

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLAN UPDATE PROCESS, PURPOSE, AND TIMELINE.

Why

Since the adoption of the last Land Use Plan (2008), Wilson County has grown. This plan will confirm the shared vision for the future and provide a roadmap for County leadership and staff in achieving those goals.

Who

- This project is a collaborative effort of:
- County Staff
 - Local Stakeholders
 - Advisory Committee
 - Planning Board & Board of Commissioners
 - The Public (YOU!)

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Task and Event	2023			2024									
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Project Initiation and Analysis													
Data gathering, mapping, plan review, community profile	[Bar]												
Community tour and kickoff meetings		[Bar]											
Steering Committee						01/31							
Stakeholder Interviews		11/13											
Planning Board / BOC Update Meeting													
Economic Development and Finance Meetings	10/4	11/1 & 11/15											
Visioning and Plan Development													
Community Survey				01/23-03/03									
Draft Community Vision Statement and Goals													
Steering Committee						03/11		05/14		07/17			
Public Meeting(s)							04/17				08/20		
Planning Board / BOC Update Meeting								06/03					
Draft Future Land Use Map													
Draft Plan Recommendations													
Plan Refinement and Adoption													
One-month public posting and adoption draft review period													
Review public comment on adoption draft													
Presentation of adoption draft to the Planning Board and BOC													

Legend:
BOC = Board of Commissioners

Note: Schedule is subject to change and will be updated periodically to reflect project progress. Please visit the project webpage for the most up-to-date information.



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What

A comprehensive plan update involves data analysis and mapping, public engagement, and community goal setting. The plan will include a Future Land Use Map and policy recommendations to achieve the vision and goals of the community.

When

The update kicked off in Fall of 2023 and will conclude in fall of 2024: There are numerous meetings, open houses, and opportunities for community input.

STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

Contact:

Wilson County Planning Department
PlanningAndZoning@wilsoncountync.gov
 Office: 252-399-2965, option 2

Project website:

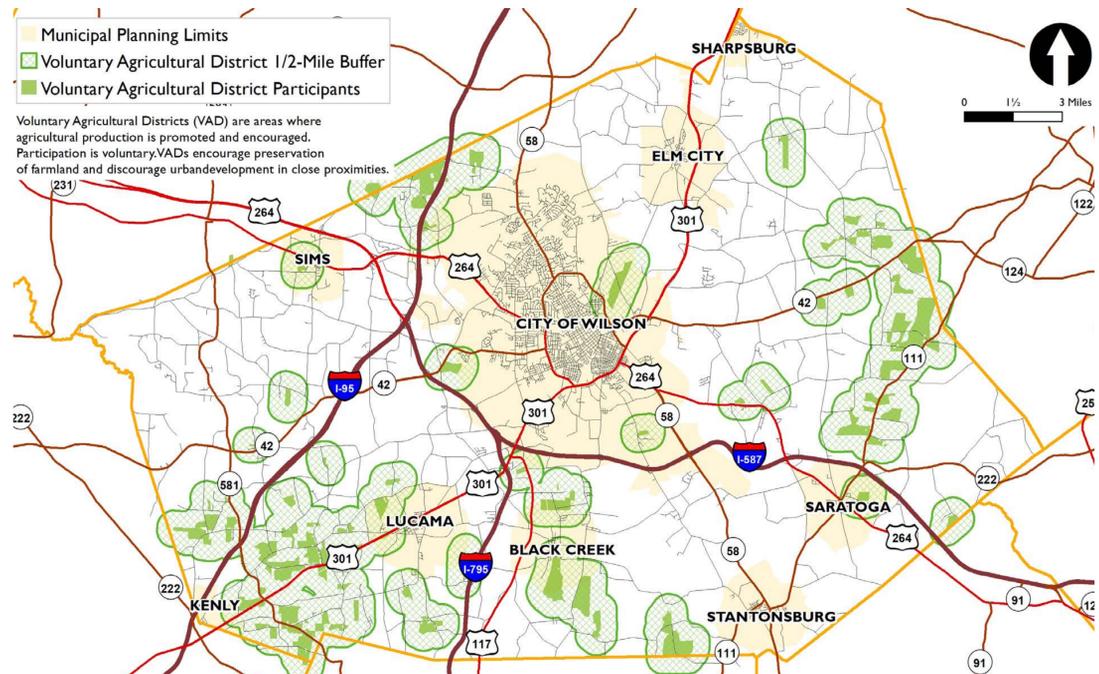
<https://www.wilsoncountync.gov/departments/development-services/planning/2045-comprehensive-plan>



RECOMMENDATIONS: AGRICULTURE

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE AIMED TOWARDS FURTHERING THE COUNTY'S RICH AGRICULTURAL HISTORY AND THE RELATION TO CONSERVATION AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

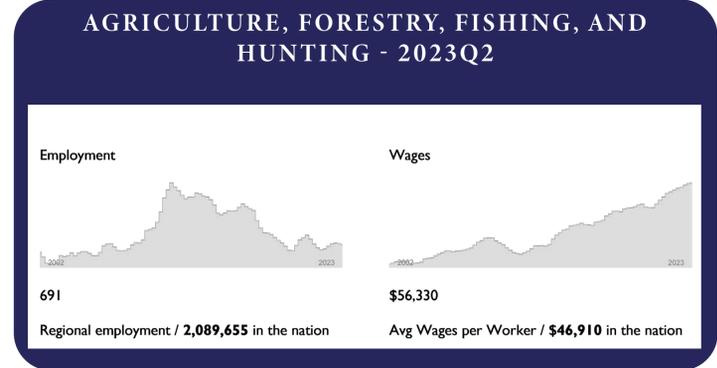
Did You Know? In 2022, Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting produced \$96.1 million in GDP for Wilson County, North Carolina.



This map shows both Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) participants and associated 1/2-mile buffer zones. A majority of VADs are located in the southwestern portion of the County.

Plan Recommendations

- **Preserve rural and agricultural areas.**
 - Support the development of a regional greenbelt that will connect agricultural lands, floodplains, forests, wetlands, greenway corridors, open spaces, and natural areas. Forming partnerships with local land trusts, conservation agencies, and/or municipalities is recommended.
 - Continue to notify property owners of the presence and significance of the Voluntary Agriculture District program and enrolled properties.
- **Support agricultural production and agritourism as economic engines.**
 - Maintain a focus on supporting the operation of production agriculture. E.g. - minimize residential development (and associated traffic congestion) on roads in rural areas, support agricultural-supportive industries, land uses, and operations, establish larger buffers for residential development adjacent to production agriculture, etc.
 - Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to expand vendors at the Wilson Farmers & Artisan Market.
 - Encourage agritourism activities for existing operations that are interested in the bona-fide farm designation.
- **Maintain availability of and access to local agricultural products.**
 - Provide opportunities for local farms to sell goods to residents, businesses, and visitors.



Case Study: Alamance County Farmland Preservation Program

The Alamance County Farmland Preservation Program is an initiative that protects agricultural lands and promotes sustainable farming practices within the county. This program is supported by the NC Agriculture Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and the Piedmont Land Conservancy.

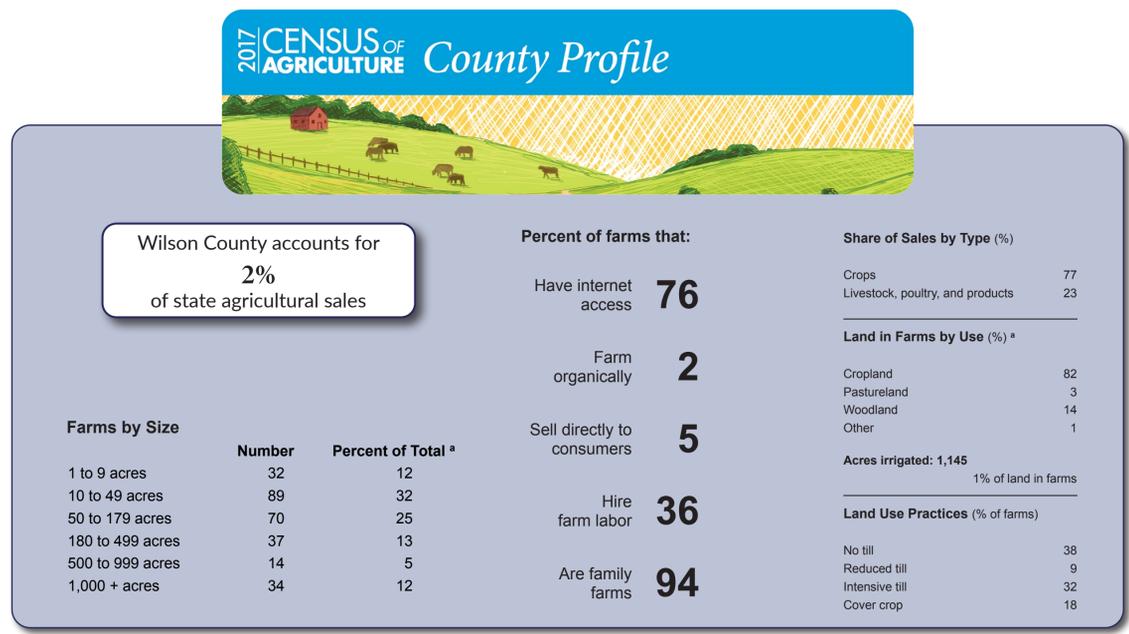
The primary goals of the program are to:

1. **Promote Agricultural Values:** By increasing the visibility and pride in the agricultural community, the program supports the economic and financial health of local agriculture and forestry.
2. **Preserve Farmland:** These voluntary agreements allow landowners to sell the non-agricultural development rights of their land. Landowners retain ownership, the right to sell or rent the land, and the right to farm.

A THRIVING TOMORROW
2045
Wilson County

AGRITOURISM ASSESSMENT 2024

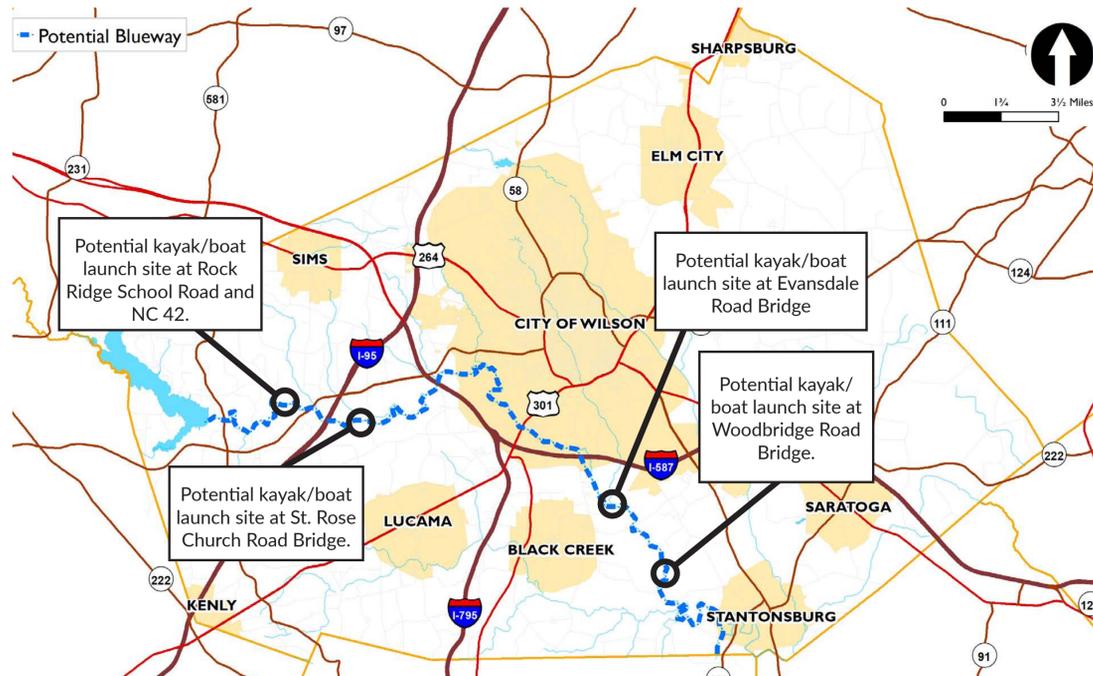
As part of a separate analysis to this plan, an agritourism assessment has been prepared which outlines various approaches for Wilson County farms to attract visitors for the purposes of entertaining or educating while generating income.



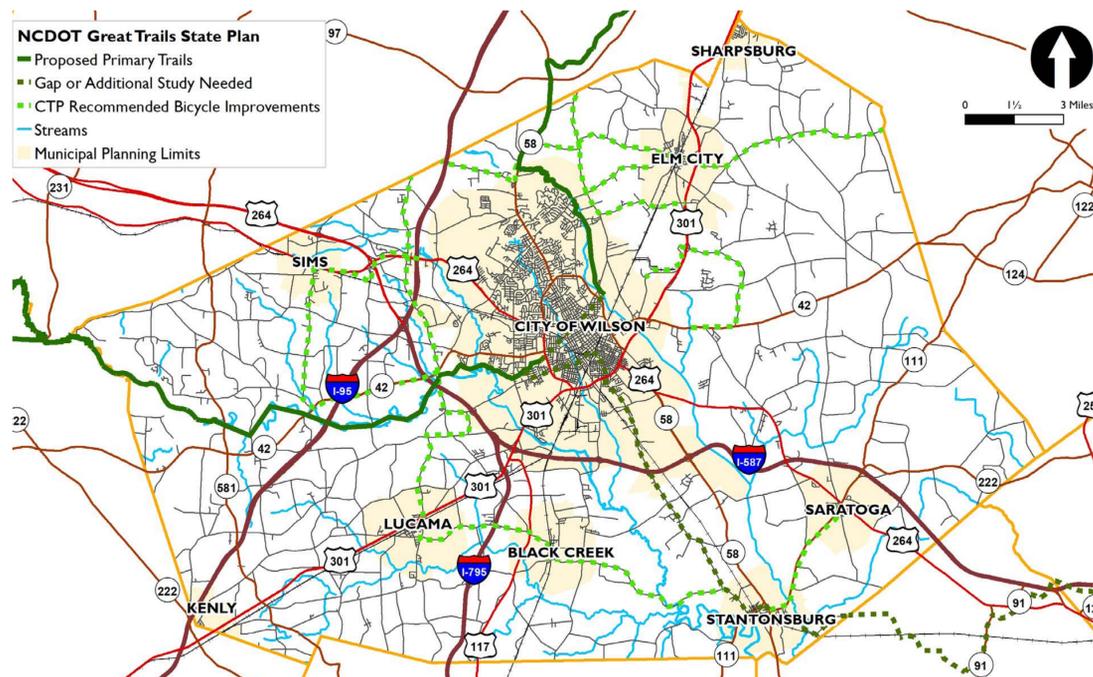
Support local agriculture by creating a Wilson County Grower endorsement to verify local farming operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: RECREATION

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS AIM TO EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN WILSON COUNTY.



This map depicts a potential blueway along Contentnea Creek that stretches from the Buckhorn Reservoir to the southeastern portion of the County, through the Town of Stantonsburg.



This map contains recommended bicycle improvements identified in the County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan and proposed trail locations identified in the NCDOT Great Trails State Plan.

Did You Know?

Blueways are defined as a stretch of a water body that has been mapped out with the intent of creating an educational, scenic, and challenging experience for recreational paddlers.

Case Study: Greenville, NC Paddle Initiatives

As paddling along scenic rivers in eastern North Carolina grows in popularity, communities are implementing policies to grow this recreational opportunity for residents and visitors alike.



Plan Recommendations

• Create public recreational opportunities that connect and compliment facilities and services provided by municipalities.

- Identify gaps in recreational services not currently filled by municipalities and identify sites within the county to serve these needs regionally.
- Establish boat launches along the Contentnea Creek and other navigable waterways to provide outdoor recreational opportunities and water access. Coordinate with municipalities that might provide additional launch locations.
- Coordinate with state and local agencies to build out the bike paths and trails identified in the State's Great Trails State Plan. Coordinate with adjacent counties and municipalities to create larger trail networks. This will also create recreational tourism opportunities in the County.

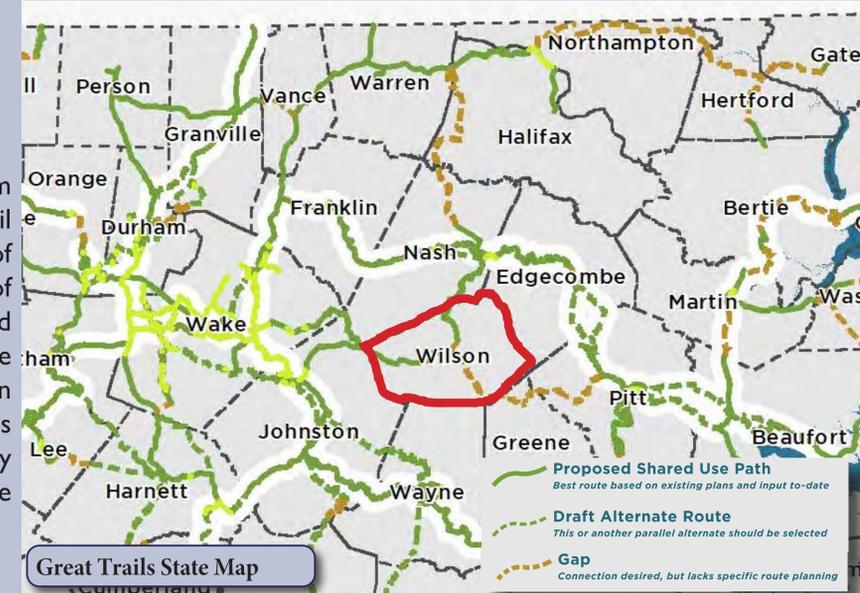
• Continue to prioritize transportation planning and development efforts that will serve current and future residents and businesses.

- Identify and pursue bicycle and pedestrian projects as identified in adopted plans such as the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, Great Trails State, and this plan.
- Identify candidate grants to assist in implementation of transportation projects identified by the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the Great State Trails Map, and other planning efforts.



Great Trails State Program

The Great Trails State Program provides funding for new trail development and extension of existing trails anywhere in the state of North Carolina. This includes paved trails or greenways, natural surface trails, biking trails, and equestrian trails. As an eligible applicant for this grant opportunity, Wilson County may pursue funding through the Great Trails State Program.



Great Trails State Map

RECOMMENDATIONS: DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

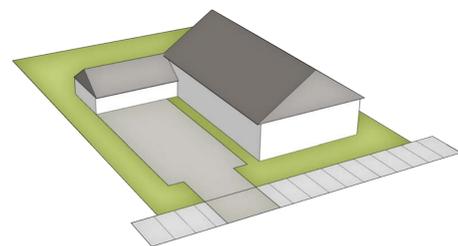
THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS INVOLVE UPDATING THE COUNTY'S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) TO PROMOTE ENHANCED DESIGN WITHIN NEW DEVELOPMENT.

Recommendation Focal Areas

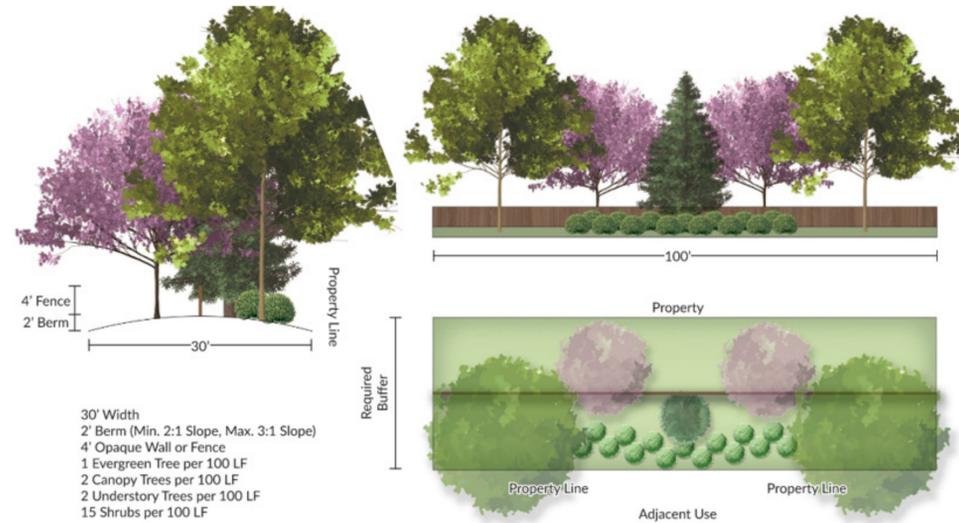
UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE UPDATES

Updating the requirements in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) will help address the changing needs of the growing population and community preferences for new development. Currently identified issues include the items below.

- Strengthen residential subdivision design standards to reflect modern standards, including but not limited to:
 - Change Major Subdivision lot count to six from four.
 - Major Subdivision lot shall be served internally no joint/shared or single driveways allowed.
 - Additional landscape buffer around all major subdivisions.
- Simplify the landscape buffer matrix to include 20ft (or more) staggered buffer.
- Strengthen standards related to transportation improvements required by large developments.
- Update and clarify zoning districts use standards and design standards.
- Update and modernize the table of permitted uses, including appropriately transitioning special use permits to by-right (with standards), where appropriate.
- Open space standards to ensure appropriate levels of public or private recreation for rural residents, including potentially multi-use trails.
- Revise development approval procedures to streamline and modernize the applicant experience and simplify administration while maintaining or improving development quality and outcomes.



Example of single-family detached graphic.



Updated, modern graphics make development standards easily understood.

Example of Updated Development Ordinances

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- Sample UDO Outline:**
- Chapter 1: General Provisions
 - Chapter 2: Administration
 - Chapter 3: Process and Procedures
 - Chapter 4: Zoning Districts & Dimensions
 - Chapter 5: Uses and Use Standards
 - Chapter 6: Subdivisions & Infrastructure
 - Chapter 7: Environmental Standards
 - Chapter 8: Development Regulations
 - Chapter 9: Signs
 - Chapter 10: Definitions



Example of subdivision entrance sign graphic.

Plan Recommendations

- Provide space for a variety of housing types, lot sizes, and development types to meet the needs of current and future residents.
 - Update zoning and subdivision standards for new residential developments located in Reserved Growth Areas as identified on the Future Land Use Map to include amenities and site design features that residents of those neighborhoods will require (e.g. - open spaces, amenity centers, sidewalks, streetlights, etc.)
- Promote enhanced design within new residential subdivisions.
 - Require additional pedestrian infrastructure within new residential subdivisions, such as sidewalks, multi-use paths (aka greenways), open spaces and active recreational facilities, enhanced bioretention (aka stormwater control ponds), and other amenities.
- Promote interconnectivity within new and existing developments.
 - Require cross access interconnectivity (for both residential and non-residential properties) and minimum block lengths and stub streets for new residential subdivisions and commercial uses. Recommended maximum block lengths for residential development is 800 feet, and for nonresidential development is 600 feet. Streets within a development should be carried to the property line of adjacent properties to ensure future connectivity.
- Preserve rural and agricultural areas.
 - Require buffers on new developments that locate adjacent to production agriculture. Recommend a 50-foot wide buffer with enhanced plantings that will help reduce conflicts between new neighbors and long-established farm operations.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSPORTATION & INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE ENHANCED COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COUNTY, NCDOT, AND LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES, ALONG WITH STRATEGIES TO BOOST COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AT KEY CROSSROADS.

Commercial Crossroads Recommendations

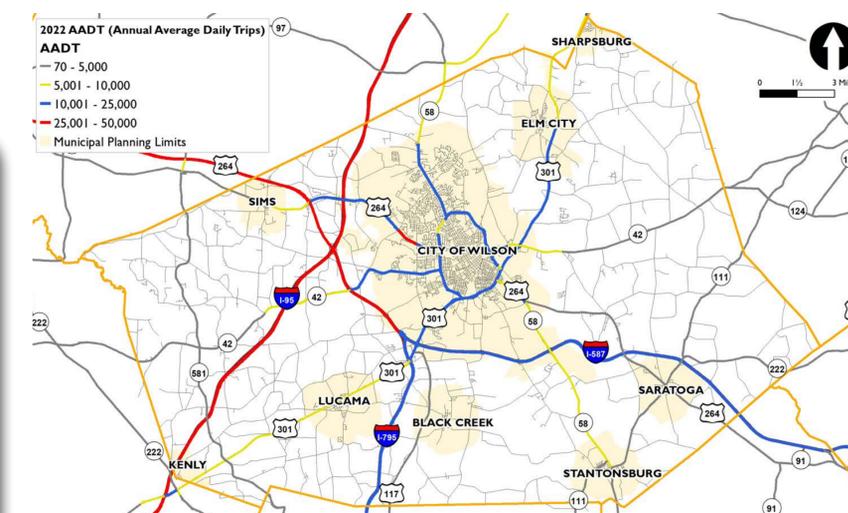
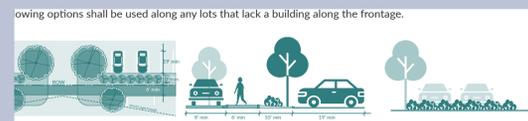
- **Promote neighborhood-serving and community-scale nonresidential uses in areas identified as Rural Commercial Crossroads on the Future Land Use Map.**
 - Analyze the County's Zoning Map to determine existing zoning designations at various crossroads and update the Table of Permitted Uses to allow for appropriate retail, service, and commercial uses.
 - Encourage the reuse of existing nonresidential structures.
 - Support rezoning of properties in and adjacent to Rural Commercial Crossroads for appropriate uses and when appropriate design criteria are met (sufficient street network, traffic control, and turn lanes, interconnectivity, building and site design criteria, connection to public drinking water supply, etc.)

Intergovernmental Coordination Recommendations

- **Coordinate with municipalities to increase the number of high paying jobs** (from: *City of Wilson 2043 Comprehensive Plan*)
 - Continue coordination with municipalities to promote economic development initiatives including the identification of new industrial and manufacturing sites, continuing education and job training centers, etc.
 - Encourage high-quality, job-generating development.
 - Discourage incompatible residential development in and around employment areas, Employment Centers, and Reserved Growth Areas.
- **Strengthen local partnerships.**
 - Establish a regular meeting schedule for local officials, staff, representatives, and leaders to convene, discuss, and solve local issues.
 - Maintain a list of regional/municipal partners. This record of organizations can help staff implement plans to identify goal alignment with other groups.
 - Remain open to opportunities and partnerships that will help achieve the vision and goals of this plan.
- **Coordinate with municipalities to ensure orderly growth and development in Reserved Growth Areas on the Future Land Use Map.**
 - When development or land use intensification is proposed in Reserved Growth Areas, notify and solicit input from adjacent municipalities. This may also involve creating more robust development standards in that more closely match the standards of the municipalities that will serve as the hub for developments in these areas.
 - Coordinate with municipalities to avoid duplication of efforts in the provision of public water service.
- **Support the expansion of broadband and internet service and access.**
 - Partner in the expansion of broadband coverage and services when appropriate.
 - Partner in the pursuit of federal and state grant opportunities to assist with expansion efforts.
 - Coordinate with NCDOT to install conduit during all transportation improvements for future connections.

Consider creating small area studies for rural commercial crossroads with higher traffic volumes or high development demand/potential.

Rural crossroads with high potential for development should be studied to ensure future high quality development. Such a study would discuss connectivity (both between adjacent businesses and to adjacent neighborhoods) in a way that mitigates any expected additional traffic, examines potential uses, and development of design standards (materials, landscaping, signage, amenities, parking, etc.) that will create a pleasing built environment. After the study is completed, the recommendations should be adopted into local development regulations.



The map above shows that higher traffic volumes in the County exist along Interstate-95, Interstate-587 and portions of US-264 closer to the City of Wilson.

Transportation Recommendations

- **Continue to prioritize transportation planning and development efforts that will serve current and future residents and businesses.**
 - Regularly coordinate with the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization to discuss pending and approved developments impacting roadways within the County. Establish priority projects that will mitigate congestion and position those projects for capturing outside funding.
 - Update the County's 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).
- **Promote interconnectivity within new and existing developments.**
 - Ensure new development provides stub streets through the development at intervals equivalent to recommended minimum block lengths.
- **Reduce the impact of new development on traffic congestion and existing thoroughfares and highways.**
 - Identify roadways where limiting the number of driveways is desired.
 - Establish standards in the Unified Development Ordinance to minimize driveways that are too closely spaced.

County Acreage

