



UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA *2025 Comprehensive Plan*

October 18, 2010



UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

ADOPTED BY UNION COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS ON OCTOBER 18, 2010

Since development of the Comprehensive Plan began in 2006, many of the assumptions made in the Plan may have changed due to the changing economic conditions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION



Introduction

The Union County Comprehensive Plan is a public policy document that was developed from an analysis of community data, input from County and municipal citizens and business owners, and rigorous discussion and debate regarding the future vision for the County and what it should achieve by 2025.

This Plan will serve as a guide to County decision-makers for years to come. It includes community goals, policies, strategies, and an implementation plan that sets the course for future County actions and initiatives. This Plan is founded on the principles of creating a more livable and vibrant Union County that offers new employment opportunities, improved housing choices, and a high quality of life to its residents.



Union County, North Carolina

Location and Context

Union County is located in the southern piedmont region of North Carolina. It is bordered by six counties: Mecklenburg, Stanly, Cabarrus, and Anson Counties in North Carolina and Chesterfield and Lancaster Counties in South Carolina.

Since 2000, Union County has been ranked numerous times as one of the fastest-growing counties in the country. The County's proximity to Charlotte has propelled growth in the western part of the County which has absorbed many of the new residents and commercial development. The eastern parts of Union County are primarily rural in character, but this is expected to change as growth continues westward and is spurred by the development of the Monroe Connector/Bypass.

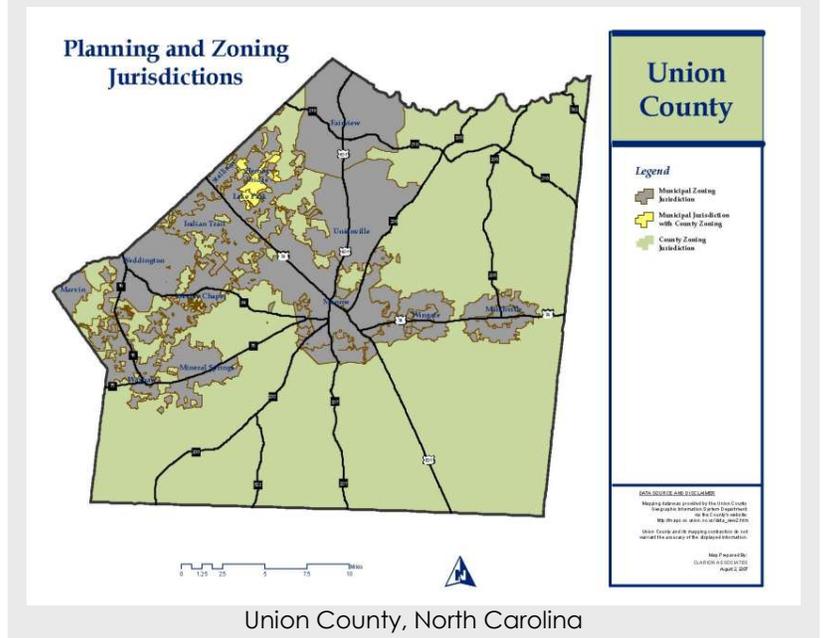


Union County is home to fourteen municipalities. To the west are Waxhaw, Wesley Chapel, Weddington, Marvin, Mineral Springs, Indian Trail, Stallings, Hemby Bridge, and Lake Park. In the central and northern portions of the County are Monroe (the county-seat), Fairview, and Unionville. Wingate and Marshville are located in eastern Union County.

Wingate and Marshville are located in eastern Union County.

Union County holds planning and zoning jurisdiction within the unincorporated areas of the County, as well as for the Towns of Hemby Bridge and Lake Park, as shown on the map to the right in the tan and yellow areas.

A key focus of the Plan is to create better coordination and collaboration between the County and its municipalities to plan for future growth and transportation facilities. Of particular interest are the areas at the edges of the towns. These “areas of joint interest” present opportunities for improving coordinated land management and planning.



Plan Background

Purpose of Plan

The Union County Comprehensive Plan will serve as a guide to decision-making on a variety of community planning issues, including transportation, land use, inter-jurisdictional coordination, economic development, agriculture, parks and recreation, and natural resources. The Plan addresses three main questions: (1) what is the status of the County right now; (2) what are the goals for the County in the future; and (3) what needs to happen to achieve those goals? The Plan provides a framework that identifies goals, community policies, and lists specific implementation strategies to guide future decision making in Union County.

The terms “Comprehensive Plan” and “Land Use Plan” are often used interchangeably by communities. The main planning document in Union County has historically been referred to as its Land Use Plan. “Comprehensive Plan” is the term that best describes this updated Plan as it includes a broader range of community issues.

Summary of Key Planning Issues and Opportunities

Over the course of the planning process, several key themes were identified. These themes summarize the key community issues that the Plan addresses. They include:

- **High Growth Rate** – The County's growth rate far exceeded expectations over the last decade, making it difficult to provide adequate services and plan for new development. Future development is expected and coordinated efforts to plan for this growth are essential.

- **Rural Character** – The community is concerned about maintaining rural character as new land is developed. The conversion of agricultural and rural lands is imminent. This development should occur in a manner that respects the existing rural community character.
- **Water and Sewer** – The wave of growth that occurred in Union County has all but used up available water and sewer resources. A state moratorium on water and wastewater permits in the County raised awareness of this issue in 2007. Additional resources need to be secured to ensure adequate provision of public utility service into the future. The County has undertaken studies to evaluate potential options for expanding water and wastewater capacity. Of particular concern is the limitation to expand sewer capacity at the 12-Mile Creek Wastewater Treatment Facility in western Union County and the need to potentially use inter-basin transfers to serve this growing area.
- **Fiscal Concerns** – Studies have shown that providing public services to residential development in Union County can be expensive. To ensure that the local cost of living does not increase and that the tax burden stays low, land use in Union County will need to be more balanced in the future. Non-residential development can help off-set the costs of servicing residential development in the County.
- **Schools** – There are many opportunities for the County to partner with the Union County Public School system to improve quality of life and share resources. Joint-use park and recreational facilities is a key goal of this Plan.
- **Environmental Protection/ Endangered Species** – Union County is home to two federally designated endangered species, the Carolina Heelsplitter Mussel and the Schweinitz's Sunflower, along with other species of consideration. Protecting their habitats and other environmentally sensitive lands, such as floodplains and wetlands, is an important goal of the County.
- **Monroe Connector/Bypass** – The US-74 “Monroe” Connector/Bypass will be an important transportation facility and economic generator in the County for years to come. Planning for development at the connector/bypass's interchanges, particularly in areas of shared planning jurisdiction, will be an important focus for the County.
- **Intergovernmental Coordination and Cooperation** – The County can play a lead role in organizing and coordinating efforts of county-wide significance. In the past, the fourteen municipalities and the County have independently made decisions that affected neighboring jurisdictions. Having had almost a decade worth of development experiences, many community leaders now realize that coordinated governing approaches are needed to secure the future success of the County.
- **Transit** – Although transportation planning efforts have not yet expanded local transit opportunities, it is likely future growth and development will spur the need for more alternative transportation modes in Union County. Creating a framework for future transit corridors and transit-oriented development sites is necessary to pave the way for new transportation services.

Why Update the Plan?

Union County's most recent community plan was adopted in 1998 – the *Union County Land Use Plan*. While this plan helped the County to become what it is today, community conditions have evolved to a point that the Plan no longer provides sufficient guidance.

Planners in 1998 could not have foreseen many of the challenges and opportunities the County would face two decades later, such as land development and population growth exceeding forecasts, the need to better manage water resources and plan for future extension of services to keep pace with growth, and coordinating planning activities among the many jurisdictions that lie in Union County. The time is ripe for renewing the Plan. The economic downturn of 2008 and the resulting slow down of development in the County provided an opportunity to reflect upon lessons learned over the previous decade and identify a strategic course of action for the next.

What was the Process for Developing the Plan?

Development of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan was initiated in 2006. The Union County Board of Commissioners directed the Union County Planning Department to manage an effort to update the County's 1998 Land Use Plan. This updated Plan was charged with addressing new conditions and opportunities facing the community. The County hired Clarion Associates, a land use planning and zoning firm, to assist with facilitating the planning process and developing plan materials. A Steering Committee (comprised of community leaders from the County and municipalities) was formed by the Planning Board to oversee development of the plan. The Committee and planning team worked for over two years on Plan development. The process of updating the Plan involved the following steps.

- Stakeholder interviews and review of data and policies to assess the current framework for guiding development in the County.
- Public forums to engage community members in a dialogue on county-wide issues and preferred designs for new development.
- Summary of policy context and review of key issues.
- Analysis of existing conditions and development and service capacities in the County.
- Using community input and analysis of conditions and capacities to develop a set of alternative growth scenarios for the County.
- Analysis of the existing transportation system and future needs.
- Analysis of the economic trends affecting Union County and developing strategies for attracting targeted businesses and creating new employment.
- Developing the Comprehensive Plan that includes goals, policies, and strategies as well as an implementation action plan.

The planning process provided several opportunities for community feedback and input, including the following.

- Symposium of Ideas (December 11, 2006)
- Public Design Workshop (August 4, 2007)
- Key Community Issues Forum (February 26, 2008)
- Future Land Use Forum (September 29, 2008)
- Planning Board Meeting to Review Draft Plan (March 5, 2009)
- Planning Board Work Sessions to recommend changes to the initial April 2009 draft, the additional goals, policies, and strategies selected from the Planning Board's review of goals and policies referred by the Board of County Commissioners, and the Planning Board's detailed review of the text of each chapter of the draft plan (July 2009 – August 2010).
- Plan Adoption (October 18, 2010)

Plan Overview

The 2025 Comprehensive Plan contains 5 chapters and 2 appendices. The first two chapters provide an overview and background information on the Plan and the effort undertaken to develop it. Chapters 3 and 4 organize the key elements of the plan (goals, policies, and strategies) into themes that will guide future decision-making in the community. Chapter 5 provides guidance for implementing the plan framework and updating the Plan over time. Each chapter is described below.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** provides an overview and summary of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.
- **Chapter 2: Key Data and Information** summarizes some of the key facts that are more fully described in Appendix A: Existing Conditions.
- **Chapter 3: Goals, Policies, and Strategies** provides a structured framework that will guide future decision-making in Union County.
- **Chapter 4: Future Land Use Plan** outlines how the County will manage future growth and development in partnership with its municipalities through 2025. This chapter identifies future growth areas and future land uses within the County.
- **Chapter 5: Implementation Action Plan** provides guidance on how the County should go about implementing the plan following its adoption.
- **Appendix A: Existing Conditions** provides the critical data about County demographics, employment, and existing land conditions. This information helps to inform public policy discussions.
- **Appendix B: Maps** provides larger scale versions of maps that are referenced or shown in the Plan.

CHAPTER 2: KEY DATA AND INFORMATION



Introduction

Policy direction for Union County was informed by an analysis of existing conditions and trends for population, employment, schools, transportation, and public utilities. Potential development capacity and forecasts for new population growth and development show that the County has much potential for future growth. These statistics are organized here. Appendix A: Existing Conditions, includes these statistics and identifies data sources. It also provides a more thorough discussion of the trends and forecasts for the County, as well as maps and charts to illustrate these facts.

HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION

- The County's 2009 population was estimated at 198,645. This is a 60.6% increase from 2000 when the population was 123,677. Most of this growth occurred in the incorporated towns.
- The percentage of the population in the unincorporated portions of the County has declined since 1970 from 69% to 32%. As the County grows, the towns are becoming the centers of population.
- As of 2000, the median age in the County was 33.4 years old. This is younger than the median age for the state. The youngest community was the City of Monroe. This is likely due to the fact that it is the only true urban center in the County where more opportunities for younger generations are provided.
- The average compounded population growth rate for the County between 1970 and 2009 was 3.36%. The highest rate occurred between 2000 and 2009 when the County grew an average of 5.41% per year. These rates are responsible for the County's rank as the fastest growing County in North Carolina during this period.
- The County was home to 67,198 households in 2008. Households in Union County comprised 10.2% of the total households in the Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area. This is an increase from 8.5% in 2000.
- Population projections for Union County estimate an additional 67,802 new people will reside in Union County by 2020. The total population for 2020 is estimated at 266,447.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS AND FORECASTS

- Full-time jobs in Union County increased from 45,343 in 2000 to 54,116 in 2006. Union County's proportion of jobs for the entire Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area increased from 5.7% to 6.4% during this period.
- By 2006, services surpassed manufacturing as the industry sector that employed the most workers in Union County. The County also added nearly 200

agricultural/mining workers. As of 2006, Union County employed 30% of the agricultural and mining workers in the Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area.

- Union County was the state's third highest agricultural producer in 2008 with \$454.8 million in sales. At that time, Union County had 178,193 acres of land in 1,107 farms. 61.5% of all farmland in Union County in 2008 was in crop production.
- In 2008, Union County was ranked first in the state for wheat production and third for soybeans.
- Union County's share of Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area employment is projected to increase from an estimated 6.4% in 2008 (56,600 jobs) to 7.2% in 2020 (81,533 jobs).

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

- Nearly half of all Union County workers travel outside of Union County for work, with many (approximately 25,000) traveling along US-74 and other major east-west routes, such as NC-16 and NC-84 to Mecklenburg County.
- The largest number of commuters into Union County (4,853) originates in Mecklenburg County.
- US-74 carries the highest traffic volumes, ranging from 14,000 vehicles per day near the Anson County line to 58,000 vehicles per day near the Mecklenburg County line.
- It is expected that major commuter routes (US-74, NC-16, NC-84, and others) will be over capacity by 2030 even with planned roadway improvements.
- Continued residential development will increase demand on local and collector streets, especially during peak hours as commuters connect to and from their homes and major commuting routes.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- The Union County Public School system operates 29 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 9 high schools, and 5 special schools. In total, these schools use 300 mobile classrooms.
- According to the Union County Public Schools, enrollment for 2009-2010 was 38,539 and school capacity was 44,586. Plans for expansion will increase capacity to 44,736. Estimates show that this capacity will be sufficient through 2014-2015. The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance helps the school district ensure that capacity is available for students before new student generating development (i.e., residential development) is approved.

UTILITY PROVISION

- Union County is divided by two main watersheds: the Catawba and the Yadkin Pee-Dee.
- Four sub-watershed areas are protected by state mandate to protect drinking water supplies. All four are in the Yadkin Pee-Dee watershed.

- The County's total water treatment capacity at present is 20 million gallons per day. The average peak day demand for water is 9.6 million gallons per day and the peak water usage is 16.5 million gallons per day. Irrigation restrictions have been put in place to ensure that water users have consistent water supplies during peak water usage months.
- Expansion solutions for water capacity are being sought. System improvements are planned to enable the County to draw the full 4 million gallons per day from Anson County. Additional supplies might be available through the expansion of the Catawba Water Treatment Plant.
- The County operates two wastewater treatment plants: Twelve Mile Creek and Crooked Creek, both in western Union County. The combined capacity is 7.9 million gallons per day. The average daily demand is 4.55 million gallons per day.
- The County also owns several small package treatment plants and purchases treatment capacity from the City of Monroe and the Charlotte Metropolitan Utility.
- Union County is negotiating an agreement with the City of Monroe to purchase an additional 10 million gallons per day of wastewater treatment capacity and is working to expand capacity from the Charlotte Metropolitan Utility. These arrangements will be an important component of the County's ability to manage future growth in Union County. The County has also discussed development of a new wastewater treatment plant in the eastern portion of the County, providing more opportunity for development in eastern areas.

HABITAT AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

- Union County is home to two federally designated Endangered Species: the Carolina Heelsplitter Mussel and Schweinitz's Sunflower.
- The North Carolina Natural Heritage Areas program has identified twelve species in need of habitat protection in Union County, and 21 candidate species are being observed.

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

- The County issued 25,757 residential building permits between 2000 and 2009. 98.1% of these permits were for single-family residences.
- Owner-occupied housing units increased from 76.5% to 77.2% between 2000 and 2007.
- As of May 2008, there were 18,000 lots in Union County subdivisions that were still undeveloped. Many of these lots were undeveloped because of the sewer moratorium and real estate market downturn.
- 869,752 square feet of multi-tenant retail space was built county-wide between 2003 and 2007. 781,953 square feet of this new development were absorbed.
- Most of the available retail spaces are located in older centers along US-74. Demand is stronger for newer centers serving the rapidly growing population in western Union County.

- As of May 2008, more than 1 million square feet of multi-tenant retail space was under construction and another 3.1 million square feet were proposed in 17 projects.
- Eight competitive industrial business parks have a remaining 420 acres of land for industrial and business development concentrated in locations along the US-74 corridor west of Monroe. With less than 28% of its competitive industrial/business park land remaining, it is essential for Union County to identify new growth areas.

LAND USE

- 69% of the County is unincorporated. The majority of this County land is agricultural and residential -- 66.8% is used for agricultural residential and 27.1% is used for residential.
- Of the total unincorporated land, 91.1% of County lands are zoned Agricultural Residential (RA-40 and RA-20) and 7.74% are zoned Residential (R-40, R-20, R-10, R-8, R-6), and 1.15% are zoned Commercial/Industrial (B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4, B-6, HC, LI, and HI).
- Higher density residential uses are primarily located within the incorporated towns.
- The majority of employment and commercial uses are located in the incorporated towns (76.7%).

DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

- Of the 409,244 acres of land in the entirety of Union County, 232,001 acres are developed and unlikely to change and 177,243 acres are potentially available for development.
- Focusing on the unincorporated portions of the County, there are 282,478 acres of which 160,919 acres are developed or otherwise unavailable for development and 121,559 available for development.

MARKET FOR RETAIL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Marketable retail lands are located along the new Monroe Bypass interchanges in the western portions of the County along NC-84 and NC-16 and in the northeastern portions of the County on NC-218.

CHAPTER 3: GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES



Introduction

This chapter contains the Plan Framework – the goals, policies, and strategies that provide guidance for future decision-making in Union County.

GOALS

Goals are statements about what the County aims to achieve through 2025. Goals give decision-makers and citizens a clear idea about the County's intended direction.

POLICIES

Policies provide a definite course of direction for the County that will guide decisions and set a framework for actions. They provide ongoing guidance for elected and appointed officials, community leaders, staff, and administrators as they make decisions about development, programs, and capital investments in the County.

STRATEGIES

Strategies outline the specific plan of action to be taken to achieve the County's goals. These actions are organized into a strategic action plan in Chapter 5: Implementation Action Plan.

How are the Goals, Policies, and Strategies Organized?

The goals, policies, and strategies are organized into the following nine community themes.

- Well-Planned Growth / Economic Development
- Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space
- Public Facilities (Water and Sewer Services, Schools)
- Environmental Protection
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Cooperation
- Housing
- Transportation
- Future Land Use Plan
- Attractive Community Appearance and Image

Plan Framework (Goals, Policies, Strategies)

A. WELL-PLANNED GROWTH/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Expansion of the County's tax base and maintaining low taxes for citizens is contingent upon development of new commercial enterprises in Union County. The County also realizes that land is not a limiting factor to growth, and that growth can have significant impacts on agriculture and community character. The County will implement this plan to achieve well-planned growth patterns that are fiscally, socially, and environmentally responsible, and that support development of new industries.

Goal A-1: Promotion of New and Existing Businesses

Promote the development of new and existing businesses and industries by offering a progressive atmosphere that will diversify the local economy, expand the tax base, and enhance quality of life.

Policy A-1.1: Business Expansion and Development.

Encourage and promote the development and expansion of new and existing businesses and industries by offering a progressive atmosphere for enterprises that will diversify the local economy, expand the tax base, and enhance the quality of life in Union County. The County will do this by ensuring that land permits, infrastructure, and public facilities are in place to serve new industries in areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan map. This includes new and expanded development within the fourteen municipalities and along the edges of jurisdictional boundaries. Locations that are not identified on the Future Land Use Plan map should also be considered as long as they are (1) identified by local economic development agencies as targeted locations for economic development, and (2) will not negatively impact adjacent areas.

Strategies:

- Work with Economic Development Agencies to identify zoning needs for marketable sites.
- Work with Economic Development Agencies to identify infrastructure needs for marketable sites and assist in providing needed infrastructure.
- Support business development in the fourteen towns in Union County, particularly in areas that are underutilized and needing revitalization.
- Activities that bring new people and businesses to the area, including special events, sports tournaments, tourism, and convention activities shall be encouraged and supported.
- Local economic development and industrial recruitment efforts shall focus on businesses and industries that have a clean air and water quality impact.

Policy A-1.2: Local Business Promotion

Coordinate with the Economic Development Commissions and the Chambers of Commerce to promote local businesses.

Strategies:

- Assist and support in efforts to market local businesses.
- Work with the Chambers of Commerce to develop a “Buy-Local” Campaign.
- Ensure that County government practices promote purchasing of local goods and services.

Policy A-1.3: Actively Market the County to New Employers

Work with the Economic Development Commissions and the Chambers of Commerce to promote the County to prospective new industries.

Strategies:

- Provide technical assistance and support to the Economic Development Commissions and the Chambers of Commerce to market the County to new industries.
- Economic development incentives shall be identified, evaluated and only implemented after cost-benefit analysis is conducted to encourage appropriate and desirable growth and development within the region.
- Promote the regional airport as an amenity to new businesses.

Policy A-1.4: A Highly Trained Workforce

Union County will work to ensure that it offers prospective employers a highly trained and well-educated workforce.

Strategies:

- Continue to provide a high quality public education.
- Encourage South Piedmont Community College and Wingate College to offer courses that will provide skills needed for targeted employers/industries.
- Promote development of a public vocational school and expand vocational course offerings.

Goal A-2: Orderly and Predictable Growth

Identify areas best suited for economic development and make land use and infrastructure decisions to encourage development in those identified areas.

Policy A-2.1: Identify Priorities for Future Industry Sites

Identify priority areas best suited for economic development and make land use and infrastructure decisions to encourage development in those identified areas. These sites should be located in and around existing communities where services are either already available or expansion is planned.

Strategies:

- Work with the Economic Development Commissions to identify priority locations being marketed for new industries, as guided by the Future Land Use Plan map.

Policy A-2.2: Coordinate Infrastructure Expansion

Work with service providers to coordinate economic development efforts with infrastructure improvement planning.

Strategies:

- Incorporate into the Union County Capital Improvement Plan the public improvements needed to serve priority economic development sites and plan for those improvements.

Policy A-2.3: Implement the Future Land Use Plan of this Comprehensive Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan identifies areas best suited for economic development land uses, those areas that are environmentally sensitive, those areas where agricultural uses are to be protected, those areas where new school facilities will be needed, and areas for additional residential development. The Future Land Use Plan will serve as the blueprint for growth and development decisions in the County.

Strategies:

- Amend the County's zoning ordinance to allow for targeted commercial and industrial development in the County.
- When making rezoning and other land development decisions, refer to the Future Land Use Plan and other supporting policies and maps to inform decision-making. Additional information to be evaluated should include endangered and threatened habitat and Natural Heritage Areas, plans for schools and libraries, public infrastructure improvements, and environmental features.
- County departments should coordinate master planning efforts to ensure that the Future Land Use Plan is updated to reflect plans for parks and recreation, schools, public facilities, and other public services.

B. PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE

The County recognizes that its economy has a strong tradition of agriculture as a way of life and as an economic generator. The County will continue to support agricultural industries and maintain the rural quality of life and community character that make Union County a desirable place to live.

Goal B-1: Maintain Agricultural Production and Forestry

Encourage protection of productive areas of the County for continued agricultural and forestry use.

Policy B-1.1: Support Farmland Preservation Efforts

Support the preservation of farmland, forestry, and horticultural lands within the County. Promote these business operations within the County and provide assistance to ensure their long-term viability. Discourage encroachment from non-compatible land uses on agricultural lands.

Strategies:

- Develop a County Farmland Preservation Plan.
- Adopt a Purchase of Development Rights Program that will make state and federal dollars available to Union County farmers.
- Consider providing County funding as a match to private funding for conservation efforts (i.e., conservation easements).
- Support the work of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service's Union County Center.
- In partnership with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the Catawba Lands Conservancy, and other partners, works with rural landowners to identify long-term strategies for properties that are being converted from agricultural uses.

Policy B-1.2: Support Local Agriculture

Work to market and promote local agricultural production through such vehicles as farmer's markets and community supported agriculture.

Strategies:

- Assist in the marketing and advertising of local farmer's markets.
- Work with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service's Union County Center to identify methods to further support local agricultural enterprises and to identify infrastructure needs of local agricultural, forestry, and horticultural businesses.
- Work to provide adequate transportation infrastructure that will allow farmers and other agricultural producers to transport shipments of goods and move needed equipment and supplies.

Policy B-1.3: Encourage Agri-tourism

Allow and promote appropriate agri-tourism activities that can help support local farms' economic vitality.

Strategies:

- Work with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service's Union County Center to identify potential regulatory barriers to agri-tourism uses and to identify solutions that balance the expansion of agri-tourism businesses with the need to mitigate their land use impacts on adjacent properties and roadways.
- Assist in marketing and advertising of local agri-tourism activities.

- Work with local agricultural partners to explore the potential for expanding agricultural business operations in the County, such as equestrian uses.

Goal B-2: Protect Rural Character and Scenic Views

Encourage preservation of scenic views and rural character.

Policy B-2.1: Protect Rural Character and Scenic Views.

Ensure that new development enhances and protects the County's rural character by protecting critical scenic corridors in the county.

Strategies:

- Develop an inventory of important scenic corridors in Union County. The 1997 Land Use Plan provides a starting point for this inventory.
- Consider developing a scenic corridor overlay district that would apply to new developments within critical scenic corridors. The overlay district could include more rigorous standards for providing vegetative buffers along roadways, increasing setbacks of buildings, regulating off-premise signs, and height restrictions. When developing the standards, consider the potential for alternative energy sources, such as wind farms, in these locations.
- Consider developing a dedicated funding source for protecting lands in scenic corridors.

Goal B-3: Foster Cooperative Relationships Between Farmers and Residents

Promote cooperation between agri-tourism and agricultural businesses and residential neighborhoods.

Policy B-3.1: Promote Communication between Farmers and Residents.

Encourage an open dialogue between farmers and residents of adjacent neighborhoods.

Strategies:

- Establish a mechanism to provide notice to new residents that are moving into homes proximate to active farming operations. This mechanism should be focused on lands within the rural areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan map.
- Encourage farmers and residents to meet and discuss issues of mutual concern at community meetings.

Goal B-4: Direct Development Away from Rural Areas

Discourage development that results in the excessive reduction of farmland, open space, and natural areas.

Policy B-4.1: Well-Planned Rural Development

Encourage rural development patterns that result in the protection of rural landscapes, support the continuation of local farming, and protect open spaces and wooded areas.

Strategies:

- Encourage the development of large lot subdivisions that reflect the rural character of Union County.
- Encourage developers to use stormwater best management practices, respect the natural topography and drainage patterns of the land, and protect groves of trees when designing new subdivisions. Long-term maintenance plans for natural stormwater maintenance features should be required.
- Consider providing incentives for subdivision designs that incorporate these types of low-impact design principles.

Goal B-5: Promote Protection of Open Spaces and Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Encourage and promote programs and development patterns that result in the protection of open spaces and environmentally sensitive lands, such as endangered and threatened species habitat, wetlands, and floodplains.

Policy B-5.1: Support Open Space Preservation Efforts

Encourage and promote programs and regulations that result in the protection of open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategies:

- Encourage landowners to place private conservation easements on important open lands and environmentally sensitive areas. Direct landowners to land trust organizations that can assist with these efforts.
- Consider developing a dedicated public funding source for protecting critical open space lands.

Policy B-5.2: Promote Private Land Conservation Efforts

Educate local landowners about the benefits of land protection efforts, and support the work of local land trusts, such as the Catawba Lands Conservancy.

Strategies:

- Identify existing large parcels in the County that are located in the rural area on the Future Land Use Plan map that have good soil and draining conditions for agricultural production. Work with landowners to encourage permanent protection of these lands.
- Work with the Catawba Lands Conservancy to identify priority open space lands and promote private land conservation efforts in these areas. This could include private conservation easements or acquisition of land funded through grants and other funding sources.

Goal B-6: Provide Convenient Recreational Opportunities Throughout the County

Provide a variety of active and low-impact recreational opportunities at conveniently located sites throughout the County.

Policy B-6.1: Implement the Union County Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Work to implement the Union County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, particularly the development of a regional Union County park.

Strategies:

- Work with the municipalities and provide financial and technical support to assist in identifying and developing community and local parks in Union County.
- Update the inventory of county-wide parks, greenways and trails.
- Work with regional partners to develop plans for the Carolina Thread Trail within Union County.
- Develop a plan to create an inter-connected recreational network of greenways and trails.
- Consider requiring new developments to provide an open space, greenway, or park facility component within residential subdivisions of a significant size for use by residents of the development. These lands shall be adequate for active or low-impact recreation and shall be designed in a manner to provide pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile access for residents of the development.

C. PUBLIC FACILITIES (WATER AND SEWER SERVICE, SCHOOLS)

The County is committed to investing in high-quality services to meet the needs of the current and future community. This includes:

- *Providing and maintaining accessible **public utility systems** capable of accommodating and helping to direct future growth.*
- *Investing in the **education** of the children and workforce of Union County to attract employers and provide residents opportunities to live and work in Union County.*

Public Utility Systems

Goal C-1: Ensure Utility Capacity for Future Development

Provide and maintain accessible public utility systems capable of accommodating and helping to direct future growth. Explore expansion of additional County wastewater treatment capacity.

Policy C-1.1: Ensure Adequate Water Supply and Treatment Capacity.

Ensure that the County can provide adequate water and wastewater treatment capacity to new developments.

Strategies:

- Coordinate County development and public works approvals to ensure that there is adequate water and wastewater capacity available to serve new residential and non-residential developments.

Goal C-2: Fiscally Efficient Public Water and Wastewater Service

Operate water and sewer services in a cost-efficient manner.

Policy C-2.1: Pursue Water Conservation Practices to Augment Capacity

Encourage water conservation practices in the County to increase efficiency of utility systems and reduce costs.

Strategies:

- Explore water conservation methods, such as rainwater harvesting and gray water recycling, to augment water supply, distribution, and treatment capacity. Such methods can improve capacity and reduce or prolong the need for costly infrastructure improvements and expansions. Gray water recycling at the 12 Mile Creek Treatment Plant is one opportunity for conserving water. Other uses of this recycled water should be explored.

Goal C-3: Seek Opportunities with Neighboring Jurisdictions to Expand Utility Systems

Explore possibilities for coordinating with neighboring jurisdictions for water supply and water / wastewater treatment.

Policy C-3.1: Increase Water Supplies and Wastewater Treatment Capacity

Work with neighboring jurisdictions to secure additional water supplies and additional County wastewater treatment capacity to provide adequate service to existing and approved developments and future developments.

Strategies:

- Continue to work with neighboring jurisdictions (Anson County and Lancaster County) to secure plans for increasing water supply.
- Continue to assess and develop plans for increasing wastewater treatment capacity.

Goal C-4: Reserve Utility Capacity for Future Growth

Explore mechanisms to allocate and reserve water/sewer capacity for future economic development uses.

Policy C-4.1: Coordinate Service Capacity and Economic Development Planning

Coordinate service capacity with future economic development opportunities to ensure that future needs can be met.

Strategies:

- Explore mechanisms to allocate and reserve surplus water and sewer capacity in order to accommodate development of new and existing agricultural, industrial, and commercial businesses.

Education

Goal C-5: County and School District Coordination for Schools

Coordinate the provision of new school facilities.

Policy C-5.1: School Planning

Coordinate with the Union County School system and the fourteen municipalities to identify areas where new school facilities will be located.

Strategies:

- Establish an institutional framework for sharing information between the school system, the municipalities, and the County to plan for the future locations of schools and to provide utility, transportation, and other infrastructure needs for new schools.

Goal C-6: Joint-Use of Schools and Recreational Facilities

Coordinate the planning and development with new school facilities with plans for County recreation facilities.

Policy C-6.1: Maximize Community Benefits of Public Investment

Coordinate development of new school facilities with new parks and recreation facilities to serve the community.

Strategies:

- Establish a joint-use task force that includes representation from the school district, the County, and the fourteen municipalities to coordinate land acquisition and facility planning and construction in an effort to co-locate new parks and recreational facilities in the County.
- Consider development of a County land banking system which would help to coordinate County real estate purchases and reinforce the need for joint-use facilities that efficiently use public funds.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The County recognizes the importance of maintaining the health and aesthetics of the land, water, air and habitats. This is important to the environment, the health of residents, and the long-term attractiveness of the community as a place to live and work.

Goal D-1: Protect Water and Air Resources

Promote the protection of air quality and water quality.

Policy D-1.1: Water Quality Protection

Encourage the protection and improvement of local water quality.

Strategies:

- Adopt and implement stormwater best management practices (BMPs) in development regulations and programs to reduce runoff and protect water quality. Ensure that long-term management of these facilities is a component of stormwater planning efforts.
- Encourage the improvement of North Carolina sedimentation and erosion control standards to better protect water bodies from construction site run-off.

Policy D-1.2: Air Quality Protection

Encourage the protection and improvement of local air quality.

Strategies:

- Launch an outreach campaign to educate residents and businesses on ways they can contribute to improved air quality.
- Encourage industries to promote business practices that support maintaining and improving air quality.

Goal D-2: Consider Impacts of New Development on Environmental Features and Endangered/Threatened Habitats

Include consideration of the County's existing natural environment and environmentally sensitive lands in future land use decisions.

Policy D-2.1: Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas including wetlands, waterways, slopes, protected species habitats, and other areas.

Strategies:

- Encourage developments to site structures and infrastructure away from environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, steep slope, and protected habitat areas.

E. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The County will work to implement this plan and offer current and future residents and businesses a well-planned community with a high quality of life and a high degree of predictability and transparency on development decisions to create a stable and encouraging environment for investment. The County will serve as the leader for fostering communication among the many jurisdictional entities in Union County and will encourage and provide opportunities for better coordination between these jurisdictions to plan for future growth and infrastructure needs.

Goal E-1: Intergovernmental Coordination

Identify areas of common interest and agreement among the County and its municipalities to develop and pursue initiatives.

Policy E-1.1: Foster an Ongoing Dialogue with the Municipalities

The County will encourage and foster relationships with the municipalities to ensure an ongoing dialogue on issues of joint interest.

Strategies:

- Continue to hold quarterly Mayors-Commissioners Issues Conference (MCIC) meetings and the monthly County Manager meetings with municipal managers, administrators, and clerks.
- Develop an institutionalized system for coordinating efforts among the staffs of the local municipalities, the County, the public utility, and the school district and for planning within areas of mutual interest.
- Hold annual "State of the County" summits that provide an opportunity for elected officials to meet and discuss topics of joint concern to all jurisdictions.
- Work with Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) and Rocky River Rural Planning organization (RRRPO) and the local municipalities to develop priorities for transportation improvements in the county.

Goal E-2: An Active, Involved Citizenry

Area citizens have shown a keen interest in the affairs of their local government. There is a can-do spirit driven by civic pride and revealed through broad community involvement. Volunteerism is a constant source of energy and government officials should routinely seek the views of their constituents on growth and development issues.

Policy E-2.1: Local government boards and committees should be roughly representative of the constituent voting population of the planning area.

Policy E-2.2: Neighborhood and special area planning shall be encouraged to foster public involvement in the preparation of closely tailored, action-oriented, special area plans and improvements. Public participation should be a central, on-going feature in all plans.

F. HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

The County will encourage and support a well-planned, diverse housing environment offering a mix of housing to all income groups, and offering a safe and pleasant living environment. Neighborhoods will be strengthened through nurturing community spirit to create a sense of pride.

Goal F-1: Provide a Range of Housing Choices

Encourage development of a supply of housing that can accommodate diverse incomes and needs. Promote a range of housing opportunities to the County's workforce.

Policy F-1.1: Variety of Housing Types

New developments should incorporate a variety of housing options to ensure that the housing needs of new and mature families, seniors, singles, and couples can be met. This allows residents to remain in a community as their housing needs change.

Strategies:

- Conduct an assessment of housing stock in Union County that identifies the type and price of housing available in the County. Compare the inventory with local demand for housing to identify housing gaps in the County. The assessment should focus on changing demographics (i.e., the aging population and childless households) and new demands for non-traditional housing products.
- Encourage the municipalities to provide for a variety of housing types by amending zoning ordinances.
- Work with local developers to identify regulatory, financial, and other barriers to developing a diversity of housing products in Union County.

Goal F-2: Strengthen and Enhance Existing Neighborhoods

Strengthen existing neighborhoods through the provision of public services, improved access, and compatible land use patterns.

Policy F-2.1: Use Appropriate Transitions to Protect Character

Work to provide appropriate transitions between neighborhoods and between residential and non-residential areas to maintain the integrity of different land uses.

Strategies:

- Jointly plan with the municipalities for areas on the edges of the towns to ensure land use and design compatibility.
- Require non-residential development to include transitional features in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Such features could include landscape buffers, tree plantings, noise barriers, orientation of buildings, building height, reduction in lighting features, and others.
- Require higher density residential neighborhoods to transition to lower density residential neighborhoods by providing landscaped buffers, encouraging higher density uses to be located away from the edges of lower density neighborhoods, and other features.
- Preservation of tree cover.

Policy F-2.2: Improve Neighborhood Connectivity

Work to improve connectivity in existing neighborhoods and require greater connectivity in new developments.

Strategies:

- Amend the subdivision ordinance to require subdivisions to provide multiple points of entry, connectivity with adjacent areas and neighborhoods, and private sidewalks and trails for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Provision of pedestrian and bicycle linkages within developments and between residential and commercial areas.

Goal F-3: Encourage Infill Development/Discourage “Leapfrogging”

Create incentives to help provide for infill development and develop locational criteria to identify appropriate locations for multi-family developments.

Policy F-3.1: Factors used to determine preferred locations for multi-family developments shall include: close proximity to employment and shopping centers, access to major thoroughfares, the availability of public services and facilities, stormwater management issues, and compatibility with adjacent areas and land uses.

Policy F-3.2: Incentives may be provided for infill development and the rehabilitation of existing housing already provided with urban services to acknowledge the lower service and infrastructure costs to the taxpayer. Development requiring the expansion of services and infrastructure may be required to assist in the cost of such service expansions.

Policy F-3.3: New infill development shall be architecturally compatible with existing structures, landscape features and the streetscape within its vicinity.

Policy F-3.4: Housing throughout the county shall be required to meet or exceed minimum housing and nuisance abatement standards to eliminate unlawful activity and blight. Individual structures that have declined to levels beyond reasonable rehabilitation and repair shall be removed so as not to adversely affect the economic health of other nearby structures.

Policy F-3.5: All forms of housing development should be discouraged from “leapfrogging” into the countryside, thereby destroying the rural character of the County, breaking up large farmland areas, and making the provision of urban services more costly to taxpayers.

Policy F-3.6: Detailed neighborhood and small area planning (or public information meetings) shall be supported so as to encourage greater resident involvement and closer attention to area specific issues and needs.

G. TRANSPORTATION

Union County will encourage and promote an efficient and safe transportation system that moves people and goods through a well-coordinated transportation network in an environmentally sensitive manner. The County will achieve this through a multimodal emphasis which includes auto, transit, air, bike, and pedestrian travel.

Goal G-1: Support and Expand Bus Transit Service

Continue efforts to support provision and expansion of bus transit service in the central and western parts of the County.

Policy G-1.1: Expand and Support Bus Transit Service

Work to support and enhance existing transit service and expand service within Union County.

Strategies:

- Continue efforts to support the provision and expansion of bus transit service in the central and western parts of the County.
- Provide amenities for transit riders such as bus shelters, lighting, benches, and posted schedules for convenience, security, and comfort.
- Develop additional park-and-ride lots at key locations along transit corridors.
- Work with major employers to create incentives to increase transit ridership of employees.
- Continue to encourage MUMPO to develop shuttle/express routes from central and western towns to downtown Charlotte and LYNX lines.

Goal G-2: Identify Future Rail Service Corridor

Identify a corridor for possible future rail service in the central and northwestern parts of the County, with interim use as trails.

Policy G-2.1: Plan for Future Rail Service

The County will work with the municipalities to plan for future rail service.

Strategies:

- Work with the municipalities to identify and adopt a transportation corridor plan for a possible future rail service in the central and northwestern parts of the County.

- As part of the rail corridor planning efforts, work with the municipalities to reserve public right-of-way along the potential future rail corridor, with interim use as a set of trails while discussions continue about possible transit service.
- Encourage development of transit supportive land uses and densities along an established rail corridor.

Goal G-3: Land Use Planning for Monroe Connector/Bypass Corridor and US-74

Plan for land uses in and near the corridor for the proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass and US-74 that support County goals.

Policy G-3.1: Joint Planning Along Monroe Connector/Bypass Corridor

The County will work with the municipalities to coordinate growth and development along the Monroe Connector/Bypass corridor to encourage economic development, efficient use of infrastructure and financial resources, and discourage sprawling strip commercial development.

Strategies:

- Initiate a corridor planning effort with affected municipalities to plan for land uses in and near the corridor for the proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass that support County goals, paying particular attention to areas near future interchanges.

Policy G-3.2: Joint Planning Along US-74

The County will work with the municipalities to coordinate revitalization efforts along US-74 to develop a vision for the corridor and formal plans for implementation.

Strategies:

- Initiate a corridor planning effort with affected municipalities to develop a vision for the US-74 corridor and to develop an action plan for implementation. Actions could include public/private partnerships to redevelop targeted nodes, application of new corridor design standards, and other strategies.

Goal G-4: Coordinated Roadway Planning

Coordinate transportation planning efforts to improve roadway access, capacity, connectivity, and safety in the county.

Policy G-4.1: Reduce Traffic Congestion and Improve Roadway Capacity

The County will work with the municipalities, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization, and local developers to increase roadway access, capacity, connectivity, and safety in the County.

Strategies:

- Continue to work with the municipalities to develop priorities for road improvement projects in the County. Development of the *Local Area*

Regional Transportation Plan for four of the western towns is an example of this type of coordination.

- County officials should continue to make formal, annual presentations of transportation projects for inclusion in the North Carolina Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Priorities should be vetted with all municipalities so the County can speak with “one voice” in making recommendations to the state.
- Consider development of new county-wide access management standards based on functional road classifications that would apply to all new developments.
- Consider using Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) to enhance roadway capacity.
- Consider upgrading signal timing systems at critical intersections.
- Consider alternative methods of intersection control, such as roundabouts.
- Amend the County’s development ordinance to require comprehensive traffic impact analyses for new developments. The threshold for determining which developments are required to undertake impact analysis will be determined at the time the ordinance is amended.
- Consider requiring developers to fund transportation improvements and mitigations.
- Amend the County’s development and subdivision ordinances to require developments to better connect to adjacent roadways to reduce traffic loads on arterial roads. Refer to the LARTP (i.e., Western Union Transportation Plan) plan for these provisions.
- Amend the County’s development and subdivision ordinances to require pedestrian and bicycle improvements to enhance walkability in all new developments. Refer to the LARTP (i.e., Western Union Transportation Plan) plan for these provisions.
- Work to provide adequate transportation infrastructure that will allow farming equipment and tractor trailers to transport shipments of goods and move needed equipment and supplies on rural roads.

H. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Union County will use the Future Land Use Plan as a guide for decision-making regarding development approvals, rezoning decisions, and infrastructure improvements. As new conditions and circumstances arise, the Future Land Use Plan will be updated to reflect new conditions and needs.

Goal H-1: Revise the Future Land Use Plan

Revise the Union County Land Use Plan to meet today’s conditions and needs, and to help promote the goals articulated in this Comprehensive Plan.

Goal H-2: Designate Land Use Classifications

Identify on the Future Land Use Plan those areas that are best suited for economic development land uses, those areas that are environmentally sensitive and those areas where agricultural uses are to be protected. Provide flexibility to allow for future sites to be designated as opportunities arise.

Goal H-3: Incorporate Land Uses that Support the Monroe Connector/Bypass

Adjust the Future Land Use Plan designations in and near the corridor for the new Monroe Connector/Bypass to achieve development patterns that meet County goals.

These three goals have been used to update the Future Land Use Plan, designate land use classifications, and incorporate land uses that support the Monroe Connector/Bypass. The following potential strategies outline the next steps needed to implement the Future Land Use Plan.

Strategies:

- The Union County Board of Commissioners should adopt the Future Land Use Plan.
- The Union County Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, and other advisory boards and County staff should use the Future Land Use Plan map and classifications as a guide for decision-making regarding future development approvals and capital improvement plans.
- In accordance with state statutes, statements of consistency with the Future Land Use Plan and the full *Union County Comprehensive Plan* will be made by the Board of County Commissioners, Planning Board, and County staff when taking action regarding rezoning requests.
- Union County should amend the Future Land Use Plan at such times that new conditions or opportunities have arisen to ensure that the Plan is current and provides up-to-date information to guide decision-making in the County.

I. ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITY APPEARANCE & IMAGE

Major urban corridors and gateway roadways should be landscaped, contain understated signage, and architecturally appealing buildings. Both urban and rural roadways shall be free of clutter and litter. Strict enforcement of regulations concerning junked vehicles and dilapidated structures shall be observed. Area citizens place a high value on the unique history of our community, and emphasis shall be placed on preserving historic buildings and places.

Goal I-1: Appearance and Development Standards for Major Travel Corridors

Coordinate planning efforts with municipalities to improve the appearance and image of urban and rural roadways.

Policy I-1.1: The important economic, tourism, and community image benefits of attractive major travel corridors through the area shall be recognized. Such entryway corridors shall receive priority attention for improved appearance and development standards, including landscaping, signage, tree preservation, underground utilities, streetlights, and sidewalks.

Policy I-1.2: The significance of street trees in providing visual relief, summer cooling, improved air quality, and livability shall be recognized through public policies to encourage their planting and maintenance. Highest priority shall be give to gateway travel corridors and urban centers. Programs urging voluntary efforts by property owners shall be preferred. Power companies shall be encouraged to aesthetically trim trees under or near power lines when those trees do not interfere with power line operations.

Goal I-2: Appearance and Development Standards for Neighborhoods

Encourage preservation of the natural features of the development site and minimize the visual impacts of the built infrastructure.

Policy I-2.1: The placement of utility wires underground shall be required in all new public and private developments. Existing overhead utilities should be relocated to underground locations when redevelopment or new construction affords the opportunity and where high visibility justifies the cost.

Policy I-2.2: Clear cutting of trees (except those grown for timber) shall not be permitted without advance notice and just cause. Those proposing the removal of trees shall demonstrate a good faith effort to incorporate existing trees into their site designs. Incentives and disincentives may be used to encourage appropriate site development.

CHAPTER 4:

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



Introduction

Through the Future Land Use Plan, Union County is charting how best to accommodate future housing, commercial, and employment development. The Future Land Use Plan was developed over the course of several years and included input from the community, representatives of the municipalities, and the committees overseeing development of the Plan.

Growth Pattern Themes

Development of the Future Land Use Plan was guided by several overarching themes supported by the community:

1. Direct growth to urban and suburban areas along the edges of the towns to limit sprawl type development, to make wise use of development patterns in the towns, to maximize the use of existing transportation corridors, and lay the framework for future transit expansion.
2. Focus denser residential land uses in areas where existing water and wastewater capacity is available or likely to be expanded in the future – east of Monroe and north of Wingate and Marshville in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin.
3. Provide new opportunities for commercial and employment growth in areas identified as marketable for non-residential uses to increase employment opportunities in the County and balance the tax base.
4. Maintain the rural character of lands by encouraging land conservation, supporting agricultural practices, and managing new development to ensure it is compatible with adjacent rural lands.
5. Provide more transitional land uses between urban and rural areas to reduce the potential for incompatible land uses being located in close proximity, and to create more of a transition between urban and rural lands.

Character Area Descriptions

The following character areas describe the general objectives for the Future Land Use Plan in sub-sections of the County.

Northwest

Urban and suburban-type development has set much of the stage in areas of Union County closest to Charlotte. Stallings and Indian Trail control much of this area because the land is either within corporate limits or within Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. Economic analysis coupled with existing zoning designations and the future Monroe Connector/Bypass resulted in the identification of key strategic non-residential nodes, categorized on the Future Land Use map as commercial centers, commercial corridor opportunity areas, industrial areas, employments centers, or office/institutional centers.

Western Municipalities

Development patterns in and around the towns of Marvin, Weddington, Wesley Chapel, and Mineral Springs have been of a low-density residential type, and these communities have expressed strong interest in having areas immediately outside their borders develop in a manner that is consistent with the character of their communities. Accordingly, the Future Land Use Plan shows most of those areas in a low-density residential designation. The context around Waxhaw is somewhat different. The NC-16 corridor coming down out of Mecklenburg County has been characterized by more intensive development, much of it non-residential, and two key commercial center nodes are identified. The Town of Waxhaw recently adopted a new comprehensive plan that envisions a blend of development (residential and non-residential) and preservation within the town.

Monroe Area

Growth is envisioned to continue in the areas surrounding Monroe, driven by the availability of water and sewer service and transportation infrastructure (most notably the new Monroe Connector/Bypass). A series of non-residential nodes are designated on the map in key strategic areas (e.g., around proposed new interchanges) where lands are ripe for development. The area between Monroe and Wesley Chapel / Mineral Springs is a critical planning area. Medium-density land use is appropriate along the edges of Monroe and reinforces the development pattern along the main transportation corridors in the County. Wesley Chapel and Mineral Springs prefer to have lands adjacent to their towns developed as low-density residential. The delineation between these two land uses was determined based on existing conditions and proximity to adjacent town boundaries.

Monroe Connector/Bypass Corridor

Opportunities are on the horizon for new residential and non-residential development in this corridor. Key nodes are specified on the Future Land Use map where market feasibility for non-residential development is highest (mostly near new interchanges). Also shown on the map is the proposed, but not yet fully funded, southern bypass around Monroe, and nodes of development at intersections with NC-200 and US-601 where market potential exists.

Wingate-Marshville Area

This area is already accessible to rail service, and is likely to be a major opportunity area once the new Monroe Connector/Bypass is in place. Activity nodes are suggested on the Plan, along with the industrial area paralleling US-74, west of Marshville. Medium-

density residential development is focused north of Wingate, in keeping with the town's land use objectives.

Northeast

This area of the County could experience significant change over the planning horizon. Public utility discussions in the past have proposed development of a new wastewater treatment plant in this general area. The County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan established a community goal to develop a 400-acre regional park in this sector. The majority of lands in this part of the County are rural and agricultural. The Future Land Use Plan designates much of this area to stay as rural conservation or low-density residential to preserve the character of the area. Nodal commercial development is located at the intersection of NC-200 and NC-218.

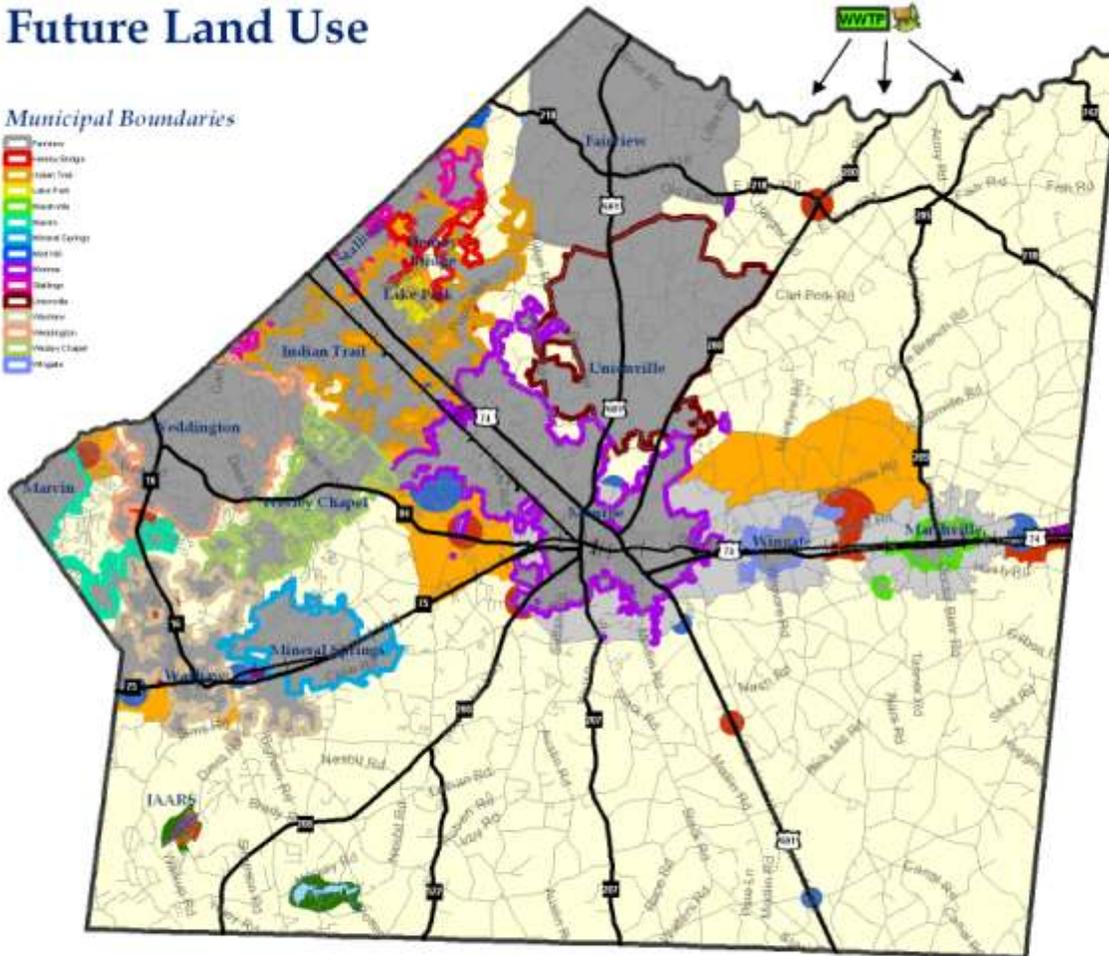
South

This area is currently characterized by rural and agricultural uses and patterns, and is designated on the Future Land Use map as a rural area. Lands within rural areas are encouraged to maintain rural character and agricultural uses through new design standards.

The following series of four maps shows the Union County Future Land Use Plan, the land use plans of the towns, and the County's Thoroughfare Plan. The overlays of the towns' plans and the Thoroughfare Plan provide a better context for the County's Future Land Use Plan.

Future Land Use

Municipal Boundaries



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
 - Municipalities
 - Extra-territorial Jurisdiction
 - Railroad
 - Water Features
- Future Land Use**
- Residential
 - Low-Density (0-1 DU/Acre)
 - Medium-Density (1-2.5 DU/Acre)
 - Urban-Density (2.5-5 DU/Acre)
 - Use-Intensive
 - Commercial Center
 - Industrial
 - Employment Center (Office, Industrial, other)
 - Office/Institutional
 - Future Study Area for Possible Development Nodes
 - GreenSpace
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Other
 - Future Need for County Park for This Area of County
 - Future Need for Waste Water Treatment Plant for This Area of County

DISCLAIMER

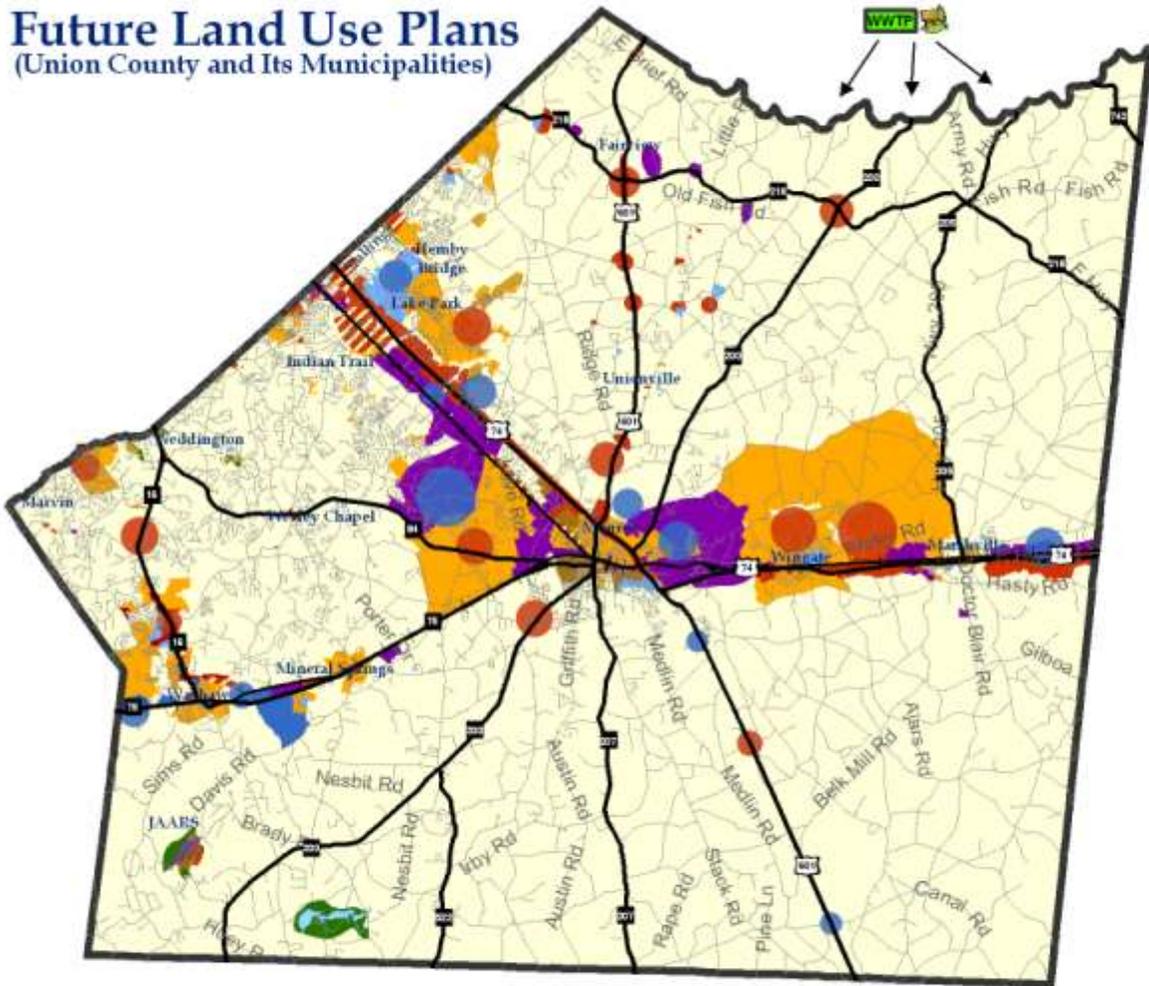
Mapping data is provided for the Union County Program/Operational Code Locations. Union County will be made by customers at risk without the accuracy of the data provided.

Map Prepared by
 CLM/ISS/AL/0000010
 April 4, 2010

Planning Board Recommendations:

Map updated by:
 Union County GIS Department
 February 17, 2010
 February 22, 2010

Future Land Use Plans (Union County and Its Municipalities)



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
 - Railroad
 - Water Features
- Future Land Use**
- Intensity**
 - Low-Density (0-1 DU/Acre)
 - Medium-Density (1-2.5 DU/Acre)
 - Urban-Density (2.5+ DU/Acre)
 - Use-Category**
 - Mixed-Use/Town Center
 - Commercial Center
 - Industrial
 - Employment Center (Office, Industrial, other)
 - Office/Institutional
 - Future Study Area for Possible Development Nodes
 - Conservation**
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Rural Conservation Area
 - Infrastructure**
 - Future Need for County Park for This Area of County
 - Future Need for Waste Water Treatment Plant for This Area of County

UNION COUNTY AND ITS MUNICIPALITIES
Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department.
Union County and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the information hereon.
Map prepared by: GLENN W. ALLEN/URS | April 2010

Planning Board Recommendations.
Map Updated By:
Union County GIS Department
February 11, 2010
February 22, 2010

Future Land Use Categories

This section describes the land use classifications shown on the previous Future Land Use Plan maps. These land use classifications are intended to guide future development decisions, provide direction for re-zonings, and inform the process for updating the county's Zoning Ordinance.

Nodes have been identified as candidates for non-residential development. Identification was based upon proximity to transportation networks, availability of utilities, and market assessments. Because many of the non-residential nodes designated on the Future Land Use Plan map are general in nature and not parcel-specific, locational criteria are also suggested below, indicating land characteristics that are most desirable for non-residential uses. If a parcel is located within an area that has been identified as a non-residential node and has characteristics consistent with the locational criteria described below, then the parcel should be considered to be a good candidate for that type of development.

CONSERVATION

Parks and Open Space

Parks and Open Space areas contain public or quasi-public uses such as publicly owned open space land, parklands, and recreational areas. The intent of this land is that it will be maintained in its natural state for perpetuity.

RESIDENTIAL

Low-Density Residential

These areas provide opportunities for more rural scale and lower density traditional neighborhood living. These areas include detached single-family residential uses with a maximum density of 1 dwelling unit per acre. This area serves as a transitional land use between the rural land use and more intense land uses surrounding the municipalities. Other types of uses that may occur in this area are schools, parks, and other public facilities. Some of these areas may be served by existing water and sanitary sewer. These areas are shown in yellow on the map and are located adjacent to urbanizing areas.

Medium-Density Residential

These areas include existing and future areas for development of more dense residential neighborhoods. Housing densities should range from 1-2.5 dwelling units per acre. These areas are served by public water and sanitary sewer. Other types of uses that may occur in this area are schools, parks, and other public facilities. The land use is shown as light orange and is located near Marvin, Waxhaw, Monroe, Indian Trail, Hemby Bridge, Marshville, and Wingate.

Urban-Residential

This land use classification reflects the urbanizing areas that are directly adjacent to towns and higher density development. It provides a transition between the municipalities and the lower density development found in the County. Housing densities should range from 2.5-5 dwelling units per acre. These areas are served by public water and sanitary sewer. Other appropriate uses that can occur in this area include schools, parks, public facilities, and appropriately designed and sited neighborhood commercial development. This designation is shown in dark brown and is located along the edges of Stallings.

NON-RESIDENTIAL

Office/Institutional

Office/Institutional areas include locations for small office developments, government facilities, Wingate College, and other similar uses.

Industrial

The Industrial classification is applied to areas that currently support industrial uses or lands that could accommodate a variety of industrial establishments. These areas incorporate larger tracts of land because of their nature and function. Industrial developments should provide shared access, and have a coordinated design and a planned layout.

Commercial Center

These areas include existing or future commercial retail and service centers. They are located near residential and employment areas to provide residents and employees with good access to commercial services. These centers can have a range of characteristics depending on their primary markets. The larger scale regional draws are more automobile-oriented and draw people from throughout the region. These areas are located along major roadways providing good access, and they may include larger scale stores like “big boxes,” warehouse clubs, and large specialty retailers. Smaller, accessory uses can also locate in these areas to provide convenience shopping and include restaurants and smaller specialty retailers, often located on out-parcels or in smaller shopping centers. These areas are characterized by a range of commercial, public, and semi-public uses. They emphasize pedestrian-oriented activity centers which may contain a mix of retail, office, cultural, educational, open space, and other public and private uses, with a balance among the various uses. A mix of uses can occur in a single structure, in a group of structures on a parcel, or on a group of parcels; however, multi-story buildings with a vertical mix of uses are encouraged. Greater regulatory flexibility is intended to encourage innovative and creative design and high-quality development and redevelopment.

Convenience Commercial Center

These centers generally serve an area within three to five minutes driving time and generally have a supermarket as the anchor store. Convenience shopping centers should be located at intersections of roads which provide access both

directly and indirectly to a large enough trade area to support the proposed center. A convenience shopping center should provide for the sale of convenience goods (food, drugs and sundries) and personal services (laundry, dry-cleaning, barbering, and restaurants) for the day-to-day living needs of the immediate neighborhood.

Locational Criteria

1. Proximity to future population growth and existing retail
2. Access to existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure
3. Transportation access to major/minor thoroughfares
4. Consistency with the land use plans of surrounding municipalities

Neighborhood Commercial Center

These centers generally serve a larger trade area than convenience commercial centers. These are located at key locations along major roadways that provide access both directly and indirectly to a large enough trade area to support the proposed center. A neighborhood commercial center should provide a broader range of shopping and services, including restaurants, larger retailers, lawn and garden care, and other uses. These centers generally include up to 1,000,000 total square feet per center.

Location Criteria:

1. Proximity to future population growth and existing retail
2. Access to existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure
3. Should be located on at least one major arterial or a highway to promote access to the site and reduce impact on neighborhood roadways.
4. Consistency with the land use plans of surrounding municipalities

Regional Commercial Center

Regional commercial centers provide retail services to regional markets and typically include more than 1,000,000 square feet of space and are approximately 100 acres or more in size. These centers include lifestyle commercial centers, big box retailers, traditional malls, and other larger retail commercial campuses.

Location Criteria:

1. Proximity to future population growth and existing retail
2. Access to existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure
3. Should be located on at least one major arterial or a highway to promote access to the site and reduce impact on neighborhood roadways.
4. Consistency with land use plans of surrounding municipalities
5. Approximately one acre of land for each 10,000 square feet of retail
6. Buffer of 1.5 – 2 miles from other regional commercial development

Employment Center

These areas include a wide range of business, light industrial, office, research and development, and related ancillary uses, such as restaurants and small-scale retail and convenience shopping. They generally take on the appearance of an office development, yet with warehousing capabilities. Employment centers often take the

form of a “campus” in the integration and coordination of uses and quality and character of the development. These areas are prime locations with good access to major road networks and an employment base and should be reserved for high-return employment generating uses such as office buildings or light manufacturing or warehousing operations.

Business/Industrial Parks

Business and industrial parks include light and heavy industrial uses, warehousing, distribution, flex space, office parks and scattered retail uses in support. These are larger parks that typically provide 1-3 million square feet of space. They are located along major roadways and possibly near rail lines, but are not located in major commercial center locations.

Location Criteria:

1. Access to existing or planned water and sewer infrastructure
2. Should be located on at least one major arterial or a highway
3. Consistent with the land use plans of surrounding municipalities
4. Heavy industry uses should be buffered from residential areas by light industrial or commercial uses

For all non-residential development, as a specific development is considered a series of factors should be addressed, including:

- Transportation impacts.
- Compatibility with the size and scale of adjacent land uses.
- Be of a reasonable size and configuration with adequate open space, circulation, and parking.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN



Introduction

The goals and policies identified in this plan will be made real through concerted, consistent, and highly focused attention to implementation. Implementation will be most effective when the County administration, present and future Boards of Commissioners, and other governmental entities actively and continuously use the Union County Comprehensive Plan as a key reference for all decisions and actions.

The plan includes over 100 strategies aimed at implementing the plan's goals and policies, setting out an aggressive plan of action. Among the myriad strategies, several rise to the top as most critical for implementation. These include strategies to improve the planning capacity in the County, update its land use and zoning ordinances to facilitate new business development, plan for development along the new Monroe Connector/Bypass and redevelopment along US-74, and establish formal mechanisms for coordinating planning efforts with the municipalities and public school system. These six priority "implementation actions" are explained in more detail below, including a recommended timeline for initiation and entities responsible for the actions.

The remaining strategies are organized by specific action areas of similar purpose. These groupings are a means for organizing the plan implementation efforts into formal work plans, making implementation more strategic and feasible. Each action area has a recommended timeline for initiation and an identified party responsible for initiation of the strategy. It is recommended that annual reports on the status of implementation be made to monitor and track implementation over the life of the plan. In future plan updates, implementation actions that have been accomplished can be removed, priorities can be reassessed, and new actions can be added to the list.

Priority Implementation Actions

1. UPDATE THE UTILITIES MASTER PLAN

Infrastructure capacity in Union County is critical to new business development and maintaining the quality of life found in the County. Several studies are underway to evaluate the current status of public water and sewer services in the County, including evaluations of potential long-range solutions for water and wastewater service constraints. These initiatives are of the highest priority to ensure the health, safety, and economic prosperity of the County. To better coordinate current and long-range infrastructure improvements and development plans, the 2005 Union County Water and Wastewater Master Plans should be consolidated, updated, and revised to address new conditions and opportunities.

Timeline: Initiate update within 1 year of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Public Works Department

The Utilities Master Plan should reinforce the goals and policies of the Union County Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the goals of the Utilities Master Plan should be to direct growth through the provision of service to commercial and employment areas identified on the adopted Future Land Use Plan and to discourage more intense development that would require public water and sanitary sewer services from locating in areas that are intended for lower intensity uses over the long-term (i.e., rural areas). The Utilities Master Plan should also incorporate strategies to coordinate the approval of new development proposals with the permitting of water/sanitary sewer service to ensure that capacity is adequate for both existing and new customers.

2. AMEND THE COUNTY ZONING AND SUBDIVISION ORDINANCES

The Union County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are two of the most critical tools the County has to direct and manage growth, facilitate economic development, improve design of new developments and redevelopments, add greenway and recreational amenities, and improve the mobility and accessibility of the transportation system. Following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the County should undertake a process to amend the zoning and subdivision ordinances to be in accordance with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Timeline: Initiate update within 1 year of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

Amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should address the goals, policies, and strategies laid out in this Comprehensive Plan. Amendments should include the following:

- A. Add a new zoning district that permits mixed-use developments within appropriate commercial and employment areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan map. An overlay district could be developed in the interim while the full update to the ordinance is conducted.
- B. Encourage the protection of open spaces within new residential developments that are located within the rural areas, as denoted on the Future Land Use map, through clustered subdivision or other alternatives (i.e., locations of well taps, etc.) that provide buffers between neighborhoods and adjacent rural and agricultural uses. Incentives should be provided, such as density bonuses, to encourage open space protection efforts.
- C. Consider requiring all new residential developments of a significant size to include open space, park, or greenways within the development. Provide incentives, such as density bonuses, to offset this new requirement.
- D. Work with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service's Union County Center to identify potential regulatory barriers to agri-tourism uses and events and amend zoning ordinance regulations to permit appropriate uses.
- E. Establish a mechanism to provide notice to prospective residents that are moving into homes proximate to active farming operations to educate them on what can be expected when living adjacent to these uses, particularly for rural areas designated on the Future Land Use Plan map.

- F. Consider providing incentives, such as density bonuses, for residential developments that incorporate stormwater best management practices. Require development of long-term maintenance plans for these features.
- G. Ensure that water conservation techniques, such as rainwater harvesting via cisterns and grey water recycling are allowed under current development regulations.
- H. Consider amending regulations to further restrict development within the 100-year floodplain, near wetlands, areas of steep slope, and in protected wildlife habitat areas and to provide incentives to developments that exceed these requirements, such as density-bonuses and reductions in parking and landscaping requirements.
- I. Ensure that the development of workforce housing, multi-family, and senior housing in appropriate locations proximate to services and infrastructure is allowed under current zoning regulations. Work with local affordable workforce housing developers to identify barriers to this development.
- J. Require non-residential developments to include transitional features in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods, such as landscape buffers, tree plantings, noise barriers, appropriate building orientation, building height, reduction in lighting features, etc.
- K. Require higher density residential neighborhoods to transition to lower density residential neighborhoods by providing landscaped buffers, encouraging higher density uses to be located away from the edges of lower density neighborhoods, etc.
- L. Amend the subdivision ordinance to require subdivisions to provide multiple points of entry, reasonable connectivity with adjacent areas and neighborhoods, and sidewalks and trails for cyclists and pedestrians.
- M. Adopt county-wide access management standards based on functional road classifications that would apply to all new developments and improve traffic flow. The *Local Area Regional Transportation Plan* can provide guidance for such standards relevant to western Union County.
- N. Amend County ordinances to require comprehensive traffic impact analyses and require appropriate mitigation for new developments that meet an appropriate threshold given level of service goals (i.e., units within development or other measurement).
- O. Consider developing an overlay district that would include more rigorous standards for lands within priority scenic corridors (See Implementation Action PI-8.)
- P. Add language to specify that the Future Land Use Plan map should be used as a guide for future rezoning and other development decisions.
- Q. Establish special design standards for big box retail stores so as to avoid accepting the “anywhere USA” standard, minimal building design.

- R. Government may employ a combination of incentives and disincentives to protect existing trees and/or require the replacement of trees removed for development.
- S. Large parking lots shall have landscaped planting islands and perimeter buffer strips and may use other materials and design technologies to intercept and absorb runoff from the parking surface. Parking requirements shall be carefully gauged by land use so as not to create excessive paved surface areas.

As future land use studies are conducted, such as along the US-74 connector/bypass and US-601, the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances should be subsequently amended to reflect new policies.

3. COORDINATE SCHOOLS, PARKS AND RECREATION, AND LAND USE PLANS

Comprehensive Planning in Union County means more than development of a land use plan; it emphasizes the ongoing coordination of related efforts to create vibrant communities. The coordination of public facilities, most especially school and parks and recreational facilities, provides an opportunity to develop vital community centers and to assist families and neighborhoods in creating built models of community focused learning centers. It can also result in fiscal efficiencies and a reduction in costs to the County over the long-term. The Union County Public School system, the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, the Union County Planning Department, the Union County Public Works Department and the fourteen municipalities need to work together to develop strategies for co-locating schools and parks and for coordinating land use, infrastructure, and school development plans.

Timeline: Initiate process to develop joint planning mechanism within 1 year of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

There are many examples for joint-use and coordinated land planning for schools. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Liaison Committee is comprised of elected officials that meet regularly to discuss critical topics of county-wide interest, including schools. The metro area also has a Joint-Use Task Force comprised of staff level representatives from city and county agencies that have a stake in joint use opportunities. These models have been successful at improving communication flow and developing joint-use agreements between schools and parks, libraries and schools, and even joint-use of a local transit center and school.

4. EXPAND COUNTY PLANNING CAPACITY

Union County has not had adequate capacity to plan for the wave of growth that the County experienced over the last decade. Counties of similar size with less development activity typically have staff capacity that is two or three times the size of Union County's Planning Department staff. Although development has decreased significantly as a result of the national economic downturn of 2008, it is expected that development in Union County will begin again and planning capacity will be needed to coordinate countywide planning efforts, manage development applications, and oversee implementation of the actions outlined in this Plan.

In addition, the County needs to play a stronger role in coordinating transportation planning countywide. Historically, counties in North Carolina have not been involved in the development and maintenance of transportation systems in their jurisdictions. Changing conditions, including the reduction in federal and state funds for transportation planning and improvements necessitate that local governments take a larger role in transportation planning if local goals are to be met. Union County should play an important role in coordinating planning efforts for roadways that cross multiple jurisdictions and two transportation planning areas (MUMPO and RRRPO). To date, the County does not employ staff to undertake transportation planning. Several jurisdictions have taken the reins and initiated a planning process for a high traffic local area in the County – the western Union County Local Area Regional Transportation Plan (LARTP). The County should assist and coordinate similar efforts in the future. This level of planning can identify county-wide priorities for transportation improvements and focus public resources appropriately.

Timeline: Expand Capacity within 2 years of Plan Adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

An evaluation of staffing needs is required to fully gauge the needs of the department. The County should consider the number of staff needed to manage current development review, long-range planning (i.e., corridor planning efforts, management of special projects, such as the update to the development ordinance, and transportation planning.) Specific transportation planning strategies to be undertaken by new staff should include both roadway planning, as well as alternative modes such as bus, greenways/trails, and bicycle routes. Planning efforts should focus on coordinating multiple jurisdictions and joint planning efforts. Long-term, the County should develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that addresses multiple modes to link jurisdictions and areas of interest.

5. DEVELOP A MECHANISM FOR JOINT PLANNING IN AREAS OF INTEREST

Municipal representatives in Union County have been involved in the development of the County's Comprehensive Plan. They recognize the importance of planning at the edges of their communities and how development in the unincorporated areas at community borders can impact their towns. The Union County Comprehensive Plan was developed with this concern in mind, and addresses the plans of the fourteen municipalities in Union County. Looking long-term, it is critical for the towns and the County to work side-by-side to plan for development in areas of common interest – the unincorporated lands located at the perimeter of corporate limits. The County should develop a formal mechanism to work with the municipalities to share information and discuss potential developments within areas of interest.

Timeline: Initiate process to develop joint planning mechanism within 2 years of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

Joint planning mechanisms can range from sharing information about development projects to sharing development approval authority with the municipalities. Reaching agreement on the specifics of how the County and towns will work together to plan for development in areas of joint interest will take time to work through. Agreements that are reached should be formalized through inter-governmental agreement documents.

6. DEVELOP THE MONROE CONNECTOR/BYPASS CORRIDOR PLAN

Development of the Monroe Connector/Bypass (i.e., US-74 Bypass) will open many doors for new commerce in Union County. Ensuring cohesive development at key nodes in the corridor, appropriate design guidelines for future development, and traffic flow in the corridor will require coordination with multiple jurisdictions in the County, including the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, the governments of Stallings, Hemby Bridge, Lake Park, Indian Trail, Unionville, Monroe, Wingate, and Marshville, the Partnership for Progress, and other entities. The County should undertake and lead development of a plan for this corridor and should engage these entities to develop strategies to coordinate land use planning, infrastructure improvements, and design regulations for lands in the corridor.

Timeline: Initiate plan within 3 years of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

Land use planning within the corridor should be guided by the adopted county Future Land Use Plan and the land use plans of the municipalities, but should be flexible in addressing new conditions and opportunities that arise during the corridor planning process.

7. DEVELOP THE US-74 CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PLAN

Development of the Monroe Connector/Bypass (i.e., US-74 Bypass) will divert much traffic from the current US-74 corridor and provide new opportunities for redevelopment. Planning efforts should be undertaken to identify a new vision for the US-74 corridor and ensure the development potential in this corridor is maximized. The County should undertake and lead development of a plan for the revitalization of this corridor and should engage the municipalities along the corridor to develop strategies for coordinating land use planning, infrastructure improvements, and design regulations for lands in the corridor.

Timeline: Initiate plan within 4 years of plan adoption
Entity Responsible: Union County Planning Department

Similar to the proposed plan for the new bypass, land use planning within the US-74 corridor should be guided by the adopted County Future Land Use Plan and the land use plans of the municipalities, but should be flexible in addressing new conditions and opportunities that arise during the corridor planning process.

Remaining Implementation Actions

Remaining strategies have been organized by the type of action: Planning Initiative (PI), New Policy (NP), Infrastructure Improvements (II), Education and Outreach (EO), and Coordination/Collaboration (CC). The timeline for initiating actions is identified for each action and follows the following timeline:

- **Ongoing** – action is currently underway and should be continued
- **Short Term** – action should be initiated within 1 year of Plan adoption
- **Medium Term** – action should be initiated within 3 years of Plan adoption
- **Long Term** – action should be initiated within 5 years of Plan adoption

Entities responsible for initiating actions are also outlined.

Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
<i>Planning Initiatives (PI)</i>		
PI-1: Develop an inventory of existing land use county-wide. The inventory should be linked to the development permitting system so that it can be updated over time. This information will help inform future planning efforts, particularly assessments of land use and development capacity.	Ongoing	Union County Planning
PI-2: Working with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and the Union County Farm Bureau, develop a Union County Farmland Preservation Plan.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
PI-3: Conduct a county-wide assessment of housing stock to identify any housing gaps in the County, such as workforce housing, starter homes, or senior housing facilities. The purpose of this assessment is to identify housing types that are in need in the County and to ultimately change policies to facilitate development of these units.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
PI-4: Working with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and the Union County Farm Bureau, conduct an assessment to identify prime agricultural lands in the County. These lands should be the focus for future preservation efforts.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
PI-5: Develop a plan for a future rail corridor to extend into Union County. The plan should include specific strategies to reserve public right-of-way for the future corridor.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
PI-6: Update the County's inventory (both in GIS and in text form) of all (public and private) parks, recreational facilities, trails, and greenways in Union County. This inventory can help provide critical data for developing a plan for an interconnected system of greenways and trails, including development of the Carolina Thread Trail in the County.	Long Term	Union County Planning and Parks and Recreation
PI-7: Develop an inventory of scenic corridors in the County. This information can be used to inform future rural preservation efforts.	Long Term	Union County Planning
<i>New Policy (NP)</i>		
NP-1: Update the Union County 5-year Capital Improvement Plan to reflect the planned improvements set out in the updated Utilities Master Plan, the Union County Parks and Recreation Master Plans, plans for public safety capital improvements, and other relevant County capital improvement plans.	Ongoing	Union County Finance in coordination with other relevant departments
NP-2: Explore opportunities (such as irrigation and industrial use) to use recycled gray water to further reduce public potable water consumption.	Short Term	Union County Public Works
NP-3: To provide additional opportunities for statewide funding assistance to local farming operations.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
<i>Infrastructure Improvements (II)</i>		
II-1: Per the recommendations of the Union County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, plan for and develop a northern regional park.	Short Term	Union County Parks and Recreation

Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
II-2: Plan for and develop the South Western Union County Library.	Medium Term	Union County Library
II-3: To address safety conditions on roads shared by local traffic and farming equipment, provide additional road signage to alert drivers of potential driving conditions on the road. Focus efforts on the south US-601 corridor.	Medium Term	Union County Planning
II-4: Identify additional opportunities for public park and ride lots in the US-74 corridor, and other corridors, to facilitate commuter use of transit. Plan for and develop lots and include needed amenities at lots, including bus shelters, lighting, benches, etc.	Long Term	Union County Planning
<i>Education and Outreach (EO)</i>		
EO-1: Develop educational materials to distribute to County residents regarding the need for and benefits of alternative water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting, gray water recycling, reducing irrigation practices, and the like.	Ongoing	Union County Public Works
EO-2: Develop an outreach campaign to educate residents and businesses on the importance of achieving EPA ozone attainment in Union County and the ways that individuals can contribute to improved air quality for the County and region.	Ongoing	Union County Health
<i>Coordination/Collaboration (CC)</i>		
CC-1: In coordination with the fourteen municipalities, create a coordinated strategy for advocating for transportation improvements and planning initiatives. Communicate these county-wide priorities to MUMPO and RRRPO.	Ongoing	Union County Planning
CC-2: Support the efforts to develop the Carolina Thread Trail in Union County and coordinate greenway planning efforts county-wide to link with the regional trail.	Ongoing	Union County Parks and Recreation
CC-3: Continue to conduct quarterly meetings of the Mayors-Commissioners Issues Conference (MCIC) and monthly County Manager meetings with municipal managers, administrators, and clerks to coordinate planning efforts county-wide.	Ongoing	Union County Manager
CC-4: Conduct "State of the County" Summits every year or two years to bring together community leaders to discuss priority community issues.	Ongoing	Union County Manager
CC-5: Work with the economic development agencies to facilitate development of priority industrial and business park development projects. This may include coordination with relevant municipalities and the Union County Public Works Department to address infrastructure and zoning needs.	Ongoing	Union County Manager
CC-6: Working with the economic development agencies, encourage local employers to provide incentives to employees that use public transit and alternative commuting modes to alleviate congestion on the County's roadways.	Medium Term	Union County Planning



APPENDIX A: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

This summary presents the background content with which the plan and its policies were developed. The summary reflects conditions in the County when the plan was being drafted (2007-2010). Conditions, trends, and dynamics contained in this appendix include:

- Location and Context;
- History of Union County;
- Population and Growth;
- Housing and Neighborhoods
- Land Use Patterns and Projections;
- Economy;
- Transportation;
- Environment and Natural Resources;
- Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation;
- Historic Sites and Landmarks;
- Infrastructure and Services; and
- Education and Libraries.

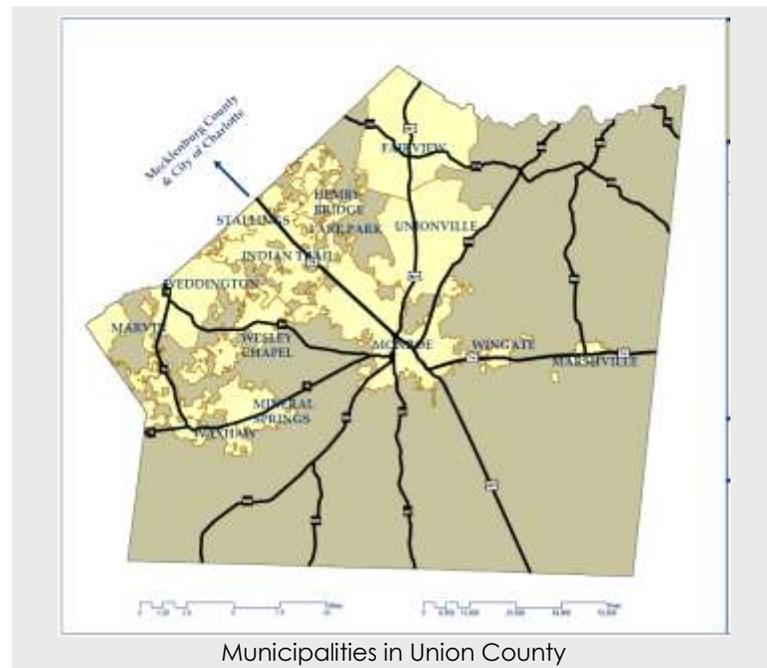


Union County, North Carolina

Location and Context

Union County is an area of 409,244 acres (639 sq.mi.) located on the border of South Carolina, just 15 miles southeast of Charlotte, North Carolina along US-74. Union County contains fourteen incorporated communities. These municipalities include:

- Fairview
- Hemby Bridge
- Indian Trail
- Lake Park
- Marshville
- Marvin
- Mineral Springs
- Monroe
- Stallings



Municipalities in Union County

- Unionville
- Waxhaw
- Weddington
- Wesley Chapel
- Wingate

History of Union County

From its early days as a Waxhaw Indian settlement, Union County has grown into a busy suburban-rural county, filled with opportunities. The original inhabitants, the Waxhaw Indians, a tribe of the Catawba Nation, were besieged by an epidemic of smallpox which almost annihilated the tribe in 1741. What few survivors were left joined other tribes. It wasn't until about 1750 that the area became settled by emigrants arriving from Pennsylvania and from Germany, England, Wales, and Scotland. Since the land was well suited to farming, new communities grew and prospered.

Although the area was a hotbed of patriot support, Union County settlers were not disturbed by the events of the Revolutionary War. They continued to farm and enjoy the rural qualities of the area.

Union County was founded in 1842, when the land area was divided between Mecklenburg and Anson counties to form a new county, the name of the county, "Union", was chosen as a compromise between the Whigs and the Democrats because the County was a union of parts of the two other counties. In 1843 the first County Board of Commissioners founded the county seat in Monroe. The City of Monroe was named for James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States.

The settlers developed a self-sufficient agricultural economy that eventually evolved into a specialized crop economy that was dependent upon cotton, after the invention of the cotton gin. Cotton was the primary cash crop in the County until settlers became concerned that they should diversify in the 1920's as a hedge against a sagging cotton market and to preserve the topsoil in the region. Cotton remained the major cash crop until the 1950's and has recently made a resurgence.

As time passed, the County acquired more and more businesses: movie theaters, a school system, Wingate College (now Wingate University), restaurants, motels, the Union Regional Medical Center (CMC Union) etc. By the 1960s the County began to grow as Mecklenburg County residents discovered the County's pleasant lifestyle and sought refuge from more urban areas.

By 1975, the County was the top producer of poultry (chickens and turkeys) and eggs in North Carolina. Other agricultural products produced in the County include mixed grains, cotton, hay, milo, swine, broilers, grains, dairy cattle, and dairy goods.



Disease and conflicts had all but wiped out the Waxhaw Indian tribe by 1741.



Photos courtesy of the Museum of the Waxhaws:
www.museumofthewaxhaws.com/

In 1998 over 1200 businesses were located in the County, with a labor force of 50,460, out of a population of 101,000. Among the major industries were the production of processed foods, plastic pipe, plastic fittings, crushed stone and clay products, metal products, furniture, and textiles.

Union County has been identified as one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina and the 18th fastest growing County in the nation. The County has seen its highest residential growth rate over the last decade, adding almost 75,000 new people to the County, most of which have settled in western Union County. While still maintaining a strong agricultural economy, the County has become home to many commercial retail and personal service businesses that serve its new residents. The County's population is estimated to have grown to more than 198,000 in 2009 and has a labor force exceeding 70,000. With assets such as the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, the Union Regional Medical Center (CMC Union), and South Piedmont Community College, Union County has become a premier location for business in the Charlotte region.

Population and Growth

POPULATION

The population of Union County was estimated at 198,645 people in 2009, a 60.6% increase from 2000¹. The County has grown steadily for the past several decades, with the majority of the growth occurring in its cities, towns, and villages. Table A-1 Summary of county-wide Growth Trends details population growth in Union County, its municipalities, and compares them to overall growth in North Carolina.

Table A-1: Summary of County-wide Growth Trends

Municipality	1970	1980	% Change 1970-1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Indian Trail	405	811	100.25%	1,942	139.46%	11,905	513.03%
Lake Park*						2,093	n/a
Marshville	1,405	2,011	43.13%	2,160	7.41%	2,360	9.26%
Marvin*						1,039	n/a
Monroe	11,282	12,639	12.03%	16,385	29.64%	26,228	60.07%
Stallings	726	1,826	151.52%	2,152	17.85%	3,189	48.19%
Waxhaw	1,248	1,208	-3.21%	1,294	7.12%	2,625	102.86%
Weddington		848		3,803	348.47%	6,696	76.07%
Wingate	2,569	2,615	1.79%	2,821	7.88%	2,406	-14.71%
Union County	54,714	70,436	28.73%	84,210	19.56%	123,677	46.87%
North Carolina	5,084,411	5,880,095	15.65%	6,632,448	12.79%	8,049,313	21.36%

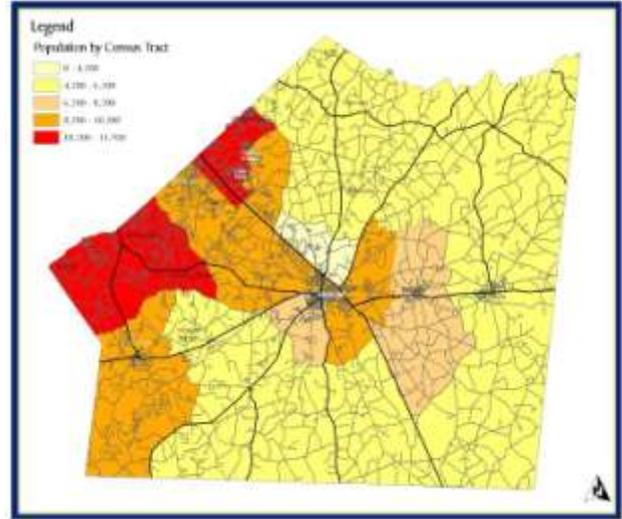
Source: 2000 US Census and the Union County Land Use Plan (1998)

* Note: historic population information is not available for these newly incorporated communities.

¹ Source: ESRI estimates.

POPULATION DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION

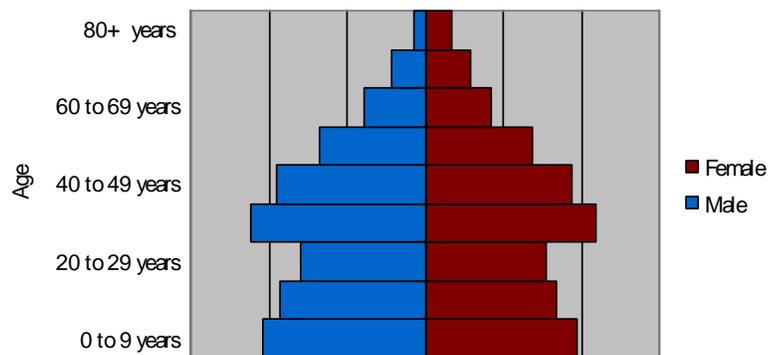
Union County has always been an agricultural community. While this remains true today, the percent of the total population living in the unincorporated County has declined slowly, from 69% in 1970 to 32% in 2008. The majority of the growth in the County has occurred in western portions closest to the Charlotte metropolitan area. This portion of the County has added three communities in the past few decades to accommodate this growth: the Village of Lake Park, the Village of Marvin, and the Town of Weddington. At the same time, eastern communities of Wingate and Marshville have experienced comparatively slower, and sometimes negative, growth rates.



POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION

The population of the County is relatively young, with a median age of 33.4 years – lower than the state (36.6) and the U.S. as a whole (36.4). The youngest community in the County is Monroe, with a median age of 31.8 years. The gender split is almost equal, with a slightly larger young male population and slightly older senior female population.

Distribution of Gender by Age Group



RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2008), Union County is predominantly White (84.8%) with Black/African American the next largest racial group (12.2%). The percentage of people of Hispanic/Latino origins was 10.1%. The percentage of Black/African Americans has decreased over the past few decades from 16.7% in 1980 to 15.9% in 1990 and dropped to just above 12% by 2008.

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Union County has experienced intense growth impacts from its geographic closeness to Charlotte, the hub of the twelve county Metrolina area. The average compounded annual growth rate for the County over the past 39 years (1970-2009) was 3.36% growth per year. The highest rate occurred in 2000-2009 when the County grew an average of 5.41% each year. This growth occurred after a decade of high growth with a compounded annual growth rate of 3.92% from 1990-2000. The projections listed in

Table A-2, show population forecasts for Union County that were prepared using an evaluation of previous population trends, local real estate market analysis, and discussions with County staff and local real estate and economic development professionals.

Table A-2: Union County Population Projections

Period	Forecast	Change from Previous Period	
		%Change	Number
2009	198,645*		
2010	203,913	2.7%	5,268
2015	230,345	12.9%	26,432
2020	266,447	15.6%	36,102
2009-2020		34.1%	67,802

Source: Land Matters, Warren & Associates, August, 2008.

* This estimate is as of April, 2010.

Housing and Neighborhoods

TOTAL HOUSING AND MIX

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, the housing stock of Union County was predominantly single-family (83.3%), with mobile homes (10.5%) and multi-family (6.2%) dwellings comprising the remaining housing stock. The County issued 25,757 residential building permits between 2000 and 2009, peaking in 2005-2006 when nearly 8,000 permits were issued. Nearly all of these (98.1%) were for single-family units; only 1.9% of the permits were for multi-family development. According to ESRI, Union County added 23,808 households (occupied housing units) between 2000 and 2008. The resulting 54.9% growth rate was higher than the previous decade's 48.1%, and was nearly double that of the Charlotte MSA (28.5%). Union County's 67,198 total households in 2008 comprised 10.2% of the MSA, up from 8.5% in 2000.

HOME OCCUPANCY

According to ESRI, between 2000 and 2007, the percentage of owner-occupied housing units increased from 76.5% to 77.2%, while renter-occupied housing units decreased from 18.5% to 17.6%. There were 1,165 more vacant housing units in 2007 than in 2000, but given construction of new units in that same time period, this only represents a 0.2% increase in the share of the total.

HOUSING AGE AND QUALITY

The median year of construction for owner occupied houses is 1986. The median year of construction for renter occupied houses is 1975. Less than 2% of all housing types lack complete plumbing facilities or kitchen facilities.

HOUSING PRICES AND AFFORDABILITY

In 2000, the average cost of a home was \$128,500 and the average rental cost was \$587.

Land Use Patterns and Projections

EXISTING LAND USE

Sixty-nine percent of the entire County is unincorporated. The majority (61%) of all land in the County is agricultural and is concentrated in the unincorporated areas (66.8%). Approximately 31% of the County is used for residential purposes; 27.1% of lands in the unincorporated portions of the county are residential. The majority of very low density residential uses and mobile homes are found in the unincorporated County while most higher-density residential uses (multi-family and group housing) are within incorporated communities. The majority of employment and commercial uses are located in incorporated communities while more than half (63.9%) of the County's vacant land is in unincorporated areas.

Table A-3: Summary of Existing Land Use

Land Use	Unincorp. Total	% Unincorp.	Total County	% Total County
Agricultural				
Reserved Agriculture	38,486	13.6%	55,652	13.6%
Undeveloped Rural/Agriculture	20,097	7.1%	30,688	7.5%
Improved Agriculture (Structures)	130,265	46.1%	163,288	40.0%
<i>Agricultural Subtotal</i>	<i>188,830</i>	<i>66.8%</i>	<i>249,628</i>	<i>61.0%</i>
Residential				
Single-Family Residential (Large lot 100+ acres)	4,460	1.6%	6,043	1.5%
Single-Family Residential Estate (20-99 acres)	21,762	7.7%	27,828	6.8%
Single-Family Residential (5-20 acres)	24,359	8.6%	36,294	8.9%
Single-Family Residential (less than 5 acres)	25,304	8.9%	53,201	13.0%
Multi-Family Residential	271	0.1%	1,394	0.3%
Group or Other Housing	43	0.0%	126	0.0%
Mobile Homes	460	0.2%	552	0.1%
<i>Residential Subtotal</i>	<i>76,659</i>	<i>27.1%</i>	<i>125,438</i>	<i>30.7%</i>
Non Residential				
Commercial	514	0.2%	2,526	0.6%
Industrial	1,482	0.5%	5,606	1.4%
Office	58	0.0%	675	0.2%
<i>Non-Residential Subtotal</i>	<i>2,054</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>8,807</i>	<i>2.2%</i>
Other				
Civic/Institutional	1,173	0.4%	2,668	0.7%
Vacant Lots	12,413	4.4%	20,738	5.1%
Parks Recreation & Open Space	1,349	0.5%	1,965	0.5%
<i>Other Subtotal</i>	<i>14,935</i>	<i>5.3%</i>	<i>25,371</i>	<i>6.2%</i>
Total	282,478	100.0%	409,244	100.0%

Source: Union County Tax Assessor Records, Clarion Associates, 2010

EXISTING ZONING

The County is currently zoned predominantly agricultural (91.11%). The second largest category is land zoned for residential purposes (7.74%) the majority of which is low density single-family residential development. Business and employment uses comprise the remaining 1.15%.

Table A-4: Zoning of Unincorporated Lands in Union County, 2010

Zone District	Total Acres	% Total
Agricultural		
RA-40	251,352.1	88.98%
RA-20	6,022.4	2.13%
<i>Agricultural Subtotal</i>	<i>257,374.5</i>	<i>91.11%</i>
Residential		
R-40	13,452.0	4.76%
R-20	7,662.3	2.71%
R-10	147.7	0.05%
R-8	266.6	0.10%
R-6	325.3	0.12%
<i>Residential Subtotal</i>	<i>21,853.9</i>	<i>7.74%</i>
Non-Residential		
B-2	129.1	0.05%
B-4	405.6	0.14%
B-6	0.0	0.0%
LI	1,002.0	0.36%
HI	288.0	0.10%
HC	1,424.9	0.50%
<i>Non-Residential Subtotal</i>	<i>3,249.6</i>	<i>1.15%</i>
Grand Total	282,478.0	100.00%

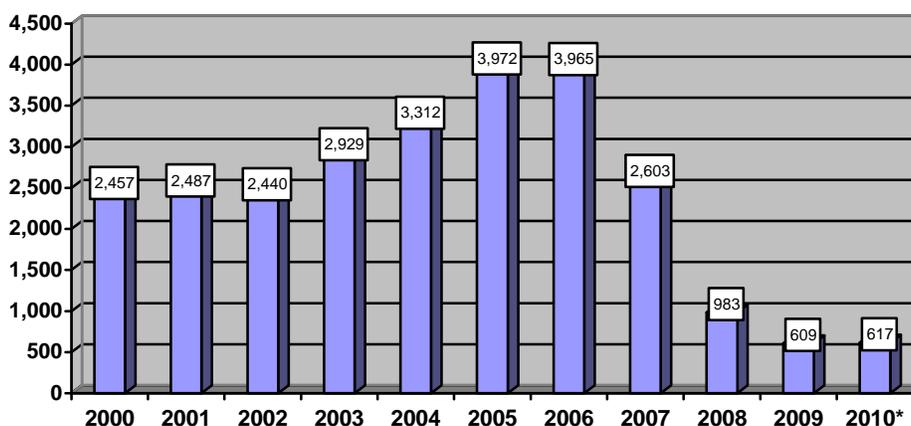
Source: Union County GIS, Clarion Associates, 2010

NEW DEVELOPMENT

Residential Development Activity

Between 2000 and 2009, the number of residential building permits issued in Union County averaged slightly more than 2,500 per year. However, based on 2010 year-to-date data, only 617 annual residential permits are expected. This continuing decline results in a 2000-2010 annual average of about 2,400 residential permits. The decrease in permitting during the last four years is a result of water/sewer infrastructure capacity issues and the downturn in the national and regional housing markets.

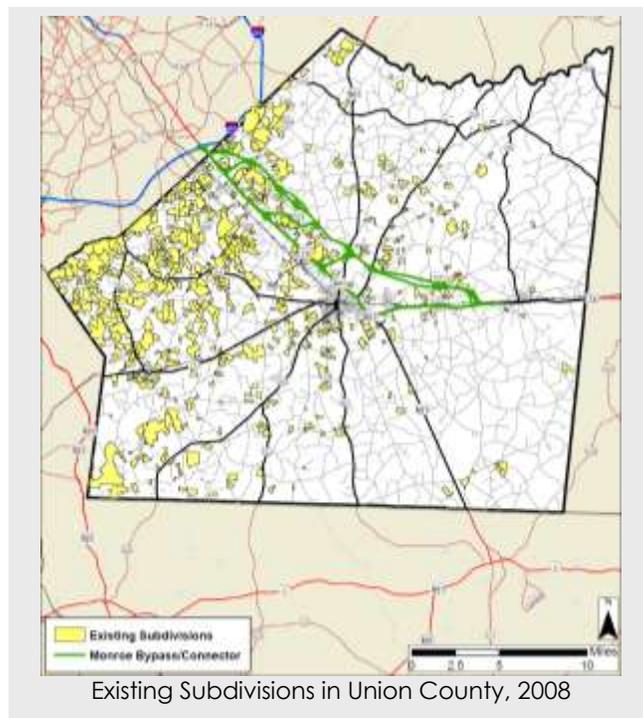
Residential Building Permit, Union County (*through July 2010)



According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 98% of the 25,757 residential permits issued between 2000 and 2009 were for single-family detached dwellings. The multi-family category, with 2% of the total, includes any attached units such as duplexes, apartments, townhouses, and condominiums. Mobile homes are included in the single-family category.

Approved Subdivisions

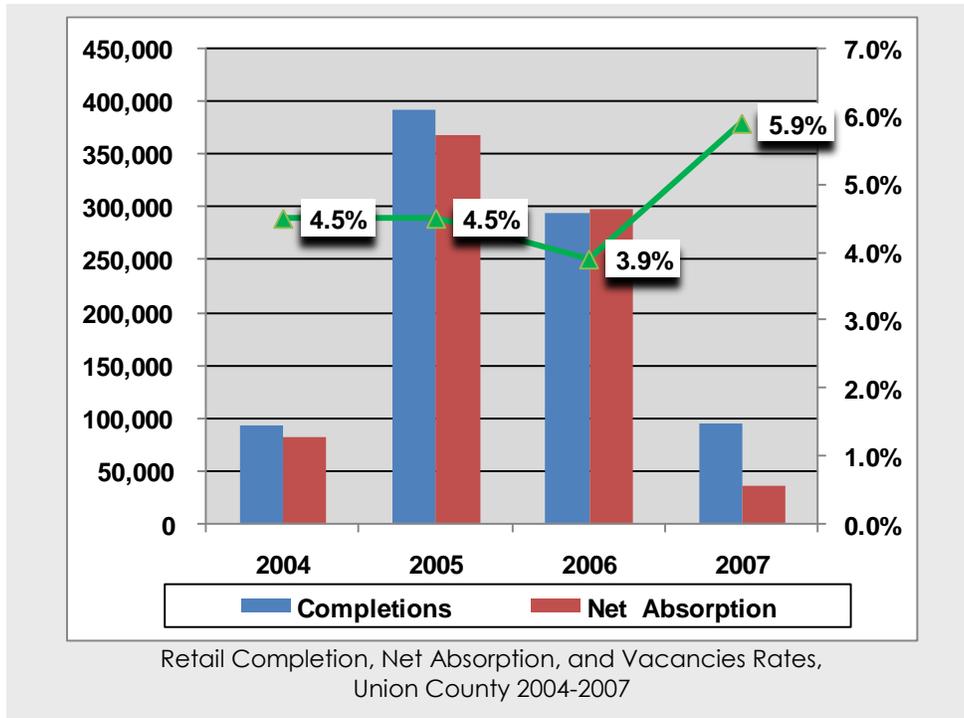
There are 30,773 total lots in Union County subdivisions that have yet to build-out (at least one remaining undeveloped lot). As of May 2008, nearly 18,000 lots, or more than 58%, were still undeveloped. Based on input from Land Matters and Union County, 93% of the lots should have sewer or septic service available. A total of 11,373 of the remaining lots are in the fastest-growing part of the County – the central western portion of the County. The map to the right shows the distribution of Union County's existing subdivisions, including both completed and under development projects.



RETAIL

A total of 869,752 square feet of multi-tenant retail space was completed in Union County between 2003 and 2007. Only 781,953 square feet were absorbed, resulting in an over supply of 87,799 square feet at the end of 2007. Most of the available space is concentrated in older centers along US 74 in Monroe. Demand has been stronger in newer centers serving rapidly growing western Union County.

The graph below indicates how the supply and demand trends have impacted retail vacancy rates in Union County between 2004 and 2007. Although the vacancy rate increased from 3.9% in 2006 to 5.9% in 2007, it was almost equivalent to the six-county Charlotte region's vacancy rate of 5.7% at the end of 2007.



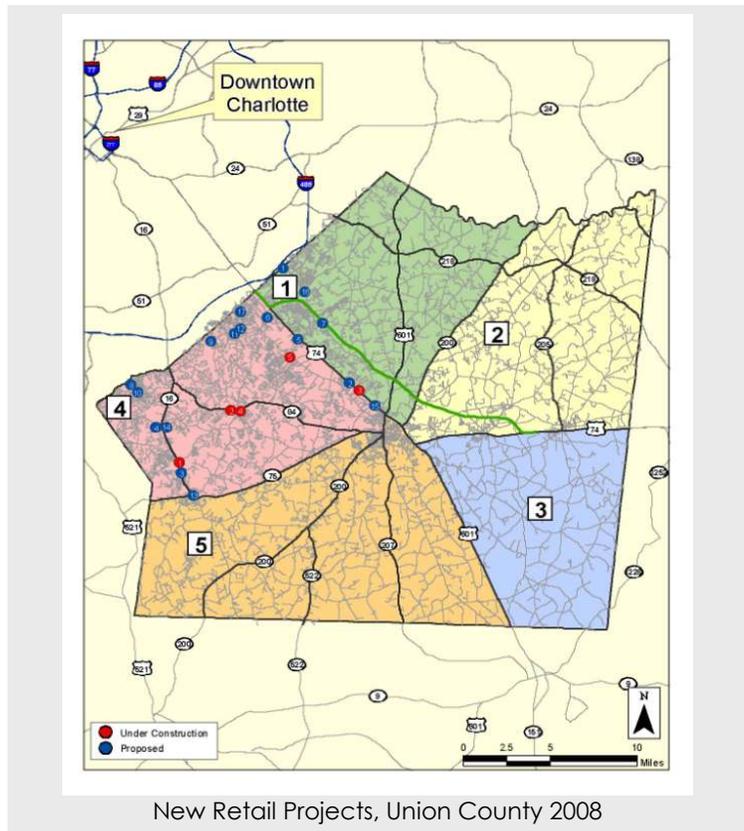
As of May 2008, Union County had five projects totaling more than 1 million square feet of multi-tenant retail space under construction and another 3.1 million square feet proposed in 17 projects. About 73% of the space under construction is located at Cureton in Waxhaw and Village Commons II in Wesley Chapel. Almost half (46%) of the proposed space is located at Idlewild Village in Stallings and Secret Place in Monroe. Because of the sluggish economy, construction of the 800,000-square-foot Idlewild Village project has been delayed until 2010. The table and map on the following page identify these projects.

Table A-5: Retail Projects Under Construction or Proposed in Union County, 2008*

Map Key	Commercial Project	Location	Status	Square Feet		Jurisdiction
1	Cureton	Providence/Cuthbertson roads	U.C.	419,750		Waxhaw
2	Village Commons II	NC-84/Waxhaw Indian Trail Rd.	U.C.	365,000		Wesley Chapel
3	The Park at Monroe	US-74/Wellness Blvd.	U.C.	140,000		Monroe
4	Shops at Wesley Chapel	Weddington/Waxhaw Indian Trail roads	U.C.	125,000		Wesley Chapel
5	Sun Valley Commons	6601 Old Charlotte Highway	U.C.	20,889		Indian Trail
Subtotal				1,070,639		
1	Idlewild Village	I-485/Idlewild Rd.	Prop.	800,000		Stallings
2	Secrest Place	US-74/Secrest Price Rd.	Prop.	650,000		Monroe
3	Prescott Village	Providence/Pine Oak roads	Prop.	260,000		Waxhaw
4	New Town Gardens	Providence/New Town roads	Prop.	260,000		Waxhaw
5	Union Towne Center II	Faith Church Rd./US-74	Prop.	200,000		Indian Trail
6	Town Center Project	Indian Trail Rd.	Prop.	140,000		Indian Trail
7	Stinson's Crossing	Secrest Shortcut/Unionville-Indian Trail roads	Prop.	140,000		Indian Trail
8	Raley-Miller Site	Rea/Tom Short roads	Prop.	120,000		Union County
9	Shoppes at Stallings	Antioch Church/Weddington-Matthews roads	Prop.	115,000		Stallings
10	Raley-Miller Site	Rea/Tom Short roads	Prop.	114,500		Union County
11	Austin Village	Chestnut Ln./Potter Rd.	Prop.	100,000		Stallings
12	The Grove	Potters Road/Chestnut Lane	Prop.	88,485		Stallings
13	Jackson Station	NC-16/NC-75	Prop.	50,000		Waxhaw
14	New Town Market II	NC-16/New Town Rd.	Prop.	39,580		Union County
15	Rolling Hills C.C. Area	2626 US-74	Prop.	26,400		Monroe
16	Shoppes at Idlewild Commons	Idlewild Commons/Mill Grove roads	Prop.	24,000		Hemby Bridge
17	Stallings Village	Old Monroe/Stallings roads	Prop.	13,900		Stallings
Subtotal				3,141,865		
Total				4,212,504		

Sources: Union County, Union County Municipalities, Warren & Associates

* Note for Table A-5: The retail project information provided in Table A-5 was collected by Warren and Associates in May 2008. With help from the Land Use Administrator for Union County, a comprehensive list of commercial activity in Union County was compiled. From this list, Table A-5 includes the entitled, multi-tenant, retail projects of at least 10,000 square feet as of May 2008. These numbers were cross checked with data from the Karnes Research Company, a local firm that tracks retail development activity in Union County. Site visits were also conducted to field check the data as well as consultations with brokers to confirm this data.



INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS PARKS

According to the Union County Partnership for Progress, there are eight competitive industrial/business parks with remaining acreage in Union County. These parks contain more than 1,500 acres, 420 of which are still available for development.

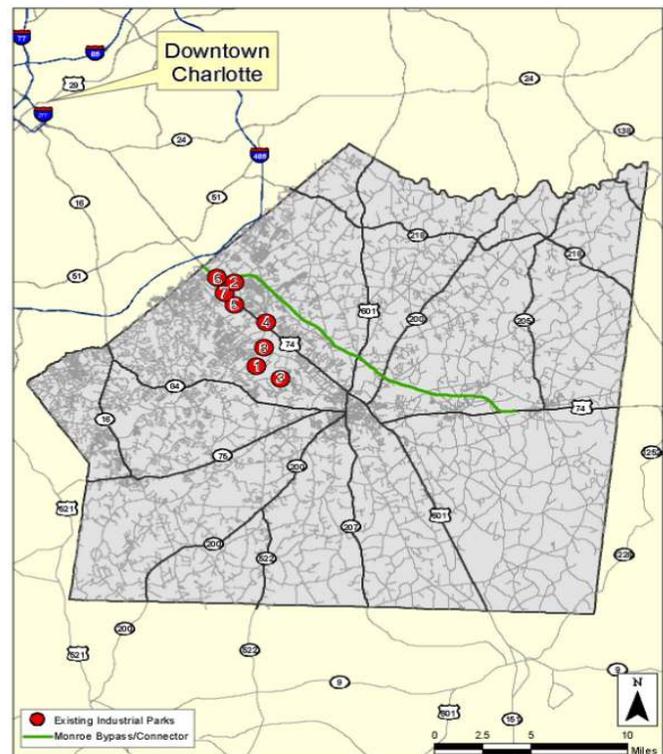
Table A-6: Industrial/Business Parks in Union County, 2008

Map Key	Industrial/Business Park	Location	Total Acres	Remaining Acres	% Acres Remaining
1	Monroe Corporate Center	Airport Rd./Corporate Center Dr.	500	250	50.0%
2	Old Hickory Business Park	Indian Trail-Fairview Rd./Stinson-Hartis Rd.	270	60	22.2%
3	AeroPointe Industrial Centre	N. Rocky River Rd./Goldmine Rd.	80	45	56.3%
4	Industrial Ventures I&II	US-74/Gray Fox Rd.	380	23	6.1%
5	Indian Trail Industrial Park	Unionville-Indian Trail Rd./Corporate Blvd.	60	16	26.7%
6	Union West Business Park	US-74/Union West Blvd.	85	14	16.5%
7	Indian Trail Business Park	US-74/Corporate Blvd.	80	10	12.5%
8	Tower Industrial Park	Old Charlotte Rd./Tower Industrial Rd.	50	2	4.0%
Total			1,505	420	27.9%

Source: Union County Partnership for Progress

The 500-acre Monroe Corporate Center, which is located adjacent to the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, has the largest concentration of industry in Union County. Industrial Ventures I & II has only 23 of its 380 total acres still undeveloped along US-74 in Indian Trail. The 270-acre Old Hickory Business Park in Indian Trail has 60 acres remaining just north of US-74 along Indian Trail-Fairview Road.

As indicated on the map to the right the eight parks are concentrated along the US-74 corridor west of Monroe. With less than 28% of its competitive industrial/business park land remaining, it is essential that Union County identify new areas for employment growth.



Existing Industrial Parks, Union County 2008

DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Assessing development capacity provides information for planning purposes to be used when considering policy decisions related to land development and public infrastructure. An assessment of Union County's development capacity was conducted in 2008. It includes a multi-step process to determine the potential development capacity of the land in Union County, and is outlined below.

Step 1: Identify Existing Land Use Pattern

This analysis uses the records from the County Tax Administrator to assist in determining the existing land use in the entire county. This is the first step in identifying the land to consider for potential development capacity.

Step 2: Identifying Potential Development Areas

Using the existing land use classification, each parcel is placed in a development potential category. This is the point where land that is already developed and has little potential for intensification is removed from consideration, and the land that is most likely to develop in the future is identified. The following step further refines the pool of land considered for potential development capacity.

Step 3: Identify Potential Constraints to Development

There are many factors that can influence the maximum building yield in the County. This step identifies the presence of natural features that are protected such as, floodplains, soil conditions, and other protections placed on the land that either prevent the land from being developed or restrict the intensity of development.

Step 4: Assess Areas with Greatest Potential to Support Growth

Accessibility and availability of sewer and water services were examined to help rank the potential development areas from most to least likely to be developed. This step does not guarantee that the most likely area will develop first but is an exercise in assessing where growth could be best supported.

Existing Land Use and Potential Development Areas

Steps one and two of the process identify the current or existing land uses in the County, and then each land use category is assigned a development status. The land use categories and their development status are described below.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

This category identifies any land primarily dedicated to park or recreational uses or open space including but not limited to parks, open space set-asides in subdivisions, golf courses, and country clubs. This land is "built" or "developed". This land will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Reserved Agriculture

This category identifies the land included in the County's Land Use Value program. These parcels are recorded as active agricultural land and the land value is adjusted

based on agricultural use rather than market value for other development purposes. This land is "reserved" for agricultural uses through the terms of the program. This land will not be considered for short-term potential development capacity.

Undeveloped Rural/Agriculture

This category identifies parcels of land in excess of 5 acres which do not have any recorded built improvements. This land is "undeveloped," it will be considered for potential development capacity.

Improved Agriculture (Structures)

This category identifies parcels of land in excess of 5 acres that contain structures that are not classified by the Tax Administrator's office as other non-agriculture uses. This land is not included in the Land Use Value program. This land is "developed with potential for reuse or intensification," it will be considered for potential development capacity.

Single-Family Residential (Large Lot 100+ acres)

This category identifies parcels of land in excess of 100 acres that are classified by the Tax Administrator's office as single-family residences. This land is "developed with potential for reuse or intensification," it will be considered for potential development capacity.

Single-Family Residential Estate (20-99 acres)

This category identifies parcels of land ranging between 20 and 99 acres that Tax Administrator's office classifies as single-family residences. This land is "developed with potential for reuse or intensification," it will be considered for potential development capacity.

Single-Family Residential (5-20 acres)

This category identifies parcels of land under 20 acres that the Tax Administrator's office classifies as single-family residence. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Single-Family Residential (less than 5 acres)

This category identifies parcels of land under 5 acres that the Tax Administrator's office classifies as single-family residence. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Mobile Homes

This category identifies parcels of land primarily occupied by mobile homes. The location of mobile homes was based on the Tax Administrators use descriptions. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Multi-Family Residential

This category identifies parcels of land that the Tax Administrator's office classifies as apartments, condo, duplex, townhouse or triplex residence. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Vacant Lots

This category identifies parcels less than 5 acres that do not have a building or are classified by the Tax Administrator's office as single-family residential with no building. In many cases this includes undeveloped parcels in residential subdivisions, or approved subdivisions that are not yet built. This land is "undeveloped," it will be considered for potential development capacity, and given a high probability score due to its state of readiness for development. It will be assumed to be development in the pipeline and account for very short term capacity.

Group or Other Housing

This category identifies parcels primarily occupied by fraternity houses, dormitories, senior care facilities, other residential, nursing homes, and multiple residential retirement community. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Civic/Institutional

This category identifies parcels primarily occupied by churches, schools, public facilities such as fire stations, government buildings, university or other educational related uses, jails, libraries, museums, and post offices. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

Commercial

This category identifies parcels primarily occupied by a variety of retail, service, or commercial uses including but not limited to sales, auto services, and commercial recreation such as bowling alleys, gyms or health clubs, cinemas, shopping centers, markets, restaurants, hotels, salons, kennels, laundromats and others. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

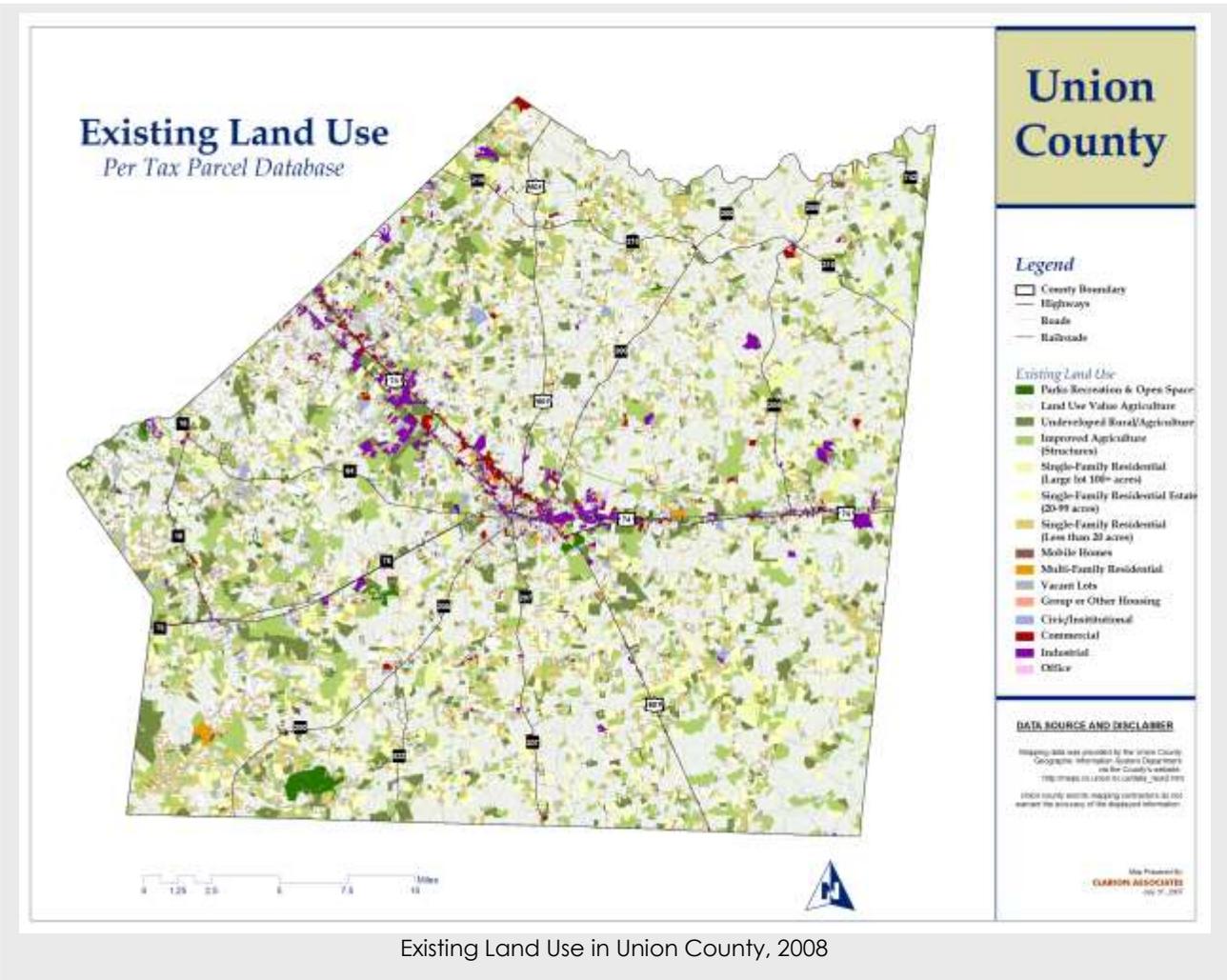
Industrial

This category identifies parcels primarily occupied by a variety of manufacturing, distribution, or warehousing uses. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

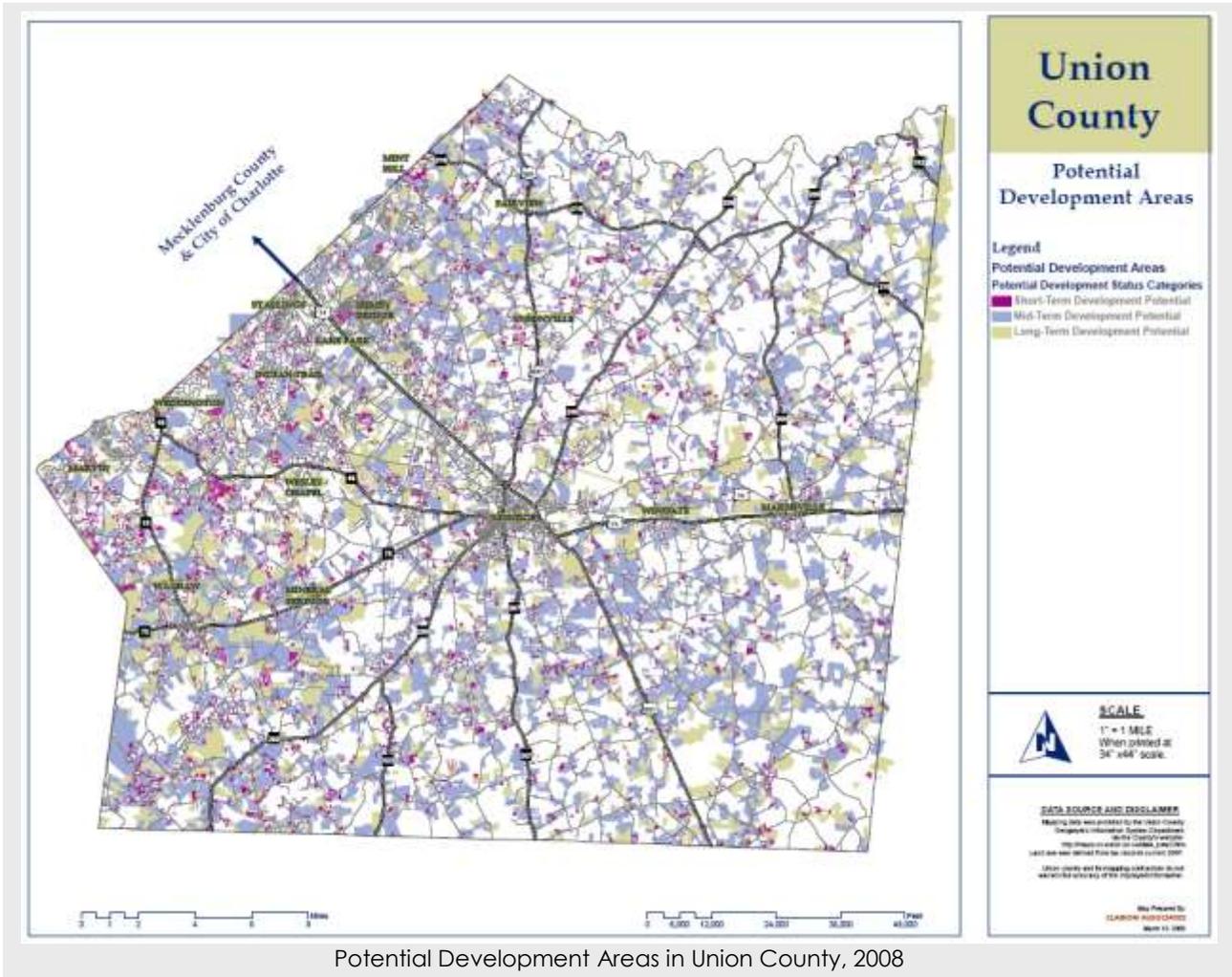
Office

This category identifies parcels primarily occupied by a variety of professional, financial and office services including medical, dental, hospitals, and banks. This land is "developed," it will not be considered for potential development capacity.

These lands are shown on the map on the following page titled, Existing Land Use. A full page map can be found in Appendix B.



The results of this analysis are shown on the map on the following page, Potential Development Areas. The analysis indicates that, of the 409,244 acres of land in Union County, 232,001 acres are developed and unlikely to change and 177,243 acres are potentially available for development. Looking at the unincorporated portions of the county, there are 282,478 acres of which 160,919 acres are developed or otherwise unavailable for development, leaving 121,559 acres available for development of some kind. Of those 121,559 acres of developable land in the unincorporated portions of the county, approximately 13,000 acres are classified as most ready at this point to accommodate new growth. Most of that land is in the western half of the County. Note: Please refer to pages 59-61 for the process of determining the Potential Development Areas.



Potential Development Areas in Union County, 2008

FUTURE NON-RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Appropriate locations for future retail and employment centers were identified within Union County. These locations were based on the following:

- Existing retail and employment centers
- Feedback from local economic development and commercial real estate professionals
- Residential and commercial trends/development activity
- Employment trends
- Proximity to rail service
- Planned transportation investments
- Planned infrastructure capacity improvements
- Municipal and County land use plans

Retail Growth

Most of the current retail development activity is located in western Union County where the majority of household growth is taking place. Much of the future expansion in retail will still be located in this area, particularly along the NC-16 and NC-84 corridors. The area's population growth, coupled with high household incomes is a natural attraction for neighborhood and community retailers.

The Monroe Connector/Bypass project north of US-74 is already drawing interest from the development community. It was recently approved as a North Carolina Turnpike Authority project, which should expedite the construction process. Currently, the project is planned to have eight interchanges in the following locations:

- I-485
- Stinson-Hartis Road
- Sardis Church Road
- Rocky River Road
- US-601
- NC-200
- Austin Chaney Road
- US-74

Future retail centers are suggested at the Rocky River Road and US-601 interchanges because of land availability, thoroughfare access, and proximity to residential development activity. Another center is proposed at Austin Chaney Road because of the potential for high-density residential surrounding the interchange and a planned employment center to the east.

In addition, the NC-218 corridor in Union County is expected to become more active with residential development following public utility service extensions. The highway also has an interchange with I-485 just west of the Mecklenburg County line. Both of these factors should cause spillover growth from Mint Hill and Charlotte. This will create retail demand that could be accommodated at the US-601 and NC-200 intersections.

Industrial Growth

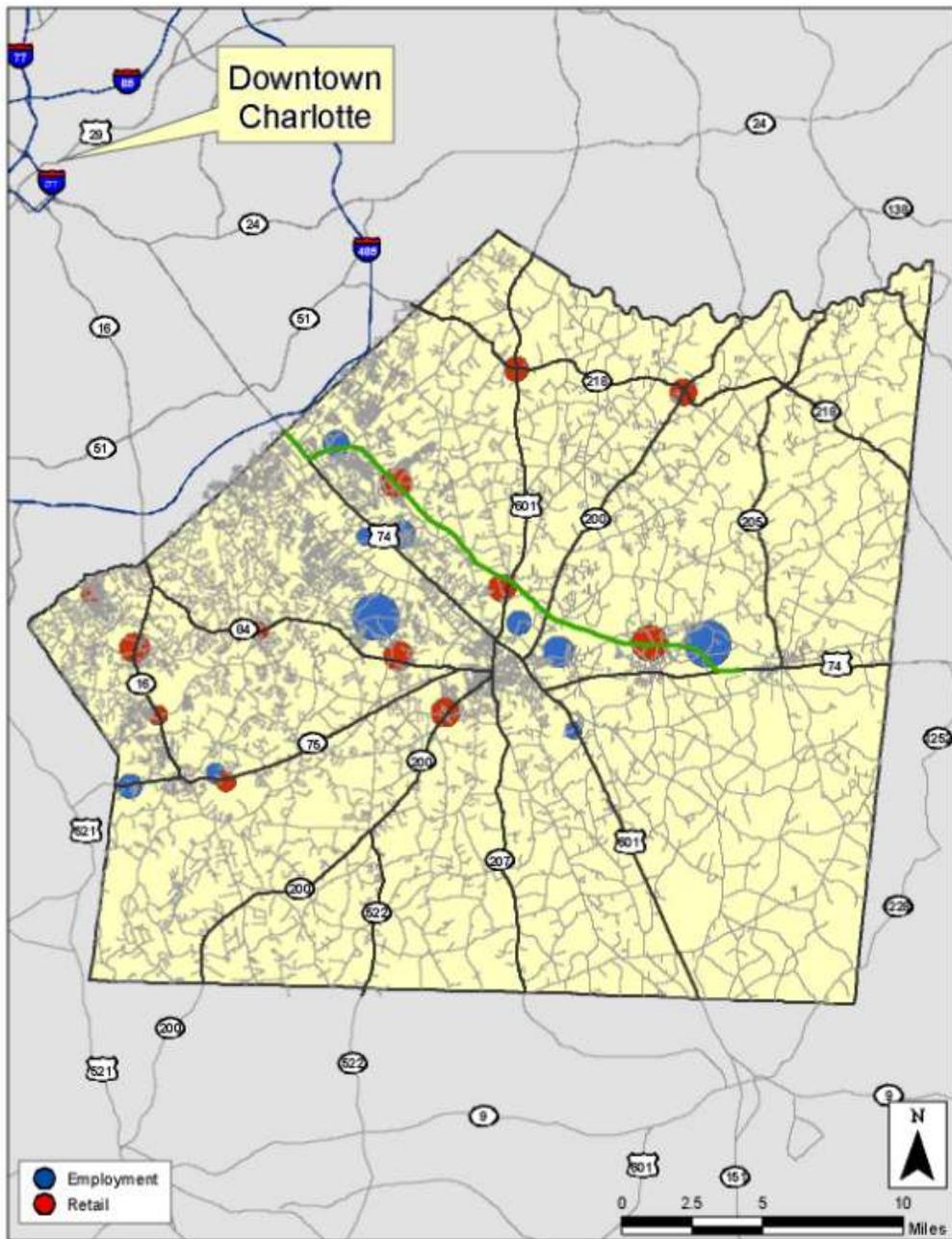
Based on the results of the industrial and office demand forecasts by Warren and Associates through 2020, additional industrial/business park land is required to maintain a competitive supply of sites for various uses. Market forces should dictate alternative locations for employment clusters as a result of improved transportation access/mobility, expanded infrastructure capacity, and lower land costs. Existing employment locations near the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, Old Hickory Business Park, and the US-74 corridor west of Monroe are encouraged to expand. New locations in Union County for employment growth include:

- NC-75 west of Mineral Springs
- Between US-601 and NC-200 north of US-74 and just south of the proposed Monroe Bypass
- Surrounding the US-74/Monroe Connector/Bypass Interchange between Wingate and Marshville
- The intersection of a potential southern bypass of Monroe and US-601 South (based on the adopted MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan)

While the continued development of existing employment centers provides opportunities for economies of scale in Union County, the recommended new employment centers primarily take advantage of planned transportation improvements. Opportunities for future corporate office space are recommended for the Monroe Connector/Bypass interchanges, US-74 corridor throughout the County, Old Hickory Business Park, and the two employment centers along the NC-75 corridor. Smaller, professional office parks could develop in conjunction with future retail centers, taking advantage of close proximity to residential clusters.

Industrial development is more likely to emerge near the expanding airport and along railroad lines and major highway corridors such as US-74, US-601, the Monroe Connector/Bypass, and to a lesser extent, NC-75. These centers could contain a combination of manufacturing and distribution uses.

The map on the following page identifies projected markets for future retail and industrial employment centers.



Projected Future Retail and Employment Centers,
Union County 2008

Economy

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Union County had 45,343 full-time jobs within its borders in 2000, representing 6.4% of the Charlotte MSA's 713,692 jobs and almost three percentage points below its share of MSA population. In 2006 that number rose to 54,116 full-time jobs and 7.3% of all jobs in the MSA. In that time (2000-2006), services surpassed manufacturing as the industry sector that employed the most workers in Union County. Also notable, the County added nearly 200 agriculture/mining workers, almost 30% of the Charlotte MSA. All of Union County's industries except retail trade and information comprised either the same or higher percentage of Charlotte MSA employment in 2006 than in 2000.

Table A-7: Employment by Industry, 2006

Industry	Union County	Charlotte MSA	County % of MSA
Agriculture & Mining	782	2,681	29.2%
Construction	8,917	52,392	17.0%
Manufacturing	11,515	73,213	15.7%
Wholesale Trade	2,797	43,676	6.4%
Retail Trade	5,154	81,883	6.3%
Transportation/Utilities	1,268	32,440	3.9%
Information	300	20,324	1.5%
F.I.R.E.	1,335	70,174	1.9%
Services	13,043	274,288	4.8%
Government	9,005	93,042	9.7%
Total	54,116	744,113	7.3%

Source: NCESC

Note: Mining and Utilities numbers not disclosed for Union County.

Table A-8: Employment by Industry, Union County, 2000-2006

Industry	2000	2006	Change	
			#	%
Agriculture & Mining	593	782	189	31.9%
Construction	7,276	8,917	1,641	22.6%
Manufacturing	13,125	11,515	-1,610	-12.3%
Wholesale Trade	2,082	2,797	715	34.3%
Retail Trade	5,040	5,154	114	2.3%
Transportation/Utilities	1,350	1,268	-82	-6.1%
Information	403	300	-103	-25.6%
F.I.R.E.	855	1,335	480	56.1%
Services	8,392	13,043	4,651	55.4%
Government	6,227	9,005	2,778	44.6%
Total	45,343	54,116	8,773	7.3%

Source: NCESC

Note: Mining and Utilities numbers not disclosed for Union County.

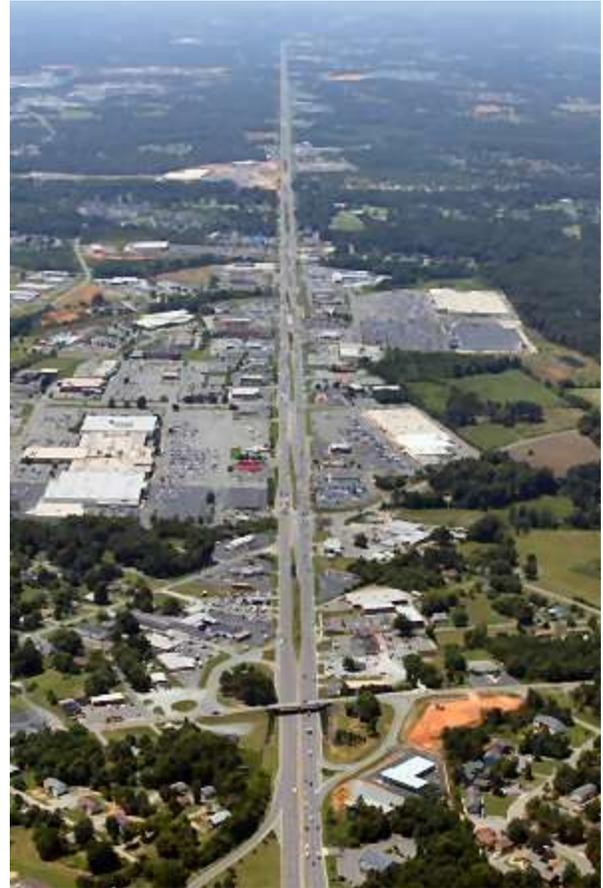
LOCATIONS OF MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Major Employment Nodes

Eight business/industrial parks are located in Union County with additional space for future businesses:

1. Monroe Corporate Center;
2. Old Hickory Business Park;
3. AeroPointe Industrial Centre;
4. Industrial Ventures I & II;
5. Indian Trail Industrial Park;
6. Union West Business Park;
7. Indian Trail Business Park; and
8. Tower Industrial Park.

These parks contain more than 1,500 acres, 420 of which are still available for development. The 500-acre Monroe Corporate Center, which is located adjacent to the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport, has the largest concentration of industry in Union County. Industrial Ventures I & II has only 23 of its 380 total acres still undeveloped along US-74 in Indian Trail. The 270-acre Old Hickory Business Park in Indian Trail has 60 acres remaining just north of US-74 along Indian Trail-Fairview Road.



The eight parks are concentrated along the US-74 corridor west of Monroe. Less than 28% of its competitive industrial/business park land is remaining.

Major Employers

The County's largest employers as of 2009 are shown in Table A-9.

Table A-9: Major Employers in Union County, 2009

Major Employers	Major Product	No. of Employees
Tyson Foods, Inc.	Poultry Slaughtering, Dressing & Processing	1,000+
Allvac	Secondary Smelting & Refining of Nonferrous Metals	1,000+
Pilgrim's Pride, Inc.	Poultry Product Supplier	500-999
Charlotte Pipe & Foundry Co.	Plastic Pipe	500-999
Tyco / Scott Health and Safety	Respiratory Protection Products	250-499

Source: Union County Chamber of Commerce, 2009

Unemployment

The County's unemployment rate as of May 2010 according to the NC Employment Security Commission was 9.4%, which is significantly higher than the rate in 2000 (4.3%). During this time period, however, the total number of people in the labor force increased 48.3% (30,670 workers). Employment counts have changed significantly as a result of the national, state, and local economic crisis that came about in the fall of 2008.

AGRICULTURE

Union County has posted the state's third highest agricultural sales in 2008 at \$454.8 million. At that time, the County had 178,193 acres of land in 1,107 farms. The majority of farms are family- or individually-owned farms, though corporate and partnership farms are becoming more common. Approximately 61.5% of all farmland is under crop production. Soybeans, corn, cotton, wheat, and hay are the primary agricultural crops grown in the County. In 2008, Union County was first in the state for wheat production and third in the state for soybeans. Livestock (non-crop) production includes broilers (second in state), chickens, turkeys (fourth in state), beef/cattle and hogs/pigs.



Secondary economic impacts from agriculture are present in a variety of farm-related community and tourist events including riding stables, farm-based tours and events like the Aw Shucks! Corn festival and farmers markets.

INCOME AND POVERTY

Income

The median household income is \$66,792 (2008), 31.9% higher than in 2000 (\$50,622) but still slightly lower than the Charlotte MSA's eight-year growth rate of 33.5%. However, the County still surpassed the MSA median household income by \$3,916, or 6.2%. This continues the trend from the previous decade (1990-2000) during which the County's median household income rose 63.5%, much higher than the MSA's 49.3%.

Poverty

In 2000, 22.1% of female headed households, 16.2% of non-family households, and 3.3% of married couple households were below the poverty line. Of these, 68% of the female headed households and 51% of married couple households had children present.

EMPLOYMENT FORECASTS

Union County at-place employment was estimated for 2008 and forecasted for 2010, 2015, and 2020. It is important to note that these jobs are located in Union County, regardless of employee residence location.

The job forecasts are categorized by type of industry and converted into industrial and office land demand. This analysis helps to determine whether the land demand for employment uses in Union County can be met by the existing supply. All forecasts assume the following:

- The Monroe Bypass/Connector is open by 2015
- The new wastewater treatment plant is complete by 2012
- Additional water service capacity is in place by 2013
- Land has been assembled and rezoned for employment uses in close proximity to Monroe Bypass/Connector interchanges, with a large industrial concentration near the highway's eastern terminus at US-74

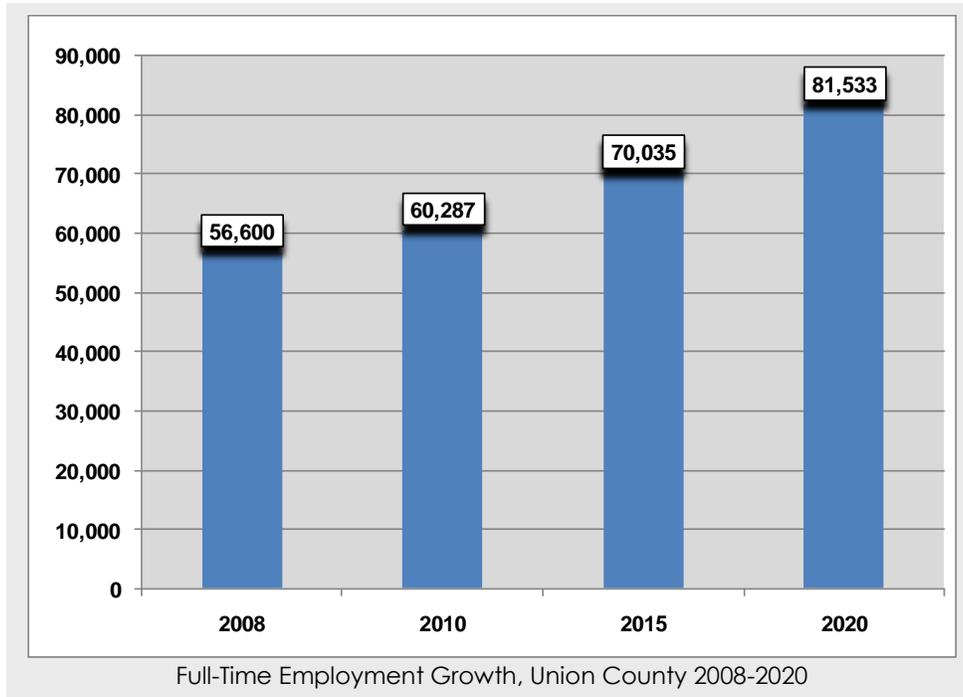
Union County functions as part of the Charlotte regional economy. Charlotte MSA employment estimates/forecasts for 2008, 2010, 2015, and 2020 were obtained from Woods & Poole Economics. These forecasts included both full- and part-time employment totals. In order to be consistent with the majority of job-reporting agencies, including the North Carolina Employment Security Commission (NCESC), part-time employment was removed from the total based on historic shares (1990, 2000, and 2006).

Union County full-time employment estimates/forecasts from 2008-2020 were determined by adjusting the County share of Charlotte MSA employment, taking into account trends (1990-2008), planned infrastructure improvements, and potential spillover demand from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Union County shares of Charlotte MSA employment are forecasted to increase from an estimated 6.4% in 2008 to 7.2% in 2020.

Table A-10: Employment Forecasts, Union County, 2008-2020

Area	1990	2000	2006	2008	2010	2015	2020
Union County	34,543	45,343	54,116	56,600	60,287	70,035	81,533
Charlotte MSA	593,830	798,802	839,086	884,379	927,486	1,029,933	1,132,401
County % of MSA	5.8%	5.7%	6.4%	6.4%	6.5%	6.8%	7.2%

Sources: NCESC, Woods & Poole, Warren & Associates



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The following are economic development resources in Union County:

- North Carolina Dept of Commerce,
- City of Monroe (offers economic development grants),
- Monroe Economic Development ,
- Charlotte Regional Partnership ,
- Employment Security Commission,
- Union County
- Union County Chamber of Commerce,
- Union County Partnership for Progress.

Transportation

ROADS

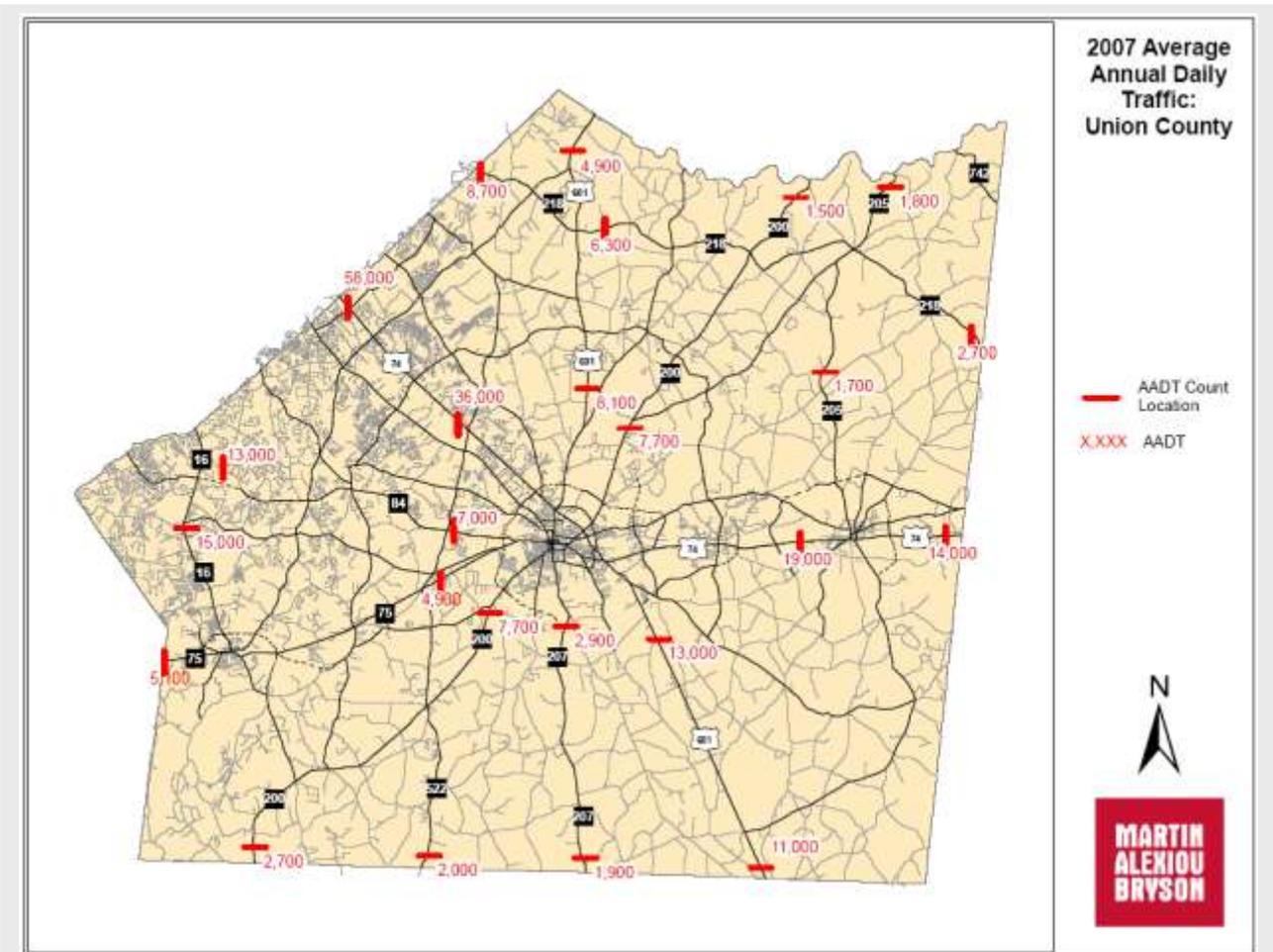
The major transportation corridor in Union County is US-74, designated a North Carolina Strategic Highway Corridor, which connects the County with Charlotte to the northwest, and to Wadesboro and Wilmington to the east. Other major routes are US-601, NC-16, NC-75, NC-84, and NC-200. These routes are shown on the Existing Transportation System map. A full page map can be found in Appendix B.



4%, respectively.) Approximately 82% percent of Union County workers drive alone to work, with 13% carpooling and the rest using other alternative modes of travel. New information related to commuting patterns will be available through the 2010 U.S. Census.

Traffic

One of the most visible side effects of the tremendous growth in Union County is an increase in traffic and its resulting congestion, delays, and safety concerns. The map below illustrates 2007 average daily traffic (ADT) counts on the County's principle roadways, measured in vehicles per day (vpd) (source: NCDOT Traffic Survey Group, 2007). Not surprisingly, US-74 carries the highest traffic volumes (ranging from 14,000 vpd near the Anson County line to 58,000 vpd near the Mecklenburg County line). Traffic along US-74 drops off significantly between the Mecklenburg County line and Monroe due to the higher densities of residential units in the western part of the County. Other major roadways that carry high daily volumes of traffic include: NC-16 (15,000 vpd), US-601 south of Monroe (13,000 vpd), US-601 north of Monroe (8,100 vpd), NC-84 (7,000-13,000 vpd), and NC-75 (4,900-5,100 vpd).



2007 Average Annual Daily Traffic County, Union County, 2008

One way to illustrate existing and projected traffic conditions is to use a volume-to-capacity analysis. A volume-to-capacity analysis simply identifies the capacity of a roadway to handle traffic volumes in a diagrammatic way. The volume-to-capacity analysis shows the following:

- Major commuter routes (e.g., US-74, NC-16, NC-84, Old Monroe/Old Charlotte Rd) will be over capacity, even with planned and underway improvements.
- Continued residential development will increase demand on local and collector streets, especially during peak hours as commuters connect to and from their homes and the major commuting routes.
- The municipalities in Union County will shoulder the highest traffic volumes.

Road Planning Focus Areas

The Metrolina Model was also used to identify a number of transportation “hot spots” or focus areas on the Future Land Use Plan. While future transportation impacts will be felt throughout the County, these eight locations are areas that are projected to experience significant circulation and congestion issues. Many of these “hot spots” have been identified in the MUMPO planning process and in some cases improvements have been planned. None of these eight locations are located exclusively within unincorporated areas, suggesting the most significant future traffic issues may be faced by the County’s municipalities. This heightens the need for future coordination in transportation planning between the County and its municipalities. In no particular order of importance, these locations are:

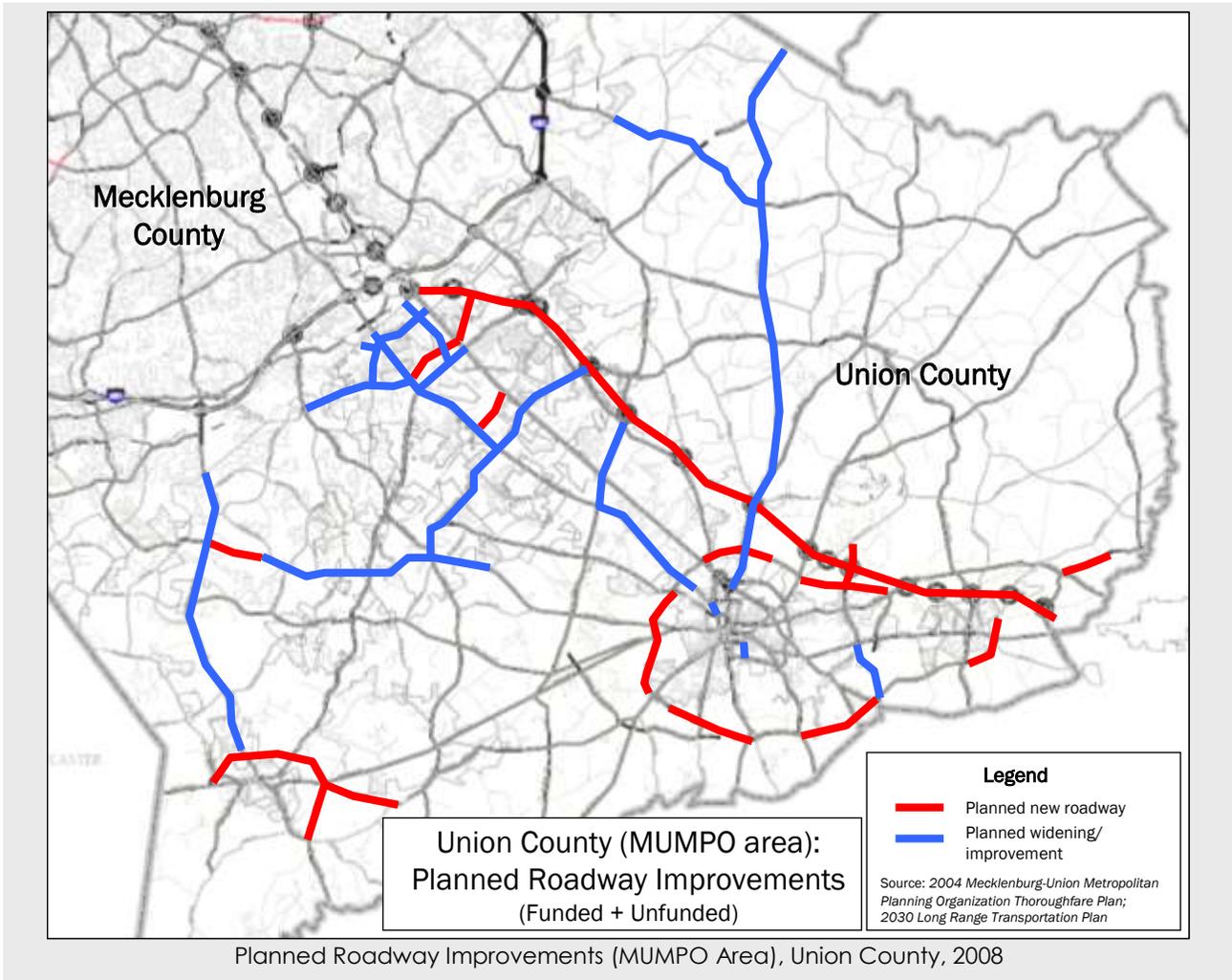
- **South Main Street, Waxhaw:** Two major North Carolina routes (NC-16 and NC-75) converge in downtown Waxhaw. The delays and congestion experienced today are projected to be exacerbated by 2030. The Waxhaw Parkway, which has been in the planning stages for many years, would help to alleviate some of that congestion by allowing through traffic to bypass the downtown, but there is currently no funding for that project. The LARTP western Union County regional transportation plan is in progress. A draft version of the plan includes recommendations for segment of the parkway as part of the recommended Thoroughfare Plan for the study area.
- **Intersection of Rea Road/Providence Road:** Providence Road (NC-16) will continue to be a major north-south commuting route. The ongoing widening improvements will increase the road’s capacity, which will in turn increase the volume of traffic on the road and at key intersections. The draft LARTP includes recommendations for improvements to NC-16 at this intersection and beyond as part of the recommended Thoroughfare Plan.
- **Intersection of Weddington Road (N.C. 84)/Waxhaw Indian Trail:** NC-84 will continue to be a major east-west route, connecting NC-16 with downtown Monroe and US-74. Waxhaw Indian Trail will increase in importance as a north-south route. The intersection of the two routes is projected to experience significant traffic volumes. The draft LARTP includes recommendations for improving this intersection and these roadways as part of the recommended Thoroughfare Plan.

- **Intersections of Wesley Chapel Rd and Old Monroe Road and US-74:** Both US-74 and Old Monroe Road are projected to be over-capacity in 2030, especially near the intersections with Wesley Chapel Road. Improvements to Wesley Chapel Road are part of MUMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan and Thoroughfare Plan, but are not funded as part of the State's Transportation Improvement Program. These locations are within the City of Monroe.
- **Idlewild Road, near Mecklenburg County line:** Idlewild Road, connecting I-485 to northwestern Union County, is projected to experience significant traffic volumes in 2030. Improvements such as widening, access management, and signal timing upgrades may be considered. This location is generally located with the Towns of Stallings and Hemby Bridge.
- **Intersection of Future Monroe Connector/Bypass and US-601:** This intersection, just north of Monroe, is anticipated to be a high-impact interchange location, and the draft Future Land Use Plan indicates this area may be developed as a Commercial Center. Access to and from the Connector/Bypass interchange will be key, as well as attention to the intersections and signals in the developing commercial area around the interchange. Widening US-601, as planned in the Long Range Transportation Plan, will help add capacity to that roadway. This location is generally within the City of Monroe.
- **Intersection of Monroe Connector/Bypass and US-74 near Marshville:** The terminus of the Monroe Connector/Bypass at US-74 near Marshville will be a significant crossroads, and is anticipated to be a major Employment Center on the draft Future Land Use Plan. The actual intersection is important, but perhaps more critical are the intersections in the vicinity. The Connector/Bypass will introduce new traffic to the Marshville and Wingate areas, which should add to the development potential (and hence, traffic) of the general area.

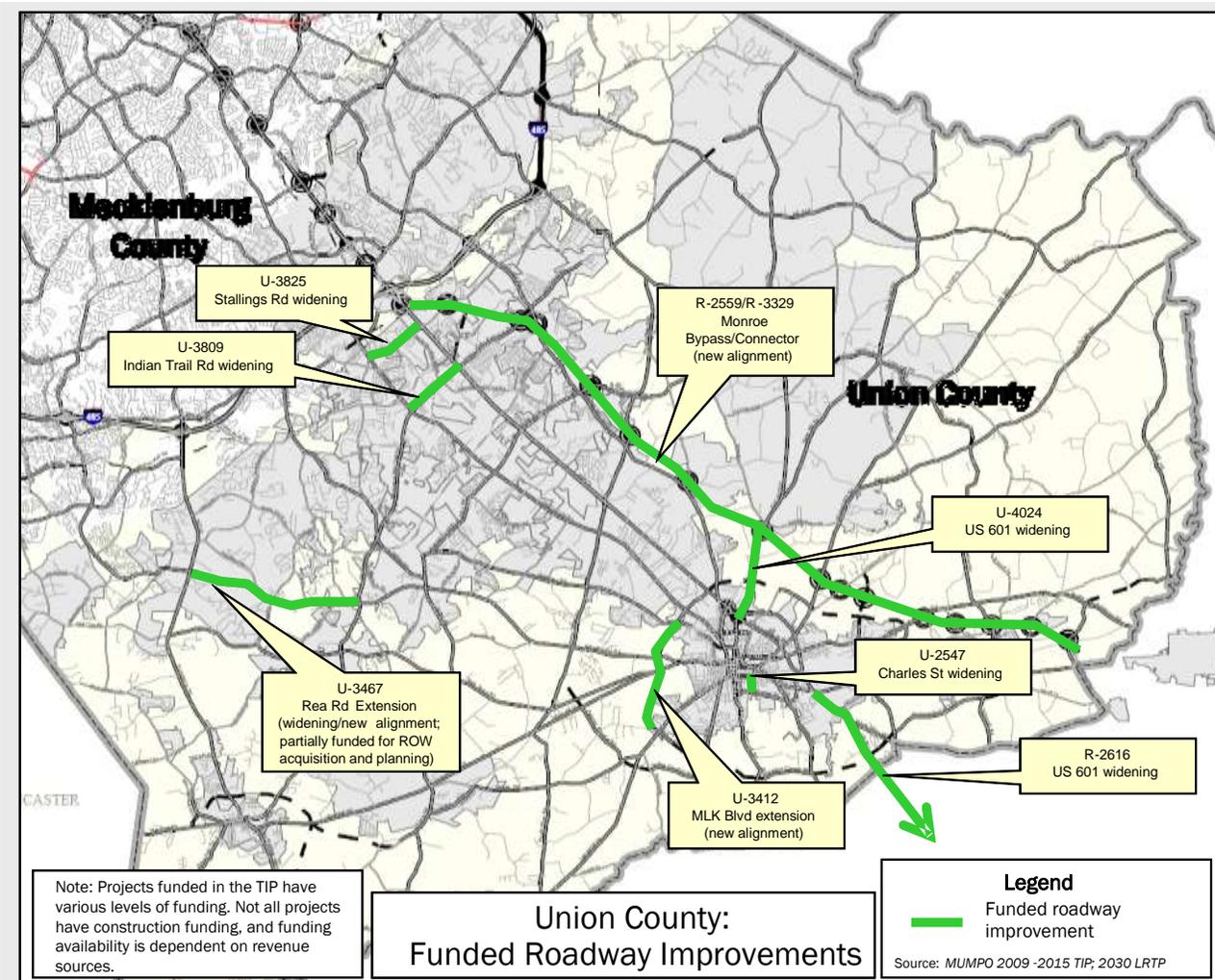
THOROUGHFARE PLANS

These capacity and congestion issues have been anticipated in the regional transportation planning process administered by MUMPO. One of the main functions of MUMPO is to prepare the region's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Thoroughfare Plan, which include prioritized improvement projects (e.g., widenings, new roads, intersection improvements, bridges, and bike, pedestrian and transit improvements). These projects feed into the state's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), projects that become funded for design and construction.

The map below illustrates both funded and unfunded roadway improvement projects from the 2030 LRTP and 2004 MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan. MUMPO has completed the process of updating the LRTP to 2035, and is also beginning the process of developing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for the MUMPO region to take the place of the Thoroughfare Plan.



The map on the following page illustrates funded roadway improvement projects from the 2009-2015 TIP. A complete listing of LRTP and TIP projects, as well as reports detailing the projects, can be found on the MUMP website, www.mumpo.org.



Funded Roadway Improvements (MUMPO Area), Union County, 2008

The other major transportation improvement that will have a major impact on the County's transportation system, as well as land use patterns, is the Monroe Connector/Bypass project (STIP projects R-2559/R-3329). Of particular interest are the eight interchange locations along the proposed alignment, shown on the map on the following page. Studies began on the project in the early 1990s and in September 2006 the Bypass and Connector projects were combined into a single project for environmental review. The North Carolina Turnpike Authority, established in 2002 to create alternative financing opportunities to pay for highway construction, is developing the project as a toll road. The Record of Decision, the final step in the environmental review process, is expected in the third quarter of 2010, and it is anticipated the project will be open to traffic in December 2014. The interchange locations are key because the new highway will only be accessible at the interchanges, creating both development opportunities and traffic constraints around



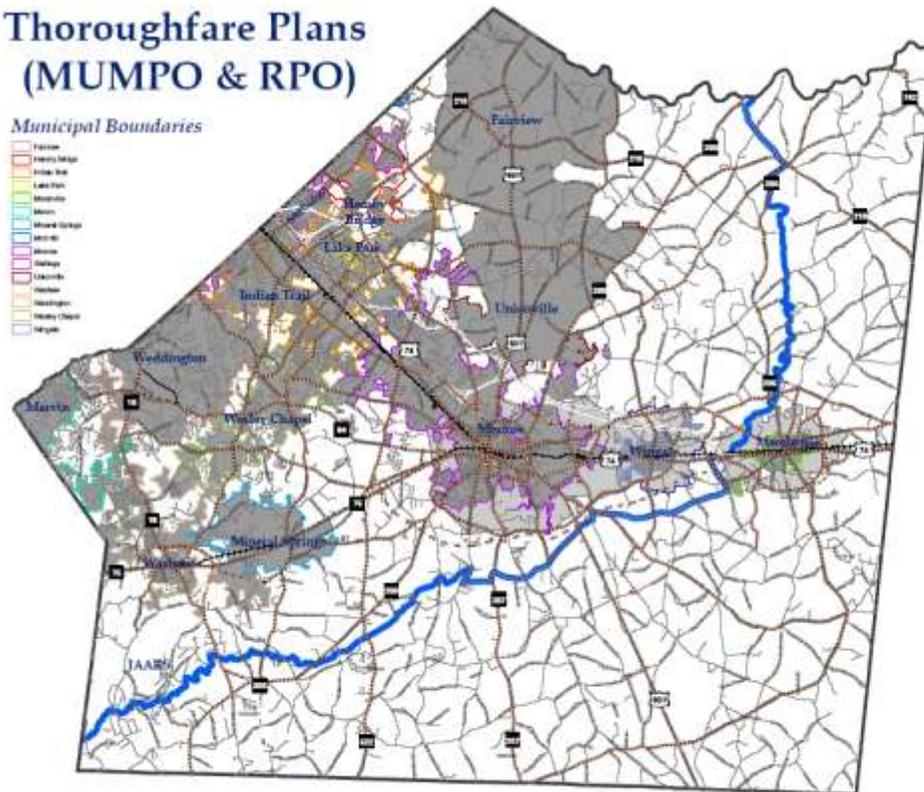
Proposed Monroe Connector/Bypass Interchanges, Union County, 2010

those interchanges. It will be critical that the County continue to work with the Turnpike Authority to ensure adequate access and circulation are provided at the interchanges, and to work with the municipalities and developers as the areas around the interchanges are developed.

The map on the next page provides a composite Thoroughfare Plan map of the planned transportation improvements in both the MUMPO and RRRPO jurisdictions for the entire County.

Thoroughfare Plans (MUMPO & RPO)

Municipal Boundaries



Union County

Legend



DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department. Union County and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared by
CLARKIN ASSOCIATES
January 18, 2008

Composite Thoroughfare Plans (MUMPO & RRRPO), Union County, 2008

TRANSIT

Regional transit service is provided into Union County by Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS). Except for the County's paratransit service, STAR (Union County Specialized Transportation for Area Residents), there is no local, public mass transit system in the Union County. CATS operates a well-used express route (74X) that runs along US-74 from Marshville into Mecklenburg County. There are three park-and-ride lots along the 74X route that give commuters the option of driving to the park-and-ride lot and taking the bus into Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. CATS is considering plans for expanding transit into Union County, in addition to significant expansion plans for mass transit within Mecklenburg County. Federal funding for transit improvements has decreased in recent years, limiting new opportunities for transit in Union County.

RAILROAD

CSX Railroad owns, operates and maintains an active single track freight line through Union County, paralleling US-74 (running between Mecklenburg and Anson Counties)

and NC-75 (connecting Monroe to South Carolina). CSX recently (May 2008) announced the National Gateway initiative to improve freight links between mid-Atlantic ports and the Midwest. One of three main rail corridors to be improved is the Carolina Corridor between Wilmington and Charlotte, passing through Union County.

AIRPORT

Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport serves corporate and private aircrafts from small piston engine aircraft to larger turboprop and jet aircraft. This includes over eighty aircraft based at the airport and the daily transient aircraft. Flying lessons and maintenance services also are provided at the Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport. Currently, improvements are being made to the airport to accommodate larger aircrafts. These improvements are aimed at increasing business and tourism in the area. Charlotte-Monroe Executive Airport is located northwest of Monroe, at Paul Hermes Drive near Old Charlotte Highway and US-74. Access to the airport during peak hours can be difficult due to congestion. In addition, residents of Union County have access to Charlotte/Douglas International Airport for passenger service.

BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN WAYS

In general, roadways and development outside of the incorporated areas of the County are rural in nature and design. The vast majority of the roadways in the County are 2-lane rural roads that are not designed to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. Most of the County's sidewalks, for example, are located in the downtown areas of the County's municipalities, or within residential neighborhoods. The County lacks a comprehensive network of sidewalks to enable residents to walk between major destinations.

Bicycle facilities, such as bike lanes, wide shoulders, or off-street bike paths, are similarly scarce for those wanting to bicycle as a viable alternative to driving. The typical 2-lane rural road has 12-foot travel lanes with narrow shoulders, making bike travel difficult and unsafe in many areas.

Union County does have opportunities for recreational bicycling and walking, through existing and planned parks and trail systems. Cane Creek Park, for example, provides an extensive network of bicycling and walking trails. The County is also an active participant in the planning of the Carolina Thread Trail, a multi-county regional trail system. While these recreational trails and systems may not function as viable alternatives for commuters, they do provide important opportunities to promote healthy and active lifestyles.

Environment and Natural Resources

SCENIC RESOURCES

Scenic Highway Corridors

The 1998 Union County Land Use Plan identifies four scenic highway corridors. These corridors, which allow residents and visitors to enjoy the rural countryside and mature forested areas of the County, include:

- US-601 North from Monroe to Cabarrus County
- US-601 South from Monroe to Chesterfield County
- NC-75 West from Monroe to Lancaster County
- NC-84 West from Monroe to Weddington.

These corridors, and potentially others, will need to be further evaluated following adoption of the Comprehensive Plan to determine if additional protection strategies are needed within these corridors.

WETLANDS

One of the more significant habitat alterations has been to wetlands. North Carolina has lost and continues to lose wetlands at an alarming rate. According to the 1994 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Report "Southeast Wetlands: Status and Trends, Mid-1970s to Mid-1980s", freshwater, forested wetlands declined by 3.1 million acres in the southeast region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina & Tennessee). An estimated 38.8% (1.2 million acres) of this loss occurred in North Carolina. Wetlands are especially important as they provide habitat for fish and wildlife; store floodwaters; recharge groundwater; filter nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants; and provide carbon to aquatic systems. It is critical to protect the state's remaining wetlands.

SOILS

There are seven types of soil found in Union County: Iredell-Gaston-Mecklenburg, Cecil-Applying, Tatum, Cid-Badin-Goldston, Badin-Cid-Goldston-Tatum, Goldston-Badin-Cid, and White Store-Creedmorr-Chewacia.

Iredell-Gaston-Mecklenburg: This soil type is primarily found in the western part of the County near Marvin and Weddington. It makes up about 1% of the soils found in the County. This soil type is found on nearly level to strongly sloping land, is well drained to somewhat poorly drained, and has a loam surface layer and a dominantly clay subsoil.

Cecil-Applying: This soil type is found in the western part of the County and predominates south of Waxhaw and in the Marvin-Weddington area. It comprises about 8% of the soils found in the County. This soil type is generally found on gently sloping to strongly sloping land, and is well drained. It has a loam surface layer and predominantly clay subsoil.

Tatum: This soil type is found again in the western part of the County, and comprises about 18% of the soils in the County. This soil type is concentrated in the Indian Trail area, the southeastern part of Weddington, most of Waxhaw, and to the southeast of Marvin, Weddington, and Waxhaw. Two other "clumps" exist to the east, along NC-200 North and US-601 South, near the County line. This soil is generally gently sloping to steep, well-drained and has a loam surface layer and a dominantly clay subsoil.

Tatum soils are generally found on broad ridges and narrow side slopes of terrain. The soil type is generally used as cropland or pastureland, especially on the gently sloping ridge tops. The steeper areas are used mostly as woodland. The hazard of erosion and the slope are the main management concerns in areas of cropland and pasture. The main limitations affecting development are the content of the clay, the depth to bedrock, and the slope.

Cid-Badin-Goldston: This soil type is found scattered throughout the County. It comprises about 15% of the soils found in the County. Some locations include Indian Trail, Lake Park, northwestern Monroe, and southern Wingate. The soil type is found on nearly level to steep terrain, and can range from excessively drained areas to somewhat poorly drained areas. It has a loamy surface layer and a loam or clay subsoil.

Cid-Badin-Goldston soils are used mainly as cropland pasture, or woodland. The hazards of erosion, wetness, and the depth to bedrock are the main limitations affecting farming. This soil is generally not suited for development because of the wetness and the depth to bedrock.

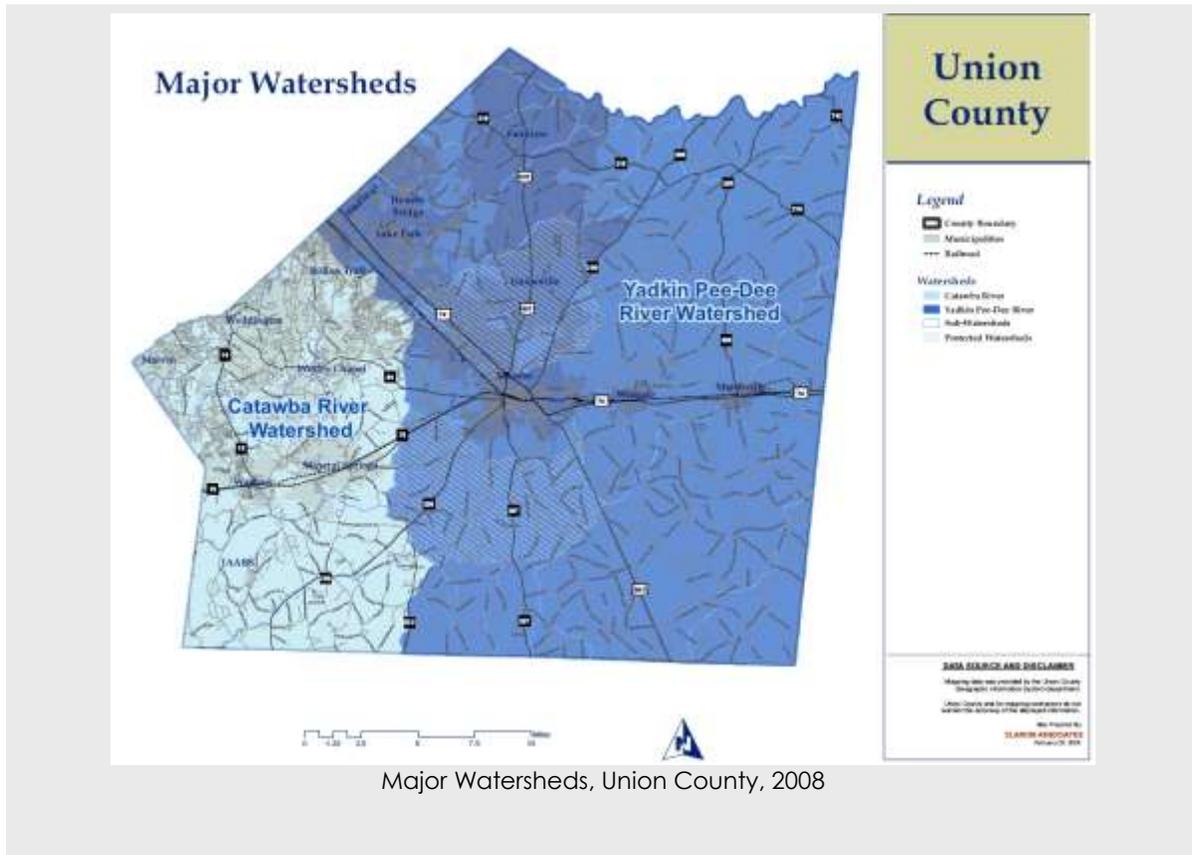
Badin-Cid-Goldston-Tatum: This soil type is found scattered throughout the central and north-central parts of Union County. It makes up about 45% of the soils found in the County, and predominates in the Monroe and Marshville area. It is found on nearly level to steep terrain, and can be excessively drained to somewhat poorly drained. In general, it has a loamy surface layer and a loam or clay subsoil.

Approximately 2/3 of this soil type is used as cropland. The rest is used for development or as woodland, hayland, or pasture. The cropland is mainly on the broad ridge tops, with woodlands dominating the steeper side slopes. The hayland and pasture are intermingled in the more strongly sloping areas. The main management concerns are the slope, surface runoff, wetness, and the hazard of erosion. Moderate permeability, the clayey texture, and low strength are additional limitations affecting urban uses or development.

Goldston-Badin-Cid: This soil type dominates the eastern part of the County. It makes up about 12% of the soils found in the County. This soil type is found on nearly level to steep terrain, and can be excessively drained to somewhat poorly drained. It consists of a loam surface layer and a loam or clay subsoil. This soil type is suited for pasture or woodland uses. Some gently sloping areas are used as cropland. The hazard of erosion, the slope, wetness, and the depth to bedrock are the main management concerns in areas of pasture, woodland and cropland. The main limitations affecting development are the slope, depth to bedrock, and the wetness.

White Store-Creedmoor-Chewacia: This soil type is found in a valley along Brown Creek in the southeastern part of the County, south of the area known as White Store. It comprises about 1% of the soils found in the County. It is found on nearly level to strongly sloping terrain, and can be moderately well-drained to somewhat poorly-drained. A loam surface layer and loam or clay subsoil are characteristic of this soil type.

About 2/3 of the acreage of this soil type is used as woodland. The rest is used equally as cropland and hayland or pasture. Most of the woodland is on the steeper side slopes and on flood plains. The main management concerns are the slope, surface runoff, the hazard of erosion, and flooding. Slow permeability, the clay texture, and low strength are additional limitations affecting urban development.



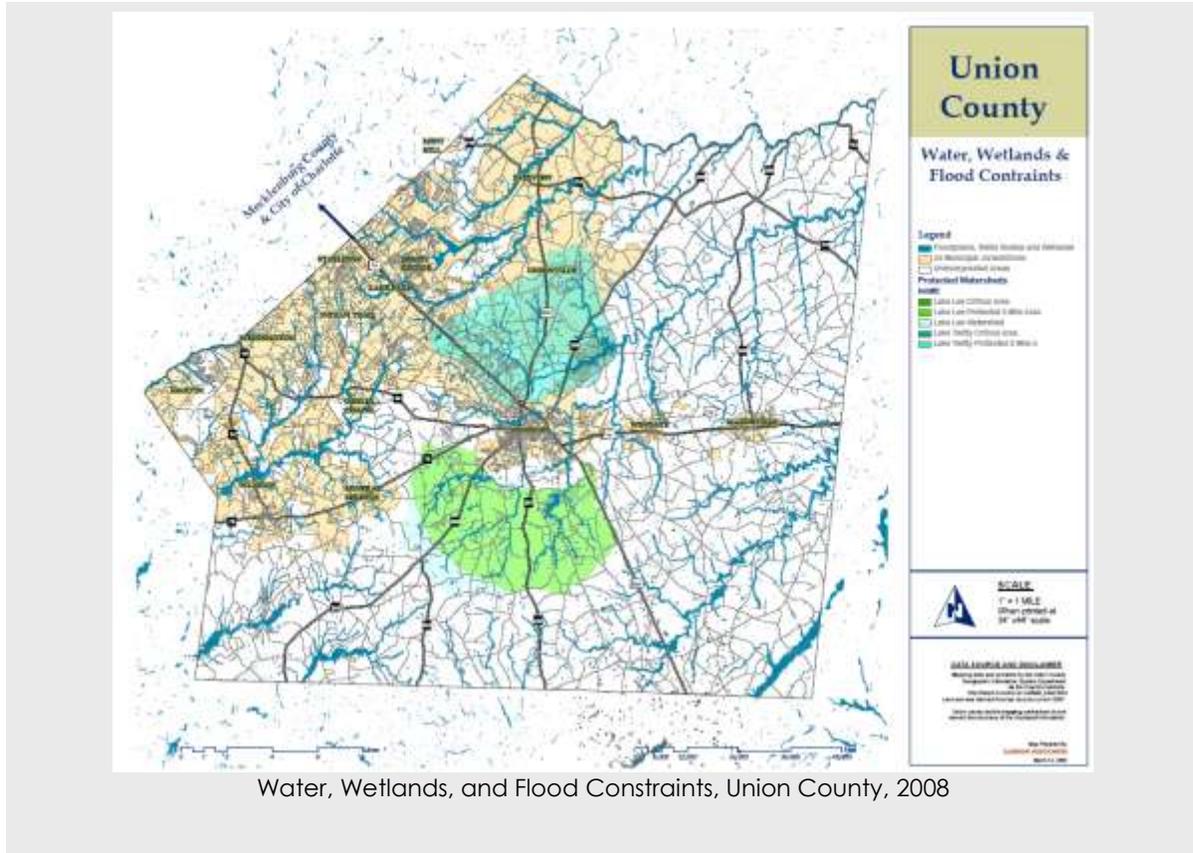
WATER RESOURCES

Union County lies within the Catawba and Yadkin Pee-Dee River watersheds. The majority of public water is provided from the Catawba watershed (18MGD) with 1.9 MGD from the Yadkin Pee-Dee watershed. In the future, the Yadkin Pee-Dee may be a major source for the County's potable water needs. The Major Watersheds map below shows the divide between the two watersheds.

Union County is provided with water from surface streams, lakes/reservoirs, and ground water. The major source of drinking water for the City of Monroe comes from Lake Twitty (north of Monroe), Lake Lee (south of Monroe) and Lake Monroe (south of Monroe). Other water resources in the County are the Rocky River in northern Union County, and Cane Creek Lake in the southwest part of the County.

Protected Watersheds

As mandated by the State, Union County has adopted regulations to protect the available drinking water supply sources. The map below, Water, Wetlands, and Flood Constraints, depicts the four protected watersheds in the County:



Water, Wetlands, and Flood Constraints, Union County, 2008

1. Stewart's Creek – Watershed III, Critical Area
2. Stewart's Creek – Watershed III, Balance of Watershed Area
3. Richardson Creek – Watershed IV – Critical Area
4. Richardson Creek – Watershed IV, Protected Area.

Watershed III Critical Area

The Watershed III, Critical Area is defined as an area “one-half mile and draining to water supplies from the normal pool elevation of reservoirs, or one-half mile and draining to a river intake.” Lake Twitty is the reservoir in this watershed. The watershed provisions in the Watershed III Critical Area are designed to maintain a low to moderate land use intensity pattern, with single-family residential uses allowed at a maximum of

one (1) dwelling unit per 40,000 square feet – or just less than one unit per acre. All other residential and non-residential development is allowed up to a maximum of twelve percent built-upon area, on a project by project basis. The definition of “built-upon” area is that portion of a development project that is covered by impervious cover including buildings, pavement, gravel roads, recreation facilities (e.g., tennis courts), etc. Wooden slatted decks and the water area of a swimming pool are considered pervious.

Watershed III Balance of Watershed Area

In order to maintain a low to moderate land use intensity pattern, single-family residential uses are allowed in this watershed at a maximum of two (2) dwelling units per 40,000 square feet. All other residential and non-residential development is allowed up to a maximum of twenty-four percent (24%) built-upon area. In addition, up to ten percent (10%) of the balance of the watershed which is located within Union County’s jurisdiction may be developed for non-residential uses up to a maximum built-upon area of seventy percent (70%) on a project by project basis which will be allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis.

Watershed IV Critical Area

Richardson Creek serves as the source of the water in this watershed. Only new development activities that require an erosion/sedimentation control plan (i.e., activities that disturb more than one acre of land) are required to meet the following provisions:

- In order to address a moderate to high land use intensity pattern, single-family residential uses are allowed at a maximum of two (2) dwelling units per 40,000 square feet.
- All other residential and non-residential development shall be allowed at a twenty-four percent (24%) built-upon area.

Watershed IV Protected Area

The definition of “protected area” is that area five miles and draining to water supplies from the normal pool elevation of reservoirs, or ten miles and draining to a river intake. Only new development activities that require an erosion/sedimentation control plan are required to meet the following regulations:

- In order to address a moderate to high land use intensity pattern, single-family residential uses are allowed at a maximum of two (2) dwelling units per 40,000 square feet.
- All other residential and non-residential development shall be allowed at a twenty-four percent (24%) built-upon area. Or, if the project does not include a curb and gutter street system, a built-upon area of up to thirty-six percent (36%) is allowed.

Exceptions

The watershed regulations do not apply to existing development. Nor does it apply to additions to single-family homes. However, it does apply to expansions to existing structures (except single-family dwellings), although the built-upon area of the existing structures are not required to be computed in the overall density calculations.

ENDANGERED SPECIES AND NATURAL HABITATS

Union County is home to two federally designated endangered species and several state species of significance.

Carolina Heelsplitter

The Carolina Heelsplitter is a federally designated endangered species with habitat in Union County. It currently has a very fragmented habitat but historically was known to live in several locations within the Catawba and Pee Dee River systems in North Carolina and the Pee Dee and Savannah River systems, and possibly the Saluda River system, in South Carolina. Historically, the species was collected from the Catawba River, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; several streams and ponds in the Catawba River system around the Charlotte area of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; one small stream in the Pee Dee River system in Cabarrus County, North Carolina; one pond in the Pee Dee River system in Union County, North Carolina; and an area in South Carolina referred to only as the Abbeville District.

Only six populations of the species are presently known to exist. In North Carolina one small remnant population occurs in the Catawba River system in Waxhaw Creek, a tributary to the Catawba River, in Union County, and another small population occurs in a short stretch of Goose Creek, a tributary to the Rocky River in the Pee Dee River system, in Union County. There are four surviving populations in South Carolina. The species has been reduced to a few short reaches of each of these streams, primarily as a result of impoundments and channelization projects and the general deterioration of water quality resulting from siltation and other pollutants contributed as a result of poor land use practices. The location of this habitat in Union County is shown on the Habitat and Natural Heritage Areas map. A full page map is located in the appendix.

The decline in the species throughout its range has been attributed to several factors, including siltation resulting from poorly implemented agricultural, forestry, and development activities; golf course construction; road construction and maintenance; runoff and discharge of municipal, industrial, and agricultural pollutants; habitat alterations associated with impoundments, channelization, dredging, and sand mining operations; and other natural and human-related factors that adversely modify the aquatic environment. Many of these same factors threaten the remaining populations of the species.

Schweinitz's Sunflower

The Schweinitz's Sunflower was federally designated as an Endangered Species in 1991. It is a perennial herb that grows from 1 to 2 meters tall from a cluster of tuberous roots. It is classified in the Sunflower Family (Asteraceae, formerly Compositae) and is one of the rarest plants in the United States, found only in a very few prairie remnants and along

utility and highway rights-of-way in North Carolina and South Carolina. There are only about 90 known populations, many containing less than 40 plants each. The sunflower begins flowering in late August or early September and continues flowering until the first frost.

It is believed that this species formerly occupied prairie like habitats or Post Oak - Blackjack Oak savannas that were maintained by fire. Current habitats include roadsides, power line clearings, old pastures, woodland openings and other sunny or semi-sunny situations. Schweinitz's Sunflower is known to grow in a variety of soil types but is generally found growing on shallow, poor, clayey and/or rocky soils, especially those derived from mafic rocks. In the few sites where Schweinitz's Sunflower occurs in relatively natural vegetation, the natural community is considered a Xeric Hardpan Forest.

North Carolina Natural Heritage Areas

Significant Natural Heritage Areas is a classification of North Carolina natural communities that describes more than 100 natural community types across the state. This information is used to better understand the habitat needs of rare species in North Carolina. The inventory for plant and animal species in Union County developed by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Areas program includes the following species. Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern habitats are regulated by the State of North Carolina.

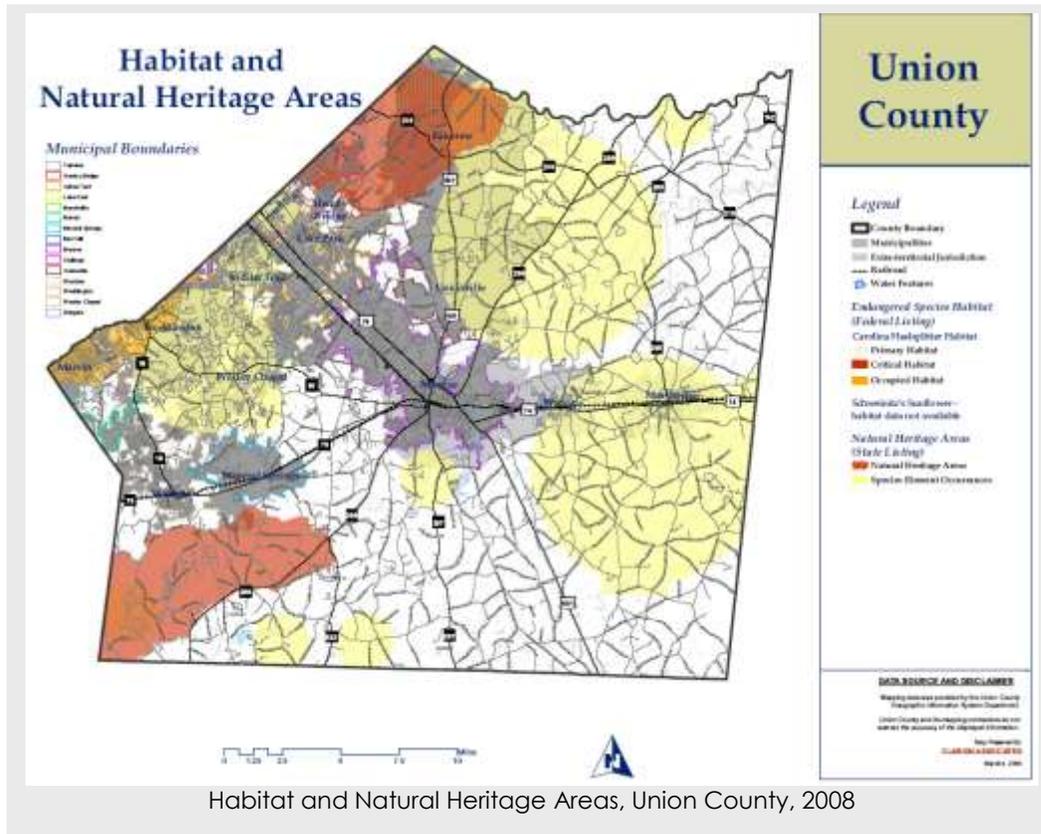
Table A-11: Natural Heritage Areas Inventory for Union County

Species	State Designation	Federal Designation
Atlantic Pigtoe	Endangered	Federal Species of Concern
Carolina Heelsplitter	Endangered	Endangered
Savannah Lilliput	Endangered	Federal Species of Concern
Carolina Creekshell	Endangered	Federal Species of Concern
Schweinitz's Sunflower	Endangered	Endangered
Michaux's Sumac	Endangered-Special Concern	Endangered
Eastern Lampmussel	Threatened	None
Creeper	Threatened	None
Georgia Aster	Threatened	Candidate
Notched Rainbow	Special Concern	None
Mole Salamander	Special Concern	None
Timber Rattlesnake	Special Concern	None
Carolina Darter – Central Piedmont Population	Special Concern	Federal Species of Concern
Loggerhead Shrike	Special Concern	None

Source: North Carolina Natural Heritage Areas Program

Twenty-one additional species are identified by the state as candidate or significantly rare species, but their habitats are not regulated by the state. The additional species are: A-Mayfly, Spine-Crowned Clubtail, Septima's Clubtail, Eastern Creekshell, Small Wood-Bark Moss, Carolina Birdfoot-Trefoil, Missouri Rockcress, American Bluehearts, Carolina Jointgrass, Prairie-Tea Croton, Piedmont Aster, Indian Physic, Smooth

Sunflower, Virginia Quillwort, Mudbank Crown Grass, Heller's Rabbit-Tobacco, Narrow-Leaf Aster, Coachwhip, Dry Oak-Hickory Forest, Piedmont Mafic Cliff, and Xeric Hardpan Forest. The Habitat and Natural Heritage Areas map shows the habitats of the



Habitat and Natural Heritage Areas, Union County, 2008

federally designated Endangered Species, and state designated Natural Heritage Areas. A full page map is found in Appendix B.

Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Recreation

STATE PARKS

There are four regional state parks within a one-hour driving distance from Union County. These parks include:

- Morrow Mountain State Park
- Duke Power State Park
- Andrew Jackson State Park, and
- Cheraw State Park.

RECREATION

There are currently one hundred and twenty-five (125) separate recreational facilities within Union County. Sixty-eight are owned and operated by the public sector and fifty-three sites are schools. The remaining sites are private and quasi-public facilities.

Table A-12: Park and Recreation Facilities

Parks	Amenities													Township Location	
	Baseball	Baseball Rentals, Horseback riding, and miniature golf	Recreational Facility	Multi-purpose Field	Play Equip.	Football	Tennis	Basketball	Trails	Volleyball	Picnic Areas	Lake	Camping		Soccer
Cane Creek Park	■	■			■				■		■	■	■		Jackson
Creft Park	■				■		■	■			■				Monroe
Dickerson Park/Recreation															Monroe
Edna Love Park	■										■				Vance
Elatos Park					■			■			■				Sandy Ridge
Jaycee Park	■				■		■				■				Monroe
Marshville City Park	■						■			■	■				Marshville
McAteer Park	■														Monroe
Roanoke Park	■														Monroe
Russ Alexander Memorial Park	■														Sandy Ridge
Stallings Municipal Park	■														Vance
Sunset Park	■		■		■	■		■						■	Monroe
Sutton Park	■		■		■			■	■		■				Monroe
Weddington Optimist Park	■		■	■							■			■	Sandy Ridge
Winchester Recreation Facility			■	■	■			■		■					Monroe

Table A-13: School Recreation Facilities

School Recreation Facilities	Amenities												Township Location	
	Baseball	Basketball	Field house	Football	Gymnasium	Multi-Purp. Field	Obstacle Course	Play Equip.	Pool	Racquet Ball	Soccer	Tennis		Track
Elementary Schools														
Antioch Elementary					■	■		■						Vance
Benton Heights Elementary	■				■	■		■						Monroe
East Elementary					■	■		■						Monroe
Hemby Bridge Elementary	■				■	■					■			Vance
Fairview Elementary	■				■	■		■						Goose

School Recreation Facilities	Amenities													Township Location
	Baseball	Basketball	Field house	Football	Gymnasium	Multi-Purp. Field	Obstacle Course	Play Equip.	Pool	Racquet Ball	Soccer	Tennis	Track	
Indian Trail Elementary	■				■	■		■						Creek Vance
Kensington Elementary	■					■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
Marshville Elementary	■				■	■		■						Marshville
Marvin Elementary	■				■	■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
New Salem Elementary	■				■	■		■					■	New Salem
New Town Elementary					■	■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
Poplin Elementary					■	■		■						Vance
Porter Ridge Elementary					■	■		■						Goose Creek
Prospect Elementary	■				■	■		■			■			Buford
Rea View Elementary					■	■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
Rock Rest Elementary					■	■		■			■			Monroe
Rocky River Elementary					■	■		■			■			Monroe
Sandy Ridge Elementary					■	■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
Sardis Elementary					■	■		■			■			Vance
Shiloh Elementary					■	■		■			■		■	Monroe
Stallings Elementary					■	■		■			■			Vance
Sun Valley Elementary					■	■		■			■			Vance
Union Elementary	■				■	■		■			■			Lanes Creek
Unionville Elementary		■			■	■		■			■		■	Goose Creek
Walter Bickett Elementary					■	■		■			■			Monroe
Waxhaw Elementary	■				■	■		■			■			Jackson
Weddington Elementary					■	■		■			■			Sandy Creek
Wesley Chapel Elementary					■	■		■			■			Sandy Ridge
Western Union Elementary					■	■		■			■			Jackson
Wingate Elementary	■				■	■		■			■			Monroe
Middle Schools														
Cuthbertson Middle	■				■	■					■	■		Sandy Ridge
East Union Middle					■	■								Marshville

School Recreation Facilities	Amenities												Township Location	
	Baseball	Basketball	Field house	Football	Gymnasium	Multi-Purp. Field	Obstacle Course	Play Equip.	Pool	Racquet Ball	Soccer	Tennis		Track
Marvin Ridge Middle	■				■	■					■			Sandy Ridge
Monroe Middle					■	■					■			Monroe
Parkwood Middle	■	■			■	■								Buford
Piedmont Middle	■				■	■								Goose Creek
Porter Ridge Middle	■				■	■					■			Goose Creek
Sun Valley Middle					■	■		■				■		Vance
Weddington Middle	■				■	■					■			Sandy Ridge
High Schools														
Cuthbertson High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Sandy Ridge
Forest Hills High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Marshville
Marvin Ridge High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Sandy Ridge
Monroe High					■							■	■	Monroe
Parkwood High	■	■	■	■	■	■						■	■	Buford
Piedmont High	■		■	■	■	■						■	■	Goose Creek
Porter Ridge High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Goose Creek
Sun Valley High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Vance
Weddington High	■			■	■	■						■	■	Sandy Ridge
Special Schools														
Central Academy	■			■	■	■					■	■	■	Monroe
South Providence					■	■							■	Jackson
Union County Early College					■	■								Monroe
Wolfe					■	■		■						Monroe
WBEC					■			■						Monroe
College/University														
Wingate University	■				■	■			■	■	■	■		Monroe

Table A-14: Church Recreation Facilities

Church Recreation Facilities	Amenities	Township Location
Bethlehem Methodist Church	Softball field	Buford
New Hope Trinity Methodist Church	Softball field	Buford
Sandy Ridge Baptist Church	Softball field	Buford
Prospect Methodist Church	Play area, volleyball area, picnic area	Buford
Shiloh Advent Church	Softball field	Goose Creek
Union Grove Methodist Church	Play area	Goose Creek
Benton's Crossroads Baptist Church	Play area	Goose Creek
Ebenezer Baptist Church	Volleyball court, basketball court, soft ball field	Goose Creek
Hillcrest Baptist Church	Basketball court, volleyball court, play area	Goose Creek
Antioch Baptist Church	Basketball court, play area, softball field	Goose Creek
Waxhaw Baptist Church	Softball field	Jackson
Mary Elizabeth Church	Basketball court	Jackson
Union Baptist Church	Play equipment	Lanes Creek
Austin Grove Baptist Church	Softball field	Marshville
Union Grove Baptist Church	Basketball court and softball field	Marshville
Shiloh Baptist Church	Softball field	Monroe
Hebron Methodist Church	Play area	Monroe
Mt. Carmel Methodist Church	Basketball court, volleyball court, play area	Monroe
Fairfield Baptist Church	Softball field	Monroe
Siler Presbyterian Church	Softball field, picnic area, play area, multi-use field	Sandy Ridge
Mineral Springs Methodist Church	Softball field	Sandy Ridge
Potters Road Church	Play area, and basketball court	Sandy Ridge
Central Baptist Church	Gym and softball field	Sandy Ridge
Weddington Methodist Church	Play area	Sandy Ridge
New Town Church	Softball field	Sandy Ridge
Sardis Baptist Church	Play area and softball field	Vance
Stallings Methodist Church	Play area	Vance
Friendly Baptist Church	Pavilion, Play Area, Multi-Use Field	Goose Creek

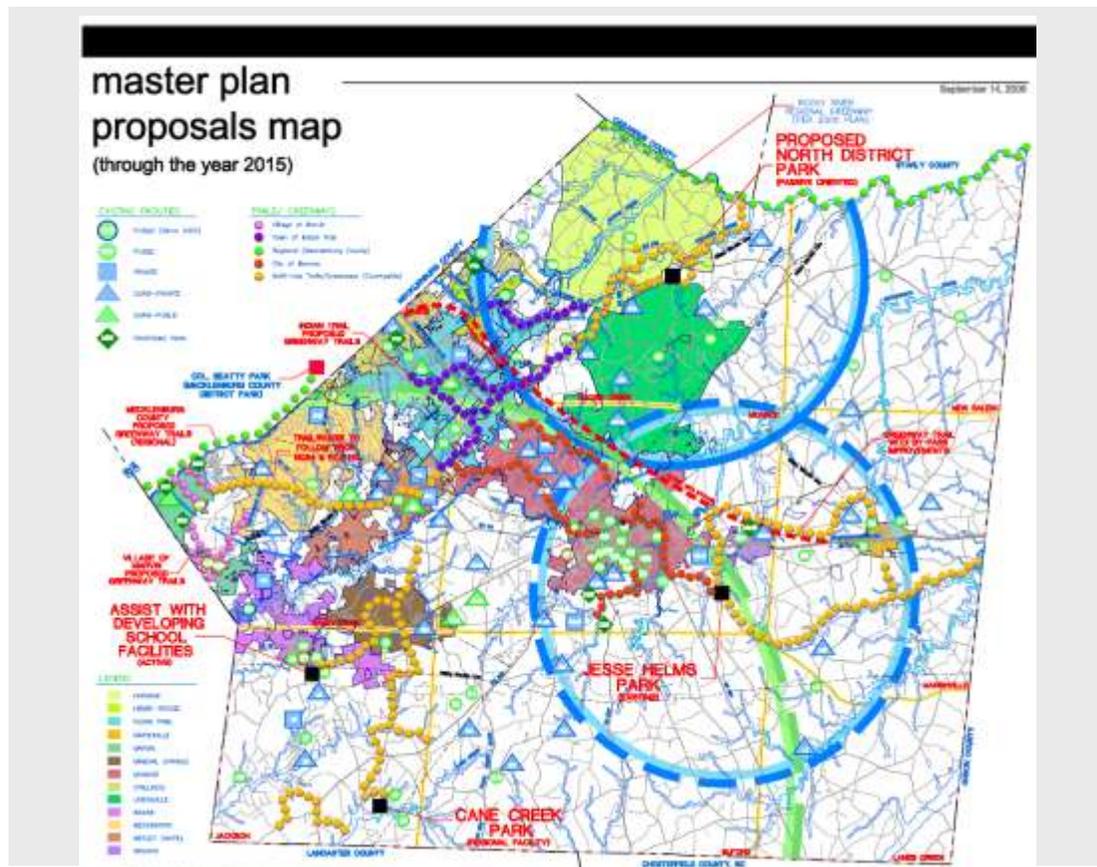
OTHER COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- JAARS Community Center
- Moose Lodge
- Beaver Dam Swim and Racquet
- Wesley Chapel Swim Club
- Valhalla Swim and Racquet Club

- Country Valley Swim and Racquet Club
- Olive Branch Community Building
- Pebble Creek Executive Golf Course
- Weddington Pool and Racket Club

PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING

Union County adopted a Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan update in 2006. The Master Plan outlines the long range strategies for providing adequate parks and recreation facilities and programs to Union County residents through 2015. The plan identifies several large capital projects: development of the Jesse Helms Park Site, acquisition and development of a North District Park, and joint development with Union County Schools to create a Western School Park. A strong recommendation of the plan is for the County to cultivate partnerships with the school system and other private recreational providers to expand park and recreation offerings. The Master Plan also calls for increasing funding for the county-wide funding/grant program to assist municipalities in the development of community and neighborhood parks. The County will become a lead coordinator in development of greenways and trails throughout the County. The plan identifies over 120 miles of trails. The map below shows the Master Plan proposal map for the County.



MUSEUMS

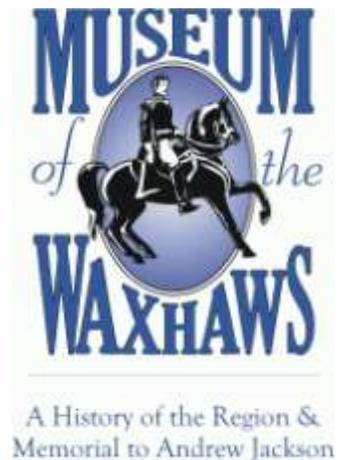
JAARS Museum of the Alphabet (Jackson): Displays ancient and modern alphabet makers and features the history and evolution of the written language.

Mexico Museum (Jackson): Honoring Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico's president from 1934-1940, for supporting William Cameron Townsend to bring a written language, education, and health services to more remote areas of Mexico.

Jesse Helms Foundation Center: The Jesse Helms Center exists to promote the principles of free enterprise, representative democracy, traditional American values, and a strong national defense, on which former U.S. Senator Jesse Helms built his life and career.

Museum of Waxhaws: Beginning with its Native American roots, the museum is a regional attraction dedicated to the history of the Waxhaws and interpreting the American Revolution as well as the Civil War.

Jesse James Historical Society: Waxhaw is home to a historical society dedicated to the memorial of Jesse James.



HISTORIC LANDMARKS

John C. Sikes House: Located in Monroe, this house was home to a leader in politics and government, John C. Sikes, during the 1920's and architects Louis D. Sutherland and G. M. Tucker.

Pleasant Grove Camp Meeting Ground: Since 1829 the grounds have been used as an annual religious retreat for family with deep roots in Union County. Families return to Union County for a reunion ending with events on the third and fourth Sundays in July.

Historic Architecture Landmarks in Union County include: John C. Sikes House, Union County Courthouse, US Post Office in Monroe, Monroe City Hall, Monroe Downtown Historic District, and Waxhaw--Weddington Roads Historic District

Waxhaw Historic District: Historical location for community planning and development, commerce, transportation and architecture for Union County.

Infrastructure and Services

WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITIES

The County, Monroe, Wingate, and Marshville all currently operate public water systems. Union County Public Works provides water for all the municipalities with the exception of Monroe and Marshville. Explosive growth in recent years has used available water and wastewater capacities and has limited new development in the County.

In January, 2007, the State of North Carolina put in place a sewer moratorium to address the lack of capacity at the County's western 12 Mile Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant. The County has undertaken assessments to address current and future water and wastewater needs. In the interim, the County has adopted Water and Wastewater Allocation Policies that guide the provision of water and wastewater and the permitting of prior approved projects.

Water

Union County has several sources for its public water. The County has a contract to pull 18MGD from the Catawba River and a contract with Anson County for 4MGD of treated water capacity. The County is not able to access the full 4MGD from Anson County due to infrastructure constraints, which limits current capacity to 1.9MGD. The County's total treated water capacity at the present is 20MGD. The annual average daily demand for water is 9.6MGD; peak day water demand for 2010 is 16.5MGD.

Irrigation of lawns in the spring and summer months demands a significant amount of water from the system. Irrigation restrictions are in place to ensure that water users will have consistent water supplies during peak months of the year.

The County has undertaken steps to expand water system capacity. System improvements are planned to enable the County to draw the full 4MGD from Anson County's system. These improvements should be completed in the next year. Expansion at the Catawba Water Treatment Plant is also being considered. If approved and funded, this expansion could add an additional 9MGD to the County's system. In total, these expansions could increase system capacity from 20MGD to 31MGD.

Wastewater

Union County operates two wastewater treatment plants. The 12 Mile Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has a 6MGD capacity and the Crooked Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant has a 1.9MGD capacity. Average daily demand at 12 Mile Creek WWTP is 3.55MGD and 1.0MGD at the Crooked Creek WWTP.

The County owns a few small package treatment plants, such as the Grassy Branch and Tallwood plants. The County also purchases 2.65MGD of treatment capacity from the City of Monroe and 1MGD from the Charlotte Metropolitan Utility. Union County is currently working to expand capacity from the Charlotte Metropolitan Utility to 3MGD.

In addition, it is negotiating an agreement with the City of Monroe to purchase an additional 10MGD of wastewater treatment capacity.

Sewer capacity in the western part of the County has been allocated to maximize the state regulated capacity. New projects cannot be permitted for sewer capacity in this area until additional capacity is available. Some capacity is available on the eastern side of the County, where there is less development pressure.

Sewer system planning is currently focusing on providing needed service, while also minimizing the need for inter-basin transfers. Various options for providing additional system capacity are being evaluated.

ELECTRIC POWER

Electric power is distributed in Union County by two providers, Union Power Cooperative and Duke Energy. Union Power Cooperative is headquartered in Monroe, North Carolina and provides service to nearly 65,000 members in five southern piedmont counties including Union County. Duke Energy is one of the largest power companies in the United States and provides energy to approximately 4 million customers across the United States, with 2.4 million located in North Carolina. Duke Energy's corporate headquarters is in Charlotte, North Carolina.

WASTE FACILITIES

Union County operates a county-owned transfer station on Austin Chaney Road and six satellite collection centers throughout the County. All solid waste is taken from the satellite collection centers to the transfer station. Solid waste may be taken to a satellite collection center or the transfer station by private citizens. Private haulers can only dispose of solid waste at the transfer station. Solid waste collected at the transfer station is transported and disposed of at the Chambers Development Municipal Solid Waste Landfill located in Anson County and/or BFI's Charlotte Motor Speedway (CMS) Landfill located in Cabarrus County. The County also operates a Construction and Demolition Landfill within Union County for these materials. Solid waste may not be brought or disposed of there.

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Union County has 18 active fire departments and a Fire Marshal's Office. The primary duty of the Fire Marshal's office is enforcing the North Carolina Fire Prevention code. Other duties include guidance on budgetary duties for the fire departments, as well as, building inspections, fire investigations, and issuing of burning permits.

Union County provides several programs for emergency medical services apart from EMS service. These services include the Union County Emergency Management Team and Emergency Communications Department. These two departments serve as the hub of operations during a disaster, where local government officials and agency representatives would report so all response efforts are effectively coordinated.

SHERIFF AND POLICE PROTECTION

The Sheriff's Office, located in Union County, employs approximately 189 sworn law enforcement personnel, 32 non-sworn personnel (i.e., detention officers) and 29 support staff (i.e., IT, administration, accounting, etc.) The office is responsible for patrolling the 639 square mile span of Union County and provides full service to County residents and businesses, including patrol, jail, civil process, criminal investigation, and animal services. The office is divided into four divisions: Administration, Detention, Operations, and Services. The SRT (Special Response Team) is composed of highly trained Sheriff Deputies from various divisions, as well as, EMS medics.

Education and Libraries

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Union County Public School (UCPS) system operates 29 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 9 high schools, and 5 special schools; 300 of the system's total classrooms are mobile units. Growth trends over the last decade have created significant demands on the school system, particularly in the western portions of the County. The approach to school planning has been more reactive to this growth, leaving many schools operating close to maximum capacity. The county's new Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance was put in place to ensure that the school system has capacity for new enrollment before new student-generating development occurs. The current slowed growth rate has allowed the school district to play "catch up" and plan for future needs. The Union County Public Schools Enrollment Forecast on the following page illustrates these forecasted demands on the system.

Union County Public Schools Enrollment Forecast June 2010

Capacities	ADM	Projected 20th Day ADM										
		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Elementary												
Marshville	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496
Union	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496	496
Wingate	515	515	515	515	515	515	515	515	515	515	515	515
Jonestown	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
New Town	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Marvin	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Ree View	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Tand Ridge	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
East	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Rock/Road	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Water Bucket	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Prosper	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Wachow	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Western Union	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Fairview	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
New Salem	286	286	286	286	286	286	286	286	286	286	286	286
Unonville	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Henry Bridge	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Poplar	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Porter Ridge	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Sarah	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Stalings	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Indian Trail	722	722	722	722	722	722	722	722	722	722	722	722
Rocky River	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Shiloh	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Sun Valley	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Antech	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Weddington	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504	504
Wesley Chapel	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
Totals	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415	20415
Middle												
East Union	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100
Cubletown	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100
Marvin Ridge	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100
Morris	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Fairwood	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Fedward	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Porter Ridge	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
Sun Valley	1150*	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149	1149
Weddington	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Totals	9750*	9691	9679	9661	9643	9625	9607	9589	9571	9553	9535	9517
High												
Fossil Hills	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175	1175
Cubletown	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100
Marvin Ridge	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Morris	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Fairwood	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225	1225
Fedward	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125	1125
Porter Ridge	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Sun Valley	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Weddington	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Totals	12200	12175	12159	12143	12127	12111	12095	12079	12063	12047	12031	12015
Special												
Berkton Heights	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
DATA	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570	570
E. Providence	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
VOCC	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Wrede	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Totals	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121	2121
System Totals	44566	44539	44512	44485	44457	44430	44403	44376	44349	44322	44295	44268
System Growth			1.33%	1.31%	0.99%	2.41%	0.42%	2.49%	0.04%	-0.27%	-0.61%	-0.94%

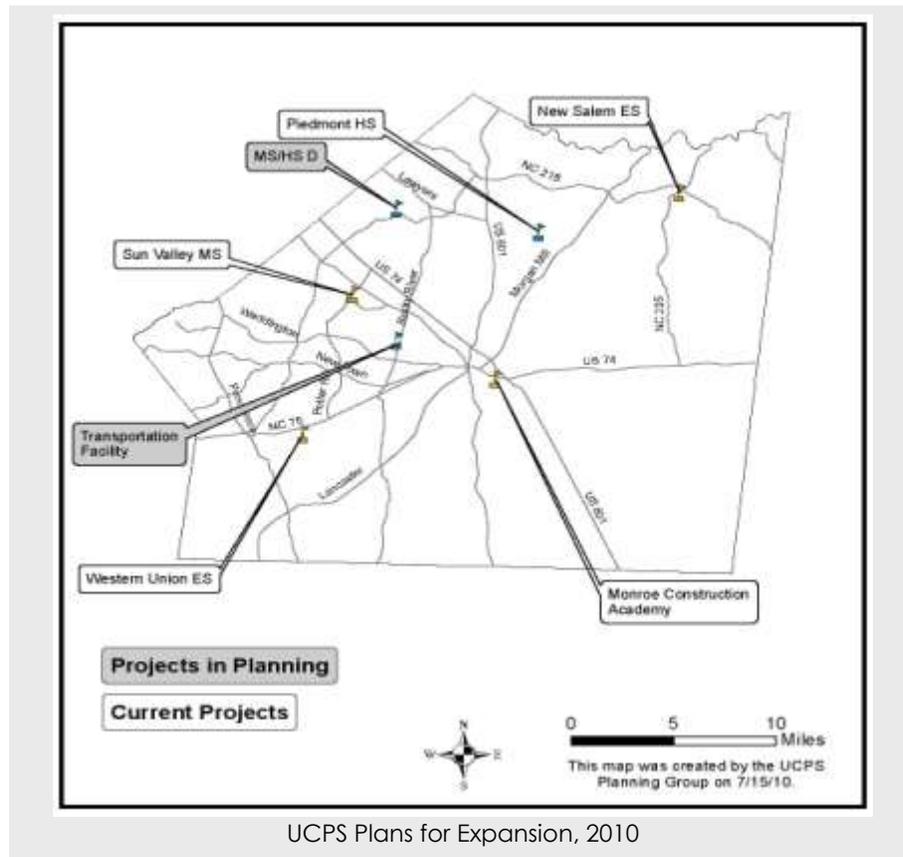
A BELOW CAPACITY
OUT OF CAPACITY

*Sun Valley HS capacity changes to 1,300 for 2010-2011 school year
 **Forecast Date from McKinley Demographic Research, modified for 2010 assignment

Union County Public Schools Enrollment Forecast, 2010

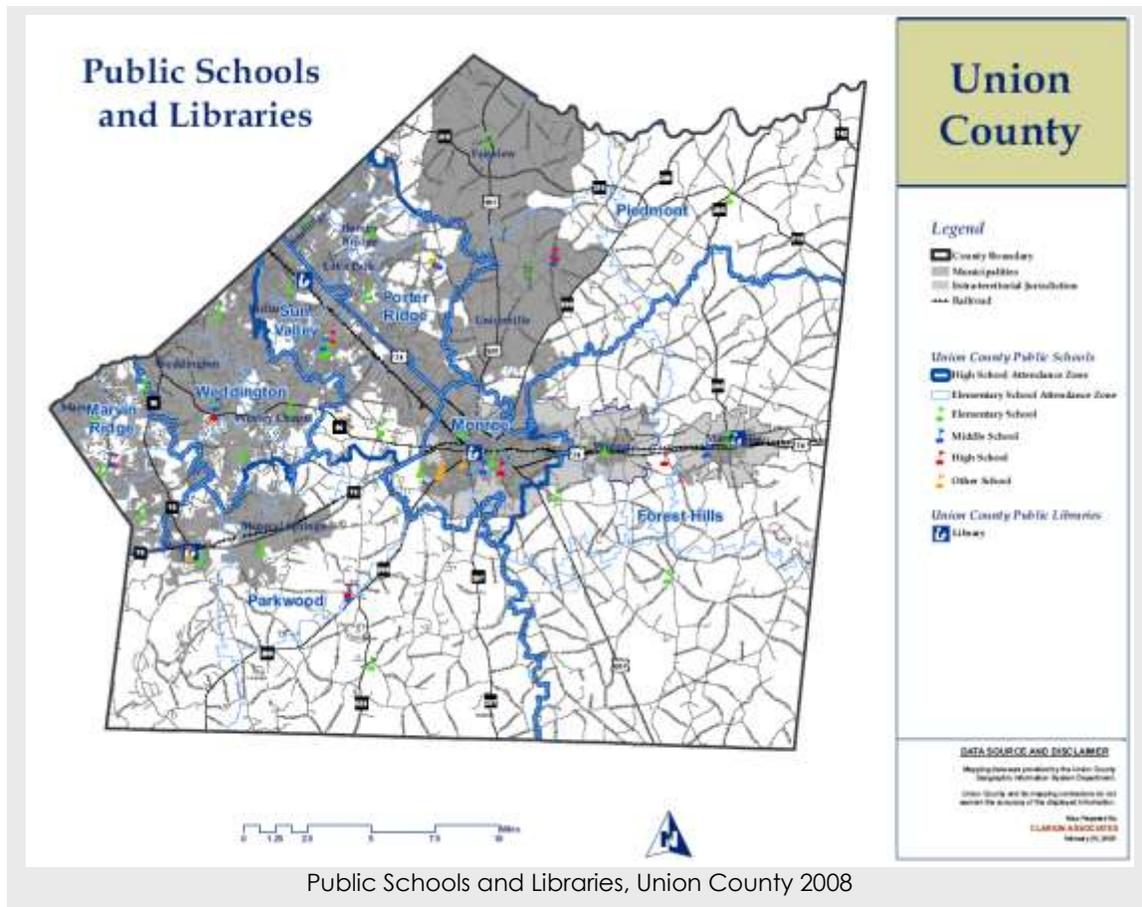
In planning for school system capital needs, UCPS coordinates with the County and, to the extent possible, the municipalities to plan for growth. In Union County, schools follow development of subdivisions and it is necessary for the jurisdictions to share information to properly plan for future demands.

To address over capacity schools and future student demand, the school system has an ongoing initiative to plan, design, and construct new facilities and expand existing facilities. As part of this process, UCPS purchased several school sites in the 2006-2007 school year. The current construction schedule sets out plans for 36 construction projects that will be completed during the 2008-2011 timeframe. The following map illustrates projects in the current phase of planning.



UCPS recently completed a Comprehensive Facilities Study that evaluated existing conditions and made recommendations for future facility upgrades. It is expected that future development will be occurring in the eastern portions of the County where sewer treatment capacity is available to new development and access will be provided by the new US-74 connector/bypass. The system is pursuing an effort to encourage joint use of public facilities, such as schools and parks to better use public fiscal resources.

The following map shows the location of existing school facilities and libraries in Union County. A full page map is found in Appendix B.



COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Wingate University currently has 2,041 students enrolled and offers forty undergraduate degrees in arts and sciences, business, education, fine arts, music and sport sciences. The university also has a School of Pharmacy and offers master programs in business, education, physical education, physician assistant studies and sports administration.

South Piedmont Community College has an established satellite campus in Monroe. The mission of the college is “learning, student success, and workforce and community development.” Courses offered at the college include a wide array and can be provided through the traditional classroom environment or through online courses. Associate degrees and certification programs are available for a wide range of careers, including health services, real estate appraisal, plumbing and mechanical engineering, accounting, advertising, and graphic design, and more.

LIBRARIES

There are four libraries in Union County; Marshville Branch Library, Union County Public Library, Union West Branch Library, and Waxhaw Library. The County is currently planning for the development of a fifth library.

APPENDIX B: MAPS



Maps

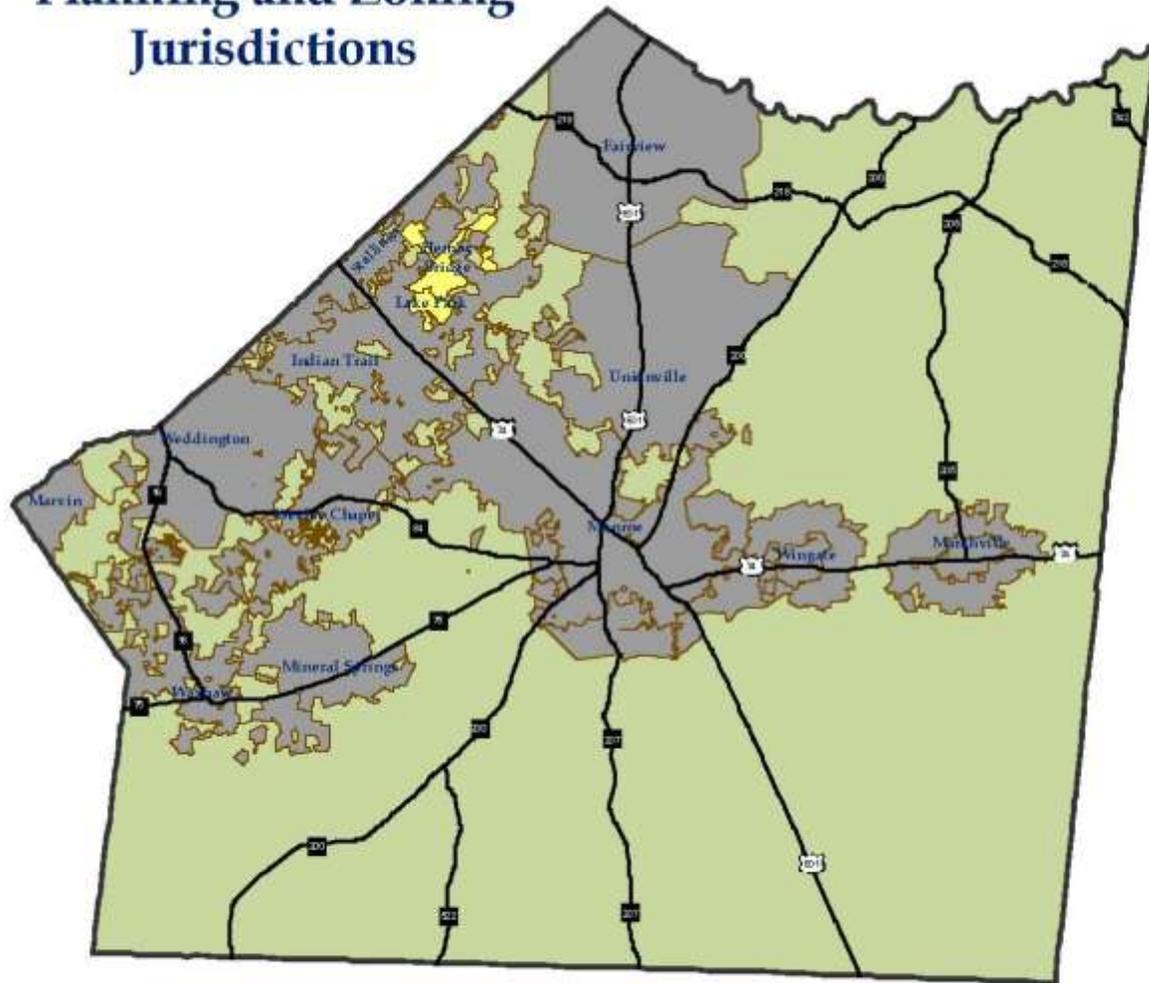
EXISTING CONDITIONS INVENTORY

- Planning and Zoning Jurisdictions in Union County
- Existing Land Use
- Potential Development Areas
- New Retail Projects
- Existing Industrial/Business Parks
- Projected Markets for Retail and Industrial Employment Centers
- Existing Transportation System
- 2007 Average Annual Daily Traffic County
- Public Schools and Libraries
- Existing and Potential County Park Sites
- Environmental Features
- Major Watersheds
- Habitat and Natural Heritage Areas

FUTURE LAND USE

- Future Land Use (Union County Jurisdiction)
- Future Land Use (All Jurisdictions in County)
- Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plans (Union County Jurisdiction)
- Future Land Use and Thoroughfare Plans (All Jurisdictions in Union County)

Planning and Zoning Jurisdictions



Union County

Legend

-  Municipal Zoning Jurisdiction
-  Municipal Jurisdiction with County Zoning
-  County Zoning Jurisdiction

DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

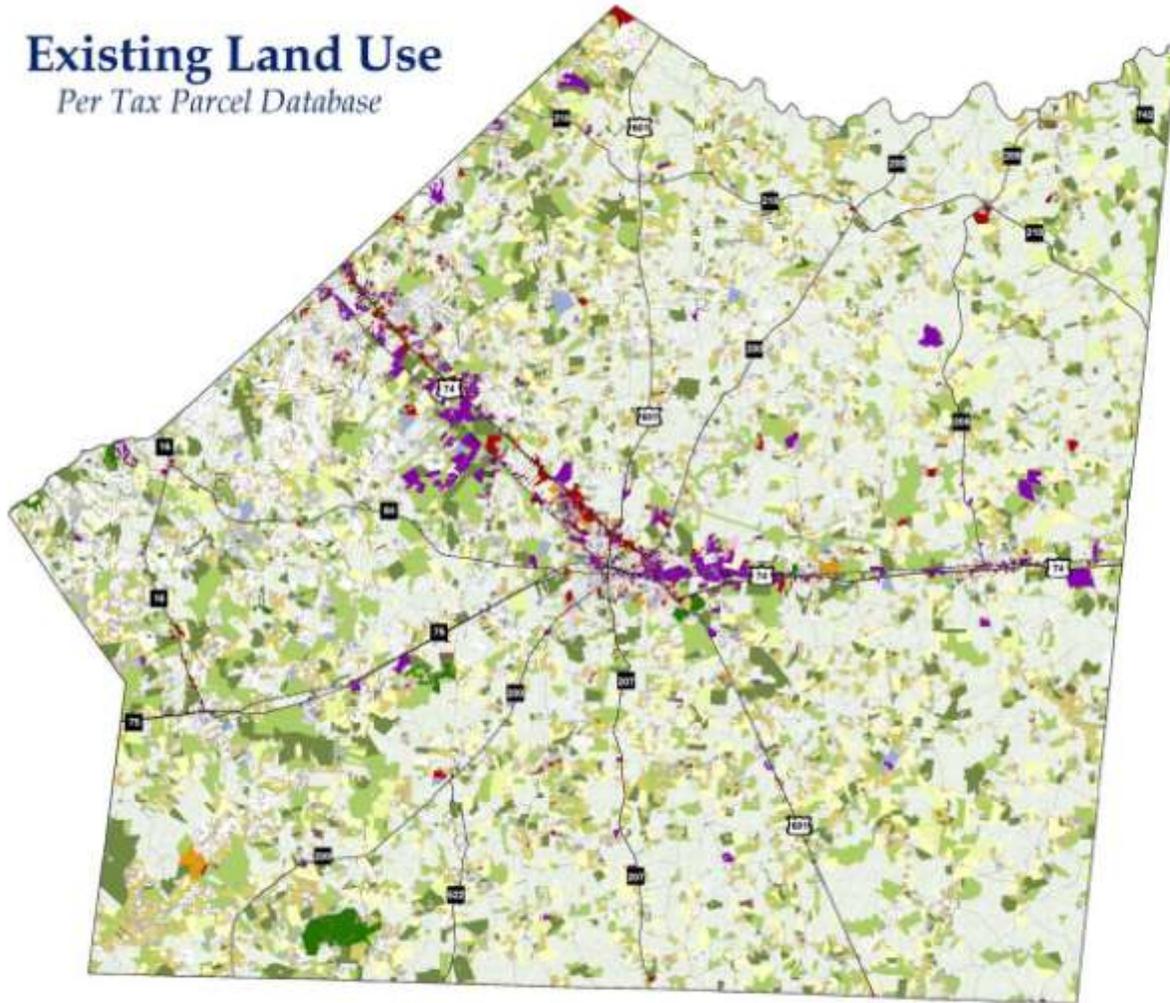
Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department via the County's website: http://maps.ut.union.nc.us/GIS_new2.htm

Union County and its mapping contractor do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared By:
CLARION ASSOCIATES
August 2, 2007

Existing Land Use

Per Tax Parcel Database



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
- Highways
- Roads
- Railroads

Existing Land Use

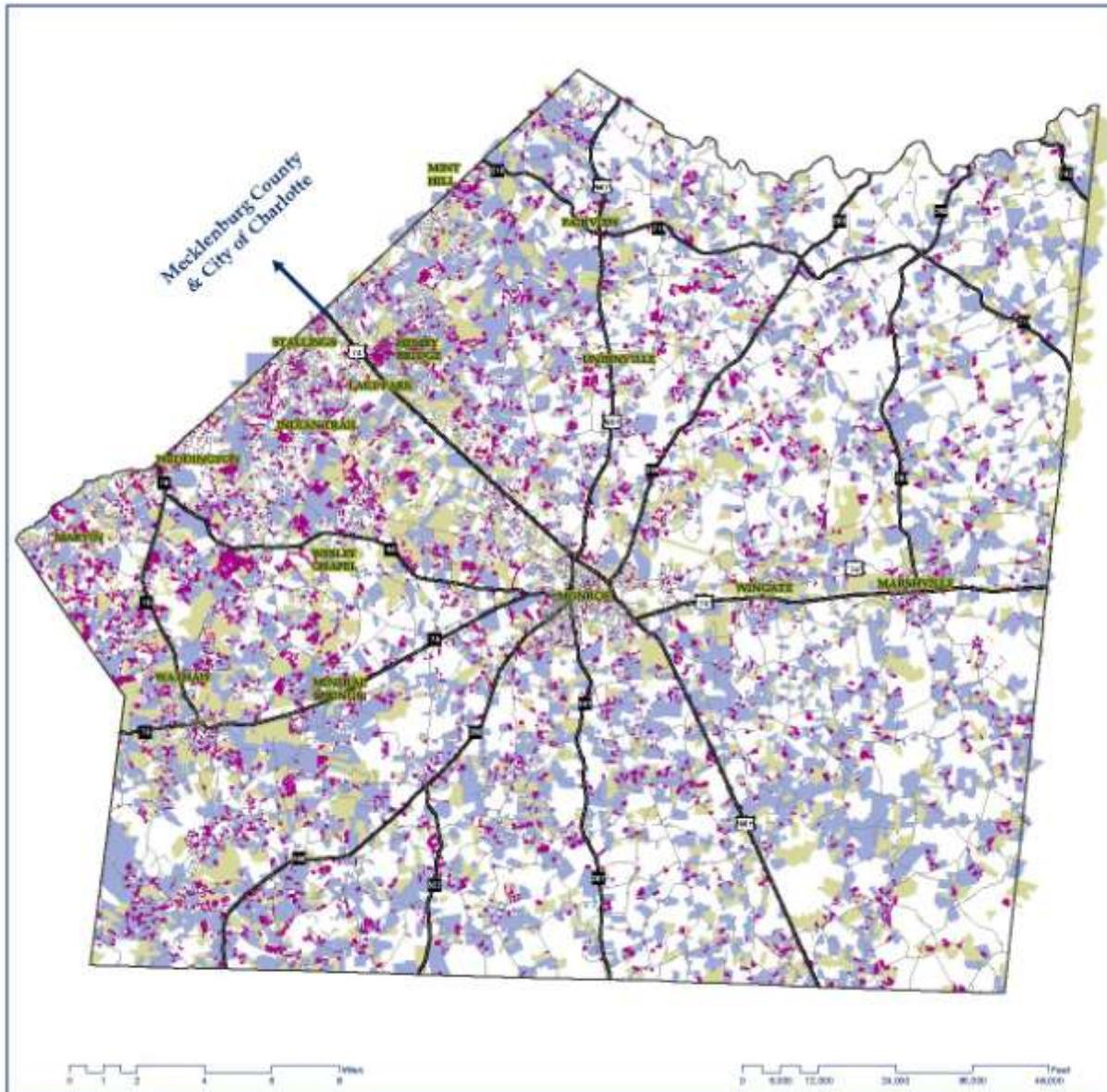
- Parks Recreation & Open Space
- Land Use Value Agriculture
- Undeveloped Rural/Agriculture
- Improved Agriculture (Structures)
- Single-Family Residential (Large lot 100+ acres)
- Single-Family Residential Estate (20-99 acres)
- Single-Family Residential (Less than 20 acres)
- Mobile Homes
- Multi-Family Residential
- Vacant Lots
- Group or Other Housing
- Civic/Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Office

DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department via the County's website. <http://maps.union-nc.gov> if available, view it first.

Union County and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared By
CLARION ASSOCIATES
 July 31, 2007



Union County

Potential Development Areas

Legend

Potential Development Status Categories

- Short-Term Development Potential
- Mid-Term Development Potential
- Long-Term Development Potential



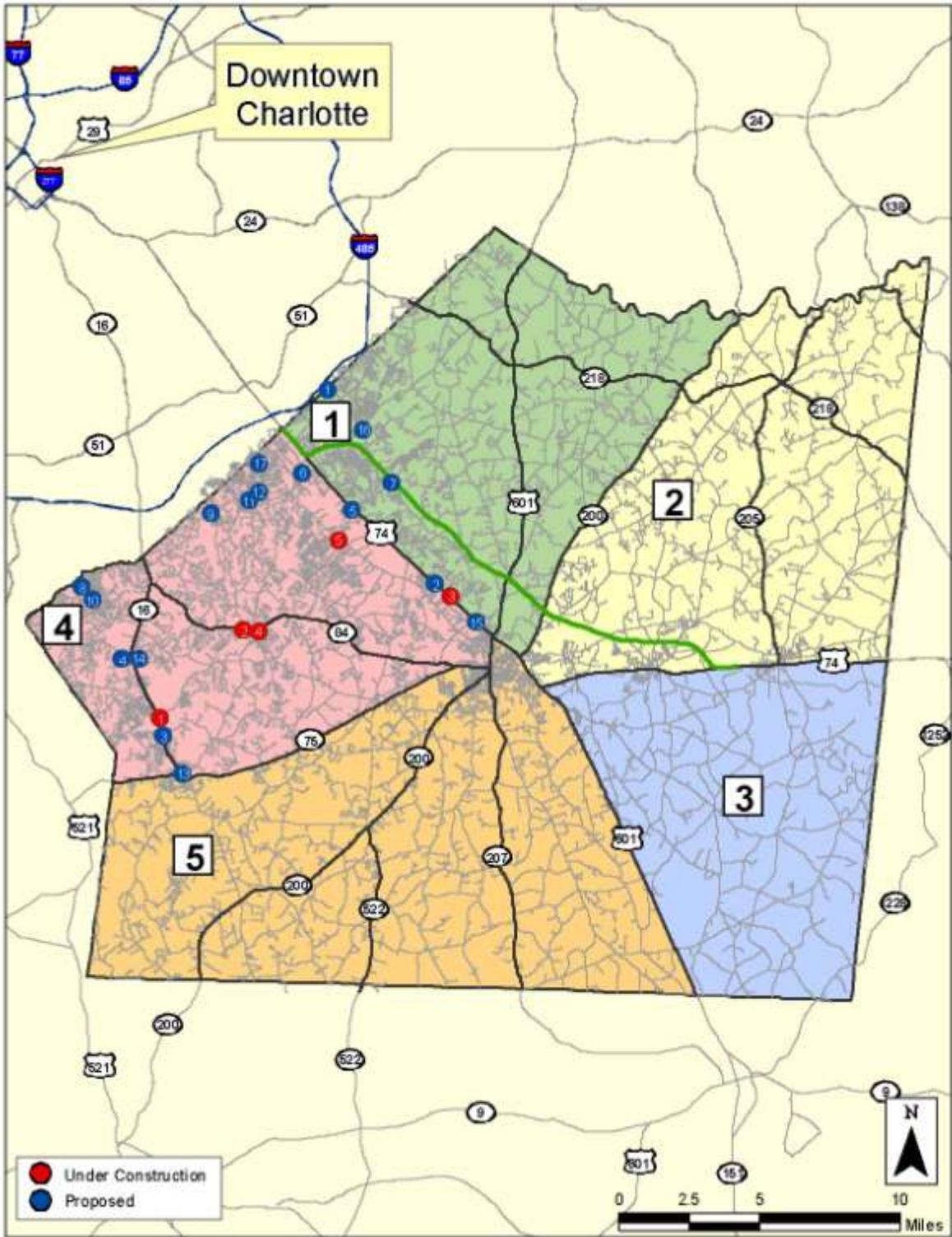
SCALE

1" = 1 MILE
When printed at 34" x 44" scale.

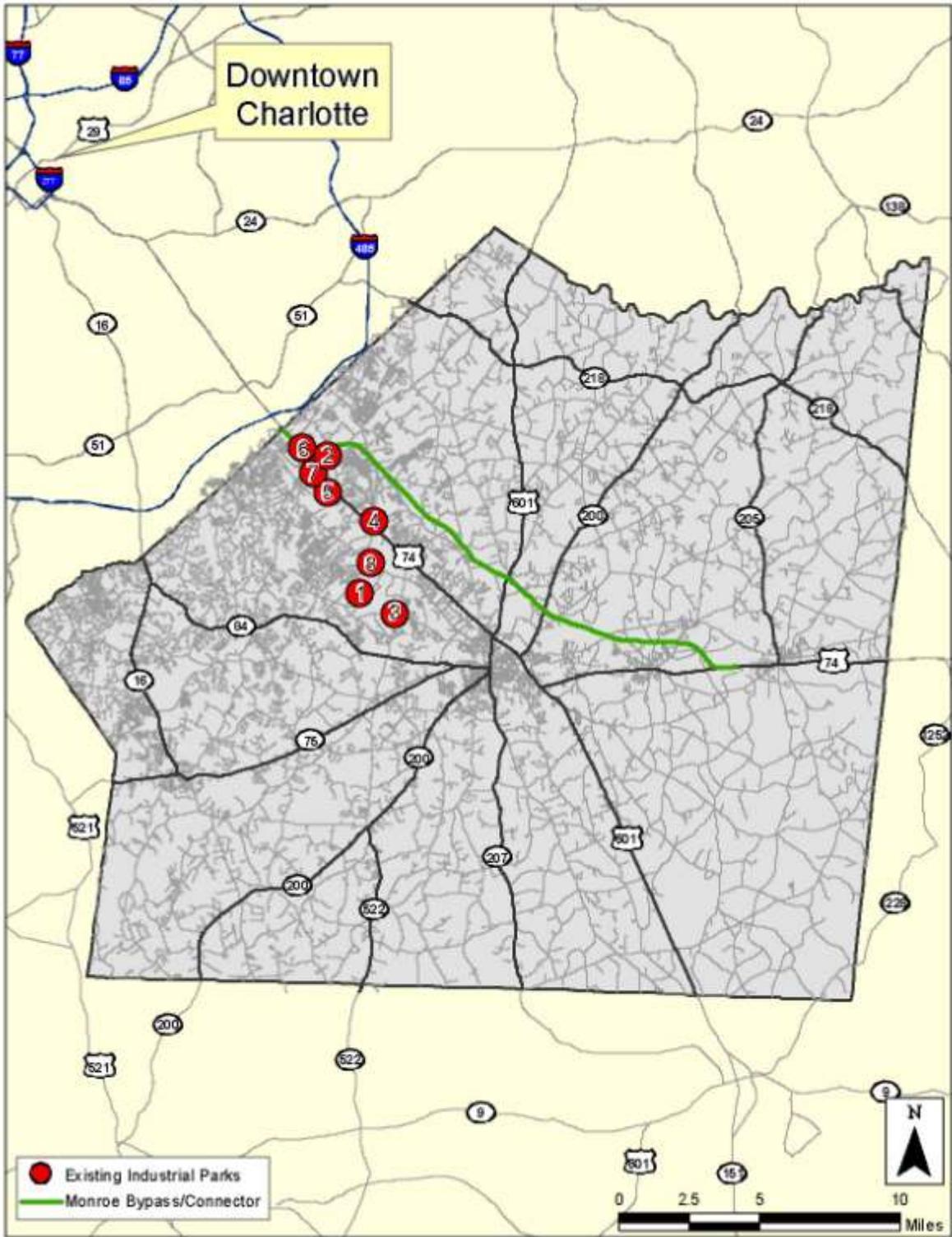
DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department as the County's master. Information is not intended for use in any application where accuracy is critical. Users are encouraged to verify coordinates and not rely on the accuracy of the displayed information.

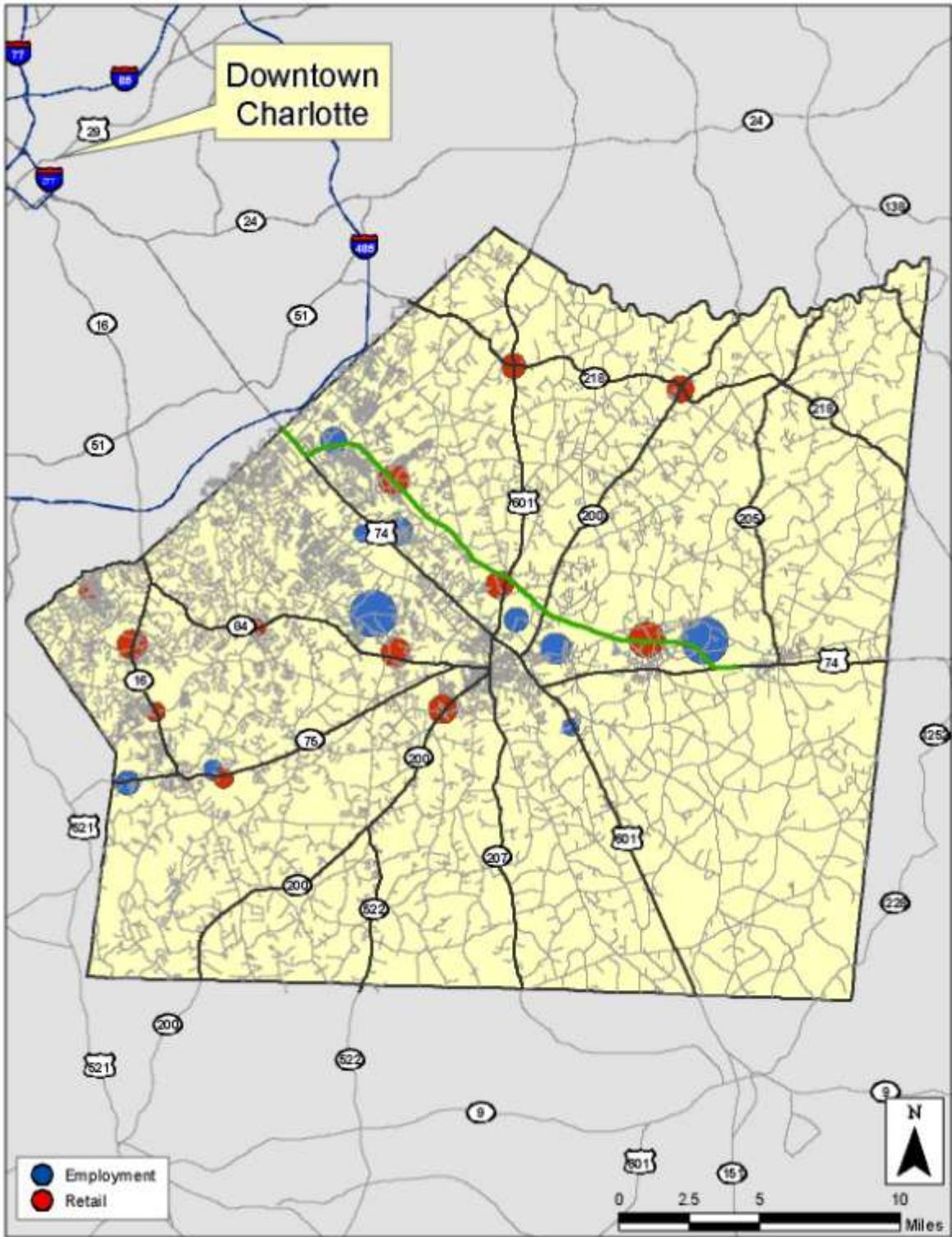
Map Prepared By:
ELANOR ASSOCIATES
March 15, 2006



New Retail Projects

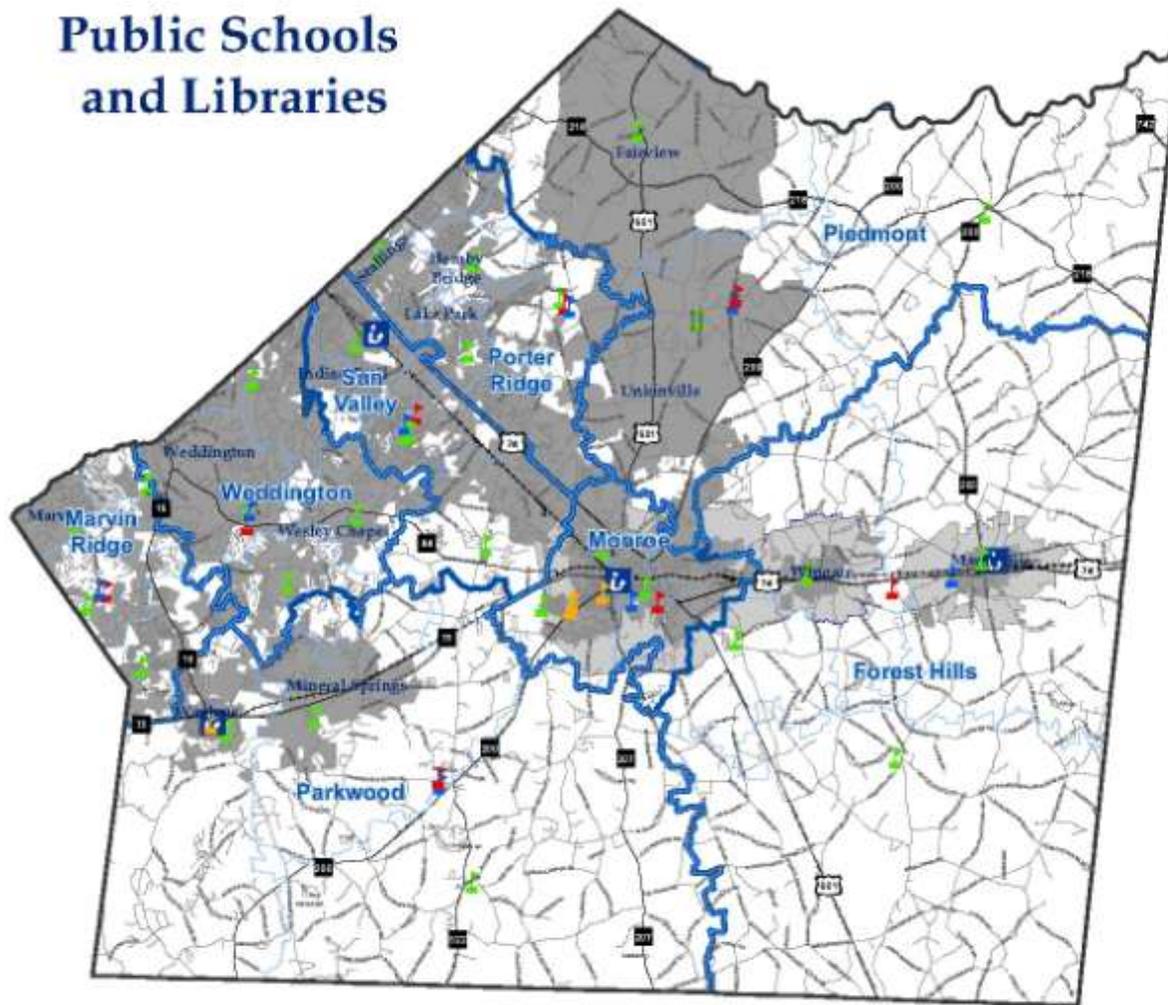


Existing Industrial / Business Parks



Projected Markets for Retail and Industrial Employment Centers

Public Schools and Libraries



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipalities
- Extra-territorial Jurisdiction
- Railroad

Union County Public Schools

- High School Attendance Zone
- Elementary School Attendance Zone
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Other School

Union County Public Libraries

- Library

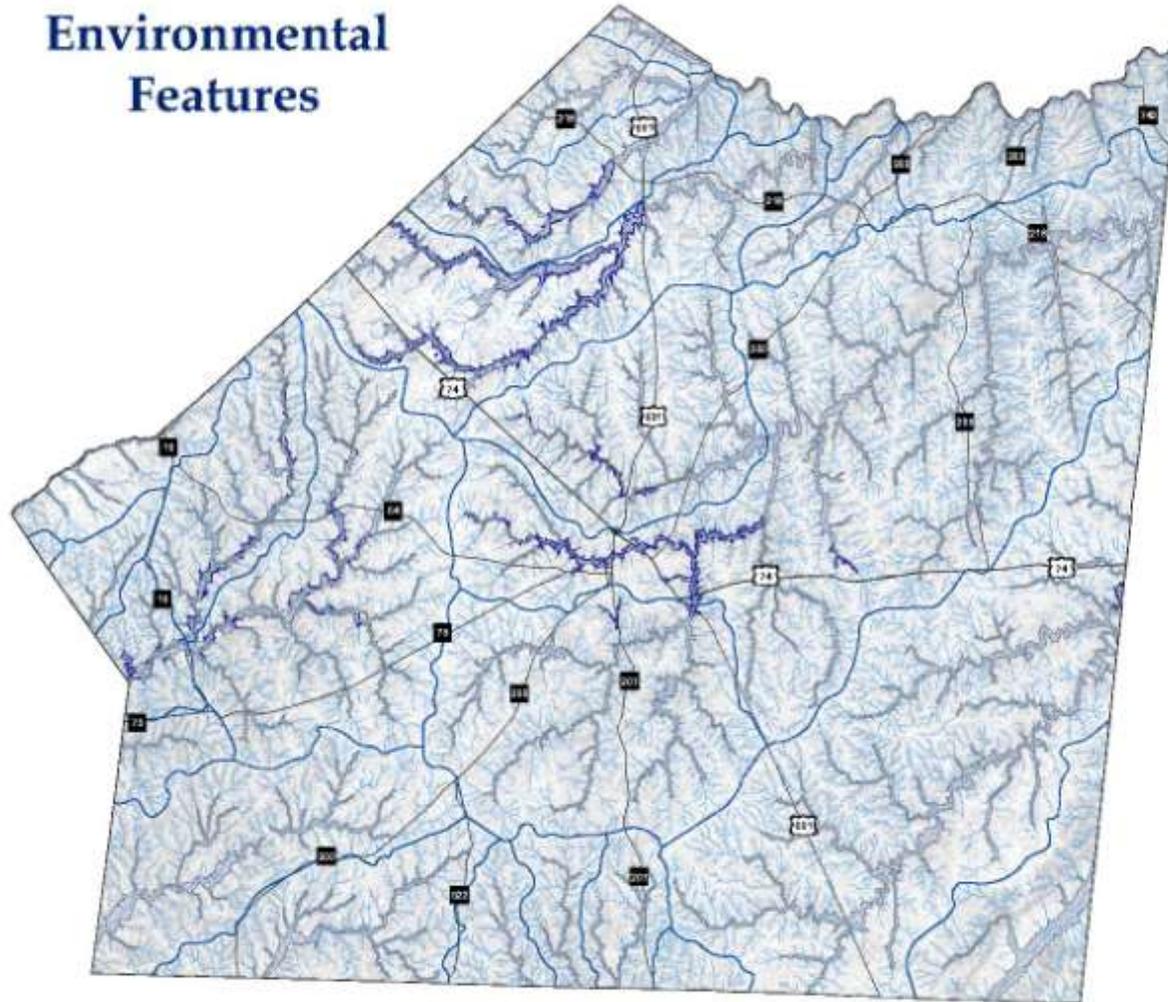
DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department.

Users should use the mapping information as is and not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES
 February 20, 2018

Environmental Features



Union County

Legend

- Basin Boundary
- 100-Year Floodplain
- 500-Year Floodplain
- Water Features
- 10 Foot Contour Line

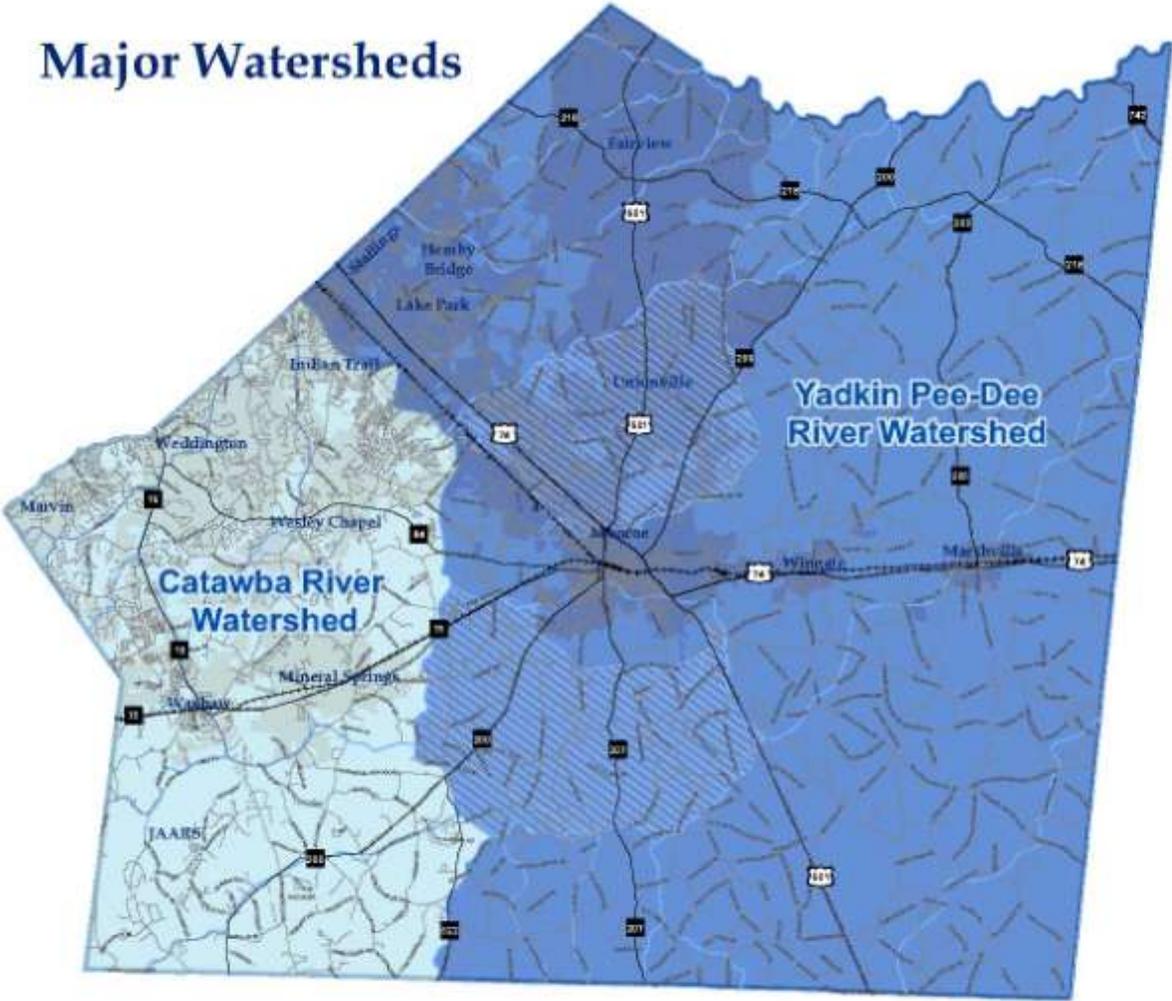
DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department via the County's website: <http://maps.union-nc.gov/arcgis/arcswt.htm>

Union County and its mapping contractor do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared By:
CLARION ASSOCIATES
July 21, 2007

Major Watersheds



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipalities
- Railroad
- Watersheds**
- Catawba River
- Yadkin Pee-Dee River
- Sub-Watersheds
- Protected Watersheds

DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

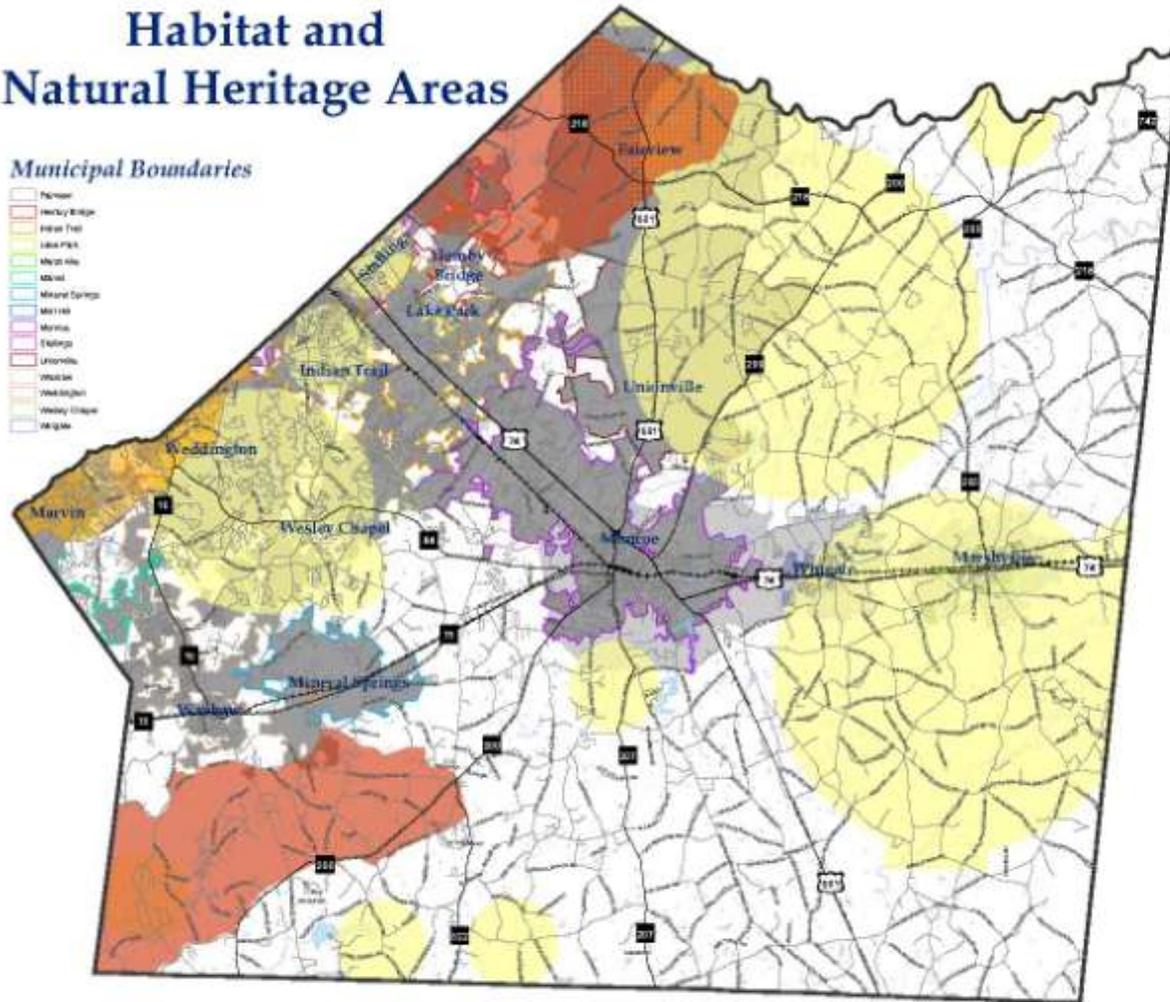
Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department. Users should use the mapping information as a guide and not rely on the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared by:
CLARION ASSOCIATES
 February 20, 2018

Habitat and Natural Heritage Areas

Municipal Boundaries

- Pharr
- Healy Bridge
- Indian Trail
- Lake Park
- Marvin
- Midland
- Midland Springs
- Marvin
- Edwards
- Unionville
- Wesley Chapel



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
 - Municipalities
 - Extra-territorial Jurisdiction
 - Railroad
 - Water Features
- Endangered Species Habitat (Federal Listing)**
- Carolina Hooplogger Habitat
 - Primary Habitat
 - Critical Habitat
 - Occupied Habitat
- Schweinitz's Sunflower - habitat data not available.
- Natural Heritage Areas (State Listing)**
- Natural Heritage Area
 - Species Element Occurrences

DATA SOURCE AND DISCLAIMER

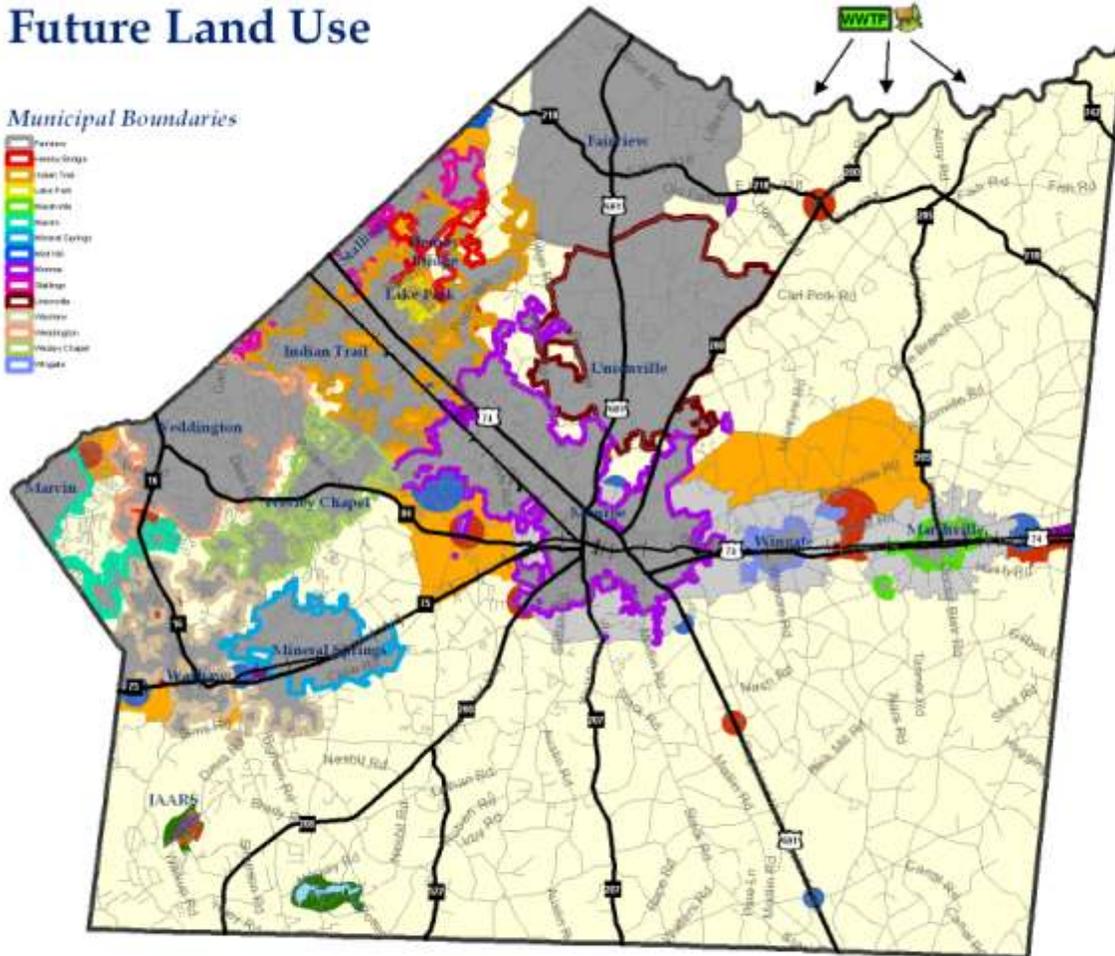
Mapping data was provided by the Union County Geographic Information System Department.

Union County and its mapping contractors do not warrant the accuracy of the displayed information.

Map Prepared for:
CLARION ASSOCIATES
 March 4, 2008

Future Land Use

Municipal Boundaries



Union County

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipalities
- Extra-territorial Jurisdiction
- Railroad
- Water Features

Future Land Use

- Residential**
 - Low-Density (0-1 DU/Acre)
 - Medium-Density (1-2.5 DU/Acre)
 - Urban-Density (2.5-5 DU/Acre)
- Use-Intensive**
 - Commercial Center
 - Industrial
 - Employment Center (Office, Industrial, other)
 - Office/Institutional
 - Future Study Area for Possible Development Nodes
- GreenSpace**
 - Parks and Open Space
- Other**
 - Future Need for County Park for This Area of County
 - Future Need for Waste Water Treatment Plant for This Area of County

DISCLAIMER/RESOLUTIONS:
 Mapping data is provided for the Union County Program/Operational/Code Departments.
 Union County will be liable for corrections or not correct for accuracy unless displayed otherwise.

Map Prepared by:
 CLARENCE ASSOCIATES
 April 4, 2010

Planning Board Recommendations:
 Map updated by:
 Union County GIS Department
 February 17, 2010
 February 22, 2010

