

# TOWN OF DALLAS

## 2030 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Adopted June 14th, 2022



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# 1. Introduction

## PURPOSE

In Fall 2021, the Town of Dallas began the process to update its Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The existing plan was adopted in 2003, making it almost 20 years old. The decision to update the plan was necessitated by changes to Chapter 160D (the North Carolina General Statutes which authorize development regulation), which dictated that all towns with zoning ordinances needed an up-to-date comprehensive plan by July 1, 2022. Additionally, in the almost 20 years since the previous plan was adopted, the Town of Dallas and the surrounding region have experienced significant growth and change. Consequently, the challenges and opportunities which the Town faces both today and in the future have also changed. This plan provided a chance to revisit the priorities set forth in the previous plan and craft a new vision for the Town of Dallas. Going forward, this plan will serve as the primary guiding framework for how Dallas will manage development and provide a high quality of life to its citizens.

## PLANNING PROCESS

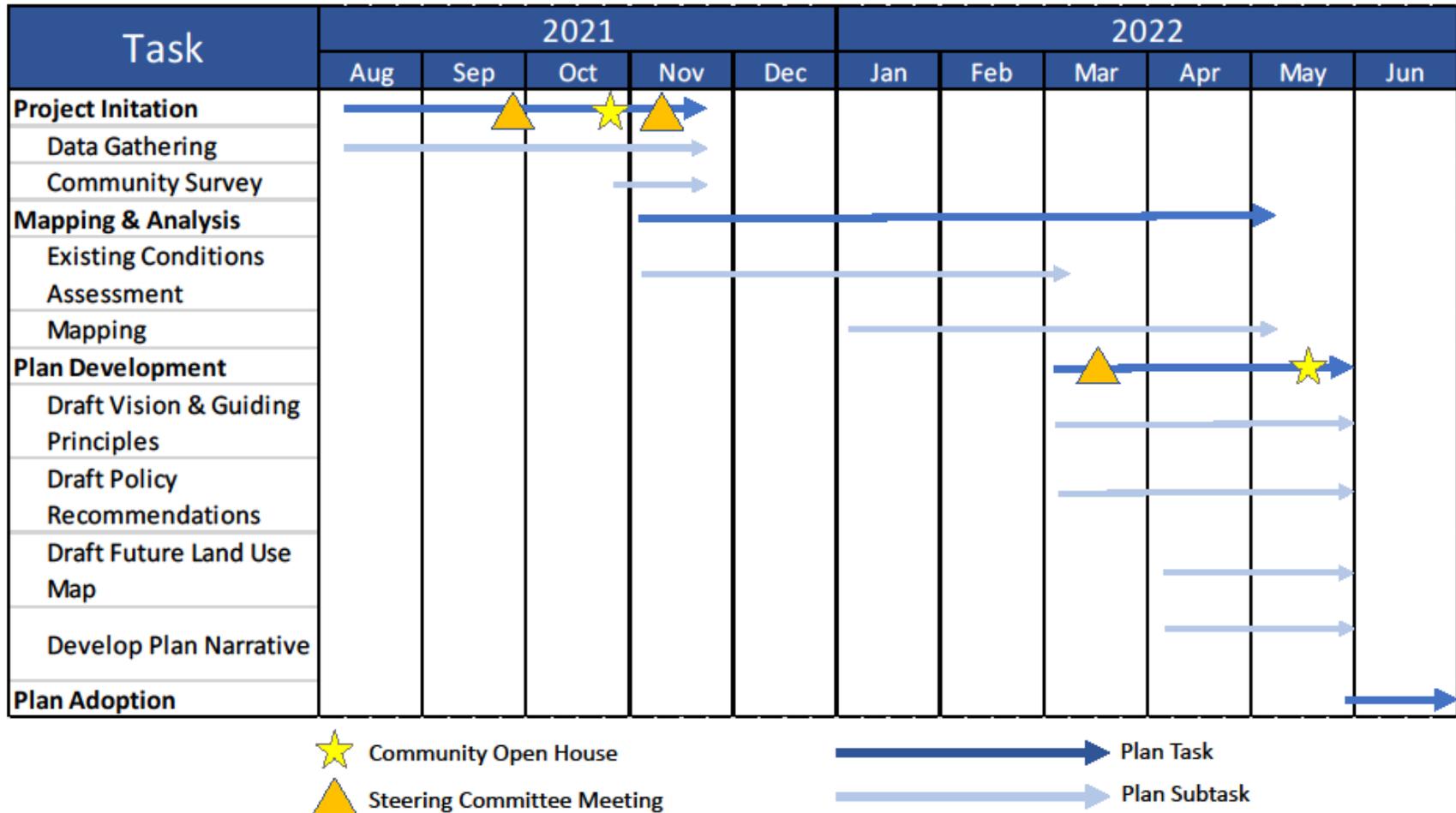
The Town of Dallas began the land use plan update on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, and the plan was officially adopted by the Council on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The plan establishes a vision for the entire community on a broad array of topics such as land use and economic development, so a detailed approach which involved as many voices as possible was utilized in the

development of the plan. The project consultants, under the guidance of Town staff, facilitated the bulk of the planning activities. However, the feedback provided by the members of the public, appointed and elected officials, and other community stakeholders was fundamental in crafting the vision, goals, and recommendations of the plan. A steering committee comprised of members of the public met routinely during plan development and offered crucial feedback. Other engagement opportunities included a community-wide survey and several open houses. Going forward, the community will continue to play a role in the implementation of the plan.

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The structure of this plan is set up so that reader's can see the underlying conditions of the Town, its goals, and its specific strategies to accomplish its goals. The current chapter (Chapter 1) introduces the overall purpose and context for the plan. Chapter 2 explores the history and existing conditions of the Town with regards to demographics, transportation, land use, and other important categories. Chapter 3 summarizes the public engagement process, and the vision and goals that were developed from the community's input. Chapter 4 provides specific implementation strategies to achieve the overarching goals established for the Town of Dallas. Chapter 5 describes the types and locations of land uses envisioned in the Future Land Use Map, and Chapter 6 outlines plan implementation strategies.

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE



## 2. Existing Conditions

### HISTORY

The Town of Dallas, located just north of Gastonia, is the oldest municipality in Gaston County. After Gaston County was incorporated in 1846, Dallas was made its county seat due to its central location. In 1863, the Town of Dallas itself was officially incorporated. The original boundaries were all lands “within one-half mile in every direction from the courthouse”, reflecting Dallas’s prominence as a political center. The Courthouse Square is still the defining feature of downtown.

As railroads were introduced to the region in the late 1800s, Dallas was not included along any routes. Conversely, nearby Gastonia, which had railroad access, became an important center of the textile industry. Gastonia’s population expanded, and it became the county seat in 1911. Even so, Dallas remained an important, albeit small, center of commerce in the region. It’s nickname, “The Crossroads of Gaston County”, reflects how its geographic positioning at the center of Gaston County was a defining characteristic of the community. The same holds true today, given its proximity to the Interstate 85 and Interstate 321 interchange.

With a 2020 population of just 5927, Dallas has retained much of its small-town charm over the years. In addition, it has also retained a rich historical legacy, reflected in its downtown architecture and its cultural amenities, such as the Gaston County Museum. Today, Dallas has garnered a reputation as a friendly community with a high quality-of-life.



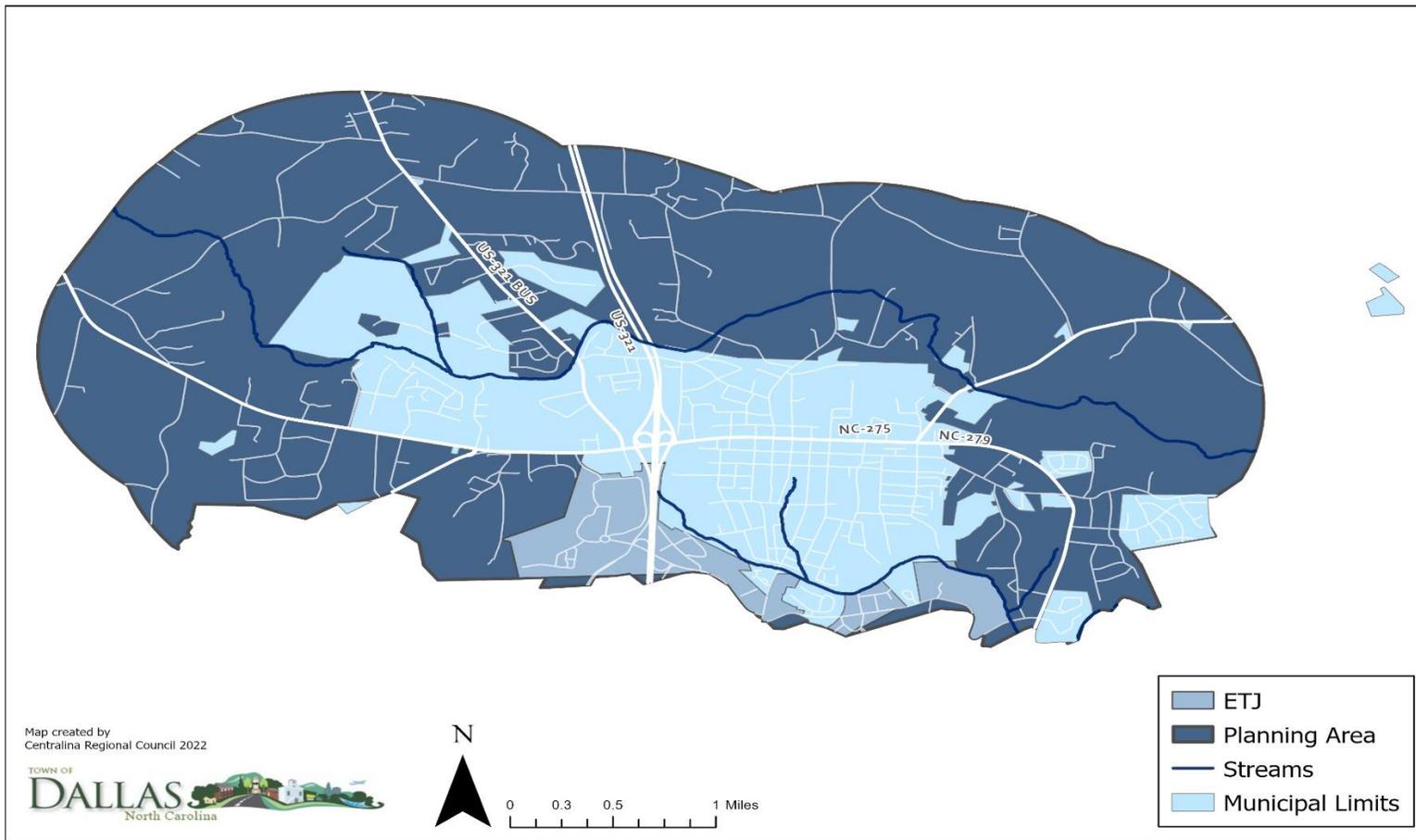
The Dallas Courthouse, at the center of Courthouse Square, has been the center of civic and social life since the Town’s inception



The Gaston County Museum, housed in the historic Hoffman Hotel, continues to represent Dallas’s unique contributions to Gaston County’s history.

## STUDY AREA

The Town of Dallas is located centrally in Gaston County, and the municipal limits (shown in light blue on the map) cover 2.93 square miles. The town does have an ETJ (shown in grey blue), which covers an area of 0.56 square miles (including the Gaston College campus). However, for this plan, a larger planning area has been designated (shown in dark blue). The planning area covers 11.25 square miles. US 321 is a major transportation corridor which intersects the town, and the US 321 and Interstate I-85 interchange is roughly 3 miles away. Dallas is conveniently located approximately 25 miles from uptown Charlotte.



## CONTRIBUTING PLANS

While this comprehensive plan will be the primary guiding document for the Town of Dallas, several other plans were consulted in the development process and will continue to play an important role for the town moving forward. Those plans are as follows:

### Town of Dallas

- Town of Dallas Zoning Ordinance & Zoning Map
- Town of Dallas Land Use Plan (2003)
- Town Center Plan (2013)
- Town of Dallas Economic Development Assessment (2018)
- Town of Dallas Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan Draft (2021)

### Gaston County

- Gaston County 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

### GCLMPO

- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)

### Other

- State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)

## ZONING ORDINANCE & ZONING MAP

While the Comprehensive Land Use plan will serve as the guiding document for growth and development in Dallas, the ordinances and zoning map serve as the legal requirements for the type of development and uses which are permitted within the town. For example, if the Comprehensive Land Use plan suggests that a certain district is appropriate for higher-density development, any development within that district must still meet the requirements of the ordinances. So, while the Comprehensive Land Use plan can be thought of as the roadmap that shows the town where it should go, the ordinances can be thought of as the lanes which dictate where it can or cannot go. Together, the two work in unison to help the town achieve its goals in a safe, predictable manner.

Currently, the town has fifteen different zones, enumerated in the following categories: Single-Family Residential (R-15, R-12, R-10, R-5); Multi-Family Residential (R-8, R-6); Office and Institutional (O and I-1); Business (BC-1, B-1, B-2, B-3, B-3P), Industrial (I-2), and Multi-Family Districts (RMF, RMF-H). In addition, the ordinances provide guidance on the uses, building standards, and other elements which must be used in each zone. The zoning map (Figure 1 below) shows where each zone falls within the municipal boundaries.

The zoning ordinances and zoning map are located on the Town of Dallas website.

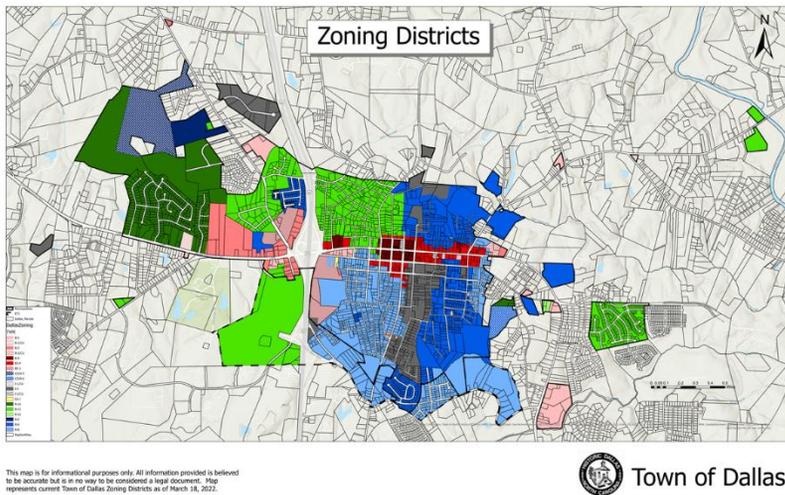


Figure 1: Town of Dallas Zoning Districts Map

### TOWN OF DALLAS LAND USE PLAN (2003)

Prior to the development of this plan, the Town of Dallas’s last land use plan was adopted in 2003. At the time, the plan thoroughly reflected the needs and desires of the community. A community survey was distributed to town citizens, and 70 people attended an open forum. A Land Use Plan Steering Committee was consulted for the goals and recommendations of the plan, as well as the future land use map. The work was also supported by students from the UNC Charlotte Master of Public Administration program, who developed a “Strategic Plan for Economic Development Growth and Redevelopment”. However, in the twenty years since that plan’s adoption, the context has changed drastically. A new plan was needed to

both ensure conformity with NC General Statute 160D, but also to provide a refreshed blueprint for Dallas based on current and future conditions.

That said, an important consideration during the development of this plan was how to maintain consistency with the pre-existing plan where possible. Indeed, despite changing conditions, many of Dallas’s goals have remained constant over time. Here are a few of the previous plan’s goals as examples:

- To maintain downtown Dallas as the community’s focal point
- To maintain and enhance the Town’s aesthetic qualities and physical character
- To improve upon the pedestrian realm that already exists throughout the community
- To provide safe and convenient mobility for Dallas residents of all ages
- To ensure that the park and recreation needs of Dallas residents are met with adequate recreational facilities in the area

### TOWN CENTER PLAN (2013)

This plan, adopted in 2013, provides a detailed examination of the Town of Dallas’s ‘town center’, which is roughly comprised of the 100 block of West Trade Street, the intersections at both ends, and the Historic Courthouse and grounds.

Specifically, the plan addresses both the need to preserve and celebrate the historic resources of the town center, as well as how those historic resources can be utilized for economic growth and vitality. The plan’s recommendations follow the Main Street Four Point Approach® to revitalization, which is a method established by the National Main Street Center, Inc. (NMSC). Its four basic tenets are as follows:

1. *Organization* – ‘building partnerships with diverse organizations that have an interest in revitalization of the Dallas Town Center’
2. *Promotion* – ‘creating greater interest and ownership by the community in the value of the Dallas Town Center, including ways to make it a center of community life’
3. *Design* – ‘projects (both public and private) and policies that enhance the visual qualities and historic assets of Dallas Town Center’
4. *Economic Restructuring* – ‘measures to successfully rebuild a new diverse economic base in the town center, with a focus on small businesses’

The plan also outlines specific strategies for each of these four approaches, such as “Create a brand for Dallas Town Center” under *Promotion*. For this updated comprehensive plan, the importance of downtown Dallas emerged as an important theme from the community survey, steering committee, and open house events, and the Town Center Plan’s recommendations were considered in the development of new goals and recommendations outlined in a later chapter of

this plan. In addition, the Town Center Plan itself remains a relevant document which should be referenced in decisions regarding downtown Dallas.



Figure 2: The renovated Dallas Courthouse, which is an important landmark for the Dallas Town Center.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT (2018)**

This plan was adopted in 2019 and was produced by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center (MS&RP). The focus of this plan was to provide an assessment of the economic conditions in Dallas, which could be used to initiate economic development efforts. Building on the Town Center Plan (2013), the plan emphasizes the importance of downtown Dallas in any potential economic redevelopment efforts.

The plan utilizes several elements as part of its assessment, including:

- Asset identification
- Collection of demographic and retail market data
- SWOT analysis
- Interviews with the Local Work Group and other community stakeholders

From these steps, the plan team developed a set of recommendations for Dallas. One of the main recommendations was to “Update the town’s land use plan and consider ordinances/regulation based on best practices of successful downtown districts”. Thus, it is clear to see how the updated comprehensive land use plan is an evolution of the groundwork that Dallas laid out in this plan and other earlier plans. As with the Land Use Plan (2003) and the Town Center Plan (2013), the recommendations in the Economic Development Assessment (EDA) were utilized for the goals and recommendations included in a later chapter. Additionally, the recommendations in the EDA remain largely relevant.

### **BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN DRAFT (2021)**

This plan was initiated in 2018 after the Town of Dallas and Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization submitted an application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for a 2019 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant. The Final Draft of the plan was finalized in June 2021, although at the time of this plan’s adoption, the Final Draft has not yet been adopted. The overarching vision as expressed in the draft plan is as follows:

*“Supported by a citywide network of sidewalks, bikeways, and trails, walking and bicycling in the Town of Dallas will be safe, convenient, and comfortable for users of all ages and abilities.”*

The plan presents an inventory of Dallas’s existing and planned networks, as well as an estimation of pedestrian and bicycle demand. From this, the plan proposes recommended sidewalk, bikeway, and trail facilities. It also provides design guidelines, local development policies and regulations, non-infrastructure programs, prioritization criteria, and funding sources and strategies which should all be considered during implementation of the recommended facilities.

Mobility emerged as an important, cross-cutting theme in this updated comprehensive land use plan; as such, the recommendations in the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan were considered during the development of this plan’s goals and recommendations. Further, implementing the recommendations of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will be a crucial step towards implementing the overall vision of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

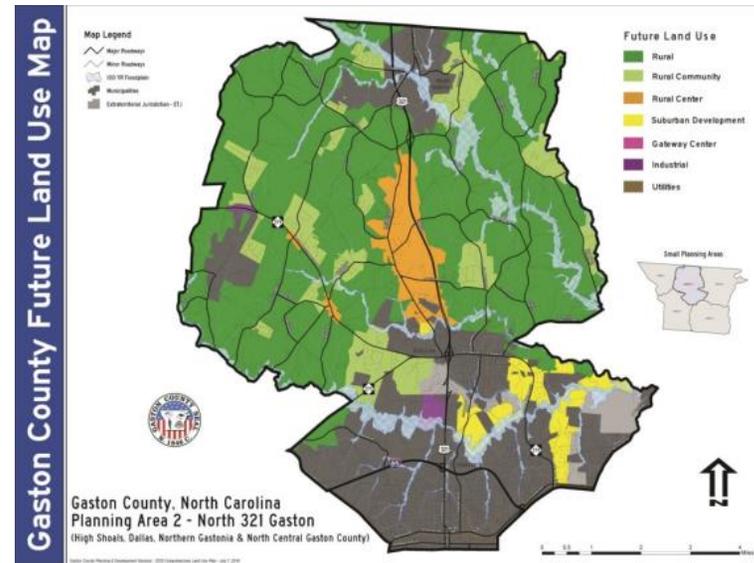
### **GASTON COUNTY 2035 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN**

This plan was adopted in 2016, and it serves as Gaston County’s guide for change, growth, and development over the twenty-year period past its adoption. Although the plan

broadly applies to all of Gaston County, it is still an important resource for the Town of Dallas. The plan’s development was guided by various boards and committees which included representation from the Town of Dallas, as well as public feedback from open house sessions. The Gaston County plan outlines the major regional trends in demography, economics, and transportation; further, it addresses some of the specific key issues the county and municipalities will face in the near and long-term future.

The plan divides Gaston County into five Small Area Planning Districts based on their similar land use and related factors. Dallas is included in Area 2, or the ‘North 321 Gaston/North Central Gaston (High Shoals, Dallas, and surrounding areas)’ district. The county plan presents a set of key issues for citizens within this district, as well as a future land use map (shown below). The key issues are:

- Preservation of open space
- Road improvements and better connectivity to other areas of the County and throughout the region
- More transportation alternatives
- Preservation of agriculture and maintaining the rural “feel” of the community
- Steer development towards existing infrastructure and areas immediately surrounding towns and cities



Source: Gaston County Planning & Development Services  
 Figure 3: Future Land Use Map for ‘Area 2’ in the Gaston County Land Use Plan

While the Town of Dallas is not bound to these considerations or to the county’s future land use map, they are derived partially from citizen and stakeholder feedback from Dallas community members. In addition, it is important to consider the county-wide perspective on land use and other issues to assure cooperation and factor regional issues into decisions.

### **METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)**

The 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GLCMPO) is the locally adopted, fiscally constrained, long-range transportation plan for Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln counties. Fiscal constraint requires that the document

includes sufficient financial information to demonstrate that projects in the plan can be implemented using committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources (federal, state, and local).

Projects included in the MTP for the Town of Dallas include:

- Lower Dallas Hwy Widening (2035 Horizon Year Project)
- Oakland St Modernization (2035 Horizon Year Project)
- Ratchford Rd (2045 Horizon Year Project)

While the Lower Dallas Hwy Widening is scheduled by NCDOT, funding issues have delayed the project. In addition, several projects in the Town of Dallas jurisdiction are included as “Unmet Needs”, which means that there is no current funding for the projects, but they have been identified as priorities. The 2050 GCLMPO MTP was adopted on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 and can be found on the GCLMPO website.

### COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

A CTP has been prepared for Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln counties and was adopted by the MPO Board in December 2016. The CTP represents the community’s consensus on the future transportation system (including the existing system and improvements) needed to support anticipated growth and development over the next 30+ years. The CTP is a joint effort between the GCLMPO, local counties, towns, and the NCDOT.

Unlike the MTP, the CTP does not include specific transportation projects or improvement schedules, but

instead represents the status or completeness of the comprehensive transportation system that may be required to support anticipated growth and development. By establishing the region’s future transportation needs, the CTP offers an organized way to identify, and eventually prioritize, the transportation projects that may be built in the communities within the GCLMPO area. The projects included as “Unmet Needs” in the MTP are included in the CTP.

Consequently, the CTP is a useful tool for the Town of Dallas to gauge where its current transportation gaps and opportunities may exist. For example, the Town of Dallas Bicycle and Pedestrian Draft Plan utilized the CTP as part of its existing and planned network inventory. CTP maps for Highway, Public Transportation and Rail, Bicycle, and Pedestrian facilities can be found on the GCLMPO website.

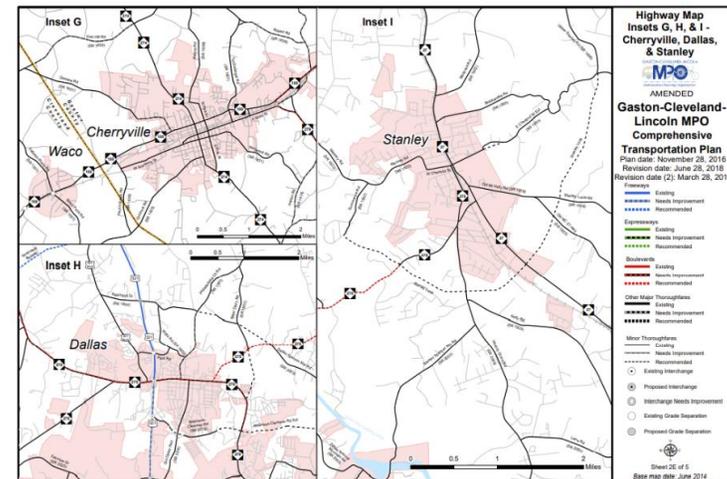


Figure 4: CTP Highway Map for Dallas

## STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (STIP)

The STIP is a current multi-year capital improvement document which gives the scheduling and funding of construction projects across the state over a 10-year period. The current STIP document time ranges are 2020 – 2029, and it is updated monthly based on amendments that are approved by the Board of Transportation (for GCLMPO and other MPOs). It is the most exhaustive and accurate reference for transportation projects which are currently planned and funded (at the state and federal level) for the Town of Dallas and the GCLMPO region. NCDOT also maintains a STIP map which shows all the projects in the STIP [at the following link](#).

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Dallas is one of fifteen municipalities in Gaston County. While there are some commonalities between each community, there are also distinct differences between Dallas and its peers in terms of population, growth, and other demographic features. The following sections contain some comparisons to other Gaston County communities, as well as Gaston County and North Carolina, to provide context to Dallas’s conditions.

## POPULATION GROWTH

The Town of Dallas, like many communities in the Charlotte Metro region, has experienced steady growth over the past ten years. The 2020 Census population estimate for the Town of Dallas was 5927 persons, which is an increase of 32.1

percent since 2010. This is considerably higher than the 10.6 percent and 9.5 percent growth rates for Gaston County and North Carolina, respectively, over the same period. Figure 6 shows the population growth of the remaining Gaston County communities over the past decade. Only two municipalities – Belmont and McAdenville – have seen higher growth rates. Both communities are positioned in the eastern portion of the county closer to Charlotte, yet the growth rate in Dallas, which is located more centrally, is comparable.

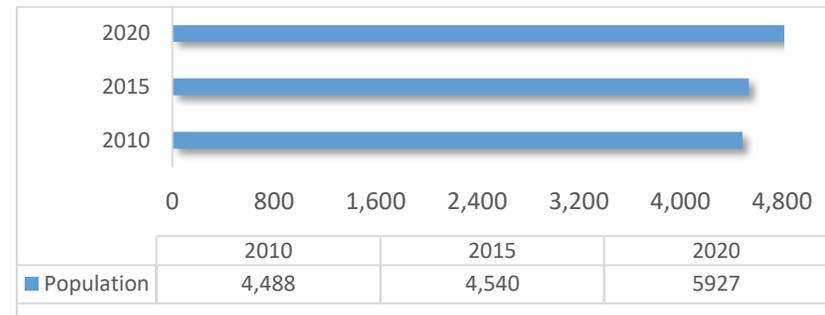


Figure 5: Population growth in Dallas

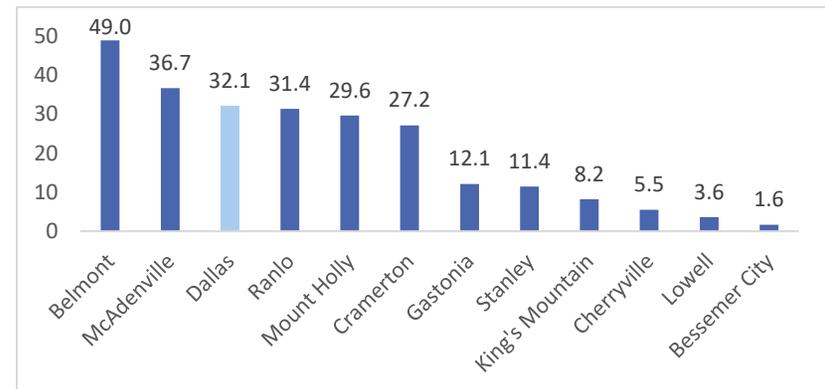


Figure 6: Population growth for Gaston County municipalities, 2010-2020 [NOTE: Dellview, Spencer Mountain, High Shoals not shown]

In addition, Dallas has been able to increase its population despite minimal annexations to its municipal boundaries over the past ten years. Figure 7 shows the population, growth rate, and increase in land area for the Gaston County municipalities. Despite ranking third in the population growth rate, Dallas ranks tenth in increase in land area. Since 2010, its land area has only increased by 1 percent, compared to 20.6 percent for Belmont and 10.4 percent for Mount Holly. Yet, despite growth which has been concentrated within the existing municipal limits, Dallas can continue to grow without annexation. As will be discussed in later sections, there is still a large amount of developable land within the municipal limits, as well as opportunities for in-fill development.

	POPULATION (2020)		PERCENT GROWTH (2010 TO 2020)		INCREASE IN LAND AREA (2010 TO 2020)	
1	Gastonia	80411	Belmont	49.0	Belmont	20.6
2	Mount Holly	17703	McAdenville	36.7	Mount Holly	10.4
3	Belmont	15010	Dallas	32.1	Bessemer City	9.0
4	King's Mountain	11142	Ranlo	31.4	Kings Mountain	8.4
5	Cherryville	6078	Mount Holly	29.6	Ranlo	6.1
6	Dallas	5927	Cramerton	27.2	Cramerton	4.3
7	Bessemer City	5428	Gastonia	12.1	Gastonia	2.3
8	Cramerton	5296	Stanley	11.4	Lowell	2.2
9	Ranlo	4511	King's Mountain	8.2	Dallas	1.0
10	Stanley	3963	Cherryville	5.5	Cherryville	0.5
11	Lowell	3654	Lowell	3.6	Stanley	0.5
12	McAdenville	890	Bessemer City	1.6	High Shoals	0.3
13	High Shoals	595	High Shoals	-14.5	McAdenville	0

Figure 7: Population, population growth, and increase in land area (square miles) for Gaston County municipalities [NOTE: Dellview, Spencer Mountain not shown]

## AGE

Dallas has a median age of 39.3 years, which is nearly identical to the median ages for Gaston County (40.1 years) and North Carolina (38.7 years). However, for older adults and youths, there are distinct differences. Figure 8 shows the percentage of persons who are 65 year or more and 19 years or less for Dallas, Gaston County, and North Carolina. Dallas has a lower percentage of residents 65+ and a higher percentage of residents less than 19 than both the county and the state.

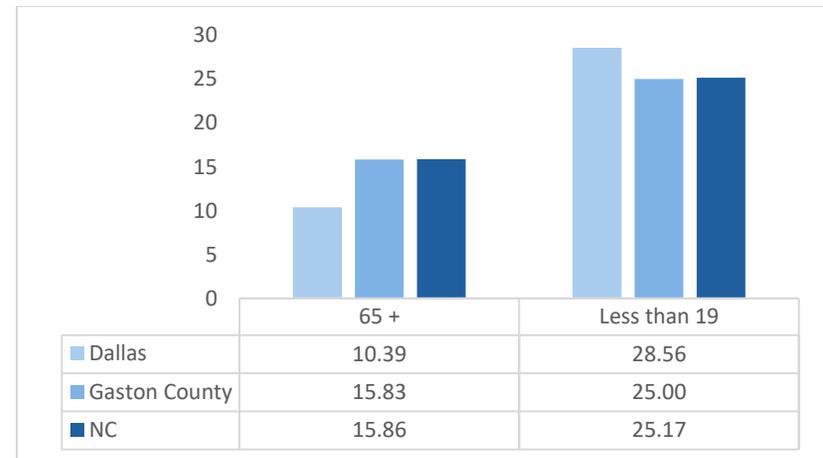


Figure 8: Percent of population with an age of 65+ and less than 19

While the 2019 median age is comparable for all three geographies, the Town of Dallas has seen the highest increase since 2010. At that time, the median age in Dallas was 35.8 years. This may reflect the type of residents that Dallas has attracted over the past decade, many of whom are working age. As Dallas grows, the proportion of all age groups may

grow to resemble more closely that of the county and the state.

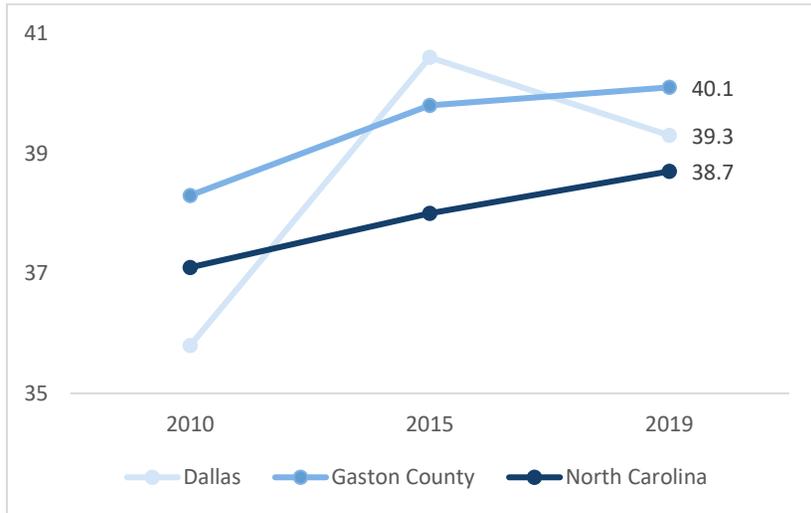


Figure 9: Change in median age, 2010-2019

### RACE & DIVERSITY

Overall, the Town of Dallas has a similar racial composition to Gaston County. Both jurisdictions have almost the same proportion of residents classified as White, Black, Asian, or Other, although Dallas has a marginally lower proportion of White residents. However, both are less diverse than North Carolina as a whole, which has a lower proportion of White residents and a higher proportion of residents who are Black, Asian, or Other.

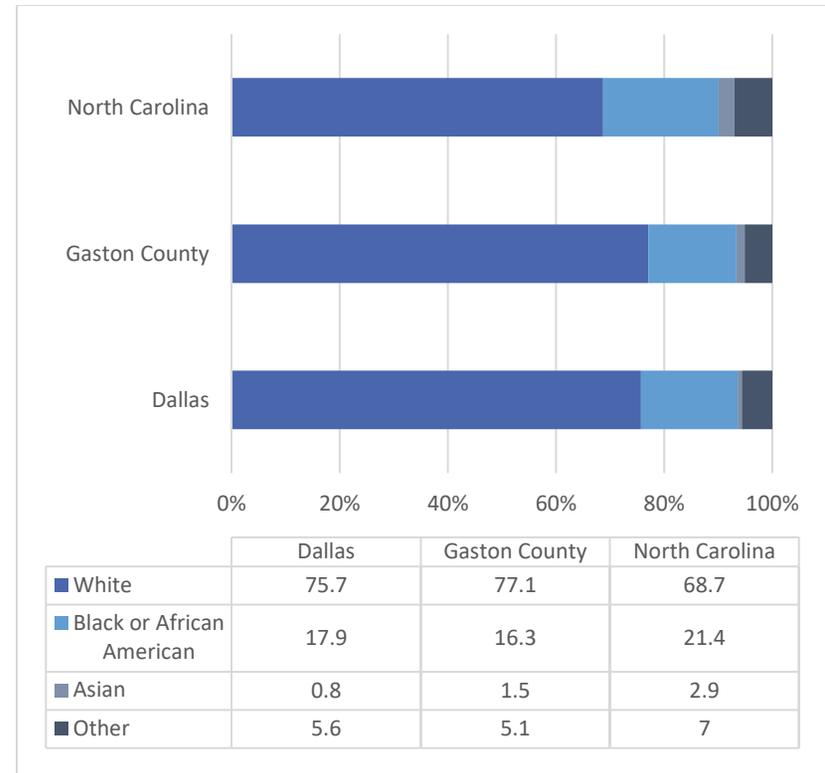


Figure 10: Race, 2019

In all three jurisdictions, the minority population is increasing, albeit gradually. Since 2010, Gaston County has seen the largest increase in the non-white population at 1.7 percent, followed by the state (0.9 percent) and Dallas (0.6 percent). Notably, Dallas has seen a decrease in its Black population since 2010, although it has also seen an increase in residents who are classified as Other, which incorporates categories such as ‘Some other race’ or ‘Two or more races.’

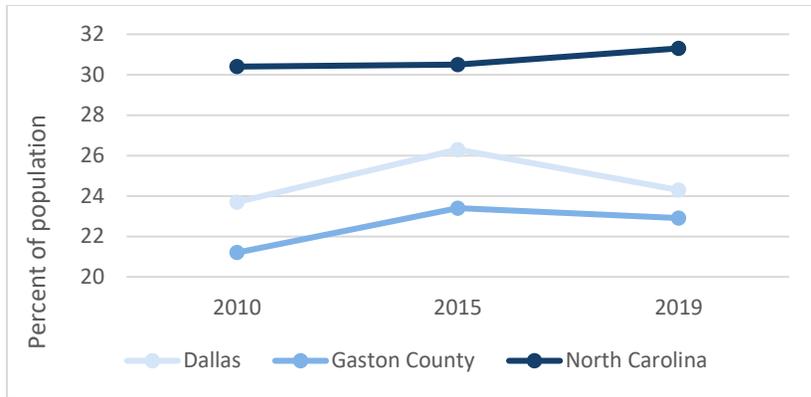


Figure 11: Change in non-white population, 2010-2019

One explanation for why Dallas has seen an increase in this category may be rapid growth of the Hispanic/Latino community. In 2010, only 2.3 percent of Dallas’s residents identified as Hispanic or Latino, which was roughly one-half of Gaston County’s total and one-third of North Carolina’s total. In the decade since, the Town of Dallas has seen an almost 450 percent increase in the Hispanic/Latino population. No other racial or ethnic group has seen such a radical increase or decrease during this period. At 12.6 percent of the population, it is now greater than both North Carolina (9.4 percent) and Gaston County (7 percent).

Capturing the unique needs and perspectives of different groups was a crucial element of this plan and its recommendations. As Dallas continues to diversify, it is crucial that all members of the community are engaged and involved,

both in the implementation of this plan and all other community initiatives.

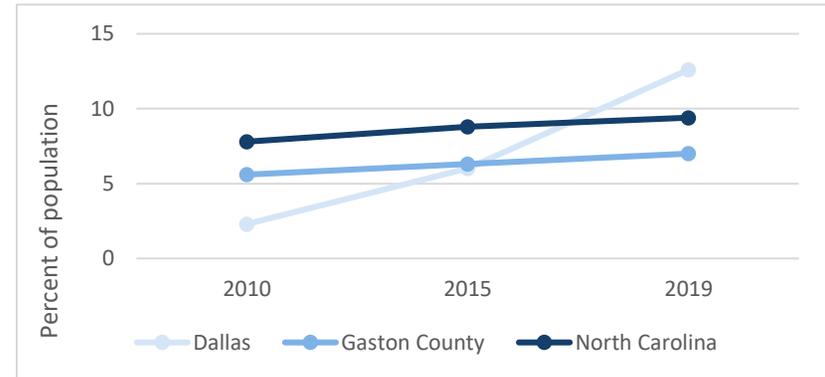


Figure 12: Change in Hispanic/Latino population, 2010-2019

## ECONOMY

### LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

The Town of Dallas’s local economy is comprised of a wide range of local businesses, regional institutions, and national chains. According to the US Business directory, there are 250 active businesses or institutions within the Town of Dallas, including major employers such as Gaston College. Despite the local employment opportunities, many residents do commute to other parts of the region for work; 65 percent of survey respondents indicated that they travelled outside of the Town of Dallas for their employment.

Figure 13 shows the employment by Occupation for the Town of Dallas, Gaston County, and North Carolina. One thing to note is the lower rate of Service workers (8.8 percent) than Gaston County as a whole (15.2 percent). This difference is likely a result of residents shopping in other parts of Gaston County such as Gastonia. A common theme that arose from community engagement is the desire for more local small businesses, including restaurants, retail, and entertainment. This desire is also reflected in pre-existing plans such as the Town Center Plan (2013) and the Economic Development Assessment (2018).

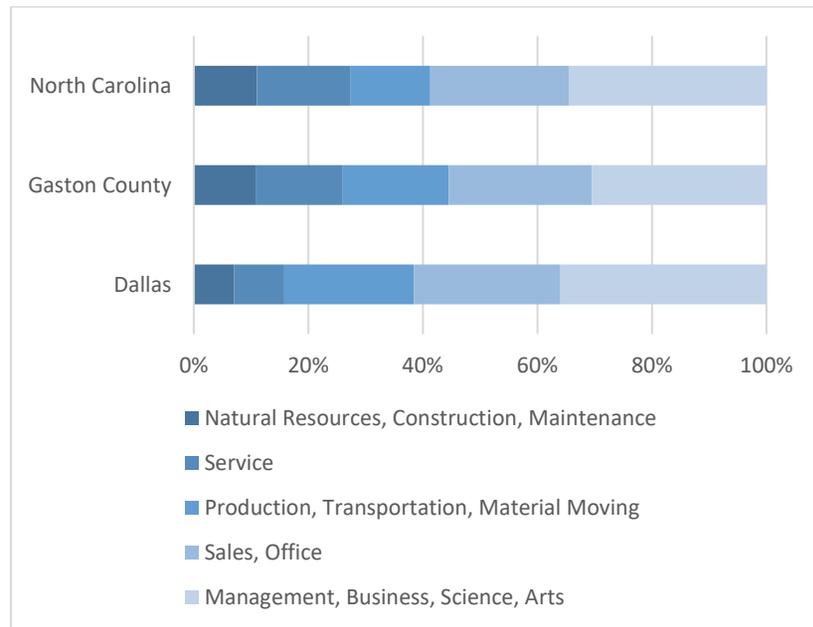


Figure 13: Employment by Occupation, 2019

Figure 14 provides more specific detail on the types of Industry within the Town of Dallas. The leading industries by total employment for Dallas are:

1. Manufacturing (29.4 percent)
2. Education, Health Care (19.5 percent)
3. Construction (11.6 percent)
4. Arts, Entertainment, Hospitality (9.4 percent)

These four industries are also the only ones which account for a higher percentage of the total employment in the Town of Dallas than they do in Gaston County; in other words, these are the industries that Dallas “specializes” in. Conversely, industries such as ‘Retail’, ‘Finance, Real Estate’, and ‘Information’ account for a much smaller proportion of total employment in the Town of Dallas than they do in Gaston County.

In industries which already predominate in Dallas, there is ample opportunity to build upon existing resources to attract more businesses and employment opportunities. For example, Dallas could attract manufacturing companies to the Town of Dallas by promoting its labor force and available sites for facilities. Conversely, Dallas should also pursue policies which target employment sectors which are relatively small, such as Finance. Gaston College could be a tremendous resource in these efforts given its growth in enrollment and curriculum. Later chapters will address specific goals and recommendations related to economic development.

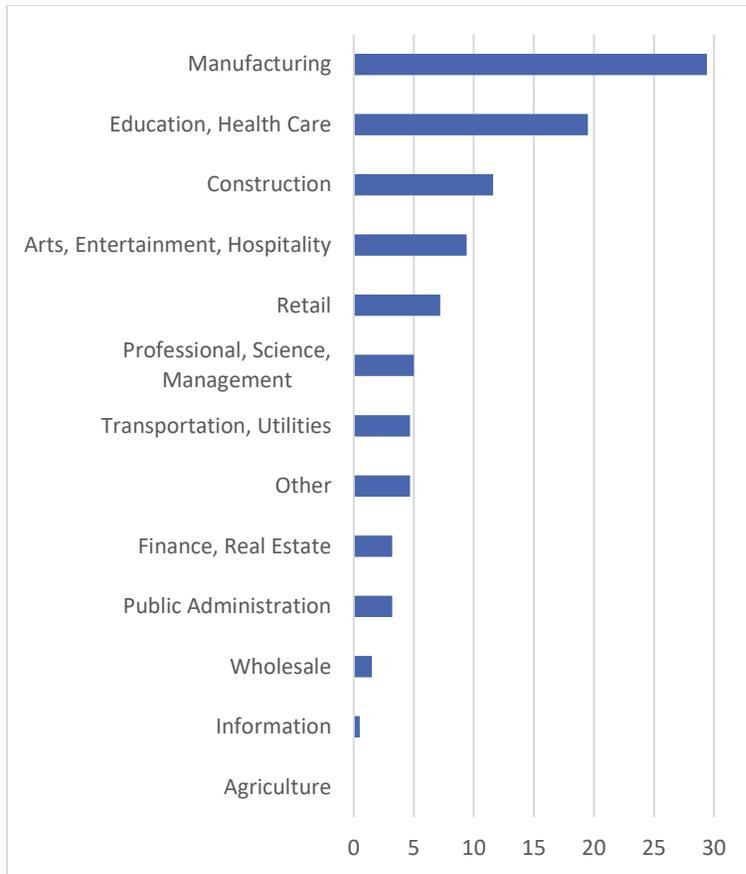


Figure 14: Employment by Industry, 2019

### INCOME, EDUCATION, AND POVERTY

Overall, the median income in the Town of Dallas (\$42606) is lower than it is for Gaston County (\$52835) or North Carolina (\$54602). Additionally, since 2010, the median income for the Town of Dallas has increased at a slower rate than it has for

the county or state. The poverty rate, by contrast, is almost identical between Dallas, Gaston County, and the state at around 15 percent of the population. While addressing poverty will be an important task for Dallas, it will also be important for the town to consider strategies for how to increase the local median income.

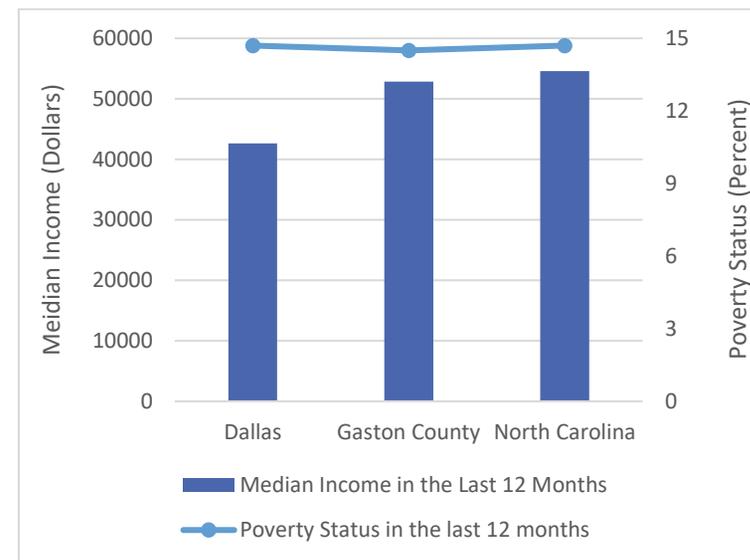


Figure 15: Median Income & Unemployment, 2019

As of 2019, the Town of Dallas had a lower percentage of residents with a High School degree or a bachelor’s degree than either Gaston County or the state. Further, although the number of people with high school and bachelor’s degrees has

been increasing for the county and the state since 2010, the Town of Dallas has experienced a decline in both.

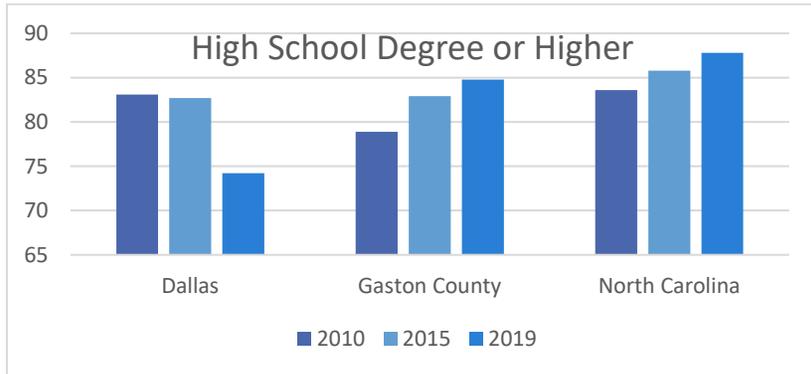


Figure 16: Change in percent of people with a high school degree or more, 2010-2019

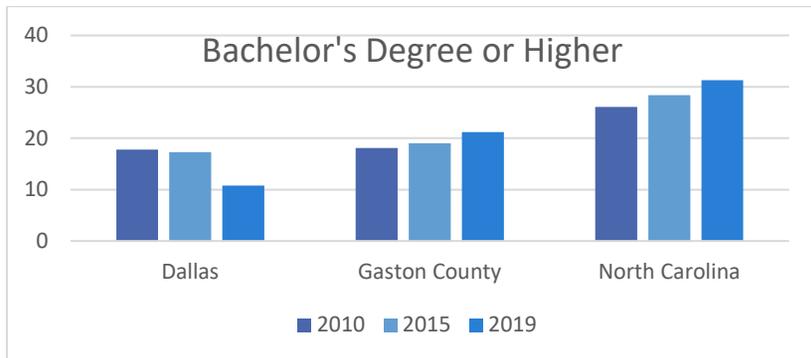


Figure 17: Percent of people with a bachelor's degree or more

Additionally, the Town of Dallas has experienced higher rates of unemployment over the past decade than the county or the state. In 2019, the Town of Dallas had an unemployment rate of 9.7 percent, compared to 6.2 percent and 5.6 percent for

the county and the state. While this has decreased since 2010, it has decreased at a slower rate than the county and the state and started at a higher 2010 level.

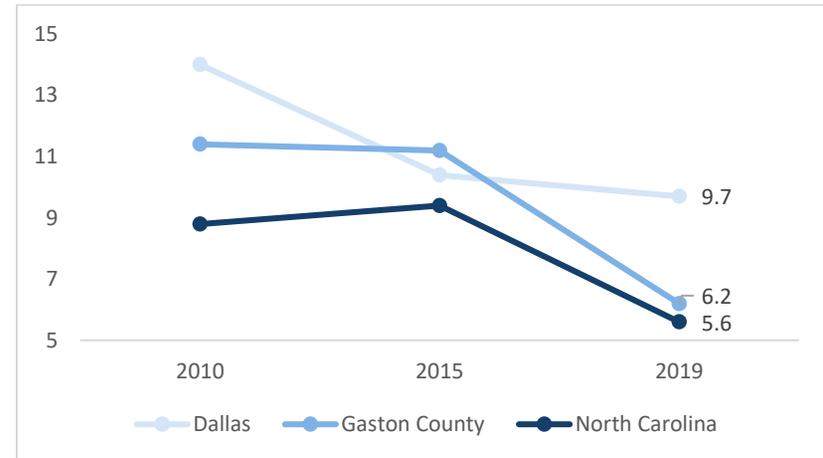


Figure 18: Change in unemployment rates, 2010-2019

## HOUSING

### COST OF HOUSING

Gaston County offers lower housing costs than the state of North Carolina as a whole. However, the Town of Dallas has even more affordable housing options than either Gaston County or North Carolina. In 2019, the median home value was \$172,500 for the state and \$144,200 for the county; in Dallas, it was \$135,000. Dallas also has lower median rents (Figure 20) and lower median monthly owner costs for homes with mortgages (Figure 21) than the state or the county.

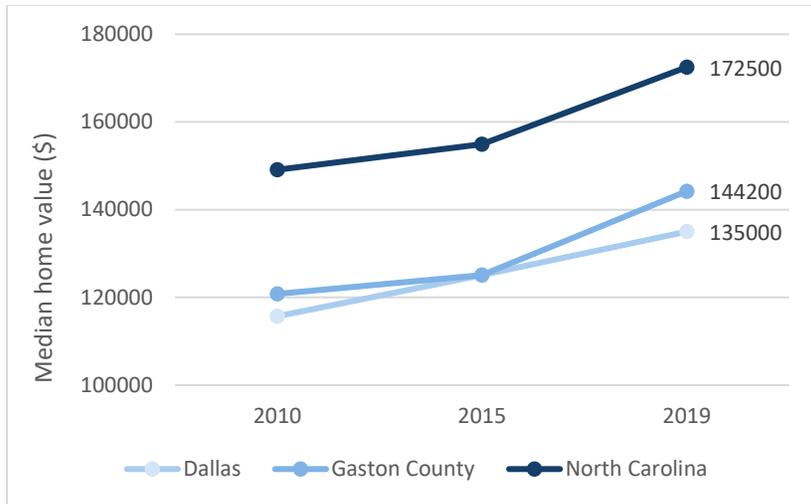


Figure 19: Change in median home values, 2010-2019

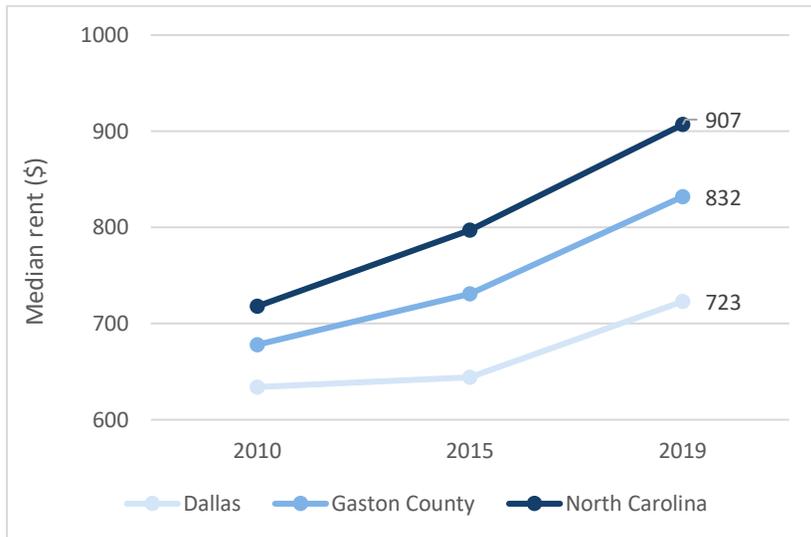


Figure 20: Change in median rent, 2010-2019

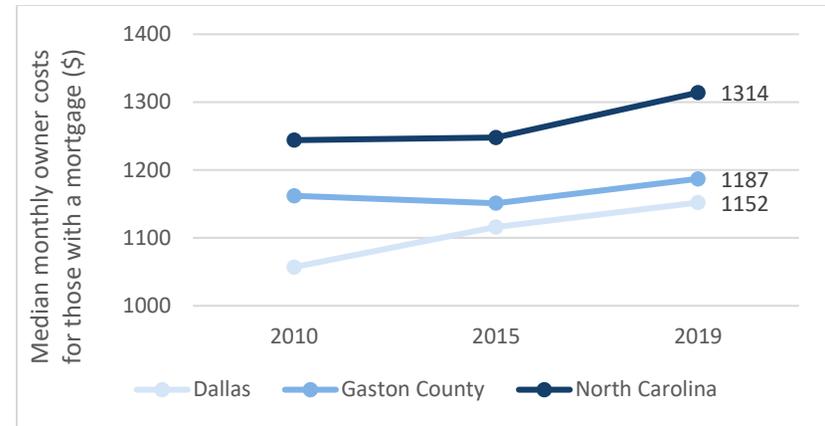


Figure 21: Change in median monthly owner costs for houses with mortgage, 2010-2019

While housing tends to cost less in Dallas, that does not always mean that it is more affordable. For example, although the monthly owner costs for homeowners with a mortgage in Dallas is lower than the county or the state, the amount of people whose selected monthly owner costs as a percentage of income (SMOCAPI) is greater than 30 percent is much higher, as shown in Figure 22. In other words, residents in Dallas tend to pay a higher percentage of their income towards housing costs. In part, this is due to the lower overall median incomes in Dallas as compared to Gaston County and the state. As Dallas grows, it will be increasingly important to pursue policies that ensure that all residents have access to affordable housing, especially those that make less than the area median income.

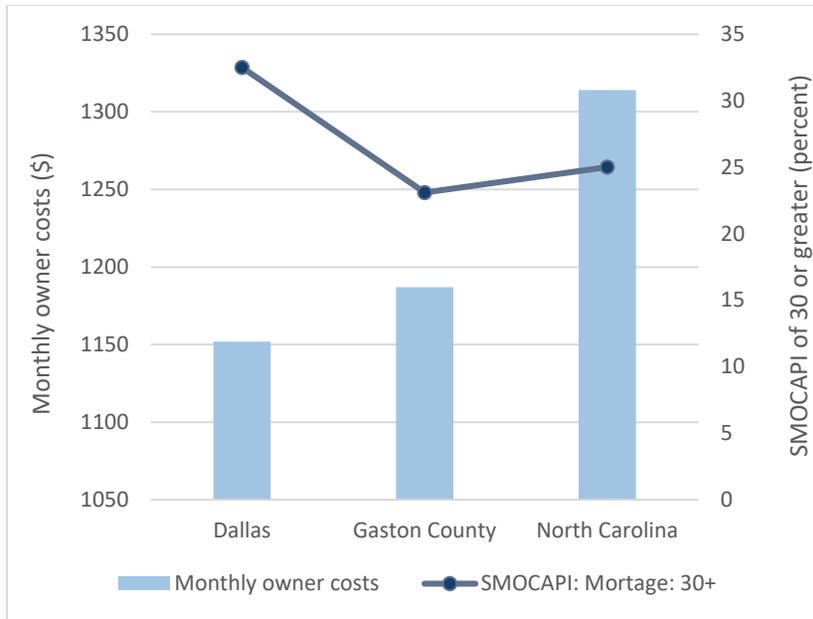


Figure 22: Monthly owner costs, as a total and as a percentage of median income, 2019

In addition, the cost of housing has been dramatically increasing across the nation over the past few years. Figure 23 shows the change in the Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI), which is a measure of the typical value of homes in the 35<sup>th</sup> to 65<sup>th</sup> percentile. Although home values have been increasing since 2012, there has been a dramatic spike in prices from the end of 2020 onwards. While there is no consensus on the exact cause or end date of this spike, the Town of Dallas can address the issue at a local level by enacting policies which incentivize the development of housing which is affordable at multiple income ranges.

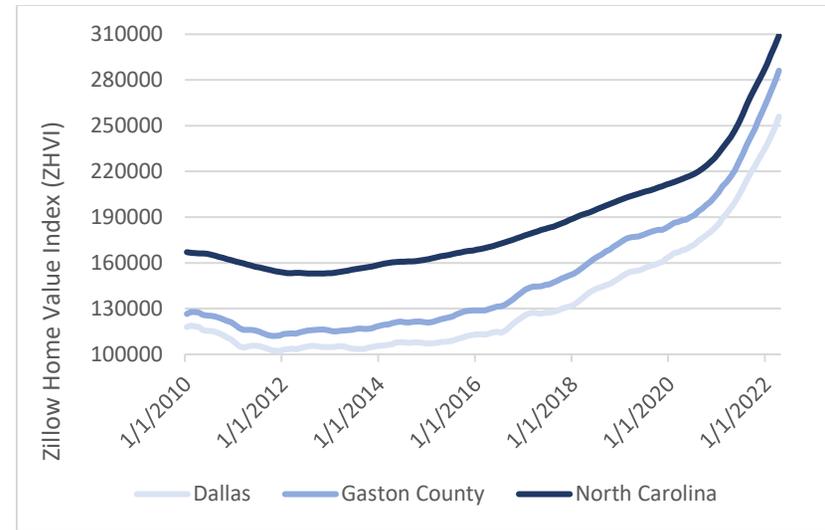


Figure 23: Change in the Zillow Home Value Index, from 2010 – present

## HOUSING STOCK

As of 2019, the Town of Dallas has a total of 1982 housing units; this represents a decrease of housing units since 2010, when the town had a total of 2077 housing units. However, the vacancy rate in Dallas has also declined over the past decade. In 2010, Dallas had a higher vacancy rate than either Gaston County or the state; now, it has a vacancy rate of just 7.5 percent, which is less than either the county (9.8 percent) or the state (14.3 percent). While the overall vacancy rate is low, a key issue that emerged from the community engagement was how to address blighted or abandoned buildings, especially near downtown, which will be addressed in a later chapter in the goals and recommendations.

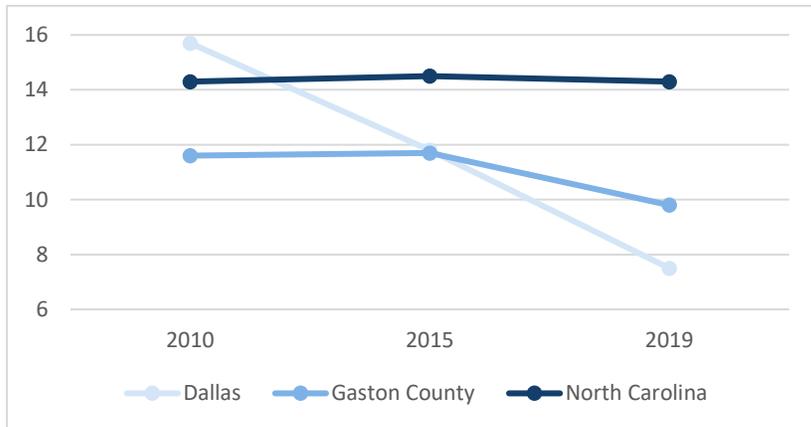


Figure 24: Change in vacancy status, 2010 – 2019

Dallas has a relatively old housing stock compared to the county and the state. The median year of construction for housing units in Dallas is 1972, compared to 1979 for Gaston County and 1988 for the state. Dallas’s housing stock is also considerably older than some other Gaston County communities which have experienced high levels of growth like Belmont and Mount Holly.

### TYPES OF HOMES

Compared to Gaston County and the state, Dallas has a lower rate of homeownership. 43.7 percent of all residents rent their housing unit, compared to 34.7 percent and 34.8 percent for the county and state respectively. The proportion of people who rent in Dallas has increased over the past decade, though the town has also had a higher rate of renters than the county

or state over that period. Despite the higher rates of renting, the average household size is the same for Dallas, Gaston County and the state at roughly 2.5 persons per household.

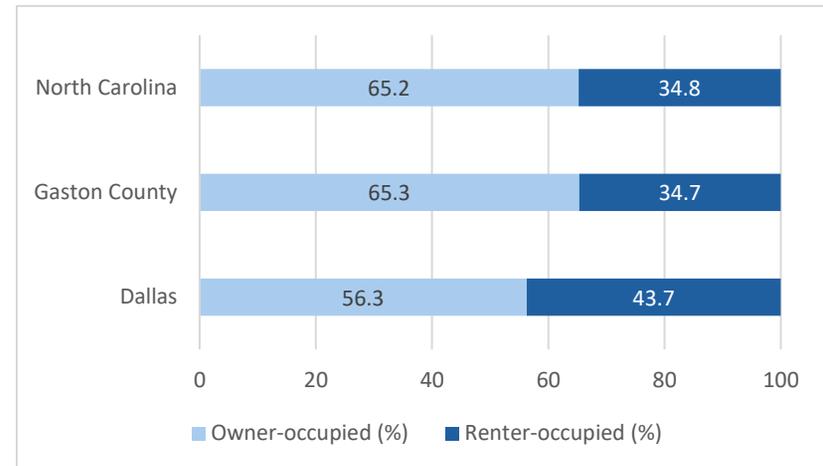


Figure 25: Occupancy rates, 2019

Additionally, Dallas also has a higher share of apartments (20.1 percent) than the county or state, which could partially account for the higher proportion of renters. 74.7 percent of Dallas’s housing units are one-unit homes (what is traditionally considered ‘single-family’); this is comparable to Gaston County (75.4 percent) and a higher rate than the state. Dallas also has a relatively low rate of mobile homes, vans, and RVs at 5.2 percent; Gaston County (10.8 percent) and the state (12.9 percent) both have double the proportion of these types of housing units. Given the low number of housing units

in Dallas, however, mobile homes may still be highly visible throughout certain parts of the community.

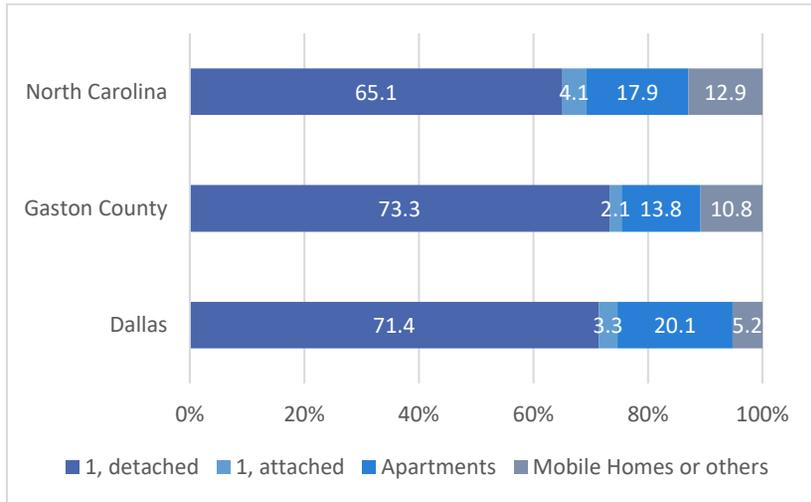


Figure 26: Types of homes

## MOBILITY

### ROADS

The Town of Dallas has several major roads within its planning area. US-321 and US-321 Business (also known as Dallas High Shoals Highway) are both classified as US Routes and are state-maintained. US-321 directly connects to Interstate-85, which is a major transportation corridor for freight and passenger traffic. US-321 itself is a highly trafficked corridor, and it has over 51 thousand average daily trips at its busiest section within Dallas’ planning area.

NC-275 and NC-279 are classified as NC Routes and are state-maintained. The section of NC-275 which intersects downtown Dallas is referred to as W Trade St, and it is the primary road used to both visit and pass-through downtown. It can experience high levels of traffic, with an average daily trip count of 23 thousand at its busiest section. Public engagement has identified this volume as both a challenge (congestion, safety) and an opportunity (economic development from through traffic). Outside of these two routes, there are several other ‘Secondary routes’ which are state maintained, such as E Main St and N Gaston St.

The Town of Dallas also maintains a large network of local (or non-system) roadways. In total, 22.7 miles of the 96.7 total miles of roadway in the Dallas planning area – or about 23 percent – are locally maintained. Many of the local roads are in the historic town center, where they have a gridded, connected layout. A large portion of local roads are also located closer to the urban periphery, typically adjacent to residential developments. By contrast, these roads are less connected and are often dead ends. Increasing street connectivity was a theme that emerged from public engagement, and policies which address how residential streets are configured will be paramount in addressing it effectively. In general, most transportation policies should target locally maintained roads, as the town has more control over changes than it does with state-maintained roadways.

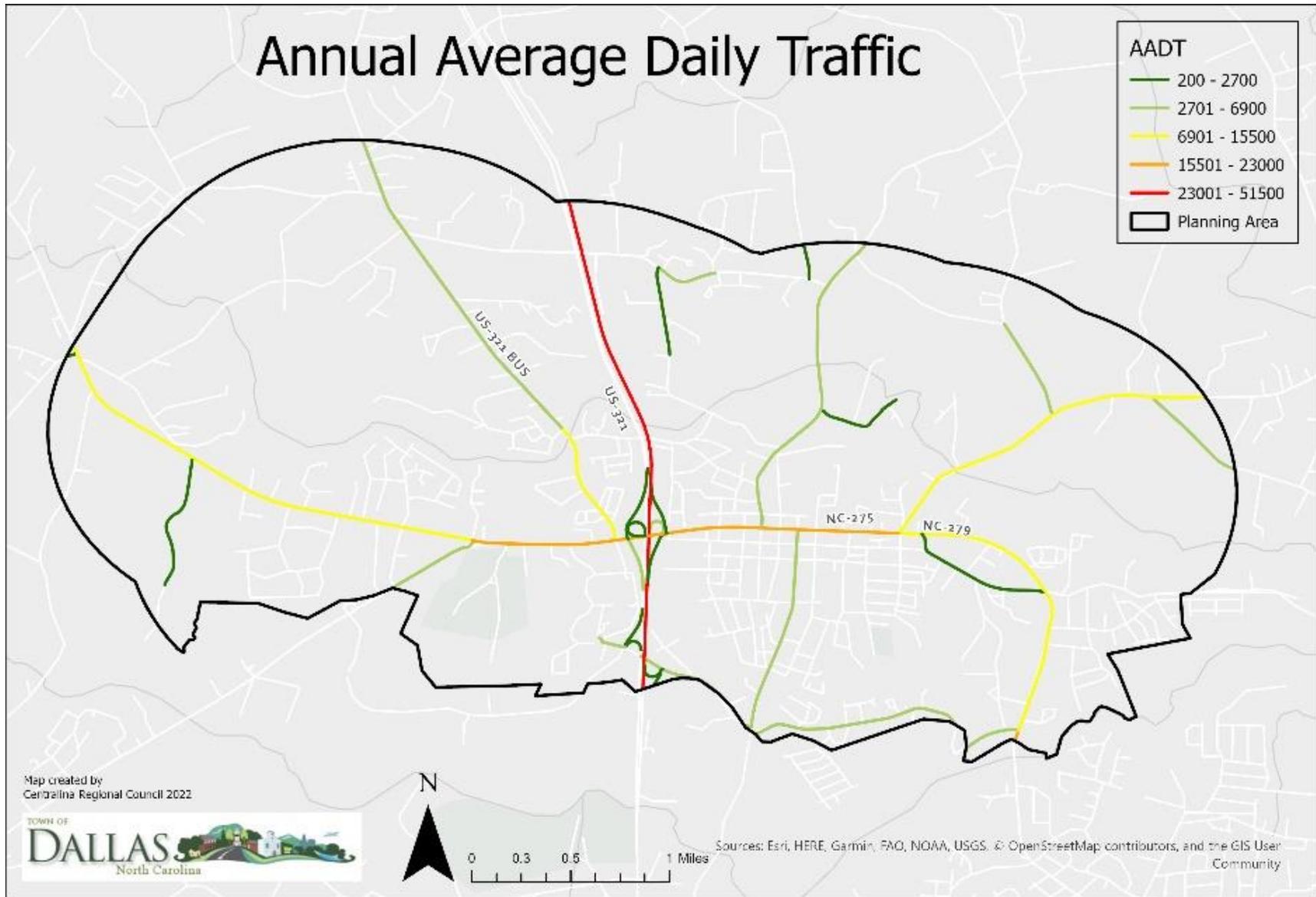


Figure 27: Annual Average Daily Traffic, 2019 [Data source: NCDOT Road Characteristics]

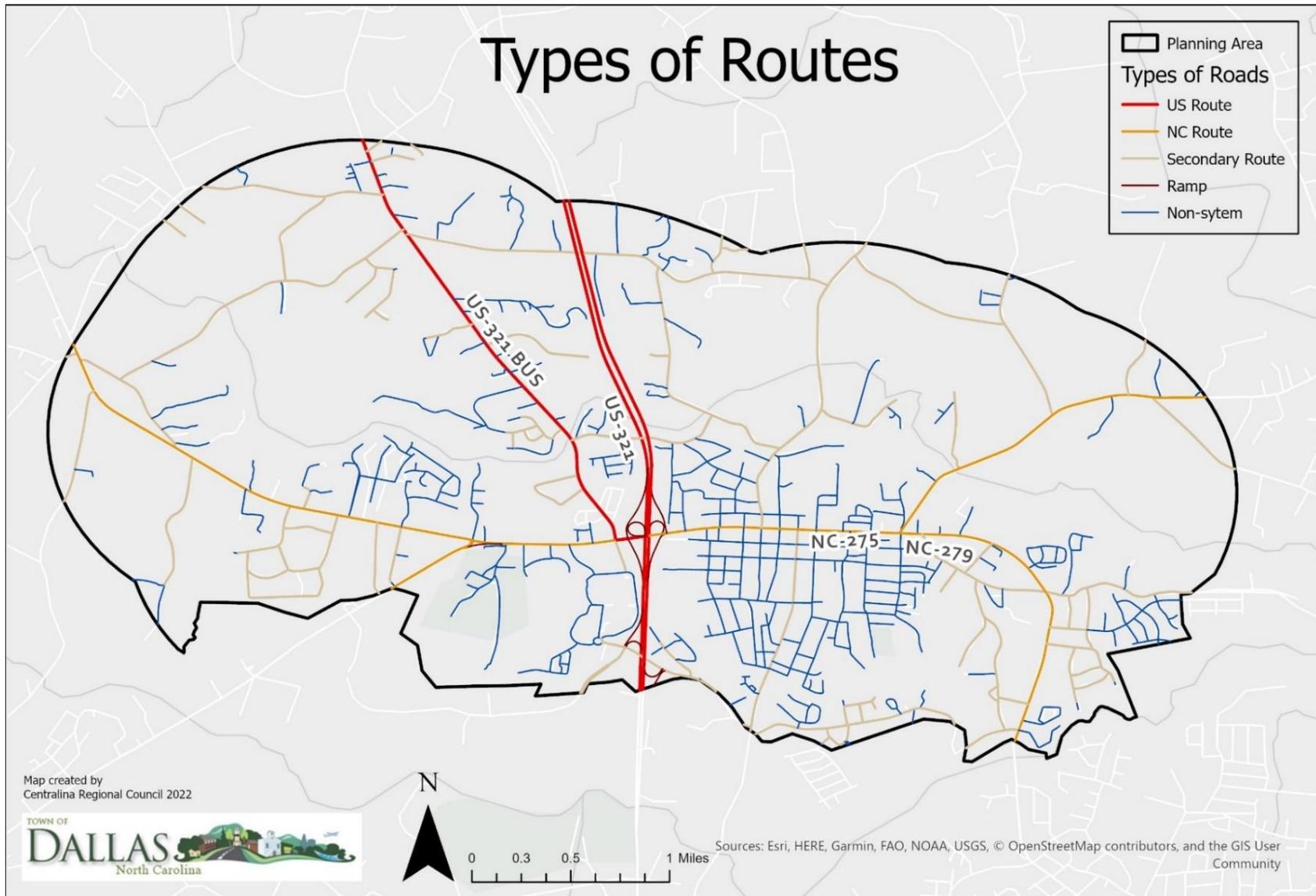


Figure 28: Different Classifications of Roadways

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE NETWORK

Generally, the types of infrastructure which support walking and bicycling are sidewalks, on-road bicycle facilities, and shared use paths. Currently, the Town of Dallas does possess some of these facilities. Downtown Dallas has the most overall coverage, particularly in terms of sidewalks; most major roads such as Trade St, Main St, and Church St have at least partial coverage. However, there are some noticeable gaps in the sidewalk network in downtown. Additionally, many of the newer residential developments outside of downtown have sidewalks. However, these neighborhoods lack any pedestrian connection to downtown or other parts of Dallas, particularly along NC-275 and NC-279.

The on-road bicycle facilities that do exist in Dallas are all painted lanes on the shoulders of roads, and they are not separated or protected. The GCLMPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan has these facilities labelled as “Needs Improvement”. The only shared use path currently located within the Dallas planning area is in Dallas Park.

The Town of Dallas is currently in the process of adopting a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan which outlines the existing conditions of the multi-modal network and recommends new sidewalks, on-road bicycle facilities, and shared use paths. The

existing infrastructure, as well as the recommendations from the draft plan, are shown on Page 25. The recommendations are focused on providing more overall coverage across all facility types, but they are also targeted to fill key gaps and provide greater connectivity. For example, the recommendations would provide greater connectivity between Gaston College and downtown, and they would also provide a direct connection to Dallas from the adjacent Carolina Thread Trail.

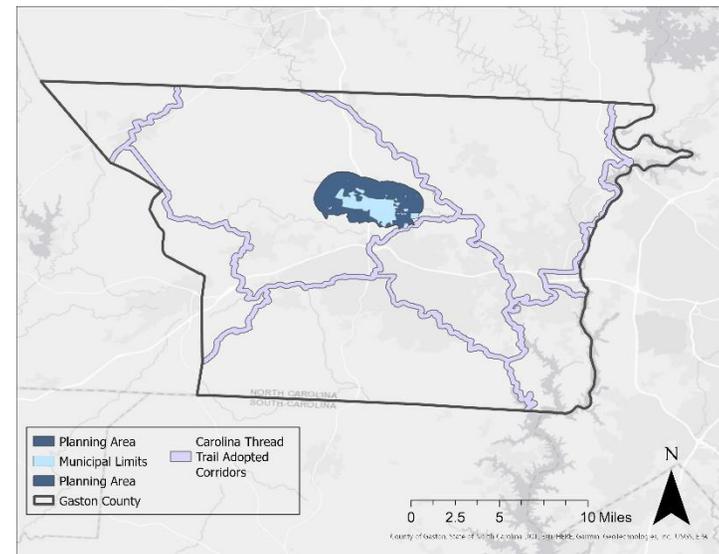


Figure 29: Adopted Corridors for the Carolina Thread Trail

# Existing & Proposed Ped / Bike Infrastructure

- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing On-Road Bikeway
- Existing Shared Use
- Proposed On-Road Bikeway
- Proposed Shared-Use Path/Sidepath
- Proposed Sidewalk
- Carolina Thread Trail
- Planning Area

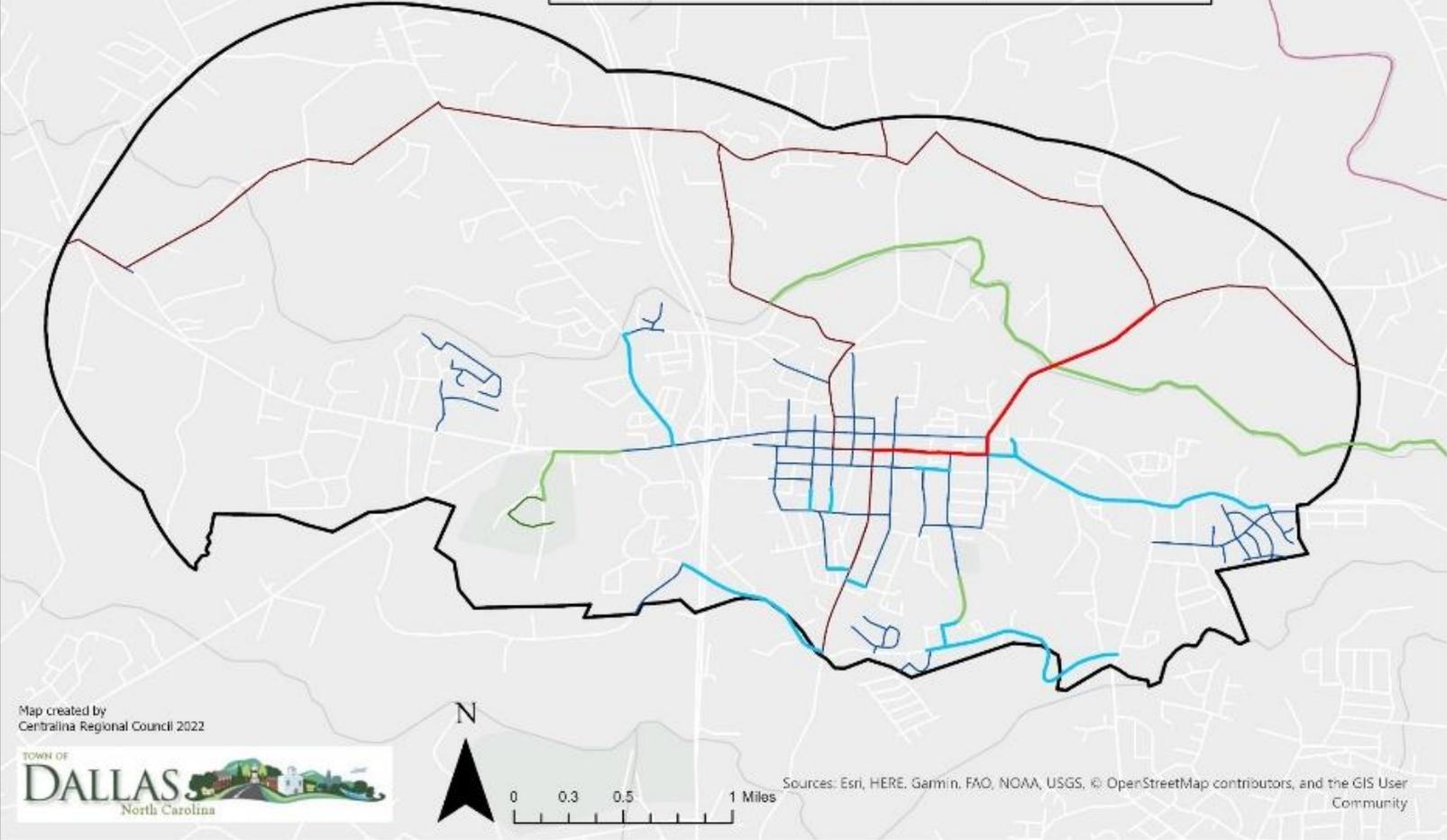


Figure 30: Existing and Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

## OTHER

Although the Town of Dallas does not have a complete transit system, the Gaston County ACCESS does provide a Deviated Fixed Route that runs from the City of Gastonia hub to Gaston College. This route has stops at various points in the Town of Dallas, including the Ingles and Gaston County Museum.

Both freight and regional mobility will play an important role for the Town of Dallas as the region continues to grow. CONNECT Beyond, the Regional Mobility Plan for the greater Charlotte metropolitan region, was adopted in October 2021 and offers a suite of recommendations for improving mobility across the region. It identifies two 'Emerging Mobility Corridors' in the Dallas planning area – US-321 from York to Lincolnton, and Highway 279 from Dallas to Cherryville – as candidates for future high-capacity transit investments. To learn more about Connect Beyond, visit the [Plan website](#).

Electric vehicle ownership is increasingly rapidly at both the state and national level. This process has been hastened by the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program, part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which will provide nearly \$5 billion over five years to help states create a network of EV charging stations. The Town of Dallas does currently have several EV charging stations near the courthouse square. However, as charging technology is

improved, the town will need to determine a system to maintain and update its charging infrastructure. Additionally, given the strength and independence of Dallas's municipal electric system (see Page 28), the town is well positioned to supply more EV charging stations. Additionally, Dallas's location along major transportation corridors will increase the demand for EV charging infrastructure. Numerous state and federal grants are available to communities who want to install EV chargers; if Dallas pursues such opportunities, it could be vital part of the regional EV charging network.

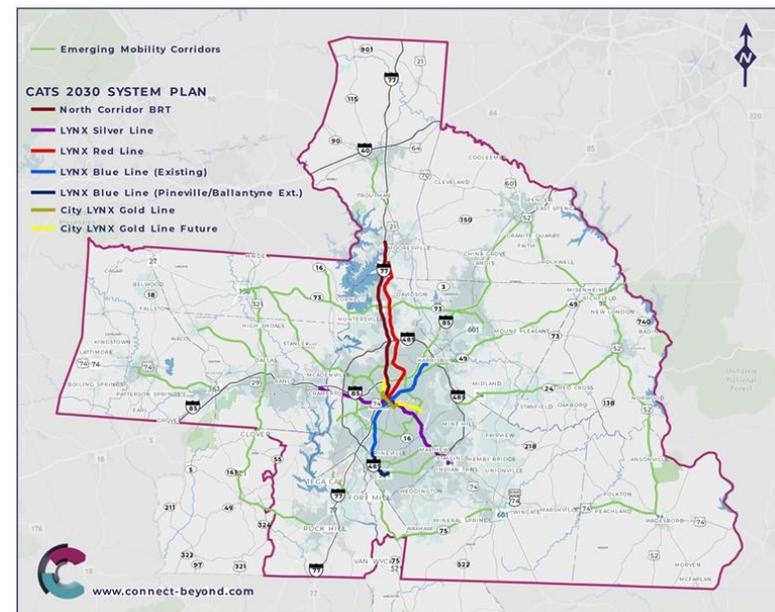


Figure 31: Emerging Mobility Corridors from the CONNECT Beyond plan. Two corridors are within Dallas's planning area.

## PARKS & RECREATION

Residents of the Town of Dallas have access to several parks and recreational facilities. Currently, there are seven parks either inside or adjacent to the planning area, as shown in Figure 33 (next page). The parks are as follows:

1. Dallas Park
2. Camp Sertoma
3. Cloninger Park
4. Jagers Park
5. Dennis Franklin Gym
6. Carr School Fields
7. Rankin Lake Park

Dallas Park and Camp Sertoma are both operated by Gaston County. Camp Sertoma’s facilities include a lodge, cabins, meeting room, kitchen, and a nature trail. Dallas Park is around 100 acres in total, and it is identified as one of three ‘regional parks’ in Gaston County that serves county residents. Its facilities include ball fields, picnic facilities, equestrian facilities, an amphitheater, tennis courts, and the historic Heritage Village. Given its regional significance, Gaston County produced a Dallas Park Master Plan in 2013 which prioritizes the maintenance and improvements for the park. While the Town of Dallas does not directly control Dallas Park, it is important that the town works in coordination with the

county to ensure that improvements directly benefit the community.



Figure 32: Dallas Park

Cloninger Park, Jagers Park, Dennis Franklin Gym, and Carr School Fields are all operated directly by the Town of Dallas. Cloninger Park is a neighborhood park with a children’s play area, a paved walking track, and an extensive lawn area. Jagers Park is also neighborhood park with a children’s play area, paved walking track, a baseball/softball field, and a multi-purpose court. Carr School Fields contain four baseball fields and a walking track, and it is operated through a partnership with the Town of Dallas and Gaston County Public Schools. Finally, Dennis Franklin Gym is a traditionally designed gymnasium with a 500+ seat court.

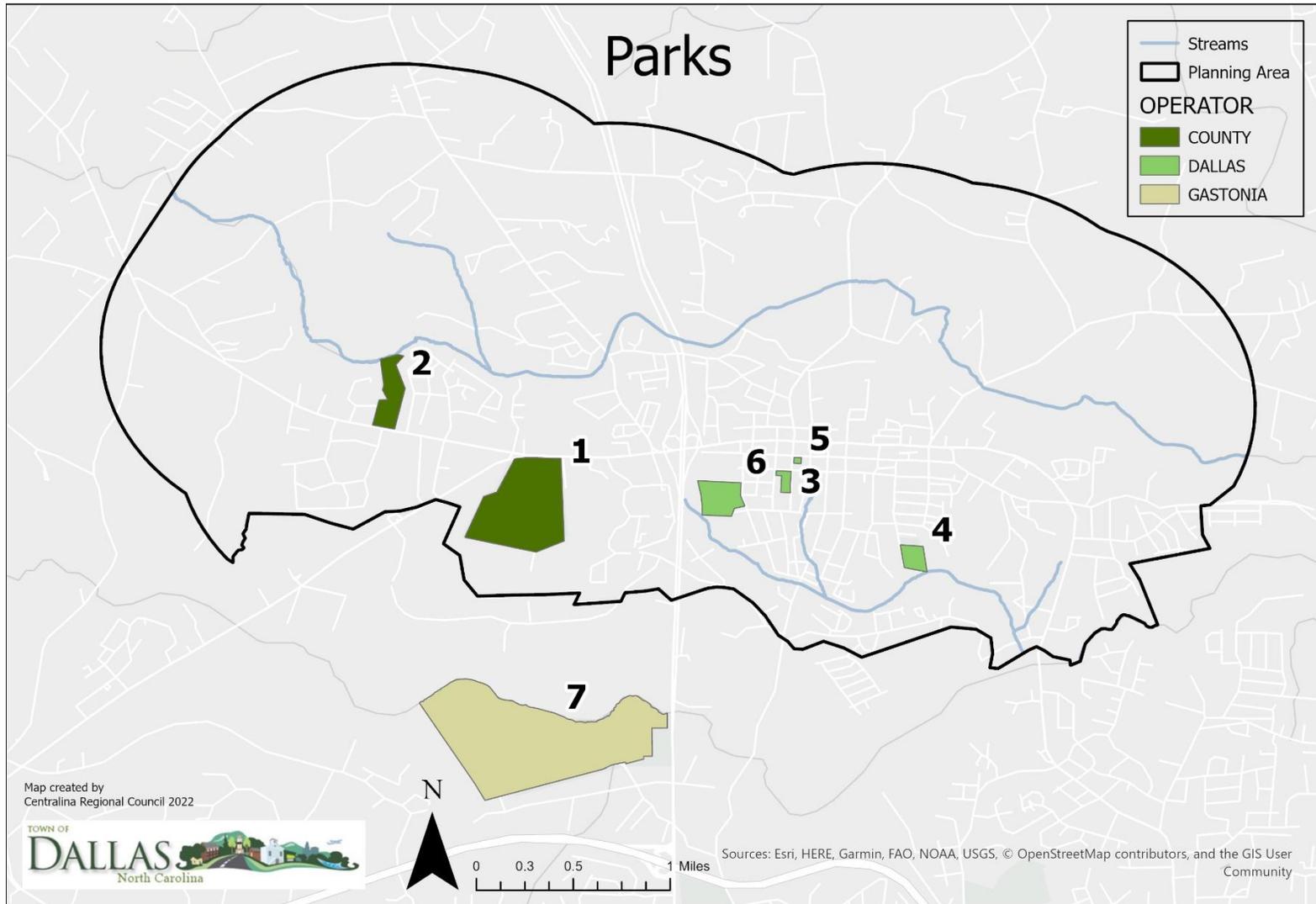


Figure 33: Parks in or Near the Dallas Planning Area (refer to numbering on Page 27)



Figure 34: Jagers Park

Rankin Lake is operated by the City of Gastonia, and it encompasses 242 acres of land, including a city-owned reservoir. While the park does not fall within the Town of Dallas planning area, it is still a recreational destination for town residents.

Dallas has also been announced as the future location of the Gaston Aquatics Regional Aquatic Center. The facility will be constructed on the opposite side of US-321 from Gaston College, near Carr Elementary School. The project has an estimated completion date of late-2023. This project will not only be a unique recreational amenity for the town, but it will also serve as a major catalyst for economic development. The center will be used to host meets for the Gaston Gators Swim

Club and will draw an estimated 500 swimmers per event. The facility will contain medical and therapeutic uses, a zero entry pool, and around 1600 seats for spectators. These visitors will likely spend the night, shop, and dine nearby, positioning the town well for economic development opportunities such as retail and hotels.

## INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

### UTILITIES

One major strength for the Town of Dallas is that it owns and operates its electric, water, and sewer utilities. The municipal electric utility has been in operation for over a century. Today, the department is staffed by ten total employees, including one director, one foreman, six journeyman line workers, one arborist, and one line clearance technician. This team has extensive knowledge of both overhead and underground distribution systems, and it is supplemented by a Tree Trimming/Line Clearance Crew that is overseen by a licensed utility specialist, ISA Arborist. Along with its main distribution circuits, the town also owns and maintains two sub-stations which ensure flexibility in power delivery in the event of outage events.

The Town of Dallas is served by a water treatment facility, which provides safe and cost-effective drinking water. The facility is rated for one million gallons a day of production of

drinking water. The facility is a surface water system and uses conventional treatment. The Town withdraws raw water from the South Fork River of the Catawba River Basin. The facility also uses an off-stream storage pond as a pre-sedimentation basin to help with high turbidity events.

The town also operates a waste treatment plant capable of processing .6 MGD (million gallons/day) with a discharge to Dallas Creek. The average output of the plant is 350,000 gallons of treated sewage per day, and in 2021, the plant processed more than 125 million gallons of wastewater. The fully treated effluent is ultimately returned to the South Fork River under the terms of the Federal Permit.

As the town grows, it will become increasingly important to ensure that the electric, water, and sewer systems have enough capacity to accommodate new developments. However, the town must also plan for the continued maintenance of the existing infrastructure, especially given that parts of the system are over one-hundred years old.

To that end, the town is working on inventorying its existing infrastructure, schedule maintenance, and plan for new expansion. The town utilizes PDF maps to track the location of its infrastructure, and a water asset inventory grant is currently in the works to produce updated maps. The town is also aiming to have updated sewer and electric maps soon.

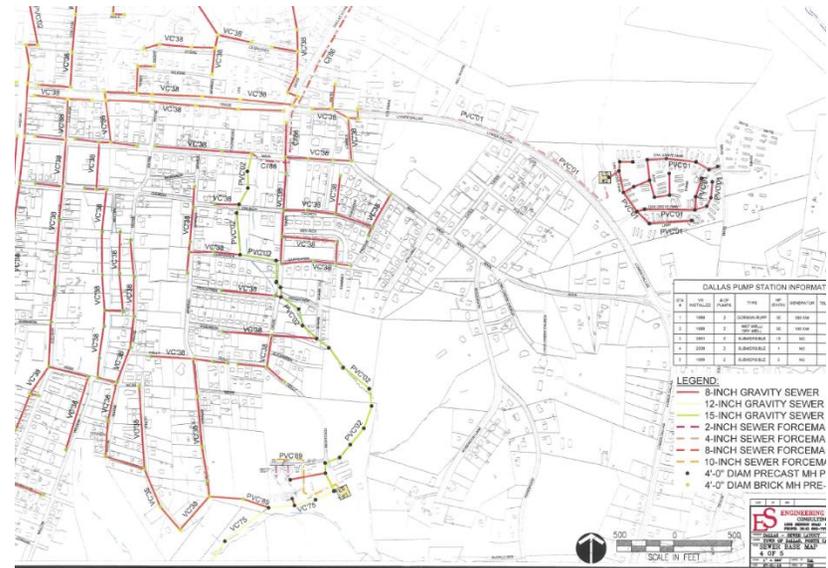


Figure 35: Subset of the Town of Dallas sewer map. The Town is in the process of updating its utility maps.

## POLICE

The Town of Dallas is currently served by 18 police personnel, under the direction of Police Chief Robert Walls. Of these 18 employees, 15 are sworn full-time, 2 are non-sworn, and 1 is a part-time sworn employee. Together, the department works to provide a safe environment in which residents and non-residents can live and work. Regular duties include conducting investigations, making arrests, patrol, serving citations and warrants, noise regulation, and providing assistance as requested to the Gaston County Police and Sheriff's Department.

The department had several notable achievements in 2021. It was awarded the Police Executive Department of the Year award, and it also started a K-9 program. The department is also heavily involved in the community through service and education events. A report which provides detailed information on the department’s annual activity can be found on the [Town of Dallas website](#).

### **FIRE & RESCUE**

The Town of Dallas is served by the Dallas Volunteer Fire Department (DVFD), which provides both emergency and non-emergency services to citizens and visitors. It operates within the Dallas Fire District (which is aligned with the municipal boundaries) but also aids other departments in Gaston County as needed. The department is staffed by 34 members and led by Fire Chief Earl Withers III. The fire station was constructed in 2009; it houses two fire engines, one 55 foot Quint, one brush/squad vehicle, and 2 command vehicles.



Figure 36: Vehicles owned and operated by the DVFD

The town is also served by the Dallas Rescue Squad, which was founded in 1974 and is one of the few remaining all-volunteer squads in Gaston County. Its comprised of eight members who are Emergency Rescue Trained (ERT) and ERT certified, as well as several youth trainees. The squad operates several vehicles, including: four ambulances, two rescue trucks, two boats, and a K-9 search and rescue vehicle.

Both the Dallas Rescue Squad and the Dallas Volunteer Fire Department are heavily involved in the community. The rescue squad offers trainings and conducts fundraisers to support itself. The DVFD offers fire safety courses to Carr Elementary School, local day care centers, and senior citizens; they also help organize the Fourth of July fireworks and Christmas parade.

### **TOWN GOVERNMENT**

The Town of Dallas operates under a Council-Manager form government. The Town Manager services as the chief Administrative Officer in charge of the day-to-day administrative and operating function of town governance. The elected officials include the mayor and the five-member Board of Aldermen; all members are elected to four-year terms. The council is responsible for setting the policies and programs which the town follows, through legislative decisions.



## CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

### CULTURAL

As the first municipality and county seat in Gaston County, the Town of Dallas has a rich historical legacy which carries on to this day. Its history is best represented by the numerous historic structures still standing throughout the town. The Dallas Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The historic district originally encompassed the courthouse square and the surrounding lots. The courthouse itself was originally constructed in 1843 and now serves as the Dallas Town Hall and a public meeting space. The courthouse square remains the civic and social center of Dallas, and the grounds are used to host outdoor events and festivals.

In 2019, an architectural survey was conducted on behalf of the town. The survey examined 108 historic resources to determine potential eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, on April 2022, the boundary of the historic district was officially increased. An important consideration for the town will be how to balance economic development efforts with the desire to maintain the historic elements of the town. Where appropriate, grants or funding which incentivizes the improvement of historic structures for commercial uses may help achieve both goals simultaneously.

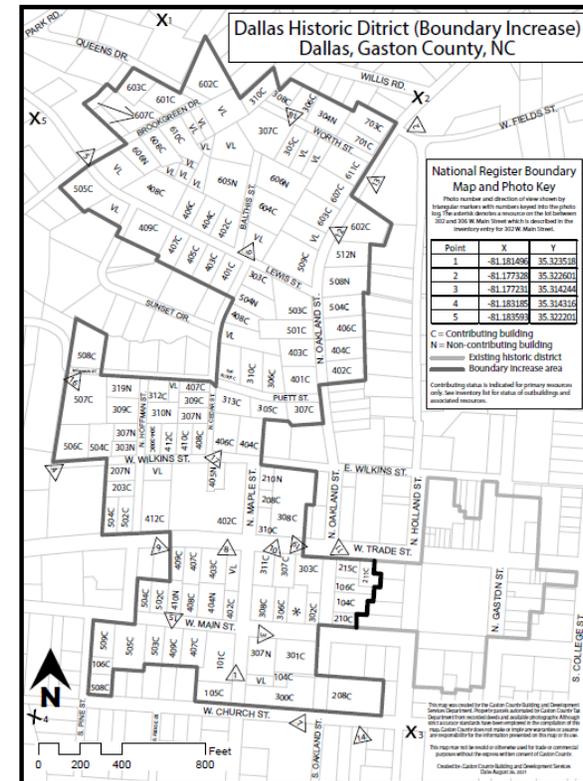


Figure 38: Boundary Increase for the Dallas Historic District

The Gaston County Museum, housed in the Hoffman Hotel within the Dallas Historic District, offers residents and visitors opportunities to learn about Gaston County's history and art. The museum has both permanent and rotating exhibits and collections, and it also offers educational programs. As Dallas looks to celebrate its own unique history, the museum and its staff will be an essential partner.

## EDUCATION

With an enrollment of over 5000 students, Gaston College is an important institution for the town. The college is currently expanding its academic programs and adding collegiate sports, which will likely increase both the number of students and visitors in Dallas. As the college continues to grow, increased coordination between the town and college may prove beneficial.

Carr Elementary School is located within the Town of Dallas’s municipal limits, and North Gaston Middle School and High School are located within the town’s planning area. As with Gaston College, partnerships between the town and the school will be crucial parts of any strategy to increase educational opportunities and prepare residents for the workforce.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Two creeks—Little Long Creek and Long Creek—run through the Dallas planning areas at various points. Little Long Creek runs roughly parallel to NC-275, north of downtown. Long Creek also runs roughly parallel to NC-275, south of downtown. Both creeks eventually converge and feed into the South Fork Catawba River.

Flood zone regulations limit development along certain parts of these waterways. However, this also presents an opportunity for the town to utilize this land for passive and active recreational opportunities, such as greenways. In particular, the Little Long Creek corridor would be an ideal connection to the portion of the Carolina Thread Trail along the South Fork River.

Dallas is still surrounded by mostly rural land, including several working farms, to the west, north, and east of its planning area. As the town faces increased development pressures, ensuring the preservation of this land through land use policies will become increasingly important.

## LAND USE

### EXISTING LAND USE

The Town of Dallas is currently comprised of several distinct land use categories (see the Current Land Use Map on Page 36). The dominant land use is single-family housing (41.5 percent). Other active uses include Office/Institutional (10.4 percent), Commercial (4.6 percent), Industrial (3.5 percent), Mixed-Use (1.6 percent), and Multi-Family (1.6 percent).

The land under the ‘Preserved Open Space/Agriculture’ category includes cemeteries, parks, flood plains, and other types of land which are less suitable for development. Active

agricultural uses also fall under this category. Land categorized as ‘Undeveloped’, on the other hand, represents parcels which have no active uses and less barriers to development. In total, 23.9 percent of land in Dallas is Preserved Open Space/Agriculture, and 12.9 percent of land is Undeveloped. While development capacity is not unlimited, the town has enough undeveloped land to strategically pursue growth opportunities.

Land Use Category	Percentage of Total Land (planning area)
Commercial	4.6
Industrial	3.5
Mixed-use	1.6
Multi-family	1.6
Office/Institutional	10.4
Preserved Open Space / Agriculture	23.9
Single-family	41.5
Undeveloped	12.9

Figure 39: Land Area for Each of the Current Land Use Categories

In addition to ‘Undeveloped’ land, a large portion of land is underutilized. A 2018 analysis of land uses in the Charlotte region identified that 13.4 percent of all parcels in the Dallas planning area were Underdeveloped, which is defined as:

“Lots or parcels with permanent buildings or structures that occupy only a small portion of the property; leaving significant area available for future development.”

In-fill development tends to require less new infrastructure, since it takes advantage of existing roads and utilities. Also, in-fill development increases the town’s tax base without decreasing the amount of undeveloped land. Consequently, the town should consider in-fill development opportunities where appropriate.

In addition, the town could greatly benefit from the strategic addition of more non-single-family housing uses such as Commercial. While single-family housing is an integral component of Dallas’ character which should be protected and preserved, the provision of other uses is essential to economic growth, the provision of amenities, and increased quality of life for residents. For example, existing plans such as the Town Center Plan and public engagement from this plan have identified the need for commercial development and employment opportunities. By locating these uses near existing commercial or mixed use centers, such as downtown or highway corridors, the town can create transitional zones which increase the density of uses while buffering existing residential neighborhoods.

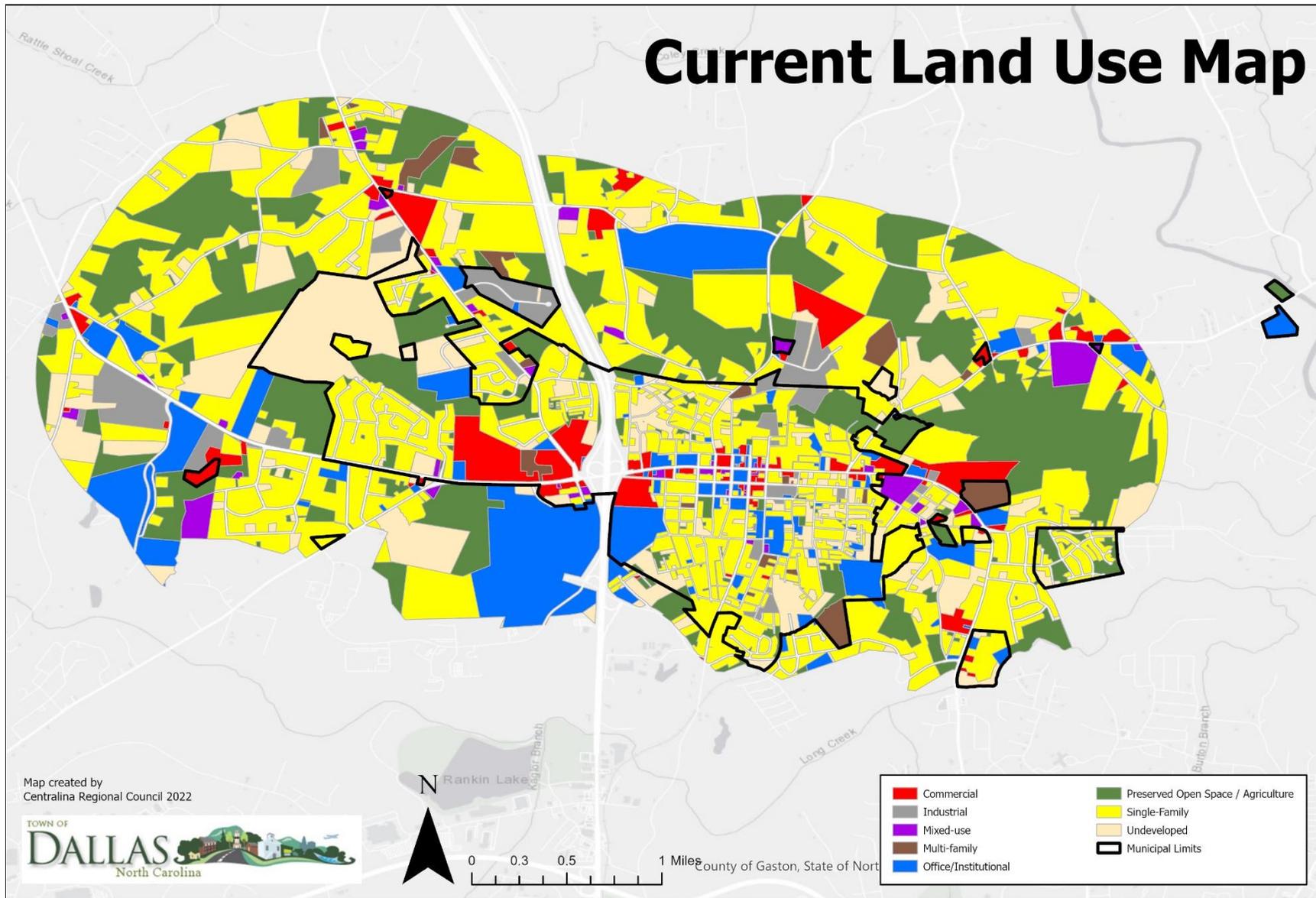


Figure 40: Current Land Uses in the Dallas Planning Area

### 3. Community Vision & Goals

#### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The ultimate purpose of this plan is to guide the Town of Dallas according to the community’s vision. Community engagement opportunities helped ensure that all community members and key stakeholders had an opportunity for their voice to be heard. The issues and insights shared by members of the public were essential in crafting the goals and strategies of this plan. Several different avenues for engagement were offered at different stages of the plan development process.

#### SURVEY

Prior the the land use plan development process, the Town of Dallas had conducted two surveys to better understand community sentiment on future growth and development and perceptions on the Town’s greatest challenges. The Community Survey 1 was released from October 2020 to November 2020, and it had thirty-nine respondents. The Community Survey 2 was released during April 2021, and it had 182 total responses.

A third survey made specifically for the land use plan development process was made available to the general public on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and closed on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. During this four week span, the Town of Dallas advertised the Community Survey 3 on its various social media platforms and its website. Respondents had the option to complete the survey through an online link or through the

submission of paper copies, which were available at Town Hall. The survey contained questions on specific topic areas such as transportation and housing, as well as opportunities for open-ended feedback. Overall, 113 people completed the survey, each providing a unique perspective which helped shape the plan goals.



Figure 41: Community Engagement Timeline

## STEERING COMMITTEE

A group of nine community members were appointed by Town Council to serve as steering committee members. The steering committee met four separate times throughout the entirety of the planning process (September 30<sup>th</sup>, November 18<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup>, April 21<sup>st</sup>). During these meetings, the steering committee provided valuable feedback through activities such as SWOT analysis and open discussion. In addition, the steering committee was consulted for major plan developments, such as the formation of the plan goals. The local knowledge and perspectives, as well as time, contributed by these volunteers was invaluable to the final product.



Figure 42: Advertisement for the second open house event

## OPEN HOUSE

Open houses were conducted on October 28<sup>th</sup> and May 26<sup>th</sup>; two separate sessions (afternoon and evening) were offered to accommodate different schedules. For the first set of open houses, participants learned about the overall plan process, as well as the existing land use and conditions within the Town. The participants then provided feedback in a series of activities and discussions facilitated by the consultant. For the second set of open houses, the plan goals and recommendations were presented. Participants had the opportunity to comment on these items and make suggestions on how they could be improved.



Figure 43: Community members at the first open house event

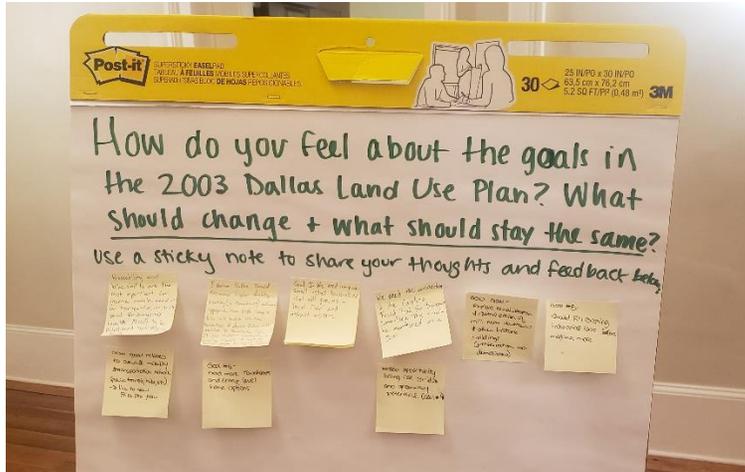


Figure 44: Responses collected during the first open house event

## TOWN STAFF

The Town staff were heavily involved in the planning process. They shared resources and information with the project consultants, and they contributed key insights derived from their on-the-ground experiences with the community. In addition, they helped facilitate key planning activities such as the steering committee meetings and the open houses.

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

Ultimately, the Board of Aldermen was responsible for reviewing, critiquing, and adopting the plan. They played an instrumental role in developing the plan, and they will continue to play a role in manifesting the vision of the plan by committing to implement its recommendations.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### COMMUNITY SURVEY 1

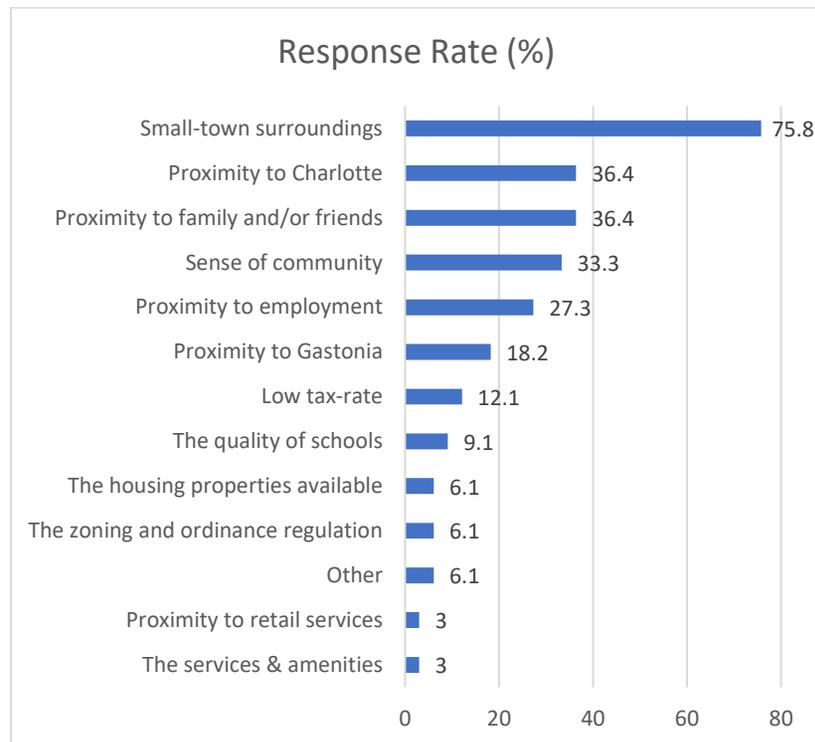
The first community survey, conducted in late-2020, was meant to gauge residents' opinion on major topic areas such as town character, current challenges, and priorities. When asked to describe Dallas using adjectives, survey respondents used terms such as 'small', 'comfortable', and 'peaceful'. These responses reflect one of Dallas's core strengths—its unique small-town charm and overall high quality of life.



When survey respondents were asked why they lived in the Town of Dallas, the small-town charm and sense of community were clear themes. In addition, proximity to nearby communities such as Charlotte and Gastonia stood out. Retail, services, and amenities ranked low on the list of

reasons, which may reflect a desire amongst survey respondents for more commercial development.

**Figure 45: What are some of your reasons for living in the Town of Dallas?**



Survey respondents were also asked about the top issues in Dallas with regards to the community, land development, and transportation. The top three responses are shown in Figure 46. The top land development responses reflected the demand for more retail and entertainment. The community

and transportation responses highlight the desire for a community that is safe, connected, and accessible.

What are urgent community issues?	What are urgent land development issues?	What are urgent transportation issues?
Alcohol and drug abuse	Availability of retail and shopping	Congestion on local roads
Perception of town	Availability of entertainment and restaurants	Maintenance of existing roads
A sense of community	Recreational opportunities	Availability of sidewalks

Figure 46: Top issues in Dallas (from Community Survey 1)

When asked about the top priorities for land development, survey respondents had the following top four answers:

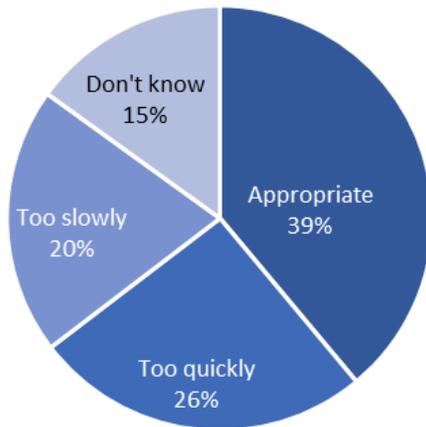
1. Encourage small-town charm
2. Preserve natural and culturally important features
3. Walkable neighborhoods
4. Support a family-friendly and inclusive community

## COMMUNITY SURVEY 2 & 3

The second and third community surveys, conducted in early-2021 and late-2021 respectively, built upon the findings of the first survey. Compared to the first survey, these two surveys ask more focused questions on specific topic areas such as housing, transportation, and downtown. While the second survey was used in the development of the plan, the third survey was the primary engagement mechanism used during the plan development process. The third survey results, broken down by theme, are as follows:

### Growth And Development

**Figure 47: How do you feel about the pace of growth in Dallas over the last 10 years?**



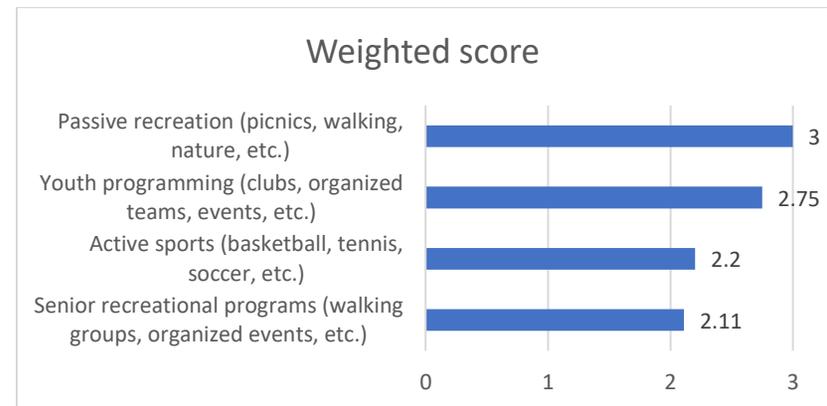
The percentage of residents who felt that the pace of growth was too quick (26 percent) was slightly higher than those who

felt it was too slow (20 percent). The highest response category was those who felt the pace of growth was appropriate (39 percent). In addition, when asked what type of growth Dallas should encourage over the next ten years, 63 percent of respondents indicated 'a balance of residential and employment growth', compared to 12 percent of respondents who indicated 'no growth'.

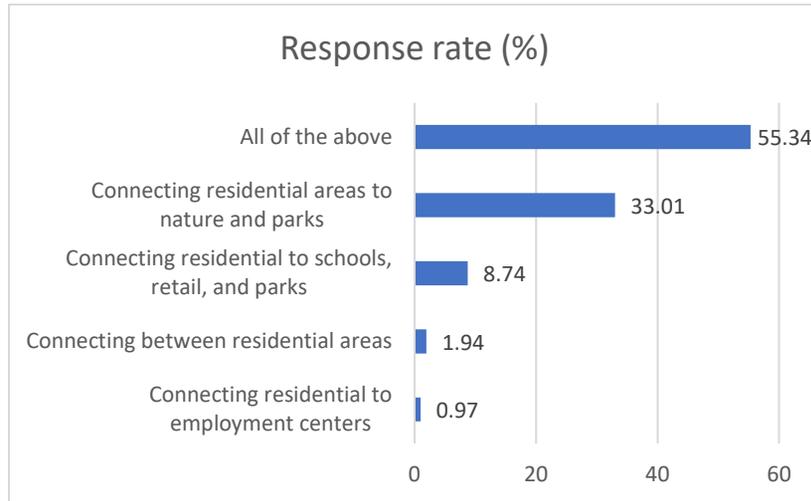
### Recreation And Open Space

Survey respondents expressed a strong preference for passive recreation activities compared to other types of recreational activities. This is also reflected in the responses about a future Carolina Thread Trail connection. The majority of respondents expressed interest in providing maximum connection to parks, residential, employment, and commercial centers.

**Figure 48: What recreational activities are most important to you?**



**Figure 49: How should the Carolina Thread Trail be incorporated into the Town?**



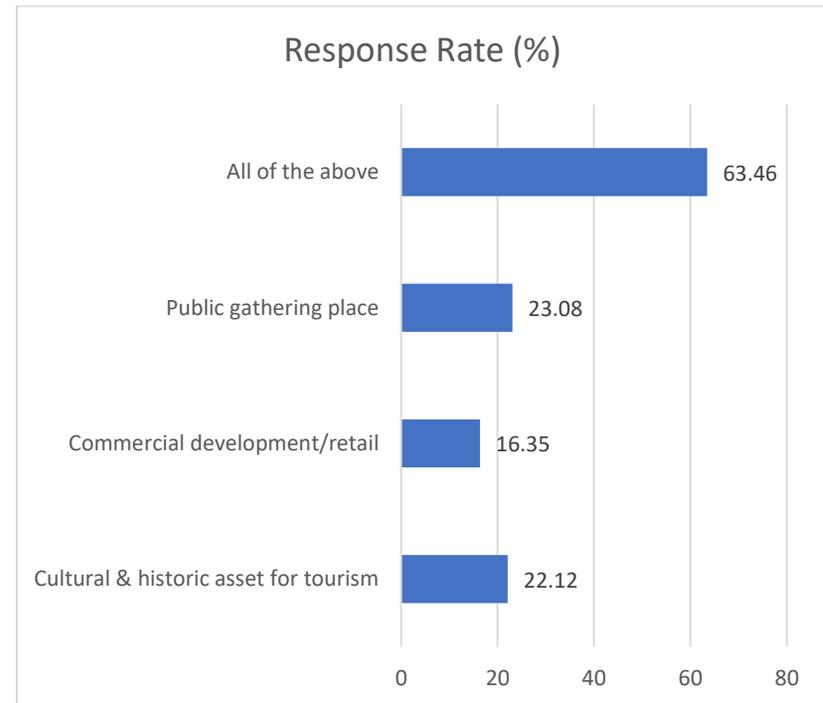
Prior engagement also identified community festivals and events as an important component of Dallas’ social and economic well-being. When asked about the types of festivals that Dallas should prioritize, respondents favored outdoor music events and festivals (75 percent), festivals that celebrate local history, culture, foods, etc. (72 percent), and artisan markets or boutiques (56 percent) as their top three selections.

**Downtown Dallas**

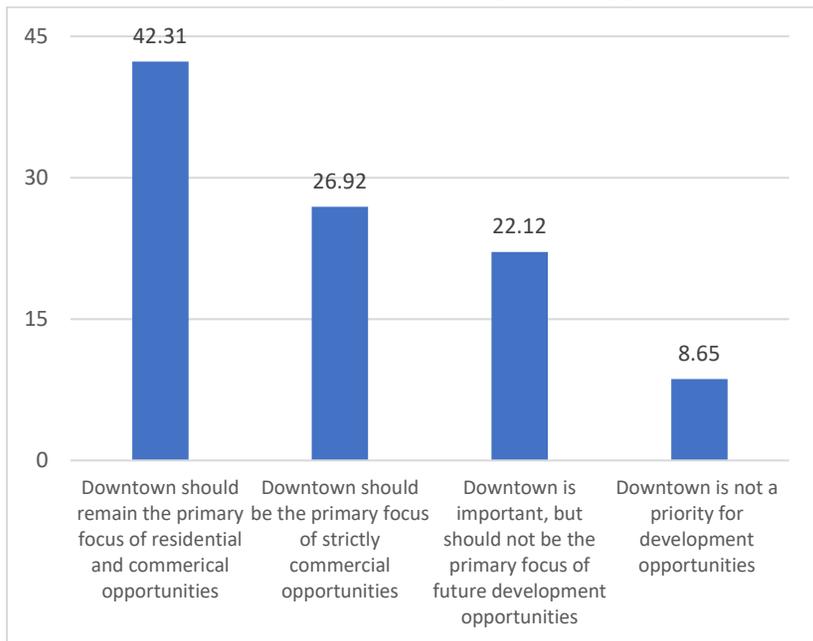
Based on this survey’s responses, the majority of residents still see downtown Dallas as the major focal point for both future

development opportunities, as well as civic and social life. The majority of respondents would like to see commercial development in downtown, and a sizeable portion would also like to see residential development. Only 8.7 percent of respondents said that downtown should not be prioritized for development. In addition, the majority of respondents would like downtown to serve as a center for commerce, a public gathering place, and a historic and cultural asset.

**Figure 50: What should be the primary role of the downtown area within the Dallas community?**



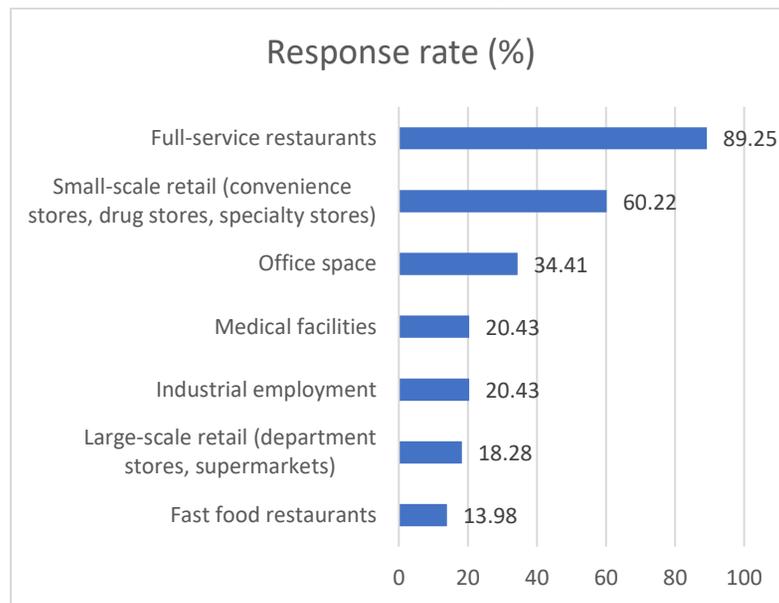
**Figure 51: Should downtown still be the primary focus for residential and commercial development opportunities?**



**Shopping, Restaurants And Entertainment**

Survey respondents express a clear preference for commercial developments such as full-service restaurants (89 percent) and small-scale retail (60 percent). The two least preferred types of commercial development were large-scale retail such as department stores (18 percent) and fast-food restaurants (14 percent). The demand for small-scale, local commercial options mirrors the demand for more services and amenities expressed in the Community Survey 1.

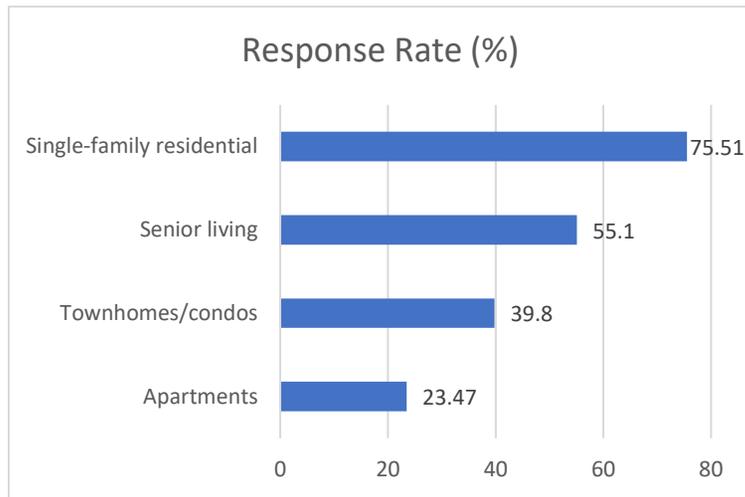
**Figure 52: What types of commercial development should Dallas encourage?**



**Housing Choices**

When asked what types of residential development should Dallas encourage, the majority of survey respondents indicated single-family residential (76 percent), followed by senior living (55 percent), townhomes/condos (40 percent), and apartments (23 percent). While the preference for townhomes/condos and apartments is markedly lower than that for single-family housing, it still represents a distinct demand, especially given the relatively small amount of either housing in comparison to single-family housing.

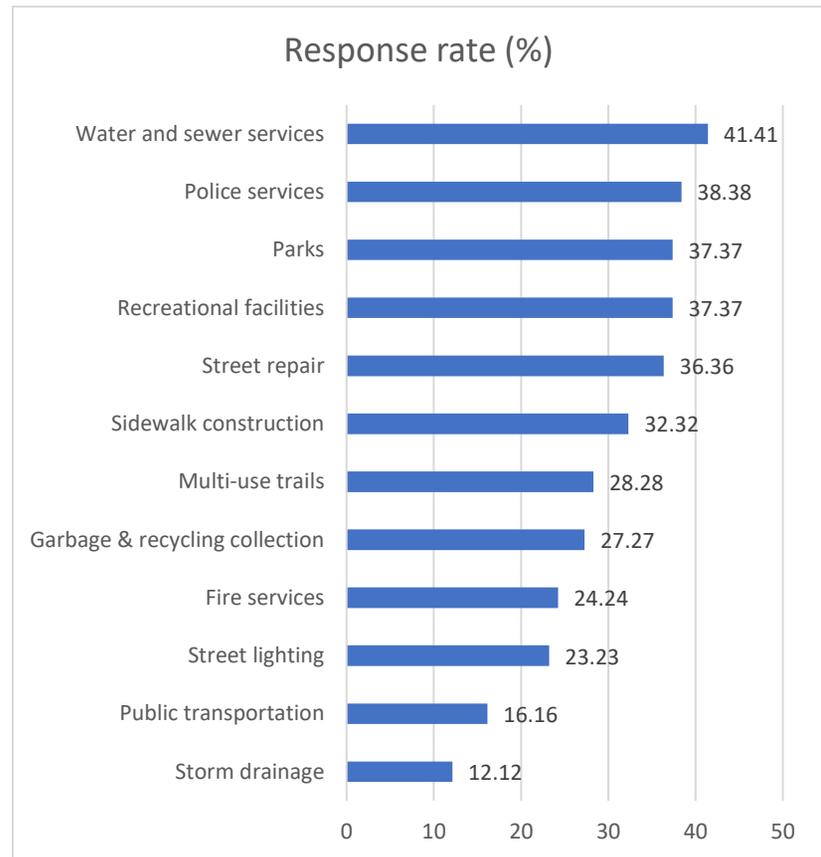
**Figure 53: What types of residential development should Dallas encourage?**



**Community Facilities And Infrastructure**

Survey respondents were asked to select the type three types of infrastructure investments which were important for Dallas to make. The top selection was ‘water and sewer services’ (41 percent), followed by police services (38 percent) and parks/recreational facilities (37 percent). Water and sewer in particular will be an important consideration, as the potential for future growth is largely dependent on the capacity of the water and sewer system; this topic emerged as a major theme through discussions with the steering committee and town staff as well as this survey. The other top responses are also in line with other survey responses which prioritize public safety, amenities, and overall quality of life.

**Figure 54: What types of infrastructure investments are most important for Dallas?**

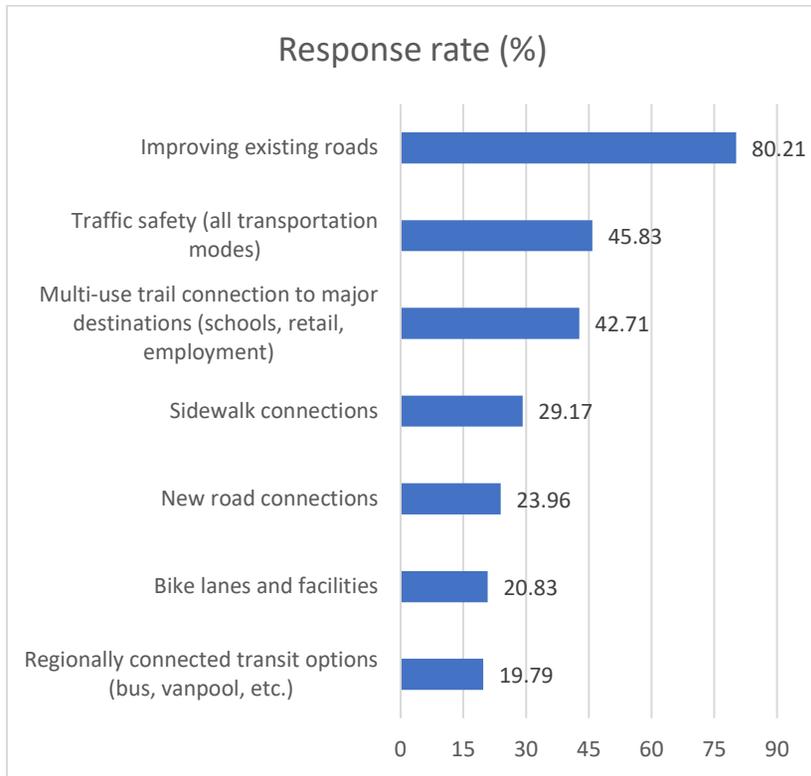


**Transportation**

When asked to select the top three transportation priorities for Dallas, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents (80 percent) selected ‘Improving existing roads’. Traffic safety and multi-use trail connections were the next two highest

priorities, respectively. Pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure was a lower priority comparatively, but it also emerged as an important theme from other parts of the survey (e.g. Recreation and Open Space) and the overall public engagement process. Regional public transit was the lowest priority but was still included as a top three priority for some respondents.

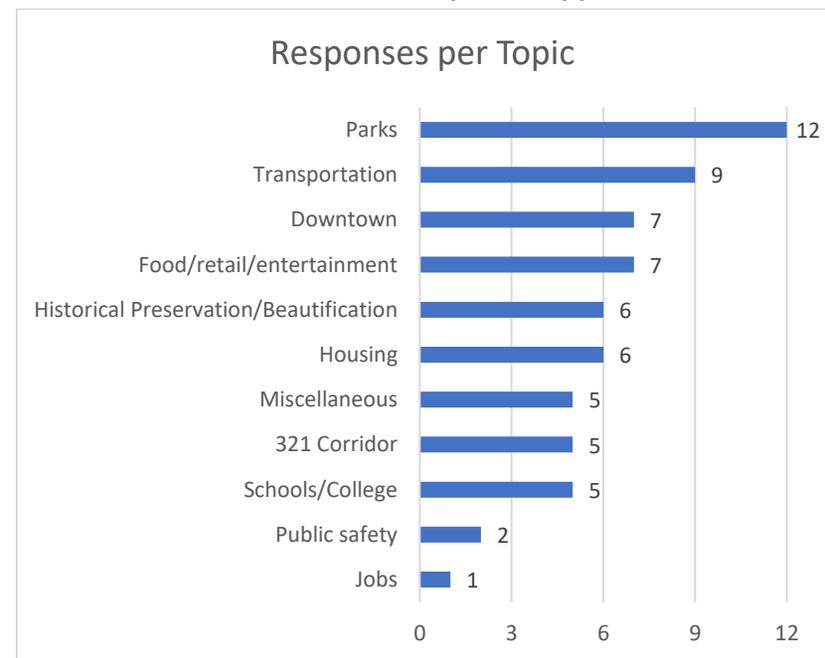
**Figure 55: What areas of transportation infrastructure are most important to Dallas’s long-term vitality?**



**Open-ended Questions**

While the majority of survey questions were grouped by theme, respondents were given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. The primary open-ended question asked respondents what areas Dallas should focus on for future development opportunities. As shown below, responses covered a wide range of topics. These responses were instrumental to providing context and nuance to the other survey responses.

**Figure 56: What other areas of Dallas should the community focus on for future development opportunities?**



In addition, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any closing thoughts. While the answers were more difficult to place into discreet categories, they were synthesized and used to develop the main recommendations of the plan.

### MAIN THEMES FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Through the surveys, open houses, discussions with the steering committee, and feedback from town staff and community leaders, distinct themes began to emerge. While not an exhaustive list, some of these themes are as follows:

- The ability to walk and bike throughout town
- Investment in walking/biking infrastructure
- Maintaining and celebrating Downtown’s history
- Make downtown a desirable destination through retail, cultural amenities, and events
- Attract and support small, local businesses
- Investment in park facilities & recreational opportunities
- Ensuring roads are safe and efficient
- High-quality housing that augments community feel
- A variety of housing types in the neighborhoods where appropriate
- Maintaining the ‘small town feel’ through smart land use policies
- Maintain high-quality infrastructure and community facilities (water and sewer, parks, roads, etc.)
- Public safety & beautification

### VISION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All the components of the plan development process—public engagement, existing conditions analysis, and conversations with community members—were synthesized into the plan’s vision statement and guiding principles. The vision statement is the overarching, broad description of the community’s values and shared vision. The guiding principles expound upon the vision statement; they provide the specific vision for a particular topic area. The guiding principles are also used to categorize the policy recommendations. In total, the following six topic areas were used for the guiding principles:



## TOWN OF DALLAS VISION STATEMENT

*Dallas, 1006 miles east of the other Dallas, is a small town in North Carolina **BIG** on preservation of quality of life. It's a place where folks gather at the Town Square for celebrations and experiencing a variety of cultural offerings from local music, artisans, and a museum to authentic shopping and dining. This Dallas is the hub for recreational activities, yet connected in proximity to Charlotte International Airport, medical facilities, colleges, and universities; making it prime for business growth and expansions due to our state-of-the-art infrastructure.*



Images Sources: GoGaston (left & right), Lineberger's Farms (middle)

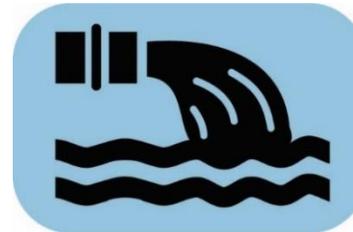
## TOWN OF DALLAS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*“Foster a Distinctive Community that is Economically Competitive in the Region”*

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



*“Provide Well-Maintained and High-Quality Community Facilities Services, and Programs”*

### CULTURAL RESOURCES



*“Support a Vibrant Downtown as an Activity Center and Cultural Hub”*

### HOUSING



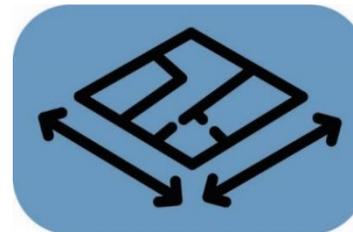
*“Create a Diverse Inventory of Housing While Preserving the Character of Existing Residential Areas”*

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



*“Ensure a Connected, Safe and Accessible Transportation System”*

### LAND USE



*“Communicate Strategic, Well-planned Allocation of Land Uses”*

## 4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*“Foster a Distinctive Community that is Economically Competitive in the Region”*

#### 1.1 -- Create an Environment That is Conducive to Small Business Development

- 1.1.1 -- Form a local business team to provide commercial permitting assistance to new businesses
- 1.1.2 -- Assess opportunities to facilitate learning and entrepreneurship development opportunities to support local business expansion
- 1.1.3 -- Strengthen media presence to better market local businesses, events, and economic development initiatives
- 1.1.4 -- Help businesses apply for funding opportunities or grants

#### 1.2 -- Recruit Major Employers to Promote Economic Diversity

- 1.2.1 -- Coordinate with the Gaston County Economic Development Commission to recruit national and regional businesses
- 1.2.2 -- Conduct site readiness assessment of commercial parcels to secure businesses best suited to the locations

#### 1.3 -- Prioritize the Built Environment as A Way to Attract New Businesses

- 1.3.1 -- Explore development review processes that encourage outdoor dining
- 1.3.2 -- Continue to assess and install outdoor furniture where applicable; consider the use of coordinated furniture standards
- 1.3.3 -- Determine opportunities to increase pedestrian friendliness downtown such as tree canopy, wayfinding, and additional furniture
- 1.3.4 -- Consider impacts of land use ordinances on economic development goals and initiatives

#### 1.4 -- Leverage Existing Resources to Maximize Economic Development Opportunities

- 1.4.1 -- Form ‘Town and Gown’ committee (comprised of representatives from Gaston College and the Town of Dallas) to augment economic development

opportunities between Gaston College and the Town of Dallas

- 1.4.2 -- Plan for economic development initiatives that accommodate incoming Apple Creek Business Park labor force
- 1.4.3 -- Strategically plan for the expansion of existing water, sewer, and electric utility facilities in the planning area
- 1.4.4 -- Continue implementing existing plans such as the Economic Development Assessment and Town Center Plan

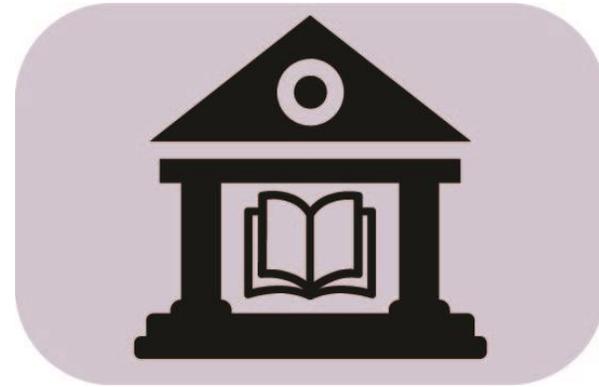
#### 1.5 -- Increase Strategic Planning efforts along the US-321 Corridor

- 1.5.1 -- Assess development policies along US-321 Corridor in response to anticipated growth of the Charlotte Metropolitan Region Impact Area

#### 1.6 -- Identify champions to implement Economic Development Strategies

- 1.6.1 -- Form a focus group of key, local stakeholders who meet regularly to discuss economic development issues

## 2) CULTURAL RESOURCES



*“Support a Vibrant Downtown as an Activity Center and Cultural Hub”*

#### 2.1 -- Revitalize and beautify the Central Business District

- 2.1.1 -- Evaluate incentive program opportunities to promote building revitalization efforts among local property owners.
- 2.1.2 -- Improve the appearance of streets in downtown through landscaping, street plantings, and decorative lighting.
- 2.1.3 -- Explore opportunities to establish a formalized park or plaza within the Central Business District.

2.2 -- Enhance wayfinding and placemaking throughout the community

- 2.2.1 -- Install wayfinding signage at key entrances and transition points throughout Town.
- 2.2.2 -- Coordinate with Gaston County Museum and the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission to identify historic sites and install informational signage.

2.3 -- Identify and support historical and cultural community assets.

- 2.3.1 -- Complete a cultural asset study to identify historic community resources that are currently unknown or insufficiently documented.

2.4 -- Establish the Town as an attractive host site for cultural events and activities.

- 2.4.1 -- Investigate the suitability of various sites as a community event venue.
- 2.4.2 -- Host more reoccurring town events, such as the Christmas parade
- 2.4.3 -- Strategically plan for how to utilize the new Gaston Aquatic Center for events & tourism; specifically, pursue hotel development opportunities

2.5 -- Support high quality education in the community as well as opportunities for lifelong learning

- 2.5.1 -- Partner with Gaston County Schools to identify courses which prepare students for emerging industries in the region
- 2.5.2 -- Partner with Gaston College and the Town of Dallas to connect community members to educational opportunities and seminars.

**3) TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY**



*“Ensure a Connected, Safe, and Accessible Transportation System”*

3.1 -- Improve walkability and accessibility in downtown and across the community

- 3.1.1 -- Coordinate with the Gaston County ADA Coordinator to ensure ADA compliance at intersections and along sidewalks.
- 3.1.2 -- Establish enhanced pedestrian connections between downtown and key recreational facilities and activity centers, such as Dallas Park.
- 3.1.3 -- Work with NCDOT to investigate the applicability of pedestrian interventions, such as leading pedestrian intervals and accessible pedestrian signals, at key intersections.

3.2 -- Enhance and expand active transportation connections throughout the community

- 3.2.1 -- Continue to pursue the development of a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan for the Town.
- 3.2.2 -- Revise development regulations to encourage or require bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure with new residential and commercial development.

3.3 -- Pursue traffic calming strategies to improve safety for all road users

- 3.3.1 -- Work with NCDOT to conduct a speed study to identify suitable locations for speed reduction interventions, such as speed humps.

3.4 -- Allow for efficient, safe movement of personal vehicles and trucks

- 3.4.1 -- Coordinate with NCDOT to assess whether signalization adjustments on downtown streets are needed to allow for a more efficient flow of vehicles through the community.
- 3.4.2 -- Explore opportunities to designate "freight corridors" to restrict truck traffic to arterial streets that can handle higher traffic volumes.
- 3.4.3 -- Pursue grant opportunities for the implementation of EV charging infrastructure

3.5 -- Investigate opportunities for regional transportation connections to support residents and businesses.

- 3.5.1 -- Continue coordination with the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) to enhance regional transportation connectivity.

## 4) COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



*“Provide Well-Maintained and High Quality Community Facilities, Services, and Programs”*

### 4.1 -- Enhance the Town's parks and trail systems.

- 4.1.1 -- Codify Development Ordinance to require trail easements with future development proposals where applicable
- 4.1.2 -- Plan for future Carolina Thread Trail connections to Dallas Park, residential neighborhoods, and public facilities
- 4.1.3 -- Assess minimal open space requirements in Development regulations; increase the required percentage and include in all zoning districts

### 4.2 -- Develop a multi-modal transportation system that connects communities within the Town and the planning area

- 4.2.1 -- Coordinate with local, state, and federal partners to leverage funding for bike lanes, sharrows and multi-use paths
- 4.2.2 -- Plan for Rail-Trail multi-use paths in coordination with regional mobility plans such as the Carolina Thread Trail
- 4.2.3 -- Plan for infrastructure supportive of multi-modal transportation systems such as wayfinding, lighting and fencing where appropriate
- 4.2.4 -- Coordinate with Gaston County to make improvements to Dallas Park, and to produce an updated Dallas Park Master Plan if necessary
- 4.2.5 -- Implement Dallas Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

### 4.3 -- Revitalize existing recreation facilities

- 4.3.1 -- Conduct and utilize planning studies to apply for grant funding to revitalize existing recreational facilities

### 4.4 -- Invest in reliable, high-quality water and sewer systems that support existing and new developments

- 4.4.1 -- Assess and strategically plan for utility service area boundaries in coordination with Two Rivers

- 4.4.2 -- Codify minimal utility review standards for residential and commercial development

4.5 -- Develop coordinated plans for long-term public service provision and expansion needs.

- 4.5.1 -- Prioritize development impact review with Gaston County Schools prior to development approvals to ensure long-term sustainable community growth
- 

**5) HOUSING**



*“Create a Diverse Inventory of Housing While Preserving the Character of Existing Residential Areas”*

5.1 -- Maintain the Value and Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods

- 5.1.1 -- Implement proactive code enforcement and protection from illegal land use activities through the hiring of a full-time code enforcement officer

5.2 -- Ensure new residential development is compatible with existing built environment

- 5.2.1 -- Clarify the required sidewalk placements as part of the Complete Streets design and connectivity standards to provide for walkability in neighborhoods
- 5.2.2 -- Encourage flexible density and scale in new residential developments where appropriate
- 5.2.3 -- Update conservation guidelines (in coordination with UDO development)
- 5.2.4 -- Explore Planned Unit Development, Conditional Rezoning, and Development Agreements when considering new proposals to better predict the outcome of development

5.3 -- Support a range of housing types and densities in strategic locations.

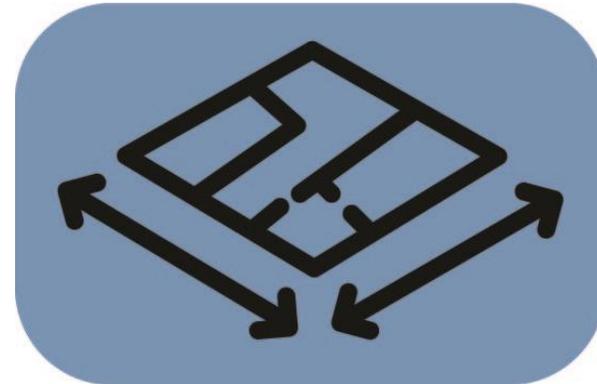
- 5.3.1 -- Pursue development of age-friendly housing to provide safe, walkable access to amenities and services.

- 5.3.2 -- Allow for higher density residential development near downtown and as a transitional use between non-residential zones and low density residential.
- 5.3.3 -- Plan for Single-Family, Two-Family, and Multi-Family mixed use residential where utilities and infrastructure may support such development
- 5.3.4 -- Develop and incorporate a set of development incentives which can incentivize affordable housing in new residential developments

5.4 -- Mitigate the offsets of new residential development through land development regulations.

- 5.4.1 -- Assess minimal transportation impact analysis requirements and when applicable to residential development regulations; implement a lower threshold from the ITE

**6) LAND USE**



*“Communicate Strategic, Well-Planned Allocation of Land Uses”*

6.1 -- Promote Land Conservation

- 6.1.1 -- Identify priority corridors to preserve historically and culturally significant land

6.2 -- Assess needs, and fulfillment of needs through specific land use decisions

- 6.2.1 -- Develop land in response to identified needs from strategic and comprehensive planning studies

6.3 -- Encourage walkable and mixed-use development.

- 6.3.1 -- Encourage ground-level uses that are friendly to window shoppers, passersby, and the desired downtown experience.
- 6.3.2 -- Adopt more flexible standards for infill development in and near downtown.

6.4 -- Maintain community character and a high quality of development.

- 6.4.1 -- Update building and permitting codes to ensure new and existing structures comply with health, safety, and design quality standards.
- 6.4.2 -- Encourage reuse and redevelopment that respect the integrity and character of established neighborhoods and commercial zones.

## FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

A Future Land Use Map (FLUM) is the fundamental visual guide to the character and location of future development in the Town of Dallas. The community type categories used in the Future Land Use Map are based on public engagement, steering committee and town staff feedback, current zoning categories, pre-existing plans and initiatives, and land suitability projections based on the Metrolina CommunityViz Model (MCM).

In total, the following twelve community types were utilized:

1. Town Center (TC)
2. Mixed-Use Neighborhood (MUN)
3. Urban Neighborhood (UN)
4. Multi-family Residential (MFR)
5. Single-family Residential (SFR)
6. Rural Living (RL)
7. Suburban Mixed-Use Center (SMUC)
8. Industrial (IC)
9. Government Facility (GF)
10. Education Campus (EC)
11. Health Care Campus (HCC)
12. Recreational Open Space (ROS)

### Town Center

The Town Center is the main area of economic, entertainment, and community activity. Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage pedestrian activity.



Buildings typically stand two or more stories in height with residential units above storefronts. The compact, walkable environment and mix of residential and non-residential uses in a town center often support multiple modes of transportation.

The Town Center supports a mix of uses. Primary land uses may include: townhomes, apartments, senior housing, sit down restaurants, community-serving commercial, professional offices, live/work/shop units, post office, and community facilities. Secondary land uses may include: day care, farmers markets, or pocket parks.

The Town Center typically has high street connectivity and a grid street pattern. Transportation choices may included automobiles, walking, bicycling, or transit.

## Mixed-Use Neighborhood



A mixed-use neighborhood offers residents the ability to live, shop, work, and play in one community. These neighborhoods include a mixture of housing types and

residential densities integrated with goods and services in a walkable community that residents visit on a daily basis. The design and scale of the development encourages active living through a comprehensive and interconnected network of walkable streets. Mixed-use neighborhoods support multiple modes of transportation.

The primary uses in a mixed-use neighborhood may include: single-family detached homes, condominiums, apartments, townhomes, sit down restaurants, neighborhood-serving commercial, professional offices, and government buildings. Secondary land uses may include churches, schools, pocket parks, community parks, and natural areas. These areas typically have high street connectivity and a grid street pattern; they support multiple modes of transportation including automobiles, walking, bicycling, and transit.

## Urban Neighborhood



Urban neighborhoods support a mix of moderate- to high-density housing options. These neighborhoods are relatively compact, and may contain one

or more of the following housing types: small lot, single family detached, townhomes, condominiums, or apartments. Buildings are generally oriented toward the street. The design and scale of development in an urban neighborhood encourages active living with a complete and comprehensive network of walkable streets. Cul-de-sacs are restricted to areas where topography, environment, or existing development makes other street connections prohibitive.

The primary uses in urban neighborhoods may include: single-family detached homes, townhomes, duplexes, apartments, and condominiums. Secondary uses may include churches, schools, and parket parks. Typically, streets have a grid pattern and high connectivity. These areas may support automobiles, walking, bicycling, and transit.

## **Multi-family Residential**



Multi-family residential neighborhoods are generally formed as complexes or communities, with a relatively uniform housing type and density throughout. They support

the highest residential density in the suburban landscape, and may contain one of the following housing types: condominiums, townhomes, senior housing, or apartments.

Multi-family suburban neighborhoods are found in close proximity to suburban commercial and office centers, and provide the rooftops necessary to support various suburban commercial and office uses within the centers. Buildings are oriented interior to the site and are typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas.

Primary land uses may include: apartments, town-homes, condominiums, and senior housing. Secondary uses may include: churches, community centers, pool and amenities, and natural areas. Street connectivity is typically medium, and these areas tend to support automobiles, bicycling, and buses.

## **Single-family Residential**

Single-family residential zones are generally formed as subdivisions with a relatively uniform housing types and densities. This category supports a range of single-family housing



types, from large-lot, low density homes to small-lot residential neighborhoods. The category may also include single family attached housing, such as townhomes, where appropriate.

Single-family zones are typically buffered from surrounding uses by landscaping or transitional uses. The street configuration depends on the type of single-family housing; lower density housing will have more curvilinear roads, and automobiles are the main transportation mode. Higher density housing may have higher street connectivity, and hence walkability, especially where neighborhoods are located near commercial centers. All single-family zones will aim to support walking and biking through the provision of trails, sidewalks, and other connections.

## Rural Living



Rural Living areas are characterized by large lots, abundant open space and a high degree of separation between buildings. Homes and “hobby farms” are scattered throughout the

countryside and often integrated into the landscape. The lot size and distances between dwellings decreases with greater development densities. Buildings are generally oriented towards highways and have direct access via private driveways. This community type may also support working farms, including the primary residence of the property owner and any out-buildings associated with farm activities.

Primary land uses may be single-family detached homes, mobile homes, hobby farms, or working farms. Secondary uses may include churches, natural areas, or ancillary uses to farm activities. Street connectivity is typically low, and the primary transportation choice will be automobiles.

## Suburban Mixed-Use Center

Suburban Mixed-Use Centers (SMOCs) support a wide array of uses, including commercial, office, and residential. At its highest density, SMOCs serve broader



community needs. Buildings in the core may stand three or more stories, with residential units or office space located above storefronts. These zones may also provide goods and services to surrounding neighborhoods; in such cases, uses would be low-intensity, unobtrusive, and at a scale and design compatible with nearby residential development. Primary land uses may include a variety of commercial operations (sit down restaurants, convenience stores, banks, barber shops), offices, and residential units (townhomes, apartments). Walkability is supported in these zones, particularly for nearby residents.

In addition, Suburban Mixed-Use Centers may also support non-mixed uses, such as office centers or commercial centers. These uses are typically lower density, and they provide ample parking to support automobile trips. For example, primary uses could include corporate offices or big box commercial such as a grocery store.

## **Industrial Center**



Industrial centers may encompass both heavy and light industrial uses. Heavy industrial centers support large-scale manufacturing and production uses, including assembly and

processing, regional warehousing and distribution, bulk storage, and utilities. Light industrial centers generally supports manufacturing and production uses, including warehousing, light manufacturing, medical research, and assembly operations.

These areas are found in close proximity to major transportation corridors (e.g., highways or railroads) and are generally buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that increase in size as development intensity increases. Street connectivity is generally low, although efficient access to trucking routes and regional transportation facilities is often required.

## **Government Facility**



The Government Facility community type includes land uses which are owned and operated by the Town of Dallas or other governmental agencies. Not all government facilities fall under this category; larger facilities such as the Gaston Correctional Facility are incorporated, whereas smaller facilities may be incorporated in other categories such as Town Center.

Generally, however, Government Facility could include any building or complex of buildings that serve public purpose, including a library, school, public works complex, or town government. Visual qualities of the building and its surrounding grounds often make civic and institutional facilities a landmark within the region.

Street connectivity and the available transportation choices varies depending on the size and location of a particular use. Broadly, however, the Government Facility community type will support automobiles and walking.

## Education Campus



The Education Campus community types incorporates all educational related land uses. For university/ college campuses, the category includes all of the academic buildings,

residence halls, athletic facilities, equipment, or other ancillary uses needed to support an institution for higher education. Buildings are often oriented around highly-walkable networks of internal streets and pedestrian pathways, which support several modes of transportation for reaching the campus (i.e., bicycle, transit, or automobile). Structured parking or large surface lots, dedicated areas for public gathering, and distinctive architecture also represent a typical university campus. Complementary uses near a university may include student housing, residential neighborhoods, downtown, or private research and development buildings.

In addition, public schools (K-12) would also fall under the Education Campus community type. Street patterns and connectivity will vary, but emphasis will be placed on providing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure connections.

## Health Care Campus

A health care campus includes various medical and medical-related uses, such as primary care, outpatient surgery, birthing centers, and other specialty services. Some uses are relatively large in scale, and may include a hospital, teaching facilities, research and rehabilitation centers, and private medical office buildings. Larger healthcare uses may be oriented in a campus setting, with large buildings connected via walkways, structured parking, or an internal network of streets for circulation.



Smaller healthcare uses, such as outpatient offices, may resemble the Suburban Mixed-Use Center community type. Ample parking would be located at the site to support automobile trips. However, the site might also be located in proximity to commercial, office, or residential uses.

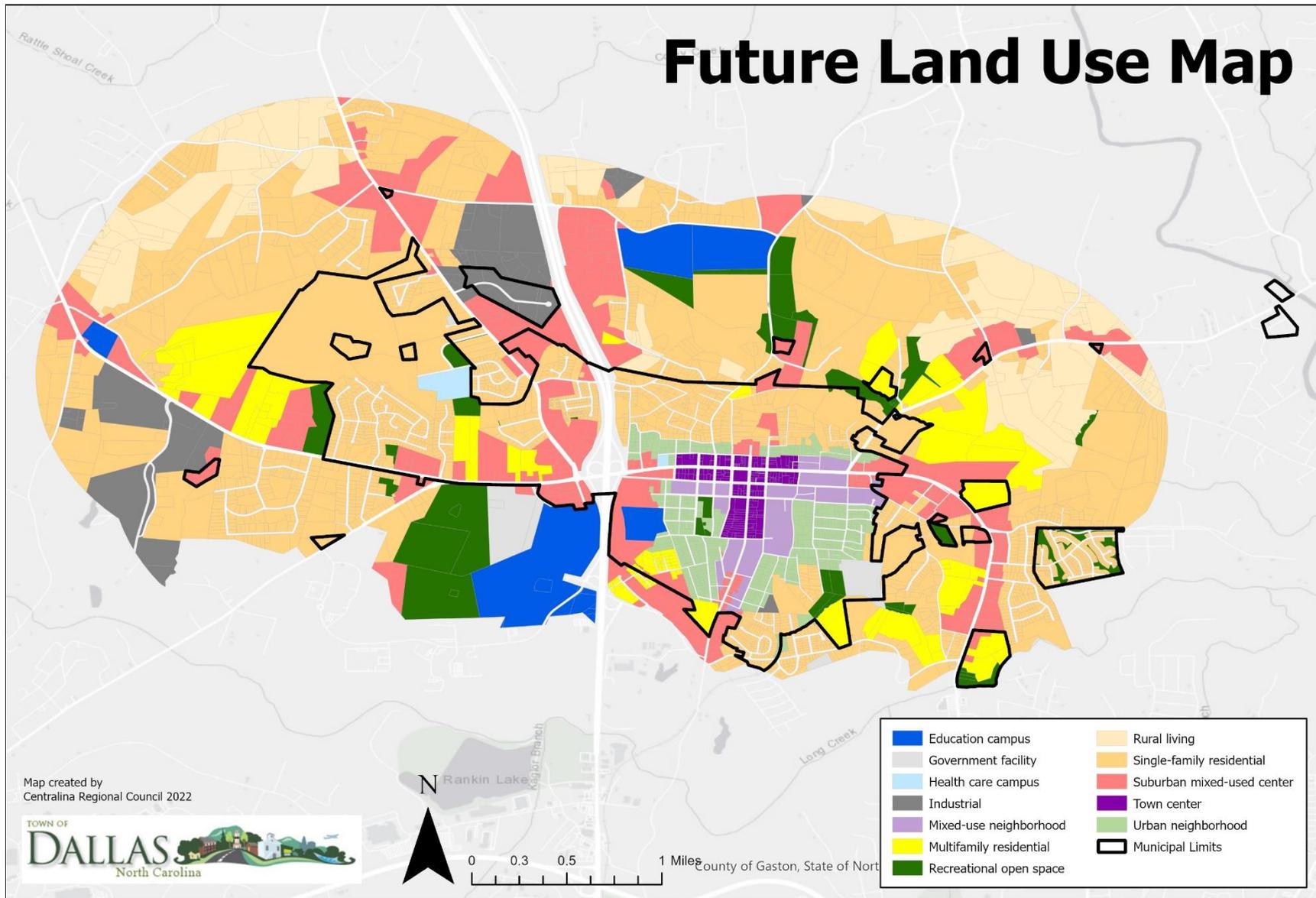
## Recreational Open Space



Recreational  
Open Space  
comprises  
land  
dedicated for  
active and  
passive  
recreational

uses. These areas are designated to exclude development and to provide good public access. These areas include municipal and community parks, open air sports complexes and athletic fields. This community type may also incorporate other preserved open spaces such as natural areas, greenways, stormwater retention/detention areas, or undevelopable land in a flood zone.

Recreational Open Spaces will typically have low street connectivity and a curvilinear street pattern accessible to automobiles. However, given the recreational nature of the uses, walking and bicycling may be encouraged through connections to sidewalks, bikepaths, and greenways.



**Figure 57: Future Land Use Map for the Town of Dallas**

## 6. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### Implementation Strategies

The Town of Dallas Comprehensive Land Use Plan will be an active document which serves as an essential decision making guide for decisions made by the town in the coming years. In order for the plan’s vision to be realized, it is crucial that the recommendations of the plan are implemented. Successful implementation will require collaboration and coordination across multiple stakeholder groups: the Planning Board, Board of Aldermen, Town staff, neighboring jurisdictions, developers, non-profits, and the citizens of the Town of Dallas. In addition, each recommendation will require a unique implementation strategy. The selected strategies will vary depending on finances, staff capacity, and current priorities; however, a few general strategies to be considered are listed below:

**1. Review local ordinances and policies**

Reviewing zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and other regulatory documents to ensure alignment with the plan’s recommendations will ease the process of implementation. If the Town of Dallas consolidates its ordinances into a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the comprehensive plan should be an important part of the update process. This pertains

especially to recommendations under the goals of *Economic Development, Housing, and Land Use*.

**2. Incorporate plan into budgeting process**

Many of the plan’s recommendations may require additional funds or staff to implement. Thus, it is important for this plan to be part of the Town’s annual budget process.

**3. Build partnerships**

By leveraging existing relationships and developing new relationships, the Town can greatly increase its capacity to implement the plan’s recommendations. Efforts should be aligned or coordinated with those of the business community, non-profits, state agencies, etc. where possible.

**4. Continue community engagement efforts**

As recommendations are implemented, continued community engagement will ensure that community members are engaged and responsive. It can also help the Town assess the effectiveness of its efforts and determine shifting needs or priorities.

## 5. Build early momentum

By successfully completing small-scale projects at an early stage, the Town can secure public confidence and additional funding to pursue larger, more complex projects.

### Plan Update

NC General Statutes mandate that local governments must have a ***reasonably maintained*** comprehensive land use plan. While the statutes do not specifically define the term ‘reasonably maintained’, professional planning best practice is to update the plan every five to ten years. If the community is experiencing rapid growth, every five years may be more appropriate. Thus, the Town of Dallas should consider an update of this comprehensive land use plan by 2027.

### Plan Maintenance

This plan is not meant to be a static document. While the plan is a comprehensive synopsis of the Town’s vision and goals, it is a snapshot in time. As the Town experiences growth and change, its priorities may shift. Accordingly, the plan may need to be adjusted year-to-year to account for these changes. The

Town should implement a system whereby the plan can be evaluated based on the events of the past year. Two potential evaluation tools are as follows:

#### 1. Yearly Action Program

A Yearly Action Program (YAP) would lay out the ‘work plan’ for implementing the comprehensive plan’s recommendations. Each project would be prioritized and given a cost-estimate. Ideally, the YAP would be coordinated with the annual budget process at the beginning of the year so that any planned projects could be included into the Town’s annual budget and given appropriate funding.

#### 2. Annual Plan Evaluation

The Annual Plan Evaluation (APE) would occur at the end of the year and serve as the primary evaluation mechanism for the work done that year. The APE would review the actions taken by the Town to implement the comprehensive plan’s recommendations. In addition, it would review any land use decisions that were made to determine their alignment with the comprehensive plan. Based on the findings of the APE, changes to the comprehensive plan may be recommended. Additionally, the findings of the APE would also inform the next year’s Year Action Program.

Open House Flyers



**TOWN OF DALLAS**  
COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

**Open House Event | All Are Welcome!**

Over the next eight months, The Town of Dallas will update its comprehensive land use plan. A comprehensive plan captures the vision and values of a community and develops a strategy for reaching these goals. The plan will address strategies for growth, development, and design for the next 20 years. The Town will hold a series of open houses for residents to provide input on what they value about where they live and what they hope for the future.

**What to Expect at the Open House:**

- Helpful Staff to Guide you Through the Process
- A Relaxed, Informative Atmosphere



\*Face Masks Required Prior to Entry

Open House

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Thursday, October 28, 2021

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Dallas Courthouse  
131 N. Gaston Street, Dallas, NC

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Drop-in between 11:00 am – 1:00 pm  
or  
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

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Light refreshments will be provided

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Contact  
Development Services Director  
Nolan Groce at [ngroce@dallasnc.net](mailto:ngroce@dallasnc.net)



**OPEN HOUSE**

The Town of Dallas is engaging in a coordinated and inclusive process to update our comprehensive land use plan. This plan will capture the vision, values and goals for the Town of Dallas' future. This open house is an opportunity to share feedback on the draft plan before its adoption.

**Town of Dallas 2030 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Draft**

**Where:** Historic Dallas Courthouse (131 N Gaston St, Dallas, NC 28034)

**When:** Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Drinks and light refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact the Town of Dallas Development Services Director, Nolan Groce ([ngroce@dallasnc.net](mailto:ngroce@dallasnc.net)).



## Community Survey Flyer



### TOWN OF DALLAS COMMUNITY SURVEY

The Town of Dallas is engaging in a coordinated and inclusive process to update our comprehensive land use plan. This plan will capture the vision, values and goals for the Town of Dallas' future.

Take 10 minutes to impact the future of Dallas!

Scan the QR code below or go to:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VJHHQKZ>

