



Comprehensive Plan Caldwell County

JANUARY 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Randy Church	Donnie Potter
Mike LaBrose	Robbie Wilkie
Jeff Branch	

PLANNING BOARD

Chris Barlowe	Dino DiBernardi	Jeff Church
Jerry O'Brine Branham	Phil Case	John Moore
Sam Patterson	Chad Gragg	Clay Wilson

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Jeff Church	Gloria Rhoney	Kesley Pfaff
Joe Sims	Kim Edmiston	BJ Fore
Deborah Murray	Kenneth Teague	

COUNTY STAFF

Administration

Stan Kiser, County Manager

Planning & Development

Shelley Stevens, Planning Director
Kimberly McGee, Planning Technician

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

CALDWELL COUNTY RESIDENTS

A special thanks to the residents and business owners that participated in this process to plan and shape the future of Caldwell County.

PREPARED BY



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Figure 1-1: Planning Study Area	13
Chapter 2: Caldwell County Demographics	15
Chapter 3: Transportation	27
Figure 3-1: Caldwell County Funded Highway Projects	33
Figure 3-2: Caldwell County Comprehensive Transportation Plan	35
Figure 3-3: Caldwell County Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan Network	38
Figures 3-4 : 3-11: Connlley Springs Road Conceptual Renderings	40
Chapter 4: Resources & Services	45
Figure 4-1: Caldwell County Water & Sewer	49
Figure 4-2: Caldwell County Community Facilities	51
Chapter 5: Parks & Recreation	55
Figure 5-1: Caldwell County Parks & Recreation	61
Figure 5-2: Caldwell County Managed Areas	63
Chapter 6: Natural & Cultural Resources	67
Figure 6-1: Caldwell County Water Resources	71
Figure 6-2: Caldwell County Conservation Values	75
Figure 6-3: NC Natural Heritage Programs Areas	77
Figure 6-4: Caldwell County Historic Sites	83
Chapter 7: Economic Development & Tourism	87
Figure 7-1: Proximity to Caldwell	90
Figure 7-2: Caldwell County Opportunity Zones	93
Chapter 8: Land Use & Growth Management	97
Figure 8-1: Zoning Districts	101
Figure 8-2: Existing Land Use	103
Figure 8-3: Non-Residential & Residential Development 2010-2018	107
Figure 8-4: Potential Multi-Family Residential	111
Figure 8-5: Potential Multi-Family Residential (Topography)	113
Figure 8-6: Future Land Use	115
Figures 8-7 : 8-10: Highway 321 Overlay District Conceptual Renderings	128
Figures 8-11 : 8-14: Caldwell County Gateway Conceptual Renderings	130
Figures 8-15 : 8-16: City Walk Greenway Connection to Shoppes at Rivercreast	132
Chapter 9: Recommendations	135
Appendix A: Community Meeting Summary	149
Appendix B: Online Survey Results	157

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

According to North Carolina General Statutes, every local government must base their zoning decisions on a long-range plan, which describes policies for land-use and growth management issues. These decisions range from rezoning decisions to transportation regulations to policies governing the uses and subdivision of land. Caldwell County will experience significant change, primarily due to the widening of Highway 321 and the county's proximity to Hickory, the Catawba River, and Interstate 40. The Caldwell County Commissioners and the Caldwell County Planning Department set the creation of this Plan in motion by partnering with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to assist in its development.

The Caldwell County Comprehensive Plan is a fundamental policy document that will help guide the County's growth and development over the next twenty to thirty years. The Plan provides a vision of how the County should look in the future and clearly defines the steps that should be taken in order to realize that vision. The Plan identifies areas where investments should occur and what type of growth should be encouraged in which areas. It establishes a roadmap for how the County should change - and how the County should remain unchanged. County Commissioners, Planning Board and Staff can use this comprehensive plan as a guide for developing regulations, deciding rezoning cases, developing capital improvement plans, applying for grants, developing its transportation network, extending water and sewer infrastructure, amending its zoning ordinance, drafting its budget, and planning for parks. By following this Plan, Caldwell County will continue to create the conditions that encourage orderly growth and economic development well into the future.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Caldwell County Plan was developed by the Caldwell County Advisory Committee, a 10-person group consisting of Planning Board members, County Commissioners, County Planning Staff and interested citizens. The Committee conducted a 12-month community outreach, education, discussion and strategic thinking process which resulted in the creation of a draft version of this Plan. The draft version was presented to the County Commissioners. At the heart of the Plan is a series of recommended growth management strategies in the areas of land use, transportation, public services, economic development, and natural and cultural resources. Upon adoption of this Plan by the County Commissioners, the Planning Board and the County's planning staff will be charged with prioritizing and implementing the strategies proposed in this document.

The County Plan Advisory Committee consisted of:

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
Jeff Church, Ed. D – Chair	Caldwell County Schools - Associate Superintendent/ Planning Board
Joe Sims – Vice-Chair	Farm Bureau Insurance/ Caldwell County School Board
Deborah Murray	Caldwell County EDC - Executive Director
Gloria Rhoney	Caldwell County Department of Environmental Health - REHS - EH Supervisor
Kim Edmiston	Caldwell Chamber of Commerce - Immediate Past Chair/Foothills Radio Group
Ken Teague	Caldwell County Department of Emergency Management- Former/Retired Emergency
Kelsey Pfaff	Caldwell County Department of Public Health - Heath Education Supervisor
BJ Fore	Realty World Bollinger and Associates – Real Estate Broker/ Retired Caldwell County Sheriff's Department Captain/Planning Board
Shelley Stevens	Caldwell County Planning & Development
Kimberly McGee - Alternate	Caldwell County Planning & Development

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Several meetings were held to provide opportunities for citizen involvement in the development of this Plan. Early in the process, four public meetings were held to gather citizen input. These public input meetings were held at:

West Caldwell High School	Commons Area	Feb. 19, 6:00-7:30 pm
South Caldwell High School	Commons Area	Feb. 21, 6:00-7:30 pm
Hibriten High School	Media Center	March 18, 6:00-7:30 pm
Happy Valley School	Media Center	March 21, 6:00-7:30 pm

At each meeting, participants were asked to list the assets of the County, their concerns and vision for the County's future. There were about 65 citizens in attendance. Results from the four public meetings listed above are provided in the Appendix A. An online public survey was also conducted to gather additional public comment. The results of the public survey are provided in Appendix B. Near the conclusion of the planning process, a final public meeting was held to provide citizens with the opportunity to evaluate whether the draft plan reflected their concerns and interests. The final public meeting was held at Alden E. Starnes County Office Plaza on October 21st. At the final public meeting, citizens reviewed the maps and recommendations in the draft plan and provided additional input. A formal public hearing held at the County Commissioners meeting provided additional opportunities for citizen input.

THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The Caldwell County Advisory Committee was presented the draft plan on October 24th. There was a unanimous decision to approve the document and to send a recommendation for approval of the draft plan to the County Commissioners. The draft plan was then reviewed by the County Commissioners, and a public hearing was held to discuss the adoption of the draft plan at the January Commissioner's meeting. The draft plan was approved by the County Commissioners on January 6th, 2020.

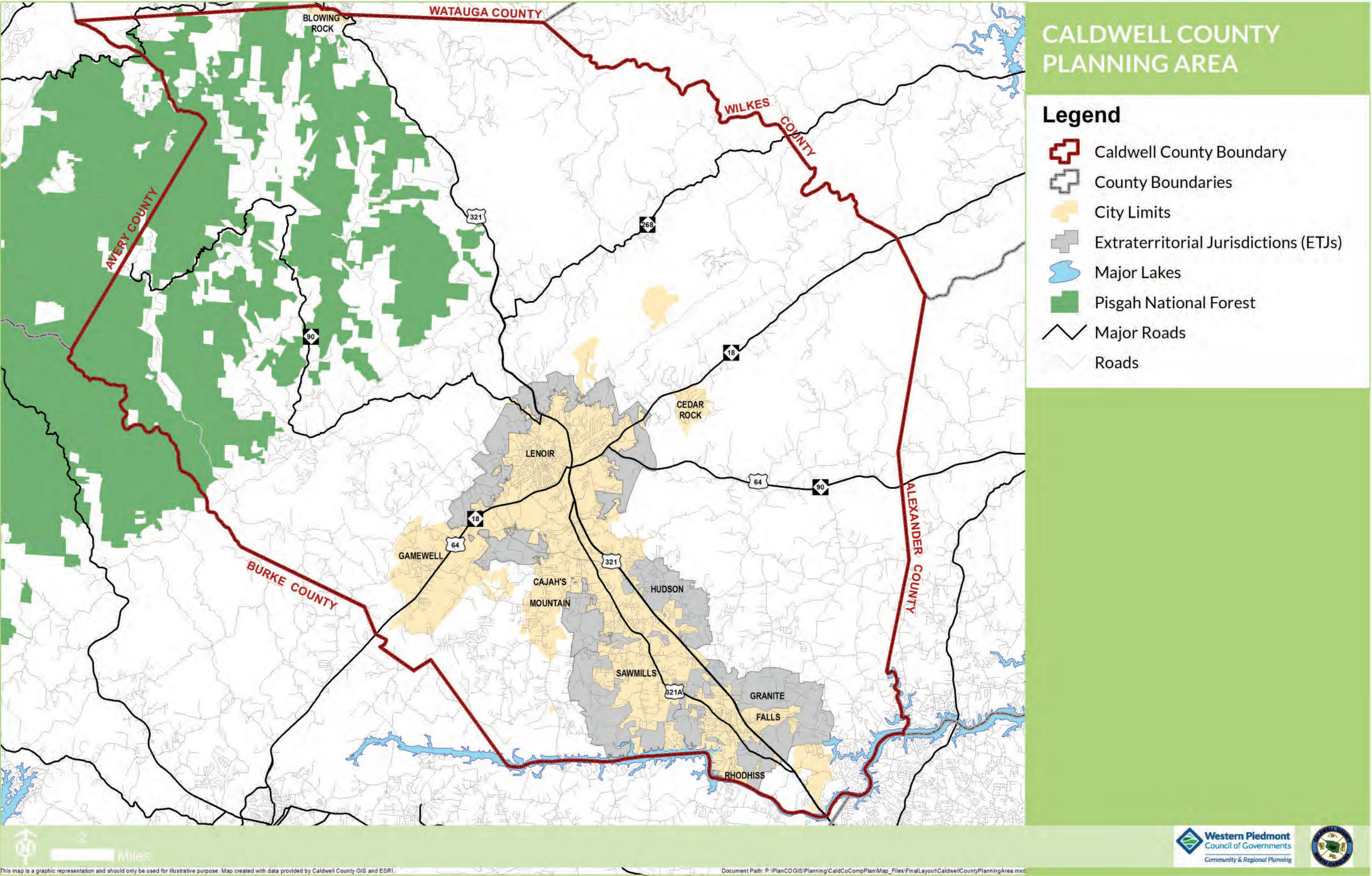
PLANNING AREA

The geographic area included in this Plan includes land located within the County's borders which is outside of the municipal limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJs) of any town or city. Those areas inside the municipal boundaries and the citizens in those areas are still representative of Caldwell County (See Figure 1-1: Planning Area).

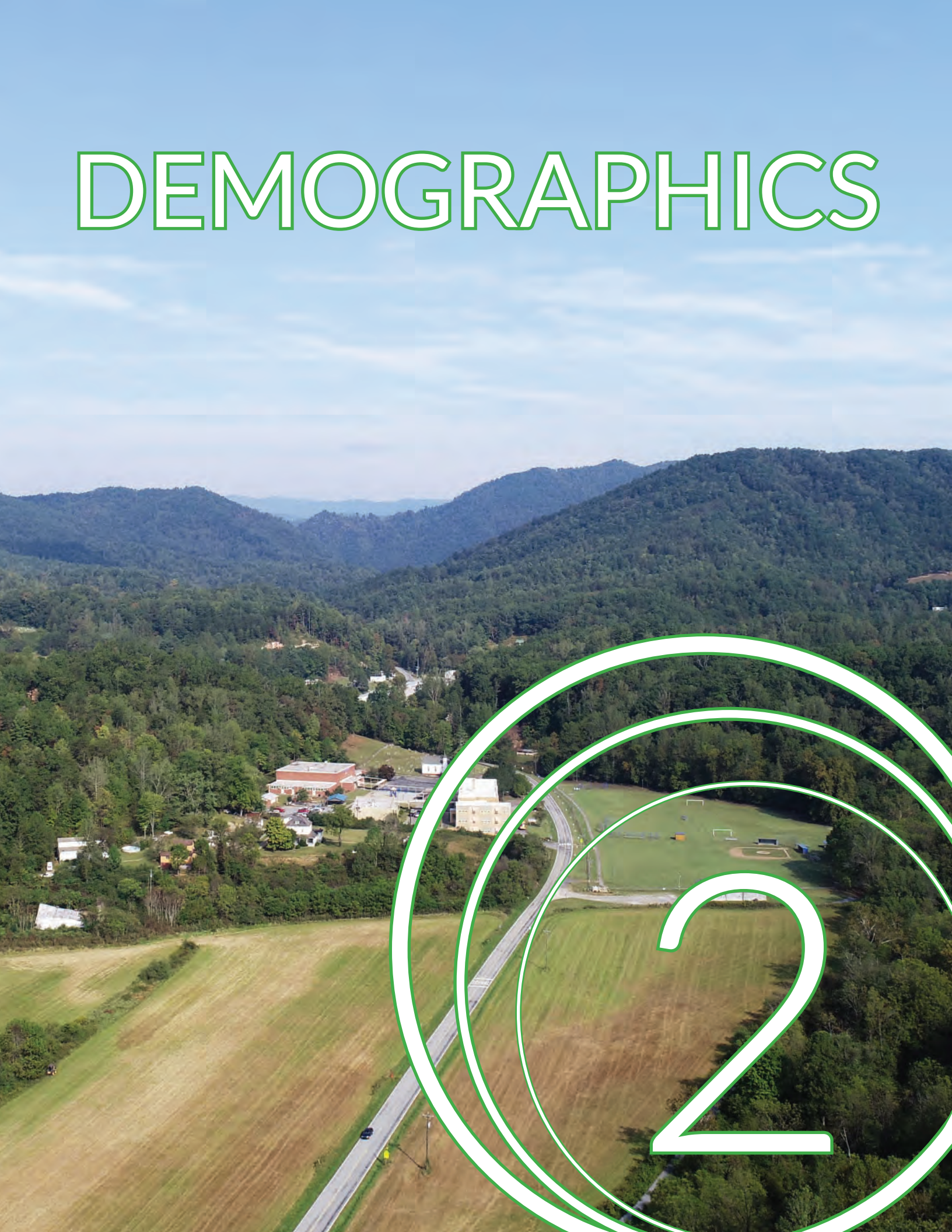
NEXT STEPS

Upon adoption of this Plan, appropriate changes will be made to the County's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and the Future Land Use section of the plan should be referenced when considering rezoning requests. Comprehensive plans are intended to be living documents. Revisions of this Plan may be necessary based on state law and changing economic conditions. The Planning Board and County planning staff should review this document periodically to evaluate its effectiveness and to determine if revisions are necessary.

FIGURE 1-1



DEMOGRAPHICS



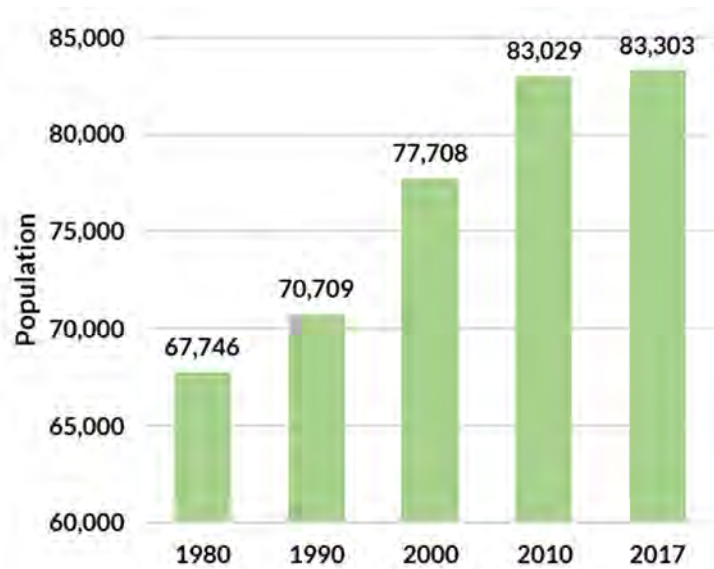
CALDWELL COUNTY

DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION

The Census count in 1980 for Caldwell County was 67,746 (Figure 2-1). As of 2017, the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments data center estimates that the population of Caldwell County is 83,303. Table 2-1 shows population changes between 2000 and 2017 for Caldwell County, the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties), North Carolina and the United States. Caldwell County added 5,321 people between 2000 and 2010, an increase of 6.8%. The percentage growth was slightly higher than the Hickory MSA (6.5%), but not as high as the North Carolina (18.5%) or the US (9.7%) population growth rate. Between 2010 and 2017, Caldwell County experienced a population gain of only 274 people, a 0.3% increase. From 2010 to 2017, the population of the Hickory MSA rose by just 0.9%. North Carolina's population grew 7.7% between 2010 and 2017 to 10.3 million. The number of persons in the United States has increased 5.3% from 308.7 million in 2010 to 325.2 million in 2017.

Figure 2-1
Caldwell County Population, 1980-2017



Source: 1980-2010 Census, US Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget and WPCOG Data Center, 2018.

TABLE 2-1 POPULATION COMPARISON, 2000-2017							
Location	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change 2000-10	% Inc.	2017 Estimate	Change 2010-17	% Inc.
Caldwell County	77,708	83,029	5,321	6.8	83,303	274	0.3
Hickory MSA	341,851	365,497	23,646	6.5	368,950	3,453	0.9
NC	8,049,313	9,535,483	1,486,170	18.5	10,272,692	737,209	7.7
US	281,421,906	308,745,538	27,323,632	9.7	325,179,168	16,433,630	5.3

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau; 2017 Estimates from the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget and US Census Bureau, 2017.

Whites are the largest race group in Caldwell County. Over 89% of the County's population is White (Table 2-2). Between 2010 and 2017, however, the number of Whites decreased by 40 persons to 74,885. Hispanic is the County's largest minority group (5.6% of Caldwell County's population in 2017). The County's Hispanic population grew from 3,796 to 4,682 persons. Since the 2010 Census, Caldwell County's mixed race population has increased by 246 persons to 1,504.

TABLE 2-2 CALDWELL COUNTY POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNIC GROUP, 2010-2017						
Race/Ethnic Group	2010 Census	% of Pop.	2017 Estimate	% of Pop.	Change 2010-17	% Change 2010-17
White	74,925	90.2	74,885	89.9	-40	-0.1
African American	4,086	4.9	3,990	4.8	-96	-2.3
American Indian	257	0.3	295	0.8	38	14.8
Asian American	455	0.5	579	0.7	124	27.3
Two or More Races	1,258	1.5	1,504	1.8	246	19.6
Some Other Race	2,048	2.5	2,050	2.5	2	0.0
Hispanic (Any Race)	3,796	4.6	4,682	5.6	886	23.3
White, (Not Hispanic)	79,233	95.4	78,621	94.4	-611	-0.8

Source: 2000-2010 Census, US Census Bureau,

Age group population data for Caldwell County from 2010 to 2017 is displayed in Table 2-3. Some age groups gained population between 2010 and 2017, while others experienced declines. The older age groups in Caldwell County have had the most significant population gains since 2010 due to the aging of the "Baby Boomers." The number of people in the 65 to 74 age group, for example, grew by more 1,700 between 2010 and 2017 to 9,260 persons. The population of 75 to 84 cohort increased 22.5% from 3,933 in 2010 to 4,816 in 2017.

TABLE 2-3 CALDWELL COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2010-2017				
Age Group	2010 Census	2017 Estimate	Change 2010-17	% Change 2010-17
Under 5 Years	4,645	4,073	-572	-12.3%
5 to 9 Years	5,042	4,377	-665	-13.2%
10 to 14 Years	5,619	5,032	-587	-10.4%
15 to 19 Years	5,568	5,597	29	0.5%
20 to 24 Years	4,327	5,628	1,301	30.1%
25 to 34 Years	8,806	8,953	147	1.7%
35 to 44 Years	12,093	9,580	-2,513	-20.8%
45 to 54 Years	12,749	12,512	-237	-1.9%
55 to 59 Years	5,864	6,163	299	5.1%
60 to 64 Years	5,500	5,753	253	4.6%
65 to 74 Years	7,548	9,260	1,712	22.7%
75 to 84 Years	3,933	4,816	883	22.5%
85 Years and Over	1,335	1,559	224	16.8%
Total	83,029	83,303	274	0.3%

Source: 2000-2010 Census, US Census Bureau.

The largest population loss between 2010 and 2017 was in the 35 to 44 age group due to the economic recessions between 2000 and 2010, which caused some younger people to leave Caldwell County. The population of the 35 to 44 age group fell from 12,093 in 2010 to 9,580 in 2017. Besides population loss in the 35 to 44 age group, substantial population decrease also has occurred in Caldwell County's youngest age groups (the under age 5, 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 cohorts). The population of the under age 5, 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 groups decreased by 12.3%, 13.2% and 10.4% respectively between 2010 and 2017.

The impacts of the increasingly older labor force (age 45 to 64) and elderly (age 65 and older) populations on median age can be seen in Table 2-4. Between 2000 and 2010 the median age in Caldwell County increased by 3.8 years to 41.3. Caldwell County's median age increased another 5.3% between 2010 and 2017 to 43.5 years. Caldwell County's 2017 median age is higher than the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and the United States.

TABLE 2-4 MEDIAN AGE, 2000-2017					
Location	2000	2010	% Change	2017	% Change
Caldwell County	37.5	41.3	10.1	43.5	5.3
Hickory MSA	36.7	40.5	10.4	42.9	5.9
NC	35.3	37.4	5.9	38.8	3.7
US	35.3	37.2	5.4	38.1	2.4

Source: 2000, 2010 Census and 2017 ACS, US Census Bureau.

The NC Office of State Management and Budget has age group projections available for Caldwell County (Table 2-5). The population of the 65 to 74, 75 to 84 and 85 years and over age groups will continue to grow over the next 20 years as the "Baby Boomers" grow older. The loss of 25 to 44 year olds in the County from 2000 to 2010 will lead to population declines in the 45 to 54 and 55 to 59 age groups through 2037. The population of the age 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 groups is anticipated to decrease by more than 7% and 13% respectively between 2017 and 2037.

TABLE 2-5 CALDWELL COUNTY POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2017-2037				
Age Group	2017 Estimate	2037 Projection	Change 2017-37	% Change 2017-37
Under 5 Years	4,073	4,730	657	16.1%
5 to 9 Years	4,377	4,977	600	13.7%
10 to 14 Years	5,032	5,218	186	3.7%
15 to 19 Years	5,597	5,202	-395	-7.1%
20 to 24 Years	5,628	4,875	-753	-13.3%
25 to 34 Years	8,953	10,693	1,740	19.4%
35 to 44 Years	9,580	12,385	2,805	29.3%
45 to 54 Years	12,512	10,704	-1,808	-14.5%
55 to 59 Years	6,163	5,329	-834	-13.5%
60 to 64 Years	5,753	5,669	-84	-1.5%
65 to 74 Years	9,260	12,101	2,841	30.7%
75 to 84 Years	4,816	8,153	3,337	69.3%
85 Years and Over	1,559	2,834	1,275	81.8%
Total	83,303	92,870	9,567	11.4%

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2018.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

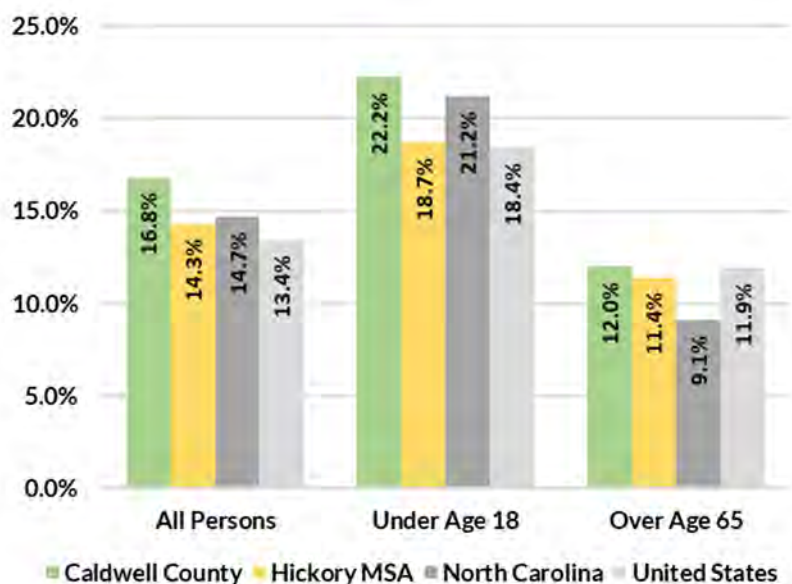
Caldwell County household income data from the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) is shown in Table 2-6. Caldwell County has experienced a 24.9% increase in median household income (from \$39,050 in 2010 to \$45,033 in 2017). Caldwell County's 2017 median household income is \$3,046 less than the Hickory MSA median, and is \$7,719 less than the State median. About 28% of Caldwell County households in 2017 earn less than \$25,000 a year while 27% of households earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year. Another 34% of households had incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year. Eleven percent (11%) of Caldwell County households make more than \$100,000 per year.

TABLE 2-6 CALDWELL COUNTY INCOME STATISTICS, 2017 ACS		
Households	2017 ACS	% of Households
Total Households	32,245	100.0
Households Earning Less than \$25,000	9,118	28.3
Households Earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000	8,639	26.8
Households Earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000	11,008	34.1
Households Earning more than \$100,000	3,480	10.8
Median Household Income	\$45,033	

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

According to the Census website, the Bureau "uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty." Results from the 2017 American Community Survey for Caldwell County show that 13,489 persons, or 16.8% of the population, were at or below the poverty level (Figure 2-2). The Caldwell County poverty rate for the total population and for children under age 18 was higher than the Hickory MSA or the North Carolina rate. The Caldwell County poverty rate for persons over age 65 was also higher than the Hickory MSA or North Carolina.

Figure 2-2
Poverty Rate Comparison, 2017 ACS



Source: 2017 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

EMPLOYMENT

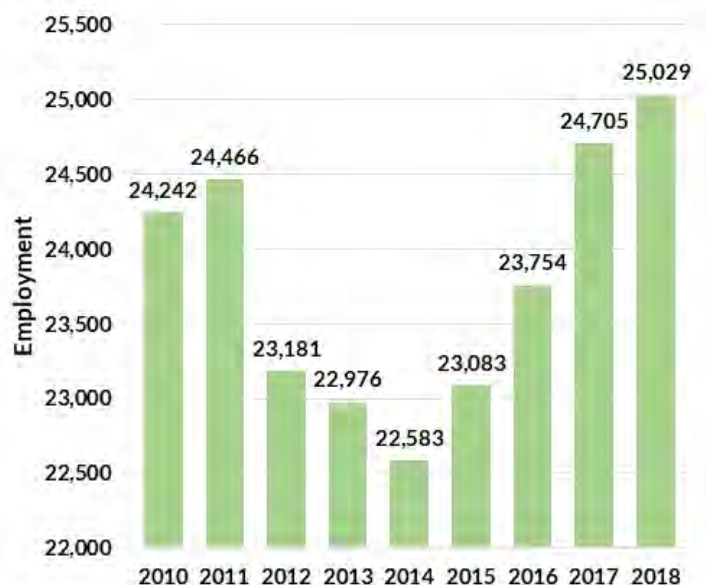
Employment by industry of Caldwell County residents from the 2017 ACS is shown in Table 2-7. About 26.3% of total employment in 2017 was in the manufacturing industry. Another 18.8% of employed persons worked in the education and health care industry. About 12.5% of workers were in the retail trade industry.

TABLE 2-7 CALDWELL EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, 2017 ACS		
Industry	2017 ACS	% of Employed Population
Employed Population	35,318	100.0
Agriculture	0	0.0
Construction	1,918	5.4
Manufacturing	9,295	26.3
Wholesale Trade	1,273	3.6
Retail Trade	4,429	12.5
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	2,420	6.9
Information	273	0.8
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate	1,385	3.9
Professional Services	1,698	4.8
Education and Health Care	6,651	18.8
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	2,706	7.7
Other Services	2,540	7.2
Public Administration	730	2.1

Source: 2017 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Between first quarter 2010 and first quarter 2014, Caldwell County employment fell from 24,242 to 22,583 (Figure 2-3). Since first quarter 2014, Caldwell County employment has increased by 2,446 to 25,029. The number of employed residents in Caldwell has grown from 32,461 in August 2010 to 35,064 in August 2018. The County's unemployment, meanwhile, has fallen from 14.1% in August 2010 to 3.9% in August 2018 (Figure 2-4). Significantly, there are approximately 10,000 more working residents in Caldwell County than Caldwell County jobs. This is due to out-commuting workers from Caldwell seeking employment, mainly in Catawba and Burke Counties (Figure 2-5). Over the past eight years, the biggest employment losses in Caldwell County have occurred in educational services (418), wholesale trade (265) and health care and social assistance (258) (Figure 2-6). The largest

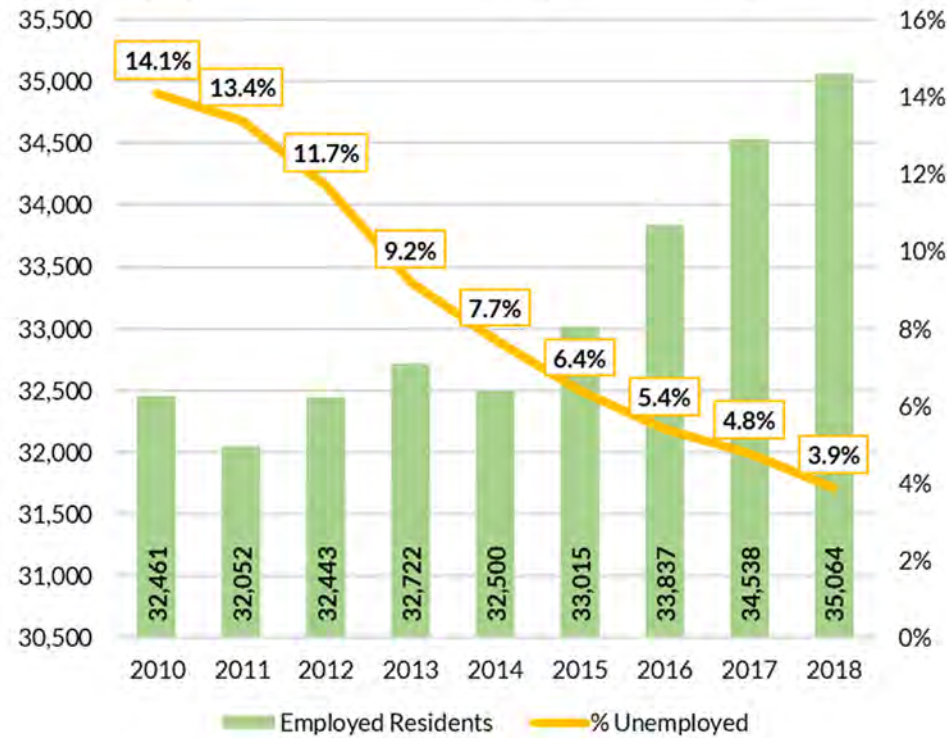
Figure 2-3
Caldwell Co. Employment, First Qtr. 2010-2018



Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2018.

employment gains occurred in manufacturing (1,209), accommodation and food services (373) and administrative and support services (341) and (Figure 2-6).

Figure 2-4
Caldwell County Employed Residents and Unemployment Rate, August 2010 to August 2018



Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2018.

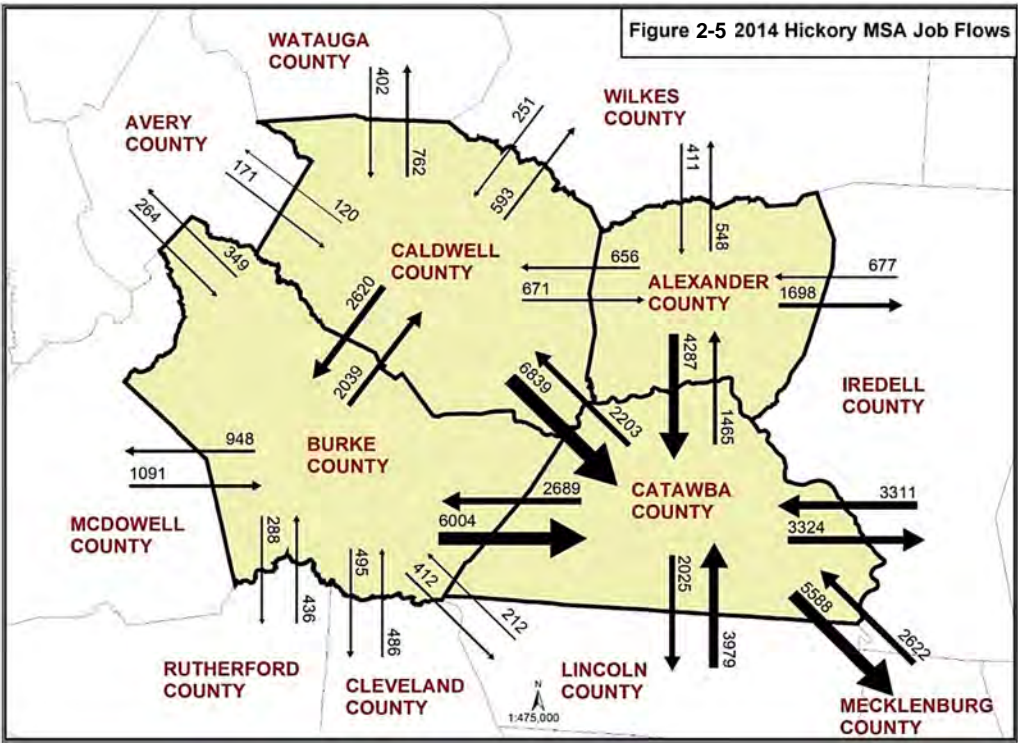
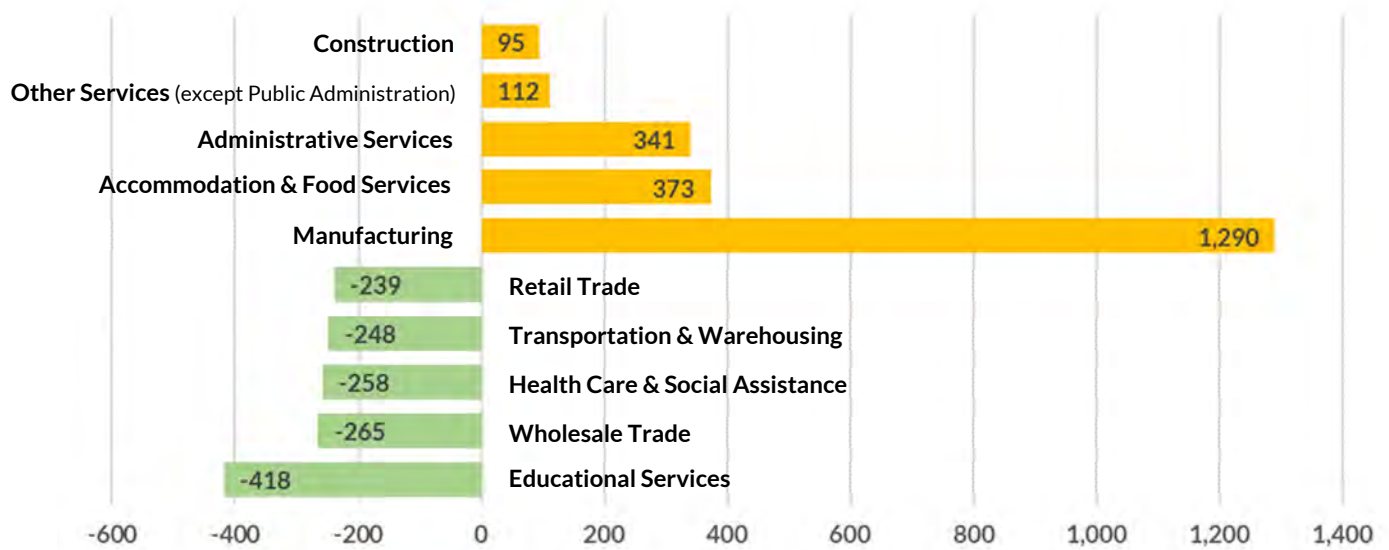


Figure 2-6
Caldwell Co. Employment Gains & Losses by Industry Sector, 1st Qtr. 2010-2018



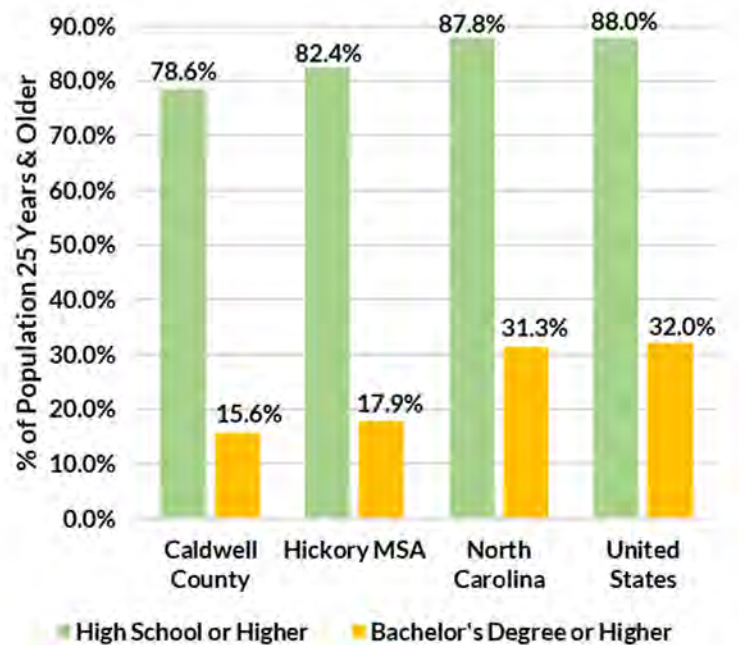
Source (Losses): NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2018.

Source (Gains): NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2017.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment levels of the population age 25 and over for Caldwell County, the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and the United States are shown in Figure 2-7. Data from the 2017 ACS indicates that 78.6% of Caldwell County's population age 25 and older has an educational attainment level of high school (or equivalent) or higher with 15.6% having a bachelor's degree or higher. Caldwell County had lower educational attainment rates (over age 25 high school or higher and over age 25 Bachelor's degree or higher) than the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and the United States.

Figure 2-7
Educational Attainment, 2017 ACS



Source: 2017 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

HOUSING

The number of housing units in Caldwell County increased from 25,557 in 1980 to 38,022 in 2017 (Figure 2-8). Most of the housing growth occurred between 1980 and 2010. From 2000 to 2010, about 4,200 housing units were added in Caldwell County (Table 2-8). Caldwell County's 12.7% percentage housing growth between 2000 and 2010 was slightly higher than the Hickory MSA, but was lower than the State or the US. Caldwell County only added 363 housing units between 2010 and 2017. Caldwell County's housing growth rate (1.0%) between 2010 and 2017 was slightly lower higher than the Hickory MSA and was much lower than the State or the US.

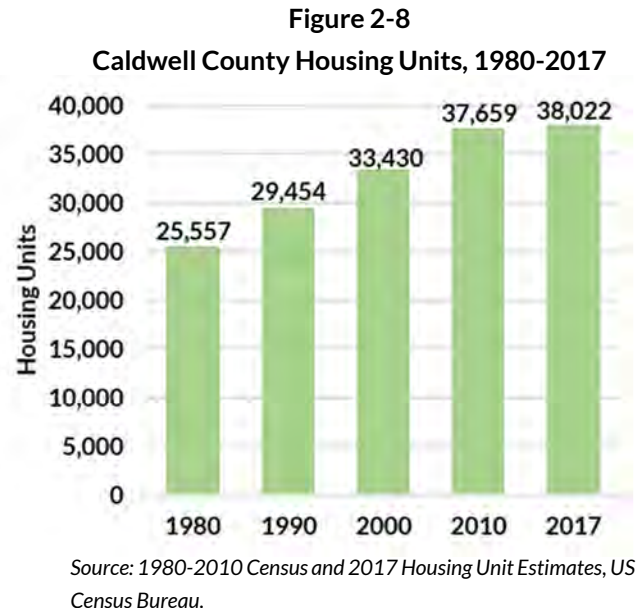


TABLE 2-8 HOUSING UNITS, 2000-2017							
Location	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	% Inc.	2017	Change 2010-2017	% Inc.
Caldwell County	33,430	37,659	4,229	12.7	38,022	363	1.0
Hickory MSA	144,874	162,613	17,739	12.2	164,530	1,917	1.2
NC	3,523,944	4,327,528	803,584	22.8	4,568,097	240,569	5.6
US	115,904,641	131,704,730	15,800,089	13.6	136,312,356	4,607,626	3.5

Source: 2000-2010 Census and 2017 Housing Unit Estimates, US Census Bureau.

Data in Table 2-9 shows that the percentage of renter-occupied units in Caldwell County has increased between 1990 and 2017. The percentage of renter-occupied housing in Caldwell has grown from 25.2% of occupied units in 1990 to 28.7% in 2017. This is due to increase in multi-family construction, as well as some units being converted from owner-occupied to renter-occupied. As of 2017, Caldwell County had a slightly higher percentage of renter-occupied housing than the Hickory MSA, but a lower percentage of renter-occupied units than North Carolina and the United States.

TABLE 2-9 PERCENT RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS, 1990-2017				
Location	1990	2000	2010	2017
Caldwell County	25.2	25.1	26.1	28.7
Hickory MSA	25.3	25.7	26.6	28.1
NC	28.6	27.2	33.3	34.6
US	35.8	33.8	34.9	36.1

Source: 2000-2010 Census and 2017 ACS, US Census Bureau.

Table 2-10 shows a significant increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Caldwell County between the 2000 Census and the 2010 ACS (23.6%). Median housing value rose 11.8% to \$119,800 between the 2010 ACS and the 2017 ACS. Median home values gained 12.2% in the Hickory MSA between from 2010 to 2017. The 2017 ACS Caldwell County median housing value was less than the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and United States median value.

TABLE 2-10 MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS, 2000 TO 2012-2016					
Location	2000	2010 ACS	% Change	2017 ACS	% Change
Caldwell County	\$86,700	\$107,200	23.6	\$119,800	11.8
Hickory MSA	\$93,500	\$118,500	26.7	\$132,900	12.2
NC	\$108,300	\$154,200	42.4	\$171,200	11.0
US	\$119,600	\$179,900	50.4	\$217,600	21.0

Source: 2000 Census, 2010 and 2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

TRANSPORTATION



TRANSPORTATION

The need for improved connectivity and the creation of a transportation network that includes all modes of transportation are key topics in this Plan. Citizens of Caldwell County voiced their strong preference for maintaining the County's current atmosphere – while also developing a street network that is efficient, promoting a mix of land use options, offering expanded bicycle and pedestrian access, and providing a range of route options for emergency access. This chapter analyzes the goals and future vision of the Caldwell County transportation network.

TRANSPORTATION / STREET DESIGN POLICIES

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) policies help determine which improvements are made to existing roadways, and also set standards for future projects. NCDOT's policies require that streets be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities - regardless of their mode of transportation. Improvements are generally planned to occur in conjunction with new roadway development and redevelopment.

TABLE 3-1: STATE AND REGIONAL POLICIES

POLICY	POLICY DESCRIPTION
Greenway Accommodations	In 2015, NCDOT approved guidelines for the accommodation of future greenways under bridges. The guidelines include a decision-making approach and cost-sharing recommendations.
Complete Streets	This policy requires planners and designers to include other modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian, in all transportation projects in municipal areas under certain circumstances.
Bicycle Policy	This policy details guidelines for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of bicycle facilities and accommodations.
Pedestrian Policy Guidelines	These policies allow NCDOT to work with local governments to add sidewalks in coordination with highway improvement projects. State funds are available on a sliding scale to match funds provided by the local government, which will be responsible for maintaining the sidewalk.
Administrative Action to Include Greenway Plans	In 1994, the NCDOT adopted administrative guidelines to consider greenways and greenway crossings during the highway planning process. This policy was incorporated so that critical corridors, which have been adopted by localities for future greenways, will not be severed by highway construction.
Bridge Policy	NCDOT's Bridge Policy establishes design elements for new and reconstructed bridges on the state road system. It includes requirements for sidewalks and bicycle facilities on bridges, including minimum handrail heights and sidewalk widths.

MAJOR ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The following thoroughfares are recommended for improvement and are included in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and/or the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), which were jointly adopted in July 2018 by the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO). Any projects that are currently funded, as of this Plan's writing, include a State Transportation Improvement Plan identification number (STIP #) in parenthesis below. Otherwise, the proposed project is recommended for the future, but not currently funded.

- **US 321 (STIP # U-4700A)** – Funded widening of US 321 to a six-lane, divided facility with reduced-conflict intersections from US 70 in Hickory to US 321A in Granite Falls
- **US 321** – Future widening of US 321 to a six-lane, divided facility with superstreet treatments at signalized intersections from US 321A in Granite Falls to Southwest Boulevard in Lenoir
- **US 321 Intersections (STIP #'s U-4700CA, U-4700CB, and U-4700CC)** – Funded enhancement of three intersections (Mount Herman Road and Pine Mountain Road in Hudson, plus Mission Road in Sawmills) for reduced-conflict design
- **US 321 / Dudley Shoals Road (STIP # U-6161)** – Funded new southbound ramp onto US 321
- **US 321-A / Duke Street (STIP # U-5776)** – Construction underway to realign intersection in Granite Falls and relocate railroad crossing
- **US 321-A (STIP # U-6034)** – Funded upgrade of roadway from Pinewood Road to Duke Street, including new turn lanes
- **US 64 / Calico Road (STIP # U-6033)** – Funded realignment of skewed intersection into two separate intersections with turn lanes
- **US 64 / NC 90 / NC 18 (STIP # R-5745)** – Construction underway to improve intersection with turn lanes and walking paths
- **US 64 / NC 90** – Future upgrade from NC 18 in Lenoir to west of Three Forks Road in Taylorsville
- **US 64 / NC 18** – Future widening to a four-lane divided highway between Gamewell and Morganton
- **NC 268** – Future modernization from US 321 to Wilkes County Line to improve safety
- **Castle Bridge (STIP # R-3430 B) and Connelly Springs Rd (STIP # R-3430 C)** – Funded new bridge over Catawba River, widening from Lenoir to Cajah's Mountain, and modernization from Cajah's Mountain via Baton to Dry Ponds Road
- **Southeast Boulevard** - Future connection from US 321 at Southwest Boulevard to NC 18 utilizing Alfred Hartley Road and new alignment

MINOR ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Roadways that need safety improvements are recommended to be modernized. Modernization can include safety improvements like realigning sharp curves and turns, as well as adding turn lanes, shoulders, and rumble strips. The type of modernization is contingent upon the roadway's needs. The following transportation projects are recommended for modernization – and are funded, where a STIP identification number (STIP #) is listed in parenthesis.

- **Dudley Shoals Road / Grace Chapel Road (STIP # U-6035)** – Funded new roundabout at five-point intersection
- **Pinewood Road (STIP # U-6036)** – Funded turn lanes and sidewalks in Granite Falls west of US 321
- **Cajah's Mountain Road (STIP # U-6157)** – Funded modernization from Connelly Springs Road to US 321A
- **Dry Ponds Road** – Future modernization from Connelly Springs Road to Pinewood Road, plus new extension from US 321A to Pinewood Road
- **Pleasant Hill Road** – Future modernization from US 321-A to Connelly Springs Road
- **Hubbard Road / Shiloh Church Road** – Future modernization and extension from Grace Chapel Road to NC 127
- **Crump Road Extension** – Future connection from Rocky Road at Miller Hill Road
- **Orchard Drive / Crump Road** – Future intersection realignment at Clark's Chapel Road
- **Pinewood Road Extension** – Future extension from Dudley Shoals Road to Wike Road
- **Falls Avenue** – Future widening to three lanes and modification of the US 321 interchange with Falls Road
- **Hibriten Extension** – Future extension of Lower Creek Drive
- **Hospital Avenue Extension** – Future extension of Hospital Avenue to Pennell Street
- **McRary Creek Road** – Future extension from US 64 to NC 18 on new location
- **Myers Road Connector** – Future connection to US 321
- **Rocky Road** – Future improvements from Miller Hill Road to US 64/NC 18
- **Spruce Street Extension** – Future extension to US 64 / NC 18

FIGURE 3-1

CALDWELL COUNTY
2045 METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION PLAN
PROJECTS

Legend

Caldwell County Boundary

County Boundaries

City Limits

Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJs)

Major Lakes

Pisgah National Forest

Major Roads

Roads

**Highway Projects
(Horizon Year)**

2025

2035

2045

CTP

**Interchanges/Intersections Projects
(Horizon Year)**

2025

2035

2045

CTP

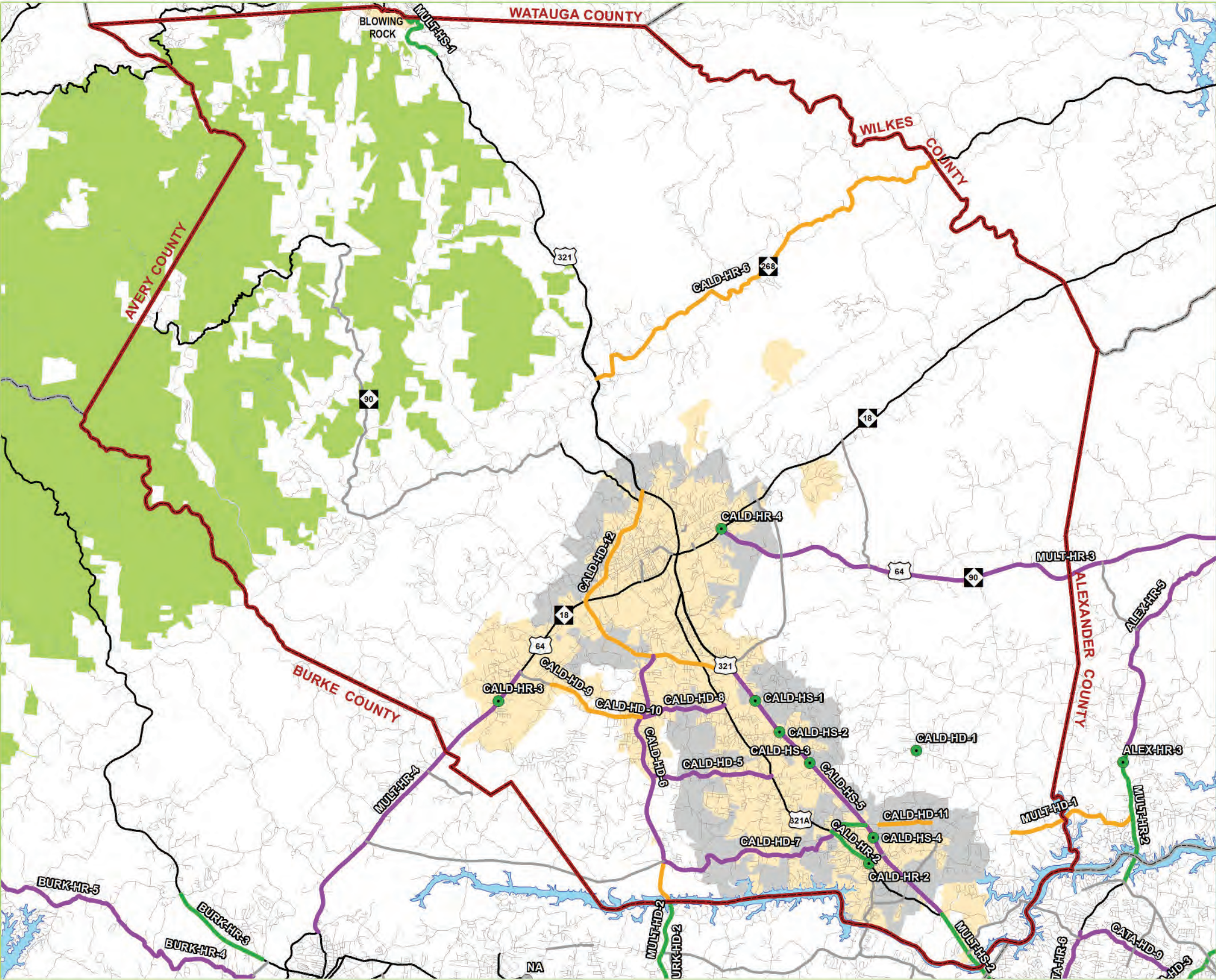
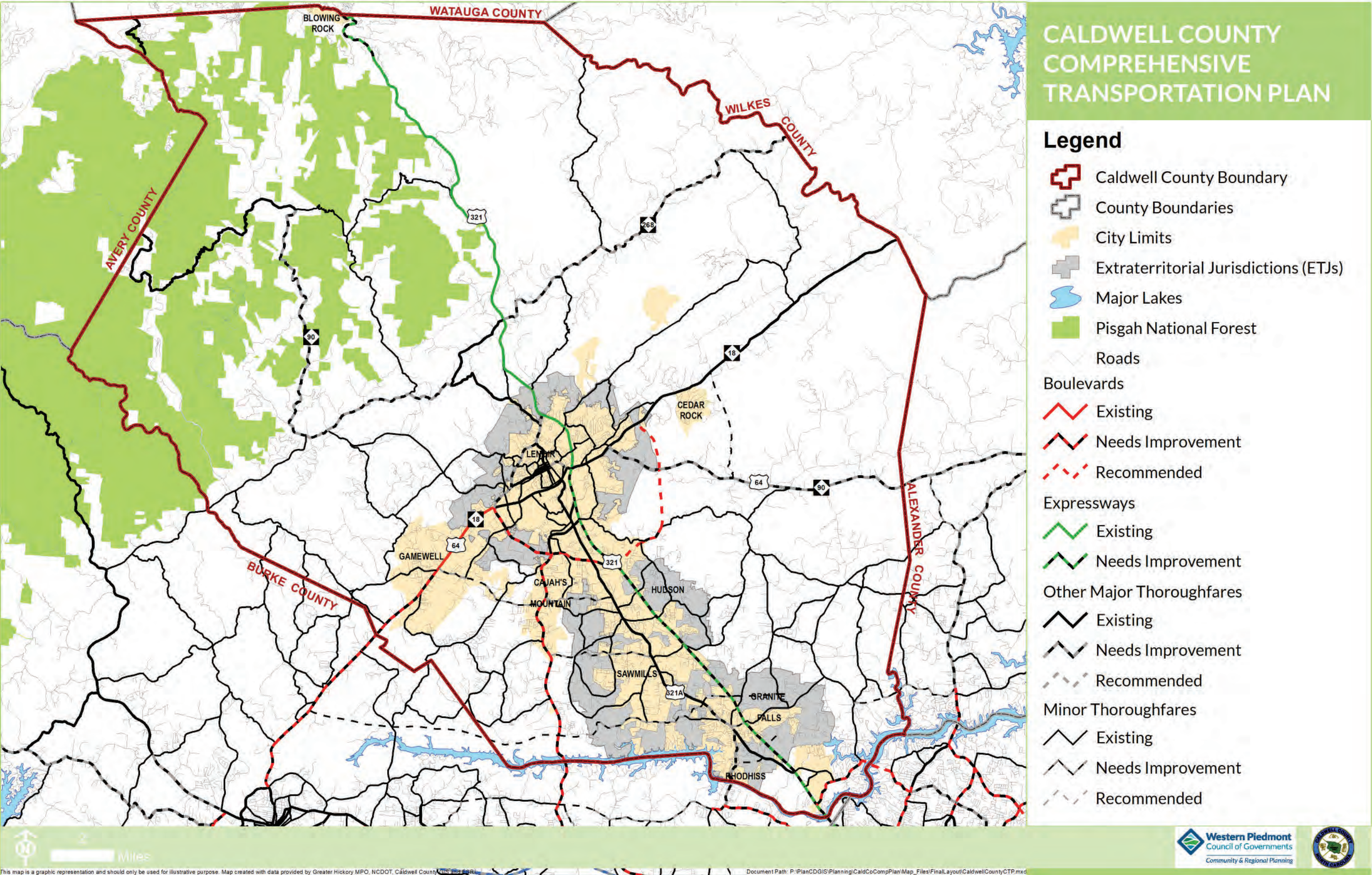


FIGURE 3-2



PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Caldwell's sidewalk network is sparse. Streets should reflect and support a pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages walking, while also supporting other modes of transportation (cars, trucks, bicycles, etc.). This type of street network would have a direct impact on the County's overall quality of life. The Greater Hickory MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan recommends bicycle and pedestrian facilities be included in the design of the U.S. 321 widening project.



Multi-use paths (pictured at left) are separated from the roadway and provide infrastructure for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

NCDOT's policy for designing and planning multi-modal networks that safely accommodate access and travel for all roadway users is referred to as the "Complete Streets Policy". At their August 2019 meeting, the North Carolina Board of Transportation adopted an updated Complete Streets Policy. The new policy requires NCDOT planners and designers to consider and incorporate multimodal facilities into the design and improvement of all appropriate projects. The new policy no longer requires a local cost-share for bicycle-pedestrian facilities on NCDOT-led projects, if a locally adopted plan recommends bicycle-pedestrian facilities and as long as the project's environmental document has not yet been completed. Without a locally-adopted plan, requested bicycle-pedestrian facilities would now have a sliding percentage as low as 5% for local cost-share, depending upon that community's population. A local maintenance agreement would still be required, and any locally-administered project would still require a local match, typically of 20%.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

The Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan, adopted in 2016, identifies high, medium, and low priority bicycle routes identified by local governments in the four-county region. Caldwell County has high, medium, and low priority segments along the following routes (also displayed in Figure 3-3):

High Priority Segments:

Route Segment 9 connects Gamewell to Burke County. The recommendations for Route Segment 9 consist of 3.07 miles of signs and five-foot shoulders on Morganton Boulevard (US 64).

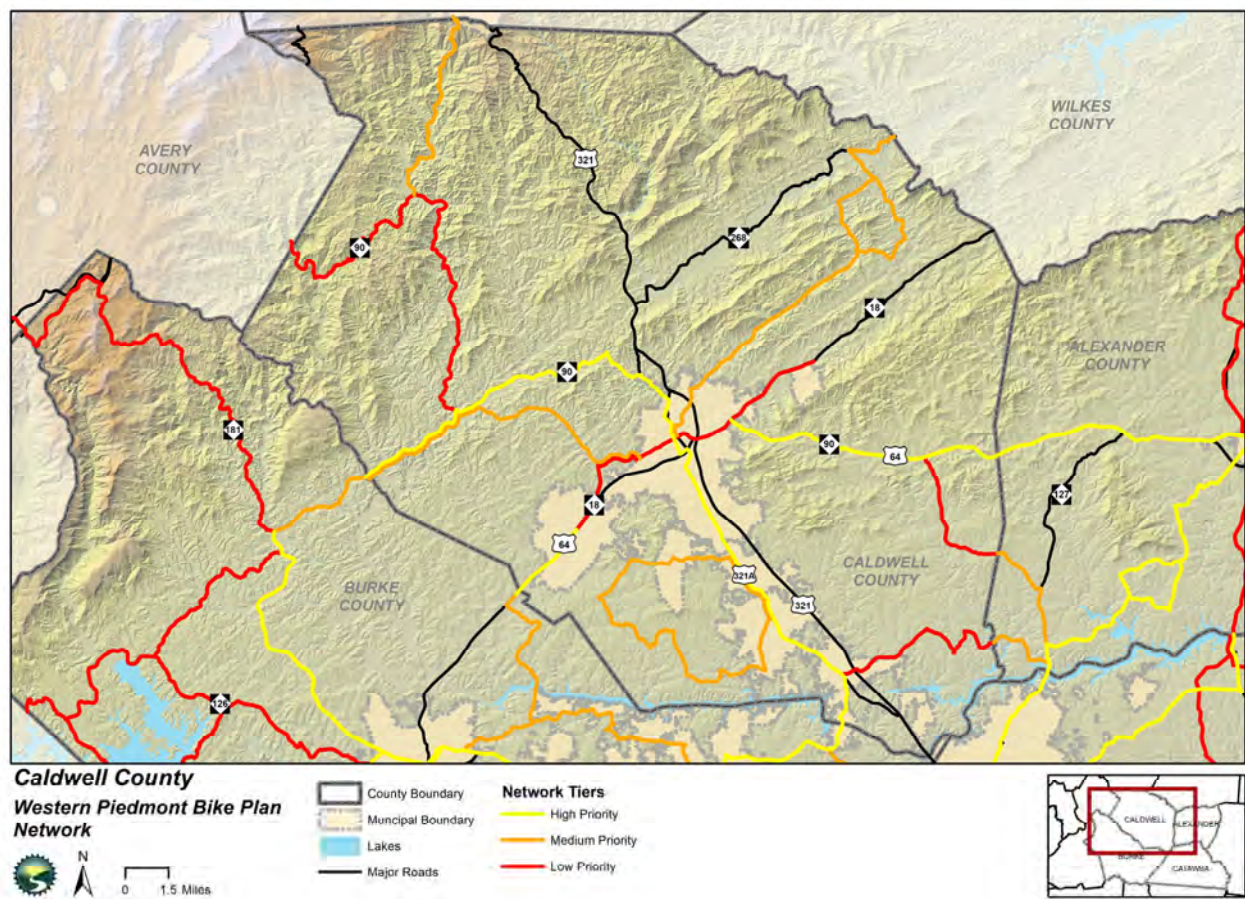
Route Segment 10 connects Lenoir to Burke County via Hudson, Sawmills, Granite Falls, and Rhodhiss. The recommendations for Route Segment 10 consist of 6.24 miles of four-foot shoulders on Main Street, North Main Street, Norwood Street, and US 321A; 2.46 miles of four-foot bike lanes on Caldwell Street, Duke Street, Main Street, and North Main Street; 2.98 miles of sharrows (share-the-road arrow pavement markings) on Caldwell Street, Duke Street, Main Street, North Main Street, Norwood Street, Pennton Avenue, and US 321A; and 1.43 miles of bicycle advisory or regulatory signs on Norwood Street.

Route Segment 11 connects Lenoir to Burke County via Collettsville and Adako Roads. The recommendations for Route Segment 11 consist of 7.88 miles of five-foot shoulders on Collettsville Road; 5.56 miles of four-foot shoulders on Adako Road and Valway Drive; 0.97 miles of sharrows (share-the-road arrow pavement markings) on Main Street; and 0.61 miles of bicycle advisory or regulatory signs on Main Street in Lenoir.

Route Segment 12 connects Lenoir to Alexander County. The recommendations for Route Segment 11 consist of 9.84 miles of five-foot shoulders on Taylorsville Road (US 64).

Medium Priority Segments include Zacks Ford Road and Grandin Road between Lenoir and Wilkes County; Globe Road and Anthony Creek Road between NC 90 and Watauga County; Abington Road between West Lenoir and Collettsville; Sawmills School Road, Dry Ponds Road, Connelly Springs Road, Baton School Road, Union Grove Road, Smokey Creek Road, Clarks Chapel Road, Orchard Drive, and Pleasant Hill Road in Sawmills, Baton, Cajah's Mountain, Hudson, and South Caldwell County.

FIGURE 3-3: CALDWELL COUNTY WESTERN PIEDMONT BIKE PLAN MAP



EXISTING PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE FACILITIES

Caldwell County does not maintain any greenway system located within the county. The City of Lenoir has a 5.8-mile greenway system that is in fair condition, moderately used, and provides limited connections to several recreation areas. There are an estimated 178,797 linear feet of sidewalk within the municipal limits of Granite Falls, Lenoir, Hudson, and Sawmills. Approximately 26 miles of North Carolina bicycle route NC 2 (Mountains-to-Sea) runs through the county.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transportation is a lifeline for many citizens in the Western Piedmont region. Transit services connect people to jobs, schools, grocery stores, medical care, recreational areas, and family.

The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA) serves the Greater Hickory MPO planning area, currently operating as Greenway Public Transportation. Demand Response Van Service is currently offered by Greenway Public Transportation for areas in Caldwell County. Van Service must be scheduled 72 hours in advance by calling 828-465-7643.

The creation of Flex Bus Route Service is recommended for areas of Caldwell County near and between the communities of Lenoir, Hudson, Sawmills, and Granite Falls. A Flex Bus Route is different from a Fixed Bus Route in that it covers a regular route with scheduled bus stops, but it can also deviate from the route to make special pick-ups and drop-offs (when scheduled more than 24 hours in advance). Hickory, Conover, and Newton have Fixed Bus Routes, whereas Taylorsville, Morganton, Drexel, Valdese and Rutherford College currently all have Flex Bus Routes.

BATON – CONNELLY SPRINGS ROAD ROADWAY MODERNIZATION

As listed under the Major Roadway Improvement Projects section of this chapter, Connelly Springs Road has been funded for roadway modernization (STIP # R-3430 C). Figures 3-4 through 3-11 on the following pages are conceptual renderings that illustrate what changes the modernization could entail.



FIGURE 3-4

The possible construction of a sidewalk along Connelly Springs Road would result in the creation of pedestrian connections between nearby higher-density residential areas, the shopping center, the Baton Walking Park and Baton Elementary School.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image



FIGURE 3-5

Landscaped medians and other amenities such community signage or a clock would encourage reduced vehicular speeds and let drivers know that they are entering an active pedestrian area.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image





FIGURE 3-6

The possible construction of a sidewalk along Connelly Springs Road would result in the creation of pedestrian connections between nearby higher-density residential areas, the shopping center, the Baton Walking Park and Baton Elementary School.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image



FIGURE 3-7

A crosswalk linking the residential areas along Connelly Springs Road to the shopping center would improve pedestrian access to Ingles and other business locations.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image





FIGURE 3-8

The possible construction of a sidewalk along Connelly Springs Road would result in the creation of pedestrian connections between nearby higher-density residential areas, the shopping center, the Baton Walking Park and Baton Elementary School.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image



FIGURE 3-9

A crosswalk at the corner of Connelly Springs Road and Baton School Road would improve pedestrian access to the west side of Connelly Springs Road and to Baton Elementary School, if the sidewalk is extended along Baton School Road.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image





FIGURE 3-10
 If extended along Baton School Road, a sidewalk would improve pedestrian access to Baton Elementary School.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image

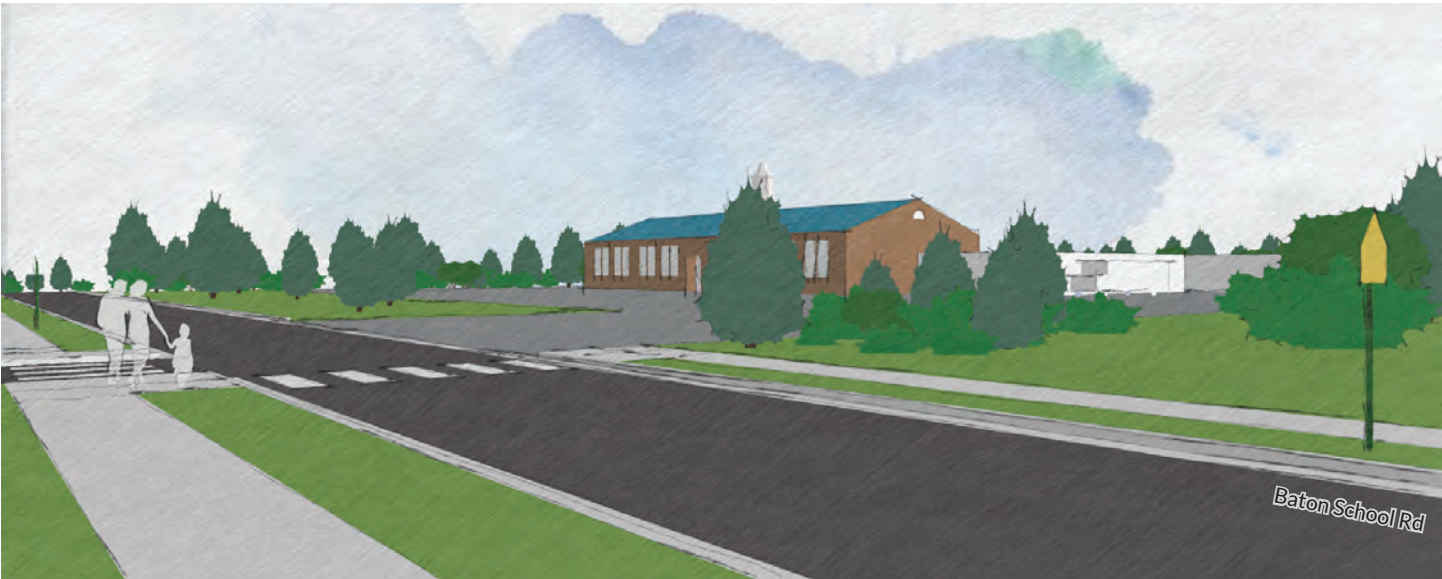


FIGURE 3-11
 A crosswalk at Baton School Road and Carpenter Road would improve pedestrian connections between nearby residences and the school.

Red Arrow indicates the directional view shown in the adjacent image



TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

TR-1. Maintain a good working relationship with NCDOT-Division 11 and WPCOG, in order to coordinate land use and transportation planning for new and updated roadway corridors.

1. Promote continued road improvements on unimproved streets and continue to seek dedication of private streets to help improve residential and emergency vehicle access.
2. Work with NCDOT on programmed projects and modernization.
3. Require adequate transportation access to all developments in order to provide orderly and efficient traffic flow and maintain current and minimum design standards for new subdivision road construction.

TR-2. Incorporate adopted plans to create a County-oriented environment that encourages walking, while also supporting other modes of transportation.

1. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along NC 321 from the southern bridge into the County to MDI and possibly to the Shoppes at Rivercrest.
2. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along Connelly Springs Road from the Castle Bridge area to Ingles, Baton School Road and Baton Elementary School.
3. Consider the Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan recommendations for future bicycle facilities to create connections with other bicycle routes and the Overmountain Victory Trail.
4. Evaluate the feasibility of adding public transportation or Travel on Demand for Caldwell County.
5. Promote the development of applicable bicycle and pedestrian facilities for all roadway projects listed in the “Major Roadway Improvements” and “Minor Roadway Improvements” sections of this chapter, and the Greater Hickory MPO’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan.

RESOURCES & SERVICES



Caldwell
County

Social Services
Public Health
Sheriff
Permitting
2351

4

RESOURCES & SERVICES

PUBLIC SERVICES

Caldwell County provides water services to its citizens through a distribution network that consists of three separate water systems; the North System in the U.S. 321 N-Patterson area, the West System in the Gamewell-Collettsville area, and the Southeast System in the Kings Creek-Oak Hill-Dudley Shoals Grace Chapel area. In total, this water system consists of more than 350 miles of water mains and provides service to a significant portion of the County (See Figure 4-1: Caldwell County Sewer and Water Lines).

Other water systems in the County include The City of Lenoir, the Town of Granite Falls and the Baton Water Corporation. Lake Rhodiss is the water supply for the County. The City of Lenoir owns and operates its own water system and treats water drawn from Lake Rhodiss at its water treatment facility on Waterworks Road. The City of Lenoir also maintains the water system for the Town of Gamewell. Water lines located within the Town of Sawmills are maintained by the Town of Sawmills, but receive potable water from the City of Lenoir's system. The City of Lenoir recently obtained the water system which provides service to the Town of Hudson. The Town of Granite Falls also owns and operates a potable water treatment facility, which is located on Lakeside Avenue and draws water from Lake Rhodiss. Residents in the Baton area receive water from the Baton Water Corporation.

EDUCATION

The Caldwell County School System includes six high schools - three traditional high schools, an alternative school, and two innovative high schools located on the campus of Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute (CCC&TI). Students are enrolled in 12 elementary schools, four middle schools serving grades 6-8, and four K-8 schools. There are several institutions of higher education in the area that provide excellent opportunities for advanced learning: Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute, Catawba Valley Community College, Western Piedmont Community College, Appalachian State University, and Lenoir-Rhyne University.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire protection in Caldwell County is provided by both paid and volunteer firefighters. There are fifteen (15) fire departments placed throughout the county and incorporated areas. Fire protection services within the municipalities include the City of Lenoir, and the towns of Granite Falls, Sawmills, and Hudson. There are three (3) additional departments from outside the county that respond to calls within cross-jurisdictional fire districts between Alexander, Burke and Watauga County.

The Caldwell County Sheriff's Department handles the law enforcement and correctional facility needs for the County. There are three other law enforcement agencies within Caldwell County: Lenoir, Granite Falls and Hudson. Each of these departments employ fulltime police officers.

Caldwell County provides several other public services, including Caldwell County Building Inspections and the Environmental Health Department. These entities ensure that the appropriate standards are followed in new and

existing residential, commercial and industrial developments. The County has also adopted ordinances (which are enforced by the Caldwell County Planning Department) that control issues such as refuse and junked vehicles.

TABLE 4-1: PUBLIC FACILITIES

Hospital	
Caldwell Memorial Hospital, Inc.	
Health Department	
Caldwell County Health Department	
Fire Department	
Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department	Lenoir Fire Department – Station 1, 2 & 3
Blowing Rock Fire Department	Little River Volunteer Fire Department
Collettsville Volunteer Fire Department	North Catawba Volunteer Fire & Rescue
Gamewell Volunteer Fire Department	Patterson Fire Department
Grace Chapel Volunteer Fire Department	Rhodhiss Volunteer Fire Department
Granite Falls Fire Department	Sawmills Volunteer Fire Department
Hudson Volunteer Fire Department	Valmead Fire Department
Kings Creek Volunteer Fire Department	Yadkin Valley Volunteer Fire Department
Law Enforcement	
Caldwell County Sheriff's Department / Caldwell County Jail	North Carolina State Highway Patrol Troop F District III
Town Of Hudson Police Department	City Of Lenoir Police Department
City Of Granite Falls Police Department	
Public School	
Baton Elementary	Kings Creek Elementary
Davenport A+ Elementary School	Oak Hill Elementary
Dudley Shoals Elementary	Gamewell Middle
Gamewell Elementary	Granite Falls Middle
Granite Falls Elementary	Hudson Middle
Hudson Elementary	William Lenoir Middle
Lower Creek Elementary	Caldwell Applied Sciences Academy
Sawmills Elementary	Caldwell Early College
Valmead Elementary	Hibriten High
West Lenoir Elementary	South Caldwell High
Whitnel Elementary	West Caldwell High
Collettsville School	Horizons Elementary
Happy Valley Elementary	Caldwell County Gateway School
Community College	
Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute	
Nonpublic School	
Harris Chapel Christian Academy	Heritage Christian School
Library	
Caldwell County Public Library	Hudson Branch Library
Granite Falls Branch Library	

FIGURE 4-1

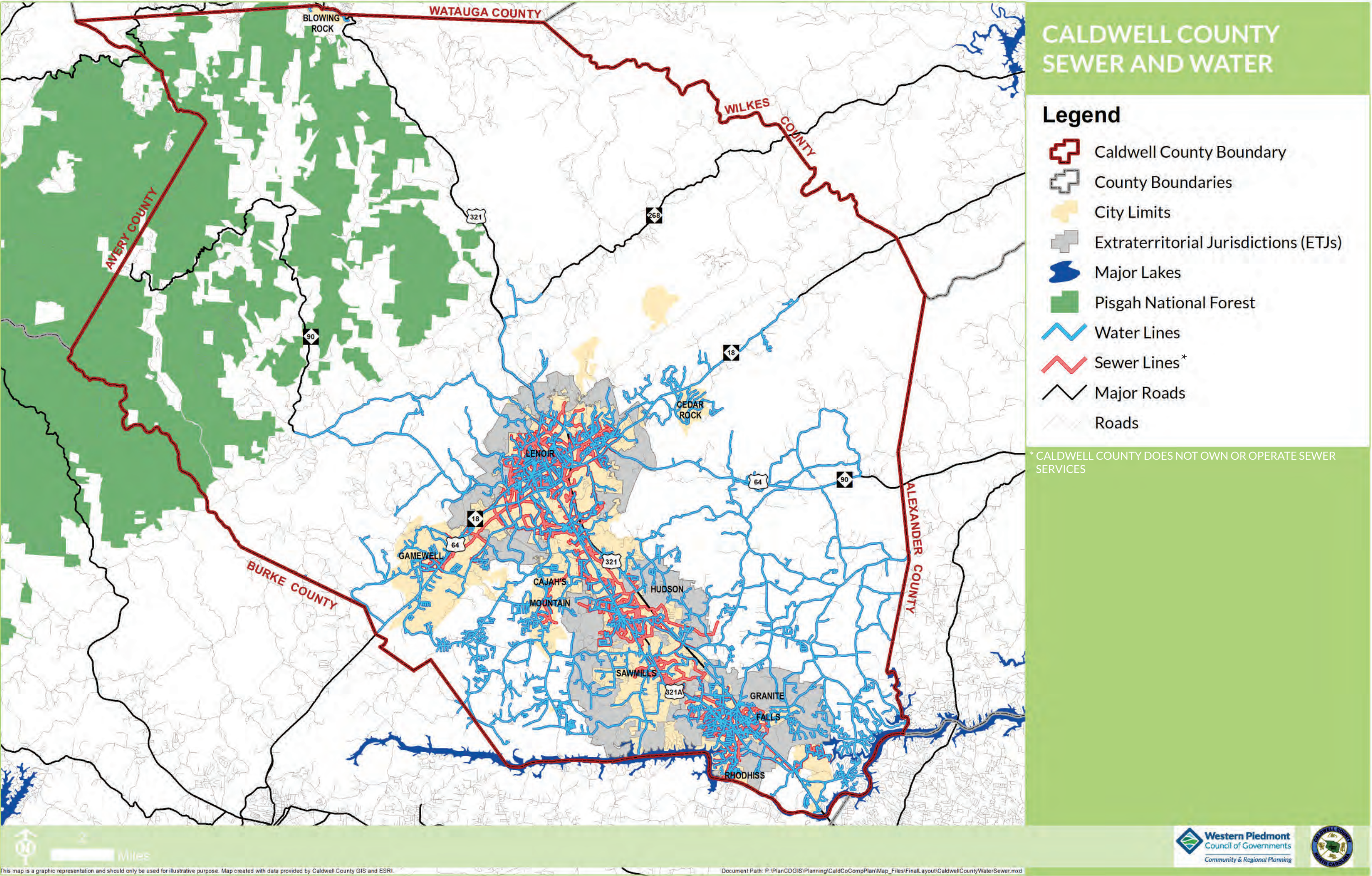
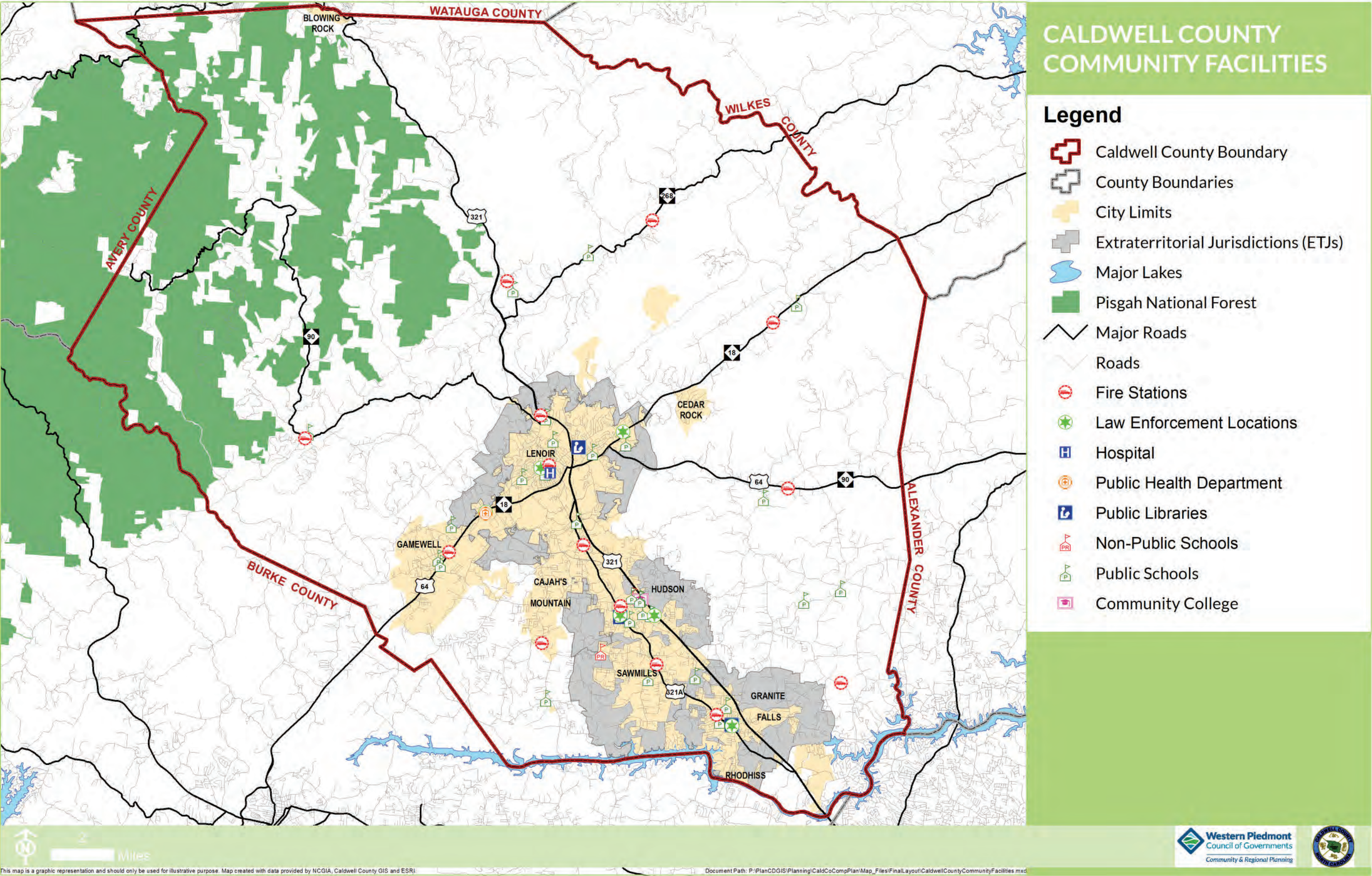


FIGURE 4-2



RESOURCES & SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS:

RS-1. Help decrease nuisance activity through abatement and by fixing or demolishing vacant and dilapidated structures.

1. Identify and document nuisance, vacant, and dilapidated structures.
2. Make abatement of code enforcement issues in highly-visible areas a priority.
3. Continue to look for ways to strengthen the County's code ordinance and efforts.
4. Explore the creation of an independent code enforcement department or code enforcement employees.

RS-2. Maintain relationships with water and sewer providers on future public water and sewer projects.

1. Work with municipalities to extend sewer line to prospective industries, new housing developments, or other uses that demonstrate a predicted increase in revenues and/or property values.
2. Research funding sources to extend water lines to encourage economic growth.
3. Develop an infrastructure construction/improvement plan for Highway 321 that allows for consistent water and sewer availability.
4. Have a civil engineer on retainer or on staff for development plan review services.

RS-3. Caldwell County Schools could adopt a program for elementary, middle and high school students that identifies government careers and leadership opportunities.

1. Incorporate the career/volunteer based learning program into the Board of Education Strategic Plan.
2. Utilize law enforcement and fire for outreach efforts.

RS-4. Utilize new strategies to promote the growth of fire and emergency volunteer participation.

1. Conduct outreach and education to better inform the citizens of the need for volunteers.
2. Conduct a "Fire Academy" in partnerships with schools to inform upcoming volunteers and certify existing volunteers.

PARKS & RECREATION



PARKS & RECREATION

Although Caldwell County does not operate its own Parks and Recreation Department, it does provide ongoing support to recreational opportunities for citizens and works with municipalities to promote recreation opportunities. Projected increases in residential development throughout the county will likely lead to further citizen demand for recreational activities and facilities in the future. While it is important that we consider the availability of recreation facilities based on current needs and projected increases in population, the development of recreational facilities is also a major tool that can be used to stimulate economic development and tourism. The purpose of this section is to establish priorities for recreation development in Caldwell County over the next ten years.

COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS

Caldwell County's natural beauty provides a perfect setting for a casual walk, a long bike ride, or a challenging hike. Recreation opportunities throughout the County provides citizens and visitors alike with a chance to view one of the many rivers and lakes found throughout the County. There are 29 community parks located throughout Caldwell County. 15 of those 29 community parks are located within the municipal limits of a town or city. The County currently relies on civic organizations such as the Optimist, Ruritan, or Lions Clubs and volunteers to conduct maintenance, development, and programming at the 14 community parks. Caldwell County also provides grant writing assistance and some financial assistance to civic organizations operating community parks. The Caldwell County Planning Department can assist community park stewards with plan development, as well as the identification of resources for park improvements and future areas for recreational opportunities.

Greenway development has been a major focus for recreation development within the county and the municipalities. The Lenoir Greenway extends over 7 miles of paved trails and designed for walking, jogging and biking. The Lenoir Greenway connects to the Caldwell County Library, the Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center, and the Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex. Lakeside Park, which is located in the southern part of Caldwell County, features numerous trails for walking/hiking and mountain biking. The trails are intermixed with facilities that allow users to enjoy waterfront views, have a picnic or go fishing. The park features three separate fishing decks that have been strategically located to afford the best fishing sites while also providing fantastic views of the lake. Recently, the Town of Granite Falls added an ADA accessible fishing deck and a binocular viewing scope to the park.

The Town of Hudson has been successful in connecting Redwood Park to several community assets via greenways and trails. The "Loop" now connects Redwood Park, CCC & TI, Hudson Elementary School, Hudson Middle School, and downtown Hudson together. Redwood Park also provides two outdoor basketball courts, two tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, picnic tables and covered shelters for parties by reservation. Additionally, Redwood Park has three separate playgrounds for children, a nature trail with interpretive tree displays, and an outdoor amphitheater. The McCreary Recreation and Fitness Center and Hudson pool are also located at the park.

Caldwell County has been active in establishing greenways along the Yadkin and Johns rivers. Nearly 2 miles of conservation easements were secured for the Happy Valley Greenway, which will connect Happy Valley Elementary School to New River Building Supply along the Yadkin River. On the Johns River, conservation easements and

commitments from future land developers and Crescent Resources have resulted in the creation of nearly 6 miles of reserved corridor for the Johns River Greenway that currently connects to Hard and Flossie Clark Family Park.

CALDWELL COUNTY PATHWAYS

Caldwell County Pathways, Inc., a local nonprofit organization, works within the County to develop a network of greenways and trails. Caldwell County Pathways began as a commissioner-appointed committee before establishing themselves as a nonprofit. Twenty members, including local citizens, community leaders, and representatives of local governments make up Caldwell County Pathways, Inc.

PUBLIC LANDS

There are two major public landholdings in the county: Pisgah National Forest and the Buffalo Game Lands. These public lands account for approximately 57,388 acres or 23% of the total County acreage. The Buffalo Cove Game Land is located mostly in Caldwell County, with a small portion located in western Wilkes County. Both of these lands provide camping and hunting opportunities. Approximately 10% (50,000 acres) of Pisgah National Forest’s 506,000 acres are located in the Collettsville Planning Sector. The Pisgah National Forrest provides a variety of recreational uses, including hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, and boating. With the establishment of the Wilson Creek Visitor Center and the designation of Wilson Creek as a National Wild and Scenic River, this area of the County is highly likely to experience increased usage in the future (Figure 5-2: Caldwell County Managed Areas).

WATERWAYS

There are four streams that can be traveled by boat (navigable streams) in Caldwell County that have the potential to be developed into blueways. Blueways provide infrastructure for the launching and removal of boats on public property. These streams include the Catawba River; Wilson Creek; Johns River; and the Yadkin River.

Catawba Blueway	The North Carolina Upper Catawba River Trail extends over 82 miles from Black Bear Access in Burke County to Lookout Shoals in Catawba County. With 22 access points, one future site and four portages around dams, the trail covers 18 free-flowing miles and 64 reservoir miles. There are two access points in Caldwell County: one at Castle Bridge on Connelly Springs Road and the other at Veteran’s Park in the Town of Sawmills. However, there are no campsites anywhere on the trail. This plan proposes such at Veteran’s Park.
Wilson Creek and Johns River Blueway	Wilson Creek has long been a haven for kayakers. The Johns River is especially good for boating below the confluence of Mulberry Creek. Improved access for these areas is a major part of the Wilson Creek Facility Improvement Plan.
Yadkin River Blueway	The Yadkin River is the least utilized blueway in the county. However, with recent efforts to establish a greenway along the river and to develop the Yadkin Valley Neighborhood Park near Fort Defiance, access and exposure to this recreational opportunity is expected increase.

CALDWELL COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION IN THE FUTURE

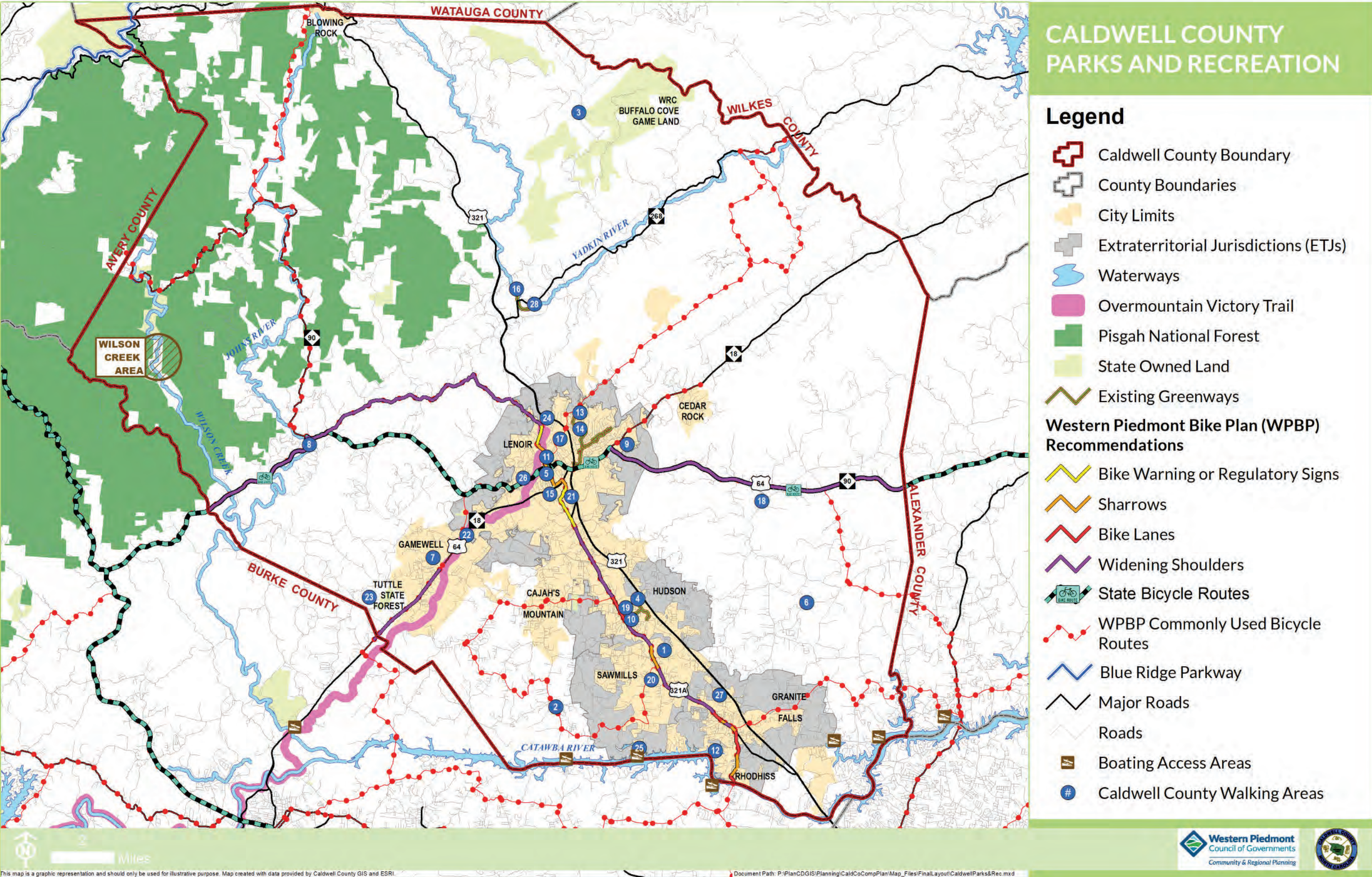
The Advisory Committee indicated that there was county-wide interest in developing a large sporting complex with multiple playing fields to support baseball/softball tournaments. There is significant interest in baseball in Caldwell County.

In order to improve the county's existing recreational facilities or invest in new ones, the County should allocate funding to develop a Parks and Recreation Plan. An adopted parks and recreation plan is required when applying for grant funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), and other funding sources. A parks and recreation plan can include the development of greenways that connect to existing parks, the construction a senior center, a multi-functional youth center, or an all-inclusive recreational center for citizens and visitors.

At minimum, the County could partner with several municipalities to develop a plan for parks and recreational opportunities within their areas. Caldwell County can also work with the municipalities to apply for a North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant to develop a comprehensive sidewalk, bicycle and pedestrian plan. A Parks and Recreation Plan or a plan developed through a grant provided by the North Carolina Department of Transportation can be used to improve connectivity by developing community walking trails that use sidewalks, greenways and multi-use paths along major thoroughfares throughout the county.

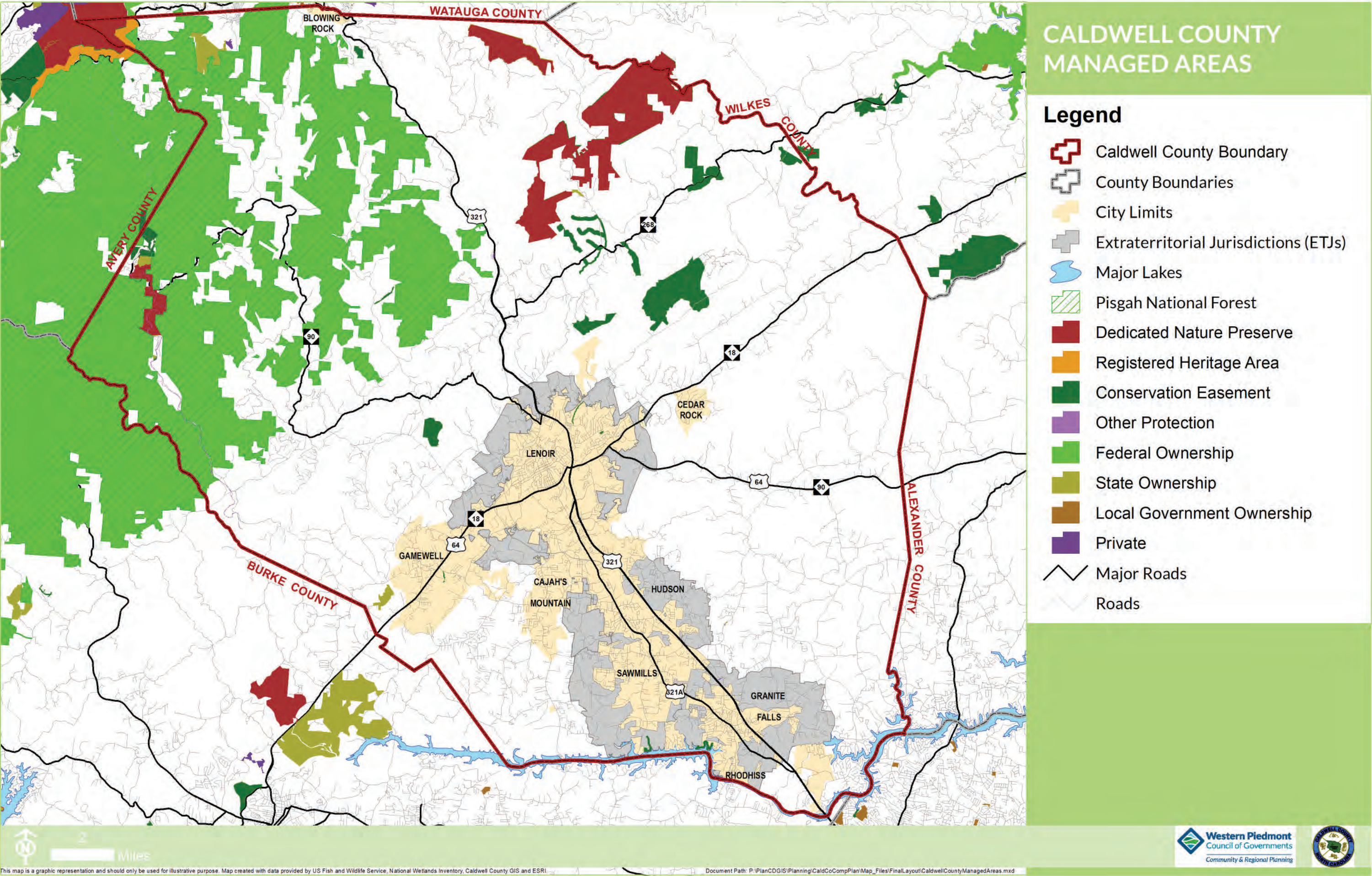
Passive recreation can be a very important asset for a community, whether it be for tourism purposes or for local residents. The County and the municipalities should work together to identify and acquire land in strategic locations that will result in open space preservation, the construction of greenways and parks – and other passive recreation opportunities (locations with scenic views and opportunities to engage in nature watching activities, etc.).

FIGURE 5-1



This map is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purpose. Map created with data provided by Caldwell County GIS and ESRI.

FIGURE 5-2



PARKS & RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

PR-1. Explore new, and expand on existing, recreational opportunities for the County.

1. Develop a Caldwell County Parks and Recreation Plan so that grant funding can be obtained from Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), or other similar funding sources.
2. Explore the possibility of creating a Parks and Recreation Department within the County.
3. Explore the possibility of providing a multi-functional sports complex in the County.
4. Work with the municipalities to apply for a NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant to develop a comprehensive sidewalk pedestrian plan.
5. Identify and acquire land in strategic locations to encourage open space preservation, greenways, parks and other passive recreation opportunities.
6. Partner with municipalities within Caldwell County to extend and connect park, trail systems, and sidewalks.

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

CALDWELL NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural topographic features and environmental characteristics strongly influence human settlement patterns. For example, flat terrain may lead to the development of agricultural, residential, or industrial land uses, while low lying areas subject to flooding might be developed into recreational fields or be used for agricultural purposes. This chapter will evaluate the County's existing natural characteristics and its built environment. Information from this chapter should be used to help guide future land use decisions. For example, development within floodplain areas should be restricted or not allowed because flooding can have disastrous impacts, both in terms of private property damage and the use of tax dollars for clean-up and debris removal.

Specifically, this chapter will examine the environmental factors related to land use planning including watershed and floodplain development, conservation easements, land donations, natural heritage areas, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

WATERSHEDS

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, or stream. It is separated from other watersheds by high points on the land such as hills or ridges. A water supply watershed is an area where water drains to a point and is collected and held then used as a public drinking water source.

Watershed regulations, which were established by State of North Carolina, protect the County's drinking water supply by limiting the amount of impervious surface that can be developed within a watershed – which in turn reduces the amount of stormwater runoff that enters streams or lakes. Impervious surfaces prohibit water from reaching and percolating into the ground and also facilitate the flow of pollutants such as oil and road salt into nearby bodies of water. Examples of impervious surfaces include paved roads and parking lots, rooftops, sidewalks, and even gravel parking lots.

The entirety of Caldwell County is in the drainage area for the Catawba River watershed. The County's streams and creeks drain into the Catawba River, which then drains into Lake Rhodhiss and into the Catawba River Basin. A portion of the planning jurisdiction of Caldwell County is subject to the WS-IV (Water Supply Watershed) Catawba River Protected Area (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). The lake is a major source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people throughout the region. More stringent development regulations are imposed in the WS-IV Protected Area and the WS-IV Critical Area. The regulations are a requirement of the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality, and are based on a template ordinance provided by the State and administered by Caldwell County. The density, or amount, of proposed development is governed by these watershed regulations. Developers may apply for the right to develop more property if they install engineered controls to mitigate stormwater runoff. These laws are designed to protect drinking water from the polluted stormwater runoff that flows into streams, lakes, and rivers from impervious surfaces. In general, development will be more restricted on lands that are closer to drinking water sources.

FLOODPLAIN

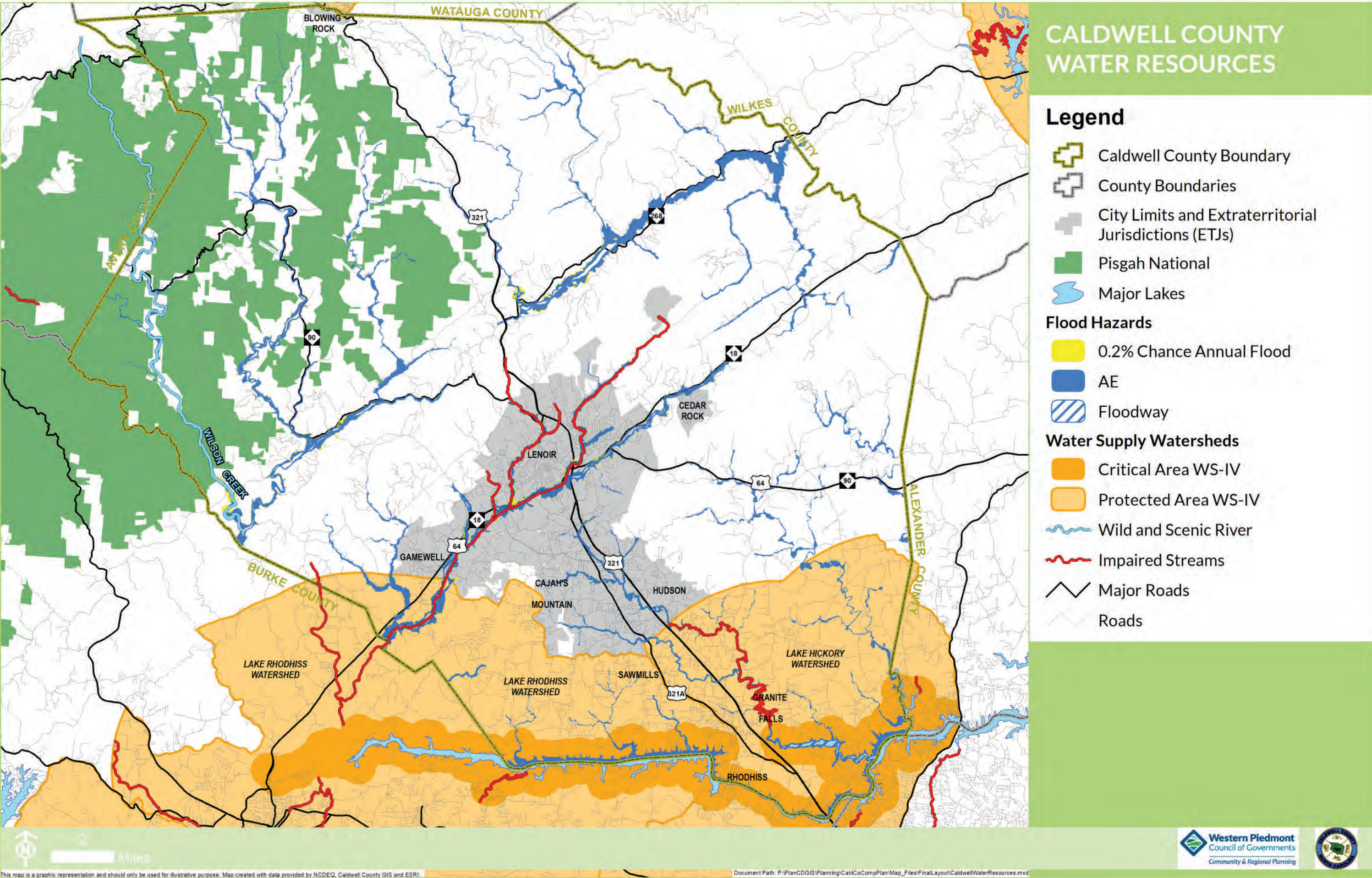
Floodplain regulations are another example of locally-enforced, state-mandated laws. Both the County and the State have an interest in discouraging development in the floodplain for public safety reasons. In Caldwell, floodplain areas can be found primarily along major waterways, including Lake Rhodhiss, Lower Creek, Upper Little River, Gunpowder Creek, Mulberry Creek, the Yadkin River, and their tributaries (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). Within Caldwell's planning jurisdiction, there are two types of designated flood zones with distinct sets of rules: the Floodway and the Flood Hazard-AE Zone.

The County is fortunate not to have a large amount of designated floodplain. The County participates in FEMA's Flood Damage Prevention and Insurance Program as outlined in the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Floodplain management is generally defined as a comprehensive program of preventative and corrective measures to reduce losses associated with flooding. Floodplain management measures may include, but are not limited to, land use regulations (including new development and construction policy), construction of flood control projects, flood-proofing, floodplain preservation, acquisition of flood-prone properties, education, and implementation of early warning systems.

The floodway is the channel of a river, or any waterway, and the adjacent land that must be reserved in order to pass the base flood discharge without increasing the identified base flood elevation (BFE). To avoid the risk of sediment, construction, or plant debris being swept downstream, the floodway is classified as a "non-encroachment area" (NEA), meaning that no land-disturbing activity should occur there without the completion of a detailed hydrologic study which proves that the activity will not affect downstream water levels. As a general rule, no structures, other than public bridges, are allowed in the Floodway.

The Flood Hazard-AE Zone denotes areas that have a one percent probability of flooding in any given year. New structures are allowed within the AE Zone if a floodplain permit is obtained. A floodplain permit requires all new construction to meet certain standards. The basement and/or foundation (the lowest floor level) must be elevated to or above the BFE. Many property owners choose to build outside of the floodplain to avoid carrying the necessary flood insurance.

FIGURE 6-1



CONSERVATION / AGRICULTURE / ENVIRONMENT

While much of Caldwell County's Planning jurisdiction is rural, there are still many large tracts that are being used for large scale residential development that could be designated for conservation or agricultural development. Roughly half of Caldwell is located in the Lake Rhodhiss WS-IV watershed protected area (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). The County could allow for a limited amount of low-density residential development and associated uses that would still provide adequate protection for environmentally-sensitive areas and wildlife habitat, protect viable working farms, maintain the integrity of rural viewsheds, and limit the amount of potential property damage associated with existing natural hazards. That area – and other wooded tracts – can follow the conservation approach to residential development by identifying and preserving sensitive wildlife and timber areas before development begins.

Figure 6-2: Conservation Planning for Green Growth, displays information that can be used when developing a plan for water and ecological conservation by identifying those areas that are protected by conservation easement or other means. The Green Growth map also displays impervious surface areas (locations with land cover that does not allow water to penetrate and soak into the ground). As development in the County occurs, the amount of impervious surface will increase. An increase in impervious surface area causes the volume and velocity of stormwater runoff to increase significantly. This can result in severe flooding, erosion, and adverse impacts to drinking water supplies and recreational water activities – including fishing and swimming. Importantly, water quality degradation from polluted stormwater runoff can contaminate both surface water and groundwater (i.e. wells) sources. The County currently enforces a Floodplain Ordinance and a Water Supply Watershed Ordinance to help address some of the effects of impervious surface growth.

The information displayed in Figures 6-2 is based on the best scientific data and expertise available from a multitude of sources. Areas with more rare, abundant and diverse species and habitats are rated with higher conservation values on a scale of 10 to 1. The areas with a conservation value of maximum (10) to very high (7) are the most sensitive, and contain the rarest species and habitats. These are the most important areas to conserve, buffer and connect for wildlife purposes. Areas with a rank of 6 to 1 are of high (6) to moderate (1) conservation priority. They play an important role in maintaining habitat connectivity and biodiversity, but may not be as sensitive or rare as more highly ranked areas. The areas in gray have at least 20 percent impervious surface, and therefore are likely have the least habitat value. They have been assigned the value of -1. White areas are of unknown value (most have not been inventoried).

Natural Heritage Natural Areas (see Figure 6-3: Conservation Planning for Green Growth) are identified by North Carolina Natural Heritage Program ecologists. These sites support rare and high-quality populations of native plants, wildlife and natural communities (habitats) on both land and water – and are extremely important to the conservation of the state's biodiversity. An area's value rating may be due to the presence of rare species, rare or high-quality natural communities or other important ecological features. It should be noted that this dataset only contains data for rare species and habitats; not all priority wildlife and habitats species datasets are included.

FIGURE 6-2

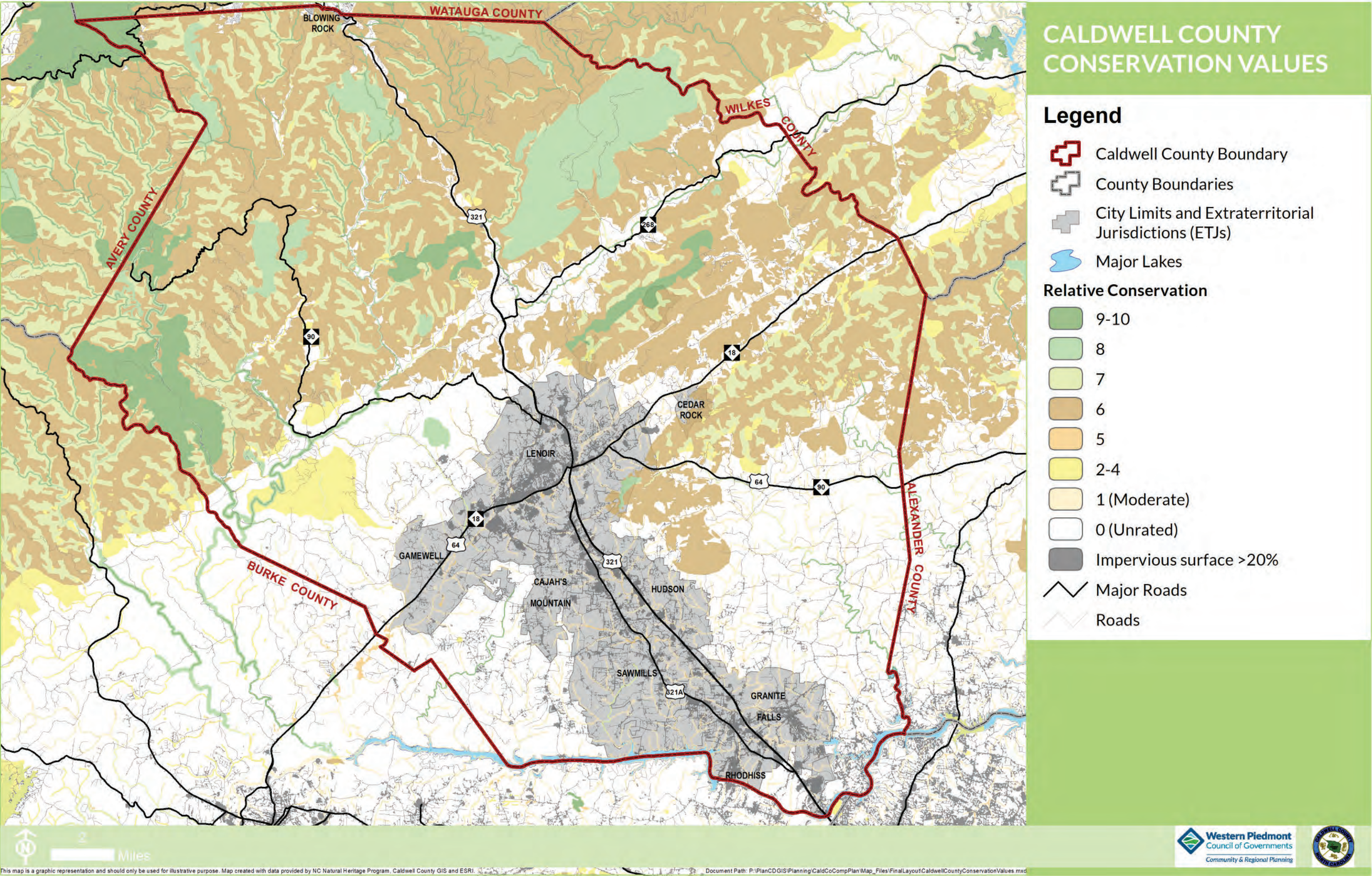
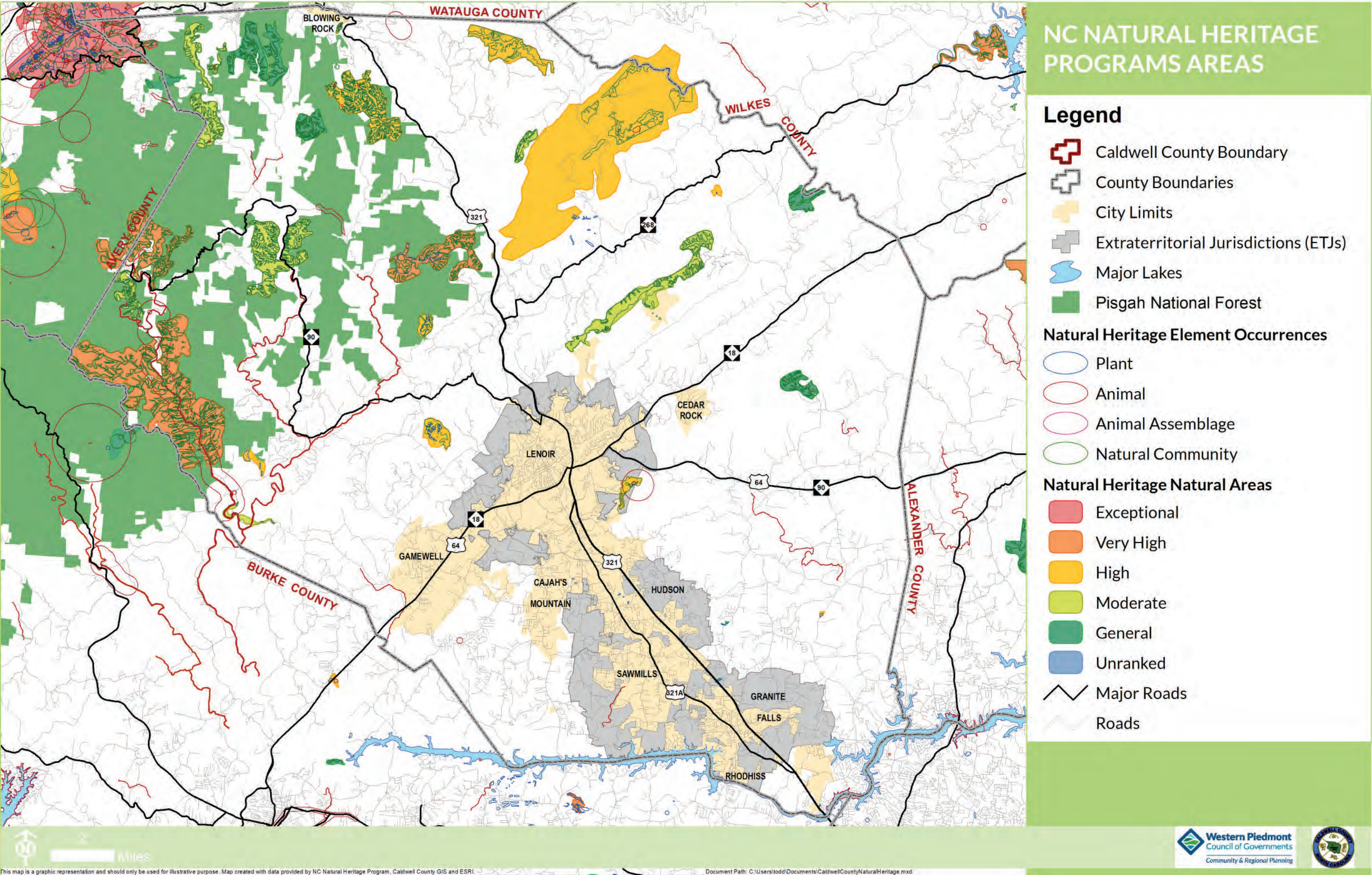


FIGURE 6-3



CURRENT OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Caldwell County currently has three overlay districts that are used for Conservation Purposes: The Collettsville Overlay District, the Yadkin Valley Overlay District and the Wilson Creek Overlay District (See Figure 8-1, Zoning Map). The Collettsville Overlay District has standards that apply within the Collettsville District (Townships of Johns River, Mulberry, Globe, and Wilson Creek). It requires a 3 acre minimum lot size and architectural standards for businesses development. The Yadkin Valley Planning District has similar requirements.

The Wilson Creek Conservation Overlay District includes Wilson Creek, and extends from the southernmost U.S. Forest Service boundary on Brown Mountain Beach Road north to the Avery County line. It also includes all areas within 1,320 feet (1/4 mile) of each side of Wilson Creek. The purpose of the Wilson Creek Conservation Overlay District is to implement the Wilson Creek Vision Statement, which describes five primary goals:

1. Enhance the public health, safety, and general welfare in the Wilson Creek area through the protection of water quality, the environment, and historic values
2. Preserve and enhance the water quality of Wilson Creek as a North Carolina “outstanding water resource” and a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River
3. Protect the public’s view of Wilson Creek and screen future development from the road and waterways
4. Protect the area’s endangered plant, animal, and aquatic species
5. Work to complement the U.S. Forest Service Comprehensive Management Plan for the Wilson Creek area adopted on September 30, 2005, and support other federal and state agencies, as well as land trusts, that have jurisdiction or interests in the Wilson Creek corridor

LAND DONATIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides grants to local governments for the acquisition of land to be used for public recreational use. Additionally, PARTF grants can be used to protect natural and scenic resources or to renovate older park facilities.

Because landowners occasionally approach local governments with proposals to sell their land, Caldwell County should be aware of the PARTF program and how it can be used to help the County achieve its natural resource, recreation, and environmental planning goals. PARTF provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants up to \$500,000. Importantly, the appraised value of land to be donated to an applicant can be used as part of the County’s matching fund requirement. Property acquired with PARTF funding must be dedicated forever for public recreational use.

Similarly, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) provides grants to local governments for projects that specifically address water pollution problems. CWMTF may fund projects to acquire land that “represents the ecological diversity of North Carolina”. Caldwell County should also be aware of the CWMTF program and how it can be used to help the County achieve its natural resource and environmental planning goals.

CALDWELL CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's preservation-worthy historic places. The Register includes significant properties, which are further divided into buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. The National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) carries out many historic preservation responsibilities including surveying, evaluating and nominating properties for inclusion in the National Register.

If a property meets the criteria to be on the National Register, the National Park Service designates the property as "Determined Eligible" for listing. However, a property so designated will not yet be formally listed in the Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register, but not listed, do not qualify for federal rehabilitation tax incentives, federal tax incentives for preservation easements on historic buildings and sites, or National Park Service grants.

In North Carolina, the placement of a property or district on a "Study List" constitutes the first step toward nomination to the National Register. The Study List identifies properties and districts that are likely to be eligible for the National Register, giving the green light to sponsors and staff to proceed with a formal nomination with reasonable assurance that the property can be successfully nominated.

According to the State Historic Preservation Office, there are thirty-four (34) sites in Caldwell County that are either listed in the National Register, Determined Eligible or are on the Study List. Figure 6-4: Historic Sites illustrates where those places are located, and Table 6-1 below indicates their description and status.



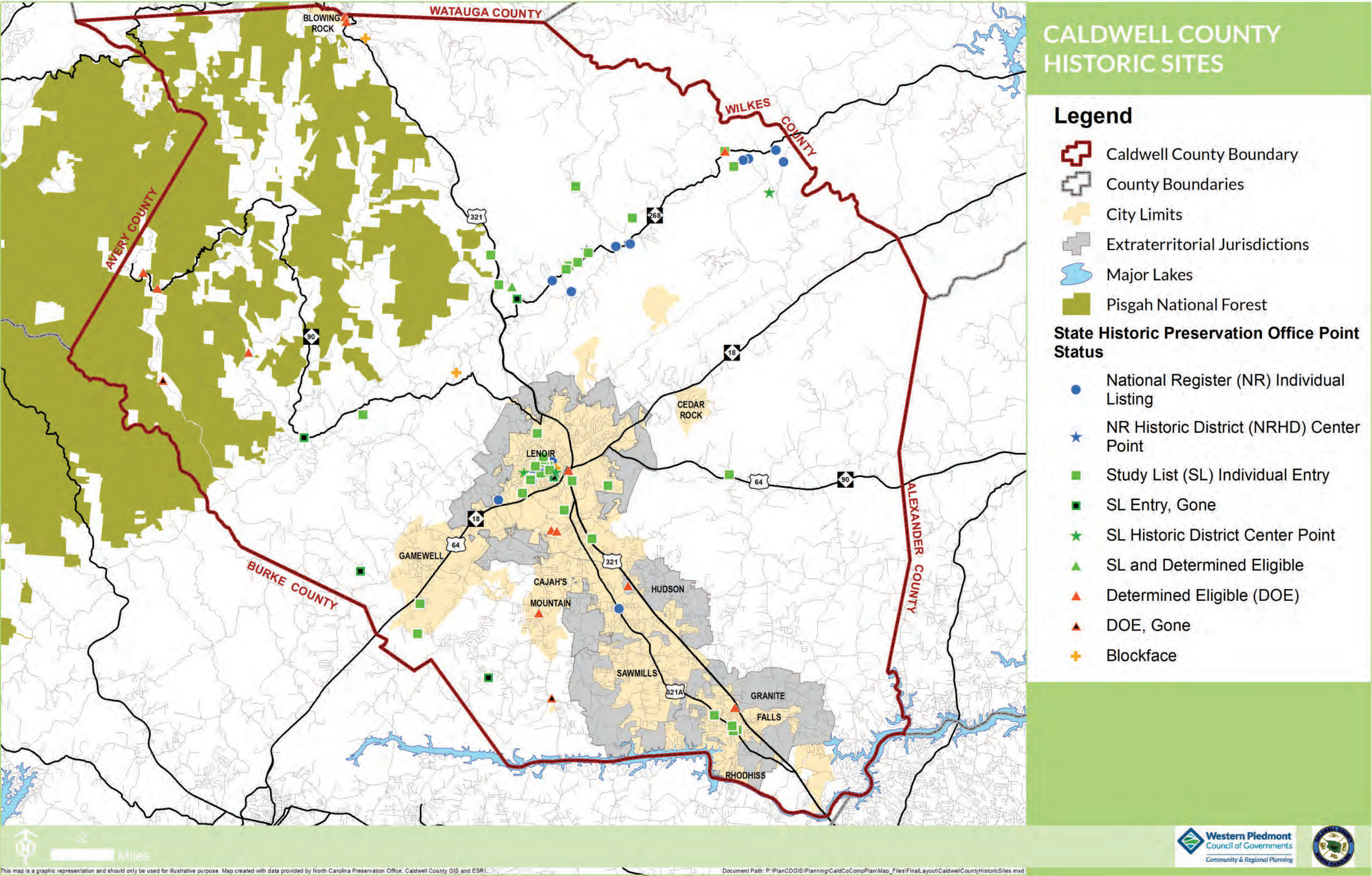
Fort Defiance, 1792

TABLE 6-1: HISTORIC SITES

National Register (NR) Individual Listing	
Site Name	Township
Caldwell County Courthouse	Lower Creek
Clover Hill	Yadkin Valley
Dula-Horton Cemetery	Yadkin Valley
Edgar Allan Poe House	Lenoir
Fort Defiance	Yadkin Valley
Hudson Cotton Manufacturing Company	Hudson
J.M. Bernhardt Planing Mill and Box Factory - Steele Cotton Mill	Lenoir
Lenoir Cotton Mill - Blue Bell, Inc. Plant	Lenoir
Lenoir Grammar School	Lower Creek
Lenoir High School	Lenoir
Mariah's Chapel	Kings Creek
Mary's Grove	Lenoir
Riverside	Kings Creek
The Fountain	Patterson
Walter James Lenoir House	Yadkin Valley
William Hagler House	Kings Creek
National Register Historic District (NRHD)	
Site Name	Township
Lenoir Downtown Historic District	Lenoir
Lenoir Downtown Historic District Boundary Increase	Lenoir
Patterson School Historic District	Yadkin Valley
Determined Eligible for National Registration	
Site Name	Township
American Effird Texile Mill Village Historic District	Lenoir
Blackstone Post Office	Yadkin Valley
Bridge (DOT 130004)	Wilson Creek
Elijah Estes House	Johns River
Elizabeth Bush House	North Catawba
G. Haywood Hartley House	Lower Creek
Harpers Chapel Methodist Church and Cemetery	Patterson
House (Cottage)	Patterson
House (Jack Dunavant Cottage)	Patterson
James Edgar Broyhill Estate	Lower Creek
Julius V. Stirewalt Farm	Lovelady
Mortimer Work Center	Wilson Creek
Whitnel School (former)	Lenoir

For more detailed information regarding historic sites in Caldwell County visit www.ncdcr.org Division of Historic Resources.

FIGURE 6-4



NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

- NR-1. Continue to protect Caldwell County's natural resources through incentives and ordinances designed to help preserve the rural areas of the County and safeguard the environment.
1. Encourage developers to use innovative stormwater treatment techniques such as pervious pavement and sidewalks, bio swales, or bio-retention cells in the Water Supply Watershed to reduce flooding and improve drinking water quality.
 2. Work with the Foothills Conservancy to evaluate land acquisition proposals that may be eligible for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) or Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) grant funding.
- NR-2. Protect the historic fabric of Caldwell County through preservation and by assigning importance to structures of known historical value.
1. Maintain structures of value that are listed, determined eligible, or on the study list for the National Register of Historic places.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is the process by which the local economy and the socio-economic well-being of the citizens are improved. Local governments can work with the private sector to create the kind of conditions that lead to economic growth. For example, local governments can recruit major employers to locate in suitable areas, work with existing businesses to encourage growth, or create opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

A primary goal of this Plan is to evaluate the County's overall economic climate by examining local economic trends, while also assessing other key aspects that contribute to its economic success (infrastructure, commercial/industrial building stock, land use, zoning, transportation, and environment). In doing so, the Plan can help address the community's overall goal of strengthening and diversifying its industrial, manufacturing, commercial, and retail sectors.

From 2000 to 2010 Caldwell County was reacting to fundamental structural changes in the global and local economy. In the furniture industry, there was an eighty (80) to ninety (90) percent loss of employment, and the Great Recession nearly resulted in the sector's complete demise. However, there have been many improvements in Caldwell County's economy since that time, and the forecast of Caldwell County's future economic development should not be based on events that occurred prior to 2010.

Caldwell County is within the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) that is the #1 furniture manufacturer in the U.S. Even during the recession, the MSA remained #1, but employment levels were significantly reduced. Since 2010, the furniture industry has recovered and is back to pre-recession hiring levels. The County has also taken the opportunity to increase and diversify its industry. As the result, the County's economy has changed more since the Great Recession than it has in its 178 year old history. New industries established in Caldwell County since 2008 are listed in Table 7-1. New retail is not included in the table, but it stands to reason that when new industry is added, new retail follows.

TABLE 7-1: CALDWELL COUNTY NEW INDUSTRIES SINCE 2008

Lubrimetal	Carolina Prime Pet	Childforms
Randall Miller Trucking	JBS, USA	Exela Pharma Sciences
CCF Sofa	Blue Ridge Tissue	Google
CCON Metals	Bakers Waste Equipment	Sattler Corp
XPO Logistics	STAT Industrial Recycling	CentriLogic
80 Acres Urban Agriculture	Woodgrain Millwork	Spann Enterprises
Automated Solutions	Carolina Locust	Superior Furnishings Direct
Roblon	Summit Install	Harlee Packaging
Ryan-Al Door	Carolina Leg Supply	Hoffman Materials
Kendall Supply	Southern Wood Products	AikenControls
ICON Publishing	Camp Coffee Roasters	BioNutra, Inc.

Different portions of the County have different challenges related to economic development. North Caldwell – specifically the northern portion of U.S. Highway 321 – is currently made up of residential development and some scattered commercial sites. This area is likely to retain its current mixture of development into the future, but it remains possible that additional nodes of commercial activity or neighborhood businesses will develop. For South Caldwell, the southern portion of U.S. Highway 321 is where most commercial development exists. There are a few large parcels in this area that remain open to development that are in close proximity to water and sewer services. This area is home to MDI, is close to Interstate 40, and is within 1 hour of a major international airport. Eastern and western Caldwell County (along NC Highway 18) have challenges related to the lack of available sewer service. However, there are large parcels of available land in this area.

FIGURE 7-1: PROXIMITY TO CALDWELL COUNTY



The N.C. Highway 321 widening project, which is scheduled to begin in 2021, may make Caldwell County more attractive to retail and restaurant establishments. The flow of goods to Charlotte, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, and Asheville will become even easier as the road is expanded from two lanes to four. As the County becomes more accessible, it is reasonable to conclude that Caldwell will experience growth in other sectors, including housing and services. Figure 7-1 shows the proximity of many major

economic centers to Caldwell County. Transportation corridors that are within proximity or within the County include:

- Interstate 40 – 10 minutes
- Interstate 77 – 35 minutes
- US Highway 64
- NC Highway 18
- NC Highway 90
- NC Highway 268
- NC Highway 321

There are two airports within Caldwell County, the Foothills Regional Airport and the Lower Creek Airport. The County also has three regional airports within 40 miles including Hickory Regional Airport (2.5 miles), Statesville Airport (29 miles) and Wilkes County Airport (37 miles). The Charlotte-Douglas International Airport is 43 miles away.

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The Opportunity Zones Program (Sec. 13823) provides tax incentives for qualified investors to re-invest unrealized capital gains into low-income communities throughout the state, and across the country. Low-income census tracts are areas where the poverty rate is 20 percent or greater and/or family income is less than 80% of the area's median income. Investments made by qualified entities known as Opportunity Funds into certified Opportunity Zones will receive three key federal tax incentives to encourage investment including:

- Temporary tax deferral for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Step-up in basis for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund
- Permanent exclusion from taxable income of long-term capital gains
- New market tax credits

Caldwell County requested four Opportunity Zones, and those four were approved (see Figure 7-2: Opportunity Zones). Census Tract 311 is bordered by Hwy 268 to the north and Hwy 18 to the south. Census Tract 301 is bordered by Main St NW switching to Creekway Drive to the west, Highway 18 to the south, and Hwy 321 to the east. Census Tract 303 is bordered by Highway 18 to the northwest, Connelly Springs Rd to the east, and a series of roads to the south including Orchard Rd., Crump Rd., and Rocky Rd. Census Tract 308 is bordered by that same series of roads to the north, as well as Highway 18 to the west, Connelly Springs Road to the east and the county line to the south.

HOUSING STUDY

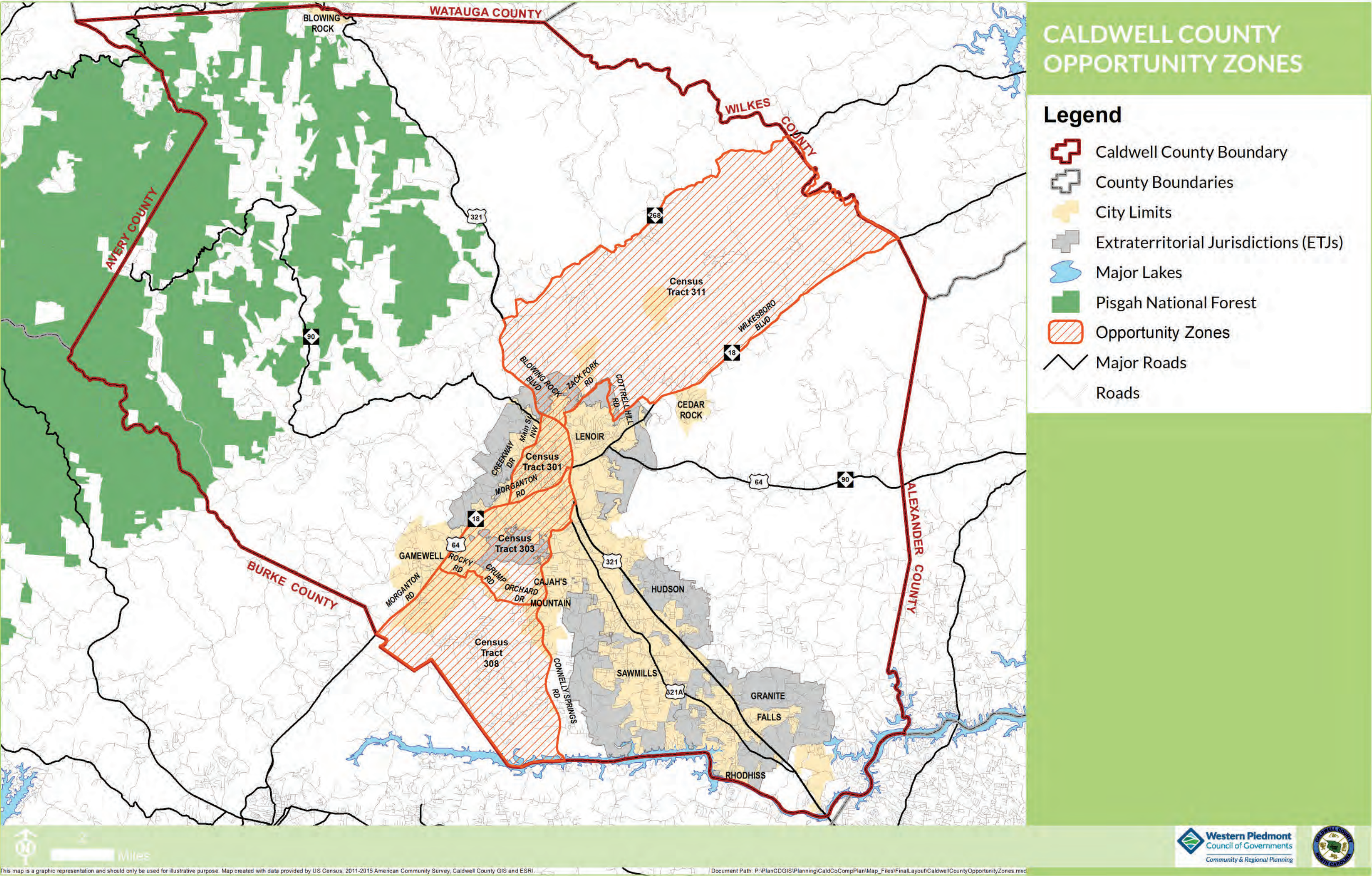
In order to encourage developers to bring in more housing development into Caldwell County, the County commissioned a study to examine unmet housing demand. New businesses and industries have expressed concern that their new hires have struggled to find housing that suits their needs. Caldwell County's economy has added about 1,000 new jobs a year for the past few years, but with no new housing being built, an increasing number of workers are living in neighboring counties and commuting to Caldwell County. Current housing and income statistics for Caldwell County have not been enough to convince developers to build new market rate, multi-family apartments.

The Caldwell County Board of Commissioners approved hiring the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government's Development Finance Initiative (DFI) to study the current housing market, point out what it lacks and identify solutions to encourage new development in the area.

Previous studies showed that almost 85 percent of existing housing in Caldwell County was already occupied, and that an increasing number of new hires lived outside of Caldwell County. The DFI study found that 81 percent of business and industry found the lack of suitable housing to be a recruitment problem as they try to expand. The study also found that 15,400 employees of Caldwell County businesses commute here from outside the county.

In addition, the DFI study determined that when compared with rental patterns in the rest of the state, there is potential in Caldwell County to fill more than 1,000 new apartments by 2023. The study identified five sites as having a high success potential for multifamily development, based on their size, infrastructure and proximity to such things as retail and grocery businesses. A second phase of the study could focus on creating specific development plans for those identified sites in order to encourage developers to build there

FIGURE 7-2



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- ED-1. Promote economic development strategies to help recruit viable businesses and service industry activities.
1. Continue to identify and promote available commercial industrial and residential sites within Caldwell County.
 2. Support and partner with Caldwell County Economic Development Commission in bringing additional employment opportunities into Caldwell County.
 3. Identify methods and strengths to market Caldwell County as a destination.
- ED-2. Create amenities that attract new residents, tourism and young adult populations back into the region.
1. Attract unique businesses by encouraging development that enhances its role as a destination.
 2. Increase or market passive recreational opportunities such as parks, open spaces, and walking trails/sidewalks/greenways.
- ED-3. Inventory available properties throughout the County and encourage commercial development projects in appropriate areas.
1. Work with water providers and municipalities to expand water and wastewater infrastructure to areas with high economic development potential.
 2. Maintain a buildings and site inventory for industrial and commercial uses, and make the information available to interested parties through printed materials or websites.
 3. Study possible sites and establish industrial park areas and consider partnerships for pre-development investments with municipalities.

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

8

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The core component of the Caldwell County Comprehensive Plan is land use. The desire of Caldwell County is that growth and development is well planned, dictated by a community vision, and defined by a clean environment and the preservation of community character. Effective land use planning determines where certain land uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial development are appropriate, and provides specific directives for land development design that ensures water quality, environmental health, and the preservation of community character.

The manner in which the land is currently being used, the availability of land which is suitable for future development or redevelopment, and Caldwell County's land use regulations each play a part in determining which type of land use will occur in each zoning district. The County's overall responsibility is to ensure that land is developed in the most effective and appropriate way in order to promote the health, welfare and public interest of Caldwell County residents and stakeholders.

ZONING DISTRICTS

Caldwell County has planning jurisdiction over the areas that are not within municipal limits or municipal Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJ), which consists of approximately 247,000 acres. Land use in Caldwell County's planning jurisdiction is predominately zoned for residential - agriculture, which accounts for approximately 77.6% of the County's total zoning jurisdiction. Another 18.5% is reserved for Natural Forests / Parks, and 2.8% is zoned for residential use. The remaining 1.1% of the County's jurisdiction is zoned for industrial, commercial or planned unit developments.

As shown in Figure 8-1: Caldwell County Zoning Districts, the current County zoning districts closely reflect existing land use patterns in most of the County. There are five non-residential zoning districts established in the County Zoning Ordinance. The Light Industrial (L-IND) and Industrial (IND) districts allow for industrial land uses such as manufacturing, assembly and distribution. Office and Institutional (O-I) allows for professional office space, public, and quasi-public uses. General Business (G-B) and Neighborhood Business (N-B) are the County's main commercial districts. These districts provide suitable locations for commercial activities which primarily serve the traveling public - for example along main thoroughfares such as U.S. Highway 321.

Of the five residential zoning districts established by the County Zoning Ordinance, the vast majority of land in the County is zoned Residential-Agricultural (RA-20). This zoning district allows single lot site-built homes, manufactured housing (mobile homes) and agricultural practices. Minimum lot sizes vary from 21,780 to 32,670 square feet ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre), depending on applicable watershed regulations and the availability of public/community water or municipal sewer. The second largest residential zoning district is Residential Low-Density (R-20), which allows single-

family residences at a density (minimum lot size) that depends on whether public or community water/sewer is available. Most of the land zoned R-20 can be found south of Granite Falls and surrounding Cedar Rock. The third residential zoning district - Residential Low-Density Manufactured (R-20M) – is intended to be a quiet, low-density area consisting of limited home occupations and limited private and public community uses. The County Zoning Ordinance also designates Medium-Density Residential (R-15) and a Multi-Family (M-F) districts, however, there are no current properties that are zoned as either designations. The majority of parcels within residential zoning districts are greater than 5 acres, and the average size is approximately 9 acres. This indicates that the County has a low-density rural development pattern for residential housing.

There is also a Planned Unit Development (PUD) district, which allows for the diversification of land uses, such as industrial, commercial, office and/or residential uses, within a unified site plan.

Additionally, Caldwell County currently has three overlay districts that are used for conservation purposes. These districts include the Collettsville Overlay District, the Yadkin Valley Overlay District and the Wilson Creek Overlay District. For more information regarding these districts refer to Chapter 6: Caldwell County Natural and Cultural Resources.

TABLE 8-1: CALDWELL COUNTY ZONING

Zoning	# of Parcels	Total Area (in Acres)	% Total Area	Min. Acreage	Max. Acreage	Average
General Business (G-B)	95	363.80	0.15%	0.13	143.46	3.83
Industrial Development (IND)	45	379.53	0.15%	<0.1	77.58	8.43
Residential Manufactured Home Park (MHP)	2	1.38	0.00%	0.53	0.86	0.69
Neighborhood Business (N-B)	23	89.51	0.04%	<0.1	29.25	3.89
Office and Institutional (O-I)	3	7.56	0.00%	0.50	5.81	2.52
Planned Unit Development (PUD)	316	1,768.76	0.72%	<0.1	170.70	5.60
Residential Low-Density (R-20)	2,065	6,932.70	2.81%	<0.1	352.04	3.36
Residential Low-Density Manufactured (R-20M)	81	47.52	0.02%	<0.1	1.57	0.59
Residential - Agriculture (RA-20)	21,861	191,677.55	77.58%	<0.1	3,814.96	8.77
Natural Forest/Park	14	45,808.25	18.54%	3.24	43,678.61	3,272.02
Total	24,505	247,076.56	100%			

FIGURE 8-1

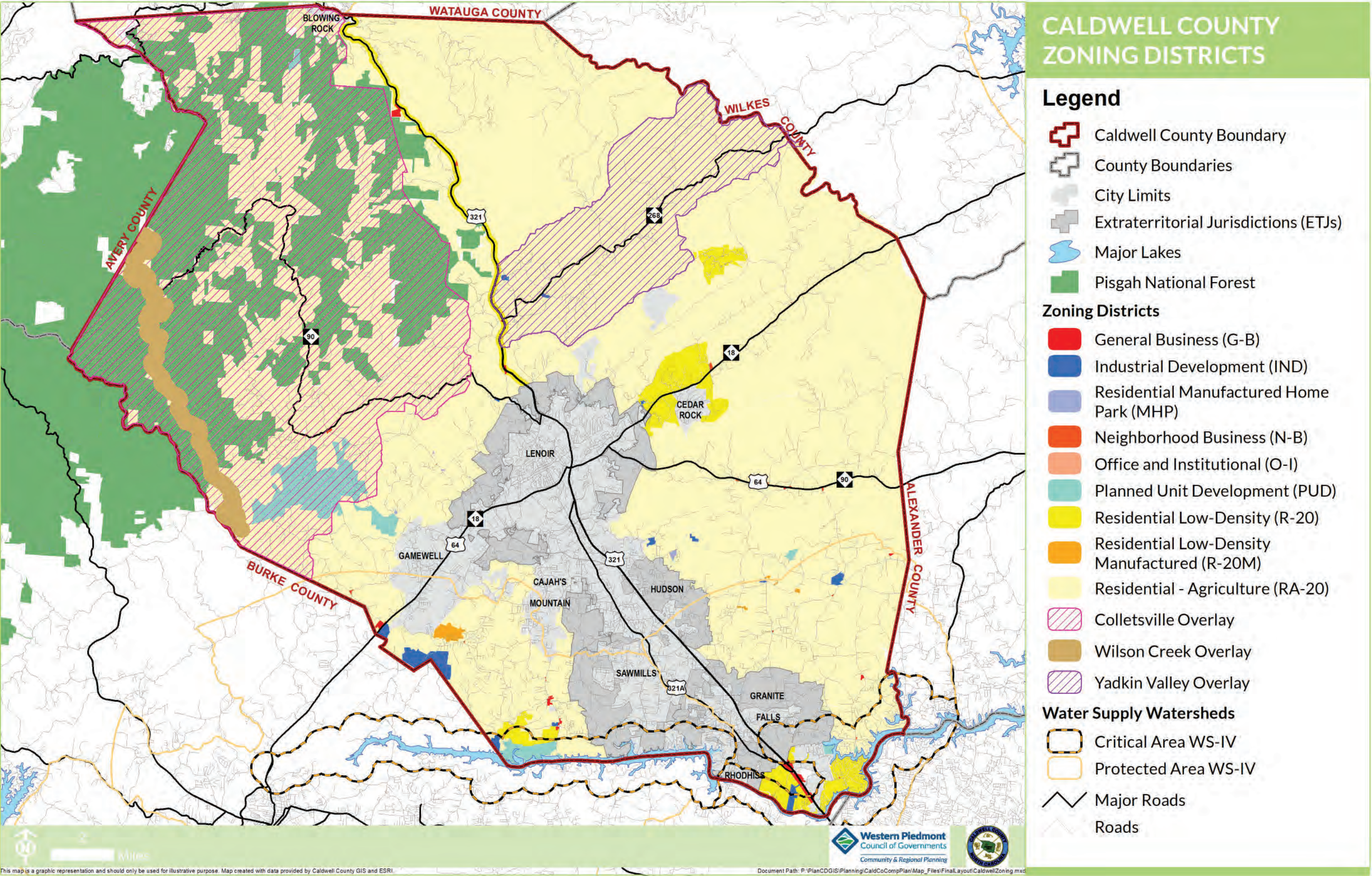
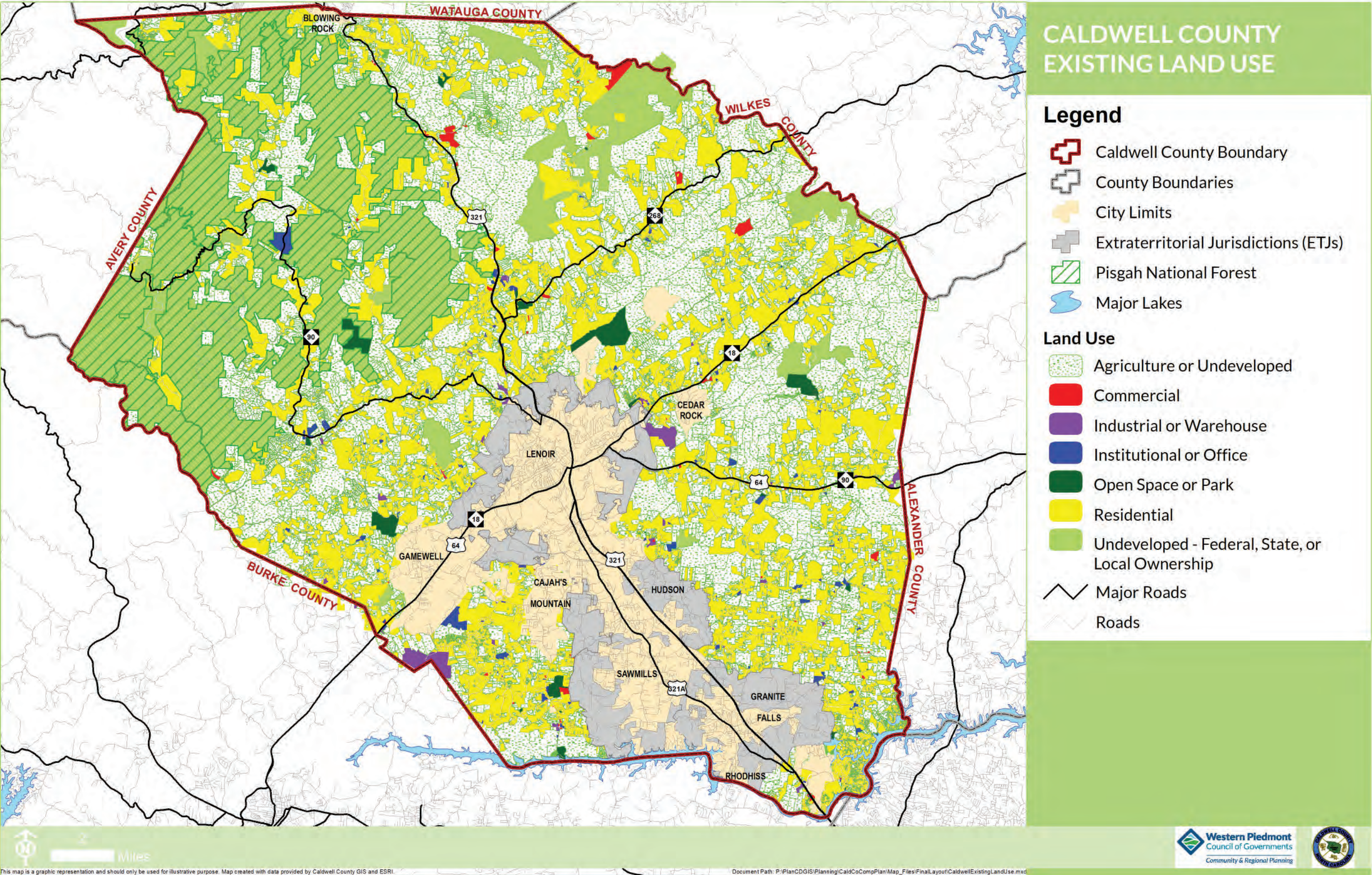


FIGURE 8-2



EXISTING LAND USE

A land use survey of all properties in the Caldwell County Planning Area was completed in 2019. Land uses were categorized according to the following primary uses:

Residential	A parcel containing a residence.
Institutional or Office	A parcel containing any type of medical use concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, and care of human beings. This category also includes public services, and may be operated by a federal, state, or local governments, public or private utilities, public or private schools or colleges, churches, public agencies, or tax-exempt organizations.
Commercial	A parcel containing any type of activity involving the sale of goods or services for financial gain (commercial activity), but does not include parcels containing home occupations or medical offices.
Industrial or Warehouse	A parcel containing any type of business use or activity at a scale greater than home industry involving manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, warehousing, and/or storage.
Open Space or Park	A parcel designated for recreation or deemed open space.
Agriculture or Undeveloped	A parcel not in use or containing agriculture and/or abandoned buildings.
Undeveloped (*Federal, State, Local, or Private Ownership)	A parcel that is undeveloped, owned and maintained by a Federal, State, or Local Government, or private organization dedicated to protecting and conserving lands.

Land use in Caldwell County's planning jurisdiction is mainly "residential" or "agriculture or undeveloped". Given the County's rural and agricultural history, these land use patterns are not surprising. Figure 8-2: Caldwell County Existing Land Use, displays types of land use across the County; a quick glance reveals the overwhelming amount of land either developed as residential or agricultural or designated as undeveloped protected lands. The vast majority of land in Caldwell County is devoted to agriculture use. Of the nearly 247,000 acres in the County, 47.3% is occupied by agriculture uses or is undeveloped and could be used for agriculture purposes in the future. Agricultural uses include woodlands, farms and family homesteads, among other agricultural practices. Residential uses occupy the second largest percentage of land use at 27.5%. The third largest is government park land and private game lands, which occupy 23.3% of the total acreage in the County. The remaining 1.9% is divided between commercial, industrial or warehouse, and open space or park land uses. Table 8-2 summarizes these land uses by acreage and number of parcels.

TABLE 8-2: EXISTING LAND USE

Land Use	Parcels	Total Area (in Acres)	% Total Area	Min. Acreage	Max. Acreage	Average
Agriculture or Undeveloped	8,435	116,458.49	47.29%	<0.1	1,881.86	13.81
Commercial	110	7.6	0.00%	<0.1	192.88	834.66
Industrial or Warehouse	65	1,168.52	0.47%	<0.1	472.40	17.98
Institutional or Office	219	2,410.03	0.98%	<0.1	1,052.47	11.00
Open Space or Park	36	1,130.3	0.46%	0.18	323.01	31.40
Residential	1,5475	67,736.2	27.51%	<0.1	882.59	4.38
Undeveloped (*Federal, State, or Local Ownership)	165	57,338.34	23.28%	<0.1	43,678.61	347.51
Total	24,505	246,249.50	100.00%			

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in Caldwell County has primarily been clustered within municipal boundaries and Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ), however there have been clusters of development surrounding Lake Hickory, Lake Rhodhiss and The Coves planned unit development in the Collettesville Area. The majority of residential development has been single-family construction, with 818 new single-family homes compared to 33 multi-family residential units constructed between 2010 and 2018. During this time, 80% of all new residential development has occurred outside city limits and ETJs.

TABLE 8-3: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2010 - 2018

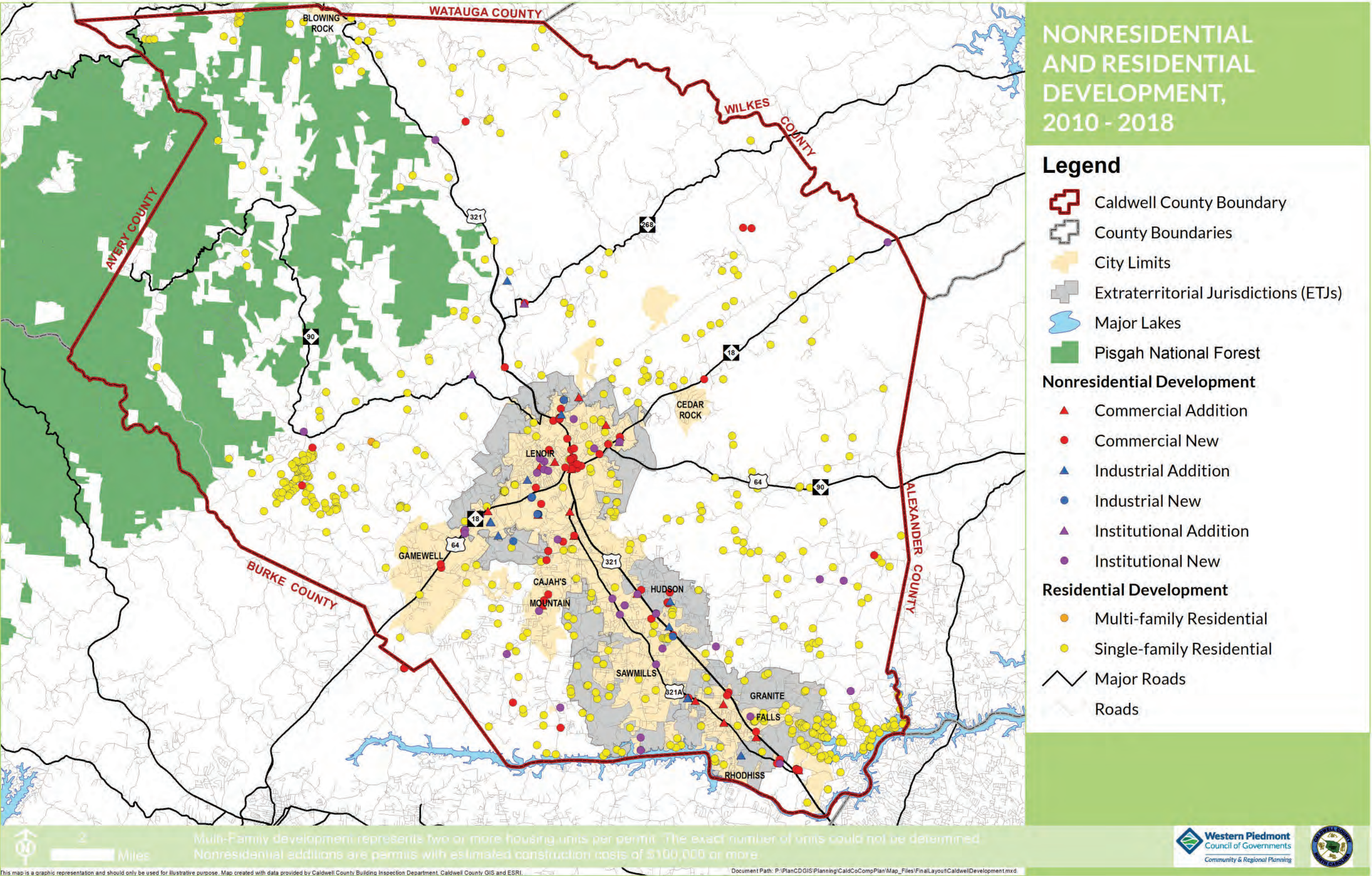
Residential	Caldwell County	Inside City Limits or ETJ	Outside City Limits or ETJ	% Inside city limits or ETJ	% Outside city limits or ETJ
Multi-Family Residential	33	1	32	3%	97%
Single-Family Residential	818	168	650	21%	79%
Total	851	169	682	20%	80%

From 2010 to 2018, new non-residential development primarily occurred along Highway 321 (See Figure 8-3: Residential & Nonresidential Development, 2010-2018). The majority of construction was new, rather than additions to existing structures. There were 151 non-residential construction permits issued between 2010 and 2018, of which 117 were new construction and 34 were additions to existing structures. From these permits, 77% of all non-residential development occurred within city limits and ETJs.

TABLE 8-4: NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2010 - 2018

Non-Residential	Caldwell County	Inside City Limits or ETJ	Outside City Limits or ETJ	% Inside city limits or ETJ	% Outside city limits or ETJ
Commercial Addition	20	19	1	95%	5%
Commercial New	72	53	19	74%	26%
Industrial Addition	11	10	1	91%	9%
Industrial New	10	10	0	100%	0%
Institutional Addition	3	1	2	33%	67%
Institutional New	35	24	11	69%	31%
Total	151	117	34	77%	23%

FIGURE 8-3



FUTURE LAND USE & GROWTH

An analysis of existing land use, zoning, recent development patterns, subdivision density, traffic counts, public comment and surveys was performed to identify areas within Caldwell County's planning jurisdiction that are potentially poised for future growth. Members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee were asked to aid in the determination of what types of future development would be appropriate for Caldwell County, where development should be located, and to what development standards it should be held.

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 8-6) was developed to guide zoning and development decisions and serve as reflection of the County's comprehensive land use vision. Caldwell County Planning staff, Planning Board and County Commissioners rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning, watershed regulations, and infrastructure needs. Caldwell Planning staff and the Planning Board should review and update land use regulations to ensure their compatibility with desired types of development as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

During stakeholder meetings and through the results of public surveys, it became apparent to the Committee that citizens had a clear preference for more commercial and residential development - specifically retail, boutique retail, restaurants, grocery stores, medical offices and recreational opportunities. The Committee determined that the Plan should encourage a mix of housing types by making provisions for allowing multi-family housing along U.S. Highway 321. The Committee also expressed the need for localized development to occur within the outer rural areas of the County, which would provide goods and services to residents with limited access to necessities. This localized development may also spur additional residential and commercial development – two important goals that were identified during stakeholder meetings and through public surveys. Although there is very little manufacturing located within the County's zoning jurisdiction, the Committee felt that the County does not need additional manufacturing areas, and that new manufacturing should be encouraged to locate in appropriate existing manufacturing areas.

RESIDENTIAL

An overarching theme that emerged from the Advisory Committee and through public input has to do with the lack of housing diversity in the County. The Economic Development Commission has conducted a study to quantify unmet housing demand (See Chapter 7: Economic Development). There are a few methods the County can use in order to encourage the development of a more diversified housing stock:

The first is to allow multi-family housing and mixed-use development along commercial corridors, specifically along the southern portion of Highway 321. This type of housing can work well in higher-density areas that are within close proximity to resources and goods. Multi-family housing would require that water and municipal sewer be made more consistently available in those areas as recommended in Chapter 4: Resources and Services. To achieve this type of housing development, the zoning ordinance can be updated to allow multi-family and mixed-use development within the General Business Zoning District.

The second method is to make use of the County's Medium-Density Residential and Multi-family Housing zoning districts. These districts currently exist and have been adopted into the County's Zoning Ordinance, however, they are not currently in use. The County should open up all of the existing residential areas for rezoning to the Multi-Family District as long as the development site meets a number of requirements including access to water, proper

soils and topography, and adequate size to accommodate multi-family size septic systems where municipal sewer is not available. Figure 8-4, Suitable Multi-family Residential Parcels, illustrates all of the parcels in the county that are over eight (8) acres, and have access to water. Figure 8-5, Suitable Multi-family Residential Parcels (Topography), illustrates those parcels from Figure 8-4 and their relationship to topography. From these, it is evident that the most suitable land for multi-family development and zoning is in the southern portions of the county.

SHORT-TERM HOUSING RENTALS

Short-term housing rentals, such as Airbnb, Vrbo and Flipkey have been a topic of discussion in Caldwell County, as they offer the possibility of short term worker housing, temporary housing for new residents as they look for permanent housing, and can increase tourism in the county. The downside of short-term housing rentals is that many residents feel that the presence of a short-term rental in their neighborhood may be intrusive. In a survey conducted for the Plan, 57% of participants viewed short-term housing as favorable for the County, while 24% were undecided and 19% did not think of it as favorable (See Appendix B). Another issue surrounding short-term housing rentals concerns taxation - should short-term rentals be taxed like a hotel room? 44% said no, while 37% said yes, with 19% undecided. Based on feedback from the public, Caldwell County should encourage and develop basic guidelines for short-term housing rentals such as Airbnb, Vrbo and Flipkey, and similar flexible uses of private residences - while maintaining the residential integrity of the neighborhoods that they are located in. Examples of some guidelines include:

- They must purchase an annual short-term rental permit.
- They must live on the property while a guest is staying at the home.
- There is a limitation on the number of guests (2 or 4).
- Not for use for special events.
- Backyard cottages cannot be used.

HIGHWAY 321 OVERLAY DISTRICT

Another major theme to emerge from the Advisory Committee and from public input includes discussions of establishing a U.S. Highway 321 Overlay District. In a public input survey, 83% of participants stated that they would be in favor of requiring new businesses along the Highway 321 corridor to meet reasonable design standards such as landscaping, building materials, signage, and setbacks. Public meeting participants indicated that they would like to see a mix of retail, commercial and residential uses with a variety of restaurant and recreational options along 321. As a response to this input, the Future Land Use Map illustrates recommended areas for the adoption of the Highway 321 Overlay District. This overlay district would require new development to meet design criteria such as setbacks, façade materials, height limitations, sign placement and materials, parking, landscaping, and access. Once adopted, the requirements of the overlay district would only apply to new development.

FIGURE 8-4

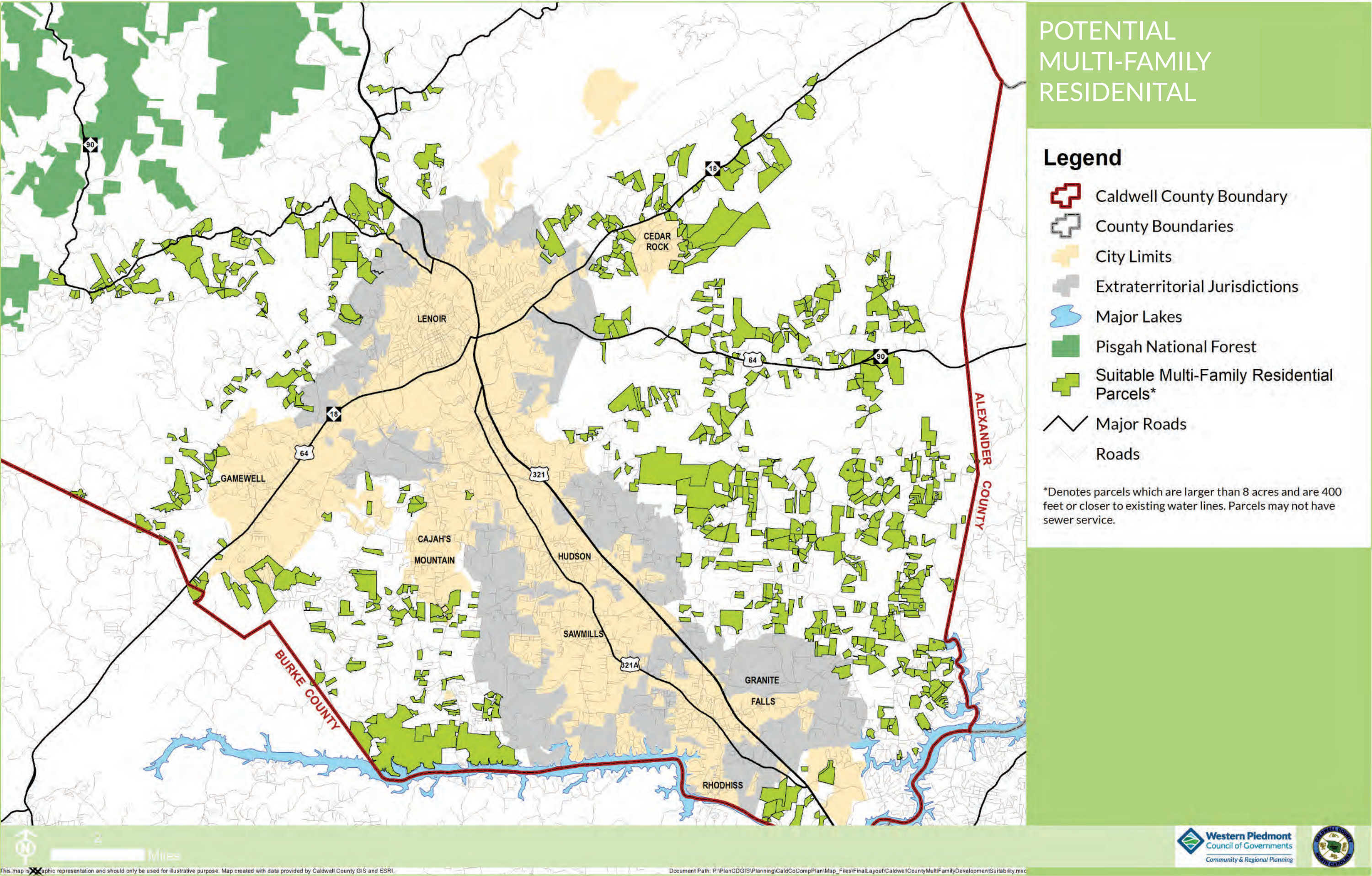


FIGURE 8-5

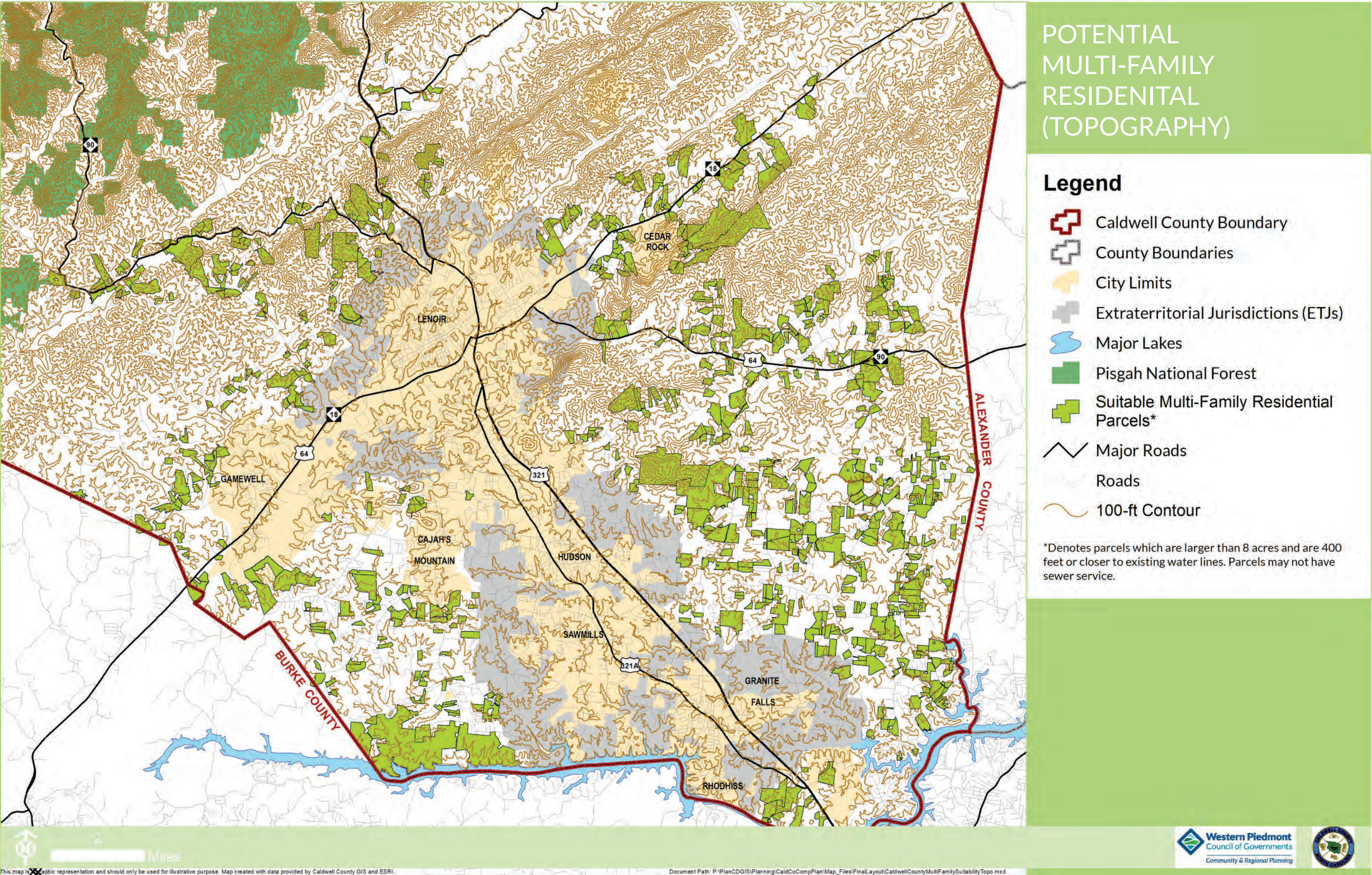
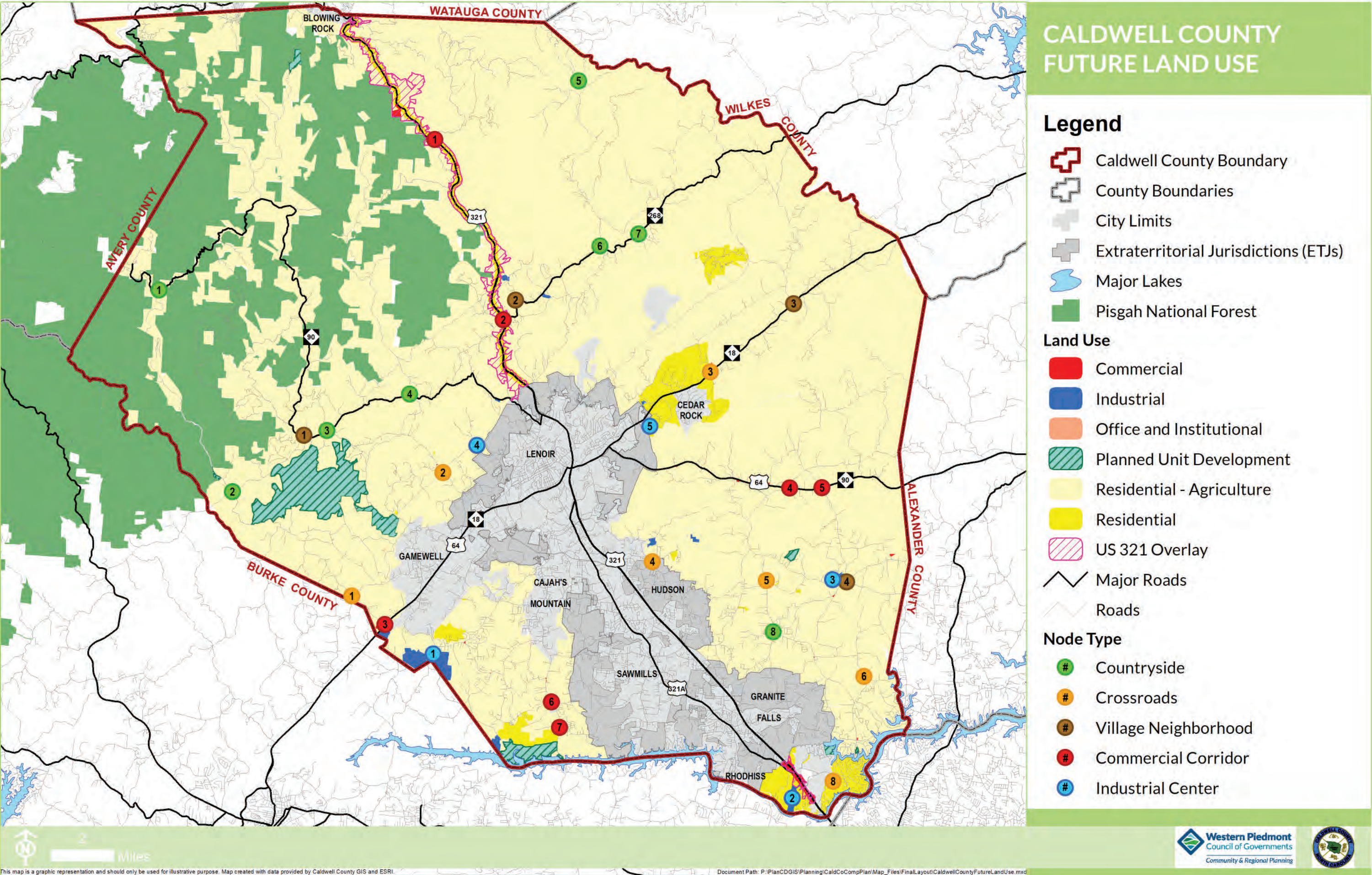







FIGURE 8-6



FUTURE LAND USE NODES

To encourage a more centralized development pattern and to provide more opportunities for single-family and multi-family housing, commercial, and industrial development, the Future Land Use Map establishes five (5) types of land use nodes to be established at key intersections through the County. The nodes are:

	COUNTRYSIDE	The Countryside node is intended to be a low-development intensity node that provides limited, basic services to residents in rural areas of the County. These nodes are largely located in areas where conservation of natural areas and farmland is highly valued, such as Wilson Creek.
	CROSSROADS	The Crossroads node is a low-development intensity node that focuses commercial development around the main corners of the intersection. This node also encourages residential development extending out from the intersection. These nodes are largely located in more populated areas of the County between more heavily developed areas and incorporated jurisdictions.
	VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD	The Village Neighborhood node is a medium-development intensity node that is intended to allow for “community” development in unincorporated areas. This node largely focuses on encouraging residential development along with supporting centralized commercial, civic and park space. These nodes are anchored by a school and include areas such as Happy Valley and Collettsville.
	COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR	The Commercial Corridor node is a high-development intensity node that is intended to provide primary commercial development along established transportation corridors with large traffic volumes. This node also encourages the development of multi-family residential units. These nodes are located in areas along major highways such as U.S. Highway 321 and U.S. Highway 64.
	INDUSTRIAL CENTER	The Industrial Center node is a high development intensity node that is intended for light and heavy industrial parks or campuses. These nodes are located in areas of existing industrial development or have access to major highways.

The boundaries of these nodes are not strictly defined. Land use decisions for the nodes may be based on the type of development proposed and the impact that it would have on the community in relation to the characteristics of the node. The characteristics of each node are further defined later in this chapter. Each description of the node contains an intention, characteristics, development intensity (as defined by Caldwell County’s Zoning Ordinance), current zoning districts found within these areas, and proposed zoning districts that would guide development toward the end goal of the node. These proposed zoning districts are not new districts, they are already defined and adopted in the Caldwell County Zoning Ordinance.

Future land uses for areas located outside of the nodes are indicated on Figure 8-6. Areas outside of the nodes have largely been designated for low development intensity residential-agriculture uses, with some medium residential development intensity in areas just outside of municipal limits. As described in the Future Land Use and Growth section of this plan (page 110), it is recommended that a design zoning overlay district be placed over the Highway 321 corridor.

COUNTRYSIDE NODE

Intention: To provide low-density housing and basic services to residents while preserving and conserving agricultural land, rural heritage, and conservation areas.

Countryside Node 3, Collettsville Rd. & Abington Rd.

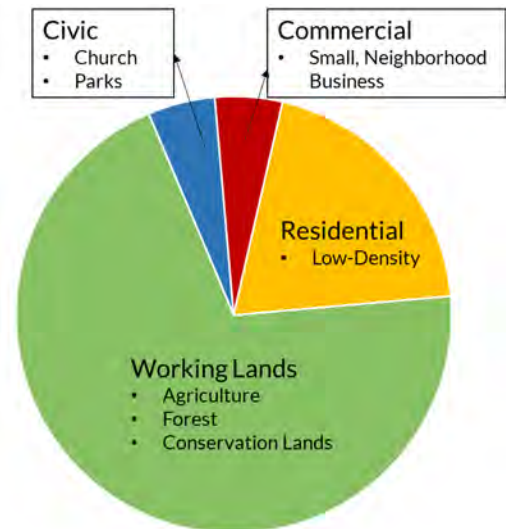


Character:

- Largely characterized by agriculture, undeveloped or conserved lands.
- Limited low-density housing and civic uses.
- Provides small neighborhood businesses for basic services.
- Dispersed development pattern.
- Two-lane rural highways.

Development Density:

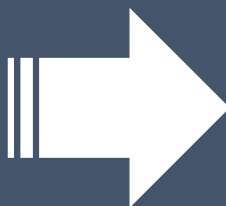
- 1 dwelling unit / acre (pending public water access & watershed requirements).
- Deep Building Setbacks, 30+ feet.
- 35-foot building height limitation.
- Maximum Lot Coverage (Residential 50% / Commercial 70%).



Current Zoning Districts:

Primary:
Residential-Agriculture (RA-20)
Planned Unit Development (PUD)

Secondary:
General Business (G-B)
Neighborhood Business (N-B)



Proposed Zoning Districts:

Residential-Agriculture (RA-20)
Low-Density Residential (R-20)
Multi-Family (M-F)
Neighborhood Business (N-B)



Brown Mtn. Beach Rd & Edgemont Rd



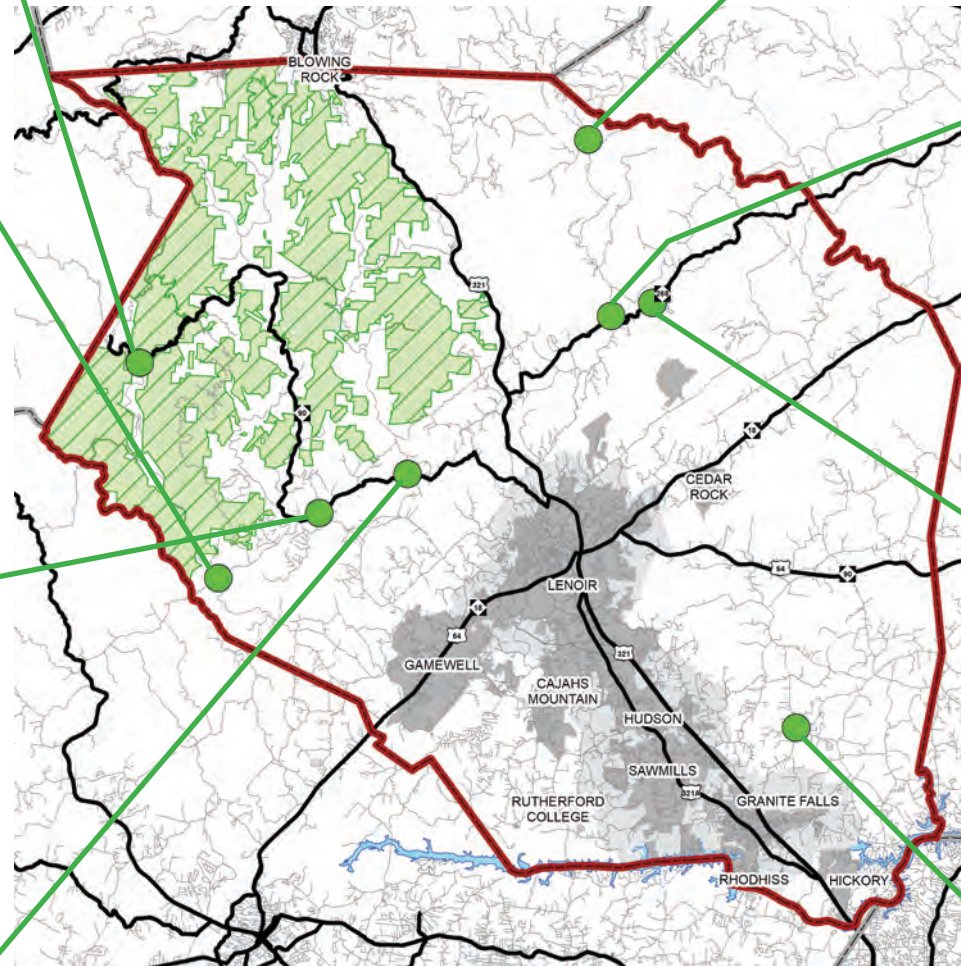
Adako Rd & Brown Mtn. Beach Rd



Collettsville Rd & Abington Rd



Collettsville Rd & Mulberry Creek Rd



Countryside Nodes



Buffalo Cove Rd & Old Sampson Rd



Buffalo Cove Rd & 268



268 & Piney Grove Cir



"Five Points" Dudley Shoals Rd & Grace Chapel Rd

CROSSROAD NODE

Intention: Encourage commercial and civic activity at key intersections within rural areas to serve rural population commercial needs.

Crossroads Node 4, Mt. Herman Rd. & Ellerwood Rd.

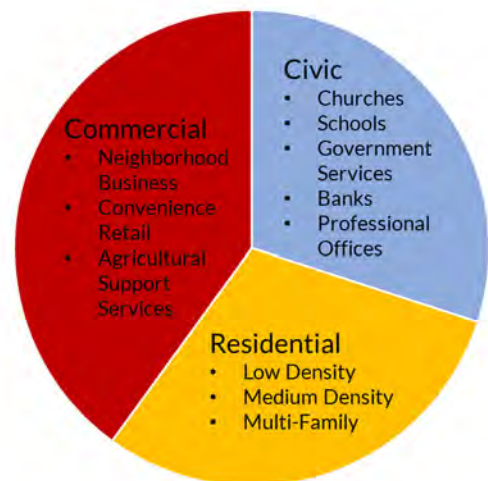


Character:

- Characterized by neighborhood businesses at major corners of the intersection.
- Low-density and medium-density housing.
- Civic spaces for office and institutional organizations.
- Clustered development pattern.
- Two-lane rural highways.

Development Density:

- 1 dwelling unit / 1/3 acre (pending public water access & watershed requirements).
- Deep Building Setbacks, 30+ feet.
- 35 foot building height limitation.
- Maximum Lot Coverage (Residential 50% / Commercial 70%).



Current Zoning Districts:		Proposed Zoning Districts:
Residential-Agriculture (RA-20) Residential Low Density Manufactured (R-20M) Low Density Residential (R-20) General Business (G-B) Neighborhood Business (N-B) Industrial (IND)		Low-Density Residential (R-20) Medium-Density Residential (R-15) Multi-Family (M-F) Neighborhood Business (N-B) Office-Institutional (O-I)



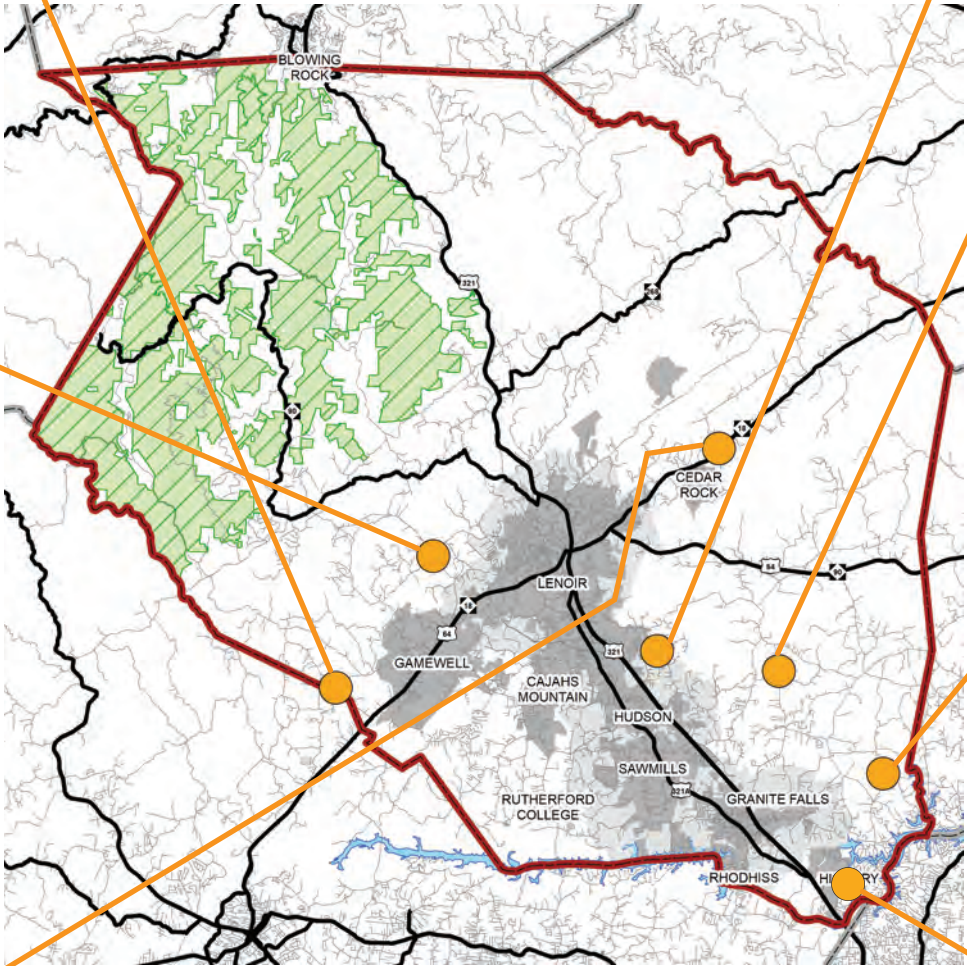
Playmore Beach Rd & Hartland Rd



Abington Rd & Deerbrook Rd



Wilkesboro Blvd & Blue Creek Rd



Crossroads Nodes



Mt Herman Rd & Ellerwood Rd



Campground Rd & Temple Hill Church Rd



Petra Mill Rd & Icard Dam Rd



Grace Chapel Rd & New Farm Rd

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD NODE

Intention: To support residential, commercial, and civic development within areas considered to be community or neighborhood centers outside of incorporated areas.

Village Neighborhood Node 3, Happy Valley.

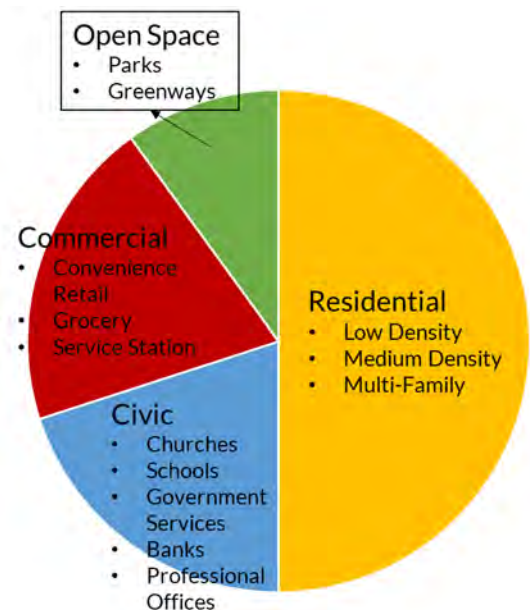


Character:

- Characterized by an identifiable community center with a variety of commercial, retail and civic services.
- Low-density and medium-density housing.
- Civic spaces for office and institutional organizations.
- Clustered development pattern.
- Integrated street network and pedestrian connectivity.
- Designated open space, parks and greenway networks.

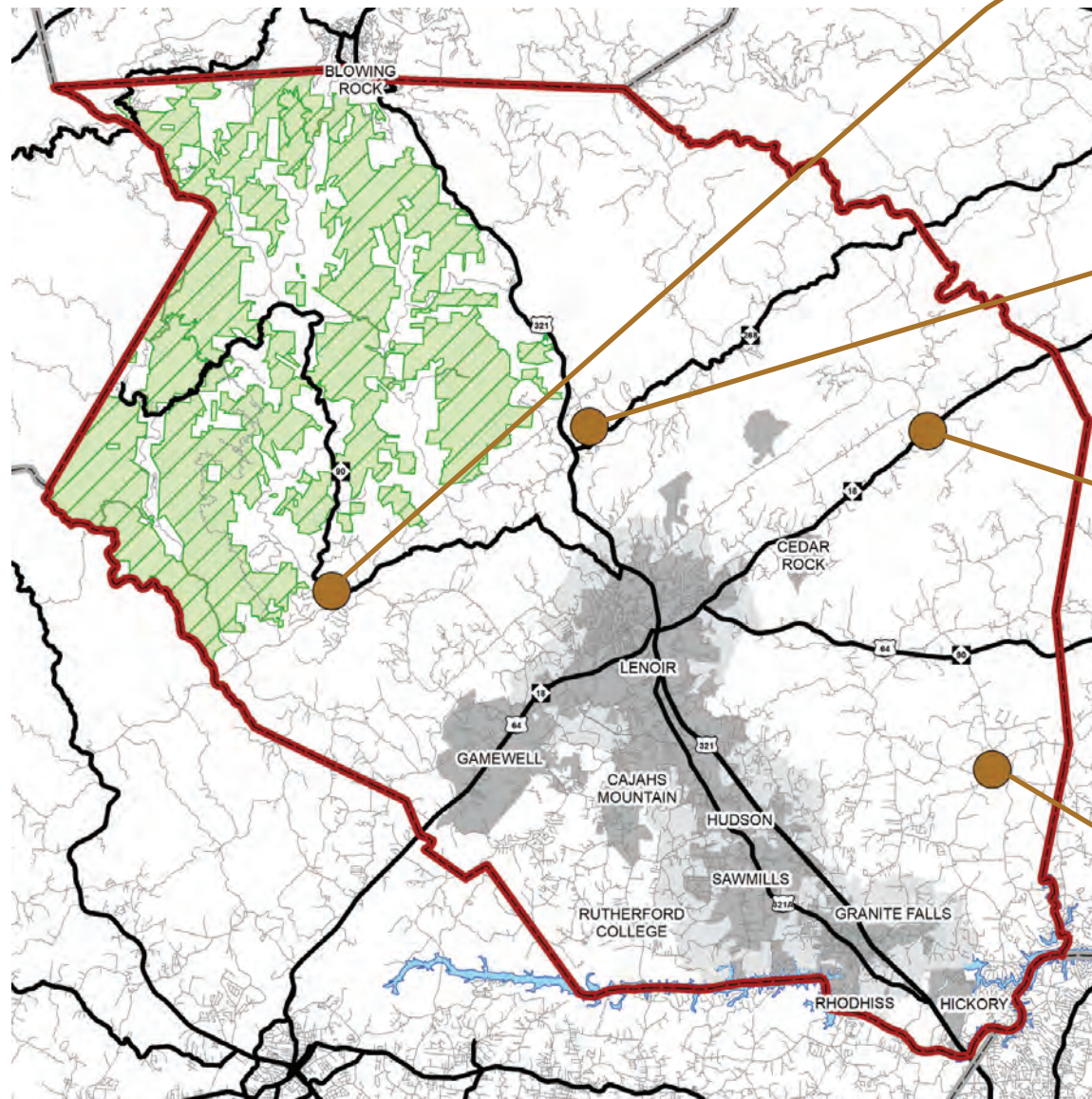
Development Density:

- 1 dwelling unit / 1/3 acre (pending public water access & watershed requirements).
- Deep Building Setbacks, 30+ feet.
- Height limitations (Residential 35ft. / Commercial 50 ft.).
- Maximum Lot Coverage (Residential 50% / Commercial 70%).



Current Zoning Districts:		Proposed Zoning Districts:
Residential-Agriculture (RA-20) Planned Unit Development (PUD) Neighborhood Business (N-B) Office-Institutional (O-I) Industrial (IND)		Low-Density Residential (R-20) Medium-Density Residential (R-15) Multi-Family (M-F) Neighborhood Business (N-B) General Business (G-B) Office-Institutional (O-I)

Village Neighborhood Nodes



Collettsville



Happy Valley / Patterson



Wilkesboro Blvd & Grandin Rd



Dudley Shoals Rd & Charlie Little Rd

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR NODE

Intention: Provide primary commercial development along established transportation corridors with large traffic volumes.

Commercial Corridor Node 7, Connelly Springs Rd. & Baton Church Rd.

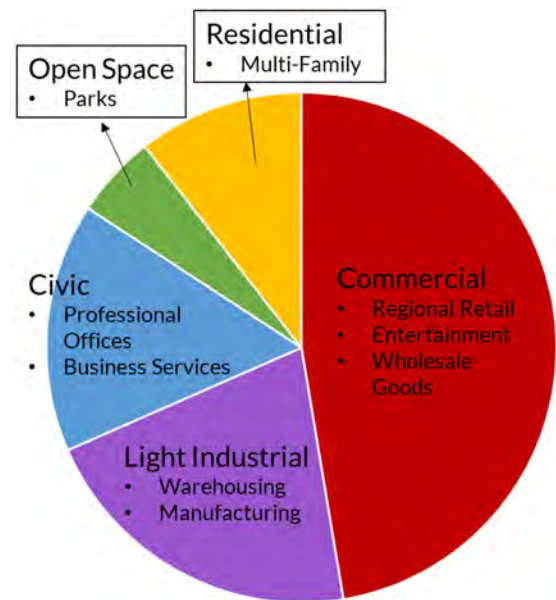


Character:

- Largely characterized by variety of commercial and retail services.
- Multi-family residential housing.
- Professional office and business services.
- Small-scale light manufacturing or warehousing.
- Managed access and street connectivity.
- Pedestrian facilities and designated open space and parks.
- Side and rear landscaped parking areas.

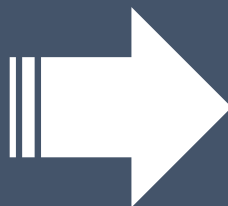
Development Density:

- 10 dwelling unit / acre (pending public water access & watershed requirements).
- Deep Building Setbacks, 30+ feet.
- Height limitations (Residential 35ft. / Commercial 50 ft.).
- Maximum Lot Coverage (Commercial 70%).



Current Zoning Districts:

Residential-Agriculture (RA-20)
Low Density Residential (R-20)
Neighborhood Business (N-B)
General Business (G-B)
Industrial (IND)



Proposed Zoning Districts:

Medium-Density Residential (R-15)
Multi-Family (M-F)
Planned Unit Development (PUD)
General Business (G-B)
Office-Institutional (O-I)
Light Industrial (L-IND)



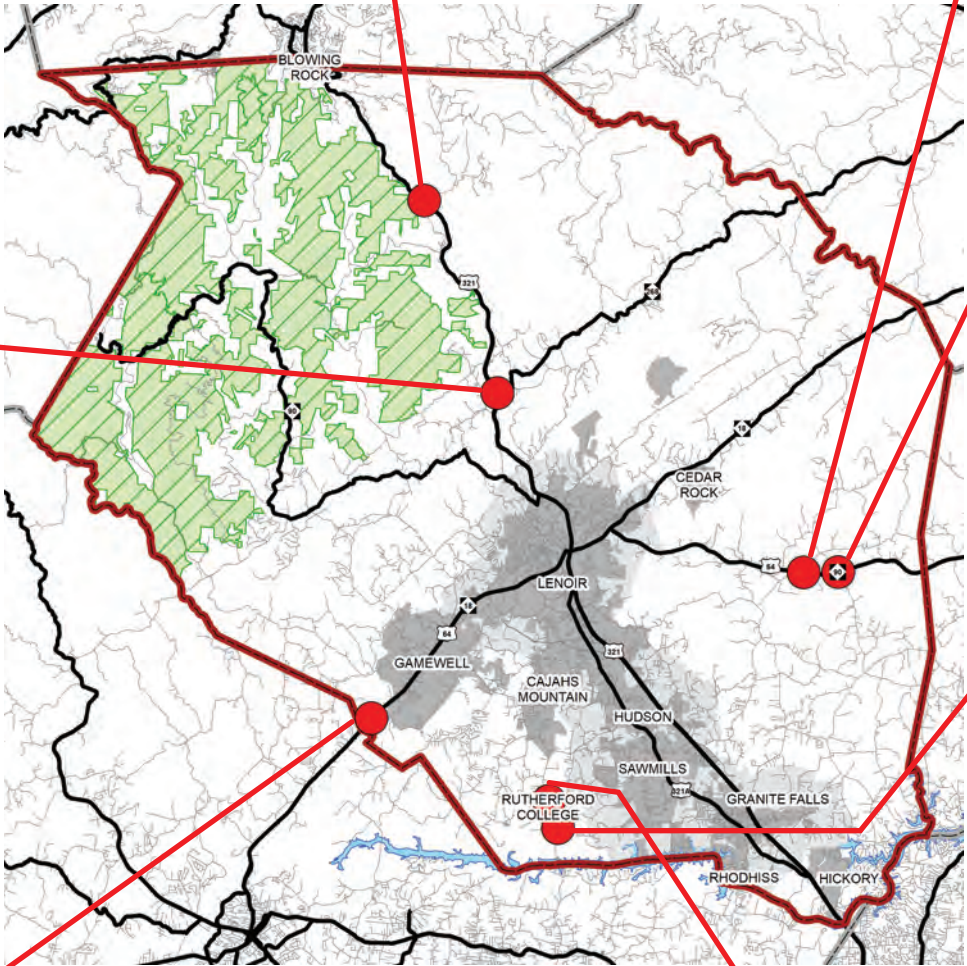
Hwy 321 & Richland Rd



Hwy 321 & Hwy 268



Hwy 64 & Playmore Beach Rd



Commercial Corridor Nodes



Hwy 64 & Station Rd



Hwy 64 & Morris Creek Rd



Connelly Springs Rd & Dry Ponds Rd



Connelly Springs Rd & Baton Church Rd

INDUSTRIAL CENTER NODE

Intention: To designate areas for industrial campuses and parks.

Industrial Center Node 1, Hwy 64 & Calico Rd.

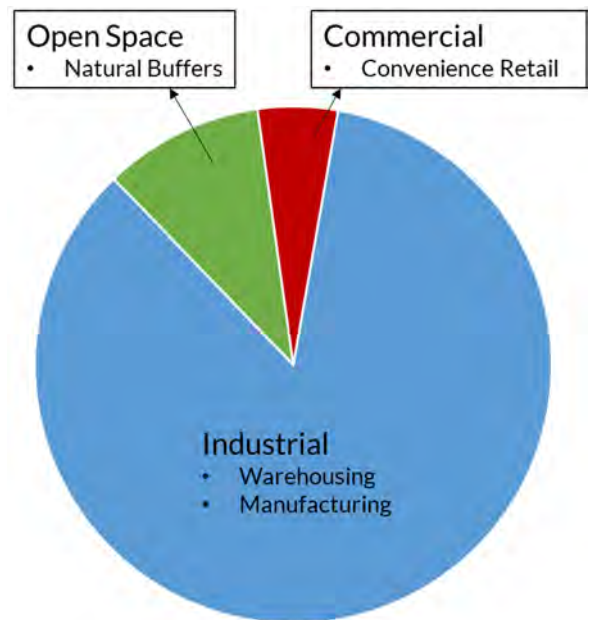


Character:

- Largely characterized by industrial development.
- Large surface parking areas and industrial streets with highway access.
- Separation from residential and other land uses by designated open space, natural buffers and landscaping.
- Limited commercial development for support services and convenience retail.

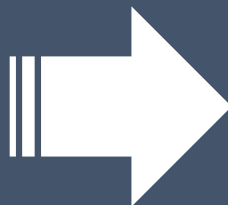
Development Density:

- Large lot sizes (pending public water access & watershed requirements).
- Deep Building Setbacks, 30+ feet.
- Height limitations, 75 feet.
- Maximum Lot Coverage, 70%.



Current Zoning Districts:

Residential-Agriculture (RA-20)
Low Density Residential (R-20)
General Business (G-B)
Industrial (IND)



Proposed Zoning Districts:

General Business (G-B)
Light Industrial (L-IND)
Industrial (IND)



Hwy 64 & Calico Rd

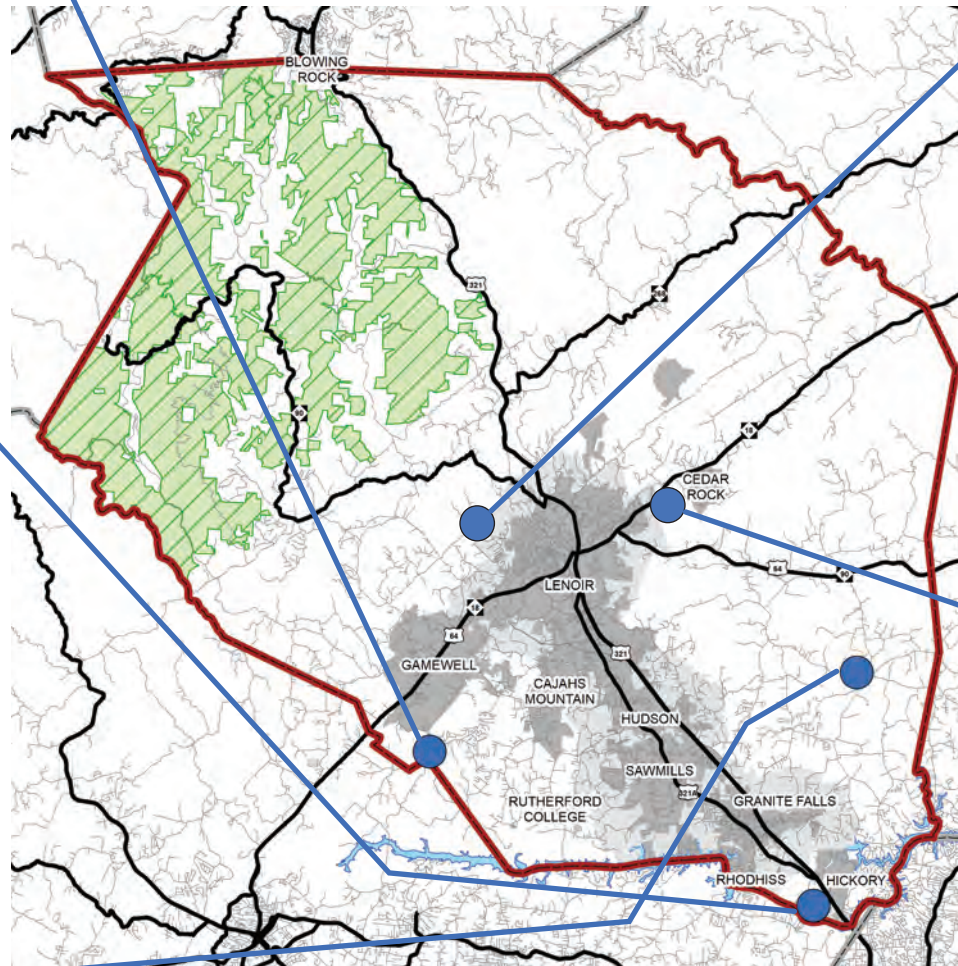


Hwy 321 & Lake Hickory



Dudley Shoals Rd & Burns Rd

Industrial Center Nodes



Hoods Creek Rd & Cheraw Rd



Hwy 64 & Wilkesboro Blvd

HIGHWAY 321 OVERLAY DISTRICT CONCEPTUAL RENDERINGS



FIGURE 8-7

This rendering shows:

- A. Vehicle parking in the rear of buildings
- B. Open space for outdoor enjoyment
- C. Retail space
- D. Multi-use path
- E. Apartments
- F. U.S. Hwy 321



FIGURE 8-8

Open spaces between retail establishments would encourage residents to enjoy the outdoors during shopping trips and give the retail area a 'destination' type of feeling.

HIGHWAY 321 OVERLAY DISTRICT CONCEPTUAL RENDERINGS



FIGURE 8-9

Varied roof heights create a more interesting streetscape for shoppers, residents, and visitors, while a shared use path provides bicyclists and pedestrians with convenient access to retail locations.



FIGURE 8-10

Mixing residential uses with retail and commercial uses promotes efficient land use and may appeal to younger demographic groups.

CALDWELL COUNTY GATEWAY HIGHWAY 321 & GRACE CHAPEL FLYWAY BRIDGE

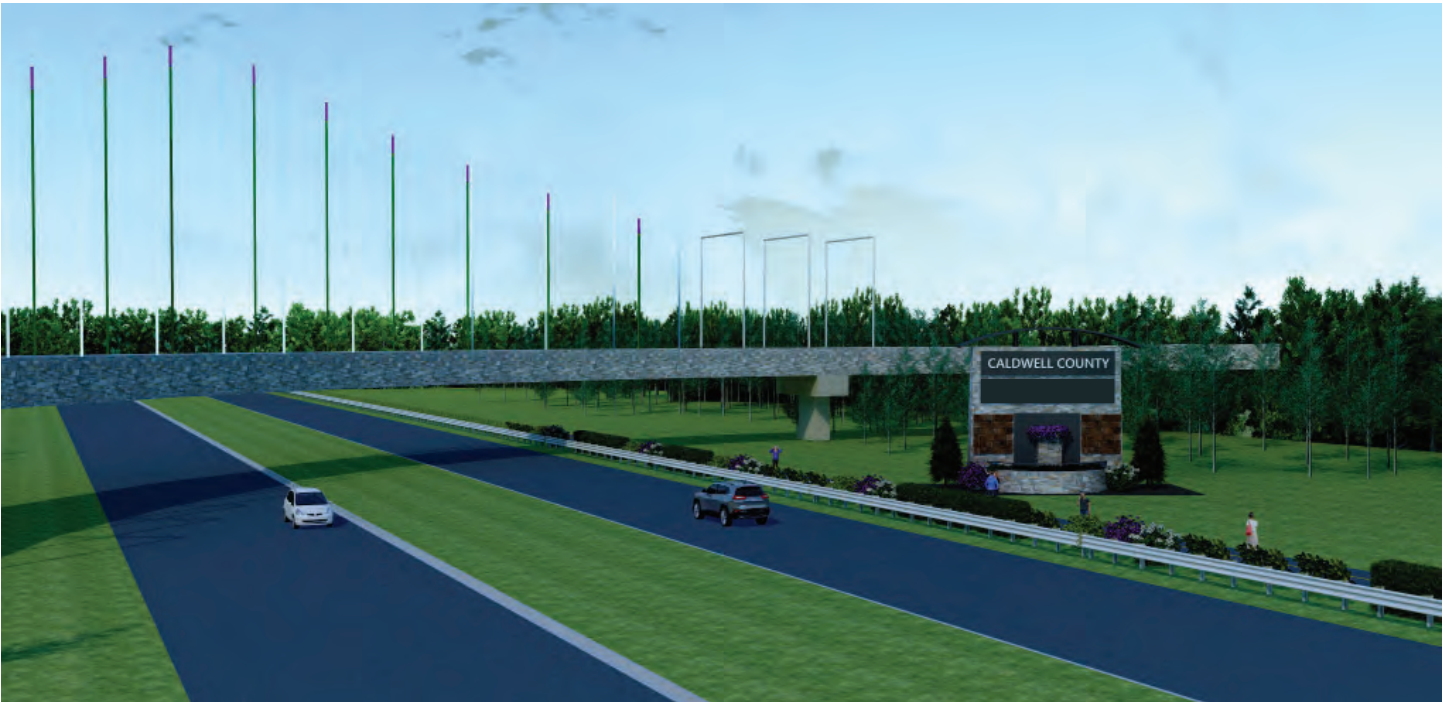
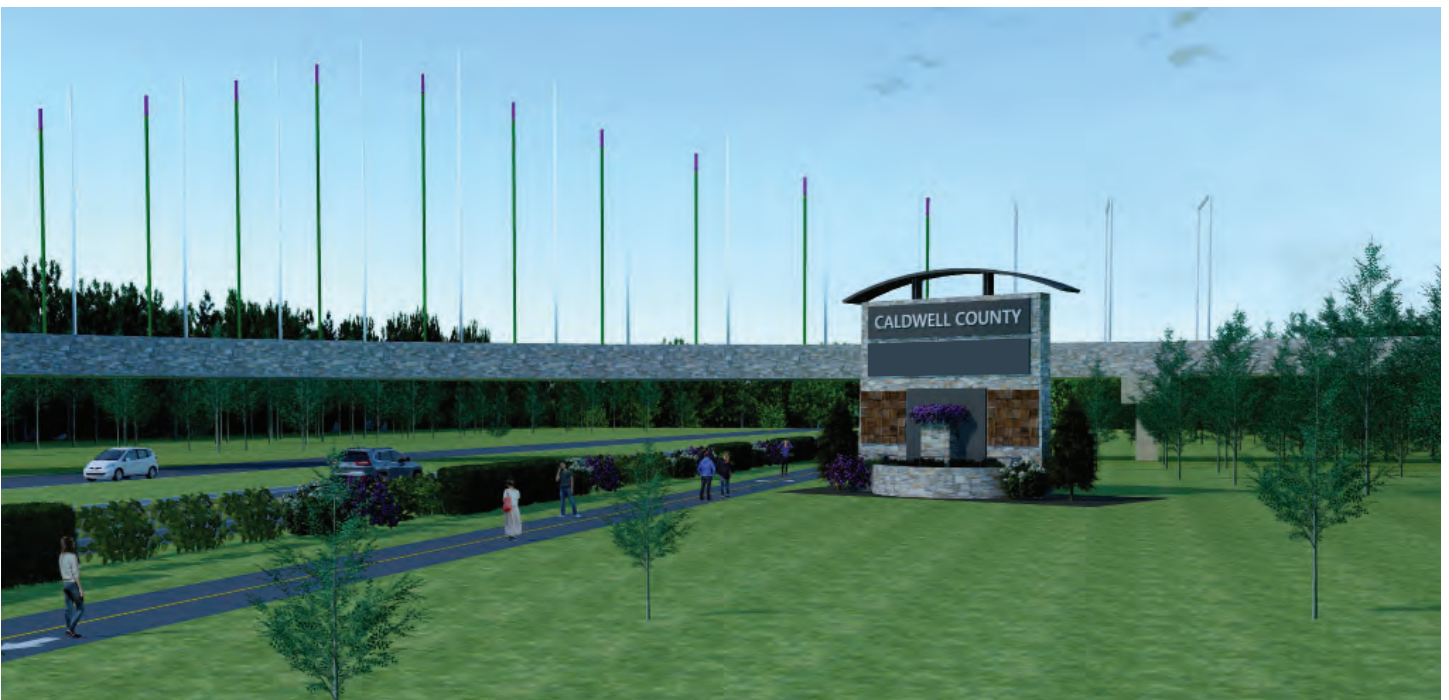


FIGURE 8-11

The flyway bridge, depicted in Figures 8-11 and 8-12, includes a stone façade and sculptural elements incorporated into its design. In addition, signage informs drivers that they are entering Caldwell County. The conceptual shared use path shown here connects to the City of Hickory's Riverwalk/Citywalk. The path would also continue to MDI, and potentially to the Rivercrest Shopping Center.

FIGURE 8-12



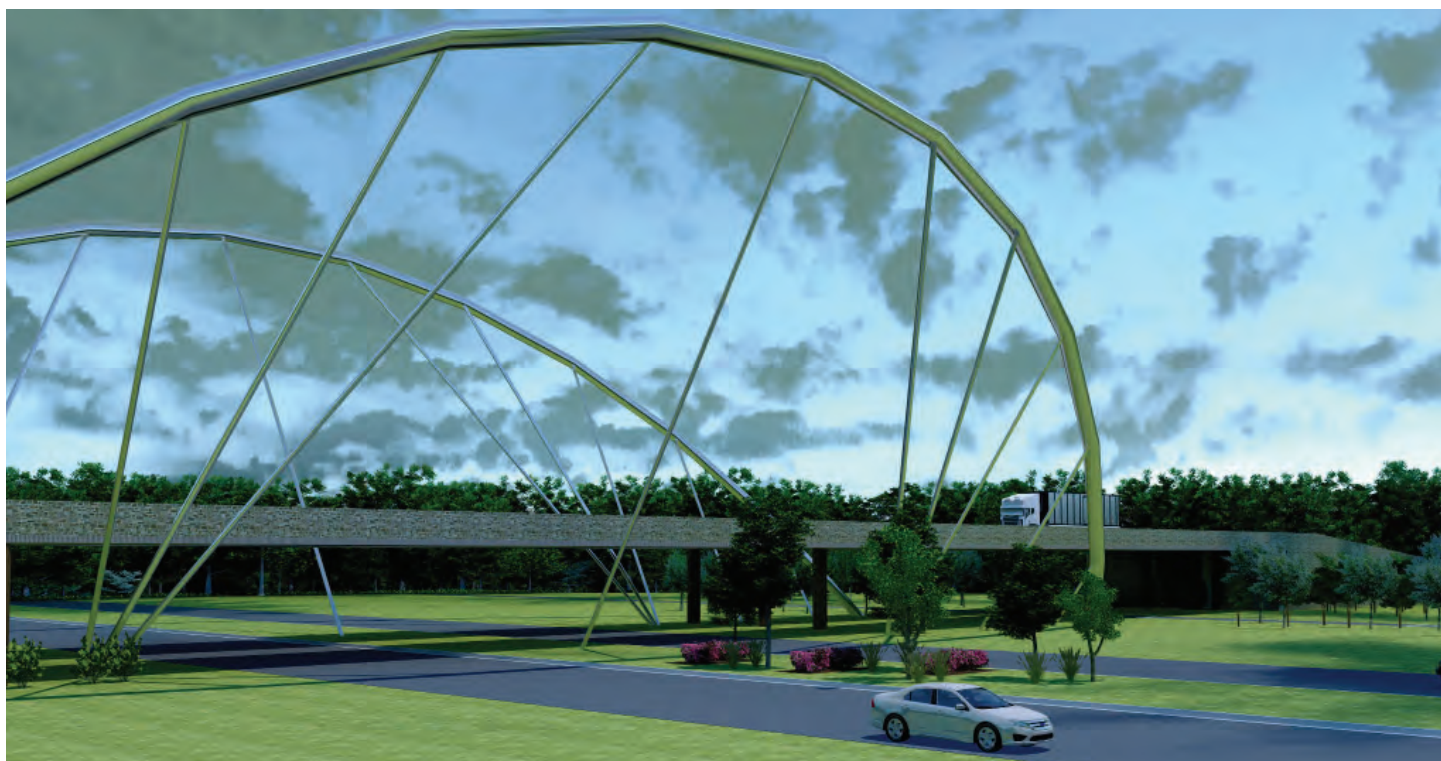
CALDWELL COUNTY GATEWAY HIGHWAY 321 & MDI BRIDGE



FIGURE 8-13

Figures 8-13 and 8-14 depict a potential gateway entrance that includes a bridge sculpture, a stone façade on the bridge, and a conceptual shared-use path that connects to the City of Hickory’s Riverwalk/Citywalk. The path would potentially continue to the Rivercrest Shopping Center.

FIGURE 8-14



CITY WALK GREENWAY CONNECTION TO SHOPPES AT RIVERCREST



FIGURE 8-15



FIGURE 8-16

LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- LU-1. Update zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they are compatible with the designated land uses outlined in this plan.
1. Develop innovative strategies and incentives to encourage commercial development within the County, specifically retail and boutique establishments, restaurants, grocery stores, medical offices and recreational opportunities.
 2. Encourage appropriate development and re-zonings in the Countryside, Crossroads, Village Neighborhood, and Commercial Corridor nodes as outlined in Chapter 8: Future Land Use.
 3. Encourage continued use of existing manufacturing sites, and encourage new manufacturing to locate in appropriate places, including the industrial nodes outlined in Chapter 8: Future Land Use.
- LU-2. Incorporate land use design standards that enhance the aesthetics along Highway 321 and the gateway entrances into the County.
1. Add a new Overlay District along Highway 321 in Commercial Districts to include architectural features such as sidewalks, structural aesthetics, new parking standards and façade details for new development (See Figures 8-7 : 8-10).
 2. Consider installing art/signage/landscaping and adding architectural enhancements to the new bridges on U.S. 321 to help enhance the “Gateway” entrance into Caldwell County (See Figures 8-11: 8-14).
 3. Work with the municipalities along U.S. Highway 321 to establish a contiguous multi-jurisdictional Overlay District (See Figures 8-7: 8-10).
 4. Work with NCDOT and the City of Hickory to complete a multi-use path extending from the southern entryway along U.S. Highway 321 into Caldwell County to MDI or the Rivercrest Shopping Center (See Figures 8-15 and 8-16).
 5. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along Connelly Springs Road from the Castle Bridge area to Ingles, Baton School Road and Baton Elementary School (See Figures 3-4: 3-11).
- LU-3. Update zoning regulations to encourage a range of housing options to better house the County’s new and existing workforce, and to attract multiple incomes and generations.
1. Look for funding and partnerships to build the necessary utility infrastructure which will allow multi-family apartments and mixed used development along Commercial Corridors.
 2. Make use of the County’s multi-family housing district by allowing developers to re-zone parcels in areas that have appropriate acreage, topography and soils.
 3. Work with the Caldwell County Economic Development Commission to determine the types of housing sought by local workers and use their multi-family housing study to determine suitable locations.
 4. Encourage and develop basic guidelines/ordinances for short term rentals and similar flexible uses of private residences, while maintaining the residential integrity of neighborhoods.
 5. Continue to require multi-family and single-family developers to dedicate land for parks, greenways or open space in large-scale developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Caldwell County Plan is intended to be an ever-changing document. The Plan should be evaluated to ensure it stays relevant as the County grows and changes. The Plan's essential guiding principles, goals and policies should remain largely unchanged to prevent undermining the overall intentions and integrity of the long-range planning process. Any changes to the County Plan should be facilitated through the Advisory Committee or Planning Board and recommended to the County Commissioners.

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

TR-1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Maintain a good working relationship with NCDOT-Division 11 and WPCOG, in order to coordinate land use and transportation planning for new and updated roadway corridors.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote continued road improvements on unimproved streets and continue to seek dedication of private streets to help improve residential and emergency vehicle access. Work with NCDOT on programmed projects and modernization. Require adequate transportation access to all developments in order to provide orderly and efficient traffic flow and maintain current and minimum design standards for new subdivision road construction. 		<p>Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Caldwell County</p> <p>WPCOG</p>
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCDOT WPCOG Planning Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning staff GIS/Mapping 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		Updated streets, new streets, pedestrian improvements.

TR-2		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Incorporate adopted plans to create a community-oriented environment that encourages walking, while also supporting other modes of transportation.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along NC 321 from the southern bridge into the County to MDI and possibly the shopping center in Granite Falls. 2. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along Connelly Springs Road from the Castle Bridge area to Ingles, Baton School Road and Baton Elementary School. 3. Consider the Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan recommendations for future bicycle facilities to create connections with other bicycle routes and the Overmountain Victory Trail. 4. Evaluate the feasibility of adding public transportation or Travel on Demand for Caldwell County. 5. Promote the development of applicable bicycle and pedestrian facilities for all roadway projects listed in the “Major Roadway Improvements” and “Minor Roadway Improvements” sections of this chapter, and the Greater Hickory MPO’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Plan. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Caldwell County • WPCOG
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCDOT • WPCOG • Planning Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • GIS/Mapping 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	New bicycle and pedestrian facilities as recommended by adopted plans.	

RESOURCES & SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

RS-1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Help decrease nuisance activity by abatement and fixing or demolishing vacant and dilapidated structures.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and document nuisance, vacant, and dilapidated structures. 2. Make abatement of code enforcement issues in highly visible areas a priority. 3. Continue to look for ways to strengthen the County's code enforcement ordinance and efforts. 4. Explore the creation of an independent code enforcement department or code enforcement employees. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County Emergency Services • WPCOG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning/County staff • GIS/Mapping 	3-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	Code enforcement issues dealt with / ordinance amendments / new code enforcement program.	

RS-2		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Maintain relationships with water and sewer providers on future public water and sewer projects.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with municipalities to extend sewer line to prospective industries, new housing developments, or other uses that demonstrate a predicted increase in revenues and/or property values. 2. Research funding sources to extend water lines to encourage economic growth. 3. Develop an infrastructure construction/improvement plan for Highway 321 that allows for consistent water and sewer availability. 4. Have a civil engineer on retainer or on staff for development plan review services. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Providers • Municipalities • WPCOG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant Writing • Mapping • Engineering 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	Expansion of water services.	

RS-3		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Caldwell County Schools could adopt a program for elementary, middle and high school students that identifies government careers and leadership opportunities.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate the career/volunteer based learning program into the Board of Education Strategic Plan. 2. Utilize law enforcement and fire for outreach efforts. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • Board of Education • Caldwell County Schools
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Schools • Law Enforcement • Fire Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher assistance • Education coordination 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program creation. • Incorporation into the Board of Education Strategic Plan. • Presentation to students.

RS-4		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Utilize new strategies to promote the growth of fire and emergency volunteer participation.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct outreach and education to better inform the citizens of the need for volunteers. 2. Conduct a “Fire Academy” in partnerships with schools to inform upcoming volunteers and certify existing volunteers. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • Fire Departments
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Department • Emergency Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written material • Education Coordination 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased Volunteer staff. • Creation of a Fire Academy. • Educational materials created and distributed to residents.

PARKS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

PR-1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Explore new, and expand on existing, recreational opportunities for the County.	
KEY ACTIONS:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Caldwell County Parks and Recreation Plan so that grant funding can be obtained from Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), or other similar funding sources. 2. Explore the possibility of creating a Parks and Recreation Department within the County. 3. Explore the possibility of providing a multi-functional sports complex in the County. 4. Work with the municipalities to apply for a NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant to develop a comprehensive sidewalk pedestrian plan. 5. Identify and acquire land in strategic locations to encourage open space preservation, greenways, parks and other passive recreation opportunities. 6. Partner with municipalities within Caldwell County to extend and connect park, trail systems, and sidewalks. 	PROJECT INITIATOR(S): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • Caldwell leadership • County Staff/Planning
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPCOG • PARTF • CWMTF • County Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning/County staff • GIS/Mapping • Grant Writing 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a Parks and Recreation Plan. • Dedicated Parks and Recreation Staff. • Trail construction. 	

NATURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

NR-1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Continue to protect Caldwell County's natural resources through incentives and ordinances to help preserve the rural areas of the County and safeguard the environment.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage developers to use innovative storm water treatment techniques such as pervious pavement and sidewalks, bio swales, or bio-retention cells in the Water Supply Watershed to reduce flooding and improve drinking water quality. 2. Work with the Foothills Conservancy to evaluate land acquisition proposals that may be eligible for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) or Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) grant funding. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning • WPCOG
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARTF • CWMTF • Foothills Conservancy • WPCOG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • WPCOG grant writing assistance 	1-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications submitted to PARTF and CWMTF. • Measures put in place to protect natural resources. • Properties under conservation easement.

NR-2		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Protect the historic fabric of Caldwell County through preservation and by assigning importance to structures of known historical value.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
1. Maintain structures of value that are listed, determined eligible, or on the study list for the National Register of Historic places.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning • Interested Citizens
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC State Historic Preservation Office • Foothills Conservancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • WPCOG grant writing assistance 	1-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		Structures added to the National Register of Historic Places.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

ED-1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Promote economic development strategies to help recruit viable businesses and service industry activities.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to identify and promote available commercial industrial and residential sites within Caldwell County. 2. Support and partner with Caldwell County Economic Development Commission in bringing additional employment opportunities into Caldwell County. 3. Identify methods and strengths to market Caldwell County as a destination. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC • Relevant County Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • Outreach/Marketing programs • Facebook/Website coordinator 	3-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		Marketing materials produced/new businesses/Facebook and/or website marketing.

ED-2		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Create amenities that attract new residents, tourism and young adult populations back into the region.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attract unique businesses by encouraging development that enhances its role as a destination. 2. Increase or market passive recreational opportunities such as parks, open spaces, and walking trails/sidewalks/greenways. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC • Planning Board • WPCOG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • Outreach/Marketing programs • Facebook/Website coordinator 	3-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		Rise in population in younger age bracket/increase in parks, open spaces, and walking/increase in small businesses

ED-3		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Inventory available properties throughout the County and encourage commercial development projects in appropriate areas.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with water providers and municipalities to expand water and wastewater infrastructure to areas with high economic development potential. 2. Maintain a buildings and site inventory for industrial and commercial uses, and make the information available to interested parties through printed materials or websites. 3. Study possible sites and establish industrial park areas and consider partnerships for pre-development investments with municipalities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County EDC • Planning Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • Outreach/Marketing programs • Facebook/Website coordinator 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	The addition of local County based economic development inventory of properties.	

LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

LU - 1		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Update zoning and subdivision regulations to ensure they are compatible for the designated land uses outlined in this plan.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop innovative strategies and incentives to encourage commercial development within the County, specifically retail and boutique establishments, restaurants, grocery stores, medical offices and recreational opportunities. 2. Encourage appropriate development and rezonings in the Countryside, Crossroads, Village Neighborhood, and Commercial Corridor nodes in the County as outlined in Chapter 8: Future Land Use. 3. Encourage continued use of existing manufacturing facilities, and encourage new manufacturing to appropriate places, including the industrial nodes outlined in Chapter 8: Future Land Use. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning Board • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County Leadership • Caldwell County EDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff; GIS/Mapping 	Ongoing
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting small businesses . • Adoption of new ordinances. • Development of multi-family housing. 	

LU-2		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Incorporate land use design standards that enhance the aesthetics along Highway 321 and the gateways into the County.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add a new Overlay District along Highway 321 in Commercial Districts to include architectural features such as sidewalks, structural aesthetics, new parking standards and façade details for new development (See Figures 8-7 : 8-10). 2. Consider installing art/signage/landscaping and adding architectural enhancements to the new bridges on U.S. 321 to help enhance the “Gateway” entrance into Caldwell County (See Figures 8-11: 8-14). 3. Work with the municipalities along U.S. Highway 321 to establish a contiguous multi-jurisdictional Overlay District (See Figures 8-7: 8-10). 4. Work with NCDOT and the City of Hickory to complete a multi-use path extending from the southern entryway along U.S. Highway 321 into Caldwell County to MDI or the Rivercrest Shopping Center (See Figures 8-15 and 8-16). 5. Promote the development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks and/or multi-use paths) along Connelly Springs Road from the Castle Bridge area to Ingles, Baton School Road and Baton Elementary School (See Figures 3-4: 3-11). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning Board • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County Leadership • NCDOT • MPO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • GIS/Mapping 	3-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new design guidelines. • Implementation of art at gateway. • Number of businesses that use new design standards. 	

LU-3		
STRATEGY NARRATIVE:	Update zoning regulations to encourage a diversity of housing options to better house the new and existing workforce, and attract multiple incomes and generations.	
KEY ACTIONS:		PROJECT INITIATOR(S):
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Look for funding and partnerships to build the necessary utility infrastructure which will allow multi-family apartments and mixed used development along Commercial Corridors. 2. Make use of the County's multi-family housing district by allowing developers to re-zone parcels in areas that have appropriate acreage, topography and soils. 3. Work with the Caldwell County Economic Development Commission to determine the types of housing sought by local workers and use their multi-family housing study to determine suitable locations. 4. Encourage and develop basic guidelines/ordinances for short term rentals and similar flexible uses of private residences, while maintaining the residential integrity of neighborhoods. 5. Continue to require multi-family and single-family developers to dedicate land for parks, greenways or open space in large-scale developments. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Commissioners • County Manager • County Planning Board • County Planning Staff
POTENTIAL PARTNERS:	RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caldwell County Leadership • Caldwell County EDC • League of Municipalities • Developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning staff • GIS/Mapping 	3-5 years
MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new multi-family developments. • Diversification of housing.

Appendix



APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY MEETING SURVEY

Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) staff led four community meetings to compile resident input regarding the Community's perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The results of the meetings were taken into consideration while drafting the Caldwell County Plan.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was conducted to identify how residents perceive their community. Strengths are internal and supportive characteristics that are the foundation of community. Weaknesses are internal and harmful characteristics to community stability. Opportunities are external and helpful characteristics for continued growth. Threats are external and harmful characteristics that weaken community stability.

Below are the SWOT results. Attendees voted on which topics they felt were most important. These votes are represented by the number to the right of each item listed.

SOUTH CALDWELL SWOT MEETING

STRENGTHS			
Votes	Strengths	Votes	Strengths
6	Schools / Education (CC Vocational Training)	2	HWY 321
6	Music Talent / Arts Centers / Festivals	2	NC Data Corridor
6	Economic Development – Industrial Diversity	1	Legion Baseball / Access to Crawdads / Baseball Overall
5	Job Diversity - Higher Wages	1	Hudson Dinner Theater
4	Healthcare (4 Hospitals)	1	Low Crime
3	Business Incubator	1	All EMS
3	Small Town Character	1	Sculpture
3	Breweries / Wine / Distillery	0	Climate
2	Wilson Creek – Fly Fishing	0	Bike Trails / Recreation Opportunities
2	Caldwell County Pathways	0	Partnerships
2	National Forest	0	Community
2	I-40 / Airport (2 Regional, 2 International)	0	Location → 1 mile County Lines

WEAKNESSES			
Votes	Weaknesses	Votes	Weaknesses
9	Housing / Multi-family / Market Rate / Low Income / Aging	3	Opioid Epidemic
5	Public Transportation	2	Lack of education about existing industries / jobs
4	Vacant Properties / Vacant Industrial Buildings	2	Call Service / Wi-Fi / Broadband
4	Retail Restaurant / Diversity	1	Homeless Population
4	Aging Population	1	Water / Sewer / Gas Connectivity
3	No Industrial Park	0	Quality Nursing Facilities

OPPORTUNITIES			
Votes	Opportunities	Votes	Opportunities
8	Outdoor Recreation & Multimodal Connectivity (Greenways/Bike Lanes/Trails) to Attract Companies	1	Utilizing Plans (bike/ped, Comprehensive, etc.)
6	Retail / Restaurants	1	School Math & Science
4	Branding & Marketing	1	Create an identity - who do we want to be?
4	Education (public schools-college partnership)	0	Pharmacy
3	Tourism	0	Railroad (increase capacity)
3	Downtown Revitalization to retain young people	0	Tourist Accommodations
2	Retirement Communities	0	Occupancy Tax for Airbnb's
1	Public Transit - TODs		

THREATS			
Votes	Threats	Votes	Threats
8	Housing	2	Mindset (Antiquated)
7	Young people leaving - no return	1	Poverty / Homeless
7	Opioids	1	People moving to urban areas
3	Volunteers	0	NCDOT
2	Economic Downturn	0	Community Hospital → support

WEST CALDWELL SWOT MEETING

STRENGTHS			
Votes	Strengths	Votes	Strengths
4	Location to Mountains / Hickory / Charlotte	1	Education
2	The people	1	Hospital
2	Existing Roads are good	1	Senior Center
2	Community College	0	Public Lands
2	Weather / Climate	0	Culture
1	Partnerships	0	Low Tax Rate
1	Cost of Living	0	Infrastructure (Water/Internet)
1	Natural Beauty	0	Safe / Low Crime

WEAKNESSES			
Votes	Weaknesses	Votes	Weaknesses
3	Lack of Multi-Family Housing	1	Filling Empty Store Fronts
2	Middle Income Housing	0	Losing young population
2	Increased drug use	0	Minimum housing issues
2	Retaining Businesses	0	Minimal Public Education
2	ADA Issues	0	Market Rate Apartment
1	Lack of high income employment	0	Weather (Bad Weather Maintenance)

OPPORTUNITIES			
Votes	Opportunities	Votes	Opportunities
3	Events (Festivals/Cruise-Ins)	1	Railroad Access
3	Getting young people involved	0	Wilsons Creek
3	Improve Caldwell County Fair	0	Tech Infrastructure
2	Marketing / Branding	0	Leaves
2	Tourist Attraction	0	Recreation
1	Destination Stops	0	Increase Housing Diversity
1	Coordination between Towns / County / Chambers	0	Connectivity

THREATS			
Votes	Threats	Votes	Threats
5	Opioids / Drugs	1	Migration ? Urban Areas
3	Lack of Infrastructure for industry	0	Aging Population
2	Better Opportunities is surrounding areas	0	Market Leakage
1	"Brain Drain" Young People		

HIBRITEN HIGH SCHOOL MEETING

STRENGTHS			
Votes	Strengths	Votes	Strengths
6	Rural in Nature	0	Safety
5	Public Schools and Community College	0	Low Traffic
2	Natural Beauty	0	Clean Air / Climate
2	Affordability / Low Cost of Living	0	Good People / Community
1	Central Location to I-40/85/321	0	Industry Diversity
1	Public Library	0	Medical Facilities
1	Farms	0	Partnerships
1	History	0	Recreation and Walking Trails

WEAKNESSES			
Votes	Weaknesses	Votes	Weaknesses
6	Event Structure with the flexibility to host multiple types of events	2	Aging Infrastructure
6	Appearance/Traffic Lights/Lack of gas stations on 321	2	Update Existing Facilities
5	Lack of Market Rate Housing	1	Need Bike Lanes
5	Code Enforcement/Junk & Trash/Minimum Housing Issues	1	Improved Gateway
2	Public Transportation	1	Traffic on Smithcross Road
2	Lack of Housing Diversity	0	Attracting Young People to the Area
2	Lack of Higher End Housing	0	Need More Events/Festivals
2	Lack of Higher End/Non-chain Restaurants	0	Dangerous Truck Traffic
2	Support for Mom & Pop Businesses		

OPPORTUNITIES			
Votes	Opportunities	Votes	Opportunities
5	Over Mountain Victory Trail	1	Wilson Creek Park
3	Gateway to the Mountains	1	Patterson Science Buildings
3	Good Restaurants	1	Empty Mall Building
2	Recreation Expansion & Connection to Existing Facilities	0	Production / New Industries
1	Rehabilitation of Old Factories	0	River Walk Project
1	Burke School of Science and Math		

THREATS			
Votes	Threats	Votes	Threats
10	Lack of Housing Options	0	Guns
7	Lack of High Speed Internet / Affordable Internet	0	Drugs
5	Unplanned Development	0	Animal Control
3	Lack of open/informal forums to speak to Council/Board Members	0	Complacency of Residence

HAPPY VALLEY MEETING

STRENGTHS			
Votes	Strengths	Votes	Strengths
3	Early College	0	Festivals
3	Community College	0	Cost of Living
2	Historic Sites	0	Natural Beauty
1	Law Enforcement	0	Library
1	Health Care System	0	Senior Center
0	Location	0	Chamber of Commerce
0	People / Population Size	0	Aquatic Center
0	Hospital	0	Volunteer Fire Department
0	Recreation	0	EMS
0	Water Quality		

WEAKNESSES			
Votes	Weaknesses	Votes	Weaknesses
7	Airport	0	Traffic 321
5	Regional Park Plan	0	Existing Facility Maintenance
5	Code Enforcement	0	Volunteers
3	Crime / Drug	0	Local Government Commitment
2	Non-conforming Land Uses	0	Pedestrian / Bicycle Lanes (Ex: 18)
1	Housing Diversity	0	Railroad Connectivity
1	Lack of Sewer	0	Interstate
1	Aging Infrastructure	0	Public Transportation

OPPORTUNITIES			
Votes	Opportunities	Votes	Opportunities
2	Tourism Promotion	0	Improved Educational Opportunities
2	Retirement Housing	0	Tax Rates
1	Neighborhood Schools	0	Available Land
1	Employment	0	Mountain Views
1	Historic Aspects / Preservation	0	Blowing Rock Style Towns / Downtown
0	Manufacturing Sites	0	Event Attractions
0	Lakes	0	Teacher Incentives / Housing
0	Over Mountain Victory Trail		

THREATS			
Votes	Threats	Votes	Threats
6	Teacher Retention	0	Police Response
2	Lack of Smart Land Use	0	Lack of Awareness of Crime Stoppers
2	Drugs	0	Weather / Code Red Awareness
2	Hazardous Waste Dumping	0	Lack of Workforce
1	More Challenging Education	0	Farming Chemicals and Water Quality
0	Gangs	0	Stormwater Runoff
0	Sex Trafficking	0	Job Retention

Appendix



APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY

An online public survey was held from June 11th to July 4th, 2019. Approximately 118 participants took part in the survey. A link to the survey was posted on the Western Piedmont Council of Governments' (WPCOG) website. The survey focused on public response to the following: housing needs, development along the NC Highway 321 corridor, recreational opportunities, short-term housing rentals, infrastructure expansion, and the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the County. The results of the survey were taken into consideration while drafting the Caldwell County Comprehensive Plan.

SURVEY RESULTS: HOUSING NEEDS

Question 1: Caldwell County, in general, is experiencing a shortage of available housing. What housing types do you think Caldwell County needs? Please drag 4 of the items above the line in your preferred order. Use the comment button at the bottom of the page to suggest additional housing types.

Answer Choices:

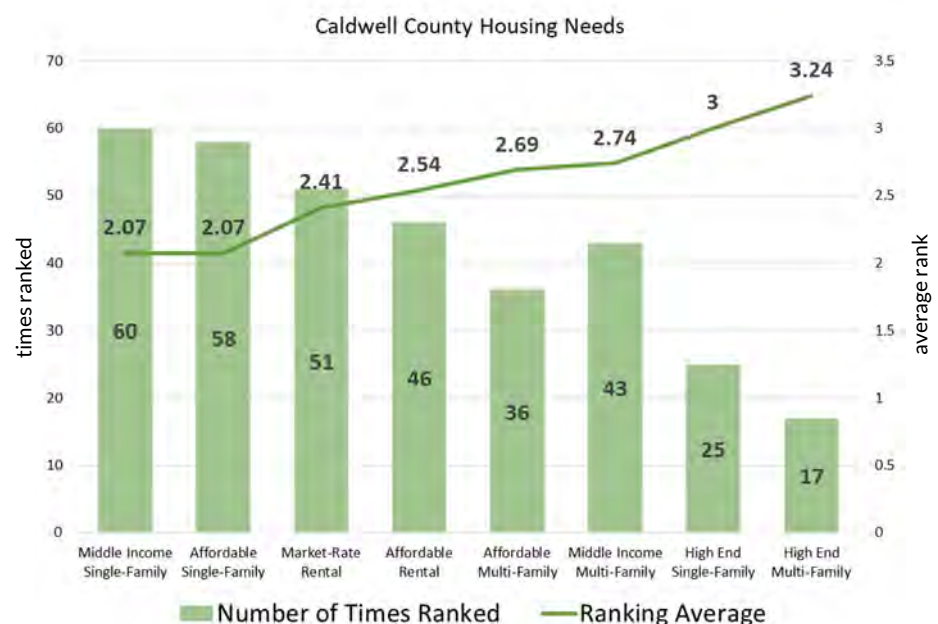
- High End, Single Family
- Middle Income, Single Family
- Affordable, Single Family
- High End, Multi-Family
- Middle Income, Multi-Family
- Affordable, Multi-Family
- Market-Rate Rental
- Affordable Rental

Results: Housing options were ranked 1 to 4, with 1 having highest priority and 4 having lowest priority. The closer the average ranking is to 1, the higher priority that housing type ranks overall.

From survey results, it is observed that the primary housing demand is for middle income single-family and affordable single-family housing. There is also reasonable demand for market-rate rental and affordable rental housing. There is a slight demand for multi-family housing, and low demand for high-end housing.

Additional comments regarding housing include: providing age restricted

condominiums and single-family developments catering to retirement ages, providing mixed-use with retail and apartment space, and restricting manufactured homes.



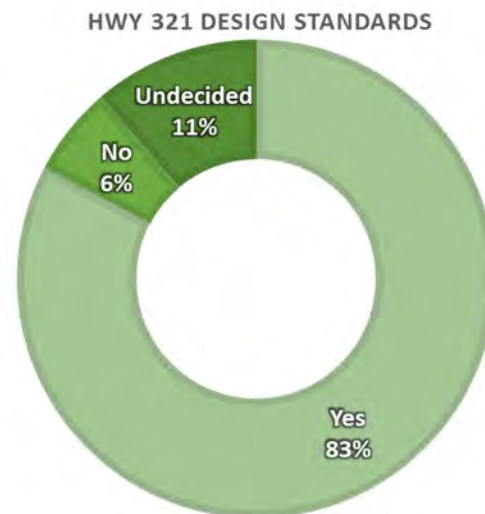
SURVEY RESULTS: FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ALONG NC HIGHWAY 321

Question 1: Would you be in favor of requiring new businesses along HWY 321 to meet reasonable design standards such as landscaping, building materials, signage, setbacks, etc.?

Answer Choices:

- Yes, No, or Undecided

Results: The overwhelming majority (83%) of survey participants were in favor of implementing design standards for new development along the NC Highway 321 corridor. The remainder of participants were undecided (11%) or opposed (6%) to implementing design standards.

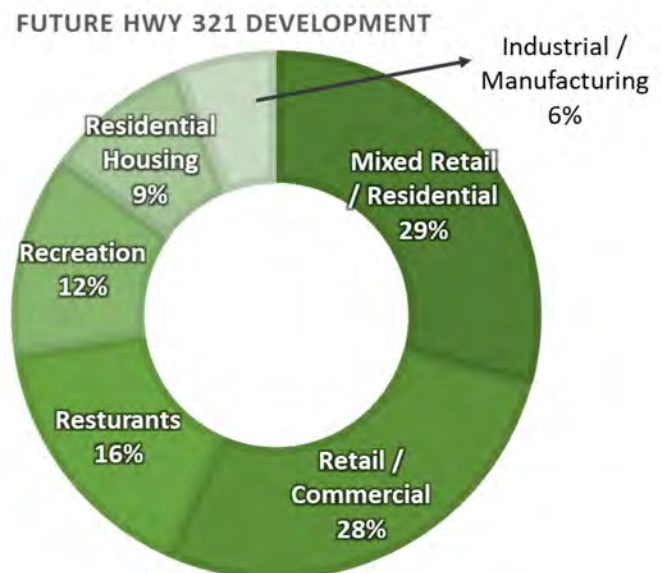


Question 2: What type of development would you most prefer to see along HWY 321 corridor north of Lenoir? (Choose 1 answer)

Answer Choices:

- Retail / Commercial
- Residential Housing
- Restaurants
- Industrial / Manufacturing
- Mixed Retail / Residential
- Recreation

Results: Participants were divided between Mixed Retail / Residential (29%) and Retail / Commercial (28%) as their preferred type of development to encourage along NC Highway 321. Other participants desired Restaurants (16%), Recreational Opportunities (12%), Residential Housing (9%) and Industrial / Manufacturing (6%).



SURVEY RESULTS: RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Question 1: What do you think are the most important recreational opportunities in the county?

Answer Choices: Open Ended

Results: Participants provided a range of recreational opportunities located within the County that they found to be important to their quality of life. Each of those indicated opportunities are listed below, along with the percent of participants that listed the opportunity.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails / Greenways / Hiking (23%) • Biking / Cycling (10%) • Parks (10%) • Blueways / Stream, River, Lake Access / View of water (7%) • Wilson's Creek (6%) • Preserved Natural Areas (5%) • Baseball / Softball (3%) • Fishing (3%) • Youth Sports / Activities (3%) • Travel Sports / Multi-Purpose Sports Facility (3%) • Camping / Campgrounds (2%) • Dog Park (2%) • Soccer (2%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimming (2%) • Basketball (1%) • Children's Park (1%) • Golf (1%) • Recreation Center (1%) • YMCA (1%) • Teen / Young Adult Programs (1%) • Lake Hickory (1%) • Mall / Big Box Retail Area (1%) • Mountain Biking (1%) • Splash Pad (1%) • Outdoor Learning Center / Nature Trail (1%) • Outdoor Event Space (1%) • Bowling (0.5%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brewery Tour (0.5%) • Disc Golf Course (0.5%) • Football (0.5%) • Horseback Riding (0.5%) • Skate/Scooter Park (0.5%) • Walker Stadium (0.5%) • Zip-Line (0.5%) • Picnic Areas (0.5%) • Multi-Cultural Programs (0.5%) |
|---|--|--|



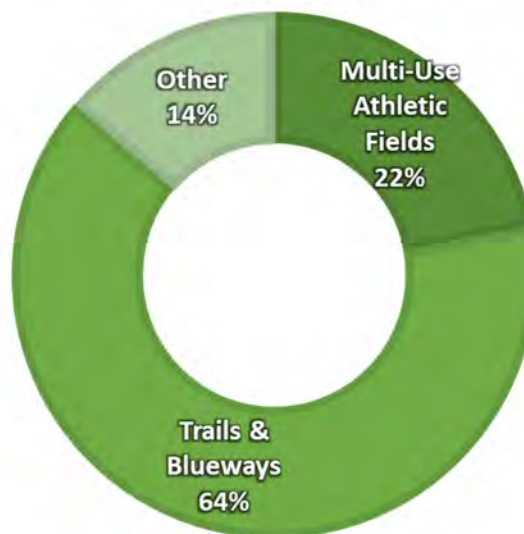
Question 2: Which of the following types of recreation should the county add or expand? (Choose 1 answer)

Answer Choices:

- Multi-Use Athletic Fields
- Trails and Blueways
- Other

Results: The majority of participants (64%) identified a need for expansion of trails and blueways. Another 22% identified multi-use athletic fields and 14% choose other recreational facilities

EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN NEED OF EXPANSION



SURVEY RESULTS: SHORT-TERM HOUSING RENTALS

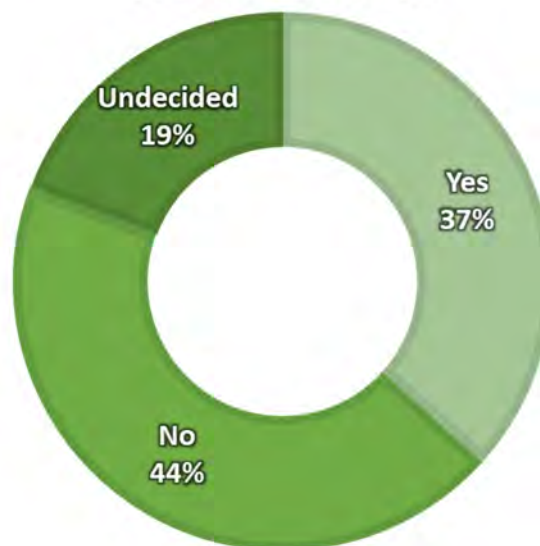
Question 1: Should short-term housing rental properties (such as Airbnb) be taxed in the same way as hotels and motels?

Answer Choices:

- Yes, No, or Undecided

Results: The majority (44%) of survey participants did not think that short-term housing rentals should be taxed in the same way as hotels and motels. In a close second, 37% percent of participants thought that short-term rental should be taxed like hotels and motels. The remainder of participants (11%) were undecided on how to tax short-term rentals.

SHOULD SHORT-TERM RENTAL PROPERTIES BE TAXED LIKE HOTELS



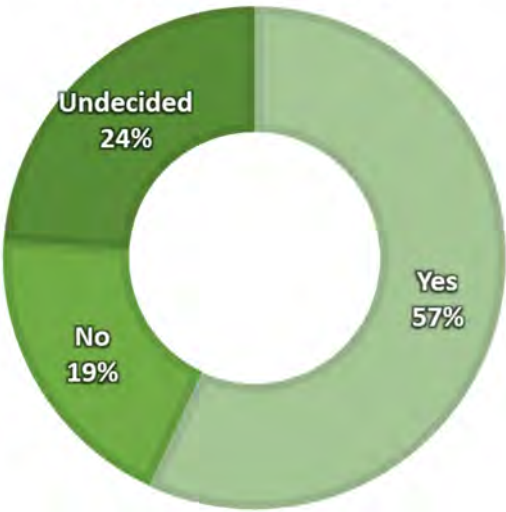
Question 2: Do you think the availability of short-term housing rentals is a favorable commodity for Caldwell County?

Answer Choices:

- Yes, No, or Undecided

Results: The majority of participants (57%) view short-term rentals as a favorable commodity for the County. The remainder of participants are undecided (24%) or disagree (19%) that short-term rentals are beneficial for the County

ARE SHORT-TERM HOUSING RENTALS FAVORABLE FOR THE COUNTY



Question 3: Do you have any additional thoughts about short-term property rentals such as Airbnb?

Answer Choices: Open Ended

Results: Participants provided a range of responses concerning short-term property rentals. Each response was categorized into a general statement. These statements are listed below, along with the percent of participants agreeing with that statement.

Percent	Topic
25%	Short-term rentals are an asset to the County and/or Property Owner
18%	No additional thoughts
12%	Short-term rentals should be monitored and regulated
11%	Short-term rentals should not be taxed like hotels
9%	Caldwell County is not a destination, there is not enough interest in the area to support short-term rentals
7%	Short-term rentals should pay hotel taxes
5%	With the housing shortage and lack of non-HUD apartments, short-term rentals provide housing for people moving to the area while looking for permanent housing
4%	If a company is renting multiple short-term rentals, they should be taxed like hotels
2%	Short-term rentals are a nuisance (parties, traffic)
2%	Short-term rentals provide higher quality rooms than the hotels in the County
2%	Short-term rentals provide housing for short-term contractors from out-of-town
2%	Do not like Short-Term Rentals
2%	Do not know what an Airbnb short-term rental is
2%	The County should promote hotels instead of short-term rentals

Question 4: Do you currently operate or would be interested in operating a short-term housing rental?

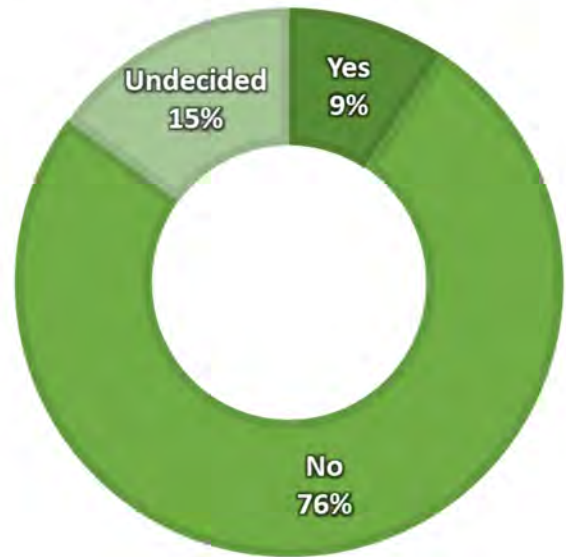
Answer Choices:

- Yes, No, or Undecided

Results:

The majority of participants (76%) view reported that they do not currently operate or would be interested in operating a short-term housing rental. The remainder of participants are undecided (15%), currently operate or would be interested in operating (9%) a short-term rental.

CURRENTLY OPERATE OR WOULD BE INTERESTED IN OPERATING A SHORT-TERM HOUSING RENTAL



SURVEY RESULTS: DEVELOPMENT FACTORS

Question 1: Where do you think it would be most useful to expand sewer service in the county?

Answer Choices: Open Ended

Results:

Percent	Topic
37%	Do not know
9%	Areas most attractive for potential investors (New Residential, Commercial, Industrial, etc.)
6%	South Caldwell
4%	321 Corridor and area surrounding the corridor
4%	Fill within incorporated limits
3%	East Caldwell
3%	Oak Hill
3%	Sawmills
3%	North of Lenoir
3%	Populated areas near existing infrastructure
3%	Highway 18
3%	Populated areas of the County
3%	Colletsville
1%	Happy Valley
1%	Gamewell
1%	Abington
1%	Wilkesboro Road
1%	Airport
1%	321 North (past Valmead School Area)
1%	Do not expand into County, limit growth
1%	Do not expand at all
1%	Within critical and protected areas of the watershed
1%	In developed areas with lot sizes 1/2 acre or less
1%	Patterson
1%	Poverty Areas

Question 2: What do you believe are the biggest issues facing Caldwell County?

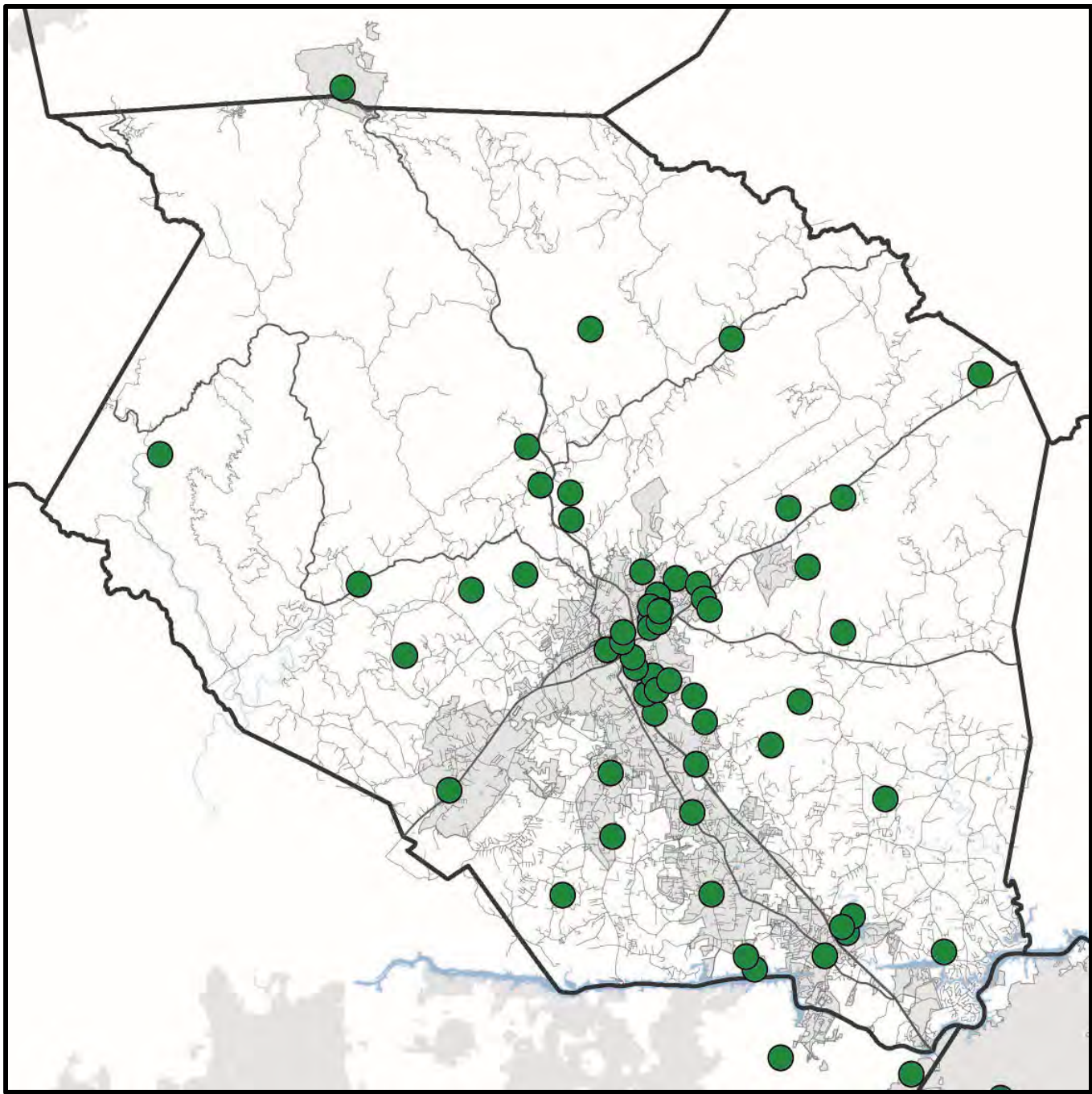
Answer Choices: Open Ended

Results: This question generated a large / ranging number of responses. Below are the most common responses.

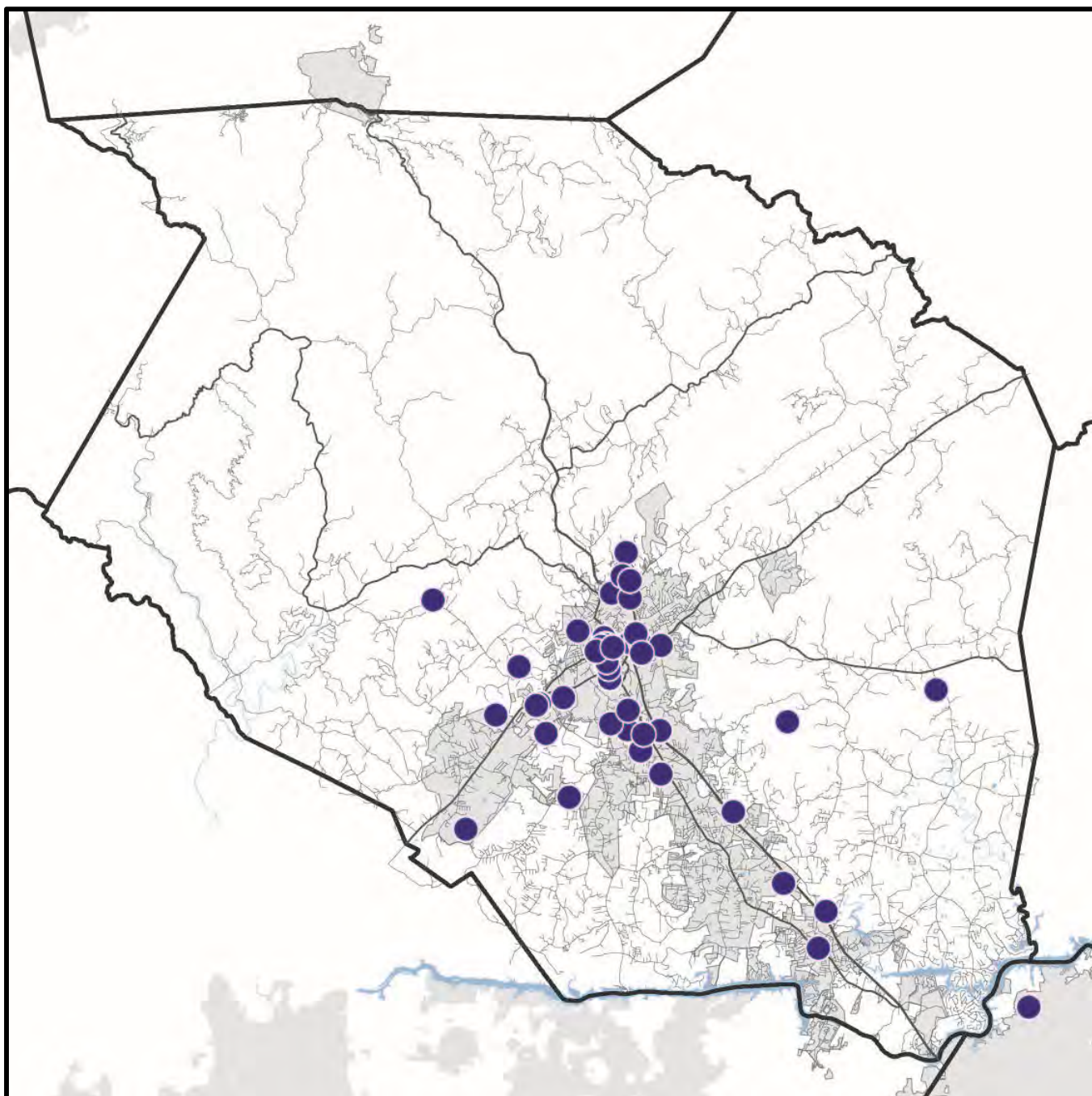
1. Drug, Alcohol & Crime related issues
2. Limited job opportunities for middle to high income
3. Lack of tax base
4. Lack of entertainment / variety of entertainment / commercial retail / restaurants
5. Housing options
6. Blighted / Abandoned Homes & Property
7. High Rent Costs / Lack of Affordable Housing
8. Lack of Elderly Care / Facilities
9. Convincing younger generations to remain in the area
10. Lack of a trained / quality workforce
11. Financial support for public schools
12. Population Growth / Attracting New Residents
13. Attracting New Businesses
14. Grocery Store Variety
15. Lack of Middle or High Income Housing
16. Suitable Broadband / Cell / Wireless signal or speed

SURVEY RESULTS: MAPPING EXERCISE

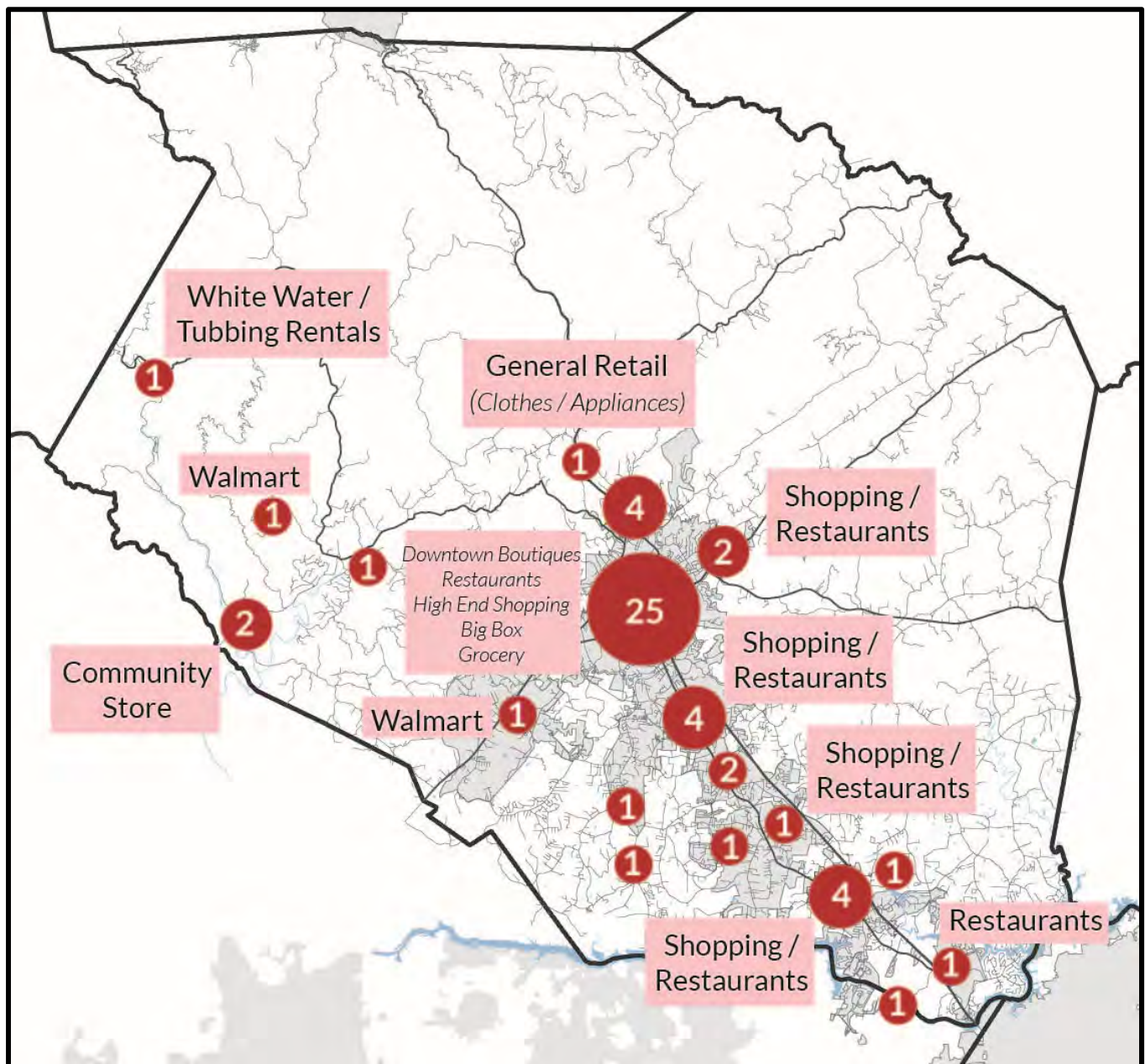
Question: Where do survey participants live? (optional)



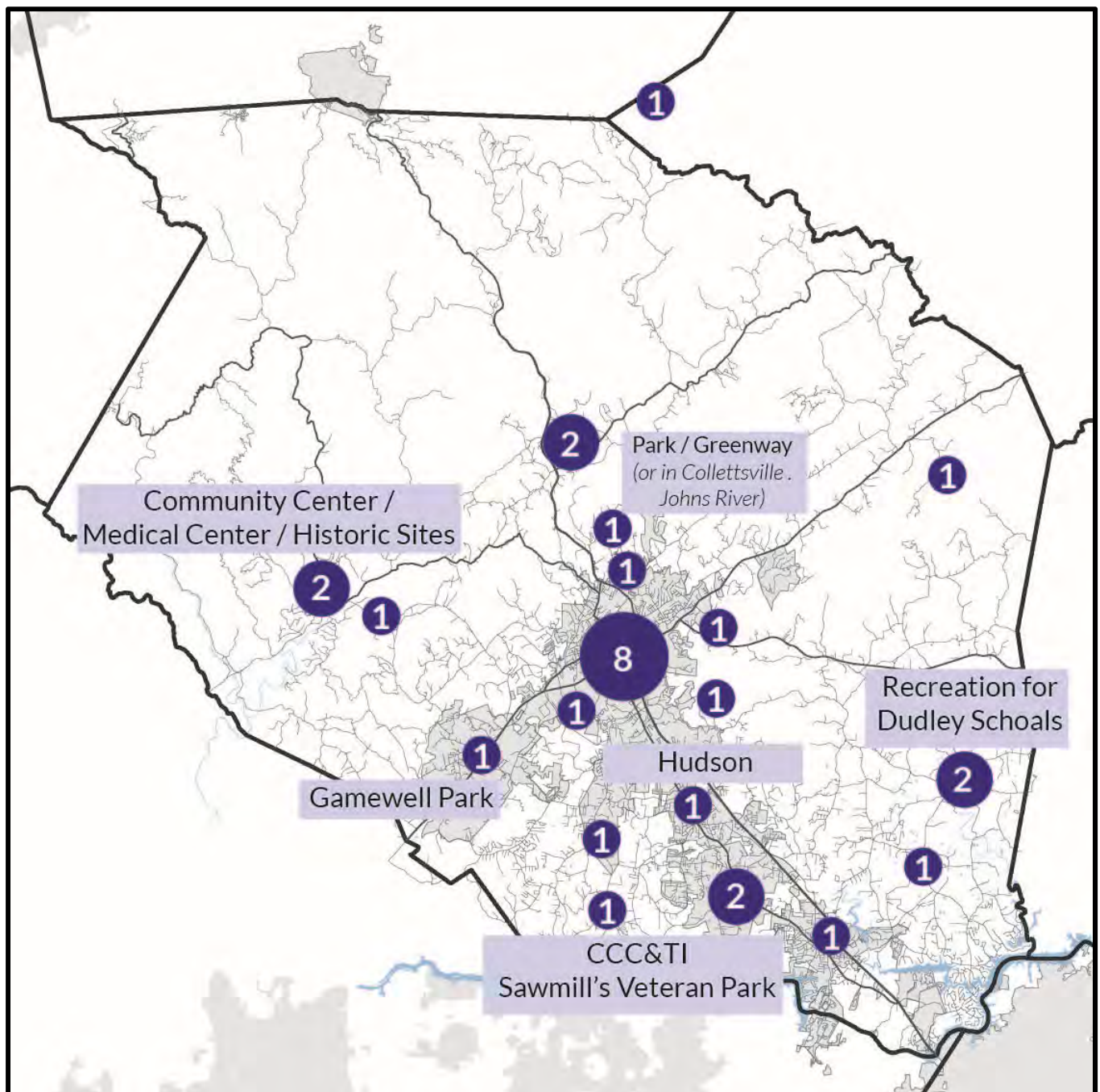
Question: Where do survey participants work and/or own a business? (optional)



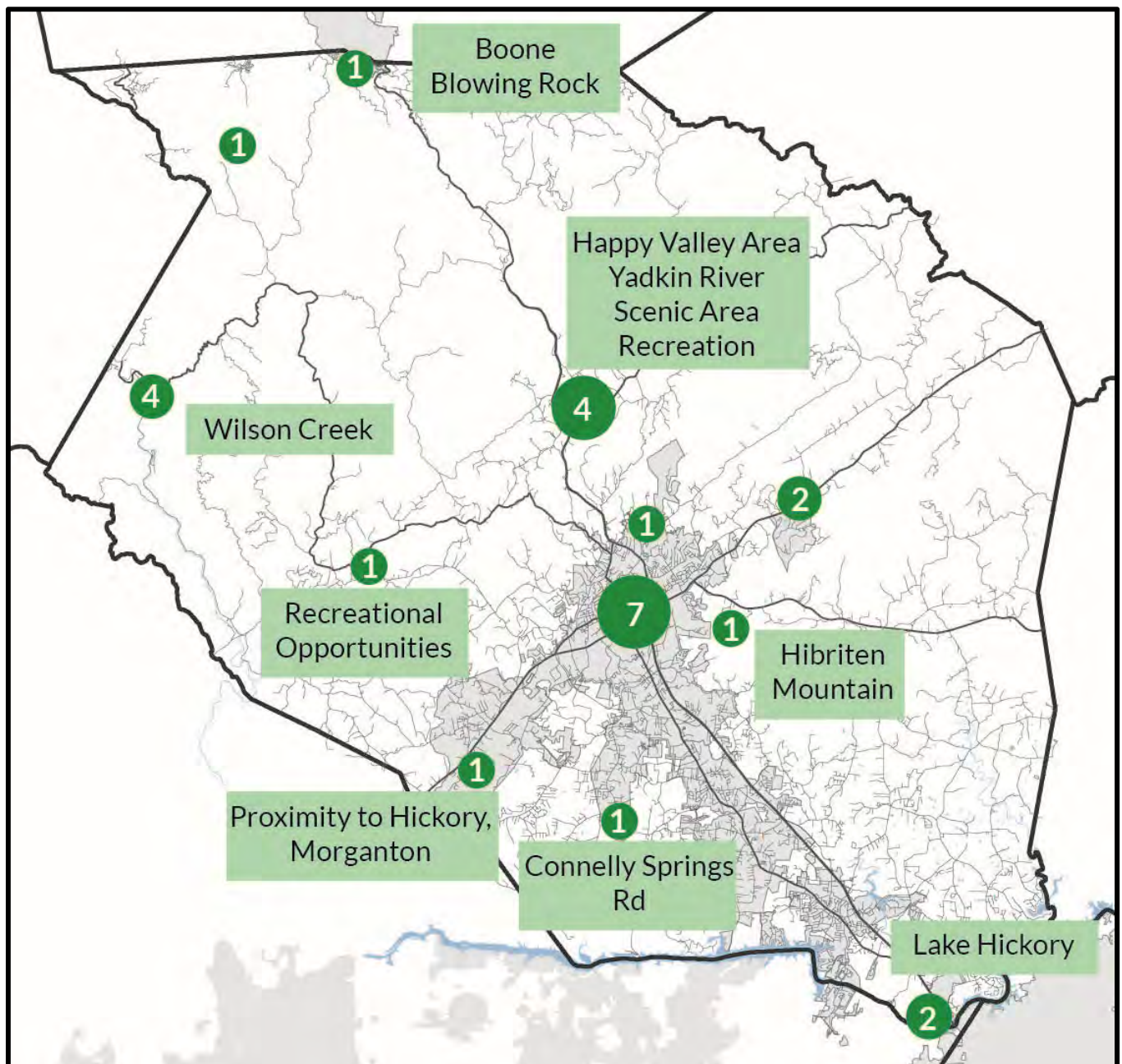
Question: Where do survey participants want there to be more retail options? (optional)



Question: Where do survey participants consider there to be a community node? (optional)



Question: Where do survey participants consider there to be a regional node? (optional)





Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968