



**GROW**  
**Harnett**  
**COUNTY**

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**COMPREHENSIVE  
GROWTH PLAN 2015**





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thank you to all the organizations and individuals who committed their time, insight, and energy to this effort. This plan is the result of the seamless coordination among County staff, the advisory committee and the consultant team. Their efforts leveraged the ideas gathered through a public engagement strategy process into a collection of goals and recommendations that will help **Grow Harnett County**.

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**GROW HARNETT  
COUNTY**

# INTRODUCTION

Harnett County is at an exciting and critical point in its growth and development. Growing from a population of just 68,000 in 1990, to a 2014 population estimate of 125,717 residents, the County has evolved from a rural, agricultural community to an increasingly diverse area that is influenced by both the Research Triangle and Fort Bragg regions of North Carolina.

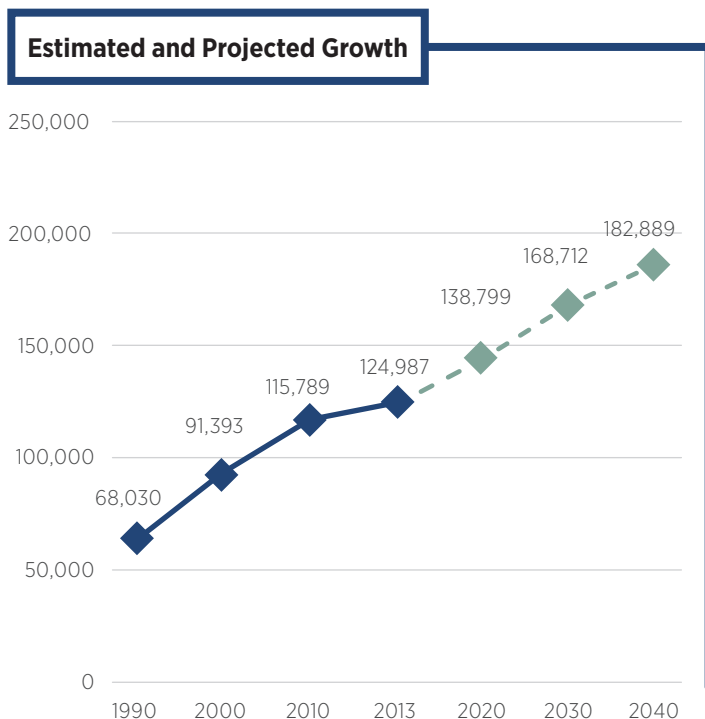
The most recent population figures indicate that Harnett’s growth will continue to outpace regional, state and national rates. Anticipated growth is expected to increase the County population by 46% by 2040. With so much future growth projected, several questions arise about the future of Harnett County.

Where will people live, work and shop? What steps can the County take to ensure quality development? How will growth impact the region’s resources? Can the existing systems of infrastructure support additional people, housing, jobs and cars?

County leaders recognize that these are all important issues that deserve careful thought. This plan will help the community answer some of these questions and keep Harnett County on a path to proactively manage growth in a way that results in a stronger, more prosperous community.

The projected population and need for additional jobs, shopping options and services will result in significant development, land use, and transportation impacts on the county. For these, as well as many other reasons, the County decided to proactively address the direction of growth through the comprehensive planning process.

FIGURE 1: ESTIMATED AND PROJECTED GROWTH



Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management Projections, US Census Bureau

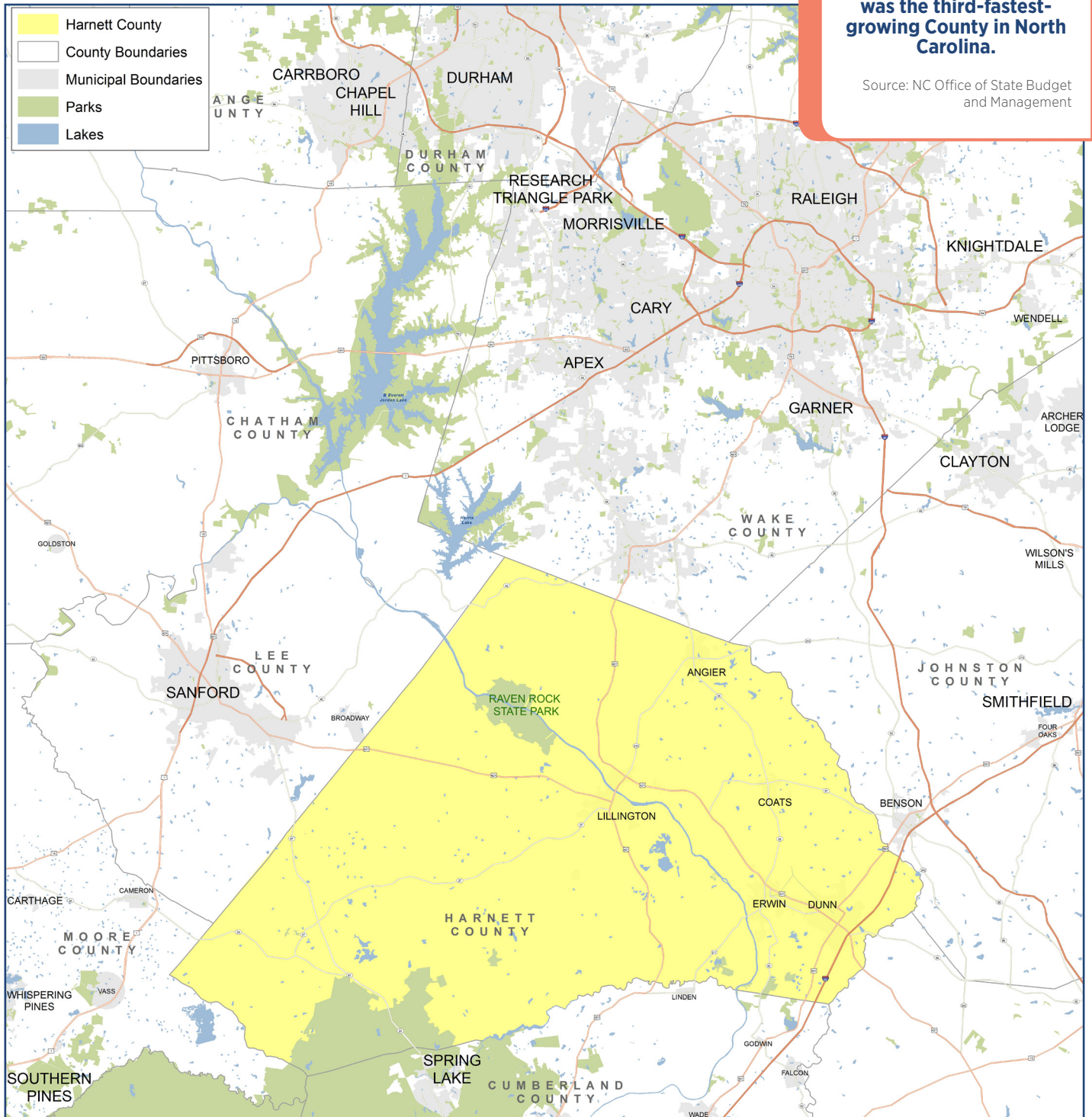


MAP 1: STUDY AREA

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**From 2010-2014, Harnett was the third-fastest-growing County in North Carolina.**

Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management



# PLAN DEVELOPMENT

## PLAN PURPOSE

Grow Harnett County is the county’s planning effort to create a comprehensive growth plan to guide development of the county to desired community outcomes.

A comprehensive growth plan is best described as a guide to the county’s future. It informs current and future decision makers on where they are now, where they want to go, how they intend to get there, and who will help them along the way.

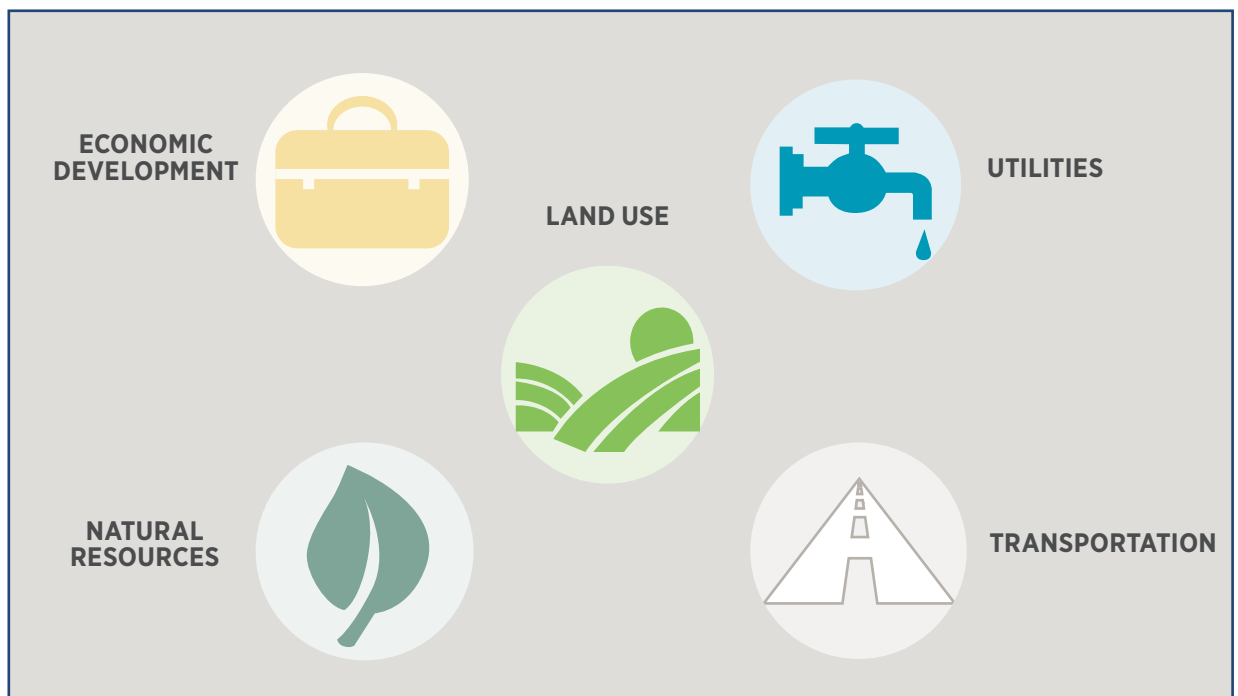
It is a policy document that defines a direction forward so that public investment decisions can be better informed and result in opportunities that will improve Harnett County’s quality of life and competitive position in the region, and potentially stimulate subsequent private-sector investment. The plan presents a clear vision for the future of Harnett County and outlines strategies so that the public and private sectors can jointly implement

the plan. It should be consulted regularly to ensure conformity of land use decisions and infrastructure planning and should be updated and revised periodically to ensure currency.

As illustrated in Figure 2, Grow Harnett County focuses on five interrelated focus areas: land use, economic development, natural resources, transportation and utilities.

This plan should be amended as needed and updated every 5-8 years to ensure it continues to address current needs and represent the vision for Harnett County. Amendments follow the normal procedures for land use plan adoption

FIGURE 2: FIVE FOCUS AREAS

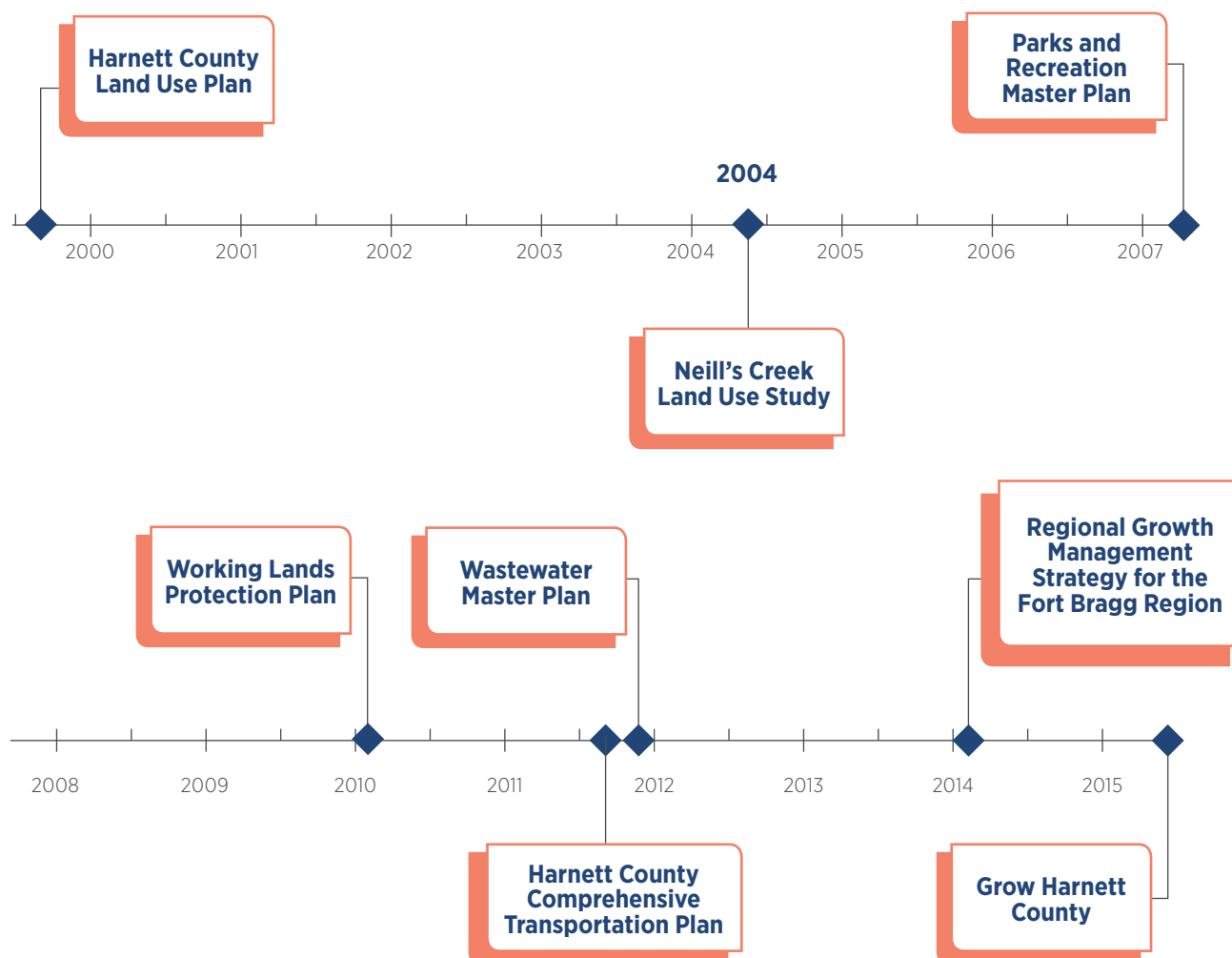


## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Harnett has a long-standing tradition of preparing plans to help guide growth and development decision-making in the community. Each of these previous efforts resulted in a set of recommendations that provided the County with a decision-making framework, and also helped inform the development of this Growth Plan. It is the next step to ensure that, as Harnett County grows, it continues to be defined by the values that make it a unique, inviting and prosperous place to live and work.

This process allowed many departments and stakeholders to come together and discuss how the actions of disparate entities will and can shape the future of Harnett County. At its core, the Plan will function as an update to the existing Harnett County Land Use Plan, originally adopted in 1999. In addition, it builds on previous planning efforts and aligns individual departmental programs and serves as the general plan for the development of and investment by the County.

FIGURE 3: PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS TIMELINE





▲ Grow Harnett County was informed by public input from a variety of sources including workshops, stakeholder interviews and online participation.

## THE FIVE PHASES

The process to create Grow Harnett County was divided into five phases. The first phase focused on project initiation tasks such as data collection, a review of existing plans, and studies and a kick-off meeting and study area tour. During Phase Two, the consultant team inventoried existing conditions in the study area to provide an overview of issues and opportunities to be considered in subsequent phases. During Phase Three, the Plan Development Phase, alternative land

use scenarios supported by illustrations and imagery were developed. Based on the results of the previous phases, a set of recommendations and implementation strategies that support a preferred scenario were developed during Phase Four. The final phase of the process consisted of merging all plan components into a single comprehensive document. This report is the deliverable of this final phase of work.

FIGURE 4: THE PLANNING PROCESS





# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Guiding development of the plan was an inclusionary public engagement process. Understanding community values ensures that this plan, implemented in accordance with the recommendations, supports and advances those priorities over the long term. The process included traditional methods and new techniques to encourage a diverse group of citizens to contribute to the plan.

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This effort was guided by an Advisory Committee, made up primarily of residents and business owners, and also included representatives from the planning board and the development community. This group met regularly through the process to give direction, provide feedback, and advise the project team on plan concepts and recommendations. A list of the Advisory Committee members can be found in the Acknowledgements section of this document.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A committee made up primarily of Harnett County staff provided technical support to the planning effort. Representatives from public safety, economic development, engineering, parks and recreation, planning and public utilities. A list of the Technical Committee members is listed in the Acknowledgements section of this report.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to verify and supplement the data gathered, to explain the conditions observed and to further understand the issues and opportunities that affect the study area. The input from these interviews supplemented the feedback received directly from citizens and property owners participating in the process. The stakeholders included key personnel from County departments as well as representatives from a variety of interest groups including real estate developers and brokers, home owners associations, religious institutions, the school district, health department and others.

## COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community meetings were held throughout the planning process to provide an opportunity for the public to come together and learn about the project and guide development of the vision for the future of Harnett County. During the first meeting, residents met to learn about the project, refine the understanding of issues and opportunities established by the Advisory Committee and comment on alternative land use scenarios. An interactive map was available for conveying land use and natural resource issues that need to be addressed through the planning process. The second community meeting was designed as a visioning session to develop the Future Land Use element of the project and to identify strategies to realize this vision.

## SURVEY

An online survey was sent out to elected officials, Advisory Committee members and posted on the Harnett County website.

### Major findings from the survey included the following:

- ▶ Family ties, small town lifestyle and housing affordability are the top 3 reasons people choose to live in Harnett County.
- ▶ Rural character, jobs and safety also ranked high.
- ▶ Campbell University and the Cape Fear River are two of Harnett County's most important assets.
- ▶ Major perceived advantages for economic development include highway accessibility, housing costs, and quality of life.
- ▶ Major perceived disadvantages for economic development include attractiveness to young people, quality of public schools and availability of advanced information and communication technology services.
- ▶ Health and educational services, agriculture and military industries are most important to Harnett's success.









# ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

# ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## INTRODUCTION

Harnett County has experienced exceptional growth over the past two decades. From a population of 68,000 in 1990 to an estimate of 125,717 in 2014, Harnett grew by 85%.

With this growth come a variety of opportunities and challenges. Continued population growth demands more housing. Additional households will boost retail spending potential in the County and drive commercial development. In addition, there will be demand for more community services such as schools, parks, and recreation facilities. New facilities for police, fire, and EMS will also be required to adequately serve the area. Similarly, infrastructure improvements will be needed to manage the demand placed on transportation and utility systems.

In order to pay for all of these community services and facilities, Harnett needs to diversify its tax base. The majority portion of Harnett's tax base is supported by residential property taxes. Over time, this imbalance will result in costs that exceed available funding, and meeting the needs of the residents will become increasingly difficult. Costs incurred to meet the demands of existing and future residents can be partially offset through tax revenue generated by nonresidential development. County leaders know that for

Harnett to capitalize on these opportunities, and maintain its appeal, it must diversify its tax base and become a destination for employers and retailers.

In addition, capitalizing on and protecting the assets that make Harnett County unique are equally as important. Ensuring continued viability of military operations, protecting water quality in the Cape Fear River to ensure the long-term viability of our water supply, providing recreation opportunities for local citizens and regional tourists, and maintaining the scenic, agricultural nature of rural areas in the County will all be critical to ensuring that the quality of life is preserved and enhanced in coming years.

The following pages summarize the main issues and opportunities relative to the five focus areas of the planning effort. A full report of the County's existing conditions can be found in the State of the County document found in the Appendix of this report.



▲ Harnett County Courthouse.



▲ Cape Fear River.

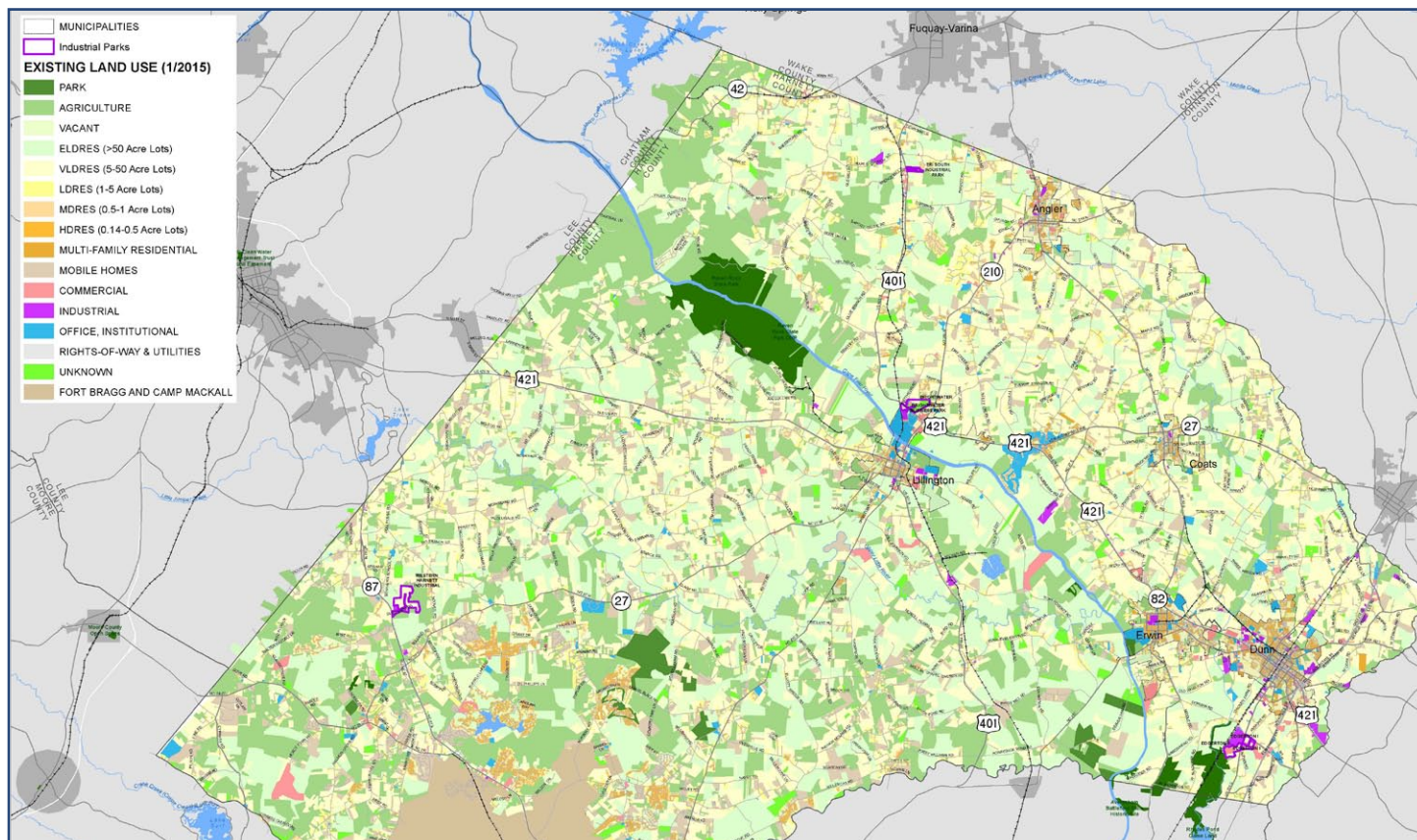


## LAND USE

A historically decentralized, **auto-dependent growth pattern** has led to increased traffic, high costs for infrastructure, and impacts on agricultural lands. Directing growth to locations appropriate for residential development that are easily served by infrastructure and have access to jobs and services, while limiting impacts on natural resources and agriculture, will be key to the future of Harnett County. Forested and agricultural lands contribute to the **rural character and scenic beauty** that contributes to the quality of life in the county. In addition, agriculture contributes millions to the local economy and forests protect water quality and harbor rare and endangered species. This saves water filtration costs and indirectly supports military operations that were once hampered by restrictions imposed due to waning populations of the endangered red cockaded woodpecker.

Identifying areas ideal for commercial, mixed use, and industrial development will be critical to increasing the tax base. Presently commercial, office and industrial development account for just 3% of the land area of the county, yet they account for over 10% of the tax value in the county. Increasing the number of jobs and shopping options inside the county can allow residents to work and shop in the county as well as **increase the tax base**. This can help keep residential property taxes and infrastructure fees and help pay for services such as schools and parks. On the opposite side of the spectrum, some low value residential housing types actually cost the County more in services than the property taxes that are contributed. This shows that different land uses have different fiscal impacts. Considerations of long term fiscal impact should factor into land use decisions in the future.

MAP 2: EXISTING LAND USE MAP



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Harnett County's current economic conditions are being shaped by global trends that are rapidly changing the competitive landscape. Urbanization is a significant trend in NC and around the world. Today more than 90 percent of the country's GDP, and 86 percent of the jobs, are located in urban areas, with more growth happening in larger communities that offer new 21st century infrastructure such as commercial airports, research universities and large hospitals. Educated workers, especially younger workers, are more attracted to an urban lifestyle. Over the past 30 years North Carolina has transitioned from 48 percent urban to 66 percent urban, and the increase is accelerating.

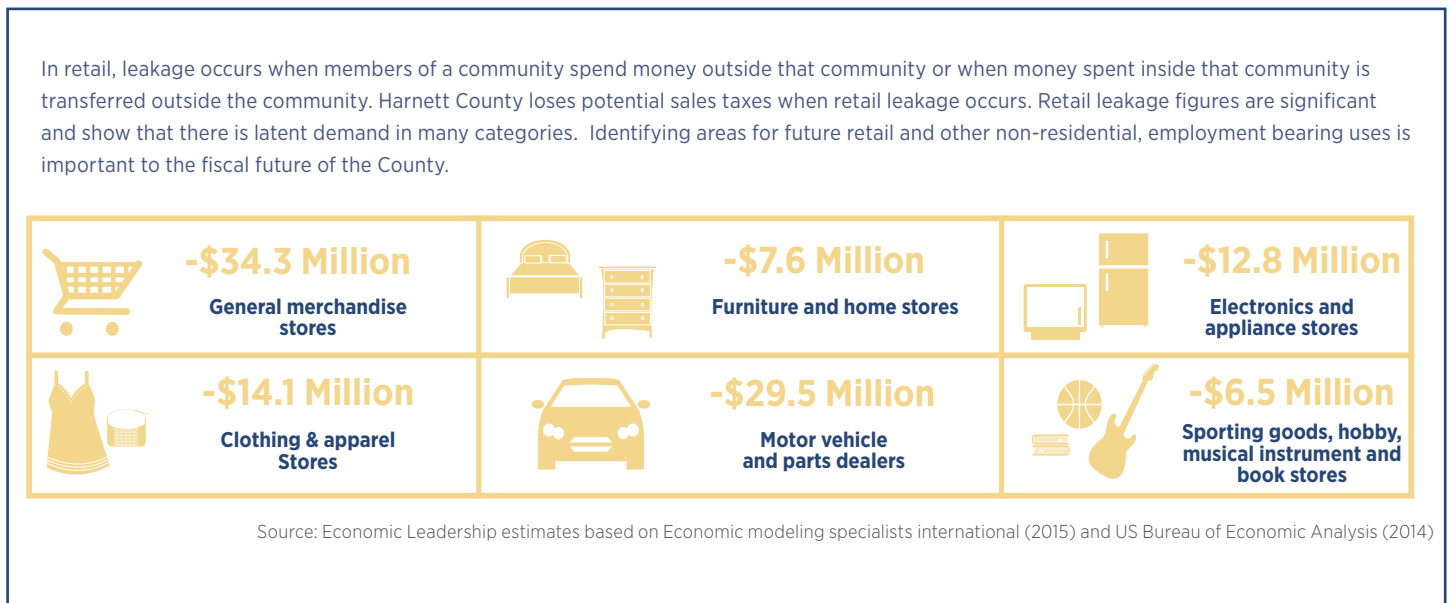
Harnett County has only 44 percent of its population living in the urban areas of the county. Dunn, the largest Harnett County municipality is the 88th largest in North Carolina and is about half the size of the southern Wake County cities of Apex, Holly Springs, Garner and Fuquay-Varina. Four of North Carolina's largest cities, #2 Raleigh (425,424), #4 Durham

(241,174), #6 Fayetteville (210,468) and #7 Cary (144,671) are within very close proximity to Harnett County and create an attractive draw for younger, more educated workers.

Today, a dense concentration of **educated and skilled labor** is often the deciding factor in business locations and expansions. Having citizens with the right skills is a prerequisite for most places to successfully compete. Smaller places are at a disadvantage due to limited concentrations of talent, but can have a competitive advantage if they can adjust education and training resources more quickly to meet market demands.

Finding workers with the right skills is one of businesses' top priorities. **The talent bar is rising.** The types of skills needed and the types of jobs being created are different than they were in the past and they will be different in the future. A recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report concluded that despite millions of people unemployed in America, businesses

FIGURE 5: RETAIL LEAKAGE



had millions of job openings with 50 percent saying that they cannot find the talent they need. While Harnett County's educational attainment levels for higher education are below average compared to its neighbors, its high school graduation rates are comparable and with a strong effort at specific skill training, the workforce can effectively compete for jobs. The key will be a strong partnership with the Central Carolina Community College and Campbell University.

**Shifting sector growth** is impacting available jobs.

Manufacturing jobs, the foundation for good jobs in many North Carolina counties, have been reduced dramatically by globalization and especially by technology advancements. Automation and efficiencies have eliminated the need for many workers in many sectors. Although there is continued consternation about the loss in manufacturing in the United States, the manufacturing share of national GDP has remained constant for decades, while the number of workers needed to produce the products has dropped significantly. In the past, manufacturing has provided important economic activity and jobs to Harnett County.

The number of in-county jobs has stagnated since 2000, with only 147 more jobs in 2014 than in 2000, despite population growth of over 33,000 during that time. In the same time period, manufacturing jobs in the county have dropped from 4,184 to 1,491. Wage and income levels for Harnett residents are below neighboring counties.

Jobs, wages and wealth are moving to the extremes. Job growth since the end of the recession has been more concentrated in lower wage service sectors such as food preparation, administration and sales, and also in highly

skilled, highly educated sectors such as business, scientific and professional services. Currently there are too few people, with the specific skills that are in high demand, creating a supply-demand market that favors the employee and is driving up the costs of finding highly-qualified labor and also the wages of those hired.

At the same time, too many people, with limited (or in low demand) skills, are creating a supply-demand market that favors the employer, stagnating the wages paid to low skilled labor and increasing the skill level of those that get hired. One current result is a shrinking middle class. To combat this trend within Harnett County, educational attainment levels need to rise and more citizens need to be trained for in-demand middle skill jobs.

Fort Bragg has been a major economic influence in the past decade. It is the **largest military installation** in the state with nearly 24,000 active duty military employed on base. Each year, billions of dollars are contributed to the local economy from military payrolls and other spending. Many military families choose to live in southwestern Harnett County due to the exceptional quality of life the area provides. Increasingly growth pressures are also coming from the north, as people desire to locate there and commute to employment centers of Raleigh, the Research Triangle Park and Holly Springs. No one can know for sure, but Federal government austerity could also have a significant dampening impact on growth at Fort Bragg. Over the next decade, the United States military will be challenged by budget limitations, but will also face major transformations due to rapid changes in warfare technology.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND PARKS

Harnett County’s natural resources and parks are among its most valuable assets. Farms and forests contribute \$300 million in value added income annually. The Cape Fear River provides a source of drinking water for the region and when combined with the Upper Little River, Raven Rock State Park and Anderson Creek Park, forms a network of recreation opportunities and open spaces that are unparalleled in the Triangle and Fort Bragg regions. Undeveloped lands north of Fort Bragg are **critical to training operations**. The Sandhills supports one of the best remaining examples of the rare and diverse **longleaf pine ecosystems** which supports the only population of red-cockaded woodpeckers that has met its recovery goal. Rivers and floodplain forests serve as habitat corridors and offer recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, nature photography, bird watching, boating, hunting, and fishing.

As the population increases, there is growing demand for passive recreational facilities, including greenways, nature preserves and active facilities, including sports fields and playgrounds. Harnett County’s natural and wildlife heritage is threatened by growth pressure that results in **conversion of agricultural lands**, timberlands, and wildlife habitats to urban uses. Many streams are considered impaired due to stormwater run-off and sedimentation. Conservation of natural assets and even enhancement can happen in tandem while accommodating development through best practices in design, including enhanced land use planning and encouragement of conservation subdivisions in sensitive habitats and wildlife travel corridors. **A balanced approach** to parks planning that includes passive open space in addition to active recreation facilities can help provide a diverse set of recreational opportunities to current and future residents.



### WATER QUALITY

Urban stormwater and agriculture runoff have impaired many creeks in Harnett County. Low impact development (LID) techniques such as reducing impervious surfaces and retaining vegetated riparian (stream) buffers can help improve water quality.

### WATER ACCESS

The Cape Fear River and Upper Little River offer great opportunities for tourism. New and improved canoe/kayak launches could allow greater access to these natural resources.

### ACTIVE RECREATION

Harnett County Parks & Recreation partners with local, state and federal agencies with the goal of providing comprehensive recreation and leisure opportunities for all citizens. Five county parks are maintained, which have a variety of active recreation facilities including baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, a disc golf course and playgrounds. Additional facilities will be needed as the County grows.

### PASSIVE RECREATION

Harnett County Parks & Recreation maintains two parks with passive recreation opportunities (Anderson Creek Park and Cape Fear River Trail Park). Reserving land for additional passive recreation and amenities (nature parks, trails, and greenways) will be important to preserving the quality of life in Harnett County.

### FOREST & FARM PRESERVATION

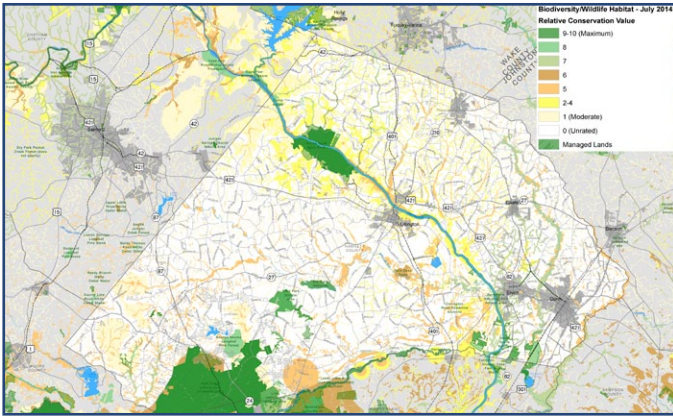
Farmland and forests contribute to the scenic quality of the County’s rural areas. They also contribute over \$300 million in value-added income to the local economy. Residential growth in rural areas can increase development pressure and threaten the viability of agricultural and timber production.

### SPECIES PRESERVATION

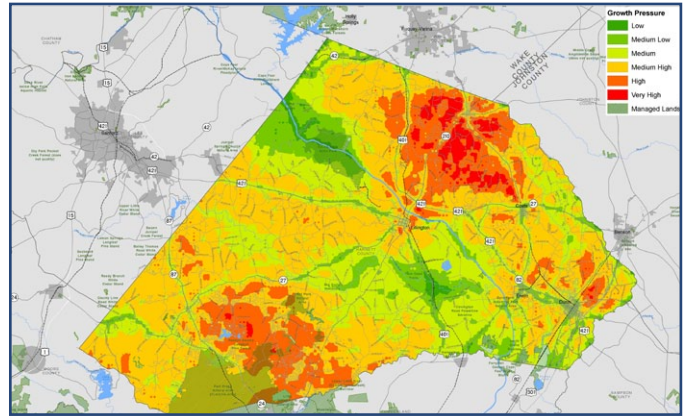
The Cape Fear Shiner, the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and the Rough-Leaved loosestrife are federally endangered species that call Harnett County home. In addition 22 types of species are listed as Federal Species of Concern. Clean water and connected wildlife corridors and habitats are essential to preserving biodiversity.



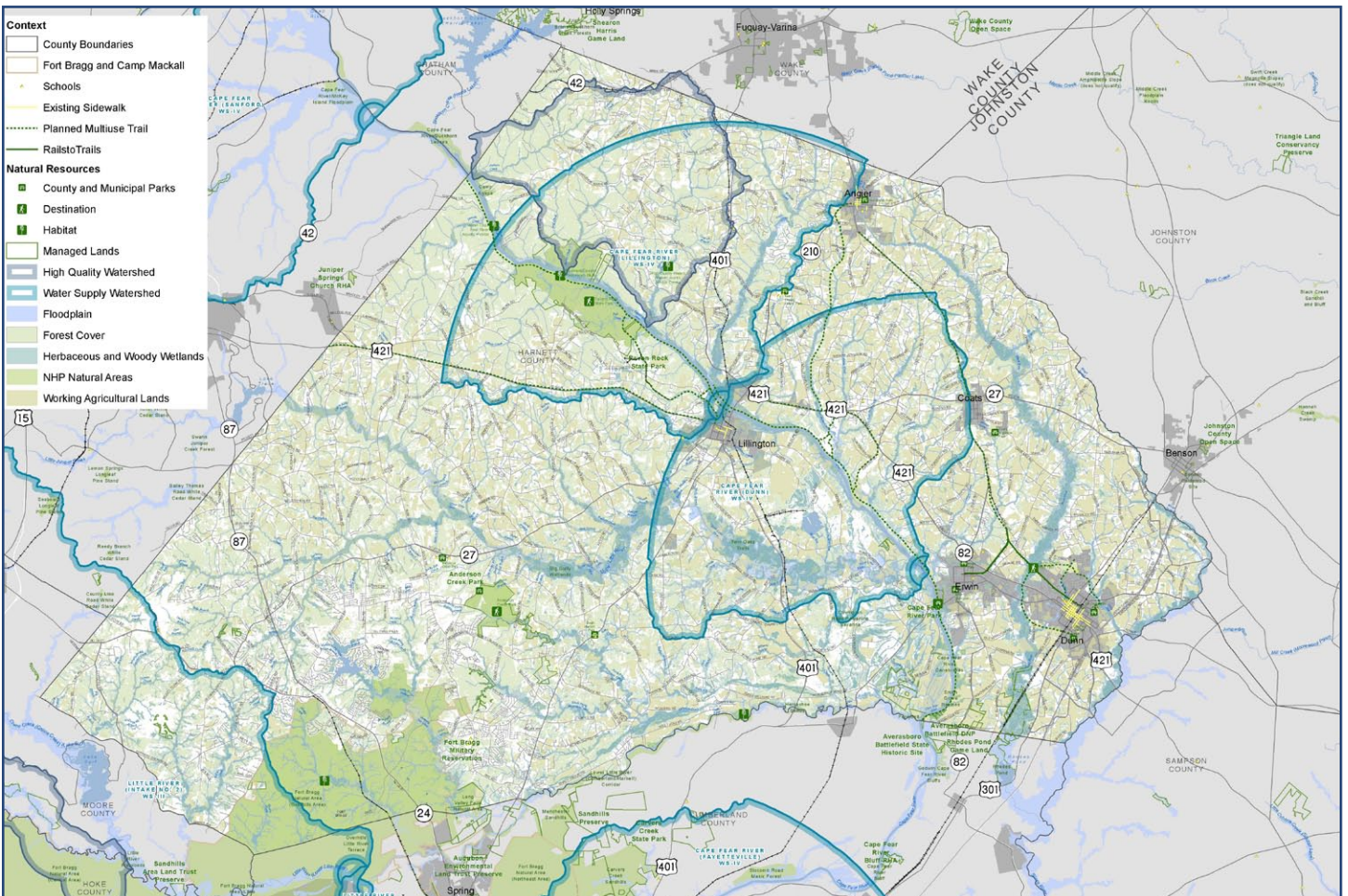
MAP 3: BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT



MAP 4: GROWTH PRESSURE



MAP 5: NATURAL RESOURCES

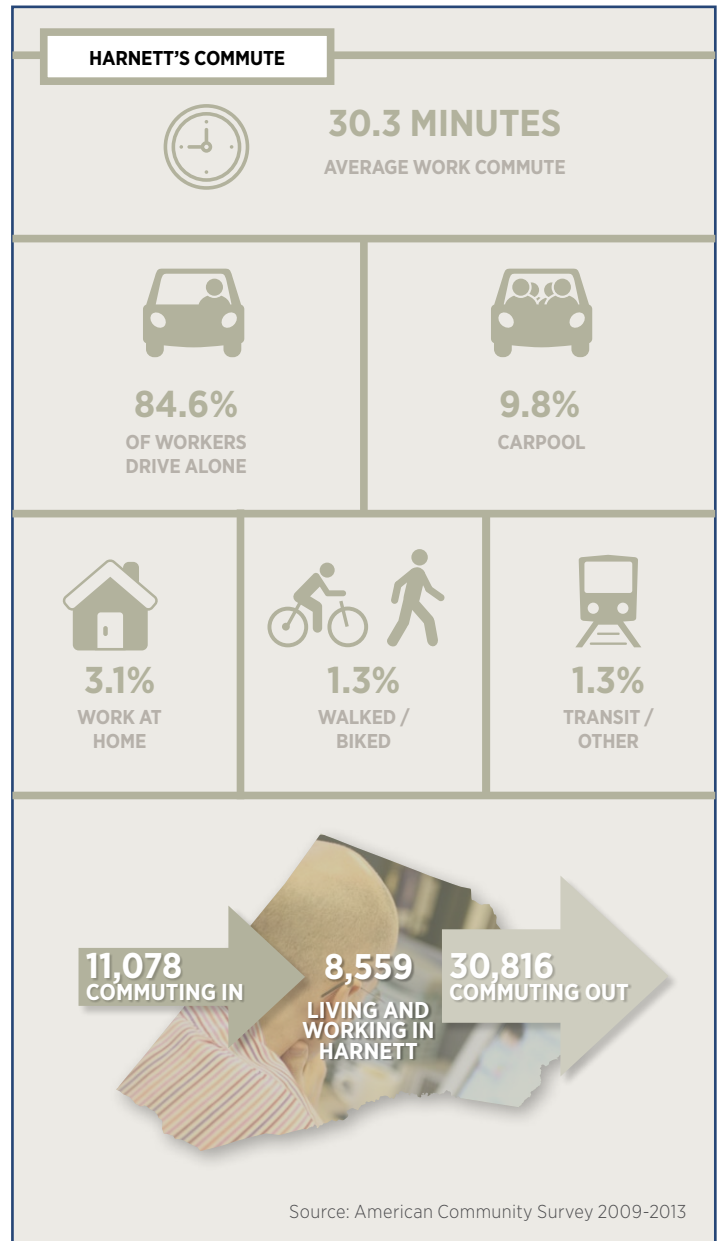


## TRANSPORTATION

A significant majority of residents, 64 percent, commute outside Harnett County for work. The County's jobs to household ratio are the lowest among neighboring counties, placing Harnett as a **bedroom community** for Wake, Cumberland and Lee counties. Historically, Harnett County was characterized by rural and agricultural development. Therefore, many of the highways in the county were originally intended to be two-lane, farm-to-market roads. New development, however, has transformed many of these country roads to major transportation corridors, creating problems with capacity and safety. Investment in preserving and improving the access to the economic engines of the Research Triangle, Fort Bragg and Fayetteville will be critical to continuing to be an attractive place to live and do business.

Economic and political realities suggest more **limited federal and state assistance** to counties in the near future. This presents significant challenges for infrastructure maintenance and may limit funding for new location roadways. With public sector austerity comes a greater need for communities to maintain mobility through access management controls on major roads, and by building effective public-private partnerships at the local level to ensure new development mitigates impacts to the transportation network via on-site and off-site improvements. In some urbanizing areas, there is a growing demand for active transportation options such as biking, walking and transit. The design of new development and future roadway improvements, including the degree to which streets are connected and accommodate multiple types of users will impact traffic levels and the viability of alternative transportation in the future.

FIGURE 6: HARNETT'S COMMUTE

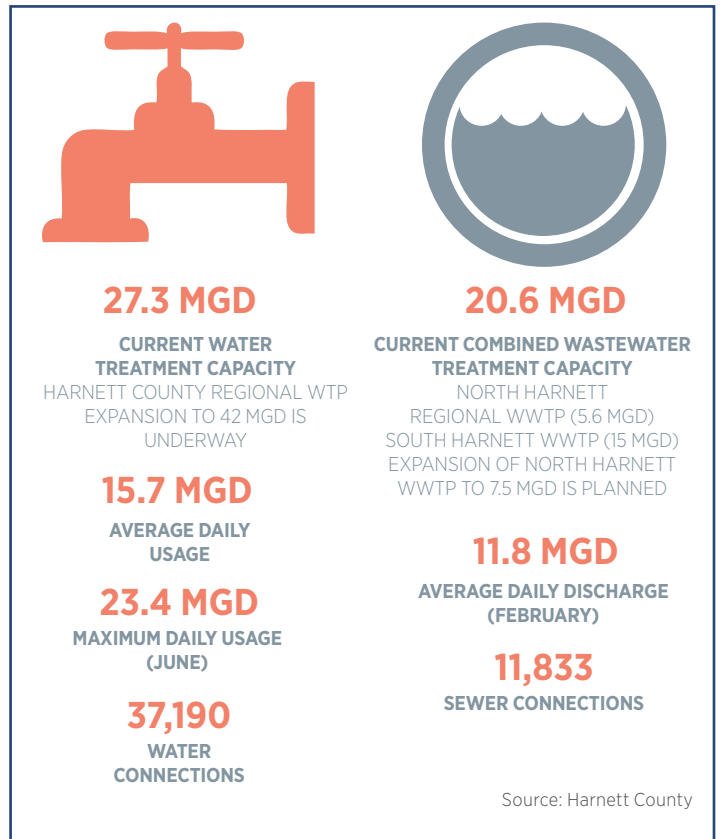


## UTILITIES

Significant investments have been made in the Harnett County water and sewer systems in recent years. The County is unique in that the majority of the county is served by water and an extensive sewer system is maintained that rivals those in larger cities. Moving forward, it will be critical to define expectations regarding future capacity and levels of service to ensure that growth is encouraged where infrastructure exists.

In addition to water and sewer, other utilities, including electric, natural gas and high-speed internet are key to attracting certain types of development including commercial, industrial, professional services, technology and even certain residents. Continued coordination with private utility providers that determine where these services are extended is essential to encouraging economic development.

FIGURE 7: WATER AND SEWER USAGE AND CAPACITY











# HARNETT COUNTY'S FUTURE

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

One method to help communities learn about the potential impacts and trade-offs of future growth and development is through a process called scenario planning.

Scenario planning provides an opportunity to think and make decisions about the impacts of growth on the county to develop a common vision for the future. A trend or Business-As-Usual scenario was developed to represent what the County would look like in 2040, given current trends and policy. Alternative scenarios, based on Harnett County's goals and input from the Technical and Advisory Committee, were developed as alternative paths to the current course of growth and development.

Potential impacts of growth (positive and negative) were measured for all of the scenarios using a set of indicators — measures developed

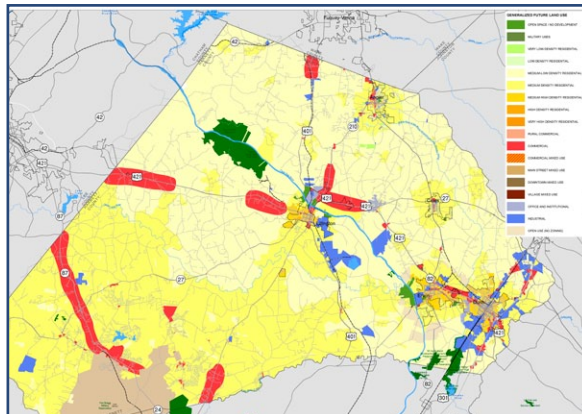
based on priorities and goals developed by the Advisory Committee.

From this analysis, and with input from the Advisory Committee, a Preferred Scenario was developed that maximizes the performance of priority indicators. The Future Land Use Plan was developed from the Preferred Scenario and refined based on input from the public, Advisory Committee and elected officials.

For more details on the process and results of scenario planning please refer to the Appendix of this report.

## SCENARIOS

### Business As Usual Scenario (BAU)

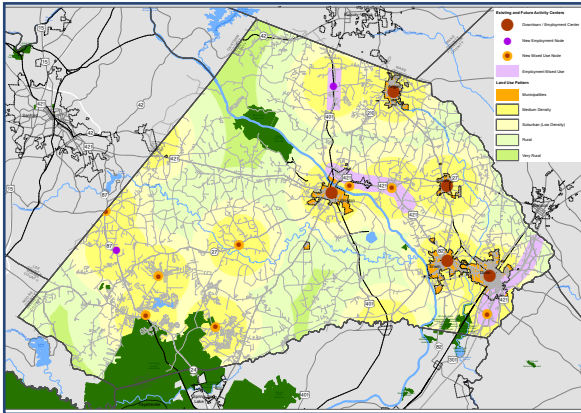


Following existing policies, the Business-As-Usual scenario results in:

- ▶ Scattered low density development that limits utility demand inside of easily served areas, resulting in decreased revenues.
- ▶ Significant impacts to military operations, and wildlife habitats.
- ▶ New development impacting over 38,000 acres of working lands



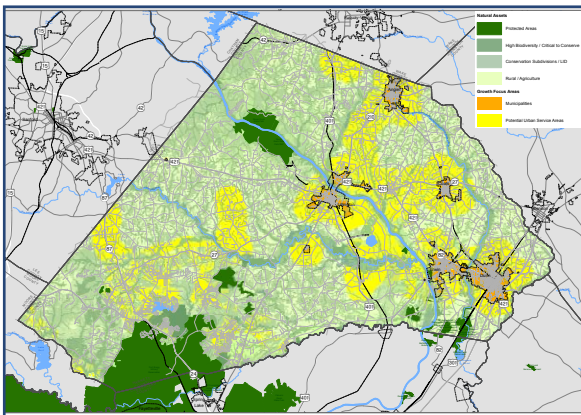
## Strong Towns (ST)



Focusing growth near existing towns and planned activity centers results in the following:

- ▶ Increased efficiency of the utility systems in the county
- ▶ More vibrant towns (83% increase in new homes near towns)
- ▶ Reduced impact on military operations on Fort Bragg as measured by impacts to critical to conserve lands and within noise zones
- ▶ Improved the long-term viability of sensitive long-leaf pine ecosystems by reducing the number of homes near Smoke Awareness Areas

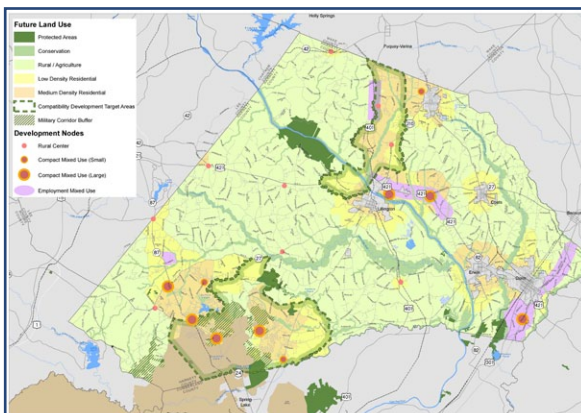
## Natural Assets Scenario (NA)



The Natural Assets Scenario shows that forecasted growth can be accommodated while accomplishing the following:

- ▶ Reduced impacts to wildlife habitat and forest cover by 14,000 acres
- ▶ Reduced the amount of new impervious surface in Water Supply Watersheds and High Quality Waters

## Preferred Scenario (PS)



The Preferred Scenario showed that by combining elements of the three alternatives the following could be achieved:

- ▶ Saved 8,000 acres of agricultural lands (which equates to \$1,000,000 in annual tax revenue)
- ▶ Reduced impacts to the Critical to Conserve lands by 50% compared to the BAU Scenario
- ▶ Increased utility demand by 2.5 MGD in Utility Focus Areas (areas easily served by sewer). This equates to \$750,000 per year in potential revenue)

# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Harnett community envisions a future where the county will continue to grow and prosper in a way that promotes a high quality of life, capitalizes on and protects the assets that make Harnett County unique, and ensures that all Harnett residents have access to a variety of housing, transportation, recreation and employment options.

## INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan was derived from the Preferred Scenario after further refinement based on coordination with the Technical Team and input from the public, Advisory Committee and elected officials. It is a conceptual representation of the development patterns leaders and citizens of Harnett County envision for the future. The map is descriptive, not prescriptive, conveying the intended primary uses in different areas. This map is a concept and should be interpreted with flexibility to accommodate market opportunities and isolated compatible uses.

There are 11 land use categories illustrated on the map. Each land use category is intended

to indicate a predominant land use—or set of uses—as well as other features that define the character of development in connection with the category. A brief description of each category is provided below. Each description is consistent with the ideas and vision the community has for the future development pattern. These descriptions do not propose a change to existing development within each category; instead, they suggest a complementary direction moving forward and list qualities to be embodied by new development and redevelopment.

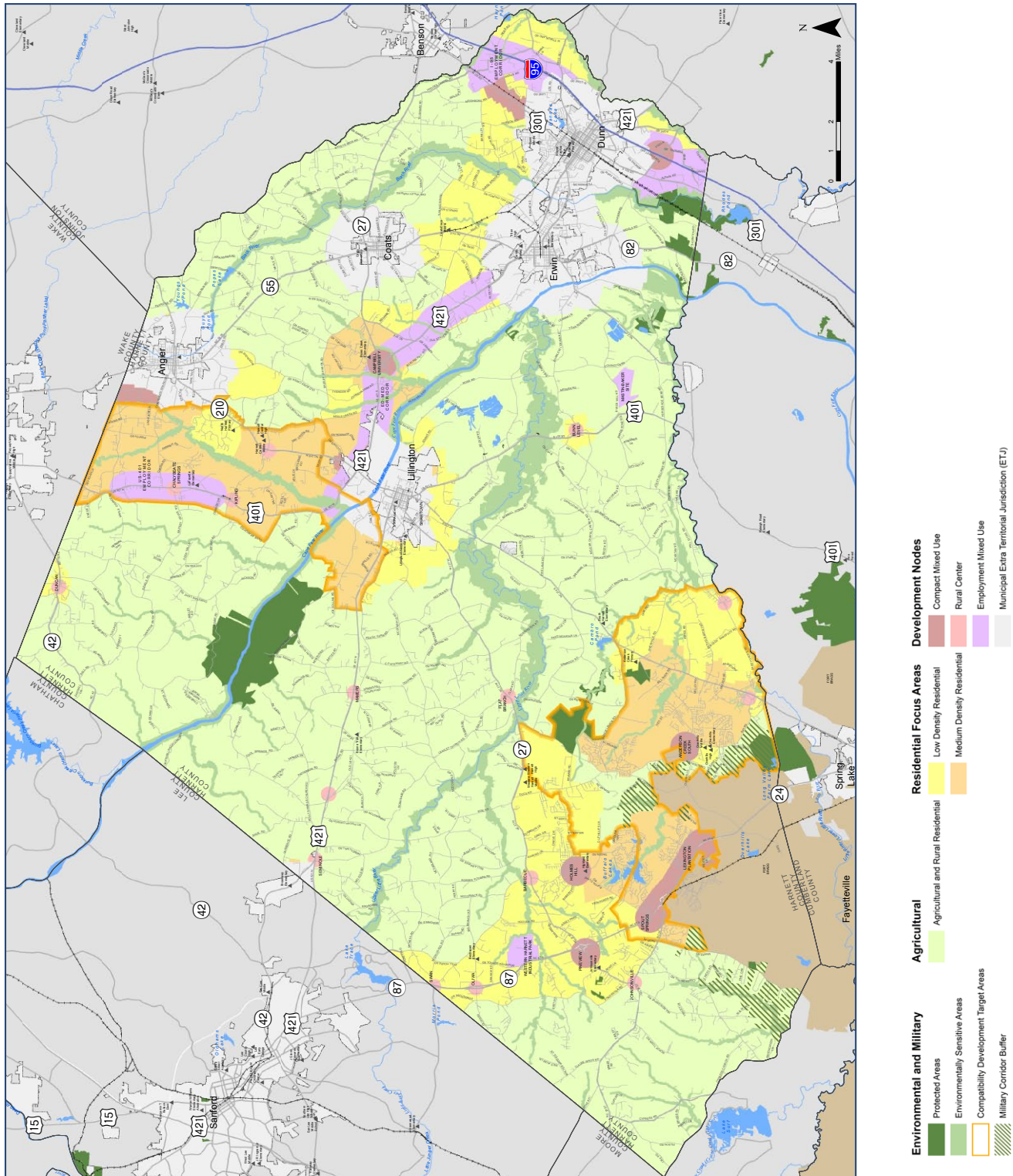
### **GUIDE GROWTH IN A MANNER THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP.**

The Comprehensive Growth Plan and the Future Land Use Map contained within it are intended to guide decisions of County leaders regarding future growth and development within the community. The implementation of the Plan must be facilitated through strong political will and effective tools, such as zoning and subdivision regulations in the Unified Development Ordinance. To ensure effective implementation, the County should:

- ▶ Promote the policies outlined in the Plan.
- ▶ Examine existing codes and standards to ensure the implementation of the Plan is possible.
- ▶ Preview development proposals for consistency with the Future Land Use Map.



MAP 7: FUTURE LAND USE MAP



## FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

### ENVIRONMENTAL AND MILITARY AREAS

**Protected Areas:** Parks and other forms of protected open space, including large conservation easements.

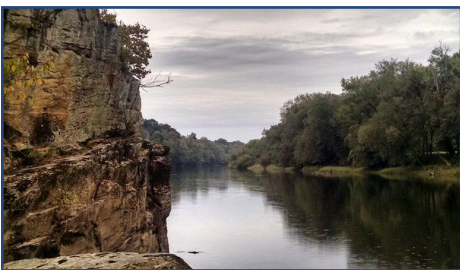
**Environmentally Sensitive Areas:** Environmentally sensitive areas, including floodplains and areas located in the Conservation Overlay Zoning District. Primary uses in these areas would be open space, forestry, and agriculture.

**Compatibility Development Target Areas:** Areas where water and sewer is readily available and residential developments are recommended to take advantage of the Compatibility Development option in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This option allows for greater flexibility in lot sizes in exchange for higher amounts of open space. This allows for clustering development in order to preserve rural views and key natural features such as habitat corridors and farmland.

**Military Corridor Buffer:** Critical and Important to Conserve Lands as identified by the Fort Bragg JLUSE within 1 mile of the base and parcels > 50 acres within ½ mile of Fort Bragg. Except those lands with existing or pending development (i.e. Lexington Plantation, Anderson Creek Club, Walmart), proposed Compact Mixed Use Areas, and lands east of Ray Road. Proposed development in these areas is meant to be reviewed by the Federal Government to ensure compatibility with Fort Bragg operations.

### AGRICULTURAL and RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS

**Agricultural and Rural Residential:** Primarily agricultural and forestry uses with some rural residential areas. These areas are located outside of existing and future sewer service areas and rely on septic systems for wastewater treatment. They have a limited road network and in some cases lie within High Quality Watershed or Water Supply Watershed areas. The lack of utility and transportation infrastructure, the established low density development pattern and ongoing agricultural activities in these areas contribute to their rural character. This character can be enhanced by encouraging only low intensity uses, single family residential up to one unit per acre and context sensitive rural design.



▲ Protected Areas



▲ Environmentally Sensitive Areas



▲ Agricultural and Rural Residential Areas

## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

**Low Density Residential:** Single family detached residential intended to remain predominantly suburban in character and provide for low density single-family residential development on lots smaller than those in Rural Residential areas. Gross densities of 1-3 dwelling units per acre depending on utilities, soils and character of adjacent development.

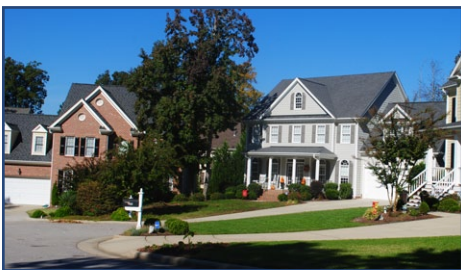
**Medium Density Residential:** Medium density residential with a mix of housing types including single family detached homes with average lot sizes, small-lot homes and patio homes. Gross densities of 2-5 dwelling units per acre. Located in areas served by current or planned utilities or in areas near the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of towns. Additional housing types (including townhomes and apartments) and higher densities may be appropriate as part of planned developments or near Development Nodes.

## DEVELOPMENT NODES

**Rural Centers:** Small scale commercial centers. The exact location and extent of the Rural Centers will be market driven, however, the non-residential footprint will usually be less than 50,000 square feet in these areas.

**Compact Mixed Use:** These areas are meant to be nodes or activity centers for growing areas in the County. They are located near concentrations of existing or planned residences, and areas with access to major thoroughfares and utilities. These areas incorporate commercial uses including grocery stores, retail establishments, restaurants and services. Office, civic and institutional uses should complement commercial uses. Higher density residential including small lot single-family, townhomes and apartments should be located in close proximity to shopping and service destinations and complimented by pedestrian facilities to provide more walking opportunities to internal and external destinations. The exact location and size of non-residential areas will be dependent on market conditions.

**Employment Mixed Use:** These areas are located along major thoroughfares and include prime locations for economic development opportunities. Uses encouraged in the Employment Mixed Use areas include but are not limited to industrial, warehouse, office, research and development, tech-flex, medical, energy and distribution. Residential development is appropriate only when not in conflict with existing or future industry or commercial uses.



▲ Low Density Residential



▲ Compact Mixed Use



▲ Employment Mixed Use







# GROW HARNETT RECOMMENDATIONS

## GOALS & STRATEGIES



The following recommendations are likely to have the greatest impact on Harnett County over the next 20 years. The implementation of the Plan must be facilitated through strong political will and effective tools. By implementing these policies and strategies, the county can address some of its most pressing issues and capitalize on its most viable opportunities.

The policies and strategies are organized by goals. The goals provide a long-term end to which the county can direct effort. The policy and strategies provide a specific action or recommendation to achieve an identified goal.

### LAND USE GOALS

- Goal LU-1:** Reinforce countywide economic development goals with land use decisions.
  - Goal LU-2:** Encourage growth where infrastructure exists.
  - Goal LU-3:** Promote quality commercial and retail development at well-located sites in order to help reverse retail leakage trends.
  - Goal LU-4:** Accommodate a mixture of housing types in appropriate areas.
  - Goal LU-5:** Promote and maintain the rural character and agricultural economy of the County.
  - Goal LU-6:** Promote compatible uses in areas adjacent to Fort Bragg and Harnett Regional Jetport (Airport).
  - Goal LU-7:** Monitor the fiscal impacts of land use changes.
  - Goal LU-8:** Improve aesthetics of urbanizing areas.
- 



## LAND USE STRATEGIES

### Goal LU-1

**Reinforce countywide economic development goals with land use decisions.**

#### Policy LU-1.1

Concentrate future economic growth in the Campbell health-education corridor, along the I-95 corridor, in pockets contiguous to high residential concentrations for retail and services, and in the municipalities.

#### Policy LU-1.2

Identify prime locations for industrial and distribution operations and protect these locations from incompatible development.

#### Policy LU-1.3

Prioritize water and sewer infrastructure investments to support economic development efforts.

#### Policy LU-1.4

Promote shovel-ready I-95 sites with incentives.

#### Policy LU-1.5

Promote high-potential sites and groups of sites that constitute future employment centers.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-1.5.1:** Develop small-area concept plans that can be used to brand and market future employment centers, preserve/improve access, and reduce future land use conflicts. The Ed-Med Corridor, US 401 Employment Corridor, and the I-95 Employment Corridor are locations where conceptual plans paired with marketing efforts would be advantageous.

### Goal LU-2

**Encourage growth where infrastructure exists.**

#### Policy LU-2-1

Encourage growth inside municipal limits and extra-territorial jurisdictions to promote strong towns.

#### Policy LU-2.2

Encourage growth inside utility service areas—areas where adequate water and sewer service exists.

#### Policy LU-2.3

Monitor development trends and effectiveness of policies.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-2.3.1:** Coordinate with tax assessor to update tax records and/or permit tracking software to allow for more detailed reports on development approvals and building permits.

### **Goal LU-3**

**Promote quality commercial and retail development at well-located sites in order to help reverse retail leakage trends.**

#### **Policy LU-3.1**

Encourage commercial and retail development at the intersections of existing and planned arterials in and near Development Nodes as identified on the Future Land Use Map.

#### **Policy LU-3.2**

Preserve/improve access to high potential sites by requiring access management along major arterials and planning for a connected collector street network in the vicinity of Development Nodes.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-3.2.1:** Develop small-area concept plans that can be used to brand and market potential retail and mixed-use centers as well as illustrate access points, collector street configurations and cross sections, building orientation and other design features.

#### **Policy LU-3.3**

Promote pedestrian oriented design near Development Nodes to appeal to consumer preferences for more attractive, walkable centers.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-3.3.1:** Consider design guidelines or standards similar to the Highway Corridor Overlay District for Compact Mixed Use areas.
- ▶ **Strategy LU-3.3.2:** Require new buildings, near Development Nodes, to be located close to the street with minimal parking in front. Consider revising UDO to include maximum setbacks in addition to minimum setbacks (based on total right-of-way needed with planned improvements).

#### **Policy LU-3.4**

Require pedestrian facilities in new developments near Development Nodes and in Low Density and Medium Density Residential Areas.

#### **Policy LU-3.5**

Encourage public greenspace or plazas as organizing elements and destinations within Development Nodes.



FIGURE 8: DEVELOPMENT NODE EXAMPLE (IN SUPPORT OF LU-3)

Commercial and retail development should be encouraged in and near Development Nodes. Buildings should be oriented towards the street with minimal parking in front. Landscaping and street trees should be located along internal and external roads.

**Apartments and higher density residential** in close proximity to retail encourage walking.

**Central greens, plazas and other forms of public space** serve as amenities and organizing elements



**Buildings oriented towards the street with minimal parking in front** improve aesthetics and walkability of development

**Single-family neighborhoods** provide a transition from the development node to rural areas

**Consolidating drive-cuts and connected collector streets** are key to maintaining mobility around and access to commercial nodes

**Goal LU-4**  
**Accommodate a mixture of housing types in appropriate areas.**

**Policy LU-4.1**

Promote higher density residential (apartments, townhomes, and small-lot homes) in areas within walking distance (1/2 to 1 mile) of Development Nodes.

**Goal LU-5**  
**Promote and maintain the rural character and agricultural economy of the County.**

**Policy LU-5.1**

Implement Goals from Working Lands Protection Plan and protect prime agriculture lands and active farming operations from incompatible development.

**Policy LU-5.2**

Limit expansion of sewer service into areas designated as Agricultural and Rural Residential on the Future Land Use Map to limit impact on agricultural operations.

**Policy LU-5.3**

Promote low density, context sensitive residential in the Agricultural and Rural Residential areas shown on the Future Land Use Map.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-5.3.1:** Allow flexibility in street design if Rural Residential standards are met. Revise UDO as necessary to allow for this type of development. See Figure 10 for more information.

**Policy LU-5.4**

Expand assistance for voluntary land conservation.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-5.4.1:** Provide printed information on statewide, regional and local land conservation programs in the planning department and other county offices and through the county web page.

**Policy LU-5.5**

Encourage retention of mature forest.

- ▶ **Strategy LU-5.5.1:** Encourage tree retention through defining criteria for designating significant trees and updating the Unified Development Ordinance to include guidance on preservation (See section 9.5.1.8 of Pinehurst's Development Ordinance for an example of how to define and preserve significant trees).

FIGURE 10: CONTEXT SENSITIVE RURAL RESIDENTIAL EXAMPLE (IN SUPPORT OF LU-5)

Many areas of Harnett County are rural in nature and offer scenic views of farms and fields from farm-to-market roads. These areas, particularly those in the Agricultural and Rural Residential area on the Future Land Use Map may not be appropriate for traditional suburban development due to lack of utilities and transportation infrastructure. The rural character of these areas could be preserved by promoting low impact, context sensitive rural development by offering flexibility in street design if Rural Residential standards are met.



Design criteria could include:

- ▶ 20 Lot Maximum
- ▶ Average lot size > 1 acre
- ▶ Design of home sites to preserve key views and natural features
- ▶ Minimal grading and disturbance of mature trees and wildlife habitat
- ▶ Alternative street standards
- ▶ Swale sections (instead of curb and gutter)
- ▶ Reduced sidewalk requirements (i.e. trails or multi-use path)
- ▶ Open space requirements

For more information see City of Raleigh Sensitive Area Street Standards at [www.raleighnc.gov/content/extra/Books/PlanDev/UnifiedDevelopmentOrdinance/#237](http://www.raleighnc.gov/content/extra/Books/PlanDev/UnifiedDevelopmentOrdinance/#237)



**Goal LU-6**  
**Promote compatible uses in areas adjacent to Fort Bragg and Harnett Regional Jetport (Airport).**

**Policy LU-6.1**

Coordinate with the Federal Government and the Regional Land Use Advisory Committee to ensure that development in or near the Military Corridor Buffer areas included on the Future Land Use Map is compatible with Fort Bragg military operations.

**Policy LU-6.2**

Promote compatible land uses in the vicinity of the Airport by allowing only those land uses and/or building construction methods that will minimize safety concerns in accident potential zones and be compatible with noise from airport operations.

- **Strategy LU-6.2.1:** Study potentially adding an airport overlay district to the Unified Development Ordinance that minimizes conflicts with Airport activities.

FIGURE 11: PROPOSED MILITARY CORRIDOR BUFFER (IN SUPPORT OF LU-7).

Development within the Military Corridor Buffer should be compatible with current and future military operations.

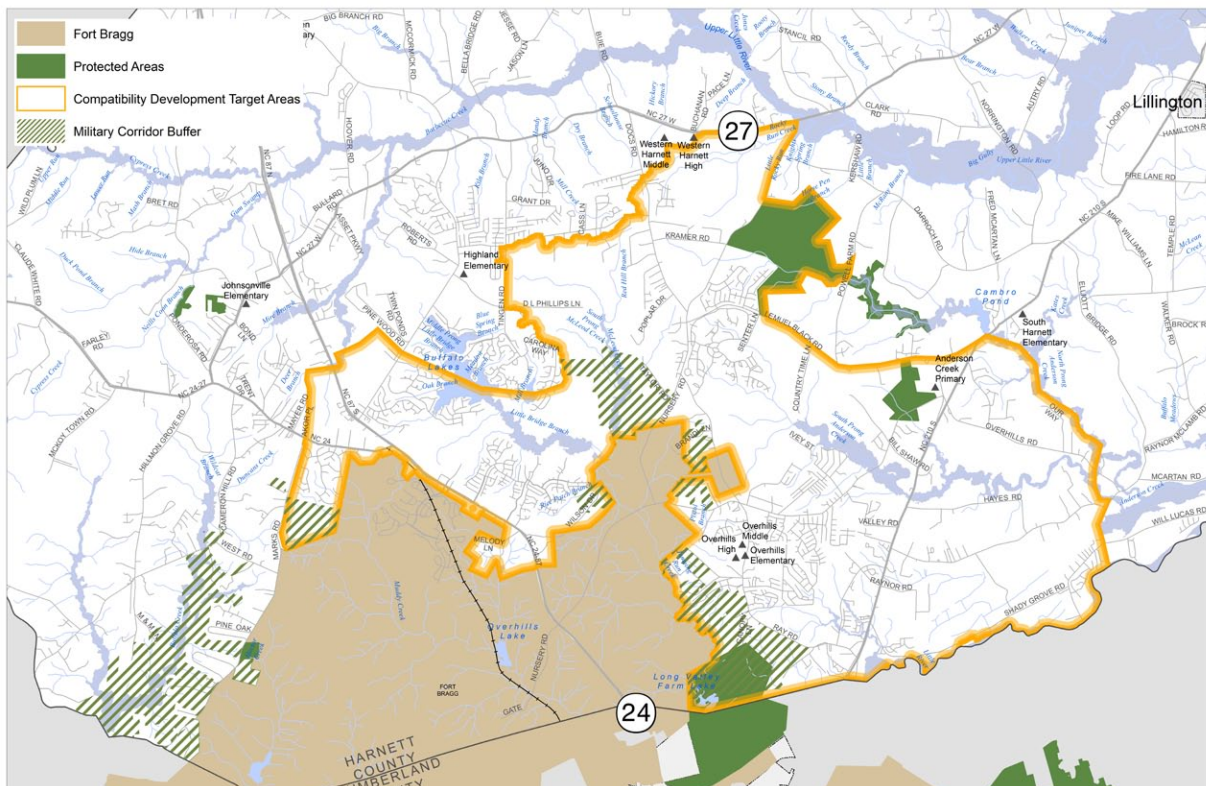
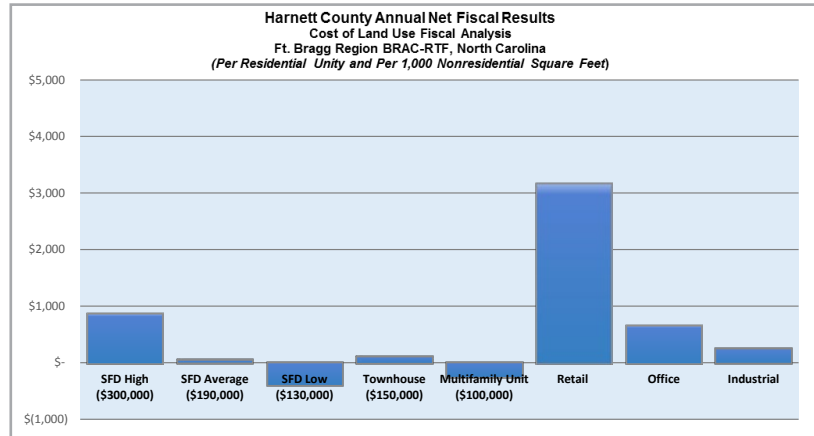


FIGURE 12: HARNETT COUNTY COST OF LAND USE (IN SUPPORT OF LU-8).

The 2011 Cost of Land Use Fiscal Impact Analysis conducted by TischlerBise on behalf of the Fort Bragg Regional Alliance shows that certain types of development result in net fiscal benefits and others cost more in services than they provide in revenue. The fiscal impacts of potential new development should factor into land use and infrastructure decisions.



**Goal LU-7**  
**Monitor the fiscal impacts of land use changes.**

**Policy LU-7.1**

Coordinate between departments to periodically update information on the county expenditures needed to provide services to different types of land use.

**Policy LU-7.2**

Consider fiscal impacts of major proposed land use changes

- **Strategy LU-7.2.1:** Consider implementation of a utility allocation policy that prioritizes allocation of capacity based on future return on investment.

**Goal LU-8**  
**Improve the aesthetics of urbanizing areas.**

**Policy LU-8.1**

Establish codes and programs to mitigate existing and avoid future aesthetic concerns.

- **Strategy LU-7.2.1:** Adopt a minimum housing code or regularly fund a problem properties program.

**Policy LU-8.2**

Require landscaping and shade trees in new developments.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The most important factor for successful economic development is building a community product that is attractive to potential investors. The presence of Interstate 95 is a major attribute for Harnett County and makes opportunities along the interstate the most likely location for some types of new investments. Harnett County also enjoys a competitive advantage with abundant water resources and therefore should consider industry targets that require high quality water sources. In addition, the proximity to Fort Bragg and growing opportunities at Campbell University provide opportunities to develop industry that supports military and “ed-med” operations. By focusing on the county’s assets and best opportunities for growth, this plan recommends focusing economic development efforts within each of the following target sectors:

- ▶ Military Support & Defense Technologies
- ▶ Medical Equipment and Supplies
- ▶ Automotive parts Manufacturing
- ▶ Food and Beverage Processing & Agriculture
- ▶ Business Services
- ▶ Logistics
- ▶ Larger scale retail

Based on local input, best practices research, and the current availability of very limited resources, this plan recommends that the Harnett County Economic Development Office focus equally on the following four goals.

- Goal ED-1: Start a business attraction and marketing effort.**
- Goal ED-2: Support existing industry to encourage retention and expansion of jobs.**
- Goal ED-3: Build a better overall economic product.**
- Goal ED-4: Build organizational capacity.**





## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES**

### **Goal ED-1**

#### **Start a business attraction and marketing effort.**

##### **Strategy ED-1.1**

Develop a “to-market” positioning “brand” around cost-competitiveness, I-95, proximity to Wake County and Fort Bragg, business-friendliness, and the opportunities of a growing Campbell University and the training resources of Central Carolina Community College (CCCC).

##### **Strategy ED-1.2**

Update and strengthen the economic development web site.

##### **Strategy ED-1.3**

Establish a more integrated and formal partnership and plan with Campbell University to work jointly to create new jobs through commercialized research, student and alumni entrepreneurship, and campus service and support needs.

##### **Strategy ED-1.4**

Focus proactive business attraction activities on companies within a 75-mile radius of Harnett County that meet the county’s targets.

##### **Strategy ED-1.5**

Aggressively partner with the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP), the NC Department of Commerce and EDPNC to generate more domestic clients.

##### **Strategy ED-1.6**

Establish client expectations for RTRP support.

##### **Strategy ED-1.7**

Grow the budget for Harnett County marketing to targeted clients and to key site selectors in target industries by \$75,000 to \$100,000 to support a full-time business recruitment specialist.

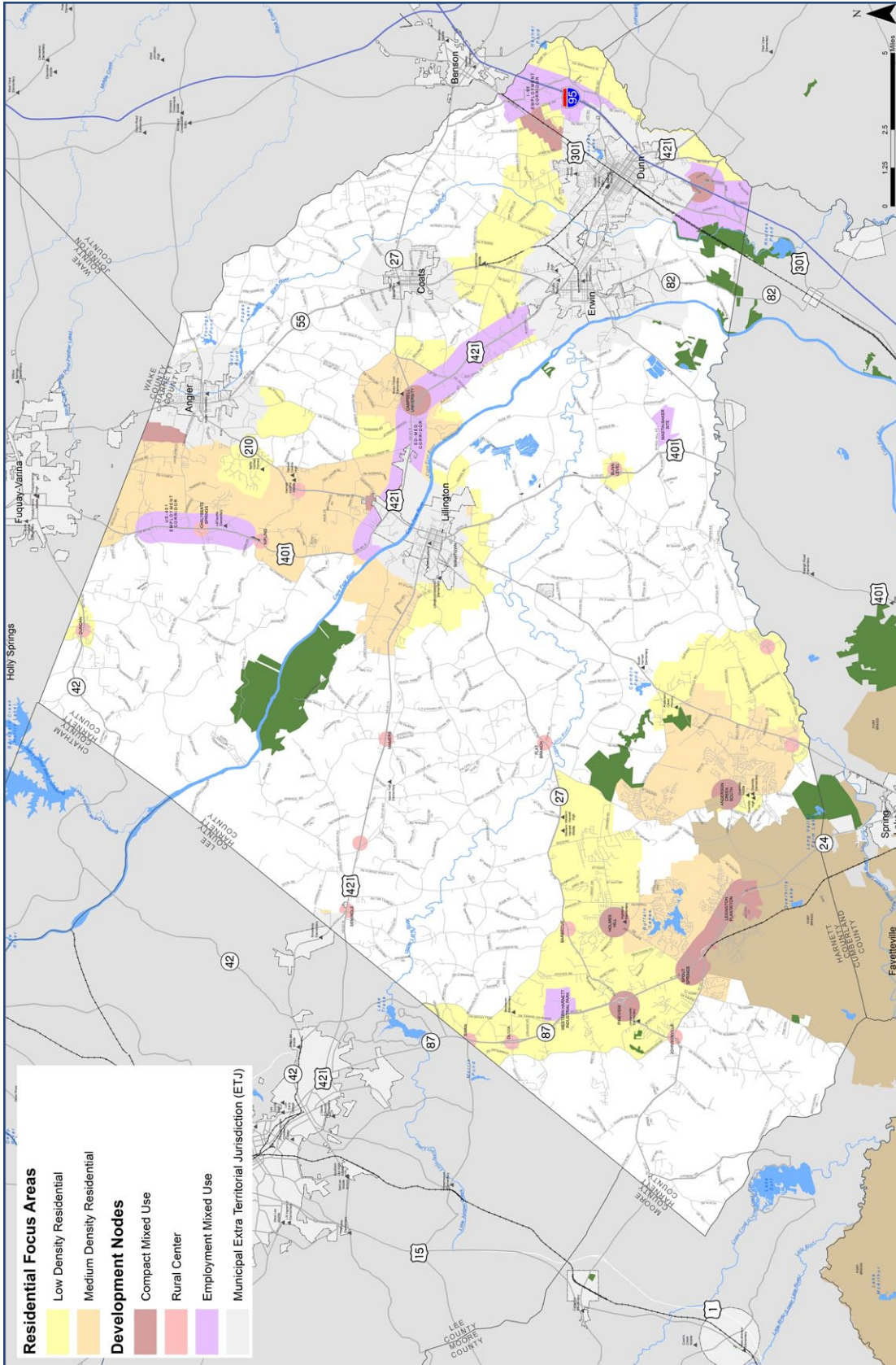
##### **Strategy ED-1.8**

Design a call program on major real estate firms in Wake, Durham and Cumberland counties to share product inventory.

##### **Strategy ED-1.9**

Develop additional marketing content based on positioning “brand”. Most of the content will be in the form of electronic information for the targeted audiences. Specific information on certified building and sites, available workforce, and incentives should be emphasized.

MAP 9: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY MAP



## Goal ED-2

### Support existing industry to encourage retention and expansion of jobs.

#### Strategy ED-2.1

Structure a visitation program in conjunction with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and other partners. A partnership with CCCC and their current visitation program would provide a strong jumpstart and synergy for discussions on workforce.

#### Strategy ED-2.2

Create a lunch conversation program for existing major private employers with the County Commissioners and County Manager.

#### Strategy ED-2.3

Conduct a business bus tour of major employer facilities for County Commissioners.

#### Strategy ED-2.4

Partner with other organizations to create an on-line business support and assistance guide including employee training options.

#### Strategy ED-2.5

Develop an economic development annual program to engage and recognize existing business contributions to job growth or product improvement in the County.

#### Strategy ED-2.6

Position the Economic Development Commission as supportive, but not leading, in workforce development issues and entrepreneurial support, further positioning the Commission as the focal point for economic development issues and economic data.

#### Strategy ED-2.7

Conduct the first of an annual survey of business to determine issues of concern.

The North Carolina Certified Site Program states:

*To obtain the Certified Sites designation, communities must undergo a stringent review process that demonstrates that they've addressed 31 prerequisites, including business/industrial use designation, phase I environment audits, geo-technical studies, topographical analysis and maps, aerial photography, availability of public utilities, industrial power quality, engineered site development plans, detailed analysis of development cost, and complete information on pricing.*

In recent years nearby counties such as Randolph, Wilson and Chatham Counties have developed aggressive mega-site programs to attract new investment. Significant public funds have been allocated to position the sites for investment.



**Goal ED-3**  
**Build a better overall economic product.**

**Strategy ED-3.1**

Develop a realistic inventory of “ready” buildings and sites based on a “Certified” model.

**Strategy ED-3.2**

Partner with County and municipal utility providers to accurately establish current utility availability to targeted sites.

**Strategy ED-3.3**

Promote the inventory with EDPNC and regional partners.

**Strategy ED-3.4**

Develop a consistent, transparent and aggressive local incentives policy for new and expanding job creation. Job creation and taxable investment thresholds should be set and a strong legal “claw back” provision should be included in the standard agreements.

**Strategy ED-3.5**

Support and encourage entrepreneurial training, career and technical education programs developed in partnership with the public schools.

**Strategy ED-3.6**

Conduct a review of the planning approval process to insure that Harnett County has a competitive advantage on time and certainty.

**Strategy ED-3.7**

Coordinate with school board to ensure adequate facilities and programs support future land use and economic development efforts.



▲ Western Harnett Industrial Park



▲ Central Harnett Hospital

## **Goal ED-4**

### **Build organizational capacity.**

The current operational capacity of the economic development effort is not sufficient to complete the recommendations included in this plan. Additional and skilled personnel and additional marketing funds are need over the next few years. During the first year support from other county staff can help, but in subsequent years the County should explore a longer term solution that might be best served by some form of public-private partnership.

#### **Strategy ED-4.1**

Evaluate the creation of a public-private partnership that would jointly fund and administer the County's economic development effort.

#### **Strategy ED-4.2**

Increase economic development internal support and capacity.

#### **Strategy ED-4.3**

Develop a strong private sector and public partner economic development advisory council to provide input and support.

#### **Strategy ED-4.4**

Develop a "public" dashboard of recent economic data.

#### **Strategy ED-4.5**

Partner with Campbell University for "State of the County" annual event to reset current reality and provide a future forum for the review of progress.

#### **Strategy ED-4.6**

Partner with Campbell University to secure senior interns to help with the initial action steps of this plan.

#### **Strategy ED-4.7**

Create a public executive summary of this plan to share broadly with all economic development stakeholders across the county.

### **Public-Private Partnerships:**

The Chatham County Economic Development Corporation is a good example of a public-private partnership that receives public funds and private donations. Governance, in the form of a board of directors, includes both public appointees and others from the private sector. The annual operating budget is \$500,000-\$600,000 annually; but even so marketing funds are usually less than \$100,000. The organization's strategic plan prioritizes improving the physical product, increasing support to existing businesses, creating new recruitment clients, and leading a workforce development transition.

## NATURAL RESOURCE GOALS

In all areas of the County residents have a desire for access to active and passive recreational opportunities close to home. Active recreational facilities and programs including ball fields, playgrounds and sports leagues have been the focus of County recreation efforts over the past decade or more. Citizens have expressed a growing desire to access to passive recreational opportunities as well. Passive recreation includes biking or jogging on a greenway, hiking in nature preserves and paddling on the Cape Fear River.

Harnett County is located at the intersection of the Piedmont, Sandhills and Coastal Plain regions. This provides for a mix of habitats that are home to 56 species considered rare or recognized by the state or federal government as priority, threatened or endangered. In addition, Harnett County is home to a number of headwater streams that feed the Cape Fear River and provide drinking water to the region. The Cape Fear River and other waterways also offer recreational opportunities that are key to positioning the County as a regional ecotourism destination.

Habitat fragmentation and loss due to urbanization along with water quality degradation from sedimentation and non-point source pollution via stormwater run-off are significant threats to Harnett County's natural assets. In the northern part of the County the biggest concern is protecting riparian habitat and rural character in the Neill's Creek Basin and the High-Quality Waters that include Parker, Avetts and Hector Creek. In the Southwestern part of the County the primary concern is protecting and restoring a connected system of uplands—primarily long-leaf pine forests to provide rare species corridors to move from Carvers Creek State Park and the Fort Bragg military base to other major habitat hubs in Anderson Creek Park and along the Lower Little River.

The Plan includes goals, policies and strategies that, if followed, will allow the County to accommodate development while providing active and passive open space as an amenity, protect terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, preserve water quality and address major concerns in the areas listed above.

- Goal NR-1: Protect High-Quality Waters in the County that preserve habitat for the Cape Fear Shiner and other rare aquatic species.**
- Goal NR-2: Encourage compatible development in areas with high-quality environmental features.**
- Goal NR-3: Position Harnett County as a Destination for Eco-Tourism.**
- Goal NR-4: Provide active and passive recreation opportunities to preserve and enhance the quality of life.**
- Goal NR-5: Raise awareness of the county's unique natural assets.**



# NATURAL RESOURCE STRATEGIES

## GOAL NR-1

**Protect High-Quality Waters in the County that preserve habitat for the Cape Fear Shiner and other rare aquatic species.**

### Policy NR-1.1

Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) techniques in High-Quality Watersheds (Parker, Avetts and Hector Creeks) and Water Supply Watersheds (Neills Creek and others).

- ▶ **Strategy NR-1.1.1:** Improve stream forest protection incentives and requirements, especially in watersheds with impaired streams or threatened streams.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-1.1.2:** Encourage reduced development footprints and disconnected impervious surfaces.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-1.1.3:** Promote innovative stormwater infrastructure (bio-swales, rain gardens, etc.).

## Goal NR-2

**Encourage compatible development in areas with high-quality environmental features.**

### Policy NR-2.1

Discourage development in floodplains.

### Policy NR-2.2

Discourage habitat fragmentation and promote the the connectivity of open spaces across the landscape.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.2.1:** Encourage the conservation of areas of high biodiversity (identified on the NCDENR Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat Assessment Map in the Appendix), Natural Heritage Natural Areas, mature forest, riparian areas, and other unique natural features such as rock outcrops, vernal pools, seeps, and long-leaf pine forests (areas where existing long-leaf pine forests are likely are identified in the Potential Upland Habitat Map in the Appendix).
- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.2.2:** Consider utilizing the N.C. Wildlife Commission Conservation Green Growth Toolbox during the development review process by requiring the creation of project specific maps (by staff or applicant) using the North Carolina Natural Heritage Data Explorer or available GIS data (i.e. the NC WRC Green Growth Toolbox Conservation Data layers).

An effective way to minimize impacts to wildlife and other natural resources is to use conservation data as a first step in development review procedures. This approach has been used by Chatham County since 2008 and they have documented a significant reduction in time to development approval and staff time needed to guide developments to approval.

### Policy NR-2.3

Provide incentives such as density bonuses to promote context-sensitive development.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.3.1:** Define/refine Compatibility Development Target Areas (CDTAs) and incentivize conservation subdivisions (40%+ open space) through flexible lot sizes in CDTAs with access to sewer.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.3.2:** Review and adjust incentives in UDO periodically to ensure that Compatibility Developments are an attractive option.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.3.3:** Revise UDO to specify priority conservation areas that should be set aside as open space in Compatibility Developments using section 3 of the NCWRC Green Growth Toolbox and Model Natural Resources Conservation Ordinance for guidance.

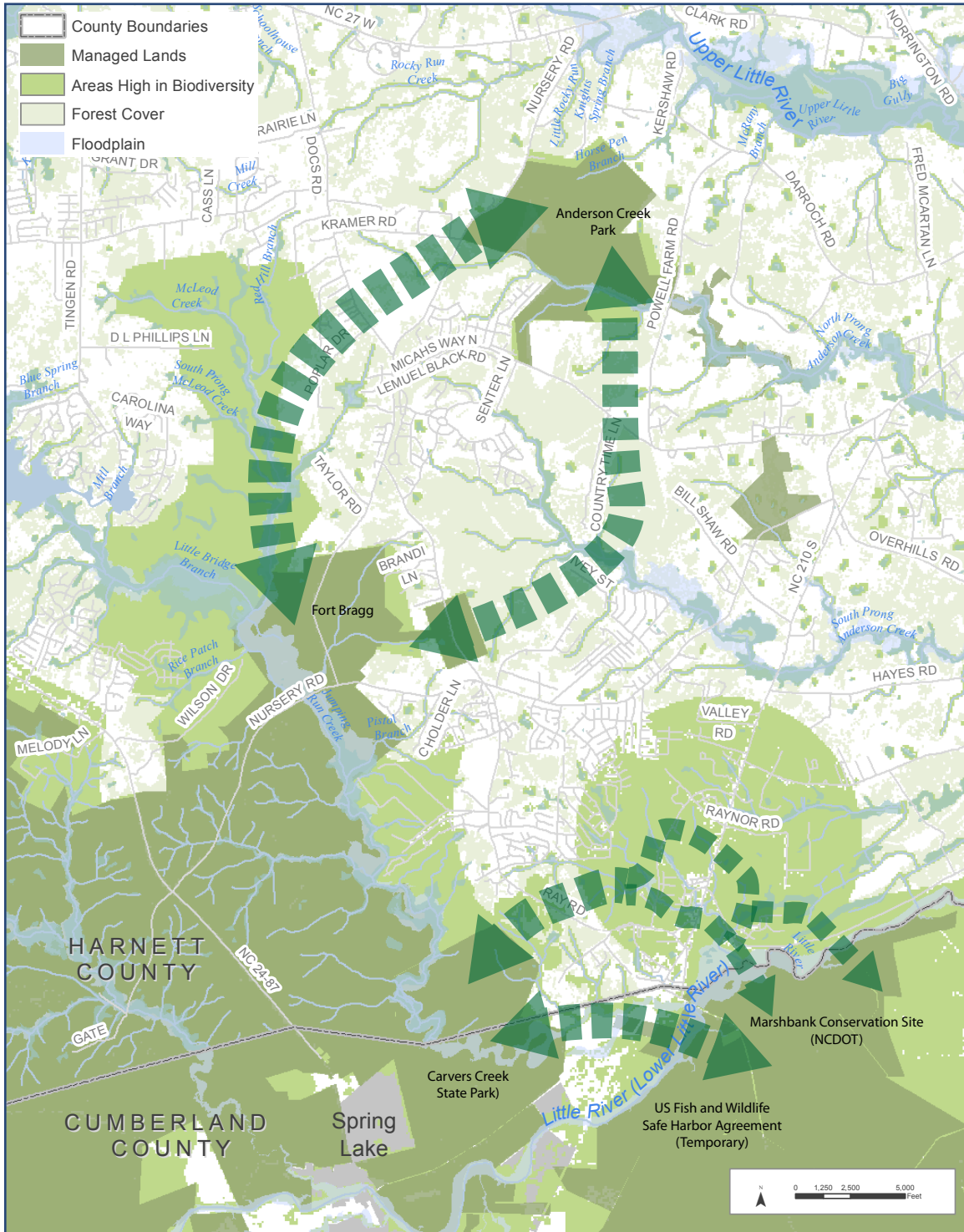
**Policy NR-2.4:** Preserve and restore the Longleaf Pine (LLP) ecosystem.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-2.4.1:** Consider an upland open space requirement or incentive (i.e. additional density bonuses) tied to conserve priority wildlife habitats such as longleaf pine forests in the Southwestern Harnett CDTA.



▲ Illustrations of Conceptual Development Scenarios that Incorporate Key Habitat Connections as Open Space Amenities in Exchange for Incentives (i.e. Density Bonus or Lower Minimum Lot Size)

FIGURE 14: KEY ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS (IN SUPPORT OF NR-2).





## **GOAL NR-3**

### **Position Harnett County as a Destination for Eco-Tourism.**

#### **Policy NR-3.1**

Improve canoe and kayak access to the Cape Fear and Upper Little River.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.1.1:** Develop a canoe and kayak access point on the Upper Little River on County owned land in the vicinity of NC 210 South of Lillington. (AI)
- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.1.2:** Partner with landowners and area non-profits and study the feasibility of creating an additional public river access point north or south of Raven Rock State Park and additional access points along the Upper Little River.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.1.3:** Partner with businesses and non-profits to inform boaters about current water levels.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.1.4:** Partner with volunteer groups to maintain a blueway on the Upper Little River.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.1.5:** Consider providing racks, informational maps, and additional facilities at launches to encourage tourism.

#### **Policy NR-3.3**

Partner with Dunn Tourism to develop a brand for Harnett County as an eco-tourism destination.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.3.1:** Coordinate with non-profits, Dunn Tourism and local businesses to develop a map and/or guidebook for paddling the Cape Fear River.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.3.2:** Pursue funding for regional greenways (Also see Goal TRANS-4).

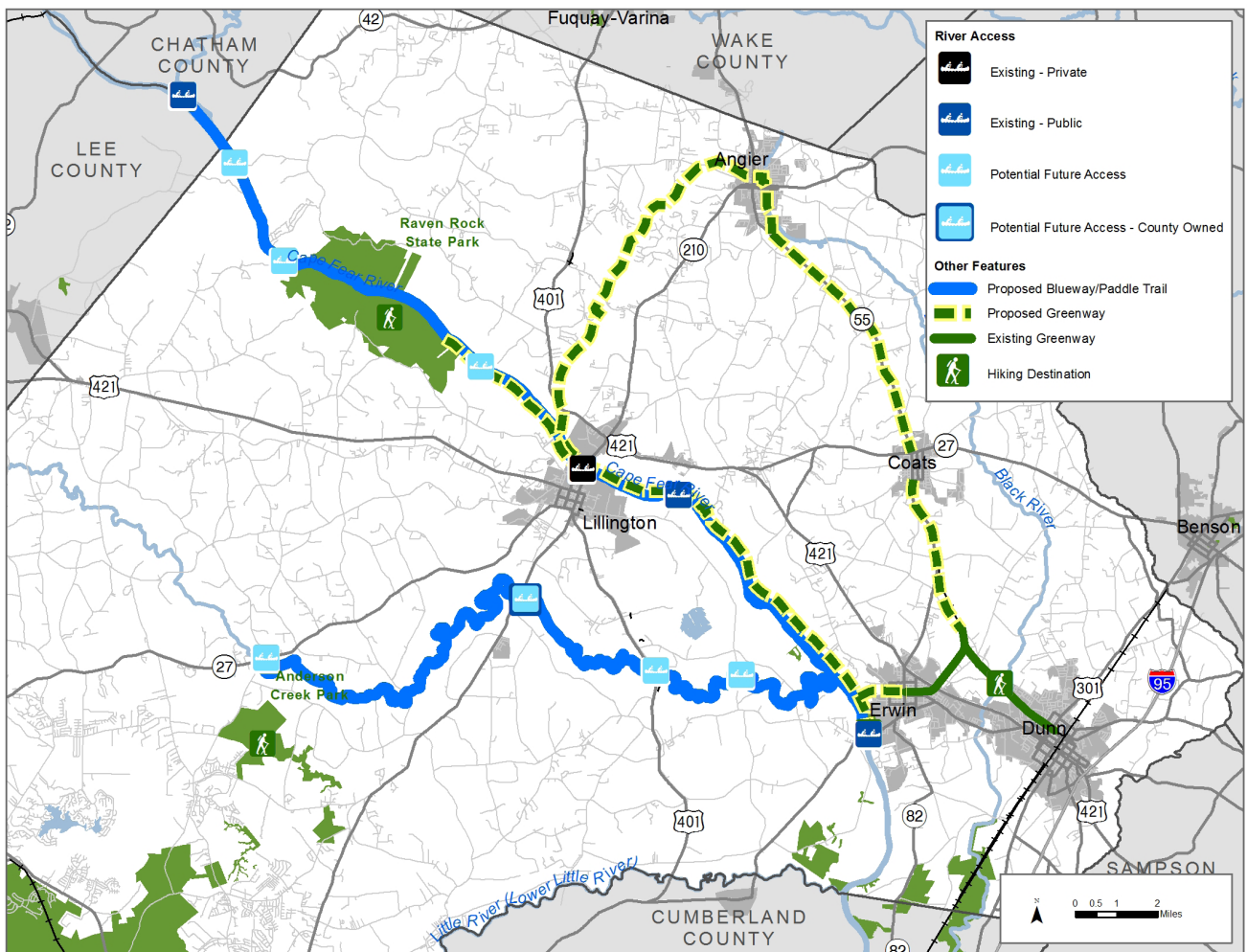
#### **Policy NR-3.4**

Improve recreational fishing opportunities.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-3.6:** Support efforts to construct fish passages at USACE's Lock and Dams #2 and #3 on the Lower Cape Fear River to improve striped bass access to historic spawning habitat in Harnett County.

FIGURE 14: CAPE FEAR ECOTOURISM MAP (IN SUPPORT OF NR-3).

The Cape Fear River and other significant parks and natural features (including Raven Rock State Park, Anderson Creek Park, and the Upper Little River) are extraordinary assets that form the basis for a system of Ecotourism facilities that have a regional and statewide draw.



## GOAL NR-4

### Provide active and passive recreation opportunities to preserve and enhance the quality of life.

#### Policy NR-4.1

Support public and private investment in active and passive recreation opportunities.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.1:** Locate new park facilities in under-served sectors (see Underserved Areas Map in Appendix).
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.2:** Update the parks and recreation master plan.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.3:** Pursue funding for construction of the Government Complex Park.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.4:** Develop the capacity to accept and maintain privately constructed greenways.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.5:** Include passive open space, including wildlife habitat and trails in new parks.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.6:** Incorporate considerations for a connected system of open space in planning efforts including transportation plans and small-area plans.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-4.1.7:** Partner with towns, athletic clubs and other organizations to develop and market events with a regional draw (i.e. paddling, biking, Frisbee golf events).



▲ Dunn Erwin Trail



▲ Anderson Creek Park



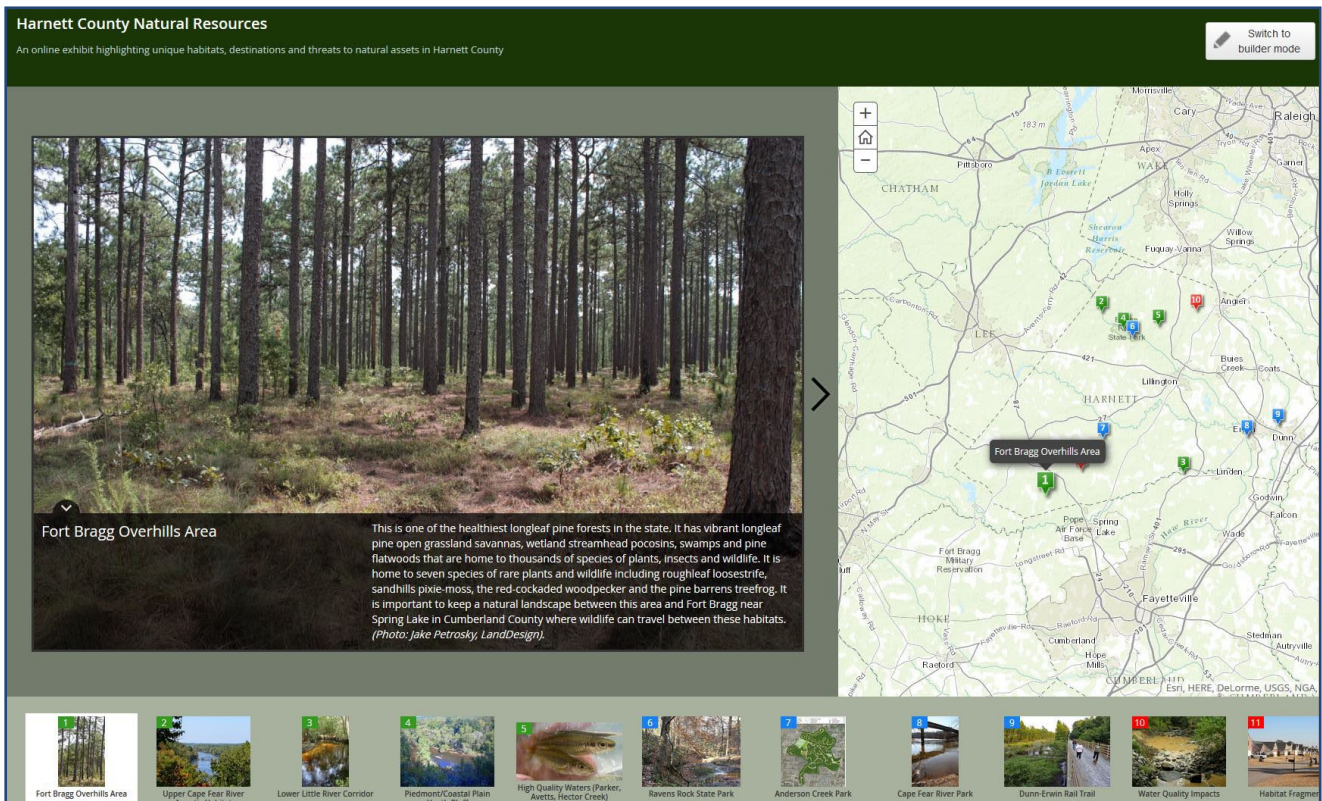
## GOAL NR-5

### Raise awareness of the county's unique natural assets.

- ▶ **Strategy NR-5.1.1:** Develop programs with local school districts to educate youth on the existence and value of natural resources in the County.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-5.1.2:** Update website to include maps and other information related to natural resources to assist in educating the public, marketing local parks and providing information to property owners.
- ▶ **Strategy NR-5.1.3:** Create a Natural Resources committee, similar to the Harnett County Transportation Advisory Group to provide guidance on natural resource issues in the county.

FIGURE 15: HARNETT COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES STORY MAP (IN SUPPORT OF NR-5).

An interactive map was created as part of the Growth Plan to provide information on Harnett County's unique Natural Resources. It can be accessed at: <http://arcg.is/1laBgnM>



## TRANSPORTATION GOALS

The decentralized pattern of growth in Harnett County has led to increased traffic, significant commute times and added costs for residents. Improving access to regional destinations is the paramount transportation concern. Maintaining mobility on key arterials, adding a connected road network as growth occurs, and providing multi-modal transportation options are other key issues.

The location and intensity of development envisioned in the Future Land Use map is meant to decrease trip length and vehicle miles traveled. The Goals, policies and strategies below are meant to support the Future Land Use map, guide the update of the Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) as well as address other issues related to transportation and mobility.

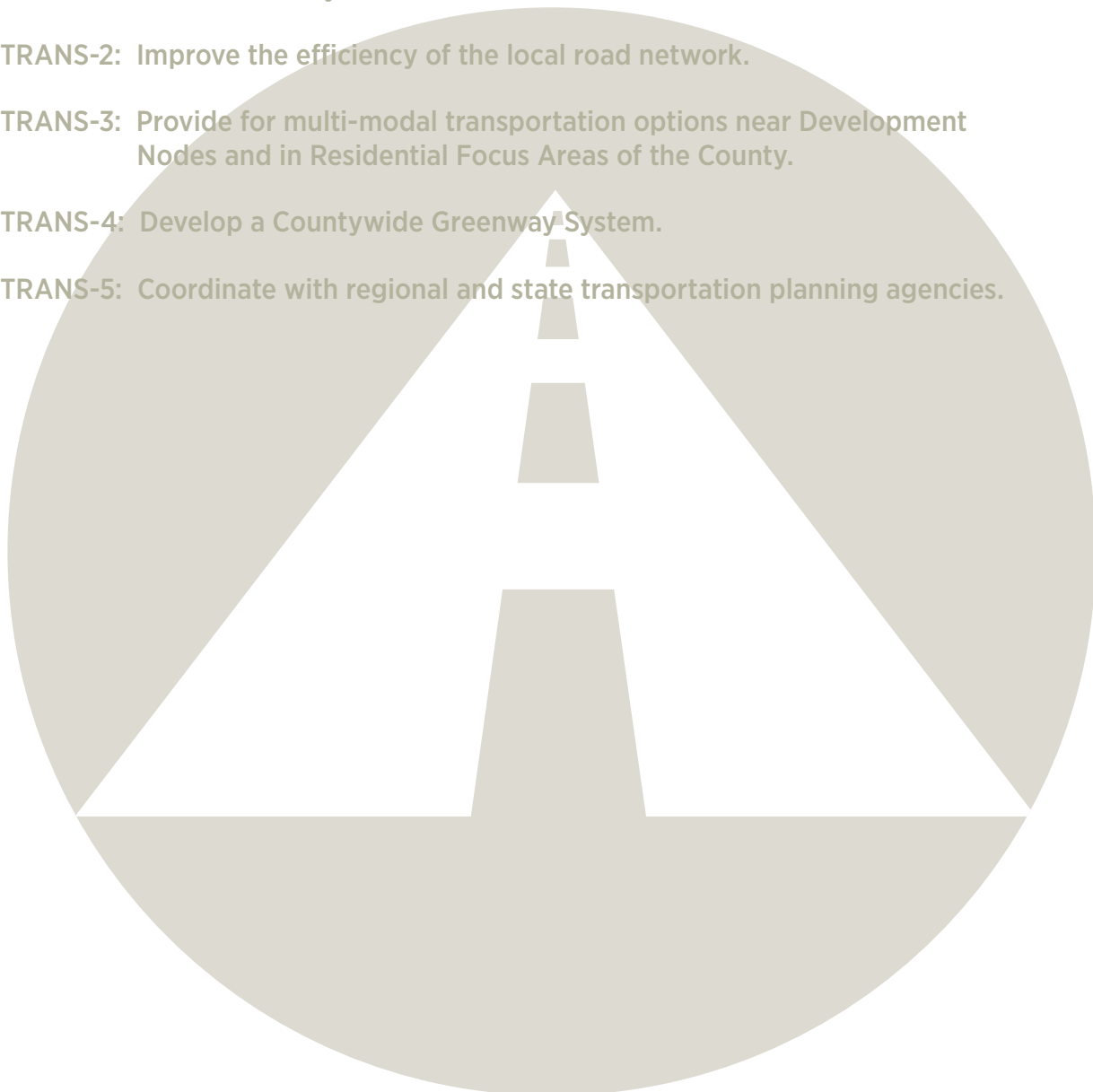
**Goal TRANS-1: Develop a strategy to get a four-lane road constructed from Harnett to Wake County.**

**Goal TRANS-2: Improve the efficiency of the local road network.**

**Goal TRANS-3: Provide for multi-modal transportation options near Development Nodes and in Residential Focus Areas of the County.**

**Goal TRANS-4: Develop a Countywide Greenway System.**

**Goal TRANS-5: Coordinate with regional and state transportation planning agencies.**



# TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

## GOAL TRANS-1

**Develop a strategy to get a four-lane road constructed from Harnett to Wake County.**

### Policy TRANS-1.1

Coordinate with CAMPO, NCDOT and Fuquay Varina to plan for a limited access route from US 401 to future I-540.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-1.1.1:** Support completion of US 401 Bypass Study or a new study focused on identifying a cost-feasible project that improves the connection between Harnett County and Wake County, specifically US 401 to I-540.

### Policy TRANS-1.2

Continue to work with CAMPO and NCDOT to widen NC 55 north of Angier.

## GOAL TRANS-2

**Improve the efficiency of the local road network.**

### Policy TRANS-2.1

Identify new-location collector and thoroughfare street alignments in growth areas.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-2.1.1:** Plan for a connected system of major and minor thoroughfares in Development Nodes and Residential Focus Areas and include new locations facilities in the next update the Harnett Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-2.1.2:** Identify new-location collector street alignments in growth areas to be constructed with development. The following growth areas should be studied:
  - ▶ Employment Opportunities
    - ◆ I-95 Corridor Employment Corridor
    - ◆ US 401 Employment Corridor
    - ◆ The Ed-Med Corridor (US 421)
    - ◆ NC 87 Corridor
  - ▶ Development Nodes
    - ◆ Compacted Mixed Use areas
    - ◆ Municipal Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ)
    - ◆ Rural Centers
  - ▶ Residential Focus Areas
    - ◆ Neill's Creek Basin (west of Angier)
    - ◆ Medium Density Residential areas in SW Harnett



### Policy TRANS-2.2

Promote access management on existing arterials.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-2.2.1:** Develop/refine guidelines and incorporate standards as needed in to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Standards should include requirements for driveway spacing, and cross access. Applicable corridors include US 401, NC 210, NC 87, NC 24, NC 27, and NC 55.

### Policy TRANS-2.3

Mitigate impacts of new development on the transportation network.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-2.3.1:** Continue to require Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) and associated concurrent public improvements or fee in lieu for large developments.

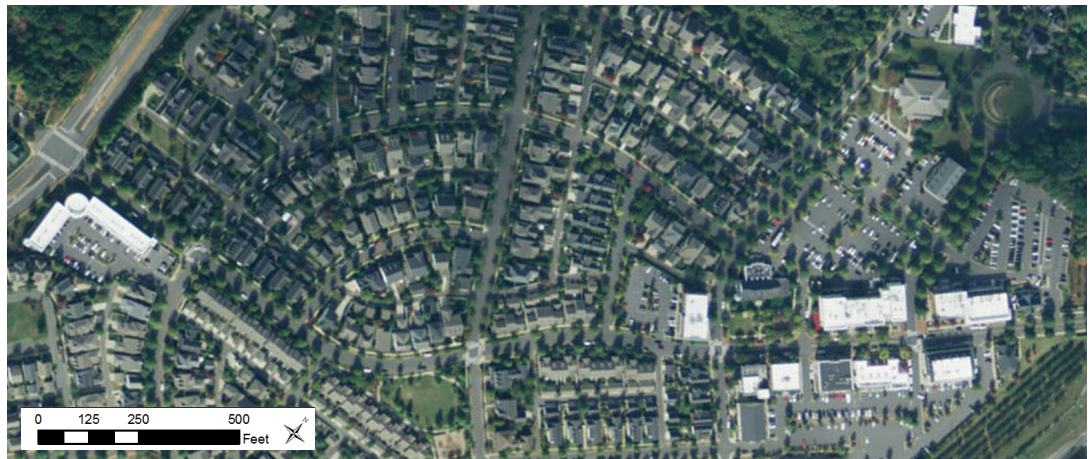
### Strategy TRANS-2.4

Encourage connected streets in all new developments.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-2.4.1:** Update block length maximums or other standards to encourage smaller blocks and more connectivity in Medium Density Residential Areas and near Development Nodes.

FIGURE 16: CONNECTIVITY AND BLOCK PATTERN EXAMPLE (IN SUPPORT OF TRANS-2)

Connected streets with shorter block lengths like those in the following aerial photograph of the mixed use community of Baxter Village in Fort Mill, South Carolina create a more walkable, pedestrian scale environment while decreasing traffic on existing arterials.





▲ On street parking, planting strips with street trees, and sidewalks increase pedestrian safety and comfort.

### **GOAL TRANS-3**

**Provide for multi-modal transportation options near Development Nodes and in Residential Focus Areas of the County.**

#### **Policy TRANS-3.1**

Continue to support the incorporation of pedestrian facilities in roadway improvement projects within Residential Focus Areas and near defined Development Nodes.

#### **Policy TRANS-3.2**

Encourage the incorporation of pedestrian infrastructure in new developments within Residential Focus Areas and near defined Development Nodes.

#### **Policy TRANS-3.3**

Promote pedestrian oriented design in Development Nodes and Residential Focus Areas of the County. Pedestrian oriented design guidance was included in the NC 87 Corridor Study, but could be incorporated into the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-3.3.1:** Require 5 ft sidewalks as recommended by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO).
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-3.3.2:** Provide guidance on when planting strips are necessary (i.e. near Development Nodes and along key residential collectors) to improve pedestrian experience.
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-3.3.3:** Provide guidance on landscaping, building orientation and parking location near Development Nodes.

## **GOAL TRANS-4**

### **Develop a Countywide Greenway System.**

#### **Policy TRANS-4.1**

Encourage trails and greenways to be planned for and constructed by public entities or by private entities as part of amenities for new developments.

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-4.1.1:** Encourage the reservation of right-of-way and construction of planned greenways as shown on the Ecotourism Map, the Adopted Comprehensive Transportation Plan and/or other relevant plans.
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-4.1.2:** Build the capacity for maintaining, improving and constructing publicly owned greenways.
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-4.1.3:** Pursue funding for construction of the first section of the Cape Fear River Greenway in the vicinity of the Government Complex Park.
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-4.1.4:** Develop a county-wide Greenway/Trail Master Plan or include as a component of a Parks and Recreation Plan update or an update of the NCDOT Comprehensive Transportation Plan. As part of this effort or as a separate studies determine the feasibility of greenway or rail-trail between Erwin, Coats and Angier and the feasibility of a greenway or rail-trail west of NC 87 to Fort Bragg.

## **GOAL TRANS-5**

### **Coordinate with regional and state transportation planning agencies to address needs and advance local priorities.**

#### **Policy TRANS-5.1**

Coordinate with municipalities, CAMPO, FAMPO, The Mid-Carolina RPO and NCDOT to update the Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-5.1.1:** Work with CAMPO and NCDOT to clarify rights-of-way needs for existing plans.
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-5.3.1:** Update CTP Roadway Element
  - ◆ Refine recommended new location roads based on recent planning efforts (i.e. Southwest Area Study and CAMPO 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan). For instance the Angier Western Connector (A632a in CAMPO MTP) is included as a 2040 new location project (2 lane) in the CAMPO MTP, but not shown on the CTP (Adopted in 2013).
- ▶ **Strategy TRANS-5.3.2:** Update CTP Transit Element
  - ◆ Confirm and update Park and Ride locations as needed.

► **Strategy TRANS-5.3.3:** Update CTP Bicycle and Pedestrian Element

- ◆ Refine recommended greenway connections based on priorities identified in this Plan and recent municipal planning efforts.

**Policy TRANS-5.2**

Require or incentivize rights-of-way preservation for planned facilities.

FIGURE 17: CAPE FEAR GREENWAY CONCEPT (IN SUPPORT OF TRANS-4).



The first phase of the Upper Cape Fear River Greenway could be constructed as part of the Harnett County Recreation Park and Fairgrounds Complex



Proposed cross-section for Upper Cape Fear River Greenway



## UTILITIES GOALS

The Harnett County Department of Public Utilities provides water and/or wastewater services to the majority of County residents (~95,000 people). The department also supplies water to Lillington, Angier, Erwin, Coats, Fuquay-Varina, Holly Springs, Spring Lake, Linden, Johnston County, Moore County and Fort Bragg. Recently the County entered into a revised water supply capacity agreement with Moore County expanding Moore County's supply to 3 MGD. Current wastewater treatment capacity totals 20.6 MGD. The North Harnett Regional wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) has a capacity of 5.6 MGD and the South Harnett WWTP has a capacity of 15 MGD. There are plans to expand the North Harnett WWTP from 5.6 MGD to 7.5 MGD.

The Harnett County Department of Public Utilities currently coordinates with municipalities to serve existing customers and new development. Continued coordination will be essential to support economic development with utility investments and planning. The Goals, policies and strategies below are meant to guide coordination efforts between Harnett County Planning, Harnett County Public Utilities, municipalities as well as infrastructure planning and investment decisions.

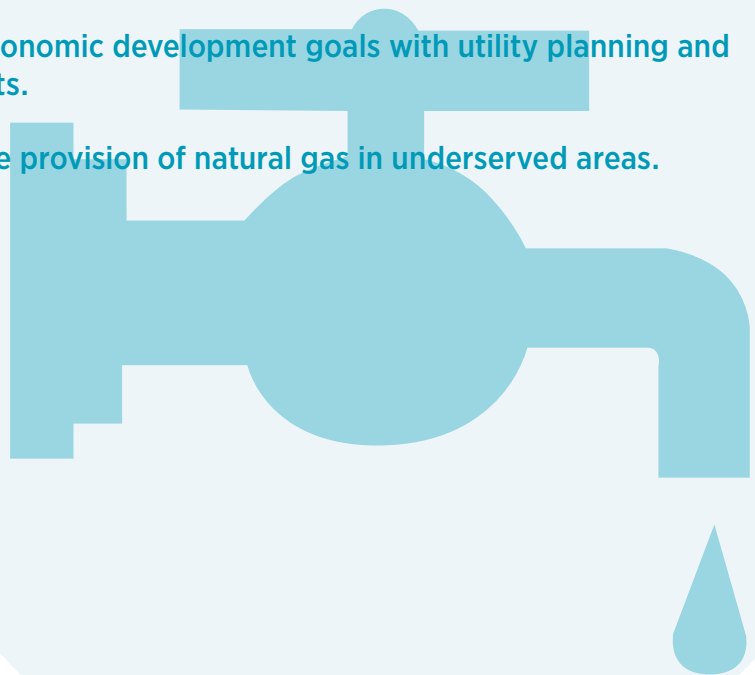
**Goal UTILITY-1: Maintain and improve the efficiency of the utility system.**

**Goal UTILITY-2: Support the Future Land Use Plan by prioritizing funding of capacity upgrades that have the potential to support quality development in growth areas.**

**Goal UTILITY-3: Update fee structure and cost share policies as needed to adequately fund and maintain utility system.**

**Goal UTILITY-4: Support economic development goals with utility planning and investments.**

**Goal UTILITY-5: Support the provision of natural gas in underserved areas.**



# UTILITIES STRATEGIES

## GOAL U-1

### Maintain and improve the efficiency of the utility system.

#### Policy U-1.1

Fund and construct recommendations identified in CIP.

#### Policy U-1.2

Continue to pursue consolidation of pump stations in Western Harnett County.

#### Policy U-1.3

Plan for efficient service provision in the Neill's Creek Basin.

- ▶ **Strategy U-1.3.1:** Develop a long-term plan for gravity fed sewer service in the Neill's Creek Basin. This may include determining locations of future gravity mains in sub-basins, developing cost share estimates for future developments and supporting the acquisition of sewer easements.

## GOAL U-2

### Support the Future Land Use Plan by prioritizing funding of capacity upgrades that have the potential to support quality development in growth areas.

#### Policy UTILITY-2.1

Provide water and sewer to priority growth areas.

- ▶ Employment Opportunities
  - ◆ I-95 Corridor Employment Corridor
  - ◆ US 401 Employment Corridor
  - ◆ The Ed-Med Corridor (US 421)
  - ◆ NC 87 Corridor
- ▶ Development Nodes
  - ◆ Compacted Mixed Use areas
  - ◆ Municipal Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ)
  - ◆ Rural Centers
- ▶ Residential Focus Areas
  - ◆ Neill's Creek Basin (west of Angier)
  - ◆ Medium Density Residential areas in SW Harnett

#### Policy U-2.2

Address long term capacity issues for Southwest Harnett County.

- ▶ **Strategy U-2.2.1:** Fund pump station upgrades and transmission infrastructure that facilitates transfer of wastewater from NC 87 Corridor to South Harnett WWTP.

- ▶ **Strategy U-2.2.2:** Pursue public/private cost share to fund parallel gravity main along South Prong of Anderson Creek to serve future development.

### **Policy U-2.3**

Limit utility expansion in areas identified as Rural Agricultural on the Future Land Use Map

### **Policy U-2.4**

Improve water pressure to increase fire rating for residents within residential growth areas.

## **Goal U-3**

**Update fee structure and cost share policies as needed to adequately fund and maintain utility system.**

### **Policy U-3.1**

Regularly revise fee structure, connection and reimbursement policies to assure adequate levels of utility service.

### **Policy U-3.2**

Continue to pursue public/private cost shares and developer agreements for reimbursement of up-front investments in infrastructure that serves additional future development.

## **GOAL U-4**

**Support economic development goals with utility planning and investments.**

### **Policy U-4.1**

Cooperate with City of Dunn to ensure utility capacity for I-95 corridor.

The current Harnett County Water and Sewer Ordinance states that Developers must demonstrate that a project will yield a minimum value of \$250,000 tax base per lot in order for the Harnett County Department of Public Utilities Director to assist in easement acquisition. This threshold should be re-evaluated in light of the Updated Future Land Use Map and fiscal impact trends of new development to determine an appropriate criteria for determining if Harnett County should intervene to encourage connection to gravity lines.

### **Policy U-4.2**

Encourage a growth pattern that maximizes return on investment.

- ▶ **Strategy U-4.2.1:** Update easement acquisition policies to enable greater flexibility for Harnett County to intervene on behalf of developers' to allow connections to Neill's creek basin gravity sewer line (west of Angier).
- ▶ **Strategy U-4.2.2:** Consider the adoption of a utility allocation policy to promote economic development and manage limited capacity in areas where transmission capacity is limited and/or a certain type of development is desired (i.e. non-residential).

## **GOAL U-5**

### **Support the provision of natural gas in underserved areas.**

#### **Policy U-5.1**

Coordinate with service providers and private stakeholders to plan for natural gas extension to spur non-residential development in underserved areas including the NC 87 Corridor.

- ▶ **Strategy U-5.1.1:** Work with Fort Bragg leadership to establish a natural gas connection to underserved areas, including the NC 87 Corridor, to reduce the cost of infrastructure and spur quality non-residential development.

Knightdale's Water Allocation Policy is an example of an innovative approach to encouraging quality development. A proposed development must obtain a certain number of points to receive water allocation if the proposal is over a minimum density. Points can be awarded for non-residential uses, roadway improvements, gateway improvements, transit facilities, and amenities (including greenways). See Knightdale's Ordinance for more details.

For More Information: [www.knightdalenc.gov/index.aspx?page=460](http://www.knightdalenc.gov/index.aspx?page=460)









**IMPLEMENTATION  
ACTION PLAN**



# IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

The following table includes a subset of the strategies that represent near to medium term action items. They include a timeframe and a list of entities involved to facilitate implementation of key portions of this plan. In addition to following the implementation matrix, the Town should also raise awareness of the plan, and the opportunities described within it, by making presentations to local groups and organizations and by distributing a prepared press release to area media outlets.

	STRATEGY	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
LAND USE	<b>STRATEGY LU-1.5.1/3.2.1:</b> Develop small-area concept plans that can be used to brand and market future employment, retail and mixed use centers as well as illustrate access points, collector street configurations, building orientation and reduce future land use conflicts.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Economic Development Commission
	<b>STRATEGY LU-2.3.1:</b> Coordinate with tax assessor to update tax records and/or permit tracking software to allow for more detailed reports on development approvals and building permits.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Harnett County Tax Assessor
	<b>STRATEGY LU-3.3.1/3.3.2</b> Update design guidelines for Compact Mixed Use areas. Consider guidelines or standards similar to the Highway Corridor Overlay District. Where applicable (i.e. near Development Nodes), require new buildings to be located close to the street with minimal parking in front.	<b>ONGOING / SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
	<b>STRATEGY LU-5.3.1:</b> Promote low density, context sensitive residential in the Agricultural and Rural Residential areas shown on the Future Land Use Map by allowing flexibility in street design if Rural Residential standards are met.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
	<b>STRATEGY LU-5.4.1:</b> Provide printed information on land conservation programs in the planning department and other county offices and through the county web page.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Sandhills Area Land Trust
	<b>STRATEGY LU-5.5.1:</b> Encourage tree retention through defining criteria for designating significant trees and updating the Unified Development Ordinance to include guidance on preservation.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
	<b>STRATEGY LU-6.2.1:</b> Study potentially adding an airport overlay district to the Unified Development Ordinance that minimizes conflicts with Airport activities.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
	<b>STRATEGY LU-7.2.1:</b> Adopt a minimum housing code or regularly fund a problem properties program.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	<b>STRATEGY ED-1.1:</b> Develop “brand” around cost-competitiveness, I-95, proximity to Wake County and Fort Bragg, business-friendliness, and the opportunities of a growing Campbell University and the training resources of Central Carolina Community College.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development
	<b>STRATEGY ED-1.2:</b> Update and strengthen the economic development web site.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development
	<b>STRATEGY ED-2.1:</b> Structure a visitation program in conjunction with municipalities, chambers of commerce, and other partners.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development
	<b>STRATEGY ED-3.1:</b> Develop a realistic inventory of “ready” buildings and sites based on a “Certified” model.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development
	<b>STRATEGY ED-3.2:</b> Partner with County and municipal utility providers to accurately establish current utility availability to targeted sites.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development

	GOAL	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
ECONOMIC DEV.	<b>STRATEGY ED-4.2:</b> Evaluate the creation of a public-private partnership that would jointly fund and administer the County's economic development effort.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Economic Development
	<b>STRATEGY NR-2.2.2:</b> Consider utilizing the N.C. Wildlife Commission Conservation Green Growth Toolbox during the development review process by requiring the creation of project specific maps (by staff or applicant) using the North Carolina Natural Heritage Data Explorer or available GIS data.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department
NATURAL RESOURCES	<b>STRATEGY NR-2.3.3:</b> Revise UDO to specify priority conservation areas that should be set aside as open space in Compatibility Developments.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners
	<b>STRATEGY NR-2.4.1:</b> Consider an upland open space requirement or incentive (i.e. additional density bonuses) tied to conserve priority wildlife habitats such as longleaf pine forests in the Southwestern Harnett CDTA.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources
	<b>STRATEGY NR-3.1.1/ 3.1.2:</b> Develop additional canoe and kayak access points on the Upper Little River and on the Cape Fear River.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Parks & Recreation Department
	<b>STRATEGY NR-3.3.1:</b> Coordinate with non-profits, Dunn Tourism and local businesses to develop a map and/or guidebook for paddling the Cape Fear River.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Parks & Recreation Department, Dunn Tourism
	<b>STRATEGY NR-4.1.1:</b> Locate new park facilities in under-served sectors.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Parks & Recreation Department
	<b>STRATEGY TRANS-1.1.1:</b> Support completion of US 401 Bypass Study or a new study focused on identifying a cost-feasible project that improves the connection between Harnett County and Wake County, specifically US 401 to I-540.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, North Carolina Department of Transportation
TRANSPORTATION	<b>STRATEGY TRANS-2.1.2:</b> Identify new-location collector street alignments in growth areas to be constructed with development.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), Fayetteville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (FAMPO), Mid-Carolina Rural Planning Organization, North Carolina Department of Transportation
	<b>STRATEGY TRANS-4.1.2:</b> Build the capacity for maintaining, improving and constructing publicly owned greenways.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Parks & Recreation Department
	<b>STRATEGY TRANS-4.1.3:</b> Pursue funding for first section of Cape Fear River Greenway near Lillington.	<b>MEDIUM TERM (2-3 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Parks & Recreation Department
	<b>STRATEGY TRANS-5.3:</b> Coordinate with municipalities, CAMPO, FAMPO, The Mid-Carolina RPO and NCDOT to update the Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Planning Department, Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, North Carolina Department of Transportation
	<b>STRATEGY UTILITY-2.2.1:</b> Fund pump station upgrades and transmission infrastructure that facilitates transfer of wastewater from NC 87 Corridor to South Harnett WWTP.	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Public Utilities
UTILITIES	<b>STRATEGY UTILITY-4.2:</b> Update easement acquisition policies to allow for greater flexibility so that Harnett County can intervene on behalf of developers' to allow connections to Neill's creek basin gravity sewer line (west of Angier).	<b>SHORT TERM (1-2 YEARS)</b>	Harnett County Public Utilities





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STRONG ROOTS

HOM  
CAMPBELL



# APPENDIX

WELCOME TO  
ARNETT  
COUNTY  
S • NEW GROWTH

IE OF  
UNIVERSITY







FIGURE 23: POTENTIAL UPLAND HABITAT (NC WRC AND NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM) NATURAL AREAS

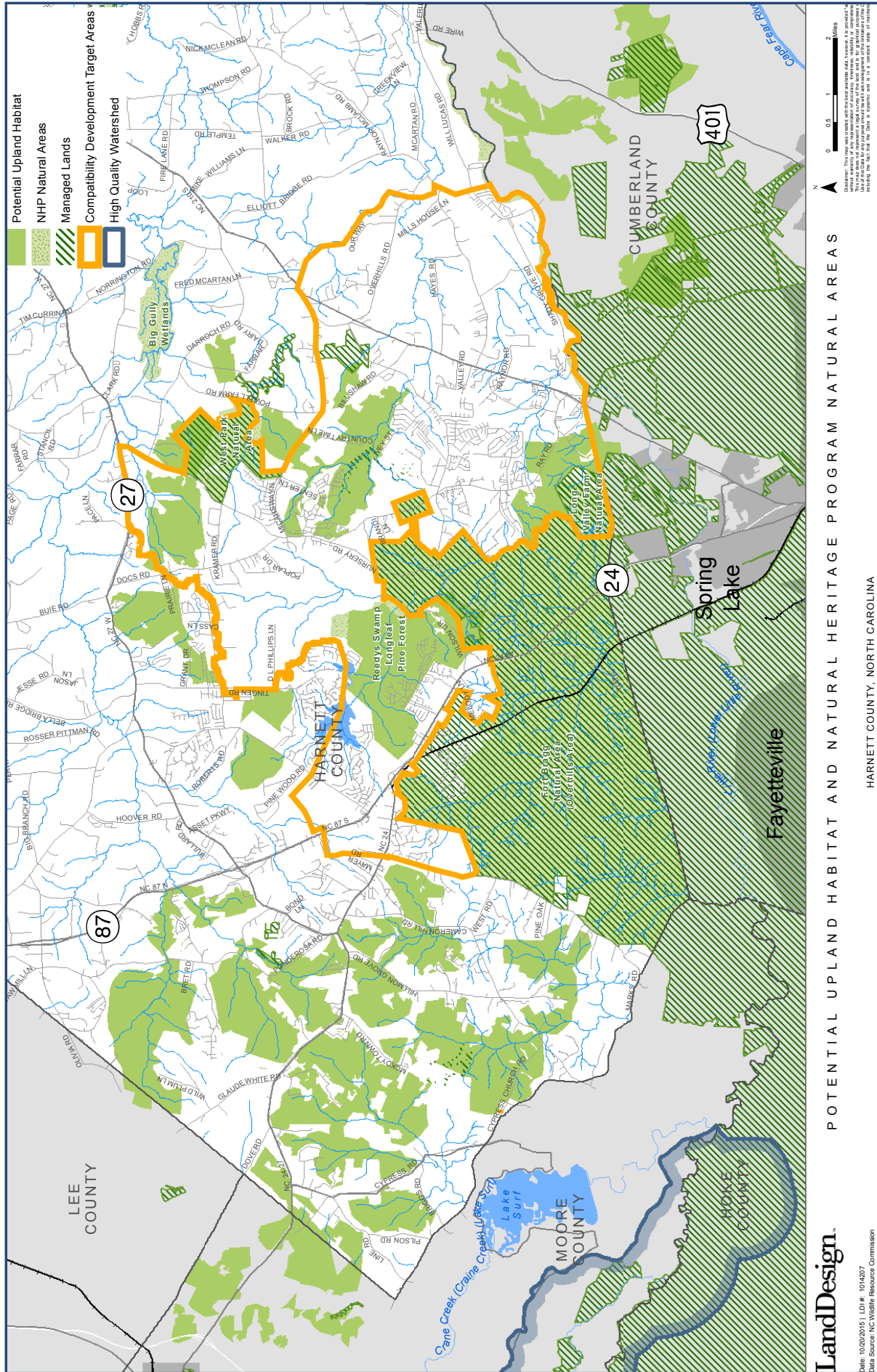
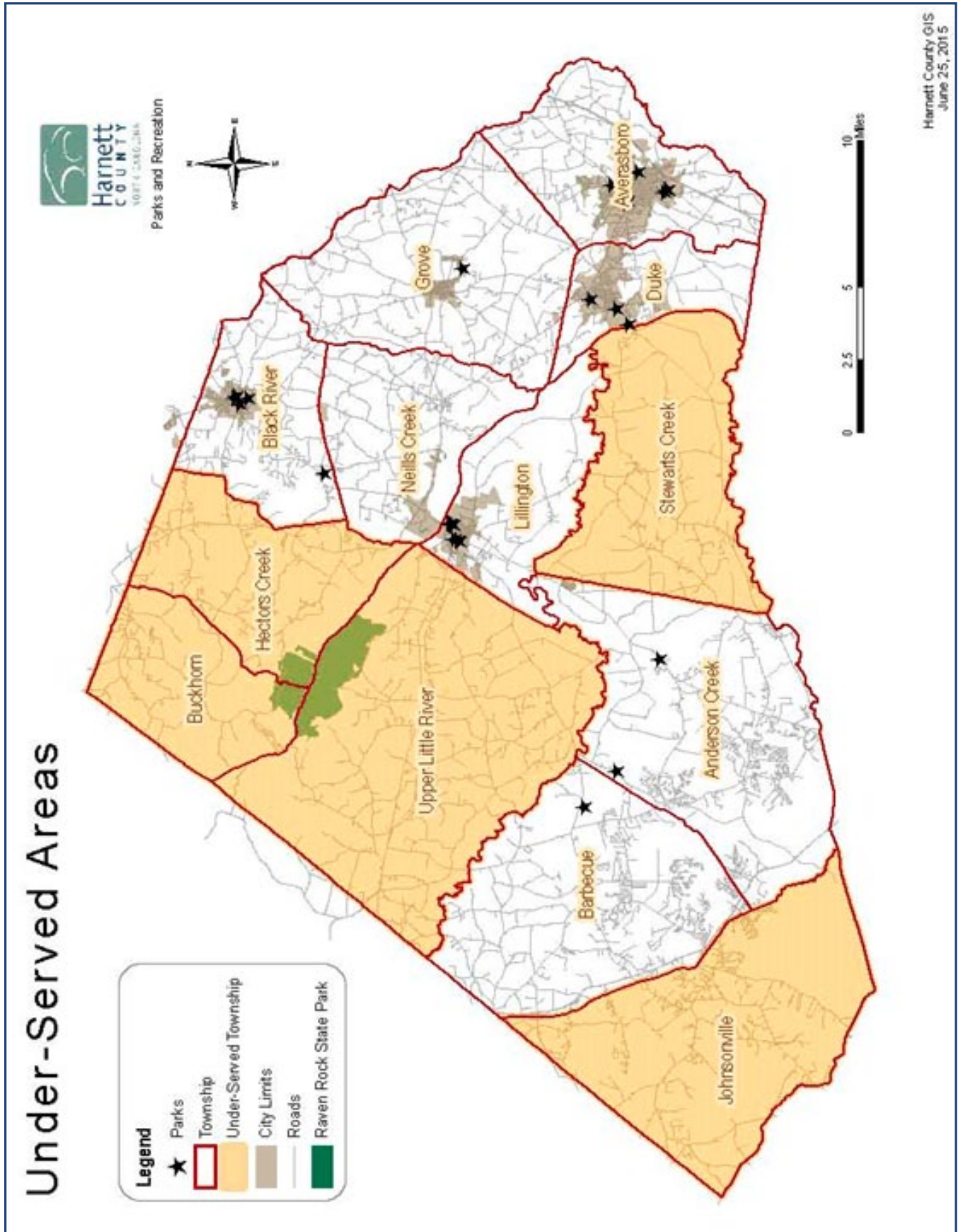


FIGURE 24: PARKS AND RECREATION UNDER-SERVED AREAS



# SCENARIO PLANNING

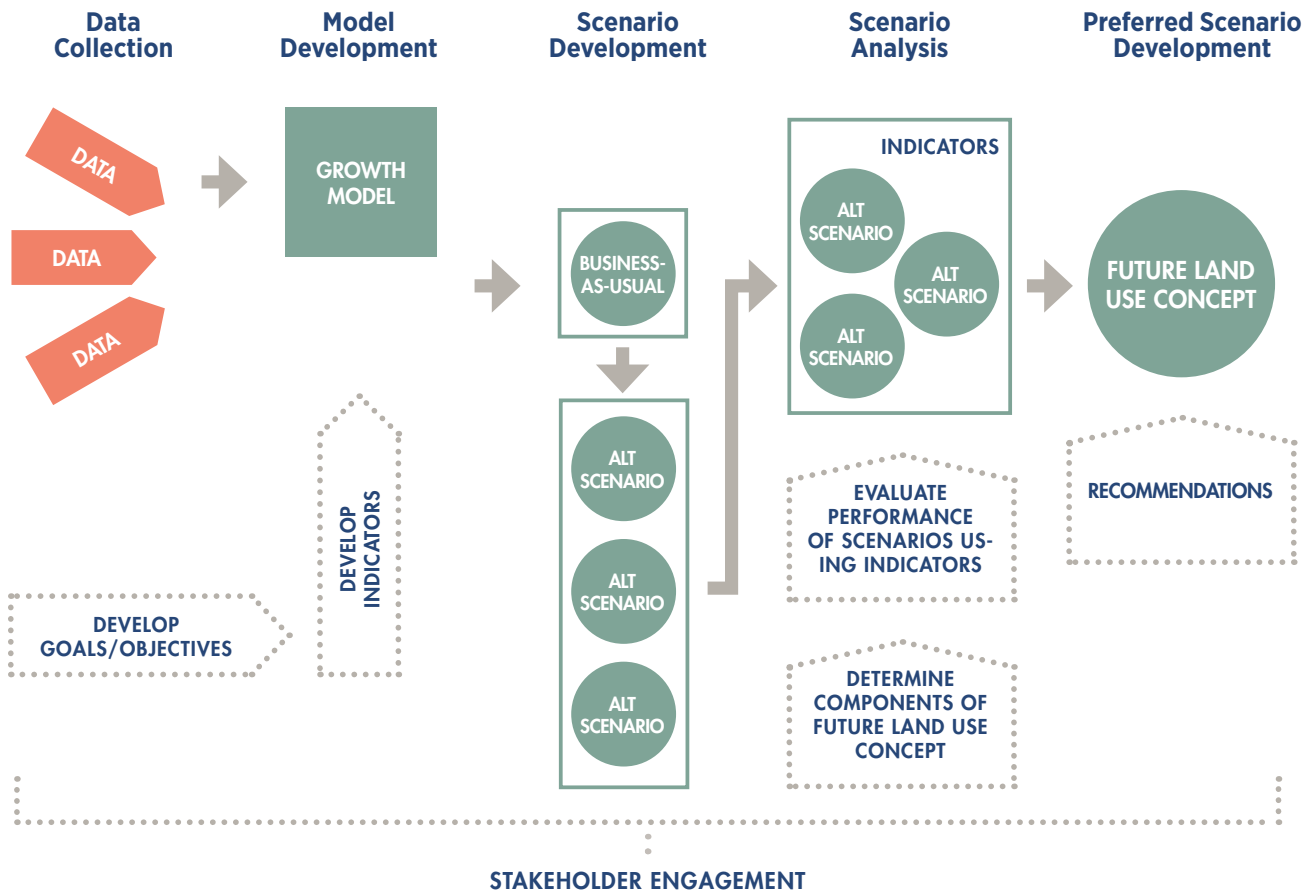
Scenario planning is a method to learn about the future of a county. In this process, a GIS-based land use model was constructed using CommunityViz, a software extension to ArcGIS Desktop created by Placeways LLC. The land use model was developed to examine the probable distributions of households and employment locations in 2040 based on the availability and suitability of land and varying land use policies.

The number of projected homes and jobs in 2040 were held constant between all scenarios. A trend or Business-As-Usual scenario was developed to represent what the County would look like in 2040, given current trends and policy. Alternative scenarios, based on Harnett County's goals and input from the Technical and Advisory Committee, were developed as alternative paths to the current course of growth and development.

Potential impacts of growth (positive and negative) were measured for all of the scenarios using a set of indicators. The preferred scenario, or Future Land Use Plan was developed to maximize priority indicators. See the following pages for maps of forecasted homes and jobs for each scenario and indicator results.

FIGURE 4: SCENARIO PLANNING

## SCENARIO PLANNING PROCESS

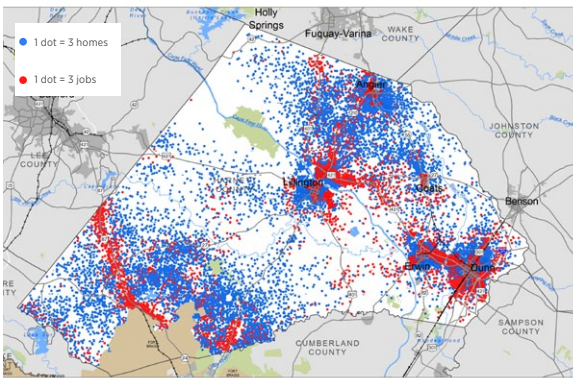




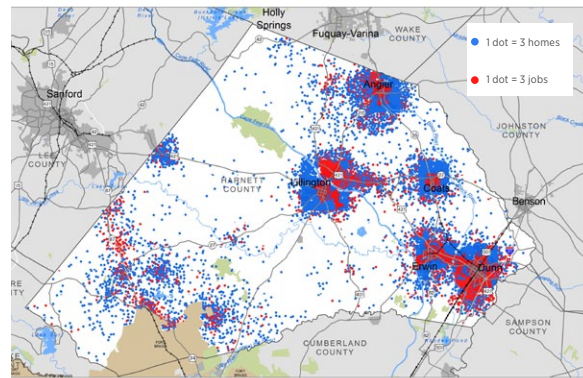
## ALTERNATIVE GROWTH PATTERNS

The Future Land Use Concept graphically represents a county-wide vision of the future. The process to develop this Concept began with an evaluation of the Business-as-Usual trendline. Based on feedback received from the public and the Advisory Committee, three alternative scenarios were created to analyze the potential impacts of growth (both positive and negative) on the County.

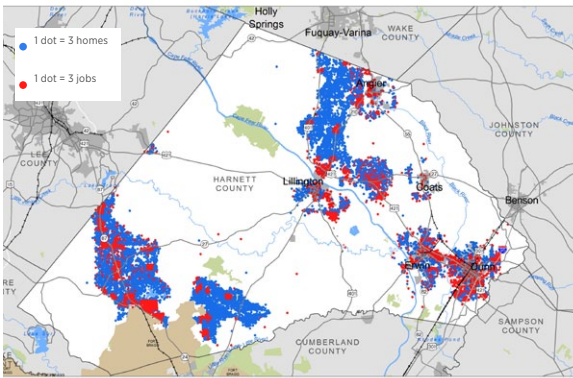
Each scenario includes assumptions regarding land use policy changes and infrastructure investment choices that result in alternative development patterns. These development patterns are shown in the maps below. The forecasted impacts of the alternative scenarios are summarized in the report card on the opposite page.



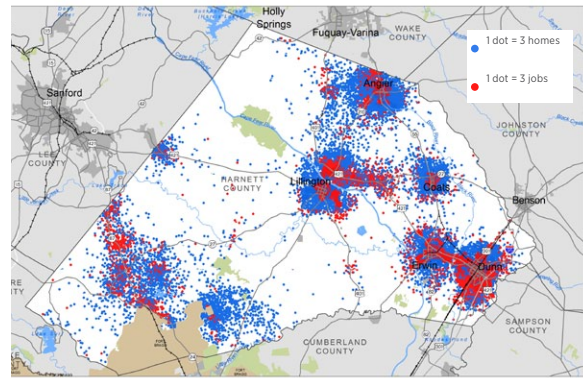
**Business As Usual Scenario (BAU)**



**Strong Towns (ST)**



**Natural Assets Scenario (NA)**



**Preferred Scenario (PS)**





### DISTRIBUTION OF GROWTH

Each scenario illustrates how growth responds to different land use, transportation, economic development and infrastructure policies.

# SCENARIO PLANNING REPORT CARD

	BAU	St	Na	PS
INDICATOR				
Total Homes Forecasted	30,558	30,558	30,558	30,558
Total Jobs Forecasted	22,783	22,783	22,783	22,783
Acres of prime industrial lands	15,593	15,593	15,593	15,593
Acres of Office and Industrial Lands	11,510	17,300	11,510	16,920
Working lands impacted	38,837	25,946	25,405	30,782
New Students	9,784	9,784	9,784	9,784
Number of new homes in High Noise Zones	148	14	17	14
Number of new homes in 500ft Fly Zone*	455	100	8	102
Number of new homes in 1000ft Fly Zone*	1,627	556	570	651
Acres of critical to conserve lands impacted by new development	3,330	1,370	1,410	1,800
Acres of important to conserve lands impacted by new development	22,700	6,230	12,200	11,450
Acres of prime agriculture lands impacted by new development	38,837	25,946	25,405	30,782
Acres of forest impacted by new development	36,750	24,334	22,793	28,233
Acres of new impervious surface in critical watersheds**	262	90	45	75
Acres of natural assets impacted	40,526	24,716	21,862	28,760
Number of new homes near Priority Habitat Corridors	1,185	458	336	507
Number of new homes near Smoke Awareness Areas	358	41	55	58
Number of new homes adjacent to Significant Natural Heritage Areas	1,893	1,440	467	1,440
Wildlife habitat impacted	23,109	16,816	8,448	16,205
Number of new homes in municipal limits	2,782	5,098	1,021	4,262
Urban Footprint	92,260	67,570	62,290	77,110
Number of new homes in utility focus areas	17,907	25,539	30,024	26,627
Number of new jobs in utility focus areas	22,574	24,090	25,006	24,313
Utility Demand inside utility focus areas***	7,862,850	9,998,250	11,256,900	10,303,700
Utility Demand outside utility focus areas***	3,491,750	1,376,150	135,150	1,025,750
Number of new homes within a 10-minute drive of health care facility	4,153	7,936	3,236	6,231
Number of new homes within a 10-minute walk of an existing school	3,725	4,834	4,760	4,922

## Results Key

-  = Worse Than Business As Usual
-  = Less than 10% change from Business As Usual
-  = Significant Improvement Compared to Business As Usual
-  = Best Improvement Compared to Business As Usual

## Scenario Key

- BAU**  
Business As Usual
- ST**  
Strong Towns
- NA**  
Natural Assets
- PS**  
Preferred Scenario

\*Flight Buffer, 500 ft and 1000ft Flight Zones from RLUAC Telecommunications Tower Study 2008

\*\*Critical Watersheds include Water Supply Watersheds Level I-III and High Quality Waters

\*\*\*Utility focus area defined by areas that are currently or easily served by water and sewer

# 2015

STATE OF THE COUNTY



**GROW**  
**Harnett**  
**COUNTY**

STRONG ROOTS  
NEW GROWTH





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# Introduction

## A Plan for Harnett's Future

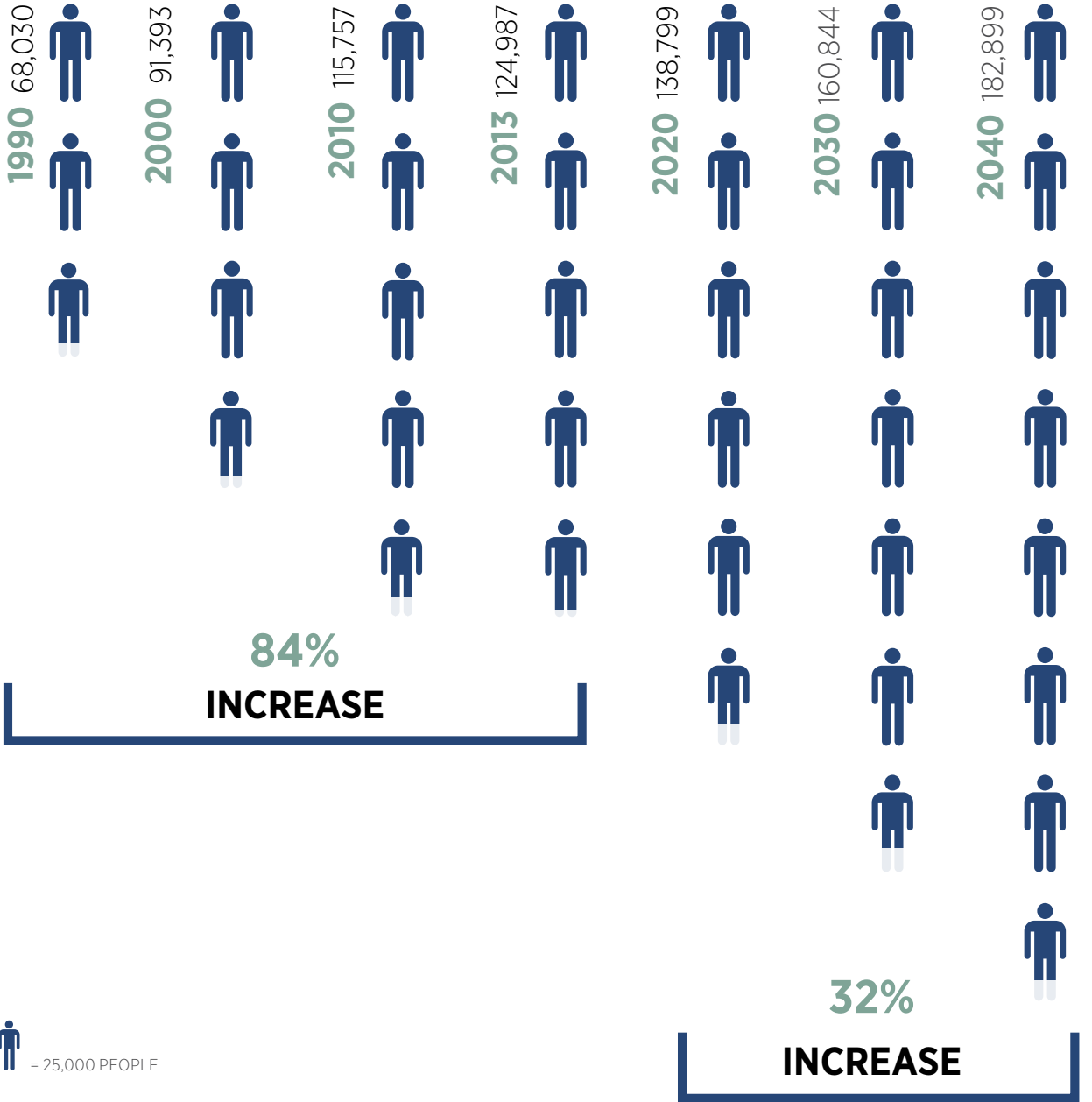
Harnett has experienced exceptional growth over the past two decades. From a population of just 68,000 in 1990, to a 2013 population estimate of 124,987 residents, the County has evolved from a rural, agriculture community to a diverse location within the Fort Bragg region of North Carolina. Harnett's location and relatively low cost of living continue to draw thousands of residents to its boundaries.

Harnett looks forward to continued growth. The County's proximity to Raleigh and Fayetteville and the Highway 87 and I-95 corridors make Harnett County a desirable location for residents, businesses, and industry. Local leaders recognize that, for Harnett County to capitalize on this market opportunity, an update to the Comprehensive Plan was needed.

- ▶ How will this growth shape Harnett's identity?
- ▶ What bold moves can the County make to ensure that the rural character remains while providing for new residents joining the community?
- ▶ How can the County continue to support strong and safe neighborhoods and thriving businesses?
- ▶ What does it take to position Harnett for continued success?

This planning process is designed to work with the community to answer these questions, develop a widely-supported vision and identify the investments needed to realize that vision for the County.

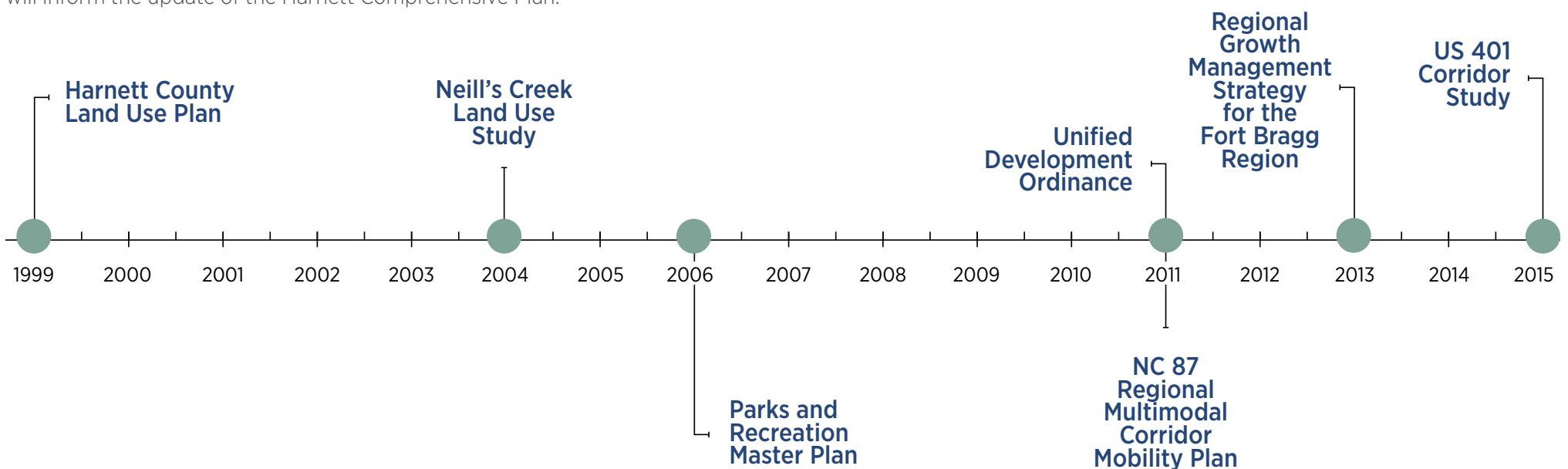
### POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS



SOURCE: NC OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTIONS

## GREAT PLANS transform communities into GREAT PLACES.

Harnett has a long-standing tradition of preparing plans to help guide growth and development decision in the community. The results of the more recent efforts will inform the update of the Harnett Comprehensive Plan.



An initial step in the planning process is an examination and assessment of the existing conditions. This report summarizes information about the County gathered through input from various citizens and stakeholders; a review of data, policies and regulations; and observations. The conclusion section at the end of this report highlights the key issues and opportunities to be addressed by the updated Comprehensive Plan.

# Community Profile

## POPULATION GROWTH

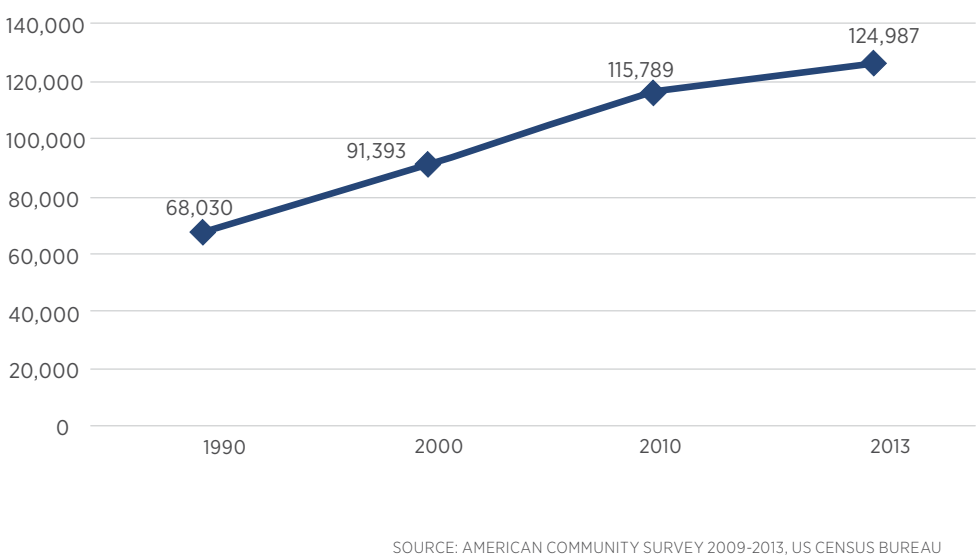
Harnett has experienced exceptional growth over the past two decades, from a population of just 68,000 in 1990. The County has evolved from a rural, agriculture community to a diverse location within the Fort Bragg region of North Carolina. The estimated 2013 population of Harnett is 124,987. This is an increase of 84% since 1990. Anticipated growth is expected to increase the County population by 46% by 2040.



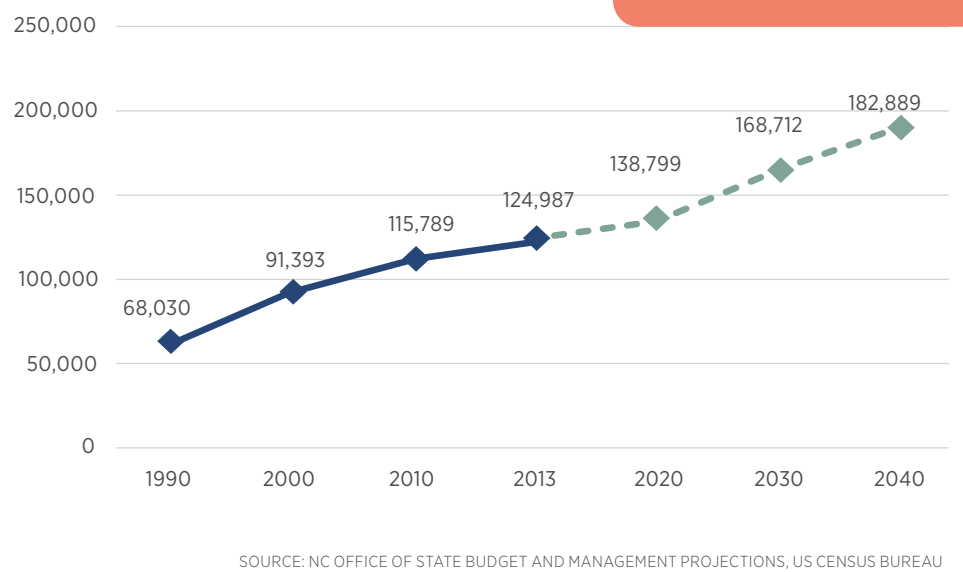
### DID YOU KNOW?

FROM 2010-2013, HARNETT WAS THE FIFTH-FASTEST COUNTY IN NORTH CAROLINA.

### HISTORIC GROWTH



### PROJECTED GROWTH



## GROWTH COMPARISONS

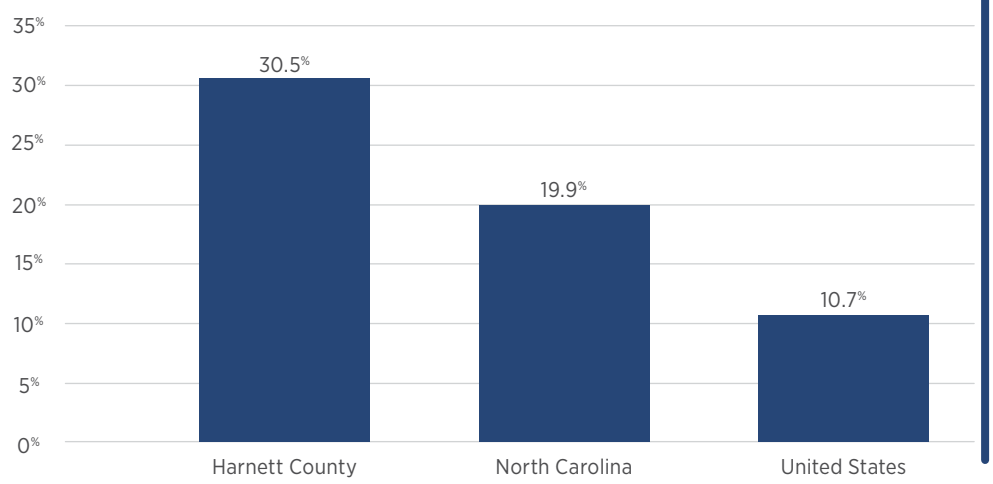
From 2000 to 2010, Harnett County grew by nearly 27%. The most recent population figures indicate that Harnett's growth will continue to outpace regional, state and national rates.

### GROWTH RATE COMPARISONS, 2000-2013

YEAR	HARNETT	LEE	JOHNSTON	CHATHAM	CUMBERLAND	NC
2013	124,987	60,266	177,967	66,817	325,871	9,848,060
2010	115,726	57,904	169,613	63,764	320,246	9,559,533
2000	91,393	49,482	123,279	49,740	303,755	8,081,614
2010-2013	8.0%	4.1%	4.9%	4.8%	1.8%	3.0%
2000-2010	26.6%	17.0%	37.6%	28.2%	5.4%	18.3%

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013, US CENSUS BUREAU

### GROWTH RATES BY COMPARISON 2000-2013

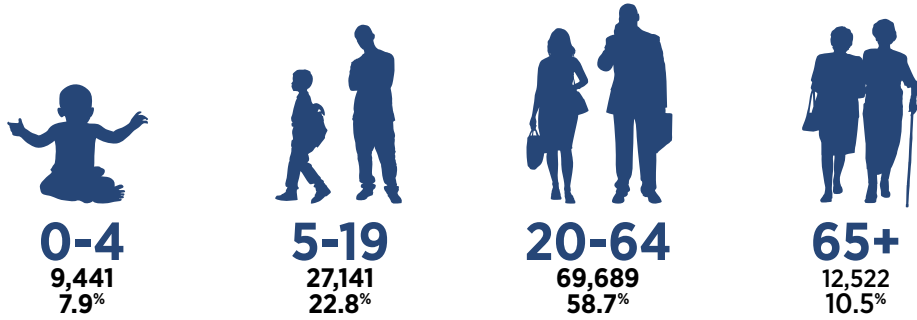




# Community Profile

## AGE (2013)

Harnett County has a young population. The median age is 33.5 in Harnett, over four years lower than the state median age. Harnett does not have a large older age population dependency ratio, but there are a larger proportion of children that are dependent on the working population.

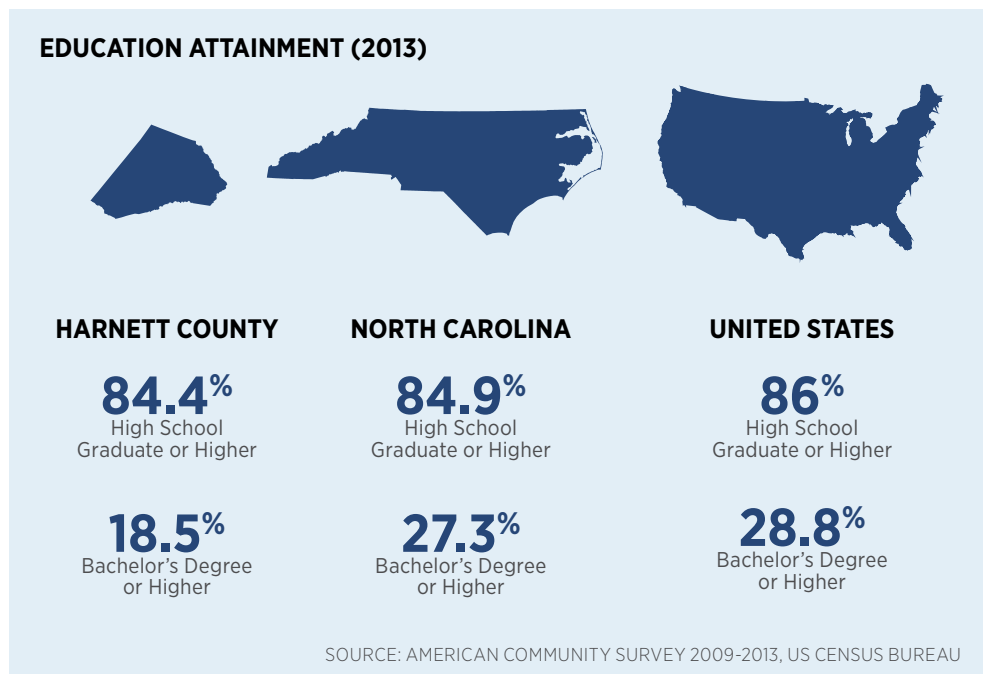


SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013

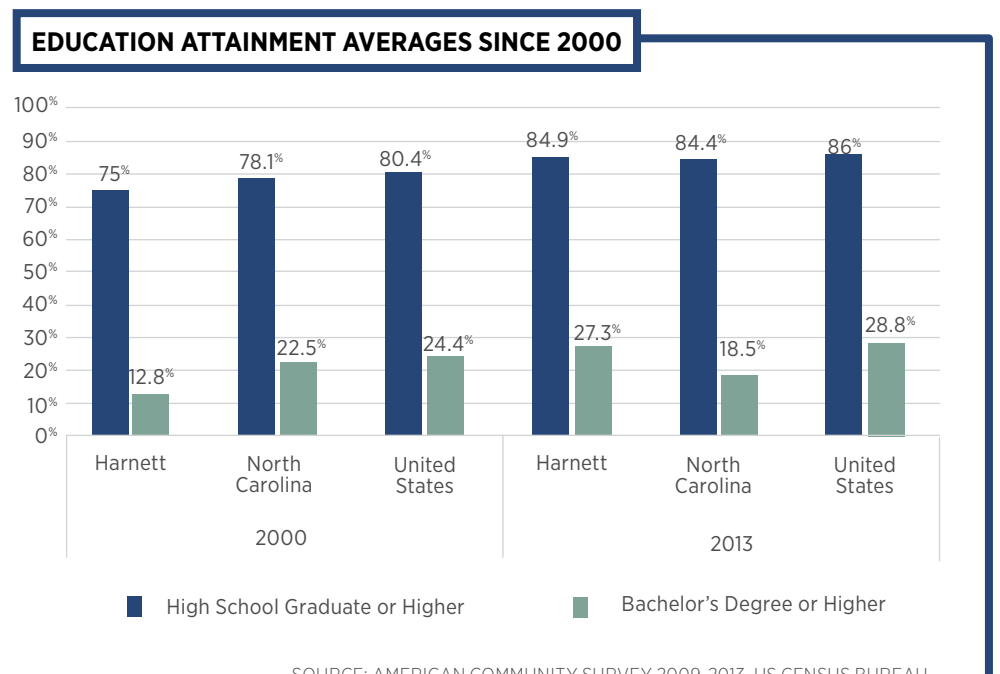
AGE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS, 2013						
	HARNETT	LEE	JOHNSTON	CHATHAM	CUMBERLAND	NC
Median Age	33.5	37.1	37	44.8	30.9	37.6
Old-Age Dependency Ratio	17.1	23.3	17.4	34.5	15.4	21.3
Child Dependency Ratio	44.8	42.7	44.3	36.1	41.7	37.6
Change in Young Working Population (2000-2013)	16.5%	5.7%	16.9%	-0.5%	-8.0%	3.0%

The young working age population in Harnett County has been growing at a rate of 16.5% from 2000 to 2013. This means that the county is attracting the portion of the population that can drive innovation and investment in the economy. Many areas are struggling to keep their young workers around, so this is an encouraging sign for Harnett County.

## EDUCATION (2000-2013)



SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013, US CENSUS BUREAU

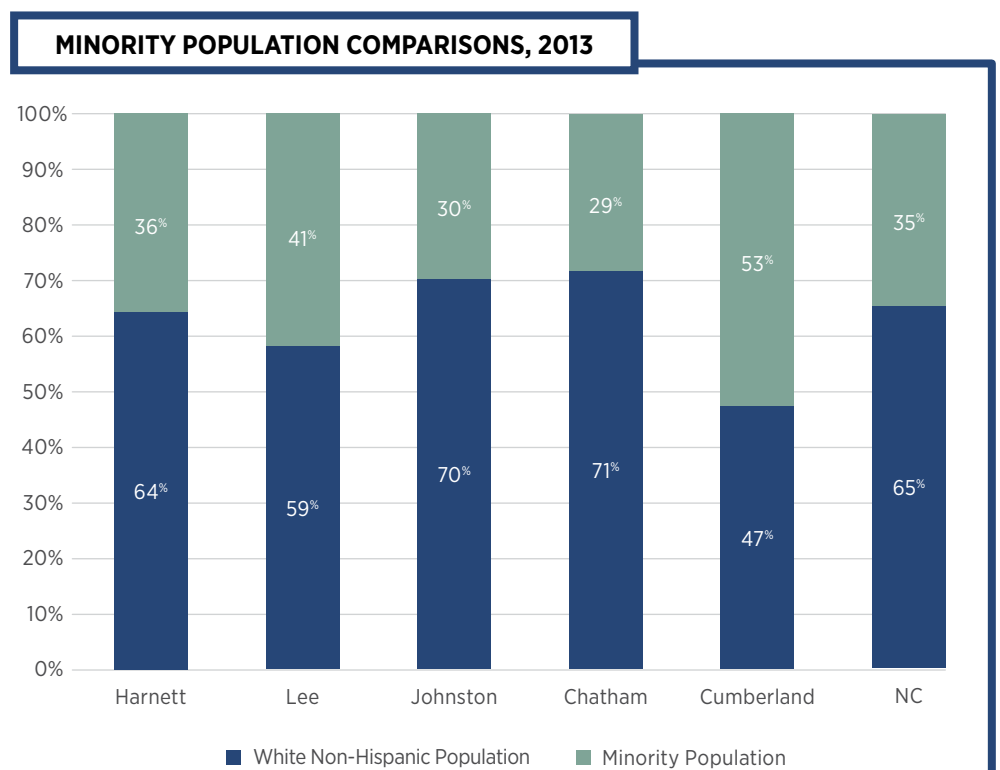


SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013, US CENSUS BUREAU

## RACE AND ETHNICITY (2013)

RACE AND ETHNICITY			
	2000	2010	% CHANGE
WHITE	64,744	82,467	27.4%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	20,481	24,969	21.9%
AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE	794	1,060	33.5%
ASIAN	591	1,264	113.9%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	61	6	-90.2%
TWO OR MORE RACES	1,430	4,115	187.8%
HISPANIC OR LATINO	5,336	13,213	147.6%

SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013, US CENSUS BUREAU



SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013, US CENSUS BUREAU

# Households and Housing

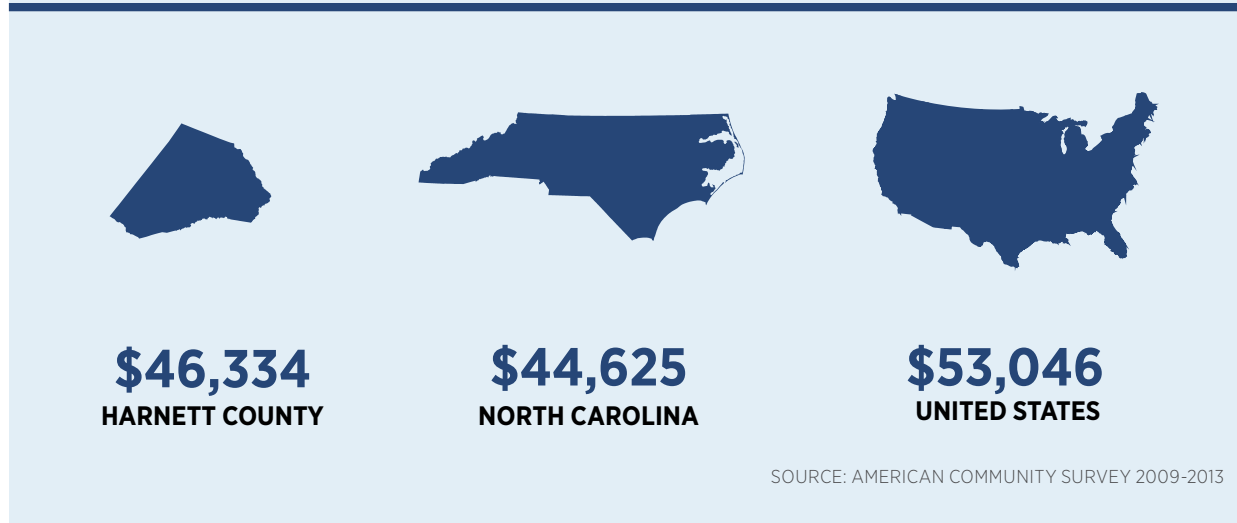
## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

As the population has increased so has the number of households in the county. The average household size and average family size are higher in Harnett County compared to neighboring counties. These rates are also growing for Harnett County.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS COMPARISONS (2013)						
	HARNETT	LEE	JOHNSTON	CHATHAM	CUMBERLAND	NC
Total Households	40,677	21,204	60,759	26,017	121,226	3,715,565
Change in Households 2010-2013	4.0%	1.0%	2.8%	4.6%	3.3%	2.5%
Average Household Size	2.83	2.72	2.81	2.46	2.55	2.53
Growth in Average Household Size	6.0%	4.2%	4.1%	1.2%	0.0%	1.6%

SOURCE: US CENSUS BUREAU, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013

## MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



## HOUSING MARKET COMPARISON

Over two-thirds of housing units in Harnett County are occupied by owners. This rate is slightly higher than the state average. Harnett County's home values and mortgage/rent prices are in "the middle of the road" compared to neighboring counties. From 2010 to 2013, the median home value increased by over \$9,000, double the state average.

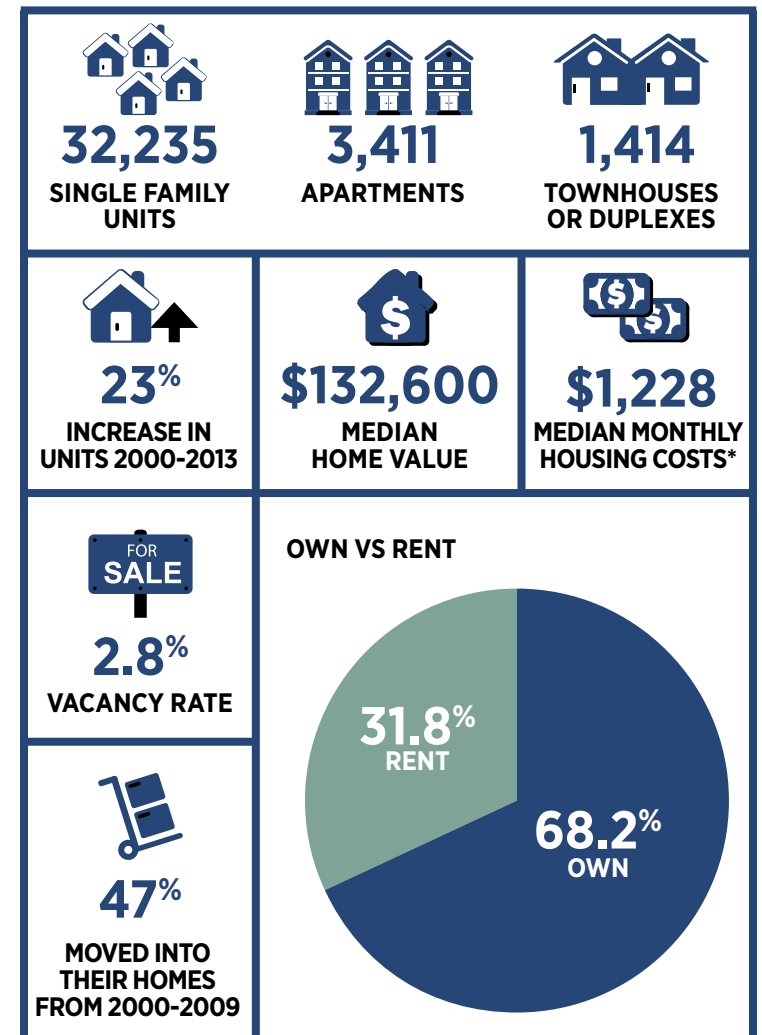
HOUSING MARKET COMPARISONS, 2013						
	HARNETT	LEE	JOHNSTON	CHATHAM	CUMBERLAND	NC
Median Home Value	\$132,600	\$131,300	\$141,200	\$211,400	\$128,700	\$153,600
Median Mortgage	\$1,228	\$1,136	\$1,254	\$1,458	\$1,215	\$1,281
Median Rent	\$756	\$686	\$778	\$774	\$853	\$776
Owner-Occupied	68.2%	69.1%	71.6%	79.9%	54.8%	66.4%
Renter-Occupied	31.8%	30.9%	28.4%	20.1%	45.2%	33.6%

## JOBS TO HOUSING RATIO

Harnett County has a low job to housing ratio meaning that the county is becoming a bedroom community for other counties at a higher rate than local county jobs are being created.

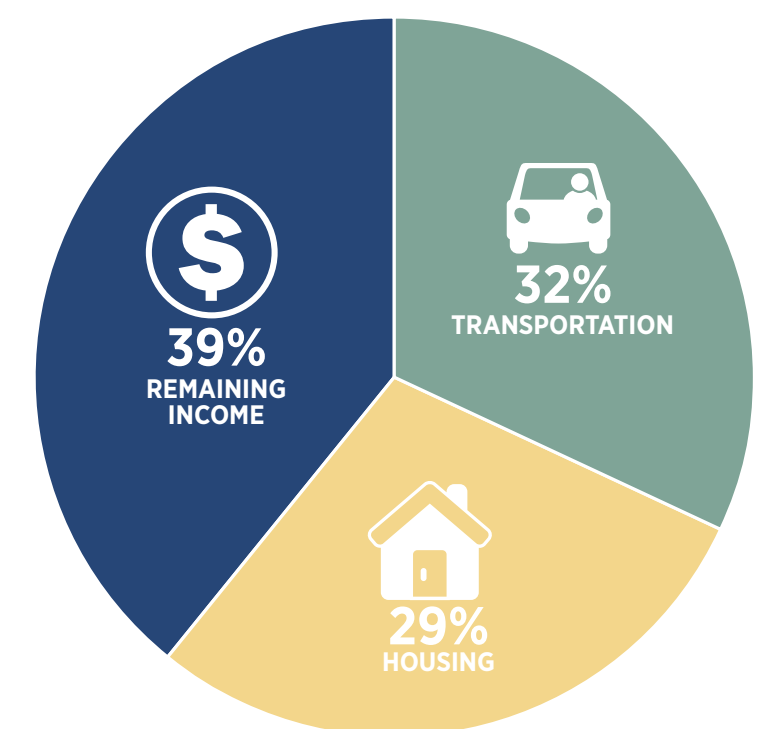
JOBS PER HOUSING UNIT COMPARISON, 2013						
	HARNETT	LEE	JOHNSTON	CHATHAM	CUMBERLAND	NC
Jobs	22,452	24,257	42,591	14,095	117,629	3,974,940
Housing Units	47,381	24,117	68,000	28,964	138,362	4,349,023
Jobs/Units Ratio	0.47	1.01	0.63	0.49	0.85	0.91

## HOUSING UNITS



## HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS

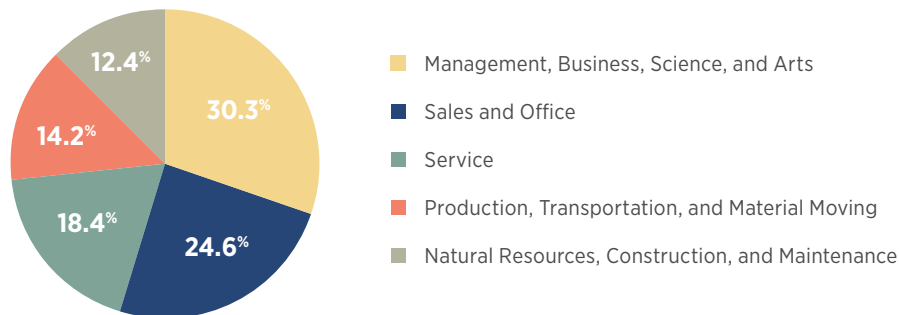
Traditional measures of housing affordability ignore transportation costs. Typically a household's second-largest expenditure, transportation costs are largely a function of the proximity of jobs and housing. Factoring in both housing and transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.



# Economic Development

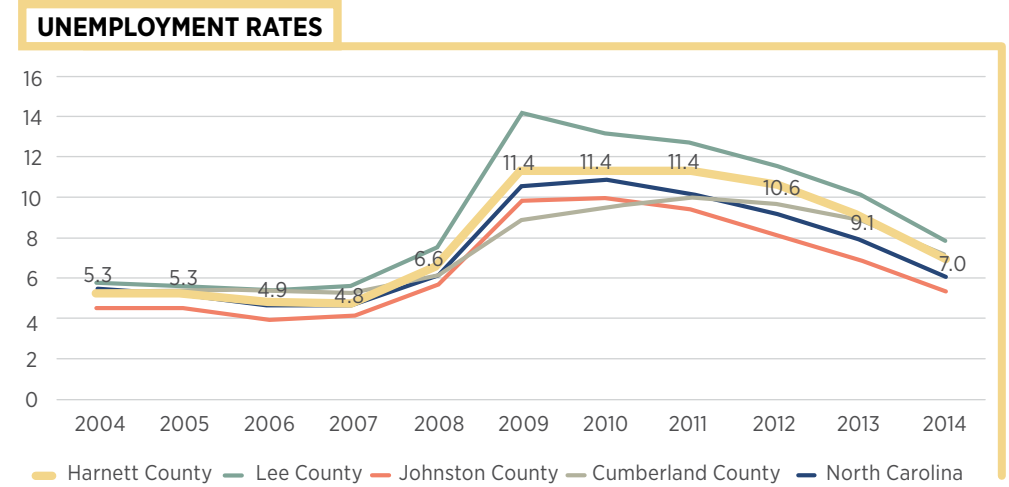
## EMPLOYMENT

According to 2009-2013 American Community Survey estimates, there were over 45,000 people employed in Harnett County. The majority of these jobs are in moderate-paying, local-serving industries. While important to the economy, these industries don't drive growth, but instead follow it.



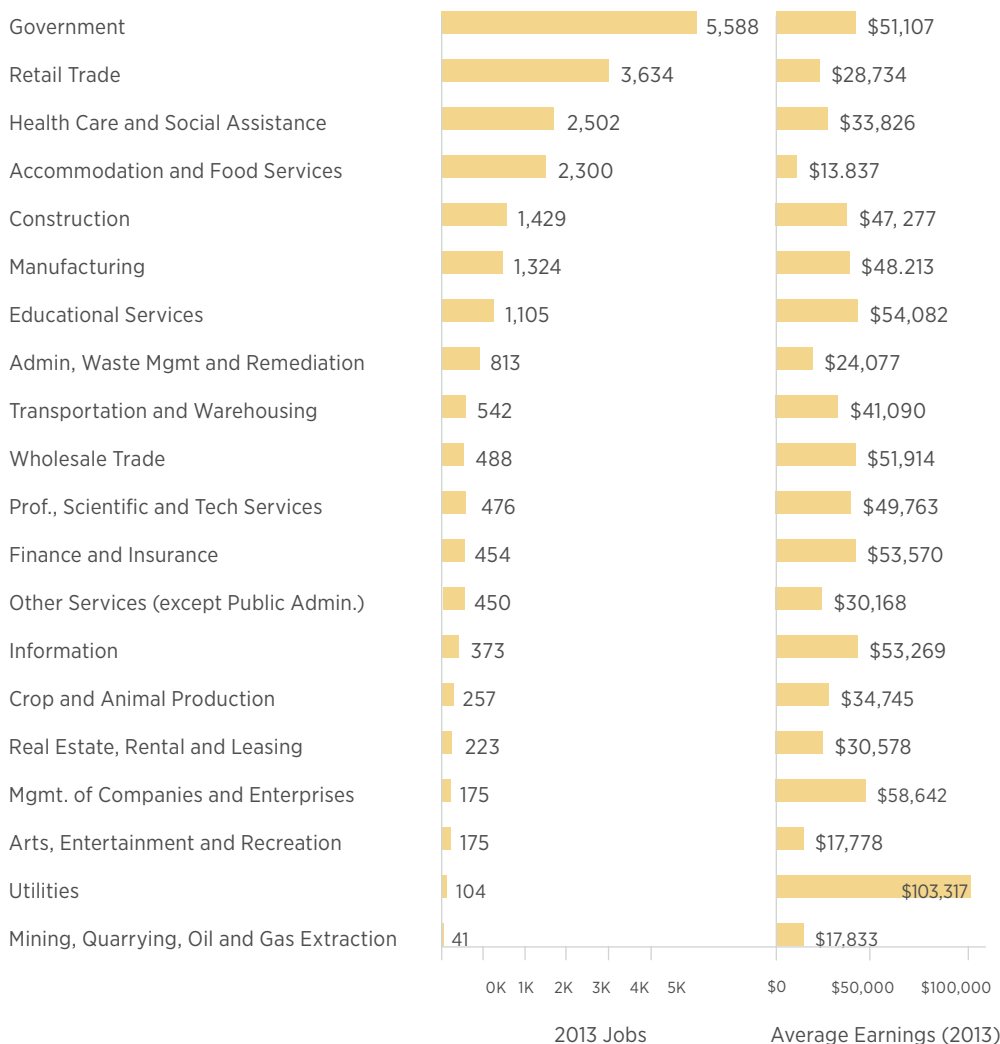
SOURCE: AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY 2009-2013

## COMMUNITY COMPARISON: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



SOURCE: ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL

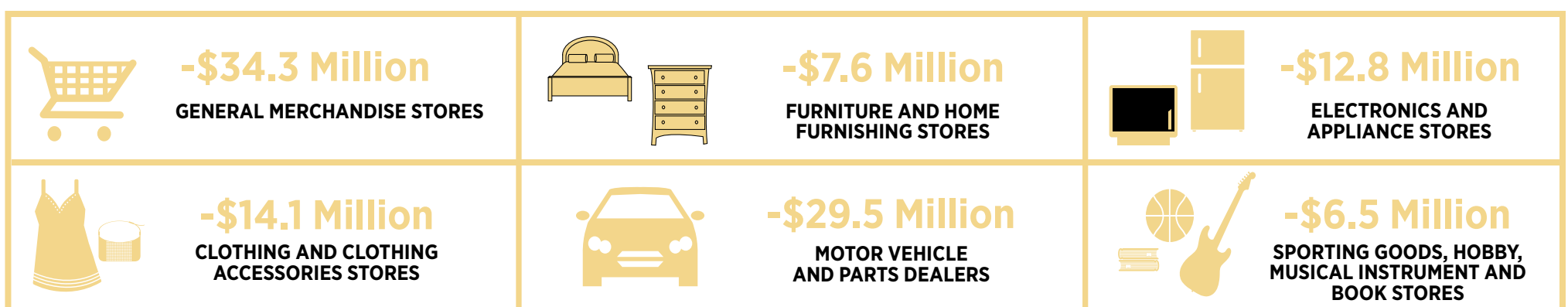
## TOP EMPLOYERS

TOP EMPLOYERS IN HARNETT COUNTY	
EMPLOYER	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
HARNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS	2,132
HARNETT HEALTH SYSTEM	1,050
HARNETT COUNTY GOVERNMENT	887
FOOD LION DISTRIBUTION CENTER	758
CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY	750
HARNETT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	381
EDWARDS BROTHERS	280
WAL-MART	270
CARLIE C'S IGA	185
SAAB BARRACUDA	167

SOURCE: HARNETT COUNTY EDC

## RETAIL LEAKAGE

In retail, leakage occurs when members of a community spend money outside that community or when money spent inside that community is transferred outside the community. Harnett County loses potential sales in a variety of categories, including the following:



SOURCE: ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP ESTIMATES BASED ON ECONOMIC MODELING SPECIALISTS INTERNATIONAL (2015) AND US BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (2014)



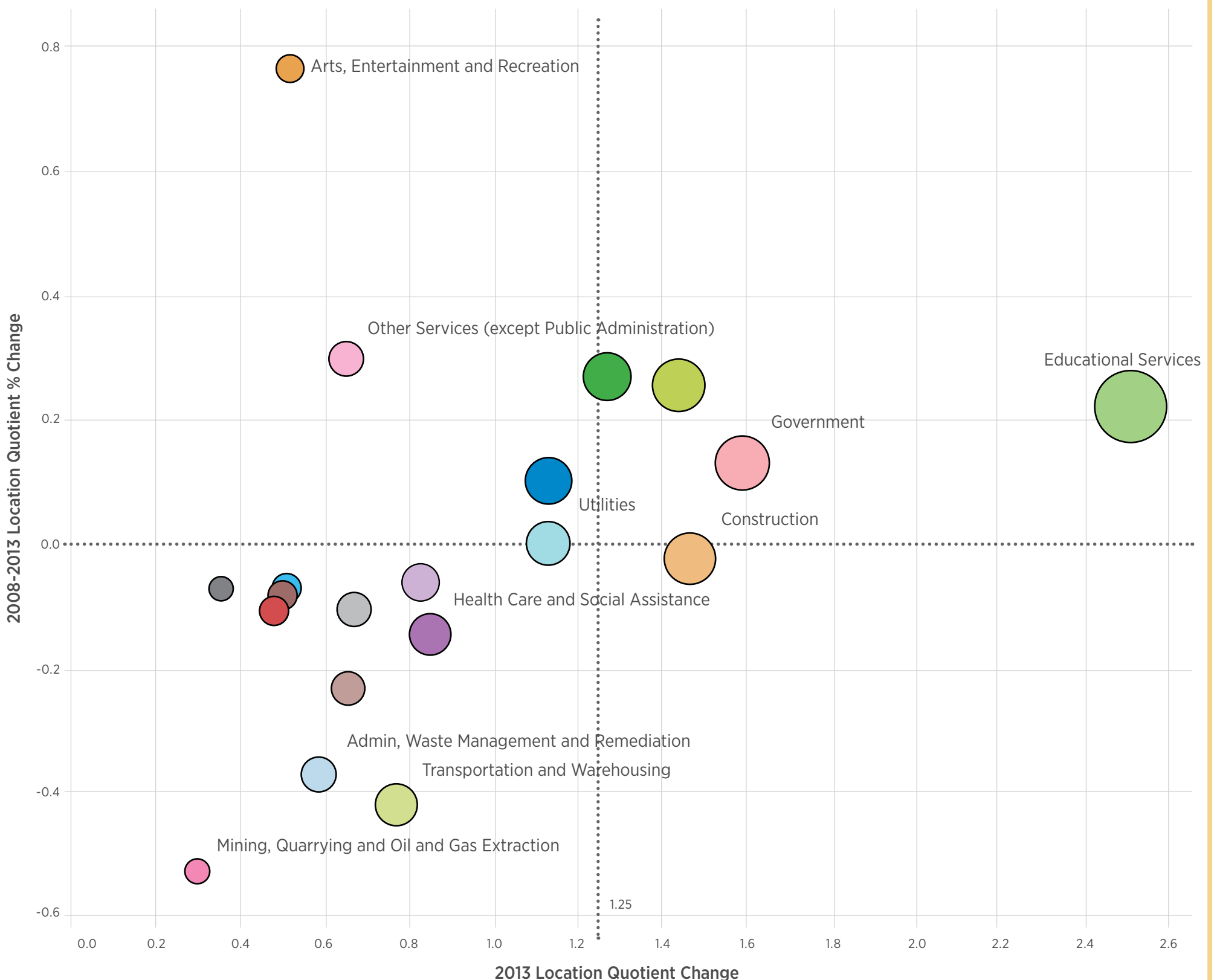
# Economic Development

## LOCATION QUOTIENTS BY INDUSTRY

Location quotient (LQ) is a valuable way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation. It can reveal what makes a particular region “unique” in comparison to the national average. In Harnett County the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector saw the greatest increase in location quotient (LQ) from 2008 to 2013. As a result, Harnett has comparative advantage in the following sectors:

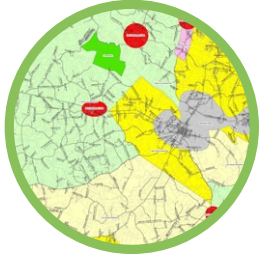


## LOCATION QUOTIENTS BY INDUSTRY



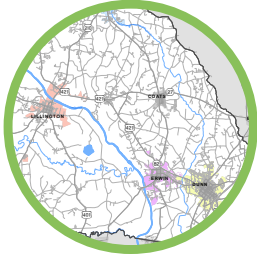
# Land Use

## ADOPTED LAND USE POLICY AND REGULATIONS



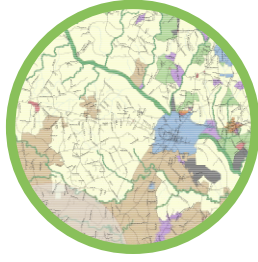
### COUNTY POLICIES

The Future Land Use map, adopted in 1999 represents an evolving vision for the County and will be updated during the Comprehensive Plan Update process.



### MUNICIPAL POLICIES

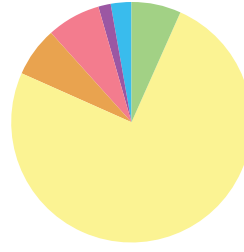
Each municipality in Harnett County also has land use policies that are applicable within municipal limits and in areas defined as extra-territorial jurisdictions (ETJ)



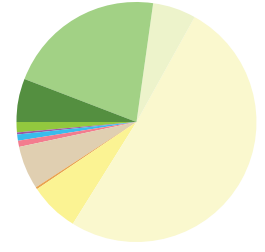
### ZONING ORDINANCE

The Zoning Map includes a description of zoning districts that regulate the use of property for the purposes of protecting public health, safety, property values, and the general welfare of the community.

## REAL PROPERTY VALUE EXISTING LAND USE



6.7%	\$456,136,990	Agricultural and Vacant
75.2%	\$5,158,994,577	Single Family Residential
6.6%	\$453,821,211	Multifamily and Mobile Homes
7.1%	\$489,192,713	Commercial
1.8%	\$122,139,790	Industrial
2.6%	\$178,540,565	Office/Institutional



6.1%	Parks and Open Space
21.3%	Agricultural
5.9%	Vacant
50.6%	Rural Residential
6.9%	Single Family Residential
0.2%	Multi-Family Residential
5.7%	Mobile Homes
0.8%	Commercial
0.9%	Office, Institutional, Government
0.3%	Industrial
1.3%	Unknown

SOURCE: HARNETT COUNTY TAX PARCEL DATA

## ISSUES



### STRONG RESIDENTIAL GROWTH



TRAFFIC CONGESTION



INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS



LACK OF FUNDING FOR SERVICES



IMBALANCE IN TAX BASE (RESIDENTIAL VS. NON-RESIDENTIAL)

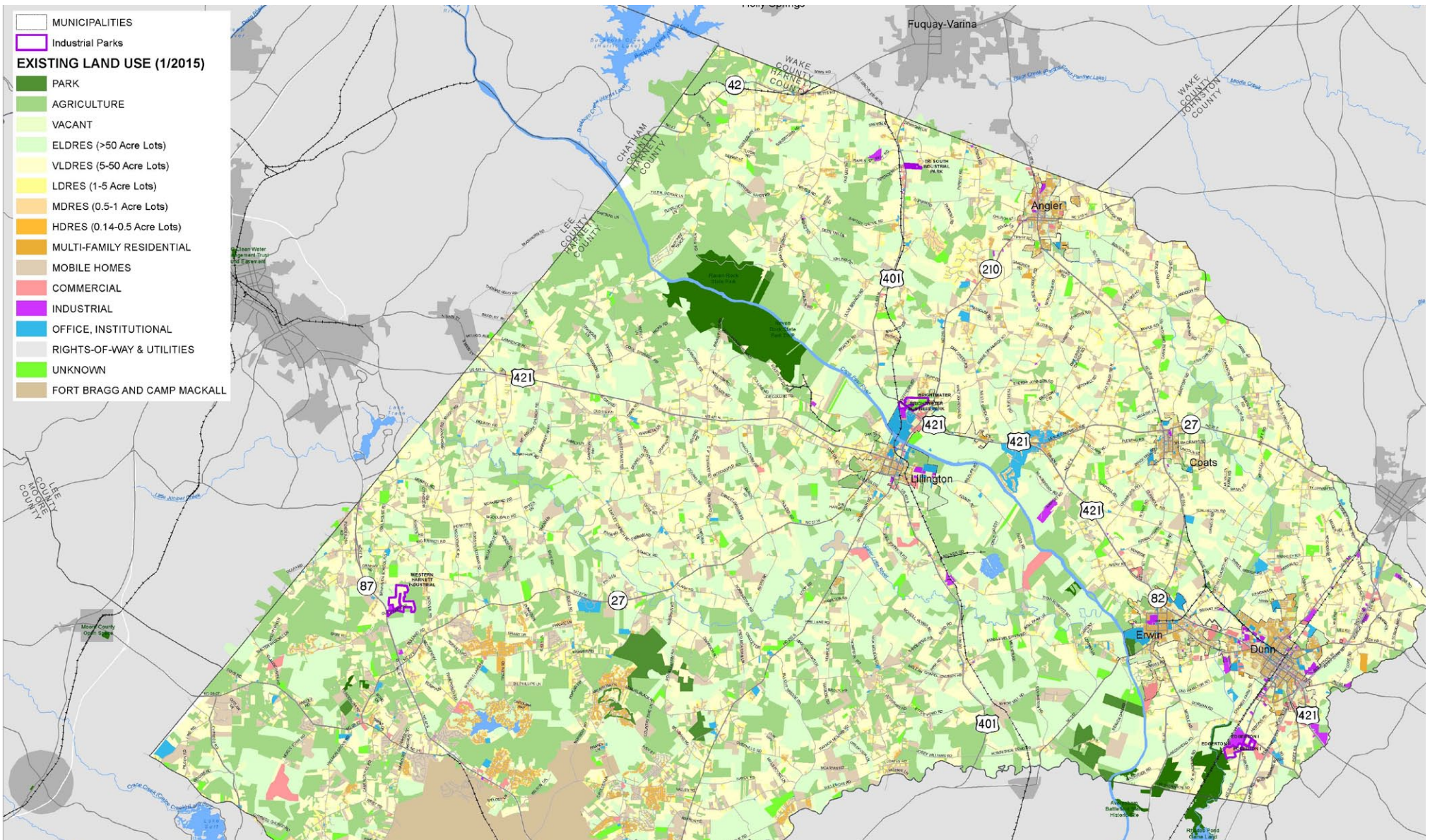


PRESERVING LAND FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES



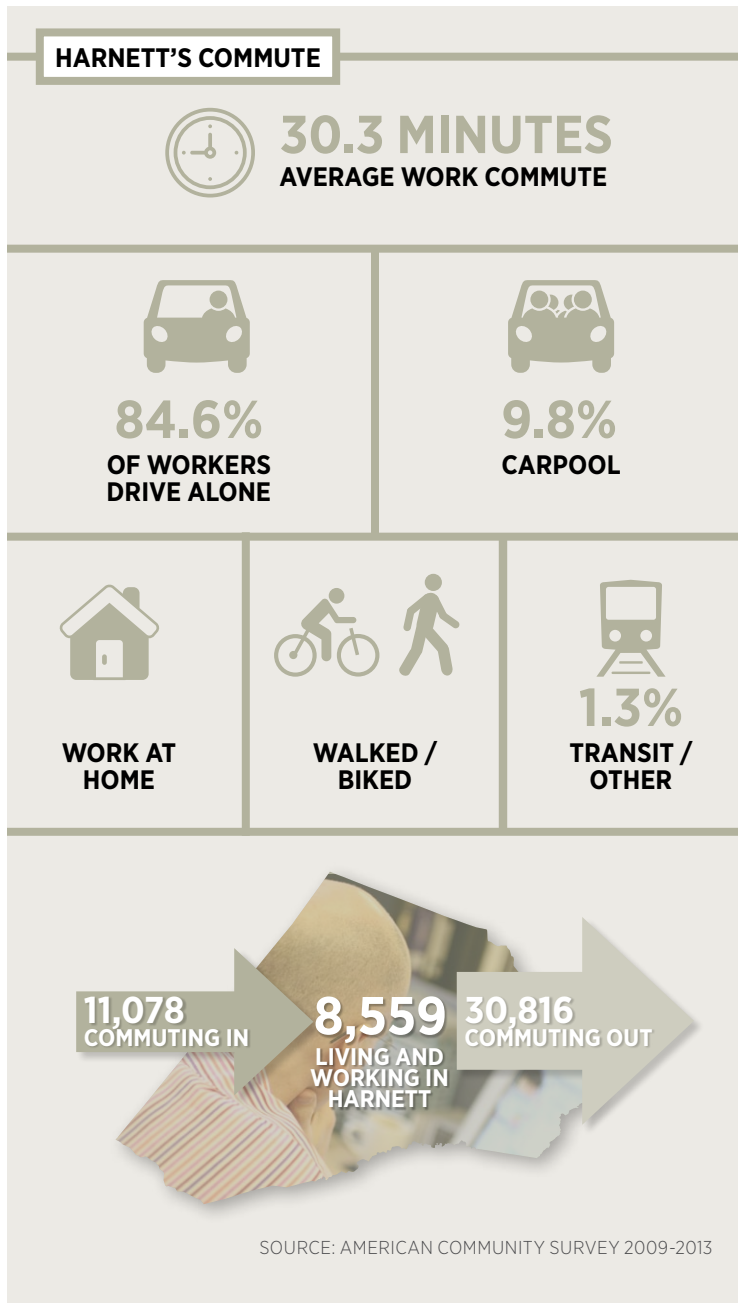
LOSS OF OPEN SPACE, FARMLAND AND FORESTS

## EXISTING LAND USE MAP



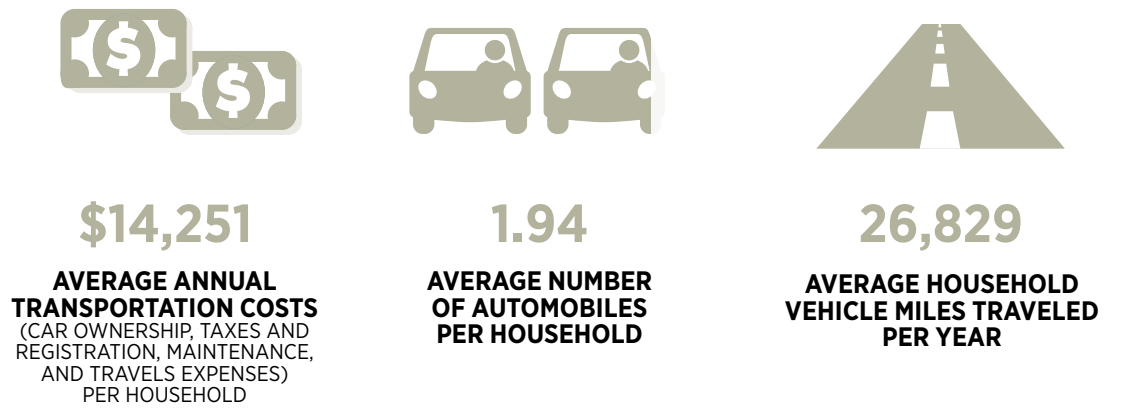


# Transportation



## TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

In suburban areas like Harnett County, drive further distances for daily activity; this drives up the cost of living. The majority of Harnett residents currently travel outside the County for employment.



## ROADWAY

There are 1,852 miles of roadway in Harnett County. Even with recent improvements, including the NC 87 upgrade, as well as the projects that are planned, significant needs exist.

PLANNED STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS (STIP)				
STIP	Project Name	Extent	Total Funding	Funding Timeframe
R-2529	NC 24/27 Widening	County Line to NC 87, Widen to multi-lanes	\$120,700	Unfunded
U-3465	Ray Road Widening	NC 210 to Overhills Road	\$29,728	FY 2015-2017
R-2609	US 401 Widening / Bypass	Fayetteville to Wake County	\$222,600	Unfunded
I-5133	I-95 Corridor Study	South Carolina to Virginia	\$6,400	
I-4906	I-95 Pavement Rehabilitation	Cumberland County to Johnston County	\$1,725	FY 2015-2019
R-5526	I-95 Interchange Improvement	Jonesboro Road Interchange	\$3,700	Under Construction
R-5523	Harnett Central Road Realignment	Realign Harnett Central Road at US 401 and Extend Neil Smith Road	\$1,599	FY 2015

SOURCE: NCDOT, CAMPO, MID-CAROLINA RPO, FAMPO

## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS			
Project Name	Location	Cost	Status
Lillington Street sidewalk	Angier	\$54,000	Under Construction (CAMPO LAPP funds)
Willow & Roy Street sidewalk connections	Angier	\$192,000	Under Construction (CAMPO LAPP funds)
Ray Road sidewalks	Harnett County	TBD	In NC STIP

SOURCE: NCDOT, CAMPO, MID-CAROLINA RPO, FAMPO

## OTHER PRIORITY PROJECTS

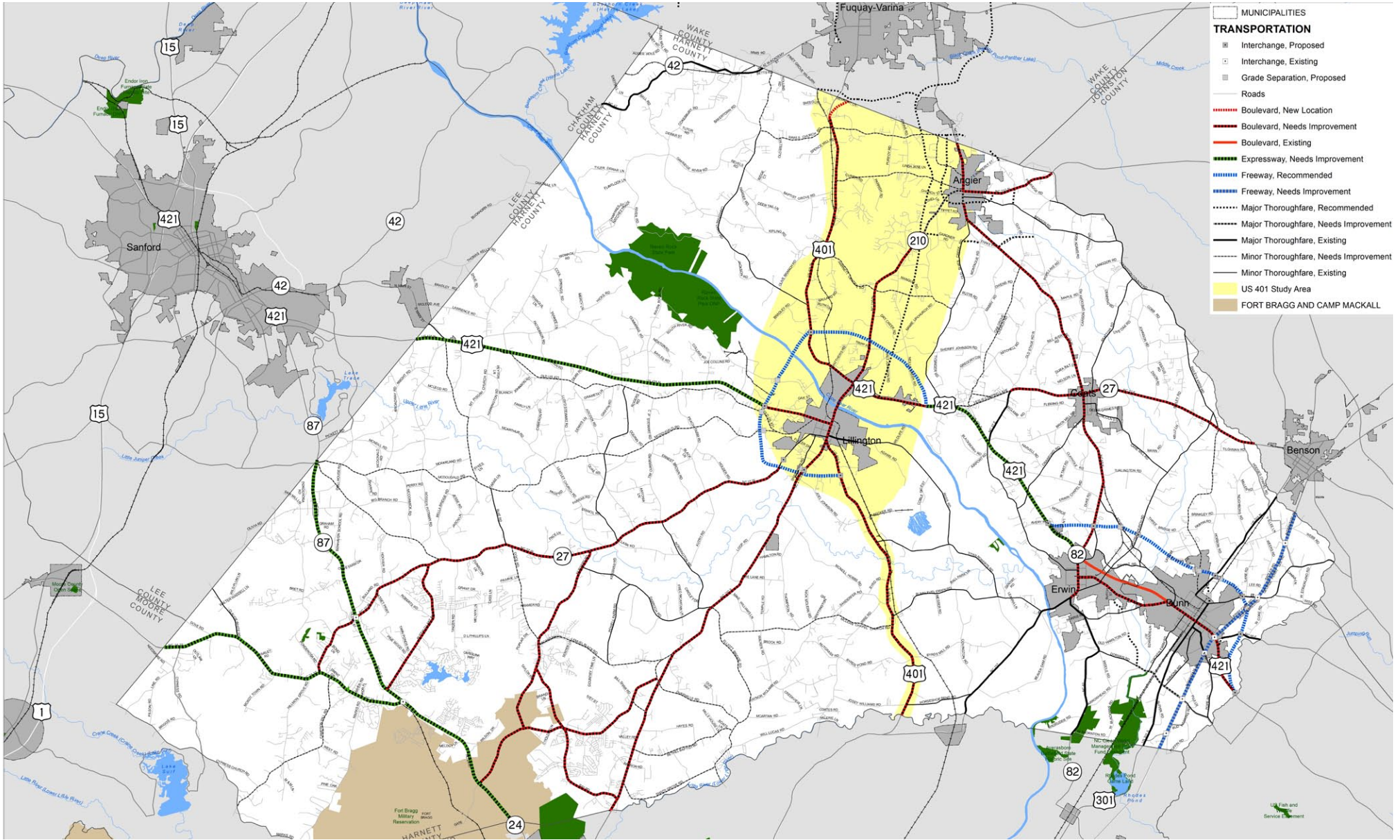
OTHER PRIORITY PROJECTS*			
Project Name	Extent	Total Funding	Funding Timeframe
NC 55 Widening	Jicarilla Rd to Rawls Church Rd (Wake County)	\$11,998	2040
NC 55 Widening	Wake County Line to Church Street	\$8,289	2030
Angier Western Connector	NC 55 (S of Angier) to Rawls Church Rd	\$9,710	2040
NC 210 Widening	Widen to Multi-Lanes and Enhance Corridor from Highway 401 in Lillington to Highway 87 in Spring Lake	TBD	Unfunded
US 421 Widening	Widen to Multi-Lanes to Include Turning Lane from East City Limit to Dunn-Erwin Road	TBD	Unfunded
US 421 Widening	Widen to Multi-Lanes and Enhance Corridor from Lillington to Sanford	TBD	Unfunded

SOURCE: NCDOT, CAMPO, MID-CAROLINA RPO, FAMPO

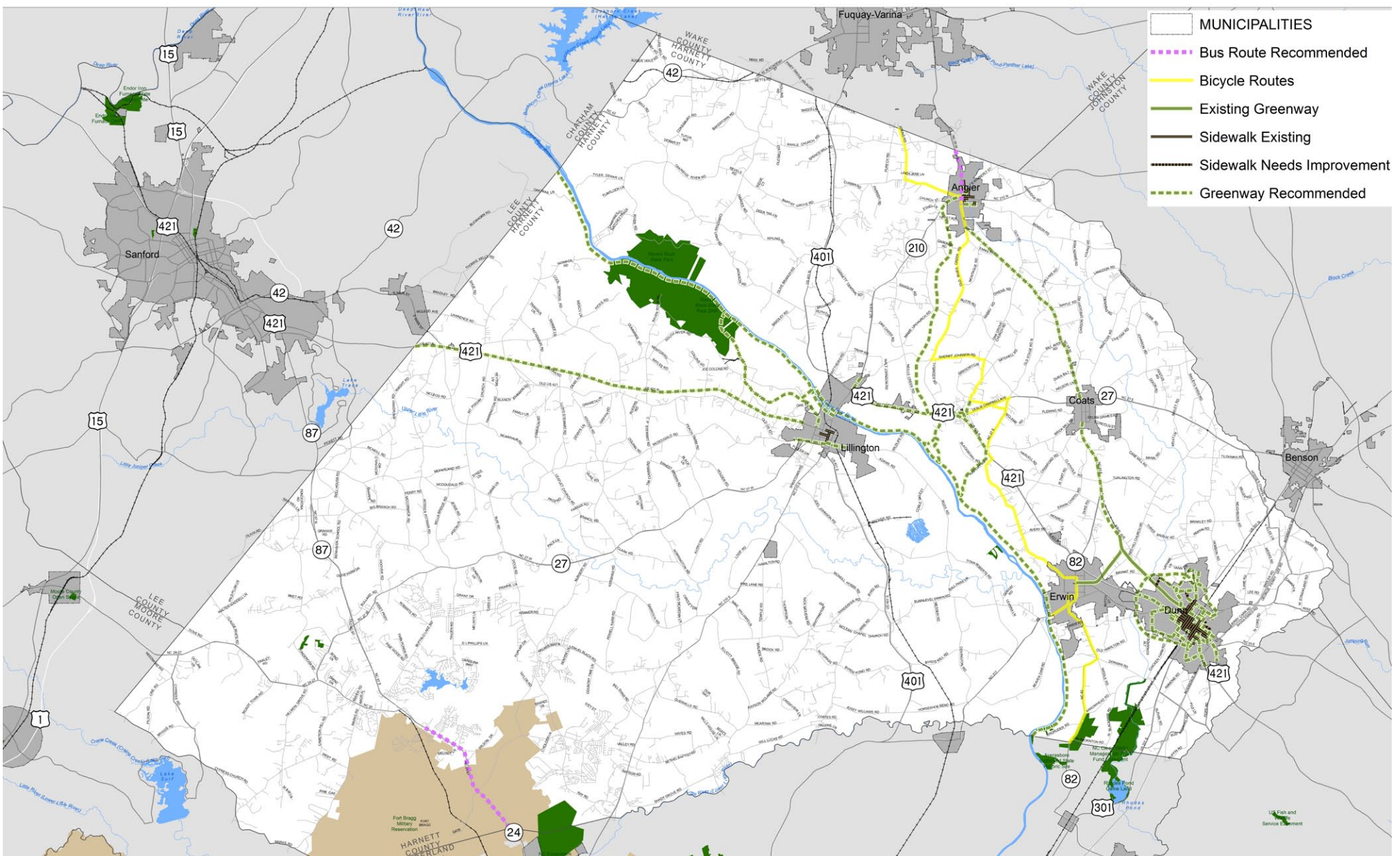


# Transportation

## COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN HIGHWAY ELEMENT



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES





# Natural Resources

## NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES



### WATER QUALITY

Urban stormwater and agriculture runoff, which includes sediment and chemicals, have unfortunately polluted and impaired many creeks in Harnett County. Low impact development (LID) techniques such as reducing impervious surfaces and retaining vegetated riparian (stream) buffers can help improve water quality.



### WATER ACCESS

The Cape Fear River and Upper Little River offer great opportunities for tourism. New and improved canoe/kayak launches could allow greater access to these natural resources.



### ACTIVE RECREATION

Harnett County Park & Recreation partners with local, state and federal agencies with the goal of providing comprehensive recreation and leisure opportunities for all citizens. Five county parks are maintained, which have a variety of active recreation facilities including baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, a disc golf course and playgrounds. Additional facilities will be needed as the County grows.



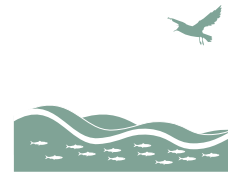
### PASSIVE RECREATION

Harnett County Parks & Recreation maintains two parks with passive recreation opportunities (Anderson Creek Park and Cape Fear River Trail Park). Reserving land for additional passive recreation and amenities (nature parks, trails, and greenways) will be important to preserving the quality of life in Harnett County.



### FOREST AND FARM PRESERVATION

Farmland and forests contribute to the scenic quality of the County's rural areas. They also contribute over \$300 million in value-added income to the local economy. Residential growth in rural areas can increase development pressure and threaten the viability of agricultural and timber production.



### SPECIES PRESERVATION

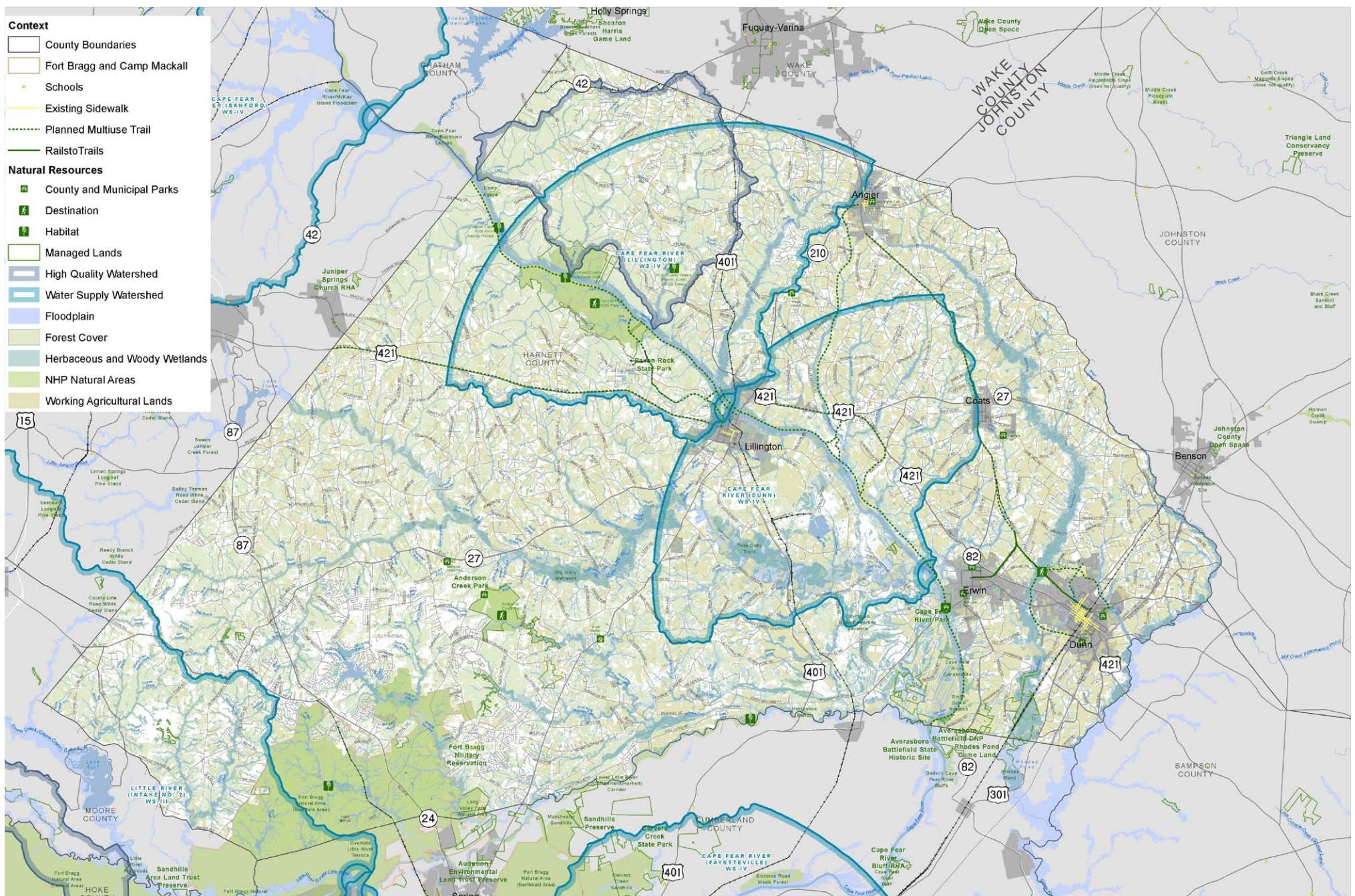
The Cape Fear Shiner, the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, and the Rough-Leaved loosestrife are federally endangered species that call Harnett County home. In addition 22 types of species are listed as Federal Species of Concern. Clean water and connected wildlife corridors and habitats are essential to preserving biodiversity.



## CULTURAL RESOURCES

Harnett County has a rich history and is home to a number of significant cultural resources that help to define the county's identity and provide unique tourism destinations. These destinations include the Aversboro Civil War Battlefield and Museum, the Coats Cotton Museum, the Coats History Museum, the General William C. Lee Airborne Museum, and the Gourd Museum. Historic structures, including the Historic Summerville Presbyterian Church, the Old Bluff Church, and the Campbell House combine with historic downtowns and rolling agricultural lands to create a beautiful landscape with deep roots.

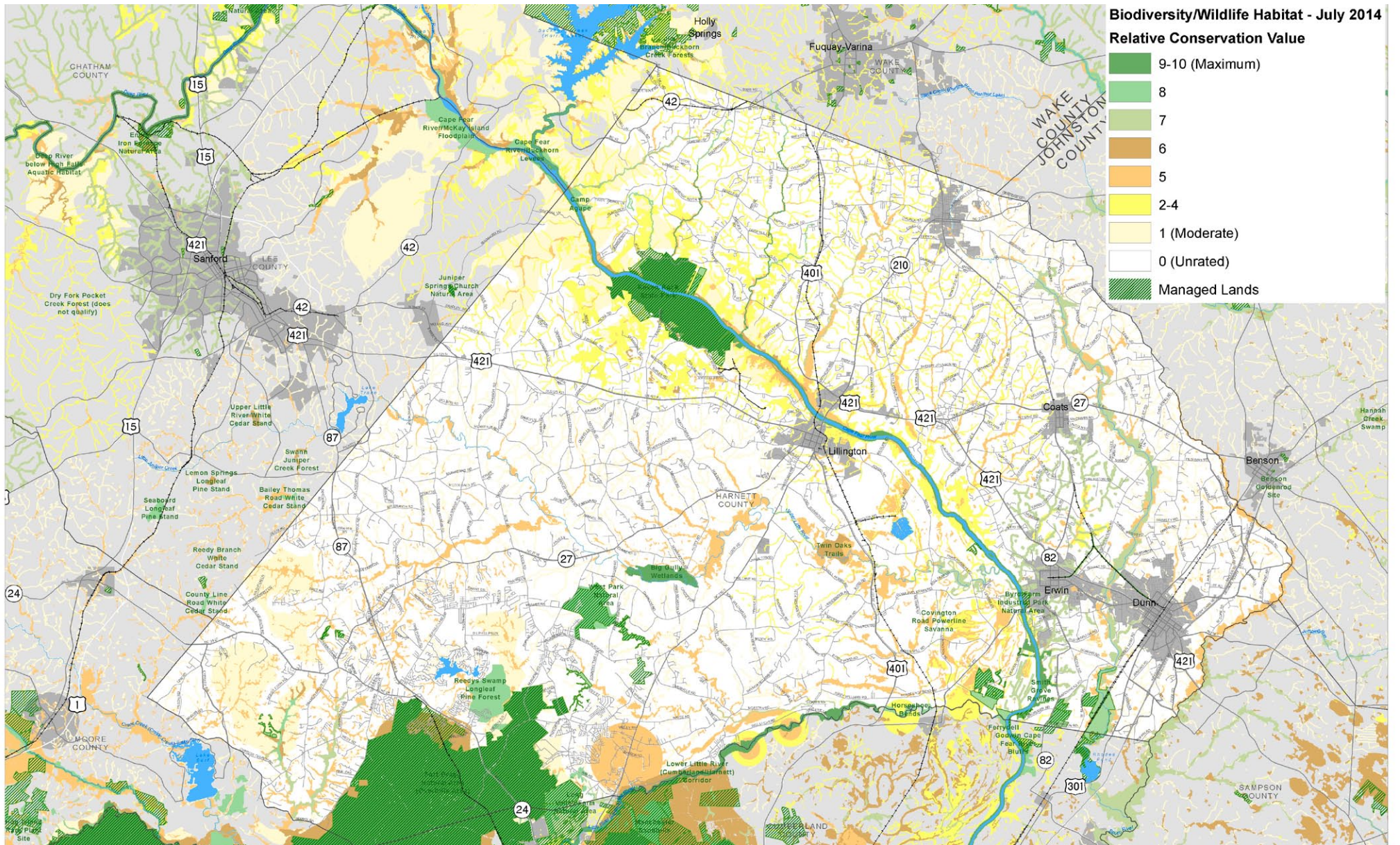
## NATURAL RESOURCES



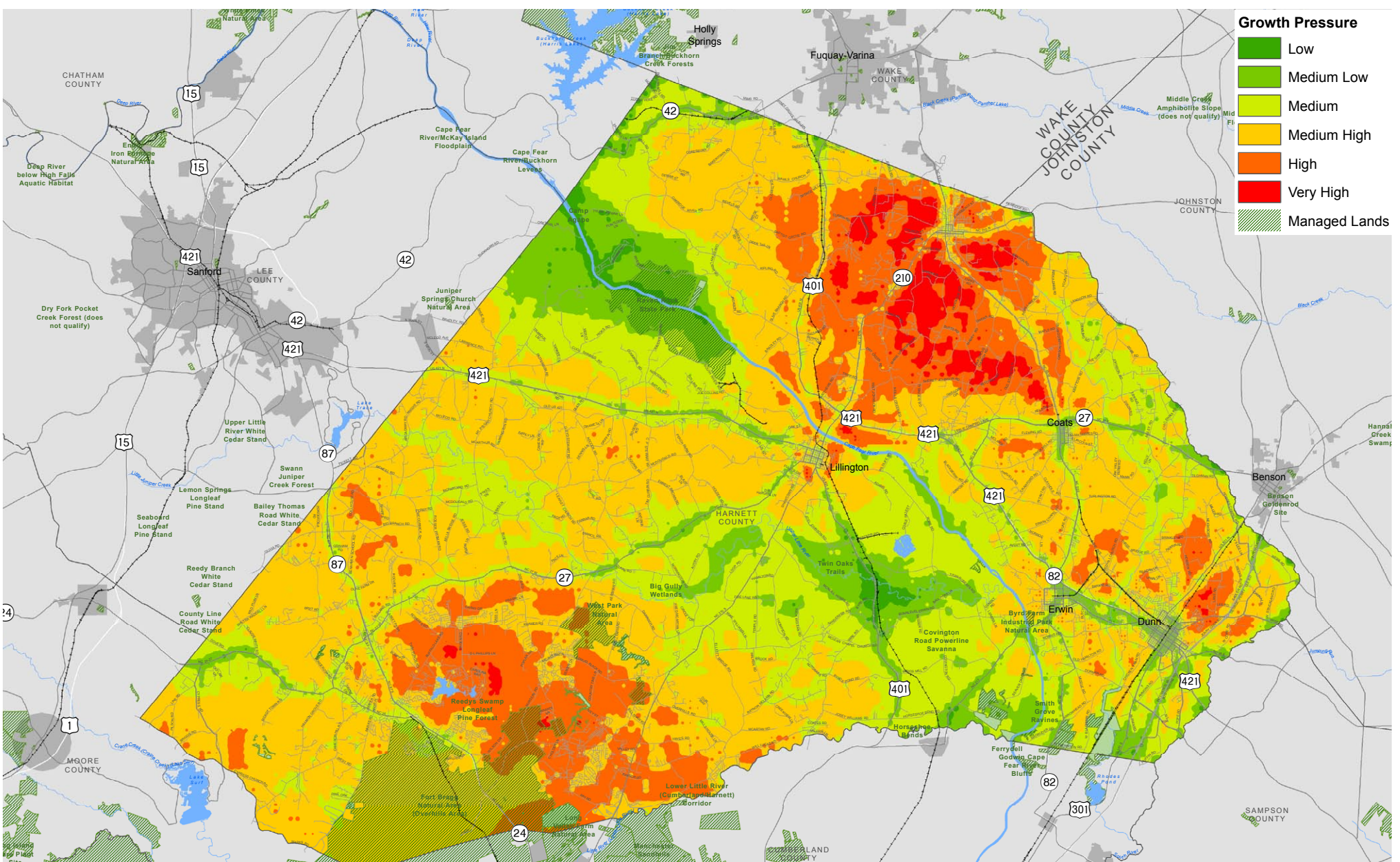


# Natural Resources

## BIODIVERSITY AND HABITAT



## GROWTH PRESSURE





# Species and Habitats

## SPECIES

### IMPORTANCE OF RARE SPECIES

It is important to protect the whole suite of species found in the ecosystems where endangered species occur. When connected ecosystems are conserved we prevent the further decline of unlisted species and populations of endangered species that could become further threatened. Endangered species are our canaries in the coal mine and are a signal that our natural landscapes are in trouble, which can be important to human welfare and health, and to preserving our cultural heritage. Safeguarding rare species has tangible benefits to tax payer and the economy. For example water treatment costs are reduced by 20% for every 10% of forest or native grassland in the watershed.

### BIRDS

- ▶ Bachman's sparrow (*Peucaea aestivalis*): Special Concern (also a Federal Species of Concern)
- ▶ Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*): Threatened (also Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act)
- ▶ Red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*): Endangered (also Federally Endangered)
- ▶ Swainson's warbler (*Limnithlypis swainsonii*): Priority Species

### CRUSTACEANS AND FRESHWATER MUSSELS

- ▶ Carolina ladle crayfish (*Cambarus davidi*): Significantly Rare
- ▶ Sandhills spiny crayfish, Significantly Rare
- ▶ Atlantic pigtoe (*Fusconaia masoni*): Endangered (also a Federal Species of Concern)
- ▶ Carolina creekshell (*Villosa vaughaniana*): Endangered (also a Federal Species of Concern)
- ▶ Carolina slabshell (*Elliptio congaraea*): on the Natural Heritage Program's 'Watch List'
- ▶ Creeper (*Strophitus undulatus*): Threatened
- ▶ Eastern creekshell (*Villosa delumbis*): Significantly Rare
- ▶ Notched rainbow (*Villosa constricta*): Special Concern
- ▶ Pod lance (*Elliptio folliculata*): Special Concern
- ▶ Triangle floater (*Alasmidonta undulata*): Threatened
- ▶ Roanoke slabshell (*Elliptio roanokensis*): Threatened
- ▶ Yellow lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*): Special Concern

### FISH

- ▶ Cape Fear shiner (*Notropis mekistocholas*): Endangered (also Federally Endangered)
- ▶ Carolina redhorse (*Moxostoma* sp.): Threatened (also a Federal Species of Concern)
- ▶ Sandhills chub (*Semotilus lumbee*): Special Concern (also a Federal Species of Concern)

## HABITATS

### HARNETT COUNTY'S UNIQUE HABITATS

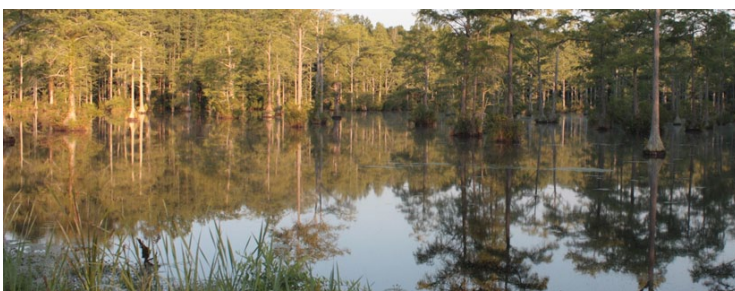
Harnett County is home to a number of headwater streams that provide drinking water to the region's residents. Forests and farmlands provide timber and food for nearby residents and contribute to the region's economy. Undeveloped lands north of Fort Bragg are critical to training operations. The Sandhills supports one of the best remaining examples of the rare and diverse longleaf pine ecosystems which supports the only population of red-cockaded woodpeckers that has met its recovery goal. Rivers and floodplain forests serve as habitat corridors and offer recreational opportunities such as hiking, camping, nature photography, bird watching, boating, hunting, and fishing to name a few. A county's natural and wildlife heritage can be conserved through enhanced land use planning and by encouraging conservation subdivisions in sensitive habitats and wildlife travel corridors. Conservation subdivisions cost less to build and maintain and homes near natural areas sell for up to 20 to 36 percent more.



Longleaf pine forest provide habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers, fox squirrels, and other rare and endangered plants and animals



Ravens Rock State Park provides a habitat hub for Bald Eagles in the center of the County.



Carolina Bays provide habitat for Sandhills Salamanders waterfowl and juvenile gamefish. Small Carolina Bays and many bogs and seeps may not be protected by state or federal regulations. The upland wildlife habitat surrounding these wetlands is not regulated by state or federal laws.

### GROW HARNETT COUNTY

### HABITAT NEEDS OF KEY SPECIES

Species	Mature longleaf Pine Forest / Savannah	Hardwood, Floodplain and Riparian Forest	Carolina Bays, Bogs, Seeps and Swamps
Red-Cockaded Woodpecker	X		
Bachman's Sparrow	X	X	
Fox Squirrel	X	X	X
Pine Barrens Treefrog		X	X
Sandhills Salamander	X	X	X
Bald Eagle		X	X
Sandhills Crayfish		X	X



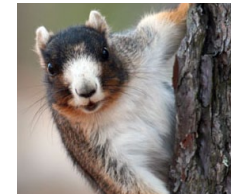
Blackwater streams in the southern part of the county serve as headwaters for cities downstream. Wetlands and forests along these streams protect or drinking water and priority wildlife habitat.



CAPE FEAR SHINER



BACHMAN'S SPARROW



FOX SQUIRREL



BALD EAGLE



SANDHILLS SALAMANDER

### HERPS

- ▶ Coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*): Significantly Rare
- ▶ Northern pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus melanoleucus*): Special Concern (also a Federal Species of Concern)
- ▶ Pine barrens treefrog (*Hyla andersonii*): Significantly Rare
- ▶ Pygmy rattlesnake (*Sistrurus miliarius*): Special Concern
- ▶ Sandhills Salamander, State Watch List

### MAMMALS

- ▶ Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*): This is a very recent addition - It was just listed as Federally Threatened on April 2, 2015.
- ▶ Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger*), State Watch List



### THE RWC SAFE HARBOR PROGRAM

"The North Carolina Red-cockaded Woodpecker Safe Harbor Program is a state program authorized through an agreement between U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The agreement allows WRC to enter into voluntary Safe Harbor Management Agreements with non-federal landowners who agree to implement land management techniques that benefit RCWs in exchange for regulatory assurances that no additional ESA restrictions will be imposed as a result of their management actions. Landowners decide whether or not they want to participate in the program and a management agreement can be terminated with a 60-day written notice to WRC."

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/SafeHarborProgram.aspx>

### DID YOU KNOW?

HARNETT COUNTY IS HOME TO 56 SPECIES CONSIDERED RARE OR RECOGNIZED BY THE STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AS PRIORITY, THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES?

SOME SPECIES INCLUDING THE CAROLINA REDHORSE FISH, THE SANDHILLS SALAMANDER AND THE CAROLINA SANDHILLS CRAYFISH ARE FOUND IN OUR REGION AND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD.

## THREATS



Sedimentation and stormwater run-off are major threats to water quality and aquatic ecosystems

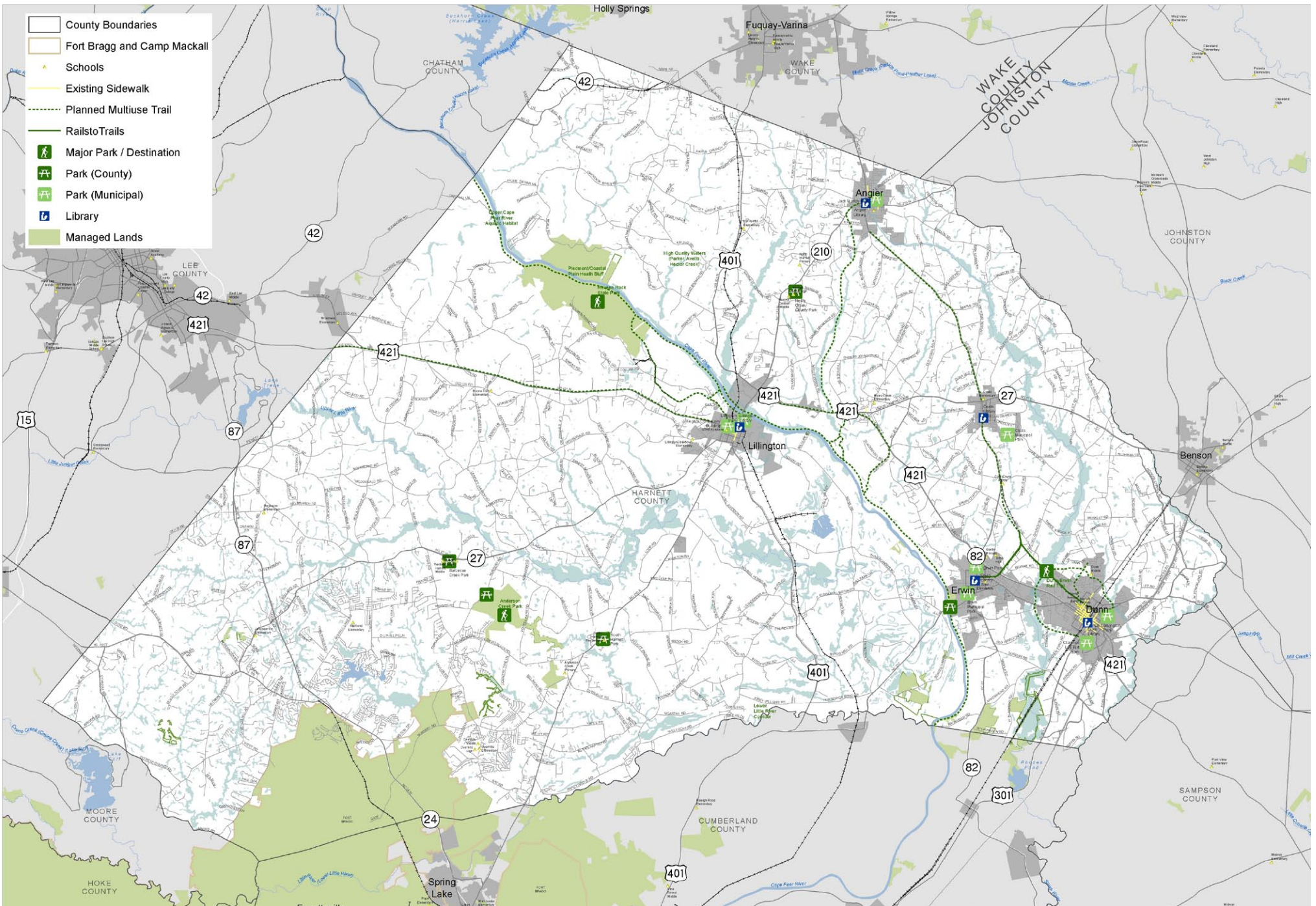


Dispersed residential development can cause habitat fragmentation and sever ties between populations of species.

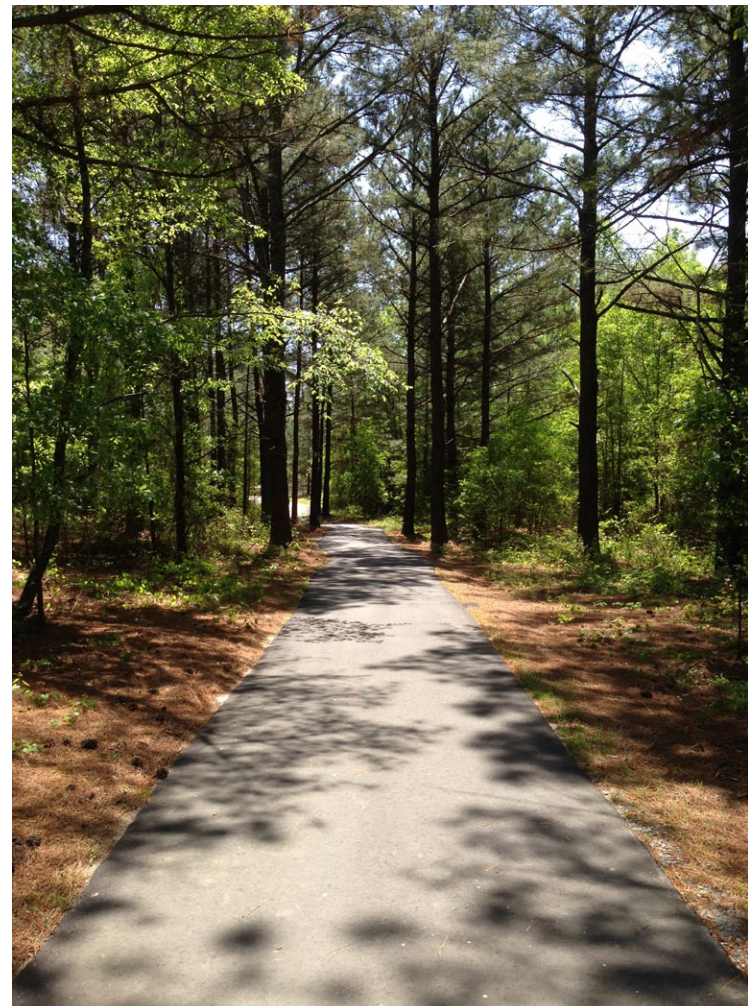


# Parks and Recreation

## HARNETT COUNTY PARKS



## ANDERSON CREEK PARK





# Utilities

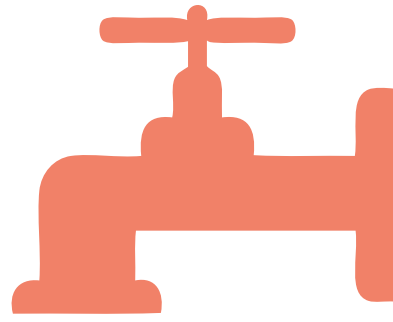
## OVERVIEW

The Harnett County Department of Public Utilities provides water and/or wastewater services to 89-95% of County residents (~95,000 people). The department also supplies water to Lillington, Angier, Erwin, Coats, Fuquay-Varina, Holly Springs, Spring Lake, Linden, Johnston County, Moore County and Fort Bragg. Recently the County entered into an revised water supply capacity agreement with Moore County expanding Moore County's supply to 3 MGD.

### DID YOU KNOW?

THE COUNTY PROVIDES WATER AND/OR WASTEWATER SERVICES TO UP TO 95% OF ITS RESIDENTS.

## WATER AND SEWER USAGE AND CAPACITY



**27.3 MGD**

**CURRENT WATER TREATMENT CAPACITY**  
HARNETT COUNTY REGIONAL WTP EXPANSION TO 42 MGD IS UNDERWAY

**20.6 MGD**

**CURRENT COMBINED WASTEWATER TREATMENT CAPACITY**  
NORTH HARNETT REGIONAL WWTP (5.6 MGD)  
SOUTH HARNETT WWTP (15 MGD)  
EXPANSION OF NORTH HARNETT WWTP TO 7.5 MGD IS PLANNED

**15.7 MGD**

**AVERAGE DAILY USAGE**

**11.8 MGD**

**AVERAGE DAILY DISCHARGE (FEBRUARY)**

**23.4 MGD**

**MAXIMUM DAILY USAGE (JUNE)**

**37,190**

**WATER CONNECTIONS**

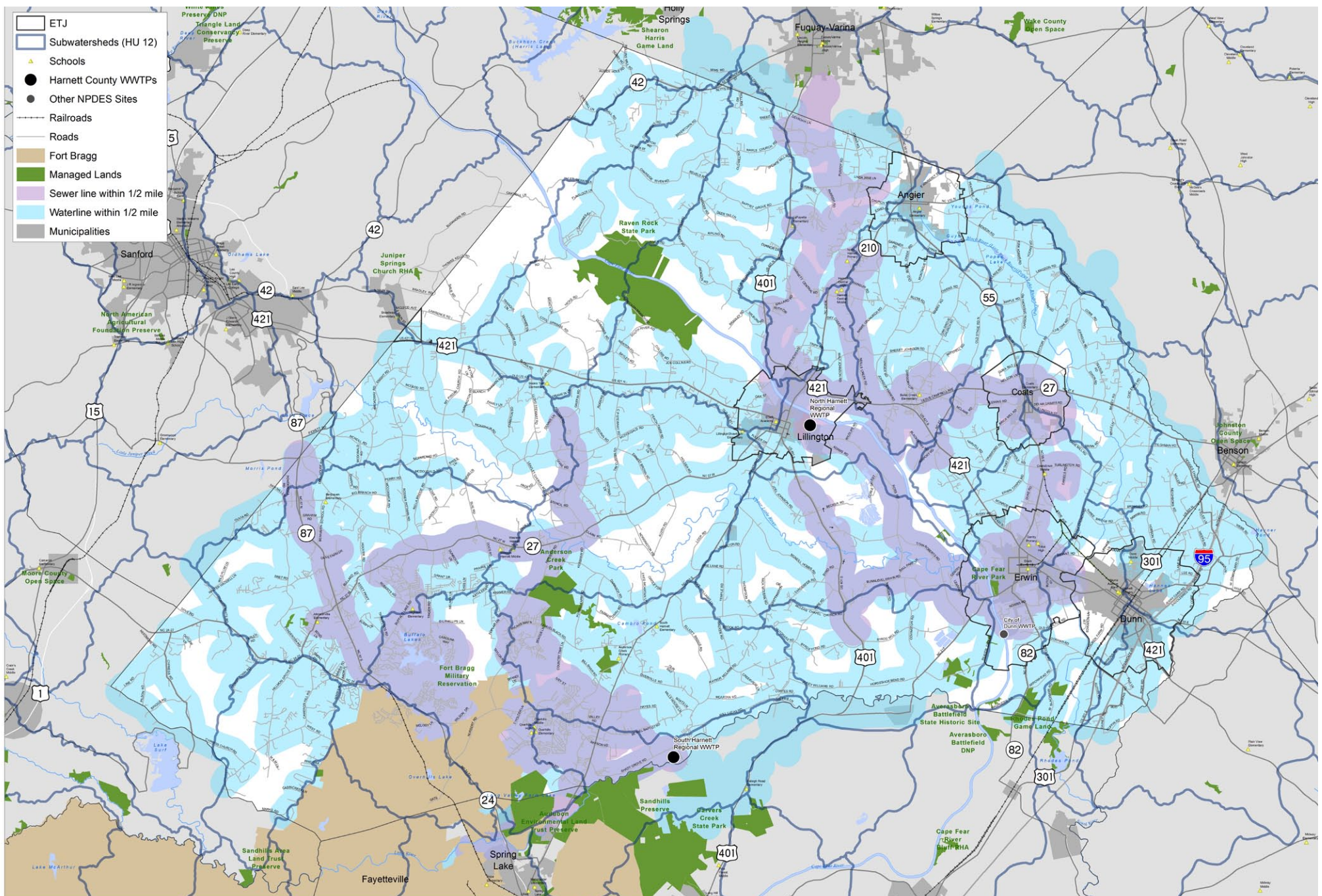
**11,833**

**SEWER CONNECTIONS**

SOURCE: HARNETT COUNTY



## UTILITIES IN HARNETT





# Facilities

## SCHOOLS

More than 20,000 students attend the Harnett County School District's 27 schools. Within Harnett County, the district operates 17 elementary schools, five middle schools and four high schools.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS		
School	2012-2013 Enrollment	Targeted Capacity
Anderson Creek Primary School	668	700
Angier Elementary School	424	750
Benhaven Elementary School	475	420
Boone Trail Elementary School	591	920
Buies Creek Elementary School	314	250
Coats Elementary School	724	720
Erwin Elementary School	280	400
Gentry Primary School	291	250
Harnett Primary School	599	740
Highland Elementary School	924	720
Johnsonville Elementary School	658	500
LaFayette Elementary School	773	500
Lillington-Shawtown Elementary School	620	720
North Harnett Primary School	465	475
Overhills Elementary School	944	920
South Harnett Elementary School	559	600
Wayne Avenue Elementary School	298	300

MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
School	2012-2013 Enrollment	Targeted Capacity
Coats-Erwin Middle School	629	800
Highland Middle School	441	650
Harnett Central Middle School	1,260	950
Overhills Middle School	1,235	800
Western Harnett Middle School	1,131	950

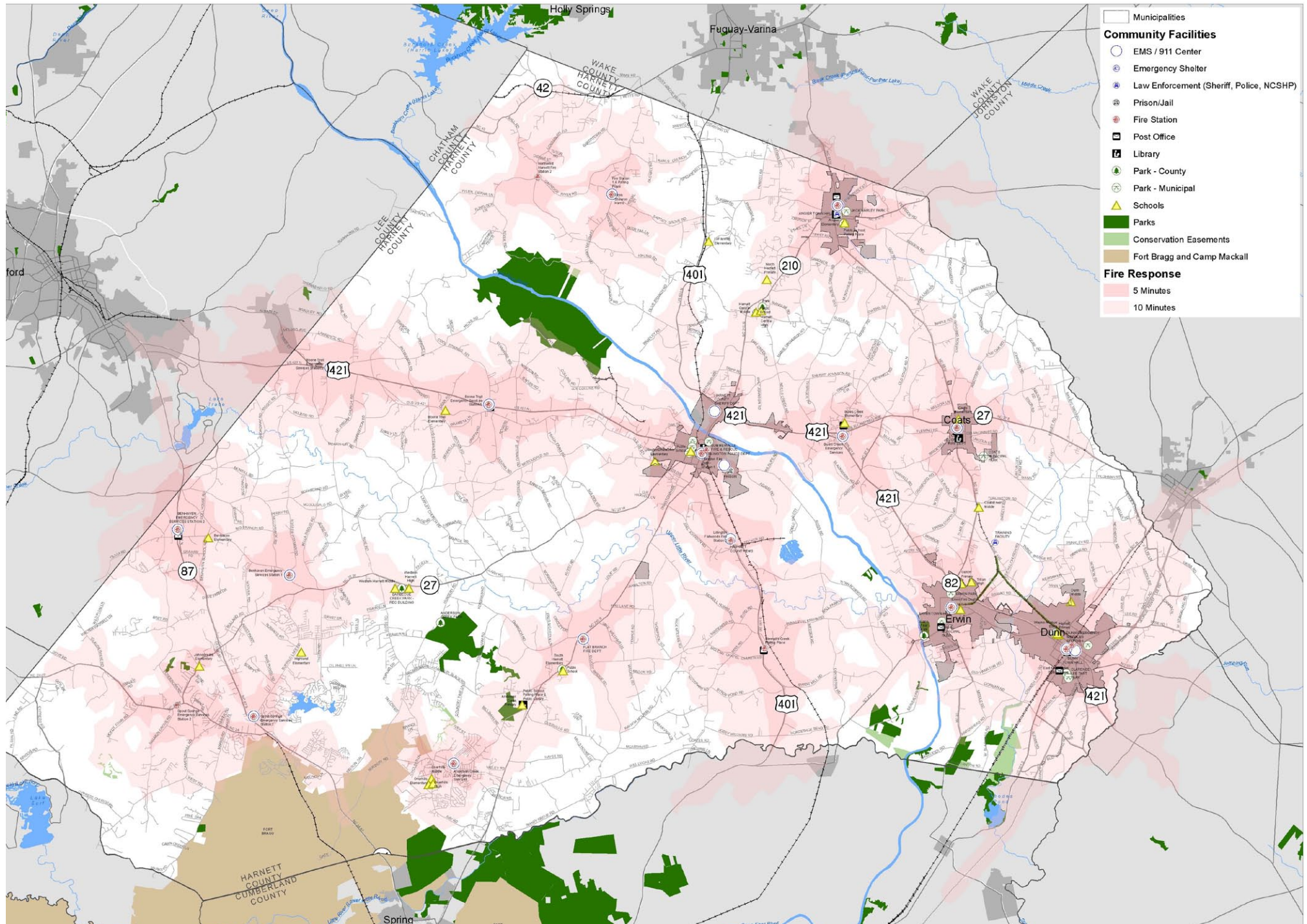
HIGH SCHOOLS		
School	2012-2013 Enrollment	Targeted Capacity
Harnett Central High School	1,488	1,550
Overhills High School	1,833	1,500
Triton High School	1,402	1,625
Western Harnett High School	1,268	1,450

### STATS AND FACTS

- ▶ 20,418 Students
- ▶ The Class of 2014 earned over \$ 5.5 million in scholarships.
- ▶ Harnett County Schools proudly employs 2,132 staff, including 125 National Board Certified Teachers.
- ▶ 27 Schools, 945 acres of land, 3,355,108 square feet of facilities
- ▶ Harnett County School's student-to-computer ratio ranks 17th out of the state's 115 LEAs and 1st among districts of comparable size.
- ▶ 94.5%, Three-year average attendance rate

SOURCE: HARNETT COUNTY SCHOOLS

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN HARNETT COUNTY



# Conclusion

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The following set of issues and opportunities were identified during the assessment, refined by the Advisory Committee and supplemented with feedback gathered during the first community meeting.

## KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Strong population growth.
- ▶ High growth rate in young working population cohort.
- ▶ Significant retail leakage.
- ▶ Majority of residents work somewhere else.
- ▶ Lower wages and personal incomes compared to neighboring counties.
- ▶ Lower percentage of higher educated population compared to neighboring counties.
- ▶ Bedroom community status with limited industrial growth in County.

### LAND USE

- ▶ Return on investment should be a factor in land use decisions and is important to the financial health of Harnett County.
- ▶ Identifying prime locations for industrial and distribution operations and protecting these locations from incompatible development will be an important step in encouraging future economic development.
- ▶ Identifying ideal locations for new commercial and retail development is necessary to help reverse retail leakage trends.
- ▶ Decentralized growth and “leapfrog” development has led to high costs for infrastructure and other government services.
- ▶ Replacing working lands with lower priced single family homes (i.e. \$130k for Harnett County) results in a significant loss in revenue (about \$3 per acre in Harnett County) AND an annual deficit in costs of services for the same acre of land.

### UTILITIES

- ▶ Water lines exist throughout the county, but many lines are not sufficient for major subdivisions.
- ▶ Cape Fear River is a valuable water source for the region
- ▶ Future land use plan needs to manage expectations and be informed by water and sewer capacity (current and planned).
- ▶ Economic development marketing should be targeted at locations with water and sewer capacity.
- ▶ Long term plan needed for trunk lines and potential location of regional pump stations.
- ▶ Standards for requiring developers to install/connect to existing gravity sewer lines are needed.
- ▶ Opportunity to establish thresholds for cost share and model developer agreements for reimbursement of up-front investments).
- ▶ Continue to build on working relationship with municipalities regarding service provision and annexation.

### NATURAL RESOURCES

- ▶ Parker, Avetts and Hector Creeks in the northwestern part of the county are considered High Quality Waters by the Division of Water Quality. Protecting these creeks will preserve habitat for the Cape Fear Shiner and other rare aquatic species.
- ▶ Urban stormwater and agriculture runoff, which includes sediment and chemicals, have polluted and impaired many creeks in Harnett County.
- ▶ Low impact development (LID) techniques such as reducing impervious surfaces and retaining vegetated riparian (stream) buffers can help improve water quality.
- ▶ The Cape Fear River and Upper Little River offer great opportunities for tourism. New and improved canoe/kayak launches could allow greater access to these natural resources.
- ▶ Providing active and passive recreation opportunities will be key to preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Harnett County.
- ▶ Farmland and forests contribute to the scenic quality of the County’s rural areas. They also contribute over \$300 million in value-added income to the local economy.
- ▶ Residential growth in rural areas can increase development pressure and threaten the viability of agricultural and timber production.
- ▶ Harnett County is home to 56 species considered rare or recognized by the state or federal government as priority, threatened, or endangered. Protecting connected ecosystems may prevent the further decline of listed species and unlisted species that could become threatened by habitat fragmentation.
- ▶ Continued recovery of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker (and the longleaf pine ecosystem) is critical to maintaining training operations on Fort Bragg.

### TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ Due to the size of the county and decentralized populations maintaining existing roads will require significant costs in the future.
- ▶ There is a need for four lane roads to Wake County and Cumberland County.
- ▶ Costs of transportation needs are likely to exceed state and federal funding streams available to Harnett County in the coming years.
- ▶ Many Harnett County residents commute significant distances to and from work. This adds to cost of living and reduces the amount of disposable income for households.
- ▶ Recruiting good paying jobs and planning for new retail centers in the county would allow more residents to work and shop closer to home.
- ▶ Population growth in some parts of the county, combined with commuting patterns have led to an increased demand for bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities such as sidewalks, greenways, bus service and park and ride facilities.



# Conclusion

The following SWOT analysis was generated by the Advisory Committee and supplemented with feedback gathered during the first community meeting.

## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

### STRENGTHS

- ▶ Location
- ▶ Strong population growth
- ▶ High rate of young working population
- ▶ Higher Ed facilities: Campbell University, ECU Dental, Central Carolina Community College
- ▶ Availability of Land
- ▶ Water System
- ▶ Military Presence/Fort Bragg
- ▶ Proximity to I-95
- ▶ Part of one of the most prosperous regions in U.S.
- ▶ Regionalism/regional brand
- ▶ Two hospitals
- ▶ History/heritage
- ▶ Small, close-knit communities
- ▶ Natural Resources: Raven Rock, Cape Fear River
- ▶ High-quality forests and farmland
- ▶ Top 10 Agriculture county

### WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Lower wages and personal incomes
- ▶ Lower percentage of higher education
- ▶ No four-lane roads
- ▶ Public school system
- ▶ Lack of incentives
- ▶ Lack of amenities
- ▶ Bedroom community
- ▶ Lack of shopping / Significant retail leakage
- ▶ No commercial tax base
- ▶ Lack of utilities other than water (gas, sewer, electric)
- ▶ No incorporated municipalities on western side of county
- ▶ Lack of skilled labor
- ▶ Brain drain
- ▶ No entertainment
- ▶ No county-wide chamber
- ▶ Lack of broadband internet along 87-corridor
- ▶ Win/lose mentality
- ▶ Lack of shared vision
- ▶ Lack of entrepreneurship

### OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Growing industry sectors
- ▶ Growing retail sectors (arts, retail, recreation, etc.)
- ▶ Leakage in retail means that opportunities for local options are needed
- ▶ Growth of medical school
- ▶ Aging boomers
- ▶ Cape Fear River
- ▶ Affordable land
- ▶ Good quality of life
- ▶ Create vision
- ▶ Keep Military families here
- ▶ Desire to work together and try something different
- ▶ Retraining options for military
- ▶ Capitalize on heritage
- ▶ Higher Ed
- ▶ How do we attract/retain millennials?
- ▶ Planned developments (mixed use)
- ▶ Build on health care by bringing in research (ex NIH grants)
- ▶ Partnership with other universities
- ▶ Riverwalk
- ▶ 421 corridor growth
- ▶ Med/Ed corridor
- ▶ Recreation destinations (parks, trails, cycling)
- ▶ Natural tourism (blueways, Raven Rock)
- ▶ Philanthropy/church groups

### THREATS

- ▶ Bedroom community status with limited industry growth in county
- ▶ Maintaining wealth growth while population increases
- ▶ Falling behind other counties every day (Wake, Johnston, Moore)
- ▶ Lack of communication/public awareness
- ▶ Short-term decision making
- ▶ Population in county is spread out
- ▶ Internal and external competition
- ▶ Disparity in schools
- ▶ No incorporated municipalities on western side of county
- ▶ Tax base
- ▶ Transient population in western part of county
- ▶ Cultural segregation
- ▶ Lack of funding
- ▶ Tax base revaluation
- ▶ Losing identity
- ▶ Uncontrolled growth
- ▶ Idle
- ▶ Communities not working with each other
- ▶ Military population draw down
- ▶ Lack of a new generation of farmers

