

HORIZON PLAN

2045

The number '2' shows a sunset over a field. The '0' shows a field of yellow flowers. The '4' shows an aerial view of a town. The '5' shows a large crowd of people at an outdoor event.

IREDELL COUNTY

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Planning Board**

November 1, 2023

# AGENDA

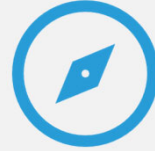
- The 2045 Horizon Plan Process
- Structure of the Plan
- Plan Highlights
- Next Steps



# THE 2045 HORIZON PLAN PROCESS



# WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?



Long-range policy  
guide

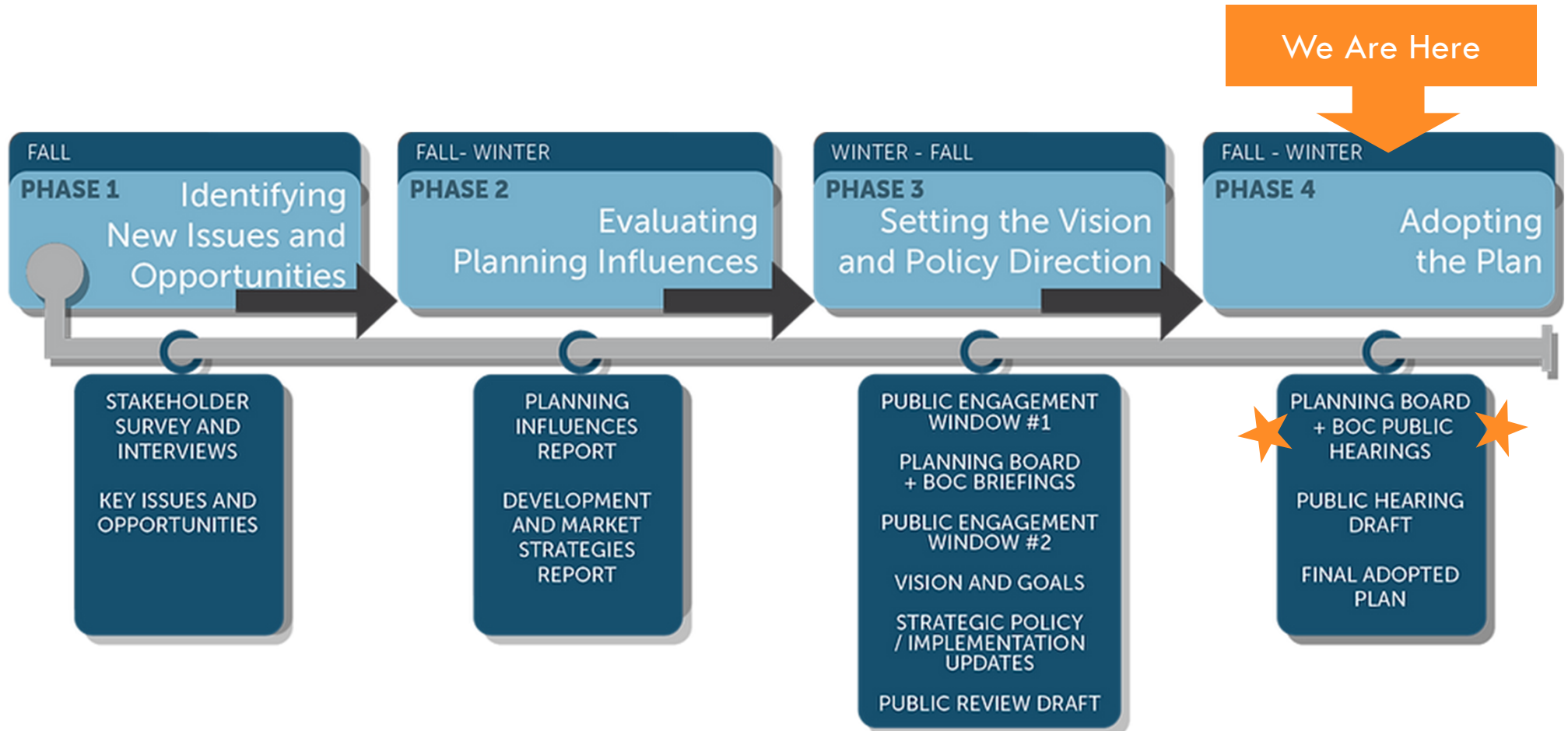


Helps direct future  
growth and  
conservation

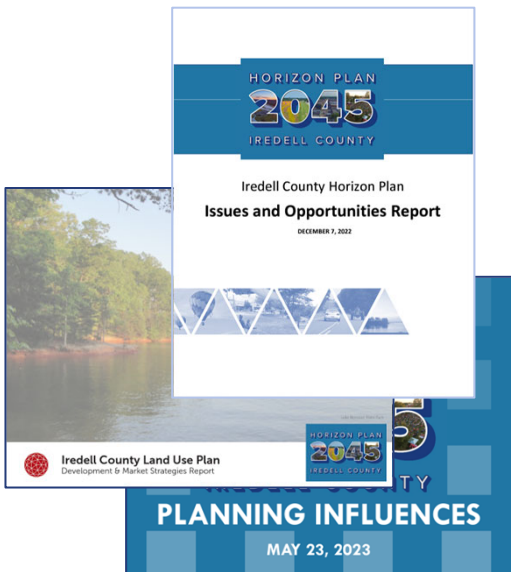


Includes vision for  
the future and an  
action plan to  
achieve it

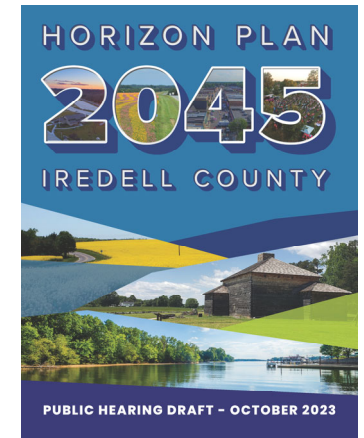
# PROJECT TIMELINE



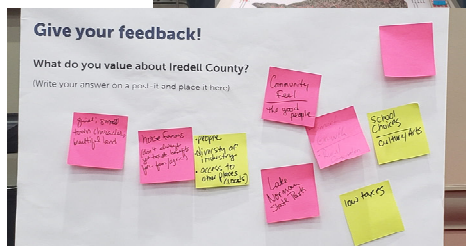
# BUILDING THE PLAN



- Issues and Opportunity Report
- Development and Market Strategies Report
- Planning Influences Report
- Comments from community
- Guidance from the steering committee



All helped lead to the draft plan



**Available on [IredellHorizonPlan.info](http://IredellHorizonPlan.info)  
(under Resources & Work Products)**

# THE PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT WILL STAY THE SAME THROUGH THE PROCESS

January Open Houses → Early Reports & Analysis (no plan draft)

August Open Houses → Public Review Draft

Planning Board → **Public Hearing Draft**

Board of Commissioners → **Public Hearing Draft** + Memo of any notes or changes from the Planning Board

Helps the public keep track of changes during the process



# STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN



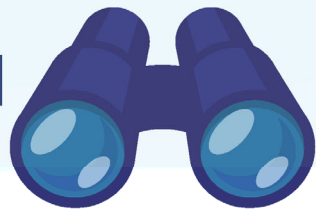


# STRUCTURE

Components across **five chapters**

**Ch. 1 About Iredell County and the 2045 Horizon Plan** including the structure, the process, and the Horizon Plan Vision

**2045 HORIZON  
PLAN VISION**



*The 2045 Horizon Plan Vision provides a guiding direction for the future of Iredell County.*

**Balance Growth and Preservation.**

**Act as Convenor in the County.**

**Make Variety a Strength.**



# STRUCTURE

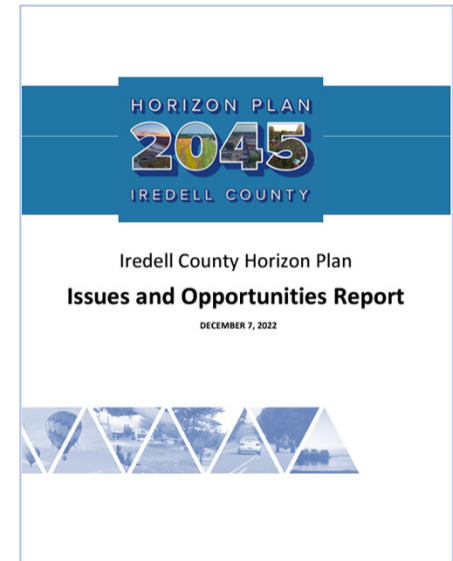
Components across **five chapters**

**Three Chapters Structured around  
Community Issues and Opportunities**

**Ch.2 Prepare for Oncoming Growth**

**Ch.3 Preserve Farmland and Agriculture**

**Ch.4 Coordinate Across the County**



# STRUCTURE

Components across **five chapters**

**Ch. 5 Moving Toward the Horizon** including performance metrics and detailed implementation actions, organized by type:

- **Further Planning**
- **Capital Investments**
- **Regulatory Updates**
- **Programs and Initiatives**

## Detailed Actions

### FURTHER PLANNING

#### **FP-1** *Implement the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan.*

Through existing partnerships with the CRTPO, NC-DOT, and municipalities in Iredell County, work to implement the recommendations included within the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan.

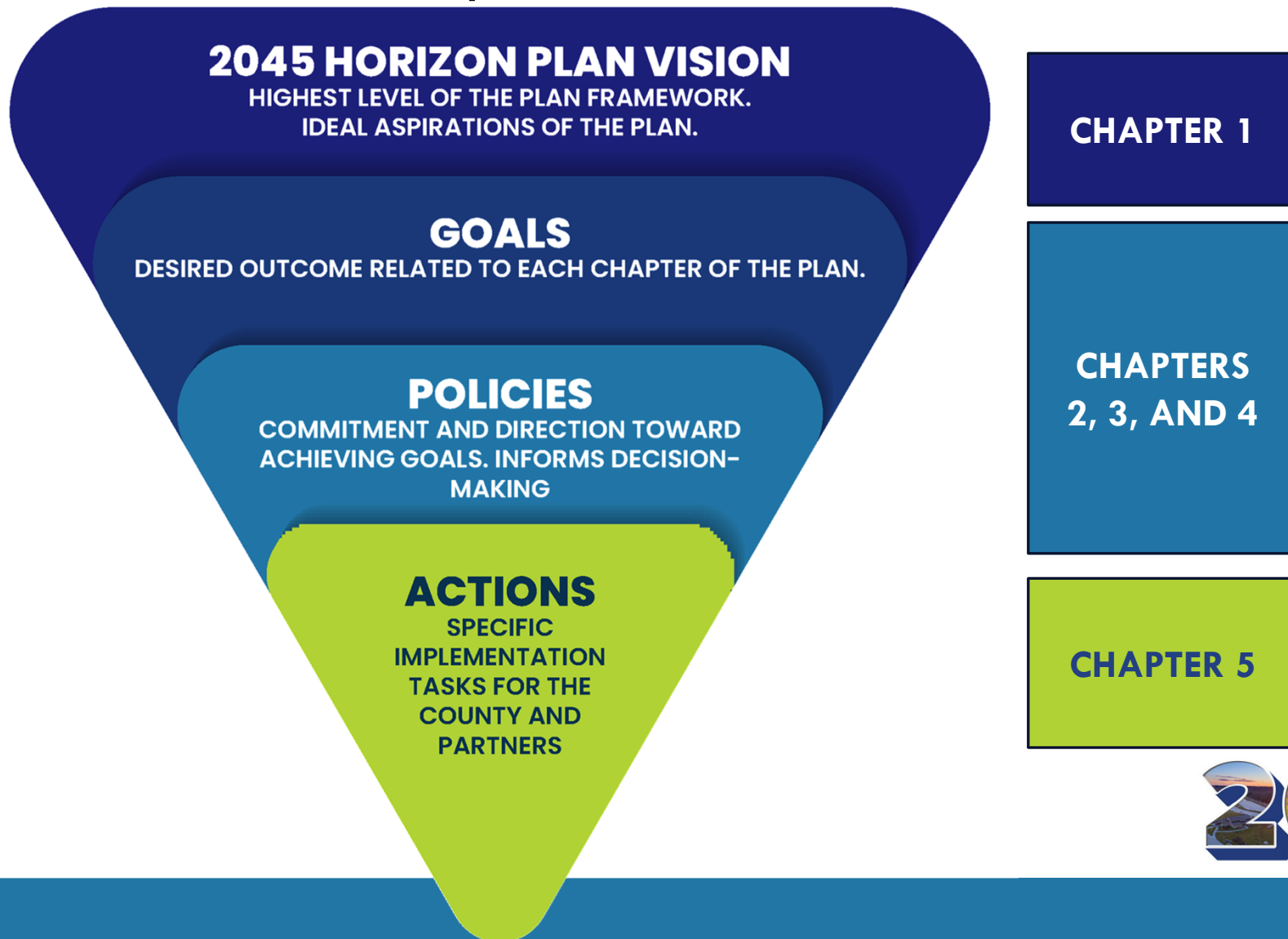
*Timing: Ongoing*

*Agency or Partner: Planning and Development Department; CRTPO, NC-DOT, municipalities*



# STRUCTURE

## Guidance in the plan



# STRUCTURE

Additional ideas and education are shown in light blue boxes, with a magnifying glass icon

## CH. 3

### Conservation Toolkit



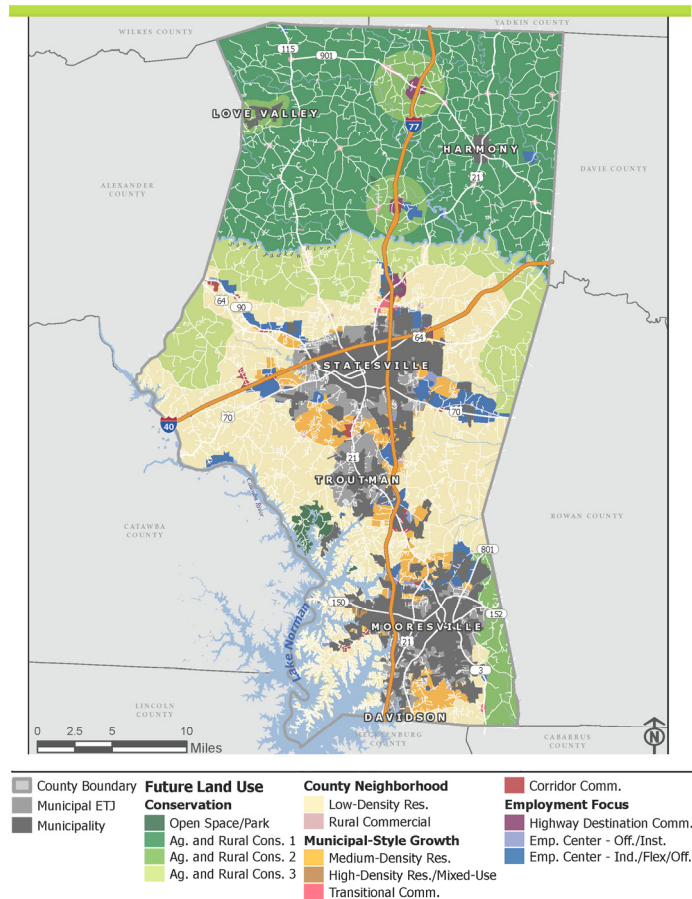
Tools for conserving farmland and agricultural are described in this section. This list includes known available tools that could be utilized as a part of conservation in Iredell County. Implementing the right tool or collection of tools is an exercise in reviewing effectiveness and balancing resources. It may be the case that additional tools that are not listed here, or that have not yet been created, are a part of a successful program. Tools are organized by how the program operates. Regulatory tools confer a benefit to the landowner or a restriction on the land that includes formal rules about what can occur on the land, based on County ordinance or State or Federal law. Financial tools convey a specific lessening of tax burden or payment for conserving land. Market-based and economic incentive tools include different business and investment structures that make farmland and agriculture more economically competitive with other alternative land uses.

# STRUCTURE

Maps provide additional key information

## CH. 2

### FUTURE LAND USE MAP - FULL COUNTY

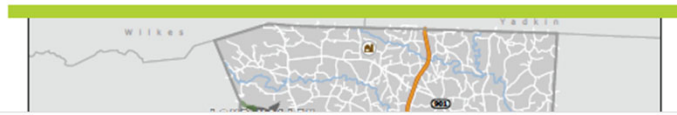


## CH. 4

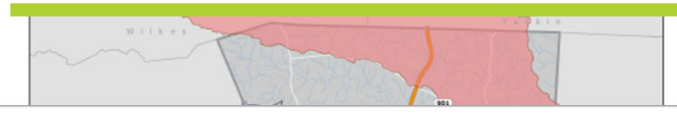
### EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL



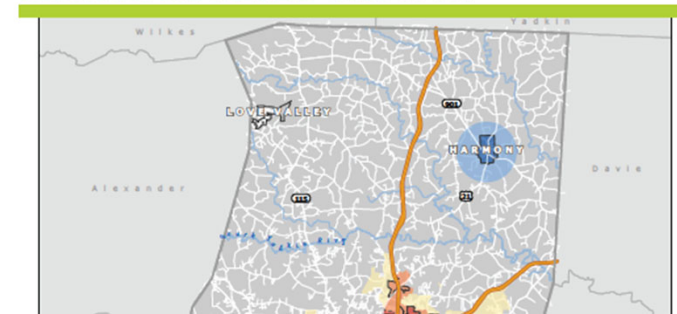
### TOURISM POTENTIAL



### WATERSHEDS



### MUNICIPAL TIERED GROWTH



# PLAN HIGHLIGHTS



# CHAPTER

## Prepare for Oncoming Growth

# 2



### In this Chapter:

Trends And Issues

Jurisdiction and Authority

Guidance for the Future

Future Land Use (and Future Land Use Map)

Other Relevant Plans

### Goal

Growth will be managed and planned for in collaboration with jurisdictional partners to align land use and transportation planning efforts across the County. These efforts will support both rural preservation efforts and municipal growth that is served by adequate infrastructure and public service capacity.





# CHAPTER 2 TRENDS & ISSUES

## (1) Growth Management

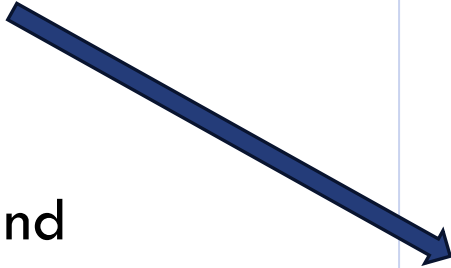
Includes “Community Preference for Planning Before Growth”

## (2) Future Land Use

Includes “Variety of Places and Character in the County”

## (3) Transportation

Includes “Transportation and Land Use Connected”



### **Strategic Changes in Municipal Planning**

The most recent plans from Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville show that all three are being deliberate and strategic with their growth. Statesville and Mooresville have connected their future land use designations to utility services tiers, and in its most recently adopted future land use map, Troutman created new designations with limited density and greater environmental considerations along Lake Norman and the Catawba River. In all three cases, even though the most recent plans account for oncoming growth, they include designations for some areas with less intensive land uses than they showed in their previous plans or maps. (For additional discussion coordination with municipalities see Chapter 4: Coordinate Across the County)

### **Community Preference for Planning Before Growth**

During all public engagement activities that occurred as a part of the development of this Horizon Plan, community members raised concerns about growth exceeding available infrastructure capacity and the impacts this has on schools, traffic congestion, and the provision of public safety, Fire, and EMS services. The County can act as a convener of partners that play a role in making growth decisions in Iredell. Iredell County can create a process for collective and deliberate planning, in coordination with municipalities, the state, and other jurisdictional partners to help address community concerns. This collaboration is needed because ultimately, the County does not build or manage the road network or municipal development and there are not tools available to local governments in

North Carolina that guarantee all infrastructure will arrive before the demand it serves. Creative solutions will need to be developed in collaboration with partners to truly plan for growth related impacts before they occur.

### **Future Land Use**

#### **A Variety of Places and Character in the County**

Iredell County does not have a single uniform land use character. It has vibrant, urban downtowns and large, bucolic farms. Even outside of the municipalities there is still a range of development types and intensities leading to different neighborhood characteristics from the houses on Lake Norman to subdivisions in view of the foothills and mountains, and from the destination retail shopping centers to the rural crossroads with a general store or restaurant. The future land use map and classifications in this Plan provides guidance for all these different place and character types.

#### **Broad Areas Have Been Dedicated to Low Density**

In the 2030 orizon Plan, over three quarters of the land in the county was planned for low densities (Agricultural Residential, Low Density Residential, and Rural Conservation). In the zoning classifications that exist at the start of this Horizon Plan, over 300,000 acres of the county is regulated as Residential Agricultural or Rural Residential. The County is large, and though there has been growth, much has been expected to remain rural or low density residential. Much of that land is in the northern planning area and in areas away from the municipalities.



# CHAPTER 2 EDUCATION

- (1) Encouraging Connectivity
- (2) Land Development, Zoning, and Annexation
- (3) Additional Transportation Plans
- (4) Recent Plans in Iredell County Municipalities



**Recent Plans in Iredell County Municipalities**

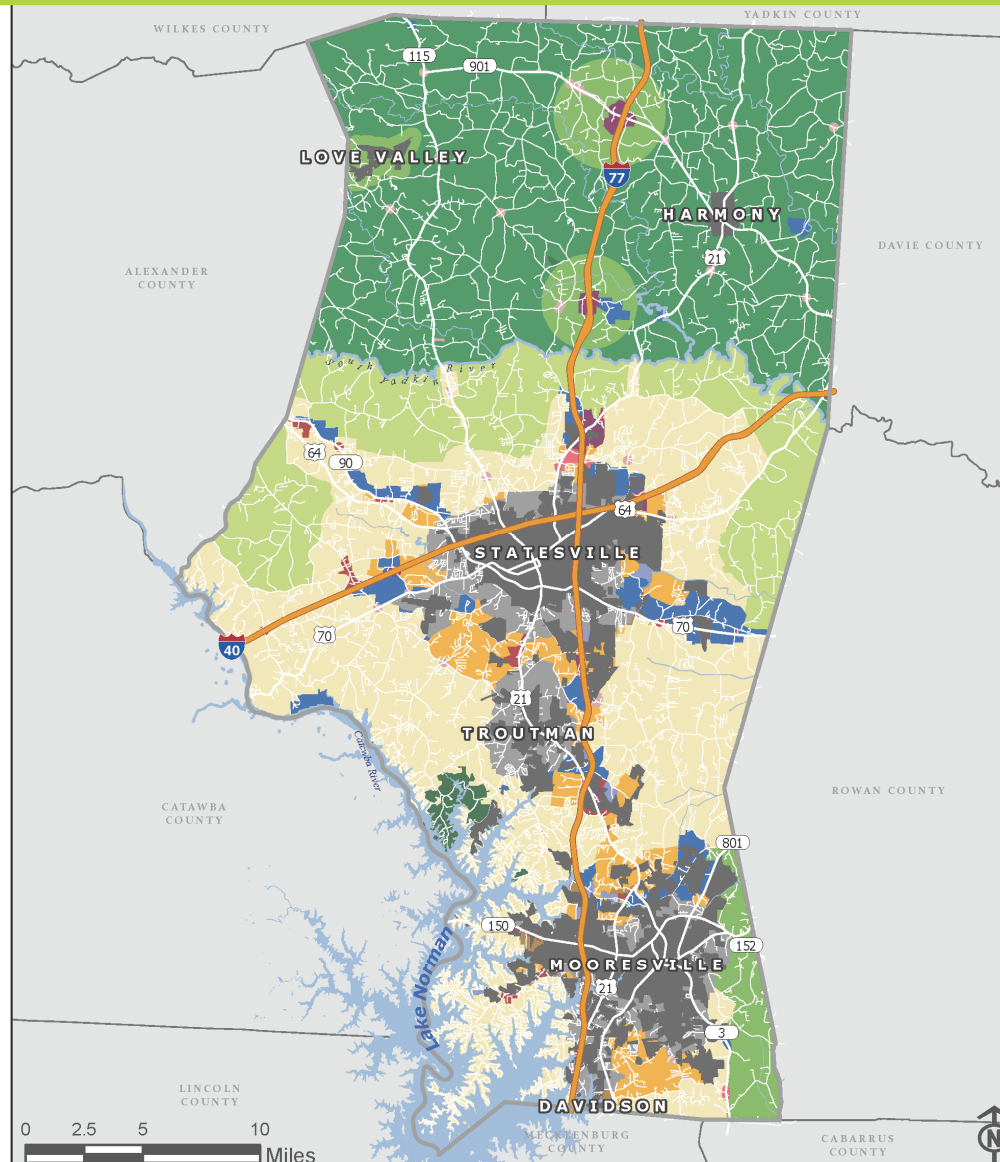
Municipalities have revised their own comprehensive and land development plans since the 2030 Horizon Plan. Understanding their visions and how their intended direction is shifting helps coordinate planning across the County.

Most recent Comprehensive plans and similar plans adopted by municipalities since 2009:

 Statesville 2045 Land Development Plan (2022)	 Troutman Strategic Plan (2018) and updated Future Land Use Map (2022)
 One Mooresville Comprehensive Plan (2019)	 Our Davidson Comprehensive Plan (2020)

# CHAPTER 2 FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS & MAP

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP – FULL COUNTY



### Future Land Use Classifications

All future land use classifications are within one of four categories:

#### Conservation

- OSP** Open Space & Parkland
- ARC1** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1
- ARC2** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2
- ARC3** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 3

#### County Neighborhoods

- LDR** Low Density Residential
- RC** Rural Commercial

#### Municipal- Style Growth

- MDR** Medium Density Residential
- HDRMU** High Density Residential/ Mixed Use
- TC** Transitional Commercial
- CC** Corridor Commercial

#### Employment Focus

- HDC** Highway Destination Commercial
- ECOI** Employment Center Office/Institutional
- ECIFO** Employment Center Industrial/Flex Space/Office

# CH 2 FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

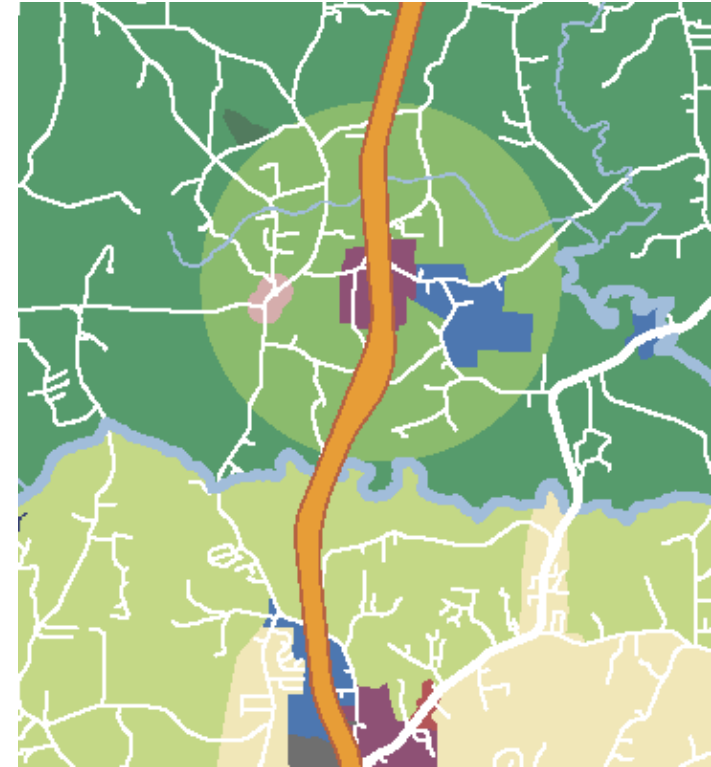
<p><b>NAME OF CLASSIFICATION</b></p>	<p><b>EMPLOYMENT CENTER – OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL</b></p>
<p><b>INTENT (DESCRIBES THE CLASSIFICATION)</b></p>	<p><b>EMPLOYMENT FOCUS</b></p> <p><b>INTENT</b> Employment Center – Office/Institutional lands are intended to provide concentrated areas of high quality employment facilities, integrated with or adjacent to complementary retail and commercial uses and/or medium- or high-density residential uses. These lands require public or private water or sanitary sewer systems for full development. These areas will provide a mix of commercial/retail and office uses at critical nodes or activity centers along major roadways. Developments should be organized using a “campus” style design that is consistent and integrated.</p>
<p><b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE HELPS ADVISE HOW TO TREAT IN THE FUTURE</b></p>	<p><b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development should have direct access to existing or planned arterial and collector streets and should not rely on local streets for primary access.</li> <li>• Development should be integrated into the context of the surrounding area, and should not be walled off as an isolated pod of development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PRIMARY AND SECONDARY USES</b></p>	<p><b>PRIMARY USES</b> Corporate office headquarters, hospital/medical facilities, business parks, educational facilities, and civic uses</p> <p><b>SECONDARY USES</b> Parks, and convenience retail and restaurants intended to serve the office/institutional developments</p>
<p><b>JURISDICTION: ARE THESE AREAS WHERE LANDOWNERS MAY BE INTERESTED IN ANNEXATION &amp; SEWER</b></p>	<p><b>JURISDICTION</b> Employment Center – Office/Institutional areas are appropriate for annexation and public sanitary sewer service if within a mile of a municipality.</p>

# CH 2 FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

**AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL  
CONSERVATION TIER 1**

**AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL  
CONSERVATION TIER 2**

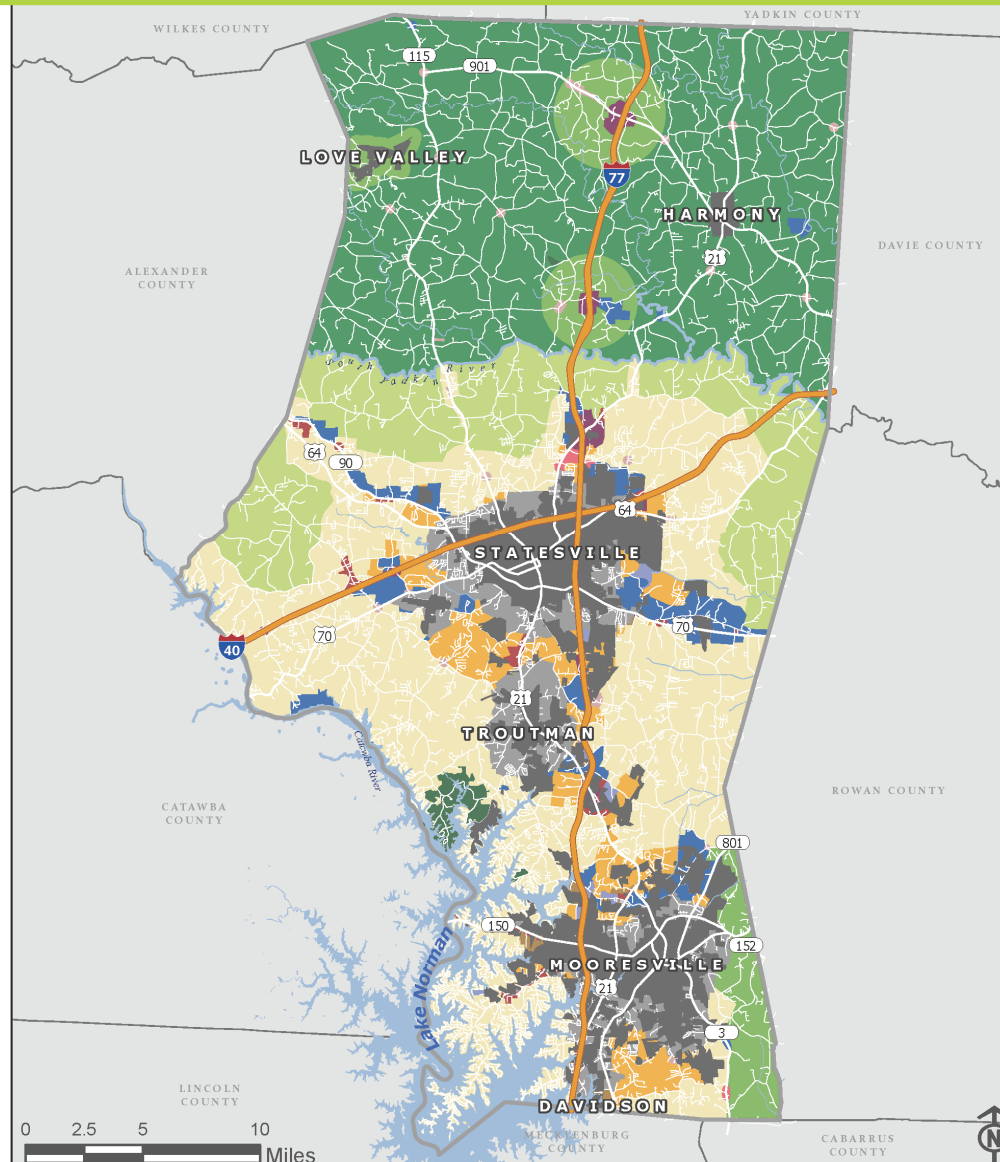
**AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL  
CONSERVATION TIER 3**



**2045**

# CHAPTER 2 FUTURE LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS & MAP

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP – FULL COUNTY



### Future Land Use Classifications

All future land use classifications are within one of four categories:

#### Conservation

- OSP** Open Space & Parkland
- ARC1** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1
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- ARC3** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 3

#### County Neighborhoods

- LDR** Low Density Residential
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#### Municipal- Style Growth

- MDR** Medium Density Residential
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#### Employment Focus

- HDC** Highway Destination Commercial
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- ECIFO** Employment Center Industrial/Flex Space/Office

# CHAPTER

## Preserve Farmland and Agriculture

# 3



### In this Chapter:

Trends and Issues

Conservation Toolkit

Jurisdiction and Authority

Guidance for the Future

### Goal

Agriculture and farmland will remain an integral part of the Iredell County's character, identity, and economy. The County will take action and assist partner efforts that allow farmers to protect the continued economic viability of agriculture and the continued integrity of rural open spaces.



# CHAPTER 3 TRENDS & ISSUES

## IMPORTANCE OF FARMLAND AND AGRICULTURE

Includes “Agriculture and Farmland as Economic Assets”

Includes “Farmland and Rural Views as a Community Benefit”



### PRESERVE FARMLAND AND AGRICULTURE

Farmland and agriculture are a part of the core identity and economy of Iredell County. Preserving and protecting agricultural industries requires creativity and effort. This chapter describes the importance of farmland in the County and presents a collection of tools that can be used to ensure that farmland and agriculture continue to thrive.

#### *Agriculture and Farmland as Economic Assets*

Iredell is an agricultural powerhouse. Farmers in the County produce the most cows in the state, including both milking cows for dairy and beef cattle. Relatedly, the County is also number one in production of corn silage and grows significant amounts of corn for feed. Much of the farming is commodity-scale, feeding North Carolina and the country. There are also local farmers specializing in production for local consumption in restaurants and resident’s homes, or for sale at one of the farmers markets in the area.

#### Trends and Issues

The trends and issues that affect Iredell County lay a foundation for the policies and actions this Horizon Plan proposes. Assessing trends and issues is a necessary step to understand the current situation and potential future of Iredell County, and to then apply that knowledge effectively.

Agriculture and farmlands are key economic assets, and rural lands are essential to the identity of the County. These values warrant consideration of an extensive toolkit.

#### Importance of Farmland and Agriculture

Agriculture and farmland have been a part of Iredell County’s identity and character for over 200 years. While residential communities in the County have grown and non-farm-based industries have risen in prominence, agriculture has continued to flourish. This is particularly true in the northern part of the County and in land away from the municipalities. Though the continued existence of agriculture and farmland has proved resilient over the years, the industry faces challenges.

To the individual farmer, farmland is a way of making a living and an investment in the future. Farms are consolidating in Iredell County. According to the two most recent available USDA Census of Agriculture years, between 2017 and 2012 Iredell saw a 12% loss of farmland and a 12% reduction in the overall number of farms. Stakeholders in the County have identified trends reaching back to the 1990s suggesting that the overall number of animals raised in Iredell County has remained relatively stable, however, they are held on fewer larger farms. The consolidation is one of many industry-wide challenges in securing land for newer, younger, or smaller farms that help the next generation of farmers. Larger holdings are harder to secure when a farmer is starting out.

Farmland is managed for future generations either through direct inheritance on family farms or through sale to the next generation of farmers.



# CHAPTER 3 EDUCATION

## CONSERVATION TOOLKIT

### (1) Regulatory Tools

Includes “VAD & EVAD”

### (2) Financial Tools

Includes “Conservation Easements”

### (3) Market-Based and Economic Incentive Tools

Includes “Agritourism”



#### *Agritourism*

Agritourism is a newer concept, though many aspects of it have existed formally or informally in the past. It consists of commercial activities on traditional farms that invite the public in. This includes activities such as u-pick fields, seasonal corn-mazes and pumpkin patches, and farm tours. It also includes activities that use the rural land as a backdrop, including hosting events or meetings in a barn or in open space surrounded by the farm and fields. Agritourism activities are open to creativity, as farms have opened their doors to everything from summer camps and field trips to exercise classes alongside the livestock. Cooking classes or farm dinners can showcase local ingredients from the farm. Agritourism activities can be confined to an individual farm, connected to a trail of sites for visitors in the areas (as with the Yadkin Valley vineyards north of Iredell County) or associated with an event week or weekend (similar to the farm tour weekends organized by the Carolina Sustainable Farm Association in the Piedmont region).

There are two critical benefits to agritourism. First, it can provide additional income to farms, making farming more lucrative and delaying or avoiding the financial pressure to sell the property for development. Second, it invites the broader community to experience the agricultural parts of the county and to take part in its continued survival. Agritourism helps bridge the disconnect between food production, the grocery store, and the dinner table. Agritourism can also be an attraction to the county as it contributes to the general collection of tourism opportunities (see Chapter 4).



# CHAPTER

## Coordinate Across the County

# 4



### In this Chapter:

Trends and Issues

Guidance for the Future

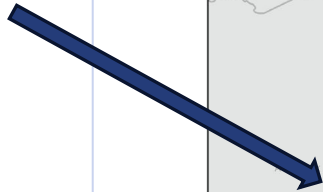
#### Goal

The County will serve as a convener for discussions on issues of cross-jurisdictional interest and will collaborate with local and regional partners to support planning efforts focused on economic vitality, preservation of natural resources, and organizing utilities to support growth areas identified on the Future Land Use and Tiered Services maps.

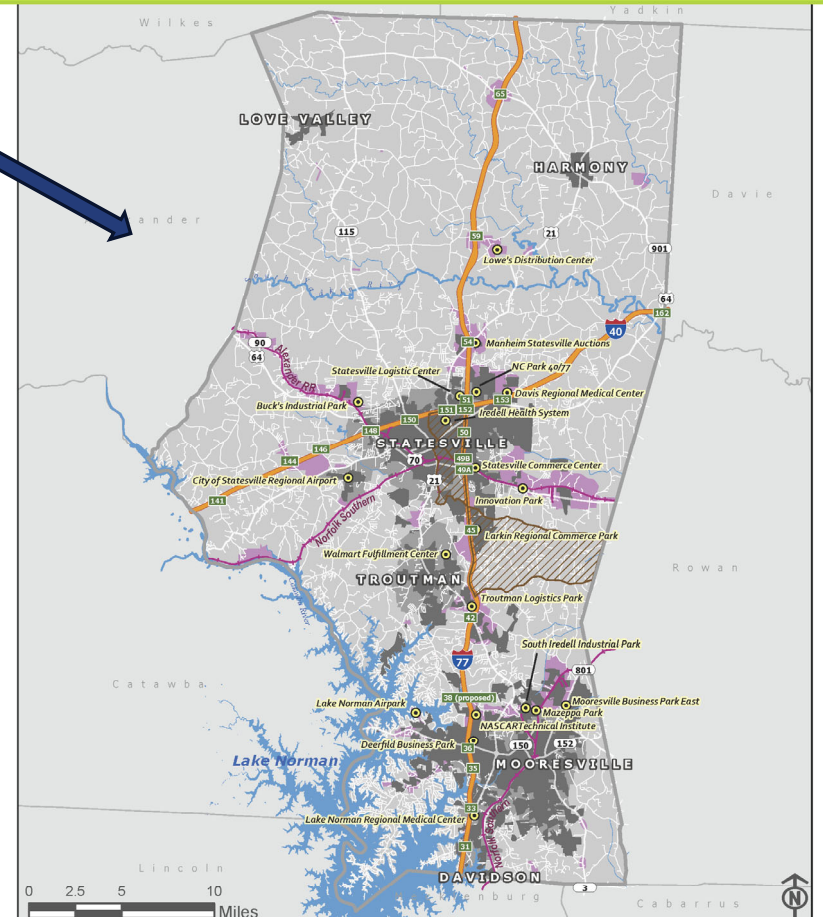


# CHAPTER 4 TRENDS & ISSUES

- (1) Economic Development
- (2) Natural Resources
- (3) Public Services and Facilities
- (4) Working with County Partners
- (5) Residents, Workers, Employers, Landowners



## EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL



### Legend

- County Boundary
  - Municipal ETJ
  - Municipality
  - Opportunity Zone
  - Interstate Interchange
  - Railroad (with labels)
  - Large Employment Site
  - Employment Focused Area
- The Employment Focused Area classification is comprised of categories from two key sources:
- Iredell County adopted Future Land Use Map (FLUM) categories: Transitional Commercial, Corridor Commercial, Highway Interchange Commercial, Employment Center - Office/Institutional, Employment Center - Industrial/Office/Flex
  - Iredell County Zoning Districts categories: M-1 (Light Manufacturing), M-2 CD (Heavy Manufacturing Conditional), M-2 Heavy Manufacturing

Also includes a  
**Tourism Potential Map**

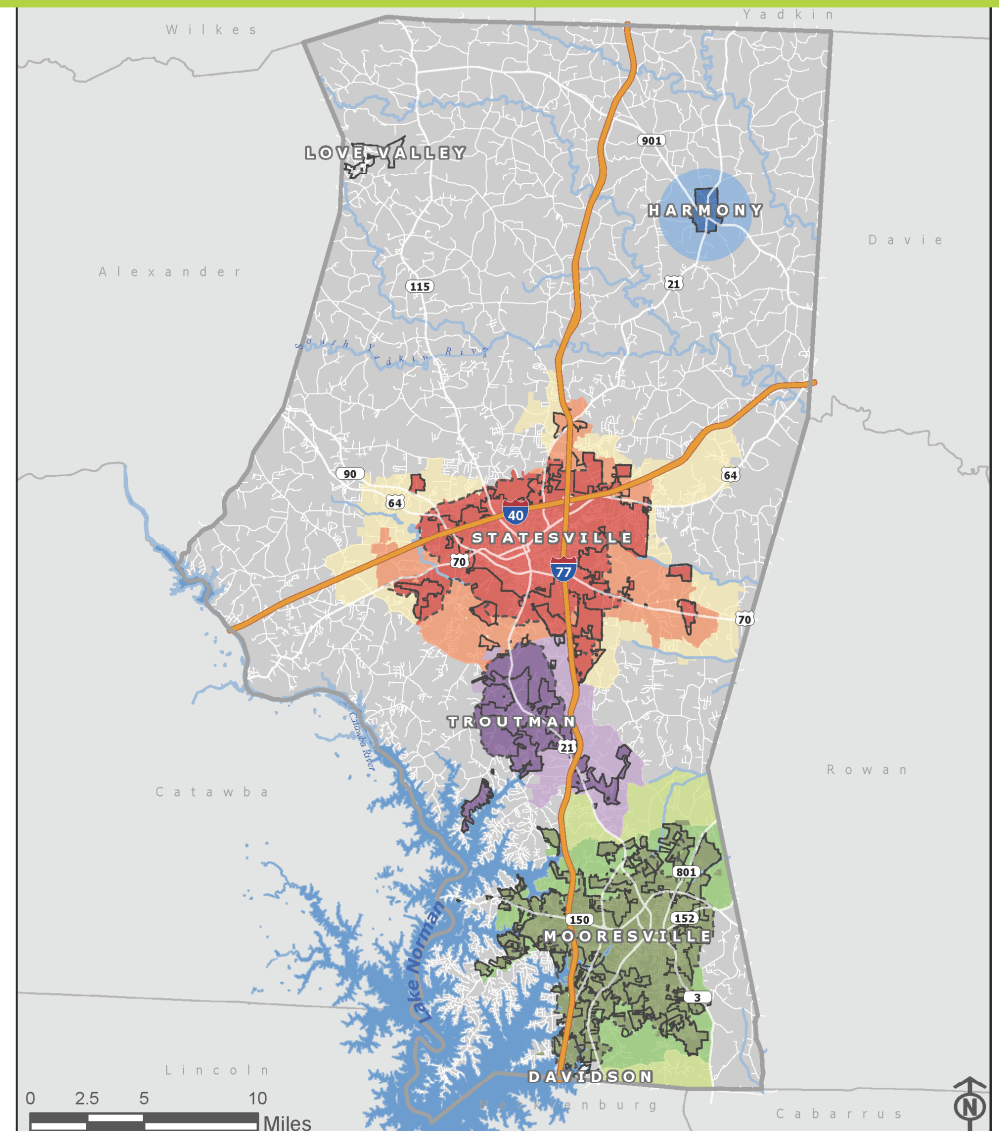
# CH 4 EDUCATION KEY TOOL

## Municipal Tiered Growth

Identify in one place how municipalities have considered growth and utility expansion in their own plans

(Based on tiered growth maps and FLU designations in their plans)

## MUNICIPAL TIERED GROWTH



### Legend

- |                 |                    |                    |                 |                |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| County Boundary | Statesville Tier 1 | Mooresville Tier 1 | Troutman Tier 1 | Harmony Tier 1 |
| Municipal ETJ   | Statesville Tier 2 | Mooresville Tier 2 | Troutman Tier 3 | Harmony Tier 3 |
| Municipality    | Statesville Tier 3 | Mooresville Tier 3 |                 |                |

# CHAPTER

## MOVING TOWARD THE HORIZON



### In this Chapter:

Identifying Priority Actions

Using Policies

Performance Metrics

Updating the Plan

Detailed Actions

# 5

2045

# CHAPTER 5: A HABIT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

## Performance Metrics

Measurement helps promote accountability and understanding of plan progress. To support a culture and habit of tracking results, one performance metric for each goal is recommended. Review of the plan over time may suggest revising the tracked metrics. Selected metrics should be easily measured by County staff so that the history of the metric over time can be tracked and trends discovered.



**Chapter 2 Metric:** Percent of development approvals certified in conformance with the comprehensive plan, to track the continued support for the future land use map and policies.

**Chapter 3 Metric:** Acres of farmland protected by VAD, EVAD, and other conservation tools, to track efforts to preserve agriculture in Iredell County.

**Chapter 4 Metric:** Number of meetings a year by each coordination group, to track ongoing efforts at communication and collaboration.

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

## Further Planning

### Example:

#### **FP-7** *Create a Strategic Plan for the Outdoor Recreation Economy.*

Iredell County should develop an Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan: a county-wide strategic planning process focused on growing the local outdoor recreation economy. The process would identify primary activity areas for further development, map key assets similar to the Tourism Potential Map with more detail and comprehensive entries, and analyze outdoor recreation assets. The plan could also identify gaps in those experiences that present business development opportunities.

**Timing:** *Within 5 to 10 years*

**Agency or Partner:** *Parks & Recreation, Planning & Development Departments; Convention and Visitors Bureaus*

## Capital Investments

### Example:

#### **CI-1** *Pursue Additional Funding Sources for County-wide Transportation Projects.*

Available resources are a bottleneck in pursuing additional transportation improvements across the County. The County, its municipalities, and regional partners can band together to pursue grants and selection in competitive programs where additional funds are available. This may include planning preparation to use as a part of applications, effective advocacy through the region's elected officials, or reserving matching funds which may be required as a part of various fund selection criteria.

**Timing:** *Within 2 years*

**Agency or Partner:** *Planning & Development Department; CRTPO and municipalities*

# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

## Regulatory Updates

### Example:

#### **RU-1** *Update the Land Development Code to Match the Guidance of the 2045 Horizon Plan.*

Creating new development standards in the Land Development Code is an important implementation step to realize the guidance of the 2045 Horizon Plan. Update the Land Development Code with the following changes:

- Add or revise a zoning district to match the Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1 future land use classification.
- Add or revise zoning district or use standards to limit the size and design features, and/or require separation of similar business types in the Rural Commercial nodes.
- Explore revision to the Municipal Growth Overlay (MGO) considering the future land use classifications. Any additional areas should come from Municipal -Style Growth and Employment Focus classification, while any new Conservation and County Neighborhood classifications in the MGO should be limited. The MGO is a planning tool built on the urban service areas of the 2030 Horizon Plan meant to

assist coordination on development that is likely to be municipal when served by utilities. The MGO definition as an overlay zone may be described directly in the land development code.

- Add municipal transition standards building on the existing Municipal Growth Overlay standards to encourage any higher density growth to be connected to voluntary annexation into a municipality.
- Ensure mixed use development is a possibility through mixed use zoning districts or with mixed use site standards.
- Add standards or incentives used to negotiate bicycle and pedestrian facility construction when adjacent road projects are occurring.
- Add connectivity standards that requires new development to connect to adjacent development by sidewalk, trails, and road connections as available.

**Timing:** *Within 2 years and Ongoing*  
**Agency or Partner:** *Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and Planning & Development Department*



# CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

## Programs & Initiatives

### Examples:

#### **PI-2** *Advertise Options for Preservation Designations to Landowners.*

Provide information to rural land owners on the benefits and effects of rezoning to the A-C Agricultural Conservation zoning district.

**Timing:** *Ongoing*

**Agency or Partner:** *Farm Preservation Board, Planning & Development Department; NC State Agricultural Extension*

#### **PI-7** *Convene Countywide Discussions with Local and Regional Partners to Address Areas of Common Benefit and Concern.*

Iredell County should act as convenor to bring community partners together to engage in regional discussions of importance. This should occur on many parallel tracks including elected officials, planning and development and public works staff, and public safety officials.

Initial discussions should be informative, keeping partners updated on the strategic thinking and actions of each other. Where possible they should progress to coordination, especially where there are opportunities for County comments to serve as inputs into other efforts, including transportation and infrastructure priorities.

**Timing:** *Within 2 years and Ongoing*  
**Agency or Partner:** *Board of Commissioners, County Management and staff at various levels; municipalities, and other regional stakeholders*

# NEXT STEPS



# PLANNING BOARD ACTION

Consider Recommendation to  
Board of Commissioners

Direct Any Particular Notes,  
Changes, or Reservations

