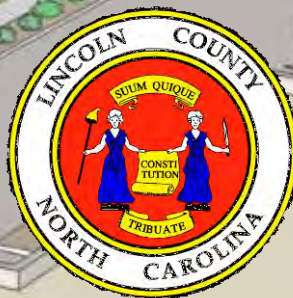


# NC16 CORRIDOR VISION PLAN



Developing a Shared  
Vision for the Future

Lincoln County  
Planning & Inspections Department  
December 2009



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**Developing a Shared  
Vision for the Future**



**Completed by the  
NC16 Steering Committee and  
Lincoln County Planning & Inspections**

**December 2009**





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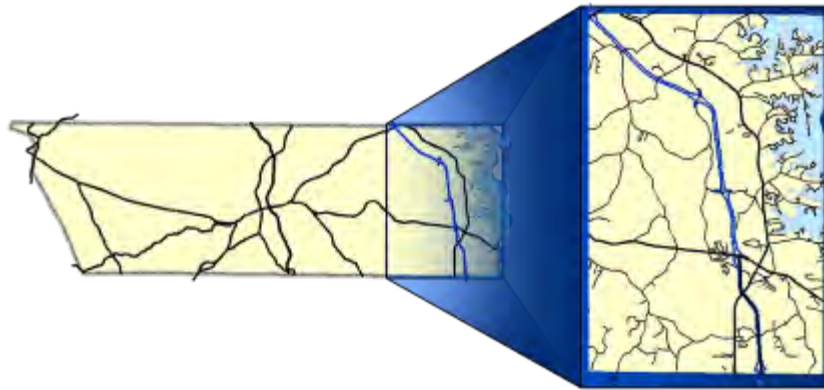
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## ***Introduction***

North Carolina Highway 16 is the primary north/south corridor in the Catawba Springs Township of Lincoln County. The growth and development occurring along this corridor over the past two decades has pushed it past its ability to handle current capacity. NCDOT is in the process of building a controlled access bypass to accommodate the main commuting traffic in this area; and while substantial progress has been made with portions being opening to Optimist Club Road (with St. James intersection opening soon), however completion is several years away. In tandem to the traffic congestion, development along the corridor has been built in a haphazard configuration with very little coordination and planning.



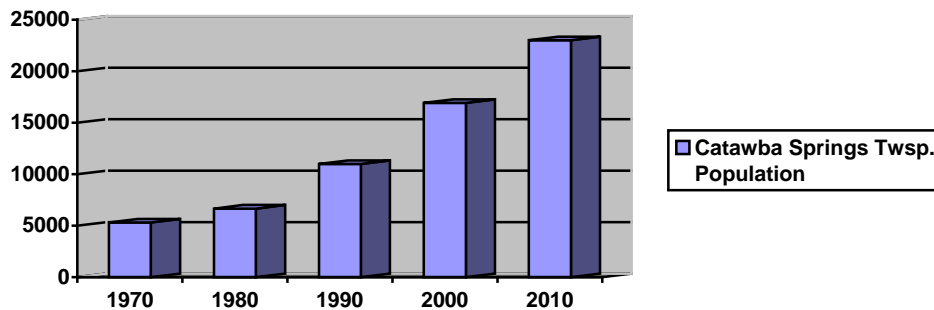
The primary goal of this corridor vision plan was for staff to meet directly with appointed citizens to gain specific knowledge of NC 16 issues as seen by a steering committee. This one-on-one type of arrangement has allowed a more detailed discussion about the problems and potential solutions for NC 16. Citizen input was also gained through several different methods, including public forums, civic group presentations, and surveys. The members of the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan Steering Committee serve their community and become liaisons between the County Staff and the community in which they live.

The vision plan gives the community an overview of the area and broad recommendations to be implemented over a period of time, in this case twenty years or more. The plan will identify issues and recommend what changes should occur to accomplish the vision goals. Certain site specific plans are not part of this project, however these types of detailed plans are recommended to further reinforce the corridor vision.

## **Corridor Background**

Cowan's Ford Dam was completed by Duke Power in 1963 along the Catawba River which began the gradual filling of Lake Norman. The lake, North Carolina's largest man-made fresh body of water, reached its final level in 1965 and since then the area has been a magnet for growth. This growth, mainly residential, has been focused between North Carolina Highway 16 and the peninsulas created by the lake. The geographical

constraints created by the lake present multiple transportation hurdles as user's main option to navigate to and from the peninsulas created by Lake Norman is "Old NC 16."



This transportation corridor runs 12.6 miles through Lincoln County from the Gaston County line north of Lucia to the Catawba County line south of NC150. The highway as we know it today first appeared, on highway maps in the 1940's, as a two lane paved road. Prior to the early 1940's, NC 16 was a combination of county roads and other numbered state routes and was made up of mixture of paved and unpaved sections. Since the 1940's NC 16 has seen several changes such as the inclusion of some three lane cross sections and multiple intersection improvements. However, the overall feel of the corridor remains the same as a two lane state highway facility. The facility is now marred by inconsistent speed limits, sudden changes in cross section, single access residential developments and a hodgepodge of land uses that lack the cohesiveness desired by many along the route.

The nonresidential development along the NC 16 Corridor has brought significant changes to both the corridor itself and to the surrounding business and residential areas. The corridor has exhibited changing patterns in population and traffic demand, in retail market and in development types, as well as a continued development of the nearby residential neighborhoods.

To encourage properly development and revitalization of the Corridor, the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan Steering Committee has created a plan to guide both public policy and private investment. Development of the plan included gathering input from corridor property owners, investors, business managers, civic leaders and the public. The County Staff and Steering Committee worked with state and local agencies, interested stakeholders, and the general public in open workshops, to develop a shared vision for the corridor hoping to shape the community according to the participants' values, thoughts and dreams – what we want for our community.

The corridor, or segments of it, can be described as lacking and having the following characteristics:

- **Lack of Definition and Identity.** There are no features or elements that define or identify the Corridor as a distinct and special place.

- **Lack of Consistency.** There are no corridor design or landscaping treatments that are continuous for the whole length of the corridor.
- **Lack of Embellishments.** There are few special features or elements that stand out or provide a sense of character or uniqueness. In fact several buildings lack any resemblance of architectural details.
- **Inconsistent Streetscape Elements.** The streetscape elements in the Corridor lack uniformity and consistency in style and color.
- **Limited Amount of Development Enhancements.** Very few of the developments along the Corridor include any substantial amount of landscaping treatments or other enhancements, while others are completely bare and lack any kind of landscaping.
- **Unsightly Overhead Utilities.** A few segments of the corridor have an extensive amount of unsightly overhead utility lines.

## SWOT Analysis

Early in the planning process, the Steering Committee went through an exercise to identify and analyze the areas strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (commonly known as a SWOT analysis). Additionally at the July 2008 Public Forum, several of the citizens' comments reflected what the Steering Committee had identified. This identifies various issues and opportunities that form the framework for the plan's final recommendations. These development constraints were mapped and combined with the inventory and opportunities identified showing the area and development and redevelopment suitability. The following is a summary of the results of those discussions and the Issues and Opportunities Map depicts the findings of the SWOT analysis with the key issues and opportunities.

- *Strengths:*
  - Small town feel
  - Variety of businesses
  - Some building renovations happening
  - Good location - to Lake Norman and Charlotte
  - Several redevelopment opportunities
  - Land still available for new development
  - New public services – hospital, schools, library
  - Feels like country in some places
- *Weaknesses:*
  - Signs – too many, cluttered, too large
  - Lack of landscaping
  - Lack of sidewalks and bicycle lanes
  - Traffic – particularly at peak times
  - Too many driveways/curb cuts
  - No town or community center



- Inconsistent land uses and appearance
- Lack of parks
- No identity or reason to come
- A few key intersections difficult to redevelop
  
- *Opportunities:*
  - Create a Town/Community identity - physical structure(s) or park
  - Capacity to attract consumers – new businesses and restaurants
  - Public Transportation
  - Regional events (i.e. Denver Days)
  - Heavy growth and redevelopment potential
  - New development, but with standards
  - Lake Norman
  - Greenspaces and greenways
  - Good labor supply
  - Satellite college - potentially with UNCC
  - Small town environment
  - Tree canopy
  - Potential to connect businesses
  - Connections with new NC16
  
- *Threats:*
  - Lack of money
  - Negative attitudes
  - Lack of sewer capacity
  - Storm water
  - Lack of communication with rest of County
  - Poor connections with new NC16 – traffic bottleneck at Denver & Triangle

The SWOT Analysis Map follows and identifies these key issues as listed.

## SWOT Analysis Map Key



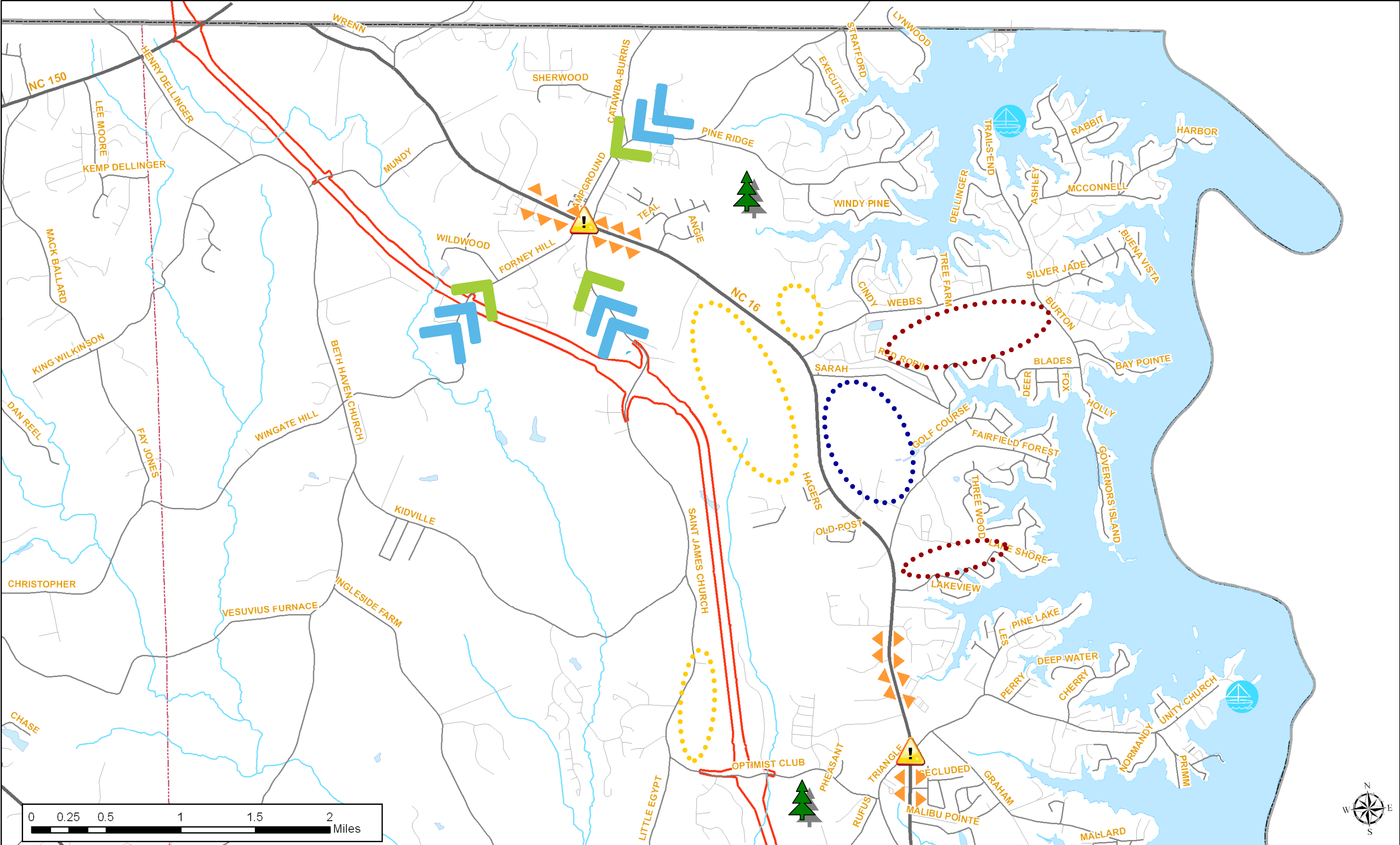
## Approach

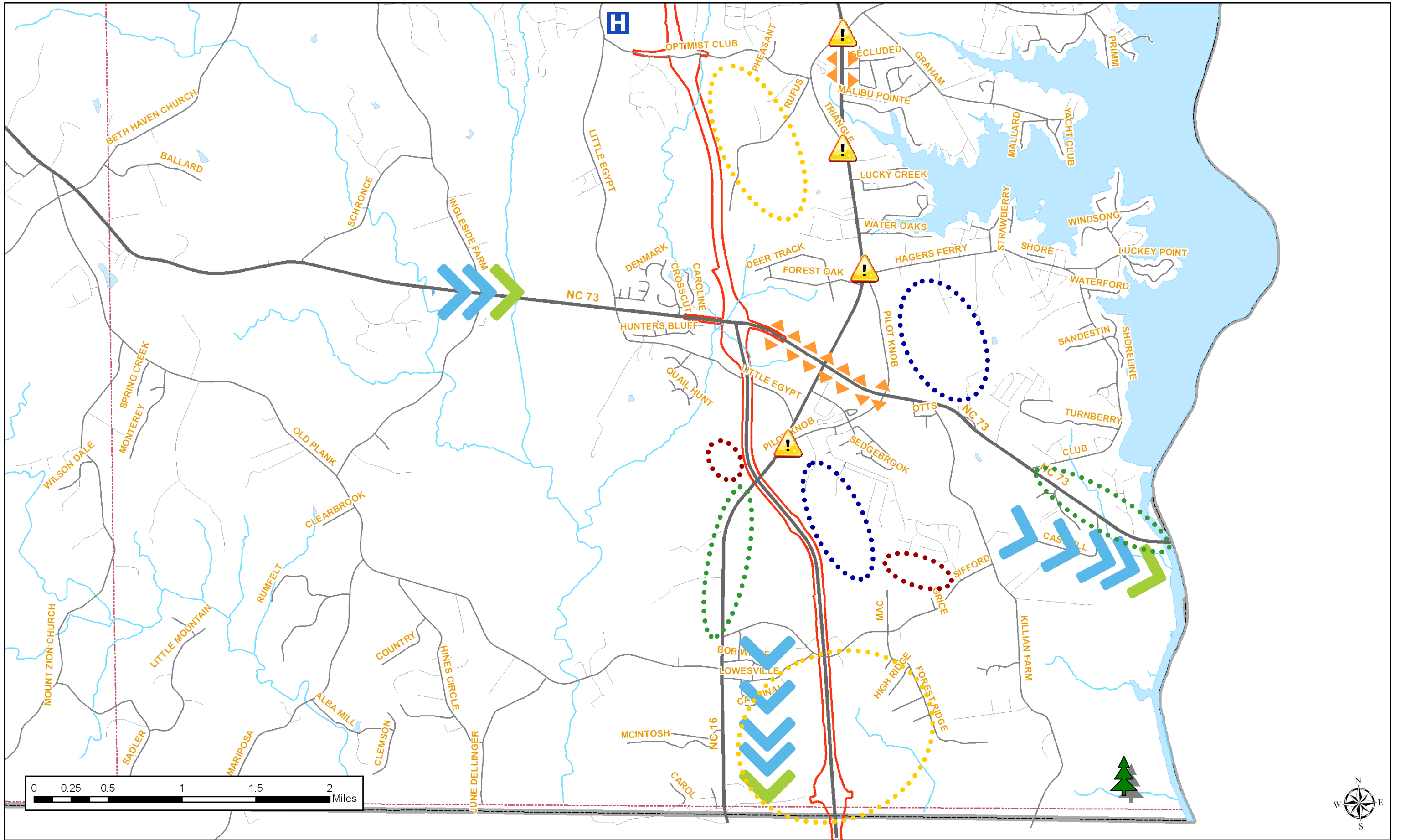
The approach of this plan is to have an understanding of the corridor from a perspective which is not site specific, but rather an overview. It gives the community an idea of what changes could occur over time along the length of the corridor, how and where certain development should occur and what standards or development criteria should be accepted.

Too often in planning documents there are various terms that are used which are unfamiliar or have a different connotation in everyday life. Below are a few terms the Steering Committee began with to focus on the task at hand. This also helps determine what issues can arise and how they are examined as the plan is developed.

*Visioning* – The vision and the visioning process should be the foundation for project plan. The vision is the springboard for innovation and should be developed with the community and citizen driven process. This is critical to lead to the success of the plan once it is adopted. Additionally, the vision must match the specific content in the plan itself. It is an overview of how the citizens want to see the community evolve over a long-term period of time. It is also considered as looking at the corridor from 10,000 feet where overall trends and standards can make an impact, but not at an individual parcel-by-parcel ground level of detail.

*Understanding Change* – Understanding where, when, how, and how much change will occur in a jurisdiction needs to be addressed so that the forces of growth can be harnessed to improve the quality of life without degrading the existing community. Maps and





recommendations representing the level and timing of change are developed to indicate the areas where the existing character will be preserved and the areas where change is desired in the short and long term. In this case, change is being guided as a part of an overall plan rather than allowing development to be built in an uncoordinated manner.

*Land Use/Transportation Integration* – Comprehensive plans typically develop goals and policies for land use and transportation. However, the two topics are rarely fully integrated in the comprehensive planning process and the result is transportation (particularly about the geometry of roadways) that is in conflict with the desired vision of the area. Plans integrate the land use and transportation decision-making process and result in streets that are sensitive to the land use, design context and integrated desired vision.

*A Holistic Approach* – Visioning plans should address a wide range of social, environmental and economic issues including sustainable development, green buildings, natural resources preservation, public health, education, and economic conditions. These topics are integrated with the land use and transportation elements of the plan so that one holistic vision of betterment is created for the community. In the case of the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan, the Steering Committee has examined the corridor and discussed many of these aspects. For example, by introducing standards for development, the corridor should realize an improved look (better building and site design), attracting businesses (knowing their investment to be more secure) and enticing additional customers (shopping at safe and appealing centers).

Other professional organizations have defined development patterns and keys to making development more viable to those who live in the area and to those coming in to work or shop. These keys are understood as to how areas function better for the people in their daily life.

In the American Institute of Architects (AIA) “Characteristics of Great Built Environments,” we can see what elements are necessary to create a safe, convenient and economic viable community.



#### Characteristics of Great Built Environments (AIA)

- A Well Defined Center and Edge
- A Hierarchy of Interconnected Streets
- Streets Designed for Cars and Pedestrians
- A Diversity of Housing Types
- Places to Work and Shop in Close Proximity to Housing
- Appropriately Located Civic Places
- A Variety of Open Spaces





The defined center and civic places gives the community a gathering spot to mingle and socialize; interconnected streets and pedestrian improvements offers a variety of ways for the citizens to move around; different housing types make sure there are opportunities for everyone from a single school teacher to a business owner; close proximity allows for people to become more ingrained in the community; and the different open spaces encourage people to enjoy the spaces from small playgrounds to athletic fields.

In reviewing these characteristics, only two could be potentially found along the corridor: diversity of housing types and places to work and shop in close proximity to housing. The limited amount of higher density and other affordable housing limits some diversity. Secondly while housing is close to shops and employment, there are no safe transportation alternatives, such as walking or biking, for access.



The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) was created to look at communities in a completely different way than had been done in the last fifty years. The “organization promotes walkable, neighborhood-based development as an alternative to sprawl and takes a proactive, multi-disciplinary approach to restoring our communities” (CNU website). In the diagram below, the differences between a conventional type of development and a traditional pattern are shown.

Access routes are shown as the solid lines in the following graphic (courtesy of CNU). With an integrated or connected street pattern in the traditional development pattern, residents are able to maneuver from house to school or store without having to access the main road. This allows options using neighborhood streets and safer routes. In the conventional development pattern such as built in eastern Lincoln County, everyone must use the main road to get anywhere because the streets are not connected. In this scenario the main road becomes very congested with local trips. This promotes unsafe pedestrian and vehicular movement and increases congestion, especially at peak times (morning and afternoon commutes).

Unfortunately, the area around the NC16 Corridor was developed primarily in the conventional development pattern; hence several concerns with traffic congestion and safety were noted during the public forums.

The development pattern along NC16 has stayed consistent with an unsustainable, ad hoc or “conventional” approach shown in the CNU diagram. This has led to a corridor which does not promote a positive or attractive identity for eastern Lincoln County. It has promoted traffic congestion, sign clutter, disconnected retail, service and industrial uses. Traffic must use old NC16 as their only means of traveling from place to place. Signage (square footage and the allowance of small temporary signs) has been allowed to be increased which in turn resulted in businesses competing for visual space and their signage to even be seen.



These are but two examples and other organizations including the American Planning Association, EPA’s Smart Growth Initiative, International City/County Manager’s Association to name a few, offer similar resources which acknowledge the changing development relationships between the built, natural and human environments. Additionally, main-stream publications such as Time Magazine, US News & World Report, Newsweek, USAToday, et cetera have published articles over the last twenty years detailing the impacts (both positive and negative) of growth based on how places are developed.

Using these examples, we can understand what elements create communities that are pedestrian friendly, interactive, have character and create a sense of place. These become the destinations where people want to come live and shop, where the community has an identity that is distinct and is appreciated by its citizens and visitors. We will reference these ideals as the vision unfolds in the recommendations of this plan.

## Previous Planning Efforts

The desire to improve the NC16 corridor has been a part of the eastern Lincoln County community for the past several years. Early efforts began prior to the enactment of county-wide zoning in 1992. In 1986, the county adopted the Westport community zoning districts as requested by those citizens. Other efforts to enact development standards and/or changes in zoning districts have occurred since that time. A brief summary of each of those efforts is located in the Appendices of this plan and include:

- DH (Designated Highway) Corridor Highway Overlay District
- 2001 Hwy 16 Committee Report Summary

- 2007 Land Use Plan & NC 16
- 2007 Land Use Plan's Discussion of NC 16 Summary
- 2009 Unified Development Ordinance

The summary of these efforts gives an overview of the background and recommendations contained within each plan or regulations. However it is important to understand that as these plans were written, the recommendations were not fully implemented and hence had minimal effect on the development along the NC16 Corridor. Yet in the case of a few major projects, such as the Lowes Home Improvement and the WalMart centers, selected recommendations within these previous plans were included as conditions; thus some aspects of the planning efforts were utilized. In the future, the steering committee is recommending that bi-annual reviews be conducted by the staff and the steering committee in order to receive updates and to monitor the implementation aspect of the plan.

## **Public Input**

In order for a plan is gain widespread acceptance, the community leaders and general public must be engaged and their thoughts and comments evaluated and ultimately integrated into the plan. Over the course of the project there were several opportunities for this to occur.

First, the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan is to be a plan prepared by the community. The Board of Commissioners appointed an eleven member steering committee from citizens who applied for selection. Their primary obligation was to work with staff to develop goals, evaluate information, discuss trends and needs, and make recommendations. This committee worked with staff, meeting twice monthly throughout the project. Secondly, two public forums were held and approximately 100 citizens showed up for each of the two forums.

The first forum was held in July 2008 and those who participated were given background information and then split up into five groups and asked to answer three questions:

What do you like about the NC16 Corridor?

What don't you like about the NC16 Corridor?

What changes would you like to see along the NC16 Corridor?

After the questions were answered, each group had to choose their top five changes and then all groups were brought back together and the top five overall choices were voted on from those twenty-five recommendations of the separate groups. That gave the Steering Committee guidance as to what issues and changes the public wanted to see reflected in the plan. This meant the study was conducted with an interactive format that included the public as neighborhood stakeholders which helped identify issues and concerns and what might be actually solutions to address those issues.



The second public forum was held in April 2009 to review the information gathered over the course of the project and review the draft recommendations of the Steering Committee. In similar fashion to the first public forum, the group was divided into five groups and their reactions to the draft recommendations was recorded. Also at this public forum, “project update sheets” were distributed which outlined the comments from the first public forum, the Steering Committee’s issues and the draft recommendations for land use, transportation, utilities and open space. Lastly, a survey was completed by well over 60% of those who attended this forum with 91% responding to the overall satisfaction of the plan recommendations saying they were “Extremely Satisfied” (55%) or “Satisfied (36%). The overall summary of the survey results can be found in the Appendix.

The citizen participation, in tandem with the Steering Committee, bolstered the plans recommendations as community based initiatives formulated to concentrate on their concerns.

Throughout the project, information was placed on the County’s website for the public to review at their convenience. In order to continue to gain public input, a letter was sent to the civic groups in eastern Lincoln County asking their members to review the information and comment as they saw fit. Additionally several articles were written in the Lincoln Times News Shoreline edition and [news@norman](mailto:news@norman) to keep the public informed of the process. Public comments are summarized...

*On Transportation:* The transportation component of the NC 16 Corridor Vision Plan is its central feature as the corridor, defined by the road, is itself the object was functionality the steering committee hopes to preserve for years to come. As part of the visioning process the steering committee in its initial public forum opened the floor to comments about what was the most crucial transportation issue that needed to be addressed. The citizens in attendance brainstormed about ideas of how to improve the corridor. Many of the ideas that came out of the forum were ways in which to reduce congestion on the road. From this brainstorming session five popular ideas came out relating to transportation. First, the more popular idea was that NC 16 should be either three or four lanes the length of the corridor so that the traffic congestion that is a result of turning motorist diminishes. Secondly as a way to decrease congestion was to push for more connectivity between uses so that citizens would not have to utilize the highway for short distances but could in turn use connections provided between businesses to gain more convenient access. Third included the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities along and emanating from the corridor. Fourth was the need for additional connections towards



the western portion of the Catawba Springs Township. The fifth idea included exploring the use of round-a-bouts as an intersection alternative to signalized intersections.



The Steering Committee mirrored many of the public's recommendations in their initial thoughts as they saw the need for a recommended street cross-section for portions of the corridor. Along with

determining a recommended cross-section the committee sought to determine what the actual right-of-way situation along the corridor is. Many portions of NC 16 have no recorded right-of-way and this circumstance makes it very difficult for any public or private improvements to occur in a cost effective and efficient manner. The committee also sided with the recommendation of the public to promote connectivity between uses. Other items garnering the attention of committee members were the need for several key intersection improvements and a consistent speed limit along the corridor.

*On Open Space:* Several options of open space were included by the public as part of the visioning process. Most notable from the public forums were the ideas of a safe, pedestrian friendly environment that was complimented with green space, and ultimately an open space that could serve as a “green” community center, as shown in this graphic.

Similar ideas were brought about by the steering committee which identified many of the same needs as those brought forth through the public forums. Opportunities for green space and parks as well as the need for an urban park to serve as the communities focus area were identified by the committee. Integration with the Carolina Thread Trail efforts displayed cohesion of planning efforts. With the presence of County Planning Staff, the committee was informed on parallel planning efforts taking place in Lincoln County such as the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Lincoln County Communities and The Lake Norman Regional Bicycle Plan. These parallel planning efforts may influence open space design and location, thus it was imperative for the committee to consider these plans when visioning.

*On Land Use:* In the public forum, land use was a key topic primarily because it related to where we live and shop, how the corridor looks and what impressions we live with of the community. Many of the comments in the forum stem for the lack of building appeal, sign clutter and moving from place to place. The public wanted a more inviting atmosphere, a variety of uses and development standards.

In particular four overlying principles were emphasized in the public forum. Two of the aspects that received the most attention was the need for architectural building guidelines and site development standards. The citizens often spoke of the lack of the building appearance with prosaic bland facades and the use of corrugated metal components. This also was reflected in the discussion for the need of better zoning and site development



standards requiring screening of equipment and/or outdoor storage areas and landscaping to soften the asphalt or gravel parking areas. In concert with that are setbacks which allowed the placement of sidewalks and street trees along the NC16 corridor. Moreover was the request that sign limitations be put into place to reduce the amount and size of signs presently found, including temporary and permanent signs.

The remaining two principles had to do with less site specific items which included the desire for a mixture of uses along the NC16 corridor and the need to identify community centers and/or where a “downtown” might be that becomes the area’s identity or landmark. During the discussion there was a consensus that of the idea of commercial uses along the entire 12.6 mile corridor was not desirable. There needed to be nodes of this activity at main intersections and a mixture of uses in between and certainly one or more of these nodes should become the corridor focal point, creating an identifiable core.

### Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Below are the Goals, Objectives and initial Recommendations that were developed by the Steering Committee at the beginning of the visioning project. These were refined and details were added throughout the planning process.

Goals	Objectives
<b>GENERAL:</b>	
To produce a viable NC Corridor Vision Plan which improves the look and feel of the corridor, manages future development, includes citizen input, and is based on land use plans.	To develop a realistic implementation plan
	Involve the community in the decision making process. Public forums Through the use of the schools- “Design your Town” contest
<b>TRAFFIC &amp; TRANSPORTATION:</b>	
<u>Collector Roads:</u>  Connectors need to be wide enough to handle the traffic and maintain safe neighborhoods.	No through truck traffic on neighborhood connectors.
	Request NCDOT to improve connectors at Triangle Circle/Optimist Club Road and at St James Church Road.
	Ensure multiple and connected access to Hwy. 73 other than business Hwy. 16
<u>Driveways &amp; Access Management:</u>  Driveway entrances should be consolidated along with other Access Managements	Turn Lane Improvement – State cooperation with Lincoln County to adopt uniform policy

techniques on NC 16 Business.	
	Radius Curb Cut Standards – required specifications, paving and concrete curbs
	<p>Restriction on number driveways per parcel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In and out allowed if just one lot.</li> <li>○ Separate in and out allowed if multi-building parcel</li> <li>○ With lowered speed limit, access for each parcel should be no problem.</li> </ul>
<u>Pedestrian &amp; Bicycles:</u>  NC 16 Business should become “Walkable” – welcoming to pedestrians and bicycles	Pedestrian Access – walkways and bikeways be required for new development and redeveloped parcels, existing developments should be encouraged to construct sidewalks to fill in links or voids.
	Request NCDOT provide a bicycle lane along the whole corridor and sidewalks where foot traffic is sensible between retail and residential properties including an expanded road shoulder for bike paths.
	Sidewalks should be installed in a coordinated manner with direction from NCDOT and Lincoln County.
<u>Road Improvements:</u>  Develop an improved and safe roadway which improves accessibility, aesthetics and lessens congestion.	Request NCDOT make improvements to build a three lane system along the entire length of NC 16 Business with medians where possible.
	Encourage NCDOT to use traffic circles (roundabouts) at intersections of roads leading to large areas of residential housing if possible.
	Encourage development of roadways

	parallel to Highway 16 Business
	To alleviate traffic congestion on the parts of Hwy 16 that will not be in the direct “Town Center”
	Consistent 35 to 40 MPH speed limit
<u>Mass Transit:</u>  Make transit accessible along the NC 16 Business Corridor.	To incorporate future transit needs of the community – increased bus /maybe someday light rail
<u>Connectivity:</u>  Travel between businesses without having to access NC 16 Business.	Make all business interconnected with parking lot connections
	NC 16 Business is really Main Street Denver
<b>LAND USE &amp; SITE DESIGN:</b>	
<u>Design Guidelines / Standards:</u>  To develop a set of guidelines for the NC 16 Business corridor that will manage the expected development over the next 30 years, retain a rural / hometown feel and meet the approval of residents of Catawba Springs Township.	Develop a list of Corridor Site Improvements with a possible business tax incentive
	Uniform Landscape Design – adopt planting and sign requirements and enforcement
	Provide a plan for retail and business parking to be shared and objectively be at the rear of the property.
	Provide a list of development criteria for achieving a pleasant feel to the corridor. These should include minimal highway cuts, turn lanes, tree and low shrubbery plantings, sign ordinances and concentrated sign groupings.
	To propose appearance and design standards for the NC 16 Corridor, and the

	<p>Town Center including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Signage standards</li> <li>○ Lighting standards</li> <li>○ Landscaping standards</li> <li>○ Architectural appearance standards</li> <li>○ Sidewalks and greenways</li> <li>○ Fencing standards</li> <li>○ Limiting curb cuts and improving access in other ways</li> <li>○ Limiting future strip development</li> <li>○ Ways to increase connectivity</li> <li>○ Limiting “unsightly” uses</li> <li>○ Liberal set back standards</li> </ul>
	<p>Buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Front and sides consistent material</li> <li>○ No metal except as accent not over 25% of front or sides</li> <li>○ Brick, masonry, architectural block</li> <li>○ Vinyl as accent only</li> <li>○ No chain link fence</li> <li>○ Stick-built on site only</li> </ul>
	Uniformity in design and materials
	Nice monuments for subdivisions accessing Hwy. 16
	Driveways and parking to be asphalt or concrete

	Outdoor mall-type areas for park and walk to shopping, eating, etc.
	Street trees
	Franchise / chain restaurants (allow them, but not their standard base corporate architecture, require upper scale plan)
	No strip malls
<u>Zoning:</u>  Create and apply zoning codes that would enhance the appearance of the entire NC 16 Business corridor.	Concentrate non-retail business off the highway.
	Uniform Zoning Plan – Conformance & Enforcement
	Encourage clustering of retail business to maximize green space.
<u>Community Center:</u>  To propose a well defined “town center” for East Lincoln to help create a better sense of community for the area. Village Concept.	To create a town center that allows for easy traffic flow, for cars, bicycles and pedestrians.
	This center would include many destinations. (Parks, parking, shops, restaurants, library, bank, recreation, medical facility, post office, green spaces etc)
	To create a recognizable/distinguishable town center “focal point.”
	Acquire funding for this project. (Either public, private or grants)
	Designated areas for encouraging shopping, office, live
<u>Economic Development:</u>	Recruit new business to the area, while



Foster atmosphere to attract small and large commercial and mixed-use development	supporting our current business owners.
	Recruit private investment
	Strengthen a continued partnership with LEDA
<b>UTILITIES:</b>	
Underground utilities	Require all new developments to include underground utilities
<b>PARKS &amp; OPEN SPACE:</b>	
Parks and open space are vital to the NC 16 Business corridor.	To incorporate the Carolina Thread Trail project into our planning process
	Small park areas – county will need to purchase this land.
	Open Space/Parks can be incorporated with commercial design.

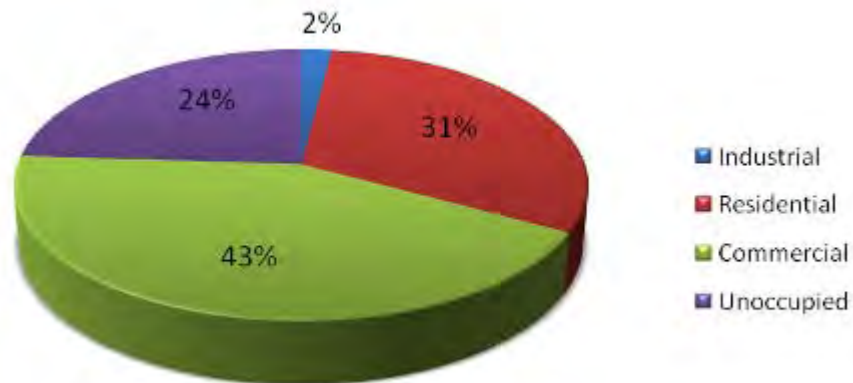


## Existing Conditions

As many of us drive on NC16, we believe we know what has been developed. Several steering committee members could recall what was at a specific intersection or larger development. However, when asked specifics about particular sites or how much vacant land was available, it was determined that many uses blended into the next.

A current land use analysis along NC16 was performed at the beginning of the planning process. It resulted in an examination of what was actually built along the corridor and how much property was available. Below is an overview of the results.

- There are a total of 570 parcels currently along the 12.6 mile stretch of NC16.
- Of the 570 parcels, 431 are currently occupied, leaving 139 vacant parcels
- There are a total of 435 properties that have a current land use of residential, commercial or industrial.
  - 245 commercial properties
  - 177 residential properties
  - 13 industrial properties
    - *The discrepancy between the 431 occupied and the 435 currently in use, is that 4 properties have built elements, although they are not occupied by a tenant*



- Of the 177 residential properties
  - 168 are single-family
  - 9 are multi-family (duplexes, townhouses and apartments)
- Building Conditions
  - Stable: 370 parcels
  - Deteriorating: 48 parcels
  - Dilapidated: 10 parcels
- There are a total of 277 driveway cuts onto NC16; this number is accounted for only in terms of commercial and industrial parcels.
  - When summing the commercial and industrial parcels you get 258, divide the 258 parcels by the 277 driveway cuts you end up with 1.074 driveway cuts per parcel.

- Many commercial parcels have driveway cuts onto side roads, and don't currently have driveway cuts onto NC16, thus the number of driveway cuts onto NC16 would actually be higher per parcel than 1.074.
- There are a total of 57 existing connections to adjacent properties or side streets.
- There are a total of 168 possible connections, this account for both developed parcels that could connect with neighboring parcels and undeveloped parcels that could connect upon future development.

## Transportation

To support the residential growth that located near the lake, NC 16 has seen an abundance of commercial growth along most of its length through Lincoln County, a development pattern not observed in adjoining Gaston and Catawba Counties. As if the residential development around the lake was not enough of a burden on NC 16, commuters utilized the route to access Charlotte and jobs in the region, the increased commercial development along the corridor placed a heavier burden on the roadways capacity and it began to be used to access varying retail and service opportunities. The combination of the commuter and local traffic utilizing NC 16 led to the call for construction of a NC 16 bypass.



Efforts to lobby for this new corridor began in earnest in the early 1990's. The project lingered on the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) until 1998 when right of way acquisition began on the southern portion of the corridor that extended from Lucia in Gaston County to the highway's interchange with NC 73 in Lincoln County. Paving on the southern portion began in 2004 and was complete to NC 73 in July of 2007. As

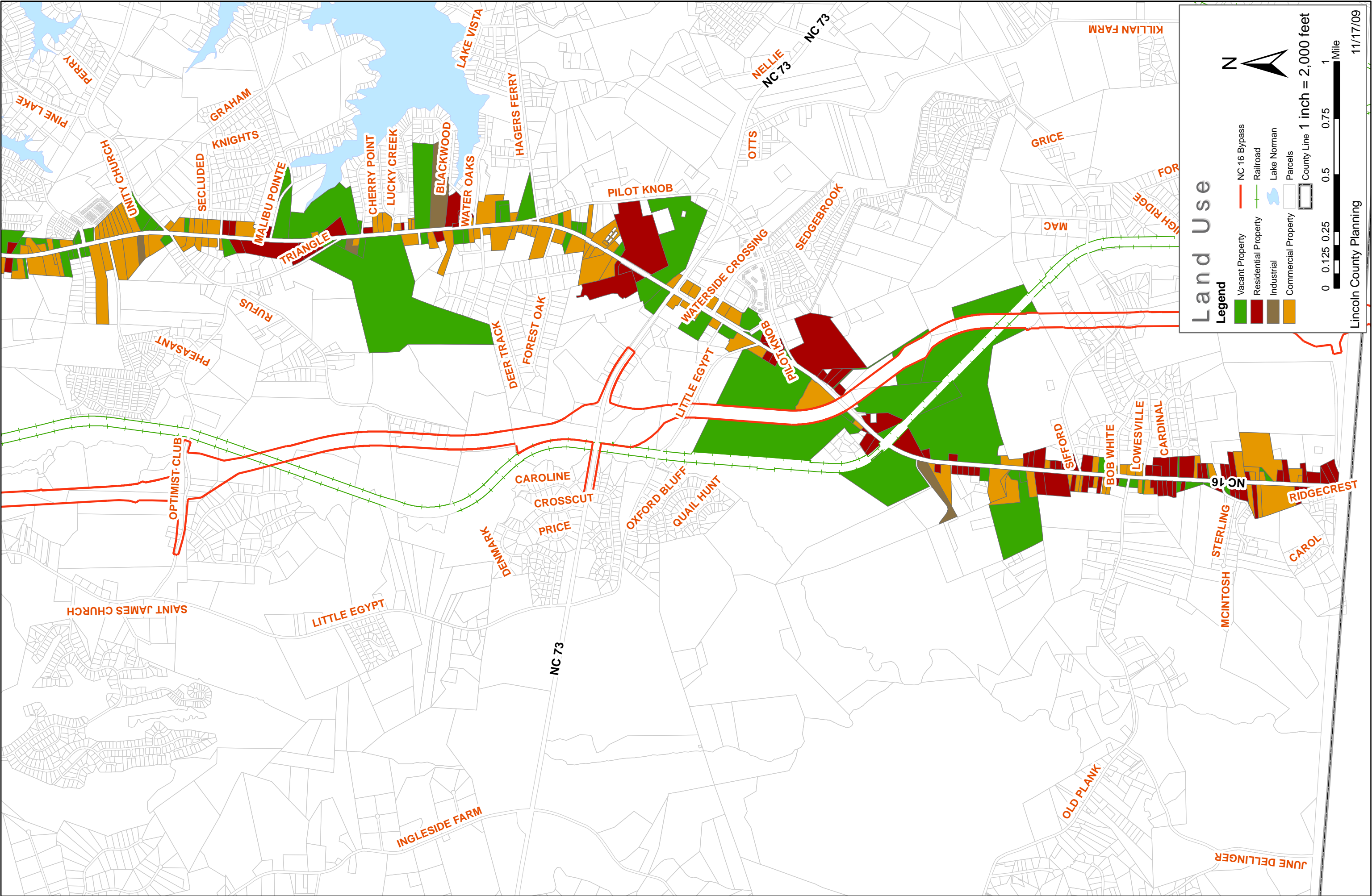
the project moves north to Optimist Club Road, St. James Church Road and NC 150 the anticipated completion dates are July 2009, October 2009 and Spring 2011, respectively. As this "bypass" is to act as a relief valve to the current NC 16 and remove non-local trips from its pavement the current NC 16 personality will certainly change as it adapts to change in travel patterns.

## Open Space

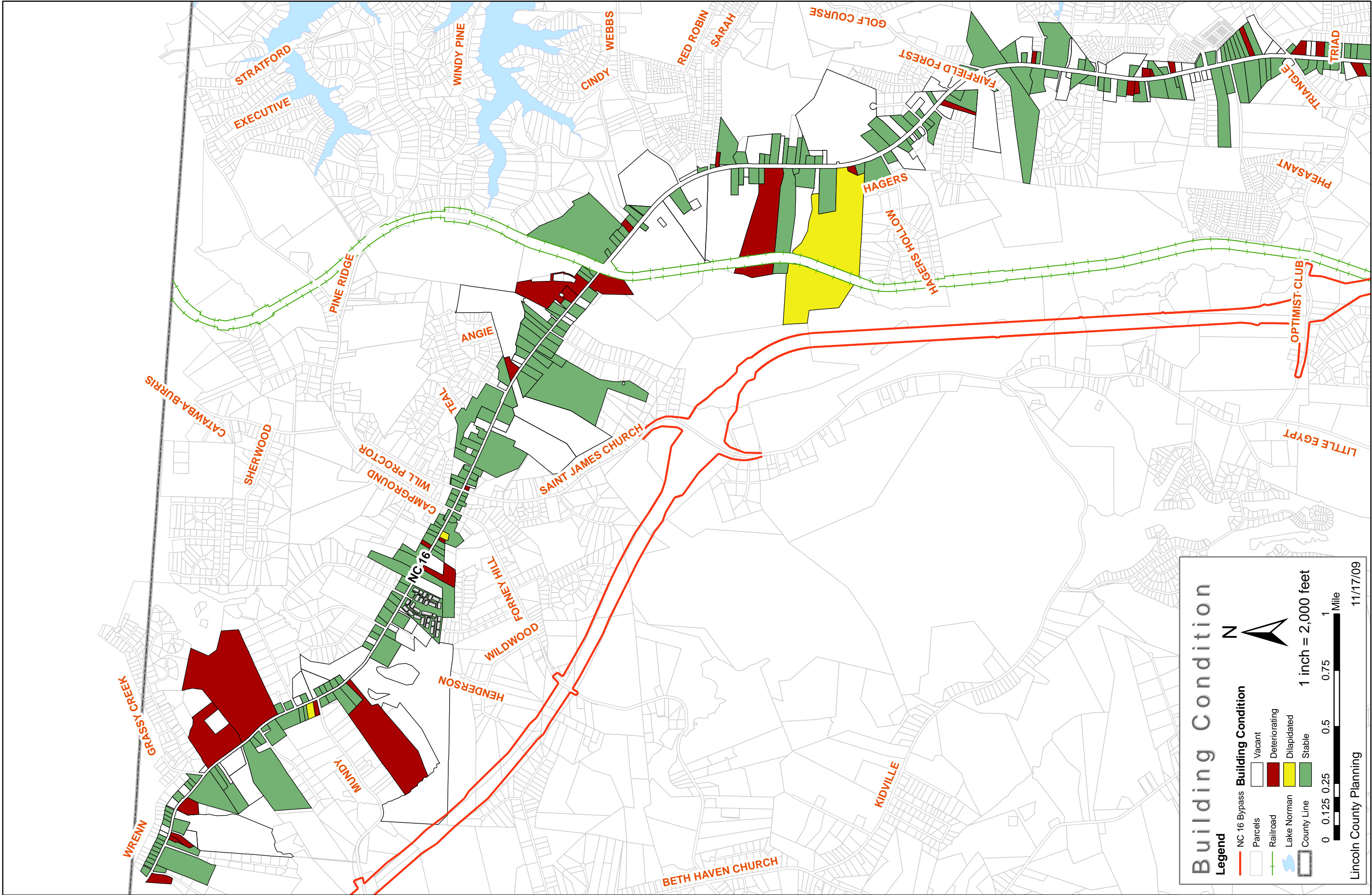
Open space often refers to areas reserved for either active or passive recreational opportunities. It can take on many forms, although in most cases it is a natural area or slightly improved area that can accommodate ball fields and/or courts, playground equipment, exercise facilities, trails, small amphitheatres or simply green space that members of a community can enjoy.



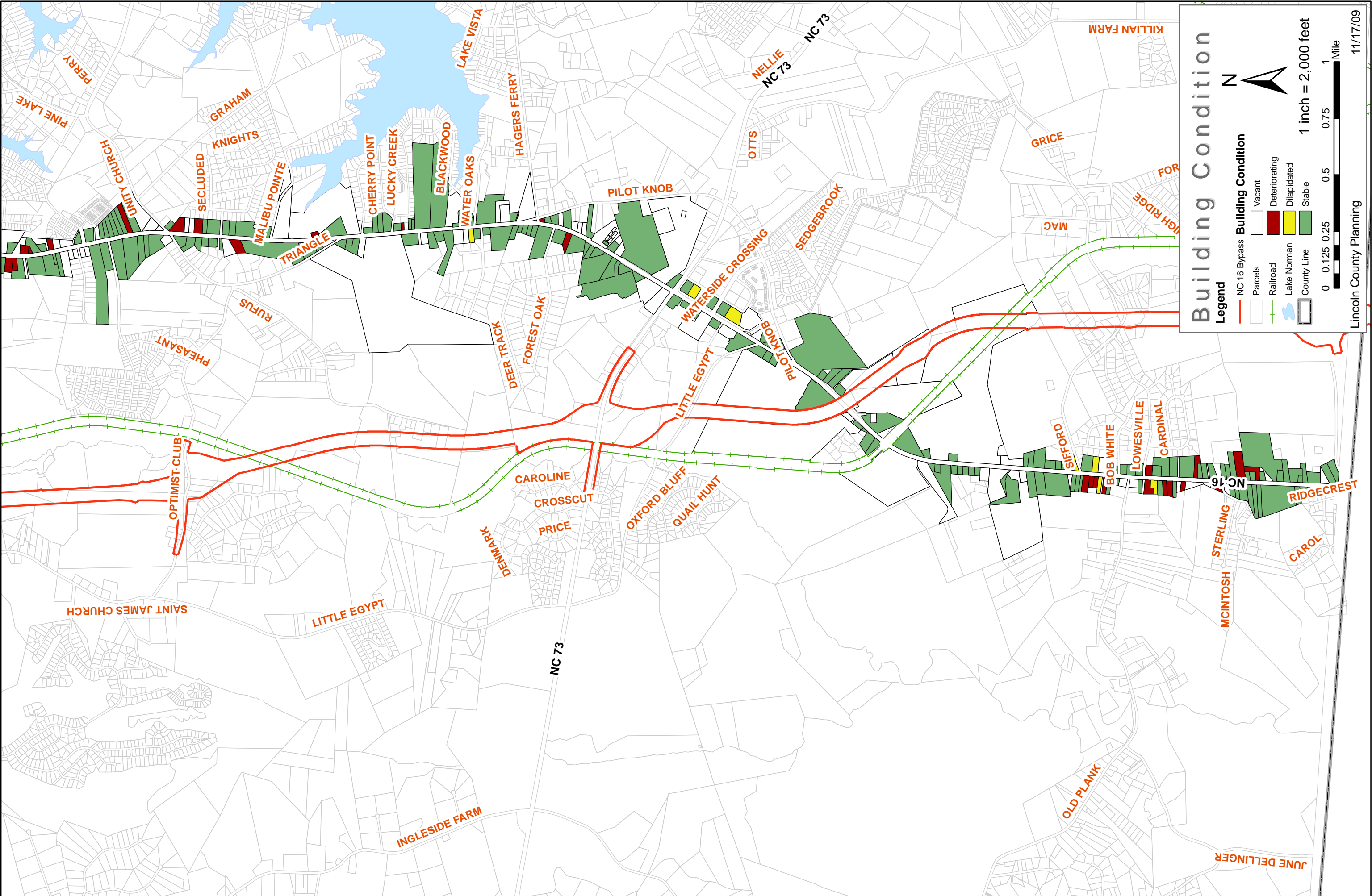












An integral part of any community, open space is a necessity that should be included in all development plans whether they are primarily residential, commercial, and industrial or a mix of uses. Trends and analysis are showing that open space is as important to the makeup of a community as these other developed land uses. Evidence has indicated that preserving open space increase property values in a large majority of case studies. This is not meant to suggest that one type of development is a superior land use, but that an integration of both developed land uses and preservation of land is needed to help balance a local economy.<sup>1</sup>

Nationally recognized as integral to a communities makeup, open space preservation has received support from the National Association of Home Builders. “By retaining a majority of a community’s open space, developers are creating unique lifestyle experiences for their residents. In many cases, they are also enhancing their community’s natural environment. (NAHB, Nature Blossoms as an Amenity in the Southeast, 7/28/08)” With an increase in property values and a mix of natural and built environments residents are receiving multiple benefits from the preservation or addition of open space to a community.



The NC16 corridor as it currently lies contains few open space recreational opportunities for area residents. The most notable existing open space can be found at the Optimist Club Park on Optimist Club Road just west of the Triangle Circle intersection. This park contains ball fields, and is adjacent to the East Lincoln Community Center. Additionally at the end of Unity Church Road, Beatty Ford Park

contains boat ramps, a 9-hole disc golf course and a “sprayground” with other playground amenities.

A currently available open space opportunity can be found along a section of property under conservation easement with the Catawba Lands Conservancy located adjacent to Sally’s YMCA along Forney Creek. This natural riparian corridor is envisioned to one day contain a section of the County’s Greenway Trails System.

Further north along the NC16 corridor an opportunity has presented itself with the addition of a 116.5 acre section of property into the county parks system along Pine Ridge Drive. This property which has become known as Rock Springs Park will provide an area for passive recreation for residents in and around Denver. Amenities will include walking trails, picnic areas, and possibly a small playground. Opportunities for educational purposes are also available at this site.

<sup>1</sup> The Impact of Parks and Open Space on Property Values and the Property Tax Base, John L. Crompton

## **Land Use**

As late as the early 1980s, NC16 was still basically a two-lane road which several homes and scattered business along much of the corridor. There was a business core in what is known as Denver and another at Triangle. Over the last thirty years, residential development increased rapidly just off NC16 and the need for more commercial services followed. The existing land use along the NC16 corridor is the result of allowing development to occur on an individual site basis without examining the impacts of and to adjacent development over an extended period of time. As mentioned in this document, this is not a new revelation, but one that was previously identified and allowed to continue.

A very inconsistent land use pattern of development has resulted as an ad hoc and unsustainable environment commonly referred to as sprawl. However, vacant and residential land still comprises of 55% of the land use which is concentrated more near the southern end (south of the South Pilot Knob Road intersection), but there are still several areas intermixed along the corridor's entire length. Additionally as found through the land use inventory, several buildings are deteriorated or dilapidated which could lend to site redevelopment. There are however a large number of parcels which were individually developed and at the time were the standard type for commercial development, individual driveways and not a part of a larger sense of place. Additionally, industrial uses have also been built sporadically throughout primarily due to the access offered by NC16, supporting the new growth as well as places for manufacturing and employment.

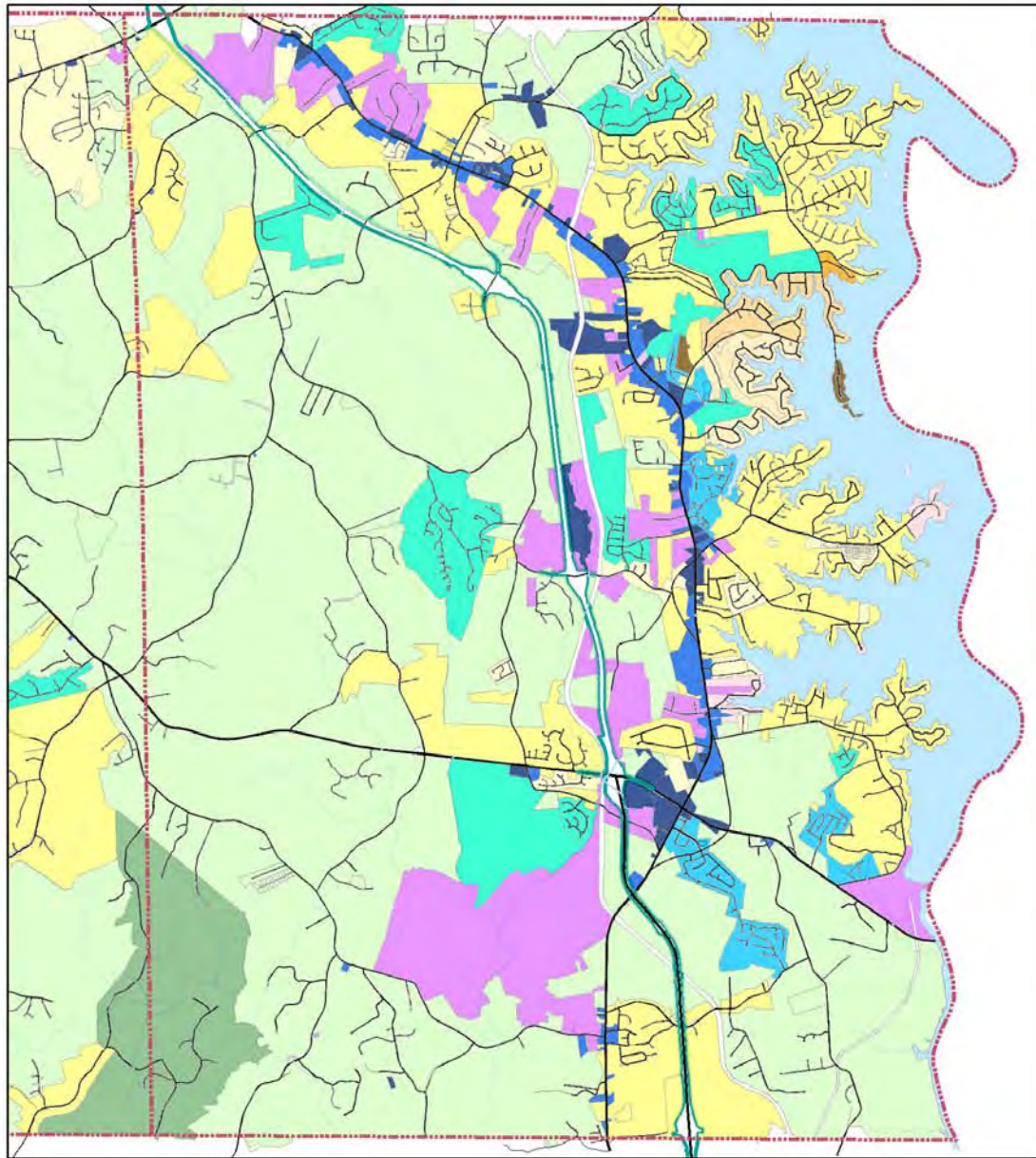
There are indications of a land use pattern which offer an alternative for the future and were aligned with the timeless way of building in the past. Examples of such exist in the Denver and the regional center of Waterside Crossing at the NC73 / NC16 intersection. These offer cluster or node of commercial development.

## **Zoning**

County-wide zoning was first enacted in Lincoln County in 1992 and the pattern of zoning has basically followed that of the land use. Since that time, approximately 730 zoning amendments (rezonings and conditional uses) have been approved which indicates development and continuous change.

Looking at the excerpt of the zoning map, nearly all land between the Catawba County line and South Pilot Knob Road is a mixture of B-N (Neighborhood Business), B-G (General Business) and I-G (General Industrial) with a few dispersed areas of residential zoning. There is also a node of B-N zoning in Lowesville at the intersection of Old Plank Road and NC16.





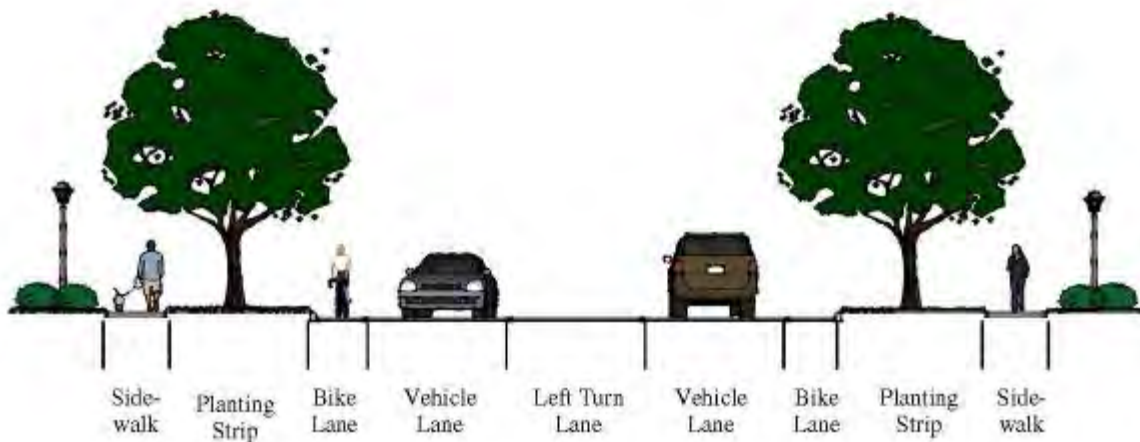


### Analysis and Recommendations

Through a combination of the ideas brought forth at the Public Forums and through many meetings held by the steering committee, the list of draft recommendations for the NC 16 Corridor Vision Plan was formulated. The draft recommendations are as follows:

### Transportation

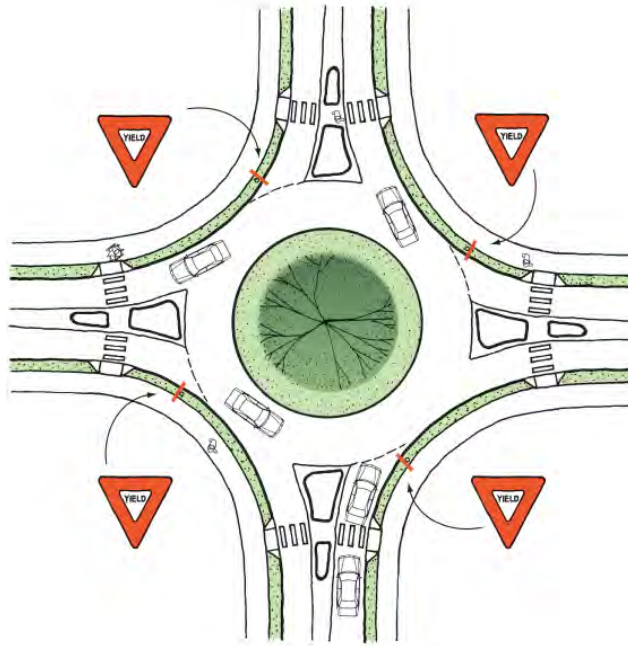
- Three lane street cross-section which includes curb and gutter designs around the identified community centers and also where economically viable.* The recommended cross section is to also include bicycle lanes and sidewalks to promote the use of non-motorized means of transport. Street trees are also a part of the recommended cross-section. Street trees provide aesthetic appeal as well as a buffer for pedestrians from the adjacent roadway. Lighting along the corridor is another recommendation that has aesthetic value but also creates a safer environment for the motorist and the citizenry. Round-a-bouts should also be considered as alternative treatments for intersection designs where appropriate.



- Connectivity for vehicles and pedestrians should exist between parking lots and secondary roads contained within subdivisions.* A connected network of streets and parking lots has the ability to reduce the dependence of the motorist on the main route, NC 16, and in turn can reduce the congestion along the road by giving the public numerous options to travel to and from their destination.
- Intersection improvements are needed at targeted locations including the intersection of NC 16 with Hagers Ferry Road, Campground Road, St. James Church Road and Unity Church Road.* These four intersections contribute to a majority of the back ups that occur along NC 16 during the peak hours. A combination of geometric, signalization and safety improvement are needed at each of these intersections. NC 16's intersection with Hagers Ferry Road would

benefit most from a geometric change to the design as the problem exists due to the angle the three roads intersect. The other intersection improvement that are needed now will only become more a focus once the NC 16 bypass opens and people start to utilize these intersections as a means by which to return to Old 16 from the bypass. Signal timing will only become more crucial at these intersections as traffic volumes on both alignments continue to increase.

- A typical **ROUND-A-BOUT** diagram showing the free flow of traffic around an intersection of two streets. These intersection designs have been used successfully on streets with different volumes of traffic, but must be installed in appropriate locations.



- *Consistent Speed limits are need along NC16.* There are currently 6 changes in speed limits varying from 35 mph to 55 mph. These varying limits make it difficult for drivers to know what the speed limit at any given time. Consistent speeds allow for traffic to flow more consistently as changes in speed do not confuse the traveling public. This comment does not apply to speed limits in school zones and during school hours.
- *Access management strategies should be stricter than current standards.* These strategies should include requirements for shared driveways, side street access and the addition of turning lanes. Stricter access management standards help to reduce the number of conflict points and aid in the reduction of stop and go traffic as the queue of traffic brakes as motorist enter and exit the highway facility. By limiting the number of driveways which access NC 16 and requiring developments to install turning and deceleration lanes allows traffic to move more freely up and down the facility.

## Open Space

- *Development of a County park on County owned land next to the Charter School on Galway Lane.* A portion of property that was obtained on Galway Lane for a



potential school location was not feasible for school development due to topography issues. Thus the Charter School was located and built on a neighboring site. The original property currently under County ownership is suitable as a park site, which would provide additional open space to the corridor.



- Develop an urban green/play space within the South Triangle Community Center with trails connecting East Lincoln Community (Recreation) Center, Optimist Club fields and Sally's YMCA.* The parallel planning effort of the County Greenways Trail Master Plan has also identified this area as a potential primary destination. Linking the recreation amenities of this area with trails would provide greater community access, and open space.
- An amphitheatre/outdoor stage in the South Triangle Community Center.* Expressed in both public forums and within the committee the idea of creation of an outdoor amphitheatre is warranted. This amphitheatre would provide an area for bands and/or playwrights to showcase local talent, and provide the residents of the corridor with a stage on which various activities could take place.
- Integrate small parks in development.* With an abundance of residential and commercial development occurring along the corridor, a push for development driven local small parks is recommended. These small parks would serve the local neighborhoods within which they would occur.
- Incorporate the Carolina Thread Trail project.* Working with the regional trail planning efforts has produced the idea of connecting the amenities of Sally's YMCA, the East Lincoln Recreation Center, the Optimist ball fields and the South Triangle Community Center. A main focus for trail linkages in the South Triangle Community Center has been identified, although it is also important to view the entire corridor and the potential for trail linkages throughout. This would include the area known as "historic Denver" and the newly proposed Rock Springs Park to the North, the development along business Hwy 16 and Hwy 73, as well as the Mountain Island Educational State Forest to the South and the various commercial nodes and residential neighborhoods throughout the corridor.
- Follow recommendations in the Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan.* Outlined within the 2006 Lincoln-Lincoln County Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan are a set of recommendations that were derived from National and



Statewide trends, existing parkland and service levels, a citizen survey summary and public forum results. Open Space development along the Hwy 16 corridor is directly influenced through these recommendations, specifically with new park areas, and greenway linkages sought along the corridor.

## Public Utilities

- *Sewer availability to the “inner-core” of the corridor to facilitate growth such as multi-family and commercial projects (the inner-core is defined as the areas between Lake Norman and Little Egypt Road along the Forney Creek Basin).* Most of the new growth will occur between NC16 and the new NC16 Bypass and such service are necessary for this development area, supported by the two main access routes. Sewer availability will allow development of higher density residential, commercial and industrial projects.
- *Commercial and industrial service as necessary to support citizens.* Very recently, capacity was a major concern for new projects, limiting what could be developed and where that could occur. However the new wastewater treatment plant is under construction and capacity should be available once the facility is completed in 2010. This has been a hindrance for new development and future projects in the area.
- *Concentrate on sewer needs at this time since water service is in place.* Water lines have been in place and have a wider distribution. Sewer service, while available in many areas, is still much more limited and will require the extension of primary trunk lines in the area. A capital improvements plan is in place and continually examined to keep pace with the growth pressure and needs of the community.
- *Require utility connections to properties when: at time of new construction; change in use (i.e. office to commercial); major expansion of building or site more than 50% of value and/or square footage).* There are several sites which are connected to individual septic systems. This is primarily where there was no public sewer service available at the time of construction. In many cases, sewer service has now been extended to these areas, but the buildings with functioning septic systems have not connected. Therefore in order to lessen the environmental impact of future septic failures, adequately treat effluent other than domestic flow, and fully support the public wastewater system connection to the public system is necessary and vital at such a time when major expansions occur.



## Land Use

- *Provide density incentives for residential development, move development farther back and have conservation area at road, then higher density allowed.* Two concerns cited by the Steering Committee were the lack of quality apartments and the lack of greenspace along the NC16 road frontage. One of the barriers for quality apartment development was the density level permitted was too low. This being the case if greenspace was conserved along the frontage, density for quality apartment projects could be increased. This will allow projects to become more viable for the developer, but yet screen it from the NC16 Corridor and retain an area of greenspace by breaking up the continuous look of development.
- *Encourage quality development.* In some cases developers will use less expensive materials to build a project, limited or no landscaping and poor site design. The long term effect of this leads to blight and decline in property values which does not promote economic vitality along the NC16 Corridor. The use of quality materials and good site design principles leads to a more attractive development which in turn can lead to attracting visitors, shoppers and a positive image of the corridor.
- *Encourage landscaping requirements.* This is a very important element in site design. Building standards only address the structure itself and without site or landscaping standards, the development looks unfinished and out of place.
- *Nodes should be concentration for business and mixed-use.* Sprawl development lends itself to an unsustainable land use pattern which actually encourages traffic congestion, a lack of connectivity, bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. By concentrating commercial activities in nodes, destination traffic is concentrated to certain areas which adequately can handle large volumes and alternative routes for bicycles and pedestrian movement can be accommodated on local routes. Furthermore, the demographics of the east Lincoln County area do not support a fully developed 12 miles of commercial strip development.
- *New signs standards addressing size and materials.* Over the past years, different sign regulations have been passed and amended. Most recently the newly adopted UDO permits signs which are smaller than previously allowed, but also offer size bonuses for a reduction in height and retained the allowance of one temporary sign per use. Materials must also match the primary building. Along the corridor there are still a number of signs which are larger than permitted today and a number of businesses have numerous signs on the site. This overabundance of signage effectively clutters the corridor and makes it difficult in some places to read the signs because they compete with each other to be seen, making each ineffective for the businesses to display useful information. Additionally, the over use of temporary signs lead to clutter and litter problems along the corridor as many companies do pick up outdated signs once placed. A comprehensive set of

sign standards which meet the business owners needs to display information and the customers needs to find businesses should be further examined.

- *Encourage green space between nodes.* As previously mentioned, continuous development along the corridor is neither sustainable nor desirable. Areas of greenspace, as natural areas where topography is unsuitable for development and recreational space can be developed should exist in areas.
- *Avoid mass grading, development should conform to natural terrain when possible.* In areas where extensive grading is required for larger scale developments, the property should be terraced and green corridors retained to control erosion runoff and maintenance of steep slopes.
- *Pedestrian spaces needed in new development.* The corridor does not permit pedestrians to access adjacent properties in many instances. By adding pedestrian spaces and connection within new development and into existing developments, traffic congestion can be lessened by eliminated short vehicular trips. A safe environment for pedestrians is essential to enhancing the corridor and its uses.
- *Reduce strip commercial & sprawl development.* This can be accomplished by realigned commercial development to nodes at major intersections and development of office, higher density residential and greenspace between those nodes. This approach also reduces the pressure to develop outlying land which in turn protects agricultural lands, water quality and does not require costly road improvements to service limited areas.
- *Adverse visual impacts (eyesores) should be avoided.* The impression a community gives is largely based on how it looks. In cases where a parcel with haphazard placement of materials or an unmaintained building can detract from the surrounding parcels and be uninviting for consumers. Additionally it can contribute to blight in the area and decline in property values.
- *Eliminate / mitigate businesses with outdoor equipment & storage of raw materials in front.* There are certain businesses which cater to the needs of customers needing large equipment, landscaping materials, construction goods and similar products. In many cases, these raw materials are placed in the front so businesses can advertise or show their goods. However this could be mitigated by placing the office closer to the street and the storage of materials away from the corridor, leading to a more attractive landscape. This has been done successfully with large format stores and similar practices could be transferred to local businesses. Secondly, these businesses could be concentrated in specific areas of the corridor with other related businesses rather than placed next to professional offices and restaurants for example.
- *Building design standards in the STO should be followed and enhanced.* In the original draft of the UDO, a concept of the Suburban Thoroughfare Overlay was

proposed. This type of overlay was meant to address the issues and concerns, several of which are mentioned in these recommendations, along the corridor. There was support for these overlay standards in certain areas, but not for all roads county-wide. Several of these proposed standards should be revisited and their merits discussed during the creation of development standards only being applied to rapidly growing areas, such as the NC16 Corridor.

- “South Triangle” along with “Downtown Denver” & “Lowesville” should be community centers along corridor. It is the recommendation of this plan to encourage development of three community centers as a concentration of activity for the eastern Lincoln County area. These centers will serve as meeting / gathering places and should be developed in an urban or traditional downtown form to reduce the need to drive, bring economically viable and sustainable places, support the community character and quality of life, and to identify / become a landmark for the eastern Lincoln County areas.

*The following graphic depicts potential development along the corridor if the recommendations are followed. This will require major redevelopment of existing structures and new developments on vacant properties and will take many years to realize. Such major shifts in a development pattern do not occur in short periods of time.*





## **Intersection Analysis and Future Development Potential**

One of the goals of the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan Steering Committee is to determine the potential site(s) for the development of a community center(s) for the eastern Lincoln County area. A community center will serve as a landmark or identification of the area; it helps to determine the character of not only the immediate area, but also the general surrounding environment; it can serve in the sense as a traditional downtown of a city.

Old NC16 is a twelve mile long corridor and to think that a single community center will be the only focus is not valid. The Steering Committee and Planning Staff have determined that a preferred approach is to identify multiple centers that will better serve the overall corridor. However the intensity or size of the centers will be different based on the location and area to be served. As an example, commercial development is regularly classified as neighborhood, community and regional shopping centers. Similarly classic downtowns range in size from a few blocks to many several blocks depending on the size of the town or city it serves. Therefore in this case, the Steering Committee has determined that there should be a larger community center to serve as the central landmark and destination for the residents of corridor, with two smaller centers to serve the northern and southern corridor residents with essential daily services.

This is not to say however that commercial development will not be permitted at any other location on the corridor, which is hardly the case particularly based on existing development pattern. It is though a recommendation of the Steering Committee that certain attention and development be focused at these locations. These areas will be targeted to be comprehensively planned with detailed small area plans programmed as future studies.

There are nine critical intersections reviewed as potential community centers along the corridor. Determining factors to consider these as critical intersection primarily include traffic counts and the area/residents served to access to NC16. These intersections and accompanying analysis are as follows:

### ***“Downtown” Denver***

This intersection actually includes both the St. James / Will Proctor and Forney Hill / Campground roads as they cross Old NC16 and is the traditional downtown area of the Denver community. It is located in the northern area of the corridor, however does serve as one of the three direct access points to the new NC16 (under construction) bringing many people through with semi-local trips – to and from their house to new NC 16 . It serves many developing areas with Forney and St. James roads running to the west and Campground Road running to the east and into Terrell / Sherrills Ford areas of Catawba County. The Land Use Plan designates this area as “Mixed Residential / Commercial which encompasses the Denver area core. The area is basically built out and divided into smaller lots with the majority of the structures being in stable condition. Parcel consolidation will be very difficult in trying to engage multiple property owners and the rehabilitation of existing buildings or removal for new construction and will be costly. Larger tract to the southeast of the main intersection could become a new center.

Redevelopment of the former RAnell site (now owned by Denver Baptist Church) and the two adjacent vacant tracts have good potential and would provide an additional link between St. James Road and old NC16 south of the main intersection. This being the case, a timely holistic redevelopment of the area is not overly realistic and could be cost prohibitive. However due its historic reference, some of the structures in place (such as Stacy's Restaurant, Denver Furniture and the former post office) and the existing street pattern, the potential to strengthen it as a community center is very good to cater to the citizens in the northern part of the corridor.



### **Webb Road**

Webb Road serves a large area of development to the east of Old NC16, the county's water intake site / treatment plant, public boat access to Lake Norman and is this area's only access to Old NC 16. There is no road heading west at this time and the area cannot be expanded further west due to the railroad cutting off expansion, but land to the south is accessible. Other than the NC16 corridor, the remaining land is identified as residential in



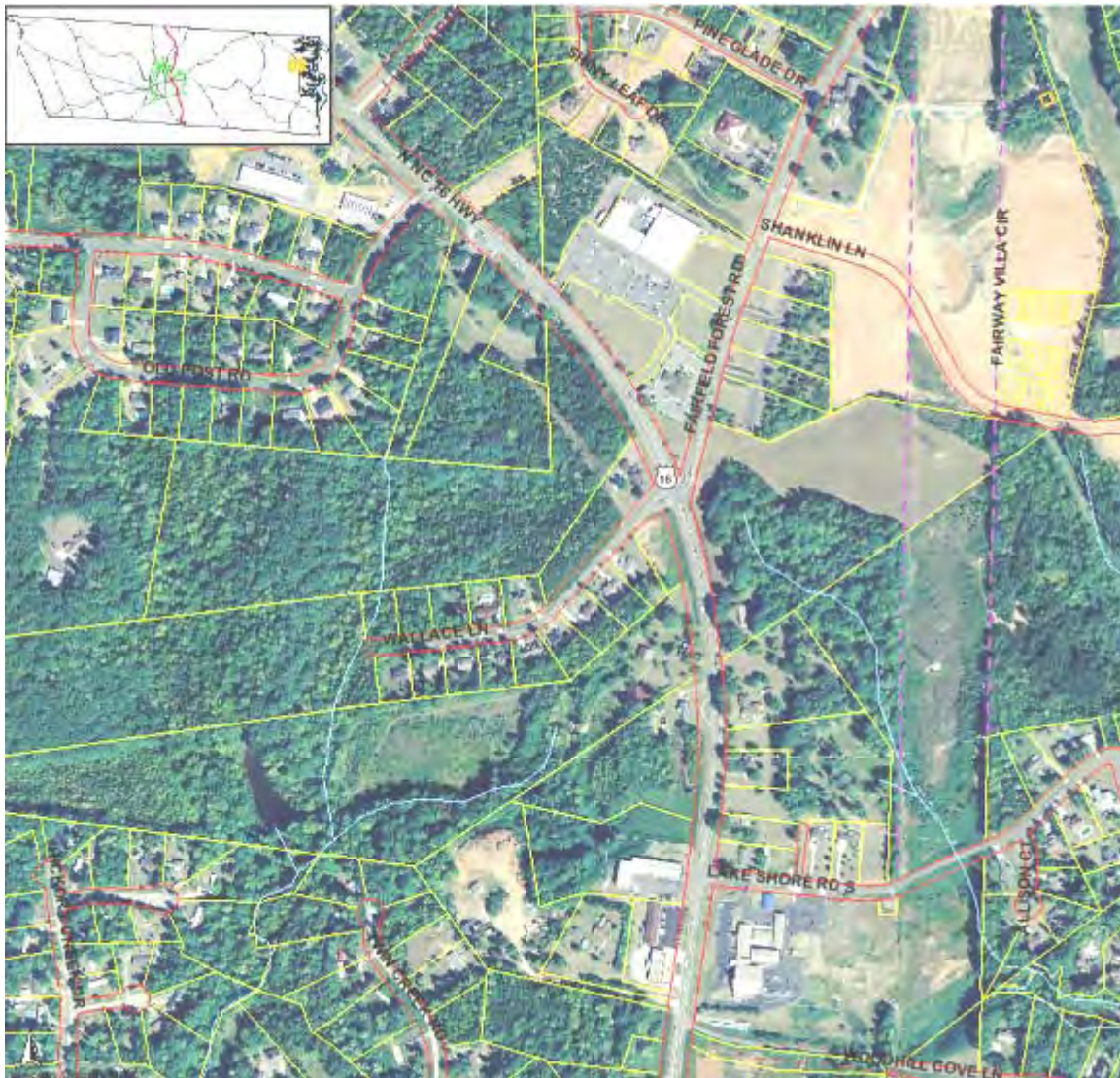
the Land Use Plan. There are several tracts of large undeveloped property surrounding this intersection, but a few are impacted by topographic conditions which could limit development. This intersection is also located towards the northern end of the corridor.



### ***Fairfield (Westport)***

The Westport community has been established for many years. It was one of the earlier developments to be built in the area, encompassing a golf course and many homes. A community shopping center with grocery, pharmacy and specialty shops is located on the northeast corner and serves the area. Presently Wallace Road extends to the west of old NC 16 and serves single family homes. The Land Use Plan designates the same future land uses as the Webb Road intersection. There are a few larger vacant tracts parcels on the west side of old NC16 which could be developed. However these parcels are configured in such a manner where property lines should be adjusted to accommodate a well designed development plan.





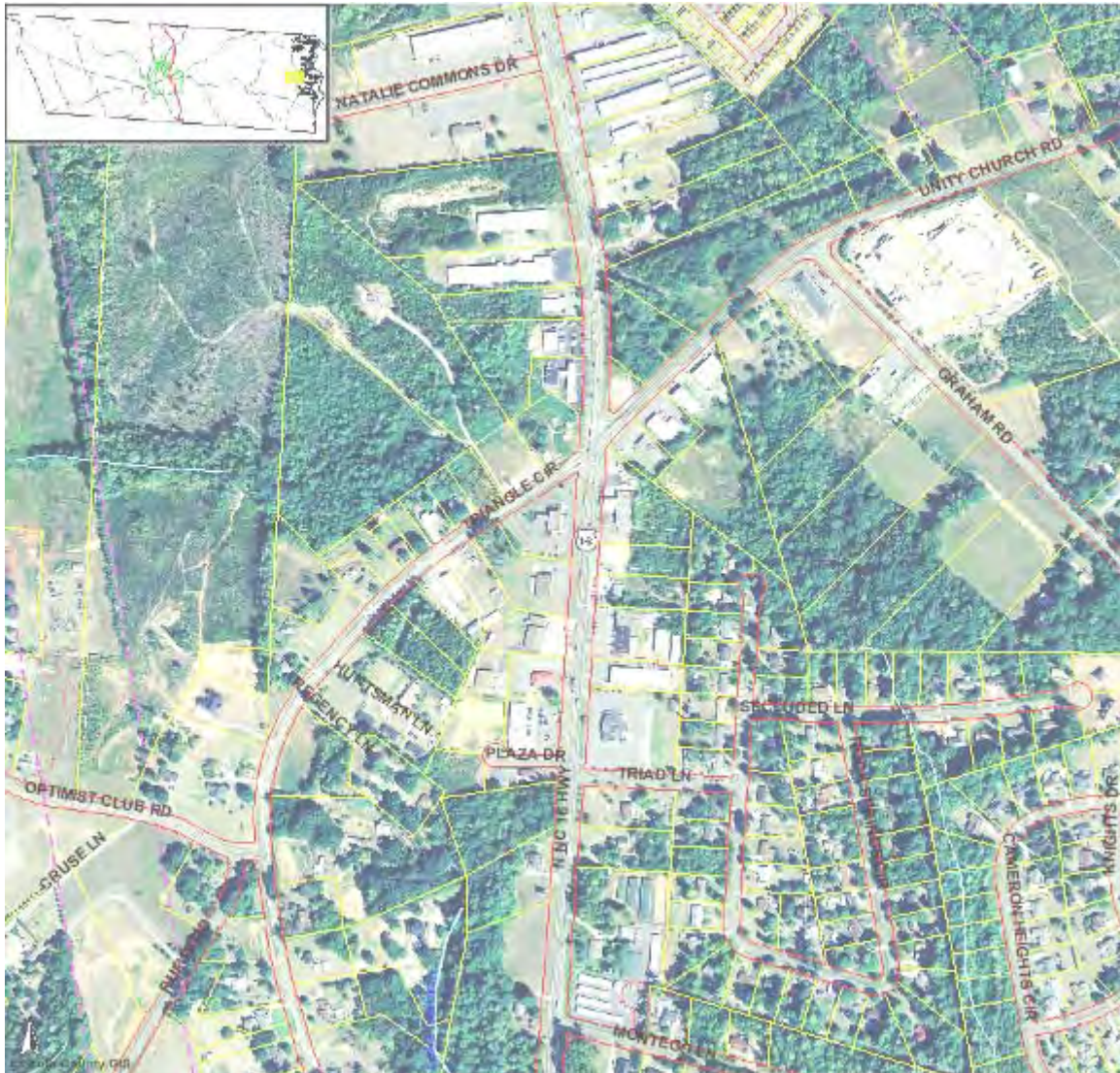
### ***North Triangle / Unity Church***

This intersection is one of the busiest along the old NC16 Corridor. Unity Church Road, combined with Graham, runs to the east and provides access to a large area of development and a public boat access to Lake Norman. North Triangle Circle connects to Optimist Club Road which is another one of the three direct access points to the new NC16. Optimist Club Road continues west and intersects with Little Egypt Road which is another important north/south corridor (and runs parallel to NC16). Many people use Little Egypt Road to bypass old NC16, then use Optimist Club Road and North Triangle Circle to get back to old NC16, then proceed across to Unity Church Road or north on old NC16. The Future Land Use Plan identifies the area outside of the corridor as residential.

This area is also considered the historic center of the Triangle community and has been heavily developed over the years. Presently at the intersection of old NC16 and North



Triangle/Unity Church Road the parcels are small, individually owned and subsequently developed. This built out configuration would make it difficult to assemble adequately sized parcels and expensive to acquire and raze existing structures for a well-planned development. This is the similar issue with the Downtown Denver area; although the location makes good sense to establish a community center, existing conditions does not make it feasible in the short term.



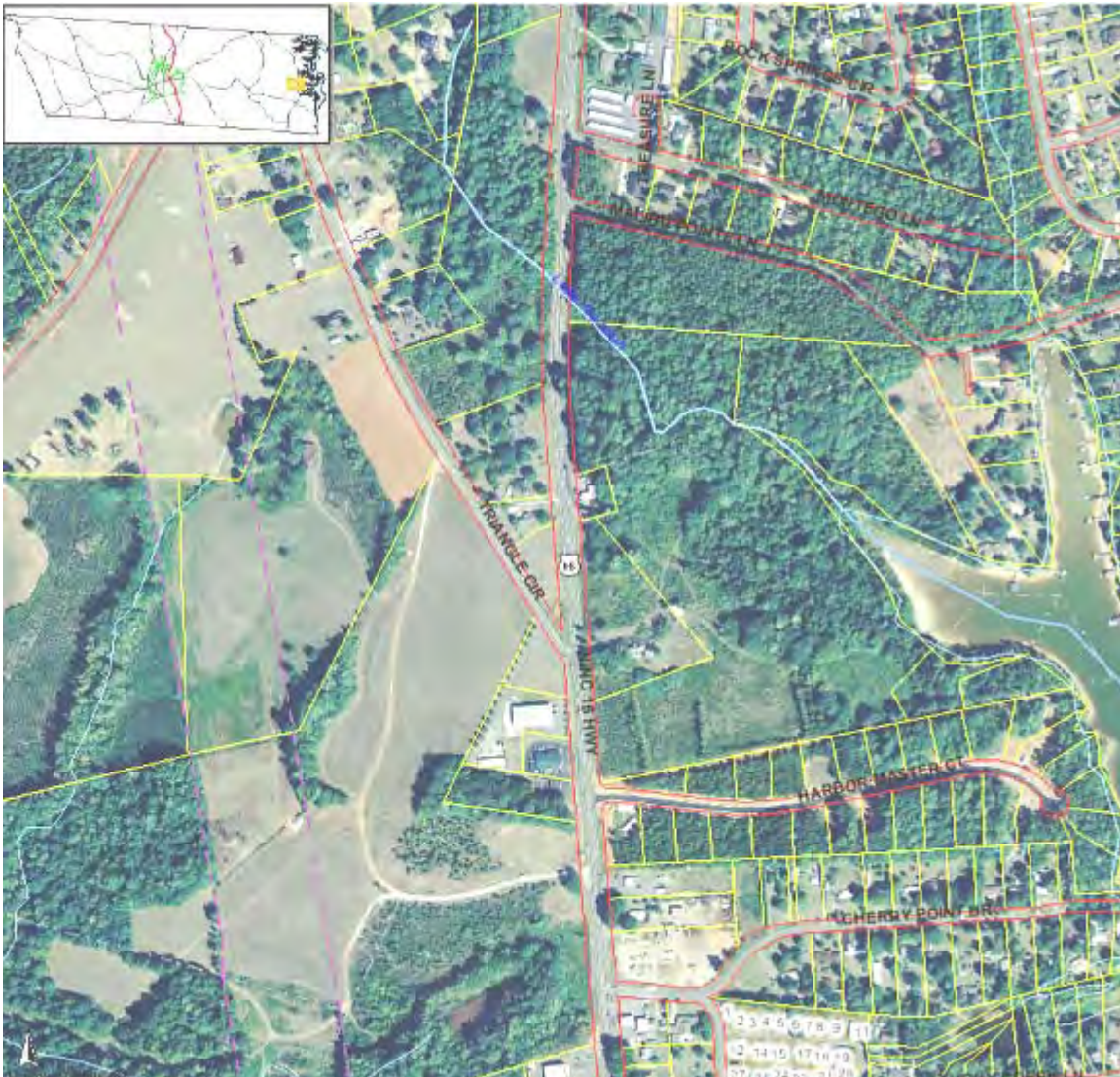
### *South Triangle*

The characteristics of access to the west of old NC16 for this intersection is the same as North Triangle Circle in that this connects to Optimist Club Road as well. However a road at this intersection does not continue to the east of old NC16 at this time. South Triangle Circle connects with old NC16 at a sharp angle, which can inhibit the intersection from functioning at optimal efficiency. The adopted Future Land Use Plan identifies the area between old and new NC16 past the corridor limits as “employment



center” which offers development with a broad range of opportunities past single family resident development. This area has also been the site for the popular Denver Days festival held in the late summer/early fall of the year.

The majority of the land surrounding the intersection is vacant and held in large tracts on both sides of old NC16. There are a few smaller tracts with both residential and commercial uses. This arrangement can lead to easier development of the properties for a main community center without the need for multiple parcel consolidation or removal of existing uses. This location is also approximately midpoint along the 12 mile corridor. An additional benefit to this location is the fact that Lake Norman’s proximity. This is the closest point that old NC16 comes to the lake and there is ample vacant land to make a connection with potential incorporation of added public access into a planned mixed-use development. These factors make it the recommended community center for the corridor featuring many components found in a “downtown” area.





### *Hagers Ferry*

Hagers Ferry Road intersection is included in this discussion primarily due to the number of properties the road serves to the east of old NC16, however there is no opportunity for access to the west. Also there have been a number of developments in this area which makes it an important location. There are a few larger tracts of land to the northeast of the intersection that could be developed as a community center. The remainder of the land surrounding this intersection is developed in smaller tracts with commercial uses which hinders redevelopment. The Land Use Plan indicates the land to develop as residential past the limits of the corridor. Another obstacle is the present intersection design in which North Pilot Knob connects to Hagers Ferry, and then both connect to old NC16. This design functions poorly and has been considered dangerous by the residents due to the odd configuration. Modification to the intersection could take place and the installation of a round-a-bout would eliminate the existing configuration with an efficiently functioning and safe alternative design, as well as a local landmark.





**NC73**

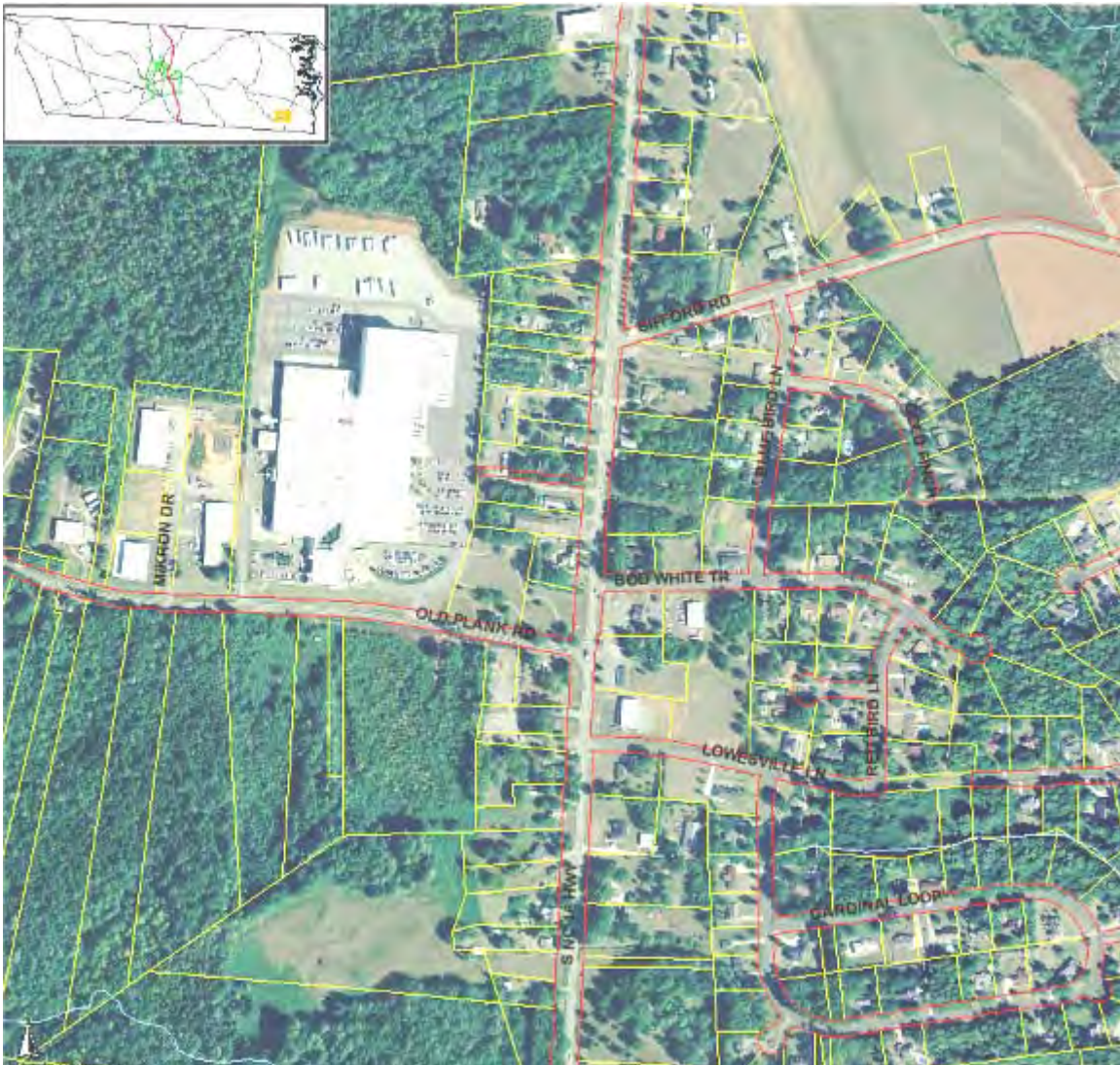
A major intersection in Eastern Lincoln County which serves as crossroads for north/south and east/west connection, this area has seen and continues to see development occurring. This intersection serves as a regional center focusing on large retail and office uses. NC 73 is one of two roads which cross Lake Norman to the east. As it runs west, it provides direct connection with new NC16 and onto Lincolnton. There are available vacant tracts, but the development characteristics and location have set a precedent that will continue. The Land Use Plan also targets this area to be “Regional Business,” thus establishing a community center is problematic.





***Lowesville (Old Plank Rd / Sifford Rd)***

The area between Old Plank Road and Sifford Road along old NC16 is identified as “Community Business” in the Land Use Plan, with industrial uses to the northwest and residential for all other areas outside the corridor. Old Plank Road provides a good connector running northwest to NC73 and the employment center with Blum and Duke Energy facilities just west of the intersection. Sifford Road runs east providing access for several developments and ties into Killian Farm Road. While Old Plank and Sifford roads are offset and do not make an aligned intersection, the section of old NC16 between could transform itself into a “main street” with an organized redevelopment effort. There are several larger parcels across from Blum facility which could be developed in a block pattern and tie back into old NC16. The existing development contains individually divided parcels with the majority built upon. This intersection is located at the southern end of the old NC16 corridor and there is an opportunity for this to become a future mixed-use community center for this area.





In the analysis of the existing conditions and the realistic opportunities to create an attraction as a central community center for eastern Lincoln County that the **South Triangle Circle** intersection offers the greatest potential due to the availability of land and its connection to the new NC16 bypass. Secondly, *Downtown Denver and Lowesville* offers the greatest potential to serve as community centers for the north and south areas of the corridor, but with a different appeal. This is not to say that the other intersections identified in this analysis along the twelve-mile corridor do not have merit or would not serve the residents of the area. Each intersection, to some degree, has development and redevelopment potential, but those development plans should be more focused on a localized service area, or neighborhood centers.

## **Development Centers**

Development in a “node” form concentrates or clusters retail, office and other commercial development at a certain point, often at intersections for better access. However it is important to understand that these intersections should not all develop in the same manner. Demographics in the area can not support the amount of retail uses that could be built if each of the main intersections were built as community centers.

There are three primary types of centers to support various levels of daily service needs of the citizens. They are as follows:

- Neighborhood Center - Smaller service area, providing services for those living fairly close by.
- Community Center - A service area for a larger trade area having goods for several neighborhoods and developments.
- Regional Center - A larger service area attracting people from a widespread area.

Typical land uses in these centers are connected in a fashion where each are easily accessible by foot. The main difference between the Neighborhood and Community Centers are the intensity or amount of the uses. Smaller stores with easy access and a variety of daily use goods are the staple for the Neighborhood Centers. In contrast, Community Centers serve a large area and are geared more to providing goods and services needed on a weekly basis. Neighborhood & Community Center Areas – commercial/retail, professional offices, churches, civic, limited upper floor residential.

The largest center along this corridor serves residents living in a larger area supporting their weekly and specialty needs. This type of center is a typical setting for land uses which are primarily non-residential which incorporates large areas of retail, such as a regional mall or “big-box” centers, and large office buildings. The Regional Center along NC16 is the NC16 & NC73 intersection.

Between these cores are transition areas which accommodate development of high & medium density residential, professional office, civic, schools, and churches. By having these areas of lower commercial intensity, they become the break in sprawl development

and offer areas for apartments and other types of affordable housing options for residents who work in the establishments along the corridor.

## **Focusing In on the Community Centers**

The three proposed community center areas are discussed in more detail. The following recommendations only serve to reflect certain principles and characteristics for the development and redevelopment of these areas as centers and landmarks for the communities. It is a recommendation of this plan that Detailed Small Area Plans be created for each center with extensive input from the property owners so that the potential for the site can be realized for both the owners and the community.

This Legend is to be used with the three community center maps in this section. These maps show general areas, walking distances and potential connections for roads.



## **Legend**

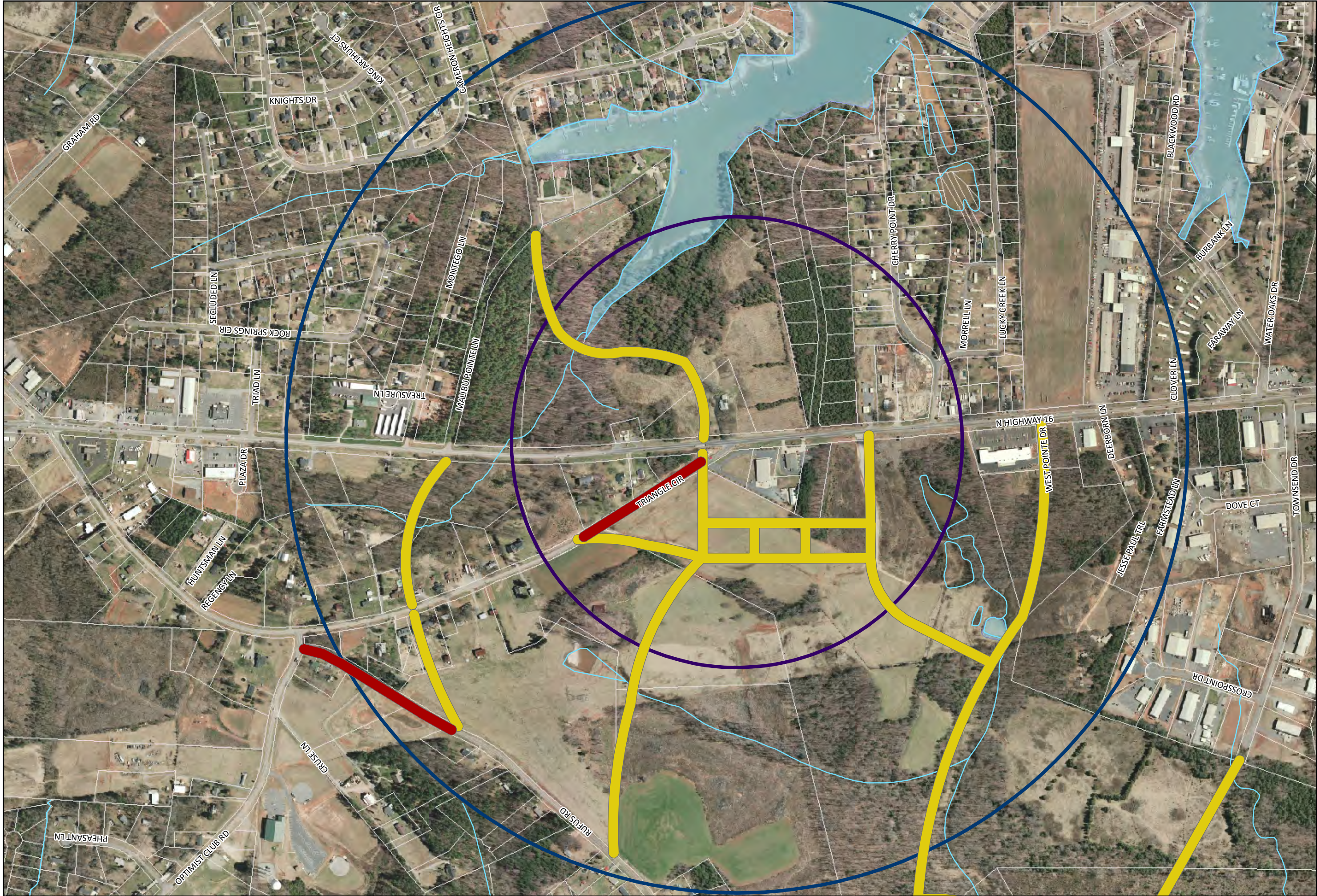
### *South Triangle*

As mentioned in the Intersection Analysis portion of this document, this area provides for the best short term development of a community center along the NC16 Corridor. It is located in the middle of the corridor, has large amounts of vacant land with direct access to the new NC16 Bypass.

Several concepts were discussed in the potential development of this center. The area should include an urban green or open space as well as a natural area with a small amphitheatre near the creek and pond at the southern edge of the vacant property fronting NC16. The center should also be built in an urban or downtown type setting with on-street parking. There should be a mix of commercial and office uses with upper story residential units. The Duke Energy transmission easement will offer areas for additional parking and a section of the Carolina Thread Trail. This easement will also serve as a transition between the commercial activity near NC16 and the future business park for employment / industrial activity with frontage on the new NC16 Bypass.

Triangle Circle Road and Rufus Road intersections on Optimist Club Road are less than fifty (50) feet apart. To alleviate congestion on the Triangle Circle and Rufus Road intersections on Optimist Club Road, a new road is planned to run south from Optimist Club Road and connect to Rufus Road, then from Rufus Road to NC16 linking the development areas. This will provide an alternate route for the residents to access NC16, the business park area and the community center. Ultimately, South Triangle Circle could be realigned to create a better intersection with NC16, however this would slated as a long-term goal.







*“Downtown Denver”*

This community center is the historic core of northeastern Lincoln County. Over the years, development has changed the area, but particular sites still function as they have for decades such as Denver Home Furnishing, Stacey’s Restaurant and Rock Springs Elementary School. There are two primary issues which need to be addressed in this area; 1) traffic patterns, and 2) building placement. The intersection of Forney Road/Campground with NC16 provides a hub, however the new NC16 Bypass will bring traffic by St. James Church Road to NC16 and creates a bottleneck. Also traffic pressure on Will Proctor Road continues to increase, which it can not adequately handle due primarily to its width.

The second issue deals with building placement and the potential for new development. Newer development has been allowed to be built in a single use auto-oriented configuration with little regard to the historic context of the area. Examples such as the ice vending machine, BP gas station and strip centers did not integrate with previous character. The development in the area has eroded any pedestrian opportunities that at one time were available.

To enhance the area both in transportation and development, the site of the former RAnell site and adjacent larger tracts becomes pivotal for redevelopment as a future community center. Denver Baptist Church now owns one of the tracts and presently uses it as their West Campus. A new road along a property line connecting St. James Church Road to NC16 near Forest Hills Road would allow an alternate connection to the new NC16 Bypass dispersing traffic and providing an alternate other than the St. James Church intersection with NC16. This road will also provide a catalyst for redevelopment of these parcels incorporating Denver Baptist’s and other owners’ long term goals and providing revenue to the church. Development could also include a public gathering space and potentially a walkable connection to the school.







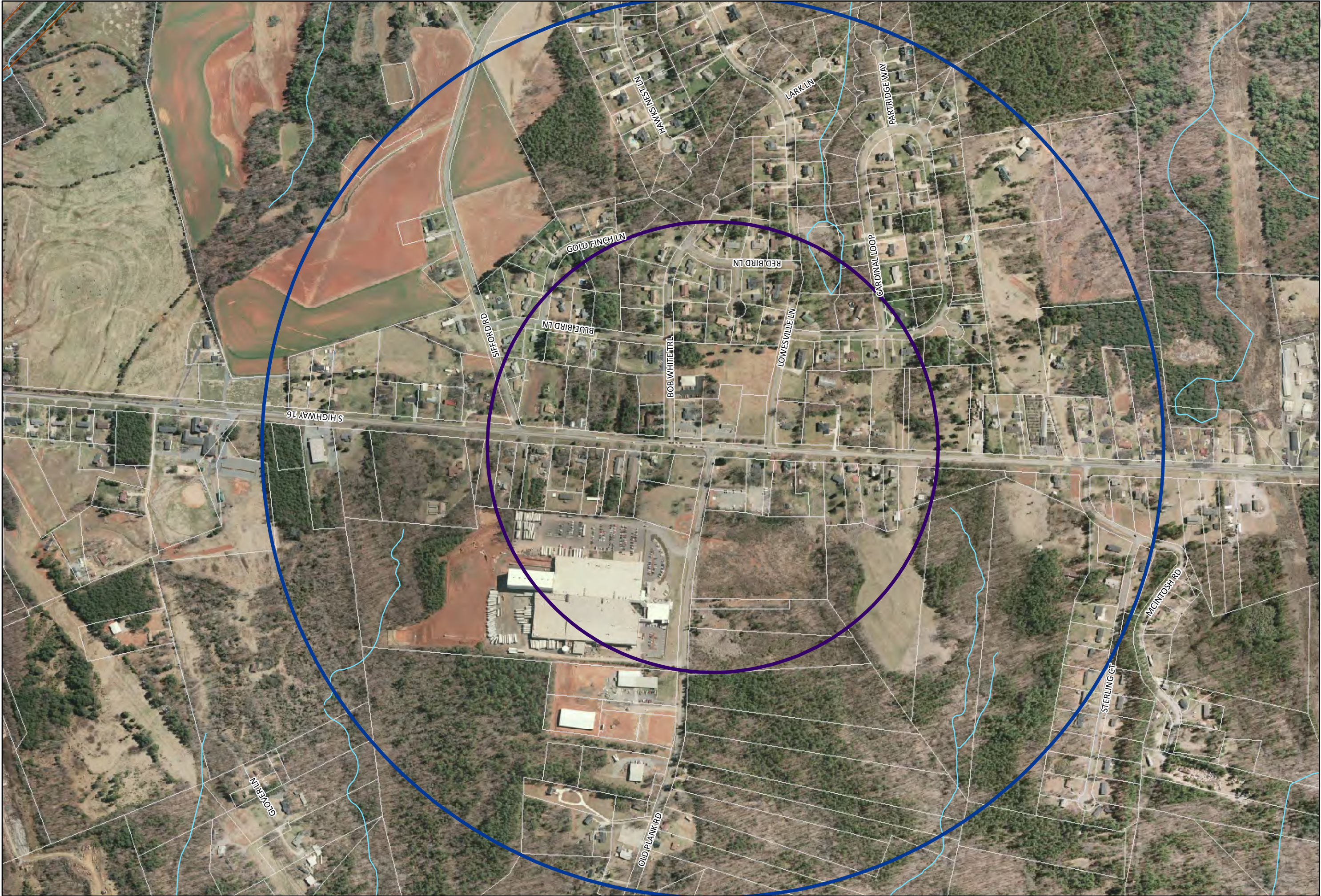


*Lowesville*

A future community center in the Lowesville area will serve the residents of southeastern Lincoln County. This area has several positives aspects, including an employment area, small stores and offices coupled with larger vacant tracts. Old Plank Road serves as a connection to new residential developments to the northwest, NC16 provides a key link south to the new NC16 Bypass (and to Charlotte) and Sifford Road to the east.

Development pressure in this area has not been a great as in others along the corridor, but given that this area's proximity to Charlotte and the regional center development at NC16 and NC73, the area could see additional development once public services become more available. There are several tracts which if combined or developed in a coordinated fashion, could become a viable community center for the area.





# Old Plank

## NC 16 Corridor Vision Plan





## ***Implementation***

### **Long Term Approach**

Implementation of the recommendations for a large area such as the NC16 Corridor does not occur in a short period of time. It also involves many property owners, civic groups, and governmental agencies to accomplish these recommendations.

The corridor as it stands today is a result of the standards, or lack thereof, which were in place – development was simply left to be market driven by an individual property owner and not on the cumulative or collective effects to the community. However as development occurs over time, that follows a set of standards addressing specific concerns or issues, the desired result will take place. With new standards in place as part of the newly adopted Unified Development Ordinance and supplemental standards recommended in the plan, the opposite can take place.

There are many aspects that come into play when we look at changes along the corridor which include economic conditions, property use versus property value, building or site condition, real estate availability, market and service needs, county and/or state resources, investors / entrepreneurs, and even natural disasters such as a flood for example. Ultimately, the places where we work, play and live come to reflect the special character of our community. To garner the opportunities at hand, the plan looks long-term and the accomplishment of the recommendations will occur long-term with positives results for the eastern Lincoln County community.

### **Adaptive Parcel and Building Reuse**

Since much of the corridor has been developed, one of the key factors for the future of the old NC16 Corridor is the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the existing older buildings and underutilized parcels. In the plan's initial phase, a land use inventory was conducted and identified 53% of the parcels were either single-family residential or vacant. Additionally 58 structures were considered to be deteriorated or dilapidated.

Over the past several years, many single family homes along the corridor have either been converted to commercial space or razed and new commercial structures built. There are other cases where older buildings have been renovated and new facades built, giving the appearance of a new building. These illustrations promote the opportunity for change and reinvestment in along the corridor. However in several cases, these have been single user franchise shops with no interconnection or community integration.

Building redevelopment is an economical alternative to new construction if the opportunity is present. Generally site is graded and utilities are in place to serve the project. The building must be in good condition and adaptable to the proposal. It is argued that this can be more expensive than greenfield, or vacant, parcel development which in some instances is correct. Nevertheless, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation or



retrofitting of existing buildings or otherwise developed sites should be a major consideration for development along the corridor.

The issue at hand in this task is to find a balance between rebuilding the obsolete buildings and building on vacant tracts. Abandoned or underutilized properties can also diminish the value of surrounding property, which directly reduces property tax revenue. These empty or deteriorating stores can create blight and potentially erode local property values, of which these effects on the county are increased by the resulting loss of tax base. By private reinvestment in underperforming or obsolete buildings and sites, this trend can be reversed and property values rise exponentially.

Along the corridor there are several underperforming properties, such as single family homes, older industrial and commercial buildings are a prime opportunity for reuse. These sites offer a particular opportunity with a large, flat, well-drained, developable space linked to existing infrastructure, NC16 allows direct access all of which results in reduced development costs by not having to grade the site, construct new roads or service line extensions. They are perfect for much denser, mixed-use developments in which people can live, work, shop and eat. These sites become opportunities for reinventing the corridor, rather than continuing to build single entity, undistinguishing areas of sprawl without a sense of place whatsoever.

A number of opportunities are available and can be as simple as a building façade replacement, adding landscaping and creating an adaptive reuse of an existing structure. Other sites will require razing an obsolete building and full site redevelopment. Potentially the county could examine giving clear policy signals to developers promoting redevelopment and easing the way for these properties. One example could be certain incentives for permitting this type of activity, such as density bonuses for infill / redevelopment sites, thus fostering land redevelopment.

## **Implementation Plan Matrix**

The following Implementation Plan Matrix consists four sections. It outlines the Recommendation (strategies), Responsibilities, How to Accomplish (action), and Timeframe needed to fulfill the goals of the vision. Included are policy recommendations regarding land development, ordinance amendments, studies which analyze the opportunities and needs of the community, along with partnerships and actions to put the plan in action.

It is recommended that these Implementation Strategies be further prioritized and a review scheme for an annual audit or report card be developed for easy understanding of what has been completed, what is being worked on and what is left to do.

### **Recommendation:**

This states the recommendation or project for implementation from the NC16 Corridor Vision Plan.

**Responsibility:**

This states the department or group responsible or in charge of moving forward with the stated recommendation.

**How To Accomplish:**

This states certain steps or actions needed to implement the recommendation.

**Timeframe:**

This states the priority or when the recommendation or project action should begin. There are four (4) timeframes;

- Ongoing (continuous daily/monthly),
- Immediate (1 – 2 years),
- Short-term (3-7 years), and
- Long-term (8+ years).

**Funding:**

Funding amount and source for the projects recommend will be determined as the work plan is developed. Several projects will be accomplished by the Planning Staff; however there may be a need to hire outside consultants or other assistance once the scope of work is written.

Recommendation	Responsibility	How To Accomplish	Timeframe
Adopt a new recommended street cross-section for old NC16	Planning & Inspections Dept., LNRPO and NCDOT	Work with NCDOT and the RPO to adopt a street cross-section (which includes the elements listed in the Plan) in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan <i>-and-</i> Work with developers to construct recommended elements as development occurs	immediate
Work with NCDOT to determine actual right-of-way	Planning & Inspections and NCDOT	Continue working relationship with NCDOT; when development plans are approved, right-of-ways are shown on plans/plats; these need to be confirmed by deed reference as part of the plan review process; this will be an ongoing process; if a comprehensive program is desired, significant funding and personnel resources need to be committed in the future	immediate

Connectivity between parking lots and develop a network of connected streets to all area properties	Planning & Inspections	Requirements are in place in the new UDO; continued work with the development community explaining need and safety	immediate
NC16 intersections need immediate improvements: Hagers Ferry; Campground / St. James; Unity Church / Triangle	Planning & Inspections	Detailed Small Area Plans developed for intersections/areas; Staff will perform work as part of duties, but minimal funds will have to be in place for plan graphics; each plan will take approximately six to nine months to complete	Hagers Ferry - long term
			Campground & St. James - immediate
			Triangle Area – short term
Speed Limit be consistent and appropriate	County Manager, Planning & Inspections, and NCDOT	Work with NCDOT to review and establish a comprehensive review of speed limits along the corridor	long term
Access management required including shared driveways, side street access and turn lanes	Planning Staff	Requirements are in place in the new UDO; continued work with the development community explaining need and safety	immediate

Sewer availability to the “inner-core” of the Corridor to facilitate higher intensity growth such as multi-family and commercial projects “Inner Core” is the areas between Lake Norman and Little Egypt Road along the Forney Creek basin Utilities should be underground for new and redeveloped properties	Planning & Inspections and Public Works	Continually work with Public Works to update and plan for expansion in the identified development area. This will include meetings to review sewer extension plans, developer plans and construction standards	long term
Commercial and industrial service is necessary to support citizens	Planning & Inspections and LEDA	Continually work with LEDA to refine standards, plans and identify needs for the corridor	on-going
Concentrate on sewer needs at this time since water service is in place.	Public Works	Keep track and schedule on completion of the new Forney Creek Treatment Facility opening capacity; keep track of sewer capital plan for extensions to higher density areas needing sanitary sewer service	on-going

Require utility connections to properties when: At time of new construction Change in use (example: office to commercial use) Major expansion of building or site development (more than 25% of value and / or square footage)	Planning & Inspections, Public Works, Planning Board, and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards in the proposed “Development District” of the new UDO	immediate
County owned land next to Charter School should be developed as a park	Planning & Inspections, Parks and Recreation, Board of Commissioners	Design potential park design and work with community to plan and develop a public park; review adjacent lands to increase the size of land and park facilities; - and - Engineered plans and construction for new public park	short term
			long term
Urban playspace in the Community Centers with trails that connect throughout the corridor	Planning & Inspections	Design community centers to include urban parks / green spaces; work with the Greenways & Trails Plan effort and the Carolina Thread Trail to have trails through or near proposed community centers; construction will occur as part of private development of area(s)	short term
Amphitheatre / Outdoor Stage be a part of the South Triangle Community Center	Planning & Inspections	Part of the design phase in the Small Area Detail Plan programmed for the area. An option could be to include an amphitheatre in the proposed park on Galway (next to Charter School); construction will occur as part of private development	immediate
Integrate small parks in developments	Planning & Inspections	Continue to work with developers as plans are submitted for review. Open space is required for any development of 50 lots and should be developed or reserved as useable space	on-going



Incorporate the Carolina Thread Trail and linear parks in the Corridor	Planning & Inspections, Parks and Recreation	Work with Greenways & Trails Plan effort and the Carolina Thread Trail staff to identify potential trail segments in the corridor	immediate
Incorporate County Recreation Master Plan recommendations	Planning & Inspections, Parks and Recreation	Continue to review plans and make recommendations for open space and area needs through development	immediate
Work with public and private groups to expand recreation opportunities along the corridor	Planning & Inspections, Parks and Recreation	Continue to review plans and make recommendations for recreation, open space and needs through development and civic groups in eastern Lincoln County	on-going
Provide density incentives/increases for residential development between nodes such as building further away from the road and leaving a buffer or conservation area, the higher density bonus Encourage quality materials and development	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the UDO; work with land development committee (builders, real estate and chamber)	immediate

Landscaping requirements for new and redeveloped properties in excess of standards in the UDO	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate
Nodes should be a concentration for business and mixed-use developments	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate
Signs should conform to the new UDO standards and potentially more strict to include materials and lighting	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee; review potential new and impacts for sign amortization along the corridor	Temporary Signs - immediate
			Permanent Signs – short term
Green space incorporated along the corridor, primarily in transition areas between nodes	Planning & Inspections, Park and Recreation	Examine areas along the corridor where development is problematic (topographic concerns for example) and review potential for conservation easements or open space with property owners / developers	long term
Development should conform to the natural terrain to the extent possible, mass grading should be avoided.	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate

Pedestrian oriented outdoor spaces should be integrated into the overall design of new development and redevelopment projects	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee; design such spaces as part of the Detailed Small Area Plans	on-going
Reduce strip commercial and sprawl development	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate / ongoing
Adverse visual impacts (eyesores) to adjoining properties should be avoided or mitigated through the use of compatible architecture, site design and landscaped buffers	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate
Mitigate businesses with outdoor equipment /storage of materials in front of building and establish site development standards	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee; review and place conditions on development proposals on a case-by-case basis	short term

Building design standards, including building placement (front setback maximum of 90 feet) and materials (including no metal on front or side facades) should be followed and potentially enhanced	Planning & Inspections, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners	Develop standards and recommendations to be included in the proposed “Development District” section of the new UDO; work with land development committee	immediate
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Previous Planning Efforts Summary

#### *DH (Designated Highway) Corridor Highway Overlay District*

In 1992, the first countywide zoning ordinance was adopted and included a section entitled DH Corridor Highway Overlay District. The purpose of the district was to "...preserve and enhance the streetscape along designated special highways and designated corridor roads in Lincoln County." The intent was to address the "preservation of aesthetics and enhancement of development potential or properties near and abutting said highway...through the use of sound land use regulations."

Several corridors (and portions) were designated as such and the district contained language which regulated permitted and conditional uses, minimum lot size, yard requirements (setbacks), minimum lot width, maximum floor area ratio, ingress and egress points (access), landscaping, uses allowed in setback areas, and signs. Many of these regulations attempted to address the issues which were becoming apparent at the time as an increase in development pressure began to occur along NC16. Subsequently however, over the years many of the requirements listed in the DH District were substantially revised and amended.

#### *2001 Hwy 16 Committee Report Summary*

The 2001 Hwy 16 Committee's purpose was to study and make recommendations on the future use and appearance of Hwy 16. The vision that the committee was reaching for was set to be 10 – 20 years in the future. The main topics discussed were traffic, safety, sign ordinance, landscaping and facades. The committee was upfront in acknowledging that Highway 16 had lost its residential character and that commercial development would become the primary use of the corridor. In turn many of the suggestions of the committee focused on the future development of this now commercial corridor.

The recommendations regarding traffic were on the surface good recommendations but had few means by which to accomplish their goals. The committee saw Hwy 16 as a "Main Street" for eastern Lincoln County. As much as eastern Lincoln County longs for its own identity Hwy 16 as their "Main Street" is not feasible. The speeds, design, lack of right-of-way and past development do not lend themselves to a main street transition for the highway. Adding a turn lane to the center of the highway throughout its Lincoln County route and eventually turning Hwy 16 into a 5 lane facility was focused on. In reality the feasibility of either of these options for the entire corridor is non-existent. The hope now would be that through trips will be rerouted onto the bypass once it opens. The rerouting of traffic introduces another problem. Two of the facilities that will connect NC 16 with the NC 16 bypass, Optimist Club Road & St. James Church Road, are undersized and not designed properly to handle the traffic they will begin to experience once the bypass opens. As mentioned in the report the county should lobby for the upgrade of

these two roads. Speed limits were also a topic of discussion and from the minutes it can be derived that the committee thought that the speed limits along the corridor were too high. The design of the road and its function of an arterial confirm that the posted speed limits are sufficient and any reductions in speeds outside of school zones would further decrease mobility.

The committee also gave recommendations relating to zoning, an aspect of the corridor that the county has much more control over. Support for the current setbacks and requirements for larger developments to install turn lanes and deceleration lanes are two items that continue to function well within the current ordinance and through Traffic Impact Analysis warrants. Development of a “Landscape Plan” was recommended and it was also advised that this plan should place safety first and should remain simple to avoid unreasonable cost to the landowner. Another recommendation of the committee relating to landscaping was that quality fences should be used and chain link fences should no longer be allowed. The committee also agreed that gravel driveway and parking lots should no longer be allowed along Hwy 16. One item that the committee recommended that the Zoning Ordinance did not have the ability to speak to but can be accomplished through the UDO is that metal buildings front façade should consist of a material other than metal. Commercial design criteria can become a part of the UDO and speak to this issue along the corridor and along others throughout the county. The final recommendation of the committee was to establish a “Minimum Building Maintenance Standard” along Hwy 16. The recommendation should be expanded throughout the county and could possibly incorporate minimum housing standards

The recommendations of the committee are all still relevant today but the dynamics of the corridor continue to change. As this renewed Hwy 16 Corridor Plan commences, the same issues experienced in 2001 will still exist and more issues will surely rise to the surface.

### *2007 Land Use Plan & NC 16*

Much of the existing NC 16 12-mile Corridor between NC 73 and Denver has been zoned for nonresidential purposes. Over the years a significant amount of strip commercial development has occurred along the Corridor. While some well-planned individual and group developments are found, much of the development consists of conversions of residential dwellings into commercial retail and service establishments, and newer single-entity developments, each with one or more of its own curb cuts. Access management standards along NC 16 have historically been weak. Thus, traffic congestion and commercial sprawl are present. A redevelopment of the corridor, especially in light of the pending opening of new NC 16 is in order to limit disinvestment and to improve mobility along the Corridor.

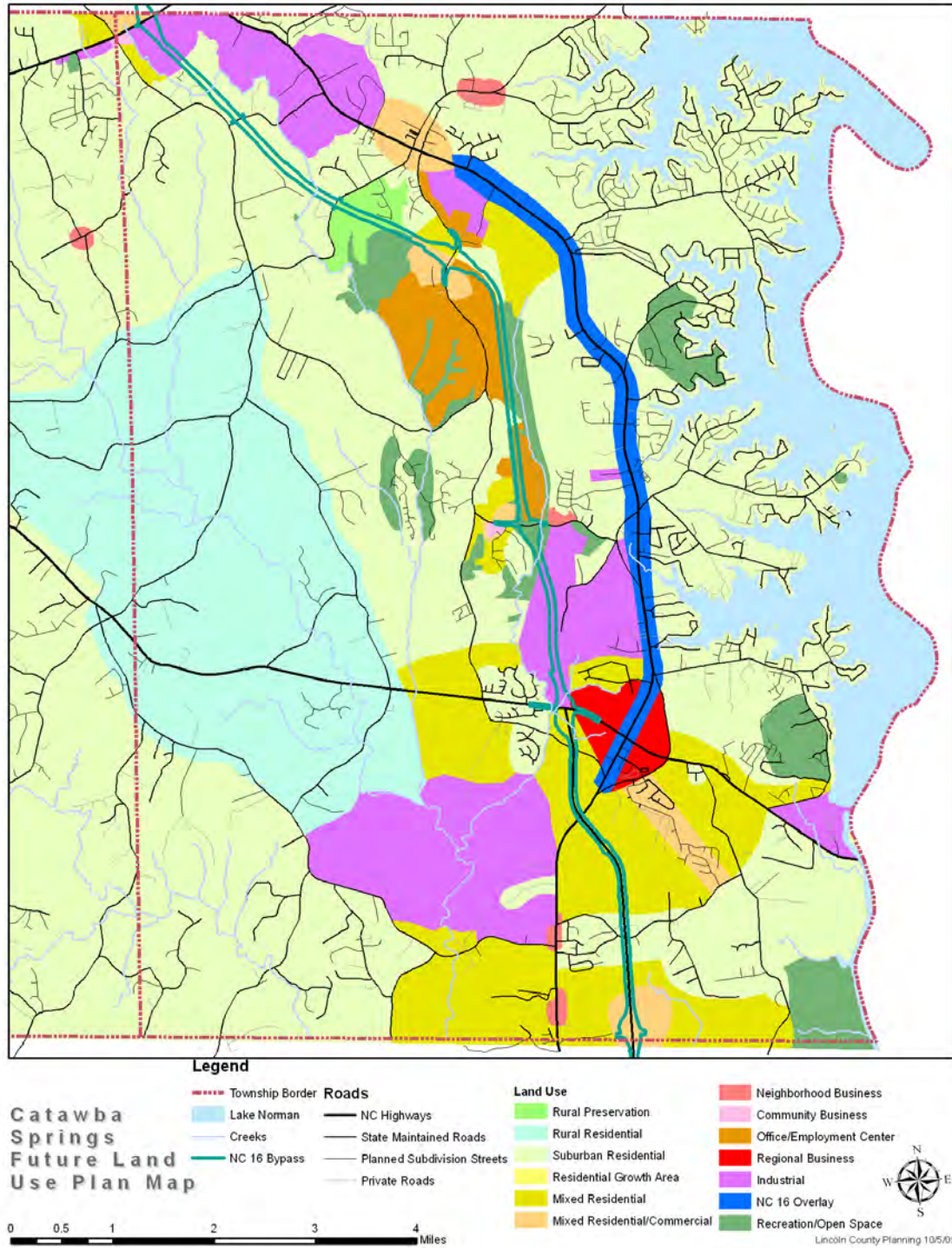
Mixed-use, per se, along NC 16 is very evident with industrial, commercial and residential uses all in close proximity to each other throughout the area, but as uses were developed and planned individually, there are virtually no linkages (either for the pedestrian or motorist) between developments. Thus, virtually all traffic that accesses

uses along NC 16 must ingress and egress onto NC 16. This further exacerbates traffic congestion along the corridor, especially during rush hour periods.

To remedy this situation, a redevelopment plan for the Old NC 16 Corridor is strongly encouraged. Such a plan should promote the further mixing of land uses, but in a more orderly and planned manner. To accommodate this, creation of a new overlay zoning district is called for. The district should be approximately a few hundred feet in depth on either side of NC 16. While allowing for a wide variety of residential and nonresidential uses, the district should also address each of the following:

1. Eliminating certain “heavy” or “unsightly” uses from locating along the Corridor:
2. Limiting future strip commercial development by giving incentives for the development of larger, planned developments as opposed to individual developments
3. Establishing Architectural Appearance Standards
4. Establishing Landscape and Tree Preservation Standards
5. Establishing sidewalk and greenstrip standards
6. Establishing new sign standards that put less emphasis on taller pole signs
7. Establishing new parking standards that prohibit or limit deep lots that foster the “sea of asphalt” look with all off-street parking being placed in the front yard
8. Establishing access management standards that (1) limit the number of future curb cuts along NC 16, (2) promote connectivity between adjacent land uses, and (3) promote the provision of access points to lots along the Corridor from adjacent roads.





*2007 Land Use Plan's Discussion of NC 16 Summary*

The pages of text in the 2007 Lincoln County Land Use Plan devoted to the NC 16 Corridor act as the catalyst for change along the corridor and throughout eastern Lincoln County. Contained within the text are acknowledgements that a significant amount of strip commercial development and residential conversions pervade the corridor. The text also brings forward that the uses themselves have not led to demise in mobility but a lack of connectivity between the uses and too many access points is the central problem. The mixture of uses, from the most intense industrial to the quaint residence, all have their places but future projects must develop in an orderly and planned manner that will promote connectivity and limit driveway access. Highlights of the 2007 Future Land Use Plan include the following:

The Land Use Plan calls for a new overlay zoning district buffering NC 16. This overlay district should address each of the eight items from the plan. A majority of the eight ideas will be wholly addressed by the Unified Development Ordinance and can be addressed in even more detail during the NC 16 Corridor Planning Process.

Many of the ideas mentioned are seemingly common sense but the idea of giving incentives or promoting larger planned developments may on the surface seem to be the exact opposite of what we need to do to counteract the mobility issues along the corridor. But these larger planned developments bring their own infrastructure that can handle the traffic that they produce. A properly planned development can create the center city or main street feel that many individuals in eastern Lincoln County long for. The overlay district called for by the land use plan shall become a part of the UDO as a highway overlay district that can not only be applied to NC 16 but to the other state highways within the county to prevent the problems that have occurred on NC 16 from occurring in other parts of the county.

*2009 Unified Development Ordinance*

Over the course of two years, a new set of development regulations were adopted by the Board of Commissioners which replaced the former zoning, subdivision, watershed, flood ordinances. Essentially the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) combined these documents into a single set of regulations with a few new/revised standards.

Although several existing regulations and standards were compiled into the UDO, there were also a number that were revised. Some of these new standards included a different approach to signage types and square footage, interconnection of commercial parking areas, prohibiting or limiting the use of metal façade materials, driveway access, landscaping in parking areas and screening of service areas.

There were also a new set of overlay standards that were to be applied to thoroughfares, such as NC16, with overlay standards which were over and beyond those for the county. The philosophy behind this concept was that the majority of people drive along the

thoroughfares, which in turn impact the access, appearance, and functionality of the sites and the development.

When the proposed Thoroughfare Overlay Districts were drafted, there were three designated types – each with different standards to address specific concerns along the different corridors. This approach was different from the former DH Corridor Overlays which only had one set of standards. The three overlays consisted of an Urban, Suburban and Rural thoroughfare overlays. The NC16 corridor was proposed to be designated as a Suburban Thoroughfare Overlay (STO).

The overall intent of these thoroughfare overlays, as stated in the proposed language in the UDO were “to established for the purpose of maintaining a safe, efficient and functional development pattern adjacent to major thoroughfares, while maintaining an aesthetic roadscape environment. It is recognized that, in areas of high visibility, the protection of features that contribute to the character of the county enhanced development quality promote economic development and stability in the entire community.” Specifically, the intent of the Suburban Thoroughfare Overlay was “to maintain existing pattern of the suburban segments of thoroughfares while allowing buildings to positively address the road and minimizing the impact of parking areas on the roadscape.”

Particular standards in the STO addressed the following:

- Certain prohibited uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing and freight/distribution),
- Maximum and minimum setbacks (maximum 88 feet and a minimum 15 feet),
- Additional landscaping, screening & buffering,
- Freestanding signs (eight feet in height and a maximum 30 square feet of area),
- Parking location requirements (50% of the required parking located in the front and the remainder of the required parking located to the side or rear of the building),
- Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and connecting internal walkways),
- Access regulations (number of driveways and separation)

Also included in the proposed standards was a section which permitted alternate means of compliance. This was recommended due to the potential for difficulties in strictly applying the standards where “may create particular hardships in areas of unusual topographic condition, or in retrofitting existing developed properties which are expanded.” In order to utilize any alternatives, specific findings needed to be established which included 1) the development attempted to meet the intent of the standards, 2) there were physical constraints and not only economic considerations, and 3) that the development was designed to meet the standards to the fullest extent possible.

However, after concerns were raised from the citizens on potential impacts this may have caused if applied countywide, the proposed thoroughfare overlays were not approved as part of the UDO. The Board of Commissioners then directed staff and the Planning Board to create an overlay for an area of eastern Lincoln County which might better deal with the growth pressures and the needs of the community, predominantly along NC16.



## **Appendix B:**

### **DH Designated Highway Overlay District (original 1992 version)**

#### DH Corridor Highway Overlay District

The purpose of the DH District is to preserve and enhance the streetscape along "designated special highways" and "designated corridor roads" in Lincoln County. A DH District may exist along the entire length of a roadway or along an identifiable segment of a roadway of at least one-thousand linear feet in length (as measured along one side to the road).

A "designated special highway", in general, is a road where the preservation of aesthetics and enhancement of development potential of properties near and abutting said highway need to be maximized through the use of sound land use regulations. Roads which are so designated will frequently be new roads which have not previously witnessed a significant amount of development. Such roads may or may not be of the limited access variety. A "designated special highway" may also be found in the vicinity of an interchange of a limited access highway.

A "designated corridor road" will most often be a road whose primary purpose is to provide access to abutting properties and to facilitate intra-County travel. Such roads may contain more than two lanes and may be divided. Both existing and new roads may receive such designation. These roads, in general, will not be of the limited access variety.

Although designated special highways and corridor roads may vary in character, particular aspects of development along those roads raise common concerns. They, therefore, should be managed in a manner which preserves and/or enhances aesthetics, promotes the safe flow of travel, and enhances the landscape. Where a DH District is approved by the Board of Commissioners, it shall consist of all lots fronting on the special highway or corridor road in the area so zoned. The actual depth of a particular DH District (the distance measured perpendicularly from said road) shall be as determined by the Board of Commissioners for each particular DH District approved. As an overlay, the DH District supplements the standards established elsewhere in this Ordinance for development in the underlying zoning district. Certain uses which may be permitted in the underlying zoning district are prohibited in the DH District. In that respect, such uses shall not be allowed to develop in any area which has received DH overlay zoning by the Board of Commissioners. Any other permitted or conditional use, allowed in the underlying zoning district, shall meet all applicable regulations of the DH District.

#### Section 12.1 DH Designated Highway Overlay District

##### 12.1.1 Location

Any DH District shall initially contain at least one-thousand (1,000) contiguous linear feet of frontage along a designated special highway or corridor road. Once a DH zoning district is placed on the zoning map, future increments of any linear length along the designated special highway or corridor road may be approved by the Board of Commissioners. The depth of any particular DH District (i.e., the distance measured perpendicular to the designated special highway or corridor road shall be as determined by the Board of Commissioners for each particular DH District in question.

##### 12.1.2 Permitted and Conditional Uses

Except as herein indicated, the uses allowed in a DH District shall be limited to those permitted and conditional uses listed in the underlying general zoning district. In no case, however, shall any of the following uses be allowed in any DH District:

A. The following manufacturing industries identified by their SIC Group Number, Division or Industry Number(s):

1. Meat packing plants and poultry dressing plants (SIC #2011, 2015)
2. Paints, varnishes, lacquers, enamels and allied products (SIC Group #285)
3. Industrial organic chemicals; agricultural chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, etc.) (SIC Group #281; SIC Group #287)
4. Miscellaneous chemical products (all products listed under SIC Group #289) (e.g. adhesives, sealants, explosives, printing ink, carbon black, and “other chemical and chemical preparations” listed in SIC #2899)
5. Petroleum refining (SIC Group #2911)
6. Asphalt paving and roofing materials (SIC Group #295)
7. Lubricating oils and greases (SIC #2992)
8. Products of petroleum and coal classified under (SIC #2999)
9. Tires and inner tubes (SIC Group #301)
10. Plastic products found under (SIC Group #30B) when resins are made at the same facility
11. Leather tanning and finishing (SIC Group #311)
12. Flat glass; glass and glassware; (SIC Group #321; SIC Group #322)
13. Cement, hydraulic (SIC Group #324)
14. Structural clay products (SIC Group #325)
15. Pottery and related products (SIC Group #326) except handmade pottery and arts and crafts operations involving no more than 1,000 cubic feet of kiln space
16. Concrete, gypsum and plastic products; cut stone and stone products (SIC Group #327; SIC Group #328)
17. Abrasive products; asbestos products; mineral wool; (SIC #3291; SIC Group #3292; SIC Group #3296)
18. Minerals and earths, ground or otherwise treated (SIC #3295)
19. Flour and other grain mill products, sugar refining (SIC #2041, 2061, 2062, 2063)
20. Animal feeds and pet foods (SIC Group #2047, 2048)
21. Fats and oils (SIC Group #207)
22. Processing and packing of canned, cured, fresh, or frozen fish and seafood (SIC Group #2091, 2092)
23. The following manufactured uses listed under (SIC Group #2099):
  - a. Yeast
  - b. Molasses and sweetening syrups
  - c. Vinegar
24. Sawmills and planing mills, general (SIC Group #2421)

25. Wood preserving; reconstituted wood products; pulp mills; paper milfs; paperboard mills (SIC Group #2491, 2493; SIC Group #261; SIC Group #262; SIC Group #263)
26. Industrial inorganic chemicals; plastic materials, synthetic resins and rubber, cellulosic and other manmade fibers, except glass (SIC Group #281; SIC Group #282)
27. Soaps, detergents and cleaning preparations; perfumes, cosmetics, and other toilet preparations (SIC Group #284)
28. Non-clay refractories (SIC #3297)
29. Miscellaneous non-metallic mineral products listed under (SIC Code #3299)
30. Steel works, blast furnaces, and rolling and finishing mills; iron and steel foundries; primary and secondary smelting and refining of nonferrous metals; rolling, drawing and extruding of nonferrous metals; nonferrous foundries; (SIC Group #331; SIC Group #332; SIC Group #333 and 334; SIC Group #335; SIC Group #336)
31. Metal heat treating, metal forging-iron, steel and nonferrous; coating and engraving of metals and allied services (SIC Group #3398; SIC Group #3462 and #3463; SIC Group #347)
32. Manufacture of other primary metal products listed under (SIC Group #3399)
33. Electrical industrial carbon and graphic products (SIC #3624)
34. Storage batteries; primary batteries, dry and wet (SIC #3691; SIC Group #3692)
35. Under SIC Group #3952, all inks, paints, oils, enamels, and crayons
36. Carbon paper and inked ribbons (SIC #3955)
37. Linoleum, asphalt - felt-base, and other hard surface floor covering listed under (SIC #399B)
38. Mining (All of SIC Division 8)
- B. Abattoir
- C. Reserved
- D. Amusement park
- E. Auction facility, livestock
- F. Auto body shop
- G. Auto repair shop (as a principal use)
- H. Reserved
- I. Reserved
- J. Contractors storage and equipment yards
- K. Farmers' market
- L. Firing range f outdoors



M. Flea market

N. Junkyards, automobile graveyards

O. Manufactured home parks

P. Movie theater, outdoors

Q. Racetrack

R. Tire recap facility

S. Off-premise advertising signs

Any other permitted or conditional use allowed in the underlying general zoning district, or parallel conditional use district shall be permitted in the DH District. Any conditional use in the underlying zoning district shall be permitted in accordance with the regulations outlined in Chapter 6. All such permitted and conditional uses shall also meet all requirements of the DH District. Where the requirements of the DH District are more restrictive than in the underlying district, the regulations of the DH District shall prevail.

#### 12.1.3 Minimum lot Size:

A one-acre minimum lot size is required for all uses except one and two family residential uses. One and two family residential uses shall observe the required minimum lot size for the underlying zoning district. If the underlying zoning district requires a greater lot size for any particular use, then the greater lot size requirement shall prevail.

#### 12.1.4 Yard Requirements:

A. The following requirements shall apply to all lots which either abut a limited access Designated Special Highway or abut a frontage road which runs parallel to a limited access Designated Special Highway:

##### 1. Minimum Front Yard Setback

Fifty (50) feet, except as follows:

- a. One-hundred (100) feet shall be required if the front yard lies adjacent to a right-at-way of a limited access Designated Special Highway.
- b. If a frontage road lies between a limited access Designated Special Highway and the principal building, a fifty (50) foot setback from the edge of the right-of-way of the frontage road shall be required.

##### 2. Minimum Side Yard Setback

Twenty-five (25) feet, except as follows;

- a. If the side yard lies adjacent to a right-of-way of a limited access Designated Special Highway, a one-hundred (100) foot setback shall be required.
- b. If the side yard is adjacent to a frontage road which lies between the principal building and the limited access Designated Special Highway, a fifty (50) foot setback shall be required from the edge of the right-of-way of the frontage road.

##### 3. Minimum Rear Yard Setback

Fifty (50) feet, except as follows:

- a. If the rear yard lies adjacent to a right-of-way of a limited access Designated Special Highway, a one-hundred (100) feet setback shall be required.

b. If a frontage road lies between the principal building and a limited access Designated Special Highway, a fifty (50) foot setback shall be required as measured from the edge of the right-of-way of the frontage road.

B. The following regulations shall apply to all lots which abut any other Designated Special Highway or which abut a Designated Corridor Road:

1. Minimum Front Setback

All lots containing any use (other than a single-family or two-family dwelling) shall observe a minimum front setback of fifty (50) as measured from the edge of the road right-of-way,

2. Minimum Side Setback

All structures shall be set back at least twenty-five (25) feet from any side lot line.

C. Minimum Rear Setback

All structures shall be set back at least twenty-five (25) feet from any rear lot lines.

12.1.5 Minimum Lot Width

A. The following shall apply to any lot which abuts a limited access Designated Special Highway or abuts a frontage road which parallels said Designated Special Highway:

All such lots shall have a minimum lot width of two-hundred (200) feet.

B. The following shall apply to any lot which has direct access onto any other Designated Special Highway or Designated Corridor Road:

Any lot having direct access (I.e., a point of ingress and egress) onto such Designated Special Highway or Designated Corridor Road shall have a minimum lot width as measured at the right-of-way line of two-hundred (200) feet.

12.1.6 Maximum Floor Area Ratio

For all uses except single-family and two-family dwellings, the following maximum floor area ratios shall be observed:

Lots containing less than 1.0 acres - 0.15

Lots containing 1.00 - 9.99 acres - 0.20

Lots containing 10.00 - 19.99 acres - 0.25

Lots containing 20.0+ acres - 0.30

Said floor area ratios shall generally be computed for individual lots. However, in the case of a planned multi-tenant development which contains more than one lot (i.e., a shopping center which contains outparcels or an office park) said floor area ratio shall be applied to the whole development. For industrial parks, however, the floor area ratio shall only be applicable to the individual lots. An example of how this would apply to a planned multi-tenant development such as a shopping center is as follows:

If a shopping center (including internal private roads and outparcels) were to be located on a tract containing fifty acres (I.e., 2,178,000 square feet), the floor area ratio would be computed by multiplying 2,178,000 by 0.30. Thus, the shopping center (including buildings located on the outparcels) would be allowed to have a maximum of 653,400 square feet of gross floor area.

12.1.7 Ingress and Egress Points

A. The following regulations shall apply to any lot (other than one which contains a single-family or two-family dwelling as its sole (principal use) which abuts a limited access Designated Special Highway or abuts and accesses a frontage road which runs parallel to a Designated Special Highway:

Direct access onto such a Designated Special Highway from any lot shall not be permitted. In addition, no access shall be allowed onto a ramp connecting the limited access Designated Special Highway with an intersecting road. Access to the lot shall be provided via said frontage road or another road which abuts the lots. No two points of ingress and egress (as measured at their closest distance) on any such lot shall be

closer than three-hundred (300) apart. If a lot has less than three-hundred (300) feet of frontage on a road which provides access, no more than one point of ingress and egress (i.e. no more than one driveway) shall be allowed on the same road for each lot, or per principal use if the principal use is located on more than one lot. Provided however, any retail use engaged significantly in the sale of automotive fuels to the public shall be permitted one (1) additional access point along its total frontage (total frontage includes the total for all streets on which the use fronts) provided said access point is no closer than forty (40) feet from any other access point. Planned multi-tenant projects such as shopping centers, office parks, and industrial parks shall be deemed to be a single principal use. A maximum of two (2) separate points of ingress and egress per lot shall be allowed per road front except under the following conditions:

1. The lot is five (5) acres or greater in area; and
2. The development is reviewed under the Conditional Use or Parallel Condition Use Permit process.

Under said conditions, more than two points of ingress and egress per road front per lot may be allowed.

Any driveway serving as a point of ingress and egress shall have a width of no less than twenty-four (24) feet and no greater than thirty-six (36) feet, unless otherwise required by NCDOT.

Wherever possible, no portion of a point of ingress and egress shall be located closer than two-hundred (200) feet to the centerline intersection of the road upon which the use fronts an intersecting road.

B. The following regulations shall apply to any lot (other than one which contains a single-family or two-family dwelling as its sole principal use) which abuts and accesses a non-limited access Designated Special Highway or a Designated Corridor Road:

On any lot or in any planned multi-tenant development which contains more than one lot, no two points of ingress and egress (as measured at their closest distance) onto the same road shall be closer than three-hundred (300) feet apart. No more than two (2) separate points of ingress and egress per lot or within a planned multi-tenant development shall be allowed per road front, except where included as a condition for a use which requires a Conditional Use Permit located on a lot containing five (5) or more areas. Any retail use engaged in the sale of automotive fuels to the public on a retail basis shall be permitted one (1) additional access point along its total frontage (total frontage includes the total for all streets on which the use fronts) provided said access points is no closer than forty (40) feet front any other access point. Wherever possible, no portion of a point of ingress and egress shall be located closer than two-hundred (200) feet to the centerline intersection of the road upon which the use fronts an intersecting road. Any driveway serving as a point of ingress and egress shall have a width of no less than twenty-four (24) feet and no greater than thirty-six (36) feet, unless required by NCDOT.

#### 12.1.8 Landscaping

A. The following regulations shall apply to that portion of any lot (other than one which contains a single-family or two-family dwelling as its sole principal use) which abuts a limited access Designated Special Highway or abuts a frontage road which runs parallel to said limited access Designated Special Highway:

In order to provide for a visually appealing landscape as viewed by the motorist from the adjoining Designated Special Highway, special landscaping requirements are required for properties which lie adjacent to or otherwise visible from a limited access Designated Special Highway.

1. The first one-hundred (100) feet of the yard lying between said Designated Special Highway right-of-way and the principal structure shall be landscaped or left as natural wooded landscape. This area shall run the entire length of the lot on the side where such lot adjoins the right-of-way of said Designated Special Highway. Said area shall include all land lying between said right-of-way and a line measured a perpendicular distance of one-hundred (100) feet from and running parallel to said right-of-way. Such landscaping shall be in the form of natural plantings (trees, shrubs, planted or naturalized ground cover and/or berm), Part or all of the required landscaped area may also be left as natural wooded areas. In no event shall any portion of the landscaping area [excluding driveways connecting the lot to the point of ingress and egress, Sidewalks, Boundary fences or walls, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, permitted signs,



school-bus shelters, and fountains and as otherwise provided in Section 11.1.8(1) (B) consist of impervious surface. No portion of the landscaped area shall exist as bare soil. The owner of the property and any tenant of the property where the landscaped area is located shall be jointly and severally responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all required landscape areas.

2. The following landscaping requirements shall also be met:

a. If a frontage road lies between the principal building and the Designated Special Highway right-of-way, the first fifty (50) feet of the yard lying between the frontage road right-of-way and the principal building shall be landscaped. Said area shall include all land lying between said right-of-way and a line measured a perpendicular distance of fifty (50) feet from and running parallel to said right-of-way. This area shall run the entire length of the lot on the side where such lot adjoins the right-of-way of the road.

B.

The following regulations shall apply along any lot (other than which contains a single-family or two-family dwelling as its sole principal use) which abuts a Designated Special Highway (other than one which is limited access) or which abuts a Designated Corridor Road:

Landscaping shall be provided along the length of the first fifteen (15) feet of the front yard as measured perpendicular from the edge of the road right-of-way. Such landscaped area shall consist of any combination of trees, shrubs, grass or other decorative or vegetative ground cover provided, however, that a minimum of one small tree per twenty-five (25) feet of linear road frontage be planted. No portion of this landscaped area shall contain bare soil. No impervious surface shall be allowed in this area except for driveways connecting the lot to the point of ingress and egress, sidewalks, boundary fences or walls, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, school-bus shelters, and fountains,

If more than twenty (20) percent of said fifteen foot landscaped area is covered by impervious surfaces, the landscaped area shall be a minimum of twenty (20) feet in width. The owner of the property and any tenant on the property where the landscape is located shall be jointly and severally responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all required landscape areas.

#### 12.1.9 Usage of yard and Setback Areas

The following regulations shall apply for all lots within a DH District except those lots whose sole principal use is a single-family or two-family dwelling unit:

A. Driveways connecting the lot to the point of ingress and egress, sidewalks, boundary fences or walls, mailboxes, newspaper boxes, permitted signs, school-bus shelters, and fountains are permitted in any required setback area.

B. Off-street parking and/or loading areas shall not be allowed (I) within any portion of any yard which lies within one-hundred (100) feet from the edge of a limited access Designated Special Highway right-of-way line; (II) within any required setback area which is measured from the edge of right-of-way of a frontage road which parallels a limited access Designated Special Highway and (III) within any required landscaped area. Off-street parking areas may be allowed in the non-landscaped portion of any yard which abuts a non-limited access Designated Special Highway or a Designated Corridor Road.

C. Outdoor storage and/or display of goods, accessory structures and uses and the dispensing of goods and services are permitted under the following conditions:

1. Such goods and activities shall not be located or conducted on a lot in any required setback area (except as otherwise provided) which abuts a limited access Designated Special Highway or a frontage road which parallels such a Designated Special Highway.

2. All outdoor storage of goods located on any lot described in Section 11.1.9(C) (1) shall be screened from the view of motorists from any limited access Designated Special Highway. Such screening shall generally be in conformance with Section 6.3 of this Ordinance with the following exceptions:

- a. The screening shall consist of natural plantings only; and
- b. The screening shall effectively screen said outdoor storage within three (3) years after the certificate of occupancy has been issued.

The Zoning Administrator may waive the requirements for such screening in cases where he determines that due to topography such screening would be impossible to install, would be unusually and unreasonably burdensome upon the developer, or would serve no screening or buffering purpose; provided however, that in making such waiver the spirit and intent of this section are met.

#### 12.1.10 Signs

A. Off-premise advertising signs shall be prohibited in any DH District.

B. Signs for all residential uses shall be as provided in Chapter 12 of this Ordinance. On-premise signs for nonresidential uses shall be allowed as follows:

1. For any lot which contains one principal nonresidential use, the following sign regulations shall apply:

a. Each use shall be allowed one free-standing pole sign. The maximum height of said pole sign shall be twenty-five (25) feet; the maximum area of said sign shall be sixty-four (64) square feet. Ground signs shall also be allowed. The maximum area of any ground sign shall be thirty-six (36) square feet. The aggregate area of all ground and pole signs for any such use shall be one-hundred (100) square feet exclusive of ground signs used solely for the direction of traffic.

b. Wall signs shall be allowed as provided in Chapter 12 at this Ordinance.

2. For any multi-tenant development (i.e., shopping center) where more than one principal use is located on a lot, the following sign regulations shall apply.

a. The aggregate area of all free-standing pole and ground signs shall not exceed one-hundred twenty eight (128) square feet. A maximum of two pole signs shall be allowed. Any pole sign shall have a maximum height of twenty-five (25) feet and a maximum area of sixty-four (64) square feet. Ground signs shall be allowed, provided that no ground sign may have an area exceeding forty (40) square feet. Excluded are ground signs used solely for direction of traffic.

b. Walls signs for any principal use within the multi-tenant development shall be as provided in Chapter 12 of this Ordinance.

## **Appendix C:**

### **2001 NC16 Plan Report**

## **Committee Report Of Existing Highway 16 To Lincoln County Commissioners**

The purpose of this committee is to study and make recommendations to the county commissioners on the future use and appearance of existing Highway 16. Specifically we will visualize ten to twenty years from now. The committee has met since April 24, 2001. Meetings were held approximately every three weeks. Each meeting had specific topics such as traffic and safety, sign ordinance; landscaping and facades on buildings and minutes were kept at each meeting. Included with this report

will be a list of members appointed by the commissioners, guest and staff along with an attendance record. The following are the findings of the Highway 16 Committee.

Early in the process it was agreed that Highway 16 was no longer a residential street. The reasons are as follows:

- High traffic count
- Lack of new housing construction
- Low resale of existing housing used as residences
- Houses are converted into business, removed from lot or rented.

The best comparison may be the Highway 150/27 at Boger City. The committee expects the same kind of development to occur on Highway 16. The committee also began to refer to 16 as Main Street for all the communities in East Lincoln. They further believe that rezoning requests from residential to commercial should be honored.

The committee next reviewed the Land Use Plan to be adopted by the commissioners. The purpose was to make each member of the Highway 16 committee aware of the plan. Several members of the planning board were also in attendance of this meeting. There was a general agreement with the plan. One issue, as stated above, was that single family residential should be rezoned to a commercial zoning, upon the request of the property owner. In response to a question from the Planning Board concerning overall plan another issue that came up that is not directly related to Highway 16 was the green circles that designated future park sites. The general feeling was that landowners within these circles could be put at a disadvantage when a change in land use by the landowner was requested. Unless the county plans to purchase these tracts, the designation should be removed. This has already been discussed with the Planning Board and will be revisited in the future.

Other topics covered by the Lincoln County Staff included the land use plan, zoning, water and sewer, sign ordinance and the thoroughfare plan. Discussion of each of these topics centered on how they would affect the development of Hwy 16. A representative of NCDOT, Mike Holder, was also invited to the November 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. He was asked to comment on several current problems and make recommendations on how to improve safety and traffic flow. He was provided a letter with a list of concerns. He has agreed to review the list with his department and make any adjustments that are warranted. A copy of that letter is attached to this report. His recommendations will be included in the Highway 16 committee's recommendations.

The following are comments and recommendations of the Highway 16 Committee.

#### TRAFFIC:

1. Highway 16 be planned as a main street for East Lincoln from Gaston County line to Catawba County line.
2. Minimum of three (3) lanes on Hwy 16, eventually five (5) lanes on certain sections, as development occurs



3. Speed limit of Hwy 16 should be reviewed by NCDOT.
4. There was much discussion concerning the connectors between Highway 16 and New Highway 16. It is recognized that these roads are not sufficient to handle the traffic that will come. Mike Holder made it clear that these roads cannot be included in the New Highway 16 improvements without putting the project on hold and the possible withdrawal of funds. His suggestion is to begin to lobby and apply as much pressure as possible on DOT for improvements.
5. See attached addendum – letter from NCDOT’s Mike Holder

**ZONING:**

1. The existing highway overlay including the following:
  - Continue current setbacks for all new construction to allow for up to five lanes. Look at all setbacks and allow for maximum use of property.
  - Continue the current practice of requiring turn lanes for larger tracts being developed (planned developments)
  - Request that the County adopt a landscape plan for new construction that would help create a main street theme. Any landscape plan should consider safety first. The landscape plan should be kept simple to avoid unreasonable cost to landowner. Also consider an incentive program to existing business to adopt a future landscape plan. (tax incentives would require special legislation)
  - Some requirements as to the quality of fences used on street side of buildings, between building and road. Chain link fences not to be allowed.
  - Gravel driveways on future construction not be allowed. Currently only the first 15 feet of turnouts must be paved.
  - Metal buildings to have front façade of material other than metal with the exception of the trim.
  - Sign ordinance be more closely monitored and enforced. After reviewing the sign ordinance the committee felt that many of the signs on the highway are in violation of the current ordinance. Safety needs to be considered.
  - Update thoroughfare plan through NCDOT

**BUILDING:**

1. County to consider establishing a Minimum Building Maintenance Standard for structures that are visible from Hwy 16.

In conclusion there was a general feeling that economics will do much to improve the appearance of existing Hwy 16. The cost of land will generally require the removal of obsolete buildings with the new construction being of a high quality. The county should concentrate on safety, planning for the future water and sewer lines within the right-of-way and creating incentives for a consistent main street theme.

The above was voted on and approved by the Highway 16 Committee on December 11, 2001.

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Doug Core  
Highway 16 Chairman

## **Appendix D: Public Forums 1 and 2 Notes**

### **Public Forum Comments July 17, 2008**

#### What You Don't Like – NC 16

##### Group 1

- Signs (too many)
- Race shops
- No landscaping
- Mini- storage
- Inconsistent cross-sections
- Above ground utilities
- Lack on industry
- No uniformity in building in style
- Lack of zoning control
- No sidewalks
- Traffic – peak hours
- Lack of town center
- Sediment run-off
- Lack of trees
- No street signs (we need attractive “readable”)
- No lodging
- No funeral home
- No bicycle lanes
- Too much hwy drainage
- Need signal coordination
- No screening for heave uses
- Schools aren't ped. friendly
- Lack of comm.. needs/uses
- Lack of public transportation (no schedule posted)
- Business connections
- No Taxi service

- Need parks

#### Group 2

- No clear cut comm. ID
- No sidewalks/greenways
- No bike (safety) access
- Difficult access
- Old bldgs
- Used car lots and storage (mini warehouses)
- Traffic capacity
- Rush hour congest
- Syncro traffic light
- School access/safety
- Random signage/advert.
- Intersection alignment
- Lack of parks
- Site distances
- No hotels
- S. Pilot Knob int.
- No lighting
- No landscaping
- Youth activities (lack of)
- The road
- Drainage issues
- No meeting space

#### Group 3

- Bumpy roads
- Signage
- Drive-way cuts
- Delay at traffic light
- Inconsistent setback
- Lack of sidewalks along entire length of Hwy 16
- Lack of consistency (p-lot, look, aesthetics, landscaping)
- Storage bldg (mini)
- Lack of passing zones
- Maintenance of current 16
- Lack of lighting
- No community center
- Traffic
- Lack of COS/parks/family
- Specific triangle/unity church/offset traffic issues

#### Group 4

- Kudzu
- Interconnectivity – lack of w-optimist/ St. James
- Dangerous to bicycles and pedestrians
- Cannot get onto 73e
- Turn lanes
- Difficult to turn left
- Poor signage lack of enforcement
- Billboards
- Computerized traffic signals
- Street numbering is poor/area identities
- Denver address / Stanley phone number
- Ugly buildings
- Too many used car lots/ storage buildings
- No more industrial
- Not consumer friendly- no walkability- no reason to come
- Unity/Webbs Chapel- boat trailers are too wide for secondary roads
- Bike lanes- Webbs Rd /Unity
- Older buildings are too close to the road
- Lack of screening; i.e. lumber yard- Lee Boy
- No walking paths
- Enforcement of Land Use Rules
- Traffic congestion due to Denver Days

#### Group 5

- All those signs—signs signs everywhere
- No more storage units
- Too many driveways
- Too many car lots
- No distinction between areas
- Not enough landscaping
- Need bike paths, walking paths, sidewalks
- Lack of connectivity
- Homes converted into businesses and closed with clutter, signs left
- Ugly road needs to be resurfaces, dark needs nice lighting
- Vacant lots not maintained
- No town center
- Need directional signs to get to Denver

#### What Do You Like—NC 16

#### Group 1

- Mixture of uses
- Upgrade of storefronts
- Local business- variety of business



- Small town feel
- New medical facilities
- Site design of medical facilities CMC
- School along corridor
- Church (religious presence)
- Hidden industry

#### Group 2

- Stacy's Rest
- Reface bldg at Unity and 16
- Turn lanes (where they aren't)
- Industrial out of sight
- Stop signs and lights/signals
- Critical uses close by
- It's not independence blvd
- Old hometown feel
- New Rest and shops
- New library
- Optimist club Rec/sports
- New medical
- Still some AG there

#### Group 3

- Access to new 16 & 73/ (483)
- Mixed use
- Redevelopment opportunities
- Local bus (mom/pop) flavor
- Trends of better aesthetics
- Rural feel
- Keep trees (selective cutting)
- Historic identity is important to "maintain"
- Low rise bldg.
- Current speed limit

#### Group 4

- Landscaping around Smithstone
- Rural atmosphere
- Center lane- appreciate the few

#### Group 5

- Addition of turn lanes and 16 & 73—laning in other areas
- Like stucco facades instead of metal
- Some places have really nice landscaping
- Not too many traffic lights

- Like country feel in some places
- Subdivisions with trees out front
- Stone structures at entrances
- Convenience of new services nice restaurants
- Differences in speed limits – appropriately gauged
- Good mix of uses in recent developments
- Historic buildings Rock Springs gym

### How To Improve—NC 16

#### Group 1

- Setbacks increased for sidewalks and trees (8)
- Screen business (6)
- Limit on building height (0)
- Improve public transportations (buses/taxi) (4)
- Landscaped median (3)
- Limit on signs (10)
- Balance of res./business (3)
- Residential “on top”
- Multi-family (2)
- No more clear cutting (1)
- More “natural” trees (landscaping) (3)
- Group of specific uses (1)
- Alternate traffic controls (1)
- Preservations of historic assets (5)
- Architectural control (8)

#### Group 2

- Win Lotto !
- Develop realistic plan (16)
- Live within means (4)
- Traffic circles (5)
- Business that increase tax ( quality stuff) (8)
- Incorporate East Lincoln (13)
- Development pay fair share (15)
- Establish where “downtown” is (17)
- More restaurant options
- Diverse shopping clusters (7)
- Capitalize lake (2)
- Greenspaces / rec. (14)
- School access off NC16 (2)
- Vocational campus/ UNCC sat (12)
- Improve traffic flow (7)
- Another police sub-stations and visible (2)

- County offices in area (6)
- Bldg facades

#### Group 3

- Consistent zoning standard
- No gravel connection (w/ curbing)
- Community center (Park)
- Lighting
- Three lanes need to be entire length
- Turning lanes
- Bike lanes / w/ sidewalk
- See Vermont sign ordinance
- Bldg/ pushed forward/ parking behind
- Limited access for comm.. (connectivity)
- Examine speed limit
- Tree (requirement)
- Better junkyard standards
- Finish new hwy 16

#### Group 4

- Set buildings back further and improve landscaping, fountains, sidewalks, and lots of trees
- Catawba Ave- Cornelius- trees w/ canopy, nice lighting, with sidewalks and parallel streets for parking, signage between I-77 and NC-115
- East Blvd. Example
- Town green, bandstand
- Town center needs to have east/west connector (would avoid congestion)
  - Webbs Road
  - St. James, Optimist Club
  - Campground Road
  - Triangle
- Bus stop w/ adequate parking > mass transit
- Future consideration for light rail > mass transit
- Crime w/ business security
- Pedestrian walkability/safety
- Birkdale Village Type of environment
- Theatre/entertainment/ arts, community gathering space, community college branch
- Building height – 3 stories?
- Architectural design w/ favorable color palette
- Roundabouts

#### Group 5

- Improve connectivity

- Higher occupancy for strip center
- Don't allow 100% business zoning
- Identify town center (s)
- New sign regs to reduce signage/more enforcement
- Pedestrian/bike friendly areas/sidewalks, curbs and gutter
- Access to new 16
- Better landscaping standard/clear cutting
- Parks along 16
- Turn lanes entire route
- Redesign of problem intersections
- Architectural standards
- Roundabouts
- Keep track traffic off other roads

## PUBLIC FORUM COMMENTS

**April 23, 2009**

### OVERALL

- Recommendations consistent with input from July
- Plan is on target, the challenge is implementation
- We want a good community for our children
- How will a county government see this through?
- Will new regulations remove the identity of Denver?
- We need a plan
- Aesthetics v. Practicality
  - Articulation --Connectivity
- How will it all be paid for?
  - private development
- Will Board of Commissioners support recommendations?
- Will development leave old Hwy. 16 for new Hwy. 16?
- Was incorporation discussed?

### TRANSPORTATION

- Sidewalks
- Aesthetics of roadway
- Connectivity
- Access, but make sure you can get back on Hwy. 16 and side roads
- Intersection improvements
- Road improvements
  - Signalization
  - 3 Lanes
- Add discussion on bike lanes



- Bike lanes off Hwy. (local roads)
- Fix critical intersections
- Pedestrian/bike connectivity between recreational uses
- Road maintenance
- Denver needs east/west connection near Webbs
- Bike paths
- More east-west corridors
- Are three lanes enough?
- Bike paths needed
- Crosswalks(?)
- Concern of 3 lane Hwy. 16 –certain sections (R-O-W unknown)
- Where are the round-a-bouts?
- Will Hagers Ferry/Pilot Knob be improved/safety?
- Existing businesses and connectivity

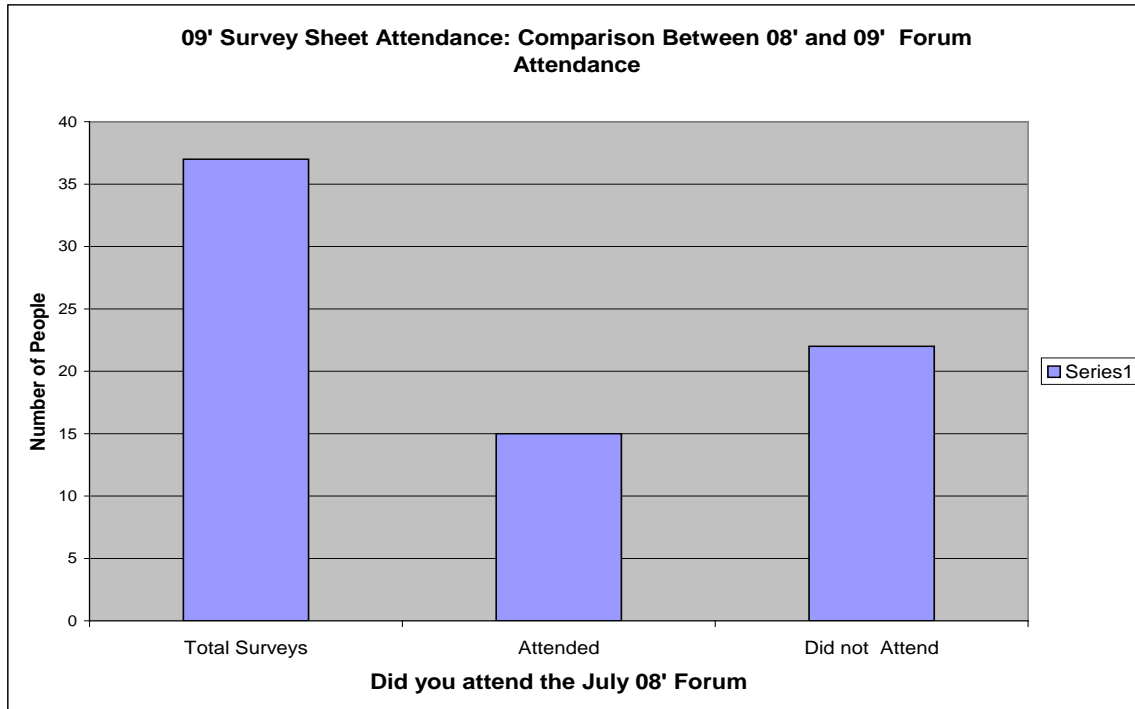
#### UTILITIES

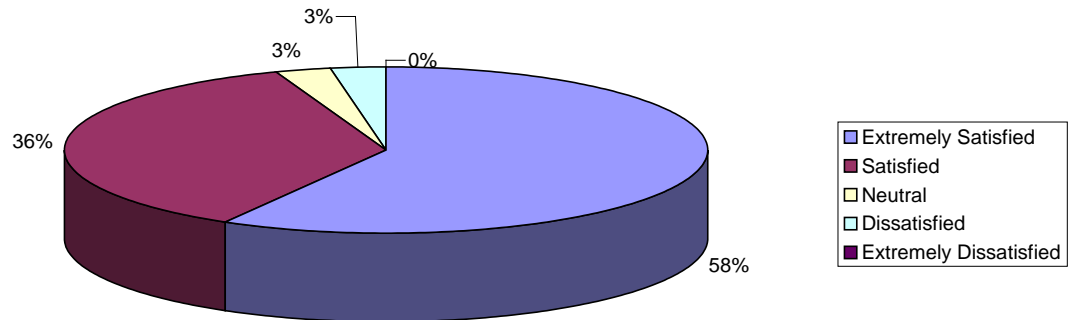
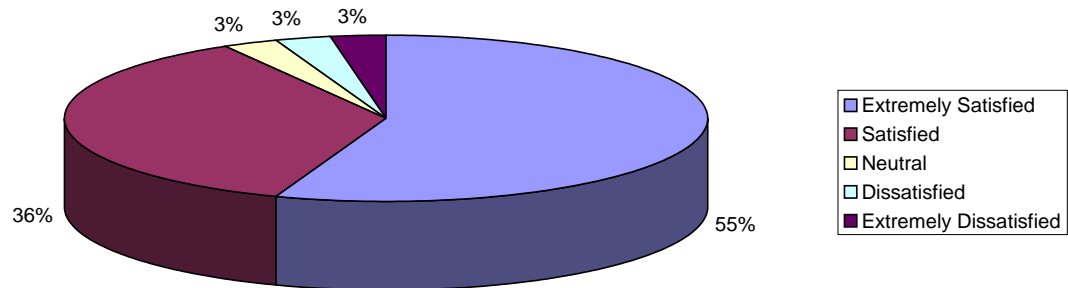
#### OPEN SPACE

- Park on county land
- Identification of green spaces for possible parks

#### LAND USE & BUILDINGS

- Landscaping
- Architectural standards
- Continuity of development
- Designated centers
- Sign standards and enforcement needed
- Development standards
- Unrealistic expectations for property owners on Hwy. 16
- Regulations would encourage higher level development
- Moratorium/new development should not be allowed unless meets development standards
- Will businesses survive between now and when new NC 16 opens and new development standards are applied?
- Purpose: Create or cap growth
- Growth management
- Sign regulation
- South Triangle makes sense; give incentive
- Need Dairy Queen
- Opportunities for higher education, college campus
- Retirement community area
- Was residential development, higher density looked at?
- Green-thinking (power) solar
- What can we do with the strip malls that are empty?

**Appendix E:**  
**Public Survey Results****Hwy 16 Visioning Plan Public Forum Survey Summary**

**Process Satisfaction****Overall Satisfaction**

**Positive Aspects:** These are the number of times that each one of these aspects was marked within the survey results. \*Note that this is not measured by the individual survey, but is a collection of aspects from all surveys. In other words an individual survey could note one or more of the aspects as being positive, but they are not separated nor sorted in that manner.

Type of Aspect	Number of Responses
Street Cross-Section	10
Landscaping	14
Community Centers	17
Building Design	11
Development Standards	17
Open Space	9

**Negative Aspects:** These are the number of times that each one of these aspects was marked within the survey results. \* Note that this is not measured by the individual survey, but is a collection of aspects from all surveys. In other words an individual survey could note one or more of the aspects as being negative, but they are not separated nor sorted in that manner.

Type of Aspect	Number of Responses
Street Cross-Section	3
Landscaping	1
Community Centers	3
Building Design	7
Development Standards	2
Open Space	4

**Comments:** What follows are all individual comments taken from the surveys.

- Need more open space.
- Not enough design standards. Now we have to focus on implementation. How we achieve it and how we encourage it.
- Town center at Triangle South would be great.
- Liked all aspects of groups vision. Sign ordinance must be done immediately & enforced. Show something now.
- If sidewalks are warranted dot it all at once from 73 to 150. Some type of bond by the County, where they pay to put sidewalks in, then property owners pay it back over installments.
- I think a provision should be made in planning of a community center for creation of a government of incorporated town/city in East Lincoln.



- Well done!
- Need to make the plan happen! Get local organizations active in promoting this.
- Getting small parcels at a reasonable price, for longer land use could be expensive especially any that touches the lake! Thanks for all you work!
- I think that Old Plank Rd. to 73 area needs to be something besides Stanley. Wondering how much tax increases is going to be necessary for these plans – yes the developer will be responsible for most, but what about green areas & amphitheatre.
- Great plan with good ideas. We just hope it doesn't raise taxes to build a community center.
- Trafficability has to be priority, 3 lanes!
- Outstanding job, keep up great work.
- The committee has worked very hard. Thank you all very much. It is a plan – a vision – we go from here.
- The committee needs to look at the section of Killians Crossing & the new L shaped strip center.
- Very effective process! Create a PR plan so that you can attract business who very well may have to spend more money to establish a new business in the community. They must understand our vision of the future and how it will encourage residential/consumer growth.
- Significant change can be realized within several years by establishing and enforcing a progressive sign ordinance. Remove the trashy look and clutter, and no 30' x 40' billboards.
- Would like to see 16 cleaned up. Clutter cleaned up around the shops. (Gas station at the triangle)
- Great vision; currently do not visit any business along 16 due to unorganized placement of business. I currently drive to Hickory/Charlotte to shop. I like the idea of centralized shops that are walkable. If we are dreaming....How about a trolley.
- Well done! Excellent vision and planning.
- My concern is having the vision, and how to implement with a lack of funding from NCDOT. Without their (money) support in preparing old hwy 16 for the plan, the plan will fall short.
- Great job! Thank you for soliciting input during the process.
- Keep up the good work.
- Missed the target. Need to back off and be more reasonable. We don't want to be Mooresville, Huntersville, Cornelius or Ballantyne. Need to get a better balance of community, not just the "Lake" people.
- I understand the need for development standards as for this area is long overdue. However I'm somewhat saddened that these changes will be the beginning of the end of the small "Mom & Pop" business. This will permanently destroy the small town of Denver.

## Appendix F: Image Credits

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	10	Public Forum (3)	K. Atkins
	11	Bike Lane	"The National Complete Streets Coalition" <a href="http://www.flickr.com/photos/completestreets/3476661821/">http://www.flickr.com/photos/completestreets/3476661821/</a>
	20	Road Shoulder Widening	R. Williams
	21	East Lincoln Comm. Center	Lincoln County
	25	Street Cross-section	R. Carson
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