





# STOKES COUNTY 2035

moving together

DRAFT PLAN 03.09.15



# STOKES COUNTY 2035

m o v i n g t o g e t h e r

**PREPARED FOR:**

Stokes County, NC  
Town of Danbury, NC  
Town of Walnut Cove, NC  
City of King, NC

**PREPARED BY:**



**WITH SUPPORT FROM:**





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## C O N T E N T S

### A. Background

### B. Planning Process

### C. Public Engagement & Vision

### D. Planning Elements

### E. Implementation Matrix

## A

### BACKGROUND

The Stokes Vision 2035 Plan is the first plan of its kind for Stokes County. This comprehensive plan provides a unified strategic direction for not only the County, but also its three municipal areas of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. This planning effort was funded with assistance from the Northwest Partnership for Public Health through the Community Transformation Grant Project.

This comprehensive plan is unique in that public health considerations serve as a cornerstone for each policy and initiative. Along with public health, this plan targets efforts that mutually benefit economic development, the natural environment, and equity.



### INITIAL PLANNING GOALS

From the onset of the planning process, the planning team established six (6) initial goals for the planning process and final plan:

- 1.0 Engage citizens through a participatory planning process to establish a 20-year vision for Stokes County;**
- 2.0 Create a “design-focused” plan that uses design schematics and visual renderings that illustrate how future growth and development can occur provided the plan’s policies are adopted;**
- 3.0 Establish realistic priorities for how to allocate resources and capital improvements;**
- 4.0 Identify areas appropriate for growth, varying densities, and preservation;**
- 5.0 Encourage community empowerment & citizen action; and**
- 6.0 Capture the planning process and outcomes within a professional document to be shared with grant funding agencies that can assist with implementation.**

# B PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process involved five (5) phases: direction setting, focus groups and research, public engagement, plan development, and plan adoption.

## OCT. '13

DIRECTION SETTING

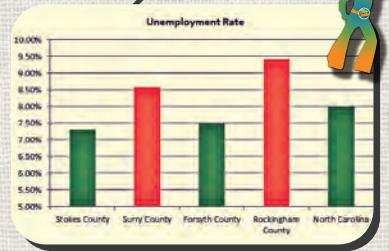
- Establish Technical Advising Committee (County & Municipal Staff)
- Project Branding
- Develop Project Website for Community Outreach



## NOV. '13- JAN. '14

FOCUS GROUPS & RESEARCH

- Field Visits
- Identify Probable Development Areas
- Conduct Demographic Analysis
- Develop Framework Plans: Walnut Cove, King, Danbury, Overall County
- Present Research Phase to Oversight Committee (POC)
- Public Kick-Off Meeting at Economic Development Committee's Business Extravaganza



## FEB. '14- JUNE '14

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct Public Workshops
- Present Community Outreach Results to Elected Officials



## JULY '14 - JAN. '15

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Finalize Probable Development Area Concept Designs
- Write Plan Policies
- Policy Review with Planning Oversight Committee



## FEB. - MAY. '15

PLAN ADOPTION

- Plan Review with Staff
- Present to Elected Officials
- 45-Day Public Comment Period
- Plan Adoption



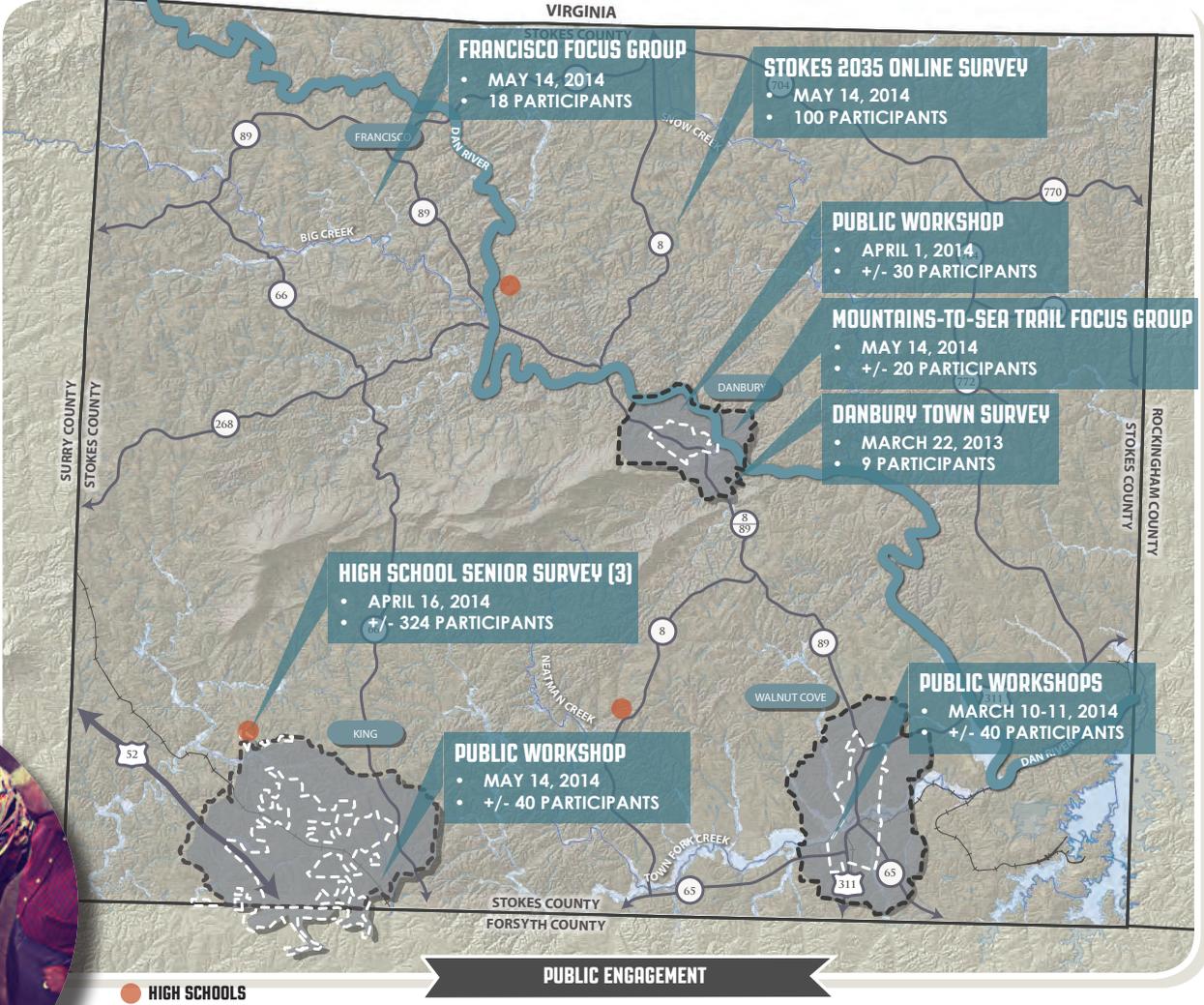
### PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

**C PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

A major goal throughout the planning process was to glean ideas and concerns from local citizens to collectively determine a future vision for Stokes County.

*Where:*

The planning process engaged Stokes County Citizens and officials at locations across the county, as depicted on the map to the right.



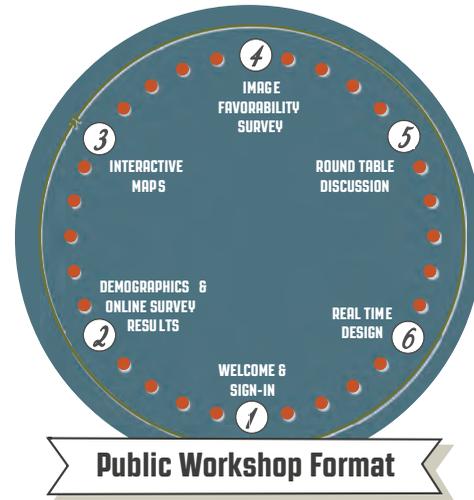
Workshop participants provided the design team with local knowledge and ideas during the public workshops.

# Public Engagement & Vision

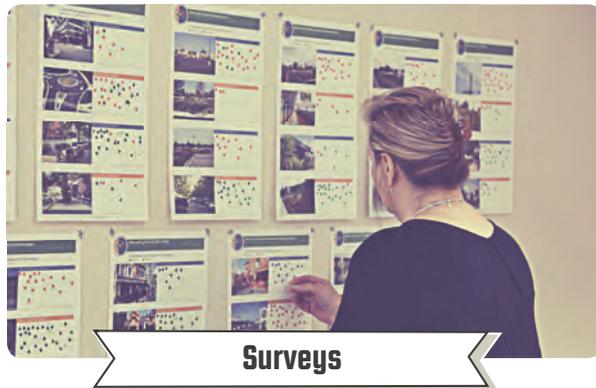
The Stokes 2035 Vision Plan was initially unveiled to the public on January 14, 2014 at the Stokes County Business Extravaganza: Disco Inferno. This event launched a major public outreach effort that subsequently included project website updates, three (3) public workshops, three (3) focus groups, and three (3) surveys.



**Project Website**



**Public Workshop Format**



**Surveys**



**Focus Groups**

## THE VISION FOR THE STOKES COUNTY 2035 PLAN IS TO CREATE A HEALTHY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH:

- 1 Future growth & development respects the county's history and rural character;
- 2 There are explicit efforts to seek, retain and attract the next generation;
- 3 There are ample and accessible opportunities for active living and a healthy lifestyle;
- 4 Future growth preserves and protects the County's unique natural environment;
- 5 Small businesses and entrepreneurship can flourish; and
- 6 Connections are made and "community happens" through unique programs and events.

## THIS VISION WILL BE ACHIEVED BY:

- 1 Encouraging growth and development where infrastructure currently exists;
- 2 Creating vibrant downtown environments in King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury that support visitation and small business development;
- 3 Establishing a linear parks and trail systems that link commercial areas with neighborhoods and community assets;
- 4 Creating unique programs and events that celebrate the people and places of Stokes County;
- 5 Supporting community based organizations and providing them the capacity to improve their communities.
- 6 Encouraging the provision of opportunities for workplace wellness and fitness.

# D

## PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Stokes Vision Plan is comprised of (5) planning elements:



This chapter serves as the cornerstone of the Stokes 2035 Vision Plan, providing guidance for Stokes County and its municipal leaders as they make land use development decisions regarding where and how the community should grow.

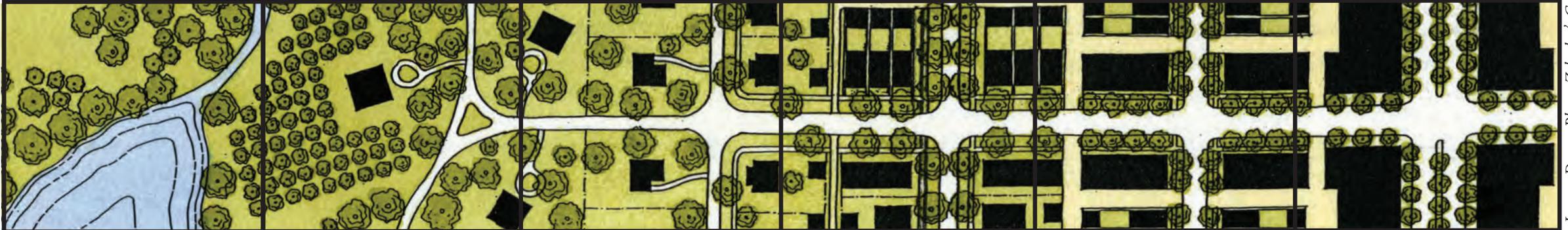
This Land Use Chapter includes three major parts: A) Methodology; B) Land Use Framework Maps; and C) Land Use Policies.

The Land Use Plan provides the overall structure for orchestrating appropriate patterns of growth and environmental conservation throughout the community.

### METHODOLOGY

The subsequent maps and policies are supported by the Land Use Transect methodology, which defines a series of zones that transition from rural Stokes County to the more urban downtowns of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. This model supports the land use priorities identified throughout the planning process, which include: protecting natural resources; developing vibrant downtowns; encouraging pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development; facilitating infill/redevelopment; and providing a broad range of housing opportunities.

The Land Use Transect includes six (6) major "sectors" moving from preserved lands to the County's most urban areas. Each sector is conceptually illustrated and defined on the following page.



**0-1 Preserved Lands**

- Conservation
- Parks and Greenways
- Limited Agriculture and Forestry
- Water Access Areas

**0-2 Reserved Lands/Conservation**

- Conservation
- Parks and Greenways
- Limited Agriculture and Forestry
- Water Access Areas

**G-1 Low Density Growth Areas**

- Primarily Residential/ Low Density
- Small Scale Multi-Family
- Limited Convenience Retail Uses
- Civic Uses

**G-2 Controlled Growth Areas**

- Single and Multi-Family Development
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers
- Neighborhood Scale Commercial
- Civic and Light Industrial Uses

**G-3 Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors**

- Medium to High Density
- Regional Centers
- Industrial Districts

**G-4 Downtowns**

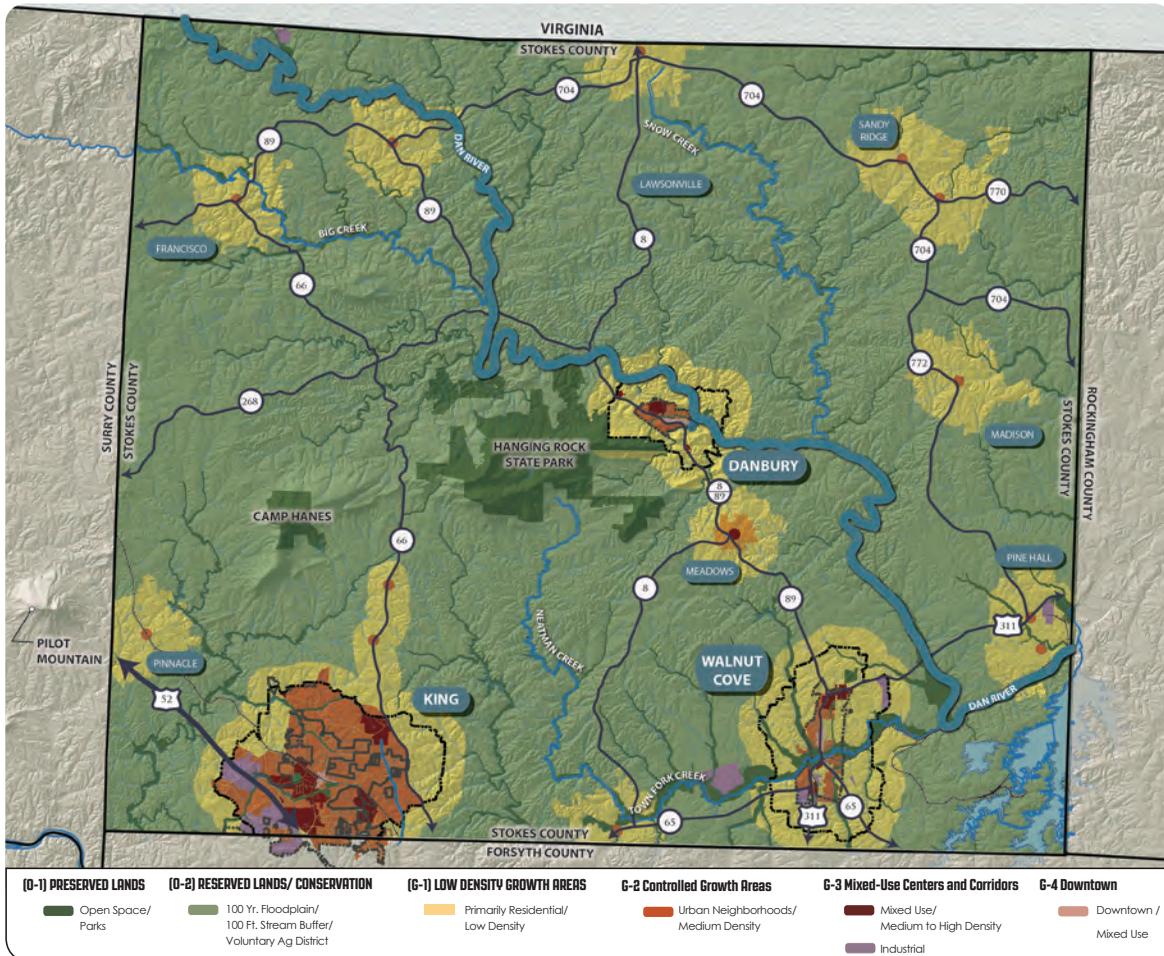
- Mixed-Use
- High Density

Image: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company

## LAND USE FRAMEWORK MAPS

The primary land use classification throughout the County includes very low (greater than 4-acre density average) or low-density (1.5 acre density average) residential growth.

In an effort to encourage neighborhood commercial growth toward major intersections throughout the county, the Land Use Framework Map identifies twelve (12) Rural Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. A one-mile buffer around these nodes identifies a target low-density residential growth area.



The recent sewer infrastructure expansion to the Meadows community will allow for greater density and is necessary to realize a return on investment; a mixed-use and high-density classification surrounds Meadows.

This plan recognizes that growth pressure will likely continue along the Highway 66 corridor that extends north from King. There are two neighborhood commercial nodes identified along this corridor.

A progression is found within each municipality from single family homes to urban neighborhoods containing mixed use nodes and centrally located historic downtowns.

## LAND USE TRANSECT ZONES

### OPEN SPACE 1 (O-1): PRESERVED LANDS

The O-1 Transect Zone is comprised of areas for preservation, conservation, or very limited development. This transect includes existing major public lands, 100 year floodplain, 100 foot stream buffer, and voluntary agricultural districts. Key areas of the O-1 transect zone in Stokes County include Hanging Rock State Park, Camp Hanes, Camp Sertoma, and the floodplains of all rivers and streams.



*Floodplain & riparian areas are suitable for linear parks and trails.*

### OPEN SPACE 2 (O-2): RURAL COMMUNITY

The O-2 Transect Zone is comprised of very low density development that includes many of the rural areas in Stokes County. This zone includes areas with very limited or no

water or sewer infrastructure. Some areas located within the O-2 Transect Zone could ultimately transition into the O-1 Transect Zone by expanding public lands and preserving highly sensitive natural resources and riparian areas.

The preservation of rural areas accomplishes many planning goals:

- It discourages sprawl by focusing new growth in and around existing developed areas.
- It plays an important role in natural resource protection.
- It promotes fiscal stewardship by encouraging growth toward municipal areas to create more efficient use of public facilities and existing infrastructure.
- By targeting growth toward municipal areas, the public will have more opportunities to walk or bike daily.

**GROWTH SECTOR 1 (G-1): LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

The G-1 sector, indicated by yellow on the Framework Maps, is intended for low-density residential growth and includes areas with limited access to water and sewer infrastructure. Many times, however, these areas are adjacent to target growth areas, such as municipal areas, county areas with water and sewer infrastructure, and existing and planned rural neighborhood commercial nodes. In addition, poor/wet soils that are not typically appropriate for development are included in this sector; soils information should be overlaid and investigated at a detailed level when developing in these areas to avoid the most sensitive soil types.

Desirable development in this sector typically consists of cluster development such as conservation subdivisions, or low-density residential development on relatively large lots. Other land uses appropriate for this sector include civic uses such as parks, schools, government uses, and religious institutions.



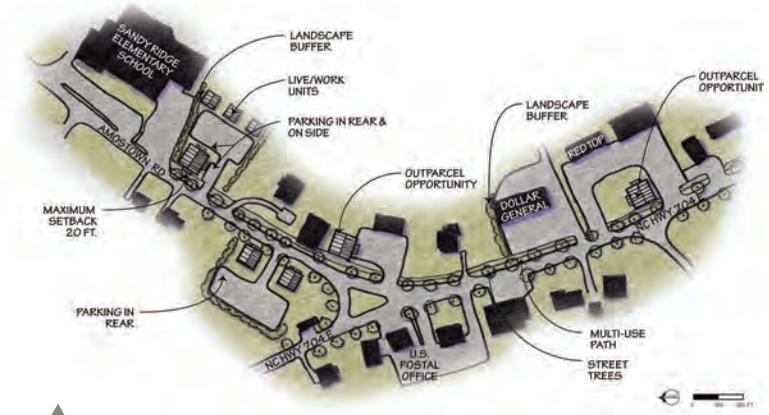
▲ Single-family homes, such as this farmhouse, are the primary land use type found within the low-density growth sector of Stokes County.

**GROWTH SECTOR 2 (G-2): URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS**

The G-2 Sector, indicated by orange on the Framework Maps, contains denser, mixed-use development at a scale appropriate for neighborhood commercial centers and walkable residential neighborhoods. Many of these areas have access to water and sewer infrastructure where growth should be directed. A local road network should be well connected and link to larger collector streets. Paths should form pedestrian connections linking

internal parks, multi-use greenways, sidewalks, and adjacent preserved open spaces. This pattern of development can provide significant public health benefits by creating safe and accessible opportunities for walking and biking.

@ Sandy Ridge



▲ Twelve (12) Rural Neighborhood Commercial Nodes have been identified throughout Stokes County. Design features include reduced setbacks and locating parking on the sides and rear.

**GROWTH SECTOR 3 (G-3): NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE**

The G-3 Sector is indicated by red on the Framework Map. Water and sewer infrastructure and major transportation networks and nodes serve these areas. The G-3 Sector also includes major road corridors for which specific attention is required to avoid unwanted strip development.

A full-range of land uses are appropriate in the G-3 sector, including single-family and multi-family residential, civic

uses, neighborhood and regional commercial centers, and light industrial areas.

### Food Lion Shopping Center @ Walnut Cove



*Infill development is encouraged throughout the county's urban areas.*

### GROWTH SECTOR 4 (G-4): DOWNTOWN

The G-4 transect zone is comprised primarily of existing downtown core areas, with a relatively dense street grid, and is appropriate for redevelopment or additional development. G-4 transect zone areas are shown in pink on the Framework Maps, which include the historic downtowns of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King.

The urban core is appropriate for redevelopment and new infill development and is well served by existing infrastructure. Because these areas are already well provided for in terms of urban services, it is one of the most efficient, fiscally responsible, and attractive areas for redevelopment or development of underutilized land.



*The “pedestrian triangle”, or area between a building’s edge, awning and curb, is the most critical area for creating a well-functioning downtown.*



Stokes County, like many rural communities across North Carolina, is working to attract job growth and investment.

Also, like much of rural North Carolina, Stokes County must confront its challenges – lagging population growth, high poverty rates, and an aging workforce – to realize economic growth.

Fortunately, Stokes County has an abundance of assets and resources to help meet these challenges. Some of these assets include: the major Highway 52 transportation corridor near King; the distinctive, small town Main Street environments of King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury; and a tremendous natural environment that includes the Sauratown Mountains, Hanging Rock State Park, and the Dan River.

Accordingly, the Stokes County economic development strategy must be diverse and provide for a range of initiatives that support:

- A BUSINESS RECRUITMENT;**
- B SMALL BUSINESS AND MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT;**
- C WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; AND**
- D QUALITY OF LIFE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT.**

## BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Stokes County must achieve three distinctive goals to attract new business and industry.

First, Stokes County must position itself **organizational-ly** for success; a public-private, nonprofit corporation structure will provide the necessary flexibility for recruitment negotiations and financial obligations.

Second, economic development leaders must be prepared with **readily-available land**; industry site selection firms will often only consider “shovel-ready” property.

Lastly, Stokes County must invest in effective **branding and marketing** through print and web.

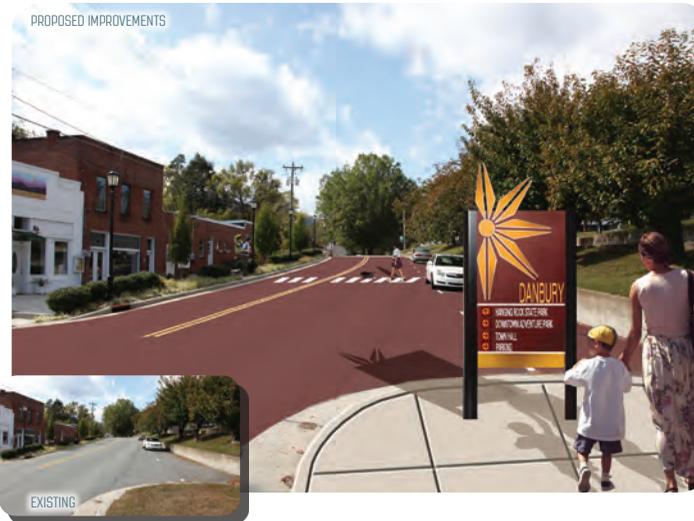
### Newsome Road Corridor in King



*At the public workshop in King, the design team worked alongside community leaders to develop a preliminary concept for the Newsome Road Corridor.*

## SMALL BUSINESS AND MAIN STREET

Stokes County and its municipalities must continue to support efforts to cultivate and foster the creation and success of small businesses. Local government must continue to provide critical infrastructure, such as water and sewer, but must also provide other critical public sector investments necessary to attract private sector development.



*Traffic calming measures and a town-wide wayfinding initiative will help to create a safer, pedestrian-friendly downtown environment. These changes are critical as Danbury seeks to expand tourism development and generate private sector investment.*

### PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



*The North Main Street gateway can be significantly improved through basic streetscape enhancements such as a wayfinding system, extending King’s streetscape with curbs, gutters, and sidewalk paving, constructing a landscaped median, and improving building facades with murals.*

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The presence of a quality workforce is one of the most critical factors a company considers when deciding whether to grow or expand in an area.

Methods to support and foster business development in Stokes County include the creation of a business development center, continuing partnerships Community Colleges, strengthening agricultural education, and expanding broadband.



There is overwhelming consensus among citizens and community leaders that recreation serves as a key element of the new economy for Stokes County. As a rural county striving to attract investment, tourism, young families, and retirees, Stokes County will need to continue creating safe and accessible trails and greenways, inviting parks and open spaces, and connectivity to its public lands and rivers. Recreation is not merely a “want,” but a critical component of Stokes County’s economic development strategy.



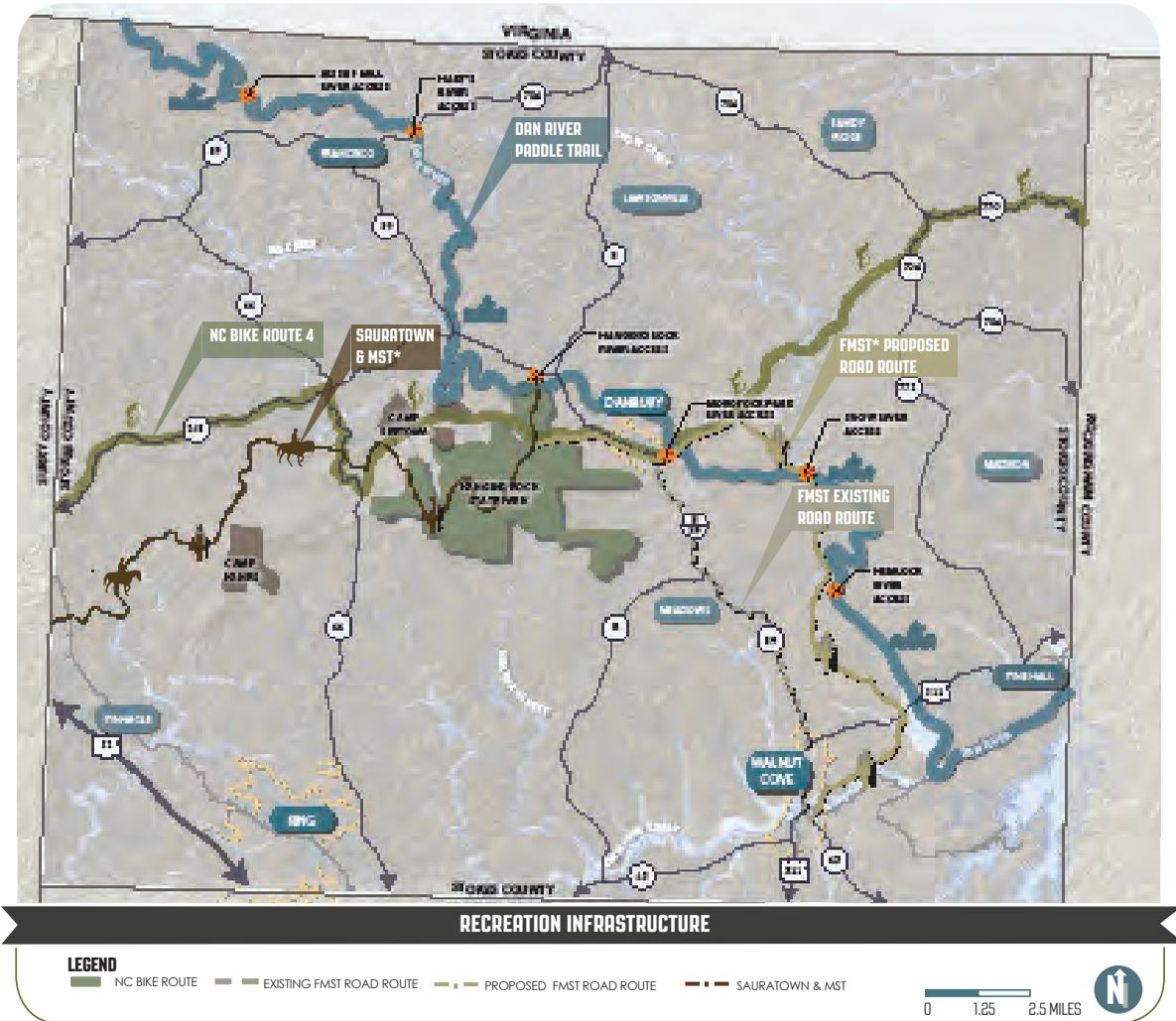
As a rural county striving to attract investment, tourism, young families, and retirees, Stokes County will need to continue creating safe and accessible trails and greenways, inviting parks and open spaces, and connectivity to its public lands and rivers.



## RECREATION GOALS

### THE BIG THREE

- 1 Encourage the development of trails and other recreation amenities that are part of larger regional and statewide efforts.
- 2 Focus on the creation of new linear parks, trails, and greenways, and improving (rather than creating new) existing park facilities.
- 3 Strengthen relationships and support civic organizations that maintain park facilities and manage programming efforts throughout the county and municipal areas.



\*FMST - Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail  
 \*MST - Mountains-to-Sea Trail

*A major recommendation of this plan is to support the development of the Mountains-to-Sea trail (MST) through Stokes County.*



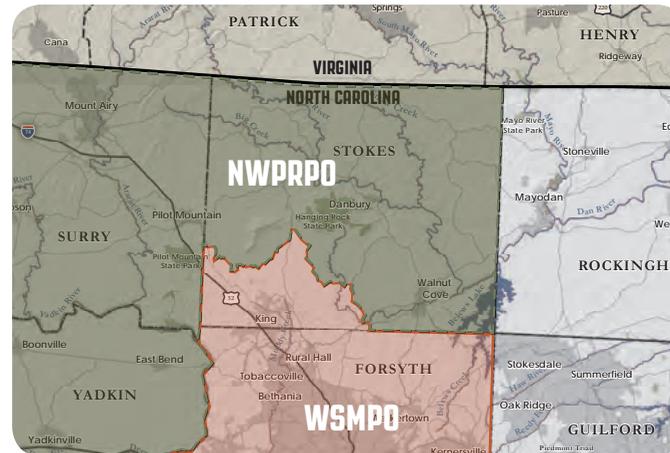
Stokes County leaders continue to work with NCDOT to improve the state's road system throughout the County. King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury also maintain a network of municipal roads. This plan includes an overview of existing transportation infrastructure, previous plans and transportation policies.

## EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Stokes County's transportation system is comprised of its roads, rail, bike, pedestrian, and transit networks. While Stokes County relies on its road network for the majority of its transportation needs, it is also important to consider how other modes contribute to the overall transportation system.

## PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) works with two regional organizations to identify, coordinate, and prioritize transportation infrastructure improvements in Stokes County: the Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (RPO). Both organizations are heavily involved in transportation planning in Stokes, but each is responsible for different geographic areas of the County.



*The Winston-Salem Metropolitan Planning Organization (shown in orange above) and the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (shown in green above) work with the NCDOT on regional transportation planning efforts.*

A main issue identified with Stokes County's transportation network can be attributed to its physiographic conditions: the Sauratown Mountains, running generally east-west through the center of the county, limit the connectivity between the northern and southern portions of the county.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Given the existing transportation network in Stokes County and the groundwork laid by previous planning efforts, the following recommendations are provided for the improvement of Stokes County's transportation network:

- 1.0 Improve transportation infrastructure to support the creation of targeted industrial growth areas.**
- 2.0 Increase the safety and functionality of major arteries without adding additional lanes.**
- 3.0 Work with NCDOT & establish community-based organizations that can create pedestrian-oriented transportation and streetscape improvements at targeted downtown areas and small business growth nodes.**



The availability of water and sewer is a major determinant of where growth can occur. This is especially true in Stokes County where soils in many locations have characteristics that preclude individual septic systems. This weakness (poor soils) provides an opportunity for Stokes County to target infrastructure development in accordance with this plan.

## WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

With the Dan River and its tributaries, the nearby Yadkin River, and the groundwater supply, Stokes County has an adequate water supply to meet its needs into the future.



*The Dan River serves as a major source for public water in Stokes County.*

## MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

The existing municipal wastewater infrastructure in Stokes County also has the capacity to meet the county's needs for the foreseeable future.

There are currently three municipal wastewater operations in Stokes County, located in King, Danbury, and Walnut Cove.

## INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

Due to the continual increase of sewer rates by the City of Winston Salem, the City of King must consider the development of its own wastewater treatment facility.

### INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS: THE BIG THREE

- 1 Create a new city-owned wastewater treatment facility for the City of King (Explore a wetland treatment facility similar to the Walnut Cove system).**
- 2 Strategically extend King's water system to "fill in" areas between existing water lines, create loops whenever practical to increase the circulation of the system.**
- 3 Capitalize on the newly expanded sewer infrastructure in the Meadow's community.**

# 8 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX



Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>LAND-USE</b>					
1.0 Update existing Land-Use Ordinances/UDO to support adopted policies within Stokes 2035 Vision Plan				N	
2.0 Develop a small-area plan and an associated zoning overlay district for Meadows				N	Meadows
3.0 Develop a detailed corridor plan and an associated overlay district along the southern gateway toward Downtown King				N	City of King
4.0 Develop a detailed streetscape and traffic-calming plan, in coordination with NCDOT, along Hwy 8/89 in downtown Danbury				N	NCDOT
5.0 Develop a corridor plan along Highway 66 North of the City fo King				N	NCDOT, City of King
6.0 Create architectural and site design guidelines that support adopted policies within the					



Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>					
1.0 Create a public-private, nonprofit corporation structure			N	N	Area landowners, developers, local non-profits,
1.1 Develop an MOU that outlines the activities of the non-profit, how it will support Stokes County, and how it will interact with ally agencies			N	N	Local non-profits,
2.1 Identify and promote an inventory of existing structures				N	Developers,
2.2 Identify and promote an inventory of locations for potential development				N	Developers,
3.0 invest in effective branding and marketing through print and web			Y	N	Designers,
3.1 Create partnerships with adjacent counties to reach a larger audience and leverage marketing dollars			N	N	Forsyth County,
3.2 Create a marketing plan that pursues target audiences				N	Designers,
4.0 Enhance the physical environment within downtown areas				Y	Town of Walnut Cove, Town Danbury, City of King
4.1 Work with NCDOT to secure improvements to public space and downtown streetscapes			Y	Y	NCDOT
4.3 Create Walnut Cove Redevelopment District that allows city to acquire and redevelop blighted structures in the downtown area			Y	Y	Town of Walnut Cove
4.4 Create Walnut Cove Municipal Services Designation to help finance downtown improvements			Y	N	Town of Walnut Cove
4.5 Organize and provide additional public parking in downtown areas			Y	Y	Local businesses,
4.6 Develop voluntary Façade Improvement Programs			N	N	Local businesses,
4.7 Redevelop and improve existing downtown parks			Y	Y	Town of Danbury, Town of Walnut Cove, City of King
4.8 Create functional and aesthetic improvements for commercial hubs and corridors			Y	Y	NCDOT,
4.9 Develop a new King Town Hall and new civic block			Y	Y	City of King
5.1 Establish a "business development center" or "business incubator"					Stokes County EDC
5.2 Partner with colleges and universities to prepare students for future careers in target industries			N	N	Forsyth Tech,
5.3 Strengthen agricultural education programs by expanding programs such as GAP throughout the county.				Y	Ag. Extension, Local high schools,
5.4 Encourage and support efforts to improve broadband internet access for Stokes County residents			N	N	Local telecom industry,
6.0 Invest in outdoor recreation infrastructure			Y	Y	Local conservancies,
6.1 Continue to develop the NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail in Stokes County			Y	Y	Environmental organizations, NC State Parks,
6.2 Foster eco-tourism on the Dan River				Y	Environmental Organizations. Local conservancies,
7.0 Establish and enhance cultural and agricultural heritage activities				Y	Ag. Extension
7.1 Finalize the Danbury Art Market to showcase the visual arts and attract visitors					



Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>					
7.2 Develop "pick-your-own produce" farms and other opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Stokes County's agricultural heritage					Local farmers, Ag. Extension,
7.3 Develop Agri-tourism in the county				Y	Ag. Extension,
7.4 Finalize Danbury Art Market to showcase the visual arts and attract visitors				Y	Dabury Art Market
8.0 Capitalize on Scenic Byways on Highways 89,66, and 8				Y	NCDOT
8.1 Improve scenic byway signage				Y	NCDOT
8.2 Work with NCDOT to designate cycling lanes				Y	NCDOT, Cycling orgs,
8.3 Pursue federal scenic byway grant funding to enhance tourism infrastructure		Y		Y	NCDOT, USDOT
8.4 Develop "strap-lines" that use a single phrase to connect a variety of tourism					
8.5 Develop an extensive wayfinding signage plan throughout Stokes County					Town of Danbury, Town of Walnut Cove, City of King

Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>RECREATION</b>					
1.0 Support the development of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) through Stokes County				Y	Environmental organizations, NC State Parks,
1.1 Work with HRSP to establish additional river access and overnight camping facilities between the intersection of Highways 268 and 89 and Moratock Park.				Y	Environmental organizations,
1.2 Formalize and improve public river access at 7-island				Y	Environmental organizations,
1.3 Re-establish a public river entry point at Whit's Access.				Y	Environmental organizations,
2.0 Conduct a trail master plan for the Dan River corridor with the goal of creating a certified section of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The planning process should include a major landowner outreach effort and recommendations for improving river access.				Y	Environmental organizations, local landowners, NC State Parks,
3.0 Create linear parks, trails, and greenways to connect commercial areas, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and other community assets.			Y	Y	Local landowners,
3.1 Conduct a targeted greenway feasibility analysis for the Town of Danbury				Y	NC State Parks, Town of Danbury
3.2 Conduct a town-wide greenway master plan for Walnut Cove that includes a landowner outreach effort. The plan should capitalize on the Town's network of floodplain areas.				Y	Town of Walnut Cove, Area landowners
3.3 Conduct a targeted greenway feasibility analysis for the City of King that includes a landowner outreach effort.				Y	Stokes Family YMCA, City of King, Local landowners,
3.4 Provide support to community organizations with an interest in developing local trail systems.				Y	Environmental organizations, local
4.0 Provide a network of well-maintained parks throughout Stokes County and its municipal areas.			Y	Y	Area landowners,
4.1 Implement the Moratock Park Master Plan completed in 2009. The County should explore a relationship with the Town of Danbury regarding the maintenance and improvement of Moratock Park.				Y	Town of Danbury, NC State Parks,
4.2 Enhance parks and public spaces located in downtown to encourage visitation and activity near commerce areas.			Y	Y	Town of Walnut Cove, Town of Danbury
5.0 Work with Duke Energy officials to develop a recreation master plan for their Belews Lake property.				N	Duke Energy
6.0 Continue and expand unique programs that use recreation facilities throughout Stokes County				N	Cycling orgs,



Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>					
1.0 Widen US 311 from a three-lane road to a four-lane road with a median, but not through downtown Walnut Cove			Y	Y	NCDOT, RPO
2.0 Widen US 52 from four to six-lanes and upgrade to interstate standards from Winston-Salem to the Surry County Line.			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO
3.0 Widen NC 65 from Winston-Salem to US 311			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO
4.0 Create a two lane minor thoroughfare with 12-foot lanes and paved shoulder starting at the US 311 and NC 89 Intersection and extending west 5.6 miles to connect with SR 1974(Mountain View Rd)			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO, RPO
5.0 Widen NC 772 from the existing 10-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes from NC 704 to SR1690			Y	Y	NCDOT, RPO
6.0 Widen NC 704 from the existing 10-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes from NC 8 to NC 770 and then from NC 772 to the Rockingham County Line			Y	Y	NCDOT, RPO
7.0 Widen NC 268 from two 9-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from the Surry County Line to NC 66			Y	Y	NCDOT, RPO
8.0 Widen NC 66 from two 9-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from NC 89 to the Winston-Salem UAB			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO, RPO
9.0 Widen NC 8 from two 10 or 11-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from the Virginia State Line to the Winston-Salem UAB.			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO, RPO
10.0 Improve transportation infrastructure to support the creation of targeted industrial growth areas.			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO, City of King, Stokes County
10.1 Advocate for an interchange at the intersection of Trinity Church Road and U.S. Highway 52 (I-74) to enhance access to potential development areas currently served by water.			Y	Y	NCDOT, MPO



Project/Task	Policy Reference #	Page #	Public Funding	Capital Expenditure (Y/N)	Partnering Agencies
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>					
1.0 Prioritize infrastructure investments that maximize and improve existing infrastructure, targeting planned growth areas.			N		
1.1 Continue necessary water and sewer infrastructure updates with the redevelopment of the downtown main street			Y	Y	Town of Walnut Cove
1.2 Conduct an engineering study to determine the feasibility of providing a county waste water treatment facility located on Little Yadkin River, south of 1-73 to serve areas from Pinnacle to Trinity Church Road			Y	N	NCDOT,
1.3 Strategically extend King's water system to "fill in" areas between existing water lines, create loops whenever practical to increase the circulation of the system.			Y	Y	City of King
1.4 Extend water along Volunteer Road and Chestnut Grove Road to complete a "loop" to the Pinnacle community.			Y	Y	
1.5 Concentrate future extension of residential services to a projected growth area west of Mountain View Road, west of NC66, and north of Old U.S. Highway 52 to encourage residential development with access to U.S. Highway 52/I-73 from South Main Street and Mountain View Road			Y	Y	
2.0 Create an independent wastewater treatment facility to serve the City of King			Y	Y	City of King
3.0 Conduct an engineering report and cost-benefit analysis to effectively plan for a City-owned sewer treatment plan.			Y	Y	





# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

### A. Project Background

### B. Planning Goals

### C. Planning Process

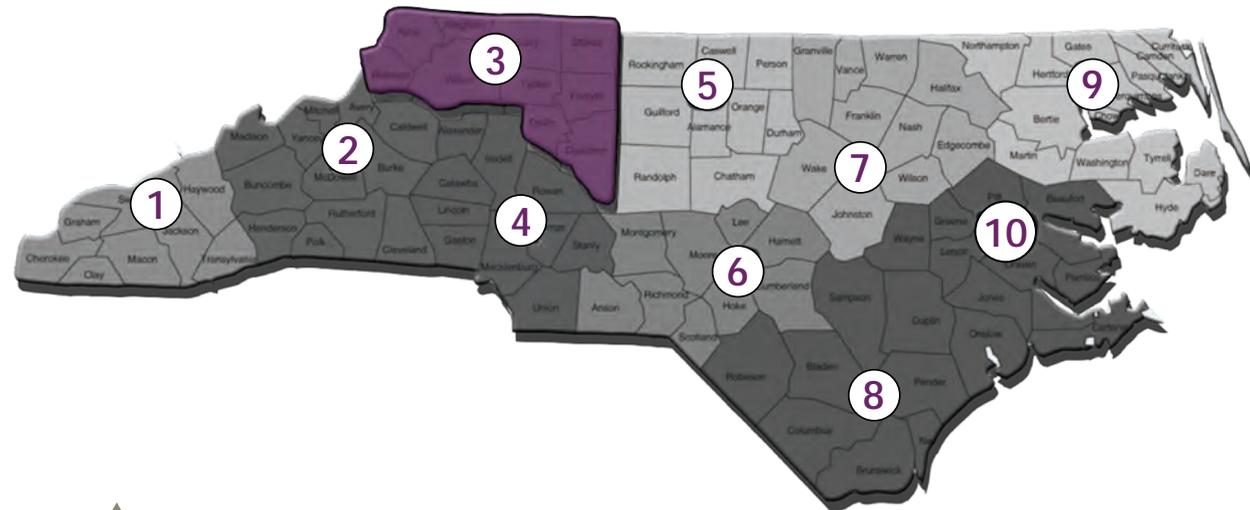


## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Stokes Vision 2035 Plan is the first plan of its kind for Stokes County. This comprehensive plan provides a unified strategic direction for not only the County, but also its three municipal areas of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. This planning effort was funded with assistance from the Northwest Partnership for Public Health through the Community Transformation Grant Project.

In 2013 the Northwest Partnership for Public Health,

which includes health directors from across the 10-county region of northwest North Carolina, created a regional plan for establishing new active living opportunities throughout their jurisdictions. The plan – Health by Design – was funded by the US Center of Disease Control’s Community Transformation Grant (CTG) and identified forty (40) projects focusing on policy development that would promote active living and public health. Of these projects, eight “Category 1” projects, including the Stokes County Comprehensive Plan, were selected for additional funding for plan development.



▲ The Health by Design plan study area includes North Carolina’s 10 northwestern counties, referred to as Region 3 by the NC Association of Local Health Directors

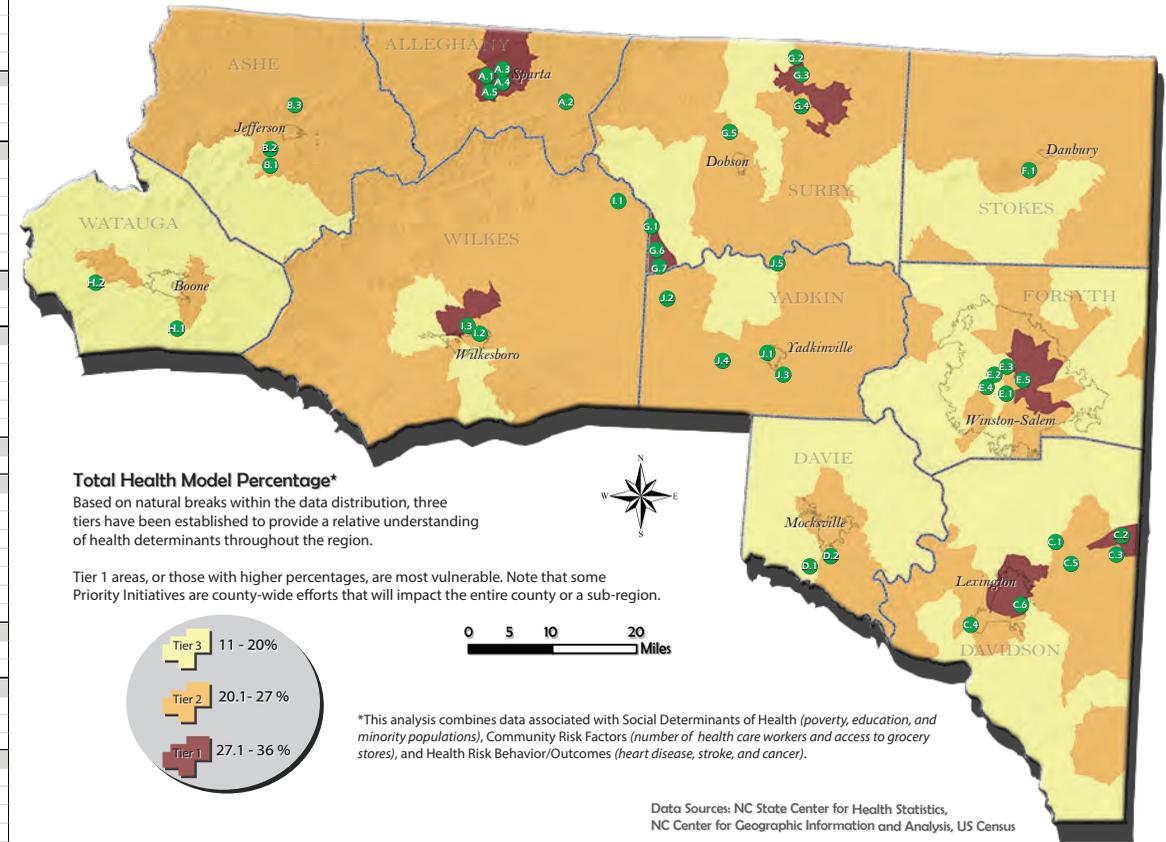


▲  
*The Stokes County 2035 Vision Plan was identified as a major priority within the regional Health by Design plan.*

This planning effort ranked particularly well among regional public health leadership within the Health by Design plan since a unified comprehensive plan had never been developed for the whole of Stokes County. Local government leaders expressed the need and support for the Stokes 2035 initiative, and each jurisdiction provided the matching funds required to receive Community Transformation Grant funding.

Project #	County/ Project
<b>Alleghany</b>	
A.1	Alleghany Wellness Center Design
A.2	Alleghany Co. Recreation Master Plan
A.3	Crouse Park Site Master Plan
A.4	Sparta Greenway Phase I Engineering
A.5	Downtown Sparta Streetscape Phase II Engineering and Design
<b>Ashe</b>	
B.1	Beaver Creek Wellness
B.2	West Jefferson Trail Implementation
B.3	Ashe County Outdoor Recreation Plan
<b>Davidson</b>	
C.1	Lake Thom-A-Lex Environmental Education Trail Construction Documents
C.2	Thomasville Parks and Recreation Master Plan
C.3	Thomasville Bike Plan Implementation
C.4	Wilcox Bridge Plan
C.5	Hughes Park Planning
C.6	Abbotts Creek Greenway Phase II
<b>Davie</b>	
D.1	Davie Co. Greenway Master Plan
D.2	Old High School Re-Purposing Engineering and Design
<b>Forsyth</b>	
E.1	Stratford Road Rail-Trail Feasibility
E.2	Winston-Salem Downtown Pedestrian Environment Study
E.3	Winston-Salem Sidewalk Missing Link Study
E.4	Winston-Salem Development Ordinance Review and Overhaul
E.5	Wake Forest Innovation Quarter Trail North Planning
<b>Stokes</b>	
F.1	Sokes Co. Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan
<b>Surry</b>	
G.1	Stone Mtn. State Park to Pilot Mtn. State Park Trail Master Plan
G.2	Mount Airy Wayfinding Signage Plan
G.3	Mount Airy Greenway Feasibility Analysis
G.4	Mount Airy Pedestrian Plan Implementation
G.5	Surry County Regional Recreation Master Plan
G.6	Mountains-to-Sea Trail Foot Bridge Design
G.7	Trail Master Plan: Elkin Municipal Park to Grater Park to Chatham Park
<b>Watauga</b>	
H.1	New River Headwaters Trail - Middle Fork Greenway Phase II Design
H.2	Historic Valle Crucis Village Trail Engineering
<b>Wilkes</b>	
I.1	Stone Mtn. State Park to Pilot Mtn. State Park Trail Master Plan
I.2	North Wilkesboro Parks and Recreation Master Plan
I.3	North Wilkesboro Downtown Engineering
<b>Yadkin</b>	
J.1	Yadkinville Community Park Phase II Engineering and Design
J.2	Jonesville Greenway Extension
J.3	Yadkin County Park Design and Engineering
J.4	5-D Engineering
J.5	Rockford River Access

## Total Health Model and Priority Initiatives



▲  
*The Stokes County 2035 Vision Plan was chosen out of forty (40) identified projects for additional funding for plan development.*

# B

## PLANNING GOALS

### PUBLIC HEALTH'S LEADING ROLE

This comprehensive plan is unique in that public health considerations serve as a cornerstone for each policy and initiative. Along with public health, this plan targets efforts that mutually benefit economic development, the natural environment, and equity.



### INITIAL PLANNING GOALS

A detailed vision for Stokes County is outlined at the end of the Public Engagement and Vision chapter on page XX. However, from the onset of the planning process, the planning team established six (6) initial goals for the planning process and final plan:

- 1.0** Engage citizens through a participatory planning process to establish a 20-year vision for Stokes County;
- 2.0** Create a “design-focused” plan that uses design schematics and visual renderings that illustrate how future growth and development can occur provided the plan’s policies are adopted;
- 3.0** Establish realistic priorities for how to allocate resources and capital improvements;
- 4.0** Identify areas appropriate for growth, varying densities, and preservation;
- 5.0** Encourage community empowerment & citizen action; and

- 6.0** Capture the planning process and outcomes within a professional document to be shared with grant funding agencies that can assist with implementation.

# C PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process involved five (5) phases: direction setting, focus groups and research, public engagement, plan development, and plan adoption.

## OCT. '13

### DIRECTION SETTING

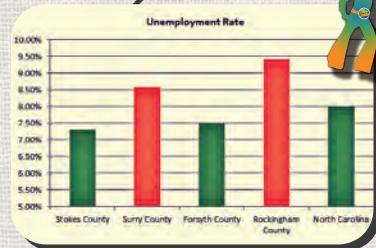
- Establish Technical Advising Committee (County & Municipal Staff)
- Project Branding
- Develop Project Website for Community Outreach



## NOV. '13- JAN. '14

### FOCUS GROUPS & RESEARCH

- Field Visits
- Identify Probable Development Areas
- Conduct Demographic Analysis
- Develop Framework Plans: Walnut Cove, King, Danbury, Overall County
- Present Research Phase to Oversight Committee (POC)
- Public Kick-Off Meeting at Economic Development Committee's Business Extravaganza



## FEB. '14- JUNE '14

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct Public Workshops
- Present Community Outreach Results to Elected Officials



## JULY '14 - JAN. '15

### PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Finalize Probable Development Area Concept Designs
- Write Plan Policies
- Policy Review with Planning Oversight Committee



## FEB. - MAY. '15

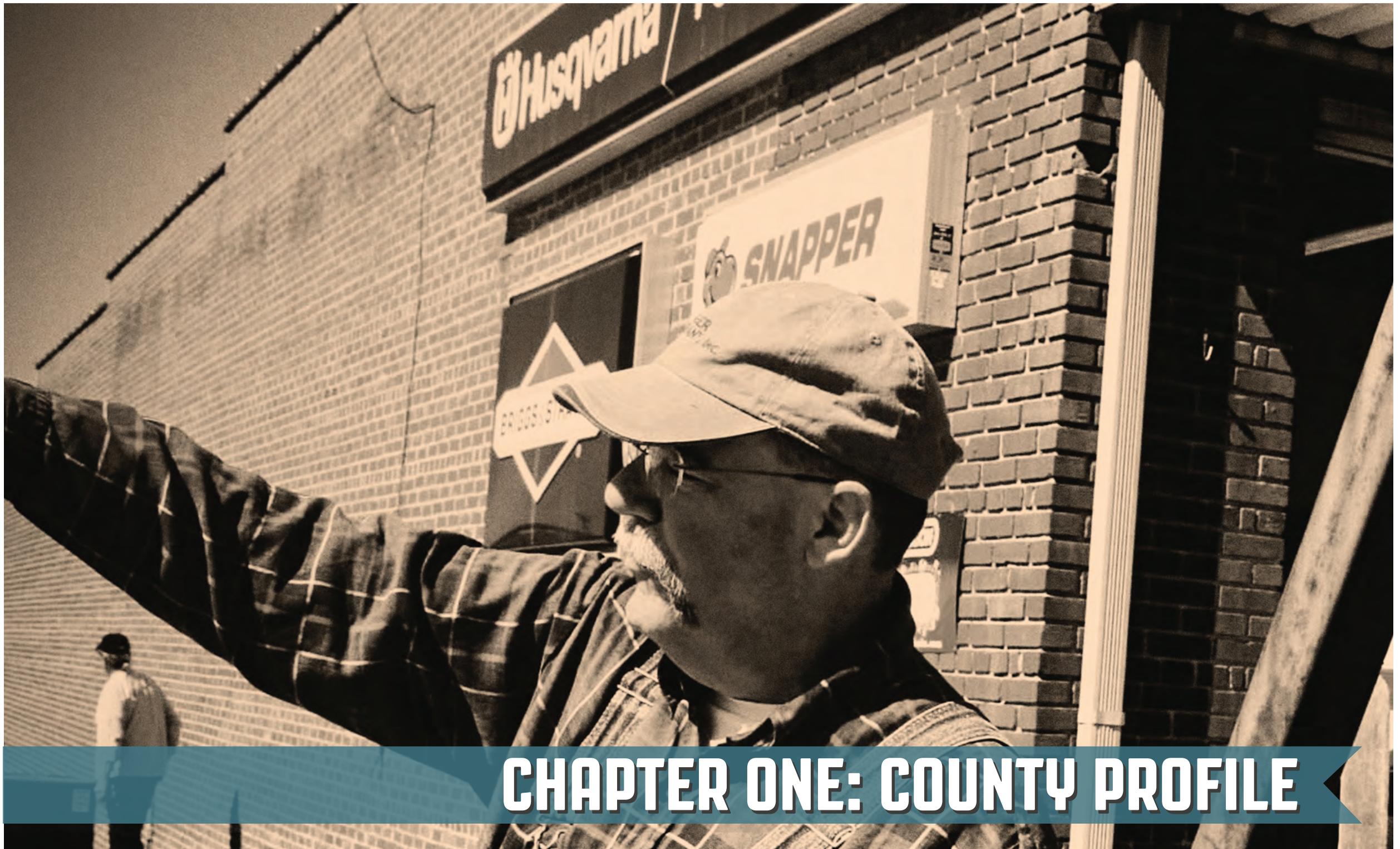
### PLAN ADOPTION

- Plan Review with Staff
- Present to Elected Officials
- 45-Day Public Comment Period
- Plan Adoption



## PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE





# CHAPTER ONE: COUNTY PROFILE

# CHAPTER 1: COUNTY PROFILE

## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

### A. Demographics

### B. Physical Environment

### C. Previous Plans and Reports

### D. Framework Maps

This chapter provides a comprehensive profile of Stokes County.

The chapter begins by examining the County’s demographics, including its current and projected population growth, age distribution, poverty rate, education attainment, etc. This demographic profile begins to unveil some of County’s greatest challenges for future growth.

Next, provided is an overview of the County’s physical environment. It’s topography, natural resources, soils, etc. have a significant bearing on how and where preservation and future growth should occur.

The County and its municipal areas have been part of a variety of previous planning efforts. The topics of these plans range from local food to transportation to economic development. These previous efforts provide a foundation for the Stokes 2035 Vision Plan.

This chapter ends will a series of maps that geographically highlight the many assets and resources found throughout the County and each municipal jurisdiction. These assets provide a framework for establishing new initiatives and sound land development policies.

## A DEMOGRAPHICS

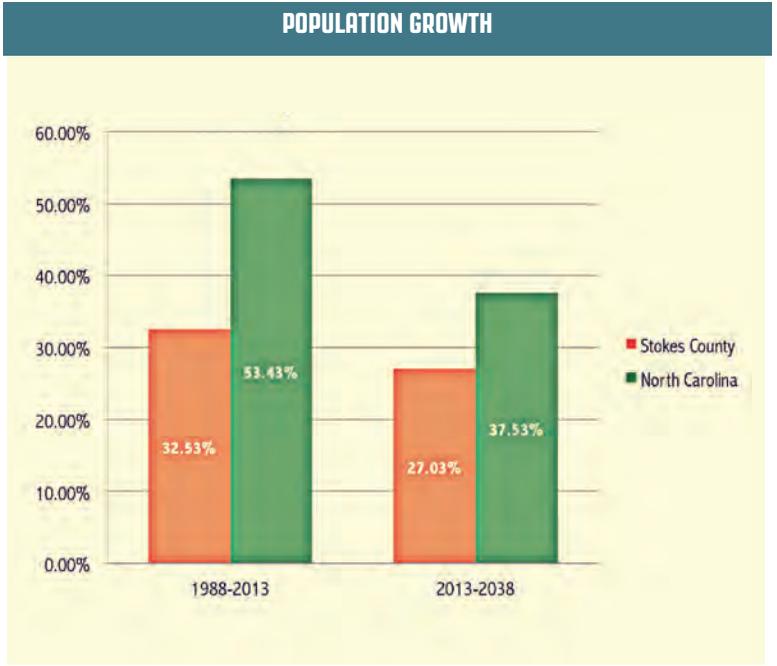
### Population and Population Projections

*Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc*

The County’s population in 2013 was 46,588. Stokes County’s population grew by 6.42% between 2010 and 2013 with the addition of 2,908 new residents. In the case of King and

Danbury, municipal population growth has been moderate, with King experiencing a 23.8 percent growth rate since 2000, and Danbury 27.7 percent. However, Walnut Cove’s population declined by 3.4 percent over the same period.

Like many rural North Carolina counties, population growth in Stokes is projected to lag the state’s overall growth; Stokes County’s population is projected to grow by 27.03 percent between 2013 and 2038, while the state’s population growth is projected to increase by 37.5 percent during the same period. Regionally, Winston Salem is not projected to experience significantly more growth (33 percent) than the County; the Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point MSA is projected to experience less growth (21.9 percent) than Stokes County.



## Age Distribution

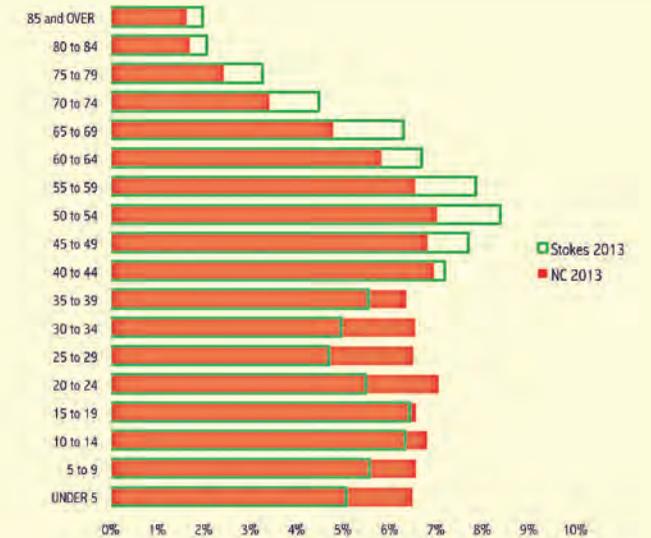
Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Stokes is an aging county. In 2013, more than 41% of the population was over 50 years old, and the largest age group was 45-60 year olds - nearly a quarter of Stokes County's population. The retiring Baby Boomer generation will further continue this aging trend. The largest rate of growth over the next 30 years is expected to be in the age group 65 and older; by 2040 Stokes will see a 101% increase in this category. According to 2040 projections, more than 28 percent of Stokes County's population will be 65 and older, compared to only 19% of North Carolina residents. The number of elderly Stokes residents will increase more rapidly than either the number of children or working-age adults (working-age defined as 18-64 years old).

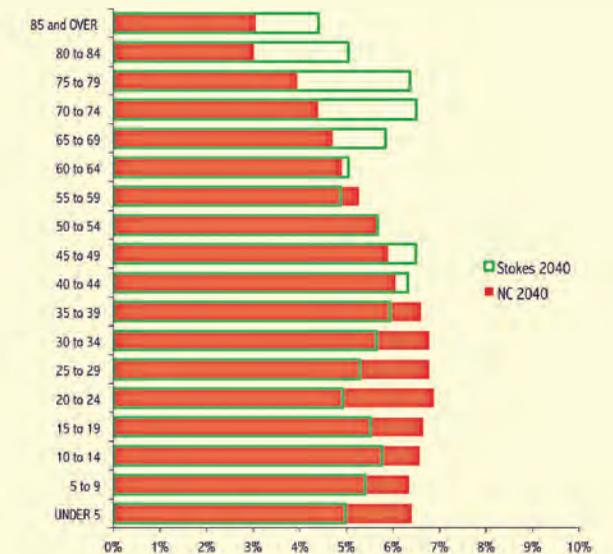
Stokes is an aging county. According to 2040 projections, more than 28 percent of Stokes County's population will be 65 and older...

The projected increase in the percentage of older adults living in Stokes County indicates a clear need to plan for supportive community design, affordable and accessible housing, and to provide access to needed services.

Stokes County Age Distribution 2013



Stokes County Age Distribution 2040



## Households

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Changes to the percent of family households and single-person households in Stokes reflect those experienced at the state level. In 2000 the percentages of family households and single-person households in the County were 74 percent and 26 percent; for the state those percentages were 69 percent and 31 percent. By 2010 the percentages stood at 70/30 in the County and 67/33 in North Carolina.

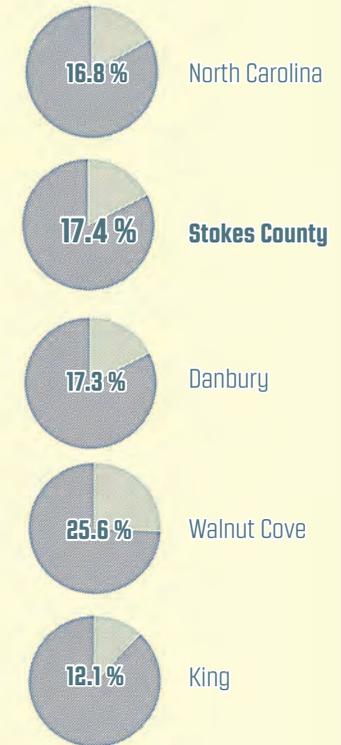
## Poverty

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Poverty rates in Stokes County are generally higher than the rest of the state. The percentage of County population below the poverty line was 17.4 percent (2008-12); for children under age 5 the percentage was 25.5 percent (lower than the state's child poverty rate of 28 percent). North Carolina's poverty rate was 16.8 percent. The percent of County population over age 65 living below the poverty line was 13.8 percent, notably higher than the statewide rate of 10.2 percent.

Walnut Cove had the highest poverty rate: 25.6 percent. At 100 percent, Danbury had the highest child poverty rate, while for those aged 65 and over, Walnut Cove had the highest poverty rate: nearly 40 percent. King poverty rate was 12.1 percent; for those aged 65 and higher the poverty rate was 15.9 percent.

### Stokes County Poverty



## Cost of Living

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

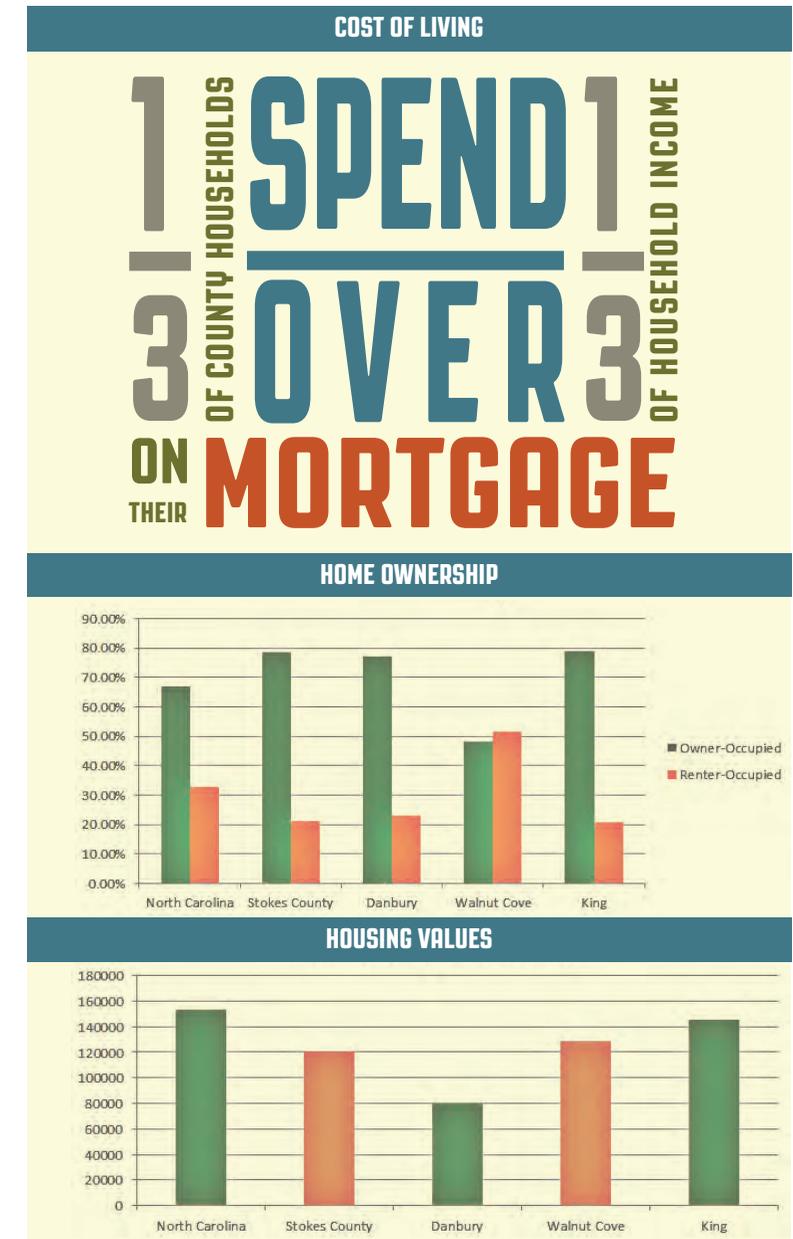
Generally, no more than 30 percent of household income should be used for housing costs. However, nearly 33 percent of County households with a mortgage spent 30 percent or more of their household income on mortgage costs. A significant percentage of Stokes County workers (36 percent) are employed in very low income positions, providing less available disposable income.

## Housing and Home Ownership

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

In 2013 the number of housing units in the County declined by one (1) percent to 21,674. Approximately 11% of the County's housing units are unoccupied. Housing stock in the County is relatively old: 70 percent of the County's housing stock was built between 1960 and 1999; 11 percent of the County's housing stock was built between 2000 and 2009. Less than 1 percent of the County's housing stock was built from 2010 to 2012.

69 percent of occupied housing units in the County consist of one-unit, detached structures. 26 percent of occupied homes are classified as mobile homes or other types. Multi-family housing (apartments) comprise only 5 percent of County housing units. Stokes County's home ownership rate (79%) is higher than North Carolina's home ownership rate (67%).



## Racial/Ethnic Composition

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

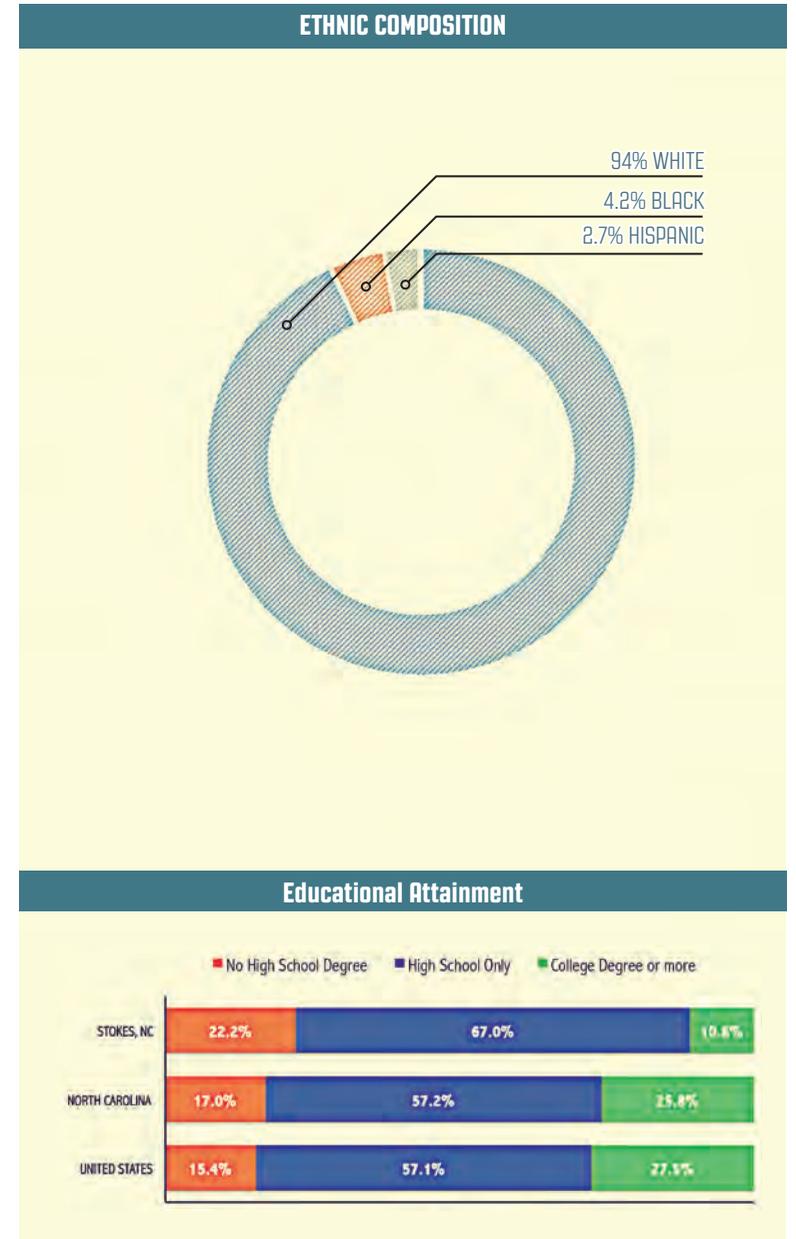
The population of Stokes County is ethnically less diverse than the State's. In 2010, 93 percent of the County's population was white, 4 percent was black, and almost 3 percent was Hispanic. North Carolina's 2010 white population comprised 69 percent of the total population, blacks comprised 22 percent, and Hispanics 8.4 percent.

By 2012, the white population in Stokes had increased to nearly 93.1 percent, the black population to 4.2 percent, and the Hispanic population remained flat at 2.7 percent. The significant increase in the state's Hispanic population has not occurred in Stokes County: the percentage of the County's Hispanic population in 2013 was 2.8 percent, less than a third of North Carolina's 2013 Hispanic population of 8.9 percent.

## Educational Attainment

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Nearly a quarter of the population in Stokes, age 25 years or older, lack a high school diploma, compared with 17 percent for North Carolina. The percentage of people who have obtained a high school diploma (with no additional education) was nearly 10 percentage points higher in Stokes than the rest of the state. Only 10.8% of Stokes County residents possess a college degree compared to 24.5% of the North Carolina population.



## Economy

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Stokes County's economic landscape is comprised almost exclusively of small business establishments: 97% of the County's business establishments have fewer than 50 employees. Of these small businesses, approximately 35% are in the Construction and Retail Trade sector. Notably, 34% of all businesses operating in the County are in the Construction and Retail Trade sector.

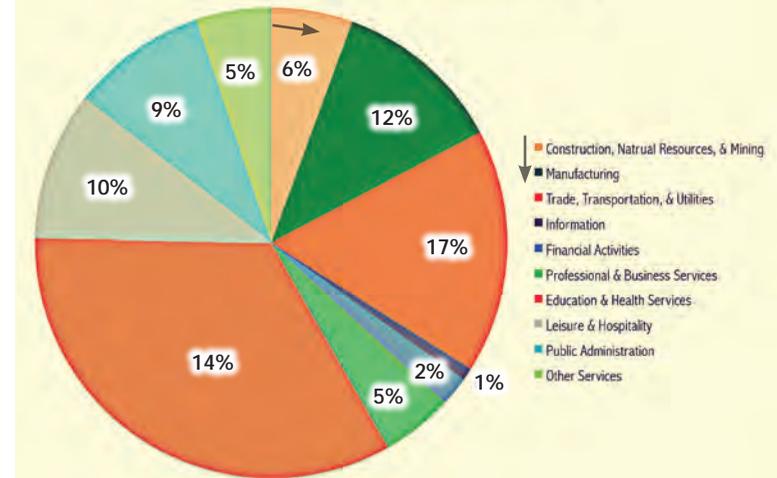
97% of the County's business establishments have fewer than 50 employees.

## Labor Force

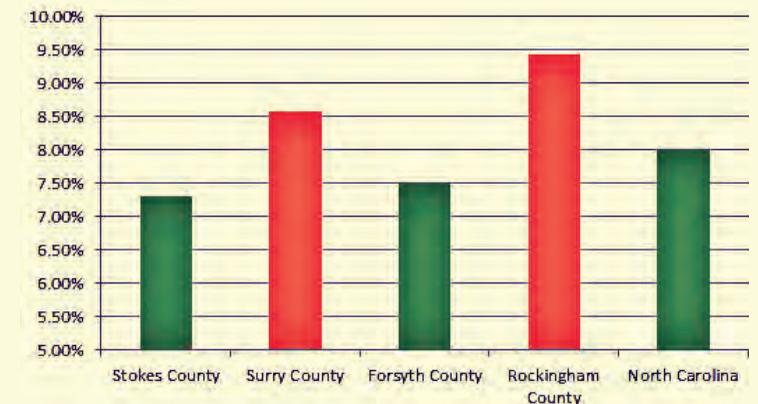
Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

The size of the County's labor force has remained relatively constant since 2000. In 2000 the labor force consisted of 23,922 persons, in 2010 the number increased to 24,590; by 2013 the County's labor force stood at 23,608. The recession of 2007 significantly impacted the County's unemployment rate: in 2000 the County's annual average unemployment rate was 3.5 percent, but by 2010 the rate increased to nearly 11 percent. The County's 2013 unemployment rate was 7.3 percent.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN STOKES COUNTY, 2013



UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



## Wages

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

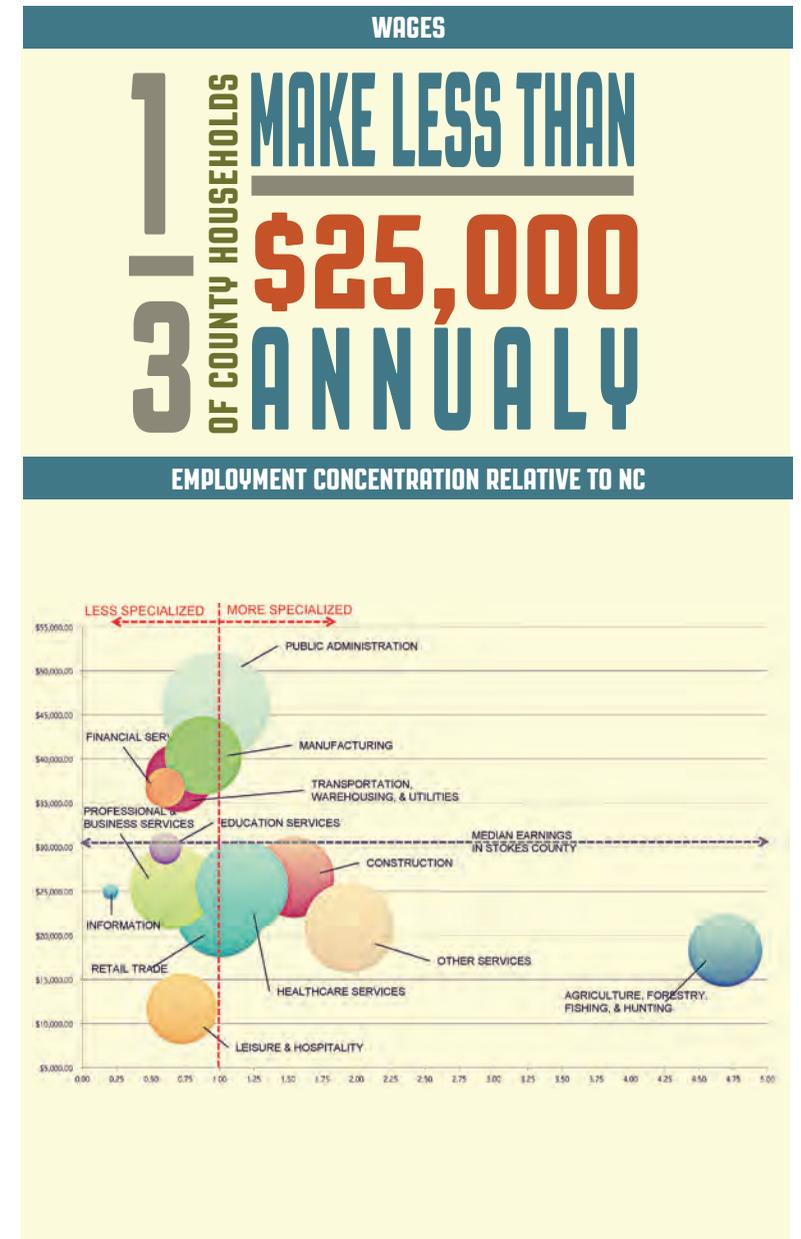
In 2000, Stokes County's median annual wage was \$22,860; the median hourly wage was \$10.99. The County's 2013 median annual wage was \$27,719; its median hourly wage was \$13.33. However, in 2014 nearly one third of the County's workforce was employed in Very Low Income occupations (those that pay less than \$25,000 annually). 90% of these Very Low Income occupations are in the County's largest employment sectors.

## Location Quotient

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

The location quotient measures the extent to which jobs are concentrated in a specific area (Stokes County) relative to the larger geographic region (North Carolina).

Compared to North Carolina as a whole, the County's concentration of employment in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting sectors is nearly 5 times higher. Stokes County is also more specialized in Health Care and Construction. However, the County does not capture its market share of higher wage jobs, such as those related to finance, manufacturing, and transportation.



## Employers

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

In 2013 the County's top five employers were Stokes County Board of Education, Wieland Copper, Stokes County, Pioneer Community Hospital, and the YMCA. As of 2013, the County's largest employment sectors consist of Service-Providing; Education and Health Services; Goods-Producing; Trade, Transportation and Utilities; and Leisure and Hospitality.

## Employment Sectors

Source: 2013, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc

Since the 2007 recession, average employment in the County's largest economic sectors have experienced significant losses, resulting in a fundamental restructuring of the County's economy. Between 2000 and 2013, employment in the Construction sector declined by nearly 60 percent; the Goods-Producing sector by 49 percent; Manufacturing by 44 percent. Conversely, the Professional and Business Services, Education and Health Services, and Leisure and Hospitality sectors all experienced increases during the period: 36 percent, 19 percent, and 13 percent, respectively. Growth in the Services sector (the County's largest employment sector), was 7.2 % during this time.

In 2012, the Winston-Salem Metropolitan Statistical Area (of which Stokes is a part) gained only 100 new jobs. The area lost 1,100 jobs in the Education and Health Services sector alone (most of these layoffs occurred at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center).

### TOP FIVE EMPLOYERS IN STOKES COUNTY

COMPANY	EMPLOYMENT
1. STOKES COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION	500-999
2. WIELAND COPPER PRODUCTS, LLC	250-499
3. COUNTY OF STOKES	250-499
4. PIONEER COMMUNITY HOSPITAL OF STOKES	100-249
5. YMCA OF NORTHWEST NORTH CAROLINA	100-249

### EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

BETWEEN 2000 AND 2013 STOKES COUNTY EMPLOYMENT HAS

**DECREASED**  
CONSTRUCTION 60%  
GOODS-PRODUCING 49%  
MANUFACTURING 44%

WHEREAS

PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS 36%  
EDUCATION AND HEALTH 19%  
LEISURE & HOSPITALITY 13%  
**INCREASED**

Stokes County is located in the northwest central portion (Piedmont) of the state, along the Virginia border and north of Forsyth County.

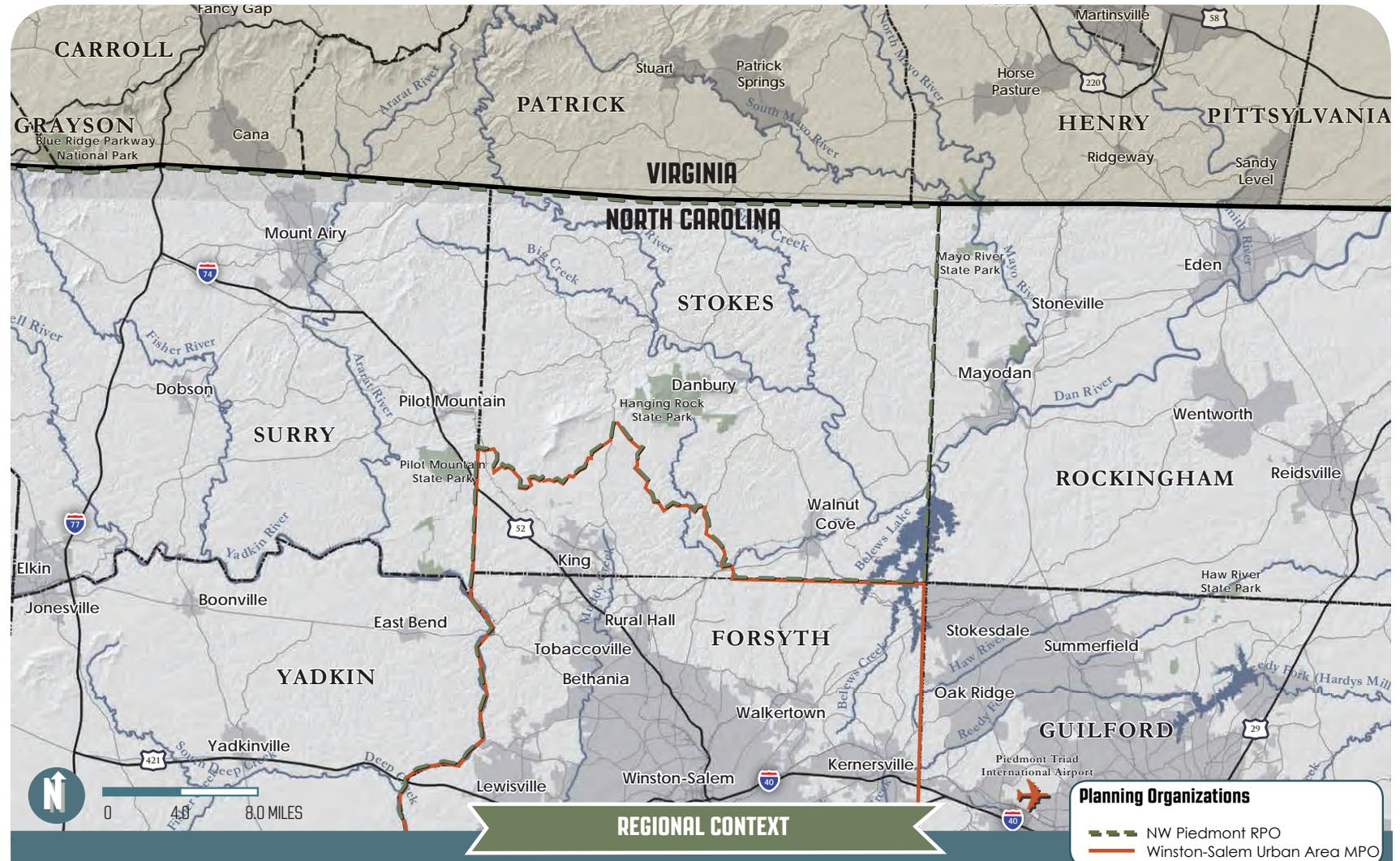
The County is divided by the Sauratown Mountains, which extend through the center of the County. The highest peaks range from 1,500 feet to 2,579 feet at Moore's Knob, the highest point of the Sauras. This range includes Hanging Rock State Park.

The southeastern corner of Stokes County is dominated by Belews Lake which occupies approximately four square miles of the County.

Stokes County is occupied by two drainage basins, the Yadkin - Pee Dee and the Roanoke drainage basins. Only a small portion of the County in the southwest flows toward the Yadkin (via the Little Yadkin River). The remainder of the County flows into the Roanoke River primarily through the Dan River.

Major transportation arteries in Stokes include US 52 in the southwest portion of the County, and US 311 in the southeast portion; these highways link the County to Forsyth County where a significant portion of the County's labor force commutes. Nearly 43 percent of commuters work in Forsyth County.

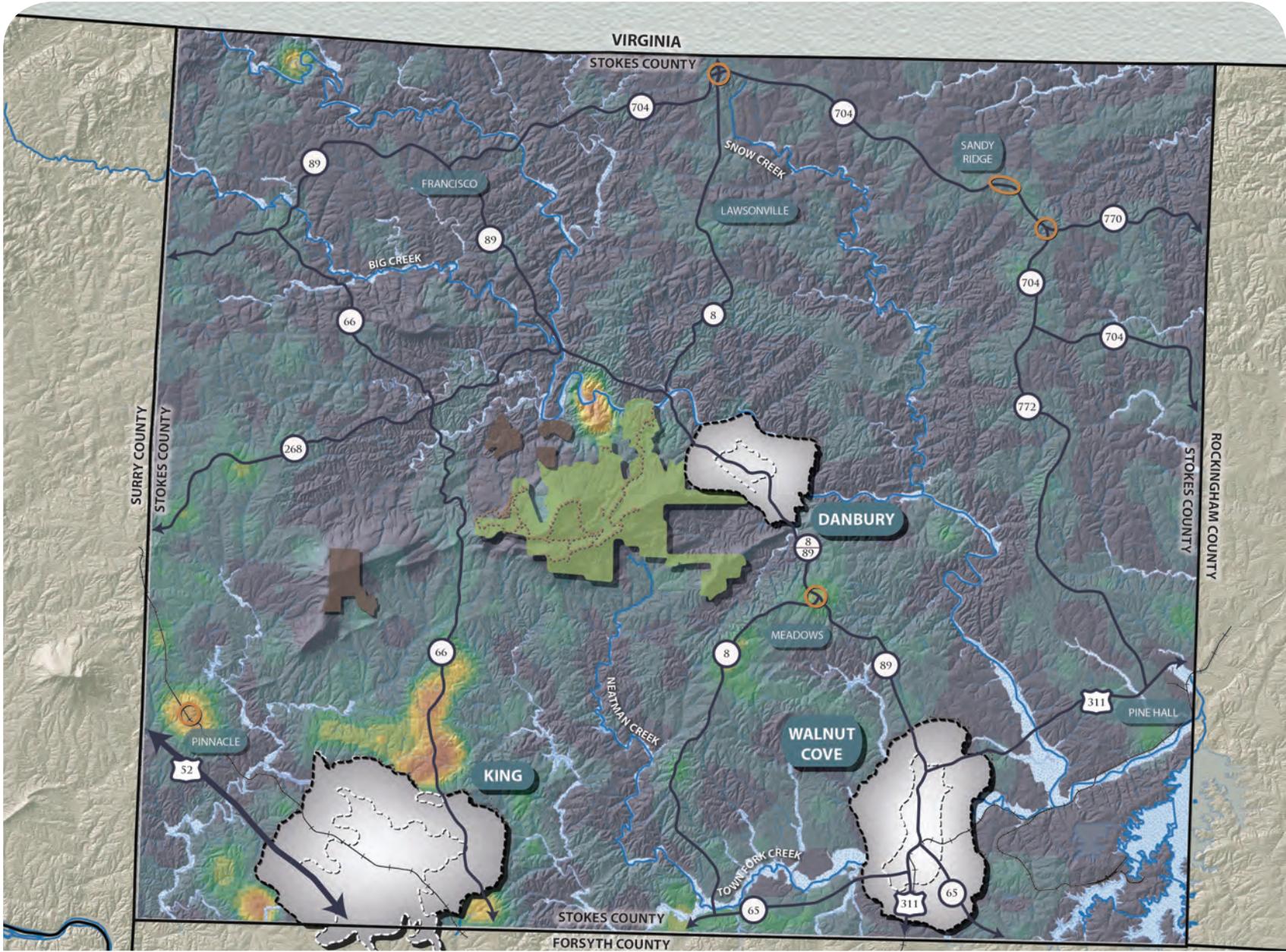
Commercial airline service is available at the Piedmont-Triad International Airport in Greensboro.



Portions of Stokes County are within the greater Winston Salem area, which serves as the region's economic hub and key employment center. The city's economic base has diversified over the last decade, adding jobs in the educational and healthcare sectors - due largely to the presence of Wake Forest University. Biotechnology research is an emerging sector in the city's econo-

my, and the city has long been recognized as a regional leader in cancer treatment and research. Given Winston-Salem's proximity to Stokes County, and in light of the County's workforce commuter patterns referenced earlier, the city's prosperity and growth are directly linked to past and future growth in Stokes County.

## Political Jurisdiction and Density



### LEGEND

- Sparse
- Less Sparse
- Dense
- Most Dense
- Hanging Rock State Park
- Private Camps and Lodges
- Urban Municipal Areas
- Commercial Nodes

0 1.25 2.5 MILES

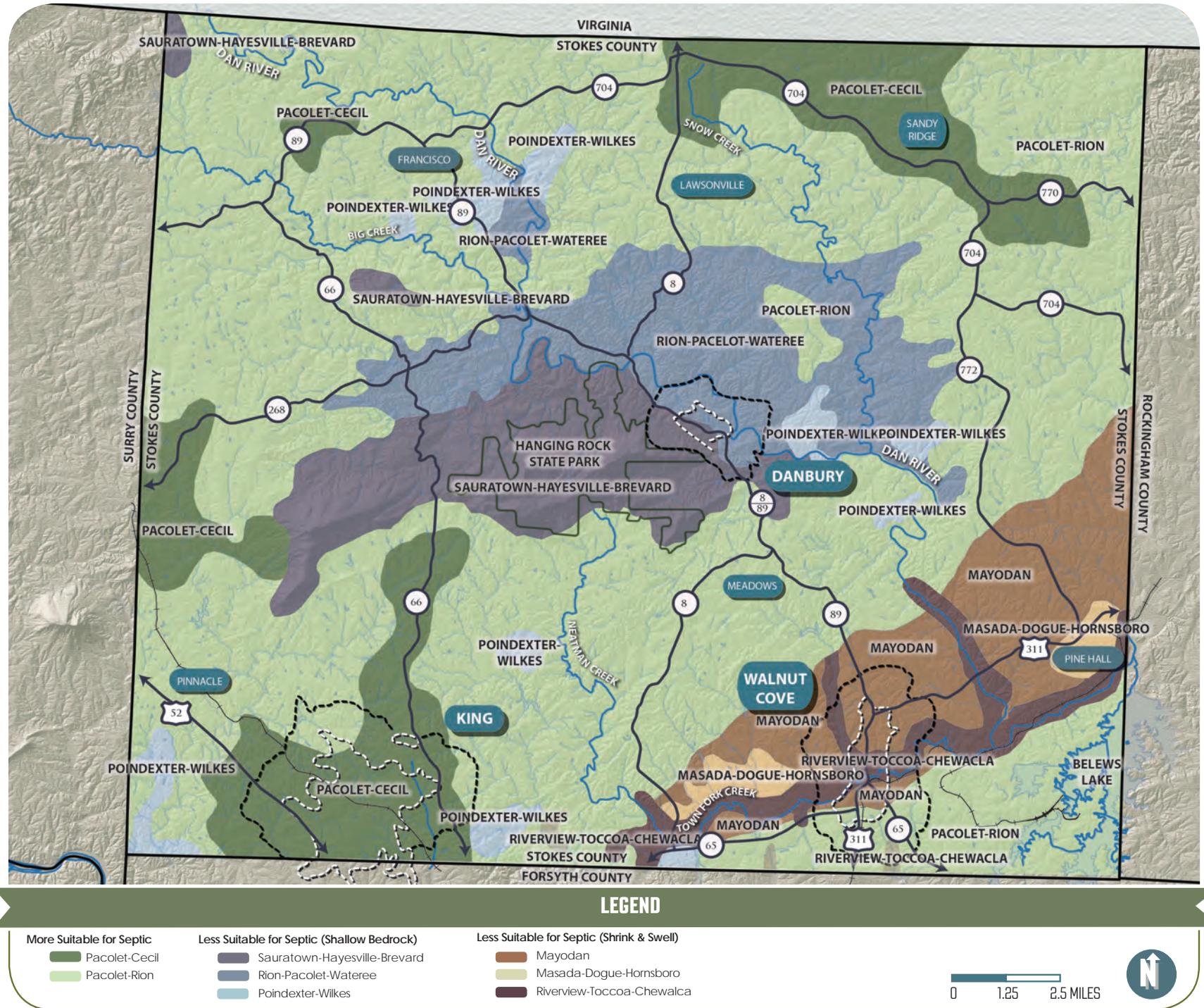


- Population is most concentrated within the County's three municipalities: Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. Danbury is located along NC Route 8 and NC Route 89 east of Hanging Rock State Park. Walnut Cove is located in the southeast section of the County and is accessed by NC Route 89 and US 311. King, the County's largest municipality, is located in the southwest portion of the County and is accessed via US 52 and NC 66.
- With the exception of a few areas immediately adjacent to the three municipalities, most of Stokes County is sparsely populated. Notable areas of density in the County include a section of NC Route 66 immediately north of King, and the Pinnacle area.

## Soil Quality

All forms of development, including residential and small commercial, have consistently struggled to meet soil evaluation tests for septic systems in rural areas where sewer infrastructure is unavailable. Using data from the North Carolina Center for Geographic Information, it is evident that key road corridors and other areas appropriate for development are restricted by poor soils. Even areas identified as “More Suitable” are known to have issues throughout the County.

The County’s poor soils direct growth and encourage density toward areas with existing infrastructure, which is appropriate and a major recommendation on this plan. However, businesses that serve local rural communities and tourists, such as B & B’s, event venues, and small commercial businesses, will continue to struggle to find suitable locations due to poor soil conditions.

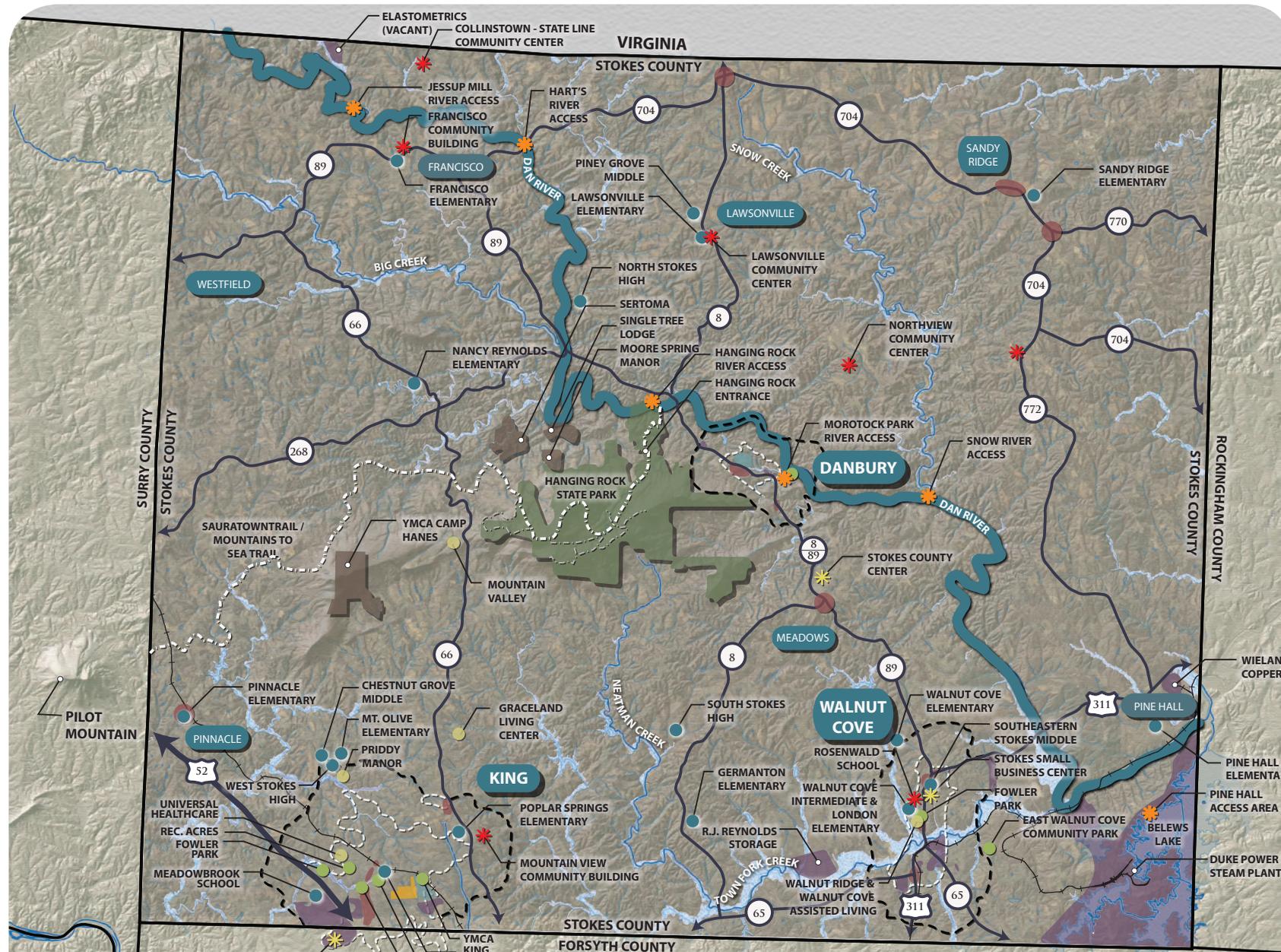


## Natural Resources and Assets

Stokes County benefits from a wide range of natural and cultural assets - the most notable of which are Hanging Rock State Park and the Dan River.

Centrally located and within driving distance of all three municipalities, Hanging Rock State Park reported 443,899 visitors in 2012. The park has approximately 22 miles of trails and is the County's primary destination for outdoor recreation activities and tourism. Given the park's central location and close proximity to the Dan River, opportunities exist to funnel visitors to and from the park via trails and river access points into other areas of the County.

The Dan River bisects the County, flowing from the northwest to the southeast for approximately 58 miles. The river offers a range of recreational options for residents and visitors, including canoeing, tubing, boating, fishing, and swimming. These activities are facilitated by the existence of the six river access sites identified on the asset map. The river offers a unique way to observe many of the County's natural assets, local landmarks, and other cultural resources.



### LEGEND

- |                        |                          |               |                   |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Commercial             | Mixed-Use                | Parks         | River/Lake Access |
| Industrial             | Hanging Rock State Park  | Senior Living | Forsyth Technical |
| Office / Institutional | Private Camps and Lodges | Schools       | Community Center  |

0 1.25 2.5 MILES



**Forsyth County's Community Food System: A Foundation to Grow (2013)**

The 2013 study “Forsyth County’s Community Food System: A Foundation to Grow”, examined the potential to develop Forsyth County’s local agricultural economy. Stokes County was included in the study. The study’s 15 key findings focused on the need to foster the growth of local food businesses and stimulate entrepreneurial development, improve coordination among stakeholders, develop processing and distribution facilities, and improve access to potential markets. The study can be used as a guide for similar evaluations of the local food economy in Stokes.

The 2013 Piedmont-Triad Sustainable Communities Planning Project was comprised of a series of workshops with the intention of determining the region’s strength and weaknesses (shown right).

Several sectors such as employment, housing, and transportation were evaluated. The survey revealed a concern on the effects of urban sprawl on the region’s rural character, the ability of the transportation system to meet future demands, and the negative impact of growth on the regions recreational assets and natural resources. Additionally, preparation for future population diversity was identified as an important priority.

**FOOD RELATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ACTION**

System Infrastructure	1. Develop a Community Food System Consortium 2. Create a Community Food System Coordinator Position 3. Explore Local Food Directory Options 4. Examine Branding Opportunities 5. Provide Food System Training Opportunities 6. Develop Job Training Programs for Food Related Businesses
Production	7. Expand the Piedmont Farm School 8. Adopt a Farmland Preservation Plan 9. Promote Internship Referral Services 10. Expand the Community Garden Resource Program 11. Amend the Unified Development Ordinance 12. Develop Policy for Use of City and County Land/Resources for Urban Agriculture
Processing	13. Complete a Feasibility Study for the Development of a Shared-Use, Processing Facility 14. Promote Existing Entrepreneurial Resources 15. Work Regionally to Explore Need for a Mobile Poultry Processing Facility
Distribution	16. Strengthen and Expand Food Hubs Serving Forsyth County 17. Promote Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) Certification 18. Educate Farmers and Chefs 19. Establish Institutional Purchasing Policy 20. Convene a Farmers Market Association
Consumption	21. Launch a Consumer Education Campaign 22. Introduce Local Food Sales to Convenient Stores 23. Research and Establish Mobile Markets 24. Streamline Process of Accepting SNAP/EBT at Farmers' Markets

**STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IN THE PIEDMONT TRIAD**

**Top Strengths**

- Excellent higher education opportunities
- Viticulture and Productive Farmland
- Access to Excellent Health Care
- Scenic and Recreational Resources
- Small Town Charm
- Strong volunteer & religious organizations that help create a sense of community
- Good highways & utilities to support job creation & economic development

**Top Challenges**

- Lack of transportation options in communities & regionally
- The “New Economy” – post-manufacturing, high tech
- Abandoned Job Centers – unused mills & shopping centers
- Capitalizing on Assets – supporting existing small businesses
- Healthy Communities – transportation options & open space
- Sidewalks & Bike Lanes – mobility and recreation
- Access to fresh food sources
- Energy Conservation – construction, restoration, re-use

**State of the County Health Report, 2013  
(Stokes County Health Department)**

The Stokes County Health Department's "State of the County Health Report" (2013) was designed as a quick overview of County health data. The report provided an annual review of the health of the County, tracked the progress of health priorities, and identified emerging health issues of importance to County residents. The report highlighted several community concerns (drug abuse, alcohol abuse, lack of exercise, smoking/tobacco use, and poor eating habits), and focused on the County's high suicide rate. The report summarized the importance of the County's Community Transformation Grant Project - which will aid in addressing these and other health concerns - as well as the County's effort to incorporate public health into its new Comprehensive Plan.

**2.3.D > ACTION PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, 2013  
(STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION)**

In 2013, the Stokes County Economic Development Commission completed its "Action Plan for Recruitment". The plan discussed several key challenges to recruiting efforts, including the County's lack of available buildings and shovel-ready sites. These factors have hindered the EDC's ability to respond to prospective company inquiries, and may constrain future expansion of existing businesses. The plan identified available buildings and sites, potential funding sources for building improvements, potential industry segments for targeted recruitment initiatives, other economic development initiatives (construction of shell buildings, etc.), and focused on the importance of marketing.

**TOP 5 HEALTH CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY**

- 1. CANCER
- 2. DIABETES
- 3. HEART DISEASE
- 4. SCHOOL VIOLENCE
- 5. OBESITY/OVERWEIGHT

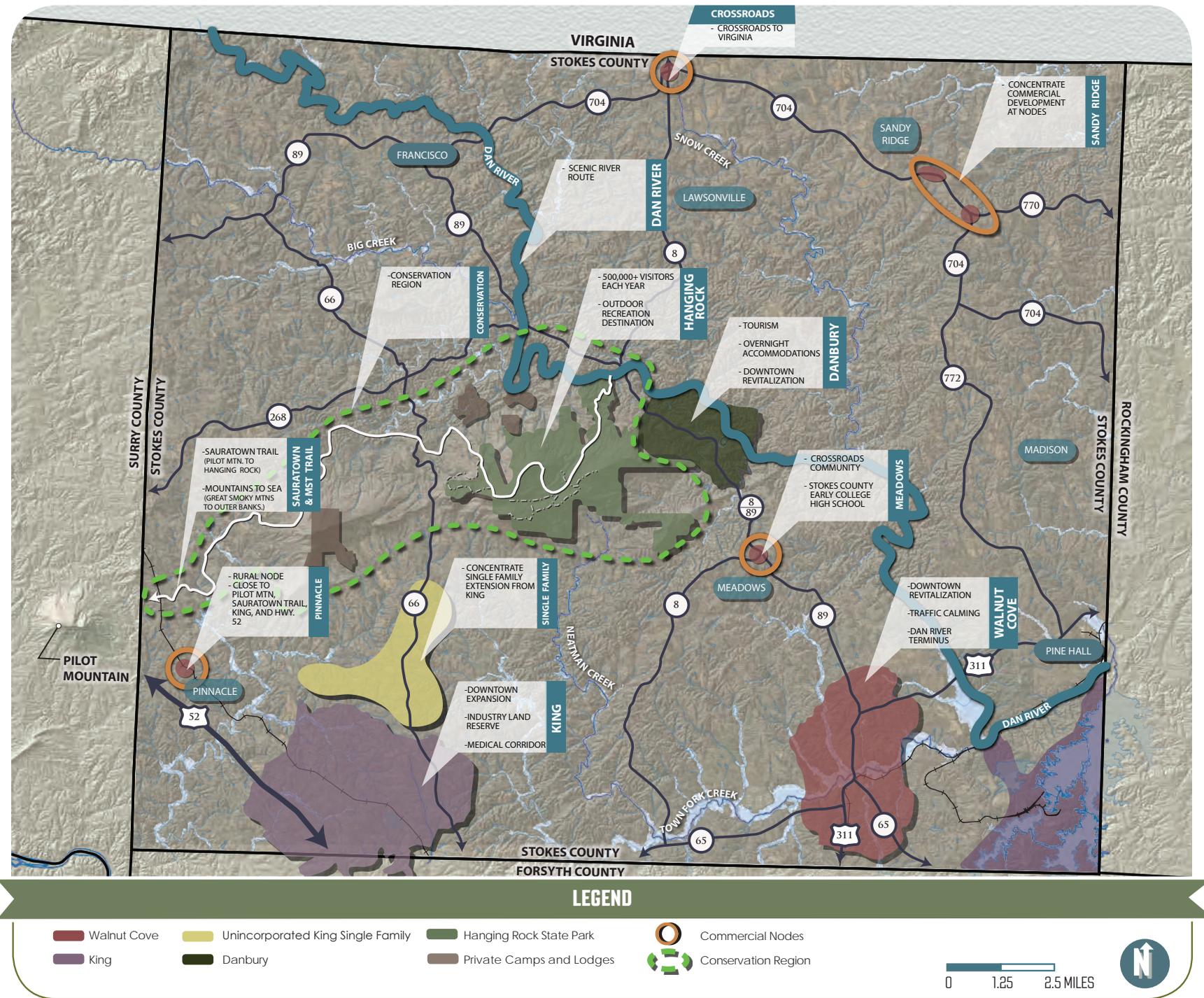
**RECOMMENDED MARKETING INITIATIVE WITH ASSOCIATED COSTS**

Marketing Initiatives	Cost
<b>Create an Identity</b>	We recommend using the current brand now but plan for a rebranding in future budget cycles. \$15,000
<b>E-Marketing &amp; Lead Generation</b>	\$2,000 to design a template that can be used in electronic marketing; in-house, on-demand printed proposals; and reports. \$10 per company contact for e-marketing.
<b>Materials</b>	\$3,000 - \$5,000 for electronic brochure with minimal hardcopies
<b>Website Updates</b>	Minor design changes \$2,000
<b>Existing Business Marketing</b>	Staff time plus travel to headquarters \$2,000+ depending upon number of trips
<b>Leveraging Partnerships</b>	\$1,500 for trips to Raleigh and in-county meetings with Commerce

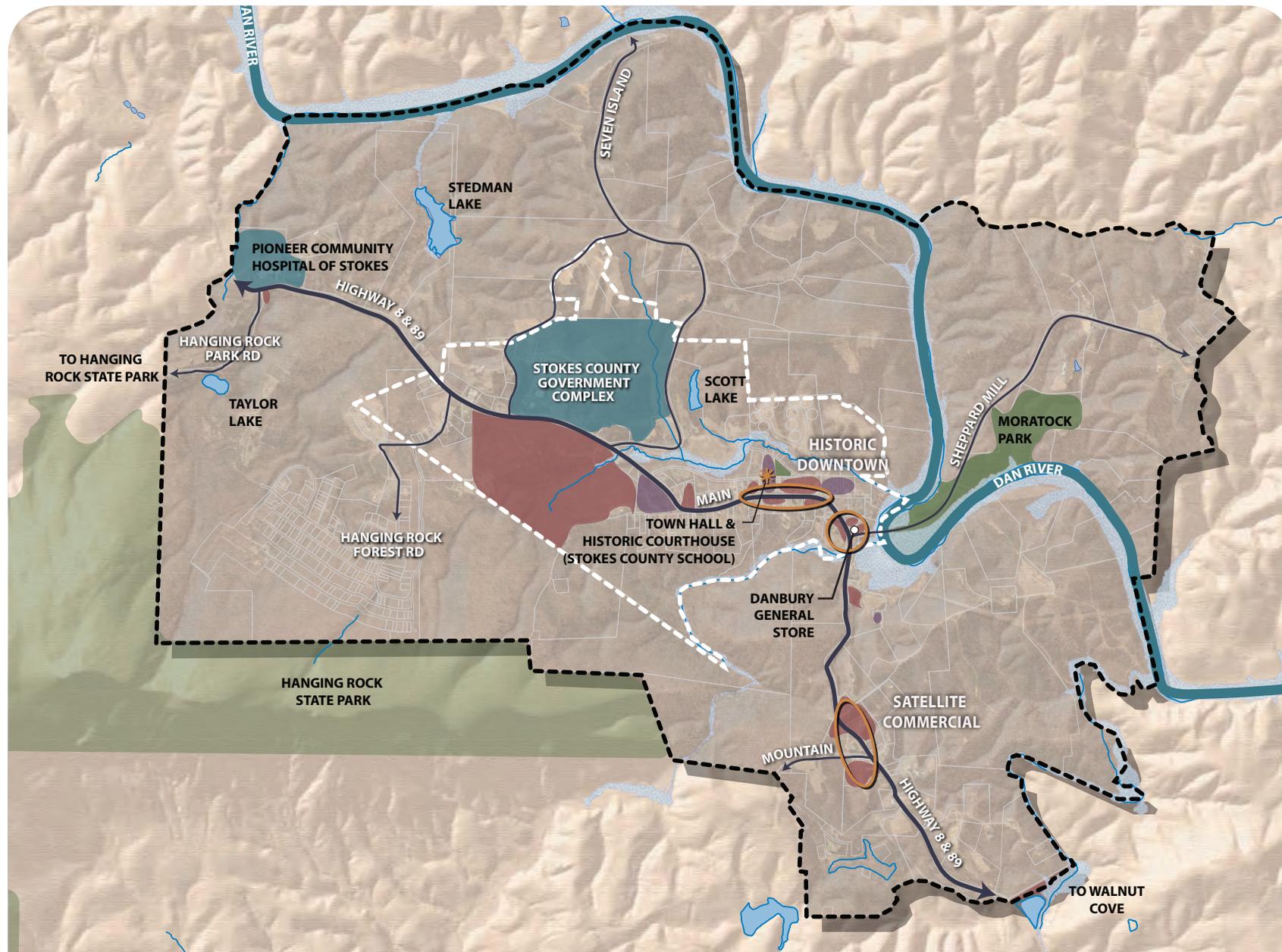
Framework maps were developed for Stokes County and for its three municipal areas of Danbury, King, and Walnut Cove. These maps strive to connect much of the information gleaned from this Chapter. The purpose of the framework map series is to identify the “is” of Stokes County. Where is the community growing? What are the geographic trends and how can they inform the way we think about the future of Stokes County? This map series was created to help inspire discussion during the public engagement phase of the planning process, which is the focus of the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to a brief description and presentation of the framework map series.

### County Framework

The Stokes County Framework Map highlights the County’s natural and cultural resources, and also identifies several commercial growth nodes. These nodes occur at the NC Route 704 – NC Route 8 intersection in northern Stokes, along NC Route 704 in the Sandy Ridge community, at the NC Route 704 – NC Route 700 intersection in northeastern Stokes, at the NC Route 8 – NC Route 89 intersection in the Meadows community, and at the Highway 311 – NC R in the Pine Hall Community. These commercial growth nodes are likely to experience long term growth as the County develops, either due to their proximity to utilities or because of their location at key points along routes that traverse the County.



## Danbury Framework



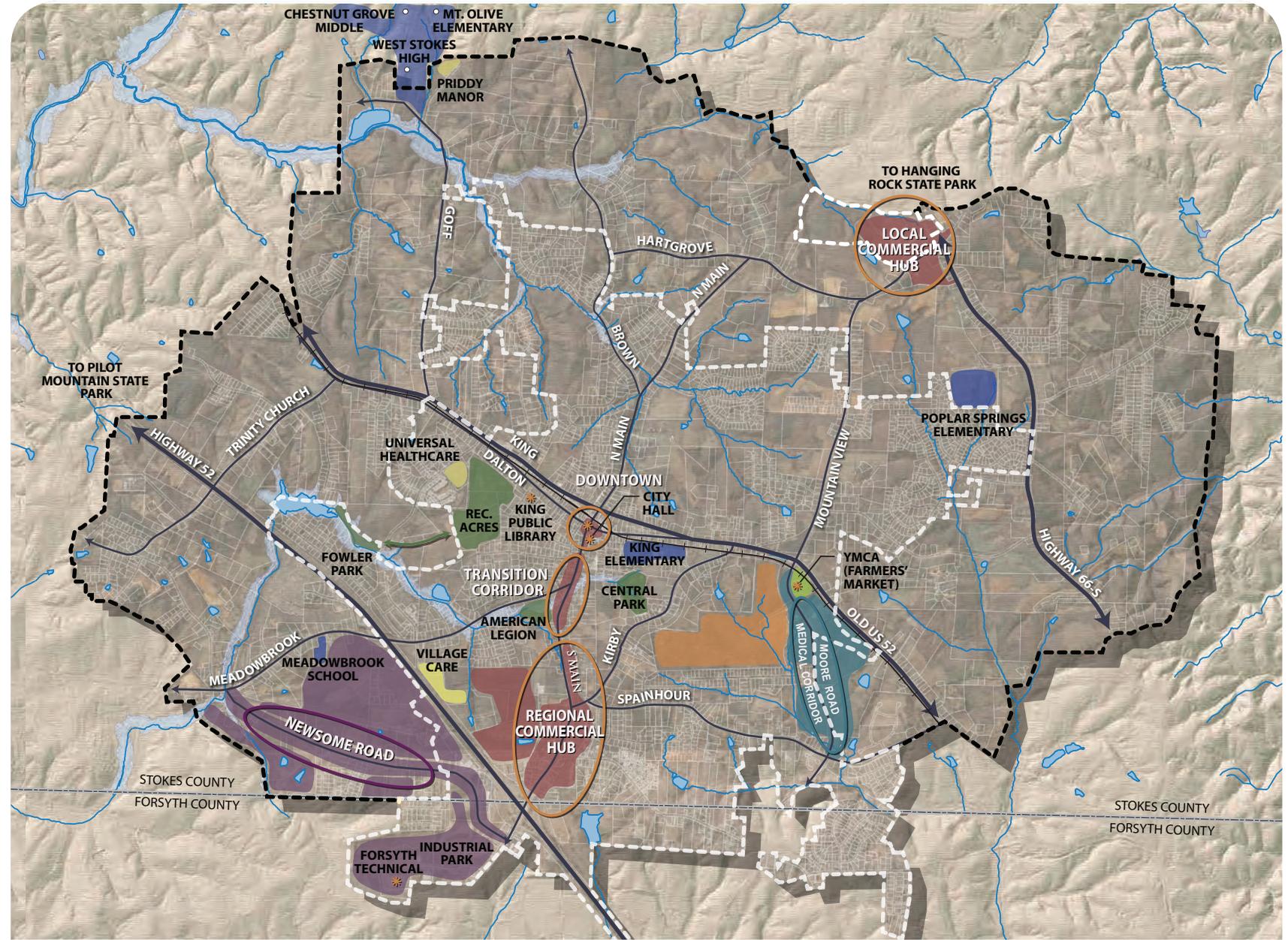
### LEGEND



The Framework Map for Danbury highlights the importance of the Town's proximity to Hanging Rock State Park. The asset map indicates two opportunities for trail connections linking the park to downtown. Commercial corridors, anchored by the historic courthouse and the Danbury General Store along NC Route 8 & 89 are also identified as key assets. Other assets include, Moratock Park, Pioneer Community Hospital, and the Stokes County Government office.

# King Framework

King's Framework Map identifies the notable commercial corridors and commercial hubs found throughout the City. One corridor extends southward along South Main Street from downtown to the intersection with Kirby and Spainhour. A regional commercial hub continues to grow along Highway 52. Between US Route 52 and Newsome Road, the framework plan identifies an industrial corridor that continues to be infringed on by multi-family development. The Moore Road Medical Corridor is shown just south of the YMCA and Farmer's Market. A local commercial hub is shown at the intersection of Mountain View and NC Route 66 & 5, which links the City to Hanging Rock State Park. Greenway opportunities are highlighted between Fowler Park and Recreation Acres.



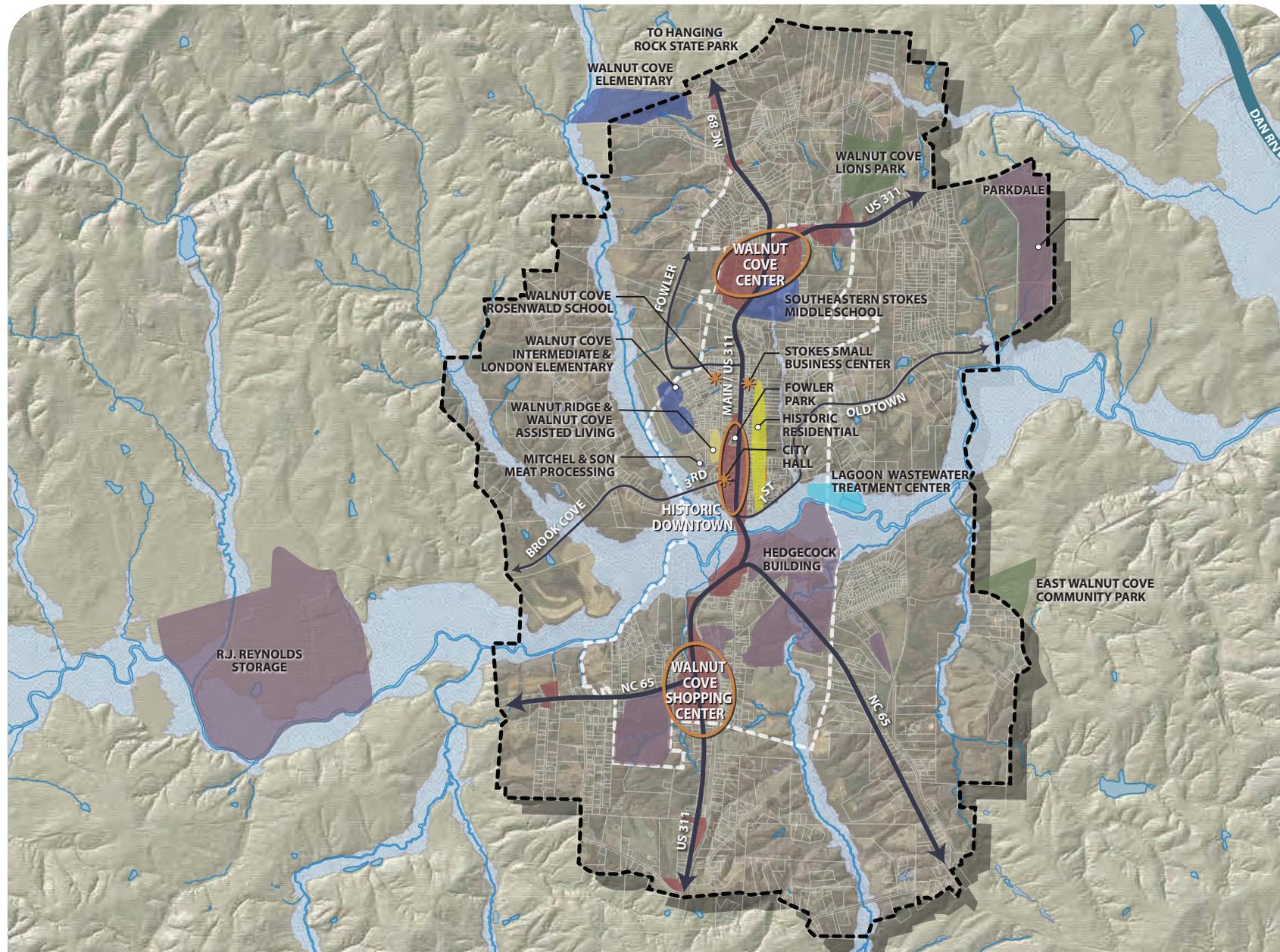
**LEGEND**

Commercial	Senior Living	Office Institutional	Schools	ETJ	Points of Interest
Industrial	Mixed-Use	Parks	City Jurisdiction	Commercial Nodes/ Corridors	

0 0.25 0.5 MILES

## Walnut Cove Framework

- The Framework Map for Walnut Cove identifies several assets. A commercial corridor is shown around historic downtown on Main Street, and commercial nodes are indicated at the key intersections of NC Route 89 and US Route 311 (Walnut Cove Center), and NC Route 65 and US Route 311. Each corridor/node is strategically located in areas that can be leveraged to stimulate future growth. The R.J. Reynolds and Hedgecock buildings are shown on the plan map, as are Fowler Park and Walnut Cove Lions Park.



### LEGEND

- |            |               |                      |                      |                   |                            |
|------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Commercial | Senior Living | Office Institutional | Schools              | ETJ               | Points of Interest         |
| Industrial | Mixed-Use     | Parks                | Historic Residential | City Jurisdiction | Commercial Nodes/Corridors |
- 0 0.25 0.5 MILES







## CHAPTER TWO: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & VISION

# CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND VISION

## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

### A. Public Engagement

- Public Workshops
- Focus Groups
- Surveys

### B. Vision

A major goal throughout the planning process was to glean ideas and concerns from local citizens to collectively determine a future vision for Stokes County. This chapter pro-

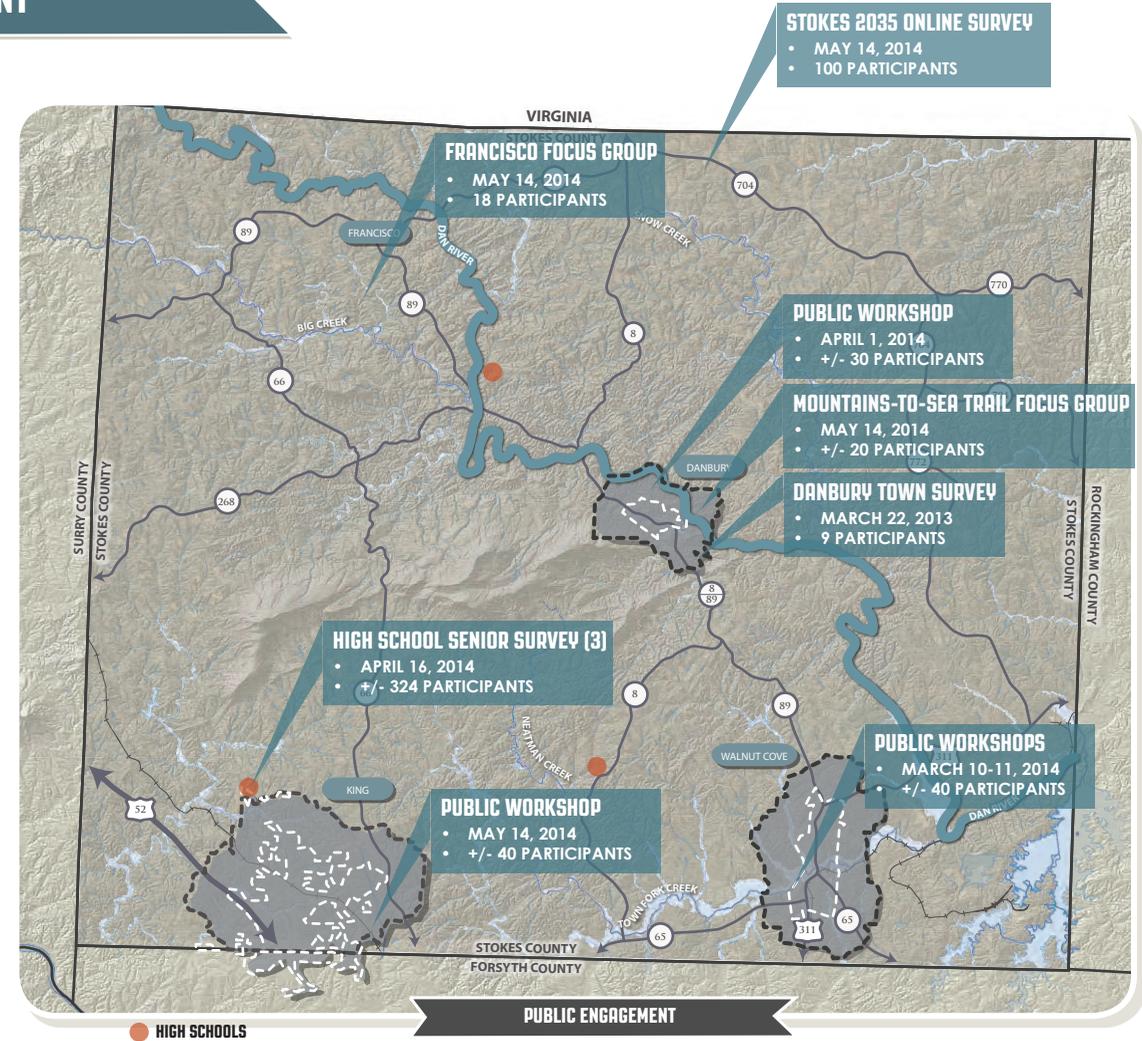
vides a comprehensive overview of all public outreach efforts and culminates with an overarching vision statement for Stokes County.

## A PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Stokes Vision Plan was initially unveiled to the public on January 14, 2014 at the Stokes County Business Extravaganza: Disco Inferno, where many local businesses were on hand to share their ideas for a better Stokes County. This event launched a major public outreach effort that subsequently included three (3) charrette workshops, three (3) focus groups, and three (3) surveys. This section provides an overview of each public outreach tool.

### Public Outreach Tools:

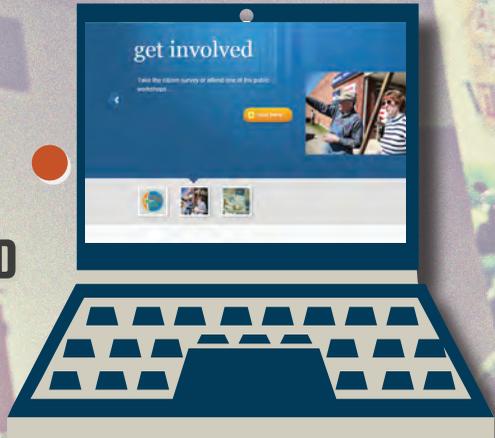
- Public Workshops
- Focus Groups
- Surveys



# HERE'S WHAT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN STOKES COUNTY LOOKS LIKE:

1

WE CREATED  
A PROJECT  
WEBSITE  
TO KEEP  
EVERYONE  
POSTED ON THE  
EVOLVING PLANNING  
EFFORT.



THEN, WE KICKED  
OFF AT THE STOKES  
COUNTY BUSINESS  
EXTRAVAGANZA:  
DISCO INFERNO.

2



3

WE LET YOU KNOW WHAT WE WERE UP TO  
AND ASKED FOR YOUR INPUT.



**PUBLIC MEETING**  
*Donate Your Ideas!*  
May 14, 2014  
King Public Library  
**STOKES 2015**  
<http://stokes2035.com/get-involved>

4

**MANY OF YOU  
SHOWED UP  
TO THE PUBLIC  
WORKSHOPS AT  
WALNUT COVE,  
DANBURY  
AND KING.**



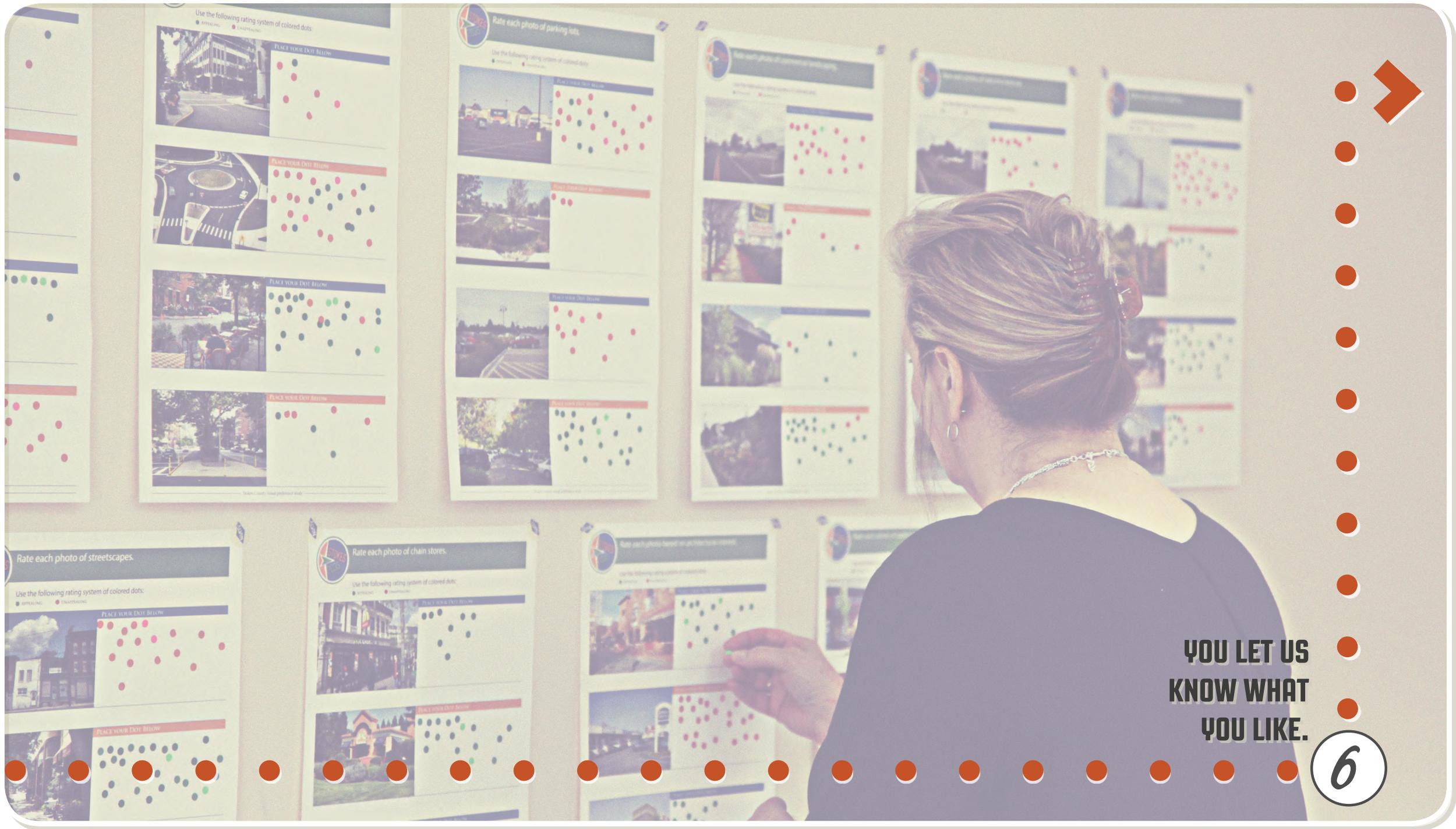
YOU HAD LOTS AND LOTS OF IDEAS.

5

**DONATE YOUR IDEAS!**

**LEGEND**





**YOU LET US  
KNOW WHAT  
YOU LIKE.**

**6**

7

WE HAD SUCH A GOOD TIME AT THE CHARRETTES, SOME OF YOU INVITED US TO YOUR COMMUNITY FOR A FOCUS GROUP MEETING.





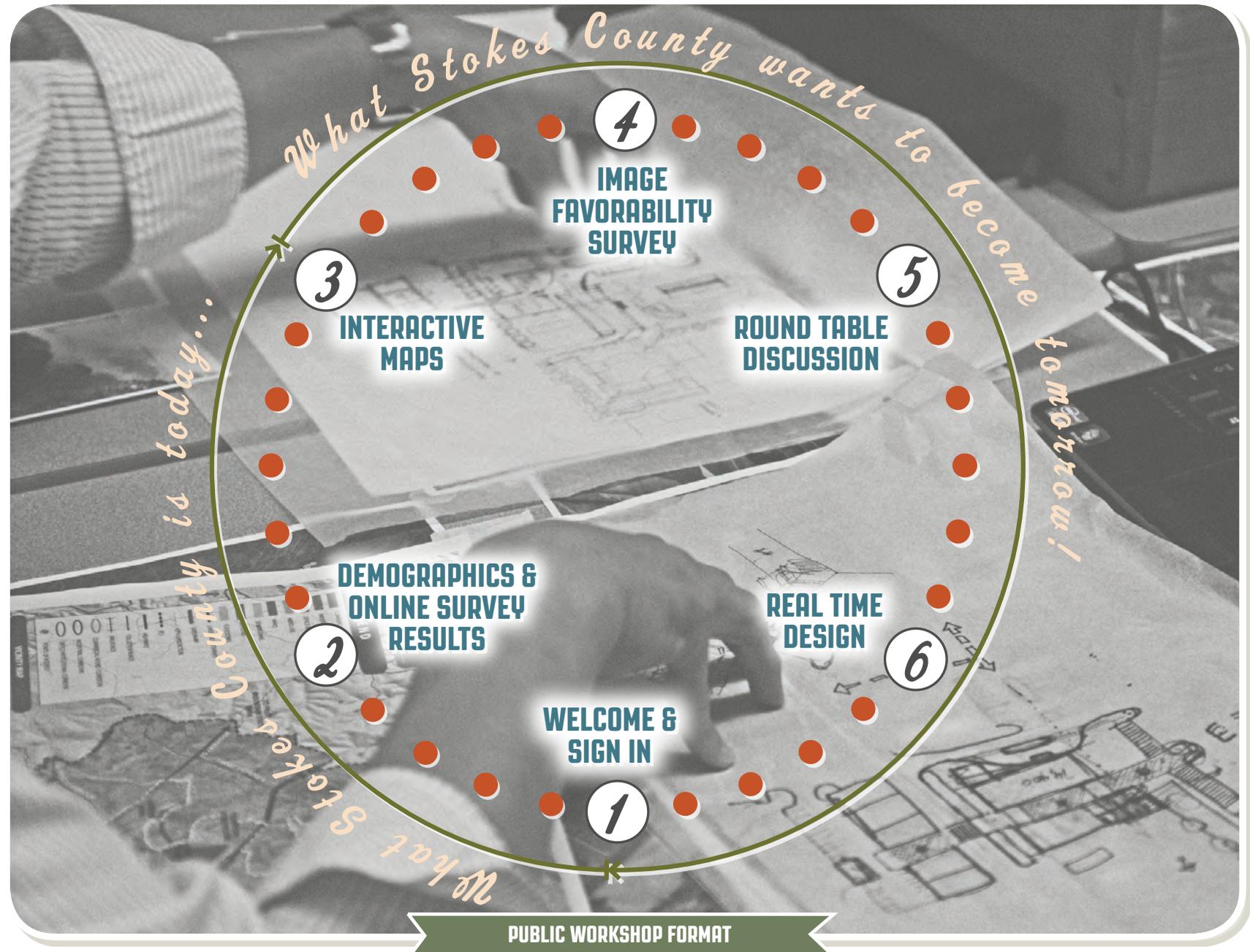


AND EVERYONE LEFT *Stoked!*

## PUBLIC WORKSHOP

A charrette is a participatory planning technique in which design professionals work alongside stakeholders to develop ideas for improving the built environment.

Three (3) public workshops, or charrettes, were conducted throughout the county from April – June 2014. Each workshop was anchored by a design team that included Landscape Architects and Architects who interacted with the public throughout the day to brainstorm ideas and opportunities for improving community life. The design team developed renderings, site plans, and schematics in “real-time” to reflect the community’s ideas and vision. Charrette workshops were conducted in Walnut Cove, Danbury, and King. Residents of the county were asked to attend the Danbury workshop.



HERE'S WHAT COUNTY RESIDENTS HAD TO SAY...

1 CAPITALIZE ON  
INDUSTRY  
*along*  
HIGHWAY 52

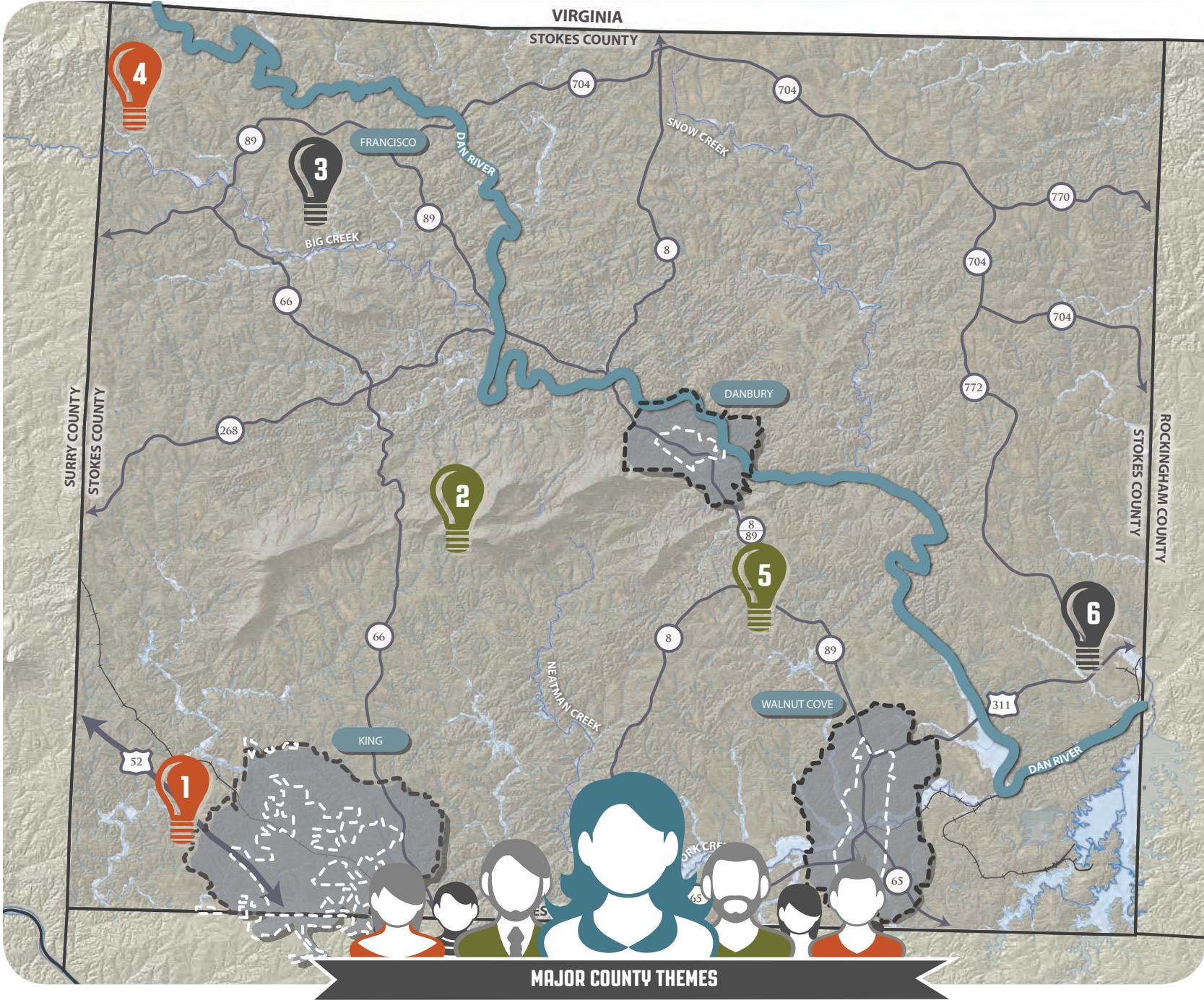
2 INCREASE CONNECTIVITY  
*with the*  
MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA  
INTRAIL

3 PROMOTE LOCAL  
VALUED  
ADDED  
PRODUCTION  
FOOD

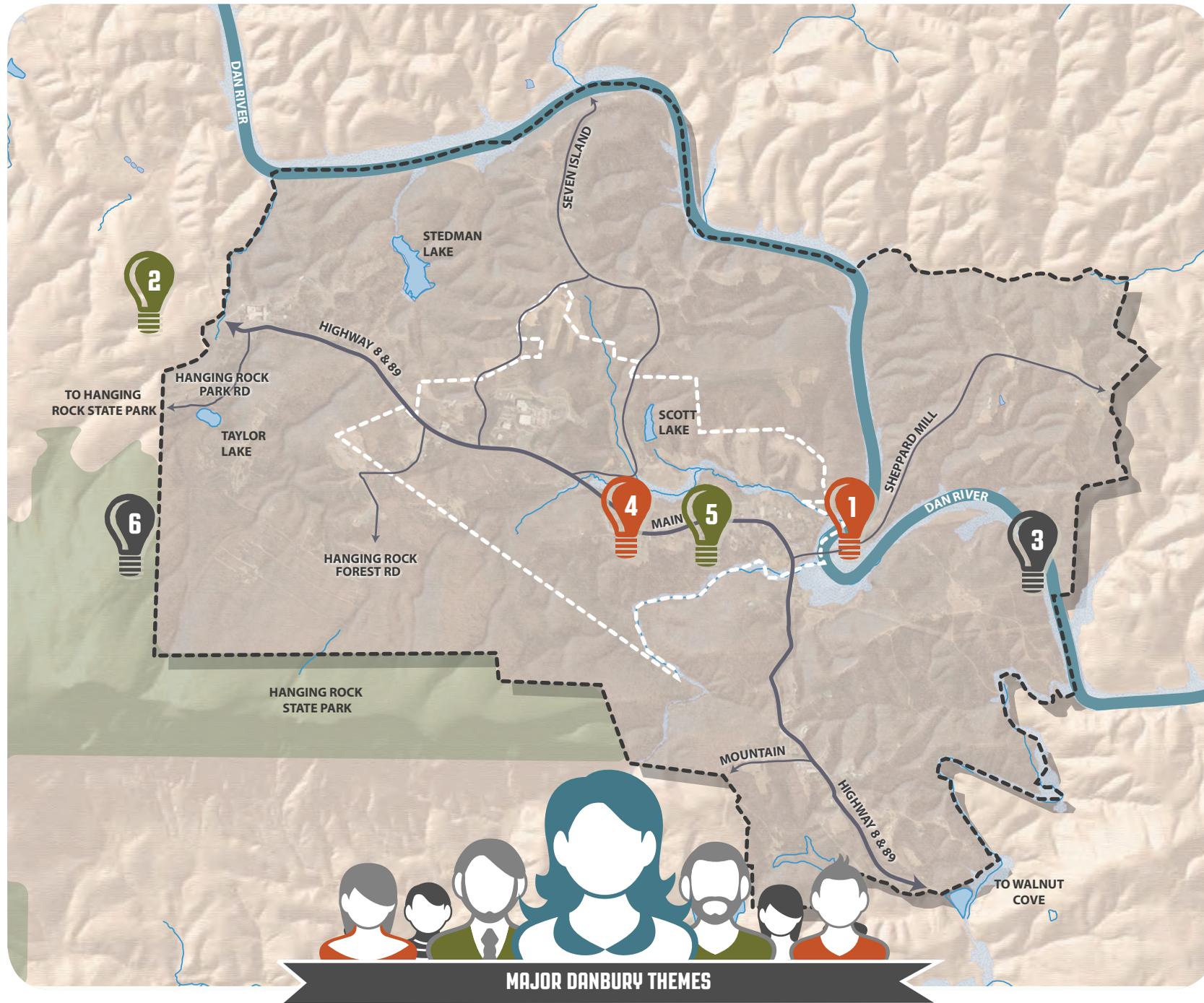
4 MAINTAIN STOKES COUNTY'S RURAL  
*and*  
MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL  
CHARACTER

5 CREATE COMMERCIAL  
DISTINCTIVE  
RURAL  
NODES

6 EXPAND  
RURAL COMMUNITY  
ORGANIZATIONS



# HERE'S WHAT DANBURY HAD TO SAY...



**1** THE **NEED A PLACE**  
*to do*  
**YOUTH “THINGS”**

**2** **STOKES RURAL**  
 COUNTY'S *and*  
**MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER**

**3** **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
*is*  
**IMPORTANT FOR THE FUTURE**

**4** **↑ IMPROVE DOWNTOWN**  
**ACCESSIBILITY**  
*and*  
**IMPROVE PARKING**

**5** **AN ENVIRONMENT**  
*that will*  
**CREATE AND KEEP & ATTRACT**  
**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

**6** **→ CONNECT ←**  
**DANBURY WITH HANGING ROCK STATE PARK**

# HERE'S WHAT WALNUT COVE HAD TO SAY...

1 POTENTIAL LOSS OF  
**HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

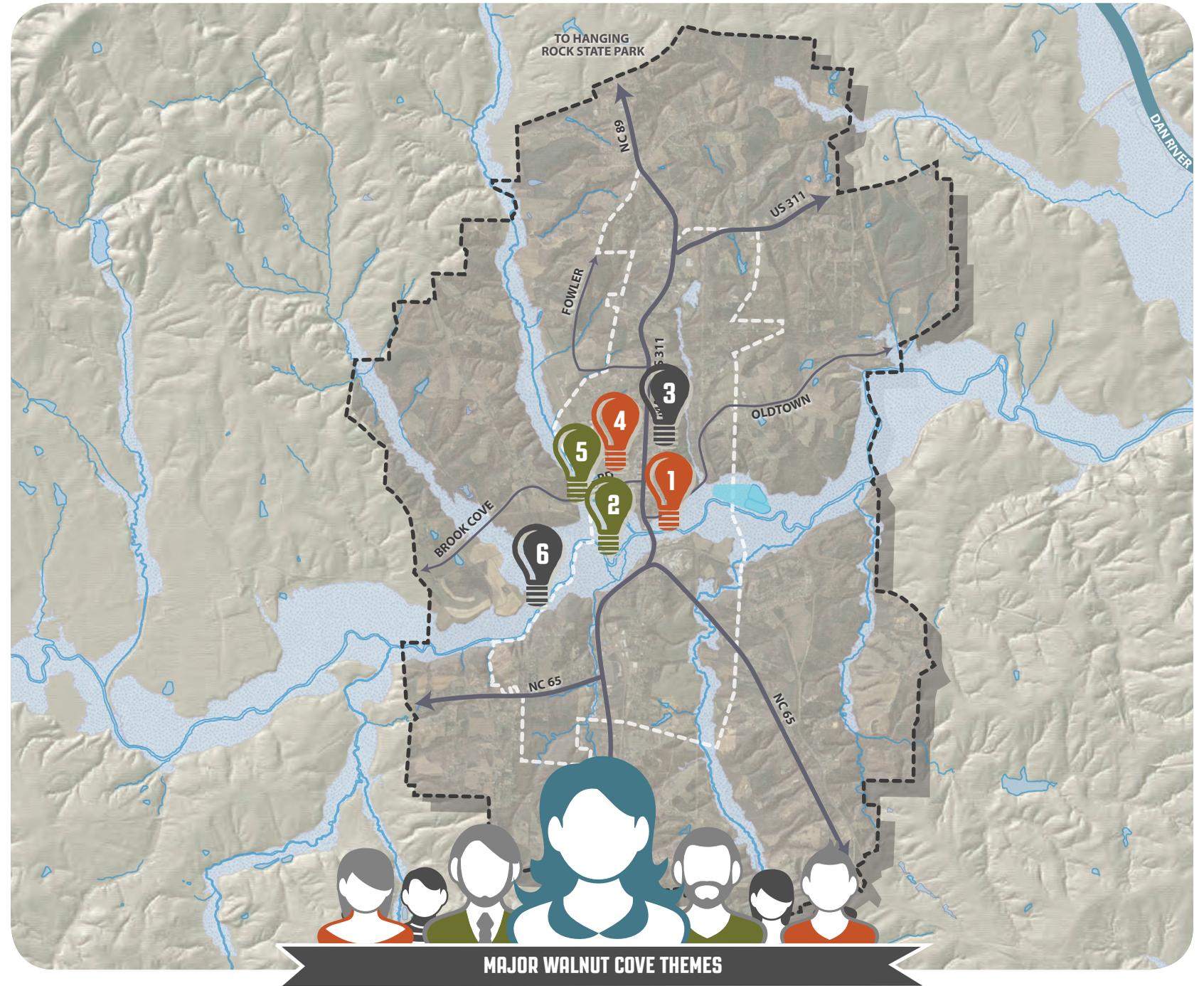
2 CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT  
*that will*  
**KEEP & ATTRACT YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

3 MOBILIZE FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY  
*to*  
CREATE POSITIVE **CHANGE**

4 REDEVELOP DOWNTOWN'S  
**FOWLER PARK**

5 IMPROVE DOWNTOWN  
**STREETScape**

6 CREATE A **GREENWAY TRAIL** THROUGHOUT TOWN



# HERE'S WHAT KING HAD TO SAY...



**1** IMPROVE APPEARANCE OF  
**BUILDINGS**  
*and*  
**STREETS**

**2** INCREASE **CONNECTIVITY**  
*with*  
**SIDEWALKS**  
**BIKE LANES**  
*and*  
**GREENWAYS**

**3** ENCOURAGE  
**B** GENERATING GROWTH  
*along*  
**NEWSOME**  
**J** ROAD CORRIDOR

**4** MAINTAIN **STOKES COUNTY'S RURAL**  
*and*  
**AGRICULTURAL**  
**CHARACTER**

**5** SUPPORT  
**MEDICAL**  
ORIENTED GROWTH  
*along*  
**MOORE ROAD**

**6** EXPAND  
**RURAL COMMUNITY**  
**ORGANIZATIONS**

## Focus Groups

At special request, two (2) focus groups were conducted throughout the planning process: a special stakeholder meeting focused on efforts to improve and further develop the Mountains-to-Sea Trail throughout Stokes County; and the Francisco community in northern Stokes County who requested that the consultant team meet with key members of their community to help initiate efforts to organize a community-based planning committee.

*The two focus groups were centered on the*

01

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL &

02

FRANCISCO.

01

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL





**ON MAY 6, 2014 WE MET AT THE NEWBERRY MANOR IN FRANCISCO, NC TO  
“LET FRANCISCO COME UP WITH IDEAS FOR FRANCISCO”.**

## WE ASKED YOU....

Tell us what you consider to be the greatest assets in the community?

What are some distinguishing characteristics of this community?

What are you excited about in the community?

What are concerns in your community?

How do you see the next 10 years being different than the last 10 years?

What aspects of community development need to be carefully planned for the next 20 years?

What are some ideas for meeting these challenges?



## HERE'S WHAT FRANCISCO HAD TO SAY...

OUR ASSETS ARE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES,  
COMMUNITY ATTITUDE, TALENT,  
**FARMS, & ORGANIZATIONS**

THE DEER, TROUT & TURKEY  
DAN RIVER JESSUP *and* RURAL LANDSCAPE  
MILL DISTINGUISH US

**WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT**  
A LACK OF THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE,  
INTERNET, NO CENTRAL PLACE TO MEET,  
CABLE & AN UNAPPEALING SCHOOL,  
CELL SERVICE, A LOSS OF COMMUNITY CHARACTER,  
*and*

**YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING**  
**WE NEED TO SUPPORT**  
EDUCATION,  
LOCAL BUSINESSES,  
& THE COMMUNITY CENTER

**REVITALIZE**  
THE SCHOOL GROUNDS  
BRING & INCUBATE  
INTERNET & FARMERS

## AFTER THE INITIAL FOCUS GROUP, MEMBERS OF FRANCISCO MET SEVERAL MORE TIMES AND CREATED THE *Francisco Community Planning Group*.

In June of 2014 the Francisco Community Planning Group decided on the following:

### PURPOSE:

Our purpose is to coordinate a community-driven planning process and to lead a campaign to invest in northwestern Stokes County. The group encourages the involvement of everyone interested in strengthening our communities and creating new economic, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities in our region.

### VISION STATEMENT:

Francisco and surrounding communities will be the most desirable area in Stokes County in which to live, work, and play

### MISSION STATEMENT:

Francisco is at the heart of scenic northwestern Stokes County where a clean mountain stretch of the Upper Dan River connects family farms, rustic retreats and a rich agricultural heritage. We envision a revitalization of our community and a bright inclusive future for our families and our neighbors. Revitalization will be achieved through an integrated development strategy that draws on a tradition of stewardship and rural innovation. Combining education, farming, outdoor recreation and community building, in new ways, will help us rise to the challenges of agricultural and generational transitions. Community teams will lead the revitalization.

These teams will address a number of priority needs identified by the community and will develop new initiatives:

### Five Top Priorities:

1. Support for education (especially Francisco Elementary School and the early-college academy for grades 6-8 scheduled to open in 2015)
2. Revitalization of the school grounds and the development of new trails
3. Support for the community center
4. Support for local businesses
5. Robust internet connectivity

New initiatives will focus on finding creative solutions to local challenges, such as: a) providing needed services, b) increasing funding and support for community organizations, c) attracting new investments, d) supporting farming, e) enriching community life, and f) promoting the region.

Four (4) surveys were conducted throughout the planning process.

**01 VISUAL PREFERENCE STUDY**

**02 ONLINE STOKES 2035 SURVEY**

**03 HIGH SCHOOL SURVEY**

**02 DANBURY TOWN SURVEY**

**01 VISUAL PREFERENCE STUDY**

The purpose of the visual preference study was to determine preferences within the built environment of Stokes County. Workshop participants were given two dots (one green & one red) per each page of four images. They were then asked to place a green dot on the image they found most appealing and a red dot on the image they found most

unappealing. Two images per page were left without any dots. The following two pages show those images that resonated well and those that were unappealing to participants.



**AT EACH PUBLIC WORKSHOP A VISUAL PREFERENCE STUDY HELPED TO DETERMINE CITIZEN PREFERENCES IN STOKES COUNTY'S BUILT ENVIRONMENT.**

@Walnut Cove Public Workshop

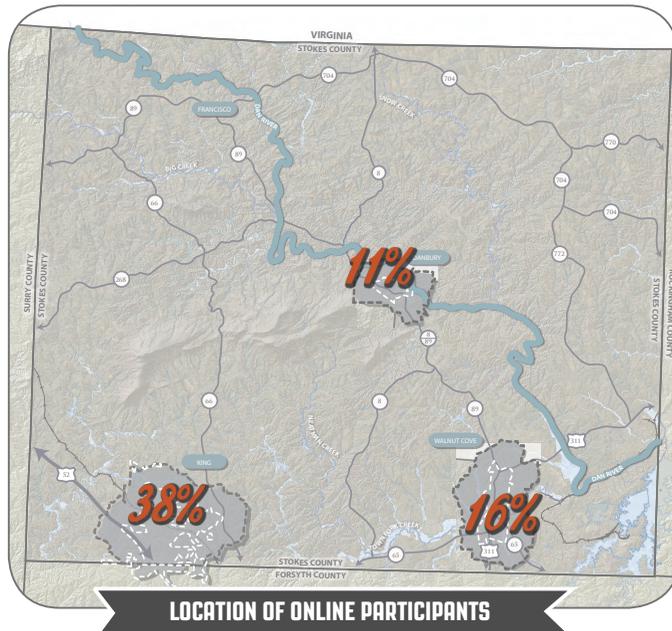
# STOKES COUNTY CITIZENS FOUND THESE IMAGES APPEALING:



# STOKES COUNTY CITIZENS FOUND THESE IMAGES UNAPPEALING:



One hundred (100) Stokes County residents participated in the Online Stokes 2035 Survey. The following map illustrates where participants reside within Stokes County.



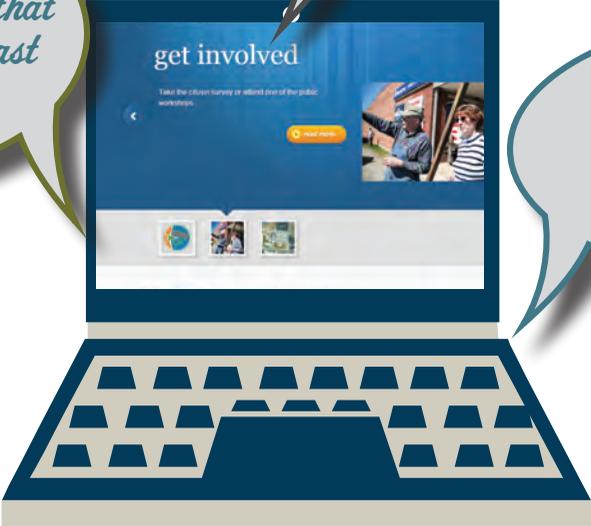
**\*35%** of participants were from the county

**HERE'S WHAT ONLINE PARTICIPANTS HAD TO SAY...**

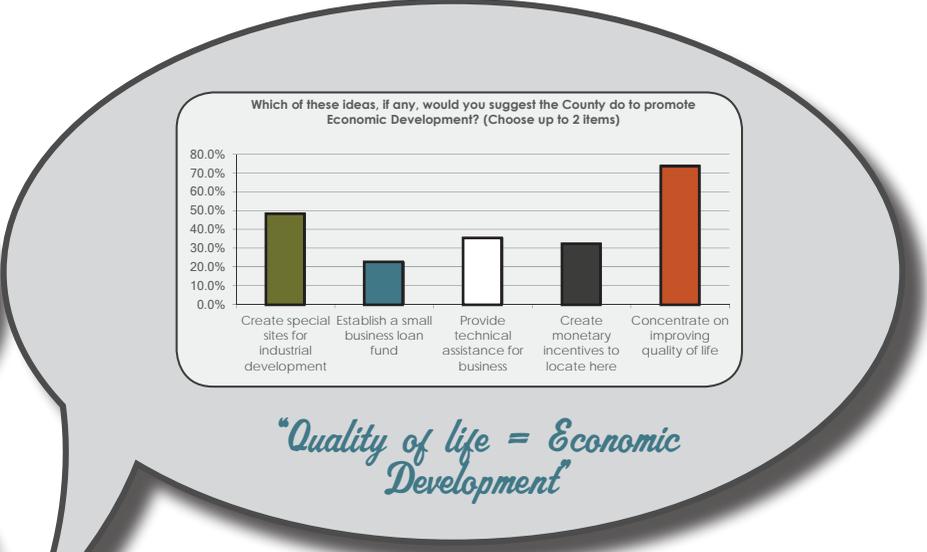
*"More unpaved walking/biking trails".*

*"Good quality of life that hasn't changed in past 5 years."*

*"Good availability of safe and affordable housing opportunities."*



*"Excellent place to raise children & retire".*



*"Quality of life = Economic Development"*

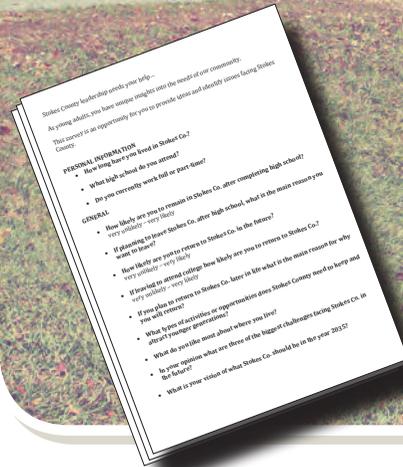
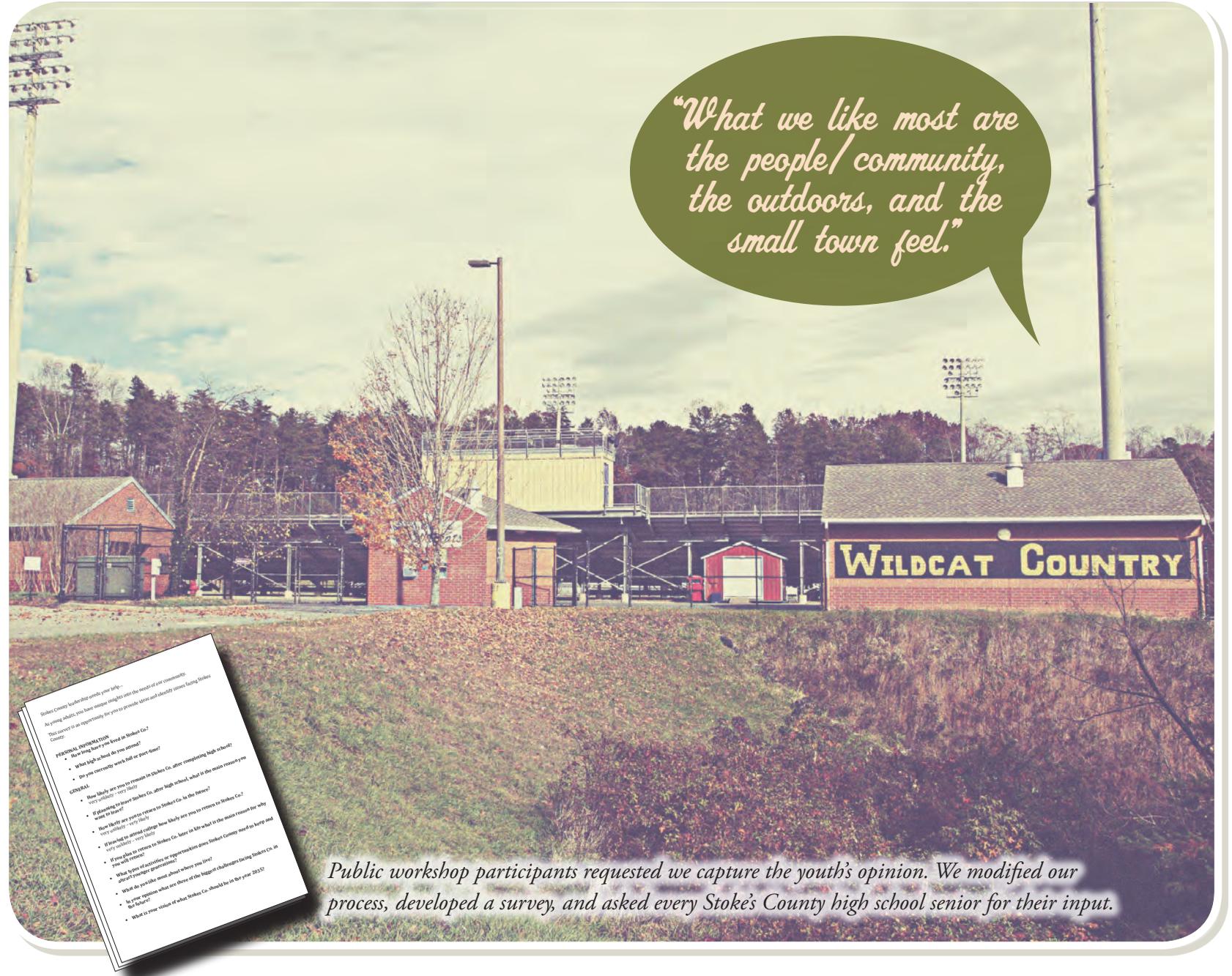
Every high school senior in Stokes County was asked to participate in the Stokes 2035 planning process by answering a survey. A total of 322 students responded, and here's what they said:

NEARLY **1** OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
**2** PLAN TO LEAVE  
STOKES CO. PERMANENTLY

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS SAY THEY **LIKE** PEOPLE & COMMUNITY  
**OUTDOORS & NATURE**  
**SMALL TOWN FEEL**

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS SAY THEY **DISLIKE** LACK OF OPPORTUNITY  
**NO GOOD PAYING JOBS**  
**NOWHERE TO GO**  
and  
**NOTHING TO DO**

IN ORDER TO KEEP AND ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE  
STOKES COUNTY NEEDS  
A PLACE TO HANG OUT  
**WELL-PAYING JOBS**  
A GOOD COLLEGE  
SOMETHING TO DO



*Public workshop participants requested we capture the youth's opinion. We modified our process, developed a survey, and asked every Stokes County high school senior for their input.*

The Town of Danbury mayor and town council dispersed a questionnaire entitled "Shaping our Future" in 2013. Of the 50 households the questionnaire was sent to there were a total of 9 responses. Here's what Danbury had to say:

**WE WANT OUR BUILDINGS & SIGNS TO CONFORM TO A COMMON THEME**

**OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IS IMPORTANT TO OUR QUALITY OF LIFE**

**INVESTING IN OUTDOOR RECREATION IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**PRESERVING SMALL COMMUNITY FEEL IMPROVING SIDEWALKS AND PROMOTING TOURISM ARE IMPORTANT TO OUR FUTURE**



**“WHAT’S YOUR VISION” WAS ASKED AT EVERY STEP ALONG THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS - STARTING AT THE 2014 STOKES COUNTY BUSINESS EXTRAVAGANZA.**



# Stokes 2035 Vision Statement

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## THE VISION FOR THE STOKES COUNTY 2035 PLAN IS TO CREATE A HEALTHY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH:

- 1 Future growth & development respects the county's history and rural character;
- 2 There are explicit efforts to seek, retain and attract the next generation;
- 3 There are ample and accessible opportunities for active living and a healthy lifestyle;
- 4 Future growth preserves and protects the County's unique natural environment;
- 5 Small businesses and entrepreneurship can flourish; and
- 6 Connections are made and "community happens" through unique programs and events.

## THIS VISION WILL BE ACHIEVED BY:

- 1 Encouraging growth and development where infrastructure currently exists;
- 2 Creating vibrant downtown environments in King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury that support visitation and small business development;
- 3 Establishing a linear parks and trail system that links commercial areas with neighborhoods and community assets;
- 4 Creating unique programs and events that celebrate the people and places of Stokes County;
- 5 Supporting community based organizations and providing them the capacity to improve their communities.
- 6 Creating opportunities for workplace wellness and fitness.





The Just Plain   
COUNTRY STORE

SHOULD HAVE  
BOUGHT IT  
WHEN YOU SAW IT

COLLECTIBLES

HICK'S  
PHARMACY

Antiques  
&  
Crafts Mall



# CHAPTER THREE: LAND USE

# CHAPTER 3: LAND USE



## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

**A. Methodology**

**B. Land Use Framework Maps**

**C. Land Use Policies**

This chapter serves as the cornerstone of the Stokes 2035 Vision Plan, providing guidance for Stokes County and its municipal leaders as they make land use development decisions regarding where and how the community should grow.

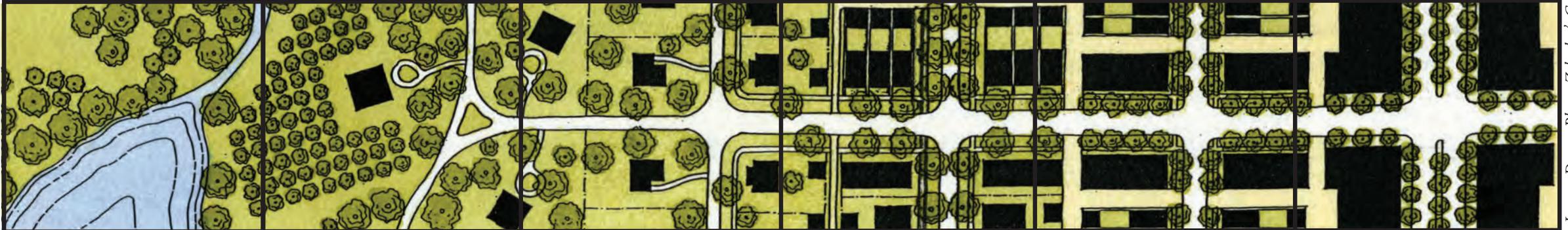
This Land Use Chapter is comprised of three major parts, including: A) Methodology; B) Land Use Framework Maps; and C) Land Use Policies.

The Land Use Plan provides the overall structure for orchestrating appropriate patterns of growth and environmental conservation throughout the community.

### A METHODOLOGY

The subsequent maps and policies are supported by the Land Use Transect methodology, which defines a series of zones that transition from rural Stokes County to the more urban downtowns of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King. This model supports the land use priorities identified throughout the planning process, which include: protecting natural resources; developing vibrant downtowns; encouraging pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development; facilitating infill/redevelopment; and providing a broad range of housing opportunities.

The Land Use Transect includes six (6) major "sectors" moving from preserved lands to the County's most urban areas. Each sector is conceptually illustrated and defined on the following page.



**0-1 Preserved Lands**

- Conservation
- Parks and Greenways
- Limited Agriculture and Forestry
- Water Access Areas

**0-2 Reserved Lands/Conservation**

- Conservation
- Parks and Greenways
- Limited Agriculture and Forestry
- Water Access Areas

**G-1 Low Density Growth Areas**

- Primarily Residential/ Low Density
- Small Scale Multi-Family
- Limited Convenience Retail Uses
- Civic Uses

**G-2 Controlled Growth Areas**

- Single and Multi-Family Development
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use Centers
- Neighborhood Scale Commercial
- Civic and Light Industrial Uses

**G-3 Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors**

- Medium to High Density
- Regional Centers
- Industrial Districts

**G-4 Downtowns**

- Mixed-Use
- High Density

Image: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company

The following maps provide a land use foundation for the County and its three (3) municipal jurisdictions.

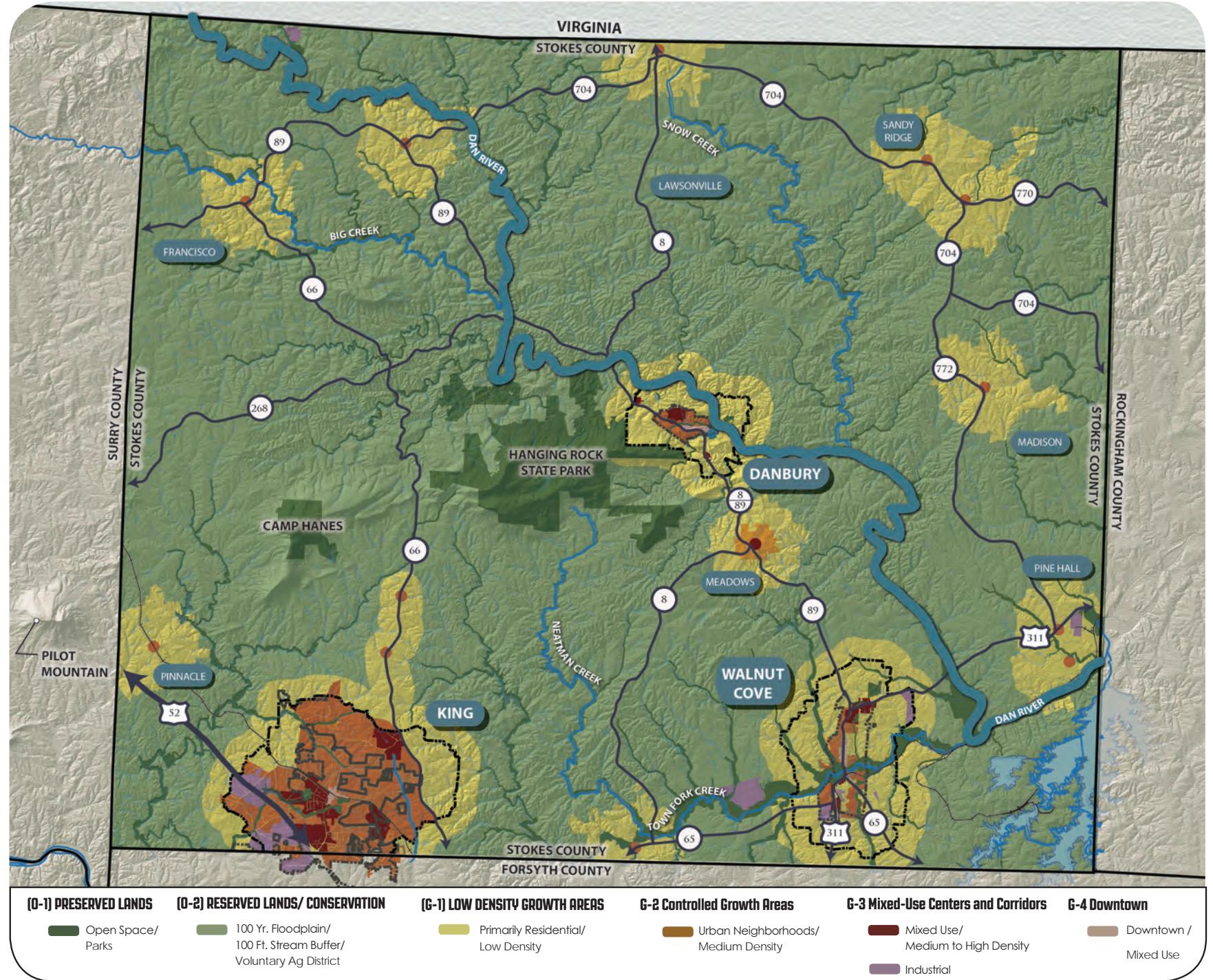
**STOKES COUNTY**

The primary land use classification throughout the County includes very low (greater than 4-acre density average) or low-density (1.5 acre density average) residential growth.

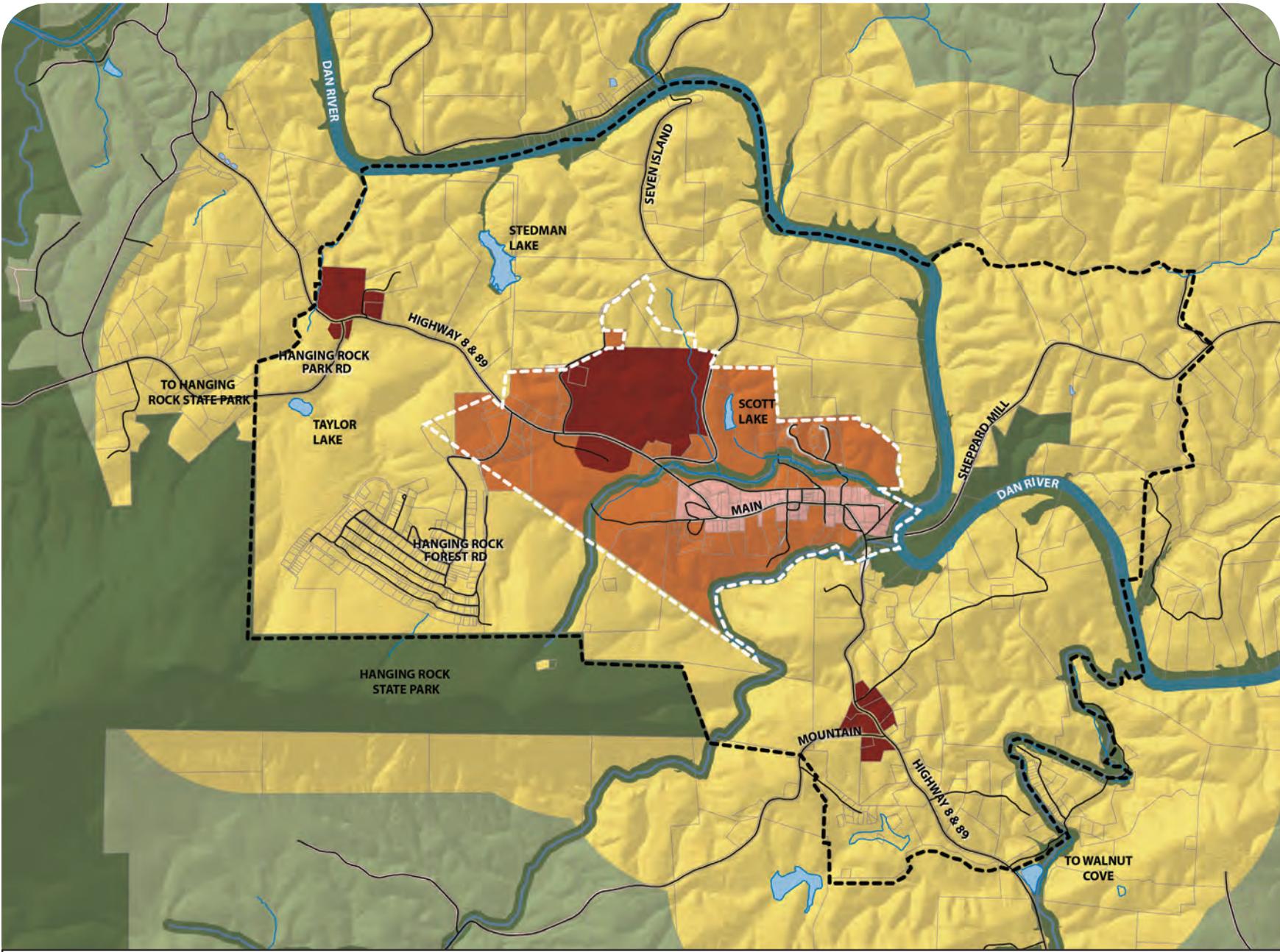
In an effort to encourage neighborhood commercial growth toward major intersections throughout the county, the Land Use Framework Map identifies twelve (12) Rural Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. A one-mile buffer around these nodes identifies a target low-density residential growth area.

The recent sewer infrastructure expansion to the Meadows community will allow for greater density and is necessary to realize a return on investment; a mixed-use and high-density classification surrounds Meadows.

This plan recognizes that growth pressure will likely continue along the Highway 66 corridor that extends north from King. There are two neighborhood commercial nodes identified along this corridor.



# DANBURY



(0-1) PRESERVED LANDS	(0-2) RESERVED LANDS/ CONSERVATION	(G-1) LOW DENSITY GROWTH AREAS	G-2 Controlled Growth Areas	G-3 Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors	G-4 Downtown
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space/ Parks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 Yr. Floodplain/ 100 Ft. Stream Buffer/ Voluntary Ag District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily Residential/ Low Density</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban Neighborhoods/ Medium Density</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed Use/ Medium to High Density</li> <li>Industrial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downtown / Mixed Use</li> </ul>

Danbury's proximity to Hanging Rock State Park, a key driver of visitation to the county, emphasizes the importance of encouraging transitional areas between the Town and the County. To achieve this, the periphery of Danbury (outside of the extraterritorial jurisdiction) is classified as a Low Density Growth Area. Progressing towards the downtown core from the periphery of Danbury there are large areas classified as Controlled Growth Areas (G-2) that are appropriate for medium density neighborhoods.

Three (3) areas within Danbury are classified for Mixed Use/ Medium to High Density development, including an area at the intersection of NC Route 8/89 and Mountain Rd., an area that includes the Stokes County Governmental Center and an adjacent emerging mixed use development on NC Route 8/89, and a node at the intersection of 8/89 and Hanging Rock Park Road that includes Pioneer Hospital.

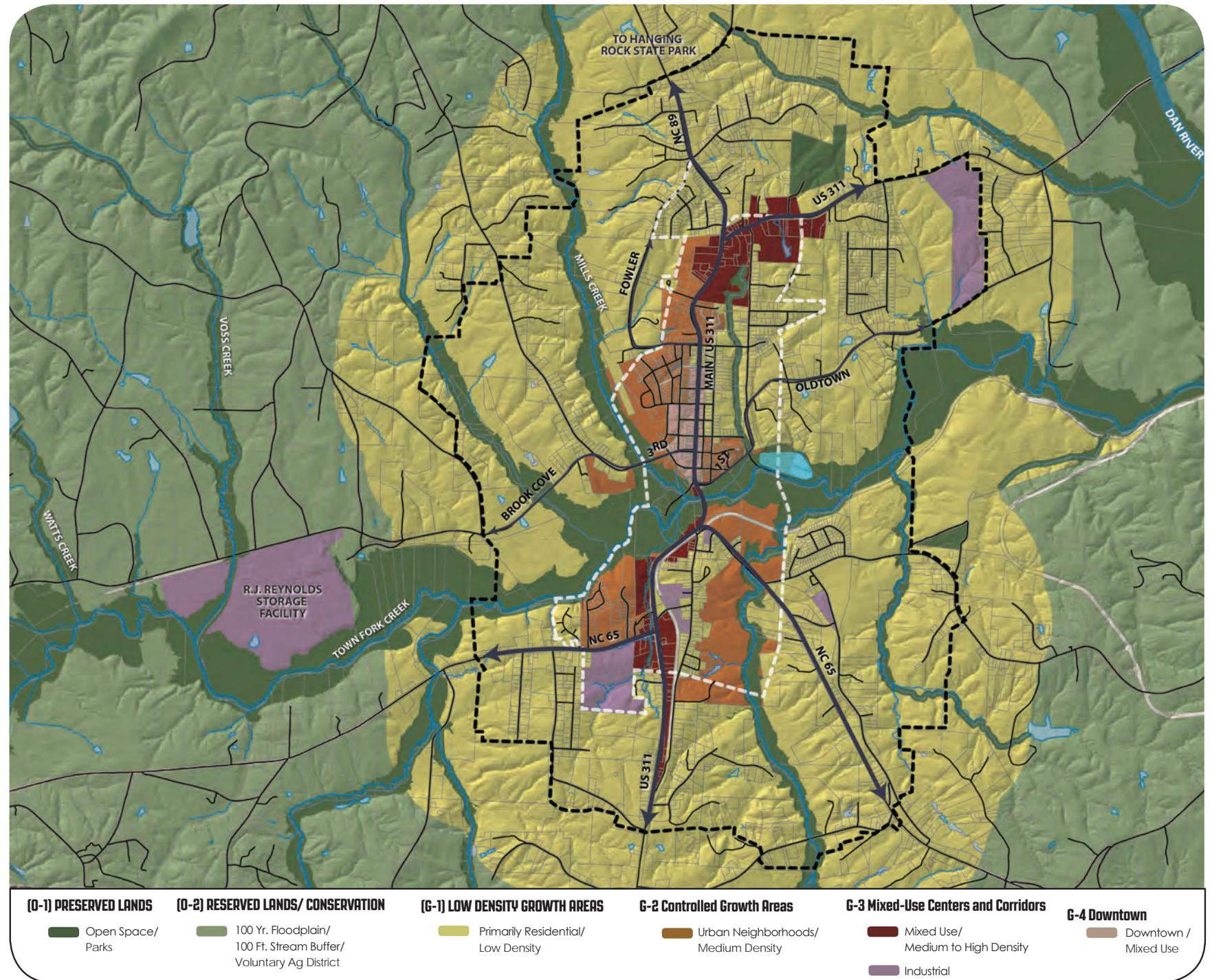
## WALNUT COVE

Walnut Cove is distinguished by its linear downtown district, which is surrounded by established residential neighborhoods. Significant capital infrastructure investments – both private and public – are necessary to foster small business development and to preserve the historic nature of downtown Walnut Cove.

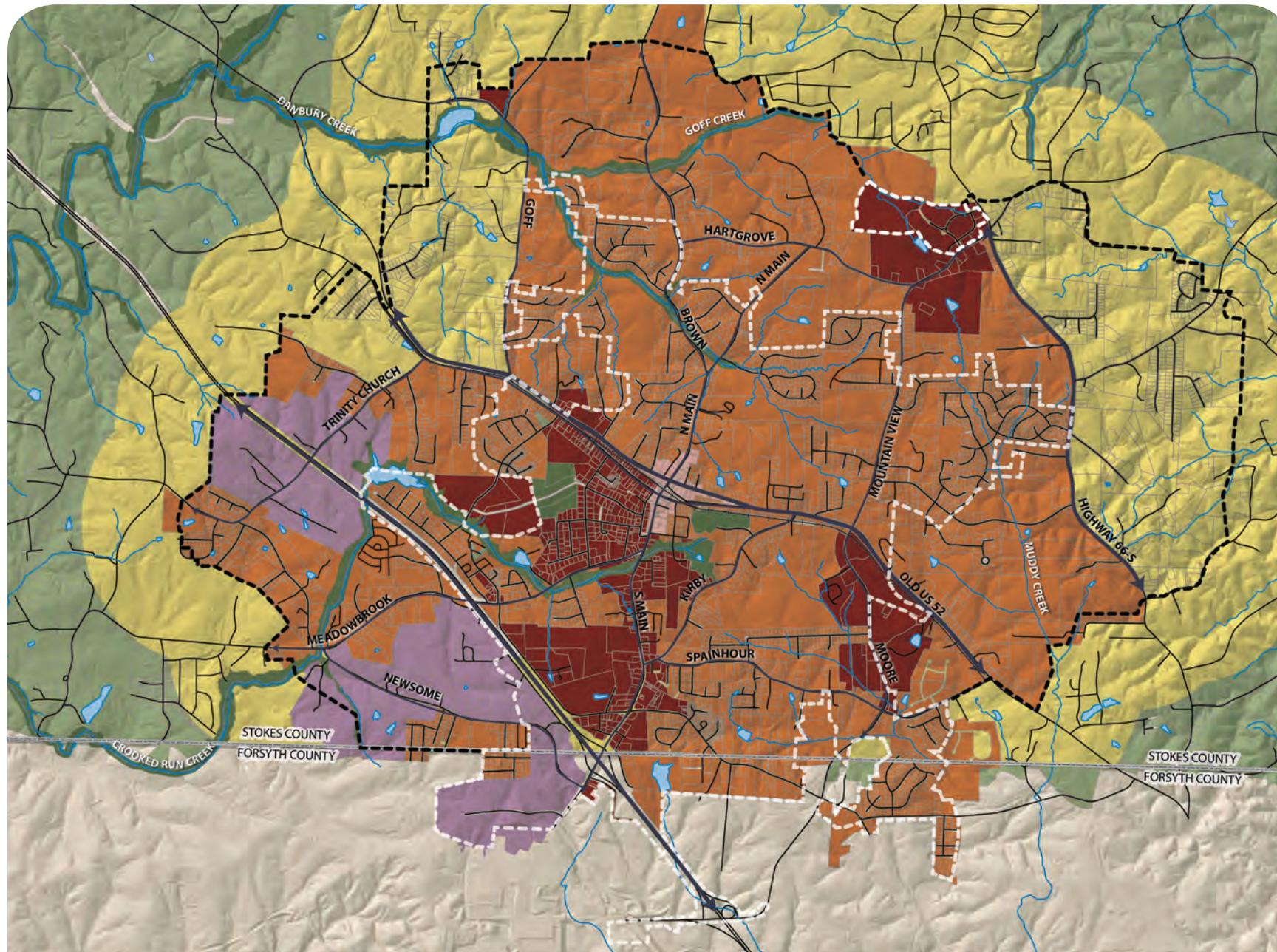
The Town is bisected by Town Fork Creek, which divides it into north and south sections. Mixed-use commercial centers exist on both the northern and southern areas of town; both areas provide an opportunity for infill development and surrounding redevelopment.

The floodplains of Town Fork Creek, Mills Creek, and their tributaries have been designated as preserved lands (O-1). Though not suitable for more intense development, these areas present opportunities for linear parks/ greenways that would connect important destinations within the town.

There are several sections of the Walnut Cove area that have been classified as industrial. Most notably, the R. J. Reynolds tract covers over 450 acres just outside the town's extra territorial jurisdiction to the west.



## KING



The City of King is located between two significant transportation arteries (US 52 and NC Route 66). Because of its proximity to major transportation corridors, King has the ability to attract major job-generating industry. It is critical for King and Stokes County as a whole that conflicting land uses (ie. residential development) do not encroach upon land projected for future industrial growth.

King has several important commercial areas that are classified as Mixed-Use Centers and Corridors (G-3). These areas include:

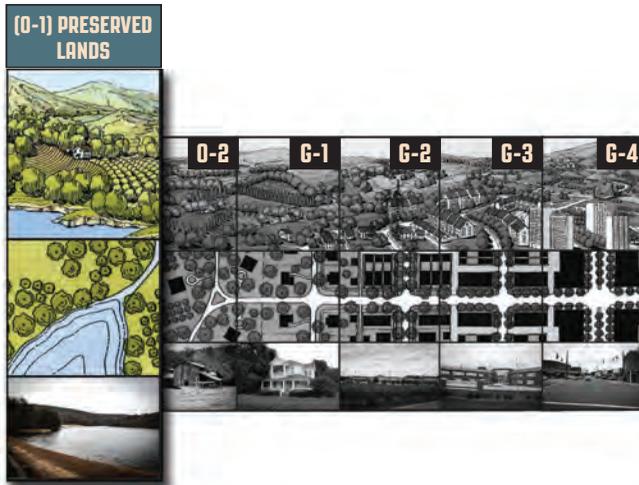
- A regional commercial hub near the interchange of US 52 and King- Tobaccoville Rd/ South Main Street.
- An important transitional corridor along South Main Street between downtown King and the commercial hub at the Highway 52 interchange.
- A satellite commercial area in northeast King surrounding the intersection of Hwy 66 and Mountain View Road.
- A mixed-use area targeted especially for medical uses along Moore Road.
- A large urban residential neighborhood west of the City's downtown core that has potential for more dense mixed use development.

State law restricts the transfer of water across watershed boundaries and thus prevents the extension of sewer lines east of Hwy 66. As a result, the area east of Hwy 66 is designated for low-density growth.

This section outlines specific policies associated with the transects found within each jurisdictions' Land Use Framework Map.

### OPEN SPACE 1 (O-1): PRESERVED LANDS

The O-1 Transect Zone is comprised of areas for preservation, conservation, or very limited development. This transect includes existing major public lands, 100 year floodplain, 100 foot stream buffer, and voluntary agricultural districts. Key areas of the O-1 transect zone in Stokes County include Hanging Rock State Park, Camp Hanes, Camp Sertoma, and the floodplains of all rivers and streams. General land use policies for the O-1 transect zone are set forth to the right.



### OPEN SPACE 1 POLICIES:

- 1.0** Encourage similar and supporting land uses, such as campgrounds, camps, lodging facilities, and recreation-oriented businesses, adjacent to existing public lands and camps.
- 2.0** Protect water quality and wildlife habitat throughout Stokes County by protecting floodplain and riparian areas from development when possible.



▲ Encourage investment adjacent to recreational resources such as Camp Sertoma that support such assets and capitalize upon the tourism draw that they present.

- 3.0** Utilize floodplain and riparian areas, which are unsuitable for development, for recreation and tourism infrastructure development.
  - 3.1** Utilize floodplain areas to create linear parks and greenways to connect communities and neighborhoods, commercial districts, and recreation resources.
  - 3.2** Allow public river accesses (blueways) along navigable rivers in Stokes County.



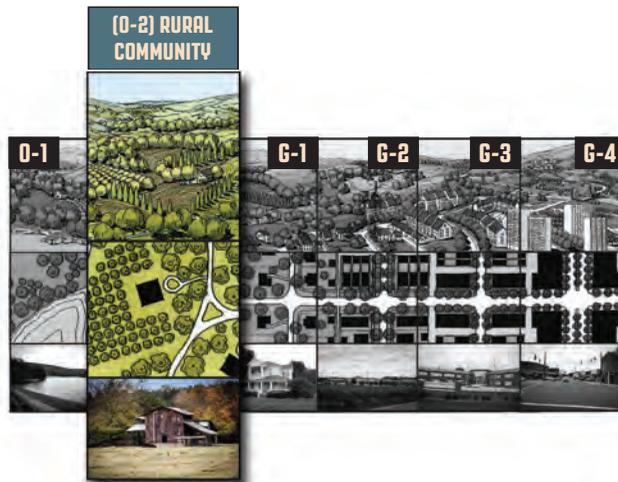
▲ Floodplain & riparian areas are substantial community assets that can be used for outdoor recreation and tourism.

## OPEN SPACE 2 (O-2): RURAL COMMUNITY

The O-2 Transect Zone is comprised of very low density development that includes many of the rural areas in Stokes County. This zone includes areas with very limited or no water or sewer infrastructure. Some areas located within the O-2 Transect Zone could ultimately transition into the O-1 Transect Zone by expanding public lands and preserving highly sensitive natural resources and riparian areas.

The preservation of rural areas accomplishes many planning goals:

- It discourages sprawl by focusing new growth in and around existing developed areas.
- It plays an important role in natural resource protection.
- It promotes fiscal stewardship by encouraging growth toward municipal areas to create more efficient use of public facilities and existing infrastructure.
- By targeting growth toward municipal areas, the public will have more opportunities to walk or bike daily.



## OPEN SPACE 2 POLICIES:

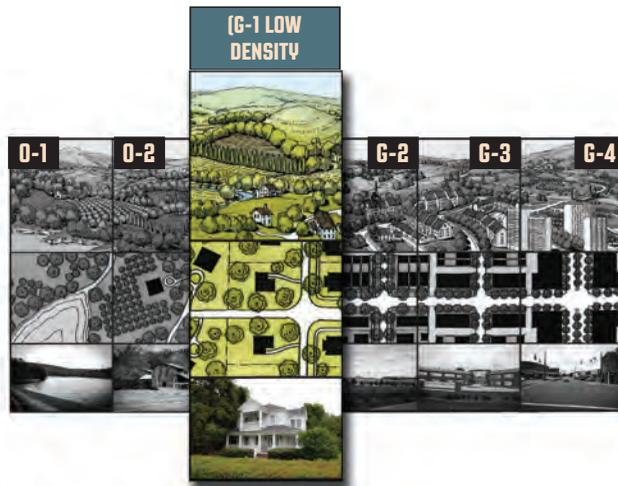
- 1.0** Support the further development and expansion of agriculture-related operations, including agri-tourism related businesses.
- 2.0** Promote institutional uses in rural areas that are compatible with the rural environment, such as churches, schools, community centers, job training centers, social service agencies, and post offices.
- 3.0** Work to expand the Stokes County Voluntary Agricultural District program to ensure any new residential homeowners are aware of nearby agricultural activities.
- 4.0** Discourage traditional residential subdivisions (1 acre lots with no preserved open space) within this district, but encourage cluster subdivisions with a greater than 3 acre density average per dwelling unit or minor subdivisions with a greater than 2 acre minimum lot size.
- 5.0** Discourage commercial land development, particularly along rural road corridors.

- 6.0** Commercial land uses might be appropriate where former commercial, but vacant, buildings exist.
- 7.0** Appropriately manage or discourage “High-Impact” land uses through detailed guidelines to maintain Stokes County’s natural resources and quality of life.
- 8.0** Continue to work with North Carolina Parks and Recreation to expand state parks within Stokes County, thereby expanding the O-1 transect zone while preserving environmentally sensitive lands that can be utilized for recreation.

## GROWTH SECTOR 1 (G-1): LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The G-1 sector, indicated by yellow on the Framework Maps, is intended for low-density residential growth and includes areas with limited access to water and sewer infrastructure. However, these areas are adjacent to target growth areas, such as municipal areas, county areas with water and sewer infrastructure, and existing and planned rural neighborhood commercial nodes. In addition, poor/wet soils that are not typically appropriate for development are included in this sector; soils information should be overlaid and investigated at a detailed level when developing in these areas to avoid the most sensitive soil types.

Appropriate development in this sector typically consists of cluster development such as conservation subdivisions, or low-density residential development on relatively large lots. Other land uses appropriate for this sector include civic uses such as parks, schools, government uses, and religious institutions.



## GROWTH SECTOR 1 POLICIES:

### 1.0 Support low density residential development where soils allow.

- 1.1 Develop standards for allowing and encouraging cluster developments and conservation subdivisions.
- 1.2 Incentivize the conservation of open space by increasing the dwelling unit density average per acre with the provision of additional open space by the developer.
- 1.3 Make provisions for density averaging to allow developers to take advantage of soils most suitable for development, while preserving poor soil areas for open space.

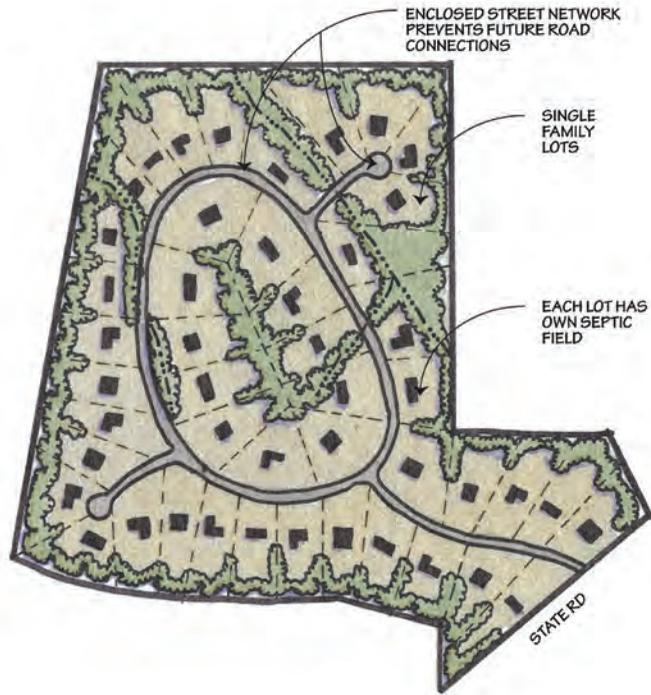
### 2.0 Connect these areas with Growth Areas, Mixed Use Centers, and Downtowns via multi-use greenways, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

- 2.1 Require all new development to dedicate multi-use greenway easements in accordance with this plan and all other adopted bicycle and pedestrian plans.



Single-family homes, such as this farmhouse, are the primary land use type found within the low-density growth sector of Stokes County.

### TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### Successful Flexible Developments:

- Prairie Crossing - Grayslake, IL
- Serenbe - Chattahoochee Hills, GA
- Village Homes - Davis, CA

#### The Numbers:

Acreage: 52.5  
 Lots: 46 Single Family (1 Acre Parcels)  
 Roads: +/- 4085 LF  
 Open Space: -0-  
 Trails: -0-

#### The Numbers:

Acreage: 52.5  
 Lots: 42 Single Family (1/4 Acre to 1 Acre Parcels)  
 4 Multi-Family  
 Roads: +/- 3260 LF  
 Open Space: +/- 22 Ac.  
 Trails: +/- 1 1/3 Mi.

### FLEXIBLE DEVELOPMENT



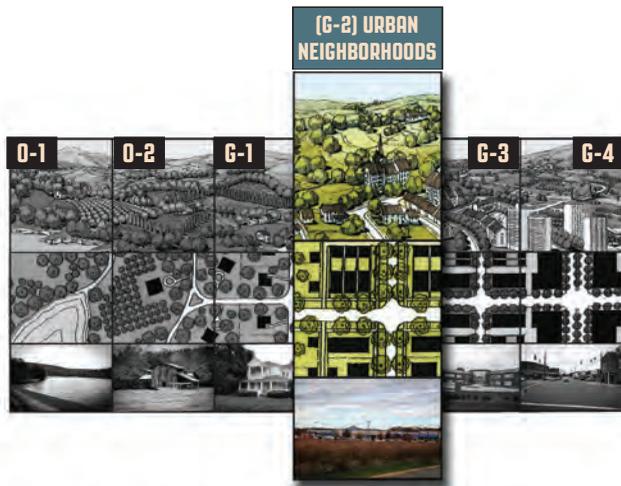
### FLEXIBLE SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT

A flexible development pattern, shown to the right alongside the traditional development pattern, was preferable among public workshop participants. Features such as community open space, interconnecting trails and the ability to preserve Stokes County's rural character were some of the most well received features found in the flexible development plan.

## GROWTH SECTOR 2 (G-2): URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS

The G-2 Sector, indicated by orange on the Framework Maps, contains denser, mixed-use development at a scale appropriate for neighborhood commercial centers and walkable residential neighborhoods. Many of these areas have access to water and sewer infrastructure where growth should be directed. A local road network should be well connected and link to larger collector streets. Paths should form pedestrian connections linking internal parks, multi-use greenways, sidewalks, and adjacent preserved open spaces. This pattern of development can provide significant public health benefits by creating safe and accessible opportunities for walking and biking.

G-2 areas are appropriate for higher density residential types, including small lot single-family homes, townhomes, apartment or condominium buildings, or mixed-use buildings. This transect should serve as transition between higher intensity commercial uses and existing lower density neighborhoods, and take advantage of proximity to existing centers of commerce, education, or employment centers such as Forsyth Tech, downtowns, and medical facilities.



### GROWTH SECTOR 2 POLICIES:

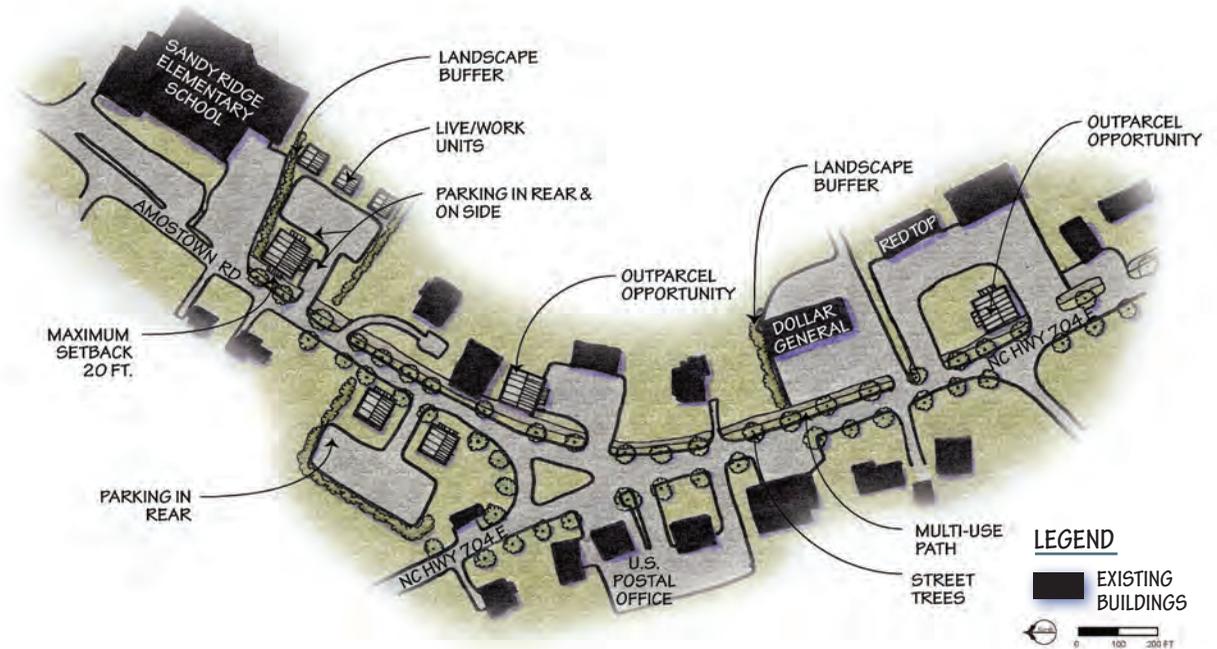
**1.0** Encourage a range of housing opportunities including single-family and multi-family that is context sensitive, accounting for the nature of surrounding properties.

**2.0** Provide for neighborhood-scale commercial uses (retail and office) that appropriately serve nearby residential areas and emphasize pedestrian use.

**3.0** Allow light industrial uses that effectively blend with the surrounding development context and environment.

**4.0** Ensure that all commercial development respects and contributes to the community character of Stokes County and its municipal areas.

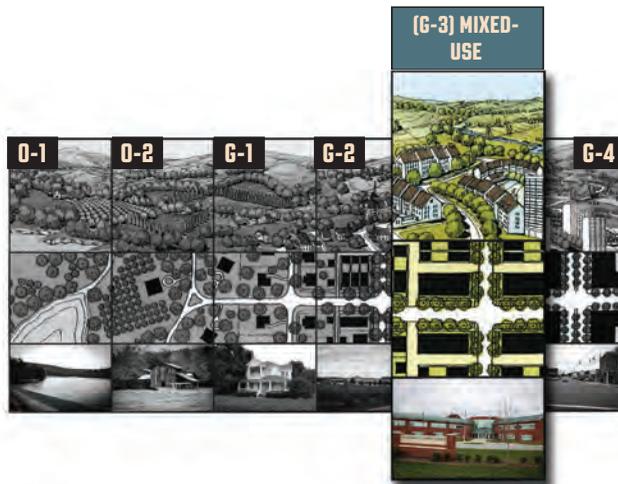
*Twelve (12) Rural Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, like this intersection in Sandy Ridge, have been identified throughout Stokes County as areas to focus rural growth. Measures such as reduced setbacks and locating parking on the sides and rear can help to preserve the character of rural Stokes County.*



## GROWTH SECTOR 3 (G-3): NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE

The G-3 Sector is indicated by red on the Framework Map. Water and sewer infrastructure and major transportation networks and nodes serve these areas. The G-3 Sector also includes major road corridors for which specific attention is required to avoid unwanted strip development.

A full-range of land uses are appropriate in the G-3 sector, including single-family and multi-family residential, civic uses, neighborhood and regional commercial centers, and light industrial areas.



## GROWTH SECTOR 3 POLICIES:

**1.0** Greater emphasis should be placed on building form, orientation, and architectural character, rather than specific land use type.

**2.0** Ensure that all commercial development contributes to the community character of Stokes County and its municipal areas by meeting minimum architectural and design standards.

### INFILL DEVELOPMENT AT A WALNUT COVE COMMERCIAL CENTER

Well-designed infill development could help existing commercial centers better contribute to the community character of Stokes County. Several features of the design below should be incorporated into new mixed-use developments as well as considered when retrofitting existing developments.

#### DESIGN FEATURES

- Vehicular parking should generally be placed along the side and rear of structures.
- The building edge should extend along a significant percentage of the road fronting lot line.
- Encourage multi-story buildings that provide for mixed-uses.
- Orient the building front toward the road.
- The building architecture should create interest through significant fenestration – approximately 60% of building fronts should incorporate glass.
- Enhanced Public Infrastructure



**3.0** “Big Box” retail shall incorporate architectural features in alignment with Stokes County character, provide for considerable parking tree islands and perimeter landscaping, and incorporate effective stormwater management systems.

**4.0** Reserve lands suitable for industrial growth, preventing the encroachment of residential development.

**5.0** Industrial development shall incorporate design features, such as walking trails, appropriate for workplace fitness activities.

**6.0** Manage growth along major corridors to create an urban form and effectively control access management.

**7.0** Ensure that all commercial development respects and contributes to the community character of Stokes County and its municipal areas.

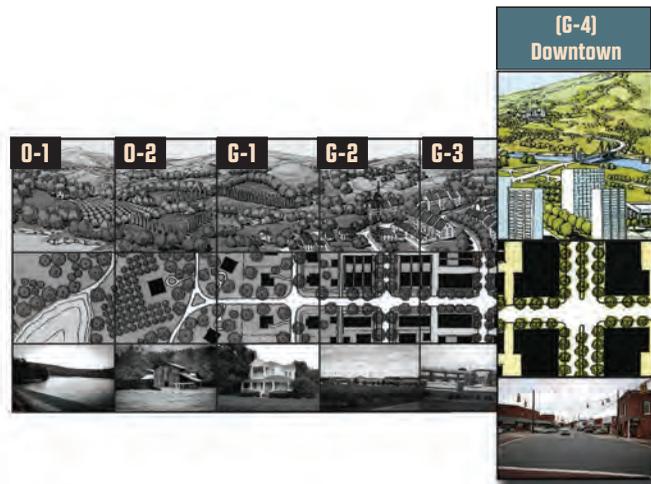


*Whether it's a local business or chain store, when incorporating basic architectural and design standards new commercial development can contribute positively to Stokes County's built environment.*

## GROWTH SECTOR 4 (G-4): DOWNTOWN

The G-4 transect zone is comprised primarily of existing downtown core areas, with a relatively dense street grid, and is appropriate for redevelopment or additional development. G-4 transect zone areas are shown in pink on the Framework Maps, which include the historic downtowns of Danbury, Walnut Cove, and King.

These areas are appropriate for redevelopment and new infill development and are well served by existing infrastructure. Because this area is already well provided for in terms of urban services, it is one of the most efficient, fiscally responsible, and attractive areas for redevelopment or development of underutilized land.



### GROWTH SECTOR 4 POLICIES:

- 1.0** Development must provide special consideration for pedestrians with particular attention to the “pedestrian triangle.”
- 2.0** Maximum setbacks will be required to ensure that buildings front along the street and adjacent to sidewalks.
- 3.0** Signage must be oriented and sized appropriately for the pedestrian scale.
- 4.0** Parking shall be located to the sides and the rear of structures or on-street.
- 5.0** Structures shall provide for a minimum of two stories, with office or residential uses located on the second story.
- 6.0** Locate public buildings, such as Town Hall, etc. within the G-4 District to support redevelopment efforts.

### PEDESTRIAN TRIANGLE

Providing special attention to the “pedestrian triangle”, or area between a building’s awning and curb, is a critical component of a competitive downtown. Several features that should be found in this zone are illustrated below.



**7.0** Initiate streetscape design and traffic enhancements with NCDOT to realize municipal interests and needs.

**8.0** Ensure that all commercial development contributes to the community character of each municipal area by meeting minimum architectural and design standards.

### LEVERAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS: KING'S CIVIC BLOCK

The concept illustrated below provides a site plan that utilizes municipal buildings to support redevelopment efforts. A capital infrastructure project of this magnitude would serve as a major catalyst to further private revitalization in King's downtown.

#### CONCEPT "A"

In King's Civic Block Concept "A", public projects would include a City Hall, amphitheater, and municipal parking lot off of Main St. The amphitheater could satisfy the need for a downtown greenspace.

*Note: See Economic Development Chapter for an alternative site plan, Concept "B", for King's Civic Block.*









ALLEY'S  
MAYTAG CO.  
1947-2002

OPEN  
ALLEY'S  
Vintage Shoppe

ALLEY'S  
Vintage Shoppe

ALLEY'S  
VINTAGE  
SHOPPE  
112-6871

# CHAPTER FOUR: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

### A. Business Recruitment

### B. Small Business and Main Street Development

### C. Workforce Development

### D. Quality of Life and Tourism Development

Stokes County, like many rural communities across North Carolina, is working to attract job growth and investment.

Also, like much of rural North Carolina, Stokes County must confront its challenges – lagging population growth, high poverty rates, and an aging workforce – to realize economic growth.

Fortunately, Stokes County has an abundance of assets and resources to help meet these challenges. Some of these assets include: the major Highway 52 transportation corridor near King; the distinctive, small town Main Street environments of King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury; and a tremendous natural environment that includes the Sauratown Mountains, Hanging Rock State Park, and the Dan River.

Accordingly, the Stokes County economic development strategy must be diverse and provide for a range of initiatives that support:

- A** BUSINESS RECRUITMENT;
- B** SMALL BUSINESS AND MAIN STREET DEVELOPMENT;
- C** WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; AND
- D** QUALITY OF LIFE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT.

## **A** BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

Stokes County must achieve three distinctive goals to attract new business and industry.

First, Stokes County must position itself **organizational-ly** for success; a public-private, nonprofit corporation structure will provide the necessary flexibility for recruitment negotiations and financial obligations.

Second, economic development leaders must be prepared with **readily-available land**; industry site selection firms will often only consider “shovel-ready” property.

Lastly, Stokes County must invest in effective **branding and marketing** through print and web.

### BUSINESS RECRUITMENT GOALS: THE BIG THREE

**Organizational Structure**

**Readily-Available Land**

**Branding and Marketing**

The following recommendations outline specific objectives associated with each goal.



Stokes County Economic Development (SCED) is the primary entity with a focus and responsibility for developing the county's economic potential. As a governmental entity, the organization is limited in several ways that a public-private, nonprofit entity would not be, such as the ability to raise private sector funds.



**1.0 Create a nonprofit economic development corporation.** Stokes County Economic Development must transition into a public-private, nonprofit economic development corporation that would bring together both the public and private sectors. This could also be accomplished by the development of a sister non-profit corporation to compliment the public sector corporation.

**Action Steps TO FORM A NON-PROFIT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITY INCLUDE:**

- 1 Host a meeting of key stakeholders to explore the various economic development organizational structure models.
- 2 Develop a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the activities of the nonprofit, how it will support Stokes County, and how it will interact with ally agencies.
- 3 Survey for private partner interest and gauge funding support.
- 4 Launch a fundraising campaign, potentially utilizing the services of a professional fundraising firm.

**Advantages OF UTILIZING A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENTITY INCLUDE:**

- A nonprofit corporation is typically more effective at raising private funds and grants, especially foundation grants.
- If structured correctly, a nonprofit could absorb unforeseen liabilities and be a buffer for the County. For example, the nonprofit could be used to control property.
- A nonprofit provides for a higher level of confidentiality in handling sensitive economic development information.
- A nonprofit can help insulate economic development activities from politics, and protect political leaders from negative repercussions of economic development activities.
- There are certain expenditures such as marketing and costly travel that may be more palatable to the public if paid for from private-sector funds.
- All of the above advantages of this organizational structure are important, but of paramount importance to most counties is the ability to supplement public money. Most public-private partnerships strive to reach a 50-50 model, whereby 50% of funding is public and 50% of funding is private.

## Readily-Available Land

**2.0** Partner with community organizations throughout Stokes County and develop community-driven strategic plans.

**2.1** The Planning Director or its liaison should regularly meet with leaders from each community.

**2.2** A community-driven strategic plan should be created that addresses public space, community events, recreation and trails, schools, and other community-specific issues.

**2.3** The County should continue to provide staff support to assist with plan implementation to generally improve quality of life throughout the County.



*There are many organizations, such as the Francisco Community Group, working throughout Stokes County to improve their communities. Stokes County must partner with these organizations to capitalize on opportunities to improve quality of life.*

### Stokes County must Identify and Secure Land Suitable for Business and Industry Development.

Stokes County and its municipalities must work in concert to preserve the County's existing buildings and limited land appropriate for manufacturing and industrial uses. Specifically, large tracts near Highway 52 must be preserved since Stokes County's access to and from Winston-Salem and I-40 creates an opportunity for businesses and enterprises looking to locate or expand in the region.

**1.0** **Existing Buildings.** The Stokes County EDC will identify and promote an inventory of existing structures to companies inquiring about locating in the Area.



*Promote existing vacant buildings such as the Elastometrics Building near Francisco as an available site that could be up-fitted to suit a variety of users.*

**2.0** **New Building Sites.** Similarly, the county and its municipalities should promote an inventory of prime locations for potential development.

**2.1** Prepare, pre-certify, and make potential building sites “shovel-ready” in order to increase their attractiveness to businesses looking to locate in the area.

**2.2** Take measures to perform “due diligence” on potential sites to investigate potential barriers to development.

#### DUE DILIGENCE CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1 Phase 1 environmental study
- 2 Review for archaeological, historical significance, and endangered species
- 3 Geo-technical survey
- 4 Conceptual master plan and estimates of probable development cost
- 5 Title search

*Note: It may be necessary to secure sites with an option or other form of agreement in order to perform some or all of these actions.*

**2.3** Explore public- private partnerships with construction and development firms to market and promote qualified business sites with shell buildings or virtual spec buildings.

**2.4** Investigate the feasibility of offering incentives in the form of free or reduced price land or buildings to companies looking to locate in the area.



▲ *Virtual Spec Buildings are a marketing tool that shows how a building can be developed or expanded on a site.*

### NEWSOME ROAD CORRIDOR INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX CONCEPT

At the public workshop in King, the design team created a preliminary concept for the Newsome Road Corridor which analyzes how the Newsome Road Corridor could be developed for industrial/ business use. Such preliminary planning efforts are effective at identifying barriers and opportunities to development in advance- and thereby make the sites more appealing to businesses.

#### PHASING



#### ANALYSIS



**2.5** Work alongside Rockingham County to explore the possibility of commercial or industrial development in the Pine Hall area from the 772/ 311 intersection to the county line to take advantage of rail and natural gas infrastructure and the availability of water.

**2.6** Follow best practices for site development to promote and market the Holder, Moore, and Newsome Drive properties as prepared, certified, prime locations that are shovel-ready for industrial development.

Stokes County's 2013 "Action Plan for Recruitment" Report identified properties on Moore Rd, a property off of Highway 52 and Newsome Road known as the "Holder Property" and another tract off of Newsome Drive as the most promising building sites in the county.

**2.7** Target medical/ health care related development along the Moore-RJR Road corridor to U.S. Highway 52 (I-73).

**2.8** Conduct site-specific soils evaluations at targeted commercial areas throughout County where sewer infrastructure is unavailable.



Several tracts for sale along Newsome Rd. in King offer preferable industrial opportunities in Stokes County.



To compete for *new investment, industry, and jobs*, Stokes County must have *shovel-ready* sites. Here are the steps:

- 1 Secure sites with an option or other form of agreement in order to conduct due diligence.
- 2 If due diligence proves positive, move forward with longer-term control either through an option, purchase, or partnership with the landowner or developer.
- 3 Certify the site through the NC Department of Commerce. Much of the certification work will be completed in the due diligence phase. Certified sites are common in most states, so companies and site selection consultants know to ask for certified sites.
- 4 After due diligence and certification, create detailed plans that visually demonstrate how the site can be developed.

## Branding and Promotion

### Stokes County must develop and maintain a strategic marketing plan for attracting new business and industry.

Enticing successful businesses to locate in an area is a function of more than just supplying buildings or sites that meet their physical needs. Marketing and promotion of sites and their benefits are indispensable in bringing those sites to companies' attention. The County, Danbury, King, and Walnut Cove should seek to effectively market Stokes County to businesses inquiring about locating in the area.

*Sample Story Graphic: Stokes County has many economic development success stories, which can be highlighted through "story graphics."*



### 1.0 Direct limited marketing funds towards the target sectors identified by Stokes County:

- Advanced manufacturing
- Medical devices
- Distribution and logistics
- Professional services
- Tourism services (though not identified by the "Action Plan", there are identified opportunities for providing services such as accommodations and retail to the existing tourism market in Stokes County).

### 2.0 Create partnerships with the NC Department of Commerce and neighboring counties to reach a larger audience and leverage marketing dollars.

### 3.0 Create a marketing plan that pursues target audiences through creating basic marketing materials that support recruitment, prioritizing the website, utilizing social media outreach, and reaching out to regional businesses.



#### ELEMENTS OF A MARKETING PLAN:

- 1 Create an Identity- "Branding"
- 2 E-Marketing & Lead Generation. Design a template that can be used in electronic marketing; in-house, on-demand printed proposals and report materials.
- 3 Create brochures, electronic brochures, and other marketing materials.
- 4 Internet and Social Media marketing.
- 5 Market to existing businesses.
- 6 Leverage Partnerships with state and local government entities and nonprofits.

Stokes County and its municipalities must continue to support efforts to cultivate and foster the creation and success of small businesses. Local government must continue to provide critical infrastructure, such as water and sewer, but must also provide other critical public sector investments necessary to attract private sector development.



97% of the County's business establishments have fewer than 50 employees.

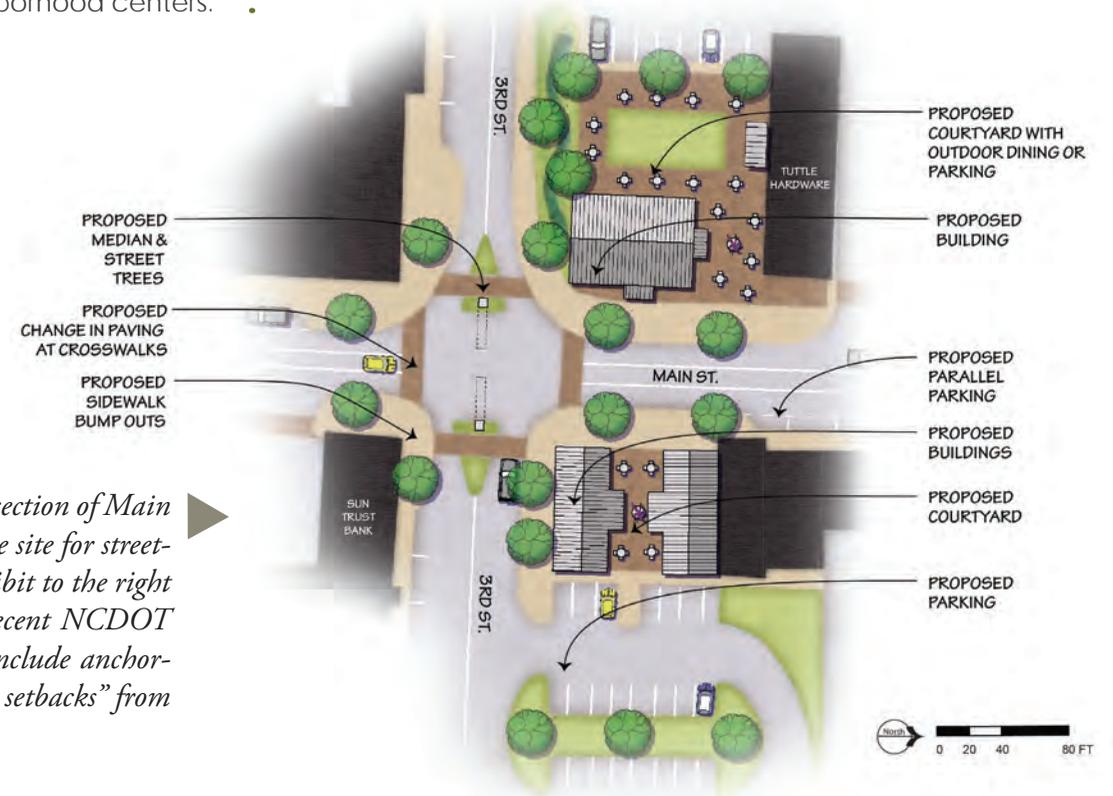
**1.0 Enhance the physical environment within each downtown area within the county.**

**1.1** Pursue downtown streetscape improvements in Stokes County's municipal areas by providing the sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure necessary to support downtown commerce. Specific initiatives include:

- Create pedestrian circulation plans that identify priority sidewalk projects and support local businesses by linking commercial areas to parking and neighborhood centers.

- Work with NCDOT and the local MPO/ RPO to get sidewalk projects on the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), North Carolina's identification and prioritization list for funding transportation projects.
- Seek grant funding or use capital improvement funds for priority sidewalk projects that cannot access funding through the STIP.
- Require sidewalks when development or redevelopment occurs in downtown areas and commercial centers.

Located at the heart of Walnut Cove, the intersection of Main Street and 3rd Street would be the most visible site for streetscape improvements in Walnut Cove. The exhibit to the right illustrates changes that could expand upon recent NCDOT streetscape improvements. Next steps would include anchoring the intersection with buildings with "zero setbacks" from the sidewalk.



- Establish a “fee in lieu of” program in which developers have an option to either construct required sidewalks or contribute funds to municipal capital improvement funds.
- Danbury pedestrian path reestablishment project. Re-establish the former pedestrian path along Main Street.
- Walnut Cove Town Hall sidewalk connector project. Complete the sidewalk connection from Main St. to Town Hall.

**1.2**

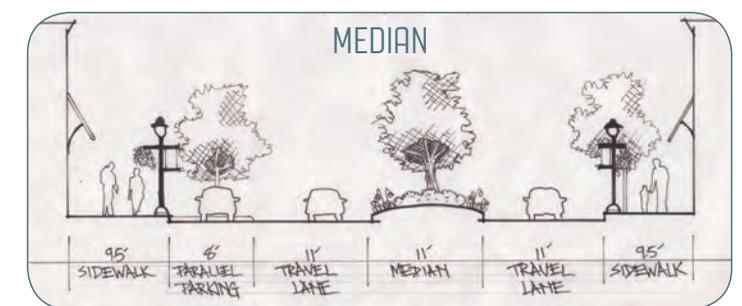
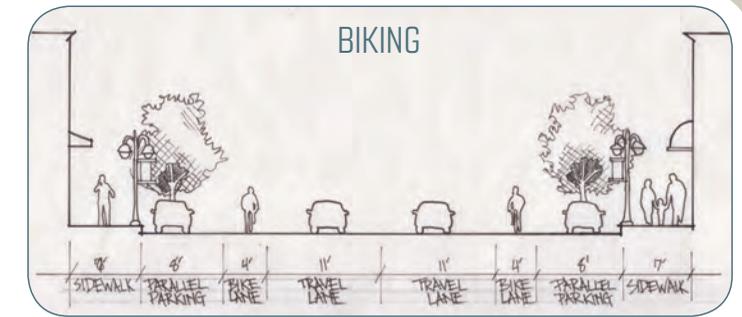
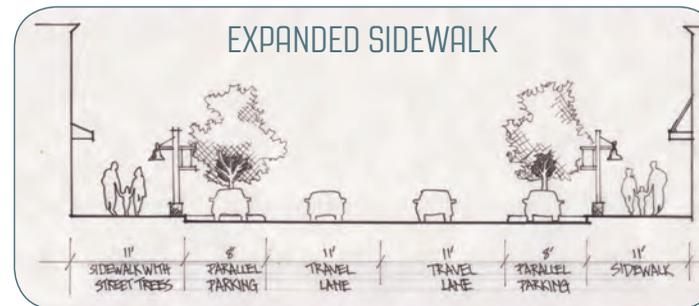
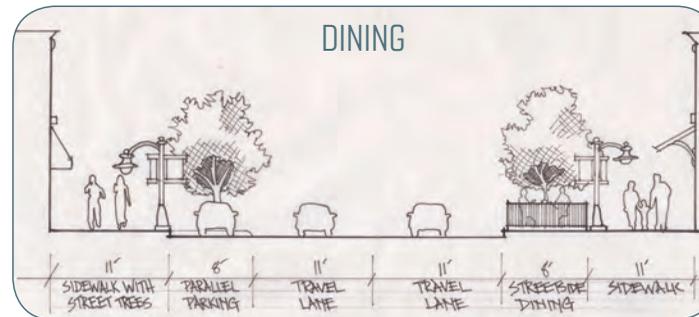
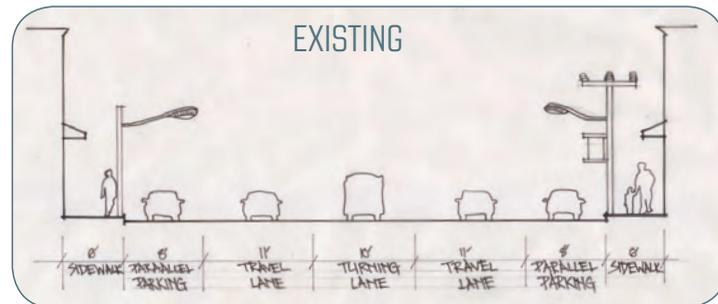
Coordinate with NCDOT to secure other improvements to Public Space and downtown streetscapes. Specific initiatives include:

- Explore opportunities for public spaces/gathering areas on the public way such as encroachment agreements that allow outdoor seating and dining areas.
- Install street furniture such as benches and waste receptacles that reflect the distinct character and style of each of Stokes County’s municipalities and help to create more functional, inviting public spaces.

- Commission public art that showcase the communities’ history, culture, and values.
- Install human-scaled street lighting that aligns with each communities’ distinct character and style.
- Danbury traffic calming project. In Danbury, work with NCDOT to implement traffic calming strategies such as road diets and colored/ stamped pavement to slow traffic and create a more pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

**STREETSCAPE OPTIONS IN WALNUT COVE**

A variety of streetscape improvement options were explored during the Walnut Cove public workshop:



## DOWNTOWN DANBURY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Traffic calming measures and a town-wide way-finding initiative will help to create a safer, pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

The changes are critical as Danbury seeks to expand tourism development and generate private sector investment.



EXISTING



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

### 1.3

**Walnut Cove Redevelopment District.** Create a Redevelopment District (in accordance with NCGS 160A, Article 22) in Walnut Cove that allows the town to acquire and redevelop blighted structures in its downtown.

- Create and adopt a Redevelopment Plan in accordance with NCGS 160A-513 that enables the community to engage the redevelopment powers set forth in state law. This plan should clearly set forth the goals, objectives, priorities, and action steps that will be accomplished in the Redevelopment District.
- Explore the possibility of passing a bond to fund the improvements as set forth in the plan.
- Commission public art that showcases the communities' history, culture, and values.

## WALNUT COVE: RIPE FOR REDEVELOPMENT

A Redevelopment District is a geographic area targeted for redevelopment by a local government pursuant to the Urban Redevelopment Law (North Carolina General Statutes (G.S.) Chapter 160A, Article 22). To be eligible for designation as a Redevelopment District, the targeted area must be classified as blighted—meaning the growth of the area is impaired by the presence of dilapidated or obsolete buildings, overcrowding, or other unsafe conditions—or as being in danger of becoming blighted. Once designated as a Redevelopment District, special statutory powers may be exercised by the local government to attract private investment. Other powers include:

- 1 Acquisition of property, including by power of eminent domain for blighted parcels;
- 2 Clearance of areas by demolition, removal of existing buildings;
- 3 Installation or construction of site improvements and other site preparation;
- 4 Entering into contracts for construction, demolition, moving of structures, and repair work (G.S. 160A-514(b) and Article 8 of G.S. Chapter 143).
- 5 Sale of real property through competitive bidding procedures (G.S. 160A-514(c));
- 6 Carrying out programs of compulsory repair and rehabilitation (probably through the use of minimum housing codes), to include “the making of loans therefor”;
- 7 Engaging in “programs of assistance and financing, including the making of loans,” for rehabilitation, repair, construction, acquisition, or reconditioning of residential units and commercial and industrial facilities in a redevelopment area. G.S. 160A-512, G.S. 160A-503(19).

**1.4** Effectively organize and provide for additional public parking in downtown areas to foster the success of local businesses.

**1.5** In Walnut Cove, create a Municipal Services Designation to help finance downtown improvements.

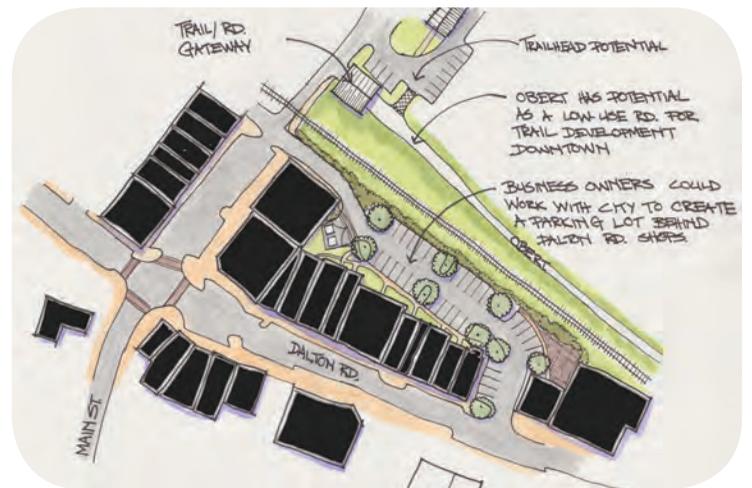
**Walnut Cove Municipal Services District Designation:**

With support from downtown businesses, create a Municipal Services District in accordance with the provisions of NCGS §160A-536 through §160A-544 to finance improvements to the downtown area. Municipal Service Districts are special taxation districts, which are represented by business owners and taxpayers within the District, and provide a mechanism to finance downtown improvements.

**DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARKING IMPROVEMENTS**



*Danbury.* Create additional public parking adjacent to the Board of Education.



*King.* Consider working with landowners to develop a public parking lot behind Dalton Rd.



*Walnut Cove.* A gateway to the Post Office's parking lot incorporates a seat wall, greenscreen, and wayfinding elements that contribute to the urban form and Walnut Cove's revitalization.

**1.6** Develop voluntary Façade Improvement Programs in which businesses are reimbursed for a portion of the costs of improvements to the façade of their buildings that meet certain standards set by the municipal jurisdiction.

**1.7** Utilize the redevelopment and improvement of existing downtown parks to anchor downtown areas and add pedestrian friendly visitor activities adjacent to business and civic spaces.

**2.0** Create functional and aesthetic improvements to commercial hubs and corridors to make them more appealing for commerce.

**2.1** Require that new establishments in commercial hubs meet standards for appearance and functionality for Mixed Use Centers as described in the Land Use chapter of this plan. Standards include the allowance of mixed uses and requirements for the design of structures and their sites.

**2.2** Explore opportunities for infill development to capitalize upon existing infrastructure and maximize the potential of existing commercial properties.

## FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

Facade improvement programs are a critical tool for advancing downtown revitalization efforts. Basic and inexpensive facade treatments, such as those developed at the public workshops, can drastically improve the

downtown image. General facade guidelines are also listed below.

@ Danbury



@ Walnut Cove



## SUGGESTED FACADE GUIDELINES

1. Strong Corners
2. Masonry (Brick) Storefronts
3. Rigid Awning Systems (With Signage)
4. Storefront Ground & Punch Windows Above
5. Clear Cornice Line/ Parapet
6. Rhythmic Variety
7. 2-3 Story Limits
8. Exterior Accent Downlights at Human Scale
9. Streetscape Texture
10. Sloped Roof = Stepped Facade

- 2.3** Capitalize on expected growth at Meadows and create a zoning overlay district to ensure high-quality and dense development that provides a return on recent infrastructure investments.

### MEADOWS



### INFILL DEVELOPMENT AT THE WALNUT COVE INGLES

The commercial node at NC HWY 65 and US HWY 311 in Walnut Cove has substantial infill development potential. Several features should be considered at this location:

- Parking along side or rear of building (note: NCDOT Right-of-Way would need to be determined);
- Proposed Greenway Trail Connector; and
- Infill Development.



**3.0 Leverage the creation of new public buildings to improve the downtown physical environments and to generate traffic and patronage to local businesses.**

**3.1 Danbury Town Hall.** Explore an opportunity to create a new Town Hall building in the downtown along with a larger streetscape and public infrastructure investment.

**3.2 King Town Hall.** With the development of a new Town Hall, consider a creation of “civic block” - to create a vibrant and thriving commercial center.

- Explore the potential for new public parking facilities.
- Investigate ways of bringing residential units into the downtown area to foster economic activity.
- Study the potential for new public spaces such as an amphitheater or civic plaza that could support community events and interaction.
- Study the potential for a farmers market that could provide economic activity to the downtown as well as support the community’s desire to retain its rural and agricultural character.

- Explore the potential for creating a “Downtown Mall” through the closure and rerouting of a portion of East Dalton Street. Such a place would energize the pedestrian atmosphere and open doors for new business opportunities in several vacant downtown buildings.
- Improve the functionality and appearance of the public space on North Main Street to create an appealing gateway to the commerce and activity in the downtown area.

- Redevelop Town Hall Site and other municipal buildings in a manner that is a catalyst for good development in the downtown area. This is an opportunity for the city to lead the way in quality development by setting an example of best practices in downtown development that reflects King's character.

*Using public sector investment to generate private sector investment.*

**CATALYST PROJECT: A CIVIC BLOCK FOR DOWNTOWN KING**

King's Civic Block Concept “B” features a City Hall, Police Department and downtown farmers’ market. A walkway from Dalton St. to the farmers market and civic plaza would encourage downtown visitation on the weekends.

*Note: See Land Use Chapter for an alternative site plan, Concept “A”, for King’s Civic Block.*

## KING GATEWAY

The North Main Street gateway can be significantly improved through basic streetscape enhancements:

- Install a signage & wayfinding system.
- Extend King's streetscape with curbs, gutters, and sidewalk paving.
- Construct a landscaped median.
- Improve building facades with murals.



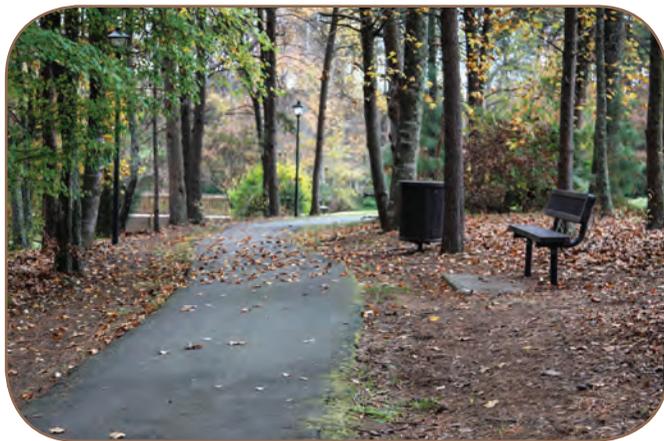
EXISTING



PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

**4.0** Develop Capital Improvement Plans that set forth goals for improvements to public space over a five year period. Make a portion of these funds “leverage only,” providing a designated fund for matching grants.

**5.0** Create greenway infrastructure that connects commercial areas, neighborhoods, and other community assets.



▲ *Greenways are highly desirable amenities that attract all ages and help drive economic growth.*

## KING MALL

At the King public workshop a downtown business owner proposes a big idea: “What if we closed off a block of Dalton St. to create a downtown pedestrian mall?”

Although bold, the King mall proposal would provide for central community greenspace to attract civic activity and patronage of downtown businesses.



The presence of a quality workforce is one of the most critical factors a company considers when deciding whether to grow or expand in an area.

Stokes County must continue to support and attract emerging industries and develop its workforce. The following policies and strategies have been identified as methods to support and foster business development in Stokes County.

**1.0 Establish a “business development center” or a “business incubator.”**

**1.1** A business development center can provide business planning assistance, assistance with identifying business partners, access to financing, exposure to critical business or technical support services.

**2.0 Partner with Forsyth Technical Community College and other colleges and universities throughout the region to prepare post-secondary students for future careers in target industries and businesses.**

**2.1**

Support K-12, post-secondary, and workforce training programs offered through county schools and Forsyth Technical Community College to enhance the competitiveness of the County’s resident workforce.



*Stokes Early College is preparing students, particularly those without a family tradition of a college education, to obtain an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.*

**3.0**

**Develop flexible policies that recognize the broad scope of impacts and economic potential of emerging industries such as agri-tourism, solar farms and cellular communication towers.**

**3.1**

Be proactive in researching and addressing emerging industries, their potential in Stokes County, and their impacts upon their surroundings.

**3.2**

Ensuring that emerging industries are developed in harmony with the rural character of Stokes County through the installation of vegetative buffers, increased setbacks, viewshed restrictions, façade/architectural requirements, etc.

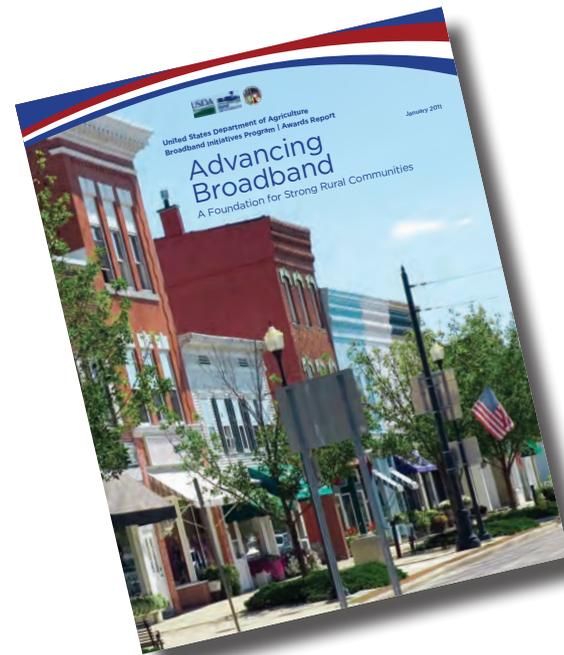
**4.0** Work with Stokes County Schools/ Stokes County Agricultural Extension to strengthen agricultural education.



photo: info.nc.agr.com

▲ North Stokes High School has an Agricultural Program that has achieved Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification- enabling the food created to be used in the school cafeteria.

**5.0** Encourage and support efforts to improve broadband internet access for Stokes County residents to capitalize on the trend toward home based occupations and remote workplaces.



▲ *Case Study:* Wilkes Telecommunications received a grant from the USDA Rural Utilities Service's Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP). The funds will go toward creating the necessary infrastructure to reach 3,680 households and 3,358 businesses.

Tourism development provides a significant opportunity for economic growth in Stokes County. The county currently experiences over 900,000 annual visitors who predominantly come to experience the County's natural assets like Hanging Rock State Park, Sauratown Mountains, and the Dan River. 400,000+ visitors a year come to Hanging Rock State Park alone.

However, a lack of services and accommodations prevent the county from capturing significant economic benefits of these visitors. The County must develop a network of tourism services and infrastructure to provide visitors with opportunities to stay longer and spend more money. There is also an opportunity to refine the tourism entities themselves to help them draw an even larger tourism market.

The development of tourism assets not only brings visitors to the county, but it also improves and creates amenities that locals enjoy. Improved quality of life can attract new business, drive real estate investment, or entice people to relocate, retire, or buy second homes in the County.

The following strategies and recommendations highlight opportunities for (1) Tourism Product Development and (2) Marketing.

## Tourism Product Development

### 1.0 Invest in outdoor recreation infrastructure to attract additional visitors to Stokes County.

#### 1.1 Continue efforts to develop the NC Mountains to Sea Trail in Stokes County.

- Extend the Mountains-to-Sea Trail from Hanging Rock State Park to Danbury.
- Connect with the statewide trails initiative and the Sauratown Trail Association and amenable landowners on permanent easements.
- Work with NC Division of Parks and Recreation for technical, administrative, and financial support for local efforts to establish the MST trail in Stokes County.
- Create a detailed trail plan for the Dan River corridor.

#### 1.2 Support efforts to create a destination-quality mountain biking trail system at Moore's Springs.

#### 1.3 Implement improvements at Moratock Park in accordance with the Moratock Park Master Plan. This public sector investment will create excitement and attract visitation that can help generate new business opportunities.

#### 1.4 Foster nature-based "eco" tourism on the Dan River.

- Promote the Dan River as a destination for paddling, fishing, and camping.
- Develop a multi-use hiking/ biking trail system along the Dan River, which could serve as part of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
- Continue to develop and improve river access along the river.

### 2.0 Establish and enhance cultural and agricultural heritage activities aimed at tourists.

#### 2.1 Develop agri-tourism in the county, such as local farmer's markets, "pick-your-own produce" farms, and other opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in Stokes County's agricultural heritage.

#### 2.2 Finalize the Danbury Art Market to showcase the visual arts and attract visitors.

### 3.0 Capitalize upon Scenic Byways in Stokes County on Highways 89, 66, and 8 as an opportunity to develop tourism-related assets and capture tourism expenditures.

**3.1** Improve scenic byway signage.

**3.2** When opportunities become available, work with NCDOT to designate cycling lanes to promote cycling as a tourist attraction as well as promote safety for cyclists.

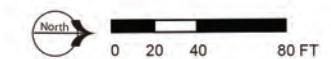
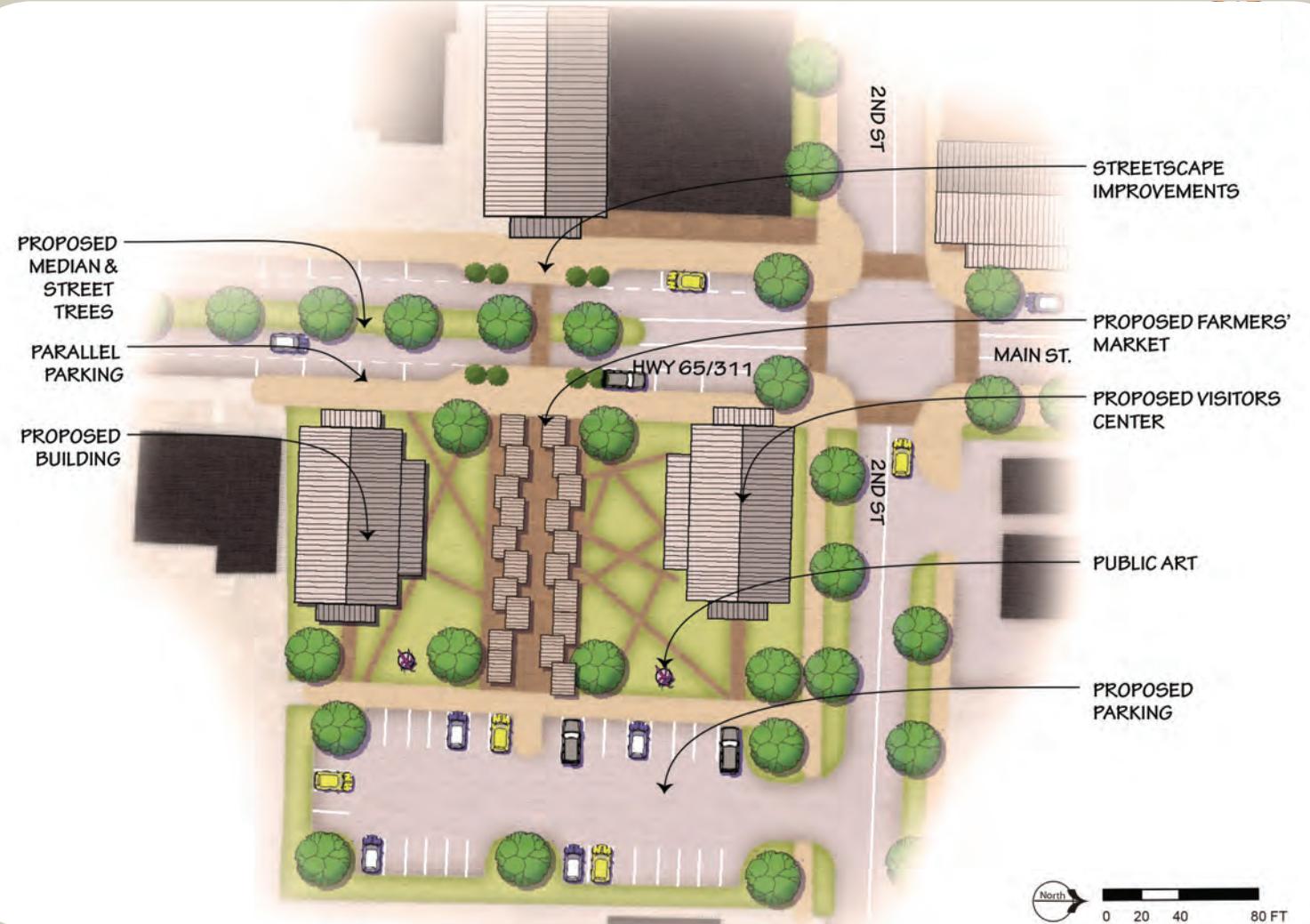
**3.3** Pursue federal Scenic Byway grant funding to enhance tourism infrastructure along these corridors.



Stokes County should take advantage of their scenic byways and work with NCDOT to develop cycling lanes or wide shoulders along destination-quality cycling routes.

### WALNUT COVE FARMERS MARKET

Downtown farmers markets, such as the proposed design in Walnut Cove shown below, are weekend destinations for local citizens and tourists alike.



## Marketing

**1.0** Establish a Stokes County brand for tourism-related marketing initiatives. This branding effort should be developed in concert with business recruitment promotional material.

**1.1** Develop “strap-lines” that use a single phrase to connect a variety of tourism opportunities found throughout the County.

**1.2** Develop an extensive wayfinding signage plan throughout Stokes County that effectively brands the County and directs visitors to its many natural and cultural resources.

### WAYFINDING PROGRAM

Throughout the public workshop series, a variety of wayfinding and signage options were developed. A unified signage plan should be developed that will provide continuity while recognizing the unique character of each municipality.



WALNUT COVE



DANBURY



KING







**CHAPTER FIVE: RECREATION**

# CHAPTER 5: RECREATION



## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

**A. RECREATION GOALS**

**B. RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is overwhelming consensus among citizens and community leaders that recreation serves as a key element of the new economy for Stokes County. As a rural county striving to attract investment, tourism, young families, and retirees, Stokes County will need to continue creating safe and accessible trails and greenways, inviting parks and open spaces, and connectivity to its public lands and rivers. Recreation is not merely a “want,” but a critical component of Stokes County’s economic development strategy.



As a rural county striving to attract investment, tourism, young families, and retirees, Stokes County will need to continue creating safe and accessible trails and greenways, inviting parks and open spaces, and connectivity to its public lands and rivers



### **A** RECREATION GOALS

#### RECREATION GOALS: THE **BIG** THREE

- 1** Encourage the development of trails and other recreation amenities that are part of larger regional and statewide efforts.
- 2** Focus on the creation of new linear parks, trails, and greenways, and improving (rather than creating new) existing park facilities.
- 3** Strengthen relationships and support civic organizations that maintain park facilities and manage programming efforts throughout the county and municipal areas.

### **B** RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are not only targeted at allowing Stokes County citizens to fully utilize the County’s environment for recreation, but also are in-line with on-going economic development and health initiatives.

- 1.0** Support the development of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (MST) through Stokes County

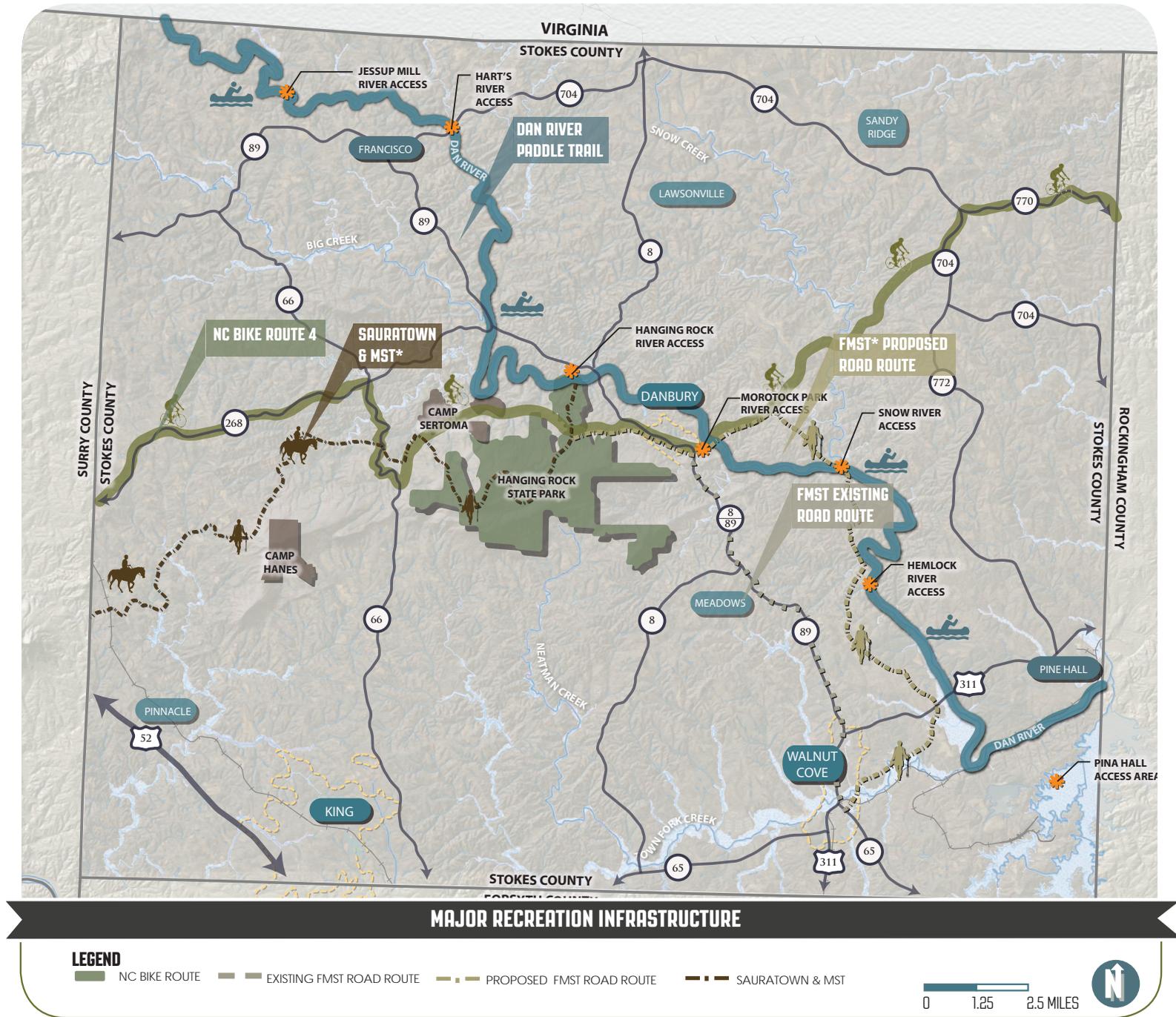
**1.1** Partner with the NC Division of Parks and Recreation for technical and financial support to further establish the MST trail in Stokes County.

**1.2** Support Community Organizations such as the Sauratown Trails Association, Friends of the Sauratown Mountains and the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail that work alongside state, county, and municipal leaders to improve trail access and recreational opportunities throughout Stokes County. Assistance can include:

- Acting as a fiscal organization for grants
- Providing human resource capacity for grant writing, maps, serving on boards, and trail maintenance
- Holding trail easements
- Providing matching funds for trail grants

**1.3** Work with amenable landowners to explore the possibility of permanent easements that would secure the future of the trails.

**1.4** Conduct a trail master plan for the Dan River corridor with the goal of creating a certified section of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The planning process should include a major landowner outreach effort and recommendations for improving river access.



\*FMST - Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail  
 \*MST - Mountains-to-Sea Trail



The MST spans for 26 miles across Stokes County's Sauratown Mountains and Hanging Rock State Park (shown above) before following a road route through the remainder of the County. Creating a master plan to replace the road sections with trail along the Dan River corridor is a major recreation recommendation of this plan.

## 2.0 Foster the development of recreation opportunities along the Dan River

2.1 Create improvements for paddle/canoe/camping/fishing access sites to support safe and accessible use of the river.

- Work with HRSP to establish additional river access and overnight camping facilities between the intersection of Highways 268 and 89 and Moratock Park.

- Formalize and improve public river access at 7-Island.
- Re-establish a public river entry point at Whit's Access.

2.2 Conduct a trail master plan for the Dan River corridor with the goal of creating a certified section of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The planning process should include a major landowner outreach effort and recommendations for improving river access.

## 3.0 Create linear parks, trails, and greenways to connect commercial areas, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and other community assets.

3.1 Conduct a targeted greenway feasibility analysis for the Town of Danbury that includes a landowner outreach effort. The plan should target the following connections:

- Hanging Rock State Park to Downtown Danbury
- Danbury Town Hall to Stokes County Government Campus
- Danbury Town Hall to Moratock Park.

3.2

Conduct a town-wide greenway master plan for Walnut Cove that includes a landowner outreach effort. The plan should capitalize on the Town's network of floodplain areas.



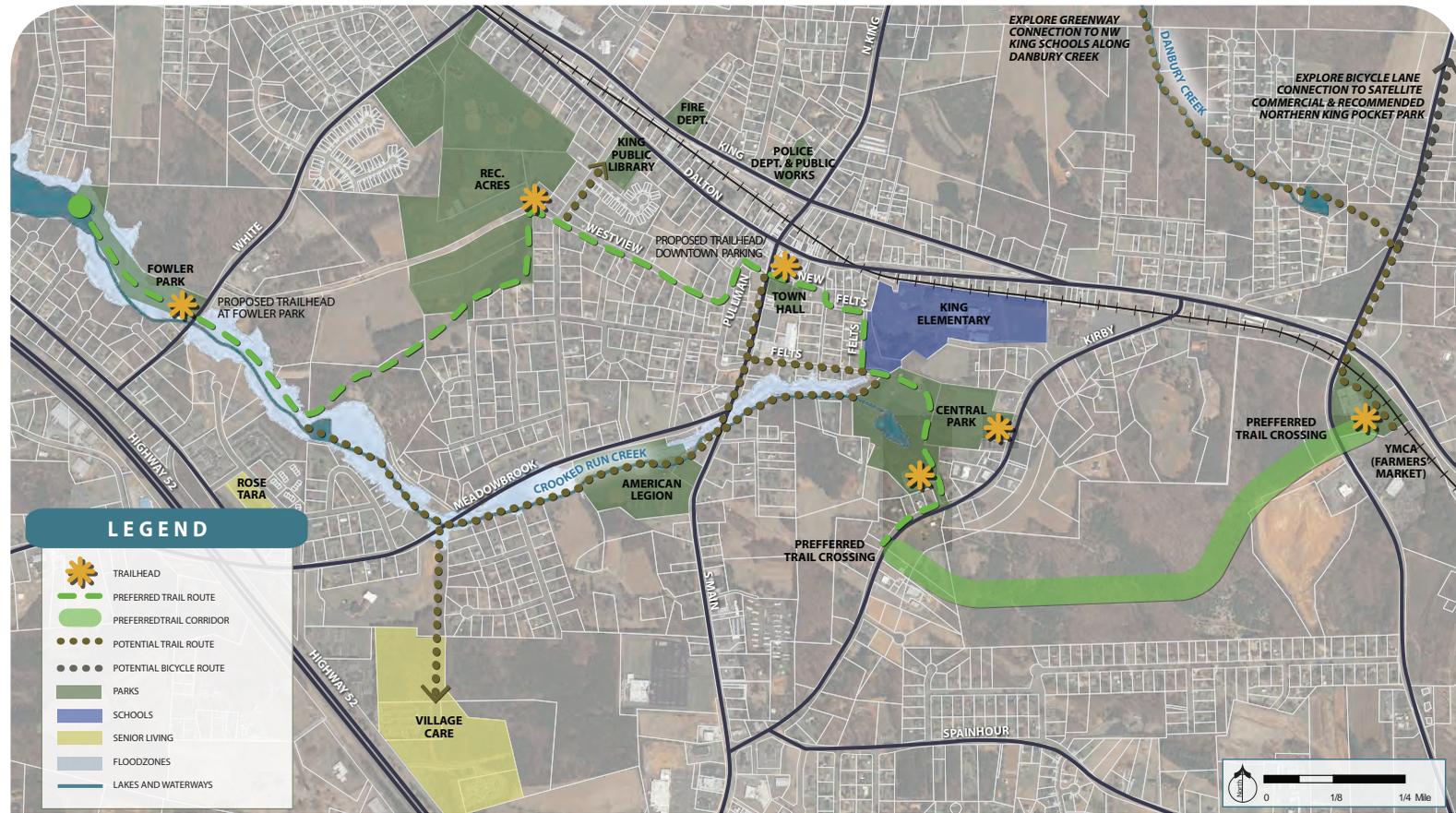
WALNUT COVE GREENWAY CORRIDOR AND ASSET OPPORTUNITIES

Walnut Cove has schools, parks, and numerous other assets worthy of greenway connection. The most valuable resource for greenway development is the expansive floodway corridors located throughout the Town.

**3.3** Conduct a targeted greenway feasibility analysis for the City of King that includes a landowner outreach effort. The plan should target the following connections:

- Fowler Park to Recreational Acres along the existing trail easement (note: with easements secured, this project is likely ready for construction documents and permitting)
- Fowler Park to the Stokes Family YMCA via Recreational

- Acres, Town Hall, King Elementary, and Central Park.
- Crooked Run Greenway: Connect Central Park to the American Legion Park
- Danbury Creek Greenway:



**KING GREENWAY CONNECTIONS**

Greenway connections were explored during the City of King’s public workshop. A detailed greenway feasibility analysis, however, is needed to further this planning goal.



Connecting Fowler Park, shown above, to Recreation Acres could be a greenway catalyst project for the City of King. This section of trail may be easier than others due to the existing sewer easement.

**3.4** Provide support to community organizations with an interest in developing local trail systems.

**4.0** Provide for a network of well-maintained parks throughout Stokes County and its municipal areas.

**4.1** Implement the Moratock Park Master Plan completed in 2009. The County should explore a relationship with the Town of Danbury regarding the maintenance and improvement of Moratock Park.

**4.2** Moratock Plan Exhibit: “Moratock Park is located in the heart of Stokes County along the Dan River. This facility would compete well for a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant.”

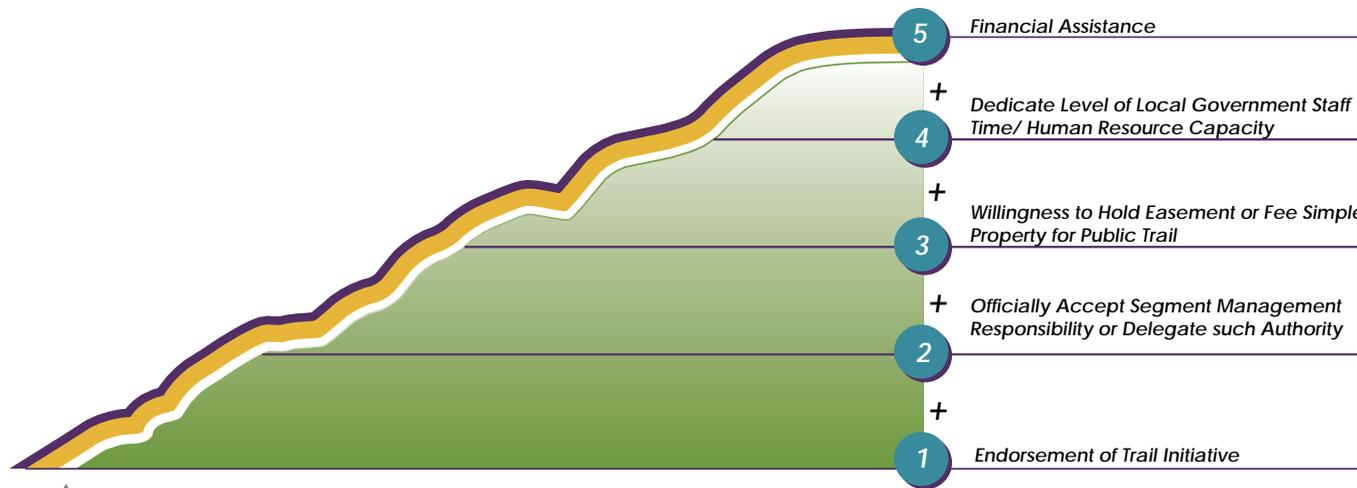
**4.2** Enhance parks and public spaces located in downtown to encourage visitation and activity near commerce areas. Specific park plans should be developed and implemented for:

- Town of Walnut Cove: Fowler Park
- Town of Danbury: Town Hall Park

**5.0** Work with Duke Energy to improve and expand recreational amenities at Belews Lake.

**5.1** Work with Duke Energy officials to develop a recreation master plan for their Belews Lake property.

**6.0** Continue and expand unique programs and events that use recreation facilities throughout Stokes County.



*The Trail Support Spectrum illustrates the varying roles local governments can take in supporting trail development.*



*Moratock Park is located in the heart of Stokes County along the Dan River. This facility would compete well for a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant.”*







# CHAPTER SIX: TRANSPORTATION

# CHAPTER 6: TRANSPORTATION



This chapter provides general transportation policy guidance as Stokes County leaders continue to work with NCDOT to improve the state’s road system throughout the County. King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury also maintain a network of municipal roads; this chapter outlines policies and objectives that impact the planning and improvement of these systems as well. Accordingly, this chapter includes three parts: 1) Existing Transportation Infrastructure Overview; 2) Previous Plan; and 3) Transportation Policies.

## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

- A. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW**
- B. PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANS**
- C. TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

### **A** EXISTING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW

Stokes County’s transportation system is comprised of its roads, rail, bike, pedestrian, and transit networks. While Stokes County relies on its road network for the majority of its transportation needs, it is also important to consider how other modes contribute to the overall transportation system. The characteristics of Stokes County’s existing transportation system are discussed below.

#### **Roads**

US Highway 52 (Interstate I-73) is the largest major highway within Stokes County. It provides an important connection for commerce and transportation between Winston-Salem, King, and Mount Airy. This corridor connects three interstate highways (I-77, I-40 and I-85), and links northwest North Carolina and Virginia to North Carolina’s industrial heartland.

Other major highways in Stokes County include US Hwy 311, NC Hwy 8, NC Hwy 65, NC Hwy 66, NC Hwy 89, NC Hwy 704, NC Hwy 772, and NC Hwy 268. The regional and local connectivity of Stokes County is largely dictated by these arteries. Both King and Walnut Cove enjoy relatively easy access to Interstate 40, North Carolina’s main east-west interstate highway, via US 52 and US 311, respectively. Danbury’s access to a major interstate is less convenient, accessing I-40

via NC 89. Access to Winston Salem, Interstate 40, and Greensboro is much more difficult from northern sections of Stokes County, where it is often easier to reach Mt. Airy or Stuart, Virginia.

### Rail Infrastructure

Norfolk Southern Railways operates two rail lines in Stokes County, one in the southeast between Walnut Cove and Belews Lake and one in the southwest through King.

The rail line in the southeastern corner is leased by the Yadkin Valley Railroad and is referred to as the CF-line. Freight is hauled over this line between Rural Hall and Mt. Airy with typically two to three trains per day. Eleven miles of this line run through Stokes County.

The rail line in the southwestern corner is known as Norfolk Southern's R-line and runs from Winston Salem to Roanoke, Virginia. Freight and coal are typically hauled over this line with up to eight trains per day. Twelve miles of this line run through Stokes County.

There are currently no passenger train services on either rail line in the county.



*Railways operate in the southeast and southwest corners of Stokes County.*

### Bicycle Infrastructure

Stokes County currently only offers on-road bike routes for its bicyclists. These designated routes extend to all corners of the county and link each municipality. NC Bike Route 4 bisects the county.

### Pedestrian Infrastructure

Stokes County's pedestrian infrastructure includes sidewalks in Walnut Cove, King, and Danbury, several parks that provide walking trails, and hiking opportunities on public land.

### Commuter Infrastructure

A park and ride lot is located in King at the corner of South Main Street and Newsome Road directly off of U.S. 52. This lot is serviced by the Surry County Express Route, part of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), which brings commuters to and from popular locations in Winston-Salem.

### Existing Transportation Providers



A park and ride lot is located in King at the corner of South Main Street and Newsome Road directly off of U.S. 52. This

lot is serviced by the Surry County Express Route, part of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART), which brings commuters to and from popular locations in Winston-Salem.

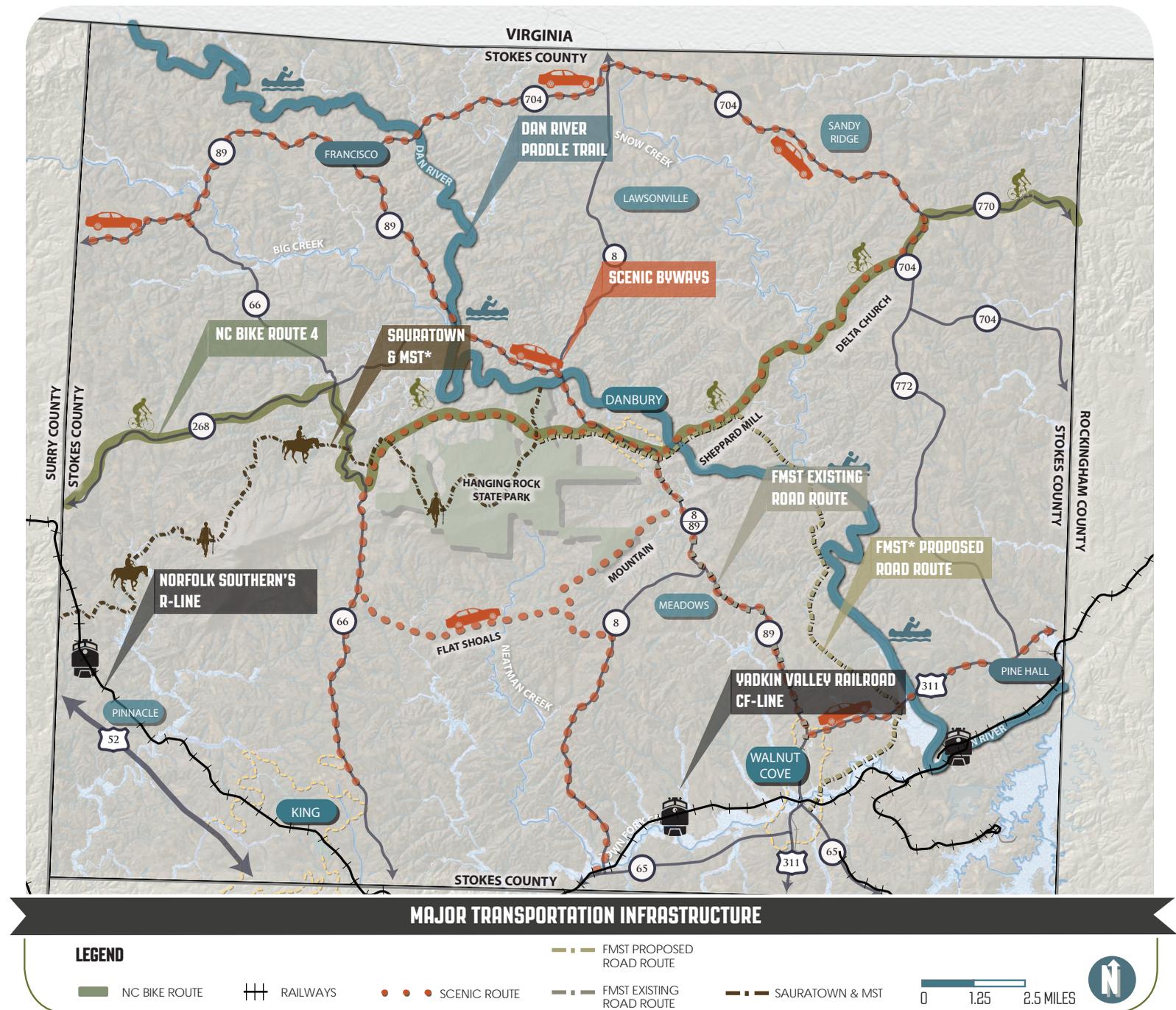
Yadkin Valley Economic Development District Inc. (YVEDDI) is a regional nonprofit organization that administers transportation, human services, and community development programs. YVEDDI serves as the primary transportation provider in Stokes County for older adults, those with disabilities, and low-income individuals. These services are part of the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan for Stokes County, which was mandated by the federal government to ensure that transportation opportunities are available for the elderly and underserved.

## SCENIC BYWAYS

Public workshop participants frequently voiced how important scenic byways were in preserving Stokes County's rural character.

## SAURATOWN & NC MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL

The Sauratown Trail offers a 25 mile long equestrian and pedestrian trail system that spans from Pilot Mountain State Park to Hanging Rock State Park. The Sauratown Trail, in addition to trails leading through Hanging Rock State Park, are part of a larger 1,150 mile in-progress NC Mountains-to-Sea State Trail (NCMST) which reaches from the Great Smoky Mountains in the west to the Outer Banks in the east. Although the designated portion of Stokes County NCMST ends after Hanging Rock State Park, a Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail (FMST) road route continues to Walnut Cove.



\*FMST - Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail  
 \*MST - Mountains-to-Sea Trail

# B

## PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) works with two regional organizations to identify, coordinate, and prioritize transportation infrastructure improvements in Stokes County: the Winston-Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (RPO). Both organizations are heavily involved in transportation planning in Stokes, but each is responsible for different geographic areas of the County.

The urban-oriented MPO makes transportation infrastructure development decisions for the south-central and southwest portions of Stokes County and the City of King. The MPO receives federal funding for its transportation planning activities, which are mandated by the federal government. The federal government also establishes which geographic areas are included in the MPO.

Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RPOs) are similar to the urban MPOs, but serve rural areas and are not mandated by the federal government, but rather are designated and funded by the State of North Carolina.

The Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (NWRPO) is the rural planning organization for Stokes County – covering all of the areas not included in the WSMPO (including Danbury, Walnut Cove

and all of the unincorporated areas of the County). The Northwest Piedmont Regional Council of Governments serves as the lead planning agency for the Northwest Piedmont RPO.



▲ *The Winston-Salem Metropolitan Planning Organization (shown in orange above) and the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (shown in green above) work with the NCDOT on regional transportation planning efforts.*

Local government participation in the NWRPO’s planning process is essential – it ensures that the transportation needs of the County’s rural areas are addressed in future plans. In addition, participation provides insight into how planned transportation projects may interact with established local land use plans.

Stokes County’s Comprehensive Transportation Plan or CTP (adopted in 2008 by Stokes County, Danbury, and Walnut Cove) evaluates current transportation conditions and makes recommendations for future transportation improvements. The plan, developed in conjunction with local governments, the North Carolina Department of Transportation and NWRPO, makes several recommendations for road improvements throughout the County. Major improvements recommended in the CTP are discussed below.

### 2008 Stokes County Comprehensive Transportation Plan *Major* Improvement Recommendations:

The 2008 Stokes County Comprehensive Transportation Plan recommends four major improvements:

**1.0 US 311:** Recommended improvements on US 311 (widening the existing three-lane road to a four-lane road with a median) would extend from NC 89 to NC 65. Improving US 311 would enable the roadway to accommodate existing and projected traffic volumes.

**2.0 US 52 (Future I-74):** The CTP recommends US 52 be widened from four to six-lanes and upgraded to interstate standards from Winston Salem to the Surry County Line. Improving US 52 would enable the roadway to accommodate existing and projected traffic volumes.

**3.0 NC 65:** Recommended improvements for NC 65 (from US 311 to the Winston Salem area) include widening (from two-lanes to a four-lane divided major thoroughfare) from Winston Salem to US 311. In Walnut Cove, a new two-lane road is proposed from SR 1921 (Martin Luther King Jr Rd) to NC 65. The existing section of NC 65 from SR 1921 (Martin Luther King Jr Rd) to US 311 would then be rerouted onto the new road.

**4.0 Proposed Southern Connector:** Previous plans and comments from the Stokes 2035 public workshop series highlight the need for improved and direct connectivity between Walnut Cove and King. The Stokes CTP recommends a two lane minor thoroughfare with 12-foot lanes and paved shoulder be constructed starting at the US 311 and NC 89 intersection and extending west 5.6 miles to connect with SR 1974 (Mountain View Rd). This roadway would connect Walnut Cove to King. However, according to the 2014 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the project is not funded.

**2008 Stokes County Comprehensive Transportation Plan**  
*Minor Improvement Recommendations:*

The Stokes County CTP also set forth various recommendations of lower priority or magnitude than the four primary recommendations discussed above. These recommendations include:

**1.0 NC 772:** Widen NC 772 from the existing 10-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes from NC 704 to SR1690 (Dillard Rd).

**2.0 NC 704:** Widen NC 704 from the existing 10-foot lanes to 12-foot lanes from NC 8 to NC 770 and then from NC 772 to the Rockingham County Line.

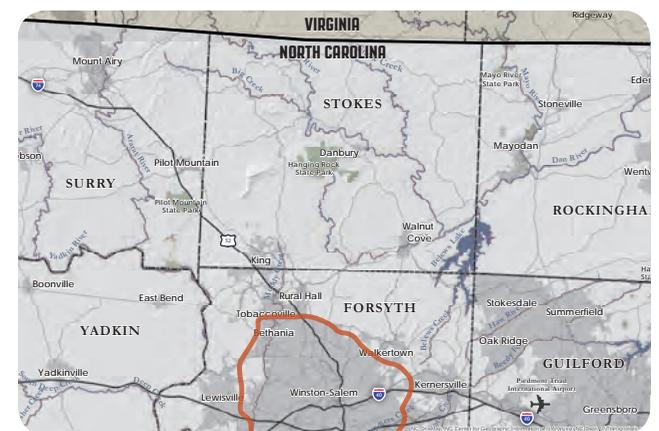
**3.0 NC 268:** Widen NC 268 from two 9-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from the Surry County Line to NC 66.

**4.0 NC 66:** Widen NC 66 from two 9-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from NC 89 to the Winston Salem UAB.

**5.0 NC 8:** Widen NC 8 from two 10 or 11-foot lanes to two 12-foot lanes from the Virginia State Line to the Winston Salem UAB.

**6.0 Winston Salem Northern Beltway:** The Winston-Salem Northern Beltway is currently in development and will create a multi-lane freeway to serve the northern part of Winston-Salem. The road is designed to help alleviate congestion and enhance safety along heavily traveled routes such as U.S. 421/Business 40 and U.S. 52 in Forsyth County.

The project begins at U.S. 158 southwest of Winston-Salem and ends at U.S. 311 southeast of the city. The total length of the project is 34.2 miles. Environmental studies for the project are complete, and design work, right of way acquisition and construction on some portions of the beltway are currently under way.



*The in-progress Winston-Salem Beltway (shown in orange above) will have regional transportation implications.*

**7.0 Winston Salem Northern Beltway: Stokes County Perspectives:** The proposed Winston Salem Northern Beltway may reduce transit times for Stokes County residents traveling to Greensboro, Piedmont Triad International Airport, and the communities around Winston Salem (Clemmons, Lewisville, Walkertown, and Kernersville). The beltway's proposed northwestern alignment through Tobaccoville and Rural Hall could provide an additional option for truck traffic traveling to and from King's US 52/Newsome Road industrial corridor. For example, truck traffic from King would be able to avoid congested areas of US 52 leading into downtown Winston Salem. Increased truck fuel efficiency associated with improved traffic flow on the Northern Beltway may improve King's competitive position in securing new businesses in the City's industrial corridor.

Overall accessibility to the County's tourism destinations and municipalities from the south may also improve, as the proposed beltway would provide direct connections from Interstate 40 to US 311 and US 52 without requiring more time consuming travel through congested areas of Winston Salem.

A main issue identified with Stokes County's transportation network can be attributed to its physiographic conditions: the Sauratown Mountains, running generally east-west through the center of the county, limit the connectivity between the northern and southern portions of the county.

**C TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

Given the existing transportation network in Stokes County and the groundwork laid by previous planning efforts, the following sets forth recommendations for the improvement of Stokes County's transportation network:

**1.0 Improve transportation infrastructure to support the creation of targeted industrial growth areas.**

**1.1** Advocate for an interchange at the intersection of Trinity Church Road and U.S. Highway 52 (I-74) to enhance access to potential development areas currently served by water.

**2.0 Increase the safety and functionality of major arteries without adding additional lanes.**

**2.1** In accordance with existing transportation plans, widen existing lanes and improve shoulders on Highways 311, 772, 704, 268, 66, 8, and 65.

**3.0 Work with NCDOT to create pedestrian-oriented transportation and streetscape improvements at targeted downtown areas and small business growth nodes.**

Targeted areas include:

- Downtown Danbury
- Downtown Walnut Cove
- Downtown King
- Meadows

**4.0 Pursue transportation initiatives that support efficient use of infrastructure, promote environmental health, and provide affordable transportation options for Stokes County residents.**

**4.1** Work with NCDOT and area transportation agencies to further encourage the use of mass transit between Stokes County and Winston Salem.

**5.0** Actively participate within the regional transportation process to help facilitate transportation projects in alignment with this plan.

**5.1** Actively participate in the MPO/RPO planning process to ensure transportation projects are included in the STIP.

**5.2** Work closely with NCDOT on transportation projects and on identifying funding opportunities for transportation related initiatives.

**5.3** Explore partnerships with transportation agencies such as PART and private providers to meet transit needs.

**6.0** Establish community-based organizations that can focus on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

**6.1** Elected officials should make a call for those with an interest in trail development throughout their respective jurisdiction.

**6.2** A formal committee should be established to facilitate the planning and implementation of multi-use greenways and other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.







**CHAPTER SEVEN: INFRASTRUCTURE**

# CHAPTER 7: INFRASTRUCTURE



## I N T H I S C H A P T E R

**A. WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

**B. MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER**

**C. INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES**

The availability of water and sewer is a major determinant of where growth can occur. This is especially true in Stokes County where soils in many locations have characteristics that preclude individual septic systems. This weakness (poor soils) provides an opportunity for Stokes County to target infrastructure development in accordance with this plan. The chapter includes an overview of existing systems throughout Stokes County and recommendations for improving this system in the future.

### *A* WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

With the Dan River and its tributaries, the nearby Yadkin River, and the groundwater supply, Stokes County has an adequate water supply to meet its needs into the future.



*The Dan River serves as a major source for public water in Stokes County.*

There are four municipal water distribution facilities in Stokes County. There are municipal systems in King, Walnut Cove, and Danbury. The Stokes Water and Sewer Authority also operate a water distribution system, purchasing its water from the City of Winston Salem. Each system has adequate excess capacity to meet anticipated growth.

In addition to the distribution systems within the county, the City of Winston Salem directly provides water service to a small percentage of Stokes County residents.

In addition to their own water supplies, the City of King has interconnection with the City of Winston Salem that enables it to purchase water to meet its needs in emergencies. Likewise, the City of Walnut Cove has the ability to purchase water from the Stokes Water and Sewer Authority to supplement its supply.

## B MUNICIPAL WASTE WATER

The existing municipal wastewater infrastructure in Stokes County also has the capacity to meet the county's needs for the foreseeable future.

There are currently three municipal waste water operations in Stokes County, located in King, Danbury, and Walnut Cove.

The City of King operates a 1,000,000 gallon per day system with an excess capacity of 750,000 gallons per day. King does not own or operate a wastewater treatment facility, but pumps waste through a force main to Tobaccoville, where the City of Winston Salem is responsible for its treatment. Due to the continual increase of sewer rates by the Winston Salem, the City of King must consider the development of its own waste water treatment facility.

## Due to the continual increase of sewer rates by the City of Winston Salem, the City of King must consider the development of its own waste water treatment facility.

The Town of Walnut Cove currently operates a wastewater treatment facility that discharges into Town Fork Creek. This system cleans water by filtra-

tion through wetlands, in which gravity and nature work to filter out unwanted contaminants.

Stokes County operates a wastewater treatment facility that discharges to the Dan River. The County has recently extended sewer the Meadows community where Forsyth Technical Community College will expand its campus. The availability of sewer in Meadows will provide for significant new growth in coming years.

### Naturally clean

After 10 years, the unusual approach that Walnut Cove took toward treating its wastewater has proven to be an idea ahead of its time. Here is how it works:



*Walnut Cove's innovative sewer treatment facility was built for less than half the price of a conventional facility and has fewer maintenance costs.*

# C

## INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES

### **1.0** Prioritize infrastructure investments that maximize and improve existing infrastructure, targeting planned growth areas.

**1.1** In Walnut Cove, combine necessary water and sewer infrastructure updates with the redevelopment of the downtown main street.

**1.2** Conduct an engineering study to determine the feasibility of providing a county waste water treatment facility located on Little Yadkin River, south of I-73 to serve areas from Pinnacle to Trinity Church Road.

**1.3** Strategically extend King’s water system to “fill in” areas between existing water lines, create loops whenever practical to increase the circulation of the system.

**1.4** Extend water along Volunteer Road and Chestnut Grove Road to complete a “loop” to the Pinnacle community.

**1.5** Concentrate future extension of residential services to a projected growth area west of Mountain View Road, west of NC66, and north of Old U.S. Highway 52 to encourage residential development with access to U.S. Highway 52/I-73

from South Main Street and Mountain View Road

**1.5** Extend sewer infrastructure to reach the Timberline subdivision in Northern King that has failing septic systems.

- Explore the possibility of CDBG to fund this extension

### **2.0** Create an independent wastewater treatment facility to serve the City of King.

### **3.0** Conduct an engineering report and cost-benefit analysis to effectively plan for a City-owned sewer treatment plan.



# Newsome Road INDUSTRIAL Campus

