Concord
NORTH CAROLINA
High Performance Living

CITY OF CONCORD

2030 LAND USE PLAN

APPROVED - MARCH 8, 2018

Tindale Oliver
design

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The following elected officials, departments, boards, and consultants participated in the development of the City of Concord 2030 Land Use Plan.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 01 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE 2

1.1 Plan Overview 2
1.2 Context For Planning 5
1.3 Purpose Of The Land Use Plan 6
1.4 How To Use The Land Use Plan 6
1.5 How The Land Use Plan Was Developed 7

PART 02 COMMUNITY CONTEXT 10

2.1 History And Historical Assets 10
2.2 Neighborhoods 10
2.3 Major Attractions 11
2.4 Strong And Diverse Economy 13
2.5 Arts And Culture 16

PART 03 GROWTH TRENDS 18

3.1 Existing Demographics 18
3.2 Projected Growth 23
3.3 Growth Trends And The 2030 Land Use Plan 25

PART 04 VISION CONCORD 2030 28

4.1 Vision Statement 28
4.2 Growth Concept Map 30
4.3 Community Character Areas 33

PART 05 LAND USE 50

5.1 Detailed Future Land Use Description 50
5.2 General Land Use Challenges And Opportunities 61
5.3 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance 62
5.4 Urban Design Strategies 66

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 06 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS 70

6.1 Existing Housing Stock 71

6.2 Projected Housing Demand 71

6.3 Challenges And Opportunities 71

6.4 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance 72

PART 07 CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY 76

7.1 Streets And Mobility 76

7.2 Transit 78

7.3 Walk/Bike Infrastructure 79

7.4 Challenges And Opportunities 79

7.5 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance 80

PART 08 PARKS AND RECREATION 84

8.1 Existing Parks And Recreation 84

8.2 Elements Of The Parks and Recreation Master Plan 85

8.3 Challenges And Opportunities 88

8.4 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance 88

PART 09 NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE 92

9.1 Working Farms 92

9.2 Open Space And Forests 92

9.3 Rivers, Lakes, And Streams 93

9.4 Challenges And Opportunities 94

9.5 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance 95

PART 10 INFRASTRUCTURE 98

10.1 Community Infrastructure 98

10.2 Water 102

10.3 Wastewater 103

TABLE OF CONTENTS

10.4 Challenges And Opportunities.....103

10.5 Goals, Objectives, And Policy Guidance.....104

PART 11 IMPLEMENTATION.....108

11.1 Implementation Work Plan 108

11.2 Relationship To Budget.....108

11.3 Annual Review/Monitoring.....108

11.4 Future Land Use Amendments.....109

11.5 Performance Measures.....109

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Technical Memorandum - Assessment, Trends, And Plan Direction

Appendix B: Public Involvement Summaries

Appendix C: CONNECT Our Future - Place Types and Community Types

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PART

01

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

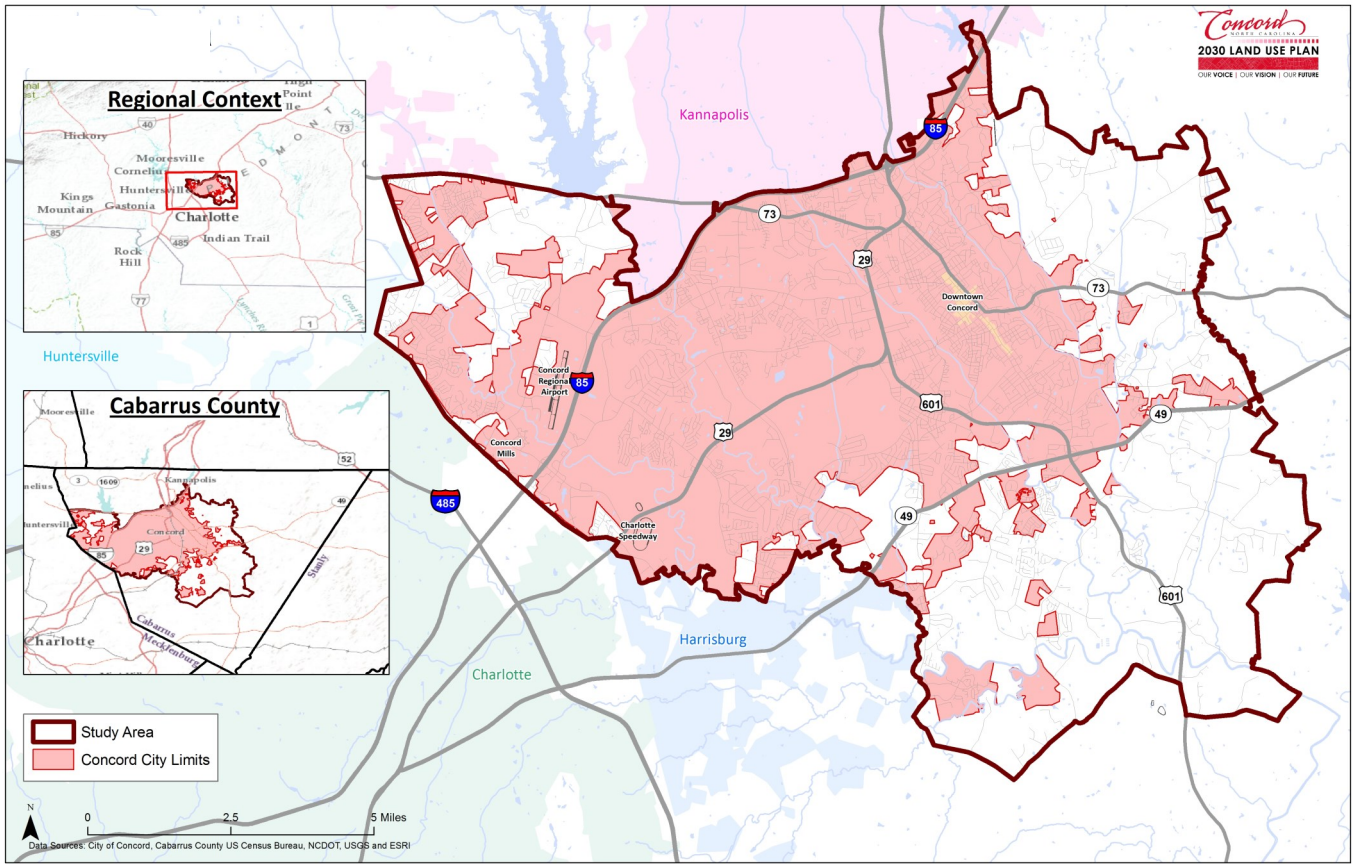
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The City of Concord contracted with Tindale Oliver to update the 2015 Land Use Plan, which was adopted in 2007. The 2030 Land Use Plan (2030 Plan) will set the direction for the City to proactively manage change over the next 10 to 15 years. The following provides a plan overview, context for planning, purpose of the 2030 Plan, how to use the plan document, and a description of how the plan was developed.

1.1 PLAN OVERVIEW

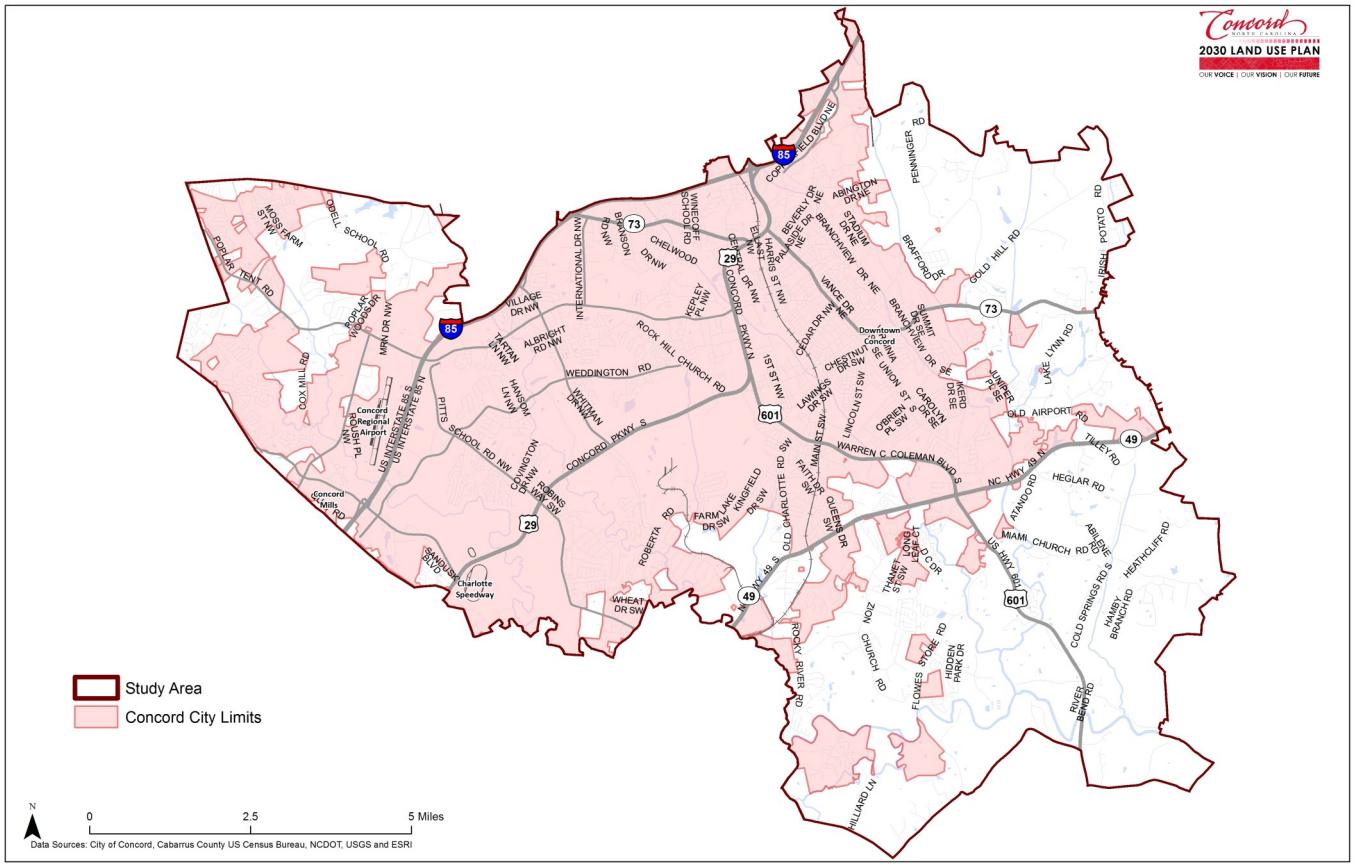
The City of Concord is located in the piedmont of North Carolina in the western half of Cabarrus County. As the largest City in Cabarrus County, in both land area and population, Concord's population represents nearly half of the County's total population. As of 2017, Concord is the 11th largest city in North Carolina. Concord is an important player in the Charlotte metropolitan area, within close proximity to Uptown Charlotte and home to regional employment, shopping and entertainment centers (**Map 1-1**).

Map 1-1: Regional Context Map



The planning area for the 2030 Plan includes the boundaries of the City of Concord, as well as areas identified for future voluntary annexation (Study Area). The Study Area is shown in **Map 1-2**.

Map 1-2: Study Area

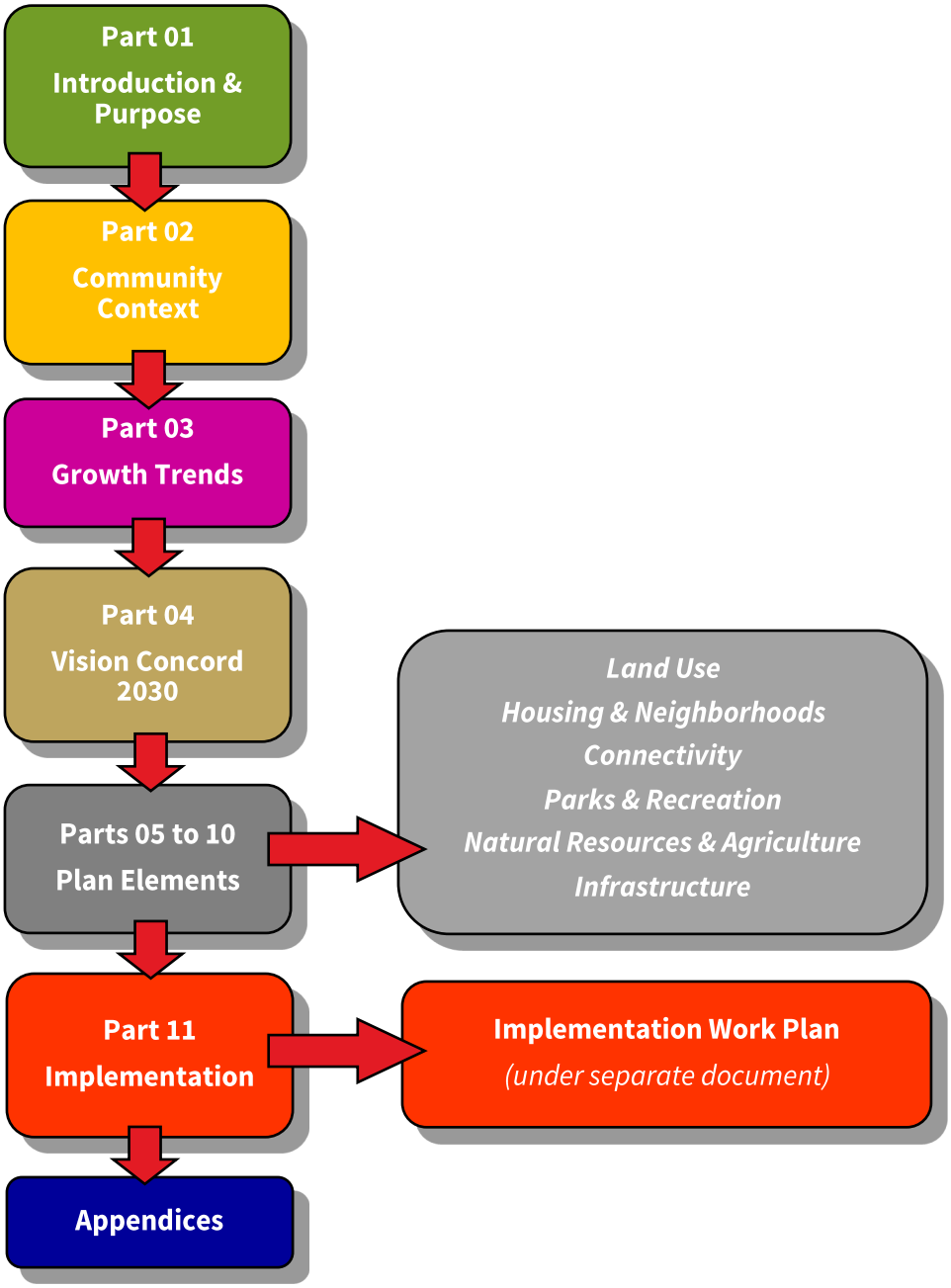


The 2030 Plan document is divided into 11 Parts (see **Figure 1-1**):

- **Part 01, Introduction & Purpose** provides an overview of the key factors and conditions leading to the need for the 2030 Plan update, the history of planning in the City, a summary of the 2030 Plan's major themes, and the planning process.
- **Part 02, Community Context** describes Concord's historical assets, major attractions, diverse economy, and local arts and culture.
- **Part 03, Growth Trends** identifies the demographic and socioeconomic trends to understand the local community and develop future direction for the 2030 Plan.
- **Part 04, Vision Concord 2030** includes the vision statement establishing the community mandate and direction for the policy framework; and describes the Growth Concept and Character Areas of the desired growth vision for the community.
- **Parts 05 through 10, Plan Elements** introduces the "Building Blocks" of the 2030 Plan, which includes six Plan Elements addressing specific goals, objectives and policy guidance:
    - Land Use
    - Housing and Neighborhoods
    - Connectivity and Mobility
    - Parks and Recreation
    - Natural Resources and Agriculture
    - Infrastructure

- **Part 11, Implementation** provides guidance for using the 2030 Plan to make future policy, programmatic, and investment decisions, and processes for monitoring implementation and updating the Plan. The Implementation Work Plan is under a separate document that identifies an initial list of implementation actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the 2030 Plan to guide the City Council and City Staff as they develop work programs during the life of the Plan.
- **Appendices** contain the documentation of data and analysis that served as a foundation for updating the 2015 Land Use Plan.

Figure 1-1: 2030 Plan Structure



1.2 CONTEXT FOR PLANNING

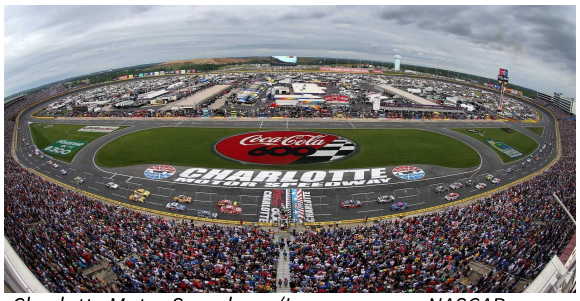
The City of Concord entered the 21st Century facing many challenges, but also a myriad of opportunities and potential. Situated within the fast-growing Charlotte region and home to the Charlotte Motor Speedway, Concord Mills Shopping Mall, numerous coveted business parks, and an increasingly busy regional airport, Concord has quickly evolved from a small agrarian and textile town into a fast-growing city of increasingly considerable regional importance and a reputation for business friendliness, quality of life, natural beauty, and cultural richness.

The expansion of population, service area, housing, and jobs has also brought the challenges associated with rapid growth, such as increased traffic congestion, school overcrowding, increased demand on utilities, and desire for more parks, greenways and other recreational facilities.

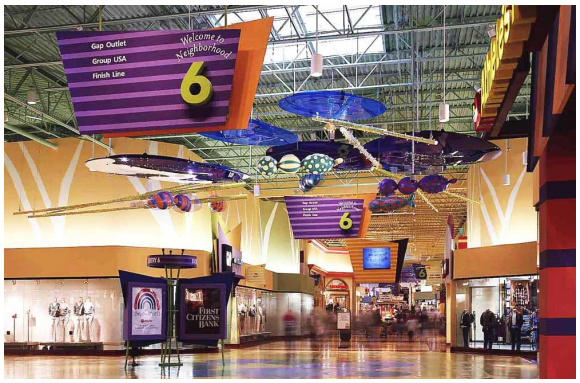
The City sought to address those challenges through the adoption of the Concord 2015 Land Use Plan. That plan set direction for the City to proactively manage change, articulating community consensus about the future. The 2015 Land Use Plan was a living, working document, to be used by all departments of the City and by elected officials to inform decision-making about development and capital and non-capital investment. Eleven years later this core purpose has not been altered in the 2030 Plan. Specifically, the 2030 Plan serves this purpose by:

- Guiding City Officials as they plan for the expansion or upgrading of roads, water and sewer infrastructure.
- Providing guidance for coordination with Cabarrus County Schools on the development of public schools, as well as future public investment in community services such as fire, police, and recreation.
- Equipping private citizens and the development community with information on future land use needed to make prudent investment decisions.
- Directing the revision and updating of existing land use regulations and the development of new ordinances, policies and studies.
- Fostering locally relevant goals and objectives provided by related regional and Concord-focused planning efforts, including but not limited to the CONNECT Our Future Regional Framework, Livable Community Blueprint for Cabarrus County, Concord Water and Wastewater System Master Plan, Concord Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, City Center Plan, Concord Downtown Master Plan, Concord Transportation Plan, and Cabarrus-Rowan MPO Transportation Plan (MTP).

The 2030 Plan, however, does not simply update the previous plan document: it defines a new vision of what Concord will be in another 15 years, and sets the community's new agenda, the new 15-year "to-do" list that will make the vision come to fruition.



Charlotte Motor Speedway (Image source: NASCAR, https://galleries.nascar.com/gallery/1115/charlotte-motor-speedway#/0)



Concord Mills (Image source: Simon, https://business.simon.com/leasing/concord-mills/photos)

Concord Regional Airport (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Departments/Concord-Regional-Airport/News-Events)

International Business Park (Image source: The International Business Park at Concord, http://www.internationalbusinesspark.com/companies/beacon-partners/)

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE LAND USE PLAN

Although Concord will continue to grow at a faster pace than many communities around the nation over the next decade, many of the growth challenges faced by the City are different than those of the last 15 years.

To some extent, the City has settled into the growth cycle. The community is now poised to exert more influence on where development should be channeled to most benefit the City, and to expect a higher standard of design and development. The City should do this, in good part, to maintain, solidify and enhance its competitive economic position in the region and the nation. The 2030 Plan represents an effort to establish the vision of Concord for the next stage of the 21st Century.

The following lists a few of the key issues that the City will be addressing through the 2030 Plan:

- How to deal with the amount of growth projected over the next 15 years and position the City to lead development.
- How to keep the plan grounded in fiscal reality.
- How to coalesce a vision that harmonizes or resolves the tension between "classic" and "new" Concord.
- How to provide sufficient flexibility in the policy framework to be able to respond to change.
- How to address the interface between land use and transportation and provide multimodality and connectivity throughout the City.
- How to identify and protect areas of the community that need specialized treatment.
- How to maximize return on public infrastructure investment.
- How to balance the desire for a higher quality of design while maintaining the City's commitment to business-friendliness.
- How to tackle the issue of long-range light rail expansion.

1.4 HOW TO USE THE LAND USE PLAN

Section 1.1 describes the overall organization of the plan document and summarizes the contents of each part of the 2030 Plan.

The core of the document is Parts 5 through 10, the Plan Elements. Each element opens with a synopsis of existing conditions and trends pertaining to the subject matter of the element, and then provides a summary of the implications of the assessment, stated as a list of key challenges and opportunities faced by the City over the next 10-15 years. Additional detail on the underlying data and analysis is available in **Appendix A**.

The policy framework for each element follows, containing the goals, objectives, and policy guidance of each element. These are structured as a hierarchy of statements that turn from a broad purpose to increasingly specific or detailed "tasks" that the City will undertake to achieve each purpose. The structure is more easily understood if thought of as responding to a series of questions:

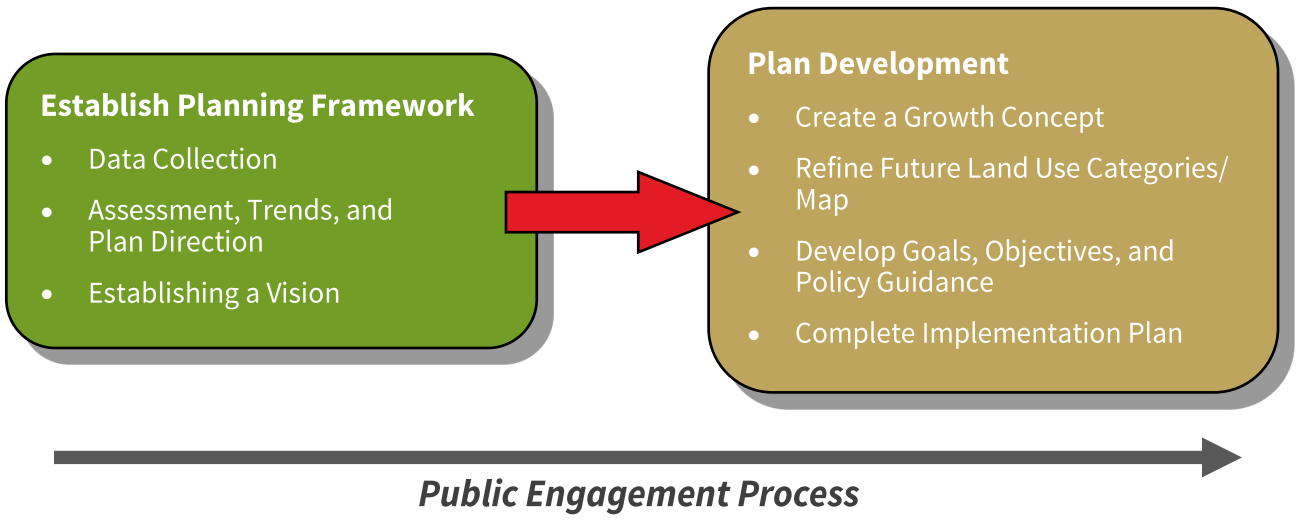
- GOAL: "What does Concord want to accomplish?"
- OBJECTIVE: "What does Concord need to do to realize the goal?"
- POLICY GUIDANCE: "How will each objective be carried out?"

Plans are turned into reality through concerted, coordinated, and consistent action over time. Part 11, Implementation describes how the 2030 Plan is to be used by the City as a guide for decision-making and action. This part lays out the Implementation Work Plan that identifies an initial list of implementation actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the Plan; relationship to the City's annual budget; the processes to review/monitor, amend the goals, objectives, and policies, as well as the Growth Concept and Future Land Use maps; and performance measures to track the progress of the Plan.

1.5 HOW THE LAND USE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The 2030 Plan was developed through a process that combined both aspirational and fact-driven components, organized into three phases. The first phase established the planning framework; the second involved the actual development of the plan document; and the third, focused on public engagement throughout the planning process, ran in tandem with the other two (**Figure 1-2**).

Figure 1-2: Planning Process



1.5.1 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data collection and analysis phase resulted in the production of a comprehensive technical memorandum which set the stage for the development of the 2030 Plan. The technical memorandum assessed the existing planning framework through an extensive review of prior plan documents; an assessment of the policies of the 2015 Land Use Plan; an examination of the present community profile; and identification of preliminary plan issues and opportunities with input from the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the members of a Planning Technical Team (PTT).

The review of prior and on-going local and regional planning and policy initiatives was conducted to identify goals/intent and important regulations, policies, projects, and other initiatives that should be accounted for in the development of the 2030 Plan.

Staff of the Planning and Zoning Department completed a status review of the goals, objectives, and strategies from the 2015 Land Use Plan. This helped to identify policies that should be removed or retained in the 2030 Plan.

The community profile of the study area was assessed to examine existing conditions and trends related to demographics, socioeconomics, land uses, economics, housing stock, and transportation relationships to serve as the framework for understanding the local community and developing future direction for the 2030 Plan. Data were collected and documented from a wide variety of local and regional sources. These can be reviewed in Part IV, Appendices, of the plan document.

1.5.2 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The 2030 Plan process was driven as much by the input of the local stakeholders, as by the outcomes of data analysis. The stakeholders included private citizens, business owners, developers, civic organizations and nonprofit institutions, City staff, appointed and elected board members. The public engagement process included 21 interviews with individuals and groups representing a wide variety of local and regional interests, four milestone meetings with the PTT, two rounds of public workshops, online participation tools, a paper survey, two Joint Meetings of the City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission, and all the formal public meetings required for the adoption of the 2030 Plan.

The quality of public input received throughout the process has added tremendous value to this document and should generate a sense of citizen ownership of the 2030 Plan. The community remained the primary source of direction for the Plan, shaping its focus and content. **Appendix B** summaries the community comments from the two public workshops.

Public Workshop

1.5.3 PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

The 2030 Plan approval process included review of the draft plan by the Planning and Zoning Commission, a public workshop with the City Council, and a public adoption hearing.

After adoption, the Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for coordinating implementation of the 2030 Plan through the Planning Department, which will work with the City Administration, City Council, and other City Departments and staff, as well as outside agencies, nonprofits, and community groups.

PART

02

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

2.0 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The City of Concord is situated within the fast-growing Charlotte metropolitan area and is a regionally important city of more than 62 square miles and more than 88,000 people. The rapid growth in population and housing within the city and surrounding region, as well as the growth of the commercial and industrial sectors, has provided Concord residents with ready access to an abundance of cultural, educational, recreational, commercial, and entertainment opportunities. The community context includes a discussion of the city's history and historical assets; neighborhood variety; unparalleled major attractions; strong and diverse economy; and arts, and culture and community organizations.

2.1 HISTORY AND HISTORIC ASSETS

Settlement of what is present day Cabarrus County began in the mid-eighteenth century. The area was originally populated primarily by Dutch, Scotch-Irish, Germans, and a small group of Welsh-English families. In 1792, the North Carolina Legislature approved the formation of Cabarrus County from what was then part of Mecklenburg. Crucial support for a separate county came from Stephen Cabarrus of Edenton, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the new county was named in his honor. For some time following its creation there was much discussion and disagreement as to the location of the new county seat and the courthouse for the new town. In an effort to resolve the controversy, Stephen Cabarrus wrote a letter appealing to the citizens to bury their differences and have "concord." Accordingly, a site was selected, and it was agreed to name the town "Concord." The principal street within the Town was named "Union" to mark the resolution of the dispute about the town's location. The Town of Concord was established near the center of the County in February 1796, when Samuel Huie sold 26 acres of his land to the newly appointed town commissioners. Concord was incorporated in 1837 with a total land area of one square mile.

In 1839 Concord Manufacturing Company began construction of a textile mill at the highest point on the newly extended North Union Street, (the Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill). Completion of the North Carolina Railroad on the western edge of town also spurred growth and opened an additional route of transportation, Depot Street, now known as Cabarrus Avenue. By the turn of the 20th Century, the textile industry had transformed agrarian Concord into a leading industrial town.

Downtown Concord, 1930's-1940's (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Visitor/Historic-Facts)

In the later part of the 20th Century the economic base of the Concord area began to shift from textile manufacturing to a more diverse mix of industrial, commercial, governmental and health-related enterprises. In addition, access to major transportation routes enabled people seeking a quieter life outside of Charlotte to make Concord their home. As a result, residential development began to spread into the former rural areas of the City. The Concord of today is a blend of progress and heritage, providing residents with the comforts of a metropolitan area while maintaining the charm of a small town.

2.2 NEIGHBORHOODS

The evolution of land use in the City of Concord has been dynamic amid exponential growth in recent years. Originally a rural community, Concord has evolved into a thriving urban center in a region rich with diversity and continued growth potential. The City of Concord offers a variety of districts and neighborhoods that offer unique environments within the study area, including urban, suburban, and rural. Maintaining a balance of these living environments is essential to ensure that adequate infrastructure, employment opportunities, recreational facilities and commercial enterprises are available to meet the growing needs of Concord's citizens.

The City of Concord has an active Public Affairs department that builds relationships with established neighborhood organizations in an effort to enhance the quality of life in the City, and improves communication between citizens and the local government. Through the Partnership for Stronger Neighborhoods, neighborhood organizations become officially recognized by the City Council and commit to collaborate with City staff to identify solutions to community issues, share information, receive information regarding City services, give feedback on public improvement projects, and participate in City sponsored programs and events. By bringing neighbors together and connecting them to services and information while using their input to ensure the City develops an effective response to meet needs of their

neighborhood, a greater sense of community and civic duty is fostered and the city is improved. Currently, there are 62 recognized neighborhood associations of which 47 are active and participating in the City's Neighborhood Program. Neighborhood organizations in the program represent both traditional older sections of the city and newly developed subdivisions. This growing partnership will not only continue to strengthen the social fabric of the community but it will lead to the development of a more vibrant city.

Live Music at Afton Village (Image source: Afton Village News, http://www.aftonvillage.com/)

Laurel Park Swim Team - Shrimps (Image source: Laurel Park HOA, https://www.laurelparkhoa.org/swim-team)

2.3 MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

In recent years, Concord has experienced extraordinary growth in the tourism industry. Major attractions such as Concord Mills, Great Wolf Lodge, and the Charlotte Motor Speedway bring visitors to the area to attend race-oriented events and to shop. It will be important to ensure that the city remains an attractive and convenient place to visit in the coming years, and appropriate development patterns and infrastructure investment, particularly near Concord Mills/ Bruton Smith Boulevard will be essential in maintaining the City's unique position as a draw for regional visitors.

2.3.1 CONCORD MILLS

Concord Mills is a super-regional retail and entertainment complex with 1.4 million square feet of retail space containing 225 stores, including manufacturer outlets, off-price retailers, category dominant stores, unique specialty stores, a food court, themed restaurants and a 24-screen movie theater. The site is on nearly 295 acres of land directly off of Interstate 85 on Concord Mills Boulevard. Since it's opening in 1999, Concord Mills has been a catalyst for development along Concord Mills Boulevard and Bruton Smith Boulevard near the I-85 interchange. The area surrounding Concord Mills includes a dynamic retail and entertainment district with substantial retail, restaurants and hotels running along Concord Mills Boulevard and Bruton Smith Boulevard from Derita Road on the west to Concord Parkway approximately three miles to the east near Charlotte Motor Speedway.

(Source image: Classica Homes, LLC, http://www.classicahomes.com/gallery/gallery.asp?GalleryID=14&MenuRef=#&gid=1&pid=1)

(Source image: Independent Tribune, http://www.independenttribune.com/news/state-s-first-vera-bradley-outlet-coming-to-concord-mills/article_82a9293a-2a06-11e4-86aa-001a4bcf6878.html)

2.3.2 GREAT WOLF LODGE

Great Wolf Lodge is North America's largest family of indoor waterparks, designed to capture the atmosphere of the northwoods. The Concord location was opened in 2009 consisting of an 80,000 square-foot indoor water park with themed pools, rides, slides, and kids' play areas. Other amenities include a spa/salon, an arcade, a 24-hour gym and multiple dining options, while kids' activities include live action adventure games and a children's spa. It also has a on-site hotel.

(Source image: Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, https://www.visitnc.com/listing/great-wolf-lodge-charlotte-concord)

(Source image: High Country Parent, http://www.highcountryparent.com/great-holiday-deal-at-great-wolf-lodge-concord-nc/)

2.3.3 CHARLOTTE MOTOR SPEEDWAY AREA

One of the most significant and influential commercial entities within the City of Concord is the Charlotte Motor Speedway containing more than 1,345 acres of land. Charlotte Motor Speedway is a world class NASCAR venue, with seating for 89,000 and a 135,000 square foot facility housing corporate offices, ticket offices, a gift shop, leased office space, an exclusive dining and entertainment facility, and 52 condominiums for onsite living. The Speedway was originally designed and built in 1959, with major renovations in following years, particularly in the 1990's. In addition to the Speedway itself, the surrounding property includes an industrial park, a 15,000 seat, state-of-the-art, four-wide drag racing strip and dirt track, a landfill, and a natural wildlife habitat area along the Rocky River and the City's Rocky River Golf Course. The Speedway hosts several NASCAR races each year, plus many additional racing events and car shows. Most team race shops are open to the public and feature museums, gift shops and sometimes the opportunity to see your favorite team's crew at work.

(Source image: Sporting News, http://www.sportingnews.com/nascar/news/nascar-sprint-cup-charlotte-motor-speedway-facebook-hack-eldora-speedway/skyqi176bw651790xn9zxwoe5)

(Source image: Sports Travel, http://www.sportstravel.com/venues/charlotte-motor-speedway/upgrades.php)

2.4 STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY

The City of Concord, along with Cabarrus County and the surrounding region, enjoys a strong and diverse economy as evidenced by the substantial investments made in recent years by the many new and expanding businesses. Some of the unique businesses and industries within Concord are motorsports/NASCAR, hospital/medical care, industrial/R&D, corporate office, and the downtown. Providing a healthy and appropriate mix of commercial and industrial development is essential to meet the needs of the current and future population of the City.

2.4.1 MOTORSPORTS/NASCAR

In addition to the Charlotte Motor Speedway, Concord is home to a number of NASCAR race shops, research and development facilities, and other auxiliary facilities that support the operations of race teams that compete across the country. According to the Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Cabarrus County is the home base for numerous NASCAR's race shops, of which three are located in Concord:

- Chip Ganassi Racing
- Hendrick Motorsports
- Roush Fenway Racing

(Source image: Hendrick Motorsports, http://www.hendrickmotorsports.com/news/articles/5128/visit-hendrick-motorsports-museum-team-store-as-part-of-charlotte-speedfest)

(Source image: Roush Fenway Racing, http://www.roushfenway.com/)

In addition, Concord is also home to the NASCAR Research and Development facility, which is a 60,000 square foot facility that conducts research to improve safety of NASCAR vehicles and race equipment.

2.4.2 HOSPITAL/MEDICAL CARE

Concord residents benefit from excellent health care facilities within the City and the surrounding region. In 2013, there were 429 (see **Table 2-1**) physicians in Cabarrus County, with most of these practicing in Concord within close proximity of the Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center.

Table 2-1: Cabarrus County Healthcare Professionals, 2013

Healthcare Profession	Number
Number of Physicians	429
Physicians per 10,000 population	23
RNs per 10,000 population	102.7
Dentists per 10,000 population	3.7
Pharmacists per 10,000 population	10.6

(Source: NC Department of Commerce)

The Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center is a regional, private, non-profit medical center with a reputation for excellence. Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center is designated a Magnet Hospital for the region. Located in the Center City area of Concord off of Concord Parkway (US 29/601), the hospital is adjacent to the Caroli-na Mall and is the major activity center between Downtown and the I-85 interchange at Concord Parkway. The hospi-tal acts as the primary anchor in the Medical District as identified on the Growth Concept Map (**Map 5-1**).

Created in 1937 as a hospital for textile workers, the Center has grown to a 457-bed facility with more than 4,200 employees. The service area for the Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center includes Cabarrus County and extends into Rowan, Stanly, northern Mecklenburg and southwestern Iredell Counties. The hospital also includes the Jeff Gordon Children's Hospital, which opened in 2006.

(Source image: Tindale Oliver & Associates)

(Source image: Independent Tribune, http://www.independenttribune.com/news/jeff-gordon-children-s-hospital-celebrates-years/article_f49488aa-408d-11e7-9e41-73fdcae19552.html

2.4.3 INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industrial development is dispersed in several areas, including the southern portion of the City, near the Concord Regional Airport, in the vicinity of Charlotte Motor Speedway, along Concord Parkway North (US 29), and in the heart of the Center City area. Industrial uses have already developed in the International Business Park on International Drive; on Concord Parkway South (US 29) including Philip Morris property and S&D Coffee; Speedway Industrial Park on Morehead Road; and other developments along Davidson Highway (NC 73), around the intersection of Stough Road and US 49, and the intersection of US 49 and Warren C. Coleman Boulevard (US 601). While these areas have developed light industrial uses, the 2030 Plan recognizes the need to reserve additional land for new industrial uses, particularly around Concord Regional Airport including Amazon and FedEx, and along I-85 between Pitts School Road and Rocky River.

(Source image: The International Business Park at Concord, http://www.internationalbusinesspark.com/companies/dnp-imagingcomm-america-corporation/)

(Source image: Salisbury Post, http://www.salisburypost.com/2015/04/03/rowans-growth-could-resemble-what-concord-has-seen/)

2.4.4 OFFICE USES

Office areas include planned office complexes and campus-style office development. Many of these uses have developed around Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center and along Copperfield Boulevard. While there are no major office parks at present, the Copperfield Boulevard development has evolved into an office destination including the corporate headquarters for ACN, additional offices for Carolinas NorthEast Medical Center, and ancillary medical office facilities. Additional office space can be found in the West Winds Business Park, which is home to the corporate headquarters of S&D Coffee and Tea.

ACN Corporate Headquarters, located on Copperfield Blvd. (Image source: Silvia Vargas)

Medical Offices, located on Church Street N (Image source: Google Earth)

2.4.5 DOWNTOWN

Nestled in the center of the City is Downtown Concord, a pedestrian-friendly historic shopping and business district consisting of shops, restaurants, galleries, museums, gardens, event spaces, and more. The downtown is located just a short drive from Charlotte, and is conveniently located less than five miles off Interstate 85.

Concord has achieved significant accomplishments in the revitalization of its downtown area through economic development. Public investment in streetscape improvements, the creation of incentive programs, and the preparation and formation of a business improvement district to provide additional marketing and enhancement services for the downtown area are just a few of the accomplishments that are driving this revitalization effort.

A market analysis study was competed in March 2016, as part of an update to the Downtown Master Plan, which projected the following demand for residential, retail and office space over the next ten years:

- 390-680 residential units
- 80-100,000 sq. ft. retail
- 27-40,000 sq. ft. office
- Did not include hotel rooms in final market analysis

Union Street Retail (Image source: Downtown Concord, Urban Design Plan, 2016)

Lofts 29 (Image source: Downtown Concord, Urban Design Plan, 2016)

Conceptual Development Projects (Image source: Downtown Concord, Urban Design Plan, 2016)

2.5 ARTS AND CULTURE

Providing opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in the Arts through accessibility to cultural facilities and activities make the City of Concord unique. The City and the surrounding area host an abundance of cultural resources, such as museums, performing arts, theatre, libraries and other resources. Many cultural opportunities are conveniently located within the City of Concord.

- The Old Courthouse Theater (formerly the First Baptist Church) is an award-winning community theatre established in 1976. The Theater offers musicals, comedies, dramas, classics and new play works as well as youth and children's theatre productions and acting classes. The staff of Old Courthouse Theater is, except for the artistic director, completely volunteer. The Old Courthouse Theater is located on Spring Street adjacent to downtown.

- The Cabarrus Arena and Exposition Center opened in 2002 and features a main arena and events center for concerts and events with 10,000 square feet of meeting rooms, a 28,800-square-foot arena floor and two exhibition halls totaling more than 65,000 square feet. The Arena and Exposition Center is home to the annual Cabarrus County Fair and is located east of downtown on US 49.

Cabarrus Arena and Exposition Center (Image source: Tindale Oliver)

- The Charles A. Cannon Memorial Library is the headquarters and main library of the Cabarrus County Library System. It is located on Union Street in Downtown Concord. The 26,000 square feet library maintains a collection of 205,650 volumes, including the Local History Collection that is housed in the Lore Room. The collection contains materials on Cabarrus County history and genealogy from 1750 to the present, with the majority of the Collection consisting of genealogical notes and records in book, microfilm, and folder form.

- The Historic Cabarrus Courthouse, constructed in 1876, and the Concord Museum is located on Union Street in the Center City area of Concord. The Courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Concord Museum is home to an extensive library that is used for genealogical and historical research as well as the history museum. It is also home of the Cabarrus Arts Council and Davis Theater.

Memorial Garden (Image source: Charlotte Magazine, http://www.charlottemagazine.com/Blogs/Charlotte-at-Home/April-2014/A-Concord-Garden-Full-of-Spring-Color/)

- Established in 1804, Memorial Garden is a three-acre garden located in the heart of Concord. Nearly two centuries old, the Garden began as a cemetery and features an ancient stone foundation, flanked with stone resting benches and beds of pansies, hyacinths, daffodils, azaleas, tulips and annuals. The Garden also features enormous oaks, magnolias, dogwood, rosebud and twisted crepe myrtles. The First Presbyterian Church Columbarium is also a place of quiet solitude, which is well landscaped with a variety of flowers and shrubs.

- Clearwater Artist Studios – The Clearwater Artist Studios are located in Gibson Village, and include 38,000 square feet of rehabilitated building space where artists can create, display and sell their art. The studio was funded by the City which owns and manages the facility. The studio is adjacent to Village Greenway and serves as a catalyst for the redevelopment of Gibson Village.

- Other Arts and Culture offerings include: Cabarrus Arts Experience, Cabarrus Art Guild, Genesis II Community Choir, Cabarrus County Vocal Ensemble, Reed Gold Mine State Historic Site, annual Downtown Festivals, and Special Events offered through the Concord Parks and Recreation Department.

PART

03

GROWTH TRENDS

3.0 GROWTH TRENDS

The growth and development trends of the Study Area were assessed to examine existing demographics and projected growth to serve as the framework for understanding the local community and developing future direction for the 2030 Plan.

3.1 EXISTING DEMOGRAPHICS

The existing demographics and socioeconomic conditions were analyzed regarding total population figures, race/ethnicity, age distribution, and socioeconomic status within the Study Area.

3.1.1 GROWTH OVER TIME

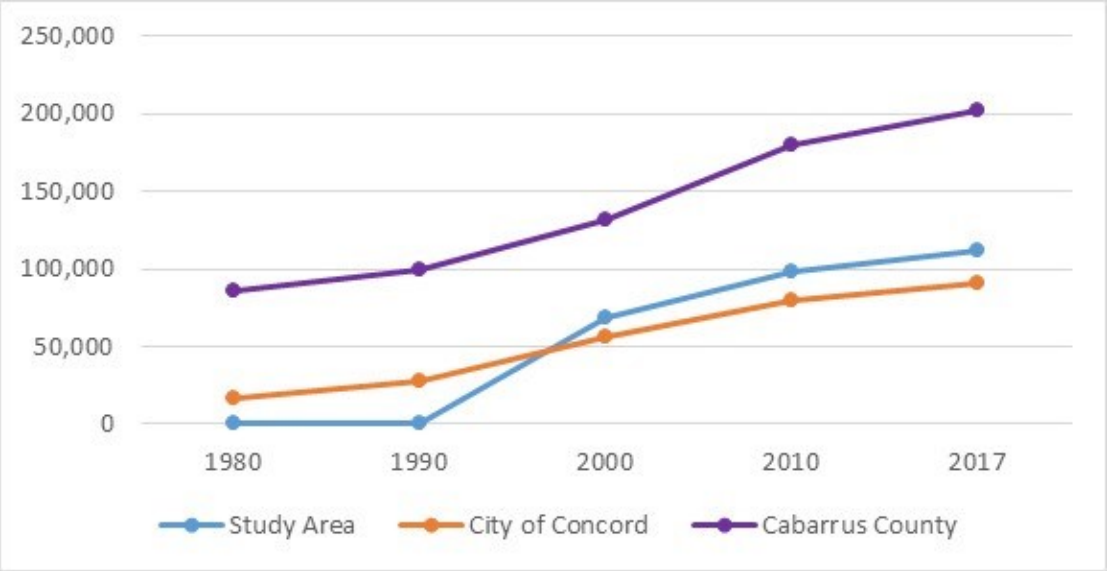
Table 3-1 and **Figure 3-1** present the historical population growth from 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2017 for the Study Area, City of Concord, and Cabarrus County. Since 1980, the region has experienced a steady increase in population, with especially dramatic growth between 1990-2017.

Table 3-1: Historical Population Growth

Year	Study Area	City of Concord	Cabarrus County
1980	N/A	16,942	85,895
1990	N/A	27,347	98,935
2000	69,089	55,977	131,063
2010	97,913	79,066	179,205
2017	111,161	91,091	202,126

(Source: City of Concord and ESRI Community Analyst)

Figure 3-1: Historical Population Growth

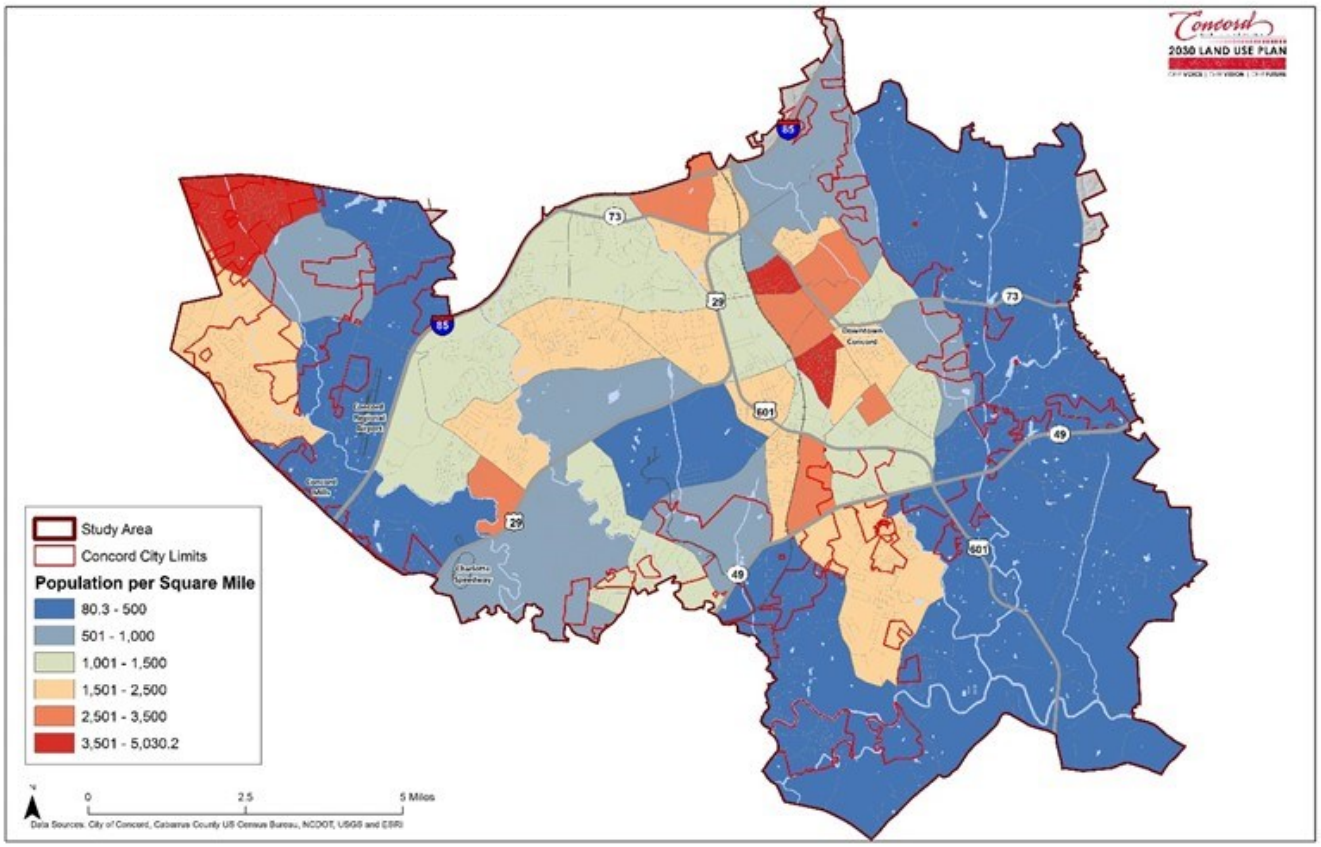


(Source: City of Concord and ESRI Community Analyst)

3.1.2 POPULATION DENSITY/INTENSITY

Map 3-1 presents the 2017 population density by Census Block. The map illustrates the existing population distribution which is largely to the west and south of Downtown. However, Downtown Concord contains more people per square mile than anywhere else in the Study Area.

Map 3-1: 2017 Population per Square Mile

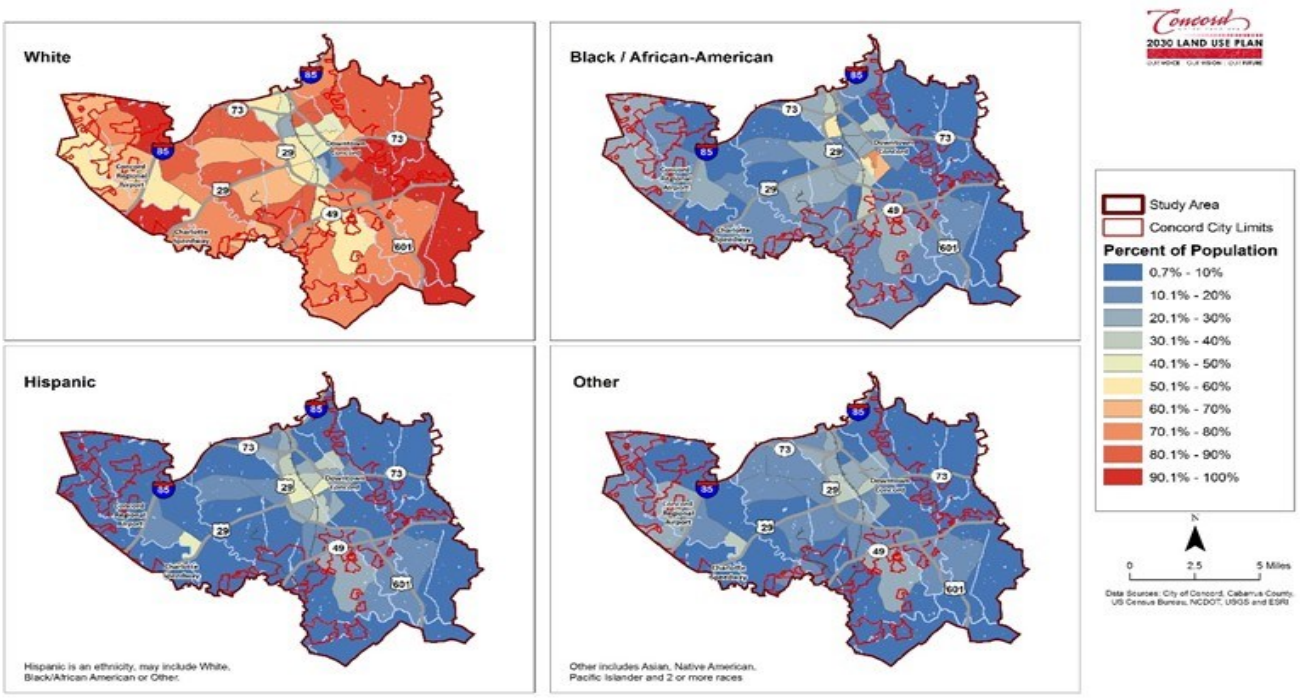


(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

3.1.3 RACE/ETHNICITY

The 2017 racial and ethnic composition of the Study Area by Census Block Groups is illustrated in **Map 3-2**. Overall, the Study Area is largely White (69%) with Black/African American (18%) being the second most represented race. Nearly 14% of the Study Area is classified as either Other (including Asian, Pacific Islander or American Indian) or two or more races. A majority of the non-white population is centered in the vicinity of the Downtown core of Concord, with a small enclave north of Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Map 3-2: 2017 Population by Race



(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

3.1.4 AGE DISTRIBUTION

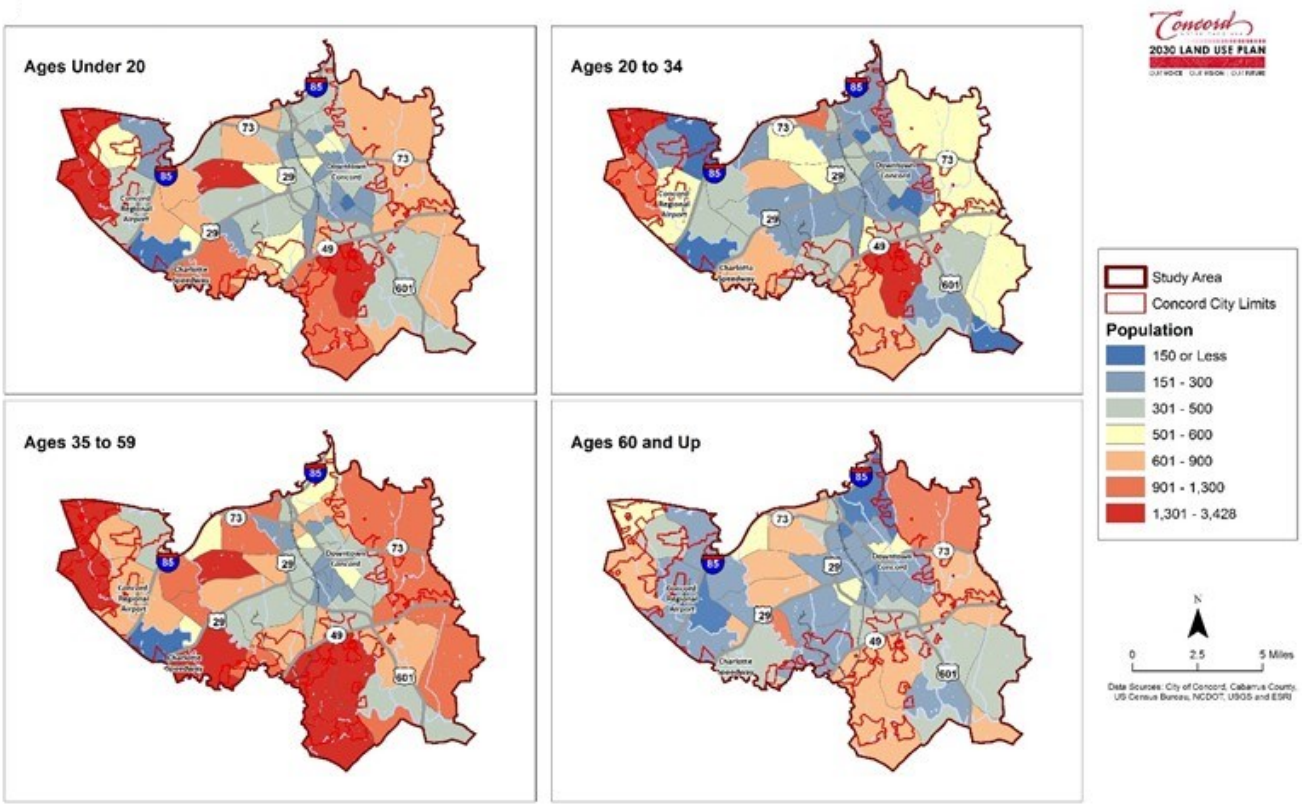
The 2017 distribution of age within the Study Area (**Table 3-2** and **Map 3-3**) shows that the largest age cohort is 35-59, with the second largest under 20 years old. **Map 3-3** illustrates the distribution of each age cohort. A significant portion of the population aged 35-59 lives in western Concord with their children. Another interesting observation is the concentration of those aged 60 and above near the confluence of NC 73 and US 29, south of the Carolinas Healthcare System Northeast.

Table 3-2: Age Distribution

Under 20 Years Old	20 to 34 Years Old	35 to 59 Years Old	Over 60 Years Old
30%	19%	34%	18%

(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

Map 3-3: 2017 Population by Age

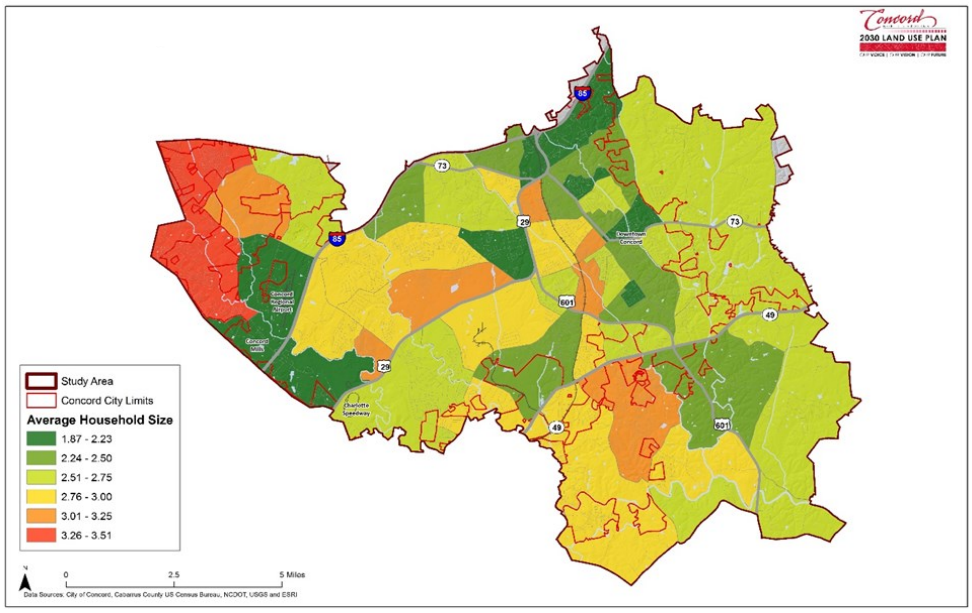


(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

3.1.5 SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

The socioeconomic condition within the Study Area includes assessments of the household size and household income. The Study Area average household size is 2.68 which is distributed as shown in **Map 3-4**. Larger household sizes are seen along the western boundary of the Study Area where immediately to the south are areas of small household sizes. Additionally, there is a general divide in the Downtown core along NC 73 with larger household sizes to the west, and slightly smaller household sizes within the eastern portion.

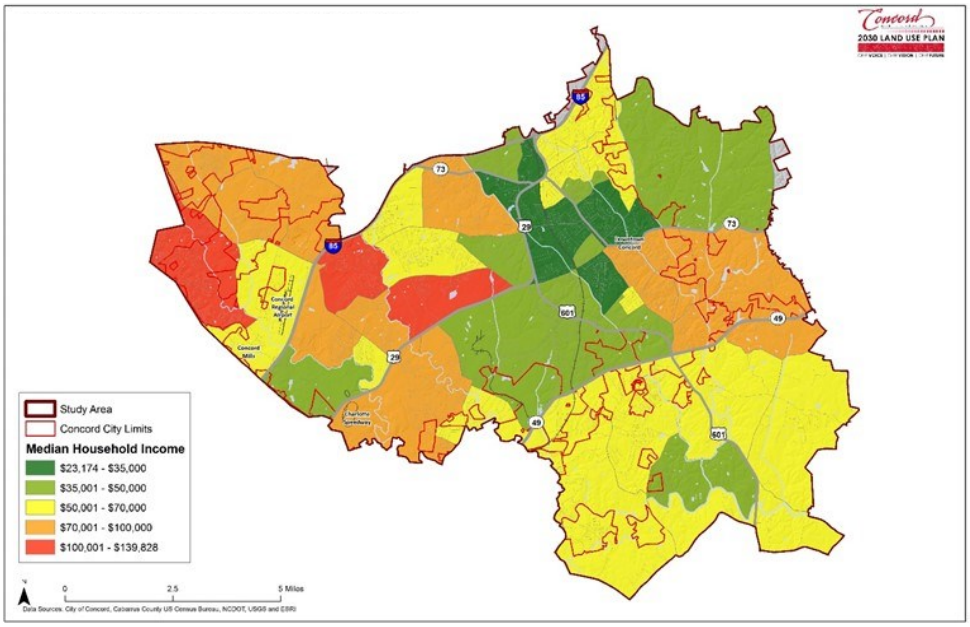
Map 3-4: 2017 Average Household Size



(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

The median household income for the Study Area is $58,378, which is approximately 19% more than the median household income for the state of North Carolina as a whole. As seen in **Map 3-5**, Downtown Concord generally contains lower average median incomes than the surrounding neighborhoods. The highest incomes are contained in the western portion of the Study Area within the City limits of Concord located adjacent to the I-85 and US 29 corridors, and west of the Concord Regional Airport.

Map 3-5: 2017 Median Household Income



(Source: ESRI Community Analyst)

3.2 PROJECTED GROWTH

The projected growth was analyzed regarding total population and employment figures within the Study Area to understand the local growth trends and develop future direction for the 2030 Plan.

3.2.1 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

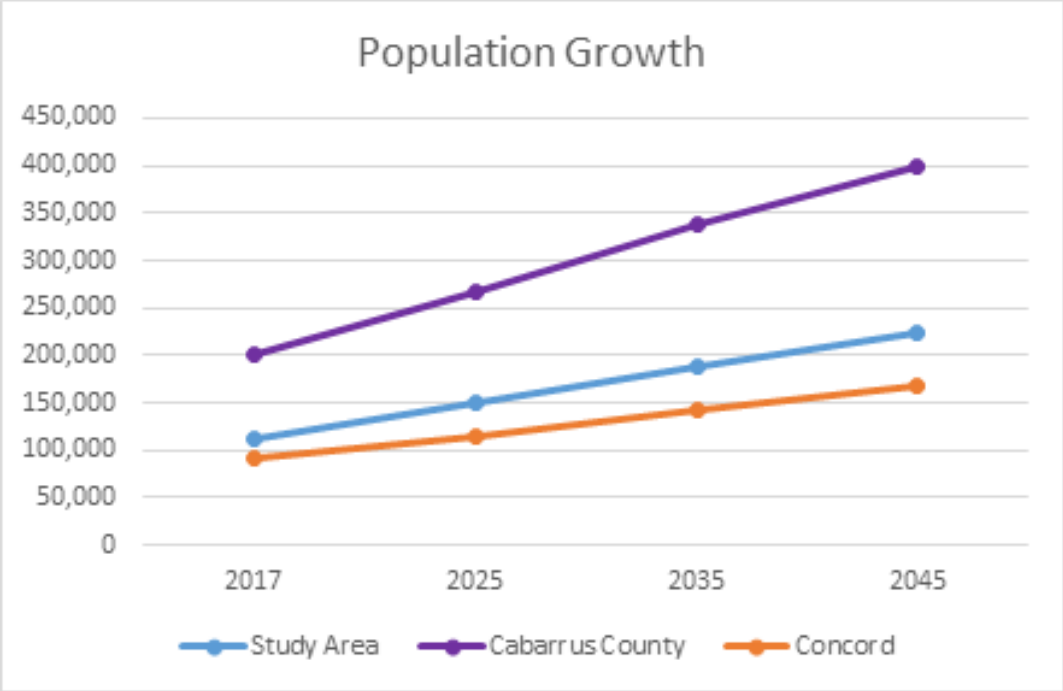
Table 3-3 and **Figure 3-2** present the projected population growth from 2017 to 2045 for the Study Area, City of Concord, and Cabarrus County. Over the next four decades, the region will experience a steady increase in population, with a projected population of 223,103 within the Study Area by 2045.

Table 3-3: Projected Population Growth

Year	Study Area	City of Concord	Cabarrus County
2017	111,161	91,091	202,126
2025	148,944	113,567	267,877
2035	188,182	141,561	337,916
2045	223,103	166.853	399,347

(Source: City of Concord and ESRI Community Analyst)

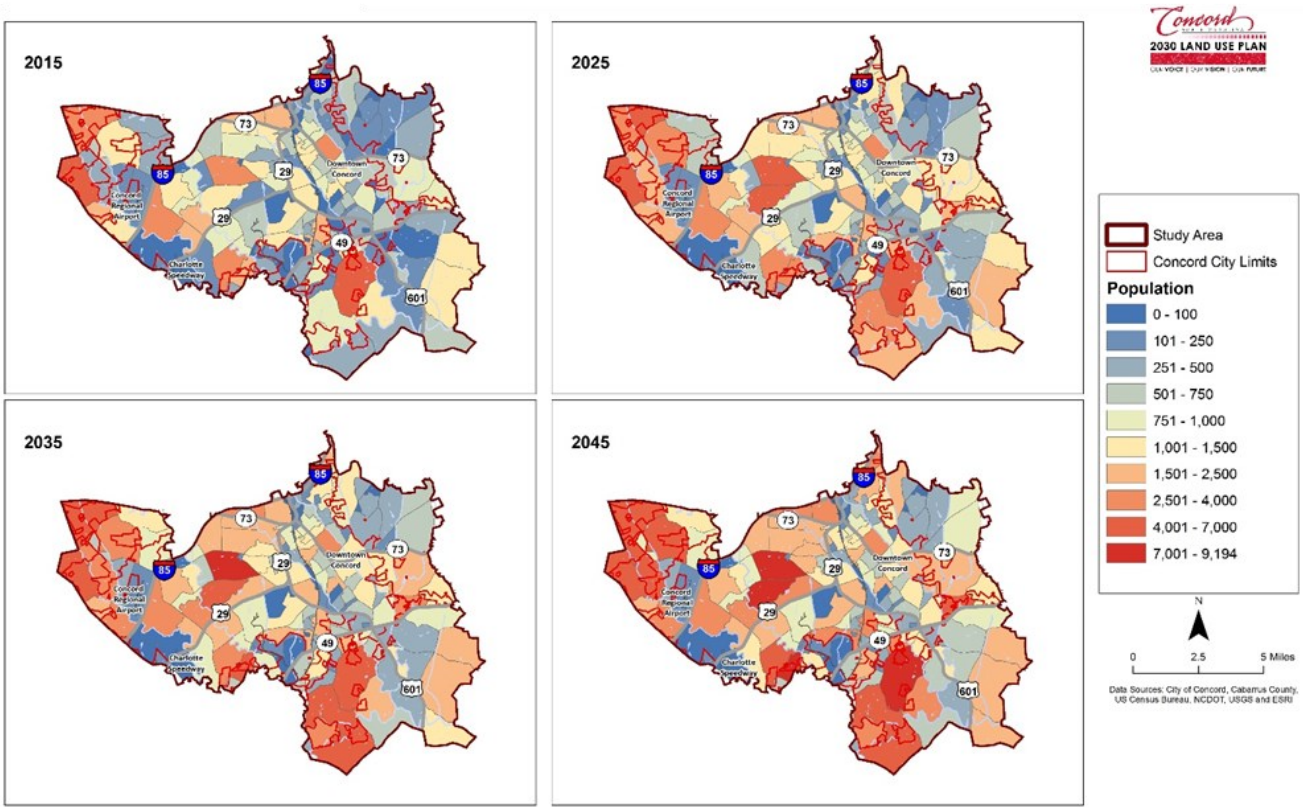
Figure 3-2: Projected Population Growth



(Source: City of Concord and ESRI Community Analyst)

Map 3-6 presents the future population density patterns by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) within the Study Area. The map illustrates the 2015 population distribution which is largely to the west and south of Downtown. This trend is expected to continue through the 2045 timeframe. It is important to note that while this map reflects overall population, it does not illustrate density of population, which would reflect that Downtown Concord contains more people per square mile than anywhere else in the Study Area.

Map 3-6: 2015 to 2045 Population Change



(Source: City of Concord and ESRI Community Analyst)

3.2.2 EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

A few of the major industries that are invested in the area are energy, food and beverage, aerospace, back office, logistics and automotive. These industries are supported by the nearby North Carolina Research Campus in Kannapolis, NASCAR facilities located in Charlotte and Cabarrus County, and both Charlotte-Douglas and Concord Regional Airports. The Cabarrus-Rowan Community College and University of North Carolina-Charlotte are also contributors to the industries in the area by offering employment as well as training opportunities for more technical and advanced jobs.

Table 3-4: Projected Employment Growth within the Study Area

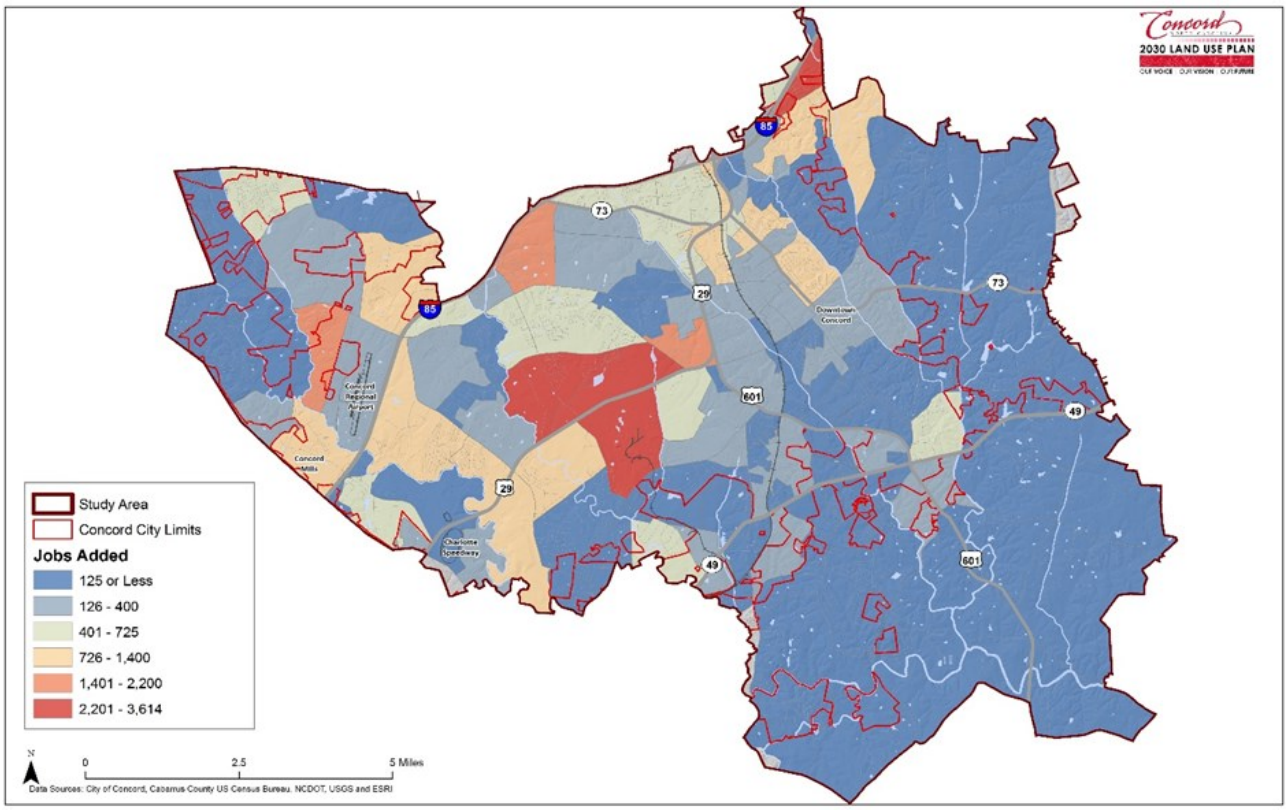
Year	Jobs
2017	53,744
2025	70,180
2035	84,119
2045	98,449

(Source: Metropolitan Transportation Plan and ESRI Community Analyst)

The primary major commercial areas within the Study Area consist of Downtown Concord, Concord Mills shopping mall, Concord Regional Airport and Business Park, Carolinas Northeast Medical Center and the I-85, US 601 and US 29 corridors. Within the Study Area, the projected employment growth from 2017 to 2045 is anticipated to include 44,705 jobs, which is an increase of approximately 83% (**Table 3-4**).

Map 3-7 shows the anticipated employment distribution mostly concentrated within the north and south side of Concord Parkway (US 29), just west of Warren C. Coleman (US 601), and enclaves within the north and west end of the Study Area.

Map 3-7: Employment Change 2015 to 2045



(Source: Metropolitan Transportation Plan and ESRI Community Analyst)

3.3 GROWTH TRENDS AND THE 2030 LAND USE PLAN

Concord has experienced significant growth over the last 20+ years, with a 60% increase since the year 2000 alone. This growth has resulted in the creation of new nodes and character areas, which have influenced the way the city functions as a whole. The City has fought to maintain its character in the face of growth, but expects additional pressure over the planning period. The 2030 Plan addresses this expected growth through a Growth Concept Map, and updated Future Land Use Map, and Goals, Objectives, and Policy Guidance designed to protect existing neighborhoods, improve the transportation/land use connection, and protect and enhance the employment base and economic assets in the community.

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PART

04

VISION CONCORD 2030

4.0 VISION CONCORD 2030

The vision for Concord in 2030 was developed based on ideas generated through the public involvement process, guidance from the Planning Technical Team (PTT), and staff input. The vision is an aspirational statement that addresses many facets of planning for population growth, economic development, and community livability. This statement articulates the overall goal for the community and the Future Land Use Map, Goals, Objectives, and Policy Guidance contained within the 2030 Plan are designed to direct development and infrastructure investment in an integrated way in support of accomplishing the vision. This part includes the Vision Statement, the Growth Concept Map, which is a visual representation of the desired growth vision for the community, and descriptions of the Community Character Areas.

4.1 VISION STATEMENT

In the year 2030, Concord is a strong, active, family-friendly and business-supportive community, rich in culture and diversity. Experiencing continuing growth, the City is planning and providing for the kind of development that it wants, while maintaining an authentic and genuine home-town feel.

(Image source: Cabarrus Events Association, http://www.cabarrusevents.org/concord-christmas-parade.html

(Image source: City of Concord Facebook)

(Image source: City of Concord Facebook)

While continuing to work constructively with its neighbors, Concord is a distinct, independent community within the larger Charlotte region. The City has become a multi-cultural center for world class business, with strong employment nodes that include high-paying, clean manufacturing jobs as well as corporate offices and complementary service and retail jobs. Our community is recognized as a regional hub for entertainment and recreation, medicine and air transport. Companies and employees are attracted by our superior schools; our network of splendidly maintained parks and greenways, and our lush tree canopy; by our expansive offering of well-connected, easily accessed local and regional destinations; and by the availability and variety of quality housing.

Carolinas Healthcare System Northeast (Image source: Tindale Oliver & Associates)

Concord Regional Airport (Image source: Charlotte Stories, http://www.charlottestories.com/concord-regional-airports-12-3-million-expansion-nearly-complete/)

Charlotte Motor Speedway (Image source: Charlotte Motor Speedway)

Our downtown is alive and vibrant with music, art, culture, and a wide variety of unique shops and restaurants. Other thriving mixed-use centers throughout the City (such as Concord Mills or our Medical district) serve distinct regional needs. These destinations are all interconnected –as well as connected to Downtown— by transit, sidewalks and trails.

Downtown Concord (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Visitor/Historic-Downtown-Concord)

Downtown Art Festival (Image source: Downtown Concord, https://www.concorddowntown.com/TheCDDC/Gallery.aspx)

Downtown Business (Image source: Downtown Concord, https://www.concorddowntown.com/TheCDDC/Gallery.aspx)

The City's older neighborhoods have been energized, rejuvenated and strengthened through development that complements their form, function and sense of place. Our historic neighborhoods are thriving and protected from erosion of their fabric and character. New neighborhoods have been carefully designed to use and serve land efficiently; to provide convenient access to jobs, goods and services; to maximize mobility and connectivity; and to enhance Concord's visual appeal.

Whether in new development, infill, or redevelopment, by 2030 Concord has been successful in promoting a variety of housing choices to serve all segments of its population, all with consideration to compatibility of scale, density, and appearance.

By bike, on foot, by car, or via transit, Concord offers its population a wide range of mobility options connecting homes to attractions throughout the City and to Charlotte and beyond.

Historical Homes, N. Union Street (Image source: Tindale Oliver)

4.2 GROWTH CONCEPT MAP

The Growth Concept Map (**Map 4-1**) is a visual representation of the overall growth vision for Concord based on the delineation of distinct Character Areas, Activity Centers, Multimodal Corridors, and Existing/Proposed Greenways. The Growth Concept Map, and the Character Area descriptions included in **Section 4.3** create the overall development framework for Concord through 2030. A brief description of the different elements included on the Growth Concept Map are included below:

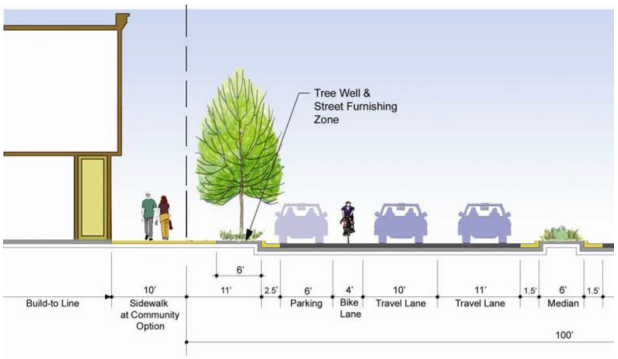
- **Character Areas:** The Character Areas that are designated on the Growth Concept identify specific areas that, due to existing /expected development pressures, are likely to be focal points for growth and development in Concord through 2030. Each Character Area has different qualities (development pattern, land use mix, etc.) and a role to play in the creation of a more connected and livable Concord. The Character Area descriptions contained within **Section 4.3** provide guidance for City staff, Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council as to the desired development character for each area.

- **Activity Centers:** Activity Centers represent existing major attractors throughout the community whose continued evolution will greatly affect the surrounding areas. These Activity Centers serve as anchors for most of the Character Areas.

- **Multimodal Corridors:** The designated Multimodal Corridors are identified as existing important automobile oriented transportation corridors that connect between Character Areas as well as to the larger region. These corridors are identified as either Primary Corridors or Secondary Corridors depending on their size and importance to the transportation system. The 2030 Plan identifies Multimodal Corridors as opportunities for incorporating multimodal features (bike lanes, transit service, sidewalks/trails) and more transit supportive land use patterns through corridor planning and zoning changes. Ultimately the development of these corridors consistent with multimodal principles will help to create a more coherent development pattern between Character Areas while encouraging travel using alternative modes.

- **Existing/Proposed Greenways:** Concord has an extensive plan to develop a comprehensive network of greenways. As shown on the Growth Concept, these future greenways will help reinforce connections between Character Areas and Activity Centers which will provide real options for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely travel through the City. Areas in floodways and adjacent to creeks, in particular, should be reserved for future greenways and other recreational facilities. See **Section 4.3.11** for additional details on the Greenway Character Area.

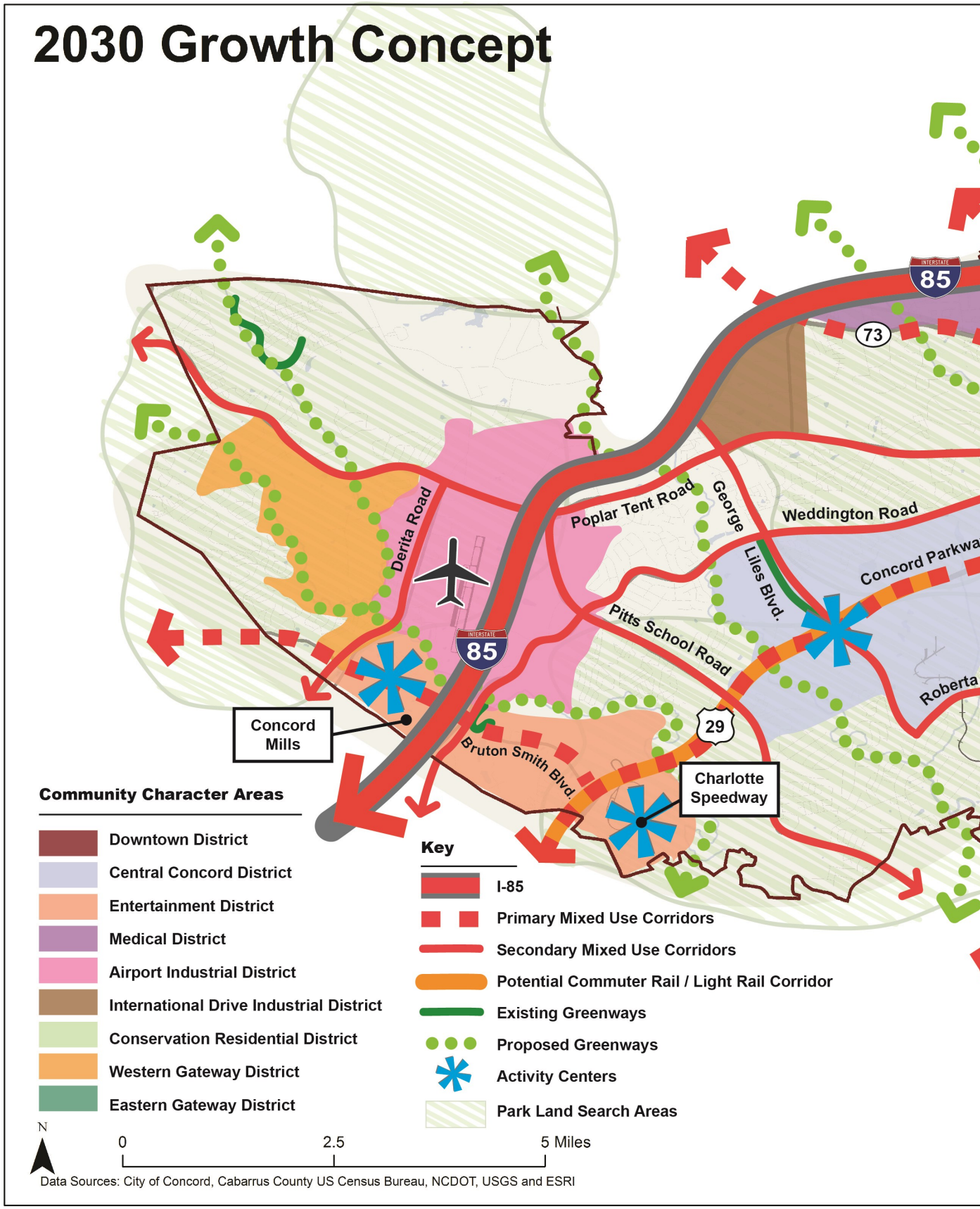
Activity Center, Concord Parkway (US 29) Warren C. Coleman (US 601) Small Area Plan

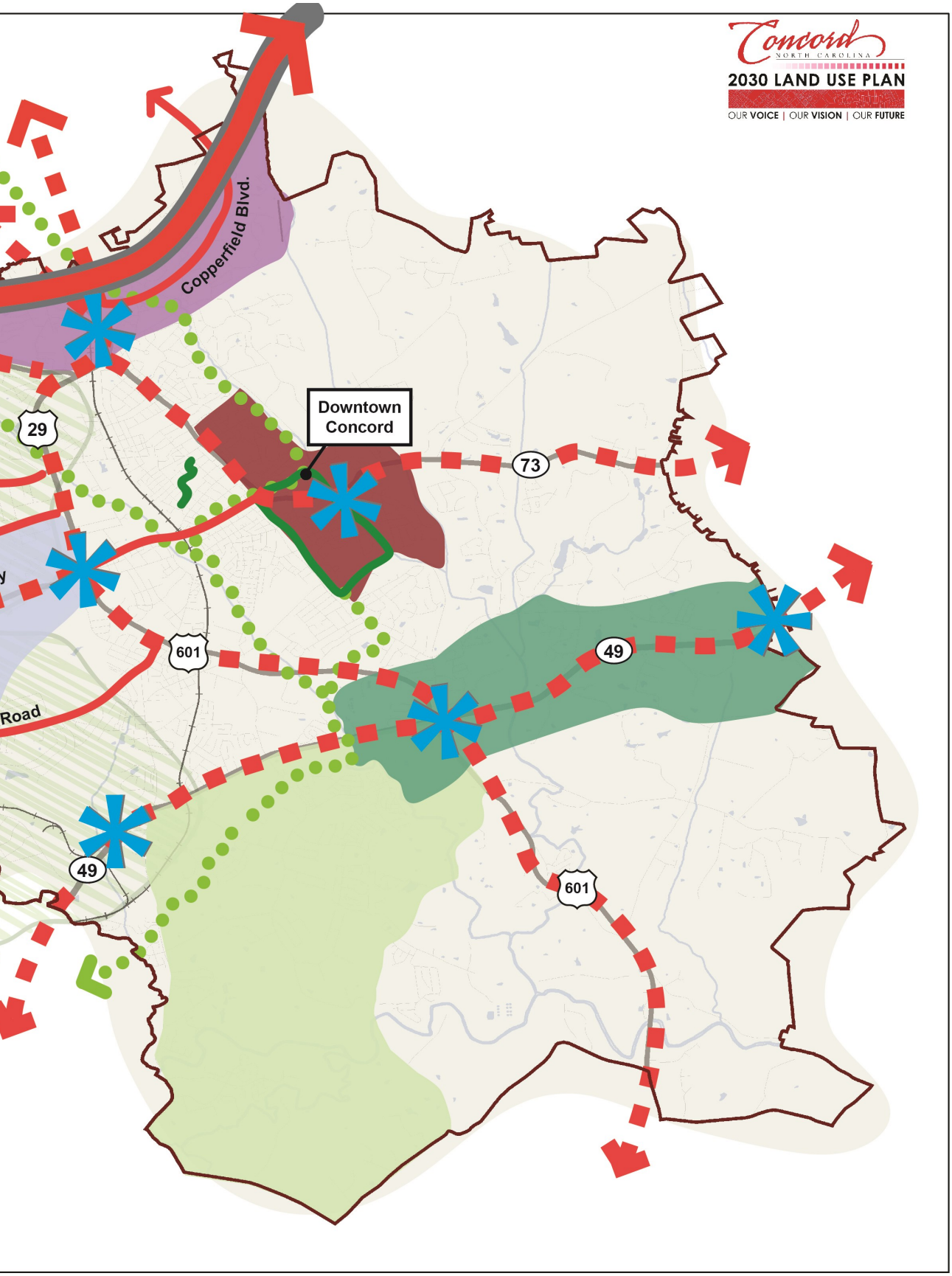


Multimodal Corridor, NC 73 Transportation/Land Use Corridor Plan

Harold B. McEachern Greenway (Image source: Carolina Thread Trail, https://www.carolinathreadtrailmap.org/trails/trail/harold-b-mceachern-greenway)

Map 4-1: 2030 Growth Concept




Concord NORTH CAROLINA
2030 LAND USE PLAN
OUR VOICE | OUR VISION | OUR FUTURE
Copperfield Blvd.
Downtown Concord
29
73
601
49
Road
49
601

4.3 COMMUNITY CHARACTER AREAS

Community Character Areas are portions of the City designated in the Growth Concept Map with unique land use characteristics and challenges that merit more detailed discussion of existing and desired character, challenges, opportunities and land use/design/development policies to inform future development decisions for each area. While some Community Character Areas have zoning districts that are specific to their needs, others are subject to conventional zoning that should be applied in a manner that reinforces the recommendations of the following sections and applicable area or corridor plans. The Growth Concept and the discussion of each Character Area should be used with the Future Land Use Map to guide zoning, capital improvement planning and development decisions.

4.3.1 DOWNTOWN CHARACTER

As shown in **Map 4-1**, the Downtown Character Area encompasses Concord's traditional core as well as easternmost sections of the Center City: approximately from Brookwood Avenue on the north to Lawndale Avenue on the south, and between Union Street and Branchview Drive, to Cold Water Creek along Cabarrus Avenue and Irish Buffalo Creek along Cabarrus Avenue.

Downtown is the heart of Concord, having the greatest concentration of historic and cultural resources and being one of the densest areas in terms of population and small businesses, Downtown is projected to be an important growth area over the next few decades, serving in function as a major activity center.

Union Street Live Concert and Block Party (Image source: https://www.concorddowntown.com/News/TabId/152/ArtMID/621/ArticleID/19/Union-Street-Live-Concert-and-Block-Party.aspx)

The closing of the textile mills and the introduction of the suburban "big box" left many structures in and around downtown vacant in the mid 1970's. Overall, the Downtown Character Area has been a designated area for retail, restaurant, professional offices, and governmental uses. Due to the strong retail presence and tourist attractions well -established within the City of Concord limits, the demand for various housing options within the area is evolving. Future availability of housing with the associated retail and restaurant establishments could lead to increased population and higher median incomes in the Downtown Character Area. The area has traditionally experienced relatively unhurried population growth and median income advancement in contrast to other parts of the City.

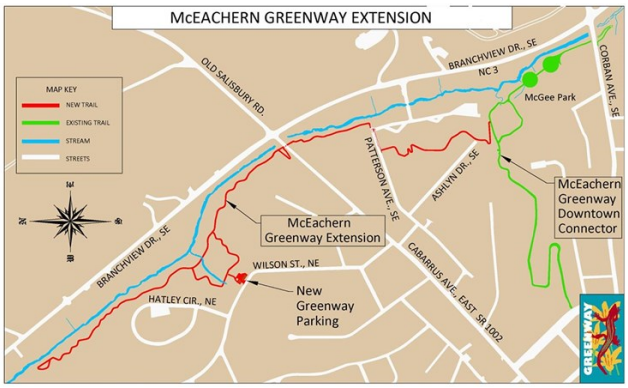
Over the years, the City of Concord and the business community have planned and taken steady steps to revitalize downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. In 2002, the first Concord Downtown Master Plan was adopted. That Plan was updated in 2008 and again in 2016. Along with public input, several technical studies informed the development of the Plan's strategies for mobility, wayfinding, parking, economic development (jobs, housing and entertainment). The Plan's implementation is projected to occur over a 6+ year period.

In 2003, the City also adopted the Center City Master Plan, a 10-year plan which addresses long-term development of each of the 14 identifiable neighborhoods that surround the traditional downtown core. A branded logo and a list of improvement strategies was created for each neighborhood.

The Harold B. McEachern Greenway extends from McGee Park at the corner of Corban Avenue and Branchview Drive south to Lawndale Avenue. The greenway's Downtown Connector runs west from the northwest corner of the park ending at McCachern Boulevard. In January 2017, the City approved a $1.3 million extension of the McEachern Greenway from McGee Park to just north of the intersection of Cabarrus Avenue and Branchview Drive (**Map 4-2**).

Some commercial development has occurred along Branchview Drive at the intersections of Cabarrus Avenue/Old Salisbury-Concord Road, and Corban Avenue. This area is older and has a lingering semi-rural/ lower-density, open space character.

Map 4-2: Plan of Proposed McEachern Greenway Extension



(Image source: City of Concord, https://goo.gl/soTVYD)

During the past 15 years, great progress has been made in carrying out the goals of the current Downtown and Center City Master Plans. Over the next 10 to 20 years, the City needs to:

- **Take additional steps to ensure the continued success of efforts to revitalize downtown**. Although there are a few vacant storefronts and several upper level redevelopment and infill opportunities, employment projections show up to 400 new jobs created in the downtown area through 2045, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.
  - Continue to support organizations such as the Concord Downtown Development Corporation.
  - Continue to implement the 2016 Downtown Master Plan and supporting technical studies.
  - Integrate land use and regulatory recommendations into the Concord Development Ordinance.
- **Decide how much of the City's projected growth could (or should) be absorbed to support the long-term vitality of downtown without compromising the core's integrity and identity**. Between the downtown core and the adjoining neighborhoods, the area has capacity for significant additional residential growth to support the City's revitalization efforts through a combination of rehab, adaptive reuse, infill and redevelopment projects.
  - Study the capacity of the area between Branchview Drive and Cold Water Creek south of Corban Avenue to support future growth close to the downtown core.
  - Require high-quality design for new and redeveloped buildings.
- **Complete the array of housing, infrastructure, service and recreation** needed to solidify the identity and competitive position of downtown as a daytime and nighttime activity center. (The 2016 DFI Market Study estimated demand for between 390 and 680 new housing units in downtown over the next 10 years).
  - Support neighborhood-oriented businesses that provide daily goods and services.
- **Add to the inventory of assets** such as new public art, wayfinding, the Downtown Greenway Loop, bike lanes, and improved transit service which already have helped increased the attractiveness of downtown.
  - Continue efforts to complete the development of the Harold B. McEachern Greenway north of the currently planned extension.
  - As the area incrementally revitalizes and grows in residents, workers and visitors, monitor the need for additional Rider Transit stops, routes, and transit options (e.g., trolley, downtown circulator).
- **Step up efforts to protect and enhance the historic and cultural resources** that make downtown the "heart and soul" of Concord.
  - Continue to recognize significant historic resources and apply appropriate historic preservation measures to all designated historic structures and sites.
  - Maintain an inventory of significant resources which meet the designation criteria.
  - Encourage the renovation and adaptive reuse of downtown buildings, by adding flexibility to the Concord Development Ordinance to accommodate historic structures and sites.
  - Continue to promote the economic benefits of historic and cultural resources, monitoring visitor and tourist activities, including heritage tourism generated by historic and cultural resources.
- **Step up the completion of multimodal infrastructure**, particularly sidewalks and bike lanes, linking the in-town neighborhoods to the historic core over the next decade.
- **Continue implementing relevant strategies of the Center City Master Plan** for the corridors and neighborhoods along Church Street, Cabarrus Avenue, and Corban Avenue.
  - Create incentives to encourage compatible-character development in underutilized areas along Church Street, Cabarrus Avenue and Corban Avenue.
  - Ensure that community amenities, public facilities and services are equitably distributed within walking distance of everyone in the neighborhoods.

4.3.2 CENTRAL CONCORD CHARACTER AREA

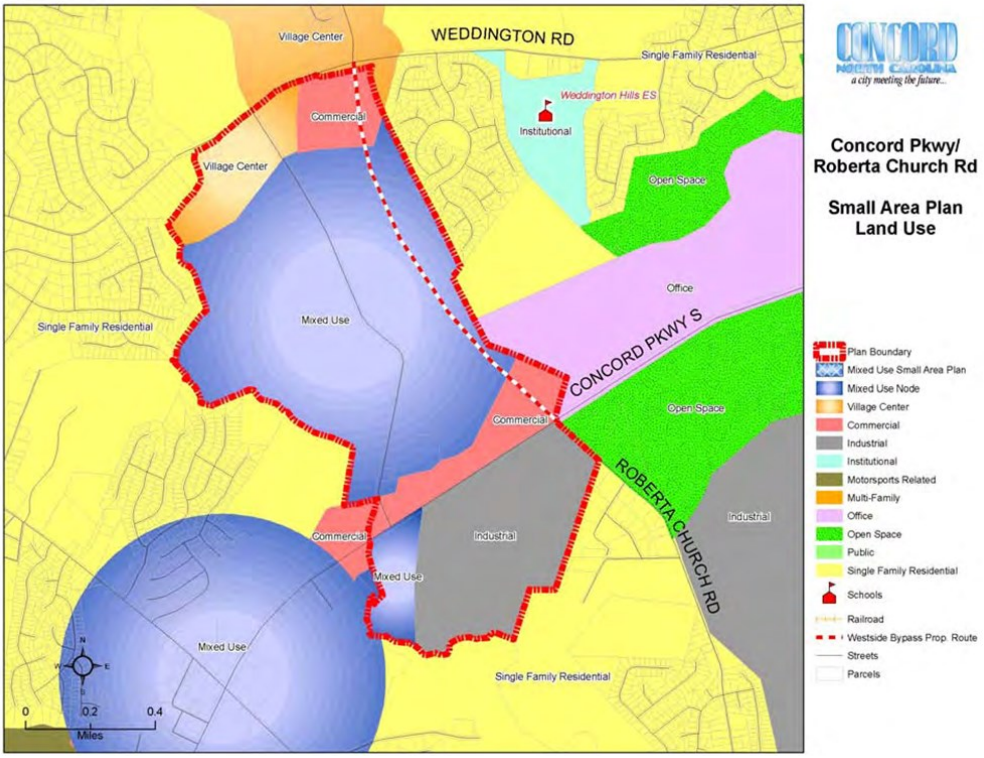
As shown in **Map 4-1**, the Central Concord Character Area extends southwest along Concord Parkway (US 29) from Wolf Meadow Branch (west of the Wal-Mart Super Center) past the corridor's intersection with Pitts School Road. There are two planned Mixed-Use Activity Centers along Concord Parkway – one at George W. Liles Parkway and one at Pitts School Road. While largely undeveloped today, the Concord Parkway corridor and the adjacent areas that represent Central Concord are planned to accommodate significant amounts of residential, commercial and industrial development over the next ten years. As this growth occurs, the City will face the following challenges:

- Maintaining Concord Parkway as an attractive corridor that serves as a primary gateway to Downtown Concord.
- Serving a mix of travel modes along Concord Parkway, including motorists, transit (both bus and the long-term potential for light rail/commuter rail), bicyclists and pedestrians (particularly within the activity centers).
- Providing multi-modal connections between uses within the activity centers.
- Ensuring compatible transitions between industrial, commercial and residential land uses.

While future rail service from Concord to Charlotte is not a given, the City has a strong interest in preserving the opportunity for future service along the Concord Parkway corridor, which provides the most direct route from Downtown Concord to the existing LYNX service at UNC Charlotte. The northeastern portion of this character area has abundant open land to accommodate future rail right-of-way on either side of the Concord Parkway corridor. The southwestern portion of the character area has less vacant land available within existing right of way, but retains opportunities on private property to provide parallel right-of-way. The City will need to identify and protect potential right-of-way for a preferred alignment to ensure that future rail services remains viable in this corridor.

Heading away from downtown, the former Phillip Morris/ALEVO site that fronts on the south side of the Concord Parkway corridor provides opportunities for a large-scale high visibility corporate campus development. Facing this site on the north side of the corridor is significant acreage of land currently used for agricultural purposes that backs up to the Cabarrus Country Club that is well suited for a mixed-use development that mirrors the mixed-use development patterns of the Roberta Church Road Small Area Plan shown in **Map 4-3**. The Plan includes industrial uses, commercial uses along Concord Parkway, a mix of residential, service, public and village center uses in the remainder of the plan area.

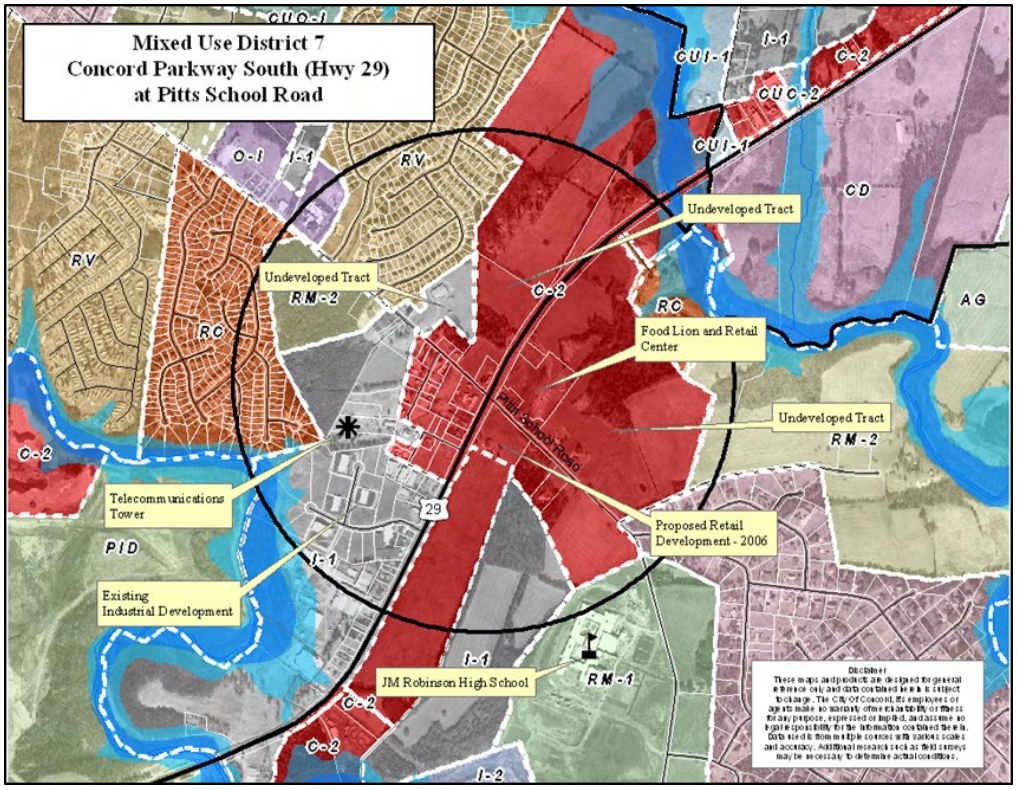
Map 4-3: Concord Parkway/Roberta Church Road Small Area Plan



(Source: City of Concord)

To the southwest of the area encompassed by the Roberta Church Road Small Area Plan is the Mixed Use Activity Center located at the intersection of Concord Parkway and Pitts School Road (**Map 4-4**). This area includes a grocery store with surrounding retail shops, gas stations, restaurants, and drug store . There is also an apartment complex in this district just north of this intersection, but is separated by vacant land. Much of the commercial development is recent and a great deal of undeveloped land remains behind this development. The southeast corner of the intersection includes a Walgreen's store, two restaurants and a Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market. Across US 29 from this location is a mixture of commercial and industrial uses. Many of the industrial buildings were built over 20 years ago and do not meet current development standards.

Map 4-4: Mixed Use District 7



(Source: City of Concord)

The current layout of development surrounding the intersection consists of conventional automobile-oriented commercial uses that abut some older industrial and commercial structures. While many of the newer commercial developments include sidewalks, the area is not conducive to bicycle or pedestrian traffic. As redevelopment occurs, the City should improve pedestrian connectivity and begin reorienting structures to support compatible integration between commercial activity around the intersection and a mix of residential development on surrounding parcels on the north side of Pitts School Road. Development along Concord Parkway to the southwest of this intersection should remain as a mix of commercial and industrial uses with a focus on visually buffering these uses from the corridor and from abutting residential development to the west of the Rocky River.

4.3.3 ENTERTAINMENT CORRIDOR CHARACTER AREA

Concord Mills/Bruton Smith Boulevard connects two of Concord's biggest regional attractions and economic assets – Concord Mills on the west side of I-85 and the Charlotte Motor Speedway to the east. Exit 49 along I-85 provides easy access to these attractions for regional visitors, but the Concord Mills/Bruton Smith corridor experiences heavy traffic congestion during peak traffic periods. Between Derita Road on the west and the Speedway are traditional auto-oriented retail and a few multi-family developments within the Mixed-Use Activity Center surrounding Concord Mills, highway oriented commercial with restaurants and hotels east of I-85, and numerous auto dealerships to the west of the Speedway. As shifts in the retail sector change demands for the space, the City will need to address the following challenges in this corridor:

- **Improving access within the corridor for visitors**. While there are many hotels within this corridor (most of which are clustered to the east of I-85), trips to anything other than the abutting restaurants require visitors to get in their cars. While improved bike and pedestrian facilities are needed, transit service connecting the hotels to motorsport facilities to the east and Concord Mills to the west could alleviate congestion during motorsports or other large events.
- **Facilitating transition to a more sustainable mix of commercial and residential uses**. While Concord Mills has the potential to remain a regional attraction through the right mix of entertainment and retail uses, much of the surrounding auto-oriented retail uses are likely to face challenges as retail markets change. The City should closely monitor occupancy within this area and ensure that applicable zoning facilitates redevelopment that reflects changes in the ways and locations that people shop.
- **Discouraging incompatible development near motorsport facilities**. The City should discourage additional residential development between Pitts School Road, I-85, and the City's southern boundaries.
- **Supporting complementary amusement and recreation uses**. The public interest district zoning that applies to the Speedway environs is a useful tool to authorize a wide variety of high impact amusement and recreational uses that could attract even more visitors to this vibrant corridor. Similar flexibility should be applied to many of the commercially zoned properties located that are outside this district.

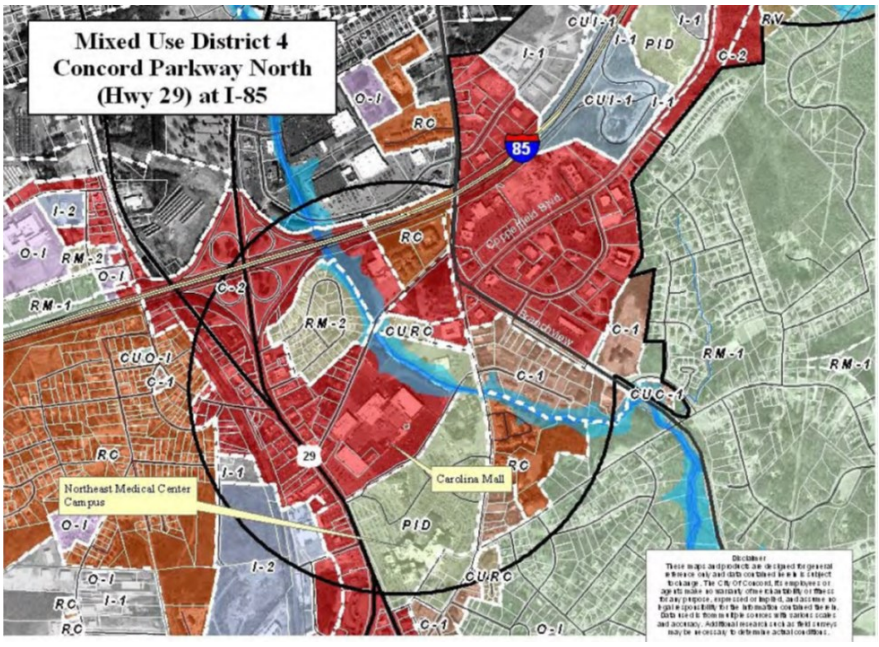
Concord Mills (Source image: Classica Homes, LLC, http://www.classicahomes.com/gallery/gallery.asp?GalleryID=14&MenuRef=#&gid=1&pid=1)

Charlotte Motor Speedway (Image source: NASCAR, https://galleries.nascar.com/gallery/1115/charlotte-motor-speedway#/0)

4.3.4 MEDICAL CENTER CHARACTER AREA

The Medical Center Character Area extends between I-85 and Davidson Highway (NC 73), east to the junction with Concord Parkway, and beyond along the south side of the Lake Concord Road and Copperfield Boulevard corridor to the City boundaries. The area includes the Carolina Mall, Carolinas Healthcare System NorthEast medical campus, a variety of complementary medical-related services, a mix of suburban-style single-family subdivisions and large apartment complexes, and several sections of auto-oriented, stand-alone commercial and strip centers. The character area incorporates former Mixed-Use District #4 (**Map 4-5**).

Map 4-5: Mixed Use District 4



(Source: City of Concord)

Carolinas HealthCare System NorthEast is an important regional 457-bed, non-profit, acute-care and, teaching hospital. The campus in Concord employs more than 4,000 people, and includes services such as the Batte Cancer Center, Jeff Gordon Children's Hospital, Hayes Family Center, and Sanger Heart and Vascular Institute. The institution was formerly Cabarrus Memorial Hospital.

NorthEast Medical Center (Source image: Tindale Oliver & Associates)

The NorthEast medical center also houses the Cabarrus College of Health Sciences, a member of North Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities. The college offers five associate degree and three bachelor's degree programs. Enrollment at the college has grown exponentially since the current facility opened on the medical center campus in 2004.

Another important asset that is located within this character area is the Concord/Kannapolis Rider Transit Center. The Transit Center serves as the transfer point between the different routes of the Rider system. The Northfolk-Southern Railroad line runs in a north/south direction through the area, behind the Transit Center property. In addition to the freight service operated by Norfolk-Southern, Amtrak runs trains on this line, but the nearest station is in Kannapolis. This line was previously studied as a potential candidate for regional rail commuter service; the goal of commuter service with a stop in Concord should again be raised at an appropriate time in the regional discussion.

The commercial area along Concord Parkway toward Exit 58 is largely developed and there is little vacant land remaining. The commercial corridor, after a period of decline, has been experiencing some degree of renovation and redevelopment.

Despite recent improvements, the pattern of single-use auto-oriented commercial sites remains. Due to the prevalence of individual driveways, access management is a challenge that the City will have to continue to address. Some redeveloped sites have been designed to provide shared parking and access, but each site also retains an individual driveway connection to Concord Parkway. The presence of such large traffic generators as the mall and the medical center aggravates traffic congestion in the area.

While vacant land for new development is relatively scarce, this area's future has potential for significant redevelopment on individual sites or assemblages, including the 40+ year-old Carolina Mall. Over the next couple of decades, the City should:

- **Continue to promote efficient site designs**, with circulation patterns that reduce the number of driveway openings, optimize traffic patterns, and safely accommodate alternative transportation modes. Site designs will need to be compatible with Exit 58 intersection improvements.
- **Expand the sidewalk network and add bicycle routes**, particularly where they can safely connect to the major employers and to the Transit Center, as well as connections to the surrounding residential areas.
- **Establish gateways** and encourage signage to be cleaned up signage over time. Wayfinding should be used to promote a sense of identity for the area.

The neighborhoods in the vicinity of the hospital and the near the transit center offer an opportunity for additional housing. Land is available in these neighborhoods, and the mix of single and multi-family offers options to residents, and the opportunity to live near work and transit. Consider higher density and more variety in housing types to add diversity and strengthen the area. Such housing may be in the form of mixed use, as loft apartments, condominiums, second floor dwellings over commercial and offices uses, or townhomes.

The Copperfield Boulevard corridor will likely continue to develop in a more suburban commercial pattern, with a mix of corporate, medical and professional service offices and convenience retail in single sites or medium-size shopping centers. Medical services complementary to the hospital will continue to be in demand. Existing development along this corridor is newer and generally of higher visual quality than the older Concord Parkway commercial, with low-key monument signage, landscaped parking lots and vegetative buffers along the road. The sidewalk network is incomplete, but the gaps will fill in as the area develops.

4.3.5 AIRPORT INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREA

The Concord Regional Airport is located adjacent to I-85, Poplar Tent Road and Derita Road, in the heart of the highest growth corridor in the state of North Carolina. The facility offers convenient access to many of the City's major destinations including Concord Mills Mall, the Charlotte Motor Speedway, the Z-max Dragway, and the International Drive Industrial Character Area. The airport is only about 15-20 minutes away from both Downtown Concord and Downtown Charlotte.

Concord Regional Airport's New Terminal (Image source: Silvia Vargas)

The Airport Industrial Character Area encompasses the area that surrounds the airport, including the Vulcan Materials Company's granite quarry and rock crushing operation, as well as about ten small- to medium-sized business and industrial parks located within the approximately 2-mile area of influence of the airport. These include the Concord Airport Business Park, home to an Amazon order-fulfillment center; West Winds Business Park, which hosts a number of motorsport -related businesses; the Roush Fenway Racing NASCAR R&D complex; and the King's Grant Business Park at Weddington Road and Pitts School Road, east of I-85, which serves a mix of light industrial and service uses.

Concord Airport Business Park (Image source: Charlotte Business Journal, https://www.bizjournals.com/charlotte/news/2016/10/28/concord-park-lands-itek-lease.html)

Most of the existing business parks still have land available, even while several major projects are underway. For example, the River Oaks Business Park at the corner of Derita Road and Poplar Tent Road will have over 1,300,000 SF of space when fully developed. The Concord Airport Business Park West project on Derita Road will have over 1,600,000 SF of space.

Development in this area exploded after the widening of I-85, and airport extended its runway in 2005 and dedicated a new $12.6 million terminal in 2016. The airport, which occupies 607 acres, serves general aviation, corporate, military, government, and commercial service aircraft, and is open 24/7. Since the expansion of the runway, which accommodates mid-size commercial aircraft, the motorsports industry has used the airport regularly for private and charter flights. In mid-2017, the airport is adding a new above-ground fuel storage tank to its existing fuel farm. It is also planning a runway and taxiway overlay project, which should be completed in 2018.

Concord Airport Business Park (Image source: SC Hondros & Associates, Inc., https://schondros.com/concord-airport-business-park/)

Demand for this type of development is anticipated to continue, as the area meets the desired site selection criteria for larger industrial and business park campuses, including strategic location with easy access to the interstate and airport, existing infrastructure, large lots, a mix of uses, access to skilled labor force and good schools. Over the next two decades, the City should:

- **Continue to update the Airport Master Plan on a regular basis**, to ensure future growth and improvement needs are met.
- **Monitor trends and criteria**. Continue to carefully monitor business and manufacturing site selection trends, as well as industrial land supply and demand.
- **Continue to expect the same high standard of design quality that prevails in the existing developments**. Apply the same expectation to future industrial development, for example, the City's recently-annexed acreage between Gordon's Food Service and Vulcan Materials Company. Design and visual quality in most of the business parks in the area is controlled through master plans and restrictive covenants and the City should encourage each park to enforce their its standards.
- **Monitor and plan for service and infrastructure needs**, from providing adequate water, broadband/fiber, and public safety services, to enhancing traffic and freight mobility.

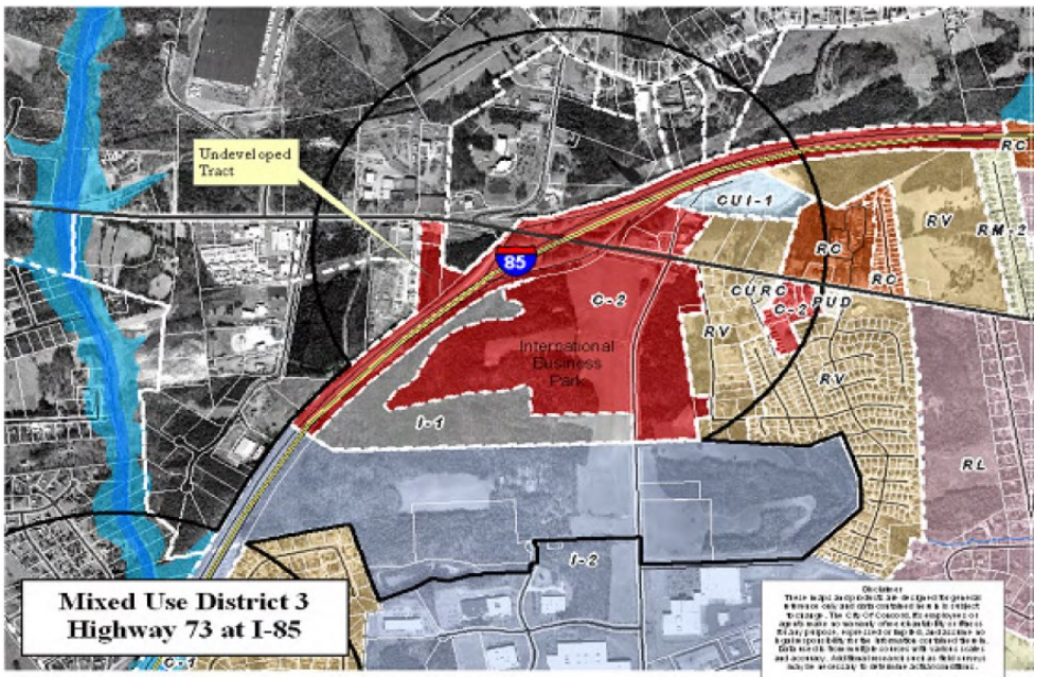
- **Preserve and integrate natural resources**. Encourage the retention of stands of trees and other natural vegetation, stream corridors, and environmentally sensitive areas and their integration into site design.
- **Screen unsightly views**. Ensure adequate screening of unattractive elements of light industrial/business park developments (loading docks, rooftop equipment, parking areas, trash containers, etc.), as well as transition buffers when adjoining other land uses.
- **Provide safe, continuous pedestrian and bicycle facility networks** to promote direct access to nearby residential, non-residential, public uses, and transit service to jobs.
- **Support the local labor force**. Ensure that the Concord labor force remains competitive. Work with employers and educational institutions to ensure relevant training and advanced learning options are provided.
- **Offer the right incentives**. Track the comparative effectiveness of incentives offered to attract new or support growth of existing business.
- **Embrace green development**. Green, sustainable industrial design and operational innovation in industrial development is becoming an increasingly important factor in company site selection criteria.
- **Discourage new residential development** in this character area.
- **Affirm airport overlays** to protect flight paths.
- **Consider integration of ancillary commercial uses**. To reduce traffic and provide employees with accessible retail and commercial uses, consideration should be given to encourage ancillary commercial that could help in addressing daily needs and services.

4.3.6 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREA

Like many other industrial and business parks within Concord, International Business Park (IBP) on International Drive is located within close proximity of Interstate 85, at the Davidson Highway (NC 73) exit (Exit 55, one of the busiest highway interchanges in the state of North Carolina).

The character area overlaps to some extent with the Mixed-Use Activity Center (**Map 4-6**), which included property surrounding Exit 55, International Business Park (IBP), and parcels along International Drive. The character area is adjacent to established single-family subdivisions to the east, south and west. The subdivision to the west consists predominantly of large lots with manufactured housing.

Map 4-6: Mixed Use District 3



(Source: City of Concord)

IBP is a premier business and industrial park, primarily marketed for "clean" industry and corporate office facilities. The park still has significant growth potential, with eight sites and one building currently available. The four northernmost parcels near the intersection of International Drive and Davidson Highway were rezoned for commercial use and are being offered for mixed-use hotel/retail development. Development in IBP is governed by a park site master plan and restrictive covenants which control such items as building architecture, urban design and landscaping. The same standards will be expected to apply to future development of the remaining parcels within the park.

Design within IBP is controlled by restrictive covenants (Image source: Silvia Vargas)

With increased access resulting from the widening and improvements of I-85, future traffic volumes will likely intensify around the highway interchange and along Davidson Highway/NC 73, as the remainder of the International Drive Character Area develops and matures.

Davidson Highway/NC 73 is a major east-west thoroughfare that connects Concord with Huntersville and Lincolnton. In 2004, with the assistance of NCDOT and the Centralina COG, three counties and five municipalities along the highway together developed a comprehensive land-use, urban design and transportation plan for NC 73. The corridor study incorporates existing and anticipated land use and transportation patterns to generate a series of typologies provide a range from two to six travel lanes, to meet anticipated traffic volumes in different locations throughout the corridor (**Map 4-7**).

Map 4-7: NC 73 Corridor Study Area

(Image source: NCDOT, https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/NC73/)

The key outcome of the NC 73 Corridor study was a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all participating communities and elected officials, indicating their intent to follow the Plan's land use and transportation recommendations.

NCDOT is committed to follow the strategic plan for the roadway so that roadway development over time will be coordinated with the land use plan of each community. However, the study area does not cover the portion of NC 73 east of Exit 55 (i.e., from I-85 to Concord Parkway). The City and NCDOT should continue to monitor traffic volumes on this roadway and consider additional improvements as the area develops. Improvements to NC 73 are slated to begin with right- of-way acquisition in 2020 and construction in 2022 per the 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program.

With the presence of more than 3,000 workers in this area, transit access and bicycle and pedestrian connections to the surrounding neighborhoods are important. The addition of commercial, office and hotel accommodations to the mix of existing uses will only strengthen the position of IBP and Concord as a major economic driver within the region (**Map 4-8**).

Map 4-8: International Business Park Master Site Plan

International Business Park Master Site Plan and Phasing Plan (Image sources: Archinect, Michael P. Schneider, https://goo.gl/Vuz54o, International Business Park at Concord, https://goo.gl/pYwQus)

Over the next two decades, the City should:

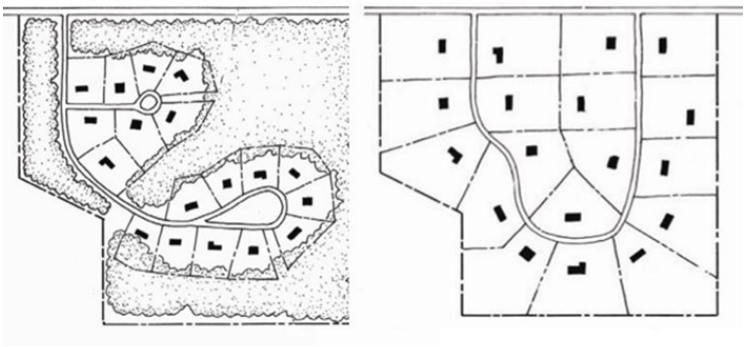
- **Provide for continuous pedestrian and bicycle facilities**. The master plan for the IBP did not include pedestrian facilities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, and other amenities. It is important to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient connections to allow the opportunity for employees to utilize the alternative transportation methods to get to and from work, and between buildings within the IBP. Additionally the provision of high-quality transit facilities in service should be pursued.
- **Consider integration of ancillary commercial uses**. To reduce traffic and provide employees with accessible retail and commercial uses, consideration should be given to encourage ancillary commercial that could help in addressing daily needs and services.
- **Continue to pursue design excellence**. The International Drive Corridor is a significant north-south connection that will only grow in importance as the IBP continues to grow and be located nearby the expanding mixed-use activity center. New developments within the IBP should be required to provide attractive building frontages along the corridor. Continue to implement the design standards within the covenants and conduct design reviews for each project.
- **Encourage diversity in employment uses**. The IBP provides excellent opportunities to mix office research distribution and clean manufacturing in close proximity to the Interstate. To maximize the impact of the IBP, a variety of users including office and research should be pursued.

4.3.7 CONSERVATION RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREA

While projected residential growth can be accommodated within areas that already have easy access to urban water and sewer service, it is expected that there will be continued demand for executive housing and other low density residential housing. Some of this demand can be met in two areas of the City in ways that help support open space preservation, water quality protection and agriculture retention goals while improving the efficiency of development. The two areas where conservation subdivision will have the greatest applicability are within the Conservation Residential Character Area shown on **Map 4-1** and the eastern portion of the City's planning area generally located Hwy 49 (northern bound), Flowe's Store Road (eastern bound/southern bound), Rocky River Road (western bound), Pine Grove Church Road (southern bound), and in the vicinity of Zion Church Road.

As shown in **Map 4-9** that contrasts conventional and conservation subdivisions, conservation subdivisions have smaller lots, which require less maintenance than large lots and have a much smaller environmental footprint. However, since each lot backs up to open space, the lots tend to have greater value than larger lots that back up to other lots. Additionally, by clustering the lots, the developer can avoid the costs and impacts of developing in areas that are affected by poor soils, steep slopes or waterways. If designed well, the developer also can save money on infrastructure costs.

Map 4-9: Conservation vs. Conventional Subdivision Design



Conservation Subdivision Design ***Conventional Subdivision Design***

By enabling conservation subdivisions with density bonuses, the City can foster subdivision designs that accomplish each of the above goals and create lots that are easier to maintain and will have greater value than typical sprawling large lot subdivision development.

While conventional subdivision densities may be limited to 0.2 to 1 unit per gross acre, using sliding scale density bonuses, the City can reward conservation subdivisions with higher gross densities for designs that preserve greater percentages of common open space by reducing lot sizes and development envelopes.

Depending on the location, subdivision layout and the topography, the common open space may be reserved for natural areas, park amenities, greenways, greenbelts or, where sufficient buffers are provided, agricultural uses. Within the Conservation Residential Character Area, conservation subdivision design that focuses on open space retention should be required for new residential developments. Within the rural areas, the conservation subdivision design may also be used to help retain working farms and allow for other agricultural uses.

Over the next two decades, the City should implement the "Green Growth Toolbox" to conserve wildlife, habitat, and other valuable natural resources as communities continue to grow by directing development in a way that stewards the wildlife and natural resources, such as:

- **Maintain large, wide blocks of contiguous habitat** to avoid habitat fragmentation by conserving 50% or more of the site if possible.
- **Maintain functional connections between core habitat areas that wildlife can travel through to avoid isolating habitats**. Major roads and large developments, make wildlife travel difficult or impossible while working farms and forests are more conducive to species movement.
- **Protect rare landscape elements, sensitive areas and associated species**. Not all open spaces are created equal. Natural open spaces—such as wetlands, riparian and native upland forests—will protect water, air, and wildlife much better than manicured open spaces.
- **Allow patterns of natural disturbance to continue such as periodic fire and river flow patterns**. Encourage habitat management, which can be funded by homeowner associations and parks departments.
- **Ensure that the native tree and shrub species of the region will be retained** by species and diameter requirements and minimize the introduction and spread of nonnative, invasive species.
- **Avoid land uses that deplete or degrade natural resources** in environmentally sensitive areas, including habitat for species of conservation concern.
- **Define specific buffer widths**, based on science, within which no permanent structures are allowed.

- **Encourage the management of stormwater on site through Low Impact Development techniques** such as rain gardens, native vegetation, constructed wetlands and swales.
- **Accommodate a mix of housing densities**, from large lots to more affordable and attractive condo-type development, on site due to open space amenities and attractive housing appearance.
- **Contiguous open space** can be owned by the homeowner association.
- **Coordinate with local land trust, Soil and Water Conservation District, and Extension agency** to assist with conservation planning and projects, and potential ordinance amendments.

(Source: Wildlife and Natural Resource Stewardship in Planning, Green Growth Toolbox)

4.3.8 WESTERN GATEWAY CHARACTER AREA

The area shown in **Map 4-1** extends from Cox Mill Road to Huntersville and encompasses Highland Creek and other suburban residential developments. While most of the development consists of low-density single, family residences, the area includes some small-lot single family homes, duplexes townhomes and apartment buildings. Assisted living and supervised care are available at the Laurels and Highland Center. Residents' children can attend Cox Mill High School, Harris Road Middle School, Cox Mill Elementary School, and the International Character School within the area. Other than school facilities, most of the recreational amenities in the area are privately owned and operated. For goods and services, most residents must drive to the commercial development within the Entertainment Corridor Character Area, which abuts the eastern side of the Western Gateway near the intersection of Derita Road and Concord Mills Boulevard.

The Laurels in Highland Creek (Image source: Senior Living, https://www.seniorliving.org/assisted-living/north-carolina/concord-nc/)

As this suburban area and the population ages, the primary challenges will be to:

- Maintain the stability and vitality of existing neighborhoods;
- Address the changing mobility, recreational and other service needs of area residents; and
- Enable the provision of compatibly-designed, neighborhood-scale commercial and service uses at targeted intersections.

Cox Mill High School (Image source: New Atlantic Contracting Inc., http://www.new-atlantic.net/portfolio-projects/cox-mill-high-school-3/)

Over the next two decades, the City should:

- **Encourage interconnectivity**. Through the zoning process, the City should encourage connectivity between existing and future single-family neighborhoods. This will allow for improved alternative transportation options and reduce traffic impacts on existing City roads.
- **Encourage nodal commercial development**. Although most of the Western Gateway area will remain residential, the City should encourage small commercial developments at key nodes to provide for convenient access to nearby residents.
- **Complete the greenway system**. There are plans for the Western Gateway area to provide major greenway connections heading west and north out of the City of Concord. The City should require properties to set aside for future development and acquire properties as needed to complete this greenway network.
- **Create a gateway**. The Western Gateway district lines to the south of Poplar Tent Road should act as a gateway into the City of Concord. The City should develop a plan to create this gateway through signage, consistent landscaping along the streets, and quality development design.
- **Provide buffering and transitions**. The Airport Industrial area lies adjacent to the Western Gateway area. As the Airport Industrial area continues to grow, the likelihood of land use and traffic conflicts will increase. Through the zoning process, the City should ensure compatibility and proper transitions between the more industrial unemployment uses near the airport and the single family neighborhoods of the Western Gateway district.

4.3.9 EASTERN GATEWAY CHARACTER AREA

The US 49 corridor connects Harrisburg and Mount Pleasant through the southeastern area of the City. The Eastern Gateway Character Area extends along the portion of US 49 from the Mixed-Use Activity Center at the Warren C. Coleman Boulevard (US 601) interchange to the eastern boundary of the City's planning area at Cold Springs Road. Development within the activity center currently consists of low to medium density residential development and some auto-oriented commercial establishments.

Auto Related Uses along US 49 (Image source: Google Earth)

New developments that have frontage on US 49 should rely on internal roads or other thoroughfares to gain driveway access. US 49 is a limited access facility and access will be carefully regulated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Mixed-Use Activity Center has several other constraints. Sewer service is limited on the south side of US 49 and the geology of the area makes development expensive due to the large amount of rock. Given some of these constraints, mixed-use projects incorporating higher density housing above retail and other forms of higher density housing should be considered. Developers will seek to maximize their returns on infrastructure costs, and may pursue higher density options. Access improvements to this District will make more attractive for development.

Bedford Farms (Image source: niblock homes, http://niblockhomes.com/portfolio/bedford-farms/)

To the east of the activity center along US 49, much of the area is undeveloped, used for agricultural purposes, or developed for low density (Bedford Farms) to very low density housing until one reaches the Cabarrus Arena and Events center area, which is surrounded by some commercial and institutional uses.

Throughout the Eastern Gateway Character Area, the City should coordinate with NCDOT to manage access to US 49 and retain the rural character of the area through extensive buffering between the highway and adjacent development. Development outside of the mixed-use activity center should not be encouraged and extensions of sewer service should be limited to areas within the mixed-use activity center and to the area north of US 49.

Over the next two decades, the City should:

- **Encourage appropriate and complementary uses to develop in proximity to the Cabarrus County Arena and Exposition Center**. The Arena and Exposition Center offers a significant opportunity to provide for an entertainment and event focused activity center. A plan should be developed to allow and encourage complementary uses, such as hotels, commercial retail shops, and restaurants. The development of these complementary uses could increase the exposure of the Arena and Exposition Center by increasing its attractiveness to a larger variety of users. The complementary uses would also provide nearby residential easy access to some daily needs and services.
- **Require design excellence**. As the area surrounding the Arena and Exposition Center starts to develop, new projects should be required to provide pedestrian connectivity to the facility and adjacent uses. Additionally, design guidelines should be considered for all non-residential uses.
- **Ensure appropriate land-use transitions**. There are a number of low density single-family residential developments near the Arena and Exposition Center. As this area begins to grow and further intensify, it will be important to provide appropriate transitions and buffers where appropriate to protect the existing residential uses.
- **Utilize zoning and infrastructure investment to ensure orderly phased development**. Heading east from the intersection of US 601 and US 49, there is a significant amount of vacant agricultural and semi- agricultural lands between that intersection and the Cabarrus County Arena and Exposition Center. In order to encourage an efficient development process along the corridor, the City should manage development through its zoning/annexation process and investment in infrastructure. By carefully utilizing these tools, premature leapfrog style development can be minimized. The City shall not extend services in the northeast area beyond the southeast Quadrant of US 49 and US 601 intersection.
- **Create a gateway**. Currently, there is little to identify the Eastern Gateway area as part of the City of Concord. By utilizing gateway signage features, and consistent streetscaping and development form, the City can create a clear and attractive gateway along its eastern edge.

4.3.10 MIXED-USE CORRIDOR CHARACTER AREA

Mixed use refers to the mixing of more than one land use within a single building, or within a single development in different buildings. Mixed-use development typically puts complementary uses, such as housing, commercial, industrial or government uses, within walking distance of each other. Mixed-Use Corridors encompass not only the roadway and the land in the right-of-way, but also areas extending out for anywhere between a block or two, to a quarter of a mile or more, depending on the location and the urban structure and character of the area.

In addition to Interstate I-85, several key transportation corridors cross the City. These include Concord Parkway (US 29), Warren C. Coleman Boulevard (US 601), Bruton Smith Boulevard and Davidson Highway (NC 73). US 49, touches the edge of Concord as an expressway on the south side of the City. George W. Liles Parkway and Copperfield Boulevards, and Poplar Tent, Pitts School and Weddington Roads complete the system of City thoroughfares. Another one, Derita Road, weaves in and out of the City limits on the north side of town.

Most of these roads pass through one or more of the Character Areas and the surrounding land use mix, development intensity and urban design may be largely consistent with the planned context of each of those areas. Generally, at least select segments of each thoroughfare may be designated as Mixed-Use Corridors, including but not limited to:

- US 29/US 601/Concord Parkway N from I-85 to Cabarrus Avenue
- US 29/Concord Parkway S/Cabarrus Avenue from George W. Liles Parkway to Branchview Drive
- US 29/Concord Parkway S from Pitts School Road to Morehead Road
- Bruton Smith Boulevard from Derita Road to US 29/Concord Parkway S
- US 601/Warren C. Coleman Boulevard from the Norfolk-Southern railroad line to US 49

The following are the desired attributes in Mixed-Use Corridors:

- They are intended to provide a range of retail, office, housing and public uses, though not every corridor must have all these uses present.
- Often, they will be areas where there is opportunity for intensification through new development on available vacant land or redevelopment of distressed, outdated or underdeveloped properties.
- They generally should have strong pedestrian and bicycle networks and be well connected to the surrounding residential areas and to employment areas.
- Development in these areas should be well integrated and compatible with the neighboring areas through appropriate transitions of land use, scale and visual character.
- In several instances, such as the case of US 29/Concord Parkway S or US 29/US 601/Concord Parkway (Church Street), the mix, density and intensity of land uses along the corridor should be transit-supportive –both for today as well as potential future transit service.
- Mixed-Use Corridors will be encouraged to achieve a high-standard of urban design and a cohesive internal character.
- The mixed-use character of development in Mixed-Use Corridors may be achieved through horizontal mixed-use blocks or vertical mixed-use buildings, or both.

The City has already undertaken planning efforts for sections of some of the corridors identified above. For example, the Concord Parkway (US 29)/Warren C. Coleman Boulevard (US 601) Small Area Plan, adopted into the Concord Land Use Plan in 2007, outlines a vision and strategies for the area surrounding the intersection of those two roads. The Small Area Plan describes the proposed future character of the area in terms fully consistent with the list of traits provided above; e.g., the planned land use mix as "providing a vibrant 24-hour environment that is safe for all users. Mixed both horizontally and vertically within multi-use buildings, uses in the Plan include office, retail, civic/community, open space, and a variety of residential types…" The Small Area Plan also addresses connectivity, circulation, open space, urban form and design (**Map 4-10**).

The Concord Parkway (US 29)/ Warren C. Coleman Blvd (US 601) Small Area Plan will be incorporated into the 2030 Plan by reference and the City will continue to implement its recommendations.

The City should carry out additional planning efforts for corridors, districts and small areas for Mixed-Use Corridors. The Mixed-Use Corridor description is intended to be flexible and responsive to changes in land use pattern and market demands over time, and permit a broad range of uses at different scales and intensities depending on each corridor's context.

4.3.11 GREENWAY CHARACTER AREA

The greenways along streams are allowed under the Concord Development Ordinance (CDO) perennial stream buffer regulations, to maintain a vegetative buffer of 50 to 120 feet on each side of the stream in order to protect the riparian environment and preserve water quality and habitat. An added benefit to this buffer is that it provides separation for differing land uses that may occur on each side of the stream. Ideally, the minimum vegetative buffer width should be extended from 50 to 100 feet, to properly protect the waterways, accommodate greenway connections, and to separate uses. Expansion of these buffers through voluntary landowner participation in establishing conservation easements should be encouraged.

Pedestrian/biking amenities linking planned greenways in order to form a green network within the City should also be encouraged.

Map 4-10: Concord Parkway/Warren C. Coleman Boulevard Small Area Plan

(Image source: City of Concord)

Hector H. Henry. II Greenway (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Resident/Community-News/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/800)

Harold B. McEachern Greenway (Image source: Carolina Thread Trail, https://www.carolinathreadtrailmap.org/trails/trail/harold-b-mceachern-greenway)

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PART 05

LAND USE

5.0 LAND USE

The Land Use Element builds upon the Vision and Growth Concept Map in Part 4 by identifying the desired land use characteristics on individual property parcels throughout the Study Area. The Vision describes where Concord wants to be as a community by 2030, and the Growth Concept identifies those areas in the Study Area where change and growth will be focused to help accomplish the Vision. Each Character Area identified on the Growth Concept Map (**Map 4-1**) includes a more focused, sub-area vision that includes descriptions of the desired land use patterns, development character and transportation systems, and identifies key challenges that will need to be addressed through the planning process.

The Land Use Element includes a Future Land Use Map (**Map 5-1**) that is a graphic representation of the desired growth pattern for Concord through 2030. This map contains ten (10) Future Land Use (FLU) categories to guide developers, staff and appointed/elected officials on the type and scale of development intended at each location throughout the City.

This element is intended to guide the City's growth, development and redevelopment through the year 2030. While the primary focus is on land use patterns, it is closely linked to each of the other elements of the 2030 Plan. After establishing the City's land use goals and objectives, this element maps and describes desired land use patterns, identifies the unique land use challenges[1] faced in different character areas and recommends specific strategies to achieve the City's vision while addressing its challenges.

5.1 DETAILED FUTURE LAND USE DESCRIPTIONS

Each FLU category includes a list of desired development characteristics, guidance for maximum densities/intensities, and applicable zoning districts that should be utilized to ensure that land use patterns evolve with new development as intended (**Table 5-3**). The FLU categories were developed in part by using guidance found in the CONNECT Our Future regional planning effort which identified a series of Place Types (Full descriptions in**Appendix C**) to guide local governments in creating their own land use plans to help create a more efficient, sustainable, and prosperous region. Associating Place Types with FLU categories provides additional guidance on the types of development patterns and quality that should be expected within each part Concord.

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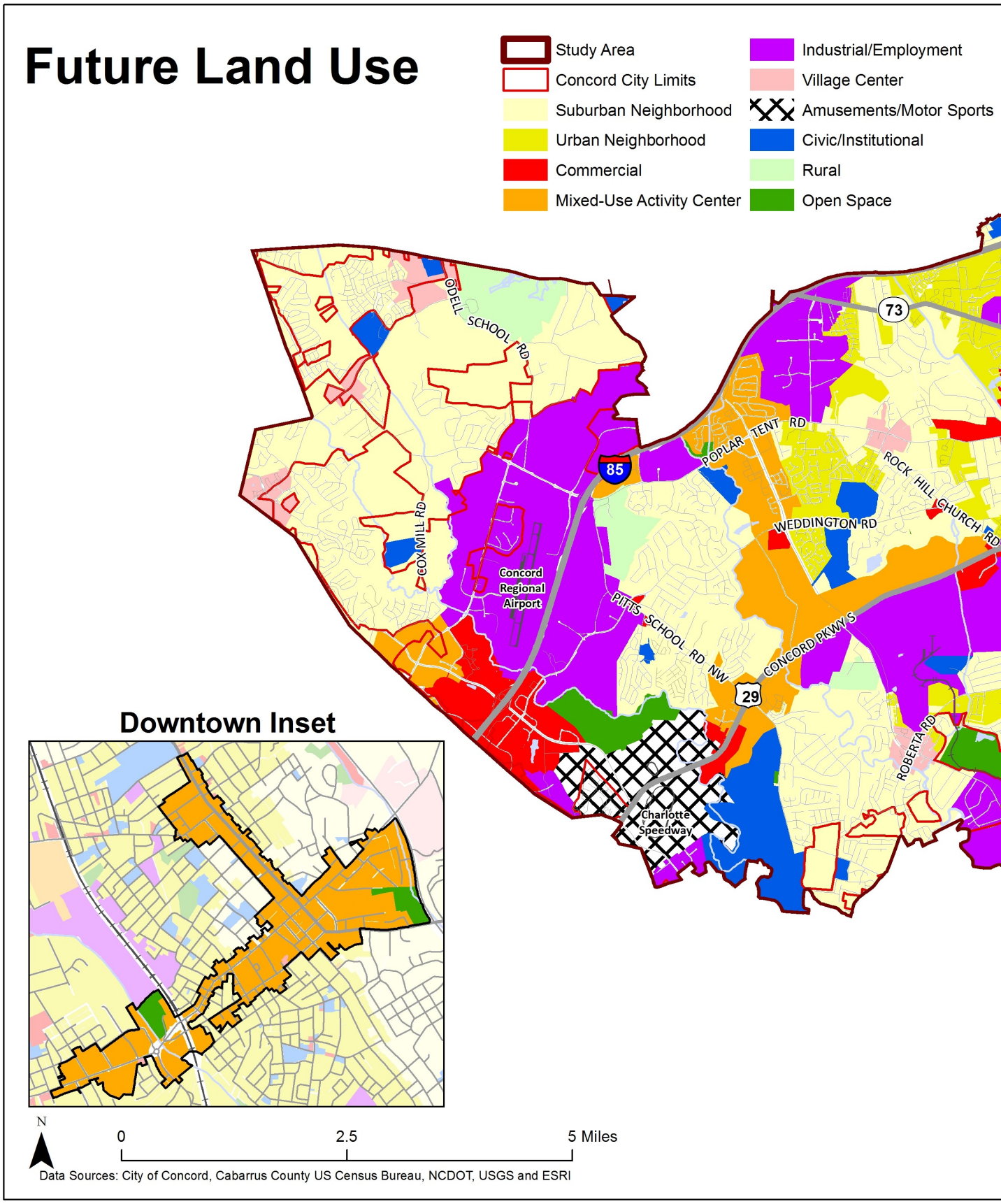
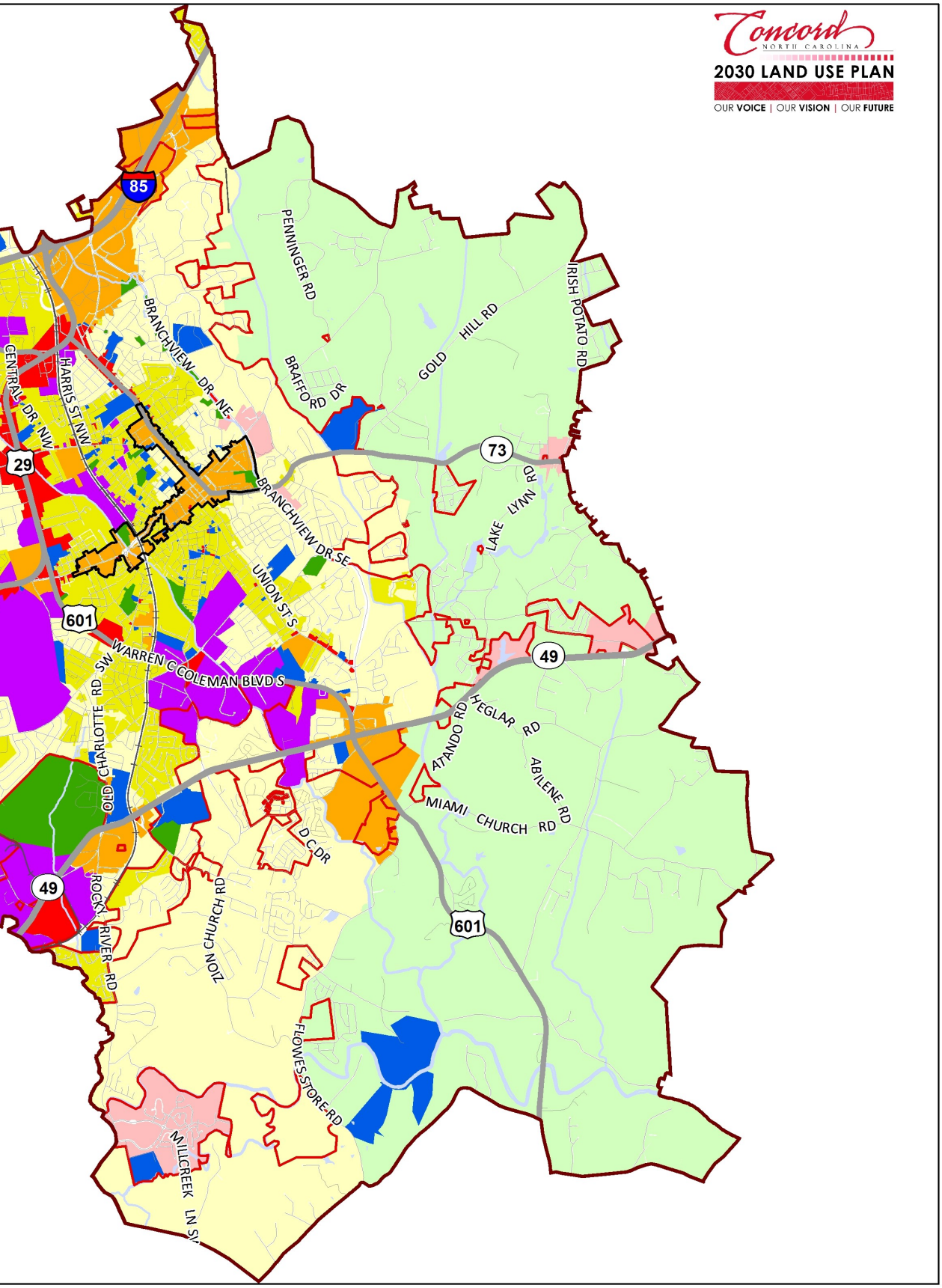
[1] Citywide challenges are identified in the following section; specific area challenges are highlighted for each of the character areas in Section 5.5.

Map 5-1: Future Land Use Categories




Concord NORTH CAROLINA
2030 LAND USE PLAN
OUR VOICE | OUR VISION | OUR FUTURE
85
29
601
49
73
PENNINGER RD
GOLD HILL RD
IRISH POTATO RD
BRAFFORD DR
BRANCHVIEW DR NE
CENTRAL DR NW
HARRIS ST NW
BRANCHVIEW DR SE
LAKE LYNN RD
UNION ST S
WARREN C COLEMAN BLVD S
OLD CHARLOTTE RD SW
ATANDO RD
HEGLAR RD
ABILENE RD
MIAMI CHURCH RD
DC DR
ROCKY RIVER RD
ZION CHURCH RD
FLOWES STORE RD
MILLCREEK LN

OPEN SPACE (OS)

The intent of the Open Space (OS) Future Land Use category is to permanently protect important open spaces in the community. Areas designated as OS can include lands dedicated for preservation by legal means, and land used for active and passive recreational purposes.

RURAL (R)

The intent of the Rural (R) Future Land Use category is to identify a variety of land use types that are representative of working agricultural uses as well as a variety of residential types including farmhouses, to large acreage rural family dwellings, to ecologically -minded "conservations subdivisions" which are designed to preserve open landscape, and traditional buildings, often with a mixture of residential and agricultural/rural-supported commercial uses.

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOODS (SN)

The Suburban Neighborhood (SN) Future Land Use category includes single-family areas that are formed as subdivisions or communities, with a relatively uniform housing type and density throughout. They may support a variety of single-family detached residential types, from low-density single-family homes to denser formats of smaller single-family homes. In areas designated Suburban Neighborhood, homes are typically oriented interior to the neighborhood and are typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas. Single-family attached dwellings are an option for infill development within the suburban neighborhood future land use category. These neighborhoods are often found in close proximity to suburban commercial, office, and industrial centers, and help provide the consumers and employment base needed to support these centers. Lots at intersections of collector and arterial streets within or at the edges of suburban neighborhoods may support small-scale, neighborhood serving, pedestrian-oriented commercial or service uses such as coffee shops, cafes, beauty salons and light retail. Pedestrian oriented uses exclude uses with drive-in, drive-through or automobile related services.

URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS (UN)

The Urban Neighborhood (UN) Future Land Use category includes a mix of moderate- to high-density housing options. These neighborhoods are relatively compact, and may contain one or more of the following housing types: small lot, single family detached, townhomes, condominiums, or apartments. The design and scale of development in an urban neighborhood encourages active living with a complete a comprehensive network of walkable streets. Cul-de-sacs are restricted to areas where topography, environment, or existing development makes other connections prohibitive. Lots at intersections of collector and arterial streets within or at the edges of urban neighborhoods may support neighborhood- and community-serving, pedestrian-oriented commercial or service uses such as coffee shops, cafes, beauty salons and light retail. Drive-through uses may be appropriate if designed and located so they access side streets and do not compromise pedestrian safety. Non-residential and multi-family uses are typically developed with minimal street setbacks in the urban neighborhood future land use category.

Recreation Open Space, Irish Buffalo Creek Greenway (Image source: Carolina Thread Trail, https://www.carolinathreadtrailmap.org/trails/trail/irish-buffalo-creek-greenway)

Working Farms (Image source: Barbee Farms, https://barbeefarms.net/photos/)

Suburban Neighborhood , Small Lot (Image source: Tindale Oliver & Associates)

Urban Apartments, Locke Mill Plaza (Image source: Steven Spring, http://www.panoramio.com/photo/26832997#)

VILLAGE CENTERS (VC)

Village Center areas are typically located at key intersections of minor transportation corridors. These centers are often located in areas with FLU categories that are residential and/or rural in focus with limited non-residential development nearby. Oftentimes areas designated as Village Centers already contain some non-residential development, usually highway oriented retail, office, or light industrial, with supportive zoning. Village Centers represent opportunities to create small/mid-size commercial and mixed-use centers and limit strip commercial in areas that are predominantly residential in character.

As with the larger Mixed-Use Activity Centers, the smaller Village Center creates an alternative to strip commercial development by concentrating non-residential uses in areas where infrastructure and residential demand support them. Consequently, none of the designated Village Centers proposed would develop without residential growth preceding it, thus creating the demand. Similarly, Village Centers would not develop if there was inadequate infrastructure, such as roads, water and sewer service.

The characteristics of developed Village Centers will vary greatly depending on the surrounding land use pattern and existing development intensity. The types of uses within Village Centers will vary, but encouragement should be given to mixed uses and those uses that are neighborhood serving (i.e. restaurants/diners, gas stations, small convenience stores, hardware stores, etc.) which reduce the need for residents to travel long distances in a car to meet basic needs. Additionally, emphasis should be given to pedestrian oriented development and interconnectivity between uses within the Village Center and out to the surrounding residential areas.

Locations of Village Centers are identified in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1: Locations of Village Centers

Village Centers
1 - Poplar Tent Rd. at Rock Hill Church Rd.
2 - Rock Hill Church Rd. at Weddington Rd.
3 - Poplar Tent Rd. at Harris Rd.
4 - Harris Rd. at Ellenwood Rd.
5 - Davidson Hwy. (NC 73) at Poplar Tent Rd.
6 - Roberta Rd. at George W. Liles Pkwy.
7 - Branchview Dr. at Cabarrus Ave.
8 – Cold Springs Rd. at US 200
9 - US 601 at US 200
10 - Buffalo Ranch
11 - Poplar Tent Rd. at George W. Liles Pkwy.
12 - Moss Creek
13 – Mills at Rocky River
14 - US 49 at Cold Springs Rd.
15 - Branchview Dr. at Corban Ave.

Birkdale Village, Huntersville, NC (Image source: http://birkdalevillage.net/)

Baldwin Park, Orlando, FL (Image source: Apartments.com, https://www.apartments.com/the-majestic-of-downtown-baldwin-park-orlando-fl/jm67s27/)

Lakeland Village Center, Lakeland, FL (Image source: Chron.com, http://www.chron.com/business/bizfeed/article/Bridgeland-adds-tenants-to-Lakeland-Village-Center-11299319.php)

Western Area Village Centers

The eight proposed Village Centers identified in the 2030 Plan are on the western portion of the Study Area where most residential growth has occurred in recent years. Many of these Centers already have neighborhood commercial and office uses in place. Others have experienced enough residential growth that a demand has been created and light commercial and office uses could already be supported, or are in an area where planned infrastructure improvements would increase access and demand.

Eastern Area Village Centers

Four proposed Village Centers are located in the eastern portion of the study area where residential growth has and will continue to develop at a slower rate compared with other parts of the Land Use Plan boundary. These Centers will develop with neighborhood commercial uses only if residential demand warrants such development. It is possible, through the ten-year timeframe of the 2030 Plan, that some of the Centers will not develop at all.

MIXED-USE ACTIVITY CENTERS (MUAC)

The intent of the Mixed-Use Activity Center (MUAC) Future Land Use category is to identify areas that serve broader economic, entertainment, and community activities as compared to mixed-use neighborhoods. Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage pedestrian activities. Buildings in the core of the mixed-use center may stand three or more stories. Residential units or office space may be found above storefronts. Parking is satisfied by using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear-lot parking strategies. Structured parking should be encouraged to be incorporated into the principal structure.

A large-scale mixed use activity center may be surrounded by one or more neighborhoods that encourage active living, with a comprehensive and interconnected network of walkable streets.

Areas designated as Mixed-Use Activity Centers Future Land Use category are large geographic areas located at key intersections of major transportation corridors, that have high growth potential, where the infrastructure can an support denser development. Mixed Use Activity Centers are located along major corridors where transit facilities are currently planned or envisioned in the future. Mixed-Use Activity Centers may not necessarily be constructed as a single development at one time. The very nature of these areas allows them to be approved in phases and to evolve over time into an area made up of a mix of land uses, usually centered on some type of public transit facility, which affords people the opportunity to live, work, shop and, in some cases, have immediate access to recreation facilities in one general area. It is also the goal of these districts to reduce vehicle trips by making them single destination points for multiple consumer needs.

The intent of the Mixed-Use Activity Center designation is to encourage the development of a mixture of complementary uses that will function as an integrated center allowing for pedestrian connections between developments and uses. Each of the eleven

Neighborhood Commercial, Village Shops, Prairie Village, KS (Image source: Shawnee Mission Post, https://shawneemissionpost.com/2014/08/21/first-washington-buys-village-shops-corinth-square-fairway-shops-30602)

Grace Park Mixed-Use Development, Morrisville, NC (Image source: The Kalikow Group, http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-kalikow-group-announces-grace-park-mixed-use-development-in-morrisville-north-carolina-nears-total-occupancy-203579561.html

Mixed-Use Activity Center, Blue Back Square, West Hartford, CT (Image source: Turner, http://www.turnerconstruction.com/experience/project/19D/blue-back-square-mixed-use-development)

proposed Mixed-Use Activity Center locations identified on the Land Use Plan have different characteristics and will develop uniquely. The size of these areas is relatively large, with the intent that mixed use development should occur within a one-half mile radius of a transit stop (an estimated ten minute walking distance). Due to the fact that each area designated as a MUAC, applying one development solution to each is not practical. The key is to coordinate development of each parcel within the context of the larger District. Coordinating connectivity and planning for future uses will be critical in this process. Locations of Mixed Use Activity Centers are identified in **Table 5-2**.

Table 5-2: Locations of Mixed-Use Activity Centers

Mixed Use Activity Centers
1 - Concord Mills
2 - George W. Lyles Pkwy. at I-85
3 - Davidson Hwy (NC 73) at I-85
4 - US 29 at I-85
5 - US 29 at Warren C. Coleman Blvd.
6 - Concord Pkwy. South at George W. Liles Pkwy.
7 - Concord Pkwy South at Pitts School Rd.
8 - Copperfield Blvd.
9 - US 49 at Old Charlotte Rd.
10 - US 49 at Warren C. Coleman Blvd.
11 - Downtown Concord/MSD

COMMERCIAL (C)

The Commercial Future Land Use category includes a mix of commercial land use types. While these areas continue to support additional commercial development and redevelopment, much of the new commercial development should be concentrated within the Mixed-Use Activity Centers and Village Centers. Strip commercial development along major corridors is discouraged in the 2030 Plan. Instead, commercial development integrated into Mixed-Use Activity Centers at key intersections is desired. Areas designated as Commercial are intended to represent those that include a variety of commercial uses at different intensities, including large scale malls, lifestyle centers, and community shopping centers.

Light Industrial, Sysco (Image source: The International Business Park at Concord, http://www.internationalbusinesspark.com/companies/sysco-food-services-charlotte/)

INDUSTRIAL/EMPLOYMENT (IE)

The intent of the Industrial/Employment (IE) Future Land Use category is to identify those areas that have either already developed as industrial or are suited for additional industrial development due to the presence of infrastructure and access to transportation routes, such as major highways and railroads. These industrial areas should be preserved for employment uses to generate jobs for the community.

Industrial uses have already developed in several areas throughout the community, most of which are light industrial in function and impact. The 2030 Plan identifies the need to protect industrial lands, and to encourage additional growth in industrial/employment uses in designated areas, particularly around Concord Regional Airport, and along I-85 between Pitts School Road and Rocky River. Additionally, some light industrial/employment uses are encouraged to locate in Mixed-Use Districts, depending upon their intensity, as identified earlier in this section.

Charlotte Motor Speedway (Image source: Charlotte Motor Speedway, http://www.charlottemotorspeedway.com/handler.cfm/template,photo_gallery/cat_id,51770?sf_id=25216)

AMUSEMENTS/MOTOR SPORTS (AMS)

Motor Sports Related uses are a land use unique to Concord, and includes the Charlotte Motor Speedway and its parking areas, as well as other various uses that have located around the Speedway which support the racing industry. This area has noise level and traffic pattern characteristics that may impact surrounding development warranting a special land use classification.

Cabarrus Arena and Exposition Center (Image source: Tindale Oliver)

CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL (CI)

Uses in this future land use category include public facilities, public and private schools, places of worship, cemeteries and other community gathering facilities.

Table 5-3: Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Category	Associated Place Types	Characteristics/Guidance	Density/ Intensity	Applicable Zoning Districts
Open Space (OS)	• Recreational Open Space • Preserved Open Space	• Open Space designation should be utilized to designate land provided as part of a required development set-aside. • Recreational Open Space should allow for public access and includes public parks.	• There are no specific density/intensity ranges associated with Open Space.	AG
Rural (R)*	• Working Farms • Rural Living • Conservation-Based Subdivisions • Open Space	• The Rural designation should be utilized to designate areas that are appropriate for agricultural activities and low density residential development. • Where development is allowed, it should be designed to minimize environmental impact through green building practices including conservation-based design.	• Residential Uses - 0.33 du/acre (1 unit/3 acres) • Non-Residential Uses - 0.10 FAR	AG, RE, PRD, C-1, PUD, B-1 RL, O-I, R-CO
Suburban Neighborhoods (SN)*	• Large-Lot Residential • Small-Lot Residential • Civic and Institutional • Open Space • Manufactured Home Communities	• Internal/external pedestrian connectivity are important in Suburban Neighborhoods. • Houses are typically oriented internally to the neighborhood and are often buffered from surrounding development. • Uses tend to be more auto-oriented, though bicycle/pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and to nearby neighborhood commercial areas are important. • C-1 is acceptable if it has frontage on a major or minor thoroughfare or is part of an expansion to an existing C-1 area, which is located adjacent to an existing major or minor thoroughfare, but does not expand said district by greater than 50%. None of the traffic from the C-1 area to the arterial street will utilize a street which contains single-family detached homes.	• Residential Uses – 8 du/acre • Non-Residential Uses – 0.25 FAR	RE, RM-1, RM-2, PRD, C-1, PUD, RV, TND B-1, RL, O-I, R-CO

Note: * Maximum density/intensity may be limited by site constraints or zoning applied to specific parcels.

Table 5-3: Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Category	Associated Place Types	Characteristics/Guidance	Density/ Intensity	Applicable Zoning Districts
Urban Neighbor-hoods (UN)*	• Townhomes/ Small Condo • Mixed-Density Residential • Mixed-Use Neighborhood • Multi-Family Residential • Urban Neighborhood • Civic and Institutional • Open Space	• Internal/external pedestrian connectivity are important in Urban Neighborhoods. • Architecture and building scale/ massing should fit within the surrounding context. This is particularly important for infill sites. • Mixed uses (horizontal or vertical) should be allowed and encouraged in appropriate locations. • Neighborhood Commercial is acceptable. Same standards as Suburban Neighborhoods.	• Residential Uses – 20 du/acre • Non-Residential Uses – 1.0 FAR	RM-1, RM-2, RV, RC, PRD, C-1, PUD, TND O-I, R-CO
Village Centers (VC)*	• Neighborhood Commercial Center • Mixed-Use Neighborhood • Mixed-Use Activity Center • Civic and Institutional • Open Space	• Require adequate infrastructure and a surrounding population that can support the businesses located there. • Small scale, neighborhood commercial/office centers providing good and services to the surrounding Neighborhoods. • Focus on connectivity bicycle/ pedestrian connectivity both within the VC and to the surrounding neighborhoods. • Due to the proximity of the VC to adjacent residential neighborhoods, land use transitions must be designed effectively to ensure compatibility and minimize impacts. • Higher density and intensity uses should be located along major thoroughfares.	• Residential Uses – 20 du/acre • Non-Residential Uses – 1.0 FAR	RV, O-I, TND, MX-NC, MX-CC1, PRD, C-1, C-2, PUD, RC, R-CO

Note: * Maximum density/intensity may be limited by site constraints or zoning applied to specific parcels.

Table 5-3: Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Category	Associated Place Types	Characteristics/Guidance	Density/ Intensity	Applicable Zoning Districts
Mixed-Use Activity Centers (MUAC)*	• Suburban Commercial Center • Highway Commercial • Suburban Office Center • Mixed-Use Neighborhood • Mixed-Use Activity Center • Transit-Oriented Development • Town Center • Urban Neighborhood • Civic and Institutional • University Campus • Health Care Campus • Open Space	• The Small Area Plans have been adopted for a number of the designated MUAC areas. Small Area Plans are more focused and specific than the overall Land Use Plan. • The City should encourage the development of small area plans for MUAC areas to provide clear guidance for decision makers when reviewing development proposals located in these areas. • Whenever possible, it is recommended that developers utilize one of the mixed use zoning districts when developing in an area designated MUAC. • The interconnectivity of the public realm (streets, walk/bike infrastructure) is an essential element of MUAC areas.	• Residential Uses – 30 du/acre • Non-Residential Uses – 2.0 FAR	RV, RC, O-I, CC, TND, MX-NC, MX-CC1, MX-CC2, MX-1B, PRD, C-1, C-2, PUD, I-1
Commercial (C)*	• Neighborhood Commercial Center • Suburban Commercial Center • Highway Commercial • Suburban Office Center • Mixed-Use Activity Center • Transit Oriented Development • Civic and Institutional • Regional Employment Center • Multi-Family Residential • Open Space	• Additional lands designated Commercial should be limited. • The Transit Oriented Development Place Type should only occur in proximity to the location of a fixed-guideway transit system (whether BRT, LRT, or CRT). • Design standards should be developed to improve pedestrian connectivity and transit access.	• Residential Uses – 30 du/acre • Non-Residential Uses – 2.0 FAR	B-1, O-I, C-1, C-2, MX-NC, MX-CC1, MX-CC2, MX-1B, PUD

Note: * Maximum density/intensity may be limited by site constraints or zoning applied to specific parcels.

Table 5-3: Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Category	Associated Place Types	Characteristics/Guidance	Density/ Intensity	Applicable Zoning Districts
Industrial/ Employment (IE)*	• Suburban Office Centers • Light Industrial Center • Heavy Industrial Center • Airport • Civic and Institutional • Regional Employment Center • Open Space	• Pedestrian facilities should be encouraged within IE areas to allow for alternative transportation modes. • Efforts should be made to incorporate transit infrastructure into areas designated IE to encourage use of alternative modes home-work trips.	• Non Residential Uses – 2.0 FAR	C-2 PID, MX-1B, I-1, I-2 No new PIDs will be considered
Amusements Motor Sports (AMS)	• Special Areas	• Efforts should be made to improve multimodal connectivity within areas designated Amusements/Motor Sports. • Transit circulator service should be encouraged to service hotels to nearby attractions.	• Specific Densities/ Intensities will be defined by underlying zoning.	PID, PUD, MX- CC2, C-2, MX-IB, I-1, I-2 No new PIDs will be considered
Civic/ Institutional (CI)	• Civic and Institutional • Industrial Center • Heavy Industrial Center • Open Space—Recreational	• Includes schools, libraries, religious institutions, and other governmental buildings and facilities. • Industrial Place Types specifically related to existing solid waste/utility facilities.	• Specific Densities/ Intensities will be defined by underlying zoning.	AG, RE, RL, RM-1, RM-2, RV, RC,O-1, B-1, CC, C-2, I-1, I-2

Note: * Maximum density/intensity may be limited by site constraints or zoning applied to specific parcels.

5.2 GENERAL LAND USE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Maintaining the community's character**. Concord's premium quality of life continues to attract new residents. The resulting increases in housing demand, commercial development, industrial development, traffic congestion and new faces continue to change the community. Changes such as downtown revitalization, greenfield development and redevelopment of commercial and industrial sites have improved the quality of life in Concord. Residents want to ensure that future changes protect or enhance the quality of their neighborhoods and strengthen Concord's identity and sense of place.

- **Capitalizing on the unique areas of Concord**. As Concord has grown, sub-sections of the community have taken shape with unique characteristics. In addition to addressing Concord's overall character, it is important to look at how these areas contribute to the vitality of Concord as a whole and ensure that new development and redevelopment preserve and enhance the character-defining qualities of each area. The City's implementation of existing and new small area plans provides an adaptable platform for the design qualities, needs and opportunities in each of the areas.

- **Maintaining a sustainable mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses**. The City of Concord will endeavor to maintain a balanced mix of land uses that enables residents to live, work, shop, and play within the City, while serving as a regional center for tourism, air transportation and health care. Commercial and industrial land uses are essential to enable the City to generate sufficient tax revenues to fund the high quality of life for residents and a mix of housing in close proximity to work.

- **Fostering infill and redevelopment**. A key element of the city's character is the combination of traditional neighborhood development patterns and newer, more suburban development patterns. Where compatible, infill and redevelopment should be targeted in key areas that have the infrastructure and community facilities in place to absorb the additional intensity. Infill is most desirable within identified Mixed-Use Activity Centers, Village Centers, and Urban Neighborhoods.

- **Ensuring compatibility between neighboring land uses**. As the diversity of uses and housing types increases, the potential for incompatibility increases. To maintain compatibility between adjacent uses, the City will need to ensure that there are seamless transitions between uses which will require a combination of separating certain uses, buffering between uses, and addressing the design, scale, height, orientation and intensity of development as appropriate to the land use transition and the site.

- **Enhancing mobility between residential, employment, commercial and recreation uses**. Improving connections between the places where residents live, work and play will be a key challenge that can only be met through better integration of land uses and the establishment of connections between uses for all modes of transportation. Narrow rights-of-way constrain opportunities to establish complete streets along many arterial street corridors, which increases the importance of coordinating land uses and ensuring that their designs facilitate better mobility.

- **Providing adequate infrastructure and services for residents and businesses, both now and in the future**. In addition to adequate transportation infrastructure, development requires utilities, stormwater facilities and a variety of services to function properly. As the City grows, it must coordinate the expansion of its infrastructure and services with growth in ways that maintain adequate levels of service for existing and new development in a fiscally sustainable manner.

- **Providing adequate recreational facilities for an expanding population**. The City of Concord will endeavor to improve its standing among its peer communities in the categories of Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents and Total Park Acres per 1,000 Residents by identifying and acquiring future park sites and encouraging Mixed-Use Activity Centers to include live, work, and play elements during the development review process.

- **Preserving natural resources and open space**. Concord's natural setting is a significant part of its quality of life. The City can incorporate water and natural area protection strategies to help achieve its mobility and compatibility goals through careful design of new development.

- **Retaining working farms**. Agriculture is a small but important part of the local economy. By protecting working farms from inappropriate encroachment of development, the City can foster the retention of this portion of the economy and provide property owners with incentives to avoid premature development of areas that lack adequate infrastructure.

5.3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Goal 1: Maintain a sustainable balance of residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

Objective 1.1: Maintain the Growth Concept Map and the Future Land Use Map to guide land use decisions for public and private decision-makers.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.1:

- **Growth Concept Map**: Identifies 10 Community Character Areas and provides a framework for mobility, greenbelts, and greenways. Each Community Character area has distinct qualities and roles in the community that shape the timing, intensity, and character of future development. The Growth Concept and the discussion of each area should be used with the Future Land Use Map to guide zoning, capital improvement planning, and development decisions.
- **Future Land Use Map**: Use the Future Land Use Map (**Map 5-1**) in conjunction with the other goals and objectives of this Plan, to guide zoning, capital improvement investment and development decisions.
- **Future Land Use Categories**: Each category may permit land uses and intensities from one or more zoning districts. Example land uses are listed as guidance and should not be considered all-inclusive; the City may use flexible zoning districts to foster a sustainable mix of uses or dwelling unit types in most future land use categories. Densities are listed as a maximum number of dwelling units ("DUs") per gross acre and floor area ratio ("FAR") of a project, including streets and other dedication areas. Maximum densities and intensities may not be achievable on all sites due to zoning and site constraints. Zoning incentives may be created to allow for greater densities that further the goals of this Plan. However, if more specific guidance is available in an already existing document, then it governs the general guidance provided in this document. **Section 5.2** includes a detailed description of each Future Land Use category.

Objective 1.2: Achieve Comprehensive Plan goals/objectives and increase economic opportunities through coordination of the Future Land Use Map changes and the City's development regulations.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.2:

- **Future Land Use Map Amendments**: Prior to amending the Future Land Use Map, make findings that the proposed amendment will:
  - Be consistent with the Plan goals and objectives;
  - Be compatible with future land uses for surrounding areas;
  - Not create a shortage of any category of residential or non-residential land; and
  - Enhance the overall quality of life in the community.
- **Relationship to Zoning**: Protect neighborhoods from encroachment of incompatible land uses by ensuring that zoning map amendments are consistent with the Future Land Use Map, developing and implementing area and corridor plans, and enforcing compatibility standards. ***Note that some uses shown on the Future Land Use Map will be premature for development until adequate facilities and services are available***.

Objective 1.3: Ensure that the Future Land Use Map allows sufficient development opportunities to meet existing and projected needs for residential, commercial, industrial and other land uses.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.3:

- Monitor Land Use: Monitor existing, approved and planned land uses and compare development capacities with projected demands for all types of residential and non-residential development. The Future Land Use Map should provide adequate land to meet projected demands and provide market flexibility throughout the City.

Objective 1.4: Protect existing and future industrial sites from encroachment of development that would limit their intended uses.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.4:

- **Adjacent Development:** Ensure that adjacent development and street networks are designed to safely and compatibly accommodate planned industrial uses and resulting traffic.

- **Site Development:** Limit non-industrial uses to those that are accessory to existing uses or uses to be developed concurrently with the accessory uses.
- **Zoning:** Update the zoning map to place enough proposed industrial land into appropriate zoning districts to meet long-term needs.

Objective 1.5: Foster an attractive and functional mix of living, working, shopping and recreational uses within Mixed-Use Activity Centers and Village Centers.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.5:

- **Mixed-Use Zoning**: Ensure that applicable zoning districts and development regulations facilitate development of a mix of compatibly integrated residential and non-residential uses within each Mixed-Use Activity Center and Village Center.
- **Land Use Transition**: Encourage land use transitions and development that foster physical continuity.

Objective 1.6: Provide a diverse mix and range of housing options throughout the City that will accommodate the current and future needs of the citizens of Concord.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.6:

- **Infill Housing**: Promote a variety of compatible infill housing types in areas with access to adequate facilities and services.
- **Housing Balance**: Ensure that zoning allows for a mix of housing types at a variety of prices to meet the demands of existing and future residents.
- **Mixed-Density Housing**: Foster a compatible mix of higher density housing types at different densities within mixed-use activity centers and village centers.

Objective 1.7: Encourage the development of public and private entertainment and recreational facilities to meet the needs of Concord's residents and visitors.

Policy Guidance for Objective 1.7:

- While parks and other recreational facilities are appropriate throughout the City, regional recreational and entertainment uses, such as amusement facilities, should be focused within the Entertainment Corridor Character Area where related noise, traffic and visual impacts are more compatible with surrounding uses.

Goal 2: Enhance mobility for all modes of transportation between the places where people live, work, shop and play (refer to Part 7 for additional policy guidance relating to mobility).

Objective 2.1: Ensure that new development is designed to provide users with mobility choices, including driving, walking, bicycling and riding transit.

Policy Guidance for Objective 2.1:

- **Complete Streets**: Modify development and street design standards to require complete streets that serve all users.
- **Transit/Bike/Pedestrian Support**: Use a combination of design standards and incentives to ensure that building and site development supports all applicable modes of transportation to and within development sites.

Objective 2.2: Ensure that new development includes interconnected road systems and enhances connectivity to existing development where it safely enhances mobility.

Policy Guidance for Objective 2.2:

- Use a combination of design standards and development incentives to achieve site and subdivision designs that improve mobility within and between developments through a combination of streets, bikeways and multi-purpose trails. As part the bike and pedestrian support referenced under **Objective 2.1**, City actions on public and private development initiatives should foster the completion of a continuous greenway and trail system.

Goal 3: Retain Concord's small town atmosphere and continually enhance the quality of life as the City grows.

Objective 3.1: Regulate the scale and design of development to promote walking and biking within residential and mixed-use areas.

Objective 3.2: Support historic preservation efforts within the City's historic districts and for other historic sites.

Objective 3.3: Apply context sensitive strategies to unique areas of the City through the development and implementation of area and corridor plans.

Objective 3.4: Enhance Concord's quality of life through efforts to support neighborhood vitality, which may include a combination of complete street improvements, improved access to parks and recreation facilities and community centers, improved transit access, housing rehabilitation efforts, active code/property maintenance enforcement, greenway or greenbelt improvements, and/or improved neighborhood services and amenities.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 3-1 to 3-4:

- The strategies for neighborhood enhancement should be tailored to the needs of each affected neighborhood and determined with the input of affected residents and business owners.
- Support adaptive reuse of existing building stock.

Objective 3.5: Retain and/or supplement landscaping along streets and within large development sites for its aesthetic and environmental values.

Objective 3.6: Continue efforts to revitalize and promote downtown Concord as the cultural and historical center of the City, as an employment and governmental center, and as an attractive shopping and dining destination.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 3.5 and 3.6:

- Close coordination is needed between City departments, the Concord Downtown Development Corporation, and other stakeholders to implement the Downtown Urban Design Plan.

Goal 4: Ensure compatibility between neighboring land uses.

Objective 4.1: Use a combination of land use transitions, intensity gradients, buffering and design to ensure that land use transitions are compatible.

Objective 4.2: Ensure that industrial and commercial developments are designed to limit encroachment of incompatible traffic, noise, odors and lighting into nearby residential areas.

Objective 4.3: Discourage the location of incompatible uses near intensive existing uses such as the Concord Regional Airport and racing facilities.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 4.1 to 4.3:

- **Land Use and Intensity Transitions:** Zoning use and site development standards should promote a gradient in the type and intensity of uses. For instance, higher density residential development can provide a compatible transition between medium-density residences and neighborhood commercial centers.
- **Buffers:** Buffers should be used to screen uses and activities that may detract from the enjoyment of adjacent land uses. Where large buffers are not necessary, the landscape design should soften land use transitions.
- **Building and Site Design Standards:** Where land use transitions are necessary to support a walkable mix of uses or housing types, a variety of development standards should ensure that the location, scale, height and orientation of buildings and site improvements provide for compatible transitions.
- **Parking and Access:** Ensure that parking lots and driveways are designed and located to minimize impacts on lower-intensity neighboring uses.

Goal 5: Provide for adequate infrastructure and services for residents and businesses (refer to Part 10 for additional policy guidance relating to infrastructure).

Objective 5.1: Use land development regulations to manage the timing, location and intensity of growth and development to provide for needed facilities and services, and discourage the proliferation of premature or unsustainable development.

Policy Guidance for Objective 5.1:

- Require new development to provide information on the impacts on the provision of water, wastewater, police, fire, emergency services, solid waste, schools, roads, and other affected infrastructure and services.

Objective 5.2: Provide adequate water resources and wastewater treatment capacity to serve the needs of the citizens of Concord both now and in the future.

Objective 5.3: Ensure that drainage and stormwater management systems are designed to effectively manage the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 5.2 and 5.3:

- Follow Best Management Practices and employ green-infrastructure strategies where appropriate to reduce pollutant discharges.

Objective 5.4: Expand and develop new parks and recreation facilities to serve the needs of existing and future citizens of Concord.

Policy Guidance for Objective 5.4:

- Coordinate parks establishment and improvement with the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Objective 5.5: Coordinate the expansion and development of greenways that can be used for bicycle and pedestrian corridors with the development review and capital improvements planning processes.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 5.5:

- Secure and improve greenways as vital transportation improvements through the development and capital improvements processes in coordination with the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Goal 6: Protect natural resources and retain open spaces for future generations (refer to Part 9 for additional policy guidance relating to natural resources).

Objective 6.1: Ensure that densities and uses allowed by the City's development regulations adequately reflect site conditions and topography.

Policy Guidance for Objective 6.1:

- Review soil types and other characteristics when evaluating subdivision, zoning, and site development applications to ensure that the proposed use, intensity, and layout of development can be supported by site conditions and topography.

Objective 6.2: Protect the natural resource base of the City and surrounding areas through a combination of strategic acquisitions, open space preservation requirements within new development and incentives for private land preservation initiatives.

Policy Guidance for Objective 6.2:

- **Open Space Mandates:** Continue to require the preservation of open space within every new residential subdivision or develop a requirement for payments in lieu of open space preservation. Consideration for expanding requirement to include some non-residential uses.
- **Tree Preservation:** Encourage tree preservation in new development.
- **Incentives:** Evaluate the use of conservation subdivision design, density bonuses and other incentives to foster the preservation of open space in excess of mandates.
- **Acquisition:** Acquire lands along river corridors and within riverine buffers as corridors to linking greenways and open space, and provide for their preservation through the development approval process.
- **Partnerships:** Seek partnerships and funding to develop an inter-connected greenway system throughout the community and region. Support the efforts of land trusts and conservation groups as they acquire parcels of land for conservation.

Goal 7: Retain working farms as a viable element of the City's economy and character (refer to Part 9 for additional policy guidance relating to working farms).

Objective 7.1: Support the ability of farmers and owners of agricultural land to continue their agricultural operation.

Policy Guidance for Objective 7.1:

- Through managing the rezoning process, minimize leap frog development patterns that may put premature development pressure on open space and agricultural lands.

Goal 8: Responsibly recruit new business and support existing business.

Objective 8.1: Create jobs.

Objective 8.2: Increase and diversify the tax base.

Policy Guidance for Objective 8.1 and 8.2:

- Increase the number of jobs and diversity of employment opportunities in sustainable and recession-proof sectors with wages that equal or exceed the County's average.
- Grow existing business and industry.
- Protect land that is designated on the Future Land Use Map for non-residential uses to provide adequate support for surrounding residential uses.
- Recruit new business.
- Coordinate with the Cabarrus County Economic Development Corporation.

5.4 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

The following are intended as city-wide strategies for the enhancement of the City's urban design character. The purpose of these strategies is to produce a high-quality and visually appealing built environment through the coordination of publicly and privately funded improvements.

These urban design strategies focus mostly, but not exclusively, on the public realm. They apply to matters such as streets and streetscapes (e.g., landscape, lighting, public art, pedestrian and bicycle safety, etc.), gateways (e.g., markers, signage, etc.), and civic spaces (e.g., parks, squares, etc.). The strategies also provide guidance for the interface of private buildings with the public street, addressing in general terms how structures should be located on a lot and how a building exterior should be articulated.

Example of neighborhood gateway - Providence Federal Hill (Image source: Zigamorph, Wikimedia Commons, https://goo.gl/ykarh3)

These strategies are mainly directed toward improving the urban design of Concord's commercial corridors and other non-residential areas. Having an appealing, safe and functionally efficient public realm improves the attractiveness of those areas; increases their vitality by drawing people to them; and supports their chances of success.

Context-sensitive refinements of the following urban design strategies and implementing actions for specific areas of the City will continue to be developed through the City's small area and corridor planning processes.

- Foster land use and design compatibility between different character areas and land uses. Transitions should address the intensity and orientation of uses, buffering of potentially incompatible activities, the relative height and scale of structures and site designs
- Consider creating a Public Space and Streetscape Improvement Plan to systematically address the quality of the City's public streets and public spaces.
- Identify and design gateway locations to emphasize the identity and sense of place of distinct areas of the City (e.g, neighborhoods, corridors, etc.).

- Enhance public bicycle, pedestrian and transit connections in new and existing developments.
- Create (and support the creation of) new pedestrian-oriented civic and public spaces throughout the City.
- Continue to develop branding signage and wayfinding to help residents, workers and visitors to understand and navigate the City's destinations.
- Encourage the use of attractive, water-efficient landscaping materials in streetscapes and private development.
- Maintain an active street tree planting and care program.
- Minimize the number of driveways and other curb cuts in mixed-use and commercial areas, such as downtown, to limit conflicts between cars, pedestrians and bicycles.
- Locate on-site surface parking in commercial developments to the side or rear of buildings facing arterial and collector streets, screened from the street by landscape or an appropriate structural screen.
- Encourage the use of permeable surfaces, significant landscaping including trees and direct pedestrian paths to building entrances in the design of surface parking.
- In commercial and mixed-use areas, ensure that commercial building facades and frontages that create a presence at the street through features such as transparent windows on the ground floor that face the street, visible accessible entrances and pathways from street and parking lots.
- Encourage the majority of commercial buildings' ground-floor uses in mixed-use and commercial areas to be pedestrian-oriented.
- Promote high-quality sign materials, colors and design that are compatible with the building design and the character of the surrounding area.
- Encourage flexible building design to enable re-use of buildings. Adaptive re-use of historic buildings should retain their character-defining features.
- Encourage innovative architecture that responds to its context. In particular support buildings that break up massing and avoid long, uninterrupted walls along the street, and which include human-scaled details that create a comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment.
- Maintain site development and urban design guidelines for large-scale commercial complexes and for "big box" retailers.
- Encourage the inclusion of attractive pedestrian and bicycle amenities in new and existing developments.
- Ensure minimal disturbance to natural resources and ecologically significant land features in development and redevelopment projects.
- Ensure that the Concord Development Ordinance reflects and supports the implementation of these urban design concepts.

Commercial building facades in historic Concord Downtown typically feature high transparency, pedestrian-oriented uses, well-designed, compatible signage, and human-scaled details that provide a model for other commercial areas. (Image source: Silvia Vargas)

Example of an attractive bicycle amenity. (Image source: Victorbull, Wikimedia Commons, https://goo.gl/vYnVeQ)

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PART 06

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

6.0 HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

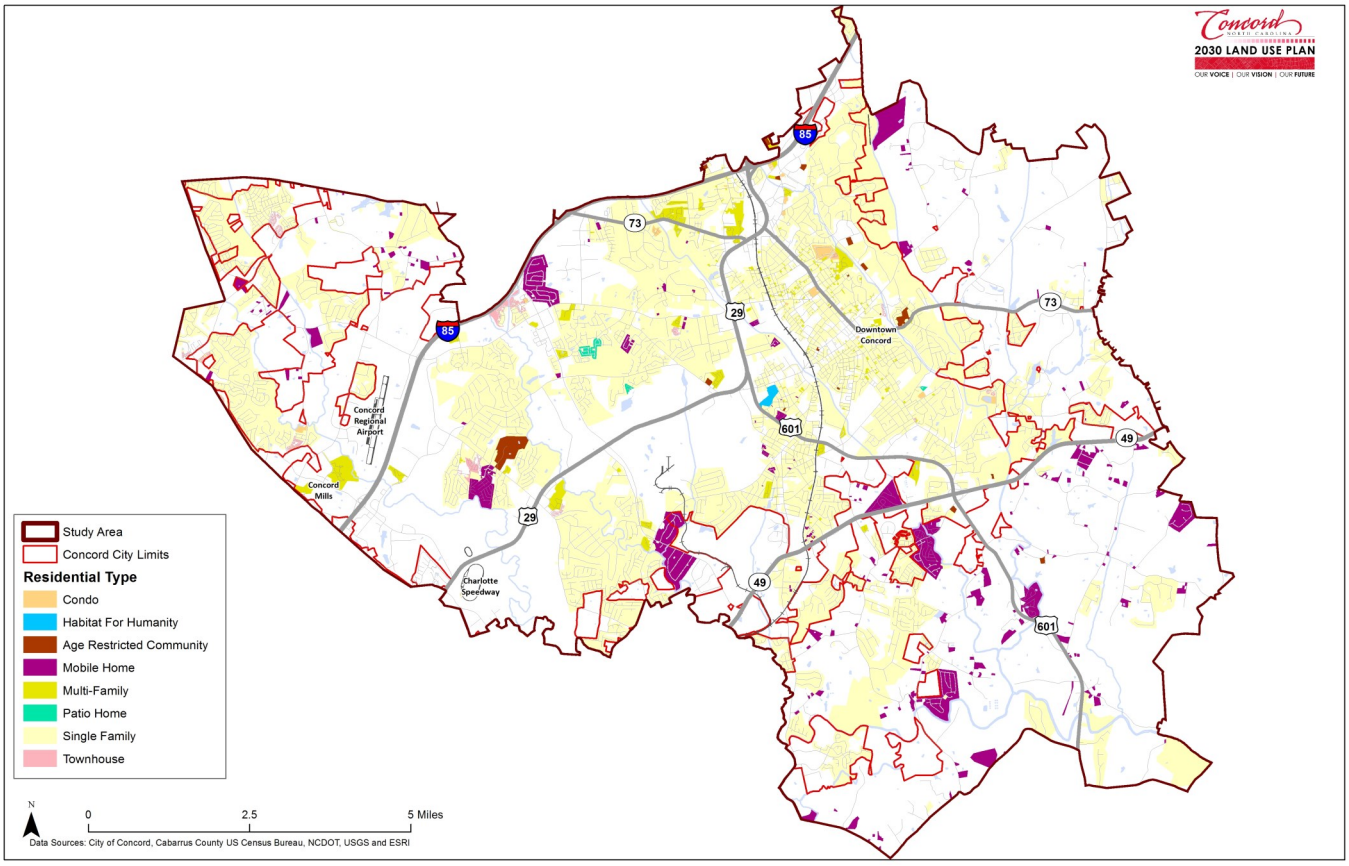
The housing supply is a key element of maintaining and enhancing quality of life. While residents' needs and desires vary, everyone needs a safe, affordable place to live. In addition to these basic requirements, housing adequacy includes considerations about the type and size of the dwelling, its accessibility for those with special needs and the quality of the neighborhood in which it is located. The housing and neighborhoods within the Study Area were analyzed to reach a reasonable understanding of the existing housing stock and projected housing demand to identify challenges and opportunities, and prepare goals, objectives and policies. **Map 6-1** illustrates housing type by location within the Study Area.

New Single-Family Construction (Image source: Tindale Oliver)

Town Homes (Image source: realtor.com, https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-search/Concord_NC/type-condo-townhome-row-home-co-op)

Apartments (Image source: Apartments.com, https://www.apartments.com/concord-chase-concord-nc/jd6r2s4/)

Map 6-1: Residential Parcels by Type



6.1 EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

Between 2000 and 2015, the number of residential units in the City limits increased from 22,485 to 33,137. The City's 2015 occupancy rate of 90.3% was relatively high, with homeowner vacancy rates being 2.5% and rental vacancy rates of 8.1%, which reflected a competitive, but not overly constrained market for renters and buyers.

Detached, single-family dwellings increased from 71.9% of all dwellings in 2000 to 73.1% in 2015. While the number of single-family, attached units and structures with five to 19 dwelling units doubled during this period, detached single family units comprised 75% of all new dwelling units.

See **Appendix A** for more information on existing housing stock.

6.2 PROJECTED HOUSING DEMAND

The housing demands were assessed by analyzing the tenure and household size, mobility, affordability, and future housing demands.

Tenure and Housing Size

While most occupied dwellings in Concord are owner-occupied, the percentage has decreased slightly since 2000. As Millennials (people born between 1981 and 1997) have opted to rent for a variety of reasons and Baby Boomers (people born between 1956 and 1964) have aged, most of the country has experienced similar or even greater decreases in owner-occupancy. Growth since 2000 has resulted in increased household size for both rental and owner-occupied dwelling units. In 2015, one of five residents had lived in their current residence for at least 15 years and 76% of residents had lived in their current residence for 5 to 14 years.

Mobility

Concord's residents are heavily dependent on automobiles for mobility, with 62% of households having two or more vehicles in 2015 and 95% of households having at least one vehicle. While the percentage of households without vehicles decreased between 2000 and 2015, the number increased from 1,453 to 1,583, which reflects a significant number of households that are transit dependent.

Affordability

Housing affordability depends upon many factors (e.g., income, household size, mobility costs, and home efficiency), but the rule of thumb is that housing is less affordable if it exceeds 30% of gross household income. While the Consolidated Strategic Plan has much more detailed analysis of affordability for moderate, low and very low income households, the American Community Survey statistics indicate that 29% of owner-occupied households and 49% of rental households were cost burdened.

Future Housing Demand

The study area's population is projected to increase from 109,347 to 188,182 (83,100 people) between 2015 and 2035. Based on the 2015 average household size (2.86) and occupancy rate (90.3%), the City can expect demand for approximately 29,056 additional housing units.

See **Appendix A** for more information on housing demand.

6.3 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the future housing demands, the City will need to address the following:

- **Allowing for an appropriate mix of dwelling types**. The mix of needed housing units is speculative, but expected increases in the number of residents aged 65 and older and current home-buying trends among Millennials suggest increased demands for attached and higher density residences. The 2030 Plan should provide the flexibility to create diverse housing types and diverse neighborhood settings.
- **Facilitating development of a mix of housing that matches the incomes of existing and future residents**. As the above data indicate, approximately 47% of existing households pay more than 30% of household income for housing. While the Consolidated Strategic Plan will address the provision of affordable housing for moderate, low and very low income households, the 2030 Plan should address the location and distribution of affordable housing. It also should address the provision of attainable workforce housing and housing for higher income households.

- **Improving mobility**. Rapid growth in the City and the region have created a variety of mobility challenges that are discussed in more detail in the Connectivity and Mobility Element. Mobility options define the quality of neighborhoods by determining how residents travel between the places they live and the places they work, plan, learn and shop. Improving options to safely and conveniently walk, bike and ride transit can improve the quality of life in neighborhoods, improve public health and reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles. Improving mobility should be a key objective of the 2030 Plan.

- **Fostering great neighborhoods**. Neighborhood quality is often a critical factor in choosing the right home. Great neighborhoods are ideal investments for homeowners, home buyers, and renters. While there are diverse definitions of what makes a great neighborhood, most include the quality of the streetscape, parks and recreation facilities, proximity to good schools, well maintained properties, neighborhood safety and easy access to places where residents work, play and shop. The 2030 Plan influences each of these factors.

6.4 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

GOAL 9: Create sustainable neighborhoods through the provision of an adequate housing supply with diverse housing types and price levels for the growing population.

Objective 9.1: Provide a diverse mix and range of housing options throughout the City that will accommodate the current and future needs of the citizens of Concord.

Policy Guidance for Objective 9.1:

- The 2030 Plan encourages the development of a variety of housing types through the identification of Mixed Use Activity Center, Village Activity Centers, and the Urban Residential Future Land Use category on the Future Land Use Map. Within these designated areas, incentives should be developed to encourage increased residential density, townhomes, and multi-family housing. Incentives could include a variety of approaches including density bonuses, flexible development standards, or fee reductions.

- As noted in **Section 6.3**, approximately 47% of existing households pay more than 30% of household income for housing. This presents a challenge for Concord that may only worsen as rapid growth continues. Diversity in housing type, though helpful, is not enough to ensure affordability.
  - Monitor the workforce housing stock, which is attainable for those households earning between 80%-140% of Area Median Income (AMI). Workforce housing is important to provide opportunities for young professionals, public servants (teachers, police, firefighters, municipal employees), and other middle class families to live in the City. It is important for the City to assess and understand affordability issues in order to design policies to produce and protect workforce housing.
  - Encourage the development of workforce housing in mixed-use corridors and activity centers.

- The rapid growth of Concord expected through 2030 has the potential to put significant development pressure on existing stable neighborhoods. It is important for polices to be developed to protect established neighborhoods from encroaching incompatible uses. This could be done by limiting rezonings, ensuring appropriate transitions of scale and use, and by targeted investments in neighborhood improvements, including housing rehabilitation.

- Encourage mixed-income neighborhoods.

Objective 9.2: Produce an adequate supply of ownership and rental housing in order to meet the future demands of affordable housing.

Policy Guidance for Objective 9.2:

- Expand affordable homeownership opportunities and support current homeowners in retaining their homeowner status.

- Expand affordable rental housing for all income groups that need assistance

- Facilitate new construction and preservation of a range of different housing types that address the particular needs of the City's households

- Expand opportunities for residential development, particularly infill development and in transit-oriented areas and along mixed-use corridors.

- Leverage financial resources by partnering with affordable housing developers, community housing development organizations, and non-profit housing agencies to expedite new construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing.

Objective 9.3: Preserve quality rental and ownership housing for households of all income levels and special needs.

Police Guidance for Objective 9.3:

- Facilitate the maintenance of existing housing in decent, safe, and healthy condition.
- Encourage and incentivize the preservation of affordable housing, including non-subsidized affordable units, to ensure that demolitions and conversion do not result in the net loss of the City's stock of decent, safe, healthy, or affordable housing.
- Rehabilitate and/or replace substandard housing with housing that is decent, safe, healthy, and affordable.

Objective 9.4: Reduce regulatory and procedural barriers to the production and preservation of housing at all income levels and needs.

Policy Guidance for Objective 9.4:

- Streamline the land use entitlement, environmental review, and building permitting processes, and create incentives to create and preserve affordable housing.

Objective 9.5: Promote sustainable neighborhoods that have mixed-income housing, jobs, amenities, services, and transit.

Policy Guidance for Objective 9.5:

- Provide incentives to encourage the integration of housing with other compatible land uses.
- Promote and facilitate a jobs/housing balance at a city-wide level.
- Educate the public to understand and support the benefits of mixed-use and mixed-income communities to accommodate projected growth.

Objective 9.6: Promote a more equitable distribution of affordable housing opportunities throughout the City.

Policy Guidance for Objective 9.6:

- Foster the development of new affordable housing units citywide and within each Community Plan area.

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PART 07

CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY

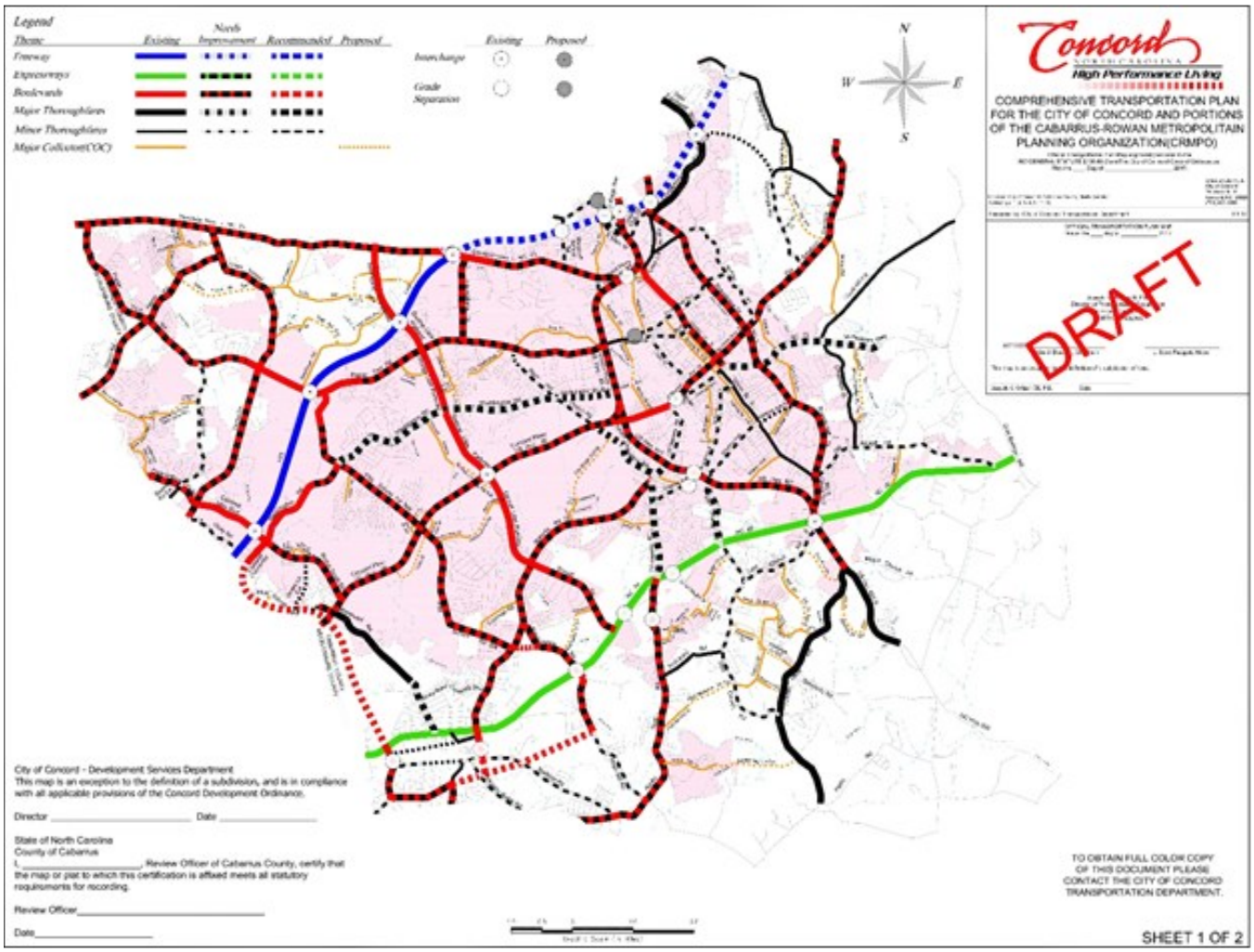
7.0 CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY

The mobility network within the Study Area was analyzed by reviewing the Concord Transportation Plan, 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and the Concord-Kannapolis Transit Development Plan to reach a reasonable understanding of the streets and corridors, transit, and walk/bike infrastructure to identify challenges and opportunities, formulate a policy guidance, and prepare goals, objectives and implementation strategies.

7.1 STREETS AND CORRIDORS

The existing roadway system within the Study Area consists of a freeway, expressways, boulevards, major and minor thoroughfares, and major collectors. The Concord Transportation Plan shows existing and future alignments of thoroughfares and collector streets in the City, as well as the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) (**Map 7-1**).

Map 7-1: Existing and Recommended Roadway Improvements (Concord Transportation Plan)

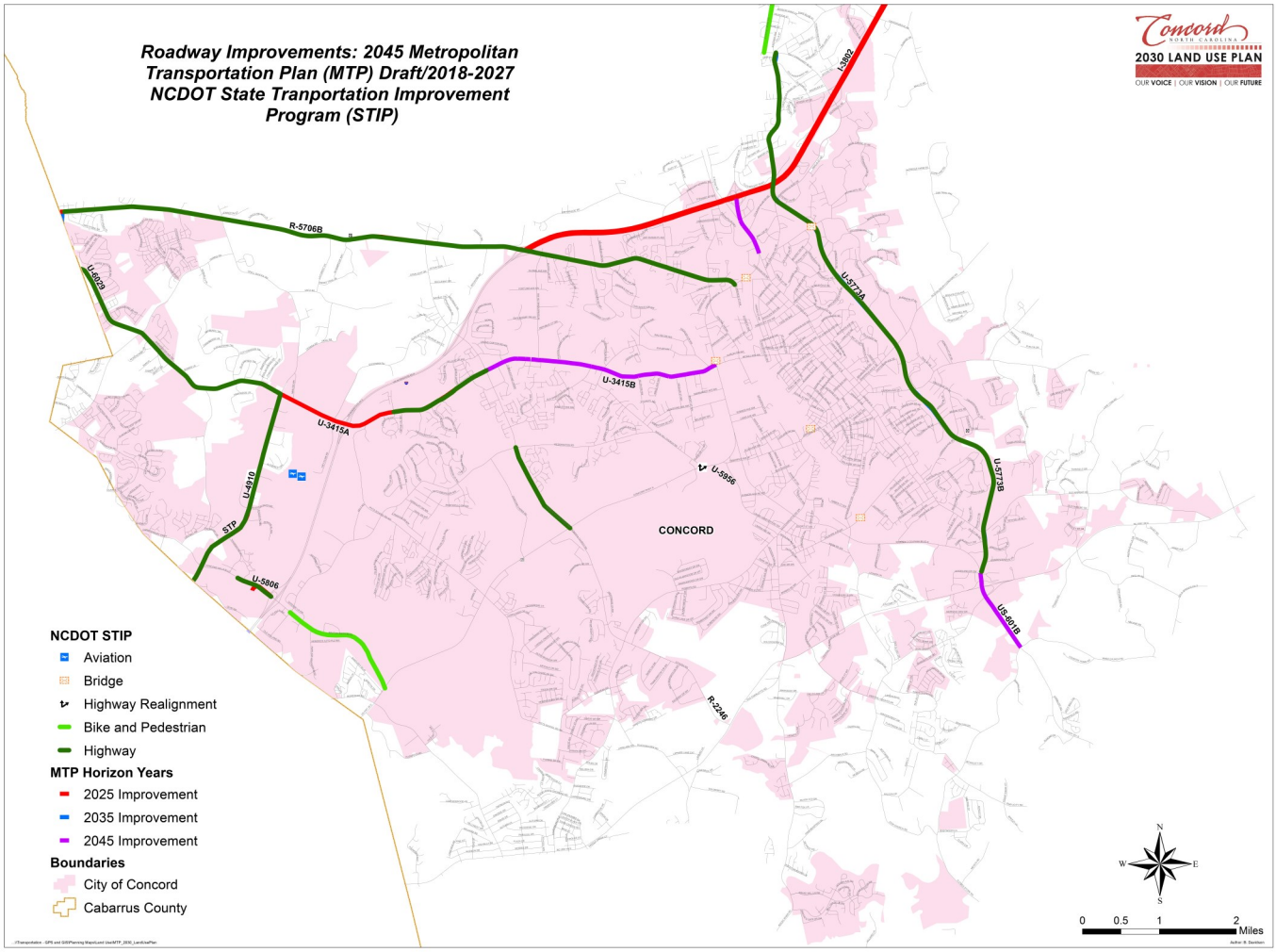


(Source: City of Concord)

The 2045 MTP also identified roadway improvements for 2025, 2035 and 2045 (**Map 7-2**).

See **Appendix A** for more information on the roadway network.

Map 7-2: Roadway Improvements (DRAFT 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan)



(Source: 2045 MTP)

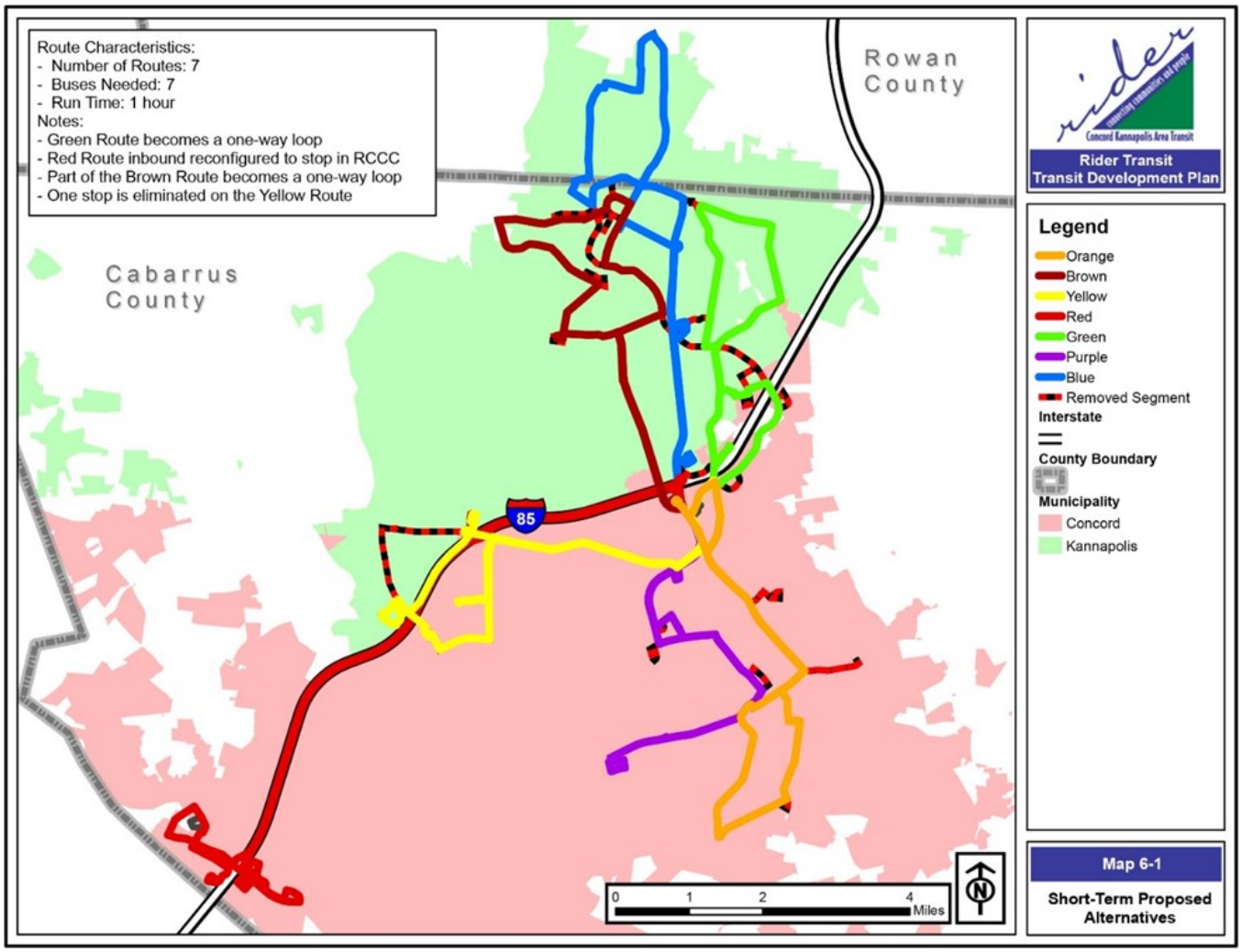
7.2 TRANSIT

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) is the long term plan that guides the development and enhancement of the Rider Transit system to serve the populations of Concord and Kannapolis.

There are seven bus routes and one Transit Center that serve the City of Concord. The TDP identified short range service improvements (**Map 7-3**). Some of the long-range priorities include improving bus stop infrastructure and pedestrian safety; new route for all day service to Charlotte; new route serving western Concord and Kannapolis; and implement additional regional service. In addition, future transit lines should be aligned with growth and land use plan (i.e., Derita Road).

See **Appendix A** for more information on public transit.

Map 7-3: Short-Term Proposed Alternative Bus Routes



(Source: City of Concord)

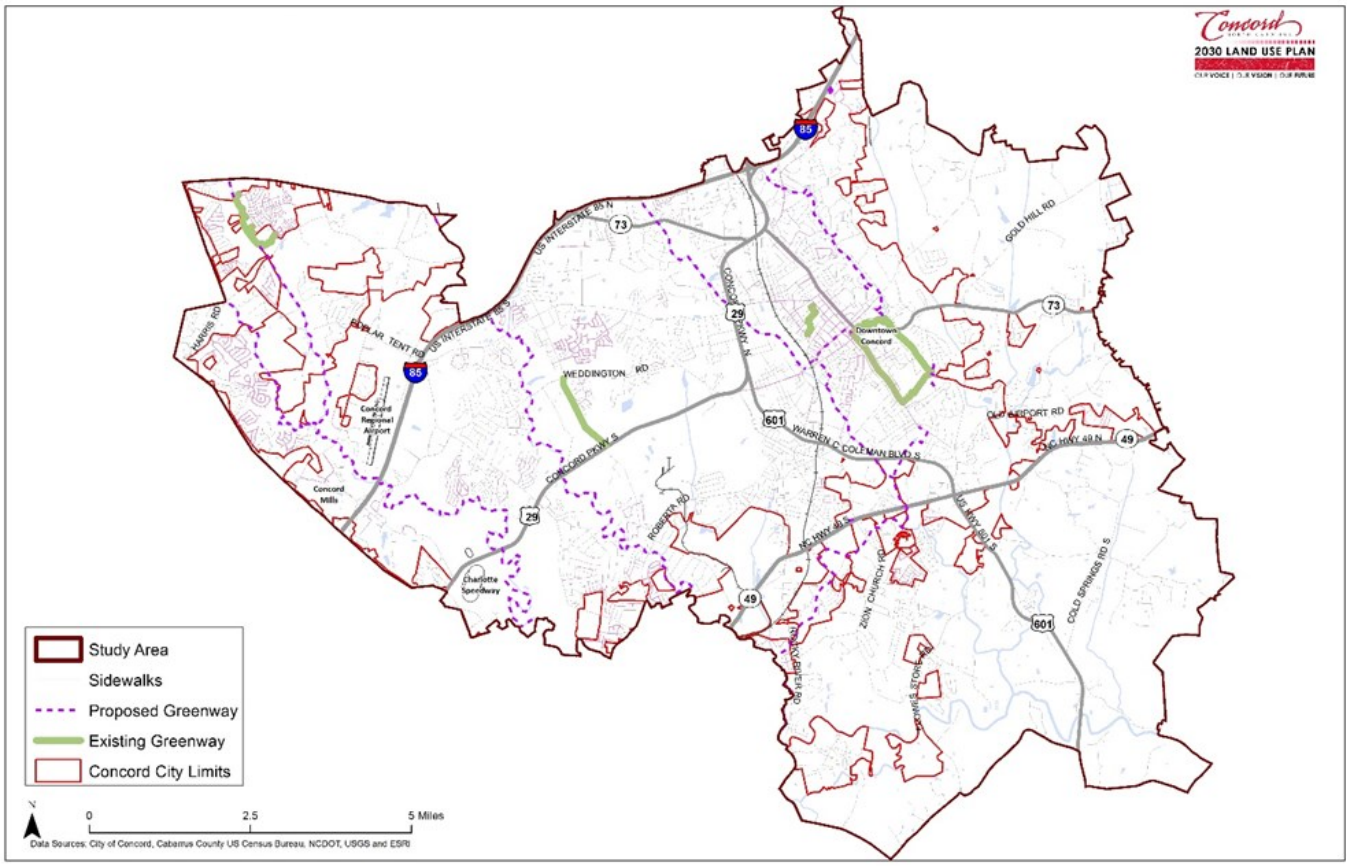
The 2040 MTP identified potential North Carolina Commuter Rail Service that will improve the commuter service to the City of Concord.

- Future commuter/passenger rail planning in the Urban Area may include the Northeast Blue Line Extension which would be a part of the Charlotte Transit System.
- Running from northeast to southwest in the CR MPO area, this line and extension begins in downtown Charlotte and continues parallel to US 29 towards Concord and terminates on the campus of UNCC.
- The extension could cross I-485 one day and continue past the Charlotte Motor Speedway and potentially to the Concord Mills Mall.

7.3 WALK/BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Within the Study Area, there are four greenways, totaling approximately 6.8 linear miles connecting to parks, wetlands, Downtown, and neighborhoods - Village Greenway (0.5 miles), Harold B. McEachern Greenway (2.0 miles), Downtown Greenway Loop (3.0 miles), and Hector H. Henry II Greenway (1.3 miles). **Map 7-4** identifies the existing and proposed greenways, and existing sidewalks. See **Appendix A** for more information on greenways and sidewalks.

Map 7-4: Greenways and Sidewalks



7.4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the future connectivity and mobility needs, the City will need to address the following:

- **Preparing and Adapting for Automated/Connected/Electric Vehicles**. The City should be mindful of this technology and its potential for disruption of the status quo in terms of development patterns, infrastructure usage, and transportation funding. The City should be prepared to initiate targeted planning efforts as the technology becomes more widespread.

- **Maintaining a balanced transportation system to allow for continued growth**. Concord is at a unique place in its history. Through thoughtful planning and infrastructure investment, the community has been able to successfully support population and economic growth. In order for this to continue through 2030 and beyond, growth must be managed more thoughtfully as capacity and congestion issues begin to put a strain on the system. Maintaining a balanced transportation system requires thoughtful policy and design choices that ensure that residents and businesses alike are provided the transportation infrastructure both residents and businesses that call Concord home.

- **Identifying and building multimodal corridors**. While Concord's transportation system has been fairly effective at addressing capacity demands of new growth, the roadways themselves are often lacking in multimodal facilities/amenities that would support use by transportation modes other than the single occupant vehicle. This lack of facilities/amenities can inhibit desired development types that depend on maintaining access while supporting alternative modes.

- **Developing a safe and effective bicycle/pedestrian network**. The transportation system provides connectivity between the unique assets and character areas located throughout the Study Area. This system, now almost entirely designed to support automobile transportation, must evolve to expand and enhance opportunities for bicycle/pedestrian modes. These enhancements will provide a viable transportation option for those who wish not to drive (or may not have access to a car), provide a network that can be utilized by the community to support exercise and public health, increase safety for bicyclists/pedestrians, and support economic development by providing non-automobile connections to retail and cultural centers throughout the Study Area.

- **Growing a transit system that serves all stakeholders effectively**. Concord is a growing and dynamic City that serves as a commuter suburb for Charlotte and an employment center for the greater region. This mix of identities and their associated transportation needs means that a multi-faceted approach is needed to manage and expand the Rider Transit system. The City should seek to more closely align the existing bus system with existing activity centers within the community while working to increase frequency to support both the transit dependent population and choice riders alike. Enhancing regional connections to Charlotte, and particularly the expanding LYNX light rail is crucial as well as it supports the needs of commuters while reducing roadway congestion and environmental impacts.

7.5 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Goal 10: Encourage and promote multimodal connectivity between residential, employment, commercial, and recreational uses.

Objective 10.1: Provide an interconnected road system.

Policy Guidance for Objective 10.1:

- Continue to require connected street patterns within and between new developments.
- Identify opportunities to improve connectivity through infill and redevelopment.
- Develop materials to help educate the public about the City's "connectivity ratio" of the CDO which is designed to ensure street connections to neighboring residential developments, recreational uses, schools, commercial and employment centers.

Objective 10.2: Support the expansion of the Rider Transit System to provide efficient transit service to those who live, work, and visit Concord.

Policy Guidance for Objective 10.2:

- Support the recommendations of the approved Transit Development Plan and future transit planning studies.
- Coordinate with NCDOT, Cabarrus-Rowan Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Charlotte Area Transit System to improve connectivity between Concord and University Area.
- Allow and encourage transit oriented and mixed-use developments near planned transit stops.
- Coordinate with Rider Transit to provide needed transit facilities with new development.
- Focus bicycle and pedestrian improvements in areas that will improve connectivity to transit facilities.

Objective 10.3: Increase the provision of sidewalks and other walk/bike infrastructure.

Policy Guidance for Objective 10.3:

- Develop a program and/or materials to educate the public and development community about the CDO requirements for sidewalks in new developments and the importance of pedestrian connectivity more generally.
- Planning and Community Development Department should work with the City's Transportation Department to identify key sidewalk system "gaps" that could be connected to greatly enhance connectivity between residential neighborhoods to recreation, schools, and other amenities.
- Coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Department to implement the City's Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the findings of the Open Space Connectivity Analysis with a focus on connectivity and regional bicycle/pedestrian corridors.

- Designate the routes identified in the *Livable Community Blueprint* as priority routes to pursue in the development of safe and user-friendly pedestrian and bicycle corridors.
- Encourage new developments to incorporate off-road facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.
- On an on-going basis, seek partnerships and funding to develop an inter-connected greenway system throughout the community and the region.
- Develop a bikeway system plan (bike lanes, shared lane markings, etc.) with prioritized improvements to coincide with roadway expansions (widening) and repaving.

Objective 10.4: Provide a transportation system that efficiently and safely serves the current and future needs of Concord citizens.

Policy Guidance for Objective 10.4:

- Implement of the Concord Transportation Plan for local roadway improvements and multimodal and pedestrian -friendly corridors.
- Implement the Cabarrus-Rowan MPO 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan recommendations for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, rail transportation, transit and public transportation, and congestion management and traffic monitoring for facilities in Concord area.
- Support the NC 73 – Transportation/Land Use Corridor Plan to improve the roadway to become a multimodal and pedestrian-friendly corridor.
- Coordinate with NCDOT to develop corridor plans on key Mixed-Use Corridors to identify transportation and land use improvements that can enhance local and citywide connectivity. Key corridors should include:
    - ◊ George W. Liles Parkway
    - ◊ Weddington Road
    - ◊ Concord Mills Boulevard/Bruton Smith Boulevard
    - ◊ Concord Parkway South (US29)/Cabarrus Avenue
    - ◊ Concord Parkway North
    - ◊ Church Street North
    - ◊ Poplar Tent Road
- Accommodate pedestrians and bicycles into most of the road typologies. Trees are located between the roadway pavement and sidewalks wherever possible, to provide a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.
- Focus the Plan to find ways to connect to light rail transit expansion to Concord.

Objective 10.5: Integrate multi-modal connectivity with the Concord Regional Airport.

Policy Guidance for Objective 10.5:

- Provide connectivity between the Concord Regional Airport and local visitor destinations.
- Maximize the effectiveness of any transit connections for local travelers and employees of the airport and surrounding firms.

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PART 08

PARKS & RECREATION

8.0 PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Concord's Department of Parks and Recreation functions as the provider of park facility development services; festivals, events, programs and athletics; recreation center operations and programming; facility operation; and customer service associated with all these functions. The parks and recreation system within the Study Area was analyzed to reach a reasonable understanding of the existing parks and recreation facilities and elements of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to identify challenges and opportunities, and goals, objectives, and policy guidance.

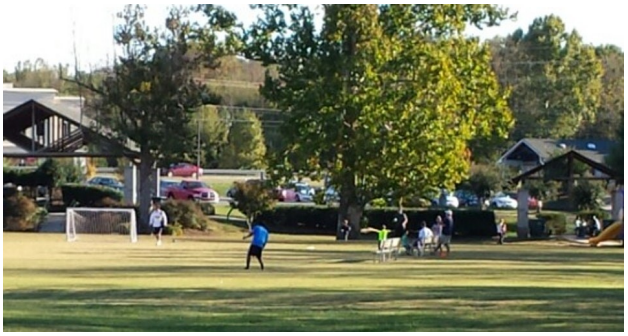
8.1 EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION

The Concord park system encompasses approximately 974 acres of land and consists of 17 facilities, including neighborhood parks, community parks, special use parks and regional parks, recreation centers, a municipal pool, a public golf course, three community centers and four greenways. In addition, the City owns Lake Fisher Reservoir located in the City of Kannapolis, which is open on a limited basis for recreational fishing. The Study Area also includes one County park (Frank Liske Park) consisting of 240 acres, and one school baseball/softball field (Webb Field) approximately 3.7 acres. **Map 8-1** show the distribution of parks and greenways throughout the Study Area. See **Appendix A** for inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities, and additional information.

In recent years, the Department has undertaken an aggressive improvement program of existing park facilities, from adding lighting and security cameras, to replacing equipment and upgrading facilities at various parks. For 2016-2017 budget year, the Department is focusing on additional facility improvements, while at the same searching for new facility opportunities in the City's high growth areas, in accordance with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City Council approved a $6.2 million budget for the 2016-2017 budget year.

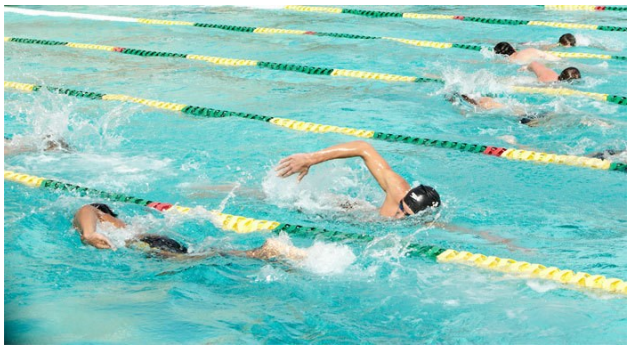
Harold B. McEachern Greenway (Image source: Carolina Thread Trail, https://www.carolinathreadtrailmap.org/images/trails/trail-system/1-DSC_0211-large.jpg)

Beverly Hills Park (Image source: Yelp, https://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/beverly-hills-park-concord)



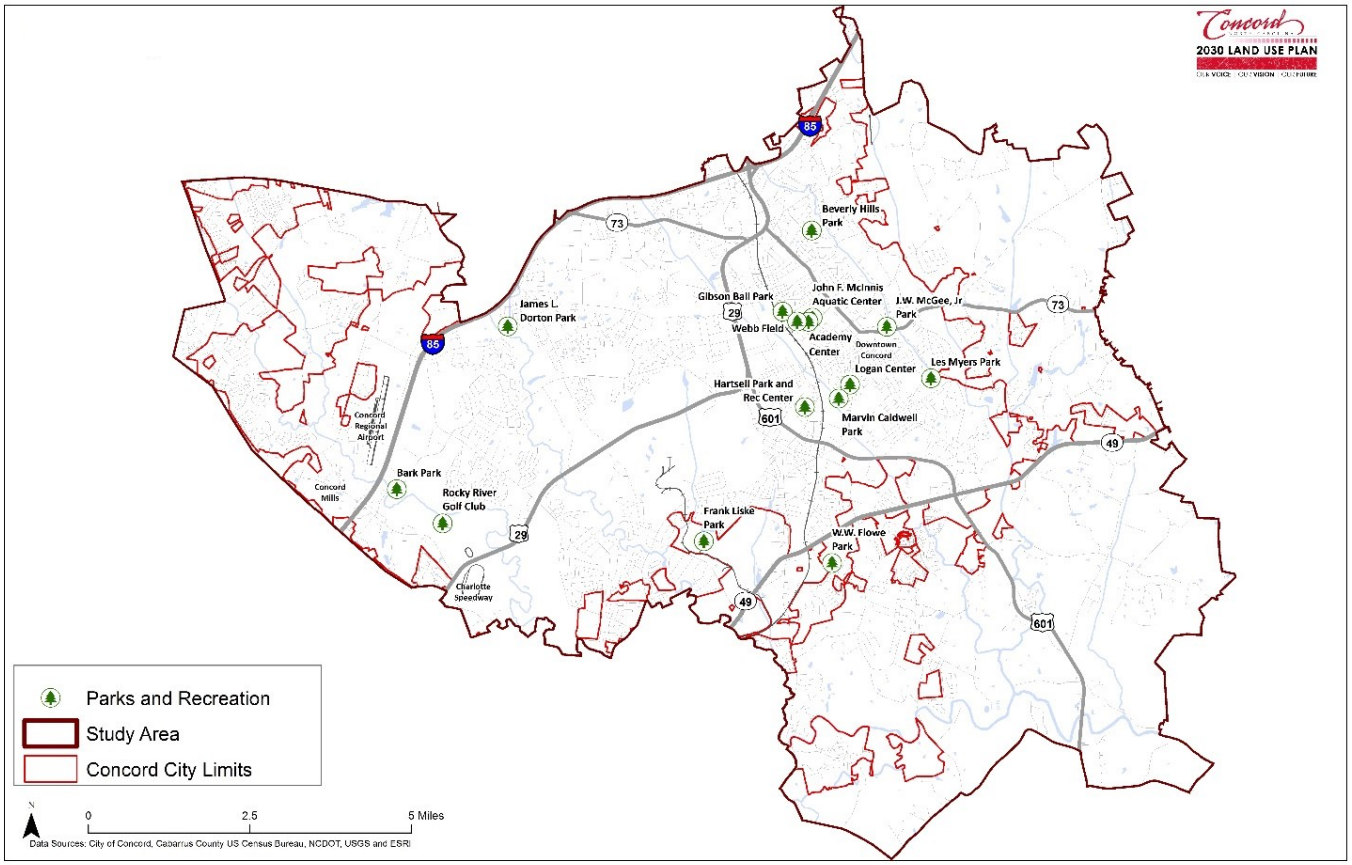
James L. Dorton Park (Image source: Foursquare, https://foursquare.com/v/dorton-park/4c4a3e72712ac92882cd256b?openPhotoId=5264429811d249468be27987)

Weddington Road Bark Park (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Facilities/Dog-Park)



John F. McInnis Aquatic Center (Image source: Cabarrus County Convention & Visitors Bureau, https://www.visitcabarrus.com/meetings-and-event-planners/john-f-mcinnis-aquatic-center/)

Map 8-1: Existing Parks



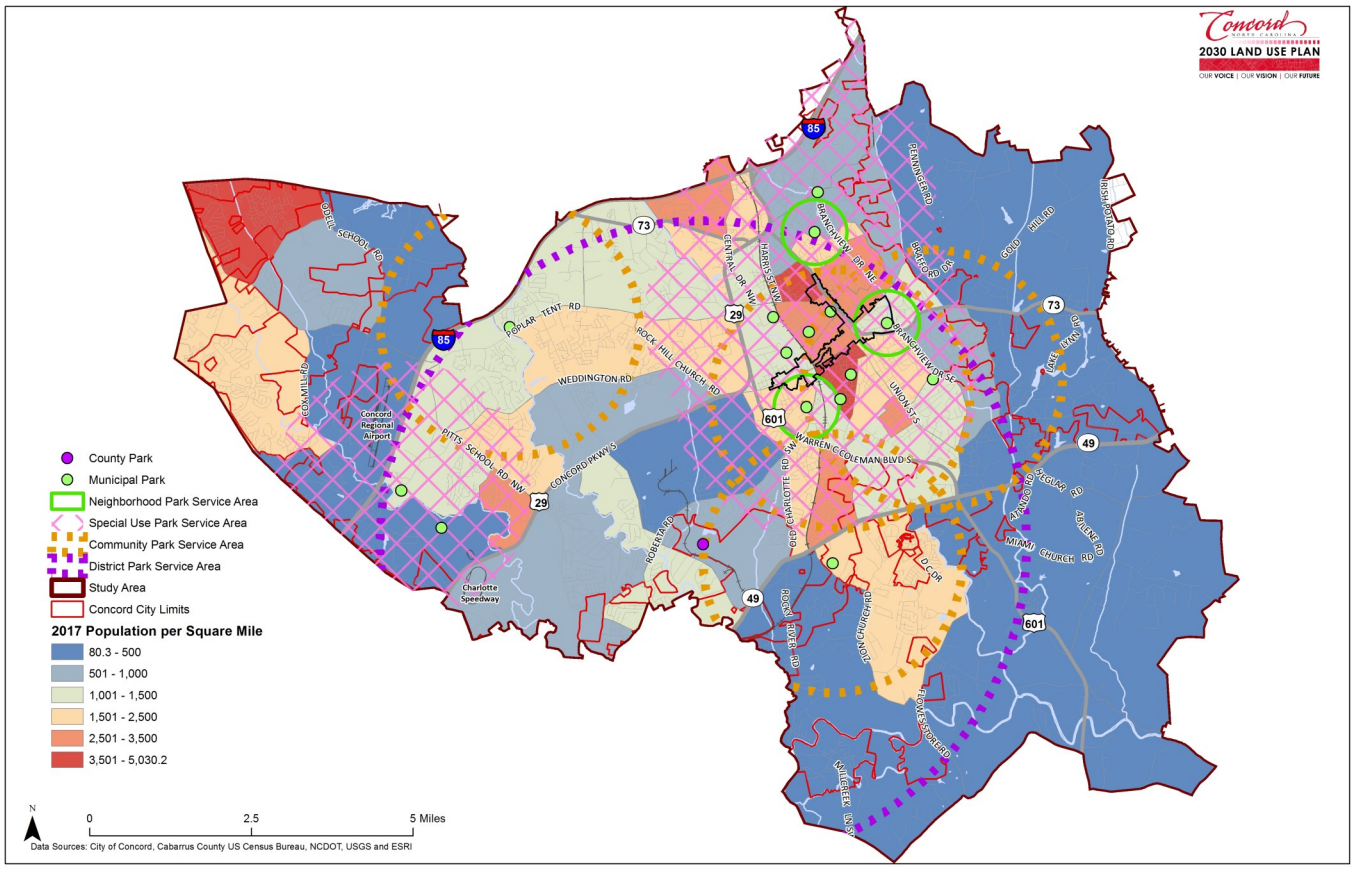
8.2 ELEMENTS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

In 2001, the City of Concord collaborated with Cabarrus County and the cities and towns of Kannapolis, Harrisburg and Mt. Pleasant to develop a multi-jurisdictional parks and recreation master plan, entitled "Livable Community Blueprint for Cabarrus County." In 2016, the Department began the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan and it was completed in January 2017.

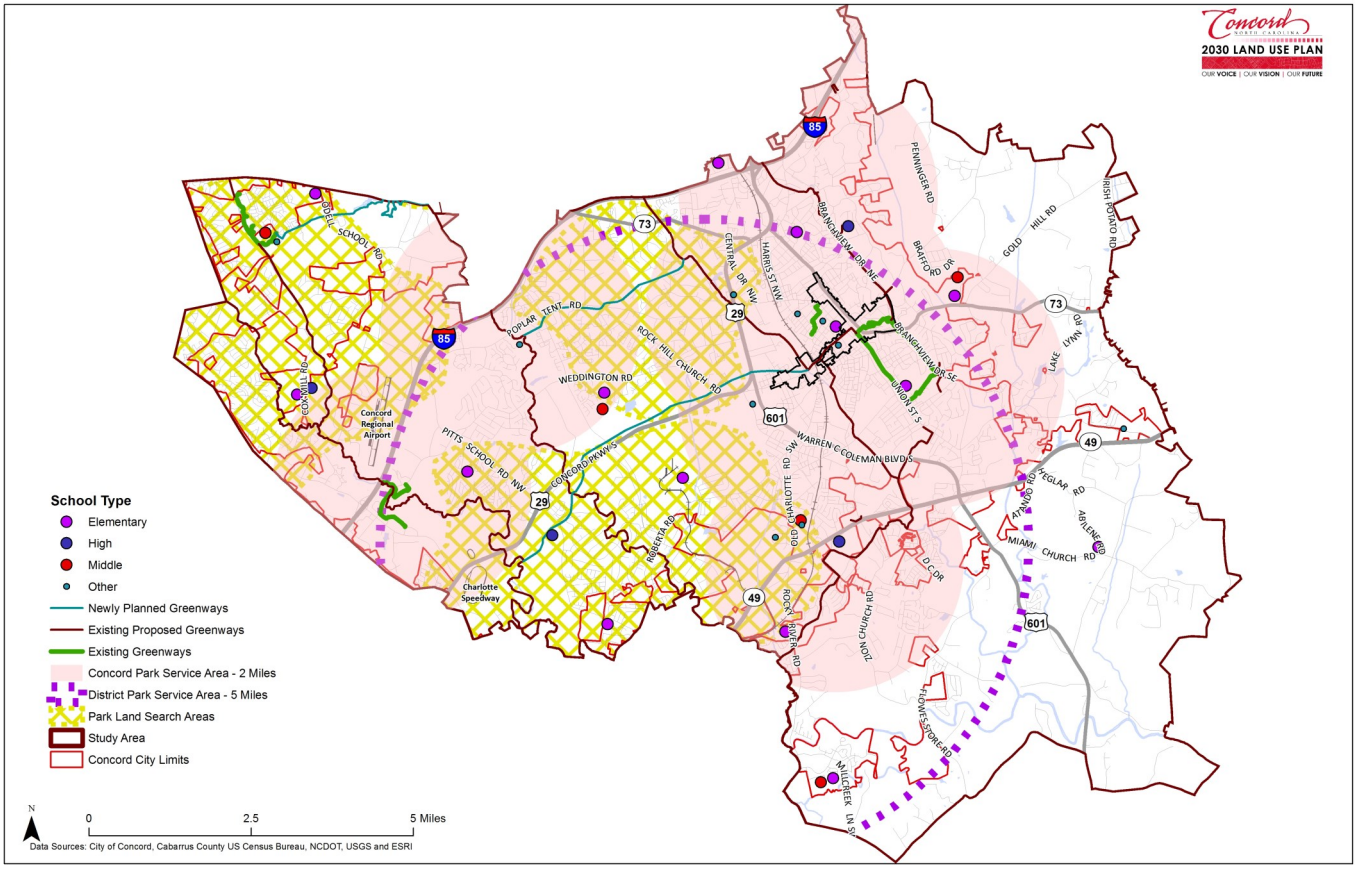
The purpose of this Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to ensure that the City's recreation programs and facilities will continue to meet residents' needs over the next 5-10-15 years. There are certain areas within the City of Concord that are lacking access to convenient parks, particularly in the northwest quadrant of the City, since most of the existing parks were built several decades ago, prior to the City's expansion as shown in **Map 8-2**. New park expansion opportunities are identified in under-served areas by providing needed park types, such as neighborhood, community, and district parks as the population increases as shown in **Map 8-3** and the 2030 Growth Concept as shown in **Map 4-1**. This Plan is designed to evaluate the existing and future park and recreation supply and demand and to make recommendations for new facilities, programs, and improvements.

Through inventory and analysis of the City of Concord Parks and Recreation System and review and interpretation of public input, a series of recommendations were developed: General Strategies, Parks & Facilities, Programs, Public Relations, and Funding. The needs and demands were turned into formal recommendations and prioritized into a final action plan for implementation along a 10 year time-line of completion.

Map 8-2: Park Service Areas



Map 8-3: Park Search Areas



8.3 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the future parks and recreation system, the City will need to address the following:

- Demand for outdoor activities with a nature based/environmental focus.
- Demand for greenways and trails, indoor activity space, and an indoor aquatic center are sought after facilities.
- Keep existing park facilities maintained and updated to meet the current and future demands,
- Focus on building facilities and/or adapting/expanding existing facilities to meet the future demands and unique needs of users with physical and developmental disabilities.
- Look for new park expansion opportunities in underserved areas or areas that are expected to be underserved due to expected population growth.
- Strengthen school partnerships and "School Park" facilities.
- Acquire and preserve unique and environmentally sensitive lands for open space preservation.
- Identify the physical needs of the park's site and include any land the local government will acquire and any capital improvements (buildings, recreation facilities, roads, utilities).
- Expand the City park system by acquiring and planning for new parks in areas lacking access to convenient parks.
- Reinforce the Concord Unified Development Ordinance to address the greenway dedications when a residential development is submitted for approval (i.e., land dedication, or fee in lieu).
- Work with the County to determine if any unused school property could be re-purposed for parks or other facilities which can serve the needs of the local community.

8.4 GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Goal 11: Provide a high quality, diversified parks, recreation and open space system that provides for all age and interest groups.

Objective 11.1: Expand and develop parks and recreation facilities to serve the needs of the citizens of Concord.

Policy Guidance for Objective 11.1:

- Implement the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan to improve and expand existing parks and facilities and develop new parks and facilities.
- Provide parks and recreation facilities in underserved areas.
- Focus on building facilities and/or adapting/expanding existing facilities to accommodate users with physical and developmental disabilities.
- Develop mini parks, neighborhood parks and civic parks as recommended in the Livable Community Blueprint.
- Develop passive parks including opportunities for trails, picnicking, camping and nature study.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Acquire lands that have an environmental quality that lend themselves to preservation and nature-based activities.
- Work with Cabarrus County in the development of community parks and determine if any unused school property could be re-purposed for parks or other facilities.
- Use the Growth Concept and Future Land Use Map to identify opportunities for future parks and potential greenway connections.
- Incorporate by reference the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan into the 2030 Land Use Plan.

- Reinforce the CDO to address the greenway dedications/reservations when a residential development is submitted for approval (i.e., land dedication or fee in lieu).
- Create greenway design standards to require developer-funded greenway construction on site when consistent with the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Objective 11.2: Improve access to existing parks, open space and recreation areas.

Policy Guidance for Objective 11.2:

- Continue to develop the planned city-wide network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities, greenways and trails.
- Amend the Concord Development Ordinance to ensure that land is reserved for linking existing and future parks and open space to the greenway system.
- Adopt a "whole access" policy for parks and trails to provide recreation for all regardless of physical ability.
- Increase transit accessibility to parks by considering stops on existing or new routes within no more than a 10-minute walk of a park.

Objective 11.3: Work with partner organizations to leverage resources, avoid duplication of facilities and services, and reduce financial impacts on the City.

Policy Guidance for Objective 11.3:

- Continue to look for opportunities to establish joint use facilities or co-location.
- Encourage the private sector to develop high-quality recreational facilities to help meet the community's recreation needs.

Objective 11.4: Increase utilization of parks and recreation programs

Policy Guidance for Objective 11.4:

- Develop a promotional campaign to encourage active and passive recreation and to inform the community about the City's facilities and programs.
- Partner with CCS and private schools to increase educational use of parks.
- Expand variety in existing and new parks facilities and programming over time, to serve the shifting needs of the community.

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PART

09

NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE

9.0 NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE

Maintaining a delicate balance of land uses within the City of Concord is essential to ensure that adequate infrastructure, employment opportunities, recreational facilities and commercial enterprises are available to meet the growing needs of Concord's citizens. As key components of the overall character of the City, it is also important that the natural resources and agriculture be preserved and protected. The natural resources and agriculture within the Study Area were analyzed to reach a reasonable understanding of the working farms, open space and forest, and rivers, lakes and streams to identify challenges and opportunities, formulate a policy guidance, and prepare goals, objectives and implementation strategies.

9.1 WORKING FARMS

One of Concord's most attractive features is the natural beauty of its land. Large undeveloped tracts and agricultural lands in the western area of the City provide scenic corridors into the heart of the City. However, agricultural lands are quickly becoming islands surrounded by residential development.

Most of the farmland is located primarily in the western portion of the City, off Weddington Road, Concord Parkway South (US 29), Pitts School Road, Roberta Road and Davidson Highway (NC 73). It is anticipated that over time, much of this farmland area will be developed into other uses. Areas just out of the City and to the east are currently primarily agricultural in nature, however, these areas too are facing development pressures.

See **Appendix A** for more information on agricultural lands.

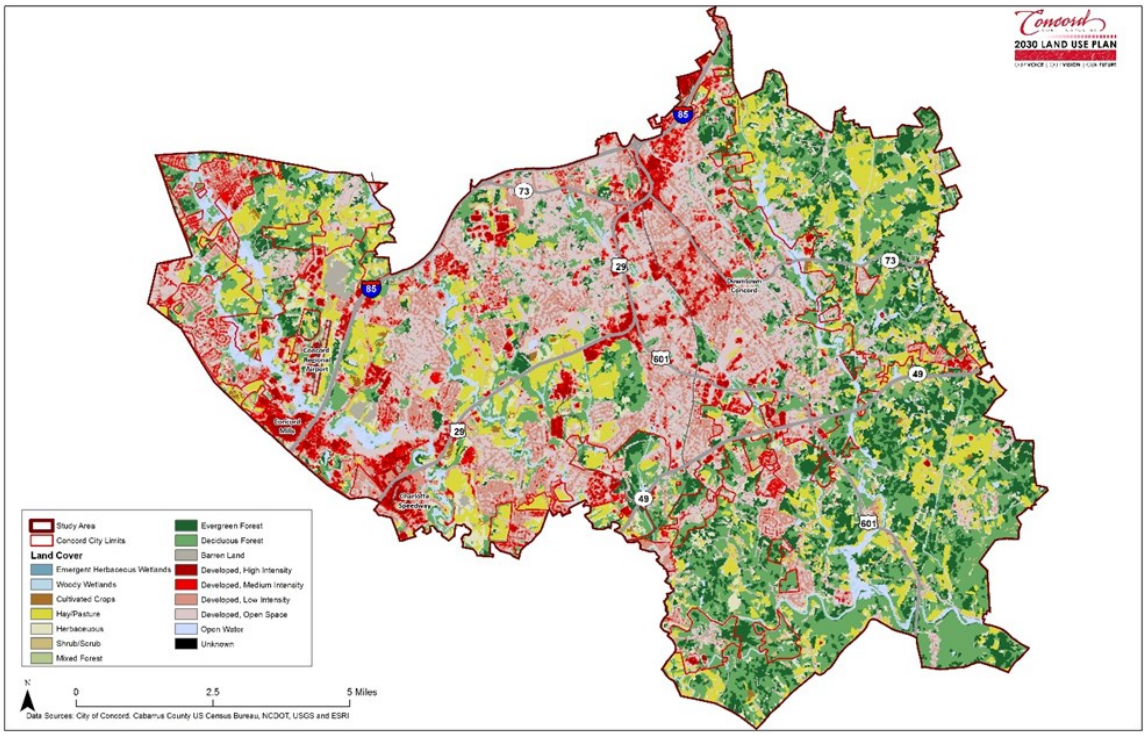
9.2 OPEN SPACE AND FORESTS

Open space includes existing recreational areas, such as parks and golf courses, as well as passive open space. In rural areas natural connections between larger undeveloped open space areas such as regional, state or national parks have been preserved and termed "greenways." In urban and suburban areas, narrower corridors connect natural or man-made features and provide alternative transportation routes and recreational sites accommodating such activities as picnicking, jogging, walking, biking or equestrian paths. There is approximately 15,669.32 acres of developed open space, which accounts for 21.4% of the Study Area (see **Map 9-1**).

The majority of the forested areas consists of deciduous, evergreen, and mixed forests consisting of approximately 24,965 acres, which accounts for 34% of the Study Area and mostly concentrated in the east end (see **Map 9-1**).

See **Appendix A** for more information open spaces.

Map 9-1: Land Cover (2011)



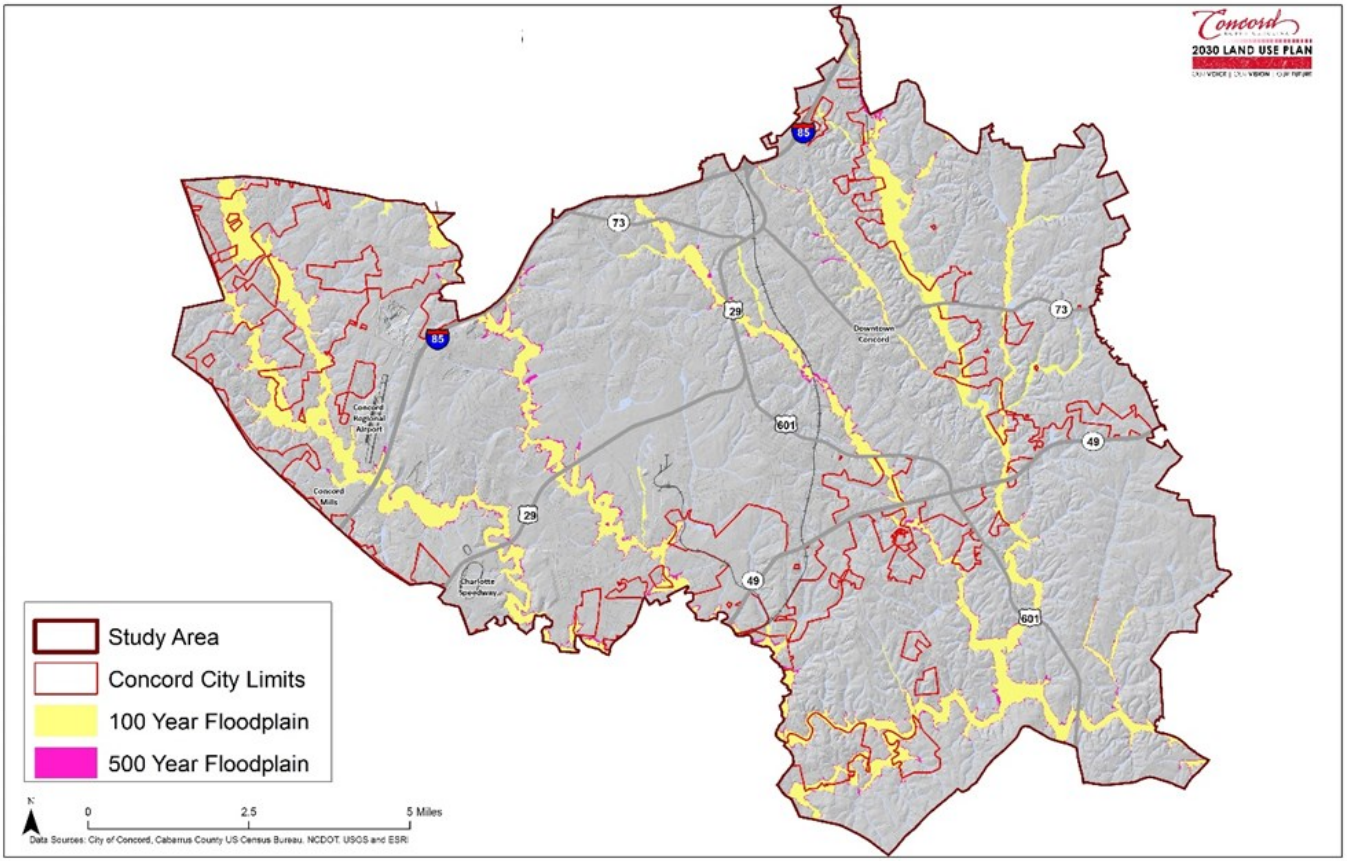
9.3 RIVERS, LAKES, AND STREAMS

The City of Concord is positioned between two major river systems – the Catawba River to the west and the Yadkin/Pee Dee River to the east. It is also within close proximity to major reservoirs including Lake Norman, Badin Lake, Lake Tillery and High Rock Lake. The City is in the Rocky River Sub-basin of the Yadkin River Basin. Major streams including Coddle Creek, Rocky River, Irish Buffalo Creek, Three Mile Branch and Cold Water Creek flow from northwest to southeast across the City.

Coddle Creek, Afton Run, Rocky River, Irish Buffalo Creek, Three Mile Branch and much of Cold Water Creek have both floodways and 100-year floodplains designated along their routes through the City. A portion of Cold Water Creek in the far eastern portion of the City has only 100-year floodplain designated, with no floodway (see **Map 9-2**). The CDO includes a Floodplain Protection Overlay District (FPOD) that regulates building and development within designated flood hazard areas. Specifically, the purpose of the FPOD is to promote the health, safety and general welfare and to minimize public and private loss due to flood conditions in specific areas.

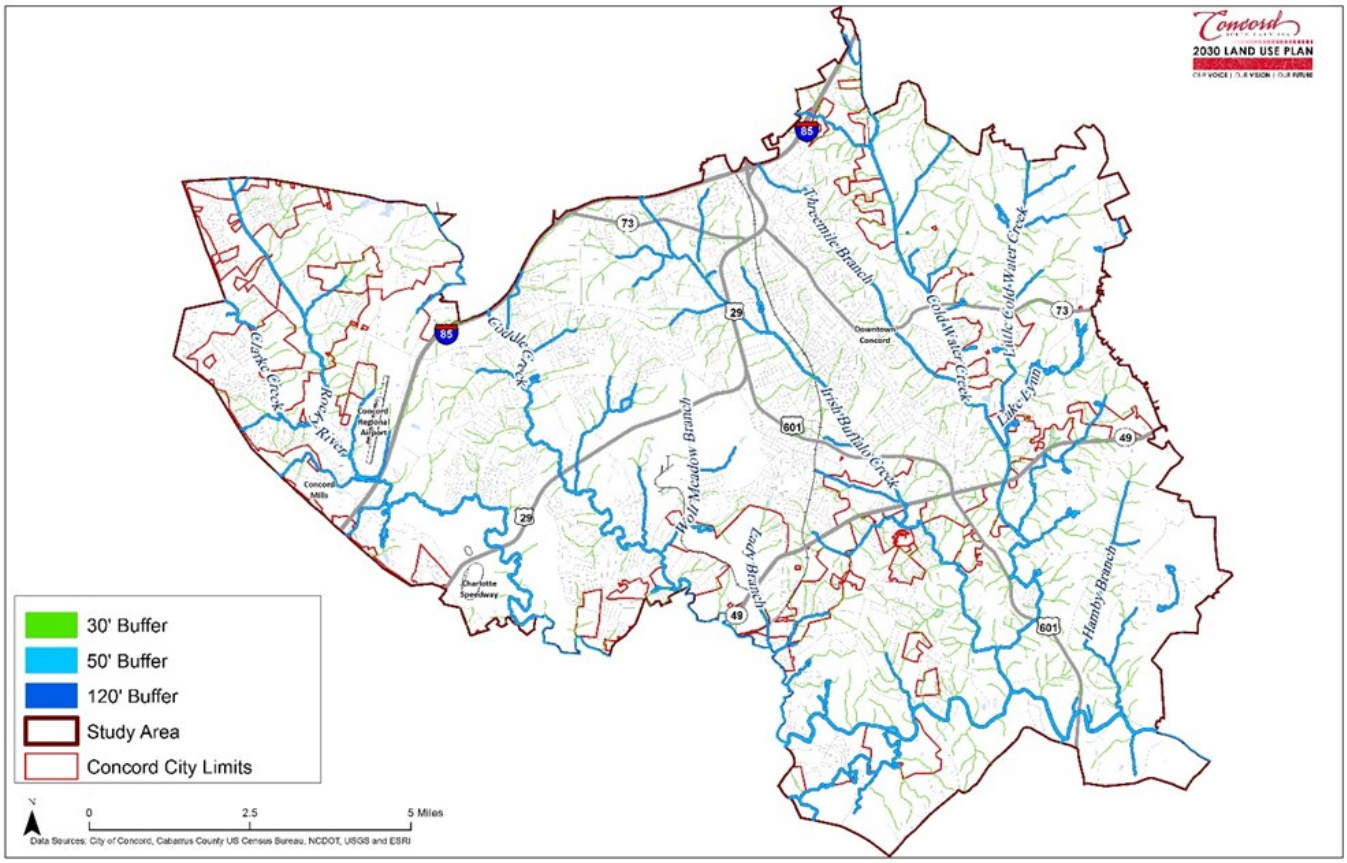
See **Appendix A** for more information on water bodies.

Map 9-2: 100 and 500 Year Floodplains



In addition, the CDO includes provisions for a River/Stream Overlay District (RSOD), which is comprised of a minimum 50-foot stream buffer established on both sides of all perennial streams, measured from the average annual stream bank (see **Map 9-3**). The purpose of the District is to minimize soil erosion, reduce the velocity of overland stormwater flow, trap sediment and soil eroded from cropland or other land being developed, and limit other pollutants from entering the waterways. No building or structure may be erected within 20 feet of the buffer. However, greenways, utilities and easements, and certain agricultural uses are allowed within the designated buffer area.

Map 9-3: Stream Buffers



9.4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the preservation of natural resources and agriculture, the City will need to address the following:

- Steady increase in population and steady decrease in buildable areas, have increased pressure to develop what remains of agricultural areas, forests, and other open spaces.
- Density limitations are the most frequently used technique for open space preservation. Unfortunately, density limitations sometimes have the unintended side effect of using up the open space in smaller lots rather than preserving any sort of true open space that might be used for agricultural purpose.
- Development of natural areas can adversely impact water quality through the removal of vegetation and forests and their replacement with impervious surfaces.
- To maintain the overall character of the City, it is also important that its farmlands and open spaces, be preserved and protected.
- Enable existing farmlands to remain viable through the use of restrictions programs and marketing projects or tax breaks.
- Agricultural land should be protected and preserved in large contiguous blocks in order to maintain a "critical mass" of farms and agricultural land.
- Agricultural land preservation must be distinguished from open space preservation and must be viewed as protecting commercially viable farms and productive agricultural land which incidentally provides open space amenities.
- Extension of urban services into agricultural areas should be discouraged.

- Need to preserve open space, through greenways and parks.
- Acquire lands that have an environmental quality that lend themselves to preservation and nature-based activities.
- Explore alternative options to preservation, such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's), Purchase Development Rights (PDR's), Voluntary Preservation of Open Space, and Purchase of Property for Open Space.

In planning for the preservation of natural resources and agriculture, the City will need to address the following topics:

- Increasing pressure to develop what remains of agricultural open spaces.
- Avoiding the unintended side effect of density limitations that use up open space in smaller lots rather than preserving any sort of true open space that might be used for agricultural purpose.
- Adverse impacts of the loss of natural areas on water and air quality.
- Adverse impacts of the loss of farmland and natural areas on the overall character of the City.
- Identifying an effective toolkit of incentives to allow existing farms to remain viable in size and economics.
- Encroachment of urban services into agricultural areas.
- Capitalizing on greenways and parks as means to preserve natural areas and resources.
- Identifying criteria to assess lands for environmental quality and preservation goals.
- Assessing the viability of alternative options to preservation, such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's), Purchase Development Rights (PDR's), Voluntary Preservation of Open Space, and Purchase of Property for Open Space.

9.5 GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Goal 12: Preserve natural resources and open space.

Objective 12.1: Promote the preservation of open space throughout the City.

Policy Guidance for Objective 12.1:

- Acquire lands along river corridors and within riverine buffers as corridors to link greenways and open space.
- Seek partnerships and funding to develop an inter-connected greenway system throughout the community and region.
- Support the efforts of land trusts and conservation groups as they acquire parcels of land for conservation.
- Determine preservation of open spaces based on review of soil conditions, as either state wide important soils, prime soils, or most productive soils.
- The City's remaining agricultural areas represent an important element of Concord's character and community identity. As the population grows, and the City's demographics change, it will be challenging to retain that element of our history.
- Protecting our abundant natural resources gives us a unique opportunity to rally several goals with the potential to positively impact the quality of life for residents across generations. The potential financial impacts (often counted in millions of dollars of economic activity) include business and job creation, enhanced community character and demand for housing and lodging as a result of increased tourism; attraction and retention of young talent with a broader array of quality amenities; and increasing property values resulting from proximity and access to parks and open space.
- Protecting our natural areas and resources has other significant public benefits. Undeveloped and protected natural areas can reduce costs for public infrastructure, help improve water and air quality, reduce risk and protect people and property from storms, flooding and other natural and man-made disasters.

Objective 12.2: Protect the natural resource base of the City and surrounding areas.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 12.2:

- Meet annually with the County and the State's Natural Heritage Program to monitor the status of animals, plants and habitats that are endangered, threatened or of special concern.
- Work closely with neighboring jurisdictions, local and state agencies, and citizens groups to promote the protection of the community's water resources.
- Continue to participate in regional air quality monitoring efforts and encourage compact development and the development and use of alternative transportation.

Objective 12.3: Protect Concord's aquatic ecosystems including rivers, lakes and wetlands to improve water quality and stormwater management.

Objective 12.4: Explore creating a comprehensive green infrastructure plan, combined with Low Impact Development strategies to address stormwater management and integration with the greenways and trails system.

Policy Guidance for Objectives 12.3 and 12.4:

- Work with agricultural landowners to reduce and prevent animal waste and fertilizers from entering waterways.
- Promote the benefits of recycling and reuse programs to reduce waste going to landfills.
- Maintain 20-foot buffer for trails along streams to help prevent erosion from the stream banks.

PART 10

INFRASTRUCTURE

10.0 INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Concord offers a wide variety of community facilities and services relating to education, public safety, and infrastructure to serve anticipated growth, and to support the future developments. The infrastructure system within the Study Area was analyzed to reach a reasonable understanding of the community infrastructure, water, and wastewater to identify challenges and opportunities, formulate a policy guidance, and prepare goals, objectives and implementation strategies.

10.1 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The community infrastructure, such as schools, police, and Fire and Life Safety was analyzed within the Study Area to understand the local school facilities and public safety services to develop future direction for the 2030 Plan.

10.1.1 SCHOOLS

Public schools within the City of Concord are part of the Cabarrus County Schools district (CCS). The district serves over 30,000 students in 41 schools. CCS is among the largest school systems in North Carolina and the 2nd largest employers in Cabarrus County with over 4,000 employees. There are 15 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, and 7 high schools within the City limits, in addition to several private schools. The system has a 90% graduation rate and high grades in other performance factors as of 2016. This, combined with a considerable inventory of new and upgraded school facilities, proves to be a magnet for new residents and student population growth (see **Map 10-1**).

The CCS is challenged to keep up with demand, particularly in the high growth areas of Concord. Based on recent trends and analysis of housing development already in place or in the pipeline, CCS' projections show the system could grow by between 850 to 1,200 new students every year for the next five years. The student generation rates for different residential uses were updated to reflect increases in the generation rate for apartments (3+ bedroom units) and single family homes priced at $400,000 or more. Because these developments are often clustered together, lack of attention to the placement of these land uses can cause significant strain on schools. The CCS may consider redistricting several of its schools to balance attendance.

In February 2017, CCS unveiled an aggressive new 10-year plan to curb massive growth and address overcrowding in the district's schools. The heart of the plan is the opening of four new schools in the next five years, while at the same time replacing 3 existing schools.

At present, the District is developing a new high school on Weddington Road, set to open in 2019. Both Central Cabarrus High School and Cox Mill High School in Concord are well over capacity, as is Hickory Ridge High School in Harrisburg.

The new plan also includes a new southwest area elementary school for growth, a replacement school for R. Brown McAllister Elementary, a new middle school, and a replacement for Coltrane-Webb Elementary, as well as construction of a new Performance Learning Center (PLC) and another new high school for growth.

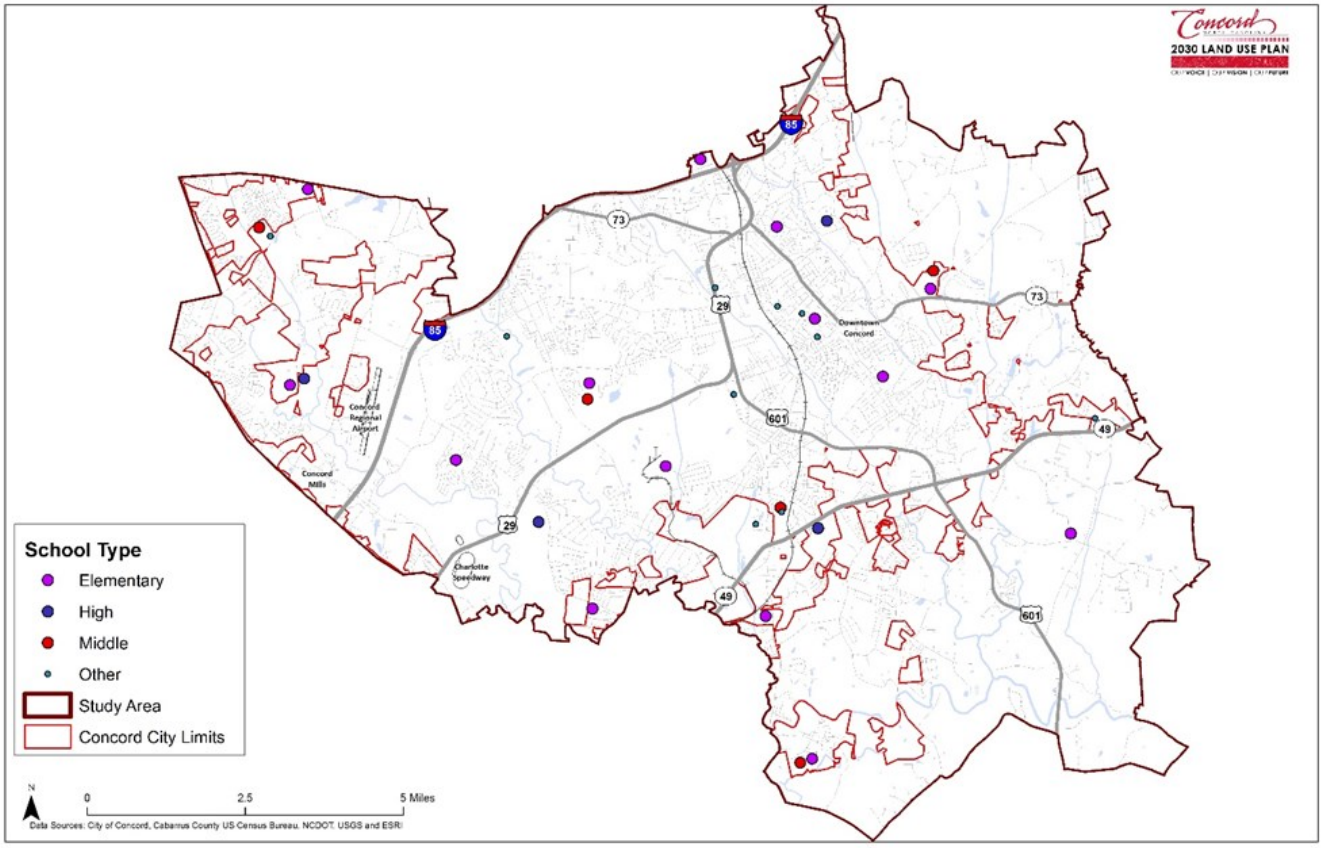
The district's plan calls for construction on the new schools and replacement schools to be completed in 2022, with an estimated cost of nearly $280 million.

See **Appendix A** for more information on schools.

Central Cabarrus High School (Image source: Google Earth)

Cox Mill High School (Image source: Google Earth)

Map 10-1: Schools



10.1.2 POLICE

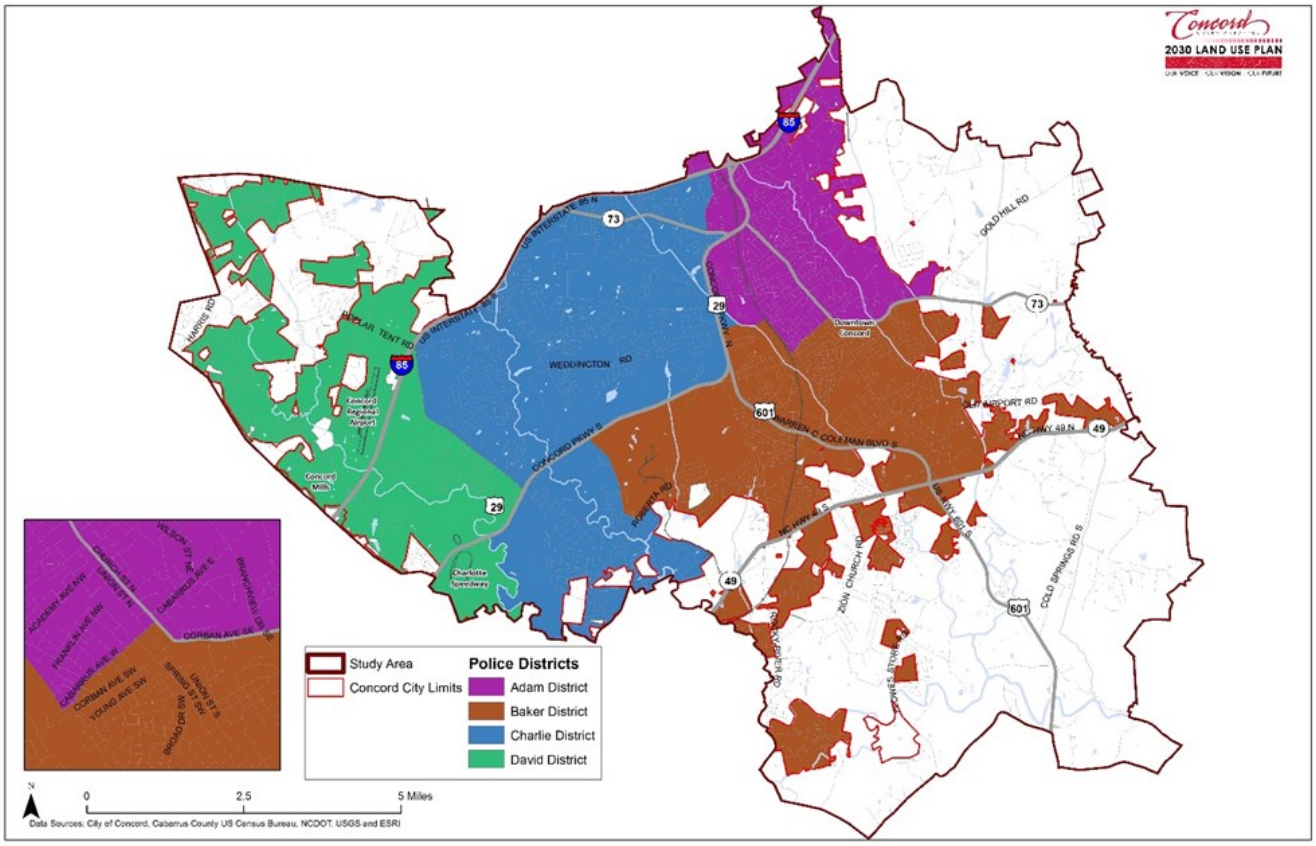
The Concord Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency that covers approximately 62 square miles (some areas not within the municipal City limits) and a population of over 85,000. The Police Department is comprised of 183 law enforcement officers and approximately 40 civilian personnel. The Department infrastructure consists of the new main headquarters next to City Hall on Cabarrus Avenue; four substations and several auxiliary facilities located throughout the City.

Under the Chief of Police, the Department's Patrol Bureau oversees four (4) geographic districts (Adam Patrol District, Baker Patrol District, Charlie Patrol District, and David Patrol District) and a K-9 Unit to serve all corners of the City - (see **Map 10-2** and **Appendix A** for more information about the districts). An Administration and Operations Division (including Code Enforcement functions) complete the structure of the Department.

The Department has seen a gradual decline in the number of crimes per 1,000 population in the past 4 years, standing at 29 Part 1 crimes 23.6/1000 population. The number of incoming calls per 1,000 population stands at approximately 1,300 for FY 2016-2017. The average response time to high-priority calls is slightly over 6 minutes.

The FY 2016-2017 Adopted Budget allocates over $20 million from the General Fund to the Police Department, including the hiring of additional sworn officers for patrol field operations and airport and the expansion of the bicycle patrol program. The budget report references the preparation of a " 3-to-5-year strategic plan that will serve as a roadmap for future development and growth" of the Department.

Map 10-2: Police Patrol Districts



10.1.3 FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY

The Concord Fire Department serves an area of approximately 62 square miles (Cabarrus County contracted the Fire Department to provide service for over 6 square miles that is not in the municipal limits) and a population of over 85,000. The organization consists of 11 fire stations and 205 sworn personnel as of the 2017-2018 budget year (This is three (3) more stations and 57 more sworn personnel than reported in the 2015 Land Use Plan update). The 2017-2018 budget year identified funding to purchase land for future Fire Station 12. The City also has land in the Cox Road area and a commitment for property along Flowes Store Road, both for projected fire stations. See **Appendix A** for more information about the Fire Stations.

The fire stations are strategically located throughout the City. The stations are organized into two battalions, each battalion has three (3) Battalion Chiefs and the Deputy Chief supervises all six (6) Battalion Chiefs. The Department Chief reports to the City Manager.

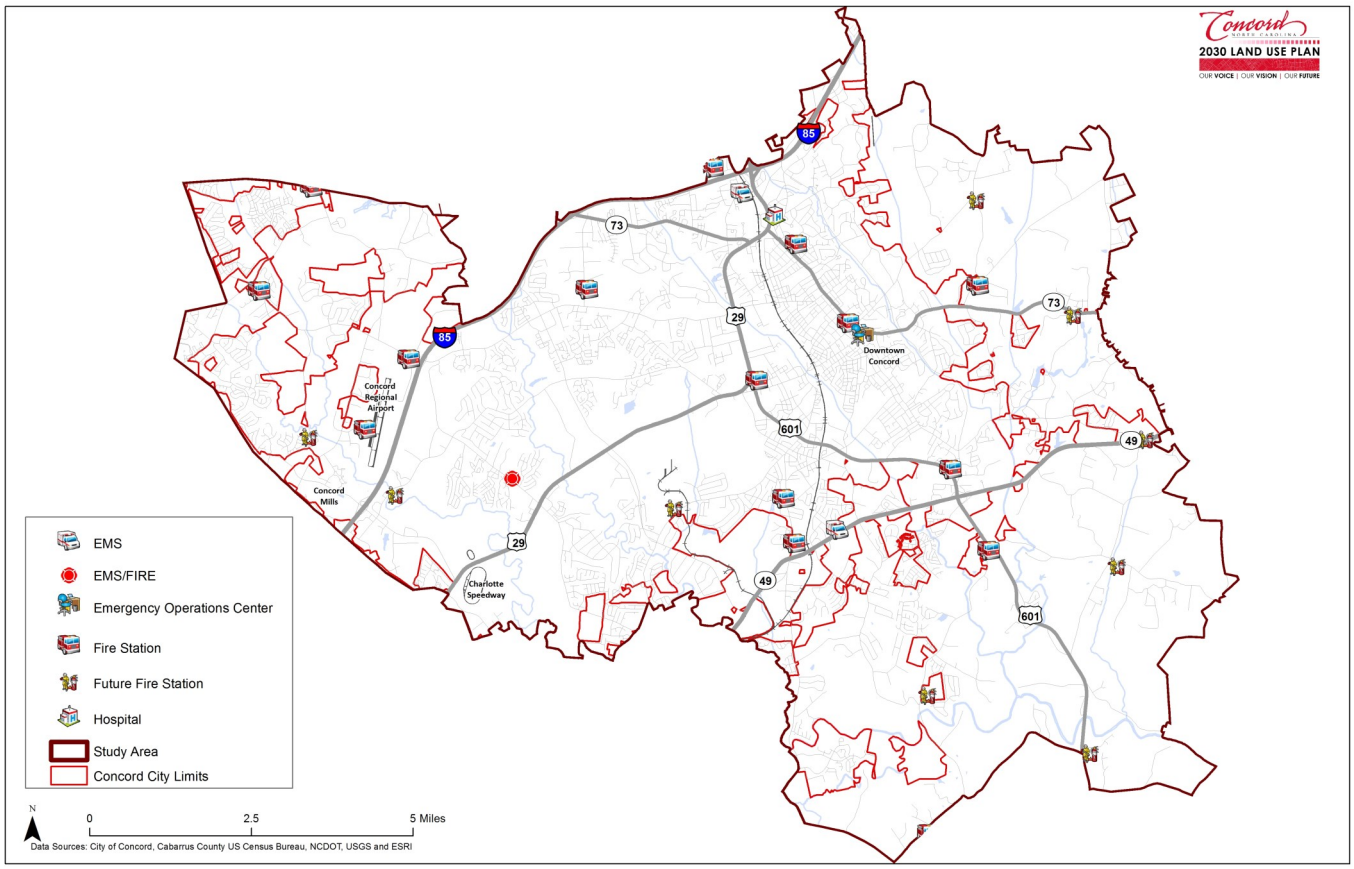
Fire Station #1 (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Departments/Fire/Fire-Stations/Station-1)

Fire Station #4 (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Departments/Fire/Fire-Stations/Station-4)

Fire Station #9 (Image source: City of Concord, https://www.concordnc.gov/Departments/Fire/Fire-Stations/Station-9)

Map 10-3 shows the geographic distribution of existing and future fire stations, and EMS and medical care facilities.

Map 10-3: Emergency Services



The City Administration and the Fire Department are evaluating the need to construct additional fire stations in response to continued growth pressures in the western and southern areas of the City. The Fire Department is also reviewing its redeployment plan, which provides a long-term "roadmap for distribution of fire stations in the future" to improve performance.

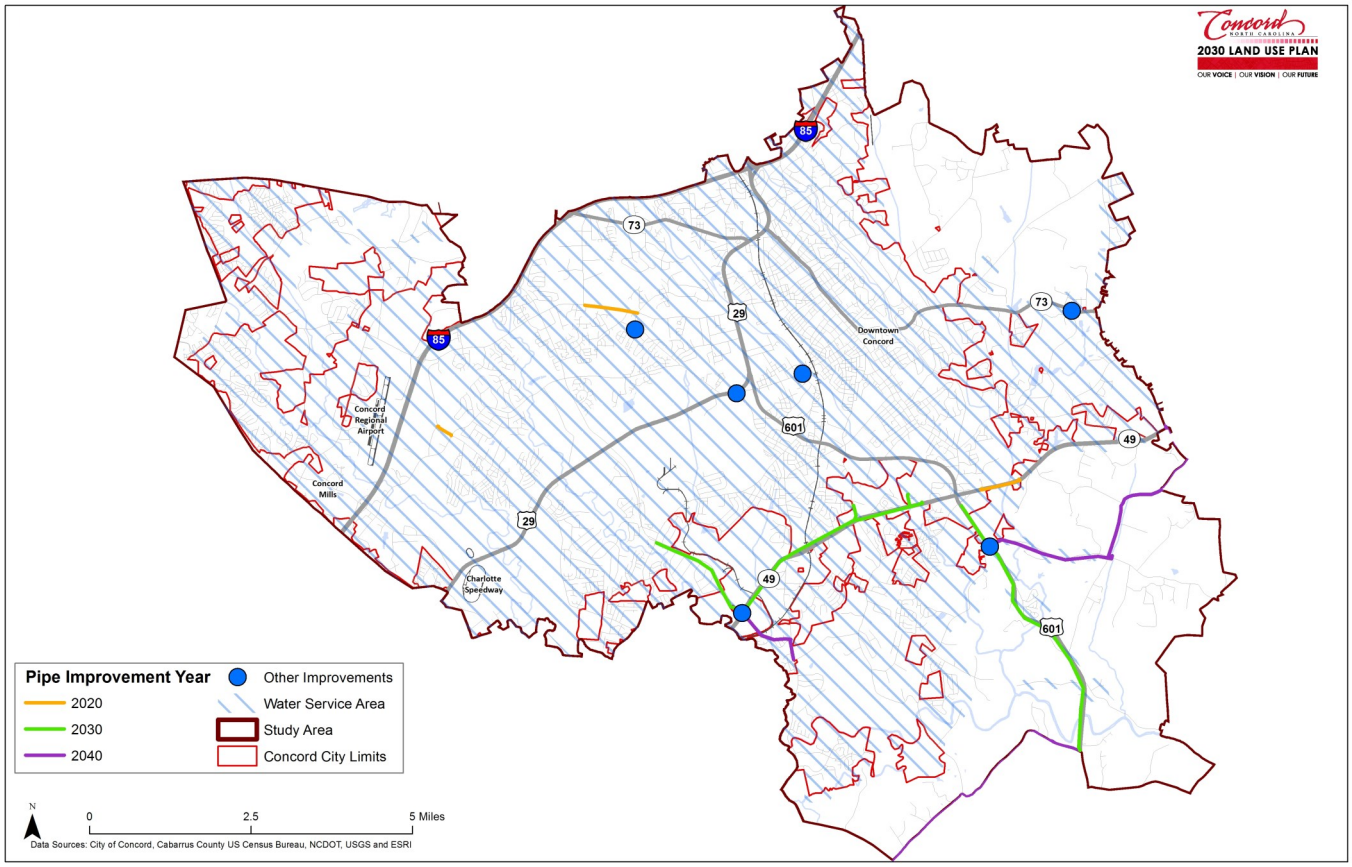
During the 2016-2017 reporting period, the average travel time to Priority 1 calls was slightly over 4 minutes and 11 seconds. This year, according to the budget report, the Department will focus on evaluating and improving the AVL dispatch, as well as on expanding automatic aid policies with other departments, to reduce response times.

The City's FY 2016-2017 Adopted Budget allocated almost $19,400,000 from the General Fund to Fire and Life Safety. This amount includes funding for several new positions, including 3 Fire Lieutenants and 3 Fire Captains (dedicated to Concord Regional Airport) and 3 Part-Time Assistant Fire Marshals. The budget recommendation also includes various capital needs for the Department.

10.2 WATER

The City of Concord operates and maintains its own water system through the City's Water Resources Department. The City has close to 100% coverage for water. Limited areas within the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) are included within the water service area. The City owns, operates and maintains infrastructure to support the water system (see **Map 10-4**).

Map 10-4: Water Service Area



The Cities of Concord and Kannapolis jointly hold an interbasin transfer (IBT) certificate to transfer up to 10 million gallons per day (mgd) each from the Catawba River Basin and the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin to the Rocky River Basin. The two cities sell water to each other, as well as to the towns of Mount Pleasant, Midland, Harrisburg, and Landis, and unincorporated areas of Cabarrus County. As a condition of their IBT Certificate, the Cities jointly produce an Annual Report that documents all water transfers over the preceding year. According to the latest Annual Report on Interbasin Transfer, the two cities' annual average combined water use in 2015 totals 14.53 mgd.

One of the City's drinking water sources is from Coddle Creek Reservoir/Lake Howell. The water is treated at the Coddle Creek Water Treatment Plant, which provides up to 12 million gallons per day (mgd) of treated drinking water. Lakes Concord, Fisher and Howell provide water for treatment at the Hillgrove Water Treatment Plant. This plant provides up to 12 mgd of treated drinking water. In addition, the City of Concord purchases water from two water sources in the City of Kannapolis, Kannapolis Lake and Second Creek/Back Creek. The City of Concord also gets water from the Yadkin-Pee Dee River through the City of Albemarle.

The City of Concord also owns and operates the water distribution system used by the Town of Midland. Charlotte Water and the City of Salisbury currently have contracts to provide water to both Concord and Kannapolis from the Catawba and Yadkin River Basins, respectively.

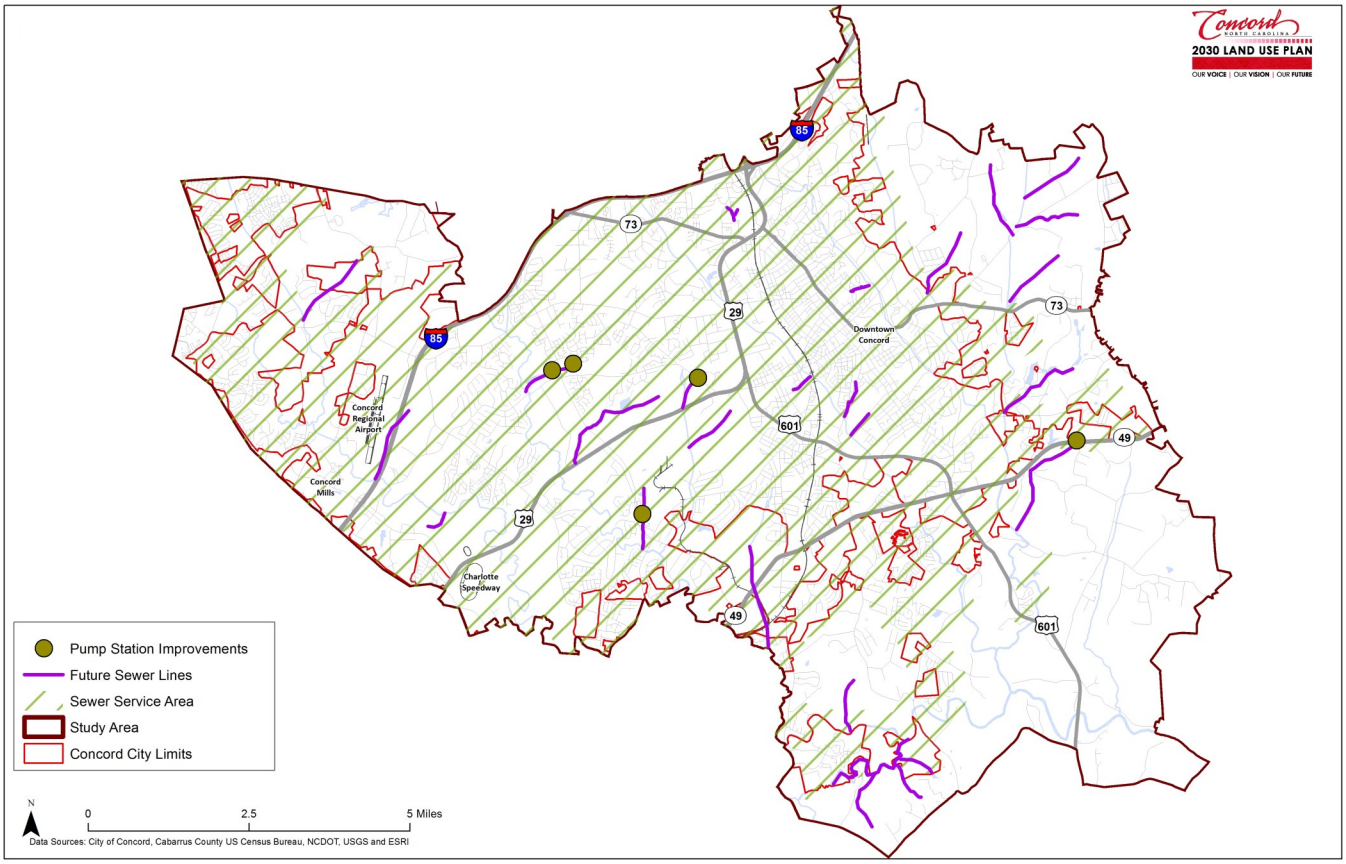
During FY 2015-2016, the Water Resources Department completed a Water System Model Update project that was used to develop its future Water System Master Plan, which was completed in 2017.

See **Appendix A** for more information on the water system.

10.3 WASTEWATER

The City operates and maintains its own sewer system through the City's Water Resources Department. The City has close to 100% coverage for sewer. Limited areas within the ETJ are included within the wastewater service area. The City owns, operates and maintains infrastructure to support the wastewater system (see**Map 10-5**).

Map 10-5: Sewer Service Area



The City is also served by the Water and Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County (WSACC), an independent, incorporated, public body funded by user fees with no taxing authority. The WSACC manages a total of two wastewater treatment facilities throughout the County: Rocky River Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (RRRWWTP) and the Muddy Creek Wastewater Treatment Plan (MDWWTP).

The wastewater collection system, which serves approximately 32,534 customers, consists of over 544 miles of sewer pipelines, approximately 13,601 manholes, and 24 wastewater pump stations. Because portions of the system date back to the early 1900's, the City must continually perform upgrades, rehabilitation and preventative maintenance on this infrastructure. Sewer Master Plan anticipated completion by end of 2017.

See **Appendix A** for more information on the wastewater system.

10.4 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In planning for the future community infrastructure, water, and wastewater, the City will need to address the following:

- Coordinate with the CCS to keep up with demand, particularly in the high growth areas of Concord.
- Need to monitor the clustering of residential uses, such as apartments (3+ bedroom units) and single family homes to reduce strain on schools.
- Evaluate and allocate public land to construct Police sub-stations in response to continued growth pressures in the western and southern areas of the City.

- Continue to prepare/update a strategic plan to serve as a roadmap for future development and growth" of the Police Department.
- Evaluate and allocate public land to construct additional fire stations in response to continued growth pressures in the western and southern areas of the City.
- Continue to update the Fire Department's redeployment plan for distribution of fire stations in the future to improve performance.
- Conduct comprehensive studies of the City's existing water and sewer systems to plan where additional water and wastewater facilities are needed in order to meet projected capacity increases within the systems as a result of future development and population growth, particularly in the western and southern areas of the City.
- In planning for the future community infrastructure and services, the City will face the following:
  - Coordinating with CCS to keep up with demand, particularly in the high growth areas of Concord.
  - Monitoring the clustering of residential uses, such as apartments (3+ bedroom units) and single-family homes to reduce strain on schools and public infrastructure.
  - Identifying appropriate public land to construct additional police sub-stations and fire stations in response to continued growth pressures in the western and southern areas of the City.

10.5 GOAL, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Goal 13: Provide adequate school facilities to serve the residents of the City.

Objective 13.1: Provide educational services that identify and respond to changing demographics of the City.

Policy Guidance for Objective 13.1:

- Create a committee composed of City staff and the CCS to share demographic information and discuss changes in population on a semi-annual basis.
- Coordinate with the CCS to keep up with demand, particularly in the high growth areas and underserved areas of the City.
- Support and actively assist CCS in identifying any future school sites so that they are consistent with the Growth Concept and Future Land Use Map.

Goal 14: Ensure community infrastructure is adequate to serve and protect the residents of the City.

Objective 14.1: Coordinate development planning with the Police and Fire Departments to ensure delivery of efficient services.

Policy Guidance for Objective 14.1:

- Acquire or have dedicated adequate lands for police and fire/life safety facilities.
- Prepare/update a Police Strategic Plan and Fire Deployment Plan every five years to identify service and safety needs, particularly in areas of high growth.
- Continue to develop/update a strategic plan to serve as a roadmap for future development and growth of the Police Department.
- Continue to update the Fire Department's redeployment plan for future distribution of fire stations to improve response-time performance.

Goal 15: Provide adequate water and wastewater facilities to serve the residents of the City.

Objective 15.1: Provide adequate water resources and wastewater treatment capacity to serve the needs of the citizens of Concord both now and in the future.

Policy Guidance for Objective 15.1:

- Support recommendation of City's Water System Master Plan to sustainable water supply to meet future growth.
- Encourage development in areas already serviced by City utilities.

- Support recommendation of City's Sewer Master Plan to sustainable wastewater collection to meet future growth.
- Continue regional dialogue to reach a consensus for providing regional infrastructure.
- Support the WSACC System Master Plan to upgrade and expand wastewater treatment facilities.
- Prioritize expansion of water and wastewater service in urbanized areas before expanding into rural areas.
- Protect water resources from encroachment and contamination. This could be accomplished by working closely with local and state agencies involved in water quality issues to develop policies and guidelines for development near water resources.

Goal 16: Prevent wasteful use of public resources and services.

Objective 16.1: Continually explore means to maximize effectiveness in service provision and reduce capital and operating cost.

Objective 16.2: Ensure provision of adequate infrastructure to serve new development.

Policy Guidance Objectives 16.1 and 16.2:

- Through the Site Plan Review Process, ensure all plans provide for safe vehicular movement and adequate off-street parking, that pedestrian safety measures exist and that the provision of adequate access for service and emergency vehicles.
- Continually explore means to maximize effectiveness in service provision and reduce capital and operating cost.
- Actively seek opportunities to creatively and efficiently co-locate compatible community facilities.
- Fine-tune coordination mechanisms between land use planning and capital programming through the CIP.
- Continue to prioritize funding among capital improvement projects.
- Where suitable, incorporate "green" building and site techniques into the construction of new public facilities and retrofits of existing ones.
- Review service policies annually to maintain the efficiency of existing operations, future growth and developments.

Objective 16.3: Assure drainage and stormwater management.

Policy Guidance for Objective 16.3:

- Follow/require Best Management Practices to reduce pollutant discharge.
- The City shall maintain development regulations containing specific standards and criteria designed to protect environmentally sensitive lands consistent with the Stormwater provisions of the CDO and other adopted City Stormwater regulations (i.e. in City Code or stand-alone ordinances, as applicable).

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PART 1

IMPLEMENTATION

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The 2030 Plan is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to changing needs and conditions. Successful implementation of the 2030 Plan will result from many individual actions by the City Council, the Planning and Zoning Commission, City staff, other jurisdictions, service providers, and private decision-makers over the course of the next 10 -15 years. The Vison, goals, objectives, and polices in Parts 4.0 through 10.0 describe what the community wants to become and how decision-makers should respond to various circumstances. The City of Concord will need to monitor the effectiveness of the 2030 Plan due to changing conditions and private development requests, which may require periodic Plan amendments. These amendments must be evaluated in terms of their consistency of the 2030 Plan and significance to overall City policy.

The following describes the Implementation Work Plan for the 2030 Plan; relationship to the City's annual budget; the processes to review/monitor, amend the goals, objectives, and policies, as well as the Growth Concept and Future Land Use maps; and performance measures to track the progress of the Plan.

11.1 IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN

The Implementation Work Plan is under a separate document that identifies an initial list of implementation actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the 2030 Plan to guide City Council and City Staff as they develop work programs during the life of the Plan. The implementation actions are organized by Plan Element with specific references to the associated goals and objectives from the Land Use Plan. Although organized by Plan Element, many of these actions do overlap, and successful implementation will require close coordination between City Departments and other agencies. The implementation actions are not intended to be an exhaustive list, and the City may pursue different strategies and adjust priorities, depending on changing opportunities and resources. The City should update the Implementation Work Plan on an annual basis, adjusting time frames and actions that are included in each year's budgeted work programs.

11.2 RELATIONSHIP TO BUDGET

The annual budget is one of the most potent tools for plan implementation because it sets priorities for action each year. Capital and operational funding decisions should directly reflect the goals, objectives, and policies of the 2030 Plan. The Plan should serve as the basis for recommended work programs and as a focus for discussion of priorities from year to year. If specific work program tasks are not funded, the City should evaluate whether they should be deferred or omitted from the Implementation Work Plan. When there is a conflict between budget priorities and Plan goals, objectives, or policies, the City should consider whether the specific goals, objectives, or policies remain valid.

11.3 ANNUAL REVIEW/MONITORING

The Planning and Neighborhood Development Department should provide an annual review of the 2030 Plan related activities to the City Manager prior to the initiation of the budget process each year. The annual review should be used as a tool to help set budgetary priorities and should:

- Measure the City's success in achieving the 2030 Plan goals through the recommended strategies;
- Propose strategies to be pursued under the coming year's budget; and
- Identify unlisted strategies that will achieve the 2030 Plan goals.

Periodically, the Planning and Neighborhood Development Department should:

- Document growth trends and compare those trends to the 2030 Plan projections;
- List development actions which affect the 2030 Plan's provisions; and
- Evaluate difficulties in implementing the 2030 Plan.

These periodic reviews should include statements identifying progress in achieving the goals of the 2030 Plan, the impact of the 2030 Plan on service provision, and proposed programs to help achieve the 2030 Plan's goals.

11.4 FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENTS

The Growth Concept and Future Land Use maps are intended to serve as a guide for public and private development and land use decisions. The City has adopted a formal amendment process in the CDO. Land use amendments are anticipated as growth occurs and market conditions change. While land use amendments may occur more frequently than policy changes, they should not occur more than three times per year. By limiting opportunities to amend the Growth Concept and Future Land Use maps, the City will reduce the potential for incremental land use changes that result in unintended policy shifts.

11.5 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Specific, objective, and quantifiable performance measures must be established so that the City and others can determine if Concord is making progress toward achievement of the 2030 Plan goal, and to inform choices about adjustments to the Plan on a continuing basis.

The Planning and Neighborhood Development Department should monitor and measure how the 2030 Plan is implemented, both in terms of the Plan's economic, social and environmental impacts and in terms of land use, housing targets, investments made and development achieved.

Key performance measures should be monitored at multiple levels – the Planning Community, City, and County. It is important for the City's leaders to know not only how the various parts of the City are faring, but also how Concord is doing in relation to the County and the region.

Consideration should be given to the following performance measures:

A. Land Use

- Acres of new publicly accessible parks/open space
- Acres of parkland per capita
- Square footage of obsolete commercial buildings converted to housing
- Historic building designations, and number of historic building rehabs and/or adaptive reuse
- Development applications in targeted (redevelopment) areas
- Active farmland parcels or number of farmland acres

B. Housing

- Number of new affordable/workforce housing units
- Increase in housing unit variety (mix of single family, multi-family, townhomes, etc.)

C. Population

- New population living downtown (individuals or households)
- Population living within 1/4 or 1/2 mile of a park

D. Multimodal System

- Miles of sidewalk installed
- Miles of new bicycle facilities (paths, lanes)
- Miles of new multi-use trail
- Miles of complete streets
- Number of bicyclists
- Number of new transit riders
- Increase in transit service area
- Number of new transit stops (or at least new transit stops near parks and schools)
- Improvement in mobility index

E. City Services

- Number of (new) city park users or participants in park programming
- Number of outdoor and environmental education activities provided per year
- Number of community facilities provided per year

F. Economic Development

- Number of new businesses opened
- Number of agricultural businesses opened
- Increase in investment of existing businesses
- Number of new jobs created
- Number of grant applications (Economic Development Grant Program, Center City Development Grant, Downtown Municipal Service District Grant Program, and Concord Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) Grants)
- Increase in tourism/travel dollars spent

G. Environmental and Energy

- Changes in air or water quality indices
- Number of green infrastructure projects

If the 2030 Plan is to be both effective and a truly "living document" continuous monitoring of performance measures is critical. We cannot measure our progress or correct our course if we don't have the kind of information provided by effective performance measures.

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From Vision to Reality

Silvia E. Vargas • Community Planning, LLC