



Town of Lillington

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Adopted: August 11, 2026



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THANKS TO THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in the planning process for the Lillington Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This Plan was made possible through the valuable contributions and insights of residents, business owners, property owners, developers, and representatives from a wide range of groups and organizations. Your engagement has been instrumental in shaping a shared vision for Lillington's future.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>PLAN CONTENT</u>	4
Guiding Framework	4
Plan Process	4
How to use this plan	5
Study Area	6
History	7
Regional Setting	8
Past Planning Efforts	9
<u>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</u>	16
Community Workshops	18
Public Survey	19
Challenges & Opportunities	20
<u>LILLINGTON TODAY</u>	24
Community Profile	24
Land Supply	29
Land Suitability	30
Environmental Constraints	32
Transportation	34
Parks & Community Facilities	37
Utilities & Infrastructure	42
<u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</u>	45
<u>VISION & GOALS</u>	55
<u>PLAN ELEMENTS</u>	58
Introduction	58
Future Land Use Map	61
Character Areas & Descriptions	62
<u>POLICIES & ACTION PLAN</u>	72
Policy Recommendations	72
Action Matrix	95
<u>APPENDIX</u>	119
Public Survey Results	120
Maps	129
Community Assessment/Economic Development Report	133

PLAN CONTENT

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The Town of Lillington is a thriving community in the heart of Harnett County, North Carolina. Incorporated in 1903, it serves as the county seat and is strategically located between the Raleigh and Fayetteville metropolitan areas. Lillington is supported by a robust health care network that serves as a significant employment base and enhances the overall well-being of residents. Similarly, parks, greenways, and Raven Rock State Park promote active lifestyles and community connections. Nearby Campbell University is an important institution that serves as an anchor for education, employment and cultural enrichment. Lillington's small-town charm, high quality of life, and scenic natural areas along the Cape Fear River make it a desirable place to live.

In March 2025, the Town launched an update to the Lillington Comprehensive Land Use Plan to address this growth, be in conformance with NCGS 160D, and ensure that future development supports a thriving community with a high quality of life.

The planning process included a detailed analysis of existing conditions and robust community engagement to identify key opportunities and challenges. These efforts informed the plan's vision, goals, and actionable recommendations. The result is a blueprint for how Lillington should grow and develop over the next 10 to 20 years, ensuring the town remains a vibrant and connected community for current and future residents.

PLAN PROCESS

A well-designed, comprehensive land use plan strikes a balance between data, analysis, market demand, and community input. This plan builds upon the foundation of the 2015 Land Use Plan through a planning process that combined an understanding of existing conditions with meaningful community engagement. These elements helped establish guiding principles that shaped the plan's direction. This foundational work set the stage for an updated land use strategy, supported by clear objectives and actionable strategies to help the Town "Bridge the Cape."



HOW THE TOWN WILL USE THIS PLAN

This plan should be used as a guide for Town staff and elected officials to advise future land use decisions. The Plan should be used in the following ways:

- **Town Staff** - To align departmental policies, inform financial decisions, and incrementally implement the community's vision related to development, resiliency, and growth.
- **Elected Officials** - To guide decisions about growth and development, while enabling staff and elected officials to consider economic conditions and community preferences.
- **Boards & Committees** - To promote the community's vision and ensure consistency across the town as decisions are made.



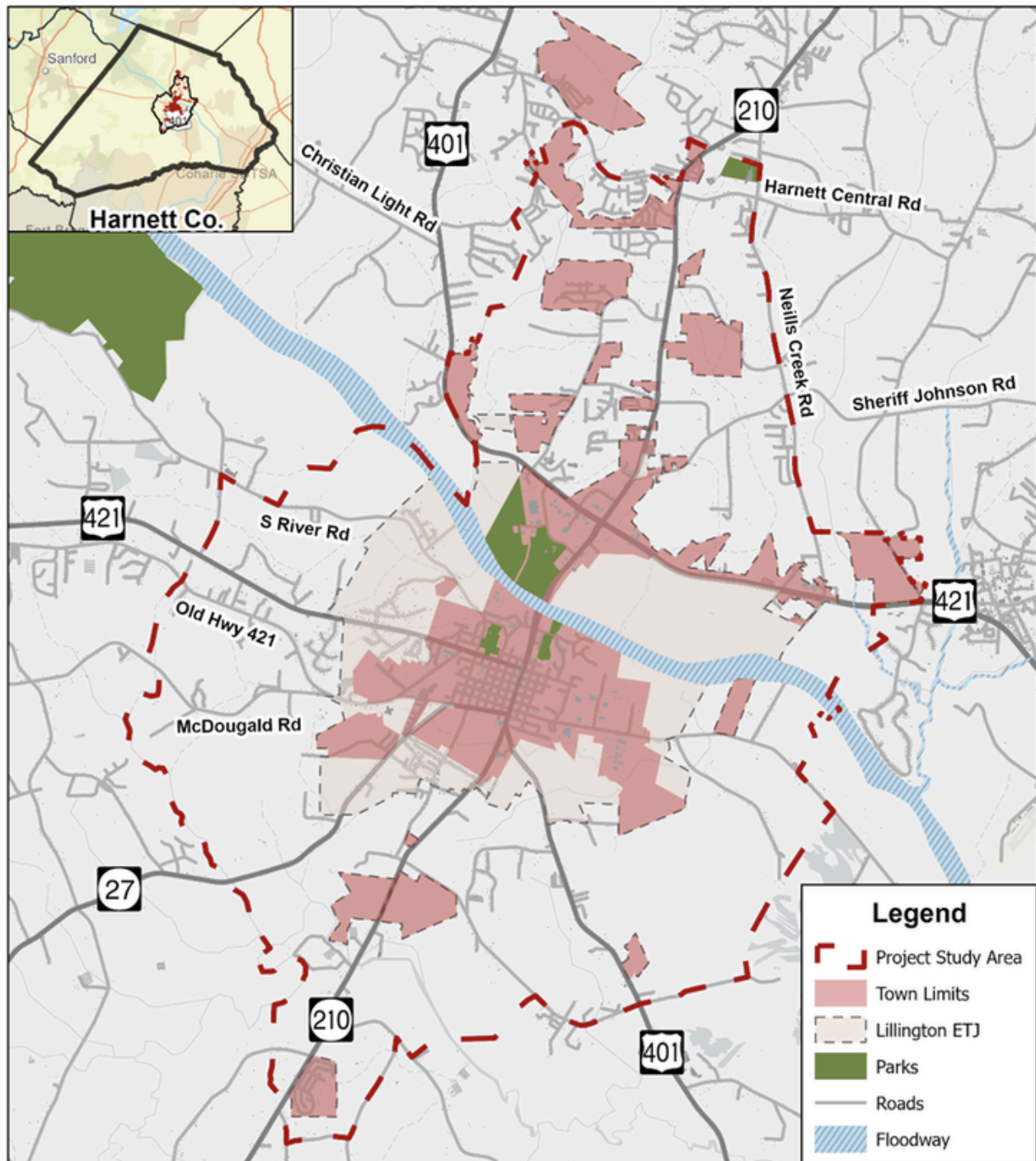
HOW OTHERS WILL USE THIS PLAN

This plan is intended to serve a wide range of groups with diverse interests in the community. It can be used in the following ways:

- **Residents** – To gain insight into the future vision for growth, development, and resiliency, and to see how supportive policies can enhance the overall quality of life.
- **Businesses** – To understand where the Town intends to focus growth and investment, and to identify areas where more concentrated development is anticipated.
- **Community Leaders** – To guide ongoing efforts that support shared community goals and priorities.
- **Regional Partners** – To coordinate cross-jurisdictional recommendations and policy strategies for more effective regional collaboration.
- **Quality of Life** – To provide a higher quality of life for residents in and around Lillington.

STUDY AREA

The study area encompasses Lillington's town limits, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), and designated growth areas to ensure a comprehensive approach to future planning. The town is collaborating with Harnett County Officials to establish an Urban Service Area (USA). This proposed area has been used as the northern boundary of the study area to maintain consistency.



HISTORY

Harnett County was formed from Cumberland County in 1855, and Lillington was named as the County seat shortly after. Construction on a courthouse began and was completed in 1897. In a region dominated by subsistence farms, Lillington became a hub for local government and business services for surrounding rural populations. This early history cemented Lillington's role as a regional service center.

In the early 20th Century, the railroad era brought multiple rail lines and depots to Lillington. The Atlantic and Western Railroad extended eastward from Sanford to Lillington, where a connection with the original Norfolk Southern Railway was made. Gridded streets were laid out south of the Cape Fear River.

Small businesses serving the surrounding population steadily grew and added to the downtown core. These included drug stores, barbershops, hardware, and grocery stores, traditional to early towns.

Today, Lillington is characterized by an up-and-coming downtown area surrounded by redevelopment opportunities and new residential subdivisions. Local and regional institutions like Campbell University, Raven Rock State Park, Harnett Regional Jetport, Central Carolina Community College, and the Cape Fear Valley Health - Central Harnett Hospital continue to expand and thrive, leading to enhanced quality of life benefits for current and future residents.

The town offers a unique mix of these quality-of-life factors and convenient access to regional metropolitan areas. The Town is investing in large-scale transportation improvements aimed at enhancing connections between residents and key local and regional employment and commercial centers, including the NC 55 bypass, NC 401 bypass and NC 210 widening and realignment.



REGIONAL SETTING

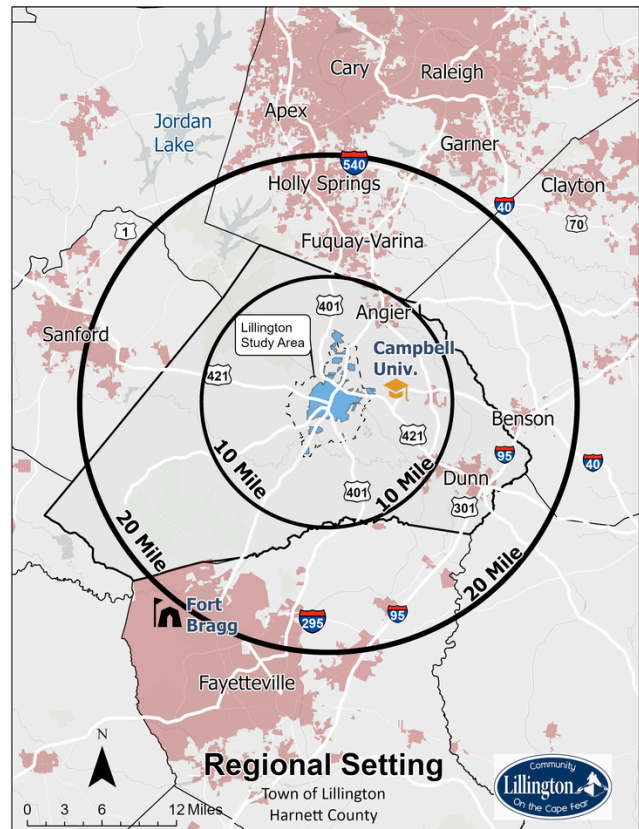
Lillington sits on the edge of the rapidly expanding Research Triangle region and is often described as being halfway between Raleigh and Fayetteville. Its central location provides convenient access to employment centers in southern Wake County, and recent completions of the southern loop of Interstate 540—along with the continued expansion of Phase 2—will further enhance regional connectivity.

According to the Greater Fayetteville Business Journal, Fort Bragg has a total direct and indirect economic impact to the Cape Fear Region of \$8.3 billion. Opportunities for employment, federal contracts, and innovation technology add to the Lillington's strategic importance.

As the county seat, Lillington is centrally located within Harnett County—one of the fastest-growing counties in North Carolina. The county's population has grown to 146,096, representing an increase of 27.4% since 2010.

Lillington benefits from strong regional connections via U.S. Highways 401, 421, and N.C. 210. Interstate 95 is just 16 miles away and can be accessed through Dunn via U.S. 421.

Additionally, the town lies within the Middle Basin of the Cape Fear River, which flows through Lillington on its way to Fayetteville and Wilmington.



LILLINGTON'S REGIONAL ASSETS



Campbell University, ECU School of Dental Medicine & Central Carolina Community College



Cape Fear Valley Health - Central Harnett Hospital



Cape Fear River, Raven Rock State Park, Golf Courses, Greenway Trails & Town Parks



Harnett Regional Jetport



Fort Bragg

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

At the beginning of the comprehensive land use plan update process, an assessment was conducted of existing plans and policies already in use. The key documents summarized below helped shape this plan and will continue to guide future planning decisions. These documents include:

Town of Lillington

- Land Use Plan
- Downtown Master Plan
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)
- Lillington Comprehensive Transportation Plan & Addendum

Harnett County

- Harnett County Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- NCDOT/Harnett County Transportation Plan
- Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Master Plan
- Harnett County Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Land Use Plan 2015

Adopted in 2015, Lillington's Land Use Plan guides growth and development through a vision statement, goals, and strategies shaped by public input. The Future Land Use Map (updated in 2019) outlines desired development patterns that support housing, commercial, industrial, and public uses, improve walkability, and balance growth across the Cape Fear River. The plan includes targeted recommendations for areas like Main Street, the Medical District, and the East Cornelius Harnett Blvd. area.



Highlights of this plan include creating complete, walkable streets, expanding greenways and public space, preserving historic buildings, and improving development standards and utility coordination. An action plan outlines the strategies, assigns responsible parties, identifies funding sources, and establishes timelines to implement the plan. Since 2015, growth has accelerated, and the plan needs to reflect:

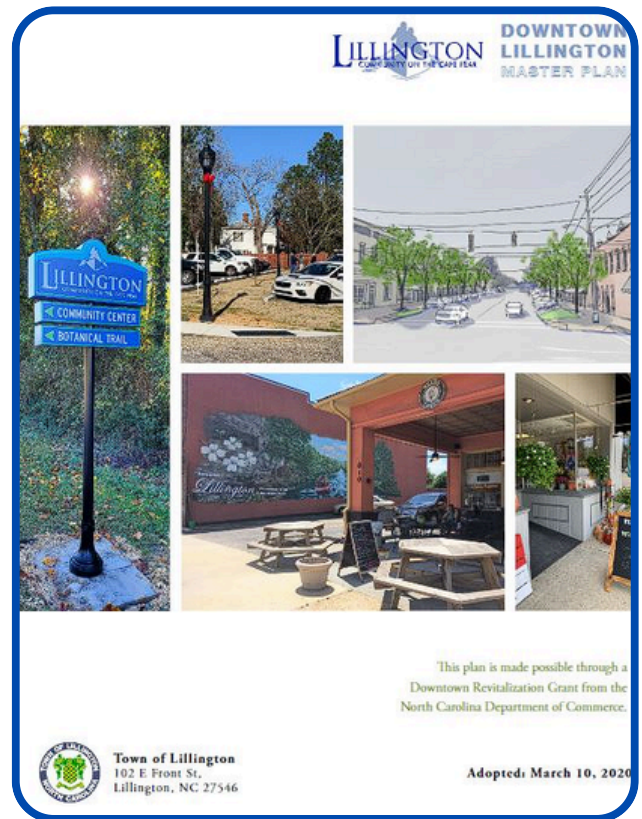
- A clearer future vision beyond existing land uses.
- Simpler, more flexible character areas.
- Expansion to include new growth areas and annexed developments, in areas beyond the town's ETJ.
- Expanded development options aimed at preserving the character of the town and human and natural resources.

Downtown Master Plan

The Town adopted the Downtown Lillington Master Plan in 2020 to establish a long-term vision for revitalizing the downtown core. The plan begins with an overview of existing conditions and outlines strategies to enhance connections, streetscapes, buildings, and key destinations.

A boundary map illustrates links to local and regional assets. Goals are supported by policy recommendations organized under five key themes: development form, economic development, alley revitalization, parking management, and outdoor gathering spaces.

Recommendations to make downtown more vibrant and inviting include improving pedestrian safety, enhancing sidewalks and crosswalks, adding wayfinding signage, and upgrading landscaping and lighting.

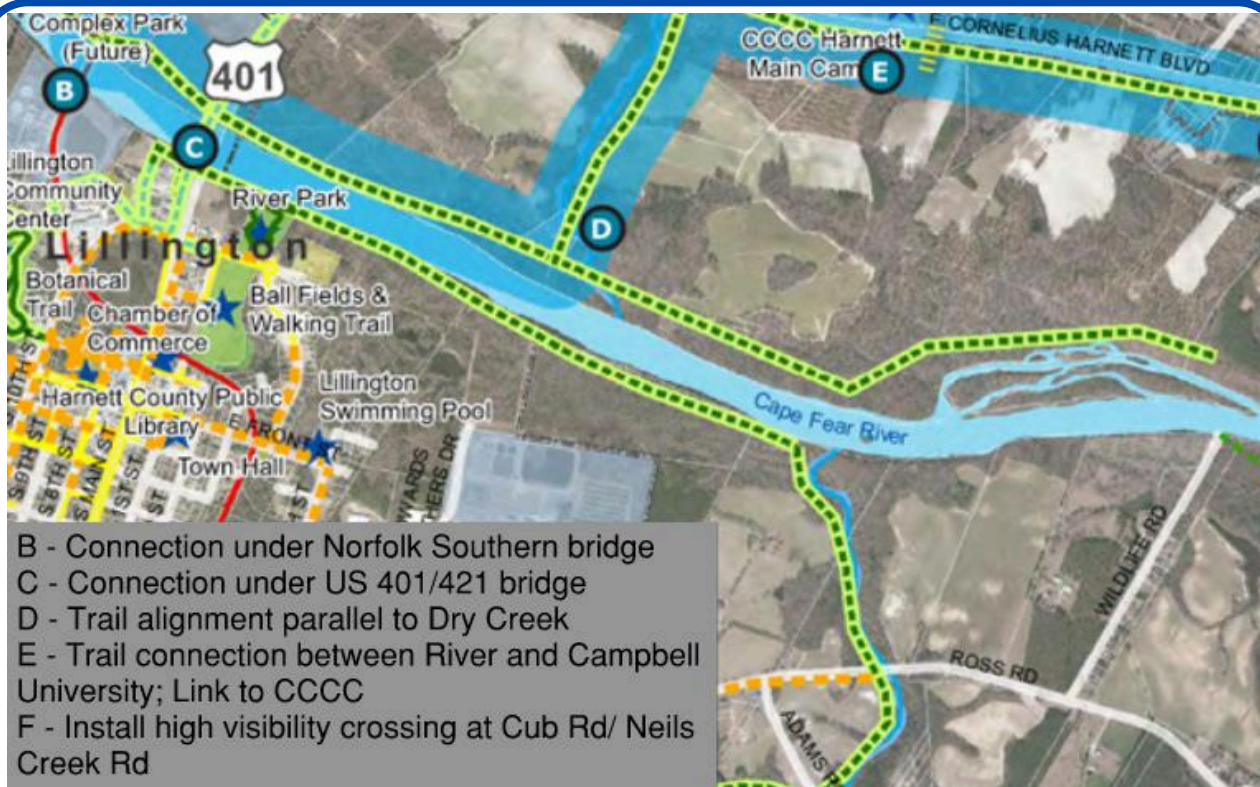
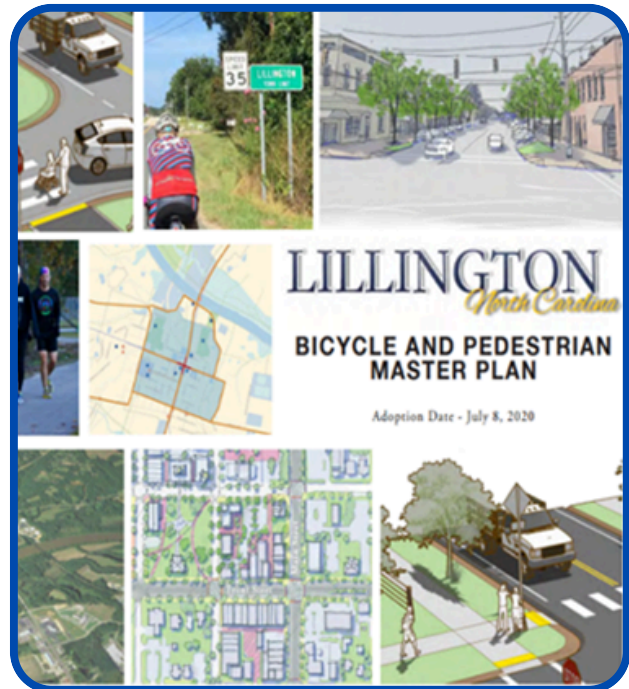


Significant investments have been made in recent years to revitalize the Town's downtown area, including the construction of the S. 8th Street & W. Ivey Street parking lot and planned streetscape improvements along W. Harnett Street, S. 8th Street, and W. Front Street.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan

Lillington adopted a Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan in 2020 that was funded by a grant from the N.C. Department of Transportation's Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation (DBPT). The plan assesses existing sidewalk and trail infrastructure and identifies opportunities to enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across town.

It outlines key needs for improving the current network and provides recommendations for repairing, expanding, & connecting assets. Proposed improvements are organized into categories such as sidewalks, intersections, greenways, trails, & bicycle routes.



The plan's action items have since led to planning and implementation of 2.5 miles of paved greenway trails along the Cape Fear River and acquisition of easements that will provide further connections to Raven Rock State Park.

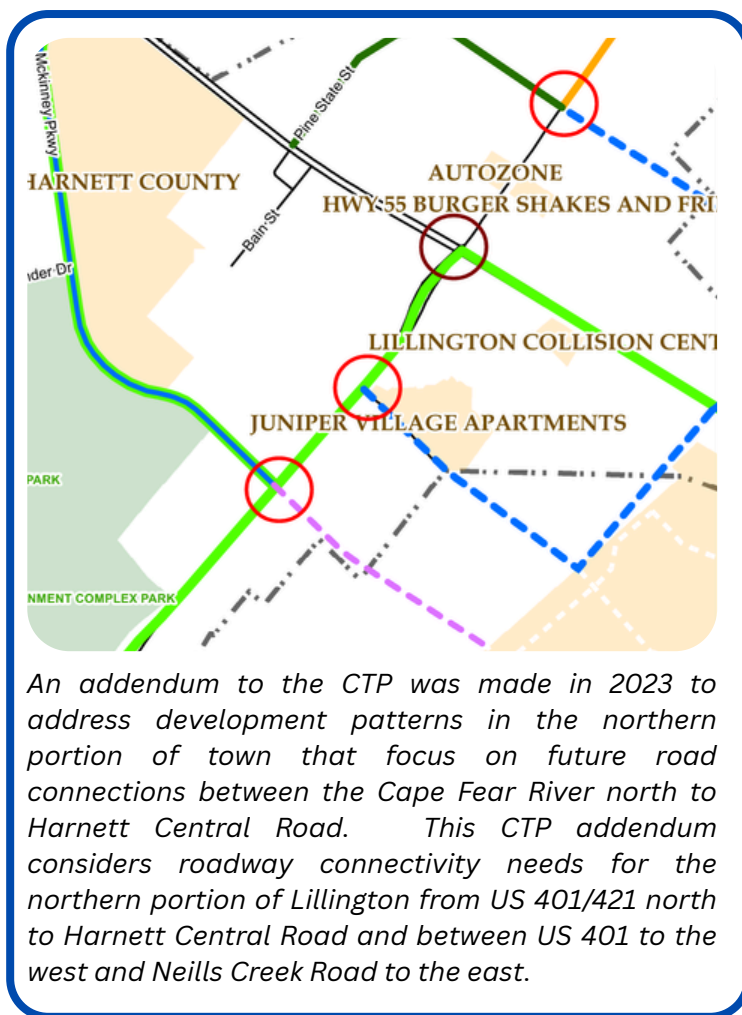
Unified Development Ordinance

The Town of Lillington's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) combines all zoning, subdivision, environmental, and land use rules into one document. It helps guide development in a way that supports the Town's long-term goals, as outlined in the Land Use Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The UDO sets standards for aspects such as land use types, the density of development, building and site design, and the division of larger properties. It also includes rules for landscaping and signage to help maintain a clean and attractive appearance throughout the town. Overall, the UDO helps ensure that new development supports the community's vision for growth, sustainability, and character while adhering to state and federal laws.

Comprehensive Transportation Plan + Addendum

The Lillington Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) serves as a long-range guide for improving mobility, safety, and connectivity throughout the community. The plan evaluates existing transportation conditions, identifies future needs, and outlines a coordinated vision for roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and multimodal enhancements that support the Town's expected growth.

In addition to establishing a functional hierarchy of streets, the CTP provides detailed project recommendations, planning-level cost estimates, and implementation strategies to help the Town prioritize investments over time.



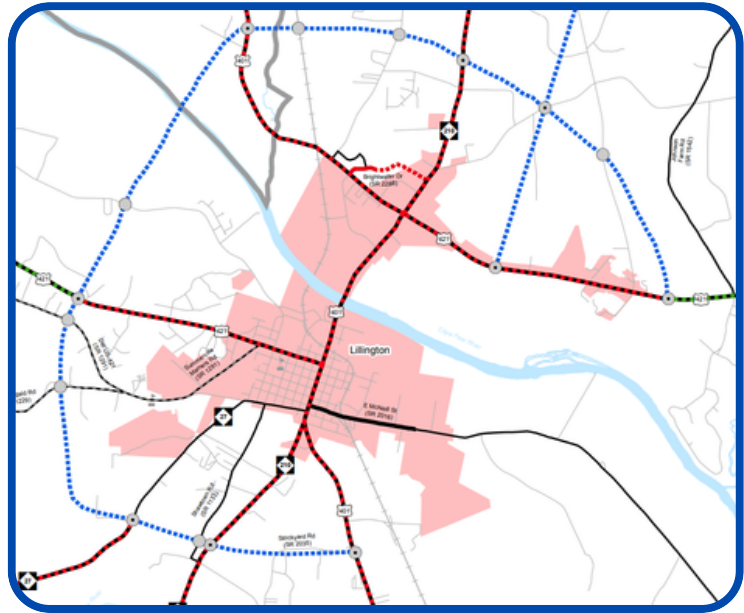
A key focus of the plan is the strategic use of private development to construct future collector roads, reducing the financial burden on the Town while ensuring that new growth contributes to a more connected and efficient street network.

NCDOT/Harnett County Transportation Plan

The 2011 Harnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, developed by NCDOT and local partners, outlines long-range multimodal improvements through 2035. It includes recommendations for highways, transit, rail, biking, and walking based on system analysis and public input.

Key Highlights:

- Northern Lillington Connector freeway with multiple interchanges.
- Four-lane boulevard with bike lanes and sidewalks to improve safety at major intersections.
- Multi-use path from Cape Fear River Trail to U.S. 401.
- New sidewalk on Front Street from Lakeside Drive to 9th Street.



*Harnett County Comprehensive
Transportation Plan*

Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Master Plan

The 2021 Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan outlines a countywide trail network connecting parks, schools, shopping areas, and natural assets. It envisions a variety of trail types that link to the East Coast Greenway and the Triangle's regional trail system.

Key Highlights:

- Multiple trail connections from Lillington to Raven Rock State Park on both sides of the river.
- Sidepath along U.S. 421 to CCCC Harnett Main Campus and Campbell University.
- Riverfront trails along both banks of the Cape Fear River.
- Natural surface trails along river tributaries.
- Sidepath links from Lillington to rural destinations like Boone Trail Community Center and Barbecue Creek Park.

Harnett County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Harnett Horizons 2040 Comprehensive Plan, an update to the 2015 Grow Harnett County Plan, outlines a vision and strategic recommendations focused on housing, economic development, and natural resource protection. The plan includes goals and actions across land use, agriculture, greenways, economic growth, transportation, and infrastructure.

Key Highlights:

- Medium-density residential and mixed-use areas proposed near Lillington along NC 210 and US 421.
- Employment Growth Area identified west of Lillington toward Buies Creek.
- Coordination encourages widening NC 210 and updating utility service areas near Lillington.
- Partnerships with CCCC and Campbell University to support workforce development.
- New "village districts" proposed to preserve small-town character, including near Buies Creek with greenway links to Lillington.

Future Land Use

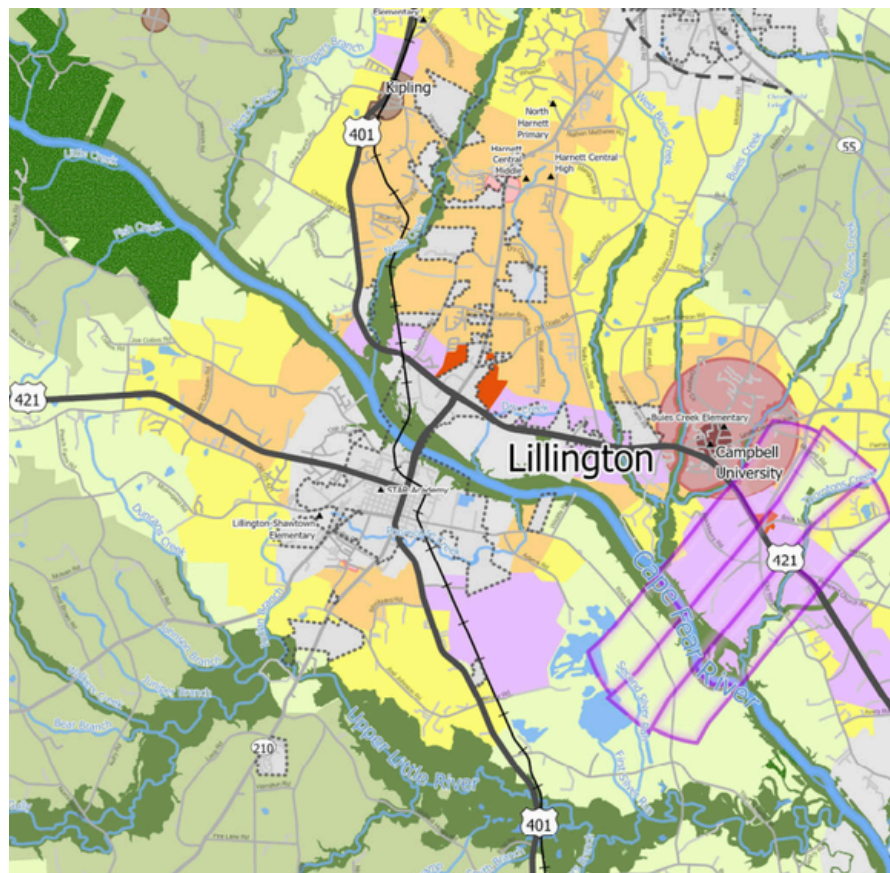
- Parks and Open Space
- Conservation
- Agricultural Protection Area
- Rural / Agriculture
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Historic Community
- Rural Center
- Village
- Village Center
- Commercial Mixed-use
- Employment

Overlays

- Jetport Overlay
- Military Overlay Buffer

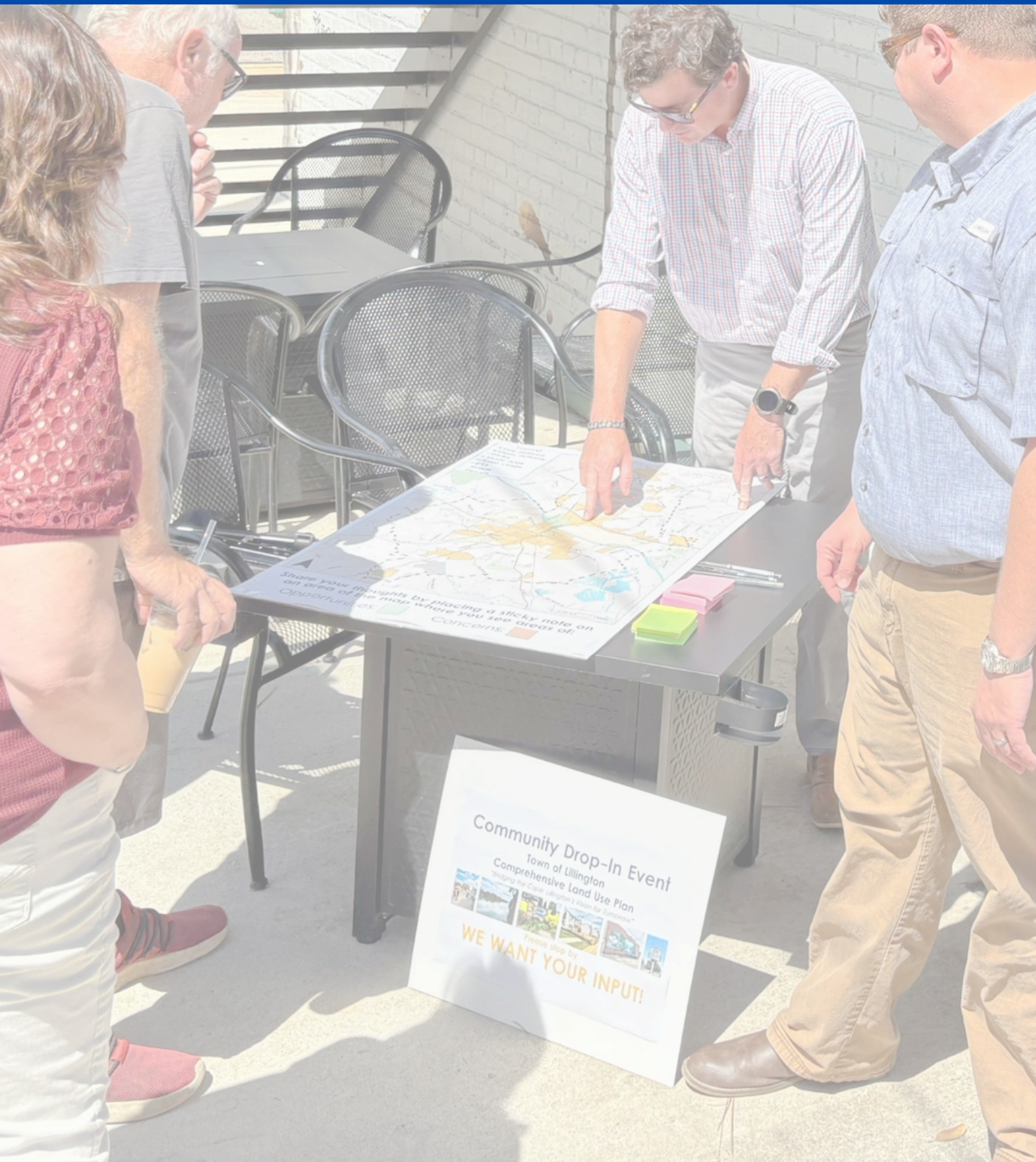
Context

- Municipal Limits
- Municipal / ETJ
- County Boundary



SOURCE: Harnett Horizons 2040 Future Land Use Map

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



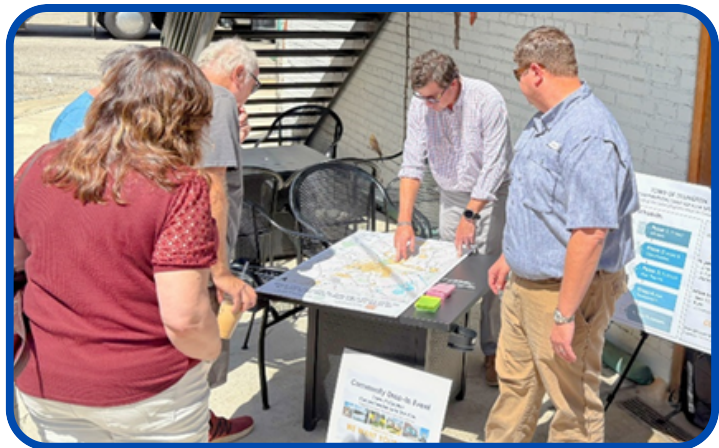
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Community input served as the cornerstone for developing the new Comprehensive Land Use Plan, with residents actively sharing their priorities, concerns, and aspirations. Outreach efforts included promotions through the Town's social media channels, official website, and flyers distributed at Town Hall. To broaden awareness of the planning process and encourage participation in the public survey and engagement events, the Town of Lillington partnered with KCI to host an informational booth at Cape Fear Fest and a pop-up event at a downtown coffee shop.

Community engagement activities included:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Cape Fear Fest
- Coffee Shop Drop In
- Public Workshop No. 1
- Virtual Public Workshop
- Public Workshop No. 2



Public engagement event held in downtown Lillington.

Steering Committee

A panel of community leaders was established to guide the overall process, offering strategic advice, local insight, and expertise on key elements of the plan. The committee brings together representatives from Harnett County Planning Services, NCDOT, small business owners, and Lillington's staff and elected officials.

The committee helps to promote opportunities for engagement from Town residents and analyzes feedback to ensure accuracy. Over the course of the project, the committee met five times to provide insight into various phases of project plan development.

Stakeholder Interviews

On April 16, 2025 the KCI consultant team conducted interviews with key stakeholders that had been identified by town staff. This included discussions with individuals with expertise in the following six groups:

- Downtown Businesses & Major Employers
- Outdoor Tourism & Parks & Recreation
- Public Safety, Institutional & Education
- Civic Clubs, Churches & Community Groups
- Utilities, Infrastructure & Transportation
- Developers, Builders & Engineers

Stakeholders describe Lillington as a welcoming small town with a strong sense of community, deep agricultural roots, and a beautiful town centered around the Cape Fear River. They want to see improvements in community developments which are seen as essential to maintaining Lillington's charm. It was communicated that many residents see the potential that new growth brings but are concerned with increasing traffic, lack of infrastructure, and limited commercial spaces. There is also the desire to ensure that Lillington does not lose its small-town charm and lose its identity as it grows and develops further. Downtown revitalization and transportation are key priorities stakeholders listed within their responses. They spoke about the growing traffic congestion, the need for more sidewalks and greenways, and improving the connections to the Cape Fear River. More gathering spaces, retail, and commercial spaces were another priority mentioned along with updating the facade and overall downtown area of Lillington. The graphic below summarizes key themes from the stakeholder interviews.

KEY THEMES FROM STAKEHOLDERS



Downtown is a focal point of the community ▪ Broad support for revitalization ▪ More upscale shops, restaurants, and destination businesses. ▪ Downtown should provide community identity and unite residents. Cape Fear River is a centralized asset ▪ The river is viewed positively but also seen as a physical divide in Town. ▪ Branding feature and recreational draw. ▪ Capeton Greenway could bridge both sides (symbolically and functionally).	Balance Across the River ▪ Balanced investment on both sides of the river — in housing, commercial space, and public services. ▪ Perceived neglect of one side fosters a lack of community identity & unity. ▪ Desire to better educate new residents Pedestrian Connectivity ▪ Connectivity was among the most emphasized needs. Stakeholders want safe, walkable routes to schools, parks, and downtown. ▪ Sidewalk gaps, especially along NC 210 and near Front Street. ▪ Greenways are seen as essential for quality of life	Capturing Residents & Workers ▪ Downtown needs to retain daytime workers after hours/weekends. ▪ New residents should feel invited to shop, play, and volunteer in Lillington. ▪ Promote downtown and outdoor lifestyle as community assets.
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In-person & Virtual Workshops

The initial public engagement meeting was held on June 4th, 2025, at the Harnett County Public Library. A total of 20 community members attended the workshop. Following a sign-in area, attendees were invited to visit six informational stations set up throughout the venue. At each station, a member of the KCI planning team or Lillington Town staff was present to answer questions, engage with attendees, and discuss any concerns.

A virtual engagement meeting was offered to provide a time-efficient solution for those unable to physically attend the in-person workshop. This meeting was designed to mimic the stations of the in-person meeting and allow participants to interact and respond to questions and voice their preferences.



Public engagement open house held at Harnett County Public Library in June 2025.



Public engagement open house held at Town Hall in January 2026.

A second in-person public engagement meeting was held on January 14, 2026 at Town Hall. Community members were invited to provide feedback on the draft plan components. The event featured display boards showcasing the plan's progress and a presentation that outlined the draft goals, character areas, and the proposed future land use map.

Following the presentation, the project team facilitated an interactive discussion and responded to questions and comments from attendees. There were specific questions about how the plan would impact local schools, small town character, and town services.

Public Survey Summary

On the project website visitors were encouraged to fill out a 16-question public survey. The survey sought feedback on residential, commercial, transportation facilities, connecting the town, and taking advantage of nearby institutions.

There was also an interactive map where respondents could identify the locations where they saw issues, concerns, or opportunities. Out of the 330 unique user visits to the website, 64 responded to the survey, 31 gave map comments and 102 project documents were downloaded. The public input from these methods helped to shape the vision and goals of the plan.

The survey responses revealed that most participants live within town limits or the ETJ, yet many shop outside of Harnett County. While residents frequently visit downtown restaurants and festivals, they would like more dining options, parks, and shopping. Key themes from the survey results are listed below and detailed results are available in the appendix of this document.



Downtown revitalization is highly desired.



Improved traffic and safety at intersections.



New & improved commercial development is important.



Provide more sidewalks & greenway trails.



Renovation and revitalization of existing neighborhoods is a priority.

Planning Board & Town Commissioners

Updates on the community engagement process and plan vision and goals were provided to the Planning Board and Town Commissioners throughout the planning process. In January of 2026 elected and appointed boards were provided more focused information on real estate demand and market analysis. The boards were asked to provide input on specific action items in the implementation recommendations and comment on the draft Future Land Use Map. Public hearings were attended during meetings with the aim of plan adoption.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The planning process gathered public input from across the community to help draft a shared vision statement - a description of the desired future that Lillington aims to achieve. Through the visioning process, residents identified core community values, emerging trends, and challenges that must be addressed. Discussions about opportunities further helped define the community's preferred future and the direction citizens would like Lillington to take.

This section outlines the challenges, opportunities, and vision statement shaped by public engagement. The plan goals that follow provide broad strategies to achieve the vision and address identified challenges.

Challenges:

Traffic Congestion

- Multiple choke points were identified, particularly: Front St. & Main St., McKinney Parkway near shopping areas, the McDonald's intersection and near S 8th St.
- Access management concerns include: too many driveways along key roads, lack of turn lanes, and inefficient signal timing.
- Traffic concentrated at river crossing, (one of two crossings in Harnett County).



Traffic in downtown Lillington (facing W. Front St.)

Parking

- Parking is limited downtown, and wayfinding signage is unclear or missing.
- On-street parking in newer neighborhoods is beginning to cause safety concerns.

Downtown

- Divided by U.S. 421, it is difficult to walk around.
- The appearance of many buildings is unattractive and dated; storefronts not properly maintained.
- Food and beverage options are lacking in number and availability.

Functioning as a bedroom community

- Residents leave Harnett County for shopping and entertainment.
- More local job opportunities are needed, especially industrial.
- New residents are not connected to Lillington socially.

Existing business inventory is limited

- Retail and office are limited with industrial having no available inventory.
- Historical buildings have been lost, underutilized, or not properly maintained.

Cape Fear divides the community

- The proposal for a bypass road and a second river crossing are viewed as long-term solutions to keep traffic moving and improve safety.
- There is continued perception of competition between north and south sides of the river, and a zero sum mentality exists.



NC 401/421 Bridge over Cape Fear River.

Opportunities:

Branding & Identity

- Town gateways could feature custom signage and landscape treatments.
- Street signs and banners could incorporate a local logo or theme.
- Distinct visual identity for downtown and corporate limits.
- The Town should market the river, greenways, and healthy lifestyle – ties to sense of community and branding.

Outdoor Promotion

- Trails and greenways are wanted to connect Cape Fear River, parks, and downtown.
- Natural beauty and outdoor recreation.
- New residents more likely to adventure on the river.
- Riverfront could accommodate more dining options.



Greenway trail in Lillington.

Downtown Revitalization

- More restaurants, parks, and shopping opportunities.
- Improve business mix, aesthetics, parking, and walkability.
- Wayfinding signs that make it easier to explore.
- Attract area employees, Campbell personnel, and businesses to stay after 5 pm.
- Alternate route by-pass (10th Street) to alleviate truck and through traffic at main intersection.



Mural in downtown Lillington.

More or updated commercial and entertainment spaces

- Restaurants, grocery stores, shopping centers.
- Recreational businesses for entertainment (YMCA or mini golf).
- Expanded retail and dining options.
- Create a more vibrant downtown to attract Campbell students and staff.

Renovating empty storefronts

- More commercial businesses of all types are desired.
- Renovating empty storefronts and revitalizing existing buildings is a high priority.



Pedestrian crossing intersection (W. Front St. and S. Main St.) in downtown.

Enhanced pedestrian safety

- Dedicated pedestrian access should be a part of any future bridge, or enhanced on current one.
- Sidewalks are desired in all areas to assist a variety of users.
- Pedestrian-friendly access is desired between neighborhoods, parks and the river.

LILLINGTON TODAY



LILLINGTON TODAY

COMMUNITY PROFILE

This section provides an analysis of demographic and economic conditions in the Town of Lillington and the study area included in this plan. The information collected here serves as background context to support the recommendations presented later in this document.

Population & Housing

The most recent American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the town's population to be 4,735, with the study area at 9,405. The total daytime population of the town increases to 7,175, including 4,768 workers.

Lillington has experienced steady growth, with household incomes also rising steadily. Adding to household wealth, home values have also risen and outperformed the county. Single-family housing growth has shifted to rent vs. owner-occupied ratios.

Approximately 32.7% of homes in Lillington are valued at more than \$300,000. The homeownership rate is 63.1%, which is slightly below the statewide rate in North Carolina. The median gross rent in Lillington is \$997/month, and only 6.8% of all renters are paying more than \$2,000/month for rent.

The largest percentage of the population in the study area includes those ages 18-64, the town's workforce.

Housing in Lillington remains competitively priced relative to surrounding metro areas when adjusting for home size, age, and amenities, though prices have risen noticeably over the past decade.

LILLINGTON

1,632

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

\$295,147

MEDIAN HOME VALUE

\$83,138

**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
INCOME**

STUDY AREA

3,608

TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

\$354,350

MEDIAN HOME VALUE

\$83,237

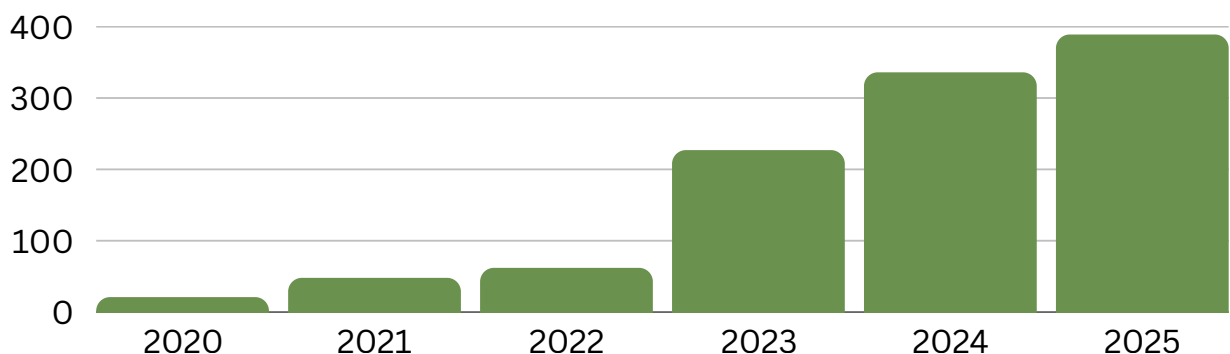
**AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD
INCOME**

Additional population increases are anticipated due to the significant number of residential lots currently under construction or in the development review process. The table below outlines proposed residential developments within Lillington’s jurisdiction as of Spring 2026, focusing on developments with the highest estimated number of residential units.

Development Name	Residential Units Proposed
Capeton Master Plan	2,900
Matthews Landing	990
Wade Park	618
Ollie Milton	490
Matthews Ridge	373
Blakes Landing	363
Miller Property	340
Providence Creek	334
Cape Overlook	319

Building Permits

Lillington has experienced significant growth in new single-family dwelling building permits since 2020, reflecting sustained residential demand and the town’s attractiveness as a place to live. This upward trend signals continued population growth, increased pressure on infrastructure and public services, and a need to align land use, transportation, and utility planning to support orderly development while maintaining community character.



Population by Generation

~5.1%

Greatest Gen: Born 1945/earlier

~20.6%

Baby Boomer: Born 1946-1964

~20.3%

Gen X: Born 1965-1980

~24.4%

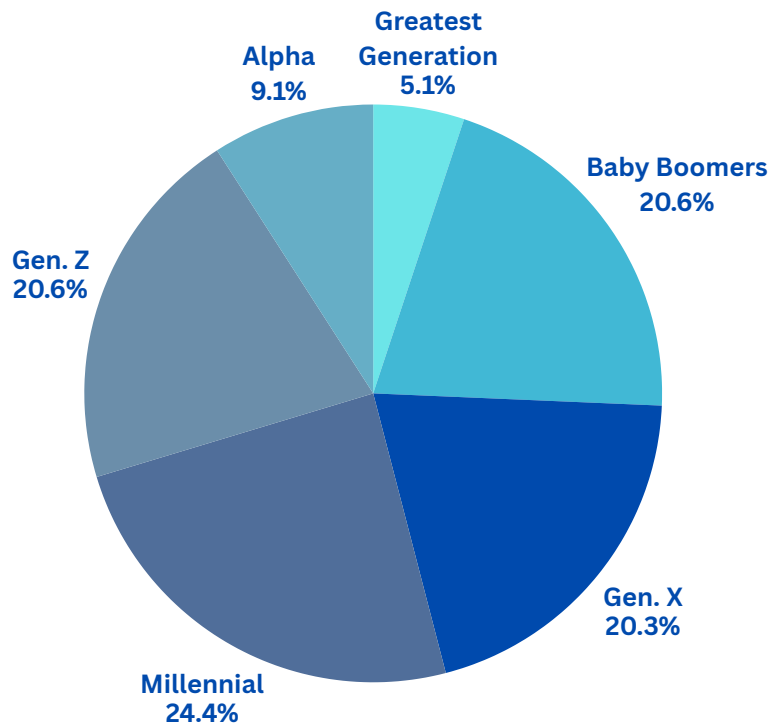
Millennial: Born 1981-1998

~20.6%

Gen Z: Born 1999-2016

~9.1%

Alpha Gen: Born 2017-Present



Income

The Median Household Income in Lillington is \$81,760. This figure has risen sharply over the past five years and is higher than the statewide median.

There is little difference between average household income for the town's current jurisdiction and the study area. Further analyzing household earnings, 30.1% of households earn \$100,000 or more

Relatively few households are in poverty compared to the statewide average. Less than 5% of Lillington's population is living in poverty, which is less than half the percentage for North Carolina of 12.5%.



**\$81,760 vs
\$73,958**

**LILLINGTON'S MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME VS.
NORTH CAROLINA'S**

4.9% vs. 12.5%

**LILLINGTON'S POVERTY
RATE VS. NORTH
CAROLINA'S**

Employment

Plentiful local and state government agencies, educational institutions, and health-care related fields have created a growing number of job opportunities.

The town's employment rate is 46.9% based on the 2024 American Community Survey. This is substantially less than the employment rate in North Carolina (59.8%), and lower than Harnett County (50.7%). However, the study area's unemployment rate is only 3.9%.

Most residents are employed in white collar jobs within the study area (58%), followed by blue collar (28%) and services (14%). The largest percentage of the population in the study area includes those ages 18-64, comprising an adequate workforce.

STUDY AREA



21.3% vs. 13.7%

**Local, State, & Federal Workers
in Lillington compared to NC**

3.9%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

58%

**WHITE COLLAR
EMPLOYMENT**

Major Employment Sectors

Per the American Community Survey (ACS), the highest number of Lillington's workers are employed in the educational services, health care and social assistance sector. A large percentage of Lillington's workers are public sector employees, with 21.3% employed by either the local, state, and federal government. This number is substantially higher than the statewide average of 13.7%.



*Cape Fear Valley
Cancer Center*



*Campbell University's
School of Osteopathic Medicine*

Industry Sector by employment percentage:

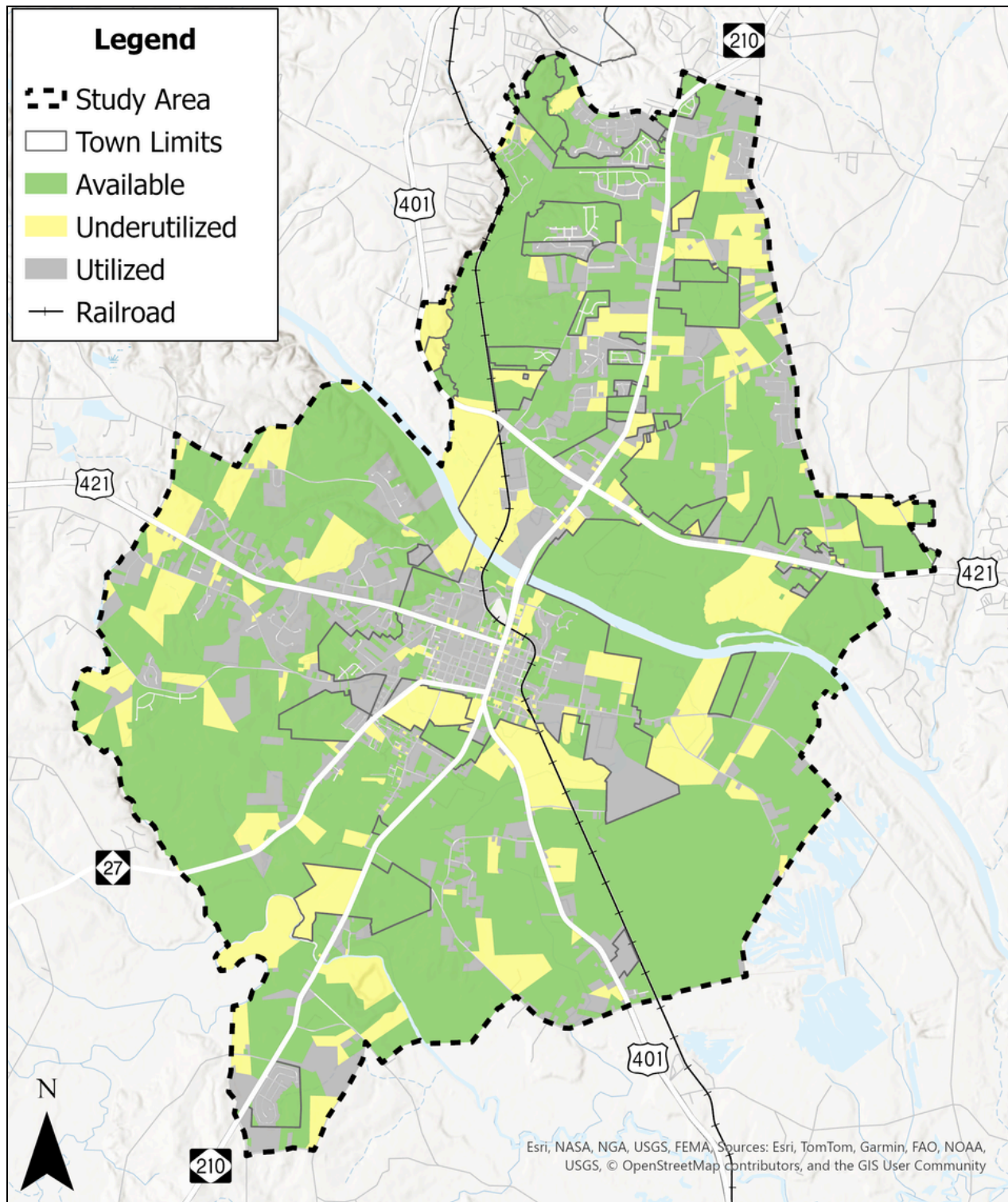
Industry Sector	Percentage
Educational services, and health care	26.9%
Retail trade	13.8%
Manufacturing	10.0%
Transportation, warehousing, utilities	10.0
Arts, entertainment & food services	9.7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and admin	9.6%

Established Major Industries and Workforce in Harnett County per Harnett County Economic Development:



LAND SUPPLY

A land supply analysis was conducted as part of this plan. It compares building value to property value. A parcel is considered “utilized” if the building value is greater than or equal to the land value. “Underutilized” parcels are those with a land value greater than the building value. “Available” parcels are those without a significant structure.

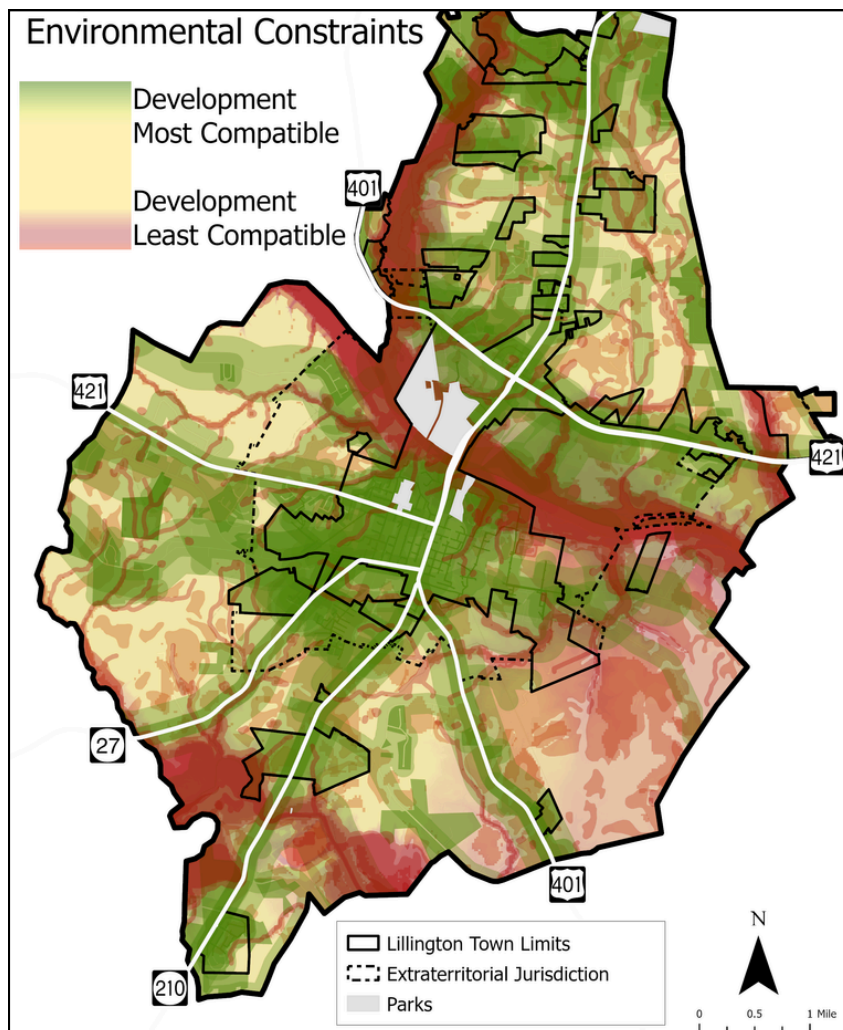


LAND SUITABILITY

This analysis evaluates land suitability across the study area and directly informs the future land use map.

Green areas identify where new development and reinvestment are most appropriate—locations with access to existing streets, utilities, schools, connected neighborhoods, and planned multimodal improvements. These areas help guide where higher-intensity residential and mixed-use growth can occur efficiently.

Red areas indicate where development is least suitable, primarily due to flood hazards, wetlands, and other sensitive natural features. On the future land use map, these areas are intended for preservation, restoration, or limited development to protect environmental systems and reduce risk.



Floodway and flood fringe areas along Neill's Creek, Upper Little River, and the Cape Fear River require low-impact development (LID) practices that work with natural systems and support conservation-oriented land uses.

The southeastern portion of the study area—between Poorhouse Creek and Coble Ski Estates Road—also presents environmental and infrastructure constraints.

While prime agricultural soils were reviewed, they were not included in this specific analysis but still informed overall plan recommendations.

Overall, this suitability analysis helps direct future growth to the most appropriate locations while safeguarding key natural resources.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The built environment in Lillington includes all human-made features—such as roads, buildings, and utilities—that support daily life.

Planning for the Town’s expansion requires a clear understanding of the condition and capacity of essential systems, including transportation, water and sewer, parks and recreation, public safety, and community facilities.

Because the built environment is closely interconnected with the natural environment, thoughtful planning is needed to balance growth with resource protection.

Conserving wetlands, avoiding development in flood-prone areas, and managing stormwater effectively are critical strategies to reduce future risks. These natural systems filter water, reduce flooding, and provide vital wildlife habitats. As Lillington grows, protecting these resources will help the community minimize negative impacts and build long-term resilience.

This section provides an overview of Lillington’s environmental constraints, parks, community resources, transportation, utilities and infrastructure.



Environmental Constraints

Lillington's environmental constraints are closely tied to its location within the Cape Fear River Basin, one of North Carolina's largest watersheds. Being part of this watershed means that land use decisions directly influence water quality, flooding, and ecological health both locally and downstream.

Flood Hazard Areas

Lillington lies along the Cape Fear River and the confluence of several tributaries, including Neill's Creek, Upper Little River, and Poorhouse Creek. These waterways create extensive floodplains and flood fringe areas that pose development limitations and require careful stormwater and land management.

These risks have grown more severe with increasingly frequent and intense weather events. Recent storms such as Hurricane Helene (2024) and Tropical Storm Chantal (2025) highlight the damage that flooding can cause, even in inland areas.

Wetlands

Wetlands are common throughout the river corridor and its tributaries. These areas provide essential floodwater storage, groundwater recharge, and habitat, but also create constraints for development due to saturated soils and regulatory protections.

Watershed

As part of the Cape Fear River watershed, Lillington contributes to a larger regional hydrologic system. Runoff from developed areas can impact downstream water quality, making erosion control, low-impact development (LID), and riparian buffer protection critical. Portions of the basin face nutrient loading, turbidity, and fecal coliform challenges, which further increase the need for responsible land use practices.

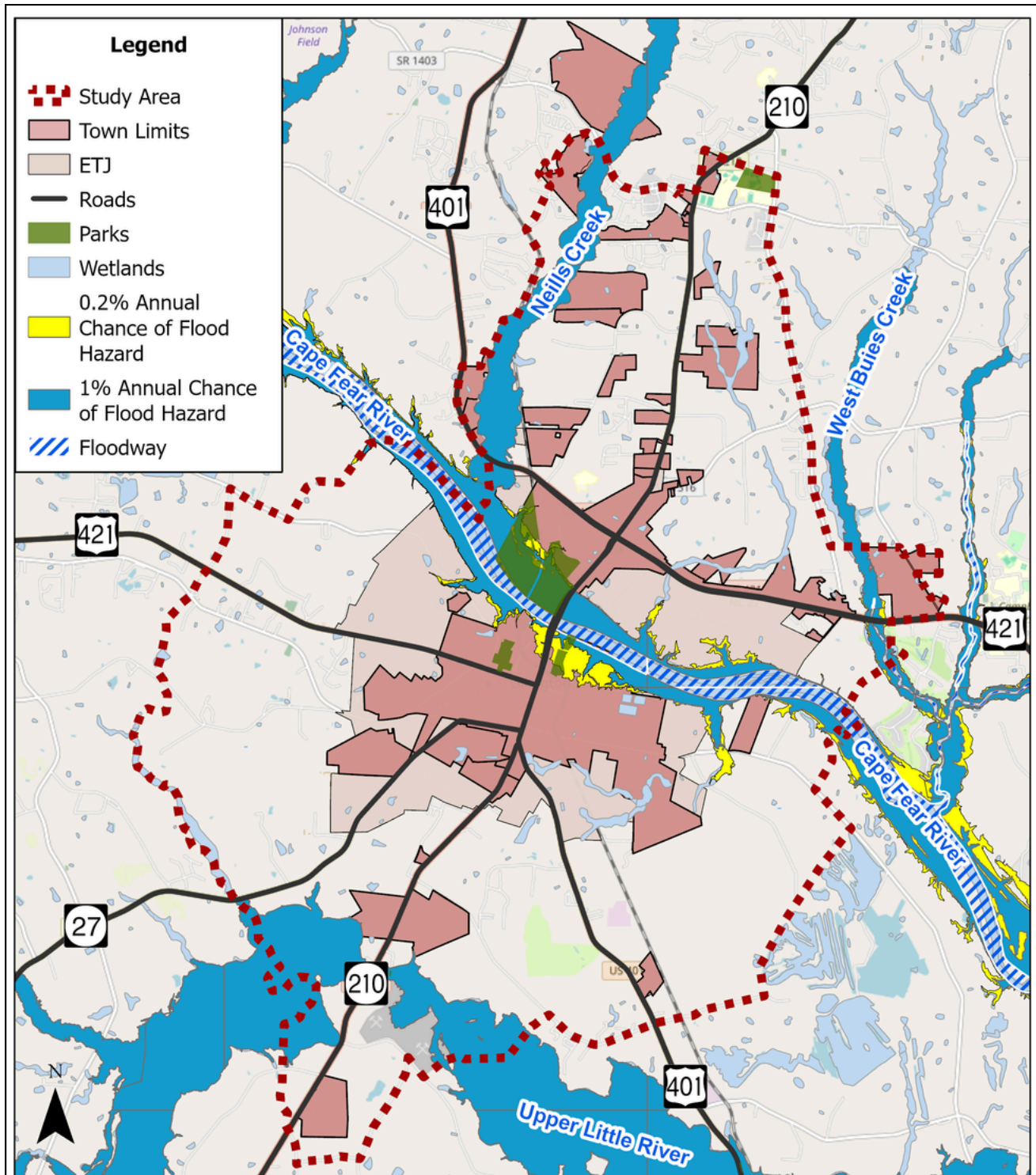
Ecological and Habitat Constraints

The river corridor and associated streams support diverse plant and animal communities. Maintaining healthy floodplains, forest cover, and riparian buffers is important for sustaining these habitats and reducing erosion.

Overall, Lillington's position within a major watershed—combined with floodplains, wetlands, and sensitive habitats—requires thoughtful development patterns that protect natural systems and reduce long-term environmental impacts.

Environmental Features Map

There are environmental constraints that may restrict development within the study area, although most of the study area is located outside of any special flood hazard area. Areas prone to flooding include those on the banks of the Cape Fear River and along major tributaries such as Neills Creek and West Buies Creek.



Transportation

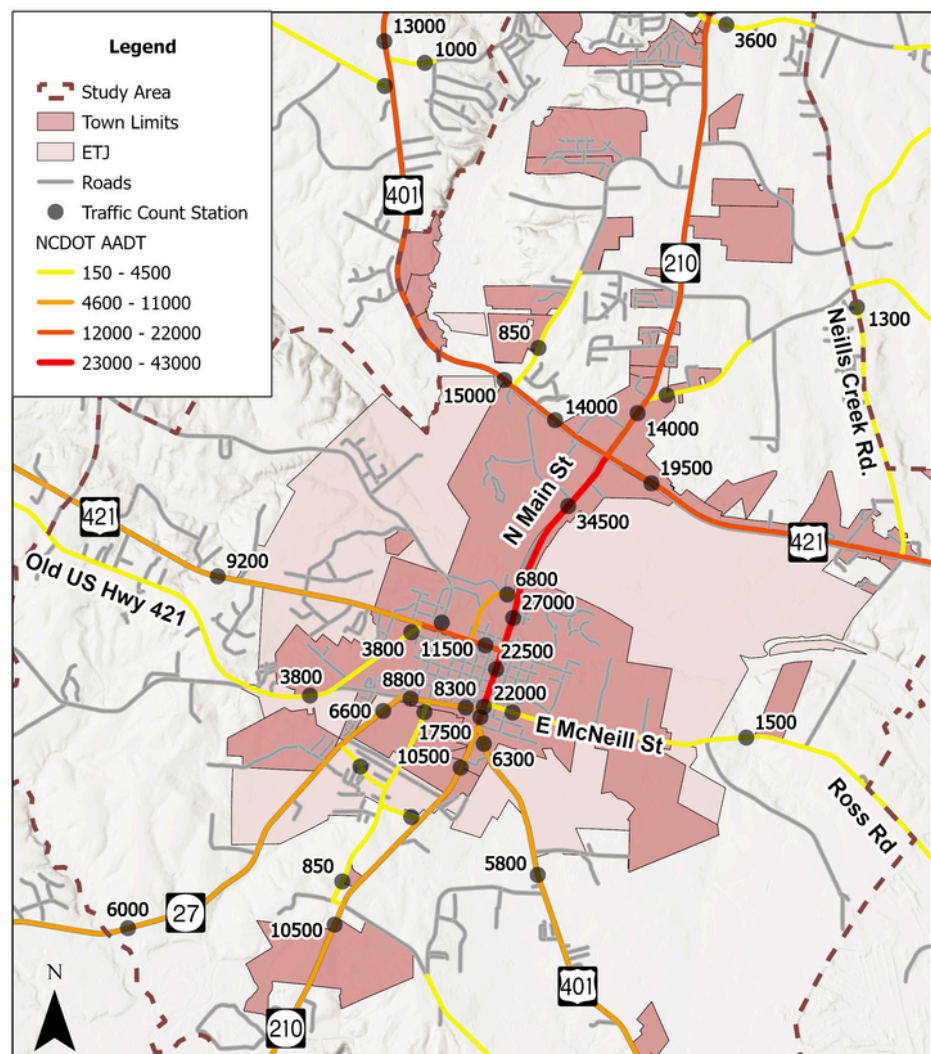
Lillington's transportation network is shaped by a combination of neighborhood streets and major state and U.S. highways—US 401, US 421, and NC 210—that connect the town to regional hubs such as Raleigh, Sanford, and Fayetteville. These corridors serve as vital routes for commerce, jobs, and regional mobility. While personal vehicles remain the primary mode of travel, Lillington continues to expand its sidewalk network and has emerged as a central hub within a recently adopted countywide pedestrian plan.

Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes, measured through Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), provide important insight for roadway planning and land use decisions. The busiest segment is North Main Street between E. McNeill Street and Cornelius Harnett Boulevard, where overlapping state highways (US 401, US 421, NC 210 and NC 27) carry more than 30,000 vehicles per day.

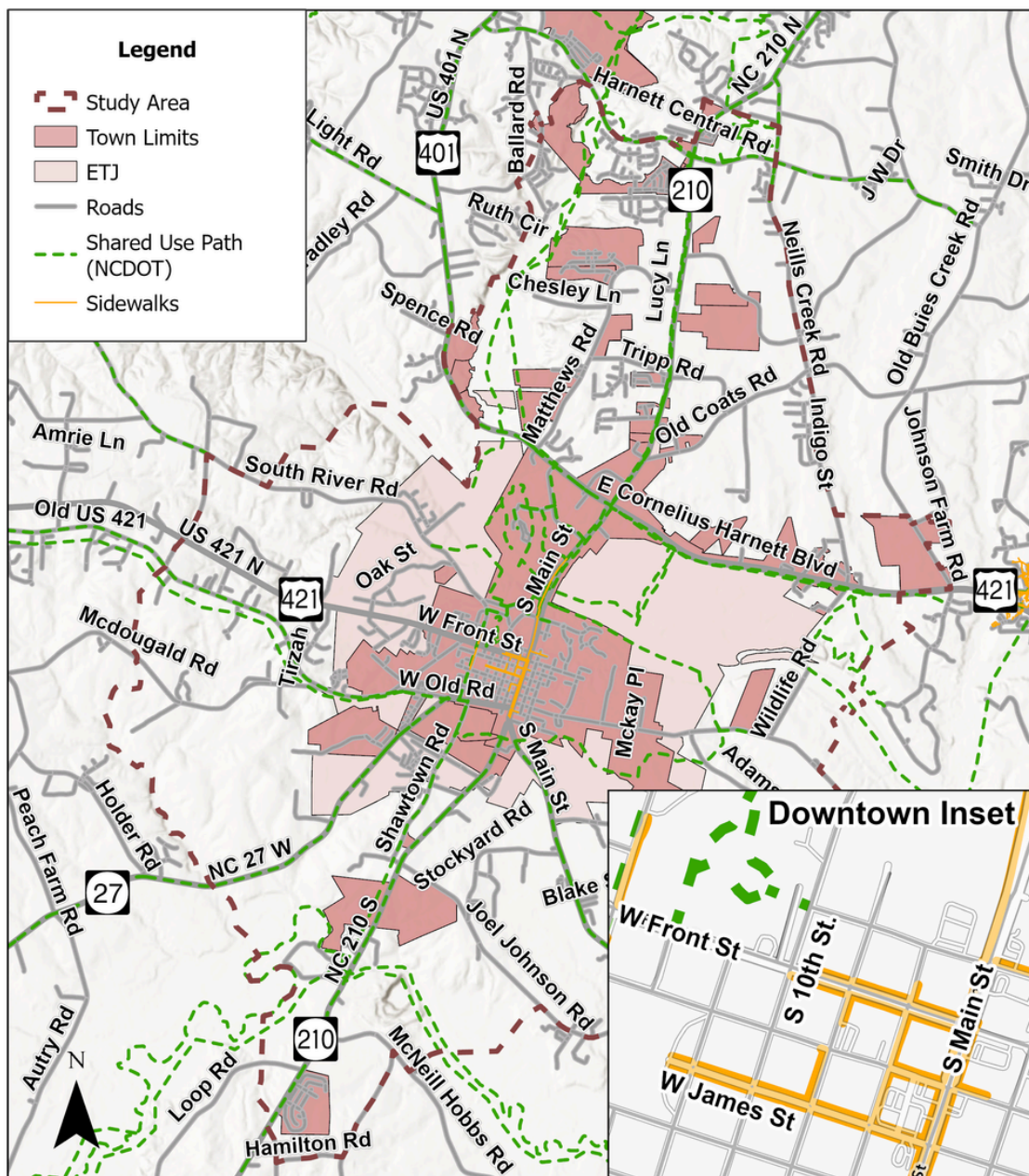
Other important secondary routes include Old US Highway 421, Shawtown Road, E. McNeill Street, Neills Creek Road, Old Coats Road, and Matthews Road.

This traffic data helps identify priority areas for road improvements, congestion management, and long-term growth planning. The map to the right presents existing traffic volumes on roadways within the study area of this plan.



Multi-Modal Transportation Facilities

The Transportation Facilities Map highlights an extensive system of shared-use paths (green dashed lines) from Harnett County's Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan. These paths extend beyond town limits to connect to smaller communities, recreation areas, and Campbell University. Within Lillington, sidewalks (orange lines) are concentrated in the gridded downtown core, where they support walkability and access to local businesses. However, gaps in the network remain, and additional amenities such as crosswalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps are needed to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility. New development standards require sidewalks on both sides of new and existing streets for all new residential and commercial developments.



Transportation Improvements

The Town has made a concerted effort to invest in substantial infrastructure improvements. Projects such as the NC 55 Bypass, the NC 210 widening and realignment, 10th St. Bypass, and the US 401 Bypass illustrate a coordinated approach at the regional level. Continued collaboration among local, county, and state officials will be essential to effectively address regional transportation challenges, particularly those related to highway capacity and mobility.

New subdivisions are required to include sidewalks, giving residents safe, modern pedestrian routes within their neighborhoods. The town has also benefited from developer-built shared-use paths along major road frontages. Although this system is still in its early stages and currently functions mostly for recreation, it is expected to expand over time, creating a continuous, paved, off-road network for cyclists, pedestrians, and other users—safely separated from vehicle traffic.

Railway

A north–south rail line runs along the east side of the downtown core and crosses the Cape Fear River just west of the highway crossing. It plays a key role in regional freight movement, though no passenger service is currently offered.

The rail network remains an important asset, and offers similar opportunities for the town’s northern and southern areas. Older industrial sites along the corridor present opportunities for redevelopment into new job centers, while some new industries rely on rail access for shipping and receiving of durable goods.



*Newly constructed paved sidepath
along Matthews Road*

Parks & Community Facilities

Parks & Recreation

Lillington has a variety of parks, open areas, and recreational spaces that enhance the town. These public spaces include neighborhood parks, riverfront parks, and community facilities that serve both residents and visitors. According to the map, Lillington's stand-out parks and recreational spaces include:

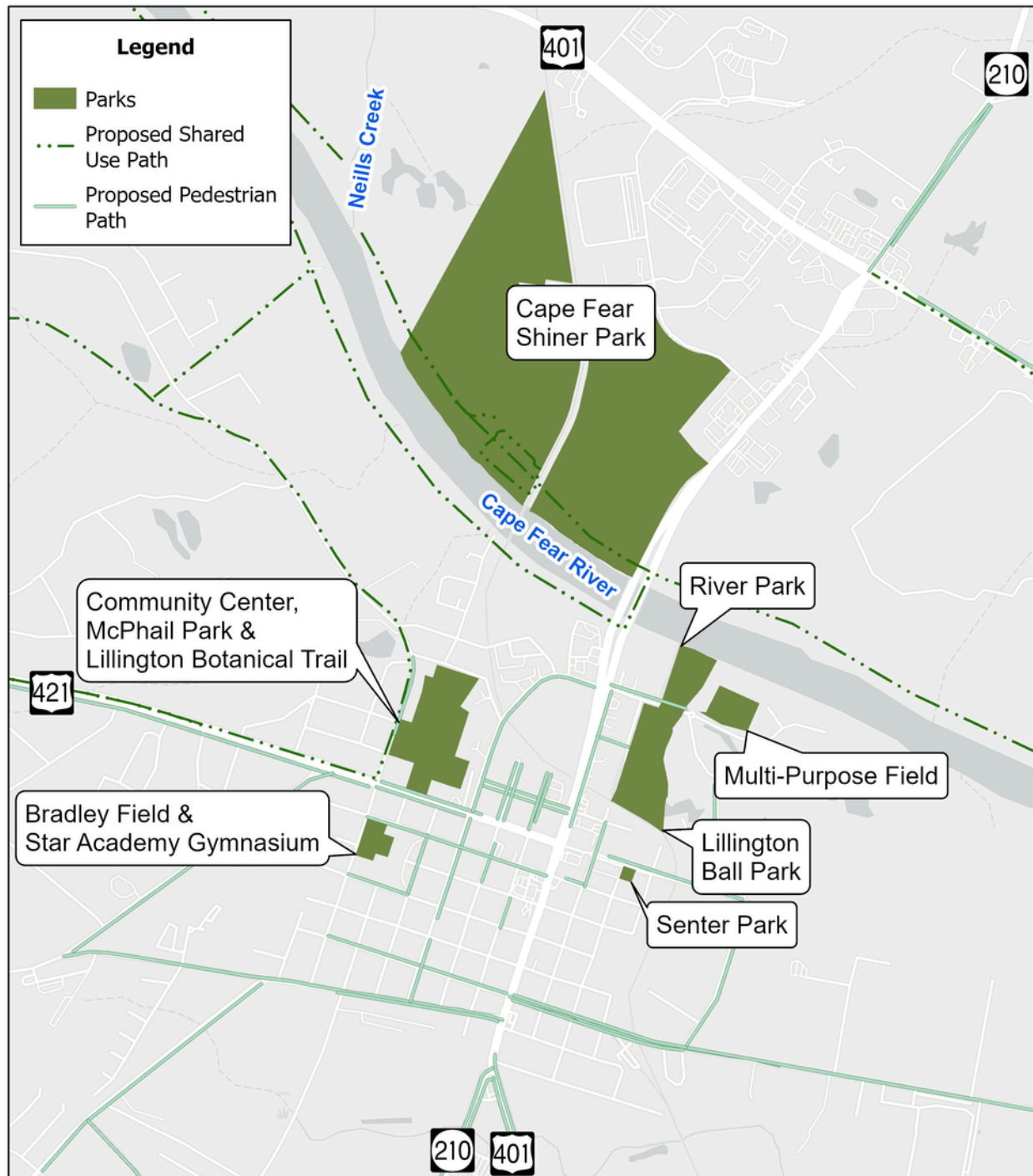
- **McPhail Park**, which features a zipline and innovative slide along with plenty of open space. **Lillington Botanical Trail**, is a mile long walking trail, that provides connections to the Lillington Community Center and McPhail Park.
- **Lillington River Park** includes an ADA accessible playground along with grassy open areas. There are also canoe launches to the Cape Fear River along with both an amphitheater and shelters both available for rental.
- **Cape Fear Shiner Park**, A Harnett County–owned park on the north side of the Cape Fear River—adjacent to Sandhills Farm Park—offers 3.25 miles of nature trails, a wildlife observation deck, athletic fields, and a canoe portage. Planned future phases will expand recreation uses and facilities.
- **Raven Rock State Park**, a North Carolina State Park located in Harnett County and less than 10 miles from the center of Lillington. This park offers bridle trails, hiking trails, and bike trails the park has amenities like picnic shelters, amphitheaters, auditoriums, classrooms, visitor center, exhibits, and even includes horse trailer parking.
- **Historic STAR Academy** is a community asset that hosts basketball and pickleball in the gym and football, junior league baseball and softball at Bradley Field.
- **Senter Park** is a small pocket park, on the edge of downtown, featuring a playground shaded by mature oak trees.



Youth playground at River Park



View of Lillington Ball Park at 405 South 1st Street



Map of Town and County parks focused on downtown Lillington

These parks and open spaces create a network of recreational activities and opportunities for town residents and visitors. Connections to the Cape Fear River enhances these spaces and offers access to water-based activities such as canoeing and rafting. It is important that future land is preserved to provide active parks and passive open space that are accessible for all to enjoy.

Community Facilities

Community facilities in Lillington include educational, healthcare, and public safety centers. Along with recreational and cultural amenities, these facilities are essential to supporting the health, safety, and overall welfare of the community. Lillington is home to several key community facilities that not only serve its residents but also provide resources to the broader region.

County Education

Lillington-Shawtown Elementary is the local elementary school serving Lillington. The district extends south beyond the study area, even as far as the Cumberland County line along US 401 South.

STAR Academy High, located within the 1915 Lillington High School building, functions as a non-traditional school focused on providing students with tailored support services aimed at preparing students for re-entry into the traditional school setting.



STAR Academy High (former Lillington High School)

Harnett Central Middle and High Schools are outside of town limit, yet just inside the northern boundary of the study area. These schools pull students from the northern end to the southern boundary of Harnett County and include the town of Angier and the rapidly expanding northwest area of Harnett County.

The Harnett County Resource Center & Library opened in 2021, serving as the main branch for Harnett County Library system. This central facility is located in the County Government complex near the main US 401 and US 421 intersection and serves a local and regional audience.

Higher Education

Central Carolina Community College's Harnett Campus has three locations within the study area. The Harnett Main Campus provides opportunities for university transfer, workforce development, and continuing education programs, supporting recent graduates while also enhancing and retooling the local workforce. The Harnett Health Sciences Center, located at the Brightwater Campus, offers continuing education and specialized training in health sciences to prepare students for employment in the medical field. The Harnett Adult Education Center, located alongside the Harnett County Government campus, supports the Bridge to Earning, Learning & Living Academy, providing adult learners with resources to expand skills and career opportunities.

East Carolina University's School of Dental Medicine operates a Community Service Learning Center in Lillington. This facility allows graduate-level dental students to complete clinical rotations while gaining experience with the specific healthcare needs of the region's population.

Campbell University has a significant impact on both Lillington and the surrounding region. In Fall 2024, the University enrolled approximately 5,000 students, with nearly half pursuing graduate or professional degrees. The University offers several unique academic programs, including Osteopathic Medicine, Physician Assistant/Public Health, Trust and Wealth Management, and Golf Management. Beyond academics, Campbell supports 21 men's and women's NCAA Division I athletic programs as a member of the Coastal Athletic Association. Its students, athletics, and facilities collectively represent an important economic and cultural asset for the region, as university events attract students, visitors, and investment from across the Southeast.

Downtown Lillington is approximately 5 miles from campus and the eastern edge of the project study area is walkable to the University's off-campus medical school complex and Keith Hills Golf Club. Students, faculty, and staff from Campbell University are a driving force of housing demand in Lillington. There is a stable and consistent need for rentals to serve a growing student population, while faculty and staff increasingly look to Lillington to satisfy both rent and buy housing closer to employment and amenities. Major university events like homecoming weekends, sporting events, and summer programs create opportunities throughout the year for Lillington to grow services, entertainment, and lodging to serve overnight visitors.



Campbell University



ECU School of Denistry

Healthcare

Cape Fear Valley Central Harnett Hospital provides health care for the town and region, attracting patients from Fuquay-Varina and western Harnett County. Requiring a large capital investment, community vision, and multiple partners the hospital opened in 2013.



Cape Fear Valley Health Pavilion

The 17,000-square- Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center opened in 2025 expanded the array of services provided. This brings cancer treatment to Lillington, previously not available anywhere in Harnett County. This presents opportunities to build partnerships with higher education institutions for education, research, and workforce development

Fire and Rescue Stations and Response Area

The study area includes coverage areas for three fire districts - Lillington Flatwoods Fire Department, Summerville Bunn Level Fire Department, and Buies Creek Fire & Rescue. Communication and coordination between these fire departments is important to create a positive relationship of mutual aid, which is beneficial for all departments. Lillington has two stations, the first is downtown on Main Street and the second on US 401 on the southern edge of the study area.

A third fire station, located north of the Cape Fear River, began construction in July 2025 and is projected to open in the summer of 2026. This will allow fire departments to maintain their response times throughout town limits, and into annexed properties that were previously covered by other fire districts. Summerville – Bunnlevel Fire & Rescue has a station on E. Harnett Street, just outside of downtown Lillington, in addition to a second station outside of the study area in the community of Bunnlevel. This will allow to maintain response times throughout town limits, even satellite annexations there were previously in other fire districts.

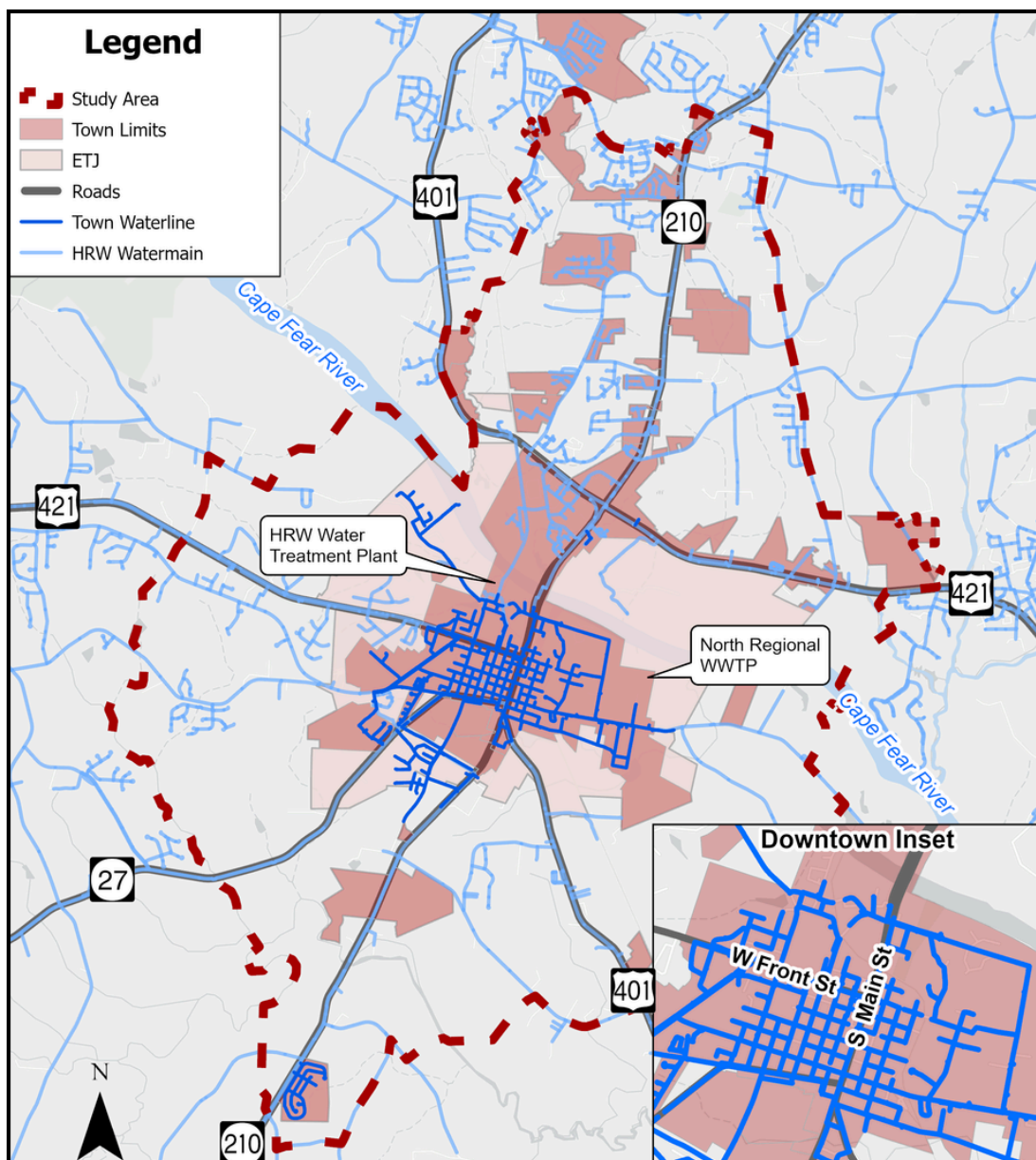


*Fire Station 3 under construction
(near NC 210 and Tripp Rd.)*

Utilities & Infrastructure

Lillington's utility infrastructure—comprising water, sewer, and stormwater systems—provides essential services to the town's residents, businesses, and institutions. These systems are most concentrated within the downtown core and along major corridors, including US 401, US 421, and NC 210.

The Town continues to make significant capital investments to expand water and sewer services throughout its jurisdiction. In addition, multiple stormwater improvement projects have been completed, are currently underway, or are advancing through the design phase. These efforts have been supported by a combination of grant funding and the Town's substantial financial commitment to enhancing its infrastructure systems.



Map of water utility infrastructure

Utility services in Lillington are provided jointly by the Town of Lillington and Harnett Regional Water (HRW). Coordination between the Town and HRW can support the efficient operation, maintenance, and expansion of utility services in each jurisdiction's service area.

Water and sewer infrastructure maintained by the Town is concentrated within the municipal limits south of the Cape Fear River. Beyond these areas, HRW provides service through an extensive network of water transmission mains and distribution lines serving outlying portions of the community and satellite residential developments. HRW's Water Treatment Plant, located between downtown and the south bank of the Cape Fear River, plays a central role in delivering water throughout the community. Similarly, the North Harnett Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant—also located within Lillington's town limits—provides regional wastewater treatment capacity. The Town is a capacity stakeholder in this facility and serves as a key partner in advancing the plant's capacity expansion from 7.5 MGD to 16.5 MGD.

The Town should continue to apply best engineering practices by upgrading aging infrastructure and replacing utility lines where maintenance needs are identified. Expansion of water and sewer service into new growth areas must be approached strategically. Decisions should be guided by cost-benefit analysis and coordinated with the Town's comprehensive land use and transportation plans to ensure orderly, fiscally responsible development.



Town of Lillington ground-level water tank

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Building an economically resilient community through job creation, business attraction, and diversification of the local economy is essential to sustaining a stable and growing tax base for the Town of Lillington. This remains a key priority for the town as it continues to grow.

Economic opportunities, including employment and access to services and retail, are vital to residents and the long-term sustainability of the Town's tax base. In order to maintain a high quality of life in Lillington, residential growth needs to be off set with non-residential development at key locations.

Many professionals living in Lillington travel elsewhere to work. Partnering with organizations dedicated to bringing economic opportunities and workforce development to the region, will become crucial as available real estate for large scale developments become scarce and employment trends towards high-tech and medical services continue to increase.

Planning for the land use and programmatic needs of growing a more diverse and robust economic environment will help ensure a resilient Lillington in the future.

Regional Economic Context & Partnerships

Lillington's economy functions within a broader regional system. Strategic coordination with county, regional, and institutional partners is essential to successful economic development.

Regional Role

As the county seat of Lillington, the Town serves as a center for government services, civic activity, and professional employment. Its location provides access to regional employment centers while offering a more affordable and small-town alternative for residents and businesses.

Key Economic Development Partners

- **Harnett County:** Provides countywide economic development, infrastructure planning, workforce initiatives, and industrial site development.
- **Harnett County Economic Development:** Leads business recruitment, retention, and expansion (BRE) efforts and markets the county to targeted industries.

- **Central Carolina Community College:** Serves as a critical workforce development partner, offering customized training, certifications, and continuing education aligned with employer needs.
- **Regional Economic Markets:** Proximity to the Triangle and Fayetteville regions allows Lillington to capture population growth, supplier industries, remote workers, and service-sector businesses.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Implications



- Economic development success depends on alignment between Town land use policy and county recruitment strategies.
- Regional partnerships increase competitiveness for grants, infrastructure funding, and workforce programs.
- Lillington is well-positioned to attract small- and mid-scale employers seeking lower costs and strong quality-of-life amenities.

Economic Base & Business Environment

Existing Economic Conditions

Lillington's economy is primarily service-oriented, supported by:

- Government and public services.
- Healthcare and education.
- Retail and personal services.
- Small professional offices and local businesses.

Residential growth has been a significant economic driver, increasing demand for services, retail, and community amenities.

However, employment growth has not kept pace with population growth, resulting in a job-housing imbalance.

Business Environment Characteristics

- Strong small business presence.
- Limited supply of modern commercial and flex space.
- Opportunity for downtown and neighborhood commercial revitalization.
- Growing demand for healthcare and professional services.

Residential Market Conditions

Lillington continues to experience steady residential growth driven by affordability, quality of life, and access to regional employment centers.

- Strong demand for single-family homes and townhomes
- Growing interest in master-planned communities
- Increasing need for workforce and moderate-income housing
- Emerging opportunity for senior and age-friendly housing

Residential growth is a primary driver of local spending and service demand, but must be balanced with employment and commercial development to reduce commuter outflow.

Commercial & Employment Land

Retail & Service Commercial: Demand is rising for neighborhood-scale retail, restaurants, healthcare services, and personal services tied to population growth.

Office & Professional Space: Opportunities exist for medical offices, government-related services, and small professional firms, particularly near downtown and healthcare facilities.

Industrial & Flex Space: Limited supply of shovel-ready sites within town limits suggests a need for:

- Light industrial
- Small logistics
- Contractor and service-oriented flex buildings

The chart below indicates that there is limited available product inventory and low vacancies for retail, office & industrial uses which indicates demand and opportunity to expand in these areas where feasible.

Inventory 5-mile radius	Retail	Office	Industrial
Buildings	96	35	13
Existing S.F.	755,899	118,499	810,313
Available S.F.	1,342	3,344	0
Vacancy Rate	0.20%	2.80%	0%

Source: CoStar May 2025



Comprehensive Land Use Plan Implications

- Preserve and plan sites for future employment uses, not just housing.
- Encourage mixed-use and higher-intensity development in appropriate areas.
- Ensure zoning flexibility to accommodate evolving business models.
- Coordinate utility and transportation investments with priority growth areas.

Economy, Business & Workforce Issues & Opportunities

Key Economic Challenges



Job-Housing Imbalance: Residential growth has outpaced job creation.



Income Constraints: Lower per-capita incomes limit retail depth and spending capture.



Limited Commercial Inventory: Shortage of modern commercial and flex space.



Infrastructure Readiness: Broadband, transportation, and utilities must keep pace with growth.

Key Economic & Business Opportunities

Target Industry Opportunities

- Healthcare and medical services
- Light manufacturing and assembly
- Construction and building trades support
- Logistics and service-based distribution
- Professional and small office-based firms

Small Business & Entrepreneurship

- Downtown and neighborhood commercial districts are well-suited for:
 - Local retail and restaurants
 - Service businesses
 - Professional offices
- Opportunities for:
 - Business façade improvements
 - Startup assistance
 - Business retention programs focused on existing employers.

Retail & Services

- Leakage of retail spending suggests opportunities to:
 - Recruit mid-scale grocery, dining, and service businesses
 - Strengthen Lillington as a convenience and services hub for surrounding rural areas.

Labor Market & Workforce

Workforce Profile

Lillington's workforce is characterized by:

- Skills in healthcare, education, manufacturing, skilled trades, and service industries
- A growing labor force supported by regional population growth
- High levels of workforce participation, but significant commuting out of town

Employment & Commuting Patterns

A substantial share of residents commute outside the Town and county for employment. This workforce outflow indicates:

- Mismatch between local job availability and resident skills
- Wage differentials favoring regional employment centers
- Opportunity to attract employers aligned with the existing workforce

Workforce Development Assets

- Strong regional training infrastructure
- Availability of continuing education and certification programs
- Willingness among employers to partner on training when programs are aligned with business needs

Key Indicator:



Lillington has a low unemployment rate, and the majority of residents are employed in white collar jobs within the study area. The largest percentage of the population in the study area includes those age 18-64, the town's workforce. Campbell University brings university students, and the educational attainment of its residents for bachelor's degrees is above the Harnett County average, though lower than the broader Triangle region, suggesting that most graduates leave the community.

Conclusion

While many factors will influence Lillington's future economy, the analysis conducted as part of this plan identified three key elements that will be especially important in shaping long-term growth and opportunity.

Attraction & Business Expansion



- The primary land uses in support of workforce development & job growth include industrial and office developments.
- For office, this includes healthcare and the areas around the Central Harnett Hospital.
- For industrial, the development at 1425 US 401 South, which includes a Duke Energy certified site (Byrd Tract), making it competitive for attracting a variety of users.
- Harnett Regional Jetport is making significant contributions to the local and state economy, highlighting the critical role of aviation in driving growth

Small Business & Entrepreneurship (SBE)



- Small Business is supported by membership in the Lillington Area Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business support is also provided by the Central Carolina Community College
- North Carolina Small Business Centers (SBC) help small and mid-sized businesses increase sales, create jobs, and access capital. Regional offices are located throughout the state and affiliated with Central Carolina Community College.
- The downtown would be the greatest beneficiary of an SBE strategy.

Tourism

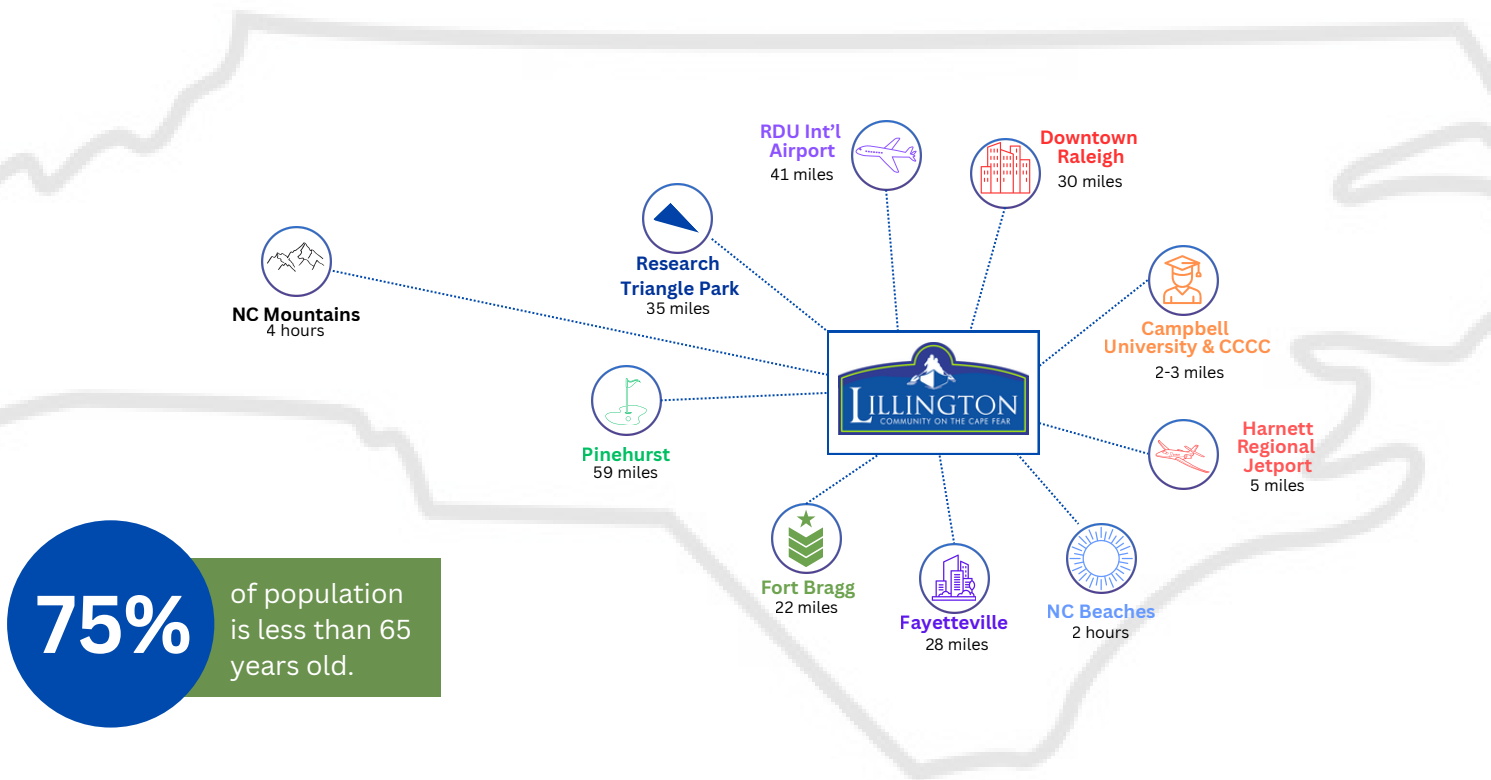


- Capitalize on the abundant recreational opportunities in the region that support tourism. This includes places to experience, things to do such as events, and opportunities for unique shopping & dining.
- Campbell University, expanding regional recreation opportunities and businesses utilizing the Harnett Regional Jetport create demand opportunities to expand hospitality such as hotels, inns and restaurants.

Community Snapshot

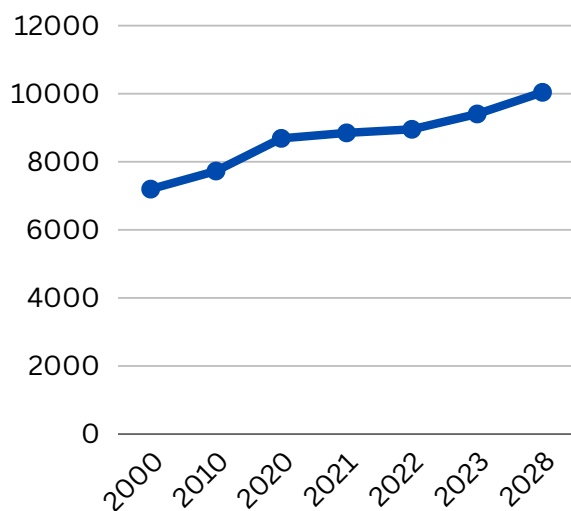
Location

Lillington is located in the heart of Harnett County and serves as the county seat. Its proximity to the Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, Fayetteville, Fort Bragg, access to recreational destinations, and major transportation corridors such as I-95 and I-40 makes it an ideal location for companies to invest and thrive.

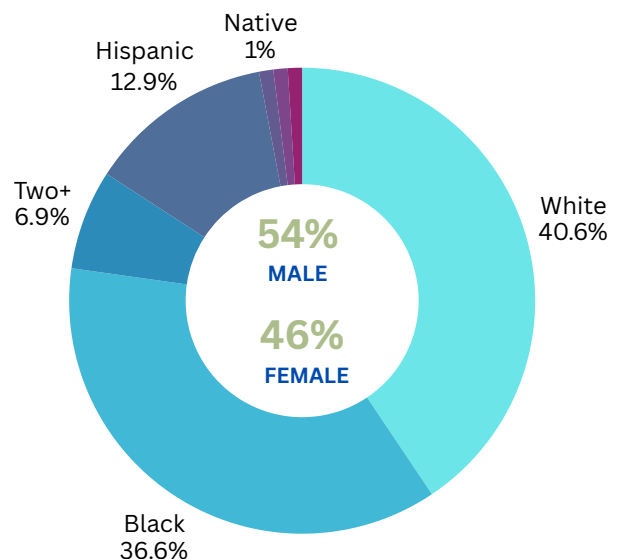


Population Characteristics (SA = Study Area Estimates)

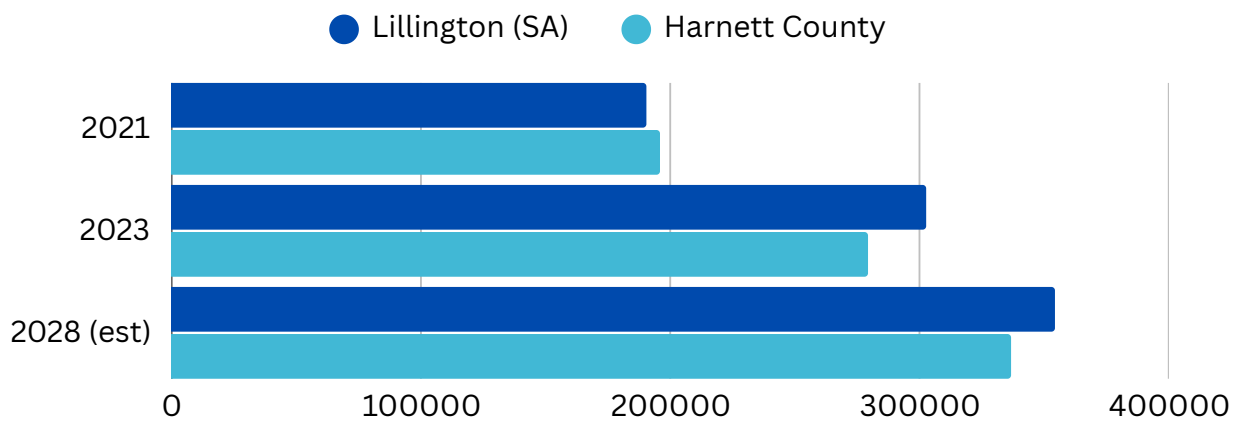
Population Growth



Gender & Ethnicity

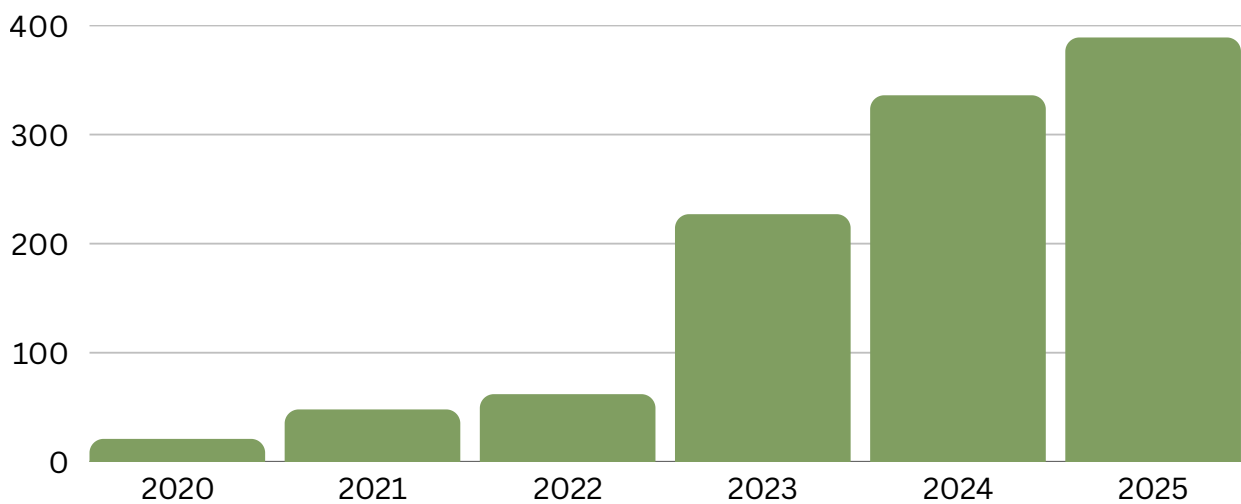


Median Home Value



Development Activity

Single-Family Dwelling Building Permits Issued by the Town of Lillington (since 2020):



Education

Lillington is part of the Harnett County School System which includes:



28 schools



+21,000 student

State & Local Taxes

4.25%
Personal
Income Tax

2.25%
Corporate
Income Tax

7%
Sales
Tax

In addition to K-12 education, Lillington is within close proximity to major higher education institutions in the Triangle, including [NC State University](#), [Duke University](#), and the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#). The town is also very near [Campbell University](#) and [Central Carolina Community College](#), as well as [East Carolina University's](#) School of Dental Medicine, providing residents and employers access to a broad range of educational, research, and workforce development opportunities.

Transportation



Lillington is located approximately 5 miles from the Harnett Regional Jetport and 41 miles from RDU International Airport. RDU International Airport provides +400 flights on 17 major airlines to 57 non-stop destinations and 14 international destinations in 11 countries daily.



The primary active freight railroad serving Lillington today is Norfolk Southern (NS). It operates freight service on the line that passes through Lillington and connects to larger regional routes, including service toward Raleigh.



Lillington is part of the Harnett Area Rural Transit System (HARTS) which provides transportation for the Harnett community serving the public for education, employment, medical and personal trips.

Top 4 Industry Sectors By Employment



29.5%

Educational services,
and health care



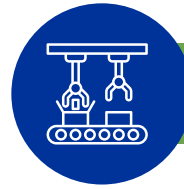
22.2%

Government (Local,
state or federal),



11.4%

Professional, scientific,
administrative and
waste management.



10.2%

Manufacturing

Commuter Flow

The graphic below displays the commuter flows in, within, and out of Harnett County every day:



VISION & GOALS



VISION & GOALS

VISION

The vision statement is a brief, inspirational description of what the town aspires to achieve in the future. It reflects shared community values that are tied to the goals of this plan. These broad and long-range goals should serve as a guiding light as staff, elected officials, and community groups work towards creating a better community.



Vision Statement:

*Lillington is a welcoming, connected community where **families thrive**, and the **Cape Fear River unites** neighborhoods, nature, and **a vibrant downtown**. The community supports a **healthy, engaged lifestyle** and a **growing local economy**.*



GOAL STATEMENTS

The goal statements were developed from community input gathered from stakeholders, the public survey, and public workshops. They will inform future planning, land use, and policy actions. The eight goal statements serve as the basis for the implementation recommendations of this plan and influence the future land use map.



Goal 1 - Revitalize Downtown

Create a vibrant and energized downtown that serves as a daily destination for retail, services, and entertainment, supported by well-connected parks and green spaces that safely link downtown to the river and surrounding community assets.



Goal 5 - Ensure Balanced Growth

Ensure equitable revitalization and development across all areas of Lillington by promoting a balanced mix of land uses on both sides of the river, with investments that enhance the quality of life for all neighborhoods.



Goal 2 - Improve Traffic Congestion & Safety

Prioritize improved traffic management and implement innovative road designs to reduce congestion and enhance safety for all modes of transportation at key intersections.



Goal 6 - Preserve Community Identity

Preserve and strengthen community identity by revitalizing existing commercial buildings to maintain the town's history, uniqueness, and small-town charm; reinvesting in infrastructure to support infill development near downtown; enhancing key gateways with attractive signage and branding; and creating welcoming spaces for cultural groups to gather and contribute to the town's future.



Goal 3 - Expand the Town's Pedestrian Network

Expand sidewalks, trails, and greenways to connect neighborhoods, natural assets, parks, and downtown, providing the infrastructure to support active, outdoor lifestyles for residents and visitors.



Goal 4 - Prioritize Commercial Development

Support retail and service businesses that generate well-paying local jobs, promote high-quality commercial development, and strengthen the community's tax base.



Goal 7 - Prioritize connectivity to the Cape Fear River

Promote the Cape Fear River as a vital natural asset that connects neighborhoods, attracts visitors, and supports an active, outdoor lifestyle for residents.



Goal 8 - Capturing Residents & Workers

Create a vibrant live, work, and play environment where residents and workers choose to stay in Lillington to meet their shopping, medical, dining, and entertainment needs.

PLAN ELEMENTS



PLAN ELEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As Lillington continues to grow and evolve, it is essential to recognize that different parts of the community possess distinct physical characteristics, land use patterns, historical context, and opportunities for future development. These differences shape how residents experience their neighborhoods, how businesses operate, and how infrastructure and public services are delivered. To reflect and respond to this diversity, the Comprehensive Land Use Plan introduces a Character Area Framework—a strategic approach to guiding context-sensitive growth, preservation, and investment throughout the town’s jurisdiction and within the broader planning study area, which includes areas anticipated for future expansion.

Character Areas represent geographic areas that share common traits and planning considerations. They help translate community values into land use guidance by accounting for the varying roles, conditions, and needs of different areas. Each Character Area provides direction on appropriate land uses, desired development patterns, transportation improvements, and public investments, ensuring that future growth reinforces Lillington’s identity while enhancing livability, connectivity, and economic opportunity. These areas are illustrated on the Future Land Use Map and form the foundation for policies and implementation strategies throughout this plan.

For planning purposes, Character Areas are classified into four general categories: Residential, Mixed-Use/Commercial, Employment, and Natural. Each classification contains more specific subcategories tailored to Lillington’s development context:



Residential

- Rural Residential
- Neighborhood Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood



Mixed Use/Commercial

- Community Mixed-Use
- Downtown Core
- Commercial & Service



Employment

- Civic & Institutional
- Employment & Light Industrial



Natural

- Parks & Open Space

This Character Area framework serves as a flexible but intentional guide to future decision-making—balancing growth with preservation, supporting infrastructure planning, and ensuring that each part of Lillington develops in a way that reflects its purpose, potential, and place within the broader community.

Assignment of Character Areas

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan establishes a long-term vision for how areas within Lillington's planning jurisdiction and study area should develop and redevelop. In most locations, the Future Land Use Map is intended to preserve existing development patterns by encouraging new growth that reflects the appearance, character, and function of the district.

In other areas, particularly at key nodes or along highway corridors with available road and utility capacity, the plan supports targeted reinvestment and redevelopment. While the plan does not dictate specific outcomes, it helps reduce barriers to private investment and brings land-use decisions in alignment with market conditions.

Public input shared goals like downtown redevelopment, enhanced commercial options, and balanced growth provided the framework for the character areas.

Character areas also integrate the Cape Fear River, local creeks, and associated floodplains to promote land-use patterns that respect natural resources and help mitigate the impacts of natural hazards. Options for commercial and service uses are needed to support continued commerce, job creation, and a resilient property tax base—critical components of a thriving community.

Overall, the Land Use Plan identifies nine distinct character areas within Lillington's planning area, providing a clear framework for coordinated land-use decisions and sustainable growth.



Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map and associated character areas are meant to guide land use and infrastructure decisions in the Lillington Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction, Town Limits, and future growth areas (study area).

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map on the following page illustrates the desired land use pattern in the Town of Lillington, and its future growth areas. Highlights from the Future Land Use Map include:

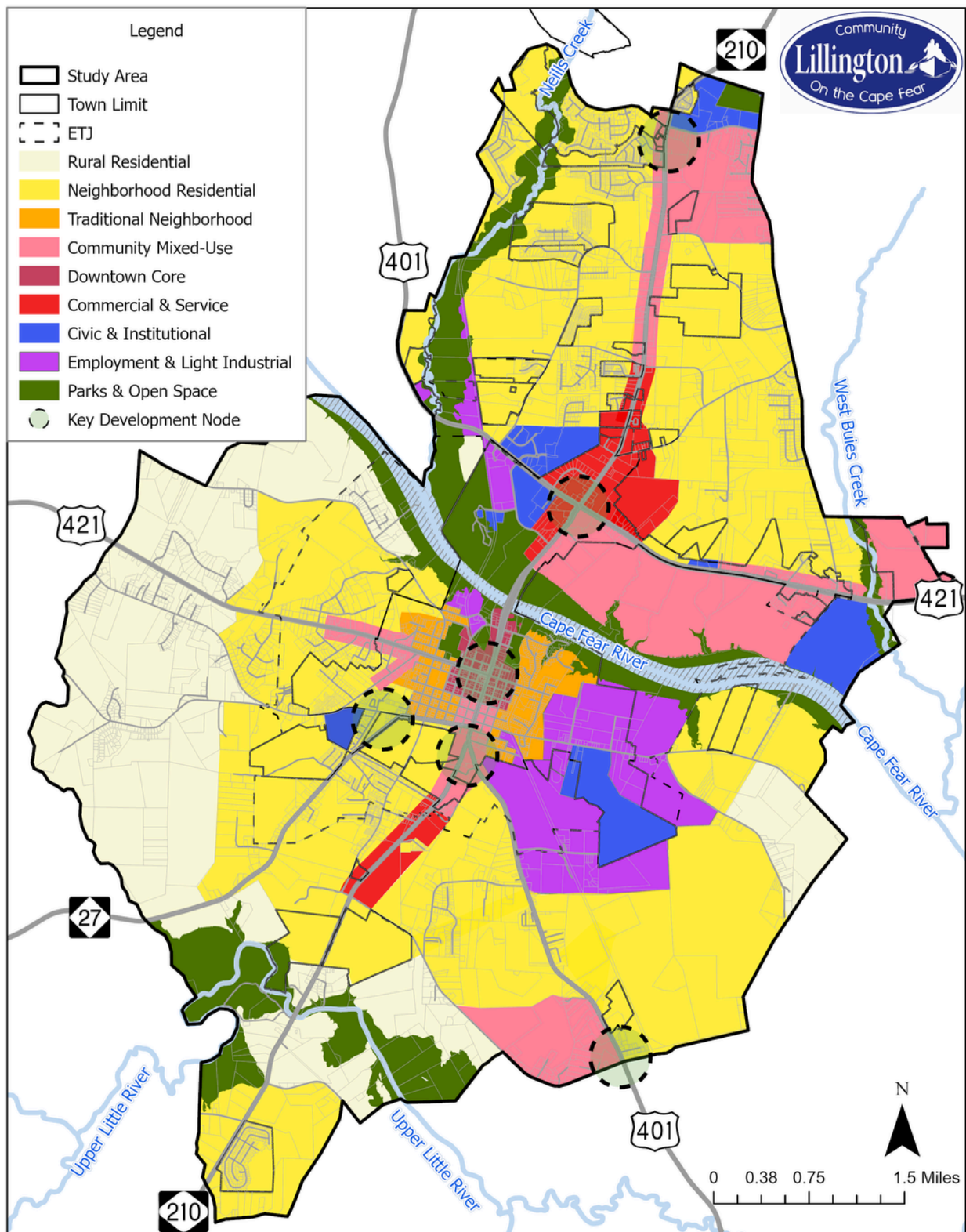
- A defined downtown core area that builds on current downtown revitalization efforts.
- Designated mixed-use types (Traditional Neighborhood, Downtown Core, and Community Mixed-Use) where a mix of land uses, including residential and commercial, is encouraged.
- Industrial and Employment areas where businesses and industry are encouraged.
- Commercial areas along major highways and thoroughfares.
- Areas for new residential development
- Sensitive areas where lower-density development should be integrated with the landscape to reduce impacts on natural resources.

Future Land Use Character Area Legend

Each color on the Future Land Use Map corresponds to a character area described below. The character areas are descriptive, not prescriptive, and indicate a predominant land use or set of uses, intensity, and shared design details. The descriptions do not propose a change to existing development, but a direction moving forward for new development and redevelopment.

 <i>Rural Residential</i>	 <i>Neighborhood Residential</i>	 <i>Traditional Neighborhood</i>
 <i>Community Mixed-Use</i>	 <i>Downtown Core</i>	 <i>Commercial & Service</i>
 <i>Civic & Institutional</i>	 <i>Employment & Light Industrial</i>	 <i>Parks & Open Space</i>

Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Map

CHARACTER AREA DESCRIPTIONS

Rural Residential

Character Area Description & Intent

The Rural Residential character area includes open space, large-lot residential uses, and master-planned conservation subdivisions designed to maintain the area's rural character and protect sensitive environmental features. These neighborhoods are thoughtfully integrated into the landscape using context-sensitive rural design principles that conserve natural areas, such as wetlands, stream corridors, and contiguous forest lands.

Conservation subdivisions are encouraged in this area to cluster homes on smaller lots while preserving significant portions of land as permanent open space. This approach supports environmental stewardship, rural aesthetics, and long-term sustainability. New development should reinforce a low-density, open character and avoid fragmentation of farmland or wildlife corridors.

These areas are primarily located outside of existing sewer service areas and likely rely on private septic systems for wastewater treatment. The transportation network is limited, consisting primarily of NCDOT-maintained secondary roads with minimal local street connectivity.

While internal pedestrian networks are encouraged within master-planned developments, pedestrian and multimodal infrastructure is generally limited beyond subdivision boundaries. Planned growth in this area should respect the natural landscape, promote rural visual continuity, and avoid sprawling, uncoordinated development patterns. Infrastructure extensions should be carefully evaluated to ensure alignment with conservation goals and cost-effective service delivery.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Residential, Parks, and Agriculture-related uses
Residential Density	1 dwelling unit/acre (large lot) 1-3 dwelling units/acre (conservation subdivision)
Non-Residential Density	Occasional grandfathered service business
Building Height	1-2 stories
Open Space Elements	Gateway corridors, greenways, stream corridors, regional parks, and agriculture
Street Pattern	Modified grid
Typical Street Spacing	600 – 1,200 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Rural condition (rural locals, collectors, arterials)

Neighborhood Residential

Character Area Description & Intent

The Neighborhood Residential character area represents the suburban neighborhoods being developed in and around the Town of Lillington. These areas are primarily composed of single-family detached homes on a variety of lot sizes, including small-lot subdivisions and patio home communities. Compared to Traditional Neighborhood areas, the overall density is lower and the development pattern is more auto-oriented, yet still focused on providing a cohesive and well-connected neighborhood structure.

Neighborhood Residential areas are served by public water and sewer, and typically feature curbed streets, sidewalks, and internal open spaces. These amenities are designed to support community interaction and active living while maintaining a suburban scale. Townhomes or other attached housing types may be appropriate when thoughtfully integrated into the development—particularly when they are clustered around a central green space, amenity area, or neighborhood entryway, and when meaningful open space is preserved elsewhere in the site design.

While the area is intended to remain primarily residential, small-scale commercial or service uses (such as a neighborhood café, daycare, or corner store) may be appropriate within larger, master-planned developments where such uses serve nearby residents and are designed to blend with the surrounding neighborhood character. New development in this character area should emphasize connectivity, walkability within subdivisions, architectural variety, and context-sensitive transitions to adjacent land uses. Integration with greenways, trails, and nearby parks is strongly encouraged.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Primary residential
Residential Density	3-5 dwelling units/acre (single-family)
Non-Residential Density	Limited small-scale commercial if part of a planned development
Building Height	2-3 stories
Open Space Elements	Neighborhood playgrounds, pocket parks, stream corridors, greenways, sidewalk connectivity
Street Pattern	Modified grid and curvilinear to meet topography.
Typical Street Spacing	300-900 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Suburban and urban conditions (neighborhood, suburban streets, some alleys.

Traditional Residential

Character Area Description & Intent

The Traditional Neighborhood character area reflects the walkable, human-scaled residential fabric found near Downtown Lillington and is encouraged around future planned Mixed-Use Nodes. These neighborhoods are characterized by a connected street grid, pedestrian-oriented design, and a mix of housing types that support both long-term residents and newcomers. While the area is primarily made up of single-family homes and duplexes, higher-density housing options—including townhomes, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and small-scale apartment buildings—are appropriate, particularly when located near commercial corridors or civic spaces and served by pedestrian infrastructure.

Development in the Traditional Neighborhood area should prioritize context-sensitive infill, allowing for the adaptive reuse of existing structures and compatible new construction that reflects the scale, setbacks, and architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood. The intent is to support housing diversity and neighborhood revitalization without compromising the area's historic identity and walkability.

Key design features should include:

- Front porches, narrow lot widths, and short front setbacks
- Tree-lined sidewalks and alleys for rear access
- Connections to parks, schools, and nearby commercial centers

The Traditional Neighborhood designation encourages reinvestment in older neighborhoods, supports gentle density increases, and ensures that redevelopment aligns with the Town's goals for inclusivity, mobility, and preservation of community character.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Mixture of residential dwelling types, infill development
Residential Density	4-8 dwelling units/acre (single-family); 8-14 dwelling units/acre (townhomes)
Non-Residential Density	0.5 - 1.00 floor area ratio (FAR)
Building Height	1-3 stories
Open Space Elements	Neighborhood playgrounds, pocket parks, stream corridors, greenways, sidewalk connectivity
Street Pattern	Traditional grid
Typical Street Spacing	300-600 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Urban conditions (compact/pedestrian-friendly streets with alleys).

Community Mixed-Use

Character Area Description & Intent

The Community Mixed-Use character area is composed of master-planned developments that thoughtfully integrate a variety of residential housing types with complementary commercial and service uses. These areas are designed to promote a walkable, neighborhood-scale environment where residents can live, work, and shop within a cohesive, well-connected community. Residential uses typically include townhomes, duplexes, small-lot single-family homes, and low-scale multifamily buildings. Commercial uses may be concentrated in a central node or strategically embedded throughout the development as corner stores, offices, or small service providers that serve daily neighborhood needs.

Key features of this character area include:

- **Connectivity:** All components of the development should be linked by a comprehensive road network and a safe, continuous pedestrian system of sidewalks, crosswalks, and trails.
- **Design Intent:** Neighborhood design should foster a sense of place with community green spaces, civic gathering spots, and attention to the relationship between buildings and public streets.
- **Location Criteria:** These areas are typically located at or near major thoroughfares and key intersections, providing visibility and accessibility while reducing development pressure on rural or environmentally sensitive areas.

Community Mixed-Use is intended to support compact, complete neighborhoods that meet local housing demand, reduce reliance on vehicle trips, and create opportunities for economic growth in a format that reinforces Lillington's small-town character.



Development Considerations:

Development Pattern	Mixture of uses
Residential Density	4-18 dwelling units/acre
Non-Residential Density	0.5 - 1.5 floor area ratio (FAR)
Building Height	1-5 stories
Open Space Elements	Centralized amenities, greens, plazas, wider sidewalks, greenways, stream corridors.
Street Pattern	Traditional grid
Typical Street Spacing	200-500 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Urban conditions (neighborhood streets, collectors, arterials).

Downtown Core

Character Area Description & Intent

The Downtown Core is the traditional heart of Lillington, designed to foster vibrancy, small business opportunities, and a strong sense of community identity and culture. This area features a rich mix of historic buildings that house commercial, office, government, and civic uses, as well as upper-story residential units and office spaces that contribute to a 24/7 activity level. New mixed-use development is both appropriate and encouraged, particularly along the downtown edges, provided that setbacks, building height, and architectural massing respect and reflect the character of the existing historic fabric. Design standards should emphasize pedestrian orientation and complement the visual identity of the district.

Key priorities for the Downtown Core include:

- **Community Gathering Places:** Create and enhance plazas, pocket parks, and flexible event spaces for cultural programming and public events.
- **Pedestrian-Friendly Design:** Expand and maintain wide sidewalks, install pedestrian-scale lighting, and improve landscaping to enhance the walkable experience.
- **Traffic Safety & Accessibility:** Incorporate safe pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and ADA improvements to ensure equitable and safe mobility.
- **Support for Small Businesses:** Encourage entrepreneurship and local retail by promoting storefront activation, façade enhancements, and business-friendly policies.

This area encompasses the traditional central business district and adjacent blocks, including E. Harnett Street, E. Front St., S. Main St., and S. 8th St., which form the core of Lillington's historic and economic identity.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Mixture of uses
Residential Density	6-18 dwelling units/acre
Non-Residential Density	N/A
Building Height	1-4 stories
Open Space Elements	Public gathering areas (formal & non-formal), pocket parks, wider sidewalks, greenways.
Street Pattern	Traditional grid
Typical Street Spacing	200-500 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Urban conditions (downtown streets, on-street parking, landscaping, decorative street lighting).

Commercial & Service

Character Area Description & Intent

The Commercial & Service character area is designed to accommodate large-scale, automobile-oriented commercial uses that serve both the local community and a broader regional market. Typical uses in these areas include grocery stores, shopping centers, restaurants, gas stations, lodging, and other highway-oriented services.

These commercial nodes are strategically located along high-traffic corridors such as U.S. 401, U.S. 421, and S. Main Street, where high visibility, accessibility, and vehicle capacity support sustained commercial activity.

To improve aesthetics and mitigate impacts associated with larger format development, the Town encourages:

- Generous landscaping and buffering along road frontages and around parking lots to soften visual impacts, reduce heat islands, and provide stormwater benefits.
- Unified signage and cohesive building design to enhance corridor identity and avoid visual clutter.
- Pedestrian connections within larger sites to improve walkability between buildings and outparcel developments.

Future development in this area should balance economic opportunity with thoughtful site planning and corridor design, ensuring that key gateways into Lillington reflect the Town's commitment to quality, functionality, and long-term sustainability.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Primarily commercial, retail, offices & services.
Residential Density	N/A
Non-Residential Density	N/A
Building Height	1-3 stories
Open Space Elements	Buffers, stream corridors, sidewalks, greenways.
Street Pattern	Modified grid
Typical Street Spacing	600-1,200 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Urban conditions (internal sidewalks, collectors, and arterial streets).

Civic & Institutional

Character Area Description & Intent

The Civic & Institutional character area encompasses a variety of public and semi-public uses that serve critical governmental, educational, and health-related functions. This includes local government buildings, county and state facilities, public schools, higher education campuses, medical centers, and professional offices such as legal, financial, and medical service providers. These areas often take the form of campus-style developments that accommodate multiple buildings, parking areas, internal circulation systems, and public access points. Notable examples in Lillington include the Harnett County Government Complex and the Harnett Health campus.

Key design considerations for Civic & Institutional areas include:

- Prominent, well-landscaped entryways with clear monument or directional signage.
- Pedestrian-friendly internal circulation, including sidewalks, crosswalks, and safe access between buildings and parking areas.
- Cohesive architecture and site design that reflects civic pride and contributes positively to the surrounding community character.
- Stormwater management features such as bioretention areas, permeable pavement, and tree canopy coverage to enhance sustainability.

These areas often act as employment centers and community anchors, drawing residents, workers, and visitors throughout the week. As such, they should be thoughtfully integrated into the broader transportation and pedestrian network, and designed to accommodate future expansion, public access, and public safety.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Institutional, government, office
Residential Density	N/A
Non-Residential Density	N/A
Building Height	1-4 stories
Open Space Elements	Central green, plaza, wider sidewalks, greenway, stream corridors.
Street Pattern	Modified grid
Typical Street Spacing	600-1,200 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Urban conditions (internal sidewalks, collectors, and arterial streets).

Employment & Light Industrial

Character Area Description & Intent

The Employment & Light Industrial character area is intended to support job-generating uses such as light manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, telecommunications infrastructure, recycling operations, and other similar employment-based activities. These areas are essential to Lillington's economic base—offering opportunities for local employment, business expansion, and long-term tax revenue growth. These uses are typically located near major transportation corridors such as highways or rail lines, and are dependent on the availability of planned or existing public utilities, including water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. Development in this area requires careful planning to mitigate impacts on nearby residential or commercial areas. As such, sites should:

- Consist of large parcels that accommodate appropriate setbacks, loading areas, and buffering.
- Incorporate landscaping, fencing, and screening to minimize visual and noise impacts.
- Provide internal circulation systems that can safely handle employee vehicles, delivery trucks, and service access.
- Be located in areas that minimize conflicts with pedestrian activity or non-industrial land uses.

Design and layout should prioritize functionality, safety, and site efficiency, while also considering aesthetics and environmental impact. Where feasible, green infrastructure strategies and sustainable site design should be incorporated into stormwater management and energy use. This character area plays a key role in supporting the regional economy, attracting investment, and creating demand for nearby services.



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Industrial, manufacturing, operation centers
Residential Density	N/A
Non-Residential Density	N/A
Building Height	1-4 stories
Open Space Elements	Buffers, stream corridors
Street Pattern	Modified grid
Typical Street Spacing	600-1,600 ft.
Typical Street Cross Section	Collectors and arterial streets with interconnections.

Parks & Open Space

Character Area Description & Intent

The Parks and Open Space character area includes land designated for active and passive recreation, natural resource conservation, and floodplain protection. These areas serve as essential components of Lillington's community identity, environmental health, and quality of life. This district encompasses a variety of open space types, including:

- Town and county parks
- Public greenways and trails
- Natural preserves and wildlife corridors
- Floodplains and riparian buffers along the Cape Fear River and other waterways

These areas provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, environmental education, and tourism, while also serving important ecological functions such as stormwater filtration, habitat protection, and flood mitigation. Supportive structures and uses, such as picnic shelters, public restrooms, trailheads, boat launches, rental kiosks, and outdoor dining facilities, are appropriate where compatible with the natural character and provided they comply with the Town's Flood Damage Prevention and other environmental regulations. Key planning priorities include:

- Enhancing access to the Cape Fear River and regional trail systems
- Preserving environmentally sensitive lands
- Integrating green infrastructure into new development
- Expanding recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities



Development Considerations:	
Development Pattern	Natural areas, floodplains, parks, greenways
Residential Density	N/A
Non-Residential Density	Limited recreational support facilities.
Building Height	N/A
Open Space Elements	Regional & neighborhood parks, greenways, open spaces, flood protection, stream corridors.
Street Pattern	N/A
Typical Street Spacing	N/A
Typical Street Cross Section	Rural conditions

POLICIES & ACTION PLAN



POLICIES & ACTION PLAN

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation of this Plan is essential to ensuring that the Town's long-term vision becomes reality. While the plan provides a framework for guiding growth, development, and preservation, its success depends on clear, actionable steps that align with local priorities and available resources. The following recommendations are designed to translate the plan's goals into measurable actions, provide guidance for decision-makers, and establish a roadmap for public and private investment. Together, they offer the tools needed to manage change, strengthen the local economy, and maintain the quality of life valued by residents. The policy recommendations respond to the goal statements established as part of the planning process for this document. Each goal focuses on a critical part of the community and provides goal statements, recommended policies, and implementation strategies. The eight goal statements are highlighted below.

Goal 1 - Revitalize Downtown

Create a vibrant and energized downtown that serves as a daily destination for retail, services, and entertainment, supported by well-connected parks and green spaces that safely link downtown to the river and surrounding community assets.

Goal 2 - Improve Traffic Congestion & Safety

Prioritize improved traffic management and implement innovative road designs to reduce congestion and enhance safety for all modes of transportation at key intersections.

Goal 3 - Expand the Town's Pedestrian Network

Expand sidewalks, trails, and greenways to connect neighborhoods, natural assets, parks, and downtown, providing the infrastructure to support active, outdoor lifestyles for residents and visitors.

Goal 4 - Prioritize Commercial Development

Support retail and service businesses that generate well-paying local jobs, promote high-quality commercial development, and strengthen the community's tax base.

Goal 5 - Ensure Balanced Growth

Ensure equitable revitalization and development across all areas of Lillington by promoting a balanced mix of land uses on both sides of the river, with investments that enhance the quality of life for all neighborhoods.

Goal 6 - Preserve Community Identity

Preserve and strengthen community identity by revitalizing existing commercial buildings to maintain the town's history, uniqueness, and small-town charm; reinvesting in infrastructure to support infill development near downtown; enhancing key gateways with attractive signage and branding; and creating welcoming spaces for cultural groups to gather and contribute to the town's future.

Goal 7 - Prioritize connectivity to the Cape Fear River

Promote the Cape Fear River as a vital natural asset that connects neighborhoods, attracts visitors, and supports an active, outdoor lifestyle for residents.

Goal 8 - Capturing Residents & Workers

Create a vibrant live, work, and play environment where residents and workers choose to stay in Lillington to meet their shopping, medical, dining, and entertainment needs.

GOAL 1 - REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN

Create a vibrant and energized downtown that serves as a daily destination for retail, services, and entertainment, supported by well-connected parks and green spaces that safely link downtown to the river and surrounding community assets.

Policy RD-1 | Promote Downtown Redevelopment & Building Activation.

RD 1.1: Promote mixed-use infill development that reflects the scale and architectural character of historic downtown.

RD 1.2: Encourage a mix of housing types on sites that could serve as a transition from commercial to single family residential development.

RD 1.3: Encourage infill and redevelopment in areas well-served by infrastructure and services.

RD 1.4: Ensure new buildings and renovations downtown reinforce existing design & character.

RD 1.5: Continue efforts to join NC Main Street Program.

RD 1.6: Support adaptive reuse of historical buildings and streamline permitting for building upfits and tenant fit-outs.

RD 1.7: Allow medium and high density residential and mixed-use development as part of development or redevelopment of underutilized commercial lands.



Efforts to implement the 10th Street bypass, construction of the S. 8th Street & W. Ivey Street parking lot and the planned streetscape improvements along W. Harnett Street, S. 8th Street, and W. Front Street show the Town's commitment to downtown revitalization.

Policy RD-2 | Increase Connectivity to Downtown & Improve the Public Realm.

RD 2.1: Continue to implement improvements as recommended in the Downtown Master Plan and Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.

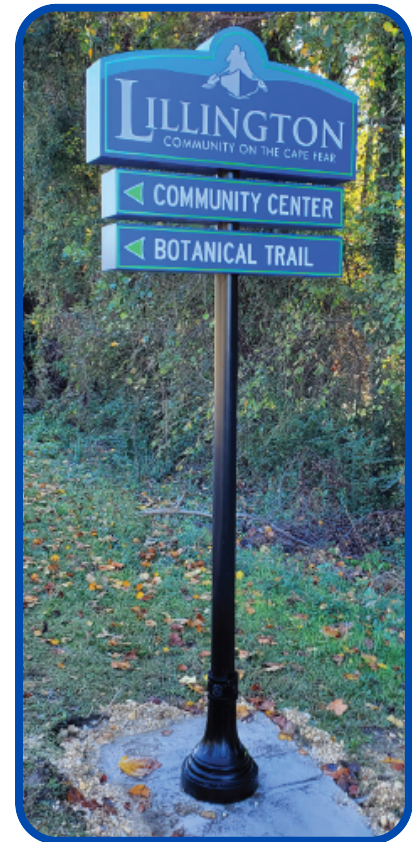
RD 2.2: Enhance the pedestrian environment & improve walkability in Downtown Lillington by increasing pedestrian amenities (ex: lighting, wider sidewalks, shade trees, benches, and outdoor furniture).

RD 2.3: Create design standards in downtown core with shorter blocks, building access from roads with parking to the side or behind.

RD 2.4: Continue to incorporate a wayfinding signage program to clearly direct drivers toward public parking lots and community facilities.

RD 2.5: Expand opportunities for on-street parking and facilitate shared parking agreements.

RD 2.6: Consider parking time limits in strategic on-street parking areas.



Example of the Town's wayfinding signage.

Policy RD-3 | Focus on Business Recruitment & Property Marketing.

RD 3.1: Study the potential for public- private partnerships for new development and redevelopment opportunities.

RD 3.2: Expand and better promote the existing façade improvement program to strategically target underutilized buildings to attract private investment.

RD 3.3: Strengthen partnerships with local realtors, developers, Harnett County Economic Development and business associations to recruit restaurants, boutiques, and essential service providers.



Example of renovated building with ground floor retail and second floor residential.

RD 3.4: Create a downtown property inventory and feature key sites on the Town's website and economic development materials.

RD 3.5: Regularly meet with Campbell University representatives to discuss connecting alumni to investment, sponsorship and mentorship opportunities that align with the town's development goals.

Policy RD-4 | Promote Downtown as a Cultural Destination.

RD 4.1: Establish gateway corridors into Downtown that address uniform signage, landscaping, town branding, etc.

RD 4.2: Encourage a variety of locally owned small businesses downtown where people can access their essential daily needs.

RD 4.3: Launch a coordinated marketing campaign to promote available downtown properties and investment opportunities.

RD 4.4: Program downtown public spaces with seasonal events, pop-up markets, and cultural performances to build momentum and visibility.

RD 4.5: Establish a Downtown Advisory Board to lead beautification, business engagement, and placemaking efforts.

RD 4.6: Explore opportunities, both informal and formal, for the Town to create a downtown plaza to host community events.

RD 4.7: Evaluate ordinances to allow temporary uses such as food trucks, pop-up retail, and street performers during permitted events.



*Downtown Lillington
businesses on S. 8th St.*

GOAL 2 - IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION & SAFETY

Prioritize improved traffic management and implement innovative road designs to reduce congestion and enhance safety for all modes of transportation at key intersections.

Policy TS-1 | Build Partnerships.

TS 1.1: Continue to cooperate with and support the efforts of NCDOT to improve the function of roads under NCDOT's jurisdiction for the benefit of all roadway users.

TS 1.2: Promote cooperative inter-jurisdictional transportation planning.

TS 1.3: Coordinate with CAMPO to ensure regional travel model updates reflect recent land use changes and approved developments within and surrounding Lillington.

TS 1.4: Pursue a Complete Streets program for priority intersections, working with Division 6 engineering staff to formulate street crosswalks, striping, retrofits, and improvements.

Policy TS-2 | Improve Traffic Management.

TS 2.1: Address safety issues at intersections listed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

TS 2.2: Evaluate corridor safety and congestion points along US 421 and NC 27/NC 210, especially near downtown.

TS 2.3: Continue to pursue pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures on S. Main Street.

TS 2.4: Utilize roundabouts, like the example shown to the right, or other innovative intersection designs where appropriate.

TS 2.5: Identify and improve intersections with high traffic volumes or accident history through traffic studies, turn lanes, or signal enhancements.

TS 2.6: Implement signal coordination and updated timing plans on key corridors to improve traffic flow and reduce delays.



Town of Cary new roundabout.

Policy TS-3 | Capital Improvements.

TS 3.1: Identify and prioritize transportation related capital projects and work with Town leadership to develop and secure annual funding for a capital improvement plan.

TS 3.2: Budget and submit LAPP funding for intersection improvements at: US 401/NC 210 (north), US 401/Front St., US 401/W. Old Road (and widening), US 401/NC 210 (South) and 10th Street bypass.

TS 3.3: Incorporate medians that allow for the stacking of vehicles at the McKinney Pkwy and US 401/421 intersection.

TS 3.4: Budget to implement 'short-term intersection priorities' from Lillington's adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.



Downtown Lillington
Intersection.

Policy TS-4 | Prioritize Transportation Improvements with New Development.

TS 4.1: As development occurs, work with the development community to implement transportation improvements per the Town's CIP.

TS 4.2: Require cross-access between commercial sites, and require secondary access to local roads to reduce traffic pressure on main arterials.

TS 4.3: Revise the UDO to minimize curb cuts to consolidate commercial driveways on major thoroughfares.

TS 4.4: Coordinate land use and transportation plans and policies to ensure they are mutually supportive.

TS 4.5: Ensure adequate right-of-way is preserved when development occurs to allow for the construction of new roads and sidewalks per the CTP & the CTP addendum map.

TS 4.6: Ensure large-scale commercial and residential developments include transportation upgrades such as access roads, turning lanes, and pedestrian facilities.

TS 4.7: Require adequate roadway connections in new development to relieve demands on existing thoroughfares.

Policy TS-5 | Improve Local Street Network & Connectivity.

TS 5.1: *Extend and connect local streets in new developments to reduce traffic pressure on major corridors and improve access.*

TS 5.2: *Evaluate the feasibility of new collector roads or bypass routes to divert through traffic from downtown and sensitive areas.*

TS 5.3: *Continue to explore public/private partnerships for construction of strategic collector roads planned for in the CTP.*

Policy TS-6 | Promote Traffic Calming & Pedestrian Safety.

TS 6.1: *Install traffic calming features in residential neighborhoods, such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, and narrowed lane widths.*

TS 6.2: *Implement pilot programs or demonstration projects to test traffic calming strategies in areas with frequent complaints or cut-through traffic.*

TS 6.3: *Prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety through high-visibility crosswalks, signage, and pedestrian refuge islands.*

TS 6.4: *Improve pedestrian infrastructure and ADA accessibility at high-traffic intersections and near schools, parks, and civic facilities.*

TS 6.5: *Coordinate with school officials and public safety staff to strengthen Safe Routes to School programs.*

TS 6.6: *Prioritize filling in gaps between sidewalk sections, particularly on arterial streets.*



Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School programs aim to make it safer for students to walk and bike to school and encourage more walking and biking where safety is not a barrier. Community members; public health, planning and transportation professionals; and school communities all have roles to play to change norms in how we move around our communities and make it appealing and safe for students to walk, bike or roll to school.

GOAL 3 - EXPAND THE TOWN'S PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Expand sidewalks, trails, and greenways to connect neighborhoods, natural assets, parks, and downtown, providing the infrastructure to support active, outdoor lifestyles for residents and visitors.

Policy PN-1 | Expand Sidewalk & Greenway Network.

PN 1.1: *Prioritize and budget for a network of sidewalks, trails, and greenways that link the downtown, parks, and Cape Fear River.*

PN 1.2: *Improve signage, graphics, and outreach about the planned trails, greenways, and routes throughout the Town of Lillington to increase usage.*

PN 1.3: *Maintain and enhance safety and accessibility of existing pedestrian facilities, including – replacement of damaged sections, ADA curb ramp requirements, and lighting.*

PN 1.4: *Complete the sidewalk network in older neighborhoods and connect them to commercial corridors, schools, and parks.*

PN 1.5: *Prioritize sidewalk and trail extensions near schools, housing developments, and employment centers.*

PN 1.6: *Leverage state and federal funding to expand the greenway system and link to the Cape Fear River Trail.*

Policy PN-2 | Plan Implementation & New Plan Development.

PN 2.1: *Maintain and update Lillington's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to reflect Harnett County's Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway plan and evolving progress.*

PN 2.2: *Plan and design streetscapes to support walkability by incorporating wide sidewalks, shared-use paths, and safe crossings.*

PN 2.3: *Plan for greenway trails to provide secondary benefits of stormwater control, environmental habitat preservation, and flood control measures.*

PN 2.4: *Conduct a townwide ADA accessibility audit of sidewalks and curb ramps.*

PN 2.5: *Implement an annual sidewalk repair and infill program to close gaps and address hazards.*

PN 2.6: *Improve crossings at busy streets through pedestrian-activated signals and refuge islands.*



New curb ramp at an intersection.

Policy PN-3 | Capital Improvements.

PN 3.1: Expand the pedestrian network to better connect residents and visitors between downtown and the Cape Fear River through a combination of sidewalks, greenways, and trails. This area can function as the “spine” of the network.

PN 3.2: Focus investments in sidewalks within areas that lack safe pedestrian infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to parks, schools, and commercial areas.

PN 3.3: Add street trees along existing sidewalks where underground utilities allow. Consider bushes and hedges where trees are not feasible.

PN 3.4: Add high-visibility crosswalks and bulb-outs at key intersections. For example, W. James St. at South 11th St. by STAR Academy High School.

PN 3.5: Partner with Harnett County to pursue funding on Raven Rock Rail Trail from Harnett County’s Bike, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan.

PN 3.6: Consider on street parking, landscaping, and ADA upgrades on W. James St. due to proximity of an old high school as a civic center.



Example of a high-visibility crosswalk

Policy PN-4 | Maintain and update standards to promote pedestrian-oriented developments.

PN 4.1: Ensure new developments incorporate and build an interconnected network of greenway trails and connected shared-use paths to a town-wide trail system.

PN 4.2: Ensure sidewalks are 10 feet wide when planned in commercial areas, including downtown.

PN 4.3: Require pedestrian connectivity and internal sidewalk networks in new subdivisions and commercial developments.

PN 4.4: Update UDO regularly to encourage walkable blocks, pedestrian cut-throughs, and shade trees & buffers.

PN 4.5: Incentivize projects that incorporate prominent mid-block pedestrian passageways or shared-use paths.

GOAL 4 - PRIORITIZE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Support retail and service businesses that generate well-paying local jobs, promote high-quality commercial development, and strengthen the community's tax base.

Policy CD-1 | Strategic Commercial Growth Areas.

CD 1.1: Partner with Harnett County Economic Development to conduct site readiness of available light industrial parcels.

CD 1.2: Create an inventory of available parcels and buildings. Define proposed uses and coordinate marketing with Harnett County Economic Development.

CD 1.3: Analyze retail leakage report and recruit these types of businesses and services to available buildings and locations.

CD 1.4: Preserve areas designed as “Commercial & Service,” “Civic & Institutional,” and “Employment & Light Industrial” on the Future Land Use Map from single-use residential development.

CD 1.5: Identify strategic commercial nodes and corridors for growth and investment.

CD 1.6: Update zoning to allow for flexible, context-sensitive commercial uses, including neighborhood-scale retail.

CD 1.7: Coordinate with large employers to ensure adequate building and land inventory is available to satisfy future expansions and facility needs.

Policy CD-2 | Recruit & Retain Business.

CD 2.1: Activate and encourage buildings and land uses in the Downtown Core with shops, offices, and restaurants.

CD 2.2: Create an online inventory marketing structurally sound buildings that are prime for adaptive reuse.

CD 2.3: Connect businesses, investors, and institutions to underutilized properties to foster building rehabilitation and upfit.

CD 2.4: Adopt a commercial building maintenance code to ensure ongoing use and maintenance of buildings and bring dilapidated buildings to a usable state.

CD 2.5: Partner with local and regional economic development organizations to market Lillington to entrepreneurs and investors.

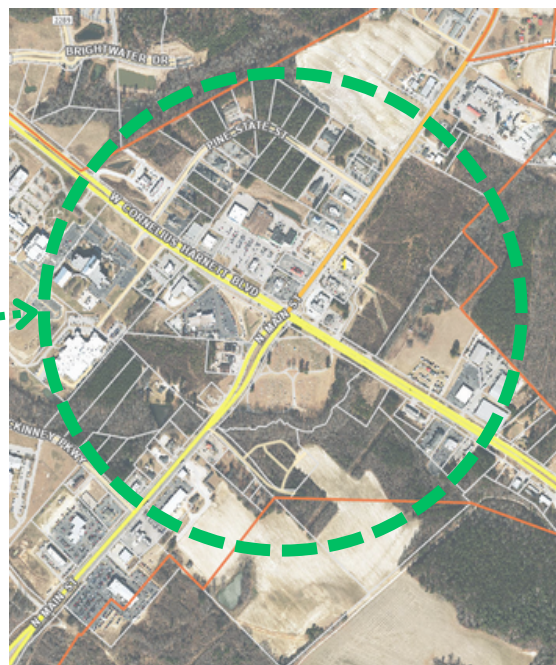
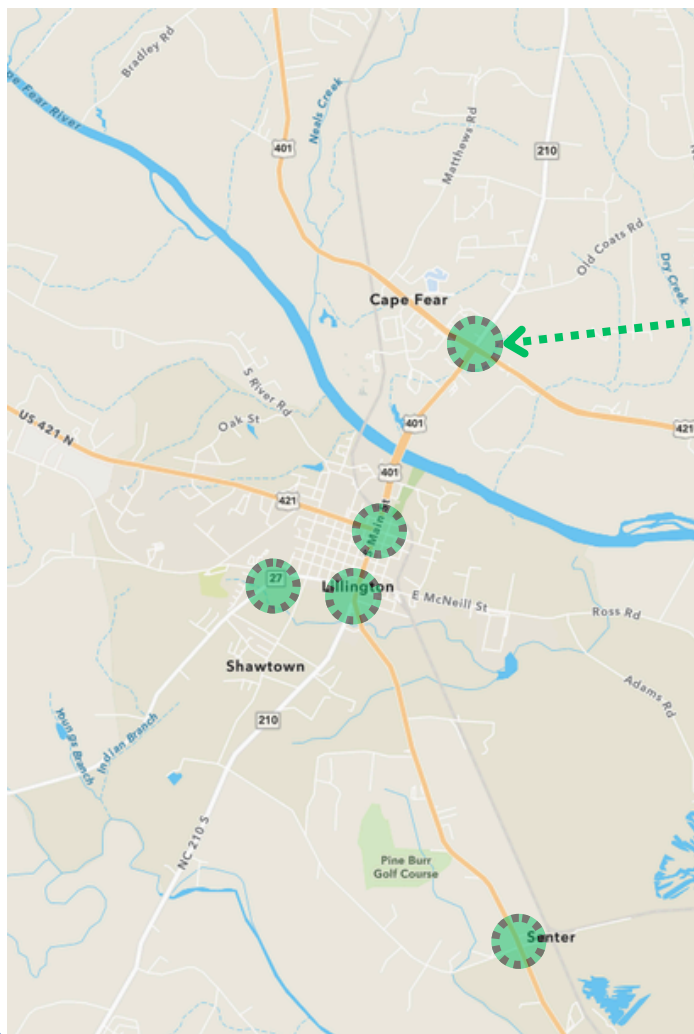
Policy CD-3 | Prioritize Key Development Nodes.

CD 3.1: Ensure the Neighborhood Mixed-Use zoning district allows for compact, high-quality commercial in line with town expectations.

CD 3.2: Target a hotel as a centerpiece within a priority redevelopment node. Marketing to visitors of regional events at Campbell University, the planned sports complex, and outdoor recreation events.

CD 3.3: Develop small-scale, mixed-use small area plans (SAPs) in priority redevelopment nodes. These SAPs should blend retail, services, transportation and housing that support local job creation and prioritize access. The image below illustrates key development nodes with **green dots**.

KEY DEVELOPMENT NODE CONCEPT



Small Area Plans (SAPs) give communities the opportunity to create focused, area-specific planning guides. The **green dots** identify key development nodes in Lillington that are well-suited for future SAPs. Effective small area plans typically address potential land uses, transportation and access, building placement and design, and needed infrastructure improvements.

Policy CD-4 | Update Development & Design Standards.

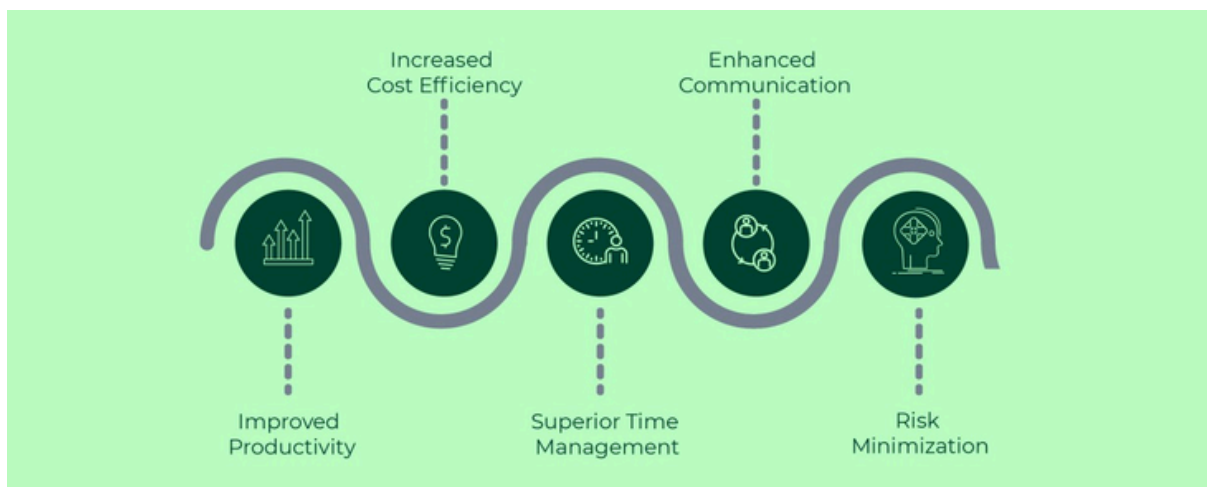
CD 4.1: Enhance site plan design standards to promote high-quality building design, landscaping, and pedestrian accessibility.

CD 4.2: Strengthen overlay district design guidelines for new commercial development, especially in gateway areas and near downtown.

CD 4.3: Streamline development review processes for small-scale businesses and infill sites.

BENEFITS OF A STREAMLINED DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Streamlining development review processes for small businesses and infill projects benefits local governments by boosting economic development, creating jobs, and generating tax revenue. It also benefits small businesses by reducing costs, accelerating project timelines, and increasing transparency. For communities, it can lead to more efficient use of land, predictable development outcomes, and the revitalization of existing areas.



CD 4.4: Require pedestrian plaza or park-like feature for developments over a certain size in the community mixed-use character areas.

CD 4.5: Building entrances should address major streets and intersection corners, particularly along “key node” intersections.

CD 4.6: Consider restriction of pole-mounted signs in the “community corridor” gateways in favor of monument signs.

GOAL 5 - ENSURE BALANCED GROWTH

Ensure equitable revitalization and development across all areas of Lillington by promoting a balanced mix of land uses on both sides of the river, with investments that enhance the quality of life for all neighborhoods.

Policy BG-1 | Promote Strategic and Equitable Investments.

BG 1.1: Continually monitor new development to ensure a balanced mix of uses and new investment on both sides of the river.

BG 1.2: Create a flexible development environment to support the formation of new business and growth in the Town's older commercial areas.

BG 1.3: Preserve large tracts of land for employment centers on both north and south sides of the river.



New subdivision in Lillington

BG 1.4: Preserve land for parks and emergency services on both north and south sides of the river.

BG 1.5: Increase engagement with new HOAs and civic groups during town planning and budgeting processes.

BG 1.6: Address area south of the river with a CTP update.

Policy BG-2 | Invest in Community Revitalization Projects.

BG 2.1: Support revitalization by preparing sites, improving public utilities, and assembling land to encourage private investment and redevelopment in areas perceived as lagging.

BG 2.2: Build new sidewalks, greenways, and bike paths in neighborhoods lacking pedestrian infrastructure to connect to schools, parks, and the river.

BG 2.3: Implement a street and sidewalk program that equitably addresses maintenance and repair in all areas of Lillington.

BG 2.4: Coordinate with Harnett County Central Library to offer educational programming and host events at alternative facilities (south of the river).



Infill residential development

Policy BG-3 | Support strategically located mixed-use and housing diversity projects.

BG 3.1: Continually update the Future Land Use Map to reflect opportunities for compact, mixed-use nodes throughout the town—not just in the core.

BG 3.2: Support **infill development** in established neighborhoods and near key corridors to maximize existing infrastructure.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Infill development may be small in scale, as in a single-family house on a vacant lot within a developed block. It can also occur on a much larger scale, like an entire block or even the redevelopment of several acres. Different types of infill development may be appropriate in different areas of Lillington depending on the surrounding context and the Town's goals for future growth.



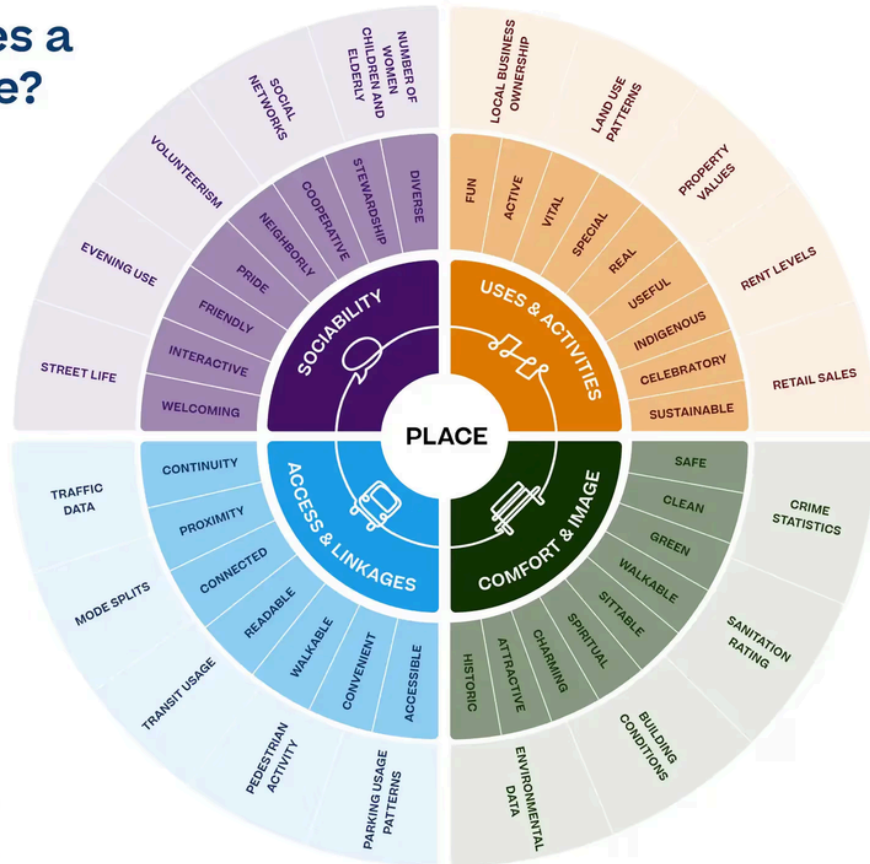
The following is a list of different infill development options, focusing primarily on small- to medium-scale infill projects:

- **Residential Development** – Provides development options that increase the amount of residential housing options as well as make them potentially more affordable.
- **Small-Lot Development** – Small-lot infill development is encouraged by designating zones that relax development regulations like minimum lot size and setback requirements.
- **Mixed-Use Development** – A complementary mix of uses in close proximity such as residential, retail, commercial, employment, civic and entertainment uses - sometimes in the same building.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)** – TOD is an effort to focus residential construction in areas with convenient access to transit options, promoting walkability and use of transit.
- **Brownfield Redevelopment** – A brownfield is an abandoned, idled, or underused property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of contamination.
- **Greyfield Redevelopment** – A greyfield refers to an old, abandoned, or underutilized property used for retail or commercial shopping such as a mall. These properties typically do not involve environmental concerns but can demand the replacement or improvement of old infrastructure.

BG 3.3: Encourage well-planned developments that focus on design and **placemaking** that support a variety of housing types and price points to meet the needs of residents across life stages and incomes.

What Makes a Great Place?

Project for Public Spaces



The Place Diagram above, developed by the Project for Public Spaces, is one of the tools used to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data.



Examples of placemaking strategies in Lillington

KEY STRATEGIES FOR PLACE MAKING:

Designing Spaces That Reflect Local Culture and History

Public spaces should celebrate and reflect the identity of the communities they serve.

Actionable Strategies:

- **Create Community Murals and Public Art Installations:** Showcase local stories, cultural figures, and historical movements.
- **Restore and Repurpose Historic Landmarks:** Convert old buildings into community hubs, museums, or coworking spaces.
- **Host Storytelling and Oral History Projects:** Encourage residents to share their experiences through digital archives, signage, or community events.

Strengthening Community Ownership Through Participatory Design

Placemaking is most effective when residents are engaged from the start and have a stake in decision-making.

Actionable Strategies:

- **Implement Community-Driven Planning Sessions:** Ensure residents have a voice in shaping neighborhood parks, streetscapes, and markets.
- **Establish Land Trusts for Public Space Development:** Prevent displacement by ensuring permanent community ownership of parks and marketplaces.
- **Develop Public-Private Partnerships:** Work with local businesses to fund community-led improvements in a way that centers on resident needs.

Prioritizing Accessibility and Inclusion

Great public spaces should be welcoming and usable by people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities.

Actionable Strategies:

- **Ensure ADA-Compliant Design in Public Spaces:** Incorporate ramps, braille signage, and accessible pathways.
- **Support Multilingual Signage and Wayfinding:** Make navigation easier for diverse communities.
- **Design Safe, Well-Lit Gathering Spaces:** Invest in community gardens, street seating, and lighting that enhance security and comfort.

GOAL 6 - PRESERVE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Preserve & strengthen community identity by revitalizing existing commercial buildings to maintain the town's history, uniqueness, and small-town charm; reinvesting in infrastructure to support infill development near downtown; enhancing key gateways with attractive signage and branding; and creating welcoming spaces for cultural groups to gather and contribute to the town's future.

Policy CI-1 | Focus on preserving local historical properties and new uses or adaptive reuse.

CI 1.1: *Prioritize infrastructure investments like water, sewer, and stormwater improvements in and around downtown Lillington to support reuse of locally historic buildings.*

CI 1.2: *Improve the facades on town-owned historical properties to enhance their character and provide an example for other public and private buildings to follow.*

CI 1.3: *Work to beautify the streetscape and entry points to the STAR Academy (old High School) and encourage Harnett County Schools to invest to fully utilizing the building.*

CI 1.4: *Create an inventory of locally historical buildings and consider developing a localized preservation action plan.*

CI 1.5: *Promote adaptive reuse of older residential buildings near key intersections through zoning changes and flexible code interpretations.*

CI 1.6: *Support voluntary preservation tools such as landmark designation and conservation easements.*



Adaptive reuse of a residential property near downtown Lillington.

Policy CI-2 | Focus on town gateway improvements and branding.

CI 2.1: *Establish corridor plans for priority gateways and community corridors to enhance accessibility, walkability and aesthetics while entering Lillington's jurisdiction.*

CI 2.2: Incorporate street trees and landscaping into the public right-of-way and coordinate with NCDOT for maintenance and upkeep.



This graphic represents an example of a community highway corridor that addresses multi-modal transportation, landscaping and lighting.

CI 2.3: Gateway corridors into the downtown area should be consistently landscaped to caution drivers, comfort pedestrians, and indicate a distinct downtown district.

CI 2.4: Install attractive signage, landscaping, and public art at key Town gateways to create a sense of arrival.

CI 2.5: Maintain a unified branding and wayfinding system that reinforces the Town's identity across all communication platforms and physical spaces.

CI 2.6: Incorporate the town logo as part of highly traveled street signs in new developments/retrofit in older developments.

CI 2.7: Create a community-wide wayfinding plan to incorporate the town brand on relevant facilities and destinations.

CI 2.8: Brand the town as an outdoor recreation destination, supported by services in the downtown area.

Policy CI-3 | Increase cultural & community gathering spaces.

CI 3.1: Create flexible, inclusive gathering spaces that reflect the diversity of Lillington's population.

CI 3.2: Support public art and cultural programming that celebrates local heritage and community pride.

GOAL 7 - PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY TO THE CAPE FEAR RIVER

Promote the Cape Fear River as a vital natural asset that connects neighborhoods, attracts visitors, and supports an active, outdoor lifestyle for residents.

Policy CF-1 | Expand Riverfront Access & Trails.

CF 1.1: Develop and enhance riverwalk greenways on both north and south sides of the river.

CF 1.2: Partner with Harnett County to prioritize greenway connections to Raven Rock State Park and Campbell University.

CF 1.3: Partner with Harnett County to build and maintain boat ramps 4-6 miles upstream and downstream from Lillington.

CF 1.4: Seek grant funding (i.e.: Clean Water Management Trust Fund) to acquire and conserve land connecting to current parks and the river.

CF 1.5: Develop additional public access points to the Cape Fear River, including riverwalks, canoe/kayak launches, and fishing platforms.

CF 1.6: Connect existing parks and neighborhoods to the river through sidewalks, greenways, and natural surface trails.

CF 1.7: Seek funding through state and federal sources to implement riverfront trail and recreation projects.



Cape Fear River activities provided by local business

Policy CF-2 | Protect Environmental Resources.

CF 2.1: Utilize floodplain areas within stream corridors as potential greenway parks and trail connections to the Cape Fear River.

CF 2.2: Consider a density bonus if development meets certain design criteria (i.e. 50% open space and 100 ft. buffer along perennial streams).

CF 2.3: Consider establishing protective buffers and conservation areas along the river to preserve viewsheds and habitat.

CF 2.4: Promote environmentally sensitive development practices near the riverfront through design guidelines and low-impact development (LID) strategies

CF 2.5: Partner with regional organizations to support water quality monitoring and river stewardship programs.

Policy CF-3 | Promote Connectivity to the River.

CF 3.1: New development should preserve riparian areas and establish greenway connections to Harnett County's adopted Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan when feasible.

CF 3.2: Update CIP to include budget for maintenance and expansion of future greenway sections.

CF 3.3: Identify and pursue locations for existing neighborhoods to tie into riverfront greenways.

CF 3.4: Prioritize implementation of the proposed sidewalk and greenway project from E. Front St. to the Cape Fear River (CTP #27 & #31).



Cape Fear River Adventures

Policy CF-4 | Create a Riverfront Identity.

CF 4.1: Incorporate the river into Town branding and marketing materials to promote tourism and recreation.

CF 4.2: Install interpretive signage that educates visitors on the cultural, historical, and ecological significance of the river.

CF 4.3: Plan unique seasonally themed riverfront events to be hosted at the town's amphitheater to activate the area year-round.

CASE STUDY: NORTH WILKESBORO'S RIVER DISTRICT



The Town of North Wilkesboro recently adopted a River District Plan to establish a vision for the public and private realm along the Yadkin River. The plan provides recommendations for transportation, gateways, parks, trails, open spaces, as well as culturally special places (Source: Town of North Wilkesboro).

GOAL 8 - CAPTURING RESIDENTS & WORKERS

Create a vibrant live, work, and play environment where residents and workers choose to stay in Lillington to meet their shopping, medical, dining, and entertainment needs.

Policy CRW-1 | Support worker retention & attraction through vibrant destinations.

CRW 1.1: *Attract commercial retail centers in designated Commercial Corridors with high-quality building design, unified signage, and landscaping that reflects a cohesive community character.*

CRW 1.2: *Encourage development of **compact mixed-use** nodes near employment centers that integrate restaurants, shops, accommodations, and daily services to support workers throughout the day.*

COMPACT MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

According to the Center for New Urbanism, compact mixed-use development is a strategic approach that aims to create efficient, sustainable, and livable urban environments. This development model integrates residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and industrial uses within a single building, complex, or neighborhood, reducing the need for long commutes and fostering vibrant, interactive communities.



- **Proximity and Density:** Creating compact, walkable districts with intensity around transit.
- **Mixed-Use Balance:** Blending housing, offices, retail, culture, and green areas in one ecosystem.
- **Sustainability:** Integrating green infrastructure, renewable energy, and circular resource systems.
- **Mobility Shift:** Prioritizing active and shared transport—walking, cycling, public mobility.
- **Inclusion:** Ensuring access to housing, services, and opportunities for all social segments.

This approach not only reduces commute times but also stimulates local economies by attracting businesses and encouraging entrepreneurship. It creates spaces where people can interact organically, leading to stronger social networks and a greater sense of belonging

CRW 1.3: Maintain & update architectural and site design guidelines that enhance the visual appeal, walkability, and functionality of commercial areas—especially those serving institutional employees.

CRW 1.4: Encourage development of higher-density housing near downtown and employment centers to support young professionals seeking affordability and access to amenities.

CRW 1.5: Promote diverse employment opportunities by targeting industrial, office, and innovation-based employers suited to the town’s planned character areas.

Policy CW-2 | Engage residents & workers through placemaking, programming and strategic land use planning.

CRW 2.1: Support worker retention and entertainment through **smart land use planning strategies**.

SMART LAND USE PLANNING STRATEGIES

Land Use Strategies for Retention & Entertainment:

- **Mixed-Use Zoning:** Combine residential, commercial, and recreational spaces so workers can live, shop, and play without long commutes, fostering vibrant, 24/7 neighborhoods.
- **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD):** Develop dense, walkable areas around public transit hubs, making it easy to access entertainment, parks, and jobs via walking, biking, or transit.
- **Creative Placemaking:** Use arts and culture (installations, events, performance spaces) to define unique community identities, attracting and retaining creative talent.
- **Public Space Investment:** Create high-quality parks, plazas, trails, and amphitheaters near businesses and residences to encourage social interaction and recreation.
- **Walkable & Bikeable Infrastructure:** Design safe, connected sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways to make active transport enjoyable and practical for everyday trips.
- **Support Local Arts & Culture:** Fund community centers, historic preservation, and local arts programs that offer unique activities and attract tourists and residents alike.
- **Adaptive Reuse & Infill Development:** Repurpose old buildings and utilize vacant lots for new housing, businesses, or cultural spaces, creating dynamic urban cores.
- **Strategic Density:** Encourage higher-density housing (where appropriate) to support local businesses and make public transit viable, reducing sprawl.

How This Helps Workers & Entertainment:

- **Convenience:** Shorter distances to work, shops, and fun reduce stress and save time.
- **Vibrancy:** Active, well-designed public spaces foster community connection and offer more things to do.
- **Quality of Life:** Access to nature (parks, trails) and cultural events improves well-being.
- **Attraction:** A lively, walkable downtown with amenities attracts new talent and keeps existing workers happy.
- **Affordability (indirectly):** By supporting mixed-use and density, it can help with housing supply, which is key for retention.

CRW 2.2: Enhance the town’s sense of place by updating gateway monument signs at key entrances into town.

CRW 2.3: Implement consistent and attractive signage across all town parks and public facilities to build brand identity and wayfinding clarity.

CRW 2.4: Utilize retail leakage analysis and develop a targeted business recruitment strategy that attracts service providers and stores aligned with unmet resident demand.

CRW 2.5: Expand the downtown wayfinding program to include parking directions, visitor destinations, and neighborhood connections.



Recently built Cape Fear Valley Cancer Center

Policy CW-3 | Expand housing options to diversify residential base.

CRW 3.1: Support the development of higher-density residential options near parks, schools, shops, and transit-ready corridors to encourage walkability and compact growth.

CRW 3.2: Actively market downtown housing, recreational amenities, and trail access to visitors from Raven Rock State Park and the greater Triangle region as a lifestyle destination.

CRW 3.3: Allow multi-family and mixed-use residential development in designated key development nodes & where supported by utilities and transportation infrastructure.

WHAT CONSUMERS ARE SAYING:

According to the National Homebuilders Association, residential consumers desire the following characteristics in a community in which they desire to live, work & play:



Protection and access to the natural environment.



Pedestrian friendliness and walkability.



Use of land in efficient and innovative ways.



Housing choices.



Transportation options.



Respect for local traditions and community character.



A mix of land uses.



A genuine sense of place.

Action Matrix

The action matrix focuses on the implementation of the recommendations proposed in this plan. This section includes a complete list of all the policies and implementation recommendations from this document and provides guidance on how to implement.

Responsible Entities

This plan requires close coordination among various groups, including elected officials, departments, existing committees, and new groups that can be formed to support implementation. Likewise, private developers will play a role in achieving the vision for Lillington by actively participating in supportive development practices. The action matrix identifies who needs to take the lead on a particular strategy with the understanding that other groups will need to support these efforts.

Department	Administration (AD), Planning & Inspections (PI), Parks & Recreation (PR), Engineering (E), Public Safety (PS)
Boards & Committees	Planning Board (PB), Recreation Advisory Board (RAB), Senior Citizens Advisory Board (SCAB), Town Council (TC)
Other Groups	Harnett County (HC), Private Development (PD), Department of Transportation (DOT), Chamber of Commerce (CC), Downtown Businesses (DB), Harnett County Schools (HCS)

Resources

This plan includes a variety of implementation recommendations. Recognizing that the individuals and organizations responsible for carrying them out often face competing priorities and limited funding, the action matrix is designed to provide a general sense of the resources needed for each action.

Action Matrix Legend

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
Refers to the implementation recommendation.	See responsible entities.	See responsible entities.	 <i>Short Term (1-2 years)</i>	 <i>Low Cost (Staff, Policy Amendments, Text Changes & Community Partnerships).</i>
			 <i>Medium Term (3-5 years)</i>	 <i>Medium Cost (Operational Budgeting, Minor Grants & CIP).</i>
			 <i>Long Term (5+ years)</i>	 <i>High Cost (Major Grants & Organizational Partnerships).</i>

GOAL 1: REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
RD 1.1: Promote mixed-use infill development that reflects the scale and architectural character of historic downtown.	PI	PB, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 1.2: Encourage a mix of housing types on sites that could serve as a transition from commercial to single family residential development.	PI	PB, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 1.3: Encourage infill and redevelopment in areas well-served by infrastructure and services.	PI	PB, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 1.4: Ensure new buildings and renovations downtown reinforce existing design & character.	PI	PB, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 1.5: Continue efforts to join NC Main Street Program.	PI	AD, TC		\$
RD 1.6: Support adaptive reuse of historical buildings and streamline permitting for building upfits and tenant fit-outs.	PI	PB, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 1.7: Allow medium and high-density residential and mixed-use development as part of development or redevelopment of underutilized commercial lands.	PI	PB, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 2.1: Continue to implement improvements as recommended in the Downtown Master Plan and Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.	AD	E, TC		\$\$\$\$
RD 2.2: Enhance the pedestrian environment & improve walkability in Downtown Lillington by increasing pedestrian amenities (ex: lighting, wider sidewalks, shade trees, benches, and outdoor furniture).	AD, PI	PB, TC, PD		\$\$

GOAL 1: REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
RD 2.3: Create design standards in downtown core with shorter blocks, building access from roads with parking to the side or behind.	PI	PB, TC		\$
RD 2.4: Continue to incorporate a wayfinding signage program to clearly direct drivers toward public parking lots and community facilities.	AD	PB, DOT		\$\$
RD 2.5: Expand opportunities for on-street parking and facilitate shared parking agreements.	PI, DOT	E, TC, PD	Ongoing	\$\$
RD 2.6: Consider parking time limits in strategic on-street parking areas.	AD	PI, TC, PD, PS		\$
RD 3.1: Study the potential for public-private partnerships for new development and redevelopment opportunities.	PI	AD		\$
RD 3.2: Expand and better promote the existing façade improvement program to strategically target underutilized buildings to attract private investment.	TC	AD, PI		\$
RD 3.3: Strengthen partnerships with local realtors, developers, Harnett County Economic Development and business associations to recruit restaurants, boutiques, and essential service providers.	PI	HC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 3.4: Create a downtown property inventory and feature key sites on the Town's website and economic development materials.	PI	AD		\$

GOAL 1: REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
RD 3.5: Regularly meet with Campbell University representatives to discuss connecting alumni to investment, sponsorship and mentorship opportunities that align with the town's development goals.	AD	PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 4.1: Establish gateway corridors into Downtown that address uniform signage, landscaping, town branding, etc.	PI	PB		\$
RD 4.2: Encourage a variety of locally owned small businesses downtown where people can access their essential daily needs.	PI	TC, PD	Ongoing	\$
RD 4.3: Launch a coordinated marketing campaign to promote available downtown properties and investment opportunities.	AD	HC		\$
RD 4.4: Program downtown public spaces with seasonal events, pop-up markets, and cultural performances to build momentum and visibility.	PR	CC	Ongoing	\$
RD 4.5: Establish a Downtown Advisory Board to lead beautification, business engagement, and placemaking efforts.	PI	AD, TC, DB		\$
RD 4.6: Explore opportunities, both informal and formal, for the Town to create a downtown plaza to host community events.	AD	TC	Ongoing	\$
RD 4.7: Evaluate ordinances to allow temporary uses such as food trucks, pop-up retail, and street performers during permitted events.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 2: IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION & SAFETY

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
TS 1.1: Continue to cooperate with and support the efforts of NCDOT to improve the function of roads under NCDOT's jurisdiction for the benefit of all roadway users.	AD	DOT, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 1.2: Promote cooperative inter-jurisdictional transportation planning.	PI	DOT, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 1.3: Coordinate with CAMPO to ensure regional travel model updates reflect recent land use changes and approved developments within and surrounding Lillington.	PI	DOT, AD	Ongoing	\$
TS 1.4: Pursue a Complete Streets program for priority intersections, working with Division 6 engineering staff to formulate street crosswalks, striping, retrofits, and improvements.	E	DOT, PB, PI		\$\$
TS 2.1: Address safety issues at intersections listed in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).	E	DOT, PB, PI		\$\$\$\$
TS 2.2: Evaluate corridor safety and congestion points along US 421 and NC 27/NC 210, especially near downtown.	PI	E		\$
TS 2.3: Continue to pursue pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures on S. Main Street.	PI	E, DOT, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 2.4: Utilize roundabouts, or other innovative intersection designs where appropriate.	PI	TC, PB		\$\$\$\$

GOAL 2: IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION & SAFETY (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
TS 2.5: Identify and improve intersections with high traffic volumes or accident history through traffic studies, turn lanes, or signal enhancements.	AD	TC, PB		\$\$
TS 2.6: Implement signal coordination and updated timing plans on key corridors to improve traffic flow and reduce delays.	AD	DOT	Ongoing	\$
TS 3.1: Identify and prioritize transportation-related capital projects and work with Town leadership to develop and secure annual funding for a capital improvement plan.	AD	TC, E	Ongoing	\$\$
TS 3.2: Budget and submit LAPP funding for intersection improvements at: US 401/NC 210 (north), US 401/Front St., US 401/W. Old Road (and widening), US 401/NC 210 (South) and 10th Street bypass.	TC	AD		\$\$\$
TS 3.3: Incorporate medians that allow for the stacking of vehicles at the McKinney Pkwy and US 401/421 intersection.	AD	DOT, E		\$\$\$
TS 3.4: Budget to implement 'short-term intersection priorities' from Lillington's adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.	AD	PD, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.1: As development occurs, work with the development community to implement transportation improvements per the Town's CIP.	PI	PD, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.2: Require cross-access between commercial sites, and require secondary access to local roads to reduce traffic pressure on main arterials.	PI	TC, PD		\$

GOAL 2: IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION & SAFETY (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
TS 4.3: Revise the UDO to minimize curb cuts to consolidate commercial driveways on major thoroughfares.	PI	TC, PB	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.4: Coordinate land use and transportation plans and policies to ensure they are mutually supportive.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.5: Ensure adequate right-of-way is preserved when development occurs to allow for the construction of new roads and sidewalks per the CTP & the CTP addendum map.	PI	PD, E	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.6: Ensure large-scale commercial and residential developments include transportation upgrades such as access roads, turning lanes, and pedestrian facilities.	PI	PB, PD	Ongoing	\$
TS 4.7: Require adequate roadway connections in new development to relieve demands on existing thoroughfares.	PI	PD, TC	Ongoing	\$
TS 5.1: Extend and connect local streets in new developments to reduce traffic pressure on major corridors and improve access.	PI	E, PD	Ongoing	\$
TS 5.2: Evaluate the feasibility of new collector roads or bypass routes to divert through traffic from downtown and sensitive areas.	AD	PB, PD	Ongoing	\$
TS 5.3: Continue to explore public/private partnerships for construction of strategic collector roads planned for in the CTP.	PI	AD, PD	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 2: IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION & SAFETY (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
TS 6.1: Install traffic calming features in residential neighborhoods, such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, and narrowed lane widths.	E	AD, PB		\$\$
TS 6.2: Implement pilot programs or demonstration projects to test traffic calming strategies in areas with frequent complaints or cut-through traffic.	PS	AD, E, PB		\$
TS 6.3: Prioritize pedestrian and cyclist safety through high-visibility crosswalks, signage, and pedestrian refuge islands.	PI	PB, PD		\$
TS 6.4: Improve pedestrian infrastructure and ADA accessibility at high-traffic intersections and near schools, parks, and civic facilities.	AD	PB, PD, HC	Ongoing	\$\$
TS 6.5: Coordinate with school officials and public safety staff to strengthen Safe Routes to School programs.	PS	AD	Ongoing	\$
TS 6.6: Prioritize filling in gaps between sidewalk sections, particularly on arterial streets.	E	TC, AD		\$\$

GOAL 3: EXPAND THE TOWN'S PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
PN 1.1: Prioritize and budget for a network of sidewalks, trails, and greenways that link the downtown, parks, and Cape Fear River.	AD	TC, PB	Ongoing	\$\$\$
PN 1.2: Improve signage, graphics, and outreach about the planned trails, greenways, and routes throughout the Town of Lillington to increase usage.	PR	RAB, AD		\$
PN 1.3: Maintain and enhance safety and accessibility of existing pedestrian facilities, including – replacement of damaged sections, ADA curb ramp requirements, and lighting.	E	AD		\$\$
PN 1.4: Complete the sidewalk network in older neighborhoods and connect them to commercial corridors, schools, and parks.	AD	E, TC		\$
PN 1.5: Prioritize sidewalk and trail extensions near schools, housing developments, and employment centers.	PI	PB, PD		\$\$
PN 1.6: Leverage state and federal funding to expand the greenway system and link to the Cape Fear River Trail.	AD	PR, E		\$
PN 2.1: Maintain and update Lillington's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to reflect Harnett County's Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway plan and evolving progress.	AD	HC, PR		\$
PN 2.2: Plan and design streetscapes to support walkability by incorporating wide sidewalks, shared-use paths, and safe crossings.	E	PI, AD, TC		\$\$

GOAL 3: EXPAND THE TOWN'S PEDESTRIAN NETWORK (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
PN 2.3: Plan for greenway trails to provide secondary benefits of stormwater control, environmental habitat preservation, and flood control measures.	PI	E, PR	Ongoing	\$\$
PN 2.4: Conduct a town-wide ADA accessibility audit of sidewalks and curb ramps.	AD	E		\$\$
PN 2.5: Implement an annual sidewalk repair and infill program to close gaps and address hazards.	AD	E, PS		\$\$
PN 2.6: Improve crossings at busy streets through pedestrian-activated signals and refuge islands.	AD	DOT		\$
PN 3.1: Expand the pedestrian network to better connect residents and visitors between downtown and the Cape Fear River through a combination of sidewalks, greenways, and trails. This area can function as the “spine” of the network.	AD	PR, E, TC		\$\$
PN 3.2: Focus investments in sidewalks within areas that lack safe pedestrian infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to parks, schools, and commercial areas.	AD	PR, E, TC		\$\$
PN 3.3: Add street trees along existing sidewalks where underground utilities allow. Consider bushes and hedges where trees are not feasible.	E	PR, PI, PD		\$
PN 3.4: Add high-visibility crosswalks and bulb-outs at key intersections. For example, W. James St. at South 11th St. by STAR Academy High School.	E	AD		\$\$

GOAL 3: EXPAND THE TOWN'S PEDESTRIAN NETWORK (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
PN 3.5: Partner with Harnett County to pursue funding on Raven Rock Rail Trail from Harnett County's Bike, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan.	AD	HC	Ongoing	\$
PN 3.6: Consider on street parking, landscaping, and ADA upgrades on W. James St. due to proximity of on old high school as a civic center.	AD	TC, HC, E		\$\$
PN 4.1: Ensure new developments incorporate and build an interconnected network of greenway trails and connected shared-use paths to a town-wide trail system.	PI	PB, PD	Ongoing	\$
PN 4.2: Ensure sidewalks are 10 feet wide when planned in commercial areas, including downtown.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$\$
PN 4.3: Require pedestrian connectivity and internal sidewalk networks in new subdivisions and commercial developments.	PI	PB		\$
PN 4.4: Update UDO regularly to encourage walkable blocks, pedestrian cut-throughs, and shade trees & buffers.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
PN 4.5: Incentivize projects that incorporate prominent mid-block pedestrian passageways or shared-use paths.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 4: PRIORITIZE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CD 1.1: Partner with Harnett County Economic Development to conduct site readiness of available light industrial parcels.	AD	HC		\$
CD 1.2: Create an inventory of available parcels and buildings. Define proposed uses and coordinate marketing with Harnett County Economic Development.	AD	HC		\$
CD 1.3: Analyze retail leakage report and recruit these types of businesses and services to available buildings and locations.	AD	CC		\$
CD 1.4: Preserve areas designed as “Commercial & Service,” “Civic & Institutional,” and “Employment & Light Industrial” on the Future Land Use Map from single-use residential development.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CD 1.5: Identify strategic commercial nodes and corridors for growth and investment.	PI	PB, CC		\$
CD 1.6: Update zoning to allow for flexible, context-sensitive commercial uses, including neighborhood-scale retail.	PI	PB		\$
CD 1.7: Coordinate with large employers to ensure adequate building and land inventory is available to satisfy future expansions and facility needs.	AD	PD, PI	Ongoing	\$
CD 2.1: Activate and encourage buildings and land uses in the Downtown Core with shops, offices, and restaurants.	PI	CC, PD	Ongoing	\$
CD 2.2: Create an online inventory marketing structurally sound buildings that are prime for adaptive reuse.	AD	PI		\$

GOAL 4: PRIORITIZE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CD 2.3: Connect businesses, investors, and institutions to underutilized properties to foster building rehabilitation and upfit.	PI	PB, PD, CC	Ongoing	\$
CD 2.4: Adopt a commercial building maintenance code to ensure ongoing use and maintenance of buildings and bring dilapidated buildings to a usable state.	PI	PB, TC		\$
CD 2.5: Partner with local and regional economic development organizations to market Lillington to entrepreneurs and investors.	AD	HC, TC	Ongoing	\$
CD 3.1: Ensure the Neighborhood Mixed-Use zoning district allows for compact, high-quality commercial in line with town expectations.	PI	PB, TC	Ongoing	\$
CD 3.2: Target a hotel as a centerpiece within a priority redevelopment node. Marketing to visitors of regional events at Campbell University, the planned sports complex, and outdoor recreation events.	AD	PI, HC, TC		\$
CD 3.3: Develop small-scale, mixed-use small area plans (SAPs) in priority redevelopment nodes. These SAPs should blend retail, services, transportation, and housing that support local job creation and prioritize access.	PI	E, PB		\$\$
CD 4.1: Enhance site plan design standards to promote high-quality building design, landscaping, and pedestrian accessibility.	PI	PB, AD		\$
CD 4.2: Strengthen overlay district design guidelines for new commercial development, especially in gateway areas and near downtown.	PI	PB, AD		\$

GOAL 4: PRIORITIZE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CD 4.3: Streamline development review processes for small-scale businesses and infill sites.	PI	PD, AD		\$
CD 4.4: Require pedestrian plaza or park-like feature for developments over a certain size in the community mixed-use character areas.	PI	PB, PD		\$
CD 4.5: Building entrances should address major streets and intersection corners, particularly along “key development node” intersections.	PI	PB, PD	Ongoing	\$
CD 4.6: Consider restriction of pole-mounted signs in the “community corridor” gateways in favor of monument signs.	PB	PI		\$

GOAL 5: ENSURE BALANCED GROWTH

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
BG 1.1: Continually monitor new development to ensure a balanced mix of uses and new investment on both sides of the river.	PI	AD, PB	Ongoing	\$
BG 1.2: Create a flexible development environment to support the formation of new business and growth in the Town's older commercial areas.	AD	PI, TC	Ongoing	\$
BG 1.3: Preserve large tracts of land for employment centers on both north and south sides of the river.	AD	PI, PB, HC, TC	Ongoing	\$
BG 1.4: Preserve land for parks and emergency services on both north and south sides of the river.	AD	PI, PS, HC, TC	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$
BG 1.5: Increase engagement with new HOAs and civic groups during town planning and budgeting processes.	AD	PB, TC		\$
BG 1.6: Address area south of the river with a CTP update.	AD	PI, DOT, HC		\$\$
BG 2.1: Support revitalization by preparing sites, improving public utilities, and assembling land to encourage private investment and redevelopment in areas perceived as lagging.	AD	PI, TC	Ongoing	\$\$\$\$
BG 2.2: Build new sidewalks, greenways, and bike paths in neighborhoods lacking pedestrian infrastructure to connect to schools, parks, and the river.	E	PI, TC		\$

GOAL 5: ENSURE BALANCED GROWTH (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
BG 2.3: Implement a street and sidewalk program that equitably addresses maintenance and repair in all areas of Lillington.	AD	PI, TC		\$\$
BG 2.4: Coordinate with Harnett County Central Library to offer educational programming and host events at alternative facilities (south of the river).	AD	HC	Ongoing	\$
BG 3.1: Continually update the Future Land Use Map to reflect opportunities for compact, mixed-use nodes throughout the town—not just in the core.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
BG 3.2: Support infill development in established neighborhoods and near key corridors to maximize existing infrastructure.	AD	PB, TC, PI	Ongoing	\$
BG 3.2: Encourage well-planned developments that focus on design and placemaking that support a variety of housing types and price points to meet the needs of residents across life stages and incomes.	PI	TC	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 6: PRESERVE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CI 1.1: Prioritize infrastructure investments like water, sewer, and stormwater improvements in and around downtown Lillington to support reuse of locally historic buildings.	AD	PI, E, TC		\$\$\$\$
CI 1.2: Improve the facades on town-owned historical properties to enhance their character and provide an example for other public and private buildings to follow.	AD	HCS		\$\$
CI 1.3: Work to beautify the streetscape and entry points to the STAR Academy (old High School) and encourage Harnett County Schools to invest to fully utilizing the building.	AD	HCS		\$\$
CI 1.4: Create an inventory of locally historical buildings and consider developing a localized preservation action plan.	AD	PI		\$
CI 1.5: Promote adaptive reuse of older residential buildings near key intersections through zoning changes and flexible code interpretations.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CI 1.6: Support voluntary preservation tools such as landmark designation and conservation easements.	AD	PI	Ongoing	\$
CI 2.1: Establish corridor plans for priority gateways and community corridors to enhance accessibility, walkability, and aesthetics while entering Lillington's jurisdiction.	PI	AD		\$\$
CI 2.2: Incorporate street trees and landscaping into the public right-of-way and coordinate with NCDOT for maintenance and upkeep.	AD	DOT, HC	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 6: PRESERVE COMMUNITY IDENTITY (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CI 2.3: Gateway corridors into the downtown area should be consistently landscaped to caution drivers, comfort pedestrians, and indicate a distinct downtown district.	AD	DOT, RAB, PW		\$
CI 2.4: Install attractive signage, landscaping, and public art at key Town gateways to create a sense of arrival.	AD	DOT, RAB, PW		\$\$
CI 2.5: Maintain a unified branding and wayfinding system that reinforces the Town's identity across all communication platforms and physical spaces.	AD	TC	Ongoing	\$
CI 2.6: Incorporate the town logo as part of highly traveled street signs in new developments/retrofit in older developments.	AD	PI, TC		\$
CI 2.7: Create a community-wide wayfinding plan to incorporate the town brand on relevant facilities and destinations.	AD	PI, TC		\$\$
CI 2.8: Brand the town as an outdoor recreation destination, supported by services in the downtown area.	AD	CC, HC, PD		\$
CI 3.1: Create flexible, inclusive gathering spaces that reflect the diversity of Lillington's population.	AD	PI, PD		\$\$
CI 3.2: Support public art and cultural programming that celebrates local heritage and community pride.	AD	PI, SCAB	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 7: PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY TO THE CAPE FEAR RIVER

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CF 1.1: Develop and enhance riverwalk greenways on both north and south sides of the river.	AD	E, PR		\$\$
CF 1.2: Partner with Harnett County to prioritize greenway connections to Raven Rock State Park and Campbell University.	AD	DOT, HC		\$\$\$\$
CF 1.3: Partner with Harnett County to build and maintain boat ramps 4-6 miles upstream and downstream from Lillington.	PR	AD, HC		\$\$
CF 1.4: Seek grant funding (i.e.: Clean Water Management Trust Fund) to acquire and conserve land connecting to current parks and the river.	AD	PR, TC		\$\$
CF 1.5: Develop additional public access points to the Cape Fear River, including riverwalks, canoe/kayak launches, and fishing platforms.	PR	AD, HC	Ongoing	\$\$
CF 1.6: Connect existing parks and neighborhoods to the river through sidewalks, greenways, and natural surface trails.	PR	PI, TC		\$\$
CF 1.7: Seek funding through state and federal sources to implement riverfront trail and recreation projects.	AD	PR, RAB		\$\$
CF 2.1: Utilize floodplain areas within stream corridors as potential greenway parks and trail connections to the Cape Fear River.	PI	AD, PR, PD	Ongoing	\$

GOAL 7: PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY TO THE CAPE FEAR RIVER (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CF 2.2: Consider a density bonus if development meets certain design criteria (i.e. 50% open space and 100 ft. buffer along perennial streams).	PI	PB, PD		\$
CF 2.3: Consider establishing protective buffers and conservation areas along the river to preserve viewsheds and habitat.	PI	PB		\$
CF 2.4: Promote environmentally sensitive development practices near the riverfront through design guidelines and low-impact development (LID) strategies.	PI	PB		\$
CF 2.5: Partner with regional organizations to support water quality monitoring and river stewardship programs.	PI	PB		\$
CF 3.1: New development should preserve riparian areas and establish greenway connections to Harnett County's adopted Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Plan when feasible.	PI	PD, PB	Ongoing	\$
CF 3.2: Update CIP to include budget for maintenance and expansion of future greenway sections.	AD	E, PI		\$\$
CF 3.3: Identify and pursue locations for existing neighborhoods to tie into riverfront greenways.	PI	PR	Ongoing	\$
CF 3.4: Prioritize implementation of the proposed sidewalk and greenway project from E. Front St. to the Cape Fear River (CTP #27 & #31).	E	PI, AD		\$\$\$

GOAL 7: PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY TO THE CAPE FEAR RIVER (Continued)

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CF 4.1: Incorporate the river into Town branding and marketing materials to promote tourism and recreation.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CF 4.2: Install interpretive signage that educates visitors on the cultural, historical, and ecological significance of the river.	AD	TC, SCAB		\$
CF 4.3: Plan unique seasonally themed riverfront events to be hosted at the town's amphitheater to activate the area year-round.	PR	CC	Ongoing	\$\$

GOAL 8: CAPTURING RESIDENTS & WORKERS

Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CRW 1.1: Attract commercial retail centers in designated Commercial Corridors with high-quality building design, unified signage, and landscaping that reflects a cohesive community character.	PI	PB, CC	Ongoing	\$
CRW 1.2: Encourage development of compact mixed-use nodes near employment centers that integrate restaurants, shops, accommodations, and daily services to support workers throughout the day.	PI	AD, CC	Ongoing	\$
CRW 1.3: Maintain & update architectural and site design guidelines that enhance the visual appeal, walkability, and functionality of commercial areas—especially those serving institutional employees.	PI	PB		\$
CRW 1.4: Encourage development of higher-density housing near downtown and employment centers to support young professionals seeking affordability and access to amenities.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CRW 1.5: Promote diverse employment opportunities by targeting industrial, office, and innovation-based employers suited to the town's planned character areas.	AD	PI, PB, TC	Ongoing	\$
CRW 2.1: Support worker retention and entertainment through smart land use planning strategies.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CRW 2.2: Enhance the town's sense of place by updating gateway monument signs at key entrances into town.	AD	PI, DOT		\$

GOAL 8: CAPTURING RESIDENTS & WORKERS (Continued)

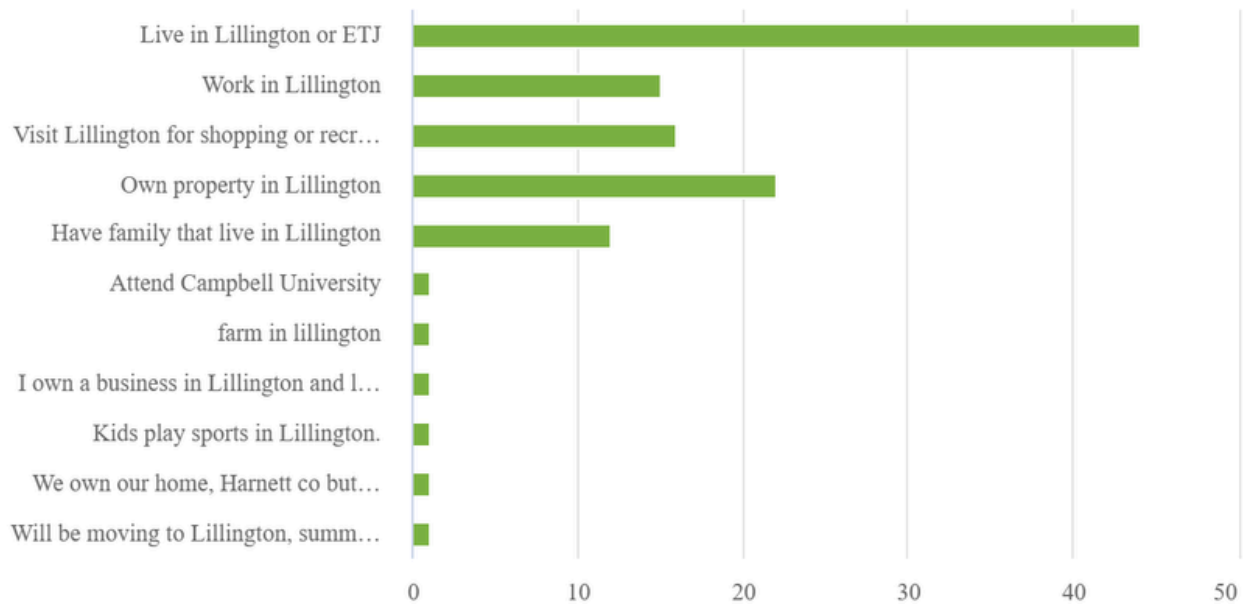
Implementation Recommendation	Lead	Support	Time	Cost
CRW 2.3: Implement consistent and attractive signage across all town parks and public facilities to build brand identity and wayfinding clarity.	AD	PR		\$\$
CRW 2.4: Utilize retail leakage analysis and develop a targeted business recruitment strategy that attracts service providers and stores aligned with unmet resident demand.	AD	PI, HC		\$
CRW 2.5: Expand the downtown wayfinding program to include parking directions, visitor destinations, and neighborhood connections.	PI	PB		\$
CRW 3.1: Support the development of higher-density residential options near parks, schools, shops, and transit-ready corridors to encourage walkability and compact growth.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$
CRW 3.2: Actively market downtown housing, recreational amenities, and trail access to visitors from Raven Rock State Park and the greater Triangle region as a lifestyle destination.	AD	CC		\$
CRW 3.3: Allow multi-family and mixed-use residential development in designated key development nodes & where supported by utilities and transportation infrastructure.	PI	PB	Ongoing	\$

APPENDIX

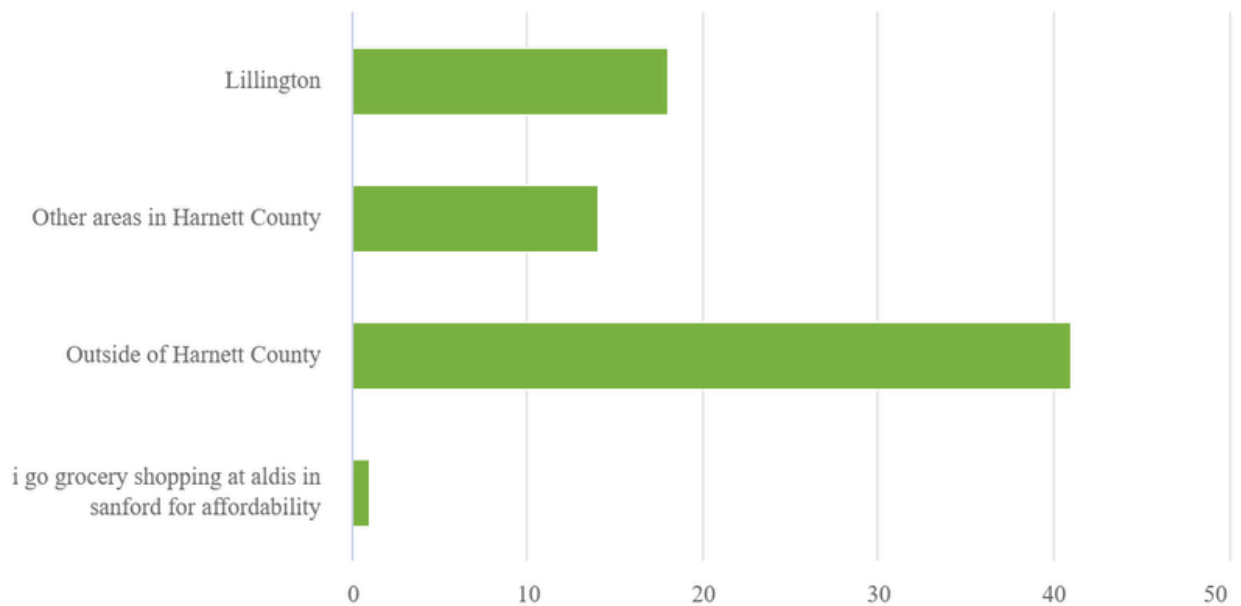
- **Public Survey Results**
- **Maps**
- **Economic Strategy Report**

Public Survey Results

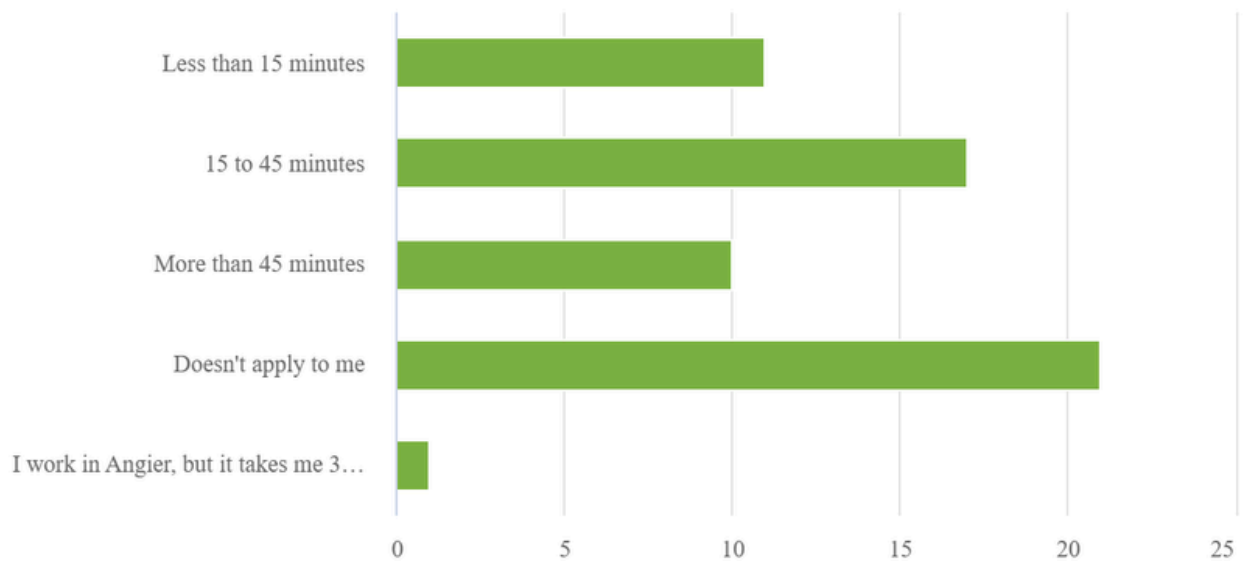
Q1. How would you describe yourself?



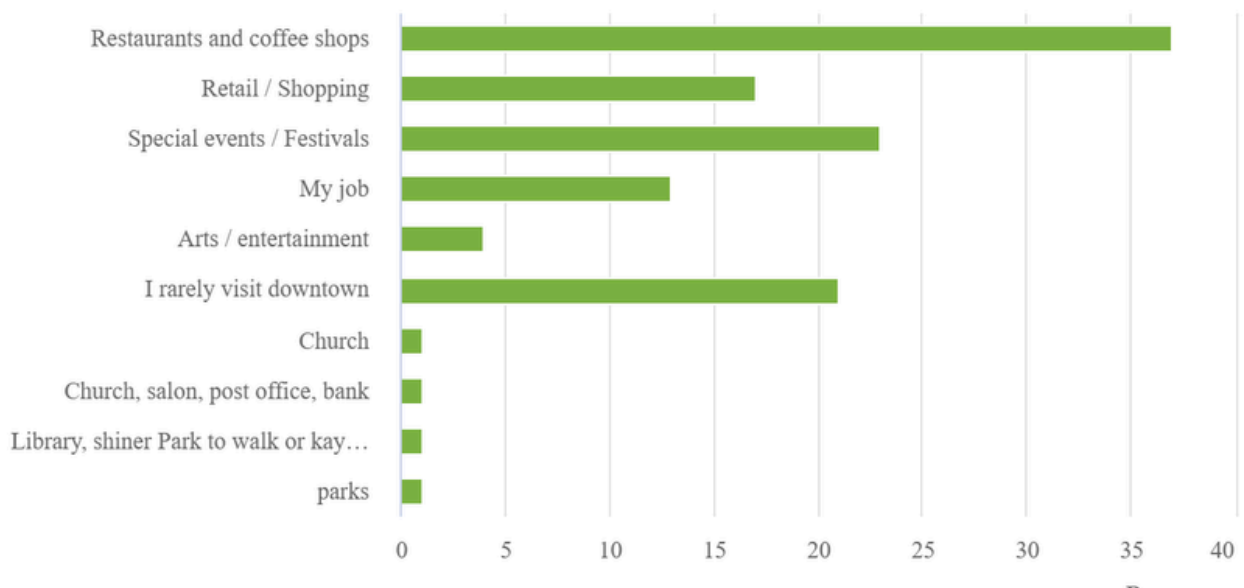
Q2. Where do you mostly go for shopping and entertainment?



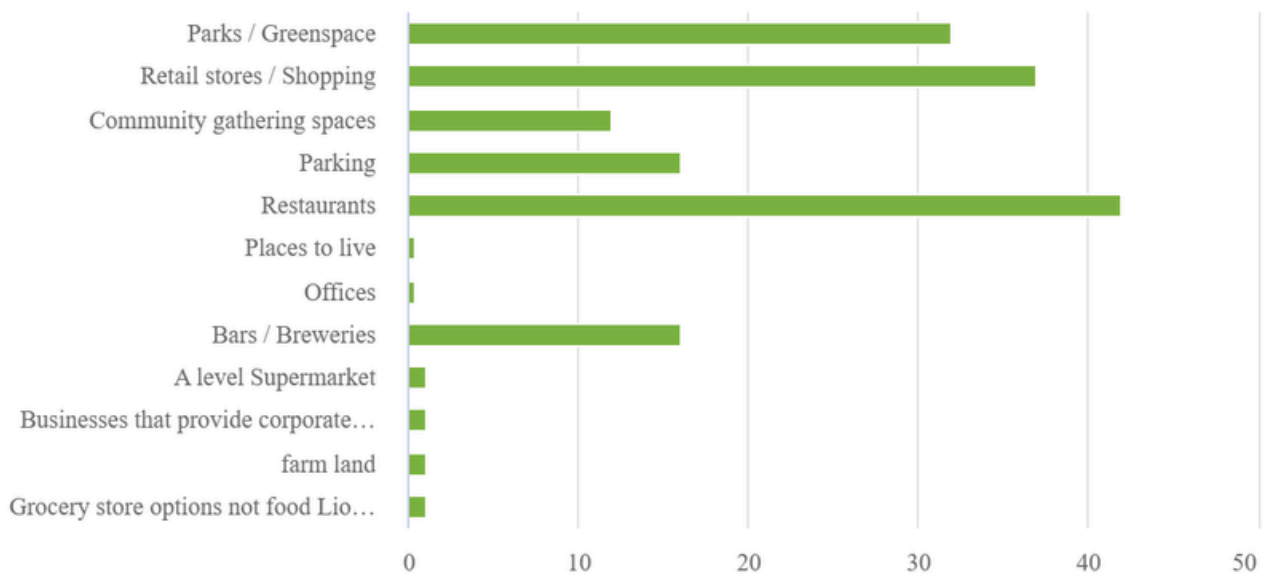
Q3. If you travel for work, how long does your commute typically take (one way)?



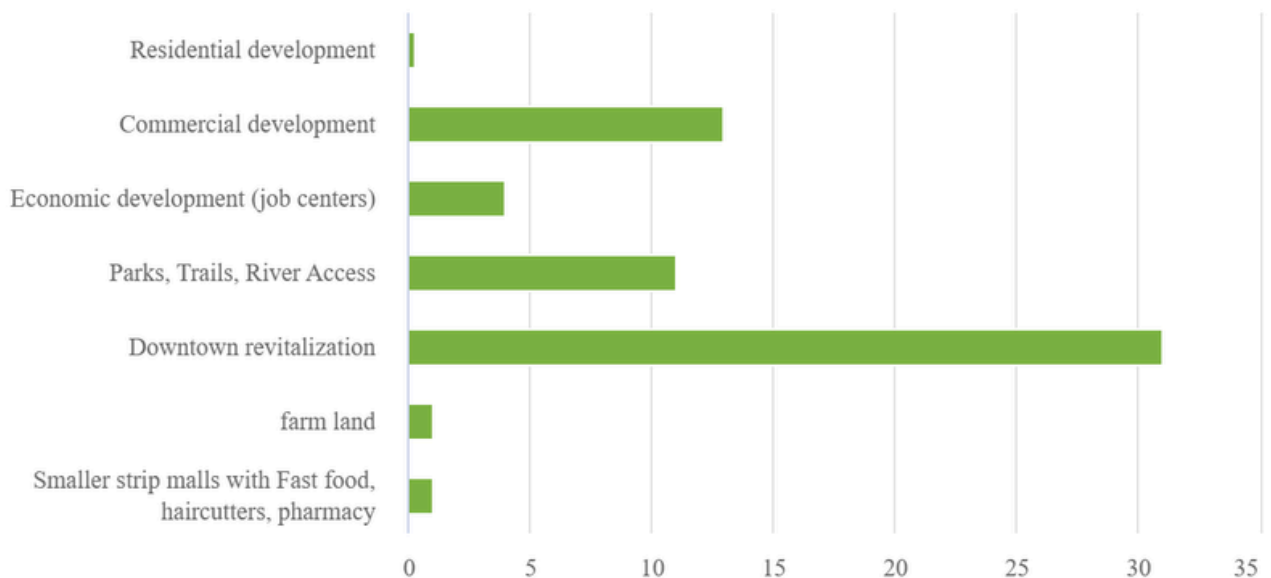
Q4. What typically brings you to downtown Lillington (select your top 3)?



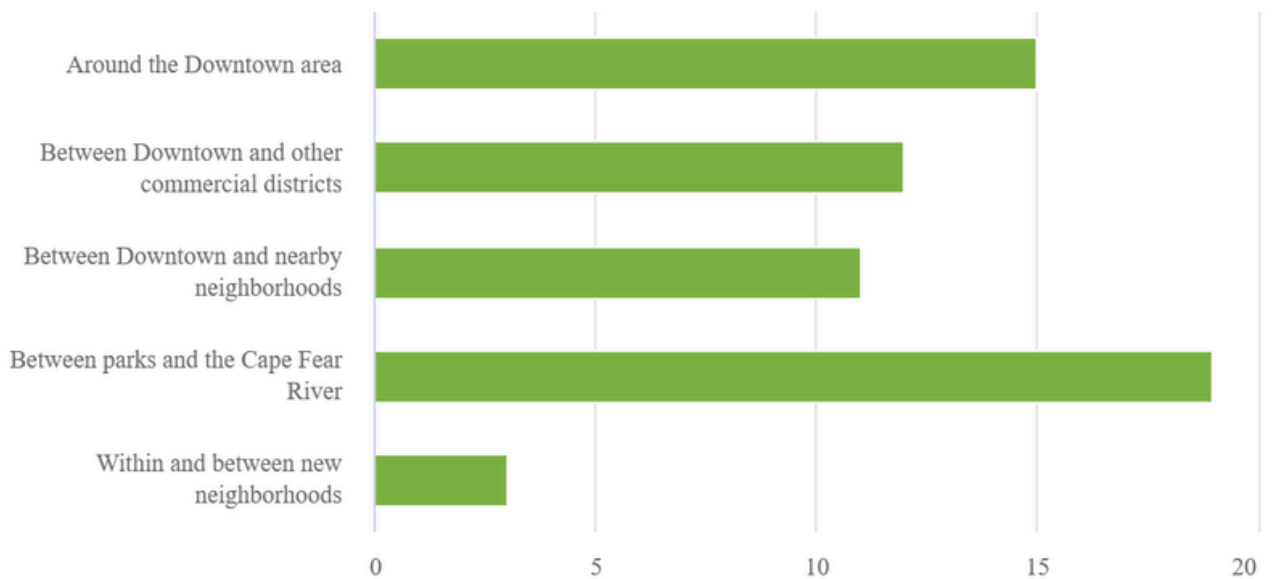
Q5. What would you like to see more of in downtown Lillington?
(select your top 3)



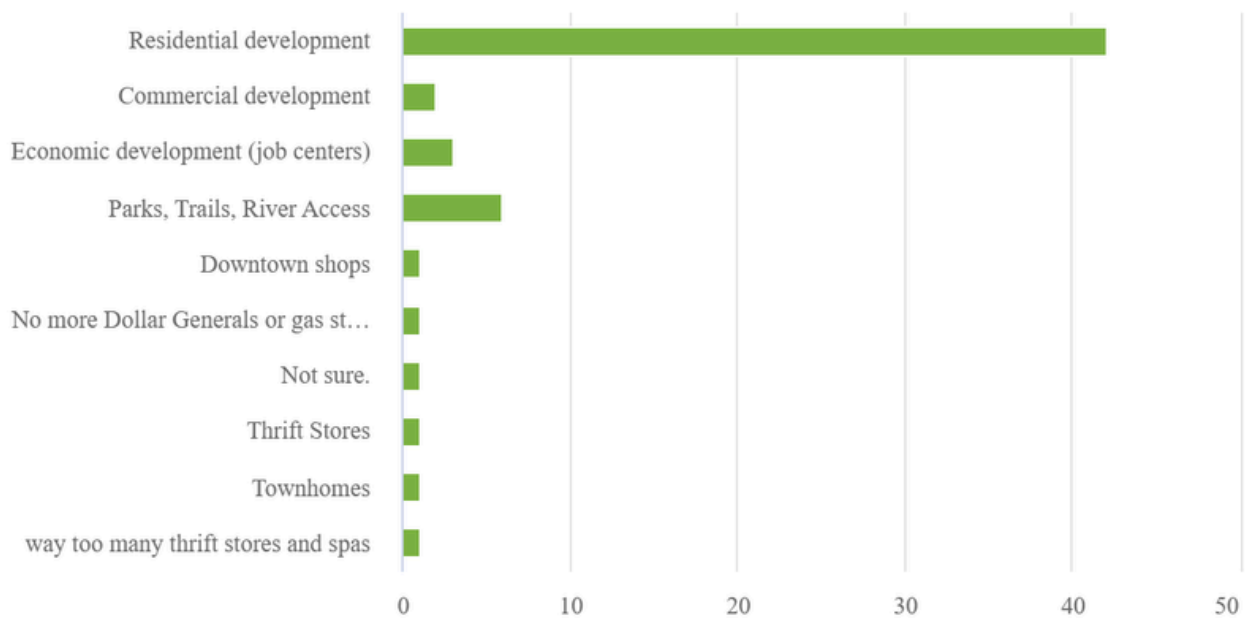
Q6. Which of the following would you like to see more of in Lillington?



Q7. Where are pedestrian infrastructure (sidewalks and trails) improvements most needed?

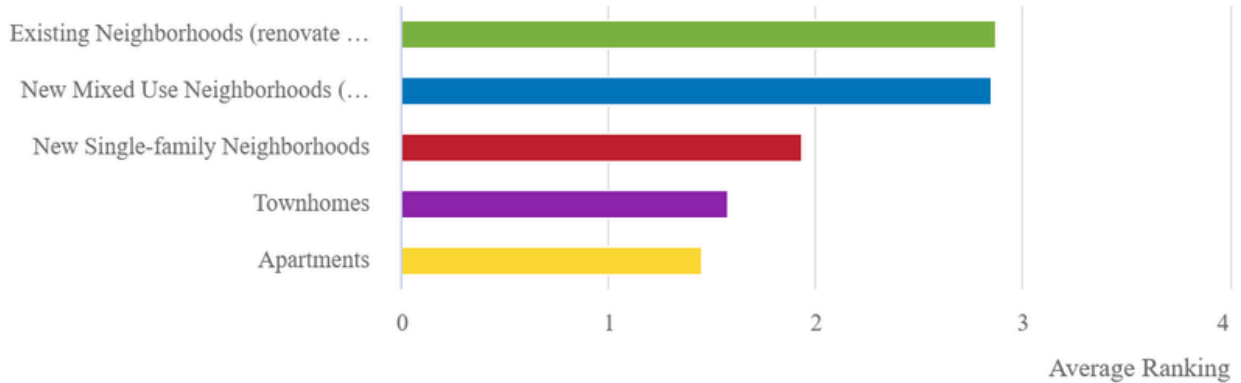


Q8. What type of development do you feel is already plentiful?



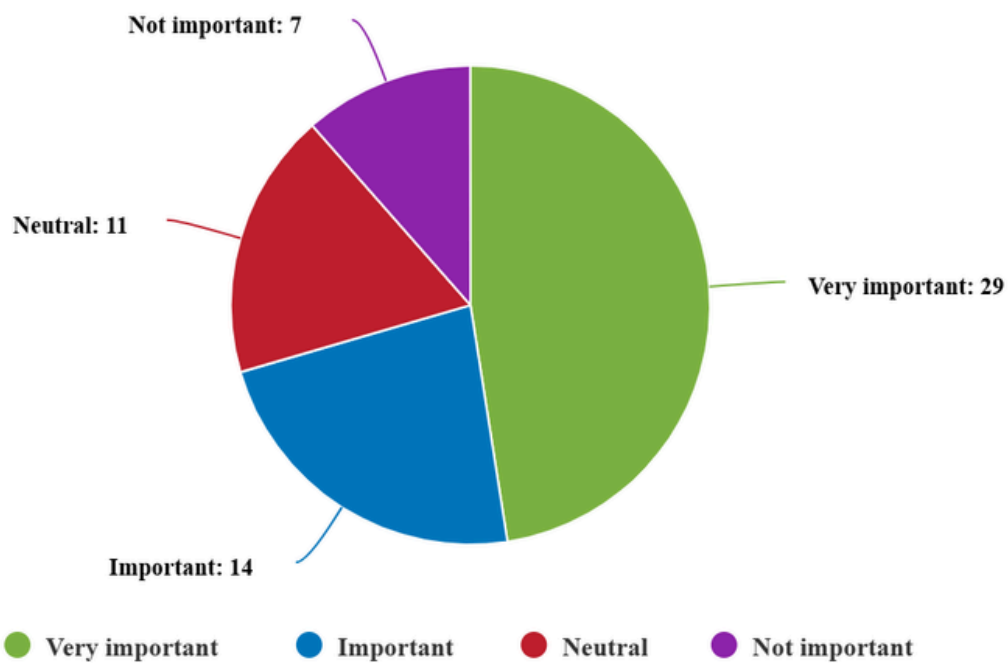
Q9. Please rank the following types of residential development on a 1-5 scale, from most to least needed (1 = most needed, 5 = least needed).

49 answers



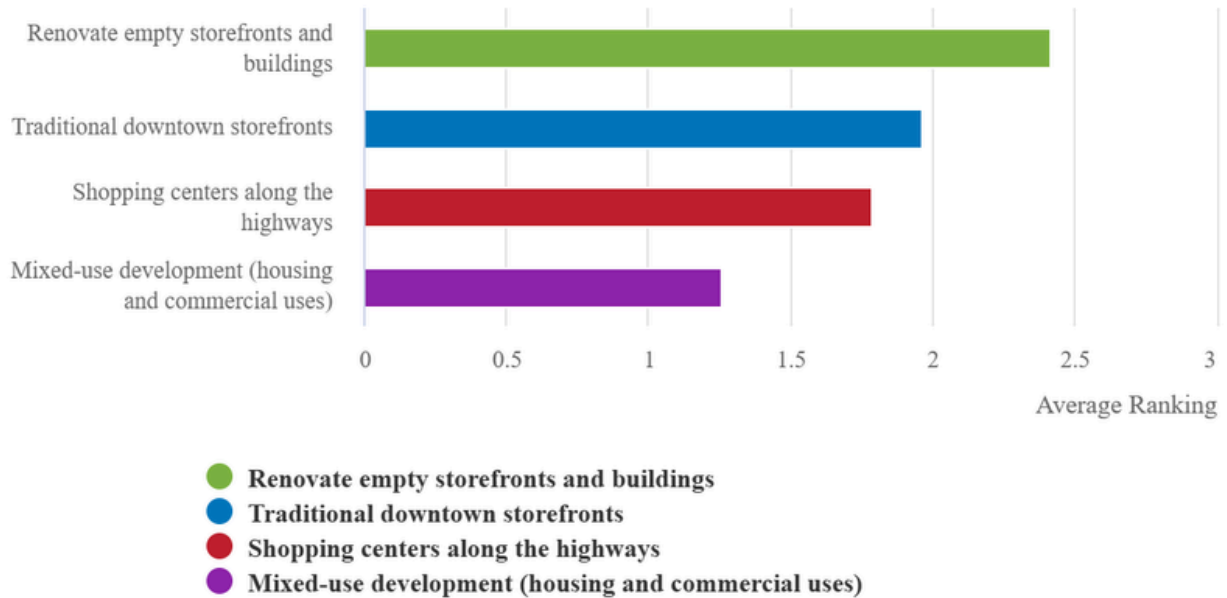
- Existing Neighborhoods (renovate and infill on vacant lots)
- New Mixed Use Neighborhoods (mix of housing types and commercial)
- New Single-family Neighborhoods
- Townhomes
- Apartments

Q10. How important is additional commercial development to you?



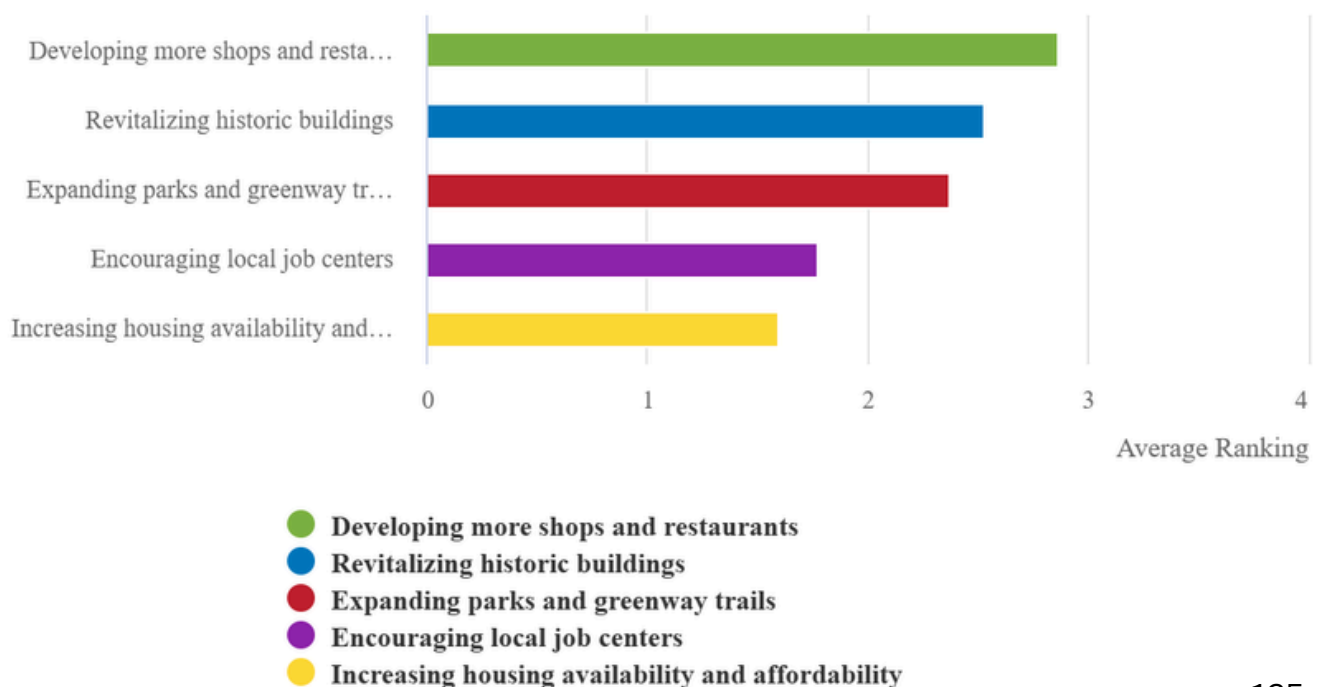
Q11. Please rank the following types of commercial development (shops, grocery, restaurants) on a 1-4 scale, from most to least needed (1 = most needed, 4 = least needed).

49 answers



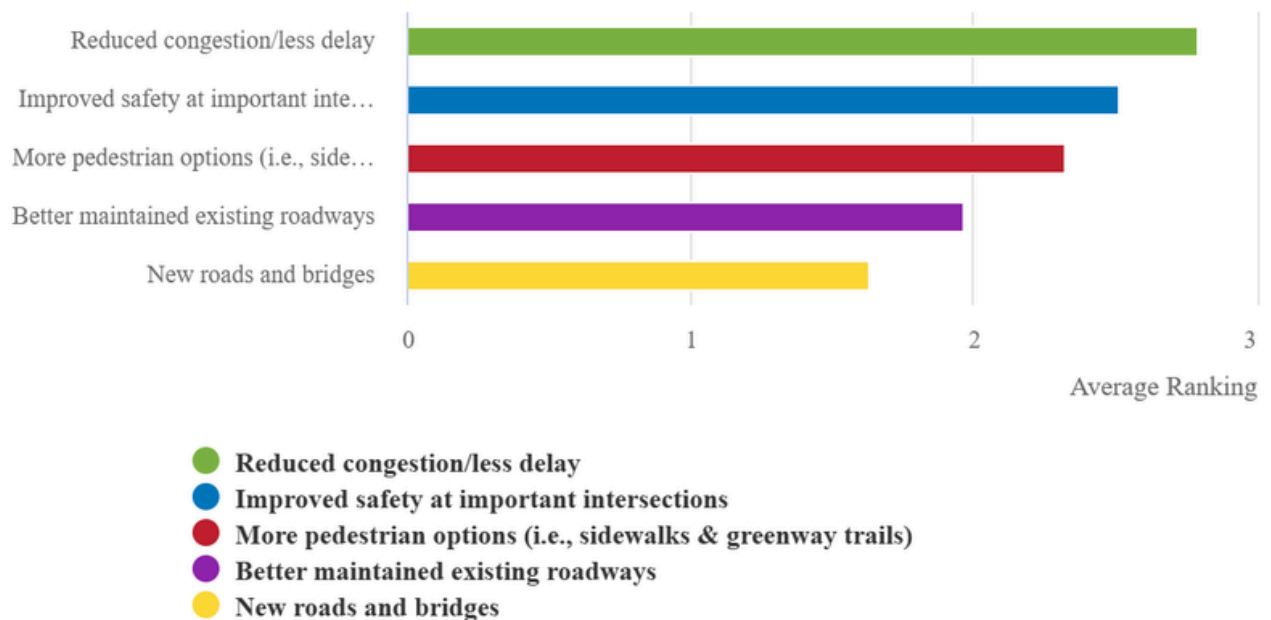
Q12. Please rank the following land use priorities on a 1-5 scale, from most to least needed (1 = most needed, 5 = least needed).

48 answers



Q13. Please rank the following priorities for the transportation system in Lillington on a 1-5 scale, from most to least needed (1 = most needed, 5 = least needed).

48 answers



Q. 14 – What do you believe should be done to better connect the north side of the river with the south side of the river?

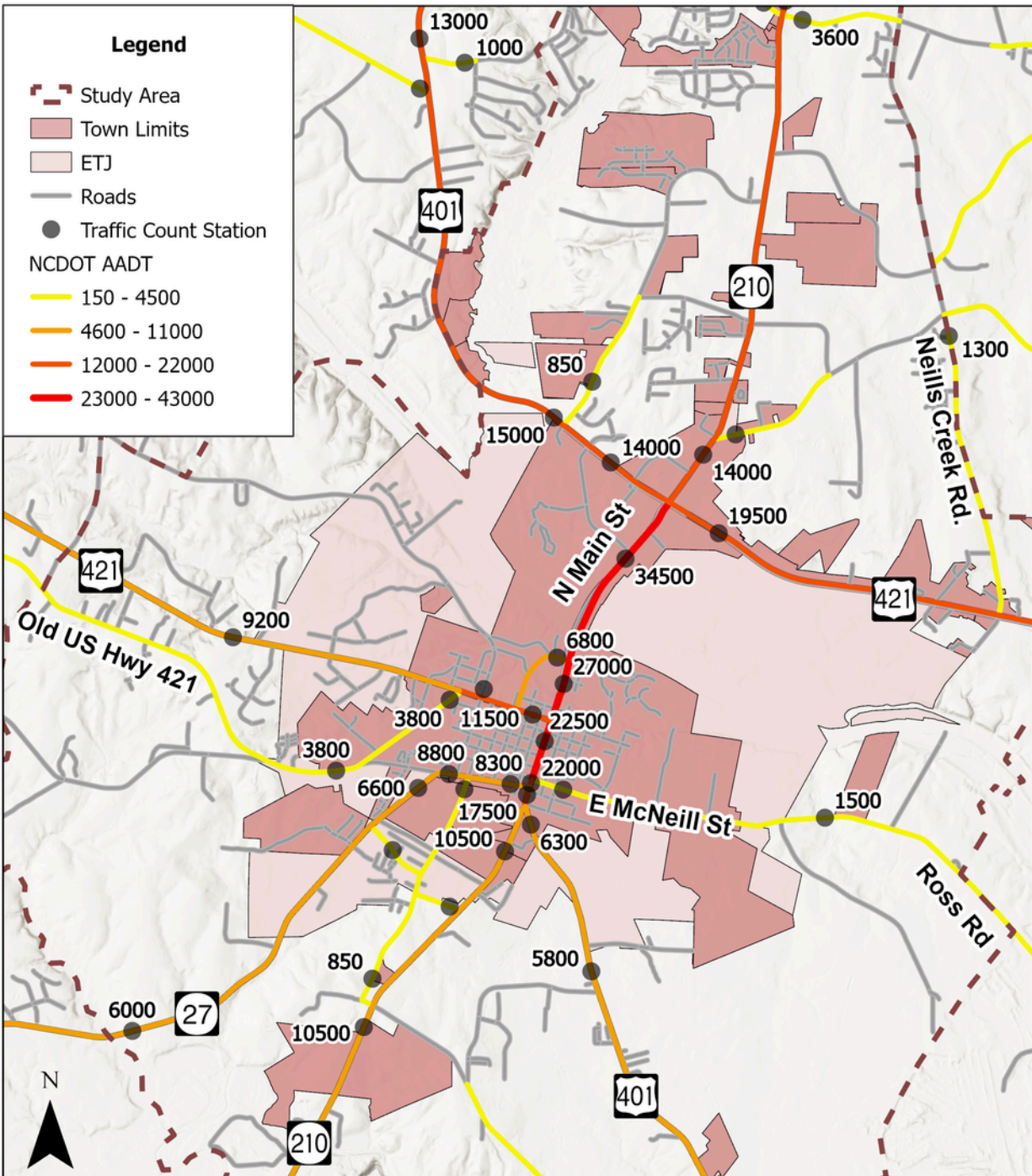
- 20.75% of respondents emphasized the need for additional bridge infrastructure, while highlighting traffic congestion and crossings as problem areas. Suggestions were included such as providing a new bridge or bypass that further connects areas like 401 or between Lillington to Buies Creek.
- 24.53% of individuals suggested that greenway and pedestrian connectivity need improvements. Ideas given were pedestrian bridges, improved walkways, safer sidewalks, and more greenways. Dedicated pedestrian access was mentioned in all respondents' responses.
- 15.09% of respondents expressed interest in downtown revitalization and commercial development on the north side of the river. These responses included creating more shopping, mixed-used development, and improving the north side's identity for a better downtown.
- 7.55% of individuals proposed transportation and accessibility upgrades. Upgrades such as adding more lanes, improving sidewalks, and adding in more local public transit options to further connect both sides of the river
- 5.66% of responses focused on community-building in the area. Like establishing community centers where both sides of the river have equal access to. Other responses included adding better signage and marketing to help promote downtown and its happenings.

Q.15 – What are some ways you think Lillington could take advantage of its proximity to Campbell University?

- 38.64% of respondents wanted to utilize the proximity that Lillington holds to Campbell University to help the overall economic development and business growth of Lillington. Ideas include expanding retail and dining options within the area that may encourage students to come into Lillington. Other ideas included offering university student discounts, creating venues, and providing job opportunities and internships to encourage more students in Lillington.
- 27.27% of individuals emphasized the importance of community engagement and partnerships with Campbell University. Things such as joint events, adult education classes, entrepreneurship/internship support, and satellite classrooms to enhance the collaboration between Campbell University and the Town of Lillington.
- 18.18% of responses highlighted revitalizing the downtown and increasing the vibrancy. Bars, breweries, shopping areas, music events, food truck events, and live music venues were responses to increasing the vibrancy within the Lillington area.
- 18.18% of individuals focused on connectivity and transportation. Including creating greenways, bike paths, trails from Campbell University campus to downtown, and adding public transit to help connect the surrounding areas.
- 18.18% also want to see improvements in the recreation and outdoor spaces, especially along the riverfront. Respondents had suggestions for greenways, running trails, bike trails, and community spaces that would support students and promote the outdoors.
- 11.36% of people called to see more housing and living options and to better attract Campbell University's students, faculty, and staff to live in town. Ideas such as offering discounts along with expanding the apartment/townhome availability were in response.
- 6.82% of responses wanted more promotion of local identity and school spirit. The responses call to add student centered amenities and to better market Lillington to students.

Q. 16 – Is there anything else you’d like to share with the project team?

- 34.48% of respondents emphasized the need for more or updated commercial spaces. Including restaurants, grocery stores, shopping centers, and recreational businesses (YMCA or mini golf were some of the things mentioned in responses).
- 27.59% of individuals highlighted the importance of better design and aesthetics in the downtown area. Respondents described the current downtown as unattractive and dated with unsafe crossings, empty/rundown storefronts, and poor food options. These respondents visioned a more walkable and appealing downtown that should attract the residents, nearby students, and businesses.
- 20.69% emphasized the need for traffic and intersection improvements. This included adding in more traffic lights, making the pedestrian infrastructure safer, expanding lanes, and alternate truck routes in responses. Many responses had concerns with the increased traffic congestion from new housing and emphasized the need for balance with growth and safety.
- 13.79% of people wanted preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods. Respondents asked for smarter land use and planning that protects Lillington’s rural character.
- 10.34% advocated better code enforcement to revitalize the downtown and improve the town. Neglected public areas and poorly maintained rental properties were highlighted within the responses.
- 6.90% wanted more greenways and parks to balance both sides of the river to support recreational opportunities, which were seen as essential to making Lillington more engaging in the responses.



Map Created: August 2025

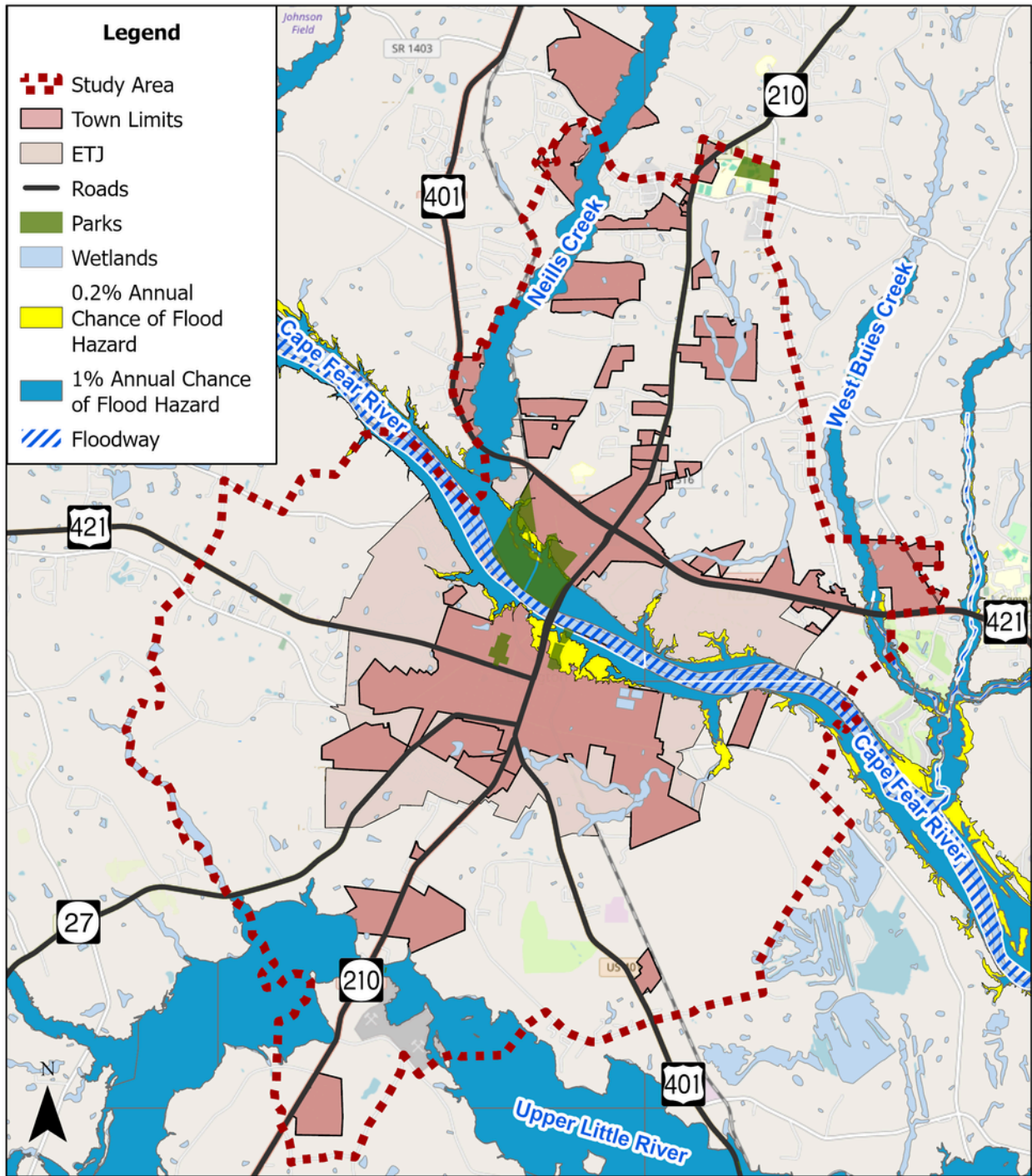
Sources: Harnett Co., KCI Associates of NC, P.A., ESRI

Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update
Town of Lillington

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



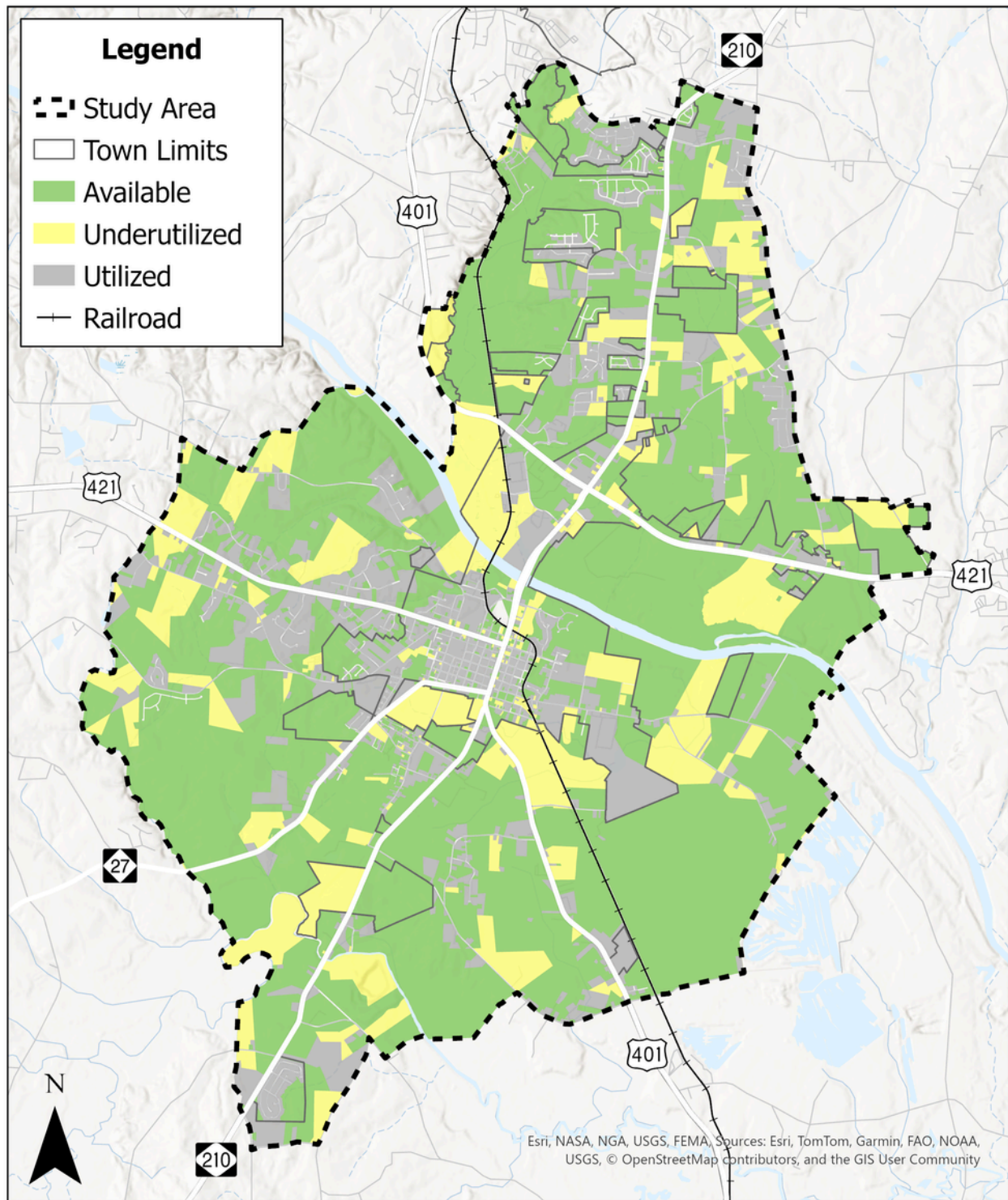


Natural Environmental Features

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update
Town of Lillington



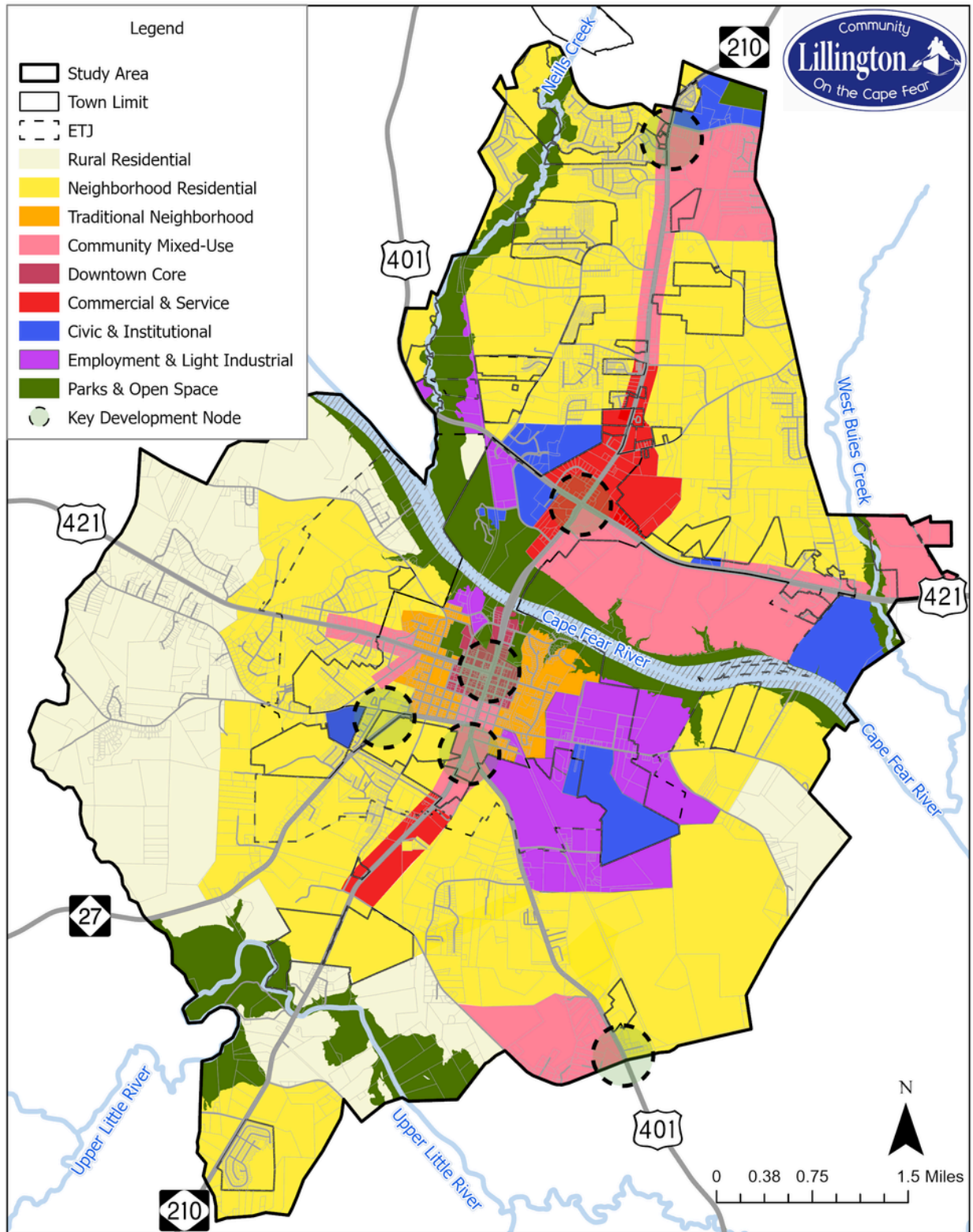


0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Land Supply

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update





Future Land Use Map



Community Assessment

IN SUPPORT OF THE
COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
LILLINGTON, NC
2025

Credit: T. Cluderay Photography

Market Overview & Real Estate Dynamics

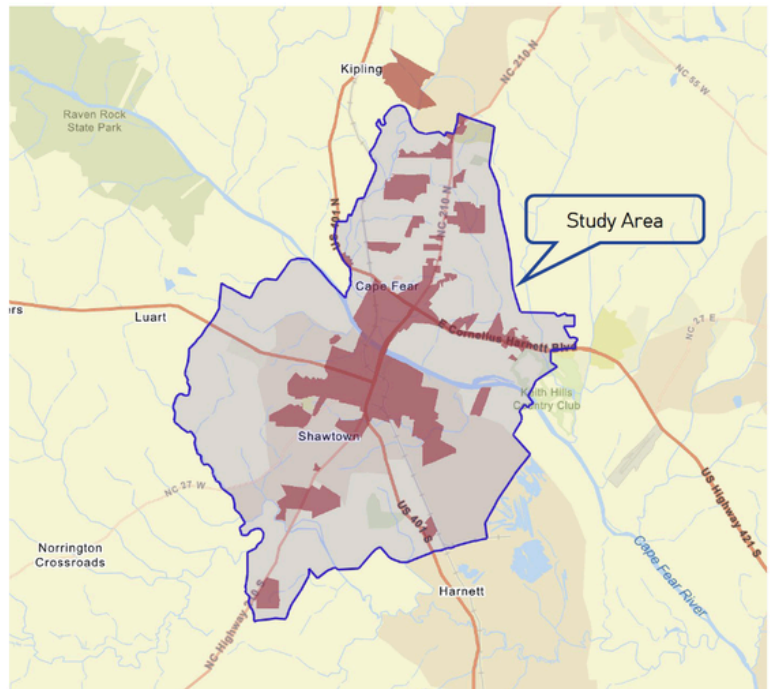
PHASE I

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Market Overview

Locational Analysis

This image highlights the comparison between the Lillington town boundaries versus the study area, identified by the town for this report. It encompasses the "area of influence" surrounding the town's current geography.



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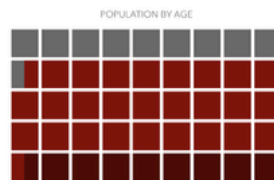
Market Overview

Key Trends & Indicators

Lillington has a low unemployment rate, and the majority of residents are employed in white collar jobs within the study area.

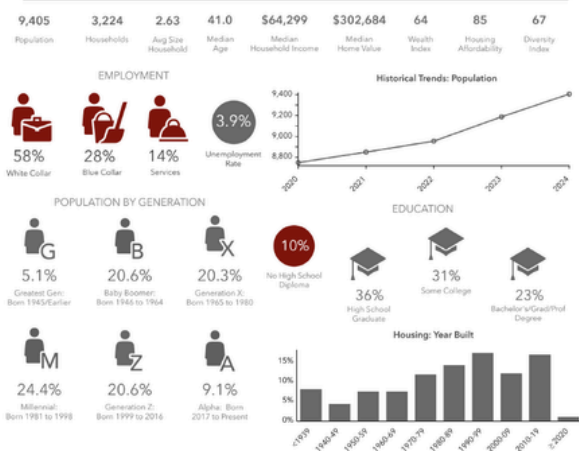
The largest percentage of the population in the study area includes those age 18-64, the town's workforce.

Campbell University brings university students, and the educational attainment of its residents for bachelor's degrees is above the Harnett County average, though lower than the broader Triangle region, suggesting that most graduates leave the community.



Source: This infographic contains data provided by Esri (2014, 2017), ACS (2018-2022), © 2025 Esri

Population Trends and Key Indicators



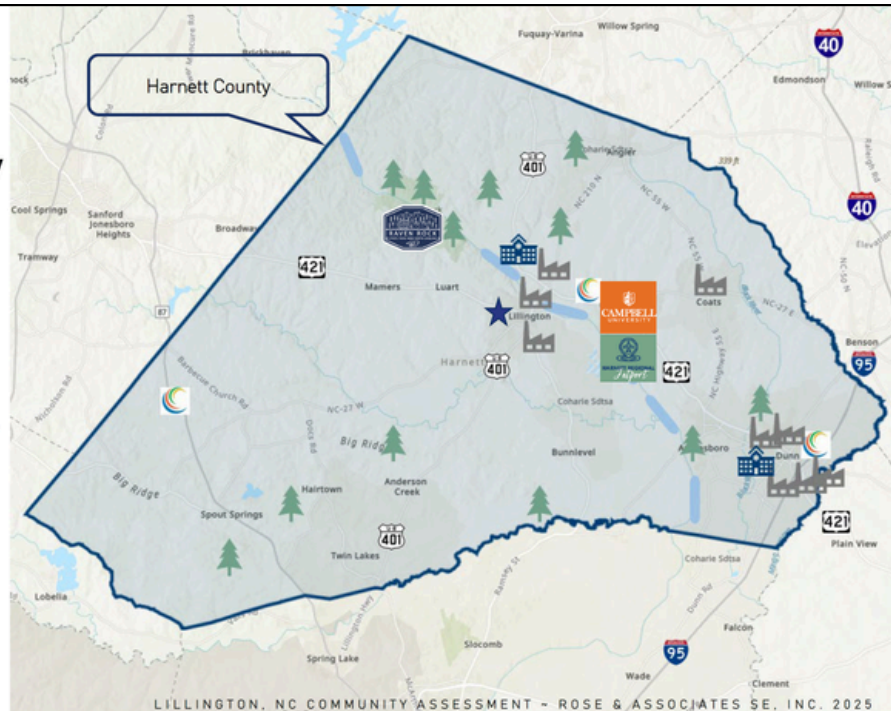
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Market Overview

Community Assets

Community Assets within the study area and Harnett County include:

-  Campbell University
-  Central Carolina Community College
-  Raven Rock State Park
-  Harnett Regional Jetport
-  Cape Fear River



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Market Overview

Demographic & Economic Highlights

- Lillington and the surrounding study area have shown steady growth since the 2020 census.
- This includes growth in population (1.6%), median household income (43.5%) and housing units (6.2%) from 2020 to 2024.
- As the county seat and location of Campbell University, Lillington has a large percentage of students and working age population (age 18-64) within the study area.
- Many residents commute outside of Lillington for employment.
- The primary economic driver within the county is educational services (University), while the greatest employment percentage is retail trade.

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Market Overview

Issues & Opportunities

ISSUES

- Cape Fear River physically divides the community.
- Job opportunities limited to a few sectors which could be expanded, such as healthcare and hospitality.
- The community desires more dining and shopping options and must have strategies to attract more consumers.

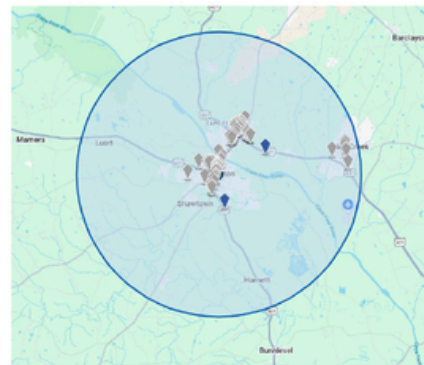
OPPORTUNITIES

- Cape Fear River is a connector for recreation and tourism.
- Gateway and directional signage is needed to highlight downtown and recreation areas.
- Expanded connections via greenways and bike lanes can connect areas within the community.

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Real Estate Dynamics

Commercial Real Estate



There is limited available product inventory and low vacancy which indicates demand and opportunity to expand in these areas where feasible.

Inventory 5-mile radius	Retail	Office	Industrial
Buildings	96	35	13
Existing S.F.	755,899	118,499	810,313
Available S.F.	1,342	3,344	0
Vacancy Rate	0.2%	2.8%	0%

Source: CoStar May 2025

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Market Overview

Retail Inventory

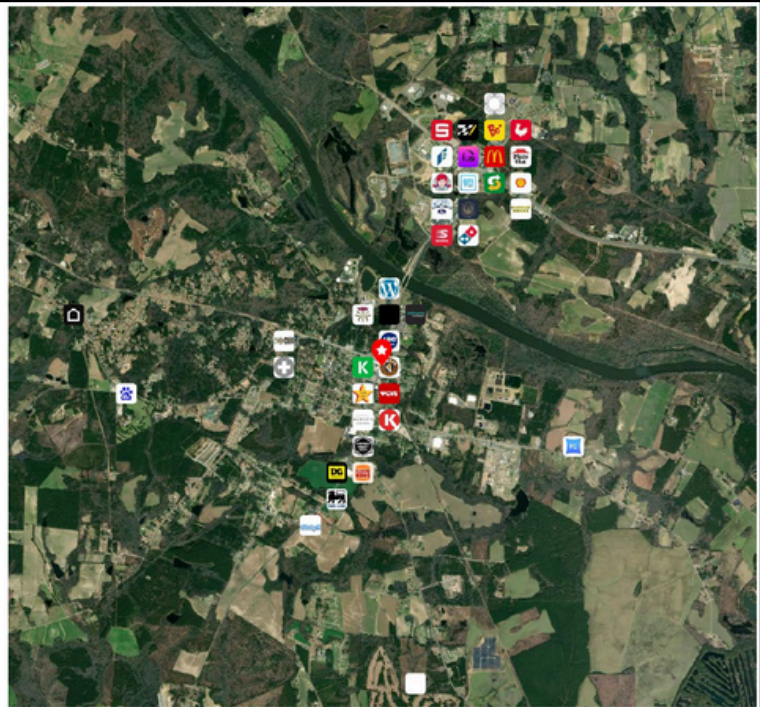
Existing Retail Categories (Supply):

- Grocery
- Fast food
- Gas & Convenience
- General Commercial

Supportive Retail Categories (Demand)**:

- Apparel
- Entertainment & Recreation
- Food & Beverage
- Financial Services

** see Appendix for details



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Real Estate Dynamics

Residential Housing Overview



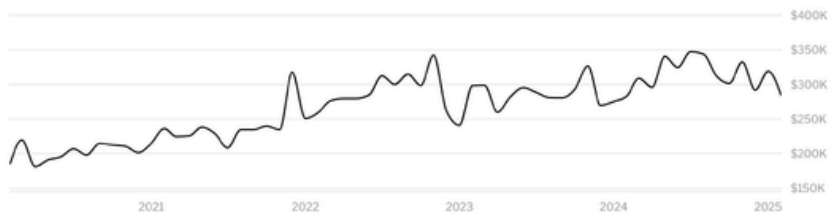
All Home Types ▾

1 year 3 years 5 years

Residential Housing includes single-family homes, townhomes and apartments. Over 60% of the housing stock are owner-occupied homes.

The NC Housing Supply Gap Analysis done by Bowen Research in 2024 indicates that there is a housing supply gap in Harnett County of 3,125 units 2024 - 2029.

According to Redfin, "in February 2025, Lillington home prices were up 0.2% compared to last year, selling for a median price of \$284K. On average, homes in Lillington sell after 87 days on the market compared to 110 days last year. There were 23 homes sold in February this year, up from 12 last year."



Based on Redfin calculations of home data from MLS and/or public records.

Median Sale Price
\$284,000
 +0.2% year-over-year

of Homes Sold
23
 +91.7% year-over-year

Median Days on Market
87
 -23 year-over-year

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Local Market Update for June 2025

A Research Tool Provided by Longleaf Pine REALTORS



Lillington

Single Family - Existing

	June			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	2024	2025	Percent Change	Thru 6-2024	Thru 6-2025	Percent Change
New Listings	11	10	-9.1%	35	59	+63.5%
Pending Sales	5	5	0.0%	27	33	+22.2%
Closed Sales	6	6	0.0%	23	31	+34.8%
Days on Market Until Sale	25	27	+8.0%	51	44	-13.7%
Median Sales Price*	\$371,500	\$315,000	-15.2%	\$350,000	\$305,000	-12.9%
Average Sales Price*	\$374,750	\$303,290	-19.1%	\$358,202	\$289,248	-19.2%
Percent of List Price Received*	100.3%	96.1%	-4.2%	99.7%	96.1%	-3.6%

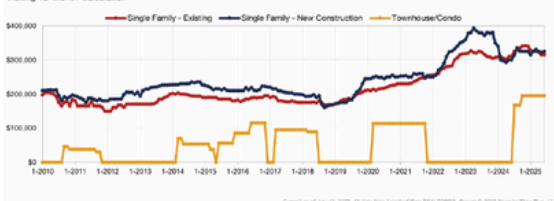
Single Family - New Construction

	June			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	2024	2025	Percent Change	Thru 6-2024	Thru 6-2025	Percent Change
New Listings	2	5	+150.0%	15	27	+80.0%
Pending Sales	2	3	+50.0%	15	34	+126.7%
Closed Sales	3	7	+133.3%	22	31	+40.9%
Days on Market Until Sale	115	75	-34.8%	85	65	-23.5%
Median Sales Price*	\$387,500	\$335,100	-13.5%	\$318,000	\$304,900	-4.1%
Average Sales Price*	\$367,800	\$342,714	-6.8%	\$323,670	\$321,889	-0.5%
Percent of List Price Received*	99.7%	99.9%	+0.2%	99.9%	99.8%	-0.1%

Townhouse/Condo

	June			Year to Date		
Key Metrics	2024	2025	Percent Change	Thru 6-2024	Thru 6-2025	Percent Change
New Listings	1	1	0.0%	2	2	0.0%
Pending Sales	1	0	-100.0%	1	0	-100.0%
Closed Sales	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Days on Market Until Sale	--	--	--	--	--	--
Median Sales Price*	--	--	--	--	--	--
Average Sales Price*	--	--	--	--	--	--
Percent of List Price Received*	--	--	--	--	--	--

Historical Median Sales Price by Property Type



Local MLS Data for June 2025 indicates a softening of the housing market from 2024 through June 2025.

Median Sales Prices:

- Existing Homes: \$315,000 (-15.2% over 2024)
- New Construction: \$335,100 (-12.4% over 2024)
- Townhome/Condo: flat; limited inventory
- Apartments- growth in luxury units challenged with high vacancy



Property Summary Statistics

Property Attributes	Low	Average	Median	High
Units	9	75	55	360
Year Built	1970	2005	2009	2028
Stories	1	2	2	3
Asking Rent/Unit	\$379	\$1,166	\$826	\$1,904
Vacancy %	0.0%	4.3%	5.8%	13.6%

Multi-family Housing - CoStar, May 2025

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Real Estate Dynamics

Commercial and Residential Highlights



Housing

- Supply gap of > 3,000 units through 2029
- Limited diversity of housing types
- Depending on absorption of planned/permitted inventory, additional units should be added.



Retail

- Limited inventory
- Dominant employer
- 10-year demand estimate of 142,000 S.F. could be added to existing inventory.



Office

- Limited inventory
- Expand flexible office and coworking options
- 10-year demand estimate of 102,000 S.F. could be added to existing inventory.



Industrial

- Limited inventory
- Consider land holdings for development
- 10-year demand estimate of 100,000 S.F. could be added to existing inventory.

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Real Estate Dynamics

Issues & Opportunities

ISSUES

- There is a housing gap of 3,125 units in Harnett County, much of which may be filled by pipeline development, depending on permitting and absorption. This includes the Capeton development, which anticipates being built out by 2029. This is largely influenced by interest rates, national economic cycles and local market factors such as employment growth.
- There is limited available inventory of commercial space in all categories signaling an inventory gap in the market.
- The downtown is making slow progress toward fulfilling its potential as a unique destination, as it continues to struggle with through traffic and capturing potential customers.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop a housing policy and consider zoning changes to provide for a variety of housing products – both for rent and for sale.
- Collaborate with landowners and Harnett County EDC to provide additional land development opportunities for office and industrial.
- Develop and implement downtown strategy and incentivize expansion of retail, restaurant and entertainment offerings in the downtown, together with streetscape, signage and public art.

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Economic Development in support of Land Use

PHASE II

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Economic Development

4 Key Elements



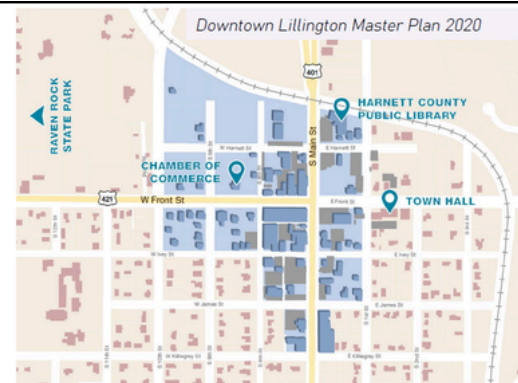
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Economic Development

Small Business & Entrepreneurship(SBE)

The Downtown Lillington Master Plan, adopted in March 2020 provided a road map to creating a vibrant downtown. Several of the recommendations have been implemented, focused on physical changes. The issue of through traffic between US 421 and 401 remains, as businesses attempt to navigate the challenges and improve customer traffic to the downtown, rather than passing by. This includes signage, parking, streetscapes and public art.

The retail attraction plan should focus on small local businesses which will provide a unique character to downtown versus the national chains found along U.S. 401. This might include an economic gardening program, which focuses on growing local entrepreneurs (see Appendix). And it should strive to improve both walk and bike scores to enhance the experience.



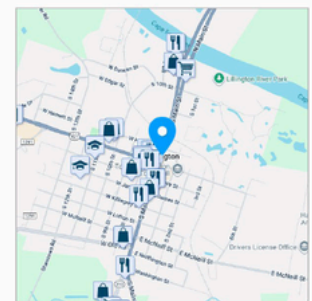
Walk Score
58

Somewhat Walkable
Some errands can be accomplished on foot.

Bike Score
42

Somewhat Bikeable
Minimal bike infrastructure.

[About your score](#)



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Economic Development

Tourism

There are abundant recreational opportunities in the region that support tourism. This includes places to experience, things to do such as events, and opportunities for unique shopping & dining. Lillington should lean into developing a tourism strategy.

Visit Harnett through the Dunn Chamber of Commerce is the primary tourism authority responsible for promoting the County and various points of interest.

[Home - VisitHarnett](#)

Campbell University, expanding regional recreation opportunities and businesses utilizing the Harnett Regional Jetport create demand opportunities to expand hospitality such as hotels, inns and restaurants.



Lillington

As the county seat of Harnett County, Lillington enjoys a proud, small-town heritage. The town was named in honor of Alexander Lillington of Wilmington, one of the Patriot commanders at the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in 1776. Located in central Harnett County along the scenic banks of the Cape Fear River, the town is home to the Botanical Trail as well as Lillington River Park, a nearly eight-acre park on the Cape Fear River.

Points of interest

- Botanical Trail
- Lillington River Park
- Belleau Wood Brewing Co.
- Fourth of July Celebration
- Cape Fear Shiner Park
- Cape Fear Fest

Visit Harnett

A Visitor's Perspective

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPGjoVziXFs>

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Land Uses in support of Economic Development

			
Attraction: Industrial Office Medical Office R & D	Retention & Expansion: Industrial Office Medical Office R & D	Small Business & Entrepreneurship: Office Flex/Lt Industrial Retail	Tourism: Lodging Retail Restaurants Parks & Recreation

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Housing Strategy

- Preservation vs. Development

Which areas should be preserved for rural and agricultural development?
Which areas are environmentally constrained?

- Development Densities

Consider the "missing middle". Density could increase where infrastructure already exists and in areas that support walkable neighborhoods with access to services, such as downtown.

Missing Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood.



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Economic Development

Issues & Opportunities

ISSUES

- Limited product opportunities for business attraction and expansion.
- Downtown Revitalization is slow and there are limited renovation/redevelopment opportunities, while retail demand expands.
- Limited housing options for all income levels and generations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expand business campus park opportunities, such as light manufacturing, in and around the Hwy 401 South (Byrd) site.
- Support healthcare and medical office development surrounding the hospital.
- Create an inventory downtown land and buildings and marketing package to promote the downtown.
- Develop a comprehensive housing strategy to expand product types (see following pages).

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Summary of Recommendations

Market (Lifestyle)

- Tourism: Create a marketing plan targeting visitors to highlight outdoor assets (e.g. Cape Fear River) & downtown in partnership with VisitHarnett/Chamber of Commerce.
- Create and implement a gateway and directional signage program highlighting major assets & the downtown.
- Improve Walkscore and other means of transportation.
- Expand and highlight connections to trails, greenways to the downtown, University and neighborhoods.

Real Estate (Value creation)

- Inventory and market retail spaces (digital brochure).
- Create a plan for identifying commercial space for retail and restaurants and targeting desired categories using data.
- Inventory and market office/other commercial properties (digital brochure).
- Inventory and market industrial properties.
- Expand details of Carolina Core Housing Study to develop a housing strategy to expand product types and price levels for all life stages.

Economic Development (Fiscal Impacts)

- Highlight workforce development (education) assets including Community College & Campbell University
- Identify industry clusters for attraction that align with educational resources (careers/industries).
- Support expansion of development of industrial & business parks off US Highway 401 in partnership with County Economic Development.
- Support the development of medical office and healthcare uses surrounding the hospital.

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