



WILSON COUNTY WILSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2024 – 6:00 PM
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
2201 MILLER ROAD SOUTH
WILSON, NC 27893

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. PRAYER
4. ROLL CALL
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Consideration of May 2024 minutes
 - 5.A Consideration of May 2024 minutes
6. ADOPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
 - 6.A Consider adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the unincorporated areas of the County as required by G. S. 160D-501
[Staff Report .pdf](#)
[Comp Plan Draft.pdf](#)
7. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
8. DEVELOPMENT SERVICE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
9. ADJOURNMENT



STAFF REPORT

Wilson County Stormwater Ordinance & Program

September 16th, 2024

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT: Wilson County Development Services Department

REQUESTED ACTION: Consider the adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the unincorporated areas of the County to be in compliance with North Carolina General Statutes.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION: Planning Board agenda placed on Wilson County's web site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL: Due to the North Carolina General Statutes, Wilson County intends to adopt the proposed 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the unincorporated areas of Wilson County no later than November 1st, 2024.

STAFF COMMENTS

Upon review North Carolina General Statutes, Planning Staff is proposing to adopt the 2045 Comprehensive Plan for unincorporated areas of Wilson County. The adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan is required by N.C.G.S. to establish and define the means by which Wilson County will comply with the requirements of the 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan rule (henceforth, "Rule") (G.S. 160D-501). With the County's increased growth, the adoption of the 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan will keep Wilson County on the proper path to ensuring the best for our citizens.



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

DRAFT:AUGUST 16, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank you to all of the participants who took their personal time to provide feedback and input during the planning process.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Wilson County
c/o Development Services Dept.
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STEERING COMMITTEE

Dr. Latanya Simpson

Ron Hunt, County Manager

Lori Winstead, Deputy County Manager

Brad Thompson, Development Services Director

Stephen Mann, Communications Director

Brajesh Tiwari, County Engineer

Matthew Taylor, Planner

Tammy Bisette, Senior Administrative Assistant

Paolo Ceyrolles, Planning Analyst

In addition to the members above, steering committee members from other boards are identified with an asterisk ()*

This document has been prepared by
WithersRavenel on behalf of Wilson County, NC.



WithersRavenel
Engineers | Planners | Surveyors
www.withersravenel.com

Adopted: DATE

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INTRODUCTION

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PURPOSE

At its core, a Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document used by towns and counties around the country to assess quality of life, local values and priorities, and establish a clear, shared vision for the community’s future. Through an intentional engagement process, the plan organizes the community’s perspective and desires regarding its future. This can include management of future development, public facilities and services, and other local initiatives. Through the creation of a Future Land Use Map, the plan also provides citizens, developers, and elected officials with a data point to consider when assessing future development and infrastructure proposals. The plan also can aid staff in deciding which projects or tasks need to be included within yearly budgets and Capital Improvement Plans.

A Comprehensive Plan should be updated regularly (every 5-10 years), as a document that organizes the needs, wants, and desires of a community over time, which change as the community experiences growth and development.

PROCESS

This Comprehensive Plan update began in Fall 2023. The project consisted of multiple stages of varying involvement for stakeholder groups, residents, business owners, County staff, Town and City staff, and elected and appointed leadership.

The general outline of the plan development included the following phases:

1. Project Kickoff – The consultants and staff held coordination meetings to initiate the project and evaluate existing projects, future opportunities, and obstacles for consideration. This included a community tour led by staff to showcase various existing land uses and new development, as well as various representative residential and commercial projects from the past.
2. Background Research and Analysis – The project team collected data, conducted field research, and reviewed previous plans to understand existing conditions and evaluate projected trends.
3. Input from Key Stakeholders – The project team presented background findings to the Stakeholder Group, which consisted of County citizens, department heads, and administrative leadership. This stage also included collaborative planning concerning baseline trends of the County.
4. Public Engagement – Various input sessions and methods were used to gather public opinion and input.
5. Visioning and Goal Setting – After public survey results were tallied, the steering committee worked alongside elected leadership to craft a guiding set of goals and a shared vision statement.
6. Development of Plan Recommendations and Future Land Use Map – With the County vision and goals finalized, the plan

recommendations and future land use map. were created to progress the shared community vision. These products were tailored to local needs based on extensive review by the steering committee, County staff, and local stakeholders.

7. Plan Finalization and Adoption – Following rollout and review by the general public, revisions were made and the final plan was presented for adoption. The project team presented the final product to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners for recommendation and adoption, respectively.

Note: #7 is written in past tense but will not be accurate after the plan is adopted by the BOCC.



SCHEDULE

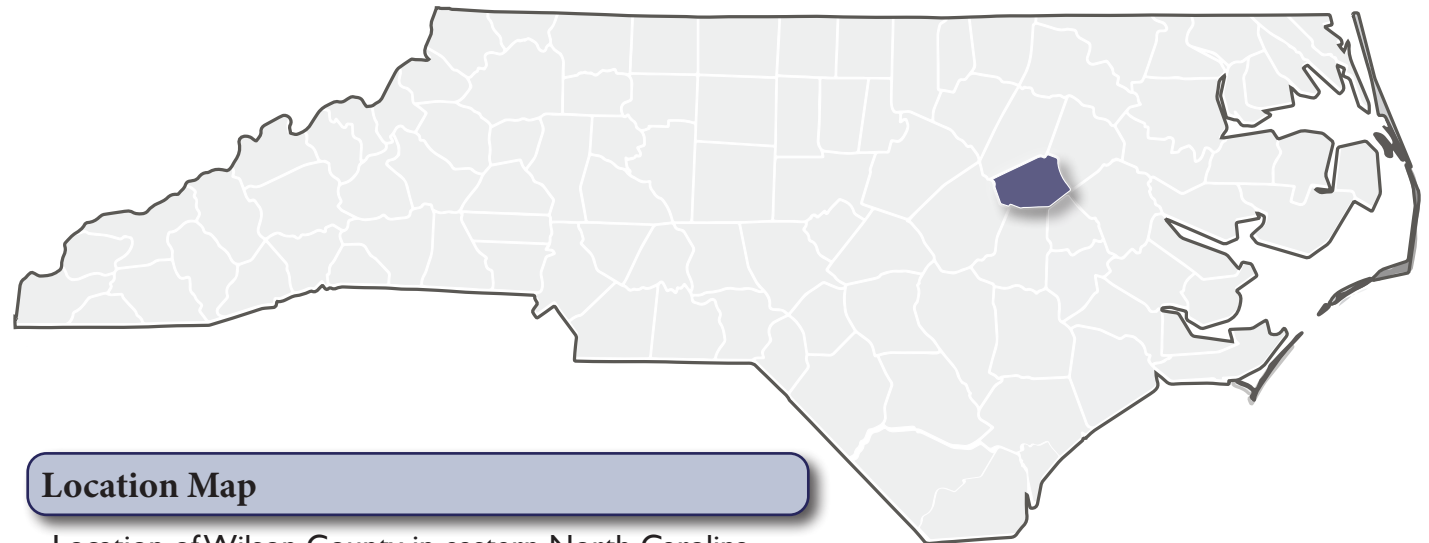
The plan update took place over the course of approximately 12 months beginning in October 2023. Throughout the project timeline, coordination meetings occurred between staff and the project team (WithersRavenel). In addition to the presence of three members of the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners on the comprehensive plan update steering committee, regular updates were also made to the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board. This helped ensure that there is awareness and participation from elected and appointed officials in shaping the plan to ensure local needs are addressed.

STUDY AREA

Wilson County is located in the north-central area of North Carolina. The largest municipality and County Seat is the City of Wilson. The local government structure of Wilson County is characterized by a commissioner-manager form, where a board of commissioners oversees policymaking, and a county manager is responsible for the day-to-day administration. This form of government promotes transparency, efficiency, and accountability.

Departments within the County include the following:

- Board of Elections
- Communications
- Cooperative Extension
- County Manager
- Development Services
- Emergency Communications
- Emergency Management
- Emergency Medical Services
- Financial Services
- Mental Health Services
- Health Department
- Human Resources
- Library
- Maintenance
- Office of the Sheriff
- Register of Deeds
- Senior Center
- Social Services
- Soil & Water
- Solid Waste Services
- Tax Administration
- Technology Services
- Transportation
- Veterans Resources
- Water Services



Location of Wilson County in eastern North Carolina.

Note: This schedule chart will continue to be updated as the project nears completion.



| Task and Event | 2023 | | | 2024 | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----|-----|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct |
| Project Initiation and Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Data gathering, mapping, plan review, community profile | ----- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community tour and kickoff meetings | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Steering Committee | | | | 01/31 | | | | | | | | | |
| Stakeholder Interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning Board / BOC Update Meeting | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Economic Development and Finance Meetings | 10/4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Visioning and Plan Development | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Community Survey | | | | 01/23-03/03 | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft Community Vision Statement and Goals | | | | | | ----- | | | | | | | |
| Steering Committee | | | | | 03/11 | | 05/14 | | 07/17 | | | | |
| Public Meeting(s) | | | | | | | 04/17 | | | | 08/20 | | |
| Planning Board / BOC Update Meeting | | | | | | | | 06/03 | | | | | |
| Draft Future Land Use Map | | | | | | | ----- | | | | | | |
| Draft Plan Recommendations | | | | | | | ----- | | | | | | |
| Plan Refinement and Adoption | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| One-month public posting and adoption draft review period | | | | | | | | | | | ----- | | |
| Review public comment on adoption draft | | | | | | | | | | | ----- | | |
| Presentation of adoption draft to the Planning Board and BOC | | | | | | | | | | | Tentatively scheduled | 09/16 | 10/07 |

Legend:
BOC = Board of Commissioners

Note: Schedule is subject to change and will be updated periodically to reflect project progress. Please visit the project webpage for the most up-to-date information.



PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

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Comprehensive planning is an on-going and ever-evolving municipal process. Previous studies and reports provide insight into the status of the County at defined points in time but also identify past and future. Wilson County is fortunate to have had previous land use analyses and studies. This section contains an overview of the past plans that are relevant to the current comprehensive planning effort.

2025 WILSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2008)

The current Wilson County Comprehensive Plan established a framework geared towards balancing growth and preserving the rural character. The County's current comprehensive plan predicted future growth to primarily take place around the incorporated areas of the County. Strategies and goals within the



plan emphasized preserving Wilson County's rural character by encouraging growth around municipal cores and promoting agriculture and lower residential densities away from town limits. Within the plan's implementation chapter, priority actions with associated timeframes were outlined. Among these recommended actions, many related to partnerships with the City of Wilson and other neighboring municipalities to form joint planning efforts that not only discussed growth planning coordination, but hazard mitigation and recreation efforts as well.

Importance to Planning Effort:

While the makeup of Wilson County has changed since the drafting of the previous comprehensive plan, recommended actions for establishing and maintaining partnerships with municipalities within the County are still critical to regional successes moving forward. Furthermore, identified areas of residential growth within the plan were focused in the northeast section of the County, around major thoroughfare in the form of Interstate-95, which was an accurate anticipation and still remains true today.

WILSON COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is inclusive of thirty chapters covering potential hazards facing Wilson County. Through scenarios, the

plan lists action items for mitigating natural and human caused events. Concepts of operations are laid out in the plan that address



procedures for preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation strategies. Staffing of the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for specific hazards is outlined in the plan along with case studies of related planning efforts.

Importance to Planning Effort:

Hazard mitigation requires collaboration among many agencies. Within this plan, specific roles of various Wilson County departments and agencies were outlined. Through the comprehensive planning effort, action items to address known and anticipated hazards will be included to further the resiliency of the County. The plan will also consider the need for additional critical facilities to appropriately accommodate population increases and best serve the community.

2011 WILSON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The 2011 Comprehensive Transportation Plan analyzed current roadway conditions within the County, and provided recommendations for the transportation network moving forward. Although the planning effort was drafted more than a decade ago, multimodal and pedestrian facility recommendations may still be applicable today with the County’s growth pattern. The plan predicted the major-

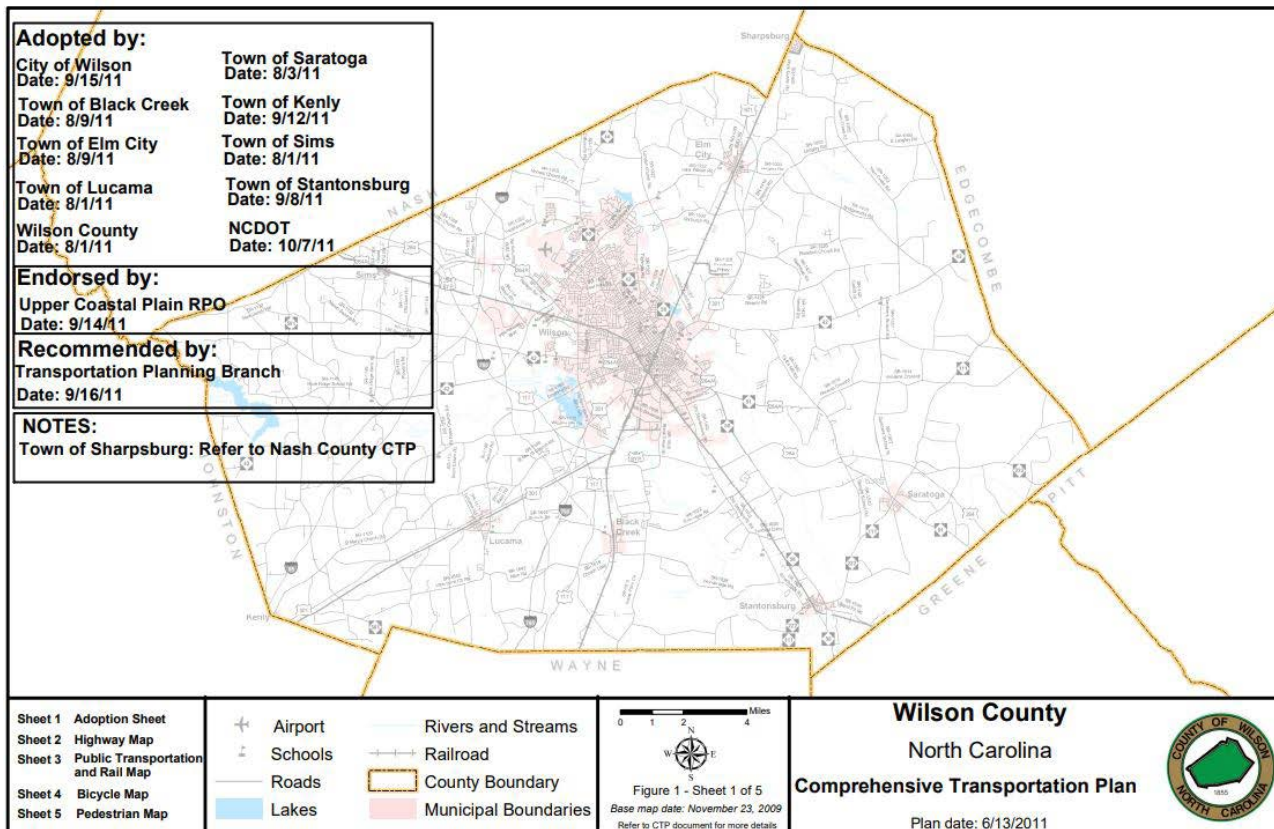
ity of Wilson County’s growth would occur along the perimeter of the city of Wilson which has held true. In addition to recommendations to accommodate centralized growth, the plan also addresses the need for balance when planning pedestrian facilities throughout the County, specifically in rural areas.

Importance to Planning Effort:

The 2011 plan calls close attention to roadways in need of improvement within the northeast limits of the City of Wilson and

Wilson County. Freeways and boulevards including Interstate-95, and US 264 are specifically listed as heavily traveled thoroughfares with recommended enhancements. Identifying areas with high traffic volumes is a critical part of the comprehensive planning process because it provides an understanding of where the majority of travel and growth is occurring. In addition to the high-level projects described above, the County has the following additional committed projects through the NC Department of Transportation identified in the 2-24-2033 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):

- Pavement rehabilitation along US 264 from the Wilson County Line to I-95 (TIP ID HI-0014)
- Pavement rehabilitation from Mile Marker 108.2 to North of Governor Hunt Road (TIP ID I-5936)
- SR 1356 (Raleigh Road parkway) from Atlantic Christian College Drive (city street) to NC 42/NC 58 in Wilson. modernization of roadway.



2021 STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

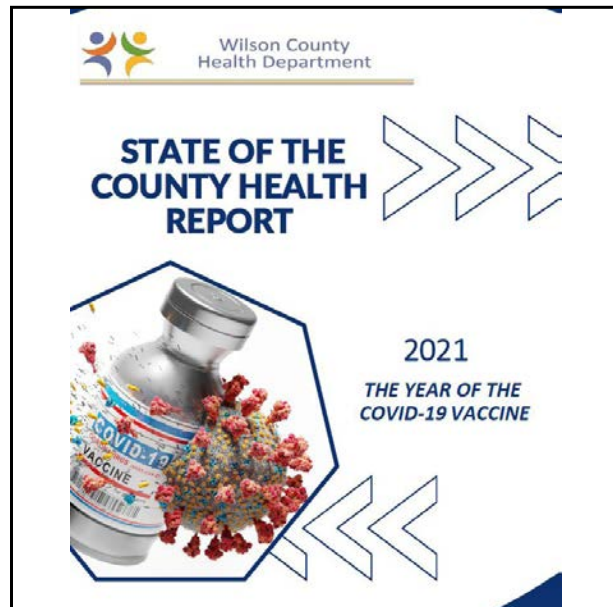
The State of the County Health Report offers detailed information about the overall health status of the community, ongoing health programs, and future initiatives that aim to enhance the public’s well-being. The 2021 report also details how the County was impacted by COVID-19 and the effectiveness

of the vaccine. Top priorities for the County as it relates to the health and wellbeing of its residents are also outlined within the report, which included:

1. Obesity
2. Fitness/Nutrition
3. Mental Health – including Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Importance to Planning Effort:

Understanding the current condition of the County’s health should inform planning policies that aim to tackle physical and mental health challenges residents are facing. The report identifies internal partnerships that the County can continue to build upon through policy recommendations to positively impact the well being of its residents.



2022-2025 WILSON COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This assessment lays out the framework for creating a culture of health within the County through comprehensive data collection and community collaboration. It was revealed that Wilson County ranks below both state and national averages with respect to health status. Variables for health status include, but are not limited to health behaviors, clinical care, social factors, and the physical environment. Community feedback was solicited as part of the needs assessment, resulting in the following top health issues for respondents:

1. Alcohol/Drugs
2. Mental/behavioral health
3. Overweight/obesity

Importance to Planning Effort:

A nexus between health challenges and planning strategies exists in the form of promoting safe, healthy activities which can contribute not only to physical health, but mental health as well. Understanding the top concerns of Wilson County residents relating to the health of the community allows policy recommendations to be brought forward that are aimed at mitigating factors that negatively impact the health of Wilson County residents.

WILSON 2030, THE CITY OF WILSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2010)

The 2010 plan identified strategies to combat key issues relating to land use, the economy, transportation, infrastructure, and housing for the City of Wilson as it experienced unprecedented growth in and around its core. Wilson 2030 also included tactics for regional collab-

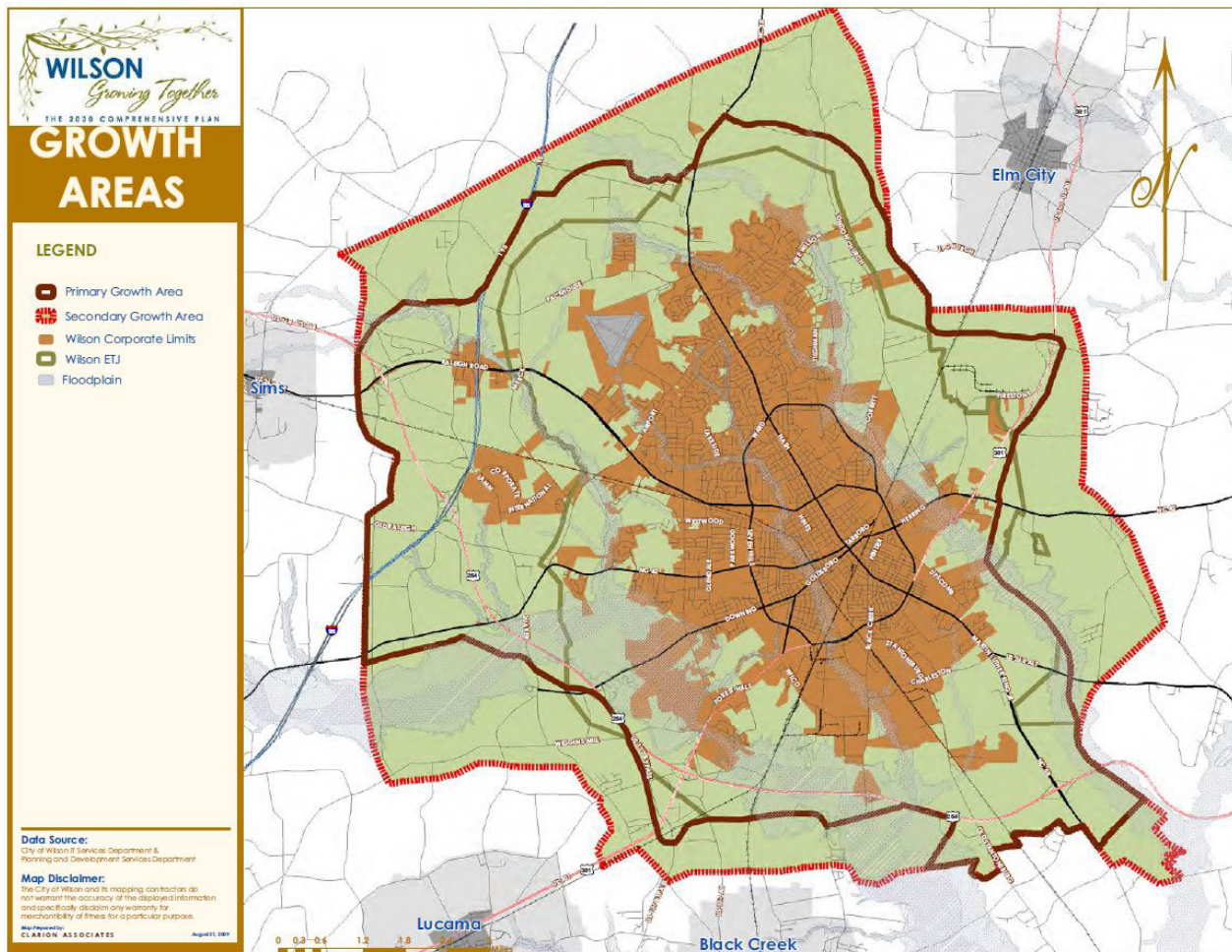


oration. Specifically, strengthening the City’s partnership with Wilson County. The plan identified growth scenarios heading into the future, and how trends relating to the City’s growth directly affect population trends in the County. A growth trend in northeast areas of both the City and County were anticipated in the planning document due to the location

PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

of I-95 and proximity to the Raleigh-Durham area. With growth trends between the City and County being closely related, the plan went on to include recommendations that acknowledged the value of partnership. These recommendations included working with Wilson County and Wilson County Schools to provide more recreation opportunities

to accommodate a growing population, and working with the County to develop a formal agreement to coordinate information on development proposals in areas of mutual interest.



Importance to Planning Effort:

The City's comprehensive plan put forth several recommended actions that involve coordination with the County for not only educational and recreational purposes, but also for development proposals. With the City being centrally located, the County will experience development pressure in all unincorporated areas, therefore, coordination on pending and approved projects will be critical to ensure proper services are provided to new and existing residents. Wilson County School also experiences the effects of City development. Recommendations of the comprehensive plan will consider these impacts and bring forward approaches to coordination between the City and County.

TOWN OF SIMS LAND USE PLAN (2022)

The Town's land use plan is an important planning effort that self-identifies the town as a small community, vulnerable to the pressures of nearby development in unincorporated areas of Wilson County. Goals within the plan primarily consist of three parts: Economic Development, Transportation and Community Facility Enhancement. 97% of the Town's residents work outside of corporate limits, therefore, the town has inserted goals of increasing local jobs through additional retail and services options.

Importance to Planning Effort:

Considerations for intergovernmental collaboration are discussed throughout the plan. Continued cooperation among the Town and Wilson County to maintain the existing secondary water supply and wastewater treatments arrangements to ensure mutually beneficial services is included as a recommended policy within the plan. Through utility coordination, the Town and County will be able to adequately prepare for future expansion.

**WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS,
5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2018-2023)**

The strategic plan set forth a list of 11 goals that focused on performance, student preparedness, safety, staffing, partnerships, and efficiency. The Wilson County School



system recognizes its responsibility to deliver high quality education to students and send prepared young people into the work force.

At the plan's core, student achievement and success is intended to evolve around learning in a safe environment that is led by strong educators.

Importance to Planning Effort:

Coordination between Wilson County Schools and Wilson County Government is important for several reasons. Direct coordination between the entities can more accurately balance County development and school resources in addition to adequately facility expansion to meet the needs of a growing population. Being in front of population increases and the resulting impacts to the school system is a key element to a successful partnership between the County and school system.

**TOWN OF KENLY LAND USE PLAN
(2012)**

Although only the northeast portion of Kenly is located within Wilson County, the Town's land use plan acknowledges this area and the future for it. Of the portion of Kenly that is located within Wilson County, over half of the total acreage is used for agricultural purposes in 2012. In addition to recognizing existing land uses within the County, Objective 6 within Kenly's land use plan suggest intergovernmental collaboration with respect to long range planning efforts should increase through partnerships with elected officials and to achieve common goals from regional perspective.

Importance to Planning Effort:

With agricultural uses consuming a majority of the portion of Kenly that is located within Wilson County, the County may consider preserving this area for similar purposes moving forward. By doing so, the County will not only protect agricultural land uses, but preserve compatible areas with compatible land uses.

WATER SUPPLY PLANS (2022)

Wilson County is divided into two water districts for quality and capacity planning purposes. The Southwest water district includes 146 miles of water line infrastructure which provide approximately 2,129 metered connections as of 2022, with nearly 2,000 of the connections serving residential land uses. Only 38 connections serve commercial land uses, and 27 connections provide water to institutional uses such as government operations and school sites. By 2030, the Southwest district will be nearing capacity as the estimated demand will reach 88% of the available water supply. The Southeast water district has a total of approximately 120 miles of water line infrastructure and provides 1,725 metered connections to primarily residential land uses. Capacity in the Southeast district is not estimated to be of concern until the year 2050.

Importance to Planning Effort:

Understanding capacity concerns will be critical when determining appropriate growth areas for residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial land uses. Growth should be encouraged in areas where adequate water infrastructure exists. While the Southeast district is not anticipated to reach system capacity for several decades, the Southwest district is nearing capacity which will require continued coordination between future development proposals and County water services.

AGRICULTURAL CENSUS (2017)

See “Agriculture” on page 54. An agritourism assessment was also developed as part of this planning effort and is available under different cover, with the County.

Importance to Planning Effort:

Not only are agricultural operations a key economic engine in the County, it was also identified by stakeholders and residents as crucial to identity and quality of life. The interplay between manufacturing, production agriculture, development, open spaces, cities/towns, and the rural, unincorporated county must be balanced to maintain opportunity and prosperity for all parties involved.

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COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

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DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

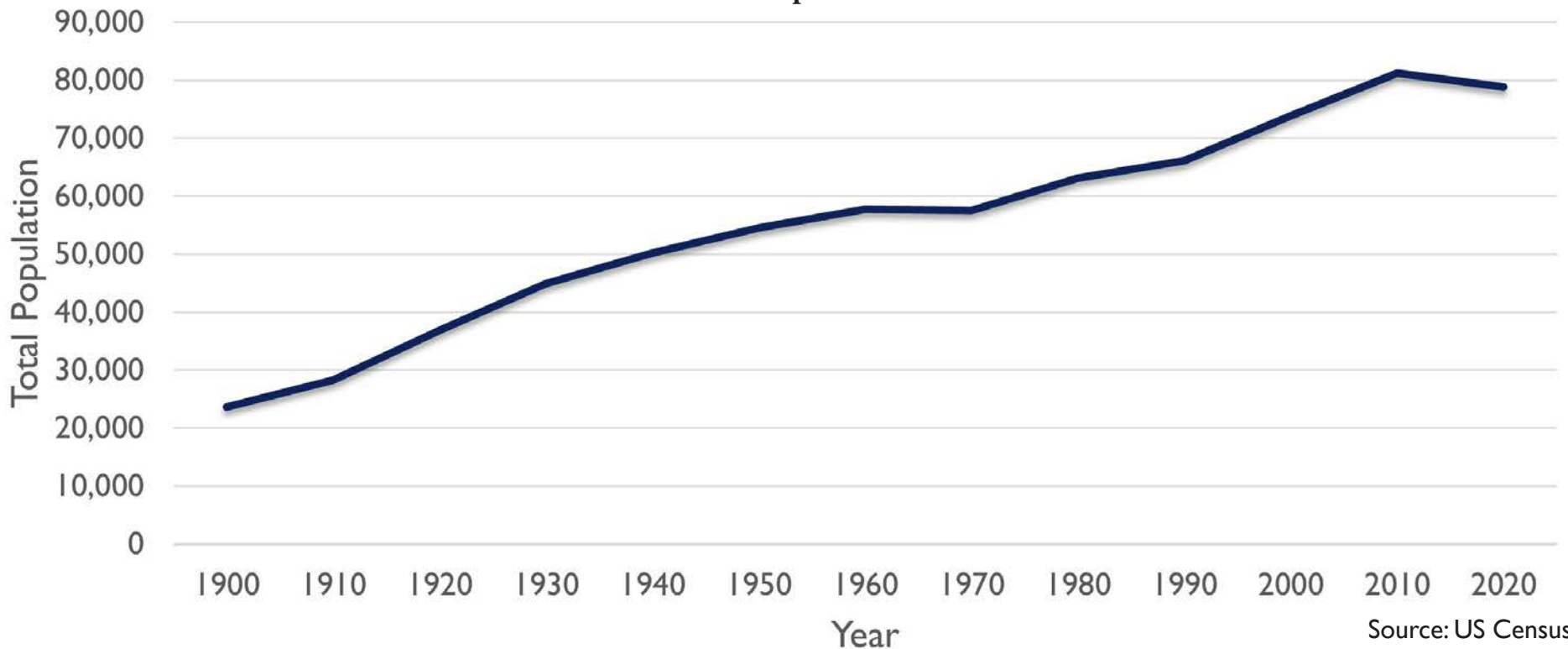
To better focus on the needs that this Comprehensive Plan should address, the project team looked to demographic and population trends of the County. The first step in analyzing the community’s demographics was to identify trends in historic data as well as future projections. Identification of demographic and population trends establishes an understanding of current conditions within the County, allowing for the development of strategic and focused plan recommendations.

The following population estimates and demographic data (unless otherwise specified) are based on U.S. Census Bureau Data, the American Community Survey, the North Carolina Office State Budget and Management, as well as projections for approved and planned housing developments in Wilson County as reported by the County and the City of Wilson.

POPULATION

Over the past 10 years, Wilson County has experienced consistent population growth. In 1990, the total population was 66,061. The County then experienced a large population increase (11.74%) from 1990 to 2000. In 2010, the population had grown by another 10.05% to 81,234 residents, and in 2020 there was a slight decrease to 78,784 residents. During the period from 1990 to 2020, the County witnessed a 19.25% increase in growth.

Historical Population Trend

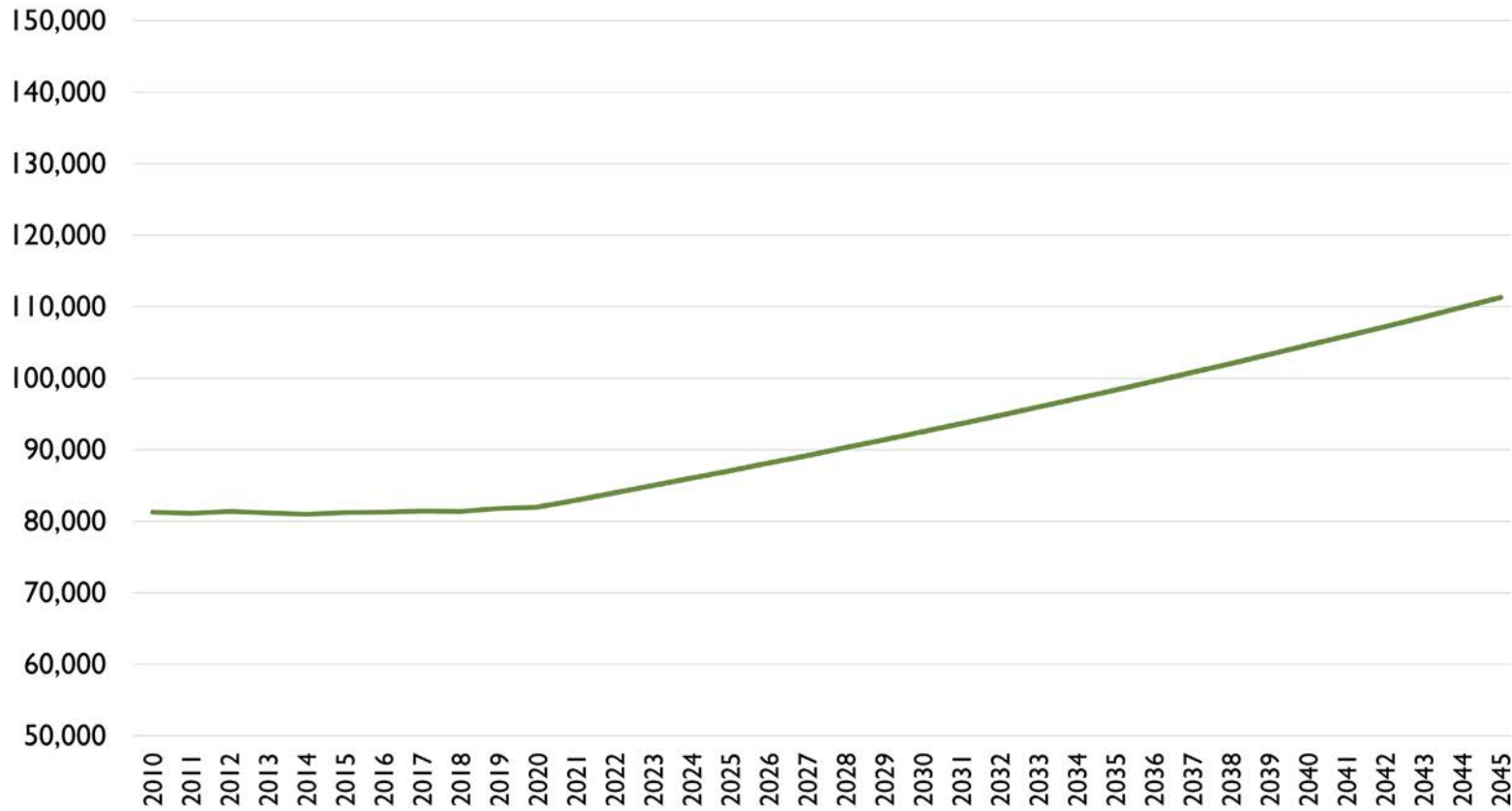


County staff have noted that development approvals and permits are increasing, indicating that growth will be emergent and steady. The population projection, in part built from analyzing recent trends in building permit data, shows the potential for growth to over 110,000 residents by the year 2045. The planning process must consider the burden on existing services that any population increase will have as well as the needs of those moving into the community.

Did You Know?

Although more residential units have been developed in the towns and cities, the total acreage of new single-family development is equal. The amount of land needed for rural development is greater for each lot - usually around one acre per home.

Population Projection



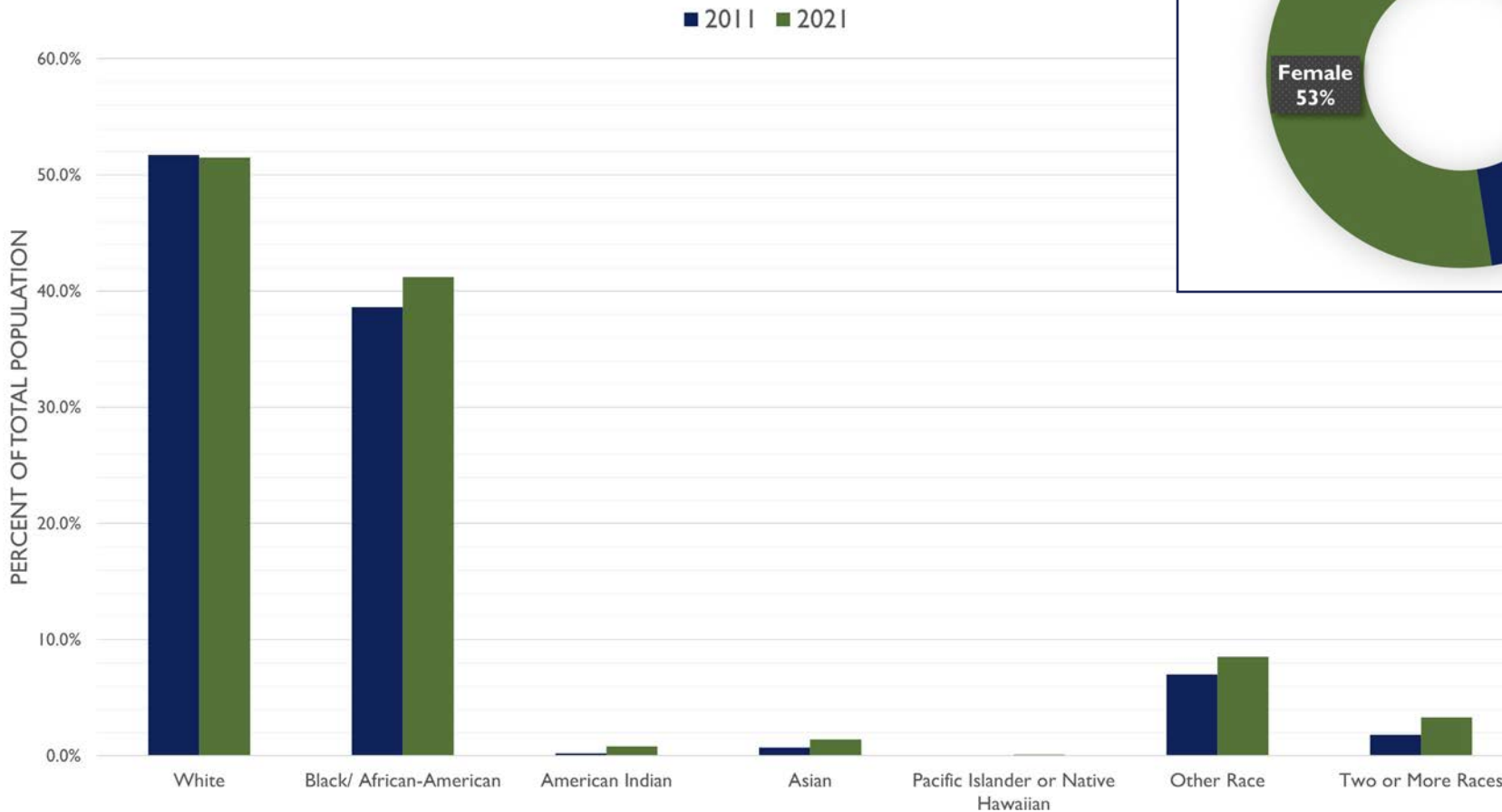


The population density map shows a majority of the County’s population resides within the City of Wilson and northwest of US Highway 301.

RACE

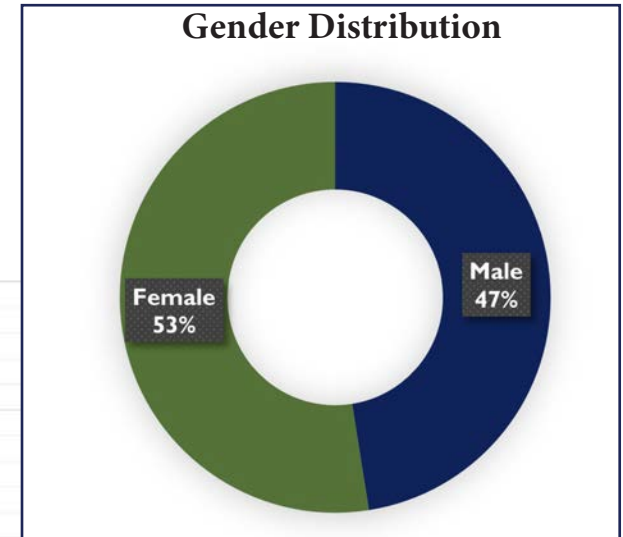
Race distribution in Wilson County has not experienced significant change between 2011-2021. The White and Black/African-American racial groups make up approximately 90% of the County. Other races and ethnicities make up the remaining percentage of the population.

Population: Race



GENDER

Gender distribution is generally in alignment with state and national trends.



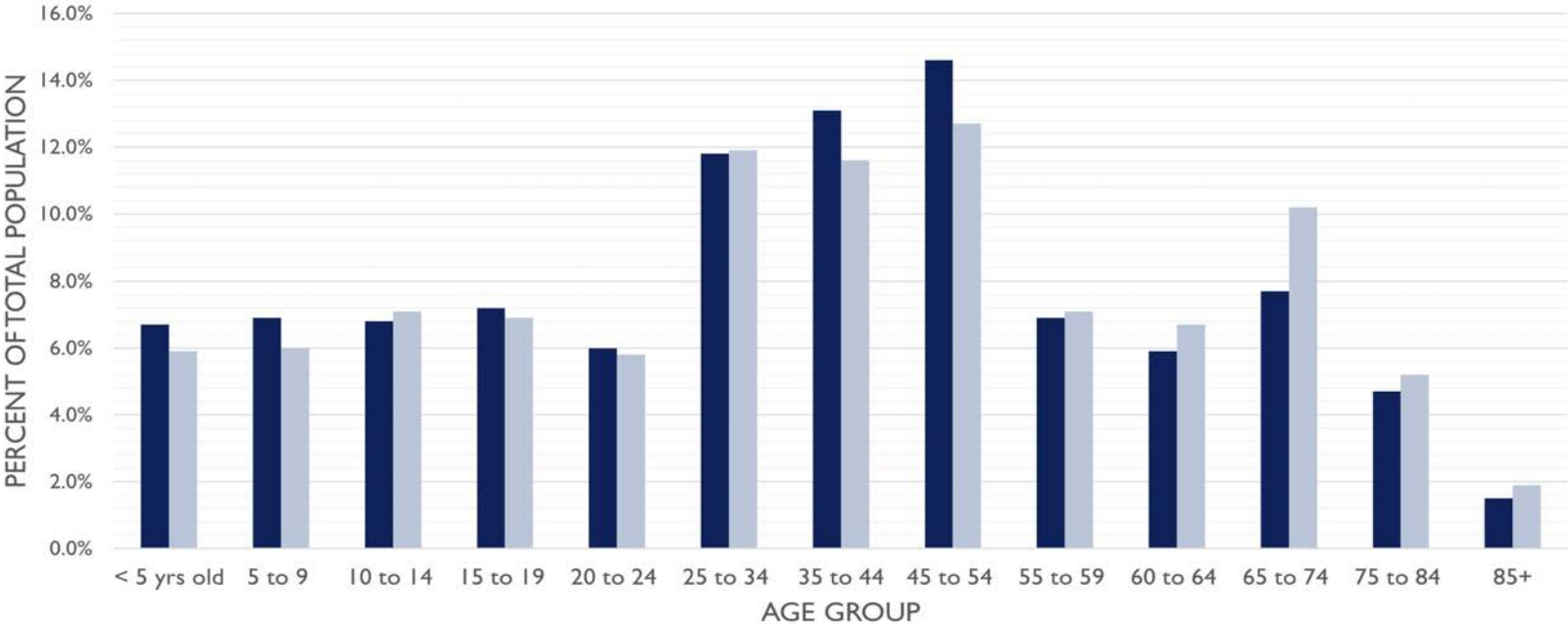
AGE

The median age in Wilson County was 40.5 years in 2021. In 2011, the median age in Wilson County was 38.7 year, indicating an upward shift and aging population over the 10-year period. Furthermore, the it should be noted that the largest increase in age cohort percentage was for that of the 65 to 74 age group which now makes up 10.2% of the overall population. Individuals aged 65 and older make up a total of 18.3% of the overall population.

Population: Age

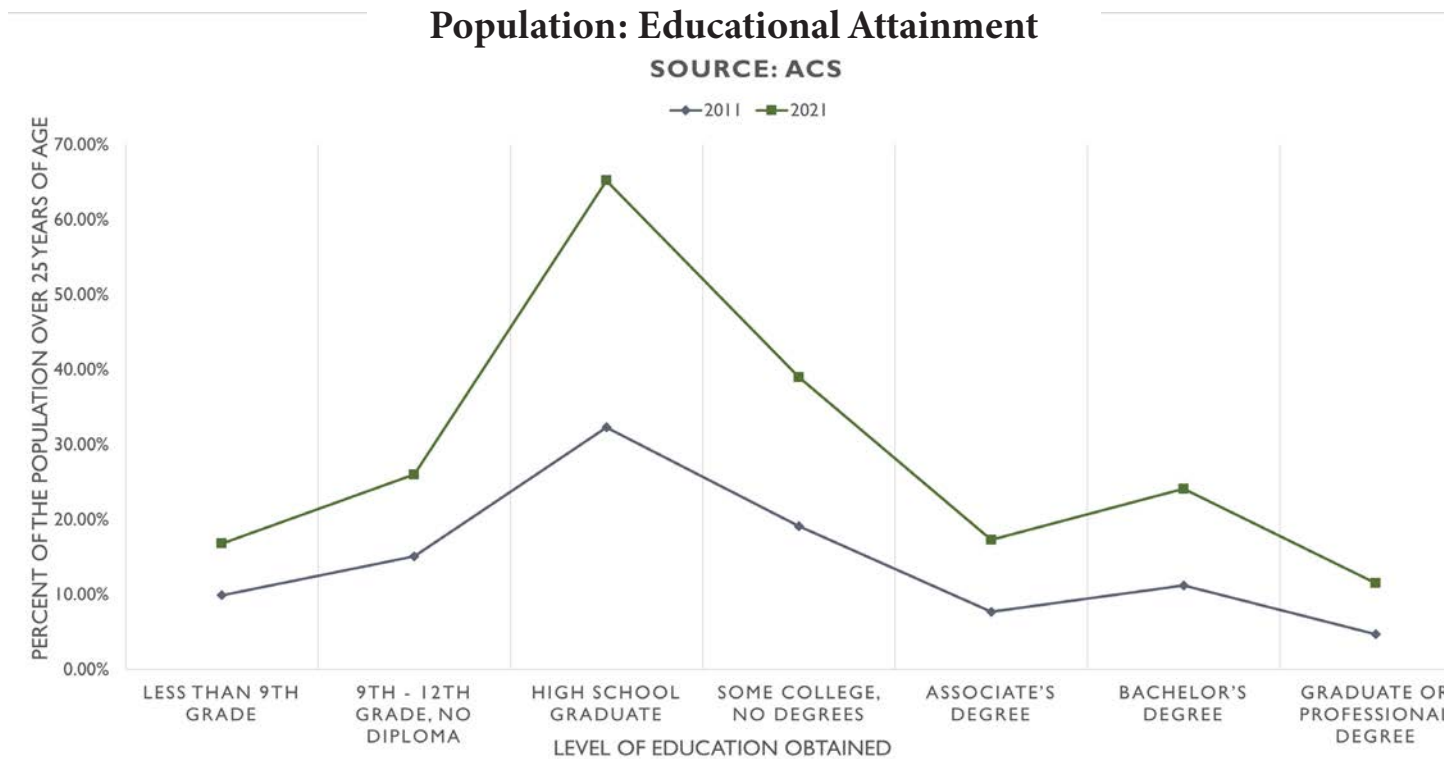
Source: ACS

■ 2011 ■ 2021



EDUCATION

Educational attainment levels have gradually increased within Wilson County. Between 2011 and 2021, 82.2% of the population graduating high school (a 7.2% increase from 2011), and 19.7% earning a Graduate degree or higher (a 3.8% increase). There was also a 4.2% decrease in the those who had a 9th to 12th grade education but with no diploma. Attainment of higher education can be correlated with more disposable income and diversified recreation needs.



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LAND USE

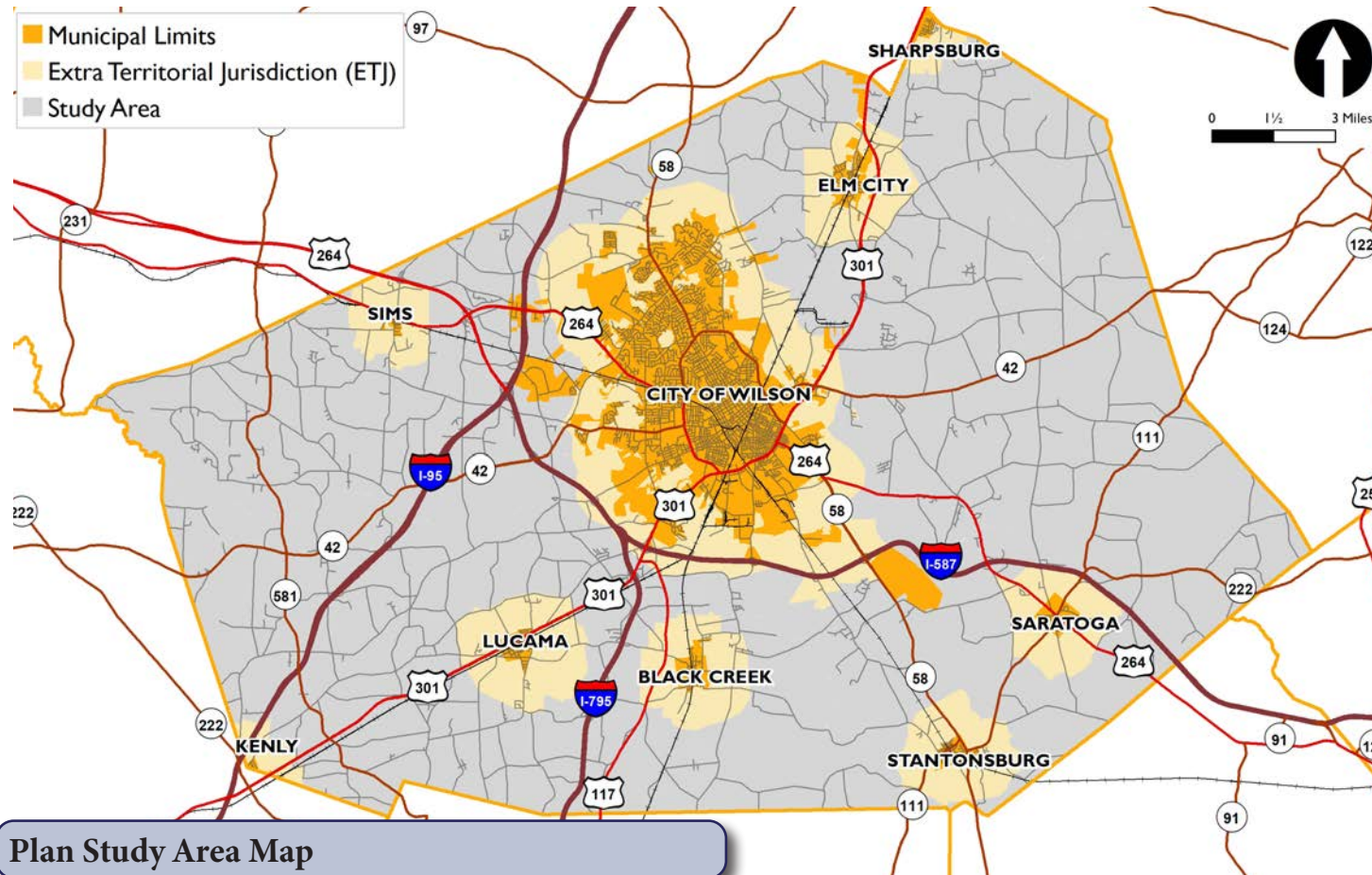
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REGULATORY JURISDICTION

The boundaries of land applicable to this plan, as it relates to the regulation of land use, zoning, and development regulation, are explicitly within unincorporated Wilson

County, exclusive of the extraterritorial jurisdictions of the towns and cities. Though located within Wilson County, the various municipalities such as the City of Wilson and

surrounding towns are incorporated and therefore have their own jurisdiction over zoning authority within their respective planning jurisdictions.



Plan Study Area Map

This comprehensive plan’s “study area” (shown in grey) includes all of Wilson County that is outside of the incorporated municipalities and their associated extra territorial jurisdictions (ETJ).

EXISTING LAND USE

Assessing existing land uses provides an understanding of how certain areas within the County have taken form and currently operate. Anticipating growth patterns is also a benefit of determining the existing land uses that make up the County. This analysis was conducted on the lands that are in between the planning jurisdiction of the towns and cities in Wilson County - the “study area” of this plan.

Not surprisingly, agricultural, vacant, and forestry land use make up the majority of the study area. Single-family residential land uses, including manufactured homes, account for nearly 5% of total land uses, followed by water bodies which occupy nearly 2%. Higher density uses such as commercial, industrial, and multi-family uses all account for approximately 1% of all land uses while low-density residential uses, classified as Rural Single-Family Residential on the Existing Land Use Map make up 1%.

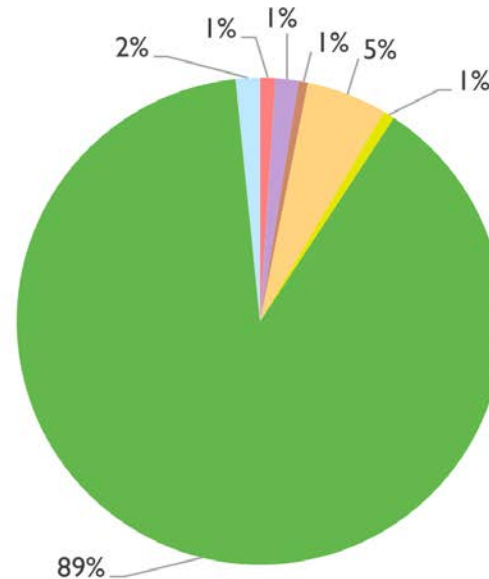
Existing land use categories are representative of the following:

- Agriculture, Forestry, Vacant – This category represents parcels that are primarily used for economic production or are undeveloped.
- Rural Single-Family Residential – Represents residentially developed parcels between 3-6 acres with a fair market improved value of greater than \$70,000.

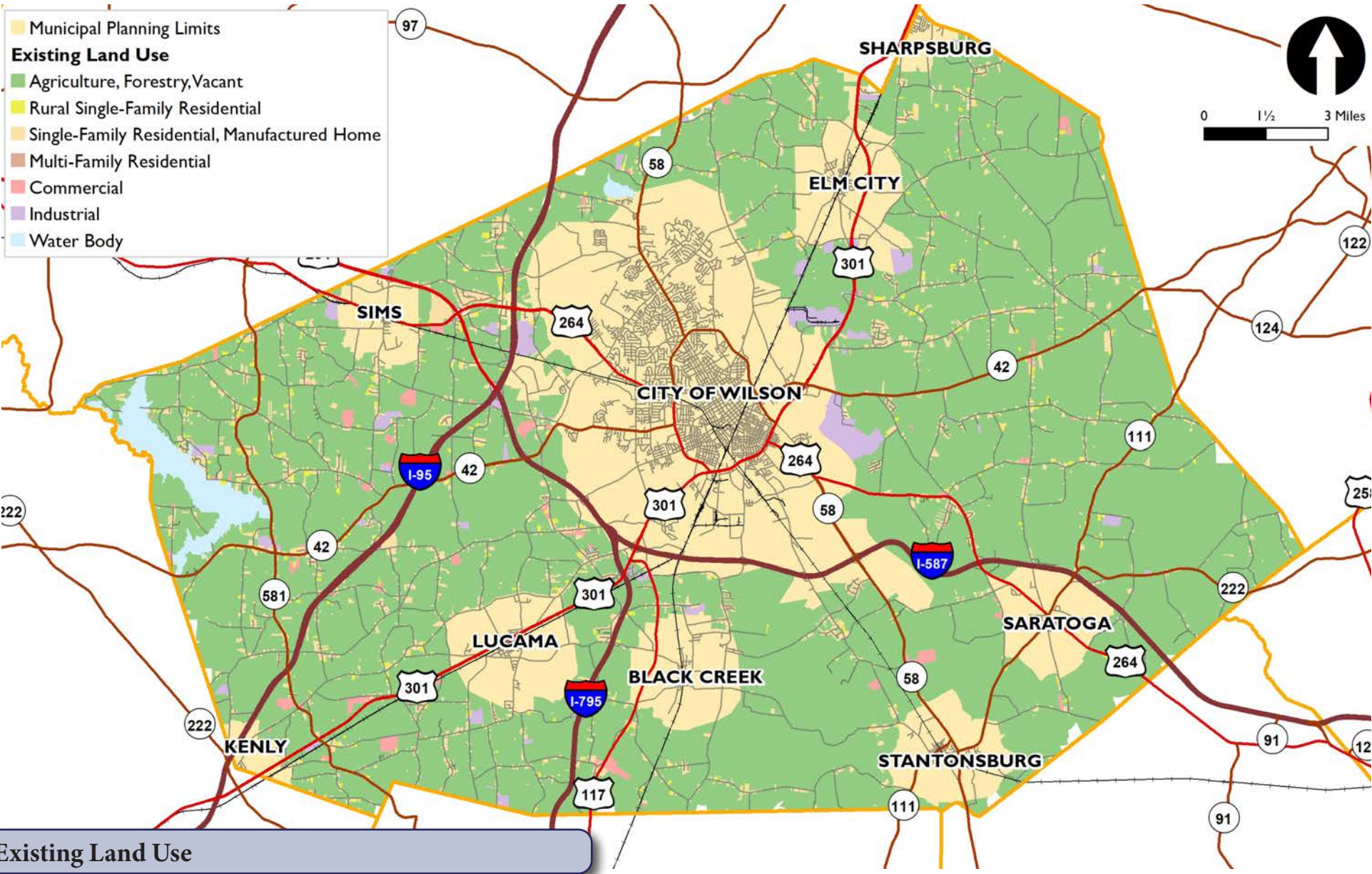
- Single-Family Residential, Manufactured Homes – Representing parcels containing single-family homes, manufactured/modular homes, or manufactured home parks.
- Multi-Family Residential – Townhomes, apartments, and duplexes.
- Commercial – Office uses, retail, religious organizational uses, schools, and other small

- scale non-residential uses.
- Industrial – Solar farms, warehouses, airfields, landfills, and other large scale non-residential uses.
- Water Body – Buckhorn Reservoir, Lake Wilson Reservoir, Wiggins Mill Reservoir, Silver Lake, and other large water bodies.

Existing Land Use (Study Area)



- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- Single-Family Residential, Manufactured Home
- Rural Single-Family Residential
- Agriculture, Forestry, Vacant
- Water body



Existing Land Use

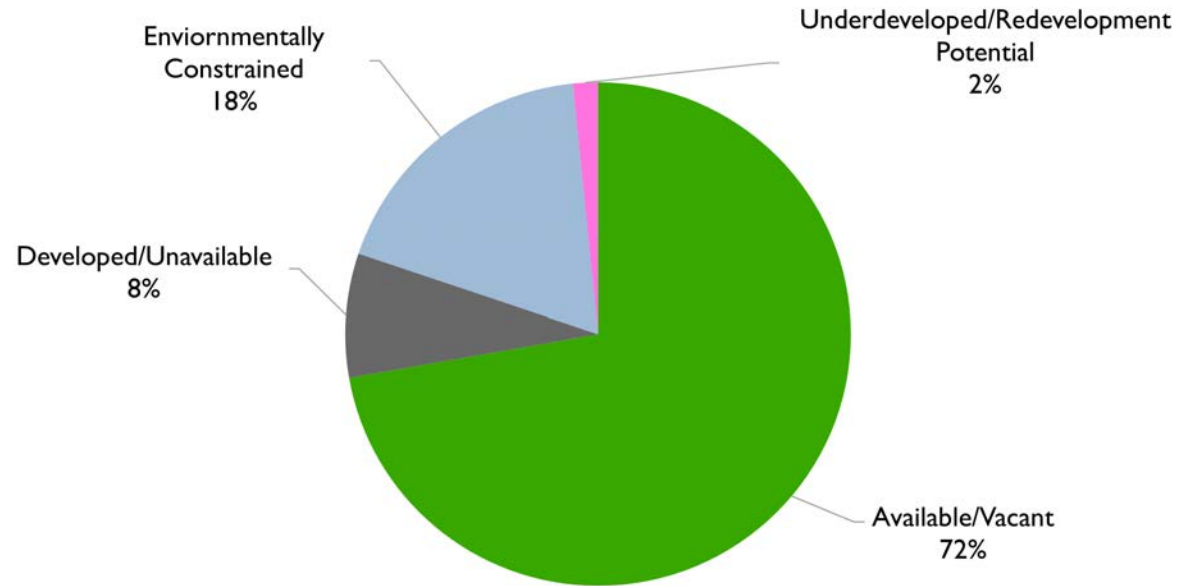
The existing land use map shows the distribution of various land uses within the study area.

LAND SUPPLY

In this land supply analysis, which considers the likelihood of land to be converted to residential, industrial, or commercial uses, land was divided into four categories: Available/Vacant, Developed/Unavailable, Environmentally Constrained, and Underdeveloped. Property tax appraiser data related to structure value and land value were considered within this analysis, in determining the potential for redevelopment or if a property is unlikely to be redeveloped. Land classifications for the purposes of this analysis were determined in part based on the ratio of land value to building value. Environmental constraints were also taken into consideration.

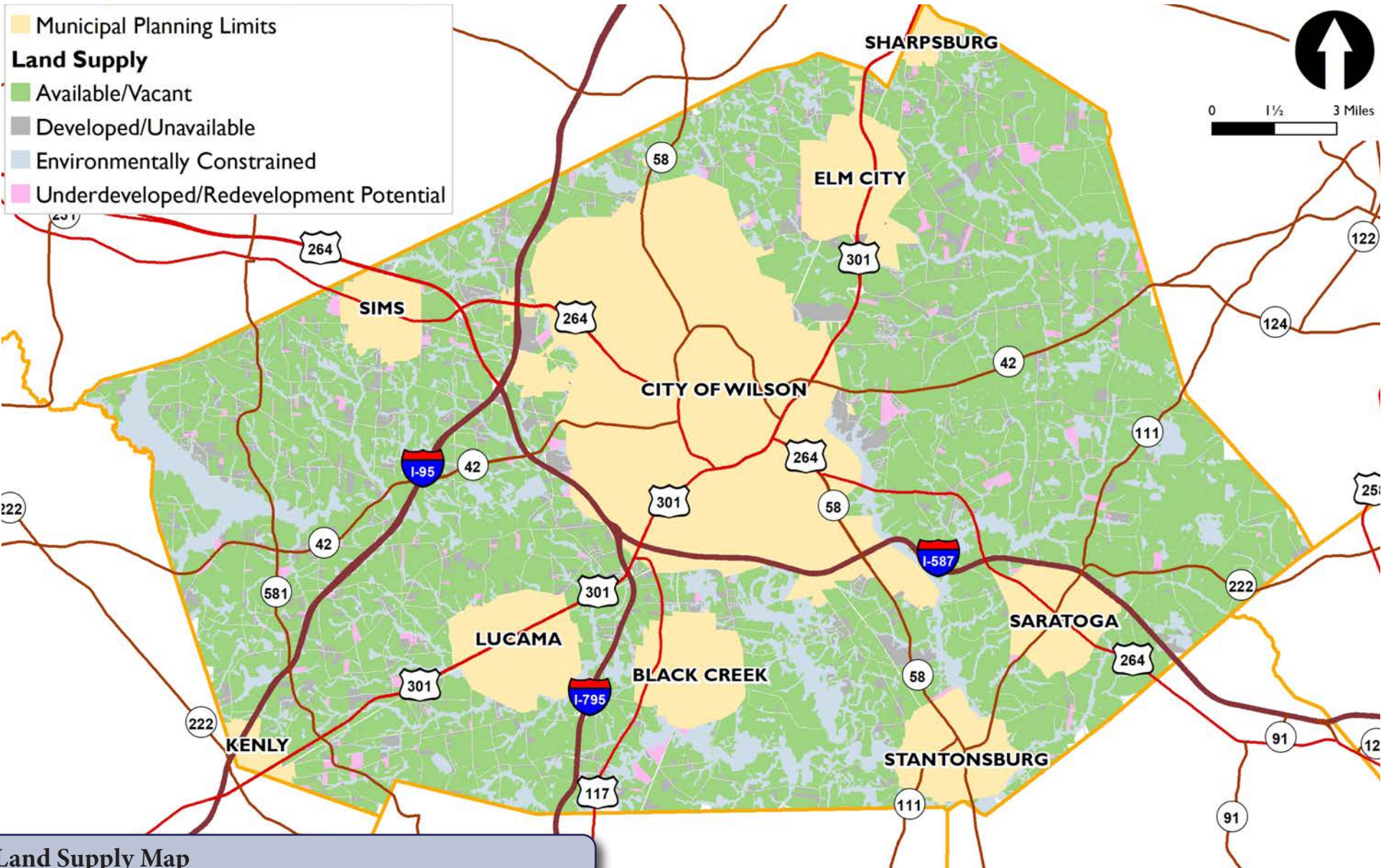
Available/Vacant land (72%) makes up nearly three quarters of the study area, followed by land that is Environmentally Constrained (18%). Developed/Unavailable lands total approximately 8% of the study area. Underdeveloped lands within the study are account for 2% of the study area. Both Developed/Unavailable and Underdeveloped lands were determined using a building to land value ratio.

Land Supply (Study Area)



Legend

| | |
|--|--|
| Available / Vacant | Vacant or agricultural lands with no significant structures. |
| Developed / Unavailable | Lands with a building to land value ratio greater than 2.5. |
| Environmentally Constrained | Wetlands, Floodway, and Water Bodies |
| Underdeveloped / Redevelopment Potential | Lands with a building to land value ratio less than 2.5. |



Land Supply Map

The Land Supply Map categorizes lands within the study area based on its relative availability and current potential for development as a residential use.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INPUT

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

With assistance from County Staff, stakeholder groups were identified to help provide focused insight into the key issues, concerns, opportunities, and challenges within the County. These groups were comprised of several perspectives, including but not limited to: staff members and department heads within the County, representatives of the towns and cities in Wilson County, local development community representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, and other community groups.

One major topic that arose was open space and recreation. There is a lot of excitement about the relocation of the Mudcats to the City of Wilson and the desire to see more recreational uses. However, there is not currently a Parks and Recreation department within the County. Public recreational land uses aid in creating a better quality of life for County residents. Some discussion involved the need to address the connectivity of open space and public recreational land use, ensuring that all members of the County are able to benefit.

The conversations also centered on the agricultural use of land and its place within the future of Wilson County. On one hand, there is a booming agricultural industry within the County that boasts some of the largest providers of cash crops throughout the state. On the other hand, there are farmers who are selling

off their land due to changes in surrounding land uses and the housing market boom. Preservation of agricultural land is imperative to ensuring balanced growth as well as maintaining the character of Wilson County. The plan will need to address conservation and the Future Land Use Map may include a specific land distinction for conversation accordingly.

There was a consistent theme that arose during stakeholder discussions: that of a desire to ensure that the plan encouraged agricultural, urban, rural, and industrial development balance to ensure that present and future generations of Wilson County residents are able to enjoy a similar quality of life. In particular, agriculture should not be left behind and is still a very important part of the community's identity and economy. Likewise, the economic engines of the municipalities are a counter-balance that provides additional employment alternatives to agriculture.

A public engagement plan was created to track the different types of public input touchpoints held with community members. It is shown on the following pages.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee was assembled to guide plan development, provide context to input received, and help tailor the plan recommendations to the specific needs of the County. This committee was formed from members of the County's Planning Board, Board of

Commissioners, County Staff, and other community-involved citizens. This board of volunteers committed to attending meetings for over a year and reviewing significant amounts of data and text. Their perspective and input was invaluable to crafting a plan that is representative of the County's residents. The exact membership is listed in "Acknowledgments" on page 4.

LEADERSHIP UPDATES AND INPUT

The Wilson County Planning Board and Board of Commissioners were consulted throughout the creation of this plan as the stewards of development and those elected and appointed by their community to guide the future of Wilson County. Board involvement is imperative to the success of the plan as these individuals are charged with reviewing any future development applications to ensure consistency with the plan and the community's vision for the County.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Public input and feedback were invaluable to the plan update process. This Public Engagement Plan outlines how different community members were engaged in the plan development process.

| Engagement / Event | Date | Persons Involved | Purpose |
|---|----------|---|--|
| Project Kick Off | Oct 2023 | Staff | An administrative project kickoff meeting with County staff to review the project details, timeline, and identify steering committee members and targeted stakeholders. |
| Community Tour | Oct 2023 | Staff, Consultant | In-person, half-day driving tour with County staff to document existing conditions through photographs and note-taking. |
| Stakeholder Interviews | Oct 2023 | Staff, Stakeholder Groups, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners | Small-group, roundtable discussions to explore local context, issues, and understand existing status and potential future conditions. |
| Steering Committee Meeting #1 | Oct 2023 | Steering Committee | Introduce the project team to the steering committee members and outline the project purpose and schedule, committee member roles and expectations, and discuss initial impressions. Conducted as part of the stakeholder interview meetings. |
| Updating regularly as project progresses - will be fully updated prior to adoption hearing. | | | |
| Steering Committee #3 | Mar 2024 | Steering Committee | Review public input from the community survey and discuss draft community vision and goals. |
| Public Meeting #1 (In-Person) | Feb 2024 | General public | One in-person public workshop to present existing conditions, Community Profile, survey results, and draft community vision and goals. Public input will be gathered to help develop the shared community vision and goals statements. |
| Steering Committee #4 | Apr 2024 | Steering Committee | Review input from the public meeting and finalize community vision and goals. This meeting will also include a summary of the subject area analyses of the multidisciplinary WithersRavenel team. The steering committee will also begin to discuss future land use and outline draft plan recommendations and action items. |
| Planning Board & Board of Commissioners updating meeting | May 2024 | Planning Board, Board of Commissioners, General public | Update board members on the status of plan development to-date, particularly regarding the draft future land use map, and gather direction and input. |

| Engagement / Event | Date | Persons Involved | Purpose |
|---|---------------|---|---|
| Steering Committee #5 | Jun 2024 | Steering Committee | Refine draft future land use map and plan recommendations for upcoming public review. |
| Public Meeting Series (3 | July-Aug 2024 | General public | Three public workshops, held in different locations throughout the County, to roll out the draft future land use map and recommendations and receive public review and input. |
| Public Review and Comment on Draft Plan | Aug-Sept 2024 | Staff, Stakeholder Groups, Planning Board, Focus Groups, Board of Commissioners, General Public | The draft copy of the plan will be available on the County webpage for final feedback and endorsements. |
| Planning Board Meeting | Sept 2024 | Planning Board, General Public | Presentation of the adoption draft of the plan to the Planning Board. |
| Board of Commissioners Meeting | Oct 2024 | BOC, General Public | Presentation of the adoption draft of the plan to the Board of Commissioners. |

Updating regularly as project progresses - will be fully updated prior to adoption hearing.

SURVEY RESULTS

A public, online and hard copy survey was developed and distributed during the early stages of plan development. This broad-based tool for gathering public input was used to assess progress implementing the previous plans' goals and to better understand respondents' priorities and values. This information, in addition to previous planning efforts and steering committee input, was used as the foundation of the vision and goals developed to help guide the community moving forward. The following pages summarize the input received from the over 1-month long survey.



Did You Know?

There is greater than 90% confidence that the actual population's views are reflected within the survey results.

OUTREACH METHODS INCLUDED:

- Yard signs posted outside community gathering spaces and schools and relocated weekly
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn)
- County/City of Wilson website advertisement
- Flyers in government buildings
- Partnered with chamber of commerce and Wilson County Schools
- Advertisement in the Wilson Times
- Business cards distributed at leadership meetings
- Email blast to all County employees, including the school district

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**Wilson County Government
Needs Your Input for the
2045 Comprehensive Plan!**

*Help Local Leaders
with Land Use and
Infrastructure Decisions
for Years to Come*

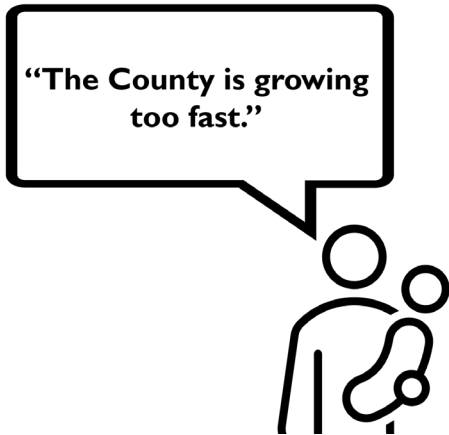
*Scan the QR Code
to Take the Survey!*

What We Love About Wilson County

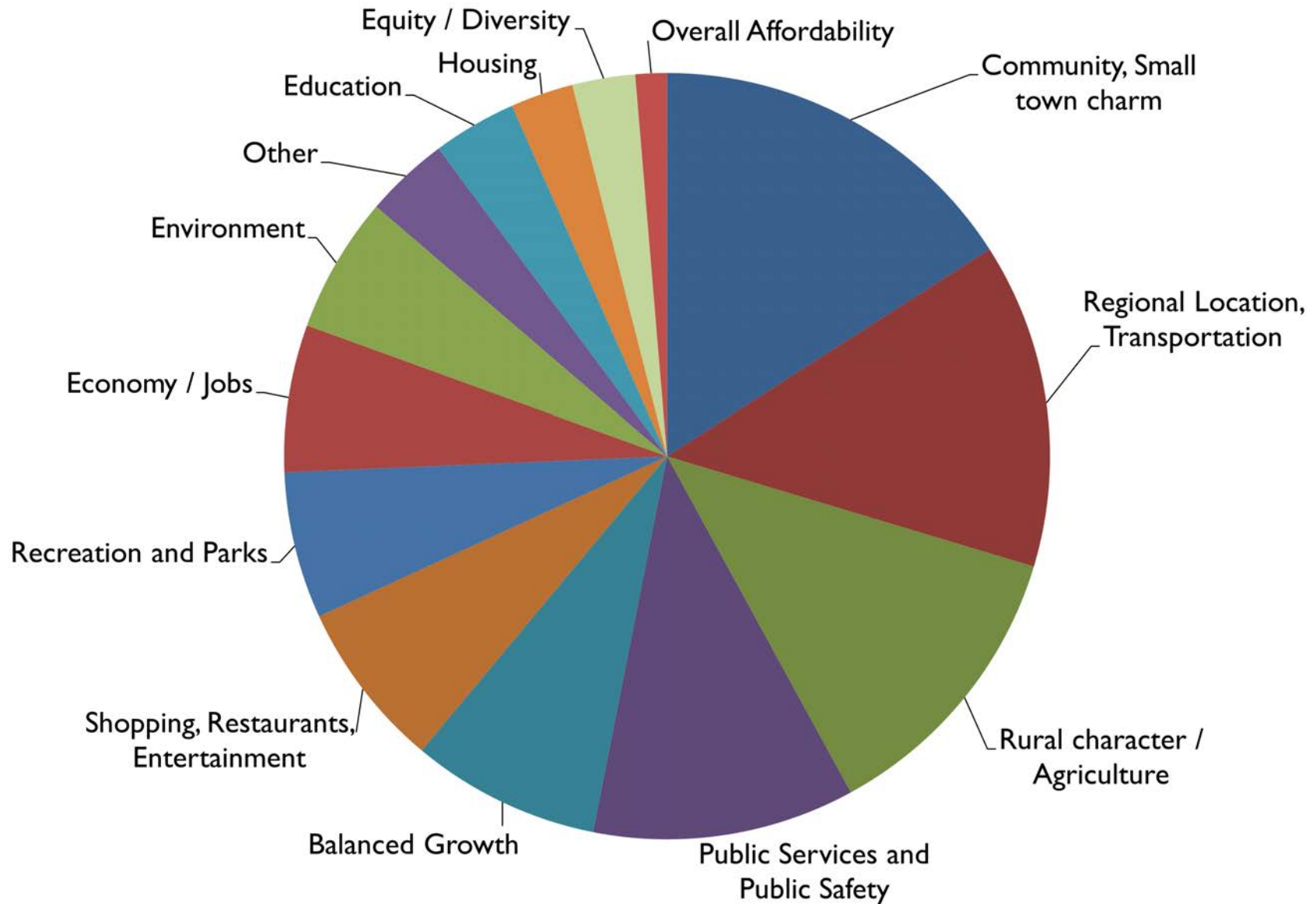
Recreation and Parks
Balanced Growth Education
Shopping, Restaurants, and Entertainment
Public Services and Public Safety
Regional Location and Transportation
Community and Small Town Charm
Rural Character and Agriculture
Equity and Diversity Overall Affordability Housing
Economy and Jobs
Environment



Biggest Concerns About The Future



What three features or aspects of living in Wilson County do you appreciate most?





COMMUNITY VISION AND GOALS

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VISION FORMATION

The community vision was carefully crafted through numerous community engagement events and strives to carry the County into the future. The gathered community input data did not indicate a need for a wholesale revamp of the previous vision, but rather that it should be tweaked, polished, and refined to address more modern concerns while preserving traditional values. Modified from the vision outlined in the County's 2008 Comprehensive Plan, this plan's vision has been refined to accurately reflect present-day community needs and preferences.



Within this framework, goals have been established to further the vision. These goals are intended to function as tool guiding the formulation of actionable steps to advance supportive initiatives. By doing so, the community is able to ensure the vision translates into tangible and beneficial outcomes.

Goals were likewise evaluated and refined to help move the County forward over the next several decades. These are in support of the overall community vision statement. Plan recommendations (detailed later) will support the advancement of the vision and goals.

COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

“Wilson County will prioritize agriculture and rural character in the unincorporated areas while also partnering with our embedded communities to achieve their goals and connect them.

Our identity is built on providing valuable public services, responsive local governance, and a high quality of life.

We work together and support each other to ensure a vibrant future.”

COMMUNITY GOALS

The goals of this plan were created to support the community vision. These more distinct components help organize the plan recommendations (presented later in the document) that will help staff and leadership in their achievement of the community vision.



Collaborative Partnerships

1. Strengthen partnerships and provide linkages between the County and embedded towns and cities.
2. Work with towns and cities to provide affordable housing in areas of opportunity, with the services and infrastructure to support those residents.



Economy

1. Prioritize agriculture, farmland preservation, and agritourism in the unincorporated areas (particularly the east and south).
2. Facilitate regional economic development opportunities and protect employment centers from being surrounded by incompatible uses.



Community Facilities

1. Guide residential growth toward cities and towns.
2. Reinforce local, context-sensitive, community character.
3. Guide limited, service and goods providing commercial uses to established rural crossroads.



Quality of Life

1. Preserve rural landscapes, natural areas, agricultural areas, and the natural resources - water, air, and land - that residents cherish.
2. Preserve and protect historical and cultural resources.



Growth Management

1. Continue to provide high quality, affordable public services.
2. Continue public drinking water service expansion to key locations.
3. Support municipalities in pursuing parks and recreational opportunities that compliment and connect each other and County facilities.

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ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

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EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Significant economic change has taken place since 1855 when Wilson County was first established. The economy of the 1800s was primarily agrarian with the major cash crops being tar and turpentine. Wilson County has seen an evolution over the years with multiple enterprises being established to accommodate residents and visitors to the region. This multitude of various industries has made the County a desirable location for new economic endeavors like large scale manufacturing as well as residential development.

EMPLOYMENT

According to JobsEQ, as of June 2023, total employment for Wilson County, North Carolina was 37,807. Employment had increased 1.4% in the region. The unemployment rate for Wilson County was 4.6% as of September 2023 which is higher than the national rate of 3.6%. One year earlier, in September 2022, the unemployment rate in Wilson County, North Carolina was 4.8%. The largest sector in Wilson County, North Carolina is Manufacturing, employing 7,597 of all workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Health Care and Social Assistance (4,533 workers) and Retail Trade (4,114).

Wilson County residents experienced an increase in median income between 2011

and 2021. Median income in 2021 was \$47,348, illustrating a \$8,588 rise in income from \$38,760 in 2011, and representing a 22.2% overall increase in median income. In the frame of income brackets, \$100,000 to \$149,999 saw the highest increase of 3.2% from 2011 to 2021 in Wilson County. The \$25,000 to \$34,999 bracket saw the highest decrease in amount, down 3.6% from 2011. This is important to note, as it supports the increasing median income. It is important to also note that the group making less than \$10,000 saw a 3.3% decrease to 7.7% of the total county population making less than \$10,000. Decreasing numbers in lower income brackets may hint at a closing wage gap between the County's populations.

ECONOMIC THEMES

As large scale manufacturers are interested in coming to the Wilson County region, it is essential to ensure that across jurisdictions, those businesses and industries feel welcomed. Welcoming efforts may include establishing streamlined processes and regulations to encourage corporations to continue doing business in the County. Collaborative efforts among the County and embedded municipalities, along with community stakeholders can assist with developing relationships and industry. Ultimately, this comprehensive may not only attract businesses but cultivates the economic vitality of Wilson County moving forward.

Median Household Income

Source: ACS

\$47,348

Fast Fact

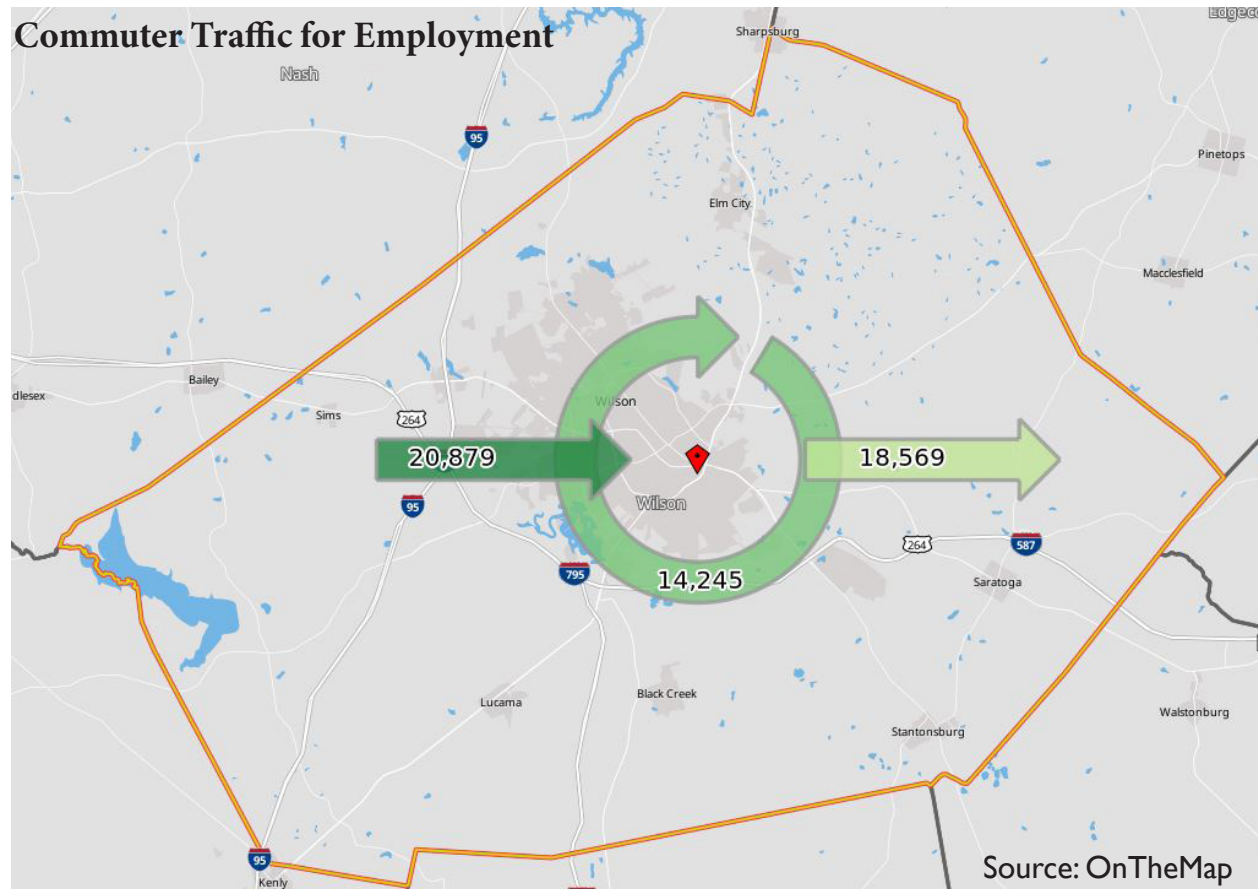
Manufacturing is the largest industry within the County. Large corporations like Merck and Purdue have a major impact in the community.

COMMUTING PATTERNS

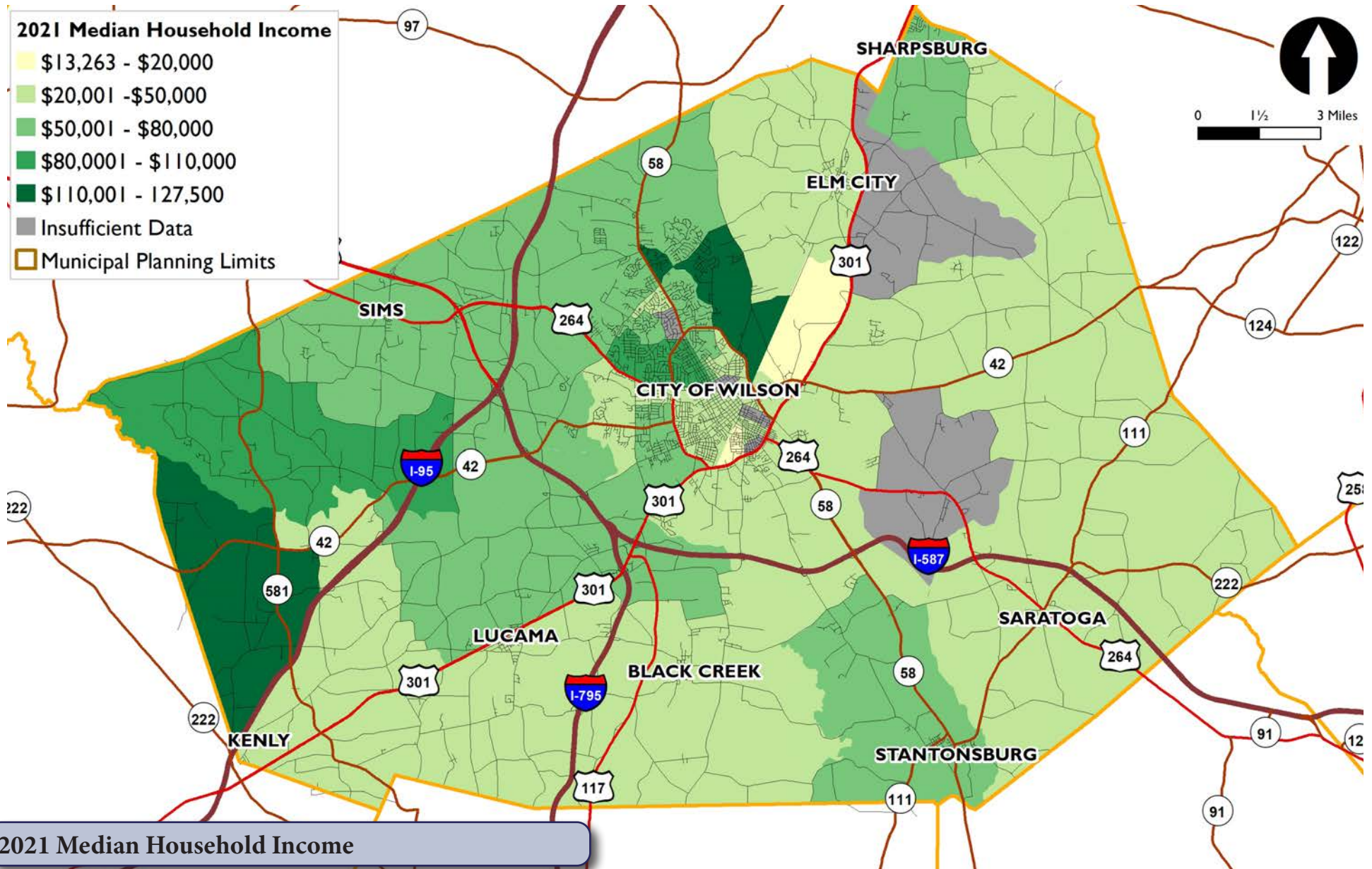
At present, 20,879 (38%) people commute to Wilson County to seek employment while 18,569 (27%) Wilson County residents also travel outside of the County for work, leaving

14,245 (35%) Wilson County residents who are employed within County limits. With a large commuting population, maintaining critical roadways will be important to maintain adequate travel times. This goes along with coordinating necessary infrastructure improve-

ments beyond roadways, such as water and sewer that attached more businesses, decrease commute times, and increase the number of those who reside and also work in the County.



| Wilson County, North Carolina, 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Current | | 5-Year History | | Total Demand | Exits | 1-Year Forecast | | Annual % Growth |
| | | | Avg Annual Wages | Location quotient | Jobs Change | Annual % | | | Transfers | Jobs Growth | |
| 31 | Manufacturing | 7,597 | \$67,185 | 2.49 | 385 | 1.0% | 727 | 304 | 519 | -96 | -1.3% |
| 62 | Health Care and Social Assistance | 4,533 | \$45,134 | 0.83 | -677 | -2.7% | 478 | 214 | 251 | 13 | 0.3% |
| 44 | Retail Trade | 4,114 | \$36,403 | 1.09 | 156 | 0.8% | 530 | 248 | 331 | -49 | -1.2% |
| 23 | Construction | 3,361 | \$64,820 | 1.49 | 279 | 1.7% | 306 | 118 | 210 | -21 | -0.6% |
| 72 | Accommodation and Food Services | 3,146 | \$20,510 | 0.96 | -3 | 0.0% | 528 | 248 | 301 | -21 | -0.7% |
| 61 | Educational Services | 2,300 | \$45,373 | 0.77 | -215 | -1.8% | 213 | 107 | 119 | -13 | -0.6% |
| 92 | Public Administration | 2,189 | \$50,775 | 1.27 | -70 | -0.6% | 201 | 89 | 127 | -16 | -0.7% |
| 52 | Finance and Insurance | 1,977 | \$74,078 | 1.31 | 640 | 8.1% | 170 | 70 | 115 | -15 | -0.8% |
| 56 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 1,893 | \$39,080 | 0.78 | -220 | -2.2% | 217 | 93 | 135 | -11 | -0.6% |
| 42 | Wholesale Trade | 1,453 | \$70,013 | 1.02 | 188 | 2.8% | 145 | 59 | 101 | -15 | -1.1% |
| 81 | Other Services (except Public Administration) | 1,448 | \$31,615 | 0.90 | 48 | 0.7% | 166 | 73 | 101 | -8 | -0.6% |
| 54 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 1,040 | \$71,192 | 0.37 | 144 | 3.0% | 93 | 35 | 59 | -1 | -0.1% |
| 48 | Transportation and Warehousing | 1,029 | \$45,111 | 0.55 | 88 | 1.8% | 118 | 49 | 73 | -4 | -0.4% |
| 11 | Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 691 | \$56,330 | 1.43 | -49 | -1.4% | 83 | 39 | 49 | -4 | -0.6% |
| 53 | Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 369 | \$45,422 | 0.55 | 2 | 0.1% | 37 | 17 | 21 | -1 | -0.4% |
| 71 | Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation | 304 | \$24,326 | 0.42 | -1 | 0.0% | 46 | 19 | 26 | 0 | 0.0% |
| 51 | Information | 183 | \$63,432 | 0.24 | -545 | -24.1% | 16 | 6 | 12 | -2 | -0.9% |
| 55 | Management of Companies and Enterprises | 149 | \$135,940 | 0.25 | -1,083 | -34.5% | 14 | 5 | 9 | 0 | 0.2% |
| 22 | Utilities | 20 | \$34,240 | 0.10 | 5 | 5.5% | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | -0.9% |
| 21 | Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction | 13 | \$74,307 | 0.10 | 3 | 5.1% | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | -0.6% |
| | Total - All Industries | 37,807 | \$51,642 | 1.00 | -925 | -0.5% | 4,083 | 1,814 | 2,531 | -261 | -0.7% |



This map shows higher household income levels generally exist in the western portion of the County with lower median income levels to the east.

AGRICULTURAL SUMMARY

A consistent theme heard throughout the engagement process was the importance of maintaining the balance between agriculture and industry. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census conducted by the US Department of Agriculture, Wilson County had a total of 276 farms with over 122,000 acres of farmland. The estimated market value of land and buildings is valued on average upwards of \$1.6 million per farm. However, it should also be noted that 97 of those 276 farms have a value of sales that is less than \$2,500. Regarding the profitability of crops, of the 122,946 acres noted within Wilson County, the most popular crops will be soybeans (40,976 acres), tobacco (11,792 acres), sweet potatoes (11,222 acres), and wheat or grain related crops (19,944). Wilson County is the state's largest producer of tobacco and second largest producer of sweet potatoes, potatoes, melons, and vegetables. It is also the second largest producer of total crops in North Carolina.

Wilson County, North Carolina, boasts a rich agricultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, and a welcoming rural

\$56,330

Average wages per Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting



Farms by Size

| | Number | Percent of Total ^a |
|------------------|--------|-------------------------------|
| 1 to 9 acres | 32 | 12 |
| 10 to 49 acres | 89 | 32 |
| 50 to 179 acres | 70 | 25 |
| 180 to 499 acres | 37 | 13 |
| 500 to 999 acres | 14 | 5 |
| 1,000 + acres | 34 | 12 |

Percent of farms that:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Have internet access | 76 |
| Farm organically | 2 |
| Sell directly to consumers | 5 |
| Hire farm labor | 36 |
| Are family farms | 94 |

Wilson County accounts for **2%** of state agricultural sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Crops | 77 |
| Livestock, poultry, and products | 23 |

Land in Farms by Use (%) ^a

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Cropland | 82 |
| Pastureland | 3 |
| Woodland | 14 |
| Other | 1 |

Acres irrigated: 1,145




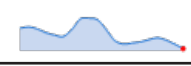
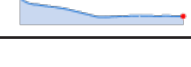
1% of land in farms

Land Use Practices (% of farms)

| | |
|----------------|----|
| No till | 38 |
| Reduced till | 9 |
| Intensive till | 32 |
| Cover crop | 18 |

community. The County has a variety of agricultural exports that contribute to a diversified farm economy. Wilson County is a major hub for poultry production, with Broilers and other meat-type chickens being the leading commodity according to the USDA NASS 2017 Census. This industry contributes significantly to the local economy and provides employment for many residents. Soybeans are another prominent crop in Wilson County, ranking second in terms of production value. They are used for various purposes, including animal feed, vegetable oil, and biodiesel. Wilson County has a long history of sweet potato cultivation. The crop remains an important part of the local agricultural identity, earning Wilson County the nickname “Sweet Potato Capital of the World”. Several large-scale farms and processing facilities operate in the area, contributing to the sweet potato industry’s economic importance. While experiencing a decline in recent years, tobacco remains a significant agricultural product in Wilson County. The presence of large tobacco companies and processing facilities add to the local economy. Farmers primarily grow flue-cured tobacco, used in cigarettes and other tobacco products, contributing to the historical and cultural landscape of the region.

The County has strong participation in the Voluntary Agricultural District program. This program grants benefits to the landowner for agreeing to keep their land in agricultural production. It also helps spread awareness to adjacent landowners that the neighboring property is running an agricultural operation.

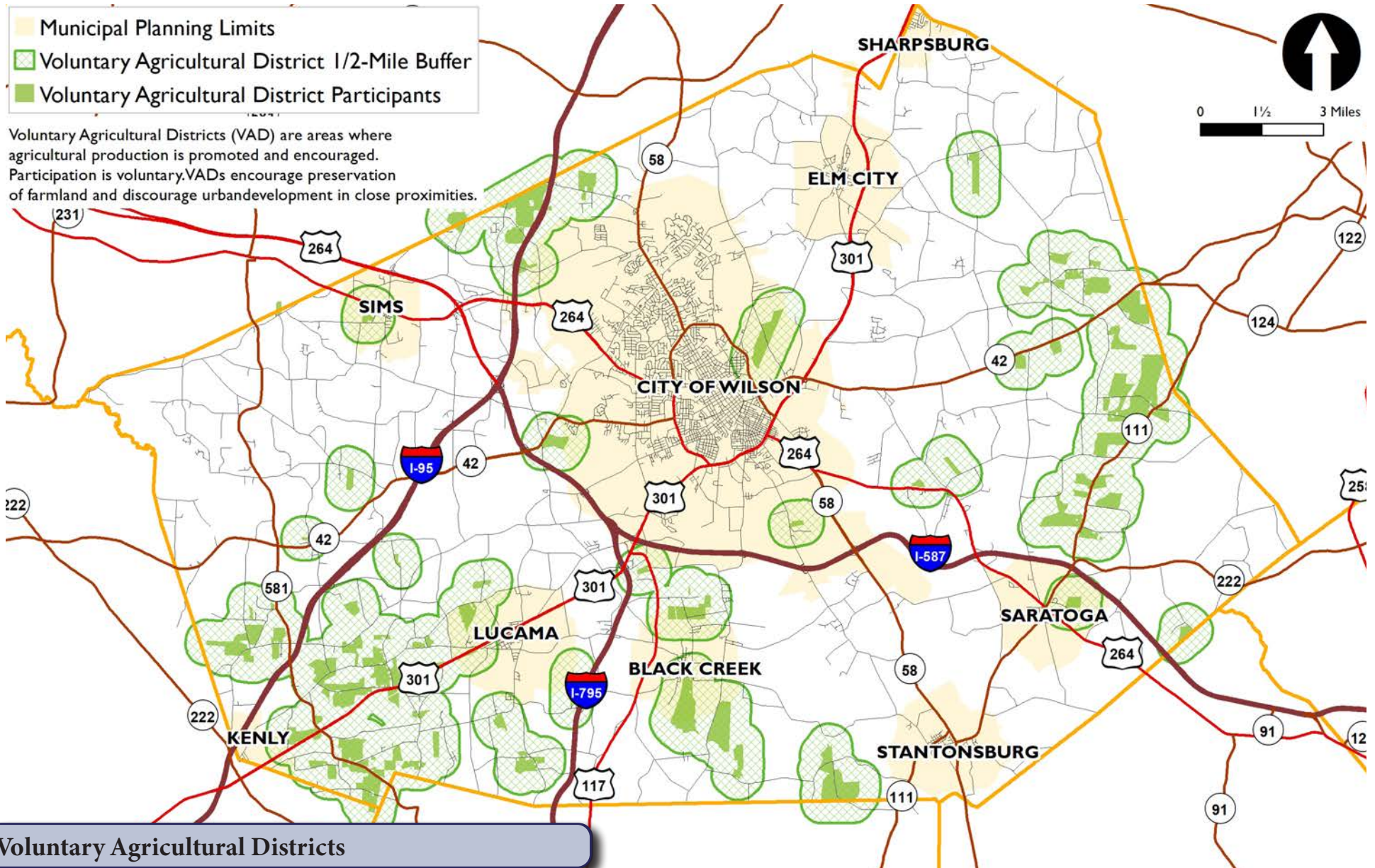
| Industry | Employment | Avg Annual Wages | LQ | 5yr History | Annual Demand | Forecast Annual Growth |
|---|------------|------------------|------|---|---------------|------------------------|
| Crop Production | 458 | \$68,232 | 2.37 |  | 54 | -0.6% |
| Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry | 186 | \$28,419 | 1.78 |  | 26 | -0.4% |
| Animal Production and Aquaculture | 34 | \$89,333 | 0.21 |  | 3 | -1.3% |
| Forestry and Logging | 12 | \$50,302 | 0.67 |  | 1 | -1.6% |
| Fishing, Hunting and Trapping | 1 | \$12,200 | 0.14 |  | 0 | -0.7% |

Top Agriculture Provider

As of 2023Q2, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting in Wilson County, North Carolina are estimated to make \$66.2 million in annual purchases from suppliers in the United States with about 20% or \$13.5 million of these purchases being made from businesses located in Wilson County, North Carolina.

GDP FROM AGRICULTURE

In 2022, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting produced \$96.1 million in GDP for Wilson County, North Carolina.



This map shows both Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) participants and associated 1/2-mile buffer zones. A majority of VADs are located in the southwestern portion of the County.



HOUSING

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HOUSING

Since 2011, Wilson County has added approximately 913 housing units, a 2.6% increase in the housing stock. However, there appears to be a mismatch between supply and demand, as the total occupancy rate of the County dropped to 88.4% in 2021. This indicates that an estimated 11.6% of the housing stock in the County lies vacant. In 2011, the balance of owner-occupied and rental housing sat around 61.1% and 38.9%, respectively. Owner-occupied housing accounted for 58.5% of the County's housing stock in 2021. Wilson County has experienced growth in housing stock and owner-occupied housing but also an overall increase in vacant units. This plan shall address the underutilization of the housing stock while recognizing the implications of the increasing number of family households.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), the median household income was \$47,348 with the median household value at \$130,000. According to survey results as part of community engagement conducted through the planning process, a need for more affordable housing is evident and will be addressed in greater detail within this plan.



Median Household Value

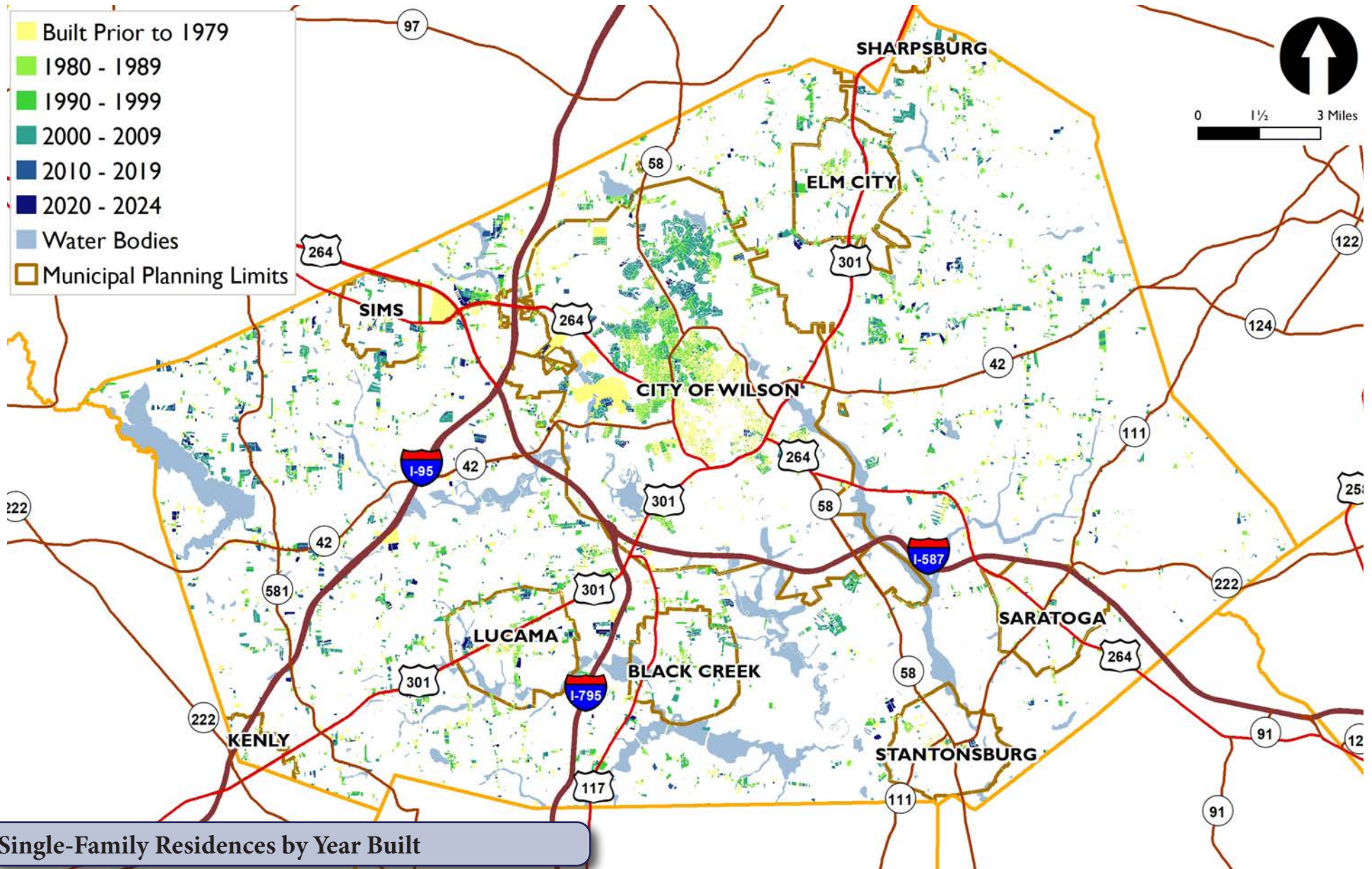
Source: ACS

\$130,000

SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Single-family detached housing has consistently made up 64% of the housing stock from 2011 to 2021. There has been an increase in attached housing over the course of the past decade but at a 0.8% increase, this data does not reflect a major shift in market share for this housing type. It should be noted that there was also an increase in the number of mobile homes within the County, with 276 new mobile homes added from 2011 to 2021, making mobile homes 14% of the overall stock available. Regarding this growth, the plan should address zoning conditions and future land use planning for mobile homes..





The map above illustrates the ages of single-family residential structures throughout the County and incorporated municipalities. Note, a majority of the older residential structures are located within Town and City limits.

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TRANSPORTATION

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ROADWAYS

Wilson County is advantageously positioned in eastern North Carolina with regional roadway access supported by several interstate highways. I-95 provides north/south accessibility in the western portion of the County, with I-587 providing a central east/west through-line. US 301 also supports centralized north/south access within Wilson County and feeds directly into the City of Wilson. The county also enjoys proximity to major cities such as Raleigh, Durham, and Greenville. These connections to economic hubs and the Research Triangle itself are critical to the ongoing economic development of the County and its municipalities.

While the existing infrastructure of the County provides advantageous connections within and around the County, continuous work is being done to identify future network needs. Wilson County is a member of the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization (RPO) alongside Nash County, Edgecombe County, and Johnston County. This organization works with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to coordinate transportation planning efforts for these communities. The RPO works to develop a project list with NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), who are responsible for a majority of the County's roadway network.

Of particular note regarding economic development, the future I-87 corridor will connect Raleigh, NC with the port of Norfolk, VA. Wilson County will be in close proximity to this project, with both I-95 and US 301 serving as vertical connections to the I-87 corridor as it passes through Rocky Mount. These connections will enhance economic development along the corridors and promote future development in Wilson County.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

Regional multi-modal infrastructure is limited, with bicycle and pedestrian facilities being concentrated in the downtowns of Wilson, Elm City, and Lucama. With much of the surrounding county remaining largely rural, multi-modal infrastructure is unsupported and transportation additions would require large capital investments.

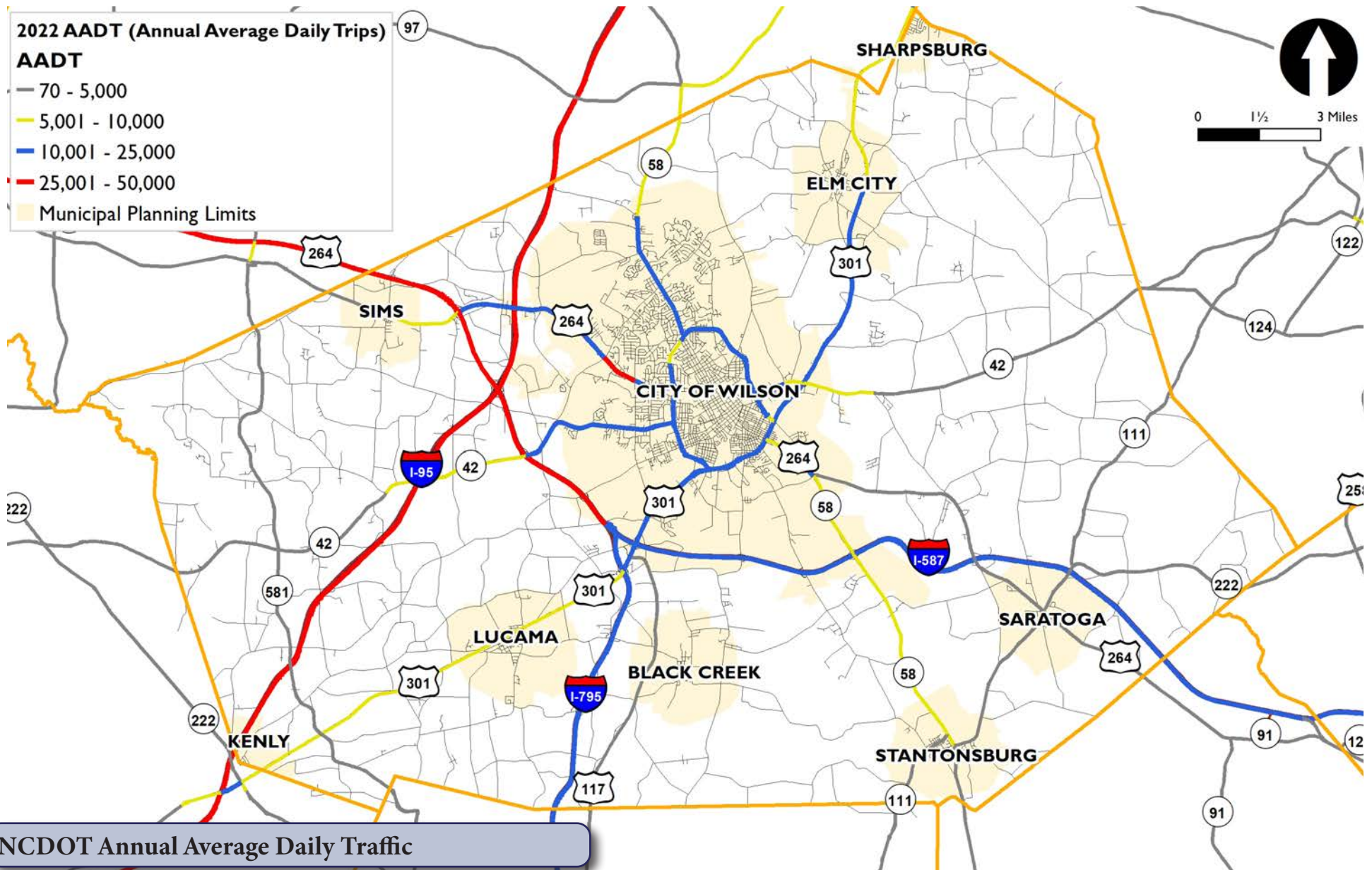
Multi-modal enhancements can be accomplished as NCDOT periodically updates sections of its roadway network. NCDOT can update street sections with multi-modal capabilities where possible and advantageous. Wilson County can guide this process further by working with the City of Wilson and other municipalities to identify key multi-modal connections within the county.

RAIL

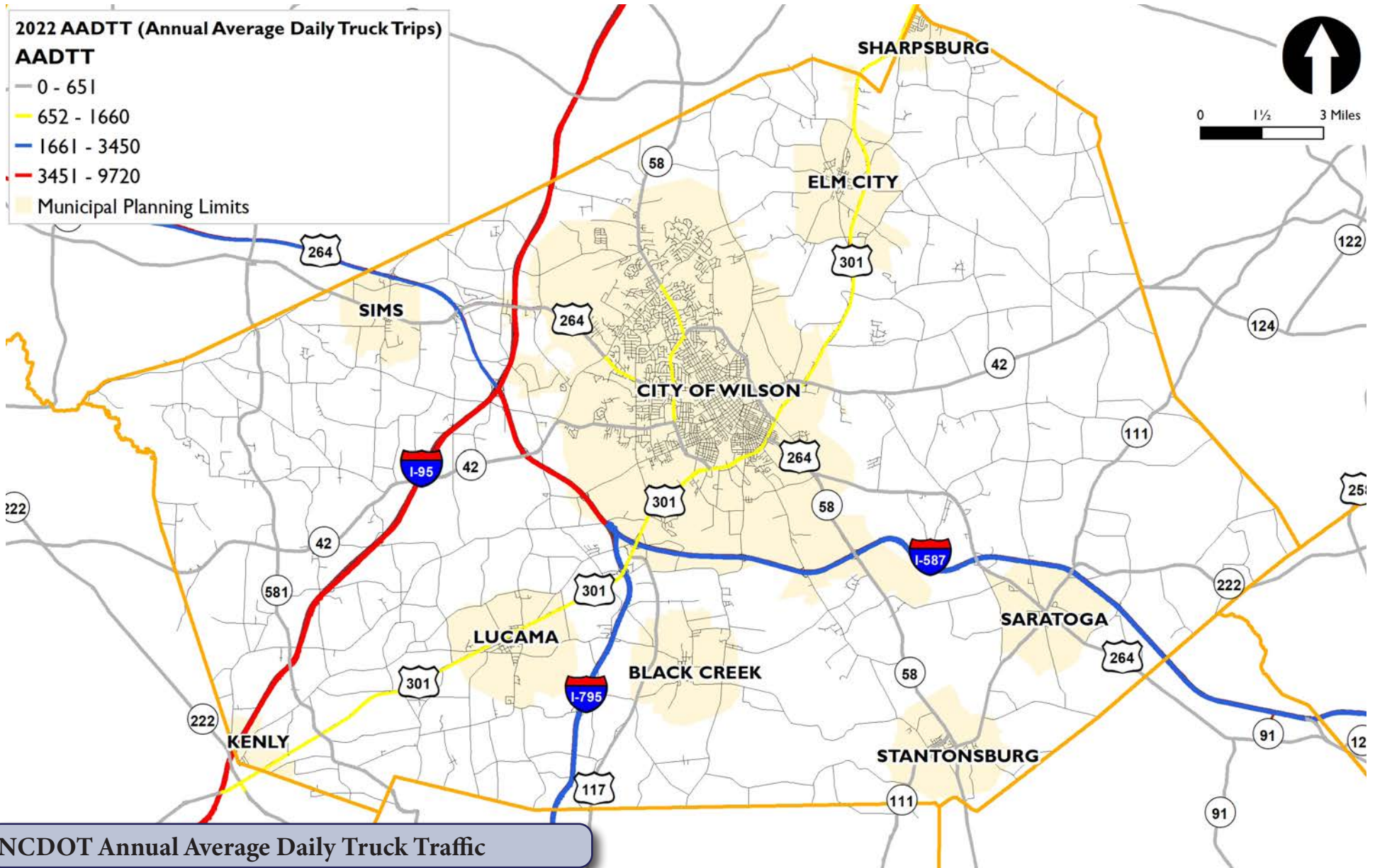
The railroad network of Wilson County is a fundamental component of the county's economy. Similar to US 301, existing rail infrastructure runs north/south through the heart of Wilson County. This rail network serves passengers and transports goods, including many of the County's agricultural products, throughout the state and beyond. Amtrak operates a station in the heart of Wilson providing commuter services to the greater region through a combination of rail/bus operations. CSX also operates a facility in the nearby Rocky Mount, providing logistic services.

TRANSIT

The County provides transit services via the ARRIVE Wilson County Transportation branch of the government. Services run from 5am – 5pm Monday through Saturday. This service utilizes smaller passenger vehicles like transit vans to make and the fare is \$2.00 for a one-way trip. ARRIVE provides equitable accessibility throughout the County through these pre-reserved one-way trips. Similarly, the City of Wilson operates a on-demand micro-transit service to serve trips within the City. The program, titled RIDE, operates Monday through Saturday and the standard fare is \$2.50.



The map above shows that higher traffic volumes in the County exist along Interstate-95, Interstate-587 and portions of US-264 closer to the City of Wilson.



Similar to commuter traffic volumes, higher truck traffic exists primarily along Interstate-95 and portions of Interstate-587.

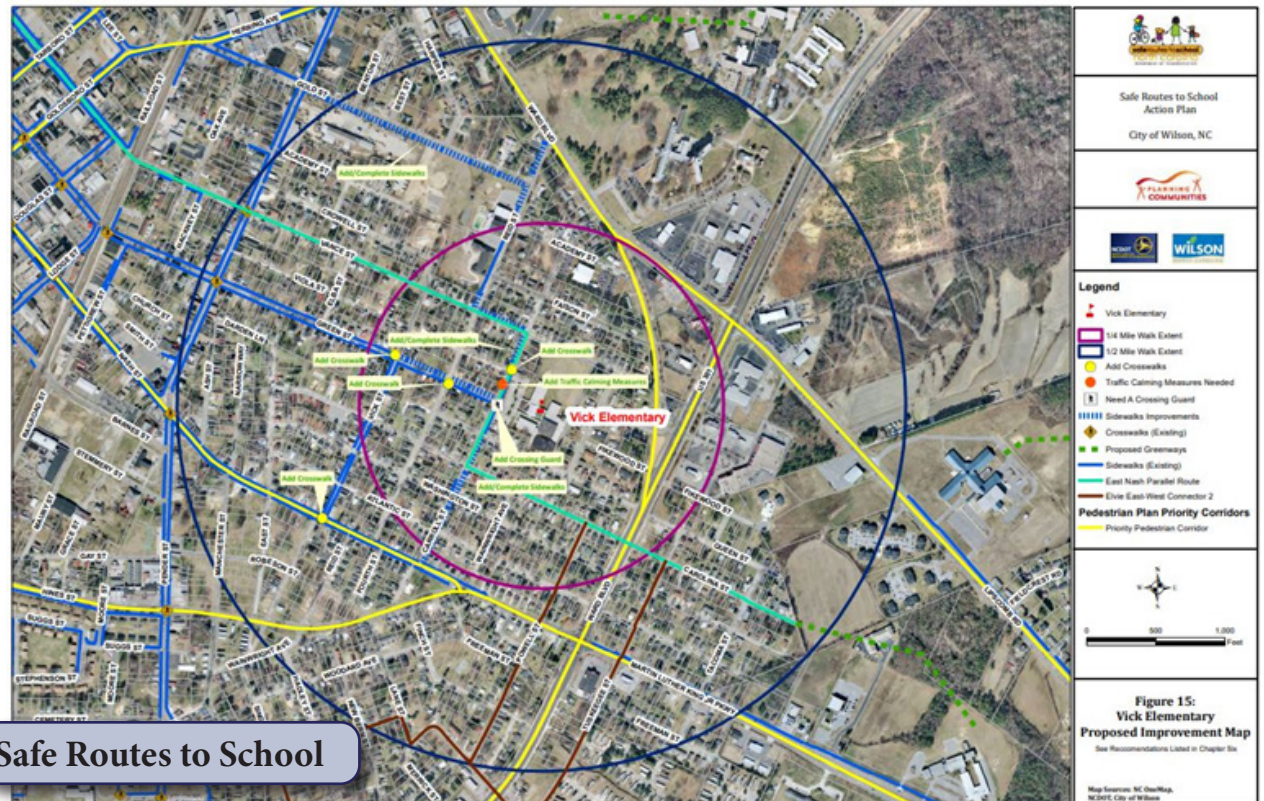
AVIATION

The Rocky Mount – Wilson Regional Airport lies just north of the County’s borders. The airport is an Index A / Class 4 airport which generally serves small passenger aircraft. As of 2023, the airport is planning for expansion to include additional hangers and terminal buildings. These additions will allow for increased use of the facility and economic development for both Nash and Wilson counties.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The Wilson County Safe Routes to School Action Plan was adopted in February 2012. This plan evaluated the multi-modal accessibility of the ½-mile distance surrounding the County’s schools. Infrastructure and policy

recommendations were put forward where accessibility barriers were identified. Local road improvements were largely targeted for the City of Wilson, as that is where most of the County’s schools are located.



Example Safe Routes to School map.

STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Wilson County has twenty (20) projects included in the State’s Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). These projects include

bridge replacements over the tributary of Town Creek, the Town Swamp bridge, and over the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. Other notable projects include the widening of US 264 to NC Highway 58 and broadband fiber installation along Interstate-95 A complete list of Wilson County projects included in the

10-year State and Federally mandated plan are shown in the following table.

| TIP | Mode | Route | Description | Comment |
|----------|----------------|--|--|--|
| AV-5845 | AVIATION | ROCKY MOUNT WILSON AIRPORT (RWI) | CONSTRUCT TAXIWAY AND T HANGARS. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| B-6000 | BRIDGE | SR 1400 (ROCK QUARRY ROAD) | REPLACE BRIDGE 970096 OVER TRIBUTARY OF TOWN CREEK. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| B-5998 | BRIDGE | SR 1339 (SHARPE SHORE ROAD) | REPLACE BRIDGE 970092 OVER TOWN SWAMP. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION |
| B-5666 | BRIDGE | US 117 | REPLACE BRIDGE 970047 OVER SEABOARD COAST LINE RAILROAD. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| I-5986C | HIGHWAY | I-95 | INSTALL BROADBAND FIBER ALONG I-95 FROM SOUTH CAROLINA LINE TO VIRGINIA STATE LINE. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. LETTING COMBINED WITH R-5777D, HO-0002A, HO-0002B, AND HO-0002C. DP FUNDS REPRESENT FEDERAL INFRA GRANT FUNDS. |
| I-5936 | HIGHWAY | I-95 | JOHNSTON COUNTY LINE (MILE MARKER 108.2) TO NORTH OF SR 1116 (GOVERNOR HUNT ROAD) (MILE MARKER 114.5). PAVEMENT REHABILITATION. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| U-5794 | HIGHWAY | SR 1309 (BLOOMERY ROAD) / SR 1382 (PACKHOUSE ROAD) | US 264 ALTERNATE TO NC 58. WIDEN AND UPGRADE FACILITY. | NOT FUNDED |
| HL-0034 | HIGHWAY | SR 1356 (RALEIGH ROAD PARKWAY) | SR 1356 (RALEIGH ROAD PARKWAY) FROM ATLANTIC CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DRIVE (CITY STREET) TO NC 42/NC 58 IN WILSON. MODERNIZATION OF ROADWAY. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| U-5945 | HIGHWAY | WILSON | WILSON CITY SIGNAL SYSTEM. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2025 |
| U-5941 | HIGHWAY | US 264 ALTERNATE (RALEIGH ROAD PARKWAY) | SR 1320 (AIRPORT BOULEVARD) TO EAST OF SR 1165 (FOREST HILLS ROAD). SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2028 |
| U-6111 | HIGHWAY | NC 58 (NASH STREET NW) | SR 1330 (AIRPORT ROAD)/SR 1332 (LAKE WILSON ROAD). IMPROVE INTERSECTION. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2029 |
| HI-0006 | HIGHWAY | US 264 | US 264 FROM I-795 TO TOISNOT SWAMP. PAVEMENT REHABILITATION. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| HI-0007 | HIGHWAY | US 264 | US 264 FROM TOISNOT SWAMP TO THE GREENE COUNTY LINE. PAVEMENT REHABILITATION. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| HI-0014 | HIGHWAY | US 264 | US 264 FROM THE WILSON COUNTY LINE TO I-95. PAVEMENT REHABILITATION. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2026 |
| HS-2004O | HIGHWAY SAFETY | SR 1320 (AIRPORT BOULEVARD) | SR 1320 (AIRPORT BOULEVARD) AT CHELSEA DRIVE AND SR 1320 (AIRPORT BOULEVARD) AT JETSTREAM DRIVE IN WILSON. INSTALL TRAFFIC SIGNALS. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| HS-2004F | HIGHWAY SAFETY | SR 1103 (WIGGINS MILL ROAD) | INSTALL ALL WAY STOP UTILIZING EXISTING OVERHEAD FLASHERS AT SR 1103 (WIGGINS MILL ROAD) AND SR 1169 (RADFORD ROAD). | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. LETTING COMBINED WITH HS-2004G AND HS-2004H. |
| W-5804A | HIGHWAY SAFETY | US 301 | US 301 AT NC 581. CONSTRUCT A REDUCED CONFLICT INTERSECTION WITH TRUCK BULB-OUTS AT THE ADJACENT U-TURN POINTS. | UNDER CONSTRUCTION. |
| RX-2004E | RAIL | SR 1329 (VAN SLYKE ROAD) | CSX CROSSING 629843W IN WILSON. CONSTRUCT SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2024 |
| RX-2004A | RAIL | SR 1163 (GOLDSBORO STREET / HERRING AVENUE) | CSX CROSSING 629847Y IN WILSON. INSTALL ACTIVE WARNING DEVICES. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2024 |
| RX-2004I | RAIL | GREEN STREET | CSX CROSSING 629849M IN WILSON. CONSTRUCT SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS. | CONSTRUCTION YEAR 2025 |

BIKE PATHS AND TRAILS

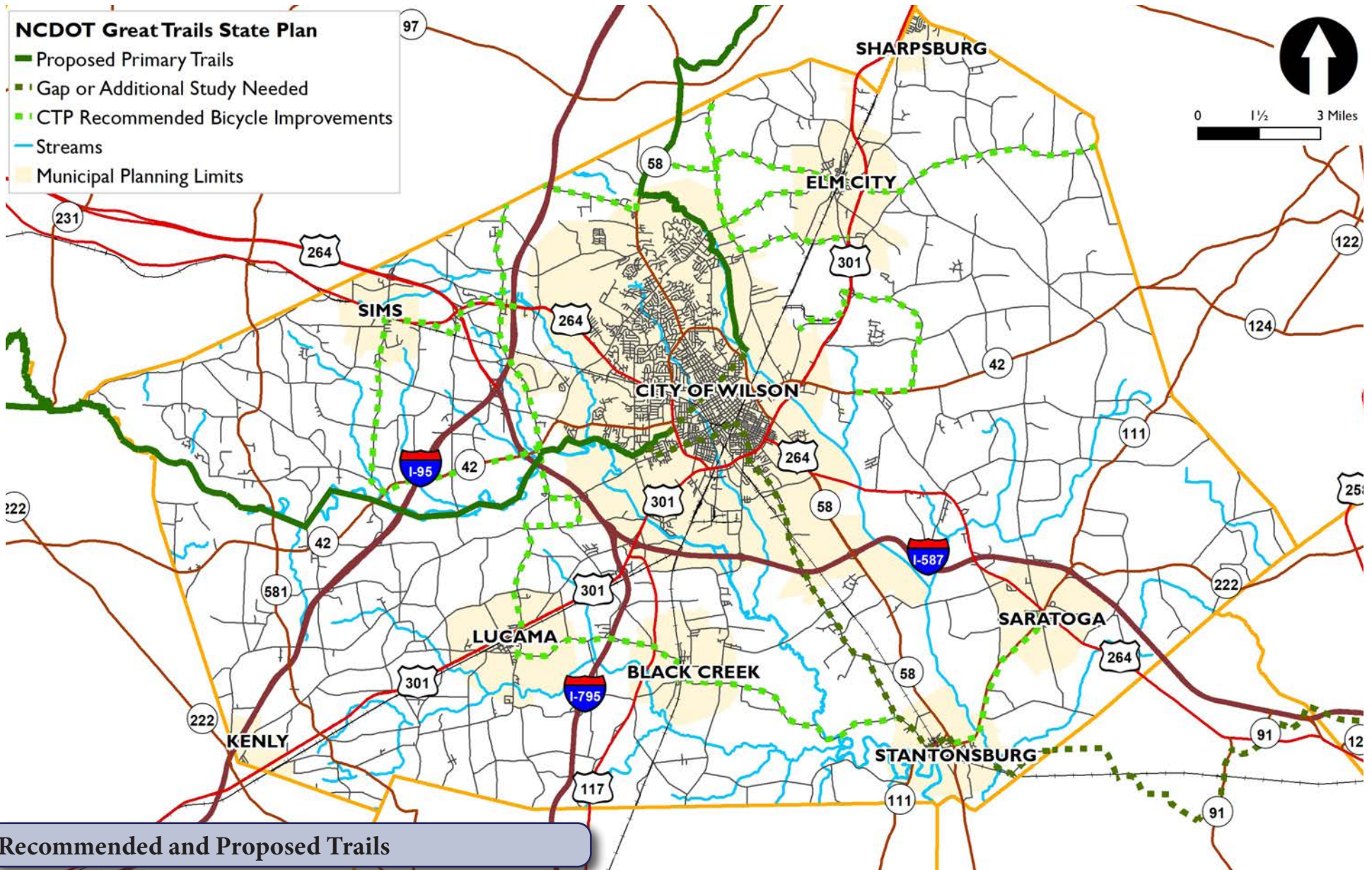
As provided in the previous section, Moccasin Creek, Buckhorn Reservoir, Contentnea Creek, and the Wiggins Mill Reservoir are listed on the NCDOT Great Trails State Map for future greenway trails. The map does indicate a gap within the City of Wilson, ultimately picking back up at Toisnot Reservoir and continuing north to Lake Wilson and Siler Lake. An additional trail gap was identified between Wilson County and the City of Greenville to the east. The NCDOT website indicates connectivity between Wilson and Stantonsburg, with the trail then moving eastward from the County border. Coordination with NCDOT and internal municipalities will be important to ensure that these trail projects can be developed in a timely manner. Ongoing coordination will also help address the trail gaps identified by the state, and make alignment recommendations to complete those connections.



Focused map snip from the NC Great Trails State Map and plan showing preliminary ideas for connections between counties and county seats across the state.

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan was last adopted in 2008. The plan prioritizes roadway expansion through the addition of lanes and interchanges on the County's largest routes including I-95, US 264, and US 301. The most recently funded project is the development of an interchange along the US 264 bypass where it intersects Stantonsburg Road (SR 1602). While portions of the plan have been implemented, 15-years have passed since the document's adoption. See "2011 Wilson County Comprehensive Transportation Plan" on page 12.



This map contains recommended bicycle improvements identified in the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and proposed trail locations identified in the NCDOT Great Trails State Plan.



OPEN SPACES, CONSERVATION, AND RECREATION

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NATURAL AREAS

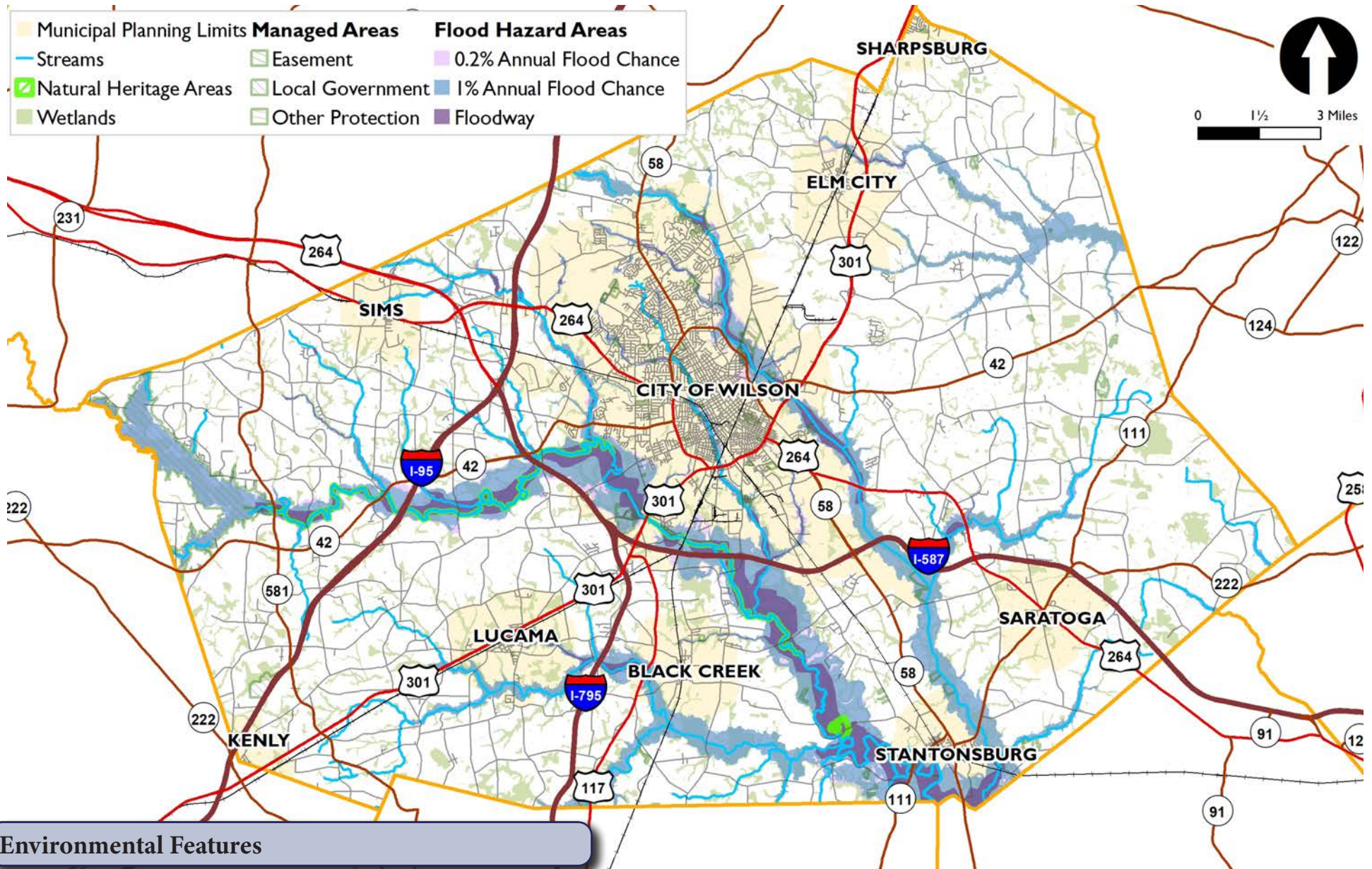
Wilson County is located near one of the largest reservoirs in the Eastern North Carolina, Buckhorn Reservoir. It has a few other smaller reservoirs and several creeks, swamps, wetlands, and streams that stretch across the County. Additionally, the land in Wilson County is generally flat and marked with several areas of floodplain and floodway.

As future development is considered, the conservation and preservation of natural areas must also be prioritized. Land adjacent to natural and built bodies of water can be susceptible to flooding, especially without appropriate storm water management regulation.

Wetlands are another natural resource that are somewhat prevalent throughout Wilson County. Regulatory protection exists for wetlands and aims to maintain clean ecosystems and water filtration capacity as new development pressures come online. Preservation of the functional operations of wetlands and riparian areas is particularly important in surface waters that serve as public drinking water intakes.



Wiggins Mill Reservoir. Photo courtesy of Stephen Mann.



Environmental Features

The map above contains environmentally constrained areas including, special flood hazards, wetlands, streams, and natural heritage areas within the County.

EXISTING RECREATION

Despite the county's regional accessibility to major urban areas, residents are able to enjoy the many natural amenities and rural characteristics of a less urbanized geography. Wilson County contains various surface waters that have been or plan to be programmed for recreational use. Descriptions of these surface waters are provided below:

- Buckhorn Reservoir is a large lake on the western side of the County and is largely accessible from US 581. The lake serves as the primary water supply for the City of Wilson but includes a variety of recreation activities. It features 850 acres of water and 350 acres of recreational land. Opportunities at Buckhorn Reservoir include boating, camping, and fishing among more traditional park activities.
- Moccasin Creek connects to the reservoir from the county border and Contentnea Creek runs east from the reservoir into Wiggins Mill Reservoir. This segment of creeks and reservoirs is listed on the NCDOT's Great Trails State Plan Network, indicating a desire for future programming of the creek alignment for greenway infrastructure.
- Lake Wilson is located in Wilson, NC. While not as large as the Buckhorn Reservoir, the lake contains similar features and amenities.
- Wiggins Mill Reservoir is located just off of US 301 at the southern termination of

Wilson, NC. The facility features boating, fishing, and duck hunting.

- The Toisnot Reservoir on the eastern border of the City of Wilson, adjacent to Ward Boulevard. This is the smallest reservoir in the County, but sports a dog park, baseball fields and a walking path.

In addition to these environmental facilities, there are also 36 municipal parks. The majority of these facilities are located within or adjacent to the City of Wilson.

- Bankers Plaza
- Belle Meade Park
- Buckhorn Lake Park
- Carolina Street Park
- Educational Forrest
- Five Points Park
- Fleming Stadium/JC Field/Denby Field Complex
- Freeman Park
- Greater Wilson Rotary Park
- Hominy Swamp Greenway
- J. Burt Gillette Athletic Complex
- Lake Wilson Reservoir Park
- Lamm Park
- Lane Park
- Library Lawn
- Linear Park
- Matthis Park
- Merrimont Park
- Norris Park
- Oliver Nestus Freeman Round House
- Pender Street Center/Park
- Recreation Park Center/Park

- Ridgewood Park
- Toisnot Park
- Vera Pope Park/Resource Center
- Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park
- Warren Street Park
- Washington-Carver Heights Park
- Weaver-Bailey Park
- Wedgewood Golf Course
- Westwood Park
- Wiggins Mill Reservoir Park/Viewing Area
- Williams Day Camp & Shelter
- Wilson Dog Park
- Wilson Rose Garden
- Woodard Park

Private recreation opportunities are also available to county residents. These include several private golf courses, country clubs/tennis courts, and raceways.

Of note particular note, Wilson County does not operate its own Parks and Recreation Department. The City of Wilson operates the municipal facilities identified above and has historically been responsible for driving recreation opportunities forward within the County. Future park planning efforts developed at the County level must heavily consider the goals and objectives of its internal municipalities. This must be done to avoid duplication of services for county stakeholders, and to ensure that strategic investments focus on diversifying opportunities and maintaining equitable services.



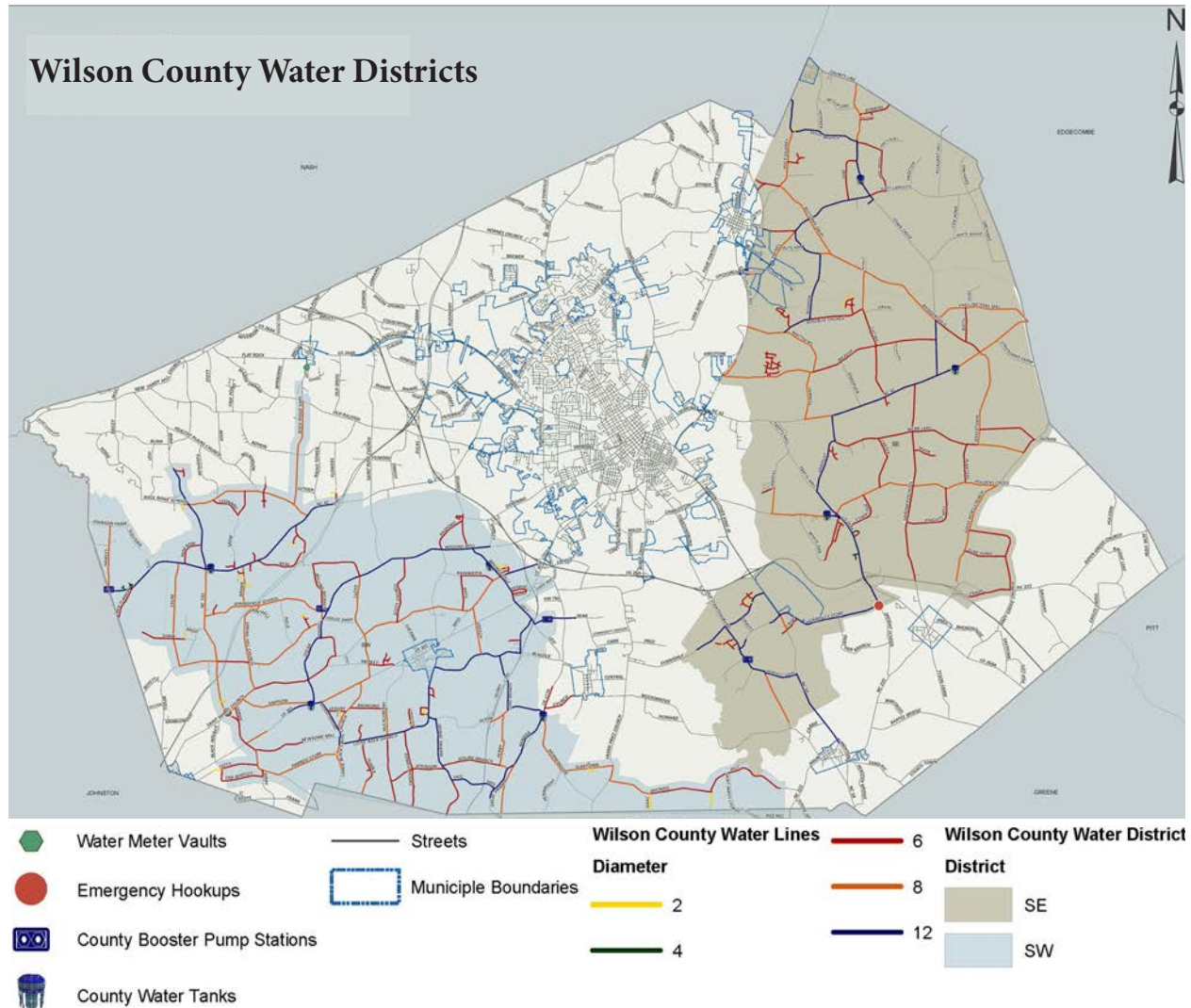
INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

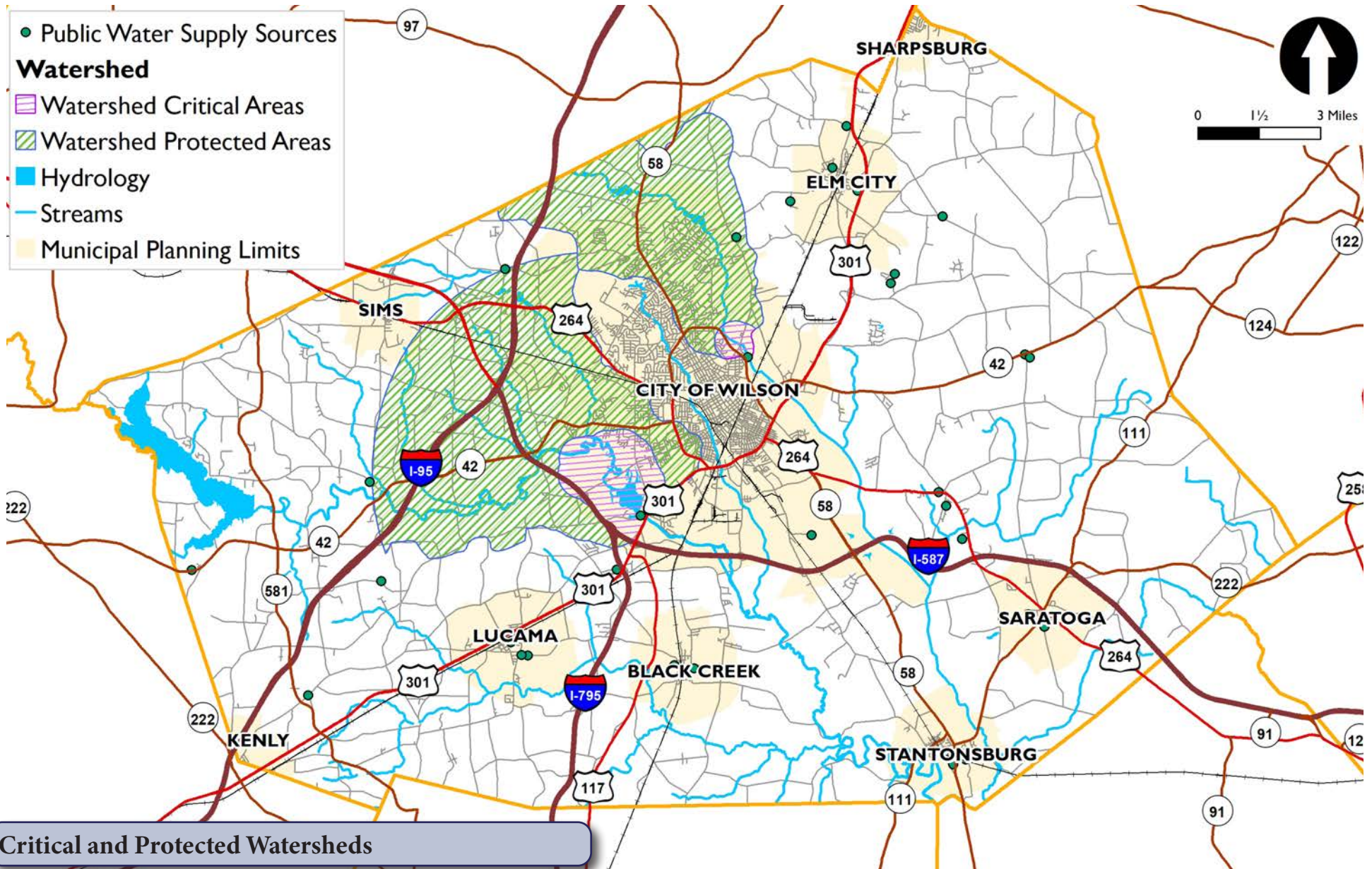
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DRINKING WATER

The County’s public drinking water system is currently being expanded within the southwestern district of the County due to residential and commercial development demand. County staff have been tasked with projecting where to expand the next. Wilson County contains two water districts; the southeast and southwest. The southeast water district serves development within the County along Interstate-95, Interstate-795, and US-301. The southwest water district serves Wilson County developments in between the Interstate-587, NC 42, and US 301 corridors.

In the past, there was demand for community wells but there has been an expressed desire to shift away from these going forward. In order to ensure adequate public services in perpetuity for those residents. In the future it is desired to expand the use of the County drinking water service. When speaking with steering committee members, the overarching theme of a balance between agriculture and industry was reiterated.





Critical and Protected Watersheds

This map shows the critical and protected watersheds in the County, along with public water supply sources. Watersheds are land areas that drain to a body of water, impacting not only water quality, but wildlife, and recreational activities. Healthy watersheds can provide social and economic benefits by allowing for clean drinking water, productive wildlife areas, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

SEWER

The City of Wilson is the largest sewer service provider in the County and serves several of the surrounding towns. Some towns in the area are under development moratorium until additional sewer treatment capacity can be developed. When sewer service is not available in municipalities, it further increases the pressure for development in rural areas. Because the County cannot offer sewer service that allows development at higher densities helps to preserve the rural feel of development in the unincorporated areas. Areas outside of sewer service areas must use on-site septic systems to treat wastewater. Soils in the study area are primarily somewhat limited or very limited in terms of septic system absorption limitations.

FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure can be described as the basic physical facilities needed for the County to operate. This includes roads, water services, and sewer services but can also include things like broadband as previously mentioned.

As the County prepares for residential and commercial growth, the location of existing infrastructure, the infrastructure's capacity, and the need for an expansion of infrastructure are all considered in the development process. If a property does not have a connection to

County water or sewer, it may operate on well and septic. This could be due to the property owner's choice to not annex into County services or due to the lack of ability to connect to the County services. The County is planning to expand the water system to increase the public drinking water connection radius, bringing necessary infrastructure to more rural areas of the County and allowing residents the opportunity to connect.

The Future Land Use Map (see "Future Land Use" on page 84) showcases areas in which development is encouraged to be located. It can also be used to determine where infrastructure expansions will be needed to ensure that future residents and industries have access to quality roads and County services and are connected to the existing road, water, and sewer systems.



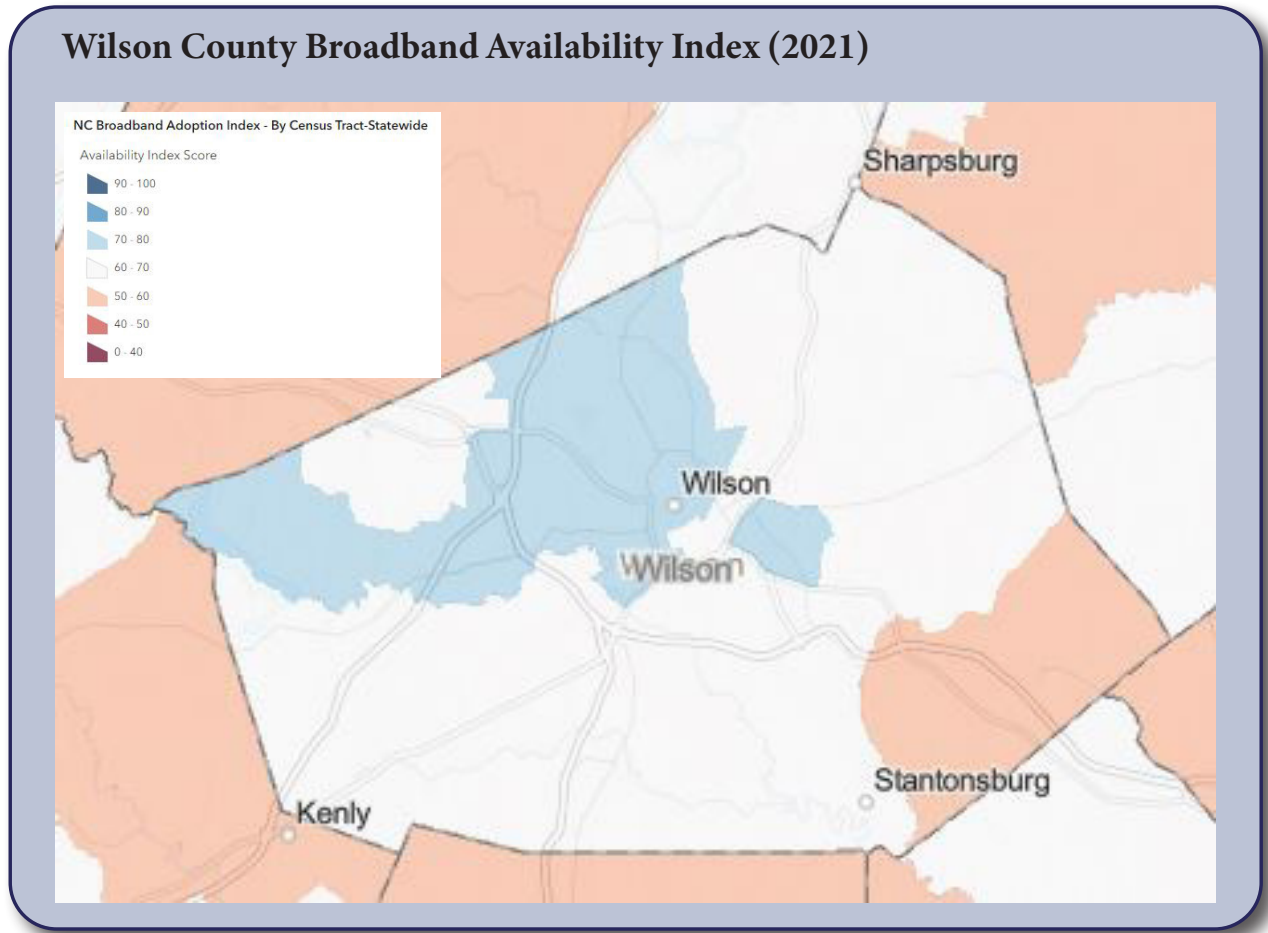
Soils / Septic System Limitations

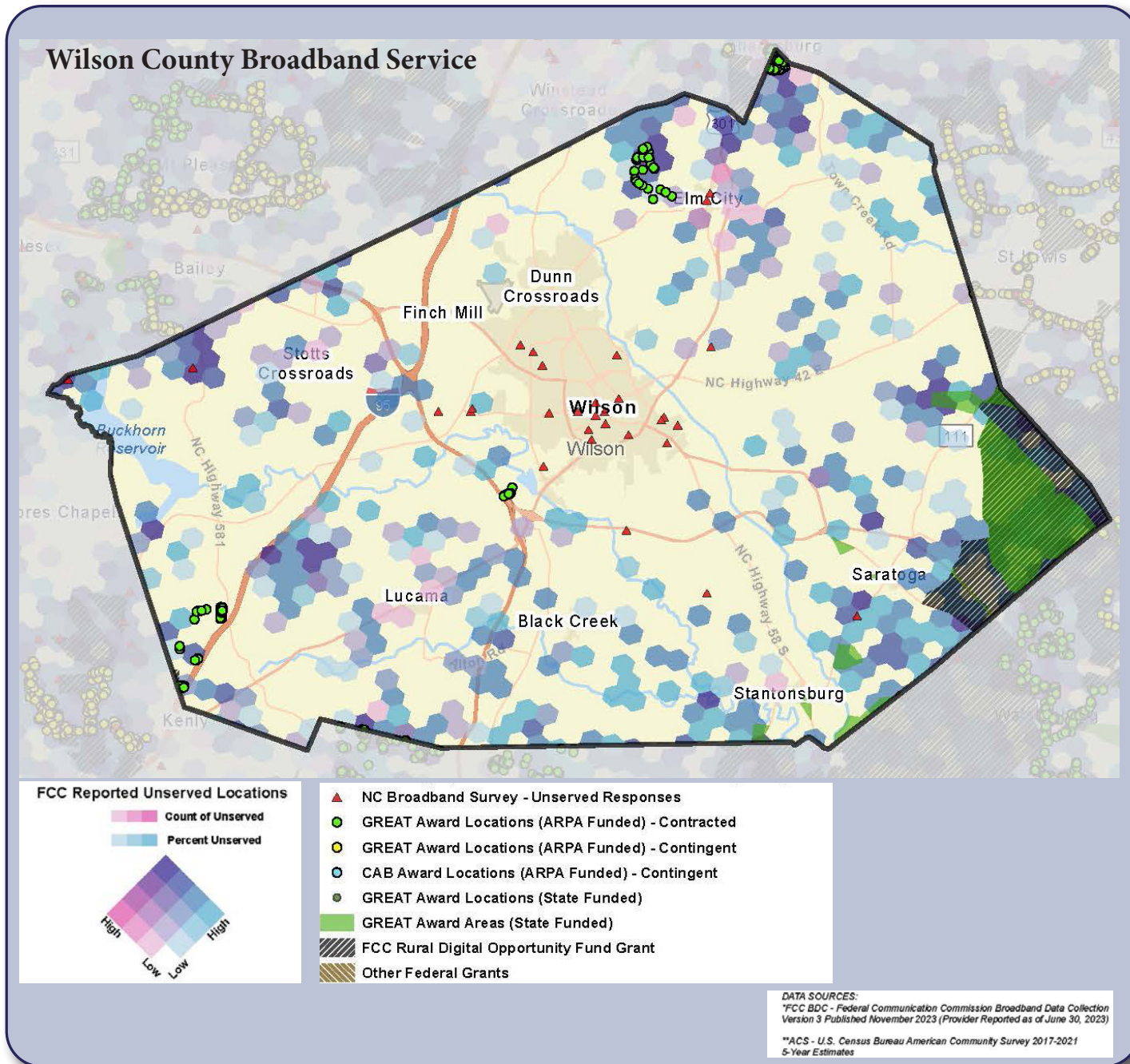
This map shows less limited soils are found on the west of the west side of the County, which can be a direct result in greater levels of development capability in areas that lack public sewer.

BROADBAND INTERNET

There is an expressed need for an expansion of broadband services throughout the County. Broadband is essential for attracting businesses, ensuring that emergency management services are available, and increasing individual quality of life. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when children and parents were forced to work from home, disparities in broadband availability became incredibly clear. The plan should address both the infrastructure as well as the funding needs for broadband throughout the County.

Broadband data is often difficult to find, therefore, multiple sources were consulted. Both maps show that broadband availability gaps are more prevalent in the northwest region of the County than in southeastern areas. As the first community-owned broadband provider, Greenlight Community Broadband provides Internet services to not only City of Wilson residents, but also residents outside of city limits and Wilson County Schools. Greenlight helps fill gaps of broadband availability that exist in central Wilson County. This plan should highlight the opportunity for the City, County, and private partnerships to help grow broadband availability for current and future residents and industry within rural areas of Wilson County.





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SUPPORT PROGRAMS & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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LAW ENFORCEMENT

During stakeholder interviews at the beginning of this planning process, County staff indicated that vacancies within the law enforcement offices do not appear to currently impact level of service. Staffing is negatively impacted by the attractiveness of other neighboring jurisdictions, with regard to pay and benefits. This may be a statewide issue and not just limited to Wilson County.

FIRE PROTECTION

Like many counties and cities throughout the State, Wilson County fire stations are volunteer fire stations staffed by passionate residents. During the stakeholder meetings, it was noted that recruitment and retention at the fire stations has been a challenge in recent years. Planning for new and future fire station and EMS locations is typically handled separately from comprehensive planning and is occurring in parallel to this effort.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

There are currently two Emergency Management Services (EMS) stations throughout the County. It was stressed during the stakeholder and community engagement that additional stations will be needed as the County grows in population as well as growth spreads across available land. A mobile command center may also increase the ability to respond in the field. The location of new EMS stations can in part be guided by the Future Land Use Map.

SCHOOLS

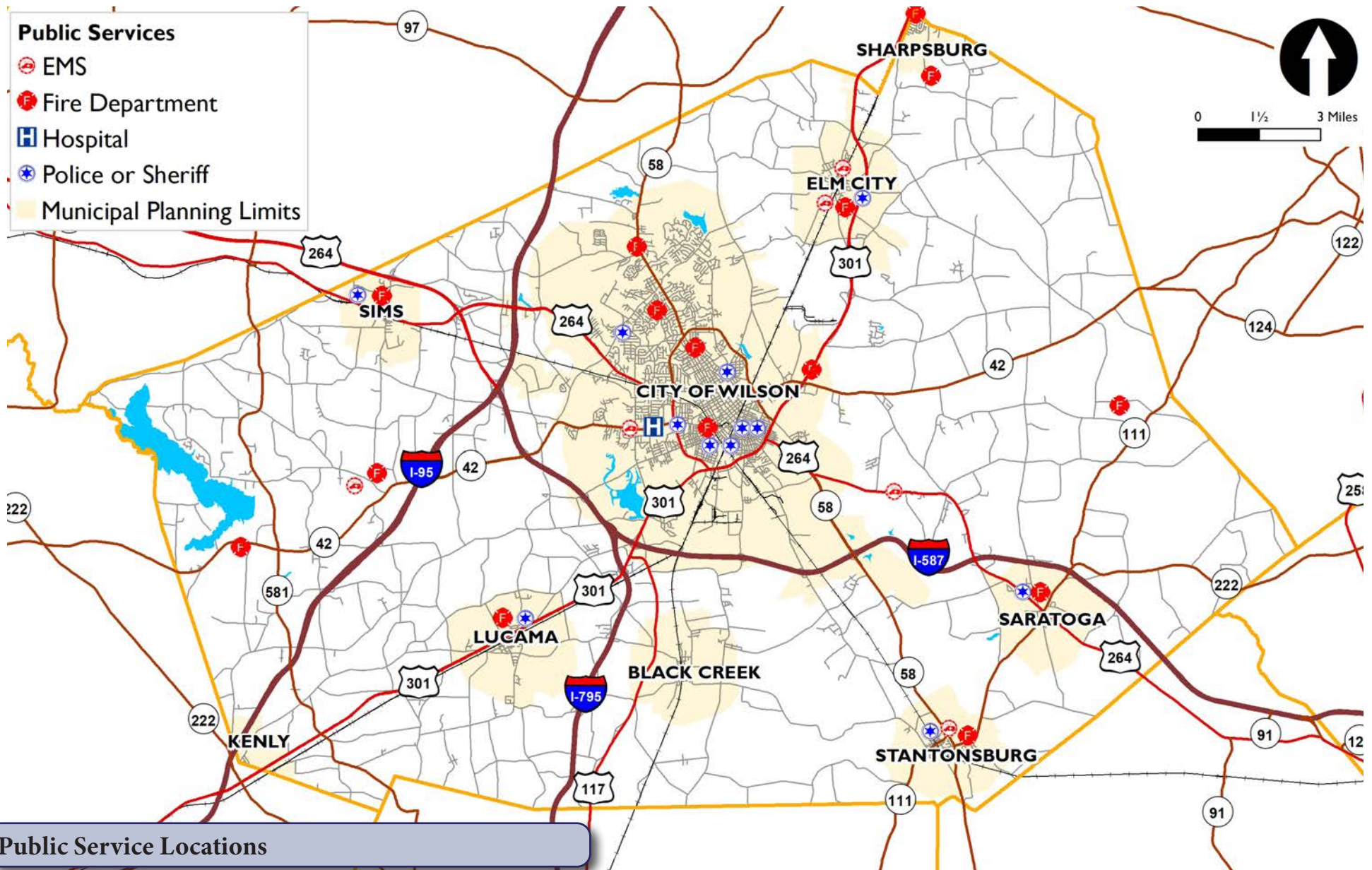
There are several school buildings throughout the County though many are currently in a cycle of renovation and reopening. There are also a few school buildings which are being used by other County entities for storage or training facilities.

PUBLIC HEALTH

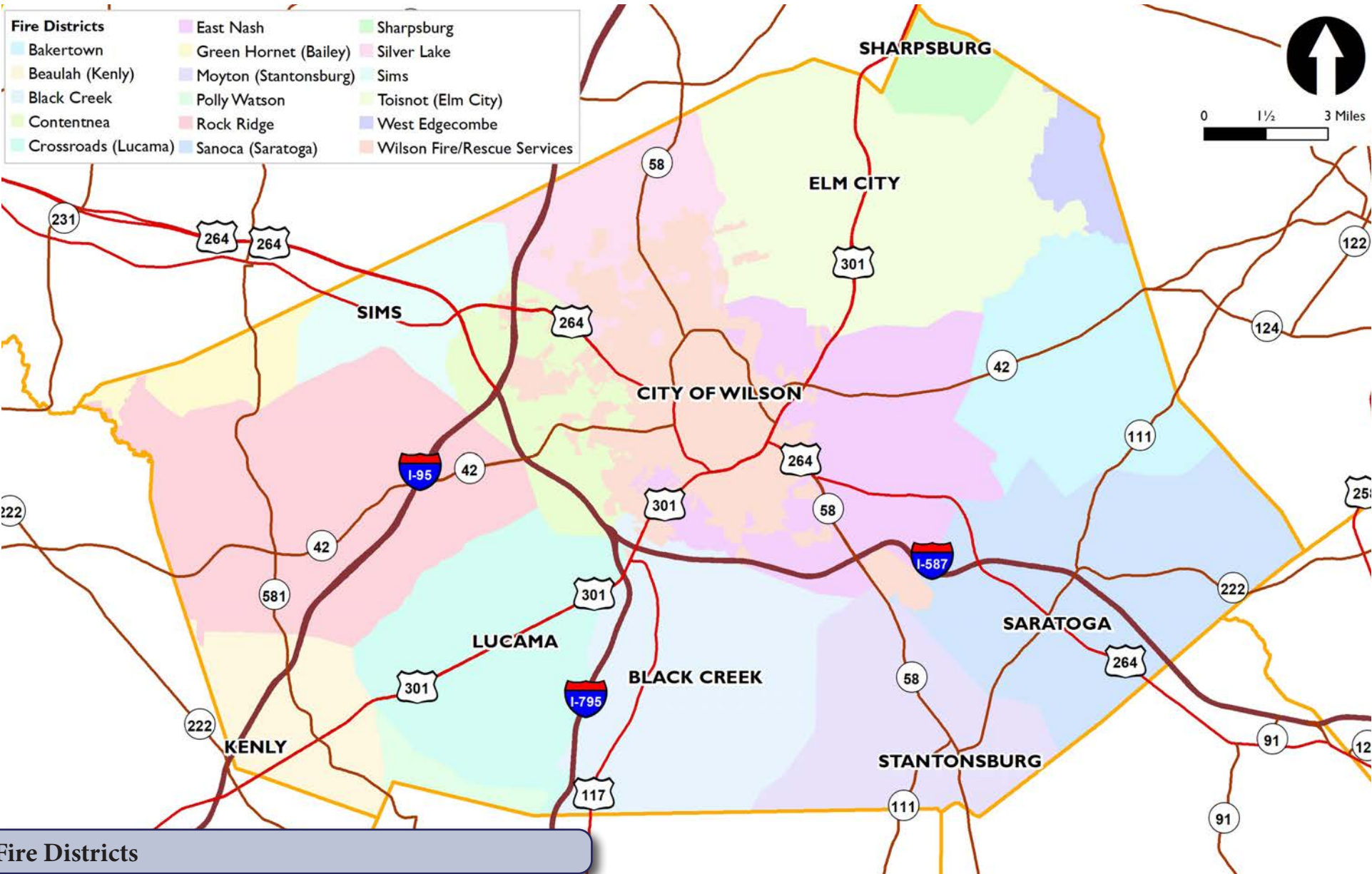
The 2022-2025 Wilson County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) conducted by the County Health department identified that the most significant community health needs were mental/behavioral health, healthy eating/active living, substance misuse, and access to healthcare or insurance.

The connection between public health and land use planning is often times forgotten. However, as this Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map determine what infrastructure and features are needed, it can also lean upon the CHNA to see the numbers and statistics corroborating these needs.

The identification of access to healthcare as an issue could influence the designation of more institutional land uses on the Future Land Use Map to ensure that current and future residents have access to the healthcare services they need.



Public service locations for both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County are shown in the map above.



Fire Districts

The map above shows the 17 fire districts within the County.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

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CITY, TOWN, AND COUNTY

There are nine municipalities located wholly or partially within Wilson County. The City of Wilson is the largest and provides several services that directly impact residents in the unincorporated County. Wilson provides power, water, and sewer services to growing areas outside its jurisdiction. In addition, the City worked with the County to develop the 1990 Wilson Growth Plan. The City and County also partner on economic development initiatives.

The other municipalities share a variety of services with the County. The County purchases water from the City of Black Creek to supplement the County's water system. The Town of Saratoga is also connected to the County water line, but only for purchases to supplement its wells. The Town of Stan- tonsburg also sells water to Wilson County and relies on the County for building permits and inspections. Sharpsburg also relies on the County for building permits and inspections. Finally, police and EMS services in Lucama are provided by the County Sheriff's Office.

As the county seat, the City of Wilson provides several resources to residents of unincorporated areas including parks and recreation, hospital facilities, and schools. Coordination between the City of Wilson and the County can contribute to the success of both jurisdictions. The City of Wilson

completed their comprehensive plan in the year 2022 and that plan was reviewed in the drafting and adoption of this comprehensive plan. Additionally, during the stakeholder involvement and public outreach, City of Wilson staff were included and consulted to ensure proper collaboration. Lastly, as it relates to public services like water, sewer, and broadband, Wilson County and the embedded municipalities must work together to ensure consistency of service for all residents.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

It is important to note that although within the County, these individual towns and cities are not within Wilson County's planning jurisdiction. Each city or town has their own jurisdiction which includes their zoning districts, planning departments, and for some, even their own comprehensive plan. It is the intent of this plan to work in tandem with those municipalities as the overall Wilson County region experiences change and transformation over the years. When viewing mapping, there may be some overlap between the County's jurisdiction as well as some of the towns within the County.

HAZARD MITIGATION

In 2004, the County Board of Commissioners adopted the Wilson County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. At the same time, the City of Wilson adopted their own plan. During the 2009 update, the all localities combined their efforts to form a more comprehensive county-wide approach to hazard mitigation planning. Through the planning process it was determined that the County is not at risk for coastal erosion, tsunamis, avalanches, or volcanoes and that there is "low" risk of riverine erosions, dam and levee failures, earthquakes, and expansive soils/land subsidence (including landslides/sink-holes). Six hazards were rated "moderate" risk – droughts and heat waves, floods, hurricanes and coastal storms, severe storms and tornadoes, wildfires, and winter storms and freezes. No hazards were rated as being a "high" risk. Given that the plan was adopted 15 years ago, a new county-wide Hazard Mitigation plan may need to be completed given the changes to the overall climate and increase in rain and severe storms in the region.



FUTURE LAND USE

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Wilson County

FUTURE LAND USE

The Future Land Use Map (typically abbreviated as “FLUM”) along with the associated goals and recommendations which support it, are created to honor the existing investments and previous land use efforts while offering a broader vision of the future development pattern of the County over the next 10-20 years. This approach to achieving the community vision and goals is typical of a comprehensive plan, which outlines the desired future community vision for development and land use. The Future Land Use Map, character area descriptions, and associated recommendations should be consulted during land use decision making, including but not limited to rezonings, public infrastructure investments, and special use permits.

Future land use, within the context of a comprehensive plan, refers to the intended or projected use of land within a community. This future land use map will guide the development of land over the next 10-20 years. It is to be used as a guiding tool for future decisions relating to land use. Planning and zoning strategies can be involved that aim to guide the development and redevelopment of land in a way that aligns with the community’s long-term goals, values, and vision.

Existing land use, land supply, the County’s previous Future Land Use Map, the future land use designations of the embedded municipalities, combined with community input helped

inform the creation of this map. This plan identifies a number of future land use designations, referred to as “character areas”. The Future Land Use Character Areas described in this chapter are a result of community ideas and values for balancing future growth and development in the County.

Rural and less dense land uses are generally designated in parts of the County that are

further away from incorporated areas. Areas designated for more intense development - either residential or employment-generating - are typically closer to (or inside) existing municipal boundaries. Areas between municipalities are typically considered “reserved” in the sense that those areas should be guided by those municipalities to ensure orderly development between jurisdictions.

Rezoning with Care

It is often tempting to preemptively up-zone all commercially-designated Future Land Use properties or those with “good access” on a major road. The argument is usually that these highly-visible and accessible properties are suited to commercial use and that by speculatively up-zoning, it will somehow generate new development, investment, jobs, etc. However, this can lead to unintended negative consequences (traffic, sprawl, cost of services, etc.) or create an excess of market supply for commercial property. Instead, communities should only up-zone properties where the appropriate infrastructure exists to support the higher traffic volumes, there is a compelling public interest, and/or doing so will not impede agricultural operations.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND CHARACTER AREAS

Agriculture/Rural

These areas of the County are where agricultural production, agriculture-supportive, and rural residential uses are found. While it is understood that these areas may experience some residential growth, preservation of rural character and agricultural operations is the primary focus.

Municipal Centers

These areas refer to the planning limits of incorporated municipalities within the County. Development in these areas strengthens vibrant small towns, urban-living, and city centers. Residential development accounts for a majority of this character area along with complementary nonresidential uses. Ideally, these areas will receive two-thirds or more of all residential development and associated supporting nonresidential development.

Employment Centers

These areas are prioritized for employment-generating uses. They are often located near major roadways and other infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses and jobs. Businesses located in these areas may or may not be agriculturally-focused. They typically receive public utilities from a municipality to support operations.

Reserved Growth Areas

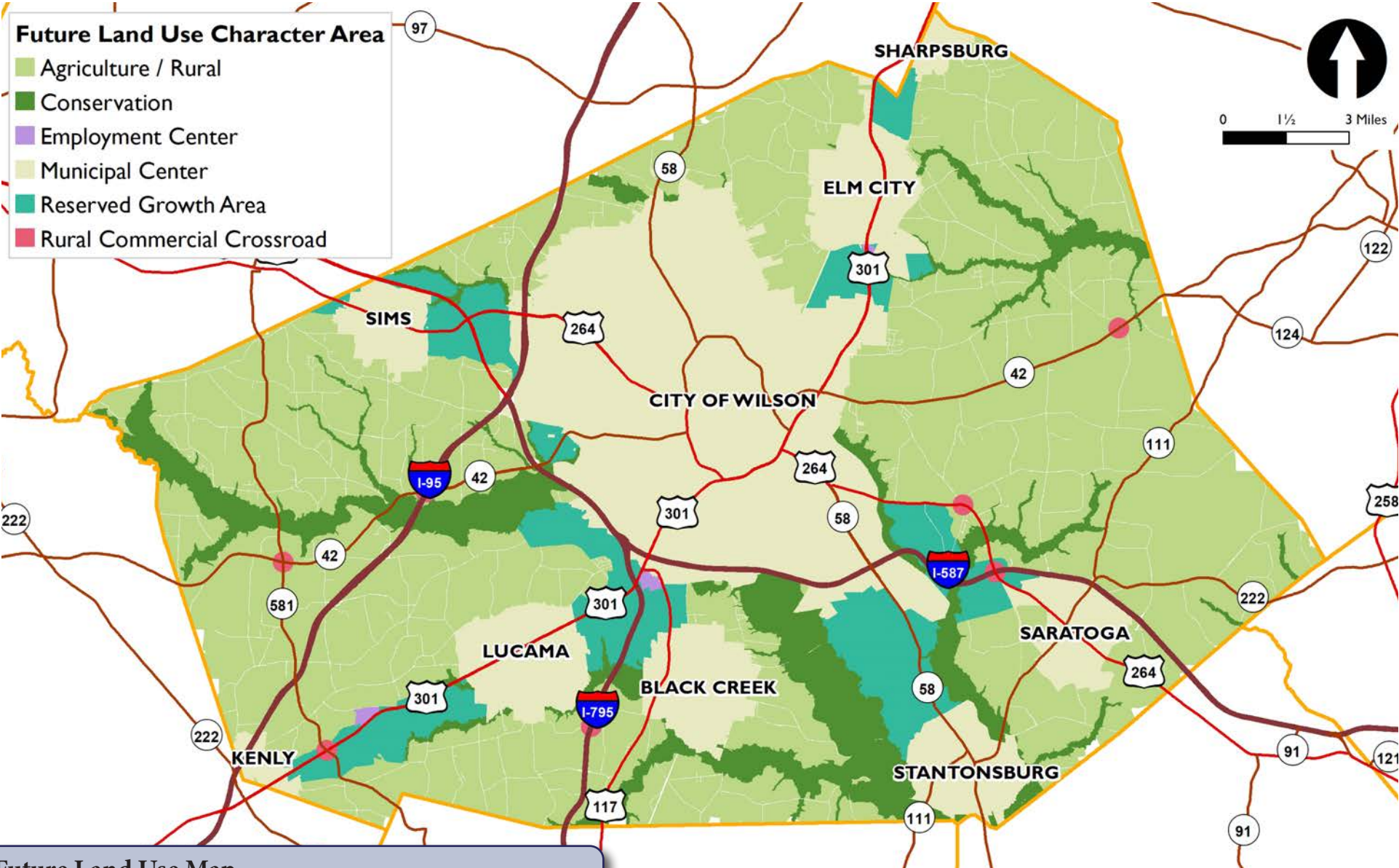
These areas are not prioritized for unincorporated growth during the time horizon of this plan and caution is urged when allowing development intensification. Residential development other than the occasional farmstead or family subdivision should be discouraged to preserve these areas for incorporation into growth plans of towns and cities. These areas should remain in production agriculture or as open spaces as they are not prioritized for growth.

Rural Commercial Crossroads

These areas provide neighborhood-scale, low impact commercial uses to nearby residents. This character area is commonly found at key intersections along major highways in rural areas of the County. Commercial development may be appropriate beyond the exact boundaries of the character area, provided the spirit and intent of low-impact, neighborhood-serving commercial is maintained.

Conservation

These areas are the 100- and 500-year floodplains. These natural spaces provide important resources to residents, including floodwater storage, wildlife habitats, and recreation. All development within these areas should include appropriate floodproofing or structural elevation, and green and resilient infrastructure designed to manage stormwater and withstand occasional flooding.



Future Land Use Map

Official future land use map for the County of Wilson, NC.

AGRICULTURE/RURAL (AR)

These areas of the County are where agricultural production, agriculture-supportive, and rural residential uses are found. While it is understood that these areas may experience some residential growth, preservation of rural character and agricultural operations is the primary focus.

Encouraged Land Uses

Agriculture and supportive facilities, including farm-related housing. Low-density residential, manufactured housing.

Discouraged Land Uses

Medium- to high-density residential and commercial uses. Residential subdivisions of greater than 30 lots without public drinking water..

Potentially Compatible Uses

Non-agricultural employment operations may be appropriate if they must be located in rural areas away from residential development and they serve a regional area. Residential subdivisions up to 50 lots, especially if served by public drinking water and exhibiting exceptional design, provided the development is appropriately situated or buffer themselves from surrounding production agricultural operations.

Transportation

Streets typically consist of country highways and connecting roads. When new low-density neighborhoods are developed, limited driveways on existing highways should be encouraged along with street stub-outs to encourage future interconnectivity. Whenever possible, individual residential driveway access to highways should be prohibited to preserve traffic flow..

Utilities

Residential and non-residential uses are primarily served by on-site septic systems. New residential development should be served by public water lines whenever possible.

Development Characteristics

Residential developments of greater than 20 lots and utilizing minimum lot sizes should provide sidewalks on both sides of the street.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| AR, R-30MH, R-30 | B-1, M-1, M-2, OI, R-10, R-15MH, R-15, R-20MH, R-20 | B-2 |

MUNICIPAL CENTERS (MC)

These areas refer to the planning limits of incorporated municipalities within the County. Development in these areas strengthens vibrant small towns, urban-living, and city centers. Residential development accounts for a majority of this character area along with complimentary nonresidential uses. Ideally, these areas will receive two-thirds or more of all residential development and associated supporting nonresidential development. Development within municipal centers will be guided by the adopted plans and policies of the particular jurisdiction.

Encouraged Uses:

All forms of residential and nonresidential development, particularly those of higher densities and intensities, that would support and reinforce a vibrant small-town or city lifestyle.

Discouraged Uses:

Agriculture, conservation lands, and similar vacant or undeveloped spaces, except to the extent that these uses should persist until the land is developed.

Potentially Compatible Uses:

N/A.

Transportation:

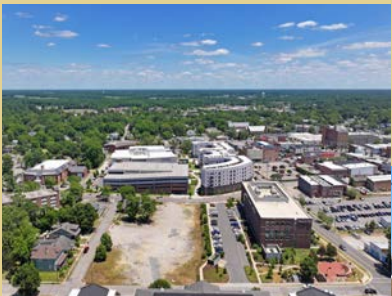
Streets in this character area are commonly 2-lane local and collector roads, although these standards are determined by the annexing jurisdiction.

Utilities:

Public water and sewer either already exist in these areas or are in close proximity and should be provided by the annexing jurisdiction.

Development characteristics:

As determined by the annexing jurisdiction. An urban development form is typical.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| R-10, R-15MH, R-15, R-20MH, R-20 | AR, B-1, M-1, M-2, OI | R-30MH, R-30, B-2 |

EMPLOYMENT CENTERS (EC)

These areas are prioritized for employment-generating uses. They are often located near major roadways and other infrastructure necessary to attract new businesses and jobs. Businesses located in these areas may or may not be agriculturally-focused. They typically receive public utilities from a municipality to support operations.

Encouraged Uses:

Large office spaces, industrial uses (manufacturing, production, logistics, freight terminals, industrial flex, research-and-development, etc.) and other large-scale, job-generating businesses.

Discouraged Uses:

Any residential uses (which could compromise the development of adjacent properties) and low-employment generating uses, such as photovoltaic solar farms or wind power farms. Typically, Employment Centers have industrial type uses, which are usually incompatible with adjacent residential development. Enhanced buffers and restrictions on residential density may be appropriate in order to minimize conflicts that could reduce the operations of these Centers.

Potentially Compatible Uses:

These areas are ideally kept in agricultural production until such time as they intensify into a business campus or non-agricultural, nonresidential business operation.

Transportation:

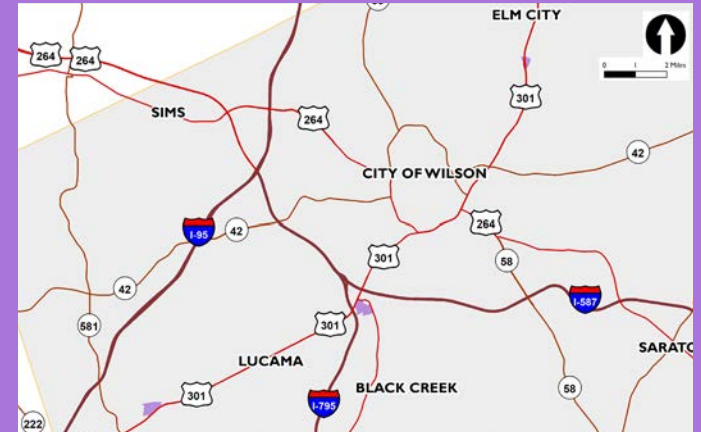
Because these areas are automobile-dependent, interconnectivity through cross access is encouraged to alleviate congestion on major roads. Access to major highways should be prioritized for these users to maintain free-flowing supply chain and distribution lines.

Utilities:

Public water and sewer typically already exist in these areas or are in close proximity and should be extended based on the user needs. It may also be appropriate to preemptively extend services to these areas to prepare them for future development.

Development characteristics:

Large campuses are set back from the street or highway. Enhanced buffer landscaping is utilized to create the illusion of a more rural landscape. However, the primary purpose of this area – employment and economic activity – should remain the focus.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| B-1, M-1, M-2, OI | R-10, R-15MH, R-15, R-20MH, R-20, R-30MH, R-30, AR | B-2 |

RESERVED GROWTH AREAS (RGA)

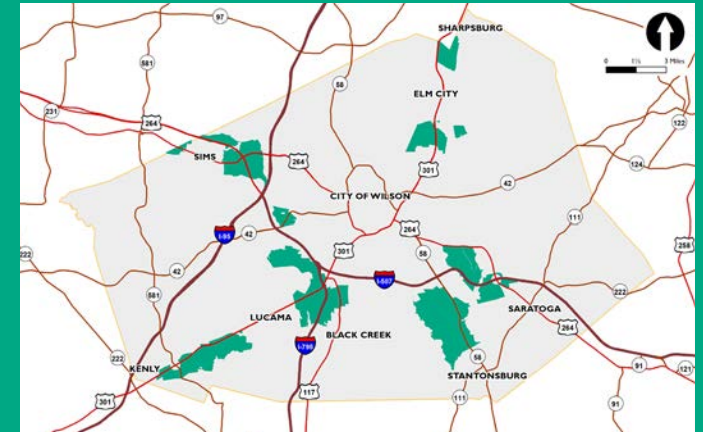
These areas are not prioritized for unincorporated growth during the time horizon of this plan and caution is urged when allowing development intensification. Residential development other than the occasional farmstead or family subdivision should be discouraged to preserve these areas for incorporation into growth plans of towns and cities. These areas should remain in production agriculture or as open spaces as they are not prioritized for growth.

Encouraged:

Annexation by a town or city and incorporation into the growth plan for that jurisdiction. Preservation of agricultural, natural open spaces, and rural areas.

Discouraged:

Medium- or large-scale residential development. Any development that would disrupt or impede any surrounding production agriculture or jeopardize incorporation of these areas into the growth plans of a municipality.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| AR, R-30MH, R-30 | B-1, M-1, M-2, OI, R-10, R-15MH, R-15, R-20MH, R-20 | B-2 |

RURAL COMMERCIAL CROSSROADS (RCC)

These areas provide neighborhood-scale, low impact commercial uses to nearby residents. This character area is commonly found at key intersections along major highways in rural areas of the County. Commercial development may be appropriate beyond the exact boundaries of the character area, provided the spirit and intent of low-impact, neighborhood-serving commercial is maintained.

Encouraged Uses:

Small-scale commercial, retail, and services such as markets, produce stands, fuel stations, convenience stores, restaurants, drive-thrus, contractors, equipment repair, raw materials supply, professional or medical offices, civic uses, and religious institutions.

Discouraged Uses:

High-density residential development. Large-scale varieties of the Encouraged Uses (above) are typically not appropriate. For instance, a daycare would be appropriate, but an elementary school would not.

Potentially Compatible Uses:

Medium-scale varieties of the Encouraged Uses (above) may be appropriate depending on the context, design standards, and provision of sufficient public infrastructure, such as drinking water and a connected street network. Depending on design and context,

low- and medium-density residential might also cluster around these areas. Farm-related housing may also be appropriate.

Transportation:

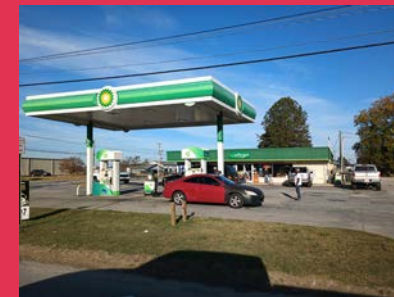
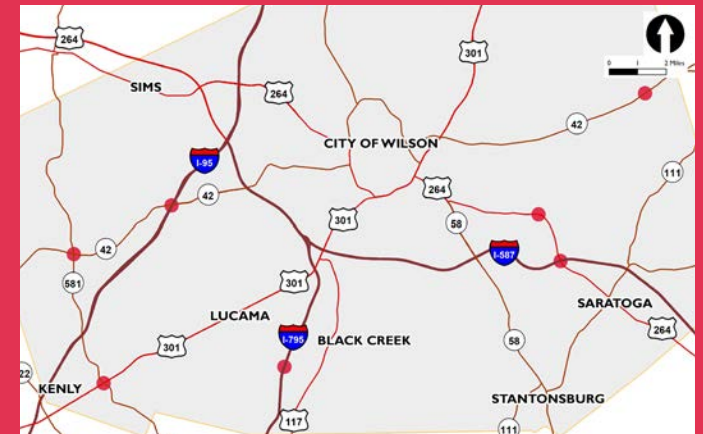
Because these areas are found near major intersections in rural areas, interconnectivity is encouraged to avoid congestion. A small street grid should also be formed or reserved around each intersection.

Utilities:

Development is primarily served by on-site septic systems, which can limit development intensity and/or type of business. Public drinking water connection is strongly preferred except in the most extenuating circumstances.

Development characteristics:

Sidewalks should be provided along public rights-of-way and to the customer entrance of every business. Buildings and parking areas should be set back from highways that are likely to require widening in the future. Whenever possible, buildings on adjacent properties should avoid parking areas or large gaps between them and their customer entrances should be linked by a cross-access sidewalk. Service areas (loading zones, trash areas, storage, parking, etc.) should be located opposite the street frontage if possible.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| B-2 | R-30, R-30MH, R-20, R-20MH, R-15, R-15MH, R-10, OI, M-1, M-2 | B-1, AR |

CONSERVATION (C)

These areas are the 100- and 500-year floodplains. These natural spaces provide important resources to residents, including floodwater storage, wildlife habitats, and recreation. All development within these areas should include appropriate flood-proofing or structural elevation, and green and resilient infrastructure designed to manage stormwater and withstand occasional flooding.

Encouraged Uses:

Conservation efforts, parks, natural open spaces. Low-density residential development provided it is adequately elevated.

Discouraged Uses:

Medium- or large-scale residential and non-residential uses that might negatively impact water quality, such as hazardous waste processing, dry cleaners, junkyards, outdoor storage of hazardous materials (batteries, transformers, automobile fluids, etc.) certain types of outdoor manufacturing, etc. Public infrastructure (e.g. - streets) in flood prone areas and associated with private development (e.g. – residential subdivisions) where the placement might create higher maintenance requirements due to regular flood events.

Potentially Compatible Uses:

Outfitters and convenience stores with limited building footprints.

Transportation:

Because these areas are environmentally sensitive, limited impervious surface that is associated with new roadways is desired.

Utilities:

Limited public and private utilities are desired in these flood-prone areas.

Development characteristics:

Natural open spaces, linear and conventional parks, and elevated structures are uses that may be located in these areas.



| Compatible Zoning Districts | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Compatible | Incompatible | Potentially Compatible |
| N/A | R-30, R-30MH, R-20, R-20MH, R-15, R-15MH, R-10, OI, M-1, M-2 | AR |



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this plan support and help advance the community vision and goals. This section outlines plan recommendations that were formed from the input of plan development participants, an analysis of recommendations from the County’s previous Comprehensive Plan and other municipal comprehensive plans, and an understanding of best practices from around the state in order to achieve the community vision and goals. These recommendations were refined based on community input. These recommendations will serve as a tool for citizens, staff, leadership, and stakeholders when planning for the future.



| Recommendation (#) | Applicable Plan Goals | | | | | Notes or Metrics |
|---|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| | Collaborative Partnerships | Economy | Community Facilities | Quality of Life | Growth Management | |
| 1: Promote neighborhood-serving and community-scale nonresidential uses in areas identified as Rural Commercial Crossroads on the Future Land Use Map. | | | X | X | X | Percentage of new commercial rezonings or businesses in Rural Commercial Crossroads vs. elsewhere in the County’s planning jurisdiction. Goal >50% |
| 2: Guide growth toward existing municipalities. | X | | X | | X | Percentage of new residential units developed in municipal limits vs. within the unincorporated County. Goal >70% |
| 3: Provide space for a variety of housing types, lot sizes, and development types to meet the needs of current and future residents. | X | | | X | | Review current UDO standards related to residential development. |
| 4: Promote enhanced design within new residential subdivisions | X | | X | X | X | Review current UDO standards related to residential development. |
| 5: Promote interconnectivity within new and existing developments. | | | X | X | | Percentage of subdivisions from the total number proposed annually with more access points , stub roads, and interconnectivity to existing roadways than that required. Goal >30% Update the County’s UDO to require enhanced interconnectivity and connectivity between adjacent parcels. |
| 6: Continue to prioritize transportation planning and development efforts that will serve current and future residents and businesses. | X | X | X | | | Monitor annual involvement with the Rural Planning Organization and participate regularly in updates to the State Transportation Improvement Program. |

| Recommendation (#) | Applicable Plan Goals | | | | | Notes or Metrics |
|---|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| | Collaborative Partnerships | Economy | Community Facilities | Quality of Life | Growth Management | |
| 7: Create public recreational opportunities within the County that connect and compliment facilities and services provided by municipalities. | X | | | X | X | Acquire or activate space for future County park(s) and recreational areas, including but not limited to greenways (multi-use trails) and boat launches. Goal: >1 new facility within 3 years and >4 facilities within 5 years. |
| 8: Identify appropriate areas for the County to extend its public drinking water system. (This initiative will be led by the Public Works Department.) | | | X | | X | Expand County drinking water infrastructure to areas with growing populations that are not anticipated to be annexed. |
| 9: Support the expansion of broadband and internet service and access. | X | X | | X | | Monitor and report on new broadband connections as a result of partnering with the City and/or participating in grant or expansion efforts. |
| 10: Reduce the impact of new development on traffic congestion and existing thoroughfares and highways. | X | X | X | | X | Adopt standards into the UDO that require appropriate transportation improvements to mitigate the impact of new development. |
| 11: Preserve rural and agricultural areas. | | X | X | X | X | Explore and create a program that further incentivize preservation of rural areas and agricultural lands. |
| 12: Support agricultural production and agritourism as continuing economic engines. | | X | | X | | Review current UDO standards related to farm stands and agricultural-supportive land uses. and reinforce support for that industry and those residents and business owners. |
| 13: Maintain availability of and access to local agricultural products. | | X | | X | | Review current UDO standards related to farm stands and agricultural-supportive land uses. and reinforce support for that industry and those residents and business owners. |

| Recommendation (#) | Applicable Plan Goals | | | | | Notes or Metrics |
|--|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|---|
| | Collaborative Partnerships | Economy | Community Facilities | Quality of Life | Growth Management | |
| 14: Coordinate with municipalities to increase the number of high paying jobs <i>(from: City of Wilson 2043 Comprehensive Plan)</i> . | X | X | | | | Percentage of jobs added each year with wages above the median wage from the previous year (adjusted for inflation). Goal >60% |
| 15: Strengthen local partnerships. | X | X | | | X | Participate in local partnerships and project initiatives. |
| 16: Coordinate with municipalities to ensure orderly growth and development in Reserved Growth Areas on the Future Land Use Map. | X | X | X | X | X | Establish a notification process that involves neighboring jurisdictions in the review process for proposed land use and development changes within the Reserved Growth Areas. Explore the potential for UDO updates to adapt development in these areas to better match that of nearby municipalities. |

I: Promote neighborhood-serving and community-scale nonresidential uses in areas identified as Rural Commercial Crossroads on the Future Land Use Map.

I.1: Analyze the County’s Zoning Map to determine existing zoning designations at various crossroads and update the Table of Permitted Uses to allow for appropriate retail, service, and commercial uses.

I.2: Encourage the reuse of existing nonresidential structures.

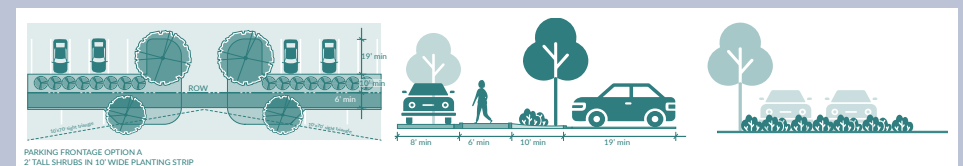
I.3: Consider creating small area studies for rural commercial crossroads with higher traffic volumes or high development demand/potential. See “Small Area Study Example”.

I.4: Support rezoning of properties in and adjacent to Rural Commercial Crossroads

for appropriate uses and when appropriate design criteria are met (sufficient street network, traffic control, and turn lanes, interconnectivity, building and site design criteria, connection to public drinking water supply, etc.)

Small Area Study Example

Rural crossroads with high potential for development should be studied and have tailored design and connectivity recommendations developed that will help ensure high quality development that will contribute to the wellbeing of the area. Such a study would discuss connectivity (both between adjacent businesses and to adjacent neighborhoods) in a way that mitigates any expected additional traffic, examines potential uses, and develops design standards (materials, landscaping, signage, amenities, parking, etc.) that will create a pleasing built environment. After the study is completed, the recommendations should be adopted into local development regulations.



2: Guide growth toward existing municipalities.

2.1: Encourage new residential development, especially major subdivisions (typically greater than 20 lots), to locate in areas where they can receive municipal services that those residents often demand.

2.2: Encourage new residential development in municipalities, their extraterritorial jurisdictions, and in areas that will be annexed into municipalities. These areas have absorbed ~2/3 of new

residential growth in the past and are marked as Municipal Centers on the Future Land Use Map.

2.3: Continue to discourage and/or prohibit private community wells and private community septic systems.

3: Provide space for a variety of housing types, lot sizes, and development types to meet the needs of current and future residents.

3.1: Update zoning and subdivision standards for new residential developments located in Reserved Growth Areas as identified on the Future Land Use Map to include amenities and site design features that residents of those neighborhoods will require (e.g. - open spaces, amenity centers, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.).

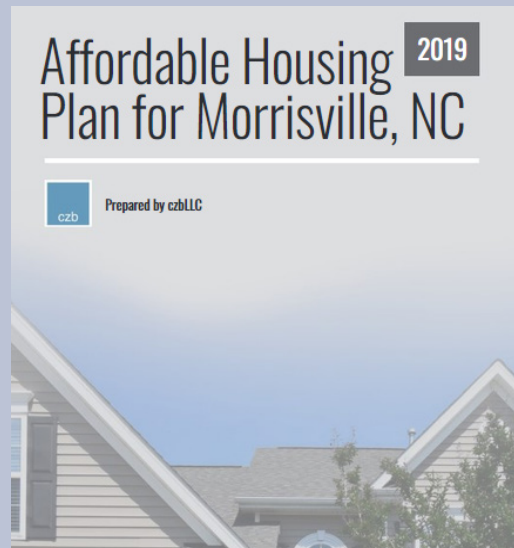
3.2: Coordinate with municipalities to identify areas for workforce housing, particularly if it can be incorporated into existing municipalities in locations that minimize external trips and traffic congestion.

4: Promote enhanced design within new residential subdivisions.

4.1: Update the County’s Unified Development Ordinance to require additional pedestrian infrastructure, similar to that of the embedded municipalities, within new residential subdivisions such as sidewalks, multi-use paths (aka greenways), open spaces and active recreational facilities, enhanced bioretention (aka stormwater control ponds), and other amenities.

Case Study: Morrisville, NC, Affordable Housing Plan (2019)

The Town of Morrisville identified the need to support the growth of affordable housing, not only for homeowners but renters as well. Through partnerships with developers, the Town set a goal to increase development and redevelopment through regulatory relief and other incentives that encourage developers to further this goal. Two main objectives were used throughout the creation of this incentive policy those were increasing rental opportunities for household with income levels at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and increasing homeownership opportunities for households with income levels at or below 80% AMI.



5: Promote interconnectivity within new and existing developments.

5.1: Update the County’s Unified Development Ordinance to require cross access interconnectivity (for both residential and non-residential properties) and minimum block lengths and stub streets for new residential subdivisions and commercial uses. Recommended maximum block lengths for residential development is 800 feet, and for nonresidential development is 600 feet. Streets within a development should be carried to the property line of adjacent properties to ensure future connectivity.

5.2: Ensure new development that has primary access by existing roads or thoroughfares provides stub streets through the development at intervals equivalent to recommended minimum block lengths.

6: Continue to prioritize transportation planning and development efforts that will serve current and future residents and businesses.

6.1: Regularly coordinate with the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization to discuss pending and approved developments impacting roadways within the County. Establish priority projects that will mitigate congestion and position those projects for capturing outside funding.

6.2: Identify and pursue bicycle and pedestrian projects as identified in adopted plans such as the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Great Trails State, and this plan. See “Great Trails State Map” on page 63. Initial priorities should focus on connecting municipalities within Wilson County and in seeking connections to

adjacent, regional population centers such as Rocky Mount, Greenville, and Wake County. There may be grant opportunities available, particularly if partnering with agencies like the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization or neighboring municipalities and counties.

6.3: With assistance from the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization, conduct an update to the County’s 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), including consideration for and inclusion of all embedded municipalities.

6.4: Identify candidate grants to assist in implementation of transportation projects identified by the CTP, the Great State Trails Map, and other planning efforts.

Great Trails State Program

The Great Trails State Program provides funding for new trail development and extension of existing trails anywhere in the state of North Carolina. This includes paved trails or greenways, natural surface trails, biking trails, equestrian trails, and any other type of trail recognized by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. As an eligible applicant for this grant opportunity, Wilson County may pursue funding through the Great Trails State Program to bring identified pedestrian improvement projects to life.



7: Create public recreational opportunities within the County that connect and compliment facilities and services provided by municipalities.

7.1: Identify gaps in recreational services not currently filled by municipalities and identify appropriate sites within the county to serve these needs regionally. Construct and maintain facilities that meet these needs.

7.2: Establish boat launches along the Contentnea Creek and other navigable waterways to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and water access. Coordinate with municipalities that might provide additional launch locations.

7.3: Coordinate with state and local agencies to build out the bike paths and trails identified in the Great Trails State Plan (see: <https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/integrated-mobility/multimodal-planning/great-trails-state/Pages/default.aspx>). Coordinate with adjacent counties and municipalities to create larger trail networks. This will also create recreational tourism opportunities in the County.

8: Identify appropriate areas for the County to extend its public drinking water system. This initiative will be led by the Public Works Department.

8.1: Continue the expansion of the public drinking water network. See “Wilson County Water Districts” on page 71.

Case Study: Alamance County Farmland Preservation Program

The Alamance County Farmland Preservation Program is an initiative that protects agricultural lands and promotes sustainable farming practices within the county. This program operates under the Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District and is supported by the NC Agriculture Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and the Piedmont Land Conservancy.

The primary goals of the program are to:

1. **Promote Agricultural Values:** By increasing the visibility and pride in the agricultural community, the program supports the economic and financial health of local agriculture and forestry. This includes measures to protect farms from the pressures of non-farm development and other adverse impacts.
2. **Preserve Farmland:** The program utilizes tools such as the voluntary purchase of development rights to ensure that farmland remains dedicated to agricultural use. These voluntary agreements allow landowners to sell the non-agricultural development rights of their land. Landowners retain ownership, the right to sell or rent the land, and the right to farm.

Another strategy North Carolina counties are using to preserve agricultural lands is by using Present Use Value rollback taxes to establish permanent agricultural easements. This helps balance economic production and agricultural history. Counties such as Wake and Lee have both deployed this approach. With a similar approach, Wilson County can help educate landowners on the idea of conservation while also supporting production agriculture.



Soil and Water
Conservation District

8.2: Coordinate with municipalities to avoid duplication of efforts in the provision of public water service.

9: Support the expansion of broadband and internet service and access.

9.1: Partner in the expansion of broadband coverage and services when appropriate.

9.2: Partner in the pursuit of federal and state grant opportunities to assist with expansion efforts.

9.3: Coordinate with NCDOT to install conduit during all transportation improvements for future connections.

10: Reduce the impact of new development on traffic congestion and existing thoroughfares and highways.

10.1: Coordinate with NCDOT and industry to identify roadways where limiting the number of driveways is desired. Establish standards in the Unified Development Ordinance to minimize driveways that are too closely spaced.

11: Preserve rural and agricultural areas.

11.1: Support the development of a regional greenbelt that will connect agricultural lands, floodplains, forests, wetlands, greenway corridors, open spaces,

and natural areas. Forming partnerships with local land trusts, conservation agencies, and/or municipalities is recommended.

11.2: Continue to notify property owners of the presence and significance of the Voluntary Agriculture District program and enrolled properties.

11.3: Update the Unified Development Ordinance to require buffers on new developments that locate adjacent to production agriculture lands. Recommend a 50-foot wide buffer with enhanced plantings that will help reduce conflicts between new neighbors and long-established farm operations.

Case Study: Dare County and municipalities enact shared minimum elevation standards

When the new FEMA floodzone maps were released around 2020, Outer Banks builders, regulators, and residents noticed that they did not coincide with their lived experience. Some properties were removed from the regulatory floodplain (the 1% annual flood chance area), but locals knew those places were floodprone and vulnerable. Consequently, the municipalities, the County, and local builders and developers came together and decided on a minimum elevation standard for all properties in the County. This example of intergovernmental coordination has made the residents and property owners in Dare County better protected from flood events and is a great example of creating local standards that exceed federal minimum requirements. See the notification letter that Town of Duck published here: <https://www.townofduck.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/CRSOutreach-to-all-property-owners-FINAL-for-2022-to-be-mailed-2022-10-03.pdf>.

12: Support agricultural production and agritourism as continuing economic engines.

12.1: Maintain a focus on supporting the operation of production agriculture in the unincorporated county. E.g. - minimize residential development (and associated traffic congestion) on country roads in rural areas, support agricultural-supportive industries, land uses, and operations, establish larger buffers for residential development adjacent to production agriculture, etc.

12.2: Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to expand vendors, advertise broader, and consider expanding the Wilson Farmers & Artisan Market. An annual County Fair with a focus on local goods may also be considered to promote local agricultural goods.

12.3: Encourage agritourism activities for existing operations that are interested in the bona-fide farm designation.

12.4: Create a Wilson County Grower endorsement to verify local farming operations.

13: Maintain availability of and access to local agricultural products.

13.1: Provide opportunities for local farms to sell goods to residents, businesses, and visitors.



14: Coordinate with municipalities to increase the number of high paying jobs
(from: City of Wilson 2043 Comprehensive Plan).

14.1: Continue coordination with municipalities to promote economic development initiatives including the identification of new industrial and manufacturing sites, continuing education and job training centers, etc.

14.2: Encourage high-quality, job-generating development in suitable areas of the County.

14.3: Discourage incompatible residential development in and around employment areas, Employment Centers, and Reserved Growth Areas.

15: Strengthen local partnerships.

15.1: Establish a regular meeting schedule for local officials, staff, representatives, and leaders to convene, discuss, and solve local issues.

15.2: Maintain a list of regional/municipal partners. This record of organizations can help staff implement plans to identify goal alignment with other groups.

15.3: Remain open to opportunities and partnerships that will help achieve the vision and goals of this plan.

16: Coordinate with municipalities to ensure orderly growth and development in Reserved Growth Areas on the Future Land Use Map.

16.1: When development or land use intensification is proposed in Reserved Growth Areas, notify and solicit input from adjacent municipalities. This may also involve creating more robust development standards in that more closely match the standards of the municipalities that will serve as the hub for developments in these areas.

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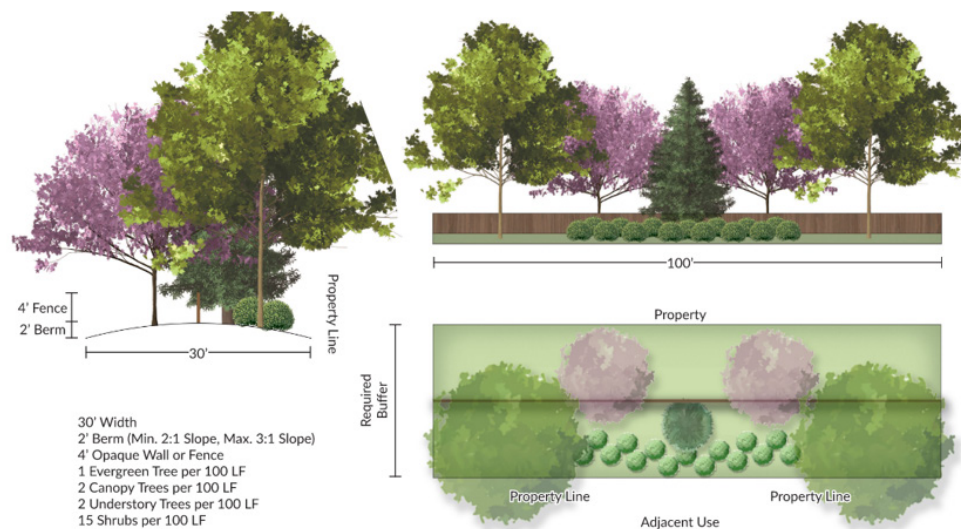
Wilson County

RECOMMENDATION FOCAL AREAS

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE UPDATES

It is recommended that the County pursue an update to its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to address changing needs of the growing population and community preferences for guiding new growth and development. Areas for enhancement in the County's current UDO include the items below and should be validated through additional community engagement as part of the update process.

- Strengthen residential subdivision design standards to reflect modern standards, including but not limited to:
 - Change Major Subdivision lot count to six from four.
 - Major Subdivision lot shall be served internally no joint/shared or single driveways allowed.
 - Additional landscape buffer around all major subdivisions.
- Simplify the landscape buffer matrix. 20ft or more staggered buffer.
- Subdivision Requirements: Street Lighting, Street Trees, mail kiosk details, sidewalks where public water is provided, restrict community wells, roadside berms, HOA requirements, amenity requirements.
- Strengthen standards related to transportation improvements required by large developments.
- Update and clarify zoning districts use standards and design standards.
- Update and modernize the table of permitted uses, including appropriately transitioning special use permits to by-right (with standards), where appropriate.
- Open space standards to ensure appropriate levels of public or private recreation for rural residents, including potentially multi-use trails.
- Review and revise development approval procedures to streamline and modernize the applicant experience and simplify administration while maintaining or improving development quality and outcomes.



Updated, modern graphics make development standards easily understood.

Example of Updated Development Ordinances

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| 6 ADMINISTRATION | |
| 6.1 The Administration | |
| 6.2 Planning Board | |
| 6.3 Board of Adjustment | |
| 6.4 City Council | |
| 6.5 Technical Review | |
| 6.6 Council & Board | |
| 7 DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS | |
| 7.1 Development Regulations | |
| 7.2 Plan and Report | |
| 7.3 Quasi-Judicial | |
| 7.4 Legislative Process | |
| 7.5 Performance Criteria | |
| 7.6 Administrative | |
| 7.7 Vested Rights | |
| 8 NON-CONFORMING USES | |
| 8.1 Purpose | |
| 8.2 Non-Conforming | |
| 8.3 Non-Conforming | |
| 8.4 Religious Institutions | |
| 8.5 Non-Conforming | |
| 8.6 Non-Conforming | |
| 8.7 Non-Conforming | |
| 8.8 Appeals and | |

Sample UDO Outline:

- Chapter 1: General Provisions**
- Chapter 2: Administration**
- Chapter 3: Process and Procedures**
- Chapter 4: Zoning Districts & Dimensions**
- Chapter 5: Uses and Use Standards**
- Chapter 6: Subdivisions & Infrastructure**
- Chapter 7: Environmental Standards**
- Chapter 8: Development Regulations**
- Chapter 9: Signs**
- Chapter 10: Definitions**

By updating the County’s UDO, up-to-date perspectives can be used to form land use regulations that meet the community’s needs.

BLUEWAYS

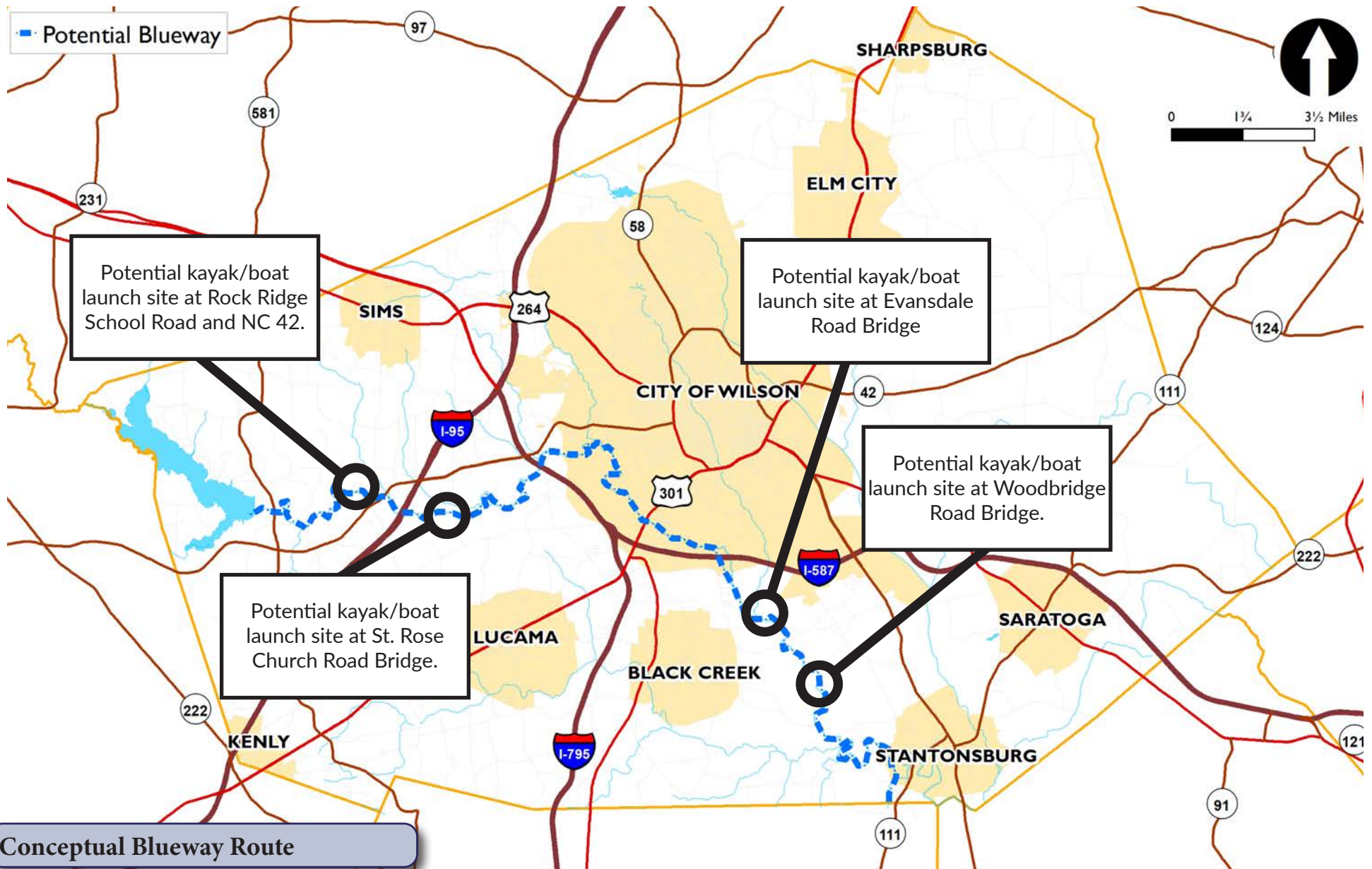
Blueways are small boat and paddling routes that combine outdoor recreation with tourism and environmental awareness along a waterway. Survey results and feedback through community engagement have highlighted a shared interest in leveraging the natural resources in the County. One suggestion stemming from this feedback is the development of blueways, which not only capitalize on these resources but also offer alternative recreational opportunities. Given the scenic natural landscapes of Wilson County, particularly along Contentnea Creek, initiating blueway development is strongly recommended in conjunction with the ongoing efforts by the City of Wilson and NCDOT to expand recreational options through trails and greenway systems.

A specific 22-mile stretch of blueway corridor has been identified, running from Buckhorn Reservoir to the Town of Stantonsburg. To assess the practicality of this corridor, it is recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken. This study would evaluate the viability of the proposed route and explore various opportunities for establishing kayak and boat launch sites along the way. Initial assessments have pinpointed two potential locations for such facilities: one near Buckhorn Reservoir and another between the towns of Black Creek and Stantonsburg. Further investigating of these sites is necessary to determine their suitability and potential impact.

Case Study: Greenville, NC Paddle Initiatives

As paddling along scenic rivers in eastern North Carolina grows in popularity, communities are implementing policy to grow this recreational opportunity for residents and visitors alike. The City of Greenville has acquired river-and creek-front properties through both capital investment and FEMA-Buyout properties to activate these sites for the advancement of paddling.





This map depicts a potential blueway along Contentnea Creek that stretches from the Buckhorn Reservoir to the southeastern portion of the County, through the Town of Stantonsburg.



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