

# HORIZON PLAN

# 2045



# IREDELL COUNTY



**PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT – OCTOBER 2023**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Above and beyond those listed here, this Horizon Plan is only possible thanks to the passionate members of the public who gave their time and effort, offering ideas and providing comments on their hopes and expectations for the future of Iredell County.*

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# CHAPTER

## About Iredell County and the 2045 Horizon Plan

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## **In this Chapter:**

**How To Use This Plan**

**The 2045 Horizon Plan Vision**



# ABOUT THE 2045 HORIZON PLAN

Iredell County is at a critical point in its planning history. As growth from the Greater Charlotte Region continues to move up the Interstate-77 corridor and opportunities along Interstate-40 spur new development, the landscape of the county has evolved. Iredell has been identified as a great place to locate or expand a business and offers a relatively affordable and high-quality lifestyle in the rapidly growing region.

While economic development is encouraged in Iredell County, it needs to be balanced by sound land use planning that protects rural character and active agricultural businesses, and that identifies future public facility and service demands from future growth. It also must adopt strategies for addressing those needs. Partnerships with neighboring municipalities, utilities, Iredell-Statesville Schools, and state agencies like NC-DOT are critical to achieving these ideas. This Plan sets out goals, policies, and actions to achieve the community's vision for Iredell County in 2045.

## How to Use This Plan

The 2045 Horizon Plan is a long-range, policy guidance document that Iredell County leaders and staff can use to inform decision-making related to growth and public investments. It does not create binding rules and regulations, but it does express the intent of the community. It is a legally required document – the 2045 Horizon Plan serves as the comprehensive plan required for all jurisdictions that practice zoning by North Carolina G.S. 160-D.

The 2045 Horizon Plan strategically targets the issues and opportunities in Iredell County, and Chapters 2, 3, and 4 organize the plan around those topics. Chapter 5 contains tools for implementing the plan, including detailed descriptions of actions.



## Guidance in the Plan

There are different levels of guidance in the plan, ranging from the broad vision to specific actions.

The **Plan Vision** is the highest level within this framework and describes the ideal aspirations of the plan. The plan is meant to be read and interpreted as working toward this vision. The Plan Vision is in this chapter.



Chapters 2, 3, and 4, each have a single **Goal** that is targeted. The Goal is the desired outcome of that chapter of the plan.

Related to each Goal are a series of **Policies**. Policies express commitment and direction toward achieving Goals, and are meant to directly inform future decisions made by County leaders and staff. Policies may be presented by staff in analyzing requests to the Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, or Board of Adjustment. They may be used by decision makers in their own deliberations, or they may be referenced by the public. Policies are found after each Goal.

**Actions** are specific implementation tasks for Iredell County and its partners. Relevant actions are briefly mentioned in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 after the Goals and Policies, and detailed descriptions and classifications are found in Chapter 5. An action is a potential instruction or further effort. Where additional resources may be needed to pursue an action, it is still up to the Board of Commissioners acting as the elected voice of the community to steer and prioritize actions undertaken.





## From Horizon to Horizon

### Process

The 2045 Horizon Plan is not the County's first comprehensive plan. A 2030 Horizon Plan was adopted in 2009 and updated in 2013. Like the 2030 Horizon Plan, the 2045 Horizon Plan looks forward in time to help the County meet the issues and opportunities of the future. It is expected that this document will be updated before the actual horizon year of 2045 is reached, as was the case with the 2030 Horizon Plan. Planning for the County is a continuous cycle, and as conditions change over time and as actions are undertaken Iredell County will again assess conditions and plan for new opportunities and issues.

This plan, like the preceding one, is based on a comprehensive review of information and trends and a public process to identify community aspirations. As initial steps, research and conversations with community members and stakeholders helped produce three preliminary documents that helped organize and guide the 2045 Horizon Plan:

- An **Issues and Opportunities Report** summarizes issues and opportunities identified through the initial review of conditions and stakeholder conversations early in the planning process.
- A **Development and Market Strategies Report** investigates economic forces including market realities and real estate dynamics in Iredell County.
- A **Planning Influences Report** collects publicly available

information about Iredell County trends and planning influences and includes projections for its future.

These documents are tools that help explain current and potential future conditions in Iredell County. This information was presented to the larger Iredell community through public engagement activities and was leveraged by the 2045 Horizon Plan Steering Committee to help shape the plan.

The process was improved through a series of stakeholder conversations that began leading up to these preliminary documents and continued throughout the planning process. For these conversations members of the project team met with representatives from County administration, the economic development taskforce, emergency medical services, the environmental health department, the Fire Marshall's office, Iredell Economic Development Corporation, Iredell Statesville Schools, Iredell Water, NC State Cooperative Extension, the parks and recreation department, the Town of Harmony, and the Town of Troutman.

### Public Outreach

The 2045 Horizon Plan process included outreach and engagement with the public aimed at identifying the critical issues to be addressed in the plan and providing an opportunity for the community to provide comments on the initial draft of the Horizon Plan.



## Open Houses

In January 2023, four open houses were held to gain insight into community values, preferences, and ideas at the beginning of the 2045 Horizon Plan update process. The open houses were held at:

- Union Grove Community Building
- South Iredell Volunteer Fire Department
- Iredell County Cooperative Extension
- Career Academy & Technical School

Open houses included a brief presentation and several stations where participants could provide feedback. In addition to open houses, comments and ideas could also be submitted through an online platform, PublicInput.com. Online participation was available from January 17th through February 9th, 2023. Additionally, paper copies of the materials were available and could be returned to the Department of Planning and Development during the same timeframe. Participation exceeded that of the 2030 Horizon plan, and generated thousands of individual data points including: preferences expressed, comments written, and locations identified on maps.

## Public Unveil and Review of Draft Plan

The draft plan was reviewed by the public from July 17th through September 12th, 2023, including four open houses during August. The open houses were held on consecutive evenings, at:

- Williamson's Chapel
- Union Grove Community Building
- Iredell County Cooperative Extension
- Career Academy & Technical School

Open houses included a brief presentation, and stations where attendees evaluated plan actions and provided comments on the plan. The same opportunities were available online.

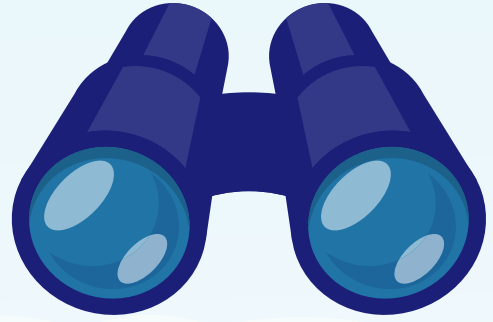
## Steering Committee

Throughout the 2045 Horizon Plan process, a dedicated group of Iredell County residents confirmed by the Board of Commissioners provided critical insight to understanding the county and helped steer development of the plan. The 2045 Horizon Plan belongs to the community, and is ultimately subject to the comment, suggestion, and direction from the broader public and adoption by the community's elected representatives. Bringing material forward into this public process would not have been possible without the Steering Committee's guidance along the way.





# 2045 HORIZON PLAN VISION



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

## **Balance Growth and Preservation.**

Iredell County faces tremendous opportunity as it grows with easy access to different regions. That growth can be an engine that brings greater opportunity to the County residents. The County must ensure that it preserves and protects core elements of the experience of living in the County that residents enjoy now. New growth opportunities and time-honored agricultural traditions can exist in balance.





## **Act as Convenor in the County.**

The future of Iredell County depends on many actors and entities, including state agencies, municipalities, key departments, utilities, institutions, neighborhood and community groups, economic advocates and business organizations. This collection of effort can achieve more if all are working toward a similar direction. Iredell County Government can be the convenor that facilitates these groups working together toward a common future.

## **Make Variety a Strength.**

It has been said that Iredell County is really several counties rolled into one. As important as it is to have a common vision, there is room enough in the county for a variety of land use patterns and communities of unique character. People live and work on rural farms, in new and old neighborhoods, in employment campuses, and in thriving downtowns. Having so many different kinds of areas within the County's borders makes for more opportunities for the residents and workers here. It is one county that provides many unique opportunities to work, live, learn, and play.





# CHAPTER

## Prepare for Oncoming Growth

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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**



# PREPARE FOR ONCOMING GROWTH

Iredell County is growing. It sits at the crossroads of growing regions. There is enough interest in the County's location and features that as the 2045 planning horizon approaches, there will be new residents and new businesses that join those who have already discovered Iredell's charms. This chapter considers how to best plan for that growth. It includes consideration of Future Land Uses, a cornerstone of this Horizon Plan used by elected officials, appointed bodies, and staff in decision-making. It also includes transportation, which is inherently connected to the land uses and planned in additional detail in the County's recent Transportation Master Plan that preceded the 2045 Horizon Plan.

## Trends And Issues

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

## Growth Management

### ***Municipal and County Growth Expected to Continue***

Iredell County has grown exponentially since the 2000 Census and is projected to grow by 20% (from 187,000 to 225,000) between 2020 and 2030, and 50% (from 187,000 to 283,000) between 2020 and 2045 according to the state demographer. Recent growth in the municipalities of Troutman and Mooresville has been faster than in the county as a whole. New development in Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville, and Davidson, especially near highway interchanges and along major corridors through Iredell County, have been more visible to the community.

Still, over half the population of Iredell County lives in unincorporated

areas, and the cumulative impact of what occurs in the much larger unincorporated area will continue to have a large effect on how Iredell County grows moving forward.

Iredell County is not just gaining new housing. It contains major employment destinations as well. During the workday, the net population in Statesville grows by nearly 15,000 people, and the net population in Mooresville grows by nearly 6,000. Some of those workers are coming from elsewhere in the County, and some are coming from other counties.

County growth will continue to be intertwined with the decisions and market forces at play in the municipalities. The County's municipalities have the infrastructure and the tools for accommodating growth at higher densities than unincorporated areas. In North Carolina and particularly in Iredell County, the way individual landowners and developers choose to respond to market forces plays an important role in determining which jurisdiction's planning and zoning rules are applied to new developments. Further description of the interplay between County and municipal jurisdictions is found later in the chapter.



## ***Utilities and Services Affect Growth***

The provision of public utilities and services affect growth patterns. Water and sanitary sewer in particular are required for more intensive growth, and when they are not available or in limited supply, it can place limits on development density. The utility conditions are discussed with greater specificity in Chapter 4: Coordinate Across the County.

Toward understanding growth management, the following conditions have a significant effect:

- Municipal water and sanitary sewer are generally only provided to areas that voluntarily annex into the municipalities, based on policies that exist in those municipalities. This is the case in Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville, and Davidson. Ultimately, growth is first spurred by developer interest and then supported by the extension of services to support that growth. What this means is that private development interests, where they align with local government land use and infrastructure plans, determine where suburban scale development is located.
- Harmony has a sanitary sewer system that was developed after the previous (2030) Horizon Plan. To ensure the system's financial sustainability over time, the community and utility are interested in exploring expansion of service outside the Harmony town limits.
- Rural water utilities, Iredell Water and West Iredell Water, have capacity to serve residential uses over a large expanse of the County outside of the municipalities with well-based water. These providers operate on a model where they could continue to expand throughout rural areas in unincorporated Iredell County.
- An array of public and private water providers supply water to the unincorporated development near Mooresville and Lake Norman.
- Public sewer service is limited to municipal suppliers in the County, and the three largest of the four sewer systems limit service to within their municipal limits. This generally helps limit density in other areas of the County without sewer service. Iredell County generally has soils that are highly effective for septic systems, and so the lack of access to sanitary sewer, while an important limitation, is less of a barrier to residential development than in many other communities.
- Advances in technology since the 2030 Horizon Plan, including improvements to package treatment plants, have made development without sewer service technically feasible at greater intensities. Some developments have already been approved in Iredell County using these systems.



## ***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 convenor 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 horizon 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.



## **Access Has Brought Growth**

Additional capacity on interstates and additional or improved interchanges have spurred growth in the County. Some have introduced new opportunities that ease access (such as the proposed Cornelius Road interchange and freight connections to Mazeppa) and others have accelerated the development of areas long targeted for growth (such as Larkin Regional Commerce Park and Barium Springs). Key access points from regional infrastructure, including interstate exits, major US and state highways, and the Statesville Airport will continue to steer growth in the County in the future.

## **Warehouse and Distribution as a Key Land Use**

In central and southern portions of Iredell County there has been a recent boom in the construction of warehouse and distribution facilities. This is a product of connections to other growing regions, and also the changing nature of commerce, where more goods are positioned for market or for delivery to the home. While the growth of this sector is notable, it also has a history in the community. The Lowes distribution facility within the northern planning area predates the previous 2030 Horizon Plan. More of this type of development is expected in the future, particularly as neighboring counties have changing conditions including severe service capacity issues and changes to local regulations that limit their ability to support development of new warehouse and distribution facilities.

## **Transportation**

Managing growth and change throughout Iredell County extends to its transportation system, which faces pressure as the County's population continues to increase at a sustained high rate. Although municipalities like Statesville, Mooresville, Troutman, and Davidson have been the sites of most county growth (and have adopted individual transportation plans in addition to securing funding), development pressure has increased in rural areas and on inter-municipality road infrastructure less equipped to handle more traffic.

The 2021 Iredell County Transportation Master Plan (ICTMP) represented the County's effort to address these transportation and growth challenges by coordinating both long-term transportation planning and visioning and near-term project prioritization and funding securement strategies between all municipalities and unincorporated Iredell County. These County-level planning efforts are an important way to address the trends and issues summarized below.

## **Additional Connections**

As emphasized by stakeholders across the county and in previous planning analysis, Iredell County has a need for additional and enhanced roadway connections. Years of growth have created persistent traffic congestion on critical transportation arteries, not only in the southern portion of the county closest to the Mecklenburg County border, but also in and around Statesville. Although the economic growth—in jobs, housing, shopping, etc.—has benefited the county in many



ways, it has led to mobility challenges for residents.

Key interchanges, such as US 21/NC 901, Interstate 40/Old Mocksville Road, and US 21/NC 115, among others, were identified in the ICTMP as priority corridors for mobility investments. Interstates 77 and 40, US 21, NC, and a new east-west connector roadway near Mooresville, in addition to other corridors, were identified as priority corridors for investment. The future vision for these interchanges and corridors will help alleviate traffic congestion, though additional mobility and land use strategies will be needed in the long term.

Some of these investments and improvements require work from NCDOT. NCDOT produces a list of priority projects, however matching funding commitments from local governments can shift the State's priorities, leading to delays on projects that do not have matching funds promised.

### ***Evolution of the Airport***

As a top general aviation airport in the State of North Carolina, the City of Statesville Regional Airport is a growing countywide economic driver. The airport supports hundreds of local jobs and had a yearly economic impact of approximately \$140 million as of 2019. Infrastructure updates, such as the new runway expansion and corporate hangar have further strengthened the airport's ability to provide excellent aviation services and help grow the regional economy.

The air support and services sector has continued to add local jobs due to the airport's amenities, operational

situation, and central location, with air traffic control outside of Charlotte's control space and easy access to nearby interstate highways. There is potential for further development in and around the airport which will continue to be an economic focus area in the future. Planning for possible road and access enhancements to support this development will be important in the coming years.

### ***Regional Growth and Traffic***

Iredell County continues to face traffic congestion and transportation difficulties, with rapid growth sometimes overtaking the creation of new transportation infrastructure development. Recent plans and studies that seek to improve these challenges have focused on the following areas of improvement: Strategic road capacity enhancements and repairs, visions for a set of priority corridors, improvement and expansion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and to a more limited degree in Iredell County, priority public transit projects. Coordination with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and county municipalities on transportation issues is critical; and additional coordination is discussed in Chapter 4: Coordinate Across the County.

### ***Transportation and Land Use Connected***

Encouraging stronger connections between land use and transportation, in part to support greater multimodal transportation options, has been woven into a number of plans adopted in the past decade by Iredell municipalities, the County, and regional planning organizations. How land is used—



especially during times of growth—greatly impacts local transportation systems. Land use decisions, from density to growth patterns, affect levels of vehicle traffic and congestion to a significant degree. Iredell County residents have expressed a strong desire to preserve farmland and rural landscapes, manage traffic, and maintain access to businesses and amenities.

Scattered housing development in more remote and largely agricultural zones, for example, can lead to excess traffic on roads that are not built to handle higher traffic counts. In contrast, redevelopment in municipalities and careful mixed-use development around or near transit nodes uses existing infrastructure and can lead to fewer new vehicle trips. Examining County zoning regulations and considering zoning code updates is one way that Iredell County could ensure that land is managed efficiently and complements investments in roadways, biking, and transit. Linking transportation and land use also requires partnering with Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville. These municipalities have the greatest existing potential for using land use changes and multimodal transportation options to provide mobility choices and new housing opportunities.

### **Transit**

While public transit is not a major part of Iredell County's current transportation system, the County has operated the Iredell County Area Transportation System (ICATS) for many years. ICATS assists residents in reaching many important everyday destinations, from medical appointments and grocery

stores to schools and libraries. ICATS runs regular services, and a weekly shuttle to the Salisbury VA Hospital. It is a valuable service, however it was not created to be a comprehensive countywide transit system.

ICATS is also a valuable partner in understanding regional transit plans of other agencies. As of spring 2023, the Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS) is studying bus rapid transit (BRT) along the I-77 corridor, possibly including Mooresville. This is a less intensive iteration of a long-proposed commuter-rail project expanding the LYNX Red Line up to Davidson and Mooresville.

### **Active Transportation**

Due to Iredell County's historic rural nature and suburban development style, along with national policy and practices that prioritized vehicular transportation, active transportation has been of secondary concern in the past. Active transportation is defined as bicycling, walking, and all human-powered forms of travel. Iredell's municipalities and regional transportation planning organizations have embraced active transportation as part of their planning efforts and a valuable way to increase community health and well-being while providing alternative transportation options that can keep cars off the road and help address traffic congestion.

Through the ICTMP, the County has built on planning efforts in Statesville, Mooresville, and the region to identify priority active transportation projects, such as new sidewalks, multi-use paths, and trails (discussed below). When prioritized with care, active



transportation safety and accessibility can be enhanced in the County during road projects.

### Trail Networks

Greenways and trails, long popular transportation amenities in North Carolina, have surged in popularity in recent years. Municipalities, counties, and the state have increasingly assisted in the planning and development of both multiuse (biking and walking) trails and hiking trails. Since the 2030 Horizon Plan was adopted, many Iredell municipalities have written plans that focus on and provide support for creating a more accessible, widespread network of bicycle and pedestrian trails, while regional planning has advanced existing and planned trails as well. For example, the Seam trail, which may

eventually run from Statesville to the South Carolina state line, is currently being studied through a partnership with NCDOT and partner jurisdictions.

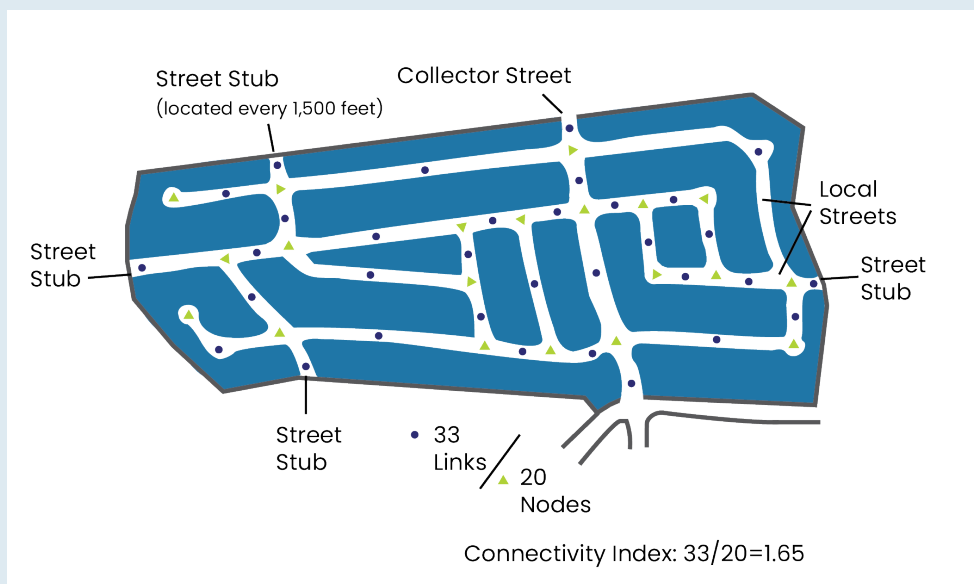
During public engagement for this plan, Iredell County residents have expressed an unmistakable desire for more public recreation and parks options, including the coordinated buildout of a larger trail network. Boosting Iredell's trail network to a new level to add community amenities will require continued interagency coordination in order to build out projects like the Carolina Thread Trail, the Seam, and trails around and near Lake Norman. These efforts are important for achieving tourism-based economic development in the county.

### Encouraging Connectivity

Connectivity is one key aspect of transportation efficiency. When the street system has more connections between developments, including within and between subdivisions, there is less

consolidation and intensification of new traffic. This style of connectivity can be written into regulatory or guiding documents, using calculations like the connectivity index sample, shown here from Mooresville's Unified Development Ordinance. Similarly, when

new commercial developments are built, encouraging cross access between parking lots and clear pedestrianways can help replace some short vehicle trips with walking or other modes. These seemingly small gains in efficiency can collectively add up to reduced strain for travelers.





# JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY

## Specific Authority and Capacity

The County has authority and capacity related to land use and transportation in the following ways:

- Planning and zoning authority except in municipalities and extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ)
- Future land use policies that guide and zoning districts that regulate development
- Basic dimensional standards in all development
- Design standards in multifamily and nonresidential development
- Transportation planning for all modes (walking, biking, and other “active transportation”; bus and other transit; vehicular)
- Suggesting priorities through regional plans
- Subdivision of land throughout the County
  - Division of land into multiple parcels
  - Bonding or other guarantees of improvement installation

North Carolina does not permit the County to exercise authority in some other ways common in other states:

- Levying of impact fees, or requiring evidence of capacity in infrastructure (sometimes called “concurrency requirements”)
- Architectural design standards for single-family or two-family residences

Iredell County does not currently supply the following services itself:

- Utilities, including water, stormwater, wastewater, and electricity
- Repair of State roads

The Horizon Plan provides aspirational direction and guidance, however it is important to have a working understanding of where the County has direct authority and jurisdiction, and where the County’s role is more influential in nature.



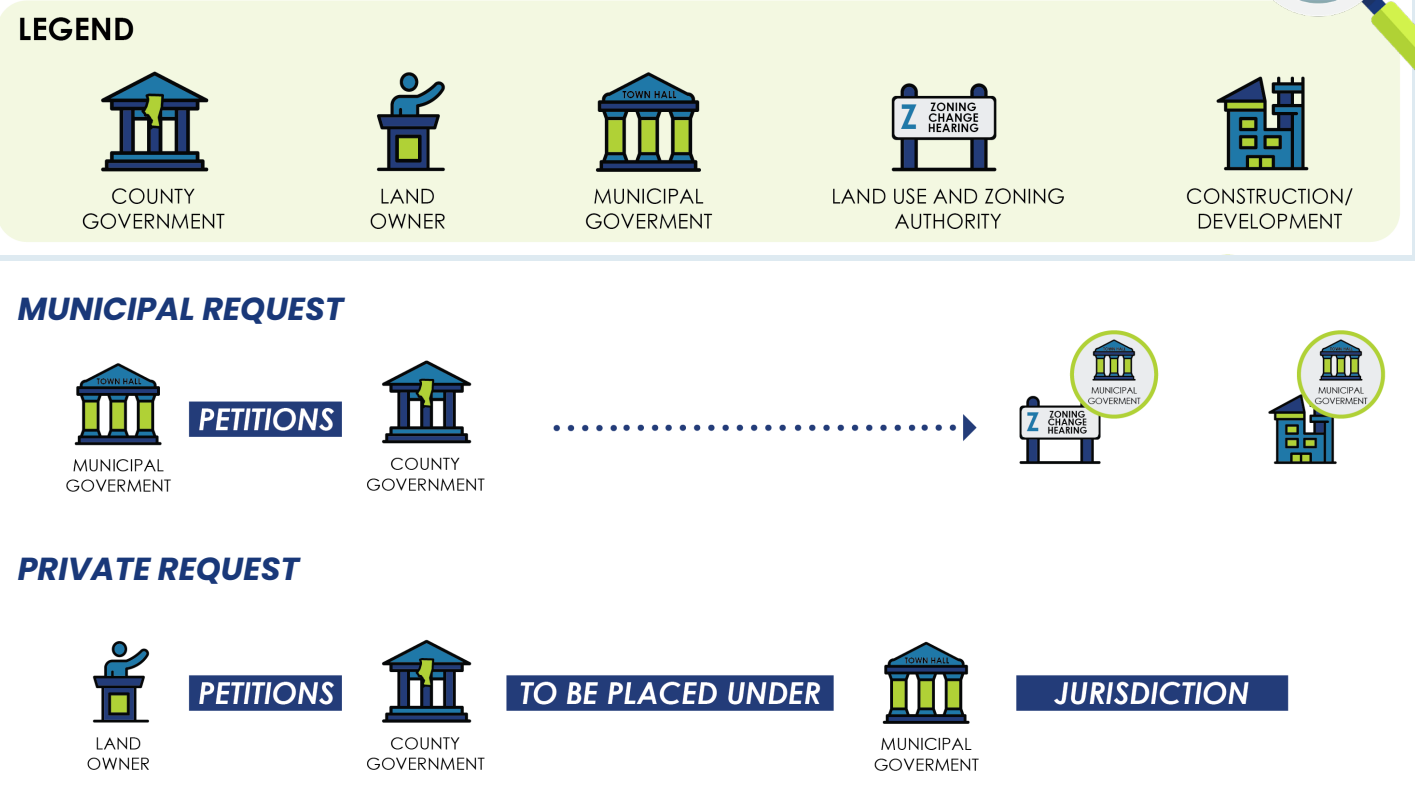
## Land Development, Zoning, and Annexation

Authority to regulate land development and zoning in Iredell County is split between the County government itself and the municipalities. Successful land use planning must consider what may occur outside of direct control of the County, but policies and actions should also be realistic about how the County can influence outcomes. The County, municipalities, and individual landowners each have a key role in planned land uses becoming actual change and development.

### Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) is a tool that can assist in the planning of rational growth patterns by coordinating on edge areas, allowing a municipality to exercise planning and zoning control on land that may be annexed in the future. Municipalities only have ETJ authority over areas “released” by the County from the County’s own planning and zoning jurisdiction. In Iredell County, release of ETJ can be requested by a municipality or a landowner.

#### RELEASE OF ETJ



Across the state, the most common type of ETJ request originates with the municipality, which petitions the County. If it is successful, landowners within the ETJ are governed by municipal planning and zoning and are constructed under municipal zoning, regardless of whether the landowner petitions for annexation. Annexation is usually required by local governments for developments that require municipal services, especially sanitary sewer.



In Iredell County, a landowner can also petition the County to have their land released into the ETJ of a municipality. Over the last decade, this has been the predominant form of ETJ request from the County. This is an action that would place the landowner under the planning and zoning authority of the municipality, but the municipality is not a formal party to the action before the County Board of Commissioners. They only need to provide certification that the municipality is willing to take them. While ultimately this may lead to the same outcome as the municipal request, with the development under the zoning authority of the municipality and developed under the municipality's standards, there are more steps along the way where development standards and intended outcome can fall out of sync.

## ANNEXATION

### LEGEND



### VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION



PETITIONS



IF NOT YET DEVELOPED

IF DEVELOPED



Nearly all annexation in North Carolina is landowner-initiated voluntary annexation from a county jurisdiction into a municipality. This process is outside of a county's jurisdiction and is solely determined by a willing property owner and the municipality that will receive the annexation and agree to provide public services to the property.

The process begins with the landowner petitioning the municipality for annexation. Though there are complexities related to noncontiguous or "satellite" annexation, in general the municipality can decide to accept the petition, and can choose to give the land a new zoning district and future land use designation at the same time if the landowner was not already in the municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). If the land is undeveloped at annexation, it is governed by municipal planning and zoning and future development will occur through the application of municipal regulations. But if the land was already developed when it was annexed, then it was constructed under the county's regulations and now the municipal development regulations that apply to this property do not match the existing development



that had to meet county standards. This can introduce inconsistencies or “nonconformities” that complicate redevelopment at a later date. There are also other paths to municipality-initiated annexations. These are much rarer and require votes of affected residents.

## Design and Site Standards

As a part of zoning and subdivision authority, Iredell County can impose some site standards and require some guarantees of completion during the subdivision and development process. For instance, the zoning authority (the County or a municipality) may regulate some character material elements of multifamily residential and nonresidential buildings. As a part of recording subdivisions, the County can require performance bonding of infrastructure, such as streets that are to be a part of the subdivision.

## Transportation Planning and Provision

### Iredell County’s Transportation Role

The state of local and regional transportation planning has shifted significantly since the 2030 Horizon Plan was adopted in 2009. The County and other governmental entities have taken a more active role in transportation planning since that time. From 2009 to 2023, at least twelve new plans (in addition to the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan, or ICTMP) that cover transportation in Iredell County have been published.

Iredell County maintains its minor role in road maintenance and improvement projects. Roads in the County are owned and maintained by NCDOT, municipalities, or private landowners. The state plays a leading role in developing the County’s transportation system. By state policy it acts in response to growth, prioritizing projects where there is already demonstrated demand. This is a reactive approach as opposed to a proactive approach that would create new capacity before or as it is demanded.

The 2021 ICTMP created clear project priorities for all modes of transportation in the county, identified funding sources, and set strategies for CTP amendments and other ongoing project updates.

In addition to its planning leadership, the County continues to operate ICATS. ICATS services include subscription routes, demand responsive rides, and loop routes. Current major routes are the Statesville Bloom, the Mooresville Main, and the ICATS Commuter Express, with service to Charlotte. Two park-and-ride lots—one each in Statesville and Mooresville—support the Commuter Express. A fourth route, the Community Connection, between Statesville and Mooresville, was recently suspended due to funding challenges.



# GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE

## Future Land Use

Future land use classifications and the Future Land Use Map together are the framework for guiding future land use decisions for Iredell County. The Future Land Use Map and classifications should also be used to inform decisions related to future infrastructure investment, zoning, possibilities for preserving nature and rural areas, and steering future economic development subject to broader market forces. The classifications are the descriptive component of the guidance.

The Future Land Use Map (or FLUM) is the spatial component of the guidance and reflects the distribution of classifications onto County land. The distribution is determined by a combination of existing conditions, anticipated growth and character, the community vision, and existing and planned infrastructure. The FLUM also identifies municipalities and their extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJs) as ultimately land use and zoning authority in those areas are controlled by the municipalities and not the County.

The future land use guidance is regularly featured in development and rezoning applications in the County. This guidance is reviewed and available when rezoning is requested. The guidance is also a broad statement of how growth and change in the County is intended to occur. When business owners and developers look to build or grow their footprint in Iredell County, many look to this Horizon Plan and its future land use guidance. It helps them understand not just what the conditions are today, but also what will be supported in the future.

## Future Land Use Classifications

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

### Conservation

<b>OSP</b>	Open Space & Parkland
<b>ARC1</b>	Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1
<b>ARC2</b>	Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2
<b>ARC3</b>	Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 3

### County Neighborhoods

<b>LDR</b>	Low Density Residential
<b>RC</b>	Rural Commercial

### Municipal- Style Growth

<b>MDR</b>	Medium Density Residential
<b>HDRMU</b>	High Density Residential/ Mixed Use
<b>TC</b>	Transitional Commercial
<b>CC</b>	Corridor Commercial

### Employment Focus

<b>HDC</b>	Highway Destination Commercial
<b>ECOI</b>	Employment Center Office/Institutional
<b>ECIFO</b>	Employment Center Industrial/Flex Space/Office



# OPEN SPACE & PARKLAND

## CONSERVATION

<b>INTENT</b>	Open Space & Parkland lands will be maintained in a natural state in perpetuity
<b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New state, regional, or county parks should be added within this category, along with any significantly sized properties that are permanently protected through conservation easements or other tools.</li> <li>• This category is not necessary for neighborhood and community parks which also fit within many other land use designations.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Public or quasi-public uses such as publicly owned open space land, research forests, parklands and recreational areas, or known archeological or historical sites.
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	Service facilities accessory to the primary uses and necessary for their maintenance or to allow appropriate visitation, interpretation, or recreation.
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	Open Space and Parkland uses will remain in the County's jurisdiction.



# AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL CONSERVATION TIER 1

## CONSERVATION

### INTENT

Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1 lands include large rural open spaces, farms and farming operations, and large lot rural residential uses. Many properties are within the VAD or EVAD Farmland Preservation programs. These areas are intended to maintain this character and allow for the long-term viability of agricultural businesses and protect them from the encroachment of suburban growth. These areas will not be served by sanitary sewer service, and are intended to be maintained at the lowest residential densities in the County to maintain the critical agricultural lands and rural character valued by the community.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Maximum intended residential density in major subdivisions of one unit per five acres (not including accessory dwelling units). Minor subdivision and family subdivision of one unit per acre are still supported in this area.
- Though there may be some existing small scale commercial or industrial uses within this area, this plan does not support new non-farm-related businesses in this area.
- The scale of farm-related businesses should be limited. For example, a business that supports repair of agricultural equipment could be appropriate, but an intensive crop or livestock processing facility, though essential to the agricultural sector, should be in the more intensive Employment Focus classifications, as the existing ones are today.

**PRIMARY USES** Farming operations, single-family residences

**SECONDARY USES** Accessory farming uses, accessory dwelling units, smaller scale farm-supportive businesses and services, places of worship, parks, and institutional uses

**JURISDICTION** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1 uses will remain in the County's jurisdiction.



# AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL CONSERVATION TIER 2

## CONSERVATION

### INTENT

Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2 lands are intended to provide residential single-family development that is generally rural in character. These uses are not intended to be served by sanitary sewer service within the planning period. Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2 areas are mostly in the Northern Planning Area surrounding Love Valley and Harmony and two rural commercial and industrial nodes along I-77 (one of which also includes the center of Union Grove, along with the southeast Mooresville Planning Area that includes lands regulated by NC water supply watershed requirements. The intent of these lands is that they will remain rural in character and provide rural residential housing options.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Maximum intended residential density of one unit per acre (not including accessory dwelling units)
- Clustering of residential developments is permitted if health code septic standards can be met and open space is set aside as part of the subdivision. Such clustering should include enough open space to keep the average density of the entire development to one dwelling unit per acre.
- Where Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2 lands are also within water supply watersheds, development should not be allowed beyond the density limits imposed by those watershed restrictions.

**PRIMARY USES** Farming operations, single-family residences

**SECONDARY USES** Accessory farming uses, agritourism uses, accessory dwelling units, places of worship, parks, and institutional uses

**JURISDICTION** Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 2 uses will remain in the County's jurisdiction.



# AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL CONSERVATION TIER 3

## CONSERVATION

### INTENT

Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 3 lands are intended to provide a transition between Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 1 and Low-Density Residential areas to ensure that new suburban-scale development does not create a negative impact on nearby working lands. These areas include active farming and forestry uses (including properties that are within the VAD or EVAD Farmland Preservation programs), rural residential uses, and open spaces. They are appropriate opportunities for private conservation easement programs. Continued protection of these areas for working lands by the County is essential, including tools such as open space/buffer requirements, property setbacks, maximum building height, driveway locations, orientation of buildings, and recommendations for locations of well taps. Clustered subdivisions that provide for the permanent protection of open space are encouraged within these areas.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Residential density should generally not exceed two units per acre. However, if a conservation subdivision is being developed, net density in the built area may increase per the Iredell County Land Development Code.

### PRIMARY USES

Working farmland, forests, single-family residential at rural densities.

### SECONDARY USES

Accessory farming uses, agritourism uses, accessory dwelling units

### JURISDICTION

Agricultural and Rural Conservation Tier 3 uses will remain in the County's jurisdiction.



# LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

## COUNTY NEIGHBORHOODS

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### INTENT

Low-Density Residential lands provide a transition in intensity from rural to more suburban and urban uses. The lands are primarily intended to be low-density residential neighborhoods, and they may be serviced by public or private water and sanitary sewer, or private well and septic systems.

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### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Average intended residential density of two units per acre (not including accessory dwelling units)
- 

**PRIMARY USES** Single-family residences

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### SECONDARY USES

Accessory dwelling units, places of worship, parks, and institutional uses (including schools)

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### JURISDICTION

It is possible that these areas may seek incorporation into one of the County's municipalities over time, especially if developed with the need for sanitary sewer.

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# RURAL COMMERCIAL

## COUNTY NEIGHBORHOODS

<b>INTENT</b>	Rural Commercial lands will remain rural in character for the planning period and will not be served by public or utility-scale private sanitary sewer systems (modern package plants may still be appropriate). It is intended that the rural commercial areas provide a variety of services and development types across the county to offer needed services to rural areas within a short commuting distance.
<b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limits on uses or floor area of a development may be appropriate to achieve the variety of services intended in these nodes and reduce potential for larger footprint retail stores.</li> <li>• New commercial development standards for Rural Commercial uses can help maintain rural community character. Examples can include requirements for rooflines, building materials, amount and placement of parking, and architectural details that are in keeping with the historic rural character in Iredell County.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Supporting farm services, small-scale commercial uses such as small markets, convenience stores, small neighborhood service businesses, small professional businesses, restaurants, places of worship, and institutional uses
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	While there are no permanent secondary uses, undeveloped rural commercial areas may be appropriate locations for small-scale temporary uses such as farm stands, seasonal sales (pumpkin patches, Christmas trees, etc.), mobile food vendors
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	Rural Commercial uses will remain in the County's jurisdiction.



# MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

## MUNICIPAL- STYLE GROWTH

### INTENT

Medium-Density Residential lands provide more dense development opportunities and a broader range of housing choices than low-density residential. The lands are intended to be developed as residential areas at a medium density and they should be served by public or private water and sanitary sewer systems. The lands can also include commercial uses scaled to serve the neighborhood.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Maximum intended residential density of six units per acre (not including accessory dwelling units)

### PRIMARY USES

Single-family residences, townhomes, multi-family residential developments

### SECONDARY USES

Accessory dwelling units, places of worship, parks, and institutional uses (including schools), neighborhood scale commercial

### JURISDICTION

Medium-Density Residential areas are growth areas that will likely be annexed and should be developed using municipal standards and be served by public sanitary sewer.



# HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL/MIXED-USE

## MUNICIPAL- STYLE GROWTH

<b>INTENT</b>	High-Density Residential/Mixed-Use lands provide urban-scale development opportunities and a broader range of housing choices than medium-density residential. The lands are intended to be developed at higher residential densities, or as a part of a development that includes a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. Mixed-use developments should include designed connections that integrate the residential and commercial components, whether they are “vertically” mixed within a building or “horizontally” mixed across a site. Development at the intended densities on these lands will require service from public or private water and sanitary sewer systems.
<b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum intended residential density of over six units per acre (not including accessory dwelling units)</li> <li>• Maximum intended residential density comparable to that found in neighboring developments, and generally fitting the character of the area.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Single-family residences, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, age-restricted residential developments, and mixed-use neighborhood-scale commercial
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	Accessory dwelling units, places of worship, parks, institutional uses, and more intense commercial and office uses that fit with the existing character of the neighborhood
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	High-Density Residential/Mixed-Use areas are growth areas that will likely be annexed and should be developed using municipal standards and be served by public sanitary sewer.



# TRANSITIONAL COMMERCIAL

## MUNICIPAL- STYLE GROWTH

### INTENT

Transitional Commercial lands are generally adjacent to neighborhoods and provide transitions or buffers between lower intensity residential uses and higher intensity commercial development. These areas will continue to serve as a buffer to residential areas and provide local opportunities for low intensity shopping and office uses.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Developments should use a “step down” design approach using natural buffers or land use or architectural transitions between lower and higher intensity developments.

### PRIMARY USES

Small-scale commercial uses such as small markets, convenience stores, small neighborhood service businesses, small offices

### SECONDARY USES

Places of worship, institutional uses, residential uses

### JURISDICTION

Transitional Commercial uses are appropriate for annexation into adjacent municipalities.



# CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

## MUNICIPAL- STYLE GROWTH

### INTENT

Corridor Commercial lands provide a mix of commercial/retail and office uses at critical nodes or activity centers along major roadways. They can include both large and small mixed-use commercial centers. Traditional strip commercial development is discouraged within these areas. Instead, developments should be designed to provide greater connectivity within and to adjacent developments, pedestrian access should be a priority, and landscaping, signage, and building design and orientation should be consistent within individual developments.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- Design standards for Corridor Commercial uses should be developed in collaboration with the municipalities that will service them in the future to reflect the character of the community.

### PRIMARY USES

Retail, restaurants, entertainment centers, automobile services, personal services, other commercial uses, and office developments

### SECONDARY USES

Higher-density residential uses such as townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and institutional uses

### JURISDICTION

Corridor Commercial areas are growth areas that will likely be annexed and should be developed using municipal standards and be served by public sanitary sewer.



# HIGHWAY DESTINATION COMMERCIAL

## EMPLOYMENT FOCUS

### INTENT

Highway Destination Commercial lands provide for high intensity uses related to travel, especially near interstate interchanges on major arterial roadways. Traditional strip commercial development is discouraged within these areas. Instead, developments should be designed to provide greater connectivity within and to adjacent developments, pedestrian access should be a priority away from the highway itself, and landscaping, signage, and building design and orientation should be consistent within individual developments.

### APPLICATION GUIDANCE

- The use of service roads and access management best practices are encouraged within these areas.
- Natural buffers should be provided between developments and interstates to improve the visual experience from the roadway and reduce the impacts of roadway noise.

### PRIMARY USES

Gas stations, hotels, restaurants, and other highway travel related businesses

### SECONDARY USES

Retail, office developments, and higher-density residential uses

### JURISDICTION

Highway Destination Commercial areas are appropriate for annexation and public sanitary sewer service if within a mile of a municipality.



# EMPLOYMENT CENTER – OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL

## EMPLOYMENT FOCUS

<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.
<b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b>	<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>
<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Corporate office headquarters, hospital/medical facilities, business parks, educational facilities, and civic uses
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	Parks, and convenience retail and restaurants intended to serve the office/institutional developments
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	Employment Center – Office/Institutional areas are appropriate for annexation and public sanitary sewer service if within a mile of a municipality.



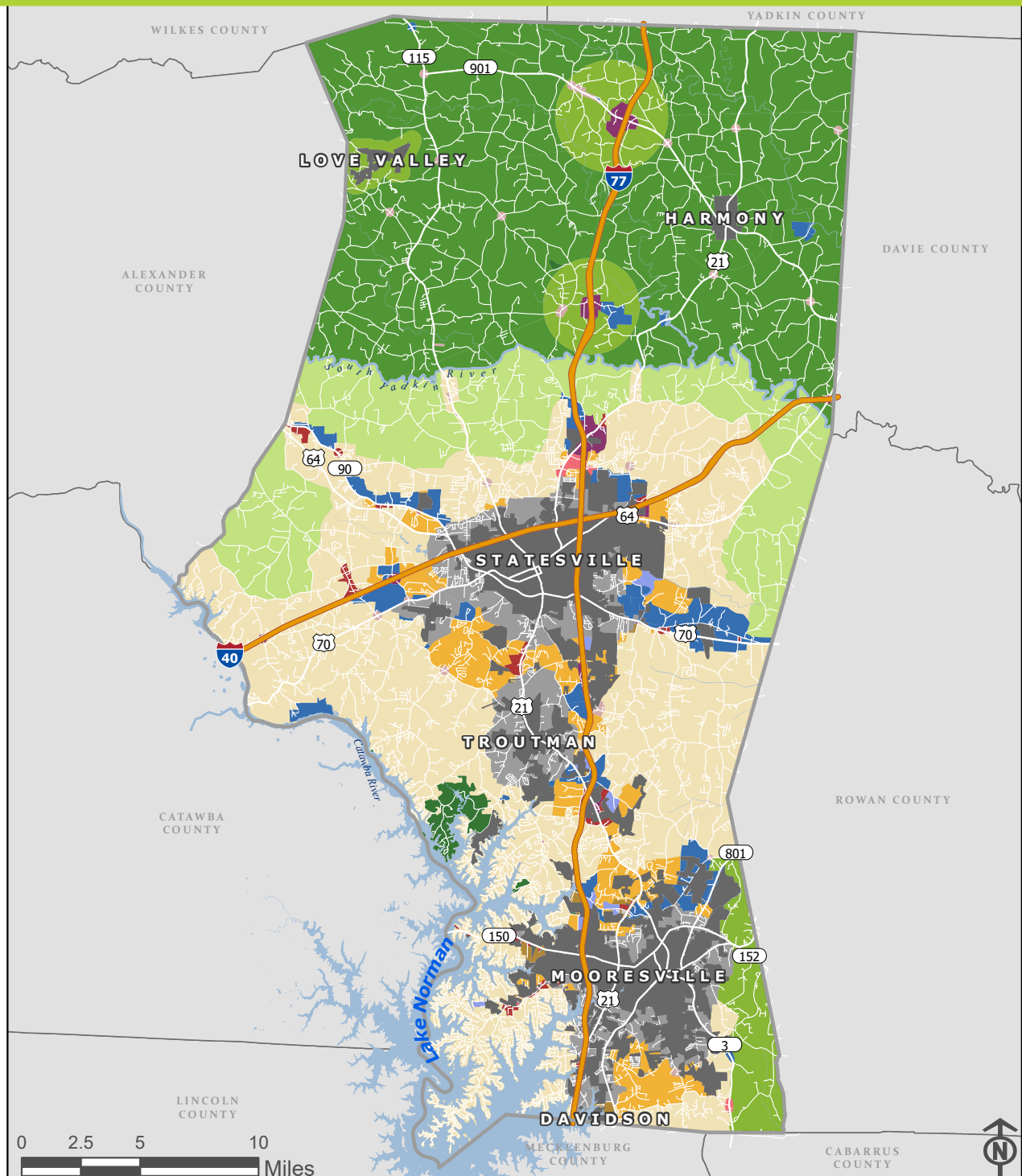
# EMPLOYMENT CENTER – INDUSTRIAL/FLEX SPACE/OFFICE

## EMPLOYMENT FOCUS

<b>INTENT</b>	Employment Center – Industrial/Flex Space/Office lands are intended as flexible space for development of industrial, flex or warehouse space, or office employment uses to attract and retain high quality employers in the County. These developments may require public or private water or sanitary sewer systems. Developments should provide adequate transitions to adjacent lower intensity uses, such as residential and commercial uses, in the form of vegetated buffers, landscaping, setbacks, and building heights.
<b>APPLICATION GUIDANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development should have access to planned arterial or collector streets to provide adequate infrastructure for transportation of goods to and from distribution centers.</li> </ul>
<b>PRIMARY USES</b>	Industrial, flex space, and office uses including manufacturing and assembly, research and development, warehousing, and building trade showrooms and offices
<b>SECONDARY USES</b>	Some commercial/retail uses that serve the industrial/flex/office developments
<b>JURISDICTION</b>	Employment Center – Office/Institutional areas are appropriate for annexation and public sanitary sewer service if within a mile of a municipality.

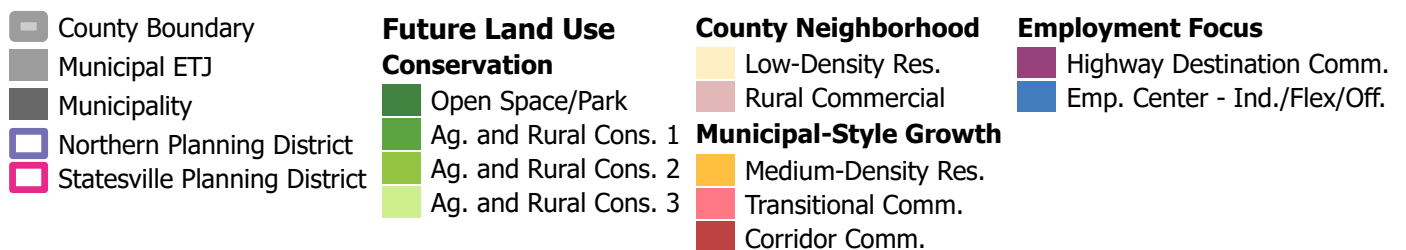
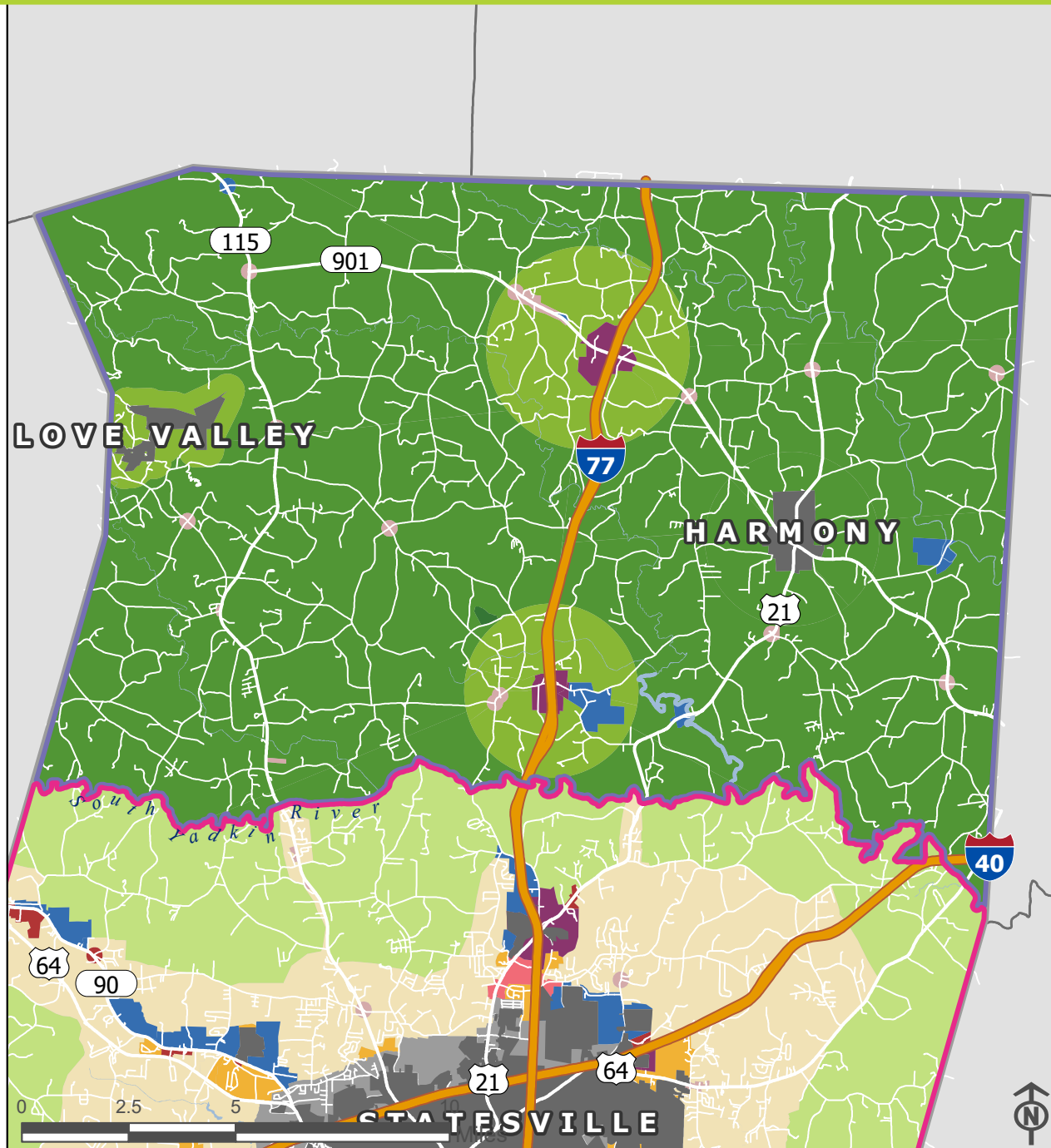


# FUTURE LAND USE MAP – FULL COUNTY



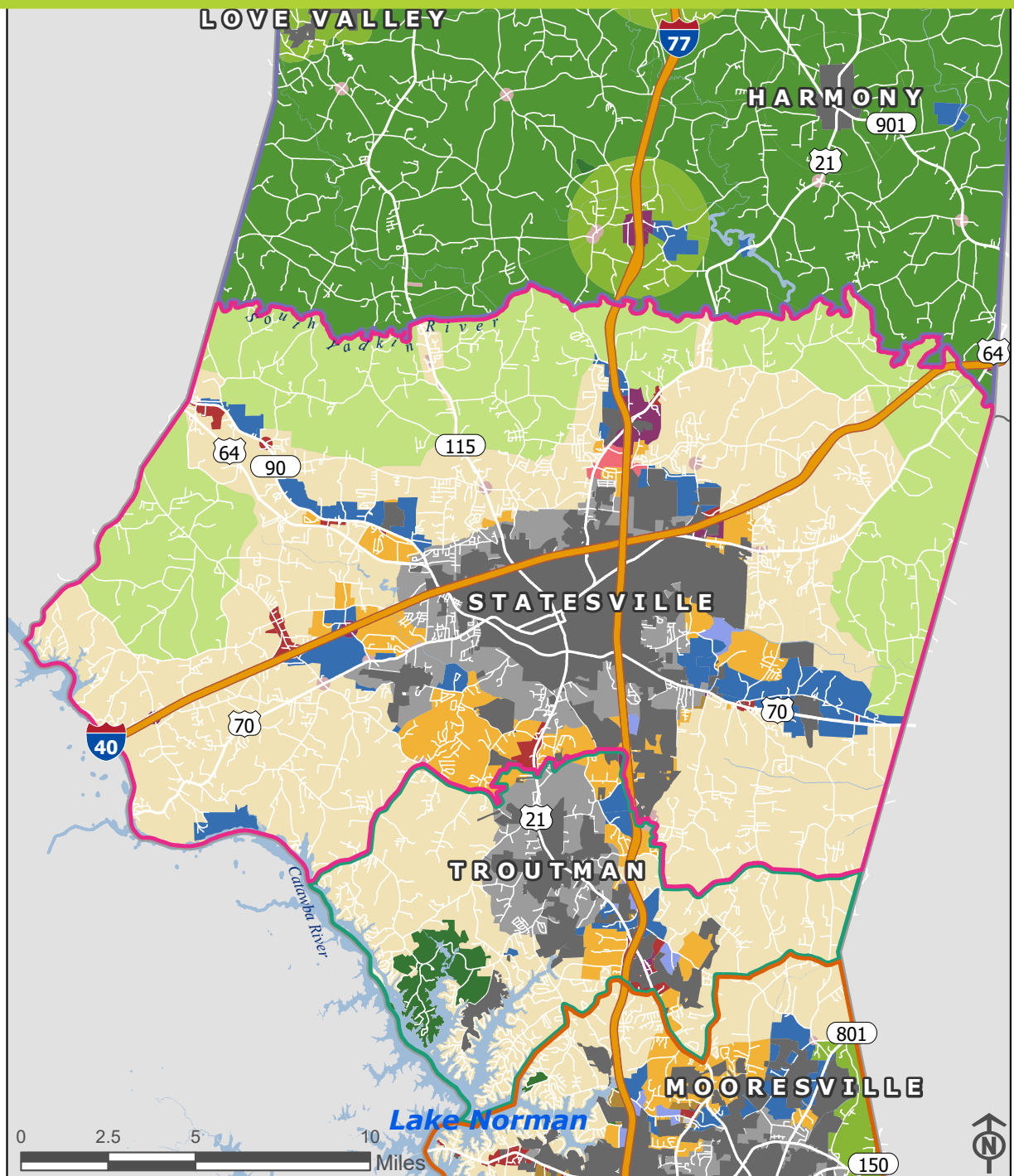


# FUTURE LAND USE MAP – NORTHERN AREA





# FUTURE LAND USE MAP – STATESVILLE AREA



- County Boundary
- Municipal ETJ
- Municipality
- Troutman Planning District
- Southern Planning District
- Northern Planning District
- Statesville Planning District

## Future Land Use

- Conservation**
  - Open Space/Park
  - Ag. and Rural Cons. 1
  - Ag. and Rural Cons. 2
  - Ag. and Rural Cons. 3

## County Neighborhood

- Low-Density Res.
- Rural Commercial
- Municipal-Style Growth**
  - Medium-Density Res.
  - High-Density Res./Mixed-Use
  - Transitional Comm.

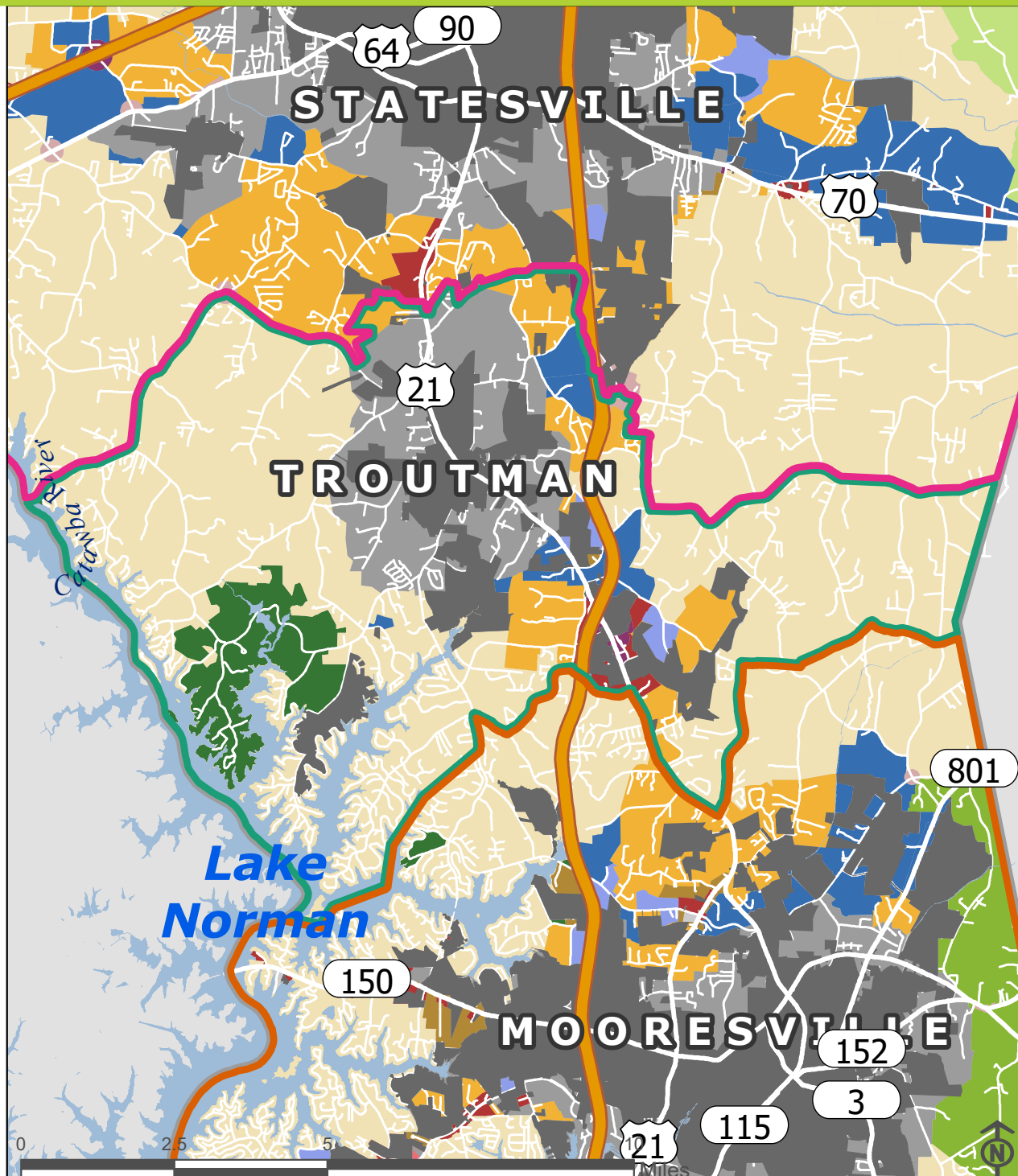
## Corridor Comm.

## Employment Focus

- Highway Destination Comm.
- Emp. Center - Off./Inst.
- Emp. Center - Ind./Flex/Off.



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP – TROUTMAN AREA



- County Boundary
- Municipal ETJ
- Municipality
- Troutman Planning District
- Southern Planning District
- Statesville Planning District

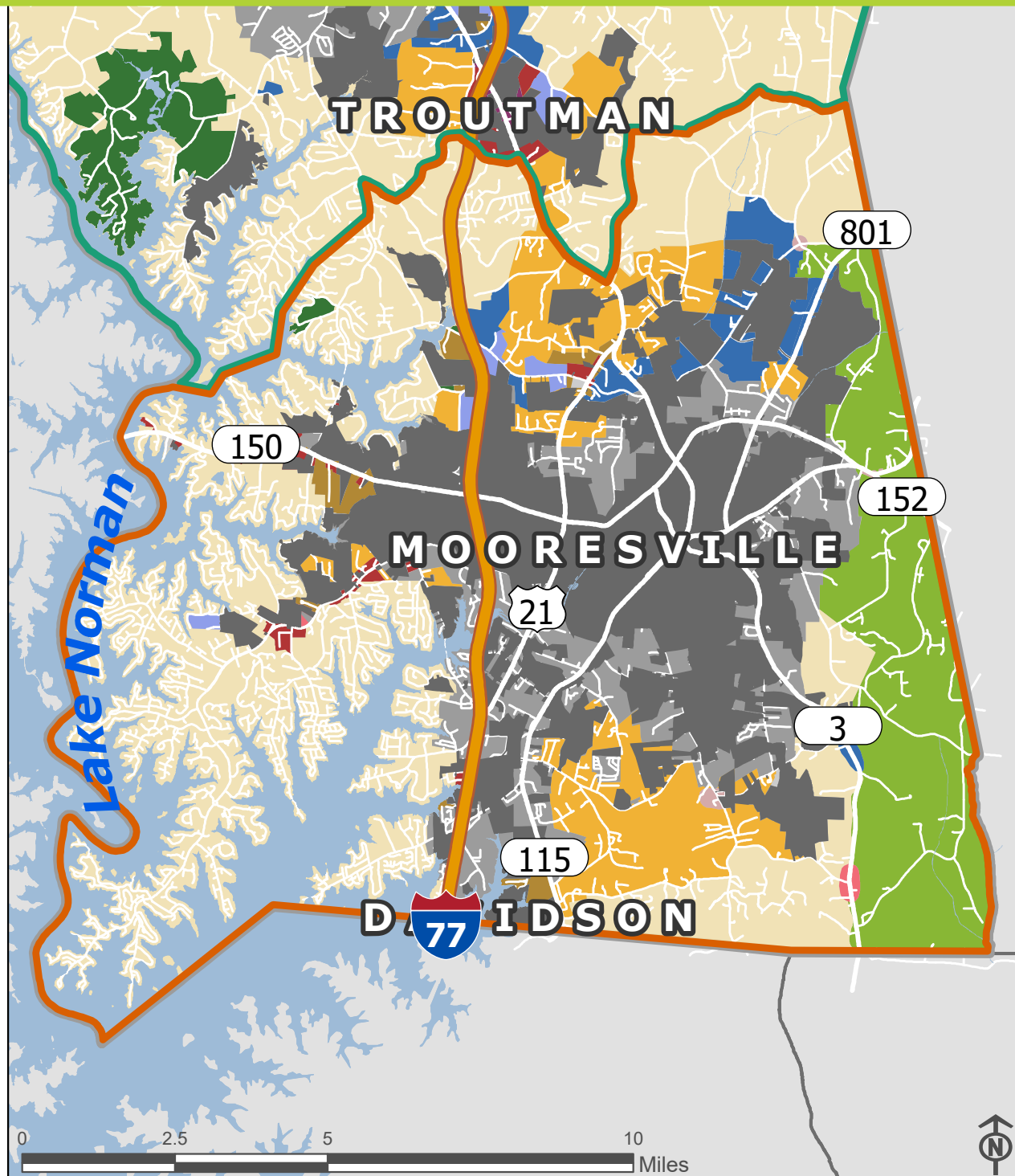
- Future Land Use**
- Conservation**
- Open Space/Park
  - Ag. and Rural Cons. 2
  - Ag. and Rural Cons. 3
- County Neighborhood**
- Low-Density Res.

- Rural Commercial
- Municipal-Style Growth**
- Medium-Density Res.
  - High-Density Res./Mixed-Use
  - Transitional Comm.
  - Corridor Comm.

- Employment Focus**
- Highway Destination Comm.
  - Emp. Center - Off./Inst.
  - Emp. Center - Ind./Flex/Off.



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP – MOORESVILLE AREA



- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>County Boundary</li> <li>Municipal ETJ</li> <li>Municipality</li> <li>Troutman Planning District</li> <li>Southern Planning District</li> </ul> | <b>Future Land Use</b><br><b>Conservation</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space/Park</li> <li>Ag. and Rural Cons. 2</li> </ul> <b>County Neighborhood</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low-Density Res.</li> <li>Rural Commercial</li> </ul> | <b>Municipal-Style Growth</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium-Density Res.</li> <li>High-Density Res./Mixed-Use</li> <li>Transitional Comm.</li> <li>Corridor Comm.</li> </ul> <b>Employment Focus</b><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway Destination Comm.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emp. Center - Off./Inst.</li> <li>Emp. Center - Ind./Flex/Off.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|--|--|



# GOAL, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

## 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.

## Policies

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>2.1</b> Maintain consistent and coordinated land use planning that guides growth in the County by applying the Future Land Use Map and plan policies to new proposed developments.</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Support municipalities accommodating oncoming suburban or urban scale growth in the County within their planning and zoning jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>2.3</b> Support the continued policies of Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville, and Davidson utility providers to require annexation as a prerequisite for services.</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Coordinate with landowners and municipal partners to encourage higher intensity development designated in growth categories to be annexed into municipalities with existing or planned utility service.</p> <p><b>2.5</b> Support the development of a fiscally sustainable sewer network in Harmony, which may include sewer services in some areas that will remain in the</p> | <p>County's planning and zoning jurisdiction.</p> <p><b>2.6</b> Maintain a sustainable mix of land use types in the County. Municipal plans will be considered in pursuing this policy.</p> <p><b>2.7</b> Provide for an array of neighborhood and home types at many price points to provide opportunities for choice within the County. Municipal plans will be considered in pursuing this policy.</p> <p><b>2.8</b> Preserve and protect agricultural and rural use of land in the County. (See Chapter 3: Preserve Farmland and Agriculture for more policies and actions on this topic.)</p> <p><b>2.9</b> Maintain and expand county and regional transportation planning partnerships, including participation in regional plans and studies that seek to support multimodal transportation options.</p> |
|--|--|



- 2.10** Work with county and regional partners to plan and prepare for emerging transportation technologies, such as connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs).
- 2.11** In conjunction with partners, pursue and locate additional grants and other funding sources for priority active transportation capital projects, with a focus on multi-use paths and regional trails that connect residents to municipalities, recreation and amenities, jobs, and other key destinations.
- 2.12** Monitor ICATS efforts to create a sustainable funding base for expanding service offered within and between municipalities. This could benefit the County.
- 2.13** Seek policy guidance and/or funding from regional, state, and national transportation planning and funding entities to research supplementing or replacing existing ICATS demand-responsive transit service with microtransit.
- 2.14** Prepare for potential MetroRAPID BRT service in Mooresville by working with the town on relevant infrastructure improvements, such as park and ride lots.
- 2.15** Plan for potential future transit service in the three additional corridors identified in the CATS 2030 Transit System Corridor Plan and Connect Beyond, with a focus developing transit-supportive land uses along the I-77 (from NC 150 to I-40) and US 21 (from I-77 to US 64) corridors.
- 2.16** Protect right of way for future transit use.
- 2.17** Use existing transportation capacity efficiently by promoting development in established areas and pre-identified growth areas, as opposed to rural areas with less capacity.
- 2.18** Where possible, ensure that new roadway projects promote road connectivity, while identifying and planning for future projects to create new secondary road connections to lessen congestion.
- 2.19** Expand the electric vehicle (EV) charging network along key corridors.
- 2.20** Assist ICATS in opening a transit center as service hub and improve transit service by adding lines and frequency.



## **Actions** – See Chapter 5 for details.

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

**Create Small Area Plans or Strategies for County-Identified Transit Nodes and Corridors. [FP-2]**

**Study Rural Road Safety. [FP-3]**

**Partner with Harmony to Develop a Utility Growth Plan and Small Area Plan or Strategy. [FP-6]**

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

**Create a Dedicated County Transportation Planner Position. [CI-2]**

**Secure Funds to Expand the EV Charging Network Along Highways and Interstates. [CI-3]**

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

**Enhance Guiding Standards for Private Landowner-Initiated ETJ Requests Plan. [RU-3]**

**Require Right-Of-Way Provision for Future Transit Corridors. [RU-4]**

**Use the Future Land Use Map When Reviewing Rezoning Requests. [PI-1]**

## **OTHER RELEVANT PLANS**

### **Transportation Planning on the Rise**

Local-level transportation planning has become increasingly sophisticated since the 2030 Horizon Plan was adopted. Municipalities and regional planning entities have created guides for improved roads and active transportation infrastructure, freight mobility, transit, and more.

#### **Plans relating to Iredell and transportation adopted since 2009:**

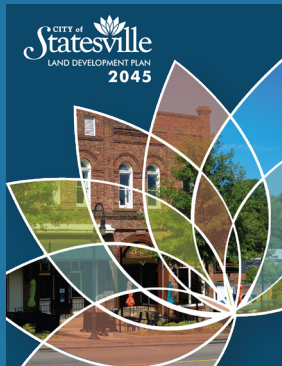
- **Iredell County Transportation Master Plan (2021)**
- **Connect Beyond Regional Mobility Plan (2021)**
- **Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Report (2017, 2020)**
- **CRTPO 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)**
- **Greater Charlotte Regional Freight Mobility Plan (2016)**
- **Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan (2006 with 2021 update)**
- **OneMooresville Comprehensive Land Use and Transportation Plan (2019)**
- **Statesville Mobility and Development Plan (2019)**
- **Pedal Moore(sville) Bicycle Plan (2022)**
- **Davidson Mobility Plan (2019; just outside of county)**
- **Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan (2010)**
- **Yadkin Valley Regional Bike Plan (2020)**
- **Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan (2011)**



## 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.

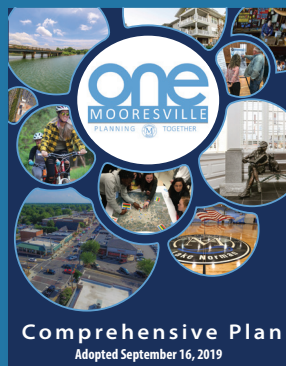
**Most recent Comprehensive plans and similar plans adopted by municipalities since 2009:**



**Statesville 2045 Land Development Plan (2022)**



**Troutman Strategic Plan (2018) and updated Future Land Use Map (2022)**



**OneMooreville Comprehensive Plan (2019)**



**Our Davidson Comprehensive Plan (2020)**



# CHAPTER

## Preserve Farmland and Agriculture

3





## **In this Chapter:**

**Trends and Issues**

**Conservation Toolkit**

**Jurisdiction and Authority**

**Guidance for the Future**



# 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.

## 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.

## *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.

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.





## 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.

### Regulatory Tools

#### ***Farmland Protection Plan***

Iredell County is one of 64 counties in North Carolina with a Farmland Protection Plan approved by the North Carolina Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). The plan is organized around four goals: strengthening farm viability and the agricultural economy, supporting farm operations and the right-to-farm, protecting farmland as a valuable natural resource, and fostering greater recognition and public support for agriculture. Though adopted

Sale or lease of land may also be essential to the retirement plans of the farmers. Historically, some of that value has been realized through selling the property for development of residential subdivisions or commercial uses. There is a financial gap between what farmers can secure selling farmland to another farmer, and, when close enough to infrastructure and demand, for residential subdivisions. County policies and access to state and national programs can help reduce that financial gap. There is no one appropriate tool, and several are offered in this chapter.

#### ***Farmland and Rural Views as a Community Benefit***

In addition to the benefits of agricultural production as an economic sector and individual farmland as a productive asset to the farmer and landowner, having a rich tapestry of rural lands is a benefit to the community. Even those who live in cities and towns benefit from the ability to easily travel to rural lands and see unbroken landscapes that have been a hallmark of the identity and character of Iredell County in the past. Agricultural land is working land that is productively managed. It exists as more than a romantic setting or vista, but preserving the setting is also an important consideration for Iredell County's many non-farming residents. This benefit is recognized by the community as well. Farmland protection was consistently among the most common comments and suggestions in all instances of public engagement as a part of the 2045 Horizon Plan process.



in 2008, the Farmland Protection Plan remains a valuable roadmap to reevaluating conditions in Iredell County, and its goals ring as true today as they did 15 years ago.

### ***Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD & EVAD)***

The voluntary and enhanced voluntary agricultural district (VAD & EVAD) programs in Iredell County provide access to regulatory benefits and programs in exchange for a conservation agreement to protect the land for active agricultural purposes. Both tools must include an agreement to protect the land for at least 10 years. While the VAD designation could be revoked by the landowner during that time period and result in the loss of regulatory benefits and programs, farmland placed in an EVAD has an agreement that is irrevocable for 10 years, with an additional three year renewal if no notice is given by the landowner to the County. VAD and EVAD designations provide stability and make clear the intent to preserve farmland. The County adds notes to subdivision plats if these farmlands are within half a mile of a VAD or EVAD. For cluster subdivisions within the Agricultural Conservation zoning district, the County requires that open space be oriented to buffer the VAD or EVAD property. This zoning district is available to be applied to land but has not been placed on the zoning map at this time. There are nearly 19,000 acres currently protected by VAD and EVAD programs in Iredell County.

### ***Farmland Preservation Board***

In alignment with state practices for VAD and EVAD programs, Iredell County has a Farmland Preservation Board that reviews and approves applications

for voluntary agricultural districts and makes decisions about establishing or modifying districts. The board also advises the Board of Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy or activities within the County that will affect the agricultural districts. The Farmland Preservation Board develops and implements the Farmland Protection Plan approved by the Board of Commissioners.

### ***Conservation Subdivisions***

Sometimes described as “agrihoods” (a combination of the words “agriculture” and “neighborhood”), conservation subdivisions are a type of development or neighborhood that includes working farmland as an essential part of the design. The specifics of conservation subdivision development vary, however in general the concept includes clear access to nature and preserved natural habitat and farmland within the community, a prominent working farm or farms on the property, community events and education around the farm areas, and elements of environmental sustainability.

The residential portions of conservation subdivisions are usually designed to have smaller lots than in other developments to allow walking to common shared neighborhood amenities. Clustering of homes allows for the protection of larger swaths of open space.

The farm portion of the conservation subdivision can vary in size. The farmland may be interspersed throughout the community or in a central location. In general, the farm is often garden agriculture, or small herds of livestock. The farms are large enough



to provide food to local restaurants or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs within the conservation subdivision but are not operating on the scale of producing commodities for larger markets.

Conservation subdivisions described by promoters as agrihoods are usually marketed as luxury planned communities – agrihoods are a stronger response to preserving land and a rural aesthetic view than they are to affordability or the overall retention of agricultural industry in an area. They can be preferable to traditional residential subdivisions where maintaining an agricultural presence and rural character is desirable, and their agricultural and open space component can be positioned as a buffer that reduces conflicts between other farmland and residences.

### *Cluster Development*

Cluster development as it currently exists in Iredell County is one limited tool that can help make conservation subdivisions possible. Cluster subdivisions differ from standard residential development by allowing

smaller lot sizes in residential areas of a development than would be otherwise available in exchange for protecting a larger percentage of open space within the project. Like all conservation subdivisions, both the smaller lot areas and the preservation area are together a part of the cluster development. Reducing the development areas via smaller lot sizes allows a developer to use less roadway and requires less extension of infrastructure than required for a traditional subdivision, allowing for more land to be preserved. In Iredell County's current Land Development Code, cluster subdivisions must preserve at least 20% of open space. The open space can include working lands and farming operations.

### *Best Practices*

North Carolina State University publishes a Conservation Subdivision Handbook with best practices and ideas for implementation. It describes how in addition to preserving agricultural land, conservation subdivisions can lead to higher home values, reduced infrastructure cost, benefits to wildlife, and stormwater management improvements. Over half of North



Images courtesy of Randall Arendt, sourced from *A Guide For North Carolina Communities In the Use of Conservation Design for Land Use Planning*



Carolina counties have ordinances that support this tool in some form, including Iredell County.

## Financial Tools

### ***Present-Use Value Taxation Program***

The Present-Use Value program (sometimes called the “Present-Use Program” or “Farm Use” in other Iredell County materials) is a voluntary state program that has allowed protection of certain agricultural land, horticultural land, and forestland since 1974 by allowing it to be appraised at its present use value, rather than the market value. Present-use value measures the ability to produce income on the land. Market value measures the estimated sales price of a property if it were voluntarily sold. The tool maintains the viability of working lands (agricultural land, horticultural land, and forestland) by protecting them from being taxed at the value they might hold if subdivided for a residential neighborhood or other use.

For the purposes of the Present-Use Value Program:

- Agricultural Land is actively engaged in the commercial production or growing of crops, plants, or animals (e.g. soybeans, grains, tobacco, cotton, peanuts, corn, horses and cattle).
- Horticultural Land is actively engaged in the commercial production or growing of fruits, vegetables, nursery products, or floral products. (e.g. apples, peaches, strawberries, pecans, sod, shrubs, greenhouse plants, and evergreens intended for use as Christmas trees).
- Forestland is actively engaged in

the commercial growing of trees.

Generally, land must pass four tests to be eligible for the program:

- Ownership type, defined by the General Assembly but generally owned by an individual, trust, or farm-related business.
- Size, including at least one tract that is in active production (10 acres for agriculture, 5 acres for horticulture, 20 acres for forestland).
- Income, with at least one minimum size tract producing an average of at least \$1,000 gross yearly income from agriculture and horticulture over the past three years. Forestland is not subject to this test as income is only generated at harvest after many years.
- Sound management, with several options available to prove the test.

Changes to eligibility are controlled by the state, and the program has generally stayed consistent over time.

### ***Conservation Easements***

In general, a conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement applying to a specific parcel of land between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits the uses allowed on the land in order to protect natural areas from development disturbance. Though some easements are designed to keep the land in a natural state for the benefit of ecosystems or wildlife, they can also be tailored to preserve farmland, protecting against building and subdivision. The basic tradeoff is through tax adjustments. In exchange for conserving the land so that it cannot be developed in the future (for example, as a residential subdivision)



federal and state tax assessments take into account the land's appraised value and the reduced development potential. An existing conservation easement is more permanent than use-value taxation. Though in general conservation easements are designed to be permanent, the conservation agreements used in VAD and EVAD programs are a form of conservation easement and are revokable over time. Iredell County already has procedures and worksheets to assist in recording conservation easements and calculating the effective land in the easement for the purpose of state programs, and a conservation easement program has been adopted, but not funded by the County after the previous Horizon Plan. (See PDR program listed below).

A state program, Purchase of Conservation Easement (PACE) permanently protects farmland and ranchland from non-farm development through property acquisition paid for through the state's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. The conservation easements in this program are maintained by non-profit land conservancy organizations. There are specific requirements for the conservancy organization required by the state, and there are well-established organizations with a history of meeting those requirements. For example, Three Rivers Land Trust holds conservation easements in 15 counties in central North Carolina, including Iredell County.

### ***Iredell County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program***

On April 5, 2005 Iredell County made a resolution adopting a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that was created with the help of the Iredell

County Farmland Preservation Board. The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program aims to preserve large tracts of land for the protection of agriculture and open space. Additionally, the program seeks to safeguard lands in watershed districts and environmentally sensitive areas. For the purpose of agricultural PDR, the program strives to conserve and protect agricultural lands, maintain sustainable agriculture operations and promote the agricultural heritage and culture of Iredell County. The program is completely voluntary and builds upon the efforts already established in the County through the Voluntary Farmland Preservation Districts.

This program has not been funded and is an important tool to consider fully leveraging to preserve active farmlands within the county. Other North Carolina counties have similar active programs, such as Wake County's open space land acquisition and conservation easement program that has protected nearly 2,700 acres and Buncombe County's Farmland Preservation program that has preserved more than 8,000 acres since 1995. These programs are funded through a variety of sources including General Obligation bonds approved by citizens.

## **Market-Based and Economic Incentive Tools**

### ***Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)***

Real estate investment trusts (REITs) allow individual or institutional investors to invest in large-scale land holdings that produce income and are managed by a trust. Though these exist for many different kinds of real estate, some REITs specialize in agriculture and farmland. They do so through owning and managing the property, which can



include hiring the actual farmers that will work the land or leasing the land to farmers.

Investors in the REIT expect to earn a return on their investment. As an investment tool there is an incentive to select quality agricultural land, keep it in profitable production, and protect it. While the business model is based on a knowledge of sound farming practice, there is no legal guarantee that lands will be maintained within the REIT. For example, REIT lands could be leased for wind or solar energy production. Without some other form of legal agreement or guarantee, the property could be sold outright to a willing buyer for another use, such as commercial or residential development.

REITs are a strategy to preserve agricultural land, at least in the short-term. While landowners, farmers, or County advocates could recruit a REIT to purchase land in Iredell County, there is no feasible way for the County to require one or create one. Agricultural REITs do have a presence in North Carolina. For example, Farmland Partners which manages nearly 200,000 acres nationwide includes holdings in eastern North Carolina with over 15,000 acres in Beaufort, Currituck, Pamlico, and Pasquotank Counties.

### ***Additional Private Partnerships and Trusts***

Additional organizations exist with a primary mission of protecting farmland or securing food systems. The services of these organizations can be critical in keeping productive agricultural land as a viable economic activity. This is a diverse category. It includes entities that provide consulting services to farmers,

that extend credit to assist farmers, or that assemble or otherwise make farmland available to new farmers. For example, The Conservation Fund, an organization with a nationwide presence, includes a “Working Farms Fund” that specifically targets at-risk farmland. This fund generates opportunities for the next generation of farmers looking to start work on their own land or for them to purchase the land needed to scale up operations. They target mid-sized farms of 20 to 500 acres and include in their target farmers those who have leased land or worked in farming operations but not owned the business themselves. The fund secures land, places appropriate easements, and helps farmers develop business plans.

Though this particular program has focused on at-risk farmland near Atlanta and Chicago, in 2022, Charlotte was added as an additional target. Farm Credit is another private organization with a different model, supporting rural communities and agricultural businesses with consistent credit and financial services. They help a nationwide network of financial institutions that partner with the farmers or the business directly. Farm Credit already has a presence in Iredell County, supporting projects near Statesville and Harmony.



## ***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).





# JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY

The Horizon Plan provides aspirational direction and guidance, however it is important to have a working understanding of where the County has jurisdiction and authority.

## Local Application of State Programs

All of the above listed conservation tools, VAD and EVAD programs, farmland protection plans and boards, present-use value taxation programs, and conservation easements are shaped by the allowances of state law and rules from the General Assembly or the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

### Programs where the County has some discretion include:

- Farmland protection plans
- Conservation easements

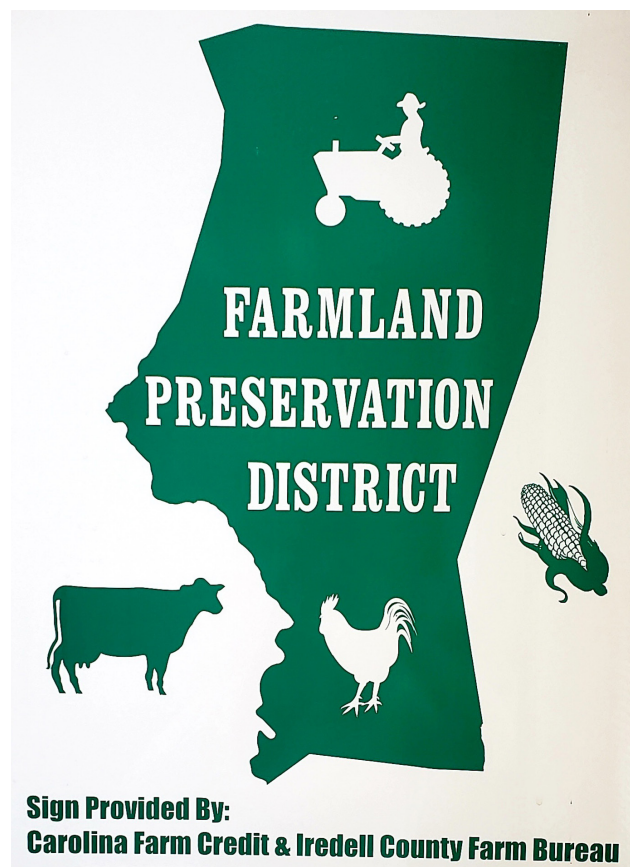
### Programs where the County must strictly administer the state requirements, with little discretion include:

- VAD and EVAD programs
- Present-use value taxation

In cases where the County has chosen to opt into a state-established program, the requirements of the program must be followed. There is more flexibility in determining an agreement or requirements in the county when using strategies that also include an additional private or nonprofit partner or trust as a part of negotiations.

## Bona Fide Farms

The County's ability to apply zoning regulation to farmland is limited by the state. Unambiguously, "County zoning regulations may not affect property used for bona fide farm purposes." The specific evidence that property is a farm is outlined in state regulation and is tied to tax documents.





# GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE

This section is intended to provide assistance to future decision makers. It includes the goal, policies and actions that can help bring the plan vision into being. It is meant to be reviewed by County staff, review boards, and elected officials in determining the long-term decisions for the County.

## GOAL, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

### 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.

### Policies

- 3.1

Continue to support agriculture and farmland as an essential piece of Iredell County’s identity and economy through support of existing County and state programs, and diligent tracking of new programs and opportunities.
- 3.2

Encourage the continued use of existing working farmland through VAD and EVAD farmland protection programs, facilitate the protection of farmland through the County’s cluster subdivision ordinance, and assist farmers and farm owners in accessing funding and technical assistance.
- 3.3

Preserve the rural character visible from public roads in areas of Iredell County that have a history of
- farming through targeted development standards and recruiting roadside farms into VAD, EVAD or other conservation programs.
- 3.4

Accommodate oncoming residential and economic growth in a manner that does not compromise the overall prevalence of farmland or the agricultural economic sector by directing new development to growth areas and away from conservation areas identified on the Future Land Use map.
- 3.5

Continue to partner with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension to educate farmers and farm owners on new developments in farming practices and farmland preservation opportunities.



**3.6** Encourage understanding and appreciation of the agriculture and farmland in the County to residents throughout the County and the region by working with the organizers of local farmers markets and local store and restaurant associations that promote products grown locally in the County. This includes partnering with local institutions such as schools, hospitals, and state offices to ensure that their food options include local products, and through cooperating with regional efforts to promote a regional branded identity that includes agriculture.

**3.7** Unite farm and non-farm entities including farmers, the cooperative extension, and local interest groups to find joint ways to promote local farming and its public benefits (i.e., scenic views, historic landscapes, rural character, local food supply, parks and recreation) through educational programs and festivals. This may include supporting agritourism programs as an entry point to experiencing Iredell County's agriculture and farmlands.

**Actions–** See Chapter 5 for details.

***Continue to Implement the Farmland Protection Plan. Consider an Update of Appropriate Tools in the Plan. [FP-4]***

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

***Update Cluster Subdivision Ordinance to Incentivize Farmland Protection. [RU-2]***

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

***Promote VAD and EVAD Programs to Farmers. [PI-3]***

***Work with Partners to Support a Network of Agritourism Opportunities. [PI-5]***

***Consider Funding the County's Purchase of Development Rights Program. [PI-6]***

## Summary of Agricultural Land Conservation Tools

The following tools are mentioned or described in this chapter:

- County Farmland Protection Plan
- Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD & EVAD)
- Present-use Value Taxation
- Conservation Easements
- Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs)
- Private Partnerships
- Agritourism
- Conservation Subdivisions/Agrihoods/Cluster Subdivisions





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# CHAPTER

## Coordinate Across the County



4





## **In this Chapter:**

**Trends and Issues**

**Guidance for the Future**



# COORDINATE ACROSS THE COUNTY

The complex task of guiding the County's land use future requires the coordination and partnership of many actors inside and outside County government. Convening appropriate partners to act together is how the County can effectively promote its interests to the state and region, help ensure municipal governments and the County have coordinated land use plan visions, and manage the influence of utilities and schools on land development. Coordination is how the County can unlock the potential of its talented community. Economic development (including tourism) is one major aspect of the County that can be best promoted through collective effort. Natural resources that span across the County require coordination for protection and management, and public services and facilities work more efficiently when considered as a network of agencies and actors.

## Trends and Issues

The trends and issues that affect Iredell County lay a foundation for the appropriate policies and actions that this Horizon Plan proposes. Assessing trends and issues is a necessary step in understanding the situation and potential future of Iredell County, to then apply that knowledge effectively. Working with County partners is an essential task to achieving the community's future vision. This is particularly important to successfully pursue economic development, protection of natural resources, and provision of community services. Other than through the Iredell County Economic Development Corporation and state and regional transportation programs that consider feedback from the County and municipalities, there are few formal mechanisms for coordination currently and so identifying potential partners is critical.

### Economic Development

Economic development supplies jobs to the community and helps build a tax base that can support quality services. Economic development is

an effort that demands collaboration and coordination. Whether supporting the growth of existing businesses in the county, encouraging startups from county residents, or recruiting employers to the region, partnerships between ICEDC, the County, municipalities, educational institutions, and other partners are critical.

Industrial indicators are a starting point for understanding how the market views the County. The larger regional Charlotte market will also always be a factor in Iredell County's development. Housing growth pressures and business expectations organize the way Iredell County can act locally, and tourism is an additional opportunity to coordinate and support amenities that support a high quality of life in the County.

### *Leading Industrial Indicators*

In cultivating economic development, it is important to understand the County's strengths – both in terms of absolute numbers of employees in different sectors and in the relative strengths compared to US averages. These lead to slightly different lists, detailed in the



Development and Market Strategies Report (see Plan Appendix).

As a percentage of employment, the most common sectors are: (1) Manufacturing – 19%; (2) Retail Trade – 17%; (3) Healthcare and Social Assistance – 12%; (4) Accommodation and Food Services – 12%; and (5) Construction – 9%.

As to how county sectors exceed national averages, the highest are (1) Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation; (2) Manufacturing; (3) Utilities; (4) Construction, and (5) Retail Trade. Both are important lists to track, with the first list an indication of overall economic activity, and the second an indication of how the market has reacted to Iredell's specific situation.

### ***Iredell's Share of the Charlotte Area***

#### ***Market***

In looking at the employment-generating classifications of office, retail, and industrial production, Iredell's largest capture of the market is industrial. In October of 2022, 10% of the Charlotte metro region's industrial floor space was in Iredell, and the space had a vacancy rate below 3% (compared to 5% vacancy for the region). Iredell was also home to 8% of the area's office space with a vacancy rate below 4% (compared to 11% vacancy for the region.) Different market tools display variations in data, with some even considering sites within parts of Iredell County "north Charlotte."

In general, the office market may be more volatile as factors such as increased work-from-home participation and high vacancy rates across the region continue to evolve post-pandemic.

### ***Housing Growth Pressure***

As of July 2022, Iredell County was one of 31 Counties in North Carolina experiencing strong housing growth, influenced by the growth of the entire Charlotte region. However, during the last quarter of 2022, home sales and prices began to decline due to rising interest rates and a looming threat of recession.

Housing costs in the southern part of Iredell County, particularly Mooresville and Troutman, are growing rapidly. The Childress Klein Center for Real Estate at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte reports a lack of affordable housing for middle class households and households with lower than average income. Some of that lack of affordability leads to residents moving farther from the center of the region. In Iredell County that could mean additional growth in the Statesville housing market, and pressure to extend into the largely rural northern parts of Iredell county.

Usually "sprawl" development is considered an urban phenomenon, but there is also rural sprawl, and it can affect the character of the area. Now, as one travels the roadways in North Iredell, the vistas are of working farms with herds of cattle, fields of corn, soybeans, wheat and hay, farm buildings and rural homes. Rural housing development almost always occurs along existing roadways, and can destroy those vistas if it is built in a sporadic or scattered way. It is important to plan for growth in the rural north and protect working farm businesses and the rural character from encroachment by suburban-style development.



## ***Attracting and Expanding County Businesses***

New, relocating and expanding businesses consider whether the ingredients for their continued success can be found in an area, and compare it to other potentially competing locations. The specific considerations are unique for each business, but in general recent trends have shown the importance of lifestyle considerations as a means of attracting and retaining labor and talent. While considerations about the site may depend on the specific jurisdiction with authority over land, community-wide considerations may be met through a combination of partners including the County and its municipalities.

### **Infrastructure and Land**

Of the elements needed for business, there is a long history of economic development professionals focusing on infrastructure and land, exemplified by the traditional business or industrial park. In the past, combining enough space to build out a production facility served by reliable water, wastewater, electricity, as well as road and rail connections was the right recipe for investment. More recently, high capacity for information transmission in the form of broadband internet or fiberoptic lines has also become critical for some industries. Industries that work in information technology and industries that want access to real-time information about the conditions and operations at their worksite prioritize this information infrastructure.

Statesville Regional Airport presents an additional infrastructure opportunity in Iredell County. Many improvements are now in progress, including a runway extension and corporate hanger. Jet East is opening a new full-service flagship maintenance facility in Statesville, increasing use of the airport.

### **Workforce Training**

Workforce training has seen similar continued support. It is necessary to maintain a skilled workforce in the community as a whole. Businesses look at educational attainment levels of the local workforce, reports on industry employment, and local training programs when determining which areas to locate within. Higher skilled workforces are more attractive to prospective businesses and provide a competitive advantage over other communities.

Iredell County is home to training programs developed by Mitchell Community College in concert with local industries. It also enjoys a privileged position in certain high-tech industries building on the high-performance auto racing teams located in the County, and the materials and services they require. The Universal Technical Institute trade school in Mooresville has direct ties to NASCAR.

Additional workforce training programs are a part of the Iredell Statesville School system, including across the County and in the specialized Career Academy and Technical School (CATS) near Troutman. CATS has a wide array of



training programs from carpentry to culinary arts, equipment repair to electronics, and nursing to pharmacy work.

### **Housing the Workforce**

In addition to improving the skills of the workforce, there is an increasing appreciation for the need for employees to be able to live nearby. While commuting long distances still can occur and individual employee preferences or family accommodation may lead to shorter or longer commutes, ensuring there is a supply of homes to house the workforce nearby is a crucial consideration. For complex manufacturing and industry where there may be a variety of industry jobs with different market values, there is an added benefit to having a full array of home prices available.

### **Quality of Life**

A talented, in-demand workforce can choose their place of employment based on a larger collection of factors than the available salary and cost of living. From the largest economic development efforts, down to modest expansions of existing businesses, there is now recognition that to attract and retain sufficient talented and skilled workers, the business must locate near places people want to live. Where traditionally, older generations set up their lives around where their job was located, younger generations of workers are now taking a different approach, choosing their lifestyle and where they want to live first and the job second. Access to nature and parks, good schools and hospitals, fun entertainment and

restaurants, and reliable broadband internet are all a part of the broader package that makes up the quality of life that is now sought after as an economic recruitment tool.

Quality of life amenities may also attract workers who are able to work remotely from anywhere, and the companies in sectors where that model works.

### **Professional Recruitment**

There has never been more information available about community conditions at the click of a button, even to decision makers who may be operating across the country or across the world. But a professional economic development office still helps employers considering a footprint in the area understand the place's advantages. Iredell County Economic Development Corporation fills this role. Having an entity to assemble regional data and that businesses can ask key questions of is an important sign that a community takes economic development seriously. ICEDC maintains extensive information used to market the County (<https://www.iredelledc.com/>).



## ***Employment Potential***

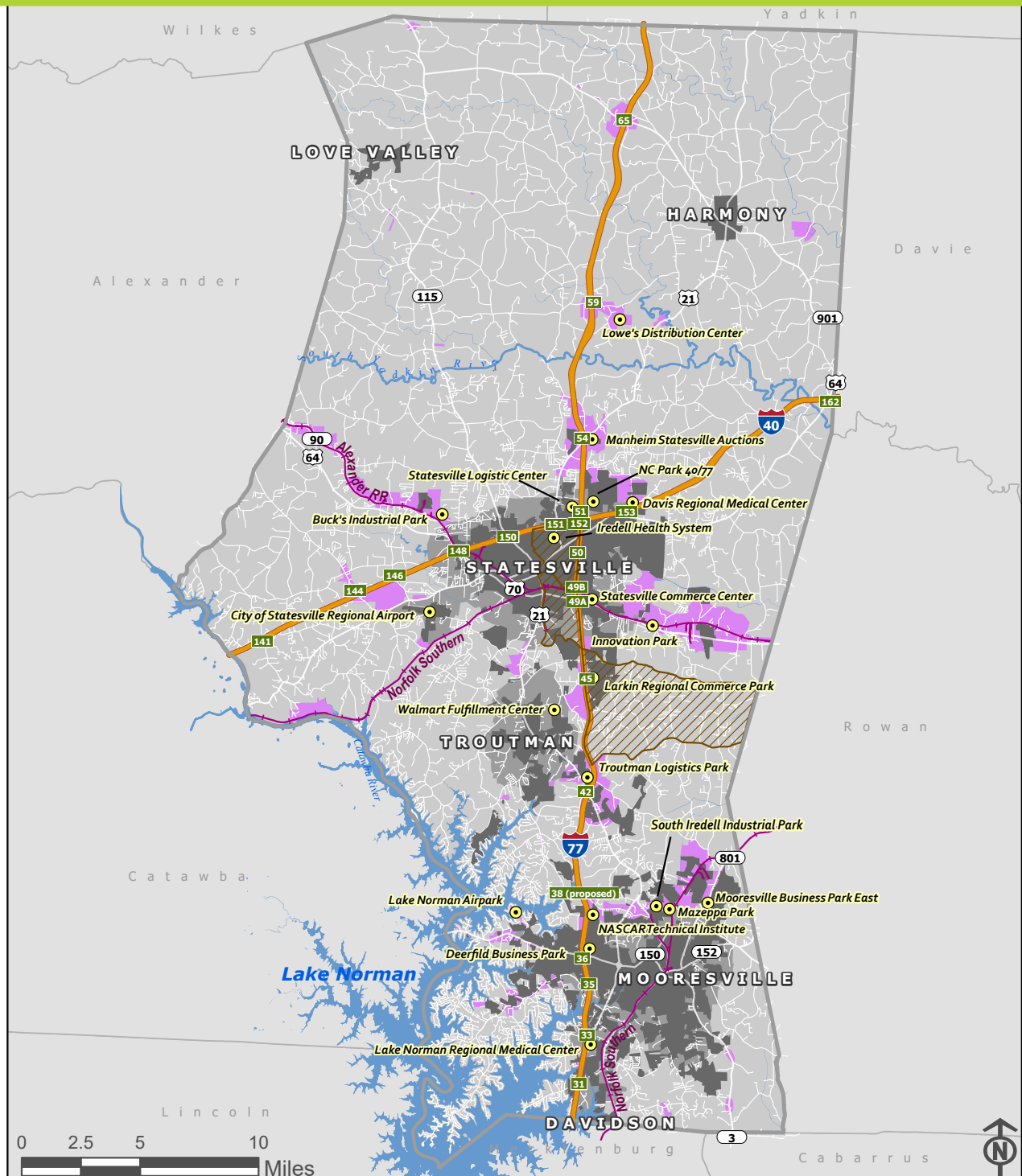
Most employment opportunities occur along major road and rail corridors in the County. These corridors coincide with the locations of business and industrial parks, interstate access, and major recent developments. In addition to key infrastructure and land designations that reflect the business expectations described above, additional features include existing business and industrial parks, and opportunity zones that provide access to federal tax credits for investment.

Much of the area highlighted has the potential for industrial development. It is important to recognize that the various types of industrial development that could be centered on these areas are not all the same:

- Warehouse and distribution uses large clear-span buildings intended to store goods and materials. Relative to other industrial categories, these facilities are operated with limited employees assisted by machinery used to move goods onto or from tractor trailer trucks.
- Manufacturing includes large facilities used to create, build, and assemble goods. Depending on the sector of the economy and product, these facilities often require higher skilled workers and can generate jobs for relatively larger numbers of employees.
- Flex space facilities combine office space for sales and operations with manufacturing space for smaller scale assembly or other goods. This may include a variety of industries from automotive to medical. Generally these are buildings with subdivided portions that include spaces of 5,000 – 10,000 square feet for individual lease or purchase. These are generally highly skilled workers, owners, small businesses and entrepreneurs.



# EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL



## Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal ETJ
- Municipality
- Opportunity Zone
- 3** 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



## ***Tourism Opportunities***

Generally, the tourism industry is comprised of various sectors that house, feed, transport, and entertain visitors. Each sector covers a broad range, providing a distinct variety of goods and services. There are five primary sectors within the tourism industry: 1) lodging; 2) transportation; 3) entertainment, recreation and activities; 4) food & beverage; and 5) retail. While separate from one another, they can often overlap and work in conjunction to create one complete and comprehensive hospitality experience.

Iredell County is home to a growing number of tourism assets that could be leveraged together if the County had an overall marketing and promotions strategy. These assets generally center around access to nature and recreation, events, and other cultural and recreation opportunities, though that theme has not been extensively promoted or linked to the County's rich agricultural history. A particular event may bring someone to Iredell County, be it a regional sports competition, a balloon rally, or a barbecue or craft beer trail, but the collective opportunities are what will keep them longer and coming back for more.

The economic impacts of tourism strategies also bring future residents and businesses, including vendors who first come to the region for personal or business trips.

### **Access to Nature, Recreation and the Outdoors**

Many of the tourism assets either already available or ready to be nurtured are those associated with outdoor recreation and ecotourism.

Chief among those assets is Lake Norman, beloved for scenic views and boating activities. The lake is also accessible from Lake Norman State Park with a visitor center, beach access, boat ramps, and 38 miles of trails. The lake and the park are regional destinations and the site of relaxation and sports, and can also be the center of a broader network of destinations in Iredell County.

Iredell County has identified greenway and trail corridors that help organize the separate greenway networks of the municipalities and tie them to a broader regional network. This includes segments of the Carolina Thread trail, a network that stretches across 15 counties in both North and South Carolina. Iredell County maintains six parks and recreation facilities, and municipalities have their own parks as well. Collectively these park systems include natural lands, trails, and active sport facilities. Future opportunities to repurpose rail right of way into pathways (often called "rails to trails" programs) may also be considered

Additionally, there are many privately held destinations including a planned waterfront hotel, waterfront dining, and sightseeing boat tours including one from Queen's Landing in Mooresville. Agritourism, discussed in greater depth in Chapter 3, adds additional outdoor destinations from wedding and meeting event spaces to u-pick facilities and seasonal harvest events.



### **Events Help Build the Tourism Economy**

Events large and small help build the tourism economy. They bring visitors in who then may stay or return and take in more offerings. This includes long-standing major events like the Carolina Balloon Festival, the second longest active hot air balloon event in the country; events at the County Fairgrounds; as well as smaller events put on by the municipalities or their downtown alliances like outdoor movie nights, food truck rallies, and street fairs.

Amateur sports offer another such opportunity. Recreational leagues can help locals get outside and enjoy the County, but there are also state and regional tournaments for schools or independent amateurs that rotate locations. Hosting regional sporting events can bring teams and their families into the County. Multi-day events can bring an infusion of visitors to stores and restaurants, and for those family members not tied to practice schedules of the athletes, to the trails and farms with agritourism activities in the area.

### **Other Cultural and Recreation Opportunities**

While building an identity as an outdoor destination fits many of the assets available in Iredell County, there are additional sites both indoor and outdoor that can be a part of building up Iredell County as a destination, from the Fort Dobbs State Historic Site protecting history of the 1700's, to more recent racing history in places like the North

Carolina Auto Racing Hall of Fame, to rotating collections at the Iredell Museums.

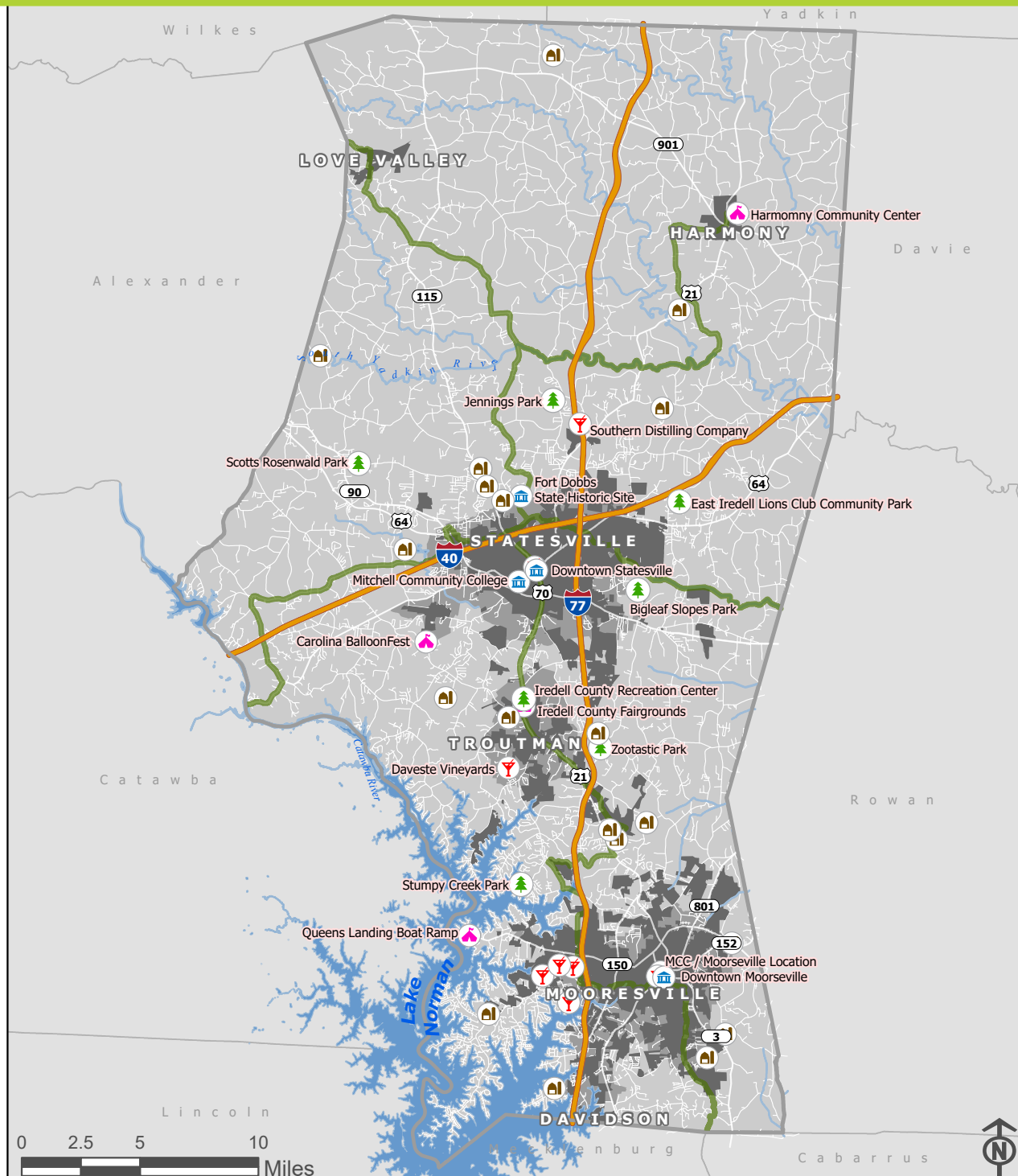
Iredell has successful vineyards including Daveste in Troutman, which can help position the County as the gateway to the extensive set of Yadkin Valley vineyards that welcome tourists. Southern Distillery Company also invites visitors and ties itself to a history of prohibition-era distilling in the region, and there are numerous breweries listed on statewide lists and trails. People travel for more than drinks. Local food and farm-to-table options from Iredell's extensive agricultural industry can also build on the County's strengths.

### **Tourism Potential**

A first step in realizing the potential of increasing tourism in Iredell County is to identify the types of assets that can be assembled toward promoting the region as a whole. This includes general points of interest, opportunities for leisure, and outdoor activities. Tourism in the County is currently managed by separate convention and visitors bureaus supporting efforts in the greater Statesville and greater Mooresville areas.



# TOURISM POTENTIAL



## Legend

- |                 |                                    |  |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|
| County Boundary | Agritourism                        | Carolina Thread Trail (existing and planned) |
| Municipal ETJ   | Points of Interest                 | Lake Norman                                  |
| Municipality    | Brewery (unless otherwise labeled) |  |
|                 | Park                               |  |
|                 | Recreation                         |  |



## Natural Resources

Natural resources are one of the greatest assets in Iredell County. Their prevalence, and the way they span jurisdictions make coordination essential to their protection and management. Water resources for drinking, agriculture, culinary uses, food processing, commercial use, and recreation are a critical part of the story. So are additional environmental considerations including air quality and remediation of pollution on old industrial sites.

### Water Resources

#### Lake Norman

Lake Norman, the largest water feature in Iredell County, is North Carolina's largest reservoir lake formed from the Catawba River. It is a place of beauty, a habitat to numerous species, and a crucial water resource. It is also a managed lake and a part of the infrastructure of hydropower projects maintained by Duke Energy along the Catawba-Wateree watershed. Duke maintains the system in part according to a shoreline management plan, renewed most recently in 2016, with additional review and updates expected in 2024 and 2025.

#### Water Supply Watersheds

In North Carolina, the Water Supply Watershed Protection Program is a means of protecting water resources for Iredell County. Troutman and Mooresville are listed as participants in the Water Supply Watershed Protection Program, though the protected watersheds stretch throughout the County, and some of those protections

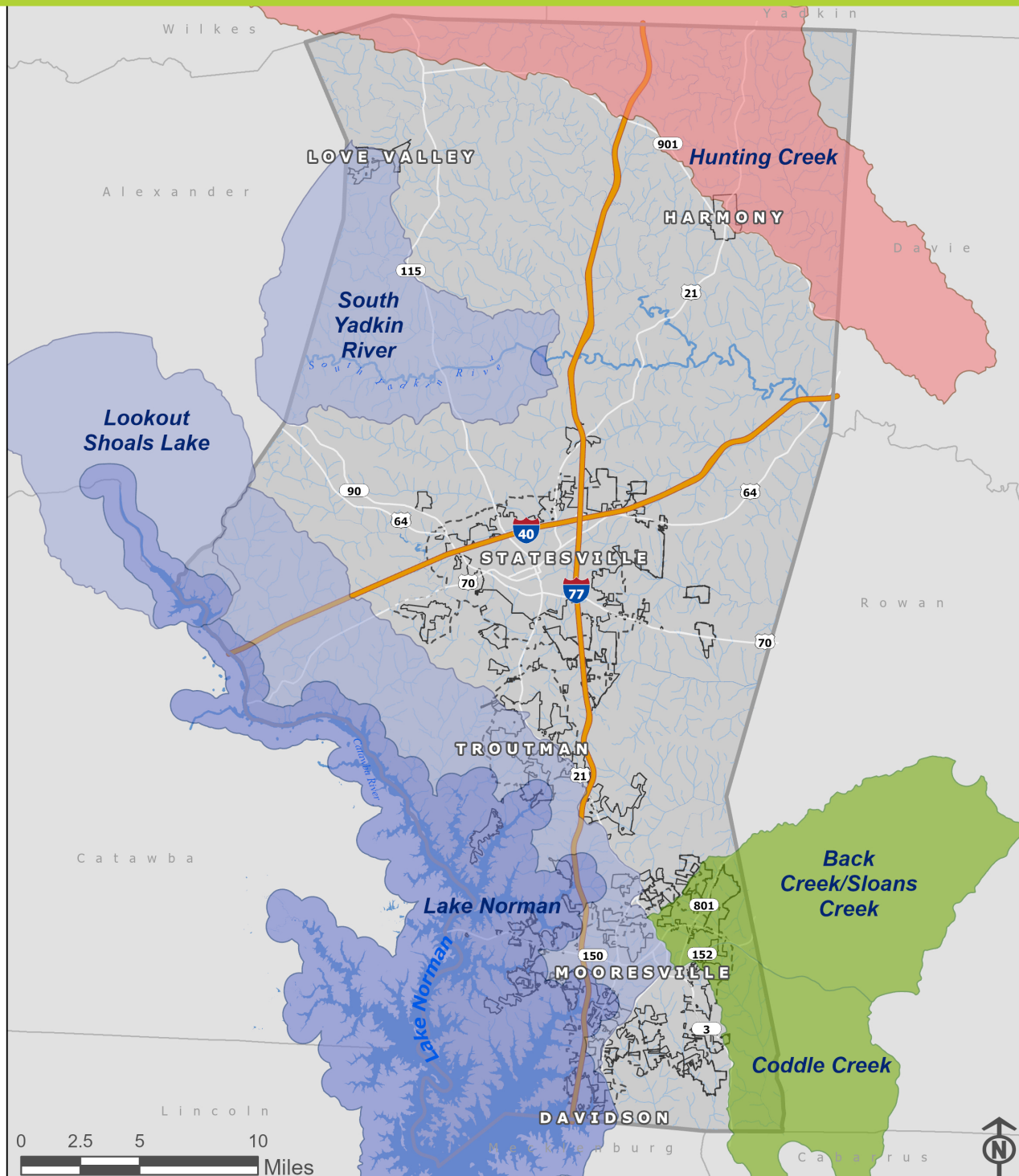
are in place to preserve quality downstream in other jurisdictions. In particular, protection of the Don T. Howell Reservoir used by Kannapolis results in watershed protections in the far southeast of Iredell County, and shifting plans in Kannapolis could affect the extent of the watershed restrictions.

There are generally five levels of water supply protection in the program. In Iredell, the protected watersheds are classified as Water Supply – II (WS-II), Water Supply – III (WS-III) and Water Supply – IV (WS-IV). WS-I, not applied in the County, is for users desiring maximum protection for their water supply where the water is a source for drinking, culinary, or food processing purposes. WS-II through WS-IV are all also meant for drinking, culinary, or food processing purposes with higher numbers used where the lower number protection is not feasible. The lowest designation (the highest protection) that exists in Iredell County is WS-II. There are very few WS-I designated watersheds in North Carolina, and none of them are east of Morganton.

Critical areas (land within one-half mile of the water source that drains to the water supply intake) are defined within each watershed. Protected areas (land within 10 miles of the water supply intake for WS-IV) and Balance of Watershed Areas (additional land protected for WS-II and WS-III) are also defined. Development regulations limit the amount and type of development that can occur in these areas.



# WATERSHEDS



- |                 |                                |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| County Boundary | <b>Water Supply Watersheds</b> |
| Municipal ETJ   | WS-IIBW                        |
| Municipality    | WS-IIIBW                       |
|                 | WS-IVC                         |
|                 | WS-IVP                         |



## **Environmental Considerations**

### **Wetlands and Floodplains**

Floodplains track along the streams and tributaries in the County, are identified on Flood Area Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). These are subject to development restrictions based on categories developed by the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA).

Though they are called “100-year” and “500-year” hazard areas, these designations are based on the probability an area will flood at least once within that timeframe. Actual flooding is not so methodical, and a flood in one year in one of these areas does not preclude a flood the next year as well. In general, there is more land in the flood hazard areas that feed into streams and rivers than directly into Lake Norman, which has its water level managed. The County regulates development in floodplains on all rivers, creeks, and major tributaries in its planning jurisdiction through buffer requirements in its land development code.

### **Air Quality**

Iredell County generally has clean air. Of the pollutants tracked by the Clean Air Act, the only instance of a pollutant elevated too highly (called ‘nonattainment’ of the air quality standard) was an instance of ground level ozone recorded in 2008 as a part of the recording in the Charlotte region (officially designated Charlotte-Rock Hill, NC-SC). In 2015, measures were reduced from “nonattainment” indicating that the region had successfully managed reduction of the pollutant.

### **Brownfields**

Brownfields are locations where past industrial activity or pollution may indicate clean-up is required before development or redevelopment can occur. The pollution may be from something that has since been removed from the site, or an ongoing source from materials still there. The State identifies two sites that are actively eligible for brownfield remediation programs, both in Statesville. As a part of the Statesville 2045 Land Development Plan, Statesville identified securing additional capacity for brownfields technical assistance. As that plan is implemented over time, funds for remediation and reuse may be secured on the sites.

## **Public Services and Facilities**

The County provides some public services across all jurisdictions in its boundaries, while other key services (notably utilities) are provided by the municipalities and other nonprofit or private actors. The efficient and effective provision of services requires coordination across jurisdictions.

### **County Facilities**

There are 63 sites in the County serviced by the Facilities Services Department. These sites support County operations including:

- Health Department
- Department of Social Services
- Hall of Justice and Court facilities
- Detention Center
- Sherriff’s Office facilities
- Government Center Complex
- Board of Elections



- All EMS bases
- Emergency Communications
- Agricultural Center
- Iredell County Fairgrounds
- Building Standards
- County Libraries
- Iredell County Transportation Services (ICATS)
- Solid Waste Department
- Animal Services
- Parks and Recreation
- Tax Administration

### **Additional County Sites and Landowners**

The County itself owns over 2,000 acres of land. The municipalities collectively own over 3,000 acres. Utilities own over 700 acres, with the majority owned by Duke Energy which owns both land actively used for infrastructure facilities and some land related to control and access of the lake. Additional sites are managed by one of the two school districts in the County (Iredell Statesville Schools and Mooresville Graded School District), including current school sites and sites held for future facilities. Iredell Statesville Schools owns over 600 Acres of Land in the County. The State of North Carolina owns another 2,000 acres.

There is currently no central location where all of these sites, both used now and preserved for future use can be viewed and assessed together. Cooperative development of facilities such as combining public safety offices and other services on a site, or the connected use of schools and parkland, is an increasingly common tool used in other communities to achieve multiple goals with limited resources.

### **Connection to Growth**

### **and Development**

The coverage and quality of available services, including public safety, schools, and parks, can affect the pattern of growth and development. Water, wastewater, and electricity more directly affect development potential, but the speed and direction of the market can be influenced by easy and convenient access to a good school, an attractive park, or other high-quality amenities.

### **Comparative Cost of Services**

Activity that generates economic benefits to the County does not all require the same investment in services. The return on investment is considered by elected officials when making decisions and implemented by County staff. However, there is not just one type of development that makes economic sense for one specific location. It is important to consider both the positive economic impact generated by a land use decision and the cost to service the area.

- In broad terms, the lowest commitment to services comes from development activity related to tourism such as food and beverage or lodging uses. Out-of-area users can come, spend in the County, and leave at the end of their visit requiring little expenditure of County funds.
- Commercial and Industrial is the next lowest commitment to services, as there is generally no cost for additional schools and less cost to service with fire and police than residential. Commercial and industrial uses, including retail, is the most expensive to service, followed by office and industrial.
- The most expensive to service



with infrastructure is housing which requires more education, fire and police services than other categories. However, a lack of available housing can cause issues with affordability in the community and can discourage some office and industrial recruitment for businesses considering where their workers will live.

These general guidelines also need to be viewed through the lens of balancing service capacity. Planning for development where capacity already exists unused is a different proposition than expansion.

## **Working with County Partners**

The future of the County and the ability to realize the vision outlined in this Horizon Plan is dependent upon the ability to coordinate and collaborate with other interested partners, including municipalities, schools, utilities, the business community, and other organizations. Today, there are few pathways for formal partner collaboration occurring in Iredell. The Iredell County Economic Development Commission is one new example of the County working with its partners to define success for the entirety of the County. The County can build off this approach and position itself to facilitate implementation of the Plan's vision. It can serve as the convenor of discussions and joint decision-making with partners on topics of common interest, such as growth along the edges of jurisdictional boundaries.

## **Governments and Utilities**

### **State and Regional Interests**

State agencies and regional

entities have a direct impact on funding of capital investments and operation of programs in Iredell County. The effect is most direct in transportation planning and expenditures, where the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are a part of the formal process of transportation construction and management. Iredell is a part of the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization for this purpose.

For additional planning assistance on natural resources, economic development, and health and wellbeing, the state is divided into regional councils of government that cooperate in this system, and Iredell is one of nine counties in the Centralina Regional Council, centered on Charlotte. Iredell also feels the influence, growth, and development toward Hickory and Winston-Salem, each in separate regional councils (Western Piedmont and Piedmont Triad Councils of Government, respectively).

Additional State agencies administer programs and decisions from the General Assembly that regularly affect the residents of the County and the capacity of County government to act.

### **Municipalities**

Iredell County contains all or part of six municipalities: Love Valley, Harmony, Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville, and Davidson. The municipalities have their own individual comprehensive, strategic, or land development plans that



guide their long-term actions, and professional staffs (with more extensive staff in Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville, and Davidson) that help implement the will of their elected officials and residents. Iredell County does not need to replicate work being accomplished in the municipalities. The County as a convenor of partners can help look with a wider view at how ongoing programs affect the entire community and the edge conditions between jurisdictions.

### **Municipal Planning Services**

While Statesville, Troutman, Mooresville and Davidson provide their own planning services, Iredell County's Planning and Development Department provides current development planning services to administer the zoning and subdivision ordinances for Harmony. Harmony, as discussed in Chapter 2: Prepare for Oncoming Growth, has a sanitary sewer system that was developed after the previous (2030) Horizon Plan, and is interested in exploring expansion of the service outside the town limits. Coordinated planning between Harmony and Iredell County is needed to balance future land use changes in the County that could support Harmony's growing wastewater utility service area and preserve the rural character and agricultural operations in northern Iredell County.

### **Utility Providers**

Utility-scale drinking water, wastewater, and electricity systems serve areas within the County. Some utility providers are

centered specifically on utilities, such as Statesville's electric services, Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville's water and wastewater services, and Harmony's wastewater services. Some of the unincorporated portion of the County can receive water from one of the area's rural water utilities, including Iredell Water Corporation and West Iredell Water Company. Their potential service footprint is larger than some of the municipal systems, though serving lower intensity development. Additional private for-profit utilities and service providers also operate in the County.

Internet service providers are increasingly seen as another basic key utility. Private for-profit providers serve the County. Some of that service includes new infrastructure, including fiberoptic cables that support significantly higher volumes of internet traffic and speed. While access to fast internet can be desirable for residents, it is essential to many businesses and industries tied to the information economy and can have impacts on where a business chooses to locate.

The capacity of utilities is critical to matching the expected land use and development potential anticipated and organized according to County land use policies. Utility infrastructure ought to be supplied efficiently, with new capacity supplied in a way to match the location and type of new growth, and the capacity and cost of servicing new growth can also steer future development. It is hard to grow an area without utilities,



and it is hard to protect areas from growth if the capacity for utility services in the specific area makes development cheaper to service.

### **Schools**

Iredell Statesville Schools, Mooresville Graded School District, along with charter, private, and homeschool options accomplish the extraordinary task of educating Iredell County's children. Iredell Statesville Schools have a direct organizational and budgetary tie into the County government. The other entities are key partners. As a system, the schools offer a variety of specialty education programs and opportunities. Iredell County's schools must grow to provide classrooms to the growing population of the County. In that sense, school growth is reactive. It can also be anticipatory, planning ahead for expected growth, and consequential, leading to additional interest in growth and development near high quality schools and programs.

Mitchell Community College is another key component of the education system in the County, discussed more in "institutions" below.

### ***Institutions and Business Organizations***

Though the specific interests of various institutions and business organizations vary, they can be invaluable partners and sources of information when connected to the County and its municipalities in their respective areas of expertise. They also, through networks of members, alumni, and clients, can

serve as an important resource for sharing information with the community. The County is interested in economic development, both as a means of securing quality jobs in the community and in balancing a tax base to provide services to residents at reasonable costs. Coordinating with these entities and making use of their expertise can help the County arrive at beneficial land use and infrastructure-related decisions.

### **Institutions**

Institutions in the County have a variety of missions. Some help educate and train the workforce including Mitchell Community College with multiple campuses throughout the area, and the Universal Technical institute. These are important partners in economic development in the county. Iredell County's two hospitals are service providers and major employers and support a healthcare ecosystem of additional businesses and services. Others help educate the community and bring in visitors, including Iredell Museums and the Ft. Dobbs historic site, which can be important to growing tourism.

### **Business organizations**

The Iredell County Economic Development Corporation helps promote the area to new employers and helps facilitate expansion of existing firms. The economic development corporation combined separate efforts centered on Mooresville and Statesville under one roof for the whole of the County in 2017.

The multiple Chambers of Commerce and Downtown Alliances represent the interests of existing



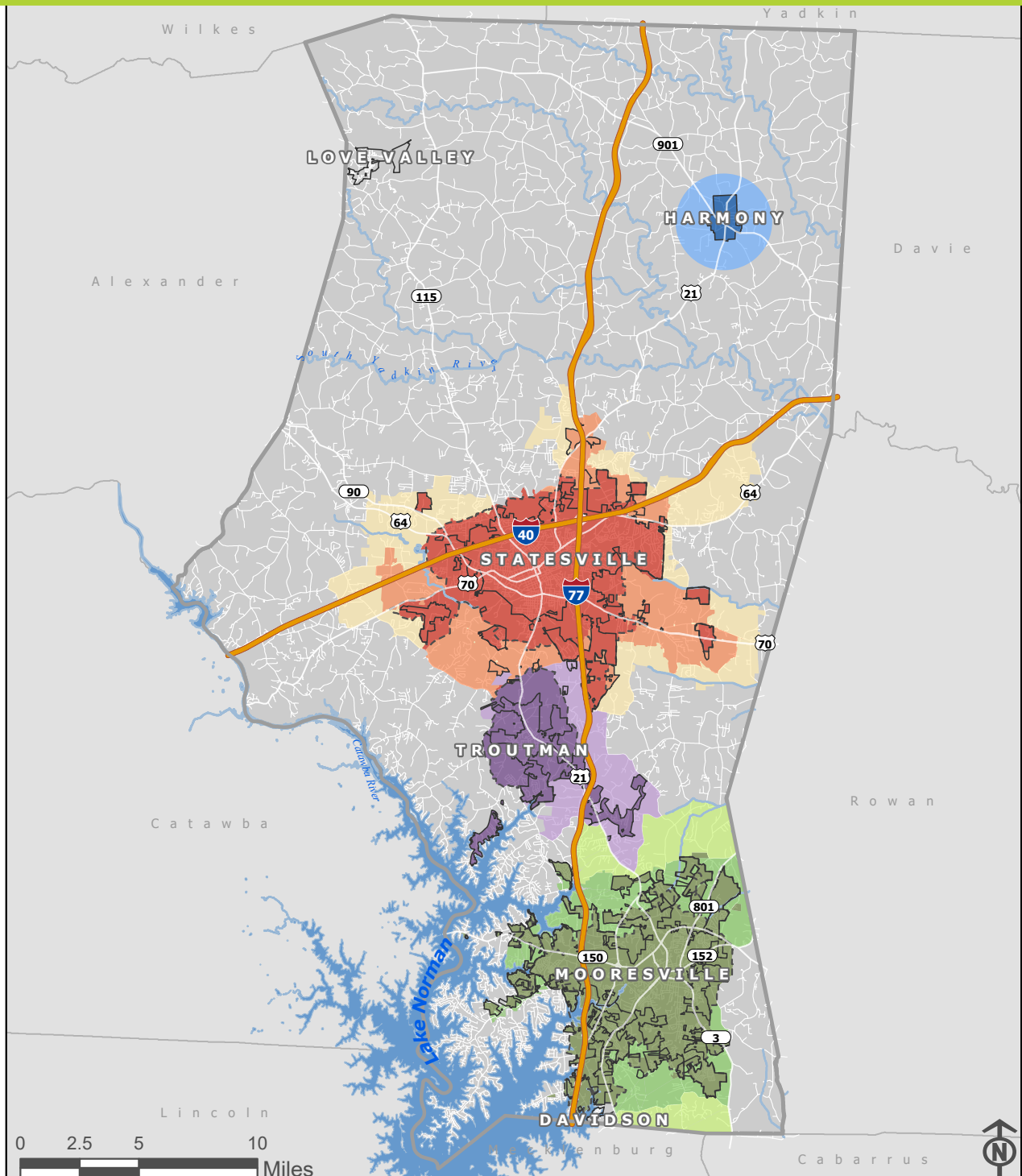
businesses across the County. They work to improve the business climate generally and as a platform to promote specific improvements or desires. These entities can be crucial partners in economic recruitment and promoting County programs by reaching their wide base of customers to help inform them of opportunities.

### **Residents, Workers, Employers, Landowners**

Members of the Iredell County community volunteer their time through formal and informal organizations for the betterment of the County as a whole or a specific interest. They serve on County and municipal advisory boards, and work through civic, neighborhood, fraternal, and faith-based organizations. They join in conversations with their neighbors more generally about the future of the County. The passion of the Iredell County community is a strength and provides opportunities for additional key partnerships as important community decisions are made. Reaching out to the Iredell County community and tapping into this strength given its geographic size of the County and diverse interests of the community is an ongoing challenge. Some other communities employ a public information office or invest in technologies that help directly connect with their own residents, workers, employers, and landowners.



# 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 | Mooreseville Tier 3 |                 |                |



# GUIDANCE FOR THE FUTURE

This section is intended to provide assistance to future decision makers. It includes a map of utility tiers that describe potential growth of service areas as well as the goal, policies and actions that can help bring the plan vision into being. It is meant to be reviewed by County staff, review boards, and elected officials in determining the long-term decisions for the County.

## Utility Tiers

Orderly growth and preservation in Iredell County can come from the combined effort of the County and its municipalities. The municipal utilities play a critical role in guiding growth as the presence of water and wastewater service has a direct impact on the intensity of possible development in an area. Coordinated and sound planning considers where utilities are likely to be expanded and the resulting growth impacts.

To facilitate the orderly extension of utilities, Statesville and Mooresville have adopted Tiered Growth Maps as a guidance tool for their officials. These maps indicate areas that already receive municipal services, and define future areas for expanding water, wastewater, and electricity services. Tier I are areas that municipalities serve now. Tiers II and III are areas where the municipalities have planned extensions of service, creating more opportunity and pressure for intensive development. Troutman has not adopted a tiered growth map, but Troutman's 2022 update to its own future land use map includes descriptions of expected land uses that help define future growth areas. A growth area based on these land uses has been included in the map on the previous page.

Harmony has not adopted specific service expansion plans, but is interested in considering ways to build customers for its new wastewater utility. A general area of interest in future growth has been included in the map below. Combining the designations from Harmony, Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville shows how the future municipal growth and service extension in the County is likely to be concentrated in areas near to where the municipalities have already grown.

In general, the first utility tier is comprised of areas already within the incorporated limits or ETJ of a municipality. The second tier includes areas of expected extension in the near future, considering growth policies, topography, and hydrology. The third tier is where service provision is eventually anticipated, perhaps over 20 years or within the municipality's planning horizon, or when the municipality has not formally adopted its own set of growth tiers.

Municipal tiered growth maps are subject to change and their collective inclusion on this map does not limit the ability of a municipality to shift course and adopt a new map or new policies.



# GOAL, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

## Goal

The County will serve as a convenor 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.

## Policies

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>4.1</b> Identify critical growth and economic development related issues of interest to County partners and convene meetings with partner leaders to develop coordinated plans and strategies.                                      | <b>4.5</b> Leverage key destinations in Iredell County and grow the tourism industry in a manner that creates amenities and value for Iredell County residents and supports the County's rural and agricultural preservation goals.         |
| <b>4.2</b> Coordinate with municipalities and local entities to communicate a united front of priorities to state agencies and regional organizations, including but not limited to NCDOT, CRTPO, and the Centralina Regional Council. | <b>4.6</b> Work with municipal and rural utilities to promote the responsible extension of utilities and monitoring of collective capacity in line with the County's plan for growth.   |
| <b>4.3</b> Maintain and improve communication with Iredell County community members directly. This may take the form of additional outreach efforts or opening new communications channels.  | <b>4.7</b> Protect the cultural heritage of Iredell County, including significant natural and historic sites, through partnerships with preservation organizations such as the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. |
| <b>4.4</b> Work with the Iredell County Economic Development Corporation and industry leaders to maintain a diversity of employment sectors in the County.   | <b>4.8</b> Respect and enforce the state's Water Supply Watershed limits on growth as a means of preserving clean water as an essential resource.   |



**4.9** Be prepared to work with regional partners to remediate air quality or ground-based pollution in the County if future lapses require remediation.

**4.10** Plan for projected growth and identify potential future impacts on public facilities and services provided by the County. Develop capital investment plans for growth before it occurs.

**4.11** Support the sharing of data on public land and facility assets owned by partners (State of North Carolina, institutions, municipalities) to leverage opportunities and reduce fiscal impacts on taxpayers through co-location or joint planning of sites to serve multiple public purposes. An example is a park that is also a play area for an adjacent school, or a fire station that is co-located with an emergency management services station.

**4.12** Before capital investment requests are made to the County to support public school investments, the County will work with Iredell-Statesville Schools through the Iredell Planning and Development Department to identify appropriate sites for schools that minimize traffic impacts, reduce the need for infrastructure expansion, shorten bus routes, and take advantage of publicly owned sites.

## Actions

See Chapter 5 for details.

***Develop a County Strategic Housing Plan. [FP-5]***

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

***Build Capacity For Community Communication. [CI-4]***

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

***Provide Courtesy Notification or Review of Development near Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville. [PI-4]***

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

***Continue Countywide Economic Development Recruitment. [PI-8]***

***Coordinate Travel and Tourism Organizations to Create Unified or Complementary Promotion of the Area. [PI-9]***

***Coordinate with County Water Providers to Facilitate a Voluntary Monitoring of Countywide Capacity. [PI-10]***

***Develop a Countywide Facilities Asset Map and Database. [PI-11]***

***Coordinate with Municipalities on Sports and Parks. [PI-12]***

***Coordinate with Duke Energy on Supporting Lakefront Recreation and Lake Access. [PI-13]***



## Diversity of Industry in the County



The industrial sector faces future challenges with new technologies such as robotics, automation and Ai (artificial intelligence) that may replace the need for some jobs. Diversifying Iredell County's industrial targets based on the various subsectors that contribute skilled workers can help mitigate the impact in the future. The sectors listed below use the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) and reflect those industries where Iredell County competes on a national level. (Calculated based on employment quotients from the 2021 County Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

### **NAICS 23 – Construction**

NAICS 237 – Heavy and civil engineering construction

NAICS 238 – Specialty and trade contractors

### **NAICS 31–33 – Manufacturing**

NAICS 312 – Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing

NAICS 313 – Textile Mills

NAICS 314 – Textile Product Mills

NAICS 322 – Paper manufacturing

NAICS 325 – Chemical manufacturing

NAICS 326 – Plastics and rubber products manufacturing

NAICS 327 – Nonmetallic mineral product manufacturing

NAICS 331 – Primary metal manufacturing

NAICS 332 – Fabricated metal product manufacturing

NAICS 333 – Machinery manufacturing

NAICS 335 – Electrical equipment, appliance and component manufacturing

NAICS 336 – Transportation equipment manufacturing

NAICS 337 – Furniture and related product manufacturing

### **NAICS 42 – Wholesale Trade**

NAICS 423- Merchant Wholesalers



# CHAPTER

## MOVING TOWARD THE HORIZON

5





## **In this Chapter:**

**Identifying Priority Actions**

**Using Policies**

**Performance Metrics**

**Updating the Plan**

**Detailed Actions**



# MOVING TOWARD THE HORIZON

This plan is about preparing for the future. Meeting that future successfully requires a dedication to implementing the policies and guidance of the 2045 Horizon Plan. The potential actions that will support the community vision and the means of tracking change and adjusting aims are a part of this chapter.

## Identifying Priority Actions

Actions are specific implementation tasks for Iredell County and its partners. The choice to execute a particular action at a particular time is an exercise in prioritization. Actions are available for future budget planning and yearly strategic direction from the County's elected officials.

## Using Policies

The policies in the 2045 Horizon Plan guide public action by the County government and private land development proposals that need some formal approval. County staff, advisory boards, and elected officials can look to the policies when deciding on a course of action or approval. Policies may be referenced in staff reports to highlight this connection. The plan is guidance and not law. In weighing complex decisions additional concerns may be raised that need to be balanced. Even in these instances, the policies provide a common framework to discuss the specifics of a particular proposal. Policies may also help staff pursue new programs or prioritize existing ones when in the daily course of their work, or when proposing budgets.

## 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.



## Updating the Plan

Iredell County will continue to face new issues and opportunities from continuing growth and change. This plan sets a long-term path, but it still needs to evolve with the community as it changes. It is important for communities to support amendments and updates to plans over time so that the policy guidance included in the plan remains relevant. North Carolina law anticipates periodic updates and recommendations for the plan, but does not list a specific time-frame. As with the 2030 Horizon Plan, aiming for a major update within 10 to 15 years depending on the pace of change remains appropriate, with earlier minor reviews and revisions as needed.

There is a specific legal requirement in North Carolina for elected officials to declare if approved rezonings are “in accordance with a comprehensive plan,” which may include policies or the future land use map. If in the future, due to changing conditions, elected officials are regularly making a statement that the plan is inconsistent with approved rezonings, that is an indication an amendment to the plan may be needed.

## Detailed Actions

### Categorizing Actions

Actions related to all goals and policies are collected in this chapter. They are categorized by the type of action recommended:

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

Actions also include two indicators. One is the recommended timing to initiate the action. The other is the appropriate County agency or partner that needs to act. These are recommendations, and may still be subject to the prioritization of resources which may affect how or when some are implemented.



## 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

#### **FP-2** *Create Small Area Plans or Strategies for County-Identified Transit Nodes and Corridors.*

Identifying transit nodes and corridors is a time-tested strategy for creating effective transit systems that work to support efficient, diverse land uses, including mixed-use developments, and where appropriate protecting high value sites for future employment. However, maximum positive outcomes may not be achieved unless proactive, goal-based directions for these nodes and corridors is created. The County should develop small area plans that lay out detailed land use, zoning, design, and character objectives for these areas. The County should first work with communities to create and execute land use and urban design visions for transit nodes, and later, for priority and emerging transit corridors.

**Timing:** Within 2 to 5 years

**Agency or Partner:** Planning and Development Department; municipalities, ICATS

#### **FP-3** *Study Rural Road Safety Upgrades.*

Produce a formal study of potential safety changes and upgrades to rural and formerly rural roads that have experienced high crash rates.

**Timing:** Within 5 years

**Agency or Partner:** Planning and Development Department

#### **FP-4** *Continue to implement the Farmland Protection Plan. Consider an Update of Appropriate Tools in the Plan.*

The Farmland Protection Plan (FPP) is part of the guidebook for operating conservation programs in Iredell County, and frames the Farmland Preservation Board's work. Iredell County should continue to support the work of the Farmland Preservation Board to implement the plan, and consider updating the FPP to include additional tools referenced in this Horizon Plan. The Farmland Preservation Board can continue to be a valuable advisor to the Board of Commissioners by tracking progress on listed policies and new strategies in addition to their statutory requirements on VAD and EVAD program administration.

**Timing:** Within 2 years

**Agency or Partner:** Planning & Development Department; Farmland Preservation Board



## **FP-5** *Develop a County Strategic Housing Plan.*

Iredell County has a very large land mass compared to most counties in the region; therefore, it has the potential of playing an out-sized role in trying to meet the increasing demand for housing across many price points. The County is witnessing this burst of demand in its southern area, a blossoming of housing demand in its middle section (Statesville), and will likely see the housing demand spill over into its vital agricultural land in the north. From the policy perspective, consideration of the following issues will be important:

- Find ways to develop new affordable housing and maintain the affordable housing that already exists.
- Look at housing alternatives for all income levels and socioeconomic groups as the demand for new housing expands.
- Protect the current agricultural and rural land uses in the northern part of the County to avoid continued sprawl.

**Timing:** *Within 5 years*

**Agency or Partner.** *Planning & Development Department; Iredell County Economic Development Corporation, and municipalities*

## **FP-6** *Partner with Harmony to Develop a Utility Growth Plan and Small Area Plan or Strategy.*

In partnership with the Town of Harmony, engage in a joint planning exercise to help determine appropriate locations and types of development that can help form a stable customer base for the Harmony wastewater utility. The plan should be acceptable to both Harmony,

which would provide the service, and the County which would control the actual land uses outside the town limits.

Striking the right balance should provide a sustainable user base while not overwhelming the overall intent to preserve farmland and agriculture in the northern parts of the County. The Future Land Use Map could be updated with the results of the plan or strategy.

**Timing:** *Within 5 years*

**Agency or Partner.** *Planning and Development Department; Town of Harmony*

## **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

### **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*

### **CI-2 Create a Dedicated County Transportation Planner Position.**

Transportation infrastructure is important enough and complex enough a task that the County would be best served by having a dedicated transportation planner. Employ a transportation planner responsible for reviewing transportation impact assessments on larger projects in the County's jurisdiction; serving as point of contact for NC-DOT and CRTPO on transportation projects; reviewing NC-DOT plans and advocating for the County's interest; providing guidance and serving as liaison between CRTPO, any committees, and the Board of Commissioners; monitoring the Transportation Master Plan to ensure

there is ongoing progress; and pursuing grants for transportation projects.

Though the responsibility of this position would be clearest if maintained entirely by the County, there may be some creative ways to split the position with one or more of the municipalities, or a regional planning entity.

**Timing:** *Within 2 to 5 years*

**Agency or Partner:** *Planning & Development Department; possibly municipalities, CRTPO, or the Lake Norman Transportation Commission*

### **CI-3 Secure Funds to Expand the EV Charging Network Along Highways and Interstates.**

Alone or with planning partners such as the municipalities or regional planning entities, apply to grant and other programs to expand the electric vehicle (EV) charging network along all key highway and interstate corridors (including I-40, designated an EV Corridor by the Federal Highway Administration), and at County-owned sites.

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

**Agency or Partner:** *Facility Services, Planning & Development Departments; NC-DOT and municipalities*

### **CI-4 Build Capacity For Community Communication.**

In order to inform and reach out to members of the community including residents, workers, employers and landowners, invest in additional public communication capacity. This may include employing a public information officer, or building time and training for a portfolio of public information tasks into an existing position with



other duties. It also may include investing in technologies that help push communications out to the community.

**Timing:** *Within 2 to 5 years*

**Agency or Partner:** *Planning & Development Department or other County Department*

## REGULATORY UPDATES

### **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*



## **RU-2 Update Cluster Subdivision Ordinance to Incentivize Farmland Protection.**

An assessment of the current cluster subdivision ordinance should be undertaken to identify ways to incentivize the protection of active farms and forests, similar to a conservation subdivision approach. This could include enhancement of the open space requirements in exchange for increased density or other incentives. The cluster subdivision could also strengthen VAD and EVAD protection by extending a requirement to orient open space toward the adjacent VAD or EVAD in any zoning district. Discussion of proposals with the farming community and developer interests could help prioritize changes that will result in preservation of farms. Where necessary to preserve character, this tool could be limited to developments with only detached homes and elevated design standards.

**Timing:** Within 2 years

**Agency or Partner:** Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and Planning & Development Department

## **RU-3 Enhance Guiding Standards for Private Landowner-Initiated ETJ Requests.**

Private landowner-initiated ETJ requests are not a necessary prerequisite to annexation by a municipality. Enhance application requirements for this request type that include a requirement for sharing previous communications between the applicant and the municipality and a linkage to municipal transition standards, if adopted. (See "Update the Land Development Code"

action, above).

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

## **RU-4 Require Right-Of-Way Provision for Future Transit Corridors.**

Successful transit systems require significant forethought and planning to ensure a successful network is viable. This can include making allowances for the future network well before there is enough demand to sustain extension of the service. Preserve necessary public right-of-way for future transit uses along designated transit corridors as a condition of development approval.

**Timing:** Within 2 years and Ongoing  
**Agency or Partner:** Planning & Development Department

## **PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

### **PI-1 Use the Future Land Use Map When Reviewing Rezoning Requests.**

The Future Land Use designations and Future Land Use Map are guidance developed to assist elected officials, appointed boards, and staff with maintaining orderly land use in the County. Though occasionally there is new information or a special opportunity that warrants diverging from the Future Land Use Map, this Horizon Plan works best when Future Land Use guidance is followed as much as possible. As rezoning is initiated, whether by private request or through any future remapping efforts tied to land development code updates, the County will follow the guidance within the Future Land Use Map.



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

### **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-3 Promote VAD and EVAD Programs to Farmers.**

The Voluntary and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District programs remain a successful tool that protects farmland and the area around it. As a voluntary tool, it is critical to advertise and promote the program to farmers to continue to grow these protections within Iredell County. Tracking the terms of these agreements is also important toward ensuring re-enrollment, and documenting proven benefits for farmers considering re-enrollment or enrollment for the first time. The County should advertise the use of VAD and EVAD programs to farmers, and track the terms and dates of the agreements in a centralized database.

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

### **PI-4 Provide Courtesy Notification or Review of Development Near Statesville, Troutman, and Mooresville.**

Countywide coordination is made possible by open communication. Development on the edges of municipal and County jurisdictions affects development and service provision on the other side. The County will provide courtesy notification or review of development applications within half a mile of the municipal limits or ETJ15F and include any municipal comment in staff reports on the application.

*Timing: Within 2 years and Ongoing*  
*Agency or Partner: Planning & Development Department; municipalities*

### **PI-5 Work with Partners to Support a Network of Agritourism Opportunities.**

A farmer can promote agritourism opportunities on the farm itself, but can be more effective in recruiting visitors and fostering an understanding of the importance of agriculture by connecting to a network of similar opportunities throughout the County. The North Carolina Agricultural Extension, the tourism bureaus in municipalities, and the operators of local farmers markets are all partners that can assist in advertising and organizing the growth of agritourism opportunities within Iredell County. The network may include self-guided tours of agritourism sites, collective marketing, and various harvest festivals.

*Timing: Ongoing*  
*Agency or Partner: Farm Preservation Board; Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, NC State Agricultural Extension*



### **PI-6 Consider Funding the County's Purchase of Development Rights Program.**

The County should consider taking action to fund and initiate action through the established Purchase of Development Rights program. This could include applying for grants for federal or state funding programs or considering a referendum to the County voters to financially support farmland preservation efforts. The County can also explore whether the program could offer protections with different time increments that still protect the land for decades.

*Timing: Within 5 years*

*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*

### **PI-8 Continue Countywide Economic Development Recruitment.**

Support countywide recruitment of new businesses and expansion of existing businesses through the Iredell EDC. Efforts that could be pursued or continued by the EDC include:

- Enlisting a marketing firm to create a professional county-wide marketing plan to illustrate the various quality of life characteristics noted above that are located throughout the county.
- Creating a digital infrastructure map that highlights the existence of Broadband throughout the county, including the providers (TDS, Spectrum, Kinetic, AT & T, etc)
- Building on quality of life and workforce development programs (including the new "Iredell Ready" collaboration between public and educational organizations.
- Developing a cluster analysis to include industry segments and occupational skills to fill the needs of existing business and industry, as well as identifying those sectors where skills exist and are transferable – for more diversification and expansion.

*Timing: Ongoing*

*Agency or Partner. Iredell County Economic Development Corporation*



**PI-9 *Coordinate Travel and Tourism Organizations to Create Unified or Complementary Promotion of the Area.***

Travel and tourism organizations, including existing convention and visitors bureaus, should pursue unified or complimentary branding and promotion of Iredell County. The organizations should consider opportunities for a shared website that serves as a landing page for potential visitors, across the County.

The coordinated organizations can share duties as facilitators for the North Carolina Tourism Extension, which would build on the success and support the Agricultural extension already enjoys in Iredell County.

Even if a single unified marketing effort is not pursued, smaller steps that ensure greater coordination between the existing entities (or even with a new unincorporated area entity) are also beneficial.

The coordinated travel and tourism organizations could create agri-tourism strategies that support economic development efforts in the rural areas while bringing visitors to these areas to appreciate the cultural heritage and recreational assets. This could include wineries, breweries, distilleries and other food and beverage related products (e.g. farm stands, farmers markets). The organizations could also partner on strategies to accommodate visitors without the effect of additional short term rentals on neighborhoods.

***Timing: Within 5 years***

***Agency or Partner. Convention and Visitors Bureaus***

**PI-10 *Coordinate with County Water Providers to Facilitate a Voluntary Monitoring of Countywide Capacity.***

Water is the utility in Iredell County with the highest number of providers. Understanding the overall capacity of available water systems pulling from surface and groundwater is relevant to planning for growth management in the County, but difficult to assemble. Invite providers to participate in a voluntary accounting of available resources and general ongoing discussions on the needs and challenges with providing water to County residents.

***Timing: Within 2 to 5 years and ongoing***  
***Agency or Partner. Planning & Development Department; municipalities and County water suppliers (including Iredell Water and West Iredell Water Company)***

**PI-11 *Develop a Countywide Facilities Asset Map and Database.***

It can be difficult to identify appropriate sites for public facilities, or funding sources to purchase them. To plan and use resources effectively across jurisdictions, departments and programs, the County will develop and maintain a complete map and list of land and facilities owned by public entities, including Iredell County, Iredell-Statesville Schools, municipalities, and the state. The database should identify the owners of public lands and the potential identified uses for sites. The database should be shared with County departments and agencies and key partners to identify highest and best use of properties. In some situations, there may be opportunities for shared



uses across jurisdictions, such as co-located fire and EMS station. A further analysis of the database could include whether some of the sites could be sold to generate funds to purchase land or construct capital facilities that are needed elsewhere. Efficiency can be gained by swapping land or repurposing land already within public control, or co-locating or subdividing larger sites for multiple purposes.

**Timing:** *Within 5 years and ongoing*  
**Agency or Partner:** *Facilities Services, Planning & Development, and other Departments; Iredell Statesville Schools, public safety offices, and municipalities*

### **PI-12** *Coordinate with Municipalities on Sports and Parks.*

Park facilities are a benefit to residents and can serve as a key piece of the outdoor recreation economy. Starting from the Iredell County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and similar plans in the municipalities, move forward as a region toward more complete park offerings. Consider whether a new facility, such as an aquatic venue or a set of ball fields could position the County well to host state and regional competitions or meets. Consider how the County Parks and Recreation Department can help recruit and market these events. Also consider how to best use and market the fairgrounds.

**Timing:** *Within 5 years and ongoing*  
**Agency or Partner:** *Parks & Recreation and Facilities Services Departments, ; Iredell Statesville Schools, Convent and Visitor's Bureaus, and municipalities.*

### **PI-13** *Coordinate with Duke Energy on Supporting Lakefront Recreation and Lake Access.*

Duke Energy hosts programs that assist private individuals and civic organizations in placing recreation facilities along Lake Norman. Support efforts to create parkland or campgrounds on Lake Norman within Iredell County. Though there may be some docks and boat ramps as well, supported programs should have a clear public component that provides recreation along the shore itself as well as access onto the Lake.

**Timing:** *Within 2 to 5 years and ongoing*  
**Agency or Partner:** *Parks & Recreation and Planning & Development Departments; civic organizations*