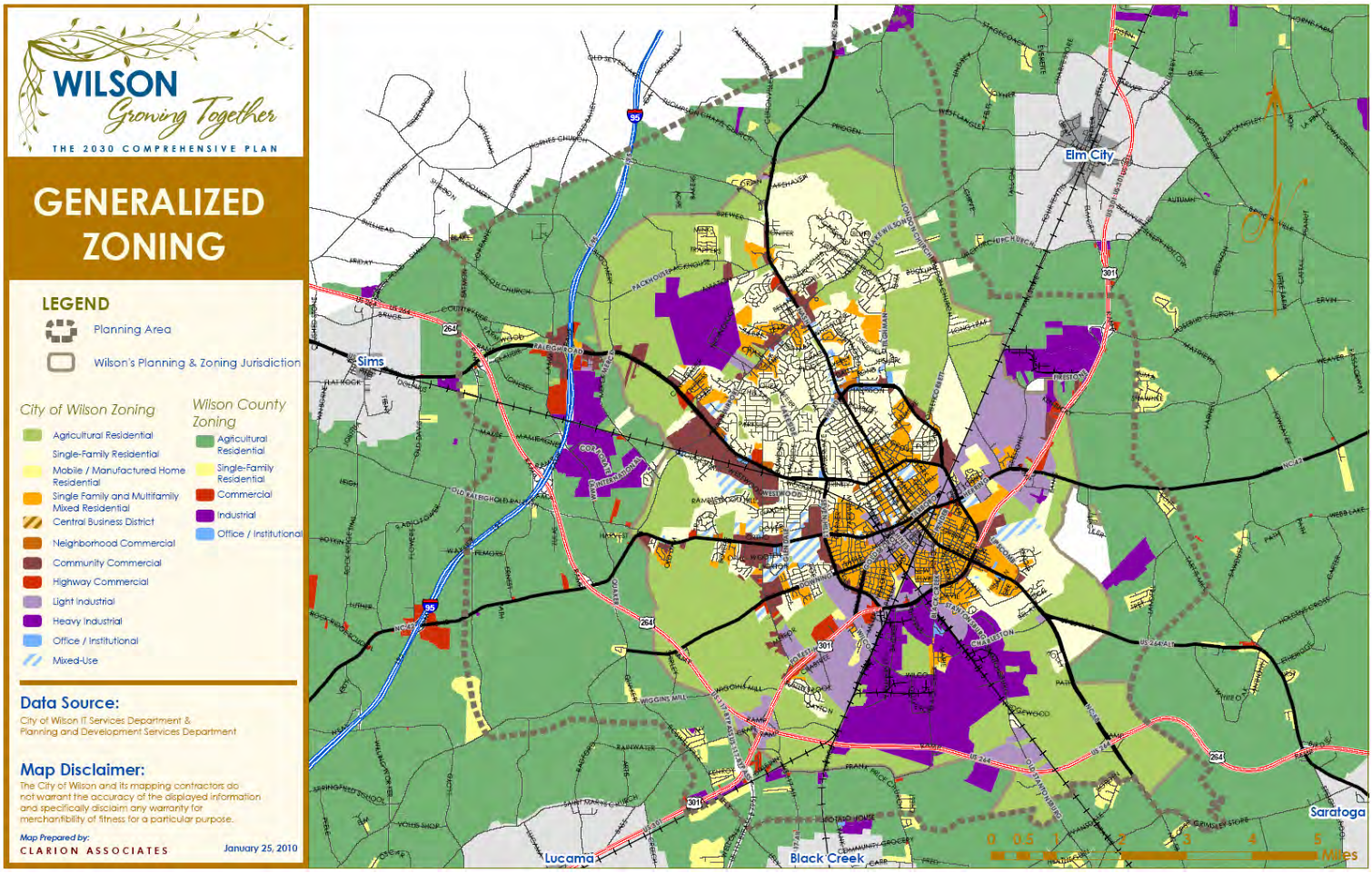
Community photographers captured "A Day in the Life of Wilson". These photos are located throughout this Plan to illustrate local life.

Relationship of Zoning and Future Land Use

City and County zoning consists of both a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the jurisdictions into zoning districts, including various residential, commercial, mixed-use and industrial districts. The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be placed on a lot. The zoning regulations also provide procedures for rezoning and other planning applications.

The zoning map and zoning regulations provide properties in Wilson's planning and zoning jurisdiction with certain rights to development, while the Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for the future development of the property. The Future Land Use Map and related policies contained in this Comprehensive Plan should be used as a guide for future rezoning decisions undertaken by the City.

Figure 3: City and County Zoning
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Sustainable Planning

A New Planning Paradigm

The City of Wilson, like many local governments across the nation, is expanding its planning focus to include a commitment to long-term sustainability. The concept of "sustainable planning" involves the ability of a community and society to plan for the needs of the present population while ensuring that future generations have the same or better opportunities.

This new paradigm for planning not only incorporates new, contemporary topics such as energy conservation, food production and security, and community health, but also provides a comprehensive approach to addressing interdependent trends rather than isolated issues. A sustainable plan establishes a comprehensive framework for strategic, efficient, progressive, purposeful, smart decision-making.

The City of Wilson understands that while many issues and topics related to sustainability are global in nature – such as climate change, air quality, and energy production – steps can be taken at a local level to address these issues. The City of Wilson will use the following planning objectives to guide local sustainability planning efforts:

- **Consistency** – Policies and strategies should be connected to achieve multiple goals and to ensure that policies are consistent.
- **Coordination** - Coordinated planning among City departments and with other jurisdictions on areas of joint interest should be achieved.
- **Interrelated** – Linkages between community issues should be acknowledged.
- **Interdisciplinary** – Planning approaches should be broad based and include the input of multiple disciplines when identifying strategies for addressing community concerns.
- **Impact-considering** – Consideration of long-range impacts should be folded into policy decisions.
- **Resource-conserving** – Community policies should focus on decreasing public costs, fostering efficient use of lands, and protecting important natural resources.

Definition of Sustainable Planning

Sustainable planning involves the City of Wilson planning for the needs of our present population while ensuring that future generations have the same or better opportunities.

~ It is the responsibility of today's generation to leave the next one with the most plentiful resources possible ~

Sustainable Planning Topics

The broad concept of sustainability encompasses a variety of topics ranging from social equity and economic viability, to the natural and built environments. For purposes of the Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the topics listed on the following pages are included for consideration within each chapter.

Links to Sustainable Planning

Each of the chapters within Parts 2 and 3 conclude with a summary table that describes how the goals and policies contained within the chapter link to the sustainable planning topics discussed in this section.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Key tenets of sustainability are energy conservation and the development of renewable and cleaner alternatives to traditional energy sources such as coal and petroleum-based energy sources. Reduced consumption of and demand for traditional energy sources helps to reduce consumer costs and decrease pollution. In addition, increased development and usage of renewable sources such as solar, wind, and geothermal can also improve energy cost predictability and even boost local economies through new job creation.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy Policies in the Plan

- Reducing energy use by providing alternative modes of transportation (riding transit (bus), cycling, walking, carpooling)
- Maximizing existing infrastructure by achieving a compact development form
- Supporting clean growth industries such as alternative energy production
- Providing development incentives that encourage the use of energy efficiency strategies in private sector developments
- Setting an example for energy efficient design in public projects, such as the Freeman Place
- Supporting development of energy efficient homes and individual production of renewable energy

Climate Change

While there is currently debate about the validity and long-term impacts of global climate change, there is no argument that humans' impacts on the natural environment are substantial and lasting. The products and services we use daily, such as our automobiles and heating and cooling systems, emit gasses that trap heat in the atmosphere, known as greenhouse gasses. The rate at which we emit greenhouse gases has increased significantly over the decades, and many are at the highest levels today than have been experienced for thousands of years. Yet despite these alarming trends, there are significant efforts underway globally, nationally, locally, and even individually to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and human impacts on the natural environment.

Climate Change Policies in the Plan

- Focusing development in primary growth areas can reduce vehicle miles traveled and thus reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Fostering development of local businesses will reduce commuting that can contribute to climate change
- Better connectivity and access through a multi-modal transportation system will reduce the need for single-occupant vehicles and reduce emissions
- Providing safe routes for students to walk and bike to school reduces the need for parents to sit in idling vehicles waiting to pick up their children at school

Waste Reduction and Recycling

The United States produces more waste per capita than any other country in the world. As the nation's population increases, so does the amount of waste generated. Like many communities, most solid waste generated in Wilson is sent directly to transfer stations and landfills. Interestingly, the solutions to curb this problem are relatively straightforward: reduce, reuse, and recycle. These concepts apply to individual behaviors such as recycling the daily newspaper and reducing the amount of household trash generated through composting, and they also apply to community-wide initiatives such as rehabilitating vacant buildings for new uses, and recycling Brownfields sites and existing infrastructure to accommodate new infill development.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Policies in the Plan

- Encouraging infill and redevelopment promotes the re-use of already developed land and established infrastructure, and reduces resources needed to accommodate new development

- Reuse of Brownfields not only recycles vacant and underutilized land, but the cleanup of these lands reduces the release of harmful toxins into the environment
- Taking a "road diet" approach supports the use and redesign of existing roads and helps reduce the need to construct additional roadways
- Encouraging historic preservation and building renovation reduces waste associates with new construction and takes advantage of existing infrastructure

Food Production and Food Security

Food security means having reliable access to food. In 2007, more than 38 million households in the United States were considered "food insecure," meaning that they have trouble putting food on the table on a daily basis. Food security is attributed to an array of factors, including household income and the supply and availability of food products. While lower income populations are most vulnerable to food insecurity, all populations are subject to food security issues related to food production and transportation. By establishing and supporting a local food system, a community is able to improve food security by decreasing costs through reduced transportation costs and reliance on imported products, and by improving access to healthy food options.

Food Production and Food Security

- Protecting environmental resources by directing development to primary growth areas helps to conserve valuable agricultural lands and natural resources needed for food production
- Supporting locally-owned businesses, such as a Downtown Market, supports local food production and secures healthy food sources for Wilson's citizens
- Reusing vacant land in the City's neighborhoods and other developed areas for community gardens can provide a healthy, local source for food
- Reducing the development footprint through a compact development form reduces the need to develop roads within outer areas, possibly protecting prime agricultural areas from development
- Encouraging development of a variety of housing types, including housing affordable to the workforce, reduces the burden of housing costs and allows households to have more money to spend on food and other household necessities

Community Health and Safety

A safe community is one where residents feel comfortable and know their neighbors, and where there are opportunities to lead productive lives, with services offered to those in need. A healthy community is one where residents of all ages and backgrounds have opportunities to engage in active lifestyles, have access to healthcare, emergency services, and healthy foods, and where risks to health and wellness such as obesity and teen pregnancy are understood and addressed. Like so many other topics within the realm of sustainable planning, community health and safety are broad topics that are influenced by a variety of factors including, but not limited to the built environment, educational opportunities, and the availability of social services.

Community Health and Safety

- Developing a compact development form interconnected by greenways, bikeways, and walkways promotes community health and provides new forms for recreation and fitness
- Enhancing job readiness of the local workforce increases opportunities for area youth to gain meaningful employment and fosters healthy professional growth of Wilson's labor force
- Improving the streetscapes along key corridors within the Center City area will increase safety and foster more pedestrian activity
- Requiring maintenance and upkeep of existing structures and lots help to ensure safe neighborhoods by reducing blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous properties

Water Conservation

Water is a vital component of life and an extremely valuable resource. It plays many roles in a community, ranging from providing habitat for fish and wildlife, to assisting in agriculture production, and supporting household and business functions. While Wilson has an adequate supply of water, this supply is finite. Efforts must be taken to ensure its conservation and protection of its quality for future generations and users.

Water Conservation

- Protecting environmental resources and promoting infill and redevelopment helps to protect water supply watersheds and offers opportunities to maximize and reuse existing infrastructure and water resources

- Encouraging new development projects to include water-saving technologies can reduce water use and wastewater generation
- Reducing the footprint of new development helps to limit stormwater flows and maintain water quality and quantity in the water supply watershed
- Providing a variety of housing options results in a mix of lot and yard sizes, including smaller lots without yards, reducing the amount of water needed to irrigate larger lawns

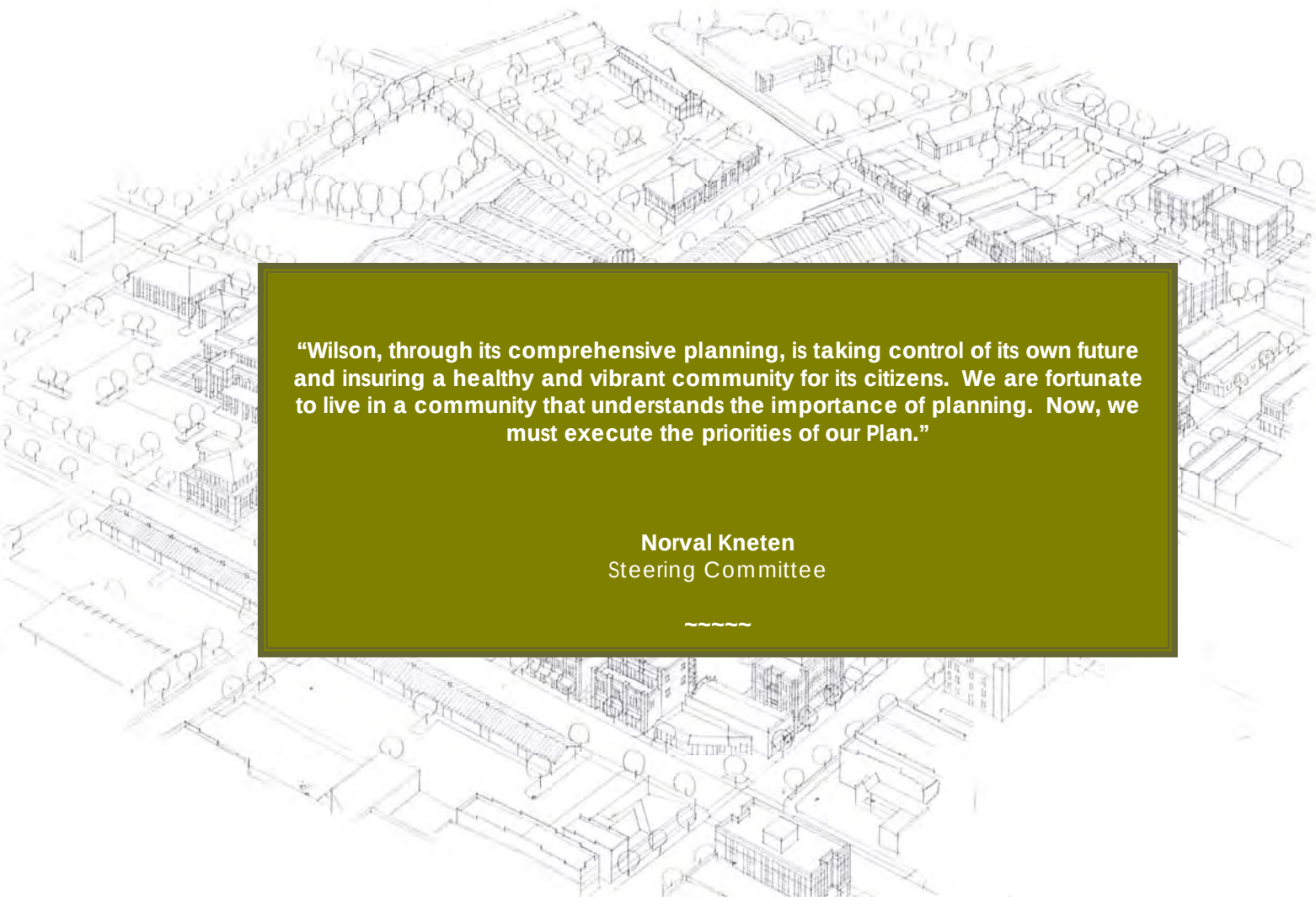
Smart Growth and Livability Principles

In addition to the City undertaking a new sustainable approach to plan for the future of Wilson, the City also embraces the tenants of Smart Growth and Community Livability. Development undertaken with the Smart Growth approach reflects the following principles as outlined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:

1. **Mix land uses**
2. **Take advantage of compact building design**
3. **Create a range of housing opportunities and choices**
4. **Create walkable neighborhoods**
5. **Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place**
6. **Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas**
7. **Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities**
8. **Provide a variety of transportation choices**
9. **Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective**
10. **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions**

The City of Wilson will also work to uphold the principles of Livability set out by the U.S. Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a consortium of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This partnership will help improve access to affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. The following set of Livability Principles will guide local governments, like Wilson, in coordinating housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help to address the challenges of climate change.

1. **Provide more transportation choices**
2. **Promote equitable, affordable housing**
3. **Enhance economic competitiveness**
4. **Support existing communities**
5. **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment**
6. **Value communities and neighborhoods**



"Wilson, through its comprehensive planning, is taking control of its own future and insuring a healthy and vibrant community for its citizens. We are fortunate to live in a community that understands the importance of planning. Now, we must execute the priorities of our Plan."

Norval Kneten
Steering Committee

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VISION STATEMENT AND PLAN THEMES

Introduction

The community vision is a statement that describes the kind of City residents, business owners, and leaders want Wilson to be in the future. It describes the hopes and aspirations for the community and provides a concise description of what Wilson will strive to be by the year 2030. The vision statement was developed from community input generated throughout the planning process.

Community Vision Statement

WILSON
Growing Together

Wilson's history echoes through the reinvented 21st century City. New industries and employment generate pride and ambition in Wilson's residents. Developments employ green designs that enhance and preserve the unique character of the City. Sustainable planning initiatives provide for a more livable Wilson where citizens are provided options for living, recreating, and working. The City is linked by ribbons of green – tree-lined sidewalks, bikeways, greenways, and trails. An engaged citizenry embraces being a green Wilson, an attractive Wilson, a healthy Wilson, a connected Wilson.

One Wilson ~ Growing Together

Plan Themes

The following topics help to form the overarching framework and themes for the 2030 Wilson Comprehensive Plan. The themes align with the goals identified in the Wilson 20/20 Vision, and build on community feedback collected throughout the planning process. The Plan themes also correspond with the topics and policy directions contained within the following chapters.

Sustainable Planning

In order for future generations of Wilson residents to have equal or better opportunities as are currently provided, efforts must be undertaken to ensure prudent use of existing resources. This means that both on an individual basis, and as a community, Wilson should take steps to conserve valuable resources such as water and energy, and should continually seek ways to reduce waste and climate impacts, and improve production of food and renewable energy.

SUSTAINABILE PLANNING

Alternative energy sources and energy conservation efforts can lead to cost savings and employment growth. Shown here is Wilson Community College's new green Student Center that generates solar energy.

Economy

Wilson's economy has experienced a remarkable transition over the last 50 years. From being the premiere historic producer of golden leaf tobacco to its current industrial base of pharmaceutical, aerospace, life science, building material, automotive, food manufacturing, and plastic industries, the City has maintained a viable economy in hard times of transition. The City's success is illustrated by recent accolades -- being ranked as a top tier micropolitan community and one of the top small business markets in the South.

The future of Wilson lies in its economic success. The generation of new jobs and new tax revenues plays an important role in maintaining and improving the City's quality of life. Balancing the importance of the regional employment draw to Wilson and the need to employ members of the local workforce will be critical into the future. The current economic and fiscal crises being felt around the nation and the globe have impacted and will continue to affect Wilson. The City of Wilson supports economic development efforts and the City recognizes the impact of local quality of life factors, such as schools, aesthetics, cultural and recreational opportunities, etc., on recruiting new businesses to the community. The City's partnerships with local businesses and institutions, such as Barton and Wilson Community Colleges, are critical to the success of the City.

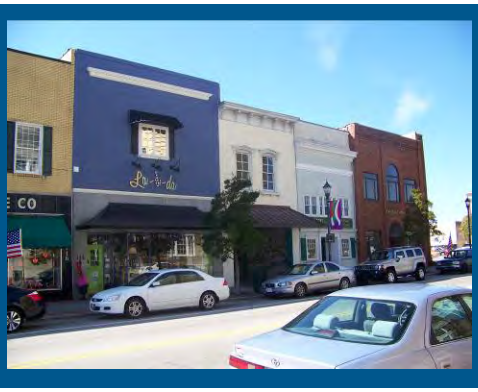
ECONOMY

Wilson supports the continued expansion of its local economy to include new industries that provide local employment to the City's residents.

Managed Growth

The City of Wilson has experienced steady increases in growth since 1900. Wilson's proximity to Raleigh and the Research Triangle, its access to major transportation corridors (I-95, US-264, Highway 301), and affordable cost of living make it a prime location for many businesses and residential developments. Between 2001 and 2007, the City permitted 2,238 new residential units, more than double the permits for all other areas in the County.

Growth in Wilson County is focused in the northeastern sector of the County, leading into Raleigh and Wake County. This development "pull" from Raleigh has played a large role in land development patterns in the City of Wilson. The focus of development has moved from the Center City area westward to I-95, leaving many areas underutilized. When asked, many residents say that more could be done to manage growth in a manner that preserves valuable open space and community history.



MANAGED GROWTH

While the growing western area near I-95 will continue to develop over time, development should be balanced to ensure reinvestment in the Center City.

Housing and Neighborhoods

When asking Wilson residents what it is about the City that keeps them here, the common response is, "its home." Home is the place where Wilson's residents know their neighbors, care about their community, and where they enjoy spending time.

Neighborhoods are the key building blocks of Wilson. While many residents love the neighborhood they call home, there are many important neighborhood and housing issues in Wilson that need to be addressed. The greatest long-term threat to Wilson is the long-term deterioration of its neighborhoods. As neighborhoods decline, they affect local business development, the educational system, and the culture and quality of life of the area. One example is the neighborhood around Barton College. Disinvestment in this area may be putting the long-term sustainability of the College at risk. It is a top priority of Wilson to improve several of its neighborhoods, focusing on those in the Center City area.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

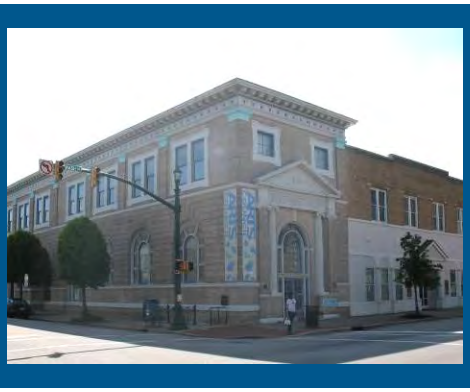
Continued maintenance and investment in Wilson's central and historic neighborhoods are top priorities that will help ensure Wilson's long-term success.

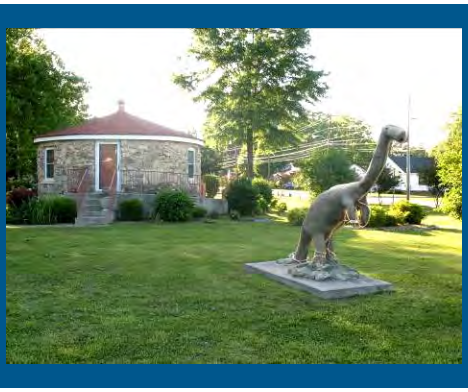
Quality of Life

Wilson's quality of life refers to the experience of the City through its cultural events, recreational facilities and programs, beautification and visual aesthetic, and design of the built environment. Downtown Wilson is a major asset to the community. Years of changing economic conditions have resulted in disinvestment in Downtown and a decline in quality of life in the community. But things are changing, and Downtown Wilson is experiencing a renaissance. New streetscape improvements line Nash Street, new restaurants have opened, and there is a sense of revitalization in the historic core.

The City is interested in identifying ways to continue to improve the quality of life in the community for long-time residents, those looking to relocate to the area, and tourists. This includes providing more cultural and recreational opportunities for all age groups and income levels, providing better pedestrian and bicycle accessibility throughout town and to key destinations, improving the design and quality of development in the community, and ensuring a vibrant and thriving Downtown for future generations.

The City has many partners in this effort – public educational institutions (Barton College, Wilson Community College, and the Wilson County School system), the Wilson Arts Council, and other entities all have an impact on the quality of life experienced in the community. Partnership efforts are needed to create a more vibrant Wilson.





QUALITY OF LIFE

Continued and new arts and cultural opportunities will sustain the quality of life for Wilson's residents and will also help to attract visitors.

Health and Wellness

Many communities around the nation are beginning to take a more prominent role to develop policies and support programs to ensure the health and wellness of citizens. Through the Wilson 20/20 Vision process, the greater Wilson community identified increasing health and wellness as a primary goal for the community. Teenage pregnancy and obesity rates in Wilson are some of the highest in the State. As of 2004, ratios of population to health service providers in Wilson were greater than most counties in the region. Wilson can do more to be a healthy community that promotes the wellness of its citizens, regardless of age or socioeconomic status.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Increasing access to healthy foods and opportunities for active lifestyles will help improve overall community health and wellness.

Education

Wilson's public education system is good, but it faces many challenges, including high school drop out rates and underperforming schools. Community demographics and the quality of life experienced in certain neighborhoods can play a role in educational attainment, supporting the notion that "it takes a village" to ensure the future of our youth. Quality of life issues, such as constructive after school programs, recreational amenities, and Safe Routes to School can improve the educational experience for the City's students. Partnerships with neighborhood organizations, community groups, and educational partnerships are helping to improve educational attainment in Wilson.

Educational needs in Wilson also extend beyond the public school system. Quality higher education opportunities are provided right in the heart of Wilson, including Barton College and Wilson Community College. These institutions provide not only degree programs and job skill training, but also cultural programming and community events. These institutions form a network of educational opportunities in Wilson.

EDUCATION

Wilson Community and Barton Colleges provide residents with opportunities for advancing their education and cultural enrichment.

Community

Community engagement is a cornerstone of any successful community. Wilson is a unique community because even though it lies in a larger metropolitan area, so many of its residents are long-time natives and have stayed in the City or are now returning to start families. There is a great sense of community because of these solid roots and sense of pride in the community.

Wilson is growing and new populations are moving to the City. Many of these residents may not be actively engaged in the community. Residents have identified many opportunities to strengthen community engagement, including development of the Comprehensive Plan.

COMMUNITY

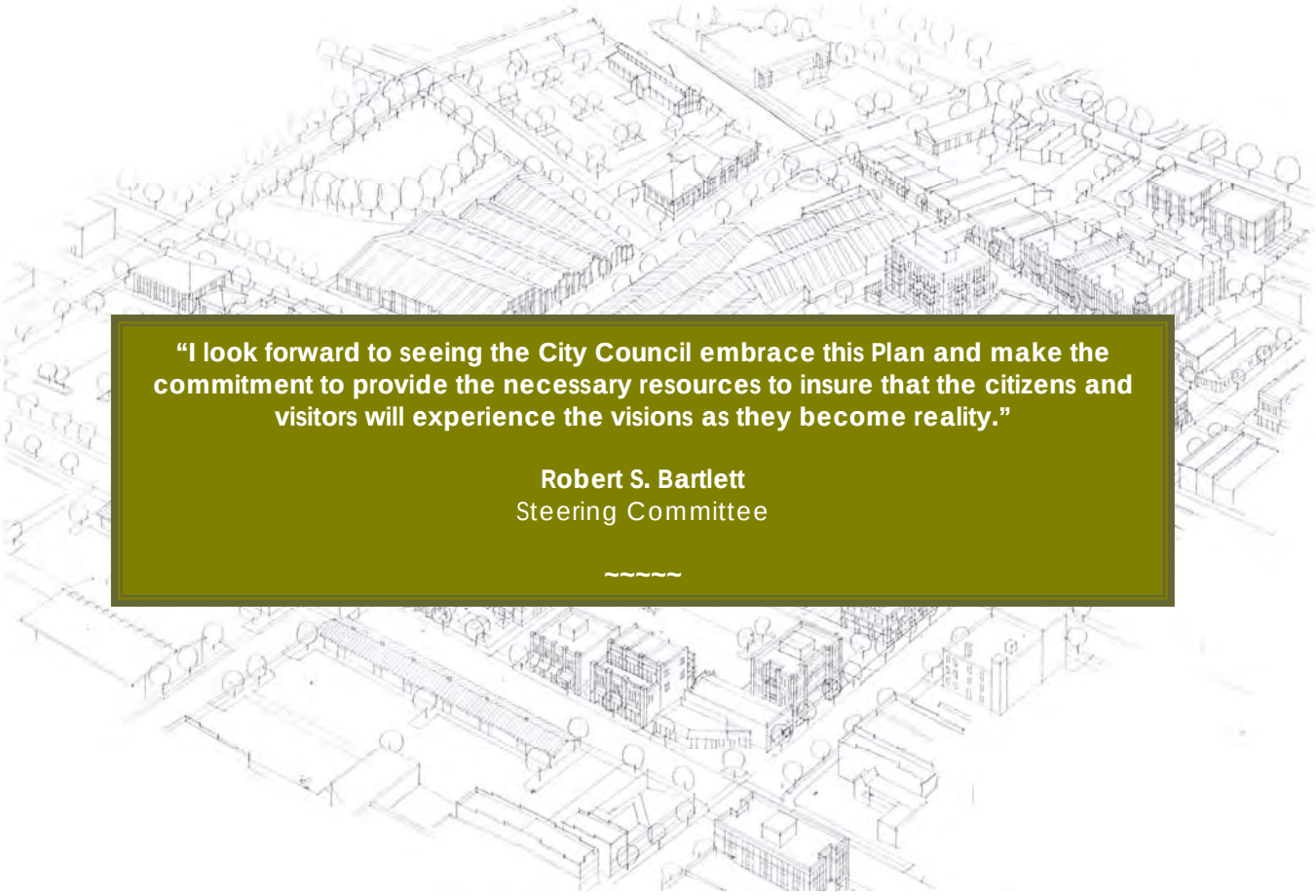
According to a recent Gallup study entitled the "Soul of the Community" a community's physical beauty, opportunities for socializing, and community openness are the emotional glue that keep residents happy.

Collaboration

No jurisdiction operates within a vacuum. Community decisions in one jurisdiction can have considerable effects on its neighbors. Wilson is fortunate to have a history of joint planning within Wilson County. The City can work to improve its collaboration with other jurisdictions to support shared objectives.

COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION

Collaboration and community engagement will help the Comprehensive Plan be successful for years to come.



"I look forward to seeing the City Council embrace this Plan and make the commitment to provide the necessary resources to insure that the citizens and visitors will experience the visions as they become reality."

Robert S. Bartlett
Steering Committee

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~ A Day in the Life of Wilson ~

Photo by: Judith Zampella

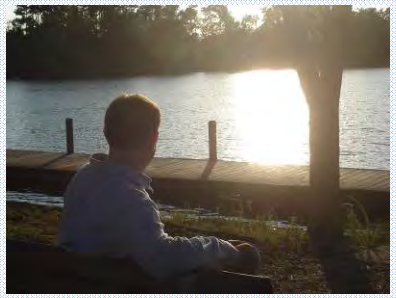


Photo by: Laura Etheridge

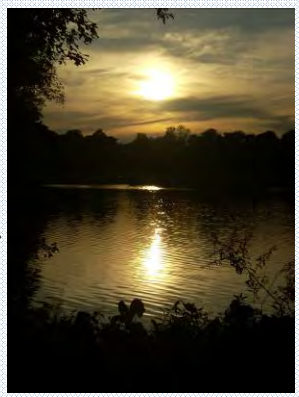


Photo by: Nadia Minniti

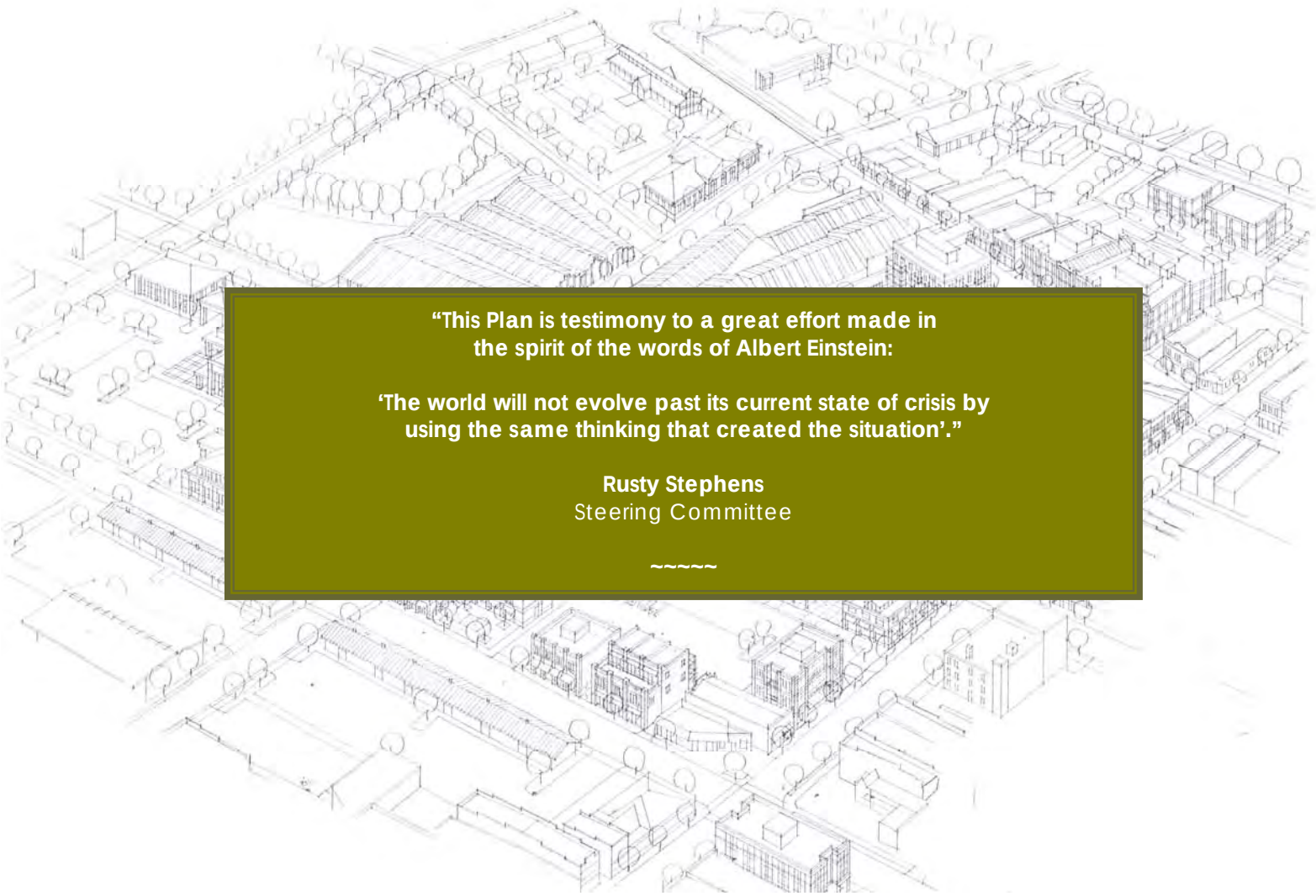
Photo by: Steve Moore

Photo by: Erin Mitchell

Photo by: Promila Sen

PART 2: KEY ISSUES

"A Day in the Life of Wilson" Youth Gold (1st Place) Photo
Taken by Austin Williams



"This Plan is testimony to a great effort made in the spirit of the words of Albert Einstein:

'The world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation'."

Rusty Stephens
Steering Committee

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LAND USE

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions for City-wide development and growth. It discusses the growth and land use-related opportunities and challenges in the community today, and summarizes the City's existing land use patterns, influences, and future development capacity. This chapter also establishes goals for how land will be developed and conserved in Wilson through 2030, and sets forth specific policies and strategies in order to guide decisions and actions to achieve those goals. The land use goals in Wilson focus on:

- Achieving a compact development form
- Directing new development to primary growth areas
- Promoting infill development and revitalization of the Center City area
- Redeveloping aging commercial corridors
- Ensuring compatible development
- Establishing a fiscally balanced mix of land uses
- Protecting environmental resources

The land use goals and policies contained within this chapter also help to further the community's sustainability-related goals such as promoting a more sustainable growth pattern with the development of new industries, revitalization of the Center City area, and protection of the natural environment. A more complete summary of how the land use goals and policies relate to the topics of sustainable planning is provided later in this chapter.

The Future Land Use section at the end of this chapter specifies the type and location of future development that should occur in the community. It is intended to be used in concert with the goals, policies, and action strategies in order to guide future development activity and land use decisions.

LAND USE

Compatible infill development in Downtown Wilson will help the community achieve many of its land use goals.

Key Issues

The following key issues emerged from community feedback regarding land use and growth management in Wilson:

- **Building Off of the City's Historic Land Pattern** – Development should be directed to areas that are currently served by public infrastructure and areas that are underutilized to create a greater development balance throughout the City. Development should be discouraged in areas where the City does not intend to provide future public services by 2030.

- **Infill and Revitalization of the Center City** – Development should be encouraged within Wilson's Downtown and Center City neighborhoods, including mixed-use developments that provide residential opportunities in Downtown. A vision for this area is necessary in order to help facilitate this change and partnerships between public and private entities to make it a reality.

- **Targeted Areas for Future Development** – The location and way in which development occurs will undoubtedly impact the community, and the targeted areas for future development need to be prioritized and highlighted.

- **Implementing a Vision for the 301 Corridor** – The 301 Corridor has long been affected by the changing focus of growth towards the northwest. Establishment of a clear and feasible vision and plan for the Corridor is necessary, and implementation should be a key priority for the City.

- **Development Compatibility** – New developments should be compatible with adjacent, existing uses and should be organized to create clusters or nodes of like development.

- **Fiscal Balance of Land Uses** – Tax revenues from some residential developments in Wilson do not offset the cost to provide public services. The City's Future Land Use plan should aim to achieve a balance between non-residential, residential, and mixed-use land uses to achieve a better fiscal balance.

- **Protecting Valuable Environmental Resources** – Future development should be designed to protect critical environmental resources, such as floodplain areas and wetlands. Opportunities for public use of these areas, such as greenways, parks, and recreational areas, should be identified. These uses should not negatively impact natural resources and should provide opportunities for residents to experience and learn about the natural environment.

- **Providing More Opportunities for Healthy Living Developments** – Wilson should strive to provide mixed-use housing opportunities that provide amenities such as walking trails, bicycle lanes, and parks that are key components of establishing healthy lifestyles.

Summary of Existing Conditions

This section summarizes existing conditions related to the natural environment and resources, existing land use, future development capacity, and current the level of coordination between land use planning and addressing infrastructure and transportation needs.

Land Use Quick Facts

The City of Wilson's corporate limits contain approximately:

- 1,440 acres of wetlands, floodplains, and land in the Neuse River buffer
- 6,008 acres of residential
- 998 acres of commercial
- 1,435 acres of industrial
- 2,715 acres of development capacity

Environment and Natural Resources

Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Wetlands are environmentally sensitive areas that provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife, store floodwaters, and filter sediment and pollutants. Because of historic and continued loss of wetlands in North Carolina, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers require a special 404 permit before development upon wetlands can occur.

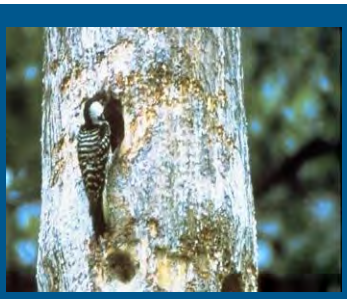
Development along the City's creeks and streams is also regulated. Development in floodways, areas which carry and discharge floodwater or flood flow, is prohibited. Development within floodplains, areas where flooding is possible, is allowed but regulated by the Special Flood Hazard Area and Special Flood Area Conservation Areas overlay zoning districts. (See the Environmental Features Map in Appendix B.)

Water Resources

The City's water supply is plentiful and of high quality. Its reservoirs not only provide the community's potable water needs, but also afford many recreational opportunities for area residents. As required by state regulations, the City monitors its drainage outfall into the Neuse River drainage basin, and manages development in water supply watersheds within its jurisdiction. Regulations pertaining to the two water supply watersheds within Wilson (WS III and WS IV) limit development density and impervious surface area, and also define critical and protected areas within each watershed. The City's Watershed Protection Overlay District corresponds with the critical and protected areas for each defined watershed. (See the Water Supply Watersheds Map in Appendix B.)

Wildlife

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated six species in Wilson County on the list of Endangered Species and Federal Species of Concern. The U.S. Endangered Species Act protects the three endangered species and their habitats, meaning that future development in such habitat areas must comply with established federal regulations. Information about the unique habitat needs of these rare species is available from the State of North Carolina's Natural Heritage Areas Program.



The Federal List of Endangered Species includes the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, pictured above. Its habitat can be found in Wilson.

Air Quality

Pollution and poor air quality is an increasing concern in Wilson County and its neighboring areas. While Wilson County is not currently violating national ambient air quality standards defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection (EPA), it must continue to monitor its air quality and work to limit or reduce air pollutant emissions.

Land Use and Development

Existing Land Use and Trends

Analysis of existing land use in Wilson is based on data collected by Wilson City staff. For simplicity in the analysis, land use classifications were grouped into general activity categories from the American Planning Association's Land Based Classification System (LBCS). Table 1 below shows the approximate acreages and percentages of each general land use activity category within the City of Wilson's planning and zoning jurisdiction. Figure 4 shows the locations of these existing land use activities.

Table 1: Existing Land Use Activities in the City's Planning Jurisdiction

Existing Land Use Activity	Acres*	% of Total Acres
No Human Activity or Unclassifiable Activity	2,809	7.2%
Natural Resources Related Activities	13,883	35.7%
Residential Activities	14,248	36.7%
Leisure Activities	1116	2.9%
Mass Assembly of People	292	0.8%
Shopping, Business, or Trade Activities	2,502	6.4%
Office or Financial Institution	60	0.2%
Social, Institutional, or Infrastructure-Related Activities	1,725	4.4%
Industrial, Manufacturing, and Waste-Related Activities	2,140	5.5%
Travel or Movement Activities	91	0.2%
Total	**38,870**	**100%**

* These calculations are approximations based on site surveys by Planning and Development Services staff in March, 2010. Land use activities change over time and these numbers will need to be updated in future revisions to the Plan.

The most predominant land use in the City is residential, with more than one third of the City (approximately 37 percent) devoted to single and multi-family residential development. More than 40 percent of land in Wilson's planning and zoning jurisdiction is estimated to be in natural resource related activities or unclassified, leaving much opportunity for new development and growth within the existing City's planning jurisdiction. Income-producing land uses, including shopping, business, and trade; office or financial institution; industrial, manufacturing, and waste-related activities; and leisure activities comprise approximately 15 percent of Wilson's land use activities.

Within recent years, the growth pattern in Wilson has been focused to the north and west toward Interstate 95. Much of the City's new commercial development has been along the Raleigh Road Corridor west of Forest Hills Road. In the wake of this new growth, some older corridors and areas of the community have experienced disinvestment and are prime opportunities for redevelopment. Such areas include the Highway 301 Corridor, the Five Points are, the Historic Warehouse District, Downtown Wilson, and Center City neighborhoods.

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXISTING LAND USE

LEGEND

Planning Area

Land Use

- No Human-Activity or Unclassifiable Activity
- Natural Resources Related Activities
- Residential Activities
- Leisure Activities
- Mass Assembly of People
- Shopping, Business, or Trade Activities
- Office or Financial Institution
- Social, Institutional, or Infrastructure-Related Activities
- Industrial, Manufacturing, and Waste-Related Activities
- Travel or Movement Activities

Data Source:

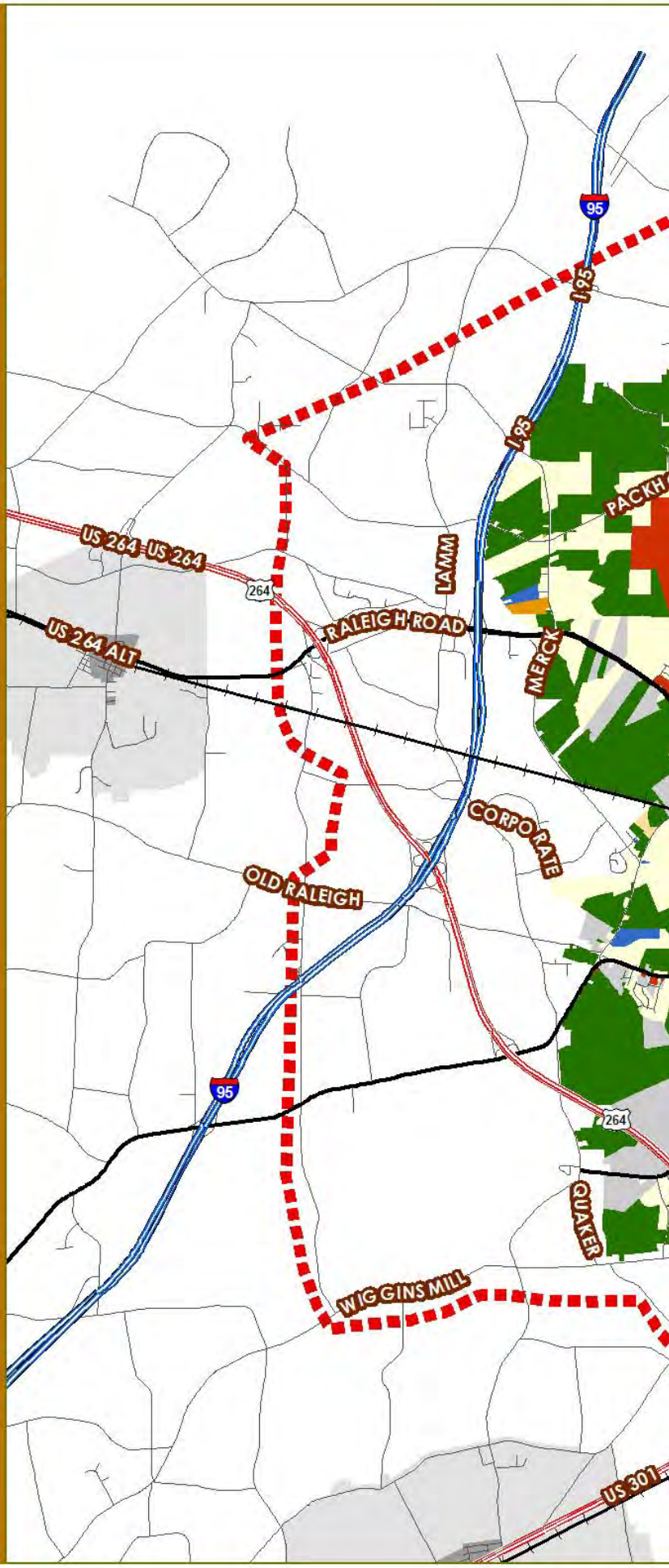
City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

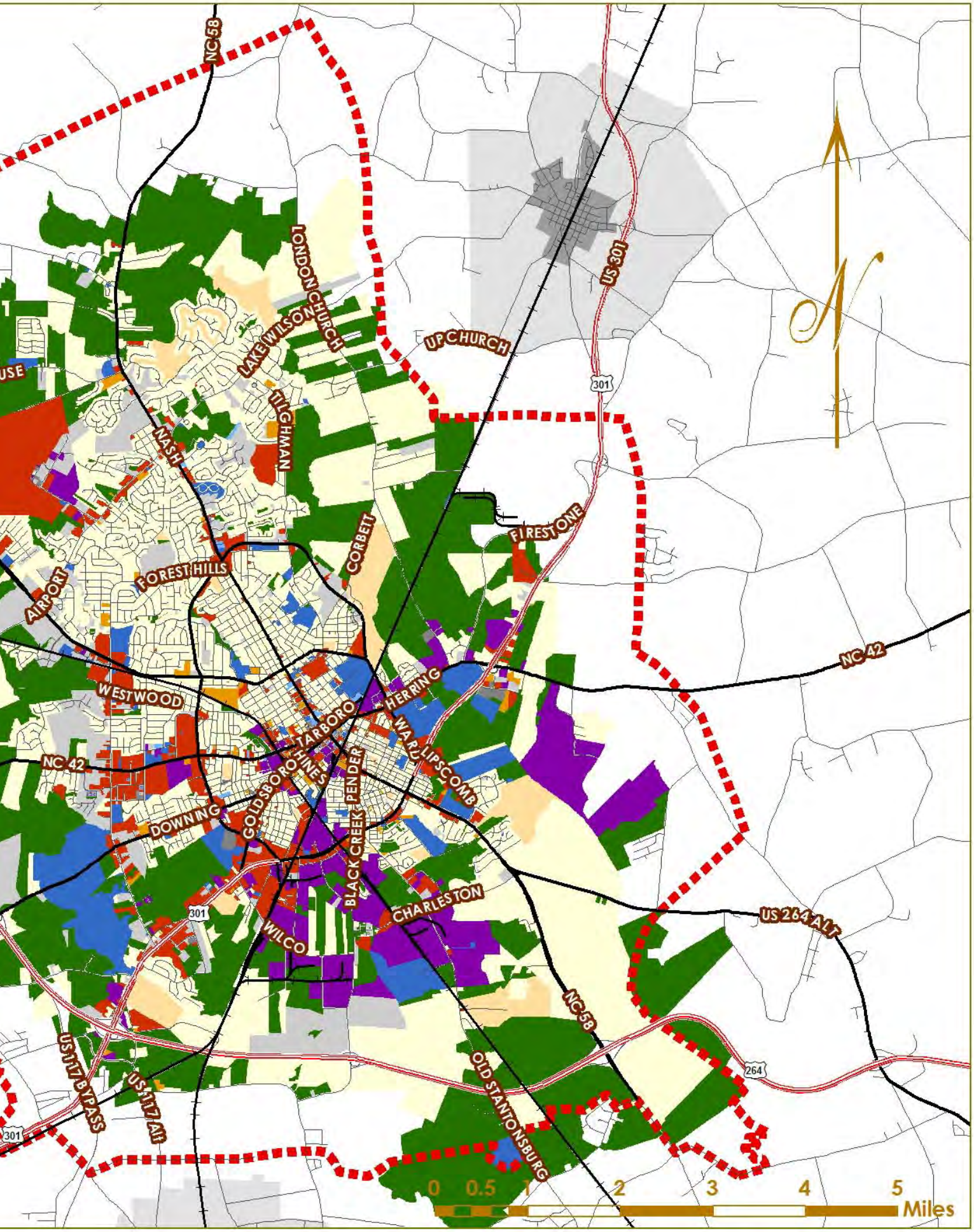
Map Disclaimer:

The City of Wilson and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information and specifically disclaim any warranty for merchantibility of fitness for a particular purpose.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

March 18, 2010




NC 58
LONDON CHURCH
LAKE WILSON
UPCHURCH
US 301
301
USE
ULGHMAN
NASH
CORBETT
FIRESTONE
FOREST HILLS
AIRPORT
NC 42
WESTWOOD
HERRING
TARBORO
WARD
LIPSCOMB
NC 42
HINES
PENDER
GOLDSBORO
DOWNING
BLACK CREEK
CHARLESTON
US 264 ALT
301
WILCO
NC 58
US 117 BYPASS
US 117 ALT
264
OLD STANTONSBURG
301
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5
Miles

Development Capacity

An assessment of development capacity in the primary and secondary growth areas for the City was conducted to identify the amount of land available for future development. Land identified for future development included the following:

- Privately owned, undeveloped lands with $0 improvement (building) value;
- Parcels of five acres or greater with single-family detached dwelling units;
- Parcels of five acres or greater with manufactured housing units; and
- Rural home sites totaling five acres or greater.

The results of the Development Capacity analysis are shown by jurisdiction, in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Estimated Development Capacity

Estimated Development Capacity (acres)	City	Wilson's ETJ	Wilson County within Planning Area Boundary	Total
	2,715	5,616	15,648	23,980

The capacity analysis revealed that within the City of Wilson's planning area there are nearly 24,000 acres or more than 37 square miles of land that could be developed in the future. In addition, approximately 260 vacant and boarded up structures have been identified in Center City Wilson. These boarded up and vacant properties total approximately 50 acres of land that could be redeveloped in the future. See Figure 5, Development Capacity Map on the following pages.

"I'm not only impressed with the growth planning-related issues and topics discussed, but also the process of inclusiveness and outreach used to develop the Plan. The Plan is bold and thoughtful enough to consider neighborhoods (a unit of area that most people can relate to), to include the principle of sustainability, to relate to the economy and the environment, design considerations (community image!), and to allow the community to delve thoroughly into the traditional growth-related issues.

The City planning staff and Clarion did a great job with the community outreach with getting the word out, including and hearing from a variety of community folks. I was again impressed with how the interrelationship of key elements of growth planning and management was explained and community input to those considerations were received and incorporated. As a planner and supporter, I'm proud of the City!"

Dennis Patton
Plan Forum

~~~~~
~~~~~

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies

Development Capacity

- Environmentally Constrained Areas
- Potential Development Areas
- Developed or Reserved Areas

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

Map Disclaimer:

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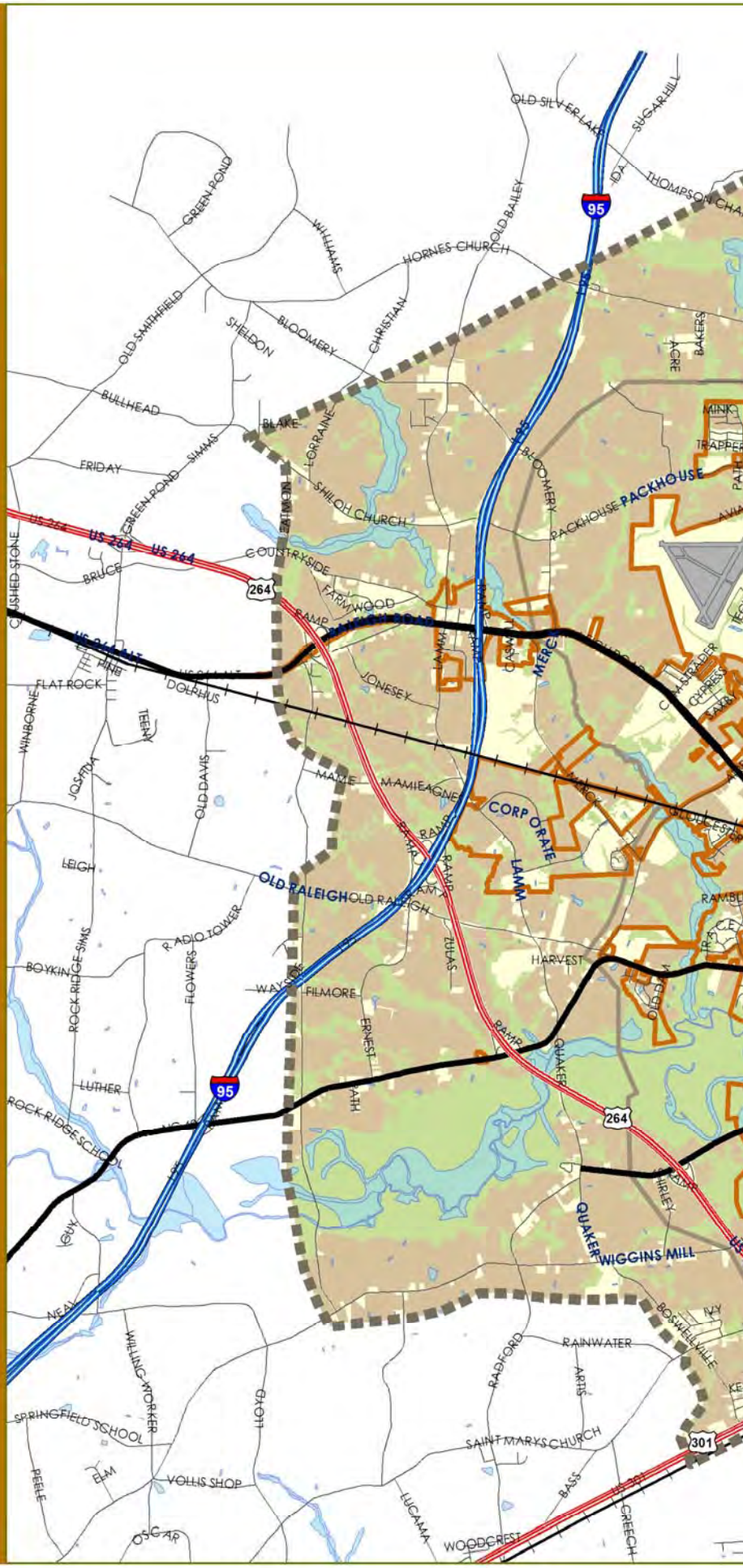
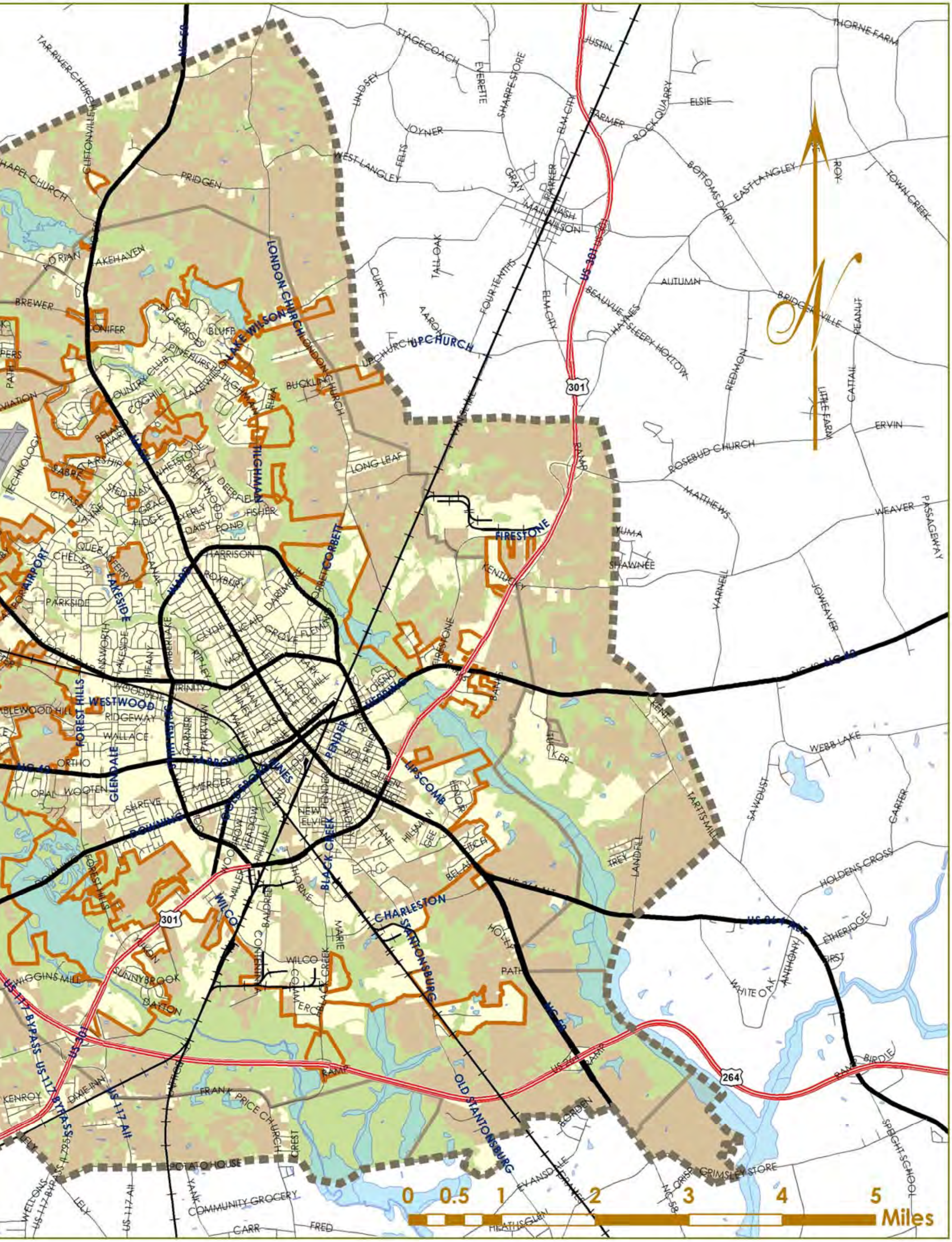
Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

January 25, 2010





NC 43
NC 58
US 301
US 264
US 264 ALT
US 17 BYPASS
US 117 BYPASS
US 117 Alt
UPCHURCH
LONDON CHURCH
LAKE WILSON
TILGHMAN
CORBETT
FIRESTONE
AIRPORT
LAKESIDE
WESTWOOD
FOREST HILLS
GLENDALE
DOWNING
TARBORO
PENDER
LIPSCOMB
BLACK CREEK
CHARLESTON
STANTONSBURG
OLD STANTONSBURG
WILCO
STAGECOACH
EVERETTE
SHARPE STORE
LINDSEY
JOYNER
WEST LANGLEY
ELM CITY
ROCK QUARRY
ELSIE
BOTTOMS DAIRY
EAST LANGLEY
THORNE FARM
TOWN CREEK
TALL OAK
CURVE
FOUR TENTHS
AUTUMN
BRIDGERSVILLE
PEANUT
SLEEPY HOLLOW
HAYNES
REDMON
LITTLE FARM
CATTAIL
ERVIN
ROSEBUD CHURCH
MATTHEWS
WEAVER
PASSAGEWAY
YUMA
SHAWNEE
VARNELL
JOWEAVER
WEBB LAKE
SAWDUST
CARTER
TARTTS MILL
HOLDENS CROSS
ETHERIDGE
WHITE OAK
ANTHONY
BIRDIE
SPEIGHT SCHOOL
GRIMSLEY STORE
EVANSDALE
HEATHSGLEN
COMMUNITY GROCERY
CARR
FRED
POTATO HOUSE
PRICE CHURCH
FRANK
DIXIE INN
KENROY
LELY
WIGGINS MILL
SUNNYBROOK
DAYTON
PRIDGEN
CLIFTONVILLE
TAR RIVER CHURCH
CHAPEL CHURCH
BREWER
LONG LEAF
KENTUCKY
RAMP
0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

Development Forecasts

Market analyses were conducted for the City of Wilson for a variety of land uses including single-family residential, townhomes, apartments, office, industrial, and retail. These analyses were used to develop a forecast for new development through the year 2020. The 2020 land demand estimates were used to develop forecasts for projected land needed to accommodate forecasted development through 2030. Table 3 shoes the estimated total additional demand per land use category by 2030.

Table 3: Estimated Total Additional Land Demand by 2030

Estimated Total Additional Land Demand by 2030* (acres)	Single-Family	Townhome	Apartment	Office	Industrial
	4,268	164	100	120	520

* Retail analysis focused on a Downtown study area and not the entire incorporated City.

This analysis shows that land demand for future development totals approximately 5,000 acres (excluding retail development) in the planning area. This represents approximately one-fifth (21 percent) of the total land capacity available for development. This means that there is more than enough (about five times more than needed) to accommodate forecasted development through 2030.

Land Use and Transportation Coordination

The impact of land use decisions on the local transportation system can not be overemphasized. The type, location, density, and pattern of growth will determine where and how much traffic will flow in the City's planning area. Transportation capacity issues can impact opportunities for new development along a roadway. Conversely, transportation improvements can open up new opportunities for land development and spur growth in new areas, such as the Raleigh Road corridor leading to I-95. Because roads cross jurisdictions, land use and transportation planning should be coordinated between the City and Wilson County.

The way developments are designed and sited influences transportation patterns. This example here shows a well designed shopping center that provides internal circulation, allowing traffic on main roads to move more freely.

The ways in which Wilson and Wilson County develop their land directly impacts the local transportation network, including roadways and alternative modes such as transit, cycling, and walking. The City's and County's land use plans have played and will continue to play a critical role in determining the future transportation needs within the planning area.

In 2009, the City and County in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of

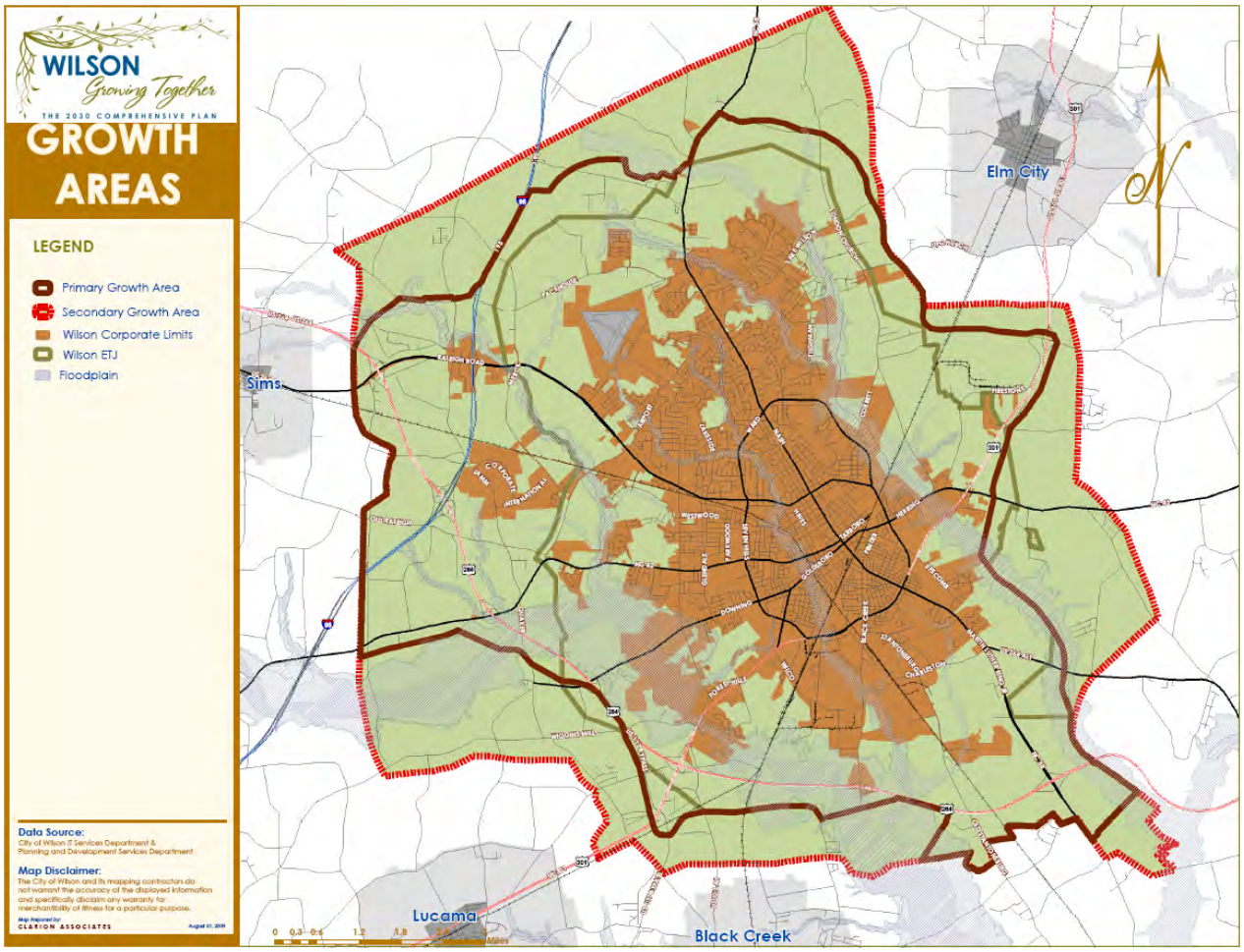
Transportation began development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Wilson County. This will be a multimodal plan that includes roadways, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes of transportation. This Transportation Plan will work to reinforce the land use and transportation goals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan, and will coordinate transportation planning across jurisdictional boundaries.

Land Use and Infrastructure Coordination

Growth Areas

During the development of the Wilson County 2025 Comprehensive Plan, leaders of the City of Wilson and Wilson County worked together to identify primary and secondary growth areas for the City of Wilson. The primary growth area identifies the areas where public infrastructure currently exists or is expected to be provided within the next five to ten years. Future growth should be directed to the primary growth area. The secondary growth area illustrates areas that may be served by public infrastructure within ten to twenty years, but that are not appropriate for shorter term development. These growth areas are shown below in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Growth Areas
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Tiered Service Areas

Two themes of this plan are to efficiently use public infrastructure and to revitalize older areas of the community. One tool that can be used to direct growth to one location and away from another is to base public utility and development fees on whether or not a development project is located in an area where public services are provided or are planned to be provided. This concept essentially links public fees to the public cost to provide the services (i.e. water, sewer, police, and fire protection) for a specific location, guiding development to appropriate areas.

The Tiered Service Areas map, shown in Figure 7 on the following page, is based on a preliminary analysis of service areas and the location of existing infrastructure. This map identifies potential service areas, as described below, and serves as a starting point for developing a formal tiered service area fee program.

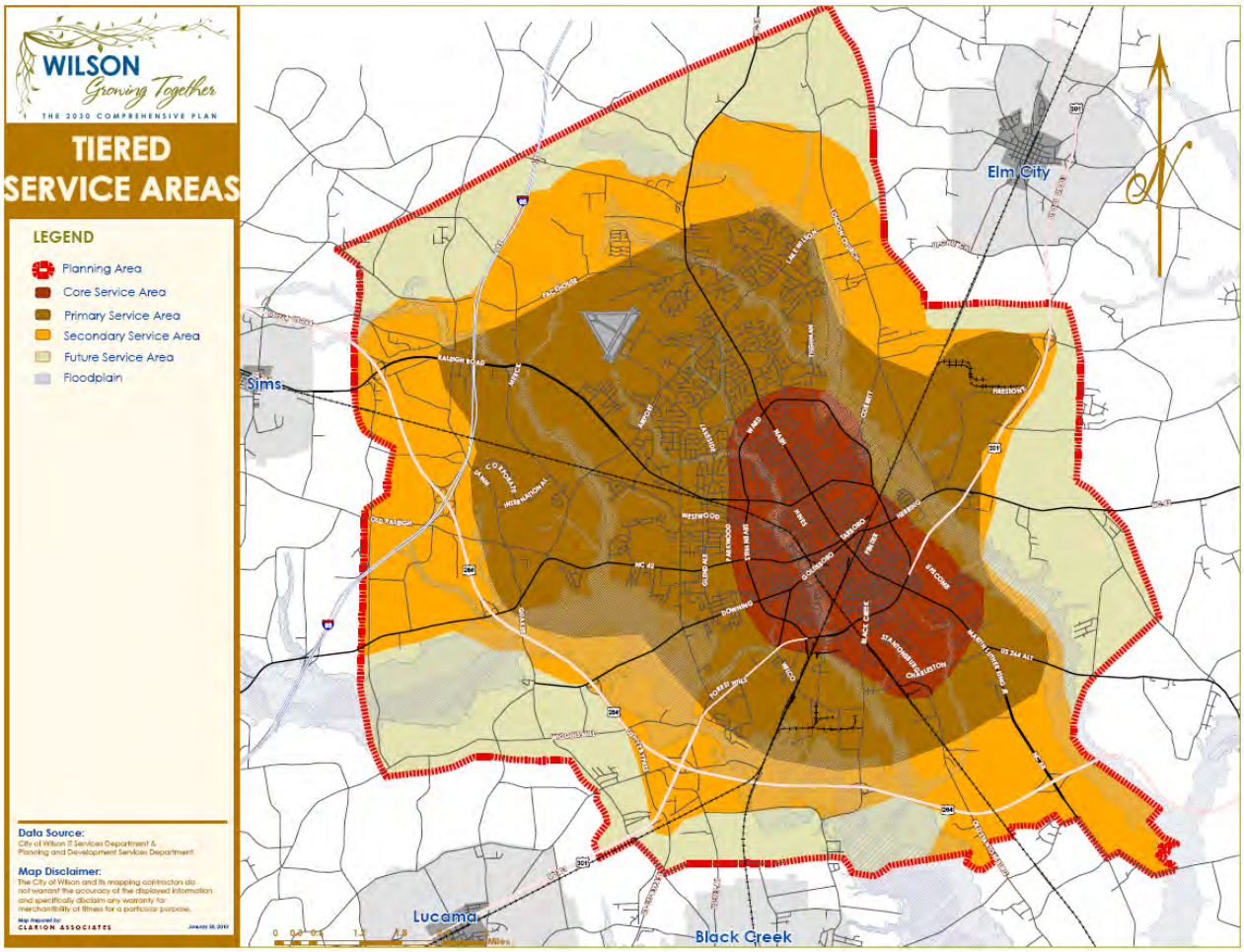
- **Core Service Area** – This area consists of land immediately surrounding and within the Ward Boulevard loop. It generally includes land that is currently serviced by public infrastructure. This area is likely less expensive to serve than other areas because the infrastructure is already in place.

- **Primary Service Area** – Encompasses areas that are either currently served by public infrastructure or where plans for future service are in place, such as the sixth fire station. This area is likely less costly to serve than outer reaching areas, but is estimated to be more costly to serve than the core service area.

- **Secondary Service Area** – Encompasses areas that are within the primary growth area that do not currently have plans to be serviced but that will likely be provided public services in the next ten years. This area likely will be more costly to serve than the core and primary service areas, but less than the future service area.

- **Future Service Area** – Incorporates the entirety of the secondary growth area shown on the Growth Areas map. These areas are likely to be provided service within twenty years. Costs to provide service to this area will be significant as this area generally is not currently serviced by the City.

Figure 7: Tiered Service Areas
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 1: A COMPACT DEVELOPMENT FORM

New development and redevelopment should reinforce Wilson's historic land use patterns to create a more connected network of neighborhoods, employment centers, and shopping and recreational destinations.

Policy 1.1: New development and redevelopment should be designed to create a compact land use pattern that efficiently uses public services and facilities, reinforces the use of multiple modes of transportation, creates greater mobility within the City, and provides better connections between adjacent developments. *(See Policy 7.7.)*

Policy 1.2: As indicated on the Future Land Use map, new developments and redevelopment along major thoroughfares, within activity centers, and in the Downtown area should incorporate a mix of land uses (both vertical and horizontal) to efficiently use land, reduce commuting and vehicle trip times, and create better connections between uses.

Policy 1.3: New development, particularly those projects located on undeveloped land, should be designed using a master planning effort that takes a holistic and tailored approach to designing the development.

Action 1.1: *Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, update the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow for higher densities and mixed-use development in targeted areas and reduce land zoned for low-density, single use development.*

Action 1.2: *To encourage a more compact development form through mixed-use developments, streamline the development approval process and simplify zoning standards required for mixed-use development within the City's Zoning Ordinance.*

Action 1.3: *Develop a tiered fee system that is based on a true representation of costs associated with the location of new development. The tiered system should promote development within targeted growth areas and infill sites and discourage isolated development outside the primary growth area by adjusting development and infrastructure fees accordingly.* *(See Action 28.4.)*

GOAL 2: DIRECT DEVELOPMENT TO PRIMARY GROWTH AREAS

Direct development to primary growth areas to create a greater balance of development throughout the City and efficiently use existing infrastructure and resources.

Policy 2.1: The Future Land Use map should be used to guide decision-makers as they take action on rezoning decisions and future capital improvement investments.

Policy 2.2: Encourage the development and redevelopment of areas defined on the Future Land Use map as primary growth areas.

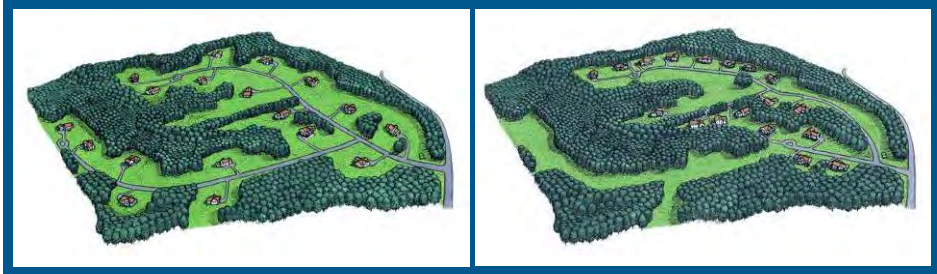
Policy 2.3: Discourage development from occurring outside primary growth areas and where the City does not intend to provide future public services by 2030. In addition, the fiscal and economic benefits of employment developments (i.e., business parks, industrial operations, etc.) proposing to locate outside of the primary growth area should be considered along with land use and infrastructure impacts when determining their appropriateness.

Policy 2.4: "Leap frog" development that bypasses primary growth areas and occurs in isolation or in small clusters should be avoided.

Policy 2.5: Development should create a neutral or, preferably, positive fiscal impact on the City. *(See Goal 6.)*

Policy 2.6: For areas outside the primary growth area that have a high productive potential for crop growth or other agricultural purposes, promote the conservation of land for appropriate agriculture and related low-intensity uses.

Policy 2.7: Areas located within water supply watershed protected or critical areas and within primary growth areas should be developed as clustered developments that protect open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands and provide for a more compact development form. *(See Policy 7.6.)*



Graphics by Randall Arendt

As shown here in this comparison, a more compact development form can accommodate the same number of residential units while reducing the development footprint and protecting open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands.

Action 2.1: *Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, revise zoning district designations to encourage development within primary growth areas and encourage the conservation of secondary growth areas for future development beyond 2030.*

Action 2.2: *The City shall set a schedule for regular review of the primary growth areas to ensure that adequate land is available for forecasted development.*

GOAL 3: INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION OF THE CENTER CITY AREA

Land within Wilson's Center City (i.e., area within the Ward Boulevard Loop), will be developed or redeveloped in a manner that reinforces Downtown as the "heart" of the community and revitalizes the Center City area to provide new opportunities for living, working, and recreating.

Policy 3.1: Foster development within Wilson's Downtown and Center City neighborhoods, including mixed-use developments that provide new residential opportunities in Downtown and a more vibrant pedestrian environment.

Policy 3.2: Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized sites in the Center City area, included but not limited to vacant sites, underutilized and blighted sites, surface parking lots, and Brownfields sites.

Policy 3.3: Foster public-private partnerships to redevelop targeted areas of the community, such as vacant warehouses in the Historic Downtown-Tobacco Warehouse district.

Policy 3.4: Partner with other organizations (public, private, and non-profit) to accomplish development and revitalization goals.

Before

After

Rehabilitating existing buildings is the "greenest" way to build and improves the character and vitality of the area.

Action 3.1: *Develop a public land bank program to acquire land with dilapidated structures, abandoned properties, and blighted lots for the purpose of selling the land to a developer of new housing or commercial development that meets the City's goals.* *(See Actions 4.2.)*

Action 3.2: *Develop and implement a neighborhood program to revitalize the City's older neighborhoods by reinvigorating stagnant real estate markets and building stronger connections among residents. The Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is a good model of this type of effort.* *(See Action 20.1.)*

Action 3.3: *Revitalize Downtown Wilson through a series of development and design, economic development, and transportation strategies (See Chapter 12: Downtown for more details.)*

GOAL 4: REDEVELOPMENT OF AGING COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Wilson will promote and encourage the redevelopment of aging commercial corridors, such as Highway 301 and Ward Boulevard between Highway 301 and Tarrboro Street, to improve the character of these corridors and adjacent neighborhoods and to elevate the quality of life in these areas.

Policy 4.1: Redevelopment of properties within aging commercial corridors should be consistent with the intent of the Future Land Use map.

Policy 4.2: Redevelopment areas that encompass identified gateways into Wilson should include special gateway treatments, such as signage, landscaping, or other similar design elements to denote the entrance to the City and provide a visually appealing experience.

Policy 4.3: Corridor redevelopment should incorporate transitions (e.g., vegetated buffers, architectural designs, appropriate building orientation on a site, and transitioning land uses) to adjacent existing developments to ensure compatibility with surrounding areas.

Policy 4.4: Redevelopment within aging commercial corridors should provide adequate access and mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and vehicles. Developments should be designed to ensure safe travel ways for all modes of transportation.

Policy 4.5: New development and redevelopment within aging commercial corridors should improve visual character along the corridor through site orientation, tree plantings and landscaping, architectural features, location of parking, and signage.

Policy 4.6: Redevelopment projects should incorporate design solutions to reduce multiple driveways accessing roads within a short distance, such as driveway consolidations, and should create interconnectivity between individual uses and developments.

Policy 4.7: The City of Wilson will consider the use of public investments to improve visual character and streetscapes in aging commercial corridors and promote redevelopment.

Policy 4.8: Public-private partnerships should be undertaken on catalyst projects to trigger the redevelopment process in underutilized commercial corridors. Public investments may include the sale or conveyance of lands through a community land bank and public infrastructure improvements.

Highway 301 Today

Improved Highway 301

This "before" and "after" example illustrates how commercial corridors can be visually enhanced through design improvements.

Action 4.1: *Develop an action plan for aging corridors, such as Highway 301 that incorporates a range of revitalization measures, such as:*

- *Design guidelines for redevelopment*
- *Public investments (streetscape improvements, sidewalks, burying overhead utility lines, landscaped medians, street lighting, etc.)*
- *Public purchase of catalyst sites for joint ventures*
- *Creating a revolving fund for targeted real estate purchases and dispositions*
- *Providing incentives to private investments (e.g., reduced utility connection fees, accelerated development approvals, property tax credits, grants based on new taxes generated)*
- *Establishment of a Community Development Corporation*
- *Consider new funding sources to encourage development within aging corridors (e.g., new markets tax credits, grants and low-interest loans, and others)*
- *Brownfields assessments*
- *Marketing assistance* (See Actions 44.1-7.)

Action 4.2: *Develop a public land bank program to acquire land with dilapidated structures, abandoned properties, and blighted lots for the purpose of selling the land to a developer of new housing and commercial development that meets the City's goals. (See Action 3.1.)*

Action 4.3: *Establish a business improvement district for the Highway 301 Corridor. This district would encourage businesses to pay a voluntary additional tax in order to fund improvements to the district, such as streetscape improvements, wayfinding signage, better lighting, road improvements, etc.*

Action 4.4: *Explore the potential for using a tax increment financing district for the Highway 301 Corridor. This is a public investment tool to fund public improvements to a designated district using publicly issued bonds with the intent that the improvements will generate an increase in tax revenues to pay off the debt acquired.*

Action 4.5*: Maintain an up-to-date geographic information system dataset of existing land uses and vacant structures in Wilson. Periodically compare this data to data on new development and redevelopment and identify trends in other aging corridors requiring reinvestment focus.*

Action 4.6: *Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to provide flexibility to promote the reuse of older buildings in commercial corridors and neighborhood business areas, such as Five Points. Parking reductions should be permitted in order to allow infill development within parking areas.*

Action 4.7: *Develop a vacant building initiative to increase private investment in vacant buildings in areas such as Five Points, the Highway 301 Corridor, and Downtown. The "Operation: No Vacancy Initiative" in Hickory, North Carolina is a model program to be considered.*

GOAL 5: COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT

New development and redevelopment should be compatible with adjacent, existing uses and should improve the quality and character of surrounding areas.

Policy 5.1: New development should take into consideration the existing conditions of surrounding properties and neighborhoods and create a development program that includes land uses, a site plan, and design treatments that accomplish the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and complement adjacent land uses.

Policy 5.2: During the development review process, proposals of new developments or redevelopments should identify any potential impacts to surrounding properties and neighborhoods and identify mitigation strategies to reduce these impacts. Additionally, current and future land use type and intensity should be accounted for during review of proposed projects in order to ensure appropriate transitions are provided.

Infill development should be compatible with adjacent structures. These examples show a new house that is compatible with neighborhood character and one that is oversized and does not "fit in".

Action 5.1: *Develop design guidelines for infill and new commercial corridors, mixed-use, and multi-family developments.*

Action 5.2: *Amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to provide for flexibility in achieving compatibility for setbacks, parking, height, lot coverage, and other development standards. Consider adopting context dependent standards for infill developments that set requirements based on adjacent land uses (e.g., height should be no more than 115% of any structure within 500 feet.)*

GOAL 6: FISCALLY BALANCED LAND USES

Future development within Wilson will include a variety of land uses that provide a diverse tax base for the City and create a better fiscal balance. *(See Policy 2.5.)*

Policy 6.1: A diversity of development, including a variety of residential unit types and densities, mixed-use developments, and employment centers should occur within the City.

Policy 6.2: Residential development should be balanced with non-residential development in a manner that does not result in Wilson becoming a "bedroom community" to surrounding regional centers, such as Raleigh, and provides needed employment, shopping, and recreational opportunities for Wilson's residents.

Policy 6.3: Infill developments are encouraged as these types of developments have been shown, through study, to maximize existing services and have a lower impact on public infrastructure and service costs in comparison to new developments.

Policy 6.4: Employment based development, such as office parks, industrial parks, higher educational institutions, and healthcare complexes, are strongly encouraged and promoted in Wilson.

Policy 6.5: Review of development proposals within Wilson should consider potential impacts on the community's real estate market, particularly the possible impact of trading development in one area of the City to another and potentially leaving a vacant property that impacts adjacent property values.

Action 6.1: Monitor the balance of tax revenues and public infrastructure costs over time and compare with development approvals to identify trends. Seek strategies to maintain a fiscal balance.

Action 6.2: *Develop a fiscal model to analyze development proposals and any positive or negative impacts development has on municipal budgets.*

GOAL 7: PROTECTION OF VALUABLE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Future development should be designed to protect critical environmental resources, such as floodplain areas and wetlands. Opportunities for public use of these areas, such as greenways, parks, and recreational areas, should be identified. These uses should provide opportunities for residents to experience and learn about the natural environment.

Policy 7.1: Environmentally sensitive areas, including forested lands, riparian buffers and stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, and areas of steep slope, are recognized as valuable environmental resources and should be set-aside as natural areas within new developments.

Policy 7.2: Environmentally sensitive areas should serve as either natural open spaces or passive/active recreational areas where only low-impact development is permitted.

Policy 7.3: Environmentally sensitive areas should be adequately protected during the construction of new developments to ensure the integrity of these resources.

Wetlands are lands that are regularly saturated with water as part of the hydrological cycle. These areas should be protected to sustain local wildlife habitat and ensure natural flow of water. This image here shows a wetland in Wilson.

Policy 7.4: New public and private developments are encouraged to use sustainable green building strategies such as purchasing or generating renewable energy, reducing energy use, reducing building footprints and impervious surfaces, reducing water consumption and wastewater generation, protecting natural habitats, and reusing of existing structures and building materials. Developments are encouraged to seek LEED certification or other green building certification awards for incorporating these strategies.

Policy 7.5: To the furthest extent possible, existing mature tree canopies should be protected and maintained throughout the community, with a focus on new developments and along major thoroughfares. *(See Goal 48.)*

Policy 7.6: Lands located within water supply watersheds should be developed in a manner that protects water resources through cluster development patterns that set-aside open space as a buffer to water sources. *(See Policy 2.7.)*

New developments should incorporate sustainable building designs such as this example from Wilson Community College's Student Center. This building uses solar panels to generate clean, renewable energy for campus use.

Policy 7.7: Land development should promote the protection of air quality in Wilson through a compact development form that reduces the need for vehicular trips resulting in less air emissions from vehicles. *(See Policy 1.1.)*

Action 7.1: *Adopt new development standards to improve the protection of environmentally sensitive lands, including:*

- *Revise tree protection and tree replanting standards*
- *Provide more incentives for open space set-asides*
- *Provide incentives to developments using green building techniques that reduce the development footprint on undeveloped lands and protect trees and natural areas during the construction process*

Action 7.2: *Amend the zoning ordinance to further restrict development in flood prone areas, specifically revising the 50% "no build" area standard. Consider development of a program to allow transfers of development density from these areas to areas that are appropriate for development.*

Action 7.3: *Using a geographic information system, identify trees and tree groves in the City that are critical for maintaining a forested canopy and habitat areas. Provide further protection for these areas.*

Link to Sustainable Planning

The goals, policies, and action strategies contained in this chapter not only help to set the stage for future land use and development, but they also help the City of Wilson move on the path towards a more sustainable future, as discussed in the table below.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies about achieving a compact development form and focusing on infill development help to conserve energy by maximizing existing utility infrastructure and reduce reliance on personal automobiles for transportation.

Climate Change

Policies that promote growth in a compact form, infill, and in primary growth areas help to reduce vehicle miles traveled, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Infill and redevelopment policies promote re-use of existing land and infrastructure, and help to reduce the resources needed to accommodate new development in fringe areas.

Food Production and Food Security

Land use policies aimed at protecting environmental resources and directing growth to primary growth areas help to protect valuable agricultural lands and natural resources necessary for food production.

Community Health and Safety

Policies aimed at a compact development form, a balance of land uses, and compatible development promote community health and safety by providing opportunities for comfortable, walkable, and pedestrian-friendly environments.

Water Conservation

Policies to protect environmental resources and to promote infill, redevelopment, and compact growth help to protect water supply watersheds, and offer opportunities to maximize and reuse existing infrastructure and water resources.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map, shown in Figure 8 on the following pages, is designed to establish a compact growth pattern that focuses development within the primary growth area. It assumes a "filling in" of existing vacant and redevelopable land in the Center City area. Mixed-use development is proposed in activity centers at key intersections, providing employment and commercial opportunities at several locations throughout the City. The Future Land Use Map suggests a focus on redevelopment of the Highway 301 Corridor and Downtown, while providing new opportunities for commercial and employment development along Raleigh Road, near the airport, and at existing industrial centers.

Using the primary growth area as a guide for allocating future land use, the amount of development allocated on the Future Land Use Map is nearly four times the land needed to accommodate future growth forecasts for 2030. This approach directs growth away from floodplain areas and nearly 4,200 acres of land in the secondary growth area.

Future Land Use Classifications

The following classifications describe the future land uses depicted on the Future Land Use Map.

- **Parks and Open Space** – Public or quasi-public uses such as publicly-owned park space, recreational areas, golf courses, and other open lands unlikely to be developed.
- **Rural Residential** – Rural land uses such as very low density single-family homes and farming operations.
- **Cluster Residential** – Single-family developments designed as cluster subdivisions for the purpose of setting aside land within water supply watersheds and other environmentally significant features as protected open space.
- **Low Density Residential** – Single-family detached subdivisions developed at a density of up to two dwelling units per acre. Some medium and high density residential development can be included as part of a master-planned development.
- **Medium Density Residential** – Single-family detached subdivisions developed at a density between two to four dwelling units per acre. Some high density residential development can be included as part of a mater-planned development.
- **High Density Residential** – Single-family detached and attached developments with a density of five dwelling units per acre or greater.
- **Multi-Family Residential** – Apartment complexes and other multi-family developments.
- **Activity Centers** – Intended to serve as focused areas for development within a compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly environment. Downtown represents the largest and most established of these activity centers. Other centers are identified at key intersections within the City Center and at Raleigh Road and Airport Boulevard.

- **Downtown Development District** – Includes a mix of office, retail, restaurant, civic, and hospitality uses. Redevelopment of this area is a focus for the City.

- **Commercial** – Includes both large and small commercial and retail uses, with some small office development along major thoroughfares.

- **Mixed-Use Commercial** – Concentrated areas of commercial, office, and residential development. The intent is to allow for both vertical (multi-story) and horizontal (multiple uses on a site) mixed-use, including high density and multi-family residential.

- **Mixed-Use Office/Employment** – Concentrated areas of employment development primarily in the form of offices, but allowing for some light industrial in appropriate locations. Developments should include commercial and higher density residential that serve the employment uses. The intent is to allow for both vertical (multi-story) and horizontal (multiple uses on a site) mixed-use, including high density and multi-family residential.

- **Institutional** – Uses related to community services, such as fire stations, libraries, schools, civic buildings, water treatment plants, and the like.

- **Industrial** – Development of industrial, flex space, and office uses in locations that are compatible with adjacent uses. Industrial employment centers are designed to function as "campuses" with integrated pedestrian facilities and transitions to adjacent, less-intensive uses.

- **Infrastructure** – Includes transportation facilities, the Wilson County landfill, and the airport.

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

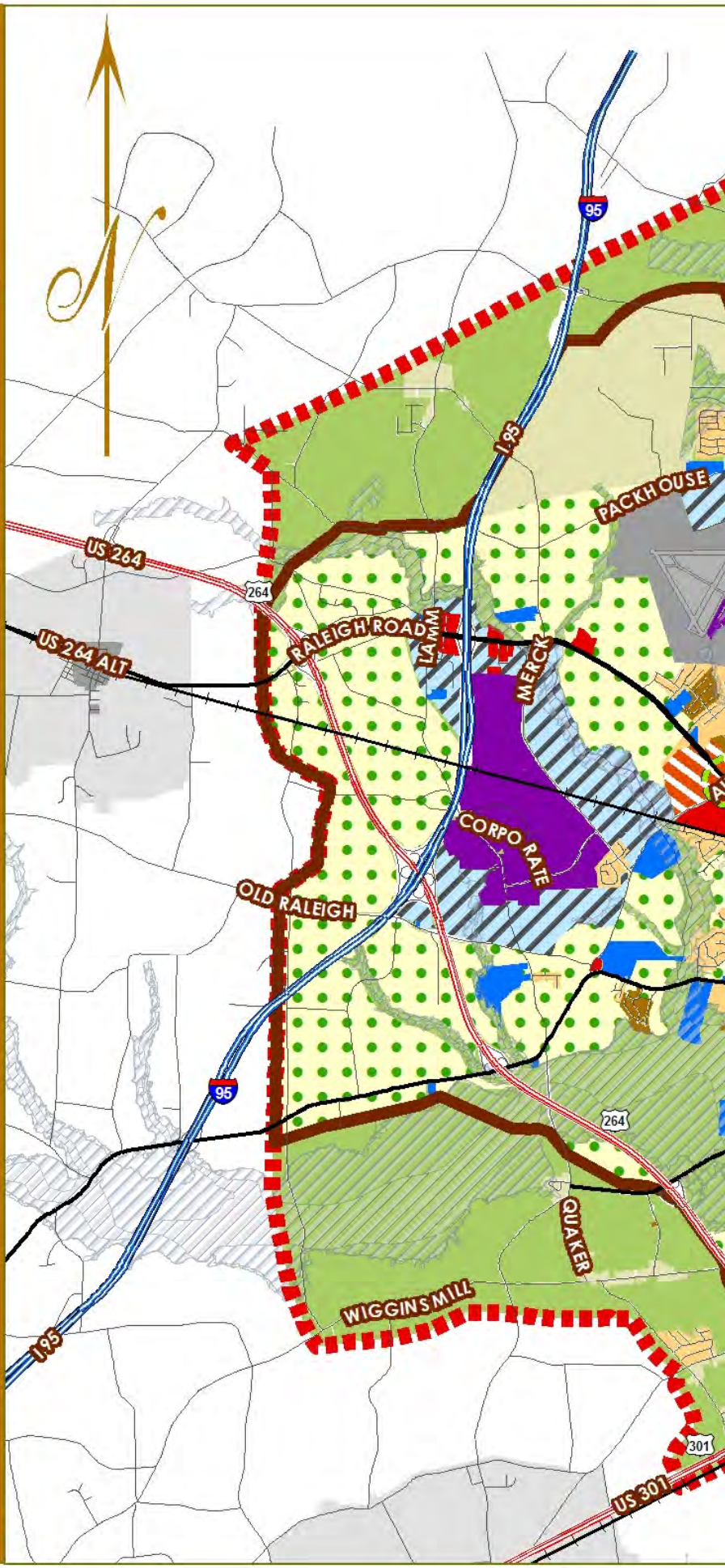
FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Primary Growth Area
- Floodplain

Future Land Use

- Parks and Open Space
- Rural Residential
- Cluster Residential
- Low-Density Residential
- Medium-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Downtown Development District
- Commercial
- Mixed-Use Commercial
- Mixed-Use Office/Employment
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Activity Center
- Infrastructure



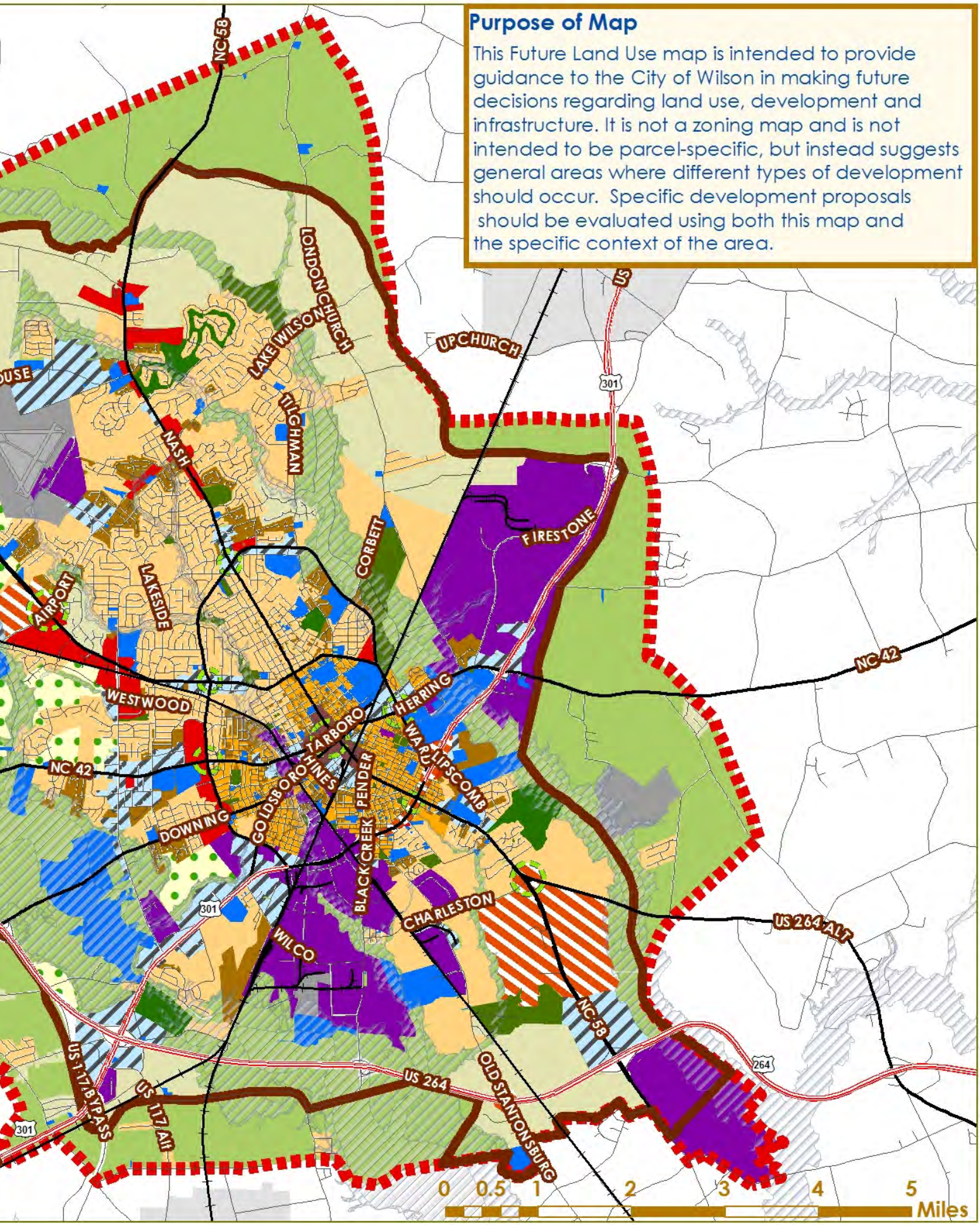
Data Source:
City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

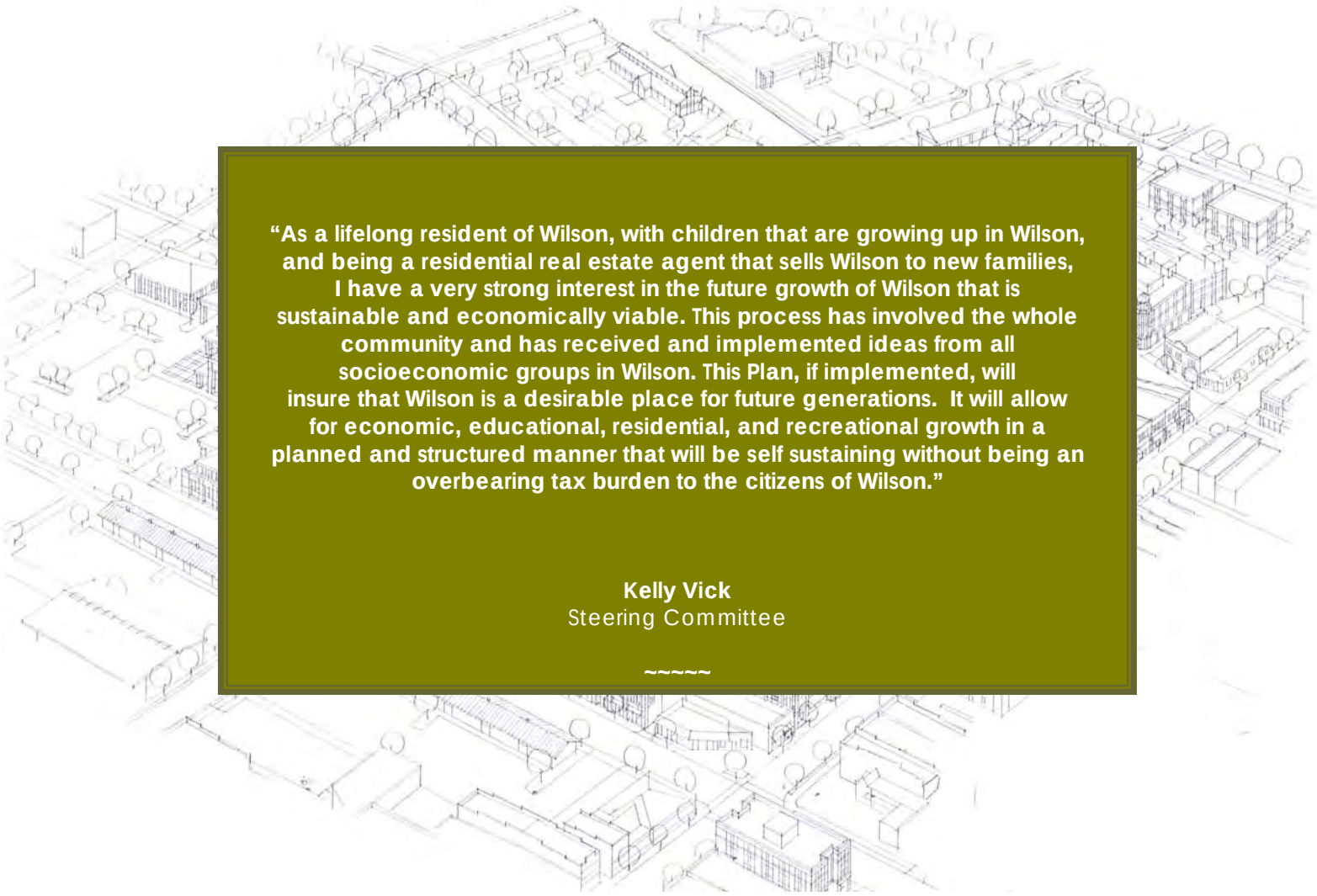
Map Disclaimer:
The City of Wilson and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information and disclaim any warranty for merchantibility of fitness for a particular purpose.

Prepared by: CLARION ASSOCIATES January 25, 2010

Purpose of Map

This Future Land Use map is intended to provide guidance to the City of Wilson in making future decisions regarding land use, development and infrastructure. It is not a zoning map and is not intended to be parcel-specific, but instead suggests general areas where different types of development should occur. Specific development proposals should be evaluated using both this map and the specific context of the area.





"As a lifelong resident of Wilson, with children that are growing up in Wilson, and being a residential real estate agent that sells Wilson to new families, I have a very strong interest in the future growth of Wilson that is sustainable and economically viable. This process has involved the whole community and has received and implemented ideas from all socioeconomic groups in Wilson. This Plan, if implemented, will insure that Wilson is a desirable place for future generations. It will allow for economic, educational, residential, and recreational growth in a planned and structured manner that will be self sustaining without being an overbearing tax burden to the citizens of Wilson."

Kelly Vick
Steering Committee

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ECONOMY

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to promote economic growth in Wilson. It discusses the current economic trends such as employment, and the supply of retail, office and industrial space, and also considers market forecasts and marketable areas for future development. This chapter provides guidance on the types of economic development the City would like to foster through 2030, as well as the actions the City can take, in partnership with local economic development partners, to encourage these efforts. Economic goals for the City of Wilson include:

- Expanding the City's economic base;
- Enhancing the job readiness of the local workforce
- Promoting economic development efforts that take advantage of the City's technology infrastructure;
- Supporting the expansion of Barton College and Wilson Community College;
- Fostering development of locally owned businesses; and
- Promoting redevelopment of Brownfields sites.

The economic goals and policies contained within this chapter also help to support the City's sustainability goals which include promoting the development of new industries and revitalization of the Center City area, establishing a job-ready workforce, and ensuring fiscal health and efficiency. A discussion of the links between the community's sustainable planning goals and economic objectives is provided at the end of this chapter.

ECONOMY

Wilson should leverage its assets such as its advanced technology infrastructure and supply of vacant and underutilized land to expand the City's economic base.

Key Issues

The following key issues regarding economic development and opportunities were identified based on feedback from community members and key stakeholders.

- **Maintaining and Expanding Wilson's Economic Base** – Wilson must continue to maintain and expand its base of manufacturing, banking, pharmaceutical, and other clean growth industries in order to support a healthy economy.

- **Enhancing Job Readiness of the Local Workforce** – Working to educate and improve the job skills of the local workforce will help to decrease unemployment rates and the outsourcing of jobs to workers living outside of Wilson.

- **Promoting Downtown as a Core Commercial Activity Center** –The City has made the revitalization and redevelopment of Wilson's historic Downtown a high priority. The City and partnering organizations should continue to devote staff and resources to foster these efforts in order to make Downtown function as Wilson's core commercial activity center.

- **Encouraging Infill and Revitalization** – The City should continue to support and encourage development within Wilson's Downtown Center City neighborhoods and where infill and revitalization opportunities exist, such as along the Highway 301 Corridor.

- **Supporting the Expansion of Barton College and Wilson Community College** – Barton College and Wilson Community College are significant economic engines for the City. Barton contributes over one million dollars a week to the local economy. The City supports future expansion of Barton College and Wilson Community College and should seek ways to assist these institutions in their efforts.

- **Encouraging Development, Retention, and Expansion of Locally Owned Businesses** – Many new commercial businesses in Wilson are nationally owned corporations or franchise type enterprises. In the future, Wilson should focus on retaining its unique community character by encouraging and supporting the development of new locally owned businesses and helping existing local businesses expand and grow.

- **Promoting Redevelopment of Brownfields Sites** – The existing Brownfields sites in Wilson present opportunities to achieve three goals: 1) reducing the harmful release of waste to the environment, 2) cleaning up existing sites that are contaminated, and 3) revitalizing underutilized properties and expanding economic development opportunities in Wilson. Reclaiming and redeveloping Brownfields sites offer a sustainable approach to economic development that Wilson should pursue.

- **Aging Commercial Corridors and Newly Developing Corridors** – Wilson is experiencing a phenomenon that occurs in many maturing City's – older commercial corridors, such as Highway 301, are in need of reinvestment to address vacancies and design enhancement to deal with blighted areas, while newer developing corridors, such as the western portion of Raleigh Road Parkway, are active areas for new development. Balancing the need to improve aging commercial corridors while also providing new development opportunities in new areas is supported by the City.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Employment

Since 2000 employment in Wilson County has increased (approximately 3.6 percent from 2000 to 2007), as the County population has also grown. In 2007 it is estimated that Wilson County had approximately 40,214 employees, with more than one-quarter in the services sector (approximately 11,507). The industry with the most considerable growth (112 percent) during this period was the finance, insurance, and real estate (F.I.R.E) sector. Compared with State of North Carolina employment data, Wilson County has a higher share of employees in the manufacturing sector, and a lower share of employees in the services sector.

Employment Quick Facts

In the City of Wilson in 2008 there were approximately:

- 26,036 jobs
- 5,106 employees commuting into the City
- 2,000 employees at BB&T

In 2008 the City of Wilson reported 26,036 jobs within its municipal boundary, and experienced a net inflow of approximately 5,106 employees, primarily within the manufacturing, retail trade, services, and government industries. Branch Banking & Trust (BB&T) is the City's largest employer, with approximately 2,000 employees at four locations in the community.

Inventories and Forecasts

Retail Space

Retail centers in Wilson contain approximately 2.1 million square feet of gross leasable area. The overall retail vacancy rate in the City is 21.2 percent, which is considerably higher than the average retail vacancy rate for the Triangle region (estimated at 6.5 percent). Both the Forest Hills and Fikewood centers have vacancy rates over 50 percent, and vacant retail anchor spaces. Parkwood Mall, the largest center in Wilson, has a 33.1 percent vacancy rate and at 30 years old it is struggling to remain competitive in the current retail environment.

Retail Quick Facts

In Wilson in 2008 there was an estimated:

- 2.1 million square feet of gross leasable retail area
- 21.2% retail vacancy rate
- 77,371 square feet of retail space in Downtown is forecasted for 2020

By 2020 the population within the Wilson Downtown trade area is projected to increase 9.5 percent, and the number of households is forecasted to increase 10 percent. As the population and numbers of households within the Downtown trade area grow, demand for retail square footage in Downtown Wilson is expected to increase from 58,803 square feet in 2008 to 66,660 square feet by 2015, and 77,371 square feet by 2020. The largest growth in retail demand is expected in the restaurant (food away from home) and grocery store (food at home) categories.

Office Space

The City of Wilson has approximately 1.5 million square feet of office space, excluding government-owned buildings. Nash Street has the highest concentrations of Wilson's office space (approximately 29 percent), which is due primarily to the BB&T Towers and suburban buildings north of Ward Boulevard. The overall office vacancy rate in Wilson is estimated between 10 and 15 percent.

Office-occupying employment is forecasted to increase by 1,750 jobs by 2020. In that time period, Wilson could absorb approximately 210,000 square feet of general office space, 60,000 square feet of medical office space, 40,000 square feet of office condominium space, and 50,000 square feet of medical condominium space – or approximately 360,000 square feet of total office space. The amount of office space forecasted would require approximately 30 acres of land.

Office Quick Facts

In Wilson in 2008 there was an estimated:

- 1.5 million square feet of office space
- 10 to 15% office vacancy rate
- 360,000 square feet of new office space is forecasted for 2020

Industrial Space

Wilson has five major industrial parks that encompass approximately 895 acres. The Wilson Corporate Park is the largest at 561 acres. Approximately 575 acres (64.2 percent) of the total industrial park space is currently vacant, leaving ample room for future industrial development.

Total industrial space is approximately 5.8 million square feet. Forecasts indicate that Wilson could absorb approximately one million additional square feet of industrial space through 2020. This additional industrial development would require approximately 130 acres.

Industrial Quick Facts

In Wilson in 2008 there was an estimated:

- 5.8 million square feet of office space
- 1 million square feet of industrial space is forecasted for 2020

Marketable Areas for Future Development

The following targeted locations for future office and industrial centers were based on analysis of existing and planned centers, feedback from local economic development and real estate professionals, development activity and trends, and access to transportation (including highways and rail). As listed below, and shown in Figure 9, four locations have been identified for future office growth, and three locations have been identified for future large-lot industrial and employment development in Wilson.

Office

- **Downtown/Nash Street** – Home to BB&T towers and government offices, Downtown Wilson remains a viable location for office uses. Redevelopment of surface parking lots could accommodate new office buildings. Vacancies in many of the store-front spaces and floors above provide opportunities for smaller professional offices, such as accountants, travel agents, and lawyers. Nash Street north of Ward Boulevard will likely continue to attract small professional offices and office condominiums.

- **Raleigh Road** – Residential and retail uses continue to develop in the vicinity of Raleigh Road. Office development will likely be attracted to the visibility and access from I-95. New residential development provides workforce housing, and the Heritage Crossing Shopping Center provides worker amenities. Raleigh Road would be appropriate for all office types.

- **Tarboro Street/Wooten Boulevard** – Proximity to the Wilson Memorial hospital provides a prime location for medical office and condominiums along Tarboro Street and Wooten Boulevard. Wooten Boulevard already hosts a number of office developments, including an operations center for BB&T.

- **Charleston Street Mixed-Use Development Area/Martin Luther King Parkway** – The Charleston Street mixed-use development is planned for 1,500 to 2,000 acres along both sides of NC-58, north of US-264 Bypass and the planned Woodward parkway industrial mega-site. Charleston Street is proposed to combine commercial, service, retail, office, and residential uses.

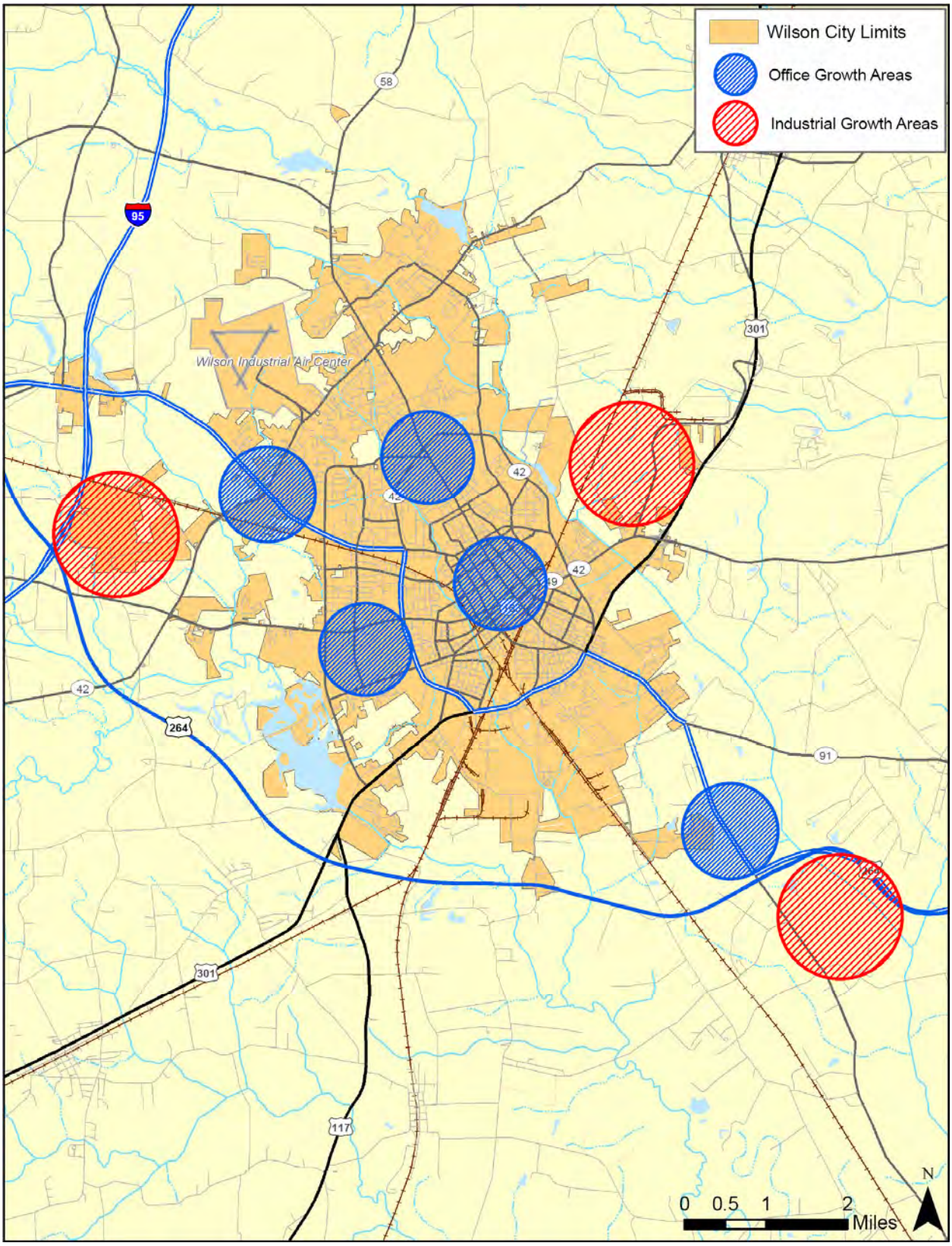
Industrial

- **Wilson Corporate Park** – Wilson Corporate Park has approximately 360 acres remaining for development. The Corporate Park has immediate access to I-95, the major north-south route on the east coast. Established industries such as Purdue Pharmaceuticals, Sandoz Pharmaceuticals, and Cott Beverage will help attract future development.

- **Northside Assemblage** – The existing Northside Business Park is located between London Church Road and Firestone Parkway northeast of Downtown Wilson. It contains 108 available acres. The site has easy access from NC-42, US-301, and US-264. Nearby landowners are privately marketing a 658-acre assemblage north of the existing development. Utilities are not yet available for the entire assemblage, and no environmental studies have been performed to determine how much of the site is buildable.

- **Woodard Parkway** – The Economic Development Council (EDC) has recently begun marketing a new industrial mega-site in the southeast quadrant of US-264 Bypass and NC-58. The site is 10 miles from I-95 along US-264 Bypass, and 40 minutes to I-40. Envisioned to be similar to the Wilson Corporate Park, Woodward Parkway is an 830-acre assemblage suitable for all types of employment, including the EDC's target industries of security and defense, life sciences, building products, food, and automotive. While not currently available, municipal utilities could be extended to the site. Woodward Parkway is proposed across US-264 Bypass from the Charleston Street mixed-use development.

Figure 9: Office and Industrial Growth Areas, 2009



Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 8: EXPANDED ECONOMIC BASE

Maintain a healthy economic base of manufacturing, banking, pharmaceutical, and other clean growth industries in Wilson and expand the City's economic base to include new industries.

Policy 8.1: A variety of employment opportunities and new businesses are encouraged to develop in Wilson.

Policy 8.2: A diversified job market that provides employment opportunities for persons with varying educational levels and skill sets is needed and encouraged.

Policy 8.3: The City of Wilson supports local partnerships and efforts to capitalize on Wilson's strengths and opportunities to provide new employment opportunities in Wilson.

Policy 8.4: Employment center development is encouraged within the primary growth area and especially as infill development within the Center City and Downtown areas.

Wilson Corporate Park, shown here, provides exception regional transportation access to its businesses. Land is available for new industries locating to the region.

Policy 8.5: Local and regional tourism efforts are encouraged and supported, with a focus on sports tourism and use of the J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex.

Policy 8.6: To better address the high retail vacancy rate condition in Wilson, approval of new retail developments should include consideration of market conditions and affects on the market if the project is approved.

Action 8.1: *Work with local economic development partners, such as the Wilson Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, Wilson Downtown Development Corporation, and Wilson Downtown Properties to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use map.*

Action 8.2: *Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not succeeding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.*

Action 8.3: *Periodically develop a community leakage analysis to identify areas where a business recruitment initiative might be successful in attracting new business.*

Action 8.4: *Work with the Economic Development Council to identify long-term needs for a new industrial park. Determine potential sites appropriate for this type of development.*

Action 8.5: *Work with the Economic Development Council to develop a strategy for protecting industrial parks from encroachment by residential subdivisions. Locations proximate to residential areas are often not preferred by prospective businesses due to potential impacts from industries.*

Action 8.6: *Approval of Rezoning and Conditional Use Permit cases should include consideration of market conditions and how the project will affect the City's overall retail vacancy rate.*

GOAL 9: ENHANCED JOB READINESS OF THE WORKFORCE

Educate and improve the job skills of the local workforce to both decrease unemployment rates and demand for outsourcing jobs to workers living outside of Wilson.

Policy 9.1: The City of Wilson supports local educational institutions, such as Wilson Community College, Barton College, and the Wilson County School System, in their efforts to train and educate Wilson's workforce and will provide support and needed assistance to these efforts by working to improve accessibility to educational facilities and improve the quality of life in the City.

Wilson Community College has partnered with Wilson County Schools to provide new educational programs for students interested in secondary education, such as the Wilson Early College Academy.

Policy 9.2: The City supports the workforce development efforts of the Wilson Economic Development Council and the Wilson Chamber of Commerce to create partnerships between businesses and schools, to develop and implement parental education programs, to develop career exploration programs for students, and to secure commitments from local businesses to recruit employees from the local workforce pool.

Action 9: *Work with local partner organizations to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.*

GOAL 10: TECHNOLOGY-ORIENTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Promote and recruit high-tech businesses needing advanced fiber-optic services.

Policy 10.1: Leverage community investments in fiber-optic networks into more economic development opportunities.

Action 10.1: *Work with local partner organizations to market Wilson as having the most advanced fiber-optic network in the State and one of the best in the nation.*

Greenlight, Wilson's community-owned fiber-optic-based internet, television, and phone service is the fastest in the State and the only system of its kind in North Carolina.

Action 10.2: *Work with existing businesses in Wilson to develop business expansion strategies that capitalize on local technologies.*

GOAL 11: EXPANSION OF BARTON COLLEGE AND WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Support the expansion of Barton College and its positive financial, social, cultural, and educational impacts on the City.

Implementation of Barton College's Master Plan will spur investment and redevelopment in area neighborhoods, improve pedestrian and vehicular accessibility and mobility and generally improve the character of this part of Center City.

Policy 11.1: The City supports Barton College in the development and implementation of the College's Master Plan and will assist with efforts to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding the College.

Policy 11.2: The City supports Wilson Community College in preparing plans to expand college facilities, including identifying opportunities to improve the Herring Avenue gateway area.

Action 11.1: *Work with Barton College to*

develop a plan for identifying, prioritizing, and initiating mutually beneficial projects. (See Action 26.)

Action 11.2: *Work with Wilson Community College to leverage potential expansion of the College with the need to improve the Highway 42 / Herring Avenue gateway, including multi-modal transportation improvements to the area.*

GOAL 12: DEVELOPMENT OF LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

Retain Wilson's unique community character and encourage entrepreneurship in the community through the establishment of locally owned businesses, and helping existing local businesses grow.

Policy 12.1: The City will consider providing economic development incentives to local residents in the promotion of locally-owned businesses.

Policy 12.2: The City will support local business development by working with local economic development agencies to identify funding sources for emerging local businesses. *(See Policy 40.5.)*

Policy 12.3: The City promotes the development of art-related businesses in the community to increase tourism, cultural arts events, and promote small business development.

Policy 12.4: The City will assist small businesses in utilizing new technologies to expand their market base.

Action 12.1: *In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend.*

Action 12.2: *The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors.*

Action 12.3: *Identify the appropriate agency/organization and position to coordinate the local small business development efforts occurring in Wilson.*

Action 12.4: *Provide a clearing house for information on locating a business in Wilson and the available State and local resources available to small businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.*

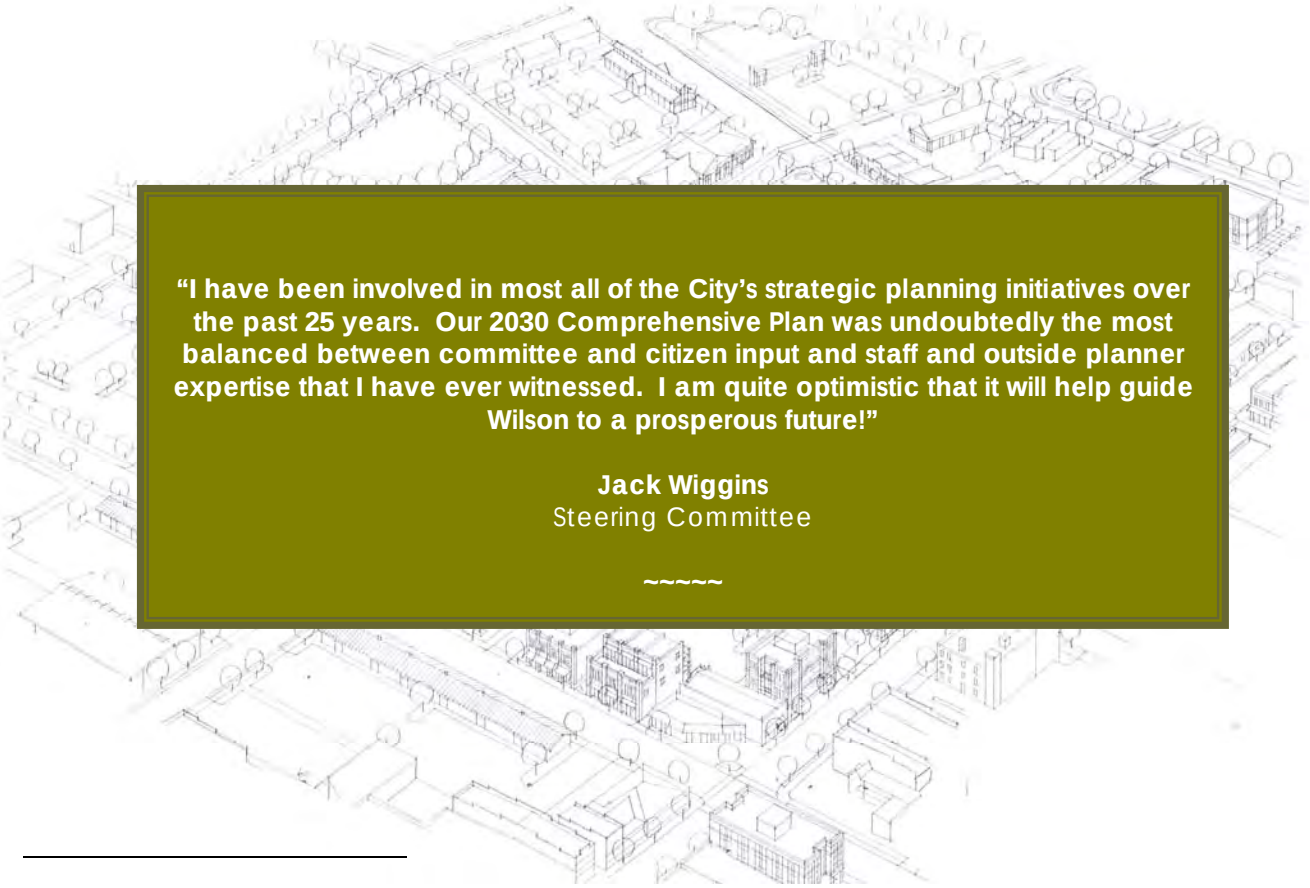
GOAL 13: REDEVELOPMENT OF BROWNFIELDS SITES

Reclaim and redevelop Brownfields[1] sites to reduce the harmful release of waste in the environment, clean up existing sites that are contaminated, revitalize underutilized properties, and expand economic development opportunities in Wilson.

Policy 13.1: Brownfields sites should be high priority targets for future redevelopment, including future community reinvestment efforts.

Policy 13.2: Seek public-private partnerships to redevelop targeted Brownfields sites in Wilson.

Action 13: *Seek funding assistance from the Federal EPA and other organizations to identify and assess Brownfields in Wilson and develop strategies for remediating and redeveloping these properties.*



"I have been involved in most all of the City's strategic planning initiatives over the past 25 years. Our 2030 Comprehensive Plan was undoubtedly the most balanced between committee and citizen input and staff and outside planner expertise that I have ever witnessed. I am quite optimistic that it will help guide Wilson to a prosperous future!"

Jack Wiggins
Steering Committee

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[1] The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines Brownfields sites as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."
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Link to Sustainable Planning

The goals, policies, and action strategies throughout this chapter set the direction for future economic development efforts and highlight key opportunities to support and enhance the local economy. They also help contribute to the City's overall sustainability, not just in an economic sense, but also in a multitude of ways, as discussed below.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies related to expanding the economic base in Wilson, especially related to clean growth industries such as alternative energy production, can help Wilson become a supplier of alternative energy. Wilson Community College and others are already producing renewable energy. Potential sites for alternative energy production could include Brownfields sites.

Climate Change

Policies aiming to further development of locally owned businesses help to reduce the number of non-local business owners commuting into Wilson, therefore helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

By promoting the redevelopment of existing Brownfields sites, Wilson is essentially recycling land that is often situated in valuable locations. Policies related to Brownfields redevelopment also help to reduce the release of harmful waste into the environment.

Food Production and Food Security

Policies targeting the redevelopment of Brownfields sites help to focus development inward, so that land located at the community's fringe can be utilized for agriculture and food production purposes. Policies aimed at supporting locally-owned businesses, such as farmer's markets and local food products help to support the food production and security of the community.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that strive to enhance the job readiness of the local workforce contribute to a safer community by increasing opportunities for area youth to gain meaningful employment.

Water Conservation

Policies promoting Brownfields redevelopment help preserve areas located at the community's fringe, such as critical water supply watershed areas. They also afford opportunities to utilize new water-saving technologies in previously developed and contaminated areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to promote an efficient, multi-modal transportation system in Wilson. It outlines the current transportation network and identifies opportunities for improvements and enhancements to make the system work more efficiently for all types of transportation users. Transportation-related goals for the City of Wilson include:

- Providing an efficient, safe and accessible multi-modal transportation system
- Maintaining and maximizing the capacity of existing road corridors
- Redesigning Highway 301
- Converting one-way street pairs to two-way streets
- Improving transit service
- Developing an interconnected system for pedestrians and bicyclists

The City's efforts to improve and expand the transportation system will also further its sustainable planning goals by helping to support revitalization of the Center City through enhanced streetscapes and walkability, and by accommodating the needs of all community members. A summary of how Wilson's transportation-related policies link to the overall sustainable planning goals and topics in Wilson is located at the end of this chapter.

TRANSPORTATION

Working to provide a more complete multi-modal transportation system will improve efficiency and accessibility for all types of users.

Key Issues

The following key issues reflect community feedback regarding the City's transportation system and transportation-related opportunities.

- **Providing a Multi-Modal Transportation System** – Many residents in Wilson have limited access to vehicles and need alternative modes, such as public buses, to move from destination to destination. But in many cases, the existing transportation infrastructure provides limited accessibility to bus stops due to the lack of comprehensive sidewalks and bike facilities. Enhancements to the City's bus system and pedestrian and bicycle networks are necessary to meet the needs of many residents, including students. New transportation infrastructure is needed to in order make the existing transportation system work more efficiently for all types of users.

- **Protecting Existing Road Capacity** – To ensure that Wilson maintains reasonable commute times to the Triangle region, to Greenville, and to other regional destinations, road capacity along key corridors, such as US-264, NC-42, and NC-58, should be maximized. Future development occurring along these corridors should be designed to efficiently use the existing roads and should mitigate potential traffic impacts.

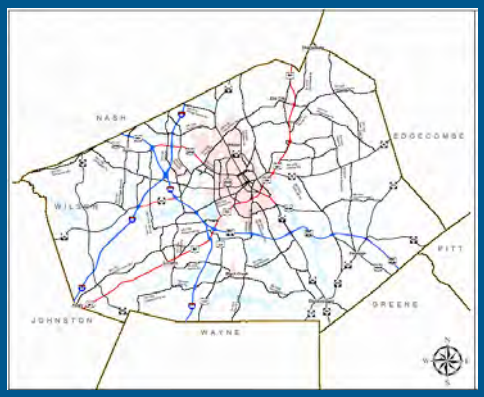
- **Creating a More Connected Community** – Neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, and places of employment could be better connected with pedestrian and bicycle network improvements to reduce dependence on personal automobiles, especially for short trips. Connections could be enhanced and safety concerns reduced by providing better lighting, ensuring clear passage along pedestrian and bicycle routes from the obstruction of landscaping and trees, providing signage, providing bike racks, and other design solutions.

- **Implementing the Safe Routes to School Plan** – Instilling good healthy behaviors, like walking and biking at an early age, can increase the health and wellness of Wilson's youth. Providing safe and accessible routes to school can help students establish healthy behaviors and increase the sense of community that occurs through pedestrian interactions.

- **Promoting the Development of an Active Living Environment** – The City should plan for and invest in infrastructure improvements to provide safe and convenient amenities that help residents of Wilson lead more active and healthy lives, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, walking trails, greenway paths, bicycle lanes, and other amenities.

Summary of Existing Conditions

The City is currently working with Wilson County and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for the County. The plan will address all modes of transportation – automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian. In addition to routine coordination with the County and NCDOT, the City is also a member of the Upper Costal Plain Rural Planning Organization (RPO), the organization responsible for planning regional and local improvements and for administering State and Federal transportation improvement fund.



The City of Wilson is partnering with Wilson County and the NC Department of Transportation to prepare a multi-modal, Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the county.

Wilson's existing transportation infrastructure distinguishes it from other mid-sized communities in the state. It features roads with capacity, freeways linking it to the larger region, train and bus transit networks, a regional airport, and a growing system of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The existing conditions for the City's transportation infrastructure are summarized below.

Roads

The City's roadway system operates well, with most east-west through traffic bypassing the City on US 264, and north-south through traffic using Interstate 95. The City's major arterial roadways carry the bulk of the traffic load, and most have sufficient capacity to maintain acceptable levels of service in the future.

Access management strategies can help to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety on Wilson's roads, such as this example section of Tarboro Street that has 25 driveways within close proximity.

Many of Wilson's major corridors, such as Raleigh Road, US 301, and Tarboro Street, developed without facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. Many feature an abundance of driveways feeding onto the corridors, which ultimately slow traffic and create opportunities for conflicts. Wilson also features a number of one-way streets, particularly in the Downtown area and surrounding neighborhoods. Potential conversion of these one-way streets presents opportunities for improving pedestrian safety and wayfinding, reducing speeds, and enhancing overall livability and walkability.

Transit

There are two types of transit available in Wilson: bus service and rail service. The Wilson Transit

System operates fixed-route buses and shuttle services within the City. Amtrack services Wilson at its Downtown train section, connecting the City to destinations such as Raleigh, Charlotte, Washington D.C., and New York City via its Palmetto and Carolinian lines.

Airports

Wilson is home to two airports: the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport, and the Rocky Mount-Wilson Regional Airport. The Wilson Industrial Air Center is owned by the City of Wilson and features three runways that cater to business, government, and recreational aircraft. It is an important economic development tool for hosting prospective industries on site visits in the City. The Wilson Industrial Park and Kidde Aerospace and Defense are examples of a prominent business park and business located near this economic hub. The Rocky Mount-Wilson Regional Airport is owned by a group of communities and counties, including the City of Wilson. It features one runway and serves all types of general aviation, as well as large air freight carrier jets.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

The City of Wilson currently lacks on-street and recreational bicycle facilities. In order to enhance recreational bicycling, promote healthy lifestyles, and encourage bicycling for work commuting and daily trips, the City's Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, adopted in July 2008, sets a prioritized plan for improving the City's on-street and recreational bicycle networks.

The City's pedestrian sidewalk system is well-established in some areas (such as the Downtown and some neighborhoods), but often lacks connections to other areas and destinations. Many of the major transportation corridors were established without sidewalks. Where sidewalks do exist along these corridors, they often have poor circulation, connections, and crossings.

Transportation Improvements

The City is working locally and regionally to identify needed transportation improvements. The major funded project that is nearest construction is the new interchange at US 264 Bypass and Stantonsburg Road (TIP R-4737), located on the west side of Stantonsburg Road. Development of this project is in response to increased traffic from Beddingfield High School, Hackney Industrial Park, and Wedgewood Public Golf Course. The estimated cost of the project is $4.9 million. Other major roadway projects have been identified, but are unfunded. Additional projects may be identified in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Wilson County.

Transportation Survey

To gauge public concerns for transportation issues and willingness to undertake various transportation solutions, a transportation survey was conducted in the fall of 2009. Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- Road congestion is generally not a significant problem for travelers in Wilson.
- Traffic signal timing, widening road lanes, and pavement maintenance are the preferred methods for reducing traffic congestion on roads.

- Critical safety and crash problems exist at Raleigh Road and Forest Hills, Highway 42 and Greenfield School Road, and along Airport Road.
- Survey respondents would like better access to Rocky Mount, Raleigh, Kinston, Snow Hill, and US-258.
- Nash Street, Goldsboro Street, and Tarboro Street are the roads most in need of improvements.

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 14: A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

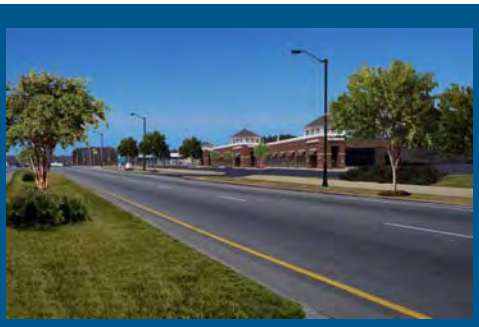
Provide an efficient, safe, and accessible multi-modal transportation system that protects the natural environment and community character.

Policy 14.1: New roads and road improvements should be designed using the "complete streets" approach that provides access to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and automobiles drivers.

Policy 14.2: Improve visual quality and provide multi-modal capacity by applying the "Road Diet" approach to certain roads. This approach takes traditional four lane undivided roads and changes the configuration to three lanes (two travel and one turning lane) and two bike lanes.

Policy 14.3: To ensure that roads promote community character and are appropriately designed for their environment, context-sensitive road design principles and traffic calming measures should be considered for all roadway projects, including updates to existing roads such as Highway 301.

Highway 301 Today



Improved Highway 301

This comparison shows existing conditions and potential redesign for a section of the Highway 301 Corridor. Design improvements could greatly enhance this area.

Policy 14.4: The transportation system should promote vehicles that are more fuel-efficient, reduce carbon emissions and the use of fossil fuels, while promoting the use of local renewable and sustainable fuels. Needed improvements include charging stations

for electric vehicles and upgrading of City vehicle fleets to more energy efficient vehicles.

Policy 14.5: New transportation facilities shall be developed in a manner that avoids negative impacts on the natural environment, including air quality, water resources, biological resources, and wildlife habitat.

Policy 14.6: Sufficient right-of-way along new roadways and at major intersections shall be reserved to allow for future facility expansion per the future Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Policy 14.7: The City supports development of a third Interstate-95 interchange in or near the City of Wilson. The City should work with NC-DOT to encourage development of this interchange that will support economic development efforts and provide new access to the City.

Policy 14.8: Continue protection of the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport's approaches and flight paths from encroachment by non-compatible development.

Policy 14.9: Maintain the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport and improve its facilities.

Action 14.1: *In collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Wilson County, adopt and implement a new Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan.* *(See Policy 41.4.)*

Action 14.2: *Expand the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport's runway from 4,500 feet to a minimum of 5,000 feet to accommodate larger aircraft.*

Action 14.3: *Seek re-enlistment of the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport in the National Plan for Integrated Airport Systems. This designation will make the airport eligible for federal funding to make improvements.*

GOAL 15: MAINTAINED ROAD CAPACITY

To ensure that Wilson maintains reasonable commute times to regional destinations and locations within the City, road capacity along key corridors shall be maximized.

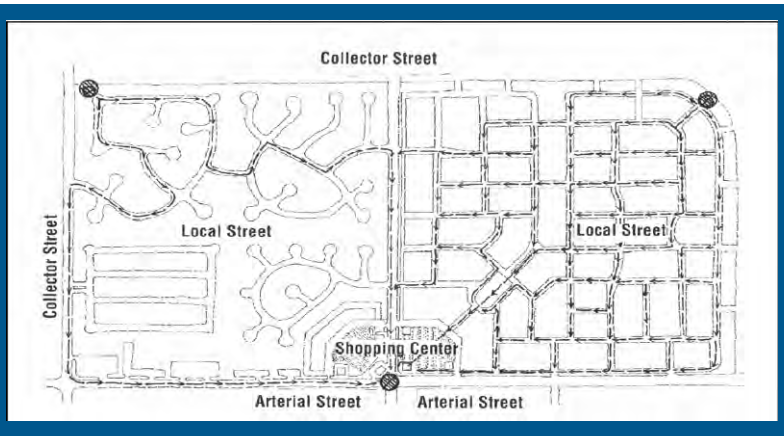
Policy 15.1: Future development occurring along key transportation corridors, such as US-264, NC-42, and NC-58, should be designed in a manner to efficiently use existing road capacity and should mitigate potential traffic impacts.

Policy 15.2: Increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network through operational measures and targeted capacity improvements, such as signal timing upgrades, access management, and alternative methods of intersection control.

Policy 15.3: Work with private developers to minimize the impact on key corridors and require new developments to pay for needed roadway improvements generated by the developments.

Policy 15.4: Street access provisions, such as driveway/curb cuts and street access points along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets should be limited to allow these roads to primarily serve as traffic movement corridors. Access management best practices are encouraged. *(See Policy 51.5 and Action 15.2.)*

Policy 15.5: Residential neighborhood street design patterns are encouraged to promote inter-connectivity and minimize cul-de-sacs, accommodate sidewalks and on-street parking, and foster safe environments for pedestrians and cyclists. (*See Policy 51.6.)*



Road capacity is improved when developments are designed to be interconnected. This image illustrates a disconnected and a connected pattern of development.

Action 15.1: *During the update to the City's zoning ordinance, ensure that zoning designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives:*

- *Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity*
- *Stacking of vehicles entering land uses located along these roads will be addressed on site*
- *Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation*
- *Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation (i.e., vehicular, transit, bicycle, pedestrian)*

Private parking lots and driveways should be shared or interconnected to facilitate better accessibility between developments. This example shows an unconnected development.

Action 15.2: *Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares.* *(See Policies 15.4 and 51.5.)*

Action 15.3: *Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on a partnership to utilize the City's fiber optic network to coordinate intersection signal timing.*

Action 15.4: *Develop a collector street alignment to protect major corridors, such as between Airport and Merck Roads. A model alignment to consider is Westwood Boulevard.*

Action 15.5: *Using traffic studies and forecasts, examine the applicability of a super-street concept and other road designs to protect and enhance travel times and public safety on major thoroughfares, particularly for U.S. 264 (Raleigh Road Parkway.)*

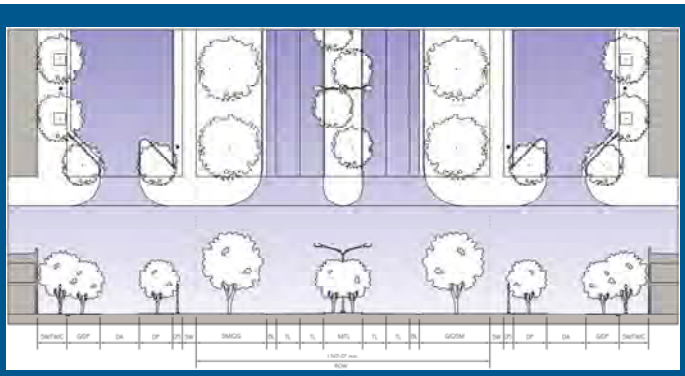
Action 15.6: *The congested intersection at Raleigh Road Parkway and Forest Hills Road should be addressed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan by identifying solutions to the high volume of left turns and other traffic flow issues.*

GOAL 16: REDESIGN HIGHWAY 301

Highway 301 will be redesigned from its former purpose of providing the main north-south route along the eastern seaboard to serving neighborhood and pedestrian traffic.

Policy 16.1: Roadway and streetscape improvements to the Highway 301 Corridor should be redesigned and reconfigured to reflect the current needs and demands for the road. It should include bike lanes, sidewalks, and a landscaped median.

Action 16: *Through the Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan, develop new road cross-sections for the Highway 301 Corridor. Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, through a Transportation Improvement Program request or an enhancement project, to redesign the Highway 301 Corridor.*



Here is an example cross-section of the Highway 301 Corridor for areas planned for commercial / mixed-use development.

GOAL 17: CONVERSION OF ONE-WAY PAIRS TO TWO-WAY STREETS

Convert or improve one-way pair streets to reduce vehicular speeds, provide for a safer pedestrian environment, and provide better wayfinding for visitors.

Policy 17.1: As funding permits, conversion of one-way pairs in the Downtown and surrounding areas should be converted to two-way streets, with pedestrian and bicycle facilities, or improved to create a safer environment for all modes of transportation and better clarity for navigating the road network.

Action 17.1: *As part of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, identify one-way pairs in Wilson and set priorities for conversion/improvement of these pairs.* *(See Action 44.4.)*

These illustrations show that changing the one-way street configuration to a roundabout near Barton College can provide for freer flow of traffic and access to all sides of the circle while still maintaining a single direction of traffic flow.

GOAL 18: IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE

Provide transit service to all members of the community in a manner that creates better access and a viable alternative to automobile travel by linking neighborhoods, employment centers, activity centers, Downtown, and educational institutions.

Policy 18.1: Transit services will be promoted as a viable alternative to driving for all people.

Policy 18.2: Improve access to transit service by providing bus stops and transit service to key locations (i.e., neighborhoods, educational institutions, places of employment, activity centers, and Downtown).

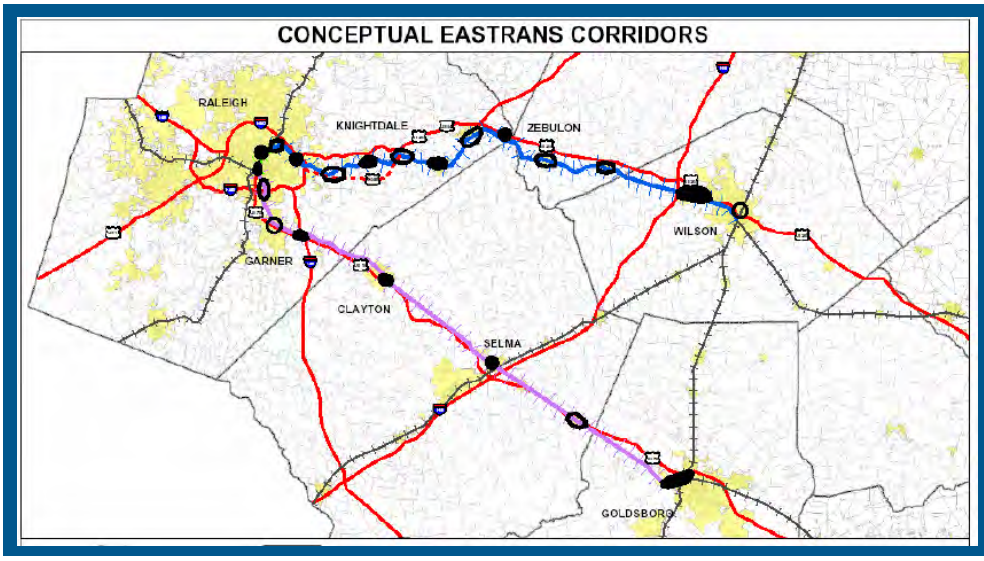
Policy 18.3: Provide functional bicycle racks for the transport of bicycles on buses.

Policy 18.4: The infrastructure, visibility, and accessibility of Wilson Transit System stops shall be improved, including providing access to bus stops from destinations via sidewalks and paths and covered bus stops at major destinations.

Demand for Wilson transit service will likely increase over time as infill development and redevelopment occur in the Center City.

Policy 18.5: Coordinate bus routes and schedules with peak commute times and Amtrak commuter rail service.

Policy 18.6: Accommodate Wilson's ability to develop a future commuter rail to the Raleigh metropolitan area in the future by preserving rail corridor right-of-way.



This map shows the conceptual Eastrans rail corridor linking Wilson to Raleigh and the larger Research Triangle area via Zebulon and Knightdale.

Action 18.1: *Assess the need for new transit stops and service routes to key destinations.*

Action 18.2: *To ensure future land is available for development of the commuter rail corridor, amend the Zoning Ordinance to require right-of-way dedication or conveyance for land, as designated per the Comprehensive Transportation Plan alignment for the rail corridor.*

Action 18.3: *To assist with employment access out of Wilson, study the viability of a van pool service to destinations in the Triangle and Greenville.*

GOAL 19: AN INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS

Develop a safe City-wide bicycle and pedestrian network that provides opportunities for recreation, commuting and other daily trips throughout Wilson.

Policy 19.1: In accordance with the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Pedestrian Plan, the provision of bikeways and walkways and supportive facilities, such as bicycle storage, should be provided throughout Wilson.

Policy 19.2: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be considerations for all road construction and maintenance projects.

Policy 19.3: New developments should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks and multi-use paths, as designated on the Pedestrian Plan or the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, or as deemed necessary to serve the new development. Bicycle and pedestrian impacts should be included within Traffic Impact Analyses for new developments.

Policy 19.4: Provide new sidewalks and sidewalk improvements in accordance with the prioritized, tiered system identified in the Pedestrian Plan.

Policy 19.5: Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program to identify priority sidewalk improvements and educate students and parents about the benefits of walking to school.

Action 19.1: *Implement the recommendations of the Wilson Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Wilson Pedestrian Plan.*

Action 19.2: *Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements. A potential source of income is an increase in the vehicle licensing fee for vehicle registrations.*

Link to Sustainable Planning

Establishment of a comprehensive, multi-modal transportation network is a big step in ensuring community sustainability. By establishing a multi-modal transportation network for people to travel throughout the City with options, the community and environment benefit in numerous ways, as discussed below.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Transportation policies aimed at providing a multi-modal system increase opportunities for non-vehicular travel, therefore reducing energy consumption, and promote the use of human-powered transportation alternatives.

Climate Change

Policies that target maintaining the capacity and functionality of existing roadways help to reduce the amount of time automobile commuters spend in traffic, thus reducing their overall greenhouse gas emissions. Likewise, policies to improve the multi-modal transportation network enable motorists to switch to other non-polluting or more efficient modes.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Transportation policies that call for a “road diet” approach and support the utilization and redesign of existing roads help reduce the need to construct additional roadways, and promote the reuse of existing roadways in order to benefit a broader group of possible users.

Food Production and Food Security

Transportation policies that promote a multi-modal system and increased efficiency and use of existing roadways help reduce the need for and amount of new roadways at the community’s fringe – roadways that could potentially bisect or impact quality agricultural lands.

Community Health and Safety

Establishment of transportation policies related to improving Wilson’s multi-modal transportation system, especially the transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks, will help residents increase healthy behaviors such as walking and biking. Policies that target converting one-way streets to two-way streets will increase safety and also foster more pedestrian activity.

Water Conservation

Policies that aim to increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network help to reduce the amount of new roadways and road expansions, thus helping limit the amount of land consumed by large swaths of impervious areas (roads) which impact stormwater runoff patterns, water quality, and water supply watersheds.

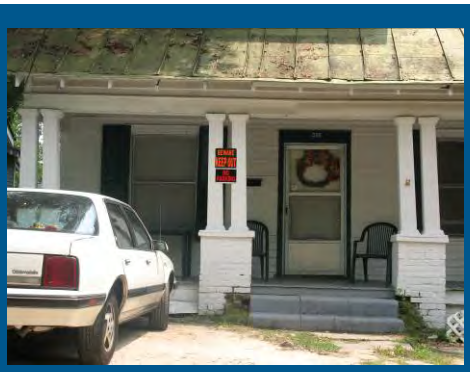
NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

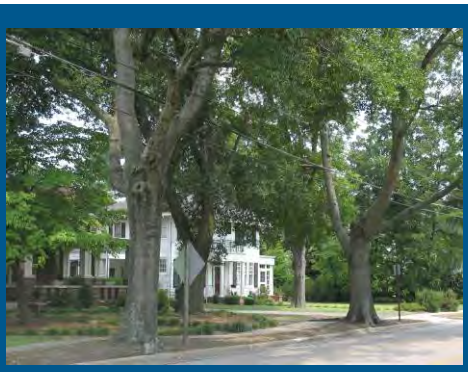
Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to improve the quality of life in existing neighborhoods, and to facilitate the development of new neighborhoods and housing opportunities in strategic locations in Wilson. This chapter also discusses the existing housing trends, including new subdivisions, neighborhoods in need, and forecasts for residential demand and development. The neighborhoods and housing goals for the City of Wilson include:

- Improving the appearance and vitality of Wilson's existing and historic neighborhoods
- Promoting maintenance and utilization of existing residential structures and properties
- Increasing homeownership opportunities
- Providing housing options for diverse household types

The goals and policies to address Wilson's neighborhoods and housing also help the City achieve its goals for becoming a more sustainable community by promoting investment and revitalization of neighborhoods in the Center City area, and by focusing on the housing needs of all types of households. The links between Wilson's neighborhoods and housing goals and policies and community sustainability are discussed at the end of this chapter.





NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

With continued maintenance and improvements in select areas, Wilson's Center City neighborhoods will remain desirable locations to live.

Key Issues

Community and stakeholder dialogues and feedback helped to identify the following key issues related to housing opportunities and the overall quality of life in Wilson.

- **Improving Aging and Historic Neighborhoods** – Many of Wilson's existing neighborhoods are suffering from a lack of maintenance, aging infrastructure, incompatible zoning, and general disinvestment. Many of these neighborhoods are located near the heart of Wilson and impact the success of institutions like Barton College. The City should work with landowners, non-profits, and neighborhood organizations to improve the quality of life and housing units in these areas.

- **Maintaining the Character and Integrity of Existing Properties** – Residential properties should be adequately maintained and utilized to their fullest potential. In order to maintain the character of Wilson's neighborhoods, and to ensure their long term sustainability and viability, the City should with landowners and neighborhood organizations to preserve historic structures and maintain non-historic properties.

- **Increasing Homeownership Opportunities** – Many of the areas experiencing disinvestment in Wilson include a high number of rental properties. By working to expand homeownership opportunities in these areas, the City could help to improve the quality the neighborhoods by creating a sense of ownership and pride that comes with owning a home.

- **Providing Housing Opportunities for a Diversity of Households** – Wilson's population is aging and in the future these residents will different types of housing than traditionally afforded by single-family subdivisions. Wilson should seek opportunities to add senior housing, up-scale multi-family housing, and mixed-use developments in the community.

- **Enhancing Community Character with New Development** – Both new residential and non-residential developments should be designed to enhance the community's character and create an attractive environment by emphasizing quality built structures, tree preservation, landscaping and buffering between roadways and adjacent uses, and appropriate building siting.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Housing Trends

Between 2000 and 2009 the number of housing units in Wilson increased 10.9 percent to roughly 21,000 units. The supply of housing units within the City of Wilson grew at a slower rate during this period than Wilson County and the Triangle Region (11.5 percent and 24.9 percent growth, respectively). Because the City's housing unit supply grew faster than household growth, vacancy rates increased from 7.3 percent in 2000 to 11.2 percent in 2008. Absorption of and demand for these vacant units is expected to take several years.

Single-family housing units comprise the largest portion of dwelling units in Wilson (approximately 63 percent). New and resale single-family detached closings accounted for nearly 95 percent of total closings between 2003 and 2008. Between 200e and 2008 the total number of annual closings declined, reflecting a national trend of declining real estate sales.

Neighborhood and Housing Quick Facts

In Wilson in 2008 there was an estimated:

- 20,870 housing units
- 11.2% housing vacancy rate
- Delivery of 3,225 to 3,925 new housing units by 2020

New Subdivisions

Eight major subdivisions with a total of 1,432 lots are currently under construction in the City of Wilson. Building permits for approximately 629 (44 percent) of those lots have been issued. There are an additional 568 lots in four proposed major subdivisions. In general, much of the new housing proposed and under construction in Wilson is located north and west of Downtown.

Residential Forecast

It is estimated that in 2009 there are approximately 21,001 housing units in the City of Wilson. The mix of housing units includes 73.3 percent single-family, 21 percent apartments, and 5.7 percent townhouses. Forecasts indicate that between 3,225 and 3,925 new housing units could be added by 2020, with single-family detached units continuing to comprise the majority of those units (estimated between 2,700 and 3,200 units by 2020). Demand for townhouse units is also expected to grow by 2020, with an additional 225 to 325 new units, which equates to approximately two to four new townhouse communities. By 2020 an estimated 300 to 400 additional apartment units will be in demand, which equates to one or two new apartment communities. In order to accommodate the forecasted residential growth, it is estimated that between 947 and 1,132 total acres will be needed.

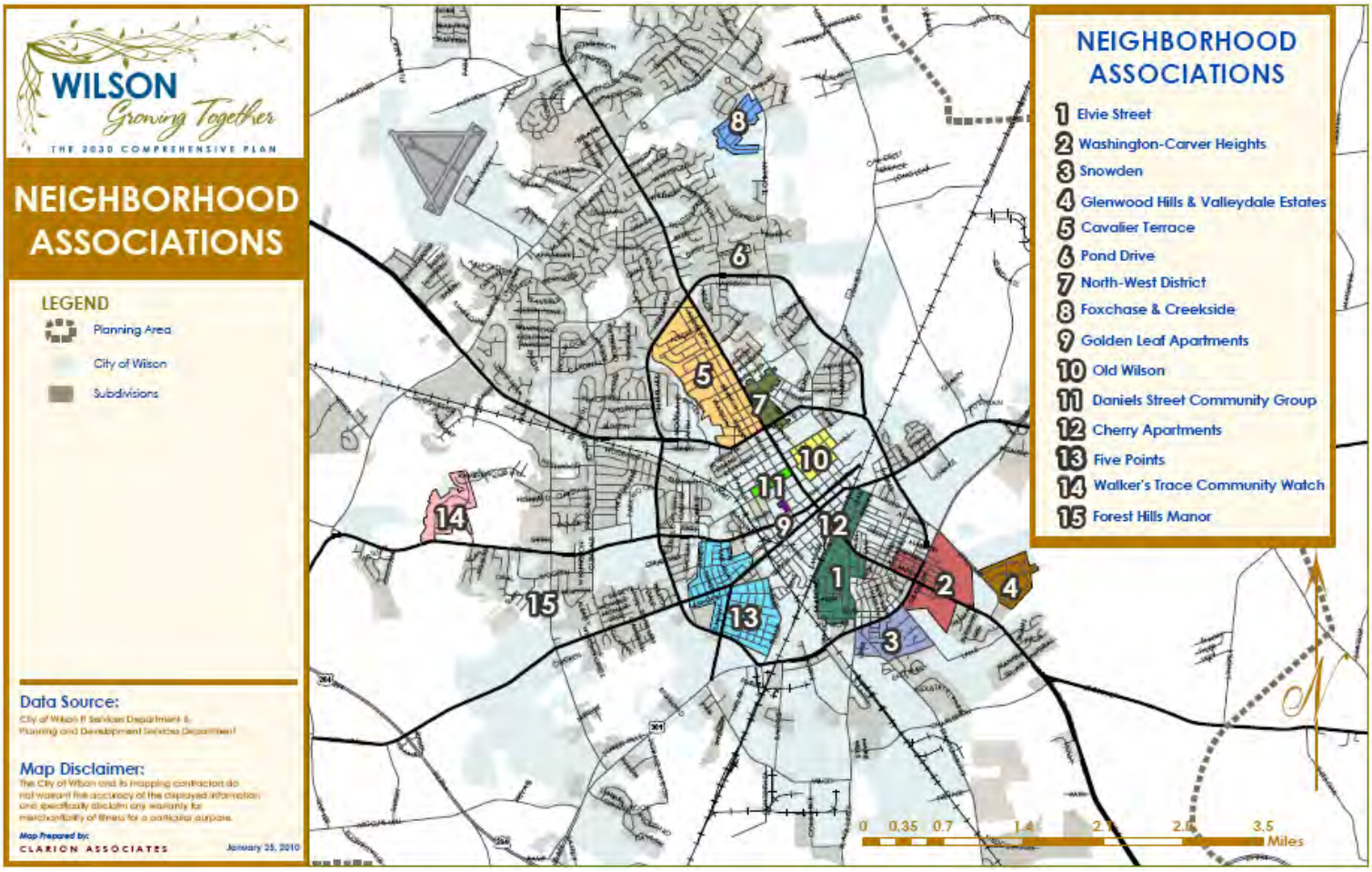
Neighborhoods in Need

Concurrent with the development of the Wilson Comprehensive Plan, the City worked with its neighborhoods to begin to plan for the future, identify key characteristics to strive for, and develop formal neighborhood boundaries. Future neighborhood plans will help individual neighborhoods accomplish their desired objectives and redevelopment goals.

A key issue facing the City's neighborhoods is the prevalence of vacant and boarded-up structures. A recent inventory of vacant and boarded-up structures in City Center Wilson

identified approximately 260 properties in such states. (See Appendix B for the Vacant & Boarded Up Structures Map that identifies these sites.) While some of these properties are in good condition and boarded to deter vandalism, others are in disrepair and are sources of neighborhood blight. Again, small, neighborhood area planning efforts are needed to develop specific strategies for each neighborhood to improve their character, safety, and livability. Figure 10 illustrates the locations of established neighborhood associations in Wilson.

Figure 10: Neighborhood Associations
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 20: IMPROVED NEIGHBORHOODS

Improve the visual appearance, economic vitality, and general quality of life in aging and historic neighborhoods.

Policy 20.1: The City will support and assist neighborhood associations and housing organizations that promote community values, policies, and actions that are consistent with this Plan.

Policy 20.2: Community improvements should be designed to attract a mix of socio-economic backgrounds to locate in aging and historic neighborhoods.

Policy 20.3: Renovations within existing neighborhoods should provide quality, sustainable housing in a manner that enhances and upholds the character of the neighborhood.

The Freeman Place neighborhood provides affordable housing opportunities for Wilson's residents.

Policy 20.4: Non-residential development within existing neighborhoods should provide neighborhood services and should not negatively impact the neighborhood with noise, traffic, or other impacts. Examples could include small corner bakeries or coffee shops with limited parking, architectural designs that are patterned after area housing, discreet signage, and limited hours of operation.

Policy 20.5: After exhausting all renovation options, blighted, uninhabitable buildings should be replaced with new infill structures that are compatible with the neighborhood context and enhance the visual appearance of the area. *(See Policy 21.3.)*

Before

After

This is an example of a blighted and boarded up home that has been renovated. Reuse of existing structures is one of the most sustainable ways to develop in Wilson.

Policy 20.6: Public infrastructure, such as sidewalks, street lamps, wayfinding signage, and other facilities shall be provided in neighborhoods in accordance with applicable plans, such as the Pedestrian Plan and the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

Policy 20.7: Market-based approaches to neighborhood planning are encouraged and preferred.

Policy 20.8: Conversion of single-family homes to multi-family developments or boarding houses incorporating exterior renovations that are incompatible with the neighborhood is discouraged.

Policy 20.9: **Consider the development of a Neighborhood Conservation District.**

Action 20.1: *Develop a Healthy Neighborhood initiative to revitalize the City's older neighborhoods by reinvigorating stagnant real estate markets and building stronger connections among residents. This initiative could use tax credits, loan pools, marketing, neighborhood events, code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements to improve participating neighborhoods. The Baltimore Healthy Neighborhoods initiative is a good model for this effort.* *(See Action 3.2.)*

Action 20.2: *Establish a neighborhood planning process that develops strategic plans for individual neighborhoods.*

Action 20.3: *Establish a neighborhood conservation district process that encourages the protection and maintenance of neighborhood character and socially, historically, or architecturally significant buildings for the benefit of the city.*

GOAL 21: WELL-MAINTAINED EXISTING STRUCTURES AND LOTS

Residential properties should be adequately maintained and should be utilized to their fullest potential to ensure long-term sustainability of residential neighborhoods and their unique character.

Policy 21.1: The conditions of housing in transitional areas should be monitored, by neighborhood, on an ongoing and regular basis. [Note: Transitional areas will be defined in the key issues section of the Neighborhoods and Housing chapter. These areas represent neighborhoods in decline or in need of assistance to elevate character and quality of development.]

Policy 21.2: The City will work with landowners, neighborhood associations, Preservation of Wilson, and other relevant organizations to seek strategies to address blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous housing, ancillary structures, and lots.

This is an example of what infill development in Wilson's neighborhoods could achieve – neighborhood revitalization.

Policy 21.3: The City will continue to enforce the nuisance ordinance and remove unsafe and uninhabitable structures, per the City's demolition program. *(See Policy 20.4.)*

Policy 21.4: The City will work with neighborhoods to achieve the "10 Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood" developed by Wilson residents. (See sidebar.)

Action 21.1: *To adequately address nuisance abatement in Wilson, seek new funding sources to fully fund the City's demolition program.*

Action 21.2: *Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas and front lawns.*

Action 21.3: *Maintain an updated inventory of properties and lots in disrepair. Identify those properties with historic values and those that have a greater impact on the community and set priorities to identify properties most in need of addressing.*

Action 21.4: *Work with landowners and local partners, such as Preservation of Wilson, to address historic structures in disrepair before demolition is necessary and market properties to new owners.*

Action 21.5: *Examine appropriate incentives, shifting expenses from City initiated demolitions to assistance with rehabilitation when appropriate.*

Top 10 Characteristics of a Great Neighborhood

1. **Accessibility** – Good access for people of all abilities to all areas and resources through multiple means of transportation.
2. **Design** – An attractive and clean environment that fosters healthy living and is influenced by a variety of architectural styles.
3. **Economy** – Plenty of living wage employment opportunities, private investments, and means of energy efficiency.
4. **Education** – Great schools: pre-school through college.
5. **Environment/Going Green** – Alternative energy sources and environmental conservation.
6. **Housing Quality** – Restored and well-maintained houses that are affordable and have well-kept yards.
7. **Leadership** – Active participation by all in implementation of these characteristics within their neighborhoods.
8. **Recreation** – Activities for all ages, including a walking track, playgrounds, and a variety of events.
9. **Safety** – Well-lit safe streets and public areas with neighborhood watch involvement, traffic calming, responsive public safety services, and drug-free zones.
10. **Social** – Community activities, mutual trust, cultural diversity, and responsibility by all

Source: Developed during 2009 Neighborhood Leadership Summit and at the Hispanic/Latino Focus Group Meeting.

GOAL 22: INCREASED HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Increase homeownership opportunities in Wilson to help families achieve the American dream and improve the quality of neighborhoods by creating a sense of ownership and pride that comes with owning a home.

Zoning regulations will be amended in the future to allow a mix of housing types within Wilson, such as the examples shown here.

Policy 22.1: Through land development standards and zoning, facilitate the development of a mix of housing types at different price points to meet the needs of households with different incomes.

Policy 22.2: Continue to coordinate efforts with other government entities, such as the Wilson Housing Authority and local affordable housing developers, to seek efforts to develop affordable housing units. An example of this type of partnership is the Freeman Place project.

Policy 22.3: Maintain existing single-family homes to provide an appropriate inventory of affordable owner-occupied housing in the City.

Action 22.1: *Implement the Housing Improvement Action Strategy Plan for Wilson.*

Action 22.2: *Consider adopting new development standards to limit the conversion of single-family, owner-occupied homes in established neighborhoods to multi-family rental uses.*

Action 22.3: *Support development of the HOPE VI project application (i.e., The Villages of Wilson) and other projects of the Wilson Housing Authority and other affordable housing partners to increase homeownership opportunities in Wilson.*

GOAL 23: HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A DIVERSITY OF HOUSEHOLDS

A diversity of housing products shall be provided in Wilson to meet the needs of non-traditional households, such as empty nesters, seniors, and young professionals without children.

Policy 23.1: New housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to meet differing lifestyle needs, such as town homes, condominium units, and two-bedroom single-family dwellings.

Policy 23.2: Senior housing developments that allow Wilson's population to "age in place" are encouraged. These developments should be located to provide and incorporate infrastructure to provide access to transit and sidewalks and allow seniors multi-modal opportunities.

Action 23: *Update the zoning ordinance to allow for a mix of housing types within new residential developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.*

Visitability and Universal Design are two design methods that allow seniors to "age in place" within the same house over time. This is an example of a house built using the Visitability technique -- doorways and bathrooms are designed to be wheelchair accessible.

"Our Citizens are the core of our community. Our neighborhoods link us together. Our Neighborhood Associations serve as the conduit that connects us all.

Wilson . . . Growing Together."

Zette McArn
Plan Forum

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Link to Sustainable Planning

The goals, policies, and action strategies contained in this chapter promote neighborhood improvement and investment, and increasing housing opportunities for a diverse range of households. Quality neighborhoods and a variety of housing options are critical to the success and sustainability of any community because they attract and retain residents, and also play a key role in the community's ability to draw new employers. Other ways in which neighborhoods and housing contribute to sustainable planning topics are summarized below.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies that aim to increase homeownership opportunities help to facilitate energy conservation and alternative energy production because residents who own their homes are more likely to make long-term investments into their homes with alternative energy systems such as solar panels, and energy efficient fixtures and appliances.

Climate Change

Policies that target maintaining and improving existing neighborhoods help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing quality housing options in areas near existing businesses and services, reducing the need to travel long distances to obtain goods and services.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Policies that promote historic preservation and building renovation help to reduce waste associated with new construction, and also take advantage of existing infrastructure and proximity to area services.

Food Production and Food Security

Policies that call for a mix of housing types to meet different lifestyle and income needs help households establish food security because households that are not overburdened by housing costs have more money to spend on food and other household necessities.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that require maintenance and upkeep of existing structures and lots help to ensure safe neighborhoods by reducing blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous properties.

Water Conservation

By promoting policies that encourage development of a range of housing options, the amount of water devoted to maintaining large single-family yards can be diminished.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to coordinate land development with the efficient and adequate provision of public infrastructure and services in Wilson. It begins with a summary of key trends and issues among Wilson's education system, and public utilities and services. It also provides guidance on the types of services and investments that the City should pursue in the future. The goals, policies, and actions contained in this chapter are divided into three sub-sections: (1) Education; (2) Public Utilities and Services; and (3) Public Safety.

The goals regarding education in Wilson include:

- Increasing educational attainment in Wilson
- Coordinating with the Wilson County School system on the location of new facilities
- Increasing partnerships with Barton College and Wilson Community College to improve the success of public school students
- Collaborating with Wilson Community College to provide educational programs for all sectors of the population

Goals related to the provision of public utilities and services include:

- Maintaining adequate levels of service for public utilities
- Reducing energy use and as a result, energy costs
- Conserving and protecting water resources
- Reducing solid waste

The goal concerning public safety in Wilson strives to ensure adequate services such as fire, rescue, emergency services, and police protection will be provided to all areas of the City.

Many of the goals and policies contained in this chapter directly relate to the City's sustainable planning goals, such as improving the educational system, and using the City's budget prudently to provide services. They also directly address the topics of sustainable planning such as energy and water conservation, and waste reduction. A summary of these links is provided at the conclusion of this chapter.

PUBLIC INFASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

City residents depend on the City and school system for quality public utilities, services, and education.

Key Issues

The following key issues regarding education, utilities, services, and safety in the City of Wilson were identified as important topics for this Plan to address.

- **Increasing Educational Attainment of Wilson's Youth** – The City should work to decrease the number of high school dropouts in the community and increase overall achievement levels of underperforming schools.

- **Maintaining Levels of Service for Public Infrastructure and Facilities** – The City should continue to provide adequate water, sanitary sewer, road capacity, parks, and police and fire service as new growth occurs.

- **Addressing Energy Use and Costs** – Many residents are concerned by the cost of their utility bills and think that current energy prices are not sustainable into the future. The City should identify opportunities to increase energy conservation measures and thereby decrease energy costs.

- **Promoting the Use of Green Development Technologies** – Wilson should encourage the use of green construction techniques for new developments, including new public facilities, and green retrofits for renovated structures.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Education

Wilson County Schools

The Wilson County School District operates 14 elementary schools, six middle schools, three high schools, and two learning centers in Wilson County. In the 2009 -2010 school year, the School District provides public education to approximately 12,630 students. The School District anticipates a 2.5 percent growth rate in the coming years that results in the addition of 150-200 new students per year.

Overall, the school system has additional capacity to add new students in the future. However, several schools including Hearne Elementary, Springfield Middle, and Hunt High School are already at capacity.

Education Quick Facts

The Wilson County School District serves:

- 12,630 students
- 14 elementary schools
- 6 middle schools
- 3 high schools
- 2 learning centers

Higher Education

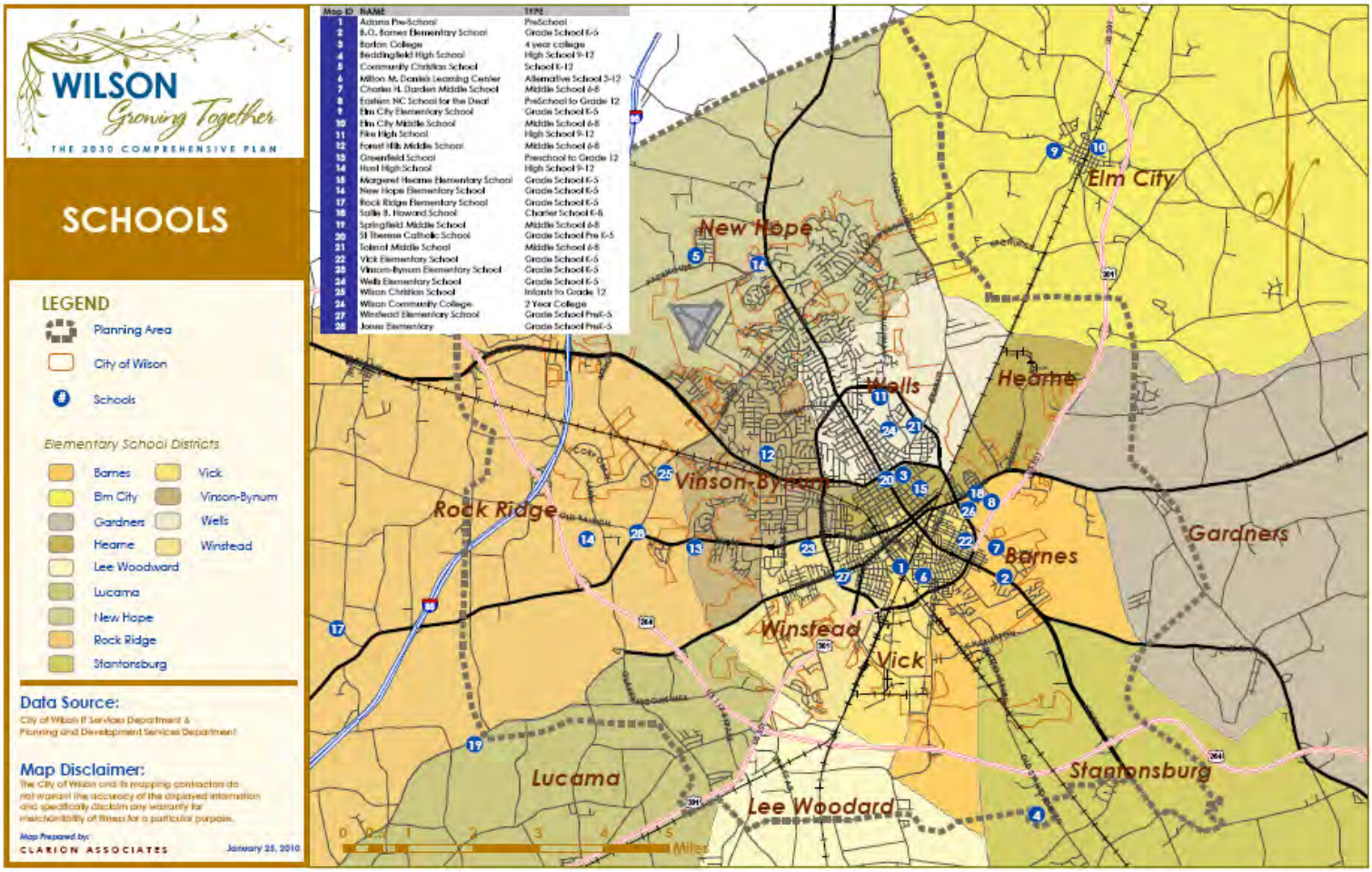
The City of Wilson has two higher educational facilities: Barton College and Wilson Community College.

Barton College – Established in 1902, Barton College (formerly Atlantic Christian College) is a private, 4-year liberal arts college. In 2009 Barton College had approximately 1,130 students and 200 faculty and staff.

Wilson Community College – With over 11,000 students and more than 450 faculty and staff, it is the mission of the Wilson Community College to provide accessible, student-centered academic and personal enrichment opportunities to enhance lifelong learning through college transfer, technical, vocational, and adult education programs.

The locations of these schools are shown on Figure 11 on the following page.

Figure 11: Wilson County Schools and Higher Learning Institutions
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Public Utilities and Services

Water and Wastewater Utilities

The City of Wilson provides public potable water and wastewater collection services within its corporate limits, extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and in neighboring communities. Previous investments in infrastructure and a more than adequate water supply contribute to the City's ability to serve current and future residents of the City and neighboring communities. Wilson provides potable water to approximately 20,191 residential customers and 2,210 commercial or industrial customers. Wastewater collection and treatment service is provided to approximately 17,385 residential customers and 1,726 commercial and industrial customers. The City does not have immediate plans for expanding the City's water or wastewater

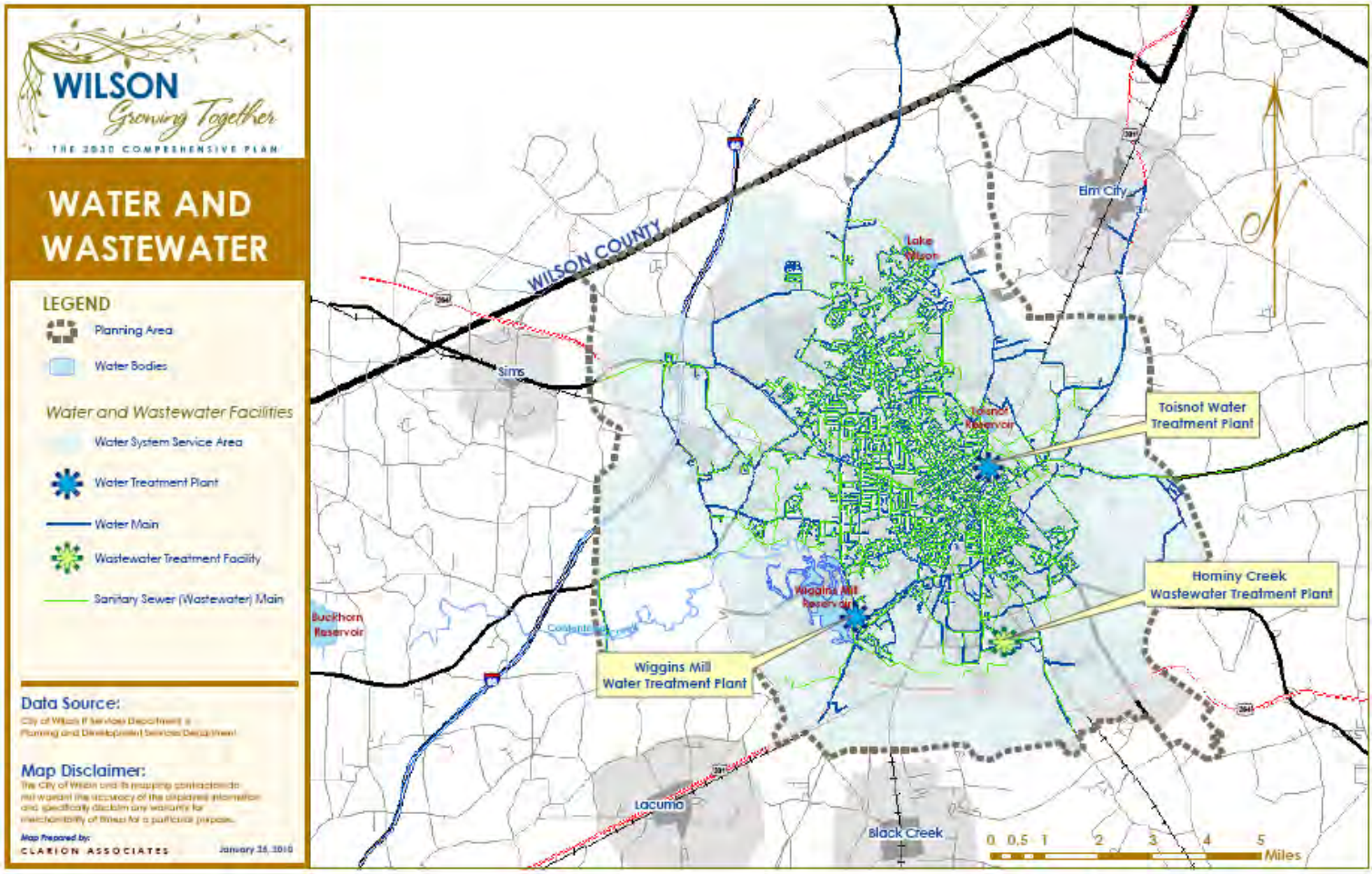
Utilities Quick Facts

The City of Wilson provides utility services to approximately:

- 22,401 water customers
- 19,111 wastewater customers
- 34,000 electric service customers
- 15,135 natural gas customers

systems, based on their current capacity and usage; however, continued maintenance and investments are necessary in order to keep up with aging infrastructure. The City also offers treated or "reclaimed water" that can be used for non-potable water purposes to reduce the amount of wastewater generated and the amount of nutrients discharged into Contentnea Creek. Water and wastewater facilities and service areas are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Water and Wastewater Service Areas
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Wilson Energy

The City of Wilson owns and operates Wilson Energy, an electricity and natural gas municipal utility. Wilson Energy provides electric service to approximately 34,000 households, businesses, and industrial sites, and natural gas service to 15,135 customers. Wilson Energy is a member of the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA), which is a collective of municipal utilities that purchase power from and own shares of power generation facilities to ensure long-term sustainability of affordable energy sources.

A Long-Range Transmission Plan, prepared in February 2009 outlines future delivery points, transmission lines, and substations to adequately serve customers through 2028. A Long-Range Transmission Plan identifies future expansions and new facilities that will be developed incrementally, as driven by future development and the need to expand capacity.

Greenlight

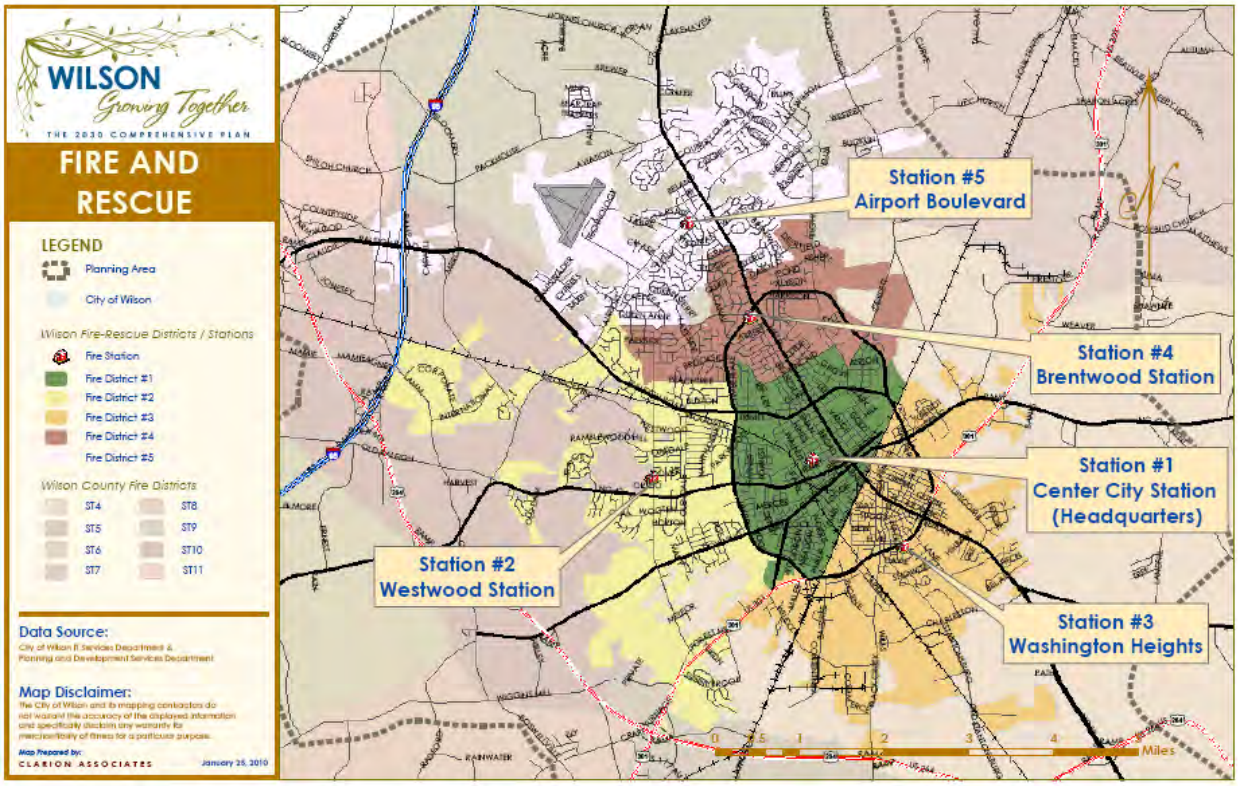
Greenlight is the City of Wilson's community-owned fiber-optic-based internet, television, and phone service utility. It is the only system of its kind in the state, and when complete it will provide high-speed communication capabilities to every address within the City limits. The service started in 2006 and is intended to entice new businesses to locate in the community, as well as provide an essential service to existing residents and businesses.

Public Safety

Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services

Wilson Fire and Rescue Services (WF/RS) provides fire protection and prevention and emergency responder services to Wilson. WF/RS operates out of five fire stations and serves a fire district encompassing nearly 30 square miles with 93 firefighters. As the costs of services and the number of emergency calls continue to rise, since 2005 the WF/RS budget has decreased 6 percent. An additional 12 staff members are needed based recommendations from the Department's 2008 Strategic Plan. A new fire station #6 is also necessary, and although the site has been identified, funding for the facility is not yet secured. Additional department priorities include new and replacement equipment and vehicles. Figure 13 shows locations of stations.

Figure 13: Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services Service Area
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Law Enforcement

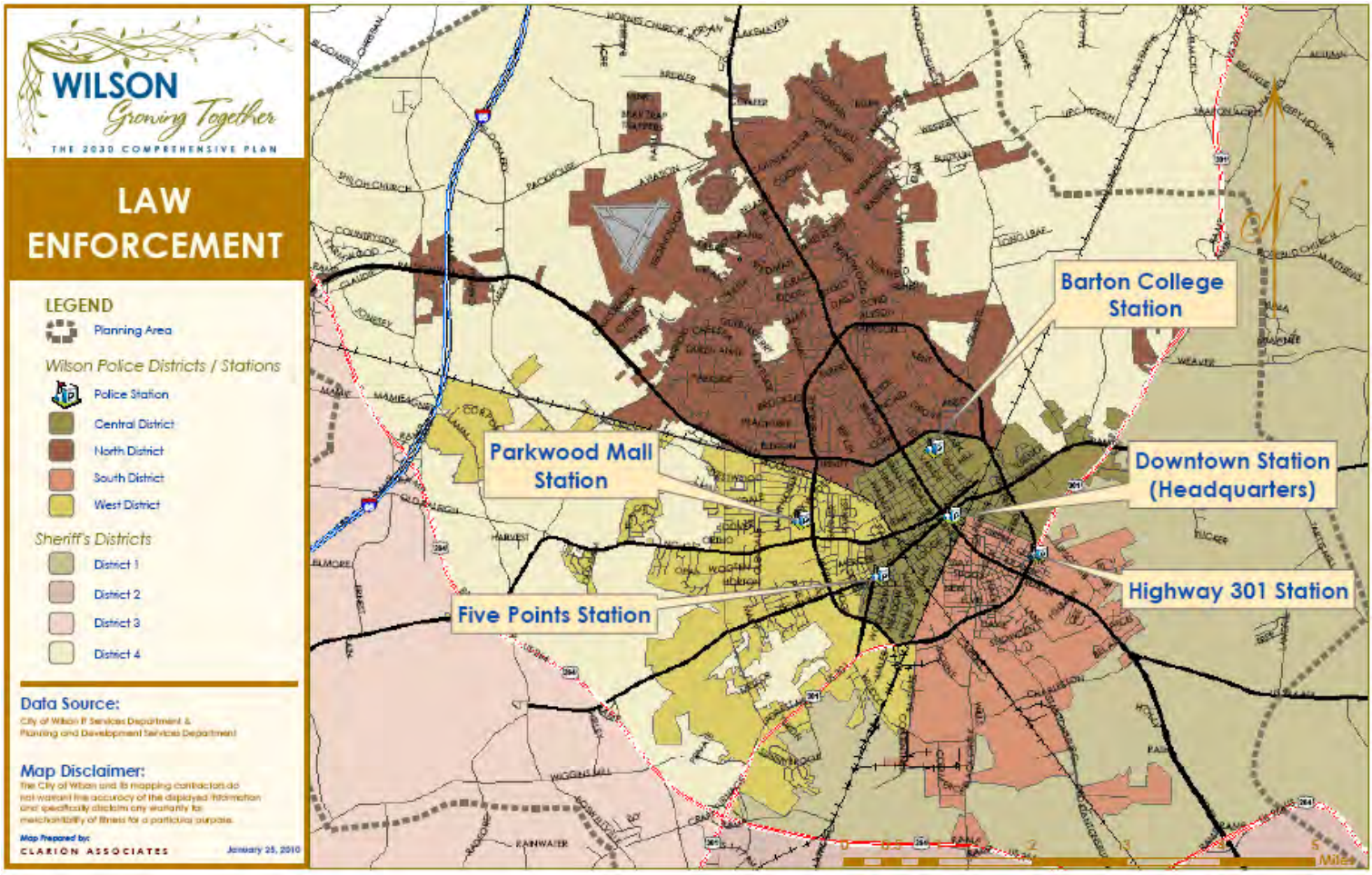
The Wilson Police Department provides law enforcement, special unit services, and community outreach and safety programs to the City of Wilson. The Wilson County Sheriff's Department provides law enforcement services outside of the City limits. The Department operates out five police stations and two annexes, and in 2007 provided approximately 2.5 officers for every 1,017 persons. As the population in Wilson continues to grow, the Police Department will likely need to add additional personnel and office space in order to adequately serve the community. Figure 14 shows the locations of stations.

Public Safety Quick Facts

The City of Wilson is serviced by:

- 5 fire stations
- 5 police stations and 2 annexes
- 93 firefighters
- 114 police officers
- 22 police department administrative employees

Figure 14: Police Service Area
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

EDUCATION

GOAL 24: INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN WILSON

Decrease the number of high school dropouts in Wilson, increase overall achievement levels of underperforming schools, and increase the skill level and educational attainment of the City's workforce.

Policy 24.1: Improve the quality of neighborhoods surrounding underperforming schools to increase the quality of life in these areas.

Policy 24.2: Recognize and support educational partnerships, such as those established between Wilson Community College, Barton College, and Wilson County Public Schools, that provide cooperative arrangements to ensure seamless transitions from high school to college. Examples include the Early College program that provides an accelerated opportunity for high school students to complete their two-year degree.

Policy 24.3: Continue to support the Wilson Education Partnership to create new programs for students, address high school reform needs, increase achievement levels and graduation rates, and improve job-readiness of the City's future workforce.

Policy 24.4: Promote private sector, non-profit, and religious organizations in their efforts to provide programs for students and youth in the community.

Action 24.1: *Through the neighborhood planning process, identify public infrastructure, public safety, and other improvements needed to raise the quality of life in neighborhoods surrounding underperforming schools. Implement necessary actions.*

Action 24.2*: Coordinate Parks and Recreational facility development and programming with the efforts of other religious and non-profit groups to provide after school programming that is accessible and affordable to all students in the City.*

GOAL 25: COORDINATED SCHOOL FACILITIES

Coordinate with the Wilson County School system to ensure that locations of new school sites align with community land use planning goals and reinforce the Future Land Use map and classifications.

Policy 25.1: New schools should be developed in locations within the primary growth area to reinforce the land use goals of this Plan and the Future Land Use map and classifications.

Policy 25.2: New schools should be designed in a manner that creates linkages to adjacent areas (i.e., Safe Routes to School Program) and reduces negative impacts on existing neighborhoods.

Action 25: *Develop a formal mechanism with the Wilson County School system to:*

- *Share information about potential schools and expansions of existing schools and any potential impacts*
- *Explore development of school design standards to reinforce pedestrian and bicycle accessibility between schools and adjoining areas and to reduce transportation impacts*
- *Share information with Wilson Schools regarding proposed subdivisions and residential developments that will impact school attendance levels*
  - Explore the joint-use of parks and recreational facilities on school grounds for use by the general public in off-hours. *(See Action 42.)*

GOAL 26: INCREASED EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN COLLABORATION WITH BARTON COLLEGE

Engage in partnerships with Barton College and the Wilson Public School system to help improve the success rates of public school students in Wilson.

Policy 26.1: Support joint efforts of Barton College and the Wilson Public School system to develop student teaching and mentoring programs to increase educational performance of public school students.

Policy 26.2: Enhance the quality and character of the neighborhoods surrounding Barton College in an effort to increase educational performance.

Action 26: *Through the neighborhood planning process, work with Barton College to identify areas of joint interest in neighborhoods surrounding the College. Identify opportunities for neighborhood improvements that can be undertaken jointly between the City and the College.* *(See Action 11.)*

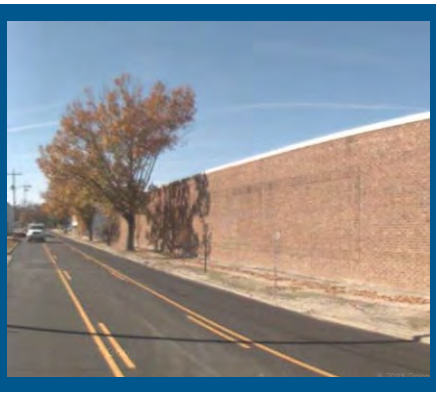
GOAL 27: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR ALL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION PROVIDED BY WILSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

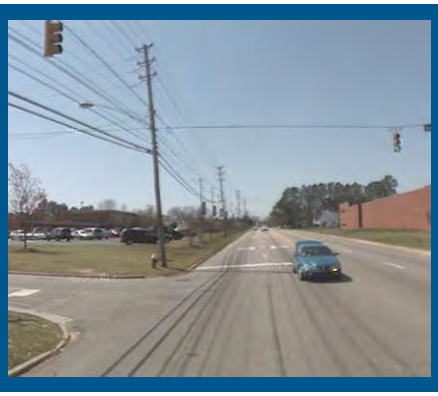
Encourage the Wilson Community College to continue to provide high quality educational services to the community.

Policy 27.1: Provide adequate access to Wilson Community College for all members of the community seeking educational enrichment.

Action 27.1: *As part of the Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Planning process, work with Wilson Community College to identify needed multi-modal transportation enhancements to improve accessibility to Wilson Community College, including pedestrian and bicycle access and transit service.*

Action 27.2: *Work with Wilson Community College to coordinate and leverage revitalization efforts within the Herring Avenue corridor.*





Collaboration between Wilson Community College and the City of Wilson can result in revitalization of the Herring Avenue Corridor, one of the City's main gateways (shown here).

PUBLIC UTILITIES AND SERVICES

GOAL 28: MAINTAINED LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES

Continue to provide adequate water, sanitary sewer, electric and natural gas service, and broadband service as new growth occurs.

Policy 28.1: Encourage the development of land to its highest and best use where public infrastructure currently exists.

Policy 28.2: Coordinate the extension of utility services and roads with the Future Land Use map by directing expansion to areas within the primary growth area.

Action 28.1: *Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure.*

Action 28.2: *Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map.*

Action 28.3: *Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.*

Action 28.4: *Adjust utility fee structures to promote development within infill and targeted growth areas through lower fees and discourage development outside of targeted growth areas by applying higher fees.* *(See Action 1.3.)*

GOAL 29: REDUCED ENERGY USE AND COSTS

Reduce energy costs through energy conservation.

Policy 29.1: Reduce energy usage in public buildings by incorporating energy saving practices, such as commissioned building systems, solar and geothermal technologies, and high efficiency building materials, to reduce the energy consumption of new public development.

Policy 29.2: Replace City-owned vehicles, such as utility trucks, police cars, and other vehicles, should be energy efficient. An example index for determining energy efficiency of vehicles is the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy's minimum vehicle score.

Policy 29.3: Create programs and incentives for energy reduction in private buildings, such as providing a streamlined development review process for projects meeting energy use reduction goals.

In October 2008, Wilson Community College completed the construction of it's new Student Center Building designed using the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard established by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Action 29.1: *Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities.*

Action 29.2*: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the public and private benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the*

individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle.

Action 29.3: *Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties.*

Action 29.4: *Develop incentives or bonuses within the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.*

GOAL 30: CONSERVED AND PROTECTED WATER RESOURCES

Reduce water consumption, increase water quality, and preserve long-term water supplies.

Policy 30.1: Maintain a sustainable and high quality supply of ground and surface water so that available resources meet existing and projected needs.

The City's water reuse plant treats City wastewater so that it can be reused for non-potable uses, such as lawn irrigation and street sweeping. Reusing City wastewater in this manner reduces the amount of effluence that is deposited into the Neuse Watershed.

Policy 30.2: New development requiring public sanitary sewer services is encouraged to use technologies to reduce wastewater discharges.

Policy 30.3: Public water and sewer lines should be located in areas outside of Watershed Critical Areas, except as necessary to address emergency public health situations.

Policy 30.4: Continue to market reclaimed water as an alternative to potable water use for the irrigation of lawns, golf courses, parks, school grounds, industrial/commercial landscapes, industrial manufacturing processes, fire protection sprinkler systems for commercial and industrial uses, street sweeping, and decorative ponds and fountains.

Action 30.1: *Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and use of non-potable water sources.*

***Action 30.2**: Adopt measures to reduce water consumption in City-owned facilities, such as purchasing new bathroom facilities that do not use potable water or use less water than traditional facilities. Reduce the need to use potable water for landscaping irrigation.*

GOAL 31: REDUCED SOLID WASTE

Reduce the amount of municipal solid waste sent to the Wilson County Landfill.

Policy 31.1: Recycling of solid waste, such as glass, plastic, paper, and cardboard is encouraged throughout the community.

Policy 31.2: New multi-family, commercial, industrial, and institutional developments should include on-site recycling facilities for use by employees and residents.

Policy 31.3: The reuse or recycling of building materials and construction waste is encouraged.

***Action 31.1:** Consider expanding the municipal recycling program to include recycling receptacles in public spaces, such as Downtown and in local parks.*

***Action 31.2:** Adopt measures to reduce solid waste and to encourage recycling in all City-owned and maintained properties.*

The City provides recycling service to single-family residential and commercial customers, reducing the amount of waste that goes into the County's landfill.

PUBLIC SAFETY

GOAL 32: ADEQUATE PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

As new development occurs, adequate public safety services, such as fire and rescue, EMS, and police protection, will be provided to all areas of the City.

Policy 32.1: New development should be located within the primary growth area to ensure adequate provision of public safety services. Service to newly developing areas should not result in the reduction of service to existing developed areas.

Policy 32.2: Within new major developments of a significant scale, work with landowners to identify opportunities for potential police sub-stations.

Action 32.1: *Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service.*

Action 32.2: *Incorporate new facility needs, such as recycling service and fire station #6, into the City's Capital Improvement Program.*

"A proactive approach to the future of Wilson."

Nadia Minniti
Plan Forum

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Link to Sustainable Planning

The goals, policies, and action strategies contained in this chapter set the direction for future investment in public infrastructure and services. Each of the sub-topics addressed – education, public utilities and services, and public safety – have potential to directly impact the community's long-term sustainability in the following ways:

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies that aim to reduce energy costs through energy conservation not only decrease the amount of energy consumed, but also save energy customers money and create momentum for the development of alternative energy sources.

Climate Change

Policies that advocate for coordination between land use planning and school facility planning help to establish schools in neighborhoods where students can walk or bike to school rather than arrive in personal automobiles, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Policies that promote reduction in the amount of municipal solid waste sent to the Wilson County Landfill help a variety of users engage in behaviors that facilitate waste reduction, and reuse and recycling of materials.

Food Production and Food Security

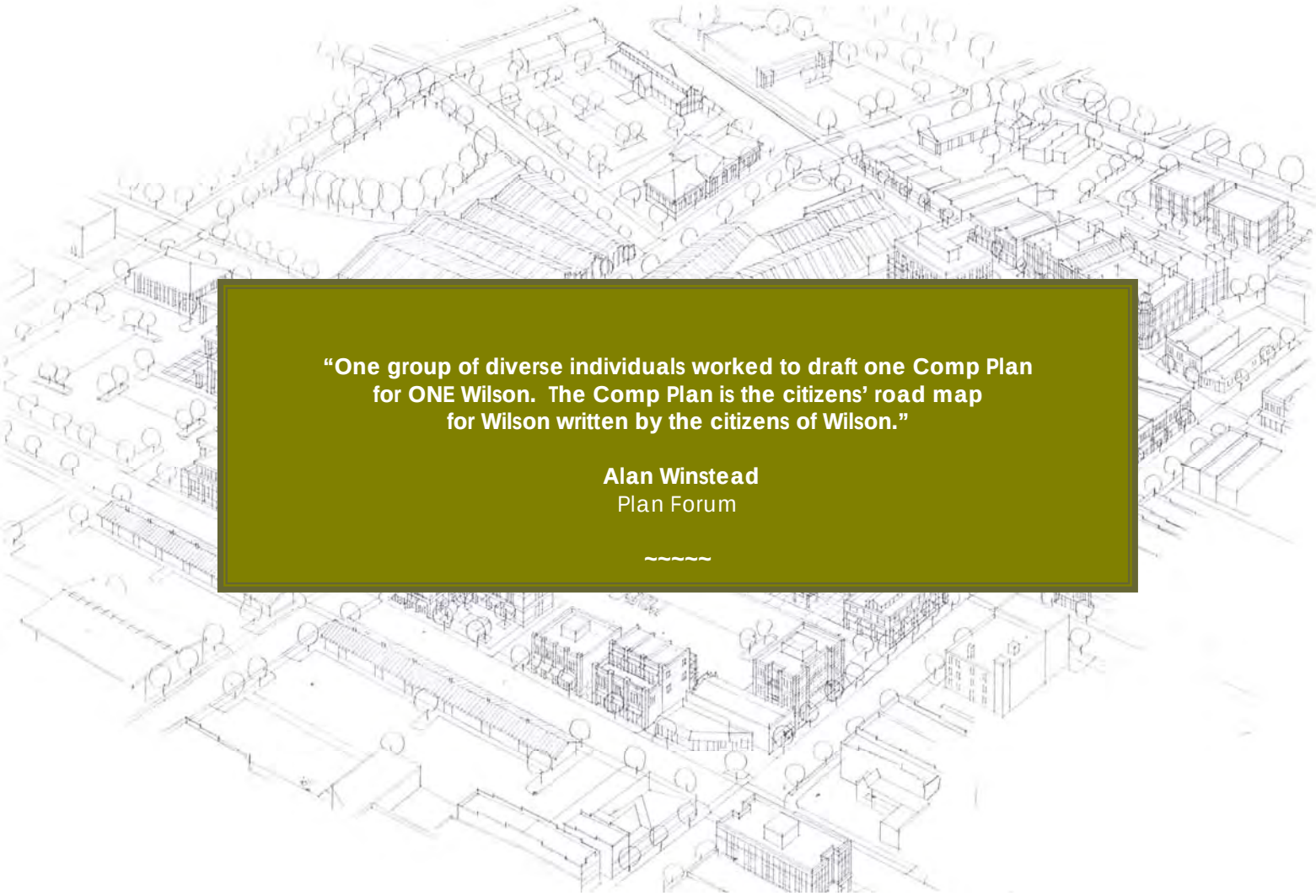
Ensuring that adequate water supplies are available within the City over time will be necessary for the production of local food sources. Finding new ways to reuse water and harvest rainwater can further protect the City's water resources.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that call for adequate public safety services for all areas of the City ensure that every resident and property has access to public safety resources. Additionally, policies that promote increased educational attainment help to increase community safety by providing opportunities for residents to gain meaningful training and employment rather than engaging in criminal activity.

Water Conservation

Public policies related to protection and conservation of water resources help to reduce water consumption, increase water quality, and preserve long-term water supplies.



"One group of diverse individuals worked to draft one Comp Plan for ONE Wilson. The Comp Plan is the citizens' road map for Wilson written by the citizens of Wilson."

Alan Winstead
Plan Forum

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PARKS AND RECREATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to enhance and expand Wilson's parks and recreational amenities, including community parks, neighborhood parks, trails, and greenways. This Chapter also provides background information on the City's existing inventory of park and recreational facilities, findings from a community parks survey, and results from an assessment of current and future park and recreational needs. The parks and recreation goals for the City of Wilson include:

- Improving the quality of and access to parks and recreational facilities for all members of the community
- Ensuring that parks and programs in Wilson meet the recreational needs of all age groups
- Providing parks and recreational facilities in a manner that is fiscally efficient and maximizes use of existing resources

The goals and policies to address Wilson's parks and recreational offerings also help the City achieve its goals for becoming a more sustainable community by providing new ways for residents and visitors to interact with nature, providing new fitness and "play" opportunities, and preserving greenways and open spaces that provide environmental benefits to the community. The links between Wilson's parks and recreation goals and policies and community sustainability are discussed at the end of this chapter.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Through development of new parks and greenways, Wilson will provide citizens with new opportunities for recreating, exercising, and communing with nature.

Key Issues

Community input provided at public meetings and through a community parks and recreational survey identified 5 key issues related to parks and recreation that need to be addressed through implementation of the plan.

- **Improve Older Parks and Recreational Facilities** – Wilson offers many parks and recreational amenities to area residents. Some of these facilities are outdated and in need of replacement and repair. The City is working to develop a strategic plan for improving recreational opportunities for residents.

- **Provide Activities for the City's Youth** – Recreational opportunities, specifically sporting activities in Wilson, are excellent. More activities and entertainment options are needed to provide affordable, healthy, and constructive alternatives for the City's youth.

- **Improving Fitness and Recreational Opportunities for Seniors and Adults** – Wilson's population is aging, and many seniors and empty nesters are relocating to Wilson because of its affordability, Downtown, and area amenities. As Wilson's senior population grows, more opportunities for recreating and exercising will be needed to meet the needs of this segment of the population.

- **Need for New Facilities** – Based on results from a community survey on park and recreational offerings in Wilson, the City's residents would like to have more facilities to meet their recreational needs. These include enhanced facilities at Lake Wilson, an indoor swimming pool, running and walking tracks, multi-use trails and greenways, and a community center with a gym.

- **Vandalism** – Vandalism is a problem in a number of parks. Often facilities are not improved because of repeated vandalism and the financial loss to the City. The City's policy is to maximize existing resources. If vandals repeatedly remove or damage facilities in a park, the City can choose to not replace equipment until it is determined that the facilities will be adequately maintained by park users.

Parks and Recreation Quick Facts

The City of Wilson manages:

- 5,133 acres of parkland
- 29 playgrounds
- 15 ballfields
- 17 picnic areas
- 13 soccer fields
- 12 mini parks
- 14 neighborhood parks
- 2 community parks
- 2 district parks
- 1 regional park
- 2 specialty parks

Summary of Existing Conditions

Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities

The City of Wilson's Parks and Recreation Department manages and operates an array of parks and recreation facilities owned by the City. The City's parks and recreation facilities include 12 mini parks, 14 neighborhood parks, 2 community parks, 2 district parks, 1 regional park, and 2 specialty parks. Public recreational facilities include 29 playgrounds, 15 ballfields, 17 picnic areas, 13 soccer fields, as well as multi-use trains, tennis courts, and other amenities. The map on pages 104-105 illustrates the locations of these facilities.

Categories of Parks

The following categories of parks was used to develop an inventory of Wilson's parks. The map on the next page illustrates the locations of Wilson's parks, highlighting the larger park facilities: Lake Wilson, Toisnot/Gillette, Wedgewood Golf Course, and Recreation Park.

Mini Park

Mini parks range from 0.25 to 3 acres in size. These are smaller parks intended to serve smaller areas. These often provide natural or paved areas with play equipment and landscaping. Picnic tables are often found at these parks. Five Points Park and Woodard Park are examples of mini parks.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks range from 3 to 25 acres in size. These are neighborhood serving parks that typically serve a one mile radius area. These parks should be easily accessible to neighborhood populations and geographically centered within safe walking and biking distance. Possible amenities include play equipment, open space for games, ball fields, tennis or basketball courts, and parking. Belle Meade, Recreation Park, and Cavalier Terrace are examples of neighborhood parks.

Community Park

Community parks range from 25 to 70 acres in size. These parks should be centrally located within the park service area and should be accessible to several neighborhoods. Family activities are typically provided, such as a community centers, baseball, softball, soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball, walking trails, picnic tables, play areas, and open spaces for passive recreation. J. Burt Gillette Athletic and Toisnot Parks are examples of community parks.

District Park

District parks range from 100 to 300 acres in size. The parks should be in a reasonable driving distance from the City and located in an area having natural qualities. These parks should have large areas for passive recreation, such as nature trails, picnicking, boating, fishing, camping, and large open spaces. Other amenities can be provided. Wiggins Mill Reservoir is an example of a district park.

Regional Park

Regional parks range from 300 to 750 acres in size. The parks typically provide natural resource based outdoor recreation. Much of the land in the park is often used for conservation purposes. Examples include state parks, state natural areas, and large natural resource-based county parks, such as Buckhorn Lake.

Special Use Facilities

Specialty use facilities provide specialized, single-purpose recreation. Examples of special use facilities in Wilson include Wedgewood Golf Course and the Wilson Golf Range.

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PARKS AND RECREATION

LEGEND

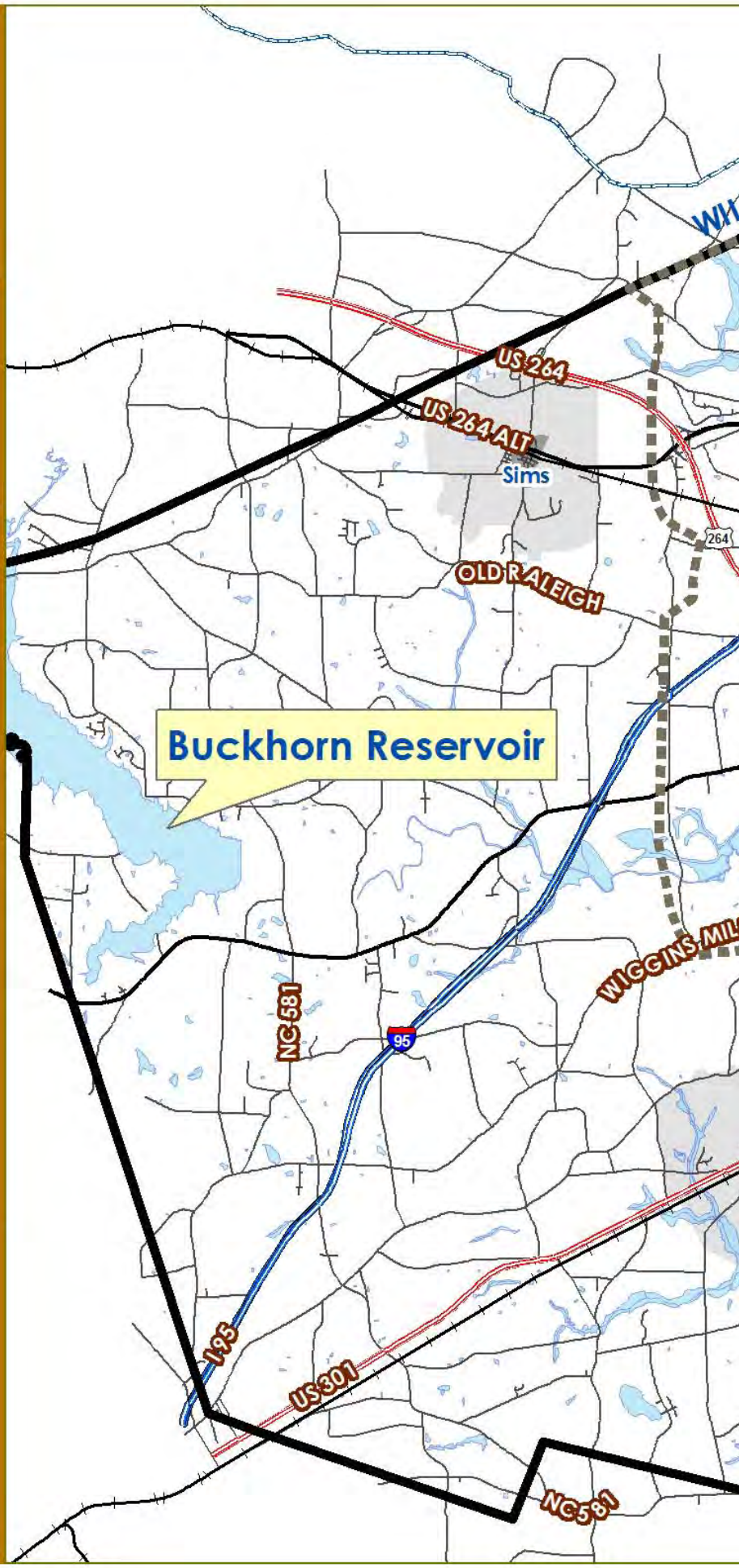
- Planning Area
- Wilson County
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Neighboring Jurisdiction
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of Neighboring Community

Existing Parks and Recreation Sites

- Parks

Proposed Greenways and Bike Routes

- Proposed Greenway
- Proposed Bike Routes
- Proposed Signed Bike Routes



Data Source:

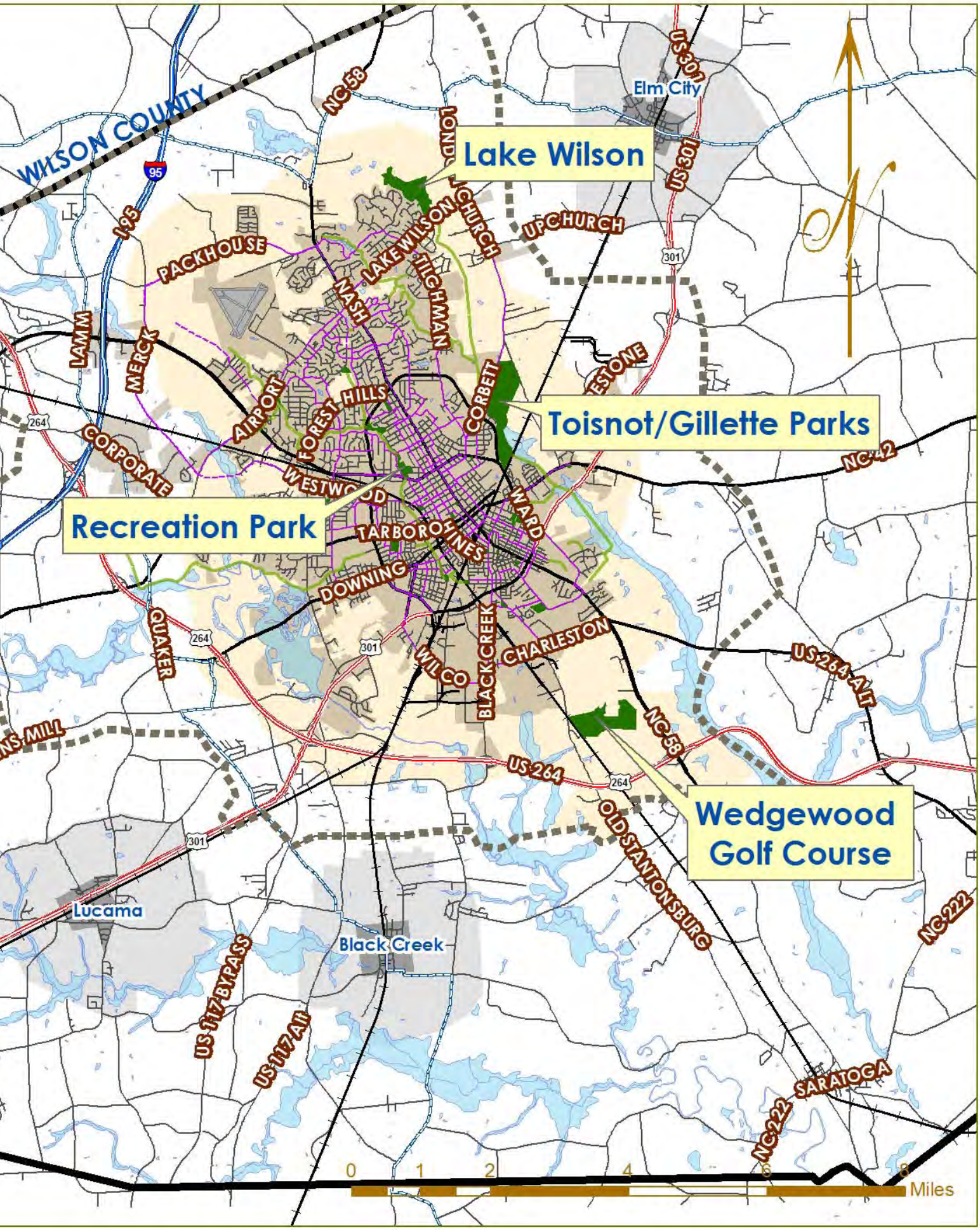
City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

Map Disclaimer:

The City of Wilson and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information and specifically disclaim any warranty for merchantibility of fitness for a particular purpose.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

March 19, 2010


Lake Wilson
Toisnot/Gillette Parks
Recreation Park
Wedgewood Golf Course
WILSON COUNTY
Elm City
Lucama
Black Creek
NC 58
US 301
UPCHURCH
LONG
LAKE WILSON
TILGHMAN
NASH
PACKHOUSE
LAMM
MERCK
AIRPORT
FOREST HILLS
CORBETT
CORPORATE
WESTWOOD
WARD
TARBORO
HINES
DOWNING
QUAKER
WILCO
BLACK CREEK
CHARLESTON
US 264 ALT
US 264
OLD STANTONSBURG
NC 222
SARATOGA
US 117 BYPASS
US 117 ALT
NC 42
I 95
264
0 1 2 4 6 8
Miles

Needs Assessment

An inventory of existing public park and recreational facilities was prepared to determine the quantity and type of parks that exist in Wilson. Park facilities were placed into categories by type to identify the number of each type of public park that is provided in the community and the specific recreational facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, picnic areas, etc.) that exist in these parks. The map shown previously identifies the location of parks in Wilson as well as the proposed greenway and bike facility designations that the City adopted as part of the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. Table 4 shows the inventory of parks and recreational facilities in Wilson.

Key Findings

- 5,133 acres of parkland, 29 playgrounds, 15 ballfields, 17 picnic areas, 13 soccer fields, and an array of other public recreational facilities are provided in Wilson
- The City manages 12 mini parks, 14 neighborhood parks, 2 community parks, 2 district parks, 1 regional park, and 2 specialty parks

The new ballfields at J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex host regional and national sporting events in Wilson. They are both a local amenity and an economic driver for the City.

- The majority of smaller parks are located within the Ward Boulevard Loop. Larger parks are primarily located outside of the loop near water features

Table 4: Parks and Recreation Inventory

	Acres	Ball Field	Basketball Court	Community Center	Football Field	Course/Range	Gymnasium	Multi Use Trail	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Racquetball Ct.	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Track	Volleyball Ct.
Mini Park Facilities																
Carolina St. Park	3		1							1						
East Street Park	0.25									1						
Elvie Resource Center and Park	2.5			1						1						
Five Points Park	3									1						
Freeman Park	3.04		1							1						
Gold	1									1						

	Acres	Ball Field	Basketball Court	Community Center	Football Field	Course/Range	Gymnasium	Multi Use Trail	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Racquetball Ct.	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Track	Volleyball Ct.
Park																
Green Street Park	0.34									1						
Linear Park	3									1					1	
Pender Street Park	2.6		1	1						1						
Washington Carver Heights Park	0.44									1						
Weaver-Bailey Park	0.44									1						
Woodard Park	3.1									1						
Total Mini Park Facilities	23.39	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	1	0
Neighborhood Park Facilities																
Belle Meade	7.98								1	1						
Cavalier Terrace	10											7			1	
Fleming Stadium/ JC Field/Denby Field Complex	13.7	4			1					1						
Lamm Park	3.8		1							1						
Lane Street Park	15.4	1	1						1	1						
Merrimont Park	7.9		1		1				1	1						
Matthis Park	5.3									1				4		
Norris Park	3.98		1							1						
Recreation Park	30	1	2	1	1		1	1	2	1	2		1	10		1
Reid Street Park	10.6	1	1	1	1		1	1		1			1		1	1
Ridgewood Park	6.5									1						
Warren Street Park	5.4		1							1						

	Acres	Ball Field	Basketball Court	Community Center	Football Field	Course/Range	Gymnasium	Multi Use Trail	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Racquetball Ct.	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Court	Track	Volleyball Ct.
Westwood Park	7.2							1	1	1						
Williams Day Camp	8.7								1	1					1	
Total Neighborhood Park Facilities	136.46	7	8	2	4	0	2	3	7	13	2	7	2	14	3	2
Community Park Facilities																
J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex	113.5	4							3	2		6			1	
Toisnot Park	84.2	4						1	3	1					1	
Total Community Park Facilities	197.7	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	3	0	6	0	0	2	0
District Park Facilities																
Lake Wilson Reservoir	127.1														1	
Wiggins Mill Reservoir	415								1							
Total District Park Facilities	542.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Regional Park Facilities																
Buckhorn Lake	4,033							2	2							
Total Regional Park Facilities	4,033	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Use Facilities																
Wedgewood Golf Course	185					1			1	1						
Wilson Golf Range	16.31					1										
Total Special Use Facilities	201.31	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL PUBLIC FACILITIES	5,133.28	15	11	4	4	2	2	6	17	29	2	13	2	14	7	2

Current and Future Levels of Service

Using the parks and recreation inventory shown in Table 4, an assessment was conducted to identify whether the existing park and recreational facilities in Wilson meet the demands of current and future populations. Nationally used standards for each type of park and recreational facility were applied to determine the level of service in Wilson for both parks and recreational facilities. This assessment used 2008 population estimates and 2030 population projections to define current and future populations. Parks were assessed in terms of the ideal acreage and number of parks demanded by 2008 and 2030 populations. Park facilities were assessed in terms of the ideal number of facilities demanded by these same populations.

Table 5 shows the results from the park needs assessment and Table 6 shows the results from the recreational facilities needs assessment. The "target" listed in the tables identifies the deficit or overage of park and recreational facilities provided in Wilson per the national standards. The national standards used in these assessments provide a solid basis for evaluating the park and recreational amenities provided in a community.

Key Findings

- **Parks** - Generally speaking, Wilson provides adequate park facilities to current residents and is expected to maintain this level of service with future populations. In some cases the City provides more facilities than are typically recommended. The results show that two community parks are needed to adequately meet the City's current and future needs. While the assessment shows need for additional mini-parks, it is the policy of the City to focus future park development efforts on larger, community serving parks.

- **Recreational Facilities** - According to the national standards used, the City's residents are underserved in terms of recreational facilities. To meet current and future populations, the City will need to add a significant number of baseball and volleyball courts, multi-use trails, community centers, ballfields, soccer fields, and other facilities.

Table 5: Park Needs Assessment (Current and Future)

		Mini Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Civic Park	District Park	Regional Reserve Park
Current							
2008 Population 47,322	Ideal Acreage	11.8	94.6	165.6	23.7	236.6	473.2
	Existing Acreage	22.7	136.5	197.7	0.0	542.1	4033.0
	Ideal Number of Parks	11.8	6.3	3.0	Varies	1.2	0.6
	Existing Parks	12	14	2	0	2	1
	2008 Park Target	**--**	**--**	**1.0**	**--**	**--**	**--**
Long Term							
2030 Population 55,632	**2030 Target**	**1.9**	**--**	**1.5**	**--**	**--**	**--**

Table 6: Recreational Facility Needs Assessment (Current and Future)

		Ball Field	Basketball Ct.	Community Ctr.	Football Field	Golf Course/Range	Gymnasium	Multi Use Trail	Picnic Shelter	Playground	Racquetball Ct.	Soccer Field	Swimming Pool	Tennis Ct.	Track	Volleyball Ct.
Current																
2008 Population 47,322	Ideal Facilities	18.9	94.6	9.5	6.3	0.9	2.4	11.8	15.8	23.7	2.4	18.9	2.4	11.8	2.4	9.5
	Existing Facilities	15.0	11.0	4.0	4.0	2.0	2.0	6.0	17.0	29.0	2.0	13.0	2.0	14.0	7.0	2.0
	2008 Unadjusted Target	3.9	83.6	5.5	2.3	-1.1	0.4	5.8	-1.2	-5.3	0.4	5.9	0.4	-2.2	-4.6	7.5
Long Term																
2030 Population 55,632	2030 Unadjusted Target	7.3	100.3	7.1	3.4	-0.9	0.8	7.9	1.5	-1.2	0.8	9.3	0.8	-0.1	-4.2	9.1
TOTAL TARGET		**11.2**	**183.9**	**12.6**	**5.7**	**--**	**1.1**	**13.7**	**0.3**	**--**	**1.1**	**15.2**	**1.1**	**-2.3**	**--**	**16.6**

Community Survey

To better ascertain the types of community parks and facilities that Wilson's residents desire, a citizen survey report was conducted in September and October 2009. Approximately 2,500 surveys were mailed to randomly selected residents throughout Wilson. Residents were also able to fill out the survey online. The complete survey and accompanying report analysis can be found at www.WilsonNC.org.

Survey Findings

Following is a summary of the survey findings.

- There was a good response to this fairly difficult survey, with 529 surveys completed (144 online and 385 by paper). This was more than enough data to accomplish the goals of the study.
- The largest number of paper surveys came from Council Districts 3, 4 and 5, with 22 percent of District 3 recipients responding.
- All age groups were well represented by the respondents.
- 54 percent of respondents were female and 46 percent were male.
- 15 percent of respondents have lived in the area for less than 5 years, 47 percent for over 25 years.
- Survey respondents were asked if "they enjoyed living in Wilson", were they satisfied with "recreational opportunities", "recreational facilities", and "recreational programs". Satisfaction with recreational facilities ranked lowest and respondents showed a strong positive response for their enjoyment of living in Wilson. While Wilson has invested in some of the best soccer and little league baseball facilities in the State, it seems the response is likely indicating a desire for the addition of new facility types that residents do not

currently have access to (such as greenways or nature parks), or improving existing facilities (such as our existing, but aging community centers).

- 34 percent of respondents said they use the City's recreational facilities at least weekly, 21 percent indicated they visit monthly, and 45 percent indicated they visit either never or only a few times per year.
- The facilities used by the most people in the past year were playground, reservoir/lake, picnic shelter, soccer field, baseball/softball field, and community center.
- The "preferred recreation activities" mentioned most were walking/hiking, swimming, performing arts, fishing, fitness programs, soccer, and golf. When asked to choose their one most preferred activity, respondents indicated walking/hiking was their favorite activity.
- The survey indicated people would use recreational facilities more often if they offered more interesting things to do, were renovated, and were better maintained.
- When asked what a respondent's "one top spending choice" was, facilities mentioned most were indoor swimming pool (21.8 percent), multi-use trails/greenways and walking tracks (18.9 percent), new community center and/or existing center renovations (15.3 percent), and facilities at lakes (11 percent).
- Respondents were asked, "Which levels/types of parks, if any, does Wilson need more of?" The answers checked most were community parks and greenways.

Summary of Survey Key Issues

One of the key findings for the future direction of parks and recreation in Wilson is a strong desire for more passive recreational activities. Greenways, nature parks, walking and hiking trails, and facilities at lakes were highly rated items in this survey. This is further illustrated in looking at survey respondent's preferred activities. The top rated activity was walking/hiking and the fourth highest rated was fishing.

This survey indicated that there is a strong desire for an indoor swimming facility. Due to the complexity of the survey it was felt it would negatively impact the rate of return to give respondents a "budget to spend" on recreational facilities. An indoor swimming facility is by far the most expensive facility that was a choice in the survey. The responses were discussed with the Plan Steering Committee to gauge their interest in facility spending. Given a trade-off of building an indoor swimming facility and very few other facilities or building several of the other desired facilities, the Steering Committee overwhelming chose building more and varied facilities. One reason they gave for this decision was that an indoor pool would appeal to fewer citizens while building a selection of varied facilities would offer more recreational opportunities to a wider range of residents. The Steering Committee felt that an indoor swimming pool should still be pursued, but only through partnerships between the City and partners such as the County, hospital, YMCA, and/or the Boys and Girls Club.

Another issue discussed with the Steering Committee was the issue of building a new recreation center at the J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex and/or renovating the Reid Street and Recreation Park Centers. The Steering Committee felt that the two existing centers should be renovated and remain open since both centers are located in walkable neighborhoods. While they felt Gillette would be a good location for a new center, it presently would not be accessible to those traveling by bike or foot. The center at Gillette should be built as resources become available since the City's population has almost doubled since the last center was built. The

area around Gillette is also expected to see more residential growth during the time period of this Plan.

There was a question in the survey that asked respondents to determine their top four choices for Wilson's future spending on parks and recreation facilities. The items in the list have been presented below by cost category – low, medium, high – to give readers an indication of the comparative costs to construct/renovate facilities.

Low Cost (under $100,000)

- Additional facilities at lakes & reservoirs (fishing platforms/picnic shelters)
- Additional playgrounds
- Mountain bike trails
- Outdoor basketball courts
- Running/walking tracks
- Tennis courts
- Volleyball courts (outdoor)
- Dog Park

Medium Cost ($100,001 to $500,000)

- Additional facilities at lakes & reservoirs (camping facilities)
- Baseball/softball fields (high school regulation size)
- Football fields
- Multi-use trails/greenways
- Nature park
- Racquetball courts
- Soccer fields

High Cost ($500,000 and greater)

- Community center with multi-use gym (basketball/soccer)
- Indoor swimming facility
- Current recreation center renovations
- Golf course renovations
- Outdoor swimming pool

Planned Improvements

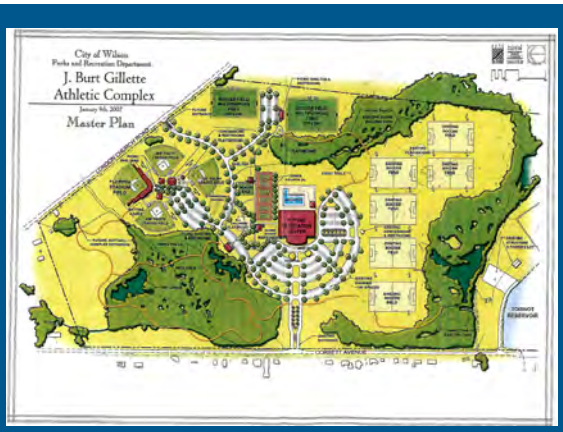
Included here are a number of parks and recreation projects that are either underway or are planned for the future. They have been approximately divided into short-range (1-7 years) and long-range (greater than 7 years) timelines to better estimate when these facilities may be available.

Current Needs (1-7 years)

- **Cavalier Park renovation** – see Master Plan below
- **Dog Park** – preliminary location is to the left of the drive going into Toisnot Park
- **Lake Wilson** – possible redesign of the park along with additional trails/multi-use paths, fishing platforms, and other recreational facilities
- **Buckhorn Reservoir** – picnic facilities, tent sites, camping sites with hook-ups, bathroom
- **Wedgewood Golf Course** – renovate the greens and update the clubhouse

Future Needs (> 7 years)

- **J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex** – ongoing development of additional soccer fields and aquatic center (see Master Plan below)
- **Wiggins Mill** – renovations
- **Land Acquisition for Future Parks and Recreational Facilities** – (see map p. 138)
- **Development of Toisnot and Hominy Greenways** – identified in the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (focus on Toisnot Loop Greenway link)
- **Development of New Community Parks**
- **Existing Park/Facility Renovation** – including Recreation Park and Reid Street Community Centers
- **Update Various Existing Trails and Equipment in Parks**



The Master Plan for J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex, shown here, is being implemented in phases by the City.

The Cavalier Terrace Park Master Plan, shown here, is a planned future park that will be developed by the City.

Special Projects

Consideration of the Future of Existing Mini-Parks

Given the size (3 acres or less) and location of some of the City's mini-parks, it has been determined that there could be alternative uses for this land that could better serve the surrounding areas. Over time, many of these parks came into existence when the City had surplus land and decisions were made to establish a park. There was little park planning that went into the decision- making process, which has resulted in parcels of land that are too small to accommodate play equipment or other recreational facilities. There is concern over the cost of maintaining these small parks compared to the actual use by residents. Also, because of their sometimes remote locations, these parks have become a haven for negative activity which results in safety concerns by the residents and in police intervention. Discussion has taken place about possible conversion of some of these parks to other uses and/or the conveyance of these properties to other land holders for long-term maintenance and development.

If new mini-parks are developed in the future and/or existing mini-parks are renovated, it is important that they be designed as "defensible spaces" with access and safety of the users in mind. An example of a City mini-park that could serve as a model for future development/redevelopment is Freeman Park located at Hines and Finch.

Freeman Park, shown here, is a good example of a "defensible" park space. Note how the surrounding residences face the park, providing for "eyes on the park" and creating a neighborhood green.

Hominy Swamp Water Quality Park

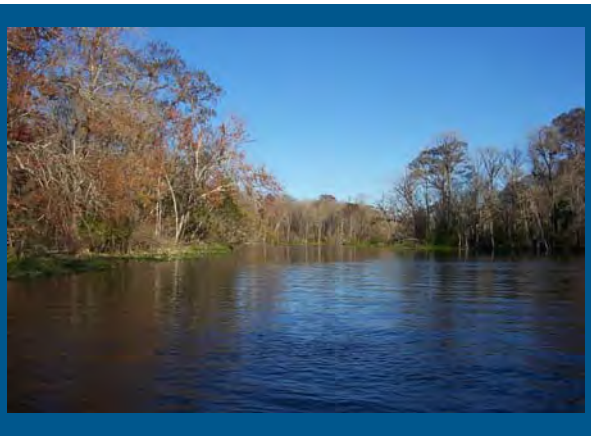
The Hominy Swamp Water Quality Park planning effort will result in numerous water quality projects that will support the City of Wilson's short term goal (five years) of developing an Environmental Education Center located central to the project area. This center will provide hands on environmental education to the public and will focus on water quality, wetland habitat, and associated wildlife and vegetation.

There are already isolated greenways scattered throughout the project area and this planning effort lays the groundwork for linking these isolated greenways to one another for a contiguous greenway along Hominy Swamp Creek from Phillip Street to Ward Boulevard. The greenways will provide access to the water quality areas for educational purposes. These segments would eventually link to the greater Hominy Greenway as recommended in the City's Bicycle Plan.

The City of Wilson has applied for grant assistance to develop the Hominy Creek Water Quality Park. A concept plan for a similar park, developed in Wilmington, North Carolina, is shown here.

Canoe Trail on Contentnea Creek from Buckhorn Reservoir to Wiggins Mill

In fall 2009, the Neuse River Foundation began a comprehensive two-year program to monitor and enhance the water quality of Contentnea Creek in Wilson County including the headwaters of Buckhorn Lake. The program will focus on solutions to water quality concerns and will increase the navigability of the Creek for recreational paddlers from Buckhorn Reservoir to Wiggins Mill. The Foundation is partnering with the City of Wilson, Barton College, and Wilson Community College on this project. This canoe trail will be part of a plan to create a 100-mile regional greenway corridor along Contentnea Creek in the Neuse River Basin. This corridor should also be studied as a greenway corridor between the City and Buckhorn Reservoir. This offers an excellent opportunity for cooperation between the City and County.



Efforts to improve Contentnea Creek, and the larger Neuse River Basin in which the Creek is located, include plans to tie into a canoe trail into a larger 100-mile long greenway system along the Neuse River.

Buckhorn Reservoir

Buckhorn Reservoir serves as a tremendous community resource providing a dependable water supply and recreational, educational, and conservation opportunities for people in the greater Wilson area. Since completion of the new dam in the summer of 2000, there has been increased demand for public access and for a broader variety of recreational uses. The public continues to enjoy and appreciate Buckhorn's resources in a number of ways – existing trails have been expanded and new trails developed. Local equestrian and cycling activities have revealed an increased community demand for access to additional areas of the land surrounding the Reservoir. The full recreational and other potentials of Buckhorn as a valuable community resource will continue to be explored.

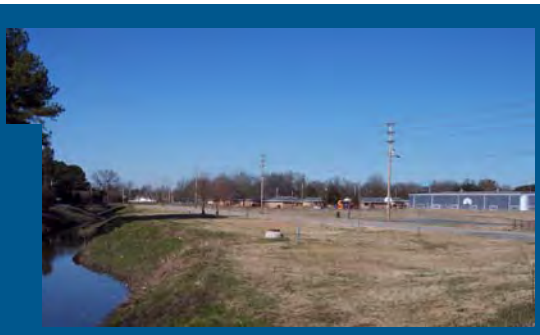
Photo by: John C Hood, AIA, LEED AP

As part of Plan implementation, additional opportunities for recreational activities at the Buckhorn Reservoir will continue to be explored.

Connection with the Countywide Greenway System

The 2025 Wilson County Comprehensive Plan recommends a Countywide greenway system. The proposed Toisnot and Hominy Greenways in the City would become part of this interconnected network of multi-use trails.

Photo Simulation by Jason Epley, AICP



Before

After

This photo simulation illustrates how future greenway improvements will not only provide Wilson's citizens with better access to nature and the outdoors, but also provide for new recreational opportunities in a manner that improves the visual appearance of the community.

Educational Forest

The City is planning to develop a naturally improved area in proximity to the Center City containing numerous selected native North Carolina tree species, and providing unique flora and fauna learning opportunities for citizens and visitors. This feature would provide unique environmental education experiences putting increased meaning into the benefits of urban forestry.

The City will develop an educational forest to provide citizens with a new opportunity to observe and engage with their natural surroundings.

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 33: AN IMPROVED PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Parks and recreational programs in Wilson will be accessible to all and provide healthy recreational opportunities for all members of the community.

Policy 33.1: Future parks will be sited in locations that provide better accessibility to areas that are underserved by parks and recreational facilities in the community. Consideration of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian accessiblity to new sites will be a priority.

Policy 33.2: Maintenance of existing parks should be enhanced to sustain existing facilities over the long-term, to improve perceptions of safety, and to improve the visual quality of parks.

Policy 33.3: The City will work with neighborhood organizations to develop strategies to secure and protect parks from vandalism and misuse, including opportunities for neighborhood watch and police patrol services.

Policy 33.4: Future mini-parks should be designed to evaluate access and safety for users and be designed as "defensible spaces."

Action 33.1: *Work with community neighborhood watch programs to develop strategies to ensure the safety and proper use of local parks.*

Action 33.2: *Implement the 2008 Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and 2006 Pedestrian Plan.*

Action 33.3: *Targeted improvements existing parks and recreational facilities and development of new facilities to be undertaken by the City include:*

- *Future construction or renovation of neighborhoods parks, such as Cavalier Terrace and Recreation Park*
- *Development of a new recreation center and renovation of existing recreation centers*
- *Development of a new indoor pool at the Gillette complex*
- *Improvements to Wedgewood Golf Course*
- *Provide additional trails/multi-use paths, and other recreational facilities at Lake Wilson park*
- *Development of the greenways system as identified in the 2008 Bicycle Plan*
- *The full recreational potential of Buckhorn Reservoir as a valuable community resource will continue to be explored and additional facilities provided*

Action 33.4: Explore opportunities to provide a dog park within the Center City area.

Action 33.5: *In the future, identify future parks need and reserve land in Wilson's growth area for future facilities.*

GOAL 34: PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR ALL AGES

Parks and programs in Wilson will fulfill the recreational needs of all ages in the community.

Policy 34.1: New and enhanced facilities will be designed to provide recreational opportunities for a range ages and interests and provide opportunities for multi-generational interactions.

Policy 34.2: Programs and recreational offerings will be enhanced to provide new, easily accessible amenities to the City's aging population, with a focus on fitness activities and low-impact sports.

Policy 34.3: The City's youth will be provided with new opportunities to recreate during non-school hours to improve the physical health and well-being of youth. Adequate multi-modal transportation (i.e., driving, taking the bus, cycling, walking) to

and from schools, recreational facilities, and neighborhoods is necessary to promote engagement of youth.

Action 34.1: *Encourage development of youth recreational facilities, such as a mini golf course and disc golf course.*

Action 34.2: *Consider opportunities to partner with businesses to provide new recreational facilities and programs for area youth. The privately sponsored Boys and Girls Club in Manassas, Virginia, is an excellent example of this type of partnership.*

Action 34.3: *Explore expansion of recreational programming for seniors.*

GOAL 35: EFFICIENT PROVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The provision of new parks and recreational programs will be provided in a manner that balances demand for new parks and recreational services with the goal of being fiscally efficient.

Policy 35.1: The City will work with the Wilson Public School system to identify future opportunities to share the use of public parks and ballfields.

Policy 35.2: The City will coordinate park planning with Wilson County with regards to providing larger regional and community parks and linking greenways that extend outside of Wilson.

Policy 35.3: The City will coordinate with community organizations to provide recreational programs and services in Wilson with a focus on efficiency and non-duplication of programs and services.

Policy 35.4: New parks and recreational facilities should provide service to larger areas in the form of neighborhood- and community-serving facilities.

Policy 35.5: When undertaking new stormwater management projects, the City will identify opportunities for developing new community greenways.

Action 35.1*: Working in collaboration with Wilson County, explore opportunities to provide a new community park.*

Action 35.2: *Working in collaboration with Wilson County, explore opportunities to improve Lake Wilson by providing trails, passive park areas, restroom facilities, and other amenities.*

Action 35.3: *Explore opportunities for partnering with Wilson Community College and Barton College to provide new recreational facilities and programs for City-wide use.*

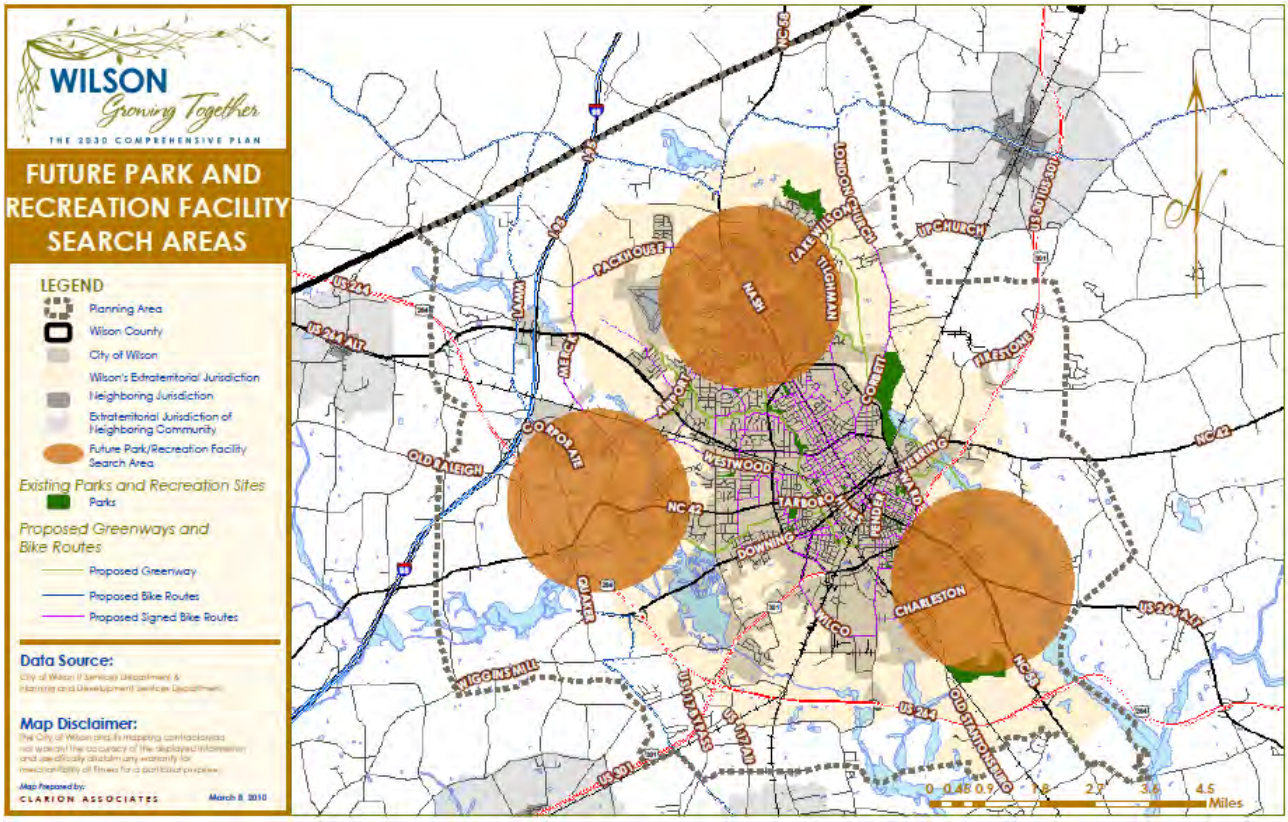
Action 35.4: *Working with Wilson County Schools, explore opportunities for joint-use of parks and recreational facilities on school grounds for use by the general public during non-school hours.*

Action 35.5: *The City should look for opportunities for the potential sale and/or reuse of small mini-parks that are not actively in use. Neighborhood community gardens or neighborhood owned open spaces or passive park areas are two options for reuse of these sites.*

Action 35.6: *Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances to include provisions that encourage or require new residential developments to include open space, park areas, and greenways.*

The following map illustrates the search areas for future parks and recreational facilities in the Wilson planning area.

Figure 15: Future Park and Recreation Facility Search Areas



Link to Sustainable Planning

The goals, policies, and action strategies contained in this chapter set the direction for future planning and investment in parks and recreational facilities in Wilson. These policies and actions reinforce sustainable planning goals as follows:

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

While most policies related to establishing additional bicycle, greenway and pedestrian routes are aimed at increasing recreational offerings in the community, these facilities can also be used as alternatives to the automobile, providing a healthy and fuel-free way to commute in and around Wilson.

Climate Change

Policies to establish parks and greenways within new developments encourages the preservation of existing tree canopy and natural areas that can help reduce impacts from the development on the natural environment, and possibly offset new greenhouse gas emissions from new development.

Food Production and Food Security

Policies to find alternative uses for mini-parks and other City lands in close proximity to neighborhoods provide opportunities for development of community gardens. Development of community gardens can results in a supply of healthy, locally grown produce that can be consumed by area residents.

Community Health and Safety

Through the community survey, residents have voiced their interest in having new and enhanced opportunities to recreate in Wilson. By establishing policies to provide better access through development of new park and recreational facilities, Wilson is providing its residents with new opportunities to engage in physical exercise, connect with other members of the community through recreational programs, and improve the safety of these community amenities by having a greater community presence and more “eyes on the street.”

Water Conservation

Development of parks and greenways along creeks, wetlands, and other riparian areas protect water quality and provide opportunities for residents to experience and learn about local water resources. Interpretive information can help citizens understand the importance of water conservation.

"Wilson is a vibrant growing, wonderful community that will only get better with caring people who are willing to fight for its future. Thanks!!"

Robin Williams
Plan Forum

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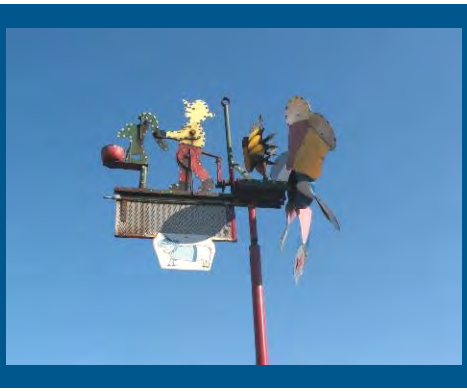
QUALITY OF LIFE

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions aimed at reinforcing the sense of community and enhancing quality of life in Wilson. It discusses the City's existing historic and cultural resources, community events and programs, opportunities for civic engagement, and community event facilities. This chapter provides guidance on how to improve the overall quality of life in Wilson by increasing cultural, recreational and entertainment offerings, and by providing programs to residents in need. It strives to engage and connect the Wilson community. Goals related to improving the quality of life and sense of community in Wilson include:

- Focusing on "One Wilson" and the needs of the overall community
- Developing a new Civic Center
- Improving communication and notice about local events and activities
- Enhancing cultural and entertainment offerings to appeal to all ages
- Providing programs to assist those in need

Like community sustainability, overall quality of life is a subjective matter that covers a broad range of topics. By promoting integrated community engagement that focuses on "One Wilson", and the needs and impacts of all residents, the City is furthering the quality of life for all residents, and is addressing one of its key goals of sustainable planning. At the end of this chapter is a summary of the ways in which quality of life goals and policies relate to overall community sustainability.



QUALITY OF LIFE

A variety of art and cultural amenities helps to instill community pride and foster civic interest and engagement.

Key Issues

The following key issues have emerged from community feedback regarding opportunities to enhance the sense of community and overall quality of life in Wilson:

- **Becoming a "City of the Arts" for All Ages** – In order to compete with neighboring communities and satisfy demand of changing demographics, Wilson must build on its existing offerings of cultural and entertainment offerings. Opportunities currently exist for young families and older residents, and the City should explore ways to partner with other organizations such as Barton College and Wilson Community College to extend offerings to singles, young professionals, and seniors.

- **Changing Community Perceptions to Emphasize "One Wilson"** – All members of the Wilson community are interlinked through a web of relationships, whether through educational, business, neighborhood, civic, or other ties. The City should emphasize the importance of inter-relationships between households, neighborhoods, and districts to highlight the fact that everyone is part of one larger community – the City of Wilson.

- **Fostering Development of a New Civic Center** – Wilson lacks space to hold larger community events. Providing a multi-use space that could be used for concerts and other events could help put Wilson on the map.

- **Providing Additional Opportunities for Civic Engagement to All Citizens** – Quality of life in Wilson will improve if its residents are actively engaged in community affairs. The City should provide greater outreach to the community through fun and entertaining civic engagement activities and include residents from a variety of backgrounds.

- **Improving Communication About Local Events and Activities** – Many residents in Wilson are unaware of the cultural amenities available to them. Communication should be enhanced to make residents aware of the community's events and activities.

- **Promoting Self-Sufficiency through Local Social Services** – Public programs to help citizens in Wilson should focus on providing assistance to individuals that need help improving their current situations, such as addressing problems with addiction, combating homelessness, and gaining new job skills. Programs should focus on solutions that foster self-sufficiency and a community spirit of service.

Summary of Existing Conditions

Historic Resources

Historic Districts

Wilson has five areas listed on the National Register of Historic Districts: Old Wilson, West Nash, Broad-Kenan, East Wilson, and the Central Business/Tobacco Warehouse districts. Listing on the National Register signifies that these districts have been researched and determined to be worthy of preservation for their historical values. In addition being listed on the National Register, three areas are also designated as local historic districts, meaning that the City believes the architecture, history and character of the area are worthy of recognition and protection. These areas include the Old Wilson, West Nash, and Broad-Kenan Historic Districts. Development and design standards for local historic districts are enforced by means of historic district overlay zones.

Historic Resources Quick Facts

The City of Wilson features:

- 5 National Register Historic Districts
- 6 National Register Historic Landmarks
- 3 Local Historic Districts
- Nearly 20 antique shops

Historic Landmarks

In addition to historic districts, Wilson has a number of individual buildings, structures, and sites designated as historic landmarks. Most of the City's historic landmarks fall within boundaries of historic districts, and six historic landmarks have been listed individually on the National Register. These landmarks include: Branch Bank, the Cherry Hotel, the General Joshua Barnes House, the Moses Rountree House, the Davis-Whitehad-Harriss House, and the Wilson County Courthouse.

Cultural Amenities

Cultural Amenities

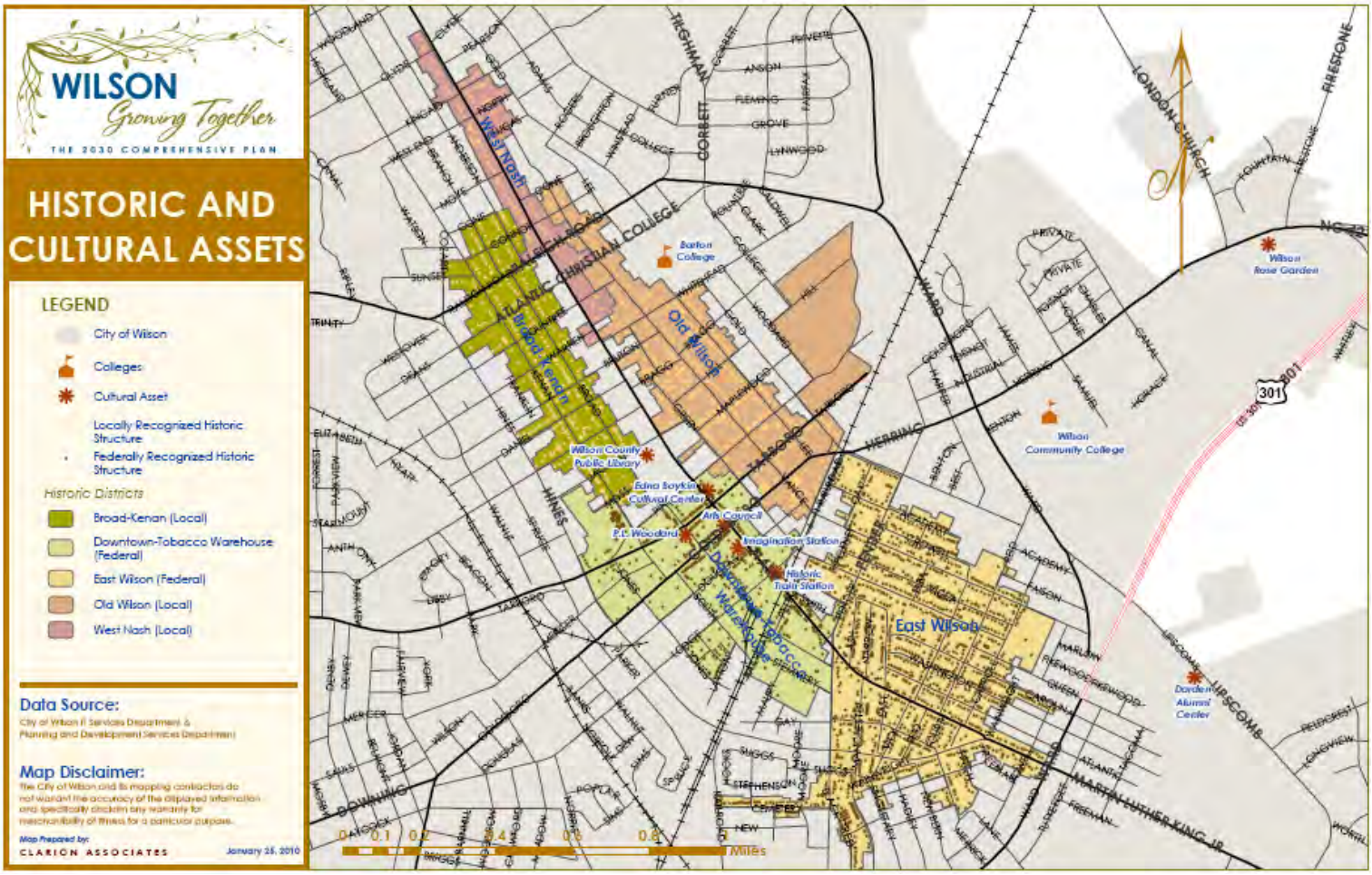
Wilson boasts an array of cultural, performing arts, educational, and community amenities. Offerings include numerous art galleries, museums, library, theatre, antique shops, gardens, train station, and educational facilities related to Barton College and Wilson Community College. Many of the City's cultural and historical assets are located in the Ward Loop and Downtown areas, and draw visitors and residents to the area.

Cultural Events

The City of Wilson and other area organizations host a variety of cultural events and opportunities for civic interaction and engagement. Such events include numerous holiday celebrations, outdoor concerts, fairs, and festivals.

See Figure 15 for the locations of historical and cultural assets.

Figure 16: Historic and Cultural Assets
(full-page version in Appendix B: Maps)



Community Event Space

While there are several venues in Wilson to hold small and mid-sized community and cultural events, there is general consensus within the community that a larger event space is needed in order to accommodate a wider variety of events, such as conferences and weddings. A feasibility study is necessary in order to determine the potential size, uses, and location of such facility in order to ensure that any new event venue is not in direct competition with an existing or planned facility.

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 36: FOCUS ON "ONE WILSON"

Perceptions of the Wilson community should emphasize the overall community and how the inter-relationships of each household, neighborhood, and district are a component of the larger picture – the City of Wilson.

Policy 36.1: Foster meaningful community engagement among all demographic sectors of the City at all community events and government forums.

Action 36.1: *Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the "One Wilson" goal. An example could be a "Town Hall" style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community.*

Action 36.2: *Organize cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents. Such events could include a public market, art show, and concert with local musicians.*

Wilson offers many opportunities for citizens from all walks of life to meet, socialize, and engage in the community. This photo was taken at a First Friday celebration.

GOAL 37: CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCES FOR ALL AGES

Wilson will offer enriching cultural experiences for all ages of the community.

Policy 37.1: As demographics change in Wilson, the City will encourage local partners to provide cultural and entertainment opportunities reflecting the diversity of Wilson's residents (singles, young professionals, and seniors).

Policy 37.2: The City supports the development of new activities and entertainment options to provide affordable, healthy, and constructive options for the City's youth.

Policy 37.3: The role of community facilities as centers of community activity should be enhanced to provide further recreational, educational, and entertainment options to citizens of Wilson.

Policy 37.4: The City should consider engaging in a public-private partnership to bring affordable festivals, races, outdoor movies, and concerts to public spaces.

Policy 37.5: The City of Wilson will work collaboratively with partners, such as the Wilson Arts Council, Barton College, and Wilson Community College, to support the performing arts and expansion of other cultural, entertainment, and educational events offered by these higher learning institutions.

Among Wilson's current cultural arts offerings is Downtown Alive, shown here.

Action 37: *Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural and entertainment establishments and activities to the City.*

GOAL 38: A NEW CIVIC CENTER

Develop a new multi-use civic center to hold community meetings, conventions, concerts, and other public events.

Policy 38.1: The City will work with local non-profit, public, and private organizations to facilitate development of a civic center.

Action 38: *Working through the Downtown Development Corporation, assess the market for a new civic center and related hospitality, tourism, and travel uses.*

GOAL 39: IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS FOR LOCAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Enhance public communication to make residents aware of events and activities of community interest.

Policy 39.1: Explore ways to better publicize events and activities that reach and resonate with all segments of Wilson's population.

Policy 39.2: Work with community and neighborhood representatives to identify ways to better engage and provide outreach to segments of the community, such as the growing Latino and Hispanic population.

Action 37.1: *Continue to conduct the Citizens Academy and expand outreach to Spanish-speaking citizens.*

Action 37.2: *Working through the Citizens Academy, poll citizens on the best ways to provide information about public events and activities.*

Action 37.3: *Publicize the City's community calendar on the Wilson Times website.*

Action 37.4: *Advertise community events in the Wilson Parks and Recreation newsletter.*

Action 37.5: *Explore opportunities for developing a comprehensive community calendar that includes civic, cultural, recreational, educational, and other events.*

Graduates of Wilson's Citizen Academy, shown here, learn about City governance and operations.

GOAL 40: PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR CITIZENS IN NEED

Public programs to help citizens in need will focus on fostering self-sufficiency and a community spirit of service.

Policy 38.1: Provide for the housing needs of the City's homeless and special needs populations.

Policy 38.2: Provide adequate public transportation between housing for citizens in need and local employment and activity centers.

Policy 38.3: Support public and non-profit organizations to create programs that allow those in need to care for themselves.

Policy 38.4: Support and assist the efforts of organizations, such as the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Wilson, Incorporated (OIC), Hope Station, and Diversified Opportunities Incorporated (DOI) to provide vital services to segments of the community needing assistance.

Policy 38.5: Support efforts of public and nonprofit organizations to create and operate programs that equip citizens to own their own businesses as a path to self-sufficiency. *(See Policy 12.2.)*

Action 38: *Assess the local transit system and its ability to provide adequate transportation service to citizens in need.*

Link to Sustainable Planning

Life in Wilson is good, yet as with any community, there are opportunities to make the quality of life in Wilson even better. The goals, policies, and strategies contained in this chapter aim to improve the sense of community and quality of life in the City of Wilson, and by doing so they also further the community's journey towards sustainability in the following ways.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies that focus on looking at the "larger picture" of the community and fostering community engagement help to drive home the message about the need to conserve energy resources, and also help build momentum and support for alternative energy development.

Climate Change

Policies that promote a focus on "One Wilson" and the power of the community as a whole assist with efforts to combat global issues such as climate change because they emphasize the need for individuals to work collectively to tackle large problems facing the community and world.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

With policies stressing "One Wilson" and the importance of community engagement residents can see how their individual actions to reduce waste and increase recycling can impact the community's overall waste reduction goals.

Food Production and Food Security

Policies that aim to provide public assistance to help residents in need assist vulnerable populations with securing basic necessities such as food, shelter, and transportation.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that promote self-sufficiency programs help the community become safer and healthier by providing housing, food, and employment opportunities for residents who may be otherwise homeless or unemployed.

Water Conservation

Policies that promote a focus on "One Wilson" help community members understand the impacts that individuals can have when they work together to protect and conserve valuable resources such as the community's water supply.

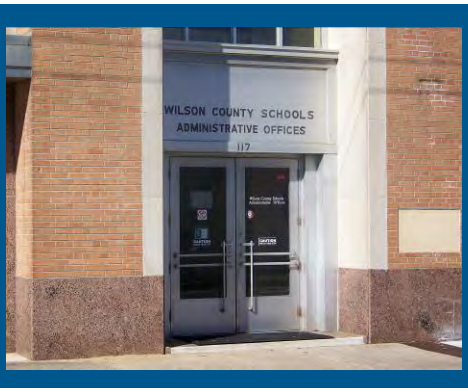
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions aimed at coordinating local land use, economic development, public infrastructure, and school planning efforts with other governmental entities and service providers. It discusses the current partnerships and collaborations between the City of Wilson, Wilson County, and the Wilson County Public School System, and highlights opportunities to further these partnerships. Goals related to intergovernmental collaboration include:

- Pursuing joint City-County planning efforts
- Coordinating school facilities planning

The goals and policies contained in this chapter help to advance regional sustainability by providing opportunities for the City of Wilson's sustainability goals to integrate with the larger County and public school systems. The ways in which the City's collaboration-focused goals and policies relate to sustainable planning topics is discussed at the end of this chapter.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

Collaboration with other governmental entities and service providers can lead to sharing of resources and cost savings.

Key Issues

The following key issues were identified from discussions regarding coordination between the City of Wilson and other jurisdictions and organizations.

- **Coordinating with the Wilson County School System to Site and Plan for New School Facilities** – The development of schools can have a large impact on a community and the City of Wilson should coordinate with the Wilson County School System to ensure that the locations and designs of new schools align with community planning goals.

- **Partnering with Barton College to Increase Educational Excellence of the Public School System** – Barton College is an integral component of the City of Wilson and its Downtown. Potential partnerships between the College, the City, and the School District may help improve the success rates of the community's public school students.

- **Supporting Wilson Community College in Providing Educational Programs for All Sectors of the Population** – Wilson Community College provides critical educational opportunities in Wilson for a broad cross-section of the community, ranging from high school graduates to retired seniors with interests in continuing education courses. The City should support the Community College in providing high quality educational services to the community.

- **Supporting Educational Partnerships that Improve the Educational Attainment of the City's Workforce** – Wilson should continue to recognize and support educational partnerships, such as those established between Wilson Community College and Barton College and Wilson Community College and Wilson County Public Schools in order to provide cooperative arrangements to ensure seamless transitions from high school to college. For example, the Early College program helps provide accelerated opportunities for high school students to quickly complete two-year degrees.

- **Supporting Organizations that Work to Improve Life Skills of Residents** – The City should continue to recognize and support other educational providers and partnerships that deliver vital services to segments of the community needing assistance, such as the Opportunities Industrialization Center of Wilson, Inc. [OIC] and Diversified Opportunities, Inc. [DOI].

- **Continuing Joint City and County Planning Coordination/ Collaboration** – The original 1990 Growth Plan was developed using a collaborative planning model in which the two jurisdictions (and the other municipalities) jointly developed a future plan for growth. This type of planning coordination/collaboration should continue and additional opportunities to share review of development proposals should be explored.

- **Coordinating School Siting with Provision of Infrastructure** – The City and Wilson County Schools need to collaborate and develop common criteria for siting and designing new schools to ensure that school development and future growth plans for the community are aligned.

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 41: JOINT CITY AND COUNTY PLANNING

The City will pursue joint City-County planning efforts to coordinate land use decisions and management strategies along the edges of the two jurisdictions and to support economic and community development efforts of mutual gain.

Policy 41.1: The City will maintain and improve the established framework for dialogue with the County on matters of mutual interest, particularly economic and land planning issues, to reach consensus and coordinate efforts.

Policy 41.2: The City will explore additional opportunities to share information between the City and County on development proposals in areas of mutual interest.

Policy 41.3: Form partnerships with the County to address neighborhood revitalization, economic development, capital improvements, and other areas of joint interest.

Policy 41.4: The City will coordinate transportation planning efforts with Wilson County and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop a coordinated Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Wilson. *(See Action 14.)*

Action 41: *Work with Wilson County to develop a formal agreement for coordinating information on development proposals in areas of mutual interest. Consider agreements to amend County zoning in areas of mutual interest.*

GOAL 42: COORDINATED SCHOOL PLANNING

New public schools and expansions of existing schools in Wilson will be informed by a joint planning process of the City and the Wilson Public School system.

Policy 42.1: The City will work with the Wilson County Public School system to develop common criteria for siting and designing new schools to ensure that school development and future growth plans for the City are aligned.

Policy 42.2: The City will provide the Wilson County Public School system with information on new residential subdivisions and other developments that impact school attendance and capacity.

Policy 42.3: The City will encourage the use of green development and low-impact design technologies in the construction of new schools.

Policy 42.4: The City will work with the Wilson County Public School system to identify joint-use park and recreation opportunities that efficiently use public revenues. *(See Policy 37.3.)*

Action 42: *Work with the Wilson County Public School system to develop a formal agreement for coordinating information on development proposals for new schools and school impacting development (i.e., subdivision proposals). Explore opportunities to share use of parks and recreational facilities.* *(See Action 25.)*

Rain gardens, shown here, are a low-impact stormwater management design technique used to treat stormwater flows naturally and capture rain before it enters the public water system. Similar systems can be developed at new public facilities and schools.

As Chairman of the Wilson County Planning Board it has been an exciting time developing a Comprehensive Plan for The City of Wilson. Departmentally the City and County will continue working together to insure our citizens have the best plan possible in growing our communities.

Randy Davis
Steering Committee

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Link to Sustainable Planning

Collaborating with partner jurisdictions – Wilson County and Wilson County Schools – provides many opportunities to further Wilson's sustainable planning goals through joint initiatives and coordinated efforts. The goals, policies, and strategies contained in this chapter are aimed at improving intergovernmental collaboration and by doing so they can bring Wilson closer to attaining sustainability in the following ways.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Encouraging the County to provide incentives for developments that generate renewable energy sources can help maintain low utility rates for these customers and reduce the need to purchase energy.

Climate Change

Coordinating with Wilson County and Wilson Schools to develop in a more compact pattern and reduce development footprints on the outer areas of the community can go far in reducing vehicle miles traveled and the need to extend public infrastructure and services. This can reduce the City's potential carbon footprint and lessen climate change impacts.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Maximizing the use of existing schools and other public structures reduces the need to develop new buildings and reduces waste generated from new construction facilities.

Food Production and Food Security

Policies to work with Wilson County to limit development within the Secondary Growth area will reduce development pressures in these areas and maintain rural and agricultural lands that are used for food production.

Community Health and Safety

Through joint efforts, Wilson County, Wilson County Schools, and the City of Wilson can work to educate the public about healthy behaviors and healthy lifestyle choices aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy, decreasing childhood obesity, and improving educational attainment for students.

Water Conservation

Encouraging local partners to use green building and low-impact development techniques when building new public facilities can reduce the need for potable water and reduce wastewater generation – conserving water and energy resources.

~ A Day in the Life of Wilson ~

Photo by: Promila Sen

Photo by: Tom Corbett

Photo by: Nadia Minniti

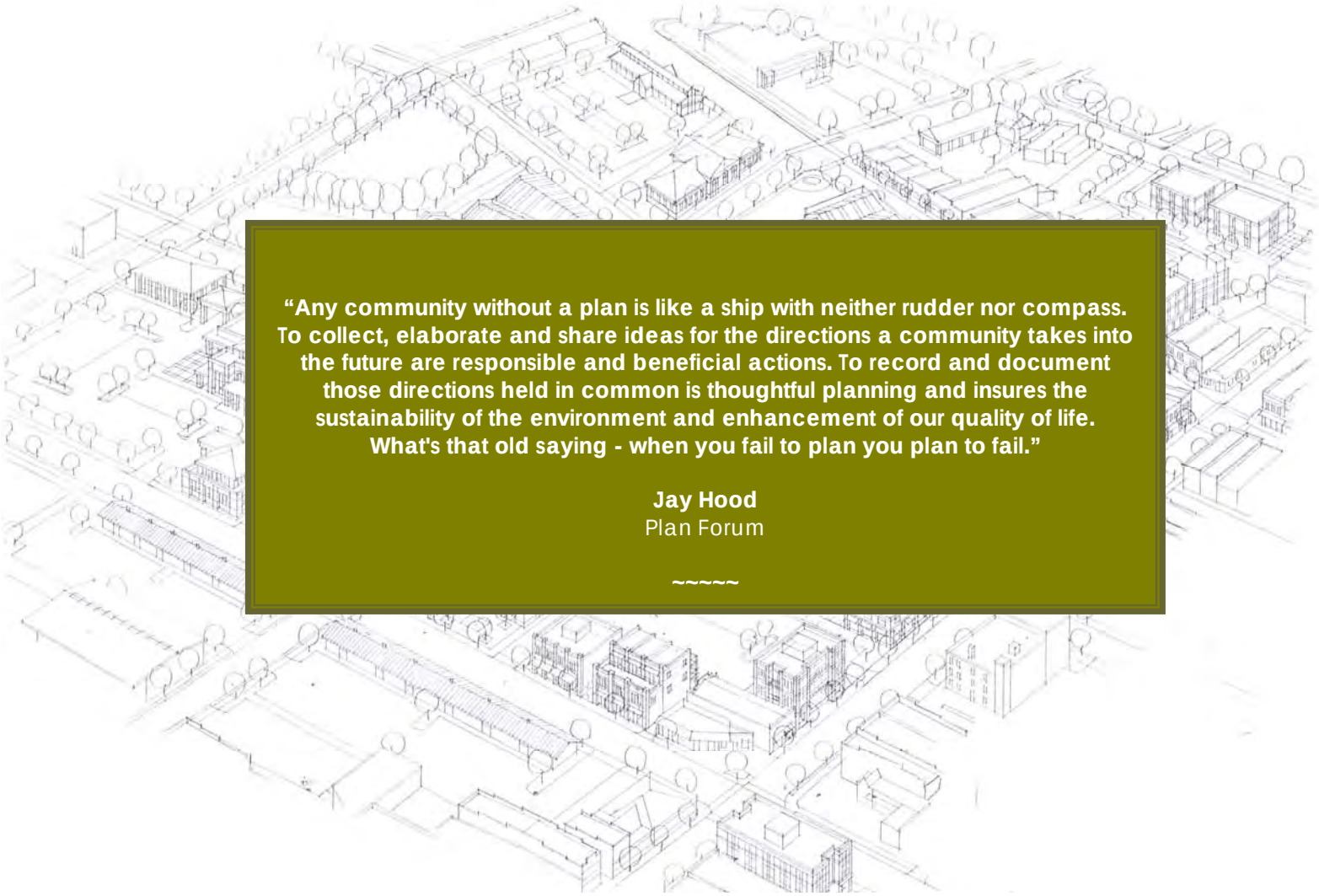
Photo by: Melissa

Photo by: Michael Herring

Photo by: Erin Mitchell

PART 3: DESIGN AND REVITALIZATION

"A Day in the Life of Wilson" Adult Bronze (3rd Place) Photo
Taken by Tom Corbett



"Any community without a plan is like a ship with neither rudder nor compass. To collect, elaborate and share ideas for the directions a community takes into the future are responsible and beneficial actions. To record and document those directions held in common is thoughtful planning and insures the sustainability of the environment and enhancement of our quality of life. What's that old saying - when you fail to plan you plan to fail."

Jay Hood
Plan Forum

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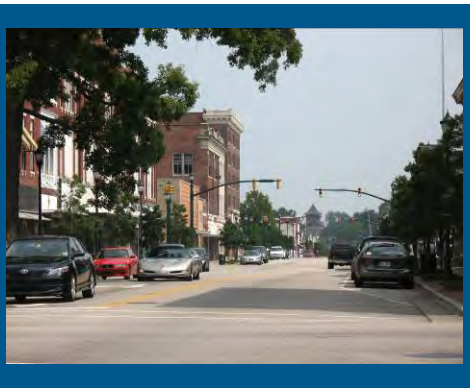
DOWNTOWN

Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to revitalize and enhance the quality of development and to create a more vibrant Downtown. It begins with a summary of the key issues and existing conditions, and then highlights prime opportunities for development and redevelopment in the Downtown area. Next, this chapter establishes a framework for future efforts and initiatives in Downtown Wilson, organized around a series of goals which include:

- Revitalizing the Downtown area so it continues to serve as the community's main activity center
- Emphasizing a human-scaled design with redevelopment and infill projects
- Focusing on "green" and sustainable development in Downtown
- Coordinating with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation and other partners to spur revitalization

Downtown is a significant area of focus for the City of Wilson as it serves as the historic "heart" of the community. Many existing programs and initiatives, such as the Façade Grant Program and Rent Incentive Program, shall continue to encourage redevelopment within Downtown. This Chapter introduces many new initiatives aimed at furthering the momentum of previous efforts. This includes: establishment of a Future Land Use Plan for Downtown, identifying Zoning Ordinance updates and development of design standards for Downtown, public improvements to enhance pedestrian and cyclist access and visual appeal of the Downtown streetscapes, development of a Downtown Market to infuse more activity in Downtown during non-peak business hours, encouraging landowners to use green techniques when undertaking building rehabilitation projects, exploring development of a Downtown Civic Center, and evaluating opportunities to provide additional financial incentives for business development, such as a revolving loan fund.



DOWNTOWN

Redevelopment and infill in the Downtown area are essential activities to ensure that the area remains Wilson's key activity center.

Like the goals and policies contained in previous chapters, the goals and policies for the Downtown area, set forth on the following pages, link to the community's overall goals for sustainability by promoting revitalization of the Center City area. Topics within the realm of sustainable planning are also linked to the Downtown-focused goals and policies, as discussed in the Links to Sustainability section of this chapter.

This chapter provides a synopsis of one of two design charrettes conducted during the planning process. At this charrette, community members, key stakeholders, and the planning team gathered to develop a future Concept Plan for Downtown Wilson. Included in the Concept Plan section are an overview of the charrette process and a presentation of the key themes and features of the Downtown concept plan.

Key Issues

The following key issues emerged during community discussions and the charrette focused on Downtown Wilson.

- **Rehabilitating Historic Buildings** – Historic buildings add value and character to the Downtown area, but many of Wilson's historic buildings are in insufficient condition to allow new business, office, or residential occupancy. The City should focus efforts on preserving and rehabilitating historic structures.

- **Promoting Compatible Infill Development** – Downtown Wilson features an assortment of vacant lots. Infill development should be encouraged in these locations, but steps must be taken to ensure that new development is compatible with the established character of surrounding buildings and land uses.

- **Taking Advantage of Downtown Technology** – Free wireless internet is provided in Downtown Wilson – an asset that should be promoted to help recruit new employers and businesses and to attract students, workers, and visitors to spend time Downtown.

- **Continuing to Coordinate with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation** – The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation plays a critical role in Downtown revitalization efforts. The City of Wilson should continue to coordinate with the Downtown Development Corporation to provide incentives and programs to revitalize the Downtown area.

- **Addressing Safety and Viability of Existing One-Way Streets** – The existing one-way streets in Downtown Wilson present challenges for traveler wayfinding and business visibility. They also contribute to speeding, therefore pedestrians feel less safe along these streets. Wilson should aim to improve safety and accessibility along these streets through conversions back to two-way streets.

- **Business Recruitment, Retention, and Expansion** – Business development efforts will target Downtown -- the City's key activity center – as a prime location for locating new businesses and expanding existing businesses. New marketing initiatives, financial incentives, and regulatory relief will improve development opportunities in Downtown.

- **Residential Development** – To make Downtown a more active City center, it is essential to develop additional housing units in and around Downtown. More residents in Downtown will create more market potential for restaurants, retail, and a proposed Downtown Market. Residents will create more vibrancy and activity in Downtown, which will spur others to visit Downtown. Residents can commute to work using alternative modes of travel (i.e., walk, bike, take the bus) to reduce the City's carbon footprint and reduce traffic congestion on Downtown streets. The City supports development of second story apartments, lofts, and live-work spaces throughout Downtown, as well as development of higher density apartment and condominium developments that can serve the Downtown area.

- **Aging Infrastructure** – Downtown is the historic core of Wilson and therefore has the oldest infrastructure within the City. Aging sidewalks, storm sewers, and utility lines can have an impact on redevelopment efforts in Downtown. As capital improvement plans are made, special consideration should be given to revitalize the public infrastructure of Downtown Wilson, providing yet another incentive for redevelopment.

Before

After

The before and after photo simulation of a building on Nash Street, shown to the right, illustrates how boarded up and vacant structures in Downtown can be renovated and improved to provide a more vibrant environment.

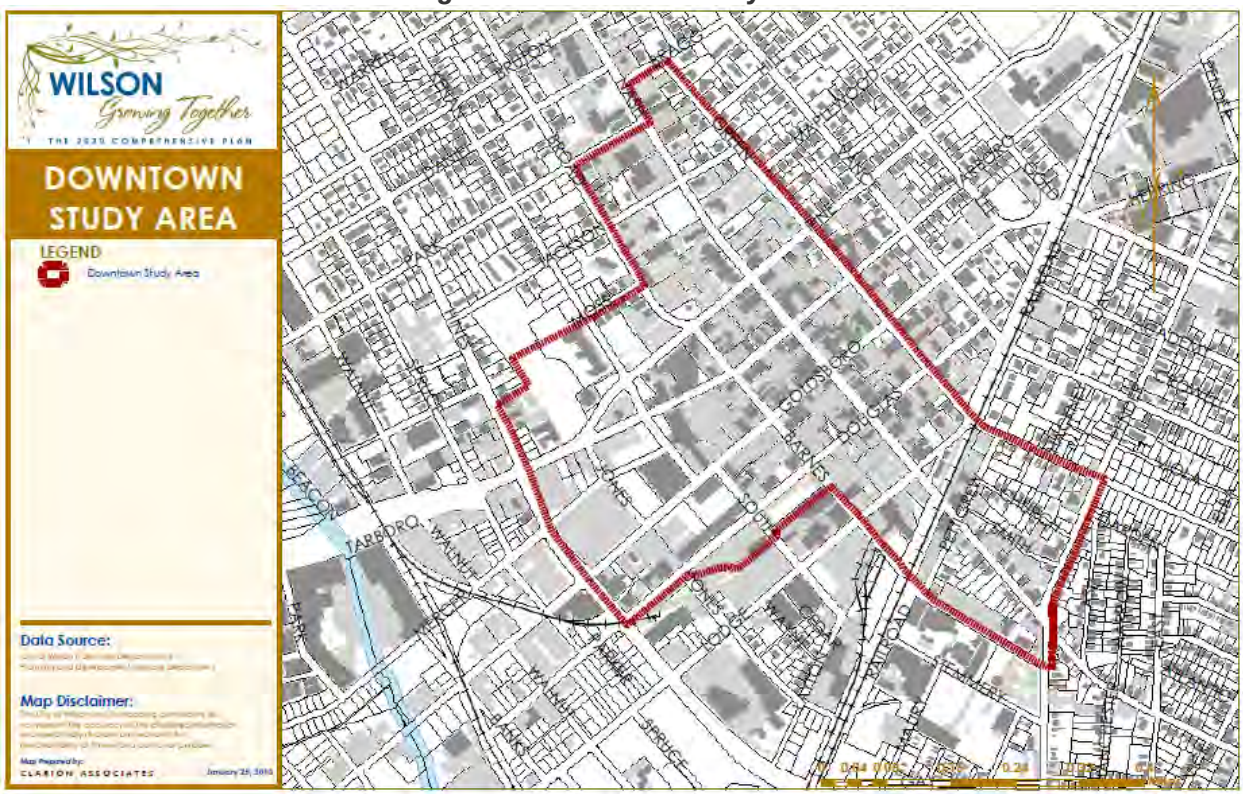
Summary of Existing Conditions

Downtown Study Area Boundaries

The Downtown study area planning boundaries, shown in Figure 17 below, aligns with the Municipal Service District boundaries, with the exception of a small addition of land at the east of Nash where planning activities are currently underway. Some of the key boundaries of the Downtown study area include:

- Park and Bragg on the northwest
- Pender on the southeast
- Green on the northeast
- Broad and Barnes on the southwest

Figure 17: Downtown Study Area

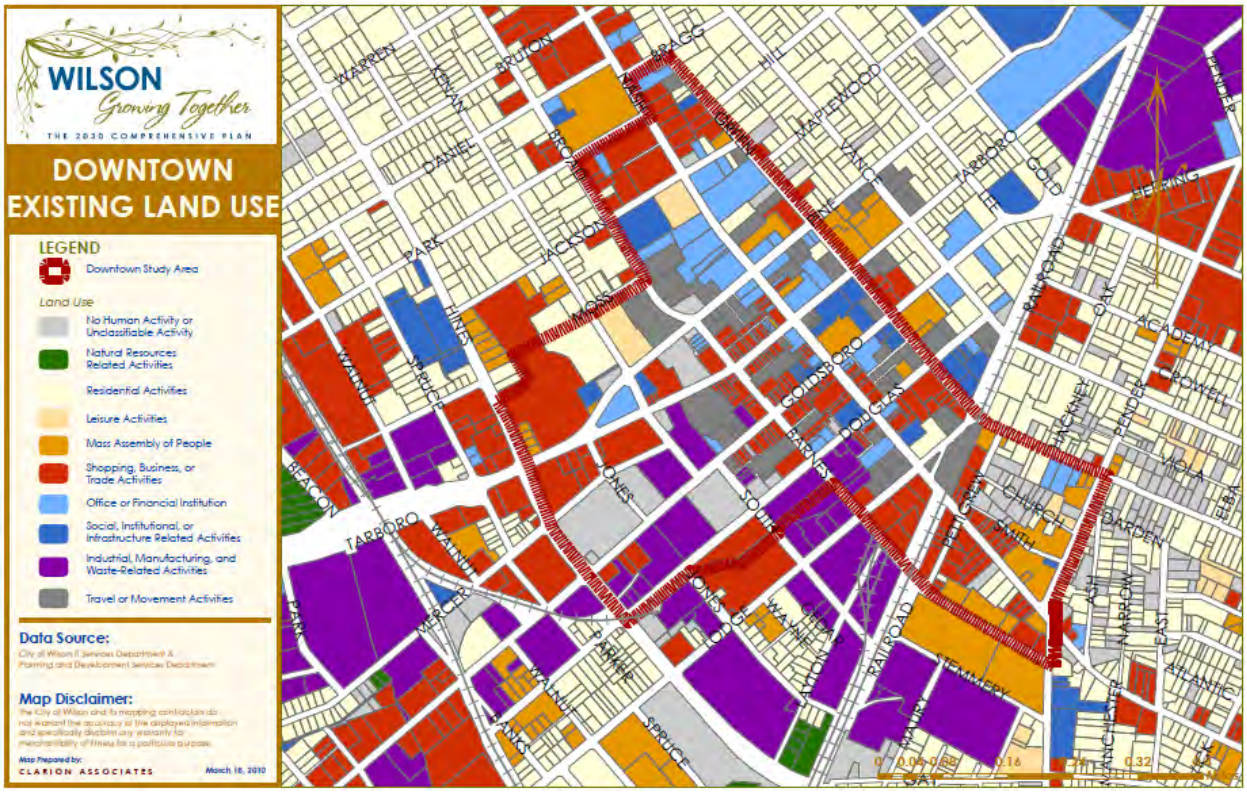


Land Uses and Zoning

Downtown Wilson is home to a diverse of range of land uses, ranging from industrial and commercial to institutional and even some limited residential. Existing land use activities in the Downtown study area are shown on Figure 18 below. The Downtown area features relatively small blocks, and grid street network, with buildings generally located near the streets. Some properties are currently vacant – prime opportunity areas for compatible infill development.

Property ownership in the Downtown area is predominantly private, although large parcels owned by the City, County, and schools also occupy the area.

Figure 18: Downtown Existing Land Use

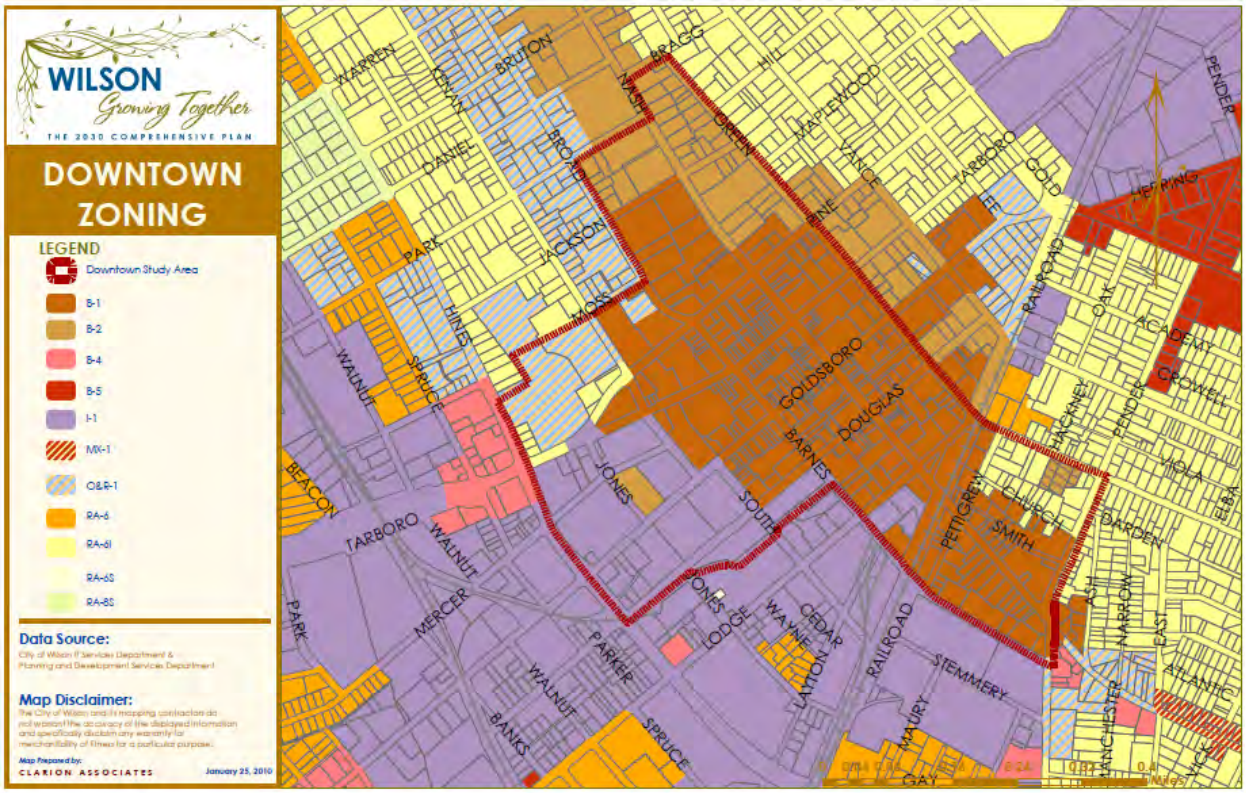


Zoning

As shown in Figure 19, four zoning districts cover the Downtown area:

- ***B-1: Central Business District*** – Traditional downtown zoning; no on-site parking requirements
- ***B-2: Peripheral Central Business District*** – Similar to B-1 but on-site parking required
- ***RA-6I:*** *Inner City Residential District* – Primarily for single-family detached residential, but some multi-family housing permitted
- ***I-: Industrial 1 District*** – Allows light industrial, warehousing, and wholesaling.

Figure 19: Downtown Zoning



Historic Districts

Within the Downtown study area, there are four locally-designated historic districts, and two districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Districts are shown on Figure 20. Within local districts, approval is required before demolition, building construction, or many alterations can occur.

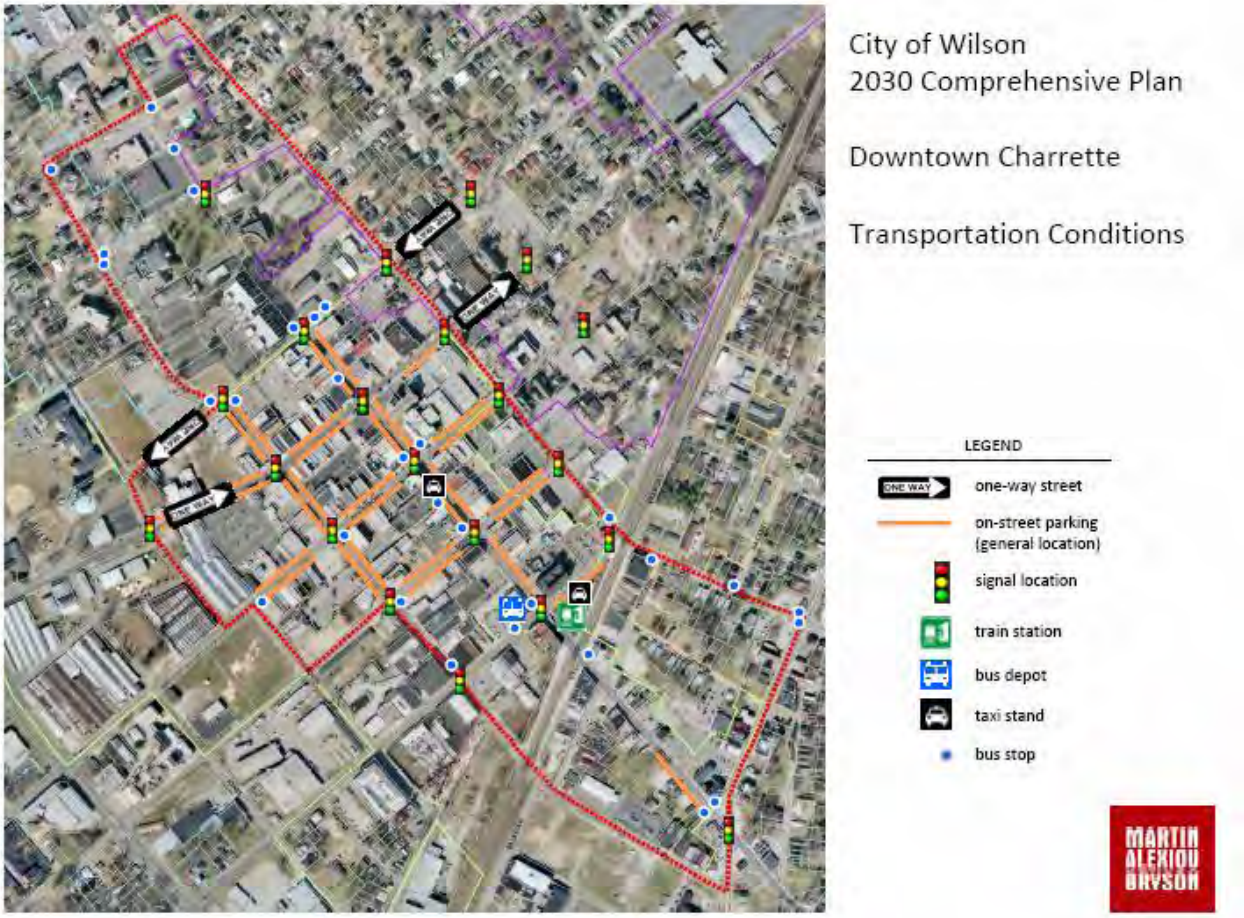
Figure 20: Downtown Historic Districts

Transportation

As shown in Figure 21, the grid street network and smaller block sizes in the Downtown area provide a walkable environment. Downtown's existing parallel on-street parking provides convenient access to customers, calms traffic, and provides a physical and psychological barrier between moving vehicles and pedestrians. Most of the area's parking lots are located behind buildings, and accessed by a network of alleys. There are several public parking lots, and generally there is sufficient parking to meet current and near-term demands. Transit service for both buses and trains is accessible at the south end of Nash and bus stops are provided in numerous locations throughout Downtown. There are two taxi stops, one on Nash Street and one near the train station.

The primary transportation issue facing the Downtown area is the existence of two one-way streets. These one-way streets limit store visibility and wayfinding, facilitate speeding, and cause motorists to travel in unnecessary direction and areas.

Figure 21: Downtown Transportation Conditions



Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities

The Downtown area features free wireless internet, and underground electrical lines along Nash and part of Barnes. There are no significant utility deficiencies that would discourage or limit future development or redevelopment in the area.

The Downtown area currently contains approximately 50,000 square feet of occupied retail space, plus a substantial amount of vacant building space, particularly on upper floors of existing buildings. Much of this vacancy is due to difficulties in updating the existing space to meet current building code requirements.

Recent trends indicate that there is an increasing amount of leasing for new restaurants and retail in the Downtown area. By 2020, retail demand is expected to increase to over 77,000 square feet (including the existing 58,000 square feet) – comprised of approximately 25,500 square feet of restaurants and bars, 16,000 square feet of grocery, and an assortment of other uses. Table 7, below, shows the amount of supportable square feet by retail category in 2008 and forecasted for 2015 and 2020.

Table 7: Retail Demand Potential, Downtown Wilson, 2008-2020

Retail Category	Supportable Square Feet			2020 Percent of Total
	2008	2015	2020	
Food Away from Home	18,173	19,353	25,473	32.9%
Food at Home	11,264	14,394	15,789	20.4%
Personal Care & Pharmacy	6,643	7,075	7,761	10.0%
Women's Apparel	3,559	3,590	3,939	5.1%
Furniture and Furnishings	2,384	2,539	2,785	3.6%
Pets and Pet Supplies	1,993	2,123	2,329	3.0%
Alcoholic Beverages	1,728	3,680	4,037	5.2%
All Other	13,059	13,907	15,256	19.7%
Total	**58,803**	**66,660**	**77,371**	**100%**

An assessment of the Downtown's economic conditions has determined that appropriate future land uses in the area include a range of residential housing options, specialty retail and restaurants, personal and professional services, office, and civic uses. Primary opportunities for infill development and building rehabilitation in the Main Street area are mapped and summarized in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Downtown Infill and Rehabilitation Opportunities

Downtown Development Corporation

The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation is an organization that encourages and coordinates activities that enhance economic and community growth in Downtown Wilson. The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation offers strong economic incentives to encourage Downtown development and redevelopment. And will be a key player in the continued revitalization of the Downtown area.

The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation is funded by Municipal Service District property taxes, and operates with budgets for administrative and operational costs. The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation is affiliated with the National Main Street Center and follows its "Four Point" approach which calls for organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion or Downtown businesses. Future focus for the organization will be on real estate development and business recruitment.

Recommendations for the Downtown Development Corporation to work more efficiently in the future include consolidation of the organization's existing committees into four committees based on the "Four Points," completion of a market analysis to better inform business recruitment efforts, simplification of the existing Façade Grant Program to encourage more applications, linking the existing Rent Incentive Program to the outcomes and recommendations of the market analysis, and evaluation and promotion of the existing Downtown Loan Pool Program.

Downtown Concept Plan

Concept Plan Development

The following Downtown area Concept Plan was developed during a three-day community charrette (a design-focused planning workshop). The goal of the charrette was to provide a forum for public and stakeholder input and to achieve a consensus on future efforts and focus for Downtown Wilson. The most tangible outcome of the charrette was the creation of the Downtown Concept Plan.

Strong teamwork between the Consultant Team, City staff, property owners, and key stakeholders led to an array of ideas, design concepts, and visions for the Downtown area. Common themes were identified, and were used to form the basis of the preliminary Concept Plan. A Steering Committee guided the more detailed development of the Concept Plan, and after more input following a public workshop and stakeholder feedback, the Concept Plan was refined and finalized. (See the Future Land Use Concept Plan on the following page.)

Districts, Areas and Corridors

Distinct planning areas within Downtown Wilson are identified as unique districts, areas, and corridors on the Downtown Future Land Use Concept Plan, provided in Figure 21. A summary of the key opportunities, concepts, and desired directions for each planning area is provided on the following pages.

A concept plan for future Downtown area development was formulated during a three day charrette.

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DOWNTOWN FUTURE LAND USE

LEGEND

- Downtown Study Area
- Tarboro Street Opportunity Areas
- E. Nash Street Opportunity Areas
- Institutional
- Main Street District
- Transitional Warehouses
- West Nash Corridor
- Parks
- Industrial
- Mixed-Use Office

Residential Areas

- Multi-Family Residential
- 5+ Units / Acre
- 2-4 Units / Acre

Data Source:

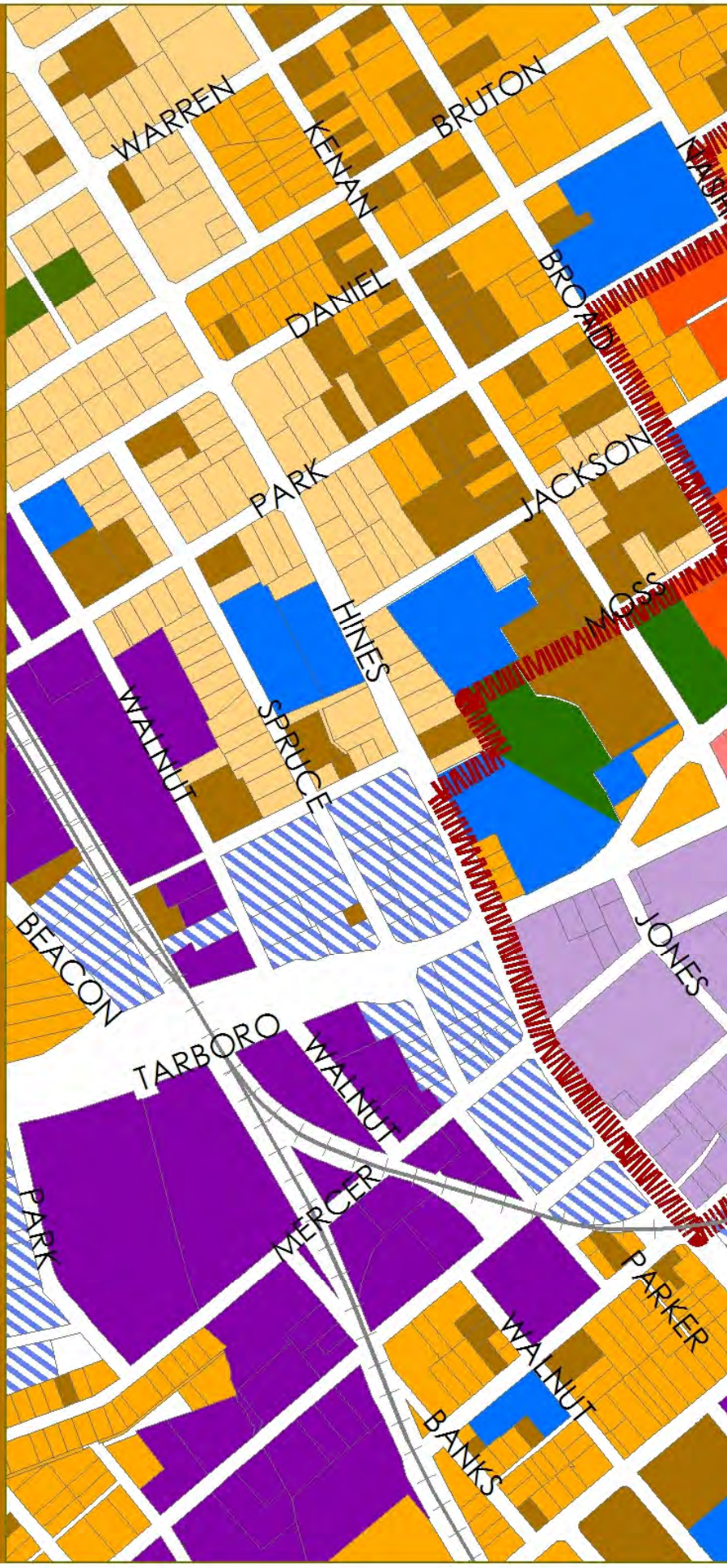
City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

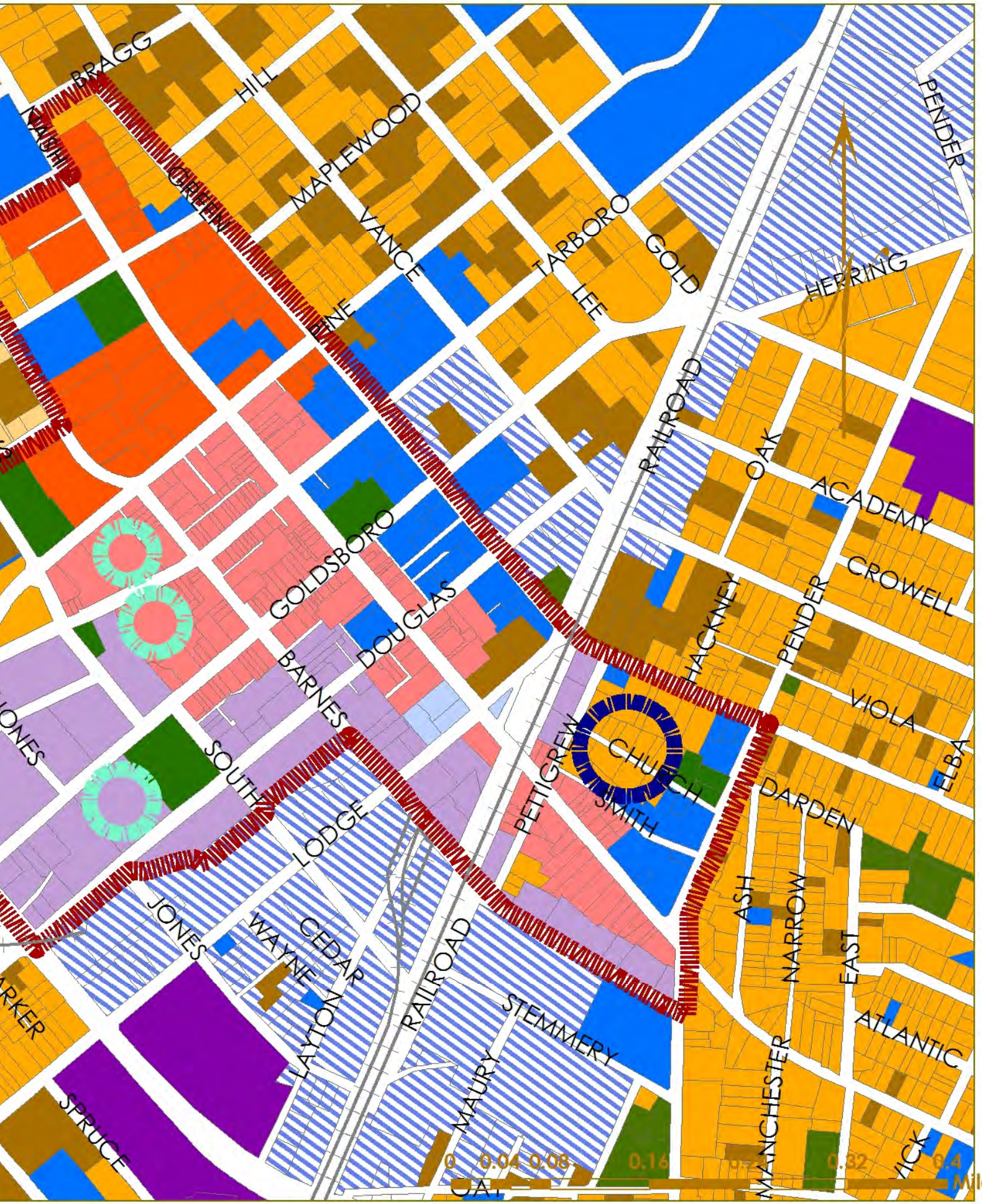
Map Disclaimer:

The City of Wilson and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information and specifically disclaim any warranty for merchantibility of fitness for a particular purpose.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

January 25, 2010




BRAGG
HILL
MAPLEWOOD
GREEN
VANCE
TARBORO
GOLD
LEE
PINE
HERRING
PENDER
RAILROAD
OAK
ACADEMY
CROWELL
GOLDSBORO
DOUGLAS
BARNES
HACKNEY
PENDER
VIOLA
ELBA
SOUTH
CHURCH
PETTIGREW
SMITH
DARDEN
LODGE
JONES
WAYNE
CEDAR
LAYTON
RAILROAD
STEMMERY
MAURY
ASH
NARROW
EAST
ATLANTIC
MANCHESTER
SPRUCE
0 0.04 0.08 0.16 0.32 0.64
Miles

Concept Plan Land Use Categories

Traditional "Main Street" District

The Main Street area has been identified as the top priority for Downtown Wilson, and is the primary focus area for Wilson's Downtown Development Corporation efforts. Top development priorities include the rehabilitation of existing buildings and compatible new infill. Key economic objectives in this area are new business recruitment and retention and expansion of existing businesses. Marketing, promotion, and management of the Downtown area, especially in a unified way to promote and operate the whole area, are important elements of the area's success.

Important public improvements in Main Street district include extension of the sidewalk improvements along Nash to the adjoining side streets, as well as burying overhead utility lines. Replacement of the holly street streets with a more appropriate species is a longer-term and relatively lower priority future public improvement.

Transitional Warehouse District

The Traditional Warehouse District has the greatest potential for new higher-intensity and larger-scale uses in the Downtown area. This is due to the general lack of historic buildings and prevalence of large sites. Over time this area should transition from the existing light industrial uses to the east to a mix of Downtown uses including commercial, residential, and office to the west. Potential future uses in the area include a new civic center, lodging facilities, boutique Downtown market, public park, visitor's center, retail, and restaurants.

A future civic center and lodging in the Transitional Warehouse District is within the realm of possibility, although a detailed study and feasibility analysis is necessary in order to determine if either would be viable. A successful civic center should ideally be located on a site that could accommodate future expansion, and should be planned and designed to accommodate specific uses such as meeting space, trade shows, or performances. Some successful civic centers in other communities could serve as models for Wilson. (See sidebar.)

The concept of a new Downtown market in the Transitional Warehouse District is popular, although any new market should make efforts to avoid competing with Wilson's existing farmer's market. Specific focus for a new market could be on organic produce, and arts and crafts. A new Downtown market could start out as a lower-budget gathering in a place such as a parking lot, and then eventually grow into a more permanent facility if successful. The most promising potential site is located on Douglas, in an existing building with loading bays. The building could easily be adapted to house a farmer's market, and funding may be available from the Tobacco Trust Fund (TTF) and/or the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The Mooresville, NC Civic Center could potentially be used as a model for a new Civic Center in Wilson.

The building on Douglas could potentially be adapted to house a new Downtown market.

A future park is envisioned for the vacant property located across the street from the historic Hi Dollar tobacco warehouse (situated between Goldboro and Douglas). A future park could include landscaping with pathways and sitting areas, or could even feature a unique element such as sculptures to draw visitors.

The existing historic Hi Dollar Warehouse, owned by the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation, is a prime site for an adaptive reuse project in the Transitional Warehouse District. The building is located adjacent to a large public parking lot, and could incorporate uses such as retail, restaurants, public restrooms, a visitor's center, or even an interpretive center that focuses on Wilson's tobacco heritage.

Institutional Areas

The Downtown area depends heavily on market support provided by the area's institutional uses. Institutions such as government buildings and schools have many employees with potential to frequent Downtown businesses, and they also draw a significant number of people into the area on a daily basis.

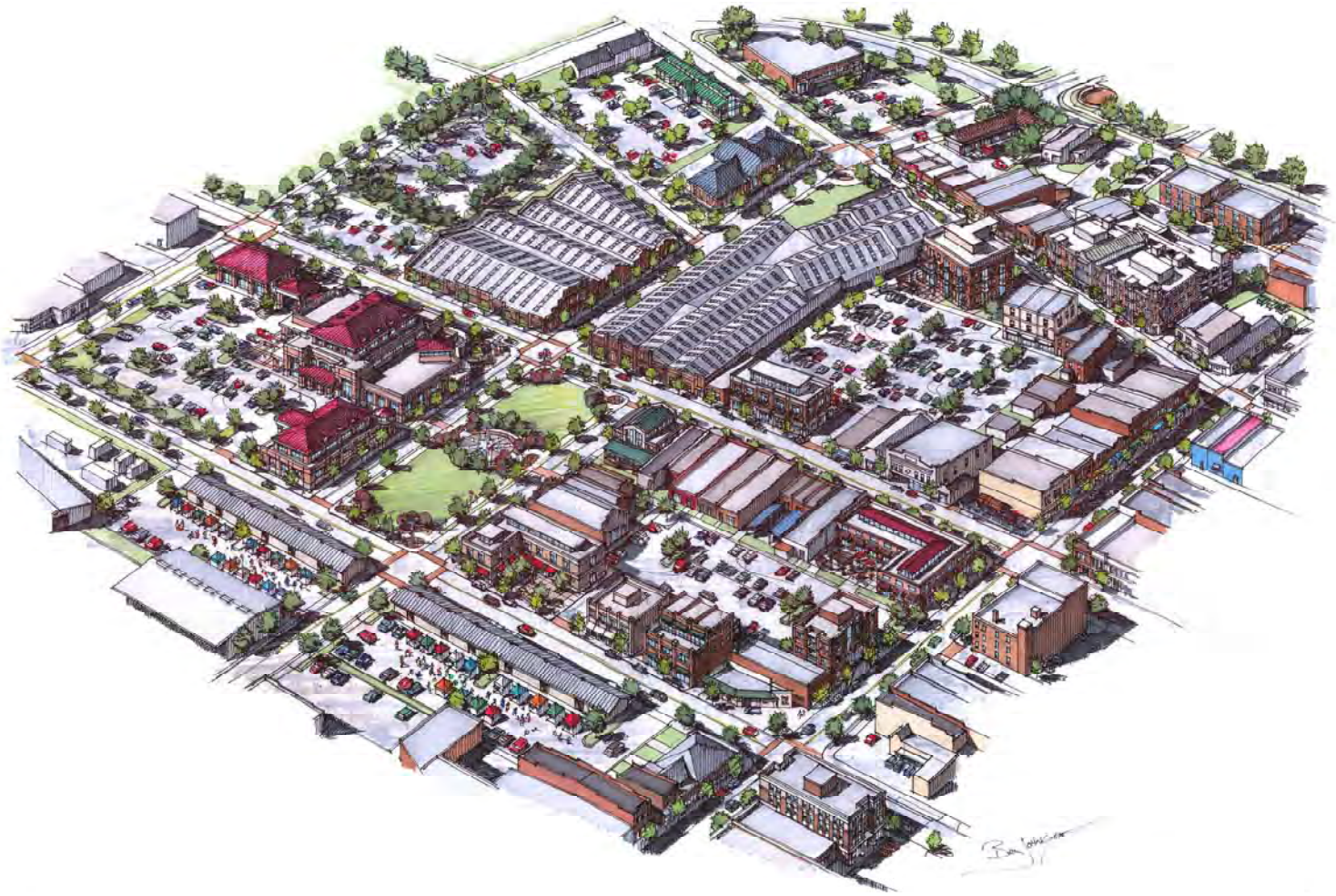
New institutional buildings should be designed to be compatible with the historic character of Downtown, but may also have more visual prominence than typical commercial storefronts. Some examples of visual prominence might include generous setbacks from the street to accommodate a public gathering space, or an interesting vertical architectural feature such as a cupola or steeple. Like the rest of the Downtown area, parking for future institutional development should be located behind the buildings, and the buildings should be designed with details that are interesting at a pedestrian level.

Neighborhood Areas

Careful consideration should be made to protect the existing neighborhood areas that are relatively intact from other encroaching uses. Infill residential development opportunities exist in the Downtown area, particularly in the East Nash vicinity. Where infill development is possible, a mix of housing types is encouraged, provided that the building form is compatible in architecture and site development to surrounding residences. In the neighborhood areas demolition of historic buildings should be avoided to the greatest extent feasible.

West Nash Corridor

The West Nash Corridor serves as a key gateway to Barton College and the West Nash Corridor Historic District to the south. To the north, the corridor is a primary gateway to Downtown Wilson. The corridor currently features a mix of uses including retail, office, and institutional uses. The existing mix of land uses, as well as the current form of development – predominantly suburban with generous front setbacks, and parking in front of and to the sides of buildings – should be maintained.



Envisioning Downtown

This graphic rendering illustrates how Downtown Wilson will look if the goals and policies of this ordinance are implemented. A new civic center is shown to the left (red roofs) near a new Downtown community park and green space (near center) between Goldsboro and Douglas streets. Warehouses located along Douglas Street are renovated to serve as a new Downtown specialty market (shown at the bottom). Renovation of warehouses, infill development, and redevelopment of vacant buildings throughout the area creates a more active and vibrant Downtown .

Focus Area Concept Plans

East Nash Focus Area

The East Nash area, shown in Figure 24, features expansive areas of undeveloped land, along with an array of older one and two-story commercial buildings, and several churches. The area is in close proximity to bus and rail transit stations on the eastern end of Nash Street. Current conceptual planning efforts of the Saint John's AME Zion Church show a future community center to be developed behind the church, with new residential development west and north of the community center, featuring a mix of housing types including single-family detached, townhouses, and courtyard apartments. The conceptual plan, shown in Figure 25 below, also shows future infill commercial and mixed-use development in the undeveloped areas along Nash. Existing buildings are shown in dark gray and proposed new buildings are shown in brown.

Figure 24: East Nash Focus Area

Figure 25: East Nash Focus Area Concept Plan

Tarboro and Goldsboro Focus Areas

The Tarboro and Goldsboro focus areas, shown in Figure 26, feature numerous historic commercial and warehouse buildings. There are relatively few vacant lots compared to some of the other districts within the Downtown area, and there is potential for strong market support due to the considerable traffic volumes passing by the area. Potential future development in this area includes civic center, lodging, Downtown market, park, and other uses. The Concept Plan for the Tarboro and Goldsboro Focus Areas is shown in

Figure 27 below. Existing buildings are colored dark gray, while proposed new buildings are brown.

Figure 26: Tarboro and Goldsboro Focus Areas

Figure 27: Tarboro and Goldsboro Focus Areas Concept Plan

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 43: A REVITALIZED DOWNTOWN

Downtown will continue to serve as the "heart" of Wilson and the main activity center for the community.

Policy 43.1: Redevelopment within Downtown should be in accordance with the Downtown Future Land Use map and classifications for the area. General uses in the Downtown area should include civic, office, personal and professional services, a mix of residential types, retail, hospitality uses, and restaurants.

Policy 43.2: Downtown uses should create an 18-hour (day and night) destination for local residents and tourists. Such uses could include community events, restaurants, unique shopping, art galleries, a boutique public market, a civic center, and other destination uses.

Policy 43.3: Historic properties in Downtown should be rehabilitated to serve new uses. State and federal tax credits are available for qualified rehabilitations that follow federal standards. The City should utilize and promote the use of the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code.

Before

After

Revitalization of the Stallings Print Building, shown here before and after improvements were made, serves as a model for other vacant buildings in Downtown Wilson.

Policy 43.4: Development within Downtown should include a mix of uses within individual buildings: commercial or retail on the ground floor and housing or office on upper floors.

Policy 43.5: Live-work units, such as art studios with dwelling space, should be provided in Downtown.

Policy 43.6: Surface parking lots on prime real estate, such as the corner of Nash and Tarrboro Streets, should be redeveloped to maximize the use of available land. Zoning in these areas should discourage permit surface lots by requiring a demonstration of need.

Current Conditions

After Redevelopment

Redevelopment of parking lots located in prime real estate locations is encouraged. These graphics show the parking lot on Tarboro Street in its current state and what it could look like if it were redeveloped with buildings along the frontage and parking remaining behind the buildings.

Action 43.1: *Amend zoning district standards in the B-1 (Central Business District) and B-2 (Peripheral Central Business District) to provide more flexible standards and allow only appropriate Downtown uses. Evaluate and possibly change the I-1 zoned areas in Downtown to ensure that the uses are appropriate with the Downtown Future Land Use Plan.*

Action 43.2: *Consider expanding the municipal services district to include targeted redevelopment areas, such as the Historic Tobacco-Warehouse Historic District.*

Action 43.3: *Consider public-private initiatives to redevelop publicly-owned priority infill sites.*

Action 43.4: *Consider a capital improvement program to underground utilities in Wilson's Downtown.*

Action 43.5: *Develop a Commercial Maintenance Building Code and work with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation to actively enforce it.*

Action 43.6: *Develop a Downtown Market in a highly visible location, such as an existing parking lot, to provide opportunities for local artisans, vendors, shop owners, and other businesses to sell goods at a Downtown market space. Monthly or weekly markets could be scheduled along with other Downtown events to promote activity in Downtown. A location in the warehouse district is preferred, containing a shelter to accommodate trucks and vendors along street frontages.*

Action 43.7: *The City should work with Downtown landowners of vacant buildings to "repurpose" vacant store fronts. They could serve as art exhibits, advertising space for community events or civic gatherings, or advertisement for other Downtown businesses.*

GOAL 44: HUMAN-SCALE DESIGN IN DOWNTOWN

Redevelopment and infill development will maintain the human-scale of Downtown's blocks, buildings, and streetscapes.

Policy 44.1: The historic block pattern designed for pedestrian accessibility and scale should be incorporated into new Downtown developments.

Policy 44.2: Ground floor building facades should feature storefronts and human-scale glazing in the form of doors and windows to create visual interest from the street.

Policy 44.3: New buildings should be oriented to front streets and provide adequate pedestrian access between the building frontage and curb.

Policy 44.4: Off-street parking lots should be discouraged and on-street parking encouraged. Any off-street parking lots should be located behind buildings and not along the street frontage. The need for new parking lots should be demonstrated prior to their approval.

Policy 44.5: On-street parking should be managed to allow for short-term parking (2 to 3 hours).

Policy 44.6: Parking garages in Downtown are encouraged and should be located on secondary streets and designed to blend in with adjacent developments.

Policy 44.7: Employee on-street parking should be discouraged or prohibited to provide priority parking to customers and visitors.

Policy 44.8: Streetscape amenities, such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, newspaper vending machines, bicycle storage racks, awnings, outdoor seating of restaurants, and other features that increase the activity at the street level are strongly encouraged.

Policy 44.9: Wayfinding signage, that orients Downtown travelers to points of interest, should be provided.

Action 44.1: *Develop Downtown design guidelines, specific to each Downtown land use district, to guide redevelopment and infill development efforts. Guidelines should be used as an incentive in return for financial incentives to developers made by the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation.*

Action 44.2: *Develop a plan to provide public wayfinding signage in Downtown. Consider making the signage easily amendable to incorporate new signage as new businesses locate in Downtown.*

Action 44.3: *Continue utilizing the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code for use in the Downtown area and further educate the development community of this alternative to the State Building Code. This code can provide flexibility for rehabilitating existing structures that are too costly to rehabilitate under standard building codes.*

Action 44.4: *Investigate the feasibility of converting one-way streets to two-way. (See Action 17.)*

Action 44.5: *Strengthen the linkages between Downtown and Barton College and Wilson Community College to encourage students and teachers to visit Downtown. Possible initiatives include a historic walking trail or a rubber trolley to promote connectivity between these destinations.*

Action 44.6: *Improve accessibility to Downtown for cyclists by providing bike racks at key destinations and signage along bicycle routes.*

Action 44.7: *Improve pedestrian accessibility in Downtown by providing designated walkways from parking lots to street fronts, crosswalks at intersections, and street furniture, such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and other amenities.*

GOAL 45: A GREEN DOWNTOWN

Revitalization efforts will focus on creating sustainable, energy-efficient, mixed-use development within Downtown.

Policy 45.1: Sustainable development practices should be considered and, as feasible, incorporated into every Downtown development and improvement project.

Policy 45.2: The City will work with the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation and the County to create incentives to encourage green building and energy efficiency in new and existing developments.

Policy 45.3: The City and the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation will invest in greening the Downtown through public improvements, such as streetscapes, parks, landscaping, rain gardens, and other similar efforts.

Policy 45.4: Renewable energy sources in Downtown, such as the use of solar panels and geothermal energy sources, are encouraged.

Wilson's historic train station is a primary amenity in Downtown Wilson. Visitors traveling up and down the east coast on Amtrak's commuter lines can stop and experience Downtown Wilson.

Policy 45.5: New developments should be designed to provide and promote access to the Wilson Transit Station and the Amtrak Train Station to reinforce multi-modal transit use.

Policy 45.6: The City will support development efforts that meet or exceed the U.S. Green Building Council's Green Building Design and Construction certification standards.

Policy 45.7: Bicycle and pedestrian routes and facilities should be provided in Downtown, per the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and the Pedestrian Plan.

Policy 45.8: Where possible, existing trees should be maintained and new trees should be replanted within streetscape areas.

Action 45.1: *Extend sidewalk improvements from Nash Street to side streets within the Main Street District. Consider burying overhead lines in this area.*

Action 45.2: *As opportunities arise, replace holly trees with a more appropriate species in the Main Street District.*

GOAL 46: COORDINATED REVITALIZATION EFFORTS

The Wilson Downtown Development Corporation will coordinate Downtown redevelopment and business recruitment efforts with other local partners, such as Preservation of Wilson and individual landowners.

Policy 46.1: Downtown efforts will be coordinated through the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation.

Action 46.1: *Maintain existing incentive programs to encourage Downtown redevelopment. Improve these programs by simplifying the existing Façade Grant Program, tying the existing Rent Incentive Program to a market analysis of properties to ensure the optimal tenant mix, and consider lower interest rates for the Downtown Loan Pool program.*

Action 46.2: *Create a revolving loan pool to provide low-interest loans to small business owners wishing to develop in Downtown Wilson.*

Action 46.3: *Explore the viability of offering property tax credits to encourage renovation and development in Downtown.*

Action 46.4: *Investigate the possibility of getting funding from other public entities, including the Small Business Administration, New Markets Tax Credits, Housing and Urban Development loans and grants, and state incentive programs.*

Action 46.5: *Continue to work with public and private entities to identify needs for Downtown and consider creating a non-profit entity such as a Community Development Corporation to assist in this work. (See Action 4.1.)*

Action 46.6: *Develop a work plan to prioritize targeted rehabilitation and infill opportunities and engage with landowners. An example catalyst site is the High-Dollar Warehouse.*

Action 46.7: *Conduct a feasibility study for a Downtown Civic Center. The study should investigate demand for specialty lodging, potentially located in an existing historic building, in close proximity to the civic center.*

Action 46.8: *Expand the mission of Wilson Downtown Properties, Incorporated, to include property ownership and redevelopment to more fully engage in targeted redevelopment projects.*

Action 47.8: *Assist in the formation of a Downtown Merchants Association by providing City staff assistance and technical support.*

Link to Sustainable Planning

A vital component of Wilson's long-term success is the resurgence of its Downtown. The goals, policies, and strategies contained in this chapter strive to ensure that Downtown Wilson regains its strength, and becomes the vibrant and sustainable core of the City of Wilson. These policies also support the topics of sustainable planning in the following ways.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies that support establishing a green Downtown Wilson help to promote energy conservation and efficiency by encouraging investment in renewable energy sources and green construction techniques.

Climate Change

Policies that promote a green, mixed-use Downtown help to curb climate change by providing multi-modal transportation alternatives to personal automobiles.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Policies that call for Downtown revitalization assist in waste reduction and recycling efforts by promoting the reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures for new purposes.

Food Production and Food Security

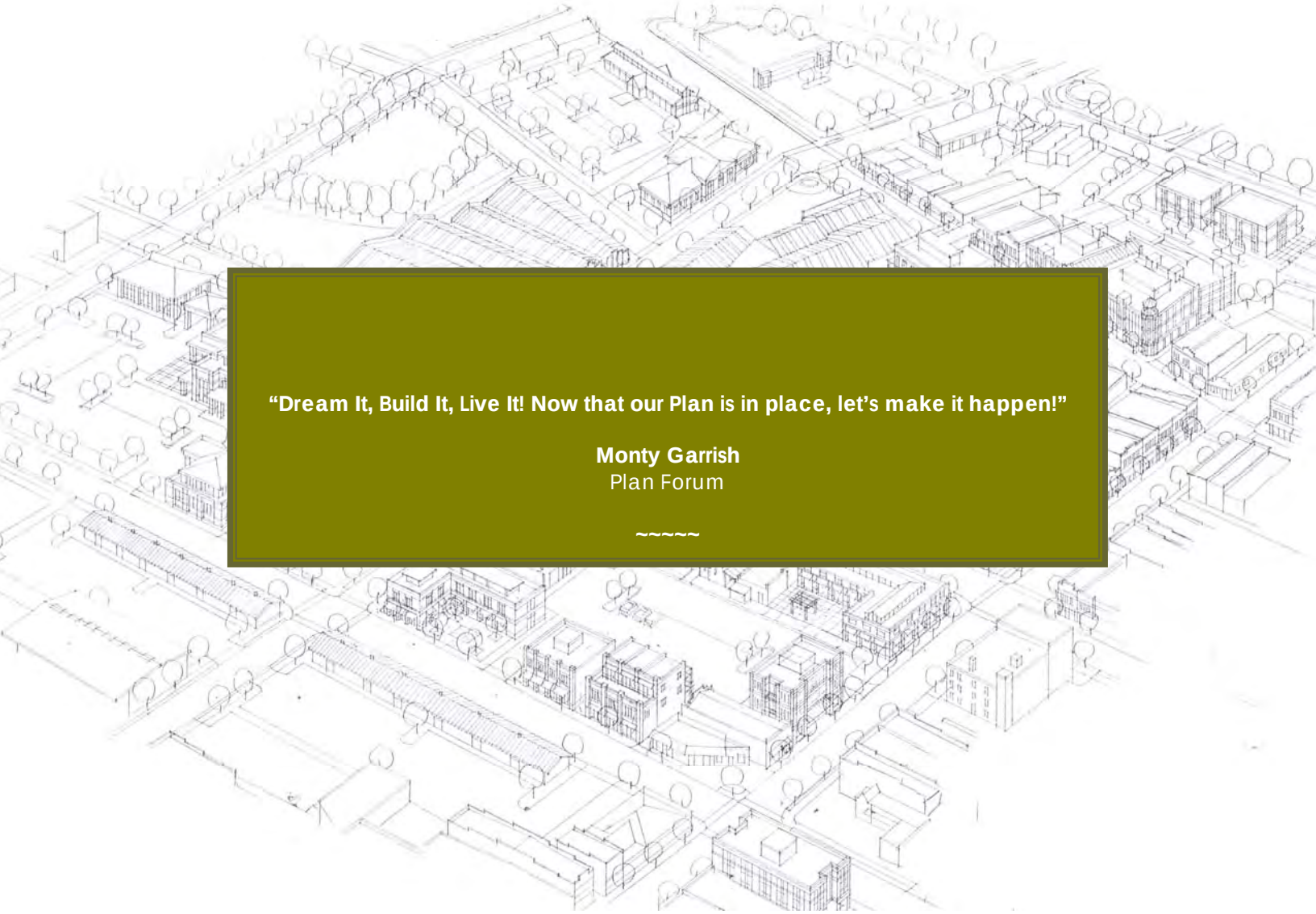
Policies that call for coordinated Downtown revitalization efforts help small businesses such as farmers and local food suppliers establish locally-owned businesses or markets to successfully compete with other larger businesses in the local economy.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that aim to maintain the human-scale design of Downtown help to ensure pedestrian walkability and comfort, leading to opportunities for more active and healthy lifestyles.

Water Conservation

Policies that encourage green building and site design, such as rain gardens, green roofs, and native landscaping help to reduce the amount of water devoted to landscaping and building operations.



"Dream It, Build It, Live It! Now that our Plan is in place, let's make it happen!"

Monty Garrish
Plan Forum

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COMMUNITY DESIGN

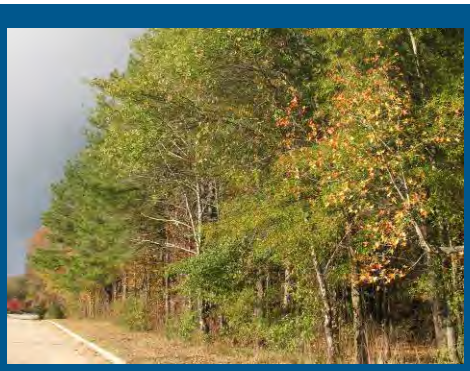
Introduction

This chapter addresses the goals, policies, and actions to improve the quality of development and visual appearance of Wilson. An overview of the key issues regarding the community's appearance and quality of design is followed by a discussion of the City of Wilson's existing appearance and design qualities. This chapter identifies the ways in which Wilson can enhance its beauty through both public and private initiatives, and ways to build on its existing strengths to improve its image. Community appearance and design goals for Wilson include:

- Leaving a positive impression on City residents and visitors
- Enhancing tree preservation measures
- Ensuring new development features high quality design
- Improving the visual appearance of the City's gateways
- Providing better connections between community destinations

As the community's appearance evolves over time, the City must ensure that it coordinates beautification efforts with its sustainability goals. For instance, as tree planting and protection are encouraged, consideration should be paid to ensure that newly planted trees are native and low-water species to reduce watering requirements. Likewise, improvements to the City's gateways will not only help improve the community's appearance, but those sorts of investments will also help the City retain and attract visitors, contributing to the City's fiscal stability. A discussion of how the community appearance and design policies in Wilson relate to sustainable planning topics provided later in this chapter.

Lastly, this chapter contains a summary of the process and outcomes of the first community charrette. This charrette focused on community gateways, the Highway 301 corridor, and City neighborhoods. Outcomes of this charrette included community-wide design concepts and concept plan.



COMMUNITY DESIGN

The quality of design in developed areas, and the abundance of trees and landscaping will leave a lasting impression on residents and visitors.

Key Issues

The following issues were identified through a community charrette and other discussions about the appearance and quality of design in Wilson:

- **Maintaining "Tree City USA" Status and Enhancing Tree Preservation Measures** – Wilson's established tree canopy and status as a "Tree City USA" are tremendous assets that the City should continue to maintain. In the future, Wilson should strive to enhance tree preservation measures by supporting programs and standards that call for more tree planting on public and private lands and tree protection requirements.

- **Enhancing City Beautification Efforts** – Wilson seeks to be experienced and remembered as an attractive City by both its residents and visitors. Clean and inviting public spaces, tree-lined streets, and attractive neighborhoods are essential for creating this experience. The City should address and pursue opportunities to increase the visual appearance and beautification of public and private spaces.

- **Enhance Design of New Developments** – New developments (including projects to redevelop existing developed areas) should convey the look and character that emphasizes that Wilson is the "City of Trees." Developments should be designed to minimize the removal of existing mature trees in streetscape areas and areas accessed by the public.

- **Enhance Community Gateways** – Gateways are perceived entrances into Wilson. The City of Wilson should work with private property owners to improve the visual experience at key gateway locations through efforts such as art, signage, and landscaping.

Summary of Existing Conditions

This section provides information on current community design initiatives and efforts in Wilson.

Trees

For 26 years, Wilson has achieved the "Tree City USA" designation from the Arbor Day Foundation and its partners the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. This designation acknowledges the City's efforts to protect its tree canopy through public initiatives and tree preservation regulations. In recent years, the City has increased tree preservation by improving development regulations.

Looking to the future, Wilson seeks to raise the bar even further on tree preservation efforts. Continuing to achieve the community's vision of being the "City of Trees" will require new or enhanced efforts to address tree preservation on both public and private lands. Doing this will not only improve the visual experience of the community but enhance the City's tree canopy and natural environment.

Quality of Development

Wilson is continuing to raise the bar on new development. In recent years, the City has updated its zoning ordinance to include new standards for landscaping and site design in response to older developments that clear cut lots and provided little visual appeal from the street and adjoining properties. But more can be done. Updating design standards for both residential and commercial development is needed to ensure not only visual appeal and attractiveness within the community, but also to achieve the City's sustainable development goals.

Beautification

Wilson is proud to work with neighborhood organizations to encourage beautification of small neighborhood lots, medians, and public parks located around the City. While the City will continue to play a role in beautifying properties around Wilson, landowners need to contribute equally to beautification efforts to ensure that City resources are used prudently and also to foster a sense of pride and ownership of privately owned properties.

Community Design Principles

Community design principles were developed as part of a three-day community charrette process focusing on community gateways, revitalization of aging corridors, and neighborhoods. These community design principles illustrated through the following concept plans should serve as a guide for future redevelopment and development throughout Wilson. During the community charrette, Concept Plans were proposed for the following specific areas (see **Error! Reference source not found.**):

- **Gateways** – various key points of entry into and within Wilson
- **Highway 301** – between Black Creek (west anchor) and Lipscomb (east anchor)
- **Five Points Neighborhood** – focusing on the intersection of Goldsboro and Downing
- **Old Wilson Mile (Vance Street)** – between Rountree (north) and Maplewood (south)

Although the Comprehensive Plan is a City-wide plan, these specific areas were selective because they are representative of how other areas within the community might be addressed. In short, many of the planning principles applied to these areas are transferable to other locations in Wilson.

The Concept Plans were developed during the community charrette focused on providing a forum for public and stakeholder input and achieving a consensus on key geographic areas in Wilson. Strong teamwork between the Consultant Team, City staff, property owners, and key stakeholders led to an array of ideas, schematic and design concepts, and visions for Wilson's future. Key ideas and common themes were identified and used to form the basis of the preliminary Concept Plans. A Steering Committee guided the more detailed development of the Concept Plans, and after more input following a public workshop and stakeholder feedback, the Concept Plans were refined and finalized.

Many of the ideas from Concept Plans developed for key areas in Wilson can be applied to other parts of the community.

Commercial Corridors

Highway 301 Corridor Concept Plan

Between Black Creek to the west and Lipscomb to the east, the Highway 301 Corridor features a wide variety of land uses and various forms of development. The corridor, shown in Figure 28 below, stretches along part of the Ward Boulevard loop, and generally lacks streetscape and pedestrian amenities. The four-lane road features a central median and turning lanes, and is traversed by approximately 20,000 vehicles daily.

Figure 28: Highway 301 Corridor Study Area

The vision for the Highway 301 Corridor is to transform it from an automobile-oriented highway into a green urban boulevard that unites uses on both sides. Key components of the Concept Plan, illustrated in Figure 29 on the following page, include adding sidewalks, street trees, and landscaping the median to create a green urban boulevard; providing stronger pedestrian links between the school to the south and the park to the north; providing mixed-use development nodes at both ends of the corridor and on the east side of MLD to break the existing commercial strip pattern of development; and introducing new uses at the intersection of 301 and Lipscomb, such as an institutional or medical use and a mixed-use center.

Figure 29: Highway 301 Schematic Diagram

Graphic Legend: Community Mixed Use Center = red; Neighborhood Mixed Use Center = pink; Transition Area = orange; Corridor Residential = black; Single-Family Residential = yellow; Historic District = brown; Parks/Open Space = green

The Highway 301 Corridor Concept Plan proposes two distinct future cross-sections to correspond with different types of land uses, shown in the following figures. One cross-section corresponds with commercial and mixed-use areas along the corridor while the other is for residential areas along the corridor.

Figure 30: Highway 301 Corridor Cross-Section – Commercial/Mixed-Use Adjacency

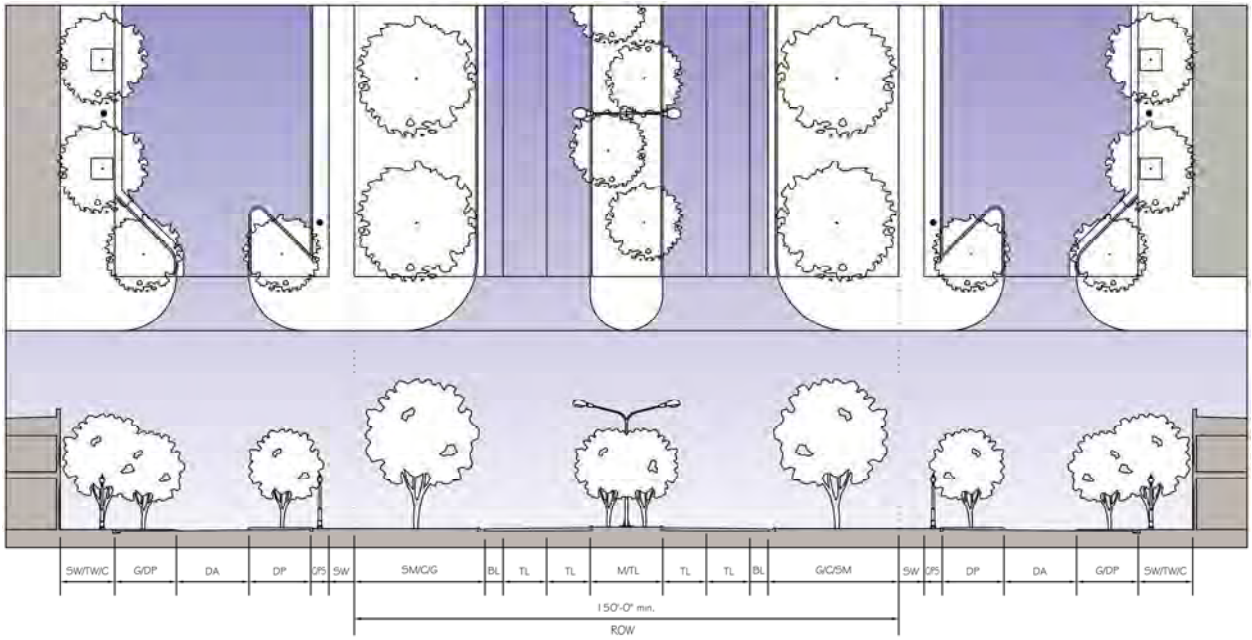
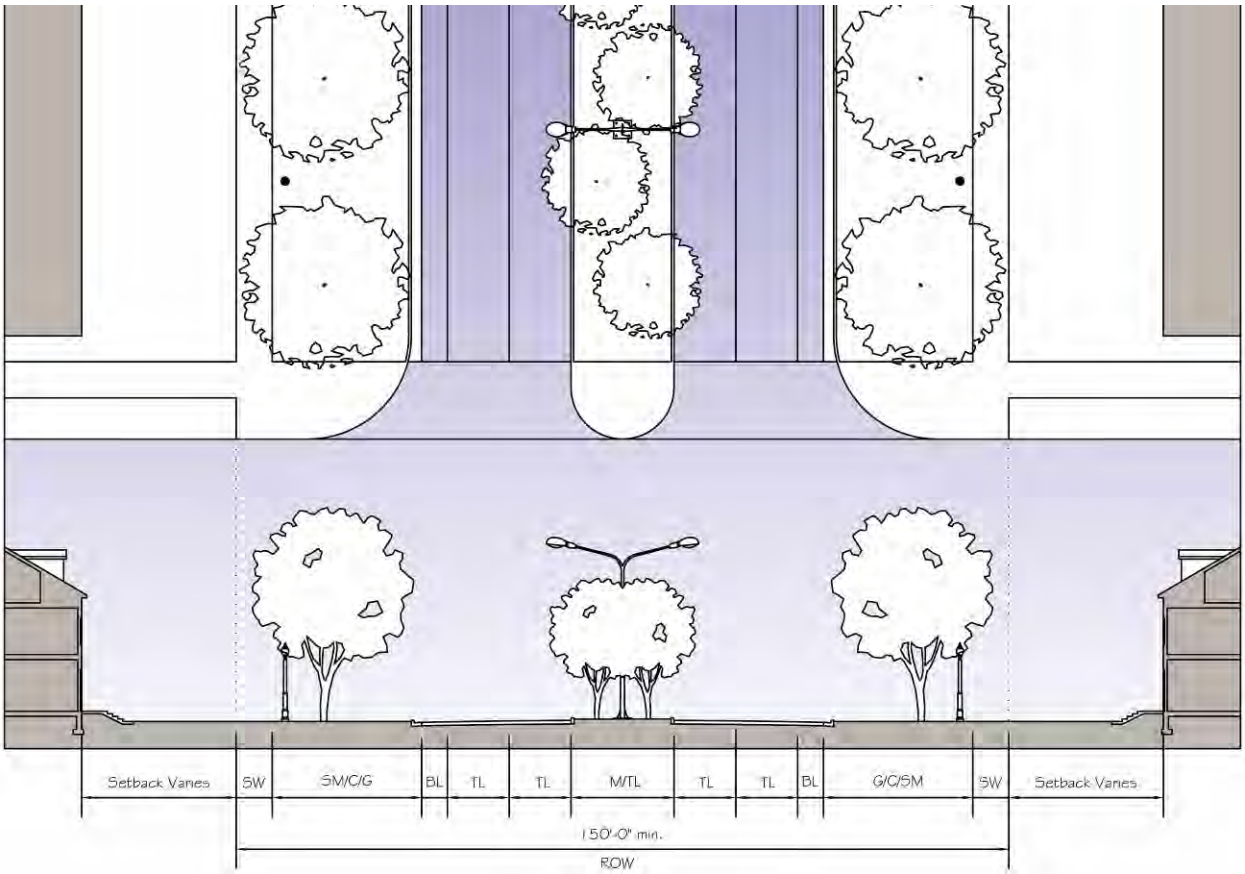


Figure 31: Highway 301 Corridor Cross-Section – Residential Adjacency



The Concept Plan also identifies a "sample redevelopment" project: a mixed-use redevelopment of the existing strip-style commercial center located at the intersection of Highway 301 and Lipscomb. The concept for the redevelopment of the Fikewood Center, shown in Figure 32 on the following page, proposes retaining one of the existing buildings and using it as an anchor for a new open space flanked by new mixed-use buildings. It includes buildings located close to the streets, with parking available on-street and behind the buildings. Possible uses include ground floor retail and services, a limited amount of upper floor office space, apartments, and townhomes.

Figure 32: Highway 301 Corridor - Sample Redevelopment at Lipscomb Road & Highway 301

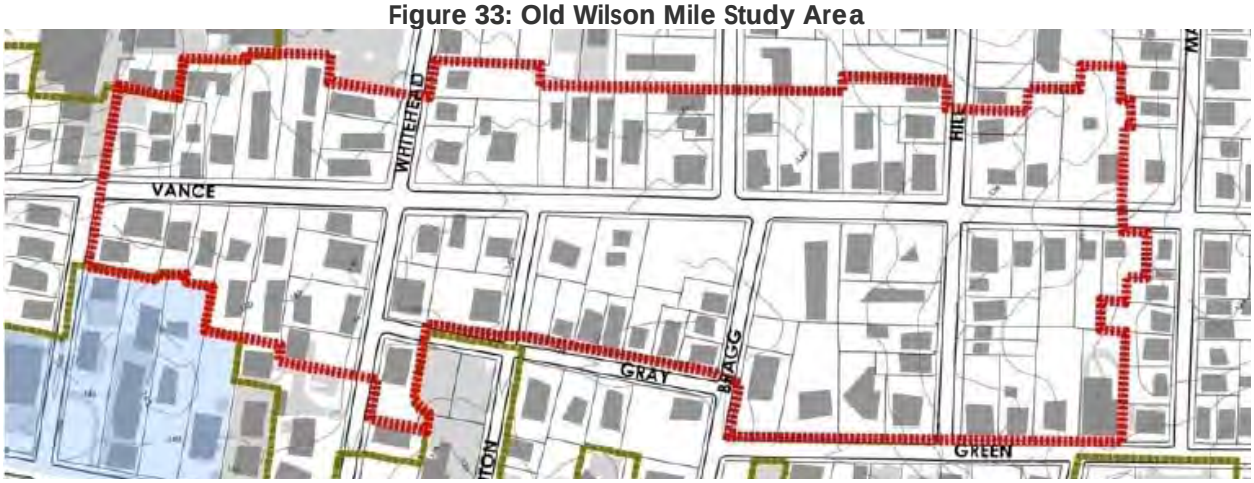
Graphic Legend: Existing Structure = purple; New Mixed Use = maroon; New Housing = yellow

Neighborhoods

Old Wilson Mile: Vance Street

The Old Wilson Mile, or the neighborhood area along Vance Street between Rountree and Maplewood shown in Figure 33 below, is a local historic district that features older homes with front porches and varied front setbacks. There is a broad landscaping strip (or parkway) between the sidewalks and street, and there is on-street parallel parking along both sides of the two-way street.

Figure 33: Old Wilson Mile Study Area



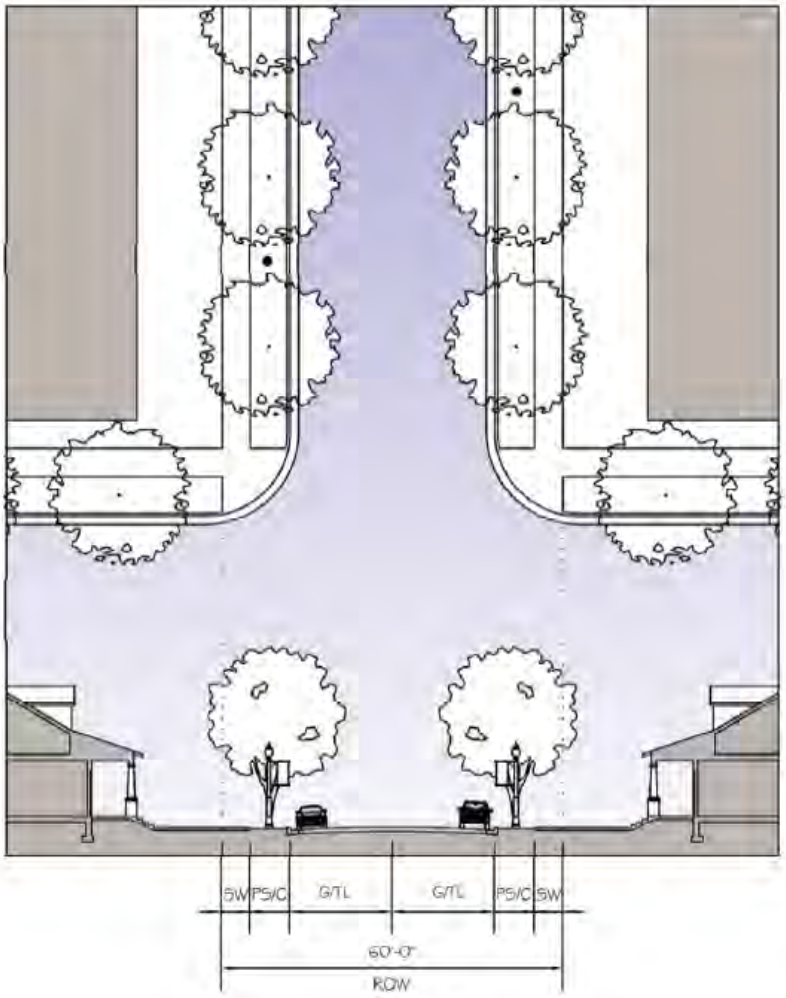
Future efforts should aim to enhance the streetscape in this area, but not substantially change the overall design of the area. Improvements should focus on improving the gateway to Barton College, as well as preserving and rehabilitating older and historic buildings. The few non-historic and incompatible buildings could be redeveloped with more compatible infill housing development.

The envisioned design for this area, shown in Figure 34, includes supplementing the area's existing street trees, providing attractive and human-scaled lighting, adding street light banners to highlight Barton College, redeveloping incompatible non-historic buildings (especially the two corner lots on Vance), and designating a Neighborhood Investment District (NID) to provide financial incentives for revitalization and stronger code enforcement. Opportunities for redevelopment and rehabilitation are marked with red asterisk symbols in Figure 34.

With respect to the street-cross section design for Vance Street, no substantial changes are proposed, with the exception of additional street trees, human-scaled lighting, and street light banners, as noted above. The proposed Vance Street Cross Section is illustrated in Figure 35.

Figure 34: Old Wilson Mile (Vance Street) Schematic Diagram

Figure 35: Vance Street Cross-Section



Other key features of the Old Wilson Mile Concept Plan include:

- **Proposed Rowhouses** – The site located at the southwest corner of Vance and Bragg currently features a one-story building with multiple apartments. In general the design of the site and building is inconsistent with the front setbacks, orientation to the street, massing, materials, and roof forms of the surrounding neighborhood. The concept envisioned for this site features an "L" shaped building that features two-story townhouses with parking at the rear, as shown in Figure 36.

Figure 36: Old Wilson Mile – Proposed Rowhouses at Vance and Bragg

- **Proposed Multi-Family** – The site located at the corner of Vance and Hill features a 1960s era apartment building that has different massing, roof form, and façade design than the surrounding historical context. The concept plan proposed for this site, shown in Figure 37, entails a more architecturally compatible multi-family building or connected buildings, with parking at the rear of the site. The more prominent side or building could orient toward Vance, with the smaller side or building facing Hill.

Figure 37: Old Wilson Mile – Proposed Multi-Family at Vance and Hill

Five Points

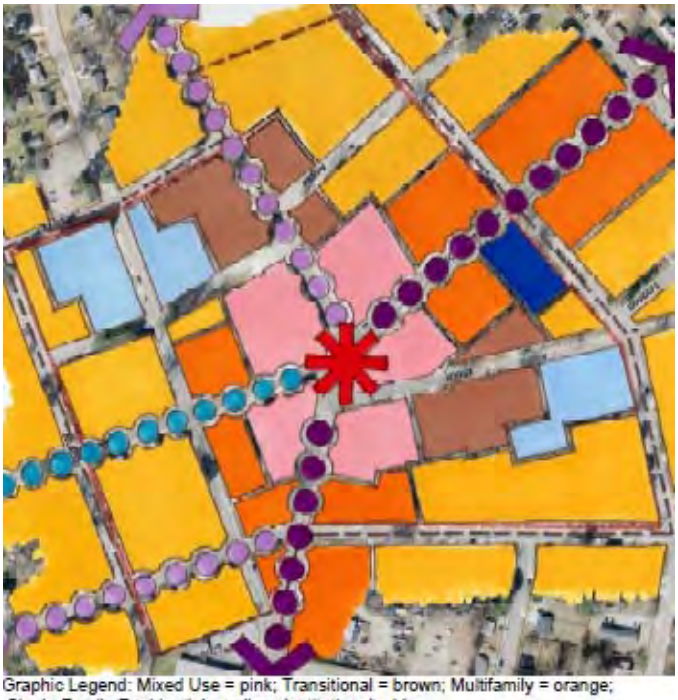
The Five Points neighborhood is generally recognized as the area located immediately southwest of Downtown Wilson, shown in the figure at right. The neighborhood takes its name from the five-street intersection at its core. Properties located at the intersection feature commercial uses, while the surrounding area consists predominantly of single-family residences.

Goals established for the area immediately surrounding the Five Points intersection include improving the street intersection to accommodate pedestrians in addition to vehicles, providing neighborhood commercial uses to meet the daily needs of area residents, encouraging physically compatible infill development (that is generally small in scale with buildings at the street with parking behind the buildings), and transforming linear commercial uses along Goldsboro into a mixed-use subdistrict that also incorporated multi-family housing (see Figure 39).

Key recommendations from the Five Points Concept Plan, shown in Figure 40, include redesigning the Five Points intersection to create a small public space, improving the streetscapes to be more pedestrian-friendly (with new sidewalks, streetlights, street trees, and crosswalk details), relocating Flo's Restaurant within the area, rehabilitating existing historic buildings, developing compatible new buildings (shown in light brown), and rezoning segments along Goldsboro to accommodate multi-family at the edges of the commercial core.

Figure 38: Five Points Neighborhood

Figure 39: Five Points Schematic Diagram



Graphic Legend: Mixed Use = pink; Transitional = brown; Multifamily = orange; Single-Family Residential = yellow; Institutional = blue

Figure 40: Five Points Concept Plan

Before

After

This before and after photo rendering illustrates how the Five Points area might be redeveloped in the future, using the concept plan principles of walkability and community character.

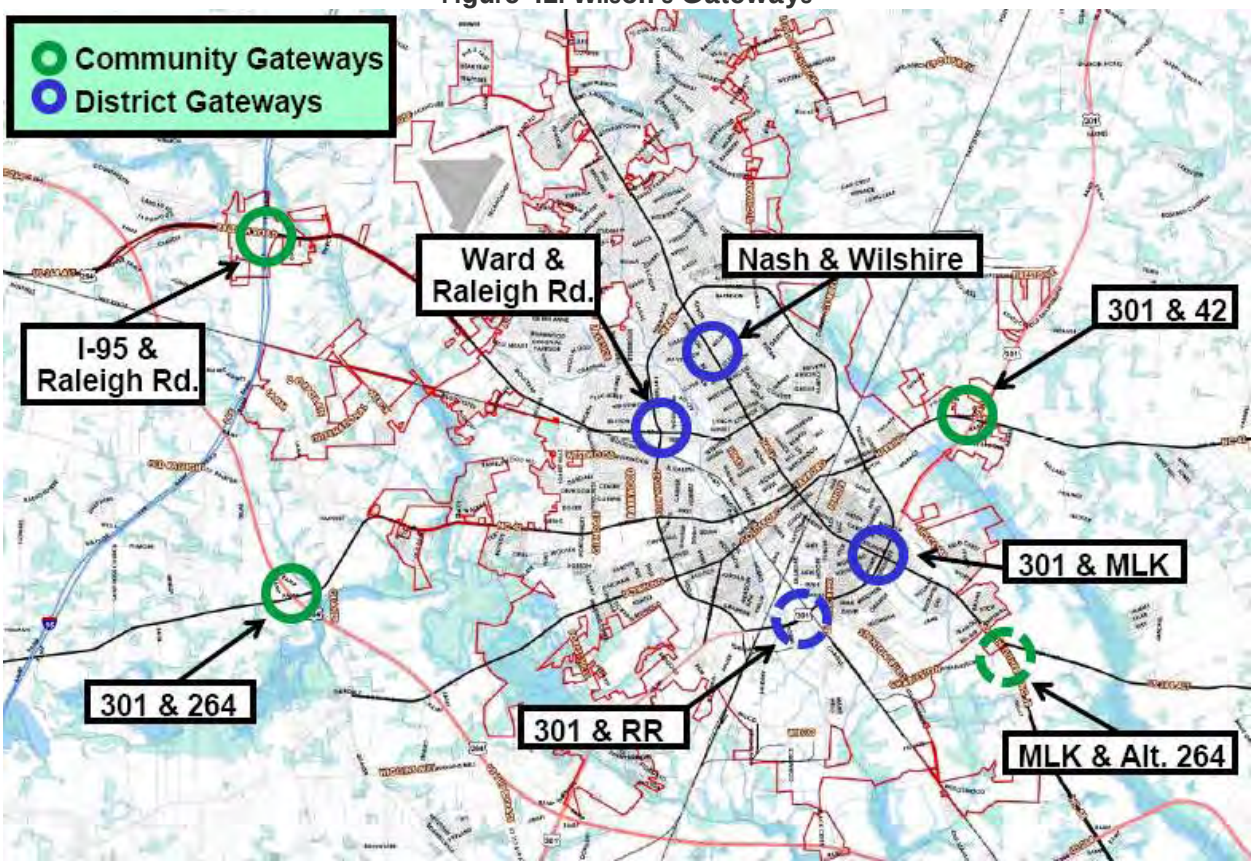
Gateways

A "gateway" is a point of entry into a community or area that offers a sense of arrival. Gateways are important because they make lasting impressions for visitors entering and leaving a community. There are currently very few clear gateways in Wilson that establish a strong sense of arrival.

Gateway treatments are typically most successful in locations that have a discernable change in landscape, land use, development pattern, or character, and in areas that will remain relevant with future development trends. A variety of gateway treatments can be used to convey a desired theme, message, or to establish a desired character. Common gateway improvements include landscaping, signage, arches, architectural features, and public art. Gateways should not be used at every entry into the community, but rather they should be applied in key locations to draw attention.

This plan identifies two types of gateways: Community Gateways (peripheral entrances into the community in general) and District Gateways (entrances into special areas within the community). The locations of these gateways were determined primarily by the frequency that they were cited by participants during the charrette's public workshop, as well as through field-verifying. These locations are indicated in the figure below.

Figure 41: Wilson's Gateways



Community Gateways (Peripheral)

Community gateways are identified in the following locations:

- **I-95 and Raleigh Road** – This is the key gateway to Wilson from the Interstate. There is an existing landscaped median on the east side of the Interstate that might make food for a good gateway treatment location.

- **42 and 264** – This a geographically strategic gateway from the southwest, although it is relatively far from the developed areas of the community. It already features a very large right-of-way area that is well landscaped, so there are positive elements to build on.

- **301 and 42** – As a key gateway from the east, an existing stand of pine trees and a water tower already lend this gateway visual prominence. A good site for a gateway treatment would be the right-of-way strip on the north side of 42 immediately west of the interchange.

- **MLK and Alt. 264** – This potential gateway will require further study to determine whether it warrants a gateway treatment. While it is a geographically strategic location, there is no strong sense of arrival and it is somewhat remotely located.

With respect to the design treatments for the proposed community gateways, there is no clear "right" or "wrong" design. Future community gateway design should incorporate public feedback, and be based on an established theme. Potential ideas for community gateway designs include local whirligig sculptures, or a large abstract art installation. A key theme could build on Wilson's tobacco heritage.

District Gateways (Internal)

District gateways include the following locations:

- **Nash and Wilshire** – For those traveling south on Nash from the north, this gateway into Wilson's premier residential historic district provides a clear sense of arrival.

- **Ward and Raleigh** – This is a solid entrance into the core of the City and there is already a strong sense of arrival because of the aesthetic quality here. A vacant wooded site at this intersection might be available for a future park.

- **301 and MLK** – As a gateway from the southeast to a National Register Historic District and the Round House, this gateway treatment should be on the north side of 301.

- **301 and Railroad Tracks** – This is an important gateway within the community, but will require further consideration to determine if it is worthy of a gateway treatment.

District gateway treatments should reflect the character of their surrounding area. Because they may be viewed at slower speeds, district gateways may be smaller in size and need greater detailing than community gateways.

Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

GOAL 47: ENHANCED CITY BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS

Wilson will be experienced and remembered as an attractive City by both its residents and visitors and will provide clean and inviting public spaces, tree-lined streets, and attractive neighborhoods and non-residential centers.

Policy 47.1: New developments and redeveloped lands should incorporate vegetated landscaping for aesthetic purposes and provide natural buffers between adjacent uses.

Policy 47.2: Vacant lots should be well maintained. Overgrown lots and blighted areas are strongly discouraged.

Policy 47.3: Vacant structures are to be maintained to ensure the long-term viability of existing structures. Boarded up and uninhabitable vacant structures should be renovated to meet building codes. To better utilize lands, demolition is a secondary solution for structures that can not be returned to a habitable state.

Policy 47.4: Existing public spaces should be improved by providing landscaping and tree plantings.

Street trees help frame the public realm and create a tranquil streetscape experience. These images here depict the contrast between streets with and without trees.

Policy 47.5: New public infrastructure projects, such as development of new roads, should incorporate trees and landscaping as part of the streetscape. Tree-lined medians are also encouraged.

Policy 47.6: Use of xeriscaping and native or adapted plant species in landscaping that are drought tolerant will be undertaken by the City and encouraged on private land.

Policy 47.7: All new developments should locate utilities underground.

Policy 47.8: As funding sources are available to implement and as utility improvements are made, relocate existing overhead utilities underground.

Policy 47.9: Adopt and enforce a new City graffiti ordinance.

Action 47.1: *Amend the City's development standards to require enhanced landscaping for all new developments.*

Action 47.2*: Seek additional funds for the City's demolition program. However, demolition of properties shall only be conducted as a last resort.*

Action 47.3: *Work with landowners of blighted and vacant properties and structures to identify a strategy for improving the aesthetic quality and value of underutilized lands. Continue to partner with Preservation of Wilson to address blighted and vacant properties and structures.*

Action 47.4: *Develop a new City land bank program to acquire blighted and underutilized properties and market these structures as rehab and adaptive reuse opportunities.* *(See Actions 3.1 and 4.2.)*

GOAL 48: ENHANCED TREE PRESERVATION MEASURES

Continue to achieve the community's vision of being a "Tree City USA" by increasing the City's tree canopy and improving tree preservation regulations. *(See Policy 7.5.)*

Policy 48.1: Preserve tree stands that serve as buffers along roadways.

Policy 48.2: Preserve heritage/specimen trees on all lands, unless preservation could result in unsafe conditions.

Policy 48.3: Preserve tree groves of a significant size to maintain the City's natural tree canopy and natural air quality filtration systems.

Policy 48.4: Adequately protect the root zones of preserved trees during construction.

Trees should be appropriately fenced off during construction to adequately protect root zones and ensure long-term viability of the tree.

Policy 48.5: Work with landowners of existing developments to retroactively replant trees, especially in existing parking lots and along roadway buffers that do not meet current tree standards.

Policy 48.6: Street trees should be of a variety that will provide adequate shade and canopy to the street and sidewalk. They should be planted away from utility lines to prevent the need to prune trees.

Policy 48.7: Use of native trees is encouraged to ensure long-term viability of trees and to reduce the amount of watering required.

Policy 48.8: Continue to provide annual tree-planting programs to interested landowners.

Action 48.1: *Amend the City's tree protection ordinance to require enhanced tree protection and tree preservation during construction for all new developments. Explore requiring a tree permit for removal of trees on developed lots.*

Action 48.2: *Explore the possibility of undergrounding utilities in targeted areas, such as in the Main Street District in Downtown, to promote tree growth.*

Action 48.3: *Prepare a tree-planting and pruning manual for the City. The manual should include information on appropriate types of trees for specific conditions, pruning techniques, maintenance of trees, etc.*

Action 48.4: *Develop a long-term strategy for maintaining City-owned trees and landscaped areas.*

GOAL 49: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

New developments and redeveloped areas should convey the look and character that emphasizes that Wilson is a "Tree City USA."

Low-impact development techniques use natural drainage and plantings to manage stormwater flows, requiring less infrastructure and no additional water treatment.

Policy 49.1: New developments should incorporate low-impact design features, such as preserving open space areas that include environmentally sensitive lands and tree groves. Natural stormwater management systems, such as rain gardens, bioswales, retention ponds, cluster development, and use of pervious paving materials is encouraged.

Policy 49.2: Developments should be designed to minimize the removal of existing mature trees in streetscape areas and areas accessed and viewed by the public.

Policy 49.3: Landscaping and trees should be used to soften and unify the appearance of developments from the street and to define entryways, including reverse frontage residential lots.

Policy 49.4: The quality of neighborhoods should be enhanced by planting street trees on new residential lots.

Policy 49.5: For commercial and industrial developments, parking lots and hardscape areas should provide safe pedestrian circulation through clearly defined walkways and plantings. Trees and landscaping should be used to improve the appearance of impervious surfaces and provide natural areas for on-site drainage.

Policy 49.6: Parking lots should be located to the side or rear of non-residential developments and buffered by trees and landscaping to improve the visual appearance from road corridors.

Policy 49.7: The City shall use the Wilson Architectural Design Guidelines as a tool to encourage new developments to be designed in a more visually appealing fashion.

Action 49.2: *Amend development standards for new residential subdivisions to allow for developments that have similar standards (i.e., setbacks, lot size, sidewalks, street*

trees, street configurations, block size, etc.) as traditional neighborhoods found in Downtown.

Action 49.3: *Develop and adopt low-impact development standards to be used in new developments.*

Action 49.4: *Consider amending the City's development standards to require:*

- *Street tree plantings on lot frontages in residential subdivisions*
- *Enhanced landscaping and tree preservation/plantings along roadways to screen developments from the road*
- *Use of trees and landscaping within parking lots to define pedestrian walkways and provide natural drainage*
- *Appropriate siting of parking lots to reduce the amount of impervious surface visible from road corridors*

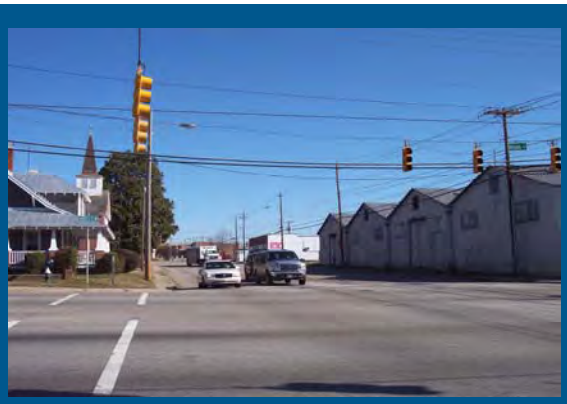
GOAL 50: ENHANCED COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

Improve the visual appearance of gateways into the City.

Policy 50.1: The visual appearance of City gateways should be improved through public and private efforts, such as community signage, public art installations, architectural features and plantings.

Policy 50.2: Special consideration should be given when approving development within gateway areas to ensure a high quality of development at City entrances. Explore corporate and/or civic club partnerships to enhance gateways.

Simulations by Jason Eply, AICP



Before

After

Investment in community gateways, as illustrated in this photo simulation at the intersection of Hines and Tarboro Streets, can greatly improve the experience of entering the City.

Action 50.1: *Assess the standards in the Highway Development District and determine if these standards are appropriate for gateway areas or if additional standards are needed to address landscaping, signage, and setbacks from the road.*

Action 50.2: *Explore corporate partnerships in return for discreet advertising signage in gateway areas and other gateway design features.*

GOAL 51: A MORE CONNECTED COMMUNITY

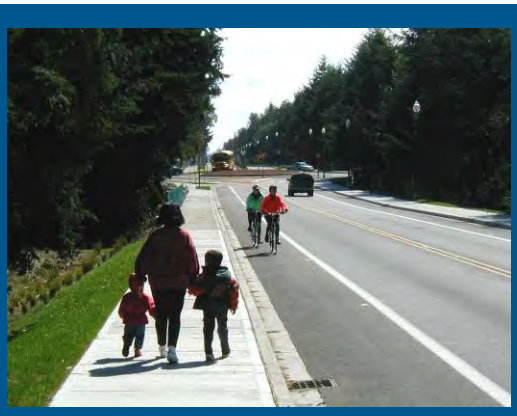
Neighborhoods, schools, shopping and employment centers, and places of interest will be connected through pedestrian and bicycle facilities, streetscape improvements, and greenways.

Policy 51.1: New residential developments should provide sidewalks on both sides of the streets.

Policy 51.2: All new and/or redeveloped non-residential development should provide sidewalks between uses, in parking areas, and to provide linkages to adjacent developments and to public sidewalks and multi-use paths already in place.

Policy 51.3: Development of bicycle lanes, signed routes, and greenways, as denoted on the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan, are encouraged within new developments and redeveloped areas.

Policy 51.4: Safety concerns should be addressed by providing better lighting, clearly-marked passage along pedestrian and bicycle routes, signage, and other design solutions.



Newly developed and redeveloped areas should provide "complete streets" that include sidewalks and crosswalks, designated bike lanes, and automobile travel lanes.

Policy 51.5: Commercial and employment centers should provide internal access between businesses to reduce the number of driveways and curb cuts along thoroughfares and maintain roadway capacity. *(See Policy 15.4 and Action 15.2.)*

Policy 51.6: Residential subdivisions should be designed using a grid or modified grid pattern and should limit the use of cul-de-sacs that reduce connectivity within developments. *(See Policy 15.5.)*

Action 51.1*: Implement the Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and Pedestrian Plan actions.*

Action 51.2: *Amend the City's development standards to require internal access within larger multi-tenant developments and implement access management standards. (See Action 15.2.)*

Action 51.3: *Consider requiring residential subdivisions to meet connectivity index requirements.*

"This Comprehensive Plan embodies the very best of the Wilson community. I have never seen so much involvement and inclusiveness as we have here in Wilson. My agency and I are very proud to have been a part of this terrific process."

Edward R. Jagnandan
Steering Committee

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Link to Sustainable Planning

Improving community design will have a marked affect on the visual quality of Wilson, but it will also help the City achieve its sustainable planning goals as discussed here.

Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Policies that aim to enhance tree preservation in the City of Wilson help conserve energy because a mature tree canopy shades buildings and parking areas, thus reducing the amount of energy devoted to cooling buildings during warm months.

Climate Change

Policies that promote tree planting and preservation help to slow climate change because trees help scrub the air of carbon dioxide and also provide oxygen.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Policies that improve the design of future developments can result in the use of higher quality materials that make buildings last longer. Buildings that last longer are more sustainable and reduce the amount of materials needed to develop "replacement" buildings and additionally reduce construction waste.

Community Health and Safety

Policies that encourage tree preservation and establishing a more connected community contribute to community health by providing cleaner air and safe and convenient opportunities to walk to nearby destinations.

Water Conservation

Policies that promote city beautification and tree planting help to conserve water by encouraging the use of native and low-water species..

~ A Day in the Life of Wilson ~

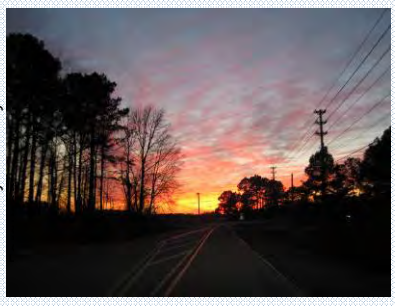


Photo by: Wendy

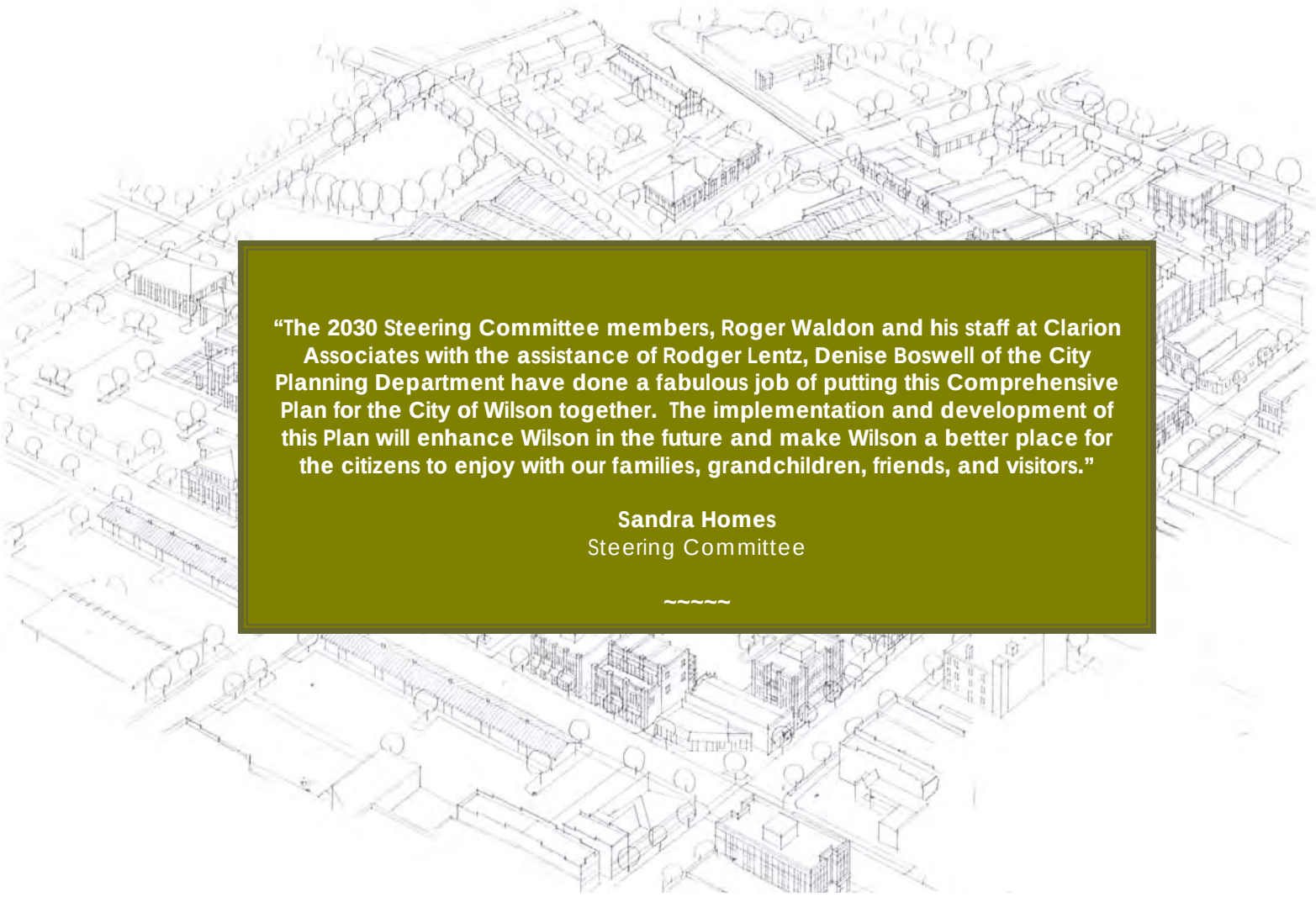
Photo by: Judith Zampella

Photo by: Melissa

Photo by: Tracey Mooring

Photo by: Michael Herring

Photo by: Laura Etheridge



"The 2030 Steering Committee members, Roger Waldon and his staff at Clarion Associates with the assistance of Rodger Lentz, Denise Boswell of the City Planning Department have done a fabulous job of putting this Comprehensive Plan for the City of Wilson together. The implementation and development of this Plan will enhance Wilson in the future and make Wilson a better place for the citizens to enjoy with our families, grandchildren, friends, and visitors."

Sandra Homes
Steering Committee

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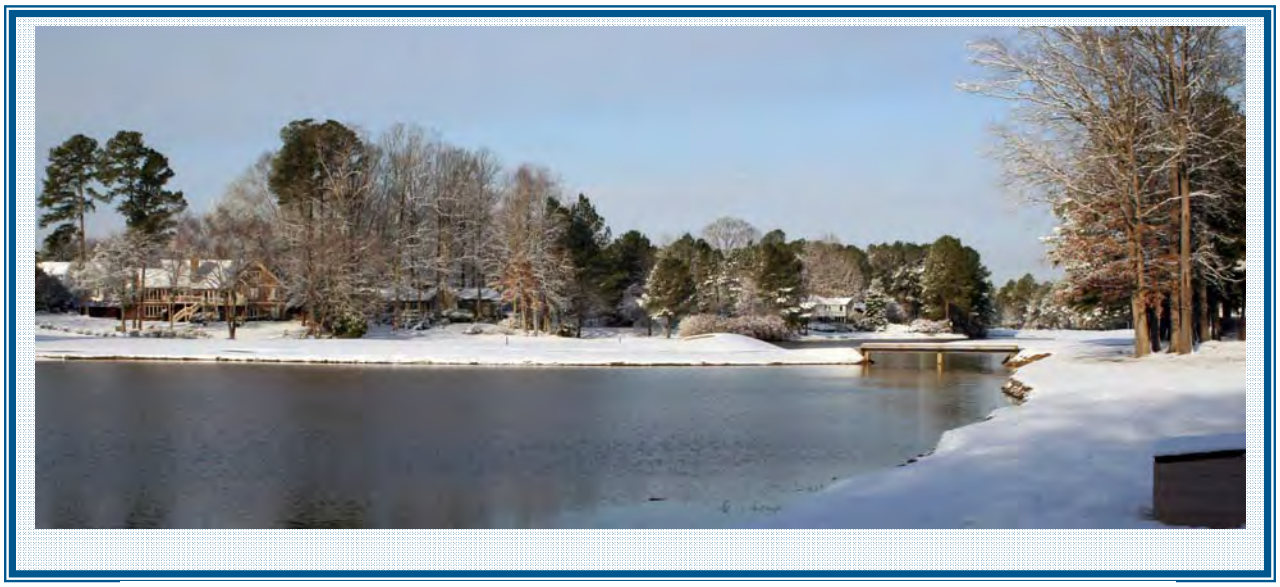
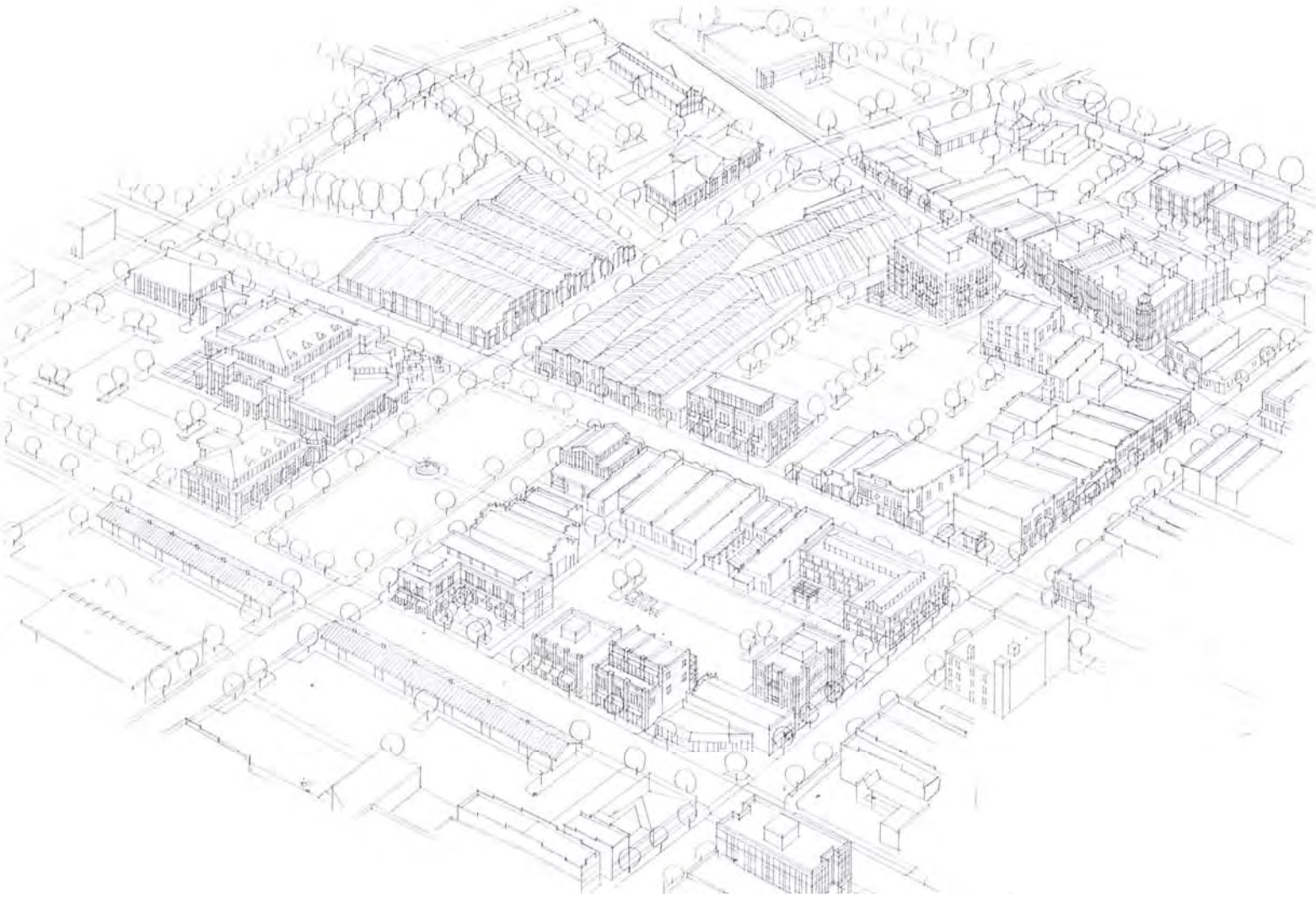
PART 4: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING



"A Day in the Life of Wilson" Adult Silver (2nd Place) Photo Taken by Bill Colon



ACTION PLAN

Introduction

This Plan includes more than 200 policies for the City of Wilson to address. While each of these policies is important for achieving the vision of becoming "One Wilson Growing Together," it is critical to set priorities among all the action strategies. These priorities will lay the groundwork for developing future annual work plans for the City and will help with organizing and prioritizing future implementation efforts.

Throughout the course of the planning process, community input focused on creating a more sustainable community that manages growth, reinvigorates the Center City and Downtown areas, and improves the education, job prospects, and well-being of citizens. Listed below are the major categories of implementation efforts that need attention in Wilson.

1. Managed Growth
2. Center City Initiatives
3. Neighborhood Planning
4. Economic Development Initiatives
5. Capital Improvements
6. Partnerships
7. Land Development Ordinance Updates
8. Sustainable Planning Actions

This chapter provides recommendations for the top priority implementation actions that the City should consider to implement this Plan. In addition, the last section of this chapter includes a matrix of secondary implementation action priorities. As priority actions are completed, implementation items from the secondary list can be moved to the priority listing. For all implementation actions, a timeline and responsible entity for initiating action is identified. To ensure implementation of the Plan, this information should be used to develop annual City work plans for departments.

Top Priority Implementation Actions

The following matrix illustrates the relationship between the top twelve priority implementation actions and the eight major implementation categories.

Table 8: Implementation Actions Matrix

	Priority #1: Work with County to establish Tiered Growth System	Priority #2: Amend City's Land Development Ordinances	Priority #3: Establish Neighborhood Planning Process	Priority #4: Support and Facilitate Center City Catalyst Projects such as The Villages of Center City	Priority #5: Establish a Vacant Properties Initiative	Priority #6: Redesign of and Streetscape Improvements to Highway 301	Priority #7 Implement Elements of Barton College's Master Plan under City Jurisdiction	Priority #8: Promote Green Workforce Initiatives with WCC & Help Implement Master Plan	Priority #9: Establish Sustainable Performance Standards and an Energy Conservation Strategy	Priority #10: Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Downtown Civic Center	Priority #11: Promote Revitalization of Downtown	Priority #12: Develop Formal Agreement with Wilson County Schools
Managed Growth	✓	✓		✓								✓
Center City Initiatives	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Neighborhoods		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
Economic Development				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Capital Improvements	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Partnerships	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Ordinance Updates		✓		✓	✓				✓		✓	
Sustainable Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	

Priority #1: Work with Wilson County to Establish a Tiered Growth System

Two of the goals of this Plan are to efficiently use existing public infrastructure and revitalize older areas of the community. Currently, new users of public infrastructure and new developments are charged the same development and infrastructure fees regardless of where they are located and how much it will actually cost to provide services to the locations. This fee approach can be more costly for the City as fees do not reflect costs; it may be a disincentive to develop in the Center City as costs are the same everywhere.

One tool that can be used to direct growth to targeted locations and away from another is to base public utility and development fees on whether or not a project is located in an area where public services are currently provided or are planned to be provided. This concept essentially links public fees to the public cost to provide the services (i.e., water, sewer, police and fire protection, etc.) for a specific location, helping to guide development to appropriate areas.

This is especially important given the findings of the 2005 Cost of Land Uses Fiscal Impact Analysis for Wilson. This report shows that several forms of development, including single-family residential valued less than $250,000 and commercial retail shopping centers, result in a net deficit for the City. The cost to service these developments is not covered by the tax revenues generated by these developments. Providing services to these types of development located in areas where services are not yet provided can be costly to the City.

Examples of Tiered Growth Systems

Communities across the country are evaluating and adopting new fee structure systems that base fees on the actual costs to serve new growth in specific areas. The reasoning is that -- the farther out the hookup or service from existing infrastructure, the more money would have to be spent on infrastructure to service the new development. The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District has established a tiered fee system with separate fees for infill areas and new growth areas. Analysis showed that the cost to convey service to infill areas was only 15 percent of the cost for new growth areas as infrastructure was already in place in infill areas. Charlotte County, Florida, adopted a tiered fee system in 2009 to promote development within its urban services area (USA) and recoup the true cost to service areas outside of the USA. Albuquerque, New Mexico, has taken a “zone” approach that provides relief for fees in fully-serviced areas, and has separate fee amounts for second (partially-served) and third tier (not served) areas.

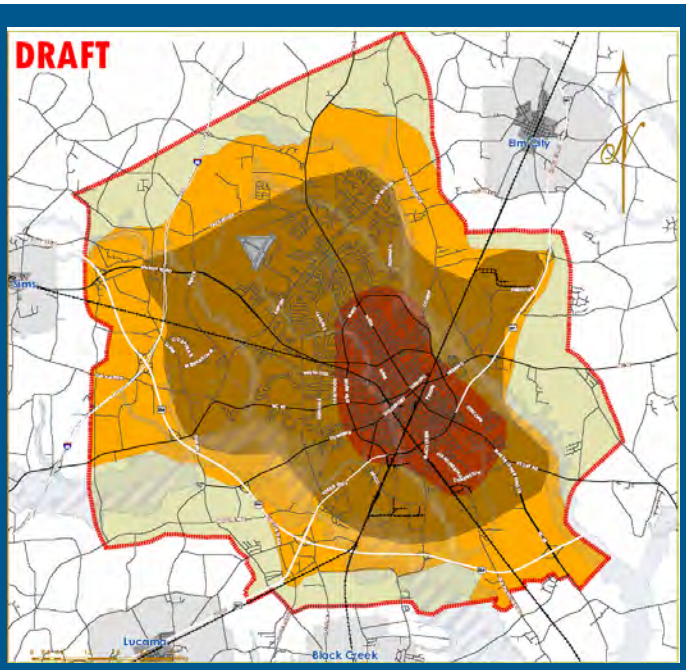
Developing a Tiered Growth System

Based on the preliminary analysis of service areas and the location of existing infrastructure, a draft Tiered Service Areas map is provided in the Plan. This map provides a conceptual starting point for discussing a policy to direct growth to certain areas based on the tiered fees concept. This map denotes four areas.

- The **Core Service Area** consists of land immediately surrounding and within the Ward Boulevard loop. It generally includes land that is currently serviced by public infrastructure. This area is likely less expensive to serve than other areas as infrastructure is already in place. Several redevelopment projects, including The Villages of Center City, are located in this area.

- The **Primary Service Area** encompasses areas that are either currently served by public infrastructure or where plans for service are in place, such as the sixth fire station. This area is likely less costly to serve than outer reaching areas, but is likely more costly to serve than the core service area.

- The **Secondary Service Area** encompasses areas that are within the primary growth area that do not currently have plans to be serviced but that will likely be provided public services in the next ten years. This area likely will be more costly to serve than the core and primary service areas, but less than the future service area.



The Preliminary Tiered Growth Areas Map provides a starting point for developing a Tiered Growth System.

- The **Future Service Area** incorporates the entirety of the secondary growth area. These areas are likely to be provided service within 20 years. Costs to provide service to this area will be significant as this area generally is not currently served by the City.

As stated previously, the Tiered Service Areas map is a starting point for defining a City fee structure intended to create incentives for development within the lower tier areas and disincentives for development in the higher tier areas. Fees that could be included within this system include water, sewer, building permit, and other development related fees.

The City should consider the trade-offs of applying this policy to all development. For example, residential and commercial developments located within an outer area could have significant impacts on the land use patterns and public service expenditures for the community. Employment development, such as a business park or industrial development, located in an outer area may provide enough community benefits to outweigh the costs to service outer reaching areas.

To establish a new tiered growth system, the City will need to work collaboratively with Wilson County to evaluate the costs to provide service to these four areas and refine the service area map and corresponding development fees accordingly.

Priority #1: Work with Wilson County to Establish a Tiered Growth System

Timeline: Initiate within one year of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Service Department with cooperation from Fire/Rescue Services, Police, Public Services, and Wilson Energy

Priority #2: Amend Wilson's Land Development Ordinances

This Comprehensive Plan reflects the desired future land use and design goals for the City of Wilson: to create a more compact development form that reinforces redevelopment of the Center City area and encourages low-impact, green development throughout the community. One of the main land management tools for achieving these goals is the City's ordinance, particularly the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. Key amendments to be made to these ordinances include:

Future Land Use

- Using the Future Land Use Map as a guide, revise zoning district designations to encourage development within primary growth areas and encourage the conservation of secondary growth areas for future development beyond 2030.
- Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, update the City's Zoning Ordinance to allow for higher densities and mixed-use development in targeted areas and reduce land zoned for low-density, single use development.
- To encourage a more compact development form through mixed-use developments, streamline the development approval process and simplify zoning standards required for mixed-use development within the City's Zoning Ordinance.
- Low-impact design methods that minimize site disturbance and utilize green building technologies should be encouraged through the use of development incentives, such as fast-track permitting, reducing or waiving fees, reducing or waiving design requirements, or other incentives.
- Approval of Rezoning and Conditional Use Permit cases should include consideration of market conditions and how the project will affect the City's overall retail vacancy rate.

Redevelopment and Infill

- Convene a group of potential Downtown and Highway 301 investors to explore what barriers to redevelopment exist and what incentives are needed to encourage redevelopment in these two locations and throughout Wilson.

- Provide flexibility to promote the reuse of older buildings in commercial corridors and neighborhood business areas, such as Five Points. Parking reductions should be permitted in order to allow infill development within parking areas.

- Provide for flexibility in achieving compatibility for setbacks, parking, height, lot coverage, and other development standards. Consider adopting context dependent standards for infill developments that set requirements based on adjacent land uses (e.g., height should be no more than 115 percent of any structure within 500 feet.)

- Develop design guidelines for infill / redevelopment, mixed-use, and multi-family developments.

Downtown

- Amend zoning regulations within Downtown to reflect the Future Land Use Map and appropriate uses as identified on the Future Land Use Map for Downtown. Examples include allowing Bed & Breakfasts, allowing as-of-right eating establishments, multi-family housing, and civic and fraternal organizations.

- Uses that should be prohibited within Downtown include auto sales and service, gas stations, car washing businesses, and other related uses.

- Evaluate the need to rezone industrial areas to promote redevelopment of these sites.

- Provide incentives for green development or redevelopment within Downtown.

- Amend zoning regulations to allow for development of live-work spaces and other Downtown housing opportunities.

Protection of Environmental Resources

- Adopt new development standards to provide more incentives for open space set-asides.

- Provide incentives to developments using green building techniques that reduce the development footprint on undeveloped lands and protect trees and natural areas during the construction process.

- Further restrict development in flood prone areas, specifically revising the 50 percent “no build” area standard. Consider development of a program to allow transfers of development density from these areas to areas that are appropriate for development.

- Amend the City’s tree protection ordinance to require enhanced tree protection and tree preservation during construction for all new developments. Explore requiring a tree permit for removal of trees on developed lots.

- Develop and adopt low-impact development incentives (i.e., stormwater management best practices) to encourage developers to use these techniques in new developments.

Transportation and Connectivity

- To ensure future land is available for development of the commuter rail corridor, amend the Zoning Ordinance to require right-of-way dedication or conveyance of land, as designated per the future Comprehensive Transportation Plan's alignment for the rail corridor.
- Develop and implement access management standards for major and minor thoroughfares. Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity.
- Consider requiring residential subdivisions to meet connectivity index requirements.
- Require stacking of vehicles entering land uses located along major and minor thoroughfares to be addressed on site.
- Require land uses permitted along major and minor thoroughfares to provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation.
- Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation (i.e., vehicular, transit, bicycle, pedestrian).

Community Design

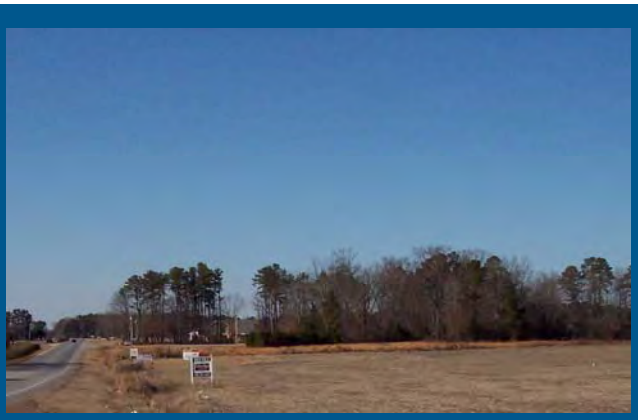
- Consider adopting new development standards to limit the conversion of single-family, owner-occupied homes in established neighborhoods to multi-family rental uses.
- Encourage a range of housing types within master planned developments. Amend zoning districts to allow for a range of housing types, as appropriate, to be developed on infill lots within established residential areas.
- Amend the City's development standards to require enhanced landscaping for all new developments, particularly along roadways to screen developments from the road.
- Amend development standards for new residential subdivisions to allow for developments that have similar standards as traditional neighborhoods found in Downtown (i.e., setbacks, lot size, sidewalks, street trees, street configurations, block size, etc.)
- Require street tree plantings on lot frontages in new residential subdivisions.
- Require the use of trees and landscaping within parking lots to define pedestrian walkways and provide natural drainage.
- Require appropriate siting of parking lots to reduce the amount of impervious surface visible from road corridors.
- Amend setbacks and dimensional standards in commercial corridors to create more opportunities for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly commercial developments that efficiently use land along major road corridors.

- Assess the standards in the Highway Development District and determine if these standards are appropriate for gateway areas or if additional standards are needed to address landscaping, signage, and setbacks from the road.
- Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas.

Priority #2: Amend Wilson's Land Development Ordinances

Timeline: Initiate within one year of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Service Department with TRC Departments



Before

After

This before and after photo rendering illustrates how an undeveloped parcel on Raleigh Road might look like if developed using new development standards.

Priority #3: Establish a Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Process

An important strategy for obtaining Wilson's vision is to pursue more detailed planning at the neighborhood level. While Wilson shares a community vision, individual neighborhoods have different needs based on existing conditions and neighborhood-specific issues and challenges.

Neighborhood planning presents an opportunity for citizens to shape the neighborhoods where they live, work, own property, or manage businesses. The neighborhood planning process in Wilson should address land use, zoning, public safety, infrastructure, transportation, schools, and urban design issues. The goal of neighborhood planning is for diverse interests to come together and develop a shared vision for their neighborhood. A neighborhood plan:

- Represents the views of all the stakeholders that make up a neighborhood

- Identifies neighborhood strengths and assets
- Identifies neighborhood needs and concerns
- Establishes goals for improving the neighborhood
- Recommends specific recommendations to reach those goals

Potential implementation strategies that could result from neighborhood planning initiatives include the development of new partnerships to leverage resources and improve neighborhood assets, targeted capital improvements such as sidewalks, street lighting, community facilities and parks, changes to zoning and development standards, and other efforts.

For neighborhood plans, all stakeholders should be invited to participate – business owners, residents, property owners, and various community organizations and educational institutions. A high priority for the City is improving the neighborhoods in the Center City, including those surrounding the Villages of Center City Hope VI revitalization project, Downtown, Barton College, public schools, and Wilson Community College. Working together with City planning staff, stakeholders should work to establish a clear vision and identify priority needs and actions to achieve the neighborhoods goals. Important intangible outcomes from the neighborhood planning process are stronger relationships between neighborhood stakeholders, improved neighborhood cohesion, better communication between neighbors, and the generation of a sense of common ground between diverse stakeholders.

Neighborhoods were engaged during the comprehensive planning process to develop a list of the top 10 characteristics of a great neighborhood and should be guiding principles for development of neighborhood plans. (See sidebar in Chapter 7 for top 10 list.)

Neighborhood Planning Examples

The City of Austin's Neighborhood Planning process is a good example of a long-standing neighborhood planning process that has continually engaged communities in development of neighborhood scale plans. The City's process connects with neighborhoods, provides education regarding land use, development, and capital improvement choices, and facilitates a consensus-based process for developing strategies for neighborhood improvement. These plans are developed through joint city-neighborhood collaboration and are formally adopted by the City Council. Any changes to the plan must be amended by City Council.

The City of Champaign, Illinois, has established a formal neighborhood planning approach called "Neighborhood Wellness" that identifies strategies for delivering neighborhood–based services throughout the City. The City was awarded a national planning award in 1992 for this program that assesses each neighborhoods level of "wellness" and develops goals and strategies to improve conditions. This planning is adopted as part of the comprehensive plan for the city. Updates to the plan involve five phases:

- Defining planning areas, including any new areas that have been annexed since the last version of the plan

- Collecting and analyzing data on social, economic, and physical conditions in planning areas
- Classifying four levels of wellness for each neighborhood: healthy, conservation, preservation, and restoration
- Ongoing public participation and community engagement
- Development of an action plan with goals, objectives, and strategies and an implementation schedule for plan programs

Baltimore's Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative is a program focused on revitalizing the City's older neighborhoods by reinvigorating stagnant real estate markets and building stronger connections among residents. This initiative uses tax credits, loan pools, neighborhood marketing, neighborhood events, code enforcement, and infrastructure improvements to improve participating neighborhoods. This initiative goes beyond traditional neighborhood planning to look at market approaches for improving neighborhoods.

Developing the Neighborhood Planning Process

Development of a formal neighborhood planning process to be led by the City will require some evaluation of staff capacity and resources. There are currently sixteen neighborhood associations formally recognized by the City of Wilson. It is unlikely that the City can undertake planning initiatives in all of these neighborhoods simultaneously, much less providing planning services to other areas that are not currently organized into neighborhood groups.

The City will need to accomplish the following to establish a formal process for developing neighborhood plans:

- Working with neighborhoods, develop a comprehensive map that identifies neighborhood boundaries for the entire City (A preliminary map is included in the Neighborhoods and Housing Chapter)
- Develop a formal process for initiating neighborhood planning, such as by neighborhood petition to the City Council
- Develop a set of criteria for determining priorities among neighborhoods requesting neighborhood planning services
- Develop a formal process for adopting and implementing neighborhood plans
- Recommended criteria for determining neighborhood priorities include the following:
    - Neighborhood is located within the Center City area
    - Neighborhood is represented by a formal neighborhood association registered with the Human Relations Office with by laws, a slate of officers, and regularly scheduled meetings

- Neighborhood association can demonstrate it continuously provides opportunities for interaction and learning for residents by organizing workshops and other community events
- Neighborhood has an established Neighborhood Watch Program through the City of Wilson Police Department
- Neighborhood leadership provides evidence of working with staff from Planning and Development Services, Human Relations Office, and the Police Department
- Neighborhood leadership can articulate the critical needs in the community and support identification of needs through a community petition
- Neighborhood is located near a public or private school or college

Priority #3: Establish a Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Process

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Services Department, Human Relations Office and Police Department

Priority #4: Support and Facilitate Center City Catalyst Projects such as the Villages of Center City

There is much evidence to show that communities with strong institutional partnerships focused on common goals can go far to achieve community visions. Revitalization of Wilson's Center City has a higher probability for success if undertaken as an "all hands on deck" approach. The City can serve as a leader among partners involved in projects to improve the neighborhoods, commercial areas, institutional uses, streetscapes, schools, and overall quality of life in the Center City. These present opportunities for the City to encourage partners to raise the bar on development and take a more integrated and sustainable approach to develop greener communities that are energy efficient, limit land and resource disturbance through careful site design, and provide integration between neighborhoods and activity areas. The City can

The Conceptual Site Plan for Villages of Center City Revitalization is intended to spur redevelopment in other parts of the Downtown area.

continue the momentum developed over the course of the Comprehensive Plan process by making it a priority to support and facilitate catalyst projects that focus local efforts and generate community interest, showing that plans can in fact become a reality.

Villages of Center City

Wilson is fortunate to have the timely opportunity to assist with the implementation of the Villages of Center City project. Led by the Wilson Housing Authority, this project is designed to redevelop and revitalize the Whitfield Homes public housing community located south of Hines between Lodge and Pender. This plan includes over 405 new mixed-income housing units ranging from walk-up apartments, to duplexes, to townhomes. Plans for the Villages at Pender and Lodge include new parks and playgrounds, open spaces, development of a new greenway near a restored creek, and community gardens.

In addition, this project has identified other opportunities for redevelopment that build on the Comprehensive Plan's goals to improve neighborhoods and create better connections between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods located in the southeastern portions of the Center City. Other village opportunities include:

- **Village at Freeman Place.** The Villages Concept Plan builds on ongoing efforts to revitalize and redevelop the Freeman Place for first-time homebuyers. Located east of Pender and north of Hines, new development is proposed to provide additional single-family detached housing and higher-density housing opportunities as well as a new childcare facility.

- **Village at Nash.** Located north of Barnes and west of Pender, the Concept Plan for the Village at Nash includes new owner-occupied townhomes , senior housing as part of the St. Johns Renaissance proposed mixed-use project, and senior housing in the Cherry Hotel.

- Thirty-seven scattered **infill sites** have been optioned to the Wilson Housing Authority within one mile of Whitfield homes. These sites are opportunities for new housing development in established neighborhoods.

The City and its partners have invested $14 million in anticipation of these revitalization efforts, focused on Freeman Place, code enforcement, and demolitions and repairs. This project will create a market synergy in this part of the City and will create new interest for redeveloping other strategic areas of the Center City, such as the Hi-Dollar Warehouse and other sections of the Downtown Tobacco Warehouse District. The graphic on the previous page illustrates the Villages of Center City conceptual site plan and its relationship to Downtown. The image below illustrates what some of the residential developments are proposed to look like.

These architectural renderings illustrate what the residential developments in the Villages of Center City are proposed to look like.

To ensure the Village of Center City and other identified catalyst projects are given priority attention, the City should provide support by:

- Identifying implementation of catalyst projects as a high priority for the City
- Assisting in the sale and assembly of city-owned land for redevelopment as part of catalyst projects
- Developing short-term "stop-gap" Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance revisions to enable project entitlements under planned densities before the major Zoning/Subdivision Ordinance update is undertaken (Implementation Priority #2)
- Engaging in aggressive code enforcement in and around the Villages of Center City to target remaining blighted properties
- Establishing partnerships with the Wilson Housing Authority, Preservation of Wilson, Wilson Community Improvement Association (CDC), neighborhood associations, and other organizations to create a strong community focus on catalyst projects, leverage resources, and make redevelopment plans a reality
- Establishing the next redevelopment area priorities that will build on the momentum and synergy of current catalysts projects, some utilizing local Brownfields sites. Potential priorities include the Narrow Way area and a Brownfields site bounded by the CSX rail line, Barnes, Pender, and Gay Streets. (See purple areas located on the Revitalization Conceptual Site Plan map on the previous page)
- Undertaking neighborhood planning initiatives in the Center City, targeting neighborhoods between Downtown and Highway 301 Corridor

- Transportation and other capital improvements, including: (1) improvements to Lodge and Pender Streets to serve as the main connectors from the Villages of Lodge and Pender to the core of Downtown and the transportation hub, (2) improving pedestrian accessibility of the Hines Street overpass, (3) expansion of Norris Park into floodplain areas located on adjacent project sites, and (4) necessary on-site infrastructure.

Priority #4: Support and Facilitate Center City Catalyst Projects

Timeline: Initiate within one year of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Service Department, Community Development Department, Downtown Development Corporation, and Public Services Department

Priority #5: Establish a Vacant Properties Initiative

An informal survey in the summer of 2009 identified 260 vacant and boarded-up properties in the Center City area. Research around the nation has shown that vacant properties can impact the property values of neighboring lots and perceptions of safety. This is true in Wilson as many community members cite blighted, vacant properties as a key issue to be addressed in the future. Currently, the City has few tools to address these vacant and blighted properties. The City aims to establish a Vacant Properties Initiatives that achieves the following goals:

- Vacant properties should be improved and protected as a priority, and demolition should be used only when other solutions have been exhausted
- The City should serve to facilitate private sector revitalization of vacant properties and should work with landowners and developers to identify ways that the City can encourage this action
- Revitalization of vacant properties should uphold the City's goal of achieving a more green development form – one that uses low-impact development techniques and green building design

Example Vacant Properties Initiatives

Communities around the nation are establishing programs to encourage reuse of these properties while simultaneously addressing the need for housing and commercial development. *Operation No Vacancy* is a new initiative in Hickory, North Carolina, that aims to attract reinvestment in distressed commercial and industrial corridors. The initiative began after staff conducted a comprehensive inventory of vacant buildings in the City. City staff has used this inventory to create a Commercial Revitalization Area, which contains the areas that have the highest concentration of vacant buildings and need for reinvestment. The newly created and City financed Vacant Building Revitalization grant offers 50 percent matching funding of up to $25,000 to people who redevelop a vacant or under-utilized non-residential building in the targeted area. Brownfields sites can be given priority for the vacant building grants. Other economic development incentive programs include City financed community appearance and landscape incentive grant programs, and a commercial revitalization area tax incentive for

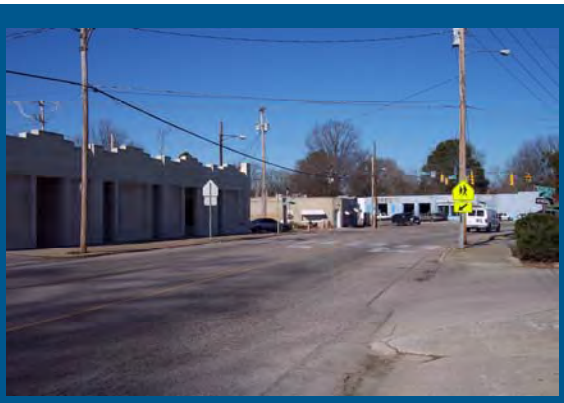
projects that invest more than $500,000. For residential buildings, the City offers first-time home buyer and home rehabilitation financial incentives through its CDBG funding.

The National Vacant Properties Campaign serves as a resource to communities looking to overcome the challenges of vacant properties. It provides a clearinghouse of information on vacant property initiatives undertaken across the nation, including new funding and regulatory tools that address prevention of abandonment, fostering rehabilitation of substandard housing and buildings, acquisition and management of tax-delinquent properties, and flexible zoning tools to promote reuse of buildings.

Developing a Vacant Properties Initiative

The City of Wilson should develop a vacant building initiative to increase private investment in vacant buildings in areas such as Five Points, the Old Wilson Mile, the Highway 301 Corridor, and in Downtown. The first step is to maintain an updated inventory of properties and lots in disrepair. Next, the City should identify those properties with historic values and those that have a greater impact on the community and set priorities to identify properties most in need of addressing. Working with landowners and local partners, such as Preservation of Wilson, the City should focus on historic structures and properties that are in disrepair before demolition is necessary. The City should set standards for maintaining vacant buildings, to discourage neglect and disrepair before it occurs. Finally, the City should work with landowners and local partners to identify methods that the City can use to facilitate revitalization of properties, such as waiving tax liens or other fees on vacant properties as a trade-off for rehabilitation work.

Simulations by Jason Eply, AICP



Before

After

This before and after photo rendering illustrates how redevelopment of vacant properties and streetscape improvements could have a striking affect on the Five Points neighborhood.

Priority #5: Develop a Vacant Properties Initiative

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

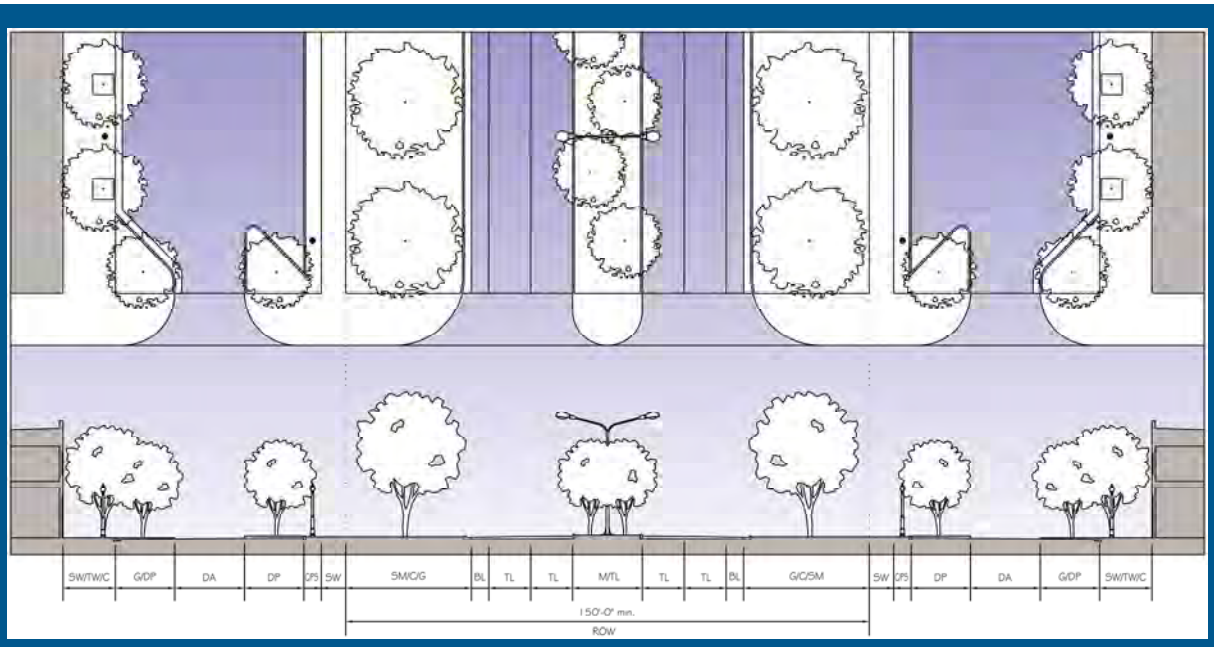
Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Service Department and Community Development Department

Priority #6: Redesign Streetscape Improvements to Highway 301

The City's overall goal for revitalizing aging commercial corridors, such as the City's first priority -- Highway 301 -- is to enhance the quality of life in these areas. This includes transforming the form and function of the road corridor, providing more multi-modal transportation amenities (e.g., sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.), redevelopment of vacant lots, and enhancing the visual character along the roadway.

Highway 301 was once the main road for north-south interstate travel before the development of Interstate 95. Since that time, the role of the road has changed. Today it primarily serves regional and local travelers. Currently, the North Carolina Department of Transportation lists Highway 301 as an expressway within the North Carolina Intrastate System, an outdated classification that continues Highway 301 as a major regional road. The City has a different vision for the road that would transform it from its prior regional expressway function to a tree-lined boulevard.

Through the Neighborhoods, Corridors, and Gateway Design Charrette held in April, 2009, the community developed a vision for the Highway 301 Corridor that transforms the roadway from its former use as a regional automobile-dominated roadway to a green corridor that is more pedestrian-friendly and visually pleasing (see the graphic below). The Comprehensive Transportation Plan that is being developed will focus on context sensitive improvements to this corridor that reflect this vision, including sidewalks, crosswalks, designated bike lanes, relocating utilities underground, planting of street trees, and landscaped medians.



The Conceptual Highway 301 Corridor Cross-Section transforms the roadway into a more pedestrian-friendly and visually pleasing environment.

As a first step to improving the Highway 301 Corridor, the City of Wilson should work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, through a Transportation Improvement Program request or an enhancement project, to redesign the Highway 301 Corridor. Next, the City should work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to initiate a streetscape improvement project to implement new road cross-sections for the Highway 301 Corridor.

Priority #6: Redesign of and Streetscape Improvements to Highway 301

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Planning and Development Service Department

Priority #7: Implement Elements of Barton College's Master Plan that Relate to the City's Areas of Responsibility

Barton College is an important community asset in Wilson. Barton serves as an educational and cultural landmark in the community that draws students and visiting families from around the nation to Wilson each year. It generates sales tax revenues, provides important cultural events, and offers higher education opportunities within the community.

Barton recently undertook an update to its Master Plan. This update focused on ways to improve the visual character of the college campus, improve transportation and pedestrian access and circulation, provide expansion opportunities, and revitalize neighboring areas. The City has been involved in development of Barton's Master Plan and supports the initiatives it includes. Part of this initiative includes City-College partnerships to improve the areas surrounding Barton.

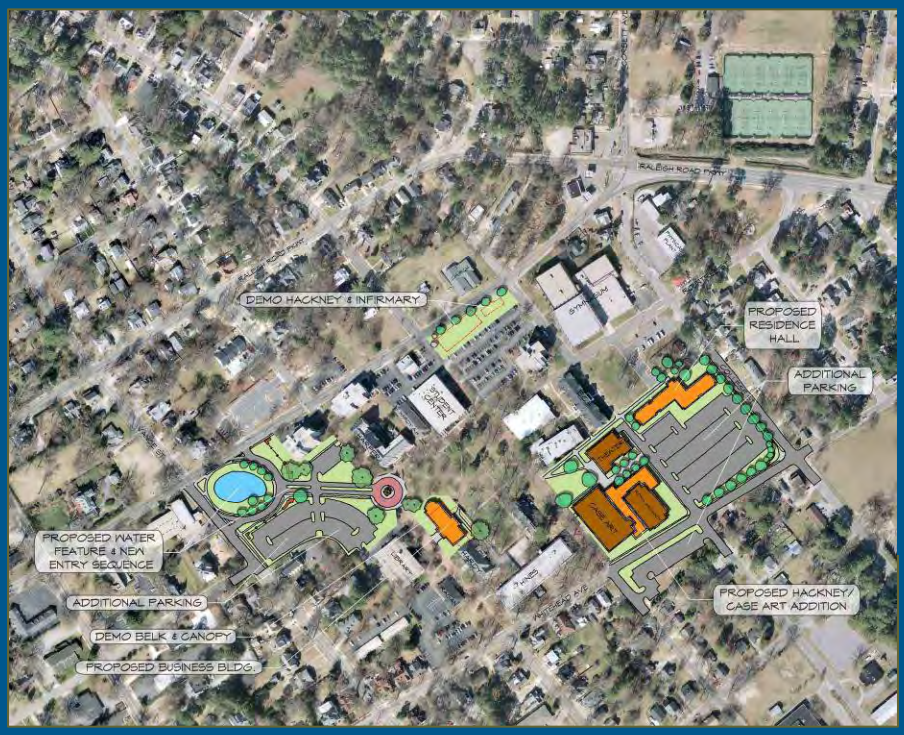
Implementation of the Barton Master Plan has important implications for the neighborhoods surrounding the College. Many of the implementation strategies outlined in the Master Plan will be catalysts for larger neighborhood revitalization efforts and will lead to tangible improvements to neighborhoods.

The City should take a proactive step and begin formal discussions with Barton College to identify priority partnership projects to improve this part of the community, including incorporating transportation improvements identified in Barton's Master Plan as part of the City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan, public investments in streetscape improvements, improving K-5 schools in areas surrounding Barton, and undertaking neighborhood planning in areas near the College. The City should work to convert Raleigh Road Parkway and Atlantic Christian College Drive to serve as two-way streets to improve traffic flow and accessibility to the College.

Before

After

Using ideas from the Barton College Master Plan, this photo rendering illustrates how the intersection at Corbett Avenue and Raleigh Road Parkway might look like if redesigned to function as a roundabout.



Barton's Master Plan identifies many opportunities for improving the visual character, transportation flow, and sense of place for Barton and its environs.

Priority #7: Implement Elements of Barton College's Master Plan that Relate to the City's Area of Responsibility

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Barton College and Planning and Development Service Department

Priority #8: Promote Green Workforce Development Initiatives and Work with Wilson Community College to Implement Elements of its Master Plan that Relate to the City's Areas of Responsibility

Seventy (70) percent of Wilson Community College's over 11,000 students are residents of the City of Wilson. The Community College has a highly significant societal and economic impact on the City. Wilson Community College (WCC) provides a growing number and variety of educational programs including dropout recovery, trade, technical, professional, and college transfer programs.

WCC serves as a training leader for our region in a variety of critical workforce sectors such as: Allied Heath, Nursing, Health Care providers, Teachers, Fire, Police, and Emergency Medical Technicians. College programs draw thousands of students from around the State to Wilson each year. Further, the College is also a leader in the State with its innovative Introduction to Manufacturing Program and related business and industry training program from which over 1,900 students have graduated in the last three years. The College's focus on workforce development has been applied to its leadership in the areas of sustainable/green practices and education and has seen WCC become an acknowledged leader nationally in the development of sustainable practices, purchasing green products, facilities retrofit, and construction of a new certified LEED Gold green building (see rendering to the right). All of these capacities become the basis for teaching the 21st Century skills of the new green economy.

Rendering of Wilson Community College's LEED Designed Student Center.

The College has gone beyond being a green campus and now provides green workforce training programs for its students, including a program to train green building for residential contractors and a Green Advantage course that trains commercial contractors and subcontractors for this certification exam. Wilson should join WCC in promoting green workforce development initiatives in the City to capitalize on the leadership of the College and the need to train the City's workforce for employment in the new economy. This might include:

- Joint efforts to work with local green businesses to develop new training programs at WCC, such as a preservation training program to advance revitalization initiatives in the City
- Marketing the green businesses currently at work in Wilson
- Promoting green jobs and training programs at local public schools

Wilson Community College is an enthusiastic partner in the City's vision for community services and development. This includes the College's role as sustainability and green champion in partnership with the City and Wilson Housing Authority. These partnerships are creating opportunities for cooperative green retrofit plans for the revitalization of Downtown, the historical housing sector, and community housing throughout the city. A major initiative is underway with Wilson Housing Authority properties, as well as larger neighborhood revitalization efforts. WCC serves in an advisory and resource capacity as well as offering training in green restoration in support of Downtown development and restoration efforts.

In addition, the City should work with WCC to implement the elements of the College's 2008-2018 Facilities Master Plan that relate to the City's areas of responsibility. These might include developing a plan for expanding the campus across Herring Avenue, the possible use of Brownfields money (if available) for site redevelopment, and the revitalization of the Herring Avenue Corridor. Among the rapidly growing community colleges in the State, Wilson

Community College has reached a point where it is landlocked on 31 acres occupying outdated and inadequately maintained buildings and infrastructures. When the current College Plan is updated, the City should be involved in the planning process.

Priority #8: Promote Green Workforce Development Initiatives and Sustainable Practices, and Identify Other Priority Partnership Projects, Assist with the Implementation of the College's Master Plan

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Wilson Community College, Wilson County, Planning and Development Service Department, Economic Development Council

Priority #9: Establish Sustainable Performance Standards and Develop an Energy Conservation Strategy

The City of Wilson has an opportunity to be a leader in the community in establishing sustainable development practices. Communities around the nation, including Washington D.C., Salt Lake City, Utah, Greensboro, North Carolina, and others are developing sustainability policies and programs that are focused on energy conservation that can result in a reduction in costs for both the public and private sector.

The City should develop a formal energy conservation strategy to initiate adjustments to City operations that will serve to promote energy efficient transportation and development patterns, material conservation (waste reduction and recycling), and energy efficiency and conservation strategies for buildings and facilities. Likewise, the City should develop incentive programs for private sector projects that incorporate energy efficient transportation and land use patterns and sustainable building designs and systems. Incentives could include procedural incentives, such as waiving fees for development applications, offering density and height bonuses, allowing shared parking agreements, allowing green roofs to qualify for open space credits, and expedited processing for infill and mixed-use projects.

Priority #9: Establish Sustainable Performance Standards and Develop an Energy Conservation Strategy

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: City Administration with assistance from relevant City departments

Priority #10: Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Downtown Civic Center

Wilson is lacking a space to hold larger community events. Providing a multi-use space that could be used for concerts and other events to serve area residents is needed and could also help generate regional interest in Wilson and draw new visitors to the community.

The Civic Center idea is clearly one that will require a great deal of detailed study and feasibility analysis before it could be deemed viable. At the May 2009 Downtown Charrette, key preliminary issues for evaluating a new Civic Center were identified:

- The civic center's size and specific uses must be determined (meeting space, trade shows, performances, etc.)
- The civic center should be located and designed for future expansion
- The most economically viable lodging near the center might be a 20-25 room "inn style" operation within a block of the civic center (not a national chain)
- Potential civic center models to study include those in the following communities: Sanford, North Carolina; Statesville, North Carolina; Mooresville, North Carolina (shown in the image below); Natchitoches, Louisiana; Natchez, Mississippi

Mooresville's Citizen Center can serve as a model development for a civic center in Wilson.

A feasibility study should be undertaken to identify the need for a civic center in Downtown Wilson. The study should also investigate demand for specialty lodging, potentially located in an existing historic building, in close proximity to the civic center. The Mooresville, North Carolina, Charles Mack Citizens Center (shown at right) is a good example of a downtown civic center in a community that is similar to Wilson.

Priority #10: Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Downtown Civic Center

Timeline: Initiate within four years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Downtown Development Corporation and Wilson Visitors Bureau

Priority #11: Promote Revitalization of Downtown

Revitalization of Wilson's Downtown is a high priority for the City. Many of the implementation priorities included in this chapter address different aspects of Downtown revitalization:

- **Priority #2: Amend Wilson's Land Development Ordinances** – This implementation action identifies several City ordinance amendments to ensure appropriate zoning and land uses are established in Downtown.

- **Priority #3: Establish a Neighborhood Planning Process** – Developing neighborhood plans and implementation initiatives for areas adjacent to Downtown will have a strong impact on improving the character and quality of Downtown.

- **Priority #4: Support and Facilitate Center City Catalyst Projects Such as The Villages of Center City** – The City will focus resources on development of catalyst projects, many of which are proximate or adjacent to Downtown, providing additional housing opportunities and reshaping the community fabric in the Downtown area.

- **Priority #5: Establish a Vacant Properties Initiative** – A large proportion of vacant properties are located in Downtown Wilson. This implementation action will set priorities for structures in need of repair and reinvestment and establish policies for encouraging redevelopment of these properties.

- **Priority #7: Incorporate Barton College's Master Plan into the City's Plan** – Working with Barton College to establish a partnership for implementing the College's Master Plan will further revitalization efforts in Downtown through public investments in streetscape improvements, improving area schools, and undertaking neighborhood planning near the College.

- **Priority #9: Establish Sustainable Performance Standards and Develop and Energy Conservation Strategy** – Developing a formal energy conservation strategy to initiate adjustments to City operations will promote energy efficiency and material conservation. As many government operations are located in Downtown, these programs will set a precedent for Downtown development and operations that can be promoted to private sector developers.

- **Priority #10: Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Downtown Civic Center** – A larger City civic center in Wilson would provide new opportunities for events, conferences, and performances, and could bring prominence and greater visibility to Downtown Wilson throughout the region. Conducting a feasibility study for a new civic center is the first step in achieving this goal.

In addition to these priorities, Downtown Revitalization can be achieved through strategic economic development, design and development, and transportation strategies:

Economic Development Strategies

- **Maintain existing Downtown Redevelopment incentive programs**, such as the Rent Incentive Program, Owner-Occupied Building Grant, and Façade Matching Grant programs, to provide developers with redevelopment assistance.

- **Expand the mission of Wilson Downtown Properties, Incorporated**, to include property ownership and redevelopment to more fully engage in targeted redevelopment projects.

- **Assist in the formation of a Downtown Merchants Association** by providing City staff assistance and technical support.

- **Strengthen the linkages between Downtown and Barton College and Wilson Community College** to encourage students and teachers to visit Downtown. Possible initiatives include a historic walking trail or a rubber trolley to promote connectivity between these destinations.

- **Develop a Downtown Market** in a highly visible location, such as an existing parking lot, to provide opportunities for local artisans, vendors, shop owners, and other businesses to sell goods at a Downtown market space. Monthly or weekly markets could be scheduled along with other Downtown events to promote activity in Downtown. A location in the warehouse district is preferred, containing a shelter to accommodate trucks and vendors.

- **Expand the Municipal Services District** (MSD) to include areas that are commonly identified as part of Downtown, such as the Tobacco-Warehouse Historic District, to expand the jurisdiction of the Downtown Development Corporation to Downtown areas that are priorities for revitalization assistance.

- **"Repurpose" vacant store fronts** through partnerships with Downtown landowners of vacant buildings. They could serve as art exhibits, advertising space for community events or civic gatherings, or advertisement for other Downtown businesses.

Design and Development Strategies

- **Develop Downtown Design Guidelines** to assist landowners with redevelopment of historic and older properties. Guidelines should be used as an incentive in return for financial incentives to developers made by the Wilson Downtown Development Corporation.

- **Encourage use of the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code** for eligible Downtown redevelopment projects that can benefit from use of this Code over the standard building code. The City should identify a staff person in the Planning and Development Services Department to serve as an advocate for the Code, educating other City departments and Downtown landowners on the benefits of the Code.

- **Strategic infill opportunities on vacant parcels and surface parking lots** should be prioritized for future development, such as the Hi-Dollar warehouse and the 208 West Nash Street sites. New development guidelines for new construction should be used in order to mimic existing building designs. The City should consider offering low interest loans and/or existing incentives to support new construction on infill lots. The City could also master lease space to assist a developer seeking project financing.

- **Promote the use of green building techniques and energy conservation measures** in privately owned structures. Educate landowners that historic properties are the

"greenest" developments as they reuse existing infrastructure and building materials. Consider establishing a formal program to offer incentives for green developments in Downtown.

Transportation Strategies

All transportation strategies should be addressed in the City's Comprehensive Transportation Plan that is being developed in partnership with the NC Department of Transportation.

- **One-way streets in Downtown Wilson should be converted to two-way** to improve access and visibility for retail, and reduce travel speed for office and residential uses. Tarboro and Pine streets are the most viable candidates. Establish plans for street conversion.
- **Develop a strategy for improving transit service** to Downtown.
- **Improve accessibility to Downtown for cyclists** by providing bike racks at key destinations and signage along bicycle routes.
- **Improve pedestrian accessibility in Downtown** by providing designated walkways from parking lots to street fronts, crosswalks at intersections, and street furniture, such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, and other amenities.

Priority #11: Promote Revitalization of Downtown

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: Downtown Development Corporation with assistance from Planning and Development Services Department

Priority #12: Develop a Formal Agreement with Wilson County Schools

Wilson's public education system provides quality services, but it faces many challenges, including high school drop out rates and underperforming schools. Community demographics and the quality of life experienced in neighborhoods can play a role in educational attainment, supporting the notion that "it takes a village" to ensure the future of our youth. Quality of life issues, such as after school programs, recreational amenities, and the Safe Routes to School program can improve the educational experience for the City's students. Partnerships with neighborhood organizations, community groups, and educational institutions are helping to improve educational attainment in Wilson. Improving the schools and the neighborhoods surrounding the schools are related goals, and will require joint efforts of the City, neighborhood stakeholders, and Wilson County Schools.

There is an opportunity to address other school-related issues through increased dialogue between the City and Wilson County Schools regarding the siting and design of new facilities. Schools can generate growth and therefore the locations of new schools should align with the City's future land use plans. The City and Wilson Public Schools should also work together to identify strategies to fully utilize existing schools operating under capacity prior to development

of new schools. Facing tax revenue shortages, the City and Wilson County Schools could join forces through joint use agreements to stretch public dollars and provide jointly operated and maintained parks and recreation offerings to the City's residents.

The City should initiate a process with Wilson County Schools to develop a formal agreement to share information, plan for the improvement of underperforming schools, jointly plan for new schools, and consider the joint-use of public school facilities, ball fields, and playgrounds.

Priority #12: Develop a Formal Agreement with Wilson County Public Schools

Timeline: Initiate within two years of Plan adoption

Responsible Entity: City Administration with assistance from Planning and Development Service Department

Secondary Priority Implementation Actions

Secondary priority implementation actions formulated from plan goals and policies are provided in the following matrix and organized by key implementation categories. To assist with the development of annual work plans for City departments, the matrix provides the entity responsible for the action and the timeline for initiating action.

- **Ongoing** actions should be commenced upon adoption of the plan and should continue for the life of the plan.
- **Short Term** actions should be initiated within three years of plan adoption.
- **Medium Term** actions should be initiated within five years of plan adoption.
- **Long Term** actions should be initiated within seven years of plan adoption.

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
Managed Growth		
1. Maintain an up-to-date geographic information system dataset of existing land uses and vacant structures in Wilson. Periodically compare this data to data on new development and redevelopment and identify trends in aging corridors requiring reinvestment focus.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services and Information Technology Services

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
2. Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet Comprehensive Plan goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use Map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service.	Ongoing	Fire/Rescue, Police, Public Services, Planning and Development Services
3. The City shall set a schedule for regular review of the primary growth areas to ensure that adequate land is available for forecasted development.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
4. Monitor the balance of tax revenues and public infrastructure costs over time and compare with development approvals to identify trends. Seek strategies to maintain a fiscal balance.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
5. In collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Wilson County, adopt and implement a new Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Plan.	Short Term	Public Services and Planning and Development Services
6. Develop a fiscal model to analyze development proposals and any positive or negative impacts development has on municipal budgets.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services and Finance
Center City Initiatives		
7. Develop and adopt a Commercial Maintenance Building Code and actively enforce it.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services and Downtown Development Corporation
8. As opportunities arise, replace holly trees with a more appropriate species in the Main Street District.	Ongoing	Parks and Recreation and Public Services

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
9. Continuing the partnership with Wilson Downtown Properties and Wilson Downtown Development Corporation, the City should market the Hi-Dollar Warehouse for a mixture of civic and commercial uses. In order to encourage a successful development the following uses should be considered: ♦ A government use, such as offices or meeting space, to accelerate loan approval and construction ♦ A Visitor's Center ♦ A signature destination restaurant	Ongoing	Downtown Development Corporation and Wilson Visitors Bureau
10. Promote partnerships facilitating preservation real estate activities with Preservation of Wilson.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services, Preservation of Wilson
11. Revitalization and rehabilitation of blighted and vacant properties is paramount. For those properties that can not be addressed by these means, the City should seek new funding sources to fully fund the City's demolition program.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
12. Provide incentives to developers with projects in the Highway 301 Corridor, such as ♦ Reduce City of Wilson utility connection fees for Highway 301 Corridor developments ♦ Offer an accelerated entitlement process ♦ Negotiate property tax credits for the incremental increase in value over a specific period	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
13. Consider development of a "One Wilson" Park at the location of Downtown Alive events.	Medium Term	Downtown Development Corporation
14. Extend sidewalk improvements from Nash Street to side streets within the Main Street District. Consider burying overhead lines in this area.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services and Public Services
15. Explore corporate partnerships in return for discreet advertising signage in gateway areas and other gateway design features.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
16. Consider development of a land bank to acquire and redevelop vacant and abandoned properties with tax liens. Work with City leaders to encourage the State legislature to authorize the use of this tool.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services
17. Consider new funding mechanisms to promote redevelopment in the Center City: ♦ Tax Increment Financing ♦ New Markets Tax Credits ♦ Grants or low-interest loans from non-profit community development foundations, such as the Golden Leaf and Z. Smith Reynolds foundations. ♦ A collaborative low-interest fund with area banks and financial institutions ♦ Section 108 Loans ♦ Economic Development Initiative (EDI) and Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) grants. ♦ Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Loans	Medium Term	Economic Development Council and Downtown Development Corporation
18. Consider creating a revolving fund for real estate purchases and dispositions within the Highway 301 corridor.	Medium Term	City Administration
19. Develop design guidelines for redevelopment along the Highway 301 Corridor.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services
20. Work with Wilson Community College to develop a plan for the Herring Road Avenue Corridor, including gateway treatments and reuse of vacant buildings.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services
21. Develop a Heritage Tourism Plan for Wilson that markets Wilson as a unique, historic destination along I-95.	Long Term	Downtown Development Corporation, Visitors Bureau, and Preservation of Wilson
Quality of Life		
22. Advertise community events in the Wilson Parks and Recreation newsletter.	Ongoing	Parks and Recreation and Public Affairs

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
23. Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural and entertainment establishments and activities to the City.	Short Term	Visitors Bureau
24. Working through the Citizens Academy, poll citizens on the best ways to provide information about public events and activities.	Short Term	Public Affairs
25. Publicize the City's community calendar on the Wilson Times website.	Short Term	Public Affairs
26. Explore opportunities for developing a comprehensive, multilingual community calendar that includes civic, cultural, recreational, educational, and other events.	Short Term	Public Affairs
27. Continue to conduct the Citizens Academy and expand outreach to Spanish-speaking citizens.	Short Term	Human Relations
28. Organize cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents. Such events could include a public market, art show, and concert with local musicians.	Medium Term	Downtown Development Corporation and Visitors Bureau
Neighborhoods and Housing		
29. Consider establishment of a local "Weed and Seed" program.	Short Term	Police and Community Development
30. Examine appropriate incentives, shifting expenses from City initiated demolitions to assistance with rehabilitation when appropriate.	Short Term	Community Development and Planning and Development Services
31. Implement the Housing Improvement Action Strategy Plan for Wilson.	Medium Term	Community Development
32. Consider establishment of neighborhood conservation districts to protect neighborhood character and socially, historically, or architecturally significant structures.		Planning and Development Services

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
Economic Development		
33. Work with local economic development partners, such as the Wilson Economic Development Council, Chamber of Commerce, Wilson Downtown Development Corporation, and Wilson Downtown Properties to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use map.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services
34. Work with local partner organizations, such as the OIC, to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.	Ongoing	City Administration
35. Work with local partner organizations to market Wilson as having the most advanced fiber-optic network in the State and one of the best in the nation.	Ongoing	Public Affairs
36. Seek funding assistance from the Federal EPA and other organizations to identify and assess Brownfields in Wilson and develop strategies for remediating and redeveloping these properties.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services
37. Work with the Economic Development Council to develop a strategy for protecting industrial parks from encroachment by residential subdivisions. Locations proximate to residential areas are often not preferred by prospective businesses due to potential impacts from industries.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
38. Update the EDC website to include information on available State and local resources available to small businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.	Short Term	Economic Development Council
39. In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
40. Identify the appropriate agency/organization and position to coordinate the local small business development efforts occurring in Wilson.	Short Term	Economic Development Council & City Administration

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
41. Work with existing businesses in Wilson to develop business expansion strategies that capitalize on local technologies.	Short Term	Economic Development Council & Greenlight
42. Following development of Woodard Parkway, work with the Economic Development Council to identify long-term needs for a new industrial park. Determine potential sites appropriate for this type of development.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services & Economic Development Council
43. Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not succeeding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services, Downtown Development Corporation and Economic Development Council
44. Periodically develop a community leakage analysis to identify areas where a business recruitment initiative might be successful in attracting new business.	Medium Term	Economic Development Council
Parks and Recreation		
45. Encourage private development of youth recreational facilities, such as a skating rink.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services and Parks and Recreation
46. Explore opportunities for the potential sale and/or reuse of small mini-parks that are not actively in use. Neighborhood community gardens or neighborhood owned open spaces or passive park areas are two options for reuse of these sites.	Ongoing	Planning and Development Services and Parks and Recreation
47. Amend zoning and subdivision ordinances to include provisions that encourage or require new residential developments to include open space, park areas, and greenways.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services and Parks and Recreation

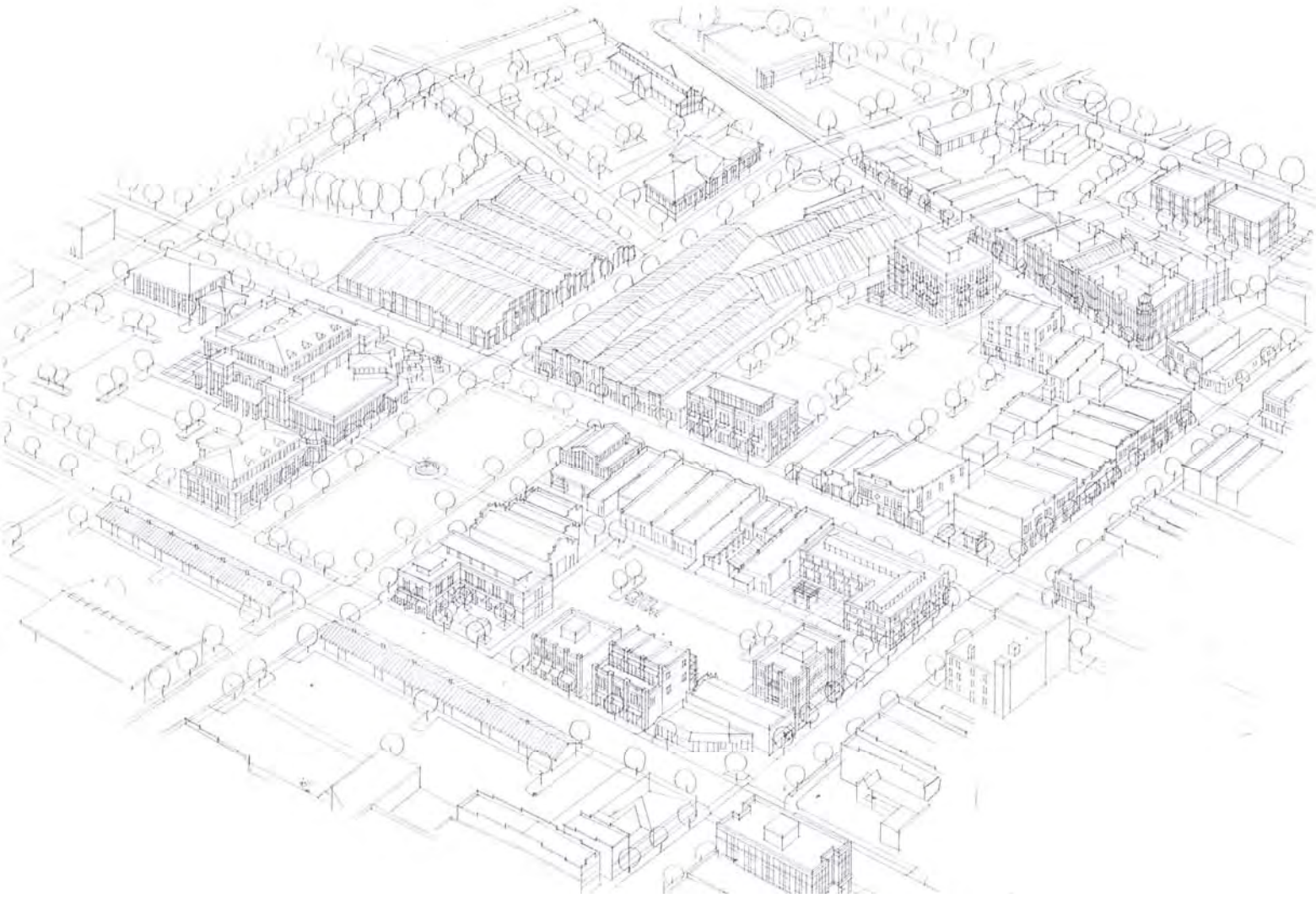
Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
48. Work with community neighborhood watch programs to develop strategies to ensure the safety and proper use of local parks.	Short Term	Parks and Recreation
49. Consider opportunities to partner with businesses to provide new recreational facilities and programs for area youth. The privately sponsored Boys and Girls Club in Manassas, Virginia, is an excellent example of this type of partnership.	Short Term	Parks and Recreation
50. Explore expansion of recreational programming for seniors.	Short Term	Parks and Recreation
51. Targeted improvements to existing parks and recreational facilities and development of new facilities to be undertaken by the City include: ♦ Future construction or renovation of neighborhoods parks, such as Cavalier Terrace ♦ Development of a new recreation center and renovation of existing recreation centers ♦ Development of a new indoor pool at the Gillette complex ♦ Improvements to Wedgewood Golf Course ♦ Provide additional trails/multi-use paths, and other recreational facilities at Lake Wilson park ♦ Development of the greenways system as identified in the 2008 Bicycle Plan	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
52. Explore opportunities to provide a dog park within the Center City area.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
53. Working in collaboration with Wilson County, explore opportunities to provide a new community park.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
54. Working in collaboration with Wilson County, explore opportunities to improve Lake Wilson by providing trails, passive park areas, restroom facilities, and other amenities.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
55. Explore opportunities for partnering with Wilson Community College and Barton College to provide new recreational facilities and programs for City-wide use.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
56. Working with Wilson County Schools, explore opportunities for joint-use of parks and recreational facilities on school grounds for use by the general public during non-school hours.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
57. In the future, identify need for parks and reserve land in Wilson's growth area for new facilities.	Long Term	Parks and Recreation
Capital Improvements and Infrastructure Planning		
58. Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation on a partnership to utilize the City's fiber optic network to coordinate intersection signal timing.	Short Term	Public Services
59. Identify solutions for the congested intersection at Raleigh Road Parkway and Forest Hills Road in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.	Short Term	Public Services
60. As part of the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, identify one-way pairs in Wilson and set priorities for conversion/improvement of these pairs.	Short Term	Public Services
61. As part of the Wilson Comprehensive Transportation Planning process, work with Wilson Community College to identify needed multi-modal transportation enhancements to improve accessibility to Wilson Community College, including pedestrian and bicycle access and transit service.	Short Term	Public Services
62. Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.	Short Term	Public Services
63. Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements. A potential source of income is an increase in the vehicle licensing fee for vehicle registrations.	Short Term	City Administration and Finance
64. Develop a formal funding plan for siting, design, construction, and maintenance of Fire Station #6.	Short Term	Fire/Rescue Services and Finance

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
65. To assist with employment access out of Wilson, study the viability of a van pool service to destinations in the Triangle and Greenville.	Short Term	Public Services and Planning and Development Services
66. Seek re-enlistment of the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport in the National Plan for Integrated Airport Systems. This designation will make the airport eligible for federal funding to make improvements.	Short Term	Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport Authority
67. Develop a collector street alignment to protect major corridors, such as between Airport and Merck Roads. A model alignment to consider is Westwood Boulevard.	Medium Term	Public Services and Planning and Development Services
68. Using traffic studies and forecasts, examine the applicability of a super-street concept and other road designs to protect and enhance travel times and public safety on major thoroughfares, particularly for U.S. 264 (Raleigh Road Parkway.)	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services and Public Services
69. Assess the local transit system and its ability to provide adequate transportation service to citizens in need.	Medium Term	Wilson Transit System and Public Services
70. Expand the Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport's runway from 4,500 feet to a minimum of 5,000 feet to accommodate larger aircraft.	Long Term	Wilson Industrial Air Center Airport Authority
Partnerships		
71. Work with Wilson Community College and Barton College to develop mentoring programs to assist students in underachieving public schools.	Short Term	Human Relations
72. Develop a program to donate used municipal computers and establish neighborhood resource computer labs for after school and workforce training programs. Work with Barton College and Wilson Community College to teach classes at these neighborhood centers.	Short Term	Human Relations and Planning Development Services

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
73. Work with Wilson County to develop a formal agreement for coordinating information on development proposals in areas of mutual interest. Consider agreements to amend County zoning in areas of mutual interest.	Short Term	City Administration and Planning and Development Services
74. Coordinate Parks and Recreational facility development and programming with the efforts of other religious and non-profit groups to provide after school programming that is accessible and affordable to all students in the City.	Short Term	Parks and Recreation
Sustainable Planning		
75. The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors.	Ongoing	Administration
76. Adopt measures to reduce water consumption in City-owned facilities, such as purchasing new bathroom facilities that do not use potable water or use less water than traditional facilities. Reduce the need to use potable water for landscape irrigation.	Short Term	Public Services
77. Develop incentives or bonuses within the City's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.	Short Term	Planning and Development Services
78. Consider expanding the municipal recycling program to include recycling receptacles in public spaces, such as Downtown.	Short Term	Public Services
79. Adopt measures to reduce solid waste and to encourage recycling in all City-owned and maintained properties.	Short Term	Public Services
80. Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle.	Short Term	Public Affairs

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
81. Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and graywater reuse.	Short Term	Public Affairs
82. Using a geographic information system, identify trees and tree groves in the City that are critical for maintaining a forested canopy and habitat areas. Provide further protection for these areas.	Medium Term	Planning and Development Services
83. Prepare a tree-planting and pruning manual for the City. The manual should include information on appropriate types of trees for specific conditions, pruning techniques, maintenance of trees, etc.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation
84. Develop a long-term strategy for maintaining City-owned trees and landscaped areas.	Medium Term	Parks and Recreation



PLAN MONITORING AND UPDATING

Introduction

The Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan is a vision plan and a policy document that will guide future decision-making within the City. In order for the Plan to remain relevant and useful, it must be updated periodically to reflect the current trends, conditions, and needs of the community, and its progress should be monitored. This chapter addresses both plan updating and monitoring to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan has the ability to evolve and grow with the community over time.

Plan Monitoring

The City will monitor the implementation of the Plan over time to measure the progress in achieving goals, policies, and actions. This information will provide crucial feedback to the City's decision-makers regarding the approach to Plan implementation on an ongoing basis.

A formal process should be developed to institutionalize Plan monitoring. It is recommended that the Planning and Development Services Department, the department that supervised development of the Comprehensive Plan, prepare a comprehensive annual report to the City Manager and City Council on the status of Plan implementation. This will require staff to coordinate with other departments, agencies, and organizations to develop complete and accurate reporting on Plan implementation efforts.

In addition to Plan monitoring, the City will use the Comprehensive Plan during development of the City's annual budget and updates to the Capital Improvement Program to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Like Plan monitoring, the Planning and Development Services Department will take the lead on evaluating consistency among future City budgets, Capital Improvement Programs, and the Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Updating

It is intended that an update of this Plan take place at least every five years unless otherwise directed by the City Council to occur sooner. In making a determination of when a Plan update should be initiated, a prime consideration is the magnitude of the changes that have occurred in the City since the Plan was last updated. For instance, unexpected changes in the economy, the environment, traffic congestion, projected growth, or other issues, may trigger a Plan update in less than five years.

When conducting a Plan update, Wilson will thoroughly re-evaluate the vision, goals, policies, and implementation actions of this Plan and change or remove those no longer relevant to the community. A Plan update will also include a thorough review of the validity and current quality of all information contained within the Plan and should include opportunities for involvement by the public, boards and commissions, elected and appointed officials, staff, and other affected interests.

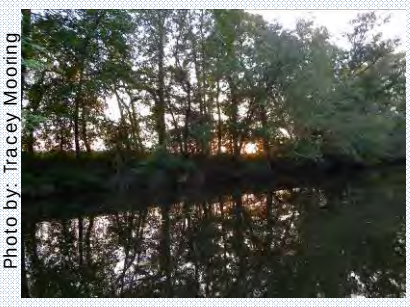
~ *A Day in the Life of Wilson* ~

Photo by: Judith Zampella

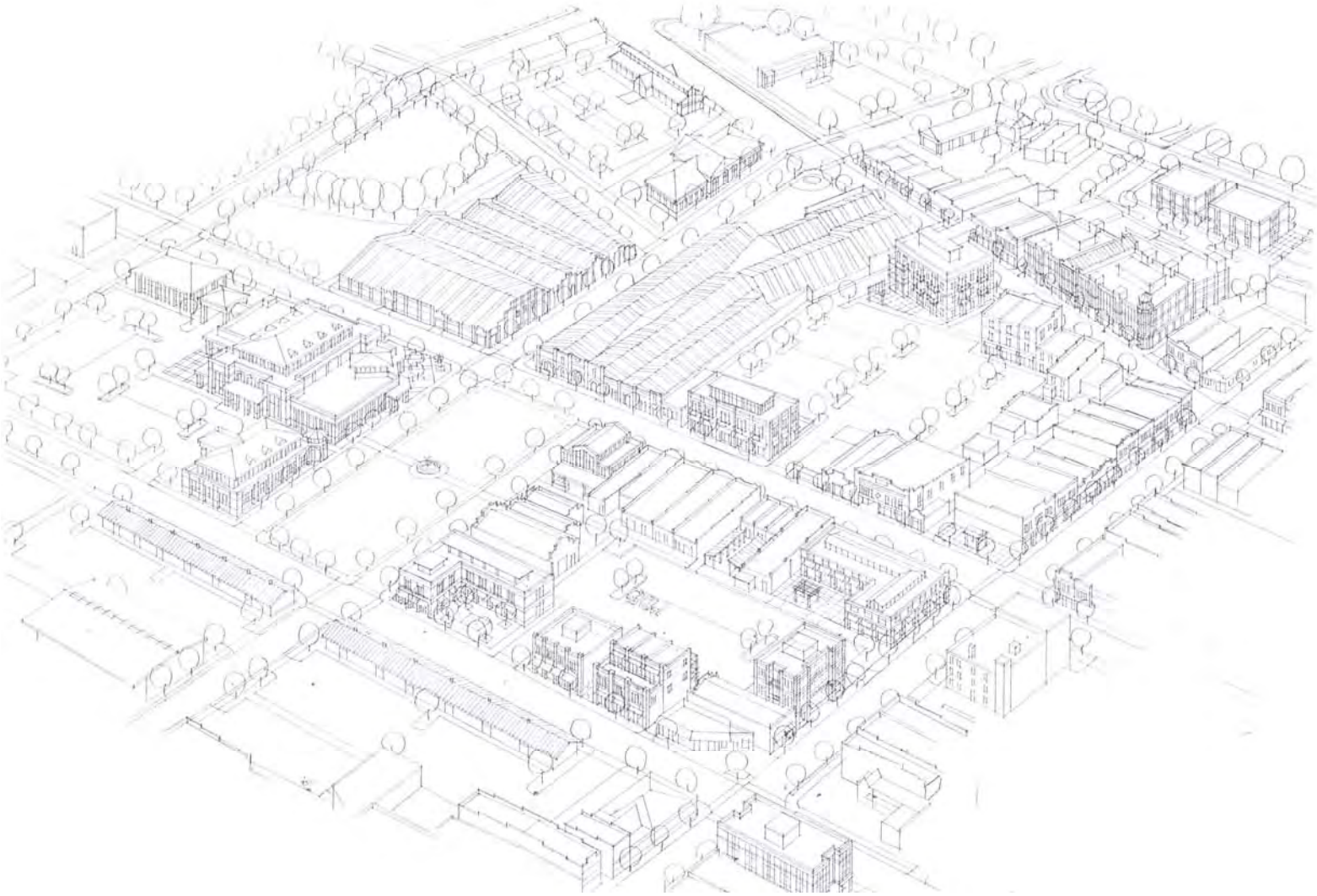
Photo by: Laura Etheridge

Photo by: Michael Herring

Photo by: Tracey Mooring



PART 5: BACKGROUND INFORMATION



APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

A

Access Management

Systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

An ordinance requiring a determination of the adequacy of public facilities to accommodate growth resulting from approval of a development application.

Affordable Housing

Housing which has a sales price or rent within the means of a low or moderate-income household as defined by local, state, or federal legislation.

Arterial Street

A class of street serving major traffic movements (high-speed, high volume) for travel between major points.

B

Best Management Practice (BMP)

Any activities, practices, procedures, programs, or other conservation measures designed to prevent or reduce the discharge of chemical, physical, or biological pollutants directly or indirectly into surface water or groundwater to control soil loss and achieve water quality conservation goals.

Bikeway

A corridor designated and/or reserved for bicyclists.

Buffer

An area of land established to separate land uses, or a natural area design to intercept pollutants and manage other environmental concerns or provide for open space.

Build-out

The point at which all land eligible for development has been developed to its maximum allowed level.

C

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Generally a short-range plan which identifies capital projects (such as transportation improvements) and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule, and identifies financing options.

Charrette

A collaborative design-oriented workshop focused on building consensus and generating solutions or alternatives to address a problem or topic.

Cluster Development

A development design technique which concentrates buildings on a portion or portions of the site to leave the remainder undeveloped and used for agriculture, open space, or natural resource protection.

Collector Street

A road into which local roads funnel and which, in turn, carries traffic to an arterial road. Ideally a collector road would have few private entrances accessing it directly.

Complete Street

Streets designed and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Complete streets exhibit the following qualities: they are great places for people; are defined by buildings and entrances, not roadway; enhance the places that they serve; and form community character and shape civic design.

Conservation Easement

A property interest or right granted by the landowner to a land trust to maintain in a natural state or limit the use of that land.

Corridor Plan

A plan focused on managing development along a transportation corridor.

Cross-Section

A plan showing the proposed design of a roadway, often including all components of the public right-of-way such as sidewalk, travel lanes, median, curb, and gutter, and sometimes other elements such as landscaped parkways and buildings.

D

Density

The average number of dwelling units per gross acre of land on a development site, including all land within the land within the boundaries of the site for which the density is calculated.

Design Standards

Regulations adopted in the community's development code that sets forth criteria for the physical development of a site, including requirements pertaining to heights, landscaping, parking, setbacks, and other physical requirements. Guidelines provide suggested direction whereas standards are mandatory.

Development

The process of converting land from one use to another, including the rezoning of land; subdivision of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation, or enlargement of any structure; and any mining, excavation, or landfill..

E

Economic Development

Efforts that seek to improve the economic well-being of a community, including job creation and tax base growth.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Areas that have limited suitability for development due to their natural resource values, such as wetlands, steep slopes, and distinctive wildlife habitat areas.

F

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

A comparison of the total floor area of a building to the size of the land of that location.

Floodplain

An area indicated on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maps that is subject to periodic flooding, which creates a hazard to construction located thereon and, if restricted, causes flooding of upstream properties.

G

Goal

A statement about the community's desired direction. Goals are general expressions of community values and, therefore, may not be quantifiable or time-dependent. Goals give decision-makers and residents a clear idea about the community's intended direction.

H

Historic District

An area designated by the city council as an overlay district within which are found: (1) historic landmarks as established by the state board of historic resources;(2) any historic structure;(3) any historic areas;(4) areas of unique architectural value located within designated conservation, rehabilitation or redevelopment districts; and/or (5) parcels of land contiguous to arterial streets or highways found by the city council to be significant routes of tourist access to the locality or to designated historic landmarks, buildings, structures or districts in the city or a contiguous locality.

I

Implementation

The act or process of carrying out or fulfilling plans and proposals.

Infill Development

The development of housing or other uses on vacant parcels or sites within already built-up areas.

J

Jurisdiction

A unit of local government such as a county or town. Also used to refer to the legal authority to enact and administer zoning regulations.

L

Land Use

The branch of planning that oversees the use of land, with focus on land use plans, zoning regulations, and growth management strategies.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1998, LEED provides a suite of development standards for environmentally sustainable construction. LEED is also a certification that development professionals can acquire that identifies their environmentally sustainable construction expertise.

Level of Service (LOS) Standard

An expression of the minimum capacity required to satisfy needs for a particular service or facility.

Local Street

A street that serves primarily to provide direct access to abutting land and access to the higher order street systems. It offers most local level of mobility and service to through traffic movement is usually discouraged.

Low Impact Development (LID)

Low impact development is a term that has come to describe best management practices for stormwater runoff management through on-site design, such as a rain garden. This contrasts with traditional stormwater techniques that divert water off a development site and into a traditional stormwater system.

M

Mixed-Use Development

A building or development that incorporates two or more different uses such as, but not limited to, residential, office, retail, public, or entertainment. Vertical mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of uses within the same building, typically with different uses on different floors. Horizontal mixed-use developments incorporate a mix of different uses within different buildings in a common development.

Multi-Family Residential

A residential classification in which multiple separate dwelling units are located within a single building, such as an apartment building.

Municipality

A city, town or community incorporated for local self-government.

N

Needs

Any data, information, policies, programs, or other needs identified during the planning process that should be addressed in future adopted implementation strategies.

New Urbanism

Also known as 'traditional neighborhood development,' 'neo-traditional,' or 'village-style' development, this type of development typically includes principles such as pedestrian-friendly road design, interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, preservation of natural areas, satisfaction of requirements for stormwater management, mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and/or reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

O

Objective

A specific end, condition, or state that is an intermediate step toward reaching a goal. It should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time-specific. An objective may pertain to one particular aspect of a goal or it may be one of several successive steps toward goal achievement. Consequently, there may be more than one objective for each goal. Objectives provide specific guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in the community.

Open Space

Any parcel or area of water or land that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purpose of (1) the preservation of natural resources; (2) the managed production of resources; (3) outdoor recreation; or (4) public health and safety.

Overlay District

A zoning district, applied over one or more other districts that contains provisions for special features or conditions, such as historic buildings, affordable housing, or wetlands, in addition to the requirements of the underlying zoning.

P

Policy

A specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment of the legal legislative body to a particular course of action. A policy is based on and helps implement a comprehensive plan's objectives. A policy is carried out by implementation measures. For a policy to be useful as a guide to action it must be clear and unambiguous. Clear policies are particularly important when it comes to judging whether or not zoning decisions, subdivisions, public works projects, etc., are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Principle

An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine guiding general plan policies, proposals, standard, and implementation measures. Principles are based on community values. In practice, principles

underlie the process of developing a comprehensive plan and may or may not need to be explicitly stated in the plan itself.

Public Facility

Land uses including schools, day care facilities, churches, libraries, jails, recreational centers, airports, hospitals, fairgrounds, utility lines, power substations, fire stations, police/law enforcement stations, and government offices.

Public Infrastructure

Facilities such as roads, water and sewer lines, treatment plans, utility lines, and other permanent physical facilities in the built environment needed to sustain industrial, residential, or commercial activities.

R

Redevelopment

The placement of reconstruction of buildings that are not making efficient and effective use of the land on which they are located, or are in substandard physical condition.

Right-of-way

A strip or portion of land that is dedicated or reserved for transportation, utility, or other public facility purposes.

S

Single-Family Residential

A residential classification in which a dwelling unit is intended for occupancy by one family. It may be independent from any other structure (detached) or that may share common walls with an adjoining structure (attached).

Strategy

Specific courses of actions to be taken to achieve the community's goals and objectives.

Stormwater Runoff

The portion of the total precipitation that does permeate into the soil but instead flows across the ground or other surface and eventually reaches a watercourse.

Sustainability

The concept that a community meets the needs of the present population while ensuring that future generations have the same or better opportunities. The sustainability concept traditionally incorporates economic, social, and environmental themes and can be used as a way of guiding development policy within a community.

T

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Urban development designed to accommodate pedestrian and non-vehicular forms of transportation on-site with a mix of uses that support transit ridership.

Transportation Plan

A plan that identifies transportation needs for a region or municipality and creates a framework for project priorities.

U

Urban Development Area

An area designated by a locality that is appropriate for higher density development due to proximity to transportation facilities, the availability of a public or community water and sewer system, or proximity to a city, town, or other developed area.

W

Walkable/ Pedestrian-Friendly Development

Pedestrian-friendly developments are designed with an emphasis primarily on the sidewalk and on pedestrian access to the site and building, rather than auto access and parking areas. A walkable environment should have some of these characteristics: well-maintained and continuous wide sidewalks, well-lighted streets, high street connectivity, a safety buffer between pedestrians and motorized vehicles (such as trees, shrubs, streetside parked cars, green space between pedestrians and cars), minimal building setbacks, cleanliness, and land use patterns characterized as mixed-use.

Z

Zoning

The division of the community into districts, and the establishment of regulations governing the use, placement, spacing and size of land and buildings.

APPENDIX B: MAPS

Existing Conditions Maps

- Regional Context
- Planning Area
- Annexation History
- Land Ownership
- Environmental Features
- Water Supply Watersheds
- General Zoning
- Average Annual Daily Trip Counts (Transportation)
- Public Transit
- Neighborhood Associations
- Vacant & Boarded Up Structures
- Historical & Cultural Assets
- Water & Wastewater
- Fire & Rescue
- Police
- Schools

Growth and Future Land Use Maps

- Growth Areas
- Tiered Service Areas

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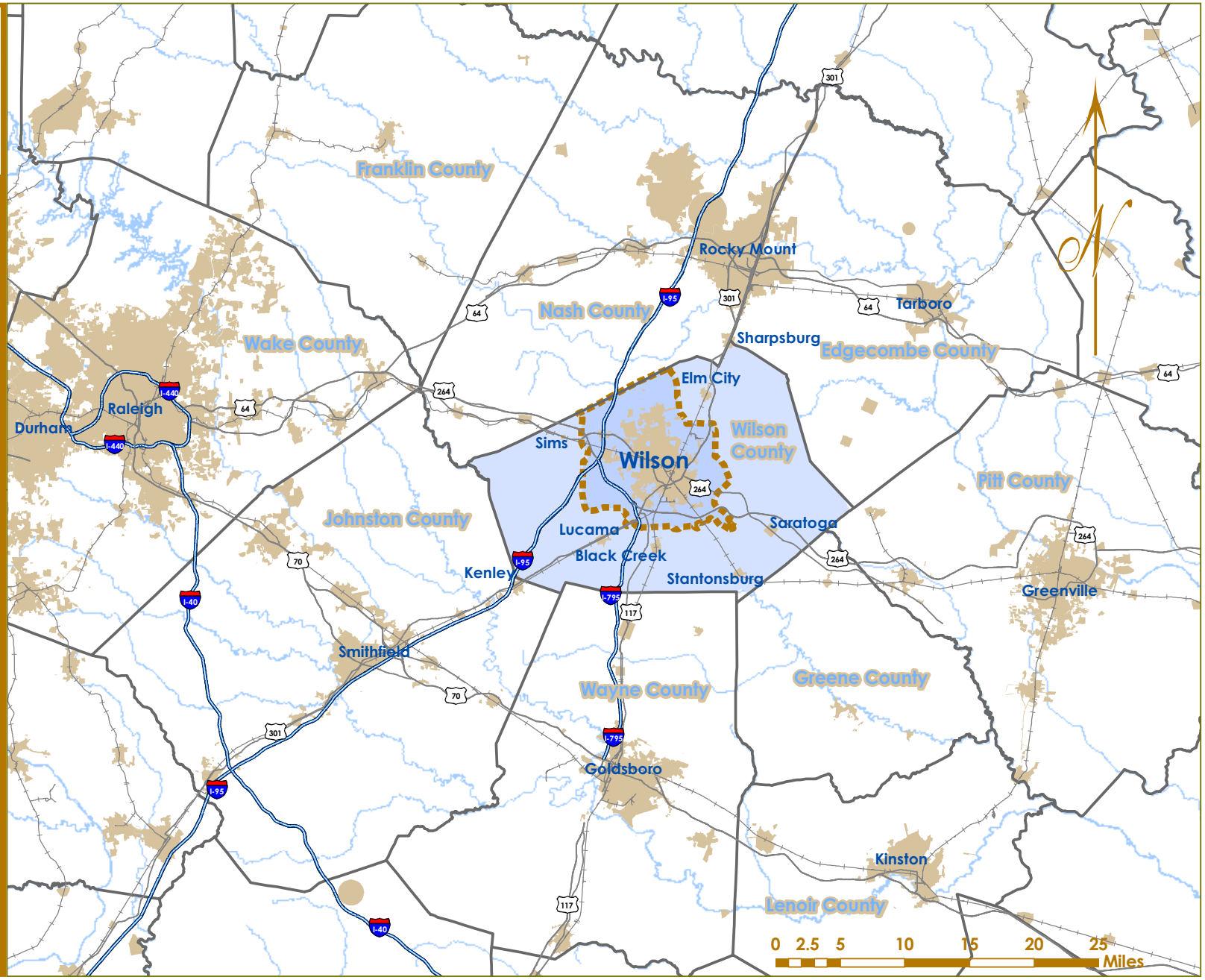
REGIONAL CONTEXT

LEGEND

- Wilson's Planning Area
- Municipalities
- County Boundaries



Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department &
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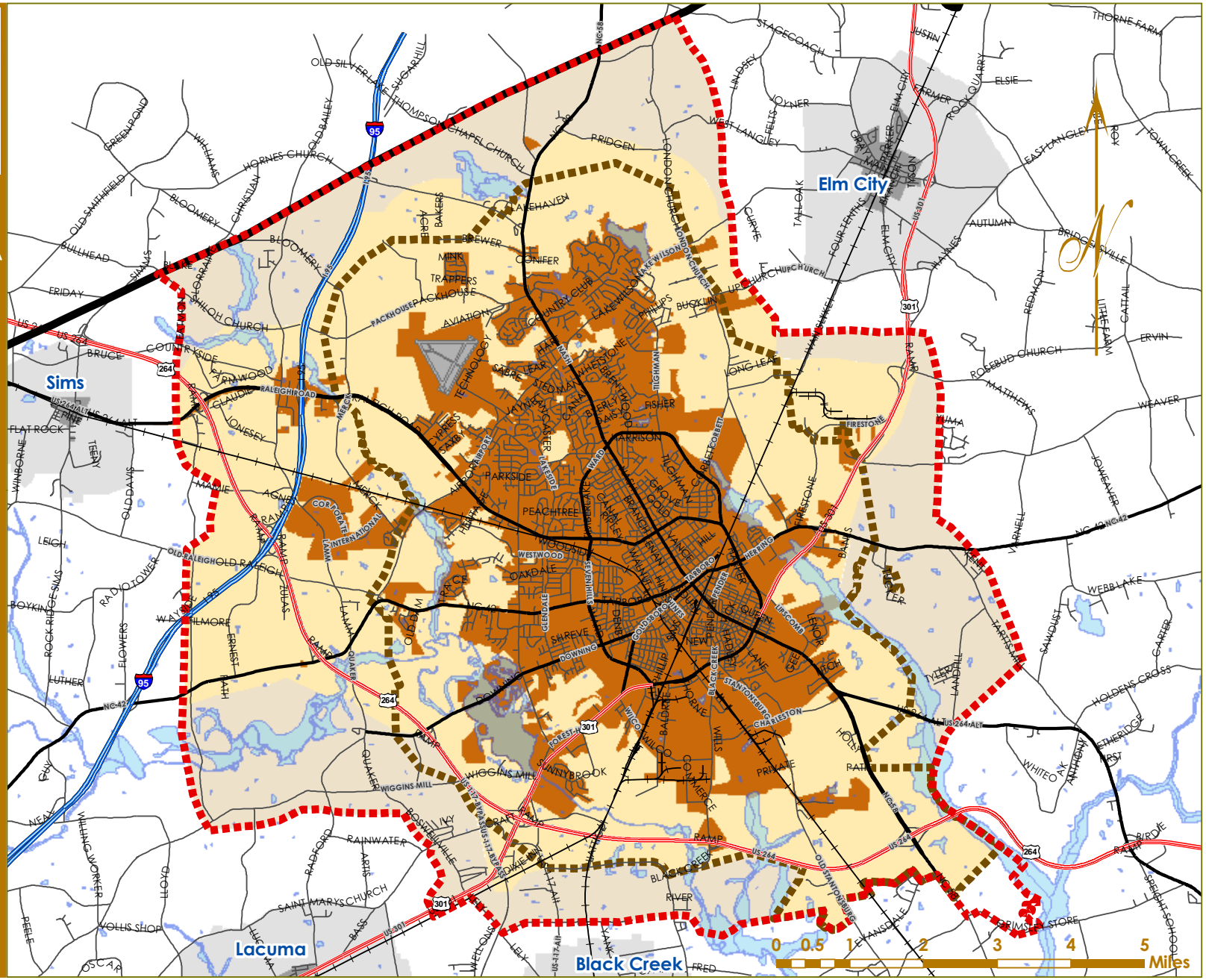
PLANNING AREA



LEGEND

- Wilson County
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Planning Area
- Neighboring Jurisdiction
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction of Neighboring Community
- Wilson Primary Growth Area Per 2008 County Plan (5-10 years)
- Wilson Secondary Growth Area Per 2008 County Plan (10-20 years)
- Water Bodies

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department & Planning and Development Services Department

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ANNEXATION HISTORY

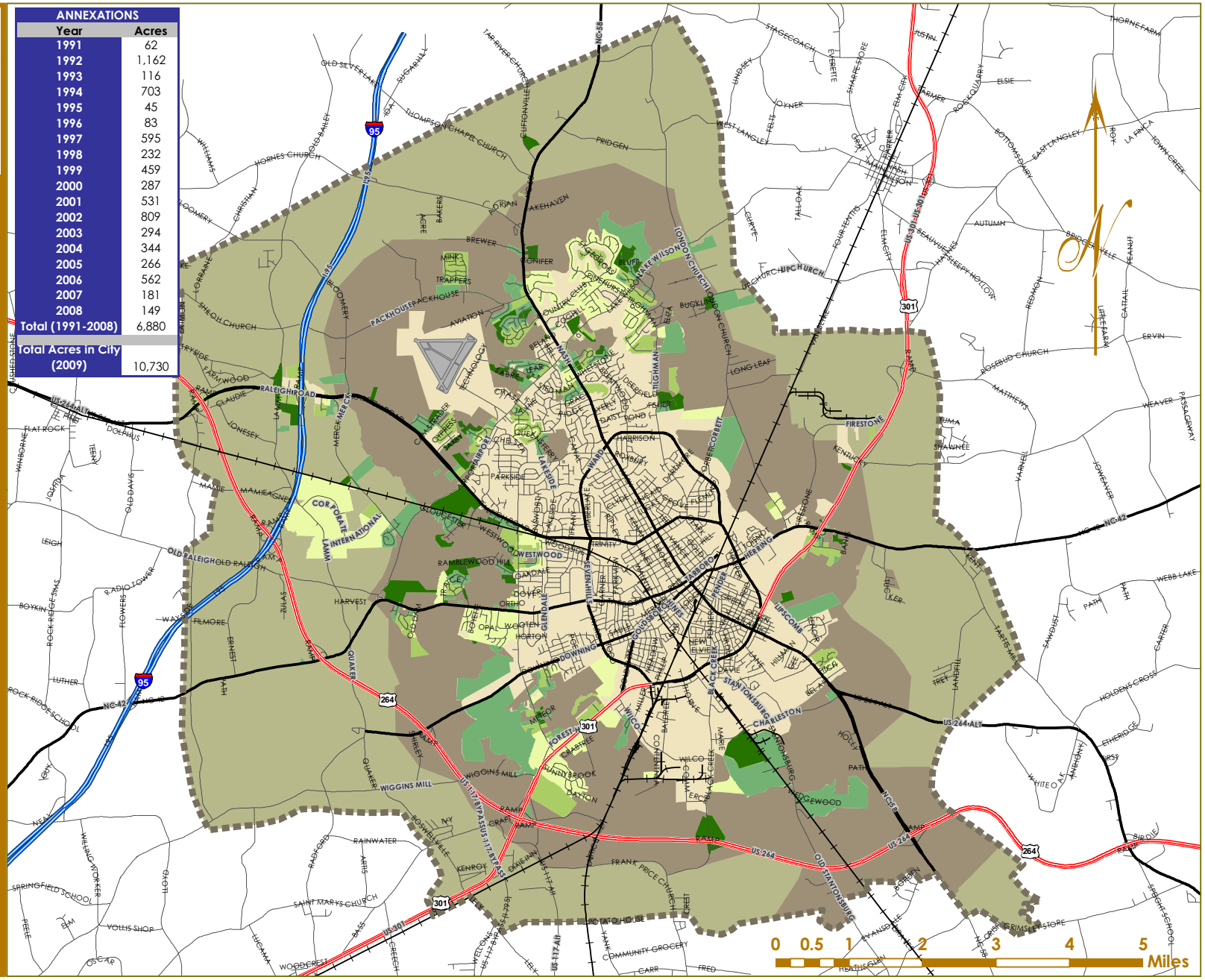
ANNEXATIONS	
Year	Acres
1991	62
1992	1,162
1993	116
1994	703
1995	45
1996	83
1997	595
1998	232
1999	459
2000	287
2001	531
2002	809
2003	294
2004	344
2005	266
2006	562
2007	181
2008	149
Total (1991-2008)	6,880
Total Acres in City (2009)	10,730

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Annexation History

- 1991-1995
- 1996-2000
- 2001-2005
- 2006-2008



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LAND OWNERSHIP

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Private Ownership
- Railroad (CSX)
- Colleges
- City of Wilson
- Wilson County
- State / Federal

LAND OWNERSHIP IN PLANNING AREA				
Land Owner	Acres	% of Total Acreage	Parcels	% of Total Parcels
Private	53,880	92%	23,561	97%
City	2,797	5%	614	3%
County	1,494	3%	96	0.4%
Colleges	140	0.2%	40	0.2%
State/Federal	18	0.03%	22	0.1%
Railroad	91	0.2%	12	0.05%
Total Public/Quasi-Public	4,540	8%	784	3%
Total	58,420	100%	24,345	100%

Data Source:

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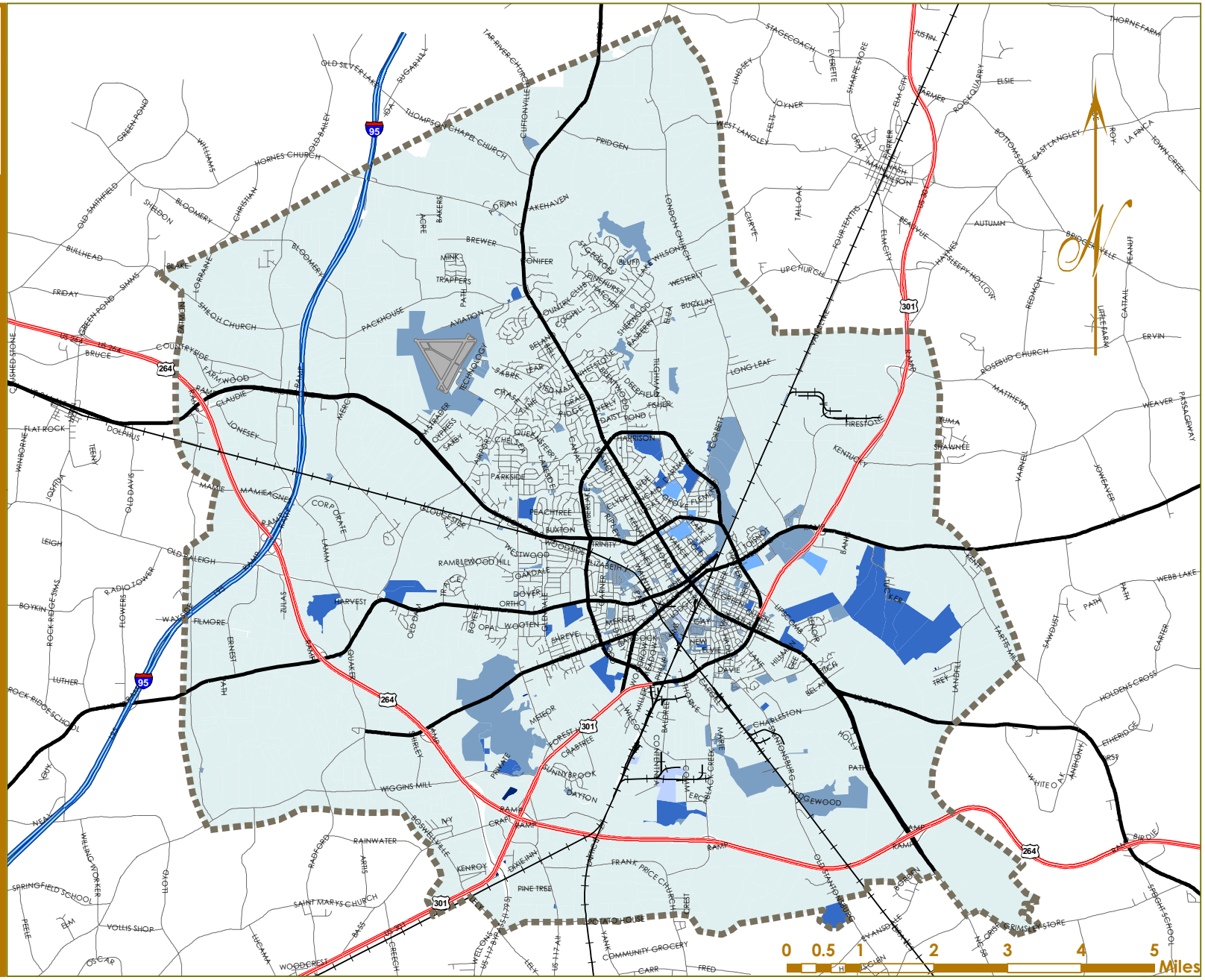

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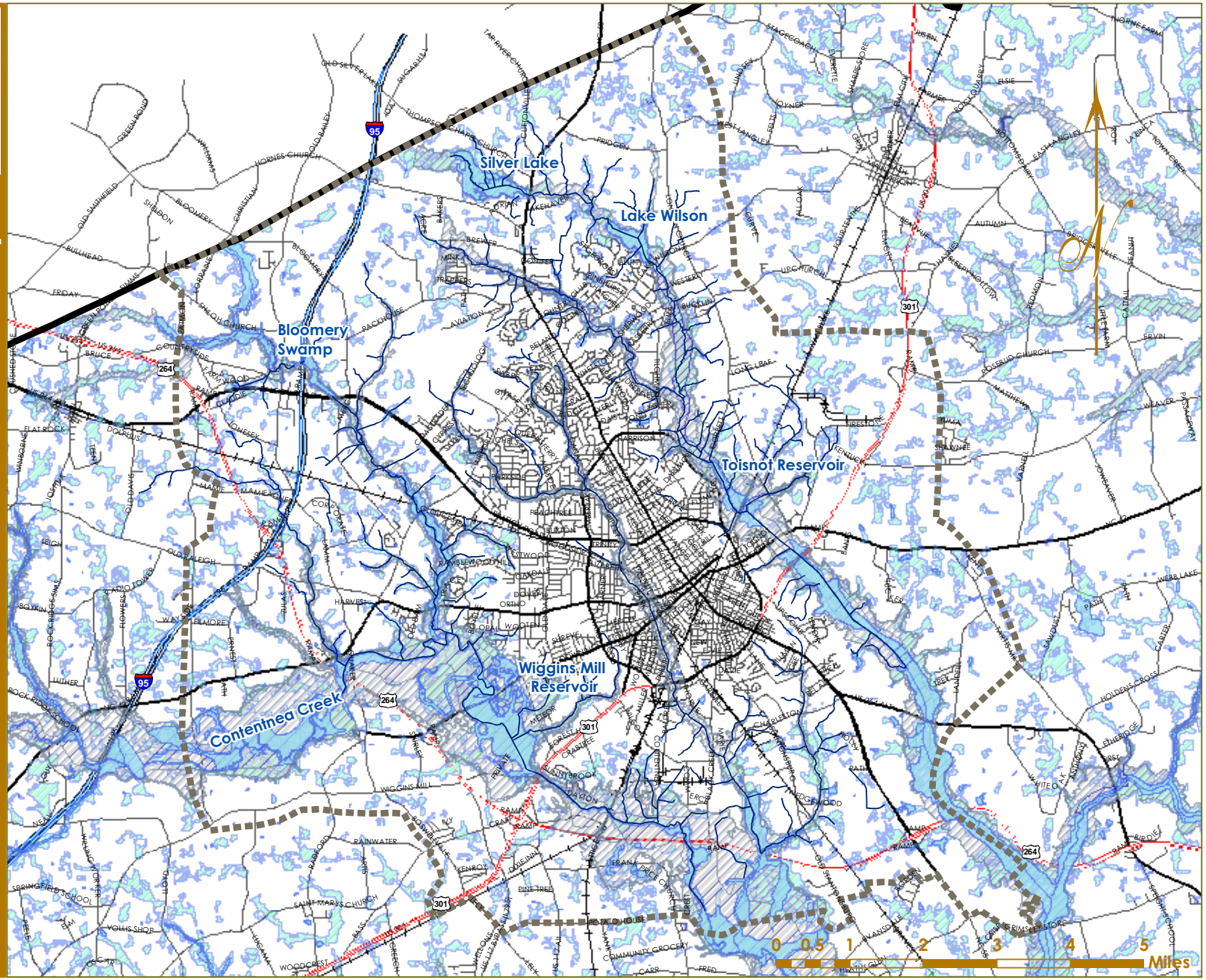
ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Wilson County

Environmental Features

- Water Bodies
- Neuse River Buffer
- Wetlands
- Floodway
- 100-year Floodplain
- 500-year Floodplain



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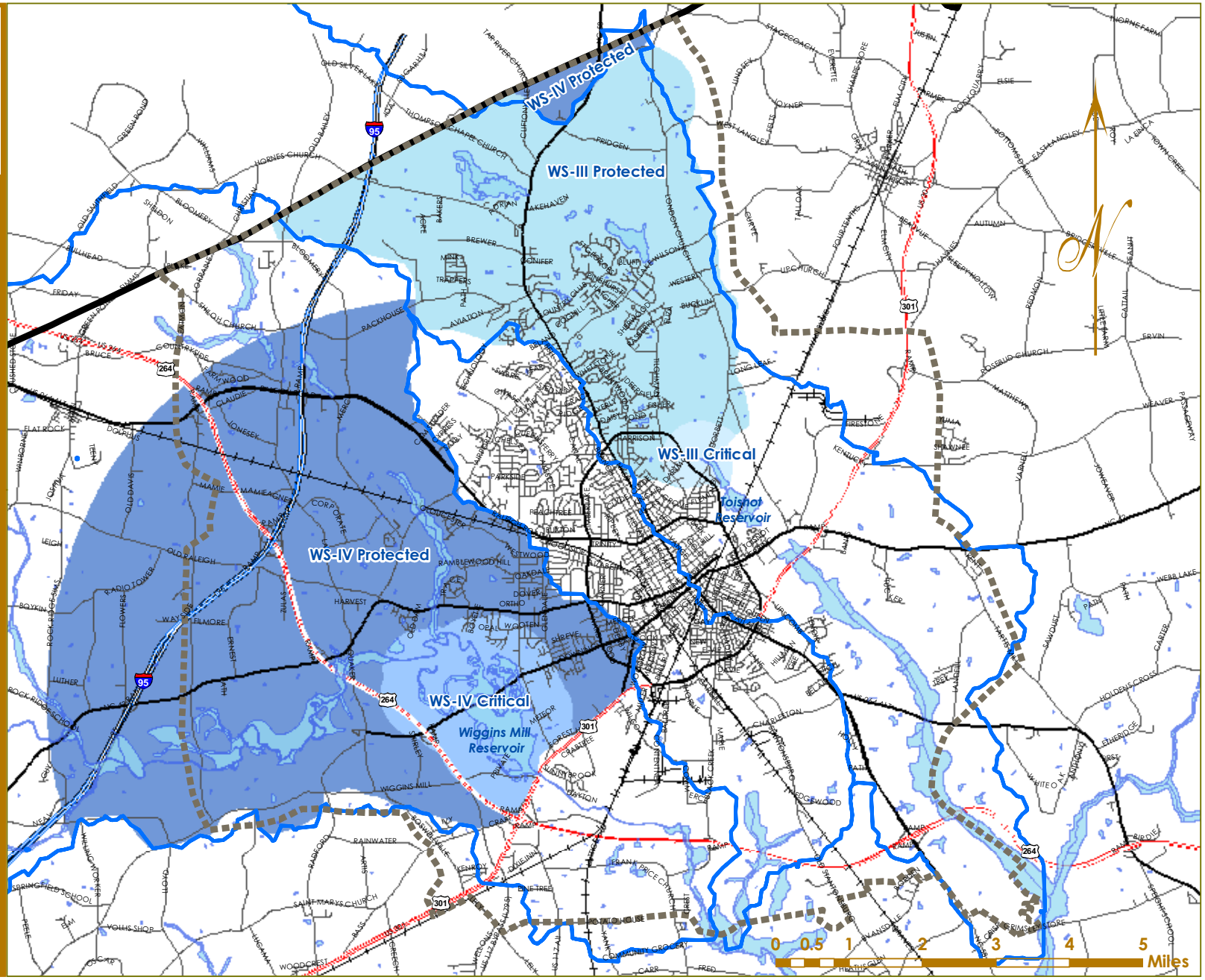
WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Wilson County

Environmental Features

- Water Bodies
- Drainage Basins
- Watershed III - Critical Area
- Watershed III - Protected Area
- Watershed IV - Critical Area
- Watershed IV - Protected Area



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GENERALIZED ZONING

LEGEND

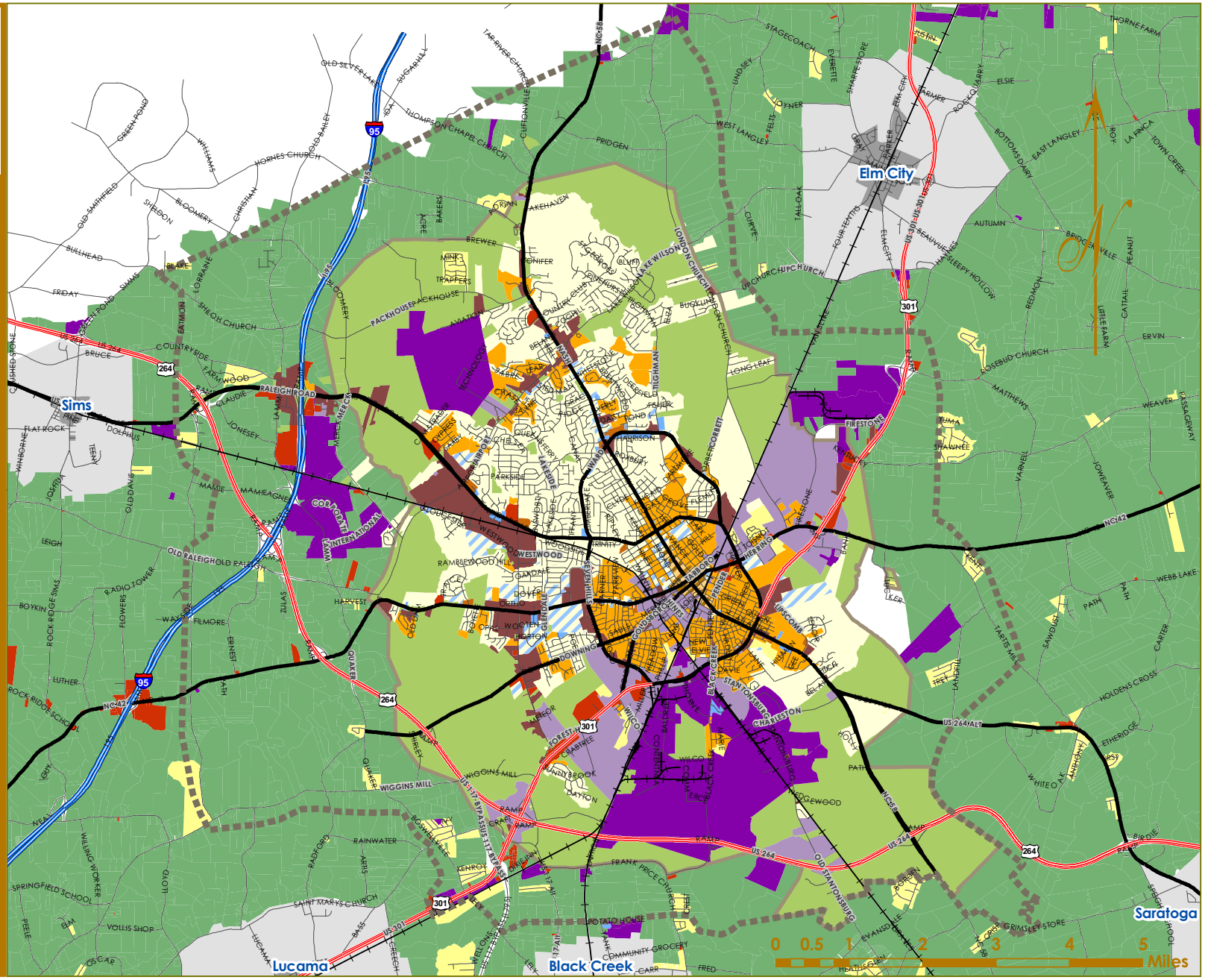
- Planning Area
- Wilson's Planning & Zoning Jurisdiction

City of Wilson Zoning

- Agricultural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Mobile / Manufactured Home Residential
- Single Family and Multifamily Mixed Residential
- Central Business District
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Office / Institutional
- Mixed-Use

Wilson County Zoning

- Agricultural Residential
- Single-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Office / Institutional



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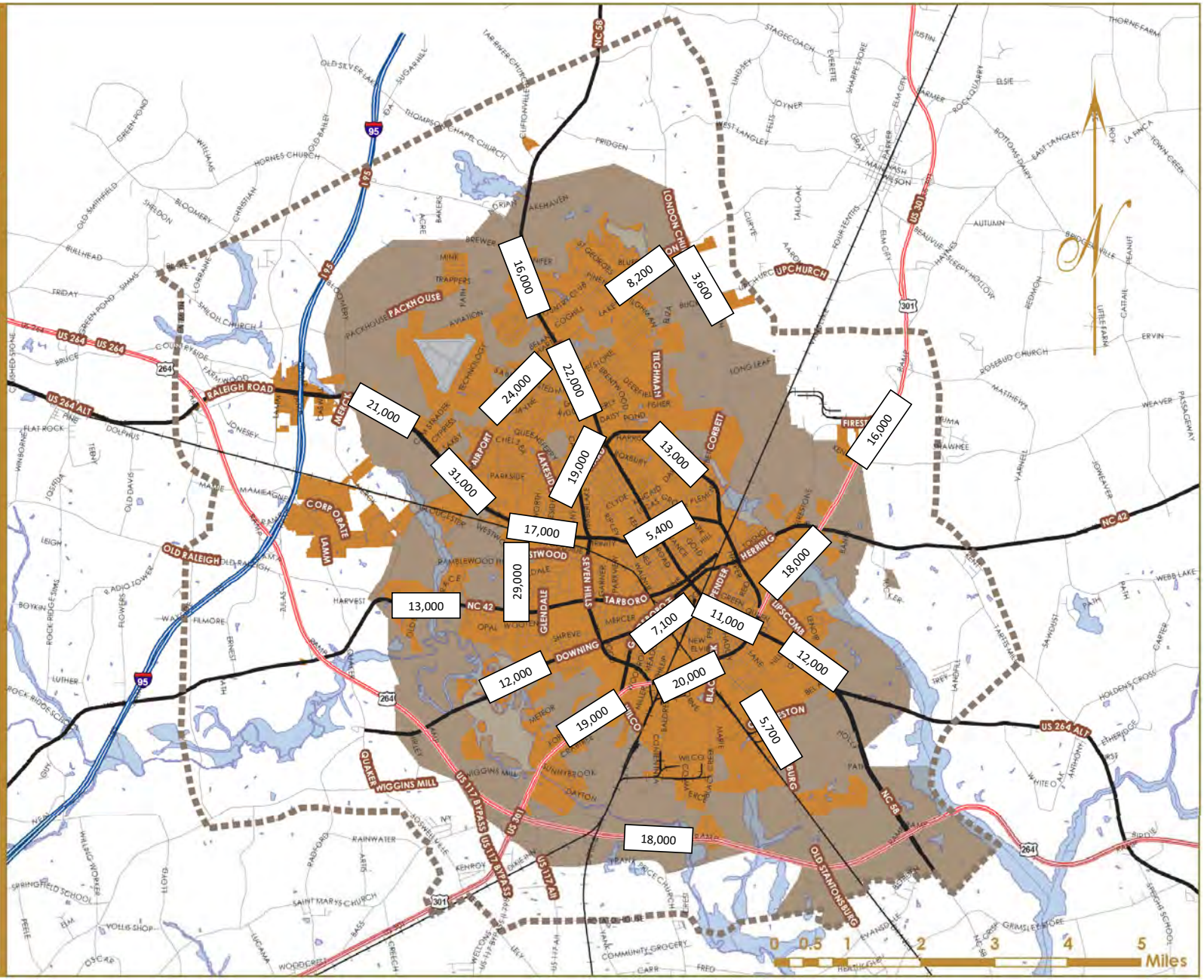
ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS



LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- 12,000 — Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), 2007, NCDOT

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department &
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MARCH 31, 2009

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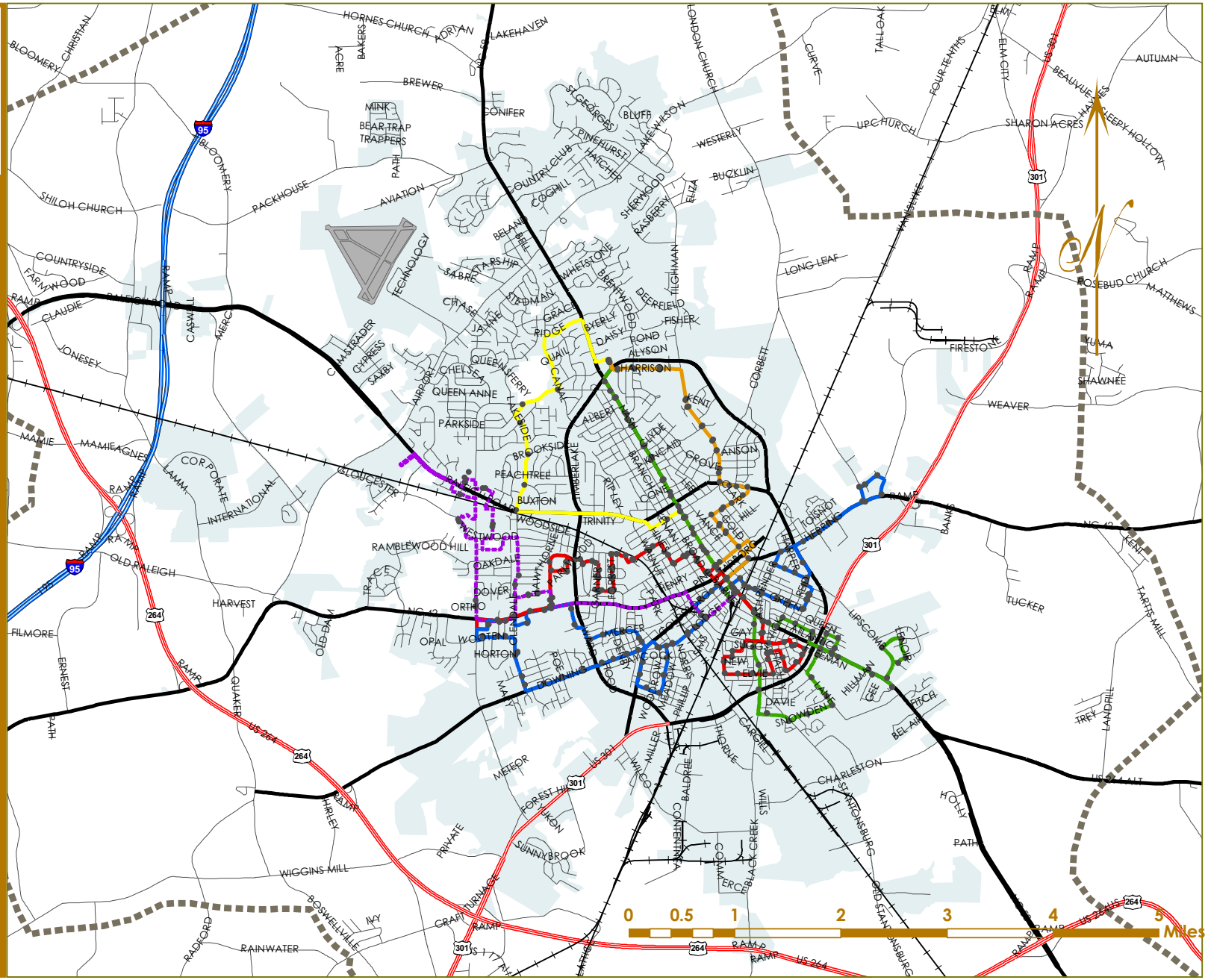
PUBLIC TRANSIT

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson

Bus Stops and Routes

- Bus Stop
- Blue Route
- Green Route
- Orange Route
- Red Route
- Yellow Route
- Shuttle Route



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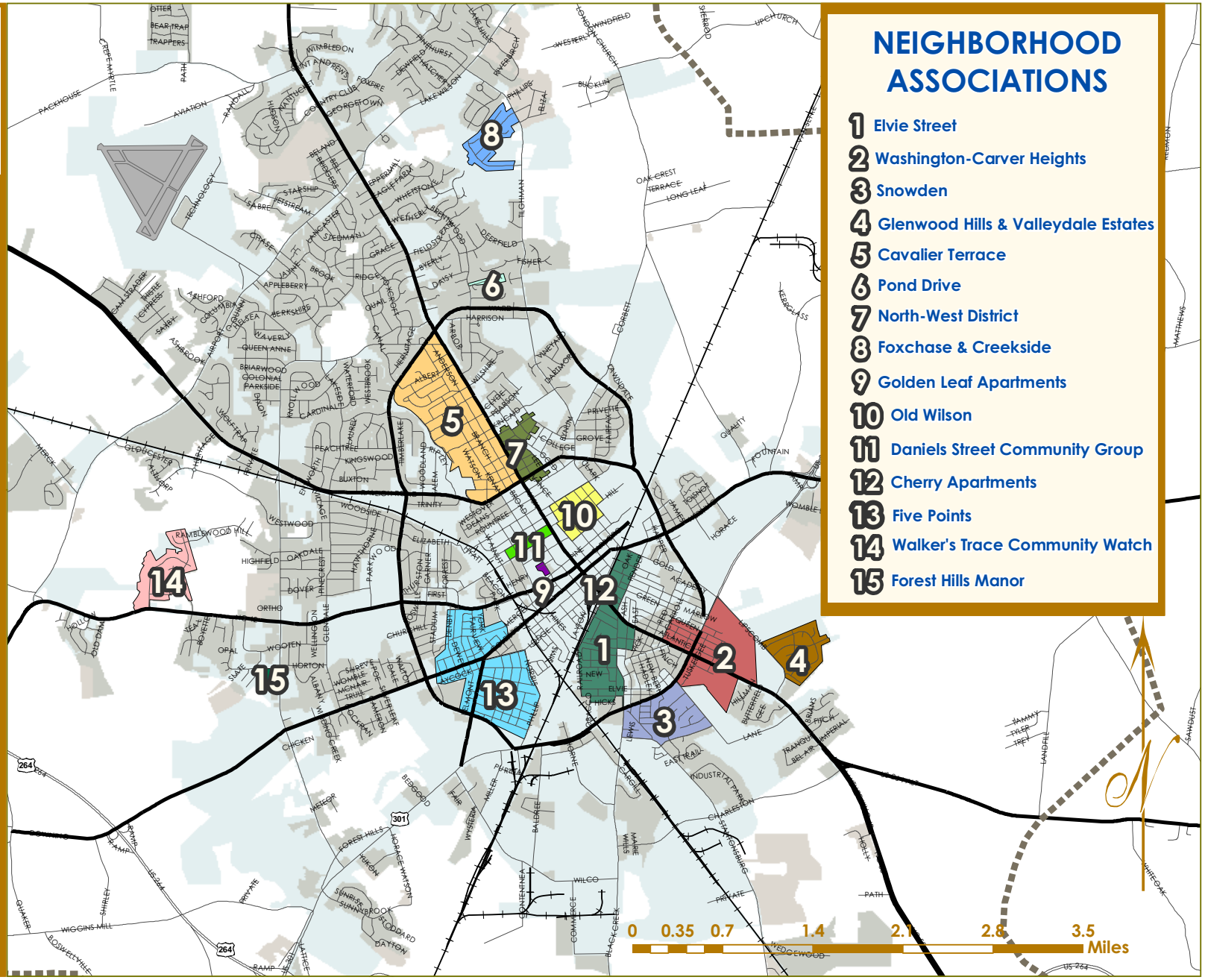
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Subdivisions



NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

1. Elvie Street
2. Washington-Carver Heights
3. Snowden
4. Glenwood Hills & Valleydale Estates
5. Cavalier Terrace
6. Pond Drive
7. North-West District
8. Foxchase & Creekside
9. Golden Leaf Apartments
10. Old Wilson
11. Daniels Street Community Group
12. Cherry Apartments
13. Five Points
14. Walker's Trace Community Watch
15. Forest Hills Manor

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

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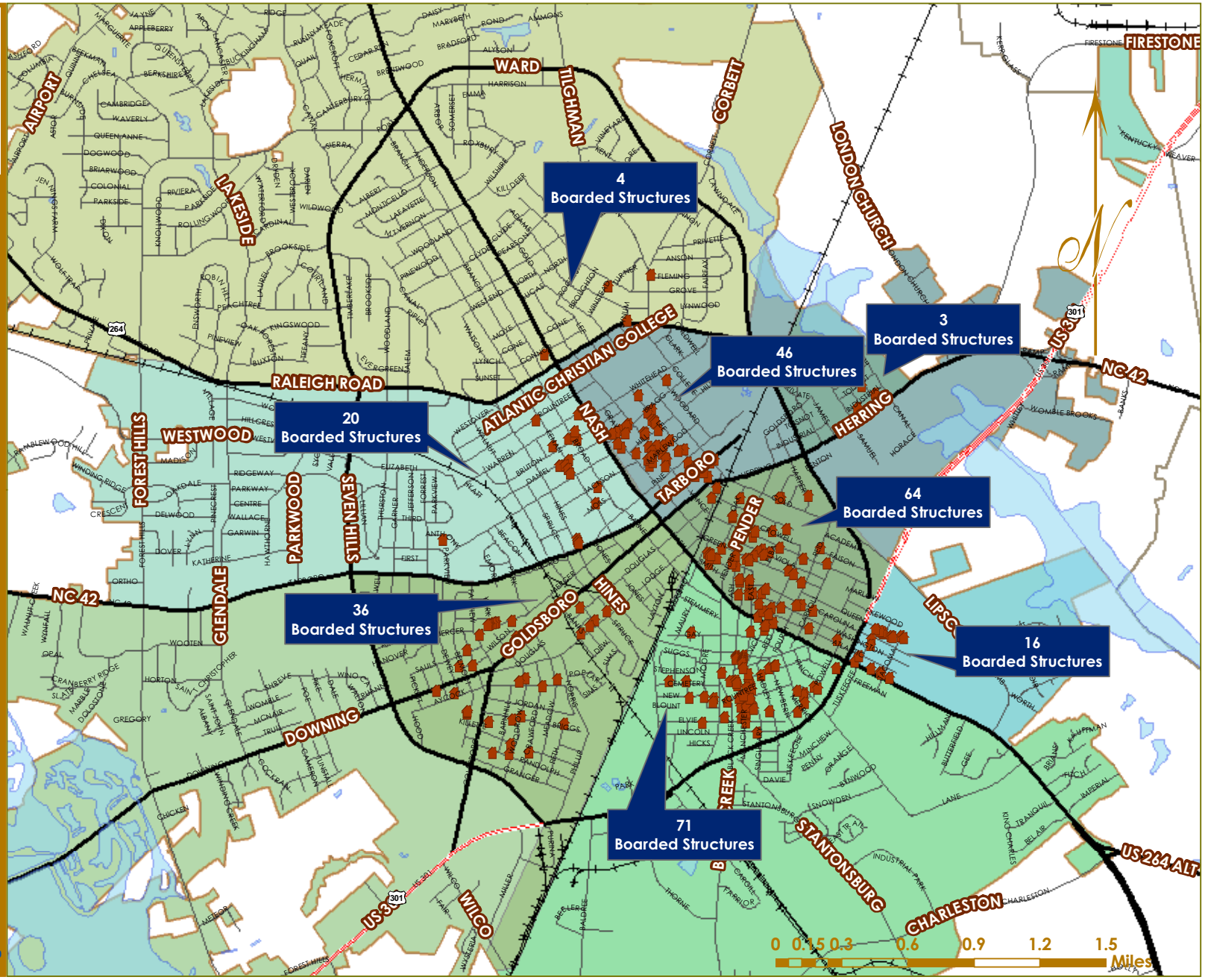
VACANT AND BOARDED-UP STRUCTURES

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Wilson's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Water Bodies
- Vacant and Boarded-Up Structure



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HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS

LEGEND

- City of Wilson
- Colleges
- Cultural Asset
- Locally Recognized Historic Structure
- Federally Recognized Historic Structure

Historic Districts

- Broad-Kenan (Local)
- Downtown-Tobacco Warehouse (Federal)
- East Wilson (Federal)
- Old Wilson (Local)
- West Nash (Local)

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department & Planning and Development Services Department

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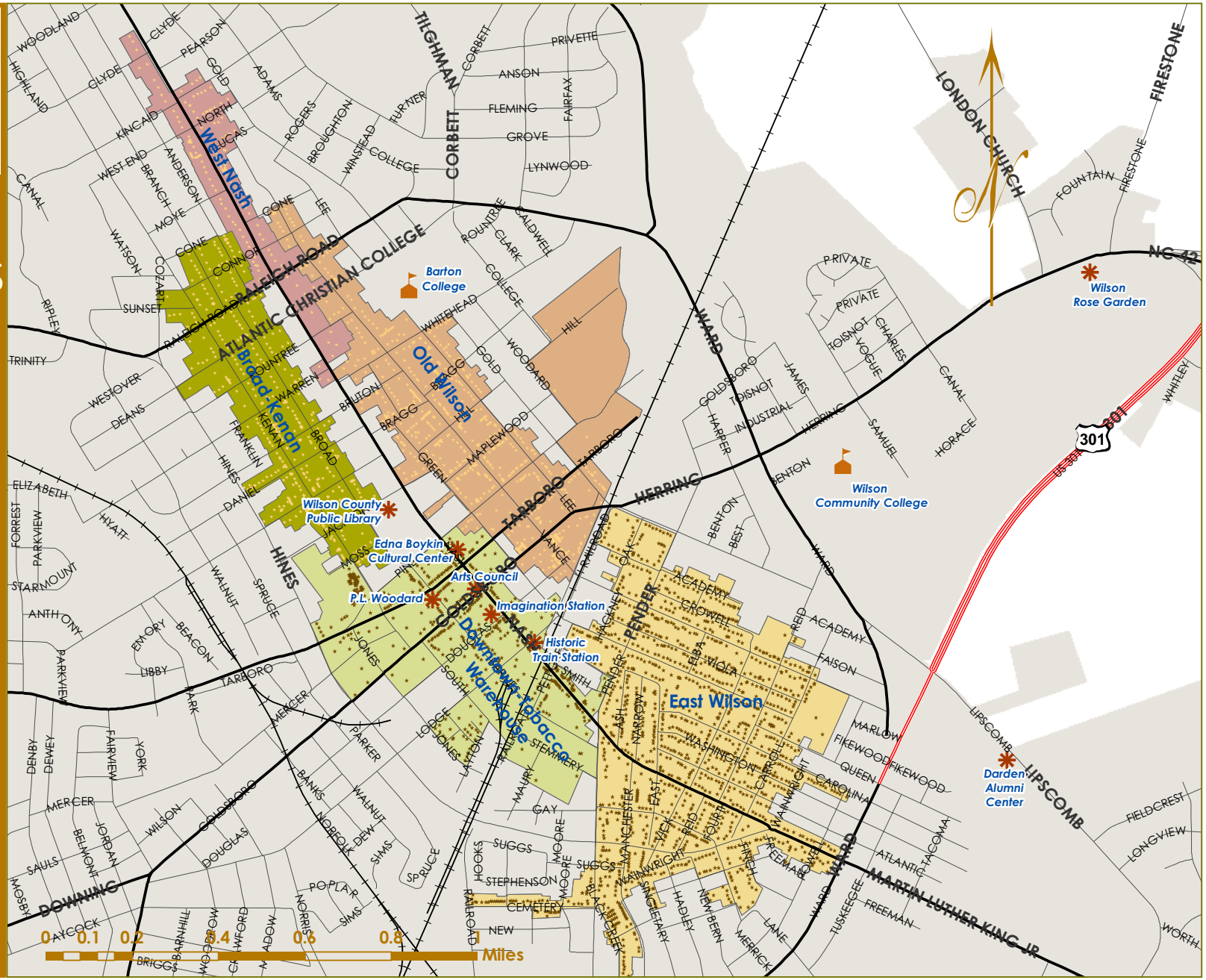

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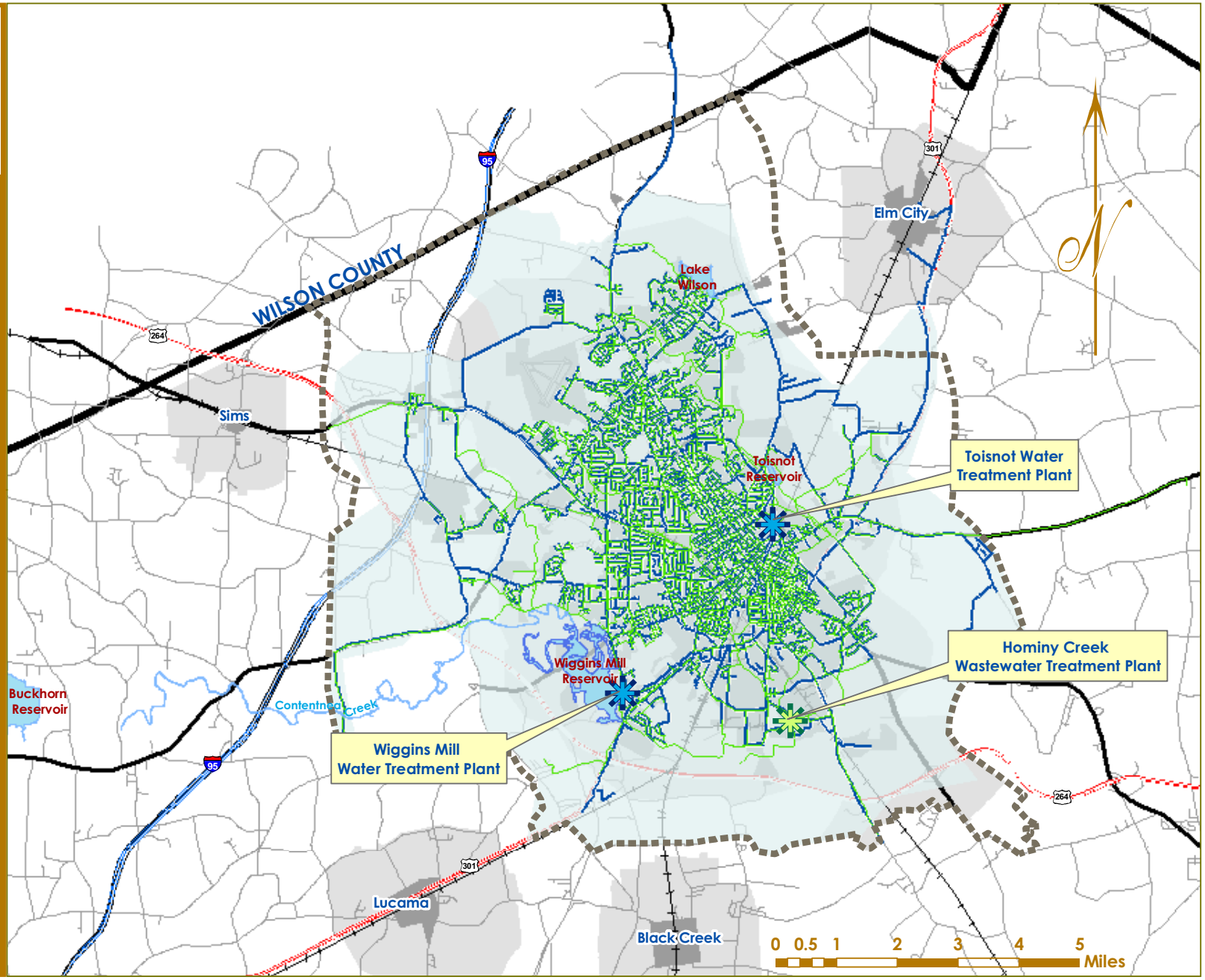
WATER AND WASTEWATER

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Water Bodies

Water and Wastewater Facilities

- Water System Service Area
- Water Treatment Plant
- Water Main
- Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Sanitary Sewer (Wastewater) Main



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FIRE AND RESCUE

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson

Wilson Fire-Rescue Districts / Stations

- Fire Station
- Fire District #1
- Fire District #2
- Fire District #3
- Fire District #4
- Fire District #5

Wilson County Fire Districts

- ST4
- ST5
- ST6
- ST7
- ST8
- ST9
- ST10
- ST11

Data Source:

City of Wilson IT Services Department &
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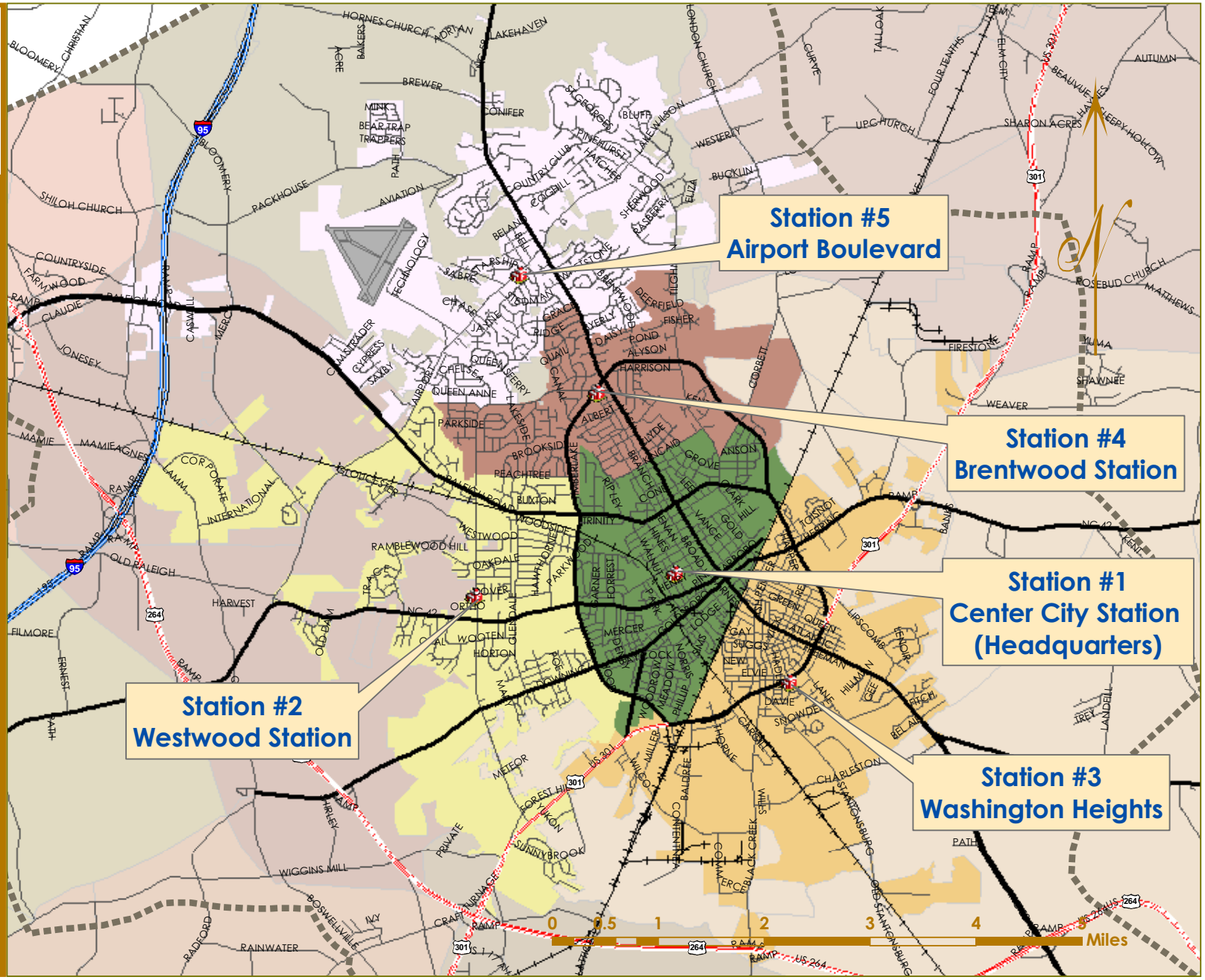

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

LEGEND

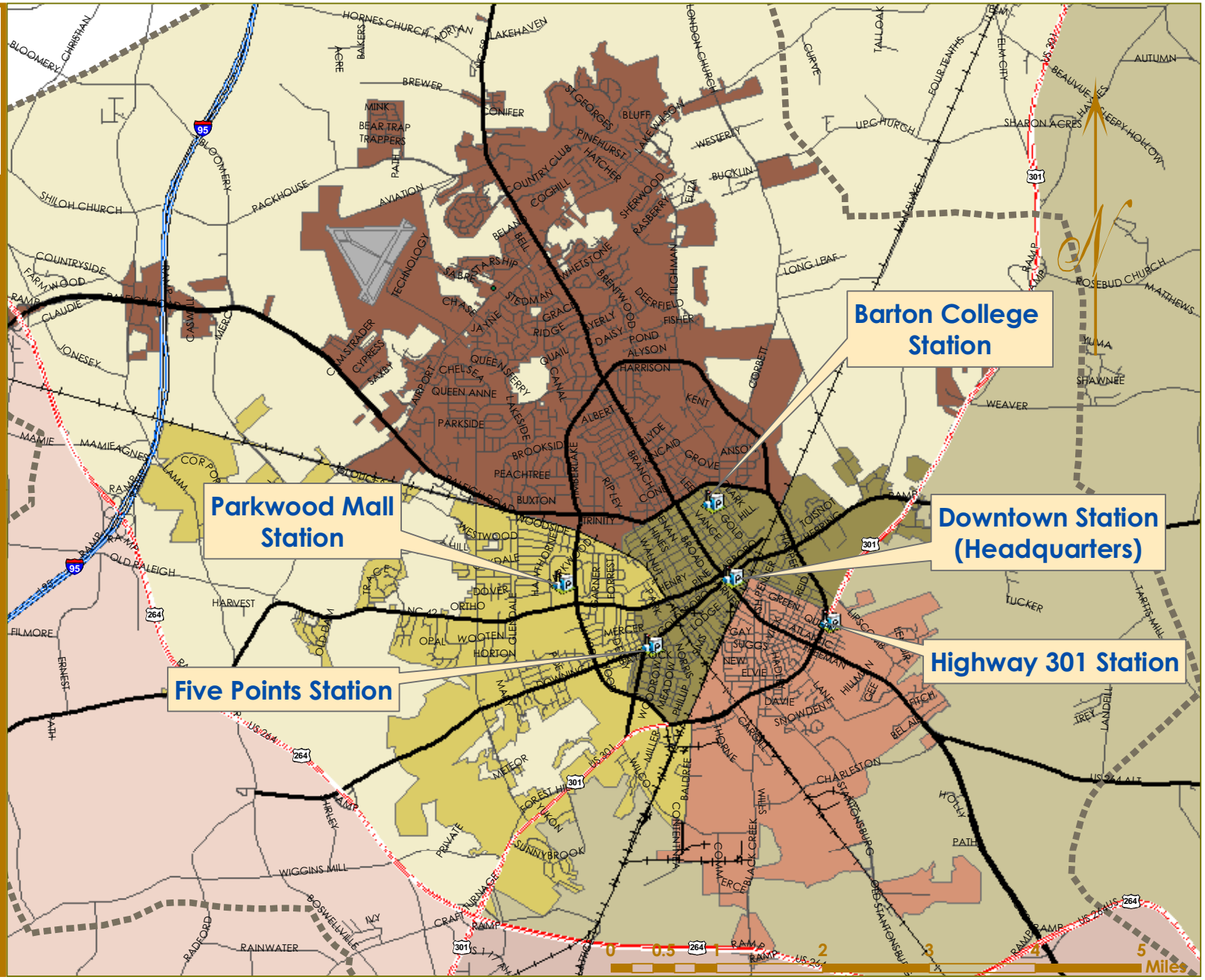
- Planning Area

Wilson Police Districts / Stations

- Police Station
- Central District
- North District
- South District
- West District

Sheriff's Districts

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- District 4



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SCHOOLS

Map ID	NAME	TYPE
1	Adams Pre-School	PreSchool
2	B.O. Barnes Elementary School	Grade School K-5
3	Barton College	4 year college
4	Beddingfield High School	High School 9-12
5	Community Christian School	School K-12
6	Milton M. Daniels Learning Center	Alternative School 3-12
7	Charles H. Darden Middle School	Middle School 6-8
8	Eastern NC School for the Deaf	PreSchool to Grade 12
9	Elm City Elementary School	Grade School K-5
10	Elm City Middle School	Middle School 6-8
11	Fike High School	High School 9-12
12	Forest Hills Middle School	Middle School 6-8
13	Greenfield School	Preschool to Grade 12
14	Hunt High School	High School 9-12
15	Margeret Hearne Elementary School	Grade School K-5
16	New Hope Elementary School	Grade School K-5
17	Rock Ridge Elementary School	Grade School K-5
18	Sallie B. Howard School	Charter School K-8
19	Springfield Middle School	Middle School 6-8
20	St Therese Catholic School	Grade School Pre K-5
21	Toisnot Middle School	Middle School 6-8
22	Vick Elementary School	Grade School K-5
23	Vinsom-Bynum Elementary School	Grade School K-5
24	Wells Elementary School	Grade School K-5
25	Wilson Christian School	Infants to Grade 12
26	Wilson Community College	2 Year College
27	Winstead Elementary School	Grade School PreK-5
28	Jones Elementary	Grade School PreK-5

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- City of Wilson
- Schools

Elementary School Districts

- Barnes
- Elm City
- Gardners
- Hearne
- Lee Woodward
- Lucama
- New Hope
- Rock Ridge
- Stantonsburg
- Vick
- Vinson-Bynum
- Wells
- Winstead

Data Source:

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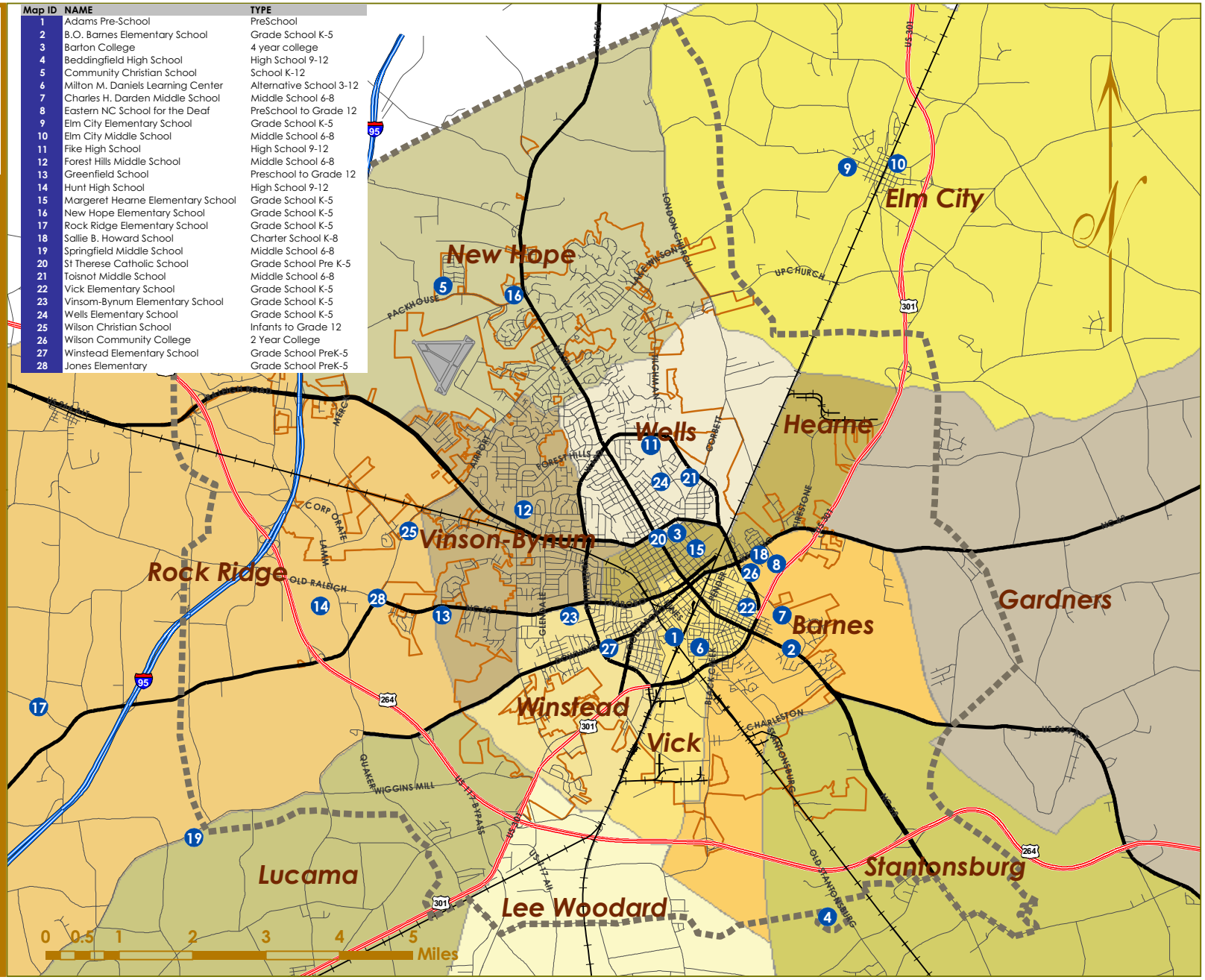

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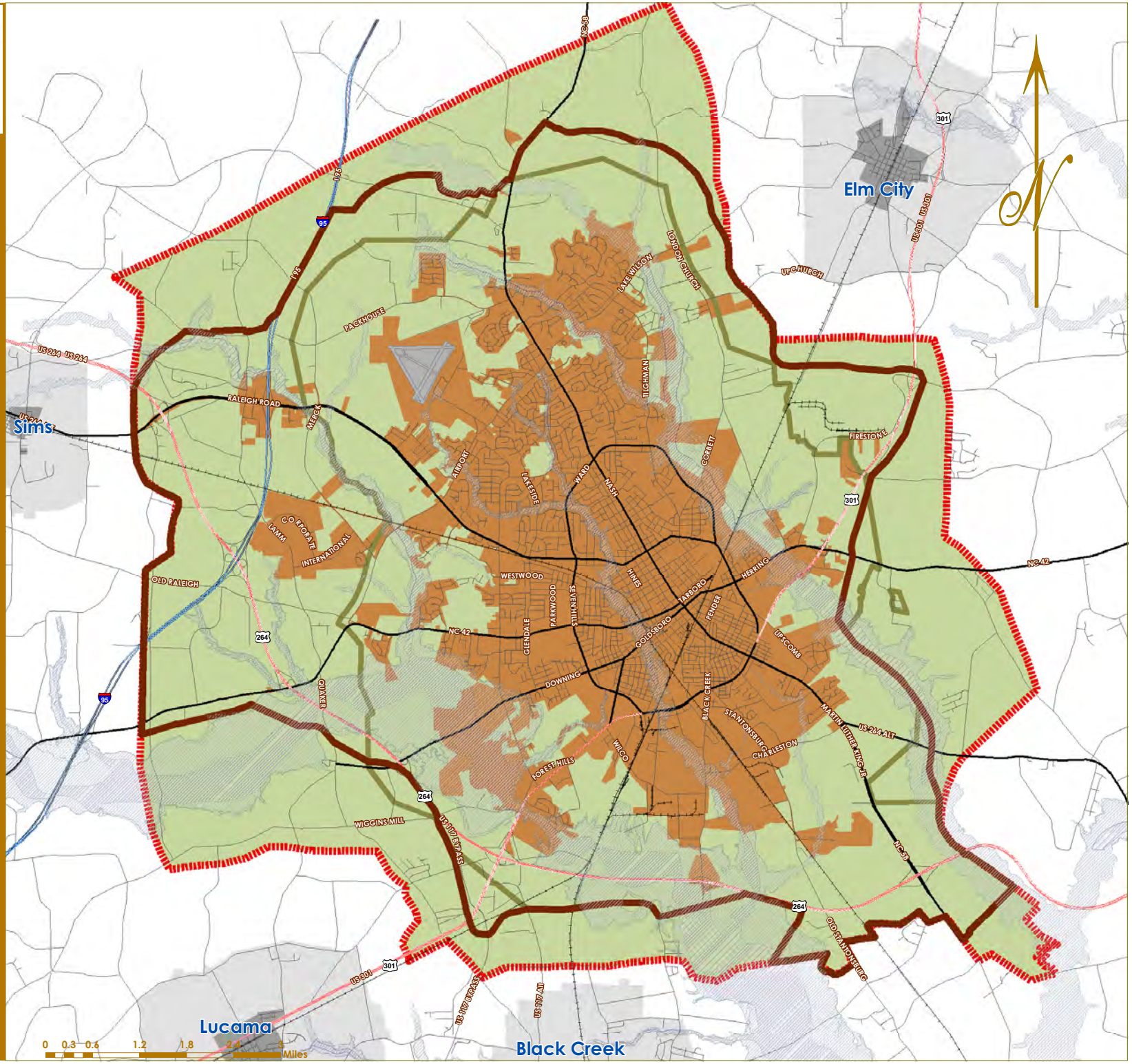
GROWTH AREAS

LEGEND

- Primary Growth Area
- Secondary Growth Area
- Wilson Corporate Limits
- Wilson ETJ
- Floodplain



0 0.3 0.6 1.2 1.8 2.4 3 Miles

Data Source:
City of Wilson IT Services Department &
Planning and Development Services Department

Map Disclaimer:
The City of Wilson and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information and specifically disclaim any warranty for merchantibility of fitness for a particular purpose.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

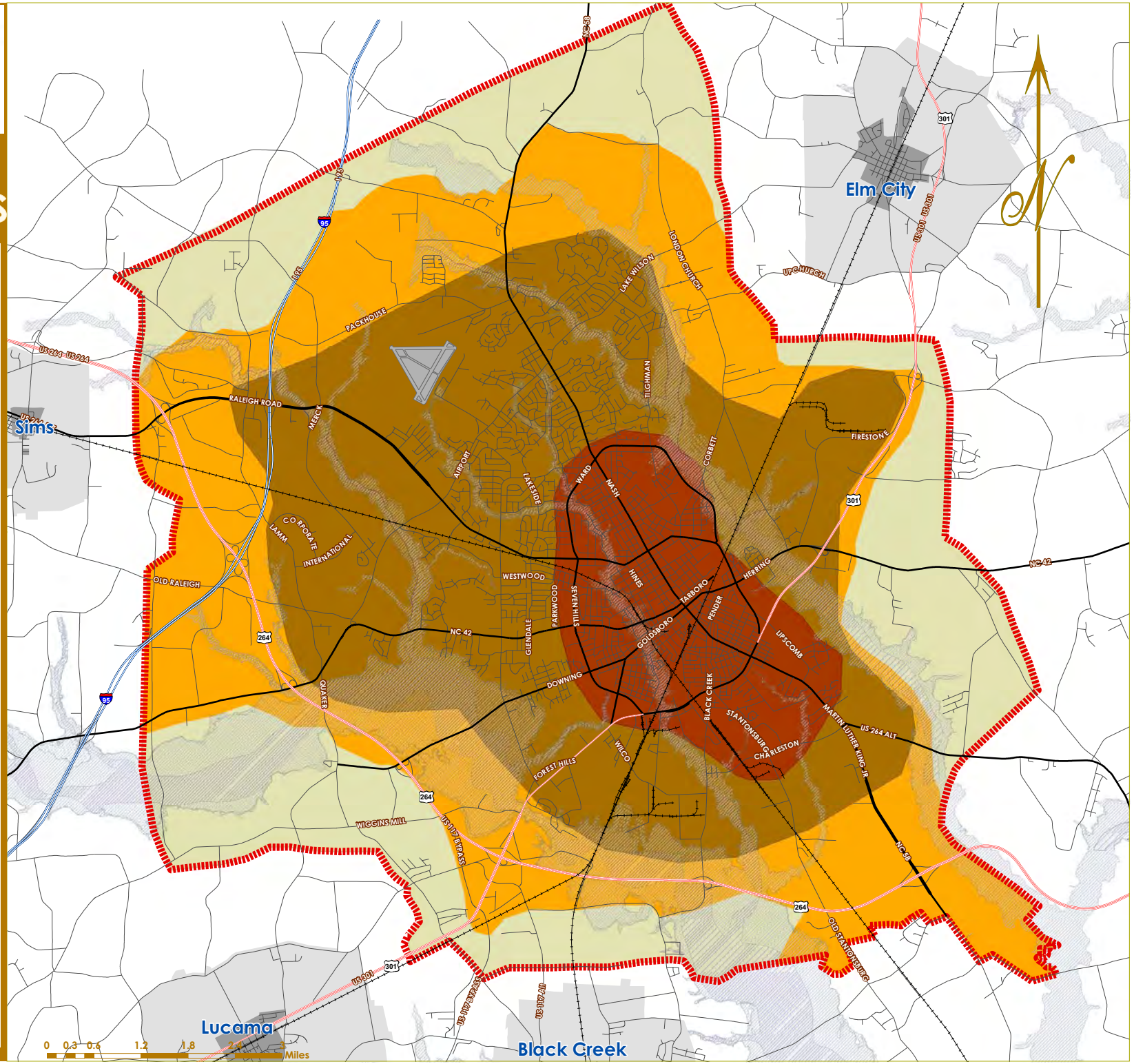
August 31, 2009

WILSON
Growing Together
THE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TIERED SERVICE AREAS

LEGEND

- Planning Area
- Core Service Area
- Primary Service Area
- Secondary Service Area
- Future Service Area
- Floodplain



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Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES

January 25, 2010

WILSON
NORTH CAROLINA