



Planning

ZEBULON

NORTH CAROLINA



Grow Zebulon

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Zebulon Tomorrow
AND
Zebulon Today Report



Adopted June 7, 2021 by
Town of Zebulon Board of Commissioners



June 25, 2021

Mr. Michael J. Clark, AICP, CZO
Planning Director
Town of Zebulon
1003 North Arendell Avenue
Zebulon, North Carolina 27597

Dear Mike:

In conjunction with our consultant team partner, Ramey Kemp Associates (RKA), we are pleased to submit this final version of the newly updated **Town of Zebulon Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)** as adopted unanimously by the Board of Commissioners on June 7, 2021. The CLUP was prepared in accordance with our Professional Services Agreement as a subconsultant to RKA. The new plan:

- Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 era during 2020, reflects **community and leadership input** obtained through a Town Hall Meeting on Zebulon’s Future; a blitz of 12 socially-distanced small group sessions conducted over the course of a week, mostly at an outdoor space in Downtown (with the Mayor and Commissioners spread across the sessions); work sessions with a small group of residents and business people who served as an ad hoc “sounding board” during plan development; work sessions with the Board of Commissioners; and a joint public hearing before the Town Board and Planning Board.
- Includes a **Zebulon Today Report** with background and statistics that provide a snapshot of Zebulon as it was in 2020, early in the comprehensive planning process.
- Builds on **10 strategic priorities** that were identified based on the Zebulon Today findings and wide-ranging input from Zebulon residents, leaders and the consultant team:
 1. Align land use and transportation planning.
 2. Sync the CLUP with the Unified Development Ordinance.
 3. Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways.
 4. Center growth management on “AFP” – Adequate Public Facilities.
 5. Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
 6. Secure new and renewed partnerships.
 7. Steer Downtown momentum.
 8. Protect and reinforce character.
 9. Build community – ONE community.
 10. Think BIG but share costs wisely.
- Concludes with a Plan Implementation section and four-page **Action Agenda table that calls out 35 priority initiatives** where the Town and its public and private partners should focus their energies and efforts either immediately in Year 1, in the near term during Years 2-4 or later in Years 5+.

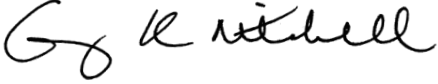
www.kendigkeast.com

Michael Clark
June 25, 2021
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Change is inevitable, but positive, beneficial change for Zebulon will require the ongoing commitment of all who contributed their time and ideas to this plan. We sincerely appreciated this opportunity to lend our professional skills and experience to this effort. We look forward to seeing the continued growth and enhancement of Zebulon in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

KENDIG KEAST COLLABORATIVE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Gary Mitchell, FAICP
President (Project Manager)

Acknowledgments

Mayor and Board of Commissioners

Robert S. Matheny	Mayor
Glenn York	Mayor Pro Tem
Shannon Baxter	Commissioner
Beverly Clark	Commissioner
Larry Loucks	Commissioner
Annie Moore	Commissioner

Planning Board

Gene Blount	Chair
Michael Germano	Board Member
Stephanie Jenkins	Board Member
Laura Johnson	Board Member
David Lowry	Board Member
Jessica Luther	Board Member
Joshua Robinson	Board Member

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Thanks also to ...

Individual residents, business representatives, property owners, partner agencies, local organizations and others who contributed their insights and ideas to Zebulon's long-range planning process.



ZEBULON TOMORROW

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ZEBULON TOMORROW

Plan

Introduction



Introduction

The Zebulon **Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP)** is intended to guide future development, redevelopment and community enhancement efforts over the next 20 years through 2040-41. It serves as a framework for thoughtful community discussion on the real and perceived challenges currently facing Zebulon and the opportunities that will shape its future. Through long-range planning efforts, the community can accommodate its projected growth and revitalization in a manner that preserves its history, culture and overall quality of life for current and future residents.

Process

The CLUP resulted from an 18-month planning and community engagement process, which was extended due to the disruption of the COVID-19 global pandemic that began a few months into the process. The plan's findings and recommendations focus on the physical and economic aspects of the community's projected growth and development in the coming years. It provides guiding principles, goals, policies and action priorities that will help Town officials, appointees and staff in determining the location, financing and sequencing of public improvements; administering development regulations; and guiding reinvestment efforts. The CLUP also provides a basis for



SOURCE: Visitraleigh.com.

Focus Areas

Focus areas within the Comprehensive Land Use Plan provide direction when setting program and funding priorities to enhance the quality of life in Zebulon.

The five **Focus Areas** are:

1. Land Use and Development
2. Growth Capacity
3. Housing and Neighborhoods
4. Economic Development
5. Recreation and Amenities

These focus areas were considered in developing the Zebulon Today Report and help orient this Zebulon Tomorrow portion of the CLUP.

coordinating the actions of many different functions and interests within and outside of municipal government.

Plan Purpose

A comprehensive plan is usually the most important policy document a municipal government prepares and maintains. This is because the plan:

- Lays out a long-range vision regarding the future growth and enhancement of the community.
- Considers at once the entire geographic area of the community, including areas where new development and redevelopment may occur, along with its regional context.
- Assesses near- and longer-term needs and desires across a variety of inter-related topics that represent the key “building blocks” of a community (e.g., land use, transportation, urban design, economic development, redevelopment, housing, neighborhoods, parks and recreation, utility infrastructure, public facilities and services, cultural facilities, etc.).
- Serves as a guideline for measuring success and is amended from time to time to remain a “living document” that is able to address changing circumstances.

Through a comprehensive plan, a community determines how best to accommodate and manage its projected growth and to revitalize older neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. The Zebulon CLUP aims to ensure that ongoing development and redevelopment will proceed in an orderly, well-planned manner so that public facilities and services can keep pace, and so that residents’ quality of life will be enhanced.

The CLUP also clarifies and states the Town’s intentions regarding the area’s physical development and associated infrastructure

investment. This information creates a greater level of predictability for residents, land owners, developers, potential investors, and partner agencies and organizations.

Why Plan?

Local planning allows Zebulon to better control its future rather than simply dealing with change as it happens. Planning enables the Town to manage future growth and development actively as opposed to reacting to development and redevelopment on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues. The process for developing the CLUP involved major community discussions about Zebulon’s priorities and its capability to provide the necessary public services and facilities to support these priorities. Such considerations led to pivotal discussions about what is “best” for the community and how everything from taxes to quality of life will be affected.

Long-range comprehensive planning provides an opportunity for the Town’s elected and appointed officials to step back from pressing, day-to-day issues and clarify their ideas on the kind of community they are trying to create and maintain. Through the plan development process, Zebulon’s leaders could look broadly at programs for neighborhoods, housing, economic development and provision of public infrastructure and facilities and how these efforts may relate to one another. The plan ultimately represents a “big picture” of the community and its near-term and longer-range future. In sum, essential reasons for long-range planning are to:



- Provide a balance of land uses and services throughout the community to meet the needs and desires of the population.
- Ensure adequate public facilities to meet the demands of future development and redevelopment.
- Achieve and maintain a development pattern that reflects the values of the community and ensures a balanced tax base between residential and non-residential development.
- Ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of the perception and image of the community.
- Involve local citizens in the decision-making process, provide a transparent planning process, and reach consensus on the future vision for Zebulon.

Use of this Plan

A comprehensive plan, if embraced by leadership and residents, has the potential to boost a community's livability and its opportunities for tangible accomplishments.

This plan is ultimately a guidance document for Town officials and staff, who must make decisions on a daily basis that will determine the future direction, financial health and "look and feel" of the community. These decisions are carried out through:

- Targeted programs and expenditures prioritized through the Town's annual budget process, including routine but essential functions such as code compliance.
- Major public improvements and land acquisitions financed through the Town's budgeting efforts.
- New and amended Town ordinances and regulations closely linked to CLUP objectives (and associated review and approval procedures in the case of subdivision and land development activities).
- Departmental work plans and resources in key areas.
- Support for ongoing planning and studies that will further clarify needs, costs, benefits and strategies.
- Pursuit of external grant funding to supplement local budgets and/or expedite certain projects.
- Initiatives pursued in conjunction with other public and private partners to leverage resources and achieve successes neither could accomplish on their own.

Despite these many avenues for action, the CLUP should not be considered a "cure all" for every tough problem the community faces. This plan focuses primarily on the responsibilities of Town government in the physical planning arena, where municipalities normally have a more direct and extensive role than in other areas that residents value, such as education and social services. Long-range plans, as vision and policy documents, also must remain relatively general.

The resulting plan may not address every challenge before the town, but it is meant to set a tone and motivate concerted efforts to move the community forward in coming years.



Zebulon Board of Commissioners
(Spring 2021).

Planning Authority

State enabling legislation for local planning – and for related development regulation authorities – is contained in Chapter 160D, Local Planning and Development Regulation, of the North Carolina General Statutes. Within Article 5, Planning, is Section 160D-501 regarding Plans, which states:

A comprehensive plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development of the jurisdiction. A land-use plan uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land. A comprehensive or land-use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.

Planning analysis may address inventories of existing conditions and assess future trends regarding demographics and economic, environmental, and cultural factors. The planning process shall include opportunities for citizen engagement in plan preparation and adoption.

Section 160D-501(b) does not mandate the contents of local comprehensive plans but itemizes potential topics such plans may address, most of which are captured in this CLUP including everything from desired growth patterns, economic development and public infrastructure and services to housing, recreation and protection of environmental, historic and cultural resources.

In general, comprehensive plans can highlight "Issues and opportunities facing the local government, including consideration of trends, values expressed by citizens, community vision, and guiding principles for growth and development."

Section 160D-501(c) requires that the local governing body adopt the plan with the advice and consultation of the planning board. Planning boards are established through Section 160D-301, which specifies that among its duties, a planning board may be assigned

"to prepare, review, maintain, monitor, and periodically update and recommend to the governing board a comprehensive plan, and such other plans as deemed appropriate, and conduct ongoing related research, data collection, mapping, and analysis."

As in most states, the North Carolina General Statutes require, in Section 160D-701, that "Zoning regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Also, while adopted plans "shall be advisory in nature without independent regulatory effect" per Section 160D-501(c), the plan must be considered by the planning board and governing board when considering proposed amendments to zoning regulations. Section 160D-501(a) further specifies that a local government applying zoning regulations must "reasonably maintain a comprehensive plan or land-use plan." The Implementation section of this CLUP provides guidance for periodically reviewing and updating the plan at regular intervals.

Finally, with the adoption of this plan, Zebulon will be in compliance with the planning requirements of the new Chapter 160D as adopted by the General Assembly in 2019 and amended in 2020. As part of those actions, the General Assembly also directed that local governments that have zoning ordinances must have an up-to-date comprehensive plan or land-use plan by July 1, 2022.



SOURCE: wikipedia.org.

Other Local Planning

Along with comprehensive plans, "A local government may prepare and adopt other plans as deemed appropriate. This may include, but is not limited to, small area plans, neighborhood plans, hazard mitigation plans, transportation plans, housing plans, and recreation and open space plans."

Section 160D-501
North Carolina
General Statutes

Coordinated Planning

"A local government may undertake any of the planning activities authorized by this Article in coordination with other local governments, State agencies, or regional agencies ..."

Section 160D-503
North Carolina
General Statutes

What Zebulon Residents Had to Say

Community and leadership engagement activities during the CLUP process included:

- Three work sessions with the Board of Commissioners (March and December 2020, and April 2021).
- A Town Hall Meeting on Zebulon’s Future with approximately 30 attendees, held at Wakefield Baptist Church in north Zebulon (March 2020).
- A blitz of 12 small group sessions conducted over the course of a week in late September 2020, mostly at an outdoor space in Downtown plus a few socially distanced sessions at the Community Center, as a way to renew community conversations after a six-month COVID-related hiatus since spring 2020 (with 45 residents, business owners and representatives of partner agencies/organizations engaged, plus Town Board and Planning Board members spread across the sessions).
- Four work sessions with a small group of residents and business people who served as an ad hoc “sounding board” during plan development (March 2020, December 2020, February 2021 and April 2021), including two informal meetings held jointly with the Town Planning Board.
- A joint public hearing before the Town Board and Planning Board (May 2021) prior to the Town Board’s consideration of plan adoption in June 2021.
- An informal public open house period at Town Hall prior to the joint hearing above (May 2021).



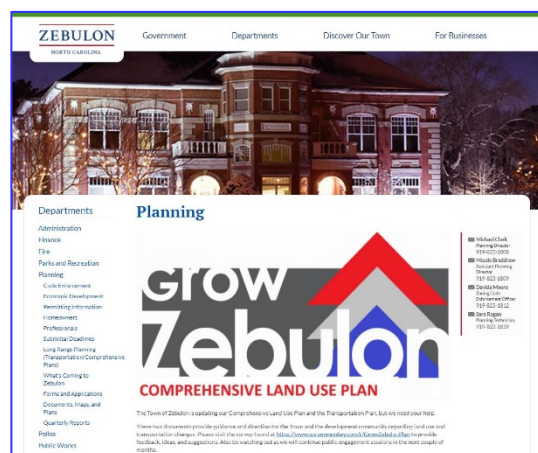
Group map exercise at pre-COVID Town Hall Meeting on north side.

Activated alley location for outdoor small group sessions during COVID.



The consultant team and Town staff also had ongoing discussions and completed area driving tours during the process. After the COVID-19 public health situation shut down traditional in-person public engagement activities, Town staff also conducted an online survey and gathered further input through social media posts.

The supplement at the end of



this Introduction, titled **Issues and Considerations**, provides 17 pages of documented input from many of the engagement activities itemized above.



Below is a sampling of comments that demonstrate concerns and hopes for Zebulon related to growth and economic development, housing and amenities, and Downtown and countryside alike, among other topics discussed:



"I'm fine with the growth. But it needs to be smart, managed growth based on a vision ... versus growing too fast and unplanned."

"We have authenticity here. It's been lost in surrounding communities."

"Opportunity here for decent new workforce housing that is being lost in so many other places in the region."

"For effective service delivery we have to understand the constituents and really engage since there are a lot of outsiders coming in."

"We need to become more of a destination, but don't lose the charm. Bigger is not always better. Offer an experience."

"We need to be a lifestyle versus a bedroom community, also so residents spend less time (and money) out of town."

"Our economic development approach has evolved, focused more on a series of smaller wins versus one big win."

"We need to sustain a successful Downtown. We need a place to congregate and socialize with a suburbanizing north side."

"We still have enough land to create a special community - not just throw up houses."

"We have the best of both worlds - urban and rural. We need to appreciate the past while planning for a sustainable future."

"We have potential here [in Downtown Zebulon] unlike anything outside of Raleigh."

Future City

While the **Zebulon Today Report** provides background and insights about the town as it is today, this Zebulon Tomorrow portion of the CLUP focuses on Zebulon as it intends to be in the years ahead. These aspirations are presented in topic areas that are central to Zebulon’s physical growth and development as listed on page 1 of this Introduction. Each topical section highlights key issues and considerations followed by a Framework for Action portion. A final section on plan implementation considerations, priorities and procedures rounds out the Zebulon Tomorrow portion of the plan.

Guiding Principles

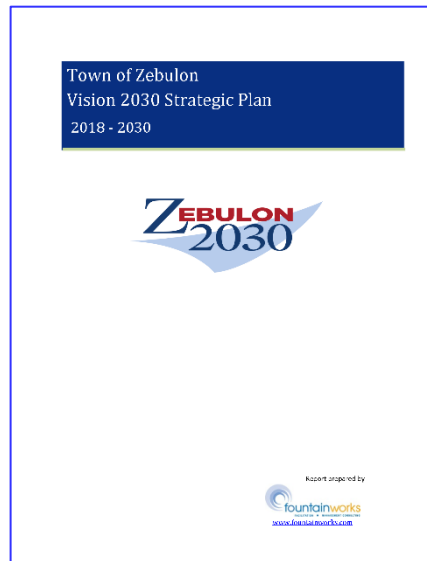
Through the process of preparing this plan, the six guiding principles below were identified. **A Guiding Principle expresses a basic value or operating policy that will apply regardless of the course of action ultimately chosen.** In essence, guiding principles frame how an organization goes about pursuing its mission. Along with the guidance in the Town’s Strategic Plan and other foundational documents, these principles should be consulted when making crucial decisions and when evaluating the results of previous decisions and actions.

Guiding Principle 1: Zebulon will be **CONNECTED**

Zebulon will be an increasingly connected and accessible place, internally, to the rest of Wake County and the Raleigh metropolitan area, and to other towns and counties in all directions. Improvements identified through the Comprehensive Transportation Plan will be an important part of this. As will the ongoing linkages that gradually build toward an area-wide recreational network as envisioned in the Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Beyond the mobility aspect of connectedness, the residents, businesses, non-profits, community organizations and Town government of Zebulon must all remain in touch and working together on shared priorities and solutions as area growth proceeds. Technology advancements and related fiber and network investments will also connect Zebulon even more to the nation and world. But human connections and a strong sense of community will always come from a vibrant downtown, appealing parks and trails, regular events at Five County Stadium, and other local destinations and gathering places that bring residents together and draw more visitors into Zebulon

Guiding Principle 2: Zebulon will be **GROUNDED**

Even as the area grows and demographics change, Zebulon will remain grounded by enduring core values that all relate back to a shared desire to preserve a “small town feel” and remain a “Town of Friendly People.” Zebulon is also anchored by its history, especially a traditional downtown and adjacent neighborhoods that speak to its origins as a railroad town and hub for surrounding rural areas and population. The Town’s solid economic base, increasing residential population, access to Wake County public schools and reputable private schools, a strong faith community and similar factors all contribute some sense of stability amid an era of change. Looking ahead, Zebulon



Vision

Zebulon is a vibrant, growing community that maintains its small-town charm and heritage.

Mission

Zebulon is committed to enhancing the quality of life of our residents by delivering excellent, friendly services and fostering collaboration within our community.

Focus Areas and Goals

The Vision and Mission above are from the Town’s Strategic Plan, which also calls out three focus areas with associated goals:

1. Vibrant Downtown
2. Small Town Life
3. Growing Smart



SOURCE: UNC Libraries.



must focus on ways to maintain an “authenticity” that sets it apart from other area communities as noted by some who provided input to this plan.

Guiding Principle 3: Zebulon will be BALANCED

Zebulon will seek to be a complete and balanced community as it grows. From an economic and tax base standpoint, this relates to having both great neighborhoods and living options while also being an attractive host community for major employers and a wide array of small businesses. The Town must also ensure that all residents have nearby access to parks and nature, along with various other types of public services and amenities close to home. The development pattern that emerges over time must also be in sync with the design and capacity of the transportation system built to serve it. Zebulon also must balance the needs of older established neighborhoods and commercial areas with the necessary management and servicing of growth at its edges. Additionally, a balanced community means a balanced lifestyle for residents, with leisure and cultural offerings that feed the soul while promoting health and wellness. Zebulon



SOURCE: visitraleigh.com.

should be a “life-cycle community” that nurtures both its youth and entrepreneurs, enabling both to blossom and thrive here and stay as long as they desire.

Guiding Principle 4: Zebulon will be PRUDENT

The range and magnitude of future financial commitments facing Zebulon’s leaders and Town management will only increase as the community grows in both population and territory. Zebulon will continue to weigh the costs and benefits of all such decisions, pursue ways to leverage local resources through external funding and partnerships, and seek equitable methods for staying financially sound while ensuring that future generations help bear the cost of major investments from which they will benefit. Zebulon must also be prudent by safeguarding its past investments in community infrastructure and public facilities, to ensure they are sustained throughout their useful life cycle. Forward thinking and risk avoidance will prevent unnecessary costs from ever being borne, enabling Town resources to be directed as much as possible to pursuit of strategic priorities that eventually turn vision into reality.

Guiding Principle 5: Zebulon will be COLLABORATIVE

Zebulon will continue to value and foster partnerships that enable the Town to accomplish outcomes it likely could not achieve on its own, or as soon or as affordably. Some partners are obvious and essential, such as public agencies at other levels of government and neighboring jurisdictions. Others involve public/private cooperation and interaction with non-profits and other community and regional organizations. Within each section of this CLUP is a list of such partners related to the plan focus areas of land use and development, growth capacity, housing and neighborhoods, economic development, and recreation and amenities. Beyond the physical focus of this plan, other partnership opportunities involve additional community needs and priorities from education and social services to arts and culture. Zebulon’s future success will also depend on an engaged and civic-minded population that accepts its responsibility to help set the direction and priorities of Town government and the community, always in an informed and respectful way with the support of Town leaders and staff.

Guiding Principle 6: Zebulon will be RESILIENT

Zebulon leaders will appreciate all the uncertainty the future holds while setting a course based on best available information and expressed goals and priorities. Resilience starts with such wise anticipation, then effective response to unexpected circumstances. The foundation for a resilient community is a diverse local economy that will continue to attract investment and generate jobs over the long term while bolstering the Town's tax base. Zebulon's economic base must also be able to withstand times of recession and avoid over-reliance on one or a few major employers. Given local government's core responsibility for public health, safety and welfare, another critical element of a resilient town is its preparedness to respond immediately to natural disasters and other civil disruptions (e.g., a global pandemic), then implement longer-term recovery plans. Communities are also sustained by a housing market and neighborhoods that enable longtime residents to live out their life where they choose, comfortably and affordably. Finally, resilience flows from hearty, giving people who are plugged into their neighborhoods and community, embrace volunteer opportunities, and are welcoming to newcomers and supportive of those pursuing a local business ownership dream. All of these qualities of Zebulon residents were highlighted during discussions for this plan.

Goals and Action Priorities

The [Framework for Action](#) in each plan section also provides Goals and identifies strategic Action Priorities:

A **Goal** is a statement of a desired outcome ("end") toward which efforts are directed as expressed by more specific objectives and action steps ("means").

A strategic **Action Priority** is aimed at seizing a special opportunity or addressing a particular challenge one faces, given limited resources – financial and otherwise – and recognizing that a broader agenda of new or ongoing activities will also be pursued in the meantime.

Pathways to Action

The action priorities in this CLUP are presented in five categories that represent the major ways that comprehensive plan goals and initiatives are typically advanced and accomplished:

Capital Investments



Many municipalities use a multi-year Capital Improvements Program, or "CIP," to identify and budget for "big ticket" projects, especially those that must be phased and/or coordinated with other initiatives. This may include street infrastructure; water, sanitary sewer and drainage improvements; parks, trails and recreation facility construction and upgrades; construction of public buildings; and purchase of land, vehicles or major equipment. With a typical five-year outlook, a CIP provides predictability regarding the Town's capital investment plans and priorities for the benefit and awareness of private interests and citizens. Anticipating and adequately budgeting for major capital projects will be essential to implementing this CLUP. Likewise, decisions regarding the prioritization of proposed capital improvements should reflect the direction and priorities of this plan.

Programs and Initiatives



Programs involve the routine activities of Town departments and staff, as well as special projects and initiatives they may also undertake. As part of CLUP implementation, this method may include initiating new or adjusting existing Town programs and activities; expanding community outreach efforts; or providing specialized training to accomplish a priority objective more promptly and/or effectively.

Regulations and Standards



Given that private investment decisions account for a vast majority of the Town's physical form, land development regulations and engineering standards are fundamental for plan implementation. Consequently, zoning and subdivision regulations and associated development criteria and technical engineering standards are the basic keys to ensuring that the form, character and quality of development reflect the Town's planning objectives. These codes should advance the community's desire for quality development outcomes while recognizing economic factors. They should not delay or interfere unnecessarily with appropriate new development or redevelopment that is consistent with plan principles and directives.

Partnerships and Coordination



Some community initiatives identified in this plan cannot be accomplished by Town government on its own. They may require direct coordination, intergovernmental agreements or funding support from other public entities or levels of government. Additionally, the unique role of potential private and non-profit partners to advance the community's action agenda should not be underestimated. This may occur through cooperative efforts, volunteer activities and in-kind services (which can count toward the local match requirements for various grant opportunities), and from public/private financing of community improvements.

More Targeted Planning / Study



Various areas of Town governance require more detailed study and planning, especially as required to qualify for external funding opportunities. These studies involve targeted planning work at a "finer grain" level of detail than is appropriate for comprehensive planning purposes (e.g., utility master plans, roadway alignment studies, etc.). As such, some parts of this plan will be implemented only after some additional planning or special study to clarify next steps and associated costs and considerations, including clarification of roles and potential cost-sharing when partnering is involved.

ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Zebulon Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) and Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

Through October 2020 Community and Leadership Engagement Activities

The table below was compiled from two rounds of initial project meetings in Zebulon. The first round was in early March 2020. After some interim months due to COVID-19, the second round was in late September-early October 2020. The March round included workshop sessions with the Town Board, then the Planning Board (along with a small group of residents and business people who served as an ad hoc “sounding board” during plan development) on March 2, 2020; an evening Town Hall Meeting held in north Zebulon on March 3 (attended by approximately 30 persons, along with Town representatives); a session with the Town Manager and department heads/representatives on March 3; and other discussions with Town Planning staff.

The second round, during the week of September 28, 2020, involved a series of 12 small group sessions conducted with residents, business owners, and representatives of partner agencies/organizations, plus Town Board and Planning Board members spread across the sessions (45 total individuals engaged). Additional meetings with the Town Manager and individual departments were also completed. The table indicates whether an issue/consideration originated primarily from one of these sources or was raised in multiple discussions.

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Demographics					
Cultural shift with newcomers.	X				
Changing needs because of population growth.	X				
A lot of new people moving here (out-of-state license plates). Still a small town, but don't know everyone anymore.		X	X	X	
Homebuyers in new developments are mostly outsiders (per builders).				X	
Outer subdivisions could “take over,” similar to Wendell Falls. Need all areas to take pride in one community, four quadrants with a core downtown.				X	
Wake County Public School System has to market to new families in growing Zebulon, overcome some East Wake County perceptions and expectations of people relocating from Raleigh or elsewhere.				X	
Want our kids to come back at some point.		X			
Grew up here and less than 50% of high school classmates stayed. Some drawn to Wendell and Knightdale. But Wendell losing its charm.				X	
Diversity is key to growing into a better place. Is a local asset, but work to do (racial, economic).		X	X	X	
Opportunity for diverse new residential areas with homes in \$200-\$300,000 price range.				X	



Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
People into Franklin County east around US 64 associate with Zebulon.					X
Congregation (Zebulon Baptist Church) much more spread out than in past, into surrounding counties.				X	
Land Use and Development					
Explosive growth (4,000 houses coming online), pace of growth. Need to control it, not get away from us.	X		X	X	
Extent of platted lots ready to build on (~3,300 in February 2020).					X
Yes grow, but healthy growth. Need to make our own decisions, have the town say what it wants to be.				X	
Fine with the growth. But needs to be smart managed growth based on vision of how we want to grow – versus growing too fast and unplanned.			X	X	
Have land and room to grow.			X		
Growth is coming. Matter of where to grow and what type of growth. Need a place for everything including chain retail and restaurants.	X		X	X	
Will have commercial strips eventually near new subdivisions. Be careful about hurting Downtown if residents have no need to come Downtown.				X	
Last small town feel in Wake County. Not overbuilt like Cary and Apex. Seen how others have grown and changed.				X	
Moved here for small town feel – feels like home.				X	
Community schools are part of small town feel – inside the building and through interactions with and support from community and businesses.				X	
Need to grow all the pieces (schools, parks, etc.) with the overall growth of the town. Should put fire stations and parks where development is happening (where kids hang out, play, walk in the woods).				X	
School populations are up with homebuilding in area (building on ~3,100 lots expected next 6 years, with 2+ people per home).				X	
Wake County Public School System is on its own to find sites for new schools. Maintain enrollment projections and model for optimum site locations based on residential population, transportation, land and development costs, etc. Prefer to be near residential areas for walkability. Schools also end up as buffer to highways and retail. Data group works with municipalities on planning, permits, densities, etc. Have a rolling 7-year capital projects plan. Also do adaptive re-use for new schools, some leasing.				X	
Zebulon has a great feel and character, a place where anyone would want to live.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) was a major accomplishment, is fantastic, now need to implement it effectively.	X		X	X	
Communicating UDO to general public.		X			
Extent of subdivisions and related traffic.		X			
Need to make the connection between land use and transportation (e.g., too much activity along short stretch of Highway 96 between US 64/264 and Pearces Road).				X	
Still have people who do not want to see change, do not want development. The new needs to blend into what was already here.		X		X	
Careful about growth impacts on longtime land owners.				X	
Too much high-density housing and smaller lots. Would like to see some larger lots.			X	X	
Not as much market for larger lots now, even mixing some duplexes and townhomes into new developments.				X	
Smart development versus “unchecked” development.			X		
No clear cutting of trees.			X		
We are building so quickly, not all of it done well. Need to grow in the right way.				X	
Maintain “small town” identity, charm and character amid growth – not become another Cary.			X	X	
All-encompassing development and connections versus just giant pockets of neighborhoods.					X
Identify our natural corridors along with transportation corridors, then fit neighborhoods within them. Provide non-highway connections.				X	
Developer participation in growth-related improvements through development agreements.					X
Family properties on north side were inherited by next generation who did not stay here. Commercial, office and industrial development is coming.				X	
Pending development near Five County Stadium with desired mix of housing types/levels, will draw people from age 30 to mid-60s. Will see more residential and commercial development with proximity to US 264 interchange and Walmart.				X	X

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Growth potential on south-southeast side, but will happen last due to distance from US 64/264. Proximity of these undeveloped areas to Downtown, Community Park, Community Center. But may still need incentives for development. Need to build on Downtown revitalization, opportunity for near-Downtown apartments. Need to create more interest.				X	X
Code compliance focus (property upkeep).			X		X
Potential Historic District – preserving historic properties and unique look. Greater investor interest if we have a historic district.			X	X	X
Infill opportunities with patio homes and townhomes in areas that are walkable to Downtown. A missed opportunity that we did not allow this in past. Some older houses need to go.				X	
Public spaces, with meaningful design.			X	X	
Moved here for sense of country living with lots of trees and low density.			X		
Don't lose all the farmland and tobacco fields. More commuters now, but should love coming home.				X	
Wake County also focused on land conservation in East Wake along with parks/trails/greenway efforts. Lead County role in areas where towns have not grown together yet.				X	
Infrastructure and Public Services (Growth Capacity)					
Aging infrastructure, and adequate funds for repairs.	X		X	X	
Future implications of installing a lot of streets and infrastructure at same time, with same life cycle.				X	
Wakefield annexation was a major accomplishment.	X				
Water/sewer challenges for Downtown building renovations.	X				
New Wakelon Elementary School.		X			
Future school needs – and where?		X			
Wake County Public School System sometimes able to share utility extension costs with private development, but school sites not usually dedicated. Often end up with worst of land in developing areas.				X	
Financial capacity to do everything needed.		X			
Value placed on public safety services.			X		
We have the infrastructure here to support growth relative to places that cannot grow without it.				X	
Maintaining adequate water and wastewater capacity with growth. Having Raleigh water will support growth.			X	X	X
Storm drainage.					X
Town Hall asset at entrance to Zebulon.					X
Investments to meet City of Raleigh standards.					X

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Zebulon does well at joint projects.					X
Improve on plan review, permitting and inspections through Wake County. Or Town take on that function, current arrangement killing businesses.				X	X
Town staffing challenges (recruiting, retention).					X
Rely very much on neighbors to satisfy emergency service needs (Zebulon share of area call volume).					X
Challenges of catching up with and getting ahead of growth (financial constraints).			X		X
Zebulon provides a very high level of service with what we have – can we keep it up, meet expectations?					X
Potential fire station relocation for shifting service demands.					X
Police Department growth with ongoing development, more population and increased traffic (higher call volume).			X		X
Increased crime, drugs, violence with growth.			X		
Police Department burden from incident response and criminal activity related to US 64/264.					X
Almost done paying off utility systems merger agreement with City of Raleigh. Increase in Town water customers is making earlier payoff possible.					X
Wastewater plant near Five County Stadium will approach capacity but not expand due to other Raleigh improvements that will enable more north and east side growth.					X
Planned water supply reservoir on Little River northwest of Zebulon now decades away, if ever.					X
No forced annexations, but can require as condition of connecting to Town utilities.					X
Planning ahead of further inevitable growth to be ready and get outcomes we want. We have a tidal wave coming, but we are well ahead of the curve for communities of this size. Planning efforts by all Town departments is a big accomplishment.			X		X
Formalizing our approach to government functions.					X
For effective service delivery we have to understand the constituents and really engage since there are a lot of outsiders coming in.					X
Internet level of service.			X		
Housing and Neighborhoods					
Character/appearance of neighborhoods around Downtown mostly unchanged in recent years, but some homes being renovated/improved, estimate about one-third have changed hands.	X			X	
Need to ensure quality homes amid a changing market.		X	X		

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Need greater housing variety (types, styles/design, price points).		X	X	X	
Cheaper land is the key advantage for Zebulon now as all other housing development costs are relatively fixed regardless of location.				X	
Message from builders is "let us build," people know about Zebulon and are waiting to get in.				X	
Need to appeal to broadest spectrum of market – aim to achieve five price points.				X	
Opportunity here for decent new workforce housing that is being lost in so many other places in region.				X	
Be careful with residential design standards and their cost/effects – need home designs that work for everyone.				X	
Cost of add-ons can undermine affordability for those you want in the community, should be buyer options.				X	
Be careful with development fees and overall costs, will affect viability of both new and redevelopment.				X	
Cannot get quality housing through sheer demand, occurs step by step by adding amenities and raising reasonable development standards gradually.				X	
Affordable new housing in \$150-200,000 range.			X		
With local house prices able to get larger house with more land here, for now.				X	
Revitalization of older neighborhoods.			X		
Need incentives for preservation and recycling of older homes. They are part of our brand and image.				X	
Rite-Aid is now empty, took out two older homes at the time.				X	
Not overlook affordable housing needs in Zebulon amid needs in all of Wake County.					X
Housing and lifestyle options (including affordable multi-family) for various income levels and stages of life. Townhomes for younger people, one-story ranch style for seniors. Should allow for "bungalow courts" focused around a common area.			X	X	X
Need mixed-housing neighborhoods versus areas saturated with just starter homes.			X	X	X
Need market rate multi-family residential versus only age targeted and low-income sites.					X
Still some negative perception of multi-family, had a bad example here in the past.				X	
Challenge of locating multi-family away from nodes of activity (tied to transit in Raleigh).				X	
Need to educate community about housing trends, impact of Raleigh growth on east Wake affordability.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Opportunity to attract GSK employees and others to live locally, overcome perceptions about schools and other community factors.				X	
Interconnected neighborhoods.			X		
Retirement town potential, along with first-time and middle-age homebuyers? People do stay, lots of senior volunteers in town.				X	
Concern about costs of living in town (water bills, taxes). Rising tax bills with higher valuation of older homes.				X	
Avoid homeowner associations (HOAs) – need not be Cary.			X		
Area Economy and Jobs					
Zebulon had industry and employment before lots of residential, positive place for industry.				X	
Success at attracting different kinds of businesses and enterprises, need a diverse tax base.	X		X	X	
Extent of daytime population relative to other area communities. People went home at night when Zebulon was mainly a jobs town before. Wendell has transitioned from bedroom community to an active downtown, activity on weeknights.				X	
Rebuild of Smithfield’s reflects area growth.	X				
Growth from convenient location near Raleigh (urban center), Research Triangle Park and highways, and with Rocky Mount and Wilson to the east. Attractive to commuters and businesses.			X	X	
Zebulon is in between so many activity centers – Greenville more than Rocky Mount to the east. A “tweener” town. Near but apart from Raleigh.				X	
Raleigh is the draw, getting closer all the time.				X	
Opportunity in all of Wake County ever since Research Triangle began, growth still radiating out from it, Zebulon next to experience it.				X	
Jobs and opportunity start to drop off not too far east of Zebulon.				X	
Difficult to create growth, should not take it for granted for screw it up.				X	
Medical potential and need in Zebulon. Proximity to Wake Med a plus.		X		X	
Chamber programs very helpful to a startup business.				X	
Liked the feel of Zebulon for locating a business relative to other town/cities in area.				X	
Limited location options for opening a new business.				X	
Why did we lose Carter’s Baking Company to Wendell? Too difficult to start a business here. Need to draw and help the little guy.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Need office space for young workers and start-ups, where less capital investment needed. Need some shared work space with day care.				X	
Great access to airport (RDU) without all the Raleigh traffic.				X	
Last frontier of east Wake County with Wendell, positioned for growth. Optimistic about our future, need regional wins for all. And perspective that a win for one community is a win for all.				X	
We have underestimated our value in east Wake County, should have aimed higher than the subpar development we accepted, have better income potential, Wendell Falls setting new standard.				X	
Keeping our dollars in Zebulon, not having to leave town to get needed items.			X	X	
Older retail centers are dated (e.g., Triangle East, Wedgewood). Do bare minimum to maintain them.				X	
Additional local job opportunities.			X		
Workforce education and skill levels.			X		
Importance of community image and aesthetics to economic development.			X		
Tax base to fund services.			X		
Residential share of tax base is growing, which changes the economic development approach.					X
Need to avoid over-reliance on a few major businesses/employers.					X
Balance of residential rooftops and industry.			X		
Add residential to established commercial tax base strength, as a cushion in case a major employer leaves.				X	
Increasing real estate values with growth. But more costly to acquire land now.			X	X	
Economic development approach focused more on a series of smaller-scale wins versus one big win.					X
Capitalize more on Five County Stadium asset (year-round activity, better marketing, make a destination with investment on rest of site and around it, model of Durham Bulls Athletic Park, etc.). Vacant land around it, Town has utilities out there, access to multiple highways. Should have more commercial along old US 264 as in Durham.			X	X	X
Need to implement pending branding results.					X
Concern about types of businesses growth will bring.			X		
Economic development has changed, now competing with other area downtowns.				X	
Become more of a destination, but don't lose the charm. Bigger not always better, don't become Knightdale. Offer an experience.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Some challenges to location of private industrial park (plus East Wake Academy located within it).					X
Public schools are good, not great – as expected when moving here.				X	
Still great value in Wake County school system (relative to areas farther east). Some concerns and under duress, but still a high in-state reputation.				X	
Wake County schools model has been large high schools with students coming from a distance.				X	
East Wake Academy is highly desired school, only high school level within Zebulon now. Draws people here from five counties. Also a community center for events. Not looking to grow significantly, want to remain a small town school.				X	X
Tourism promotion (Downtown, Five County Stadium, etc.). Should connect to Stadium from Downtown.			X	X	
Hotel potential near US 64/264-NC 96 interchange (delayed by COVID-19).				X	X
Downtown Zebulon					
Changes and excitement Downtown – moving in the right direction.	X		X		
Refocusing again on Downtown after earlier era of improvements.				X	
Maintain Downtown charm and character (e.g., names of old stores still on facades) – don't update everything.			X	X	
Having a "Main Street." Have a great few blocks.			X	X	
Scale of Downtown relative to a Raleigh is the advantage, can interact with small businesses.				X	
We have a Norman Rockwell type downtown. Almost like Mayberry, people welcoming and checking on you.				X	
Have an intact Downtown with nearby neighborhoods that are much the same as in past.				X	
More Downtown options and points of interest coming that will draw a wide variety of ages.		X			
Have potential here unlike anything outside of Raleigh. Business draw is proximity to US 64/264 and traffic count through Downtown (have to meander into Downtown Wendell).				X	
Consultants told us we have a "gold mine" here, better than Wake Forest.				X	
Not taking enough advantage of our Downtown asset – what many places do not have.				X	
Have new people in town who want a downtown like Apex, Fuquay and Wake Forest. They want what investors want.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Parking issues are a sign of a thriving Downtown.		X			
Parking mainly a problem at peak times – do not want overflow street parking in front of our house.				X	
Have more cars but less people in Downtown than in past.				X	
Do not know which Downtown parking is public or private. Signage will help.				X	
Downtown parking is OK except for our biggest events – have parking people do not realize they can use, directional signage has helped.				X	X
But parking will be a challenge after adding thousands more homes, more businesses.				X	
Every Downtown tenant wants some parking right out front. Will add lots of demand if all these buildings are renovated and brings more retail and restaurants. Can see a parking structure someday.				X	
Need to make strategic acquisitions Downtown for public parking areas, one block off Arendell with signage (e.g., if fire station site becomes available).				X	
Parking should be behind buildings as much as possible with visible and safe pathways to Arendell.				X	
Don't do lots of parallel parking Downtown. Rolesville has no angle parking after their downtown re-do, businesses do not like it.				X	
Need a Downtown traffic pattern that matches our Downtown objectives – a pedestrian setting. Need street to match what we are developing – part of a total revitalization. Wendell a good example of what you can have without a state highway (more personable environment, families with kids going to a farmers market, golf carts, etc.).				X	
Need to have a business-to-business environment Downtown, where business people feel comfortable walking to other places. A change in the street situation would draw businesses.				X	
Need to re-use Downtown buildings versus building new, to keep Downtown historic and maintain the architecture.		X			
Challenge and cost of renovating older Downtown buildings, especially for a new business occupancy. So many buildings stayed empty for so long, rough condition.				X	
Negative of boarded-up buildings Downtown, some investors working on that now. Vacancy makes it a desperate looking downtown.				X	
Need a plan of action for vacant buildings – and for the businesses that are departing.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Renovations are coming through market forces, but also need the right tenants (not pawn shops). Should aim for unique shops and overall feel and character (e.g., not view of a warehouse from a wine bar).				X	
With Downtown it's "chicken or egg" – make improvements first to attract new businesses, or try getting them here first to justify public investments?				X	X
Focus on lower cost changes first – "bang for the buck."				X	
Definitely no small "strip malls" near Downtown.				X	
Keep Downtown compact.				X	
Have a mix of long-term businesses and other storefronts vacant and transitioning.		X			
Success of Downtown events (e.g., tree lighting ceremony). Turnout for tree lighting is a sign of our growth, people becoming more aware of Zebulon.		X	X	X	
More community-wide events Downtown.			X		
Horton Street is an easy street to close for events. Should have food trucks weekly – and make sure people know. Also music, movies – multiple activities and destinations. Weaver's Pond has food trucks 2-4 nights per week, creating their own town.				X	
More events every month beyond tree lighting. Have a Town Events Committee, and Economic Development Committee working on getting more electricity downtown (COVID delays).				X	X
Ongoing focus on Downtown revitalization. Need government participation to get it done, but have to recognize slower government processes.			X	X	
Want a thriving Downtown – how do we draw people? Need more after 5:00 activity like Wendell has accomplished.				X	
Should have second-floor residential as in other downtowns in region. Had it here in the past, some investors exploring it.				X	
Downtown used to have a little bit of everything. Needs a new focus like restaurants, but not bars without food service.				X	
Make Downtown a destination, gathering place, community center (see Belmont, NC). Including activities for families and young people. Otherwise our local dollars are going to other places.			X	X	
Need to serve the millennials (e.g., retail, coffee, rooftop bars, restaurants, etc.).				X	
Focus on bringing restaurants, bars and retail – with incentives. Need a more upscale restaurant.			X	X	
Financial incentives for Downtown revitalization (e.g., tax breaks).			X		

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Want to walk Downtown and find good eating and entertainment. A little nightlife, but not over the top, not Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh.				X	
Should allow open containers Downtown, not many in region have that.				X	
Both praise and issues after moving Farmers Market to Downtown from Town Hall.					X
Need to provide and activate vibrant outdoor spaces Downtown to support businesses, access Downtown destinations via activated alleys, pop-up parks.				X	
Should orient more businesses away from the busy, noisy state highway through Downtown.				X	
What is the future of unimproved alleys?				X	
Appealing downtowns have a main square or fountain, some focal point.				X	
Good police presence Downtown, better walking environment than Downtown Raleigh.				X	
Need a Downtown organization, something that gives owners and merchants a vested interest.				X	
Zebulon will join North Carolina Main Street Program in 2021 after preparatory steps in 2020.					X
New funding opportunities by joining Main Street Program, and tax credits through historic district.				X	X
Need to sustain a successful Downtown. Need a place to congregate and socialize with a suburbanizing north side. Having Downtown residential and surrounding residential neighborhoods will help.				X	
Recreation and Amenities					
Five County Stadium benefit to Zebulon.	X			X	
Five County Stadium site can be much more than baseball. Looked at amphitheater concepts before. Consider options not available in area (e.g., indoor recreation space/center, indoor track, meeting space with hotel, etc.).				X	
Parks for children.			X		
Parks at appropriate size and design for future size of Zebulon (obtain partly through development set-asides).				X	
Need to plan for community size park space near residential development areas (public or private). Community Park was always intended to expand, farmland around it. Have adjacent property that could accommodate a splash pad or other feature. Need to link to current/future neighborhoods.				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Need private recreation areas/facilities built to Town standard in case an HOA is discontinued. Town currently takes on only greenways, with paved trails, per the Greenway Master Plan.				X	
Trails and greenways, and connect them. Wake County Greenway System Plan shows making connections between municipalities. Want adequate width for multi-use trails. Also need to fill missing sidewalk links. Funding challenges and competition between municipalities for limited dollars.			X	X	
Initial greenway implementation along Beaverdam Creek in north Zebulon. Coordinated with easements for sanitary sewer lines.	X				X
Also need a blueway system eventually (Town Board been talking about water recreation areas).				X	
Vision of continuous trail connection across Town from Little River to Five County Stadium. Would also promote equity in local recreation opportunities. But also constraints in Old Zebulon for connectivity.				X	
Need transit links to recreation areas.				X	
Community Center asset and success for Town.	X				X
Community Center the only indoor recreation space in area. But not enough room for spectators.				X	
Positive community effects of park and recreation improvements.	X		X		
All across Wake County people are moving to Triangle and region from all over, bringing recreation expectations.				X	
Recreation changes all the time, need to provide for traditional recreation plus trendy, niche activities.				X	
Wake County has funds to buy and develop property for future joint use school-park arrangements (current joint use agreements at both elementary schools).				X	
Getting new residents up to speed on what Zebulon offers.	X				
Need to be a lifestyle versus a bedroom community, also so less time is spent out of town.				X	
Need more amenities in general (restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, arts/cultural, etc.) – and more variety in these. More growth and change will help it happen.		X	X	X	
Need an arts center.				X	
Need convenient access to amenities. Should have a coffee shop near home.				X	
Restaurants beyond fast food, cheapens the town. Go elsewhere for restaurants now.			X	X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Need more and varied things for people to do (entertainment, events, community activities, etc.).		X	X		
Activities for families and kids, beyond parks. Lived here 30 years, always gone elsewhere for activities.			X	X	
Lack of spaces to be with one another, need gathering places outside of church. Have to go to Wendell (e.g., coffee shops).				X	
Have both a traditional Downtown and a Walmart, people can have both here.				X	
Yes we have a Walmart and a Waffle House. Is that the image we want? Heard someone say in the Bearded Bee in Wendell that Zebulon equals Walmart, Wendell equals Target.				X	
Need to stop thinking Downtown ends at railroad tracks, actually can extend to Temple-Johnson Road.				X	
Greater attention to and protection of the area's natural resources.			X		
Protect a good amount of the forest areas.			X		
Land acquisition ahead of growth.			X		
Should consider creating a wetlands mitigation bank with all the development in the area. Provide credits to developers and generate revenue for the Town.				X	
Still have enough land to create a special community – not just throw up houses.				X	
Need land preservation as we grow. Looks like everything just popping up everywhere.				X	
Interest in what happens with Little River Dam and Park. Potential for restaurants there?			X	X	
Potential for more natural/passive approach to Little River Park, already have five active Town parks.				X	
Potential for regional open space and trail links (e.g., Little River Park north through reservoir area to Mitchell Mill State Natural Area to Wake Forest). Have North Carolina Mountain-to-Sea Trail on a larger scale, plus existing/future Wake County trails.				X	
With ~2,000 acre Little River Reservoir now decades away, have approximately 1,100 acres of open space and 300 acres for recreation very close to Zebulon. Potential green corridor from US 64/264 to Little River Park. Need partnerships to accomplish. No 20-mile continuous greenway segments anywhere nearby, would draw from Raleigh, Cary, etc.				X	
Having six parks and a community center for a town this size is a big achievement.					X
Zebulon values recreation.			X		X

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
A large community-scale park with varied offerings (similar to Knightdale Station Park) will likely be a priority amid our financial limitations. Should be family-oriented, with kids playing.				X	X
Link parks with trails and greenways (developer who will gladly participate as it pays off by adding value).				X	
Need beautiful entries to community besides Town Hall and Downtown, involves land use and quality development such as NC 96 entry north of US 64/264.				X	
Other Topics					
A lot of change – what will we become? What does Zebulon want to be?				X	
Potential here, everywhere in town. I’m excited for Zebulon!				X	
Nice area and welcoming, draws people here. Still known as “The Town of Friendly People.”		X		X	
Need to do more to uphold “Town of Friendly People” and welcome and integrate new people into the community.				X	
A very livable, nice place. Quieter than Wendell and Knightdale.				X	
Have authenticity here, lost in surrounding communities that are capitalizing on other things (shopping/retail in Knightdale, housing in Wendell Falls).				X	
Lived here all my life, and why I live here has not changed. Maybe wearing rose colored glasses now?				X	
Have the best of both worlds – urban and rural. Need to appreciate the past (such as the dam and understanding why it was important) while planning for a sustainable future.				X	
Been seen as the “stepchild” of Wake County.		X			
Being left behind by other towns and communities and staying underdeveloped due to a lack of foresight and planning, willingness to grow and progress.			X		
Heard someone in Wendell say Zebulon wants to do its own thing, does not work jointly or regionally.				X	
Need to be an interconnected community in all ways (roads, sidewalks, trails, people, etc.).	X	X	X	X	X
Government that is accessible and responsive to its citizens – not just the loudest voices.			X		
Need to communicate with people before you want something from them.				X	
Need a Chief Information Officer to push the good news versus just reacting to rumors and bad news (install a Town message board).				X	

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Increase in church engagement with growth, opportunities to involve churches in expanding community activities.			X		
Enable existing residents adapt to change positively. Need to maintain community spirit among old guard plus new people.			X	X	
Community feel of the town merging with the growth in our area.			X		
Make Zebulon as desirable as Wake Forest.			X		
Sense of community here with civic organizations and ways to serve. Builds relationships and camaraderie. Even those who only work here love it.				X	
Sense of community and unity here wavered about 2010. Needed more young people involved and leadership transition. Downtown upgrades helping.				X	
More charities and opportunities to volunteer.			X		
Meeting needs of those with special needs.			X		
Need to meet all needs. Be more open-minded and progressive.				X	
Need to listen to all voices.				X	
Community awareness of and education about these plans.			X		

NOTE: The selected items below from the overall input to the Comprehensive Transportation Plan have some connection to land use, economic development, recreation and/or other CLUP topics.

Transportation					
Some of traffic increase (weekdays) is due to increased local employment. Will flip with more residential development.				X	
Not a Downtown bypass, look what that has done to other North Carolina towns.				X	
Much of truck traffic is tankers to/from petroleum depots in Selma. Truck traffic will re-route if more pedestrian activity Downtown, takes them longer.				X	
School-related traffic.		X		X	
Should use roundabouts for continuous traffic flow, and also as gateway features.				X	
New and upgraded sidewalks and crosswalks to overcome lack of connectivity, fill gaps in system.	X	X	X		X
Wake County Public School System looks for new school sites that will promote pedestrian/bicycle safety, have good connections.				X	
Greenways also for reaching destinations away from roads and traffic.				X	X

Issue / Consideration	Town Board	Ad Hoc Group	Town Hall Meeting	Small Groups	Town Staff
Improvements to Old Bunn Road an example of developer participation based on growth impacts. Need that contribution to fix roads so they can handle development.				X	
Wayfinding. Committee of Town staff working on this and branding (with Chamber involvement). Signage in Wendell and Knightdale very nicely done.				X	X
Residential developments need multiple access points.				X	
Additional Zebulon interchange along US 64/264?					X
Need to put development in the right locations, but density pushback outside of core areas.				X	
Potential future commuter rail link Downtown.					X
After COVID-19, will we see less commuting and more people working from or closer to home?				X	

ZEBULON TOMORROW

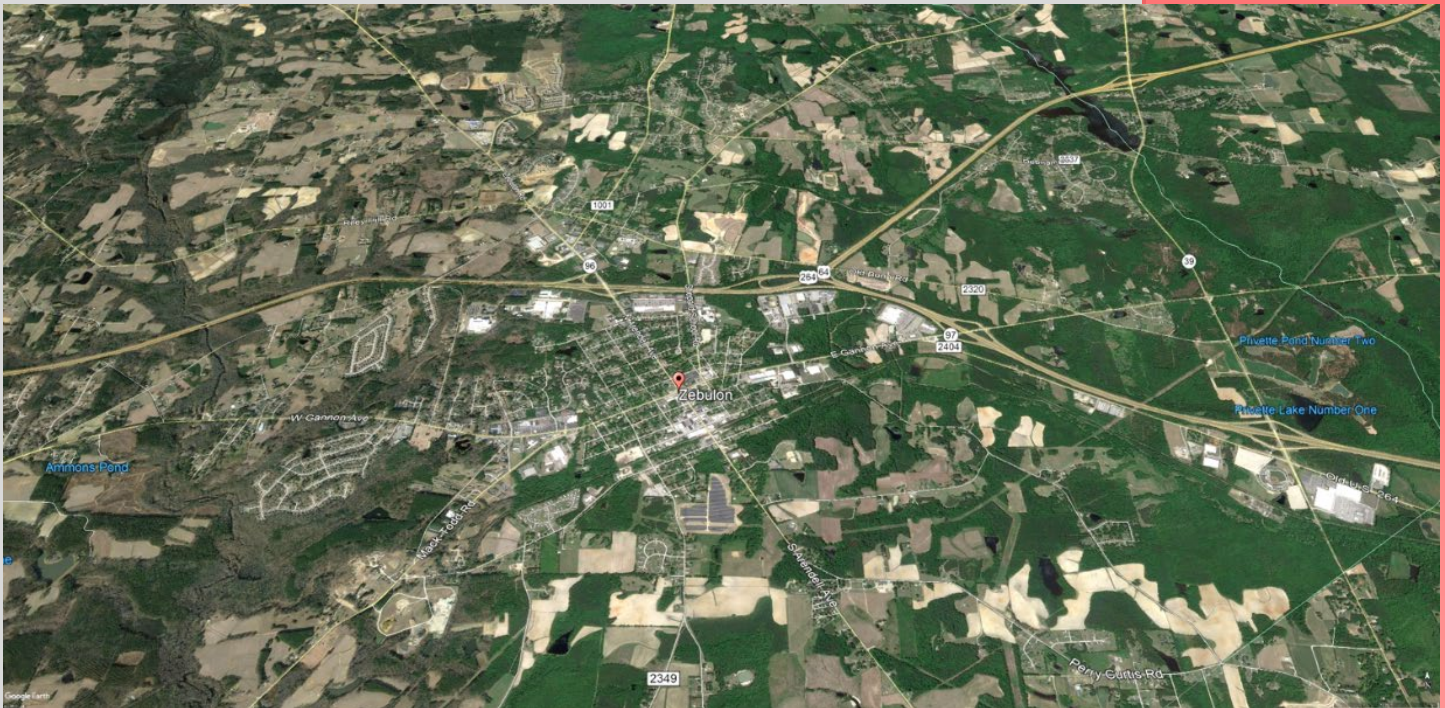
Land Use and Development



Introduction

This plan section establishes the necessary policy guidance to enable the Town of Zebulon to plan effectively for future development and redevelopment, and for ongoing stewardship of areas intended to remain much as they are. Sound land use planning is essential to ensure that the Town is prepared to serve anticipated public infrastructure and service needs, and also to create and maintain a desired community character.

Land use considerations are integrated with all other Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) components. For instance, the transportation network provides access to land, which, along with real estate market factors, influences the type and intensity of development that may occur. The capacity and condition of public utilities can dictate the location, amount and timing of development, as can economic development efforts by the Town and other partners. Similarly, proximity to parks and public facilities promotes public health and safety and affects the development potential of an area. Development character and site design shape community aesthetics and the perceptions held by area residents, tourists and those considering investment in Zebulon.



SOURCE: Google Earth.

Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Zebulon Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, a set of **10 Plan Priorities** was identified based on input from the Town's Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, other community stakeholders, the results of varied public engagement activities, and Town staff and the consultant team. Six of the 10 strategic items are most relevant to the Land Use and Development portion of the CLUP:

- Align land use and transportation planning.
- Sync the land use plan with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways (including through effective land use planning).
- Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
- Protect and reinforce community character.
- Build community – ONE community.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action section builds off of the Plan Priorities highlighted above. The actions below involve tangible steps that will, in the long run, lead to achievement of the goals in this Land Use and Development section in line with the plan's Guiding Principles.

Goals for Land Use and Development

1. A land use allocation and pattern that advances Zebulon's objectives of achieving greater housing variety, supporting its economic development and tax base needs, and creating a complete community with convenient resident access to schools, recreation, shopping and services.
2. Consistent character of land use within areas intended for particular character types, from rural and suburban through auto-oriented and urban along the community character spectrum.
3. Ongoing and effective collaboration between land use and transportation planning to ensure a well-connected community with adequate means and capacity to accommodate multiple forms of circulation between local destinations.

Policies for Land Use and Development

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters, and physical improvements, among others, Zebulon will:

- A. Appreciate residents' desire to maintain Zebulon's "small town feel," charm, identity and character as the town continues to grow, and learn lessons from other Wake County communities that already experienced significant growth and change.
- B. Accommodate a range of character settings within its planning area to address diverse market preferences, from large-lot "country" living to walkable, mixed-use living environments.
- C. Emphasize compatible intensities and character when evaluating applications involving more intensive and/or non-residential development near existing homes and neighborhoods.

- D. Promote land use outcomes that further community objectives for preventing traffic congestion, ensuring more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly design, and support expanded and viable public transit options.
- E. Ensure development design respects the area's environmental assets and resource base, including waterways and their riparian buffers, unique landscapes, and mature tree stands, especially where there is potential for greenway and/or blueway acquisition.
- F. Manage land use patterns near Zebulon's parks, greenways, trails and open spaces to: protect their ecological functions; prevent physical and other impactful encroachments; maintain public access; and preserve their overall quality and value – especially where public green spaces contribute to neighborhood character and enhance commercial settings.
- G. Ensure that all residential developments have multiple access points for public safety reasons and circulation options.
- H. Plan for destination development in the vicinity of Five County Stadium that builds toward a cohesive entertainment and hospitality district over time rather than a fragmented pattern of stand-alone developments.

Along with the broader-brush statements of policy above, the specific policies below are intended as a supplement to the Future Land Use and Character map, which provides only a visual depiction of desired land use patterns and sound development practices. Town officials and staff should use these statements as a guide and reference, particularly when making decisions regarding proposed development activity and/or changes in zoning classifications.

General

- G1: Land uses should not detract from the enjoyment or value of neighboring properties.
- G2: Potential negative land use effects (noise, odor, dust, excessive light, traffic, etc.) should be considered in development review/approval and mitigated.
- G3: Adequate transportation access and circulation should be provided for uses that generate large numbers of trips. Pedestrian and bicycle access should be addressed where appropriate.
- G4: Well-planned mixed-use projects are encouraged where compatible with nearby development.
- G5: Floodplain areas should not be encroached upon by development unless there is compliance with stringent floodplain management practices. These areas should be used for parks, recreation or related purposes, or for agricultural uses.
- G6: Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected, including wildlife habitat areas.
- G7: Community attractions that draw many external visitors should be in locations with good regional transportation access and visibility.

Residential

- R1: Residential areas should not be located next to heavy industrial areas.
- R2: Residential and commercial areas may be adjacent if separated by a buffer.
- R3: Schools, parks and community facilities should be located close to or within residential neighborhoods.
- R4: Houses should have direct access to local residential streets but not to collector streets or thoroughfares.



- R5: Houses should not be adjacent to freeways unless with substantial buffering.
- R6: New residential development should be buffered from thoroughfares and collector streets.
- R7: New residential developments should include adequate area for parks and recreation facilities, schools and places of worship.

Commercial

- C1: Neighborhood retail and service uses should be located at intersections of thoroughfares or collector streets or at the edge of logical neighborhood areas unless appropriately placed within a planned development.
- C2: Retail development should be clustered throughout the community and convenient to residential areas.
- C3: Buffers should separate retail and office uses from residential areas.
- C4: Office and professional uses should be compatible with nearby residential areas and other uses through appropriate building height limitations and adequate buffering and landscaping.
- C5: Low-intensity office and professional uses should provide a transition between more intense uses and residential areas.

Heavy Commercial

- H1: Commercial uses with more intensive operational or traffic characteristics should be located away from most residential areas.
- H2: Heavy commercial development should be concentrated in nodes at intersections and along major thoroughfares that are designed and constructed to accommodate higher traffic volumes.
- H3: Buffers should separate heavy commercial uses from any adjacent residential areas, especially where the commercial use involves visible display or outdoor storage of merchandise or materials.

Industrial

- I1: Heavy industrial development should not be directly adjacent to residential areas.
- I2: Industrial uses should be located in dedicated industrial development areas.
- I3: Industrial development should be separated from other uses by buffers.
- I4: Industrial development should have good access to thoroughfares and freeways.
- I5: Industrial development involving trucking operations should have good access to truck routes, designated hazardous material routes, and railroads as applicable.

Parks and Open Space

- P1: Parks should be evenly distributed throughout the town and include larger community parks and smaller neighborhood parks.
- P2: Pedestrian connections should be provided between parks, schools, residential areas and employment centers.
- P3: Parks are a desirable use for floodplain areas.
- P4: Parks and open space should be used to buffer incompatible land uses.
- P5: Natural features should be used as buffers or preserved open space between or around developed areas.

Community Facilities

- F1: Community facilities should be located in easily accessible areas.
- F2: Community facilities, depending on their scale and level of activity, should be located adjacent to thoroughfares or collector streets to accommodate traffic.
- F3: Community facilities should be well buffered from nearby residential areas.

Actions

Capital Investments

1. Add criteria to the Towns' capital improvements planning process to ensure that potential interaction between public investments and land use outcomes or evolution is considered when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

Programs and Initiatives

1. Grow Planning Department staffing so adequate resources are devoted both to development review functions plus special initiatives and plan implementation efforts.
2. Maintain fiscal impact analysis tools, customized to Zebulon, for evaluating the potential net benefits to Town government of specific land use scenarios and as an essential input to related decision-making.

Regulations and Standards

1. Review all aspects of the UDO, based on this new CLUP, to identify potential regulatory and/or standards updates.
2. Add new or amend current UDO provisions, as needed, that are directly linked to actions in other CLUP sections related to housing attainability, neighborhood conservation, business retention and attraction, leisure and lifestyle related land uses, transit support, a more pedestrian- and cycling-friendly community, and park and open space protection.

Partnerships and Coordination

1. Continue coordination with Wake County to ensure complementary implementation of this new CLUP and the County's PLANWake, plus ongoing interaction with other counties.
2. Continue coordination with Wendell, Knightdale and Rolesville on common planning interests and objectives.
3. Continue close coordination with the Wake County Public School System as one of the Town's essential partners for community building and maintaining school campuses as neighborhood anchors.

More Targeted Planning / Study

1. Coordinate future concurrent updates of the CLUP and Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan to ensure ongoing integration of land use and transportation analysis and decision-making.
2. Follow the completion of this town-wide CLUP with ongoing special area planning efforts, particularly for Downtown, key corridors (e.g., Arendell Avenue, Gannon Avenue, Proctor Street/Old Bunn Road), and the Five County Stadium area including the Old U.S. 264 corridor.

Partners

Partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Land Use and Development include:

- Area real estate and development community (property owners, developers, builders, land planners/designers/ engineers, etc.).
- Neighboring jurisdictions and Wake County.
- Wake County Public School System.
- Triangle J Council of Governments.
- Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.
- Triangle Land Conservancy.
- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce.



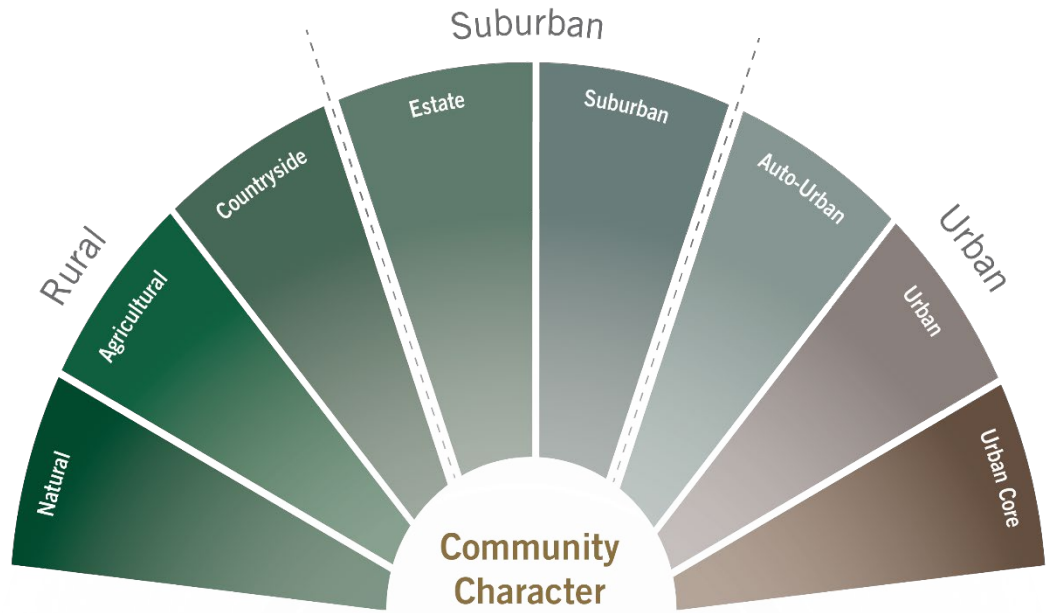
Community Character Framework for Land Use Planning

This updated CLUP clarifies Zebulon’s approach to land use planning and growth guidance so that it builds more on the concept of **community character**. This approach looks beyond the basic use of land – residential, commercial, industrial, etc. – as only one factor that determines the ultimate compatibility and quality of land development within neighborhoods, non-residential areas, and along roadway corridors. It also promotes the ongoing integrity of rural and open space areas intended for minimal or no development.

Character Emphasis

Community character accounts for the physical traits one can see in a neighborhood, on a busy roadway corridor or along a recreational trail or country lane which contribute to its “look and feel” relative to areas of the community with much different character.

Nearly any land use can occur in a range of settings within a community, from the most rural and suburban to the most urban, provided the use is designed to match the character of its surrounding area.



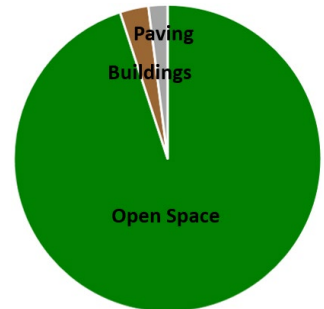
The community character approach to evaluating and planning for land use emphasizes the variation in physical conditions experienced along a spectrum from natural and rural landscapes at the edges of a community to its most urbanized environments, usually found in a core downtown area. A character-based approach focuses on the intensity and design of land uses, which encompasses:

- The density and layout of residential development;
- The scale and form of non-residential development; and
- The coverage of land surfaces by buildings and paving relative to the extent of open space and natural vegetation or landscaping.

How the automobile is accommodated is a key factor in distinguishing character types including how public streets are designed, how parking is provided, and how buildings and paved areas are arranged on sites. Among the three major character classes:

- **Rural** character areas have wide open spaces where structures and paved surfaces occupy only a minimal portion of the landscape – or none at all in pristine or preserved natural areas.

Example Proportions of Rural Character Elements



- **Suburban** character areas have noticeably less intensive use of land, with open and green spaces balancing – or, in Estate areas, exceeding – the extent of land covered by structures and paved surfaces.
- **Urban** character areas exhibit the greatest pedestrian orientation, through a more compact scale and “architectural enclosure” of streets by buildings situated close to front property lines and sidewalks.

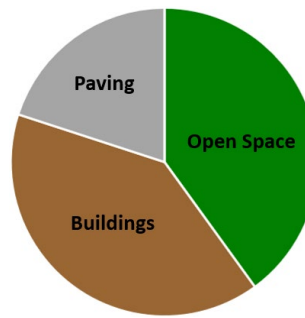
Within the Urban class, **Auto Urban** character areas are a particular planning challenge as they are designed mainly to accommodate automobile circulation and parking. Land cover by buildings and paved surfaces is similar to **Urban** areas, but without the walkability emphasis.

The community character approach can be applied to the entire array of land use types, and regardless of whether a site is in private ownership or owned and developed by a government agency for public purposes. Examples include:

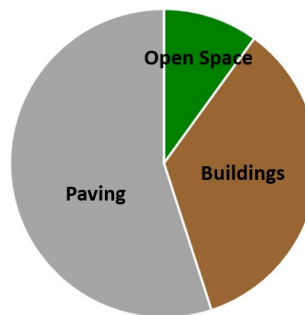
- A single-family home situated on a relatively large lot, with many mature trees and substantial separation from neighboring homes (Suburban or Estate character), versus a single-family bungalow on a small, narrow lot with rear-alley access and minimal yard space or vegetation (Urban neighborhood character).
- Storefront shops and small cafes in a walkable, neighborhood commercial setting (Urban character) versus “big box” stores and associated pad-site restaurants and retailers in a large-scale shopping center with extensive surface parking and minimal landscaping (Auto Urban character).
- A master-planned business park in a campus-like setting (Suburban character) versus an office building on a site dominated by surface parking (Auto Urban character) or a more vertical building in a downtown setting with ground-level retail uses and a nearby parking garage (Urban character).
- A public library, community center or neighborhood park that is designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential area (whether Suburban or Urban in character) versus a municipal public works maintenance and storage site or a wastewater treatment plant that is as intensive as most private industrial sites in a community.

Maintaining and enhancing desired character is a central aim – and challenge – of implementing community plans amid constant change. A community character approach allows the formulation of standards within the Town’s development regulations to achieve the desired character in newly developing areas, protect and enhance it in redevelopment and infill areas, and to ensure a rural atmosphere is maintained in areas where this character type is deemed most appropriate for the long term. Character-focused categories on a municipality’s future land use plan and character-

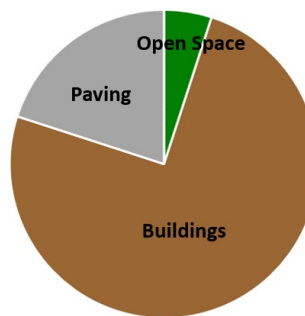
Example Proportions of Suburban Character Elements



Example Proportions of Auto Urban Character Elements



Example Proportions of Urban Character Elements



Design and Character

Aesthetic enhancements such as architectural design, landscaping and screening, signage standards, and site amenities also contribute to development appearance. But these factors can and should vary with the area character, which as defined here involves the interplay between buildings, paved surfaces and unbuilt areas. For example, in a downtown core like Zebulon’s relative to suburban areas, landscaping shifts more to the public realm given minimal building setbacks and yard areas



oriented districts on its zoning map better portray the intended on-the-ground outcomes for land use and development. This offers assurance to neighboring property owners, a smoother path to approvals for development applicants, and more beneficial outcomes for the entire community.

Future Land Use and Character

Shown on the **Future Land Use and Character map** is the general pattern of uses anticipated and/or desired in the years ahead, and the character contexts in which uses occur. The map, along with the text descriptions in this section, indicate the use that is expected to predominate in areas where land is currently undeveloped or, in previously developed areas, based on what is already on the ground and will likely remain or possibly evolve. Such transitions in use can occur through redevelopment of previously built sites, "infill" construction on a vacant parcel amid existing built sites, or repurposing of an existing structure for another use without significant site changes.

Along with the predominant use types, other complementary uses will also remain or may emerge in particular areas of the community (e.g., small-scale, neighborhood-oriented retail and service uses within or near the edges of largely residential areas). Certain uses can be located amid other predominant use types, such as public facilities and places of worship within predominantly residential areas. Mixing uses on sites is common in downtowns (e.g., upper floor office or residential above ground-floor retail) and may occur elsewhere in a community as the market accommodates and zoning allows.

Some uses are highly market-driven, with their timing and particular location dictated by the extent and pace of other types of development. This includes the typical pattern of retail uses locating near new residential "rooftops" and often at key roadway intersections. The location and extent of various forms of residential development can also be difficult to predict amid broader housing market cycles and regional needs, combined with developer areas of expertise and interest in bringing single-family or multi-family products to market.

Map Categories

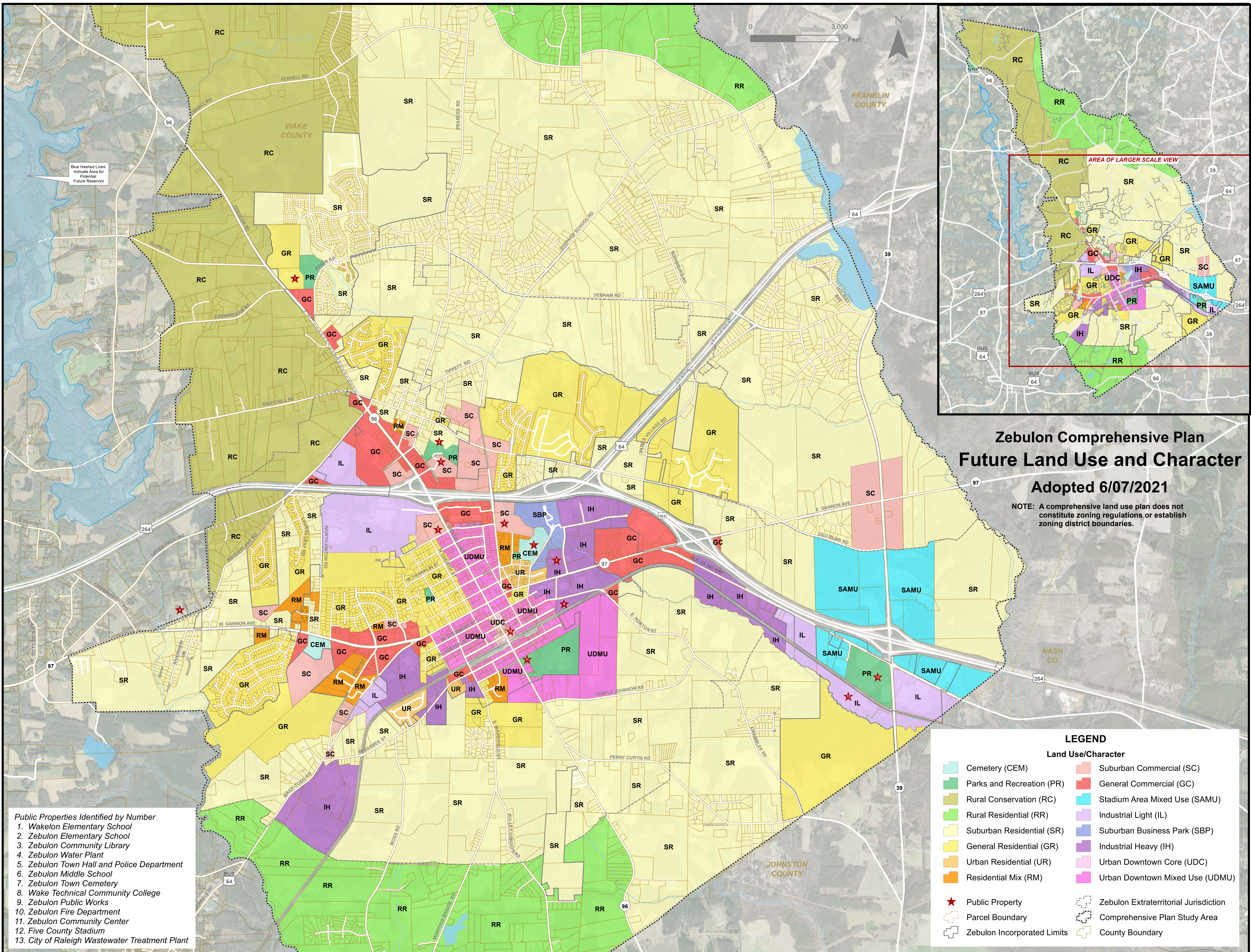
The Future Land Use and Character map shows areas within Zebulon designated in 15 categories that address both use and character:

- Parks and Recreation
- Rural Conservation
- Rural Residential
- Suburban Residential
- General Residential
- Urban Residential
- Residential Mix
- Suburban Commercial
- General Commercial
- Stadium Area Mixed Use
- Industrial Light
- Suburban Business Park
- Industrial Heavy
- Urban Downtown Core
- Urban Downtown Mixed Use

For context, the map also shows locations of significant public properties and facilities, along with a privately-owned cemetery within the town.

The following descriptions indicate the anticipated principal uses in each category, plus the intended character of the areas in which the land uses occur, abut or mix. Public and institutional uses, including public parks, commonly occur in all of these areas and should match the character.





**Zebulon Comprehensive Plan
Future Land Use and Character
Adopted 6/07/2021**

NOTE: A comprehensive land use plan does not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries.

- Public Properties Identified by Number**
1. Wakelon Elementary School
 2. Zebulon Elementary School
 3. Zebulon Community Library
 4. Zebulon Water Plant
 5. Zebulon Town Hall and Police Department
 6. Zebulon Middle School
 7. Zebulon Town Cemetery
 8. Wake Technical Community College
 9. Zebulon Public Works
 10. Zebulon Fire Department
 11. Zebulon Community Center
 12. Five County Stadium
 13. City of Raleigh Wastewater Treatment Plant

LEGEND

Land Use/Character	
	Cemetery (CEM)
	Parks and Recreation (PR)
	Rural Conservation (RC)
	Rural Residential (RR)
	Suburban Residential (SR)
	General Residential (GR)
	Urban Residential (UR)
	Residential Mix (RM)
	Suburban Commercial (SC)
	General Commercial (GC)
	Stadium Area Mixed Use (SAMU)
	Industrial Light (IL)
	Suburban Business Park (SBP)
	Industrial Heavy (IH)
	Urban Downtown Core (UDC)
	Urban Downtown Mixed Use (UDMU)
	Public Property
	Parcel Boundary
	Zebulon Incorporated Limits
	Zebulon Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
	Comprehensive Plan Study Area
	County Boundary

Specific standards for land development based on these designations are articulated through the Town’s implementing regulations (zoning, subdivision, etc.) as they currently exist within the Unified Development Ordinance and may be further amended over time based on this planning guidance.

Land Use Planning versus Zoning

The side-by-side comparison below highlights the distinct purposes and uses of a future land use map relative to a zoning map. The Town’s development regulations are among the primary tools for implementing the plan. The zoning and subdivision regulations, in particular, can play a significant role in establishing and protecting the physical character of the community. These regulations delineate land use districts and the uses permitted within them, together with standards for buildings and site improvements. As a result, the zoning and subdivision regulations largely direct development outcomes. Although the plan and future land use map provide only general planning guidance, they become the basis for updates of the zoning and subdivision regulations and the official zoning map.

Aspect	Future Land Use Map	Zoning Map
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlook for future use of land and character of particular areas of the community. • Macro level, showing generalized development patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basis for applying different land use regulations and development standards in different areas of the community (“zones”). • Micro level, with an area- and site-specific focus.
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for Town’s zoning map and related decisions (zone change requests, variance applications, etc.). • Baseline for monitoring consistency of actions and decisions with the CLUP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulating development as it is proposed or as sites are positioned for the future with appropriate zoning (by the property owner or the Town).
Inputs and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing land use in the community. • The locational aspects of community planning priorities involving housing, economic development, infrastructure, parks and recreation, public facilities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLUP and future land use map for general guidance. • Zoning decisions that differ substantially from the general development pattern depicted on the future land use map will indicate the need for some map adjustments during the next plan update.



Parks and Recreation

This designation includes the locations of government-owned and maintained public parks, designed for both active and passive recreational enjoyment. Some sites are developed with a variety of facilities and amenities while others have limited improvements and will be developed over time or remain in a more natural state.

Primary Land Use Types

- Public parks, greenways, trails and open space.
- Joint Town-school park areas.
- Public recreation areas and facilities, both outdoor and indoor.
- Private recreation areas and facilities, both outdoor and indoor.



Zebulon Elementary School Park and vicinity.

Where on the Map

Five of the Town's public park sites are shown in green (along with the Town-managed Little River Park on the far west side), plus the Zebulon Community Center along N.C. 96 on the south side of Downtown and the Five County Stadium site in east Zebulon. Within the larger planning area, also Mitchell Mill State Natural Area along N.C. 96 north.

Characteristics

- As with any public facility, the design, intensity of development, and planned uses/activities within parks should match area character (e.g., public squares/plazas in urban downtowns relative to recreational play and sports-focused parks in suburban areas and nature-oriented parks for passive recreation in estate and rural areas).
- Public parkland theoretically will remain so in perpetuity compared to other public property and buildings that can transition to private ownership at some point.

Rural Conservation

This designation is very similar to the next category, Rural Residential, with the added, overriding objective of long-term watershed protection near an area designated for future reservoir construction along the Little River.

Primary Land Use Types

- Agricultural uses.
- Scattered residential homesteads and clustered subdivision lots amid open space.
- Limited non-residential uses consistent with the Little River Reservoir Water Supply Watershed Protection Interlocal Agreement (ILA) between Wake County, the City of Raleigh and the towns of Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon.



Minimally developed area of northwest Zebulon, just north of U.S. 64/264 and between the Little River and N.C. 96.

Characteristics

- Rural character from wide open landscapes, with minimal sense of enclosure and views to the horizon unbroken by buildings in most places.
- Scattered residential development on relatively large acreages, resulting in very high open space ratios and very low site coverage, and providing greater detachment from neighboring dwellings than in Estate Residential character areas.
- Some areas closer to an Estate Residential character, with homes in a subdivision layout around public (or sometimes private) streets, but typically with one-acre or larger lot sizes that still provide substantial openness and separation between individual dwellings.
- Potential for conservation developments that further concentrate the overall development footprint through cluster designs, with increased open space set-aside to maintain the overall rural character and buffer adjacent properties.
- Limitations on impervious surfaces for the water quality protection purpose, along with preservation of rural character.

Where on the Map

Areas of northwest Zebulon just south of and mostly north of U.S. 64/264, continuing across N.C. 96 and well north to the top of the designated planning area.

Rural Residential

This designation consists of lands that are sparsely developed, with mainly agricultural activity and very low-density residential as the primary uses along with more natural areas. This category provides its residents with the choice of relative seclusion within the countryside and away from a more developed setting. Some jurisdictions have limited rural character areas within their corporate limits, except in areas that have been annexed for eventual development or that are not suitable for future development. Other municipalities intentionally preserve rural character through the protections afforded by agricultural zoning. Floodplain areas may also retain their rural character over the long term given their unsuitability for any intensive land development.

Primary Land Use Types

- Agricultural uses.
- Scattered residential homesteads and clustered subdivision lots amid open space.



South edge of planning area near Little River and the Wake County line.

Where on the Map

At the northern and southern edges of the larger planning area around Zebulon, aside from areas in the Rural Conservation category.

Characteristics

- Rural character from wide open landscapes, with minimal sense of enclosure and views to the horizon unbroken by buildings in most places.
- Scattered residential development on relatively large acreages, resulting in very high open space ratios and very low site coverage, and providing greater detachment from neighboring dwellings than in Estate Residential character areas.
- Typically no (or limited) centralized water or sanitary sewer service available. Also much greater reliance on natural drainage systems, except where altered significantly by agricultural operations or regional storm water management projects and/or infrastructure.
- Potential for conservation developments that further concentrate the overall development footprint through cluster designs, with increased open space set-aside to maintain the overall rural character and buffer adjacent properties. This may also make alternative community wastewater treatment methods feasible to eliminate the need for individual on-site septic systems.

Suburban Residential

This designation is for residential areas where suburban character is established and preserved by achieving a balance between buildings and other site improvements relative to the degree of open space maintained within the neighborhood. The openness may be found in relatively large yard areas on individual lots and between homes and/or in common green spaces or water features. This distinguishes suburban character areas from more auto-oriented areas where site coverage in the form of dwellings, driveways and other paved surfaces predominates over open space.

Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Planned developments that integrate other housing types (e.g., attached residential such as patio homes or townhomes), with increased open space to preserve an overall suburban character.
- Golf course subdivisions.



Subdivisions around Pippin Road in north Zebulon.

Characteristics

- Less noticeable accommodation of the automobile compared to more intensive auto-oriented areas, especially where driveways are on the side of homes rather than occupying a portion of the front yard and where garages are situated to the side or rear of the dwelling.
- A larger baseline minimum lot size in a Suburban Residential zoning district allows for deeper front yards and building setbacks and greater side separation between homes.
- Character-based zoning and development standards can also discourage overly standardized subdivision designs and promote conservation design by allowing for smaller lot sizes than the baseline in exchange for greater open space set-aside. This approach enables some viable use of sites partially constrained by topography or other factors. It also provides flexibility for additional housing forms that blend with the area's suburban residential character through additional on-site open space and perimeter buffering where differing housing types and densities are adjacent.
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) relative to concentrated storm water conveyance in auto-oriented areas.

Where on the Map

Extensive coverage on the map, surrounding much of the core area of Zebulon in most directions, and all the way to the edge of the larger planning area in some locations.

General Residential

This designation covers areas of primarily single-family detached residential use where accommodation of the automobile is more visually dominant relative to more prominent green space in Suburban Residential character areas. This is typically due to relatively smaller and narrower lots, and often with limited open space set-asides or amenities for residents.

Primary Land Use Types

- Detached residential dwellings.
- Other attached residential forms (e.g., duplexes and multiplexes, patio homes, townhomes, multi-family, etc.) as permitted by zoning.
- Planned developments, potentially with a mix of housing types and varying densities, subject to compatibility and open space standards.



Shepard's Point subdivision along Old Bunn Road, adjacent to the Hamilton Acres subdivision to the east.

Where on the Map

In some central areas of Zebulon, such as west of N.C. 96 and north of West. Gannon Avenue. Also provides a transition to Suburban Residential areas in other locations, such as north of U.S. 64/264 and southwest of town.

Characteristics

- Residential neighborhoods with less openness and separation between dwellings compared to Suburban Residential areas.
- Auto Urban character, especially where driveways and front-loading garages dominate the front yards and front facades of homes. This can be offset by landscaping, "anti-monotony" architectural standards, and limitations on "cookie cutter" subdivision layouts characterized by straight streets and uniform lot sizes and arrangement.
- Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses may emerge over time and should be encouraged on corner sites or other locations at the edge of predominantly residential areas, at a scale and with a site design that is compatible with nearby residential uses.

Urban Residential

This designation is for areas usually close to a downtown, where site coverage by structures is the highest of any residential area in the community. Where detached single-family dwellings are included, this is usually because of relatively small and often narrow and shallow lots, bringing the homes closer to the street and sidewalk and to each other. Urban character is especially reinforced where most blocks have rear alley access to properties, at least decreasing the possibility of an auto-oriented street scene where rear garages or parking are still widely used versus front driveways. Attached housing forms are also designed with limited on-site open space and surface parking, sometimes with greater reliance on on-street parking and/or an on-site parking structure.

Design of the public realm should also reinforce the urban character, typically with a grid street pattern, sidewalks on both sides of all streets, and pocket parks or other common open space. Along with bike lane improvements in some locations, such areas should be the most conducive for pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair circulation within the neighborhood and to nearby shopping, parks, schools, and other destinations.

Primary Land Use Types

- Both detached and attached residential types (e.g., duplexes and multiplexes, townhomes, brownstones, multi-family, ownership condominiums, etc.).
- Mixed housing forms, on single sites or within close proximity.
- Neighborhood-oriented commercial retail and service uses where zoning allows.



Central Zebulon neighborhood between Shepard School Road and Triangle East Business Park to the east.

Characteristics

- Often a focus area for infill and redevelopment activity within the community, which may require customized development and design standards to ensure compatibility with the established or intended area character. This may include controlling the scale of development where larger sites have been created through assembly of smaller parcels.
- May require development and design standards to avoid encroachment of uses designed with an auto-oriented character more suited to other areas of the community.

Where on the Map

Along with the neighborhood highlighted above, two other locations near Downtown along West Barbee Street.

Residential Mix

This designation appears in various map locations where a mix of housing types in close proximity, from single-family detached to duplexes, other attached housing types, and multi-family apartment buildings is permissible and encouraged. Providing for more areas with varied attainable housing will make Zebulon more livable for residents who are at or below the median income range. Areas with residential variety can also mesh well with efforts to revitalize and/or make corridors more conducive for walking and cycling, along with supporting potential transit service.

Primary Land Use Types

- Both detached and attached residential types (e.g., duplexes and multiplexes, townhomes, brownstones, multi-family, ownership condominiums, etc.).
- Mixed housing forms, on single sites or within close proximity.
- Neighborhood-oriented commercial retail and service uses where zoning allows.



Area of the Maples Apartments along Primrose Place in south Zebulon.

Where on the Map

Found in various areas across the community, sometimes as a transition between non-residential uses and areas of mostly single-family detached residential.

Characteristics

- As with the diversity of housing types, character may also vary within such areas and may tend toward auto-oriented character where surface parking is especially needed (i.e., for multi-family housing).

Suburban Commercial

This designation involves commercial developments, whether at a neighborhood-focused or larger scale, that stand apart from most auto-oriented contemporary development. The suburban character is achieved through lesser coverage of the site with buildings and especially paved areas. Preservation of trees or other natural site features, along with generous landscaping, can also move a site into the suburban range of the community character spectrum relative to sites where "gray" paved surfaces predominate over "green" and open spaces.

Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the site, and with potential incorporation of residential use as zoning allows.
- Office use, involving large and/or multi-story buildings or small-scale offices depending on the site, which may involve a medical or technology/research focus.
- Planned development to accommodate custom site designs or mixing of uses in a suburban character setting.



Suburban character of the State Employees Credit Union site relative to more auto-oriented site development across N.C. 96.

Characteristics

- Suburban character primarily from reduced site coverage relative to most auto-oriented commercial development. May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve a suburban character (e.g., car washes).
- Especially at key community entries and along high-profile roadway corridors, may also involve other criteria to yield less intensive and more attractive development outcomes relative to auto-oriented areas, including higher standards for landscaping (along street frontages and within parking areas), signs, and building design.
- Near residential properties and areas, the permitted scale and intensity of non-residential uses should be limited to ensure compatibility (including adequate buffering/screening, criteria for placement and orientation of buildings and parking areas, height limits, and residential-in-appearance architectural standards).
- More opportunity for natural and/or swale drainage (and storm water retention/absorption) versus concentrated storm water conveyance in auto-oriented areas.

Where on the Map

Various locations but typically adjacent to Suburban Residential areas, plus other sites exhibiting a distinctly green appearance relative to auto-oriented commercial areas.

General Commercial

This designation is for properties in commercial retail, office and service uses, primarily along portions of major roadway corridors within the community for high visibility and accessibility, but also in other locations to accommodate smaller-scale and neighborhood-focused businesses.

Primary Land Use Types

- Commercial centers along major roadways, with a range of uses including those on high-profile pad sites along the roadway frontage.
- "Big-box" commercial stores (e.g., grocery, appliances, clothing, etc.).
- Restaurant chains including various "fast food" and casual dining establishments.
- Automobile service related enterprises (e.g., gas stations, automobile service/repair, car washes).
- Offices and services.
- Hotels and motels, and recreational vehicle parks where zoning allows.
- Mixed-use developments, with potential incorporation of residential use as zoning allows.



Cumulative Auto Urban character outcome along West Gannon Avenue near the Pony Road and Mack-Todd Road (Business U.S. 64) intersections.

Where on the Map

Near several U.S. 64/264 interchanges, elsewhere along N.C. 96 north, and also concentrated along a portion of West Gannon Avenue.

Characteristics

- Commercial areas with significant portions of development sites devoted to vehicular access drives, circulation routes, surface parking, and loading/delivery areas, making pavement the most prominent visual feature. This can be offset by reduced site coverage and enhanced landscaping, building design, and well-designed signage.
- Buildings typically set back toward rear of site to accommodate expansive parking areas in front, closest to passing traffic, often resulting in less emphasis on architectural design.
- Development desire to maximize signage to capitalize on site visibility to passing traffic.
- Often not conducive for access or on-site circulation by pedestrians or cyclists.

Stadium Area Mixed Use

This designation is for a unique land use – Five County Stadium – and its vicinity, which warrants special consideration. Such consideration is necessary both to: (1) protect a major community asset and highly-valued use; and (2) buffer and protect nearby properties from potential adverse effects given the nature and operational aspects of the special use. In the case of Five County Stadium, the concern mainly involves peak arriving and departing traffic flows, plus potential noise considerations during special events held at the stadium (e.g., concerts, fireworks, etc.). Otherwise, the stadium is mostly surrounded by land zoned for non-residential uses, with a food distribution facility and a wastewater treatment plant already abutting the stadium site on the east and south, respectively.

Primary Land Use Types

- Stadium and other public gathering facilities (e.g., conference center, arena).
- Commercial retail and service uses, at varying scales and development intensities depending on the site.
- Mixed-use developments.
- Hotels and motels, and recreational vehicle parks where zoning allows.
- Restaurants.
- Public recreation areas and facilities, both outdoor and indoor.



Suburban character of the State Employees Credit Union site relative to more auto-oriented site development across N.C. 96.

Characteristics

- As elaborated on in the Economic Development section of this CLUP, the Five County Stadium vicinity is envisioned to develop as a destination area with hospitality, entertainment and recreational offerings. And preferably with a high degree of master planning and coordinated development both around the stadium site and on large vacant properties to the north across U.S. 264.
- A walkable, mixed-use environment is also sought to bolster the area's attractiveness for both residents and visitors, along with an array of activities that keep the area active even when the stadium is not hosting a game or event. This will require avoidance and mitigation of potential auto-oriented character in site design and development.

Where on the Map

Vicinity of Five County Stadium in far east Zebulon, including properties on the north side of the U.S. 264-N.C. 39 interchange.



Industrial Light

The industrial designations accommodate uses that are intensive in terms of how “light” industrial and especially “heavy” industrial activities can affect other nearby properties. This can include factors such as noise, vibration, light/glare, odor, truck traffic, and hours of operation, as well as the sheer scale and intensity of some heavy industrial uses. Depending on the standards applied through development regulations, an industrial area can allow for a wide range of uses, from office/warehouse to wholesale, product assembly, and manufacturing.

Primary Land Use Types

- Warehousing and distribution.
- Light manufacturing and/or processing/assembly.
- Office use accessory to a primary industrial use.
- Retail sales and services especially for area businesses and workers, and heavy commercial uses (e.g., building supply, recreational vehicle/manufactured home sales, etc.).



GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) property with large-scale buildings and associated surface parking.

Where on the Map

Along with the GSK property in west central Zebulon, also areas of light industrial focus in southwest Zebulon and in the vicinity of Five County Stadium on the east side.

Characteristics

- Typically auto-oriented character due to the extent of site coverage by buildings and paved areas.
- Potential for outdoor activity and storage, which should be screened where visible from public ways and residential areas.
- May involve significant truck traffic or direct rail service.
- On-site moving and construction equipment in some cases.
- Potential for environmental impacts that may affect the proximity and type of adjacent uses, including particulate emissions, noise, vibrations, smells, etc., plus the risk of fire or explosion depending on the materials handled or processed.
- Certain intensive publicly-owned uses are best located within industrial areas (e.g., public works facilities, fleet maintenance, treatment plants, fire training, etc.).

Suburban Business Park

This designation is often a subset of Suburban Commercial in communities that aim to promote high-quality office and/or light industrial development as an economic development magnet or as part of overall efforts to set a high bar for non-residential development. Zoning standards can promote master-planned, campus-style business environments.

Primary Land Use Types

- Office uses.
- Light industrial uses (including warehousing/distribution), well screened and in buildings with enhanced architectural design.
- Research and technology uses.
- Commercial retail and service uses secondary to the area's primary business focus, to serve local workers and visitors.
- Potential incorporation of residential use as zoning allows.



Triangle East Business Park, which accommodates both industrial activity and the East Wake Academy campus.

Characteristics

- Suburban character, typically in a campus-style setting featuring reduced site coverage and increased open space, together with enhanced building design.
- Typically a minimum open space ratio of 30 percent, which still allows for a sizable cumulative building footprint since most such developments involve large sites.
- Extensive landscaping of the business park perimeter, and special streetscaping and design treatments at entries, key intersections, and internal focal points.
- Development outcomes often controlled by private covenants and restrictions that exceed municipal ordinances and development standards.
- Intended to create a highly attractive business investment environment.

Where on the Map

This designation appears only on the current East Wake Academy site, as an indication of a desirable future use appropriate to the property should the Academy ever relocate

Industrial Heavy

The industrial designations accommodate uses that are intensive in terms of how “light” industrial and especially “heavy” industrial activities can affect other nearby properties. This can include factors such as noise, vibration, light/glare, odor, truck traffic, and hours of operation, as well as the sheer scale and intensity of some heavy industrial uses. Depending on the standards applied through development regulations, an industrial area can allow for a wide range of uses, from office/warehouse to wholesale, product assembly, and manufacturing.

Primary Land Use Types

- Heavy manufacturing.
- Rail-oriented industrial facilities.
- Office use accessory to a primary industrial use.



Triangle East Business Park, which accommodates industrial facilities along freeway right-of-way and separated from any residential areas.

Where on the Map

Along with industrial facilities in Triangle East Business Park and nearby sites south of East Gannon Avenue, also areas of heavy industrial focus along the Carolina Coastal Railway line in southeast and southwest Zebulon.

Characteristics

- Outdoor activity and large visible structures and storage facilities, which may be difficult to screen from neighboring properties aside from fencing, landscaping and/or berms along site perimeters.
- Higher volume of truck traffic, and sometimes direct rail service.
- On-site large-scale moving and construction equipment in some cases.
- Environmental impacts expected that will affect the proximity and type of adjacent uses, including particulate emissions, noise, vibrations, lighting/glare, smells, etc., plus the risk of fire or explosion depending on the materials handled or processed.
- Often operate “24/7,” which also requires adequate separation and buffering from any nearby residential areas.

Urban Downtown Core

This designation often involves the most intensively developed area of a community in terms of the greatest coverage of sites with buildings and the least amount of private development area devoted to off-street parking and landscaped open space. Instead, most parking is accommodated on-street and/or within public parking areas. This enables most streets and other public spaces to be framed by buildings that abut the public sidewalk with zero or minimal front setbacks, creating “architectural enclosure” versus the progressively more open feel in other character areas (auto-oriented, suburban, etc.). These elements, along with a predominance of mixed uses, makes this area of a town the most conducive for pedestrian activity and interaction. Public plazas and pocket parks can provide green space amid the urban environment and a place to gather and host community events, along with periodic street closures.

Primary Land Use Types

- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual structures, including potential for residential space above commercial retail, service or office uses, plus live/work units.
- Entertainment and cultural uses (e.g., restaurants, pubs, live music venues, theater, cinema, art galleries, museums, etc.).
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones).
- Potential for parking structures and limited public or commercial surface parking areas.



Downtown Zebulon.

Characteristics

- Multi-story structures encouraged (or required) to bolster urban character, encourage vertical mixed use, promote retail viability, and support transit ridership.
- Mostly on-street parking and minimal off-street surface parking (until the urban character begins to give way to auto-oriented site design in transition areas around downtowns).
- Streetscape enhancements in public ways usually emphasized given limited area for private on-site landscaping relative to other character areas.
- May exclude some auto-oriented uses that cannot achieve an urban character.
- Public/institutional uses should be designed to match the urban character.

Where on the Map

Core area of Downtown, centered on Arendell Avenue (N.C. 96), from just south of Gannon Avenue to the railroad tracks south of Vance Street.

- Alleys and rear-access garages can reinforce urban character on blocks with attached or detached residential dwellings.
- Often the only place in a community where multi-level parking structures may make sense and be financially viable.

Urban Downtown Mixed Use

This designation is for areas around an urban downtown core that still accommodate a mix of uses but at a lesser intensity than in the core area. The mixed-use area typically provides an eventual transition to other nearby neighborhoods and roadway corridors that are more uniform as areas primarily for single-family detached residential uses and commercial uses, respectively. The transition area is often supportive of the downtown core by accommodating complementary uses (e.g., professional offices, restaurants, art galleries and other cultural venues, varied residential options, etc.) and retaining a walkability more characteristic of urban character areas than auto-oriented areas. The vicinity around a core downtown usually also contains some of the community's most historic sites and districts, with historic homes still in residential use and others sometimes converted to shops, cafes, offices and other uses.

Primary Land Use Types

- Mixed uses, on single sites and within individual structures, including live/work units.
- Commercial retail and services, and office uses.
- Attached residential types (e.g., townhomes, brownstones, multi-family).
- Detached residential, often on relatively small and/or narrow lots in older neighborhoods.



Areas of central Zebulon immediately east, north and west of the Downtown core.

Where on the Map

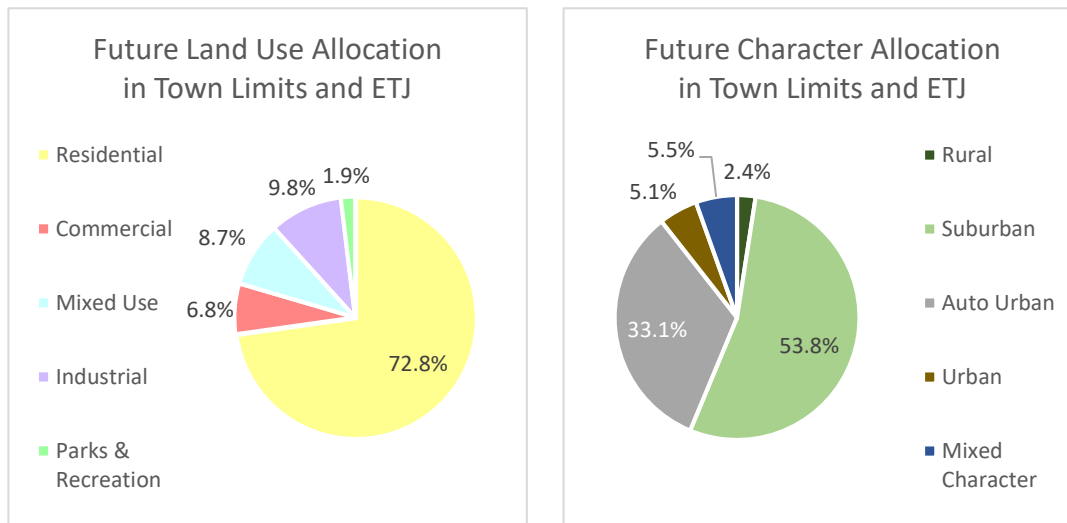
Central Zebulon, from the Downtown area north to Town Hall, plus future development areas wrapping around Community Park.

Characteristics

- Often a focus area for infill and redevelopment activity within the community, which may require customized development and design standards to ensure compatibility with the established or intended area character. This may include controlling the scale of development where larger sites have been created through assembly of smaller parcels.
- Where a more urban and walkable character is desired, may require development and design standards to avoid encroachment of uses designed with an auto-oriented character more suited to other areas of the community.

Land Use Quantities on Map

Tallied in the table below are the estimated acres within each designation shown on the Future Land Use and Character Map. In more general terms, the map reflects these approximate use and character allocations within the current town limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ):



It should be noted that the extent of area initially designated for residential use will ultimately be reduced. Commercial nodes will emerge amid neighborhood areas, and some land will be set aside for recreational use, preserved open space and/or public purposes and facilities (e.g., drainage).

Map Category	Town		Extraterritorial Jurisdiction		Planning Area	
	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total	Acres	% of Total
Parks and Recreation	124.7	3.9%	0.0	0.0%	28.2	0.2%
Rural Conservation	0.4	0.0%	194.5	4.1%	4,949.4	36.5%
Rural Residential	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	4,102.9	30.2%
Suburban Residential	528.1	16.4%	3,367.0	70.6%	4,375.2	32.2%
General Residential	1,278.9	39.8%	290.3	6.1%	0.9	0.0%
Urban Residential	44.3	1.4%	0.8	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Residential Mix	88.3	2.7%	14.4	0.3%	0.0	0.0%
Suburban Commercial	107.7	3.4%	99.4	2.1%	118.0	0.9%
General Commercial	251.6	7.8%	81.8	1.7%	0.0	0.0%
Stadium Area Mixed Use	47.8	1.5%	284.6	6.0%	0.0	0.0%
Industrial Light	233.5	7.3%	96.6	2.0%	0.0	0.0%
Suburban Business Park	41.4	1.3%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Industrial Heavy	214.2	6.7%	197.2	4.1%	0.0	0.0%
Urban Downtown Core	7.3	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Urban Downtown Mixed Use	217.0	6.8%	141.3	3.0%	0.0	0.0%

NOTE: Cemeteries account for 0.9% of the area within the town limits (27.7 acres).



Current Zoning

The table below provides a comparison between the land use and character designations described above and the current zoning districts in Zebulon’s UDO.

Land Use and Character Designation	Most Closely Associated Zoning District
Parks and Recreation	All districts except Heavy Industrial (HI)
Rural Conservation	Residential Watershed (R1)
Rural Residential	Residential Watershed (R1)
Suburban Residential	Residential Suburban (R2)
General Residential	Residential Neighborhood (R4)
Urban Residential	Residential Urban (R6)
Residential Mix	Residential Multi-Family (RMF)
Suburban Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial (NC)
General Commercial	General Commercial (GC) Heavy Commercial (HC)
Stadium Area Mixed Use	Commercial Amusement - Special Use General Commercial (GC)
Industrial Light	Light Industrial (LI)
Suburban Business Park	Campus Industrial (CI) Office and Institutional (OI)
Industrial Heavy	Heavy Industrial (HI)
Urban Downtown Core	Downtown Core (DTC)
Urban Downtown Mixed Use	Downtown Periphery (DTP)

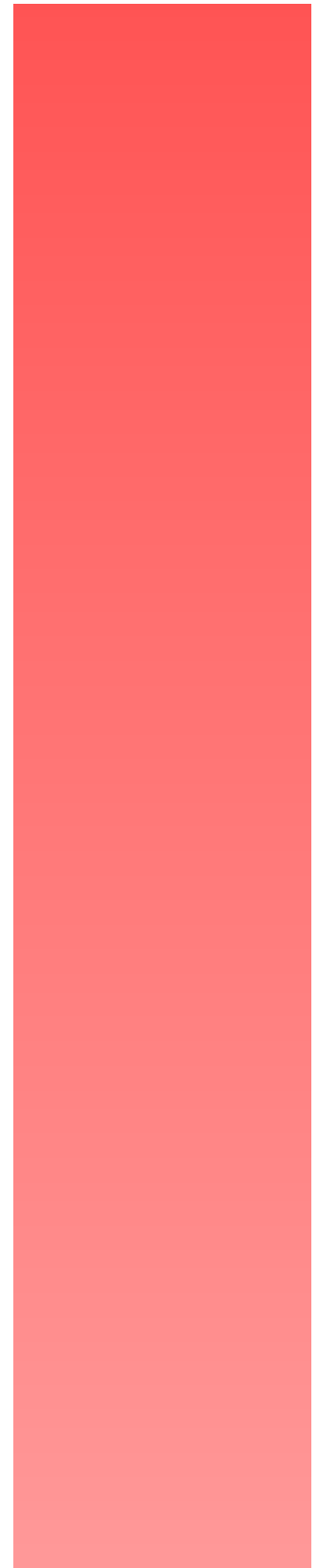
Criteria for Proposed Amendments to the Future Land Use and Character Map

Along with procedures for monitoring and periodically updating the CLUP, another specific issue involves consideration of proposed amendments to the adopted Future Land Use and Character map. A first consideration is whether a map amendment is necessary immediately, such as in conjunction with a particular rezoning request? Or, can a potential adjustment to the Future Land Use and Character map wait so that it may be examined more holistically, along with any other map changes under consideration, through the next interim review and update of the entire CLUP?

The items below should be reviewed and addressed, especially by the Planning Board, when a Future Land Use and Character map adjustment is proposed:

- **Scope of Amendment:** Is the proposed map change limited to one or a few parcels or would it affect a much larger area?
- **Change in Circumstances:** What specific conditions have changed sufficiently to render the current map designation(s) inappropriate or out-of-date (e.g., town’s population size and/or characteristics, area character and building form, property/structure conditions, infrastructure or public services, market factors including need for more land in a particular designation, etc.)?
- **Consistency with Other Plans:** In addition to the CLUP, is the proposed map change consistent with the intent and policy direction of any other applicable plans (utility infrastructure or drainage plans, public safety plans, parks and recreation master plan, etc.)?

- **Adequate Information:** Do City staff, the Planning Board and/or the Board of Commissioners have enough and appropriate information to move ahead with a decision (e.g., utility capacity, potential traffic impacts, other public service implications, resident/stakeholder concerns and input)?
- **Stakeholder Input:** What points, concerns and insights have been raised by area residents, property owners, business owners, partner agencies/organizations or others?



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ZEBULON TOMORROW

Growth Capacity



Introduction

Zebulon must prepare for, and have the capacity to meet, the service demands of current residents plus future new development and redevelopment. This plan section focuses on the potential extent of growth in and around Zebulon in the decades ahead, where this growth might occur and the implications it could have for the Town. Growth can bring many economic and community benefits but must be balanced with reinvestment in Zebulon's established neighborhoods and non-residential areas, which tax base expansion through revitalization will help to support.

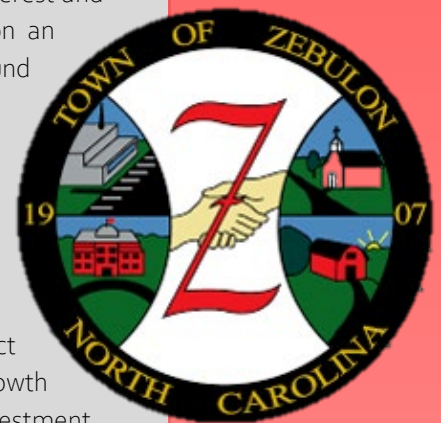
As with other mature communities, Zebulon has a full slate of aging infrastructure and public facility needs to address. Infrastructure and services are essential to secure investor interest and assurance to undertake private projects in Zebulon. Likewise, the Town depends on an adequate tax base from business activity and private property improvements to fund essential capital projects and ongoing maintenance.

Capital investments in public infrastructure such as utilities and streets can signal desired locations for growth, help maintain a high quality of life for residents, and create a framework for land development and revitalization. Meanwhile, local development regulations govern subdivision and re-platting activity, provide for the appropriate use of land through zoning, and set minimum standards for the nature and quality of development. The Town can also choose to employ financing and special district mechanisms that advance the community's economic development and growth management objectives while supporting beneficial private development and reinvestment. Finally, effective oversight and management of ongoing growth and revitalization also depends on solid partnerships with other key public agencies, including Wake County and the Wake County Public School System, among others.

Absorbing some of the community's projected population growth within existing developed areas will inject new dollars and energy inside the town, capitalize on public infrastructure and facilities that are already in place, and potentially lead to new housing options and commercial and mixed-use developments.

Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Zebulon Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, a set of **10 Plan Priorities** was identified based on input from the Town's Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, other community stakeholders, the results of varied public engagement activities, and Town staff and the consultant team. Five of the 10 strategic items are most relevant to the Growth Capacity portion of the CLUP:



- Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways.
- Center growth management on “APF” – adequate public facilities.
- Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
- Secure new and renewed partnerships.
- Think BIG but share costs wisely.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action section builds off of the Plan Priorities highlighted above. The actions below involve tangible steps that will, in the long run, lead to achievement of the goals in this Growth Capacity section in line with the plan's Guiding Principles.

Goals for Growth Capacity

1. A growth management philosophy and strategies that enable most of the projected growth in the Zebulon area to be absorbed within and contiguous to the existing developed town.
2. A growth progression and pattern of development that promotes the Town's long-term financial sustainability and applies an adequate public facilities approach to growth management.
3. Sustained budget and community support for public safety services to ensure superior levels of service, police and fire responsiveness, and a safe and secure community as Zebulon grows.

Policies for Growth Capacity

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters and physical improvements, among others, Zebulon will:

- A. Continue its commitment to planning and internal coordination across all Town functions to anticipate opportunities and challenges and remain on course toward the outcomes it wants.
- B. Seek a balance between investment in new and extended public infrastructure to support first-time development and necessary investment in rehabilitation of aging infrastructure in previously developed areas.
- C. Together with the City of Raleigh, ensure well-maintained water, wastewater and storm drainage infrastructure that serves the needs of Zebulon residents and businesses while minimizing adverse impacts on the environment.
- D. Commit to a steady yearly program of capital improvements, as its financial means allow, while avoiding a deferred maintenance approach that causes unmet needs to accumulate and become more costly.



- E. Link capital improvements planning and project prioritization to the Town’s economic development agenda and tax base needs, especially where public infrastructure investments will leverage complementary private investment in support of this CLUP, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan and other adopted Town plans.
- F. Fund phased increases in Zebulon Police Department staffing to reach a level that enables a full-fledged community-oriented policing approach focused on prevention versus a mainly reactive, call-driven posture with current staffing.
- G. Support the Zebulon Fire Department in maintaining or improving upon its Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating (currently 3 on a scale of 1 to 10, and 4 outside the Town limits).
- H. Be a prepared and resilient community with Town infrastructure and services that can recover quickly from the effects of severe weather and natural hazards and which manages growth and development to reduce risks.
- I. Pursue multi-objective drainage design solutions, where appropriate, that integrate open space, recreational and aesthetic considerations while maintaining public safety.
- J. Continually explore new technologies and emerging best practices in public infrastructure and public service delivery that can make Zebulon a leader among its peer communities in gaining efficiencies and exceeding performance measures.
- K. Remain an active and reliable partner in interlocal and interagency approaches to operation and oversight of essential infrastructure and public facilities and services, including with the City of Raleigh, Wake County and neighboring towns and counties – and also in regional processes administered by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Triangle J Council of Governments through which capital project priorities and funding allocations are determined.



Along with the broader-brush statements of policy above, the following policies may be used by Zebulon officials and staff as a guide when deciding whether to bring additional territory into the Town through annexation or related growth guidance measures:

Annexation and Growth Management Policies

- L. Continue to require annexation as a condition of utility service given no other capability for Town-initiated annexation.
- M. All annexation decisions should involve a fiscal impact assessment to determine that the annexation is fiscally responsible from the perspective of Town operations, maintenance, capital investments and debt.
- N. The Town should aim for sensible extensions of its jurisdiction through annexation and avoid creating “donut hole” situations when certain areas are bypassed for annexation, which can create inefficient public service delivery and inconsistent regulation of land use and development, among other considerations.

“Resilience” Defined

Resilience is the ability to prepare for, absorb, recover from, and more successfully adapt to adverse events.

National Academy
of Sciences



- O. Wherever possible, existing infrastructure systems in areas proposed for annexation should have near or fully adequate capacities to accommodate current and projected development demands in such areas without the Town bearing an inordinate burden for capital investment in the near or longer term.
- P. To maximize the use and efficiency of existing Town infrastructure, growth should first be directed toward vacant parcels and underutilized lands within the Town's existing incorporated area before extensive development is considered or encouraged within future growth areas beyond the Town limits.
- Q. The Town should promote re-use and/or redevelopment of obsolete, vacant buildings and underutilized properties to maximize the efficiencies of existing infrastructure and municipal services, along with the overall community and tax base benefits of restoring such properties to productive use.
- R. Annexation decisions should be consistent with the Town's economic development objectives.
- S. The Town should prioritize annexation opportunities in highly visible areas at community gateways and along key corridors to ensure sound regulation of the type, pattern and quality of development.
- T. Along with financial and tangible considerations, the Town should weigh the intangible benefits of annexation and the possible costs of inaction.
- U. Annexation actions should be consistent with the direction and priorities of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Town's Strategic Plan.

Actions

Capital Investments

1. Continue ongoing infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation efforts and upgrades through the Town's capital projects planning and budgeting process.
2. Complete the relocation of the Downtown fire station to a more central location to better position the Zebulon Fire Department for effective town-wide incident response, consistent with its four-minute travel time target.
3. Begin planning for a second Town fire station likely within the next decade and potentially in east-northeast Zebulon based on growth trends and recent analysis.



Upgraded Capital Improvements Planning

As towns like Zebulon grow in size and the sophistication of their governance, they often progress toward a more formalized Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) process for identifying, prioritizing and funding essential capital projects. The range of activities to incorporate into the CIP should go beyond street, drainage and utility infrastructure projects to include parks and trails, Town buildings, land and right-of-way/easement acquisition, major vehicle and equipment purchases,

and the planning and design studies that are often a precursor to significant initiatives and expenditures. Even aesthetic or tourism-related enhancements such as community gateway treatments, streetscape upgrades along corridors and installation of wayfinding signage qualify as capital projects. Prioritization factors should include:

- Immediate public health and safety issues.
- Improvements dictated by state/federal mandates or as a permit condition.
- Geographic and/or socioeconomic fairness across the town.
- Public meetings and input.
- Input from Town staff and consultants regarding technical and/or financial readiness for particular projects.
- Inter-departmental working groups, especially to coordinate on sequencing considerations for or across multiple projects.
- Recommendations from Town boards/commissions and subcommittees of the Board of Commissioners.

Programs and Initiatives

1. Continue preparing for new and altered development patterns expected in and around Zebulon as major infrastructure investments by the City of Raleigh are completed, especially to the north and east and eventually on the south side.
2. Provide adequate funding to achieve high-quality police services in line with continued population growth and development, increasing call volumes and other indicators of policing coverage, response time and service level. Zebulon can learn from the experiences of other Wake County communities that followed a similar growth trajectory and had to adjust to new and different crime challenges and increasing traffic-related call demands, especially in a jurisdiction bifurcated by a busy freeway.
3. Build on a high level of community support and trust for the Zebulon Police Department to work toward accreditation, which will reflect improved policies, practices and skills training, which can also lead to improved officer retention.
4. Continue building an asset management planning and life-cycle strategy for all components of Town-managed infrastructure and other public facilities.
5. Monitor and help mitigate infrastructure-related issues faced by investors and developers involved in Downtown redevelopment and/or renovation of older buildings.



Regulations and Standards

1. Continue advancing the overall Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) purposes and applying specific provisions relevant to this Growth Capacity section including:
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.1. regarding protection of residents and landowners from flooding, fire, seismic activity and dangers from extreme weather events.





Partners

Partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Growth Capacity include:

- Area real estate and development community (property owners, developers, builders, land planners/designers/engineers, etc.).
- City of Raleigh.
- Neighboring jurisdictions and Wake County (mutual aid, infrastructure coordination, etc.).
- Wake County Public School System.
- Duke Energy Progress (electricity).
- Dominion Energy (gas).
- Spectrum by Charter (cable).

- Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.2. regarding orderly growth and a sustainable balance of land uses to assist with the fiscal wellbeing of the Town and redevelopment of underutilized sites already served by public infrastructure.
- Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.3. regarding protection of the natural environment and preservation of open space and habitat areas.
- Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.4. regarding properly functioning infrastructure, land dedication for public facilities, payments in lieu of constructing required infrastructure, and coordinated provision of streets and other public facilities.
- The Flood Hazard Overlay zoning district (Section 3.8.2.).
- Incentives for sustainable development practices (Section 5.12).
- Conservation subdivision provisions, which tend to reduce infrastructure needs (and impervious surfaces) and increase preserved open space (Section 6.2).
- Prevention of soil erosion and sedimentation (Section 6.9).
- Stormwater management (Section 6.11).
- Utilities and infrastructure (Section 6.14).

Partnerships and Coordination

1. Continue effective interaction with development applicants to secure mutually beneficial cost-sharing arrangements that expedite desired housing and other development and ensure orderly and timely construction of needed infrastructure and public facilities.
2. Continue to fulfill the Town’s water quality protection responsibilities in northwest Zebulon under the Little River Reservoir Water Supply Watershed Protection Interlocal Agreement along with Wake County, the City of Raleigh and the towns of Wake Forest and Wendell. Also continue to monitor the projected timeline for reservoir construction.



3. Continue Zebulon's input to and support of the Wake County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan, especially as it relates to Town eligibility for related grant opportunities through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
4. Strengthen the Town's partnership with the Wake County Public School System, especially as the need for more eastern Wake school sites grows nearer, and given the lead time involved from site search and acquisition through campus planning, design and ultimate construction under the System's seven-year capital projects plan. The Town should coordinate closely on data and research involving development trends (permits, approved densities, etc.) and enrollment projections in the Zebulon area. The Town can also assist with school siting possibilities and key factors (proximity to residential population, transportation considerations involving all modes, co-location opportunities, buffering benefits where schools end up between neighborhoods and highway commercial areas, land and development costs, etc.), plus potential adaptive re-use scenarios in town. The Town should also continue to make the case for land dedication and school siting within planned residential developments – and in feasible locations versus “leftover” pieces.
5. Maintain close relationships with other area public safety agencies given Zebulon's reliance on mutual aid and interagency support to satisfy local emergency service needs.

More Targeted Planning / Study

1. Maintain an up-to-date drainage master plan for the town, and coordinate with the City of Raleigh on ongoing water and wastewater system planning and improvements for the Zebulon area, as the findings and recommendations of such efforts are an essential input to multi-year capital improvements planning and programming and any related grant pursuits to leverage local dollars with external funding sources.
2. Regularly review and update, as appropriate, the Town's development and infrastructure related fees to ensure adequate revenue generation in line with costs and based on regional trends across jurisdictions.
3. Complete a special area plan for south Zebulon, focused especially on areas south of Downtown and around Community Park that are in the Urban Downtown Mixed Use designation. The plan should explore the development outlook and possibilities for this area as utility infrastructure eventually becomes available, consistent with the direction of this CLUP, the UDO, the Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and other Town plans. This area's proximity to Downtown, a potentially enlarged Community Park, the Community Center and other Zebulon assets will make it desirable after the current wave of north side development, not to mention if a commuter rail link from Downtown Zebulon into Downtown Raleigh might someday happen. However, given the south side's distance from U.S. 64/264 and other possible perception issues, the potential need for initial development incentives and/or pro-active marketing and branding should also be considered.



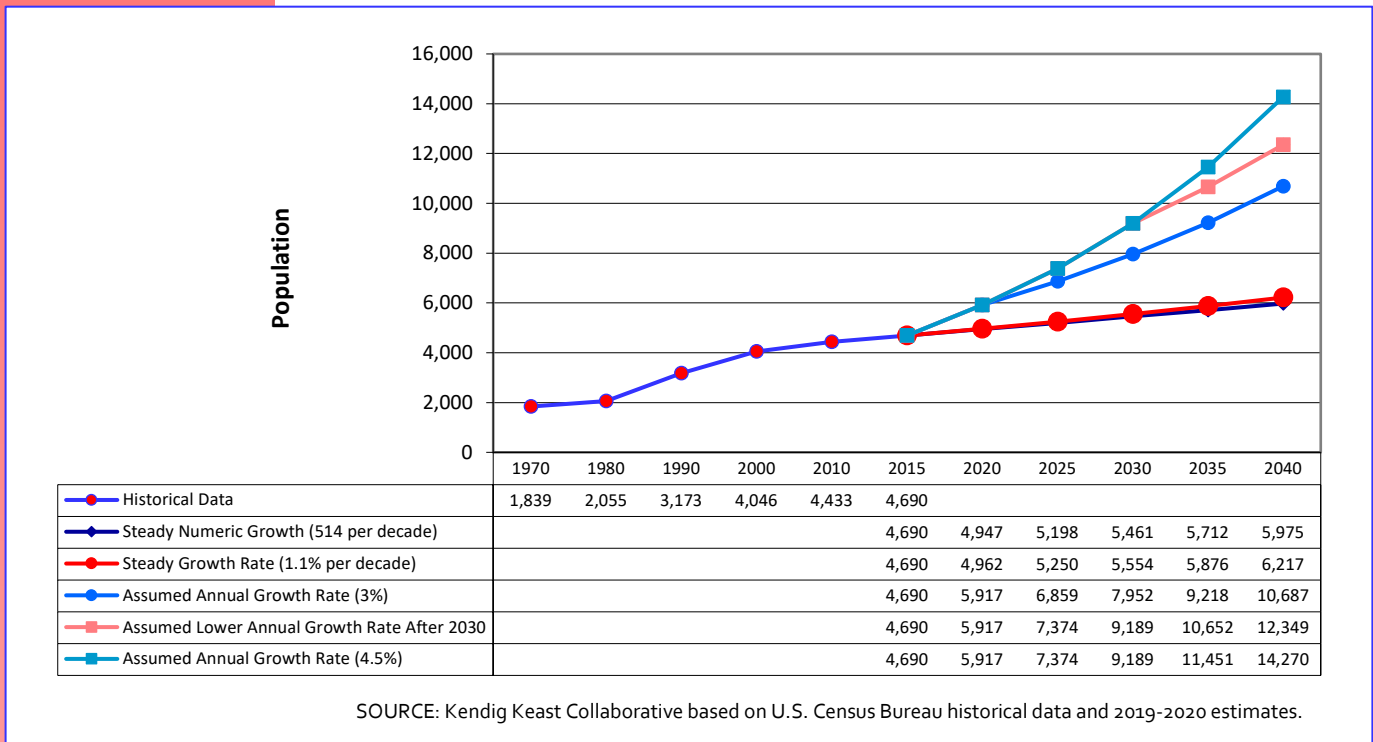
Population Outlook for Zebulon

Population projections are a crucial component of a long-range planning process. They help determine and quantify the demands that will be placed on public facilities and services based on the potential pace and scale of the community’s physical growth. Projections reflect local, regional, national and even international trends and offer a basis to prepare for the future. However, forecasting population changes can be challenging, particularly for the long term, because it is often difficult to account for all circumstances that may arise. Therefore, it will be important for the Town to monitor population and economic growth continually to account for both short- and longer-term shifts that can influence development activity and trends in the community and larger region.

Alternative Growth Scenarios

Demographers caution that population projections become trickier as the geographic area gets smaller, making town-level population the most difficult to forecast. This is because local population change is strongly influenced by less predictable factors such as housing prices, availability of vacant land to develop, and annexation of additional territory, which may already have existing residents and results in an instant increase in the town-wide total.

Given this context, the population projections chart below provides a comparison of multiple potential scenarios for future population change in Zebulon. The projections build on the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimate for Zebulon of 5,917 persons in 2020, and they identify potential population levels in five-year increments out to 2040.



Projections Based on Varying Quantities and Rates of Growth

A common method for projecting population is to extend historical trends to future years. However, this method is not as useful for Zebulon given its phenomenal pace of new housing development over just the last few years, which has ratcheted up the local growth curve well above



the prior trend. Zebulon is experiencing such growth partly because of North Carolina's overall economic success, but particularly due to the associated population boom in the Raleigh metropolitan area. Many of those who provided input to this CLUP spoke of Zebulon as the last "eastern frontier" of Wake County, and area development community representatives cited Zebulon's relatively lower land costs within the county as a reason for its recent surge in new home construction. As a result, Zebulon is now able to capture a larger share of regional growth because of the amount of new housing that is coming to market in the area. This rate of home building has altered the population trend line, and periodic annexation of new growth areas by the Town can also add new increments of population versus a more steady growth trajectory.

As highlighted in the Zebulon Today Report, more than 3,000 new housing units were already in the approval pipeline toward construction in late 2020, with more proposed developments under review and anticipated. Additionally, data on certificates of occupancy (COOs) for completed homes issued by the Town since July 1 indicated that Zebulon had gained nearly 500 new residents just in the second half of 2020 (163 COOs x 2.99 persons per household per U.S. Census Bureau estimates) – an even faster pace than the same period in 2019 and continuing that way into 2021 based on the newest available building permit and COO data.

Therefore, the Steady Numeric Growth and Steady Growth Rate lines on the population projections chart are included mainly to illustrate what would have been without the recent uptick in housing construction.

- The **Steady Numeric Growth** line reflects a linear growth forecast. This is often referred to as a "straight line" projection because it adds the same absolute number of new persons to the population in each period. For Zebulon, this would have been 514 added residents per decade had the 2010-2020 decade ended more like the slower growth trend from 2010 to 2015. A linear projection actually produces a declining rate of growth over time as the same amount is being added to an ever-expanding base. **The Steady Numeric Growth scenario would have resulted in a 2020 population of 4,947 persons. In fact, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Zebulon was already at 5,917 persons in 2020, nearly 1,000 higher. Continuation of the previous trend would have led to a 2040 population of 5,975 persons – only 58 persons more than the level already attained in 2020.** The percentage growth by decade would have decreased from 11.6 percent between 2010 and 2020 to 10.4 percent from 2020 to 2030, then 9.4 percent from 2030 to 2040.
- The **Steady Growth Rate** line is an exponential growth projection. It produces higher numbers than a linear projection because the numerical change gets larger each year while the *rate* of growth stays constant. This is similar to the power of compound growth in a savings account; the interest (i.e., growth) rate may not change, but it is being applied to an ever-expanding balance, resulting in larger and larger interest earnings over time. **Had Zebulon continued with a 1.1 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) as it experienced from 2010 to 2015, then the 2020 population would have been 4,962 persons under the Steady Growth Rate scenario – only slightly higher than the Steady Numeric Growth projection above of 4,947. By 2040, this scenario would have led to 6,217 residents, reflecting a steady growth rate of 11.9 percent per decade.** The difference between these scenarios is not substantial at this point as Zebulon's population numbers are still relatively small.

[It should be noted that the County Step-Down method was not used for Zebulon. This is another common projection method which considers the trend in a town's share of the countywide population in past decades and prospects for its future share. This method is not practical for



Zebulon as it is such a small part of Wake County, which was estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau to have had 1.1 million residents in 2019 – with Zebulon only about 0.5 percent of that total.]

Projections Based on Assumed Rates of Growth

Given the impracticality of typical trend projection methods for Zebulon, the three other scenarios on the population projections chart apply varying growth rate assumptions. They are accelerated growth scenarios as they consider what would happen if growth in the area proceeds at a faster rate than in the past.

- The first such scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (3%)**, is based on a steady CAGR of three percent per year from 2020 through 2040. This would be a rapid pace for many communities that are busy enough keeping up with one to two percent annual growth. Yet this is a more moderate pace relative to the 4.8 percent CAGR that Zebulon experienced from 2015 to 2020. **This scenario would result in 10,687 residents by 2040, nearly 80 percent higher than the linear projection of 5,975 persons, and also well above the 6,217 persons predicted by the exponential growth projection.** This scenario illustrates where Zebulon could be in 20 years if it steadily keeps gaining new homes and/or expands its incorporated area to bring in more population.
- The scenario labeled **Assumed Lower Annual Growth Rate After 2030** maintains a 4.5 percent CAGR for the first 10 years, from 2021 to 2030 – slightly below the 4.8 percent of recent years. Then the CAGR drops to three percent for the 2031-2040 decade. **Relative to the 10,687 residents in 2040 produced by the steady three percent scenario above, this scenario would lead to 12,349 residents in 2040.** The eventual reduction in growth rate could reflect a slower pace of area home construction as land costs rise, as fluctuations occur in the national economy (including a return of interest rates to more typical levels), or various other factors. Also, growth percentages tend to moderate naturally over time as the overall “pie” continues to expand; otherwise, ever larger quantities of people and homes would be added year after year if the growth rate remained steady over several decades.
- The final scenario, labeled **Assumed Annual Growth Rate (4.5%)**, shows what would happen if Zebulon were to maintain a robust CAGR of 4.5 percent over the next two decades. **This scenario results in the highest 2040 projection of 14,270 persons, about 2.5 times more residents than the estimated 2020 population.**

Bottom Line

It is wise for municipalities to think in terms of a range of potential growth rather than an absolute number given the uncertainty of any small-area forecast that extends beyond a few years. **It is assumed for this CLUP that Zebulon’s 2040 population will fall within a forecast range of 10,687 to 14,270 persons, which yields a midpoint of 12,478** – slightly higher than the result of the Assumed Lower Annual Growth Rate After 2030 scenario. **This outcome would average out to a compound annual growth rate of 2.9 percent from 2020 through 2040**, from an assumed base of 5,917 persons in 2020. Should this base number end up even higher once the Census 2020 results are released, then the projections would also shift somewhat higher.

As explained above, all of these scenarios are projections of what *could* occur in Zebulon over the next several decades based on recent trends and/or specified assumptions. Some communities choose to adopt more conservative assumptions due to concerns about their growth capacity and/or the implications of growth in terms of density, traffic, school impacts, loss of open space or

Midpoint Projection

The midpoint projection would result in:

- 2025 population = **7,117**
- 2030 population = **8,570**
- 2035 population = **10,335**
- 2040 population = **12,478**

This would mean:

- **6,561 more residents** in 2040 than in 2020.
- **2,194 more housing units** by 2040 based on the current estimated 2.99-person average household size in Zebulon.



other factors. On the other hand, some officials wish for their community to set its sights higher and aim to grow well beyond the projected level in the coming decades.

The midpoint projection could be exceeded if the Town promotes growth more aggressively through programs that incentivize new development or redevelopment/infill, brings more population and/or growth areas into the town through ongoing annexation, or simply continues to experience an unprecedented growth surge felt across the entire Research Triangle region. Other key factors include:

- The extent of available, developable land in and around Zebulon that actually transitions to residential use, the pace and timing of such land development activity, and the housing types and densities involved;
- The projected capacity of the Town's infrastructure and public services (and of the Wake County Public School System) to accommodate this growth in future years; and
- Community values and preferences as to where and how growth occurs, which ultimately translates into capital projects and public services planning.

As emphasized at the start of this discussion, the next step after any such projections is immediate and ongoing tracking of actual growth year to year. That way, assumptions and projections can be adjusted through annual reviews and periodic updates of this CLUP. Finally, available data and/or local studies on trends in daytime population – the influx of workers and visitors who come into a hub community like Zebulon on most weekdays and/or weekends – is another critical factor for gauging and anticipating cumulative demands on local infrastructure and public services.

Physical Implications of Projected Growth

This aerial view of the Braemar subdivision, in west Zebulon along Water Plant Road, shows an existing neighborhood of 164 single-family homes. To accommodate the midpoint population growth projection in this plan section, Zebulon would need 13-14 more subdivisions equivalent in size to Braemar by 2040 (at a minimum considering that the Town might choose to pursue more aggressive policies to achieve an even higher population growth rate). This quantified need for land area and dwelling units is based on:

- An average household size in Zebulon of 2.99 persons (per the U.S. Census Bureau).
- 164 units housing 490 residents at 2.99 persons per household.
- 2,194 units (164 x 13.4) needed to house 6,561 additional residents by 2040, which is based on the midpoint projection of 12,478 total residents in Zebulon in 2040.

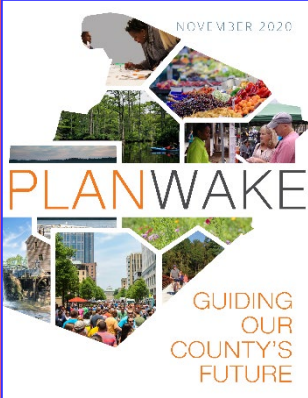
This initial approximation provides a starting point for tracking land consumption in the years ahead as actual population growth and land development activity continue. The needed land area will decrease depending on the extent of added population that is absorbed into housing types other than single-family detached homes. Along with new multi-family projects, Zebulon is already seeing newer subdivision plans that include a mix of housing types, such as townhomes, which reduce the overall development footprint and preserve more open and green space through smaller lot sizes and clustering of some housing on sites.



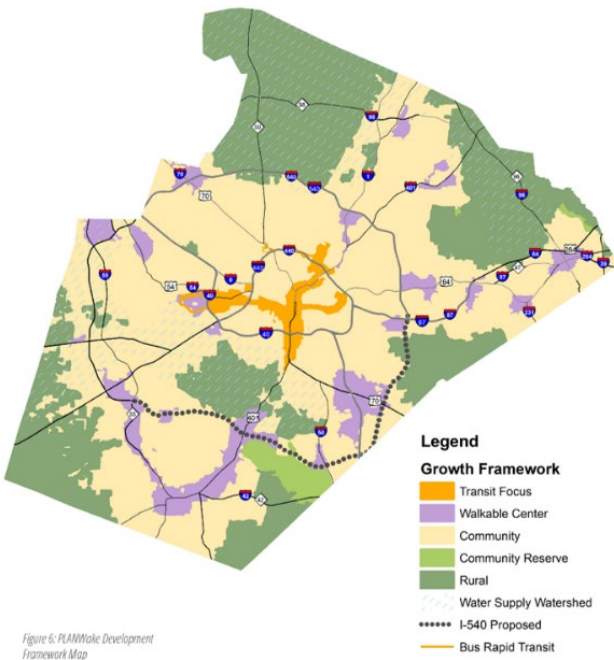
Coordinated Growth Planning

Concurrent to completion of this new CLUP, Wake County had also released for public review its draft of PLANWake, the next county-wide comprehensive plan. The Development Framework and Urban Services Areas maps in PLANWake sync well with Zebulon’s new Future Land Use and Character map in terms of:

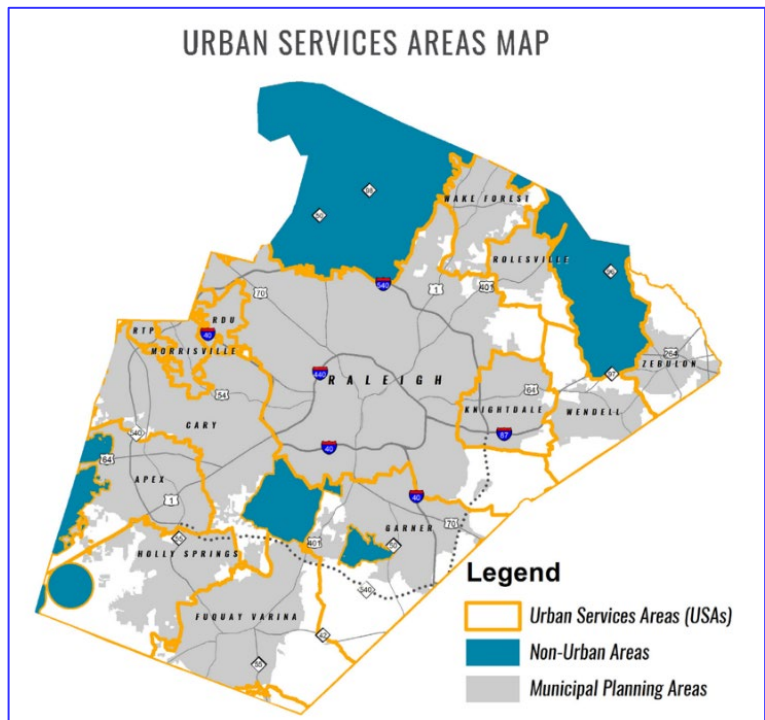
- Focusing the most intensive development and public infrastructure within a more walkable core area of the town (shown in purple on the Development Framework map);
- Accommodating a next increment of growth within the “Community” area surrounding Zebulon in all directions (shown in yellow on the Development Framework map); and
- Preserving a more rural atmosphere in areas farther north and northwest of the town, especially for watershed protection purposes ahead of the eventual Little River Reservoir (rural shown in green on the Development Framework map, and consistent with the Urban and Non-Urban areas shown on the Urban Services Areas map).



DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK MAP



URBAN SERVICES AREAS MAP

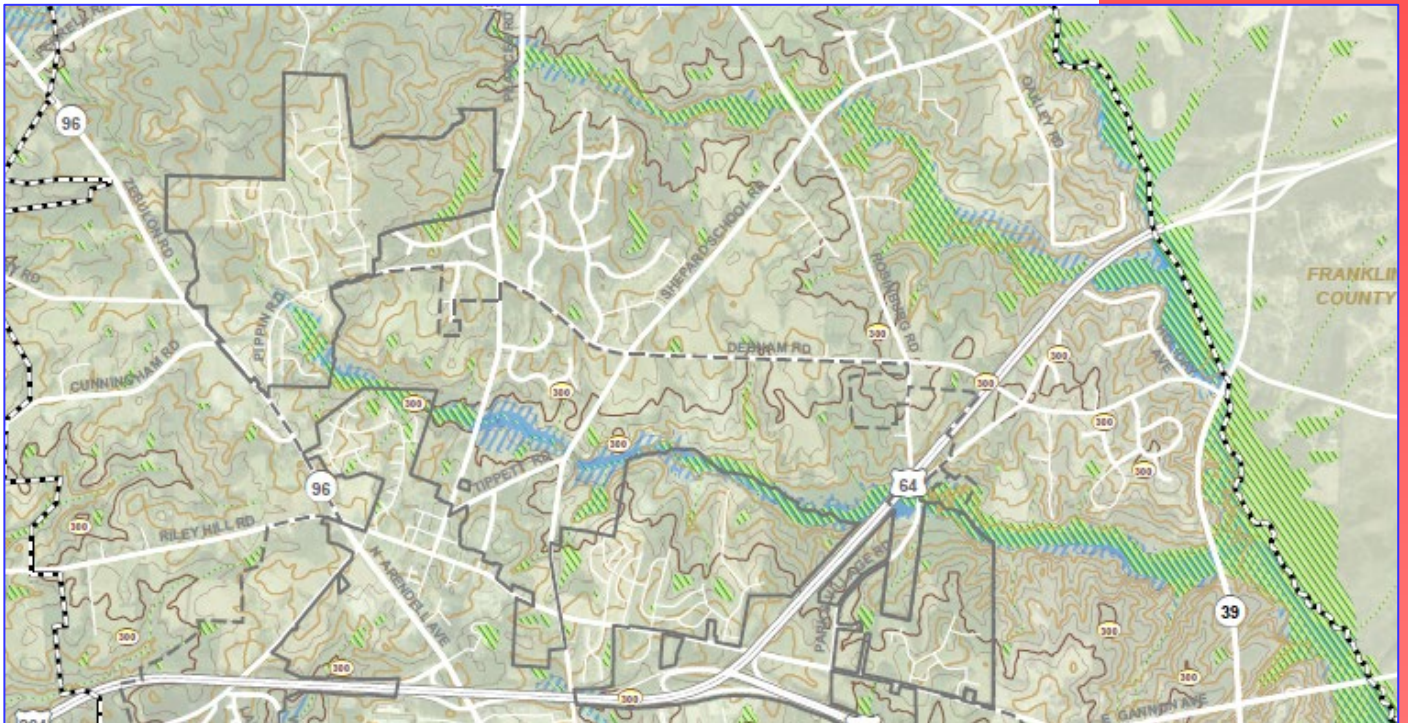


SOURCE: PLANWake, Wake County.

As discussed in the Zebulon Today Report, the town is framed by the Little River corridor on the west and Moccasin Creek on the east. In between, Little Creek, Beaverdam Creek and others cut across the area in a more east-west direction and, together with their associated watersheds, create pockets of developable area. The area terrain also influences the roadway network, with Proctor Street/Old Bunn Road and Pippin/Debnam Road running east-west generally between the creeks.

The map view below is a clip from **Map 6, Natural Features**, in the Zebulon Today Report. It shows that development has already occurred and is continuing north of Pippin Road, from N.C. 96 on the west to Shepard School Road on the east. This includes the Weaver’s Pond, Hunters Greene and Wakefield Meadows subdivisions. East of Shepard School Road, most new development is still focused farther south around Old Bunn Road. Further northward growth will eventually become





more costly and difficult to serve with municipal utilities given the change in topography with land sloping away from Zebulon, generally north of Debnam Road. Infrastructure investments by the City of Raleigh will support additional Suburban Residential development in this vicinity as shown on the Future Land Use and Character map, and also east of Zebulon and eventually on the south side. All of this is consistent with PLANWake as summarized above, especially in aiming to maintain a more rural character to the north of Zebulon while directing more growth to the farthest eastern corner of Wake County in the vicinity of U.S. 264. During discussions for this CLUP, it was noted that people who live east of town in developed areas into Franklin, Nash and Johnston counties already identify with Zebulon as their hub community for shopping and services.

“Smart Growth” Audit

Zebulon should join other communities that are enjoying the economic and quality-of-life benefits of steady growth, but also wanting to know if they are growing in an efficient and sustainable manner. The Smart Growth Network suggests that growth is “smart” when “it gives us great communities, with more choices and personal freedom, good return on public investment, greater opportunity across the community, a thriving natural environment, and a legacy we can be proud to leave our children and grandchildren” (from the *This is Smart Growth* pamphlet published by the Network through a cooperative agreement with ICMA, the International City/County Management Association and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

The Town can consider how well it is applying the Principles of Smart Growth identified by the Network, recognizing that some principles may not be relevant or attainable locally. Zebulon can also identify and apply measurable indicators as benchmarks for tracking progress on each of the principles as illustrated in the **Smart Growth Principles** table below. Additional resource publications include: *Smart Growth Audits* (American Planning Association, PAS Report 512); *Jobs-Housing Balance* (APA, PAS Report 516); and *Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Strategies for Implementation* (Smart Growth Network and ICMA).

Strategic Plan Focus

Among the three focus areas in Zebulon’s Strategic Plan is **Growing Smart**:

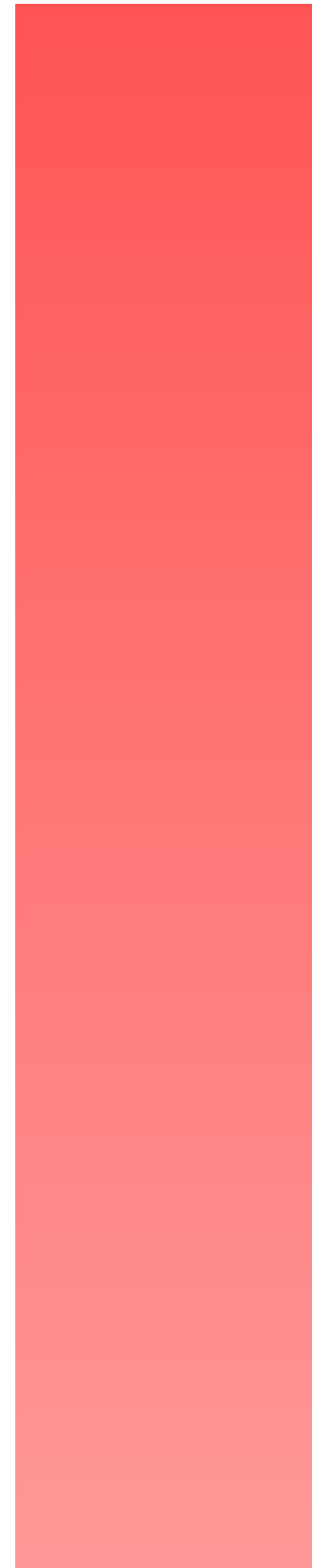
“Our community is growing and **we will plan for the growth with appropriate staffing and service levels** to address land use and traffic concerns; promote economic development and preserve the affordability of our community.”



Smart Growth Principle	Potential Local Indicator
Mix land uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total acres in developments designed with integrated and complimentary uses, especially where residential and non-residential uses are mixed within the same master-planned project.
Take advantage of compact building design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local comparisons of percent site coverage among sites with typical auto-oriented and horizontal design relative to sites with building footprints that preserve more open and green space.
Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of total housing stock not in single-family detached dwellings. Relative percentage of ownership and rental opportunities within total housing units. Extent of housing options for certain "life cycle" stages (e.g., young singles, "empty nesters," senior independent and assisted living, etc.).
Create walkable neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total linear feet of sidewalk relative to total street length in sample neighborhoods. Number of non-street linkages to/from the neighborhood to nearby schools, parks, adjacent neighborhoods and other destinations.
Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey residents elsewhere in the region on recognizable place names and destinations in Zebulon. Measures of the total volume of landscaping in public areas at key community entries and along major corridors.
Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total acres in and around Zebulon under conservation easements, land trust ownership or other non-public preservation measures. Total linear feet of trail along area waterways and in other natural areas to facilitate public access.
Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total dollars of public investment to spur redevelopment in Downtown Zebulon, in older established neighborhoods and along key corridors in town. Relative percentage of building permit activity for improvement/rehabilitation of existing properties and structures.
Provide a variety of transportation choices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys of trail and bikeway network users to quantify those biking to/from work, shopping or other destinations versus purely recreational use. Ridership trends on local park-and-ride bus service.



Smart Growth Principle	Potential Local Indicator
<p>Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual statistics on approvals/denials, extent of variance requests and other metrics from the Town’s development review processes. • Measures of time savings for applicants, Town staff and Boards/Commissions from technology and other procedural streamlining steps.
<p>Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total hours of Board of Commissioners and Board/Commission meeting time devoted to public hearings and comment opportunities on development-related matters. • Website analytics on number of persons accessing agendas, packet materials and other online information about development-related matters.



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ZEBULON TOMORROW

Housing and Neighborhoods



Introduction

At the time of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Zebulon was experiencing a wave of new housing construction including single-family detached homes, townhouse options and multi-family residential development. This trend was expanding both housing quantity and choices for existing residents plus the many newcomers drawn to the area by new and relatively affordable dwellings within the context of Wake County and the Raleigh metropolitan area.

Housing needs, gaps and challenges are central to any community-wide long-range plan. A key component of a town's livability is whether its residents can find suitable and economical housing options at all stages of life to remain in the community they love. Zebulon also must offer quality and sustainable neighborhoods, the elements of which – safe streets, great schools, nearby shopping, and parks and trails, among others – cut across all parts of this CLUP.

While the development of new residences and the rehabilitation of older housing occurs primarily through the private sector, municipal government and other public and non-profit partners have essential roles to play. The Town and other partners protect residential investments over time, and strong neighborhoods support the local economy and tax base. Having a diverse stock of housing – new and old, big and small, ownership and rental – is crucial for offering choice and providing for the individual needs of all households, regardless of economic conditions.



Strategic Plan Focus

Among the three focus areas in Zebulon's Strategic Plan is **Growing Smart**:

"Our community is growing and we will plan for the growth with appropriate staffing and service levels to address land use and traffic concerns; promote economic development and **preserve the affordability of our community.**"

- Plan for appropriate land use to meet transportation and housing needs.

Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Zebulon Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, a set of **10 Plan Priorities** was identified based on input from the Town's Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, other community stakeholders, the results of varied public engagement activities, and Town staff and the consultant team. Six of the 10 strategic items are most relevant to the Housing and Neighborhoods portion of the CLUP:

- Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways.
- Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
- Secure new and renewed partnerships.
- Protect and reinforce community character.
- Build community – ONE community.
- Think BIG but share costs wisely.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action section builds off of the Plan Priorities highlighted above. The actions below involve tangible steps that will, in the long run, lead to achievement of the goals in this Housing and Neighborhoods section in line with the plan's Guiding Principles.

Goals for Housing and Neighborhoods

1. A quantity and diversity of housing options that makes living in Zebulon attainable for a wide range of age groups and income levels.
2. Appealing housing and neighborhood choices for families drawn by Zebulon's employment opportunities, small town charm, recreational assets and other amenities.
3. Neighborhoods that are safe and comfortable for all residents.
4. Preserved and enhanced integrity and value of existing neighborhoods, and quality design of newer residential areas to ensure their livability and long-term sustainability.

Suburban Residential character of an existing in-town neighborhood along W. Franklin Street, near Whitley Park.



Policies for Housing and Neighborhoods

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters and physical improvements, among others, Zebulon will:

- A. Continue to apply development regulations and standards which ensure that new and redeveloped residential properties are compatible with the character of their surrounding area.
- B. Maintain a regulatory framework that encourages an array of residential options – through new development, redevelopment, adaptive re-use of structures and maintenance of existing housing stock – to respond to the need for varied housing types, sizes and price points that are attainable for prospective owners and renters at all levels of income.
- C. In cooperation with public and private partners, consider the entire spectrum of tools for assisting people in attaining their ownership or rental goals and methods for spurring and guiding the supply side of the market to pursue projects that will address local needs.
- D. Evaluate and improve any permitting processes that could hinder desired and compatible housing construction, renovation and preservation within the Town’s jurisdiction.
- E. Continue to promote developments that mix rather than isolate varied housing types, with common amenities to be enjoyed by all residents.
- F. Support development of assisted living and higher-level care facilities and other residential options intended specifically for those hoping to age in place rather than leave Zebulon during life transitions.
- G. Encourage mixed-use development proposals that include a residential component, especially where this will support retail viability and transit ridership, place residents near education and local employment options, and provide living options for seniors and others close to transit, parks and shopping, medical and other services.
- H. Promote quality design of residential developments near greenways, parks, trails and preserved open spaces that capitalizes on this proximity.
- I. Support the ongoing appeal of Zebulon’s neighborhoods through effective code compliance and by using public investments in streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, parks and trails, and pedestrian/bicycle safety measures, along with routine maintenance practices for all of the above.



Attached housing option in the Wakelon Townhomes development along Pearces Road.

Importance of the interface between natural areas and suburban development as in the Shepards Park development along Old Bunn Road.



Classic homes in the
"Downtown Periphery"
area of central Zebulon.



- J. Strike a balance in using historic preservation tools to safeguard properties and neighborhood areas with clear historic significance and integrity while not applying such methods too broadly in areas that need redevelopment and infill activity to remain viable long term.
- K. Continue efforts to overcome negative perceptions of multi-family housing from past situations in Zebulon, especially by promoting new market-rate multi-family projects along with targeted housing needs that are addressed by subsidized projects.
- L. Through implementation of its Comprehensive Transportation Plan and Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, ensure that residential areas across the town are interconnected through street, sidewalks and off-street links.
- M. Monitor the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of home owner associations (HOAs) given increasing concerns and scrutiny of HOAs in some regions.

Actions

Capital Investments

1. Include criteria in the Town's capital improvements planning process that ensures consideration of neighborhood needs and enhancement opportunities when identifying and prioritizing candidate capital projects.

Programs and Initiatives

1. Consider utilization of all available programs, tools and partnerships, as appropriate for Zebulon, to support local homeownership aspirations and affordable rental housing (e.g., down payment assistance, utilities assistance, payment of Homeowner Association fees, etc.).
2. Maintain an inventory of vacant residential parcels in the core area and developed portions of town and assess the potential for specific housing types that further CLUP goals and other Town policies and plan/study recommendations.
3. Consider formation – or formalization – of a cross-departmental Neighborhoods Team to focus on neighborhood-level issues and needs which often require solutions involving coordinated response by various Town functions.
4. Continue active code compliance efforts with a focus on measurable results including producing an annual report on the status of substandard buildings and statistics on other program activities and successes.

5. Pursue opportunities to advance Zebulon as a lifelong community including Age-Friendly certification from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Regulations and Standards

1. Continue advancing the overall Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) purposes and applying specific provisions relevant to this Housing and Neighborhoods section including:
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.7. regarding encouragement of both urban densities in Downtown and other appropriate locations while also promoting more varied housing types, sizes and standards of quality to meet changing housing preferences and needs. This section also emphasizes preserving established neighborhood character and ensuring that infill development and redevelopment maintain compatibility with established residential surroundings.
 - Zoning districts that allow the entire range of housing forms across the character spectrum (rural, suburban, core neighborhoods and urban), encourage mixed housing in neighborhoods and within master-planned developments, and provide for residential uses and mixed-used developments in primarily commercial districts (Article 3, Districts).
 - Provision for neighborhood-oriented and scaled non-residential uses through a Neighborhood Commercial zoning district (Section 3.4.2).
 - Downtown Core and Downtown Periphery zoning districts that encourage urban housing options Downtown and provide a framework for sustaining the long-established walkable neighborhood context around Downtown (Sections 3.5.3 and 3.5.4).
 - A Planned Development district option that opens the door to creative master-planned developments that move beyond standard residential subdivision models to achieve higher-quality outcomes in terms of housing mix, recreational amenities and intentional open space preservation (Section 3.5.5).
 - A Manufactured Home Overlay district to provide reasonable opportunities for this housing option within the Town's planning jurisdiction while ensuring compatibility and quality (Section 3.8.5).
 - All-encompassing development standards (Article 5) to provide clear direction for residential development and ensure desired outcomes in terms of multi-modal access and circulation (Section 5.1), design (Sections 5.2 and 5.3), fences and walls (Section 5.5), landscaping (Section 5.6) and open space (Section 5.7).
 - Subdivision regulations addressing various elements above and more, through the platting process (Article 6) including a fee-in-lieu alternative to certain land dedications and/or improvements (Section 6.3), greenway implementation and open space credits (Section 6.4), Owner Association formation and ongoing operation (Section 6.5), reservation of potential neighborhood school sites and land for public parks (Section 6.7), and other infrastructure-related provisions that ensure public safety and adequate facilities and services in future neighborhoods.



Example of a small footprint home near Downtown, along N. Wakefield Street.

Strategic Plan Focus

Among the three focus areas in Zebulon's Strategic Plan is **Vibrant Downtown**:

"We will have a clean, attractive, and historic downtown with a variety of special events, entertainment, shops, restaurants, businesses and **housing** to serve as the heart of Zebulon, providing a gathering place for the community and a destination for visitors."

Partners

Partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Housing and Neighborhoods include:

- Area real estate and development community (property owners, developers, builders, land planners/designers/engineers, etc.).
- Wake County Department of Housing.
- Housing Authority of the County of Wake.
- Wake County Public School System.
- Triangle J Council of Governments.
- Social & Economic Vitality (Wake County Human Services).
- North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.
- Community Alternatives for Supportive Abodes (CASA, disabled housing).
- Fair Housing Project – Legal Aid of North Carolina.
- Home Builders Association of Raleigh-Wake County.

- Incentives for sustainable development practices (Section 5.12) and for reforestation and tree protection (Section 5.9).
- Conservation subdivision provisions for clustered residential design that preserves more open space – and can make constrained properties more viable to develop, thereby increasing the lot count and reducing the ultimate price point of homes (Section 6.2).

2. As more residential areas of Zebulon mature in the decades ahead, consider a Neighborhood Conservation zoning strategy to protect the integrity of older, established neighborhoods where limited change is desired, or for careful oversight of infill and reinvestment activity, and to recognize the unique attributes of particular neighborhoods.



Single-family home rentals can be a sign of neighborhood change warranting attention.

3. Having already made accessory dwelling units (ADUs) a permitted use in various zoning district subject to particular standards (UDO Section 4.4.7), continue to monitor trends and best practices for managing ADU activity with so much attention on this niche housing option across the nation and within the urban planning community. The same applies to short-term rental activity and parameters for preventing adverse neighborhood effects.
4. Along with routine feedback received through development review, approval and permitting processes, seek input periodically from the real estate, development and builder communities on ways the Town’s development regulations, standards and/or processes help to promote or may work against Zebulon’s housing objectives, especially with standard market trends and economic conditions over time.

Partnerships and Coordination

1. With the extent of new housing supply in Zebulon, pursue efforts in partnership with GlaxoSmithKline and other major employers to entice more workers to consider living locally and make them more aware of local amenities and resources.
2. Continue regular interaction with Wake County and other municipalities included in the County’s Urban Entitlement Community framework, and through Zebulon’s three-year cooperation agreements with the County, especially to advocate for the Town’s fair share of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other grant funding for affordable housing and rental assistance, neighborhood improvements (e.g., streets and sidewalks) and assistance to target populations (e.g., seniors, disabled, homeless, etc.).
3. Maintain a positive and productive relationship with Preservation Zebulon to advance shared heritage planning and neighborhood preservation priorities including potential incentive methods and/or recognition for those reinvesting in and upgrading older homes.
4. To continue living up to Zebulon’s motto as the “Town of Friendly People” even as the town grows in people and territory, coordinate with community organizations, the local faith community and others to welcome newcomers into the Zebulon community, raising

their awareness of events, family activities and “things to do,” along with opportunities to plug in for networking and volunteer service.

5. Maintain ongoing outreach to and communication with home owner associations (HOAs) and also to areas without HOAs or other organized means for neighborhood-level interaction with Town officials and staff. Consider hosting an annual Neighborhoods Summit as a high point for such outreach, to promote networking across neighborhoods and to funnel input into the Town’s annual budgeting and capital improvements planning.
6. Maintain relationships with local and regional real estate/development representatives and with economic development entities that recognize housing attainability as critical to community success, public school system viability and the fiscal sustainability of local government. Especially continue to promote opportunities to anchor neighborhoods with public school campuses.
7. Partner with the faith community, Habitat for Humanity of Wake County and other community-based or non-profit efforts to address low-income housing needs in Zebulon, especially through “sweat equity” approaches and to assist owners of older homes with rehabilitation and repair.

More Targeted Planning / Study

1. Within the framework of this CLUP and other Town plans, complete concise neighborhood plans in a prioritized series over multiple years (also as a basis for crafting area-specific Neighborhood Conservation zoning standards if and when pursued).
2. Through the Town’s new economic development position and other partner agencies and organizations, continue to track key housing market and socioeconomic indicators and trend data relative to CLUP priorities and to monitor for emerging issues or needs. Through public input to this plan, the need to educate the community about the impact of regional growth on eastern Wake County affordability was noted. At some point a more in-depth housing study and plan might be appropriate for Zebulon, but likely not until the current wave of new housing construction moderates.
3. Also monitor other area cost-of-living indicators beyond monthly mortgage and rental payments including local government factors such as appraisals, tax rates, utility rates and differences in such factors between in-Town and unincorporated areas.
4. Amid the ongoing popularity of retiring to the Carolinas, continue to assess Zebulon’s retirement community potential and the factors that shape this advantage and perception as tracked by various organizations and media outlets (e.g., retirenc.com, AARP-American Association of Retired Persons, agefriendly.com, etc.).

Partners

Additional partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Housing and Neighborhoods include:

- North Carolina Housing Coalition.
- Raleigh Regional Association of Realtors.
- Faith community.
- Habitat for Humanity of Wake County.
- Preservation Zebulon.
- Wake County Historic Preservation Commission.
- Capital Area Preservation.
- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce.



U.S. Housing Supply Shortfall

As this CLUP was moving toward public hearing and adoption, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (“Freddie Mac”) in April 2021 released an analysis showing the U.S. housing market was behind on meeting national demand for single-family homes by 3.8 million units. Due to various factors besides the COVID-19 pandemic, this gap between supply and demand had increased by 52 percent since 2018. This shortage of new housing is especially impactful to prospective first-time home buyers and is detrimental to U.S. economic growth according to Freddie Mac’s chief economist.

With its current residential construction boom, Zebulon stands apart from various communities of its size and position that have seen a dramatic drop-off in volume home building since the Great Recession of 2007-09. This slowdown was sometimes due to lack of developable lots, availability and cost of labor and materials, consolidation of building in larger and faster-growing markets for efficiencies, and a focus on higher-end custom home construction, among other factors.

SOURCE: “U.S. Housing Market Is Nearly 4 Million Homes Short of Buyer Demand.” Nicole Friedman, Wall Street Journal. April 15, 2021.

Quality Neighborhood Design

As with economic development, where municipal government helps to ensure a positive and supportive “business climate” for commercial and industrial investment, the Town has an essential role in promoting adequate and affordable housing development in quality neighborhood settings. The Town’s development and subdivision regulations help to ensure sound design practices, and the zoning regulations determine the range of housing types that may be built in the community, and where and in what amounts. These are critical functions given the proportion of developed land in Zebulon that, as in most communities, is already devoted to residential use or intended for such use as shown on the Future Land Use and Character map in this CLUP.



Homes oriented toward a central green with rear garage access.

Effective land use planning and management also balances the convenience of shopping and services in close proximity to neighborhoods with the need to ensure compatible non-residential development near homes. Capital investments by the Town and others in infrastructure, public facilities and parks and trails provide the framework for private development to bring needed new dwellings to market. Furthermore, housing options and value are a key ingredient for economic development success – and that success, in turn, drives further housing demand, including for “move-up” homes when local income growth increases purchasing power and lifestyle aspirations.

Contemporary subdivision design too often overlooks the time-honored elements of what makes a neighborhood appealing and sustainable for the long term. Typical features of a quality neighborhood design include:

- **Some focal point**, whether a park or central green, school, community center, place of worship or small-scale commercial activity, that enlivens the neighborhood and provides a gathering place.
- **Equal importance of pedestrian and vehicular circulation.** Street design accommodates, but also calms, necessary automobile traffic. Sidewalks along or away from streets, and/or a network of off-street trails, provide for pedestrian and bicycle circulation (especially for school children) and promote interconnectivity of adjacent neighborhoods.
- A **variety of dwelling types** to address a range of needs among potential residents (based on age, income level, household size, etc.).
- **Access to schools, recreation and daily conveniences** within relatively close proximity to the neighborhood, if not within or at its edges (such as along bordering major streets).
- An **effective street layout** that provides multiple paths to external destinations (and critical access for emergency vehicles) while also discouraging non-local or cut-through traffic.
- **Appealing streetscapes**, whether achieved through street trees or other design elements, which “soften” an otherwise intensive atmosphere and draw residents to enjoy common areas of their neighborhood. This should include landscape designs consistent with local climate and vegetation.



Corner neighborhood eatery amid attached housing (right).



Access between homes to a community trail system and amenity area from neighborhood

Landscaped medians with markers and distinctive lighting (left) help define a new neighborhood, as does a landmark feature at a high-profile



- Compatibility of fringe or adjacent uses, or **measures to buffer the neighborhood** from incompatible development.
- Evident **definition of the neighborhood “unit”** through recognizable identity and edges, without going so far (through walls and other physical barriers) as to establish “fortress” neighborhoods.



- Set-aside of **conservation areas, greenbelts or other open space** as an amenity, to encourage leisure and healthful living and to contribute to neighborhood buffering and definition.
- **Use of local streets for parking** to reduce the lot area that must be devoted to driveways and garages and for the traffic calming benefits of on-street parking.
- **Respect for historic sites and structures** and incorporation of such assets into neighborhood design.

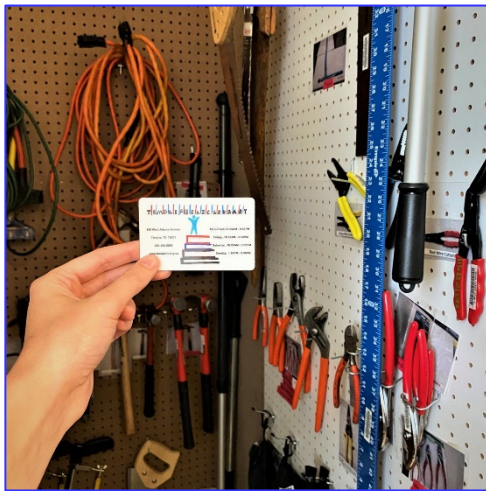


Supporting Older Neighborhoods Too

Best practices and success stories in neighborhood protection and revitalization abound across the country. As one example, the City of Temple, Texas, targets its resources and efforts through a Transform Temple Department within municipal government that “focuses on preserving, enhancing and engaging Temple neighborhoods and helping residents to access City services and

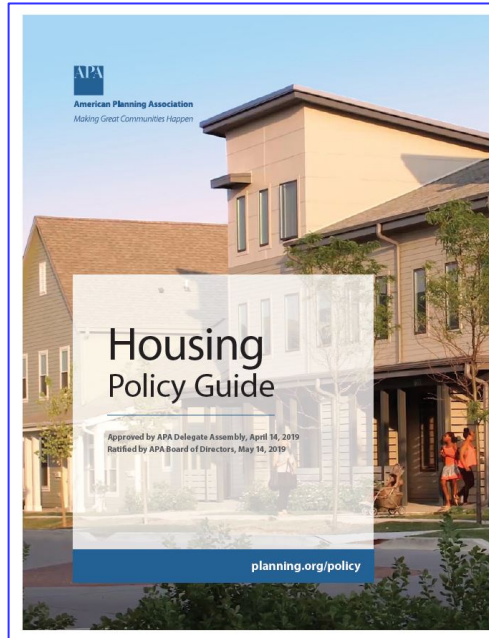
programs. The mission of the Department is to improve and maintain neighborhood vitality through enhanced communication and education.”

A signature program of the Department is its Temple Tool Library. The Tool Library provides residents access to tools to maintain and improve their homes by offering a “lending library” of tools. Through a no-cost membership and use of a City public library card, Temple residents can borrow tools that may otherwise be too costly to purchase. More information is available on the City website (<https://www.templetx.gov/departments/>).

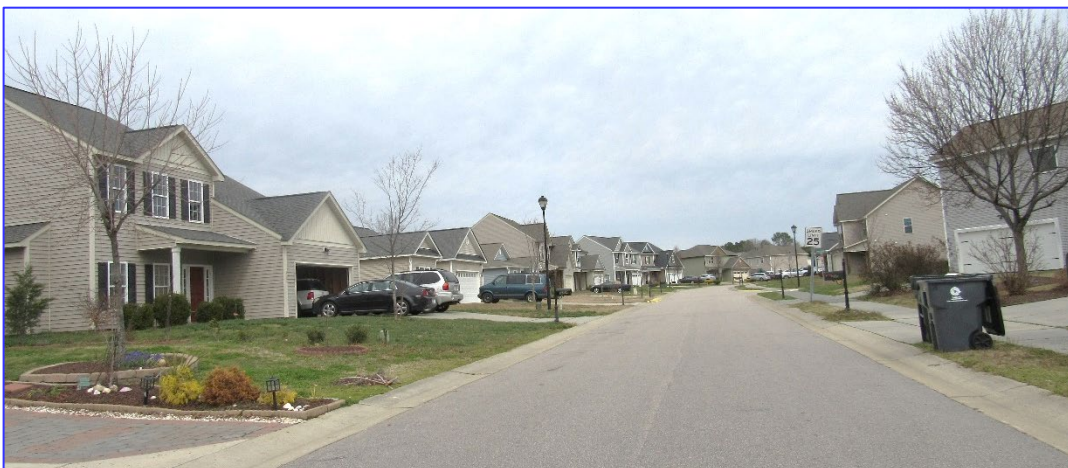


Housing Policy Options

Zebulon is not alone in its housing issues and needs. Many communities across the nation are grappling with housing affordability, housing production and changing housing needs. The American Planning Association (APA) publishes policy guides on a range of planning issues. The policy guides lay out principles of good planning and are used by both APA and planners across the country to advocate for the adopted positions and principles contained within the guides. Keeping abreast of national trends and best practices can help Zebulon position itself to take advantage of resources as they become available. The 2019 APA Housing Policy Guide contains the following five high-level policy positions:



- **Position 1:** Modernize state and local laws to ensure housing opportunities are available, accessible, and affordable to all.
- **Position 2:** Preserve existing housing to maintain the quality and overall supply of affordable housing.
- **Position 3:** Encourage environmental sustainability and resiliency as critical elements of housing availability and affordability.
- **Position 4:** Ensure that public and private finance keeps pace and innovates to support increased housing availability and affordability.
- **Position 5:** Support funding and program flexibility to provide services, shelters, and permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, veterans, immigrants, and the formerly incarcerated.



Neighborhood scene in Braemar subdivision in west Zebulon.

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ZEBULON TOMORROW

Economic Development



Introduction

This plan section highlights that Zebulon is part of a broader metropolitan economy centered on Raleigh and the Research Triangle, with Zebulon serving as a growing eastern Wake County hub community, employment base and a new living option for more metro area residents. The Town, the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce and other partners continue to work on key economic development factors they can directly influence, whether involving utility infrastructure availability and capacity, the size and skills of the local workforce, networking and support among existing and prospective new local businesses, and processes for obtaining development approvals and permits.

Local governments create synergy by providing basic public services, on the one hand, while also pursuing economic development initiatives. Increased economic activity that creates a growing tax base better enables the Town to provide the infrastructure and services desired by residents and businesses. In turn, the services, infrastructure and amenities the Town provides are enticements that encourage further economic growth. Well-constructed economic development policies will provide Town government the greatest opportunity to influence the quality, quantity and timing of development. Such policies will create the ability to shift some of the risk of funding public improvements to private sector partners and will afford the opportunity to ensure growth pays for itself.

Successful economic development also requires a focus on quality of place, capitalizing on Zebulon's special character and often-cited "charm" to attract and retain businesses and high-skilled workers and to draw visitors seeking shopping, services, entertainment, recreation, arts and culture, and heritage tourism. During discussions for this CLUP it was often noted that Zebulon has entered a new era of residential growth after an earlier time of being known more for its business and employment base. As this transition continues, Zebulon also has the opportunity to build a more comprehensive and sophisticated approach to economic development as it is doing in other areas of governance and collaboration appropriate to a growing community.



Defining Economic Development

Economic development is a shared effort between local governments and the business community with the mutual benefit of increased economic activity and revenue.

At the core of all economic development programs is to attract and retain businesses, create jobs, stabilize and grow the local tax base, and enhance local quality of life. To achieve these goals, economic development programs encompass a wide range of activities:

- Business retention and expansion assistance.
- Business recruitment.
- Marketing and branding.
- Small business development.
- “Economic gardening” (a data-centric approach to identifying and assisting local high-growth companies).
- Incentives.
- Workforce development.
- Tourism, including cultural (art, historic, music).
- Improved public services, processes and infrastructure.

Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Zebulon Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, a set of **10 Plan Priorities** was identified based on input from the Town’s Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, other community stakeholders, the results of varied public engagement activities, and Town staff and the consultant team. Seven of the 10 strategic items are most relevant to the Economic Development portion of the CLUP:

- Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways.
- Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
- Secure new and renewed partnerships.
- Steer Downtown momentum.
- Protect and reinforce community character.
- Build community – ONE community.
- Think BIG but share costs wisely.



Framework for Action

This Framework for Action section builds off of the Plan Priorities highlighted above. The actions below involve tangible steps that will, in the long run, lead to achievement of the goals in this Economic Development section in line with the plan's Guiding Principles.

Goals for Economic Development

1. An economically resilient community with a diverse yet stable economic base, an environment that supports both entrepreneurs and established businesses, and a local real estate market attractive to emerging investment, job creation and development opportunities.
2. A town that remains the unquestioned hub community for eastern Wake County as a multi-purpose destination and center of employment, commerce, government services, education, culture and recreational and leisure activities for residents and visitors.
3. Community infrastructure that supports ongoing economic development momentum including utilities, transportation, technology, education and housing.
4. A new regional destination within Zebulon in the form of a recreation, leisure and hospitality district centered on Five County Stadium.
5. A revived Downtown that is the vital heart of Zebulon and remains so even as retail and business development emerges near new residential rooftops across the community.

Policies for Economic Development

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters and physical improvements, among others, Zebulon will:

- A. Embrace the Town’s public sector role of facilitating private investment, sometimes by leading with strategic public investments that also involve risk and, at times, a longer timeframe to return on that investment.

- B. As part of building a deeper economic development function within Town government, evaluate all available public sector tools, techniques and financing methods for spurring private sector interest and reinvestment in vacant and underutilized non-residential properties, to pursue those best suited to Zebulon.
- C. Maintain a regulatory framework and Town processes that signals its interest in attracting target business sectors, needed and compatible revenue-generating uses, and lifestyle and leisure uses that support Zebulon’s livability and residents’ quality of life.
- D. Determine whether economic development prospects are compatible with adopted Town plans, policies and regulations and can be accommodated with adequate public infrastructure and services.
- E. Emphasize economic development pursuits that will further diversify the local economic and tax bases and avoid over-reliance on a few major businesses and employers.
- F. Continue to appreciate the economic engine reflected in the Research Triangle, and continue to build on this regional identity and asset in Zebulon’s own development and business climate efforts, aiming for eastern Wake “wins” with other nearby communities.
- G. Make tourism promotion an increasing focus within its overall economic development portfolio, in support of initiatives elsewhere in this CLUP and the Town’s Strategic Plan to make Zebulon more of a destination and offer visitors a memorable experience.
- H. Take greater advantage of its two greatest underutilized economic assets – Downtown Zebulon and Five County Stadium – and the spin-off investment they can generate within the broader community. [Note that Five County Stadium is a special focus of this Economic Development section while Downtown receives greater focus in the Recreation and Amenities section.]
- I. Support a “community of learning,” in coordination with education and workforce development partners, in which quality primary and secondary education, vocational and higher education, lifelong continuing education and other educational resources are valued and accessible to Zebulon residents.
- J. Continue to educate residents and other stakeholders about the Town’s financial outlook and constraints amid growth and increasing demands for services and amenities, and the benefits of an enhanced and diversified tax based through growth.
- K. Continue to promote a “stay local, buy local” mentality as Zebulon adds to its retail, service and restaurant options in the years ahead.



Actions

Capital Investments

1. As part of a more formalized capital improvements planning process, establish criteria for identifying projects that will most effectively advance Zebulon’s economic development agenda, with appropriate timing and means of funding. This should include potential facility and capital projects illustrated by the Five County Stadium scenarios in this CLUP section, along with key projects in the new Comprehensive Transportation Plan.



Retention is Job One

According to the International Economic Development Council, estimates show that it takes eight times the effort (in staff time, marketing trips, site tours, etc.) to attract a new business than it takes to retain an existing one.



Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that 70 percent of new jobs in the U.S. are created by existing businesses. These facts highlight the importance of working with existing companies as local engines of job creation.

SOURCE: Congressional Research Service, Small Business Administration and Job Creation.

2. Explore grant and technical assistance opportunities through the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office, under the state Department of Information Technology, for promoting fiber and technology investments and upgrades, along with digital inclusion efforts. The Office also offers a clearinghouse of information on federal grants and opportunities through non-profits and foundations (at the time of this CLUP, found at <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/grants/other-resources>).

Programs and Initiatives

1. Hire a first-time Economic Development Director as called for in the Town's Strategic Plan. Individuals in this position typically are:
 - **A Primary Point of Contact.** The Director should be the lead voice for all outgoing communications and incoming inquiries related to economic development in Zebulon. This role should be closely coordinated with the Town Manager, who is also often a first contact for external inquiries, and the Chamber of Commerce. This includes:
 - › Following up promptly and effectively to inquiries from all potential investment and job creation prospects.
 - › Maintaining a database of past and current prospects by employing customer relationship management (CRM) software.
 - › Knowing "the competition" well and being an enthusiastic purveyor of Zebulon's story and the unique strengths and amenities it has to offer.
 - › Reporting regularly to the Board of Commissioners and Zebulon community on economic development progress, results and next steps, including through use of quantitative indicators, selected performance metrics and other "report card" measures (e.g., tax revenues by type, job creation/retention, value of investments made, income/wages, etc.).
 - **An Aggressive Networker.** The Director should be plugged into numerous networks that are crucial to economic development practice, including elected officials (and key staff), public agencies, organizations, business and trade groups, and other economic development professionals at the local, regional, state and national levels.
 - **A Key Data and Information Resource.** The Director should be the key contact for all essential market, development and other pertinent community data about Zebulon. The Director should also be highly knowledgeable of other data and information resources about the area, available through other agencies and entities. This includes focusing especially on marketing and informational outreach to new and growing businesses within the target industry sectors identified for Zebulon, based on keen knowledge of their needs involving space, infrastructure, transportation, workforce skills, technology and other location and investment factors.
 - **The Lead for Plan Implementation and Maintenance.** The Director should be the lead individual and primary advocate for executing the Town's Economic Development Plan (once adopted), through ongoing Board of Commissioners interaction and guidance and through an annual work program and budget. This includes:
 - › Interacting routinely with Town management and staff on annual and capital budgeting and priority improvements, other Town programs and initiatives most relevant to economic development priorities, and promoting quality development

in Zebulon while assisting developers of desired and beneficial projects to navigate the Town's approval and permitting procedures in a smooth and timely manner.

- › Tying the target industry sectors for Zebulon directly into an economic development incentives strategy that optimizes future recruitment and attraction efforts.
 - › Managing any special study efforts involving contracted consultants.
- **An Image and Branding Monitor.** If not leading them, the Director should routinely monitor all activities by the Town and other local and area partners and entities that help to shape public, business/development community and opinion leader perceptions of Zebulon and its image, reputation, assets and challenges, and accomplishments. This includes lending direct or in-kind support to other organizations that plan and host local community events that appeal to both residents and visitors to Zebulon.
2. Nurture local economic and employment gaps, such as medical facilities/services and lodging (cited through input to this CLUP) plus other target business sectors to be identified through the Economic Development Plan discussed below under More Targeted Planning/Study.
 3. Create or reinvigorate a leadership development program through the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce, with a particular focus on recruiting young adult business and community leaders to participate in and promote the program. In other communities this has led to an ongoing formalized structure for young and emerging leaders to collaborate and channel volunteer enthusiasm and effort into strategic initiatives (one example is the Claremore Collective in Claremore, Oklahoma, <http://www.claremorecollective.com/>).



COLLECTIVE
HOME
LEADERSHIP TEAM
GET INVOLVED!

BRIDGING *The* GAP

WE THE COLLECTIVE
Claremore Collective is a group of diverse young professionals and next-level talent.

WE ARE ASSEMBLED
as one voice to move our city forward and focus on a few key areas:

INITIATIVES

4. As part of Downtown and overall economic development planning, explore opportunities for shared work spaces for young workers, startups and others, which was cited as a local need through input to this CLUP (including convenient support services such as day care).



Partners

Partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Economic Development include:

- North Carolina Department of Commerce – NC Main Street, Rural Planning Center.
- Neighboring jurisdictions, Wake and other counties.
- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce.
- Area real estate, development, business and entrepreneur community.
- Wake County Economic Development – Raleigh Chamber.
- Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.
- Capital Area Workforce Development.
- Wake County Public School System.
- Wake County Technical College – Eastern Wake Education Center.

5. Implement the results of the Town’s branding initiative, which was ongoing during preparation of this CLUP.
6. As part of addressing community image and aesthetics to support economic development, consider ways to incentivize upgrades to older retail centers and commercial properties while also monitoring ongoing upheaval in the retail sector.
7. Continue to monitor state legislation affecting economic development best practices and tools for North Carolina municipalities.

Regulations and Standards

1. Continue advancing the overall Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) purposes and applying specific provisions relevant to this Economic Development section including:
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.5. regarding establishing a unique “sense of place” in eastern Wake County, including through Downtown revitalization.
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.6. regarding promoting a strong and diverse economy by emphasizing “high-quality, aesthetically-appealing development and site features as a means of attracting and retaining talent and promoting the Town’s economic competitiveness.”
2. Continue to assist small businesses and building owners to navigate code requirements and other potential challenges to locating in and renovating spaces within older and/or historic structures.

Partnerships and Coordination

1. Continue active participation in regional economic development organizations to advance Zebulon’s interests; and likewise, continue to foster relationships with and support local economic development organizations, especially the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce as it was transitioning to new leadership at the time of this CLUP. Also regularly update Zebulon’s profile on the Wake County Economic Development website.
2. Continue to strengthen and grow partnerships involving:
 - [Regional economic development planning, programs and initiatives](#) administered by the Triangle J Council of Governments through its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and its seven-county Economic Development District established in 2018 (including Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Orange and Wake counties), along with Wake County Economic Development.
 - [Education and workforce training](#) with the Wake County Public School System, area private schools, Wake County Technical College and Capital Area Workforce Development.
 - [Commercial property prospects](#) with property owners, brokers and developers to keep abreast of their plans and desires for their properties.
 - [Insights about the area economy and local business needs or challenges](#) through a major employers and small business owners roundtable that meets periodically.
 - [Tourism promotion and marketing coordination](#) through ongoing interaction with Visit Raleigh (Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau), Visit NC (Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina) and the Carolina Mudcats, among others.

3. Pursue establishment of an NCWorks Career Center location in Zebulon, in partnership with Capital Area Workforce Development.
4. Continue to explore options for improving on plan review, permitting and inspection processes between the Town and Wake County.
5. Pursue opportunities to build on the Town's Interactive Development Map as an economic development and site/building inventory tool, tapping into data and mapping available through Wake County/City of Raleigh iMaps and other regional and state economic development entities.

Partners

Additional partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Economic Development include:

- Triangle J Council of Governments – Community and Economic Development.
- Social & Economic Vitality (Wake County Human Services).
- Carolina Mudcats.
- Visit Raleigh – Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau.
- Visit NC, through the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.
- Area utility and Internet service providers.

Targeting Poverty in Eastern Wake County

Social & Economic Vitality is a collaborative initiative that aims to eliminate inter-generational poverty in Southeast Raleigh and eastern Wake County (Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon). Strategies are holistic in nature and support thriving families, nonprofits, businesses and communities.

In 2015, the Wake County Long-Range Planning Department conducted an analysis to determine the extent to which communities across Wake County experience various "vulnerability factors," such as high poverty, high unemployment, low educational attainment, along with "economic health factors" such as housing cost burden and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollment. Through the analysis, it became clear that communities in and around Southeast Raleigh, Knightdale, Wendell and Zebulon experience greater vulnerability and economic stress than other areas of the county.

As a result, in 2016, the Wake County Board of Commissioners determined that a targeted, geographically-focused investment called Social & Economic Vitality (SEV) would be made to improve long-term outcomes in those particular communities. SEV is led in partnership by Wake County Human Services and NC Cooperative Extension - Wake County Center, with critical support provided by community members and partners.

SOURCE: Wake County Human Services Department website

(<https://www.wakegov.com/departments-government/human-services/about-human-services/social-economic-vitality>)

More Targeted Planning / Study

1. Prepare a full Economic Development Plan to confirm target industry sectors and identify tools and strategies that will capitalize on Zebulon's strengths to attract, retain and grow businesses in these and other sectors. The plan can also examine gaps in retail and other business sectors and assess leakage in retail sales and revenue. The plan can also help guide the development of vacant land, infill development and redevelopment, and investment and revitalization along key roadway corridors. The plan should also include links to planning for infrastructure, historic preservation, arts and culture, and tourism promotion. Zebulon may be eligible for technical assistance and/or funding available through the Community Strategic Planning program of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, through the same Division that oversees the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center programs.



2. Using input from existing local businesses, pursue a strategic marketing plan based on identified assets, advantages and services that can help attract targeted new businesses and retail customers to Zebulon.
3. Prepare a special area plan for the Five County Stadium vicinity, building on the principles and conceptual scenarios in this CLUP section, including a robust marketing and year-round programming component.
4. Coordinate with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Triangle J Council of Governments, Wake County Economic Development or any other entities that may conduct more localized data collection or studies to quantify daytime populations.

SPECIAL FOCUS: Five County Stadium and Vicinity

Stadium Background

After moving the Class A Minor League baseball team from Columbus, Georgia – the Mudcats – to North Carolina in 1991, owner and North Carolina businessman Steve Bryant wanted a new stadium to be home to the team. Consideration for the stadium included the location of other existing teams, such as the Durham Bulls, and prioritized public accessibility. With these and other factors in mind, a site three miles east of Zebulon’s downtown and approximately 27 miles east of Raleigh was selected for construction. The design of the 6,500 seat stadium focused on traditional ballpark style with metal seating, covered areas for fans and a closed-in field. Cattails Restaurant and a group party area titled “Catfish Landing” are incorporated into the stadium design and follow the fishing theme. The stadium primarily functions as the home of the Mudcats but also hosts the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Baseball Championships each year and some other entertainment events.

While the stadium provides a location for baseball and occasional other events in the region, its surroundings lack the features of a destination to attract Zebulon residents and other visitors to the area beyond baseball games. Recognizing this challenge and the need to make the stadium vicinity more of a destination, the Town of Zebulon’s Vision 2030 Strategic Plan calls for more year-round community events and festivals, specifically citing Five County Stadium as a location for these events along with Downtown. Public input from the Strategic Plan engagement process expands on this idea of the stadium area as a destination with additional ideas such as tourism promotion, incorporating other types of athletic venues nearby and capitalizing on the highway access and vacant land in this part of Zebulon.

Strengths and Challenges of Five County Stadium Area

To create a destination and a location where Zebulon residents and visitors from across the Raleigh metropolitan area and points east will want to travel year-round, the strengths and challenges of the existing site and surrounding context must be understood. These are described below.

Strengths

- Good proximity to and vehicular access from U.S. 264.
- Not much competition from other stadiums or sports in the area, so Five County Stadium and the Mudcats games become more of a draw.
- Vacant land on and near the site, including across the U.S. 264 overpass, creates an opportunity for new development to strengthen the stadium area as a destination.

Five County Frankness

As one patron noted, “Five County Stadium appears to be an island. If you stumble out here, it’s to watch a game. There is no dining or other attraction that will bring you near this area ... if someone isn’t local to the area, they probably would not spend entertainment dollars with the Mudcats.”

Ballpark Reviews

<http://www.ballparkadventures.com/fivecountystadium.html>



Aerial view of distance between Downtown Zebulon on left and Five County Stadium on right.

- The new master-planned Sidney Creek development south of the stadium along N.C. 39 will bring more full-time residents to the area, which means more rooftops to support retail and restaurants year-round.
- A greenway connecting Five County Stadium to Downtown Zebulon is proposed as part of the 2015 Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and would help make the area more accessible to cyclists and pedestrians.

Challenges

- The intersection of Old U.S. 264 and N.C. 39, where the stadium is located, has frequent semi-truck traffic turning into and out of the U.S. Foods distribution center, making the intersection difficult for bicycles and pedestrians to navigate.
- Existing parking on the stadium site is sprawling and unpaved – while recognizing the stadium use requires substantial surface parking.
- The property directly north of the stadium, across Old U.S. 264, is relatively shallow and may be difficult for significant new development.
- The railroad and wastewater treatment plant to the south of the stadium create a physical constraint for development along this edge of the stadium property.
- Old U.S. 264 is the main route from central Zebulon to the stadium but is currently an unattractive route for reaching the destination.
- Current access to the stadium is limited to vehicles rather than providing a range of options including bike paths and pedestrian accessibility.

Case Studies

While Five County Stadium exhibits a unique set of strengths, challenges and opportunities, similar athletic stadiums and event centers around the country offer potential ideas for how to enhance the stadium area to become more of a destination. In searching for similar locations, the following design characteristics were prioritized:

- **Use:** Minor league baseball stadiums began as the research focus, but this expanded to include other similar sites such as soccer stadiums and county fairgrounds.
- **Size:** The size of the primary event space goes hand in hand with the use. However, for uses other than a minor league baseball stadium, ensuring that the space did not greatly exceed a 6,500 seat capacity was the goal.
- **Location:** The initial search for case studies focused on identifying stadiums in similar settings – near a community, but at least a few miles away from a city center or other major development. However, many comparable stadiums are situated in downtown settings. Although this context is very different than that of Five County Stadium, there are still many lessons to be learned. These lessons were specifically focused on determining how the space became a destination on its own, while still connecting to the community through a variety of modes of transportation.



SRP Park is bordered to the south by a river and to the east by a highway. New development, including a hotel and parking structure, are beginning to take shape on the site.

A landscaped median and special paving separate SRP Park and the hotel with dining.

The amphitheater south of SRP Park includes tiered seating, which also connects to the greenway trail.

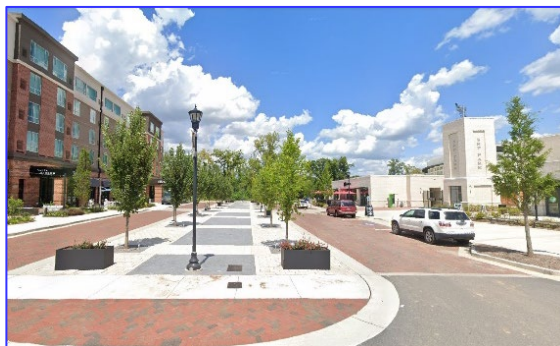
When the above conditions were met or nearly met, the focus turned to learning from the development as a destination. The two case studies below outline key takeaways from event center examples in South Carolina and Montana.

SRP Park in North Augusta, South Carolina

Situated on the Savannah River between Augusta, Georgia, and North Augusta, South Carolina, SRP Park is home to the Augusta GreenJackets, a minor league affiliate of the San Francisco Giants. The stadium is located closer to the two cities than the relationship of Five County Stadium to Downtown Zebulon (approximately 0.5 miles from North Augusta’s city center and one mile from Augusta’s Broad Street). However, the geography of the area creates some similar conditions in which the minor league stadium appears

isolated from adjacent development to the north and south. In addition to the construction of the stadium in 2018, this development incorporates a “main street,” which utilizes special paving and a landscaped median to slow traffic and focus the design on pedestrian movement between the stadium and the hotel that sits opposite the stadium. The ground level of the hotel is also home to a restaurant with outdoor dining, along with other outdoor seating.

Similar to how Five County Stadium occasionally hosts concerts, an amphitheater adjacent to the development creates an opportunity for outdoor events and concerts. However, the North Augusta Riverfront Amphitheater is designed in an intentional way that incorporates large steps for seating and a paved stage. A greenway trail borders the southern portion of the amphitheater and leads directly to an entrance to SRP Park, creating easy access to events at this complex for



cyclists and pedestrians. Additional residential development to the east and west of SRP Park appears to be underway and is connected to the circulation system that accesses the stadium.



Ogren Park at Allegiance Field in Missoula, Montana

Ogren Park, home to the Missoula Osprey, sits across the Clark Fork River from downtown Missoula. While the distance from downtown is relatively short as the crow flies, in order to access the park, one must travel around the recreational complex to the Orange Street Bridge. Along with Ogren Park, the recreational complex features a large park, aquatics center, playground, fishing pond, skatepark and athletic fields and is surrounded by the Riverfront Trail. Mixed-use development featuring restaurants, cafes, fitness centers, condominiums and student living was recently constructed to the south of Ogren Park. Just outside of the recreational complex, but still within walking distance of Ogren Park, is the Montana Natural History Center. The combination of open space, recreational and leisure activities, and dining choices, accessible by car, bike and foot, creates a unique destination just outside of Missoula's downtown.

Common Adjacent Uses and Features

While no other stadium is exactly like Five County Stadium in its features, many other minor league baseball stadiums incorporate nearby adjacent uses to assist in creating a destination. Some of these uses could be considered for the vacant land adjacent to and near Five County Stadium. Such uses and features include:

- Other athletic facilities – such as soccer fields, tennis courts, a skatepark and additional baseball fields – that are primarily outdoors although some indoor facilities are included.
- Fishing pond.
- Indoor gym facility.
- Community center.

Ogren Park sits south of the Clark Fork River and is near a developing mixed-use area.

- Dog park.
- Skyzone or Adventure Park.
- Amusement park and water park.
- Horse racing track.
- Hotels, typically with ground floor restaurants accessible to the public.
- Dining options including restaurants, cafes and bars.
- Mixed-use or residential development (medium to high density).
- Outdoor event spaces including an amphitheater.
- Accessibility through a greenway or trail system.
- Government offices, often the Parks and Recreation Department building.

Principles for Turning the Five County Stadium Area into a Destination

To transform the Five County Stadium area into a destination that attracts visitors from around the region, a variety of uses, site designs and features could be incorporated. However, each possibility should begin with the following principles:

Connectivity

The Five County Stadium complex should be better connected to Downtown and central Zebulon, especially for cycling and pedestrian circulation. It should also be accessible to and from developing, complementary areas around the nearby U.S. 264 interchange.

Profile

The Five County Stadium location should be easily recognizable for visitors and highway travelers through more prominent signage and gateway design treatments (e.g., potential U.S. 264 freeway overpass enhancements, banners, distinctive lighting, gateway monument signage and landscaping, etc.).

Site Development

Future development of available space on the stadium site should emphasize uses that draw regular activity beyond stadium events. Suggestions through the CLUP process included an indoor recreation facility unique to eastern Wake County or an indoor meeting/event space.

Pedestrian Orientation

Design of the stadium site, nearby mixed-use sites and the public realm between them should emphasize walkability and bicycle/pedestrian safety. This should include reducing or breaking up large, undefined areas of surface parking and possibly taking advantage of opportunities to move some parking off-site, to the north side of Old U.S. 264, to make more productive use of the stadium site.

Programming

Along with non-baseball events, concerts and other uses of the stadium, the Five County Stadium site should be regularly programmed for hosting other community and visitor-oriented events, especially for outdoor activities during conducive times of the year – and for winter-oriented events during the colder months. Such events should be coordinated with planned activities

Downtown to encourage longer, multi-purpose stays in Zebulon and avoid detracting from Downtown visitation and vibrancy.

Conceptual Scenario Planning

The principles for creating a destination were applied in two scenarios to envision ways in which the Five County Stadium site and surrounding land can be utilized to create a year-round draw. The scenarios and their key elements are described below.

Scenario 1

Scenario 1 focuses on enhancing the Five County Stadium site and vicinity through the introduction of a series of new community-oriented uses to ensure that visitors to the area have many activity options to select from, in addition to attending a game at Five County Stadium.

Stadium Site Development

Scenario 1 proposes new development and outdoor spaces to create a more active site around the stadium. Development focuses on the northwest side of the stadium with a multi-use facility that could include recreational and meeting spaces. Future expansion of the facility to accommodate an indoor or outdoor aquatics center is also proposed, and an adventure center south of the multi-use facility is connected via the potential aquatic center. The adventure center could include a variety of activities such as a trampoline park, mini golf, rock climbing or indoor sky diving.

Parallel to the multi-use center along a “Main Street,” a series of restaurants/cafes/bars/retail shops line the northwest edge of the stadium and can take advantage of the landscaped edge on the rear and/or views into the stadium. The “Main Street” framed by the multi-use facility and the other active uses connects the new parking area across Old U.S. 264 to the stadium entrance and also to the parking area south of the stadium along N.C. 39. Special paving and landscaping for Main Street would draw attention to this key path through the site. While its primary function

would be for pedestrians accessing the stadium and other facilities within the site, it would retain the ability to be utilized for emergency vehicle access and accessible drop-off locations, and it can be repurposed for farmers markets and other outdoor events on non-game days.

In addition to new buildings on the site, outdoor facilities would supplement the multi-use facility and provide opportunities for more events, plus recreational and leisure activities on the southern part of the site. An amphitheater space at the southwest corner of the site would include a partially covered, small stage with wide, terraced steps leading from the Main Street to the stage.

A park setting with amenities such as picnic tables or a small pavilion would be located next to the amphitheater, and it would be bordered to the north by a playground. A skatepark or similarly sized outdoor recreational facility would be tucked into the southeast corner of the property. Two small restroom facilities would be located on the southern portion of the stadium site to service these outdoor functions. Finally, parking would be maintained along the eastern edge of the site and include ADA accessible parking and bicycle parking. Landscaping would be incorporated throughout the site to buffer parking from active uses and to create a more pedestrian-oriented environment.

Proposed Programming

-  “Main Street”
-  Amphitheater (with partially covered stage and terraced seating)
-  Playground
-  Natural park setting
-  Skatepark (or other outdoor activity facility)
-  Multi-use sports/practice fields
-  Outdoor patio space
-  New landscaping

Proposed Development

- 1** Multi-use facility with meeting room space
- 1.5** Potential aquatics center (future expansion of multi-use facility)
- 2** Adventure Center (ie. trampoline park, mini golf, rock climbing, sky diving, etc.)
- 3** Restaurant/cafe/dining/bar or retail
- 4** with outdoor patio space; potential for balcony or rooftop space
- 5** looking to Stadium
- 6** Hotel
- 8** “Traveler/visitor-oriented businesses”
- 9** such as restaurants,
- 10** specialized food shops (ie. ice cream, smoothies, etc.), retail,
- 11** and potential outdoor patio space
- 12** Restroom facility

Hotel Development

Situated diagonally across the Old U.S. 264-N.C. 39 intersection from the stadium is a hotel, which would anchor the vacant land there. This hotel would provide an opportunity for out-of-town fans to attend Mudcats games or other sports tournaments hosted at or near Five County Stadium. The facility also could include space for small conferences or tournament meetings, as well as a restaurant and rooftop deck. Other restaurant and retail options are provided on the hotel site and connected by a pair of outdoor green spaces that could be used for events or leisure activities. Pedestrian pathways would connect each component of this development.

Recreational Facilities

In addition to the hotel, the land northeast from Five County Stadium presents an opportunity for multi-use sports or practice facilities such as baseball or soccer fields. A small restroom and outdoor patio area are included near these facilities.

Connectivity and Transportation








While many people will still utilize Old U.S. 264 or U.S. 264 to access Five County Stadium by car, Scenario 1 also incorporates opportunities to access the site via bike and paths to emphasize the “park once” philosophy. The proposed greenway shows a path from central Zebulon along the railway to access the site, consistent with the Town’s Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This would provide opportunities to cut north around or into the Five County Stadium site or to continue along the rail line to connect with the north-south path running parallel to N.C. 39. Turning north would provide access to bicycle parking, the stadium facilities and nearby hotel, while turning south would provide access to the new Sidney Creek development. The bicycle/pedestrian links could also extend farther north along N.C. 39 to connect the land (and potential future uses) north of U.S. 264 to the stadium site. Bicycle parking accompanies vehicular parking, primarily located along the periphery of the proposed development.

Once pedestrians reach the site, the goal is to enable them to circulate without having to use a vehicle or bicycle. Near the stadium, the “Main Street” pathway would create ample space and direct paths to the stadium and other facilities around the site. Pedestrian pathways between the stadium, parking lots and hotel are included to enhance safety and draw attention to pedestrians as they access events and facilities throughout the Five County Stadium district.



Gateway Monument Signage and Landscaping

Incorporating signage around the stadium site and at key intersections would welcome visitors as they enter the area, assist them in locating specific destinations and parking facilities and create a branding opportunity for the Five County Stadium “District.” The majority of the branding and wayfinding opportunities focus on locations for new signage enhanced by landscaping at key intersections – such as near the on/off ramps for U.S. 264 along N.C. 39 – or entry points into the Stadium District along key corridors – such as Old U.S. 264 and the southern approach along N.C. 39 near the railroad. Enhancing the existing monument sign on the southwest corner of N.C. 39 and Old U.S. 264 is also highlighted as an opportunity.

Connectivity and Transportation

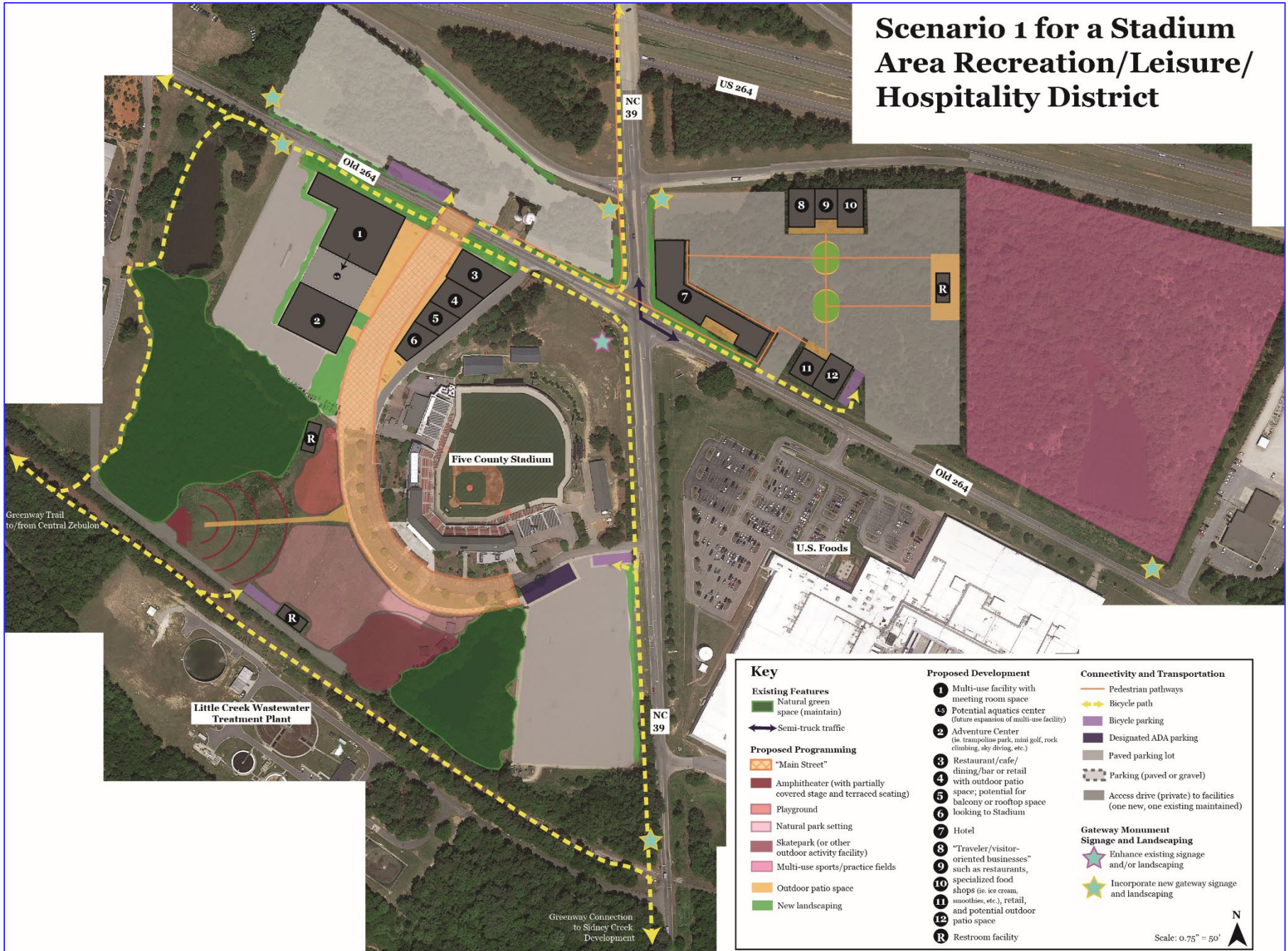
-  Pedestrian pathways
-  Bicycle path
-  Bicycle parking
-  Designated ADA parking
-  Paved parking lot
-  Parking (paved or gravel)
-  Access drive (private) to facilities (one new, one existing maintained)

Gateway Monument Signage and Landscaping

-  Enhance existing signage and/or landscaping
-  Incorporate new gateway signage and landscaping



Scenario 1 for a Stadium Area Recreation/Leisure/Hospitality District



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retain the ability to be utilized for emergency vehicle access and accessible drop-off locations, and it could be repurposed for farmers markets and other outdoor events on non-game days.

South of the Main Street, an amphitheater with a small stage and terraced seating sits in the southeast corner, bordered by the railroad to the south and an existing green space to the east. The remaining space south of the stadium and Main Street remains open space, although small features such as a playground or pavilion, along with restroom facilities and bicycle parking, could be incorporated. A service vehicle drive along the railroad provides necessary access for maintenance and setup vehicles.

Finally, on the far southeast edge of the stadium site, the former gravel parking lot would be repurposed into an activity center with indoor activities (such as bowling, a trampoline park or rock climbing) and an outdoor activity area such as mini golf, go karts or a BMX course. Parking for these facilities would be retained on site, as would ADA accessible parking near the stadium and Main Street.

Community Center and Recreational Facility Development

Across the Old U.S. 264-N.C. 39 intersection from the stadium, the currently vacant property to the northeast would be developed into a multi-use site for tournaments and other activities. A community fitness center anchors the northeast corner of the intersection and includes an outdoor patio and pool. Pedestrian pathways connect the community center to a series of outdoor recreational facilities situated on the eastern portion of this site. Tennis courts and soccer fields are the key focus of these outdoor facilities but are supported by a pavilion and patio area, restrooms, concessions and a playground to occupy visitors during tournament “off” times, or to provide other forms of entertainment.

Connectivity and Transportation

Recognizing that many people will still access the stadium and new entertainment and recreational facilities by car from U.S. 264, Old U.S. 264 or N.C. 39, ample parking areas are provided along the periphery of the site. A large parking area (gravel or paved) would be established north of the stadium site, across Old U.S. 264. The Main Street would provide a pedestrian connection from this parking area to the destinations within the site. Smaller parking areas are located on the northwest and southeast corners of the stadium site, near new development that patrons may access during a Mudcats game or on non-game days. Parking is also provided on the site with the community center and recreational facilities.

Bicycle parking accompanies the vehicular parking areas and is connected to central Zebulon by the greenway trail. This trail also provides bicycle access along N.C. 39 north to the community center and south to the Sidney Creek development.

The goal for the stadium site is that once visitors park their car or bike, they would walk to their destination and not return to their car or bike until they leave the area. With this goal in mind, clearly marked pedestrian pathways are incorporated throughout the stadium area, with crosswalks at proper locations to ensure safe pedestrian movement between facilities.

Appreciating the Importance of Small Businesses

Traditionally, economic development efforts have focused on the "big get" to entice large regional and national job producers. The nationwide fever over the Amazon HQ2 site selection process was a recent high-profile example. These types of opportunities, which are not frequent, spark fierce competition among cities and towns. Unfortunately, smaller communities have difficulty matching the scale of incentives offered by larger jurisdictions and expend valuable resources without big payoffs. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that 52 percent of job growth in the U.S. in recent pre-pandemic years came from small and mid-sized businesses (1-49 and 50-249 employees, respectively) – approximately 22 percent from small and 30 percent from mid-sized businesses. All communities should pay more attention to this key growth segment. Especially smaller communities that may realize a higher success rate as there is likely less competition from communities outside of the local region.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, The Economic Daily.

Supporting Business Startups and the Creative Economy

As Zebulon grows and draws in a more diverse population and workforce, the Town and Chamber of Commerce should focus on supporting an "entrepreneurial pipeline" for local individuals with business creation aspirations. Typical support activities include:

- Helping to identify local growth markets and under-represented business categories.
- Serving as a match-maker between those entering the pipeline and all available business assistance resources in the area.
- Coordinating with educational institutions such as Wake County Technical College, the Wake County Public School System and local private schools to develop entrepreneurial curricula and exposure to real world business situations and opportunities.
- Actively encouraging local businesses and residents to utilize the entrepreneur pipeline.

Along with traditional business "incubator" facilities, local governments and economic development organizations are increasingly developing or recruiting co-working spaces to support early-stage businesses, accommodate resident remote workers and identify local entrepreneurs. As noted in the Actions portion of this plan section, shared work spaces was mentioned as a local need in Zebulon through input to this CLUP. Such spaces are often housed in downtown settings and contribute to an overall revitalization strategy and efforts to bring more synergistic daily activity to an area. Some co-working spaces are managed and operated by a private entity while others are only hosted in a private lease space but overseen by a public agency, educational institution or a non-profit.

The term "co-working space" has evolved to encompass a variety of other shared work space models. Examples include:

- Food halls;
- Maker spaces;
- Incubators and accelerators; and
- Farmer's markets and other merchant-oriented spaces.

Driven by Data

Businesses base their location decisions on a variety of factors such as existing workforce skills and programs, site availability, access to transportation networks, and utility and infrastructure capacity. Retailers also focus on median income, disposable income, population size and density, and spending patterns. Municipal governments have little control over some of these factors. However, using this data can help determine where to focus economic development efforts and incentive policies.

The most effective economic development initiatives focus on unique community strengths and local advantages to businesses locating in your town.

At their core, all of these spaces offer their users an alternate location to start or grow a business. The primary benefit for businesses is the relatively low overhead (no insurance, utility costs, property taxes, etc.). Not all of the models above are a good fit for every community. However, one or more of these co-working spaces may help boost the entrepreneurial pipeline in Zebulon, factor into Downtown revitalization efforts and also support residents who will continue as mostly remote workers even after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides.



Incubator

Business incubators are geared toward speeding up the growth and success of startup and early-stage companies. In addition to physical space offered at a co-working facility, incubators include more business assistance services such as mentoring, links to investors and technological help.

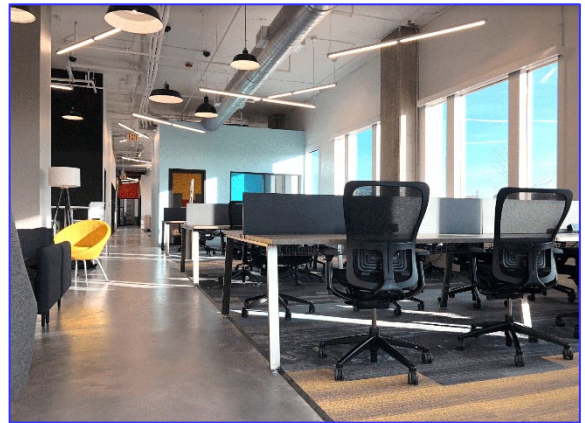
SOURCE: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/encyclopedia/business-incubator>

SOURCE:

<https://velocityglobal.com/blog/how-business-incubators-can-benefit-startups/>

Traditional Co-Working Space

Co-working is a service model that involves individuals working independently or collaboratively in shared office space. The typical user of a co-working facility is self-employed, a telecommuter or a freelance worker. Larger enterprises sometimes use co-working facilities to provide office space when they have more than the normal number of employees working at any given time. These businesses may also offer perks such as free coffee and networking events.



SOURCE: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/co-working>



Food Hall

Food halls are spaces that provide multiple small kitchen setups to vendors that are available for rent on a monthly or sometimes weekly basis with a shared dining room. They operate similar to a mall food court with one important distinction – the business does not own the space/equipment they use to cook. This setup is ideal to help aspiring

restaurateurs learn the basics of creating a menu, cooking items to order and, in some cases, managing server staff.

SOURCE: Food Halls 3.0, Cushman and Wakefield.

Maker Space

A maker space is a collaborative work space for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high-tech and low-tech tools. These spaces may be open to kids, adults and entrepreneurs and have a variety of equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, computer numerical control (CNC) machines, soldering irons, sewing machines, metal-working equipment, etc. The key difference from a co-working space, with a typical focus on desks and wifi, is that a maker space provides equipment for tenants to physically "make" prototypes, then test and fine-tune their products.

SOURCE: <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/coworking>



SOURCE:
<https://www.25ncoworking.com/locations/frisco-tx/>

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ZEBULON TOMORROW

Recreation and Amenities



Strategic Plan Focus

Among the three focus areas in Zebulon's Strategic Plan is **Small Town Life:**

"We will preserve and enhance our small-town feel by developing more activities and locations to gather with family and neighbors, making Zebulon a safe, connected, family friendly and walkable town."

Key actions include:

- Promote more community events and festivals.
- Enhance and create more community gathering places.
- Increase the connectedness and walkability in the community.

Introduction

At the time of this Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Zebulon was already focused on recreation and amenities by preparing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan and also by pursuing more in-depth planning for Downtown revitalization in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Commerce through its Main Street Program and the NC Rural Center. Beyond these significant initiatives, the input to this CLUP confirms that town leaders and residents were thinking in general about all the elements that will make Zebulon a more complete community as it grows, from more shopping and restaurant options to cultural and entertainment offerings. In this respect, this CLUP section builds on various shared objectives in the Economic Development section.

Ultimately, all aspects of this CLUP shape the livability of Zebulon, but this plan section especially reinforces the quality of life its residents enjoy. The Recreation and Amenities section underscores that parks, open space and recreation facilities are an essential part of a healthy and sustainable community, offering relaxation and exercise outside of the home and work and beyond school activities. Much like streets, utilities and police and fire protection, parks are another component of a municipality's core services – and often among the public services most valued by residents and also enjoyed by visitors. With its unique heritage and appreciation for the arts, Zebulon also offers access to the surrounding countryside and an increasingly active Downtown, plus all the nearby leisure and cultural assets of Raleigh and other Wake County communities.

The quality of land, water and air resources is also essential to the character and livability of a community, especially one like Zebulon within a larger metropolitan area. All the other CLUP elements tie to the environment including topics such as: land management through municipal planning and development regulation; design of housing and neighborhoods; availability of travel options; provision of water, sanitary sewer, waste disposal, storm drainage and other public services; and – through this plan element – planning for recreation and enjoyment of the outdoors. Consideration of prudent resource conservation practices requires a holistic view of the community and how it interacts with, benefits from and manages the integrity of its natural "infrastructure."



Key Planning Issues and Considerations

Through the Zebulon Today and Plan Direction phases of the comprehensive planning effort, a set of **10 Plan Priorities** was identified based on input from the Town's Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, other community stakeholders, the results of varied public engagement activities, and Town staff and the consultant team. Eight of the 10 strategic items are most relevant to the Recreation and Amenities portion of the CLUP:

- Connect, connect, connect the Zebulon community – in all ways.
- Center growth management on “APF” – adequate public facilities.
- Fortify a resilient economic (and tax) base.
- Secure new and renewed partnerships.
- Steer Downtown momentum.
- Protect and reinforce community character.
- Build community – ONE community.
- Think BIG but share costs wisely.

Input to Parks and Recreation Planning

As the CLUP process was nearing its conclusion, a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for Zebulon was also in progress. Community and leadership input to this CLUP – which occurred amid broader discussions about growth, land use, housing, infrastructure, transportation and economic development, among other topics – indicated interest in the following items related to the town's parks and recreation outlook:

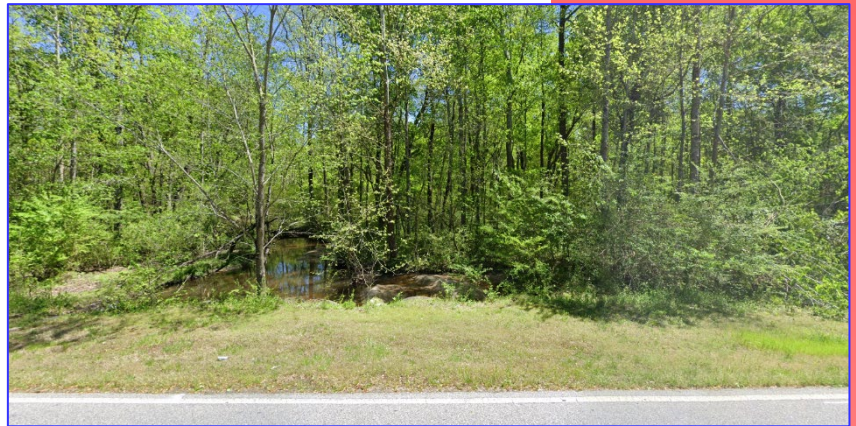
- Meeting the recreation expectations of current residents plus many newcomers to both Zebulon and the Research Triangle region.
- Parks that are ready for the future Zebulon in terms of their size and design.
- Parks designed especially for children.
- Parks linked to existing and new neighborhoods.
- Future of Little River Dam and Park, with ideas ranging from active development (with restaurants) to maintaining a more natural setting for passive recreation relative to the Town's other existing parks.



Little River Dam and Park
from W. Gannon Avenue.

- Private recreation areas built to Town standards in case the Town ever assumes their operation and maintenance.
- Expansion of and added features within Community Park.

- A large-scale family-oriented community park with varied offerings, drawing upon the Knightdale Station Park as a nearby example.
- Continued focus on the Community Center as a great Zebulon asset.
- Need for indoor recreation space, including with room for spectators during sports activities.
- Being nimble and adaptable to accommodate trendy recreation interests, when feasible, along with ongoing core recreation activities.
- More local greenways and trails (including a potential trail connection all the way across town from Little River to Five County Stadium, but recognizing trail constraints in central Zebulon), with links to the longer-distance Wake County greenway system and larger regional and state-level networks.
- Adequate trail width for multiple uses.
- Fill gaps in the local sidewalk network.
- Also work toward a local blueway system over time along with other water-oriented recreation.
- Greater attention to and protection of the area's natural resources including through public land acquisition ahead of growth.
- Leveraging the Five County Stadium site and vicinity to be much more for Zebulon.
- Equity in provision of parks and recreation facilities and services.



Proximity to natural areas in Zebulon, even along Industrial Drive.

SOURCE: Google Maps street view.

Input to Downtown Planning

Also concurrent to this CLUP was an ongoing in-depth planning focus for Downtown Zebulon. CLUP engagement activities pointed to these areas of interest related to Downtown revitalization and enhancement:

- Define "Downtown" beyond the railroad tracks and extend south to Temple-Johnson Road.
- Maintain a compact and walkable Downtown core.
- Match the Downtown traffic pattern and street design to Zebulon's core objective for Downtown revitalization – a pedestrian setting.
- Address perceived and real parking needs, but balanced against the elements that make traditional downtowns appealing (e.g., not losing building-lined streets to surface parking).
- Better Downtown wayfinding, including to help people locate available parking more easily.
- More interaction and business-to-business activity among Downtown businesses.
- Maintain historic Downtown architecture as much as possible through adaptive re-use versus building new, recognizing the costs and challenges of renovation.
- Eliminate boarded-up buildings and other visible signs of vacancy and owner inactivity.
- Consider financial incentives for Downtown revitalization.

Strategic Plan Focus

Among the three focus areas in Zebulon's Strategic Plan is **Vibrant Downtown**:

"We will have a clean, attractive, and historic downtown with a variety of special events, entertainment, shops, restaurants, businesses and housing to serve as the heart of Zebulon, providing a gathering place for the community and a destination for visitors."

Key actions include:

- Revitalize downtown Zebulon.
- Develop events, entertainment, and cultural attractions to draw people downtown.

- Make Downtown a destination, gathering place and community center, especially so residents do not spend their leisure time and dollars elsewhere.
- A new focus for Downtown, with "a little bit of everything" as in earlier times (e.g., retail, coffee, restaurants, rooftop bars, entertainment, etc.), including an upscale restaurant.

- A level of nightlife for Downtown that fits with Zebulon.

- Include activities for families and young people.

- Appropriate tenant mix, through what the market brings plus targeted business recruiting, especially as tenants periodically turn over.

- Add upper-floor residential, where feasible, as Downtown once had and other area towns do.

- Pursue lower-cost changes first, such as the current alley activation efforts, to get early "bang for the buck."

- Avoid "strip malls" near Downtown.

- Benefit from successful Downtown events to raise awareness.

- Importance of regular programming with multiple activities so people make Downtown a recurring destination throughout the year (e.g., street closures, food truck events, music, movies, more evening activities, etc.).

- Need for more electricity access Downtown – already being addressed.

- Good police presence to keep people comfortable walking during the evening.

- Some focal point such as a main square or fountain as in other appealing downtowns.

- Activate alleys and other underutilized spots as vibrant outdoor spaces to support Downtown businesses and provide more ways to access and enjoy Downtown destinations.

- Need a Downtown organization, something that gives owners and merchants a vested interest.

- Maintain the surrounding neighborhoods, along with new residential in Downtown, to support a successful, sustainable Downtown.



More specifics from all of the CLUP input are captured in the 17-page supplement titled **Issues and Considerations** at the end of the CLUP Introduction.

Framework for Action

This Framework for Action section builds off of the Plan Priorities highlighted above. The actions below involve tangible steps that will, in the long run, lead to achievement of the goals in this Recreation and Amenities section in line with the plan's Guiding Principles.

Goals for Recreation and Amenities

1. A "lifestyle" community, with a range of amenities and activities for all ages and interests, to keep residents enjoying their home town along with visitors.
2. Both a quantity and quality of park sites and trail miles to meet residents' expectations, support their outdoor recreation interests and promote wellness.
3. An indoor recreation facility designed to meet various needs, freeing the Community Center for particular uses to which it is best suited.
4. A town with varied places and spaces for people to gather, in Downtown and elsewhere.
5. Sustained success of a revitalized and active Downtown that is forever the town's historic and cultural hub, even as a growing Zebulon gains other nodes of activity.
6. A more attractive community based on quality design and character of both private development and the public realm.



Zebulon Community Center, still active but underutilized due to COVID-19 era limits.

Policies for Recreation and Amenities

In making decisions that involve public resource allocation, regulatory matters and physical improvements, among others, Zebulon will:

- A. Emphasize Zebulon's historic, recreational and cultural assets in all community events, marketing and economic development efforts.
- B. Through Town government activities and numerous partnerships, aim to create a vibrant community for both residents and visitors, enlivened by an active downtown; an array of arts, cultural and entertainment options both indoor and outdoor; heritage tourism opportunities; and popular community events and festival s throughout the year.
- C. Preserve and enhance public green spaces that provide access to nature, widespread opportunities for recreation and play close to home and continuous greenway connections within and beyond the town.
- D. Prioritize public safety, including safe pedestrian/bicycle access to and from parks, trails, Downtown and other public spaces, and personal security while enjoying these community facilities and events.
- E. Support an active, healthy community through provision of recreational facilities, programming and outdoor fitness activities.
- F. Promote efficient use, re-use and conservation of water resources.

Public Support for Arts and Culture

In 2018, the organization Americans for the Arts conducted a broad-based public opinion poll which showed that:

- 90 percent of Americans agree that arts institutions are important to quality of life.
- 86 percent agree that arts institutions are important to local businesses and the economy.
- Americans are highly engaged in the arts and believe more strongly than ever that the arts promote personal well-being, help us understand other cultures in our community, are essential to a well-rounded K-12 education, and that government has an important role in funding the arts.

Suburban Commercial character of the State Employees' Credit Union site, at a key entry to Zebulon, through generous landscaping and parking design.

- G. Continue the Town's role in protecting water quality within the Little River watershed, in anticipation of potential future development of the Little River Reservoir.
- H. Encourage energy efficiency, other "green" building practices and reduced solid waste generation by residents, businesses and the Town.
- I. Pursue design, operation and maintenance practices for Town facilities, vehicles and public infrastructure that promote Zebulon's environmental resilience and minimize adverse impacts.
- J. Be a community that recognizes and leverages the economic and social benefits of the arts.
- K. Regularly evaluate the most appropriate and effective methods the Town can use for devoting resources and support to cultural arts and community events programming.
- L. With its public agency and local partners, pursue a consensus-based historic preservation strategy for Downtown and other core areas of town that balances community, owner and business interests.
- M. Pursue a revitalization strategy that welcomes fresh ideas and investments while maintaining Downtown's charm and character, including the integrity of its surrounding neighborhoods.
- N. Be careful about diverting too much vehicular traffic (i.e., routine visitation) away from Downtown through measures aimed at reducing congestion and improving safety.
- O. Seek a balance between satisfying parking demands and maintaining a fundamental commitment to a compact, walkable core Downtown, especially through creative strategies for dealing with significant – but infrequent – peak parking needs during special events.
- P. Evaluate when and where it is best for Town government to make "first moves" to spur market response and private investment in Downtown revitalization.
- Q. Promote Zebulon's aesthetic appeal through the quality expectations set within the Unified Development Ordinance for buildings, landscaping, signage, lighting and other site design elements.



SOURCE: Google Maps street view.

Actions

NOTE: The pending Parks and Recreation Master Plan and ongoing Downtown planning efforts will generate additional, specific action items that complement or go beyond these CLUP actions.

Capital Investments

1. Continue phased improvements and extensions toward the ultimate vision of a community-wide, interconnected multi-purpose trail network with regional linkages where such opportunities arise, including through continued coordination of utility line projects and greenway improvements (as along Beaverdam Creek in north Zebulon).
2. Along with recreational trail projects, prioritize sidewalk extension and repair projects and crosswalk improvements in the central area of town where sidewalks are the main way to provide continuity in the town-wide trail system. Especially pursue projects that will improve access to local jobs, educational facilities, healthcare and other services and fresh food.
3. Continue to expand wayfinding and community identity/branding investments in more areas of town, including for added directional signage to Downtown parking.
4. Plan for potential strategic land acquisitions Downtown, for additional public parking or other specific needs.
5. Explore opportunities to link the design and construction of specific capital projects to community beautification objectives, such as along corridors and at high-profile gateways to town. This can include supplementing public infrastructure with art and design elements that help to improve the aesthetics of and/or screen an otherwise utilitarian capital project. Possibilities include overpasses and viaducts (with the North Carolina Department of Transportation), ground and elevated water storage tanks (as with the Carolina Mudcats design at Five County Stadium), utility boxes and fire hydrants. In Downtown, this can include creative designs for street furniture, bike racks, trash containers, signage, lighting fixtures, etc.

Programs and Initiatives

1. With community partners and the Chamber of Commerce, explore ways to formalize a "Welcome to the Town of Friendly People" initiative for orienting new residents and businesses to Zebulon destinations, events, resources and volunteer service opportunities.
2. Continue the Town's event planning focus, across departments and with community partners. Also ensure responsiveness to feedback and suggestions, as when the farmers market was relocated to Downtown from Town Hall.
3. Maintain the Town's Tree City USA recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation, and pursue more community recognitions and competitive rankings that are beneficial for economic development purposes and general marketing of Zebulon (e.g., All-America City honors through the National Civic League and Scenic City certifications through Scenic America).



Partners

Partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Recreation and Amenities include:

- Area real estate and development community (property owners, developers, builders, land planners/designers/engineers, etc.).
- Neighboring jurisdictions.
- Wake County Public School System.
- Wake County Community Services.
 - Parks, Recreation and Open Space.
 - Libraries.
- Wake County Environmental Health Services.
- Wake County Public Health.
- Wake Soil and Water Conservation District.
- Wake County Water Quality Division.
- Triangle J Council of Governments.
 - Natural Resources and Resilience.
 - Transportation (air quality).
- North Carolina Department of Commerce.
 - Main Street.
 - NC Rural Center.

4. Evaluate opportunities to manage stormwater through green infrastructure methods on Town-owned properties, in coordination with partners, and to demonstrate effective methods for use on private properties.
5. Utilize best management practices for Town-maintained open spaces and facilities, such as efficient mowing, xeriscape (i.e., low-water, low-maintenance and native plantings), reduced pesticide use and energy and water conservation.
6. Keep abreast of water conservation best management practices and promote wise water use throughout the community, including through related grant opportunities.
7. Continually evaluate new technologies and options for improving dissemination of all Town information, including for parks and recreation facilities and programming.

Regulations and Standards

1. Continue advancing the overall Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) purposes and applying specific provisions relevant to this Recreation and Amenities section including:
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.3. regarding protection of the natural environment and preservation of open space and habitat areas.
 - Purpose and Intent Section 1.4.5. regarding establishing a unique “sense of place” in eastern Wake County, including through Downtown revitalization.
 - A Planned Development district option that opens the door to creative master-planned developments that move beyond standard residential subdivision models to achieve higher-quality outcomes in terms of housing mix, recreational amenities and intentional open space preservation (Section 3.5.5).
 - A Gateway Corridor Overlay zoning district to enhance the visual appeal of certain roadways and key entryways to town (Section 3.8.3).
 - Development standards for open space set-asides and maintenance (Section 5.7)
 - Incentives for sustainable development practices (Section 5.12) and for reforestation and tree protection (Section 5.9).
 - Subdivision regulations providing a fee-in-lieu alternative to certain land dedications and/or improvements (Section 6.3), greenway implementation and open space credits (Section 6.4), reservation of land for public parks (Section 6.7), and a credit for providing trail improvements in lieu of sidewalks (Section 6.8.3).
 - Conservation subdivision provisions, which tend to reduce infrastructure needs (and impervious surfaces) and increase preserved open space (Section 6.2).
 - Prevention of soil erosion and sedimentation (Section 6.9).
2. Continue to monitor the National Register Historic District nomination advanced by Preservation Zebulon for any regulatory or other implications for the Town. [At the time of this CLUP, the nomination was set to be reviewed in June 2021 by the National Register Advisory Committee of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.]

Partnerships and Coordination

1. Continue to pursue new grant funding opportunities available to Zebulon through its participation in the North Carolina Main Street Program.
2. Continue mutually beneficial arrangements with developers to add to the local greenway inventory and work toward continuous trail segments and links to Town parks.
3. Pursue targeted land conservation efforts with Wake County and the Triangle Land Conservancy, especially given resident desire to preserve some sense of country and the area’s agricultural past amid projected growth and change. Especially explore regional open space and trail potential in the Little River watershed and future reservoir area northwest of Zebulon, which could provide new or enhanced connections to Mitchell Mill State Natural Area and segments within Wake County’s planned greenway system, plus south of U.S. 64/264 to Little River Park.
4. When next relevant to Zebulon, pursue funds Wake County has available for purchase and development of property to be used for additional joint use school-park sites, as with the existing joint use parks at Wakelon Elementary and Zebulon Elementary schools.
5. Pursue establishment of a local Keep Zebulon Beautiful affiliate, of Keep North Carolina Beautiful, to focus energy and resources toward the town’s beautification and image enhancement and to highlight accomplishments and voluntary improvements on private properties.
6. With the Zebulon Downtown Arts Council, continue to explore the funding and logistics for creating an arts center/facility in Zebulon, likely through a phased development program that could start with shared space within an existing building or facility.



Zebulon Downtown Arts Council

The non-profit Zebulon Downtown Arts Council (ZDAC) is a group of citizens dedicated to energizing Downtown Zebulon through promotion of the arts. The group’s vision is that “ZDAC will create art spaces throughout downtown Zebulon to encourage community involvement and stimulate economic development.”

The genesis of ZDAC was a 2011 draft proposal presented to the Town by the United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County, outlining a plan for arts and cultural development of towns in eastern Wake County. The ZDAC Steering Committee of private citizens was formed to pursue establishing a non-profit organization whose purpose would be to raise funds to create and sustain a Downtown arts center, which is ongoing.

Along with the arts center, ZDAC uses various means to create spaces for the visual and performing arts and is committed to the overall revitalization of Downtown Zebulon.



Partners

Additional partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Recreation and Amenities include:

- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.
 - NC Arts Council.
 - Parks & Recreation.
 - State Office of Historic Preservation.
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension – Wake County Center.
- North Carolina Forest Service.
- Preservation Zebulon.
- Little River Historical Society.
- Wake County Historical Society.
- Wake County Historic Preservation Commission.
- Capital Area Preservation.
- Zebulon Downtown Arts Council.
- Zebulon Chamber of Commerce.
- Bennett Bunn Plantation.
- Carolina Mudcats.
- Visit Raleigh.
- Visit North Carolina.

More Targeted Planning / Study

1. As part of a special area plan for the Five County Stadium vicinity, among the action items in the Economic Development section of this CLUP, consider recreational possibilities and other potential amenities that came up through engagement for the CLUP including an indoor recreation facility, a multi-use facility with meeting space and other concepts.
2. Pursue more detailed parking analysis and planning, as appropriate, through the overall Downtown planning efforts. This should include input from building and business owners, tenants/merchants, residents, workers, visitors and other Downtown stakeholders. The potential for an eventual parking structure Downtown can also be evaluated if and when appropriate.
3. Complete regular updates to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, highlighting implementation progress and successes – especially through partnership efforts – and continue to communicate Zebulon’s park, recreation, trail and open space priorities to funding partners and private development interests. Future updates should increasingly focus on parkland needs in south and east Zebulon as these areas draw more development activity.
4. Determine the steps, timing and funding toward an eventual large community-scale park along the lines of the Knightdale Station Park that is so familiar to many Zebulon residents, along with other model park projects Zebulon can emulate.

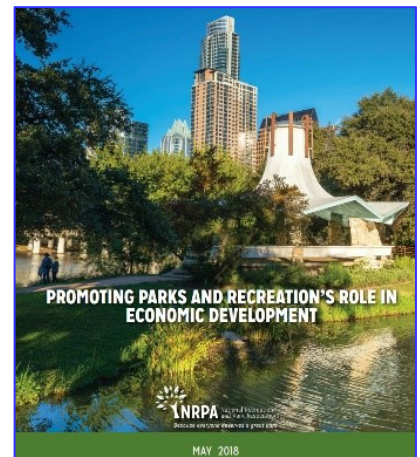


Parks and Economic Development

Parks contribute to perceptions of a community and its overall quality of life. Quality of life elements, including parks and recreation, can make a community more attractive to potential residents, businesses and their workers.

Well-maintained parks also increase property values of nearby properties, which in turn enhances local tax revenues. Additional tourism-related spending occurs when parks host out-of-town visitors for events, festivals or sports tournaments.

SOURCE: National Recreation and Park Association (2018).



5. As part of any future drainage master planning for the town, pursue design approaches to demonstrate the multi-purpose recreational and open space preservation opportunities with certain stormwater facilities.

- 6. Tap into data and resources at the regional and state levels for tracking tourism numbers and spending, along with information on area, state and national tourism trends (in general and before/after the COVID-19 disruption). When appropriate, a more localized study could examine visitation at local sites and amenities, gathering data and input from local partners as available and compiling visitor feedback and ratings including from popular travel websites and social media.

Partners

Additional partners for implementation of CLUP priorities related to Recreation and Amenities include:

- Triangle Land Conservancy.
- Keep North Carolina Beautiful.
- Local service organizations.
- Faith community.



A sampling of events and destinations that enrich the lives of Zebulon residents and draw visitors to Downtown and other places in town.

SOURCE of butterfly photo: Zebulon Downtown Arts Council.

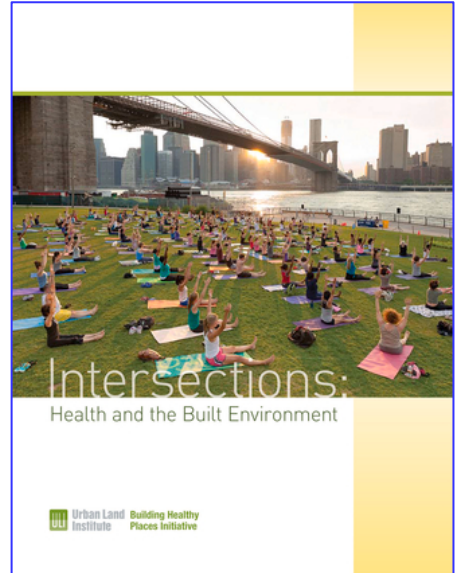
SOURCE of McLean's Old Time Cafe photo: Visit Raleigh.

Parks and Health

Well-designed parks and trails can encourage and allow a safe place for exercise and community interaction, also providing mental health benefits such as stress reduction. Local governments and other public agencies can use tools such as Health Impact Assessments (HIA) to quantify and qualify the potential public health effects of proposed policies, plans or development projects. This includes the distribution of benefits and costs within the community

HIAs recommend strategies for monitoring and managing health and for bringing public health issues to decision-makers outside of the public health field, such as in transportation and land use. The assessments can be voluntary or regulatory processes that focus on health outcomes. HIAs can be completed specific to recreational projects to evaluate how best to maximize the positive impact of new park and trail investments on public health.

SOURCE: Intersections: Health and The Environment, Urban Land Institute (2013).



ZEBULON TOMORROW

Plan

Implementation



Introduction

With this updated Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), the Town of Zebulon and its numerous partner agencies and organizations will have an essential new document that should be frequently referred to for guidance in community decision-making. The plan should be a “living document” that is responsive to ongoing change. Its key planning considerations, goals, policies and action strategies must be revisited periodically to ensure that the plan is providing clear and reliable direction on a range of matters, including land development issues and public investments in infrastructure and services.

Implementation goes well beyond just a list of action items. It is a challenging process that will require the commitment of the Town’s elected and appointed officials, staff, residents, business owners, major institutions, other levels of government and other organizations and individuals who will serve as champions of the plan and its particular direction and strategies. Among its purposes, this final plan section highlights specific roles, responsibilities and methods of implementation to execute priority plan recommendations. Equally important are formalized procedures for the ongoing monitoring and reporting of successes achieved, difficulties encountered and new opportunities and challenges that have emerged since plan adoption. This is in addition to any other change in circumstances, which may require rethinking of plan priorities. Scheduled plan evaluations and updates, as described later in this section, will help maintain its relevance and credibility as an overarching policy and action guide.

ZEBULON

The Town of Friendly People

Why This Final Plan Section is Important for Zebulon

- Emphasizes the importance of not only creating a plan, but translating it into real action and tangible, beneficial results.
 - Adds a shorter-term strategic perspective to what is otherwise intended as a guide to Zebulon’s long-term enhancement over the next 20 years.
 - Includes a list of priority actions for the Town and other plan implementation partners to focus on during the next several years after plan adoption.
 - Underscores the need to keep the plan fresh and relevant through annual review and reporting procedures and periodic updates.
 - Advocates ongoing community engagement as the plan is implemented.
-

Plan Administration

During the development of this plan, representatives of government, business, community groups and others came together to inform the planning process. These community leaders – and new ones that will emerge over the horizon of this plan – must maintain their commitment to the ongoing implementation and updating of the plan’s goals, policies and action strategies.

Leadership Alignment

Long-range plans such as Zebulon’s CLUP are relatively general in nature, but they are still complex policy documents that account for interrelationships among various policy and action choices. Engaging decision-makers and administrators about plan implementation is an important first step after plan adoption. As the principal groups that will implement the plan, Town management and department heads, the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board should all be “on the same page” with regard to priorities, responsibilities and interpretations.

Consequently, Town management should arrange to convene those listed above immediately after plan adoption, to include:

- A discussion of the respective roles and responsibilities of the Town Board, Planning Board (and other Town advisory bodies) and Town departments and staff;
- A thorough overview of the entire CLUP, with emphasis on the parts of the plan that relate to each group;
- Implementation tasking and priority setting, which should help solidify a near-term action agenda;
- Potential facilitation of a mock meeting in which the use of the plan and its policies and recommendations is illustrated; and
- An in-depth question-and-answer session, with support from the Planning Director, Town Attorney and other key staff.

Definition of Roles

Board of Commissioners

The Board should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Adopting and amending the plan, when necessary and appropriate, after recommendation by the Planning Board (and input from other boards/commissions depending on the topic).
- Acting as a champion of the plan.
- Establishing the overall implementation priorities and timeframes by which action strategies in the plan will be initiated and completed.
- Considering and approving necessary funding commitments.
- Adopting new or amended land development regulations to implement the plan.
- Approving intergovernmental and public/private agreements that implement the plan.
- Approving projects and activities and their associated funding during the Town’s annual budget process, consistent with this plan and its policies and action priorities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Commissioners

As the community's elected officials, the Board of Commissioners should assume the lead role in implementing this plan. In conjunction with the Town Manager, the Board's key responsibilities are to decide and establish priorities, set timeframes by which actions will be initiated and completed, and determine the budget to be made available for implementation efforts. The Board and Town management must also help ensure effective coordination among the various groups that are responsible for carrying out the plan's action strategies.



Planning Board

The Planning Board makes recommendations to the Town Board based on plan principles and decision guidance. The Board should prepare an Annual Progress Report to ensure continuing plan relevance.



Town Management and Staff

Town staff manage the day-to-day implementation of the plan. In particular, they are responsible for supporting the Town Board, Planning Board and other Town boards / commissions.



- Providing policy direction to the Planning Board, other appointed Town boards and commissions, and Town management and staff.

Planning Board

The Planning Board should take the lead in the following general areas:



- Ensuring that recommendations forwarded to the Board of Commissioners are reflective of plan goals, policies and action priorities.
- After holding one or more public hearings to discuss new or evolving community issues and needs, making recommendations to the Board of Commissioners regarding plan updates and plan amendments.

Town Staff

Town staff should take the lead in the following general areas:

- Managing day-to-day implementation of the plan, including ongoing coordination through an interdepartmental plan implementation committee with representatives of all key Town functions.
- Supporting and carrying out capital improvement planning efforts.
- Managing the drafting of new or amended land development regulations.
- Conducting studies and developing additional special-purpose and/or special area plans.
- Reviewing land development applications for consistency with the CLUP.
- Negotiating the specifics of intergovernmental and other agreements.
- Administering collaborative programs and ensuring open channels of communication with various private, public and non-profit partners.
- Maintaining an inventory of potential plan amendments, as suggested by Town staff and others, for consideration during annual and periodic plan review and update processes.
- Generating and presenting an annual report to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners concerning progress toward implementation of the CLUP.

Plan Implementation Methods

WAYS OF MOVING TOWARD ACTION

Plan implementation generally occurs in five ways:



Capital Investments



Program and Initiatives



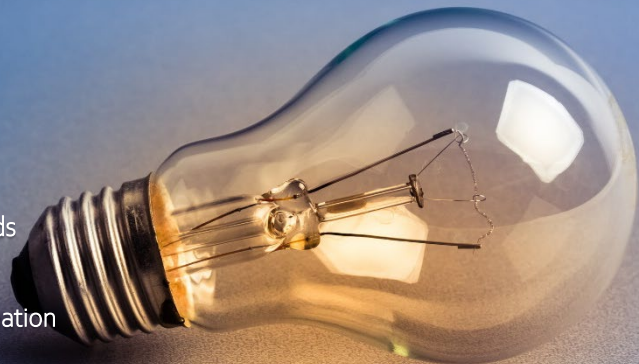
Regulations and Standards



Partnerships and Coordination



More Targeted Planning / Study



Action Agenda

The goals in this CLUP will ultimately be attained through a multitude of specific actions itemized in each plan section. The initiatives highlighted in this Implementation section cut across – and are supported by – multiple elements within the plan. Compiled in the [Action Agenda table](#) below is a set of **35 key action items** derived from the plan sections. The table does not include every recommendation found throughout this plan, a number of which aim to reinforce or expand upon existing beneficial activities by the Town and its partners. Instead, it details a shorter “to do” list of initial strategic priorities, their potential timing and who is responsible for initiating, administering and participating in the implementation process.

The table indicates a target timeframe for pursuing each action item, either immediately in Year 1 after plan adoption (15 items), in the near term during Years 2-4 (16 items) or later in Years 5+ (4 items). Additionally, the action strategies are categorized as to whether they will involve:

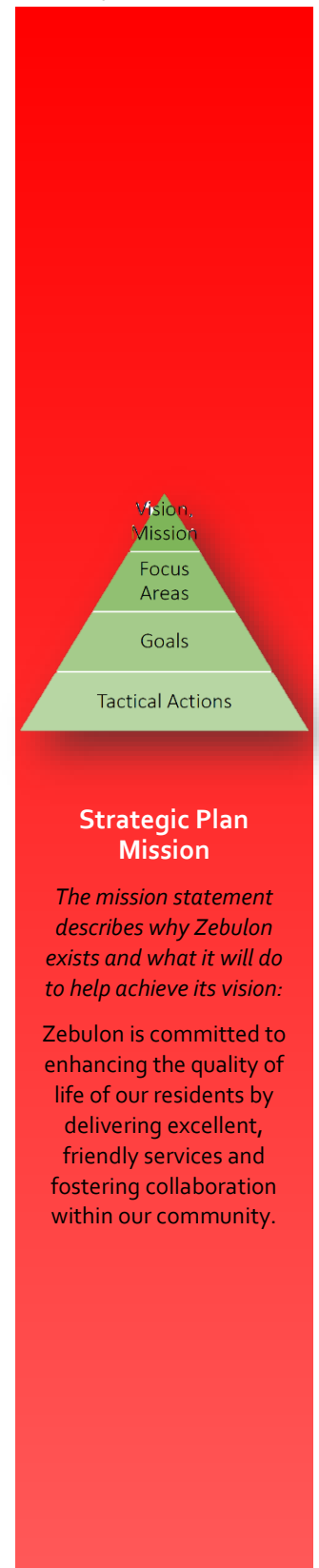
- (1) Capital investments,
- (2) Programs and initiatives,
- (3) Regulations and standards,
- (4) Partnerships and coordination, and/or
- (5) More targeted planning / study.

Most capital projects will also require, to varying degrees, additional feasibility analysis, construction documentation, specifications and detailed cost estimates. More complete lists of potential partners are included in each plan section.

The Action Agenda table provides a starting point for determining immediate, near-term and longer-term task priorities. This is an important first step toward plan implementation and should occur in conjunction with the Town’s annual budget process, during Capital Improvements Program (CIP) preparation and in support of departmental work planning. Then, once the necessary funding is committed and roles are defined, a lead Town staff member should initiate a first-year work program in conjunction with Town management, other departments and other public and private implementation partners.

The near-term action priorities should be revisited annually by Town officials and staff to recognize accomplishments, highlight areas where further attention and effort are needed, and determine whether some items have moved up or down on the priority list given changing circumstances and emerging needs. It should be kept in mind that early implementation of certain items, while perhaps not the uppermost priorities, may be expedited by the availability of related grant funds, by a state or federal mandate or by the eagerness of one or more partners to pursue an initiative with the Town. On the other hand, some high-priority items may prove difficult to tackle in the near-term due to budget constraints, the lack of a lead entity or individual to carry the initiative forward or by the community’s readiness to take on a complex or potentially controversial new program.

Progress on the immediate and near-term items should be the focus of the first annual review and report one year after adoption of this CLUP, as described later in this section. Then, similar to multi-year capital improvements programming, the entire Action Agenda – and all other action strategies within the plan sections – should be revisited annually to decide if any additional items are ready to move into a sooner action timeframe.



Zebulon CLUP Action Agenda

ACTION	Where in Plan	Initiate	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
Add new or amended provisions to UDO based on updated CLUP.	Land Use & Development R&S Action 2	Year 1	Regulations and Standards	Planning Director Planning Board Board of Commissioners
Complete the relocation of the Downtown fire station.	Growth Capacity CI Action 2	Year 1	Capital Investments	Board of Commissioners Town management Fire Department
Prepare for new and altered development patterns driven by City of Raleigh infrastructure investments.	Growth Capacity P&I Action 1	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Planning Department Public Works Departments All Town departments
Maintain an inventory of vacant parcels with potential for infill with varied housing types.	Housing & Neighborhoods P&I Action 2	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Planning Department
Form – or formalize – a cross-departmental Neighborhoods Team	Housing & Neighborhoods P&I Action 3	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Town management All departments
Seek input periodically from the real estate / developer / builder community regarding housing market trends and UDO issues.	Housing & Neighborhoods R&S Action 4	Year 1	Regulations and Standards	Planning Department Public Works Department Parks and Recreation Department Real estate / development contacts
Pursue Zebulon’s fair share of CDBG and related grant funds for housing and neighborhood initiatives.	Housing & Neighborhoods P&C Action 2	Year 1	Partnerships and Coordination	Planning Director Wake County
Formalize a “Welcome to the Town of Friendly People” initiative for orienting new residents and businesses to Zebulon.	Housing & Neighborhoods P&C Action 4 Recreation & Amenities P&I Action 1	Year 1	Partnerships and Coordination Programs and Initiatives	Board of Commissioners Community organizations Faith community Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
Nurture target business sectors to locate and develop in Zebulon (e.g., medical, lodging, etc.).	Economic Development P&I Action 2	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Economic Development Director Town management Planning Department Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Real estate / development contacts
Explore opportunities for shared work spaces for young workers, startups and others in Downtown and elsewhere.	Economic Development P&I Action 4	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Economic Development Director Planning Department Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Real estate / development contacts
Regularly update Zebulon’s profile on the Wake County Economic Development website.	Economic Development P&C Action 1	Year 1	Partnerships and Coordination	Economic Development Director Wake Co. Economic Development



Zebulon CLUP Action Agenda (continued)

ACTION	Where in Plan	Initiate	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
Continue phased greenway / trail improvements and extensions.	Recreation & Amenities CI Action 1 Recreation & Amenities P&C Action 2	Year 1	Capital Investments Partnerships and Coordination	Planning Department Parks and Recreation Department Public Works Department Wake Co. Parks / Rec. / Open Space Triangle Land Conservancy
Prioritize sidewalk extension and repair projects and crosswalk improvements in the central area of town where sidewalks are the main way to provide continuity in the town-wide trail system.	Recreation & Amenities CI Action 2	Year 1	Capital Investments	Public Works Department Parks and Recreation Department Town management Board of Commissioners
Continue to monitor the National Register Historic District nomination advanced by Preservation Zebulon for any regulatory or other implications for the Town.	Recreation & Amenities P&I Action 2	Year 1	Programs and Initiatives	Planning Department Town management Board of Commissioners Wake County Historic Preservation Preservation Zebulon
Continue to pursue new grant funding opportunities available to Zebulon through its participation in the North Carolina Main Street Program.	Recreation & Amenities MTP/S Action 1	Year 1	More Targeted Planning / Study	Planning Department Board of Commissioners
Years 2-4				
Grow Planning Department staffing for plan implementation capacity.	Land Use & Development P&I Action 1	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Board of Commissioners Town management Planning Director
Complete a special area plan for the Five County Stadium vicinity (then for other priority areas).	Land Use & Development MTP/S Action 2 Economic Development MTP/S Action 3 Recreation & Amenities MTP/S Action 1	Years 2-4	More Targeted Planning / Study	Planning Director Parks & Recreation Director Economic Development Director All Town departments Carolina Mudcats Real estate / development contacts
Pursue Police Department accreditation.	Growth Capacity P&I Action 3	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Police Department Town management
Pursue Age-Friendly certification of Zebulon by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).	Housing & Neighborhoods P&I Action 5	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Planning Department Economic Development Director AARP

Zebulon CLUP Action Agenda (continued)

ACTION	Where in Plan	Initiate	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
Partner with major employers to entice more workers to consider living options in Zebulon.	Housing & Neighborhoods P&C Action 1	Years 2-4	Partnerships and Coordination	Economic Development Director Planning Director Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
Hire a first-time Economic Development Director.	Economic Development P&I Action 1	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Board of Commissioners Town management Zebulon Chamber of Commerce
Create or reinvigorate a leadership development program through the Zebulon Chamber of Commerce.	Economic Development P&I Action 3	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Director Board of Commissioners
Implement the results of the Town's branding initiative.	Economic Development P&I Action 5	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Town management Board of Commissioners Economic Development Director Real estate / development contacts
Pursue opportunities to build on the Town's Interactive Development Map as an economic development and site/building inventory tool.	Economic Development P&C Action 1	Years 2-4	Partnerships and Coordination	Economic Development Director Planning Department Wake County / City of Raleigh
Prepare a full Economic Development Plan.	Economic Development MTP/S Action 1	Years 2-4	More Targeted Planning / Study	Economic Development Director Planning Department Town management Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Business community Relevant regional / state agencies
Pursue a strategic marketing plan to attract targeted new businesses and retail customers to Zebulon.	Economic Development MTP/S Action 1	Years 2-4	More Targeted Planning / Study	Economic Development Director Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Local business community
Continue to expand wayfinding and community identity / branding investments in more areas of town, including for added directional signage to Downtown parking.	Recreation & Amenities CI Action 3	Years 2-4	Capital Investments	Public Works Department Economic Development Director Town management
Maintain the Town's Tree City USA recognition, and pursue more community recognitions and competitive rankings.	Recreation & Amenities P&I Action 3	Years 2-4	Programs and Initiatives	Parks and Recreation Department Economic Development Director Town management
Explore grant and technical assistance opportunities for promoting fiber and technology investments and upgrades, along with digital inclusion efforts.	Economic Development CI Action 2	Years 2-4	Capital Investments	Economic Development Director Zebulon Chamber of Commerce Relevant state agencies Wake County Public School System



Zebulon CLUP Action Agenda (continued)

ACTION	Where in Plan	Initiate	Action Type	Action Leaders and Key Partners
Pursue targeted land conservation efforts, especially given resident desire to preserve some sense of country and the area's agricultural past amid projected growth and change.	Recreation & Amenities P&C Action 3	Years 2-4	Partnerships and Coordination	Parks and Recreation Department Planning Department Wake Co. Parks / Rec. / Open Space Triangle Land Conservancy
Pursue establishment of a local Keep Zebulon Beautiful affiliate, of Keep North Carolina Beautiful.	Recreation & Amenities P&C Action 5	Years 2-4	Partnerships and Coordination	Parks and Recreation Department Community organizations
Years 5+				
Host an annual Neighborhoods Summit for outreach to HOAs and networking across neighborhoods.	Housing & Neighborhoods P&C Action 5	Years 5+	Partnerships and Coordination	Planning Department Town management All departments
Consider ways to incentivize upgrades to older retail centers and commercial properties.	Economic Development P&I Action 6	Years 5+	Programs and Initiatives	Planning Department Economic Development Director Real estate / development contacts
Plan for potential strategic land acquisitions Downtown, for additional public parking or other specific needs.	Recreation & Amenities CI Action 4	Years 5+	Capital Investments	Town management Board of Commissioners Economic Development Director Planning Director Real estate / development contacts
Continue to explore the funding and logistics for creating an arts center / facility in Zebulon.	Recreation & Amenities P&C Action 6	Years 5+	Partnerships and Coordination	Board of Commissioners Town management Zebulon Downtown Arts Council

Plan Amendment Process

The Zebulon Comprehensive Land Use Plan should be a flexible document that allows for adjustment to changing conditions over time. Shifts in political, economic, physical, technological and social conditions, and other unforeseen circumstances, may influence and change the priorities and fiscal outlook of the community. As Zebulon evolves, new issues will emerge while others will no longer be as relevant. Some action statements will be found impractical or outdated while other plausible solutions will arise. To ensure that it continues to reflect the overall goals of the community and remains relevant over time, the CLUP must be revisited regularly to confirm that the plan elements are still on point and the associated goals and action strategies are still appropriate.

Revisions to the CLUP are two-fold, with minor plan amendments occurring at least every other year and more significant updates and modifications occurring every five years. As an example, a **minor amendment** could include revisions to certain elements of the plan as a result of the adoption of another specialized plan. **Major updates** will involve:

- Reviewing the community's base conditions and anticipated growth trends;



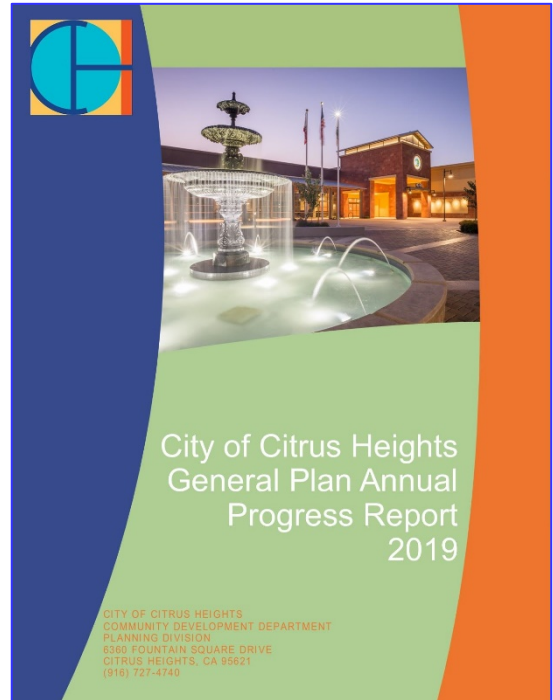
- Re-evaluating the plan findings and formulating new ones as necessary; and
- Adding, revising or removing action strategies in the plan based on implementation progress.

Annual Progress Report

Town staff should prepare an annual progress report for presentation to the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners. This ensures that the plan is consistently reviewed and that any needed modifications or clarifications are identified for the bi-annual minor plan amendment process. Ongoing monitoring of consistency between the plan and the Town’s implementing regulations should be an essential part of this effort.

The **Annual Progress Report** should include and highlight:

- Significant actions and accomplishments during the last year, including the status of each programmed task in the CLUP.
- Obstacles or problems in implementing the plan.
- Proposed content amendments that have come forward during the year.
- Recommendations for needed actions, programs and procedures to be developed and implemented in the coming year, including recommendation of projects to be included in the Town’s proposed Capital Improvements Plan, other programs/projects to be funded and priority coordination needs with public and private implementation partners.



Bi-Annual Amendment Process

Plan amendments should occur at least bi-annually (every two years), allowing for proposed changes to be considered concurrently so the cumulative effects may be understood. **Factors that should be considered in deciding on a proposed plan amendment include:**

- Consistency with the goals, policies and action strategies in the plan.
- Potential effects on infrastructure provision including water, wastewater, drainage and the transportation network.
- Potential effects on the Town’s ability to provide, fund and maintain services.



- Potential effects on environmentally sensitive and natural areas.
- Whether the proposed amendment contributes to the overall direction and character of the community as captured in the plan vision and goals and as reflected in ongoing public input.

Five-Year Update / Evaluation and Appraisal Report

An [Evaluation and Appraisal Report](#) to the Board of Commissioners should be prepared every five years. This report should be prepared by Town staff with input from all departments, the Planning Board and other boards and commissions. The report process involves evaluating the existing plan and assessing how successful it has been in achieving the community's goals. The report purpose is to identify the successes and shortcomings of the plan, look at what has changed over the last five years and make recommendations on how the plan should be modified in light of those changes.

The report should review baseline conditions and assumptions about trends and growth indicators. It should also evaluate implementation potential and/or obstacles related to any unaddressed major action strategies. The evaluation report and process should result in a strategy for amending the CLUP, including identification of new or revised information that may lead to updated goals and action strategies.

More specifically, [the report should identify and provide:](#)

- A summary of major actions and interim plan amendments undertaken over the last five years.
- Major issues in the community and how these issues have changed over time.
- Changes in the assumptions, trends and base studies data in the Zebulon Today report, including:
 - › The rate at which growth and development is occurring relative to the projections in the plan.
 - › Shifts in demographics and other growth trends.
 - › Town-wide attitudes and whether apparent shifts, if significant, necessitate amendments to the stated goals or action strategies of the plan.
 - › Other changes in political, social, economic, technological or environmental conditions that indicate a need for plan amendments.
- Ability of the plan to continue to support progress toward achieving the community's goals. The following should be evaluated and revised as needed:
 - › Individual sections and statements within the plan must be reviewed and revised, as necessary, to ensure that the plan provides sufficient information and direction to achieve the intended outcome.
 - › Conflicts between goals and action strategies that have been discovered in the implementation and administration of the plan must be pointed out and resolved.
 - › The list of priority actions must be reviewed and major accomplishments highlighted. Those not completed by the specified timeframe should be re-evaluated to ensure their continued relevance and/or to revise them appropriately, along with discussion of any barriers encountered, missed opportunities and lessons learned.

- › As conditions change, the timeframes for implementing major actions in the plan should be re-evaluated where necessary. Some actions may emerge as a higher priority given new or changed circumstances while others may become less important to achieving the goals and development objectives of the community.
- › Based upon organizational and procedural factors, plus the status of previously assigned tasks, the implementation task assignments must be reviewed and altered, as needed, to ensure timely accomplishment of the plan’s action strategies.
- › Changes in laws, procedures and missions may affect the community’s ability to achieve its goals. The plan review must assess these changes and their effects on the success of implementation, leading to any suggested revisions in strategies or priorities.

Ongoing Community Outreach and Engagement

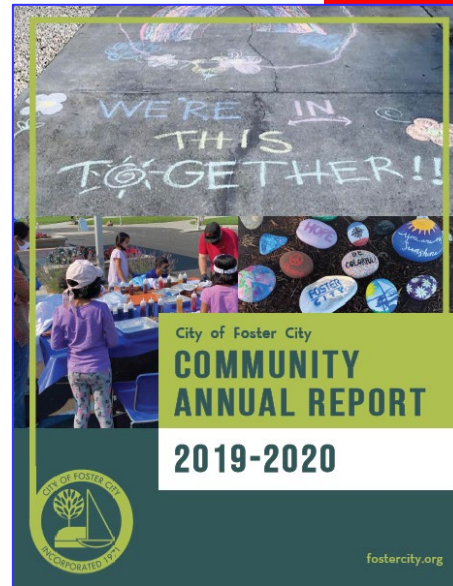
All review processes and updates related to this CLUP should emphasize and incorporate ongoing public input. The annual and continual plan evaluation and reporting processes should also incorporate specific performance measures and quantitative indicators that can be compiled



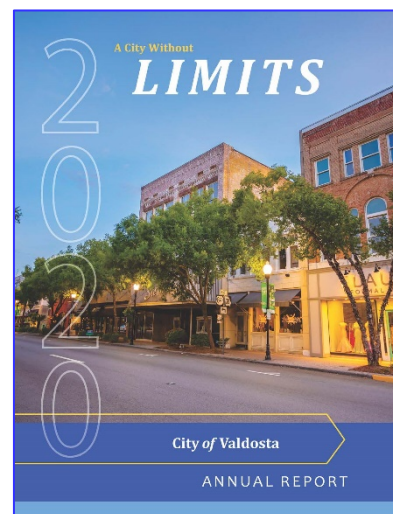
and communicated both internally and to elected officials, residents and other plan stakeholders and partners in a “report card” fashion. Examples might include:

- Acres of new development (plus number of residential units by type and square footage of commercial and industrial space) approved and constructed in conformance with this plan and Zebulon’s development regulations.
- Measures of service capacity (gallons per day, etc.) added to the Town’s utility infrastructure systems – and the number of dollars allocated to fund the necessary capital projects.
- New and expanded businesses, added jobs and associated tax revenue gains through economic development initiatives.
- Lane miles of new or rehabilitated road, plus bike, pedestrian, transit and other improvements added to Zebulon’s transportation system that increase mobility options.
- Acres of parkland and open space added to the Town’s inventory, utilization of new or improved recreation spaces and linear feet of trail developed or improved.
- Indicators of the benefits from redeveloped sites and structures (appraised value, increased tax revenue, new residential units, retail and office spaces in mixed-use settings, etc.).
- The numbers of residents and other stakeholders engaged through Town-sponsored education and outreach events related to CLUP implementation and periodic review and updating, as outlined in this section.





Visual presentation of metrics status in annual report of City of Powell, Ohio.



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Zebulon Today

REPORT



Purpose

This report provides background information about Zebulon as it is today. This information is presented in topic areas relevant to a refreshed new Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) for Zebulon's physical growth and development. This report also highlights key planning considerations for the years ahead, which will set the stage for the Zebulon Tomorrow portion of the CLUP in terms of community needs and desires for the next 20 years, through 2040. The content of this report is based on initial background studies to date by the Town's community planning consultant, Kendig Keast Collaborative, as well as input received to this point.



Benefits

A comprehensive plan is a long-range, community-driven policy document that lays the groundwork for how Zebulon can take charge of, invest in and realize its future over the next 20 years and beyond. Amid a period of ongoing rapid population growth since its 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the Town of Zebulon has undertaken multiple other targeted planning efforts as cited on this page. Keeping the Comprehensive Plan current is a planning best practice and ensures the Plan reflects the newest emerging issues and opportunities along with the findings and recommendations of other recently completed planning studies.

Other Zebulon Plans

Along with relevant regional and Wake County plans and studies, key local resource documents consulted during the Zebulon Today phase included:

- Zebulon Comprehensive Plan (June 2008).
- Zebulon Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (October 2015).
- Zebulon Fire Facility Plan (February 2018).
- Zebulon Vision 2030 Strategic Plan, 2018-2030 (June 2018).
- Zebulon Unified Development Ordinance (December 2019).

Focus Areas

Focus areas within the Comprehensive Land Use Plan provide direction when setting program and funding priorities to enhance the quality of life in Zebulon.

The five **Focus Areas** are:

1. Land Use and Development
2. Growth Capacity
3. Housing and Neighborhoods
4. Economic Development
5. Recreation and Amenities

These focus areas were considered in developing this Zebulon Today Report and will orient the Zebulon Tomorrow portion of the CLUP.

Comprehensive Plans:

- Provide public officials with a greater understanding of existing conditions in their community and the larger trends and forces that are impacting growth and development;
- Provide a long-term outlook at the potential implications of land use, infrastructure and other decisions;
- Establish priorities for implementation strategies and actions to achieve preferred outcomes;
- Place communities in more favorable positions when pursuing and securing grants and capital partnerships;
- Offer an opportunity for constructive and meaningful public input, education and engagement through a variety of forums, including one-on-one meetings, focus groups, town hall meetings and community workshops and surveys;
- Provide policy guidance and a legally defensible basis for effective and implementable land development regulations;
- Provide a framework to enable local officials to make better-informed decisions based upon a coordinated plan to guide the orderly growth and development of their community; and
- Provide the umbrella for weaving together a series of small area plans, through which greater synergies can be created.

Engaging in a local comprehensive planning process enables the Town of Zebulon to have a greater measure of control over its future and the opportunities and challenges that change will bring. Planning will enable the Town to manage future growth, development and redevelopment actively as opposed to reacting to development proposals on a case-by-case basis without adequate and necessary consideration of community-wide issues.

Approach

Existing Town | Future Town

The planning process focuses first on providing a snapshot of existing conditions, through the lens of multiple plan elements, culminating in this Zebulon Today report. The report includes discussion of Zebulon's history, location and physical characteristics and highlights its demographic composition and trends. A summary of key indicators, from the latest available U.S. Census data (including the 2010 U.S. Census and interim Census Bureau estimates) and other sources, illustrates historical and current conditions and context relevant to the CLUP.

Comprehensive plans are future-oriented and contain policies and actions that are intended to advance a set of preferred conditions. As such, the Zebulon Tomorrow component and its implementation emphasis will be the primary focus of the Town's CLUP. The Zebulon Tomorrow portion includes recommended initiatives and strategies for guiding Zebulon's development and redevelopment while preserving community character, enhancing quality of life and improving economic well-being.

Zebulon Setting and Context

The Town of Zebulon is the easternmost town in Wake County. Zebulon is part of the greater Raleigh area – also known as the Research Triangle region – in northeast central North Carolina.

As shown on **Map 1, Regional Context**, Zebulon is generally located due east of central Raleigh and Knightdale, southeast of Rolesville and Wake Forest, and northeast of Wendell and Clayton. The cities of Wilson and Rocky Mount are farther east of Zebulon.



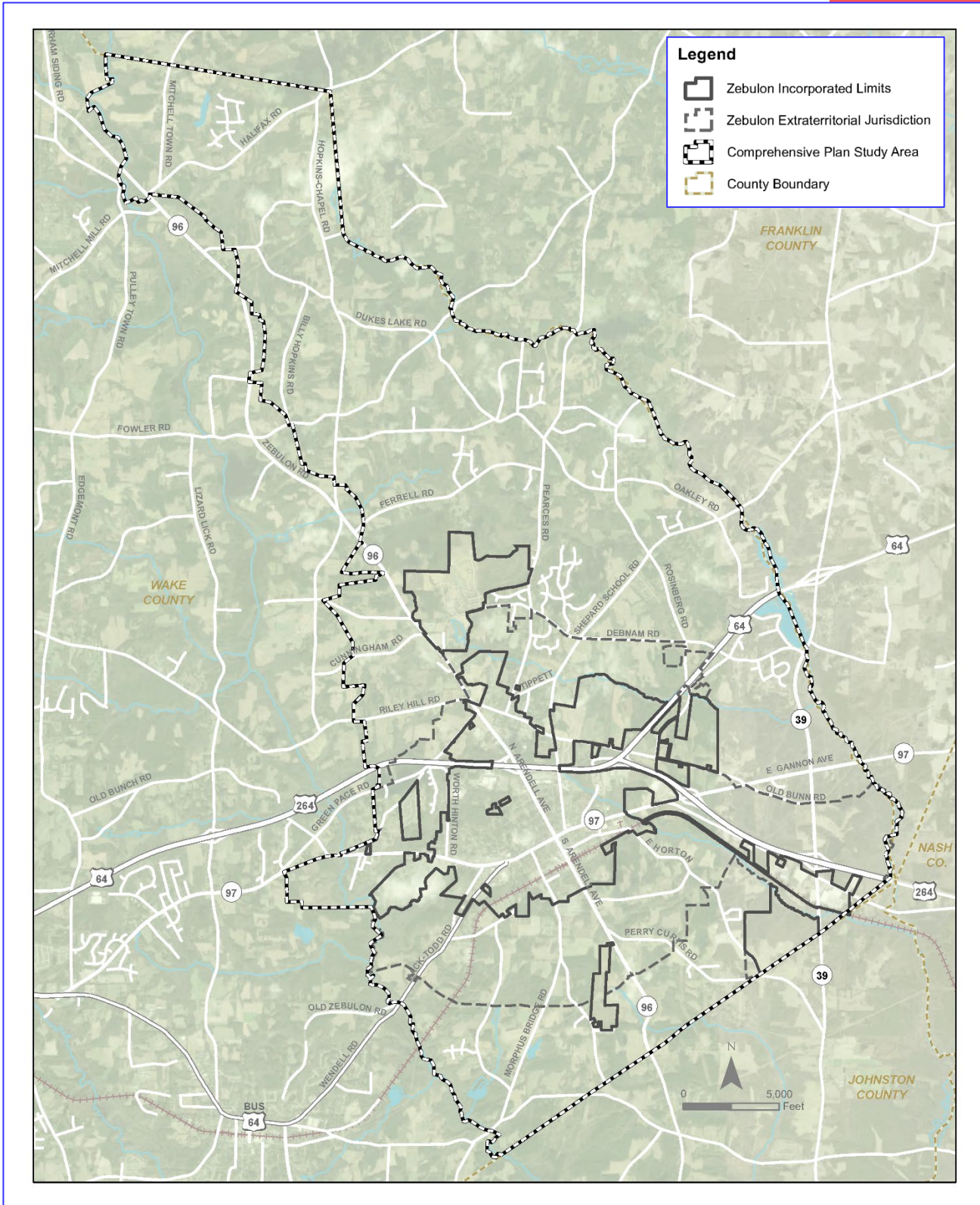
Zebulon has direct access from U.S. 64 (future Interstate 87), and Business U.S. 64 traverses

central Zebulon. U.S. 64 continues northeast to Rocky Mount and ultimately the Atlantic coast. U.S. 264 splits from U.S. 64 on the east side of Zebulon and proceeds to Wilson, then Greenville, and then merges again with U.S. 64 at the coast. Both Rocky Mount and Wilson are located near the heavily traveled I-95 corridor. N.C. 96 is the main north-south highway through Zebulon, connecting to I-95 south of Zebulon at Selma.

The Town boundaries encompassed a total area of 5.65 square miles in March 2021, as displayed on **Map 2, Zebulon Jurisdiction**. The Zebulon extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) included 13.84 square miles at that time. Map 2 also shows a much larger planning area for purposes of this CLUP.

Zebulon is on the Piedmont plateau area of the eastern U.S., between the Atlantic coastal plain and the Appalachian Mountains. Much of the town area is in the 300-foot elevation range above sea level. The town is generally situated on higher ground between the Little River on the west and Moccasin Creek on the east. A future water supply reservoir has long been planned northwest of Zebulon by damming the Little River just north of U.S. 64.

MAP 2 | Zebulon Jurisdiction



Zebulon Today Report Organization and Content

The information in this report is presented in the following topic areas relevant to the Town’s CLUP for guiding Zebulon’s future physical development:

- Historical Timeline
- People
- Housing
- Jobs and Income
- Utilities and Public Facilities
- Parks and Amenities

A Comprehensive Transportation Plan concurrent to the CLUP covers current mobility conditions.

Historical Timeline

1906

Raleigh & Pamlico Sound Railroad Company decides to bring railroad through area.

1906

Charter issued to Zebulon Company, organized by Edgar Barbee and Falconer Arendell, which begins dividing 49-acre area into streets, blocks and lots.

1907

Zebulon is officially incorporated and recognized as a town, with 297.5 acres in its jurisdiction.

1908

Zebulon’s first school, the Wakelon School, opens.

1920

Zebulon’s first water system is installed.

1923

Zebulon acquires its first fire truck and initiates garbage pickup service.

1976

The Wakelon School building is added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1986

The Bennett Bunn Plantation northeast of town becomes the second area property added to the National Register of Historic Places, with an original house dating to 1833.

1991

Five County Stadium is completed, and minor league Carolina Mudcats play first game on July 3.

1997

Zebulon annexes the neighboring community of Wakefield, nearly doubling the acreage within the corporate limits (to 2,115 acres), and increasing the population to 3,908.

2007

Voters approve the Town purchasing the Wakelon School building from GlaxoSmithKline, which had used it as office space.

2007

The George and Neva Barbee House, built in 1914, becomes the third area site added to the National Register of Historic Places.

2008

Zebulon adopts its first Comprehensive Plan.

2015

Zebulon adopts a Greenway, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

2018

Zebulon adopts a Vision 2030 Strategic Plan.

2019

Zebulon adopts a new Unified Development Ordinance amid a period of tremendous growth.



Zebulon through the Years

Zebulon's development footprint has spread significantly in recent years, especially north of U.S. 64 with extensive subdivision platting and home construction activity. The series of aerial views below, from Google Earth, shows this transition since 1998 through 2019. This includes:

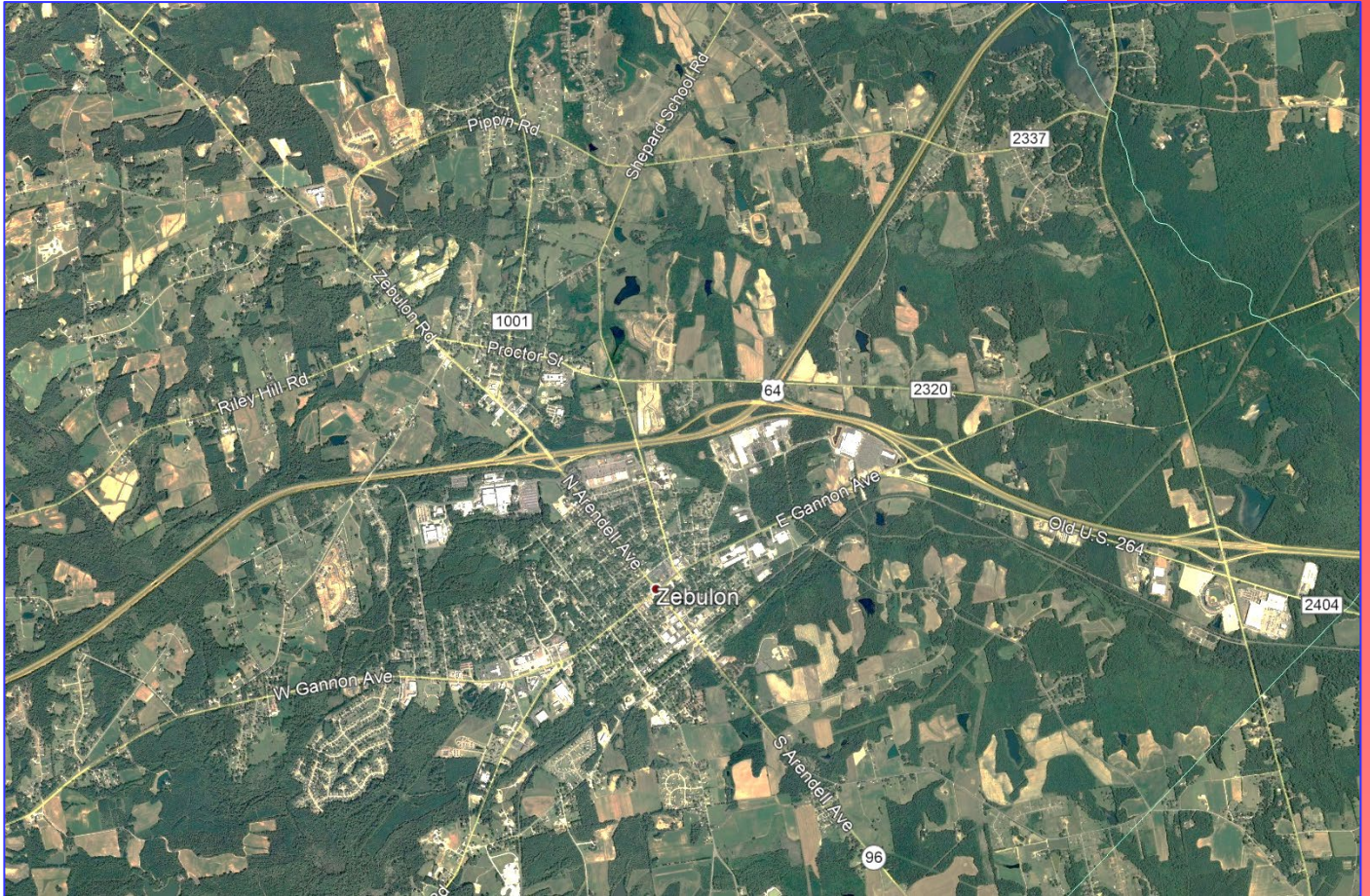
- Still mostly undeveloped and/or rural conditions south of the railroad, around Five County Stadium on the east side, around the original Wakefield community on the north, and with only pockets of development to the west and southwest toward Wendell.
- By 2008, U.S. Foods is visible across N.C. 39 from Five County Stadium, and the Triangle East Business Park has seen further investment; new residential development is happening around Old Bunn Road and Pippin Road on the north side; and the Pineview subdivision is mostly built on the west side, with early construction under way on the Braemar subdivision. Wakelon Elementary School has also been built along N.C. 96 near Pippin Road. More commercial development has emerged along N. Arendell Avenue, just north of U.S. 64, along with the Walmart center on E. Gannon Avenue. Only limited new development has occurred on the south side.
- By early 2019, the trend of rapid north side home construction is well under way and the most notable change over the prior decade. The new solar farm near S. Arendell Avenue, south of Downtown, is also visible.

Zebulon Area in March 1998



SOURCE: Google Earth

Zebulon Area in October 2008



SOURCE: Google Earth



Zebulon Area in February 2019



SOURCE: Google Earth

People

A review of key population indicators quantifies the substantial growth in Zebulon’s population since 2010. Unless indicated otherwise, all data in this and later sections reflect the newest available estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, pending the release of Census 2020 data. Time will tell to what extent various indicators were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic peak during 2020 and its lingering after-effects.

Census Data Availability

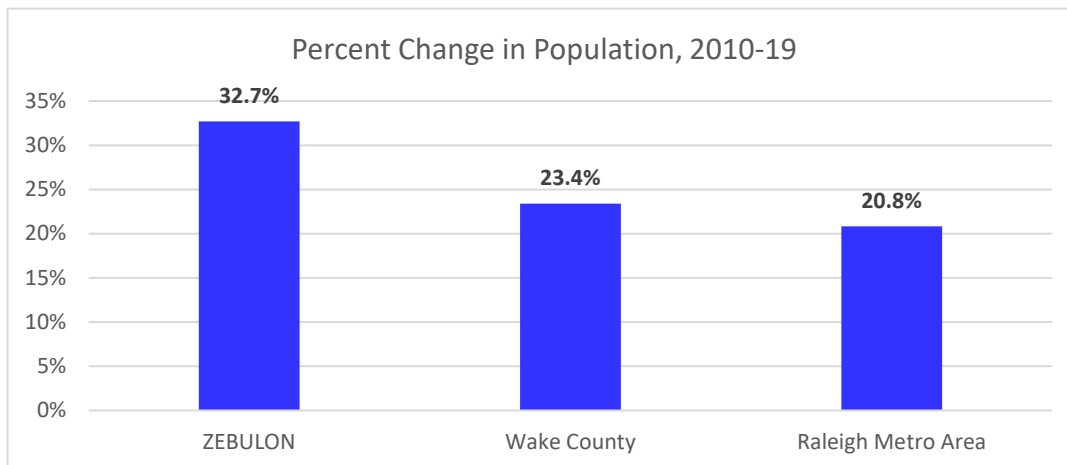
This Comprehensive Land Use Plan was prepared at the start of a new decade. This is when one-of-a-kind data from the last decennial U.S. Census (2010) is growing increasingly out of date and data from the next census (2020) is still at least a year away. The COVID-19 public health emergency impacted the ability of the Census Bureau to conduct normal Census activities in 2020, causing the typical Census reporting timeframe to be extended for some unknown period.

In the meantime, interim estimates for some indicators are available through the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) and used here. These standard data points enable “apples to apples” comparisons to other communities, the state and the nation.

Population

The population count in Zebulon is a near-daily moving target with the extent of new home construction and the pace of newcomers moving into the community. The newest available U.S. Census Bureau estimate is through July 2019, when the population within the Town limits – also smaller at that time prior to recent annexations – was 5,917 persons. At the time of this report, the population count was known to be well beyond the 6,000 threshold with ongoing occupancy of newly-built homes. See the further discussion below, under the Housing topic, of more current Town data on population growth.

The comparison chart below shows that while the Raleigh region had added the equivalent of a fifth of its 2010 population through 2019, Zebulon had grown at an even faster pace, adding nearly a third of its 2010 population by mid-2019.

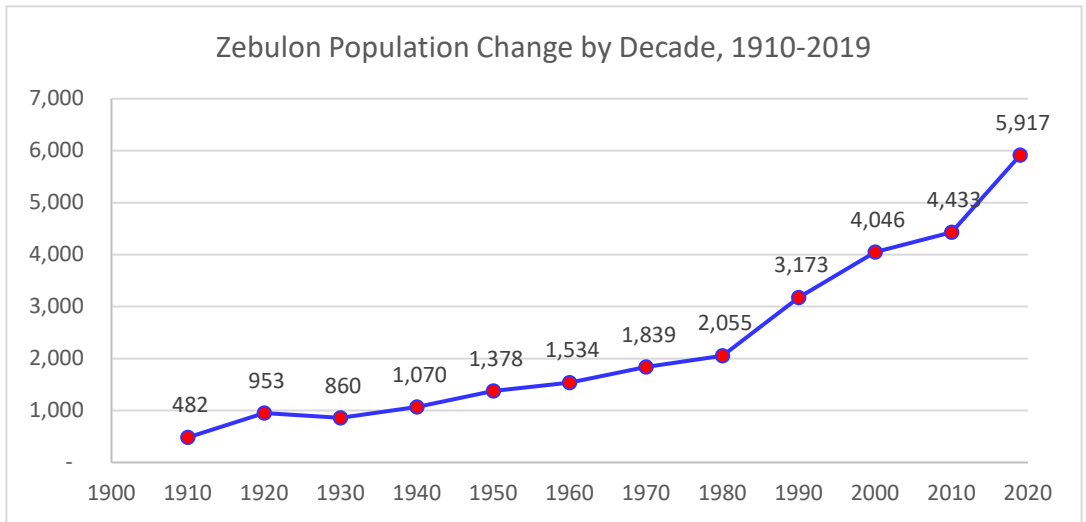


The chart below of Zebulon’s historical population trend shows many decades of mostly gradual but steady growth from 1930. The growth pace started to pick up notably after 1980, until the most rapid period of growth over the last decade since 2010.

6,000+

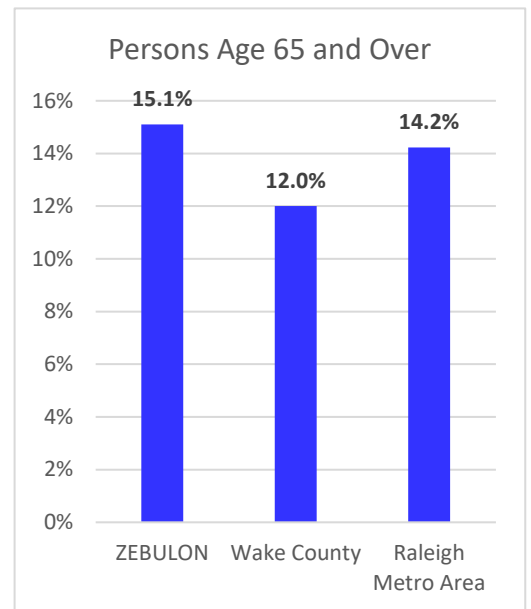
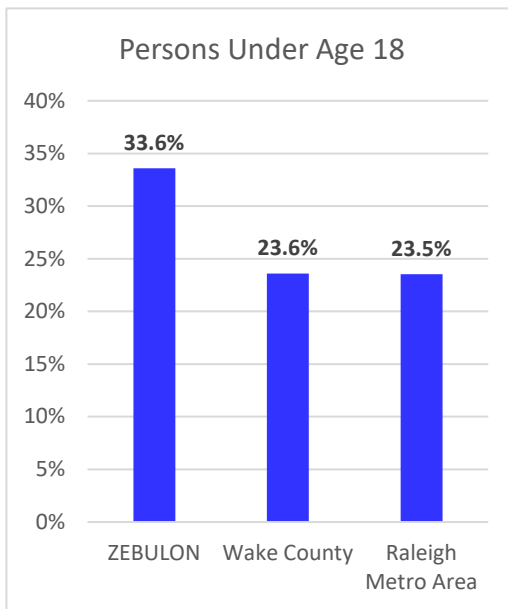


36.1



Age Distribution

The estimated 2019 median age in Zebulon was 36.1, compared to 38.1 for the entire nation. The charts below reflect that Zebulon had a relatively younger population than all of Wake County and the region in terms of the share of residents under age 18, although Zebulon had a higher proportion of senior residents. The age 65+ percentage will undoubtedly decline with younger families and new working-age population moving into the community.



Housing

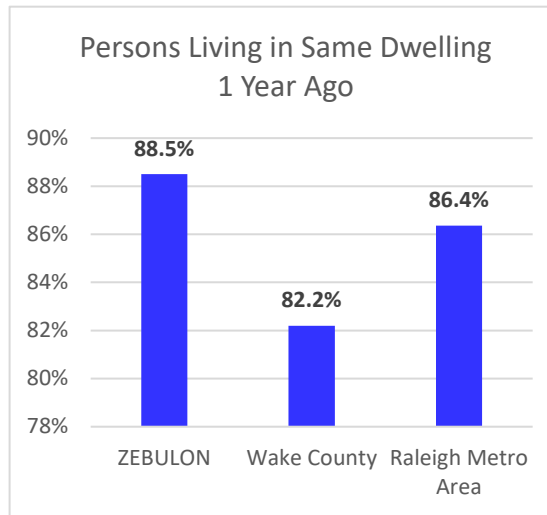
Much of the early input and discussion during the CLUP process centered around the explosive growth occurring in and around Zebulon, especially in terms of new subdivision approvals and home construction. While much of this new development involves single-family detached dwellings, the market is responding to the Town’s desire for mixed housing outcomes, including attached forms of ownership housing and new multi-family construction.



Pending Housing Units – and Further Population Increase

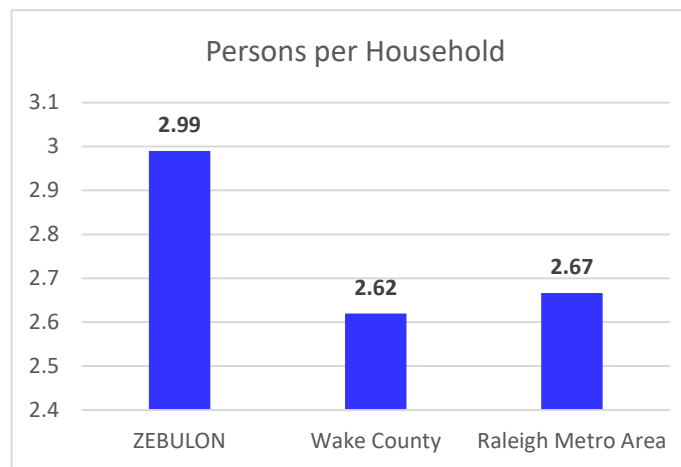
At the time this report was drafted, Town Planning staff in December 2020 reported that building permit applications for 221 single-family homes had been received year to date, compared to 191 in 2019. Additionally, 163 residential certificates of occupancy had been issued in the second half of 2020 since July 1, relative to 114 in that period during 2019. Based on an estimated average household size in Zebulon of 2.99 persons per household, that meant approximately 487 new residents had potentially been added from July through December 2020 based on the 163 newly-occupied homes. Furthermore, just over 3,000 more homes were already in the approval pipeline toward construction.

At the same time, the next chart shows that despite Zebulon’s growth wave, a sizable share of the population was still relatively stable in terms of where people had lived one year earlier, somewhat above the Wake County and regional percentages.



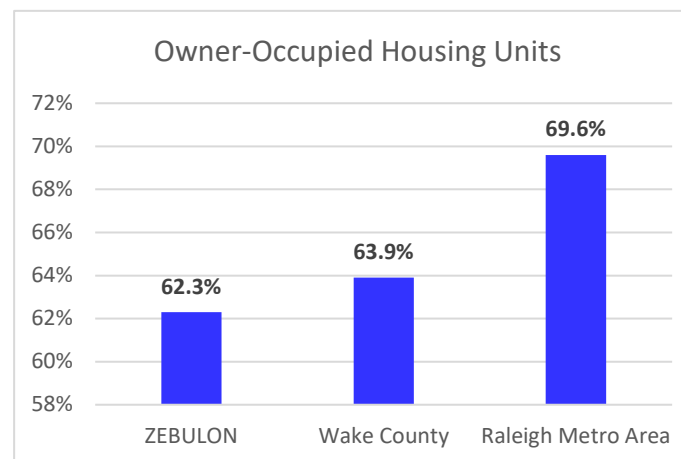
Household Size

As another sign of demographic shifts in Zebulon amid growth, the newest available estimate of average household size was 2.99 persons in 2019, which was up from 2.62 persons at the time of Census 2010. The Persons Per Household chart shows that the local household size was also well above those for all of Wake County and the Raleigh region.



Owner-Occupied Housing

Another indicator that should shift with ongoing construction of new single-family detached homes is the extent of owner-occupied housing in Zebulon. The next chart shows that Zebulon had a lower share of such housing within its overall housing stock in 2019 relative to all of Wake County and the Raleigh region.



3,000+

2.99

62.3%



\$130,100

3,820

Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units

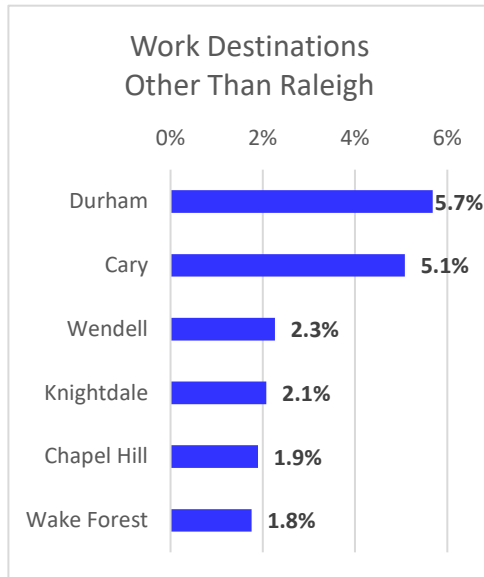
While home values are undoubtedly on the rise in Zebulon, and local real estate professionals have access to the most recent numbers, use of U.S. Census Bureau estimates allows for “apples-to-apples” comparison across different geographies. The most recent Bureau estimate, from 2019, shows a median value of \$130,100 for owner-occupied homes in Zebulon. For comparison, the Wake County median value was \$281,700.

Jobs and Income

Through leadership and public discussions for the CLUP, it was noted that Zebulon was historically a “jobs town” first, but now its full-time residential population is increasing with the extent of new housing construction at this “last frontier” of eastern Wake County.

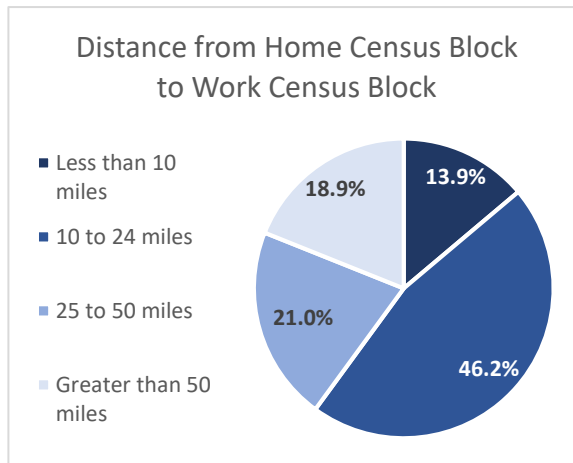
Jobs Available in Zebulon and Jobs Held by Residents

Jobs data available from the U.S. Census Bureau through 2018 shows that Zebulon had approximately 3,820 local jobs at the time, which could have been held by residents or individuals commuting from elsewhere. On the other hand, when focusing on residents who work, 2,165 Zebulon residents had jobs, which could have been local or outside of Zebulon.



Of the 2,165 employed residents in 2018, nearly one-third (32.1 percent) commuted into Raleigh. The next highest share, at only 6.5 percent, were residents who stayed within Zebulon for work. The chart to the left shows the next most common work destinations in the region, with another 42.6 percent reporting other work locations, which could be nearby or distant (2.1 percent were in Greensboro and 4.3 percent in Charlotte).

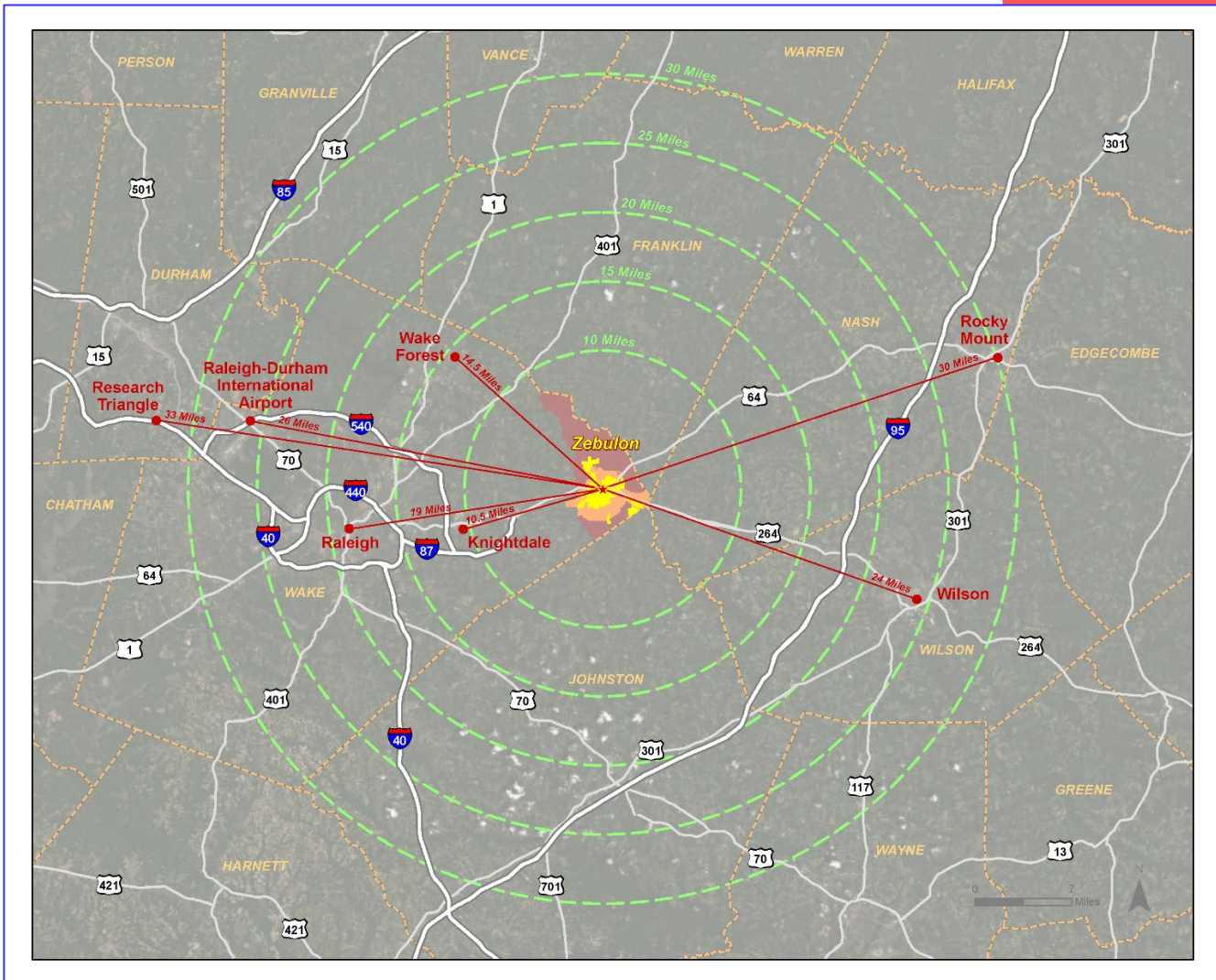
In fact, numerous individuals who provided input to the CLUP noted business and work-related connections, personally or by family members, to Wilson, Rocky Mount and Greenville. In this respect, various people pointed out that Zebulon is well situated between those eastern destinations and Raleigh, the Research Triangle and other places



to the west as illustrated on **Map 3, Zebulon Economic Destinations**. Relative ease of access to Raleigh-Durham International Airport is also seen as a Zebulon advantage.

The next chart shows that the largest share of employed Zebulon residents, nearly half, traveled between 10 and 24 miles from their home area to their work location in 2018.

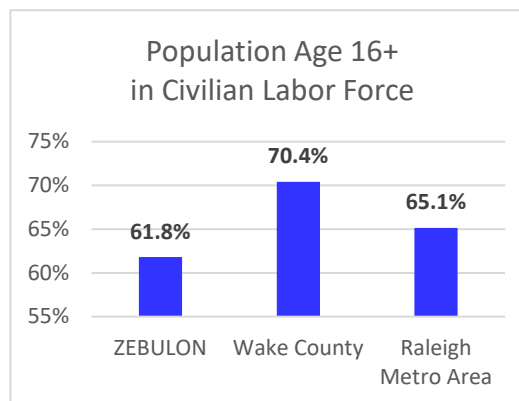
MAP 3 | Zebulon Economic Destinations



Pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline is the largest local employer, with more than 1,500 local workers. Other significant employers are food distributor U.S. Foods and Zebulon-based Nomacorc (manufacturer of synthetic wine bottle corks) and Devil Dog Manufacturing (clothing).

Population within Labor Force

The next chart shows that Zebulon had a lower labor force participation rate among its working age population in 2019 than all of Wake County or the Raleigh region. Among employed residents, the largest shares in 2018 were engaged in Health Care and Social Assistance occupations (15.1 percent) and Retail Trade (12.1 percent), with all others spread widely across other occupational categories.



61.8%

When considering the 3,820 local jobs in 2018 (held by residents or others), 25.6 percent were in Manufacturing, 20.9 percent in Retail Trade, 16.4 percent in Accommodation and Food Services, and 9.9 percent in Health Care and Social Assistance.

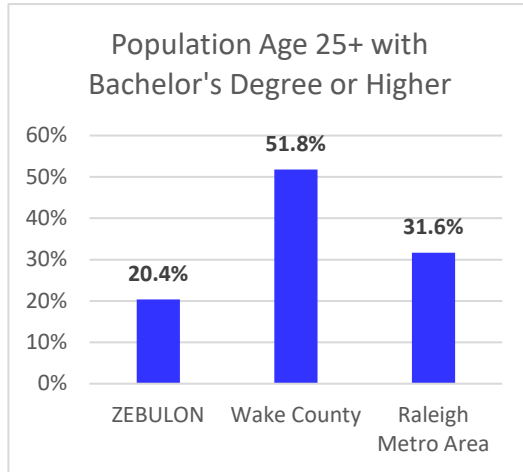


20.4%

\$53,676

Population Age 25+ with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

As the chart below shows, educational attainment in Zebulon was lower in 2019 than across Wake County and the Raleigh region – but recognizing that the region is known nationally for its

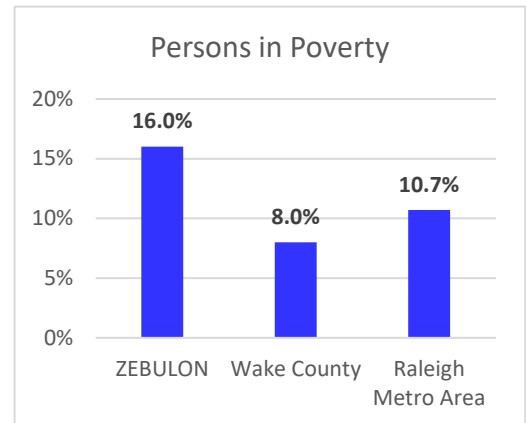
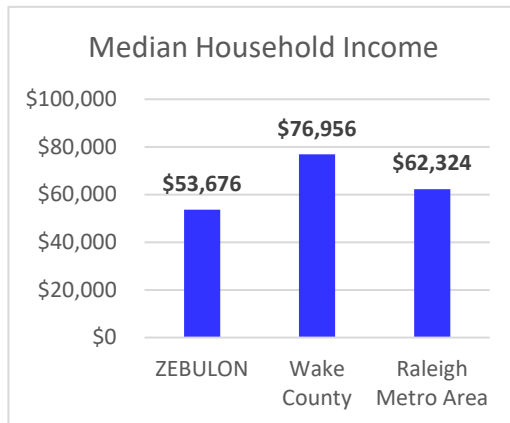


wealth of higher education opportunities and technology leadership. Among employed residents in 2018, 18.8 percent had attained a bachelor's or more advanced degree. Among individuals working in Zebulon (residents or others), the rate was slightly lower at 17.7 percent.

Locally, Zebulon hosts a technical community college facility in the Eastern Wake Education Center, part of the Wake Technical Community College System ("Wake Tech"). Zebulon has three public schools – Wakelon and Zebulon Elementary Schools and Zebulon Middle School – and high school students attend East Wake High School in Wendell. East Wake Academy is a popular North Carolina Public School of Choice (charter school), and Heritage Christian Academy is a local private school.

Median Household Income

Similar to educational attainment, median household income in Zebulon is also below the countywide and regional amounts. A related indicator shows that 16 percent of the local population fell below the federally-defined poverty line in 2019.



Utilities and Public Facilities

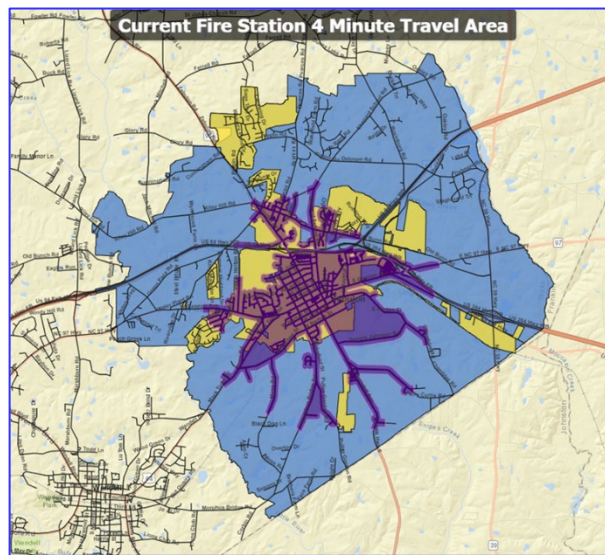
As in any established but growing community, Zebulon will have to balance the maintenance and rehabilitation needs of older infrastructure and public buildings with the service needs of newly-developing areas. As a community that also draws visitors for work, shopping and services, education and other reasons, Zebulon also has to serve its daytime population along with full-time residents.

Zebulon Incorporated Area

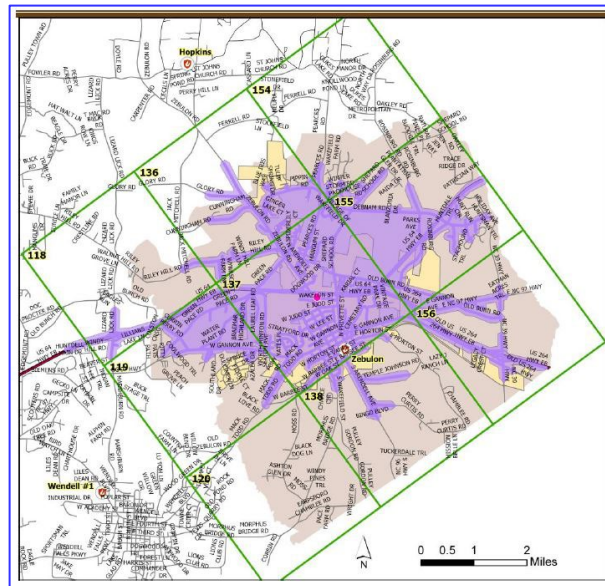
Zebulon’s incorporated area has continued to expand in recent years, often as new development occurs and is annexed as part of public service extensions. As noted earlier, the Town boundaries encompassed a total area of 5.65 square miles in March 2021, and the ETJ included 13.84 square miles at that time. Displayed on **Map 4, Zebulon Annexation History**, is the progression of the Town’s territorial growth since 2005.

Fire Response Target in Minutes

According to Zebulon Fire Department (ZFD) leadership, ZFD has achieved its target four-minute travel time to an incident location approximately 90 percent of the time. However, at the time of this report and CLUP process, ZFD was facing increasing challenges meeting this target given its south side station location Downtown relative to the extent of north side growth occurring. The 4-Minute Travel Area graphic illustrates, in purple, the areas ZFD was able to reach within four minutes from its Downtown station. Areas in yellow are outside this reach.



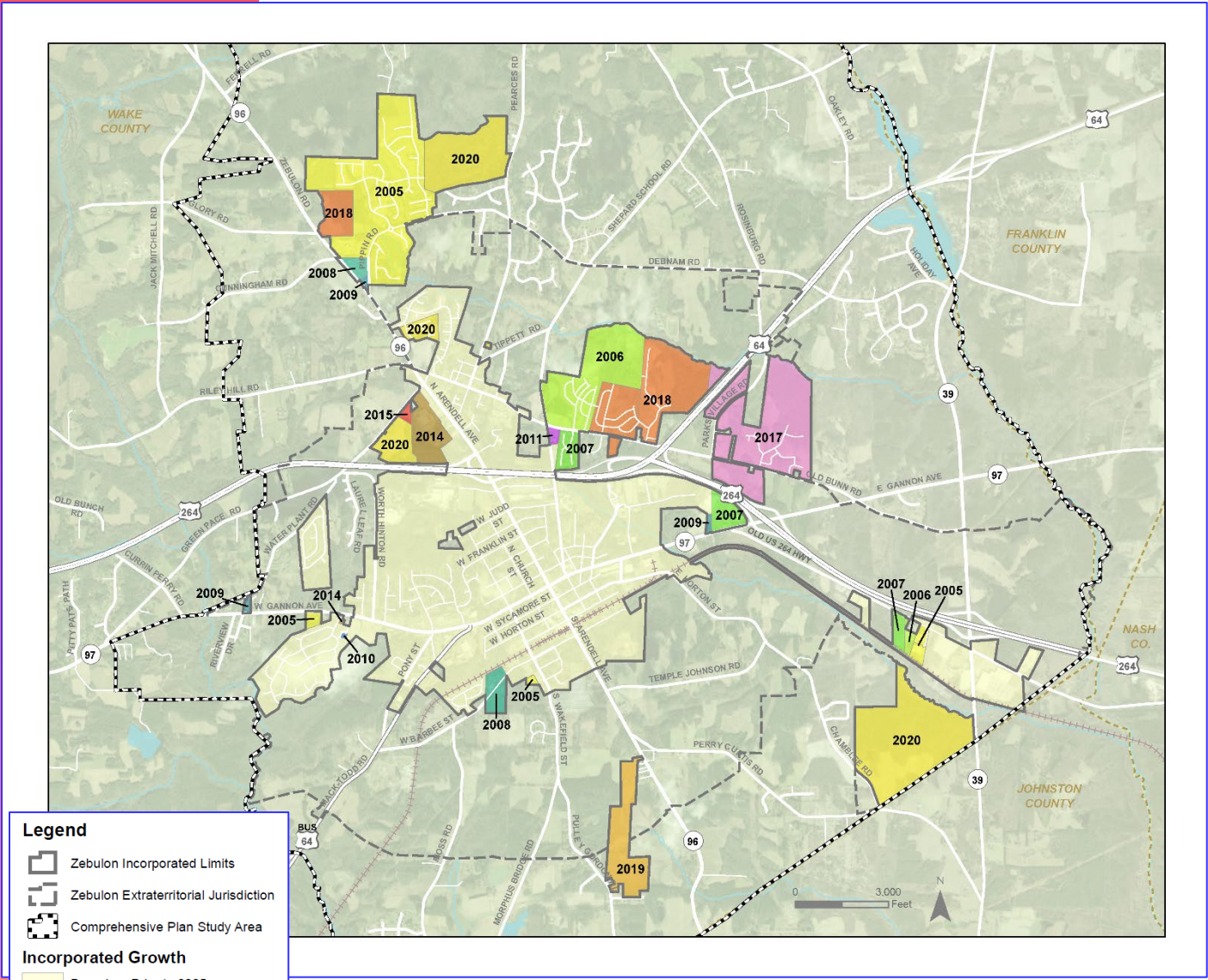
The second graphic, from ZFD’s Fire Facility Plan, shows how service area coverage would improve from a more centralized fire station location, similar to how the Zebulon Police Department is housed near Town Hall. Options for a fire station move were under consideration by the Town during the CLUP process. Relocation would also open up another high-profile property for repurposing and new private investment amid a renewed Downtown revitalization focus. This key investment decision is an example of the essential infrastructure and facility tipping points the Town will face in coming years.



5.65

4

MAP 4 | Zebulon Annexation History



Responsiveness is one of many considerations in the ratings assigned by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to jurisdictions across the nation. The ISO assigns communities a Public Protection Classification from 1 (best) to 10 (worst), and Zebulon had a 3.0 rating at the time of this report (4.0 for areas into the unincorporated portions of the County). A community's fire suppression capabilities are evaluated based on a variety of factors including the water system, fire department staffing and equipment, emergency communications, fire and building codes, and public education efforts. A 2-3 rating is highly favorable considering that only a few hundred jurisdictions have achieved a 1 rating. ZFD will undergo its next periodic inspection cycle for an updated ISO rating during 2021.

Growth-driven staffing needs will affect all Town functions at some point, but especially public safety services. Like their ZFD counterparts, the Zebulon Police Department (ZPD) is seeing its response times rise with a growing service area and increasing traffic on local roads. Compared to five years ago, ZPD incident response may take 9-11 minutes depending on the call type and location relative to a 4-6 minute goal.



Years to Pay Off Raleigh Utility Merger Agreement

At the time of this report, the Town had less than two years left to pay off a 2006 agreement through which the City of Raleigh accepted responsibility for operating, maintaining and improving water and wastewater facilities and services previously owned and operated by Zebulon. Other area towns executed similar agreements, which is also leading to investments in new capacity and distribution/collection lines by Raleigh with its capacity to take on larger projects. These improvements will create more long-term development potential in eastern Wake County, as has already occurred along Old Bunn Road.

Zebulon Public Works staff expect that, following the merger agreement payoff, the average decline in local water bills will be in the \$70 range – a tremendous benefit for Zebulon residents along with businesses and other utility customers. Zebulon Public Works retains responsibility for local drainage and storm water management.

Displayed on **Map 5, Public Facilities and Properties**, are facilities and sites owned and maintained by the Town or other public entities. This includes the Town Hall building and Police Department, the Downtown fire station, the Community Center and a Town Cemetery. The Zebulon Community Library is operated by Wake County, as is the adjacent Eastern Wake Regional Center, which provides local access to various County functions and services. Area public schools are the responsibility of the Wake County Public School System. The U.S. Postal Service operates the post office Downtown.

Timeframe until Little River Reservoir Construction

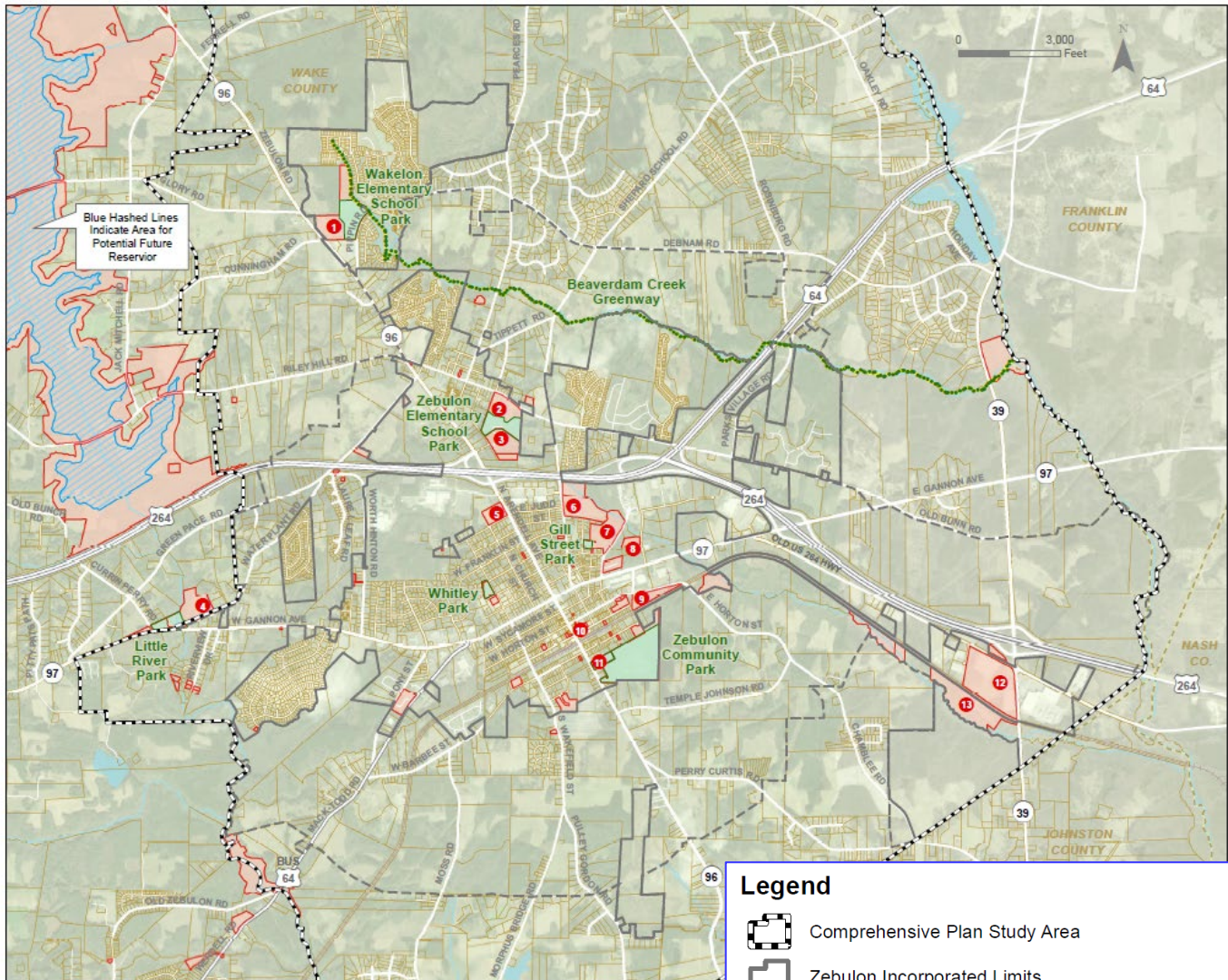
As with proposed new reservoir projects in other parts of the nation, the proposed Little River Reservoir northwest of Zebulon (distinct from the existing Little River Lake reservoir north of Durham) was postponed in recent years by environmental concerns. Construction originally slated to begin in 2016 has been put off until at least 2030 to enable more time for further environmental impact assessment, especially related to projected wetlands loss. That timeframe could extend even further if reductions in water demand from conservation and other measures reduce the need for the additional water supply. However, the Wake County website states, “The City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department continues to consider the Little River Reservoir a key source of drinking water for the future.”

As part of working toward the planned reservoir, in 2008 the Wake County Board of Commissioners, the City of Raleigh and the towns of Wake Forest, Wendell and Zebulon entered into the Little River Reservoir Water Supply Watershed Protection Interlocal Agreement (ILA). The ILA helps to protect the water quality of the future reservoir limiting the types and extent of non-residential uses in the watershed. Among the items illustrated on **Map 5** is the area of the potential future reservoir closest to Zebulon and the associated public property ownership, from U.S. 64 northward.

< 2

2030+

MAP 5 | Public Facilities and Properties



Legend

- Comprehensive Plan Study Area
- Zebulon Incorporated Limits
- Zebulon Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- County Boundary
- Parcel Boundary
- Park
- Public Parcels

Specific Properties identified by Map Number (#)

1. Wakelon Elementary School
2. Zebulon Elementary School
3. Zebulon Community Library
4. Zebulon Water Plant
5. Zebulon Town Hall and Police Department
6. Zebulon Middle School
7. Zebulon Town Cemetery
8. Wake Technical Community College
9. Zebulon Public Works
10. Zebulon Fire Department
11. Zebulon Community Center
12. Five County Stadium
13. City of Raleigh Wastewater Treatment Plant

Parks and Amenities

At the time of this report and the CLUP process, the Town was also developing a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan will cover the existing conditions and future outlook, needs and priorities for expanding and enhancing varied recreational opportunities in Zebulon as the community continues to grow. Biking accommodation and trail and sidewalk needs are just a few ways the Master Plan will interact with the new Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

The role of the CLUP is to “connect the dots” across separate but inter-related factors that will shape the Town’s future. For example, the area’s hydrologic features in the form of rivers, creeks, ponds and their associated floodplains are key factors that define the landscape and where land development can feasibly occur, together with the local terrain and slopes. The same factors can help determine the placement of utility infrastructure needed to serve development and new population. Waterways and their vegetated surroundings and wildlife are also magnets for nature enthusiasts and often the backbone of area greenway systems. The best opportunities to acquire, extend and link greenways, trails and other open spaces are when private development occurs and as public infrastructure and facility (including school) projects are pursued. Related partnerships may involve interagency efforts and/or public-private coordination.

Depicted on **Map 6, Natural Features**, are the various elements cited above, including the framing of Zebulon by the Little River corridor on the west and Moccasin Creek on the east, and the general topography between them. Little Creek, Beaverdam Creek and others cut across the area in a more east-west direction and, together with their associated watersheds, create pockets of developable area. Map 6 also shows floodplain and wetland areas scattered across the Town’s jurisdiction.

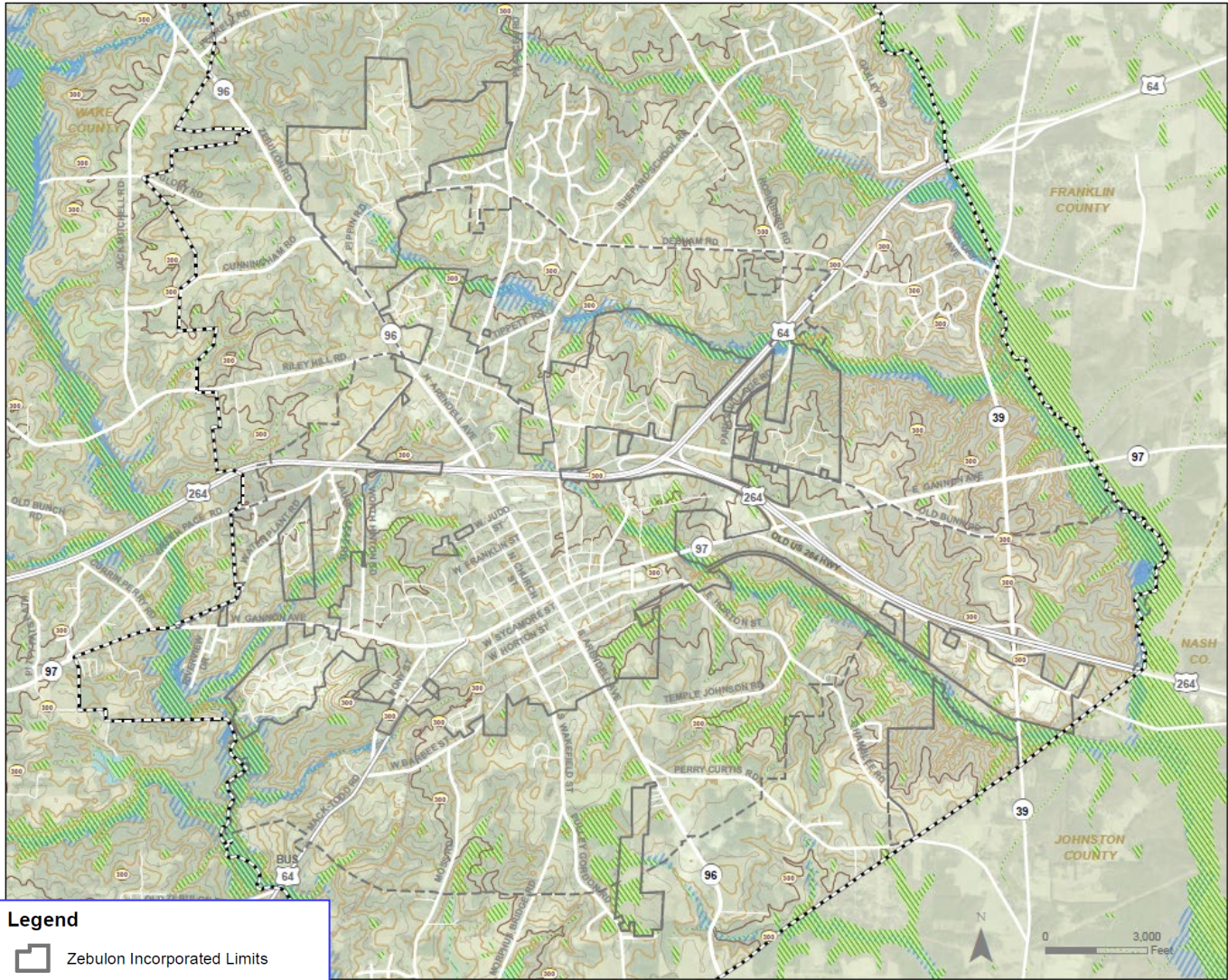
Included on Map 5, above, are the six public parks managed and maintained by the Zebulon Parks and Recreation Department:

- Community Park (largest Town park at 47.5 acres);
- Gill Street Parks;
- Little River Park;
- Wakelon Elementary School Park;
- Whitley Park; and
- Zebulon Elementary School Park.




Along with the Town’s parks, the Department provides recreational, educational and other programming involving arts, fitness, travel and wellness, plus summer camp opportunities. The Town’s Community Center is a key asset for hosting such activities. The Department also interacts with others in planning for and executing major community events such as the Christmas Tree Lighting Downtown. Additionally, the Department oversees the Zebulon Farm Fresh Market, which connects residents and visitors with local farmers and other vendors in Downtown each spring through fall, on Saturdays plus selected Wednesday evening pop-up times.


6

MAP 6 | Natural Features






Legend

-  Zebulon Incorporated Limits
-  Zebulon Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  Comprehensive Plan Study Area




 County Boundary

 Wetlands

Ten-Foot Contours

-  100-Ft Major Contour
-  20-Ft Major Contour
-  10-Ft Contour

FEMA Flood Zones

-  100-Year Flood Zone
-  500-Year Flood Zone
-  Floodway



grow Zebulon

COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

