



Ayden, NC

# LAND USE PLAN

Adopted: November 12, 2019



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This Land Use Plan was created by Stewart on behalf of the Town of Ayden, NC.

Adopted: November 12, 2019



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# INTRODUCTION

*Planning for a bright future*

## PROJECT PURPOSE

The Town of Ayden Land Use Plan updates the 2030 Ayden Community Vision. Marked by community engagement and data analysis, this plan is intended to be used as a guideline for community decision making into the future. It will be used by the town staff and elected and appointed officials as they make decisions about resources and land use in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes, 160A. The plan also documents the community's aspirations and serves as a touchstone for the public at large and for those investing in land and development within Ayden. This document lays out strategies and recommendations to accomplish community goals over a 15 to 20-year planning horizon. The plan should be reviewed and amended periodically in response to land use trends, population changes, and evolving Town goals.

The Town of Ayden elected to update their Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in parallel. This is an efficient method of planning that allows for a dialogue between the aspirational guiding document, the Land Use Plan, and the detailed development regulations in the UDO. These two documents will inform one another in a way that is both forward thinking and realistic in how the vision will be achieved through high quality development.

This update of the Land Use Plan and UDO is timely given the major changes impacting the community including the pending completion of the Southwest Bypass and the potential for substantial residential growth in the coming decade. By planning for growth, the Town is poised to benefit from this major transportation change and strengthen its economy through residential and employment growth while preserving the small-town charm that makes Ayden unique.



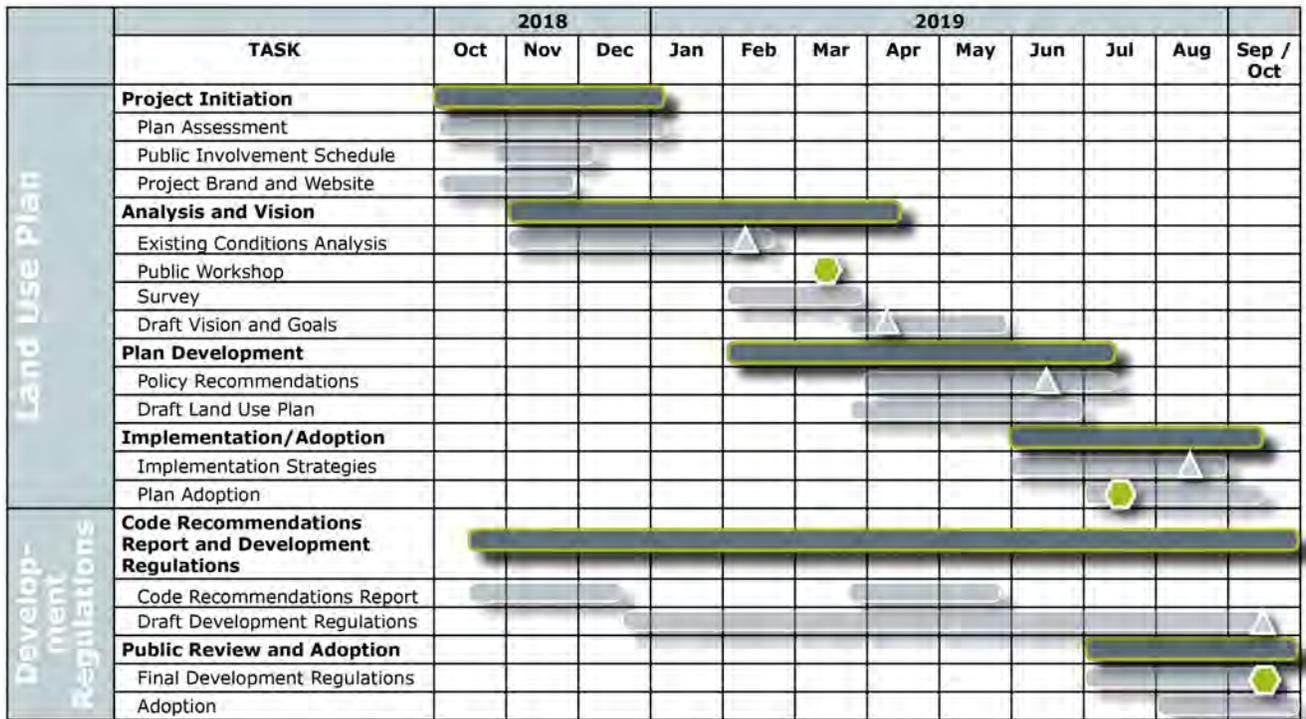
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# PLAN PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan Use Plan update began in late 2018 and was completed over a 10-month project schedule, which was punctuated with multiple opportunities for public engagement and input. The project was divided into four phases. Phase One included listening to staff and stakeholders and an extensive community tour. During Phase Two, the project team analyzed land use features and existing community plans and worked with the community to draft a vision statement at the first public meeting. Phase Three focused on the creation of a draft future land use map and drafting goals around several key elements to support the vision statement. These were reviewed and confirmed at the second public meeting. Phase Four featured editing of the draft plan to incorporate community feedback and review of the plan by the Steering Committee, Planning Board, and Board of Commissioners. This phase culminated in plan adoption.

# PLAN STRUCTURE

The Ayden Comprehensive Land Use Plan is divided into five chapters starting with background information and developing a vision for future development. It establishes a planning framework to guide development and land-use change and aims to achieve environmental, social and economic objectives.



# WHAT WE HEARD

The community’s love for Ayden shined in the public engagement components of the project. The plan is a result of this engagement, and reflects the values and desires expressed both in person and online. Engagement methods included:

## Steering Committee

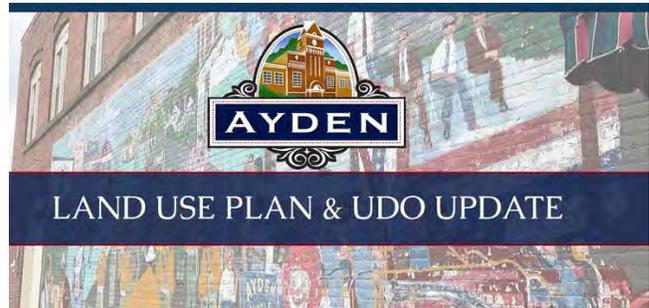
This diverse group of 12 community members appointed by Town Council met throughout the project to provide guidance to the project team.

## Stakeholder Groups

Early in the process, five stakeholder groups consisting of representatives of the real estate, development groups, downtown businesses, property owners, appointed officials, and staff were interviewed to gain insight on the community.

## Public Meetings

On March 28, 2019 the public was invited to a Visioning Workshop to review and provide feedback on various elements of the plan. They participated in a visioning exercise, visual preference surveys on residential and commercial character, neighborhood design and downtown character. Attendees were also invited to share ideas on a keep-toss-create collaborative map to provide feedback on things they like, things they do not like, and things they would like to see in different areas of Ayden. In addition, participants could give open ended comments on any issues and feedback on the meeting itself. Approximately twenty people attended the visioning workshop.



**WHAT IS A LAND USE PLAN & UDO?**

A Land Use Plan is a collection of policies and maps that serves as a community's blueprint for growth.

A UDO (Unified Development Ordinance) is a document that contains zoning and subdivision regulations and other regulations such as design guidelines, sign regulations, and floodplain and stormwater management that specify standards for new development.

Click below to learn more!

[More Info](#)

**GET INVOLVED**

We want to hear from you about your vision for the future of Ayden. Click the below to see upcoming events, key dates, and project information.

[More Info](#)

**STAY INFORMED**

You can also join our mailing list to get emails about upcoming events and important project news!

**Sign up for email updates & stay informed**

Name:

Email Address:

[Subscribe Now](#)

Please fill in a valid email address



**KEEP TOSS CREATE MAP**

A NUMBER OF STRATEGIES WERE USED TO GATHER COMMUNITY FEEDBACK DURING THE PLANNING PROCESS INCLUDING A WEBSITE, ONLINE SURVEY AND TWO COMMUNITY MEETINGS

# INTRODUCTION

## VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS



- COMMERCIAL PREFERENCE
1. SUBURBAN SHOPPING WITH AMENITIES
  2. DOWNTOWN SHOPS
  3. OUTDOOR DINING



- RESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE
1. TRADITIONAL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES
  2. DUPLEXES
  3. ONE-STORY PATIO HOMES



- DOWNTOWN PREFERENCE
1. NEW SHOPS AND BUSINESSES / FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
  2. SECOND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL
  3. CONVERTED ALLEY

On July 22, 2019 the community gathered again to affirm the direction of the draft plan and review priority action items. Participants viewed the results of prior community engagement efforts including online survey results and the Visioning Workshop materials. They were provided an overview of draft plan themes and recommendations. Participants were asked to provide feedback on a series of vision statements, draft land use maps, and thematic boards. Approximately 25 people attended the second community workshop.

## Project Website

The team created a website open for the duration of the planning process. It was linked to the Town’s website and provided a one-stop resource for tracking the Plan’s progress, reviewing meeting summaries and background documents, and seeing notices to online surveys and upcoming meetings.

## Online Survey

Over 100 community members took an online survey and paper surveys offered in the spring of 2019. The survey was designed to gather demographic information and to establish an understanding of community priorities and values. The survey included questions about concerns, values, priorities for improvement, housing options, and a visual preference survey regarding the character of residential and commercial development types.



COMMUNITY MEMBERS GAVE RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "WHAT DOES AYDEN NEED?" WHILE ATTENDING THE 39TH ANNUAL COLLARD FESTIVAL IN DOWNTOWN AYDEN

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

*“I find the people to be our greatest asset.”*

*-Survey Response*

## OVERVIEW

The Town of Ayden, with 5,167 people, is a small town characterized by a charming downtown, historic neighborhoods, commercial centers, and agricultural lands. Construction of the Southwest Bypass in the western portion of the Town’s jurisdiction could bring significant change to the community by creating an opportunity for commercial development and shortening the commute time to Greenville. This will likely lead to residential and commercial development pressure that could change the character of Ayden. This change may also bring opportunity, as Ayden currently has a higher poverty rate than some of the nearby communities.

## STUDY AREA

The study area for this plan is a slightly larger than the Town’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ represents the area over which the Town can regulate planning, zoning, development standards, and land use. The study area factors in areas outside of the ETJ due to potential development pressure and utility services and respects the ETJ of other municipalities (Winterville and Greenville).

2



DOWNTOWN ↑

TOWN HALL ↑

ARTS & REC. / THEATER ←

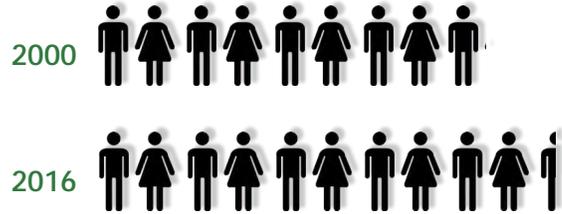
# POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Ayden is one of 10 municipalities in Pitt County. Winterville, Snow Hill, and Grifton are all small towns located in close proximity to Greenville. As Greenville is the economic driver of this region, it was included in this analysis as well.

With a median age of 36.8 years, Ayden has the second-lowest median age out of neighboring jurisdictions. Other than Grifton, Ayden is the only municipality with a median age that lowered between 2010 and 2016.

With a total population of 5,167 as of 2016, Ayden has been slowly and steadily growing for decades. Over the last 16 years, there has been a population increase of nearly 12%, or nearly 550 persons. Situated just south of Winterville and Greenville, two jurisdictions that have experienced more growth than Ayden, and at the southern terminus of the Southwest Bypass, Ayden is positioned for

## POPULATION GROWTH



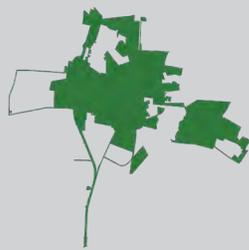
more growth in the near future. The population of Ayden, including its ETJ, is over 6,100.

The poverty rate in Ayden is a concern with 31% of the population living in poverty. Greenville and Snow Hill have similar poverty rates, indicating the issue is not isolated to Ayden.

## Housing

Ayden has added approximately 197 homes since 2000. The majority of

## AGE, INCOME & POVERTY



AYDEN  
**36.8**  
MEDIAN AGE

**\$29,139**  
MEDIAN INCOME

**31%**  
PERSONS BELOW  
POVERTY LINE



PITT COUNTY  
**31.7**  
MEDIAN AGE

**\$42,308**  
MEDIAN INCOME

**24.5%**  
PERSONS BELOW  
POVERTY LINE



NORTH CAROLINA  
**38.3**  
MEDIAN AGE

**\$48,256**  
MEDIAN INCOME

**17%**  
PERSONS BELOW  
POVERTY LINE

SOURCE: 2016 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Ayden's 1,090 housing units are single-family detached, followed by multi-family residential including duplexes and apartments. Mobile homes constitute approximately 3% of Ayden's housing stock.

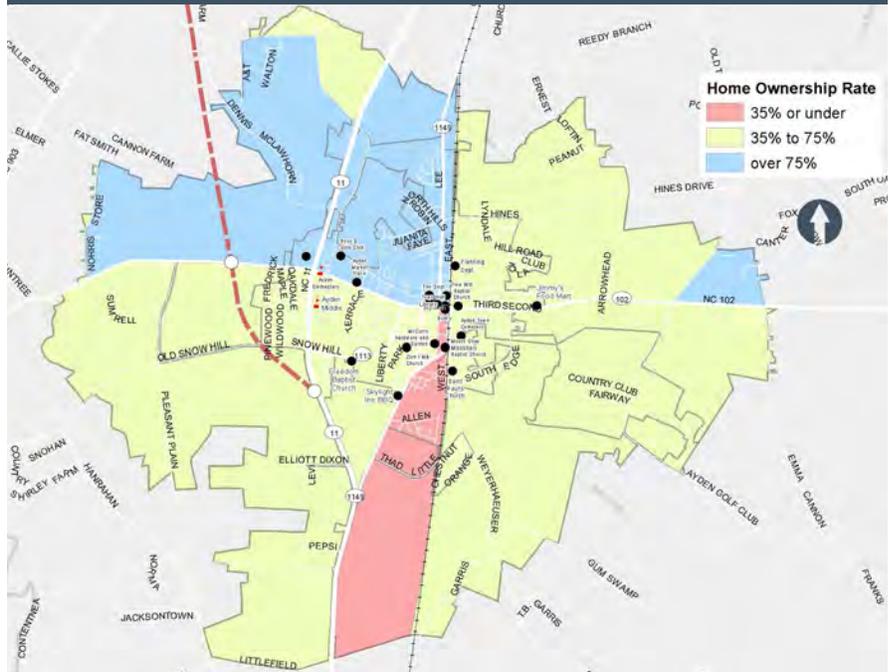
Home ownership and household income vary greatly throughout Ayden and the surrounding area. Ayden's median home value (\$90,700) is greater than Grifton's, but is more than \$58,000 dollars less than that of Greenville. Home ownership is also second lowest among its peers, placing only above Greenville. Generally, home ownership rates are highest in northeast Ayden, while most people in south-central Ayden, directly south of downtown, are likely to rent.

Additional information regarding population and demographics is available in the Appendix.

### COMMUNITY COMPARISON

	Ayden	Winterville	Snow Hill	Grifton	Greenville
Total Housing Units	1,090	3,412	804	1,130	41,320
% Owner Occupied	46.8%	82.2%	47.5%	56%	33.7%
Median Income	\$29,139	\$63,958	\$28,696	\$31,622	\$35,069
Median Home Value	\$90,700	\$158,200	\$94,200	\$89,900	\$148,200

### HOME OWNERSHIP



### KEY STATISTICS

1,090  
HOUSING UNITS



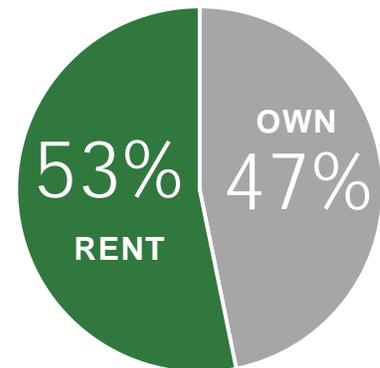
67%  
SINGLE FAMILY  
DETACHED



\$90,700  
MEDIAN HOME  
VALUE



31%  
MULTI-FAMILY  
HOUSING

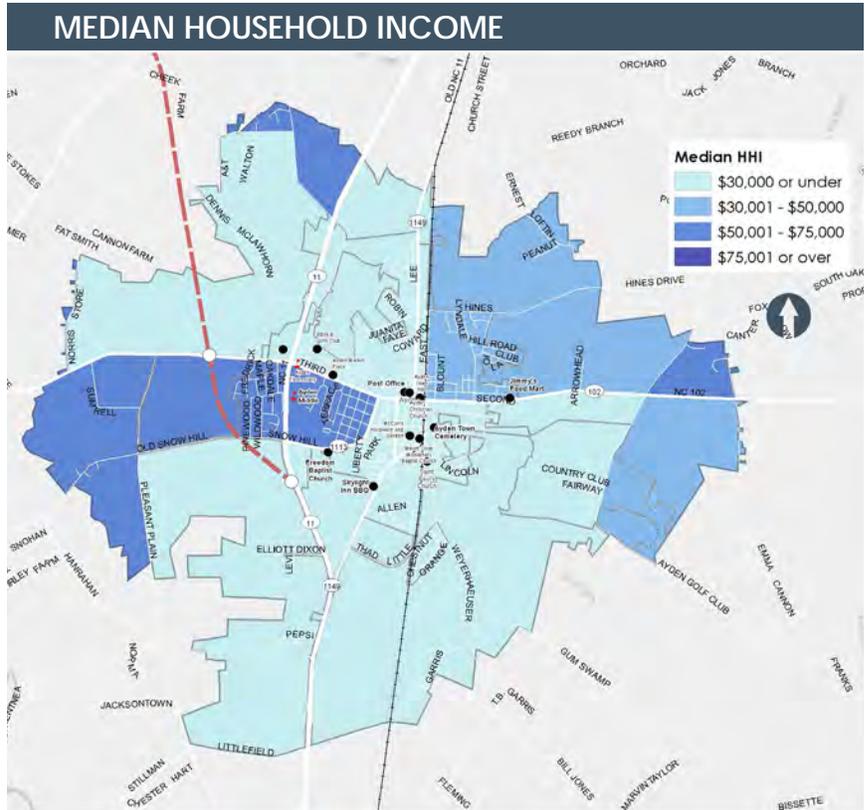


# ECONOMY

## Income

The median household income for Ayden, as a whole, is \$29,139. Ayden, Snow Hill, and Grifton all have similar median household income values.

Median household income in all block groups throughout Ayden is less than \$75,000 per year. It is worth noting, household income is not necessarily tied to home ownership in Ayden. The area of town with highest home ownership rates (north of NC-102 and west of Old NC-11) are not the same areas with the highest median household income, which are primarily northeast of town and between the neighborhoods between NC-102 and Old Snow Hill Rd.



SOURCE: 2018

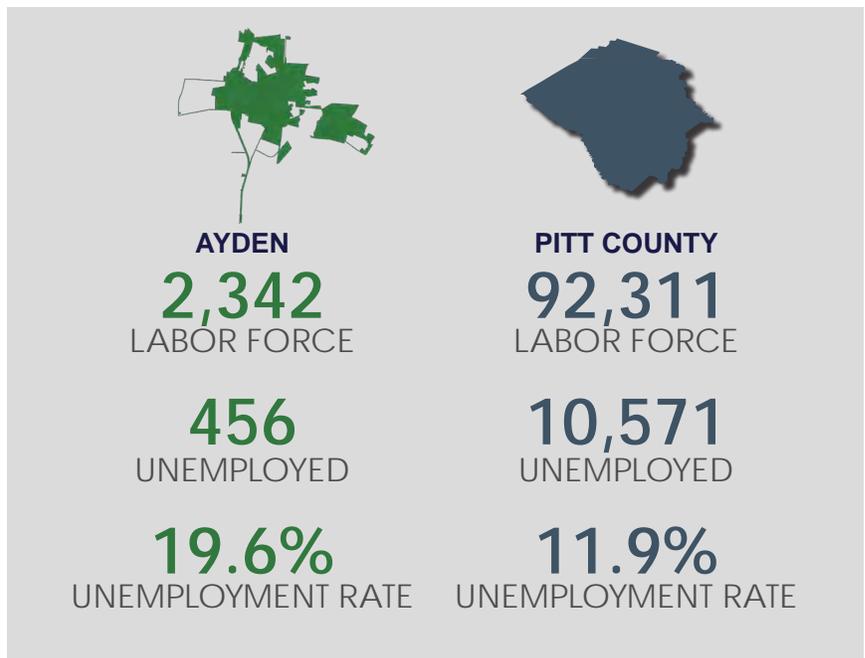
## Employment

Ayden has a 19.6% unemployment rate which is higher than Pitt County (11.9%) and North Carolina (3.9%).

Educational Services / Health Care / Social Assistance is the largest employment sector, employing over 32% of the town's workforce. This is likely a direct result of the fact that three of the four largest employers in Pitt County are within this same sector: Vidant Medical Center, East Carolina University, and the Pitt County Board of Education.

More than 150 residents are

## ECONOMIC INDICATORS



SOURCE: 2016 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY; BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

employed in the second largest sector, Entertainment/Recreation/Accommodation/Food service. Retail Trade and Manufacturing are nearly tied in third. The Construction industry is also a significant employer.

## Commuting Patterns

The average daily commute in Ayden is 17.9 minutes. Relatively few people who live in town also work in town. Nearly all of the people who live in town work elsewhere, approximately 35% commute to Greenville and about 60% work within Pitt County. Nearly everyone who works in Ayden commutes from outside of the Town's limits.

### EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR IN 2016

Industry Sector	Total	Percent
Educational Services; Health Care and Social Assistance	607	32.5%
Manufacturing	181	9.7%
Public Administration	69	3.7%
Retail Trade	208	11.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	25	1.3%
Finance and Insurance; Real Estate and Rental	26	1.4%
Information	16	0.9%
Construction	128	6.9%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	72	3.9%
Wholesale Trade	26	1.4%
Professional and Technical Services; Management	89	4.8%
Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	340	18.2%
Other Services	80	4.3%
	1,867	100%

SOURCE: 2016 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

### WORKFLOW PATTERNS

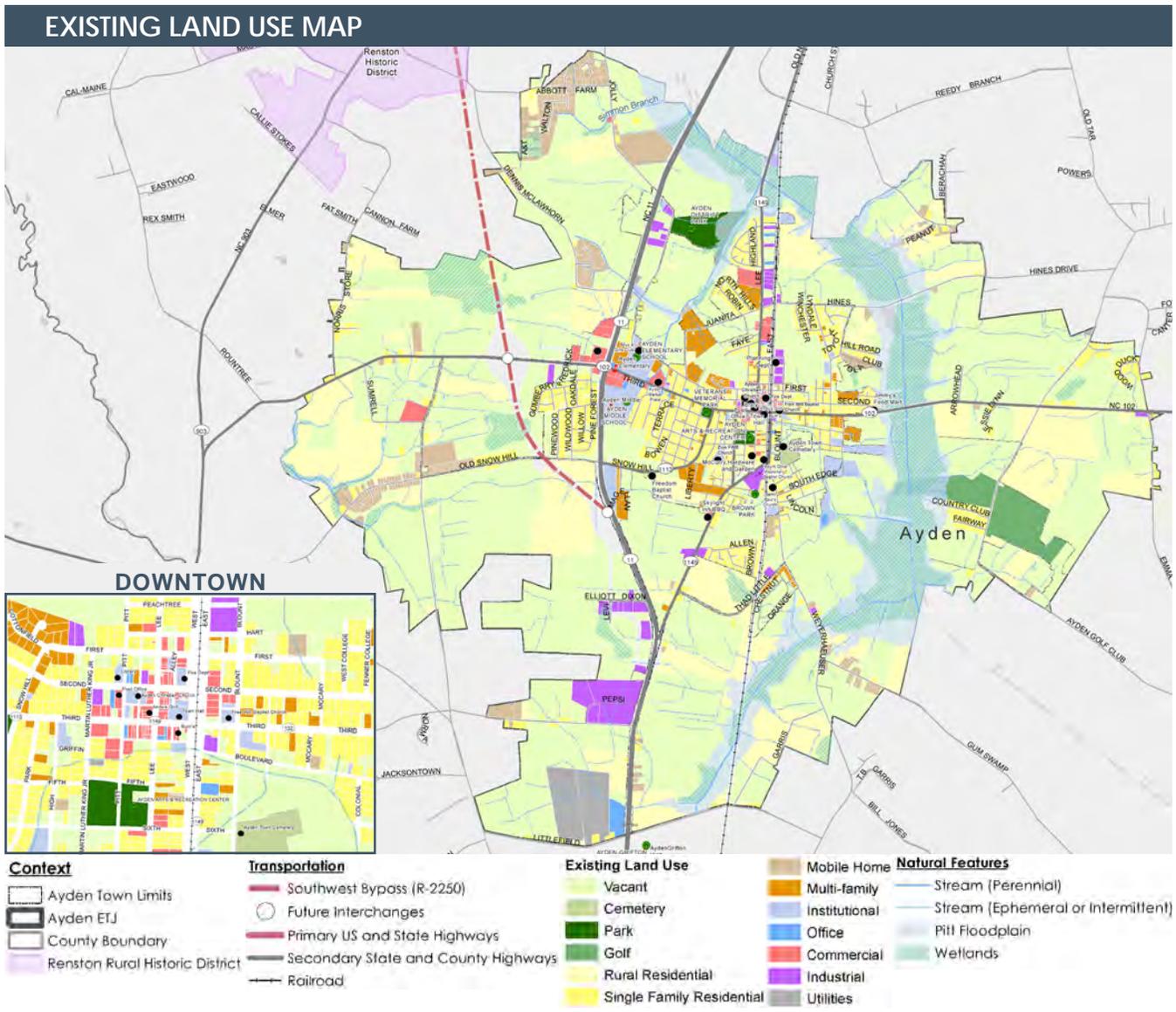


SOURCE: 2015 CENSUS ON THE MAP

# LAND USE

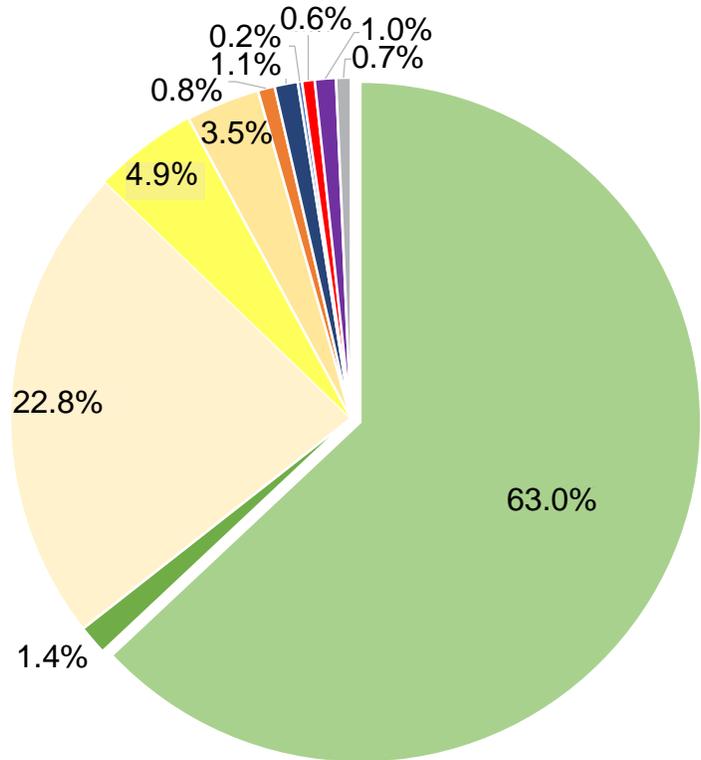
## Existing Land Use

Analysis of existing land use is a representation of how land is currently used based on tax parcel records, rather than a representation of current zoning. Land use has implications on tax values, cost to provide community services, preservation of open space, public health, economic development and a variety of other societal factors. Ayden is unique in that 63% of all land area within the town's ETJ is currently vacant, or undeveloped lands. Rural Residential accounts for more than 22% of the area, making it the next largest existing land use category. Commercial and office uses less than 1% of the area's land use with parks, recreation, and open space making up under just over 1%. As the community grows, this composition is likely to change.



**EXISTING LAND USE**

- Vacant 63.0%
- Parks, Open Space, Golf 1.4%
- Rural Res (> 2 acres) 22.8%
- Single-Family Residential 4.9%
- Manufactured Homes 3.5%
- Multi-Family Residential 1.1%
- Institutional 1.1%
- Office 0.2%
- Commercial 0.6%
- Industrial 1.0%
- Utilities 0.7%

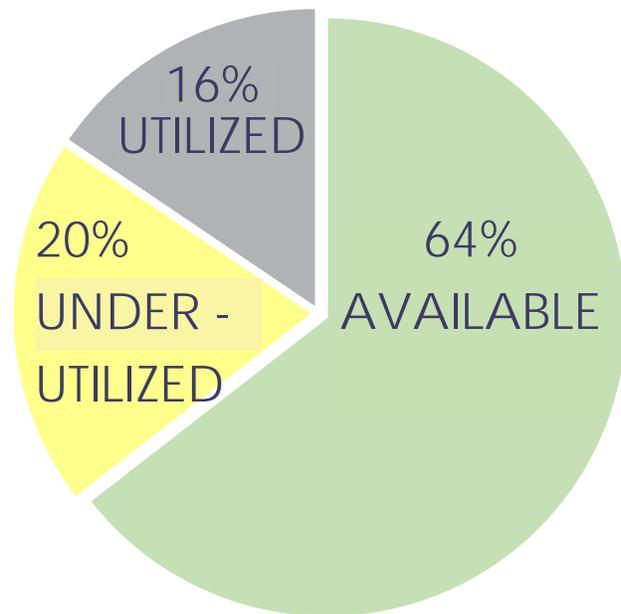


**Issues and Trends**

Future development in Ayden should seek to address the following:

- » Managing new residential growth on Town’s edges
- » Activating downtown to take advantage of historic core
- » Non-conforming parcels in more neighborhoods
- » Balancing residential tax base with more industrial and commercial growth
- » Capitalizing on the completion of the SW Bypass
- » Increasing home ownership percentage and average value of new homes

**LAND AVAILABILITY**



## LAND SUITABILITY

A suitability analysis considers several physical and environmental factors, such as existing land use and proximity to highways, to determine how well suited a parcel is for a certain type of development. This analysis was used to inform the future land use map.

Results show several highly suitable areas for future residential development including downtown and most of the area within Ayden’s municipal limits that are not already utilized.

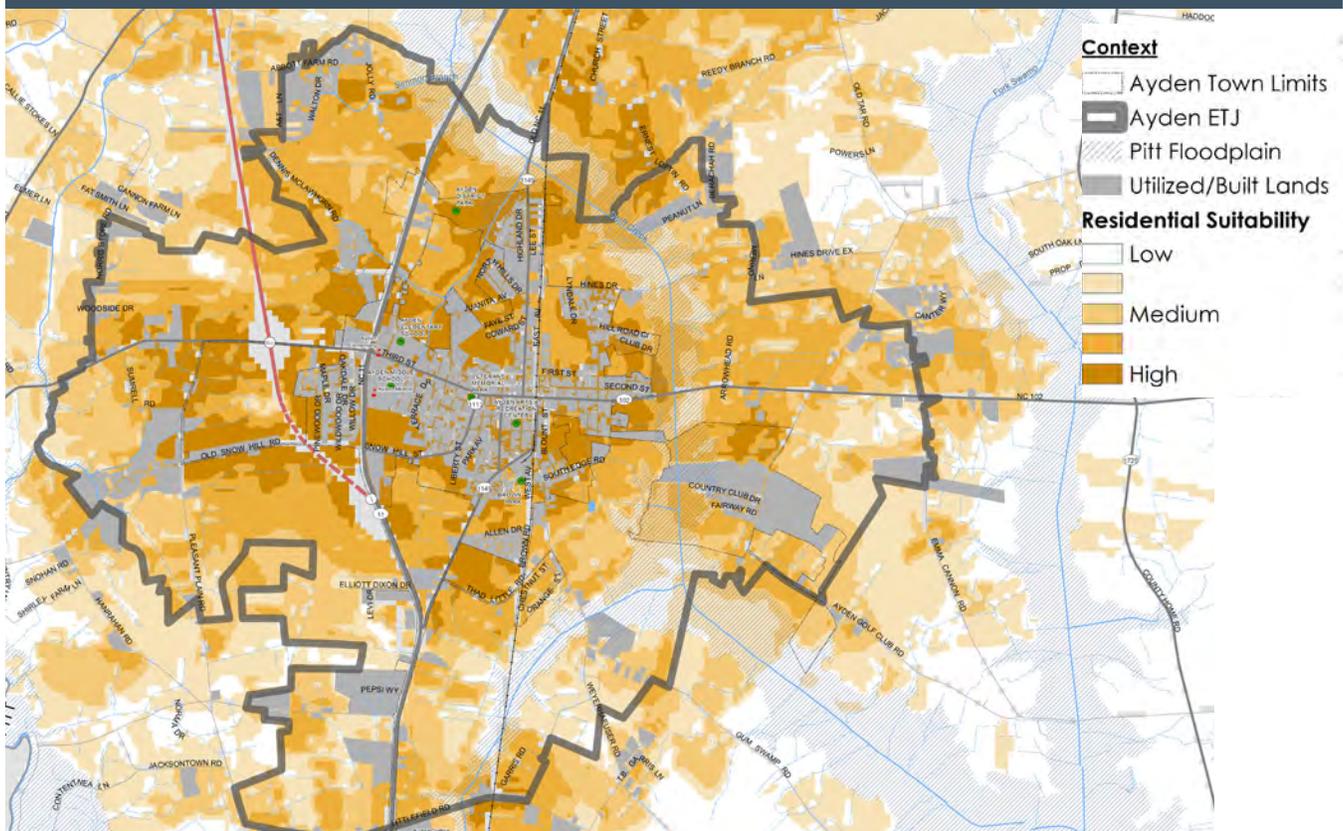
Downtown also shows opportunity for commercial infill development as there are several parcels in downtown that are highly suitable for commercial uses. Other areas well-suited for commercial uses are west of downtown and along Hwy 11.

Future industrial development is best suited in south Ayden, the area surrounding the existing Ayden District Park, and near the future interchange with the Southwest Bypass.

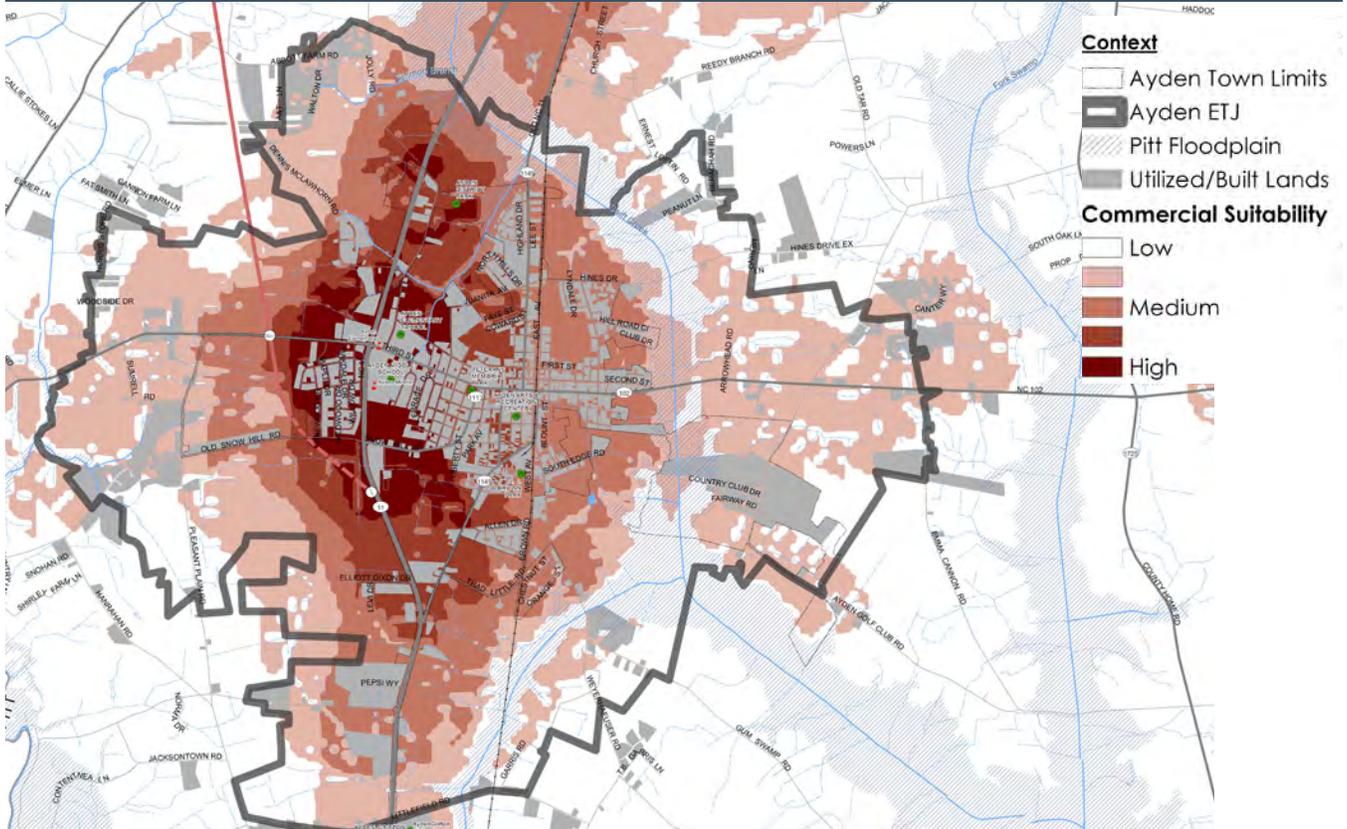
## Land Use Issues and Trends:

- » Protection of agricultural lands and farming operations
- » Residential demand for smaller lots and more diverse housing types near parks, schools, and shopping
- » Desire to enhance downtown, improved walkability and maintaining small-town charm
- » Local support for a more balanced tax base and diversity in land uses

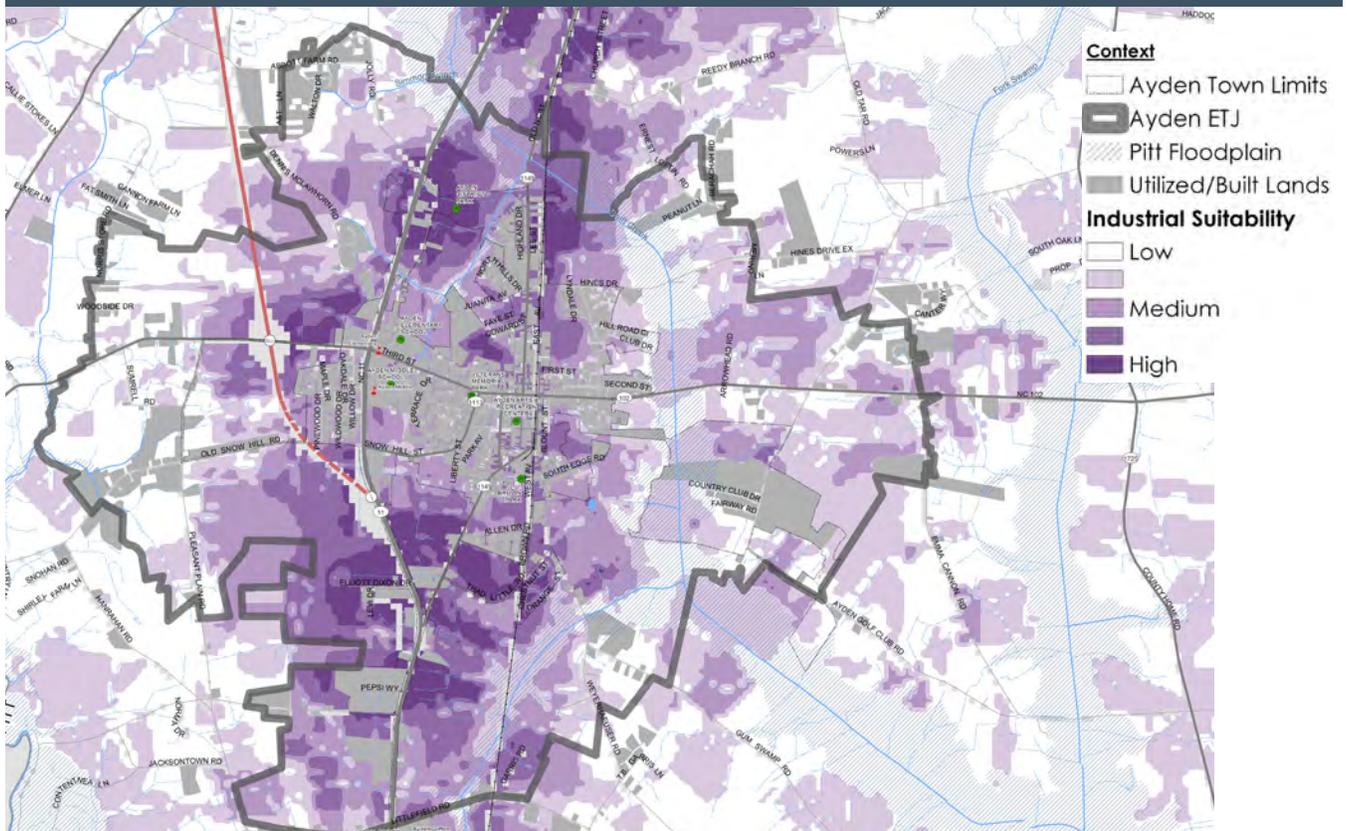
## RESIDENTIAL SUITABILITY



### COMMERCIAL SUITABILITY



### INDUSTRIAL SUITABILITY



# PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The town has a number of strategies outlined in the Ayden Community Vision 2030 Plan to preserve natural resources, address environmentally sensitive areas, increase tree cover, increase opportunities for parks and recreation, connect greenways and open space, and preserve the history and tradition of the community as agricultural in nature.

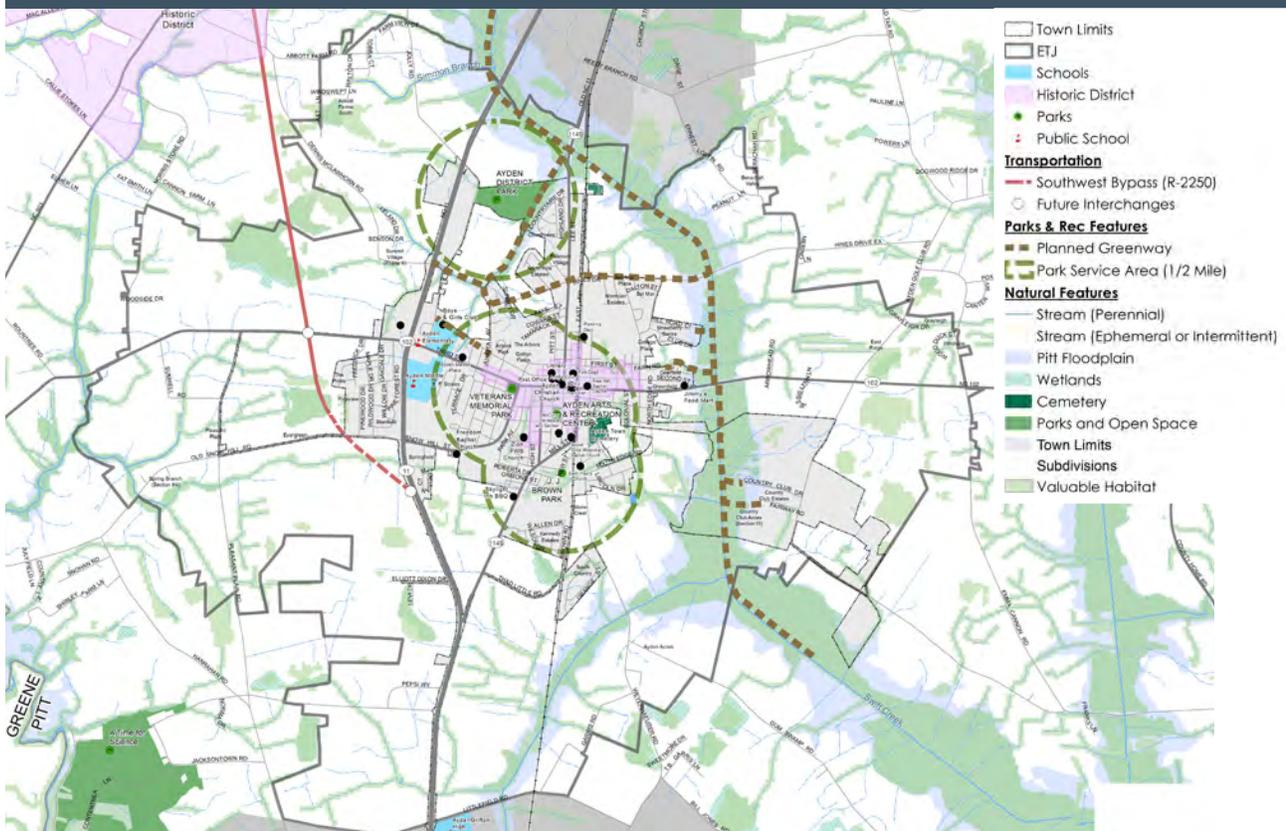
Ayden has several community parks that are prized by the community. Continuing to expand access to parks and open space, through the creation of new parks and trails connecting the community to existing parks will be a priority moving forward.

Protection of agricultural and ecologically rich lands will also be a priority as the community grows.

## PLANNING FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE:

- » A downtown pocket park is budgeted in the 2019 CIP.
- » A greenway and neighborhood bikeway are proposed to connect the Ayden District Park to downtown (MTP ATP).
- » The town desires to focus a trail system along Swift Creek (Strategy 8-4-1, ACV 2030) where majority of valuable habitat is located.
- » The town desires to create a Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan (Strategy 8-4-1, ACV 2030).

### PARK SERVICE AREAS AND VALUABLE HABITAT



## KEY STATS



**2,059 ACRES**  
OF VALUABLE HABITAT IN AYDEN\*

\* DATA FROM NC DNCR



**3**

PARKS IN THE TOWN OF  
AYDEN



**58**

ACRES OF PARKS

## GREENWAYS AND SIDEWALKS

8.5 MILES  
OF EXISTING  
SIDEWALKS

7.4 MILES  
OF GREENWAYS AND  
TRAILS PLANNED TO  
CONNECT SCHOOLS  
AND PARKS



SOURCE: PITT COUNTY GIS DATA, PITT COUNTY 2005 GREENWAY PLAN

## PARK ACCESS

### ACCESS TO PARKS IN AYDEN

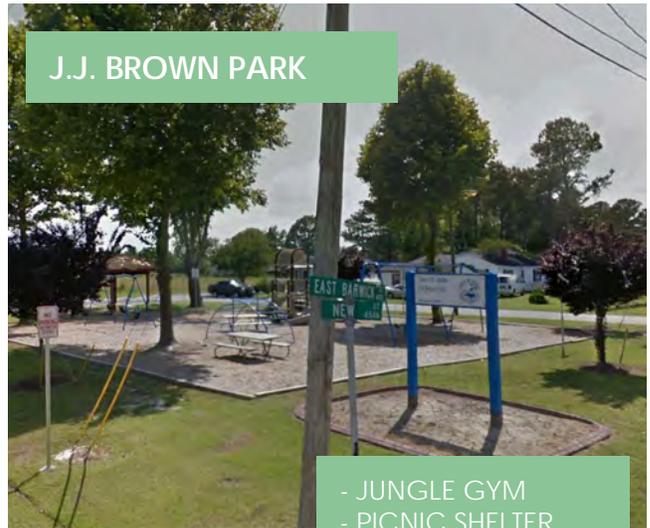
	NUMBER WITHIN AYDEN PLANNING JURISDICTION	% OF TOTAL
POPULATION WITHIN 1/2 MILE	3,484	56%
HOMES WITHIN 1/2 MILE	1,706	70%

### VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK



- 4 TENNIS COURTS
- GRASS FIELD
- JUNGLE GYM
- PICNIC SHELTER
- INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

### J.J. BROWN PARK



- JUNGLE GYM
- PICNIC SHELTER

### AYDEN DISTRICT PARK



- SPLASH PAD
- JUNGLE GYM
- BOCCE BALL
- HORSESHOES
- DISC GOLF

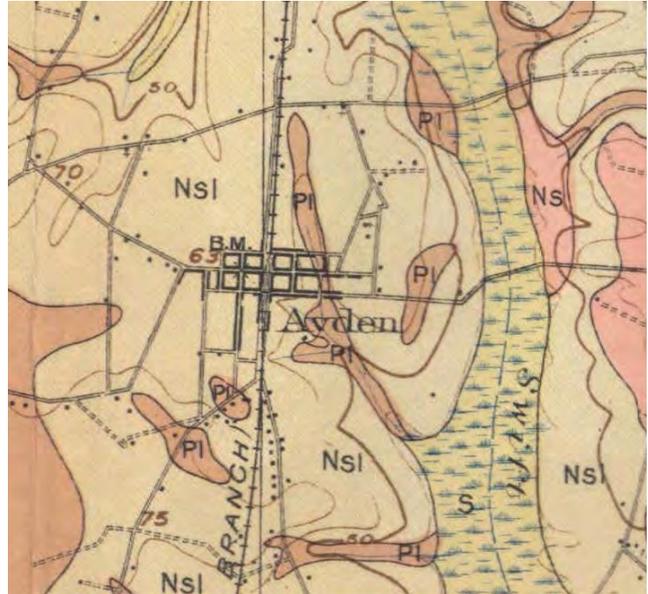
## CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

### History Brief

In 1891, William Henry Harris decided a portion of his farm in the southern part of what is now Pitt County would make a great place to live if only it had a railroad depot. After Harris convinced the Atlantic Coast Line of the same, a 40-acre parcel of his land was divided into residential lots surrounding the depot to create “Harristown”. Within the next several years, lots were sold, and homes were built. Businesses began to spring up to support the new residents, and on February 3, 1891, the town was incorporated as “Ayden”. Within a few years, the Carolina Christian College and the Free Will Baptist Seminary were established. The Ayden municipal power plant supplied full-time electricity by 1919. In 1922, the Mutual Building and Loan Association of Ayden was organized to help families obtain mortgages to build homes in Ayden.

The Town experienced tough times during the Great Depression, but after World War II, the town began the long period of prosperity that continues today. To accommodate this growth, commercial, cultural, religious, and other establishments have developed within and around Ayden. Medical clinics, recreation programs and parks, churches, restaurants, and other public and private facilities have emerged and expanded.

Today, Ayden encompasses over three square miles and is home to approximately 5,000 residents. The community is continuing to prepare itself for new growth as Pitt County continues to develop as a major industrial and economic center for eastern North Carolina. While focusing on progressive planning and growth management for the future, Ayden, home of the annual Ayden Collard Festival, is



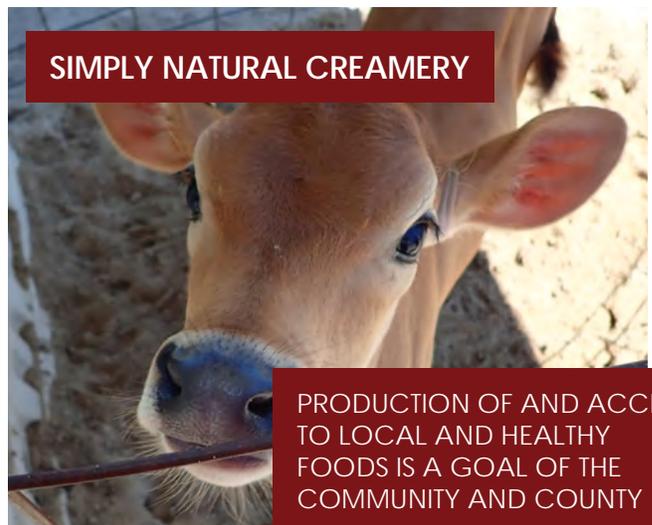
1910 Map of Downtown Ayden

SOURCE: AYDEN HISTORICAL AND ARTS SOCIETY

striving to maintain the character and quality for which the town has become known – a community of small town atmosphere with big city convenience.

### Agricultural Heritage

Much of the land surrounding downtown is comprised of active farms and agricultural lands. The Census of Agriculture for Pitt County reported 391 farms with an average size of 439 acres in 2012, a 10% decrease



**SIMPLY NATURAL CREAMERY**

**PRODUCTION OF AND ACCESS TO LOCAL AND HEALTHY FOODS IS A GOAL OF THE COMMUNITY AND COUNTY**

since 2007. The town's pride in its agricultural heritage is on full display every year during the Ayden Collard Festival in September and the "Kings of Q" BBQ Festival in May. Strategies to preserve this agricultural community and identity will be needed as the community grows and the farming economy changes.

## Downtown

Downtown continues to be the center of community and culture in Ayden. Over the past few decades, downtown Ayden has experienced both private and public reinvestment and downtown is increasingly re-emerging as a destination. Quilt Lizzy will be opening a location in downtown, providing both employment opportunities and a visitor attraction.

With several blocks of in-tact historic building facades and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, downtown Ayden has a distinct sense of place and represents a major asset to the future development of town. While a handful of the historic buildings in downtown have undergone adaptive reuse and now house



THE AYDEN COLLARD FESTIVAL BEGIN IN 1975. JUST LIKE THE BBQ FESTIVAL, THE COLLARD FESTIVAL IS A REGIONAL EVENT THAT DRAWS LARGE CROWDS TO DOWNTOWN.

locally-owned eateries and entertainment venues, many of historic structures are vacant or under-occupied. Continued expansion of the retail and restaurant offerings downtown and a continued emphasis on programming and special events will solidify downtown's position as the heart of the Ayden community.



Ayden's historic fire station was built in the heart of downtown in 1891. Today, the Fire Department is housed in an adjacent building with more modern amenities, and the historic part is used by a local organization.



## PLAN ASSESSMENT

This assessment of Ayden’s adopted plans is intended to inform the development of the current Land Use Plan & Development Regulations Update. This analysis and the relevant sections of the included plans will help shape discussion with the steering committee and the public and inform any recommendations generated during the plan update process.

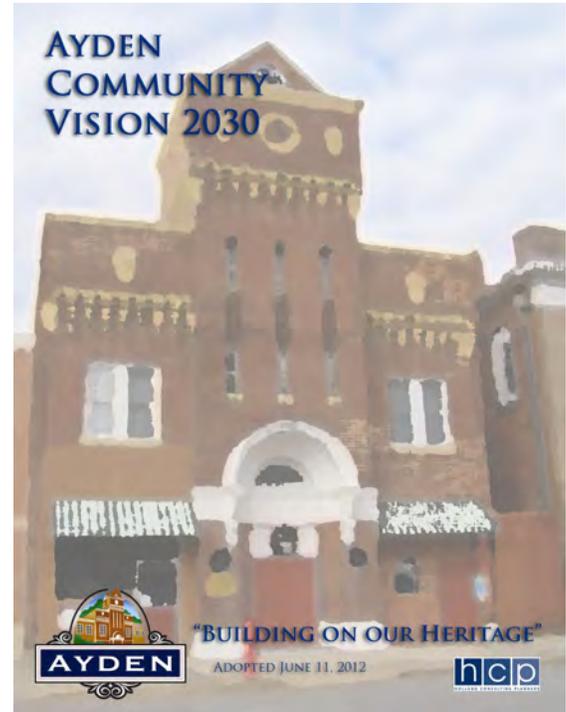
### Comprehensive Plan

The Ayden Community Vision 2030 “Building on our Heritage” plan was adopted in 2012. This plan builds on the Town’s original comprehensive plan, which was adopted in 1991 and updated in 1996. Guided by a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and featuring extensive community engagement, the plan contains sixteen themes.

The plan’s implementation chapter contains a list of the actions needed to successfully implement that plan. However, the actions are primarily assigned to elected and appointed bodies, rather than to Town staff who have the capacity to work on these items. A yearly update on implementation progress and a clarification and evaluation of priorities and specific recommendations will help the Town determine if the goals set are realistic, and whether they need to be revised and/or reassigned to further the goal of successful plan implementation.

The following will be addressed in the update to the Future Land Use Map:

- » Southwest Bypass alignment, interchanges and location of the district park factored into the land use recommendations
- » More descriptive land use classes and increased clarity in policies for land use
- » Additional specification on types of residential development and intensity of development
- » Flexibility in some commercial areas
- » Consideration for voluntary annexation



## Downtown Concepts (2006)

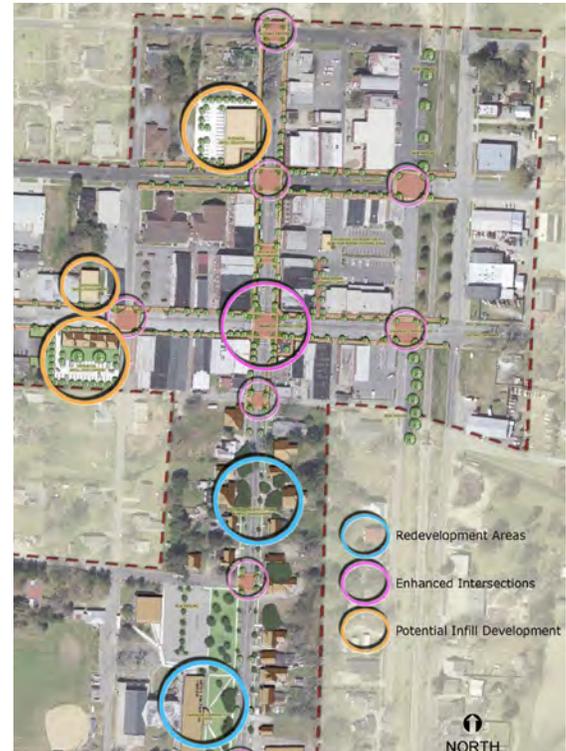
During a three-day charrette, a plan for a nearly seven block area was developed for downtown Ayden. Residents and business owners treasure the architectural character, streetscape environment, and atmosphere of downtown, but they want more variety and access to stores and restaurants, in addition to better landscaping and maintenance. Generally, recommendations focus on improvements to appearance and sustaining a traditional downtown mix of uses. Some of the proposed projects may have been aspirational, especially with the Great Recession starting two years after this plan was completed. The graphics and ideas are compelling, and the plan has sparked creativity and investment in the years since its creation.

Progress on action items within the plan include:

- » Additional parking at the Recreation Center, while still retaining a large greenspace on the corner of Lee St. and W 5th St.
- » Renovations to Recreation Center (CDBG funds) and new playground
- » Continued support from the façade grant program to enhance downtown building appearance. Grants to date include Bum's Restaurant, Salon 535, and others.
- » Painted crosswalks installed at 2nd and 3rd Streets on Lee St. and West Ave.
- » Care given to the installation and maintenance of street furniture and landscaping planters.

Outstanding items in the plan include:

- » A landscaped pedestrian alley identified as a priority improvement to connect Lee St. to the parking lot behind Town Hall.
- » Several intersections did not receive improvements and some elements to enhance intersections, including curb extensions to reduce pedestrian crossing distance
- » Lee St. Gateway improvements - many vacant and underutilized properties remain



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

- » Recommendations for lighting enhancements, landscaping and trees

### Zoning Map (2016)

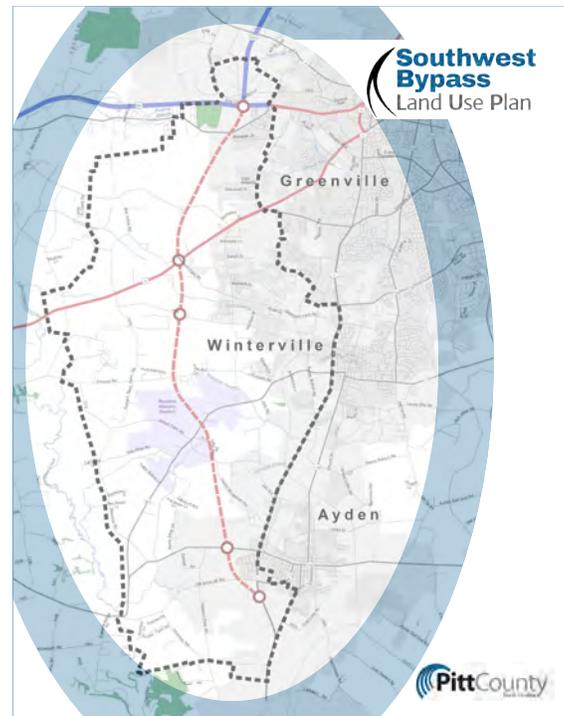
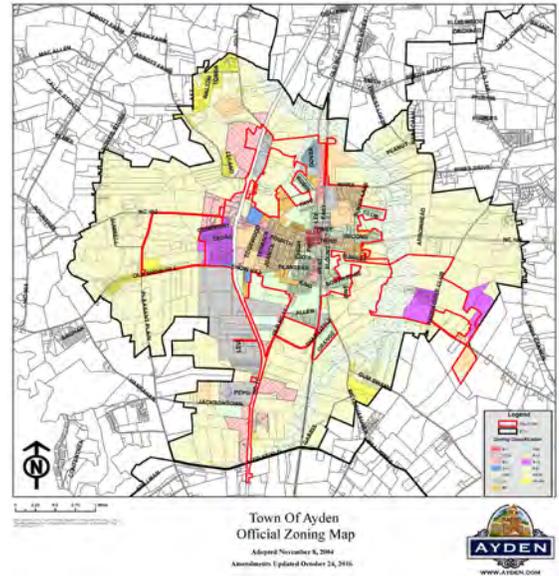
Ayden’s existing Zoning Map has 13 land use classifications. These zoning categories are each associated with development regulations related to land use, buffers, open space and circulation. The future land use map adopted as part of the Land Use Plan guides elected officials in decision making as they update the zoning map through staff-initiated townwide rezonings or privately-initiated individual parcel rezoning applications.

### Southwest Bypass

The Southwest Bypass will be a four-lane median divided highway connecting the west side of Ayden to Highway 264 on the west side of Greenville. It is intended to improve travel time along US265/NC11 corridor. The impacts of growth along the corridor are considered in the plan through considerations for future land use, character of development, and intensity within the study area. Ayden’s footprint totals over 17% of the study area. Character areas identified in Ayden include a mixed-use development pattern around the future NC 102 interchange and traditional neighborhood development to the south and west of the downtown adjacent to the interchange with NC11. These character areas serve as a guide for rezonings and infrastructure investment decisions. In addition, the plan looks at policy changes, aesthetics, open space and creation, and future infrastructure and transportation needs. The Ayden Land Use Plan builds on groundwork laid by the recommendations in this plan.

### Greenville Urban Area MPO Active Transportation Plan

This is a multi-jurisdictional active transportation plan to enhance connectivity, equity, health, safety, and livability, while also having a positive impact on the environment and economy. Through multiple public input opportunities and committee meetings, this plan





# VISION AND GOALS

## VISION

A community vision is a manifestation of a community's desired future. During the development of the Land Use Plan, the public and Steering Committee were engaged to identify their overarching purpose and core values, which were used to form a shared vision statement. To inform activities, direct limited bandwidth, and to make informed land use decisions regarding sensitive community resources, the Ayden Land Use Plan defines a vision and set of goals for the Town. This vision should be used to define strategic priorities to provide decision-making and budgetary direction.

*“Ayden is a small town on the rise. The town is characterized by a strong sense of community, a vibrant and historic downtown, new neighborhoods, a network of parks, and quality connections to nearby communities. By growing together, the Town will stay true to its roots as it expands its housing and employment options and strategically conserves farmland and its natural and cultural heritage.”*

*- Town Vision Statement*

TOWN OF AYDEN

3



INCORPORATED 1891



## GOALS

The following is a set of community goals developed to guide future actions. It is based upon background information, the previous land use plan, and community feedback obtained during the public input portion of the plan process:

1

### Land Use and Community Character

Ayden is a community shaped by its historic downtown and agricultural roots. The Town will accommodate a range of housing options, new commercial and economic development, and maintain community character through development design.

2

### Housing and Neighborhoods

Ayden takes pride in and maintains its neighborhoods, which will be well-served by a network of parks and transportation choices. Ayden will offer a range of housing options that build on the diversity of the community and allow people to both raise a family and age in place, all while enjoying the small-town charm that makes Ayden unique.

3

### Parks and Natural Resources

Ayden prioritizes the preservation of the natural environment. By protecting the floodplain, tree canopy, and farmlands, Ayden will build a sustainable community while staying true to its agricultural heritage. A connected system of parks connects Ayden's neighborhoods to nature and to one another and encourages a healthy lifestyle for all of its citizens.



*“The things I value most about Ayden are the small-town feel, the green space, and the walkability”*

*-Survey Response*

4

## Transportation and Infrastructure

Ayden's connected network of multimodal transportation facilities supports job growth, neighborhood connections, accessibility, and active lifestyles. Ayden's utility systems are reliable and support future growth in areas appropriate for development.

5

## Economic and Community Development

Downtown Ayden is the cultural and commercial heart of the town, with historic buildings activated by local businesses. Ayden features a well-educated population that is poised to take advantage of job growth and entrepreneurial spirit and build on its connection to the region. Ayden's services are community-focused and build on the diverse needs of community members.



Based on survey responses, the downtown was the biggest concern for Ayden's future. The highest priorities for downtown Ayden centered around commercial areas - creating new shops, businesses and restaurants and also renovating and maintaining the existing buildings.

# PLAN ELEMENTS

*“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now”*

*-Alan Lakein*

## SIX PLAN ELEMENTS

The Ayden Land Use Plan recommendations coalesce around thematic goals introduced in Chapter 2. Each element contains strategies for implementing the thematic goals and are by nature interrelated. The six plan elements are:

- » Land Use and Community Character
- » Economic and Community Development
- » Housing and Neighborhoods
- » Parks and Open Space
- » Transportation and Infrastructure



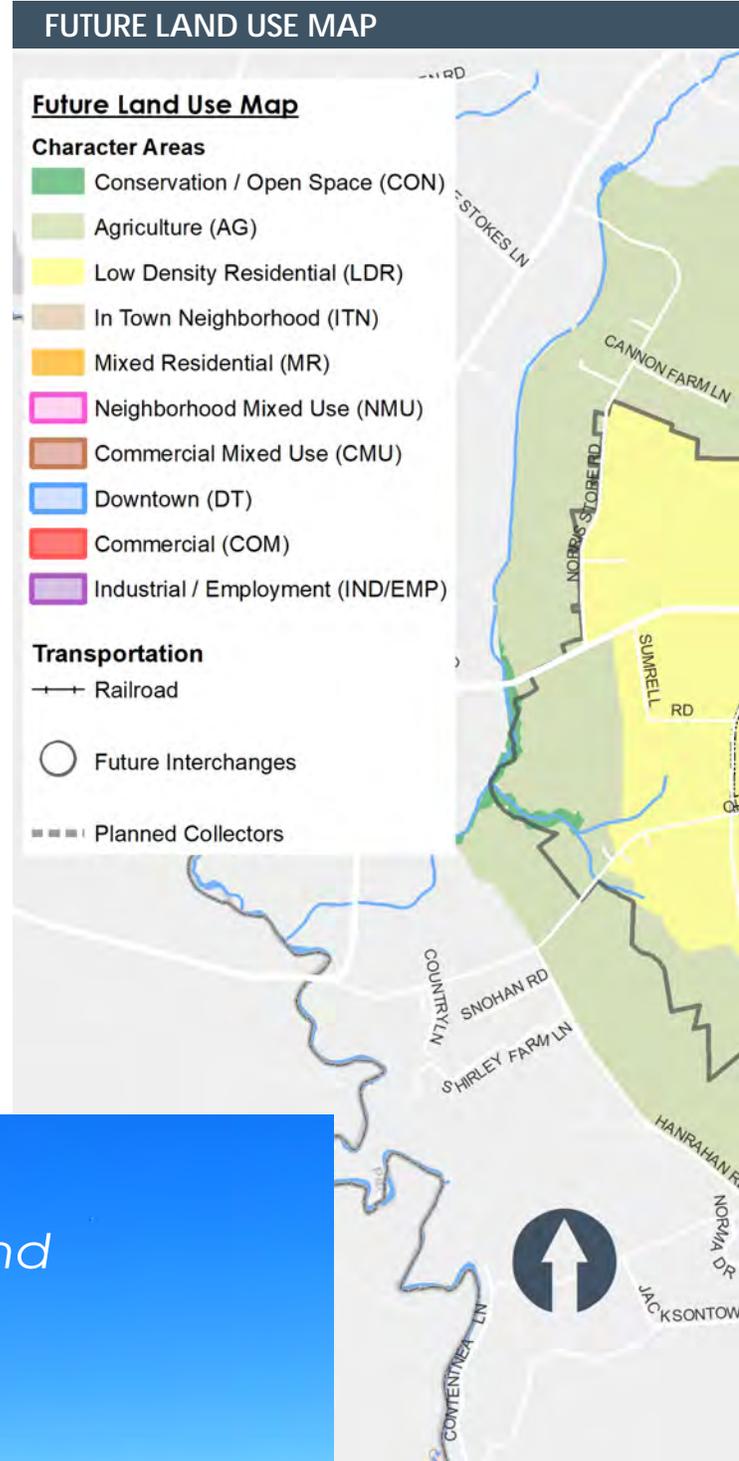
4

AYDEN  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOL

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## Future Land Use

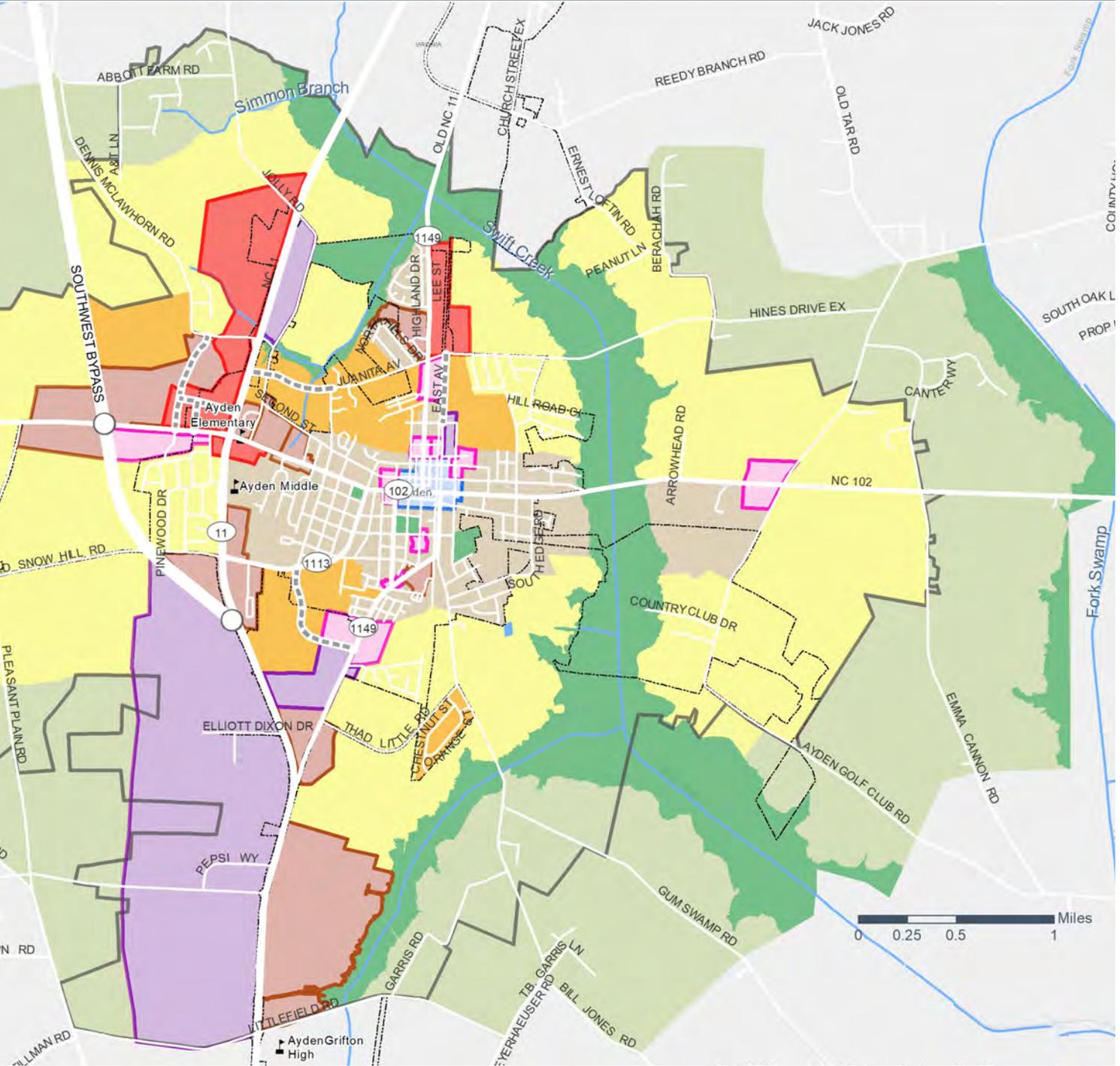
The Town of Ayden’s Land Use Plan Map includes ten separate land use categories. Included in these ten categories are three residential categories of varying densities, three commercial and commercial mixed-use categories, and one category for each of the following: agriculture, conservation/open space, downtown, and industrial. The future land use map depicts the locations of the land use categories. Descriptions below specify the predominant uses and development design characteristics for each of the land use categories. Appropriate zoning districts for each future land use categories are listed as are areas where existing zoning districts may need to be adjusted or augmented to accomplish goals of the Plan.



*“If you don’t know where you’re going, you might end up someplace else”*

*-Yogi Berra*





### Future Land Use Categories

The following land use categories apply to the Future Land Use Map on the previous page:



#### CON – Conservation/Open Space

These areas are typically characterized by sensitive lands deemed inappropriate for development due to physical or environmental constraints, high flood risk, presence of existing parkland, or potential for future reservation of open space. They can incorporate passive or active recreational facilities such as sports fields, shelters, parking lots, and/or trails and greenways.



#### AG- Agriculture

These areas are devoted to agricultural uses which can include forestry, crop production, livestock rearing, and pastureland. Residential uses are generally very low density (< 1 dwelling unit per acre on average) due to lack of sewer service and sparse road network. Policy recommendations that apply to these areas are focused on restricting the size and density of subdivisions in order to reduce conflict with agricultural operations and established rural residential homesites.



#### LDR - Low Density Residential

These areas are comprised of single-family homes with densities ranging from 1 to 3 dwelling units an acre. New development without access to sewer should be at lower densities, actual lot size will vary based on quality of soils.



#### ITN – In-Town Neighborhood

These compact neighborhoods are defined by small-lot single-family development and a pedestrian-scale and well-connected street grid. Preservation of existing homes is a priority, and infill development should be sympathetic in scale and design to the surrounding historic character. New homes should have building massing and setbacks similar to existing homes on the street adjacent and across from the development. Side loaded and alley-loaded homes are common. Frontages typically include on-street parking, street trees and sidewalks. New attached residential, which may include duplexes, triplexes or quadplexes, should be designed to resemble the design and scale of existing single-family structures. Home-based businesses and garage apartments as accessory uses are allowed if performance-based criteria are met.



#### MR- Mixed Residential

These areas contain a mix of housing types on small lots in walkable neighborhoods with a density of 3 to 8 dwelling units per acre and are intended to accommodate a variety of age groups and lifestyle preferences. Patio homes, small lot cottage homes, townhomes, and small-scale garden apartments may be featured within this district. These areas should include small blocks, a defined center oriented around civic uses or greenspace, and vehicular and pedestrian connections to surrounding development.



## DT- Downtown

Downtown Ayden is meant to function as the cultural and economic heart of the Town. This area contains a horizontal and vertical mix of uses including retail, restaurants, service, office, and residential uses. First floor uses are primarily retail, restaurants, and services. Upper floor uses are primarily office and residential. Some small-scale auto-repair and craftsman workshops that are pedestrian in scale and orientation are present. Multi-story buildings with small setbacks are common. Large sidewalks separated from the roads by parallel parking are defining features of the streetscape. Surface parking lots are primarily on the side or rear of buildings and the interiors of blocks. Shared parking is common.



## NMU - Neighborhood Mixed Use

These areas are comprised of small-scale non-residential uses on entry corridors that are compatible in scale, design, and use with the surrounding neighborhoods. Typical uses include offices, restaurants, and retail. Auto-oriented uses are discouraged. Patio homes and attached residential including townhomes, duplexes, and quadplexes may be part of planned developments and infill in these areas.



## CMU - Commercial Mixed Use

These areas function as activity centers on major streets and thoroughfares incorporating commercial retail and office, light industrial and institutional uses to serve the community. Residential single and multifamily development of medium to high densities may be vertically or horizontally integrated with the commercial uses.



## COM - Commercial

These areas are comprised primarily of community and regional scale commercial development such as retailers, restaurants, offices, and service uses. All such uses should be located along major corridors and concentrated at key intersections. New development should have access to multiple streets and include landscaped frontages, buffers between adjacent development and interior drives with connections to adjacent parcels.



## IND - Industrial

These areas contain employment-generating industrial uses such as warehouses, research and development, light manufacturing, and multi-tenant flex spaces and should be located in areas with highway access.

## INST-Institutional Uses (Not Shown)

Institutional uses including schools, government buildings, and churches may occur in a number of zoning districts and are not shown on the future land use map.

## LAND USE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

**LU-1** Encourage a development pattern that is consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

- **Strategy LU-1.A** Base rezoning decisions on consistency with this plan and encourage development design that fits the applicable character area.
- **Strategy LU-1.B** Regularly update the Future Land Use Plan.
- **Strategy LU-1.C** Amend the Future Land Use Plan to reflect rezonings that are not consistent with the plan.
- **Strategy LU-1.D** Update the Future Land Use Plan every 5 years.

**LU-2** Encourage a diverse tax base that includes employment generating industrial and commercial land uses.

- **Strategy LU-2.A** Encourage the continued investment in and expansion of the industrial park on the southern side of Ayden west of NC 11 in order to take advantage of the new access to the Greenville Southwest Bypass.
- **Strategy LU-2.B** Encourage the clustering of commercial development at major intersections and where there are compatible land uses and infrastructure availability.

### Diversifying the Tax Base:

- » Currently less than 2% of the land area in the Town of Ayden is commercial, industrial or office. Studies show that non-residential land uses such as commercial or agriculture contribute more in taxes than they consume in services such as schools, emergency services and social services (Source: Cost of Community Services in Franklin County, 2009). Non-residential development can also help create jobs for local residents and help keep residential tax rates low.



### **LU-3** Accommodate residential growth while protecting agricultural operations and other natural resources.

- **Strategy LU-3.A** Discourage utility extensions and dense residential growth in and near the Agricultural Area identified on the Future Land Use Plan.
- **Strategy LU-3.B** Encourage the clustering of residential uses away from active farmland and natural resources to minimize the adverse impacts of new neighborhoods.

### **LU-4** Ensure that the community's appearance is attractive for residents and visitors. Appearance and character are an important component of economic development.

- **Strategy LU-4.A** Continue to emphasize the importance of community appearance and continue efforts to improve and beautify town parks, facilities, and properties.
- **Strategy LU-4.B** Continue to enforce minimum housing ordinances and maintenance components of the development regulations to ensure that existing development is kept in good repair.



AGRICULTURE IS A SIGNIFICANT DRIVER OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY. FARMS IN PITT COUNTY IN 2017 GENERATED A TOTAL OF \$242 MILLION IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS (SOURCE: 2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE).

## PLAN ELEMENTS

- **Strategy LU-4.C** Require new subdivisions that are served by Ayden utilities to meet town development standards. Basic subdivision design standards should include:

- » Landscaping standards
- » Street and/or yard trees
- » Sidewalks, at a minimum on one side of streets in residential areas and on both sides of public streets for commercial properties
- » Stormwater requirements that seek to replicate predevelopment runoff levels
- » Open space in the form of parks, greenways, and natural areas

- **Strategy LU-4.D** Update street standards that contains specific regulations and recommendations for types of roadway corridors within the community.

- **Strategy LU-4.E** Develop a Gateway Improvement Plan that will identify the community's primary gateways and outline a uniform signage, lighting, and landscape design for gateways.

## LU-5 Preserve and enhance the Town's history and heritage.

- **Strategy LU-5.A** Study the creation of Local Historic District Commission and historic overlay zoning districts with reasonable standards to provide for the protection of the community's historic housing and building stock.

- **Strategy LU-5.B** Create design standards for the regulation of building placement and massing, materials and details, and protection of historic structures.



NEW RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS IN TOWN LIMITS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH ACCESS TO UTILITIES SHOULD MEET BASIC DESIGN STANDARDS INCLUDING SIDEWALKS, STREET OR YARD TREES AND OTHER LANDSCAPING AND STORMWATER STANDARDS

- **Strategy LU-5.C** Work with partners (public and private) to support and enhance the Ayden History Museum currently located within the town-owned Dixon Building at Second and Blount streets.

- **Strategy LU-5.D** Encourage development design that reinforces historic character and takes advantage of redevelopment opportunities.

- » Create two tiers of Downtown land uses, a Downtown Core and a transition area. The creation of a new Neighborhood Mixed Use zoning district could be used in a transition area
  - This new district could limit the types and scale of uses to provide a transition between Downtown and more intense commercial areas to neighborhoods

- **Strategy LU-5.E** Encourage infill and reuse in the Downtown Core that will feature historic and infill multi-story structures with entrances directly connected to the sidewalk.

- » On-site parking should not be required and when it is present will be to the rear of the property. The primary focus is on the pedestrian experience, with the highest level of building detail at the ground level.

- **Strategy LU-5.F** Encourage infill and redevelopment in Neighborhood Mixed Use areas in the form of pedestrian-friendly buildings and neighborhoods that are compatible with surroundings.

- » Parking should be located to the side or rear, and pedestrian-oriented buildings should have high quality building materials, transparent facades, landscaping and wide sidewalks.



LOCAL HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICTS CAN AID TOWNS IN PROTECTING THE UNIQUE HISTORIC FABRIC OF A COMMUNITY BY PROVIDING TAX BENEFITS FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS, AND ZONING FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOW NEW DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

## PLAN ELEMENTS

- » These areas could include residential neighborhoods and infill housing on vacant lots as well as non-residential uses at a scale that is complimentary to adjacent neighborhoods.
- » Non-residential uses should be designed to minimize impact on adjacent residential uses by utilizing screening, landscape buffers and careful site layout and lighting choices.

### **LU-6** Create a downtown public realm that encourages people to visit, explore, and enjoy the downtown experience.

- **Strategy LU-6.A** Develop a Streetscape Master Plan for 2nd St., 3rd St., and Lee St. and/or other key corridors
  - » Create attractive multimodal corridors that serve as gateways for the community.
  - » Determine necessary roadway improvements, pedestrian enhancements, opportunities for street trees, lighting, and furnishing upfits.
  - » Pursue state funding and cooperation with the development community to implement the plan.
- **Strategy LU-6.B** Coordinate to ensure that sufficient public parking (on-street and off-street parking lots) is available to serve the Downtown District.
- **Strategy LU-6.C** Evaluate

cross-streets and railroad frontage for opportunities to improve or add pedestrian facilities and add on-street parking and/or street trees.

- **Strategy LU-6.D** Actively seek grant funding to implement improvements to downtown.
- **Strategy LU-6.E** Continue to address building vacancies in the Downtown Area
  - » Identify vacant buildings and work with property owners to find new tenants and/or to fund necessary building repairs or upfits

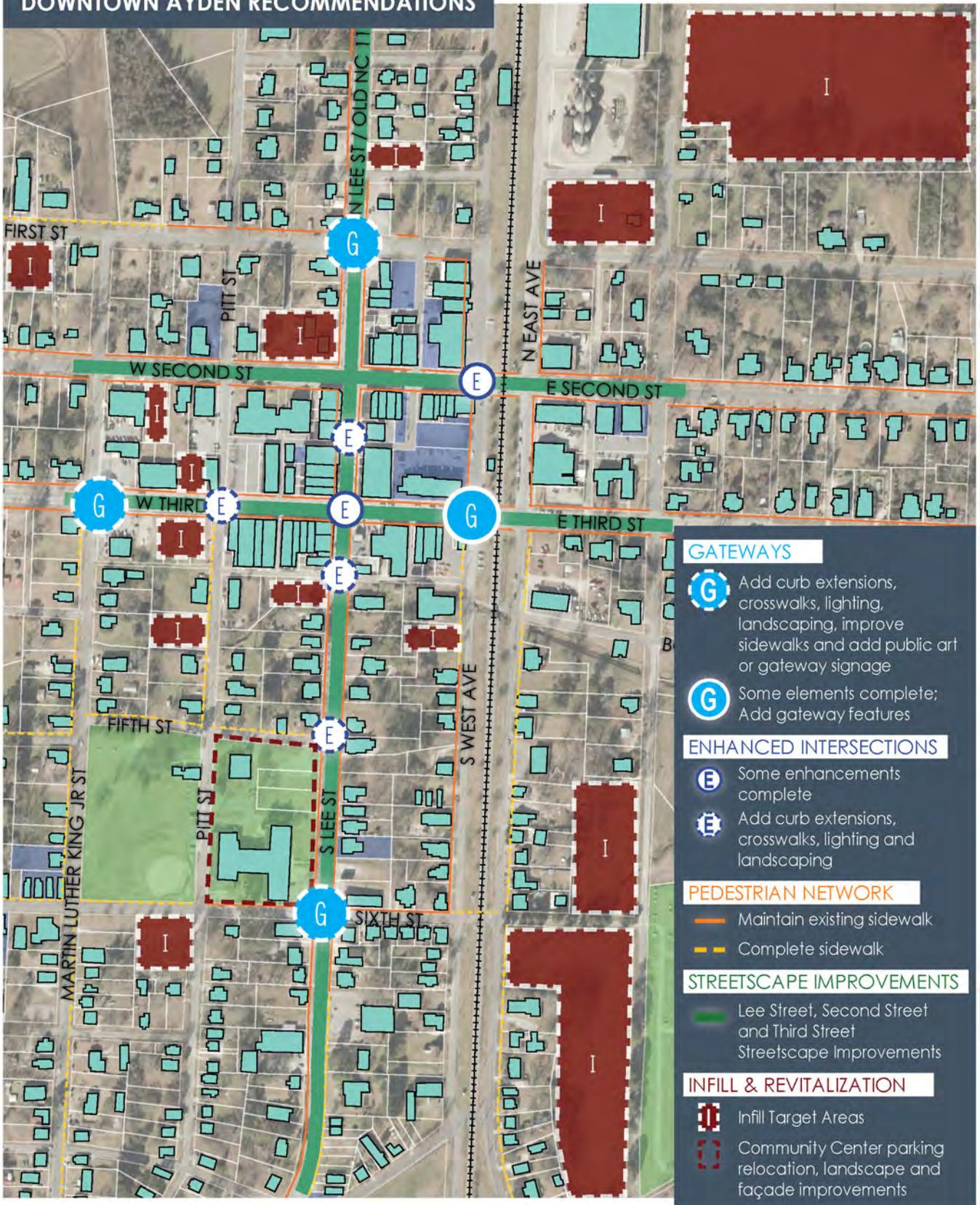
### **LU-7** Encourage uses that activate downtown 18 hours a day, and on weekends as well as weekdays.

- **Strategy LU-7.A** Encourage the development of upper-floor residences. This will include identifying grants, tax credits, and other funding sources to support property owners that desire to develop such residences and ensuring that development regulations continue to allow them by-right.
- **Strategy LU-7.B** Coordinate business recruitment with the Chamber of Commerce and Town in a way that builds on existing businesses, gaps in activity, and priorities highly visible vacant structures.

#### **Downtown Parking:**

The Ayden Main Street Committee has identified parking as a priority for downtown's success. Efficient use of on-street parking and signage and maintenance of off-street parking lots is a recommended first step before the creation of new off-street facilities.

## DOWNTOWN AYDEN RECOMMENDATIONS



### GATEWAYS

- G** Add curb extensions, crosswalks, lighting, landscaping, improve sidewalks and add public art or gateway signage
- G** Some elements complete; Add gateway features

### ENHANCED INTERSECTIONS

- E** Some enhancements complete
- E** Add curb extensions, crosswalks, lighting and landscaping

### PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- Maintain existing sidewalk
- Complete sidewalk

### STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

- Lee Street, Second Street and Third Street Streetscape Improvements

### INFILL & REVITALIZATION

- I** Infill Target Areas
- I** Community Center parking relocation, landscape and façade improvements

# ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**ECD-1** Provide an atmosphere which is attractive to prospective industries/businesses.

- **Strategy ECD-1.A** Provide utilities and other necessary infrastructure at the lowest possible rate and user fees while adequately budgeting for maintenance and cost recovery of capital projects.
- **Strategy ECD-1.B** Regularly review regulatory ordinances and processes to identify ways to expedite the development process for new and expanding businesses.
- **Strategy ECD-1.C** Cooperate with/support the Pitt County Development Commission’s efforts to recruit businesses to the Ayden area.
- **Strategy ECD-1.D** Annually conduct a local business forum to discuss how the Town may aid in improving the local business environment.

**ECD-2** Encourage land use patterns which are conducive to business development.

- **Strategy ECD-2.A** Discourage conflicting land uses adjacent to the Town’s industrial parks.
- **Strategy ECD-2.B** Encourage commercial rezoning which is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and which offers development opportunities for new businesses.
- **Strategy ECD-2.C** Maintain a published inventory of existing vacant parcels which are zoned for commercial/industrial development.

**ECD-3** Support the regional agricultural economy as a vital part of the Ayden community.

- **Strategy ECD-3.A** Support efforts to protect local farmland through development of new, diverse markets for local foods and produce, such as additional farmers’ markets, grocery stores, community-supported agriculture programs, farm-to-institution programs, etc.



AYDEN DOWNTOWN FAÇADE GRANT IMPROVEMENTS:

1. CINDERINE’S
2. GWENDY’S GOODIES
3. BUM’S RESTAURANT

- **Strategy ECD-3.B** Support development of local food processing, wholesale, and distribution facilities to connect local agriculture to markets such as retailers, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.
- **Strategy ECD-3.C** Work with the Pitt County Development Commission, Greenville-ENC Alliance and other entities to utilize economic development incentives to attract and retain local food processing, wholesale, and distribution firms.

## ECD-4 Encourage entrepreneurial/small business development as an essential part of the Ayden economy.

- **Strategy ECD-4.A** Work with existing agencies/schools to establish a business incubator center in Ayden.
- **Strategy ECD-4.B** Maintain an inventory of support programs available at the local, state, and federal level which may aid small business development, including potential funding assistance.
- **Strategy ECD-4.C** Work with the Ayden Chamber of Commerce to annually recognize the importance of small business to the Ayden community.
- **Strategy ECD-4.D** Coordinate with local businesses on events and programming that encourage patronage of local businesses.
  - » The BOLT program which stands for Businesses Open Late on Thursdays is a recent example of an event coordinated by the Ayden Main Street Program and the Chamber of Commerce that encourages the support of local businesses.



AYDEN'S AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE CAN BE SEEN AT THE ANNUAL COLLARD FESTIVAL AND TASTED IN THE FAMOUS BARBEQUE AT THE SKYLIGHT INN BBQ RESTAURANT AND AT THE ANNUAL BBQ FESTIVAL IN DOWNTOWN

**ECD-5 Reinforce Downtown Ayden as the cultural and civic center of the community while also offering a diverse array of shopping, dining, office, and cultural amenities.**

- **Strategy ECD-5.A** Continue to support the efforts of the Ayden Main Street Committee.
- **Strategy ECD-5.B** Identify small scale catalytic investments that could build on downtown's identity and experience, such as plantings, murals, signage, and internet presence. Seek partnerships to implement these items frequently to build momentum and excitement for downtown.
- **Strategy ECD-5.C** Facilitate regular coordination between the Town, the Ayden Chamber of Commerce and downtown businesses to identify businesses that are desired for the District.
- **Strategy ECD-5.D** Actively recruit complimentary businesses to locate in the Downtown District.
  - » Based on stakeholder interviews conducted as part of this plan recruitment should focus on restaurants, small scale retail and employment generating uses that support the existing community character.

### PROGRESS ON THE 2006 DOWNTOWN PLAN

Elements accomplished since completion of the plan:

- » Stamped crosswalks at four core downtown intersections
- » Storefront facade updates
- » Replacement of street trees
- » Parallel to angle parking conversion on West St

Elements not accomplished or on hold:

- » Downtown intersection gateways, additional street trees, midblock crosswalks, and many elements of enhanced intersections including curb bump outs and landscaping features
- » Streetscape improvements
- » Appearance design standards
- » Arts & Recreation Center public greenspace, facade improvements and relocated parking
- » Infill development
- » Zoning regulations to preserve Historic District

## **ECD-6** Provide adequate community service facilities.

- **Strategy ECD-6.A** Seek state and federal technical and financial assistance to provide community facilities which are accessible for physically handicapped persons.
- **Strategy ECD-6.B** Provide the Pitt County Board of Education with locational information for all residential development.
- **Strategy ECD-6.C** Support the mission of the Pitt Community College in meeting the educational and job readiness requirements of regional and county residents.
- **Strategy ECD-6.D** Continue to support the efforts of the library to foster the development of a literate and well-informed Ayden population.
- **Strategy ECD-6.E** Continue to support the Town's art community in its efforts to expand cultural opportunities.
- **Strategy ECD-6.F** Support intergovernmental cooperation with the county and area municipalities for the provision of community facilities and services.
- **Strategy ECD-6.G** Support efforts, initiatives, and programs – both public and private – that provide needed new community buildings and facilities or serve to improve existing community buildings and facilities.

## **ECD-7** Ensure that Ayden has a voice on issues of a multi-jurisdictional/regional nature and that the Town is supportive of the positive efforts and initiatives of fellow municipalities and other entities that serve its citizens.

- **Strategy ECD-7.A** Continue to develop and cultivate relationships with legislators at the federal, state, and county levels to ensure that our needs and perspectives are understood and considered.
- **Strategy ECD-7.B** Continue to expand partnerships with outside entities such as the Greenville Urban Area MPO, the Mid East Commission and the Greenville-ENC Alliance to ensure that the community has a voice in issues of regional concern.

# HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

**HN-1** Identify the areas of the community most in need of revitalization (Revitalization Target Areas) and lay the foundation for public and private investment that will improve the living conditions and/or business environment within these areas.

- **Strategy HN-1.A** Identify Revitalization Target Areas and coordinate with residents, stakeholders, the Pitt County Housing Authority and non-profit organizations to develop strategies for these areas. Incorporate recommendations into updates of ordinances, the Land Use Plan and/or new Neighborhood Plans.
- **Strategy HN-1.B** Actively seek funding to implement the recommendations of the Revitalization Strategy.

**HN-2** Encourage and facilitate infill development where houses have been removed in established neighborhoods.

- **Strategy HN-2.A** Develop a comprehensive approach to achieving infill development that addresses each of the following:
  - » Assembling buildable infill lots within existing neighborhoods;
  - » Identifying potential for-profit and non-profit partners to build infill

housing; and

- » Identifying and pursuing state and federal programs that may assist in constructing infill housing.

- **Strategy HN-2.B** Consider revisions to the development regulations that enable infill that reflects the existing historic in-Town Neighborhoods' built character in terms of lot size, setback and building form.

- » Reduced lot sizes
- » Reduced front and side yard setbacks
- » Permit neighborhood-scaled multifamily
- » Encourage alley-loaded parking
- » Restrict scale and setback based on context

**HN-3** Improve the condition of the current housing inventory.

- **Strategy HN-3.A** Continue to enforce the Town's Minimum Housing Code.
- **Strategy HN-3.B** Aggressively pursue state and federal programs available to municipalities that provide funding for housing rehabilitation and, when appropriate, removal.
- **Strategy HN-3.C** Work to identify state and federal programs and other funding sources available to individuals that provide funding for housing rehabilitation/improvement and make the citizens of Ayden aware of these resources.

## HN-4 Ensure a variety of housing opportunities and choices for all ages and income levels.

- **Strategy HN-4.A** Encourage well designed mixed-use developments by evaluating the Town's development regulations to identify any regulatory barriers that may preclude such developments.
- **Strategy HN-4.B** Encourage developments that allow seniors to age in place.
- **Strategy HN-4.C** Seek community development assistance for potential first-time homebuyers.
- **Strategy HN-4.D** Amend development regulations to permit small-lot and small-scale residential types in areas where higher density development is appropriate. This zoning category should provide for additional housing options such as patio homes, cottage courts, and neighborhood-scale multifamily development.

## HN-5 Ensure that cultural diversity is promoted as one of the community's greatest strengths and that the Town solicits a diversity of perspectives on its various boards, commissions, and committees.

- **Strategy HN-5.A** Develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for dispersing information to the public. One component of this SOP will focus on engaging the local churches as a means of providing information to minority populations and soliciting minority applicants for the Town's appointed boards, commissions, and committees. Impacts to the Town's diversity should be considered in decision making.
- **Strategy HN-5.B** Support the efforts of local non-profit organizations to conduct events that celebrate diversity and promote cultural heritage.



INCREASING HOUSING OPTIONS WILL SUPPORT THE SENIOR COMMUNITY AND PROVIDE HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR MODERATE INCOME NEIGHBORS

## PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES

### **PNR-1** Balance development with the preservation of natural resources.

- **Strategy PNR-1.A** Identify priority natural resources, and create standards which aim to protect those resources that meet or exceed State minimum standards.
- **Strategy PNR-1.B** Modify development standards to preserve a certain amount/ percentage of defined natural resources.
  - » Establish usable open space and natural open space requirements based on zoning as percentage of overall new development.
- **Strategy PNR-1.C** Discourage light pollution by requiring or incentivizing full cut-off lights to be used in commercial and industrial developments or subdivisions over a certain size.
  - » A Time for Science nature center is located just west of Ayden and offers nature classes and an onsite planetarium for star-gazing. Requiring or incentivizing “dark sky” lighting in Ayden and surrounding communities will help keep the night sky free of light pollution.

### **PNR-2** Preserve and enhance tree cover.

- **Strategy PNR-2.A** Develop policies and procedures for preserving and enhancing tree cover/canopy including species and location of trees during development.

- **Strategy PNR-2.B** Prioritize the use of native species and canopy tree planting in all streetscape, parks, and community building projects.

### **PNR-3** Preserve the history and tradition of the community as agricultural in nature.

- **Strategy PNR-3.A** Continue support of the Ayden Collard Festival and the Ayden Barbeque Festival.
- **Strategy PNR-3.B** Consider establishment of a Farmers’ Market to operate during the growing season.
- **Strategy PNR-3.C** Support Pitt County’s efforts to protect local farmland through development of new, diverse markets for local foods and produce, such as additional farmers’ markets, grocery stores, community-supported agriculture programs, farm-to institution programs, etc.
- **Strategy PNR-3.D** Support the development of local food processing, wholesale, and distribution facilities to connect local agriculture to markets such as retailers, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.
- **Strategy PNR-3.E** Work with the Pitt County Development Commission to utilize economic development incentives to attract and retain local food processing, wholesale, and distribution firms.
- **Strategy PNR-3.F** Modify zoning regulations to limit development in areas where there are concentrations in working farms and agricultural uses and encourage clustering of development to preserve large tracts of actively farmed lands.

## PNR-4 Provide for and promote an environmentally healthy community.

- **Strategy PNR-4.A** The Town should annually review its regulatory ordinances to identify changes/ improvements which may be made to support an environmentally healthy community.
- **Strategy PNR-4.B** Consider modifications to zoning to protect natural resources including agricultural areas, water quality, wetlands and/or flood prone areas.
- **Strategy PNR-4.C** Annually sponsor an environmental awareness week, including an annual cleanup of public rights-of-way.

## PNR-5 Support a comprehensive recreation program.

- **Strategy PNR-5.A** Continue to emphasize the importance of community appearance and continue efforts to improve and beautify town parks, facilities, and properties
- **Strategy PNR-5.B** Seek grant monies and/or technical assistance to prepare a Comprehensive Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- **Strategy PNR-5.C** Improve equitable access to park and recreation facilities
  - » Continue to promote, and when feasible, develop active and passive recreational facilities for use by citizens.
  - » Pursue all available State and Federal funds to assist with the acquisition, design, construction and maintenance of parks and other

open space areas.

- » Study park needs in underserved areas including potential locations for new neighborhood park sites on the east and west sides of town.

- **Strategy PNR-5.D** Continue to work cooperatively with the Pitt County School System to maximize the use of recreation facilities at public school sites.

- **Strategy PNR-5.E** Work to develop programs aimed at promoting healthy living and wellness in concert with local and regional health providers.

## PNR-6 Provide for and invest in connected greenways, open space areas, land conservation, parks, and access to water resources.

- **Strategy PNR-6.A** Continue the expansion of the District Park

- » Pursue state grants and donations
- » Support budget allocations for improvements

- **Strategy PNR-6.B** Study sidewalk and greenway improvements that would increase access to existing parks.

- » Seek grant monies and/or technical assistance to prepare feasibility studies for priority greenway segments.

- **Strategy PNR-6.C** Support and coordinate land use activities with the 2025 Pitt County Greenway Plan and the Parks and Greenway Recommendations map on page 53.

- **Strategy PNR-6.D** Consider revising development regulations to require the dedication of recreation / open space areas including greenway easements.

## GREENWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Trails and greenways are one of the most popular and highest demanded recreational amenities in North Carolina. The public stressed the need for more trails through and around the county in the 2015 Pitt County Comprehensive Recreation & Park Master Plan Survey Results and a plan to connect greenways to schools and parks within Ayden to the greater Greenville area has been in existence since 2005.

### **District Park Greenway**

Evaluate a feasible route for a greenway connection from the internal trails at District Park and Ayden Middle School with a connection to Ayden Elementary School along the drainage lateral that flows to Swift Creek. A connection to Juanita Ave. is desired to link the greenway with the sidewalk network and Ayden's core neighborhoods. A future phase could link District Park to the Swift Creek Greenway in the North. The estimated greenway project length between the future Swift Creek Greenway and Ayden Middle School with a connection to Ayden Elementary and Juanita Ave. is approximately 2.3 miles. For safety of young trail users, a two-stage trail crossing will be needed at W 3rd St and Ayden Middle School St and a crosswalk upgrade where the trail crosses W 2nd St .and connects with Juanita Ave.

### **Swift Creek Greenway**

Evaluate the feasibility, phasing and cost estimates for the design and construction of a recreational greenway along Swift Creek between Winterville and Ayden. A natural first phase could connect District Park to NC 102 where a trailhead and passive recreation space is proposed.

### **Greenway Connectors**

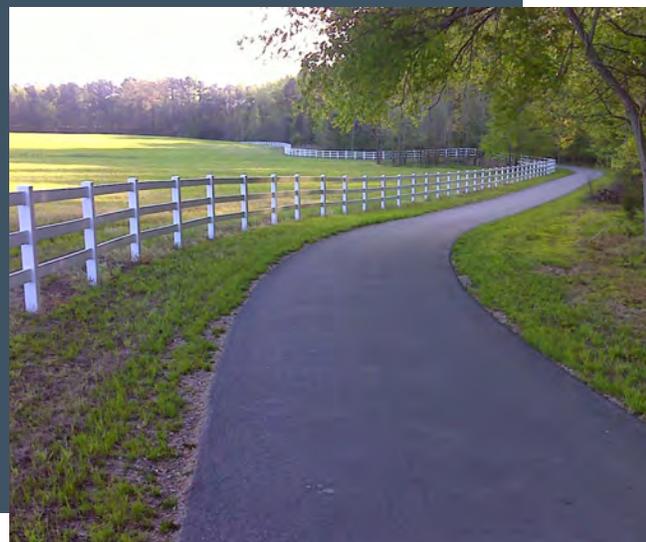
Greenway connections are important to connect trail users to low-stress streets to access origins and destinations within greater Ayden and create links between neighborhoods and off-road recreation and transportation options. Potential Greenway Connectors could include, Hiner Dr., Fawn Dr., Country Club Dr .and Fairway Rd.

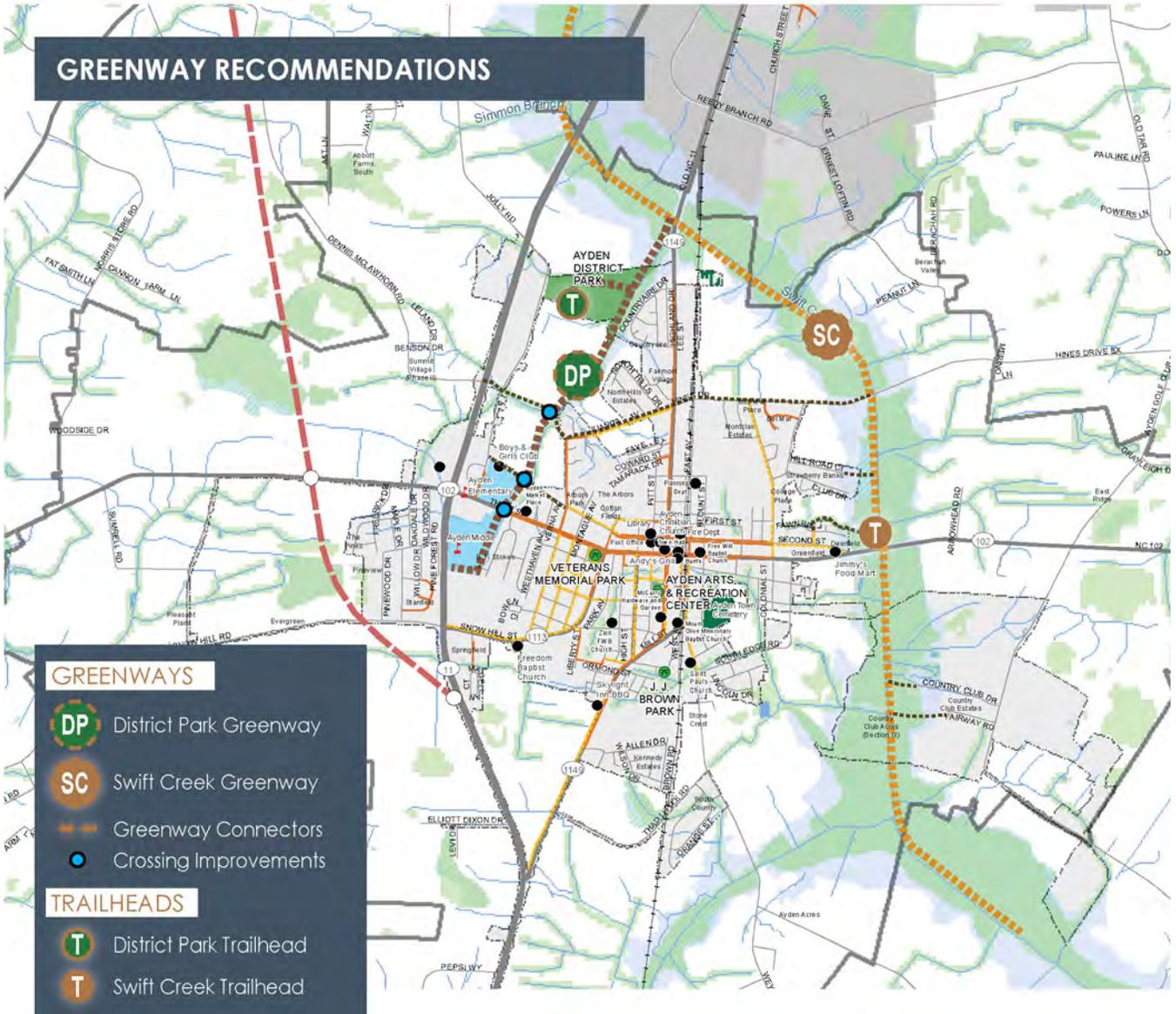
### **District Park Trailhead**

Create a trailhead at District Park to serve both the District Park Greenway and the Swift Creek Greenway. Enhance the trailhead with signage to orient trail users to park amenities such as picnic shelters, water bottle refilling stations, and restrooms.

### **Swift Creek Trailhead**

Evaluate the potential for a future trailhead, parking, and passive recreation space along NC 102 with a connection to Fawn Rd.





- GREENWAY AND TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS**
1. CONNECT PEOPLE AND PLACES WITHIN AYDEN
  2. ADD SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING TO DESTINATIONS
  3. IMPROVE KEY CROSSINGS FOR SAFETY OF TRAIL USERS

# TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## TI-1 Improve Ayden’s regional access.

- **Strategy TI-1.A** Encourage improved access to the Southwest Bypass and other limited-access strategic corridors and other major highways.
- **Strategy TI-1.B** Maintain a level of involvement in the bi-annual preparation of the NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program.
- **Strategy TI-1.C** Continue involvement with the Greenville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to ensure transportation coordination efforts continue throughout the area.

## TI-2 Provide efficient transportation routes with minimal disruption of traffic flow.

- **Strategy TI-2.A** In all non-

residential rezoning decisions, the Town should consider the need to minimize strip development and promote interconnectivity by:

- » Consolidating access points, require cross-access, and promote connectivity between sites.
- » Consider updating access management requirements for key commercial corridors.

- **Strategy TI-2.B** In all rezoning decisions, the Town should consider the need to protect transportation corridors from incompatible land uses.

## TI-3 Maintain and create a connected local street system.

- **Strategy TI-3.A** Encourage the creation of new road connections through development regulations and review
  - » Mixed Residential areas, in-Town Neighborhoods and Mixed-Use areas on the Future Land Use map should have the smallest block lengths and most roadway connections
  - » Specifically, new east-west routes should be considered to connect NC

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE OPPORTUNITIES



ACTIVE ROUTES TO SCHOOL



ACCESS TO RECREATION



HOUSING STABILITY

11 and Juanita Ave. and Snow Hill St. and Lee St. north and south of Town.

- **Strategy TI-3.B** Consider revising the Town's development regulations to require the formation of blocks with a maximum street spacing standard.

#### TI-4 Provide an integrated pedestrian/bicycle system for Ayden.

- **Strategy TI-4.A** Support implementation of the recently adopted town-wide pedestrian/bicycle plan.
- **Strategy TI-4.B** Consider revising development regulations that require sidewalks, bicycle paths, and trails in new residential subdivisions.
- **Strategy TI-4.C** The Town should develop a "Traffic Calming Policy" and

explore the feasibility of installing traffic calming measures such as speedbumps on streets to provide for public safety and mitigate the adverse impacts of cut-through traffic in neighborhoods.

#### TI-5 Prepare for the land use/transportation impacts which will result from construction of the Greenville Southwest Bypass.

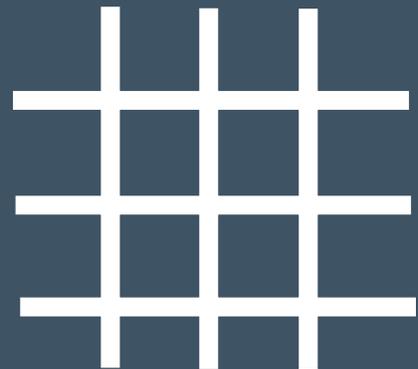
- **Strategy TI-5.A** The Town should implement the following land use and mobility recommendations that are similar to those included in the NC 102 Small Area Plan:
  - » Encourage a mix of land uses between NC 11 and the Southwest Bypass north of NC 102.
  - » No more than 50% of the land area

## BENEFITS OF A CONNECTED STREET NETWORK

Connected streets offer many benefits over a disjointed street network with many culdesacs. Benefits on encouraging a connected street system include:

- » Reduced traffic on arterial roads
- » Facilitation of non-motorized travel (biking & walking)
- » Providing better emergency access and improving service efficiency

*Source: Planning for Street Connectivity, The American Planning Association*



## PLAN ELEMENTS

should be devoted to one single use (i.e. commercial, office or residential)

- » Properties designated as Commercial or Commercial Mixed Use between should be designated as Commercial Corridor Overlay (CCOL) District when the property is rezoned.
- » Encourage collector street connections to be constructed with new development between NC 102, Dennis McLawhorn Rd. and NC 11.

- **Strategy TI-5.B** Consider study of potential transit service from Ayden to Winterville and Greenville

### TI-6 Maintain and improve stormwater retention and drainage infrastructure

- **Strategy TI-6.A** Ensure adequate stormwater facilities in new developments
- **Strategy TI-6.B** Encourage on-site detention and infiltration through development standards
- **Strategy TI-6.C** Pursue grants for regional detention projects and stormwater improvements on the southside of town.

### TI-7 Support expansion of police/fire and emergency services and facilities, as needed, to provide effective community protection.

- **Strategy TI-7.A** Investigate/pursue all available state and federal funding options to support improvement of public

safety services and facilities.

- **Strategy TI-7.B** Continue to support and participate in the Pitt County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- **Strategy TI-7.C** Annually prepare a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which will include consideration of community safety need.

### TI-8 Provide adequate community services and infrastructure.

- **Strategy TI-8.A** Encourage a growth pattern that results in the efficient provision of services
- **Strategy TI-8.B** Annually prepare a Capital Improvements Plan which will address maintenance and expansion of the Town's water and sewer systems.
- **Strategy TI-8.C** Continuously seek available state and federal funding to support improvement and expansion of water and sewer systems.
- **Strategy TI-8.D** Continue to support the Neuse Regional Water and Sewer Authority.
- **Strategy TI-8.E** Consider updates to utility policies to encourage annexation.

### TI-9 Improve dependability and resiliency of electric grid

- **Strategy TI-9.A** Study additional points of delivery for electric system to help reduce power outages during storms.
- **Strategy TI-9.B** Consider energy efficiency improvements and solar energy installations for Town buildings to reduce costs and improve resiliency.



5

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## OVERVIEW

The following table includes priority projects, programs, and initiatives essential to the implementation of the Town of Ayden Land Use Plan. Annual work plans for staff, planning board, and board of commissioners and updates of capital improvements programs should incorporate these priorities as resources are available.

*“Begin with the end in mind.”*

*-Steven Covey*

ACTION	LEAD
<p><b>1. Short-term Unified Development Ordinance Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-4C, PNR-1 &amp; TI-3B:</b> Modernized landscape standards. Revised subdivision standards to include street trees, connectivity standards, cul-de-sac limits, maximum block lengths, sidewalks &amp; natural/usable open space requirements.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-5B, HN-2A &amp; HN-2B:</b> Creation of basic infill standards for building placement, driveways, etc. that are contextual and protect historic character of older areas of town.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-5D:</b> Creation of a Neighborhood Mixed Use District to provide a transition to downtown area.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-5E &amp; LU-5F:</b> Reduce on-site parking requirements and create basic design criteria for projects in mixed-use and downtown areas (frontage, parking location, building materials, setbacks, pedestrian connections, etc.).</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-7A:</b> Require multi-family developments in downtown area (B-1 Zoning) to be upper-floor and have a “shop-front” appearance.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy HN-4:</b> Creation of a Residential Mixed-Use District and a Neighborhood Mixed Use District to permit flexibility for higher density projects (i.e. patio homes, cottages, and more neighborhood scaled multi-family).</li> </ul>	<p>Planning Staff, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners</p>
<p><b>2. Long-term Unified Development Ordinance Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy PNR-1.C:</b> Look into more detailed lighting standards (greater protection of rural areas)</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-3.B &amp; PNR-3.F:</b> Study a potential agricultural/rural residential zoning district to areas appropriate on future land use map to assist in farmland/agricultural preservation.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-5.A:</b> Establish a Local Historic District Commission, Overlay District &amp; Design Guidelines.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy TI-6.A &amp; TI-6B:</b> Comprehensively update stormwater regulations; introduce green infrastructure where appropriate.</li> <li>» <b>Various Strategies:</b> Expand building design standards based on context and building type. This could include an update of the Commercial Corridor Overlay (CCOL) and/or the creation of a commercial mixed-use district for large activity centers along major streets and thoroughfares.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning Staff, Planning Board, Board of Commissioners</p>
<p><b>3. Improve Gateways into Town.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-4.E:</b> Make improvements along the community’s primary gateways (i.e. uniform signage, lighting, and landscape design).</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-6.A:</b> Develop a Streetscape Master Plan for for 2nd St., 3rd St., Lee St., and/or other key corridors. This plan could include landscaping, sidewalks, street redesign/restriping, furnishings, and lighting improvements.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning Staff, Public Works, NCDOT, Chamber of Commerce, Property Owners</p>

## IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION	LEAD
<p><b>4. Reinforce Downtown.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy ECD-5.A:</b> Coordinate with business owners on low-cost initiatives (public and private) that could be done to activate downtown (areas, hours, diversity, etc.).</li> <li>» <b>Strategy LU-6.A, LU-6.B, LU-6.C &amp; TI-6.C:</b> Develop strategies to address larger public improvements (streets, parking and stormwater).</li> </ul>	<p>Planning Staff, Business Owners, Public Works</p>
<p><b>5. Economic Development &amp; Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy ECD-1.C &amp; ECD-3.C:</b> Coordinate with Pitt County Development Commission, Greenville-ENC Alliance, and Chamber of Commerce to attract businesses and market the Town of Ayden.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy ECD-4.D:</b> Coordinate with local businesses on events and programming that encourage patronage</li> <li>» <b>Strategy ECD-1.A:</b> Identify Revitalization Target Areas and coordinate with residents, stakeholders, the Ayden Housing Authority and non-profit organizations to develop strategies for these areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning Staff, Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners</p>
<p><b>6. Improve the Town's Network of Parks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <b>Strategy PNR-6.A:</b> Continue the expansion of the District Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pursue state grants and donations</li> <li>» Support budget allocations for improvements</li> </ul> </li> <li>» <b>Strategy PNR-5.C:</b> Improve equitable access to park and recreation facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Study park needs and new connections in underserved areas, including potential locations for new neighborhood park sites on the east and west sides of town and sidewalk improvements that would improve access to current parks.</li> </ul> </li> <li>» <b>Strategy PNR-6.B:</b> Seek grant monies and/or technical assistance to prepare a Recreation and Open Space Plan or a Pedestrian and Greenway Plan and /or feasibility studies for priority greenway segments.</li> <li>» <b>Strategy PNR-6.D:</b> Consider revising development regulations to require the dedication of recreation / open space areas including greenway easements.</li> </ul>	<p>Arts &amp; Recreation, Planning Staff</p>



STEWART