

Town of Wilkesboro

Wilkesboro Tomorrow

Comprehensive Land Use Plan



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Section One Introduction

Businesses and individuals make plans every day. Local governments often do the same – making plans for future town services, events and overall growth. Making plans say a couple of things about a place; 1) There is belief in and hope in a tomorrow, and 2) a belief that a positive difference can be made for the future. By planning, a municipality has determined change is occurring and a course of action must be calculated to develop the way it desires to grow. Planning is like going on a trip – you need to know where you are going, and a road map (or plan) to get there.

A few good reasons to plan:

- A good, clearly articulated plan forms the basis of a community's vision of its future. Without it, regulatory controls can be legally challenged as arbitrary.
- A good plan ensures that a community can provide services like police, fire, and refuse collection efficiently while maintaining a relatively low tax rate for its citizens.
- A good planning process involves a wide variety of citizens and interests. Once a community reaches consensus, the vision created in the plan can make future decision-making easier and less politically charged.
- Resources provided by state and federal governments are increasingly tied to good plans and planning processes. Highway funds, water and sewer grants, and environmental clean-up funding is easier to bring to your community if you have a well-crafted plan that shows extensive community involvement.

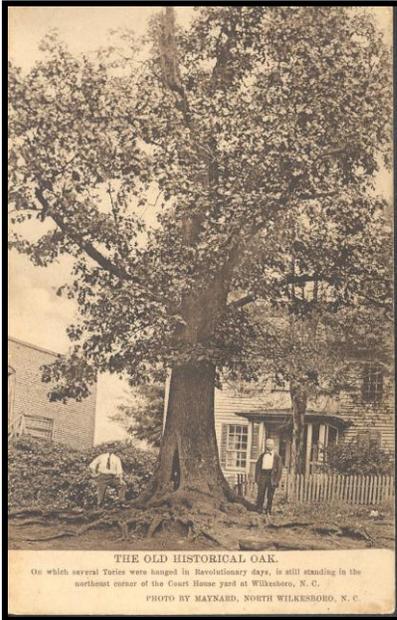
Source: *NCAPA Citizen Planner Training Materials*

It is important for local governments to be visionary and attempt to forecast future conditions and plan accordingly. This land use plan does exactly that. It looks at past and current development trends, analyzes demographic and economic data, captures a vision of what the community desires to be, and presents a plan of action to accomplish community desires in 2027 – a 20 year vision of what the future may hold for the Town of Wilkesboro.

What does the future hold for the Town of Wilkesboro? No one knows for sure. No one can predict how the Town will function and what it will look like in 20 years. As you read this plan, how do you think the Town should develop over the next two decades? Take a look at the following pages in this plan. Does it describe a future for Wilkesboro that you desire? Hopefully, this plan will inspire you and Town leaders to build a stronger and more prosperous Town. It is just a plan. It is just a vision. Without action to implement, it will be just that – a plan on a shelf. With committed leadership it can help guide the future growth of the Town of Wilkesboro.

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Section Two Town of Wilkesboro History



The ancestors of generations of Wilkesboro citizens came to the North Carolina backcountry seeking better lives and more freedom than they had ever known. Before 1730, only an occasional white hunter or Indian trader was to be found in the vast backcountry of North Carolina. However, around the middle of the century the flow of people to the backcountry became a rapid stream. A large factor in this migration was the Great Wagon Road that ran from Pennsylvania to Georgia. This route was an ancient trading path used by the Indians of the north to come south to trade or make war in Virginia or the Carolinas.

The chief reason for the massive movement of population was economic. Areas of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania had begun to see rising land costs and soil depletion that motivated these pioneers to search for fertile, cheaper land elsewhere. However, some of the pioneers were dissenters who came to this unsettled area seeking religious freedom from the established Anglican Church. The settlers were a heterogeneous group, often distinguished by place of origin.

The area around Wilkesboro saw mostly Scots-Irish, German, and English settlers. The Scots-Irish and Germans mostly came down the Great Wagon Road, while the English arrived by routes from every direction.

As the North Carolina backcountry became settled, there arose a need for greater political structure. Among other functions, county courts at that time had jurisdiction in civil cases, could certify deeds, wills, or bills of sale, and could record the marks and brands of cattle. In addition, the court regulated local businesses by granting licenses and fixing rates. However, during the 1750's and 1760's this area was part of Rowan County, with the county seat a great distance away. In 1771, when Surry County was created from Rowan, the seat of local government was made more accessible for people in this area. However, by 1777, a group of petitioners, led by Benjamin Cleveland, attended the North Carolina Assembly to point out the "grievous and burthensome problems" created by the sheer distance to attend court in Surry County. The delegation succeeded in having a separate and distinct county formed.

The place where the new Wilkes County Court would choose to meet was first known as Mulberry Fields. Early Baptists had built the Mulberry Fields Meeting House on the south side of a hill above the Yadkin River, and justices decided to use the old wooden structure as a temporary courthouse. The justices had made a rather logical choice because the site was a low, flat ridge rising above the Yadkin and the "bottomlands" of the river were rich in alluvial soils.

In 1799, the North Carolina General Assembly appointed a committee headed by Thomas Fields, a surveyor, to acquire 50 acres around the temporary courthouse to provide land for a permanent courthouse and other official county buildings and to organize the Town. The Wilkes County Court, chaired by General William Lenoir, a hero of the Battle of Kings Mountain, took the Fields committee deeds and divided the land into a grid of streets and lots with a public

square in the middle for the courthouse and public facilities. The lots were sold in May 1800, and Wilkesboro was formed in the same general shape we know today - a courthouse square, Main Street, and a downtown bordered by North, South, East and West Streets. Bridge Street led to the main highway into Town. General Lenoir's streets, going in four directions from the courthouse, defined lots for homes and businesses. There already was a post office, named Wilkes, opened in 1793, which became Wilkesborough, later changed to Wilkesboro. In 1847, the Town of Wilkesboro was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly.



The Town served as a center of law, government, and trade for most of the nineteenth century while it grew in a slow, but steady, manner. This entire area remained relatively untouched by the American Civil War. Rapid growth and industrialization were stifled during this time by a lack of adequate transportation (i.e., a railroad) within the County. Ironically, when the railroad came to this part of the County in 1890, it was a mixed blessing for Wilkesboro. The railroad ran on the north side of the Yadkin, across the river from Wilkesboro. Instead of Wilkesboro realizing the full benefit of this new

transportation system, an entirely new town, North Wilkesboro, developed around the depot. This new Town became the primary commercial and industrial area of the county, while Wilkesboro maintained its character as the center of government and law.

Wilkesboro business and industry grew from very modest beginnings - general merchandising, farm and wood products, pottery, and tobacco. Growth and change in Wilkesboro remained slow up to and even after the Second World War. However, the second half of the twentieth century saw a rather dramatic change from this earlier pattern. Textiles and poultry are two industries that became large employers during this time. At least one of those industries, Holly Farms (now Tyson) continues to be the largest employer in this community. The year 1965 also saw the opening of Wilkes Community College (WCC) on the west side of Town. The area on this side of Town has since seen substantial development.



A significant move for the Town of Wilkesboro took place in 1977 when the Town limits crossed to the north side of the Yadkin River. The Town annexed an area that was the eventual site of Wilkes Mall. This site lay along US Highway 421, a route connecting the piedmont to the mountains. Since that foothold was established, other annexations have taken place in that area and it has seen tremendous commercial development. It is now the commercial center of the county with national retailers and franchises. This corridor along US 421 will only continue to grow since the highway has been widened from two to four lanes along its entire route through Wilkes County.

In spite of its dramatic growth in the past half century, Wilkesboro continues to serve its original purpose as the governmental center of Wilkes County. The Town contains both the Wilkes County Courthouse and the Johnson J. Hayes Federal Building. However, Wilkesboro has also established itself as an educational, cultural, retail, and industrial center of the County. Wilkes Community College has flourished and is recognized for its excellent educational and cultural opportunities. Wilkesboro has been impacted the last few years with the loss of manufacturing jobs. In spite of this, industries located in Wilkesboro, such as Tyson, East Coast Millworks, Lowe's Companies, and Key City Furniture continue to provide a significant number of jobs for the surrounding area.

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Section Three Background Research

The development of a land use plan first requires that analysis of certain key growth factors be performed. The intent of the analysis is to insure that policies contained in the plan address current problems, trends, and issues facing the planning area.

When combined with information provided by the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Committee and the citizenry, a solid foundation for planning is established. The key growth factors included for analysis are discussed in the following subject areas within the Wilkesboro Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

- Population
- Housing
- Economy
- Infrastructure
- Environment and Land Suitability
- Community Resources
- Current Land Use and Development Policies

Collectively, these key growth factors summarize past and present conditions, while providing the essential yardsticks for estimating future conditions in the planning area.

For the purpose of analysis, Wilkesboro is compared with the municipalities of Elkin (Surry County), North Wilkesboro, and Yadkinville (Yadkin County), as well as Wilkes County and the State of North Carolina.

POPULATION

To better understand the characteristics of population, a thorough identification of the current and future conditions of the population needed to be completed. This data has been compiled into tables and analyzed in the tables and paragraphs that follow.

Size and Historical Growth of Population

The Town of Wilkesboro has had slow but steady growth over the last 116 years. The largest percentage increase in the Town's population occurred between the first two decennial censuses where there are actual population figures for the Town of Wilkesboro (1890 and 1900) when the Town's population nearly doubled from 336 to 635 residents. Substantial increases in the Town's population also occurred between 1900 and 1910 (25.82%), 1920 and 1930 (28.00%), 1930 and 1940 (25.62%), 1960 and 1970 (29.97%) and 1980 and 1990 (26.93%). In recent years, Wilkesboro has seen very little growth.

Comparing Wilkesboro's growth in the 20th century to the comparison jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has not had the dramatic surges in population that both Elkin and North

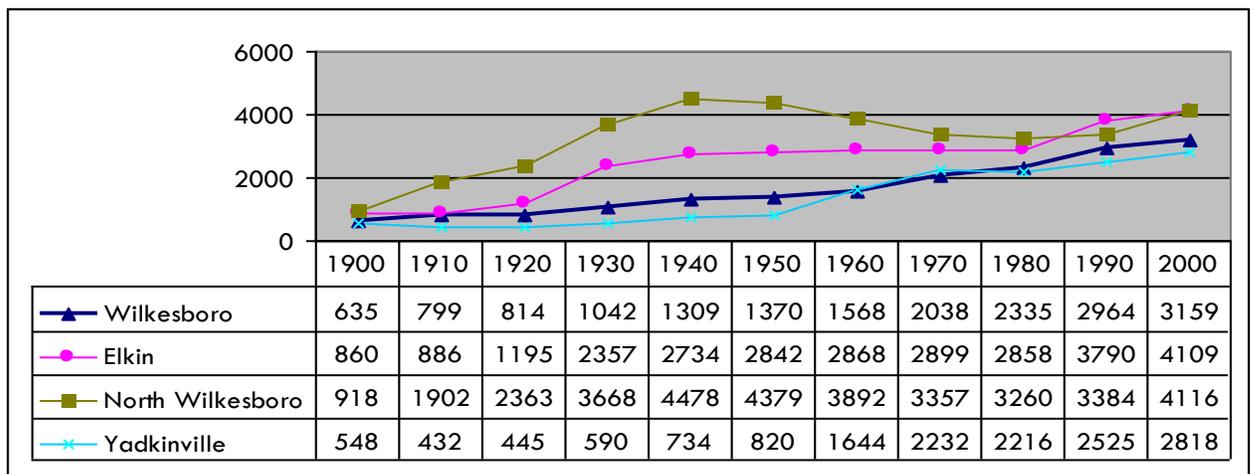
Wilkesboro saw in the 1920's and Yadkinville experienced in the 1950's. Unlike the comparison municipalities, Wilkesboro has not witnessed a decline in population from one decennial census to the next.

Figure 3.1 Population Figures for Town of Wilkesboro with Numerical and Percent Change (1890 – 2006)

Year	Population	Numerical Change	Percent Change
1890	336	-----	-----
1900	635	299	88.98%
1910	799	164	25.82%
1920	814	15	1.87%
1930	1,042	228	28.00%
1940	1,309	267	25.62%
1950	1,370	61	4.66%
1960	1,568	198	14.45%
1970	2,038	470	29.97%
1980	2,335	297	14.57%
1990	2,964	629	26.93%
2000	3,159	195	6.57%
2006	3,195*	36	1.13%

Source: US Census and NC State Data Center
 * 2006 Estimate

Figure 3.2 Town of Wilkesboro's Growth vs. Comparison Municipalities



Source: US Census

Population Projections

It is very difficult to predict the population of any municipality due to the unpredictability of potential annexations and the local, regional and national economy. Population projections indicate that the Town of Wilkesboro may add 292 persons (3,451 total population) to its population by 2030. This projection is based on the assumption that Wilkesboro will continue to grow at the rate it is growing as compared to the County's 2030 growth projections.

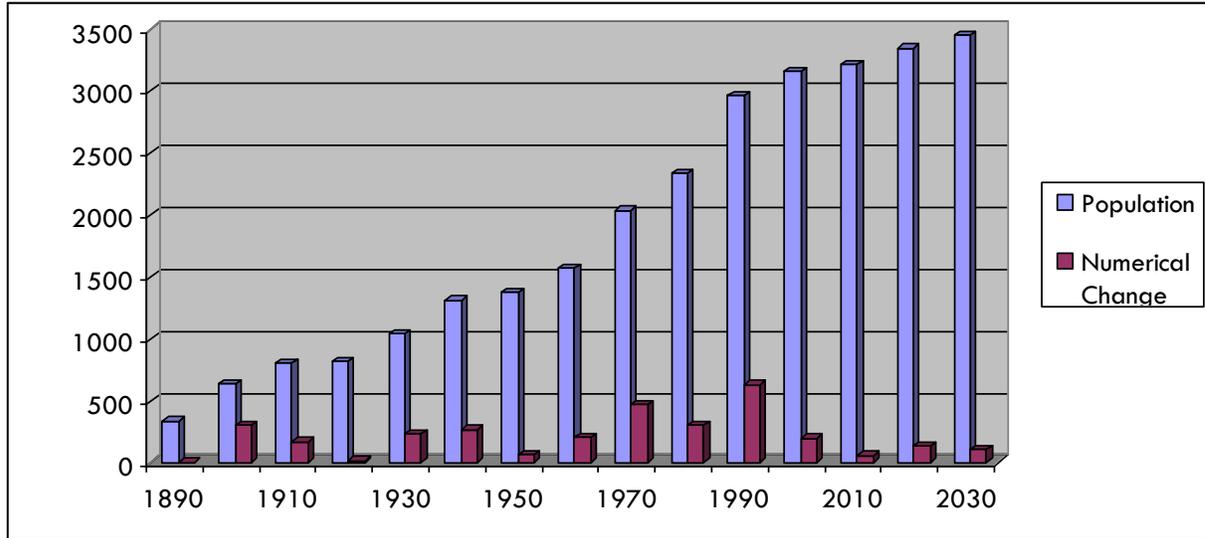
The main projection method used is the constant-share projection. Constant-share projections assume that the entity being studied accounts for a portion of the reference region's growth. The constant-share formula reads as follows for the 2010-2030 Town population projections:

$$\text{Wilkesboro pop. (2010)} = \frac{\text{Wilkesboro pop. (2006)}}{\text{Wilkes County pop. (2006)}} \times \text{Wilkes County pop. (2010)}$$

The NC Office of State Planning population estimates for 2006 were used as the base year comparisons. The 2006 total population for the Town was 3,159, while the county population was 67,310. The Town population was divided by the county population to find the constant-share ratio. Next, the ratio figure is multiplied by the projected county population to arrive at the projected population of the Town.

For comparison purposes, the Wilkesboro total population was also projected using a linear projection method. The growth rate observed from 1990 to 2000 was used to calculate the growth rate through 2030 as well. The total projected population, using the linear growth rate for 2030 is 3,824 – an increase of 665 persons. Neither of these methods takes into consideration actions that the Town of Wilkesboro could undertake that would substantially alter these numbers such as pursuing the annexation of several neighborhoods and communities adjacent to the current Town limits.

Figure 3.3 Population Figures and Projections for Town of Wilkesboro with Numerical and Percent Change (1890 – 2030)



Sources: US Census and NC State Data Center

Figure 3.4 Population Projections for the Town of Wilkesboro Using Linear and Constant-Share Methods

Year	Population – Linear Method	Population – Constant Share Method	County Projected Growth
2000 (Actual)	3,159	3,159	65,632
2006 (Est.)	3,195	3,195	67,310
2010	3,367	3,216	67,849
2020	3,588	3,348	70,627
2030	3,824	3,451	72,812

Sources: US Census and NC State Data Center

Population, Land Area, Density and Growth Rate

Of the four comparison municipalities, Wilkesboro has the second lowest population at 3,178 persons which is larger than only Yadkinville, but has the second largest land area with 5.52 square miles behind only Elkin. Of the comparison municipalities, Wilkesboro has the lowest population density with 572.28 people per square mile. By comparison, Yadkinville has a population density of 1,036.03 persons per square mile while Wilkes County has only 88.35 persons per square mile.

Figure 3.5 Comparison of Population, Land Area, Population Density and Growth Rate

	Population (2005)	Land Area – 2000 (sq. miles)	Pop. Density – 2000 (sq. miles)	Growth Rate, 1990-2000
Wilkesboro	3,178	5.52	572.28	6.57%
Elkin	4,175	6.27	655.6	8.4%
N. Wilkesboro	4,168	5.12	803.9	21.6%
Yadkinville	2,809	2.72	1,036.03	11.6%
Wilkes Co.	66,897	757.19	88.35	10.5%
N. Carolina	8,682,066	48,710.88	165.20	21.4%

Sources: US Census and NC State Data Center

Age Groups

Wilkesboro's overall population characteristics had some significant changes in the decade between 1990 and 2000. As a percentage of the population, all of the age groups less than 44 years old maintained a very similar percentage of the Town's total population while the actual number of persons in these age groups went up to correspond with the increase in the Town's population. There was a significant increase in the number of persons between 45 and 54 both as a percentage of the total population (10.07% to 14.09%) and the percentage of persons in this age category (41.80%). The 55-64 age category was the only segment of the population that declined in both actual numbers of persons (313 to 269) and as a percentage of the population.

Figure 3.6 Town of Wilkesboro Population by Age Groups, 1990 & 2000

Age in Years	1990 Population	% of Population in 1990	Population 2000	% of Population in 2000	% Change of Residents in Age Group 1990 – 2000
Under 18	524	20.37%	641	20.29%	18.25%
19-24	193	7.50%	243	7.69%	20.58%
25-34	336	13.06%	380	12.03%	11.58%
35-44	320	12.44%	428	13.55%	25.23%
45-54	259	10.07%	445	14.09%	41.80%
55-64	313	12.16%	269	8.52%	-16.36%
65-74	262	10.18%	328	10.38%	20.12%
75-84	237	9.21%	265	8.39%	10.57%
85 and over	129	5.01%	160	5.06%	19.38%
Totals	2573	100.00%	3159	100.00%	

Source: US Census

Figure 3.7 Comparison of Age by Range – Wilkesboro and Comparison Jurisdictions

	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+
Wilkesboro	16.7%	11.3%	25.5%	22.6%	23.8%
Elkin	18.4%	10.8%	26.8%	20.3%	23.6%
North Wilkesboro	20.7%	13.0%	29.1%	20.4%	16.8%
Yadkinville	19.7%	11.5%	27.2%	20.3%	21.3%
Wilkes County	18.9%	11.6%	29.7%	25.7%	14.1%
North Carolina	20.5%	13.9%	31.1%	22.5%	12.0%

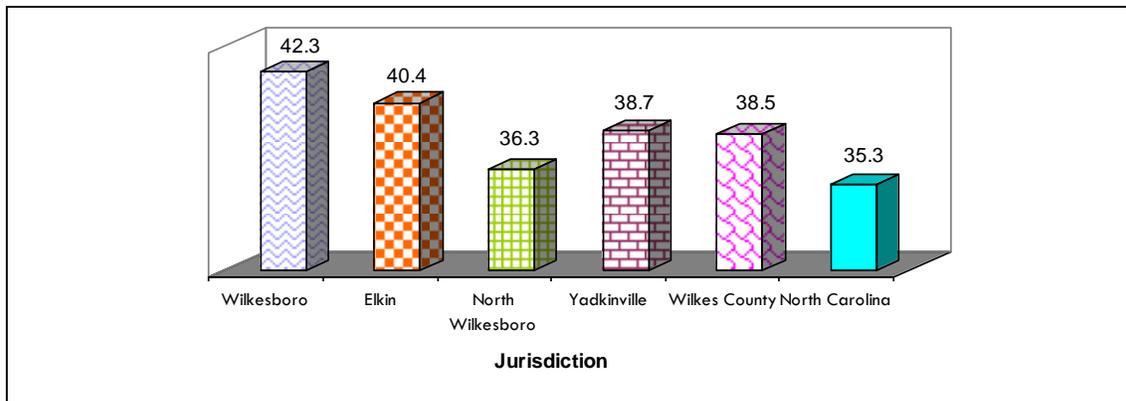
Source: US Census

Median Age

Median Age is defined by the Census Bureau as the measure that divides the age distribution into two equal parts: one-half the cases falling below the median value and one-half above.

As of the 2000 Census, Wilkesboro’s median age was 42.3, 3.8 years higher than Wilkes County’s median age of 38.5 and 7 years higher than North Carolina’s median age of 35.3. Among the comparison municipalities, Wilkesboro has the highest median age by almost two years over Elkin (40.4) and six years higher than North Wilkesboro’s median age of 36.3.

Figure 3.8 Comparison of Median Age – Wilkesboro and Comparison Jurisdictions



Source: US Census

Race

The majority of Wilkesboro's population is white. Wilkesboro's minority population accounted for only 14.62% of the Town's population in 2000 and only 12.51% of the Town's population in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000 there was an increase in the number of persons of all races, but a percentage increase in only the Native American, Asian, and Other Race populations.

Figure 3.10 Wilkesboro Racial Composition – 1990 and 2000

Race	1990 Number	1990 Percentage	2000 Number	2000 Percentage	Percent Change 1990-2000
White	2,251	87.49%	2,697	85.38%	-2.11%
Black	283	11.00%	310	9.81%	-1.19
Native American	0	0.00%	6	0.19%	0.19%
Asian	23	0.89%	86	2.72%	1.83%
Other Race(s)	16	0.62%	60	1.90%	1.28%
Totals	2,573	100.00%	3,159	100.00%	

Source: US Census

Educational Attainment

The Town of Wilkesboro's educational attainment levels are above state averages in the most widely used indicators: percentage of persons 25 years old and over with a high school diploma (81.7% vs. 78.1% for all of North Carolina) and percentage of persons 25 years old and over with a bachelor's degree (26.2% vs. 22.5% for all of North Carolina).

In comparing Wilkesboro's educational attainment levels with those of the comparison jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has a significantly lower percentage of residents without a high school diploma at 18.3% than any of the other jurisdictions including the percentage for all of North Carolina. Wilkesboro also has the highest percentage of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher at 26.2%. In contrast, only 9.9% of Yadkinville's residents and 11.3% of Wilkes County's residents had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Figure 3.11 Town of Wilkesboro vs. NC Educational Attainment, 2000

Persons 25 Years Old and Over	Wilkesboro	North Carolina
Less than 9 th Grade Education	10.5%	7.8%
9 th to 12 th Grade, No Diploma	7.8%	14.0%
High School Graduate	27.5%	28.4%
Some College, No Degree	19.0%	20.5%
Associate Degree	9.0%	6.8%
Bachelor's Degree	16.6%	15.3%
Graduate or Professional Degree	9.7%	7.2%
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	81.7%	78.1%
Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	26.2%	22.5%

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure 3.12 Educational Attainment for Persons 25 and older in Wilkesboro & Comparison Areas

	% Without a High School Diploma	% With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Wilkesboro	18.3%	26.2%
Elkin	31.5%	25.3%
N. Wilkesboro	36.7%	18.5%
Yadkinville	39.2%	9.9%
Wilkes County	34.0%	11.3%
North Carolina	21.9%	22.5%

Source: 2000 US Census

Transportation

96.7% of Wilkesboro residents in the workforce drive to work with 83.9% driving alone and 12.8% reporting that they carpool. 3.3% of the workforce walk to work or work at home. No workers reported using any form of public transportation.

Figure 3.13 Method of Travel to Work

Transportation Method	% of All Workers
Drove Alone	83.9%
Carpool	12.8%
Public Transportation	0.0%
Walked	0.7%
Other Means	0.0%
Worked at Home	2.6%

Source: 2000 US Census

41.8% of Wilkesboro residents in the workforce have a commute time less than 10 minutes. 89.5% of Wilkesboro residents in the workforce have a commute time less than 25 minutes and only 6.1% have a commute time more than 45 minutes. The average travel time to work for persons in Wilkesboro is 13.7 minutes.

Figure 3.14 Commute Times for Those Who Work Outside the Home

Less than 10 minutes	41.8
10 to 14 minutes	26.9
15 to 19 minutes	16.0
20 to 24 minutes	4.8
25 to 29 minutes	1.4
30 to 34 minutes	2.4
35 to 44 minutes	0.5
45 to 59 minutes	3.3
60 to 89 minutes	1.8
90 or more minutes	1.0
Mean Travel Time to Work (minutes)	13.7

Source: 2000 US Census

Income

The median household income for Wilkesboro in 1999 was \$40,982, which was higher than North Carolina and all other comparison jurisdictions. Among the comparison municipalities, Elkin had the next highest median household income at \$31,698. Wilkesboro's per capita income of \$24,300 and median family income of \$53,355 are also significantly higher than any of the other comparison jurisdictions.

Figure 3.15 Income – Wilkesboro and Comparison Jurisdictions

	Median Household Income (in 1999 dollars)	Median Family Income (in 1999 dollars)	Per Capita Income (in 1999 dollars)
Wilkesboro	\$40,982	\$53,355	\$24,300
Elkin	\$31,698	\$38,667	\$21,123
North Wilkesboro	\$22,813	\$29,844	\$14,594
Yadkinville	\$31,250	\$45,000	\$14,792
Wilkes County	\$34,258	\$40,607	\$17,516
North Carolina	\$39,184	\$46,335	\$20,307

Source: 2000 US Census

Poverty

According to the Census Bureau **poverty status** is defined by family – either everyone in the family is in poverty or no one in the family is in poverty. The characteristics of the family used to determine poverty status are number of people, number of related children under 18, and whether the primary householder is over the age of 65. An income threshold is determined given a particular family's set of characteristics; if that family's income is below that threshold, the family is in poverty.

The poverty rate for all persons in Wilkesboro is 11.6%, which is 0.3% lower than the rate for Wilkes County and 0.7% lower than the North Carolina average of 12.3% as well as the other comparison municipalities. Wilkesboro's 14.4% poverty rate for children is higher than both Elkin (10.6%) and Wilkes County (13.2%), but is lower than North Wilkesboro (23.2%), Yadkinville (19.1%) and North Carolina's rate of 15.7%. Wilkesboro's 9.4% poverty rate for persons aged 65 and older is the lowest among all the comparison municipalities, Wilkes County and the statewide rate 13.2%.

Figure 3.16 Poverty Comparison – Wilkesboro and Comparison Jurisdictions

	All Persons	Children (0-17)	Elderly (65+)
Wilkesboro	11.6%	14.4%	9.4%
Elkin	12.6%	10.6%	18.5%
North Wilkesboro	21.2%	23.2%	27.2%
Yadkinville	14.4%	19.1%	13.9%
Wilkes County	11.9%	13.2%	17.2%
North Carolina	12.3%	15.7%	13.2%

Source: 2000 US Census

HOUSING

To provide a brief picture of the housing conditions within the Town, a brief housing analysis was performed. While the actual median value of housing units in Wilkesboro has probably increased since 2000, the 2000 median value still has meaning when comparing Wilkesboro to comparable jurisdictions. Of the comparable jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has the highest median home value at \$112,500 which is significantly higher than the comparable municipalities and is higher than even the North Carolina median home value.

Wilkesboro's homeownership rate of 57.4% is 12.0% lower than the state percentage of 69.4% and 13.6% lower than Wilkes County's homeownership rate while it is higher than the homeownership rates of Elkin (55.9%) and North Wilkesboro (41.0%).

Figure 3.17 Homeownership Rates & Housing Values, 2000

	% of Owner Occupied Units	Median Value
Wilkesboro	57.4%	\$112,500
Elkin	55.9%	\$91,100
North Wilkesboro	41.0%	\$84,400
Yadkinville	67.8%	\$86,100
Wilkes County	71.0%	\$89,200
North Carolina	69.4%	\$108,300

Source: 2000 US Census

Of the 1,382 housing units in Wilkesboro in 2000, 1,305 of them were occupied. This translates to an occupancy rate of 94.4% which is the highest percentage of all the comparable jurisdictions. Wilkesboro's occupancy rate is 5.5% higher than the statewide rate of 88.9% and is 8.4% higher than the rate for Wilkes County.

Of all the comparable jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has the smallest average household size with only 2.16 persons per household. This average household size translates to one-third less of a person per household than the statewide average of 2.49.

Figure 3.18 Occupancy Rates and Average Household Size, 2000

	Houses	Occupied	% Occupied	Avg. Household Size
Wilkesboro	1,382	1,305	94.4%	2.16
Elkin	1,854	1,690	91.4%	2.32
North Wilkesboro	1,837	1,639	89.2%	2.25
Yadkinville	1,026	959	93.5%	2.51
Wilkes County	30,478	26,290	86.0%	2.53
North Carolina	3,523,944	3,132,013	88.9%	2.49

Source: 2000 US Census

Housing Affordability

For the majority of Wilkesboro's property owners, monthly owner costs do not exceed 15% of their monthly household income. 85.7% of Wilkesboro's homeowners pay less than 35% of their monthly household income toward their monthly costs. In comparison to other jurisdictions these are very high percentages. This indicates that for most Wilkesboro residents the costs of homeownership are very low. For the 12.1% of the population that is spending 35% or more of their monthly income on their monthly owner costs, homeownership is not so affordable. However, this percentage is still a lower percentage than all of the other comparable jurisdictions.

Figure 3.19 Monthly Owner Costs as Percentage of Household Income

	Less than 15%	15 – 19%	20 – 24%	25 – 29%	30 -34%	35% or more
Wilkesboro	60.1%	16.4%	6.8%	2.4%	1.1%	12.1%
Elkin	43.2%	13.2%	10.1%	12.3%	5.6%	14.4%
North Wilkesboro	46.5%	15.5%	3.5%	13.7%	1.9%	17.9%
Yadkinville	39.8%	15.2%	18.2%	8.0%	5.4%	13.4%
Wilkes County	46.6%	16.2%	10.8%	8.2%	3.7%	12.4%
North Carolina	37.7%	17.7%	13.8%	9.1%	5.7%	15.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

For the majority of Wilkesboro residents who rent where they live, rental costs are also low in comparison to their household income. 74.5% of renters in Wilkesboro pay less than 35% of their monthly household income on rental costs. Compared to the other jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has the lowest percentage of persons paying 35% or more of their household income for their monthly rental costs and seems to indicate that rental costs are affordable for most Wilkesboro residents who choose to rent.

Figure 3.20 Rental Costs as Percentage of Household Income

	Less than 15%	15 – 19%	20 – 24%	25 – 29%	30 -34%	35% or more
Wilkesboro	34.2%	7.5%	4.9%	17.8%	10.1%	15.6%
Elkin	18.3%	15.0%	11.6%	7.8%	5.3%	32.3%
North Wilkesboro	23.7%	14.7%	14.4%	10.1%	8.1%	18.1%
Yadkinville	28.2%	2.2%	15.2%	8.2%	7.9%	23.7%
Wilkes County	26.3%	13.0%	10.0%	8.5%	5.3%	18.7%
North Carolina	19.3%	14.5%	12.6%	9.6%	6.7%	26.7%

Source: 2000 US Census

Types of Housing

Wilkesboro has a pretty diverse mix of housing types when compared to the comparison jurisdictions. 65.8% of all housing units are single-family detached or attached housing units. This percentage is slightly lower than the state average of 67.4% and 12.4% lower than Yadkinville's rate of 78.2%. 28.8% of all housing units in Wilkesboro are located in buildings with at least 2 housing units which is considerably higher than the statewide rate 16.1% and Wilkes County's rate of 5.8%, but still less than North Wilkesboro's percentage of 36.2%. Among all the comparable jurisdictions, Wilkesboro has the lowest percentage of housing units that are manufactured homes at 5.0%.

Figure 3.21 Comparison of Structural Characteristics of All Housing Units

	Single-Family Detached or Attached Housing Units	Housing Units that are in Buildings with 2 or more units	Percentage of Housing Units that are Manufactured Homes	Percentage of Housing Units that are a Boat, RV, Van, etc.
Wilkesboro	65.8%	28.8%	5.0%	0.5%
Elkin	71.9%	20.7	7.4%	0.0%
North Wilkesboro	58.6%	36.2%	5.3%	0.0%
Yadkinville	78.2%	8.0%	13.8%	0.0%
Wilkes County	67.2%	5.8%	26.8%	0.3%
North Carolina	67.4%	16.1%	16.4%	0.2%

Source: 2000 US Census

Age of Housing

Unlike a lot of other jurisdictions in North Carolina, Wilkesboro's housing stock was constructed in pretty even amounts over most of the 20th century. The largest percentage of housing was constructed in the last two decades with 22.2% of all housing units constructed in the 1980's and 19.7% of all housing units built in the 1990's. As is typical in most communities throughout North Carolina, there was also a surge in construction in Wilkesboro following World War II when 19.3% of all housing units were built. Only 5.5% of housing units were built prior to 1939.

Figure 3.22 Year Structure Built in Wilkesboro

Year Structure Built	Number of Structures	% of Total Structures Built
1999 to March 2000	13	0.9%
1995 to 1998	197	13.6%
1990 to 1994	76	5.2%
1980 to 1989	321	22.2%
1970 to 1979	234	16.1%
1960 to 1969	250	17.3%
1940 to 1959	279	19.3%
1939 or Earlier	79	5.5%

Source: 2000 US Census

ECONOMY

Labor Force

The percentage of Wilkesboro residents over the age of 16 who are in the labor force has declined more than 10% since 1980. North Wilkesboro, Yadkinville and Wilkes County have also seen a modest decline in their percentages since 1980. North Carolina and Elkin both experienced an increase in the 1980's and a decline in the 1990's. Individuals who are over the age of 16 who are not in the labor force include retired persons, homemakers and the institutionalized.

Figure 3.23 Percentage of Persons 16 & Older in Labor Force in Wilkesboro & Comparison Jurisdictions

	1980	1990	2000
Wilkesboro	66.5%	57.2%	56.4%
Elkin	52.3%	58.8%	55.3%
North Wilkesboro	60.8%	55.1%	52.2%
Yadkinville	60.3%	55.6%	54.1%
Wilkes County	66.0%	65.8%	62.8%
North Carolina	62.1%	67.6%	65.7%

Source: 2000 US Census

Employment

More than one-fourth (25.1%) of all Wilkesboro persons who work are employed in the educational, health and social services sector. In 2000, 22.7% of Wilkesboro persons who work worked in the manufacturing sector. 15.9% of working residents worked in retail trade while 8.2% of residents worked in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service employment sector.

Figure 3.24 Employment by Industry Sector in Wilkesboro, 2000

Industry	# of Employees	% of Total Employed
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	14	0.9%
Construction	49	3.2%
Manufacturing	346	22.7%
Wholesale Trade	38	2.5%
Retail Trade	242	15.9%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	48	3.1%
Information	7	0.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing	61	4.0%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management Services	97	6.4%
Educational, Health and Social Services	383	25.1%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services	125	8.2%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	61	4.0%
Public Administration	53	3.5%

Source: 2000 US Census

Manufacturing Sector

The data below from the three most recent US Economic Censuses provides a view of the recent changes in the manufacturing sector in Wilkesboro and the comparison jurisdictions. Between 1992 and 2002, Wilkesboro has seen the number of establishments drop from 34 to 32 and the number of employees in the manufacturing sector drop from 4,274 in 1997 to 4,187 in 2002, while the dollar amount of sales, shipments and receipts increased in the ten-year period. In comparison to the other municipalities, Wilkesboro fared very well in this ten-year period. Yadkinville experienced a loss of 1,365 manufacturing jobs between 1997 and 2002 and more than a \$567 million decline in shipments, sales and receipts.

Figure 3.25 Number of Manufacturing Establishments, Employees, Annual Payroll and Shipments, Sales and Receipts in Wilkesboro & Comparison Jurisdictions

	Year	# of Establishments	# of Employees	Shipments/ Sales/ Receipts (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Wilkesboro	2002	32	4,187	\$873,237	\$95,125
	1997	33	4,274	\$544,484	\$86,397
	1992	34	N/A	\$535,600	\$105,100
Elkin	2002	15	1000-2499	Withheld	Withheld
	1997	17	2,244	\$218,649	\$44,472
	1992	11	N/A	\$176,600	\$48,200
North Wilkesboro	2002	25	1,549	\$201,014	\$42,036
	1997	35	2,914	\$290,451	\$59,056
	1992	37	N/A	\$196,900	\$53,300
Yadkinville	2002	9	1,014	\$124,247	\$30,572
	1997	13	2,834	\$691,831	\$72,509
	1992	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wilkes County	2002	98	6,656	\$1,316,935	\$167,534
	1997	108	8,082	\$1,081,153	\$168,069
	1992	118	9,800	\$896,800	\$176,600

Source: US Economic Census

Retail Sector

Upon examination of the retail sector of Wilkesboro and the comparison jurisdictions between 1992 and 2002 the number of establishments and number of employees has declined in all jurisdictions except Yadkinville. Wilkesboro saw the number of retail establishments decline from 120 to 65 between 1992 and 2002 and the number of employees in the retail sector decline from 1,542 in 1997 to 1,229 in 2002. While the annual payroll increased from \$18,222 to \$23,339 in Wilkesboro between 1992 and 2002, the dollar amount of sales increased from \$157,488 in 1992 to \$235,763 in 1997, but then dropped to \$218,459 in 2002.

Figure 3.26 Retail Sector in Wilkesboro vs. Comparison Jurisdictions – 1992, 1997 & 2002

	Year	# of Establishments	# of Employees	Shipments/ Sales/ Receipts (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Wilkesboro	2002	65	1,229	\$218,459	\$23,339
	1997	86	1,542	\$235,763	\$20,902
	1992	120	N/A	\$157,483	\$18,222
Elkin	2002	67	985	\$164,437	\$16,423
	1997	69	1,773	\$149,659	\$15,736
	1992	87	N/A	\$102,732	\$12,044
North Wilkesboro	2002	95	818	\$177,160	\$15,124
	1997	106	1,036	\$165,460	\$15,441
	1992	132	N/A	\$126,302	\$13,158
Yadkinville	2002	43	350	\$67,148	\$5,626
	1997	29	315	\$55,122	\$4,729
	1992	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wilkes County	2002	248	2,637	\$511,313	\$49,138
	1997	259	2,906	\$458,624	\$41,252
	1992	330	3,395	\$340,801	\$36,682

Source: US Economic Census

Service Sector

Between 1997 and 2002, Wilkesboro also experienced some changes in its service sector. There were increases in the number of real estate and leasing establishments, professional, scientific and technical services, health care and social services and other services. The only category that experienced a decline in the number of establishments was the accommodation and food category. The number of employees in each of the service sector categories increased substantially, except the accommodation and food service category, which saw a loss of 254 jobs. With the exception of the health care and social assistance category all service sector categories saw increases in receipts. The annual payrolls for all categories of the service sector increased between 1997 and 2002.

Figure 3.27 Wilkesboro's Service Sector – 2002

	# of Establishments	# of Employees	Shipments/ Sales/ Receipts (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Real Estate & Leasing Services	18	77	\$12,741	\$1,995
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services ¹	33	226	\$13,375	\$5,836
Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services ²	12	107	\$3,781	\$1,465
Health Care & Social Assistance	30	579	\$13,492	\$30,101
Accommodation & Food Services	35	674	\$26,778	\$7,009
Other Services ³	22	112	\$14,744	\$2,437

Source: US Economic Census

¹ e.g., lawyers, architects, accountants, advertising, veterinarians

² e.g., temporary services, call centers, travel agencies, landscaping

³ e.g., auto repair, laundry services, beauty salons, photo-finishers

Figure 3.28 Wilkesboro's Service Sector – 1997

	# of Establishments	# of Employees	Shipments/ Sales/ Receipts (\$1,000)	Annual Payroll (\$1,000)
Real Estate & Leasing Services	12	46	\$4,668	\$595
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services ¹	28	141	\$6,599	\$2,257
Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services ²	12	51	\$2,440	\$655
Health Care & Social Assistance	19	462	\$19,183	\$7,845
Accommodation & Food Services	44	928	\$26,490	\$6,552
Other Services ³	15	48	\$1,868	\$524

Source: US Economic Census

- ¹ e.g., lawyers, architects, accountants, advertising, veterinarians
- ² e.g., temporary services, call centers, travel agencies, landscaping
- ³ e.g., auto repair, laundry services, beauty salons, photo-finishers

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure refers to the transportation and utility assets of a community that are deemed necessary for urban development. A community's infrastructure plays a large role in determining where development will occur and not occur. Property with convenient access to a transportation thoroughfare, adequate potable water and public sewer is much more valuable and has many more potential uses than a property without infrastructure. Wilkesboro, by operating a water and sewer system and influencing where roads and highways are built plays a huge role in determining where development will and will not occur.

Transportation

Town Streets. The Town of Wilkesboro owns and maintains approximately 27 miles of streets. All of these streets would be classified as either local or minor collector streets. The Town of Wilkesboro receives funds to maintain these streets from the State of North Carolina. These funds are referred to as Powell Bill funds. The Town is required to annually submit a map and list of streets that are maintained by the Town to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The current policy of the Town is that it will accept a street into the Town if it is built to NCDOT standards. These standards are meant to insure that the street will not become a liability to the Town.

State-Maintained Roads. A number of roads in Wilkesboro are not under the control of the Town, but instead that of NCDOT. In the Town of Wilkesboro, all of the State roads are major collectors, arterials, or freeways. Wilkesboro has several significant state-maintained thoroughfares that carry traffic into and out of Town: US Highway 421, NC Highway 16, and NC Highway 268. The State supplies information to municipalities regarding planned road projects by way of the Thoroughfare Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Also, the State periodically collects average daily traffic counts on the state-maintained roads around the area. Traffic count maps are available from the local DOT office.

Thoroughfare Plan. The latest Thoroughfare Plan was completed for the area in 1993. Due to the size of the area, the plan dealt with both Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro in one document. The thoroughfare plan is meant to guide the development of the urban street system based on anticipated growth and traffic demands. Some of the major recommended improvements and comments from the 1993 plan are:

- **NC 268 Bypass** – A proposed four-lane facility on mostly new location from the intersection of NC 18 and NC 268 to US 421 west of Wilkesboro.
- **Main Street (Wilkesboro) Relocation** – This is a proposed two-lane facility that allows traffic to bypass Main Street.
- **US 421 Bypass** – Widening and alignment improvements are already scheduled in the TIP (R-2239 & R-2240) that will improve the level of service for this major carrier of through traffic.
- **SR 1001 (Oakwoods Road)** – It is recommended that this road be widened to 24 feet.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The NCDOT publishes its schedule of transportation projects by way of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP covers a six-year time period and is updated every two years. The current TIP covers the years 2007-2013. Figure 3.29 lists the projects in the current TIP that impact Wilkesboro.

Figure 3.29 TIP Projects, 2007-2013

ID Number	Location	Description	Schedule
R-2207A	NC 16.	US 421 to Ashe Country line. Upgrade two lanes and add climbing Lanes.	Complete
R-4449	NC 268	End of five lane section west of Wilkesboro to 0.5 miles east of SR 1176. Widen to three lanes.	Under construction
U-5000	US 421 Business	US 421 Bypass to SR 1500, part on new location.	R.O.W. – Unfunded Construction - Unfunded
U-3468	US 421 Business	US 421 Bypass (Northern Option) NC 16 to the Yadkin River. Four-lane divided facility on new location.	R.O.W. – Unfunded Construction - Unfunded
R-616	NC 18/268	Wilkesboro – N. Wilkesboro Bypass, NC 18 to US 421. Multi-lane, part on new location.	R.O.W. – Unfunded Construction - Unfunded

Source: High Country RPO

High Country Rural Planning Organization (RPO). The Town of Wilkesboro is a member of the High Country RPO. Membership is voluntary and is via a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the High Country RPO. Formation of RPO's is conditioned on four core functions: (1) develop and prioritize transportation projects for input into the Statewide TIP; (2) coordinate local and regional multi-modal transportation plans; (3) act as an information resource center; and, (4) provide a mechanism for meaningful public participation.

Aviation. Wilkes County Airport is located along Airport Road approximately 7.5 miles from downtown Wilkesboro. The airport is county-owned, and has a 6,200-foot runway that will accommodate prop aircraft and small jets. Wilkes County Airport is a general aviation facility and is home to many corporate and personal aircraft, with nearly 23,000 operations yearly.

Residents and visitors have access to major airports at Piedmont Triad International (90 miles) or Charlotte-Douglas International (90 miles). These airports handle a range of domestic and international flights.

Rail. The Yadkin Valley Railroad, based in Rural Hall, NC, is a subsidiary of the Gulf and Ohio, provides freight rail service in Wilkes County, on track leased from Norfolk Southern. The railroad extends into the County from the east, following the Yadkin River to its terminus in North Wilkesboro.

Public Transportation. Wilkesboro does not provide any form of public transportation. Public transportation around Wilkesboro is provided by the **Wilkes Transportation Authority (WTA)**. WTA is a non-profit agency funded through the North Carolina Department of Transportation, through contracts with various social service agencies, and through normal fares. WTA currently operates one fixed route and on-demand trips within a 50-mile radius. The fixed route, called the Wilkes Express Shuttle System, operates Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The 18-mile route serves the towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro with 34 regular stops. Rural residents are served by on-demand trips that must be scheduled at least one day in advance. WTA's On-Demand services are intended for passengers needing transportation for medical appointments, to pay bills, buy groceries, shopping, social, and recreational functions, etc.

The **Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority (PART)** is a regional transportation system that focuses on enhancing the quality of all forms of transportation for all citizens that has recently expanded its system to provide transportation for Wilkes and Watauga counties. PART currently operates the twice-a-day Mountaineer Express which runs between Greensboro and Boone with stops in Winston-Salem, Yadkinville and Wilkesboro at Wilkes Community College.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation. The Yadkin River Greenway is one vision of alternative transportation for the Wilkesboro area. The Yadkin River Greenway was created through the efforts of citizen volunteers, landowners, and the governments of Wilkes County, North Wilkesboro, Wilkesboro and the State of North Carolina. A non-profit community organization, The Yadkin River Greenway Council, provides coordination and leadership.

The greenway currently runs along Reddies River near Wilkes Regional Medical Center to the Yadkin River where it follows the Yadkin west to the Wilkes Regional Medical Center Wellness Center. There is a trailhead in downtown Wilkesboro near the Old Wilkesboro Jail and the Old Cleveland Log Home that crosses the Yadkin before joining the main length of the trail. Future plans call for the Greenway to extend westward to W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, with the eastward terminus remaining on the Reddies River in North Wilkesboro. Extended plans call for extending the Greenway to parts of other existing trail systems and extending the greenway eastward to Elkin and beyond and west past W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.

Through receipt of a grant from the NC Department of Transportation, the Town of Wilkesboro contracted with McGill & Associates to prepare the **2006 Wilkesboro Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan**. The purpose of the 2006 Wilkesboro Comprehensive

Pedestrian Plan was to create a document to guide the Town in the (1) planning, (2) design, (3) financing, (4) implementation and (5) maintenance of the Town's pedestrian system. The plan is designed to enhance and prioritize capital improvements and maintenance projects for the Town with special consideration for addressing critical pedestrian transportation and safety and addressing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues.

The Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan documents the Town's existing pedestrian facilities and their condition as well as improvements that are needed such as handicapped ramps, crosswalk and signal improvements. The plan also prioritizes the needed improvements, estimates their cost, and provides ideas for funding sources.

Utilities

Water System

Source. The Yadkin River is Wilkesboro's water supply source. Wilkesboro is the first municipality to pull water from the river. At the intake, the raw water is routinely graded as "good" to "excellent" by the NC Division of Water Quality. The water is pumped from the intake to the filtration Plant by way of two pipes – a 16 inch pipe and a 24 inch pipe. The intake point is located within a WS-IV water supply watershed protection area, which requires the Town to more intensely regulate development in those areas where runoff will discharge above the water intake. The Yadkin River is dammed approximately 3 miles above the water filtration plant to form W. Kerr Scott Reservoir. The reservoir is approximately 3,475 acres in size. Wilkes County and the City of Winston-Salem each own half of the water supply rights from the pool elevation of 1,000 to 1,030 feet above sea level. The contract governing these water rights was for 50 years and will run out in approximately 2010. Discussions are taking place between local governments in Wilkes County to move their intakes to W. Kerr Scott Reservoir. There would be several advantages to this move such as better raw water quality and the easing of watershed restrictions in Wilkesboro.

Treatment. The treatment capacity of Wilkesboro's water filtration plant is 10 million gallons per day (mgd). The current average daily demand is 4.5 mgd. The peak one-day demand for the plant is 7.5 mgd. Once the plant reaches 8 mgd, the Town must have a plan in place to expand the plant. The water treatment plant is a conventional plant with eight filters.

Distribution. The Town currently has a clearwell with a capacity of three million gallons. There are currently three booster pumps within the distribution system. The Town also utilizes three elevated tanks (500,000, 500,000 and 250,000 gallons) and one standpipe (500,000 gallons). This totals 1,750,000 gallons of elevated storage. The current seven-day average usage is roughly divided up as follows: 50% is used by Tyson, 25% is sold to rural water associations; and 25% goes to Town customers. Growth in usage is occurring in the unincorporated areas of Wilkes County that are part of one of the rural water associations.

Wastewater System

Collection. The Town of Wilkesboro has two main outfall lines that lead to the Cub Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. One line belongs to the Town of Wilkesboro and terminates in a 24" line at the plant. The other main outfall line is owned by Tyson Foods and terminates in a 30" line at the plant. The Tyson line alone has the capacity to handle 14 million gallons a day. There are plans to abandon the line owned by the Town and switch all flow over to the line owned by Tyson. This is part of a larger project involving the combining of the two systems into one.

There are currently five pump stations within the sanitary sewer system. Two of the pump stations are new ones located in the US 421 area west of the Town. All of the pump stations have performed well and are not currently a concern. There are many septic systems remaining within Town. Property owners are not required to access the sanitary sewer system if they have a satisfactory septic system. However, if a septic system fails, the Health Department will usually require a property owner to access a sanitary sewer system if it is available to them. The Town has made it a policy that sewer be available to any property within the Town limits. There are also several locations served outside of the Town limits such as Wilkes Central High School, Central Wilkes Middle School, and Moravian Falls Elementary School. Those property owners who granted easements to the Town to lay these lines to the schools have also been given the opportunity to access the system.

Treatment. The Town maintains the Cub Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant on the east end of Town. The plant has a permitted capacity of 4.9 million gallons per day (mgd). Once a municipality exceeds the 5.0 mgd barrier, it is required to maintain a 24-hour staff presence at the plant. The average daily discharge is approximately 3.2 mgd. There has never been a discharge violation at the plant.

Tyson currently has two pretreatment basins contiguous to the Town's plant that handle Tyson's waste before being sent to the Town's basins.

Electric - Duke Power provides electric service to this area.

Natural Gas - Frontier Energy provides natural gas to this area.

Telephone - Embarq and Wilkes Telecommunications provide telephone service to Wilkesboro.

Cable Television - In 2001, Charter Communications was granted the franchise to provide cable television service to the residents of Wilkesboro. This franchise runs for 15 years. Residents also have the ability to receive television via satellite dishes sold by various local dealers.

Internet - Every resident of Wilkesboro is able to have access to the Internet via several local companies. For basic service, a person must possess a regular phone line. Local companies, like Wilkes Telecommunications and Embarq, also offer DSL access, which offers a faster connection. Charter Communications offers access to the Internet through their cable service.

ENVIRONMENT AND LAND SUITABILITY

Development pressures rise as an area looks for economic growth. The challenge is to sustain economic growth that is also environmentally sustainable - a balance between economy and ecology. Much of land use planning is concerned with maintaining the natural environment to ensure its existence for future generations to enjoy and utilize. The information below presents some important considerations when balancing the environment with land use.

Slopes

Slopes have a considerable impact on the location of existing and future development. Steep slopes are generally defined as slopes greater than 25 percent. Steep slopes are considered to be deterrents to development because of several factors. They have highly erodible soils and are more likely to be unstable. In areas where slopes exceed 25 percent it is important to minimize land disturbance as much as possible on unstable side slopes; this includes construction of homes as well as roads. Clearing steep slopes for development leads to more sediment in our streams and lakes, which negatively impacts our drinking water quality as well as natural habitats for fish. The best development practices in these areas include clustering development either on ridge tops or at the toe of the slope. Further, in these locations soils are often shallow and rocky which makes them unsuitable for locating septic tanks. Areas with steep slopes require more engineering analysis and design to ensure that roads and structures will be properly located and constructed; it is also more difficult and expensive to construct building foundations and roads even if they have been properly designed. The Slopes Map shows where steep slopes are located within the planning area.

Soils

A critical factor in planning for future land use is soil characteristics. Soil permeability, its shrink-swell potential, its depth to bedrock and the susceptibility to flooding it represents are directly related to its suitability for certain types of development. Soils within a floodplain drain poorly and are inappropriate for most uses that involve permanent structures. Bedrock near the surface of the soil can present construction problems as well as poor absorption for septic tank uses. Minimizing intense development in an area where the soils are poorly suited can avoid expensive problems at a later date. The Hydric Soils and

Water Supply Watersheds Map shows the location of hydric soils, which are often located in floodplains. Hydric soils are also often the source of prime farmland.

Floodplains

Floodplains are another characteristic of the land that affects its development potential. As can be imagined, structures located in floodplains are at a much higher risk of sustaining flood damage during heavy rain events. Further, as structures appear in floodplains, waters from heavy rains are not allowed to spread out as intended and the flow is instead channeled into a high velocity flow that can cause havoc downstream. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is responsible for publishing information regarding areas that are susceptible to flooding. It is important to note that the information generated by FEMA is based on computer models and represents a “best guess” as opposed to a scientific formula that is 100% accurate, dependable and predictable. Floods are notoriously unpredictable.

Flood maps which are accompanied by a flood study, depict the 100-year floodplain and also give base flood elevation. A brief definition of these terms in unscientific language may be helpful. A **100-year flood** is defined as a flood that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year. The **floodplain**, or **flood hazard area**, is the land area that is predicted to flood in a 100-year flood; it is made up of the **floodway** and **flood fringe**. The **floodway** represents a computer-generated land area that must be left open to carry floodwaters so that development may take place in the flood fringe. Another way to explain it is that the computer model calculates that if all land in the flood fringe were developed, flood waters in the floodway would not rise more than one foot, so long as the floodway remains completely free of obstructions such as fill and buildings. The **flood fringe** is the area where you are permitted to fill or build, and structures are required to be placed above base flood elevation. **Base flood elevation** or **BFE** is defined as the predicted height of floodwaters in a 100-year flood.

Wilkesboro contains several areas that are susceptible to flooding. A copy of the flood maps and flood studies can be found at Wilkesboro Town Hall. The dam at W. Kerr Scott Reservoir, constructed mainly for flood control, has decreased the chances of major flooding in the area, but not completely. The Town is a member of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This program enables citizens to buy flood insurance. As part of becoming enrolled in the NFIP, the Town adopted a Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance in 1992. To administer the NFIP, the Town uses the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by FEMA. The Town is currently using the map issued in August of 1999, but it does not contain some of the areas annexed since that time.

The State of North Carolina is currently undertaking a comprehensive mapping of each river basin in the state to provide better maps. The maps will be much more accurate and can be used in a digital format once the project is done. The Town will be closely involved with the evolution of this project as the State is planning to have meetings in each area as they move ahead with the mapping.

Water Quality

As the Town of Wilkesboro experiences greater urbanization, it becomes important to pay greater attention to water quality. The more land that is disturbed, the more sediment finds its way into our streams and rivers, increasing the cost of treating the municipal water supply and harming natural habitats. Additionally, the runoff from our streets, parking lots, and buildings that finds its way into our waters contains any number of pollutants. The Town of Wilkesboro administers a Water Supply Watershed Protection program that is meant to mitigate the effects of increasing urbanization. The program is based on maintaining a certain percentage of project areas as pervious surfaces in order to decrease the amount of land that must be disturbed and, therefore, the amount of runoff. The Town currently has jurisdiction over the following acreages:

- 1835 acres (including ETJ areas) in the WS-IV Protected Area
- 200 acres in the WS-IV Critical Area.

The NC Division of Water Quality's watershed protection program includes five (5) watershed or WS classifications. Figure 3.30 lists the development requirements of the watershed program. Wilkesboro contains both a WS-IV Critical Area and a WS-IV Protected Area. The Hydric Soils and Water Supply Watersheds Map shows the watershed areas. The Town has chosen to use both the "low density" development option as well as utilize the "10/70" high-density provision.

Figure 3.30 Water Supply Watershed Protection Rules Summary

Watershed Classification	Allowable Dischargers	Allowable Development: Low Density	Allowable Development: High Density	Stormwater Controls: Hi Density	10/70 Provision	Residuals Application	Landfills	Agriculture BMPs
WS-I Watershed	None	None	None	NA	None	None	None	Required (5)
WS-II Critical Area	General Permits	1 du/2ac or 6% built upon (2)	6-24% built upon area	Control the 1" storm	Not allowed	No new sites	No new landfills	Required (5)
WS-II Balance of Watershed	General Permits	1 du/ac or 12% built upon area	12-30% built upon area	Control the 1" storm	Allowed	Allowed	No new discharging landfills	Not Required (5)
WS-III Critical Area	General Permits	1 du/ac or 12% built upon area	12-30% built upon area	Control the 1" storm	Not Allowed	No new sites	No new landfills	Required (5)
WS-III Balance of Watershed	Domestic & Non-process Industrial	2du/ac or 24% built upon area	24-50% built upon area	Control the 1" storm	Allowed	Allowed	No new discharging landfills	Not Required (5)
WS-IV Critical Area	Domestic & Industrial (1)	2du/ac or 24% built upon (3)	24-50% built upon area (3)	Control the 1" storm	Not Allowed	No new sites	No new landfills	Required (5)
WS-IV Protected Area	Domestic & Industrial	2du/ac or 24% built upon (3,4)	24-70% built upon area (3,4)	Control the 1" storm	Allowed	Allowed	Allowed	Not Required (5)

Notes:

- (1) New industrial process wastewater discharges are allowed but will require additional treatment.

- (2) Residential development may apply dwelling units per acre or use percent built-upon surface area. Non-residential development must use percent built-upon surface area.
- (3) Applies only to projects requiring a Sedimentation/Erosion Control Permit.
- (4) One-third acre lot or 36% built-upon area is allowed for projects without curb and gutter street drainage systems.
- (5) In WS-I watersheds and critical areas of WS-II, WS-III, and WS-IV watersheds, agricultural operations must maintain a ten (10) foot vegetated buffer or equivalent control along all perennial streams. Permitted animal operations are allowed in all water supply watersheds.
- (6) Municipalities with a pretreatment program (2H .0904) is considered industrial discharge.
- (7) Discharges qualifying for a General Permit pursuant to 2H .0127 will also be allowed in all areas of WS-III and WS-IV watersheds along with the allowed discharges noted in the table.
- (8) Groundwater remediation discharges may be allowed when no other practicable alternative exists.
- (9) Local governments will assume ultimate responsibility for operation and maintenance of stormwater controls.

Source: NC DENR

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Community resources are those things that significantly add to an area's quality of life. These range from safety to cultural and recreational opportunities. Below are listed some of the Wilkesboro area's important community resources.

Health Care

- **Wilkes Regional Medical Center**, the only hospital in this area, is located in North Wilkesboro. The hospital contains 130 patient beds and includes a wide range of medical services. Residents also have access to the world-class healthcare offered at North Carolina Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem or at Duke University in Durham. Local physicians often refer people to these latter institutions when more specialized care is needed than can be provided locally.
- Physicians and dentists are located throughout this area. In 2000, the NC Department of Commerce estimated there to be 72 physicians in Wilkes County, or one physician for every 912 residents. The ratio in 2000 in terms of dentists was one for every 5,049 residents.
- The Town of Wilkesboro contains two nursing homes. **Avante** in Wilkesboro is able to accommodate 120 residents and **Britthaven**, Inc. is able to accommodate 186. **Wilkes Senior Village**, a nursing home located in North Wilkesboro, has space for 130 residents. There are also two "assisted living" facilities around the area. **Village of Wilkes Traditional Living** is located in North Wilkesboro and can accommodate 72 residents. **Mountain House Assisted Living** has room for 99 residents and is located several miles west of Wilkesboro near US 421. **Rose Glen Retirement Village**, a 100 unit independent living facility was completed in early 2007 immediately adjacent to downtown Wilkesboro.

Libraries

- **Wilkes County Public Library** is located in downtown North Wilkesboro. The library offers residents access to books, periodicals, and the Internet. They include a range of works for the reader of fiction or non-fiction as well as a collection just for children.
- **Wilkes Community College (WCC)** offers county residents free access to its collection. WCC may have more specialized works than one can find at the public library. \
- Residents can also take advantage of the collection at **Appalachian State University (ASU)**. Through the “Community Borrowers” program, a nominal fee grants residents of Wilkes access to the ASU collection.

Education

Primary and Secondary Education: Wilkes County operates the public school system for the entire county. The system consists of fifteen (15) elementary schools, four (4) middle schools, and four (4) high schools. The middle schools and high school are connected to the NC Information Highway. Several churches operate Christian academies around the area as well.

Wilkes Community College: Wilkes Community College (WCC) is located on South Collegiate Drive in Wilkesboro. The WCC campus covers 140 acres and currently has 2,600 degree-seeking students. The college offers a range of practical educational programs. Aside from the traditional Associate Degrees, students can earn Bachelor Degrees in various disciplines through programs offered by Appalachian State University, Gardner-Webb University, and Winston-Salem State University. Further, WCC offers a “basic skills” program that allows adults to complete requirements for a high school diploma or GED. The Industrial Training Program coordinates with local businesses, the NC Department of Commerce, and local economic development agencies to develop and provide a customized training curriculum. Course offerings are expanded through distance learning opportunities offered in a state-of-the-art facility.

Arts

- **Wilkes Art Gallery** is located in North Wilkesboro and continually features exhibits by different artists.
- **The Walker Center** is housed at Wilkes Community College and is a venue for performing artists and shows.
- **The Wilkes Playmakers** are housed at Benton Hall in North Wilkesboro.

Historic Resources

Wilkesboro is fortunate to have a number of historic resources from a variety of time periods that help to tell the story of Wilkesboro. **Old Wilkes, Inc.**, a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the history of Wilkes County, North Carolina has identified the following historic sites in Wilkesboro on its **Old Wilkes Heritage Walking Tour**:

- **The Old Wilkes Jail** – Completed in 1860, it is one of the few intact examples of a mid-19th century jail remaining in the State.
- **The Robert Cleveland House** – This house was built in the 1770's and was restored in Wilkesboro after being moved from its original location in western Wilkes County.
- **The Historic Federal Building** – Located on Main Street, this building was built in 1915. It retains nearly all of its original exterior and interior details and is a nice example of Federal Revival style architecture.
- **The Carl Lowe House** – Built in 1889 and a fine example of Queen Anne and late Victorian houses, it is located at the top of Brook Street. The Carl Lowe house was the first structure designated a Local Landmark by the Town of Wilkesboro.
- **St. Paul's Episcopal Church** – This was one of the earliest consecrated churches in the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina, completed in 1849.
- **The Old Law Office** – Built in the late 19th century, this is an excellent example of a carpenter Gothic architecture. The building is now a law museum open only on special occasions.
- **The Smithey Hotel** – Built in 1891, the building with its second story porch remains relatively unaltered on the exterior.
- **The J.T. Ferguson Store** – This building's distinctive front is made of cast iron and pressed metal that was produced in St. Louis in 1887. The building front is one of the few remaining out of the approximately 5000 sold over a 23-year period.
- **The Presbyterian Church** – This Church was established in 1837 and the building built in 1849. It served the oldest Presbyterian congregation in 21 western North Carolina counties.
- **The Brown-Cowles House** – This house dates from the 1830's and is the oldest known building remaining in Wilkesboro. A rare slave kitchen and curing house also remain on the property.
- **The Wilkes County Courthouse** – Built in 1902, it is a fine example of classical revival architecture. The building has recently been renovated to be

the Wilkes County Heritage Museum, which preserves and promotes the history of Wilkes County. The museum showcases local history exhibits on topics such as racing, pottery, Native Americans, medicine, moonshine, the Tom Dooley story and much more.

The **Overmountain Victory Trail** is another memorial to Wilkes County history. The Trail commemorates the route that patriots, many from Wilkes County, took to reach Kings Mountain, where they helped to defeat the British in a pivotal Revolutionary War battle. At present, the Trail is a series of disconnected portions that provide no sense of the history of the event. The National Park Service has become involved in the effort to make the Trail a significant reminder of the historical event. A portion of the Trail will pass through downtown Wilkesboro.

Parks

The Town of Wilkesboro owns and operates two parks. **Cub Creek Park** is currently 25 acres in area that includes youth baseball fields, tennis courts, two walking tracks, dog park and picnic facilities. The Town received \$128,425 from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund in 2007 to purchase additional acreage for expansion and improvements to the park. **Westwood Park** is 16 acres that has youth baseball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts and a walking track.

Other recreational opportunities also available to Town and area residents include:

- **Rivers Edge Park** is operated by Wilkes County. It includes soccer fields, softball fields, baseball fields, horseshoe pits, a walking track, a BMX track, skate park, R/C airplane field and restroom facilities.
- The **Wilkes Family YMCA** and the **Wellness Center of WRMC** offer fitness opportunities. The YMCA is located in Wilkesboro and is housed in a facility that opened in March 2002. The Wellness Center is located in North Wilkesboro.
- **W. Kerr Scott Reservoir** is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The reservoir is approximately 5.5 square miles (3475 acres). There are many parks around the reservoir that provide boat-launching ramps, docks, and picnic facilities.
- **Wilkes Community College** has a walking track on campus that includes exercise stations. In addition, the College has tennis courts and a fitness center for students.

Public Safety

The **Wilkesboro Volunteer Fire Department (WFD)** provides fire protection for the Town of Wilkesboro. The department currently has about 30 firemen. The current ISO rating of the department is 4. The department owns two pumper trucks, ladder truck and a brush

truck that are housed at the main station on Cherry Street. The station at Cherry Street affords good access to the US 421 bypass.

The Town also employs a Fire Inspector whose duty is to inspect commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family establishments in order to insure their compliance with fire codes that reduce exposure to loss of life or property.

Emergency medical services are provided by Wilkes County.

The **Wilkesboro Police Department** consists of approximately 30 full-time officers and part-time officers. Among the full-time officers are two detectives, one K-9 officer, and one Highway Interdiction officer.

LAND USE

Existing Land Use

The following paragraphs provide a general idea of current land use in Wilkesboro and the extra-territorial planning jurisdiction (ETJ). The Existing Land Use Map is a graphic representation of current land use.

Single-Family Residential (detached)

Established subdivisions in Town limits include: Forest Hills, Westwood Hills, Ken Acres, Stonebridge, Beacon Ridge, and Woodfield. The lots in these subdivisions predominantly range from one-third acre to three-quarter acre. Forest Hills, Westwood Hills, and Ken Acres, older subdivisions contain mostly one-third to half-acre lots. Newer developments such as Stonebridge, Woodfield, and Beacon Ridge have lots that are closer to three-quarters of an acre. There are also a variety of larger lot sizes in these neighborhoods.

Single-family residences are also located in other areas throughout Town. Winston Street, Westover Drive, Welborn Avenue/Hill Avenue, and Corporation Street are all areas with older homes on lots predominantly one-third acre in size. Closer to downtown, there are many single-family residences along Woodland Boulevard and in the Highland-College-Spruce Street area. There are also a number of residences south of Main Street, adjacent to the downtown commercial district.

There are a number of established subdivisions that lie in the ETJ: Laurelwood, Country Club, Ravenwood, Ridgecrest, and Knollwood. A typical lot in all of these subdivisions is about one-half acre (2 dwelling units per acre), although various larger lots exist. Scattered residential development exists throughout the ETJ with particular concentrations around Congo Road, Winkler Mill Road, and the Sleepy Hollow area of Brushy Mountain Road. Lot sizes in these areas vary greatly.

Multi-Family Residential/Single-Family (attached)

There are five major multi-family developments in Wilkesboro. Two of these are located near Wilkes Community College – Glenn Hill (49 units) and Windmere Apartments (99 units). Cub Creek Apartments (48 units) are located off Industrial Park Drive in the southeastern part of Town. All of these apartment complexes are targeted to lower-income individuals or families. Woodfield Oaks (97 units) is another significant multi-family development. The average density of these multi-family developments is about 8 dwelling units per acre.

Asbury Court (18 units) and Woodfield Landing (35 units) are attached single-family developments (Townhouses). The average density for these developments is about 2.5 dwelling units per acre.

There are very few multi-family residential developments in the ETJ since multi-family developments typically require public water and sewer.

Commercial

Commercial development in Wilkesboro has developed in response to the location of major thoroughfares. Franchises and major retailers are located on the 421 bypass west of Wilkesboro, 421 Business, and NC 268 near Wilkes Community College. Development in these areas is mostly of the strip commercial type. These strip commercial development areas include service and food establishments as well. Smaller-scale commercial development can be found in other parts of Town. Downtown contains some specialty stores as well as professional offices and several service-type establishments. Cothorn Street (east of downtown) and School Street (near WCC) are areas that also have some service establishments meant to serve local traffic.

Various types of commercial development is found scattered throughout the ETJ. Small convenience stores and restaurants are common commercial uses scattered throughout the ETJ as well as small garages and various operations that sell items such as construction equipment and lumber. Commercial development in the ETJ is mostly located on thoroughfares such as US 421, NC 16, and Boone Trail/Old US 421.

Industrial

There is no formal industrial park in Wilkesboro. The Town's major industry, Tyson Foods, is located in the center of Town. In the same general area as Tyson are other industrial buildings as well – Pet (vacant), Wilkes Glove, and Ansell Golden Needles (vacant). On the eastern edge of Town, Industrial Park Road (formerly Tom Thumb Glove Road) also contains a couple of industrial sites. The last area with substantial industrial development is NC 268 west of downtown, in an area formerly used as the county airport, East Coast Millwork Distributors and Key City Furniture are two of industries located here. The industrial sites located here are located in both a flood hazard area and a watershed area.

There are very few industrial uses in the ETJ, but the uses that are present are almost exclusively lumber operations.

Institutional/Public

Parks are included in this category and several are found within Wilkesboro: Cub Creek Park, Westwood Park, School Street Park, and Rivers Edge Park. Also, there is a trailhead of the Yadkin River Greenway located on the edge of downtown Wilkesboro. There is also land used for educational purposes such as Wilkes Community College and Wilkesboro Elementary School. Other substantial pieces of property used for public purposes include offices for the Town and Wilkes County, the Wilkes County Courthouse and Federal Building. The Town's wastewater treatment plant, water filtration plant, and garage are also included in this category. Churches and nursing homes are also classified as "institutional" uses.

Institutional and public land in the ETJ and study area includes: land owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers around the Kerr-Scott Reservoir, Scenic Memorial Gardens on Old NC 18, Oakwoods Country Club, and numerous churches.

Manufactured Housing

There is very little manufactured housing (i.e., mobile homes) within Wilkesboro's town limits. The only two areas in Town where some mobile homes are found are on Fletcher Street and at Broyhill Trailer Park (between River Street and Welborn Avenue).

Manufactured housing (i.e., manufactured homes or mobile homes) is scattered throughout the extra-territorial jurisdiction and the study area. There are several mobile home parks, but also a high number of manufactured homes located on single lots in areas that contain a mixture of stick-built single-family homes and manufactured homes.

Current Land Use and Development Policies

The Town of Wilkesboro has two major ordinances that regulate the development of land: the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance. Other regulations that play an important role for properties located in areas that are subject to them are the Town's water supply watershed regulations and Flood Hazard Protection Ordinance. Other ordinances and regulations that have an impact on the development of land within Wilkesboro and surrounding areas include: the state building code, Town of Wilkesboro Minimum Housing Ordinance, Town of Wilkesboro Nuisance Ordinance, Wilkes County Zoning Ordinance, Wilkes County Solid Waste Ordinance, Wilkes County Use Value Assessment Program, Mountain Ridge Protection Act and the NC Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act.

Zoning and the Town of Wilkesboro Zoning Ordinance

From the attention given to the subject by legal writers and in court decisions, it is clear that confusion exists as to the distinction between "planning" and "zoning". In reality, zoning is just one of many legal and administrative devices by which plans may be

implemented. Most of the confusion has arisen out of the fact that many jurisdictions have adopted zoning ordinances before embarking on full-scale planning.

Zoning is essentially a means of insuring that the land uses of a community are properly situated in relation to one another, providing adequate space for each type of development. It allows the control of development density in each area so that property can be adequately serviced by such governmental facilities as the street, school, fire, police, recreation, and utility systems. This directs new growth into appropriate areas and protects existing property by requiring that development afford adequate light, air and privacy for persons living and working within the community.

Zoning is probably the single most commonly used legal device available for implementing the land use plan of a community. Zoning may be defined as the division of a town (or other governmental unit) into districts, and the regulation within those districts of:

1. The height and bulk of buildings and other structures;
2. The area of a lot which may be occupied and the size of required open spaces;
3. The density of the population; and
4. The use of buildings and land for trade, industry, residence or other purposes.

Of major importance for the individual citizen is the part zoning plays in stabilizing and preserving property values. It affects the taxation of property as an element of value to be considered in assessment. In the past, zoning was only indirectly concerned with achieving aesthetic ends. Most examples were in relation to historic buildings and areas, however, there has been an increasing tendency and greater acceptance to including aesthetic provisions such as landscaping and building design within zoning ordinances.

The zoning ordinance does not regulate the design of streets, the installation of utilities, the reservation or dedication of parks, street rights-of-way, school sites and related matters. An official map preserving the rights-of-way of proposed streets against encroachment can be useful for protecting rights-of-way. The zoning ordinance should, however, be carefully coordinated with these and other control devices. It is becoming more common for the provisions of many of these separate ordinances to be combined into a single comprehensive ordinance, usually called a unified land development ordinance.

Wilkesboro first established zoning in 1965. Over the years the zoning ordinance has had minor changes to incorporate new uses and newer principles of land use regulations.

If a property is zoned properly for its intended use, then the needed permits can simply be obtained through application and payment of any required fees. If a rezoning is required the approval of the Town Council must be obtained. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the magnitude, complexity and any controversy generated by the proposal.

It is important to note that a request to change the zoning ordinance is a request to change the basic plan for the area where the property is located. For example, if someone applies to change the zoning from residential to commercial to allow a used car lot, regardless of the special conditions of the site, the basic issue is whether a business should be located on that property and does it meet the general purposes of the ordinance. Such decisions or changes to the plan may not individually have a large impact, but taken collectively may indicate the need to revise or modify the plan to meet continuing demands for growth and development.

The Town of Wilkesboro is divided into the following zoning districts:

R-20A	Residential/Agricultural District	B-2	General Business District
R-20	Suburban Residential District	B-3	Limited Business District
R-8	Single-Family Residential District	M-1	Industrial District
R-6	General Residential District	M-2	Limited Industrial District

Most of the older residential neighborhoods in Wilkesboro are zoned R-6 and R-8. The majority of the remaining land within the Town limits designated for residential use is zoned R-20. The surrounding rural landscape located in the Town’s extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction (ETJ) is primarily zoned residentially with R-20A being most predominant north of Highway 421 and R-20 south of Highway 421. Property adjoining Highway 421 is primarily zoned B-2, General Business.

The ordinance lists uses permitted within each district. A use not listed is not allowed. Some districts are organized in a way referred to as cumulative zoning. For instance, uses permitted in an R-20 district are also allowed in R-8 and R-6. Likewise, B-2 includes all of the permitted uses from B-1. The exception to this is manufactured home parks, which are permitted in R-20, but expressly prohibited in R-8 and R-6. A table within the ordinance lists minimum area and setback requirements and maximum height requirements.

Other features of the zoning ordinance are sign regulations, minimum parking space requirements, water supply watershed protection regulations (see below), and planned unit development (PUD) regulations. The PUD regulations set out area and yard requirements that differ from those of the ordinance’s standard zoning districts. The watershed protection regulations set density requirements for development in a designated area.

Subdivision Regulations and the Town of Wilkesboro Subdivision Ordinance

Subdivision regulations are another set of locally adopted laws that govern the process of converting raw land into building sites. They normally accomplish this through plat (map) approval procedures, under which a developer is not permitted to make improvements or to divide and sell his land until the governing body or planning board has approved a plat of the proposed design of his subdivision. The approval or disapproval of the local government is based upon compliance or noncompliance of the proposal with development standards set forth in the subdivision regulations. In the event that the developer attempts

to record an unapproved plat with the local register of deeds or to sell lots by reference to such a plat, he/she may be subject to various civil and criminal penalties.

Subdivision regulations may serve a wide range of purposes. To the environmental health officer, they are a means of insuring that a new residential development has a safe water and sewage supply system and that the lots are properly drained. To the tax official they are a step toward securing adequate records of land titles. To the school or parks official they are a way to preserve or secure school sites and recreation areas needed to serve the people coming into the neighborhood. To the lot purchaser they are an assurance that he will receive a buildable, properly oriented, well drained lot, provided with adequate facilities to meet his day-to-day needs, in a subdivision whose value will be maintained over time.

Subdivision regulations enable the Town to coordinate the otherwise unrelated plans of a great many individual developers, and in the process assure that provisions are made for major elements of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan such as rights-of-way for major thoroughfares, parks, schools sites, major water lines, sewer outfalls and so forth. They also enable the Town to control the internal design of each new subdivision so that its pattern of streets, lots and other facilities will be safe, pleasant and economical to maintain.

From the standpoint of the local governing board, subdivision regulations may be thought of as having two major objectives. First, these officials are interested in the design aspects of new subdivisions, as are the other officials mentioned. Secondly, they are also interested in allocating the costs of certain improvements most equitably between the residents of the immediate area and the taxpayers of the Town as a whole. When subdivision regulations require a developer to dedicate land to the public or to install utilities or to build streets, they represent a judgment that the particular improvements involved are (1) necessary in a contemporary environment and (2) predominantly of special benefit to the people who will buy lots from him (presumably at a price sufficient to cover the cost of these improvements) rather than of general benefit to the taxpayers of the Town as a whole.

The Town of Wilkesboro first adopted subdivision regulations in 1965. A major rewrite of the subdivision regulations was adopted in 2006 that added requirements for neighborhood meetings, open space/recreation area dedications, landscape buffers along thoroughfares, multiple entrances, street trees and sidewalks.

Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

The Town of Wilkesboro adopted this ordinance in 1992 as a condition of being enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The ordinance is used in conjunction with the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to control development in areas where the potential for flood damage is high. The ordinance focuses on the protection of structures that are placed in flood-prone areas; not on the protection or preservation of floodplains

themselves. The ordinance must be updated and enforced as a requirement for the Town to remain eligible for membership in the NFIP.

Water Supply Watershed Management and Protection Program

The water supply watershed management and protection program (adopted as part of the zoning ordinance) was originally adopted in 1993. All new development in a designated water supply watershed must meet the development standards of the ordinance. The Environment and Land Suitability section of this plan provides further information about the water supply watershed protection program.

Tree Ordinance

The Town of Wilkesboro, realizing that trees have a profound effect on the quality of life in the community adopted a tree ordinance in 2006 after receiving a North Carolina Urban and Community Forestry Grant in 2005. The purpose of the Tree Ordinance is to regulate the planting of new trees and shrubbery; to encourage the protection of existing trees and shrubbery, including their root systems; to regulate the preservation, replacement and indiscriminate removal of trees and to establish procedures for fulfilling these purposes. One of the immediate outcomes of the adoption of the Tree Ordinance was the creation of the Wilkesboro Tree Board.

State Building Code

The Wilkes County Inspections Department enforces the State Building Code throughout the county, including within the Town of Wilkesboro. The Town of Wilkesboro employs a Fire Inspector to enforce the fire code.

Minimum Housing Ordinance/Public Nuisance Ordinance

These regulations are actually part of the Town code and not the zoning ordinance. Currently, the Town contracts with an outside agency to administer these ordinances.

Wilkes County Zoning Ordinance

Wilkes County enforces a zoning ordinance that only applies to certain designated areas of the county. There is no county-wide zoning. Zoned areas are:

- Purlear Zoning District
- Country Club Zoning District
- W. Kerr Scott Reservoir Zoning District
- Lynnwoode Zoning District

Wilkes County Use Value Assessment Program

The land use program is a state-mandated program designed to give tax relief to certain landowners and their property if it is soundly managed in the production of an agricultural, horticultural, or forest commodity. To qualify for the program, the tract requirements are five (5) acres for horticultural applications, ten (10) acres for agricultural applications, and twenty (20) acres for forestry applications. Property in the program is assigned a **use value** that is lower than the market value of the land. As long as property remains in the program, the difference in taxes between the use and market value is deferred. Once a property is removed from the program, the deferred tax for that year and the three previous years becomes due.

Mountain Ridge Protection Act

Wilkes County adopted a Ridge Protection Ordinance in 1984. The intent of the ordinance is to prevent tall buildings from being built on protected ridges, thereby harming the mountain scenery. "Protected ridges" are defined as having an elevation of 3,000 feet and also rising 500 feet or more above the elevation of the adjacent valley floor. "Tall buildings or structures" have a vertical height of more than 40 feet. This definition does not include water, radio, telephone, or television towers. The ordinance and map are on file at the Wilkes County Register of Deeds.

Erosion and Sedimentation Control Laws

The North Carolina Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973 states: "The sedimentation of streams, lakes and other waters of this State constitutes a major pollution problem. Sedimentation occurs from the erosion or depositing of soil and other materials into the waters, principally from construction sites and road maintenance. The continued development of this State will result in an intensification of pollution through sedimentation unless timely and appropriate action is taken. Control of erosion and sedimentation is deemed vital to the public interest and necessary to the public health and welfare, and expenditures of funds for erosion and sedimentation control programs shall be deemed for a public purpose."

The Act empowers the NC Sedimentation Control Commission to develop rules and regulations for the control of erosion and sedimentation resulting from land disturbing activities. When there is a land disturbing activity of one acre or more, the developer is required to submit an erosion control plan to the Land Quality Section of the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for review and approval. The Land Quality Section of DENR enforces the state Sedimentation and Pollution Control Act of 1973 within Wilkesboro and Wilkes County. There is currently no local sedimentation control program in the county.

Section Four Comparison of Development Patterns

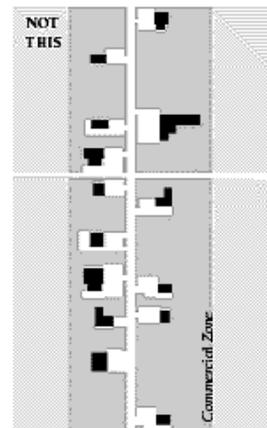
In recent years, the Town of Wilkesboro has taken many steps toward reshaping how the Town develops. An increased emphasis has been placed on improving the livability and appearance of the community with efforts such as the adoption of a tree ordinance, new subdivision regulations that require open space, sidewalks, multiple entrances and street trees, the development of new park facilities, addition of more senior living communities and the construction of the Yadkin River Greenway. The Wilkesboro Comprehensive Land Use Plan serves as a foundation to continue these efforts and also provides a foundation for further efforts.

The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan also seeks to provide a formal document that will reflect a unified Town policy toward growth and development. In some ways this document provides a new vision for the development of Wilkesboro and the surrounding area and in some ways it reinforces current efforts to change previous development patterns. This section provides a general explanation of the differences between previous approaches toward land development and the desired development patterns. This section will also provide a point of reference and confirmation of the Town's efforts to avoid further strip development, insure greater connectivity in its road networks, encourage a mix of appropriate land uses and provide for open space development

Strip Development vs. Commercial Centers

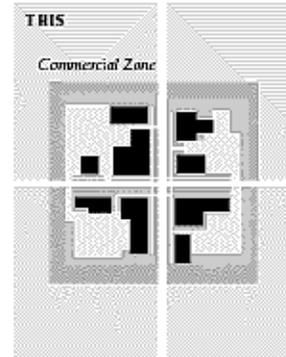
Strip Development: The characteristics of strip development include:

- Automobile oriented
- Large parking lots
- Large front yard setbacks
- Single use (i.e. only commercial)
- Numerous curb cuts
- No interconnectivity between uses
- Poor design characteristics



Commercial Center: The Commercial Center is based on applying the attributes of a traditional downtown to a new site that is smaller in scale. The characteristics of a Commercial Center include:

- Pedestrian and automobile friendly
- Few curb cuts or limited access
- Buildings built to a pedestrian scale
- Building closer to the road
- Interconnectivity between uses and shared parking
- Mixed use (i.e. commercial, office, multi-family residential)
- High quality design characteristics

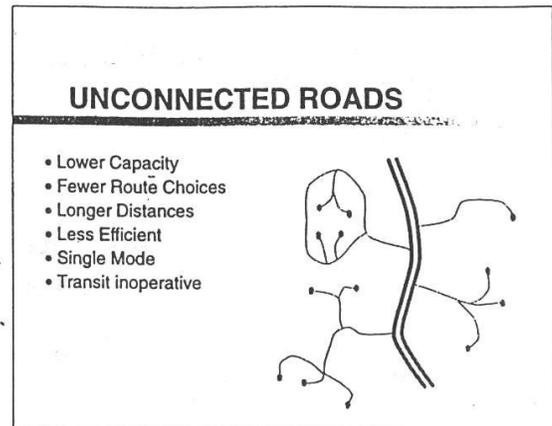


The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan supports utilization of Commercial Centers as a viable alternative to Strip Development.

Unconnected Roads vs. Road Network

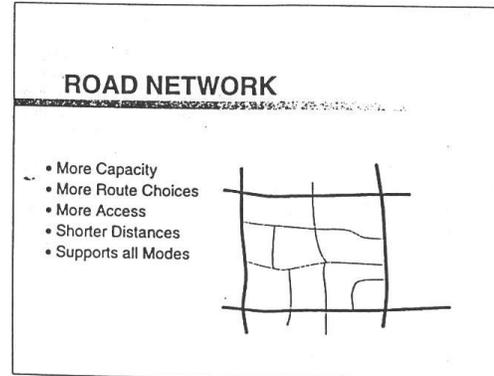
Unconnected Roads: Cul-de-sac subdivisions and numerous dead end roads can result in a transportation network that limits the number of ways through Town. In addition to the residential subdivision, commercial development has also been guilty of providing no connectivity between uses. The characteristics of Unconnected Roads include:

- Lower capacity
- Fewer route choices
- Longer driving distances
- Less efficient
- Single mode of transportation



Road Network: A transportation system based on a Road Network will help aid in the decreasing traffic congestion. Increasing the number of choices will help to disperse traffic throughout the Town. The utilization of a Road Network will result in:

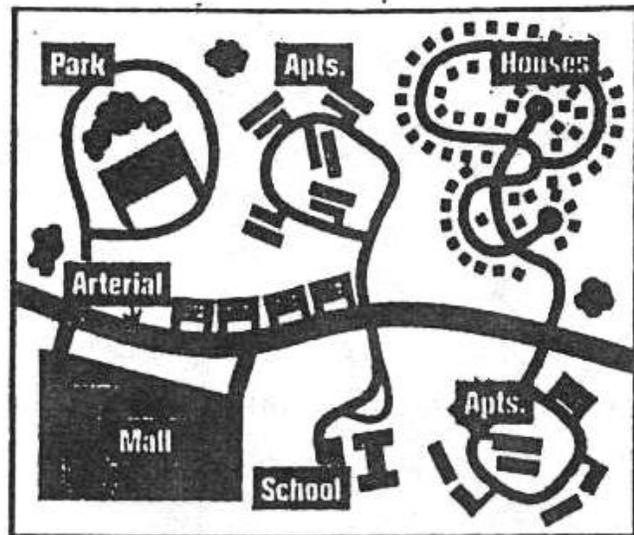
- More capacity
- More route choices
- More access
- Shorter distances
- Support for all modes of transportation



The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan supports the use of Road Networks within new residential and commercial areas to provide Wilkesboro with more transportation options throughout the Town. The Road Network approach can be incorporated into new subdivisions, new commercial centers and even office parks.

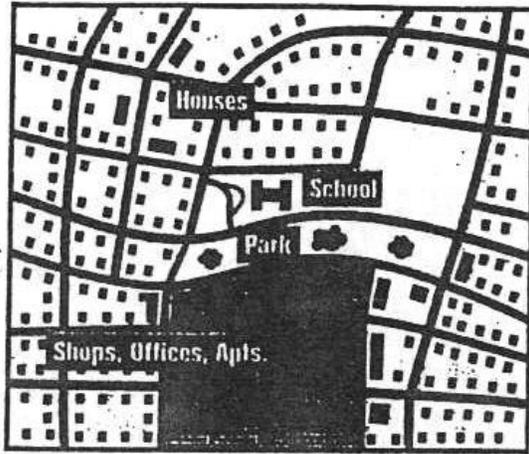
Separation of Uses vs. Mixed Use

Separation of Uses: The standard zoning ordinance has created a situation in which all uses must be separated from one another. This can result in the destruction of lively neighborhoods that included a neighborhood store, as well as the removal of residences from the downtown in many communities. While some uses need to be separated from one another, many others work well together if designed properly. For example, the construction of five three-story multi-family apartment buildings in the middle of a single-family residential district may not be appropriate. However, a multi-family Townhouse development that is designed to compliment the surrounding



neighborhood could fit in. The Separation of Uses has the potential to result in the creation of "pods" of development. The diagram highlights the problems associated with Separation of Uses: all traffic must travel out onto the main road to go anywhere.

Mixed Use: The concept of Mixed Use goes back to the time before zoning when many uses were found in a neighborhood. By encouraging a mix of uses the Town can decrease traffic, allow people opportunities to walk to work or the store, and promote commercial development that has a residential market built into the development. Downtown Wilkesboro and the surrounding residential areas are an excellent example of mixed-use development that intertwines offices, retail establishments, and residences to serve multiple needs.

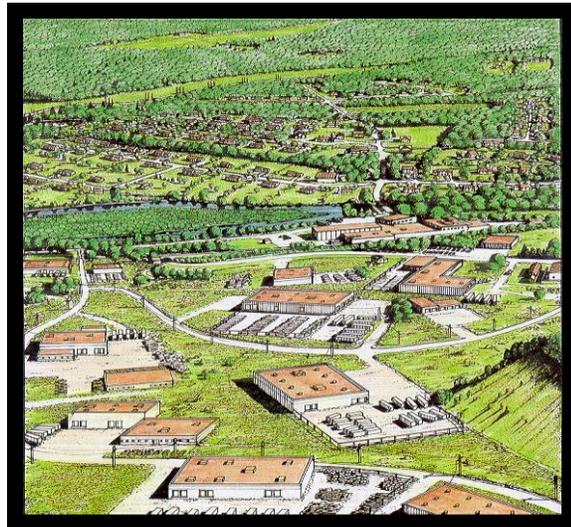


The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan encourages mixed-use development especially within and around the central part of the Town.

Conventional Development vs. Open Space Development

Conventional Development:

Conventional Development maximizes the number of lots or retail space that can be created out of any piece of land. This method of development pays little attention to environmental factors, neighborhood design or open space. The goal of the development is to place as many houses or businesses on the site as allowed under the current zoning ordinance. As a result land that should be preserved due to environmental conditions or topography gets turned into a backyard or graded for parking.



Illustrations from *Rural By Design*, Randall Arendt

In addition, this type of development places a greater burden upon the Town because it does not provide recreational space for the residents and results in overcrowding at parks and other recreational facilities. Conventional business development is often aesthetically unpleasing, results in increased runoff to other properties, and increases traffic.

Open Space Development: Open Space Development looks to provide a designated area as open space within the development. This land is permanently protected from development and can be used by the neighborhood as a recreation amenity. The developer that chooses to develop in this manner can still build the same number of units, but on smaller lots and with less infrastructure to construct as a result of clustering the development. By encouraging Open Space Development the Town can increase the recreational opportunities for its residents, decrease the amount of infrastructure that needs to be maintained, and increase the attractiveness of the overall community.



Conventional vs. Open Space Subdivision Development



The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan supports utilization of open space development in order to maintain Wilkesboro’s small town atmosphere and protect environmentally sensitive areas and the surrounding rural landscape.

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Section Five Growth Strategy: Vision, Goals & Policies

The Vision:

Wilkesboro has enjoyed a moderate, yet steady rate of growth for the last century. The attractiveness of its landscape and topography, combined with its views of the mountains, excellent highway access and abundant water and sewer capacity will help to ensure its continued growth in the 21st Century. As our Town continues to grow and become more densely settled, it will be increasingly important for us to manage that growth wisely, in order to maintain the character and high quality of life that we enjoy.

We envision future land development in Wilkesboro leading to a strong, diverse and sustainable economy with good paying jobs and a strong tax base. The key to Wilkesboro's future economic success is our ability to consistently attract clean, high-paying employers and a skilled and educated work force by fostering a high quality of life for everyone in our community. In turn, a prosperous economy will allow us to direct more resources toward maintaining and promoting a quality environment in which to live and work.

The quality of our lives together will depend largely on our ability to preserve the natural and man-made assets and resources we value most. By expecting new development to add value to the Town's character and sense of community, we will add to our own well being and simultaneously attract new residents, visitors and investment dollars. Public services and facilities will be used to encourage smart, sustainable growth in the most appropriate places, stimulating economic development while enhancing the beauty and livability of our community.

Careful management of future growth will lead to common-sense decisions about the quantity, location, type and timing of land development, and the adequate provision of community services. Development ordinances and design guidelines based on existing community features that we value most, will shape our physical, economic and social environments – helping us change what we do not like, and building upon what we value most. The overall intent of this plan is to encourage Wilkesboro's continued economic development, while maintaining and enhancing our community's environment and high quality of life. To assist in achieving this goal, the following vision statement is provided describing the type of community we want to become in the future.

Vision for Future Land Development in Wilkesboro

Over the next ten to twenty years, we envision land development in our community will continue to lead to a strong, diverse economy and a high quality of life for all our citizens. Our most valued environmental, cultural and historical assets and resources will be preserved and enhanced and development will be directed toward the most appropriate locations in order to enhance and maintain the beauty and livability of our community.

Growth Strategy: Goals and Policies

To help achieve the Town's future vision, goals and policies were established to express the overall strategic direction for the Town's growth over the next ten to twenty years. Created to highlight the major consensus points reached during the planning process, these goals and policies are grouped by category, and represent the Town's ideals concerning how the Town should grow and develop. In conjunction with the Future Land Use Map, these goals and policies articulate the growth strategy for achieving the Town's vision. The goals represent what the Town would like to accomplish. The policies serve as the positions of the Town of Wilkesboro, and provide guidance for evaluating and making decisions concerning land development proposals.

1. Growth Management Goals:

- A. **Manage the Quantity of Growth** – Seek to maintain a moderate, steady quantity of growth in and around Wilkesboro.
- B. **Manage the Location of Growth** – Encourage new land development to locate in the most appropriate places.
- C. **Manage the Quality of Growth** – Make sure the quality and character of new land development is compatible with existing land uses and that it adds to Wilkesboro's livability, character and sense of community.
- D. **Manage the Patterns of Growth** – Establish and maintain adequate transitional uses or buffers around high-intensity employment uses to help preserve the integrity of residential neighborhoods.

Growth Management Policies:

- 1.1 The Town will use the Growth Strategy and Comprehensive Land Use Plan as a policy guide when evaluating development proposals and determining appropriate zoning designations.
- 1.2 The Town will periodically evaluate developed areas outside Town limits to determine their eligibility for annexation and pursue annexation of eligible areas when economically viable.
- 1.3 The Town will require low-density, clustered or planned unit, primarily residential development within designated Rural Residential Areas, to help preserve rural character and sensitive environmental resources.
- 1.4 The Town will use natural features and development constraints in determining the best use of land and the appropriateness of land development and site design proposals.
- 1.5 The Town will promote mixing compatible uses (residential, commercial, office, institutional) and housing types to foster attractive, safe pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.
- 1.6 The Town will continue to develop and enhance community design standards to ensure that the quality and character of new land development is compatible with existing land uses, and to establish and maintain adequate transition uses or buffers around high-intensity

- employment uses and to help preserve the integrity of residential neighborhoods.
- 1.7 The Town will coordinate and manage growth in conjunction with the adequate provision of community services and facilities, especially sewer, water, roads and parks.
 - 1.8 The Town will pursue the development of specific plans for each of the special planning areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
 - 1.9 The Town will support the activities of the Historic Preservation Commission, including their efforts to place a portion of the downtown area on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as establish a local historic district to maintain and enhance the special character of Downtown Wilkesboro.

2. Environmental Stewardship Goals:

- A. Identify, value and preserve Wilkesboro's natural, cultural and historic resources.
- B. Preserve the natural environment, enhance the built environment and encourage appropriate land development in the most appropriate places as designated in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- C. Discourage land development in sensitive natural areas, especially in floodplains, along streams, in wetland areas and in areas with very steep slopes or severe soil limitations.
- D. Protect the Town's drinking water supply and the general water quality of its streams and creeks.
- E. Protect the Town from excessive noise, odor and air or water pollution.
- F. Maintain, improve and when feasible expand the Town's abundant parks, recreational opportunities, open space, and natural areas and connecting them with sidewalks, greenways and bike lanes.

Environmental Stewardship Policies:

- 2.1 The Town shall advocate for the preservation of significant natural features and sites.
- 2.2 The Town shall promote and in some cases require land use patterns that result in compact development that consumes less land.
- 2.3 The Town shall foster land use patterns that provide alternatives to automobile use in order to better protect air quality and citizen's safety and health.
- 2.4 The Town will carefully control land development activities within the 100-year floodplain, along streams, in wetland areas and in areas with steep slopes by limiting new development to low-intensity uses such as agriculture, recreation areas and trails.
- 2.5 The Town will require all proposed land development (especially industrial and commercial uses) to effectively mitigate potential excessive noise, odor, and air, water or light pollution.
- 2.6 The Town will continue to maintain and improve its sewage collection and treatment facilities, providing service priority to existing or planned

densely developed areas where water quality or economic benefits can be most readily realized.

- 2.7 Town staff will update the Town's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance whenever changes are made by FEMA or the State of North Carolina.
- 2.8 The Town will develop and adopt policies that contribute to Wilkesboro and Wilkes County becoming more environmentally and energy self-sufficient.

3. Community Appearance Goals:

- A. Improve the image and appearance of the Town to improve the quality of life of residents and to attract new businesses and quality residential development.
- B. Use a variety of tools to improve the beauty and appearance of the Town, including streetscape, landscape and buffer requirements, street trees, sign controls, site plan review, underground utilities, and development standards to encourage the preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources and enhancement of the built environment.
- C. Encourage the preservation of existing specimen trees and the planting and maintenance of new trees as part of the land development process.
- D. Support the activities of the Historic Preservation Commission and their plans to get downtown Wilkesboro on the National Register of Historic Places and establish a local historic district.
- E. Support the activities of the Tree Board including their efforts to promote tree preservation and planting in both public and private places.

Community Appearance Policies:

- 3.1 The Town will undertake efforts to improve the appearance of major roadway entrances into the Town through landscaping, sign regulations, setbacks and other visual improvements.
- 3.2 Sign policies and standards will be periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a high-quality business image.
- 3.3 The Town will evaluate the effectiveness of the existing landscaping requirements contained in the Town's tree ordinance and support the preservation of existing specimen trees and the planting of new street trees and parking lot trees for beautification, summer cooling, reduced stormwater runoff and improved air quality.
- 3.4 Infill development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of structures shall occur in a manner that is supportive of, and consistent and compatible with the existing neighborhood and architectural context of the surrounding area.
- 3.5 The Town will require land development proposals to preserve the natural features of the site whenever possible, including existing topography, significant vegetation and specimen trees, wetlands and riparian corridors along creeks and streams.

- 3.6 The Town will require the placement of utility lines underground in new public and private land developments.
- 3.7 The Town shall advocate for the development of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with curb and gutter, sidewalks, street trees, greenways, neighborhood parks and open spaces.
- 3.8 The Town will support efforts to improve the appearance and functionality of downtown by funding streetscape plans, including the feasibility of placing utilities underground, researching and applying for grant opportunities, gathering information and coordinating volunteer efforts.
- 3.9 The Town will review the effectiveness of nuisance ordinances, appearance standards and the existing code enforcement program as they apply to residential properties.

4. Transportation System Goals:

- A. Provide a safe and efficient transportation system promoting economic development and livability.
- B. Reduce traffic congestion and improve the accessibility and mobility for people and goods.
- C. Minimize the Town's transportation costs by maximizing the functionality of its existing road system.
- D. Locate commercial and office and residential uses closer to one another and connect them with sidewalks and shared driveways and parking lots.
- E. Provide alternatives to traveling by automobile such as greenways, sidewalks and bike paths.
- F. Establish an interconnected street network among all neighborhoods to disperse traffic, provide alternative routes to major thoroughfares, create a greater sense of community and prevent disjointed developments.
- G. Include alternative transportation modes (sidewalks, greenways, bike paths) in all new developments.
- H. Connect adjacent subdivisions through multiple points of ingress and egress.

Transportation System Policies:

- 4.1 The Town will seek to maintain the safety and usefulness of its major thoroughfares by requiring common access points and service roads and not allowing frequent driveway cuts.
- 4.2 The Town will require the inclusion of pedestrian amenities (such as sidewalks, trails and greenways) in new land development projects and will strongly encourage pedestrian-oriented transportation alternatives be added to existing land development throughout the Town.
- 4.3 The Town will seek to implement as many of the recommendations of the *2006 Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan* as time and resources allow.
- 4.4 The Town will seek to preserve the integrity of existing land development and minimize to the extent possible, environmental and traffic impacts associated with new or improved transportation facilities.

- 4.5 The Town will continue to develop a program of road improvements and maintenance to maximize the use of existing roadways, as a cost effective and environmentally sound means of meeting its transportation needs.
- 4.6 The Town will seek the periodic update of its Comprehensive Transportation Plan and its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) priorities.
- 4.7 The Town shall prohibit development to be accessed directly along future thoroughfares.

5. Economic Development Goals:

- A. Encourage the type of economic development that enhances the lives of residents, draws on the existing labor force, provides opportunities for employees to upgrade their skills and pay level, and is compatible with existing natural and man-made resources.
- B. Develop and maintain a strong, diverse, and sustainable local economy with good paying jobs, a healthy tax base, and a high quality of life by retaining traditional manufacturing and distribution facilities, while attracting new high-tech, high-skill, high-pay firms.
- C. Focus on building a better community, and not just “growth for growth’s sake”.
- D. Use common-sense development regulations and guidelines to carefully balance individual property rights with the good of the whole community.
- E. Invest in and revitalize older parts of the Town to improve the quality of life for all the Town’s citizens.
- F. Encourage development of tourism opportunities, taking advantage of the Town’s scenic assets such as the Brushy Mountains and the Yadkin River and the area’s cultural, historic and heritage assets such as the Overmountain Victory Trail, Merlefest, and the Wilkes County Heritage Museum and the many varied resources and assets of the county and region.

Economic Development Policies:

- 5.1 The Town will support new and expanding industries and businesses that diversify the local economy, utilize a more highly skilled labor force and increase the income of area residents.
- 5.2 The Town will support and participate in efforts that lead to the continued growth of the area’s tourism economy.
- 5.3 The Town will protect, enhance and encourage a high-quality of life, image, and recreational and cultural amenities as an incentive for further economic development.
- 5.4 The Town will balance the benefits of continued economic development with the possible detrimental effects such development may have on the quality of life of enjoyed by Town residents.

- 5.5 The Town will advocate for the revitalization and the adaptive reuse of currently unused or under-utilized structures and sites in appropriately located commercial, institutional, office and industrial areas.
- 5.6 The Town will support efforts to attract environmentally conscious industries to locate in Wilkesboro.
- 5.7 The Town will continue to work closely with other local, state and federal government economic development agencies.
- 5.8 The Town will encourage the recruitment of industries that can utilize the resources and services of Wilkes Community College.

6. Water and Sewer Service Goals:

- A. Use the Town's provision and financing of water and sewer services as an incentive to stimulate continued growth and revitalization within existing Town limits and new development in areas where water and sewer services can be cost effectively provided.
- B. Limit the extension of water and sewer services to designated Rural Residential areas.
- C. Create cost-effective strategies for providing water and sewer services to designated General Residential areas, especially in areas with failing wells and septic systems.
- D. Continue to recognize that water and sewer line extensions are an important growth management tool.

Water and Sewer Service Policies:

- 6.1 The Town shall continue to pursue the relocation of its intake to the W. Kerr Scott Reservoir.
- 6.2 The Town shall regularly undertake capital planning to schedule necessary improvements to its water and sewer infrastructure.
- 6.3 The Town shall discourage major extensions of water and sewer services that could result in scattered, non-directed development and the costly provision of other services.
- 6.4 The Town shall promote land use patterns that will utilize water and sewer infrastructure to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.5 The Town shall continue to utilize GIS technology to map and monitor its water and sewer infrastructure.

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Section Six Wilkesboro Comprehensive **Land Use Plan Maps**

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map for the Town of Wilkesboro depicts generalized land use patterns for the Town, its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and surrounding areas for the next 10-20 years. Like all future land use maps, it is general in nature and should be used only as a guide by decision-makers in making future land use decisions. No attempt has been made to identify land use patterns on a lot-by-lot basis. Rather, land use decisions should be made using the map as a guide together with the goals and policies contained in this plan.

The Future Land Use Map is broken up into eight (8) land use classifications and a number of special planning areas that merit special attention. What follows is a description of each of these classifications and areas.

Rural Residential – These areas are primarily located outside of the Town’s corporate limits and public utilities may or may not be provided. Intense subdivision development is not recommended in these areas due to a lack of infrastructure to support growth. The overall maximum density ranges from one to two dwelling units per acre depending on the amount of open space provided. Compact residential neighborhoods that set aside significant natural vistas, parkland, and landscape features and other rural heritage features for permanent conservation are encouraged. Development considerations include environmental impacts, urban sprawl, provision of open space and natural features and vistas, and the availability of adequate infrastructure.

General Residential – These areas are primarily located within the Town’s corporate limits or extraterritorial planning jurisdiction and public utilities may or may not be currently provided, and if not provided could potentially be extended during the Land Use Plan’s timeframe. Generally, land classified as General Residential has already been developed as a conventional subdivision or could be approved for a conventional subdivision. Development considerations include environmental impacts, urban sprawl, compatibility with existing development, provision of open space and natural features and vistas, and the availability of adequate infrastructure.

Neighborhood Residential – These areas are located within the Town’s corporate limits and include primarily mature neighborhoods. Public utilities are available and a road network already exists. These areas are intended to provide for residential infill development with a range of housing types surrounding the Town center area and other employment centers. Low-intensity business uses located in mixed-use buildings are also appropriate if designed and constructed at a residential scale. Development considerations include the compatibility of infill development with existing building patterns.

Mixed Use – These areas are located primarily within the Town’s corporate limits or along major thoroughfares. Areas designated Mixed Use may be either new development that

includes a mix of housing and commercial uses or an area that contains a mixture of existing housing types, commercial uses, institutional uses and occasionally a light industrial use. Older residences that have been converted to a commercial use alongside existing residences are a typical example of development in a mixed use area. Downtown Wilkesboro is an example of a mixed use development pattern with single-family residences, institutional uses such as the Rose Glen Senior Living community, Town Hall, churches and the Wilkes Heritage Museum, and the numerous offices and retail uses found throughout the downtown. Development considerations for new mixed use developments include the compatibility of different uses within the project and also with the surrounding neighborhoods as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure. Development considerations for new development in an existing mixed use area include the compatibility with existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure to serve the use.

Office and Institutional – These areas are intended for institutional uses such as schools, college campuses, churches, nursing homes and office uses such as office buildings, medical facilities and corporate office campuses. Institutional uses can be found throughout the planning area, including predominantly residential areas. Office uses are typically found adjacent to and within both commercial and industrial areas. Development considerations of office and institutional areas are similar to those of mixed use areas including the compatibility of proposed development with existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure to serve the use.

Commercial – These areas are generally located along major thoroughfares that contain a wide array of commercial uses. Typical retail uses include shopping centers, restaurants, and convenience stores. Other heavier uses may include mini-warehouses and automobile sales lots. Development considerations include traffic, compatibility with abutting residential areas, the appearance of new and existing development as well as the availability of adequate infrastructure.

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

Parks, Recreation, & Conservation Areas – These are areas where parks, recreation areas, greenways, or conservation areas either exist or have been identified as possibilities in the future. Development considerations include the desirability of the land for recreation or conservation use, how the property fits into the future recreation plans of the Town or county, and the environmental impacts of developing the land.

Town Center – The Town Center planning area is identified by most people as Downtown Wilkesboro and is the historic center of Wilkesboro. Wilkesboro's downtown or town center as stated in the description of mixed-use areas above is a vibrant mix of

institutional, retail, service, cultural, office and residential uses all located in close proximity to one another. This close proximity of different uses creates a different visual and functional environment than the rest of Town, but also creates many competing demands because the area serves so many different purposes. The Town Center area also needs to balance the needs of pedestrians and motorists, businesses and residents and tourists and citizens. The needs of each of these groups are different and create a need for more detailed study. The Town Center also contains the majority of properties proposed to be included in the Town's first local historic district and National Register historic district.

Special Planning Areas – A number of Special Planning Areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map. These areas include the entire US Highway 421 corridor, Highway 16 both North and South of US Highway 421, Cherry Street between US Highway 421 and Main Street and Oakwoods Road between US Highway 421 and the Yadkin River. These areas all have a need for more detailed study due to the current development of the area and the external impacts each area is subject to.

These special planning areas have one thing in common – they are all located on one of the region's most heavily traveled transportation corridors. The current mix of uses located within the Highway 421 planning area enjoy the benefits of the large number of motorists traveling by their property, but the large number of individual driveways for each business makes the roadway less efficient for everyone. Also, a large percentage of citizens who participated in this planning process do not feel that this corridor presents a positive image for Wilkesboro with the increasing volume of traffic, the minimal amount of landscaping and presence of so many billboards and large business signs. There is considerably less development on most sections of the Highway 16 corridor and there are many large undeveloped parcels of land, but there is great potential for some of the problems that have occurred on Highway 421 to occur on this highway as well.

The Cherry Street corridor has a number of issues that merit further study, such as the presence of many existing single-family residential uses, a scattering of commercial uses and one large industrial use. Recently, a number of requests to change the zoning of properties in this corridor have been turned down. Determining what types of land development are appropriate for this corridor and studying how to protect the viability of the existing residential development while accommodating some of the demand for more commercial development is extremely important for the Town.

An additional special planning area is the Oakwoods Road corridor. NCDOT has a number of improvements scheduled for this road including a new bridge that could significantly change the character of this roadway that currently serves as an important entrance into Downtown Wilkesboro from both North Wilkesboro and from US Highway 421.

INSERT MAPS HERE

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Maps

1. Future Land Use Plan Map
2. Existing Land Use Map
3. Hydric Soils and Water Supply Watersheds Map
4. Slopes Map
5. Zoning Map



Section Seven Implementation of the Plan

Recommendations for Implementing the Plan

1. Hold workshops for the Town Council and Planning board on how the can be used upon adoption. These meetings can look at different aspects of the plan at different meetings.
2. Refine the staff recommendation process for all land development proposals, rezoning requests, conditional use permits, special use permits and planned unit developments. The staff recommendation will include a short analysis of how the proposed development will meet or not meet the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan Growth Strategy goals and policies as well as the Plan's Future Land Use Map.
3. Make necessary changes to the Town's Zoning Ordinance to allow for the type of development desired by the community. For example, changing the Town's sign regulations or requiring shared driveways and connected parking lots between adjoining lots.
4. Encourage the Town Council and Planning Board to use the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan on a regular basis, to serve as a helpful guideline for making decisions on rezoning requests, conditional use permits, special use permits and subdivision proposals.

How to Use the Plan

Use of the Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map should be used as the first step in evaluating development proposals. The Future Land Use Map and the supporting information in Section 6 outline appropriate locations, types and patterns of land development. When reviewing a proposed development, the developer, staff, citizens, Planning Board and Town Council should determine first if that type of development is desired in the location that is first proposed.

Use of the Growth Strategy Goals and Policies

The general Growth Strategy goals and policies outlined in Section 5 of the plan should be used as the second check in evaluating how well proposed developments are supported by the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The goals and policies represent general principles that affect all development within the Town. If a proposed development does not appear to be supported by these goals and policies, it should be returned to the developer for revisions.

How Can the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Be Used By Various Users?

To aid in the effective use of the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the following examples, illustrate how different users can employ the goals, objectives, and strategies as well as the Future Land Use Plan Map in evaluating a rezoning request:

As Used by the Developer

The developer or property owner can petition for a rezoning request that is consistent with Town policy, thereby increasing the chances for rezoning approval, and minimizing guess work and time wasted.

As Used by the Town Planning Board

Prior to their regular meeting, each Planning Board member can make his or her own determination as to the consistency of the proposed rezoning with the Town's adopted objectives and strategies as well as the Future Land Use Map contained in the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan. As always, the Planning Board should take into account the recommendations of the Plan, but may choose to give different weight to the different elements of the Plan.

As Used by the General Public

Residents of the Town can and should reference specific goals and objectives of the Plan when speaking in favor of or in opposition to a rezoning request.

As Used by the Town Council

In its legislative authority to rezone property, the Town Council has the final word as to whether the rezoning request is consistent with the various plans and ordinances that affect the property in question. The Council should take into account and weigh the interpretation of policy as employed by the property owner, the Wilkesboro Planning Board, staff, and the general public. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision-making.

Recommendations for Monitoring and Revising the Plan

As the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan is used and development occurs in Wilkesboro, it will be necessary to make revisions to the plan in order to keep it updated. A major development, new road or water and sewer extensions can drastically change an area of the planning jurisdiction. It is recommended that the Town convene a meeting of the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan Committee every other year to look at changes that need to be addressed and to provide an opportunity to monitor the Town's progress in implementing the plan.

It should be noted that Town staff, the Planning Board and Town Council play a vital role in monitoring and revising the plan as well. The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Comprehensive Land Use Plan will only be a document worth using if it is kept up to date and used on a regular basis by the Town Council, Planning Board, staff and citizens of Wilkesboro.

Section Eight

The Planning Process

Following a decision by the Town Council in the spring of 2006 to begin a land use planning process, a committee was established by the Town Council to begin the focused work of developing a comprehensive land use plan. The individuals selected by the Town Council to serve on the Committee represented a diverse range of interests and backgrounds including business leaders, surveyors, developer, realtor, attorney, educator, retirees, downtown residents, ETJ resident and several Planning Board members as well as Town staff.

The Land Use Planning Committee met for the first time in September of 2006 and began work identifying goals and issues. The Committee also decided to name the planning process “Wilkesboro Tomorrow”. The Committee developed a future vision for the Town in 2016 by identifying feature story ideas, headlines, photo opportunities and quotes for a magazine article (See the Appendix for the ideas generated). Following development of a vision, the Committee held three (3) community forums in January, 2007 to seek the input of the entire community. The three forums were held in different locations in Town at different times of day. Over 80 citizens attended the forums. Citizens participated in map exercises, completed a written survey, a visual preference survey and participated in a small group discussion at two of the three forums (See the results in the Appendix).

Following the three community forums, the Wilkesboro Tomorrow Land Use Planning Committee reviewed the results of the three community forums and had focused discussion on a number of topics including residential development, downtown development, economic development and the Town’s water and sewer infrastructure.

The Committee met in June to begin work developing the Town’s Future Land Use Plan Map and during the meeting formed a Future Land Use Map Subcommittee to work on further development of the map. A draft of the plan was first presented to the Committee in September, 2007. The Committee continued to meet throughout the fall of 2007 to refine and prioritize the plan’s policies and objectives and future land use map.

The Committee identified the following plan policies from the entire list of policies that are included in Section Five as priorities for the Town Council to consider working on immediately:

Wilkesboro Tomorrow Committee Priority Policies

- Policy 1.2 The Town will periodically evaluate developed areas outside Town limits to determine their eligibility for annexation and pursue annexation of eligible areas when economically feasible.
- Policy 1.8 The Town will pursue the development of specific plans for each of the special planning areas designated on the Future Land Use Map.
- Policy 3.1 The Town will undertake efforts to improve the appearance of major roadway entrances into the Town through landscaping, sign regulations, setbacks and other visual improvements.

- Policy 3.2 Sign policies and standards will be periodically updated to enhance community identity and create a high-quality business image.
- Policy 3.6 The Town will require the placement of utility lines underground in new public and private land developments.
- Policy 3.8 The Town will support efforts to improve the appearance and functionality of downtown by funding streetscape plans, including the feasibility of placing utilities underground, researching and applying for grant opportunities, gathering information and coordinating volunteer efforts.
- Policy 4.7 The Town shall prohibit development to be accessed directly along future thoroughfares.
- Policy 5.5 The Town will advocate for the revitalization and the adaptive reuse of currently unused or under-utilized structures and sites in appropriately located commercial, institutional, office and industrial areas.

The Wilkesboro Tomorrow Committee endorsed the draft plan in November, 2007 and a work session with the newly elected Mayor and Town Council was held in January, 2008 to discuss the plan. The plan was officially adopted by the Town Council on March 3, 2008.

Appendix

I. Summary of Envisioning Wilkesboro in 2016 Activity

Cover/Headline Ideas

- Wilkesboro – Where the Mountains Begin w/ Picture of Hwy 421 @ Ronda-Clingman Exit (8)
- Historical Old Town with New Vision (8)
- Wilkesboro - Where the Living is Easy
- Wilkesboro – A Walkable Community
- Peaceful Village
- The Wilkesboro Experience
- Wilkesboro – A Town of the Future
- Greenway cross walks over Main Street Wilkesboro
- Town transforms into a retirement center
- Wilkesboro – Western NC scenic destination
- Great State of Wilkes moves forward in the 21st century
- THE NC Village 2017 (photos)
- 8.5 miles of greenway runs through beautiful City of Wilkesboro.

Feature Story Ideas

- Wilkesboro village concept featuring one-stop shopping, Medical Center; Pharmacy, Grocery Store, Restaurants and Historical Museum line streets with history and convenience (9)
- Retirees Flock to Wilkesboro, NC fast becoming North Carolina's hottest resort community. (5)
- Wilkes Community College/ Merlefest and Tourism thrives in Wilkesboro (3)
- Recreation, Greenways, Pedestrian Friendly and Rich in Parks (3)
- Elimination of Overhead Utility lines makes Wilkesboro beautiful city! (3)
- Downtown Revitalization and Mixed Use Community (2)
- Perfect Town in the perfect retirement area (1)
- New Walk-In Medical Clinic Assists Area Hospital in caregiving (1)
- Museum
- Retirement community thrives in Wilkesboro
- Attractions to include historic homes – Heritage Village
- Ease of Living – Slow pace
- Greenways are an American model
- Wilkesboro – two Towns in one.
- Pedestrian friendly
- Recreation for all ages
- Education and Medical thriving
- Beautification
- Wilkesboro – A Town rich in parks
- Revitalized historic downtown includes businesses and mixed use community
- Tourism thrives in Wilkes County
- Churches and Frescoes
- Restaurants
- Population reaches 15,000

- New 421 bypass effects on Wilkesboro
- New walk-in medical clinic assists Wilkes Regional in caregiving
- Gas hits \$7.00/gallon - New mass transit system running @ 90% capacity.
- New Theater opens on Main Street – Wilkesboro walks to the cinema

Highlights of Wilkesboro

- ❖ Small Town living (5)
- ❖ Quality of Life (1)
- ❖ Greenways (1)
- ❖ Low Cost of Living
- ❖ Wilkes Community College/Merlefest (1)
- ❖ Lifestyle Centers (1)
- ❖ Top notch Medical Facility (1)
- ❖ Heritage Museum thrives with history of Wilkes
- ❖ Frescos
- ❖ Old Wilkes – Museum
- ❖ Restaurants
- ❖ Reservoir
- ❖ New Housing
- ❖ Drug Free Community
- ❖ Police Department and Safety
- ❖ Beauty
- ❖ Maintain strong property values
- ❖ New trolley system
- ❖ Lifestyle centers

Photo Ideas

- Before and after views of Main Street Wilkesboro after above ground utility lines removed. (12)
- Retirement communities – Laurelmor (5)
- Wilkes Community College and Merlefest (4)
- Fish Dam Creek Bridge – Connecting Wilkes County along 8.5 miles of beautiful, river lined, scenic trail (1)
- Outdoor scene featuring happy citizens of Wilkesboro.
- Trees, Leaves, Mountains and someone fishing (2)
- Water, Boats, Canoeing and Rivers (1)
- Frescos
- Retirement Communities – Laurelmor
- Scenic Byway and new Highway 421 bypass
- Horses and Equestrian Events
- New schools and kids
- Wilkesboro – valley of the Blue Ridge
- Beacon Ridge

Quotes

- ◆ Wilkesboro – A quaint village in the Blue Ridge Mountains (4)
- ◆ The view from downtown Wilkesboro is dominated by majestic mountains and church steeples (3)
- ◆ Wilkesboro welcomes retirees (2)

- ◆ Service and industry thrive in 200 year old Town (1)
- ◆ Wilkesboro – Where the new and old meet.
- ◆ Ethnic and cultural diversity being addressed
- ◆ Best place I have ever lived
- ◆ Friendliest community I have been in
- ◆ A gem of a community
- ◆ No place like home
- ◆ Happiness begins here

* The number in parenthesis represents the number of votes each item received at the end of the meeting by Wilkesboro Tomorrow Committee members.

II. Summary of Information Gathered at the Land Use Plan Community Forums

Wilkesboro Comprehensive Plan Survey Results (From Community Forums)

1. How long have you lived in Wilkesboro or its immediate vicinity?
 [17%] Less than 2 years [5%] 2-5 years [5%] 6-10 years
 [6%] 11-15 years [68%] More than 15 years

2. Are you:
 [4%] under the age of 18? [0%] between age 18 and 24
 [19%] between age 25 and 44? [47%] between age 45 and 64?
 [29%] over the age of 65

3. How many people live in your household? 2.7

4. Wilkesboro's estimated population in 2005 was 3,178 people. In the next 20 years, would you prefer the population to:
 [45%] Increase Significantly [42%] Increase Slightly [8%] Stay the Same
 [1%] Decrease

5. How do you rate the importance of each of the below issues facing our community over the next 5-20 years?

Very Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	
<u>55%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>1%</u>	Preserving the rural areas in and around town
<u>94%</u>	<u>6%</u>	<u>0%</u>	Preserving environmental quality (air, streams, scenic views, trees, etc.)
<u>90%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>0%</u>	Promoting economic development (jobs)
<u>70%</u>	<u>29%</u>	<u>1%</u>	Maintaining the economic vitality of commercial properties
<u>48%</u>	<u>36%</u>	<u>17%</u>	Encouraging a wide range of housing types, (i.e. low and moderate income, multi-family)
<u>58%</u>	<u>38%</u>	<u>4%</u>	Improving the overall quality of all types of new housing

<u>74%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>0%</u>	Enforcement of minimum housing codes
Very Important	Moderately Important	Not Important	
<u>79%</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>4%</u>	Enforcement of town's ordinances and regulations (i.e. zoning, signage, landscaping, junked vehicles, high-grass)
<u>70%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>3%</u>	Providing services to area's senior citizens
<u>79%</u>	<u>27%</u>	<u>0%</u>	Retaining youth in the region
<u>65%</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>1%</u>	Expanding recreational opportunities for all ages
<u>47%</u>	<u>49%</u>	<u>3%</u>	Providing additional recreational facilities
<u>56%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>4%</u>	Expanding existing greenway system
<u>51%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>9%</u>	Improving options for pedestrian and bicycle travel
<u>57%</u>	<u>39%</u>	<u>4%</u>	Improving appearance of commercial thoroughfares
<u>61%</u>	<u>36%</u>	<u>1%</u>	Improving appearance of Downtown streetscape (trees, sidewalks, lights, benches, trash containers, etc.)
<u>82%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>0%</u>	Providing cost efficient, high quality public services (police/fire service, garbage collection, code enforcement, recreation, land use administration, etc.)
<u>77%</u>	<u>22%</u>	<u>1%</u>	Providing a safe and efficient street system
<u>60%</u>	<u>38%</u>	<u>3%</u>	Preserving and reuse of historic resources

6. Please rate to what degree you feel the following types of development should be encouraged or discouraged in Wilkesboro on a scale of 1 to 5.

	Strongly Encouraged				Strongly Discouraged
	1	2	3	4	5
Single-family homes on small lots (less than 20,000 s.f.)	27%	27%	19%	10%	6%
Single-family homes on large lots (1 to 5 acres each)	31%	22%	25%	9%	6%
Manufactured housing	5%	3%	32%	25%	27%
Town homes	32%	27%	23%	9%	1%
Two-family homes (duplexes)	10%	19%	40%	18%	5%
Apartments	14%	30%	35%	9%	4%
Mixed-use development	22%	21%	26%	14%	6%
	Strongly Encouraged				Strongly Discouraged
	1	2	3	4	5
Senior living communities	35%	39%	12%	4%	5%
New Downtown development	47%	30%	14%	1%	0%

Downtown housing	32%	26%	23%	8%	3%
Convenience Stores/ Drug Stores	19%	17%	25%	21%	6%
Personal Services (barber and beauty shops, nail salons, etc.)	14%	22%	42%	12%	4%
Grocery stores	21%	40%	23%	9%	0%
Restaurants	49%	30%	10%	3%	0%
Offices (medical/professional)	35%	34%	18%	3%	0%
Shopping centers	26%	23%	23%	12%	8%
Industry or manufacturing	40%	18%	19%	6%	8%

7. What is the one thing that gives Wilkesboro its identity and makes it unique?

- Small rural village atmosphere in Downtown. Slow pace of life.
- Tory Oak – old courthouse area
- Its rural atmosphere.
- It is a good place to live and also friendly people.
- Old courthouse.
- Living style.
- Affordable – utilities.
- Quality of life – low crime.
- Small town atmosphere/the idea that not much has changed in Downtown/the volunteer nature of the citizens.
- Slow living pace.
- Not much stuff to do.
- Small town with a strong heritage. Lowe’s was founded in Wilkes Co., Tyson (formerly Holly Farms) began in Wilkes. Wilkes is known for apple orchards, brushy Mtn. Apple Festival. Unfortunately is only remembered for moonshine.
- The old structures like the historic courthouse.
- Small town feel, beautiful mountainsides.
- Quiet – not a lot of traffic.
- Small town feeling; unique.
- I find Wilkesboro to be a very confusing city – a broken up feeling; very few good restaurants.
- Diversity; a bad image when you go past Tyson.
- Diversity.
- Location.
- Location to mountains and ocean.
- Kerr Scott Dam; some Downtown charm.
- Foothills, MerleFest.
- Small town atmosphere; quaint appearance.
- The good people working for this town and their leadership.
- Apples; hometown feeling; people friendliness.
- The county seat.
- Small; friendly officials; clean, well-maintained.
- The quaintness; the people, its history.
- The location, water and beautiful mountains.
- Heritage Museum complex.
- One of Tyson Foods’ largest plant complexes providing employment for 3000+ persons.

- Small town flavor.
- The Wilkes Heritage Courthouse in the center of town.
- Historic section, parks and recreation.
- Small town charm.
- It's the gateway to the mountains.
- Small town atmosphere with all the convenience.
- Size; friendly people.
- The beauty of the mountains and peacefulness.
- Historic charm and small town feel with progressive ideas.
- Politics.
- Small town lifestyle with big city amenities.
- It's heritage.
- The great people.
- Friendly little town.
- Its history.
- Small town feel.
- Old town quality.
- Heritage – Nascar/Moonshining.
- Small town Christian values.
- Attitude of people.
- Quality of life.
- Friendly home town feel; historical; land diversity – mountain, flat, river.
- Historic district; museum; prestigious older homes.
- Old buildings.
- Historic Wilkesboro; courthouse and Main Street.
- Small town friendly place.
- Quality town elected officials and staff.
- Small town feeling.

8. *What are the 2 most positive characteristics about Wilkesboro that you would like to see preserved?*

- Easy traffic; small town atmosphere.
- Small town friendly people/government. Good year around climate.
- The historical district; additional development of the museum.
- Good police department
- Good schools; lake and activities.
- Single family housing; Main Street – historic.
- Natural resources; skilled people.
- Main Street; Downtown living.
- Greenways and lake.
- Lake and town.
- Downtown, Brushy Mtn.
- Small town feel
- The land and old Downtown.
- Downtown, older homes.

- Courthouse.
- Untouched land; old Downtown.
- Atmosphere; quaintness.
- The fact that a “vision committee” is active to hear the desires and needs of the community. A desire to improve the image and revenue in Wilkesboro.
- The Edge Skatepark and the YMCA.
- Cannot think of any.
- History.
- History.
- Small town ‘feel’; friendly people.
- Reservoir and greenway.
- Preserving history; greenway.
- Downtown hometown atmosphere with additional stores, traditional and update sidewalks.
- Historic and small town atmosphere.
- History and its uniqueness.
- Scenic views; weather.
- Landscaping and greenway / park system.
- Quiet and respectful of the rights of our neighbors and visitors.
- Greenway; river frontage.
- Cleanliness and originality; need design standards and requirements.
- Restoring and preserving historic properties.
- Recreation and parks.
- History (courthouse), size (nice people).
- History; size.
- Quaint Downtown and friendly people.
- Wilkes Community College
- History; churches
- Small town atmosphere; beautiful area.
- Historic buildings – museum, Smithy Hotel, etc., cleanliness.
- Rural land; forests; nature; natural areas; animal habitats; friendly folks.
- Rural atmosphere; walking trails.
- The history of the town; small town atmosphere.
- Natural areas; high-quality police department.
- Small town feel; beautiful scenery.
- Small town USA; southern hospitality.
- Diversity; historic sites.
- Downtown; college.
- Old town quality; low tax rate.
- Lumber industry, moonshining
- Keep adding recreational facilities; Lowe’s corporate offices – keep as many jobs here as possible.
- Main Street; pedestrian friendly.
- Quality of life; government representatives/town manager and staff.
- Small town feel; historical aspects.
- Historic structures, small town atmosphere; parks.
- Preserving old building; new buildings.

- History; old courthouse.
- Heritage Museum and community college.
- History.
- History; parks (greenway).

9. What are the 2 most negative characteristics about Wilkesboro that you would like to see improved?

- Overhead lines in Downtown Wilkesboro. Ugly entrances to Downtown area.
- Amount of traffic on Main Street. Condition of sidewalks – need improvement.
- Streets in old parts of town.
- Streets paved in all areas (please).
- Lack of large companies; need better roads.
- Multi family housing; bars – adult entertainment.
- Where does Wilkesboro begin? Need a point to welcome people.
- Corridors 268, 421, 16/18; affordable housing.
- Downtown housing.
- Restaurants and junk cars on property.
- Ranked lowest in graduate degrees by 2005 census; ranked lowest avg. median income by 2005 census.
- Image
- Properties with junk cars.
- Bury power lines Downtown; landscape around Tyson.
- Tyson.
- Properties with junk cars, fridges, etc.
- Need trees back!
- Drug abuse in school and youth; low quality of education/drop out rate.
- Not enough recreation and drug problems due to that.
- Roadways – travel on existing roads is dangerous and directions are unclear. Rundown buildings – it seems there is an abundance of abandoned, mistreated buildings.
- Education levels.
- Education levels.
- Street design (flow); good restaurants needed.
- Factory facilities next to Downtown; bury utility lines through Downtown area.
- Streets cleaned and well maintained as well as houses behind old Gray Brothers.
- Bury those power lines in Downtown!
- The lower income drug area; more business – more jobs.
- Busy dangerous intersection 421/421 Business.
- Capitalize on overall beauty and keep promoting its history.
- Schools – incentive to graduate and qualify for good jobs. Traffic – there will be a need for better flow of traffic as industry comes!
- Trash at businesses and loud signage.
- Street littering and unsafe drivers.
- Poor run down houses; poor run down neighborhoods.
- Some of the housing units are in need of repair, multiple vehicles, etc.

- Removal of power lines, etc. in Downtown would have a major effect. Improving the fronts of Downtown businesses – having a common theme.
- Low rent housing (almost slum like).
- Christmas decorations.
- Downtown appearance; more restaurants and/or delis.
- Downtown utility poles and dilapidated properties.
- Service; all-purpose store; drug store
- The Cub Creek area; drug deals.
- Lower income housing areas; lack of dining choices.
- Care of animals should be improved; smell of Tyson; Downtown appearance (exposed power lines, temporary signs, etc.).
- Better usage of vacant buildings.
- South Street area; scenic entrances to town.
- Chain restaurants/strip development; appearance of businesses/signs.
- Lack of restaurants; loss of jobs.
- Traffic on 421 West around Walmart; overhead lines Downtown.
- Vacant warehouses etc.
- Low paying jobs; closed businesses opened.
- Overhead power lines Downtown.
- Mentioning Lowe's leaving (way too much).
- Lowe's moving; North Wilkesboro and Wilkesboro should be one town.
- Junk cars, trashed houses.
- Storefronts; water intake.
- Needs to be a little more progressive; visual appeal needs to be improved Downtown.
- Housing area east of town from Main to Cub Creek Park.
- Tyson; the old dairy.
- More job opportunities; shopping malls and restaurants.
- Bury power lines and Downtown renewal.
- Trash/junk cars; poorly maintained mobile homes.
- Sign ordinance (placement, height, etc.).

10. Are there any issues that you feel the Town of Wilkesboro must address in the next 20 years?

- Remove overhead power lines in Downtown Wilkesboro. Control growth along 421 corridor.
- Traffic – traffic – traffic
- Traffic up 421; work on the new water intake above the dam.
- Work on the streets that have not been paved in over 20 years.
- Must continue to improve water, sewer, roads, and transportation.
- Drainage – run-off – waste water.
- Too many old buildings (non historic) should be removed; designate an industrial area to attract new business.
- Future pop. Growth; the ability to service the elderly; housing; what type of community we want to become (tourism, retiree, commercial, industry).
- Traffic.
- Jobs.

- Job development for our future. Prevention of high school drop-outs, teen pregnancy.
- Affordable housing; low cost, efficient transportation; entrepreneurship and econ. Development.
- Controlled growth – strong building and zoning requirements.
- Bury power lines.
- Jobs – more activities for children such as indoor skateboarding facility.
- More jobs; beautification.
- I want to see a first class facility (directed to the use of the teenage community) where they can gather for positive social and physical activity. I want to see a quality indoor skate park and activity center where kids can be safe, supervised, and encouraged in life values.
- I want to see a wholesome place for teenagers to gather, grow in skills and socialize in a positive environment like an indoor skate park/café/ and activity center – maybe drug use would go way down.
- Recreation! More needs to be done for the youth. Drug use is out of control. Travel – streets, roadways, and access to highways could greatly be improved. Quality of Education is poor, and the drop out rate is incredibly high!
- Jobs and housing for elderly.
- Jobs and housing for elderly.
- Youth center; unity with N. Wilkesboro – “The River Unites”.
- Population growth; economic decline.
- Industry; tourism; restaurants; getting new residents.
- Jobs; meeting community needs; visitation center.
- Industry growth.
- (Controlled Growth) Water - that we will be prepared in event of terrorism and that we plan to have enough in case of drought. That we have adequate sewer.
- Encourage the young people to stay. Have retired people involved in education and tutors and mentors. Traffic. Old and empty buildings.
- Architectural heritage in Downtown and extending sewage and water to extraterritorial areas. Need to expand city limits westward toward lake.
- Preserve (even better than presently) our natural resources and encourage the growth of our employment opportunities.
- Again, must develop and enforce design standards for buildings and facilities.
- Tourism; encouraging our young people to stay here and/or return after they are educated.
- Parking, commercial development.
- We need a by-pass built to avoid so many wrecks on 421 Business, the congestion is terrible.
- Get away from the “good ’ol boy” government; take citizen’s requests more seriously; keep taxes on individuals low; better X-mas decorations soon.
- The growing population of retired people and part time residents and the needs they require. Changes from an industrial base to a service based economy.
- Manufacturing jobs and housing boom.
- Water.
- Economic growth to keep jobs in the area to retain residents.
- Historic preservation.

- Animal care issues.
- Housing; business; accommodating the change to retirement economy.
- Animal control; leash laws.
- Make sure that we take advantage of industry we have and will have.
- Basic infrastructure.
- Loss of business.
- Promote new businesses; traffic; safety/crime.
- Possibly forced annexation.
- Encourage activity with speedway; welcome newcomers; clean up bad junk areas in the county.
- Attract retirees to the foothills and mountains; keep college age graduates in the area; no trailer parks; more aggressive drug enforcement; encourage legitimate small business growth.
- Water; public transportation.
- Adequate water; air quality; controlling not stopping growth.
- Jobs – you have to employ your population; change to suit your old population; attract retirees with better amenities.
- Utilities; traffic flow on Main Street; housing availability; services for Downtown residents, i.e., drug store, small grocery, coffee shop, library, art center, senior center satellite area.
- Street widening.
- Bringing in more business and job opportunities.
- Planning and zoning.
- Control of negative aspects of growth.
- Infrastructure (ETJ); industry; planned commercial sites; solid enforcement – zoning, watershed, subdivision ordinances; economic development and incentives.

Small Group Discussion Responses to the following question: *What do you consider to be the most important development issues facing Wilkesboro in the next 20 years?* (The center column represents the number of votes the statement received at the conclusion of the meeting from all forum participants).

Employment & Economy	9	Attract industry, jobs (high tech)
	5	Economic development
	7	Develop job opportunities
	3	Locally owned businesses and restaurants
	3	Higher salaries and higher quality jobs
	3	Support grass root businesses, as well as, new businesses coming to Wilkes or are founded here
	3	Encourage small business development
	2	Entrepreneurial opportunities
	2	Local financing incentives for existing businesses and new businesses
		Improve commercial opportunities
		Expansion of local funding options (endowments, foundations)
Youth	14	First class indoor skate park for youth
	8	Retention of youth

	2	Youth services
	1	Young adult recreational opportunities (need to publicize)
Appearance & Image	8	Cleaning up of property (Public nuisances, Need stricter ordinances)
	3	Bury overhead power lines
	2	Beautification of Town to bring more people to area
	2	Branding our community
	2	Development of tourism economy and sites
	1	Update sign ordinances including billboards
	1	Better and more attractive signage
	1	Right-of-way signage requirements enforced
	1	Improve Town's Christmas decorations
	1	Add street trees to Main Street
	1	Develop tourism market
	1	Tourism increase
	1	Attracting retirees and tourists
	1	Maintain rural and small town quality of life
	1	Preserve small town appeal
		Image – What do we want it to be?
		Promote positive image of the area (plan to merchandise/market)
		Work on Town Ordinances in terms of beautification of Wilkesboro
		Junkyard ordinance
		Sidewalks with curb appeal
		Advertise, market events that are held in the county
		Enhance the appearance of streetscapes for all properties
		Wider sidewalks
		Cleaner roads
		Corridor & streetscape planning
Growth	9	Controlling and planning for growth
	3	Land use plan
	2	Enforcement and creation of new zoning laws
	1	Coordination between Wilkesboro, North Wilkesboro and Wilkes County (growth)
	1	Control of what type of business growth comes to Wilkes County
	1	Downtown commercial (retail) development
	1	Decent up-scale rental property (residential)
	1	Annexation (towards lake) Hwy. 268
		Maintaining what we currently have in the area (hold Town meetings)
		Infrastructure planning for new growth
		Plan for growth along 421, 16, 268 corridors – promotion of these areas
		Maintaining small town atmosphere
		Having available sites for business development
		Look at ETJ for development and investment
		Growth around WCC
		Lack of development
		Land use regulations for County

		Better infrastructure (roads, technology, wireless, water, sewer, green spaces, curbs)
		Converting vacant industrial buildings into other uses
		Zoning laws in county
		Zoning, subdivision and development regulations
		Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro working together
		Accommodating new residents
		Spanish speaking population
		To be more welcoming to newcomers – more tolerant
		Diversifying population
		Adjusting to Hispanic population
		Increased population - demand for new services
Commercial	4	More shops and restaurants needed
	2	Drug store needed
		Downtown amenities – pedestrian, drug stores, movie theater, galleries, library, accessible, senior center – “state of the art”
		Additional shopping opportunities
Natural Resources	10	Water (intake)
	5	Animal habitat, natural resources
	3	Water availability
	1	Water
	1	Protect the environment
	1	Ecology – recycling
Housing	4	Affordable and low cost housing
	3	Affordable mixed-use housing
	3	Housing and services for seniors, elderly and retired persons
	2	Homestead tax exemption for seniors
	1	Downtown housing
		Tighter manufactured housing regulations
		Middle income housing
		Condo building bust
Historic	3	Historic preservation
	2	Expand effort for downtown historic districts – more shops/restaurants. “Revitalization” – potential destination of tourist / bury overhead cables.
	1	Preserve historic appearance with HDC guidelines
		Proud of our heritage
		Nascar history – home of Benny Parsons, Junior Johnson
		Preserve historical sites
Infrastructure & Transportation	2	Infrastructure
	2	Improve existing downtown parking
	1	Adequate and affordable public transportation

	1	Limit traffic control bypass
	1	Traffic flow
		Adequate municipal services with low taxes
		Rising cost of energy
		Replacement of existing water and sewer lines
		Garbage, landfill???
		Utilize resources, buildings, etc.
		Further develop public transportation system
		421 Bypass – should it happen?
		Remodeling 421 W – safety/aesthetics
		Improve transportation connectivity between Towns
		Drainage and road repairs near Bojangles
		US 421 Bypass
		Support loop around Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro
		Traffic impacts with new development
		Bike lanes within roads
		Transportation alternatives
		Traffic and road improvements
		Good roads, maintain streets
		Expand PART transit to Boone and Greensboro
Parks/Recreation/	2	More pedestrian access and bike lanes
Cultural	2	Parks and recreation
	1	Create a plan for the speedway
	1	Increase and maintain local and state parks
		Entertainment/leisure activities for retirees migrating to Wilkes County
		Activities/Entertainment for youth
		Intramural sports
		Swimming pools, tennis, golf courses
		Attract movie theater
		Greenway expansion
		More recreation
		Youth center to keep kids doing positive activities
		Horse trails and associated businesses
		Promote music and other arts
		Strengthen cultural arts
		Parks and recreation – continue improvements (greenways)
Education	1	Education
	1	Increase higher education opportunities
		4-year university (expansion of 2-year institution)
		Creating a desire for education; children want to further education
		Improve workforce skill level
		Improve graduation rate
		Education – provide good schools
		Government and community support for education and community college system

		Motivate, educate youth to stay in Wilkesboro and provide skills for jobs
		Utilize College, Benton Hall, Heritage Museum, etc.
Healthcare	1	Good walk-in medical clinics
		Improve and increase health care options for seniors and others (affordable and preventive)
		Increased healthcare services
		More health programs to educate youth on social issues
		Medical facilities – Class A hospital facilities, general practitioners
Seniors		Retirement communities, planning for the elderly population
		Accommodations for seniors: transportation (trolley), wide sidewalks and crosswalks
		Elderly care quality programs and facilities, recreation, employment
Safety	1	Police protection – welfare for all (children/abused women)
	1	Removal of known drug houses
		Improve security and safety of citizens
		Maintain or improve public service levels for police, fire, water, roads, sidewalks, etc.
		Enforcement of speed limits
		Training for Public Safety agencies (new tech) satellite fire station/police

Visual Preference Survey Results

Survey participants were asked to rate the following images on a scale from -5 to +5 with +5 being the very desirable and -5 being very undesirable for Wilkesboro. The image number is located in the upper left corner and the average rating is in the lower center of the image.

