

City of Burlington, North Carolina  
Comprehensive Plan  
**Destination Burlington**



ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 1, 2015





# Vision Statement

Burlington has grown and adapted throughout its 120-year history, making the community a place that we are all proud to call home. Planning for a future that is reflective of the community's goals will pave the way to Burlington's continued success and regional relevance.

The Burlington of tomorrow will be a city that embraces cultural opportunities to support a sense of community. It will be a city that allows every resident the ability to lead a healthy, active lifestyle supported by healthy food options and plentiful recreational amenities. Young families will find Burlington attractive due to its affordable cost of living, close-knit neighborhoods, great schools, and attractive greenways. Burlington will invest in its past by maintaining established neighborhoods, preserving its many historic districts, and redeveloping its dormant areas. Multi-modal transit will make the city easy to traverse via bike, foot, car, or bus. A vibrant downtown will form the hub of the community, as a place where creative minds go to work, residents go to unwind and enjoy themselves, and some even choose to call home. Our community will be inclusive and our city will provide dependably high levels of public infrastructure and services in all areas of the city, making Burlington an easy place to do business and a desirable place to start a life.

Our path is toward an even better Burlington, our *Destination Burlington*.



Ronnie K. Wall  
Mayor

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# Executive Summary

# 00



# Executive Summary



Character & Identity



Livability



Land Use



Parks & Open Space

Preparation of the *Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan* was an opportunity for the citizens, leaders, and stakeholders in the City of Burlington to tell their story and help shape the 20-year vision for the community found on page (i) of this report. The Comprehensive Plan reflects the desire to maintain a distinct and unique identity while charting the City's future success. Nearly twenty meetings and events were held over the year-long planning process to engage community input and raise public support for the Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan sets forth the community's goals determined to be most relevant to Burlington's next twenty years and provides recommendations in eight categories affecting growth and development. Each subject area corresponds to a chapter in this Plan, and in each chapter, there is narrative that describes the significant issues related to that topic and a list of implementable recommendations for each identified goal. Below is a comprehensive list of the identified goals. Of the 29 goals listed below, the five shown **in bold** were identified early and often by the community as top priorities. The recommended strategies to achieve the goals will influence development and design standards to be included in the Unified Development Ordinance targeted for adoption in 2016.

## CHARACTER & IDENTITY

Goal 01: Celebrate Burlington's unique history and local character.

**Goal 02: Reinforce the symbolic significance of Downtown.**

Goal 03: Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.

## LIVABILITY

Goal 01: Revitalize and improve access to opportunity in Burlington's neighborhoods.

Goal 02: Establish a Community Development Corporation that will oversee an overall development strategy.

Goal 03: Improve the quality and reputation of the local educational system.

Goal 04: Provide shared activities to bring Burlington's community together.

## LAND USE

Goal 01: Continue to provide a sustainable balance of land uses to assist with the fiscal wellbeing of the city and to ensure a diverse tax base.

Goal 02: Promote zoning flexibility in appropriate areas of the City.

Goal 03: Encourage appropriate land uses to ensure basic services are provided equitably.

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

**Goal 01: Improve city-wide and regional connectivity through greenways, trails, bicycle lanes and paths, and sidewalks.**

Goal 02: Maintain and enhance recreational facilities.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC RESOURCES

### Goal 01: Improve overall environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Goal 02: Manage the City's stormwater and surface waters sustainably.

Goal 03: Address water and sewer utility issues and needs.

Goal 04: Enhance public infrastructure at significant opportunity sites

Goal 05: Support equitable distribution of public services throughout the City.

## TRANSPORTATION

Goal 01: Focus on multi-modal complete streets and the design of streetscapes.

### Goal 02: Improve equitable access to community services and amenities through public transit.

Goal 03: Provide a transportation system that supports active living.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal 01: Develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Goal 02: Create a Carolina Corridor Commerce Park.

Goal 03: Nurture growing 21st century economic sectors.

Goal 04: Improve workforce development and vocational education options within the community.

Goal 05: Capitalize on local entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.

Goal 06: Enhance Burlington's tourism potential.

## REDEVELOPMENT

### Goal 01: Promote redevelopment of former industrial properties as catalyst sites ready for investment.

Goal 02: Take advantage of Downtown redevelopment opportunities.

Goal 03: Identify challenged corridors and related gateways that are candidates for widespread redevelopment efforts.

The Plan is a tool used by the City staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, developers, and other community leaders as they guide decisions about investment and resources. Though primarily a tool of the City's Planning & Zoning Commission, the Plan is also used by others considering land use, transportation, and education decisions and business investment in the community. The Future Land Use Plan on page (ix) is one of the most significant guiding elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as it describes the pattern, character, and intensity of development across the City and its planning jurisdiction for the next twenty years. While planning criteria applied to specific zones or parcels may change in nature over the next two decades, these principles should be the overall conceptual framework guiding Burlington to 2035. The success of the *Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan* will be measured in part by the application and practice of the goals and recommendations contained within. Each chapter specifies strategies which, as performance indicators, can be measured annually and at times re-prioritized.



Infrastructure & Public Resources



Transportation

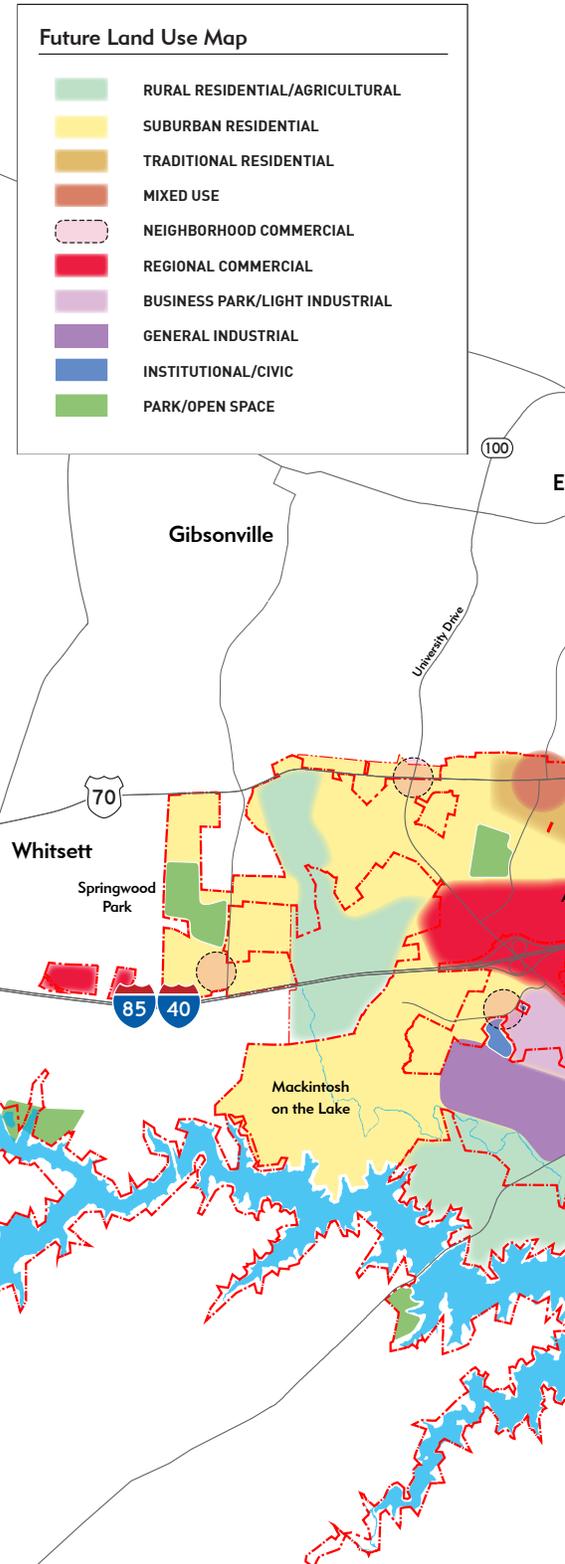
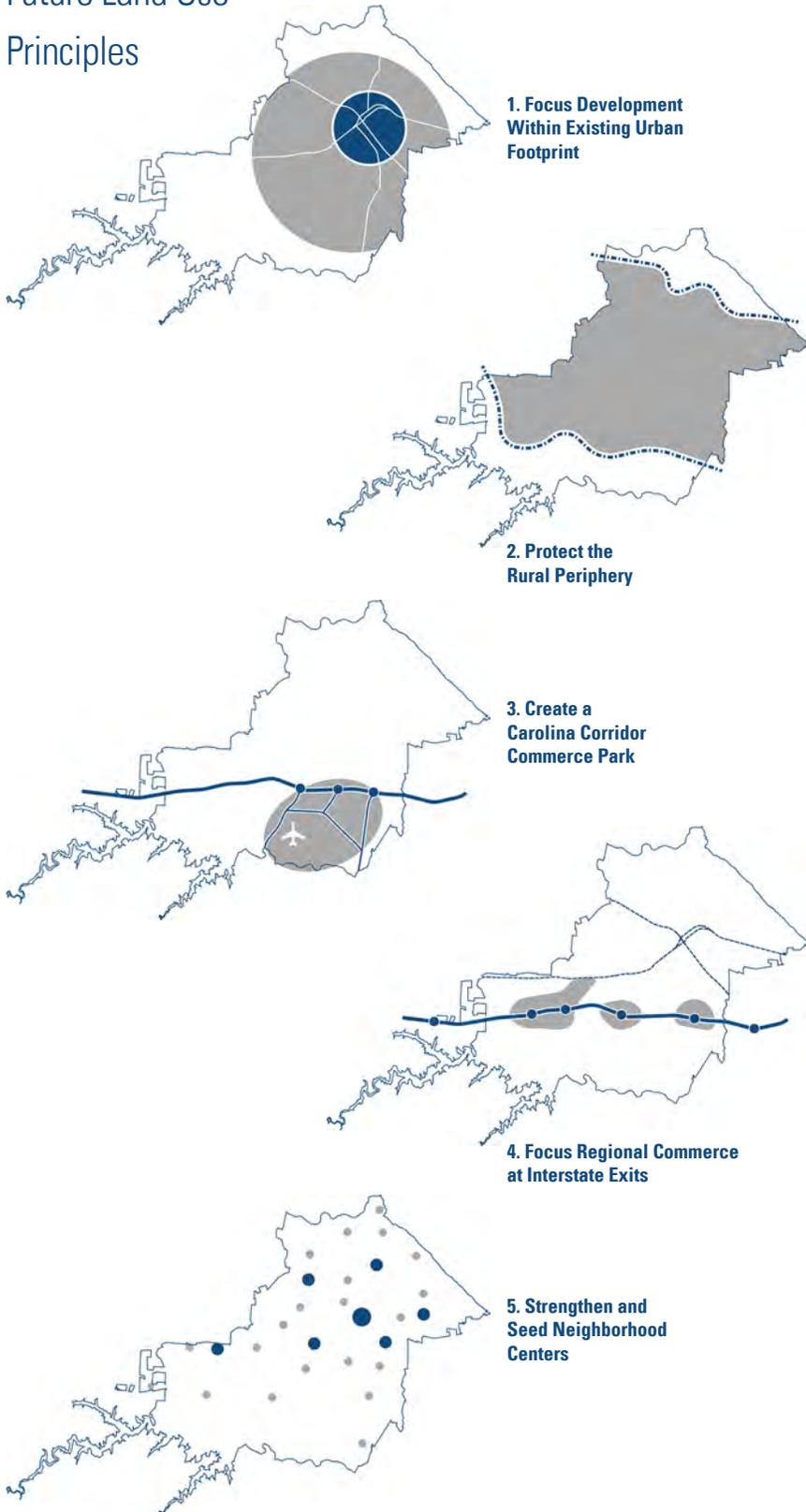


Economic Development

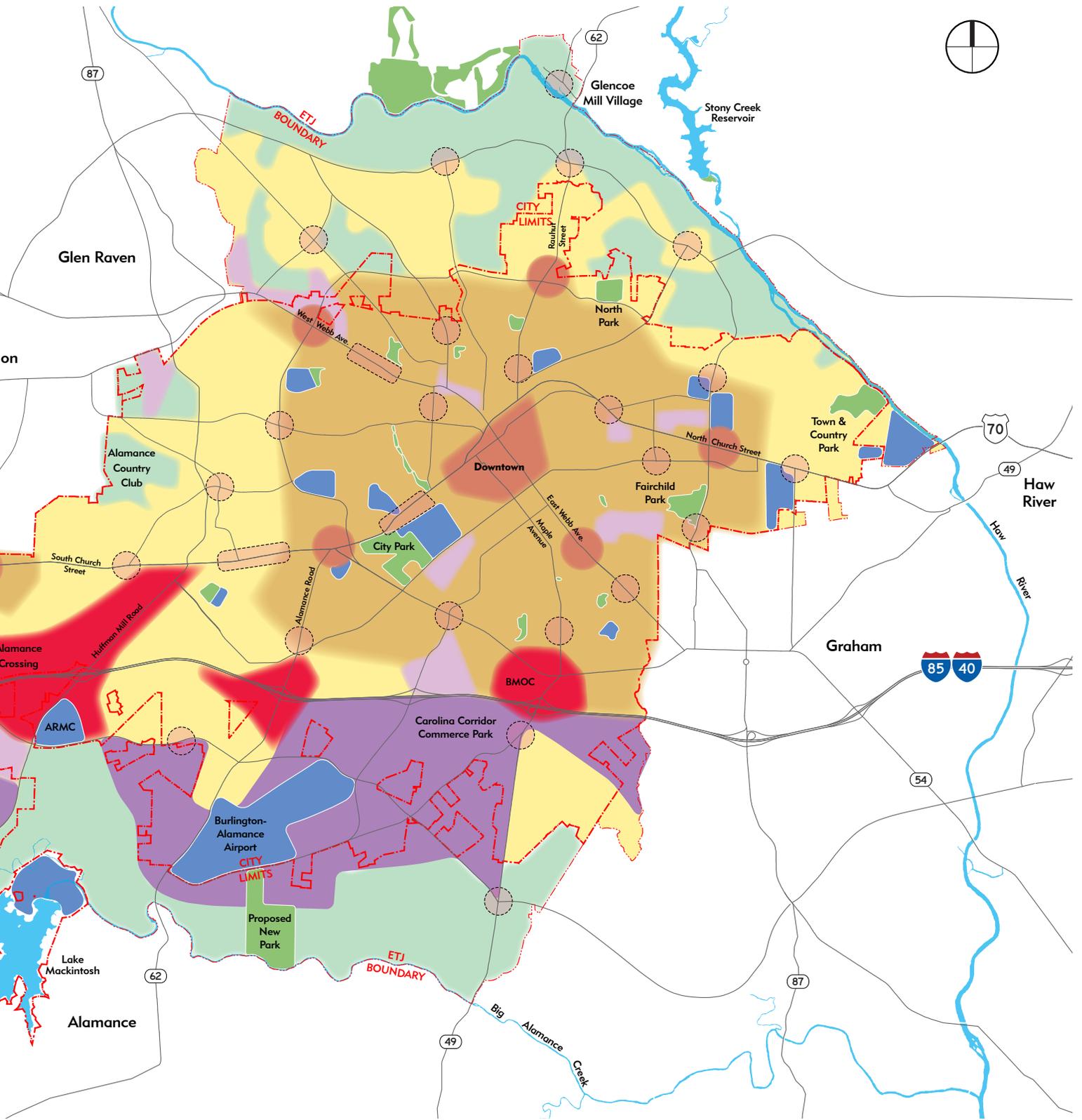


Redevelopment

# Future Land Use Principles



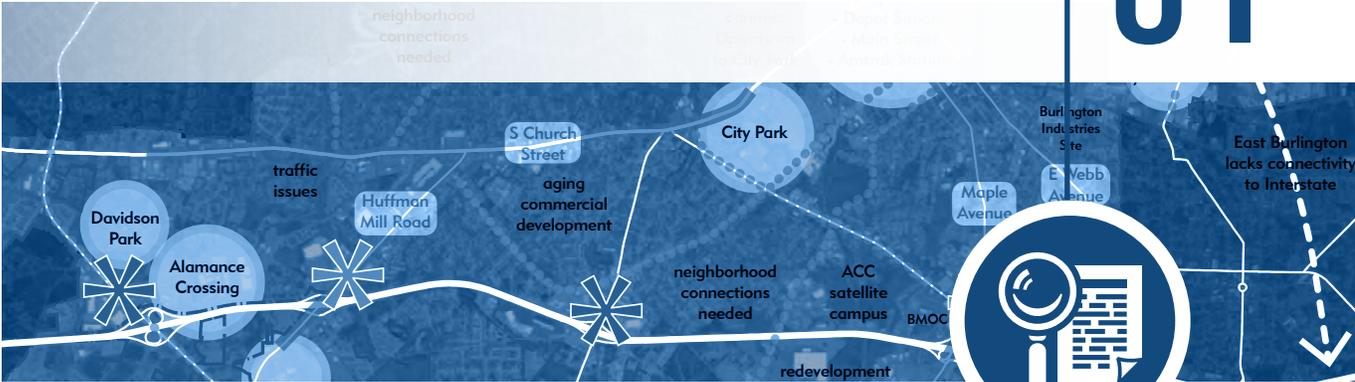
# Future Land Use Plan





# Introduction

# 01



## First Focus

“FIRST FOCUS” initiatives are included throughout the Plan on each chapter cover and describe quick implementation tasks the City can start today in order to create opportunities and engage the community to achieve the community’s vision.

# Introduction

## *Why “Destination Burlington?”*

The City’s Planning & Community Development Department asked local students to propose names for the Comprehensive Planning endeavor, and then the wider public was asked to vote on the naming options. “Destination Burlington,” the proposed name from a Civics and Economics class at Cummings High School, was selected. Mayor Ronnie Wall then incorporated the name as part of the project’s Vision Statement. Refer to Appendix D for additional information on student exercises related to the comprehensive planning effort.

### **ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan is an opportunity for the citizens of the City of Burlington to tell their story and help shape the vision for the community. The Comprehensive Plan will help the City envision and maintain a distinct and unique identity and chart its future success—one that residents of the community recognize and support. The Plan is not a law or a zoning ordinance, but serves as a guideline for community decision making. It will be used by the City’s Planning & Community Development staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council, citizens, developers, and other community investors as they attempt to understand the vision of the community.

While North Carolina state law does not require communities to adopt a comprehensive plan, many cities in the state rely on these important planning documents. Comprehensive plans are designed to guide a community for a period of time up to 20 years and are considered a best management practice to ensure sound planning and development occurs in a community.

Implementation of the goals, strategies, and specific projects included in this plan will depend on budgetary considerations, staff availability, citizen involvement, and other potentially changing conditions. The decision to undertake any project at a particular time is a discretionary policy decision of City staff and leadership.

The City can only act on recommendations in the Plan as authorized by existing state law.

## How to Use This Plan

The Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan represents a long-range initiative to guide the future of the City in a way that reflects its particular challenges and unique characteristics. Each chapter states the Goals and Recommendations that will influence the successful implementation of the priorities of Burlington residents and stakeholders. The format and presentation of Goals and Recommendations are depicted and described on the adjacent page.

In addition, “Profiles” and “Case Studies” are included in relevant areas throughout this document to further explain certain concepts or recommendations. The plan should be reviewed annually by the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council and updated every five to ten years in response to land use trends, changes in population, or any major events that may affect Burlington’s future. This will ensure the plan and its individual elements remain relevant.



Denotes a sustainable planning recommendation



Denotes a community health recommendation



Denotes a recommendation the City is currently pursuing

## Goal:

A Goal directly supports the collective efforts and ideals of the community reflected in the Vision Statement.

### RECOMMENDATION

A recommendation contains tangible steps that can be taken by City officials, business leaders, community organizations, and residents to implement the goal.

Often a recommendation is supported by additional descriptive text.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Transformation Grant program has recognized that thoughtful, creative planning strategies have a direct effect on the health and wellness of our communities' citizens. The City of Burlington has been awarded such a grant to integrate community health and wellness as a significant focus of the Destination Burlington comprehensive planning effort. An article in the October 2013 issue of Planning Magazine notes the impact planning can have on our health:

*Recent research shows that policies making healthy foods more affordable; improving sidewalk, street, and land-use design to encourage physical activity; and banning public, workplace, or residence smoking are among the most effective public health strategies.*

The CDC has outlined five "Strategic Directions" towards which each Community Transformation Grant (CTG) should assist in community health:

1. Tobacco-free living
2. Active living and healthy eating
3. High impact evidence-based clinical and other preventive services
4. Social and emotional wellness
5. Healthy and safe physical environment

"Recent research shows that policies making healthy foods more affordable; improving sidewalk, street, and land-use design to encourage physical activity; and banning public, workplace, or residence smoking are among the most effective public health strategies."

Alisa Rivera, "Health First," Planning 79:8 (October 2013): 14-19

The CTG anticipates the following performance measures for success in these Strategic Directions:

1. Changes in weight
2. Changes in proper nutrition
3. Changes in physical activity
4. Changes in tobacco use prevalence
5. Changes in emotional well-being and overall mental health

It is vital that recommendations can be viewed through these strategic directions and performance measures to assure that the final Comprehensive Plan meets the community health goals of the CTG. The medical symbol icon  denotes a community health and wellness recommendation that responds to or contributes to the improvement of one or more Strategic Directions.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Attention to both ecological and economic sustainability is a goal that can be achieved through smart land use, transportation planning, and stormwater management decisions. Continued enhancement of the natural environment is an essential part of a high quality of life. The leaf icon  denotes a sustainable recommendation.

## RELEVANT PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

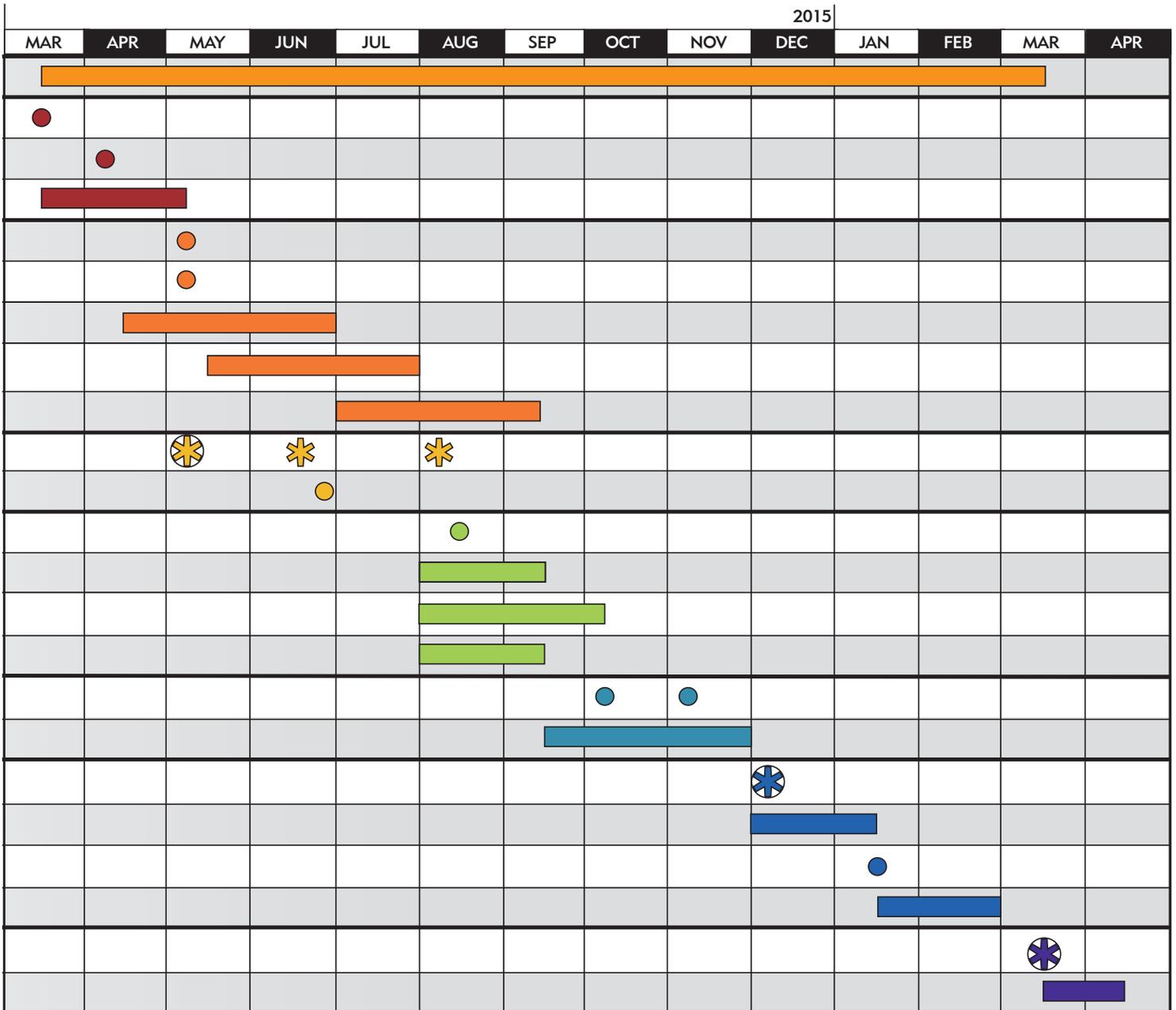
Many existing plans, studies, documents, and articles served as resources for the comprehensive planning effort. A full list of resources is available in Appendix A of this report. Several significant recent planning studies that provided the foundation for this Comprehensive Plan included:

- Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1991)
- Southwest Area Plan (1996)
- Burlington-Graham Public Transit Feasibility Study (2006)
- Alamance County Recreation & Parks Comprehensive Master Plan (2007)
- Burlington Downtown Master Plan (2008)
- Burlington-Graham Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2010)
- Alamance County Community Assessment (2011)
- BGMPO Long Range Transportation Plan Update (2012)
- Burlington Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)
- Downtown Parking Plan (2012)
- Recreation & Parks Comprehensive Master Plan (2012)
- Piedmont Together Comprehensive Regional Plan (2014)

2014

	Ongoing Public Input & Education
<b>PHASE 1 PREPARATION</b>	Initial Staff Meeting & Guided Tour
	Steering Comm. Kick-off Meeting
	Data Collection
<b>PHASE 2 INVESTIGATION</b>	Stakeholder Interviews
	Steering Committee Meeting
	Public Input Survey
	Comprehensive Analysis
	Community Issues & Needs Report
<b>PHASE 3 IMAGINATION</b>	Public Kickoff Visioning Workshops
	Steering Committee Meeting
<b>PHASE 4 INVENTION</b>	Steering Committee Meeting
	Vision Statement
	Draft Goals & Objectives
	Annotated T.O.C.
<b>PHASE 5 INTEGRATION</b>	Steering Committee Meeting
	Draft Plan
<b>PHASE 6 EVALUATION</b>	Public Open House
	Public Comment Period
	Steering Committee Meeting
	Adoption Draft
<b>PHASE 7 ADOPTION</b>	City Council Public Hearing
	Report Revisions & Production

## Project Schedule



-  = TASKS
-  = STEERING COMMITTEE
-  = RATIO TEAM LED PUBLIC MEETING
-  = CITY-LED PUBLIC MEETING

# Community Engagement Overview

The community engagement strategy developed for Destination Burlington was diverse and multi-faceted—relying on both traditional and Internet-based methods and suited to a number of different personal approaches to interaction. The intent with this strategy is to rise above the limited models of merely informing, consulting, and placating the public and actively engage them as partners in the process.

Community engagement is not an end unto itself, but rather a crucial means of obtaining, deciphering, and prioritizing information that statistics and studies alone cannot reveal. Through the input and feedback of the community, the planning process was focused onto those issues that are most in need of attention. Destination Burlington’s integrated strategy of community engagement is described in the sections below.

## CITY-LED PRELIMINARY OUTREACH

Before the consultant team was commissioned to support the planning process, the City’s Planning and Community Development Department was already actively engaged in outreach efforts for the Comprehensive Plan. This included activities with local high school classes to brainstorm names for the effort, which led to a community-wide vote that put forth “Destination Burlington” as the plan’s name. Refer to Appendix D for additional information on student exercises related to the comprehensive planning effort. City staff also conducted surveys and informal group sessions in the months leading up to the formal planning process.

## STAFF-CONSULTANT PARTNERSHIP

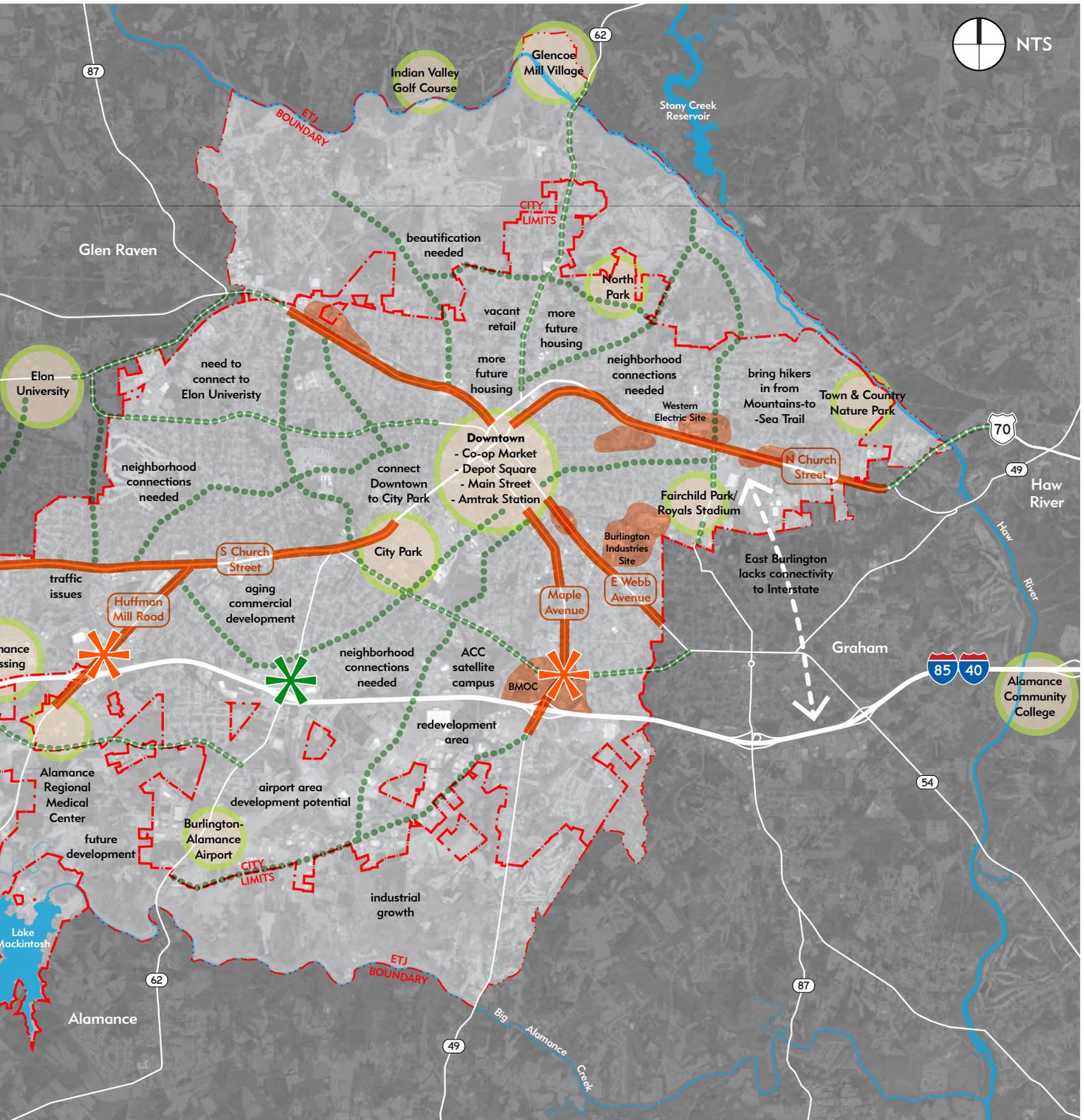
The Planning and Community Development Department always had the intent of the City’s staff being integrally involved in the Comprehensive Plan, even describing those opportunities for staff involvement while selecting a consultant team. As the City’s staff are perhaps most familiar with the planning issues at play in the community, they are an important part of the initial and ongoing public input in the process. Recognizing that, the kickoff event for the formal planning process was a workshop meeting for the City staff and RATIO team during which the staff discussed priority planning issues and mapped successes and challenges throughout the City. The partnership of City staff and RATIO team personnel continued throughout the process and resulted in a carefully-tailored plan owned by the City of Burlington.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee composed of City residents, leaders of community institutions, representatives of Burlington and Alamance County commissions, and members of the business community was assembled by the City early in the planning process. Committee members were selected to represent a diversity of interests and backgrounds, and to bring energy to the behind-the-scenes work of crafting the Plan. The charge of the Steering Committee was to assemble on a periodic basis to inform the RATIO team



Community Input Summary Map





Promotional materials and a Destination Burlington logo were developed to encourage community engagement

and City staff of significant issues, concerns, and priorities of the community, to provide feedback on the products of the planning process, and to guide and refocus the efforts of the RATIO team as the process continued. The Steering Committee met seven times over the course of the comprehensive planning process, approximately once every six weeks.

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS & BRANDING

Having a clear and consistent public identity is crucial to the success of every plan, even back to Daniel Burnham's 1909 Plan of Chicago, one of the earliest comprehensive planning efforts. Promotion and branding is not just about giving the planning effort a pretty face, however. It is a means to increasing the involvement of citizens and continually informing the community of the plan's progress and significant milestones. The RATIO team worked with the City to develop a logo and graphic vocabulary that embraced the Destination Burlington title while also tying back to the City's own logo and branding. Promotional materials including postcards, flyers, and posters were distributed to increase awareness and encourage participation in the Community Visioning Workshop. Radio segments and press coverage were an important part of media outreach.

## COMMUNITY SURVEYS

In addition to the surveys produced and distributed by the City early in the planning process, the RATIO team developed a survey for the community that was accessible both online and in a traditional paper format. The survey was designed to establish community priorities on a number of significant planning issues—areas for development, environmental protection, development regulations, city services, and community health. The paper survey responses were consolidated with the online responses at SurveyMonkey.com, and the resulting data is summarized in Appendix B.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

With the assistance of the consultant team, City staff assembled six stakeholder groups representing focused interests important to the future of Burlington. The six stakeholder groups represented the following interests:

- Economy: representation of large employers, real estate interests, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Convention & Visitor's Bureau.
- Education: representation of the public school system, Elon University, The Burlington School, the home schooling community, and Alamance County Public Libraries.
- Community: representation of local faith-based groups, the elderly and youth communities, the ethnic and racial communities, and the Burlington Community Work Group.

- Health & Wellness: representation of the Parks & Recreation Department, Healthy Alamance, services for the homeless, public housing, police and emergency management, and Alamance County Department of Social Services.
- City Design: representation of Downtown interests, transportation planning, the City's Public Works Department, the local design community, historic preservationists, and the New Leaf Society.
- Infrastructure: representation of utility companies and several City Departments that deal with the infrastructure and services of the City.

Stakeholders were encouraged to be candid during their hour-long interviews with the City and RATIO team, as the transcripts of the interviews were intended to inform the planning process and not be part of the public record of the planning process. In this way, the stakeholders were afforded the chance to give the consultants the “inside scoop” on the issues most important to them.

### COMMUNITY PLANNING KITS

The RATIO team has developed a “Community Planning Kit” for Destination Burlington that allows groups of citizens to engage in the activities of the Community Visioning Workshop if they were unable to attend the May 8th event. The kit is designed to take a group of 12-15 participants through the four planning activities, with instructions and all the stickers, photographs, scorecards, and maps from the Workshop included. The Community Planning Kits were also translated into Spanish to facilitate input from local Hispanic community groups.

### MINDMIXER

Mindmixer.com is an online “platform” for community engagement that is growing in popularity amongst planners, civic leaders, and community members. It has been designed to be user-friendly, accessible, fun, interactive, and democratic. Participants can respond to questions, post ideas, answer surveys, map the City's issues and successes, post photographs, and trumpet the good ideas of their neighbors. Although generally considered attractive to younger, more web-savvy participants, Burlington's MindMixer site was most actively used by a 35-44 age group and predominantly by citizens of the 27215 ZIP code area. There were 85 active participants in Burlington's MindMixer site, but there have been over 750 unique visitors to the site since it launched in mid-April 2014.



**Community Planning Kits were distributed for use in smaller, informal workshop venues after the Community Visioning Workshop**



**MindMixer served as the online community engagement platform through the majority of the planning process**

RATIO continues to engage the community through time-tested person to person outreach and by harnessing technology to employ a balanced approach towards gathering public input.

## Community Visioning Workshop

On the evening of May 8, 2014, the City of Burlington hosted a Community Visioning Workshop as part of the comprehensive planning effort. The purpose of the event was multi-faceted—it served to educate the community about the planning process underway, to elicit participant feedback on issues identified with help from City staff and the Steering Committee, and publicly promote the effort to encourage sustained interest, feedback, and ownership for the resultant comprehensive plan. The Workshop was an open and casual venue for participants to express their feelings.

The bulk of the Workshop event was reserved for four “Planning Activities,” described below. The activities were designed to engage the participants in a number of ways—as “voters” milling around and interacting with a crowd, as quiet judges of scenes of their City, as groups engaged in debate on health issues, and as introspective thinkers of a better future. A more detailed summary of the Workshop and its results is available in Appendix C.

Five key goals emerged from the Workshop:

- Geographic Equity
- Connectivity of Transportation Options
- Downtown as a Community Focus
- Economic Improvement
- Environmental Stewardship



Scenes from the Workshop, above and on the adjacent page, show the voting activity, mapping activity, and Visual Preference Survey

### PLANNING ACTIVITY #1

In this activity, the thirty-six community participants were asked to review groups of issues and prioritize the ones in each group they felt were most relevant or critical. Each participant could vote for one issue in each thematic category. The leading issues by category are summarized below:

- Community Health: Access to and availability of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Economic Prosperity: Redevelopment of aging mill and factory properties
- Housing and Neighborhoods: Revitalization of east side neighborhoods
- Open Space and Parks: Establishment of a greenway system between parks, neighborhoods, and Downtown
- Streets and Transportation: Public transportation: fixed-route bus service
- Downtown: Housing in downtown including apartments above commercial



**This casual workshop event was open to all interested attendees.**

### PLANNING ACTIVITY #2

In this activity—a visual preference survey—participants were shown thirty-six images grouped into six themed categories. The question that each participant was asked to answer for each image was, “how much would you (or do you) like this in Burlington?” with the scale going from 1 as “Not at all!” to 5 being “A lot!”

Some significant results in each category include:

- Housing & Neighborhoods: historically-rehabilitated Glencoe Mill Village was ranked highest in this category, while a townhouse community outside of a traditional neighborhood setting was ranked quite low.



# 01 | Introduction



- Open Space: a photograph of a community event in a park garnered the most favor in this category and ranked second overall in the survey. Natural scenes ranked favorably even in relation to typical park scenes.
- Commercial Districts: An image of a commercial strip highway was overwhelmingly negative and was the lowest ranking image overall.
- Economy & the Workplace: images featuring contemporary, white-collar workplaces were ranked strongly positive.
- Downtown: The Co-op Market on Front Street was the top-ranked place in the survey; scenes featuring historic buildings were favored strongly.
- Streets & Transportation: there were strong positive responses for landscaped roadways, public transportation, and streets that could accommodate bicycles and pedestrians.

## PLANNING ACTIVITY #3

This group mapping exercise was designed to use factors that influence community health, such as food deserts, lack of recreational facilities, pollution sources, crime, and poor healthcare access, as a way to locate areas most at risk for despair, disinvestment, poverty, and blight. The group maps were synthesized to portray a collective view of the geographic differences in community health in Burlington.

## PLANNING ACTIVITY #4

The purpose of the final workshop activity was to have participants distill down their most essential goal or priority for the comprehensive planning process. The following is a selected list of “One Goals” for Destination Burlington:

- Greenways connecting neighborhoods
- Create livable and walkable neighborhoods
- Economic Development in areas of vacant buildings
- Provide more medical facilities in our area
- Increase public transit options

Some of the most popular images from the Visual Preference Survey show, from the top, the Company Shops Co-op Market, a community activity in one of the City’s parks, Glencoe Mill Village, a “complete street,” the Alamance Regional Medical Center, and new commercial development in Elon.

## Housing & Neighborhoods



IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT HERE
Preservation of historic neighborhoods and homes	2
Revitalization of "East Side" neighborhoods	7
Affordability of housing options	4
Definition and recognition of different neighborhoods and gateways	3
Equal provision of City services and facilities throughout all neighborhoods	2
Promotion of more interaction through neighborhood events and work groups	
Focusing on neighborhood commercial streets or "village centers"	9



RATIO RKG STEWART

## Open Space & Parks



IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT HERE
Establishment of a greenway system between parks, neighborhoods, and Downtown	14
"Green" enhancements of pedestrian routes between commercial and residential areas	
Preservation of rural land, farms, fields, and meadows	2
Maintenance and upgrades to existing parks, facilities, and conserved land	7
Creation of sports fields and athletic facilities	2
Landscape beautification of roadway medians, triangles, and "leftover" spaces	3
Protection of natural resources like creeks, Haw River, woodlands, and reservoirs	9



RATIO RKG STEWART

MY ONE GOAL FOR DESTINATION BURLINGTON IS...

*Connecting of Parks & Trails*

PLEASE ANSWER HERE

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR NAME HERE, IF YOU WOULD LIKE!

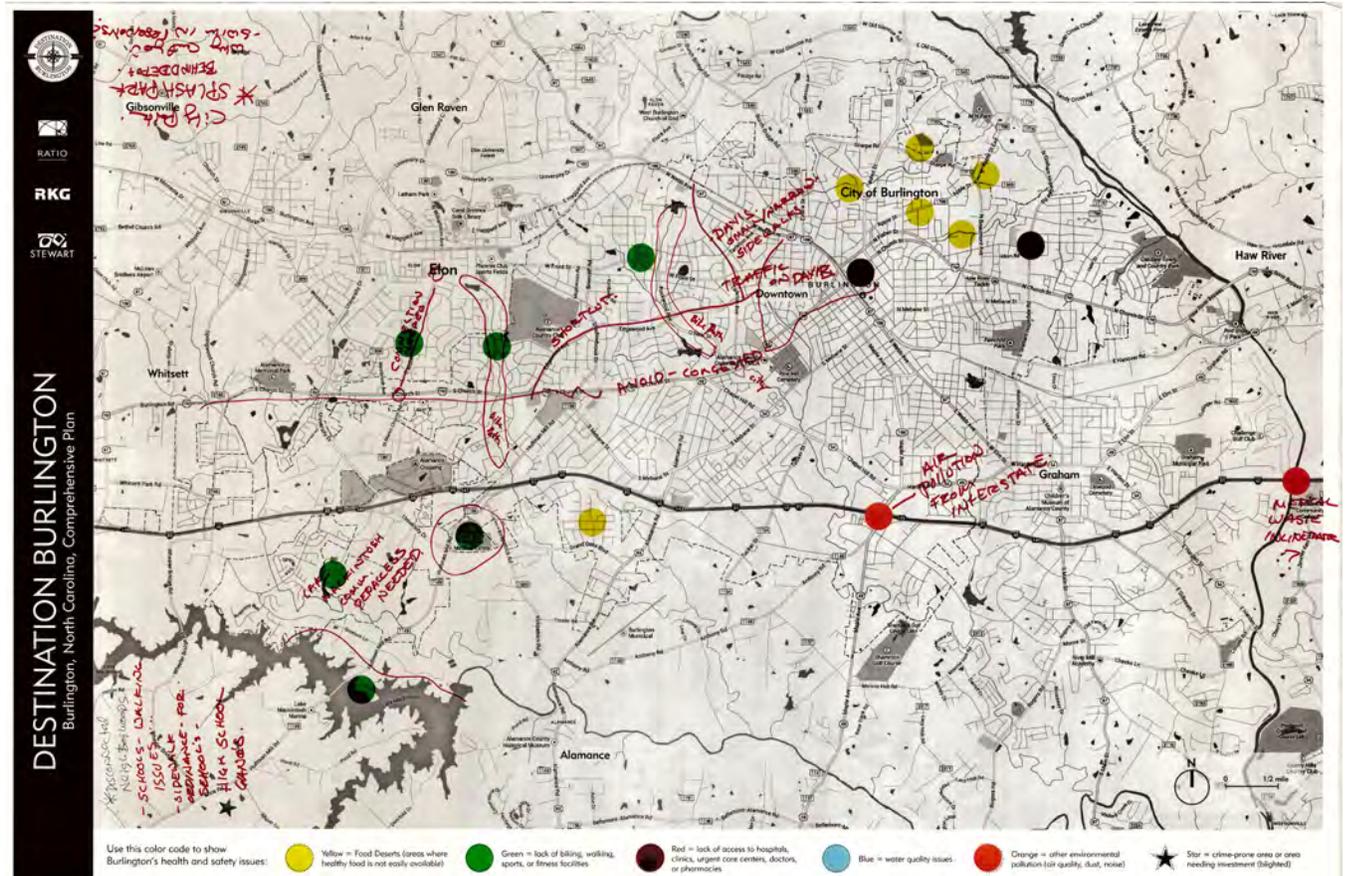


MY ONE GOAL FOR DESTINATION BURLINGTON IS...

*Strengthen the look of Burlington by using the Arts*

PLEASE ANSWER HERE

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR NAME HERE, IF YOU WOULD LIKE!



**DESTINATION BURLINGTON**  
 Burlington, North Carolina, Comprehensive Plan

Use this color code to show Burlington's health and safety issues:

- Yellow = Food Deserts (areas where healthy food is not easily available)
- Green = lack of biking, walking, sports, or fitness facilities
- Red = lack of access to hospitals, clinics, urgent care centers, doctors, or pharmacies
- Blue = water quality issues
- Orange = other environmental pollution (air quality, dust, noise)
- ★ = crime-prone area or area needing investment (highlighted)

Products of the Workshop activities were used as a launching point for the development of community visions and goals



# Character & Identity 02



## First Focus

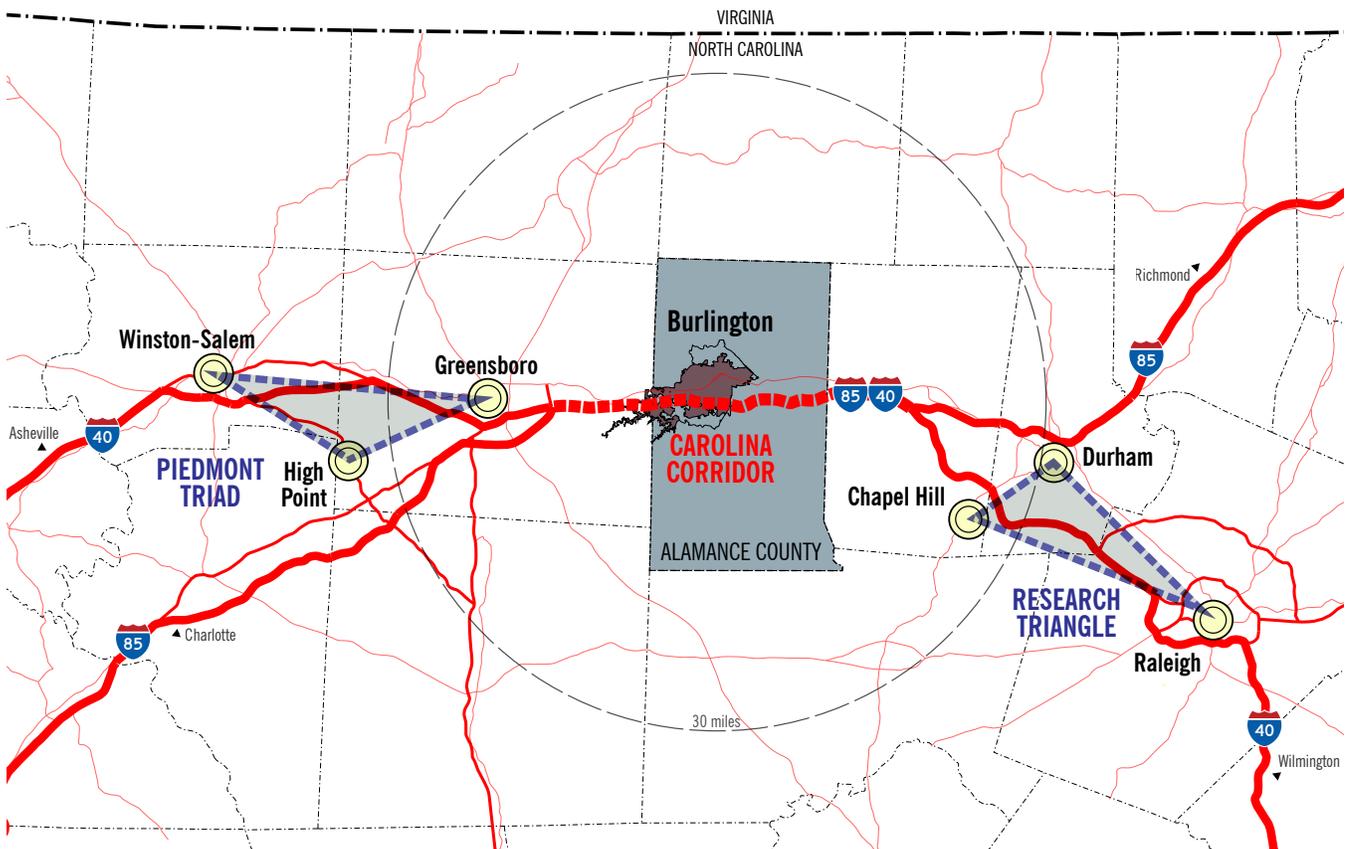
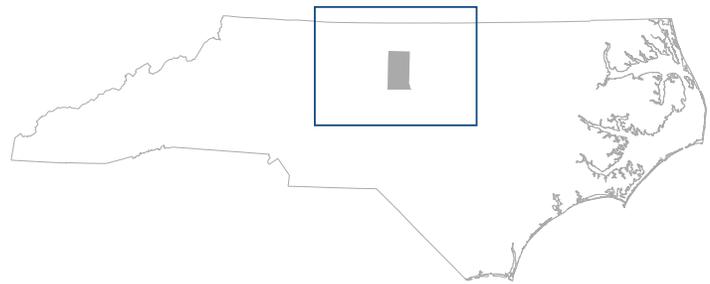
Enhance the physical character of Burlington by identifying and focusing early improvement efforts on the most significant and most challenged corridors and gateways into the City. Beginning to establish a consistent design vocabulary for gateways and corridors is important in conveying Burlington's identity.

# Character & Identity

## Location & History

### LOCATION

The City of Burlington is the largest municipality in Alamance County, North Carolina, midway between the urban economic centers of the Piedmont Triad (Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and High Point) and Research Triangle (Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill) in North Carolina's metropolitan Piedmont Crescent. Burlington is the central economic hub along "The Carolina Corridor," the confluence of Interstates 85 and 40 and a region well-served by airports and railroads. A city of over 50,000 inhabitants, Burlington is 25.4 square miles located between the Haw River and Great Alamance Creek in the Cape Fear River Basin.



## HISTORY

The original community now known as Burlington was founded as a railroad repair and maintenance site. In 1856, the North Carolina Railroad established “Company Shops” two miles west of Graham. Roughly the geographical center of the rail line, Company Shops included the railroad’s maintenance and repair shops and its central headquarters. Company Shops was incorporated as a town in 1866. In time, the community became a market center for local agriculture, with the railroad selling land to set up market enterprises.

The community of Company Shops diversified with new industries: shoes, chairs, wheels and guns. In 1886, the railroad moved its repair and maintenance shops to Virginia and no longer employed area residents. The name “Company Shops” was then changed to Burlington.

Burlington’s reign as a national leader in the textile industry began in 1880, when the first cotton mill in the town was chartered for operation. By 1890, the transition from Company Shops to the textile capital of Burlington was complete, and in 1893 Burlington incorporated as a city. Further textile mill development spurred a population and commercial building boom into the 20th century, bringing professionals, tradesmen, merchants, and clergymen to the area. The biggest textile venture began in 1924 with the founding of Burlington Mills—now Burlington Industries—which became the largest weaver of rayon in the US. By 1971, Burlington Mills had 132 plants in 92 countries, putting Burlington on the world map. Textiles still prevailed until the early 1980s, when a severe recession struck. Burlington continued to hold a significant place in the textile world as outlet shopping became a major retail trend, but that too has waned as outlet stores have decamped Burlington to newer facilities.

## Demographic Overview

Information from the U.S. Census indicates that Burlington’s population has steadily increased since 1990, but at a slower rate than Alamance County (the Burlington MSA) and the State of North Carolina. From 1990 to 2000, Burlington’s population grew from approximately 39,500 to 46,000, an increase of 6,500 or 16.5%. During the same period of time, the Burlington MSA’s population grew 19%, compared to 21% for the state. The slower rate of growth in the city may be attributed to diminishing development sites compared to the outlying areas in the county. Between 2000 and 2013, Burlington’s annual population growth rate was 1.1% with the addition of 6,593 new residents. In the three years from 2010 to 2013, the rate of population growth held fairly steady for Burlington, at an annual rate of 1.0%. Burlington’s population is projected to increase at a rate of approximately 1% annually.

In 2000, Burlington had approximately 18,840 total households, growing to



Map of the original Burlington city limits, c1893. (image from Library of Congress American Memory Collection)

Like many of the cities in North Carolina’s Piedmont, Burlington is a growing community. The number of available development sites inside the City are diminishing, but growth will continue into the 21st century.

### *Demographics at a Glance:*

- Population, estimated: 51,510 (2013)
- 2035 projected population: 62,842 (based on 1% annual growth rate)
- Median Age: 38.8 (2013)
- Median Household Income: \$36,858 (2013)
- Labor Force (16+ years): 22,759 (2013)
- Median Home Value: \$126,100 (2013)
- Housing: 56.6% Owner-occupied, 43.4% Renter-occupied (2013)

2009-2013 American Community Survey, 2013 Population Estimates, US Census Bureau

Please refer to the Destination Burlington Community Assessment Report (2014), available at Burlington's Planning and Community Development Department, for additional detail on community demographics.

21,729 in 2013, an increase of 15%. A general decline in average household size has been observed nationally, as there are increasing numbers of single-adult households, one-parent households, and generally lower fertility rates than in the past. Household sizes in both Burlington and the Burlington MSA have remained surprisingly consistent, however. Burlington's average household size has held steady at 2.37 and the county's has remained at 2.45 since 2000.

Burlington's age distribution has shifted somewhat since 2000. The younger, working age 25-44 cohort actually decreased by 230 persons by 2013, and their overall proportion of the population decreased. The older, working age 45-64 cohort increased in population by approximately 31%, from 9,850 in 2000 to 12,850 in 2013. The over-65 age group increased from 7,710 to 8,035, accounting for nearly 16% of the population in 2013. The population loss in the 25-44 age cohort is most likely related to the net decline in employment in the city and county in the past ten years. Between 2004 and 2013, The Burlington MSA lost a net 2,135 jobs. The manufacturing sector was hardest hit, losing over 5,200 jobs.

In 2013, median household income in Burlington was \$38,858 compared to \$43,043 in Alamance County and \$46,334 in the State of North Carolina. Burlington's median household income increased from \$35,222 in 2000 to \$42,671 in 2010, then fell to \$38,858 in 2013. The decline in median household incomes is most likely related to the losses of relatively high paying jobs in the manufacturing, management of companies & enterprises, and construction industry sectors since 2000.

The education attainment of the local and regional labor force is a significant factor in supporting efforts to expand economic development and attract new employers. Burlington has lower proportions of bachelor and graduate degree holders than the state and nation. The proportion of high school graduates is also lower in Burlington at 26.5%, compared to 29.1% in the state and 29.5% in the nation.

## Elements of Identity

There are many elements that make up the identity of Burlington, some that are physical and others that are an intangible "sense of place." Below is a list of significant contributors to Burlington's unique identity.

- A "small-town" feel and sense of community but with larger city amenities: Burlington is a place set apart from the larger metropolitan regions to the east and west. Community members have noted that the City's small-town feel can often boost the city's identity; some residents find the City homey—"friendly, nice, convenient, quaint, comfortable." The small-town feel is influenced by the perceived friendliness of citizens, equity and fairness, shared community activities, a focus on youth and families, and active communication amongst all the City's constituents.

Burlington also has a number of bigger-city advantages, including solid cultural institutions and a well-defined Downtown.

- Aesthetics of the city’s public realm: there is widespread appreciation for the types of beautification efforts made by the New Leaf Society for plantings, streetscape enhancements, street trees, and public art. The aesthetics of the City’s commercial corridors have been identified as a challenge facing the identity of Burlington. Features including commercial signage, overhead utilities, vacant or abandoned buildings, and perceptually hostile pedestrian environments are issues the community wants addressed.
- Historic resources and industrial heritage: some of the most desirable neighborhoods in the City are those that combine attractive older architecture with a preserved or rehabilitated public realm, including Downtown, Glencoe Mill Village, Circle Drive, and others. Aging industrial mills speak to larger issues of the community’s economic situation in past decades, but give hope for future revitalization.

**Burlington has a quintessential small-town feeling in its Downtown of historic storefronts and landmarks, including the historic train depot in the middle of Downtown.**



## Historic Resources and Preservation

The City of Burlington has seven National Register of Historic Places Districts, two of which are also locally-designated districts, and fourteen National Register Landmarks, two of which are also locally-designated landmarks. The City also has one additional local landmark that is not nationally registered.

The Burlington Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC) has the authority to review architectural changes for only the locally designated districts and landmarks. This is an important distinction to note, as so many of Burlington’s historic assets are only listed on the national level. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office states that:

*[Local] Historic district designation is a type of zoning that applies to entire neighborhoods or other areas that include*

## 02 | Character & Identity



**The adaptive reuse of the old Company Shops as a modern passenger railroad station is one of Burlington's several preservation and rehabilitation success stories**



**The revitalized Glencoe Mill Village is one of the City's most popular visitor sites and residential neighborhoods**

*many historic properties. The zoning provides controls on the appearance of existing and proposed buildings. Designation is an honor, meaning the community believes the architecture, history, and character of the area are worthy of recognition and protection. Historic district zoning can help to improve property values by stabilizing and enhancing the neighborhood's character, and it benefits property owners by protecting them from inappropriate changes by other owners that might destroy the special qualities of the neighborhood.*

By not locally listing these historic assets, the City loses an opportunity to guide redevelopment and rehabilitation with design regulations. There are other options, however, to achieve the goal of historic preservation without relying on a locally-listed historic district. See the profile on page 21 for more information on options for implementing historic preservation measures.

In 1991, the Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Plan discussed the following needs regarding historic preservation:

- Older residential buildings are located in declining neighborhoods. Need protection to stabilize neighborhoods like East Davis Street, Plaid Mill Village, Rainey Street, Tucker Street/Cameron Street.
- Historic buildings in commercial and industrial areas need to be preserved and restored, like North Main Street Company Shops Business District.
- Increase community awareness about social and economic benefits generated by preservation, like tax incentives, tourism, and local pride.

The needs discussed in the 1991 Plan have seen progress in the twenty-three years since it was published. East Davis Street Historic District and Beverly Hills Historic District have both been added to the National Register of Historic Districts (Beverly Hills includes Rainey Street). National designation of the Lakeside Mill & Village Historic District sought the preservation of part of EM Holt's large Plaid Mill operations. The Tucker Street/Cameron Street area does not currently have a district, but nearby, the South Broad-East Fifth Street Historic District has been established. While North Main Street has still been largely unrecognized as a district, the historic Company Shops has been adapted for reuse as Burlington's Amtrak station. In regards to awareness, social and economic benefits, and local pride, Burlington needs look no further than the preservation efforts at Glencoe Mill Village to understand the impact historic preservation can have—the complete rebirth of a historic neighborhood into a cultural center and recreational hub for the Haw River Trail, all with new property owners contributing to the local economy. Glencoe Mill Village has become one of the most sought after attractions of the region.

# Profile: Options for Historic Preservation

## Local Historic District Designation

Burlington has several nationally and locally registered landmarks, historic districts, and individual properties. The historic districts are primarily residential neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. Historic district designation provides the opportunity for residents and property owners to have input on proposed changes to the neighborhood fabric or individual structures. Designation also allows a property to be eligible for Federal and local tax credits (when available), grants, or special low interest loans available through other funding sources.

Designated local historic districts see higher levels of maintenance and greater appreciation rates than comparable adjacent areas that are not locally designated. The economist Donovan Rypkema has studied this and the fact is remarkably consistent across the country that local designation helps to encourage reinvestment in existing buildings and construction of new infill because it provides some protection for each new owner's investment. Downtown Burlington, listed on the National Register, encompasses the bulk of the City's non-residential historic buildings and maintains much of the urban street fabric, yet is not a designated local historic district.

Local designation could be the tool that ensures and protects Downtown investment and makes it a catalyst for continued redevelopment and economic development of a large portion of Burlington. Most concerns regarding designation, however, are related to the idea that "someone else" is given review powers over private property. The community can decide whether some items (say, paint colors—a common point of concern) are excluded from the Historic Preservation Commission review. Some people also are concerned that creating a district means nothing can be demolished or changed from the way it is now. Having a review process can help to encourage the reuse of valuable resources. There is a process for demolition but, if the proposed demolition is not justified, the commission has some tools to help the owner consider other options that may be in the best interest of the community long-term.

## Alternatives to Local Listing

There are other options in realizing the goal of historic preservation in a district like Downtown. One option that would preserve the urban fabric, allow flexibility in uses which would be beneficial in a dynamic economy, and maintain the charm of the walkable Downtown would be to amend the City's zoning ordinance Section 32.6: C, B-3 Central Business Districts, to allow for a mix of uses, create at least minimum design standards, add a process for demolition of structures, and increase densities.

Alternatively, an overlay district could be created with defined boundaries requiring some of the standards mentioned above. The overlay district would not change the underlying zoning of commercial, residential or industrial properties but would promote the continuation of higher density mixed-use development in Downtown and insure a high degree of compatibility between existing and new development in keeping with traditional Downtown development patterns.

An overlay district shall:

- Require a reasonable amount of design standards that assure compatible size, scale and massing of structures for new construction;
- Preserve existing historic character by encouraging rehabilitation of existing buildings;
- Protect property values and encourage continued investment;
- Encourage revitalization with pedestrian-oriented development with a mix of uses including residential, retail, service, office, and entertainment;
- Be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

*Resource: "The 10 Benefits of Establishing a Local Historic District," Julia Rocchi, Preservation Nation, January 2013. [http://blog.preservationnation.org/2013/01/15/10-on-tuesday-10-benefits-of-establishing-a-local-historic-district/#.VLgP7ivF\\_hs](http://blog.preservationnation.org/2013/01/15/10-on-tuesday-10-benefits-of-establishing-a-local-historic-district/#.VLgP7ivF_hs)*

*Resource: "A Handbook for Historic Preservation Commissions in North Carolina," Preservation North Carolina and the State Historic Preservation Office. Excerpt available at <http://www.burlingtonnc.gov/index.aspx?NID=654>*



**Downtown is a diverse mix of new and historic architecture, business and residential uses, and significant civic landmarks**

## Downtown

There is widespread agreement in the community that Downtown is the symbolic and historic heart of the City and deserving of exceptional focus. Downtown is the location of many citizens' favorite places, including Main Street, Depot Square, Company Shops Market, Company Shops train station, Front Street, and the Paramount Theater. While challenges remain—a perception of too little parking, too few restaurants and attractions, not enough vibrant activity—recent revitalization efforts have created \$17.5 million in private investment in 5 years and more than 30 net new businesses. 74% of respondents of the Community Survey see Downtown as the greatest opportunity for development and redevelopment in the City—Downtown is seen as an area of great potential.

In 2008, the Burlington Downtown Corporation (BDC) produced the Downtown Burlington Master Plan to visualize the future of the City's core—a Municipal Service District with additional levied taxes to provide specific services. Goals of the Plan included:

- Generate renewed pride and vitality in Downtown.
- Reconnect local residents and regional investors with opportunities in Downtown.
- Brand Burlington as "A Downtown that Works."
- Expand residential, office and retail success in Downtown.

The study looked at roadway and sidewalk sections, parking issues, public realm improvements, public art programming, appropriate redevelopment and infill sites, and potential zoning obstacles. Several studies and plans have followed, including a streetscape plan, parking plan, public art program, wayfinding strategy, and branding strategy. These efforts have borne real, "bricks-and-mortar" improvements to Downtown: repaved streets, new crosswalks, new planters and other beautification efforts, new public art installations, and events that grow more successful year by year.

Downtown faces some significant challenges in its future, three of which were recurring themes in community input. The first is the physical and perceptual separation between North Main Street and Downtown caused by the historic train depot's relocation to its current site, segmenting Main Street and isolating North Main Street from the rest of Downtown. Development obstacles to the mixing of land uses has been another issue, making the kind of vibrant street life and cultural opportunities most desired in Downtown difficult to develop. Finally, LabCorp's recent news that they will be relocating a number of Downtown-based personnel out of the city has been a cause of concern but also an opportunity to re-think the future of one of Downtown's most attractive Main Street blocks.

# Profile: Downtown Enhancements

The City’s network of streets represents the largest collection of “public places” in the community and the design of public spaces affects their success. These recommendations for additional streetscape improvements in the Downtown Municipal Service District, North Main Street and South Main Street could enhance the area and provide a gathering place for community events.

The City’s streets should be treated as safe and attractive public settings for all users whether motorized or non-motorized. The basic goal of all public spaces is to provide an inviting setting that attracts people. If such a place not only attracts people, but draws them back on a consistent basis, it can be considered successful.

The style and placement of street furnishings has a significant impact on the function and visual quality of the urban environment. Below is a list of some amenities that can be incorporated to enhance the public setting in and around the Downtown area. A consistent design vocabulary can also help knit together NoMa, Downtown, and South Main Street.

- Street trees
- Public benches and seating
- Landscaping and planters
- Street lights
- Sidewalk cafes
- Public art and/or water features



## Enhancements to Consider

### Parking Area Edge Treatments

Screening parking areas can provide safety and comfort for pedestrians and establish a definite barrier. Screen parking areas, loading, and service facilities from residences and local streets by utilizing landscaping, walls, or buildings. Materials for screening parking can include shrubs, trees, masonry walls or decorative metal fences combined with landscaping. Encourage natural stormwater solutions such as vegetated swales and pervious pavement for parking lots where possible.



# Enhancements to Consider



Streetscape improvements (above) and functional art (below) help define space and provide interest to draw people to a downtown.



### Trees

Street trees are one of the most noticeable streetscape elements, because of their vertical form. They function as a unifying visual element that can complement great architecture or screen less inspired architecture. They significantly improve the quality of urban spaces by providing shade in the summer and color in the fall.

When properly located, planted, and selected from a list of trees appropriate for urban settings, trees contribute value to property. Species native to North Carolina are likely to be more disease resistant and to adapt more readily to the heat, cold and water provided, thereby reducing long-term maintenance costs for replacement. Groups like the New Leaf Society can be a great help in supplementing the efforts of the City's Ground Department

### Trash Receptacles

Trash receptacles are already elements of the Downtown streetscape, designed to complement other streetscape elements in style, material, or color. More receptacles will be needed to cover demand as street life in Downtown continues to grow. These receptacles should be placed at high-traffic areas such as intersections and crosswalks, or adjacent to seating at a minimum of one per block. The maintenance of these fixtures is critically important—trash disposal can be quite messy. The City should work in concert with the Downtown Burlington Corporation to insure that these kinds of enhancements are properly maintained.

### Site Layout

Orient development towards streets and minimize setbacks on all streets to strengthen visual and physical connectivity for traffic and pedestrians.

- Encourage four-sided architecture (architectural detail and materials from the front facade extend to the other building sides) for structures that are visible from streets, residences, and businesses.
- Maintain the urban grid network in new development, especially residential areas.

### Seating

Benches and seat walls are always desirable in a downtown. As redevelopment occurs, or improvements are invested in by the City or individual property owners, consider an appropriate theme for these elements to ensure compatibility.

### Street Lighting

Vertical elements tend to provide a greater impact to the streetscape than flatwork (pavement, etc.). Street trees, building facades, and street lights are common vertical elements.

Lighting serves four primary purposes in downtown settings:

- To create a perception of safety;
- To establish an identity for the place or street where it is used;
- Focusing attention on unique architectural features;
- To illuminate signage, thereby improving the capacity within an area.

A street light improvement project should be a part of future Downtown planning initiatives, and should consider the following:

- A fixture that caters to motorists and pedestrians and enhances the architectural style and charm of Downtown.
- Lighting should be able to accommodate banners and hanging planters.
- Lighting should be shielded to reduce light pollution into the night sky.

### Gathering Spot

The public gathering spaces around the historic train depot should be enhanced with proper programming to bring people Downtown outside of the eight-to-five work day. Events such as these could be programmed by organizations such as Downtown Burlington Corporation and the City Recreation and Parks Department.

### Public Art

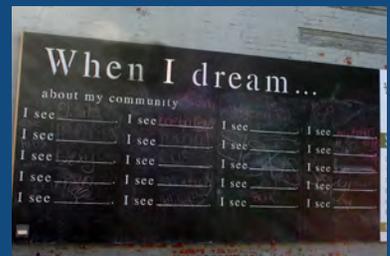
Public art can energize an otherwise lifeless space. It is important to recognize opportunities to transform “leftover” spaces scattered throughout the Downtown into attractive public settings. Local talent should be harnessed to create artistic elements. Blank walls of buildings are prime candidates for murals. Functional elements of the streetscape—benches, bicycle racks, lighting—can also be reimagined by artists to give a local, creative flare to these sidewalk features.

### Crosswalks

The most important consideration for crosswalks is the safety of pedestrians. Crosswalks should be highly visible to traffic, utilizing a change of pavement material or reflective paint. Pedestrian crossing signals are an important component of safe intersections. These treatments can help to slow traffic, creating a safer environment for pedestrians.



Elements of the sidewalk landscape should coordinate in design style and character.



Public Art: a chalkboard on a building promotes expression in public space.



Crosswalks: highlighted with special paving and paint patterns.

# Gateways & Corridors

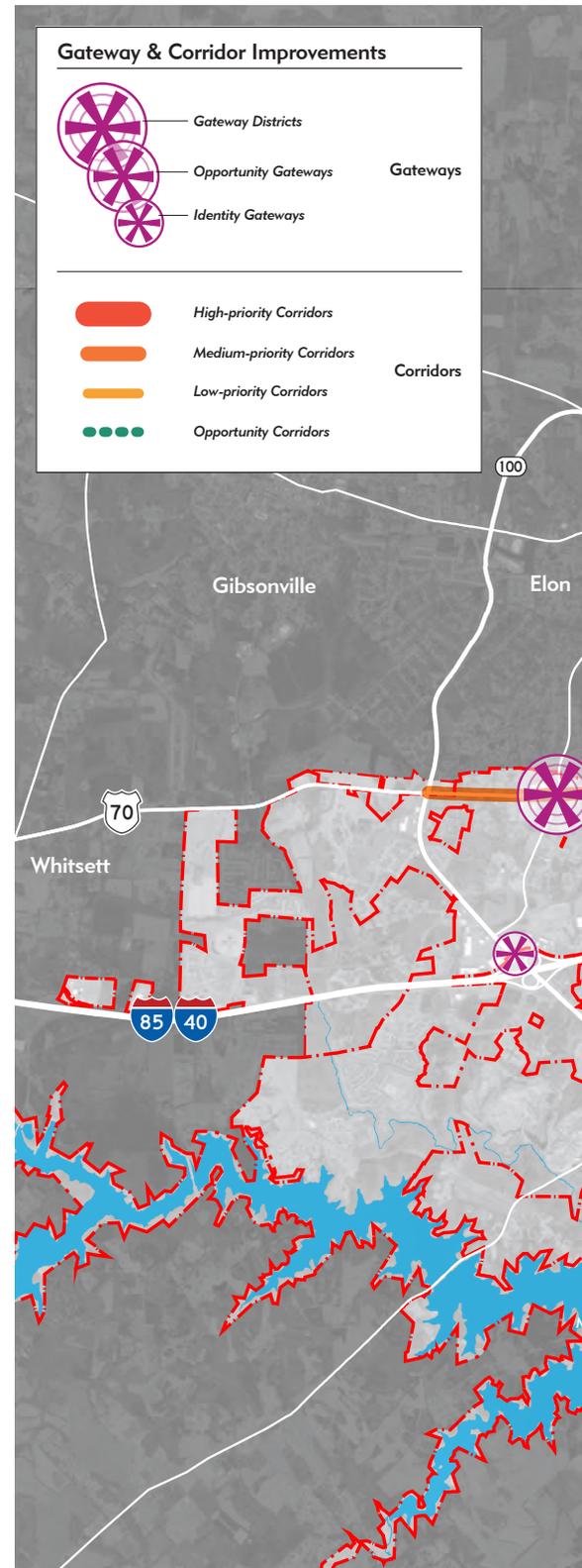
Few physical features have as great an impact of the perception of a city's identity as the gateways that mark its significant entrance points and the corridors that lead you from the gateways into and through the city.

### GATEWAYS

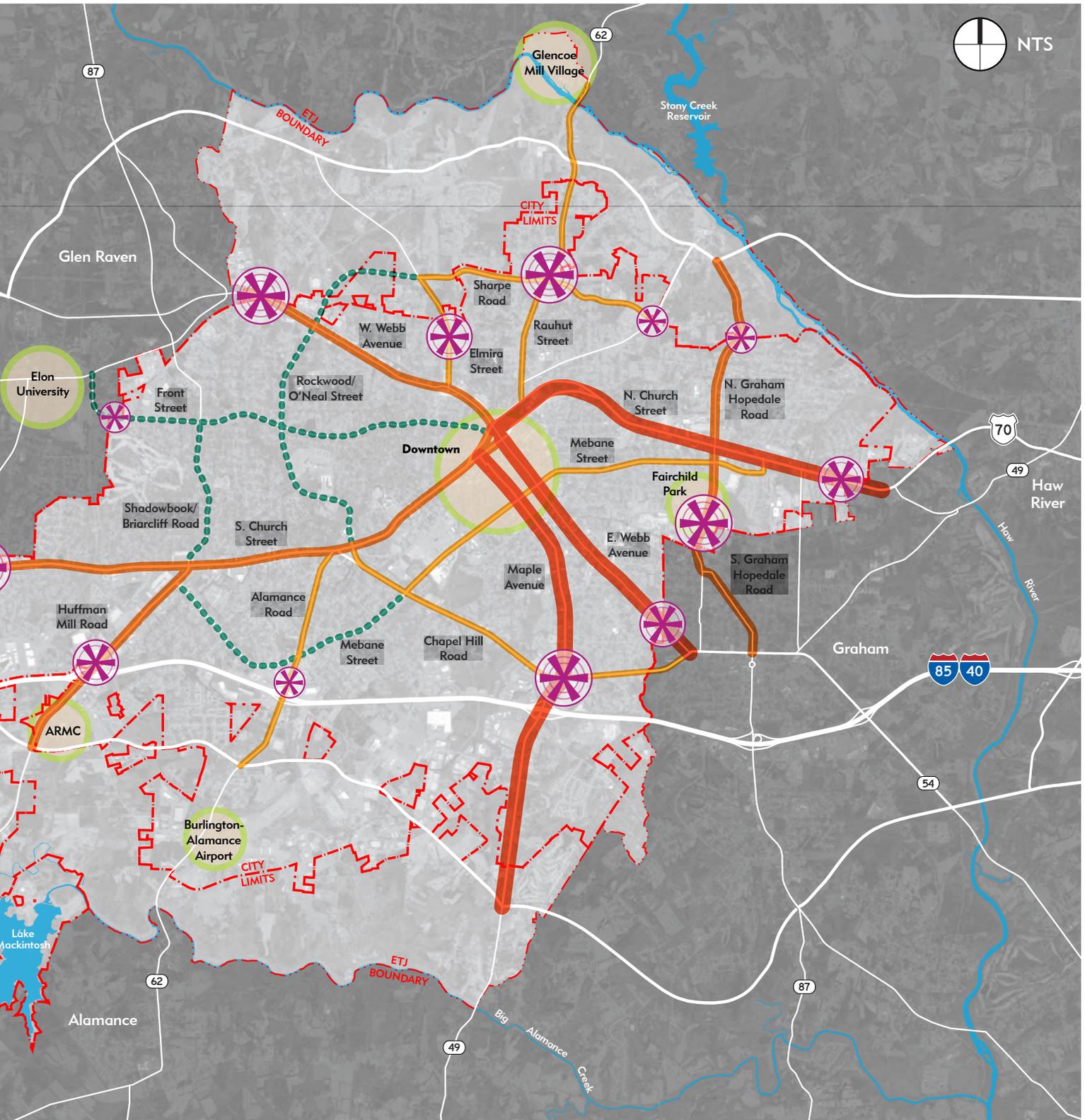
Interstate 40/85 has been a mixed blessing to Burlington—it is simultaneously one of the City's greatest regional economic assets and yet one of its biggest aesthetic detractors. The type of development most readily attracted to Interstate highway exits—auto-centric, generic, placeless—undermines the potential benefit of these ready-made, high-impact gateways. City staff, Steering Committee members, and the wider community of Burlington all identified the Interstate highway exits into Burlington as the most significant—and most potentially detrimental—points of entry into the City. In particular, the Maple Avenue exit, which current highway signage indicates is the preferred route to Downtown from the east, was regarded as the least preferable gateway to represent the character of Burlington. Unattractive and dingy buildings, traffic congestion, a disorienting intersection geometry, and wide expanses of surface parking combine to create a hostile environment for visitors entering the City. The Huffman Mill Road exit is also cited as giving the City a negative impression to visitors. The University Drive gateway is, in contrast, considered a much more positive entry point to the City because of its relatively fresh retail environment and new roadways.

Many other gateways exist on major routes leading into the City, and some are notable for a very distinct landmark or environmental transition. The gateway on West Webb Avenue from Elon is one such example—the railroad bridge over West Webb Avenue coincides with the City limits and a significant grade change so that a visitor “arrives” in Burlington after experiencing part of its historic, railroad-dominated heritage. The railroad serves as a similar but less emphatic threshold at Front Street from Elon and Graham Hopedale Road from Graham. Haw River marks a major transition into the City from the east on North Church Street, especially because the land around the US 70 bridge into the town of Haw River remains largely undeveloped up to the City limits. The gateway on South Church Street on the western edge of the City lacks the major threshold of a river, but development intensity leading up to the intersection with Williamson Avenue changes quite abruptly, signifying a point of arrival.

Burlington's other gateways are less conspicuous, particularly those from the north and from Graham. The urbanized areas of Burlington and Graham are contiguous, and the boundary between the communities along a number of minor streets is often imperceptible. There is an opportunity, however, to formalize a gateway at the East Webb Avenue border between the two cities so there is a distinct transition from one city to the other on a major route. To the north of the City limits, there is little acknowledgement of Burlington's boundary—the sparse



Proposed Gateways and Corridor Improvements



Gateway Priority Matrix	University Drive @ I-40	Huffman Mill Road @ I-40	Alamance Road @ I-40	Maple Avenue @ I-40	East Webb Avenue @ border	S. Graham Hopedale Road @ border	North Church Street @ border	N. Graham Hopedale Road @ border	Apple Street @ border	Rauhut Street @ Sharpe Road	Elmira Street @ Elm Street	West Webb Avenue @ border/Glen Raven Rd	Front Street @ Saddle Club Road	South Church Street @ Williamson Ave
Gateway Type	Identity	Oppt'y	Identity	District	Oppt'y	District	Oppt'y	Identity	Identity	District	Oppt'y	District	Identity	District
Priority Level	Low	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High
Redevelopment Potential	Devel- oping	Limited	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Not advised	Not advised	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not advised	Yes

Refer to Burlington Gateway Strategy profile on page 31 for additional information on Gateway Types and associated potential improvements.

suburban nature of development inside the City and outside in Burlington’s Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction is seamless.

All of these gateways into the City would benefit from some level of aesthetic and functional improvement. The profile on page 30 describes design and wayfinding recommendations and another on page 31 describes a three-tier strategy for public investment in the gateways.



East Webb Avenue (top) and North Church Street (above) are two of Burlington’s most challenged corridors

### CHALLENGED CORRIDORS

There is a direct relationship between the character of the City’s gateways and the corridors that connect them to other areas of the City. “Challenged” corridors are those that the public has identified as projecting a negative character of the City, either due to the type, character, or age of development along the corridor, the design of signage, the condition of the roadway, the lack of public realm amenities, or some combination thereof. Community feedback identified the City’s most challenged corridors—those that require the most immediate attention—as follows:

- Maple Avenue: The negative perception of this corridor goes hand-in-hand with its principal gateway at the Interstate. Where not plagued by the aesthetic chaos of overhead utilities and huge commercial signage, the roadway is a bleak and uninviting entryway to Downtown.
- North Church Street: US Route 70 heading east of Downtown best underscores the difficulties Burlington has with aging commercial and industrial land uses along this auto-dominated strip.
- East Webb Avenue: In many ways, East Webb Avenue is the North Church

Street of an earlier generation—narrower, with smaller and less intense development, but still projecting a bleak image of the neighborhood.

While still challenged, these corridors warrant improvement in the longer term:

- West Webb Avenue: this corridor has radical differences in character from Downtown to the border of Elon.
- South Church Street: its development is more recent than North Church Street, but it exhibits many of the hallmarks of imminent disinvestment, including low-rent retail.
- Huffman Mill Road: this corridor is the quintessential suburban commercial strip.
- Graham Hopedale Road: a primary route across the eastern neighborhoods of Burlington, this corridor is marked by a number of redevelopment opportunities that can dramatically improve the character of the corridor.

Farther on the horizon, a number of corridors should be considered for improvements, including Elmira Street, Rauhut Street, Sharpe Road, Alamance Road, Chapel Hill Road, and Mebane Street.

The most important next step for improving the high-priority corridors is the commencement of Corridor Planning, which will assess the current situation of each specific corridor, identify redevelopment opportunities and potential public realm investments, and engage local citizens in envisioning what each individual corridor can contribute to the City as a whole.

## OPPORTUNITY CORRIDORS

Opportunity corridors are connections through the community that are generally underutilized or have not been considered as significant contributors to the City's character, but have great potential to serve in a positive role if design standards can be employed and enforced. As NCDOT projects are executed over the coming decade, it is important for the City to advocate for improved multi-modal design standards. Community input has indicated a number of Burlington corridors that should be considered in this way, including:

- South Mebane Street
- West Front Street
- Shadowbrook Drive and Briarcliff Road
- Rockwood Avenue and O'Neal Streets



**Huffman Mill Road still has economic vitality and is therefore a lower priority corridor**



**Rauhut Street needs to be considered for improvements on the longer-term horizon**



**Front Street is an attractive corridor with great potential for multi-modal connection to Elon University**

# Profile: Gateways & Wayfinding

This profile explores opportunities to enhance entrances into Burlington. It is important such an effort takes into account both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as the perspective of visitors and residents. As such, the scale of these elements should relate to the scale and speed of traffic, as well as the character of the surrounding context. The design and location of gateway and wayfinding elements should reflect the unique aspects of Burlington and concisely inform and guide motorists and pedestrians to the numerous attractions throughout the community.

## Gateway Considerations

Gateway features can delineate and announce one's arrival into a region, city, neighborhood, or unique public place. Community gateways can not only shape one's first impression of Burlington, but can also reflect and strengthen the unique features and values of the community. Gateways are simply a means to distinguish or differentiate one area from another through distinct changes in the urban setting. Gateway features can vary in scale or use, and can take the form of a signature building, "Welcome" signage, a prominent view from along the corridor, or simply unique street lighting, landscaping, or other streetscape enhancements along a transportation corridor. The thoughtful creation and placement of public art could also be an integral part of any gateway experience. It can include sculpture, murals, structural design, and can also be found in signage design, lighting, streetscape furniture, or other public infrastructure. Unique material color and textures can also be incorporated.

The use of welcome signs is probably one of the most common ways to identify a community gateway. There are many innovative ways to create signs so that they can serve as public art and be reflective of the area. Landscape treatments along a roadway, located at intersections, or within medians or roundabouts can be used to designate special areas. Landscaping may also be used to enhance and frame views, as well as screen unsightly or unwanted areas. Gateway features can be a combination of the previously described elements.

Some communities choose to have a singular element repeated at every gateway, and others choose elements that reflect the character of each individual gateway. One effective way to embrace Burlington's unique identity is to partner with local artists in creating special gateway features to define and celebrate the City.

## Wayfinding Considerations

*Wayfinding* includes all of the ways in which people orient themselves and navigate through space. Throughout the nation, communities recognize the importance of creating an urban setting that is "user-friendly" and easily accessible for residents and visitors alike. One effective method of doing this is by implementing a wayfinding system.

## Wayfinding Signage Best Practices

- Provide a minimum amount of information on a sign.
- Any mapping included on the sign should be a simplified version of the actual city map.
- Present information logically.
- Use fonts and graphic elements that are easy to read. Bold colors and simple text are encouraged.
- Place so that the view of the sign is not obstructed by other elements.
- Be sure that no matter where signs are mounted, they have font sizes and information that are appropriate to the mounting height. Wayfinding signage must be designed and installed with an understanding of where the user will be receiving the information (i.e., from the car or on foot).
- Signage should be located ahead of where turns need to be made.
- The overall system must be cohesive.
- It is important to have the system created by a designer well experienced in the creation of systems.



# Profile: Burlington Gateway Strategy

Different gateways around the City warrant different levels of public and private investment to help them create a positive entrance into the City. This Plan recommends a three-tier approach to investment.

## Identity Gateways

These gateways would have minimal investment—enough to welcome visitors to the City, orient them, and provide a positive aesthetic experience. This could include iconic signage, wayfinding, and seasonal landscape design within roadway medians and islands at major intersections.

## Opportunity Gateways

These gateways would add additional enhancements within the public right-of-way, including streetscape redesign, transit stops, and pedestrian safety improvements. Roadway reconfiguration and development guidelines may also be appropriate.

## Gateway Districts

These gateways anticipate a greater level of public investment to leverage private investment. A small area plan or redevelopment plan with design guidelines would set the groundwork for more ambitious redevelopment that could include the design elements in other gateway types, but would also suggest infrastructure enhancements. The redevelopment district itself would serve as a new public face of the City to visitors.



*Iconic signage and landscape design within the right-of-way of an Identity Gateway*



*Roadway reconfiguration and streetscape program in an Opportunity Gateway*



*New district-wide redevelopment with public investment leveraging private development in a Gateway District*

# Goals & Recommendations

## Goal 01:

Celebrate Burlington’s unique history and local character.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Encourage the preservation and continued use of historic buildings, districts, landmarks, and landscapes.

---

Locally list nationally-recognized historic districts and landmarks to give the Historic Preservation Commission oversight in guiding redevelopment and rehabilitation. Research the advantages of locally listing the Downtown Burlington Historic District.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Support the historic rehabilitation efforts of private property owners.

---

Provide incentives such as reduced permit fees, creating a façade grant program, coordinating infrastructure improvements with planned rehabilitations, and coordinating with local agencies and organization’s to further enhance the viability of efforts.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Coordinate and support branding and promotional efforts for the City and its distinct districts, particularly Downtown.

---

The City should work with the BDC and active neighborhood groups to develop, promote, and mutually support a consistent brand message, with complementary themes, concepts and graphics. The City’s industrial and railroad history could be a theme of the new brand—Burlington was formerly one of the major textile manufacturing cities in the southeast, and places such as the Glencoe Mill Village and Downtown are some of the most popular local attractions.

Burlington can find direction for future growth and vibrancy by embracing the character of the past built environment and meshing it with the new. (image sources: [www.cardcow.com](http://www.cardcow.com), [nchistory.web.unc.edu](http://nchistory.web.unc.edu))



**RECOMMENDATION 04**

Support local institutions that are “authentically Burlington.”

Create a “Best of Burlington” survey to distinguish the community’s favorite independent shops and restaurants, civic institutions, schools, community service groups, local celebrities, and small businesses. Publish the results in the Times News or other local media.

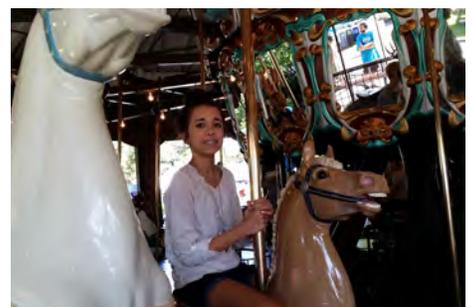
**RECOMMENDATION 05**

Promote events, festivals, pop-up markets, and activities throughout the calendar year.

Showcase the City’s character to residents and visitors alike. Continue successful formally-promoted activities like the Carousel Festival and consider additional support of the Downtown Burlington Farmers Market. Assist in promoting and coordinating new events like road races, cultural festivals, and vendor bazaars. Periodically review infrastructure and public safety needs for formal events with local stakeholders. Set the stage for self-organized events and gatherings through safe and comfortable open spaces and sidewalks.



The annual Carousel Festival in Burlington’s City Park is one of the City’s most notable community social events. These images are from Carousel Festival 2014.





**The historic railroad depot, Depot Square event lawn, Webb Avenue, and the railroad tracks all contribute to the physical and psychological gulf between Downtown and North Main Street (above). Meanwhile, the industrial sites and warehouses of the South Main Street area (below) create a distinct change in character.**



## Goal 02:

Reinforce the symbolic significance of Downtown.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Solidify a clear, compelling Downtown Burlington identity.

---

Support the continuing efforts of the Burlington Downtown Corporation in brand development, marketing, wayfinding development, and promotional campaigns. Coordinate these activities with the City's overall branding efforts.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Bring the North Main Street and South Main Street areas symbolically into the core of Downtown.

---

Address physical and symbolic barriers between Downtown and these adjacent districts through coordination of wayfinding, streetscape design, pedestrian safety enhancements, programming, and redevelopment. Use ongoing planning and urban design efforts of the BDC to knit all of Downtown together. Study the feasibility of reconnecting Main Street into the North Main area.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Formalize the preservation of Downtown's historic resources and traditional urban fabric.

---

Consider listing the Downtown Burlington Historic District as a local historic district, which will allow greater oversight of demolition, redevelopment, and rehabilitation by the Historic Preservation Commission. Expanding the district could increase funding options for preservation and revitalization efforts, façade improvements, streetscape enhancements, and other amenities. Preservation could also be accomplished through a Downtown Historic Overlay District within the forthcoming Unified Development Ordinance.

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**RECOMMENDATION 04**

Expand programming and events that bring the community together in Downtown.

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Work with the BDC to support the creation of an Art & Entertainment District that encourages performance venues, restaurants, galleries, and art studios.

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**RECOMMENDATION 05 \***

Create a focused plan for public open space in Downtown.

---

Downtown open spaces can support both informal and event-based gathering, but currently there are too few of these spaces. Coordinate a public open space strategy with a comprehensive streetscaping plan and development of greenways to assure overall connectivity to Downtown and adjacent districts.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 06**

Continue and expand the Downtown Burlington public art program.

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Task the Public Art Committee, in partnership with Burlington Downtown Corporation and Alamance County Arts Council, to look for ways to forward the program, perhaps including the development of a public art walking tour or an artist-in-residence program. Raise funds for public art through a donor recognition campaign.

*Donor Recognition:*

There are many ways to fund improvements mentioned in this Plan. Common funding sources for streetscape amenities are grants, municipal funds, corporate gifts, philanthropic donations, and fundraising programs that allow residents and business owners to leave their mark with plaques or engravings.



Selections from the Downtown public art program

# Profile: Corridor Planning

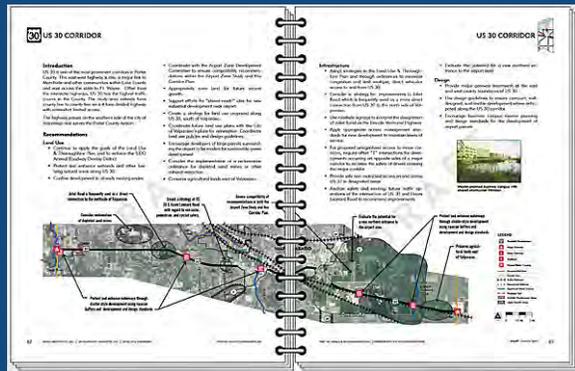
Corridor planning is a process through which a community focuses on a single transportation corridor, identifies the issues and needs of that specific corridor and its surrounding districts, and envisions its future. Corridor plans often study and offer recommendations for:

- Transportation improvements
- Transit integration opportunities
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety and amenities
- Adjacent land uses and development standards
- Redevelopment strategies
- Wayfinding signage programs
- Infrastructure development coordination

Often, longer corridors are broken up into segments that each merit their own specific strategies. North Church Street in Burlington, for example, could be divided into three or four segments based on changes

of character and issues along its length.

Corridor planning is an important next step after comprehensive planning, which only gives general recommendations for how to address challenged corridors and considerations that should be made in efforts to improve them.



# Profile: Signage Replacement Program

As Burlington prepares to update its signage standards, the City may want to consider a program to provide grant funding to businesses within Downtown and on major corridors to replace advertising signs that, due to condition or type, are no longer functional. Of particularly high priority is the replacement of existing signs that do not conform with the City's updated sign regulations with new signs that are compliant.

For example, some cities have set up a grant program to provide a match of up to 50% to replace removing and installing an approved sign for a maximum cost of \$1000.

Within the City of Burlington several priorities may be:

- Replacement of dilapidated/unsafe signage.
- Replacement of pole signs located on major

corridors with ground monument signage.

- Replacement of several advertising signs at one location with a single advertising sign.
- Replacement of wall-mounted signs on businesses located Downtown with projecting signage.
- Signs designed by a sign professional.

It is suggested the city not encourage the following for funding:

- Purchase of portable signs.
- Signs that do not conform to the City's new sign regulations or the expansion of any existing non-conforming sign.

## Goal 03:

Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Identify key gateways into Burlington which communicate the City's brand and identity along primary travel routes.

The prioritization of these gateway areas should be guided by location, exposure, and identity. Urban design and beautification enhancements at gateways may include streetscapes, landscaping, landmark signage, public art, and complementary design guidelines for adjacent development. Refer to the map on page 27 for recommended gateway locations.

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Pursue focused Corridor Plans to address redevelopment opportunities and public realm investment for challenged corridors.

The City's identified high and medium-priority challenged corridors include Maple Avenue, East and West Webb Avenue, North and South Church Street, South Graham Hopedale Road, and Huffman Mill Road.

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Develop a city-wide wayfinding signage program for gateways and major corridors.

Coordinate design of signage with wayfinding programs in and around Downtown.

### RECOMMENDATION 04

Improve sign standards for commercial areas within the City with a focus on corridor development and Downtown.

Develop corridor overlay districts in the zoning ordinance in coordination with Corridor Plans. Promote and incentivize a signage replacement program.



While some gateways into the City are already clearly defined by some natural or man-made threshold like the railroad bridge at the West Webb Avenue gateway (top), other gateway entrances are nearly imperceptible, like that on East Webb Avenue at the Graham border (above).



Private commercial signage often detracts from the aesthetic quality of Burlington's major corridors. Signage design standards need to be improved and enforcement procedures clarified.



**Urban Forestry (pictured above) sponsored by organizations such as the New Leaf Society promotes civic beautification and a positive perception of the community. (image source: [www.newleavesociety.org](http://www.newleavesociety.org))**



**Co-ops and community supported agriculture support community cohesion and a healthy lifestyle. (image above courtesy of North Park in Motion)**

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### RECOMMENDATION 05

Continue to support the activities of the New Leaf Society, Burlington Work Group, and other organizations dedicated to the City's beautification.

Continue to provide coordination assistance to active improvement and beautification organizations, and seek out leaders to found new groups across the City. Use available public information resources to promote the activities of these groups.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 06

Pursue an urban forestry program in urban and suburban residential neighborhoods.

Take the lead in educating the public about urban forestry, encouraging volunteer support, and obtaining private funding. The Community Appearance Advisory Commission—also known as the Tree & Appearance Commission—and the Alamance County Extension office can be particularly helpful in guiding this effort. Refer to the profile on the adjacent page for more information on the benefits of urban forestry.

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### RECOMMENDATION 07

Support a community garden system, urban agriculture, and activities of the local-source food community.

Identify community garden sites, particularly on public land in lower income areas, and seek out community groups, local health agencies, and nearby farmers willing to oversee and coordinate local-source, healthy food and urban agriculture efforts. Look to private businesses and local initiatives like the Company Shops Market, Downtown Burlington Farmers Market, Allied Churches of Alamance County, and Elon University's Campus Kitchen program to offer support. North Park, with its Celo Faucette Community Garden and Farm Fresh produce stand, is an excellent example of what can be accomplished through these partnerships.

# Profile: Urban Forestry

## The Benefits of an Urban Forest

Trees can be beneficial to a community, but their species, design, location, and maintenance must be carefully considered to ensure their health and vitality. For example, using continuous planting beds can be beneficial for the health of trees, and close attention should be paid to tree species and planting locations.

### Scale and Safety

Trees can bring the scale of an urban environment from an auto-oriented to a pedestrian-oriented scale. This can induce traffic calming and make an environment more safe and attractive to pedestrians. Trees can also act as a buffer between vehicles and pedestrians to further insure pedestrian safety.

### Reduced Temperatures

Trees in an urban environment can combat the effects of urban heat islands. An urban heat island is an area of higher temperature resulting from solar radiation absorbed and emitted by materials in the built environment. Trees and other plants absorb the radiation and shade these materials, resulting in lower temperatures. Water evaporation occurring from trees and other plants can also cause lower temperatures.

### Character and Beauty

Trees can be used to define a space physically, to enhance the character of an area, to create buffers for sound, odor, and pollution, to create screens from undesirable views, and to add beauty through the addition of natural elements. Trees can also add color to an environment and soften harsh building lines.

### Storm Water and Pollution

Trees in an urban setting can reduce stormwater collected by storm sewers. A tree's roots provide extra channels into the ground so stormwater can be more easily absorbed. Trees can also reduce air pollution through absorbing polluted air and through lowering

air temperatures which can lower the harmful effects of some pollutants.

### Environment and Habitat

Trees located in an urban environment can reduce energy consumption by providing shade during the summer and blocking winds during the winter (and therefore creating less of a need for artificial heating and cooling). This also causes a reduction in the use of natural resources needed to produce electricity used for climate control, as well as the pollution created from converting fossil fuels into electricity. Plant and trees also provide habitats for urban wildlife.

### The 10-20-30 Rule

This general rule for urban tree planting includes:

- Plant no more than 10 percent of any species.
- Plant no more than 20 percent of any genus.
- Plant no more than 30 percent of any family.

This rule helps to prevent monocultures. When too many of one tree type are planted in proximity to each other, a disease or aggressive pest in one can quickly spread to all others, sometimes necessitating their removal and subsequent lack of trees in a previously landscaped area. By reducing the potential for a monoculture of planted trees, it will be easier to plan for their replacement, should the need occur.





# Livability 03



## First Focus

So much of livability in a city—health, housing security, education, and a sense of community—depends on the success of its neighborhoods. It is here that citizens live, learn, shop, play, and often work, too. Pursue early successes to create positive momentum in neighborhoods by identifying catalyst sites for City-coordinated cleanup efforts.

# Livability

## WHAT IS LIVABILITY?

Livability promotes a cohesive, connected community where people know their neighbors, support local businesses, and embrace pride in their community. A livable community promotes civic engagement and opportunities for all ages to achieve success and to make safe, sustainable choices for a variety of elements that include housing, transportation, education, cultural diversity and enrichment, and recreation. The City of Burlington seeks to promote livability in order to enhance quality of life factors that will help make Burlington a choice community.

# Health & Wellness

## OVERVIEW

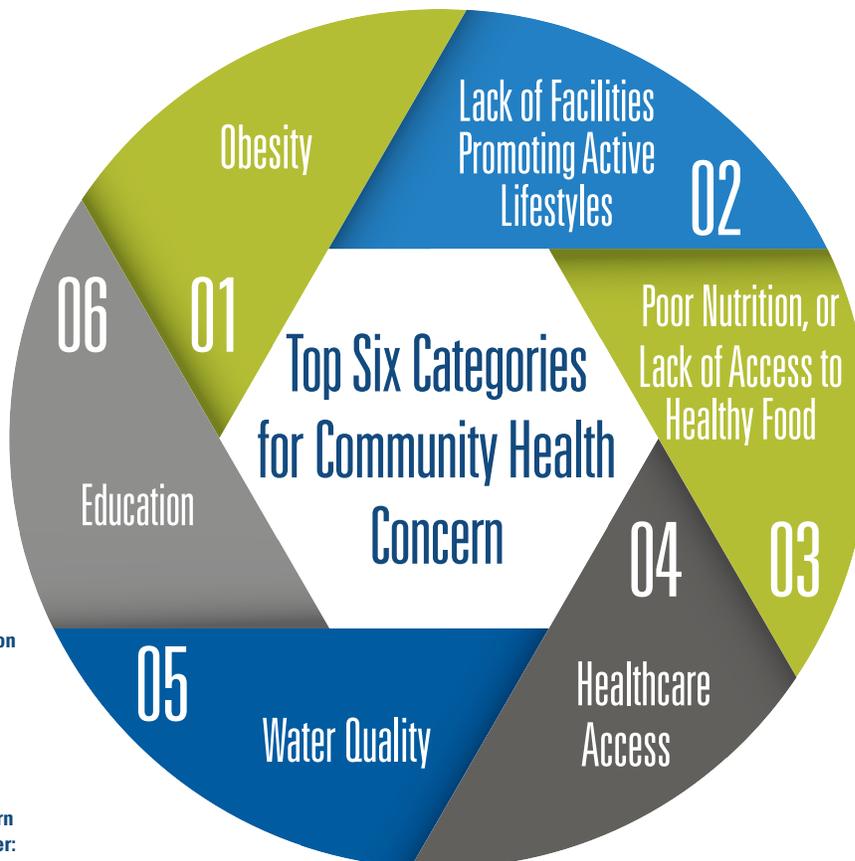
In 2011, regional and local partners conducted an Alamance County Community Assessment—a snapshot of the health and well-being of the citizens of Alamance County. The Community Assessment identified four priority health issues and four priority social issues in Alamance County:



	Alamance County	North Carolina	Top U.S. Performers
<b>HEALTH INDICATORS</b>			
Adult Smoking	24%	20%	14%
Adult Obesity	34%	29%	25%
Food Environment Index	6.5	8.7	6.9
Limited Access to Healthy Food	11%	7%	n/a
Physical Inactivity	27%	25%	21%
Access to Exercise Opportunities	77%	65%	85%
Primary Care Physicians	1,825 : 1	1,462 : 1	1,051 : 1
Dentists	2,260 : 1	2,075 : 1	1,439 : 1
Mental Health Providers	1,307 : 1	715 : 1	536 : 1
Other Primary Care Providers	2,168 : 1	1,331 : 1	n/a
Uninsured	21%	19%	11%

Source: www.countyhealthrankings.org, 2014

While Alamance County is in the top half of the state’s counties for public health, there are still a number of health indicators for which Alamance underperforms the state average. The data for these indicators is summarized above.



The Destination Burlington community input echoed a number of the concerns highlighted by the Alamance County Community Assessment. The top six categories of community health concern were, in descending order:

“Food Deserts” are areas in which there are a lack of stores selling healthy food, a lack of available access via walking and public transportation versus personal vehicles, and a lack of affordability of food in comparison to local income levels.

#### **OBESITY, FOOD ACCESS, AND NUTRITION**

Taken together, issues of obesity, food availability, and nutrition were by far the most pressing health concerns of the community. More than a quarter of survey respondents indicated that obesity was the most significant community health concern in Burlington. This is supported by both the 2011 Alamance County Community Assessment and the health indicators described earlier.

The community’s perception of the existence of food deserts in Burlington is consistent with United States Department of Agriculture analysis—significant areas in the central, eastern, northern, and southern parts of the City do not have adequate access to healthy food. Community Survey respondents also made a point to note the prevalence of fast food establishments in the community. Chronic health issues can result from an imbalance of access between supermarkets and fast food.

## Case Study: Solving the Urban Grocery Store Gap

The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) is a non-profit financing institution that created the Fresh Food Financing Initiative, an innovative new capitalization program to increase the number of supermarkets or other grocery stores in underserved communities across Pennsylvania. This statewide program meets the financing needs of supermarket operators that plan to operate in underserved communities where infrastructure costs and credit needs cannot be filled solely by conventional financial institutions. Under this program, TRF provides pre-development grants and loans, land acquisition financing, equipment financing, capital grants for project funding gaps and construction and permanent finance. TRF also provides technical assistance and workforce services to its borrowers and grantees through this initiative.

By providing underserved people access to fresh food retailers with greater variety, the initiative will give these communities the choice of a more nutritionally balanced diet. The lower food costs will also enable underserved persons living on fixed budgets to purchase higher quality foods. Supermarkets and other grocery stores will also make valuable contributions to the community by creating jobs and revitalizing neighborhoods.

Grocery stores that are eligible for this program (convenience stores do not qualify) must be serving low or moderate income census tracts, areas with below average supermarket densities, or areas with significant limitations to transportation access.

Several grant types exist including Pre-development Grants, Capital Grants, Soft Costs or Other Preopening Grants, and Construction Grants, many of which are up to \$250,000 per project.

Case studies of the program include various project sizes from small produce markets to large supermarkets. Some of the uses for awarded finances include construction, job training, renderings of proposed redevelopment in order to attract a grocery tenant; renovations, purchase of more efficient equipment such as energy-efficient lighting and refrigerators that save money over time, more space for sales, or the transition from selling only non-perishables to also providing fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meat.

*Resource: Fresh Food Financing Initiative Program Guidelines*  
<http://www.thefoodtrust.org>

*Resource: “Pennsylvania Seeds a New Crop of Local Grocery Stores,”*  
*The Hometown Advantage News. Mitchell, Stacy. Sep. 12, 2008.*  
[http://www.newrules.org/retail/news\\_slug.php?slugid=374](http://www.newrules.org/retail/news_slug.php?slugid=374)

# Profile: Starting a Farmers' Market in 3 Steps

The past few years have seen a resurgence in demand for high-quality, locally-grown produce. Because of the rising demand, farmers' markets have become increasingly popular throughout the United States. Farmers' markets give North Carolina farmers greater access to venues to market their goods. As reported in a Triangle Business Journal article by Dawn Wallace, North Carolina is among the top states when it comes to the growth of farmers markets. The USDA has launched a Farmers Market Directory, and North Carolina ranks No. 7 in growth, with 240 farmers markets. That's up from 182 in 2010—and from 86 in 2004. For a directory of farmer's markets in North Carolina, go to <http://www.ncfarmfresh.com/farmmarkets.asp>. What follows is a brief guide that outlines the main steps needed to start a successful farmers' market.

## Step 1: Coming Up with a Business Plan

Farmers' markets require a good deal of planning and organization. The first step in establishing a farmers' market is to assemble a group of stakeholders to set goals and priorities, create by-laws and operating rules, and draft a mission statement. In short, any successful farmers' market needs a business plan.

Most farmers' markets also have a market manager, someone who sees to the day-to-day (or week-to-week) operations of the farmers' market, recruits and coordinates vendors, handles customer complaints, enforces market rules, etc. The details of the manager's responsibilities and how he or she is selected should be specified in the by-laws.

## Step 2: Attracting Vendors

Two things are necessary for a farmers' market to be viable: a regular flow of customers to the market and a consistent supply of producers and vendors who offer a variety of different products. One recent study suggests that at least 100 consistent customers and a half-dozen vendors are needed to justify a farmers' market. The same study also finds that having reliable, high-quality vendors is key to attracting the customers necessary to make the market a success.

Market managers can find vendors in a number of ways. They can visit existing farmers' markets and talk to the vendors there. In many cases, the vendors may be interested in—or know someone else who is interested in—working more market days and at other markets. Managers can also attempt to contact farmers in their area directly (the website The New Farm Locator ([http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/farm\\_locator](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/farm_locator)), for example, allows you to search for farmers in your area. Other strategies include putting ads in local newspapers



and contacting representatives from local agricultural associations who may know farmers interested in becoming vendors at a farmers' market.

## Step 3: Marketing the Market

Promotion is essential to a market's success. Potential customers need to know the time and the location of the market, and they need to be given incentive to choose the farmers' market goods over alternatives (such as store-bought produce) that might be less expensive and more convenient. The marketing for a farmers' market need not be expensive or elaborate. Often, good signage and word-of-mouth advertising can be as effective as expensive media advertising. Either way, successful farmers' markets are always markets that have been promoted well.

*Resource: "USDA: North Carolina leading food hub movement," Triangle Business Journal, Dawn Wallace, April 11, 2014. <http://www.bizjournals.com/triangle/blog/2014/04/usda-north-carolina-leading-food-hub-movement.html>*

*Resource: "How to Start a Farmers Market," Velma Lakins, May 2, 2007. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3022129>*

### ACTIVE LIVING

Community Survey participants ranked a lack of fitness facilities and opportunities as the second most pressing community health issue in Burlington. Moreover, Alamance County under-performs the State in terms of adult physical inactivity. The issue is not simply about formal recreational opportunities—running tracks, sports fields, and recreation centers. Community input indicated that the City’s sidewalk and bicycle path networks are not sufficiently connected to encourage their use as recreational and exercise opportunities.

General perceptions of the safety of a neighborhood’s playgrounds, schoolyards, and residential streets have an effect on active living. Community input underscored that some areas of town are perceived as unsafe and therefore residents are less likely to recreate outdoors despite being near some significant and appreciated public parks.

Education is key when it comes to healthy lifestyles. The Alamance-Burlington School System has a long-standing School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) that guides the school system on maintaining the health of students. The school system mandates a 30-minute recess period for grades K-8 exclusive of physical education classes and promotes the integration of physical activity across the curricula.



Events such as Active City Streets promote active living and bring attention to community causes. (image source: [www.burlingtonnc.gov](http://www.burlingtonnc.gov))

**HEALTHCARE ACCESS**

Burlington is well-served by the Alamance Regional Medical Center and other nearby major medical centers which are described in the table below.

There are swaths of Burlington that lack ready access to day-to-day health services including clinics, urgent care centers, and pharmacies. Without an existing fixed-route transit service or a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle network, citizens without cars are unable to reach the health services that exist outside of their neighborhoods. Both anecdotal and statistical evidence also suggest the scarcity of medical professionals—and particularly scarcity of those professionals in certain parts of the City.

The affordability of health insurance—uninsured care, as well, where it is available—is another major hurdle for access to healthcare. While the Affordable Care Act is attempting to address this issue on the federal and state levels, the community still sees large gaps between income and the cost of healthcare. Of the 100 counties in North Carolina, Alamance County ranks as the 32nd most uninsured population in the state and is notably worse than both its urban neighbors of Guilford and Durham Counties and its rural neighbors of Caswell and Chatham Counties.



The Alamance Regional Medical Center offers state of the art care to persons in the Burlington region.

**Regional Acute Care Hospital Facilities**

Hospital	County	City	Staffed Beds	Emergency Services
Alamance Regional Medical Center	Alamance	Burlington	238	Yes
Moses H. Cone Memorial	Guilford	Greensboro	1,232	Yes
Duke University Hospital	Durham	Durham	1,019	Yes
UNC Hospital	Orange	Chapel Hill	609	Yes
Durham VA Medical Center	Durham	Durham	469	Yes
Durham Regional Hospital	Durham	Durham	391	Yes

Source: Hospitals-Data.com, RKG Associates 2014

### AGING

As the Baby Boomer demographic continues to age over the next 10-15 years, services, housing, and access will be rising concerns for seniors in the community. By 2025, one in four drivers in Burlington will be age 65 or older and that means as the community ages, fewer people will be able to move about as they are accustomed. Fortunately for the residents of Burlington, the City has started down the path of providing quality bus transportation for the community. This will provide options for those who may no longer be able to drive. Burlington should strive to continue to identify and provide resources that will enable seniors to be active and remain in their homes and community as long as possible. The City of Burlington is currently served by all tiers of senior living facilities, including age-restricted and independent living housing communities, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and memory care facilities. The trend towards aging in place, however, will require a different set of solutions including home healthcare and meal and transit assistance.

The Burlington Housing Authority also owns, manages, and maintains two public housing communities dedicated to elderly residents and manages another 40-unit complex intended for elderly and disabled residents. The geographic distribution of nursing homes in the City follows the same general pattern as other healthcare facilities, making access from many neighborhoods an issue. The trend towards aging in place means less people will be taking advantage of traditional options for seniors as they age. Another trend that is likely to influence Burlington is the fact that as the Baby Boomers age, many are downsizing into typically one-story, smaller homes. This trend is encouraging as many larger, two-story single family houses (which 79% of Baby Boomers call home) are not suitable to a community that wants to promote aging in place and multi-generational neighborhoods.



**Aging Baby Boomers are becoming attracted to walkable, active neighborhoods. Places such as Downtown provide those compact, vibrant, community spaces that retirees are looking for.**

# Profile: Aging in Place

## Five Key Components for Aging in Place

“Aging in Place” is simply a matter of preserving the ability for people to remain in their home or neighborhood as long as possible as they age.

### 1. CHOICE:

Providing both healthcare and housing options that meet the diverse needs of individuals as they move through the later third of their lives. Options should be affordable along the income spectrum so all citizens and/or caregivers are able to choose from a range of alternatives.

### 2. FLEXIBILITY:

Offering a range of services that can be applied in a variety of contexts. Flexibility requires that levels of health and housing supports be adjustable whether an individual lives in a single family home, rents a privately or publicly managed apartment or resides in an assisted living facility. Because each individual will have his or her own concerns and needs, flexible services will allow individuals to tailor different health and housing services to their own situations.

### 3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

Capitalizing on the collective purchasing power of an organized community of older adults. The growing older adult population presents not only challenges but opportunities. New economies of scale exist as the percentage of older adults in a community grows, presenting new opportunities for affordable service delivery.



### 4. MIXED GENERATIONS:

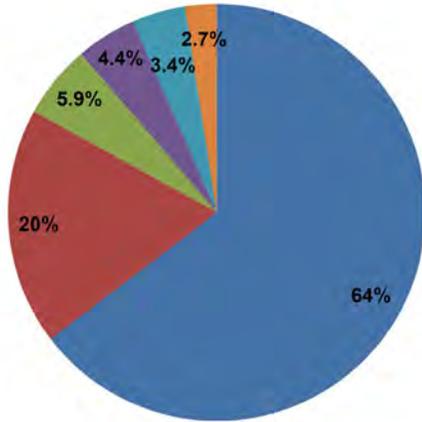
Maintaining mixed-generation communities in order to maximize older adults' capacity for self-help and community contribution. There are valuable links to be made between the needs and skills of different age groups. Young mothers often need child care while older adults need transportation to the doctor or store. Teenagers need after-school employment while older adults need help with small chores around the house.

### 5. SMART GROWTH:

Designing communities that are more accessible and livable. While smart growth benefits all residents, for many older adults good community design is a fundamental necessity, not just an amenity. Aging in Place supports older adults in their homes and makes it possible for them to get out and into the community.

*Resource: Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments, AARP Publication, 2014.*

## Burlington Housing Inventory



- **Single Family Detached:**  
15,800
- **Apartments/Condos:**  
4,722
- **Triplexes/Quads:**  
1,442
- **Duplexes:**  
1,090
- **Mobile Homes:**  
843
- **Townhouses:**

Source: US Census 2009-2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates

# Housing and Neighborhoods

## OVERVIEW

As Burlington seeks to be a choice community within the Carolina Corridor region housing availability, quality, and preferences are a large factor in attracting new residents as well as retaining existing residents. Burlington fortunately has a wide variety of housing options (illustrated left) and as it looks to the future availability of housing, that variety will only gain in importance. In 2013, Burlington’s housing inventory comprised approximately 24,560 total dwelling units with an average household size of 2.37 persons. Of those units approximately 56.6% are owner-occupied and 43.4% are rental-occupied, and 11.5% are vacant. Burlington’s proportion of renter occupied housing is high, compared to 33.6% in the state overall. Burlington’s rental rate is not alarmingly high, particularly for an urban/suburban environment. Approximately 30% of its housing inventory could be generally classified as purpose-built for rental (apartments, quads, triplexes and duplexes), leaving approximately 2,200 single family detached dwellings as rentals.

## HOUSING VALUE

Burlington’s median owner-occupied home value is currently sitting at \$126,100, which is much lower than the Alamance County average (\$137,000) and the national average of \$176,700. Given the growth pressure within the Carolina Corridor region the largely affordable housing stock within the City of Burlington is an attractive option for all populations.

## HOUSING BY YEAR BUILT

Burlington’s housing inventory has developed at a remarkably steady rate since 1960, some of which was a result of annexation. With the exception of the decade of the 1980s, the city has added between 3,000 and 3,700 new units each decade. From 2000 to 2013, 4,993 new housing units were added to the inventory. The most prolific decade for residential construction was the 1950s, when 4,793 new units were added, followed by the 2000s. What this means is most of the housing that was developed during this “boom” follows the owner-occupied suburban residential typology which is characterized by large homes with attached garages and large lots in residential subdivisions. While this housing typology continues to be extremely popular, changes in housing preferences suggest that Burlington may want to think ahead to ensure sufficient housing choices remain outside of this realm. These include a larger focus on the core, walkable neighborhoods and Downtown as a choice neighborhood.

**HOUSING TURNOVER**

The thirteen years from 2000 through 2013 was not only notable for the 4,993 new residential units added to Burlington’s inventory, but the number of units in the marketplace that turned over as well. In the three decades preceding the 1990s, there were between 1,300 and 1,600 move-ins per decade. In the 1990s, there were over 3,000 move-ins, and in the 2000s, there were over 10,000 move-ins. Data since 2010 suggests a continuation of this accelerated trend. This activity was concurrent with the major shifts in employment from the manufacturing, company management and construction sectors into the health care and service sectors that now dominate the local economy. It can be reasonably assumed that a great many workers followed jobs both out of and into the Burlington MSA during this period. This information is also consistent with building permits pulled during this period which is a result of the housing boom we saw in the 2000s. Another round of housing turnover is expected as Baby Boomers retire and consider other options (aging in place, “downtownsizing,” or relocating). Since Burlington has much single-family owner-occupied housing, special attention should be paid to the inventory of existing housing stock over the coming years to ensure existing supply is adequate, new housing doesn’t outpace existing vacant housing supply, and to encourage infill housing within the core and Downtown in order to support revitalization from the heart.

**HOUSING PREFERENCES**

As Baby Boomers reflect on and make retirement housing choices and as Millennials are looking for perhaps their first adult housing options, they both are looking towards walkable neighborhoods (such as Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods) with compact housing options, small yards or shared open space, and a sense of community. The burden and expense of maintaining a large suburban home with a lawn seems increasingly undesirable and impractical for Baby Boomers and Millennials alike who feel simply that they have “been there and done that.” A small house or apartment with comfortable space to live, work, and play that is connected and part of a greater community is trending amongst these two groups (the two largest growth groups in the community). As Burlington looks to redefine its core neighborhoods and fully realize Downtown’s potential, the housing preferences of Baby Boomers and Millennials are of the utmost importance. Furthermore, Burlington can employ strategies to embrace the revitalization of its core neighborhoods (especially Downtown and adjacent districts) in order to provide opportunities to capitalize on changing housing preferences. Burlington should also look to Elon University and Alamance Community College as resources and work to attract and retain students to the Burlington community because they will support the retention of young people within the community.

Another round of housing turnover is expected as Baby Boomers retire and consider other options (aging in place, “downtownsizing,” or relocating).

Housing Turnover (By Year)



Source: US Census 2008-2012 ACS 5-Year Estimates; RKG Associates, 2014

### HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

As single family neighborhoods transition from predominantly homeownership to higher proportions of renter occupied units, changes can occur that affect the character of the neighborhood. Renters may only perform the minimal amount of maintenance to keep the house livable, and absentee owners may not feel compelled to maintain the property to homeownership standards. If too many properties fall into disrepair on one block or within a concentrated area, blight could take hold and impact property values, creating a less stable neighborhood environment. These issues can be exacerbated when combined with low housing values and high concentrations of vacant housing.

Looking to the future, Burlington may have need to confront the declining conditions of some of its older housing stock, particularly in neighborhoods north and east of Downtown with low housing values, high proportions of rentals of detached dwellings, and high vacancy rates. The city should monitor these neighborhoods to determine whether any public intervention may be called for in the future, or if opportunities exist to bundle and redevelop a number of properties for private redevelopment. By monitoring this situation, focus neighborhoods can be identified and intervention strategies can be formulated that mitigate the impact of high concentrations of absentee ownership, vacancies, and lower valued properties.

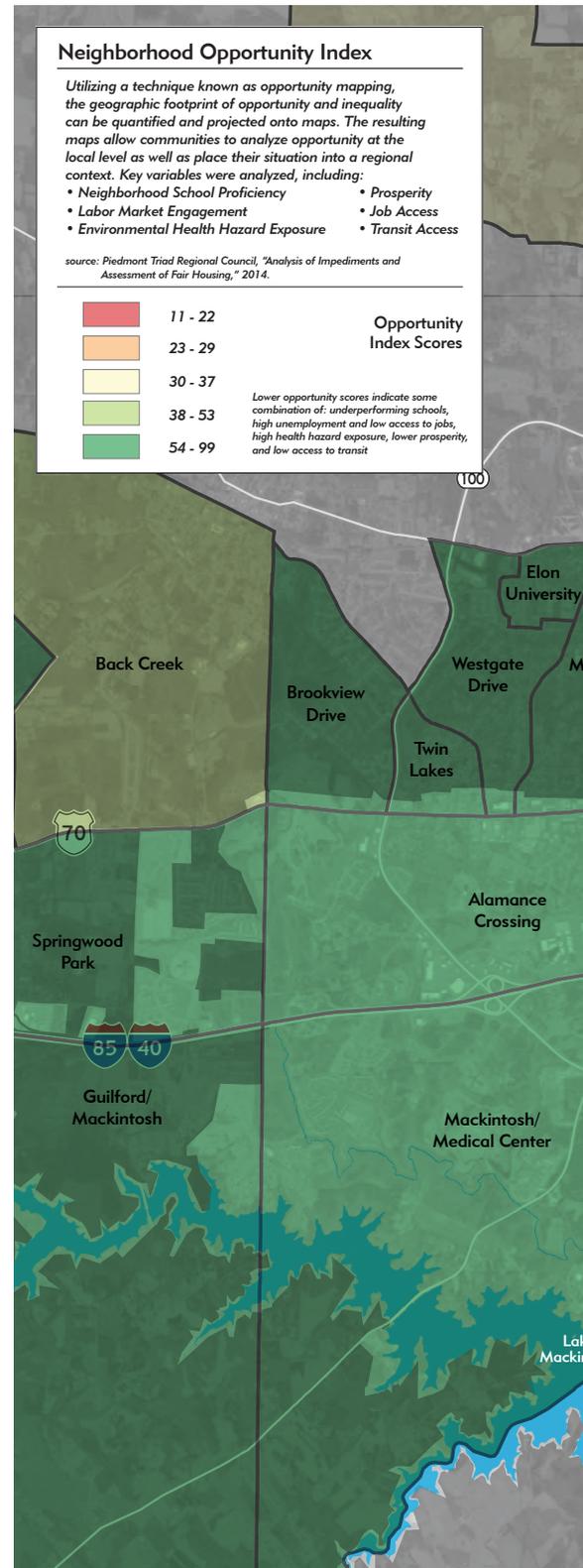
### NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY

The Opportunity Index is one way to assess disparities in opportunity that may exist amongst neighborhoods in a community. The Index is a result of the partnership of more than 300 organizations, non-profits, institutions, and businesses under the banner Opportunity Nation. A host of indicator data is analyzed to determine an area's Opportunity Score, grouped in the following categories:

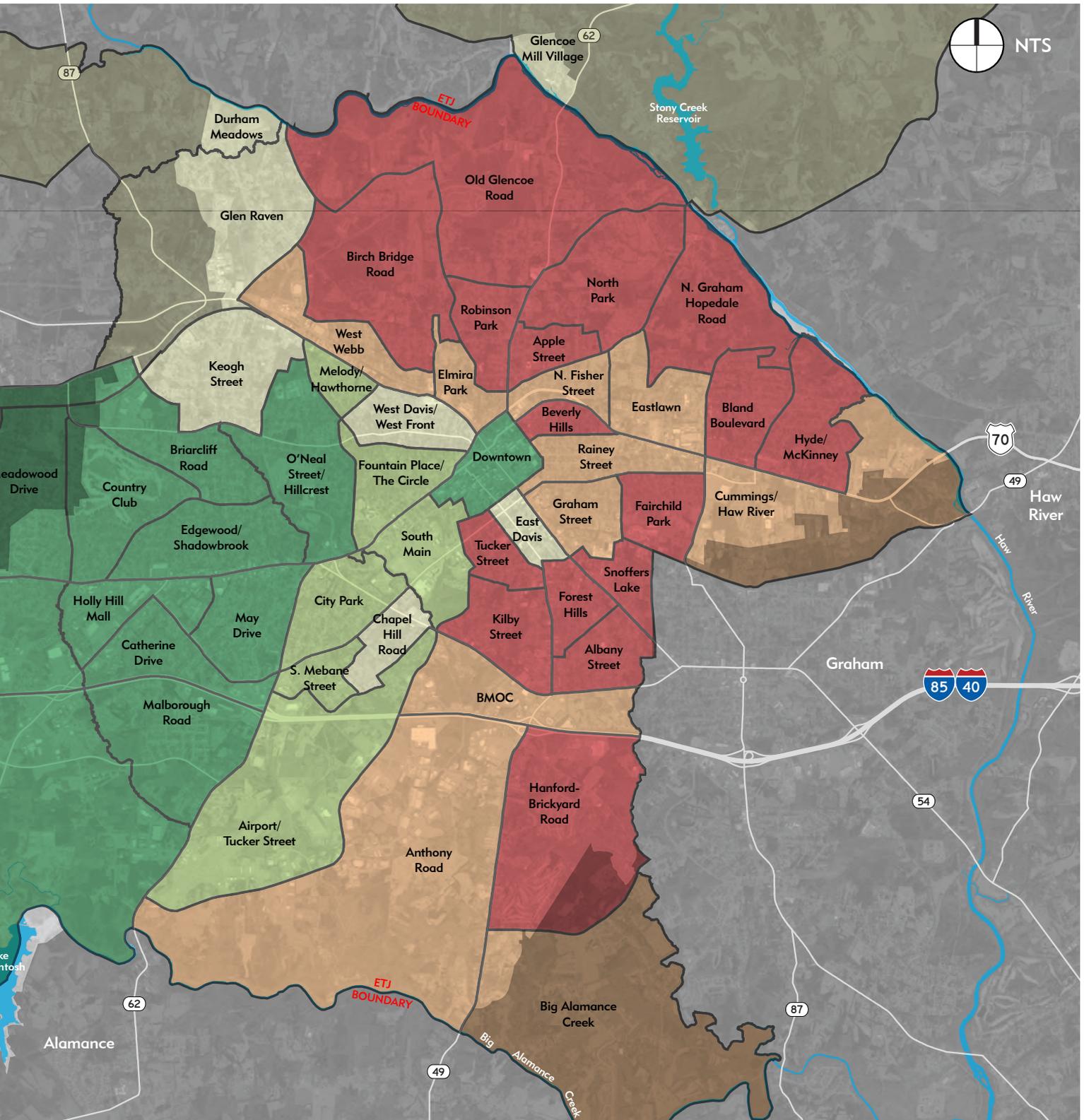
- Jobs and Local Economy
- Education
- Community Health and Civic Life

High Opportunity Scores reflect a high level of access to opportunity, which often means well-performing schools, low unemployment rates, good access to jobs and transit, high prosperity, low crime rates, and high measures of health. Low Opportunity Scores represent underperformance in many of the same measures.

As part of the Piedmont Triad Region Analysis of Impediments and Assessment of Fair Housing, a study of Burlington residents' access to opportunity was conducted on a census block scale—census blocks are roughly representative of neighborhood and district groupings. An Opportunity Map was produced from the results and has been recreated in the adjacent map. The map reveals those neighborhoods—predominantly on the eastern and northern sides of the City, in red—in which residents have the lowest level of access to opportunity. This is consistent with community input throughout the comprehensive planning process, and is evident in on-the-ground research. A similar analysis should be conducted and confirmed periodically to track improvements in Opportunity Score.



Existing Neighborhood Opportunity Map



# Profile: Housing Diversity

In community planning terms, housing is generally divided into single-family (referring to a detached residence), two-family (duplex), and multifamily (three or more attached units). Multifamily can also include residential units that are incorporated into mixed-use developments, such as apartments and condominiums that may be found above commercial businesses. Each of these housing types can be owner-occupied or rented. Rental housing may be market-rate or subsidized.

## Burlington's Housing Needs

It is well known that many of Burlington's citizens are proud of the quality of life provided in the community. Schools and an ever-expanding parks and greenway system tend to be highly valued, especially by families. Citizen input and general observation suggest that the same care and investment have not occurred with respect to housing for all income levels within the City. It is important for the long-term vitality of the community to provide housing alternatives that are affordable to lower income households or that appeal to empty nesters and young professionals.

## Rental Housing

Within Burlington, there is a growing shortage of quality market-rate rentals such as apartments, townhouses, and duplexes as demand increases. Developers across the country are building high-quality, innovative rental housing with amenities that are visually appealing and contextual. The use of durable building materials, well-landscaped grounds, pools, clubhouses, tennis courts, garages or screened parking, courtyards, or walking trails are just a few of the ways to create community-compatible developments whether located in suburban or urban neighborhoods, or within Downtown.

## Affordable Housing

Some of these housing types are often referred to as "affordable." A common misconception is that "affordable" means "subsidized." Subsidized housing is utilized by low- or very low-income households who

cannot afford to occupy market rate housing due to disability, age, or other factors. Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs the occupant no more than 30% of a household's income including taxes and utilities. This can apply to all income levels.

Location is a significant factor when considering affordability of housing. It is not enough to simply provide affordable housing in areas of lower incomes; a diversity of housing options is essential in every neighborhood so that the opportunities available in all areas are accessible to citizens of all income levels. Burlington could assist those wishing to provide affordable housing by directing developers to targeted redevelopment areas, assisting with land assembly, and having ordinances that encourage mixed-uses, such as Downtown housing located above retail or offices, or higher-density housing, such as in redevelopment areas.

Regardless of affordability, location (urban, suburban, or rural), or density, housing should always be created in ways that lengthen life spans and encourage durability and sustainability. Ways to accomplish this include utilizing attractive, durable building materials, well-landscaped lawns and common areas, garages or screened parking, courtyards, or walking trails, among others.

One funding mechanism to assist potential home buyers is a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), that develops, owns, and manages properties. Community Development Block Grants, HOME Investment Partnership Awards, and North Carolina Low Income Housing Trust Fund Awards typically provide funds to housing development projects done by CHDOs and governments. Burlington currently has an agreement with Alamance County Services Agency, Inc., to provide CHDO programs for the City funded through its HOME Investment Partnership Award budget.

*Resource: Analysis of Impediments and Assessment of Fair Housing - Piedmont Triad Region, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, November 2014*

# Profile: Neighborhood Block Revitalization Strategy

## Housing Stock

Burlington is fortunate enough to have high quality housing stock in stable neighborhoods that have some distressed housing. That said, many blocks have available properties, and some foreclosed or otherwise blighted properties that are causing property values to decline. A grassroots approach could be to support a block-scale improvement effort. The City could work with various stakeholders to support revitalization in the following way, resulting in block by block stabilization:

### Step 1: Work on Your Best Block

This is just a hypothetical block for the purpose of illustrating the concept. It is useful to begin this strategy by first stabilizing the block in a neighborhood that will provide the greatest impact with the least investment. We looked at 4 "available" properties in this hypothetical block.

### Step 2: Tackle the Worst Eyesore First

Property #2, hypothetically owned by the City, is currently vacant and boarded up, and is an eyesore within the block. By making this property available and incentivizing its repair, the City could create momentum to improve this block.

### Step 3: Strengthen the Best Property

Property #4 is identified as the property in the best location and condition and is available for purchase. The City should work with area brokers to secure a buyer for this property to further promote positive momentum in the community.

### Step 4: Meet in the Middle

Properties #1 and #3 are in the middle of the block and are both available for purchase. Working with area brokers to secure buyers for these properties



can further the positive momentum that is needed on this block. This, coupled with City-led incentives and block stabilization efforts, can help turn around this block. This could serve as a model for block-level stabilization going forward.



Habitat for Humanity of Alamance County has been very active in Burlington, using civic engagement, affordable housing, and infill residential development to bring new life and activity to neighborhoods. These images are from a “Building Blitz” on Hunt Street just north of Downtown (images from [www.wfmynews2.com](http://www.wfmynews2.com))



There are a number of fronts on which to approach the issue of improving access to opportunity. Improved access to health care, healthy food, and physical activity opportunities were discussed in the first section of this chapter, and the variety and affordability of housing was noted in the previous section. Community clean-up initiatives, block-by-block stabilization and revitalization strategies, and responsible infill development are ways the public and private sectors can work together to increase civic participation and stabilize land values. Supporting educational resources—schools, libraries, and community-led programs—is also important, as these can serve well as stabilizing community institutions.

## Education

### OVERVIEW

The City of Burlington has ample access to public, private, charter, parochial, pre-school and higher educational institutions. The City does, however, fall slightly under the state average for high school graduation (82.7% Burlington, 84.9% North Carolina) and bachelor's degree attainment (24.0% Burlington and 27.3% North Carolina). The Alamance-Burlington School System (ABSS) also spends considerably less than the state average on public education. Alamance County Commissioners control the district's education budget per North Carolina statute. Alamance County spends \$500 less per student (\$8,524) than the state average of \$9,024.

### BURLINGTON'S EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

- Overall population: 51,510; 21,729 households;
- Overall makeup: 57.0% White, 28.3% African American, 0.3% Native American, 3.0% Asian, 0.3% Pacific Islander. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 11.6% of the population;
- Burlington Enrolled Students: 11,895 total; 586 Nursery School/Preschool; 707 Kindergarten; 5,213 Grades 1-8; 2,495 High School; 2,894 College/ Grad School;
- Burlington Residents with a High School Degree or Higher: 82.7%;
- Burlington Residents with a Bachelors Degree or Higher: 24.0%;
- There are 18 K-12 schools in the City of Burlington, including 15 public schools and 3 private schools;
- There are 14 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 5 high schools and 49 preschools in the ABSS;
- There are three charter schools operating in Alamance County;

Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey

### ALAMANCE-BURLINGTON SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Alamance-Burlington School System (ABSS) serves 22,331 students (not all of whom are located in Burlington). Approximately half of the ABSS school population is White, and 21% is African American, which has remained steady across the system. The Hispanic school population is at 22% and increasing. Approximately 55% of students within the system receive free or reduced-price lunches.

ABSS has some important success stories that have been possible due to the efforts of dedicated educators and citizens alike.

- Art, music, and intervention teachers are in every elementary school and academic coaches are in all ABSS schools.
- A newly-expanded partnership between Alamance-Burlington Schools and Elon University will create more opportunities for high school seniors to earn college-level course credit while still enrolled as high school students.
- ABSS recently met nearly 90% of its Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) targets. ABSS schools met 60 of 72 total district targets, with fifteen schools meeting 100% of their targets.
- Twenty-nine of thirty-five ABSS schools earned Expected Growth status in school proficiency with 15 of those schools earning High Growth status. Eleven district schools earned School of Distinction honors.

Source: 2013, Alamance-Burlington School System Executive Summary



**Burlington students assist the Planning Department in a redevelopment ideas workshop.**



Prestigious Elon University is right across the western border of Burlington in the Town of Elon.



ACC's main campus is in neighboring Graham, but its Dillingham Center is located in Burlington Outlet Village. (images from [www.alamancecc.edu](http://www.alamancecc.edu))

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Burlington is well-served by quality higher education opportunities. There are thirty nonprofit colleges and universities within 50 miles of Downtown Burlington, including some of the most prestigious institutions in North Carolina. Two of these have the greatest impact on the City of Burlington: Elon University in neighboring Elon, and Alamance Community College in neighboring Graham.

Elon University was ranked by US News and World Report as the #1 Regional University in the South in 2014. In 2013, Elon enrolled 6,305 students in six schools covering a full range of liberal arts disciplines. Elon operates a Downtown Center for Community Engagement in Burlington. In partnership with Alamance County Public Libraries, Elon has founded the "It Takes A Village" program that has Elon students acting as tutors for underserved students. To date, this program has served over 300 students through Elon's Downtown presence.

Alamance Community College (ACC) is part of North Carolina's 58-institution Community College System and regularly exceeds the System's performance standards. The institution has grown 21% over the past five years and had 4,677 full-time equivalent student enrollment in 2011-2012.

The College has 35 academic programs in four divisions and houses Cosmetology and Continuing Education courses at The Dillingham Center in the Burlington Outlet Village. The Dillingham Center also houses ACC's Small Business Center for entrepreneurial support.

ACC provides a Career & College Promise (CCP) program for high school juniors and seniors to pursue college courses while in high school. Pathway options include earning college transfer credit or a Career Technical Education. Alamance Community College's campus is also home of Alamance-Burlington Middle College, a fully-accredited option high school that provides students with university transfer or community college classes as electives in addition to required high school classes.

## ALAMANCE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Alamance County Public Libraries staff are certified in Mother Read and the library is a certified Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Library. Mobile laptop labs, partnerships with a local wrestling group, museums, a zoo, and a planetarium, workforce classes, and a focus on underserved adults and children are all special services provided by the library system.

# Goals and Recommendations

## Goal 01:

Revitalize and improve access to opportunity in Burlington's neighborhoods.

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### RECOMMENDATION 01

Pursue early successes to create positive momentum by identifying catalyst sites for cleanup in neighborhoods needing attention.

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Catalyst cleanup sites should be at high traffic areas and should include informational signage that describes the positive impact on the neighborhood. City departments should work in concert with local community groups in identifying sites, coordinating the work, and maintaining the improvements.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02

Address perceived safety issues with positive action.

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Work with community organizations, churches, residents, and the Burlington Police Department to step up citizen neighborhood watches, community policing in problem areas, online crime reporting, and conduct routine neighborhood cleanup projects in tandem with large trash pickup days.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Encourage a mix of housing options in all Burlington neighborhoods that supports affordability, accessibility, and diversity.

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A variety of housing options will allow for a vibrant mix of residents and create a critical mass of people to support local commercial activities. Diverse housing types with different price points include apartments, single family homes, townhouses, second-story lofts, and duplexes. Multi-generational housing options (post-school, family, senior, retirement) are part of the equation for success.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 04 \***

Encourage the quality and safety of new and existing housing.

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Conduct rigorous and proactive code inspections on new construction and periodic post-occupancy enforcement inspections to ensure equal ordinance compliance across all neighborhoods of the City. Hold developers, contractors, and property owners accountable for deficient housing quality and safety.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 05 \***

Recognize schools as stabilizing civic institutions in neighborhoods with low access to opportunity.

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Schools, parks, and housing are three major components that define a healthy neighborhood. As neighborhoods are revitalized, partnerships with the schools need to be a priority. Promote the use of neighborhood schools as community gathering places, facilitate the use of school playgrounds as neighborhood parks and recreational amenities, and encourage pride in schools through effective maintenance and grounds beautification.

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**RECOMMENDATION 06**

Compile an inventory of existing public housing.

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Work to develop a 5-year plan to ensure the quantity of public housing is adequate and centrally located.

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**RECOMMENDATION 07 \***

Create an abandoned property action plan, including an inventory, evaluation, and map of unsafe and abandoned properties.

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Components of an action plan may include:

- Preventative Measures (such as awareness and counseling)
- Property Identification and Mapping
- Community Outreach
- Proactive Patrols and Inspections
- Civil and Criminal Penalties
- Neighborhood Stabilization

**RECOMMENDATION 08**

Regulate the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family homes.

The city should research and implement a plan to regulate the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family homes to maintain consistency in neighborhoods. The city should regulate, among other things: tenant opportunity to purchase rights, tenant first rights of refusal, offer of sale notices, notices of transfer and the conversion of properties.

**RECOMMENDATION 09** \* 🌱

Encourage restaurant and grocery store developments that provide healthy, local-source food options.

- Form a local food policy council to guide land use and zoning policy towards local, healthy food. Zone for mixed-use development concurrent with neighborhood nodes, activity centers, and public transportation.
- Partner with a new Community Development Corporation and other philanthropic organizations to improve healthy food retail options in underserved neighborhoods. In addition to providing healthier food options, this creates jobs and helps revitalize low-income areas.
- Promote other retail outlets such as farmers markets, cooperatives, farmstands, community supported agriculture programs, and mobile vendors. It is also important to ensure that public benefit programs can be used at these locations.

**RECOMMENDATION 10** 🌱

Investigate and create residential infill development guidelines.

As neighborhoods are redeveloped the City of Burlington must consider how new structures can meet the demand for all of these markets, and can be designed to create a seamless transition between new development and existing housing patterns to ensure the long-term viability of its neighborhoods. The drafting of a Unified Development Ordinance is an ideal opportunity to make detailed guidelines or standards for infill development.



**Smaller grocery stores in urban locations and farmers markets offer two healthy food alternatives that can improve conditions in neighborhoods with low access to opportunity.**

# Profile: Infill Development

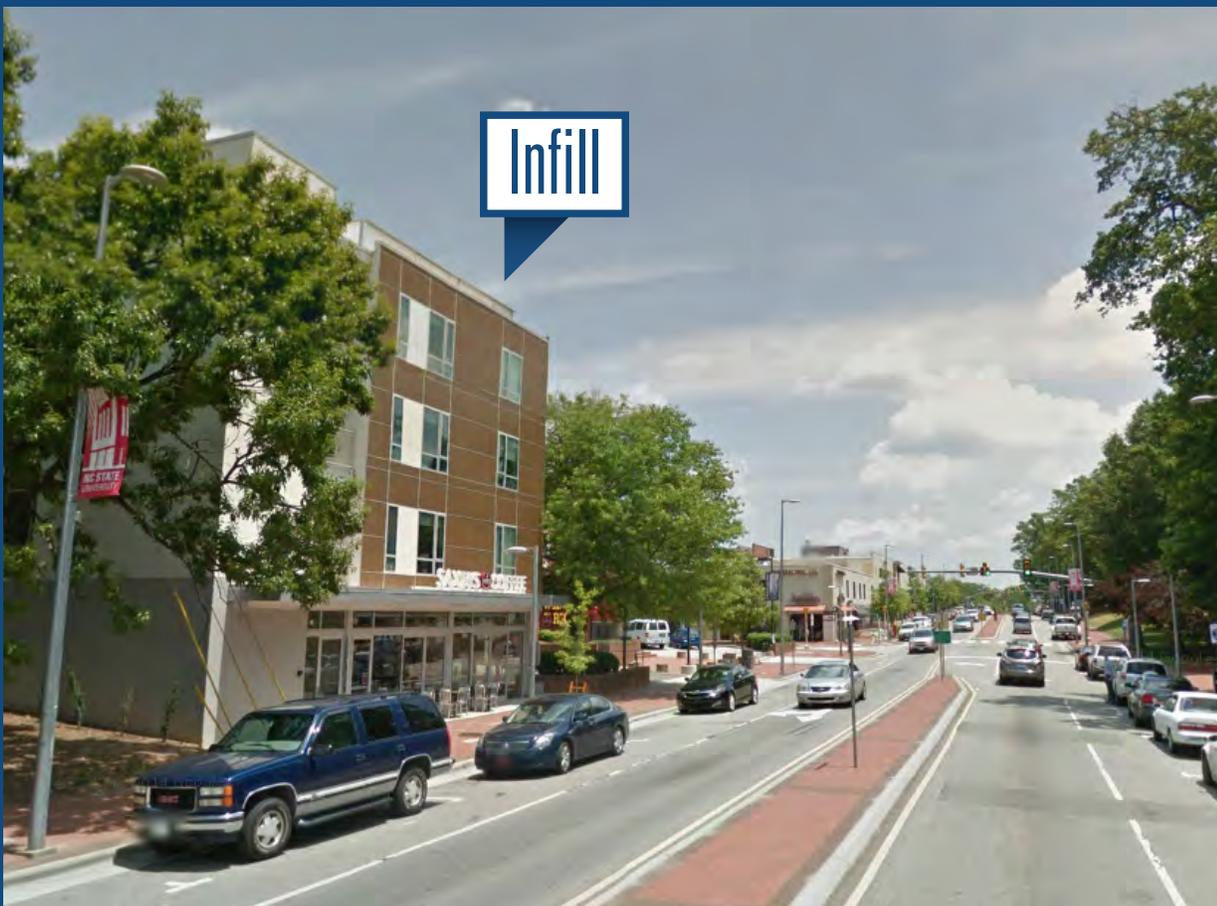
Effectively utilizing existing resources rather than expanding outward into “undeveloped” areas is commonly referred to as “redevelopment” or “infill development.” This is an effective tool as it utilizes existing infrastructure and revitalizes vacant or underutilized lots and structures within an urban/developed area. In Burlington, this strategy would best be applied to the existing commercial areas to create vibrant districts with a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses and a goal to preserve or at least respect the compact, pedestrian-friendly historic development pattern. Redevelopment would only occur on properties primarily adjacent to main thoroughfares and where owners want to participate. Proposed development should be subject to review to ensure that it is compatible with the existing residential and commercial properties.

Infill



*Infill is a flexible way of capitalizing on sporadic vacant or undeveloped lots in urban neighborhoods*

Infill



# Profile: Long Term Economic Development Tools

The rehabilitation of existing neighborhoods and structures that have fallen into disrepair and experienced prolonged disinvestment is often a critical issue for communities. The blighted properties may negatively influence the surrounding real estate and diminish the overall investment of neighborhoods and corridors within a community. The associated costs for an individual property owner to redevelop these parcels often exceeds the market return on investment due to several factors. What follows are tools commonly used to pro-actively intervene, attract and assist potential development that will catalyze other development and revitalize an area.

## Redevelopment Commissions

Redevelopment Commissions, created by a municipality or county, may use a variety of incentives and other tools to encourage and facilitate new or expand existing development. A Commission's project-oriented approach will not only address the site but parking, access and other infrastructure essential to business retention and development. Other tools include tax abatement or tax increment finance (TIF) districts, and Commissions are authorized to enter into contractual arrangements with private firms.

According to North Carolina State Statute (160A-512), Redevelopment Commission powers include but are not limited to the following:

- Purchase, obtain options grant real property to prevent the recurrence of blighted areas
- Prepare redevelopment plans and carry out redevelopment projects to improve property
- Eminent domain only for a blighted parcels to prepare for redevelopment
- Invest funds
- Contract for the construction of public improvements
- Borrow money, accept loans, grants, issue bonds
- Levy taxes in special taxing districts

The City of Greensboro Redevelopment Commission has established South Elm Development to implement

the multifaceted master plan concept for the 6-block, 7-acre site for the southern gateway to Downtown Greensboro's central business district along Lee Street.

## Community/Economic Development Corporation (CDC/EDC)

CDC/EDCs are nonprofit organizations that serve as catalysts for community-led neighborhood revitalization. Though the details between organizations differ, they typically lead a variety of initiatives including residential rehabilitation and development, economic development, business improvements, and development-oriented partnerships. They maximize public funds through alliances with financial institutions, equity investors and individual donors. A CDC/EDC has a defined program or service area (usually one to three defined neighborhood areas) and is controlled by a neighborhood-based Board of Directors—with a majority of these Directors being persons who either live, work, or worship within the program or service area.

A CDC/EDC brings capacity needed to achieve outcomes on a neighborhood scale. A CDC/EDC should have the ability to act as a bridge between the public and private sectors, bring additional staff capacity and expertise to revitalization initiatives, and adequately address the concerns of local residents by providing an outlet to address local issues. CDC/EDC's typically utilize the redevelopment powers which include the capacity to acquire and transfer land to private developers, act as partners in development deals, or act as development entities themselves. In dealing with neighborhoods where private investment is lacking, these activities are crucial to the re-introduction of real estate into the marketplace.

Refer to the profile on Public-Private Partnerships and page 181 for information related to that increasingly common economic development tool.



The above sites (at Broad & Ruffin, top, and adjacent to Fire Station No. 2 on NC 87, above) are two examples of where infill development of City-owned property could affect positive change in the community. Many significant infill opportunities exist within the City of Burlington, both publicly and privately owned.

## Goal 02:

Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC) that will oversee an overall development strategy.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Promote infill development by marketing vacant properties owned by the City and investigating forming a land bank.

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The City, along with neighborhood stakeholders and local banks, should review how a land bank could be used to establish a group of parcels for future infill housing needs. This would also provide a set of properties that could be designated for affordable housing infill projects. These projects may assist in maintaining and stabilizing housing needs especially within the City's eastern neighborhoods.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02

Identify and monitor at-risk properties.

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Investigate penalty and incentive programs to ensure progress is made on properties that are vacant or otherwise chronically challenged.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03

Consider purchasing vacant properties at tax sale and work with neighborhood organizations on a better blocks program.

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Such a program would be designed to include these properties in a land bank, generate a clean title, and conduct a block by block revitalization program using these land-banked properties as the catalyst for revitalization.

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### RECOMMENDATION 04

Identify non-monetary mechanisms to revitalize neighborhoods.

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These can include community partnerships and neighborhood groups. Work to coordinate and strengthen these organizations which will in turn allow them to positively manage neighborhood risks.

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**RECOMMENDATION 05**

Identify potential sources of funding.

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Investigate Section 108 loans and consider forming a volunteer grant committee to help identify and pursue various funding resources.

---

## Goal 03:

Improve the quality and reputation of the local educational system.

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**RECOMMENDATION 01** 

Encourage programming connections between local higher education institutions and the public school system.

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Elon's "It Takes a Village" program is a perfect example of how a local university can support the advancement of education in the community through reading skill tutoring.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 02**

Partner with the school system to create special programs.

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After school programs (e.g. running, gardening, reading, math team), and mentorship programs (e.g. Seniors Helping Our Kids) could all help elevate the educational opportunities for the community. Continue and enhance the collaborations between the Parks Department and ABSS.

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**RECOMMENDATION 03**

Champion early childhood education.

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Expand programs for pre-school children in partnership with the schools, faith-based organizations, Alamance County Libraries, and non-profits like Alamance Partnership for Children.

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**The education system is often the first thing that potential investors, developers, and residents alike look at within a community.**

---

#### **RECOMMENDATION 04**

Partner with local businesses and schools to promote the value of a high quality public education system.

---

Quality public education is an economic development and quality of life benefit that will secure long term investment in the community. Move forward with the goals established and partnerships created in ABSS's and the Chamber of Commerce's Vision Plan for Public Education and make this a lasting, long-term collaboration.

---

#### **RECOMMENDATION 05**

Support ABSS initiatives to address K-12 student needs, increase graduation rates, and ensure that each student has the basic skills to successfully enter the workforce.

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The school district may wish to further study how a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum could be integrated and or expanded with their existing programs to better prepare students for advanced employment opportunities in technical fields such as medicine, health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing.

---

#### **RECOMMENDATION 06 \***

Ensure wellness and nutrition education is available to all citizens.

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Educational programming related to health and wellbeing should be a staple of the educational system but also adult education and senior living offerings in the community.

## Goal 04:

Provide shared activities to bring Burlington’s community together.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Continue to enhance recreational, cultural, and entertainment offerings.

Partner with local organizations such as Downtown Burlington Corporation, major employers, and other stakeholders and business owners to provide coordinated efforts such as the existing Fourth Friday event. Consider activities that can move to different locations around the community like “Musical Chairs” concerts by Alamance County Arts Council. A city Burlington’s size can support several of these types of events that promote community and a “third place” outside of home and the workplace.

### RECOMMENDATION 02 \* 🌿

Support and conduct quarterly “Keep Burlington Beautiful” cleanup efforts.

Some communities have turned cleanup efforts into friendly neighborhood competitions with a reward for the cleanest neighborhood (a new tree for a local park, for example).

### RECOMMENDATION 03 \* 🌿

Continue supporting the Downtown Burlington Farmers Market and consider additional smaller farmers markets.

Smaller farmers markets or produce stands at advantageous neighborhood locations like parks throughout the City will help make healthy food equitable and accessible—the produce market stand at North Park is a notable example. Develop an incentive program to ensure the cost of healthy, local food is within all budget ranges.



**Keep Burlington Beautiful** efforts can help neighborhood and parks stay clean, safe, and attractive. This can supplement the efforts of the municipality.



# Land Use | 04



## First Focus

The future of development and redevelopment in Burlington begins with a plan of land uses that represents and furthers the goals of the community. The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan and its accompanying Future Land Use Plan is the first immediate step towards implementation of the community's vision through updates to its land use regulating ordinances.

# Profile: Ten Principles for Smart Growth

1. Create a shared vision for the future... and stick to it
2. Identify and sustain green infrastructure
3. Remember that the right design in the wrong place is not Smart Growth
4. Protect environmental systems and conserve resources
5. Provide diverse housing types and opportunities
6. Build centers of concentrated mixed use
7. Use multiple connections to enhance mobility and circulation
8. Deliver sustainable transportation choices
9. Preserve the community's character
10. Make it easy to do the right thing

*Resource: Ten Principles for Smart Growth, ULI-the Urban Land Institute, Mary Beth Corrigan, et.al., 2004.*

## Land Use

### OVERVIEW

Burlington is 25.37 square miles excluding water. The city has room to grow on its fringe within its existing Corporate Limits, but also has the opportunity to expand within its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction into the adjacent agricultural and rural lands. Like many cities, Burlington has a desire to focus on the redevelopment and revitalization of portions of the city that have suffered from little investment in infrastructure or buildings in decades. The Future Land Use Plan on page 79 designates land uses for broad areas and illustrates areas for appropriate development.

This chapter provides goals and strategies to create a balanced land use pattern that supports the principles of Smart Growth and building a healthier Burlington (physically and economically). The goal of land use planning is to seek a balance of uses that can sustain and attract residents and businesses and position the community to realize the benefits of revitalization and new development. Future Land Use was last updated as part of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. Much has changed in Burlington since that plan's horizon of 2000. This chapter provides an updated direction for Future Land Use within the community.

An updated Future Land Use Plan is intended to guide future growth and development or redevelopment. Current land use and zoning has been reviewed against the goals and recommendations contained within this plan as well as new factors such as development pressures, trends, and planned future bus transportation. This Land Use chapter will serve as a road map for future zoning map updates.

Typically, the intensity of land use decreases as it radiates from the center of the city. Within the City of Burlington it is important to note that new development has for decades trended towards the south and west sides of the city and near the airport. Also important to mention is, with the forthcoming availability of Downtown properties due to LabCorp's planned restructuring of its offices, there will be significant redevelopment opportunity Downtown, although it will be infill type development which will not change the land use.

The east side of the City needs considerable attention from a redevelopment perspective and land use and zoning will need to support opportunities to revitalize that area of the City. Another major factor that will change land use over the life of this Plan is a new fixed-route bus system.

## Existing Land Use

The analysis of current land use and annexation throughout the years suggests a growth pattern outward from the center. As this occurred, the neighborhoods surrounding the core transitioned from mixed-use, typically mill-centric villages to purely residential neighborhoods. The exception to this is Downtown, which has remained commercial in land use, and major corridors throughout the City, which despite some disinvestment, have remained commercial in nature. There are some remaining pockets of industry within the City, but those are concentrated in small districts throughout the City and its south side in particular.

### RESIDENTIAL (RURAL, URBAN AND SUBURBAN)

Rural Residential areas have been used traditionally for farming, and fall within the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) area. Appropriate uses are low density residential development and traditional agriculture.

Urban Residential areas are typically adjacent to the Downtown area in a city's core, have moderate to high density, are mixed-use in nature, and are walkable. Schools, parks, small-scale churches, neighborhood-scale retail and services, and multifamily residences that respect the scale and character are appropriate. Urban residential neighborhoods—also called “traditional residential”—are often laid out in a grid of streets and sidewalks with high levels of connectivity, both by automobile and by foot. This area contains vacant and underutilized land that should develop in a manner compatible with the community's unique character and sense of place.

Suburban Residential areas are typically found in neighborhoods that developed after World War II. Ranch and split-level detached houses are common amongst older suburban residential neighborhoods, while the most recent suburban developments have much taller and larger houses to suit contemporary tastes. The suburban development pattern often includes cul-de-sac streets and dead-ends, which discourage connectivity. Instead, this type of development should provide a connected street network to adjoining neighborhoods, with pedestrian and bicycle facilities as standard fixtures of the network. New development should also always be required to connect to utility services.

Conservation subdivisions are an alternative type of land development tool for use when desired suburban residential is adjacent to areas desired for conservation of sensitive habitats including wetlands and riparian areas. In conservation subdivisions, housing units are clustered more densely than typical suburban conditions and the remaining sensitive habitat areas are left undisturbed. Overall, the subdivision has the same unit density, but maintains the environmental integrity of sensitive areas of the site.



**Existing land use changes from more rural and suburban on the edges of the City and within the ETJ to more urban in the core.**

## DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE

This designation represents small to medium-scale mixed-use development within Burlington’s Downtown and core surrounding neighborhoods with an emphasis on serving surrounding residences as well as the entire community. The “mix of use” can be vertical—in the same structure with retail below and residential or office above—or horizontal, with retail, office, residential and institutional uses adjacent to each other.

Any site development should maintain a grid street network with garages in the rear of lots similar to the existing homes, should have a high level of connectivity to adjacent uses, and should be served by utilities.

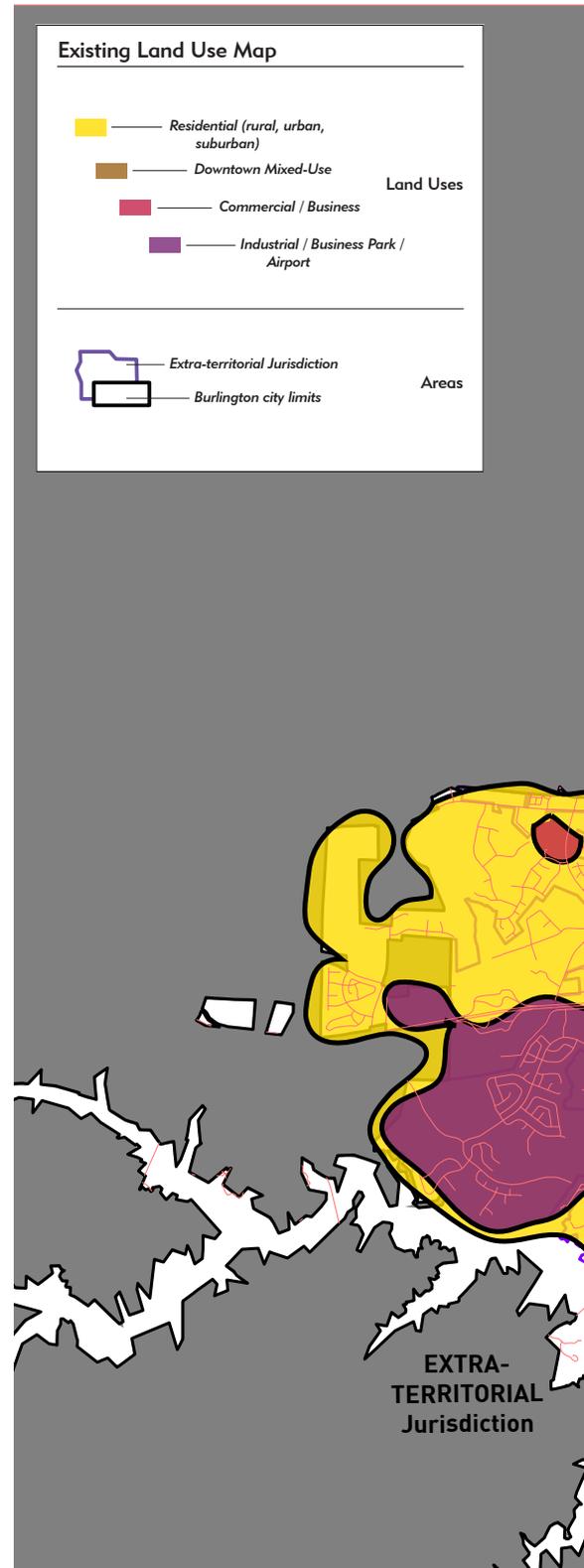
## COMMERCIAL/BUSINESS

Commercial areas have some similarities to the Downtown Mixed-use designation (retail, service, office and municipal) that serve the needs of the overall community but do not typically contain residential uses. These types of land uses typically are auto-oriented and located along the major arterials and at intersections. This development should still strive for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to surrounding areas.

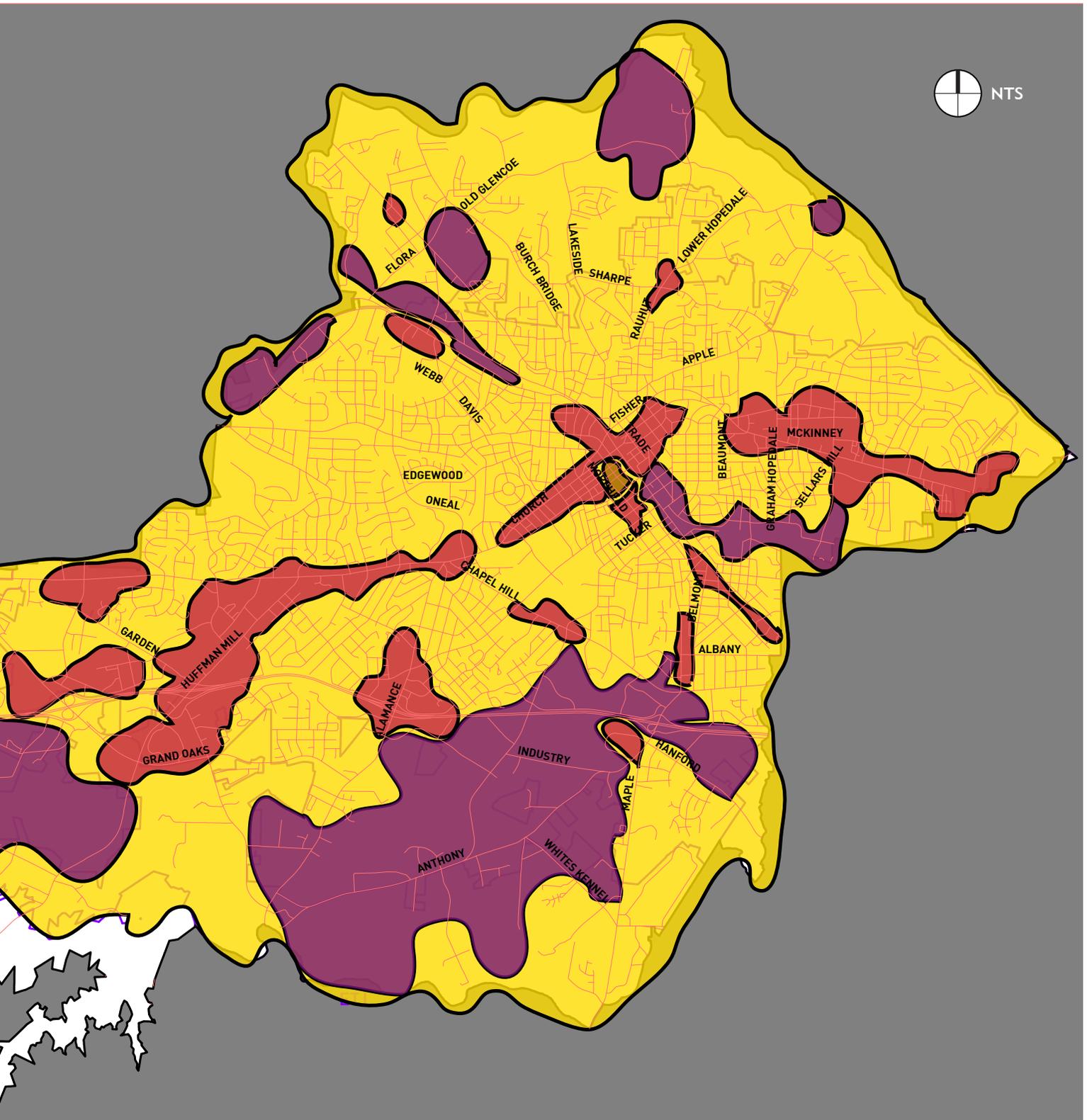
This type of development contributes strongly to the community’s image and sense of prosperity, and requires high-quality development standards. The standards should be applicable to the site design, building materials, architectural features, pedestrian access, landscaping and signage. Controlled access (limiting curb cuts) and cross-access easements between businesses (connecting parking lots) should be considered to mitigate potential traffic congestion.

## INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK/AIRPORT

This designation includes professional and business services, light assembly plants, flex-tenant type facilities, and research and development businesses. These business facilities should have good access and connectivity to rail, highways and main thoroughfares, as well as good internal circulation. The tendency for these developments to serve as major employers warrants consideration of connectivity to nearby neighborhoods (potential resident workforce). This land use also includes the Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport which includes a sizeable area that is designated for future industrial development. Attention should be paid to architecture, building orientation, landscaping, and signage to ensure cohesive design that will attract future investors.



Existing Land Use Map



# Current Zoning

The City of Burlington’s existing Zoning Map and Ordinance specifies 24 different zoning districts within the City and ETJ. These 24 districts are organized into residential, multi-family, office-institutional, commercial, and industrial zoning districts.

## RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

- R-30 - Single Family
- R-15, R-12, R-9, R-6 - Other Residential Districts
- R-M - Mobile Home Residential

## MULTI-FAMILY

- MF-A, MF-B - Multi-Family Districts

## OFFICE- INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICTS

- O-I - Office Institutional District
- R-OI - Restricted Office Institutional District

## COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

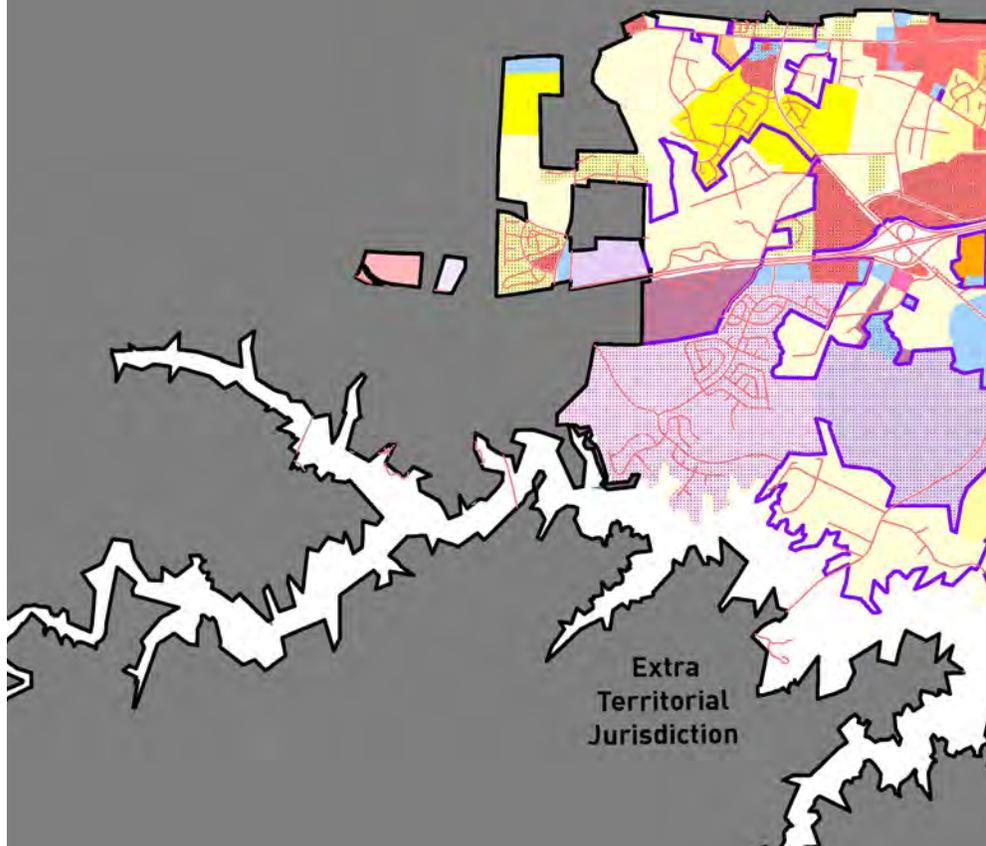
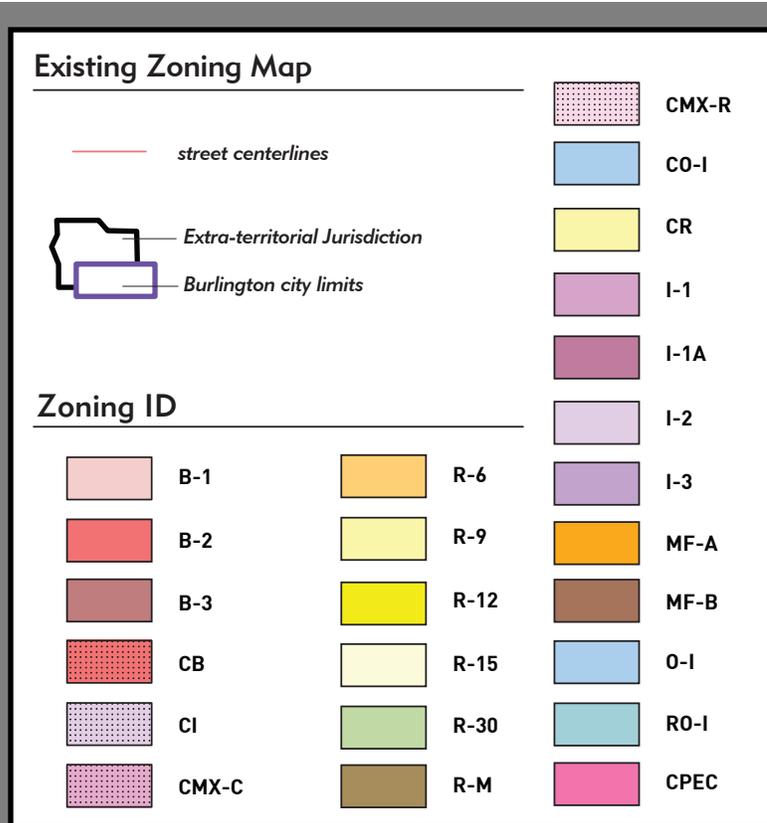
- B-1 - Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 - General Business District
- B-3 - Central Business District

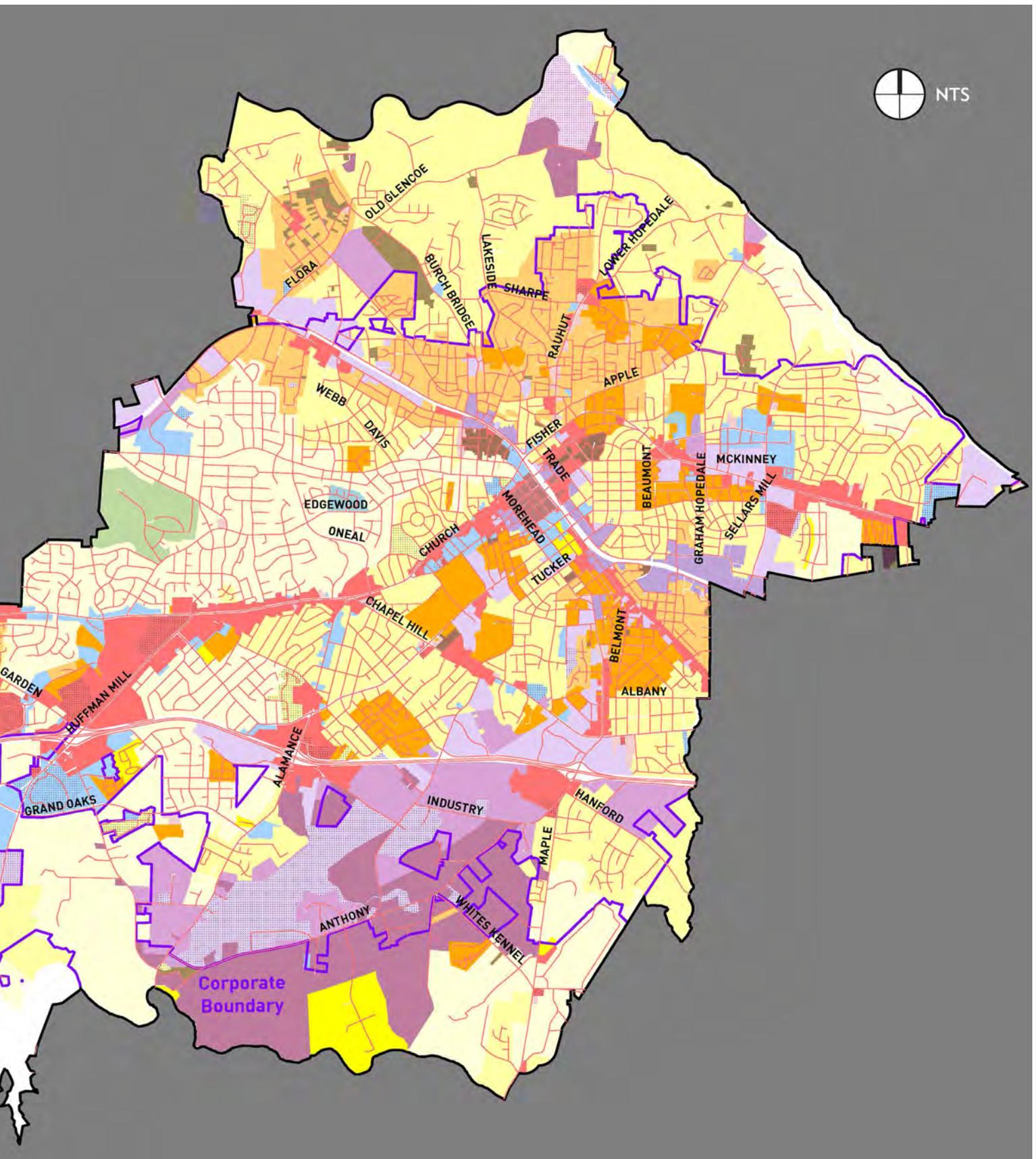
## INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

- I-1 - Planned Industrial
- I-1A - Planned Industrial-Residential
- I-2 - Light Industrial
- I-3 - Heavy Industrial Districts

## CONDITIONAL ZONING

- CR - Conditional Residential
- CO-I - Conditional Office Institutional
- CB - Conditional Business
- CI - Conditional Institutional
- CMX-R Conditional Mixed Residential
- CMX-C Conditional Mixed Use Commercial
- CPEC - Conditional Planned Employment Center



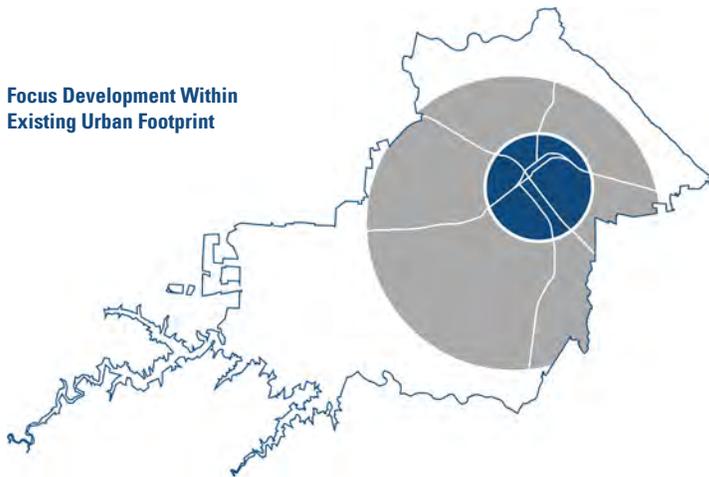


## Future Land Use Principles

The Future Land Use Plan is informed by a number of values and principles derived from community engagement feedback and the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These principles have direct implications on how uses and development intensity are located in the future. Future development, zoning, and rezoning efforts that are linked to these principles warrant extra consideration for decision making. Where the Future Land Use Plan leaves the arrangement of uses in specific areas up to interpretation, the principles described below should be used in conjunction with the other sections of this Plan to assist the Planning & Zoning Commission, City Council, and City Staff in making decisions that provide prosperity and lead to opportunities.

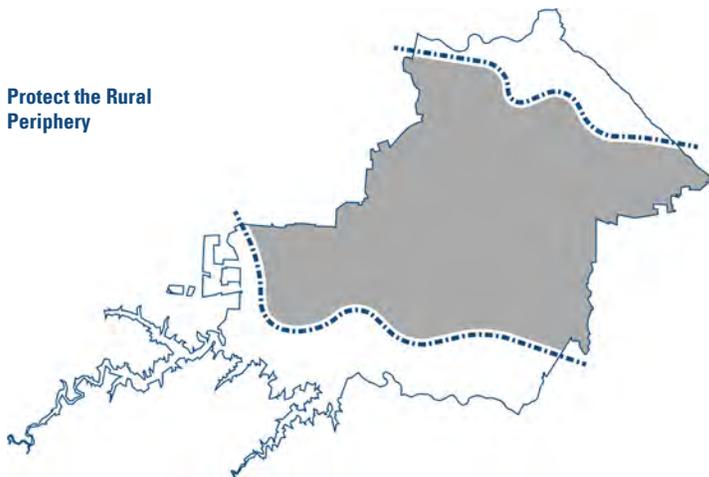
Burlington already has a well-defined urbanized area, with a dense core of mixed uses and an “inner ring” of traditional neighborhoods. Future growth within the City’s jurisdiction—shown in the adjacent diagrams as a blue outline—should focus within the established urban “footprint” of the City.

**Focus Development Within Existing Urban Footprint**



Burlington’s periphery has been rural and agricultural since its founding—much of Alamance County remains largely rural. The proximity of rural land uses to the City center is a significant aspect of the City’s character, one appreciated by much of the community. Land use regulations should protect the rural nature of Burlington’s Extra-territorial Jurisdiction.

**Protect the Rural Periphery**

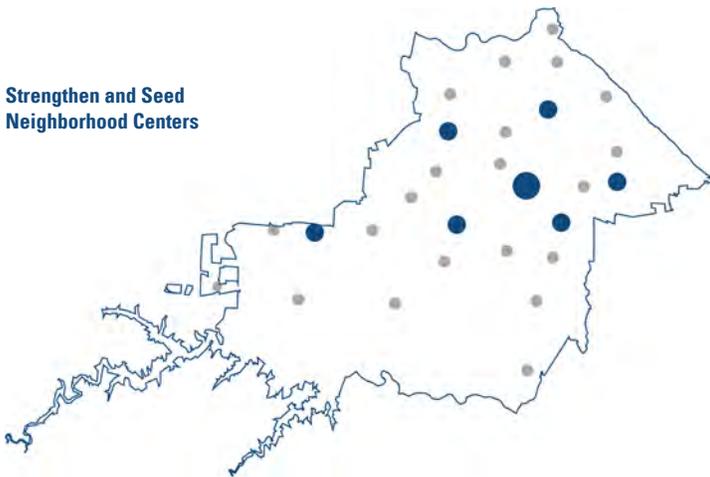


**Create a Carolina Corridor Commerce Park**



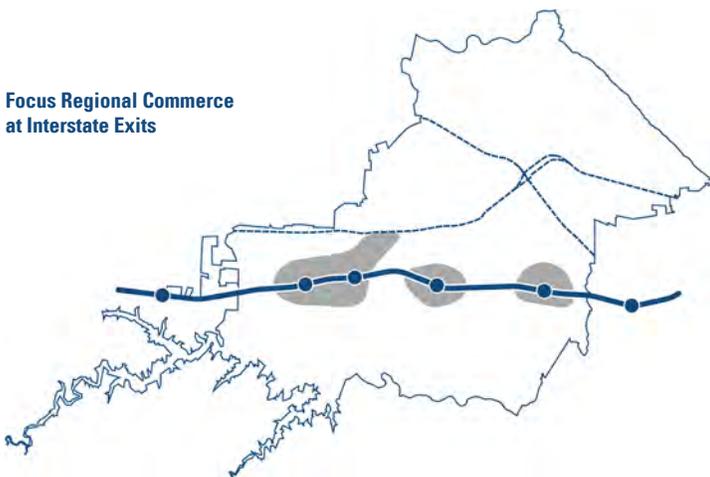
Burlington has the opportunity to create an industrial-focused commerce park thanks to its excellent Interstate highway access, proximity to some of North Carolina’s largest employment and commerce centers, its own regional airport, and a relatively undeveloped southern edge. The City should take advantage of this unique opportunity to solidify the local economy.

**Strengthen and Seed Neighborhood Centers**



Burlington has not developed a formal system of recognizing neighborhoods or planning for their day-to-day needs and services. There are, however, the beginnings of “neighborhood centers” in which local residents could buy groceries, fill prescriptions, get a coffee, have a shirt laundered, or get a haircut. These centers need to be strengthened or seeded throughout the City.

**Focus Regional Commerce at Interstate Exits**



Regional commercial activity serves a much greater market than the City alone—it includes the kinds of retail and services that bring visitors from outside the City. This is a substantial part of any city’s economy, but often does not serve the local residents well in terms of traffic and aesthetic environment. These uses are best focused at highway interchanges, where traffic control is optimized. Existing major corridors of the City can then be revitalized to serve local residents.

# The Future Land Use Plan

## OVERVIEW

The Future Land Use Plan provides land use designations that reflect the character and intensity of future development and redevelopment. Land use designations are meant to be broad brush depictions and are not intended to stand in for zone designations from the City’s zoning ordinance.

Below and on the following pages are ten different land use classifications, along with a brief description of the types of uses or development character that might occur in each. An accompanying image—either existing in Burlington, or an example from another community—further reinforces the type of development intended in each area.

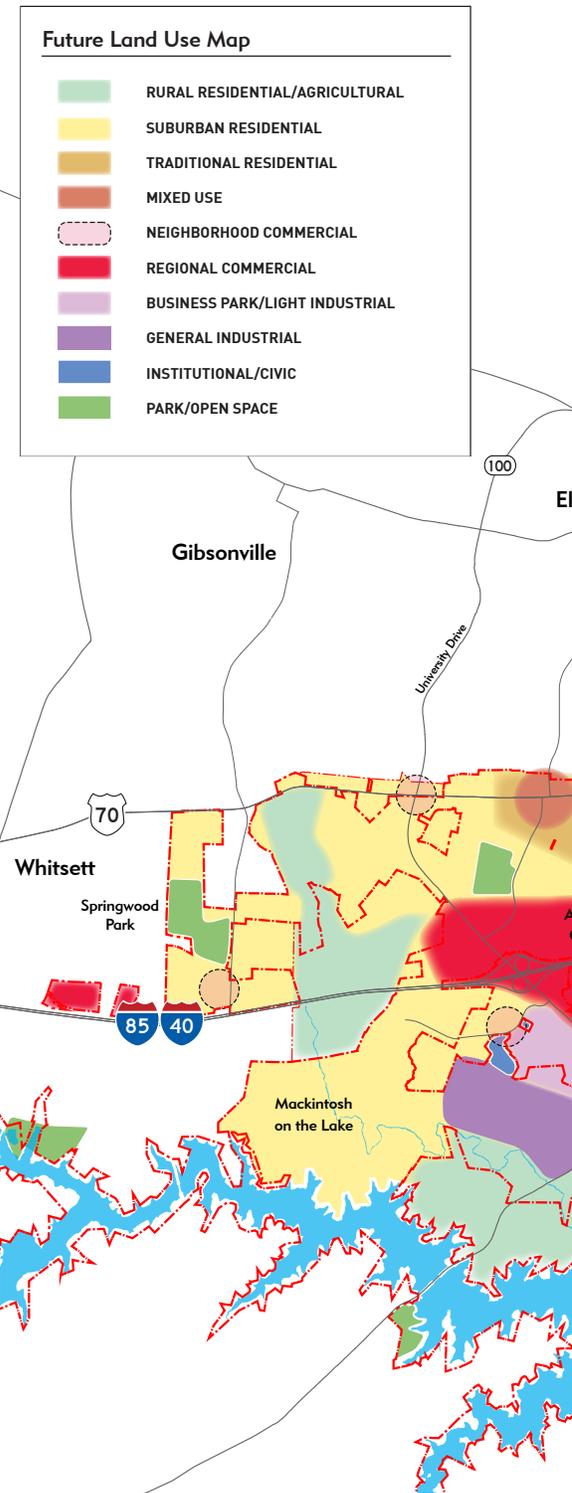
### RURAL RESIDENTIAL / AGRICULTURAL

Existing residential lots containing single-family housing units could also have agricultural related uses, such as stables and small-scale non-commercial food production and limited livestock production. Activities characterized as agritourism (farm trails, farmers’ markets, and roadside stands) may also be here.

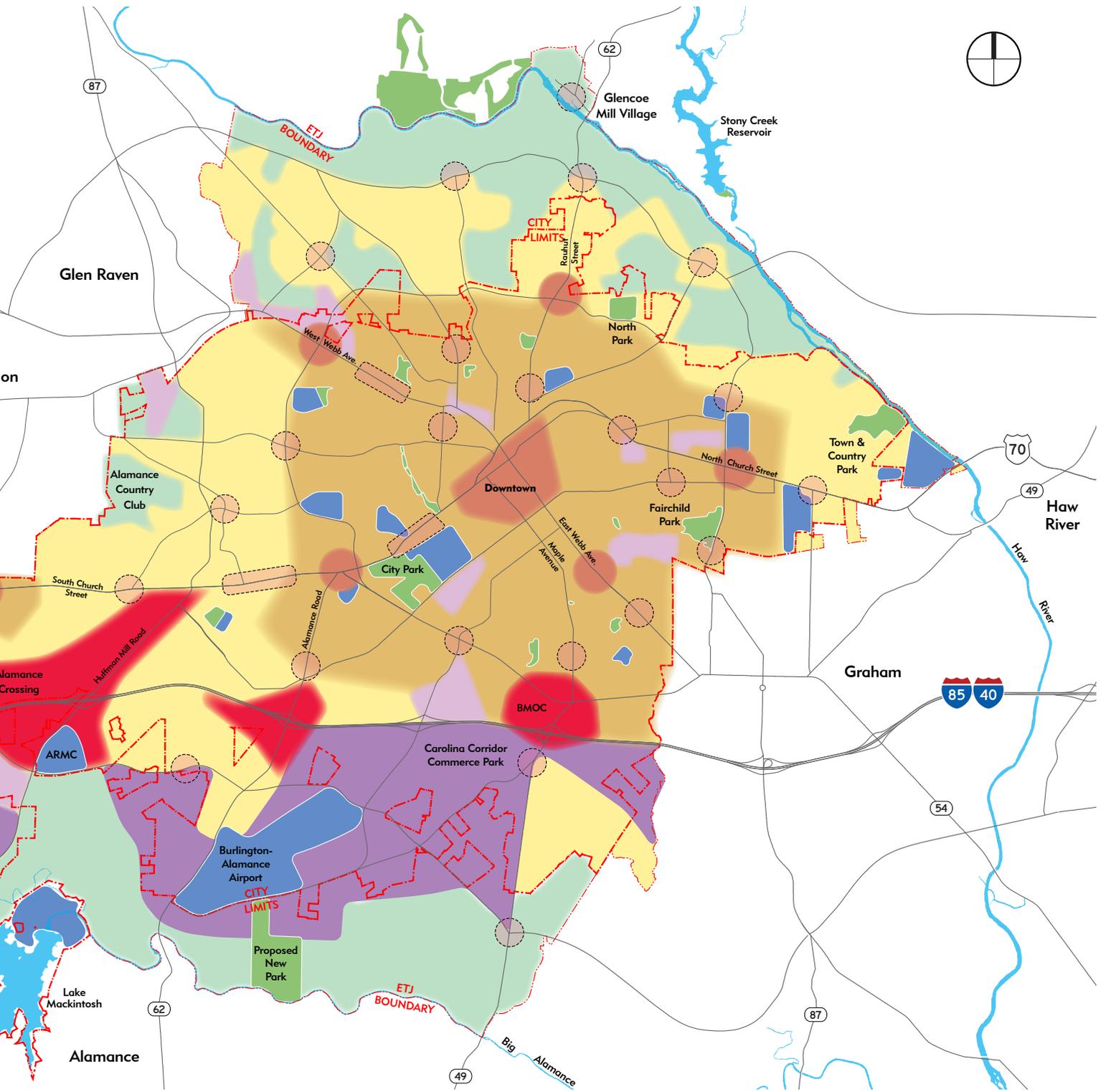


### SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Suburban residential is typically found in newer neighborhoods. This development pattern should provide a connected street network to adjoining neighborhoods with pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Cul-de-sac streets, which do not encourage connectivity, should be minimized.



Future Land Use Plan





### TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL

This designation refers primarily to the traditional neighborhood pattern that currently exists around Burlington's core. It is primarily single-family residential and two family/duplex development as well as multi-family development. This may also provide for opportunities to create high quality infill housing and additional dwelling units. Traditional residential should be close to the street, served by rear-loaded garages on alleys, and located on streets with low traffic volumes. It exhibits a high level of connectivity, typically via a grid street network, with sidewalk and local street connections to thoroughfares with public transportation access. Typically, there is proximate access to parks, commercial centers, and civic buildings.



### MIXED USE

This designation refers to mixed-use residential and commercial areas that are within Burlington's Downtown and neighborhood centers. Many of these commercial spaces are geared to entice pedestrians to patronize businesses. Ground floors should be active with uses which include: professional/personal services, storefront retail, restaurants, cafes, and shops. Upper floors may be residential or office. Often, mixed-use developments are infill opportunities, allowing the traditional neighborhood street wall to be completed and are popular ways to revitalize transit active neighborhoods. Mixed-use development typically occurs along arterial roads or clustered together with proximity to a major transit stop.



### NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTER

Neighborhood commercial centers have some similarities to the mixed-use designation (retail, service, office and municipal) that serve the needs of the overall community, but usually at a lower density and scale. The designation may also contain single family residential and medium to high density multifamily residential for a mix of uses. These types of land uses typically are walkable and located within neighborhood centers. Development should still strive for pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to surrounding areas.



### REGIONAL COMMERCIAL

Regional commercial includes higher-intensity commercial uses that generally include retailers, offices, food services, lodging, and entertainment, all of which draw customers from the City and adjacent communities. These uses are typically located along major arterial routes and Interstate interchanges. Uses planned for these areas require high visibility, high traffic counts, convenient access, and connectivity to the greater region. They are generally sited on larger parcels with dedicated parking lots for customers, and are predominately one-story buildings. New regional commercial development should have cohesive architectural styles and high-quality materials, landscaping, screening from adjacent residential areas, and internal vehicular circulation to reduce congestion on main thoroughfares.

## BUSINESS PARK / LIGHT INDUSTRIAL

This designation includes professional and business services, light assembly plants, flex-tenant type facilities, and research and development businesses. These business facilities should have good access and connectivity to highways and main thoroughfares, as well as good internal circulation. This use also tends to act as a buffer between industrial and commercial uses. The tendency for these developments to serve as major employers warrants a need to consider connectivity to nearby neighborhoods (potential resident workforce) and the possibility of public transit. Attention should be paid to architecture, building orientation, landscaping, and signage to ensure cohesive design that will attract future investors.



## GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

This designation may encompass such land uses as rail facilities, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing (not self-storage), processing plants, and other similar businesses. Some general industrial sites in Burlington may be underutilized and present an opportunity for redevelopment while others may be large undeveloped sites. These uses typically produce the greatest amount of truck traffic with a strong dependence on the roadway network. They have the potential to generate noise, vibration, dust, and odor. Industrial facilities should be located on large lots that can accommodate future expansion needs. To minimize the impact on surrounding land uses, perimeter fencing and vegetative screening are encouraged.



## INSTITUTIONAL / CIVIC

Institutional uses include civic uses such as libraries, schools, town offices, fire stations, and utilities, as well as hospitals and similar land uses essential to the city's efficient operation and overall well-being. Institutional uses are often integrated into the community close to the populations they serve. However, some uses listed above may require larger sites separate from residents, such as utility treatment plants and hospital complexes, that may require significant amounts of land for expansion or that generate high traffic. Site planning, architectural design, and landscaping set the tone for the image and identity of the community and should be carefully evaluated.



## PARKS / OPEN SPACE

This designation refers to land that is reserved as either a park or open space and are usually accessible to the public. These may include both active and passive recreation areas and may be dedicated to outdoor physical activity, organized recreation, leisure, urban agriculture, playgrounds, ecological functions, and public events. Land within these areas should be protected from development. Parks and open space should be accessible from public transportation, sidewalks, and the road system. They should be integrated into neighborhoods and commercial areas.



## Profile: Safe Growth Audit

A Safe Growth Audit analyzes the impacts of current policies and ordinances on community safety, and evaluates the extent to which a jurisdiction is growing safely relative to the natural hazards it faces.

The process of conducting a safe growth audit is similar to that of preparing a comprehensive plan, in that it requires public participation to generate the overall safe growth vision and to gain consensus on the findings and recommendations. It differs, however, in the amount of research and analysis required to identify the key contributors to safe growth and to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

To ensure adequate public involvement, it is useful to create a safe growth steering committee made up of representatives of affected interests. This committee can offer guidance throughout the process, including the step of creating a safe growth vision for the community. For that purpose, a community safe growth workshop could be held or safe growth visioning could be piggybacked onto a comprehensive plan or strategic plan visioning workshop. Information and reports could be posted on the local government website. It is important to ensure an ongoing community safe growth forum by disseminating information, receiving feedback, and developing potential safe growth champions.

Research and analysis entail systematic review of public documents as well as interviews of knowledgeable informants. The key documents are the comprehensive plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and the capital improvement program, along with policy statements concerning infrastructure provisions. Records and statistics describing development review approvals will also be useful to see how the plans, ordinances, and policy statements are actually being implemented. Interviews with zoning administrators, building inspectors, and utility officials also will shed light on implementation, as well as on the existence of unwritten policies and their impacts.

Questions asked during research and analysis seek to discover the contents of the community growth policies package and how this impacts public safety. Each community will have an individual package, depending on its growth and hazards situation. It is, however, possible to spell out a basic set of safe growth audit questions that should apply in most jurisdictions.



**LAND USE**

- Are natural hazard areas clearly identified in land use plans?
- Do land use policies discourage development or redevelopment within natural hazard areas?
- Is adequate space for expected future growth available in areas located outside natural hazard areas?

**TRANSPORTATION**

- Does the transportation plan limit access to hazard areas?
- Is transportation policy used to guide growth to safe locations?
- Are movement systems designed to function under disaster conditions (e.g., evacuation)?

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

- Are environmental systems that protect development from hazards identified and mapped?
- Do environmental policies maintain and restore protective ecosystems?
- Do environmental policies provide incentives to development that is located outside protective ecosystems?

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Are planning goals and policies related to those of the FEMA Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?
- Is safety explicitly included in the plan's growth and development policies?
- Does the monitoring and implementation section of the plan cover safe growth objectives?

**OTHER**

- Does the zoning ordinance conform to the comprehensive plan by discouraging development or redevelopment within natural hazard areas?
- Does the ordinance contain natural hazard overlay zones that set conditions for land use within such zones?
- Do rezoning procedures recognize natural hazard areas as limits on zoning changes that allow greater intensity or density of use?
- Does the ordinance prohibit development within, or filling of, wetlands, floodways, and floodplains?
- Do the subdivision regulations restrict the subdivision of land within or adjacent to natural hazard areas?
- Do the regulations provide for conservation subdivisions or cluster subdivisions in order to conserve environmental resources?
- Do the regulations allow density transfers where hazard areas exist?
- Does the capital improvement program limit expenditures on projects that would encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards?
- Do infrastructure policies limit extension of existing facilities and services that would encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards?
- Does the building code contain provisions to strengthen or elevate construction to withstand hazard forces?
- Do economic development or redevelopment strategies include provisions for mitigating natural hazards?
- Is there an adopted evacuation and shelter plan to deal with emergencies from natural hazards?

*Resource: Safe Growth Audits, "Zoning Practice Issue 10, David R. Godschalk, 2009.*



Mixing of uses with appropriate buffers make for a more active and walkable community.

## Goals and Recommendations

### Goal 01:

Continue to provide a sustainable balance of land uses to assist with the fiscal wellbeing of the City and to ensure a diverse tax base.

---

#### RECOMMENDATION 01

Use the Future Land Use Plan for making decisions regarding future development to support compatible land use.

- 
- Ensure adequate land is maintained for suitable industrial and commercial development.
  - Encourage a mix of uses while maintaining sufficient buffers between residential and industrial uses.
  - Encourage mixed-use developments around Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas.
  - Encourage intergovernmental collaboration by working with various entities to ensure the Future Land Use Plan is used when making development decisions. This is essential to ensuring the success of economic development, redevelopment, and housing endeavors.

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#### RECOMMENDATION 02

Review the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Zoning in conjunction with the Future Land Use Plan.

---

Managed growth within the ETJ is essential to right-sizing the community, keeping infrastructure costs under control, and emphasizing the importance of the core.

**RECOMMENDATION 03** 

Strengthen existing neighborhood character by focusing on redevelopment which follows the historic development pattern over “greenfield” development.

Coordinate redevelopment with the routing of the future public transportation system in Burlington to ensure future developments are served by the system. Also, encourage a mix of uses to support an active community with appropriate separations between incompatible uses.

**RECOMMENDATION 04** 

Conduct a “Safe Growth Audit” of development plans and codes.

Conduct a “Safe Growth Audit” of development plans and codes (see profile on page 82). Require an impact study for all developments over 5 acres to determine the impact on storm sewers and other public infrastructure.

**RECOMMENDATION 05**  

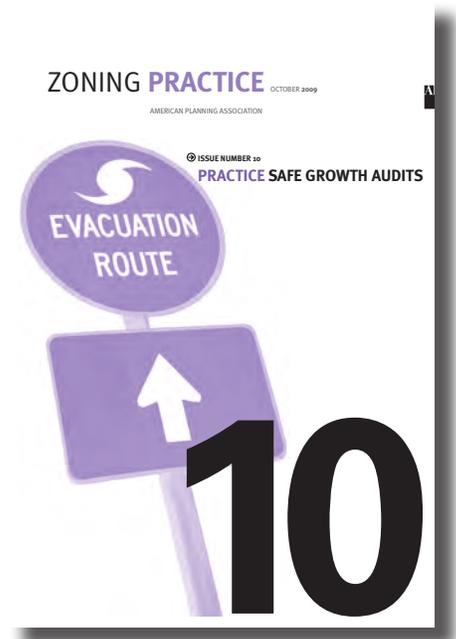
Update the Unified Development Ordinance, Zoning Map, and City Engineering Standards.

Ensure sound land planning decisions consistent with the vision of the Plan. This includes promoting development that maximizes economic and social benefits, minimizes public costs, and increases the city’s tax levy.

**RECOMMENDATION 06**

Identify locations most suitable for light industrial uses, business parks, and industrial growth.

This includes manufacturing, distribution, research, knowledge-based services or similar uses. Maintain on an ongoing basis a minimum of 100 acres of land available for business and employment uses and track the degree to which each site is served by infrastructure and public services.



Best management practices such as Safe Growth Audits help developers choose the right location. Remember “the right development in the wrong location is not smart growth.”

### *How is Land Use Different than Zoning?*

Land use is a description of where we currently—or would like to—locate certain types of activities within a city, like housing, businesses, factories, parks, schools, and other uses of land. Zoning is the legal instrument that guides land use by outlining the requirements for specific uses to be located in a certain area and look or perform a certain way. While land use maps and zoning maps look similar, land use maps show general areas and intent while zoning maps show specific requirements for specific properties.

## Goal 02:

Promote zoning flexibility in appropriate areas of the City.

---

### **RECOMMENDATION 01**

Support a complementary mix of uses within developments and individual buildings.

---

By supporting a mix of uses, a variety of quality of life and economic benefits can be realized. Efficient use of land in a compact environment results in an active neighborhood which can realize the benefits of using existing infrastructure and having the density needed to support neighborhood commercial centers and transit. These compact, mixed-use neighborhoods preserve the desirable characteristics of established neighborhood form with a focus on the human scale resulting in a place that becomes a destination for live, work, and play. Economically speaking this activity improves the real estate market and builds the tax base, while minimizing public costs.

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### **RECOMMENDATION 02**

Provide development standards that encourage infill development.

---

Development standards that encourage appropriate infill development are important because they protect the scale and design elements of existing neighborhoods. This supports the value of existing and infill buildings equally to promote neighborhood revitalization by complete block.

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### **RECOMMENDATION 03**

Employ overlay districts or other flexible zoning for redevelopment opportunity sites.

---

Redevelopment sites often need special attention both from a market perspective and a design perspective. By employing overlay districts or flexible zoning options for these sites development can be secured while ensuring the scale and design elements of the redevelopment sites are in accordance with the existing neighborhood context and community vision.

**RECOMMENDATION 04** ✓

Address confusion, conflicts, and obsolescence of the Zoning Code through a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

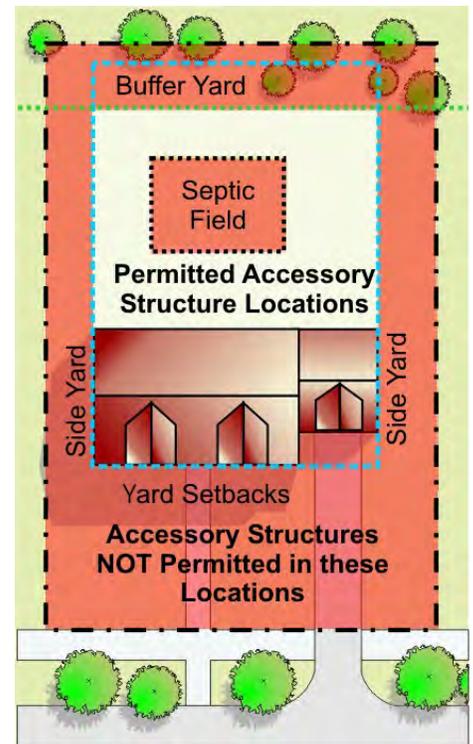
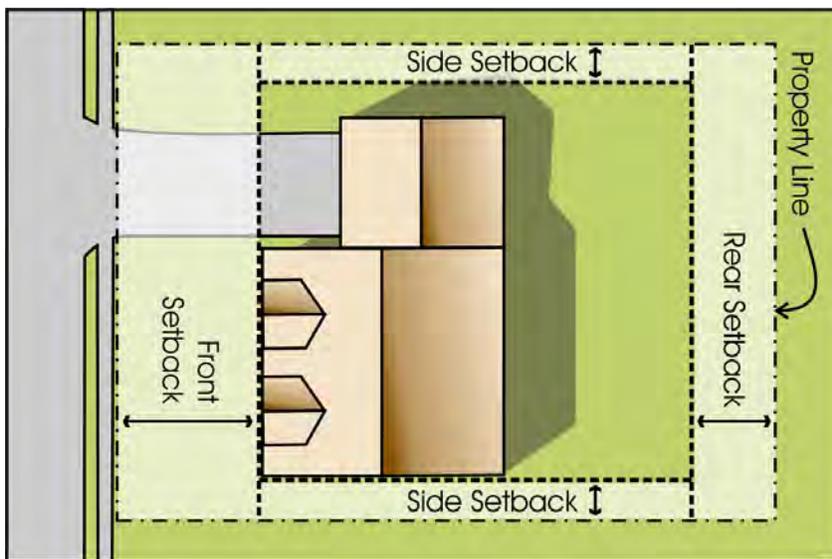
A new UDO will be modern, graphically intensive, and user-friendly from both a public/petitioner and administrative perspective. Through this comprehensive planning process, the community’s goals and objectives, supplemented by additional public input, will ultimately help shape the new UDO.

**RECOMMENDATION 05**

Maintain an economic development-friendly regulatory environment.

Make approval processes as streamlined and user-friendly as possible. For example, encourage pre-development meetings between developers and city staff. When drafting the UDO, devise zoning strategies to incentivize viable development at the most advantageous locations within the community to maximize returns on investment and attract and retain the best and brightest workers.

**The new Unified Development Ordinance will be graphically intensive and illustrate regulations to ensure the document is user friendly and development friendly (see examples adjacent and below).**





Examples of neighborhood centers in Raleigh, North Carolina.

### *What is a Neighborhood Center?*

Neighborhood centers are areas of predominantly residential neighborhoods that have retail and businesses that serve local residents’ day-to-day needs—dry cleaners, pharmacies, hair stylists, coffee shops, etc. Often, they include housing above shops and have wide sidewalks with trees and benches, on-street parking, transit stops, and safe pedestrian street crossings.

## Goal 03:

Encourage appropriate land uses to ensure basic services are provided equitably.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01 \* ✪

Encourage the development of basic community health services.

---

Support land use decision making that facilitates the development and success of pharmacies, clinics, doctors’ offices, and dentists’ offices, in all neighborhoods.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02 \* 🌿

Encourage the development of healthy, local-source food stores.

---

Support development initiatives that will locate grocery stores, supermarkets, produce stands, and farmer’s markets in currently underserved neighborhoods.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03 \* 🌿

Ensure that all development and redevelopment efforts include appropriate open space amenities.

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Parks, walking paths, greenways, community gardens, and conserved natural areas should be a staple of significant development projects in the City.

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### RECOMMENDATION 04 🌿

Ensure an appropriate mix of uses is supported in “neighborhood center” districts.

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Small-scale retail and service districts should be a component of all City neighborhoods, and should be coordinated with transit and supported by the zoning map. These neighborhood centers can also be used to begin formalizing distinct neighborhoods to facilitate the provision of public services as Burlington grows.

# Profile: Balancing Land Uses

Just like people, communities have to pay their bills. Their funding comes from tax collection, and often the residents of a community pay taxes not only to their town, but also the county, school district, and other organizations such as townships, libraries, and utility districts. Recently, Burlington has seen a large amount of housing construction but, despite common misconceptions, expensive residential development does not significantly contribute to total net tax revenues.

In addition, housing development tends to bring expenses like extended utility services, additional public rights-of-way to maintain, and additional students within the local school system, not to mention additional demand for parks and other community amenities.

On the other hand, new commercial or industrial developments do not themselves generally create additional burdens on school systems, and their sales or trade generates revenue. These developments, along with rental property and farmland, all contribute a higher rate of tax revenue than owner-occupied housing. In order to have a balance of tax revenue, businesses, farmland, rental property, and owner-occupied housing must occur within the same taxing district in proportions that support community needs.



*Example land uses in Burlington (listed from top left: suburban residential, new development, existing residential, regional mall).*

# Profile: Community Resilience

Community resilience is the capacity to withstand shocks from hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, or other natural hazards without permanent harm. Built on safe growth principles, resilient communities are able to anticipate, weather, and recover from the impacts of natural hazards. Designed to be strong and flexible, they may bend, but they do not break. Their new development is guided away from high-hazard areas, and their vulnerable existing development is relocated to safe areas. Their buildings are constructed or retrofitted to meet hazard code standards. Their natural environment protective systems are maintained and conserved so as to be able to mitigate hazard damage. And their citizens, governments, and businesses are prepared with information about hazard vulnerability and disaster resources.

Natural hazard resilience is encouraged through principles incorporated into three types of local growth guidance instruments:

- Comprehensive Plans, especially their land use, transportation, environmental management, and public safety elements;
- Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and other development regulations, including building and housing codes; and
- Capital Improvement Programs and infrastructure policies for extending water and sewer lines and building public facilities, such as roads and bridges.

Resilience may also be encouraged through economic development strategies, sector or neighborhood plans, and other initiatives with hazard-related land-use implications. Finally, resilience is a goal of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans required of state

and federal governments by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 as a condition of eligibility for federal hazard mitigation grants.

*Resource: "Safe Growth Audits," Zoning Practice Issue 10, David R. Godschalk, 2009.*



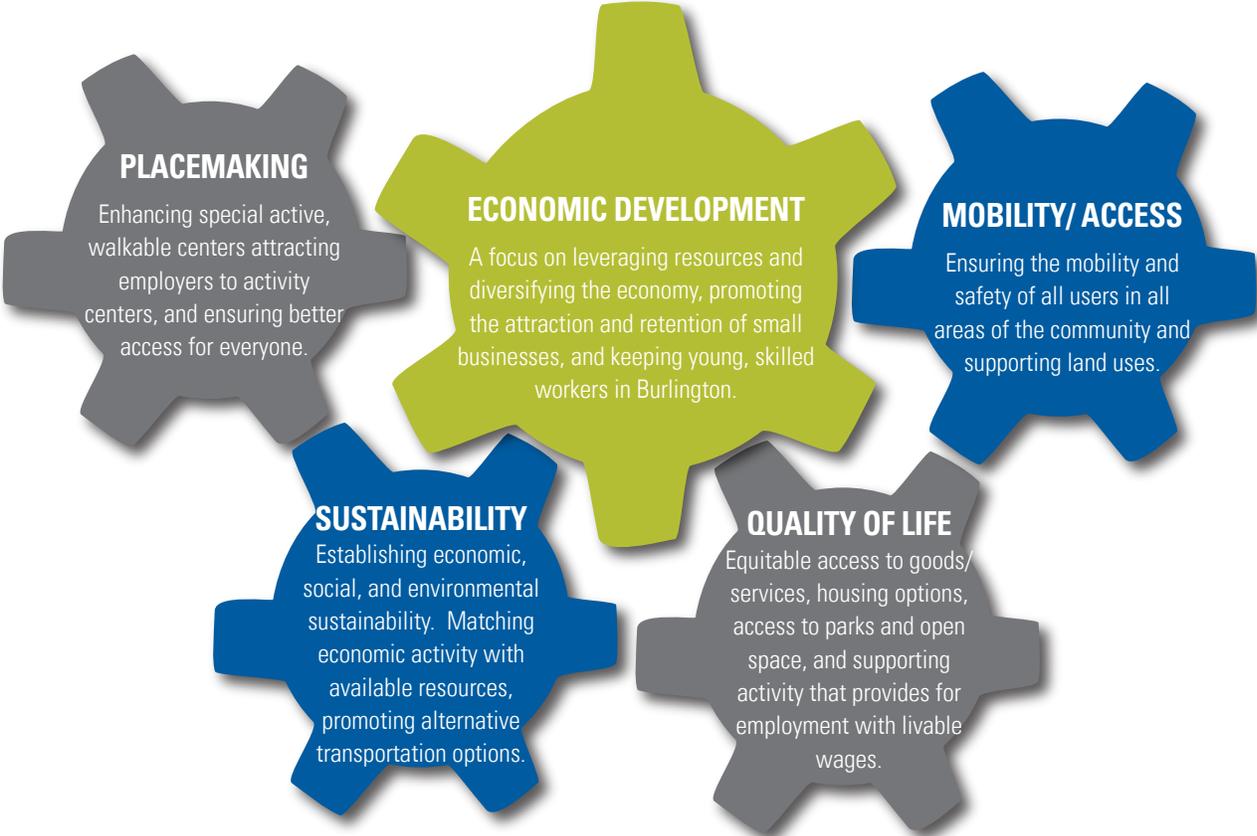
*One of Burlington's most notable recent natural disasters was the March 2014 ice storm. Floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes, while all rare, are potential hazards in Burlington. (images from [www.thetimesnews.com](http://www.thetimesnews.com))*

# Recommended Unified Development Ordinance Strategies

- Update existing adopted policies and regulations, particularly those related to coordinating land use and transportation and integrating mixed-use zoning.
- Update and streamline the system of regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan and incentivize development that creates high-quality, mixed-use destinations connected by vibrant, multi-modal corridors, while protecting and enhancing rural and other special places.
- Consolidate multiple land use and transportation documents into a new, user-friendly Unified Development Ordinance that establishes modern, context-sensitive zoning city-wide.

## KEY GOALS

As the community updates the UDO the process should support and promote the following tenets during all parts of the process:





# Parks & Open Space | 05



## First Focus

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To realize the goal of creating a network of greenways, trails, bicycle and pedestrian amenities, the City must first work with the community to complete a Greenway Implementation Study that determines desirable pathways. Forming partnerships with local utility companies, railroad companies, and private landowners will help open up more options for greenway connection locations.

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# Parks & Open Space

Burlington’s open space—those areas that are not developed nor slated for immediate development—can be studied in three general categories: open space used as trails, greenways, and other connections, open space used for parks and recreation facilities, and open space used for the protection or conservation of natural resources. All three are significant parts of Burlington’s character, civic amenities, and physical beauty. This chapter addresses those open spaces that can be actively used by the community for recreation—greenways and public parks. Natural resources will be discussed in the Infrastructure & Public Resources chapter of this Plan, as the topic is most properly addressed as one element of sustainable planning.

## Greenways

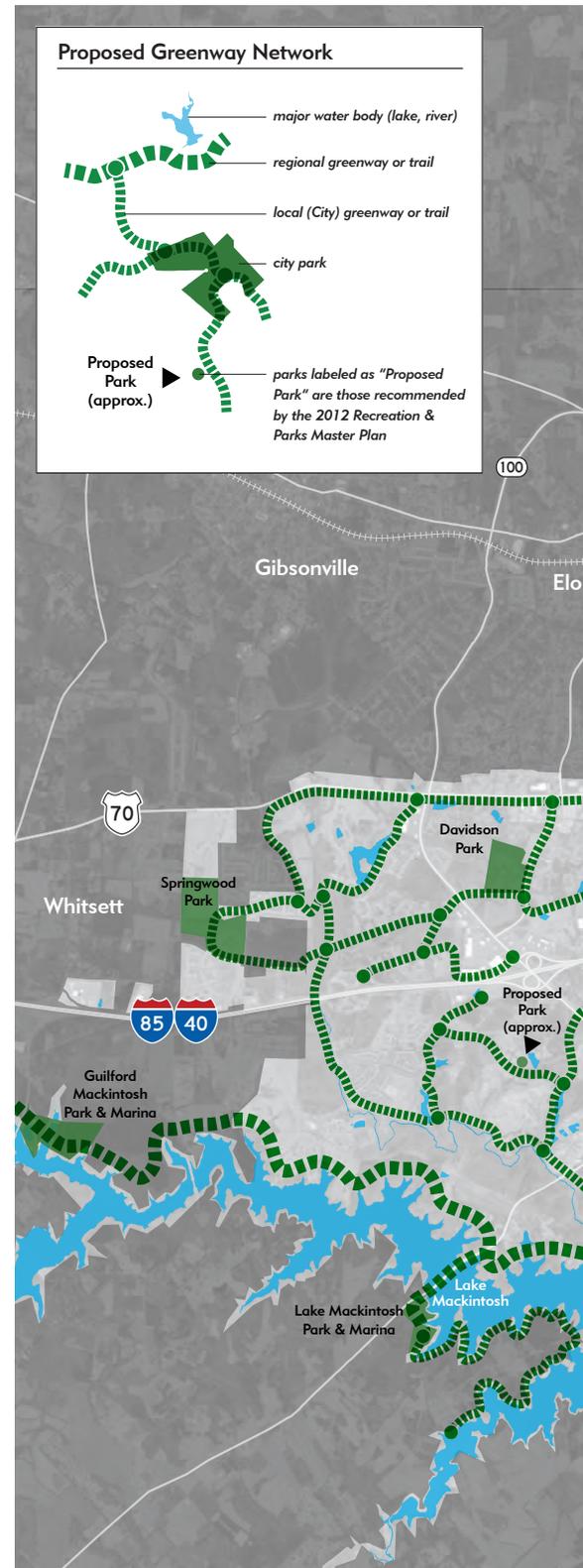
### OVERVIEW

Of all the community input related to Burlington’s open space, two significant needs continue to rise to the surface: a desire for a formal greenway system linking the City’s many assets and resources, and a need for better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and amenities. Open space as a means of connectivity throughout the City—as landscape amenities like trails and greenbelts, but also “hardscape” infrastructure like sidewalks, paths, and bike lanes—cannot be left underemphasized. The City of Burlington has studied opportunities for open space connectivity both in the past through the Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Land Use Plan from 1991, and more recently in the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan.

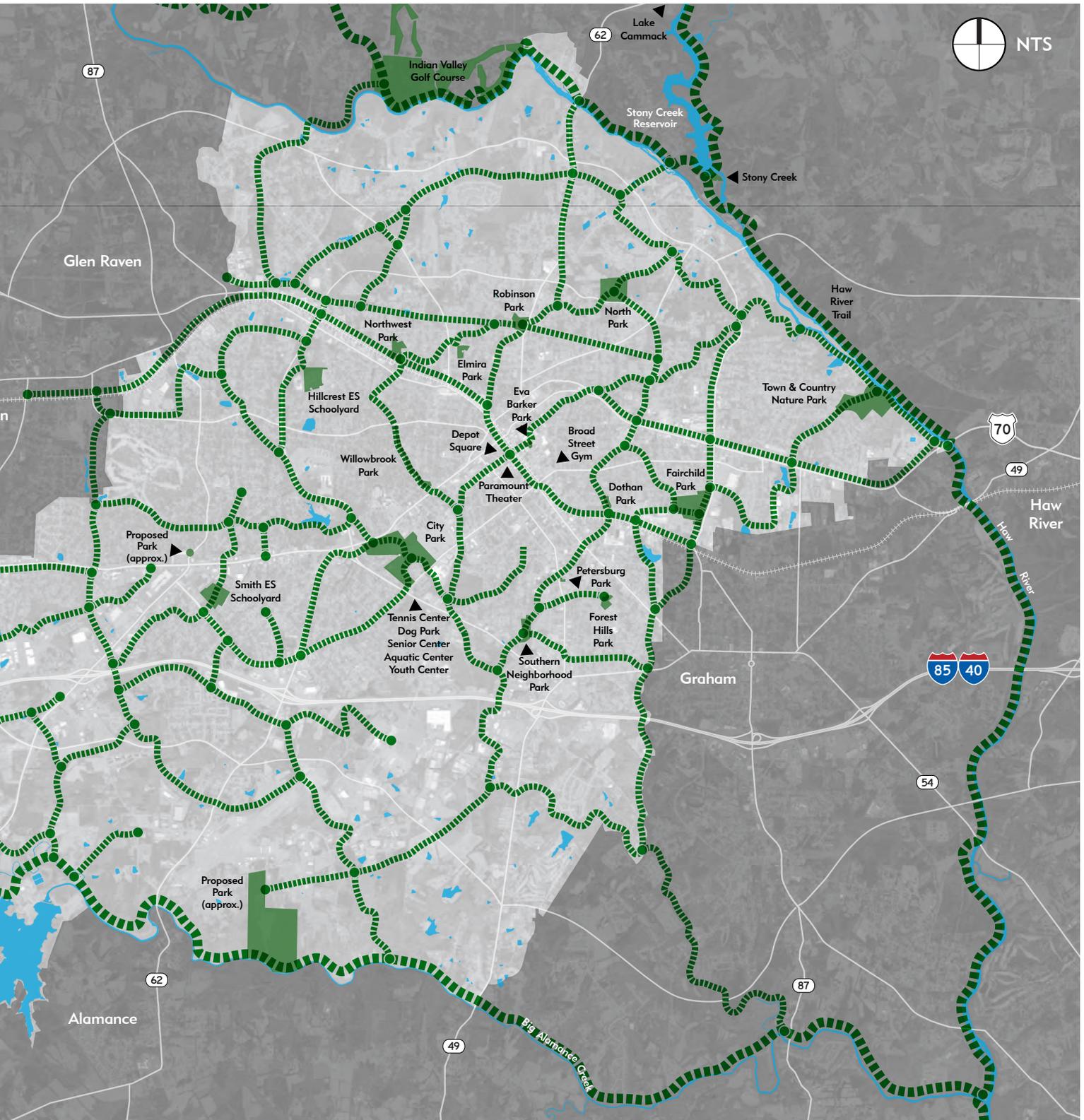
### GREENWAYS AND TRAILS

Open space as a connective system factored in significantly to the Recreation and Open Space Element of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan for the City, in which five of the twelve stated policies pertained to greenways, trails, and provisions for bicycle use. The development of the Haw River Trail was also a major recommendation of the plan, as were plans for greenways related to Great Alamance Creek, Lake Mackintosh, Little Alamance Creek, and the smaller waterways of Burlington’s northern and western neighborhoods. Willowbrook Park was seen as the beginning of a greenway through the central part of the City. Small area maps delineated corridors of opportunity for greenways, usually along the edges of the City’s significant natural features. The corridors identified by the 1991 plan are, largely, still plausible opportunities that can be augmented by new opportunities that have arisen in the past twenty-three years.

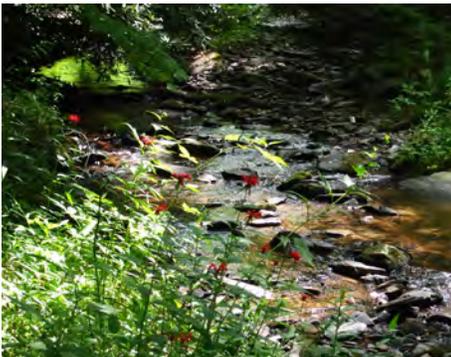
Regional trails and greenways factor strongly in both the 2007 Alamance County Recreation and Parks Comprehensive Master Plan and the 2003 Piedmont Triad Regional Open Space Strategy. In particular, the Haw River Trail, as a segment of the state-spanning Mountains-to-Sea Trail, is seen as a spine of smaller regional trails along Great Alamance Creek and Lake Mackintosh, Little Alamance Creek, and Gum Creek, with



Proposed Greenway Network



Through the regional Haw River Trail—part of North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail—Burlington has the opportunity to realize economic gain as a tourist “Trail Town” if the City can tap into that resource with a local greenway network.



Trail Character (above)

extensions to Lake Cammack and Graham-Mebane Lake, as well. The Haw River Trail is an excellent example of a partnership of local governments aligned toward the goal of establishing a regional greenway. Through the Conceptual Greenway Master Plan of 2007, this partnership created a design template that is being deployed throughout the corridor.

A greenway can serve many functions: a recreation and health amenity, transportation mode, infrastructure system, environmental protector, and economic driver. In “Economic benefits of trails” in the Summer 2011 issue of American Trails Magazine, Stuart Macdonald outlines the many economic benefits of trails through increased tourism, attracted redevelopment, higher property values, reduced health care costs, job growth, and increased consumer spending. In each case, millions of dollars of value are either created or saved as evidenced in case studies from New York, Miami, Wyoming, Arizona, and several other locations throughout the country. Another article in the same issue, “Trail Towns benefit from visitor spending,” outlines the case for trail tourism through a case study of the Great Allegheny Passage in Maryland and Pennsylvania. In 2008, this trail generated over \$40 million in direct annual spending and \$7.5 million in attributed wages. Burlington, situated right on the Haw River Paddle and Land Trails, could see an economic benefit from becoming a “Trail Town,” plugged into the Haw River Trail with its own greenway network.

### PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CONNECTIVITY

The recent 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan provided a comprehensive guide to developing an overall network of sidewalks on major routes to improve connectivity and safety. It was inclusive of different districts around town and studied Downtown as well as residential and business areas, distinguishing varying levels of service by context. It took a pragmatic approach to policy in creating regulatory guidelines that would support the vision of a pedestrian network. Continued implementation of the Master Plan is important in furthering pedestrian connectivity in Burlington.

Greenway corridors and trails, while mentioned by that Master Plan, seemed missing from the bricks-and-mortar, immediate implementation actions. A significant opportunity still exists to incorporate another layer of pedestrian connectivity on the community level throughout the City by identifying and preserving greenway corridors and trails in floodplain areas—not all pedestrian connectivity needs to happen along roadway corridors. There also is an advantage to specifically planning for a biking network in conjunction with new pedestrian improvements and multi-use trails. A Bicycle Master Plan will be an ideal complement to the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan. Refer to the brief profile of the 2012 Pedestrian Plan on page 143.

# Profile: Greenway Implementation Opportunities

Our traditional idea of a greenway is a pedestrian or bicycle trail meandering alongside a creek in a floodplain—often the best use of land that is otherwise constrained in its development. In order to realize a sufficiently connected greenway network, however, other pathways often need to be explored. “Rails-to-trails” is a popular movement for converting disused rail corridors into trails, but “rails-with-trails” is also possible along active railroads. Greenways can also be integrated into the redesign of roadway corridors if the right-of-way is gracious enough. Utility corridors—transmission lines, pipelines, sewer corridors, and underground aqueduct routes—can also be utilized for trails, with proper coordination with utility companies.



*Greenways are often created in floodplains where private development is curtailed (image source: [blueroadstohikingtrails.blogspot.com](http://blueroadstohikingtrails.blogspot.com))*



*Some utility corridors can be used for public access trails and greenways. (image source: [www.americantrails.org](http://www.americantrails.org))*



*Active rail lines can still host a trail alongside. (image source: [baycolonyrailtrail.org](http://baycolonyrailtrail.org))*



*Greenways can be incorporated into the redesign of major roadway corridors (image source: [www.thirdwavecycling.com](http://www.thirdwavecycling.com))*



**Burlington's park system includes a diversity of facility types, including traditional passive parks, playgrounds, lakefront marinas, a minor league baseball stadium, and even a Downtown performing arts theater.**

## Recreation & Parks

### 2012 RECREATION AND PARKS COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

In December of 2012, the City of Burlington's Recreation and Parks Department completed a Comprehensive Master Plan for the future of the department and its facilities through the year 2022. The Plan provided a good road map for gradual acquisition of new property, investment in existing facilities, and setting priorities for funding and meeting the anticipated demand for parks and recreation during the plan's time horizon. Through the planning process, the 2012 Plan collected and analyzed data and community input at a level of detail that is not within the traditional scope of an overall Comprehensive Plan process; therefore, the 2012 Plan is an indispensable resource for Destination Burlington and most of its recommendations should be carried forward through the Comprehensive Plan.

### PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

The 2012 Plan does leave some room for additional study and recommendations. Connectivity—pedestrian linkages to park sites to create connections with adjacent neighborhoods or the surrounding community—was overwhelmingly noted by community survey and workshop respondents as very important. Refer to the previous Greenways section for more recommendations related to connectivity of parks and neighborhoods.

The 2012 Recreation and Parks Plan addresses the need for 'Mini-Parks' (1-2 acres, mostly playgrounds/picnic facilities) on a neighborhood level. The Plan does not, however, recommend investment in new sites based on the assumption that new developments will provide these types of amenities. The findings in the Plan's surveys regarding current use and demand for facilities on the local level and addressing existing under-served neighborhoods seem to suggest that stronger development regulations may be necessary to support that assumption.

Neighborhoods on the west side of Burlington appear under-served in the 2012 Plan analysis and recommendations. These neighborhoods lack the smaller-scale parks prevalent in the central and eastern sides of the City. While community input suggests that the west side of the City is better served by parks than other neighborhoods, this perception may be in part due to the relatively recent development of new parks on the western edge of the City. The 2012 Plan recommends a new Community Park on the southern edge of Burlington's city limits as one of the few new investments to serve the developing southwestern area of the community.

### NEW RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Forecasting new types of recreation opportunities and trends now and in 2022 is important but not addressed in the 2012 plan. For example, natural playscapes, community garden facilities to promote healthy lifestyle and address food deserts,

fitness trails, spray parks, amenities geared towards senior living—all are current trends that must be anticipated in the development and enhancement of the parks system. Many resources exist to identify emerging trends in outdoor recreation, including the Parks and Recreation National Database Annual Report by the National Parks & Recreation Association, and the Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends by the American College of Sports Medicine.

## Case Study: North Park in Motion

The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) partnered with Active Living By Design (ALBD) to create “Fit Community” with support from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. A designation and grant program, Fit Community was designed to recognize and reward community-based efforts to make healthy choices easier and more accessible. The City of Burlington was the recipient of a grant in 2008-2010.

Parks, recreation and trail facilities are ideal settings for community-based initiatives to increase physical activity and healthy eating. As innate gathering places for community members and families, they serve as vital local resources and can support healthy lifestyles. Bringing play equipment or a walking track to a park where inadequate or no facilities existed previously can spur increased park use. Such actions can also lead to additional community ownership and interest in advocating for the park as a venue for healthy living.

“We wanna dance,” school-aged girls at North Park told partners from Burlington Parks and Recreation Department, the Alamance County Health Department, Healthy Alamance and nearby Elon University, who visited the park to see how a Fit Community grant might promote more opportunities for physical activity. While many boys and young men played basketball after school, girls and young women felt that “hanging out” was their only option. Overlooked by the city when decisions were made regarding improvements and programs, North Park was also underutilized by its more proximate neighbors, some of whom drove across town for recreational opportunities rather than walking to their own neighborhood park.



At North Park’s Mayco Bigelow Community Center, an unused ceramics room seemed ideal for conversion to a dance studio, an idea the partnership and the youth brainstormed together. This change in a single room marked the beginning of the North Park in Motion initiative, and a larger transformation of the physical infrastructure and social fabric that comprise North Park.

In addition to the new dance studio, funds from Fit Community, the city and partner agencies, along with the time and talent of city parks and recreation department staff, were invested in more physical projects at the park. A series of pedestrian safety improvements, including crosswalks and a new four-way stop at a busy intersection, made it easier and safer to walk or bike to the park. An existing but dilapidated outdoor walking loop was widened from six to eight feet and refreshed with new gravel, and lighting was added to extend the hours of use and keep the park safe.

Such changes—along with outreach to residents through surveys, a North Park in Motion branding campaign and a new walking club—helped create buzz. Community members took note and expressed a need for outdoor exercise equipment, bike racks and a water fountain in the park. In June 2011, the park added a biweekly produce stand, allowing residents to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from a local farmer.

*Resource: Adapted from “Creating healthy places to live, work and play across North Carolina – A report from the Fit Community Initiative.” [http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ALBD\\_FitComm\\_Webonly\\_0.pdf](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ALBD_FitComm_Webonly_0.pdf)*

## Goals and Recommendations

### Goal 01:

Improve city-wide and regional connectivity through greenways, trails, bicycle lanes and paths, and sidewalks.

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**RECOMMENDATION 01**  \* 

Conduct a Greenway Implementation Study.

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A focused study is necessary to define routes, feasible rights-of-way or easements, design guidelines, system phasing, and regional connection opportunities for a greenway system.

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**RECOMMENDATION 02**  \* 

Continue to implement the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan and conduct a complementary Bicycle Master Plan.

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Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle improvements with thoroughfare corridor improvements and greenway creation. A separate but complementary Bicycle Master Plan acknowledges the different needs of bicyclists and pedestrians.

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**RECOMMENDATION 03** \* 

Explore opportunities for public use of utility rights-of-way for recreation and trails.

---

Partner with Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas to determine the feasibility of utilizing their corridors and easements for public recreational trail use. Approach private landowners for easement use as a partnership.

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**RECOMMENDATION 04** \* 

Create a “rail-with-trail” greenway along the existing railroad right-of-way.

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Partner with Norfolk Southern and North Carolina Railroad to establish use and design constraints in light of future High Speed Rail use of the corridor.



Views of the Capital Area Greenway Trail System in Raleigh, North Carolina, above, show the diversity of landscapes through which a well-designed greenway system can traverse.

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**RECOMMENDATION 05** \* 

Coordinate greenway development with roadway corridor planning and improvement projects.

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Roadway corridor improvements guided by Corridor Plans are an opportunity to reconfigure the street right-of-way and fund adjacent landscape enhancements to create greenways along existing thoroughfares.

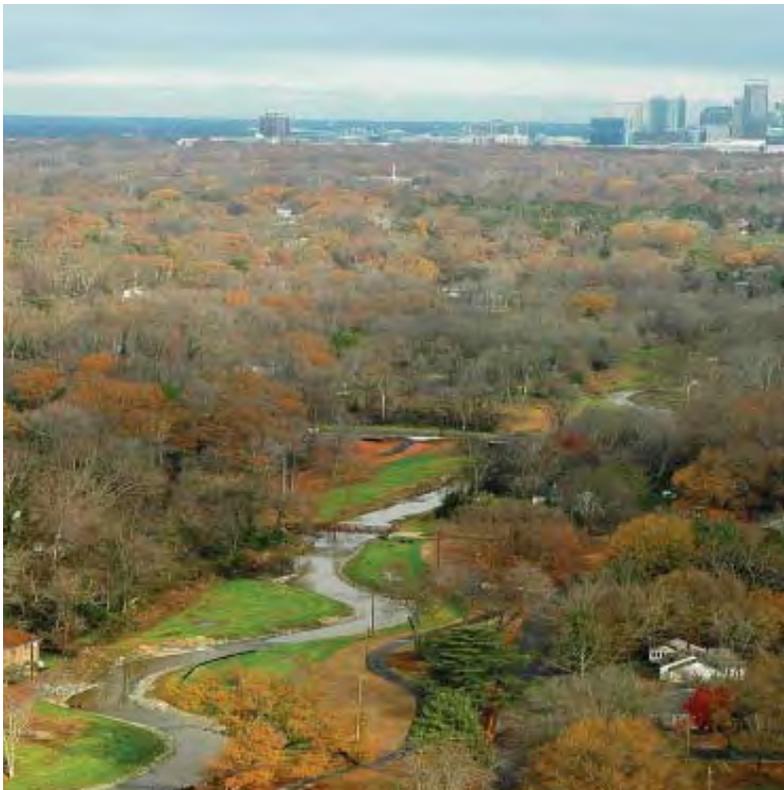
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**RECOMMENDATION 06** \* 

Integrate green stormwater management facilities into the design of greenways where appropriate.

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Well-designed greenways can serve as filters for runoff and holding basins for flood events in addition to serving as recreation and transportation facilities.



**Greenway systems are ideal for hosting water quality improvement and stormwater best management practices. The Little Sugar Creek Greenway in Charlotte, North Carolina, is an excellent example, pairing stream restoration with public recreation.**

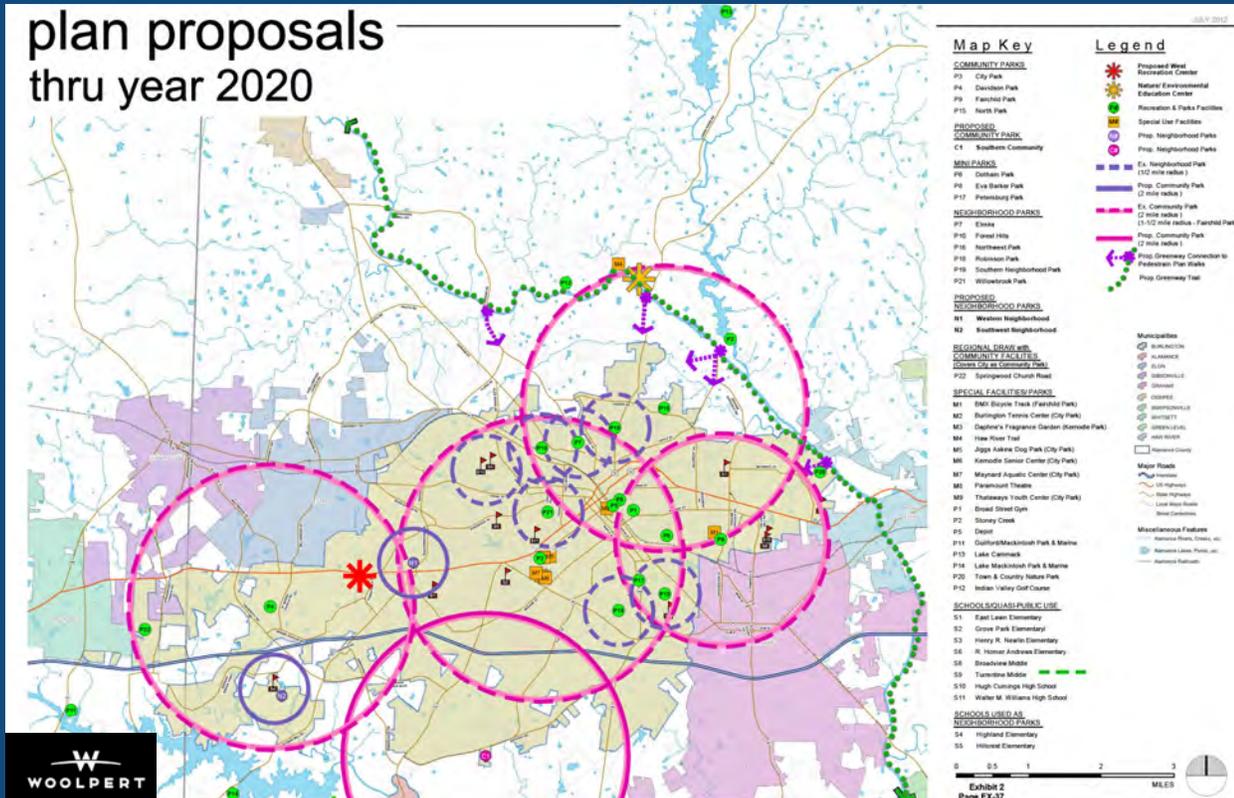
# Profile: Review of 2012 Parks Master Plan

The 2012 Recreation & Parks Master Plan included a number of recommendations for new facility development by 2022, including:

- 1 community park on the southern edge of the City
- 2 neighborhood parks, one on the City's western side, another in the developing southwestern corner
- 1 Nature Center/Environmental Education Center, potentially at the Glencoe Mill Village
- 1 recreation center/gymnasium on the western side of the City
- 5-6 miles of greenways, trails, and paths (along Haw River)
- 8 mini-park facilities (not located by the plan)

City of Burlington Total Park Sites and Acreage Requirements							
PARK TYPE		2010	2012	2017	2022	Existing	2022 Need
Population		50,475	51,949	55,033	58,127		
<b>Regional Parks **</b>							
(10 Ac/1000) +1000 Acre Parks	0.01000	505	519	550	581	10,000 +	0
	Sites	7	7	7	7	4	0
<b>District Parks **</b>							
(5 Ac/1000) +/-200 Acre Parks	0.00500	252	260	275	291	671	0
	Sites	7		7	1-2	4	0
<b>Community Parks</b>							
(5.0 Ac/1000) 45-75 Acre Parks (75ac)	0.00500	252	260	275	291	177	114
	Sites	3	3	4	4	4	1-2
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>							
(1.0 Ac/1000) +/-4-10 Acre Parks (7 ac avg.)	0.00100	50	52	55	58	38	20
	Sites	7	7	8	8	6	2
<b>Mini-Parks</b>							
(.25 Ac/1000) 5 -1.0 Acre Parks (.1 ac avg.)	0.00025	13	13	14	15	6	9
	Sites	13	13	14	15	8	8
<b>Special Use Parks</b>							
(no std. Acreage)		Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies	n/a
<b>Linear Parks / Greenway Trails</b>							
(.4 mile/1000)	Miles	20	21	22	23	8.0	15

\*\* The acreage shown for Regional & District parks denotes Burlington's share for this type of park whether provided by municipal, county, state or other governmental body



## Goal 02:

Maintain and enhance recreational facilities.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Continue implementation of the 2012 Recreation and Parks Master Plan.

The 2012 Master Plan set the groundwork for a decade of park improvements through community engagement and sound planning. Continuing to implement the plan over the coming decade should be a top priority.

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Equitably locate more small-scale parks and recreational opportunities.

Ensure that all residences throughout the City are within a 1/4-mile walking distance of City parks and greenways with appropriate, well-maintained facilities. Ensure that all development efforts include appropriate open space amenities so that small parks, walking paths, community gardens, and conserved natural areas are a staple of significant development projects.

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Research and forecast new types of recreational opportunities that can be integrated into the parks system.

Spraygrounds, rock-climbing walls, dog parks, mountain biking, disc golf, and other trends in recreational activities can inform park design and improvement programs. Engage community residents in identifying appropriate locations where innovations tailored to Burlington can be tested and implemented.

### RECOMMENDATION 04

Coordinate enhancements to Downtown public open space and use of City recreational facilities to support other Downtown initiatives.

Facilities like Depot Plaza, Eva Barker Park, and Paramount Theater can support Burlington Downtown Corporation efforts to grow an Arts & Entertainment District. Ensure connectivity of Downtown open spaces with the larger greenway system.



Small-scale parks, playgrounds, and community gardens should be located within a short walk of all neighborhoods across the City.



Enhancements to open spaces in Downtown can support a number of economic development and redevelopment initiatives



# Infrastructure & Public Resources

# 06



## First Focus

For a city of Burlington's size, opportunities for greater energy efficiency, resource conservation, "green" infrastructure, recycling, and other sustainability initiatives abound. A new Sustainability Master Plan will supplement the current Energy Plan in realizing sustainability goals.

# Infrastructure & Public Resources

Public resources are not just the pipes, wires, and trash pickups that we associate with urban infrastructure and services—though these are very important to every city. Public resources also include the natural systems and ecosystems we benefit from and utilize to sustain a healthy environment.

## Natural Resources

The citizens of Burlington spoke loud and clear, both through the Community Survey and discussions at public meetings, that stronger environmental protection and improved environmental stewardship were important goals for the future of their city. It is important, then, to consider the City's natural resources as significant *public* resources that can be conserved and championed by the City through its operations.

### NORTH CAROLINA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program is housed within the NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) Office of Land and Water Stewardship. The program serves as a database for conserving the rarest and most outstanding elements of natural diversity in the state including rare plant and animal species and natural communities. About twelve years ago, a survey of Alamance County's natural features was conducted and a Natural Heritage Inventory was produced for the County. The extensive survey and report and subsequent updates have identified a number of areas that have been listed as Natural Heritage Element Occurrences, Significant Natural Heritage Areas, and Natural Heritage Managed Areas. These areas are shown on the summary map for this report section. In essence, these areas contain natural communities of plants and animals which are so rare or so significant that they warrant special consideration in land-use decision-making.

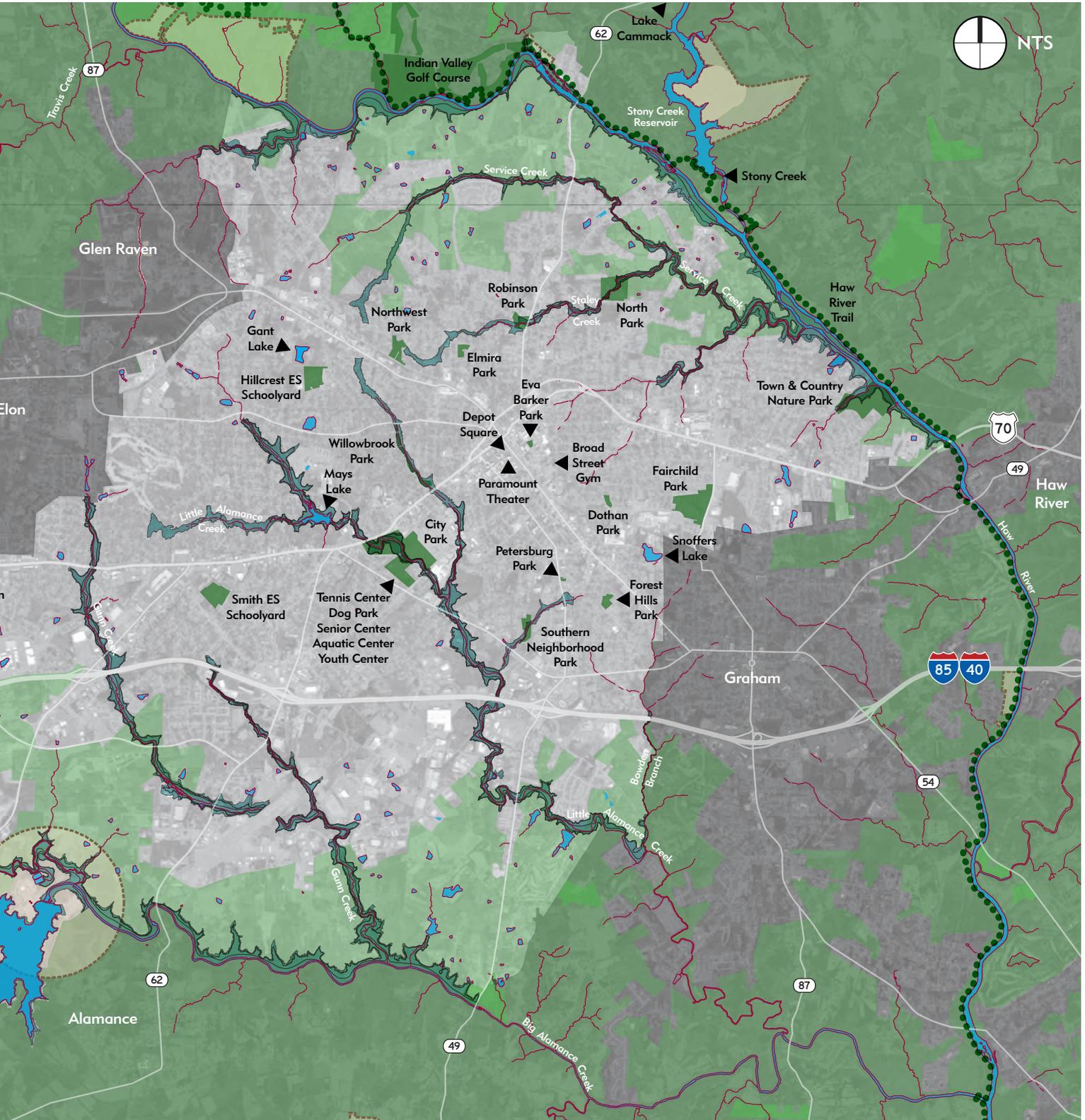
### AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The rural character of the outer edges of Burlington are an important part of its physical identity and aesthetic beauty. As in many growing, urbanizing areas across the country, though, agricultural lands are at risk of disappearing due to development pressures. In 2007, Alamance County produced an Agricultural Land Use Plan and an Agricultural Development Plan that was folded into an overall Farmland Protection Plan. Currently, the County uses a Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance under which landowners can petition the county for inclusion in the Farmland Preservation District. As a voluntary program, landowners are free to end their participation at any time. There are currently no farm preservation districts within Burlington's city limits, but there are three parcels within the City's Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) that are part of the district program, and another three immediately adjacent to the ETJ.

The City of Burlington Zoning Code has no formal zoning category or overlay district specific to agricultural uses or protection of farmland. Agricultural uses are permitted in most zoning districts of the City. Aerial photographs indicate that agricultural activities occur at a limited scale on certain parcels both inside Burlington's city limits and in the ETJ.



Natural Resources Summary Map



# Profile: Wetlands and Riparian Areas

## Defining Wetlands and Riparian Areas

Wetlands are areas inundated or saturated by surface or ground water seasonally or throughout the year. The presence of water at or near the surface is the dominant factor that determines soil characteristics as well as plant and animal communities.

Riparian areas are the vegetated corridors along streams, creeks, and rivers like the Haw. These areas are a complex ecosystem vital to the protection of stream and river water quality and include some of the richest varieties of plants and animals.

## Importance of Wetlands and Riparian Areas

Wetlands purify water by filtering and trapping sediment, chemicals, and excess nutrients before water enters other water bodies or groundwater. Wetlands provide habitat for fish, waterfowl, and other wildlife which use these areas to breed, find food, and protect their young. They also reduce flood damages by storing and slowing floodwaters. Wetlands regulate water levels within a watershed.

Healthy riparian areas are typically composed of large trees, woody understory trees and shrubs, perennials, grasses, and groundcovers. Well-maintained and managed riparian areas (including removal of flood debris) are able to influence the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the stream. They can provide food, shelter and natural linkages for a wide variety of plant and animal communities; they can shade and cool streams to enhance aquatic habitats; they can filter sediments and pollutants, preventing them from entering the stream or waterway; they can stabilize river banks, reduce bank erosion, and provide flood control.

## Identifying Wetlands and Riparian Areas

The general location of wetland areas may be determined using the U.S. Geological Service's (USGS) National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps. The exact boundaries of jurisdictional wetlands can be

determined using all three of the following criteria:

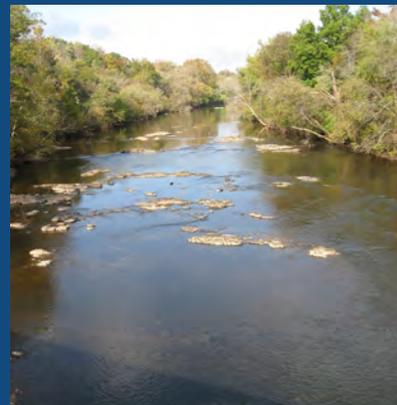
1. Water Indicator: the area is inundated or saturated to the surface, by a single, continuous episode, for at least 5% of the growing season in most years.
2. Wetland Vegetation: the presence of plant species that are typically adapted for life in anaerobic (low or no oxygen) soil conditions.
3. Hydric Soils: the presence of soil that is saturated, flooded, or ponded long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the root zone.

## Regulation of These Resources

Wetlands along waterways are protected primarily by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), as well as state and local environmental agencies may also regulate wetlands. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Corps, and USFWS have a public policy of "no net loss of wetlands" requiring acre-for-acre replacement of wetlands lost due to development either on-site or within the same watershed.

In North Carolina, the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) has the authority to regulate riparian areas for water quality purposes. Often the local government represented by the Planning Department may choose to regulate development.

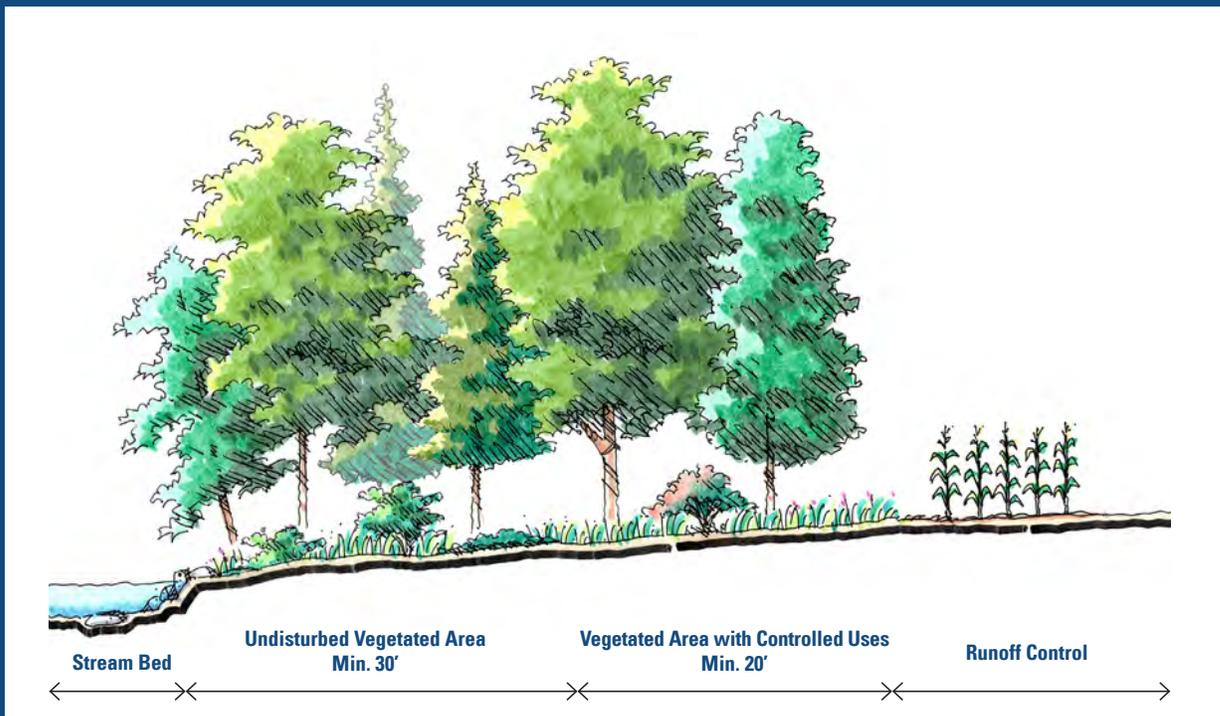
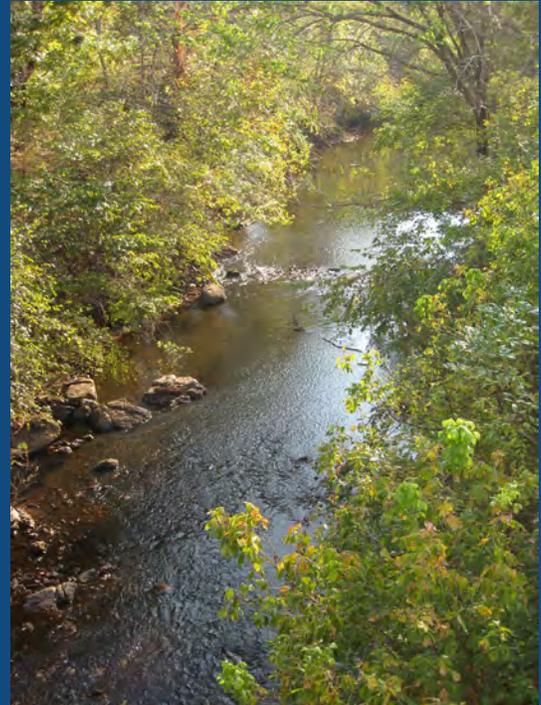
Most of Burlington's waterways contribute to the Jordan Water Supply, one of the major public water supplies in the western Triangle region of the state.



As part of this watershed, the Haw River and tributary waterways are subject to the Jordan Lake Nutrient Management Strategy (“Jordan Rules”), state law 15A NCAC 02B .0267-0.273. These rules include the provision and allowable uses for riparian buffers—required vegetated (often forested) zones used to protect the water quality of waterways from the negative impact of adjacent land uses. The Jordan Rules require every buffer to have two protected zones:

1. Undisturbed Vegetated Area: This zone is adjacent to the stream and is 30 feet in width, minimum. Removal of vegetation is not permitted.
2. Vegetated Area with Controlled Uses: This zone is 20 feet in width, minimum. This area should be undisturbed, but grading and revegetating is allowed

Jordan Lake riparian buffers must also have a control zone outside of Zone 2 to diffuse or disperse concentrated runoff flow to prevent eroded gullies. Managed revegetation and grading can be used to control runoff in these zones.





**Scenes of the Little Alamance Watershed and adjacent Travis & Tickle Creek Watershed can be both remarkably beautiful and stunningly tragic. (Images taken from the Little Alamance, Travis & Tickle Creek Watersheds Report & Project Atlas, 2008)**

# Stormwater Management

## OVERVIEW

Burlington has six watersheds: the Haw River, Little Alamance Creek, Back Creek, Gum Creek, Service Creek, and Dry Creek, with the latter watersheds flowing into the Haw River basin. The Haw River basin is located in the upper portion of the Cape Fear River Basin. The headwaters of the Haw River are located in the northeast quadrant of Forsyth County, and the river flows southeast past Burlington and on to the Cape Fear River. Between the Interstate I-40/85 corridor and NC 87, the Haw River is included on the State's 303d list of impaired waterways.

The Little Alamance Creek is one of the larger tributaries of the Haw River within Burlington's city limits and its watershed is a sub basin to the Haw River Basin. The watershed spreads across western Alamance County just north of the I-40/85 highway. The urban areas of Burlington have expanded and contributed low density impervious coverage to the watershed. This urban area occupies 57% of the land in the Little Alamance watershed and its adjoining Travis and Tickle Creeks watershed to the north.

The Cape Fear River Basinwide Water Quality Plan (July 2000) classified the Haw River as a Class C-Nutrient Sensitive Water (NSW). The 2000 plan also classified the Haw River as partially supporting and impaired for fecal coli form bacteria, sediment and unknown biological causes. The Haw River sub-basin (03030002) was rated as a Category 1—calling for high-priority restoration by North Carolina. Little Alamance Creek is considered an impaired water body by the North Carolina Division of Water Quality (NC DWQ). NC DWQ monitoring indicated the waters of the Little Alamance Creek violate the Clean Water Act for impaired biological integrity with the stresser being urban stormwater runoff.

## CONSERVATION AND RETROFITS

In rural conditions, a goal would be to assist landowners wishing to install a variety of conservation practices on cropland: conversions to grass or trees, long term no-till planting, field borders, grassed waterways, strip cropping, streamside livestock fencing, stream crossings, water troughs, wells and spring developments. In the City's urban setting, it was noted that as the Little Alamance Creek watershed has urbanized, both volume and rate of stormwater runoff have increased, resulting in stream instability, in-stream erosion, and increased pollution. Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) such as wetlands, rain gardens, or grass swales installed within the stream corridor or upland areas can capture and treat stormwater runoff before it reaches the streams. Most of the watershed's development predates stormwater regulation. Retrofitting existing

# Profile: Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management

Stormwater management is one of the most difficult challenges that a city faces in terms of minimizing its environmental impact on surrounding waterways. It is often one of the major sources of pollution in both urban and rural areas.

One of the main objectives of stormwater management is to prevent the direct flow of runoff from impervious surfaces (those that cannot soak in rainwater) into the creeks and rivers that convey water downstream in the watershed. When there is direct flow, pollutants in the runoff have no time to settle out of the water before they can pollute creeks and rivers. Many Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been developed to hold stormwater long enough to allow the contaminants to settle out or run the water through constructed wetlands to filter pollutants out of the water before entry into a river.

The use of “green infrastructure” like constructed wetlands and bioswales—drainage channels lined with filtering plants—can be beneficial for the treatment of stormwater runoff for existing properties and developing residential subdivisions, business, and industry. This green infrastructure replaces some of the expensive pipes and tanks that would otherwise be required to control stormwater, and manages it in a manner similar to nature. Some of the benefits of integrating BMPs into new development projects include:

- They can be less expensive to install and maintain.
- They can be self-healing.
- People want to be able to access the natural environment in which they live, and stormwater management facilities have the potential to become spectacular components of parks and greenways.
- They are more readily permitted by regulatory agencies.
- Communities and corporations can project a progressive environmentally-friendly image.

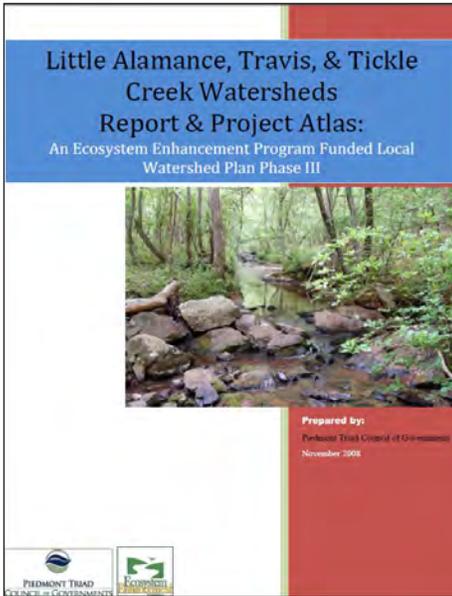
- They encourage better integration of the built and natural environments.
- There is a reduced liability for wet ponds with extended shallow water shelves.

There are also some issues to consider when utilizing constructed wetlands:

- The types of plant materials used: native vs. ornamental.
- The natural elements will need to be maintained.



*From the top: parking lot bioswale, permeable pavement, and streetside raingarden*



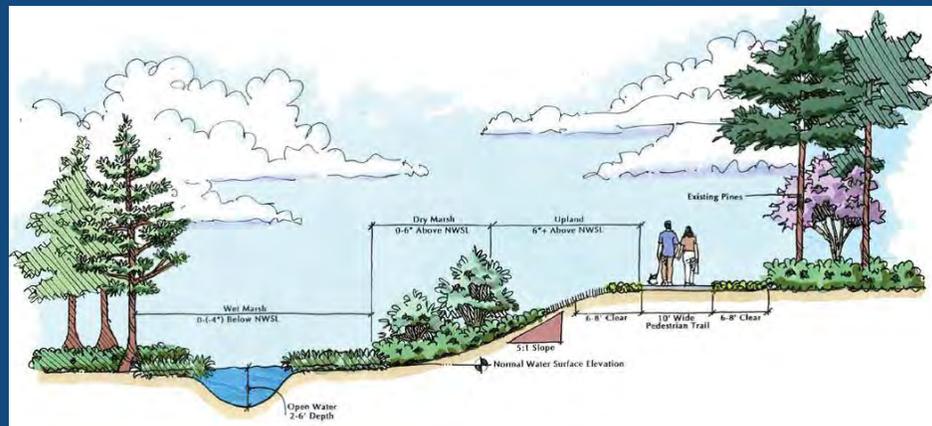
This 2008 report by Piedmont Triad Council of Governments identified a number of sites for enhancements and retrofits along local waterways.

sites is an expensive, but necessary, way to correct existing impacts. Retrofits opportunities can be described as follows:

- Retrofit public sites as demonstration projects.
- Avoid, or minimize, impacts to existing forests and wetlands as filter areas.
- Address commercial areas' on-site stormwater needs through retrofitting highly impervious sites with stormwater and pollution source control measures, more commonly known as BMP's.
- Encourage planting of native trees and shrubs, particularly within the 50-foot riparian corridors.
- Use stream buffers and rain gardens in older neighborhoods.
- Convert existing dry ponds to improved stormwater treatment devices such as wet ponds or stormwater wetlands.
- Treat larger drainage areas on County and City-owned lands.

## Case Study: Stormwater Management in Parks

James E.L. Wade Park in Wilmington, North Carolina, is a 16.5-acre site purchased by the New Hanover County Tidal Creeks program through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. The site primarily serves as a stormwater management facility to help improve water quality within the Hewletts Creek Watershed, but it is also a passive recreation park for area residents. Improvements include walking trails, environmental education signage, picnic areas and shelters, playground, boardwalk and overlook, and playfields.



# Wastewater and Potable Water

## OVERVIEW

Burlington’s wastewater collection system consists of approximately 18,500 connections serving homes, businesses and industry, 426 miles of gravity sewer lines, 4 sewer lift stations and 6,500 feet of pressurized forcemain. Everyday, an estimated 11.9 million gallons are transported through the collection system to the East Burlington and South Burlington wastewater treatment facilities. The collection system has both gravity lines and forcemains.

The City’s water supply system has ample volume and capacity to accommodate the future growth of the urban areas well into the 21st century. The Lake Mackintosh reservoir has added 7.5 billion gallons of water to the City’s water supply system.

The City’s existing sewage collection system can only accommodate minor future sewer line extensions within the immediate drainage basins surrounding the City. Future expansion beyond these areas will require lift station improvement and/or the construction of new sewer outfall lines.

## STUDY AREAS

The City and its Extra-territorial Jurisdiction can be divided into study areas similar to those used in the Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Plan from 1991.

North Burlington is mostly rural/residential in character with large vacant acreages and farmland. Population and housing growth in the past has been limited. Poor transportation and lack of public water and sewer services in areas outside the City greatly affect the area’s future growth potential. A specific need in this area is the provision of public sewer service in the Westmoreland Heights and Glen Raven Road area.

East Burlington is an area containing older areas of both residential and commercial development. In between these developed areas is a high percentage of vacant developable land. The area has experienced a declining population and a low production of new housing. A specific need in this area includes the extension of sewer lines along North Sellars Mill Road to provide service to unserved residential neighborhoods.



**Burlington’s water resources and infrastructure are not just the noticeable water towers that punctuate the landscape around the City, but also the more behind-the-scenes treatment plants, pumping stations, and of course the miles and miles of pipes.**

## 06 | Infrastructure & Public Resources

South Burlington is mostly residential in character, but commercial and industrial development continues to expand in the area; over 50% of South Burlington is zoned for future industrial growth. Continued industrial growth within the I-40/85 corridor and near the airport will substantially change the land development patterns in the area. Specific needs in this area include:

- Extend sewer along Maple Avenue from south of Bayview Drive to south of Race Track Road.
- Extend sewer along Whites Kennel Road between Anthony Road and Ample Avenue.
- Extend sewer to east of Old Trail Road that will flow toward Great Alamance Creek outfall.
- Extend sewer along Anthony Road from Alamance Road to the northeast.
- Extend water and sewer to the Shamrock Golf Course area.

Southwest Burlington contains large acreage of public land, farmland and residential dwellings. This rural landscape is changing as development pressures intensify. A specific need in this area includes the extension of sewer along Kirkpatrick Road from Grand Oaks Boulevard to Alamance Road.

West Central Burlington is the fastest growing area within the City. Population and housing growth has been strong, and there is currently a good balance in both residential and non-residential development. Specific needs in this area include:

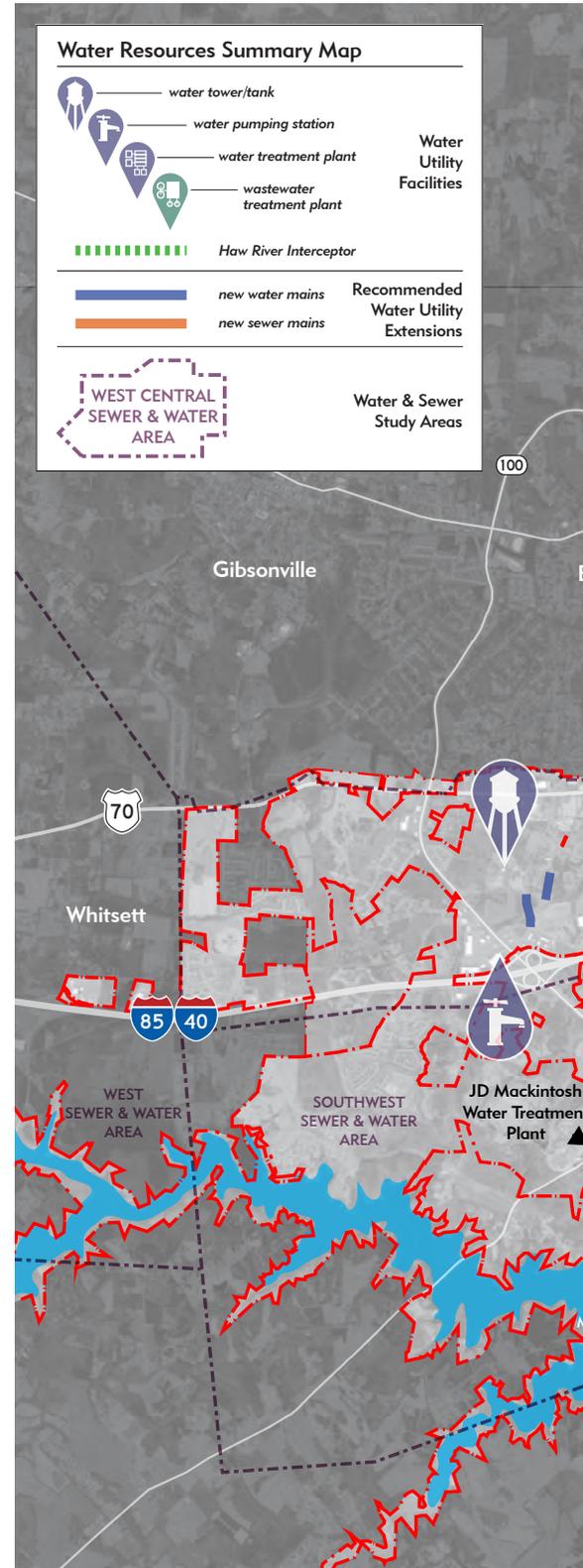
- Extend public water to the St. Marks Church Road area North of Boone Station Drive.

In 2002, the City of Burlington and the City of Greensboro entered into a water and sewer agreement which set forth service areas in proximity to Rock Creek in eastern Guilford County. AWCK prepared a report and master plan that showed how the "Western Sewer Service Area" could be served, and the report was updated in 2012. Recommendations noted in the report include:

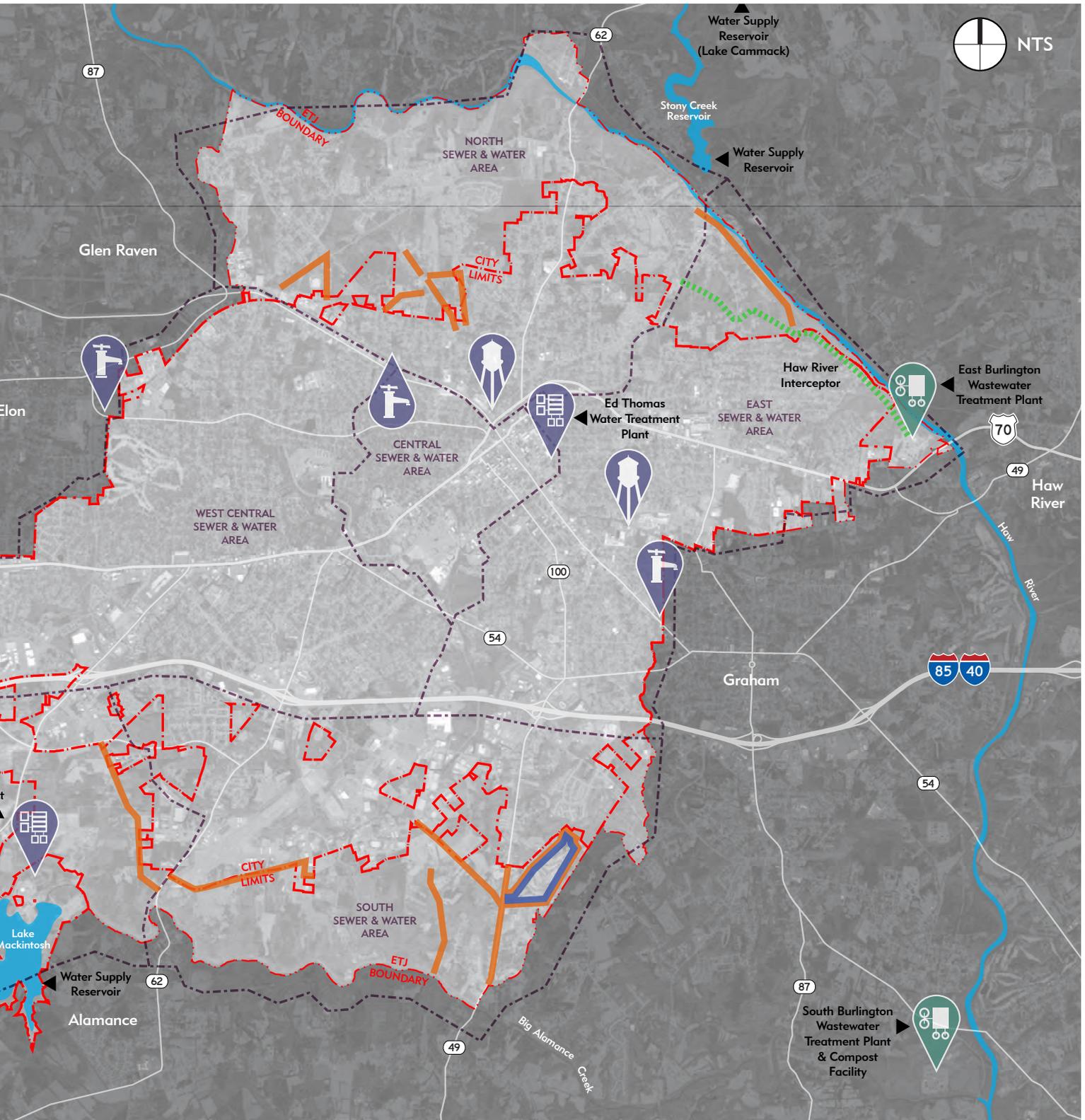
- Extension of the Rock Creek Outfall, the regional pump station and forcemain.
- Sewer improvements include installation of outfalls to serve the sub areas of the balance of the western service area.
- Change discharge of forcemain from Springwood Park Outfall to Garden Road Outfall.

Central Burlington contains the City's central business district and a diversity of older surrounding residential neighborhoods. The area has experienced a decline in population and a number of redevelopment and urban renewal efforts.

- No new extensions of utilities are needed in this area since it is fully developed. Inflow/Infiltration reduction planning should be conducted as the area redevelops.



Water Resources Summary Map



## Profile: Public Use of Utility Easements

Duke Energy has a number of requirements for public use of transmission rights-of-way over and above the private property rights of landowners granting the utility an easement. Improvements like structures, paving, or fencing are subject to specific guidelines, as are plantings and drainage features. Shared-use paths and trails are allowed under certain conditions and within very specific dimensional parameters. The utility reserves the right, however, to close any portion of the trail for any length of time without notice.

Because the utility infrastructure in natural gas rights-of-way are not exposed, the regulations of public use are less restrictive than electrical transmission rights-of-way. Piedmont Natural Gas allows hiking trails as an acceptable use and simply requires written permission for paving, fences, and grading activities. As gas rights-of-way are most often private property easements, however, private landowner rights are still applicable.

## Utility Networks

### ELECTRICAL NETWORK

Duke Energy is the utility provider for electrical service in Burlington. The utility operates five power generation plants within an approximate 50-mile radius, including coal-fired plants, oil/gas powered plants, and one nuclear plant. Duke Energy owns and operates nine electrical substations within the City's jurisdiction and has several utility rights-of-way for overhead transmission.

Burlington currently has two public electric car charging stations. In 2012, the North Carolina Department of Transportation opened a charging station at both I-85 Alamance County rest stops in the southwest part of Burlington but they were dismantled in 2013. That same year, electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla opened its first North Carolina high-speed charging station at Alamance Crossing. Carolina Nissan on Huffman Mill Road also operates a public charging station.

### NATURAL GAS NETWORK

Piedmont Natural Gas (PNG) is the utility provider for municipal gas service in Burlington. Two regional pipelines run through Burlington's planning jurisdiction—one along the Haw River and another that cuts across the center of the City roughly along the Little Alamance Creek corridor. PNG owns and operates three gate stations inside or proximate to the City along the Little Alamance Creek pipeline. Piedmont Natural Gas operates a network of public natural gas filling stations, some of which are located in the cities of the Piedmont Triad.

### DATA NETWORKS

Burlington operates its own fiber network for municipal functions. A 48-count fiber line runs east and west from Downtown along North and South Church Street. The western extension terminates at City Park. The fiber line runs east to terminate at the City's Animal Shelter and wastewater treatment facility on Stone Quarry Road. The City plans to run a 24-count fiber line out to University Drive then south to a new fire station within 18 months. There have been private requests for a public fiber infrastructure in the Downtown area of the City.

Time Warner Cable and AT&T provide television, telephone, and high-speed internet services in the City—Time Warner through a coaxial cable network using cable modems and AT&T through the standard telephone network using DSL. Both companies have begun high-speed Internet service (gigabit or faster) in select markets nationally. MegaPath also provides data and voice service over copper wireline in parts of the City.

Public wireless internet service is available through 10-12 access points in a 12-block area Downtown. Public internet access is also available at City Park, Springwood Park, and soon at Kernodle Senior Center. The City also has non-public access points at Royals Stadium and at North Church Street and Graham Hopedale Road for police use.

# Public Services

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In their 2012 Annual Report, the Burlington Police Department described several new initiatives for improving policing activity, including enhanced communications systems through the City’s fiber network, an enhanced Emergency Operations Center, new community watch groups, a bicycle patrol, new Downtown and parks patrols, and a redistricting study to create better zones. A 2014 Police Department Community Survey revealed geographic variability in the public’s perception of the department in regards to trust, professionalism, proactiveness, access, and general safety, suggesting a perception of inequity amongst the population.

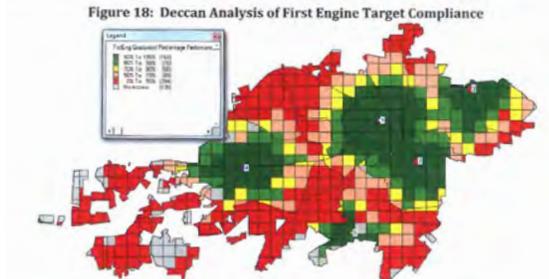
In 2011, the Center for Public Safety Excellence, Inc. produced a Fire Station Distribution and Coverage Study for Burlington. This study noted that the distribution of forces was inadequate in some parts of the city—there were some gaps of coverage and long response times. While the east side of Burlington is the predominant location of fire incidents, is not necessarily underserved—southwest and northwest of Downtown are most vulnerable, but also have the lowest incident rate. The study recommended either a new sixth fire station at Rockwood and Front streets combined with a new seventh fire station in southwest area of city, or a move of Station #4 northeast and the addition of a southwest station.

## SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

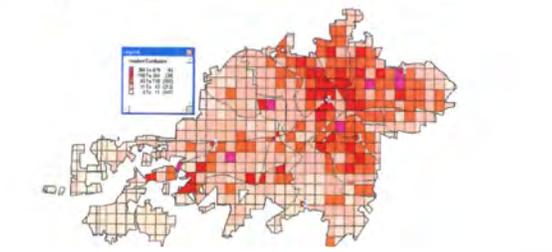
The City of Burlington is the largest of nine municipalities served by Alamance County’s Solid Waste Management system. Burlington’s solid waste largely is deposited at Alamance County Landfill, located southeast of the City’s jurisdiction. The landfill has a special Construction & Demolition Waste Cell separate from Municipal Solid Waste. Future development at the landfill includes a potential gas extraction system; recent development includes the 2008 purchase of 115 acres of adjacent land for a buffer. There are no plans to transfer solid waste outside of the county, nor plans for mixed solid waste processing for material recovery or municipal waste composting.

The City of Burlington Sanitation Division of the Department of Public Works conducts weekly curbside collection of household garbage, yard waste, and bulk waste. Burlington has bimonthly curbside pickup for commingled recyclables, contracted directly with Waste Industries since 2012. The City operates a compost warehouse at South Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant, within which yard waste is combined with treated sludge to produce compost.

B. First Engine Compliance to Time Target on Structure Fires from Current Fire Stations



Incident Distribution  
Medical Emergencies and Structure Fires January 2007 – April 2011



**These analysis maps from the 2011 study of fire station distribution in Burlington by the Center for Public Safety Excellence show that response times are inadequate in parts of the City, but also that the majority of incidents occur where the most fire stations are located.**

The current Water Resources Department composting operation at the South Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant is one example of Burlington’s current sustainability initiatives.

# Case Study: Sustainability Planning

In 2012, the City of Champaign, Illinois, commenced a sustainability planning process called Champaign Growing Greener. The resulting Environmental Sustainability Plan was the city's first community-wide sustainability plan, funded through an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG).

The City Sustainability Team concentrated on seven focus areas:

- Green Economy
- Water
- Built Environment
- Energy
- Transportation Behavior
- Solid Waste & Recycling
- Food and Urban Agriculture

The resulting Plan is a clear, accessible document appropriate to a general audience, with sidebar profiles and several "By the Numbers" infographics that describe Champaign's sustainability profile in comparison to state and national statistics.

In 2014, the American Planning Association - Illinois Chapter conferred an Award to Champaign Growing Greener in the sustainability plan category.

Resource: <http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/planning/long-range-planning/champaign-growing-greener/>

## Goals and Recommendations

### Goal 01:

Improve overall environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

---

#### RECOMMENDATION 01

Conduct a Sustainability Master Plan for the City.

---

A city of Burlington's size can harvest great financial benefit through efficiency and conservation efforts. Set out a plan for the City's Sustainability Division to coordinate other City departments in sustainability efforts.

---

#### RECOMMENDATION 02 \*

Develop a coordinated plan for conserving agricultural lands and significant natural resources.

---

Partner with Alamance County, DENR, and local environmental advocacy groups to identify the most significant local resources and develop a plan that uses both incentives and regulation to guide conservation.

---

#### RECOMMENDATION 03 \*

Develop a city-wide strategy for identifying, monitoring, and facilitating the remediation of suspected brownfield sites.

---

Update the City's past brownfield study and revise recommendations to align the study with the current market realities.

---

#### RECOMMENDATION 04

Provide more alternative fuel options for the public.

---

Partner with Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas to provide electric vehicle charging stations and natural gas fueling stations for consumers.

**RECOMMENDATION 05** \* 

Promote outdoor educational and research opportunities for students of all ages.

Support outdoor education for youth through special programs and outdoor classroom gathering spaces. Work with ABSS, Elon University, and Alamance Community College to identify safe and accessible natural field study sites for all ages of students.

## Profile: Agricultural Conservation

The Future Land Use Plan in this Comprehensive Plan identifies areas of Burlington's jurisdiction that may warrant an agricultural zone or rural residential zone. Through establishment of a rural residential zone, the City can help protect farmland through two means—purchase of development rights (PDR) or transfer of development rights (TDR). These two mechanisms allow rural property owners to realize some compensation for the potential loss in real estate development value.

PDR is a system in which the City would appraise the additional value of a rural landowner's development rights and purchase those rights as a conservation easement to prevent or limit the extent of future development. Funding could come from general tax revenues, and open space bond, or dedicated funding from a sales tax increase.

TDR is similar in that it puts a value on the development rights of rural landowners, but in this system, those rights are sold to developers to allow denser, more compact development closer to the city. In the TDR system, market economics fund the conservation, but must be carefully designed and monitored by the city. A benefit of a TDR system is the ability to realize two goals in one transfer of rights—a conserved, low-density agricultural periphery and a

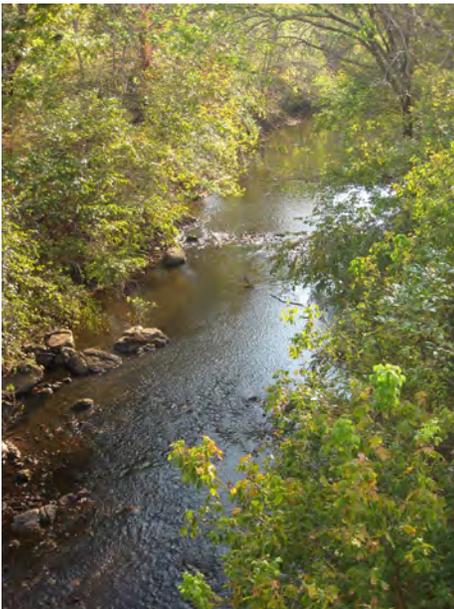
vibrant, redeveloped city center.

The City of Burlington should work in concert with Alamance County government to coordinate their strategies and build upon the County's 2007 Agricultural Land Use Plan and Agricultural Development Plan.

*Resource: "Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes," US EPA, 2012.*



*Despite being a large city, Burlington still has a rural periphery in its planning jurisdiction that can be conserved as a resource for future generations*



**Burlington's surface water supply is not just the reservoirs like Lake Mackintosh (top image), but also the streams and creeks in the watershed that feed those reservoirs (above).**

## Goal 02:

Manage the City's stormwater and surface waters sustainably.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01 \*

Protect the City's surface water supply.

---

Continue implementation and refinement of the Nutrient Management Plan to protect surface water drinking water supply.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02 \*

Identify conservation and retrofit project opportunities in local watersheds to address and prevent water pollution.

---

The needs and density of watershed restoration projects differ across watersheds. Urbanized watersheds require greater investment in attenuating stormwater impacts. Rural watersheds would focus on buffer repair needs and stream repair.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03 \*

Consider a flexible approach to achieving on-site and off-site stormwater management requirements to encourage infill development.

---

Retrofitting existing sites is an expensive but often necessary way to correct existing impacts. This is especially true with respect to nutrient reductions. Stormwater utility fees are currently utilized but communities will need to invest the time to develop sustainable financing to create shared stormwater facilities.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 04

Begin a sustainable infrastructure program for public realm design.

---

Manage City stormwater runoff in difficult, largely impervious urban environments through street rain gardens, bioswales, and other low impact designs. Make green infrastructure practices a design standard for new development and redevelopment in the City.

## Goal 03:

Address water and sewer utility issues and needs.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Prepare a Water and Sewer Service Area Plan for future extension of water and sewer service.

Provide water and sewer extensions to unserved areas within Burlington’s city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction consistent with the goals outlined through the Future Land Use Plan and as described in this Plan Chapter. The Area Plan will identify the utilities needs, costs and funding sources.

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Require an impact study for all developments over 5 acres.

This impact study would be, in essence, an infrastructure availability analysis to determine the potential impact on storm sewers and other public infrastructure and note if upgrades are required in the short or long term.



**While continued system maintenance is a primary concern within the urbanized areas of the City, making sure that the City’s water and sewer system are extended responsibly and efficiently is the most significant issue on the City’s periphery**



“Making sure the U.S. has super-fast, high-capacity, ubiquitous broadband networks delivering speeds measured in gigabits, not megabits, isn’t just a matter of consumer convenience, as important as that is. It’s essential to economic growth, job creation and U.S. competitiveness.

To maintain U.S. leadership in innovation, we need to keep pushing for faster broadband networks, and we need a critical mass of innovation hubs that offer homes and businesses access to gigabit broadband.”

Julius Genachowski, Chairman of the FCC

Excerpt of “Faster, Sooner: Why The U.S. Needs ‘Gigabit Communities’” on [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com).

## Goal 04:

Enhance public infrastructure at significant opportunity sites.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Secure high-speed Internet access throughout Burlington.

---

Reach out to Internet infrastructure providers like Google, AT&T, and Time Warner to provide gigabit internet service to the City.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Provide “innovation infrastructure” and public service upgrades Downtown and at identified opportunity sites.

---

Engage local entrepreneurs and those considering starting up a company in Burlington about the types of infrastructure or service improvements that would spur innovative companies to locate Downtown or targeted redevelopment sites. Refer to the profile on page 23 for potential Downtown improvements.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Update the 2012 Downtown Parking Plan to address changes with the departure of some LabCorp workers.

---

While the Downtown Parking Plan is still fresh, the decision by LabCorp to extract a number of office employees from Main Street buildings may have a significant impact on parking recommendations for these significant opportunity sites.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 04

Support private sector investment in infrastructure through both monetary and non-monetary incentives.

---

Facilitate the extension of infrastructure lines through private developers that can recoup their investment from adjacent new development.

## Goal 05:

Support equitable distribution of public services throughout the City.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Address gaps in coverage of firefighting and other emergency services.

---

Implement the recommendations made in the 2011 Fire Station Distribution and Coverage Study by constructing a new fire station in an under-served area.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Expand public access to the Internet.

---

Continue to establish wireless access points and make them accessible at community facilities throughout the City.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Review public realm tree program for streets, parks, and public spaces.

---

Assure the implementation of a City-wide standard for public realm trees in all neighborhoods. Consider expanding the current Grounds Division street tree program.



Street trees should be distributed throughout the city, in neighborhood centers, gateway areas, and along both challenged and opportunity corridors.



# Transportation

# 07



## First Focus

---

Burlington's recent approval of a new public transit system was a major game-changer for transportation in the City. The most significant difference the City will see is when the buses start rolling, so careful but swift planning of routes, stops, and hub locations is most important. Considerations for a new hub terminal in Downtown will give the system a fresh public face.

---

# Transportation

## OVERVIEW

This transportation chapter establishes where connectivity needs and opportunities may affect future land use and redevelopment potential. It contains pertinent information from the Burlington-Graham Comprehensive Transportation Plan (2010) and the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update (2012), which were prepared by the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization (BGMPPO) and supplemented by the State of North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). This chapter contains recommendations for a multi-modal network of roadways, bus, rail, greenways, and trails accommodating all modes including pedestrians, bicycles, public transit and vehicles.

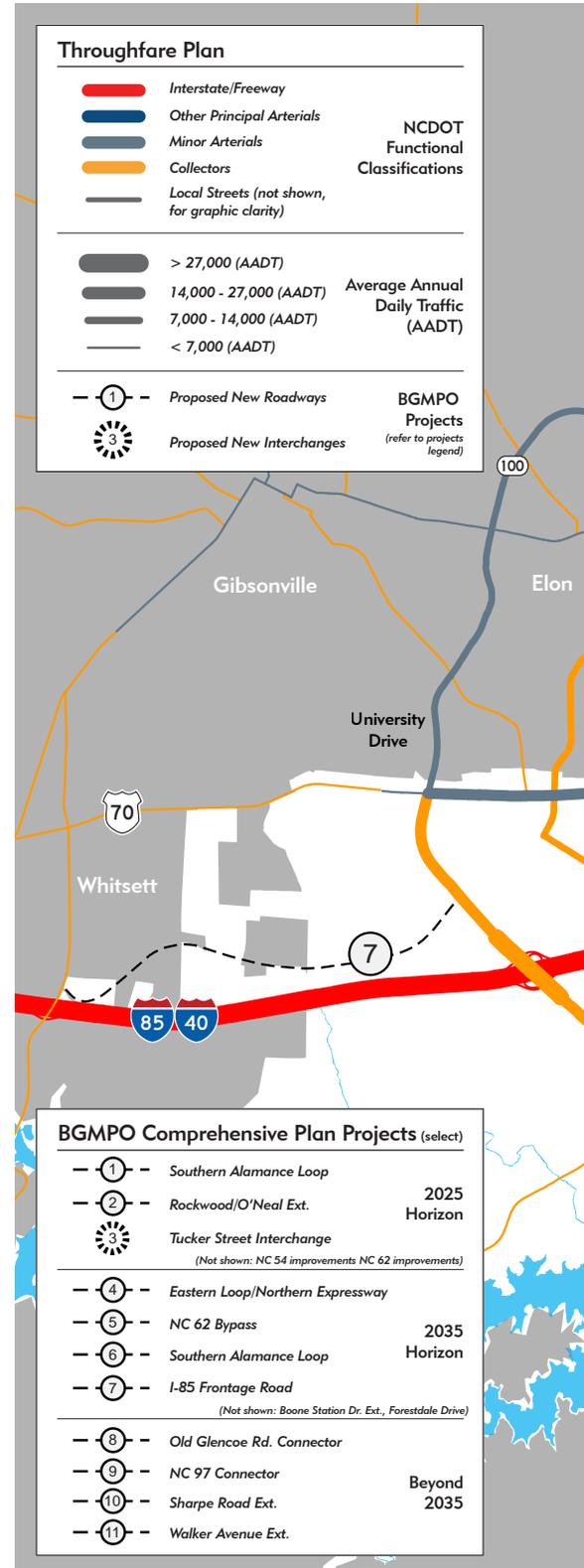
Multi-modal options can contribute to enhanced economic development within the City of Burlington, strengthen its image and identity, and help avoid uncontrolled growth and traffic-related congestion that may detract from the community's quality of life.

The transportation chapter of Burlington's Comprehensive Plan is intended to accomplish the following goals:

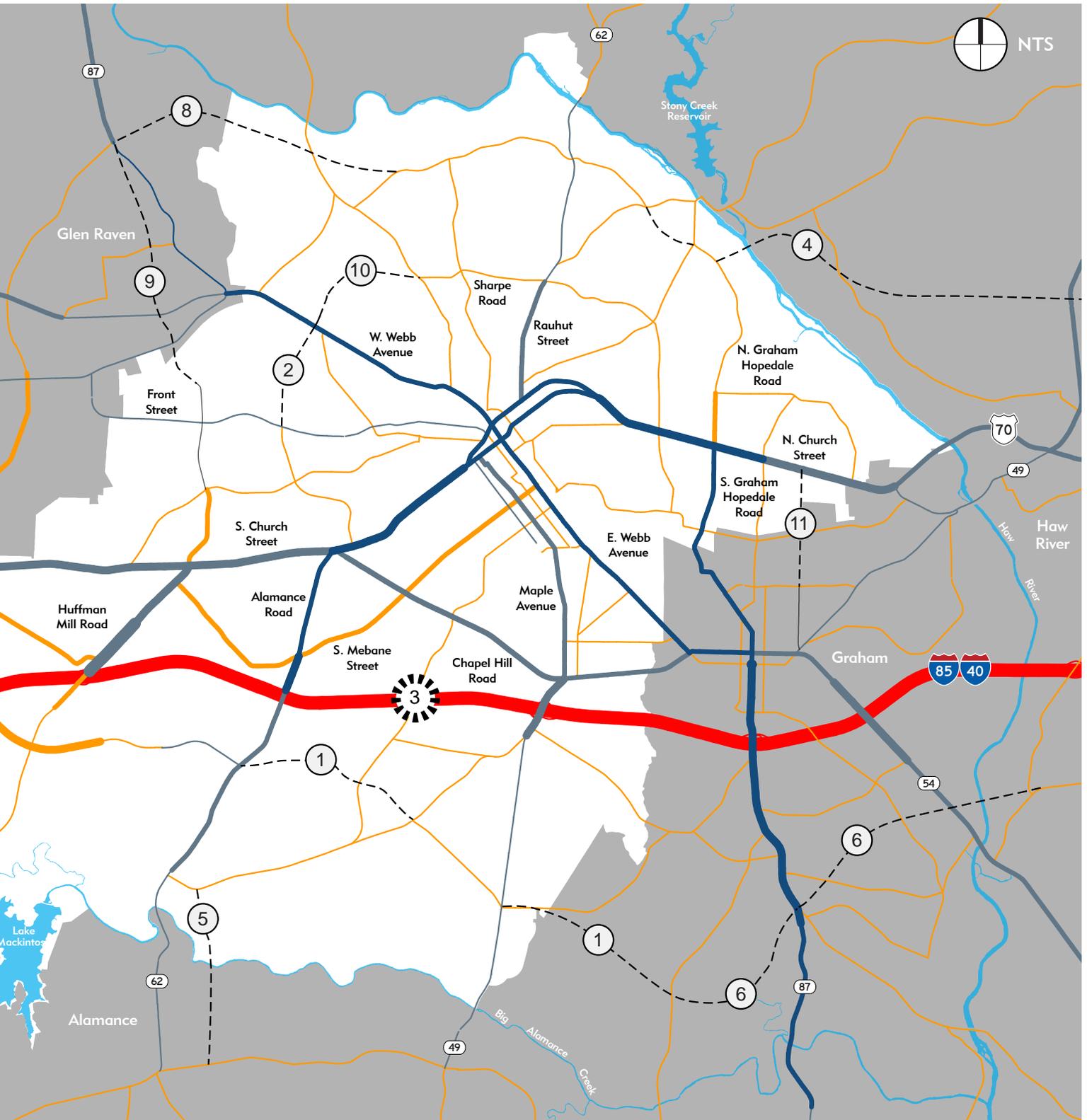
- Development Support
  - » Road connections, configurations, and other improvements should support economic development, future development patterns, redevelopment opportunities, and other development that will be highlighted in the Future Land Use Plan.
- Travel Options and Equitable Accessibility
  - » Provisions should be made for multiple transportation options with a focus on equitable accessibility throughout the entire city, including vehicular, public transit, passenger rail, bicycling and walking.
- Safety and Efficiency
  - » Adequate transportation capacity should be provided in a way that allows efficient travel within the community, but also ensures the safety of users.

## Vehicular Transportation

The City of Burlington has excellent transportation access within the North Carolina Piedmont. Specifically, access to Interstate 40/85 through the City's four interchanges and other highways such as US 70, NC 61 and NC 62 connect the City to the region and provide access for commerce. Much of the City's traffic is due to the influence of the transportation network system that allows for commuting to the Research Triangle and Piedmont Triad employment centers. Higher Interstate speeds have attracted some travel from competing roads such as NC 62, US 70, and NC 54, resulting in safer travel and a larger travel demand on the Interstate System.



Thoroughfare Plan





The City also has a robust road system that provides connectivity within the City's corporate boundary and ETJ. According to the studies completed by the Burlington-Graham MPO, 96% of travel within the Urbanized Area is conducted by automobile with 52% of trips with the destination of either to work, or home from work.

## CONGESTION

According to the BGMP, congestion continues to be an issue, especially during peak hours with roads accessing Interstate 40/85. The City has identified a plan to provide improvements to several of these streets and add multi-modal transportation options such as a bus system and bicycle infrastructure to mitigate congestion issues. Better coordination of traffic signals was also a common request made by members of the community.

## THOROUGHFARE PLAN FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

Roadways can fall into several classifications and within those are generally two types: urban and rural. Many of the roads in the Burlington corporate limits would be classified as urban treatment (curbs, gutters, and pedestrian amenities) and some are rural (open drainage in side ditch). Street classifications include:

### Interstate and Other Freeway

These roads have strict controls on allowing direct access. Access is limited to interchanges with major cross streets. Controlled access highways are designed to move people, both inter- and intra-regionally. Local examples of controlled access highways include Interstate 40/85.

### Principal and Minor Arterials

Provide the highest level of service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance, with some degree of access control.

### Major and Minor Collectors

Provide a less highly developed level of service at a lower speed for shorter distances by collecting traffic from local roads and connecting them with arterials.

### Local

Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement.

### Downtown

Downtown Streets are a special street typology. Access to and from a downtown street should be regulated to the established pattern of side streets. New buildings should abut the edge of the ROW to match existing and historic development patterns. On-street parking also provides traffic calming, increasing safety and enhancing economic development.



**Freeways like Interstate 40/85 need special controls on access (pictured top). On the other end of the spectrum, Downtown streets also have special needs, such as coordination of parking, streetscape elements, and pedestrian safety features (above).**

## PLANNED THOROUGHFARE IMPROVEMENTS

The Burlington-Graham MPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan of 2010 identified a number of roadway improvement projects, recommended new thoroughfares, and proposed highway interchanges and grade separations. The Plan was a comprehensive assessment of all projects deemed relevant to Burlington's—and Alamance County's—future. The Plan was followed two years later with a Long Range Transportation Plan, which put a timeframe to many of these projects—2015, 2025, and 2035 horizons. A number of the projects from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan are not set to be realized by the 2035 horizon. The Thoroughfare Plan on page 127 of this chapter depicts many of the significant projects expected in Burlington's future, along with their anticipated timeframes.

The next iteration of BGMPO transportation planning should reference this Comprehensive Plan and its extensive community engagement input to align the prioritization of future transportation projects with identified community needs. Recommendations of this Plan that should carry particular weight include:

- Putting identified challenged corridors at a higher level of priority for improvements, including North Church Street, Maple Avenue, and South Graham Hopedale Road.
- East Webb Avenue is currently not listed for improvements, but this corridor has been identified as one of the City's most challenged and therefore should be reconsidered for more immediate attention.
- The completion of the Southern Alamance Loop (projects 1 and 6 on the Thoroughfare Plan) and a new Tucker Street Interchange (project 3) will be important in ensuring the success of a Carolina Corridor Commerce Park around the regional airport. This concept will be introduced in Chapter 8 on Economic Development.
- Projects that enhance Interstate I-40/85 access from Burlington's eastern neighborhoods should be set at a high priority, including South Graham Hopedale Road improvements and a Walker Avenue Extension (project 11).
- Improvements to Maple Avenue and Chapel Hill Road should be coordinated with the recommended redevelopment of the Burlington Outlet Village Gateway District at their intersection.

## HIGHWAY FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION

Freight mobility through North Carolina's highway network will rely on improvements that provide direct and timely access for trucks to port facilities from inland freight nodes and facilities, including rail intermodal facilities, manufacturing, agricultural production, warehousing and distribution centers.

Based on the maritime market opportunities identified for North Carolina, investment in the US 70, I-73/I-74, and I-40 highway corridors will have the greatest effect in reducing trucking travel times within the state.



**This example of a complete street—Vanderbilt Avenue in Brooklyn (source: NYC DOT Creative Commons)—was a highly valued image from the Community Visioning Workshop’s Visual Preference Survey**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING “COMPLETE STREETS”

In many communities the transportation network has been designed and built for the automobile, but that mindset is beginning to change throughout the nation. Communities are realizing the many benefits of a multi-modal transportation network and “complete streets” policy. Such a policy addresses many transportation modes simultaneously, including vehicular, pedestrian, transit, and bicycle travel, and offers a number of health, social and economic benefits. It ensures that the entire public right-of-way (ROW) is routinely designed and operated to enable safe access for all modes of transportation and all users including people of all ages, interests, and abilities. Components of a complete street often include travel lanes, bike facilities, crosswalks, sidewalks, multi-use trails, medians, street trees and planting beds, lighting, signage, street furnishings and on-street parking.

It is important for Burlington’s transportation network to serve the existing vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian systems to meet the diverse needs of residents and visitors in a safe, efficient and pleasant manner. Connectivity between destinations is crucial to integrating all the resources (neighborhoods, parks, shopping and entertainment areas) the city has to offer. The basic street cross-section may vary by neighborhood, but to claim a “complete street” in a “walkable” city, the street should contain a minimum of 5-foot wide sidewalks so two people can pass comfortably. Where there is adequate right-of-way, planting strips landscaped with street trees should occur between the sidewalk and street.

The table below describes common complete street design standards that Burlington can reference while reconsidering the City’s engineering standards during Unified Development Ordinance drafting. On the following pages are illustrative depictions of these best practices.

COMMON COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN STANDARDS									
Functional Classifications	Minimum ROW	Number of Moving Lanes	Parking Lane <sup>1</sup>	Pavement Selection					
				Drive Lane Width	Bicycle Lane <sup>1 &amp; 3</sup>	Turn Lane <sup>3</sup>	Green Space Minimum Width <sup>2</sup>	Sidewalk Minimum Width <sup>1</sup>	Multi-Use Path <sup>3 &amp; 4</sup>
Local Street	50-60'	2	Shared	15'	N/A	N/A	5'	5'	NA
Major or Minor Collector Street	60'	2	N/A	11'	5'	N/A	5'	5'	8-10'
*Principal or Minor Arterial	80'	2	N/A	12'	N/A	12'	5'	5'	8-10'
*Downtown Street	60'	2	8'	12'	Shared	12' <sup>5</sup>	N/A	5-12'	NA

<sup>1</sup> Both sides of the roadway

<sup>2</sup> Unpaved area for landscaping, utilities, and trees

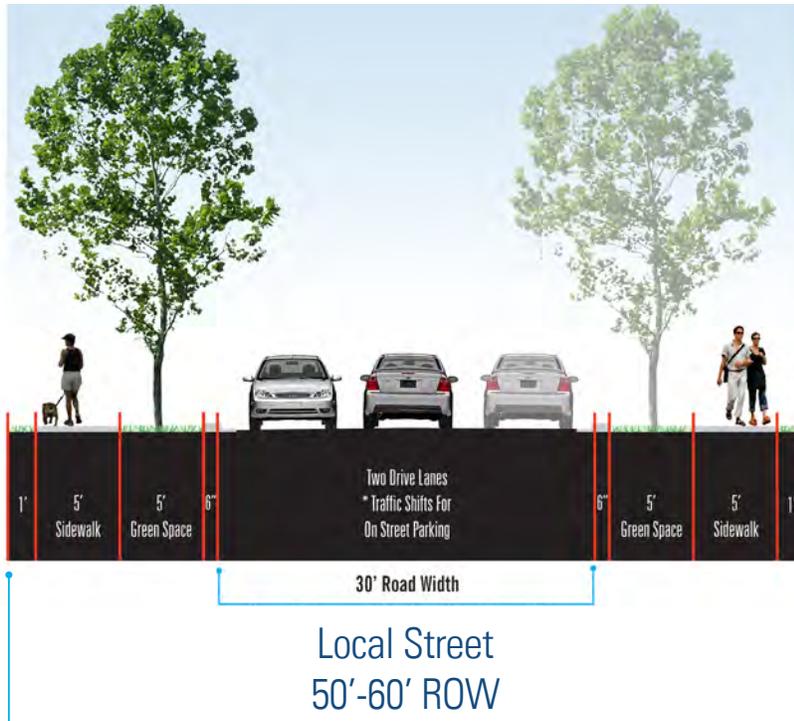
<sup>3</sup> Optional

<sup>4</sup> Paved or unpaved paths for pedestrian, bicycle, or equestrian travel in lieu of sidewalk

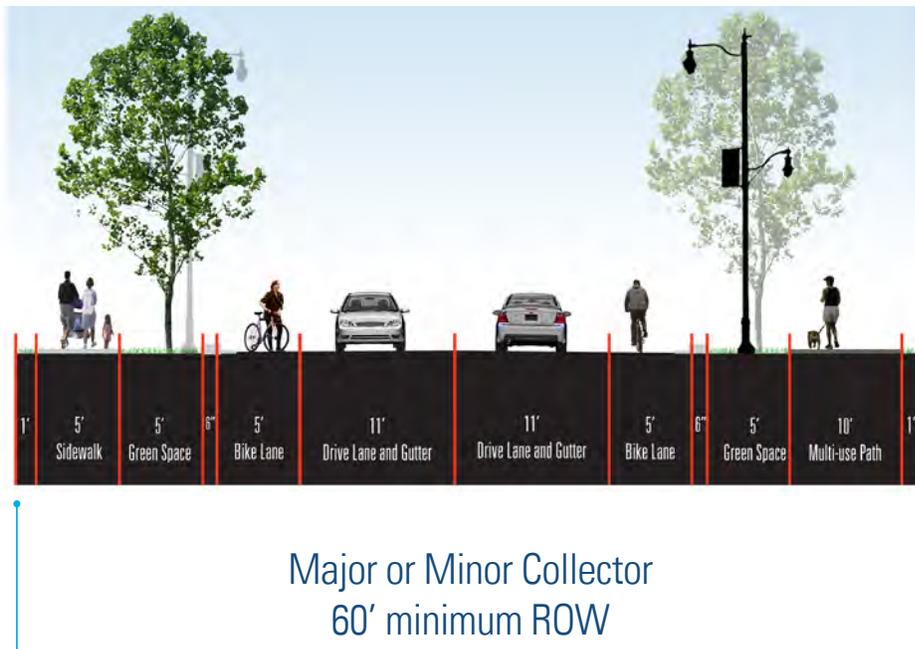
<sup>5</sup> Only at Intersection

\* Downtown and other streets in the City’s core and historic neighborhoods may vary

**TYPICAL LOCAL STREET**



**TYPICAL MAJOR OR MINOR COLLECTOR**

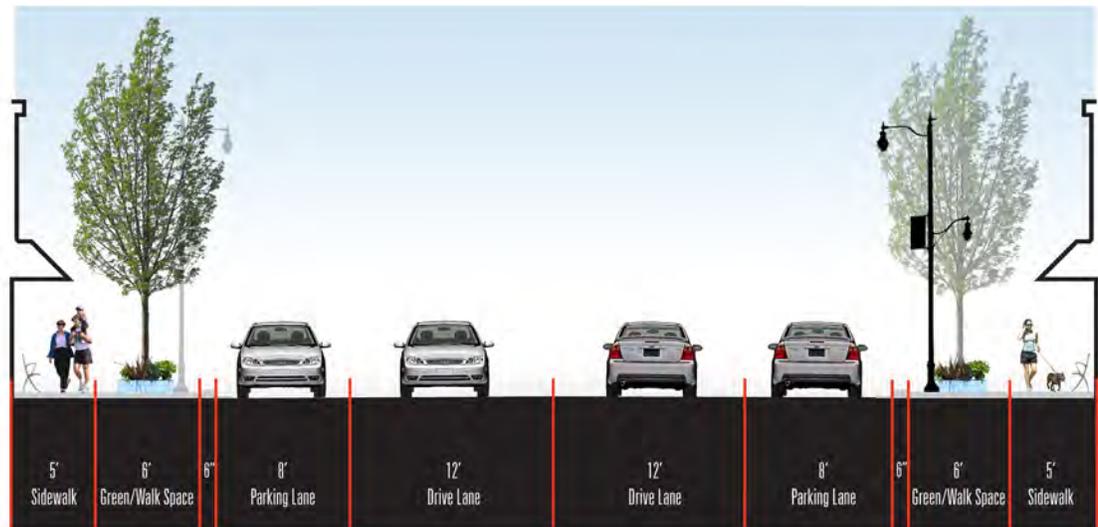


**TYPICAL PRINCIPAL OR MINOR ARTERIAL**



Principal or Minor Arterial  
80' minimum ROW (shown as 83')

**TYPICAL DOWNTOWN STREET SECTION**



Downtown Street  
60' typical ROW (shown as 63')

# Profile: Road Diets

“Road diets” are conversions of four-lane undivided roads into three lanes (two through lanes and a center turn lane). The fourth lane may be converted to bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and/or on-street parking. In other words, existing space is reallocated; the overall area remains the same.

Under most average daily traffic (ADT) conditions tested, road diets have minimal effects on vehicle capacity, because left-turning vehicles are moved into a common two-way left-turn lane. However, for road diets with ADTs above approximately 20,000 vehicles, there is a greater likelihood that traffic congestion will increase to the point of diverting traffic to alternate routes.

Road diets can offer potential benefits to both vehicles and pedestrians. On a four-lane street, drivers change lanes to pass slower vehicles (such as vehicles stopped in the left lane waiting to make a left turn). In contrast, drivers’ speeds on two-lane streets are limited by the speed of the lead vehicle. Thus, road diets may reduce vehicle speeds and vehicle interactions during lane changes, which potentially could reduce the number and severity of vehicle-to-vehicle crashes. Pedestrians may benefit because they have fewer lanes of traffic to cross, and because motor vehicles are likely to be moving more slowly. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) report *Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations* found that pedestrian crash risk was reduced when pedestrians

crossed two- and three-lane roads, compared to roads with four or more lanes.

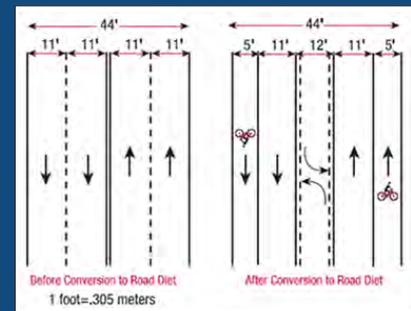
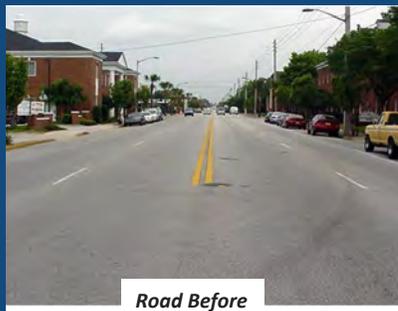
Road diets can take on many other forms such as:

- Converting one lane of one-way traffic (when superfluous lanes exist) into a bike lane, on-street parking, or wider sidewalks
- Restriping of 4-lane undivided roadways with “unbalanced flow” (i.e. higher traffic volumes in one direction than the other) to provide room for bike lanes
- Lane narrowing: nudging stripes over a little bit to create room for bike lanes, further separating traffic from pedestrians
- Roadway narrowing: moving in the curbs to reduce the pavement width

*Resource: The Federal Highway Administration, <http://www.fhrc.gov/safety/hsis/pubs/04082/index.htm>*

*Resource: <http://www.roaddiets.com/>*

A Representative Road Diet



# Railroad Transportation



## Amtrak Data for Burlington (2013)

- Passengers: 25,452
- Average trip: 139 miles
- Average fare: \$25.00
- Growth in ridership, 2007-2013: 93%

### PASSENGER RAIL

The State of North Carolina sponsors two Amtrak-operated passenger trains: the Piedmont and the Carolinian. The Piedmont makes a daily round trip between Raleigh and Charlotte by way of Burlington. The State owns the equipment for the Piedmont and contracts with Amtrak for maintenance and operations of the train. The Carolinian makes daily trips each way between Charlotte and New York City by way of the Burlington depot. The Carolinian uses Amtrak equipment and is Amtrak-maintained.

Future rail connections such as the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta, when implemented, will stop in Burlington. This is a federally-designated high speed corridor. A recent study on the corridor indicated that the potential for ridership and revenue along the passenger rail line would be greater than any other high-speed route in the United States.

Potential North Carolina commuter rail service may eventually provide service to Burlington. One of the corridors identified is the Burlington-to-Greensboro link. This 23-mile commuter corridor extends westward from Burlington along I-40/85. Travel time between the two cities is approximately 25 to 30 minutes by automobile, given the 65-mph speed limit along much of I-40/85. The speed for Amtrak has recently been increased to reduce the train travel time to be more competitive, if not the same as, an automobile trip. NCDOT estimates at least 43,000 potential commuters can be served by this rail service. Burlington's Amtrak station will be the local hub for all interstate and regional passenger rail travel.

### FREIGHT RAIL

NCDOT has a historic link to freight and freight movements. This linkage dates to the early days of Departments of Transportation, when their primary focus tended to be on creating "farm to market" roads to meet basic societal needs—bringing food from the point of production to where people live.

Compared to the historic role of freight in DOT activities and planning, recent efforts to incorporate freight considerations into the transportation planning process tend to be reflective of shifts toward the use of global rather than national or regional supply chains.

In North Carolina, freight and logistics have emerged as a state priority that can help underpin economic development and economic competitiveness. Logistics as an industrial activity relates to the movement of raw goods and materials, as well as finished goods and products, between their origins and ultimate destinations, including in-state distribution to businesses and consumers and out-of-state markets. As a result, freight and logistics touch all key aspects of the state's multifaceted economic development targets including agriculture, biomedical, tourism, education, military, and manufacturing. This ties to Burlington as rail continues to be important in many aspects of the supply chain economy.

# Public Transit

Public transportation within Burlington is currently very limited in capacity. Arranged transit is provided by the Alamance County Transportation Authority (ACTA) and focuses on providing transportation to the human services organizations and agencies within the county. Elon University also runs a bus route open to public use called the Elon Biobus, which provides service to Elon, Downtown, and Burlington’s eastern neighborhoods. This route, though, is for limited weekday hours and follows the academic year. That said, in 2013-2014, total ridership was 3,894, of which 1,582 were students (41%) and 2,312 (59%) public riders. The popularity and use of the Biobus starts to make the case for a fixed route bus system in Burlington.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION APPROVED

The City of Burlington does not currently have fixed-route transit service. During the summer of 2014, however, the City Council voted to support a fixed-route bus transit system that will serve the City of Burlington and neighboring communities. This system has been supported by numerous studies, including the 2006 Public Transit Feasibility Study, which established preliminary needs and services, service capacity, and routing. Some initial studies have already been done and preliminary routes are included in the map on page 137. Funding sources and a timeline have yet to be determined, but the system will be moving ahead over the coming months. What is planned is “hub and spoke” design, relying on Downtown Burlington as its main transfer point and hub. The location of the Downtown transfer spot may become an important catalyst for redevelopment within the Downtown and



**Bus transportation can be a transformative improvement to provide connectivity and access for a community such as Burlington. RATIO designed the Bus Transfer Station for the City of West Lafayette, Indiana (pictured above and below).**



will be discussed further in the Redevelopment Chapter of this Plan. The new system will operate with the goal of an average 30-minute headway, which will allow it to provide an equitable option for transportation access for all members of the Burlington community.

## 07 | Transportation

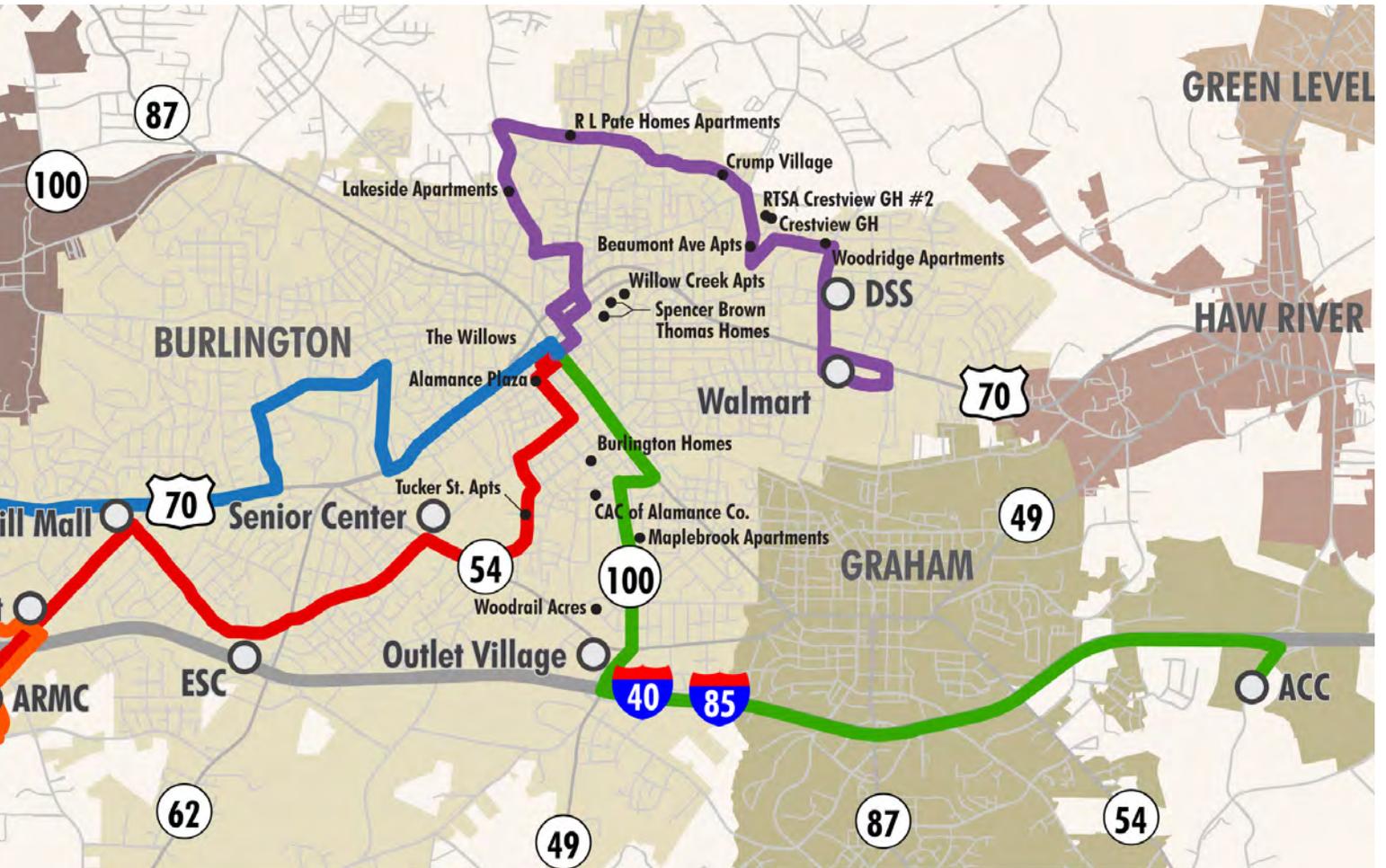
Preliminary planning calls for five routes for the urban area (including neighboring communities):

- A route connecting downtown Gibsonville with shopping destinations around Alamance Crossing and Huffman Mill Road near Interstate I-40/85. The route will also serve southern Elon and Alamance Regional Medical Center, a key destination often cited by survey respondents and stakeholders regarding access to health care.
- A route operating primarily in Burlington which is designed to serve commercial developments along South Church Street such as Holly Hill Mall and the Koury Centre. Transit service is operated to Williams High School and the Brookwood Retirement Community. The end of the line for the route is Alamance Crossing.
- A route serving the eastern portion of Burlington which could be interconnected with the previously mentioned route operating along South Church Street to provide direct service for passengers traveling from one side of Burlington to the other. The route serves residential areas north of Downtown and Alamance County facilities on Graham Hopedale Road, including the Department of Social Services. Transit service is provided to Cummings High School and to commercial areas located along North Church Street.
- A route connecting Downtown Burlington with Alamance Community College in Graham through neighborhoods along the Maple Avenue corridor. This route would be a direct link between Downtown and the potential redeveloped gateway district at the Outlet Village, and serve a number of multifamily housing communities along the way.
- A route serving residential neighborhoods south of Downtown with links to the Employment Security Commission, Holly Hill Mall and Alamance Regional Medical Center. South Mebane Street is the primary transit corridor for this route.

During discussions with Elon University officials, frequent, direct bus service between the campus and the new businesses close to Interstate 40/85 surfaced as a transit need from the University's perspective. An extension of proposed routes west of the City to capture this transit need should be a goal as planning continues.



Preliminary Transit System Routing Map





**Pedestrian and bicycle networks are not only a quality of life amenity, but can also serve as a multi-modal transportation option.**

## Pedestrian & Bicycle Network

Alamance County has over 110 miles of bike routes along state-maintained facilities—there are seven state-recognized bicycle routes in the county. Two anticipated regional projects that include both bicycle and pedestrian elements are described below:

- **Haw River Greenway:** this project is in development adjacent to the Haw River and runs through the historic Glencoe Mill Village and passes Town & Country Park in Burlington. Haw River Greenway, when complete, will become part of the state-spanning Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
- **Lake Mackintosh Greenway:** the project will link Davidson Park to Lake Mackintosh Park and Marina. A key element of this project includes accommodation for bike traffic from US 70 to Kirkpatrick Road; the remaining link will be the construction of the greenway from Alamance Regional Medical Center to the Lake Mackintosh Water Plant and eventually connect to the Lake Mackintosh Marina.

## Profile: Walkable Communities

The following characteristics are the qualities found in urban places where the pattern of development and design character combine to make frequent walking and transit use efficient and preferred choices for many people.

- A mix of land use types (residential, office, retail) in proximity to one another.
- Building entries that front directly onto the street without parking between the entries and the public right-of-way (street or sidewalk).
- Building, landscaping, and roadway design that is pedestrian scale—the architectural details of and proportions between buildings/sidewalk widths/frequency of street trees/etc. (urban design) are comfortable for people who are traveling on foot and observing from the street level
- Relatively compact residential and commercial developments (short distances between buildings)
- A highly-connected, multi-modal circulation

network (paths, sidewalks, streets, etc.), created by relatively small blocks arranged in a grid

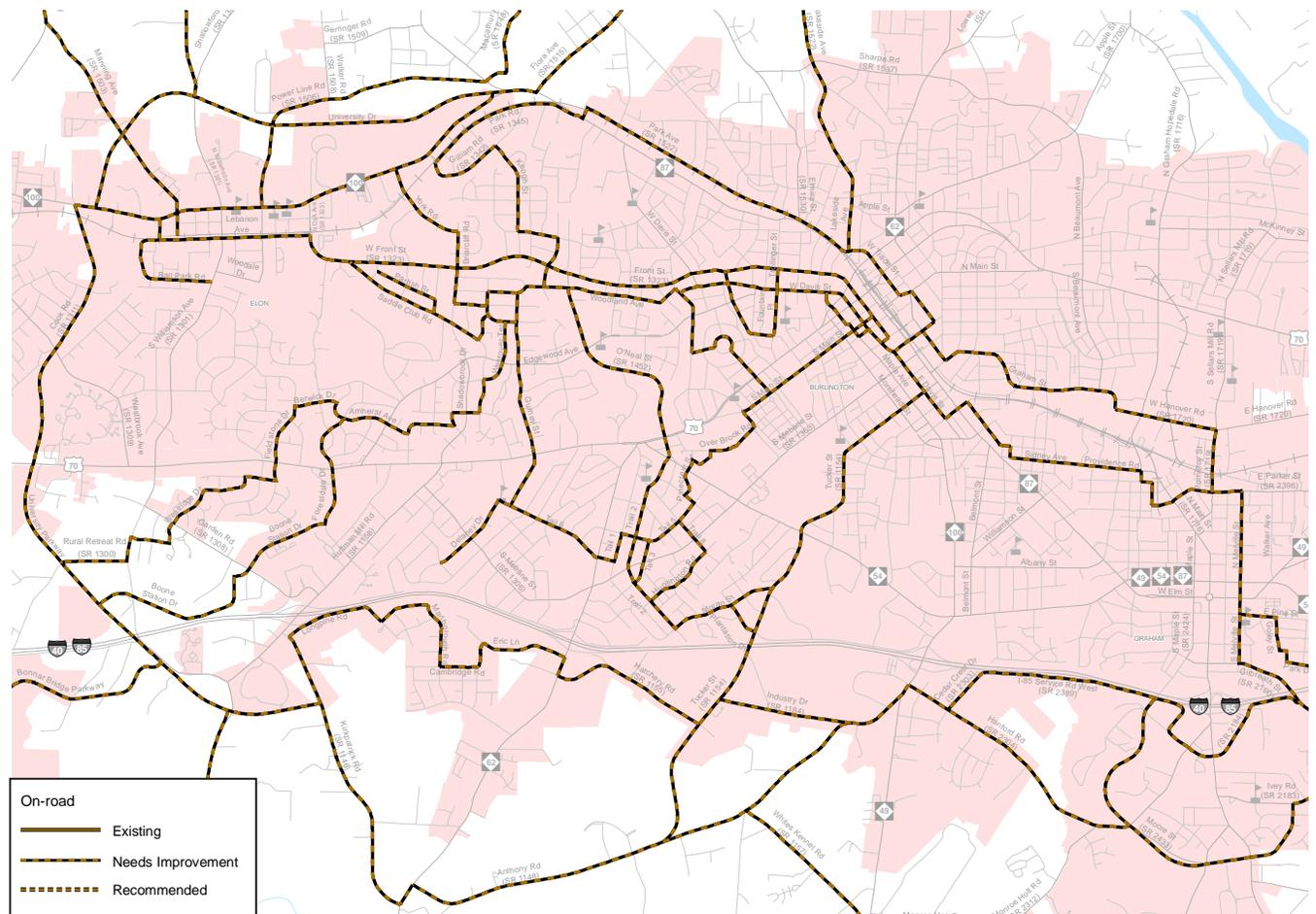
- Thoroughfares and other public spaces that contribute to “placemaking”—the creation of unique locations that are compact, mixed-use and pedestrian—are transit (bus)-oriented and produce strong feelings of pride and ownership in residents which can translate to a lasting economic value

An increasing number of communities are recognizing the value of these features and are embracing them in land use, urban design and transportation plans, often using techniques drawn from planning and design movements such as Smart Growth and New Urbanism.

*Resource: “Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities; An ITE Proposed Recommended Practice,” 2006.*

Bicycle and pedestrian mobility is of particular importance to the City of Burlington and its residents. In 2011, the City began a pedestrian planning effort that resulted in the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan (see profile on page 143). From a quality of life and level of service perspective, the City is moving forward with pedestrian improvements, and the BGMPO has also outlined a plan for potential bicycle enhancements going forward. The City should continue to work with neighboring communities to continue to support a regional pedestrian and bicycle network, provide programming and education, and to apply for federal and state funds to implement planned amenities. A Bicycle Master Plan to complement the Pedestrian Master Plan will be a useful first step, and the effort is already underway. As the City updates its Unified Development Ordinance, attention should be paid towards further integrating sidewalk, multi-use path, and bike lane requirements into development standards. Refer to the Parks & Open Space chapter for additional recommendations related to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity through greenways.

**BGMPO COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN BICYCLE MAP**



# Goals and Recommendations

## Goal 01:

Focus on multi-modal complete streets and the design of streetscapes.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Determine appropriate configurations of thoroughfare rights-of-way.

Accommodate the new bus transit system, private vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles with equal levels of service and priority based on “complete streets” best practices as shown in this chapter. Allot appropriate space to landscape for aesthetic benefit and sustainable stormwater management. Integrate right-of-way design guidelines into Corridor Planning for the City’s major corridors.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Leverage public/private partnerships to finance transportation improvements that support responsible development.

Public/Private Partnerships (PPPs) can help developers and cities alike bridge funding gaps to finance transportation improvements that are often necessary to support desired development. One potential focus of PPP collaboration could be pedestrian, vehicular, and rail crossing changes to relink North Main Street to Downtown, as discussed later in the Redevelopment chapter.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03

Coordinate infrastructure, road, transit, and streetscaping improvements along the City’s major corridors.

As capital project plans are produced, major improvements should be coordinated to achieve synergy on project engineering and construction schedules and costs. This will result in a cost savings for the community.



Painted bicycle lanes with safety area at intersections.

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**RECOMMENDATION 04**

Identify multi-modal improvements and aesthetic upgrades along secondary “opportunity corridor” arterials and collectors.

---

BGMPO’s planning and NCDOT’s implementation of roadway improvements is an opportunity to integrate enhancements into corridors that are not distressed but may be lacking multi-modal accommodation or sufficient landscape space.

## Goal 02:

Improve equitable access to community services and amenities through public transit.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 01**  

Continue planning a new bus transit system to serve Burlington and adjacent communities.

---

Engage the community in equitably planning new transit routes, stops, and future expansion opportunities.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 02** 

Locate a central “hub” transit terminal in Downtown.

---

Serve the new bus system, existing passenger rail, ACTA, taxis, and carpools through a new terminal adjacent to the Amtrak station that can act as a catalyst for wider local redevelopment.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 03** 

Provide regional interconnectivity and commuter transit opportunities.

---

Partner with regional transportation authorities in the Triangle and Triad and North Carolina Railroad to serve the City with commuter options like express buses and commuter rail.



**A hub transit station for the new bus system should be located proximate to the Amtrak station**



The Haw River Trail, part of North Carolina's Mountains to Sea Trail, is not only a recreational amenity, but also a regional connector. (image source: <http://plannersweb.com/2013/09/haw-river-revitalization/>)

## Goal 03:

Provide a transportation system that supports active living.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 01 \* 🌿

Create an interconnected system of multi-use greenways that link neighborhoods to commercial areas, Downtown, employment centers, and civic amenities.

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Refer to the Open Space element for information on creating a greenway system.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 02 \* 🌿

Support regional trail and greenway efforts.

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Support the Haw River Trail and Lake Mackintosh Greenway in partnership with Piedmont Triad Regional Council and Alamance County. Regional trails can serve as both recreational amenities and regional transportation alternatives.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 03 ☑️ \* 🌿

Continue to implement the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan and conduct a complementary Bicycle Master Plan.

---

Coordinate pedestrian and bicycle improvements with thoroughfare corridor improvements and greenway creation.

# Profile: Review of 2012 Pedestrian Plan

In early 2011, the City of Burlington commenced a participatory planning process to develop a Pedestrian Master Plan. The primary goal of the effort was making Burlington a more walkable city. Through analysis of existing conditions and community engagement, planners identified goals, action steps, and policy recommendations. The proposed pedestrian network for the City consists of three project types: sidewalks, crossing improvements, and greenways.

The Pedestrian Master Plan noted that the City does not have strong pedestrian-oriented policies, and that the development standards of the Code of Ordinances could be strengthened to make the City more walkable. Recommendations of the plan include the consideration of:

- Updating the Code of Ordinances
- Requiring sidewalks on both sides of streets, with expanded width
- Expanding the palette of street sections
- Requiring street, sidewalk, and greenway connectivity with new development to adjacent land uses
- Requiring additional streetscaping, block length limit, and crosswalks



*The 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan was the product of the City of Burlington and Alta Greenways. Before-and-after images like those above featured improvements at a number of sidewalk conditions throughout the City. The image to the left, by Sam Roberts of the Times-News, shows sidewalk construction on Tarleton Avenue, one of the projects recommended by the Pedestrian Plan.*



# Economic Development

# 08



## First Focus

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Burlington's economic development strategies and policies are currently conceived and implemented on a more regional level through Alamance County and the Piedmont Triad Regional Council. The City needs to hire an Economic Development Coordinator and develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Approach that is custom-tailored to its specific economic context but also coordinated with regional initiatives.

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**Business attraction and retention are two very important parts of any comprehensive economic development approach. These two factors work together to make for successful community economic development.**



# Economic Development

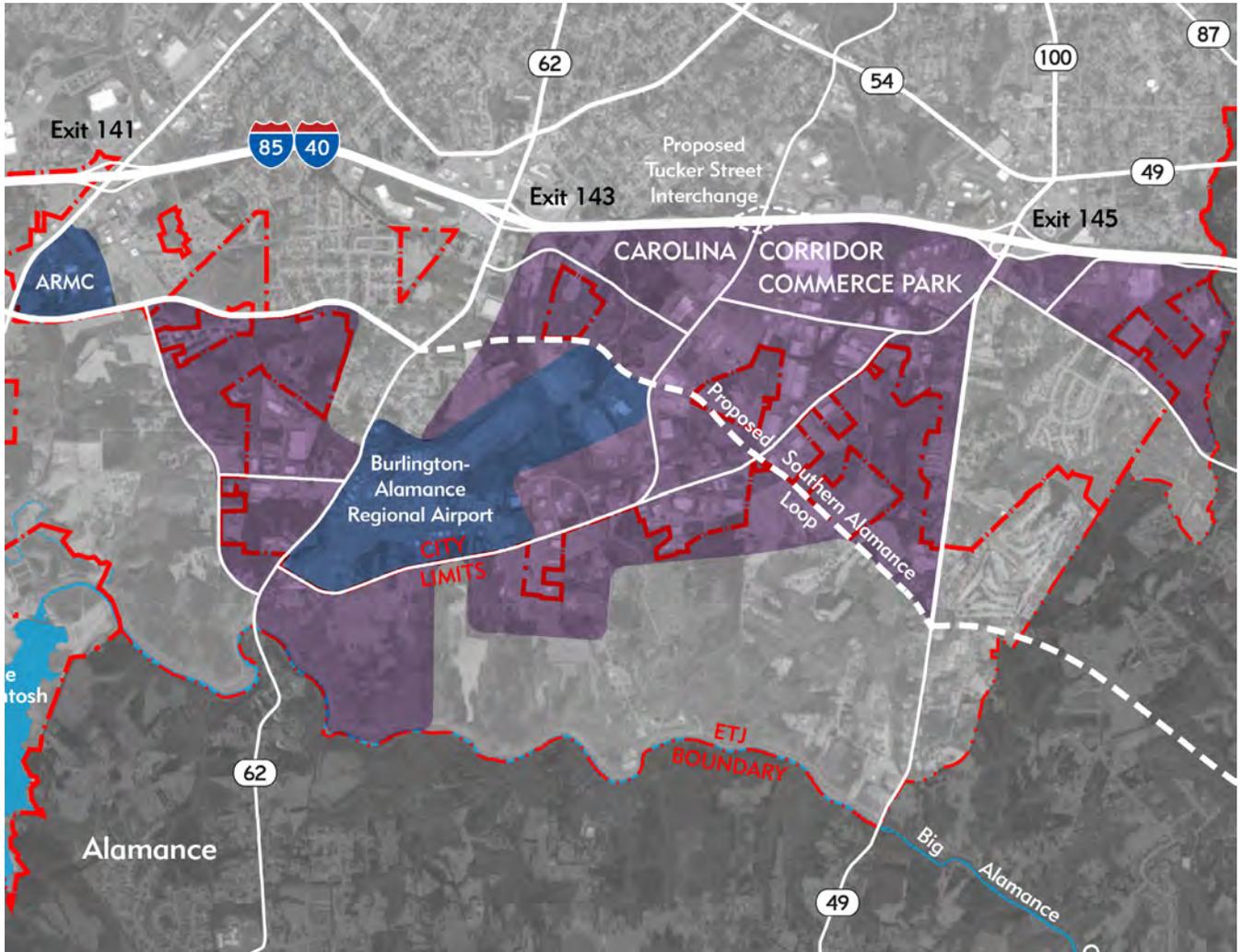
## Comprehensive Economic Development Approach

While the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce (CoC) has played the leading role in attracting new industries to the Burlington area, it is important, as the City's economic development efforts become more complex, to assist existing and new industries in Burlington by hiring a single coordinator to guide the City's economic development efforts. This individual should coordinate city services and assistance to businesses in coordination with the Chamber, State of North Carolina, and other development stakeholders. This individual would assist industries with infrastructure grants, tax credit programs, and other incentives that are part of the location selection decision-making process. The individual should work with local private developers, State of North Carolina, and the federal government to develop project-specific game plans for site and building redevelopment. Finally, the City's new economic development point person should work closely with Alamance County CoC on establishing economic development priorities for Burlington and Alamance County that work to support a comprehensive effort to expand employment and private business growth.

The comprehensive approach should include strengthening business retention programs. This may include a joint visitation program of major employers in and around the Burlington area. This retention program may focus on understanding the local and regional economic efforts that may better support their business needs through service improvements and workforce development. The local business retention program should work to identify any potential business needs that could be supported by the programs and incentives provided by the State of North Carolina for business retention, innovation, job creation, and expansion. A focus should be put on key industries like health care, information technology, and manufacturing and their capital and workforce needs. Retail, entertainment, and hospitality growth are other important sectors to Burlington. The comprehensive economic development efforts should focus on what improvements in offerings would make Burlington more attractive to business investors and their employees.

## Carolina Corridor Commerce Park

Much of the past real estate used for industrial development within the City will not be attractive to future large-scale industrial development. Therefore, the City of Burlington and other economic development partners within Alamance County should focus on how best to brand and realize future new industrial development



This map illustrates the general outline of the “Carolina Corridor Commerce Park” located south of I-40/85 between Exit 143 and Exit 145

that requires 34-foot clear-span buildings on large-scale developable properties. Most of these industrial users would need to be in proximity to transportation linkages such as I-40/85. Therefore, it is recommended that the City of Burlington, in partnership with the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders, create a “Carolina Corridor Commerce Park” with an industrial zoning overlay on the south side of the I-40/85 corridor between Exit 143 (NC 62) and Exit 145 (NC 49). This would provide future industrial development prospects with an increased level of certainty for their industrial real estate plans. This may allow the real estate to “move” faster than without such an overlay district in place. It should be noted that the State of North Carolina has already certified one large parcel within this area as a certified development property near the intersection of Anthony and Kennel Roads east of the airport.



Proximity to Interstate I-40/85 is a significant advantage to this commerce location.

### *Carolina Corridor Commerce Park Possibilities:*

- Approximately 1000 acres of prime development
- 8 million square feet of industrial space
- \$600 million in new real property investment
- 2,500 - 5,000 new jobs
- \$125 million - \$250 million new gross personal income

A “Carolina Corridor Commerce Park” could create approximately 1000 acres of prime development south of I-40/85 on either side of the Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport. This amount of industrial acreage could provide development pads for around 8 million square feet of buildings. This in turn would generate somewhere between \$600 million in new real property investment in 2014 dollars. This would potentially generate between 2500 and 5000 new jobs. Finally, this would provide new gross personal income of between \$125 and \$250 million dollars per year in 2014 dollars. All of this development could be achieved within a 3-mile proximity of the I-40/85 Carolina Corridor and both interchanges at Exit 143 and Exit 145. It is recommended that the City of Burlington and its economic development partners seriously consider the long term merits of promoting an industrial overlay zoning district that would attract and support long-term industrial development within this area. Few cities within North Carolina or the United States have this amount of real estate available for such industrial development within a growing region. It would be projected that this development could be realized by 2035 with such an industrial zoning overlay district in place, and without an overlay, it may become difficult to sustain such growth from year to year. It should be clear that larger-scale modern manufacturing needs will not likely be suited to existing brownfield redevelopment properties within the City of Burlington. These redevelopment properties will be addressed in the Redevelopment Chapter.

## A 21st Century Workforce

In the 21st Century, long-term economic development success will require a nimble and educated workforce. This will require meeting the advanced workforce education needs of industries for success. Very few, if any, local manufacturing economies within the United States will remain competitive in the global economy without advanced manufacturing processes. This requires a skilled and nimble workforce that is able to effectively use ever-evolving and advancing manufacturing techniques and equipment. At this time, Burlington does not have the depth of workforce to support these advanced manufacturing needs regarding education levels and workforce training programs.

It is recommended that the City of Burlington and its economic development partners such as the Alamance Chamber of Commerce consider joining and learning from the North Carolina Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (NCAMA). This will require effort on the part of the City and Chamber, and it may be reasonable to consider how Alamance Community College could expand its services to become certified as part of the North Carolina Advanced Manufacturing Alliance to further advance the efforts to support manufacturing (which still represents 25% of Burlington’s employment base). It should be noted that manufacturing jobs more often than not have higher wages than most other employment categories. This is

especially true for advanced manufacturing jobs. Other growth areas that the City and its economic partners should focus on are expanding health care employment, education, and hospitality training opportunities.

To nurture a 21st Century workforce, it is important to provide educational opportunities for Burlington's youth through their formal school programs. This will integrate school education with future employment offerings. It is recommended that the City, in partnership with the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce and Alamance-Burlington School System, research how to establish a mentoring program for high school and middle school students with local industries. It is also important to support the mentoring program with more advanced on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs that directly tie to future full-time employment opportunities in growing businesses and their industries.

Other key areas for economic development are creating partnerships with information technology and health care businesses. These partnerships could be enhanced by reaching out to IT firms in the Triad and Triangle regions of North Carolina as well as North Carolina's universities. This should be enhanced for youth within Burlington by supporting the local schools to develop STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) based curricula. Health care institutions and local businesses should also provide encouragement for STEM-based school programs. The City and the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce should support increasing Alamance Community College offerings that provide continued workforce development and certification necessary to further the employment growth of local businesses and industries.

## Supporting Entrepreneurial Energy

Burlington needs to expand its offerings to support the growth of small businesses. While the Burlington Downtown Corporation has a number of programs to assist Downtown businesses and property owners, it is important that the City and its economic development partners create small business development programs to encourage the growth of businesses along major corridors such as Webb Avenue and Church Street. The Chamber of Commerce should consider creating a Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) program with local business leaders to mentor small businesses throughout the community.

The City and its economic development partners should consider establishing a small business innovation fund to support small business product and service development. This could be used to support patent research and development products to loans to underwrite the development of the product into full production. The innovation fund could be supported by the creation of a venture capital fund that would support business product development. Furthermore, Burlington's Small Business Development Center should target nascent businesses that will support its growing health care, manufacturing, and IT industries.

# Profile: Advanced Manufacturing

The North Carolina Advanced Manufacturing Alliance is a consortium of ten community colleges, local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), industries, non-profit entities, and local education authorities. Its goal is to increase the number of North Carolinians with certificates, diplomas and degrees in advanced manufacturing disciplines within a two year period. This Alliance is representative of North Carolina's wonderful diversity from the Blue Ridge Mountains in the west to the waters of the Pamlico Sound in the east and encompasses a wide range of individuals served through 12 manufacturing-related education and training programs. In addition to coursework developed by NCAMA colleges through responsive interactions with industry, the Alliance is an accredited training sponsor of the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) and is able to certify instructors that have completed NCCER instructor training. This enables NCAMA to provide nationally certified credentials in a range of fields.

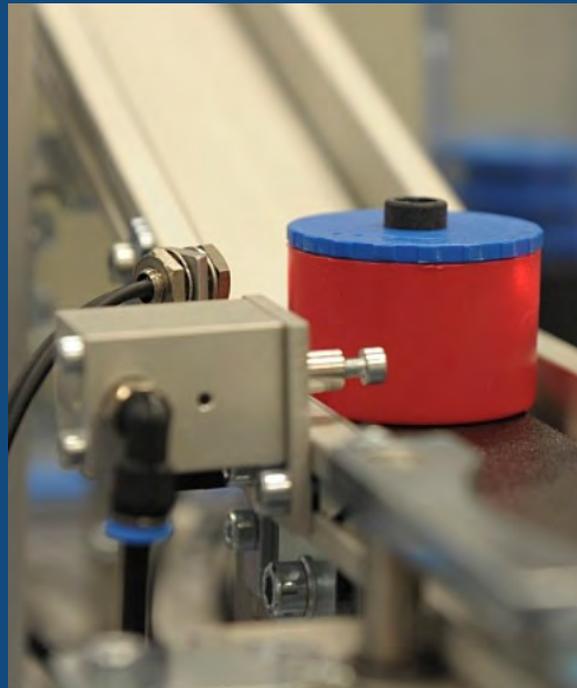
## A New Learning Model

The alliance intends to create a new learning model to swiftly educate and train Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), unemployed, and dislocated workers to enter the workforce with the specific specialized training and credentials needed by North Carolina employers.

- Robeson Community College – Lead Institution
- Specialized training for advanced manufacturing
- Industry-led training
- Hands-on training on new equipment
- Both hybrid and online, on-demand delivery of programs using multimedia tablet platforms connected to iTunes U
- Parallel development of training programs at participating community colleges
- Partnerships with Workforce Investment Boards, local employment agencies, local education authorities, local community agencies and non-profit organizations

## The Impact of Foreign Trade

These communities have all severely and historically been impacted by foreign trade. From 2001 to 2008, they experienced 56,100 or 59% of NC's total manufacturing job losses to China, according to a 2010 study by Robert E. Scott. More recently, these communities lost jobs to China, Mexico, Canada, Honduras, Brazil, and the United Arab Emirates, resulting in more than five thousand TAA certified workers between 2007 and 2010. Additionally, four of the consortium counties—Craven, Cumberland, Edgecombe and Surry—appear on the 2011 TAA list of Significantly Impacted Counties. Simultaneously, industry in these areas are often seeking well-trained and certificated workers but cannot always find workers with the appropriate skills-sets. Advanced Manufacturing Alliance programs will address this skills gap. Funding for equipment, program support and to advance the alliance's goals comes from an \$18 million DOL grant.



### Building on Existing Capabilities

In addition to the resources that the US DOL funding will provide, the Alliance is utilizing the expertise and resources of content experts in advanced manufacturing and industrialists to inform the development of curriculum and to provide professional development for the certification of new faculty for professional credentialing. Programs and coursework will utilize multimedia design specialists, videographers, digital content specialists and media integration professionals to aid in the development of podcasts, multimedia and digital content for dissemination in the online repository. A professional evaluator will be retained for careful project review and redesign as necessary. Examples of resources leveraged include:

- The AB-Tech Global Institute for Sustainability Technologies
- A multiple professionally certified instructor at Beaufort County Community College
- The Institute of Aeronautical Technology at Craven Community College
- NSF, Duke Energy and TRIO grants
- The laboratory at Davidson County Community College
- The CIM laboratory and Workforce Development staff at Edgecombe Community College
- Fayetteville Tech's Advanced Visualization & Interactive Design Center
- The Advanced Machining Center at Haywood Community College
- The Fanuc Certified Education Robot Training Program at Nash Community College
- The flexible mechatronics lab at Robeson Community College
- The Workforce Development Center at Surry Community College

*Resource: text and images sourced directly from Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, <http://advancedmanufacturingalliance.org/>*





**Arts and culture events such as the Fourth Friday events that take place in the Downtown spur community cohesiveness and placemaking.**

## Arts & Culture as an Anchor

The City of Burlington has done a very good job supporting the arts in coordination with the Burlington Downtown Corporation. By using the arts—both performing and visual—the City has the opportunity to establish itself as a choice community for residents and employers. More people want to be in a place that provides stimulating experiences, and the arts are a means to establishing those higher-end quality of life experiences. To that end, it is recommended that the City and its arts and tourism partners complete a Tourism and Hospitality Study to determine how best Burlington and Alamance County may maximize their use of the arts in concert with other tourism opportunities to stimulate long-term economic development. This may also include industrial heritage, railroad heritage, destination shopping, artists' studios and galleries, regional green and blue trail hiking (like the Haw River Trail), minor league baseball, and recreational aviation.

It is recommended that Burlington consider using its industrial heritage as the organizing brand for its visual arts. This would include creating opportunities for adaptive reuse of vacant or underutilized industrial properties near Downtown. These spaces could be made available to craftpersons who create higher-end or custom products such as ceramics or glass works. To this end, it is recommended that the City and its arts partners consider creating “live work” space for artists in or near Downtown. Some artists' studios, such as ceramics or glass-making, should not be located directly adjacent to a retail or restaurant setting, but they should be within a short walk of Downtown retail and restaurant venues. This could be part of the mixed-use “Maker's District” just northeast of Downtown across Webb Avenue that currently contains many older and underused industrial and warehouse buildings that may make excellent homes for artists and their studios. This area could be branded “NoMa” for North Main Street that bisects the area. It could provide an excellent location to support downtown arts programs and galleries. For more explanation regarding “NoMa,” see the Redevelopment Chapter. Another local destination point to continue to support is the Textile Heritage Museum at historic Glencoe Mill Village on the banks of the Haw River. The City may need to incorporate a variety of flexible zoning options for these various mixed-use districts within its overall Unified Development Ordinance.

# Goals and Recommendations

## Goal 01:

Develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Hire a new City staff person to be the economic development point-person for City of Burlington.

This point-person or Economic Development Coordinator should coordinate city services and assistance to businesses, assist industries with incentives that are part of the location selection decision-making process, lead the development of project-specific game plans for site and building redevelopment, and work closely with Alamance County Chamber of Commerce on establishing regionally-comprehensive economic development priorities and strategies.

### RECOMMENDATION 02

Create a local Economic Development Steering Committee.

The committee should include representatives from the public, private and institutional sectors such as Planning staff, business leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from Alamance Community College and Elon University. The Economic Development Steering Committee, led by the new Coordinator mentioned above, should establish goals and objectives for the City (e.g., job creation, tax base expansion, cultivation of tourism, etc.).

### RECOMMENDATION 03

Focus on business retention.

A local business retention program should work to identify any potential business needs that could be supported by the programs and incentives provided by the state of North Carolina for business retention, innovation, job creation, and expansion, with a focus on key regional industries.

### RECOMMENDATION 04

Include a target industry strategy.

Determine workforce and business needs of growth sectors in industry, health care and service sectors. Align local tax policies to assist growing industries and entrepreneurial growth.

## Profile: Economic Development Strategic Plan

An economic development strategic plan (EDSP) is a complementary document to a Comprehensive Plan or stand-alone document which specifically addresses economic development issues for a specific area and creates an action plan for implementation. Issues typically addressed include workforce, business retention, expansion and attraction, target industries, real estate and financing, with the goal of attracting private sector investment and job creation at a much greater level of detail than is appropriate in a Comprehensive Plan. Simply put, an EDSP implementation strategy will provide much greater levels of detail and specifics.

# Profile: Burlington Cultural Arts District

A Burlington Cultural Arts District would seek to bring the business and creative sectors together to advance commerce and culture, build community and spur economic development in Downtown and surrounding areas. The Cultural Arts District would be a geographically-defined, mixed-use arts and entertainment area that capitalizes on local and regional assets that are specific to the cultural, economic and social issues of Burlington. It would emphasize the high concentration of creative assets and related activities to strengthen and enhance the overall economic environment of the community. When fully implemented, the Cultural Arts District would have a distinctly “Burlington” identity and a package of economic and programming initiatives to benefit its major stakeholder groups and users: the community, local colleges, visitors, the creative, cultural and entertainment sectors and small businesses.

The Cultural Arts District would have an authentic, unique identity that attracts and encourages engagement.

- Identify and support key placemaking and identity branding initiatives in the Cultural Arts District that represent Burlington and coordinate with both Downtown and overall City branding efforts
- Facilitate development of key Cultural Arts District structures and character areas
- Facilitate placement and appreciation of public art
- Strengthen the connection with Burlington’s industrial heritage
- Support efforts to build street energy through events, programming and placemaking
- Implement a Cultural Arts District advisory structure that assists in communication, collaboration and implementation of a Cultural Arts District strategic plan
- Assist Cultural Arts District partners in effectively communicating and marketing their events, attractions and services

The Cultural Arts District would provide creative and

economic growth opportunities. Creation of an arts and culture-focused district creates opportunities for partnerships between local organizations, higher education institutions and residents.

- Facilitate arts and technology initiatives in the Cultural District
- Encourage new Cultural Arts District development projects and support art space planning and development in the District
- Support audience development and accessibility initiatives
- Facilitate opportunities for those in the creative sector to live in the District
- Ensure access to a variety of small business education, grant and loan programs for current District partners

Partnerships could include small business incubation ventures:

- Food Hub
- Grocery Incubator
- Pop-Ups and Temporary Uses
- For-profit/Not-for-profit Business Models
- Business Assistance and Support



## Cultural District Programming Examples

### Arts & Cultural Corridors

The creative redevelopment of existing commercial corridors makes room for the addition of spaces designed to cultivate the creative ambition of artists and arts organizations in Burlington, demonstrates effective creative placemaking strategies, and transforms the City's neighborhoods into destinations for cultural activity.

### Exhibitions, Performances, and Talks

Public events and exhibitions led by resident and visiting artists, as well as community partners, could take place at designated locations within the District and in the surrounding neighborhoods. These programs act as catalysts for collaboration and exchange, creating dynamic and critical creative spaces.

### Arts Education

Arts education efforts focus on building skills, confidence, and creative expression amongst local young people and adults. These range from casual family-friendly events to intensive, hands-on apprenticeship programs.

### Artist Residencies & Visiting Artists

These types of programs provide local artists and audiences the opportunity to thoughtfully engage the global, contemporary art world in a localized environment. An example of an artist residency program is Arts + Public Life in Chicago, which supports the creative work of artists through 10-month, jury-selected residencies.

### Project Examples

Nationally, there are many examples of successful arts and culture districts that were cultivated in underinvested areas of cities. The arts community developed organizational structures to assist with creation and maintenance of unique district identities that expressed the character of the cities artisans.

### Third Ward, Milwaukee, WI

- Unique historic buildings
- Mix of Uses; Galleries, Restaurants, and Performance Spaces
- Compact and walkable
- 24 Hour District



*image source: www.shorewest.com*

### NODA, Charlotte, NC

- Highly organized neighborhood committees to maintain the district
- Hosts large public events throughout the year
- Unique branding



*image source: shortwalkhome.com*

### Alberta Street, Portland, OR

- Fosters informal arts happenings and activities
- Unique approach to marketing the neighborhood
- Encourages Live/Work housing



*image source: www.portlandpedalpower.com*



Areas around airports like Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport are a natural fit for industrial uses.

## Goal 02:

### Create a Carolina Corridor Commerce Park

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#### RECOMMENDATION 01

Create an industrial zoning overlay on the south side of the I-40/85 corridor around the Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport.

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An industrial overlay zoning district would attract and support long-term industrial development within this area.

## Goal 03:

### Nurture growing 21st century economic sectors.

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#### RECOMMENDATION 01

Nurture advanced manufacturing.

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Through an alliance with Alamance County Chamber of Commerce, Alamance Community College, and expanding businesses, seek certification with North Carolina Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (NCAMA).

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#### RECOMMENDATION 02

Nurture professional, scientific and technical services.

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Create an industrial mentoring program for middle schools, industrial apprenticeship programs for high schools, and internship programs for higher education students, tied directly to employment opportunities with local industries and institutions.

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#### RECOMMENDATION 03

Nurture information technology.

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Create partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses to determine how best to attract and retain future IT workers and how best attract future IT businesses

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**RECOMMENDATION 04** \***Nurture health care.**

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Support an active, efficient, and equitable healthcare market. Identify primary and specialty services currently not offered in Burlington. Review partnerships of local health care providers with other institutions within the Triad and the Triangle that would help expand Burlington's health care offerings.

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**RECOMMENDATION 05****Nurture arts & entertainment.**

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Continue and expand Downtown arts and entertainment efforts. Assess the feasibility of an Artist in Residence program for Downtown, and link it to local school programs. Coordinate the zoning code to encourage Artist loft housing and other live-work opportunities.

## Goal 04:

### Improve workforce development and vocational education options within the community.

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**RECOMMENDATION 01****Create a Workforce Investment Board tailored to Burlington's specific needs.**

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Provide leadership in making appointments to a new workforce investment board and in setting workforce area strategies and goals. Communicate regularly with and hold accountable workforce investment representatives.

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**RECOMMENDATION 02****Address the education and training needs of the local workforce and employers.**

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Improve communication between educational institutions, vocational training providers, local employers, and economic development groups across the region, including ABSS, Alamance Community College, and local employers. Participate in and promote meetings with local employers to discuss workforce needs.



**Continuing to support and expand the healthcare market within Burlington is an important part of economic development.**

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### RECOMMENDATION 03

Set up workforce development centers in areas with sufficient need and access issues.

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ACC's Dillingham Center in the Burlington Outlet Village area is a great resource located proximate to the Interstate. This center could be supplemented with smaller satellite workforce development centers throughout the neighborhoods of the City. Public schools can often serve after-hours in this role.

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### RECOMMENDATION 04

Ensure that workforce development opportunities are easily accessible by public transportation.

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Partner with educational institutions, non-profits, and Alamance County Transportation Authority to provide shuttle service to workforce development and educational institutions in concert with the existing Elon Biobus. As the City's new bus transit service comes online, assure that routes and schedules serve the needs of those utilizing workforce development programs.

### *Small Business Mentorship*

A mentorship program is an effective business development practice that connects entrepreneurs with established business leaders for assistance and guidance. It is not dependent on physical incubation space, but can be employed to enhance a business incubator. Organizations such as the Small Business Administration offer training programs to develop mentors.

## Goal 05:

Capitalize on local entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.

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### RECOMMENDATION 01

Support and incentivize small business incubation.

Establish a small business innovation fund to support small business product and service development. The innovation fund could be supported by the creation of a venture capital fund that would support business product development. Burlington's Small Business Development Center should target nascent businesses that will support its growing health care, manufacturing, and IT industries.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02

Create a small business mentorship program.

Link local small businesses with existing businesses to provide mentoring of their operations. The Alamance County Chamber of Commerce should consider creating a SCORE program with local business leaders to mentor small businesses throughout the community.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03

Reorient philanthropic giving toward innovation.

Work with the Chamber of Commerce and major corporate leaders to create a program founded on innovation-based philanthropic giving. The city should look to peer communities for models that have been successful in implementing similar programs. This can positively affect both economic development and workforce development initiatives.

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### RECOMMENDATION 04

Support the experimentation and creativity that is needed to produce commercial innovations.

Success stories should be publicized to help educate the region and potential investors about the value of innovation. Support the Chamber of Commerce in profiling innovators online, in newsletters, and on conference circuits.



**Small business incubation programs could be housed in Downtown storefronts as the City seeks to re-occupy space that is being vacated by LabCorp's staff movement.**



**Cultural districts in areas such as Downtown and North Main Street can act as catalyst sites for a larger community renaissance.**

## Goal 06:

Enhance Burlington's tourism potential.

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### RECOMMENDATION 01

Conduct a Tourism and Hospitality Study for Burlington and Alamance County.

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Establish the marketability of Burlington's unique arts and cultural assets, including industrial heritage, railroad heritage, destination shopping, regional trail hiking, minor league baseball, and recreational aviation.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02

Integrate Burlington's industrial heritage into the city's tourism branding.

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Burlington's past as a railroad center and industrial powerhouse can be used to attract visitors. Coordinating that heritage with other tourism efforts and with the City's branding strategy can realize greater tourism income and regional notoriety. Refer to the case study on page 161 for more information.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03 \*

Continue to promote the City's parks and facilities as venues for sports and athletic events.

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Maintain the marquee status of the Aquatic Center, Tennis Center, and outdoor sports fields through continued reinvestment and upgrades in coordination with the 2012 Recreation & Parks Master Plan. Promote the use of Burlington Athletic Stadium and Indian Valley Golf Course for special events. Attract special athletic events like the Senior Olympics, Special Olympics, marathons and "fun runs."

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### RECOMMENDATION 04

Promote cultural districts and sites in the City.

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Work with the Burlington Parks Department and County Visitors Bureau to create a cultural district and site tour. This tour should link historic sites and districts in and around Burlington such as the Glencoe Mill Village, historic neighborhoods, and early railroad sites, but also current centers of art and culture like Downtown.

# Case Study: Industrial Heritage Tourism

## What is Industrial Heritage Tourism?

Industrial heritage tourism is an outgrowth of the historic preservation and heritage tourism movements. The goal of industrial heritage tourism: breathe new life into a heritage that is quickly dying away, and do it with the help of preserved industrial buildings and technological artifacts. Historic preservationists of the 1970s and 1980s found their goals very much aligned with the tourism industry of the same period. Preservationists were eager to salvage the reputation of a dying industrial heritage in order to cast the buildings and artifacts of that heritage in a more favorable light. The heritage tourism industry had similar goals—provide educational experiences for a growing group of heritage-savvy tourists, and give cultural currency to marketable places and artifacts.

## Lowell, Massachusetts

There can be no question about Lowell's industrial heritage—the "Boston Associates" and their leader, Francis Cabot Lowell, conceived Lowell as a city completely dependent on the cotton textile industry. Forces were already in motion by the turn of the twentieth century to spell the downfall of the city, however. After a brief boost in textile production as a result of World War I military demand, Lowell's textile industry began heading to cities of the American southeast, like Burlington, where labor was cheaper and unorganized, and closer to the raw inputs of the industry.

In the mid 1960s, a grassroots effort was launched to revitalize Lowell through historic preservation and tourism promotion. Local politicians and community activists enlisted the help of heritage and design consultants, preservationists, city departments, state agencies, and the National Park Service (NPS) to tie together a number of disparate preservation and heritage tourism initiatives as an "urban national cultural park" that would concentrate simultaneously on restoring historic buildings and artifacts while

demonstrating that older cities of the Industrial Revolution can slough off their reputation of economic despair and poor quality of life.

What began with mill restorations, educational exhibits, a restored and operational trolley line, and recreational



amenity development in the middle of the 1970s soon snowballed into the private development of industrial heritage museums, industrial building reuse by notable corporations, and the arrival of two minor-league sports teams with industrial heritage-themed mascots (and their respective new venues). In the meantime, hotels, restaurants, and shops have reoccupied the downtown tourist district. An economic analysis of Lowell immediately after the period of NPS investment indicated that the city's unemployment had dropped significantly and downtown investment had reached nearly \$86 million.

## Local Examples

Two local peer cities of Burlington have employed industrial heritage tourism measures recently. Danville, Virginia refers to its cluster of tobacco warehouse on its waterfront as the "Tobacco District." Likewise, Rock Hill, South Carolina has established a "Textile Corridor" where it seeks to adaptively reuse its historic mill structures.

*Resource: Lowell: A proposal to develop an Urban National Cultural Park, David Crane and Partners, 1975.*

*Resource: "Revitalizing industrial cities through cultural tourism," International Journal of Environmental Studies 25.4, Robert H McNulty, September 1985.*

# Profile: North Carolina Funding Resources

## TAX CREDITS

North Carolina offers several types of tax credits to eligible taxpayers that undertake qualifying initiatives. One class of these credits, the Article 3J Tax Credits, may be used to offset up to 50% of the taxpayer’s state income and/or franchise tax liability, and unused credits may be carried forward for up to five years.

Article 3J offers credits for:

- Creating jobs – Companies who meet a minimum threshold of new full time jobs created during the taxable year may claim a credit.
- Investing in business property – Companies can claim a credit based on a percentage of the cost of capitalized tangible personal property that is placed in service during the taxable year.
- Investment in real property – Companies located in a Tier 1 County (see below) that invest at least \$10 million in real property within a three-year period and create at least 200 new jobs within two years are allowed a credit equal to 30% of the eligible investment.

### Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit

North Carolina taxpayers that develop Interactive Digital Media (IDM) within the state are allowed a tax credit. Credits are awarded for taxpayer’s expenses that exceed \$50,000 that are paid during the taxable year in development phases, and may not exceed \$7.5 million. The percentage that applies to the expenses is:

- 15 percent of compensation and wages for a full-time employee, fringe contributions on compensation and wages, and other allowable expenses.
- 20 percent of research expenses paid to North Carolina university or participating community colleges.

### North Carolina Ports Tax Credits

North Carolina operates a modern port system that connects businesses in the state to the global economy. Businesses who pay North Carolina state income tax and use North Carolina ports can qualify for tax credits on both inbound and outbound cargo.

The credit is earned on cargo wharfage and handling fees paid to the N.C. State Ports Authority which exceed the average for over three tax years. The credit applies to taxes due to the state—up to 50% of the total tax liability for each tax year. Any unused credit may be carried forwarded up to five years for a total credit of up to \$2 million.

### Technology Development Tax Credit

Businesses with qualified North Carolina research expenses are allowed a tax credit equal to a percentage of those expenses. The allowable credits are determined by:

- Small Business status (annual receipts less than \$1 million): Qualified businesses on the last day of the taxable year are allowed a credit of 3.25%.
- County Tier: Certain tax programs in North Carolina are indexed to a county ranking system. For expenses for research performed in a Tier 1 county, a business is permitted a credit of 3.25%.
- Other research: For expenses not covered above, refer to the table below for qualified research expenses during a taxable year:

Qualified Expenses	Rate
\$0-\$50 million	1.25%
\$50 - \$200 million	2.25%
More than \$200 million	3.25%

A business with North Carolina university research expenses for the taxable year is allowed a credit equal to 20% of those expenses.

### Renewable Energy Tax Credits

North Carolina’s various renewable-energy tax credits

are unified into a statute that addresses nearly all renewables. The statute provides tax credits eligible for the cost of equipment and associated design; construction costs; and installation costs by a taxpayer and placed into service in North Carolina during the taxable year.

**Program Requirements:** The credit is subject to various ceilings depending on sector and the type of renewable-energy system. The following credit limits for various technologies and sectors apply:

- A maximum of \$3,500 for non-business solar energy equipment for active space heating, combined active space and domestic water-heating systems, and passive space heating;
- A maximum of \$1,400 for non-business solar water-heating systems, including solar pool-heating systems;
- A maximum of \$10,500 for renewable-energy systems for non-business use;
- A maximum of \$8,400 for geothermal equipment installation;
- A maximum of \$2,500,000 for solar, wind, hydro, geothermal and biomass applications on commercial and industrial facilities, including photovoltaic (PV), daylighting, solar water-heating and space-heating technologies.

Expenditures eligible for the tax credit include:

- Cost of the equipment and associated design
- Construction costs
- Installation costs less any discounts
- Rebates
- Advertising
- Installation-assistance credits
- Name-referral allowances or other similar reductions.

## DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS

### Job Development Investment Grants (JDIG)

The JDIG program is overseen by the Economic Investment Committee (the “Committee”). Five members serve on the Committee—the state’s Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Revenue,

the Director of the Office of State Budget and Management, and two private sector members appointed by the North Carolina General Assembly.

**Program Requirements:** A proposed project must meet a rigorous set of criteria. The Committee must find:

- The project results in a net increase in employment.
- The project increases opportunities for employment and strengthen the state’s economy.
- The project is consistent with the economic development goals of the state and of the area in which it is located.
- The project is competitive with another state(s) or country.
- The grant is necessary for the completion of the project in North Carolina.

The company must meet certain state health insurance and workplace safety requirements. The proposed project’s benefits must outweigh its costs, thus rendering the grant appropriate. A cost benefit analysis is done for each project, and the Committee identifies and selects projects that are most beneficial, after considering a number of different evaluation factors.

### One North Carolina Fund

The One North Carolina Fund helps recruit and expand quality jobs in high value-added, knowledge-driven industries. It also provides financial assistance to those businesses or industries deemed vital to a healthy economy that are making significant efforts to expand in North Carolina.

The fund currently consists of nonrecurring appropriations made by the North Carolina General Assembly for companies seeking to undertake new expansion or locate new operations in the state. The fund is designed to increase the state’s competitiveness, so the project location or expansion must be in competition with another location outside the state.

Companies can receive money for:

- Installation or purchase of equipment.
- Structural repairs, improvements, or renovations of existing buildings to be used for expansion.

- Construction of or improvements to new or existing water, sewer, gas or electric utility distribution lines, or equipment for existing buildings.

Program Requirements: For a company to be considered:

- The company must agree to meet an average wage test.
- Local units of government (city or county) must agree to match financial assistance to the company.

### Additional Guidelines

Factors in award decisions:

The following factors determine allocation, with special consideration given to companies that locate or expand in areas that have experienced sudden and severe economic disruptions:

- Economic impact of project, including costs and benefits to the state.
- Strategic importance of the project to the state, region, or locality.
- Quality of jobs.
- Quality of industry and project.
- Environmental impact of project.
- Project must be competitive with another state or country.

### Small Business Technology Funding

The risk and expense of conducting serious research and development efforts are often beyond the means of many small businesses. North Carolina helps small businesses compete on the same level as larger businesses with funding opportunities for the critical startup and development stages of a technology venture.

#### The One North Carolina Small Business Program

This program awards state matching funds to North Carolina businesses that have received funding from either one of two federal grant programs -- the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program.

The Federal SBIR/STTR Program provides funding

competitions in two phases that are relevant to the North Carolina program: Phase I conducts feasibility research; and Phase II expands and develops Phase I results and develops commercially viable innovations.

### OTHER PROGRAMS

#### Industrial Rail Access Program

The North Carolina Department of Transportation administers the Rail Industrial Access Program for businesses that want to locate or expand their facilities in North Carolina. This program ensures that industries have the tracks needed to transport freight and materials and also assists in refurbishing tracks.

Grant funding is contingent upon approval prior to the company making a decision to locate or expand in North Carolina and a private and/or local source match of funds. Approval is also based upon the economic benefits of the project including the number of new jobs created, the amount of capital investment, rail use and the area's economic conditions.

#### Industrial Revenue Bond Program

Industrial Revenue Bonds are available in North Carolina to assist private business development and expansion by issuing low-interest tax-exempt bonds.

Industrial Revenue Bonds, also known as industrial development bonds, IDBs, IRBs and qualified small issue bonds, offer qualified manufacturing facilities and certain solid waste disposal facilities convenient, long-term, flexible financing. They are available to assist new and expanding industry in all 100 North Carolina counties.

IRBs can be either tax-exempt or taxable and can be used to finance an entire project, including the cost of land, construction of new or expanded facilities, acquisition and installation of depreciable property such as equipment, and construction period interest.

The Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority of each county issues these bonds in the county where the project is located.

Due to the complexity and documentation associated

with revenue bonds, a business should consult early in the process with an attorney who specializes in revenue bonds (bond counsel). Most county industrial facilities and pollution control financing authorities permit companies to designate bond counsel, although some have their own designated bond counsel.

#### Significant Requirements (Manufacturing IRBs)

- Manufacturing – Must be at least 75% manufacturing.
- Letter of Credit – Since all bond issues must be supported by a letter of credit, it is important to secure an early commitment from a bank which is rated investment grade or better. Most often, the bank that issues the letter of credit will place the bonds and may purchase them.
- Environmental Approval – No IRB project may be approved without environmental certification by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). If the company must obtain required permits, the process could take 60 to 90 days. DENR representatives will guide the company through the process.
- Abandonment – Company must certify that in building the facility, it is not abandoning another facility (or, if it is, that it is impossible for the company to remain at its present location because of limitation on land use, etc.).
- Jobs Test – Must create or retain number of jobs with the size of financing (currently one job for every \$250,000 in financing).
- IRB Proceeds - May be used only for land, building and equipment (fixed assets).

#### Commerce Finance Center

The Commerce Finance Center, a division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, offers information on financing programs available to qualifying companies that plan to locate or expand in the state.

For example, the Center can provide information on tax credits available to new and expanding industries under the Credits for Growing Businesses Act (Article 3J). The Center also administers Industrial Revenue Bonds, which may be used by companies engaged

in some type of manufacturing for the acquisition of real estate, facility construction, and/or equipment purchase. It also directs programs that provide grants and loans to businesses locating or expanding in the state such as:

- Job Development Investment Grants
- One North Carolina Fund
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- Community Development Block Grants
- Industrial Development Fund
- Shell Building Revolving Loan Fund

For general information on our incentives and programs, contact us at:

Commerce Finance Center  
4318 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-4318  
Phone: 919-733-5297  
Fax: 919-715-5297

*All information in this profile is extracted from websites related to the individual programs referenced, including:*

<http://www.thrivenc.com/incentives/financial/discretionary-programs/job-development-investment-grant>

<http://www.thrivenc.com/incentives/financial/discretionary-programs/one-north-carolina-fund>

<http://www.thrivenc.com/incentives/financial/other-cost-saving-programs/industrial-revenue-bond>

<http://www.nccommerce.com/rd/community-assistance/investment-assistance/grant-categories>

<http://www.nccommerce.com/research-publications/incentive-reports/industrial-development-fund>



# Redevelopment

# 09



## First Focus

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In order for redevelopment to get off the ground, there needs to be a clear picture to the development community of what are available catalyst sites in Burlington, what challenges these sites might have, and what the opportunities are for successful investment. Detailed inventory and analysis of specific sites should be the first step in building momentum.

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# Redevelopment

Redevelopment of existing built real estate is often a critical issue for communities. These properties often cause blighting influences on surrounding real estate and act as a drag on attracting new investment to the neighborhoods and corridors within a community. The associated costs to redevelop these pieces of real estate often exceed the market return on investment due to the costs of environmental remediation, building structural obsolescence, age of the building mechanicals, and the property constraints of urban real estate. These properties are often in older sections of a community that have experienced and may still be experiencing disinvestment. Therefore, it may require the City of Burlington to proactively intervene to assist potential developers to make the necessary investment to redevelop these brownfield properties. This chapter will focus on the following redevelopment issues: priority brownfields, challenged commercial corridors, Downtown Burlington, and a potential new redevelopment district called “NoMa” that is adjacent to, but unique from, Downtown.

## Priority Redevelopment Areas

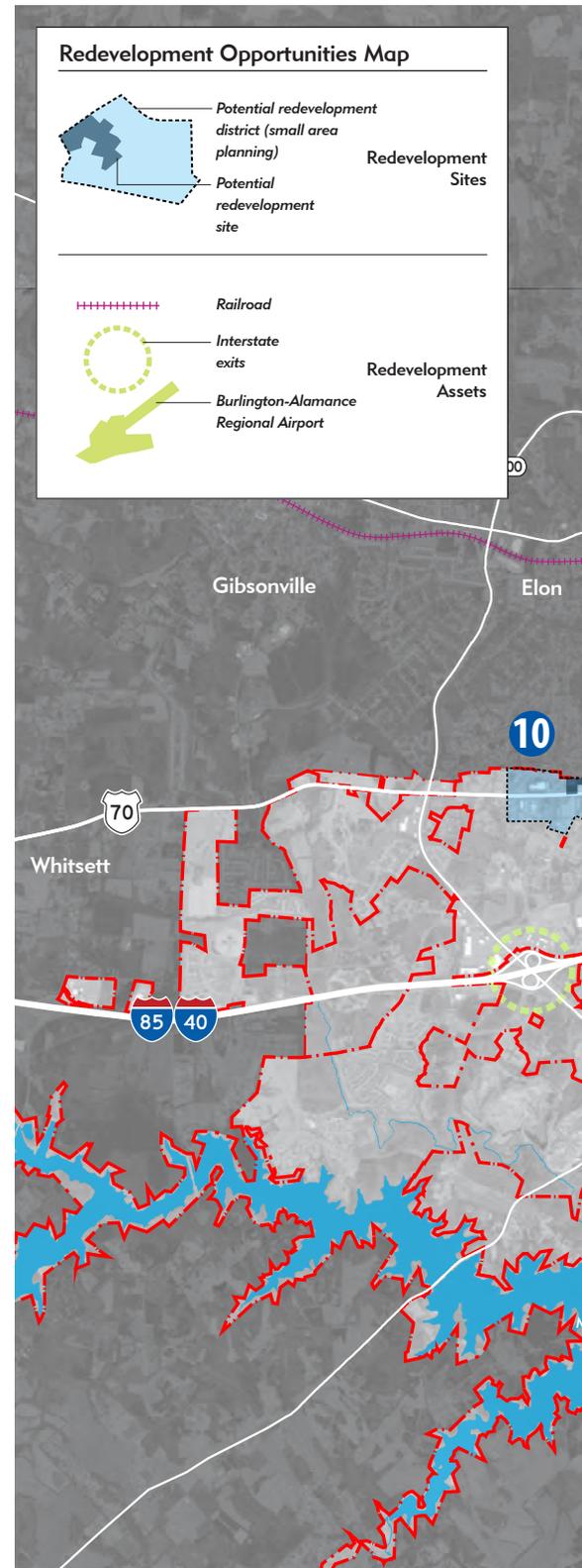
As a City with significant industrial heritage, Burlington has a number of brownfield properties that are defined by the vacant nature of their conditions and the real or perceived environmental challenges associated with the properties which limit reinvestment interest in the properties. Working with the Destination Burlington Steering Committee, a number of priority brownfield properties were identified for review. The adjacent map and table on page 172 represent an overall review of property readiness for redevelopment.

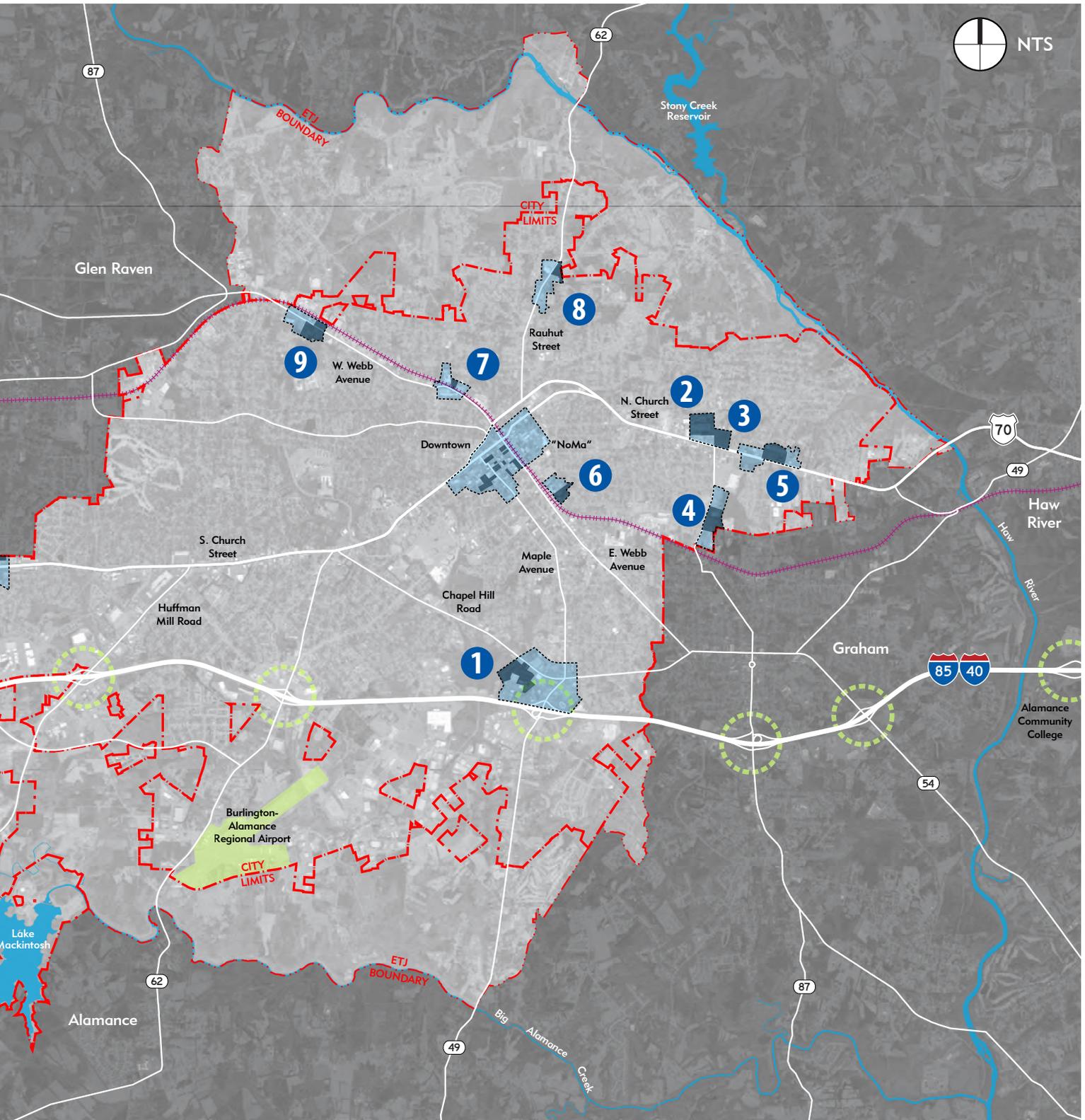
### REDEVELOPMENT READINESS ASSESSMENT

After reviewing the priority brownfield sites with the Steering Committee, a Redevelopment Readiness Assessment was completed for each location. It should be noted that only two of the identified brownfield sites may require significant intervention by the City to assist with long term remediation and redevelopment. The following is a brief overview of the property readiness assessment for each property:

- 1** Burlington Outlet Village (formerly Burlington Manufacturers’ Outlet Center)

Located at a major gateway to Burlington on the City’s south side at I-40/85, the Burlington Outlet Village has a number of strong businesses and institutions within its overall footprint. Unfortunately, a number of retail buildings and lots are not configured for existing retail activities. The retail that remains does not work as a retail/commercial district. The entire area needs to be planned as a gateway district, and the properties need to be integrated into a Small Area Plan that would support existing retail and future retail/commercial and mixed-use with potential residential uses. Existing zoning may need to be modified to allow a variety of new uses within the larger footprint of the Burlington Outlet Village area. Public realm upgrades for the gateway and corridor should





be developed to support transit operations and pedestrian improvements while also making the entire corridor visually more appealing. The City of Burlington will need to intervene to assist with a more comprehensive and sustainable development plan for the public realm improvements that will support future private reinvestment in the Burlington Outlet Village. The City may seek grant assistance from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to assist with the financial investment necessary within this area. Finally, the planning should include how best to integrate and connect the future “Carolina Corridor Commerce Park” which is just south of I-40/85 to the Burlington Outlet Village.

### **2** Western Electric Property

It is anticipated that the Western Electric property may require significant environmental clean-up prior to reuse or demolition. Currently, the property owners are salvaging valued materials from the buildings on the property. It is recommended that the City work closely with the private owners to determine their long-term redevelopment goals and investment capacity to attract new investment and reuses to the property. The City should be prepared to assist the private owners and investors with tax abatement and tax credits, as may be required to attract future investors to the site. It may be that the City could also assist by applying for other funding sources from state or federal agencies that may underwrite the future investment necessary to fully redevelop the Western Electric property.

### **3** Northeast Corner of Graham Hopedale Road and North Church Street

This large parcel is ready for redevelopment by the private sector. While North Church Street Corridor has some properties that are vacant and underutilized, as a whole the corridor remains quite economically vibrant. Therefore, the City of Burlington should only need to assist potential private investment on this site in modest ways.

### **4** South Graham Hopedale Road

The site is ready for private redevelopment. The real estate is clear, and it is across the street from Fairchild Park. The property is just south of Walmart and the commercial corridor of North Church Street. With proximity to Fairchild Park and commercial areas, the property may attract private developers for multi-family residential development. The City of Burlington may consider tax abatement or tax credit assistance to support the private investment on this site. These represent modest steps that the City could take to encourage redevelopment on this site. The market should support new, affordable multi-family development and potentially some commercial activities in support of the residential development.

### **5** Cum Park Plaza

While the North Church Street corridor still remains a viable commercial corridor, Cum Park Plaza is an aging strip shopping center. Due to its size, the City may need to intervene modestly with assistance to private investors with

tax abatement and/or tax credits to spur reinvestment and updating of this commercial center. In 2013, traffic counts remain well above a minimum threshold of 10,000 vehicles a day, so there may need to be some reconfiguration of the real estate to attract shoppers to improve retail performance of the businesses.

#### **6** Southeast Corner Property at Gilmer St. & East Market Street Intersection

The building located on the southeast corner of the intersection of Gilmer and Market Streets is an old textile mill that was built over a 75-year period from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. While it is unclear how significant the environmental remediation may be for the site, it is anticipated that most of the building space could be remediated to support a variety of uses from commercial through residential. The property would likely qualify for Federal Historic Tax Credits and/or Low/Senior Income Housing Tax Credits.

#### **7** Northeast Corner Property at Elmira St. & North Park Avenue Intersection

While some environmental issues may exist, most should be known due to continued use of the properties. There are few structural issues since most buildings in the area remain used, but may need upgrading depending on future use. This is most likely a good location for continued industrial and/or warehousing uses. The properties appear ready for investor interest, and they do not appear to be constrained for redevelopment purposes.

#### **8** Corner Property at Rauhut St. & Lower Hopedale Road Intersection

This real estate appears ready for development and investment. A new Family Dollar Store has recently located on an adjoining property. This is a good area for immediate investment for commercial use with enough real estate to create a mixed-use opportunity. The site may best work as neighborhood commercial center, with adequate land nearby for possible residential development or a multi-use business park. It does not appear to have any constraining environmental issues with the site to delay future site development.

#### **9** Southwest Corner Property at Glen Raven Road & West Webb Avenue

While the site is large, there is enough land for a variety of commercial opportunities along West Webb Avenue, but there is also potential for future residential development in a portion of the site that sits further way from West Webb Avenue. The site has a traffic light for easy ingress and egress off of West Webb Avenue. The real estate appears ready for new investment. The existing old commercial box store does not present any demolition challenges to preparing the site promptly for redevelopment purposes.

#### **10** West End Cinemas Site

The site, while currently vacant, is located in a relatively economically healthy commercial corridor on Burlington's west side. It is anticipated that the City may not be required to assist or intervene as the market should identify new reuses for the building and site.

# Profile: Priority Redevelopment Sites

Throughout the comprehensive planning process, City staff, the Steering Committee, and the public identified a number of sites and areas in the City for which development or redevelopment could contribute to positive change in the community. These sites were seen as opportunities for the reuse of former industrial or commercial buildings, redevelopment for residential use, or the beginnings of a neighborhood commercial center. These sites are located throughout the City.

	1: Burlington Outlet Village	2: Western Electric	3: Graham Hopedale & Church	4: South Graham Hopedale Rd.
<b>Size</b>	+/- 24 acres	22 acres	10 acres	29 acres
<b>Transportation</b>				
From I-40/85	0.4 mile	2.8 miles	2.8 mile	2.0 miles
From US 70	1.9 mile	0.2 mile	0.0 mile	0.6 mile
From NC 87	1.6 mile	1.8 mile	1.8 mile	1.1 mile
From NC 49	0.4 mile	1.9 mile	1.9 mile	1.1 mile
From Railroad	+/- 2.5 miles	1.1 mile	1.1 mile	0.3 mile
From New Transit System	0.0 mile	0.0 mile	0.0 mile	0.0 mile
From Regional Airport	4.5 miles	6.0 miles	6.0 miles	6.2 miles
<b>Readiness Score</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Environmental Status</b>	5	1	2	4
<b>Ownership/Developable</b>	2	2	3	2
<b>Structural Obsolescence</b>	3	2	5	4
<b>Potential Market Uses (Industrial, Commercial, Mixed, Housing)</b>	C	ALL	ALL	C, M, H
<b>Investor-ready</b>	4	1	3	4
<b>Catalyst Opportunity</b>	3	5	5	3
<b>Photo</b>				
<b>Aerial View</b>				

The table below summarizes some pertinent information about the sites, including size of the site, proximity to transportation routes and systems, and a measure of readiness for redevelopment. In the readiness score, a higher total score indicates greater readiness of the site for redevelopment; each factor is scored from 5 (greater readiness) to 1 (lower readiness). The table below also indicates suitable uses for each site. C indicates primarily commercial use, I indicates industrial use, H indicates multi-family housing, and M indicates a mix of uses.

5: Cum Park Plaza	6: Gilmer & East Market St.	7: Elmira & North Park Ave.	8: Rauhut & Lower Hopedale Rd.	9: Glen Raven & West Webb Ave.	10: West End Cinemas
17 acres	7 acres	1.3 acre	2.5 acres	10 acres	5.6 acres
2.5 miles	2.1 miles	3.1 miles	3.9 miles	3.5 miles	1.4 mile
0.0 mile	1.1 mile	0.5 mile	1.0 mile	1.7 mile	0.0 mile
1.8 mile	0.1 mile	0.0 mile	1.4 mile	0.0 mile	4.5 miles
1.8 mile	1.8 mile	3.0 miles	3.7 miles	4.1 miles	5.0 miles
1.0 mile	0.0 mile	0.0 mile	1.4 mile	0.1 mile	4.5 miles
0.0 mile	0.1 mile	0.5 mile	1.1 mile	1.3 mile	0.0 mile
6.4 miles	4.4 miles	4.9 miles	5.7 miles	4.9 miles	4.2 miles
<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
5	2	4	5	4	5
3	4	3	4	4	5
4	2	4	5	4	4
C, M	H, M	I, C	I, C, H, M	C, H, M	C, M
4	2	4	5	4	4
3	4	4	5	4	3
					
					

# Downtown Burlington

A city's downtown is its "living room." Downtowns are the image or brand that identifies a city with the general public, existing employers, and future residents and employers. It provides the placemaking punctuation mark for cities, and it establishes the place to be. Downtown Burlington is in a state of transition from a less active environment after 5 o'clock to a 24/7 live-work-play environment. It has a number of assets that many other regional downtown locations don't have. Even though LabCorp, one of the City's major private employers, has reduced the number of Downtown employees recently, they will remain a major employer in the Downtown area. Downtown is a very walkable size, and it lends itself well to pedestrians. Accommodating diverse populations through redevelopment will be critical to Downtown's success. A variety of activities, opportunities, housing, and businesses will mean that residents from all ages and walks of life will feel at home in Downtown. There are several recommended improvements for Downtown on which local stakeholders are already working, but should be identified in this planning effort.

## DOWNTOWN OPPORTUNITIES

### LabCorp

LabCorp is vacating a number of buildings along Main Street. The City and the Burlington Downtown Corporation (BDC) have an opportunity to replace first floor office with more active retail and restaurant uses. The Downtown area has a number of eateries, and it has the capacity and floor space to add more and become a major food and eatery destination. This could be accomplished by focusing on attracting restaurants and entertainment establishments along Main Street and Front Streets. It is important to try to keep the eating and drinking establishments within a five minute walk of each other.

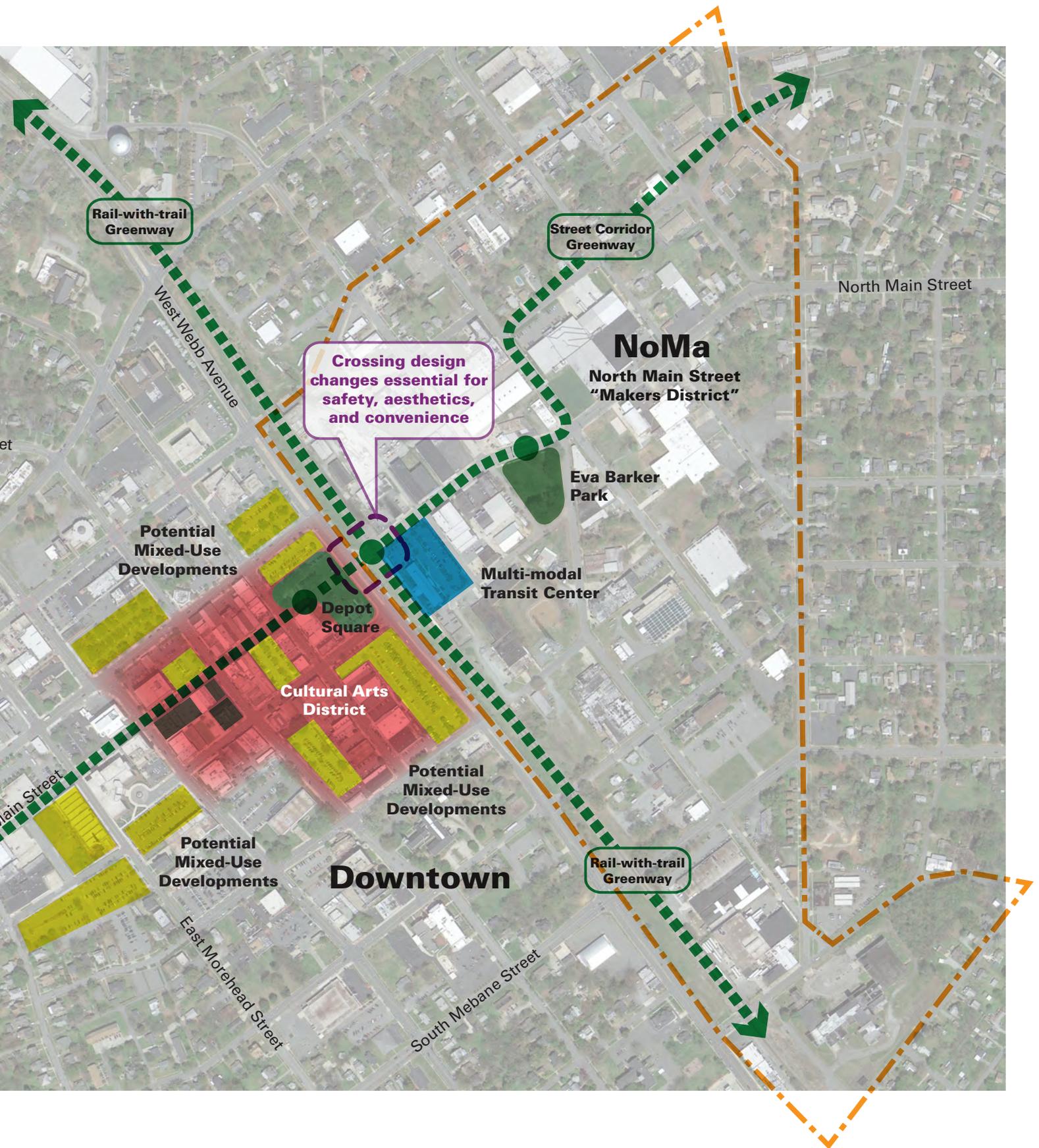
### Transit Terminal

Using the Amtrak Station as an anchor, it is possible to develop a transit hub in proximity to Downtown. This would represent a significant public investment that could spur further private investment in the area. It will be important to create a more pedestrian-friendly crossing along North Main Street between the Amtrak Station side of the railroad tracks and Downtown across Webb Avenue. This would help support Downtown redevelopment from the northeast side.

### Attracting and Supporting Investment

As the BDC is doing now, it is important to continue to sustain grant and loan programs to support reinvestment in Downtown properties. There is often a financing gap between the higher-than-average cost of renovating older properties and the market rents that can be realized in most downtowns.





## Profile: Small Area Plans

A Small Area Plan provides for a more intense study of a neighborhood or district that is tailored to the specific needs of that area. It is intended to guide public improvements and steer private investment in order to promote stabilization and revitalization.

The preparation of any Small Area Plan relies on the community's most valuable resource—its residents. The collaboration of residents, business owners and the City of Burlington add credibility to the recommendations which address the citizen's everyday issues and concerns.

Areas in Burlington that may warrant Small Area Planning include:

- Downtown (through Burlington Downtown Corporation)
- North Main Street district (NoMa)
- Burlington Outlet Village gateway district
- South Graham Hopedale Road/ West Hanover Road gateway district
- Rauhut Street/Sharpe Road gateway district
- West Webb Avenue gateway district
- South Church Street gateway district

Therefore, it is important that the BDC continue its efforts in attracting private investment in Downtown that provides updated first floor space for retail or restaurants and urban living apartments or condominiums on the upper floors. While these infill projects are extremely important to maintain the urban fabric of Downtown, it is crucial to grow additional residential opportunities, too. Additional Downtown residents will provide an expanding and steady customer base for Downtown businesses. It is recommended that the BDC and the City review surface parking lots in and about Downtown to determine which lots may be converted to new multi-family apartments or condominiums.

The City may wish to consider expanding its Municipal Service District to include areas of North and South Main Street. By enlarging the area, it will facilitate coordination of signage, streetscape design, programming, redevelopment and the provision of special public services.

Finally, the Burlington Downtown Corporation should continue to learn and apply appropriate best practices as an on-going member of the North Carolina Main Street Program and the National Trust Main Street Program. This is important to continue to build Burlington's marketing brand in the minds of the general public and local businesses. The Burlington Downtown Corporation should be congratulated for the impact it has made and will continue to make in building Burlington's "living room" and its public image. The City, in partnership with BDC, is making Burlington a community of choice in which to live, work, and play.

## North Main (NoMa) Redevelopment District

Between Downtown and east side residential neighborhoods is an older industrial and commercial warehouse area that is a sort of "no man's land" of vacant or underutilized properties. This area has some existing small businesses that give it economic possibilities and a base from which to grow. The area needs to be organized, but it could be much more integral to the City economic fabric and vitality. The district is bisected by North Main Street from Webb Avenue east to Ireland Street. While existing commercial and industrial businesses should largely be encouraged to stay, it appears that this "NoMa" area has the beginnings of a new "Makers District" that would support artist studios, workshops, and sustainable manufacturing while complementing the Downtown as the principle showcase of arts and crafts in Burlington. A Makers District would be a community of entrepreneurs, crafters, and artists—Makers—who create art and specialty crafted products and need large studio, shop, or loft spaces that can be found in older open-plan industrial properties. Many of these properties could be retrofitted as live-work space for the Makers.

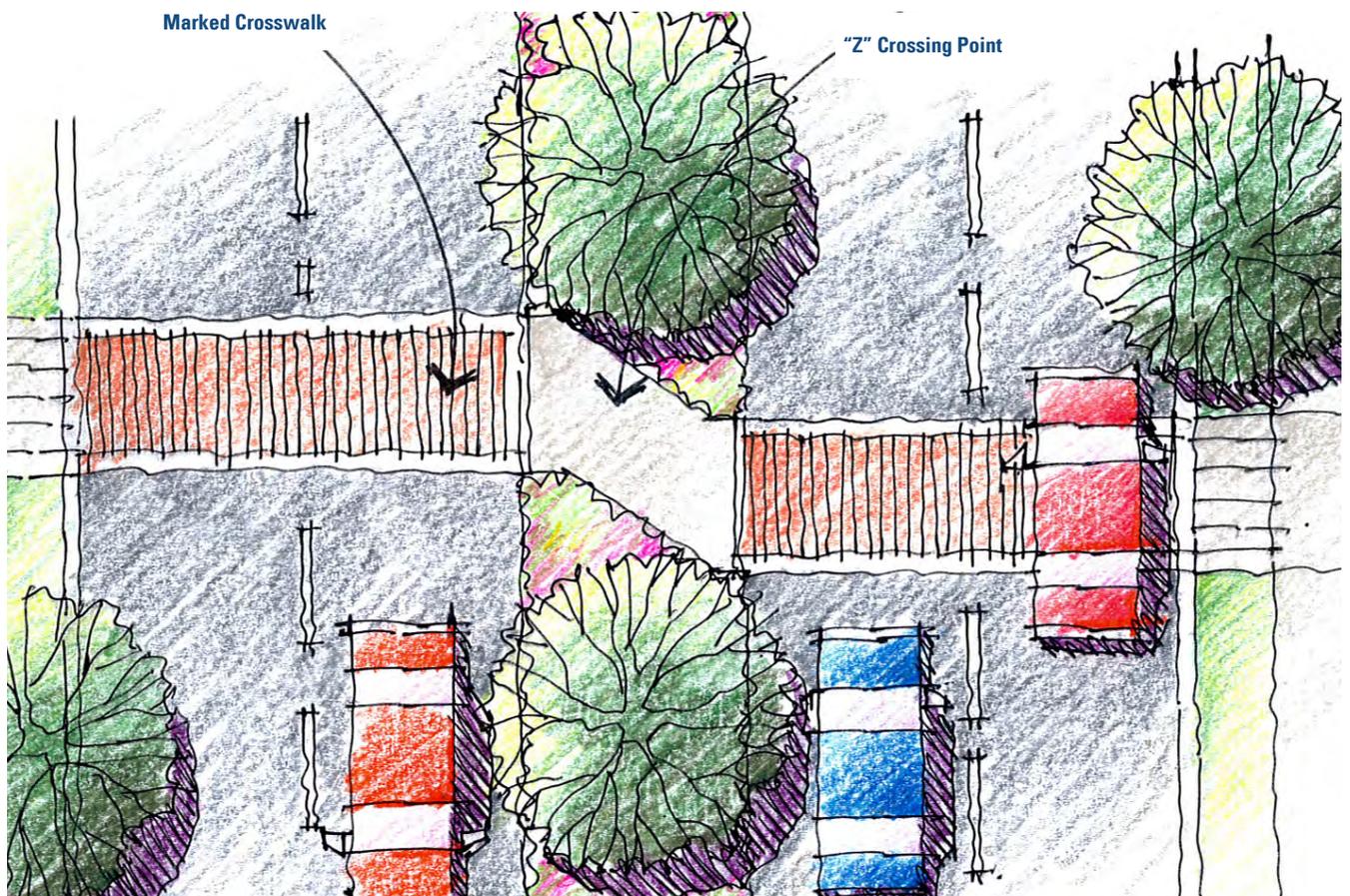
Besides supporting the Downtown and its art and entertainment venues, the NoMa Makers District would create an active space that would be walkable and

welcoming of a variety of uses from existing industrial and commercial to Makers workshops and lofts. This would create a new, vibrant district between the predominately residential neighborhoods of eastern Burlington and Downtown. It would be a natural transition area that would bridge between the west and east neighborhoods in central Burlington. It would embrace the past industrial heritage of Burlington while creating a new adaptive reuse that would complement Downtown businesses and blend seamlessly with east side neighborhoods.

The NoMa Makers District is simply a concept that needs to be further studied, to determine how the City and its redevelopment partners could create a feasible game plan to assist makers to live and work in the NoMa Makers District. The redevelopment plan would identify which properties would be the most appropriate to use to create a Makers District. It would also analyze what would be necessary to incentivize real property owners and developers to renovate the buildings and how best to finance and sequence the Makers District redevelopment effort.



**The North Main Street (NoMa) district has a number of elements necessary for revitalization, including aging public properties that can be adapted for new uses.**



**A "Z" Type Pedestrian Crossing may be an appropriate early solution to crossing Webb Avenue from Downtown into the North Main area.**

## Profile: “Maker’s” or Creative Class Districts

Through the efforts of community groups like the Alamance Maker’s Guild, Burlington and other cities across the country are plugging into the “Maker’s Movement.” This movement emerged out of the Do-it-Yourself (DIY) philosophy and was facilitated by the rapid accessibility of innovative technologies to assist in creating and sharing products, art, services, and ideas. New social communities and partnerships with education and business organizations are driving the Maker’s Movement towards entrepreneurship and significant economic impacts.

Burlington can benefit greatly from becoming a “Maker City” and offering a home to the movement. Underutilized building sites, corridors and neighborhoods can be seen as an opportunity when the right redevelopment tools are employed. The success of a redevelopment project often depends on project concepts that are visionary and sustainable—led by pioneers.

A concept with such a vision is the “NoMa” district, roughly bounded by Webb Avenue, North Church Street, and Ireland Street and centered on North Main Street. Within this district is a mix of aging industrial and commercial buildings. NoMa has the beginnings of a “Makers District” that could support studios, workshops, and live-work spaces for Makers, complementing the Downtown as the principle showcase for art and culture in Burlington. This area has some existing industrial uses and small businesses that give it economic possibilities and a base from which to grow. Creating a district with a distinct identity—and perhaps a hub facility or incubator at its center—could serve to further catalyze revitalization and provide a natural transition between the west and east sides of Burlington. A redevelopment plan would target available parcels most appropriate to create a walkable, cohesive mixed-use district and identify ways to partner with and incentivize development.

Examples of recently created hubs for artists, entrepreneurs, scientists, and other groups are highlighted to the right.

Packard Place is the hub for entrepreneurship and innovation in Charlotte housed in a 90,000 sq. ft. building in the heart of Uptown. Packard Place is quickly becoming the hot spot for entrepreneurs in Charlotte. It’s the first true home in Charlotte for entrepreneurs built by entrepreneurs.

<http://packardplace.us/>

The Asheville Collider is located less than two blocks from the National Climatic Data Center in Asheville, NC. The Collider a place for climate experts, data professionals and the growing climate data services industry to accelerate effective solutions for climate adaptation and resilience. Along with event space, conference and meeting space, the Collider offers private offices and desks in a modern co-working space designed specifically for climate data and resilience entrepreneurs.

<http://www.ashevillecollider.com/>

The Gate, branded as a hub for “makers” in San Leandro, California, is a former 1 million-square-foot auto assembly plant which has transformed into an innovation hub for next generation manufacturing spurred on after the City of San Leandro installed a privately-funded, high-speed fiber optic data network.

<http://thegate510.com/>



*North Main Street (NoMa) is ripe to become Burlington’s Makers District, with an existing base of small business and industry, but also many adaptable homes for new entrepreneurs and innovators.*

## Focused Corridor Redevelopment

Reviewing the City’s gateways and corridors, it becomes clear that many of the main corridors from I-40/85 or running east-west through the City need some form of attention to improve their appearance and appeal to the general traveler. It also becomes clear that two corridors need not just public realm upgrades, but significant commercial redevelopment focus. It is recommended that East Webb Avenue and North Church Street receive immediate small business assistance focus for lending and redevelopment purposes. These programs would be similar to those currently in use by Burlington Downtown Corporation. Furthermore, the Economic Development chapter discussed specific small business assistance programs that, while used broadly in general, need to be applied with focus on these two corridors in particular.



**Focused improvements such as the above improvements RATIO completed for Branson, Missouri, suggest the scale of improvements that may be possible as redevelopment sites along major corridors are fully developed. The images above show a similar scene before and after improvements.**

## Goals and Recommendations

### Goal 01:

Promote redevelopment of former industrial properties as catalyst sites ready for investment.

**RECOMMENDATION 01** \* 🌱

Identify and inventory former industrial properties.

Update the City’s past brownfield study and revise recommendations to align the study with the current market realities. Prepare plans to address environmental remediation on specific sites through the USEPA Brownfield program.



Former industrial properties in the City are ripe for redevelopment.

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### RECOMMENDATION 02

Prepare redevelopment prospectuses for catalyst sites to attract developer interest.

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Determine the environmental status of key redevelopment sites and properties and quantify the scale of potential remediation costs and effort. Determine the structural obsolescence of the properties for modern business operations or housing opportunities. Reach out to private sector stakeholders to understand the redevelopment constraints and identify any other externalities which may constrain business investment. Determine if other adjacent properties may be needed to assemble appropriately configured real estate to attract future investment.

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### RECOMMENDATION 03

Package and market available non-residential properties for redevelopment.

---

Prepare a marketing document that will outline critical redevelopment steps for potential investors. Conceptualize market-supportable and financially feasible redevelopment scenarios at priority sites that are consistent with design guidelines and zoning regulations applicable to the site. Work with local realtors to evaluate and market the available sites.

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### RECOMMENDATION 04

Prioritize projects most likely to advance in the next development cycle (4-7 years).

---

Prepare funding strategies for intermediate redevelopment projects from state and federal sources. These may include tax credits or grant-funded programs such as the EPA Brownfield Grant Program. The city should align its tax incentive programs to supplement state and federal tax credit and grant programs for redevelopment purposes before these intermediate redevelopment projects.

---

### RECOMMENDATION 05

Provide monetary and regulatory or other non-monetary incentives to attract development interest.

---

Quantify how financial investment gaps may be overcome through a public-private partnership (PPP) that can take advantage of local, state and national financial incentive programs such as Federal Historic Tax Credits or other credits, loans, and grant programs. Provide tax abatement to assist cash flow for investors on more costly redevelopment projects.

# Profile: Public Private Partnerships

The term “public-private partnership” (PPP) traditionally refers to projects that involve the use of public resources or financing capabilities to promote local private economic development. In those arrangements, the public entity typically provides some combination of tax incentives, public land or other assets, infrastructure investments or financing methods. The private entity makes capital investments, commits to providing jobs, contributes development expertise and assumes financial risk.

These “partnerships” (which typically are not partnerships legally) can have short life spans covering only the construction period for the project, or longer life spans covering debt repayment or long-term operating agreements. The governing body needs to take an active role in educating the public about the costs and benefits of a proposed project.

## PPPs Ideal for Local Government

There are several examples of smaller project types that are ripe for public-private partnerships. These include:

- **Unlocking the value of land:** Local and state governments have significant real estate holdings that are often underutilized. Particularly in areas with increasing density, these real estate holdings can be leveraged to replace aging libraries, public safety facilities, and provide parking while at the same time generating increased tax revenues from multi-use projects. Developers are also often willing to donate private land if it speeds up the delivery of needed infrastructure.
- **Outsourced maintenance and operations:** Often seen as the pioneer of public-private partnerships, state and local public works agencies can use PPPs to enhance performance, improve reliability and reduce costs (e.g. toll roads).
- **Regulatory compliance:** Some infrastructure projects are driven not just by need, but by mandate. Either development is occurring, or more commonly, new rules and regulations are requiring system upgrades that need to be accomplished quickly or else governments face stiff penalties. The public-private partnership approach can help bring about innovation to meet these challenges without the need for a permanent staff augmentation by the owner.

## Goal 02:

Take advantage of Downtown redevelopment opportunities.

### RECOMMENDATION 01

Create a redevelopment plan for buildings vacated by LabCorp.

Include these buildings in a renewed Downtown Master Plan update by the BDC. Include available former LabCorp buildings in a web-based database that is maintained in a partnership between the BDC and the city.

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## RECOMMENDATION 02

Capitalize on passenger rail and multi-modal access as a catalyst for North Main Street and Downtown redevelopment.

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Use the development of a hub transit terminal as a significant public investment to leverage private development interest. Consider conducting a multi-modal transportation plan for the area to coordinate public transportation investments with potential private development opportunities.

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## RECOMMENDATION 03

Capitalize on market demand for urban lifestyles in living, working, making, shopping, and playing.

---

Accommodate diverse populations through a variety of activities, opportunities, housing, and businesses. Facilitate residential and mixed-use development Downtown and support BDC in efforts to grow an Arts & Entertainment District. Engage the Makers community to reuse and revitalize the industrial buildings of the “NoMa” district. Work with local realtors to evaluate and market existing Downtown commercial properties.

---

## RECOMMENDATION 04

Incentivize adaptive reuse and infill redevelopment Downtown.

---

The City and BDC should continue their efforts to complete redevelopment in the Downtown area. While the existing programs are showing great signs of success with ongoing redevelopment projects, the City and BDC should study how to place more residential density Downtown in the form of new multi-family residential apartment projects on underutilized real estate. This increased residential base would help support continued stability and growth of Downtown retail.

---

## RECOMMENDATION 05

Consider including North and South Main Street in an expanded Municipal Service District.

---

The City may wish to consider expanding its Municipal Service District to include areas of North and South Main Street. By enlarging the area, it will facilitate coordination of signage, streetscape design, programming, redevelopment and the provision of special public services.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 06**

Apply appropriate best practices as an on-going member of the North Carolina Main Street Program and the National Trust Main Street Program.

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The Burlington Downtown Corporation is associated with the North Carolina Main Street Center and has been a nationally accredited Main Street Community since 2004. As a member of these two programs, the BDC plugs Burlington into strategic resources and technical assistance on commercial district revitalization. BDC should continue to learn from and apply these resources and share expertise with other organizations and agencies in the community.

## Goal 03:

Identify challenged corridors and related gateways that are candidates for widespread redevelopment efforts.

---

**RECOMMENDATION 01**

Coordinate redevelopment efforts closely with Corridor Planning initiatives.

---

The improvement of challenged corridors and gateway districts outlined in the Character & Identity and Transportation chapters of this Plan needs to occur in close concert with redevelopment of catalyst sites in those areas. Public investment in infrastructure and beautification should be used to leverage the greatest level of private investment possible so the two efforts are mutually supportive.

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**RECOMMENDATION 02**

Prioritize the redevelopment of catalyst sites that can serve as an anchor element to a more comprehensive development initiative.

---

Determine if certain redevelopment sites provide an opportunity to stabilize and revitalize gateways, corridors, or neighborhoods with specific types of marketable, attractive business and/or residential investment.



# Implementation Strategies

# 10



# Implementation Strategies

## Abbreviations:

ABSS	Alamance Burlington School System
AC	Alamance County Government
ACC	Alamance Community College
ARMC	Alam. Reg. Med. Center/health orgs.
BDC	Burlington Downtown Corporation
BGMPO	Burlington Graham Metro. Planning Org.
BHA	Burlington Housing Authority
CAAC	Community Appearance Advis. Comm.
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CDC	proposed Community Dev. Corporation
CoC	Chamber of Comm., Visitors Bureau
DENR	NC Dept. of Environ. & Nat. Resources
DHHS	NC Dept. of Health & Human Services
DoA	NC/Federal Depts. of Agriculture
Duke	Duke Energy
ED Coord.	Proposed Econ. Dev. Coordinator
EDPNC	Econ. Dev. Partnership of NC
Elon	Elon University
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
IT	Information Technology Department
LB&E	Local businesses & employers
MHC	Minimum Housing Commission
NCCE	NC Cooperative Extension
NCDOC	NC Department of Commerce
NCDOT	NC Department of Transportation
Parks	Burlington Parks Dept.
P&ZC	Planning & Zoning Commission
PCD	Planning & Community Dev. Dept., GIS
PI	Public Information Department
PTAC	Public Transit Advisory Committee
PTRC	Piedmont Triad Regional Council
PW&E	Public Works & Engineering Depts
R&PC	Recreation & Parks Commission
Sust	Sustainability Department
WR	Water Resources Department

## INTRODUCTION

This Plan was prepared with input from residents, property owners, and those that care about the future of Burlington. Though the Plan is primarily a tool of the City's Planning & Community Development Department and the Planning & Zoning Commission, it should also be used by those considering land use, transportation, and education decisions and business investment in the community.

The success of the Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan will be measured in part by the application and practice of the goals and recommendations contained within. These recommendations are strategies to be included as performance indicators to assess the success of implementation measures, laws, plans and other programs. The performance indicators should be measured annually, deleting what has been accomplished and re-shifting priorities as necessary until the plan is updated in the future.

## AGENCIES AND PARTNERS

As the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be implemented over several years during which administrations, boards and commissions may change, it is important to identify which organization is taking the lead in a particular task (shown in **bold** in the "Partners" column). These organizations may not always be part of City governance or management, nor even part of the public sector. A list of agencies and abbreviations is shown in the adjacent sidebar. It is important to note that the goals and recommendations outlined in this matrix are for consideration only, and do not constitute an obligation on any organization's part to lead or even participate in any given activity; this matrix simply identifies recommended activities and potential partners in furthering goals.

## TIME FRAME

The following recommendations are assigned approximate time frames for implementation which may vary based on economic influences and other factors:

- **Quick Wins:** Tasks that could be undertaken immediately and/or implemented within twelve months of the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- **Mid-Term Opportunities:** Tasks that could be initiated within 1-5 years of the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- **Long-Term Opportunities:** Tasks that are on a 6-10 year or greater timeframe after the Comprehensive Plan's adoption.
- **Ongoing Opportunities:** Tasks that may be implemented in a series of incremental steps involving numerous agencies or departments or tasks that are ongoing, continuous efforts. Also, these recommendations may go beyond the time frame of this Comprehensive Plan.

# Implementation Matrix

## 02 | Character & Identity

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Celebrate Burlington's unique history and local character.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Encourage the preservation and continued use of historic buildings, districts, landmarks, and landscapes.	Federal historic preservation tax credits, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service	<b>HPC</b> , PCD, P&ZC, AC, CAAC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Support the historic rehabilitation efforts of private property owners.	Federal historic preservation tax credits, National Trust for Historic Preservation	<b>PCD</b> , HPC, CDC, CAAC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Coordinate and support branding and promotional efforts for the City and its distinct districts, particularly Downtown.	NCDOC, CoC	<b>PCD</b> , BDC, CoC, ED Coord., AC, CAAC	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Support local institutions that are "authentically Burlington."	Times-News (in-kind), CoC, BDC	<b>CoC</b> , PCD, BDC, Times-News, LB&E	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Promote events, festivals, pop-up markets, and activities throughout the calendar year.	BDC, CoC	<b>PI</b> , BDC, CoC, Parks, R&PC	Ongoing
<b>Goal 02:</b> Reinforce the symbolic significance of Downtown.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Solidify a clear, compelling Downtown Burlington identity.	BDC, CoC	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, PI, CoC, Parks	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Bring the North Main Street and South Main Street areas symbolically into the core of Downtown.	NCDOT, NC Railroad, BDC, private developers	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, PW&E	Long-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Formalize the preservation of Downtown's historic resources and traditional urban fabric.	BDC, NC Historic Preservation Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service	<b>BDC</b> , HPC, PCD, CAAC	Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 02 | Character & Identity

### Goal 02:

Reinforce the symbolic significance of Downtown.

#### RECOMMENDATION 04:

Expand programming and events that bring the community together in Downtown.

Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
BDC, CoC, LB&E	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, Parks, CoC, LB&E, R&PC	Ongoing

#### RECOMMENDATION 05:

Create a focused plan for public open space in Downtown.

BDC, Parks	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, Parks, R&PC, CAAC	Mid-term
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#### RECOMMENDATION 06:

Continue and expand the Downtown Burlington public art program.

BDC, AC Arts Council	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, AC Arts Council, Public Art Committee, Parks, CAAC	Quick Win
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### Goal 03:

Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.

#### RECOMMENDATION 01:

Identify key gateways into Burlington which communicate the City's brand and identity along primary travel routes.

NCDOT, CoC	<b>PCD</b> , PW&E, BGMPD, CoC, Parks, New Leaf Society, neighborhood groups, CAAC	Mid-term
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#### RECOMMENDATION 02:

Pursue focused Corridor Plans to address redevelopment opportunities and public realm investment for challenged corridors.

NCDOT	<b>PCD</b> , NCDOT, BGMPD, PW&E, WR, CDC, CAAC	Mid-term
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#### RECOMMENDATION 03:

Develop a city-wide wayfinding signage program for gateways and major corridors.

NCDOT, BDC, CoC	<b>PCD</b> , PW&E, BDC, CoC, parks, CAAC	Mid-term
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#### RECOMMENDATION 04:

Improve sign standards for commercial areas within the City with a focus on corridor development and Downtown.

BDC	<b>PCD</b> , P&ZC, BDC, CoC, LB&E, CAAC	Quick Win
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#### RECOMMENDATION 05:

Continue to support the activities of the New Leaf Society, Burlington Work Group, and other organizations dedicated to the City's beautification.

private foundations, philanthropy, City staff time, Elon	<b>PCD</b> , Parks, PW&E, New Leaf Society, Burlington Work Group, Elon, BDC, LB&E, CAAC	Ongoing
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02 | Character & Identity

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 03:</b> Enhance the physical character and definition of the City.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 06:</b> Pursue an urban forestry program in urban and suburban residential neighborhoods.	North Carolina Urban Forest Council, DENR	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , PCD, CAAC, Parks, New Leaf Society/ neighborhood groups, BDC, AC Extension	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 07:</b> Support a community garden system, urban agriculture, and activities of the local-source food community.	DoA, DENR, NCCE, ARMC	<b>Parks</b> , PCD, ARMC, AC Extension, Elon, Allied Churches, LB&E, ABSS, BHA, DoA, NCCE, CoC	Ongoing

03 | Livability

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Revitalize and improve access to opportunity in Burlington’s neighborhoods.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Pursue early successes to create positive momentum by identifying catalyst sites for cleanup in neighborhoods needing attention.	PCD, Local Banks, CoC, LB&E	<b>PCD</b> , New Leaf Society/ neighborhood groups, PW&E, BHA, LB&E, Parks, Sust, CAAC	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Address perceived safety issues with positive action.	PCD, Police, CoC, Churches	<b>police department</b> , neighborhood groups, local churches & institutions	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Encourage a mix of housing options in opportunity neighborhoods that supports affordability, accessibility, and diversity.	PCD, CDC, AC, PTRC, CDBG	<b>PCD</b> , CDC, BHA, MHC, P&ZC, AC, PTRC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Encourage quality and safety of new and existing housing.	PCD	<b>PCD</b> , MHC, P&ZC, Fire Department, AC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Recognize schools as stabilizing civic institutions in opportunity neighborhoods.	ABSS, PCD, Banks	<b>ABSS</b> , PCD, Parks, PW&E, Elon, ACC, private schools	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 06:</b> Compile an inventory of existing public housing.	PCD, BHA, MHC	<b>BHA</b> , PCD, MHC	Quick Win

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 03 | Livability

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Revitalize and improve access to opportunity in Burlington’s neighborhoods.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 07:</b> Create an abandoned property action plan, including an inventory, evaluation, and map of unsafe and/or abandoned properties.	PCD, MHC	<b>PCD GIS</b> , MHC	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 08:</b> Regulate the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family homes.	PCD-CDBG	<b>PCD</b> , P&ZC, MHC, HPC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 09:</b> Encourage restaurant and grocery store developments that provide healthy, local-source food options.	ARMC, CoC, CDC, PCD	<b>PCD</b> , P&ZC, ARMC, CoC, CDC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 10:</b> Investigate and create residential infill development guidelines.	PCD, BDC, HPC	<b>PCD</b> , P&ZC, HPC, PW&E, WR, BDC	Mid-term
<b>Goal 02:</b> Establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC) that will oversee an overall development strategy.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Promote infill development by marketing vacant properties owned by the City and investigating forming a land bank.	PCD, CDC, CoC, BDC, Banks	<b>CDC</b> , PCD, CoC, BDC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Identify and monitor at-risk properties.	PCD, EPA Brownfield, DENR	<b>PCD</b> , CDC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Consider purchasing vacant properties at tax sales and work with neighborhood organizations on a better blocks program.	CDC, PCD, local businesses	<b>CDC</b> , neighborhood groups, PCD	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Identify non-monetary mechanisms to revitalize neighborhoods.	PCD, CDC, Banks	<b>CDC</b> , PCD	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Identify potential sources of funding.	Banks, LB&E, foundations	<b>CDC</b> , PCD	Ongoing

03 | Livability

**Goal 03:**

Improve the quality and reputation of the local educational system.

**RECOMMENDATION 01:**

Encourage programming connections between local higher education institutions and the public school system.

**Potential Sources for Assistance**

ABSS, CoC, PCD

**Partners**

**Elon, ACC,** ABSS, AC Libraries

**Time Frame**

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 02:**

Partner with the school system to create special programs.

ABSS, CoC, Foundations, NC Dept. of Public Instruction

**Parks,** ABSS, Elon, ACC, AC, PCD, LB&E

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 03:**

Champion early childhood education.

ABSS, DHHS, AC, CoC, Foundations

**Non-profits,** ABSS, AC Libraries, ARMC, PCD

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 04:**

Partner with local businesses and schools to promote the value of a high quality public education system.

CoC, ABSS, PCD, Foundations

**CoC,** ED Coord., ABSS, LB&E, PCD, Elon, ACC, PI

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 05:**

Support ABSS initiatives to address K-12 student needs, increase graduation rates, and ensure that each student has the basic skills to successfully enter the workforce.

ABSS, CoC, PCD, Foundations, Utilities

**ED Coord.,** CoC, Elon, ACC, ABSS, PCD, LB&E

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 06:**

Ensure wellness and nutrition education is available to all citizens.

AC, ARMC, BDC, Utilities

**ARMC,** ABSS, AC Libraries, private schools

Ongoing

**Goal 04:**

Provide shared activities to bring Burlington's community together.

**RECOMMENDATION 01:**

Continue to enhance recreational, cultural, and entertainment offerings.

BDC, PCD, CoC, LB&E, Foundations

**Parks,** R&PC, BDC, CoC, AC Arts Council

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 02:**

Support and conduct quarterly "Keep Burlington Beautiful" cleanup efforts.

PW&E, banks, LB&E, Foundations, CDC, CoC

**PW&E,** New Leaf Society/neighborhood groups, Sust, CAAC, LB&E, PCD

Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 03 | Livability

### Goal 04:

Provide shared activities to bring Burlington's community together.

#### RECOMMENDATION 03:

Continue supporting the Downtown Farmer's Market and consider additional smaller farmer's markets.

Potential Sources for Assistance

BDC, LB&E, Foundations, ARMC

Partners

PCD, BDC, ARMC, CDC

Time Frame

Ongoing

## 04 | Land Use

### Goal 01:

Continue to provide a sustainable balance of land uses to assist with the fiscal wellbeing of the city and to ensure a diverse tax base.

#### RECOMMENDATION 01:

Use the Future Land Use Plan for making decisions regarding future development to support compatible land use.

Potential Sources for Assistance

P&ZC, PCD, BDC, CoC

Partners

P&ZC, PCD

Time Frame

Ongoing

#### RECOMMENDATION 02:

Review the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Zoning in conjunction with the Future Land Use Plan.

PCD, CoC Utilities, AC

PCD, P&ZC

Ongoing

#### RECOMMENDATION 03:

Strengthen existing neighborhood character by focusing on redevelopment which follows the historic development pattern over "greenfield" development.

PCD, CoC, CDC

PCD, P&ZC, CDC, HPC, CoC, developers, PW&E, WR, Sust

Ongoing

#### RECOMMENDATION 04:

Conduct a "Safe Growth Audit" of development plans and codes.

PCD, CoC, NCDOC

PCD, PW&E

Ongoing

#### RECOMMENDATION 05:

Update the Unified Development Ordinance, Zoning Map, and City Engineering Standards.

PCD

PCD, P&ZC, PW&E, WR

Mid-term

#### RECOMMENDATION 06:

Identify locations most suitable for light industrial uses, business parks, and industrial growth.

PCD, CoC, NCDOC

PCD, P&ZC, CoC, PW&E, WR

Mid-term

04 | Land Use

**Goal 02:**

Promote zoning flexibility in appropriate areas of the City.

**RECOMMENDATION 01:**

Support a complementary mix of uses within developments and individual buildings.

**Potential Sources for Assistance**

PCD, BDC, CoC

**Partners**

**PCD**, P&ZC, CDC, HPC

**Time Frame**

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 02:**

Provide development standards that encourage infill development.

PCD, BDC, CoC

**PCD**, P&ZC, PW&E, WR, BDC, HPC

Mid-term

**RECOMMENDATION 03:**

Employ overlay districts or other flexible zoning for redevelopment opportunity sites.

PCD, BDC, CoC

**PCD**, P&ZC

Mid-term

**RECOMMENDATION 04:**

Address confusion, conflicts, and obsolescence of the Zoning Code through a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

PCD, BDC, CoC

**PCD**, P&ZC, PW&E, HPC

Mid-term

**RECOMMENDATION 05:**

Maintain an economic development-friendly regulatory environment.

PCD, BDC, CoC

**PCD**, P&ZC, AC, BDC, HPC, CoC, LB&E

Ongoing

**Goal 03:**

Encourage appropriate land uses to ensure basic services are provided equitably.

**RECOMMENDATION 01:**

Encourage the development of basic community health services.

PCD, BDC, CoC

**PCD**, P&ZC, CDC, ARMC, AC

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 02:**

Encourage the development of healthy, local-source food stores.

ARMC, PCD, BDC, AC

**PCD**, P&ZC, CDC, ARMC, AC

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 03:**

Ensure that all development and redevelopment efforts include appropriate open space amenities.

PCD, Parks, BDC, CoC, Utilities

**PCD**, P&ZC, CDC, Parks, R&PC, BDC, AC, CAAC

Ongoing

**RECOMMENDATION 04:**

Ensure an appropriate mix of uses is supported in “neighborhood center” districts.

PCD, BDC, Banks, Utilities

**PCD**, P&ZC, CDC, CoC, AC

Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 05 | Park & Open Space

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Improve city-wide and regional connectivity through greenways, trails, bicycle lanes and paths, and sidewalks	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Conduct a Greenway Implementation Study.	Parks, CoC, BDC, Banks	<b>PCD</b> , Parks	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Continue to implement the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan and conduct a complementary Bicycle Master Plan.	Parks, BDC, CoC, Utilities, Banks	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , PCD, Parks, Sust	Long-term \ Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Explore opportunities for public use of utility rights-of-way for recreation and trails.	PCD, PW&E, Parks, Utilities, BDC, CoC Banks	<b>PCD</b> , PW&E, Parks, Utilities, CoC, BDC	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Create a "rail-with-trail" greenway along the existing railroad right-of-way.	NCDOT, DENR, Utilities, CoC Foundations, BDC, PCD, Parks, AC	<b>PCD</b> , NCDOT, DENR, Utilities, CoC, Foundations, BDC, Parks, AC	Long-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Coordinate greenway development with roadway corridor planning and improvement projects.	NCDOT, Parks, AC, Foundations, PCD, PW&E, CoC, BDC	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , NCDOT, AC, Foundations, PCD, CoC, BDC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 06:</b> Integrate green stormwater management facilities into the design of greenways where appropriate.	DENR, NCDOT, PCD, PW&E, Parks, AC	<b>WR</b> , DENR, NCDOT, PCD, PW&E, Parks, AC, CoC, BDC	Ongoing
<b>Goal 02:</b> Maintain and enhance recreational facilities.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Continue implementation of the 2012 Recreation and Parks Master Plan.	Parks, PCD, BDC, CoC, DENR	<b>Parks</b> , PCD, BDC, CoC, DENR, AC	Long-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Equitably locate more small-scale parks and recreational opportunities.	PCD, Parks, CDC, Banks, CoC	<b>Parks</b> , PCD, BDC, CoC, Banks, Neighborhood organizations	Long-term

05 | Parks & Open Space

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 02:</b> Maintain and enhance recreational facilities.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Research and forecast new types of recreational opportunities that can be integrated into the existing parks system.	Parks, DENR, Foundations	<b>Parks</b> , PCD, Foundations, DENR, CoC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Coordinate enhancements to Downtown public open space and use of City recreational facilities to support other Downtown initiatives.	PCD, BDC, Parks, DENR, NCDOT, Utilities	<b>Parks</b> , PCD, BDC, DENR, NCDOT, Utilities	Ongoing

06 | Infrastructure & Public Resources

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Improve overall environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Conduct a Sustainability Master Plan for the City.	EPA, DENR, grants, water resource fee rates	<b>Sust</b> , EPA, DENR, AC, WR, PW&E	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Develop a coordinated plan for conserving agricultural lands and significant natural resources.	DoA, DENR Ecosystem Enhancement Program, NCCE	<b>AC</b> , DoA, DENR, NCCE, PCD, WR	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Develop a city-wide strategy for identifying, monitoring, and facilitating the remediation of suspected brownfield sites.	EPA, DENR Brownfields Program, private foundations	<b>PCD GIS</b> , EPA, DENR, CoC	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Provide more alternative fuel options for the public.	NCDOT, Duke, Piedmont Natural Gas (PNG)	<b>Duke, PNG</b> , NCDOT, LB&E, PCD, Sust	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Promote outdoor educational and research opportunities for students of all ages.	EPA, DoA, DENR, Elon, ACC, federal grants through Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI)	<b>Parks</b> , DoA, DENR, DPI, ABSS, Elon, ACC, WR,	Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 06 | Infrastructure & Public Resources

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 02:</b> Manage the City's stormwater and surface waters sustainably.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Protect the City's surface water supply.	public utilities	<b>WR</b> , DENR	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Identify conservation and retrofit project opportunities in local watersheds to address and prevent water pollution.	watershed grant opportunities, credit programs for Best Management Practices (BMP)	<b>WR</b> , DENR, PTRC, AC, PCD, Sust	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Consider a flexible approach to achieving on-site and off-site stormwater management requirements to encourage infill development.	credit programs for BMPs, public stormwater utility development impact fee	<b>WR</b> , PCD, Sust, Parks (greenways)	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Begin a sustainable infrastructure program for public realm design.	NCDOT, public utilities	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , NCDOT, PCD, BGMPO, WR, BDC	Mid-term
<b>Goal 03:</b> Address water and sewer utility issues and needs.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Prepare a Water and Sewer Service Area Plan for future extension of water and sewer service.	development hookup fees, impact fees, bonds	<b>WR</b> , PCD	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Require an impact study for all developments over 5 acres.	development/permit fees, staff time	<b>PCD</b> , WR, PW&E	Ongoing
<b>Goal 04:</b> Enhance public infrastructure at significant opportunity sites.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Secure high-speed Internet access throughout Burlington.	service fees, Municipal Service District, private companies/utilities	<b>CoC</b> , PCD, IT, LB&E, Internet Service Providers	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Provide "innovation infrastructure" and public service upgrades Downtown and at identified opportunity sites.	NCDOC, Municipal Service District, Federal historic tax credits, loans	<b>BDC</b> , CoC, LB&E/property owners, CDC	Ongoing

06 | Infrastructure & Public Resources

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 04:</b> Enhance public infrastructure at significant opportunity sites.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Update the 2012 Downtown Parking Plan to address changes with the departure of some LabCorp workers.	LabCorp, BDC	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, LabCorp, LB&E	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Support private sector investment in infrastructure through both monetary and non-monetary incentives.	waive or discount hookup fees, expedited permitting, Municipal Service District	<b>PCD</b> , WR, BDC	Quick Win
<b>Goal 05:</b> Support equitable distribution of public services throughout the City.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Address gaps in coverage of firefighting and other emergency services.	development impact fees	PCD, <b>Fire Dept.</b>	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Expand public access to the Internet.	private foundations, philanthropy, public funding	<b>PCD</b> , Parks, IT, AC Libraries, ABSS	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Review public realm tree program for streets, parks, and public spaces.	private foundations, corporations, public entities	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , Parks, PCD, AC, New Leaf Society/ neighborhood groups, DENR, CAAC	Quick Win

07 | Transportation

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Focus on multi-modal complete streets and the design of streetscapes.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Determine appropriate configurations of thoroughfare rights-of-way.	PW&E, PCD, NCDOT, BDC, CoC	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , PCD, NCDOT, BDC, CoC	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Leverage public/private partnerships to finance transportation improvements that support responsible development.	PW&E, PCD, NCDOT, NCDOT, Developers, Utilities, CoC	<b>PW&amp;E</b> , PCD, NCDOT, NCDOT, Developers, Realtors, Utilities, CoC, AC	Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 07 | Transportation

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Focus on multi-modal complete streets and the design of streetscapes.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Coordinate infrastructure, road, transit, and streetscaping improvements along the City’s major corridors.	PW&E, PCD, NCDOT, Foundations	PW&E, PCD, BDC, NCDOT, PTAC, CoC Foundations	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Identify multi-modal improvements and aesthetic upgrades along secondary “opportunity corridor” arterials and collectors.	PW&E, PCD, NCDOT, BDC, Utilities, CoC, Banks	PW&E, PCD, BDC, Utilities, CoC, Banks	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Continue planning a new bus transit system to serve Burlington and adjacent communities.	PCD, NCDOT, PW&E, AC	BGMPO, PCD, PW&E, PTAC, AC, CoC, BDC, NCDOT	Quick Win
<b>Goal 02:</b> Improve equitable access to community services and amenities through public transit.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Locate a central “hub” transit terminal in Downtown.	PW&E, NCDOT	PCD, BGMPO, PW&E, PTAC, AC, CoC, BDC, NCDOT	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Provide regional interconnectivity and commuter transit opportunities.	NCDOT, PW&E, PCD,	BGMPO, PCD, PW&E, PTAC, CoC, AC, ARMC, NCDOT	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Create an interconnected system of multi-use greenways that link neighborhoods to commercial areas, Downtown, employment centers, and civic amenities.	PCD, BDC, CoC NCDOT, DENR, Foundations	PCD, Parks, BDC, CoC, NCDOT, DENR, Foundations	Long-term
<b>Goal 03:</b> Provide a transportation system that supports active living.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Support regional trail and greenway efforts.	DENR, NCDOT, Foundations, Utilities	AC, PCD, BDC, Parks, PTRC, DENR, NCDOT, Foundations, Utilities	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 3:</b> Continue to implement the 2012 Pedestrian Master Plan and conduct a complementary Bicycle Master Plan.	PCD, PW&E, BDC, CoC Foundations, Utilities	PW&E, PCD, BDC, DENR, CoC, Foundations, Utilities	Long-term / Quick Win

08 | Economic Development

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 01:</b> Develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Hire a new City staff person to be the economic development point-person for City of Burlington.	City general fund	<b>PCD</b>	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Create a local Economic Development Steering Committee.	NCDOC, CDBG	<b>ED Coord.</b> , PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, CoC, PTRC, NCDOC, EDPNC, LB&E, ACC Small Business Center (SBC)	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Focus on business retention.	NCDOC, CDBG	<b>ED Coord.</b> , PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, CoC, PTRC, NCDOC, EDPNC, LB&E, ACC SBC	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Include a target industry strategy.	NCDOC, CDBG	<b>ED Coord.</b> , PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, CoC, PTRC, NCDOC, EDPNC, LB&E, ACC SBC	Mid-term
<b>Goal 02:</b> Create a Carolina Corridor Commerce Park.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Create an industrial zoning overlay on the south side of the I-40/85 corridor around the Burlington-Alamance Regional Airport.	NCDOC, CoC, LB&E, local utilities, NCDOT, public-private partnerships, developers	<b>PCD</b> , ED Coord., NCDOC, CoC, PTRC, AC, LB&E, local utilities, NCDOT, EDPNC	Long-term
<b>Goal 03:</b> Nurture growing 21st century economic sectors.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Advanced manufacturing	NCDOC, federal Dept. of Energy, Elon, ACC, Duke	<b>ED Coord.</b> , CoC, ACC SBC, PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, PTRC, NCDOC, EDPNC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Professional, scientific and technical services	NCDOC, National Science Foundation, Elon, ACC, Duke	<b>ED Coord.</b> , CoC, Elon, PCD, AC, Duke, PTRC, NCDOC, ACC SBC, ARMC, EDPNC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Information Technology	NCDOC, National Science Foundation, Elon, ACC, Duke	<b>ED Coord.</b> , CoC, ACC SBC, PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, PTRC, NCDOC, EDPNC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Health Care	NCDOC, National Science Foundation, Elon, ACC, Duke	<b>ED Coord.</b> , ARMC, CoC, PCD, AC, Elon, Duke, PTRC, NCDOC, ACC SBC, EDPNC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Arts & Entertainment	NCDOC, NC Arts Council, Elon, ACC, BDC	<b>ED Coord.</b> , BDC, CoC, PCD, AC Arts Council, Elon, ACC, PTRC, NC Arts Council, EDPNC	Ongoing

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 08 | Economic Development

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 04:</b> Improve workforce development and vocational education options within the community.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Create a Workforce Investment Board tailored to Burlington's specific needs.	NC Div. of Workforce Solutions (NCDWS), CoC, PCD	<b>ED Coord.</b> , NCDWS, NCDOC, CoC, PCD, Banks, Utilities	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Address the education and training needs of the local workforce and employers.	NCDWS, NCDOC, ABSS, ACC, Elon, PCD, CoC	<b>ED Coord.</b> , PCD, ABSS, ACC, Elon, LB&E, AC, CoC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Set up workforce development centers in areas with sufficient need and access issues.	ACC, AC, PCD	<b>ACC</b> , ED Coord., AC, PCD	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Ensure that workforce development opportunities are easily accessible by public transportation.	BGMPO, PCD	<b>BGMPO</b> , ED Coord., PCD, PTAC, ACC, AC	Ongoing
<b>Goal 05:</b> Capitalize on local entrepreneurship and innovative thinking.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Support and incentivize small business incubation.	NCDOC, BDC, Economic Development Administration	<b>ED Coord.</b> , ACC SBC, BDC, Elon, PCD	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Create a small business mentorship program.	CoC, ACC, Elon, LB&E, NCDOC	<b>CoC</b> , ED Coord., ACC, AC, Elon, ABSS	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Reorient philanthropic giving toward innovation.	staff support from all partners	<b>CoC</b> , AC, Duke/utilities, Elon, ACC, CDC, PCD, ED Coord.	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Support the experimentation and creativity that is needed to produce commercial innovations.	NCDOC, Foundations, CoC, PCD	<b>CoC</b> , ED Coord., PI, NCDOC, Foundations, PCD	Ongoing

08 | Economic Development

**Goal 06:**

Enhance Burlington's tourism potential.

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b>	Conduct a Tourism and Hospitality Study for Burlington and Alamance County.	BDC, CoC, PCD, NC Tourism, AC Visitors Bureau	<b>AC Visitors Bureau, ED Coord., BDC, CoC, PCD, NCDOC Tourism</b>	Quick Win
<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b>	Integrate Burlington's industrial heritage into the city's tourism branding.	BDC, CoC, PCD, NCDOC Tourism, AC Visitors Bureau	<b>ED Coord., AC Visitors Bureau, BDC, PI, PCD, CoC, NCDOC Tourism</b>	Mid-term
<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b>	Continue to promote the City's parks and facilities as venues for sports and athletic events.	Parks, AC Visitors Bureau, NCDOC Tourism	<b>Parks, AC Visitors Bureau, BDC, ED Coord.</b>	Ongoing
<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b>	Promote cultural districts in the City.	BDC, PCD, CoC, AC Visitors Bureau, NC Arts Comm, NCDOC Tourism	<b>AC Visitors Bureau, BDC, PCD, ED Coord., NC Arts Comm, CoC</b>	Ongoing

09 | Redevelopment

**Goal 01:**

Promote redevelopment of former industrial properties as catalyst sites ready for investment.

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b>	Identify and inventory former industrial properties.	City staff time	<b>PCD GIS, Duke</b>	Quick Win
<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b>	Prepare redevelopment prospectuses for catalyst sites to attract developer interest.	PCD, CoC, BDC	<b>ED Coord., PCD, CoC, BDC, real estate community</b>	Mid-term
<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b>	Package and market available non-residential properties for redevelopment.	Developers, CoC, Duke, CDBG	<b>ED Coord., PCD, CoC,</b>	Mid-term
<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b>	Prioritize projects most likely to advance in the next development cycle (4-7 years).	EPA, DENR Brownfields Program	<b>ED Coord., CoC, PCD, Airport Authority, NCDOC</b>	Long-term
<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b>	Provide monetary and regulatory or other non-monetary incentives to attract development interest.	EPA, DENR, PCD, PW&E	<b>PCD, ED Coord., PW&amp;E, DENR, EPA</b>	Mid-term

# 10 | Implementation Strategies

## 09 | Redevelopment

		Potential Sources for Assistance	Partners	Time Frame
<b>Goal 02:</b> Take advantage of Downtown redevelopment opportunities.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Create a redevelopment plan for buildings vacated by LabCorp.	LabCorp, Duke, BDC	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, ED Coord., CoC	Quick Win
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Capitalize on passenger rail and multi-modal access as a catalyst for North Main Street and Downtown redevelopment.	NCDOT, BDC, NC Railroad, Federal Transit Administration	<b>PCD</b> , BDC, ED Coord., PTAC, BGMPQ, NC Railroad, Norfolk Southern	Long-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 03:</b> Capitalize on market demand for urban lifestyles in living, working, shopping, and playing.	BDC/Municipal Service District, US Housing & Urban Devt., CDC	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, ED Coord., CoC, CDC	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 04:</b> Incentivize adaptive reuse and infill redevelopment Downtown.	BDC/Municipal Service District, private developers, banks,	<b>PCD</b> , BDC, ED Coord., developers, LB&E	Ongoing
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 05:</b> Consider including North and South Main Street in an expanded Municipal Service District.	BDC and PCD staff time	<b>BDC</b> , PCD	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 06:</b> Apply appropriate best practices as an on-going member of the North Carolina Main Street Program and the National Trust Main Street Program.	BDC, PCD, LabCorp	<b>BDC</b> , PCD, National Trust, NC Main Street Program, CoC	Ongoing
<b>Goal 03:</b> Identify challenged corridors and related gateways that are candidates for widespread redevelopment efforts.	<b>RECOMMENDATION 01:</b> Coordinate redevelopment efforts closely with Corridor Planning initiatives.	NCDOT, CDC, City staff time	<b>PCD</b> , ED Coord., NCDOT, CDC, BGMPQ	Mid-term
	<b>RECOMMENDATION 02:</b> Prioritize the redevelopment of catalyst sites that can serve as an anchor element to a more comprehensive development initiative.	NCDOT, CDC, City staff time	<b>CDC</b> , PCD, ED Coord., NCDOT, BGMPQ	Mid-term





# Appendices 11





# Appendix A: Resources

## GENERAL RESOURCES

- Alamance County, [www.alamance-nc.com](http://www.alamance-nc.com)
- Burlington Times-News, [www.thetimesnews.com](http://www.thetimesnews.com)
- City of Burlington, [www.ci.burlington.nc.us](http://www.ci.burlington.nc.us)
- Piedmont Triad Regional Council, [www.nwpcog.dst.nc.us](http://www.nwpcog.dst.nc.us)

## COMMUNITY IDENTITY & CHARACTER

### History

- Burlington History, [www.ci.burlington.nc.us/index.aspx?NID=62](http://www.ci.burlington.nc.us/index.aspx?NID=62)
- National Register of Historic Places Registration Form - Downtown Burlington Historic District, National Park Service, 1990
- The History of North Carolina, [nchistory.web.unc.edu](http://nchistory.web.unc.edu)
- Burlington History, Michael Holt Skinner, "Art & Architecture of Historic Downtown Burlington: A Walking Tour," [www.burlingtondowntown.com/about-us/burlington-history](http://www.burlingtondowntown.com/about-us/burlington-history)

### Demographic Overview

- 2010 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/2010census](http://www.census.gov/2010census)
- American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www)
- County Business Patterns, U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/econ/cbp](http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp)
- Demographics Now, [www.demographicsnow.com](http://www.demographicsnow.com)
- Refer also to Destination Burlington Community Assessment Report produced as part of the Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan, [nc-burlington2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/7186](http://nc-burlington2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/7186)

### Historic Resources and Preservation

- Alamance County Architectural Inventory, Alamance County Historic Properties Commission, 2014
- Burlington Historic District Walking Tour, City of Burlington
- Design Review Manual, Burlington Historic Preservation Commission
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, [www.hpo.ncdcr.gov](http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov)

### Downtown

- Burlington Downtown Corporation Plan of Work 2011-2013
- City of Burlington Public Arts Policy, 2012
- Downtown Burlington Master Plan, Burlington Downtown Corporation, 2008
- Downtown Parking Plan, Carl Walker, 2012
- Marketing Research Report, Burlington Downtown Corporation, 2010

### Gateways and Corridors

- New Leaf Society, [www.newleafsociety.org](http://www.newleafsociety.org)

# A | Appendix A: Resources

## LIVABILITY

### Community Health

- Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments, AARP, 2014
- Alamance County Community Assessment, Community Assessment Team (partnership), 2011
- Alamance County Health Brief, NC State University Institute for Emerging Issues
- ALFA: Creating the Future of Senior Living, [www.alfa.org](http://www.alfa.org)
- Aging in Community Policy Guide, American Planning Association
- Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts, USDA Economic Research Service, 2012
- Community Transformation Grant Summary, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Comprehensive Planning for Community Health, American Planning Association, 2011
- County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org)
- Fresh Food Financing Initiative Program Guidelines, [www.thefoodtrust.org](http://www.thefoodtrust.org)
- Food Access Research Atlas, USDA Economic Research Service, 2014
- "Health First," Alisa Rivera, *Planning* 79:8, October 2013
- Health Indicators Warehouse, [www.healthindicators.gov](http://www.healthindicators.gov)
- Hospital-Data.com Hospital and Nursing Home Profiles, [www.hospital-data.com](http://www.hospital-data.com)
- North Carolina Department of Justice, [www.ncdoj.gov](http://www.ncdoj.gov)
- "Pennsylvania Seeds a New Crop of Local Grocery Stores," *The Hometown Advantage News*, Stacy Mitchell, Sep. 12, 2008. [www.newrules.org/retail/news\\_slug.php?slugid=374](http://www.newrules.org/retail/news_slug.php?slugid=374)
- Piedmont Triad Regional Council Area Agency on Aging, [www.ptrc.org](http://www.ptrc.org)
- Sperling's Best Places, [www.bestplaces.net](http://www.bestplaces.net)
- State of the County Health Report 2013, Alamance County Health Department et al, 2013
- The Alamance Walks Downtown Burlington Walking Maps
- Zoning for Healthy Food Access Varies by Community Income, *Bridging the Gap*, 2012

### Housing & Neighborhoods

- Assessment of Fair Housing, Piedmont Triad Region, 2014
- American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www)
- Refer also to Destination Burlington Community Assessment Report produced as part of the Destination Burlington Comprehensive Plan, [nc-burlington2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/7186](http://nc-burlington2.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/7186)

### Education

- Alamance-Burlington School System, [www.abss.k12.nc.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=1](http://www.abss.k12.nc.us/site/default.aspx?PageID=1)
- Alamance-Burlington School System Strategic Plan, 2014
- Alamance Community College, [www.alamancecc.edu](http://www.alamancecc.edu)
- A Vision for Public Education in Alamance County, Alamance Chamber of Commerce, 2013

- Elon University, [www.elon.edu](http://www.elon.edu)
- “It Takes a Village” Project, Elon University, [www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/education/village/default.xhtml](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/academics/education/village/default.xhtml)
- North Carolina 2012 SAT Report, North Carolina State Board of Education

## LAND USE

- Burlington 2000 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, City of Burlington, 1991
- Burlington Zoning Map, 2008
- “Community Planning, Land Use, and Development,” R. Ducker, County and Municipal Government in North Carolina, UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government, 2007
- “ETJ in North Carolina,” Ken Bowers, 2014
- “Local Government in North Carolina,” UNC School of Government, 2012
- Piedmont Triad Land Supply Analysis, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, 2011
- Piedmont Together Comprehensive Regional Plan, PART and Piedmont Triad Regional Council, 2014, [piedmonttogether.org](http://piedmonttogether.org)
- “Safe Growth Audits,” David R. Godschalk, Zoning Practice Issue 10, 2009
- “Ten Principles for Smart Growth,” Mary Beth Corrigan, et.al, Washington D.C.: ULI-the Urban Land Institute, 2004
- The Southwest Area Plan, City of Burlington, 1996
- “What North Carolina’s Annexation Law Reforms Mean to You!” North Carolina Institute for Constitutional Law, 2012

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

### Greenways

- American Trails, [www.americantrails.org/ee](http://www.americantrails.org/ee)
- “Economic benefits of trails,” Stuart Macdonald, American Trails Magazine, Summer 2011
- General Design Guidelines & Schedule of Design Elements for the Haw River Trail, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, 2007
- Pedestrian Master Plan, Alta Greenways, 2012
- Piedmont Triad Regional Open Space Strategy, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, 2003
- Piedmont Triad Regional Trail Plan and Inventory, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, 2011
- “Trail Towns benefit from visitor spending,” American Trails Magazine, Summer 2011

### Recreation & Parks

- Active Living by Design, <http://activelivingbydesign.org/>
- Alamance County Recreation & Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, Woolpert, 2007
- Burlington Recreation & Parks Comprehensive Master Plan, Woolpert, 2012
- “Five Key Trends in Parks and Public Health,” Maureen Hannan, Parks and Recreation Magazine, November 2012
- Parks and Recreation National Database Annual Report, National Parks & Recreation Association
- Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, American College of Sports Medicine

# A | Appendix A: Resources

## INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC RESOURCES

### Natural Resources

- East Burlington Brownfields Redevelopment Project Redevelopment Plan, Research Triangle Institute, 2000
- “Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes,” US EPA, 2012
- North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, [www.ncnhp.org](http://www.ncnhp.org)
- The Mouth of the Haw, Haw River Trail Partnership, Spring 2014

### Stormwater Management & Green Infrastructure

- Champaign Growing Greener, [ci.champaign.il.us/departments/planning/long-range-planning/champaign-growing-greener](http://ci.champaign.il.us/departments/planning/long-range-planning/champaign-growing-greener)
- Jordan Water Supply Nutrient Strategy Rules, 15A NCAC 02B
- Little Alamance, Travis & Trickle Creek Watersheds Report & Project Atlas: An ecosystem Enhancement Program Funded Local Watershed Plan Phase III, November 2008
- The Haw River Riparian Corridor Conservation Plan, April 2005, CWMTF Project 2001B-807

### Wastewater and Potable Water

- Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, City of Burlington, 2012
- Capital Improvement Plan 2014-15 through 2018-19, Burlington Water Resources
- Sewage Collection and Wastewater Treatment Report, Burlington Water Resources, 2013
- Wastewater Master Plan to Serve the Western Sewer Service Area, AWCK, 2002
- Wastewater Master Plan to Serve the Western Sewer Service Area Update, AWCK, 2012

### Utility Networks

- DeadCellZones.com, [www.deadcellzones.com](http://www.deadcellzones.com)
- Duke Energy, [www.duke-energy.com](http://www.duke-energy.com)
- “Faster, Sooner: Why the U.S. Needs ‘Gigabit Communities,’” excerpt on [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)
- National Pipeline Mapping System, [www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/composite.jsf](http://www.npms.phmsa.dot.gov/PublicViewer/composite.jsf)
- Piedmont Natural Gas, [www.piedmontng.com](http://www.piedmontng.com)

### Public Services

- Alamance County Emergency Operations Plan, 2012
- Alamance County Solid Waste Management Plan Update, Alamance County, 2012
- Alamance County Vulnerability Assessment, UNC Institute for the Environment, 2012
- Burlington Police Department Annual Report, 2012
- Burlington Police Department Community Survey, 2014
- Fire Station Distribution and Coverage Study, Center for Public Safety Excellence, 2011
- RAIDS Online, [www.raidsonline.com](http://www.raidsonline.com)

## TRANSPORTATION

### Vehicular Transportation

- Burlington-Graham MPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan, BGMPO, 2010
- Complete Streets in the Southeast: A Toolkit, AARP, 2014
- Facility Type & Control of Access Definitions, NCDOT, 2005
- Federal Highway Administration, [www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov)
- 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update, Burlington Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization, 2012
- North Carolina Department of Transportation, [www.ncdot.gov](http://www.ncdot.gov)
- Piedmont Triad Regional Model Update Trend Memorandum, PART and Kimley-Horn, 2014

### Pedestrian & Bicycle Network

- "Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities; An ITE Proposed Recommended Practice," 2006
- Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail, [www.ncmst.org](http://www.ncmst.org)
- Pedestrian Master Plan, Alta Greenways, 2012
- Traffic Calming Policy, City of Burlington, 2009

### Railroad Transportation

- Amtrak Ridership Statistics, National Association of Railroad Passengers, [www.narprail.org/amtrak-ridership-statistics.html](http://www.narprail.org/amtrak-ridership-statistics.html)

### Public Transit

- Downtown East Burlington Ridership Report, Elon University (Biobus), 2014
- Planning for Transit-Supportive Development: A Practitioner's Guide, Federal Transit Administration, 2014
- Public Transit Feasibility Study, Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2006

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT

- Alamance County Chamber of Commerce, [www.alamancechamber.com](http://www.alamancechamber.com)
- Area Development Magazine, [www.areadevelopment.com](http://www.areadevelopment.com)
- Esri Business Information Solutions, [www.esri.com/data/find-data](http://www.esri.com/data/find-data)
- Lowell: A proposal to develop an Urban National Cultural Park, David Crane and Partners et al, 1975
- North Carolina Department of Commerce, [www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com)
- Piedmont Triad Market Trends, Preferences, and Opportunities 2025-2040, Arthur C. Nelson, 2012
- "Revitalizing industrial cities through cultural tourism," Robert H McNulty, International Journal of Environmental Studies, September 1985
- Site to Do Business, [stdbinc.com](http://stdbinc.com)
- Thrive in North Carolina, [www.thrivenc.com](http://www.thrivenc.com)
- Triad Tomorrow Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Piedmont Triad Regional Council, 2014
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

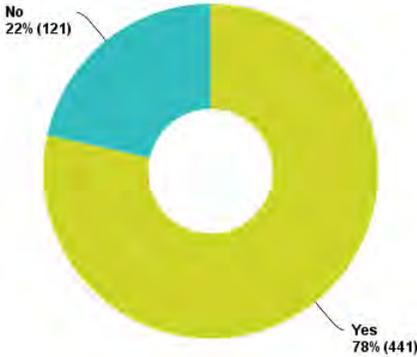


# Appendix B: Community Survey Results

564 RESPONDENTS

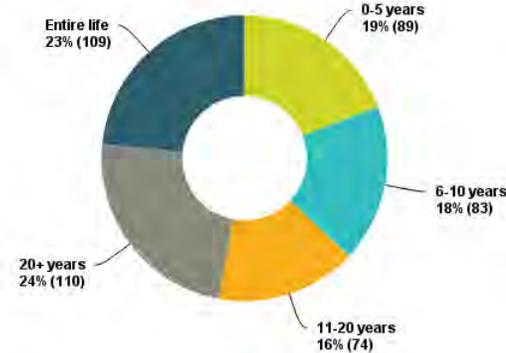
**Q1 Are you a resident of Burlington?**

Answered: 562 Skipped: 2



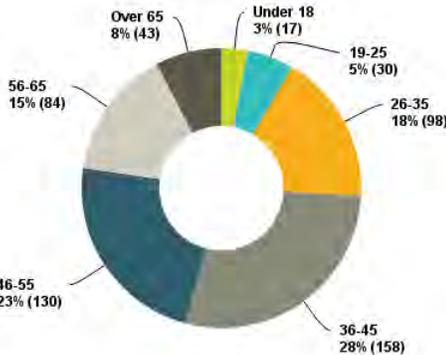
**Q2 If you are a resident of Burlington, how long have you lived in the area?**

Answered: 485 Skipped: 99



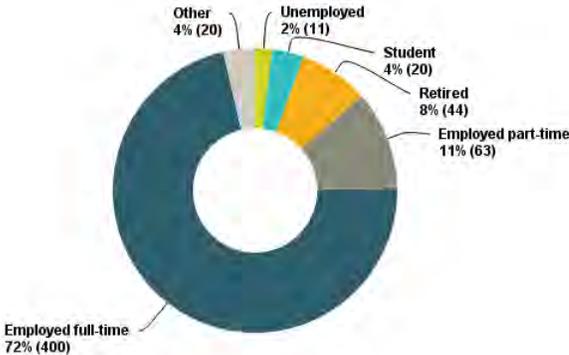
**Q3 What is your age?**

Answered: 560 Skipped: 4



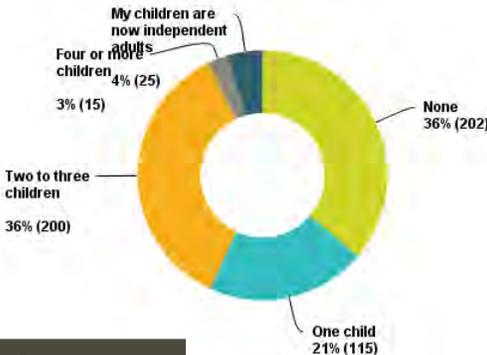
**Q4 What is your employment status?**

Answered: 558 Skipped: 6



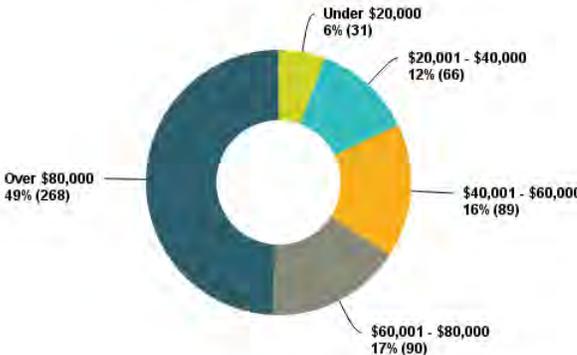
**Q5 How many children live in your household?**

Answered: 557 Skipped: 7



**Q6 Estimate your household income in 2013?**

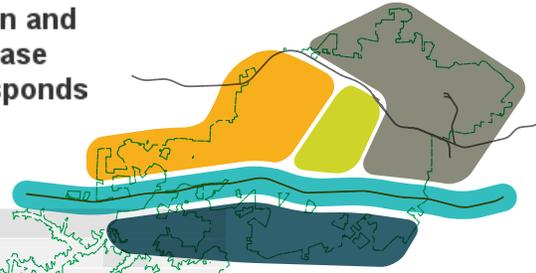
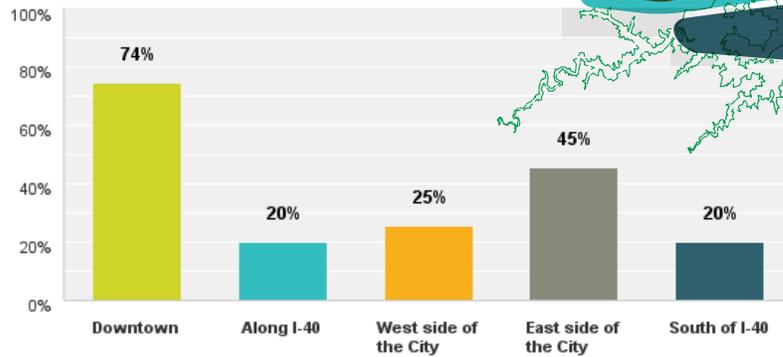
Answered: 544 Skipped: 20



# B | Appendix B: Community Survey Results

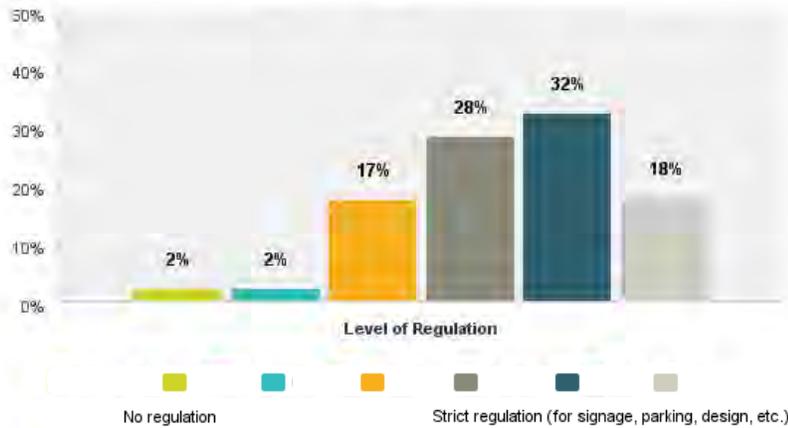
**Q7 Where could development/redevelopment occur in and around the City of Burlington? Please choose general locations that corresponds with the above question.**

Answered: 496 Skipped: 68



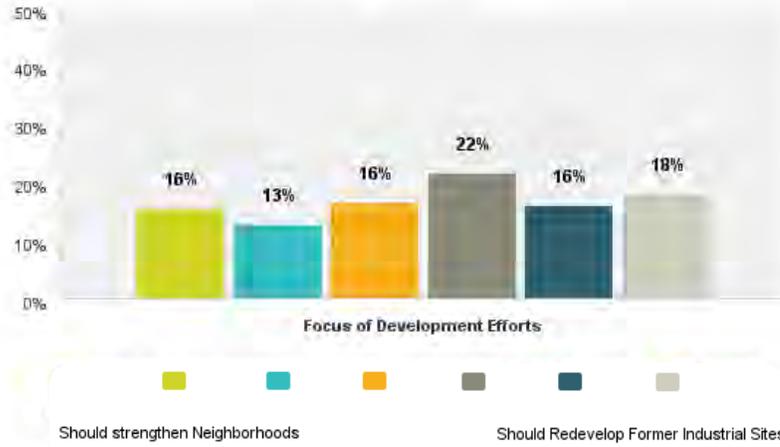
**Q8 Development in Burlington should be guided by...**

Answered: 560 Skipped: 14



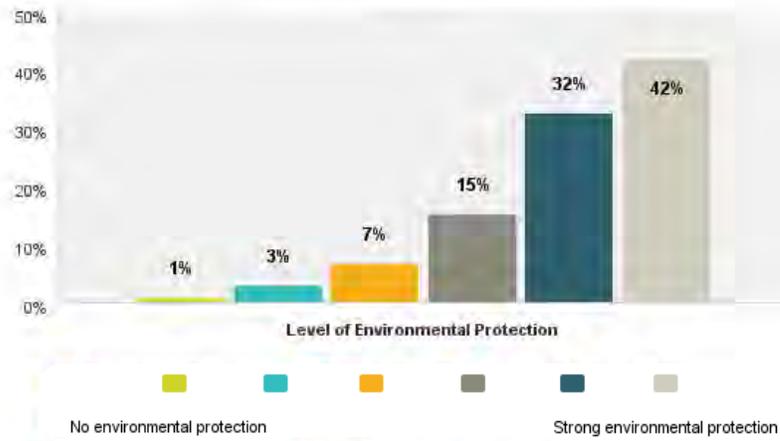
**Q9 New development in Burlington...**

Answered: 348 Skipped: 16



**Q10 Development regulations in Burlington should include...**

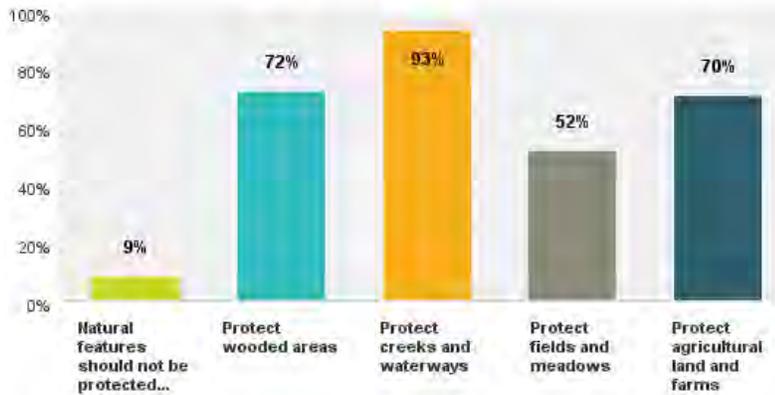
Answered: 552 Skipped: 17



# B | Appendix B: Community Survey Results

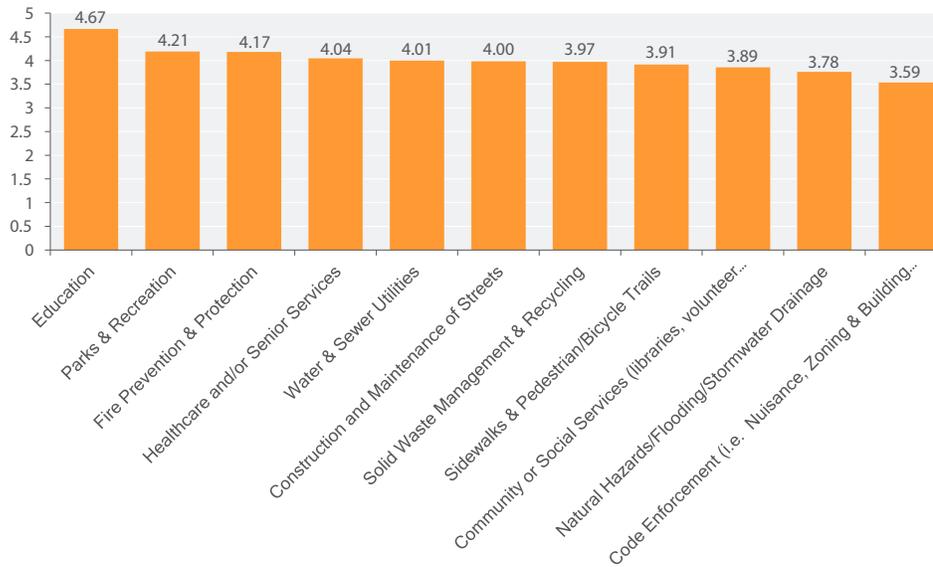
**Q11 Should natural features be protected from development? If yes, check all that should be protected.**

Answered: 547 Skipped: 77



**Q12**

Please indicate which public services are most important to you. 5 = Highest Priority : 1 = Lowest Priority







# Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary

## COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Destination Burlington | Burlington, North Carolina, Comprehensive Plan



### Introduction

On the evening of May 8, 2014, the City of Burlington hosted a Community Visioning Workshop as part of the Destination Burlington comprehensive planning effort. The purpose of the event was multi-faceted—it served to educate the community about the planning process underway, to elicit participant feedback on issues identified with help from City staff and the plan’s Steering Committee, and publicly promote the effort to encourage sustained interest, feedback, and ownership for the resultant comprehensive plan. The entire community—those that live, work, and visit the City—was invited to attend, and the Workshop was an open and casual venue for participants to express their feelings.

The bulk of the Workshop event was reserved for four “Planning Activities,” described below. The activities were designed to engage the participants in a number of ways—as “voters” milling around and interacting with a crowd, as quiet judges of scenes of their City, as groups engaged in debate on health issues, and as introspective thinkers of a better future. With a diversity of activities, the hope is that everyone in the room could find a way to connect with the issues on their preferred terms, resulting in thorough and accurate feedback from the event overall.

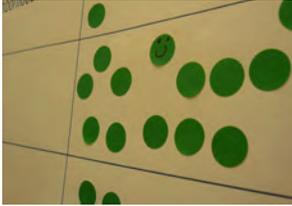
Destination Burlington

### Community Visioning Workshop

May 8, 2014  
6 pm - 8 pm



# C | Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary



## Planning Activity #1: Prioritizing Community Issues

Kickoff meetings with the City staff and Steering Committee in March and April 2014, respectively, brought up a number of important topics and issues regarding all aspects of the City. These issues were grouped by related themes. In this activity, the thirty-six community participants were asked to review these groups of issues and prioritize the ones in each group they felt were most relevant or critical. Each participant could vote for one issue in each thematic category. The leading issues by category are summarized below:

- Community Health: Access to and availability of pedestrian and bicycle facilities (16)
- Economic Prosperity: Redevelopment of aging mill and factory properties (12)
- Housing and Neighborhoods: Revitalization of east side neighborhoods (17)
- Open Space and Parks: Establishment of a greenway system between parks, neighborhoods, and downtown (14)
- Streets and Transportation: Public transportation: fixed-route bus service (14)
- Downtown: Housing in downtown including apartments above commercial (13)
  - » Linking North Main Street back into Downtown core across Webb Avenue (11)

In the Downtown category, there was a close split between the desire for downtown housing and relinking the north and south sections of Main Street.

Community Health		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	... PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Access to health facilities and care providers	●●●	3
Food deserts: areas where healthy food is not easily available	●●	2
Obesity, poor nutrition, and related illnesses	●●●●●●●	7
Access and availability of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as transportation	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	16
Access and availability of fitness, recreation, and sports facilities	●●●●	4
Water and air quality	●●	2
Support for community gardens, nearby farms, and other local food sources	●●●	3

Economic Prosperity		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	... PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Redevelopment of aging mill and factory properties	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●	12
Redevelopment of aging retail properties like Burlington Outlet Village (BMOC)	●●●●●●●	5
Quality of education and workforce development	●●●●●●	6
Retaining and attracting young workers and the "creative class"	●●●●●●●●	9
New development along the Interstate and south of the highway		
Economic incentives to attract and retain small businesses	●●●●	4
Ability to attract national retail and restaurant chains in new shopping centers	●	1

Open Space & Parks		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Establishment of a greenway system between parks, neighborhoods, and Downtown	 14	
"Green" enhancements of pedestrian routes between commercial and residential areas		
Preservation of rural land, farms, fields, and meadows	 2	
Maintenance and upgrades to existing parks, facilities, and conserved land	 7	
Creation of sports fields and athletic facilities	 2	
Landscape beautification of roadway medians, triangles, and "leftover" spaces	 3	
Protection of natural resources like creeks, Haw River, woodlands, and reservoirs	 9	

Housing & Neighborhoods		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Preservation of historic neighborhoods and homes	 2	
Revitalization of "East Side" neighborhoods	 17	
Affordability of housing options	 4	
Definition and recognition of different neighborhoods and gateways	 3	
Equal provision of City services and facilities throughout all neighborhoods	 2	
Promotion of more interaction through neighborhood events and work groups		
Focusing on neighborhood commercial streets or "village centers"	 9	

Streets & Transportation		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Pedestrian facilities: safe and connected sidewalks, paths, and street crossings	 5	
Bicycle facilities: dedicated lanes, paths, and locking racks	 4	
Public transportation: fixed-route bus service	 14	
Beautification of gateways and corridors from the interstate and neighboring towns	 6	
Management of traffic volumes and bad roadway intersections	 4	
Regional transportation: airport, Interstate 40, Amtrak, intercity and regional buses	 3	
Controls and improvements for commercial signage and parking along corridors	 1	

Downtown		
IF YOU THINK THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE ON THIS POSTER...	PLEASE PUT A STICKER NEXT TO IT, HERE	
Linking North Main Street area back into Downtown core across Webb Avenue	 11	
A variety and abundance of shops and restaurants	 4	
Parking availability	 1	
Numerous activities, especially after-hours (evenings and weekends)	 3	
Housing in Downtown, including apartments above businesses	 13	
New commercial development and redevelopment	 3	
Preservation of historic buildings and open spaces	 2	

# C | Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary



One of the VPS score-cards, with participant comments added for clarity

## Planning Activity #2: Visual Preference Survey

A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a public input gathering activity that uses carefully-selected images of places and features to elicit feedback on the community’s preferences for their own environment. Unlike a traditional survey, the VPS does not ask the participants to read and interpret written questions—it asks solely for an individual’s feelings about an image on a scale from 1 to 5. In this VPS, participants were shown thirty-six images, the majority of which were places in and around Burlington. The images were grouped into six themed categories: Housing & Neighborhoods, Open Space, Commercial Districts, Economy and the Workplace, Downtown, and Streets and Transportation. The question that each participant was asked to answer for each image was, “how much would you (or do you) like this in Burlington?” with the scale going from 1 as “Not at all!” to 5 being “A lot!”

Two pieces of resulting data for each image are useful in this survey. First, the average score of each image gives a relative sense of the preference for the scene or feature. Second, the number of extreme scores—1s and 5s—gives a sense of how strong the preference is but also how divided the participants may be on the issue. The images on the following pages show the average score of each image, its rank in its category, and its rank overall. A score break-down is included at the end of this summary report, including data on each image’s extreme scores.

Some significant results coupled with the highest-rated images from the VPS in each thematic category are shown on the following pages.

		1 = Not at all				5 = A lot!
ECONOMY & THE WORKPLACE	19	1	2	3	4	5
	20	1	2	3	4	5
	21	1	2	3	4	5
	22	1	2	3	4	5
	23	1	2	3	4	5
	24	1	2	3	4	5
DOWNTOWN	25	1	2	3	4	5
	26	1	2	3	4	5
	27	1	2	3	4	5
	28	1	2	3	4	5
	29	1	2	3	4	5
	30	1	2	3	4	5
STREETS & TRANSPORTATION	31	1	2	3	4	5
	32	1	2	3	4	5
	33	1	2	3	4	5
	34	1	2	3	4	5
	35	1	2	3	4	5
	36	1	2	3	4	5

*But moved out of st.*

*Yes! Completely open market*

## Housing & Neighborhoods:

- Images of housing types and neighborhood settings were generally met with lukewarm and mixed responses in relation to other categories in the survey.
- Historically-rehabilitated Glencoe Mill Village was ranked highest in this category, but still ranked only 15th of 36 images.
- A newer townhome community outside of a traditional neighborhood setting was ranked quite low by participants.



Average Score	<b>3.77</b>	Rank in Category	<b>1</b>	Rank Overall	<b>15</b>
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## Open Space:

- Overall, reaction to open space images was strongly positive except for the image of the golf course, which had strongly divided feedback.
- A photograph of a community event in an athletic field garnered the most favor in this category and ranked second overall in the survey.
- The more natural scenes of the Haw River and local farmland ranked favorable even in relation to more traditional park scenes.



Average Score	<b>4.39</b>	Rank in Category	<b>1</b>	Rank Overall	<b>2</b>
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## Commercial Districts:

- The strongest positive preference in the category was for a new commercial building that lines a walkable main street in neighboring Elon.
- An image of a commercial strip highway was overwhelmingly negative and was the lowest ranking image overall.
- This category had the most number of divided responses, indicating that the community's tastes for commercial environments are widely disparate.



Average Score	<b>4.28</b>	Rank in Category	<b>1</b>	Rank Overall	<b>6</b>
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# C | Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary



Average Score	4.11	Rank in Category	1	Rank Overall	9
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## Economy & the Workplace

- Images featuring contemporary, white-collar workplaces were ranked strongly positive.
- Responses to light industrial uses were largely weak but ranged from positive to divided to negative.
- Reaction to the image of the distribution center was most split.



Average Score	4.60	Rank in Category	1	Rank Overall	1
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## Downtown

- The Co-op Market on Front Street was the top-ranked place in the survey.
- Scenes featuring historic public-use buildings were favored strongly.
- There was strong negative response to images depicting Downtown's industrial and traffic-dominated areas.



Average Score	4.36	Rank in Category	1	Rank Overall	3
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## Streets & Transportation

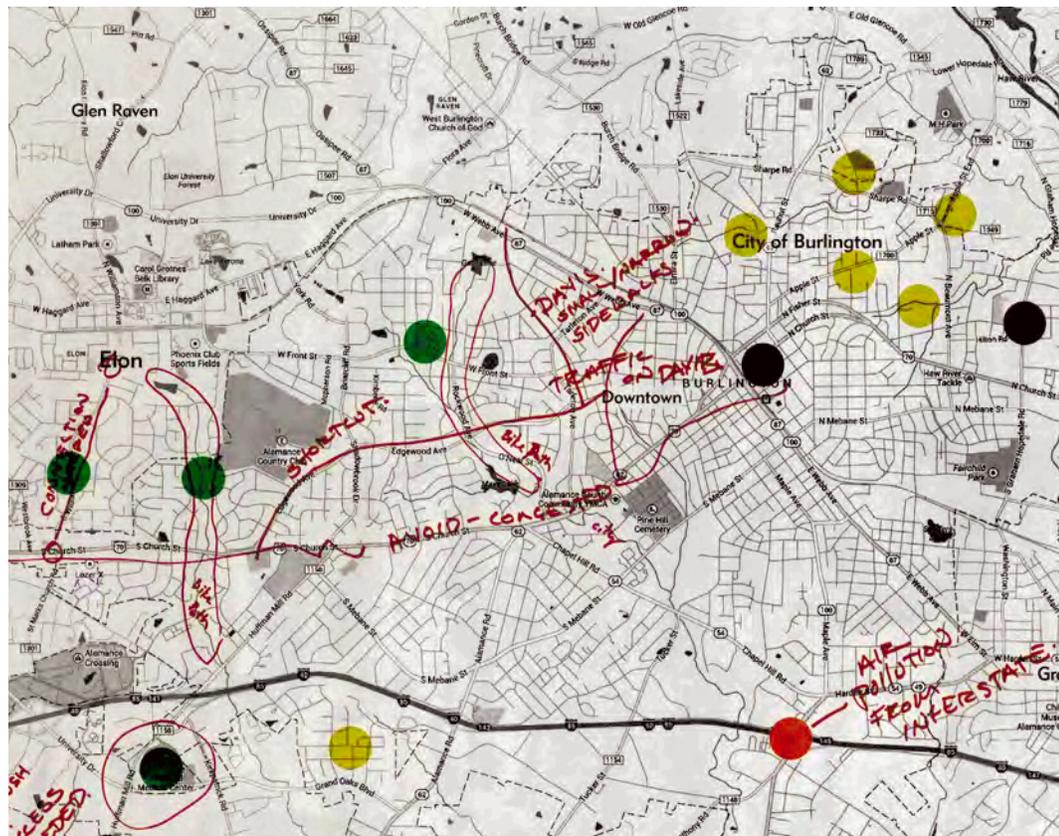
- There was notable division of opinions regarding landscaped rotaries.
- There were strong negative opinions of Maple Avenue-like corridors.
- There were strong positive responses and high ranking for landscaped roadways, public transportation, and streets that could accommodate both along with bicycles and pedestrians.

## Planning Activity #3: Mapping Community Health & Safety

Community health is a major concern of the comprehensive planning effort, as it is thoroughly woven into the fabric of urban life—the state of health says much about the state of education, economic success, equitable access, and overall quality of life for citizens. This group mapping exercise was designed to use factors that influence community health as a way to locate areas most at risk for despair, disinvestment, poverty, and blight.

It is important to note that most citizens do not have public health studies and statistics at their disposal to guide them in this exercise, but instead must rely on their memories and those of their groupmates—a collective “story” about how healthy and safe the City is in their daily experience. While the consultant team can create a technically-accurate map of health issues, it is these “mental maps” created by the community participants that reveal nascent issues before they may be noticeable in available data. Copies of each group’s maps are available at the end of this summary report.

Each group was asked to nominate a spokesperson to report to the Workshop attendees the main points of their discussion. On the following pages is a summary of each group’s report.



# C | Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary

## Group 1

- There used to be no “West Burlington” on the other side of Chapel Hill Road—it just didn’t exist.
- All the mills were in eastern Burlington; when Western Electric left, it took “one sail off the sailboat” for East Burlington. As the mills closed, everything folded over to West Burlington, west of Webb Avenue.
- East Burlington is still there, but it has taken a hit over the years.
- A lifetime resident seen has seen many changes since 1962; Cum Park Plaza in eastern Burlington on Friday nights used to be very popular—one of first shopping centers in state.
- Now, a Cum Park Plaza shop-keeper is trying to retire after 52 years but no one will take her place.



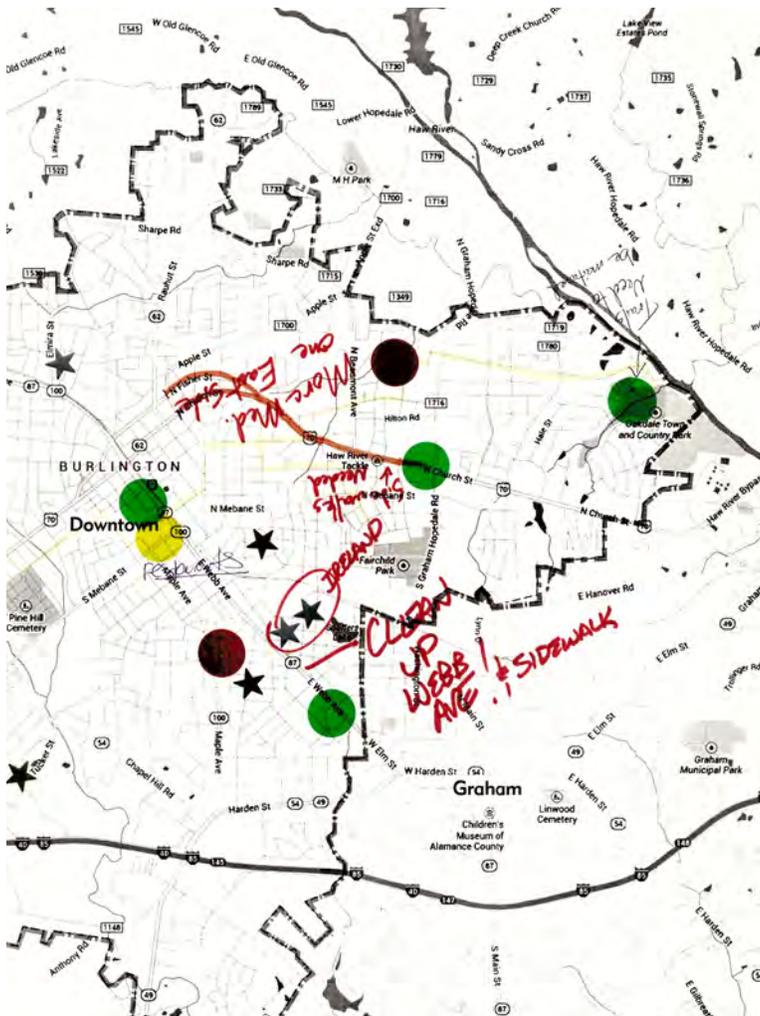
## Group 2

- Group 2 was focused on food and noted that restaurants were concentrated in certain areas.
- Not many air quality issues were noted.
- Only one notable water quality issue: Little Alamance Creek as an impaired waterway.
- Group 2 identified a few higher-crime/blighted areas around the City.
- Revitalizing McKinney Park was a request noted on Group 2’s map.
- The group identified the area around North Church Street and Graham Hopedale Road as having no real 24-hour emergency care facilities.



## Group 3

- This group focused more on bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- Their map marked trails and paths that need to be updated, accessible, and convenient, including along Front Street, North and South Church Street, Webb Avenue, and the trails at Town & Country Park.
- The East Side needs more attention for medical access; only Drew Center is still open, as Kernodle Clinic has closed.
- Sidewalks need focus on South and North Church Street corridors as well as gaps in sidewalk systems around schools for kids walking to and from school—Turrentine as an example.
- Group 3’s map also pointed out a lack of food and restaurants in Downtown.



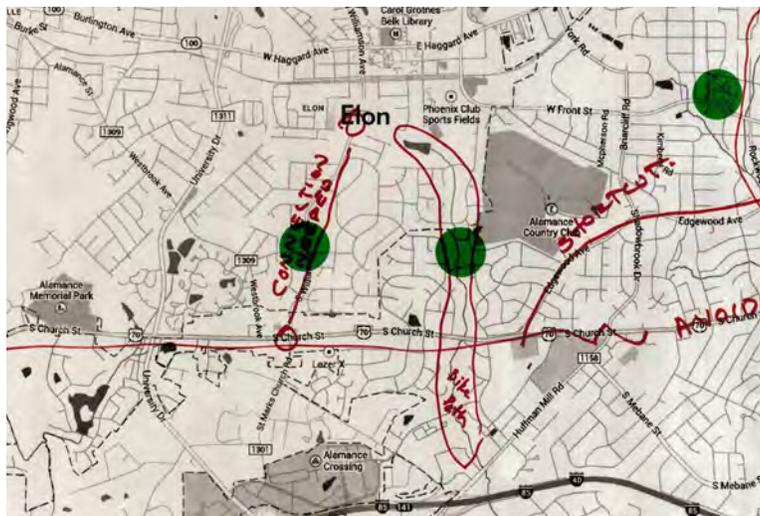
## Group 4

- Group 4 was composed mainly of members of the Burlington Work Group.
- In regards to food accessibility, it's not easily accessible and healthy; even the Downtown Co-op is not accessible to most due to cost.
- The City needs a bike and pedestrian path from Elon University down Front Street to Downtown—Elon wants to be part of the community and is only 4 miles from Downtown, but no safe, clear way exists for students without their own transportation or the Biobus.
- Webb Avenue from Graham to Burlington is another opportunity for a bike/pedestrian connection.
- The "original Burlington" is within a radius around downtown and includes East Burlington, the North Main Street area, West Davis Street area, and Graham.
- "Original Burlington" is cut off from the ARMC.
- There was a perceived water quality issue explained as runoff from the Ed Thomas Water Treatment facility into a nearby creek, eroding back yards and requiring homeowners to shore up their property. The blue dots corresponding to this issue are shown in the North Church Street/North Main Street area.
- Crime prone areas were scattered in and around "Original Burlington"
- Group 4 pointed out that there is a movement to get rid of the perceived East/West division and think about the whole City.
- The group pointed out a natural loop in Downtown on Fisher and Main Streets from the Church Street split to City Park in the south, with great potential for a walking/biking loop. This idea rests on the notion of a restored connected Main Street across Webb Avenue where the old depot blocks its path.
- Group 4 also noted possible bike/pedestrian connections north of Downtown on Route 62 and across North Church Street at Sellar Mill Road.



## Group 5

- Group 5 identified a food desert headed north out of Downtown in East Burlington, and also south of the Interstate along Grand Oaks Boulevard.
- There is an opportunity for more bike paths and walking paths along creeks with power lines—possible greenways.
- Connecting parks together is another goal of greenways; Lake Mackintosh needs its own greenway connection.
- New residential community at Mackintosh by the Lake needs better connectivity to nearby areas without car dependence.
- Group 5 noted that there were no clinics in East Burlington.
- Air quality was seen as poor in comparison to the rest of state, with Interstate highway traffic as one contributing factor.
- West Burlington and close to downtown were seen as relatively crime free in comparison to East Burlington.
- Group 5 also noted on their map:
  - » Several roadway corridors that were either needed, exhibited traffic congestion, served as shortcuts, or had inadequate sidewalks.
  - » There was a question about the presence of a medical waste incinerator at the Alamance Community College campus highway interchange.
  - » Disconnection between neighborhoods.
  - » Sidewalk issues related to school access and safety.
  - » A concern about high school gangs.
  - » A desire for a splashground/splash park at City Park or behind the old depot.
  - » A question about why swimming is not allowed in reservoirs.

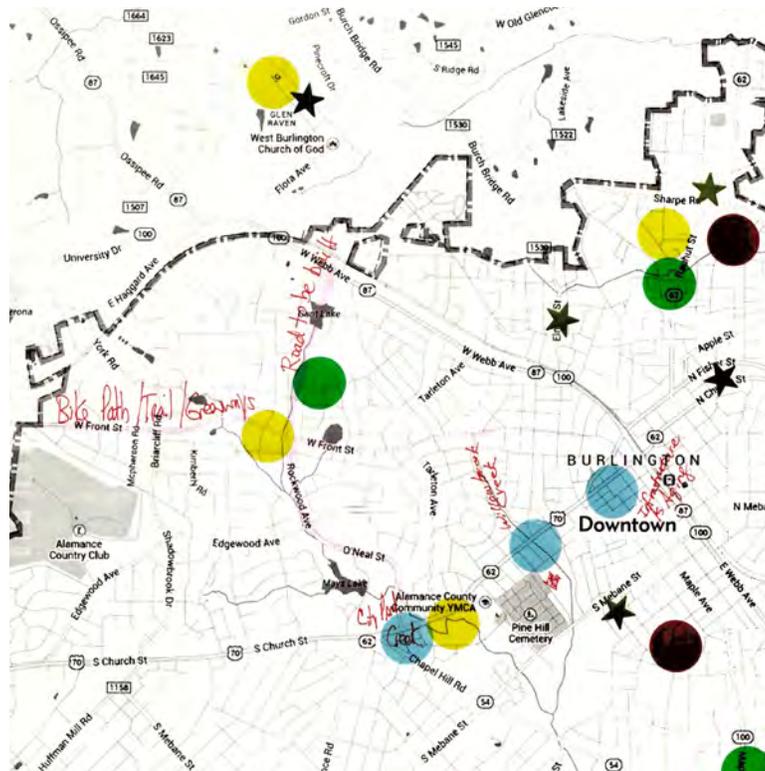


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## Group 6

- Group 6 noted the noise and air pollution along the Interstate.
- A connection along Rockwood Ave./O'Neal Street could tie into City Park and connect to Glen Raven.
- The intersection at Rockwood/O'Neal and Church is very busy.
- Crime is scattered, but there is some in West Burlington at Huffman Mill Road.
- Group 6 had concerns about water quality of Haw River and smaller creeks around North Park, City Park, and Willowbrook, also related to erosion of those creeks.
- While food deserts occurred in a number of places, those along the Interstate had more to do with the healthiness of fast food at chain restaurants.
- Also noted on this group's map:
  - » Pollution concern at Stericycle near Alamance Community College.
  - » A lack of private health care options in East Burlington.
  - » Aging water infrastructure in Downtown.
  - » Potential for a bike path/trail/greenway along Front Street towards Elon.



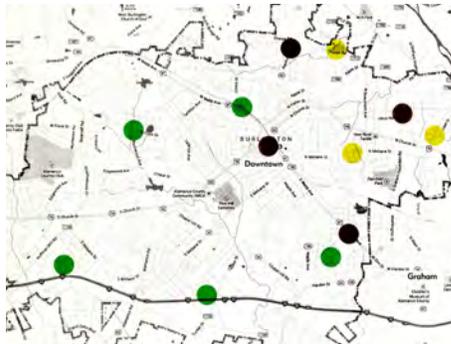
## Group 7

- Bicycling and recreation access is an issue, especially notable at Town & Country Park near McKinney Street, which seems closed.
- No clinics exist in East Burlington—Webb Avenue acts like a boundary of health care access.
- Fast food exists in the east, but nothing healthy. A health food store used to exist at Beaumont Avenue & North Church Street, but it moved to West Burlington.
- Group 5 identified several crime and blight areas including Sharpe Road, Hilton Road, and Apple Street. Illegal dumping was noted around Snuffers Lake and by Rauhut/Hatch intersection.
- There are some pharmacies in East Burlington, but the local clinic has closed.



## Group 8:

- East Burlington has food deserts—Walmart is not seen as counting as healthy food.
- Group 8 agrees that the Downtown Co-op is out of reach of most citizens.
- There is a horseshoe around Downtown and City Park to the west, south, and east that is not adequately served by recreational facilities.
- There is not much Downtown or to the east for health care—even just to procure aspirin.
- While Haw River has some issues, the water quality of the river has dramatically improved.

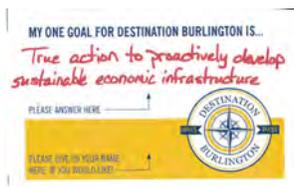
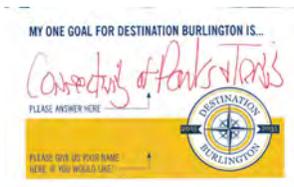


# C | Appendix C: Community Visioning Workshop Summary

## Planning Activity #4: One Goal for Destination Burlington

The purpose of the “One Goal” activity was to have participants, after over ninety minutes of discussing issues, preferences, and priorities, distill down their most essential goal or priority for the comprehensive planning process. The following is a complete list of “One Goals” for Destination Burlington:

- Greenways connecting neighborhoods (Elon and Downtown) [twice]
- Destination for families - downtown with water/splash fountain/creek. More people living and playing there will mean more business support
- Action on the top ranked items that were from the issue prioritization exercise
- Progressive progress
- Open Main Street
- Create livable and walkable neighborhoods
- Strengthen the look of Burlington by using the Arts
- Economic Development in areas of vacant buildings
- Improve all areas of Burlington
- Connecting parks and trails
- True action to proactively develop sustainable economic infrastructure
- Improve on the quality of life opportunities
- Want the City to be fair to all areas
- Provide more medical facilities in our area
- All Hands on Deck! #bethechange
- Dive in and let's make it happen
- Neighborhood business center
- Sprayground!
- Want to feel a part of my community and to not feel separate
- Public transit
- To better connect the whole of Burlington – not an East vs. West view



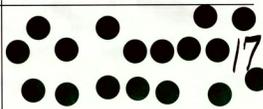
## Conclusions

All issues, concerns, suggestions, and ideas expressed at the Community Visioning Workshop are significant—the purpose of the workshop is not to dismiss or discredit any notions of Burlington’s future. It is a useful practice, however, to point out issues that grab the attention of the community and continue to rise to the top in surveys, activities, and in general conversation. It is these issues that have the most resonance in the collective soul of the community. Below are five such issues, with a brief description of each:

### Geographic Equity

At every available opportunity, the community expressed concern about all of the neighborhoods of the City being on equal footing in terms of attention, investment, and quality of life. Most participants in outreach activities have suggested that East Burlington has historically lagged other parts of the City in terms of economic development, access to community amenities and services, quality of the built environment, and citizen health security—and therefore deserves special attention in the coming years. Whether this is borne out in fact or merely perception is not necessarily significant when the issue is framed less as an “East versus West” conflict and more as a condition of equity across the entire City. It is imperative that the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan seek to improve all areas of the City equitably and not promote a pendulum swing of resource distribution that alternately favors some areas over others.

Revitalization of “East Side” neighborhoods



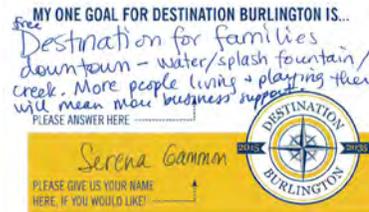
### Connectivity of Transportation Options

This issue has two heads—the alternatives that are available to car transportation, and the infrastructure needed in citywide networks to facilitate those alternatives. The community has hammered home that the City needs better pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and needs to be served by fixed-route public transportation. These are often couched as a health concerns—walking and biking as a primary means of maintaining physical fitness, and public transportation as a mode promoting accessibility to healthcare facilities. The physical systems that facilitate alternative transportation—greenways and “complete streets”—are much desired by the community for their ability to link parks, neighborhoods, and Downtown.



## Downtown as a Community Focus

Downtown occupies a special place in the hearts and minds of the citizens of Burlington. It is a focal point of cultural activity, heritage, and character, but also redevelopment and rehabilitation opportunities. The community seeks a future in which Downtown Burlington offers greater options for entertainment, dining, housing, shopping, and working while maintaining its role as a central hub for connectivity between different neighborhoods of the City.



## Economic Improvement

Redevelopment is the leading term when the community discusses an improved economy; instead of development of formerly untouched sites, citizens talk about the reuse and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites inside the City proper, particularly former industrial properties. Buildings with historic character that have been appropriated for contemporary use are popular, and public incentives to such redevelopment activity is often cited as an important component of economic development.



## Environmental Stewardship

The community identified a number of trouble spots for perceived pollution or diminished water quality during the mapping exercise. There is also a general understanding among the populace that Burlington has a number of unique environmental features and landscapes worth protecting and celebrating with greenways—the Haw River, numerous creeks and waterways, and rural outskirts. Insuring the protection of these features and improving the quality of the natural environment is a significant goal set for the planning effort.



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# Appendix D: High School Planning Exercises

Before the Destination Burlington planning process formally commenced in 2014, area high schools had participated in planning exercises conducted by City staff and helped name the upcoming comprehensive planning effort. On the following pages are the students' design sketches from these exercises.



## HOW ABOUT... 'DESTINATION BURLINGTON'?

McGowan, Molly. "How about... 'Destination Burlington'?" *Burlington Times-News* 6 Jan. 2014.

Burlington's 20-year comprehensive land use plan now has a name—"Destination Burlington"—thanks to a civics and economics class at Cummings High School. In November, the city's planning department visited Williams High School, Cummings High School and Ray Street Academy to teach a lesson on city planning and to gather student input on what Burlington's comprehensive plan should be named. Fourteen plan names were proposed, and the public was asked to vote for their favorite on the city's website or by calling the city. Of the 230 total votes cast, "Destination Burlington" received the most, according to a news release.

The winning name was proposed by students in Chad Cook's first block civics and economics class at Cummings. Mayor Ronnie Wall and Director of Planning and Economic Development Amy Nelson will congratulate the class Tuesday morning.

Cook will be awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from Burlington's City Council at its regular Tuesday night meeting. Now that the comprehensive land use plan has a name, city staff will soon begin creating the document, which will assess growth trends, population shifts, future land use, transportation issues, quality of life and regional issues to plan the city's development—gathering public input along the way.



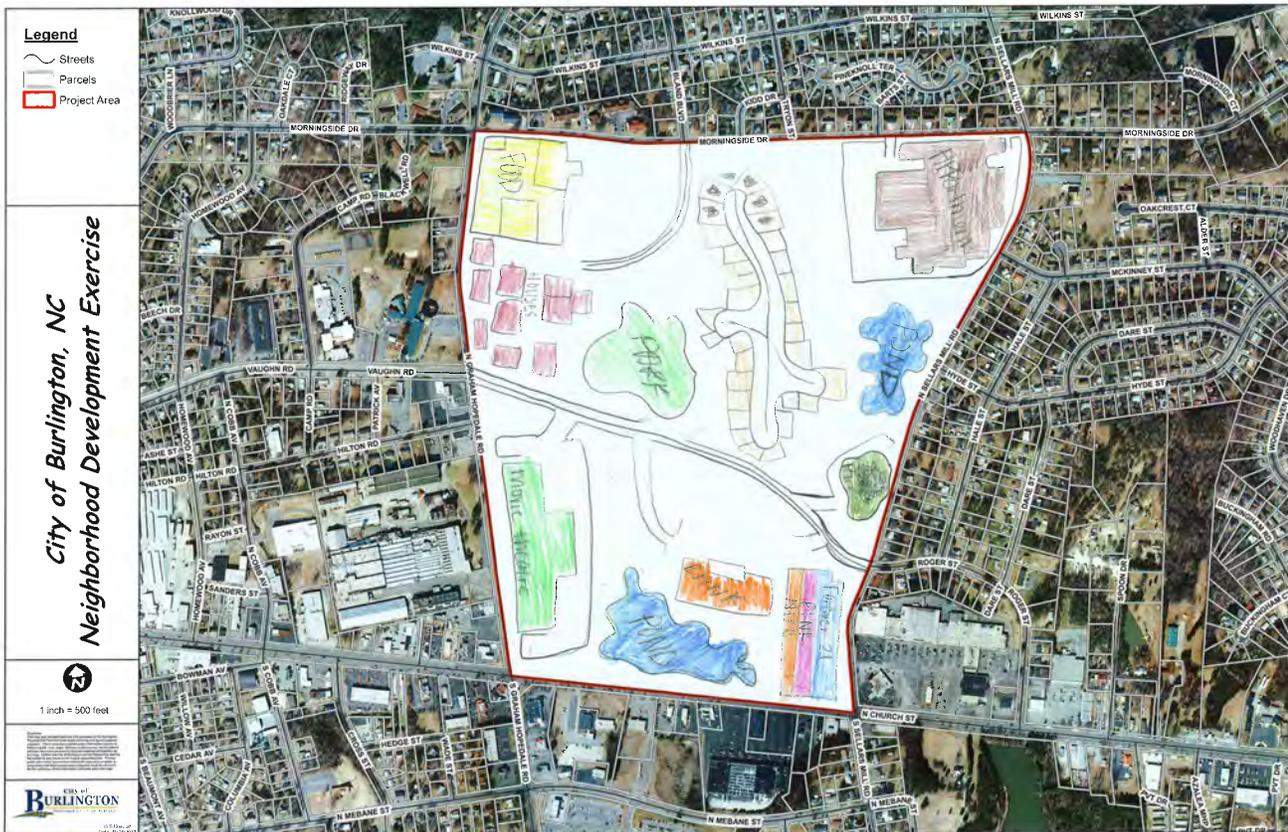
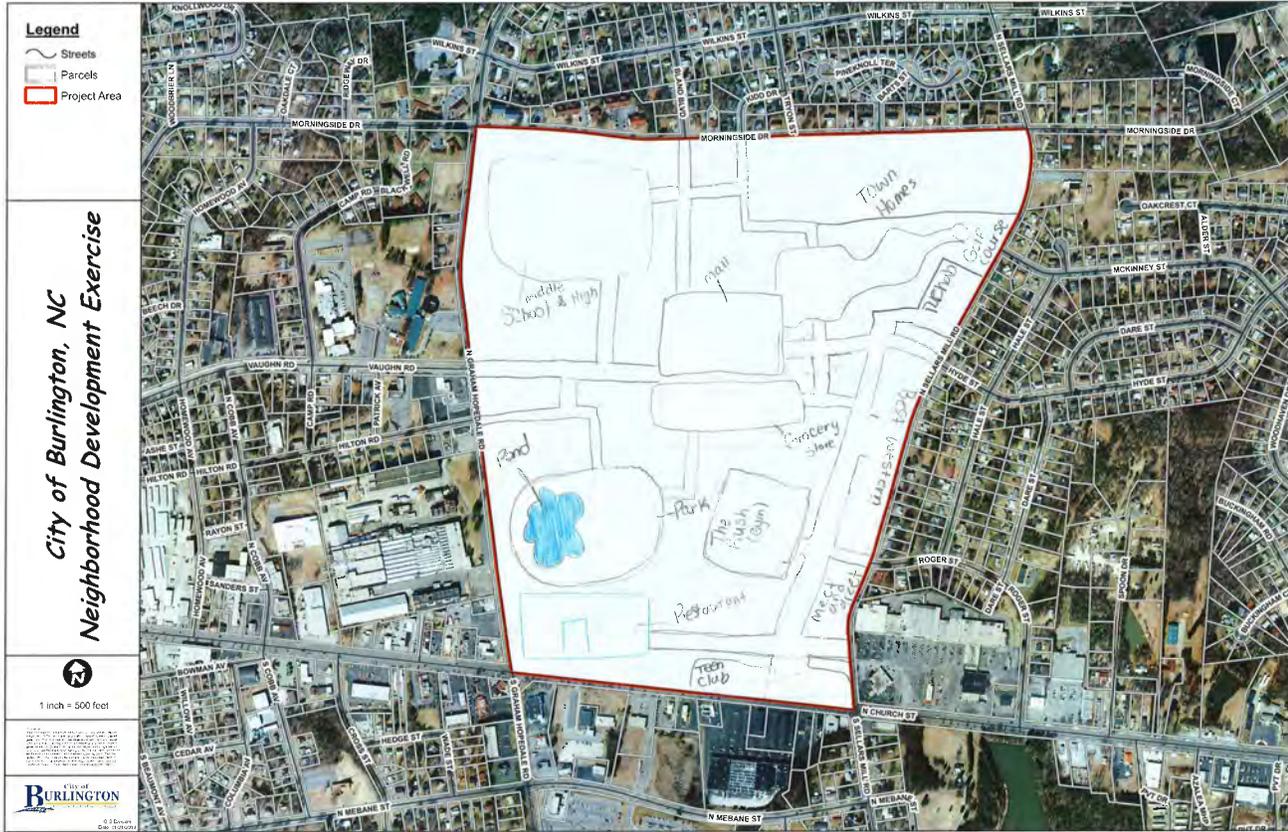


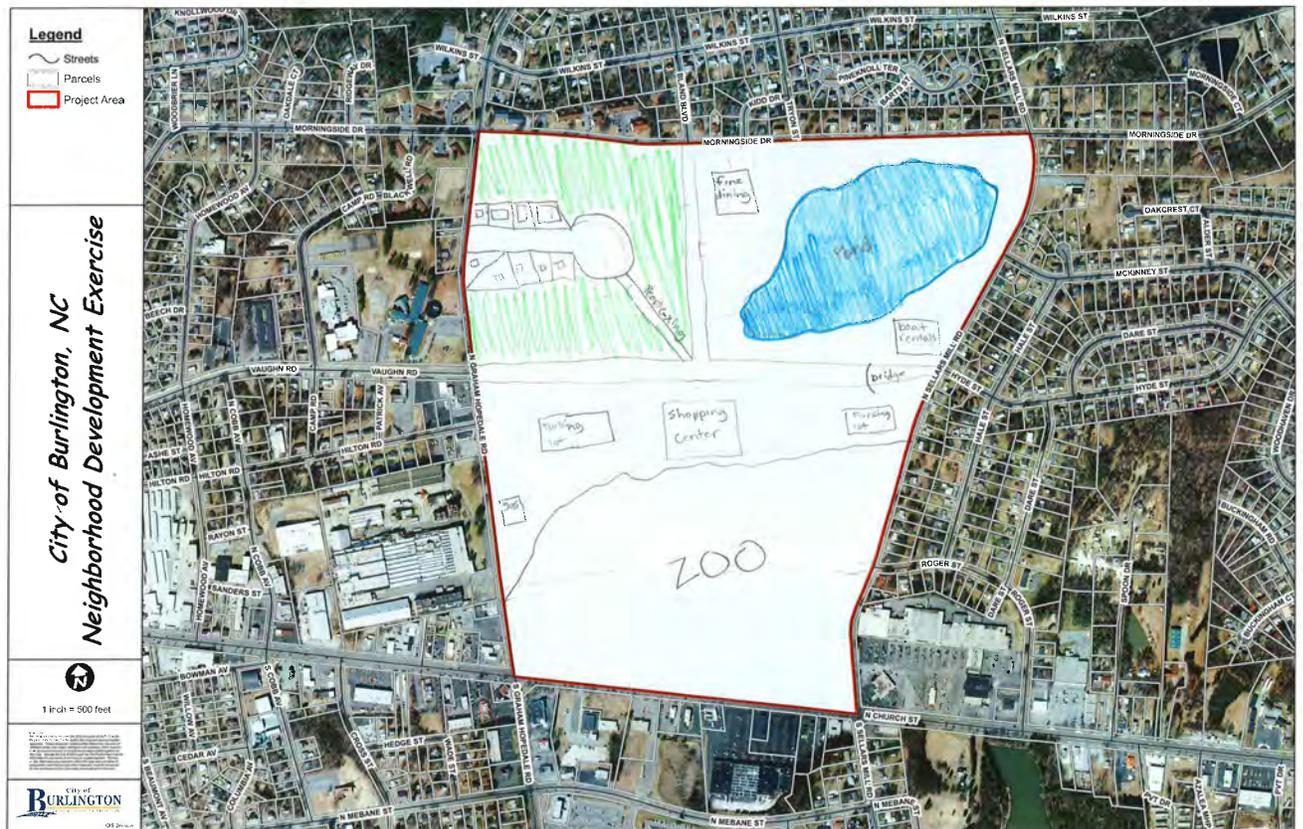
# D | Appendix D: High School Planning Exercises





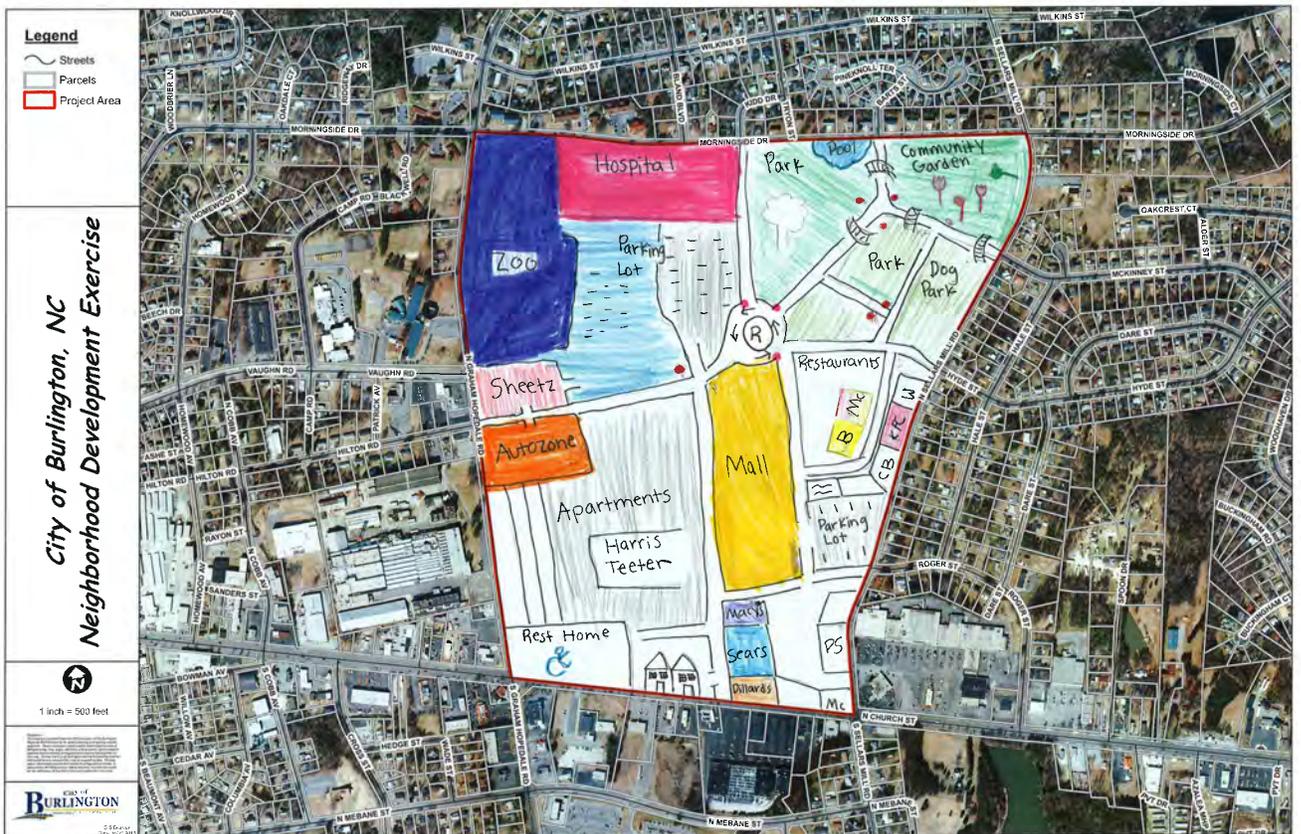
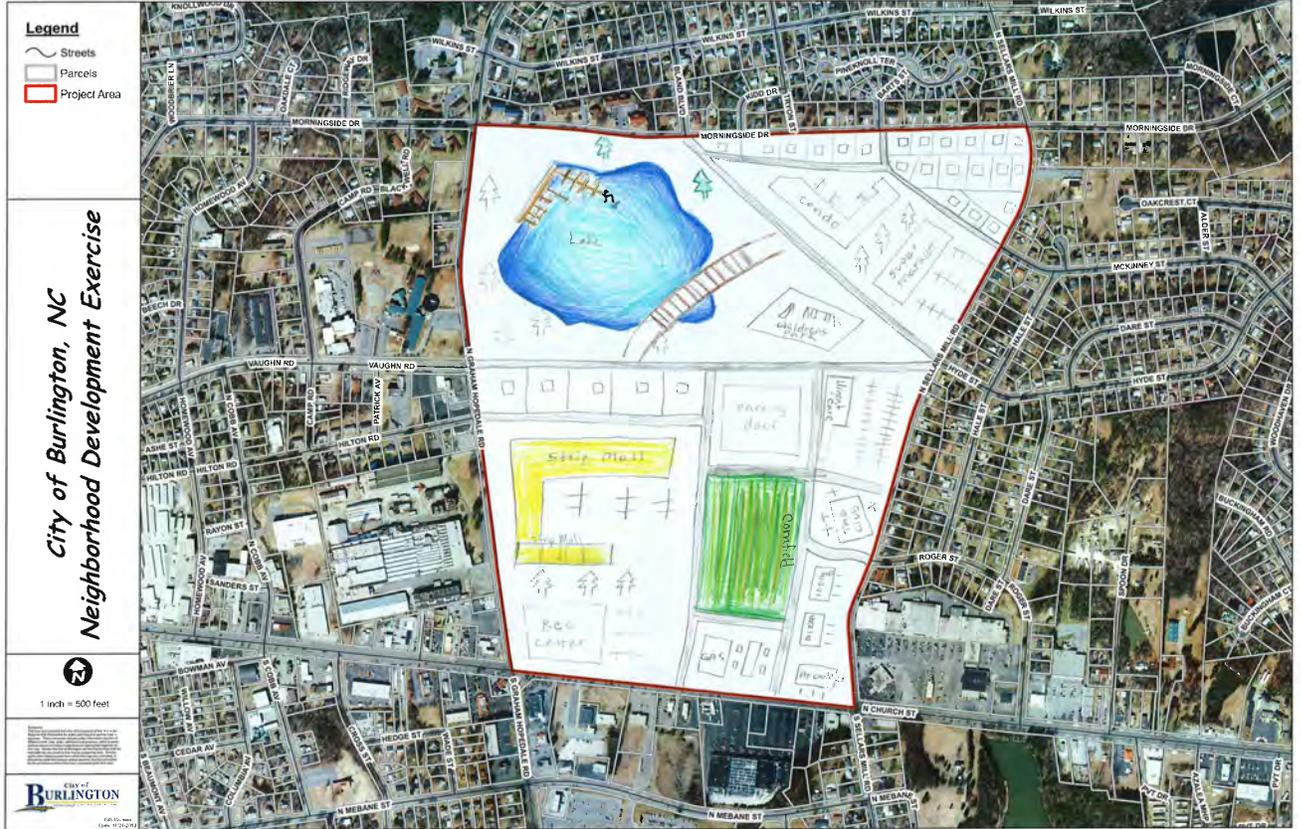
# D | Appendix D: High School Planning Exercises



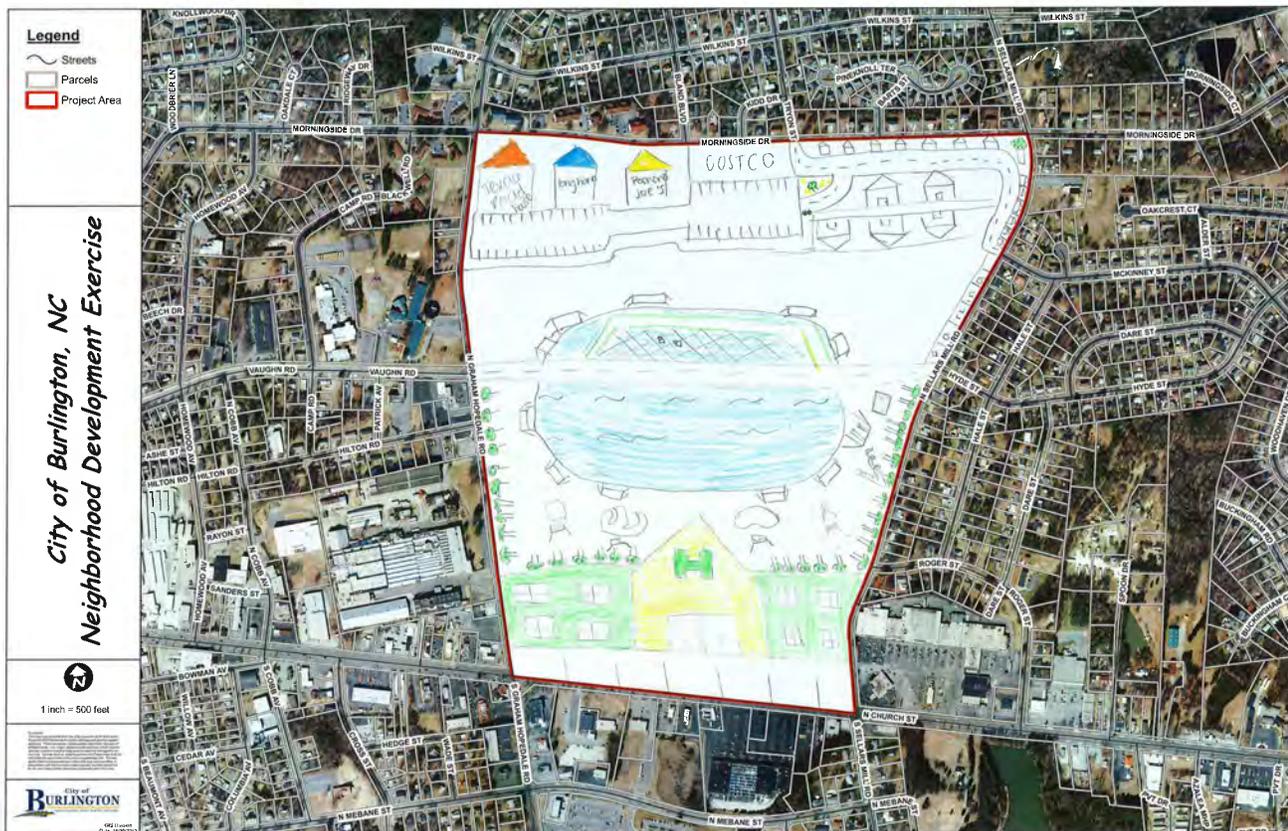


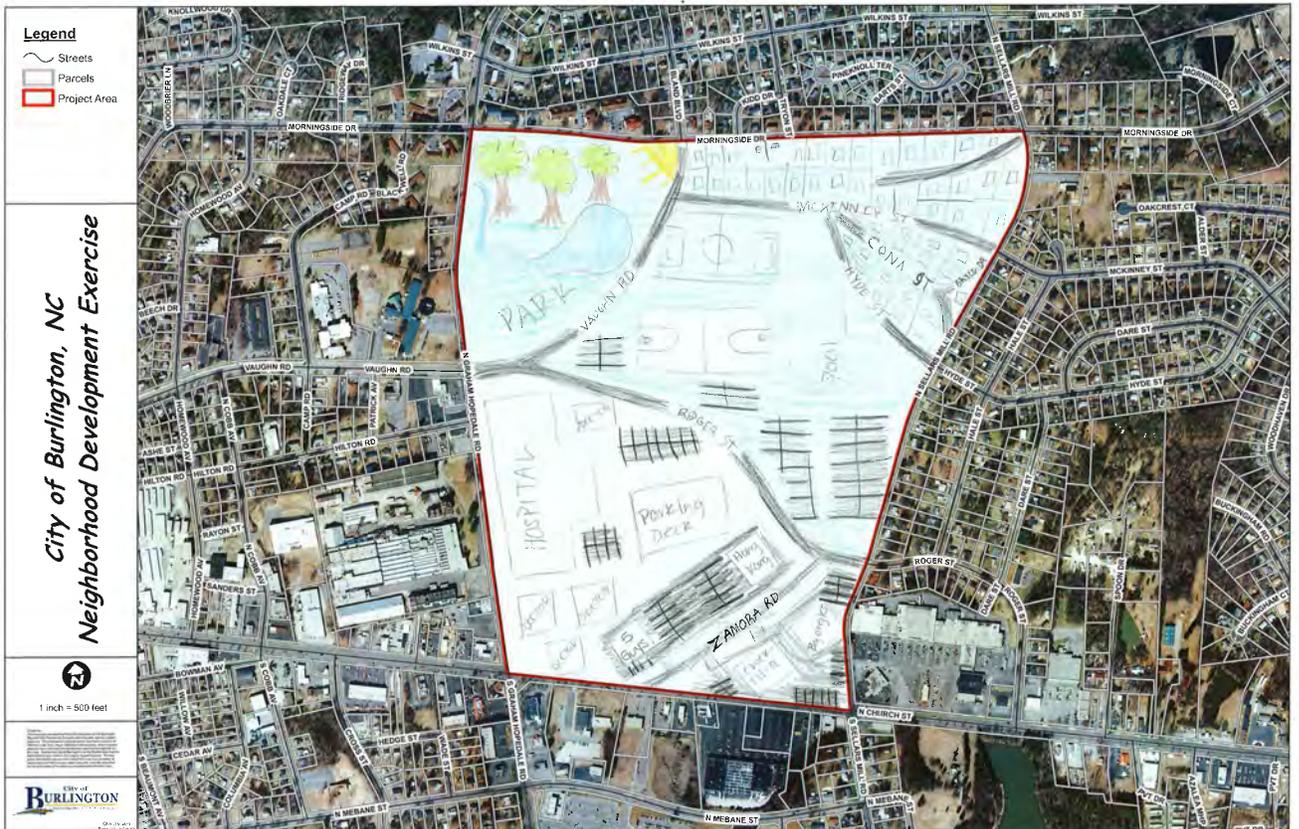
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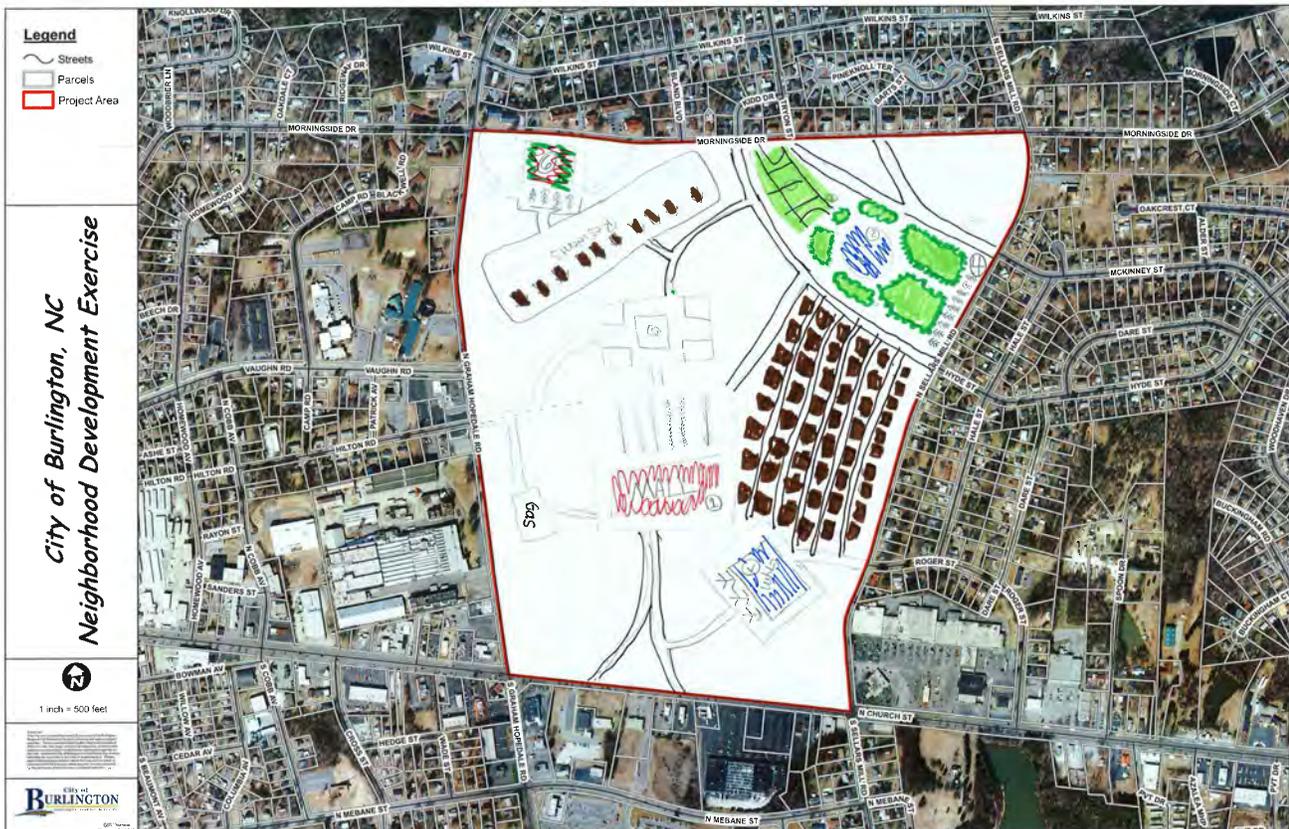


# D | Appendix D: High School Planning Exercises





# D | Appendix D: High School Planning Exercises







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