

Town of North Wilkesboro 25-Year Comprehensive Plan

Adopted By
North Wilkesboro Town Board
December 5th, 2006

North Wilkesboro Town Board

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December 5th, 2006 Town of North Wilkesboro
The Town of North Wilkesboro Comprehensive Plan is available from the Town of North Wilkesboro, Department of Planning and Inspections, 832 Main Street, P.O. Box 218, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659 or by calling 336-667-7129.

Executive Summary

This is truly an exciting time for the Town of North Wilkesboro. As the Town embarks into the 21st century, there are formidable tasks that lie ahead for the Town as its citizens are asking: “What sort of place do we want to be in 25 years?” Whereas all of the residents can certainly agree on what circumstances brought the Town to where it is today, there is the resounding question of where the Town will be tomorrow and how will it get there.

What the residents also agree upon is the desire to be in a community that is safe, clean and attractive, affordable, offers bountiful recreation opportunities and provides convenient access to shopping, jobs and other community services. However, what is lacking in many instances is a “guiding light” that can make all of the above-mentioned desires a reality. In many cases, individuals and groups approach these issues in a haphazard fashion with little coordination. This comprehensive plan will provide that guidance by forging all the concerns and desires of the community into a tactful, methodological process.

This plan analyzes current conditions and issues facing the Town in an effort to address items that can be improved upon. It addresses how the Town will respond to State and Federal projects having a direct impact on North Wilkesboro and its surrounding area. Developed by input from citizen groups, community visioning meetings, multi-jurisdictional planning outfits, and other interested parties, this 25-year plan focuses on specific goals and the necessary steps to achieve them over the long term.

The North Wilkesboro 25-Year Comprehensive Plan process was born from both a cumulative effort of existing planning committees and local input from citizens using a myriad of data collection methods. Derived from these efforts, the following key themes were identified as being the core of this plan:

- Population and Economy
- Land Use and Development
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Environmental Resources

This plan is the town’s first comprehensive attempt at putting a growth management strategy in writing. As more traditional industries are moving out of the area due to regional and national employment trends, the town believes that a comprehensive growth plan is needed to aid in the transition to a new type of economy; an economy that directly influences varying and new types of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses.

Using a community-based planning process has provided opportunities for both key stakeholders and the local community members to come together and share ideas of their vision of the Town in the future. This plan reflects this desire to create a better future for the Town and the next generation of citizens who will call it home.

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Introduction

Basics of Planning and Why?

Why plan? The answer is simple: to make better decisions. Planning can be described as both an art and a science. It can help manage proper allocation of Town resources for development on the one hand while encouraging expansion of artistic and architectural talent in urban design on the other. Whereas the dynamics of planning change dramatically from rural to urban areas, the fundamentals remain the same in context. All too often, planning is viewed with apprehension and has been quickly associated with governmental intrusion and overregulation of the lives of citizens. However, what many people fail to realize is that planning, in its simplest form, is a process through which a community group, city government, or neighborhood may take inventory of its current situation, collect information, and derive strategies for successful, positive growth in the future.

The Planning Process

Despite the fact that a majority of planning initiatives are generated from a governmental body, success in any planning process is truly founded in sound grassroots effort that involve the community and stakeholders that represent various citizen interests. This grassroots involvement insures that growth can be guided instead of allowing it to go unchecked, thus robbing a community of its identity.

The North Wilkesboro Department of Planning and Inspections wishes to utilize this “bottom up” scheme of planning. In developing this plan, the staff solicited input from numerous community resources and organizations; including, but not limited to, Wilkes Vision 20/20, the Town of Wilkesboro, Wilkes County, Wilkes Chamber of Commerce, and



Visioning session co-facilitated by NCDCA at Benton Hall, January 2005.

numerous non-profit and citizen groups. In addition, State organizations, such as the North Carolina Department of Community Assistance (NCDCA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) played a key role in this plan's development. The North Wilkesboro Planning Board was instrumental in honing the goals and objectives inherent in this plan. It is the Town's hope that through continued public participation, the establishment of goals and objectives for future growth can be formulated and implemented with the support and understanding of the Town's citizens.

The North Wilkesboro Planning Board served as the steering committee in deriving the goals and objectives of the plan. In addition, the Planning Board also served as the guiding force in formulating the town's desired future land use patterns based upon expressed public input and work sessions.

Plan Format and Elements

Past the introduction and background information, this plan is sectioned into four (4) broad elements. These elements were identified by the community as being the most crucial for successful future development. These elements include:

- Population and Economy
- Land Use and Development
- Community Facilities and Infrastructure
- Environmental Resources

Each element will be assessed for its current level of operation in the Town. Based upon each respective analysis, goals and objectives will be formed to both address the most critical deficiencies of each element and to raise the level of service for each element to projected community needs and desires.

Growing from these goals and objectives, a plan implementation schedule will be put into place to systematize the necessary steps to be taken. The implementation schedule will be divided into five, five-year periods which will permit addressing the steps in a systematic way and concise management of plan updating in the future.

Background

Geography

LOCATION

The Town of North Wilkesboro is located in the heart of Wilkes County, North Carolina in the northwestern corner of the state (see Appendix A). Wilkes County is bordered by eight (8) counties. These include the counties of Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, Iredell, Surry, Watauga, and Yadkin; thus making the town conveniently juxtaposed to eight county seats and economic hubs; all within a 45-minute drive from town. The town corporate limits cover approximately 7.5 square miles (~ 4,800 acres) of contiguous property with approximately 300 acres in satellite territories. The Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) encompasses roughly 16 square miles or 10,240 acres.

The town is bordered to the south by the Yadkin River and the Town of Wilkesboro (see Appendix B). Running through the eastern portion of the town is the Reddies River which flows from North to South and unites with the Yadkin. The Reddies River also serves the raw water intake for the town. In addition, the town serves as the junction point for NC State Highways 18 and 268 and is within one mile to the north of US Highway 421. The town is also served by NC Highway 115.

CLIMATE¹

North Wilkesboro rests in the foothills to the east of the Blue Ridge escarpment; which encompass the western edge of Wilkes County. The town's position in relation to the abutting mountain system accounts for the mild, yet wet winters and summers. The average annual maximum temperature is 68.9 degrees Fahrenheit with a corresponding minimum annual temperature average of 42.8 degrees (see Table 1). Average annual rainfall (50.0 inches) for the town falls just short of the typical average of the Southern Appalachian region (60.0+ inches).

<i>Climate Phenomenon</i>	<i>Annual</i>
Average Max. Temperature (F)	68.9
Average Min. Temperature (F)	42.8
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	50.0
Average Total SnowFall (in.)	9.9

Table 1: Historical Climate Report for North Wilkesboro, 1933-2004. Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center, <http://cirrus.dnr.state.sc.us/cgi-bin/sercc/cliMAIN.pl?nc6256>

As winter clouds approach from the west and migrate across the Blue Ridge, an orographic effect ensues which releases a tremendous amount of snow in the

¹ Source: Southeast Regional Climate Center, http://water.dnr.state.sc.us/water/climate/sercc/climateinfo/historical/historical_nc.html; 2005

Western high country, leaving little for central and eastern Wilkes County as the systems passes over. The result is more of a wintry mix of sleet and frozen rain, hence the 9.9 inches of average total snowfall, but the lack of any snow depth as portrayed in the climate data in Table 1.

HISTORY²

From the onset, North Wilkesboro was a planned town. Laid out in a grid pattern, Willard Franklin Trogdon (an investor from Greensboro, NC) surveyed the land, graded streets, established a road and bridge system, and constructed the key buildings of the town in the late 1880's. Two of the larger and more prominent family names in the town, the Blair's and the Finley's, provided over 1,000 acres of land for the town to make Trogdon's vision a reality.

North Wilkesboro grew from the demand of rail in the area (see Figure 1). Contracts with the Railroad Company called for rail service to be brought within one mile of the County Courthouse in the Town of Wilkesboro just on the other side of the Yadkin River. County government leaders expected the train to come directly from the east, but from Winston-Salem it curved north with the Yadkin River and never crossed the river, so it arrived in North Wilkesboro from the northeast and was completed in August of 1890.



Photo of the North Wilkesboro Train Depot on Kensington Heights. Circa 1890's.

With the rail came an economic boom for the Town. As the town grew, local leaders pushed for incorporation which came into fruition on March 4th,

1891 and by 1900, the Town had a population of 900 residents. This boom established the Town as the commercial center for the county. The Town of Wilkesboro (which was incorporated years earlier) rested on the other side of the Yadkin River from North Wilkesboro and provided much of the labor for many of the commercial, industrial, and retail business in the Town.

Following World War II, North Wilkesboro exploded with manufacturing and industrial growth as rail transport fueled commercial activity in the region. In

² Adapted from: Anderson, Jay J., "North Wilkesboro: The First Hundred Years." Delmar Company Publishing, 1990.

addition to being blessed with tremendous transportation infrastructure, the nature of North Wilkesboro caused its rapid growth. The town was the key to the northwest mountain counties and provided the base for shipping goods to the east and the place where people who lived in the mountain communities came for supplies and financial backing... many staying to work in the factories.

An abundant and clean water supply was available thus allowing timber processing and shipping to Piedmont factories possible. Furniture, wood milling, railroad ties, wagons, chestnut tanned leather, saddles and bridles were also made here and shipped throughout the country. Plants, roots and herbs and medicines, a foundry, livestock and processed meats and farm foods, wholesale and retail merchandising thrived.

In addition to the railroad, highways converged here. While county business was conducted steadily across the river, North Wilkesboro boomed with new economic opportunity.

Following World War II and up to today, North Wilkesboro is known as a place for nurturing successful business ventures. A postwar financial venture growing out of the old Trogdon-launched local bank turned into North Carolina's fourth largest: Northwestern Bank. Too good to resist, Northwestern was eventually merged with Charlotte's First Union, which is now Wachovia. A local hardware and war surplus equipment venture grew to a nation-wide chain hardware and building supply industry, Lowe's Companies, now operators of several hundred Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse stores nationwide and a Fortune 500 enterprise. In addition, J.C. Faw opened the first Lowe's supermarket in North Wilkesboro in 1963 that has today expanded to over 75 stores in the Southeast United States. There were also successes in furniture manufacturing growing out of the early successes with Home Chair Company, Forest Furniture, Turner-White Casket Company, Oak Furniture Company, Wilkesboro Manufacturing Company.

A flood in 1940 was destructive among some of these industries, but was followed by a rejuvenation of others. They evolved into the current wood products manufacturers, American Drew, Key City, Greene Brothers, Johnston Casuals, East Coast Millworks, and two major glass and mirror plants, Carolina Mirror and Gardner Glass. Textile manufacturing started in North Wilkesboro with Skyland's Buster Brown garments, Wilkes Hosiery Mill and Greer Hosiery Mill. Meadow's Mill is a veteran maker of gristmills and saw mills that are sold worldwide. The Journal-Patriot, published thrice weekly, is the largest non-daily newspaper in North Carolina.

Today, North Wilkesboro is in the midst of an economic upheaval common

throughout many older manufacturing centers both in the state and the nation. As manufacturing and industry is gradually moving to cheaper labor centers overseas, North Wilkesboro is actively working to find its place in the new world order while preserving the small-town atmosphere that draws many folks here to raise their children and enjoy all that the surrounding mountains have to offer.

Population and Economy

Population Analysis

According to the 2000 US Census, the total population of North Wilkesboro is 4,116 with a near 1:1 ratio of males to females; 49.7% to 50.3%, respectively. As a percentage of total population, North Wilkesboro has a fairly robust middle aged population (see Chart 1). The cohorts between the ages of 25 and 54 compose the largest grouping of people in the Town (40.6%) with the second largest cohort (16.7%) being the retiree age grouping of 65-85+. The median age of the population is 36.3.

North Wilkesboro Population by Age and Sex

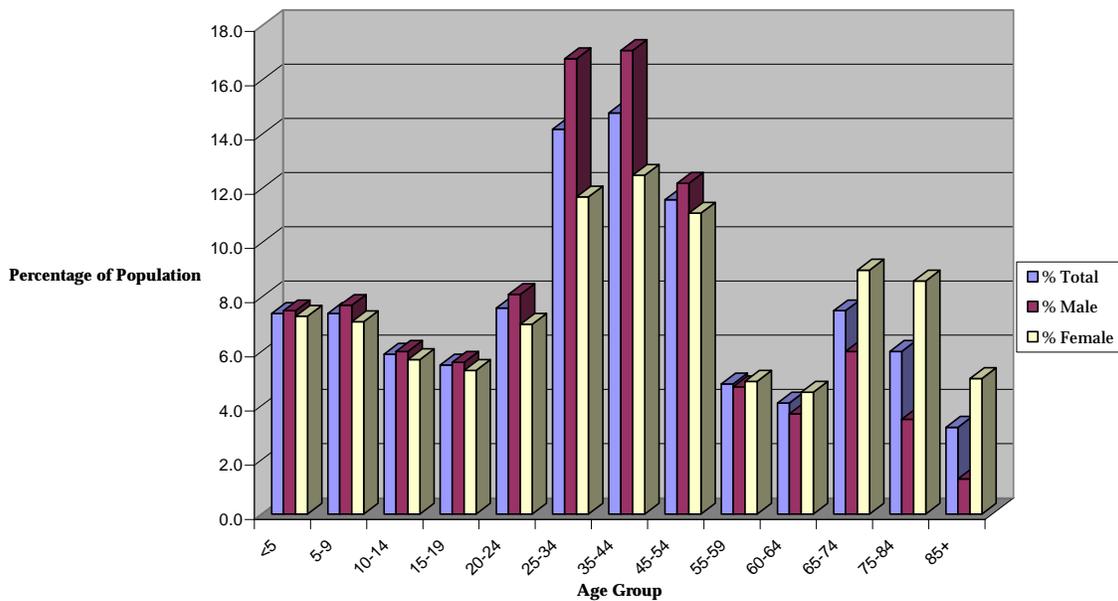


Chart 1: North Wilkesboro Population by Age and Sex. Source: NC State Data Center, 2005. www.census.state.nc.us.

According to the North Carolina State Data Center, North Wilkesboro has experienced a slow net growth rate (+.5%) in population from the 2000 Census to the June, 2003 estimates. The half percent increase is expected to be maintained over the next ten years and is reflected in the growth rate of Wilkes County as a whole as more people are living in the county. The three municipalities in Wilkes County (North Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro, and Ronda) have been estimated in 2003 to compose only 11.8% of the total population of the County; of the three urban

areas included in the 2003 estimates, North Wilkesboro composes roughly 6.2% of the total county population.

Historically, North Wilkesboro has maintained steady growth in population since 1980, but no major population boom (see Table 3).

Assuming a consistent 6.2% municipal population relative to county population up to 2030 and operating at its current trend (i.e. little to no change in town boundaries), North Wilkesboro is estimated to have a population of 5,054 by the end of 2029.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1970	3,357
1980	3,275
1990	3,384
2000	4,116
2003 (est.)	4,155

Table 2: North Wilkesboro Population. Source: US Census Bureau

North Wilkesboro has a predominantly white (non-Hispanic) population and has historically always maintained this trend. Out of the total population, 3,230 (78.5%) are white, non-Hispanic. However, with the new Census 2000, new evidence is indicating that North Wilkesboro is becoming increasingly diverse as Black (13.9%) and other non-white populations (7.6%) is growing (see Chart 2).

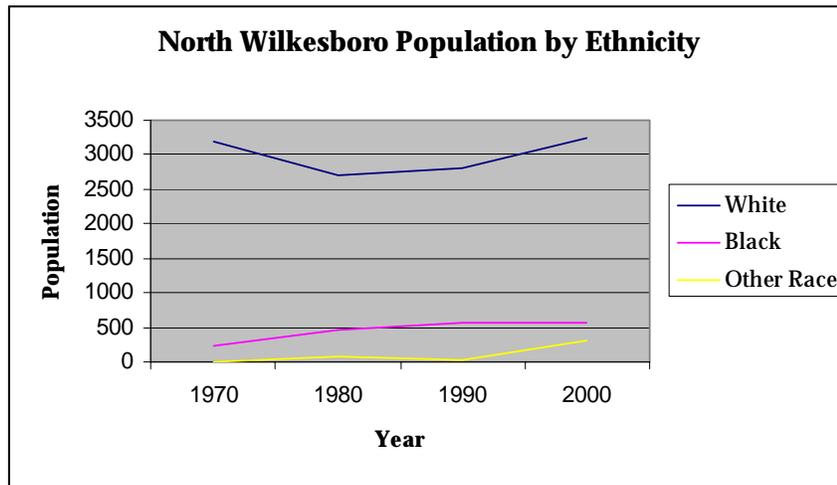


Chart 2: Ethnic Population Growth in North Wilkesboro. Source: US Census Bureau.

For the purposes of the above analysis, “other race” can generally be classified as Hispanic persons. Much like the rest of the country, Hispanics are becoming the fastest growing ethnicity in the town. When analyzing the percent increase of each respective ethnicity, Hispanics in North Wilkesboro comprise the fastest growing ethnicity in the town with a 1,265% increase between 1990 and 2000 followed by White populations which experienced a much smaller 14.6% increase during the same time period and Black population growth remaining fairly stagnant with a 1.1% percent increase.

Over three-fourths of the population (77%) has a high school education or less, while almost a quarter of the population (23%) has some form of college diploma. North Wilkesboro has a 21.2% poverty rate and 46% of the population owns their own home according to the NC State Data Center.

Economic Analysis

According to the 2000 Census, 52.2% of the total working population (age 16 years and older) are in the labor force; 49.1% of this total is employed while 5.9% of the labor force is unemployed (See Table 4). The median family income for the town is \$29,844 per year while the median earning for workers totaled \$22,204 for males and \$17, 872 for females. The per capita income of all working age population in town totals \$14,594.

	Number	Percent
In labor force	1,639	52.2
Civilian labor force	1,639	52.2
Employed	1,542	49.1
Unemployed	97	3.1
Percent of civilian labor force	5.9	
Armed Forces	0	0.0
Not in labor force	1,501	47.8

Table 3: North Wilkesboro Employment Data. Source: US Census 2000

According to 2005 North Carolina Local Government Commission (NCLGC) data, North Wilkesboro maintains a healthy, above-average fund balance when compared to other municipalities of less than 5,000 population across the state (55.98% compared to 36.70% state-wide). In addition, in 2005, the Town had a collection rate of property taxes nearly on par with the state-wide average; 97.57% for the Town compared to 97.60% for the State average.

Production, transportation, and material moving occupations are the leading employment occupations in the town; absorbing 29.3 % of the current employment market (See Chart 3). Management, professional, and related occupations (27.6%) and sales and office occupations (21.7%) compose the second and largest sectors of occupations that utilize the town’s labor force.

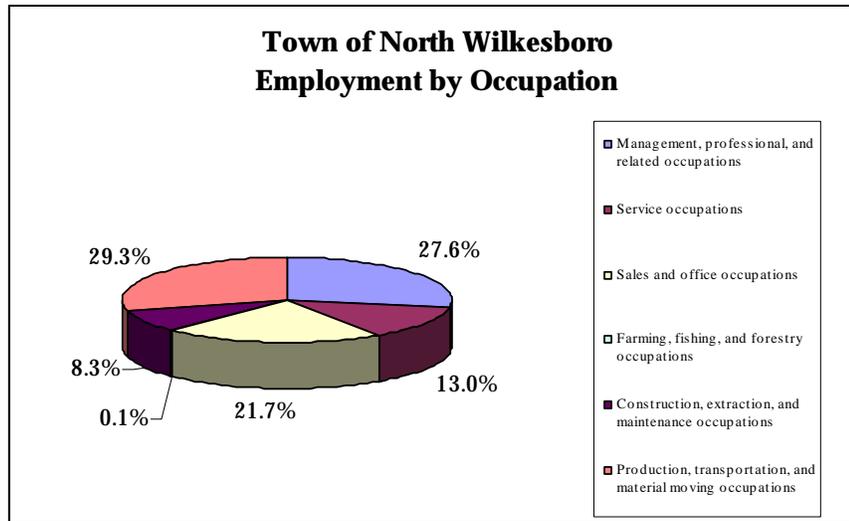


Chart 3: North Wilkesboro Employment by Occupation. Source: US Census 2000.

According to the 2002 County Business Patterns analysis provided by the US Census Bureau, over one-fifth (21.8%) of families are below the poverty level with a corresponding 21.2% of individuals living below the poverty level. In addition, the average worker in North Wilkesboro travels 16.3 minutes to work everyday; a possible indication that more people live outside the corporate limits and travel to town for work compared to in-town residents working in town.

Land Use and Development

Analysis of Existing Land Use

Having an accurate inventory of the existing land uses within the Town is critical in determining the existing capacity of specific land uses and forecasting growth potential in these land uses over the upcoming years. There is a vast difference between zoning and land use (See Appendices C and D, respectively). A property can be zoned a particular use, but when field observations are conducted, the actual use of the property can be entirely different. For the purposes of this plan, existing land uses have been divided into 16 categories which are outlined and defined below.

The land uses for the plan were derived from windshield surveys of all properties within the town limits and the surrounding ETJ. Based upon this study, the classification scheme was created and has been defined as follows:

- 1) **Agricultural (AG)**- This land use classification encompasses all open land used for the production of crops, poultry, or livestock products. In order to be classified under the land use, the property must fit, or seem to fit upon observation, into the definition of a “bona fide farm” as defined by the North Carolina General Statutes. Parcels that are used solely for the commercial sale of any of the three above-mentioned products shall not be included into the definition
- 2) **Commercial/Retail (COM)**- included the sale of both wholesale and retail goods and services.
- 3) **Executive/Office (EX)**- includes uses pertaining to the rendering of executive, professional, or “white-collar” services.
- 4) **Industrial (IN)**- includes all land uses that pertain to the manufacturing, fabrication, mass storing and/or distribution of goods.
- 5) **Institutional (IS)**- includes all land uses that are deemed to be of public importance or of cultural value. This includes civic clubs, churches, schools, nursing centers, non-profits or any other use that involves the provision of cultural or civic services to the town. This also involves all non- or not-for-profit entities.
- 6) **Mix Use/Mobile Home (MUMH)**- includes any use of property (industrial, commercial, or residential) whereby an occupied, residential mobile home is being used as a secondary, ancillary dwelling unit on the parcel.
- 7) **Mobile Home (MH)**- includes parcels that contain only mobile home(s). This includes single mobile homes on a single lot or multiple mobile homes and/or mobile home parks.

8) **Multi-family Residential (MFR)**- includes any land use that is dedicated to housing multiple families within a larger building or having multiple single family dwellings on one parcel. Bed and Breakfast establishments are included in this definition. Motel/hotel operations, however, are excluded.

9) **Public (P)**- includes all uses that are open to and used by the public. Primarily, this definition includes public parking lots. Also included are private parking lots when parking is the sole use of the property. Public housing, utilities, and recreation facilities are excluded from this classification. All government buildings, including fire and police, are included in this definition.

10) **Recreation (REC)**- includes all public and private recreation uses. This includes private golf courses and private parks.

11) **Single Family Residential- Attached (SFR1)**- includes all single family uses whereby the units or dwelling units are attached; such as town homes and condominium units. The units are typically owner-occupied.

12) **Single Family Residential- Detached (SFR2)**- includes all single family homes that are built to NC Building Code and are the sole use of the parcel upon which it rests (i.e. one home per parcel).

13) **Urban Mixed Use (UMU)**- includes all land that has more than one type or a combination of uses on one parcel.

14) **Utilities (UT)**- includes parcels that are dedicated to private and/or public utility uses; including, but not limited to, sewage, water, telephone and electrical transmission.

15) **Unknown (UN)**- uses of the land or structures that can not be determined upon survey. This usually includes primary structures that are abandoned or dilapidated and/or the current or future use is undetermined or can not be determined.

16) **Vacant (V)**- land that has minimal indication of past or present secondary structures and/or rests in a natural state.

The existing land use analysis shall be separated into separate classifications for analysis: 1) data for current in-town property and 2) data for both in-town and ETJ combined. For this study, Wilkes County tax records were correlated with GIS parcel data provided by the County mapping office.

TOWN LIMITS

According to county data, there are 2,277 parcels in town limits totaling 3,511 acres. For analysis of existing land uses, acreage allocated for specific land use categories is the best indicator of land use. Appendix E graphically details land use by acre and by parcel number for in-town properties.

Tax data indicates that commercial/ retail land values hold the largest tax value in terms of dollars. However, single family home land uses account for the largest tax value when considering building and total values of taxable land in town limits. In addition, single family land uses are, by far, the most wide-spread uses of land in terms of parcel numbers. Interestingly, vacant uses account for the overwhelming use of land in terms of acreage (see below).

ELU CATEGORY	LAND VALUE	BLDG VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL ACRES	TOTAL PARCELS
AG	504,400	454,350	958,750	37	5
COM	17,617,700	38,304,960	55,922,660	294	290
EX	5,726,200	41,492,100	47,218,300	107	82
IN	9,946,100	31,886,300	41,832,400	677	64
IS	2,421,600	22,364,600	24,786,200	92	39
MUMH	283,400	203,300	486,700	13	6
MH	215,000	228,500	443,500	25	8
MFR	5,502,200	42,799,700	48,301,900	139	117
P	5,193,200	19,696,000	24,889,200	204	79
REC	403,600	275,000	678,600	57	12
SFR1	100,600	2,365,500	2,466,100	3	4
SFR2	13,746,400	79,071,190	92,817,590	505	882
UMU	1,227,900	6,420,400	7,648,300	16	35
UT	1,418,500	1,000,900	2,419,400	112	17
UN	3,144,930	6,615,070	9,760,000	75	76
V	15,540,250	9,623,630	25,163,880	917	588
No Data*	2,358,950	4,949,480	7,308,430	239	42
TOTALS	\$85,350,930	\$307,750,980	\$393,101,910	3,511	2,277

Table 4: Existing Land Use by Tax Valuation in Town Limits, 2005. Source: Wilkes County Tax Collector

* indicates errors due to data conversion inconsistencies in county and town GIS data systems. RED values indicate the highest values per column.

TOWN LIMITS AND ETJ

According to the same county data, there are approximately 5,554 parcels both in-town limits and the ETJ totaling 19,871 acres. For analysis of existing land uses, acreage allocated for specific land use categories is the best indicator of land use. Appendix F graphically details land use by acre and by parcel number for both in-town and ETJ properties.

Tax data indicates that vacant land uses hold the largest total land value. In addition, single family land uses account for the largest tax value when considering both building and total values of taxable land in town limits and the ETJ. Single family land uses are also, by far, the most wide-spread uses of land in

terms of parcel numbers. Vacant uses account for the overwhelming use of land in terms of acreage (see below).

ELU CATEGORY	LAND VALUE	BLDG VALUE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL ACRES	TOTAL PARCELS
AG	10,016,900	6,910,790	16,927,690	2,399	78
COM	21,696,000	44,562,770	66,258,770	543	280
EX	7,634,600	47,628,500	55,263,100	212	109
IN	10,624,100	36,786,500	47,410,600	749	84
IS	8,791,200	51,512,600	60,303,800	635	78
MUMH	1,728,600	6,336,900	8,065,500	263	83
MH	3,904,300	5,175,200	9,079,500	752	271
MFR	7,996,600	51,311,480	59,308,080	291	175
P	6,037,500	26,601,100	32,638,600	346	93
REC	2,095,100	3,760,400	5,855,500	262	20
SFR1	100,600	2,365,500	2,466,100	3	4
SFR2	31,736,100	174,126,700	205,862,800	2,860	2,186
UMU	3,734,300	15,189,000	18,923,300	294	65
UT	4,185,900	1,768,500	5,954,400	656	29
UN	6,123,530	18,583,670	24,707,200	388	155
V	40,288,150	68,048,530	108,336,680	5,049	1,396
No Data*	27,566,900	71,290,800	98,857,700	4,171	445
TOTALS	194,260,380	631,958,940	826,219,320	19,871	5,554

Table 5: Existing Land Use by Tax Valuation in Town Limits and ETJ, 2005. Source: Wilkes County Tax Collector

* indicates errors due to conversion inconsistencies in county and town GIS data systems. RED values indicate the highest values per column

Analysis of Land Supply for Development and Redevelopment

When analyzing land supply for development and/or redevelopment opportunities, all vacant and unknown land uses were considered. As stated above, these land uses consisted of minimal to no apparent use of land in town and were registered as being a stand-alone parcel of land.

Appendix G shows the amount of vacant and unknown land uses within town and the ETJ. According the Existing Land Use study, roughly 992 acres totaling 664 parcels of land are either vacant or unknown within town limits. When considering both the town limits and the ETJ, there is approximately 5,437 total acres of these types of land uses composing nearly 1,551 parcels of land.

For the purposes of this plan, all land uses categorized as “unknown” have the greatest potential for redevelopment initiatives being that there are abandoned structures on the property that can be reused. All “Vacant” land uses exhibited the greatest inclination for new development.

When examining the amount of land available for development and redevelopment individually based upon the above-mentioned criteria, roughly 977 acres or 588 parcels are available for development, while 75 acres (76 parcels) are available for redevelopment. When considering both in-town and ETJ land, 5,049 acres consisting of 1,396 parcels are considered available for development.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Public Water Supply Systems

The Town of North Wilkesboro has one water treatment facility with one raw water intake on the Reddies River. The treatment facility's rated total capacity is 4.2 million gpd. Currently, the average use varies depending on the seasons of the year. During the winter, the plant treats an average of 2.6 million gpd and in the summer that figure increases to 3.5 million gpd. Based upon maximum averages during the summer, the plant is operating at 83.3% capacity during the summer months; slightly above the maximum required 80% threshold implemented by the state. Once a facility reaches this maximum threshold, state regulations mandate an upgrade in facilities.

The town also manages 7 water storage tanks which have a combined total storage capacity of 2.7 million gallons and 2 clear-well storage tanks that have a combined capacity of 2 million gallons. In total, the town has 4.2 million gallons/day reserve capacity for water when also accounting for production capacity.

Currently, the town bills approximately 1,270 residential lots and 560 commercial/industrial lots for town water services. There is less than 1% of the population not serviced by town water. The Town's policy indicates that any lot located within 200 linear feet of a water line must connect if within town limits. This policy does not apply to ETJ residents. This is due to the presence of rural water associations in these areas that provide water services to our outlying, ETJ population. The Town has contracts with Cricket-Millers Creek, Mulberry-Fairplains, and Broadway Water Associations. No rate has been established for the provision of water, out-of-town, to individual property owners.

The specifics of the contracts are two-fold depending on the association: 1) In some instances, the Town provides bulk water at set rates to the water associations which is then delivered to the associations' customers on their water lines and at association rates, and 2) The associations will flow their water through Town water lines at the association's rates.

Through on-going analysis and inventory of Town lines, the Town has identified an extremely small number of properties that are serviced by Town water at in-town rates and are not in the Town's limits.

Wastewater Management Systems

The town has one waste treatment facility that utilizes a biological, chlorine treatment; known as an active sludge plant. The maximum capacity for the plant is 2 million gallons per day; of which the town is currently treating an estimated 800,000 gallons per day. The plant is permitted by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR). The current permit expires in 2008 with anticipated new requirements for the plant to remove more total phosphorous and total nitrogen before a new permit can be renewed. In order to accommodate these new requirements, the plant will have to be upgraded to meet these anticipated requirements from the state. Currently there are no limits to the treatment of these agents required by law. The town also possesses a 1 million gallon storage tank for active sludge which is provided to farmers through contracted services for agricultural application. Effluent is conveyed from the treatment plant to the Yadkin River via a gravity line.

The town has approximately 40 miles of sewer lines and 1,300 manholes (See Appendix H). The system is composed of lines of a variety of materials; including PVC, ductile iron, cast iron, and clay. An assessment of the sewer lines was conducted in spring of 2006. This assessment is the first time the sewer system has been comprehensively reviewed and mapped. As such, old manholes and piping are constantly being unearthed and archived on an ongoing basis. The initial assessment revealed an approximate inventory as follows:

Diameter (Inches)	Length (Feet)
4	942
6	15,060
8	152,553
10	13,871
12	24,197
14	88
15	4,508
16	1,051
18	790
24	143
Unknown	35,000
Total	211,440

As indicated in the chart above, there is a considerable amount of piping of an unknown length and type. As new piping is discovered, mapped, and archived, this table shall be updated and included in future revisions to this plan.

The Town also owns and operates 19 wastewater pump stations; of which, six have autodialsers with the remaining undergoing daily inspections. Table 7 below provides details to the pump station inventory. All pump stations are duplex, submersible stations except for the Ball Park station which is a triplex above-ground.

Table 7: Town of North Wilkesboro Pump Station Inventory		
Pump Station Name	Date Built	Capacity (gpm)
VFW	1972	400
Ball Park	2002	1000
Finley Park	1992	40
Lincoln Heights	1997	260
Reddies River	1973	282
River Road #1 (Colonial Heights)	1989	200
River Road #2	1989	200
River Road #3 (Budweiser)	2002	350
Rock (Pearson St.)	1972	100
Ball Park	1989	150
West Wilkes HS	2001	100
Millers Creek Elem. Sch.	2001	100
Bojangles Millers Creek	2001	100
Congo Rd.	2001	250
Carolina Motel	2002	160
West Wilkes Middle Sch.	2001	100
Speedway Rd.	2005	100
Shady Lane	1989	150
Hwy 268	1984	420-500

The Town’s policy for sewer connection mandates that any lot or parcel within 200 linear feet of a sewer line must connect. If the parcel is located outside of town limits, the property owner must pay 1.5 times the rate of in-town residents. Annexation is typically a condition for connection to Town sewer; however it can be waived if out-of-town rates can be applied.

The town has completed a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as a part of a comprehensive sewer system assessment and improvement schedule. This CIP is designed to correspond to this plan and is included as an Appendix.

Stormwater and Floodplain Management Systems

The town has adopted standards for allocating 10/70 provisions in its regulatory watersheds. As a part of these standards, a ranking system was created to

prioritize projects located within the town’s watershed areas as a part of the review for projects. High priority is given to those projects in the watershed that utilize stormwater control systems (i.e. retention/detention, swales, etc). In addition, the town also requires stormwater controls for all major subdivisions throughout its jurisdiction.

Flood control is provided by the US Army Corps of Engineers for the Yadkin River system by way of a dam facility located upriver from town at the W. Kerr Scott Reservoir (See Appendix I). In addition, the Division of Water Quality permits dam impoundments for a variety of uses. To qualify for the dam permitting, all dams have to be over 15 feet in height and hold a minimum of 10 acre feet of water.

Transportation Systems

According to GIS data provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and Powell Bill data, there are approximately 94 total miles of roads within the Town limits and the ETJ (See Appendix J). This includes all

NCDOT, Town, and privately maintained streets and alleys, unimproved roads, and highways. The town maintains roughly 34 miles of roads while the state maintains the remaining 59.30 miles. There are .28 miles of public roads that are privately maintained roads as well. Percent mileage by road type and ownership is classified in Chart 4 below.

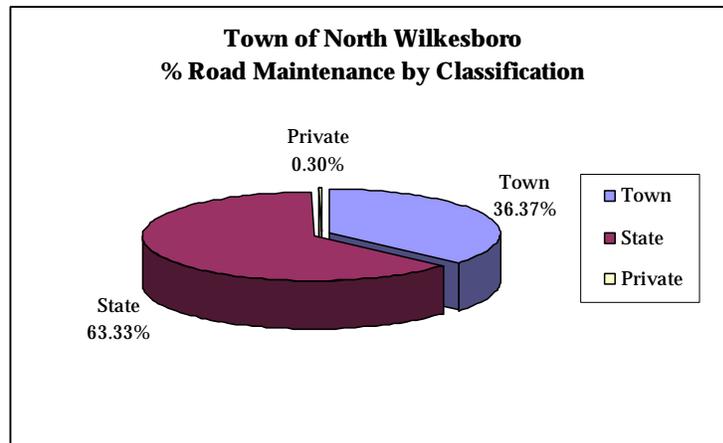


Chart 4: Percent Road Maintenance by Classification. Source: NCDOT, Town of North Wilkesboro Department of Public Works

By far, state-maintained roads account for the largest percentage of road miles within the Town and ETJ; followed by town-maintained roads.

The Town is traversed by two major highways that provide access to surrounding areas and counties. These include NC Highways 18 and 268. US Highway 115 provides access to and from the southern portion of town. According to the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), there is a 268/18 bypass scheduled to begin construction around 2012 that will essentially lead through traffic from the confluence of these two roads in North Wilkesboro to Hwy 421 in Wilkesboro near Hwy 16.

In addition to road systems, the Town is accessible by rail owned by Norfolk and Southern. This rail runs in a general east to west direction and serves as the end terminus for the Yadkin Valley Railroad Company at the train depot on Cherry Street. The town also possesses a greenway that is maintained as part of an interlocal agreement between the Town of North Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro, and Wilkes County.

Parks and Recreation

The Town of North Wilkesboro has six designated park areas (See Appendix K). The parks possess a blend of passive and active recreation opportunities. A summary of the park facilities for the town are outlined in the following table:

	Highland Park	Main St. Park	Mass St. Park	Memorial Park	Smoot Park	Woodlawn Community Center
Basketball						X
Baseball				X		
Playground (toddler)					X	
Playground (pre-teen)	X				X	X
Picnic Tables	X	X		X	X	
Picnic Shelters	X			X	X	
Tennis Courts				X	X	
BBQ Pits				X		
Outdoor Grills	X	X			X	
Shuffleboard Courts				X	X	
Horseshoe Pits				X	X	
Volleyball					X	
Skatepark					X	
Outdoor Pavilion	X				X	
Outdoor Stage	X					
Multi-Purpose Pad						X
Swimming Pool					X	
Canoe Put-in					X	

Game Room					X	
TOTAL ACRES	26.8	1.1	1.4	12.4	5.1	1.8

Table 8: North Wilkesboro Recreation Facilities by Type, 2005. Source: North Wilkesboro Parks and Recreation Department

The Town has approximately 48.6 acres of land currently designated for recreational use. According to the National Park and Recreation Association’s “Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, 10 acres per 1000 population is the standard for land needed for recreational purposes. This figure is cumulative depending on the type of park in question. The table below outlines the three types of parks used to compose the above figure, the amount of each type in the town, and the demand for future parkland by park type.

PARKLAND DEMAND STANDARDS			
PARK TYPE	DEMAND IN ACRES/1000 POP	AMOUNT PRESENT IN TOWN	TOWN'S DEMAND FOR LAND TYPE
Pocket Parks & Neighborhood Parks	2.5 Acres/1000 population	4.3 Acres/4116 population	+5.93 Acres
Community Parks	3.5 Acres/1000 population	17.5 Acres/4116 population	-2.77 Acres
Regional Parks	4.0 Acres/1000 population	26.8 Acres/4116 population	-10.57 Acres
Totals	10 Acres/1000 pop.	48.6 Acres/4116 population	

Table 9: Parkland Demand Standards, 2005. Source: “Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”. National Park and Recreation Association. 2005.

Based upon the data above when correlated with the demand standards, there is a need for more smaller-scale neighborhood parkland in North Wilkesboro; specifically 5.9 acres based upon the current population. However, the Town has an abundance of land for community and regional parks in town. It should be noted that these figures represent land demand and not park facilities. For example, Mass Street Park is listed as available neighborhood parkland, but currently sits vacant. Currently, Memorial and Smoot Parks and are most heavily used in the Town and contain the largest numbers of facilities.

In addition to the local facilities, there is a greenway that parallels the Yadkin River. The greenway is maintained by the Town of North Wilkesboro and Wilkes County and is projected to connect with Smoot Park in the near future.

Environmental Resources

Natural Resources to be Protected

STREAMS, RIVERS AND LAKES

There are two primary river systems in North Wilkesboro; the Reddies and Yadkin Rivers (See Appendix L). Both rivers are classified as being part of the larger Yadkin-Pee Dee river basin which provides drinking water to the area and to municipalities downriver; including Winston-Salem.

PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY WATERSHED

The Town of North Wilkesboro has two water supply watersheds that effect land development within their respective areas. These include the Reddies and Yadkin River watersheds (See Appendix L). These watersheds were created and classified by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Division of Water Quality.

The Reddies River watershed is classified as a WS-II watershed and encompasses roughly 59,338 acres over three counties (Alleghany, Ashe and Wilkes). It is part of the larger Yadkin River basin. Out of this acreage, North Wilkesboro has development control over nearly 2,572 acres with a subsequent 257 acres available for 10/70 allocation. This includes potential development in this watershed located in both town limits and the ETJ.

The Yadkin River basin is substantially larger and is divided numerous sub-basins; of which, one lies to the west of town. The sub-basin that affects North Wilkesboro totals approximately 31,043 acres and is classified as a WS-IV watershed. Out of this acreage, North Wilkesboro holds development control over 253 acres with a 10/70 allocation allowance of 25.3 acres. This allocation accounts primarily for a satellite territory located along Old US 421 (Boone Trail) to the west of the town.

The 10/70 provision is a provision of leniency allocated by the State to local jurisdictions for developing land beyond the stated density requirements in the local ordinance. The provision allows for 10% of the total watershed area of the corresponding watershed to be developed to 70% capacity. For example, if a watershed covered a 1,000 acre area, 100 acres can be developed to 70% lot or area coverage. The allocation is a substantial departure from the more rigorous requirements of minimum acreage and lot coverage requirements in the ordinance. The allocation is given out sparingly on a case-by-case basis from the Planning Board upon an applicant's petition.

FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are a determination derived elevation levels. The town is currently a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and possesses corresponding Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's) that have been amended over time. The town has not received a full comprehensive FIRM revision since February of 1998.

Elevations within the town boundary and the ETJ range between 928 and 1383 feet above sea level. For the purposes of this plan, floodable areas were calculated as being all elevations between 928 and 978 feet above sea level. These elevations were identified on the hard-copy FIRM's as composing the largest area of flood area within the town and ETJ. All elevations above 978 contained minor flood areas that were primarily located along identified creeks and streams experiencing a significant amount of elevation decline (fall) over a short distance.

Based upon the above-mentioned criteria, roughly 21% of the in-town territory is floodable (See Appendix M). When considering the land area covered both in the ETJ and in-town, approximately 11% is considered floodable.

It should be noted that these figures are estimates and are not intended to supersede or overwrite official FIRM or FEMA data. It should also be noted that these estimates do not take into account parcels or areas that have been officially removed from the FIRM's or have had the FIRM's amended to reflect changes in flood areas due to fill or based upon certified survey information. These estimates are based upon elevation calculations using LIDAR data in a GIS analysis.

AIR QUALITY

According to the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Air Quality Division, there are 21 active air quality permits issued for facilities with North Wilkesboro mailing addresses. Out of these 21 facilities, 14 are located solely within the town limits of North Wilkesboro (See Appendix N). A summary of the facility types are listed below.

Facility Name	NAICS Description
American Drew Plant #13	Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Mnfg.
American Drew Plant #14	Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Mnfg.
American Drew Plant #12	Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Mnfg.
D&D Displays, Inc.	Showcase, Partition, Shelving, and Locker Mnfg.
Duke Energy Corp-Lowe's Corp.	Other Electric Power Generation
Gardner Glass Products, Inc.	Glass Product Mnfg. Made of Purchased Glass
Greene Bros. Furniture Company, Inc.	Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Mnfg.

Hamby Brothers, Inc.	Other Concrete Product Mnfg.
Johnston Casuals Furniture, Inc.	Metal Household Furniture Mnfg.
Key City Furniture Co.	Non-upholstered Wood Household Furniture Mnfg.
Lowe Fur and Herb, Inc.	Secondary Smelting and Alloying of Aluminum
Minton Sales, Inc.	All Other Misc. Wood Product Mnfg.
RMC Mid-Atlantic, LLC	Concrete Block and Brick Mnfg.
Wilkes Hourglass Cleaners	Dry-cleaning and Laundry Services

Table 10: Permitted Air Quality Sites, 2005. Source: NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Air Quality

Land Characteristics Affecting Development Suitability

SOILS OVERVIEW

There are 20 recorded soil types in the Town of North Wilkesboro and surrounding ETJ (See Appendix O). For the purposes of analysis, the soils were broken out into three categories based upon their ability to affect development suitability. These three categories are outlined in more detail in Table 9 below and in the following subsections.

Soil Type	Hydric	Not Suitable for Septic Tanks	Highly Erodible	% in Town Limits	% in Town Limits and ETJ
<i>BuB</i>				<1.0	<1.0
<i>CkA</i>	X			1.4	1.5
<i>DoB</i>	X			<1.0	<1.0
<i>MaB2</i>			X	<1.0	<1.0
<i>MaC2</i>			X	<1.0	1.8
<i>MuC</i>			X	<1.0	<1.0
<i>PaD</i>		X	X	14.0	19.4
<i>PcB2</i>			X	2.6	3.6
<i>PcC2</i>			X	11.8	19.6
<i>PrC</i>			X	13.7	<1.0
<i>PrD</i>		X	X	4.5	1.6
<i>Pt</i>		X		<1.0	<1.0
<i>RnD</i>		X	X	NA	1.2
<i>RnE</i>		X	X	16.8	23.8
<i>StB</i>				<1.0	<1.0
<i>ToA</i>				4.5	3.9
<i>UdC</i>		X		10.9	4.6
<i>UfB</i>		X		12.8	4.8
<i>WeF</i>		X	X	<1.0	<1.0
<i>WhA</i>	X	X		<1.0	<1.0

Table 11: Soils in North Wilkesboro. Source: Wilkes County Soil Survey, USDA, 1997.

HIGHLY ERODIBLE SOILS

Out of the total 20 soil classifications in both the town limits and ETJ, 11 have been identified as being highly erodible (See Appendix P). Highly erodible soils are defined as being of a composition of loosely consolidated soils with a slope of 6% or greater, according to the Wilkes County Soil and Water Conservation District. High erodability is not an indicator of development potential in and of itself. This issue of high erodability is mainly a consideration when coupled with other topographical phenomena such as high amounts of slope and lack of vegetative cover. When examining high soil erosion characteristics in relation to this plan, the data reveals that roughly 67% of the town's land area is covered in highly erodible soils, while approximately 75% are classified as highly erodible both in-town and in the ETJ.

POORLY DRAINED SOILS FOR SEPTIC SYSTEMS

According to data from the Wilkes County Soil and Water Conservation District, 9 of the 20 soils present in this study are not suitable for septic tank placement or use due to poor porosity or subsequent underlying geological conditions (See Appendix Q). These nine soils types compose roughly 62% of the land area of the town limits and approximately 58.4% of the land in the ETJ.

STEEP SLOPE

Slope can be defined in terms of the percent rise from a horizontal surface; 0% being perfectly horizontal while 100% being vertical. Determining slope is crucial when determining available land in the Town that can be actually built upon with the least amount of cut, fill, or engineering (See Appendix R). Low percentages of slope indicate flatter surfaces, which to some can be interpreted as being ideal building sites. However, slopes directly determine the amount of natural drainage a building site could have and what ideal land uses could take advantage of natural topography. For the purposes of this plan, slope calculations have been classified as follows (see Table 10):

- **Low Lying/Floodable Areas (0%-2% slope)** - As stated above, flatter slopes seem to be ideal for development. However, these types of slope (especially in this area of the state) tend to encompass flood plain or low areas that tend to experience standing water during significant rain events due to little to no natural drainage pattern. These types of areas tend to be naturally suited to, for example, active/passive recreation, forestry operations, and agriculture. Urban development in these areas can be costly and, at times, impractical.
- **Good Development Potential (2%-14% slope)** – Slopes within this range makeup the best development land. This type of terrain can be classified as relatively rolling, small hills with good drainage;

making it ideal for urban development purposes as well as a whole range of agriculture, recreation , cultural, and resource extraction activities.

- **Moderate Development Potential (14%-25% slope)** – Similar to the classification above, these slopes types can be good development areas with minor engineering and/or site augmentation. Development in this classification will generally cost more money and require more analysis before site preparation. Urban-type development can be development on these types of slopes, but is ideally suited for land-based commercial activities such as resource extraction or agriculture. This land has good natural drainage potential, but this drainage pattern becomes more amplified as the slopes increase; resulting in potential erosion problems for urban development uses.
- **Poor Development Potential (25+% slope)** – Development in this classification becomes nearly cost prohibitive, depending on the use. Urban-type uses become extremely costly as engineering and land preparation can account for a significant part of the development. Erosion control and sedimentation become major concerns as natural drainage allows for flash flooding on these types of slopes; especially on non-pervious surfaces. Steep river banks and natural levees can also be found predominantly in this classification. Depending on the type of land preparation prior to site development and use intended, these areas should ideally be buffered or zoned for low density, less intensive land uses.

Percentage Slope	Classification	% Slope in North Wilkesboro	% Slope in Town and ETJ
0% -2%	Low Lying/Floodable Areas	12.7	7.1
2% -14%	Good Development Potential	42.8	39.8
14% -25%	Moderate Development Potential	22.7	28.4
25+%	Poor Development Potential	21.8	24.7

Table 12: Percent Slope by Jurisdiction. Source: Wilkes County Soil Survey, USDA, 1997.

FLOOD PRONE AREAS

Hydric soils are soils that are usually compacted and clay-like in consistency and therefore drain poorly and are associated usually with wetland areas. Table 9 above reflects the 19 soil types in North Wilkesboro and their corresponding hydric level. Assessing the hydric nature of soils is important when determining a soil's capacity for processing water runoff during high precipitation events. Adopted from the Soil Survey of Wilkes County, the classifications are defined as all soil being hydric in nature. These soils these soils are only saturated at variable times throughout the growing season.

Cultural and Historic Resources

CULTURAL

For the purposes of this analysis, cultural amenities include areas of the jurisdiction generally considered valuable due to historical considerations or areas where the community gathers for cultural events. These generally include cemeteries, structures, libraries, galleries and festival sites (See Appendix S).

There are 10 cemeteries located within the town limits and ETJ. Out of this total there is only one publicly-controlled cemetery, 2 predominantly African-American cemeteries, and the remainder being smaller, private cemeteries.

In addition to Merlefest, which is held across the river in the Town of Wilkesboro and brings over 80,000 people to the region over four days, the town has two main festivals held annually; the Brushy Mountain Apple Festival and Carolina in the Fall. The former festival is located in historic downtown and centered on the corner of Main and 10th Street on a lot owned Brushy Mountain Ruritan Club. Carolina in the Fall is located on the Shepherd Farm located off of Armory Rd. in the ETJ. Both festivals collectively bring over 50,000 people to the town annually. The Town also boasts an art gallery and also hosts the Wilkes County library in its downtown.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC

In 1980, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History completed a historical inventory for the town that listed 132 properties as being historically significant (See Appendix T). The inventory includes industrial, commercial, religious, governmental, and residential buildings as well as engineering structures and miscellaneous buildings, structures and sites (See Appendix U).

The original inventory also details the status of the buildings as being demolished or currently active. Prior to this inventory in the 1970's, the town underwent significant "urban renewal" being funded mostly by State and Federal grant money. As such, numerous historic buildings throughout the town were demolished to make way for redevelopment. The 1980 inventory reflects the buildings that were left after this redevelopment occurred. However, since 1980, other buildings have also been demolished and are subsequently listed also in the Appendix as such. Due to the history of the town as being a commercial and residential hub for the area, the percentage of properties on this inventory falling into these two categories composes the highest amount.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The goals, objectives, and policies outlined below reflect a combination of data received from public input sessions and information gathered for the information base of the plan. To the greatest extent possible, the goals reflect the desires as expressed by the community while taking into account the reality of the town's physical, social, and economic situation.

Population and Economy

Goal 1.1 Foster Development of Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses

Objective 1.1.1 Create a Business Incubator

Policy 1.1.1a Offer tax incentives for site location and facility.

Objective 1.1.2 Provide Training Opportunities for New Entrepreneurs

Policy 1.1.2a Locate and coordinate regional teaching resources for small business planning, financing, and marketing.

Policy 1.1.2b Coordinate with Wilkes Community College for educational opportunities.

Policy 1.1.2c Actively market North Wilkesboro small businesses and market potential through the Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce and EDC .

Policy 1.1.2d Retain and expand new business opportunities for youth.

Objective 1.1.3 Diversify Employment and Business Climate

Policy 1.1.3a Identify and nurture non-traditional, but growing employment sectors.

Policy 1.1.3b Encourage the Town's role in regional business growth initiatives.

Goal 1.2 Encourage Retention of Larger, Regional Businesses

Objective 1.2.1 Identify Sites for Locating in Desirable Areas

Policy 1.2.1a Identifying and zoning areas deemed necessary for larger businesses to thrive.

Policy 1.2.1b Work with RPO to insure adequate transportation projects are included into the TIP for movement of goods, services, and customers.

Policy 1.2.1c Provide water and sewer services to areas identified as being high growth areas.

Policy 1.2.1d Work with businesses and the Wilkes EDC to forecast facility "buildout" and alternatives for facility growth or relocation.

Land Use and Development

Goal 2.1 Develop and Utilize Flexible Land Use Controls

Objective 2.1.1 Revise and Implement New Zoning Code

Policy 2.1.1a Allow for more mixing of uses

Policy 2.1.1b Allow for more conditional and special use districts

Policy 2.1.1c Consolidate development regulations into a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Policy 2.1.1d Move from cumulative zoning to exclusive zoning

Policy 2.1.1e Promote infill development on vacant land

Goal 2.2 Maximize Redevelopment Potential for Vacant Structure and Parcels

Objective 2.2.1 Make Use of Innovative Financing Programs

Policy 2.2.1a Research use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in blighted and distressed areas.

Policy 2.2.1b Establish Municipal Service Districts (MSD) in distressed areas where practical.

Objective 2.2.2 Reuse Older, Abandoned Factory Buildings

Policy 2.2.2a Develop land use codes for building reuse.

Policy 2.2.2b Encourage building reuse by district.

Goal 2.3 Strengthen Community Appearance

Objective 2.3.1 Beautify Town Entrances

Policy 2.3.1a Create corridor overlay districts with design standards for Highways 268, 115, and 18 entering town.

Policy 2.3.1b Prohibit erection of new billboards within the Town's planning jurisdiction.

Objective 2.3.2 Improve Downtown Character

Policy 2.3.2a Establish uniform sign regulations

Policy 2.3.2b Develop and implement streetscape plan for pedestrian uses.

Policy 2.3.2c Incorporate festival and park-type uses in the downtown.

Objective 2.3.3 Improve Appearances on new development

Policy 2.3.3a Establish landscaping requirements for new development

Policy 2.3.3b Establish appearance and design standards

Goal 2.4 Encourage Quality, Affordable Residential Development

Objective 2.4.1 Mandate Well-Planned Residential Development

Policy 2.4.1a Encourage connectivity between subdivisions and adjoining land uses, where feasible and practical.

Policy 2.4.1b Encourage all new major subdivisions to be connected to public utilities.

Policy 2.4.1c Require subdivisions to provide open space and/or recreation areas.

Policy 2.4.1d Require the use of fences, berms, walls, or landscaped materials to provide a buffer between residential uses and adjoining uses, when practical.

Policy 2.4.1e Conduct a housing quality study throughout jurisdiction.

Objective 2.4.2 Protect the Integrity of Established Residential Neighborhoods.

Policy 2.4.2a Enforce the adopted Minimum Housing Standards in all residential neighborhoods.

Policy 2.4.2b Support a minimum housing program in areas of town containing deteriorated and dilapidated dwellings.

Policy 2.4.2c Require site design standards for all institutional uses in residential areas to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent residential properties.

Policy 2.4.2d Require design standards for mobile home and modular units.

Policy 2.4.4e Prohibit the encroachment of incompatible, non-residential uses in established neighborhoods.

Policy 2.4.4f Maintain clean and safe streets in all neighborhoods.

Objective 2.4.3 Promote Home Ownership.

Policy 2.4.3a Encourage a mix of housing opportunities in the zoning and subdivision regulations.

Policy 2.4.3b Continue cooperation with North Wilkesboro Housing Authority

Objective 2.4.4 Discourage Residential Sprawl Conditions.

Policy 2.4.4a Encourage multi-family developments to be located close to major arterials or transportation corridors.

Policy 2.4.4b Encourage traditional neighborhood development through zoning applications.

Policy 2.4.4c Annex “doughnut hole” areas inside town limits.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Goal 3.1 Encourage Fiscally Responsible Utility Extensions, Expansions and Servicing

Objective 3.1.1 Direct and Guide Development to Achieve Optimum Utilization of Public Infrastructure

Policy 3.1.1a Implement higher density/mixed use zoning codes

Policy 3.1.1b Continue to replace substandard or failing water lines, sewer lines and supporting facilities.

Policy 3.1.1c Identify and annex water and/or sewer customers who are being serviced by Town utilities, yet are not in town where practical.

Policy 3.1.1d Develop out-of-town water rates for customers outside of Town limits when annexation is not an option.

Objective 3.1.2 Ensure Adequate Water/Sewer Capacities are Available for Anticipated Growth

Policy 3.1.2a Inventory existing water and sewer transmission systems for needed modifications and repairs.

Policy 3.2.1b Adopt a policy and standards for the extension of water and sewer services into the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

Policy 3.2.1c Identify areas for the extension of water and sewer services into the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

Policy 3.2.1d Identify additional hydrant locations and needed hydrants repairs.

Policy 3.2.1e Monitor sewer system efficiency to ensure against infiltration and inflow problems.

Policy 3.2.1f Establish secondary raw water intake from W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.

Policy 3.2.1g Complete map and GIS database of water system.

Policy 3.2.1h Develop Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for sewer system development.

Goal 3.2 Encourage Adequate Stormwater Controls and Floodplain Management

Objective 3.2.1 Ensure that all existing and new development implement adequate stormwater control systems

Policy 3.2.1a Require Stormwater control systems be provided for development depending on scale and impact of use.

Policy 3.2.1b Discourage development in regulatory floodways.

Policy 3.2.1c Encourage conservation and passive uses of regulatory floodway areas.

Goal 3.3 Encourage Diversity in Transportation Options and Availability

Objective 3.3.1 Ensure that all development provides safe, attractive, and convenient accessibility to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles.

Policy 3.3.1a Inventory existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities for needed modifications and repairs.

Policy 3.3.2b Develop comprehensive transportation plan

Policy 3.3.2c Encourage developers to use established traffic calming designs to control automobile movement through residential areas.

Policies 3.3.2d Continue to plan, implement, and encourage projects that enhance the appearance of major vehicular corridors.

Policy 3.3.2e Prioritize sidewalk and multi-purpose path construction and repair as part of capital improvement programming.

Objective 3.3.2 Work with other regional entities, public and private, to pursue a multi-modal network of transportation options and facilities.

Policy 3.3.2a Incorporate regionally-adopted long-range transportation plans into the Town's Transportation Plan.

Policy 3.3.2b Work with regional public transportation systems to encourage safe and convenient public transportation access.

Objective 3.3.3 Encourage land use development patterns that shorten the average length of vehicle trips as a means of reducing congestion and delay throughout the Town.

Policy 3.3.3a Use the development approval process to ensure that new roads are built and existing roads are improved in accordance with adopted plans, ordinances, regulations and policies.

Goal 3.4 Encourage a Variety of Sound Recreation Areas, Facilities and Activities

Objective 3.4.1 Provide a variety of both passive and active recreation activities for the citizens of North Wilkesboro and surrounding area.

Policy 3.4.1a Coordinate with adjacent municipalities to create and enhance greenway linkages and access to regional park facilities.

Policy 3.4.1b Promote and encourage public participation in the design of parks, greenways and open space areas.

Policy 3.4.1c Encourage private sector to fill recreation needs that the town identifies cannot be provided publicly.

Policy 3.4.1d Coordinate with other public and private agencies in the maintenance of existing and future parks.

Objective 3.4.2 Provide a comprehensive recreation system that will assure quality recreation opportunities for present and future citizens of North Wilkesboro and surrounding area.

Policy 3.4.2a Ensure that adequate land is available for future park development by actively pursuing land acquisition in advance of need.

Policy 3.4.2b Provide a Capital Improvement Program to guide the provision for park and recreation facilities.

Policy 3.4.2c Cooperate with private sector entities to provide a variety of recreational opportunities.

Policy 3.4.2d Work to reduce stress and overuse of existing facilities.

Policy 3.4.2e Encourage an annual evaluation to assess parks and recreation needs of the community.

Environmental Resources

Goal 4.1 Encourage Appropriate Development in Designated Watershed Areas

Objective 4.1.1 Concentrate Commercial Development along Transportation Corridors.

Policy 4.1.1a Encourage clustered development in watershed.

Policy 4.1.1b Encourage mixed use commercial development in watershed.

Policy 4.1.1c Research a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program for watershed areas along corridors.

Objective 4.1.2 Encourage Appropriate Storm Water Facilities as Part of New Construction.

Policy 4.1.2a Devise ranking system for 10/70 Special Density Allocations

Goal 4.2 Encourage Preservation of Historically Significant Structures and Landmarks

Objective 4.2.1 Preserve and Enhance the Town's Historic Buildings and Landscapes.

Policy 4.2.1a Seek designation of historic district and/or landmarks.

Policy 4.2.1b Establish a Historic Preservation Commission.

Policy 4.2.1c Promote the use of incentives to ensure historic preservation.

Policy 4.2.1d The Town shall actively pursue grants and other funds to further historic preservation programs.

Objective 4.2.2 Promote education and provide access to historic resources.

Policy 4.2.2a Connect significant historical areas with greenways and pedestrian facilities.

Policy 4.2.2b Work to include historical districts and/or landmarks in “Old Wilkes” programming.

Policy 4.2.2c Work with the local public schools to ensure that historic preservation is communicated and made public.

Policy and Action Commitments

Desired Future Land Use and Infrastructure Patterns

Future Land Use was determined through a series of steering committee meetings conducted with the North Wilkesboro Planning Board. Once the future land uses were classified and mapped, the final product was placed on display for public comment.

Existing land use patterns were analyzed to determine trends in development and based future uses upon both desires expressed through the visioning session and work sessions of the planning board. The outcome was a categorization of future land uses into 10 broad categories and then mapped over the entire jurisdiction (See Appendix V). In addition, the Planning Board extended the analysis to cover areas outside of the town's ETJ into anticipated growth areas over the life of this plan.



Planning Board Future Land Use Subcommittee, 2006

Future Land Use (FLU) categories used in this plan include the following:

RESIDENTIAL

Low Density Residential (LDR) – These areas are primarily located outside of the town's corporate limits and public utilities may or may not be provided. Intense subdivision development is not recommended in these areas due to water supply concerns and lack of infrastructure to support growth. The overall maximum density depends on the amount of open space provided. Compact residential neighborhoods that set aside significant natural vistas, parkland, and landscape features and other rural heritage features for permanent conservation are encouraged. Development considerations include environmental impacts, urban sprawl, provision of open space and natural features and vistas, and the availability of adequate infrastructure.

Medium Density Residential (MDR) – These areas are primarily located within the town’s corporate limits (but may be located in the ETJ) and public utilities may or may not be provided. Generally, land classified as moderate density has already been developed as a conventional subdivision or been approved for a conventional subdivision. Development considerations include environmental impacts, urban sprawl, provision of open space and natural features and vistas, and the availability of adequate infrastructure.

High Density Residential-Single Family (HSF) – These areas are located within the town’s corporate limits and include many mature neighborhoods. Public utilities are available and an extensive road network already exists. These areas are intended to provide for residential infill development with a wide range of housing types surrounding the central business area. Low intensity business uses located in mixed-use buildings or buildings designed and constructed at a residential scale and appearance are also appropriate. Development considerations include the compatibility of infill development with existing building patterns.

High Density Residential-Multifamily (HMF) - These areas are intended to provide for residential infill development with a wide range of housing types surrounding key employment areas and traffic corridors. High intensity residential uses located in mixed-use buildings or buildings designed and constructed at a residential scale and appearance are also appropriate. Development considerations include the compatibility of infill development with existing building patterns and impact of high density residential uses on transportation corridors.

Recreation, Conservation, Agriculture (RCA) - These are areas where parks, recreation areas, greenways, or open space and agricultural areas either exist or have been identified as possibilities in the future. Development considerations include the desirability of the land for recreation, conservation use, or agriculture, how the properties fit into the future recreation or open space plans of the town or county, and the environmental impacts of developing the land.

COMMERCIAL

General Commercial (GC) - These areas are generally located along major thoroughfares that contain a wide array of commercial uses. Typical retail uses include shopping centers, restaurants, and convenience stores. Other heavier uses may include mini-warehouses and automobile sales lots. Development considerations include traffic, compatibility with abutting

residential area, the appearance of new and existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure.

Mixed Use (MU) - These areas are located within the town's corporate limits and may be either new development that includes a mix of housing and retail uses or may be an area that includes a mixture of older industrial uses that have the potential for use as mixed commercial, office, and residential uses. Retail uses are designed to draw customers primarily from adjoining neighborhoods. Development considerations include the compatibility of the different uses within the project and also with the surrounding neighborhoods and existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure.

Neighborhood Retail Node (NRN) - These are areas proposed for retail services that are designed to draw customers primarily from adjoining neighborhoods. Developments are small in scale and include uses that provide customers with everyday retail-type goods and services. Development considerations include compatibility with surrounding residential areas and the ability to access such facilities using primarily pedestrian systems of travel

Central Business District (CBD) - This area encompasses North Wilkesboro's "downtown" and contains a variety of office and retail uses and general services. Central to the success of downtown is its unique architectural features, historic integrity, attached buildings, pedestrian atmosphere, and symbiotic uses. Development considerations include design and use compatibility with the historic, urban framework.

INDUSTRIAL

General Industrial (GI) - These areas are intended to accommodate traditional industrial uses on individual tracts of land or on land located within coordinated industrial parks. Such uses may constitute health or safety hazards, have greater than average impacts on the environment, or diminish the use and enjoyment of nearby property by generation of noise, smoke, fumes, odors, glare, vibration, industrial vehicle traffic, or similar nuisances. Development considerations include access to adequate highways, water and sewer capacity and minimizing impacts to adjoining uses.

The considerable constraints to future development within the central town are mainly due to redevelopment costs. Due to the town's past history as an industrial hub, site contamination concerns have been raised as redevelopment

and infill considerations are being addressed in the central, older parts of the town. Town staff is actively developing a brownfield program to ensure these sites are reused. When coupled with aging or functionally obsolete structures that must be removed or demolished to make way for new construction, redevelopment can become cost prohibitive. In other areas outside of the town center, minor slope considerations must be taken into account when providing utilities services.

The general trend of current and future development is a transition from a traditional industrial and manufacturing area to one based upon service, management, and retirement services. Retiree in-migration is expected to have a significant impact on future development trends over the next 10-20 years; primarily in the residential and commercial services development.

Intended Development Management Program

The strongest method of development management is through the use of zoning applications. The current history of zoning in town has been through the use of an older cumulative zoning standard. The town will revert to an exclusive zoning use system via a permitted use table. This will also entail the complete revision of zoning categories to reflect future desired growth and subsequent rezoning of a vast majority of the land in town. The older zoning ordinance contained only two conditional use permits for specific uses (junk yards and mobile home parks). The newer code will significantly expand the conditional use process to allow greater flexibility between the town and its citizens by creating additional conditional use districts and permits. In addition, the town intends to maintain flexibility with the citizens by creating more mixed use standards and “uses-by-right” while maintaining community character and image.

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to aid in development decisions by a variety of users. As a result, development and rezoning decisions which employ the goals, objectives, and policies stated in this plan can be employed in the following ways:

As Used by the Developer

A chance of a positive rezoning request can be increased when the petition for the request is consistent with stated town policies or the included future land use map. The plan helps minimize uncertainties in zoning decisions and increase efficiency in decision making.

As Used by the Town Planning Board

Prior to making any zoning or land development decisions, Planning Board members can make the determination that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and/or future land use map. The Planning Board should take into consideration the objectives and policies of the Plan, but may choose to give varying amounts of weight to the different portions of the Plan; such as the future land use map.

As Used by the General Public

When commenting in favor or opposition to a land development or zoning decision, residents of the town can reference portions of the plan.

As Used by the Town Board of Commissioners

Being that the Town Board has legislative authority to rezone property, the Board also has the final word as to plan consistency with the Plan as to its affect on the property in question. The Board should consider the interpretation of policy as incorporated by the property owner or applicant, the North Wilkesboro Planning Board, staff, and the general public. As the Board becomes familiar with the process of ensuring plan consistency, a consistent foundation for decision-making will come to fruition.

Program for Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The plan shall be evaluated every 5 years for consistency and updating of policies. In addition to plan updating, tools and implementation strategies shall be evaluated for efficiency; primarily taking the form of zoning code revisions and/or amendments.

Amendments to this plan would need to be considered when new, unforeseen projects are presented or significant changes occur that would have a considerable impact to the community.