



**LOWER SWIFT CREEK**  
AREA PLAN

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## Introduction

In 2014, the population of Wake County reached a critical milestone of 1 million residents. The region's economy and higher learning environment has led to some of the highest population growth rates in the nation. Each year, Wake County adds another 25,000 residents, or about 62 people per day, to its community. It is home to many thriving industries and startups with 12 core municipalities that offer a variety of living, working, cultural, entertainment and civic opportunities.

Over the next decade, these growth trends are expected to continue, and another 250,000 new residents will likely call Wake County their home. Under current growth rates, 28,000 additional acres of new development could occur and all remaining unprotected land in the county could be converted to development within 25 to 50 years.

These exceptional trends in prosperity also present challenges. Many of our residents have seen the costs of housing, food, education and other needs rise, without an equivalent increase in their incomes. With more and more people calling Wake County home, valued farmlands, rural areas and forests have converted to housing and commercial development, and traffic congestion has made trips to work, school and shopping longer and more challenging.

## CHAPTER 1

# Overview and Background

## PLANWake

### Purpose

PLANWake is the comprehensive plan of Wake County. This plan articulates the new vision for the greater Wake County community—one that will build off recent planning advancements made through the Wake Transit Plan, the Wake County Affordable Housing Plan, the Wake County Greenway System Plan and others to account for the next wave of growth in a manner that enhances quality of life for all residents. This new course directs growth to existing towns, supports the development of connected and walkable transit-supportive centers and works with rural landowners to protect important open spaces, farms and forests.

Guided by community responses, PLANWake sets the priorities and vision for Wake County to achieve in the next decade. The Plan Framework is organized into three main components that address a comprehensive list of community issues.

- **Vision Outcomes:** aspirations for the future.
- **Development Framework:** map to guide growth.
- **Performance Metrics:** metrics to evaluate progress.

### Approach

The PLANWake approach is different from typical comprehensive plans. The planning process was focused on working in partnership with municipal and interjurisdictional partners. This plan is dynamic and requires ongoing coordination and collaboration among many different actors. As a result, the PLANWake approach involves three key actions.

#### PLAN TOGETHER

PLANWake is built on collaboration. The planning process challenged all parties to identify things that could and should be done better and asked for ideas on how to make these things a reality. By establishing the PLANWake vision outcomes and the PLANWake development framework, the plan sets overarching goals for the county, municipal and jurisdictional partners. Planning together establishes the expectation of coordinated actions across jurisdictions.

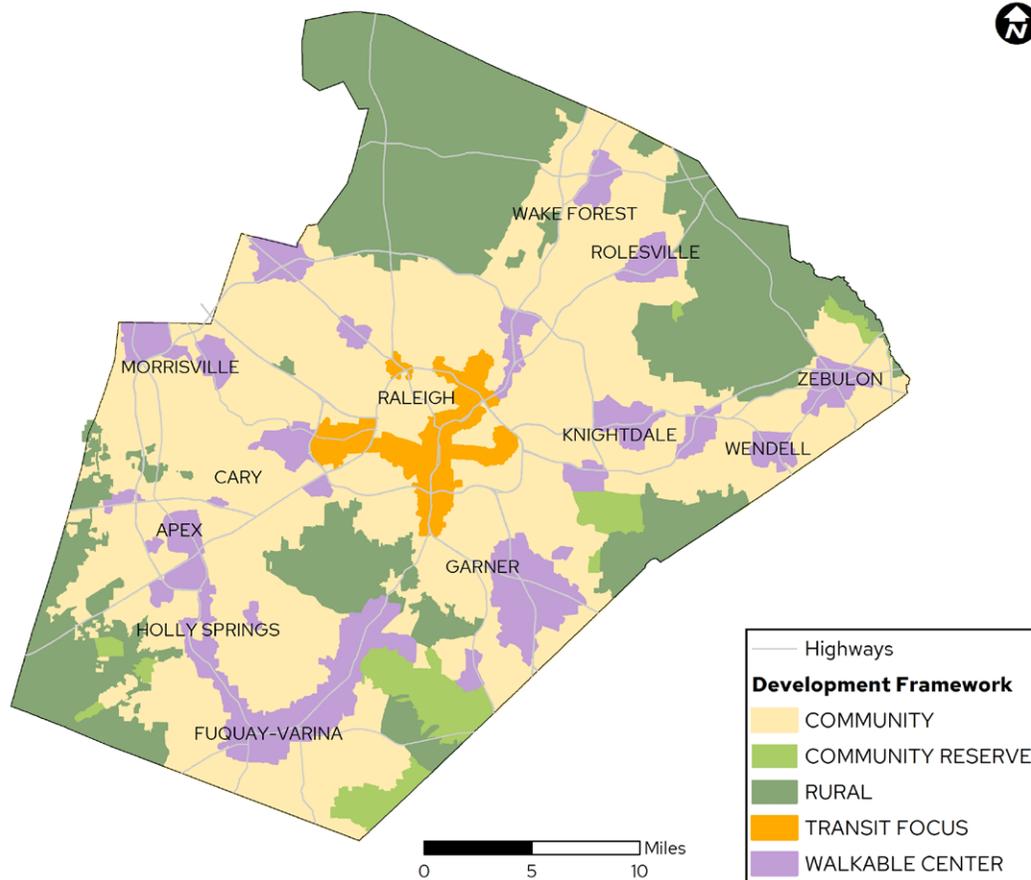
#### TRACK TOGETHER

Previous plans have had similar goals but limited means of determining if goals were being met or not. PLANWake establishes performance metrics for community-wide and municipal goals. Monitoring performance metrics and plan implementation progress is essential to taking the right actions and adjusting actions to be even more successful moving forward.

#### ACT TOGETHER

PLANWake is only one part of a complex interworking of plans, policies and investments. To achieve the goals of PLANWake, Wake County and its municipal and jurisdictional partners will need to align and coordinate the implementation of multiple plans and actions with the PLANWake vision outcomes and the PLANWake development framework. It is expected that land development and conservation decisions, particularly, will be coordinated with PLANWake.

## PLANWake Development Framework



## Municipal Transition Standards

Wake County is growing very rapidly, and the availability of developable land is drastically declining. A major aspect of Wake County's comprehensive plan, PLANWake, is to limit the types of development that create and encourage sprawl. Inherent to this subject is the fact that the county does not offer its residents water or sewer utilities, so they rely on well and septic services. These services require more area per property and limit the ability to develop land more densely, which would help combat the sprawl.

In support of municipal annexation and connections to utility services, the county's Transitional Urban Development (TUD) policy required that any unincorporated property within 2,500 feet of

municipal utilities develop under municipal standards. In 2021, the Wake County Board of Commissioners adopted an updated policy that builds off of TUD and addresses our present-day growth challenges. Called the Municipal Transition Standards (MTS), this new policy will require residential and non-residential development within 2,500 feet of municipal water or sewer to make the utility connection and develop with the municipality. It also requires any proposed regular subdivision or non-residential development located in the Walkable or Community areas — as designated on the county's Development Framework Map — to contact the service-providing municipality to discuss the feasibility of a connection to water and sewer.

## Area Plans

To meet the goals set forth in PLANWake, numerous Wake County policies and documents had to be updated or overhauled as part of the implementation process. One such example is adoption of area plans encompassing the unincorporated areas of Wake County. These area plans are designed to provide more localized land use (applications) analysis and public engagement. The Lower Swift Creek (LSC) Area Plan is the first of six area plans that will replace the current area land use plans.

Municipalities have grown significantly over the past 20 years, either through annexation or expansions of extra-territorial jurisdictions. This growth has resulted in the considerable reduction of Wake County's

planning jurisdiction, which rendered the former area land use plan geographies obsolete and their policies outdated. The new boundaries for the area plans represent the logical and updated geographic groupings of the remaining area. Additional considerations such as watersheds, rights-of-way and U.S. Census block groups contributed to the updated boundaries.

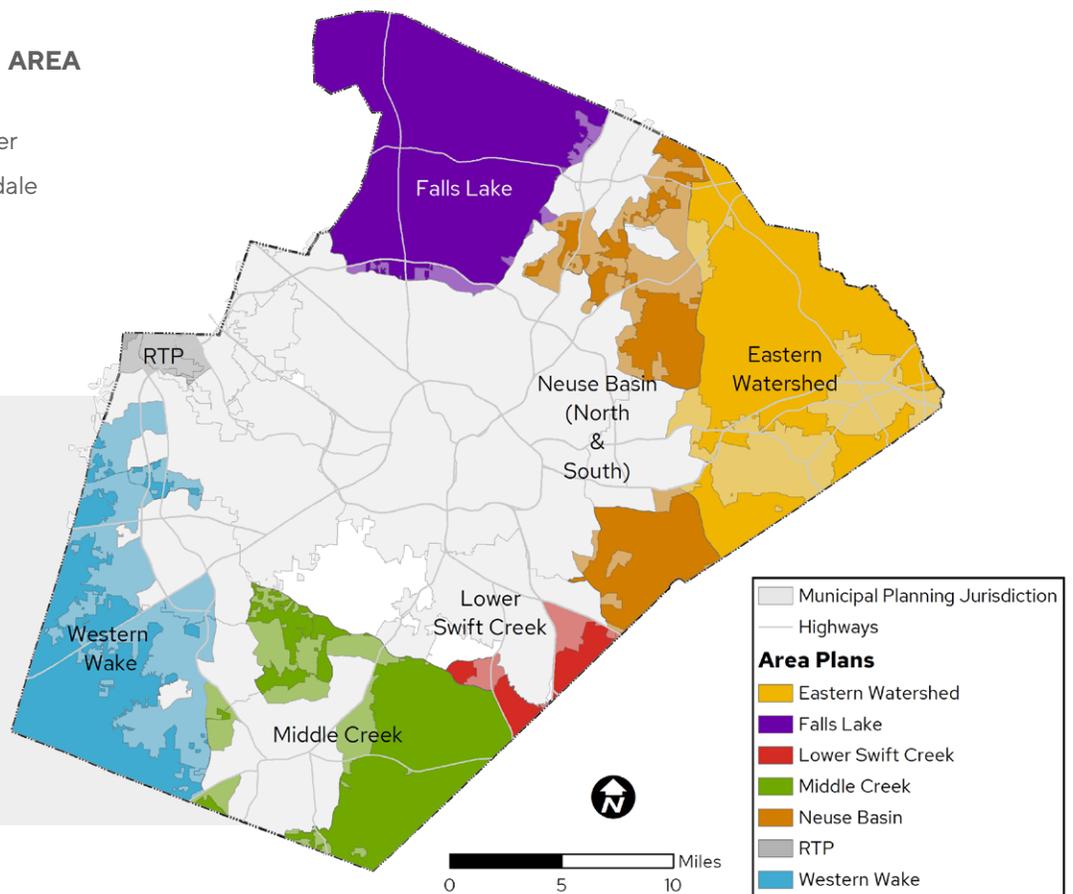
While PLANWake will continue to serve as the overarching vision for the county, the area plans can and should be used as an opportunity for certain elements – i.e., the development framework – to be modified, updated or amended as necessary.

### CURRENT/FORMER AREA LAND USE PLANS

- Fuquay-Varina/Garner
- East Raleigh/Knightdale
- Northeast
- Southeast
- Southwest

### NEW AREA PLANS

- Lower Swift Creek
- Middle Creek
- Falls Lake
- Eastern Watershed
- Western Wake
- Neuse Basin (North and South)

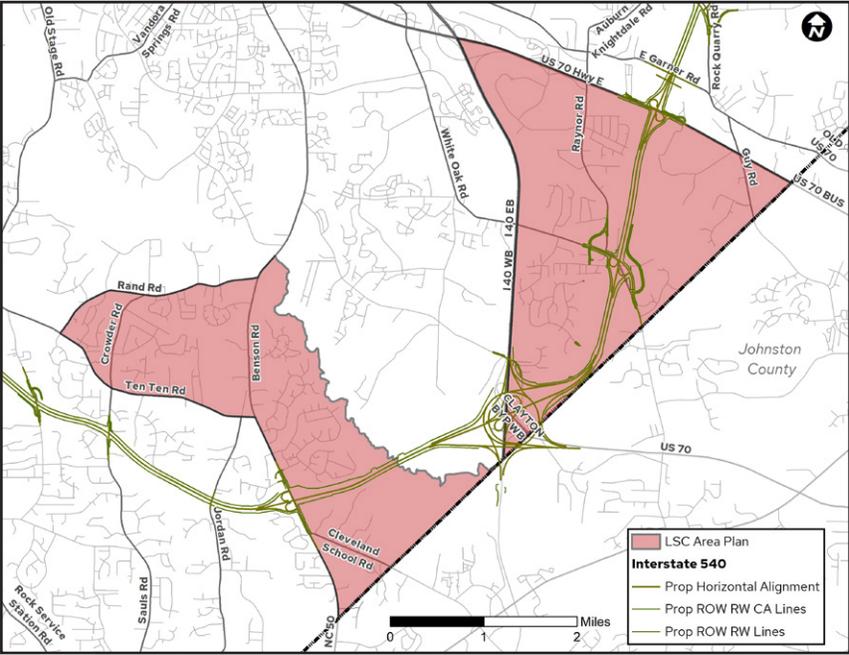


NOTE: While there is an area plan on the map for the Research Triangle Park (RTP), the RTP Foundation is responsible for any long-range or master planning initiatives in this area. Its inclusion is to identify it as an unincorporated area in Wake County's jurisdiction. Wake County will NOT be conducting an area plan in RTP.

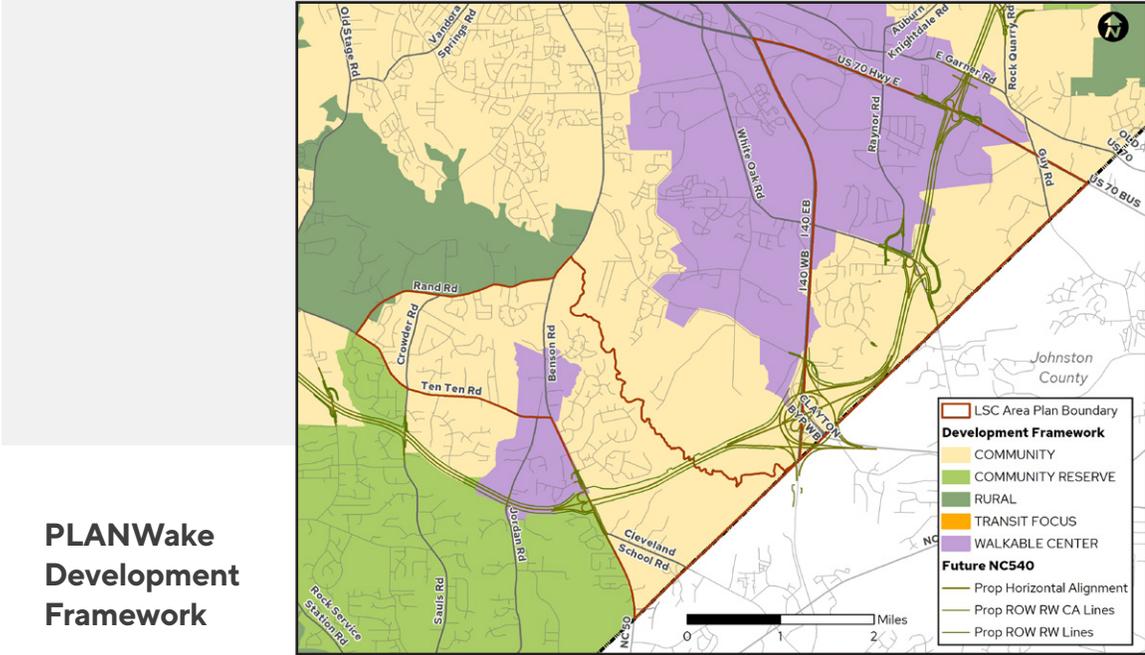
# Lower Swift Creek Planning Area

The Lower Swift Creek (LSC) Area Plan covers an area of Wake County that is approximately 7,871 acres, or just over 12 square miles. It is located southeast of the Town of Garner, and the Johnston County line borders it to the east.

The LSC area is divided into two distinct areas: the northern section, which is bordered by Highway 70, the Johnston County line and I-40; and the southern section, which is bordered by Swift Creek, the Johnston County line, Rand Road, Ten-Ten Road and Benson Road.



### Lower Swift Creek Area Plan

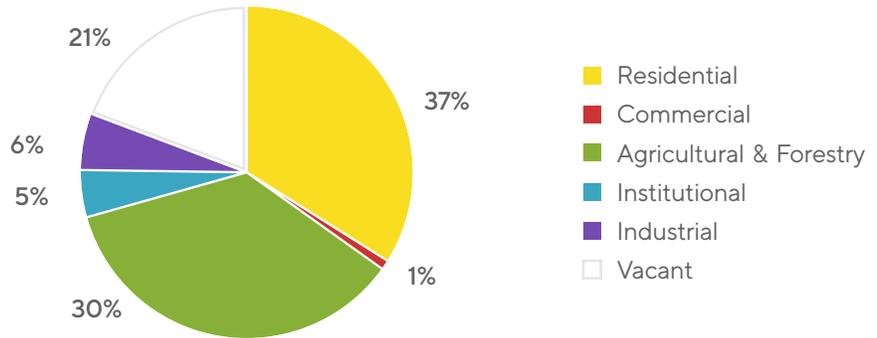


### PLANWake Development Framework

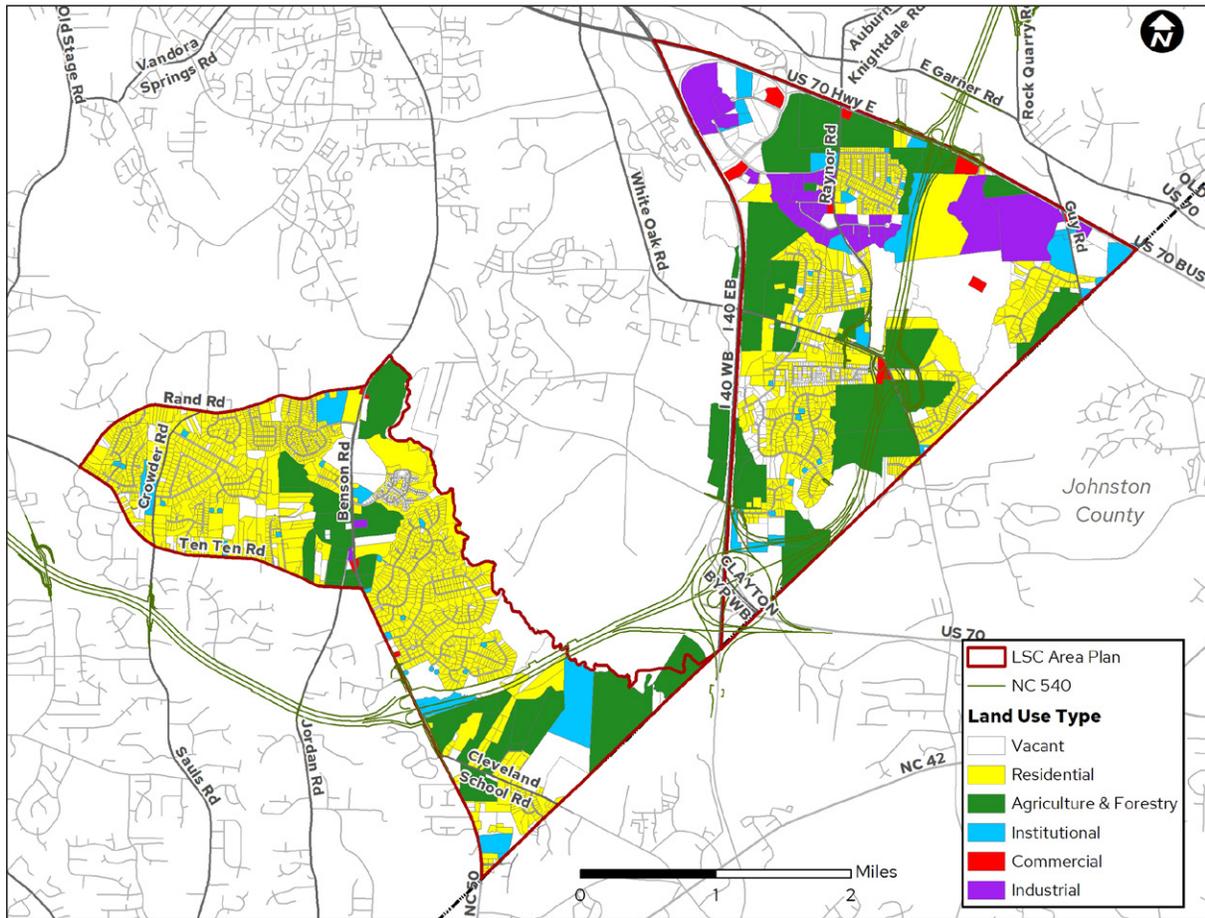
## Current Land Use

Most of the current land use in the LSC area is residential (2,312 acres [2,351 parcels]) with the exception of the Highway 70 and I-40 corridors; however, approximately 1,609 acres (520 parcels) are classified as vacant and 1,491 acres are classified as agricultural. For context, the total acreage of the LSC area is 7,871.

**LSC Area Current Land Use %**



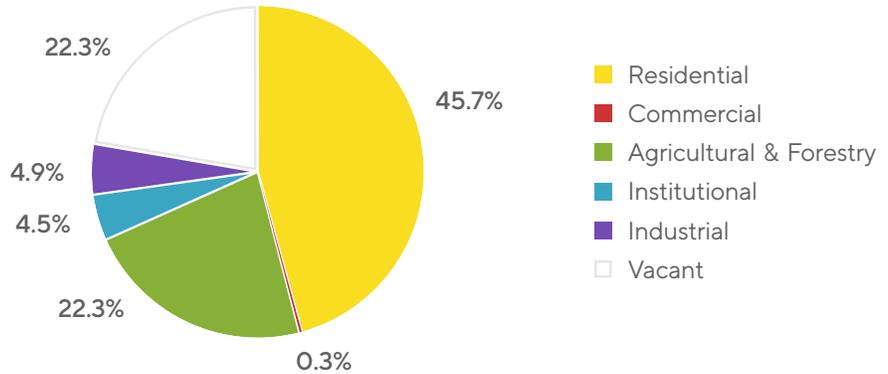
## Current Land Use



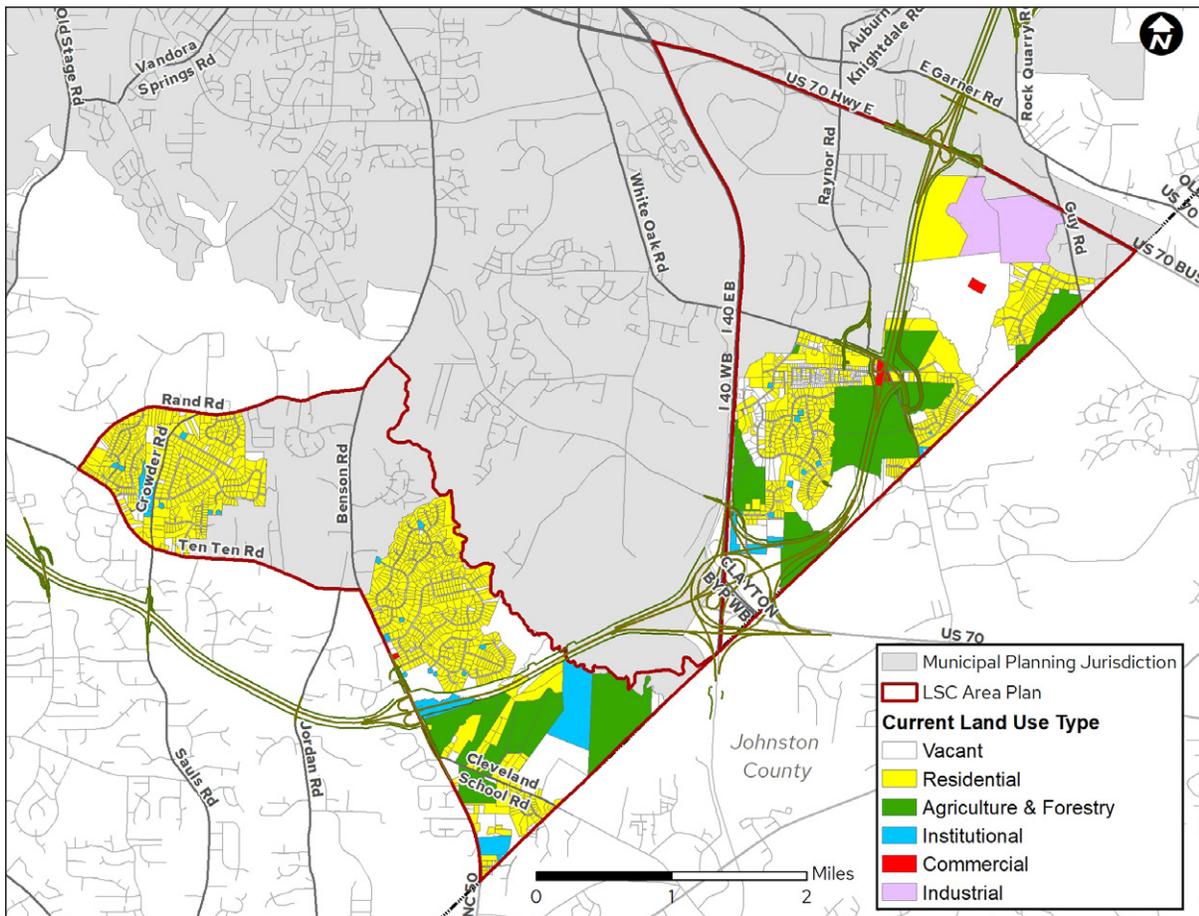
## Current Land Use - Wake County Jurisdiction

The current land use distribution does vary slightly when considering only the area within Wake County's planning jurisdiction. However, it is useful to visualize the distribution of land uses in this perspective, especially when comparing it to the future land use classifications presented later in this plan. To start, the total acreage is reduced from 7, 871 to 4,417 acres, and the percentage of both residential uses is increase to 46%. Despite this difference and the reduction overall in total area, the distribution of land uses largely remains the same.

**Current Land Use % - County Only**



**Current Land Use - Wake County Jurisdiction**



## Population and Housing

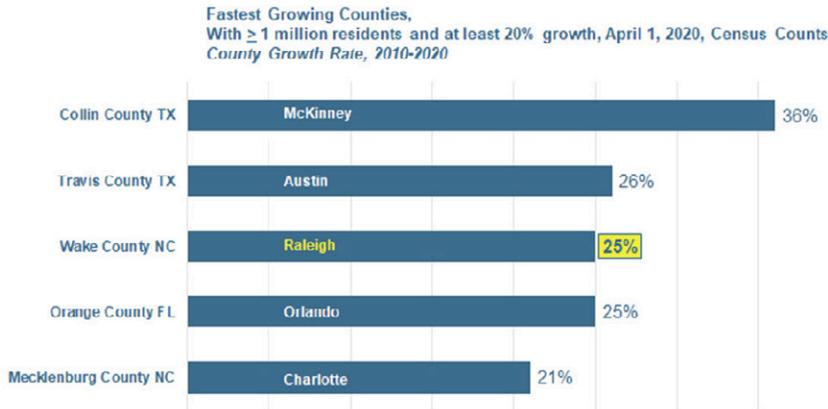
Wake County has experienced a population increase that is unprecedented in its long history. Nationally between 2010 and 2020, Wake was the third-fastest growing county with at least 1 million residents. In North Carolina, Wake County experienced larger population growth (228,417) than any other county, including Mecklenburg County (195,854), and in doing so, surpassed

Mecklenburg in becoming the most populous county with 1,129,410 residents. (U.S. Census Bureau)

This has created a demand for housing and a supply that is struggling to keep up. Housing prices continue to rise, leading to folks looking elsewhere in neighboring counties.

## Wake County's 2020 Population

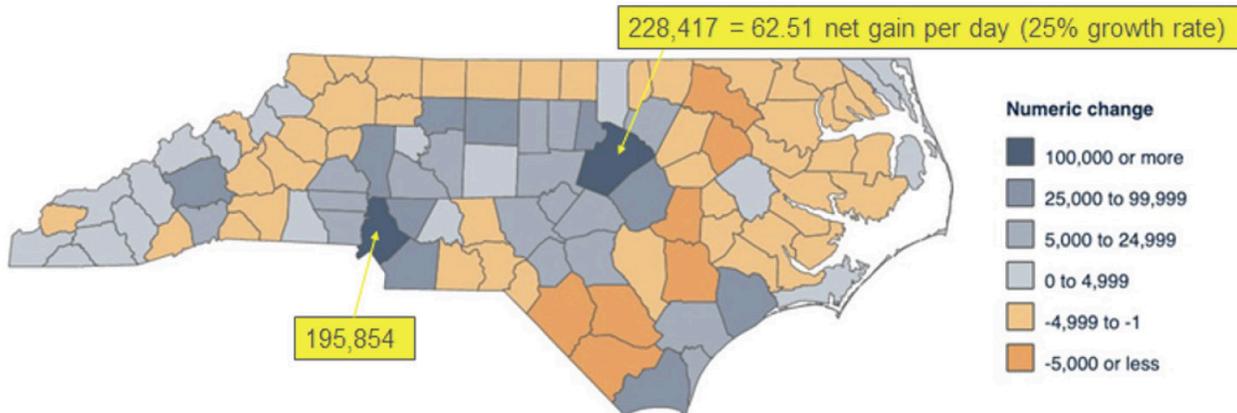
### National Context



### State Context

1.	Wake County	1,129,410
2.	Mecklenburg County	1,115,482
3.	Guilford County	541,299
4.	Forsyth County	382,590
5.	Cumberland County	334,728
6.	Durham County	324,833
7.	Buncombe County	269,452
8.	Union County	238,267
9.	Gaston County	227,943
10.	Cabarrus County	225,804

## Numeric Change in Population - 2010 to 2020

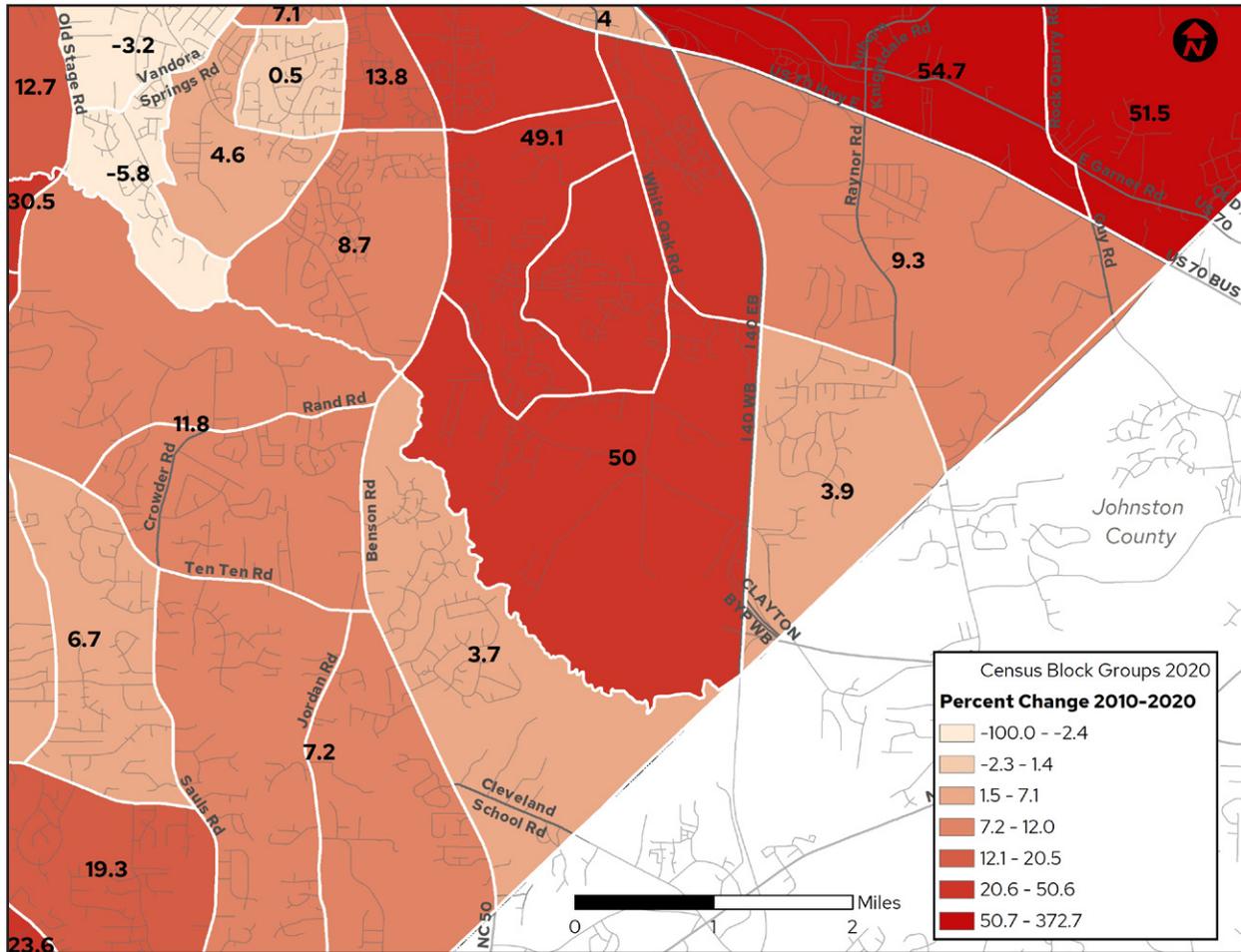


903,905 – Net gain in NC's population 2010 to 2020

The 2020 Decennial Census counted the population of the Lower Swift Creek area as 7,418, an increase of 603 people since the 2010 Census. In terms of the LSC area, this is somewhat moderate growth relative to the county. However, when looking at the adjacent areas, there are indications that the LSC area is experiencing considerable development pressure.

The census block straddling Rand Road experienced most of its growth within the LSC area to the south – so much so that the U.S. Census Bureau saw fit to amend the block group boundaries to align with it. Additionally, there was growth of more than 50% in the census blocks within the Town of Garner’s planning jurisdiction.

### Percent Population Change 2010 to 2020

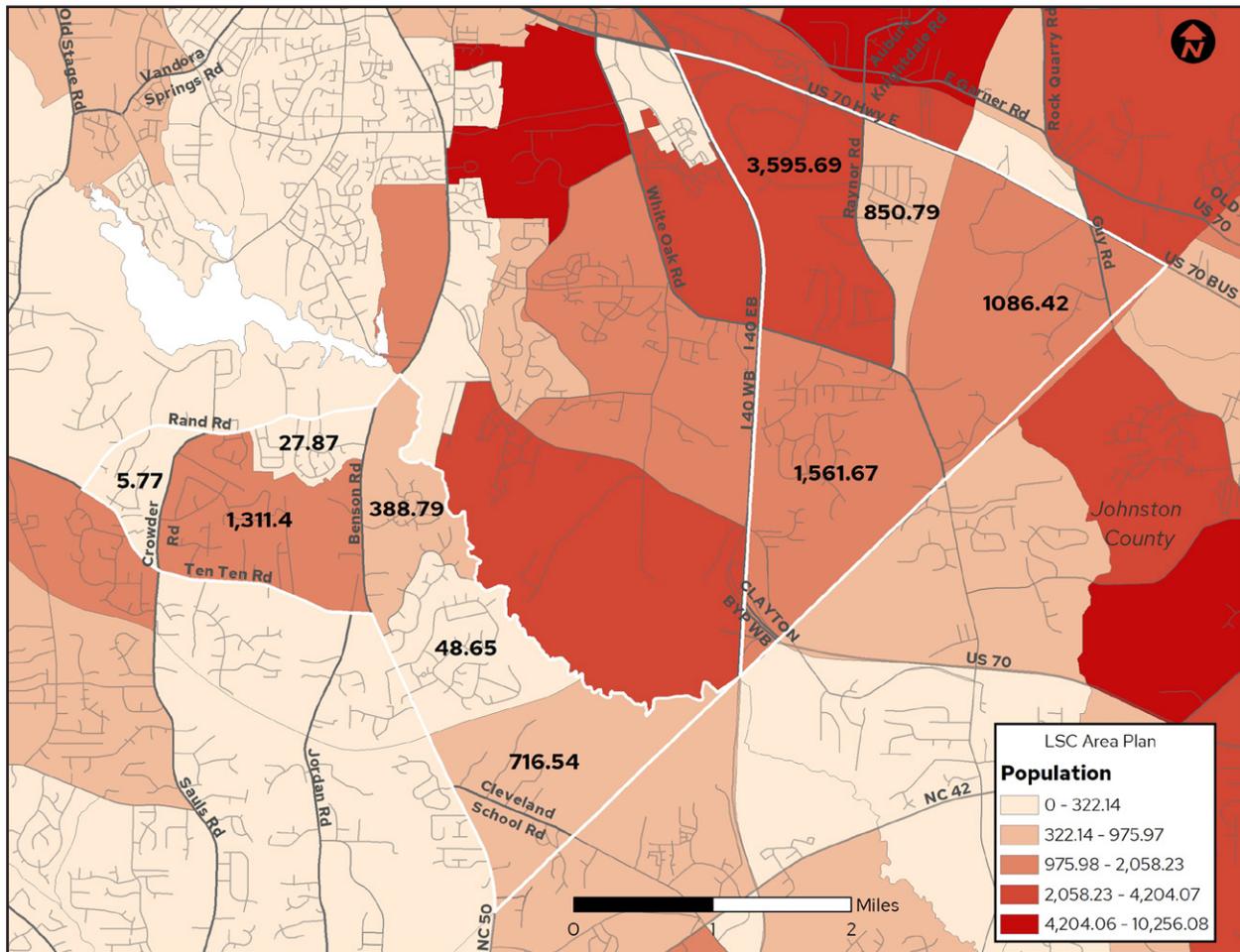


## Future Population

The LSC area, along with the rest of the county, has experienced significant growth in recent years, but what does that growth look like in the future? In its 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) and the Durham/Chapel Hill/Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization (DCHC) projected the population and job growth in order to understand future transportation patterns and plan for them.

The LSC area is expected to grow by just over 1,000 residents by 2050, which is a growth rate of just under 3%. More specifically, the most growth is expected to occur in the northern section, especially along U.S. 70 and I-40. The relative difference in growth rates between the northern and southern sections is most likely attributable to the amount of land that is currently either already developed or developable. The southern section already has a number of established residential subdivisions, which will naturally limit the amount of growth that can occur.

### Lower Swift Creek Future Population



## Transportation

In addition to housing, the rapidly growing population is having a considerable effect on transportation. Since there is a direct correlation between land uses and transportation (i.e., modes, travel times, parking, congestion), aligning the two is of utmost importance.

Creating further urgency is the construction of N.C. 540 directly through the LSC area. Leveraging the type of development in and around the interchanges as well as any non-automobile transportation projects will have a lasting impact on the entire community.

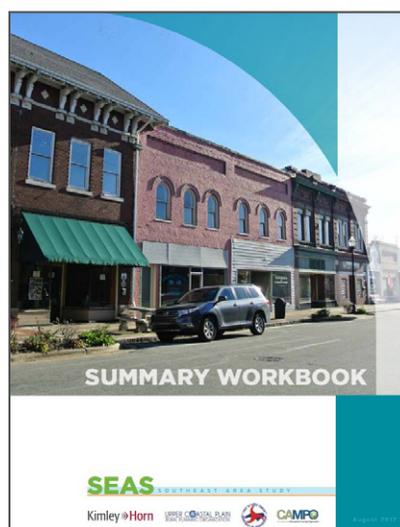
## Additional Projects, Studies & Plans

### Southeast Area Study

In 2017, the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Agency (CAMPO) completed the Southeast Area Study (SEAS) to define the area's strategy to accommodate existing and future travel needs. Along with the part of Wake County that includes the LSC area, the study includes Johnston County and 11 municipalities—Archer Lodge, Benson, Clayton, Four Oaks, Garner, Kenly, Micro, Raleigh, Selma, Smithfield and Wilson's Mills.

The plan identifies Raleigh's relative proximity as a major influence on traffic patterns, more urban environments and a demand for a more flexible transportation system in an area that's been largely rural and suburban until recently. The majority of residents in the SEAS area travel through the LSC area during their commutes in and out of Raleigh (from within Wake and adjacent counties), which has made the LSC area the locale for the five worst crash locations from 2014 to 2017.

Along with roadway recommendations, the SEAS also provides recommendations for non-automobile transportation, such as bicycle, walking and transit.



In March 2022, CAMPO began the process to update the SEAS, and expected adoption is June 2023. This update will review existing conditions, policies and development in the area and make the appropriate changes to reflect the growth of the last five years.

## Transit

### Wake Bus Rapid Transit: Rapid Bus Southern Extension Study

The City of Raleigh is undergoing a project to build a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along four major corridors (northern, southern, western and eastern)

in and out of the city. BRT is a high-capacity bus transit system that uses specialized buses, dedicated lanes, prioritized signals, elevated platforms and enhanced stations.

The Southern Corridor will connect downtown Raleigh to the Town of Garner with the last station located near the Walmart on U.S. 401.

To further the reach of this transit service into the community, CAMPO is conducting a study to evaluate a rapid bus extension from this station that would serve the Town and Clayton and points in between along U.S. 70. Rapid bus shares many similarities with BRT such as dedicated lanes and traffic signal priority in order to avoid automobile traffic and stay on schedule.

The study will provide elected officials, planners and residents with information on cost, benefit, impacts and overall feasibility of the service to make an informed decision on the project.

#### **Triangle Commuter Rail**

Although just outside the LSC boundary area, a GoTriangle-proposed commuter rail project spanning

43 miles from West Durham to Clayton would have a significant impact to the area. The project proposes to utilize the existing rail corridor located just north of U.S. 70 and provide an alternative means of affordable, quick and reliable transportation.

Residents in the LSC area would be able to access the commuter rail at a proposed stop called Auburn, located at East Garner Road just east of Raynor Road. This will provide access to N.C. 540 and could additionally serve as a park-and-ride location. The proposed service at the Auburn station would be eight trains in each direction during morning and evening peak times, two mid-day trains in each direction, and two evening trains in each direction.

At the time of this plan's adoption, a study to determine if the project is technically, financially and politically achievable is ongoing.

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## Natural Resources

Within Wake County, there is recognition that our natural resources are a finite part of an interdependent ecosystem and must be managed wisely. The residents of Wake County recognize the

area's natural environment as a precious resource because it affects our health and wellbeing, provides nourishment, and serves as the foundation of a prosperous economy.

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## Social Equity

Social Equity identifies the health and wellbeing characteristics of the community by analyzing socioeconomic statistics (U.S. Census) including housing, education, food security, poverty levels and income, among others.

The Social Equity Atlas combines these factors to indicate populations with varying degrees of vulnerability. The LSC area consists of populations with differing vulnerability levels.

Community Vulnerability and Economic Health are two key indices that the Social Equity Atlas uses to identify and measure our communities'

socioeconomic conditions. The main source of these data is the most recent 5-year estimates of U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey at the Block Group level.

For the most up-to-date information, refer to Wake County's Social Equity Atlas webpage.

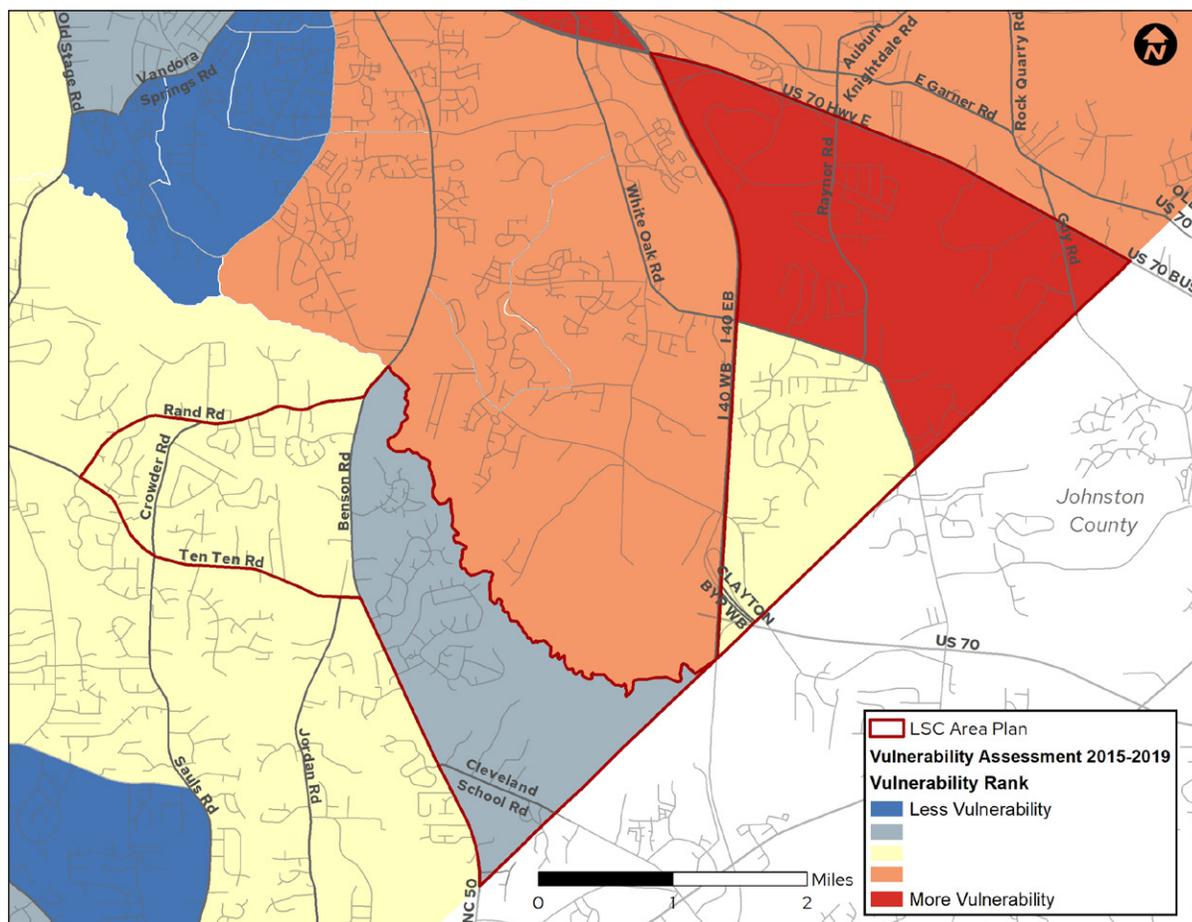
#### **COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY INDEX**

The Community Vulnerability Index helps determine where resources and initiatives are lacking by using a combination of the following factors.

- **Unemployment** - The population age 16 and older who are unemployed in the civilian labor force.

- **Age Dependency** - The population younger than the age of 18 and older than the age of 64 combined.
- **Low Educational Attainment** - The population of ages 25 and older who have less than a high school diploma.
- **Housing Vacancy** - The total number of vacant or unoccupied housing units in a block group.
- **Below Poverty Level** - The population living below the federal poverty threshold in Wake County.

## Community Vulnerability



In terms of the LSC area, the more vulnerable communities are located in the northern section along U.S. 70. This block group ranked 436 out of the 455 block groups in Wake County. Driving this ranking is the percentage of the population that is age dependent or those who are younger than 18 or older than 64, which is 45% for this block group. More specifically, the population that is younger than 18 in this block group is nearly 30%. Additionally, 20% of the population lives below the federal poverty threshold.

The least vulnerable community in the LSC area is in the block group between Benson Road and Swift Creek with a ranking of 109 out the 455 block groups. While the age dependency percentage for this block group is relatively high at 37%, the poverty and unemployment percentages most likely counteract this factor at 4% and 2%, respectively.

### ECONOMIC HEALTH INDEX

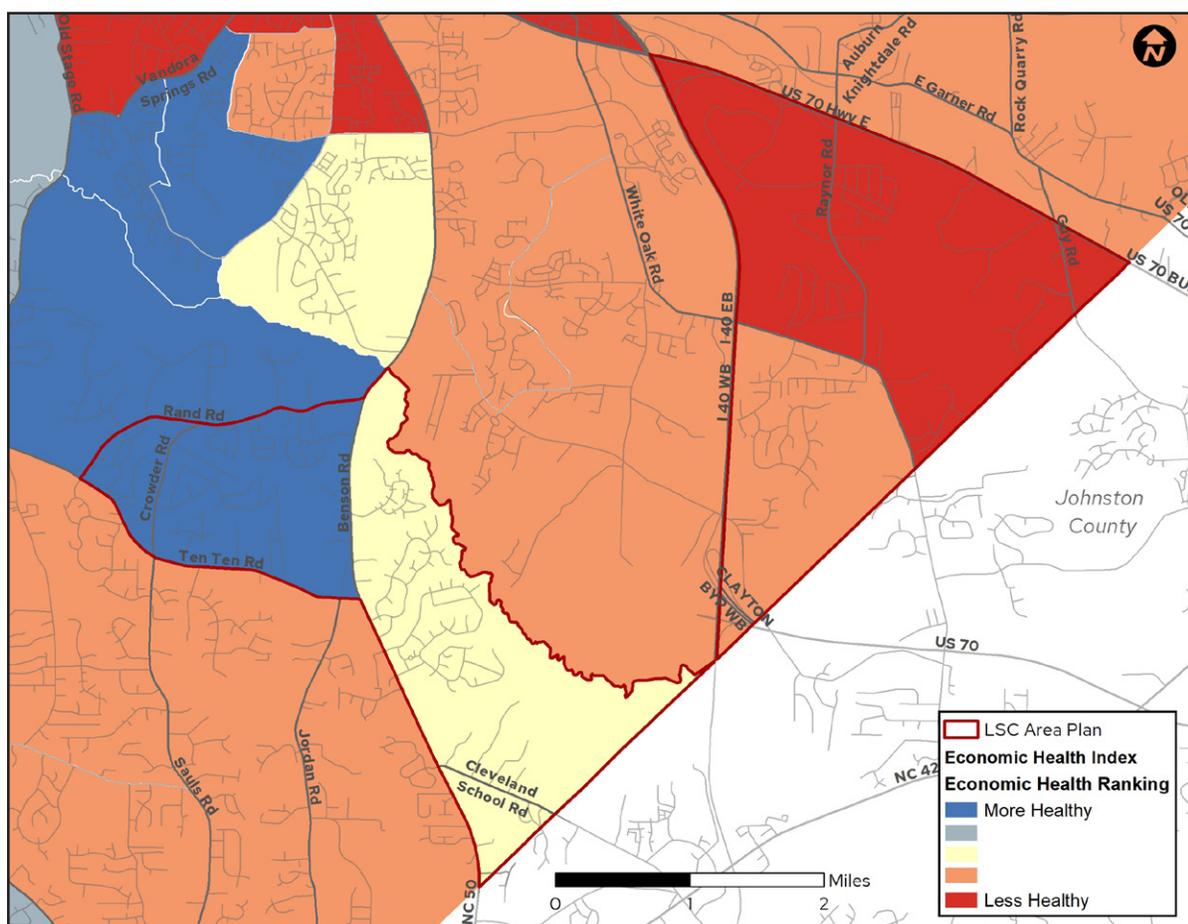
The Economic Health Index uses the following factors to compare the conditions within each

community to better understand what type of financial constraints residents within that community may be facing. Federal initiatives, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Program and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), utilize similar factors to identify low-income neighborhoods and household types, respectively.

- **Median Household Income** - The median household income in the past 12 months.

- **Food Stamps** - Measured as a percentage of households in each block group.
- **Rent as Greater than 30% of Income** - Gross rent as a percentage of household income.
- **Home Mortgage as Greater than 30% of Income** - Mortgage status by owner cost as a percentage of household income.
- **Persons Living 100%-200% of Federal Poverty Level** - Ratio of income to poverty level for whom poverty status is determined between 100 and 200 percent.

### Economic Health



Similar to the Community Vulnerability Index, the northernmost block group is considered the least economically healthy in the LSC area, ranking 375 out of the 455 total block groups. This can be attributed to 38% of households in this block group

spending at least 30% of their income on rent and 28% spending at least 30% of their income on a mortgage. This leaves households with very little left to spread out among the other expenses in their lives such as transportation, food, childcare or education.

## CHAPTER 2

# Land Use Plan

## Community Engagement and Outreach

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the conventional methods of public outreach that relied on highly attended community events, in-person meetings and canvassing. These methods, while allowing for face-to-face interaction and a more hands-on approach, also tended to engage a vocal minority relative to the larger community. Many community members are often not at liberty to physically attend a community meeting for many reasons, including childcare, transportation, work or financial, and others may not have even known about it. As a result, the responses and input received were often not representative of the community at large.

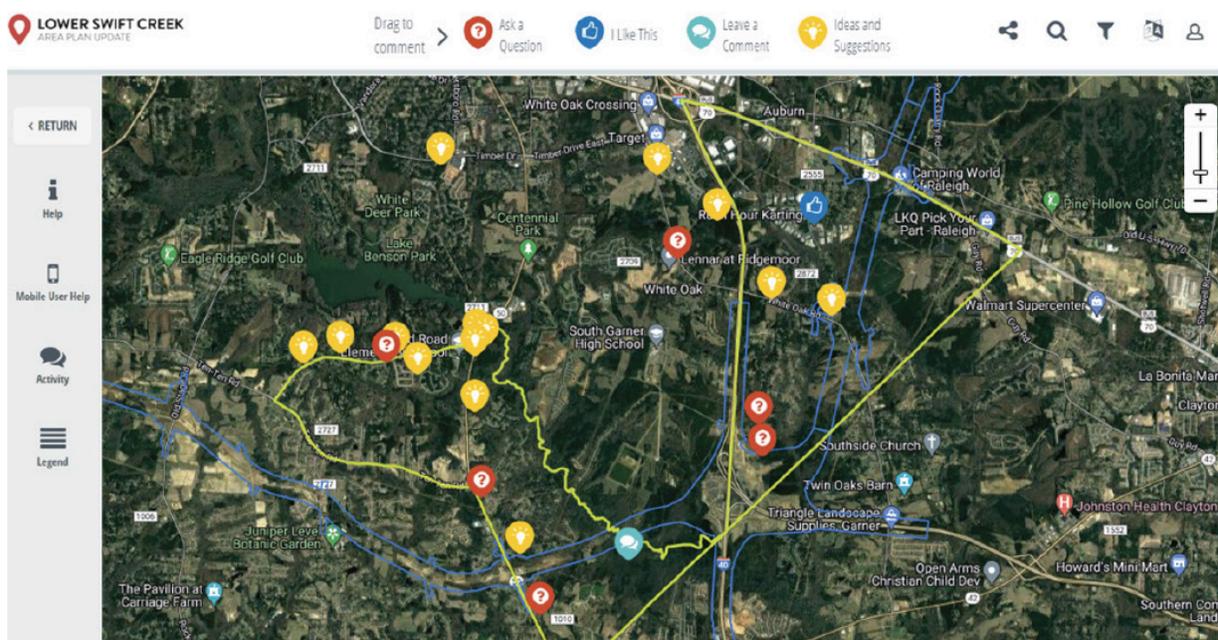
Virtual or online community engagement can bridge this gap and allow more members of the community to provide their input and be heard, and even more so when it is accessible from a cell phone.

Wake County staff utilized an online engagement platform specifically designed for this type of community participation. Through the interactive

map, ideas wall, email listservs and online surveys, staff was able to get a better understanding of those issues that affected the LSC area or that were important to residents.

On April 7, 2022, planning staff conducted a virtual public meeting to present information, receive feedback and answer any questions from residents. A second virtual meeting to receive public feedback on the LSC draft document was held on Aug. 10, 2022. Both meetings were livestreamed on Facebook and YouTube and are available to view on the LSC Area Plan webpage – [wakegov.com/lsc](http://wakegov.com/lsc) – for people unable to attend.

In addition to the virtual public engagement tools, staff also conducted in-person outreach at multiple locations in and around the LSC area – as allowed by the Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Locations included the Southeast Regional Library to coincide with library events and Election Day polling events at Turner Memorial Baptist Church and South Garner High School.



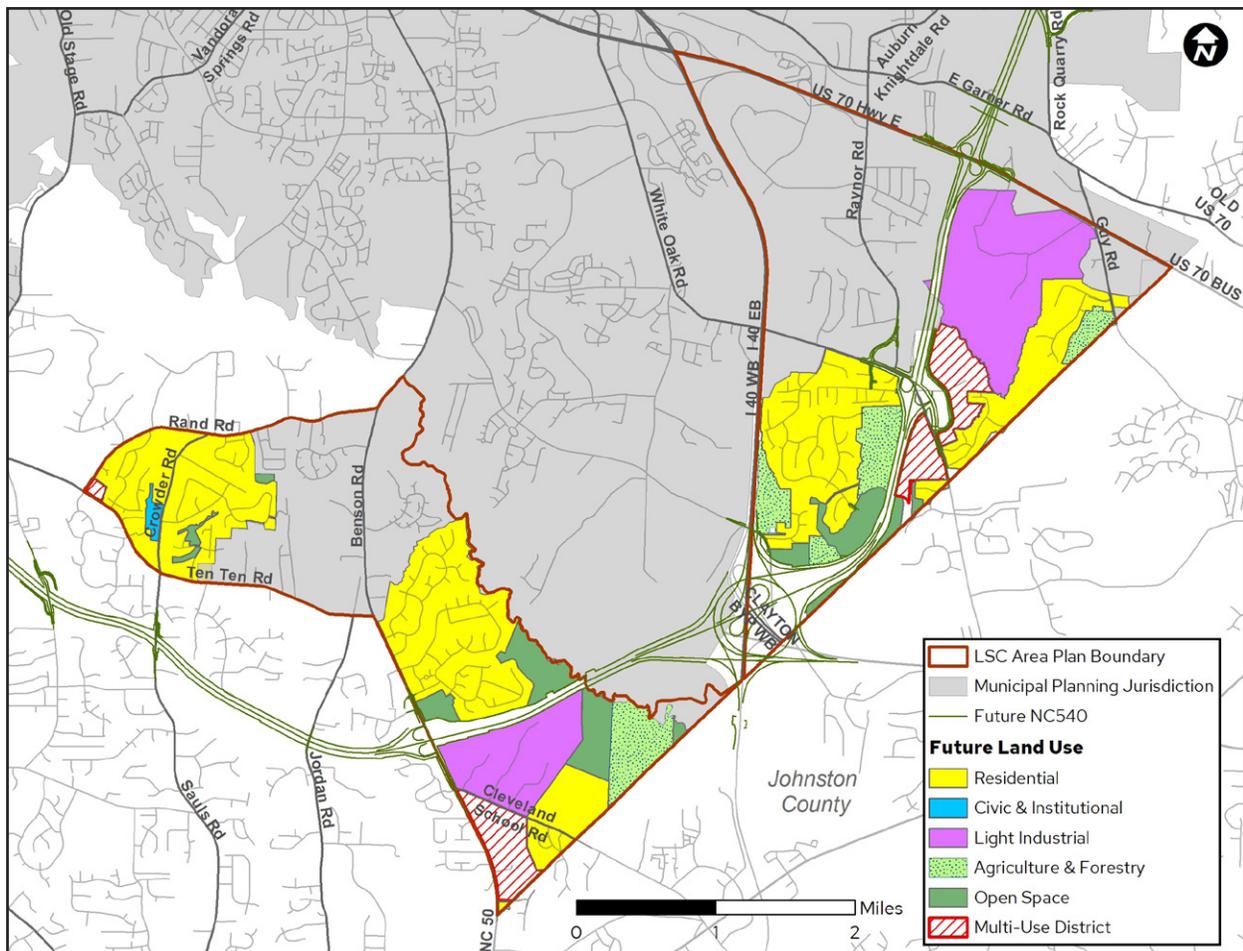
## Lower Swift Creek Area Plan

Land use planning is typically performed by looking 20 to 30 years into the future to establish the best possible uses of land as determined by the public, planning staff and stakeholders. However, it is reasonable to assume what is considered the best use of this land now can and often does change well before the 20 years are complete. For this reason, planning documents are referred to as “living documents” in that they can and should be amended and updated as necessary. Amendments can be requested by individual property owners (this undergoes a public hearing process), and updates

are typically conducted by planning staff every five or so years to ensure the data and information are still accurate and relevant.

The future land use map is based on the most recent and up-to-date information. Some portions of the Town of Garner’s municipal jurisdiction are within the LSC area, and this is represented in grey. As these areas would be developed under the town’s regulations, its comprehensive plan, Garner Forward, will take precedence for any future land use planning decisions.

### Future Land Use



Land Use Classification	Description
<b>Residential</b>	The Residential classification indicates future areas for any residential land uses with a maximum density of four dwelling units per acre.
<b>Civic &amp; Institutional</b>	The Civic & Institutional classification indicates areas intended for neighborhood-oriented non-residential development including schools, religious institutions or community centers. This classification is intended to be less intensive than other non-residential areas such as Multi-Use Districts.
<b>Open Space</b>	The Open Space classification designates future areas intended for uses such as active or passive recreation or to remain undeveloped.
<b>Agriculture &amp; Forestry</b>	The Agriculture & Forestry classification identifies areas where agricultural or forestry uses are expected to continue.
<b>Multi-Use District</b>	Formerly known as Activity Centers, Multi-Use Districts are areas near transportation corridors where non-residential development is envisioned in order to serve the community.

## Multi-Use Districts

### Overview

Formerly known as activity centers, multi-use districts are the places stakeholders have felt are most appropriate for commercial and mixed-use development to occur. Typically, these are located at the intersections of major or moderate-sized roadways. In many instances, the district is centered around a location that is or has historically been a commercial use. A good example of this would be an older gas station or community store that historically served the needs of the area population.

Multi-use districts are intended to play two primary roles. The first is to identify the most appropriate location for commercial development to help serve the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. In this role, the county uses multi-use districts to guide

decisions on rezoning requests and development permits. In this role, the county is primarily concerned with how a proposed use fits and serves the existing population. The second role of the multi-use district is to preserve opportunity areas for commercial development to occur and expand as the municipal areas expand to accommodate continued population growth. To serve this role, the multi-use district policy provides guidance on the intended maximum size of each multi-use district category. In this role, the county is primarily concerned with how a proposed use would serve the needs of a future population.

## Purpose and Approach

PLANWake describes an approach to development of multi-use districts. This approach stresses collaboration between the municipality and county to apply design standards to any non-residential development within multi-use districts in areas designated as Community or Walkable Center by Wake County Comprehensive Plan (PLANWake). These areas are intended to be developed at urban intensities in the future, therefore any development that occurs while under county jurisdiction should mimic municipal design standards as closely as possible. The county's policy is to work with municipalities to apply specifications consistent with a municipality's plans and ordinances.

To align multi-use districts with the intentional growth framework set out in PLANWake, the county will take a two-tiered approach (Rural and Municipal) with multi-use districts.

**Rural Multi-Use Districts** are multi-use districts designated as Community Reserve or Rural on the PLANWake Development Framework Map. These areas are intended to either remain in county jurisdiction in perpetuity or are not intended to

become municipal in the foreseeable future. Non-residential development will occur on well and septic or private utility and will be small scale in nature, especially within water supply watershed areas.

Rural multi-use districts could contain shopping, services, recreation and small-scale office and institutional uses needed to meet the day-to-day needs of the neighborhood. Examples are a grocery or convenience store, pharmacy, restaurant, medical or dental practice, insurance agency, law firm, small neighborhood business office, bank, school, daycare, church, park and civic club. Rural multi-use districts will serve surrounding farm and forestry uses and could contain small-scale food processing facilities, cottage industries or veterinary offices. Service stations and dry-cleaning uses would be appropriate in rural areas outside of the water supply watersheds. A full list of allowable uses can be found in Section 4-11 of the Wake County Unified Development Ordinance. Underlying zoning will determine the uses allowed in the multi-use districts, so a rezoning or a special use permit may be needed to achieve certain uses.

### Rural Multi-Use Districts Guidelines

A residential scale and proportion should be encouraged in rural multi-use districts. Connectivity will focus on cross access within the district and low-stress connections to abutting neighborhoods.

#### Rural Guidelines

<b>Size</b>	Up to 35 acres
<b>Maximum lineal distance that non-residential uses may extend along a roadway</b>	2,000 feet
<b>Maximum depth that non-residential uses should extend back from roadways</b>	500 feet
<b>Minimum separation from other neighborhood multi-use districts</b>	1 mile
<b>Minimum separation from community or regional multi-use districts</b>	1.5 miles

**Municipal Multi-Use Districts** are multi-use districts designated as Community or Walkable Center on the PLANWake Development Framework Map. These areas are intended to be annexed and served with municipal public utilities in the future. Multi-use

districts in these areas generally align with municipal plans for development. The goal of development that occurs in the county jurisdiction is to harmonize with future expected municipal development.

Municipal multi-use districts may have uses permitted in rural multi-use districts, plus uses that provide goods and services needed less frequently than a daily basis. Examples are shopping malls, hotels, movie theatres, major cultural, educational or entertainment facilities, car dealerships and mid- to large-size office parks or businesses.

Because multi-use districts located in areas designated as Community or Walkable Center

by PLANWake are intended to be developed at urban intensities in the future, any development that occurs while under county jurisdiction should mimic municipal design standards as closely as possible. The county will work with municipalities to apply development standards consistent with a municipality's plans and ordinances.

### Municipal Multi-Use Districts Guidelines

Collaboration with municipalities is key to achieving the goals of the multi-use districts in areas designated as Community and Walkable Centers. There are three types or intensities of multi-use districts: neighborhood, community and regional.

#### Neighborhood Guidelines

<b>Size</b>	Up to 35 acres
<b>Maximum lineal distance that non-residential uses may extend along a roadway</b>	2,000 feet
<b>Maximum depth that non-residential uses should extend back from roadways</b>	500 feet
<b>Minimum separation from other neighborhood multi-use districts</b>	1 mile
<b>Minimum separation from community or regional multi-use districts</b>	1.5 miles

#### Community Guidelines

<b>Size</b>	Up to 120 acres
<b>Maximum lineal distance that non-residential uses may extend along a roadway</b>	3,200 feet
<b>Maximum depth that non-residential uses should extend back from roadways</b>	800 feet
<b>Minimum separation from other community or regional multi-use districts</b>	3 miles
<b>Minimum separation from neighborhood multi-use districts</b>	1.5 miles

#### Regional Guidelines

<b>Size</b>	Up to 375 acres
<b>Maximum lineal distance that non-residential uses may extend along a roadway</b>	4,000 feet
<b>Maximum depth that non-residential uses should extend back from roadways</b>	2,000 feet
<b>Minimum separation from community multi-use districts</b>	3 miles
<b>Minimum separation from neighborhood multi-use districts</b>	1.5 miles

## Lower Swift Creek Multi-Use Districts

### Ten-Ten Road and Rand Road

**Type:** Neighborhood  
**Size:** 10 acres

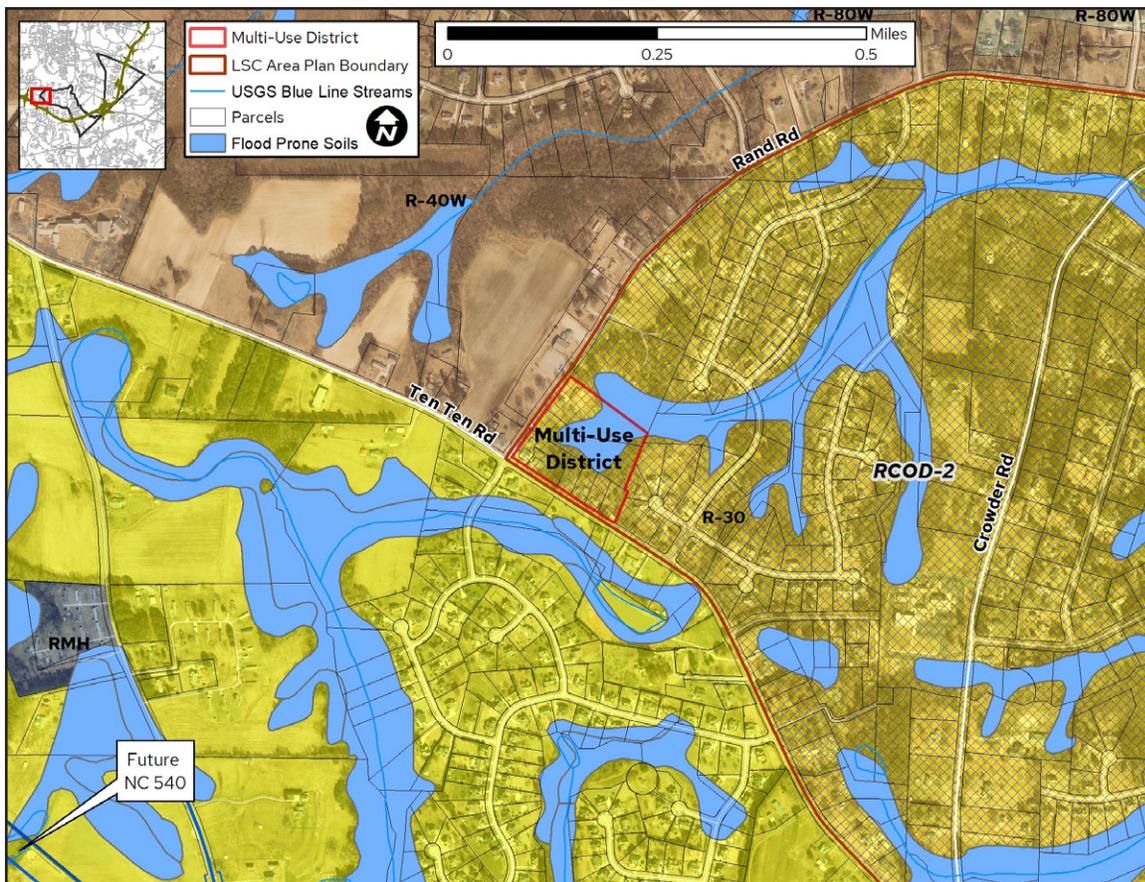
This multi-use district is located at the intersection of Ten-Ten Road and Rand Road and is the westernmost extent of the Lower Swift Creek boundary. The multi-use district is in the northeast corner of the intersection. The southern side of Ten-Ten Road is located within the Middle Creek Area Plan, and the western side of Rand Road is located within the Swift Creek Land Management Plan. Ten-Ten Road serves as a connector between N.C. 50 and Old Stage Road.

All eight parcels making up the multi-use district are currently zoned Residential-30 (R-30) with a

Resource Conservation Overlay District (RCOD-2), which is intended to protect and preserve the water quality of special watersheds. The 0.89-acre parcel located at the intersection is a non-residential and most likely, existing non-conforming use. The remaining seven parcels are currently being used as residential homes. The surrounding parcels are R-30 to the south and Residential-40 Watershed (R-40W) to the west. The multi-use district is within PLANWake’s Community designation.

At the time of this plan’s adoption, the nearest water and sewer utilities are approximately one mile away at Ten-Ten Road’s intersection with Old Stage Road.

### Ten-Ten Road and Rand Road Multi-Use District



## White Oak Road and N.C. 540

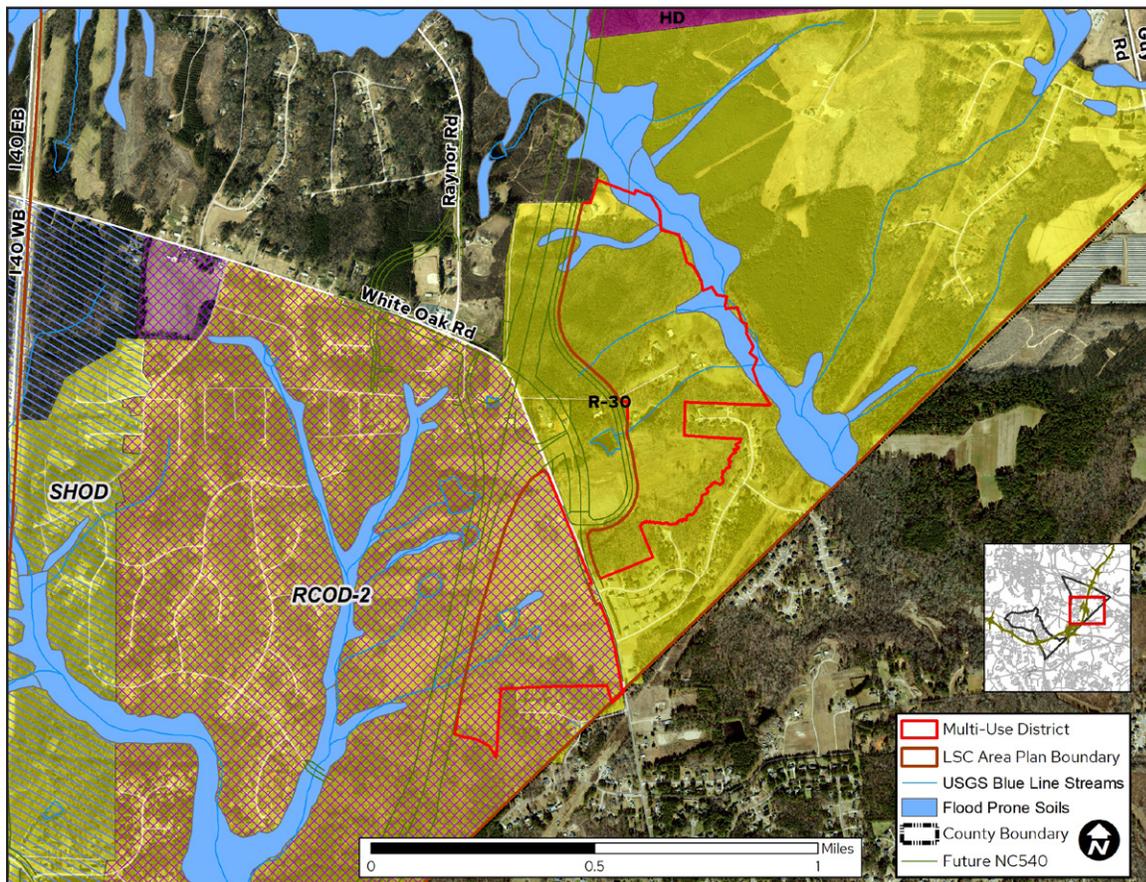
Type: Regional  
 Size: 205 acres

This multi-use district is located at the future interchange of White Oak Road and N.C. 540. White Oak Road will serve as a major connector for those looking to either enter or exit N.C. 540, affecting those in the LSC study area and beyond, including residents in Johnston County. The larger size of this multi-use district underscores the potential opportunity to leverage the highway's construction into useful and appropriate land uses for the area.

The multi-use district site is currently zoned Residential-30 (R-30), and the portion south of White Oak Road additionally has a Resource Conservation Overlay District-2 (RCOD-2), which is intended to protect and preserve the water quality of special watersheds. The current land uses in this multi-use district are residential and agricultural.

Sewer utilities are nearby – just over a half mile – at the corner of White Oak Road and Raynor Road, while water utilities are 0.8 miles farther up Raynor Road past April Circle.

### White Oak Road and N.C. 540 Multi-Use District



### Cleveland School Road and Benson Road

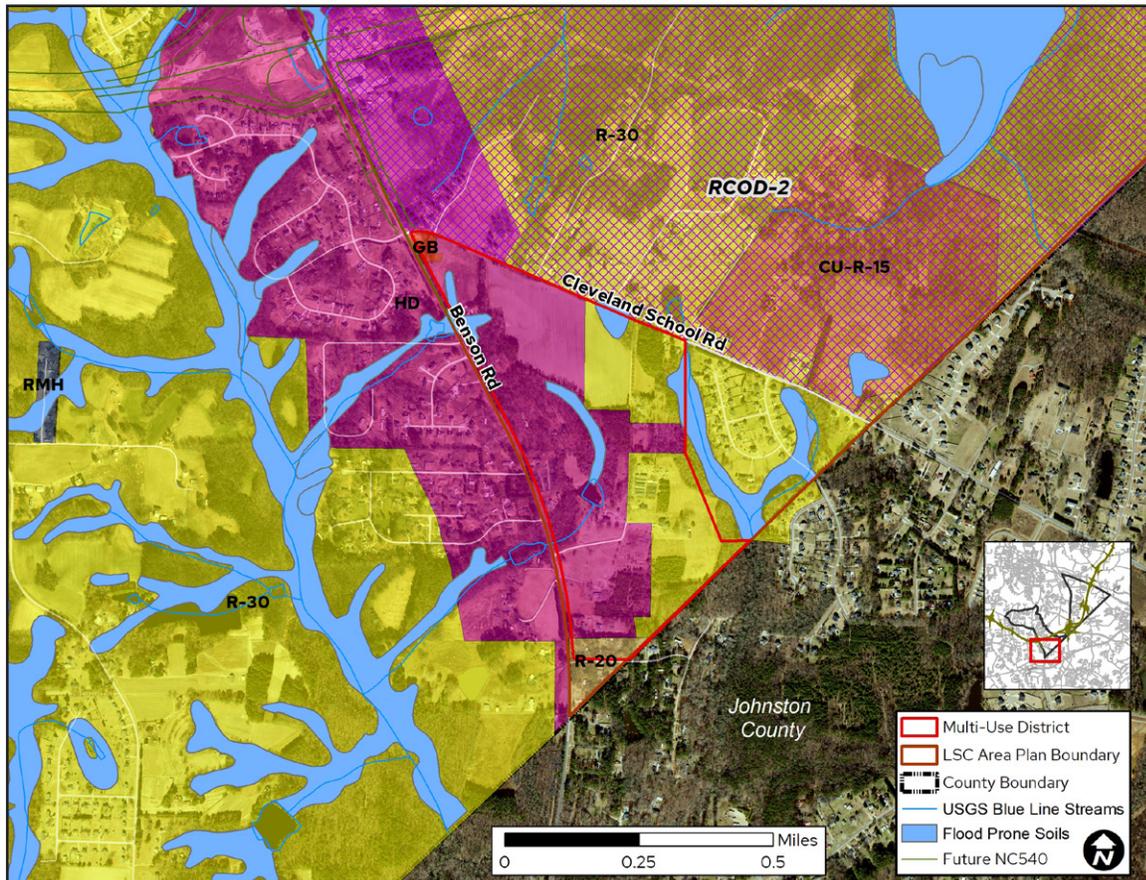
Type: Regional  
 Size: 140 acres

This multi-use district comprises 27 parcels and is located at the intersection of Cleveland School Road and Benson Road. Both roads serve as connectors for folks commuting to and from Johnston County and provide a logical nexus for non-residential services. The construction of an N.C. 540 interchange less than a half mile away will provide even more residents with access to the rest of Wake County and RTP.

The multi-use district is currently zoned Highway District (HD), Residential 30 (R-30) and General Business (GB) and the existing uses include horticulture, forestry, civic and residential. PLANWake has designated this area as Community.

At the time of this plan’s adoption, water and sewer utilities are not close by, approximately 2.5 miles up Benson Road.

### Cleveland School Road and Benson Road Multi-Use District



## CHAPTER 3

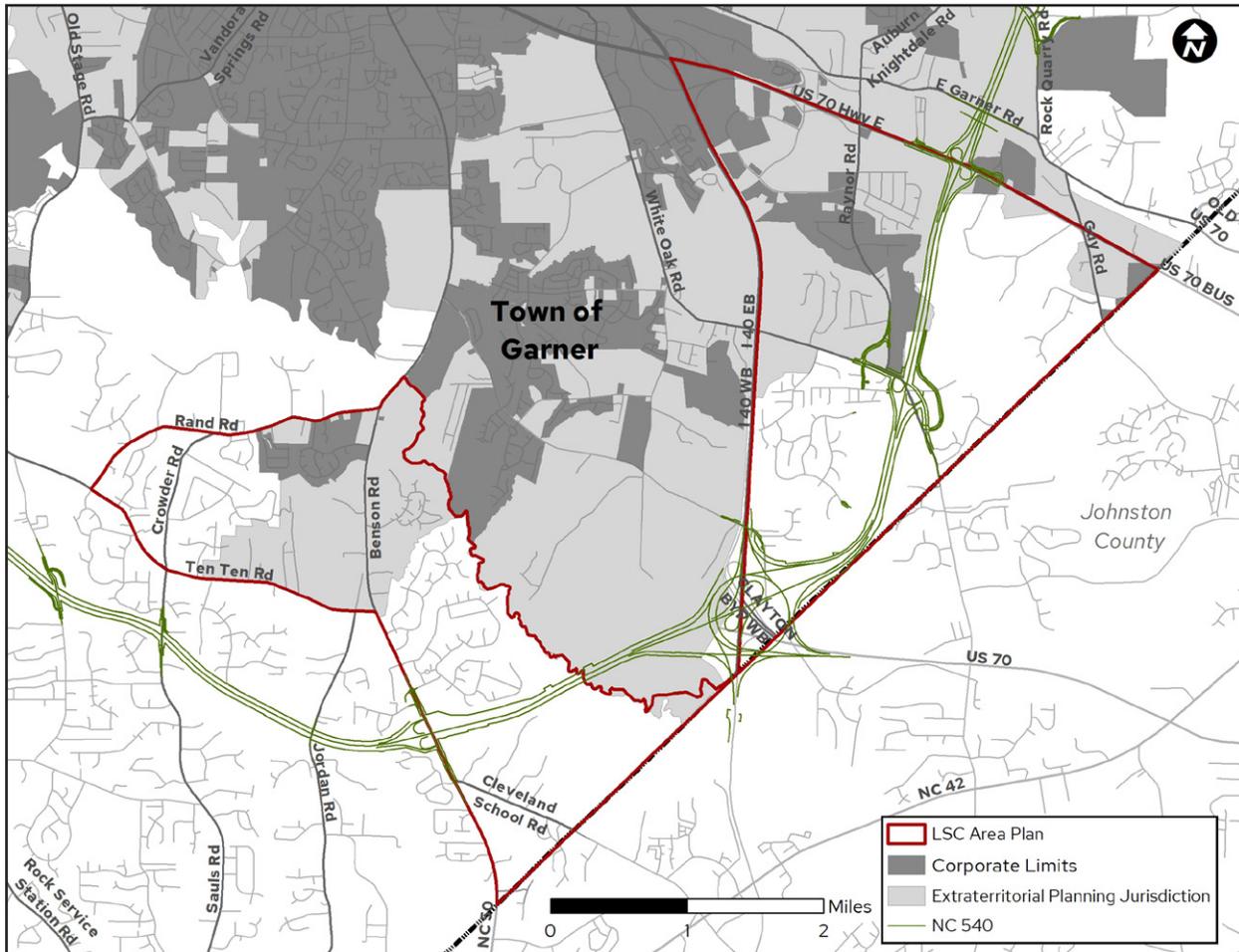
# Additional Planning Elements

## Municipal Planning Jurisdictions

A municipality's planning jurisdiction comprises the land within its corporate limits plus the land within its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). North Carolina state statutes have authorized municipalities to regulate development in their ETJs through their zoning laws and development ordinance since it is expected,

but not a given, that they will become part of the corporate limits in the future. Wake County does not provide water and sewer services – this allows municipalities to better ensure development patterns and associated infrastructure will allow the efficient provision of urban services.

### Municipal Planning Jurisdiction



In North Carolina, the decision to extend or expand a town's planning jurisdiction must be approved by the respective county's governing board. And although state law provides a framework for evaluating ETJ and deciding whether the county should agree to municipal requests for ETJ extensions, it does not provide detailed criteria.

**PLANWake, as part of its adoption by the Board of Commissioners, established the following six criteria for evaluating a municipality's request to expand its ETJ.**

## CRITERION 1

### **WAKE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK MAP DESIGNATION**

The requested ETJ must be located within an area designated as Walkable Center or Community on the PLANWake Development Framework Map. ETJ expansion in areas not noted as one of these two designations will require an amendment to the PLANWake Comprehensive Plan to change the designation of the area to a more appropriate category that supports municipal development. Likewise, any applicable Wake County area plan will also need amending to identify this area for municipal development.

## CRITERION 2

### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE ETJ EXPANSION AREA**

Requests for ETJ expansion should be where joint planning has taken place between the county and the municipality in areas that are prime for investment. The municipality must demonstrate recent growth and development activity—annexations, development requests, water and sewer expansion, and new roadways—within the requested ETJ area. This activity, along with population and job growth, must be compared to areas already within the municipality's corporate limits.

## CRITERION 3

### **MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The municipal comprehensive plan must align with the Wake County Comprehensive Plan and Development Framework. The municipality should demonstrate past examples of working with the development market to implement projects consistent with the municipal comprehensive plan.

## CRITERION 4

### **MUNICIPAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN/PROGRAM AND SERVICE EXPANSION PLAN ALIGNMENT**

The municipality must demonstrate it is ready to provide appropriate infrastructure to the requested ETJ area. The provision of infrastructure, including water and sewer lines, vehicle capacity, stormwater, sidewalks, greenways, parks and other capital projects, shall be documented in a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan/Program. The municipality must also demonstrate it is ready to provide appropriate municipal services to the requested ETJ area. These services shall include police, fire, trash collection, inspections and other municipal services.

## CRITERION 5

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The municipality must demonstrate it conducted meaningful public engagement with impacted residents and landowners and document how the concerns of residents and landowners have been addressed by the municipality (such as UDO changes or modification of the request). The municipality shall document all outreach activities to all populations.

## CRITERION 6

### **ACHIEVING COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY GOALS**

The municipality must demonstrate a track record of working with the county to achieve county-wide comprehensive goals. This track record will be assessed on the following factors: support and actions related to affordable housing, walkability, transit use, vulnerable communities, stormwater and green infrastructure.

## Relinquishment of Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Any request by a property owner to relinquish ETJ back to the county's jurisdiction must be submitted to the municipality's planning department in which it is located. This request will be reviewed by staff to determine if there is merit to undergo the public hearing process. Any decision on these matters is solely made by the municipality's elected officials.

If the decision to relinquish is successfully adopted, the county will assign its most comparable zoning district within 60 days, as required by state statute. This will undergo the typical public hearing process that occurs for rezonings under Wake County's jurisdiction with final approval by the Wake County Board of Commissioners.

## Affordable Housing

The Wake County Affordable Housing Plan, adopted in 2017, identifies various trends driving the lack of affordable housing in the county, namely population growth, an incommensurate household income to cost ratio, lack of affordable housing options among the residential development overall, and loss of existing affordable housing due to redevelopment (p. 17).

To put these trends into a real-world context, there is a current shortage of approximately 56,000 homes in Wake County affordable to families making less than \$39,000 a year. Further, approximately 5,000 people in Wake County experience homelessness.

The housing plan looks to "ensure that quality affordable housing is available for all Wake County

residents" (p. 5), but their proximity to commercial and employment centers is also crucial. This can go far in reducing affordability challenges of lower-income households. It can also ensure that these residents aren't limited to living in outlying neighborhoods that provide few opportunities for physical activity and are far from health services, particularly for those households that cannot afford a personal vehicle.

As the impacts of climate change increase, it will also be important to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are protected from the impacts of severe weather events.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure and N.C. 540

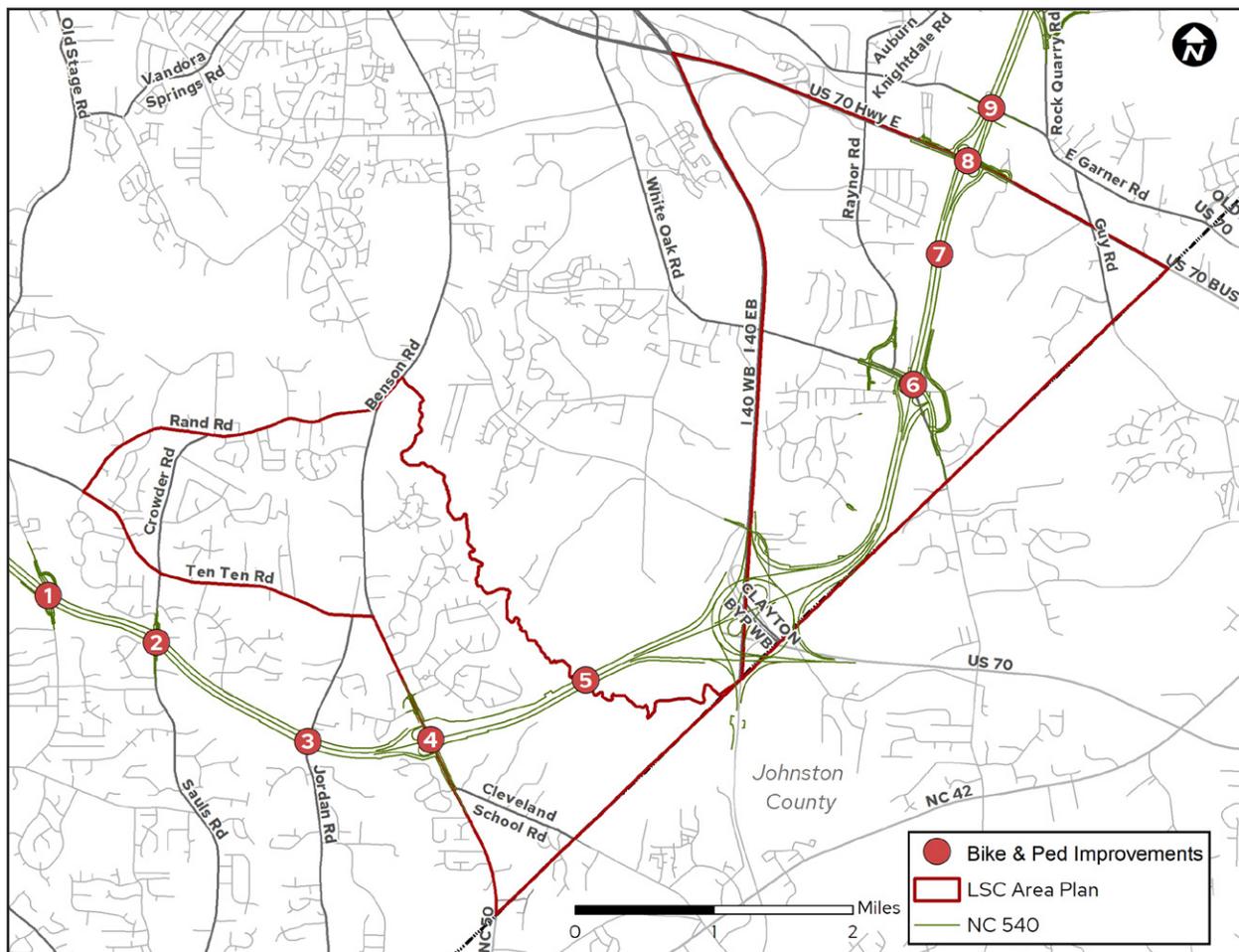
The construction of N.C. 540 is the most significant infrastructure project in Wake County in recent years, not only in terms of cost and time but also in terms of potential impact on the entire county. The ability of Wake County and its municipal partners to leverage this potential is key to ensuring that this project can serve those residents who either do not have access to an automobile or choose not to use it.

Ultimately, while N.C. 540 will increase access to and from southeastern Wake County, there must be

accommodations made to prevent it from cutting other users off as well.

The Town of Garner has been coordinating with NCDOT to integrate elements of its bike/ped plans with the new N.C. 540 interchanges and crossings. They've identified 18 such locations, nine of which fall either within the LSC area or just outside it.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure Locations



Number	Location	Description
1	Holland Church Road	Five-foot sidewalk accommodations on each side of bridge
2	Sauls Road	Five-foot sidewalk accommodations on each side of bridge
3	Jordan Road	Five-foot sidewalk accommodated (going under N.C. 540)
4	NC-50	Four lanes with 5-foot sidewalk on each side of bridge and accommodation of 14-foot outside lanes for bikes
5	Swift Creek	Swift Creek greenway can go under bridge
6	White Oak Road	14-foot-wide outside lane with 5-foot sidewalks on both sides
7	White Oak Creek	White Oak Creek bridge accommodates future greenway
8	US-70	Six-lane road with 30-foot median - no bike or sidewalks accommodated
9	Garner Road	Three-lane curb-and-gutter with no bike/ped accommodations*

\*Bike/ped accommodations are necessary with future commuter rail coming to this area.

NOTE: While this table lists improvements planned for different locations, the actual improvements implemented at the time of construction may differ to varying degrees.



## Agriculture and Farmland Preservation

According to the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2022, there are more than 77,000 acres of farmland and 691 farms in Wake County.

The SWCD utilizes soil and water conservation districts — enabled by NC General Statute 139 — that are organized as governmental subdivisions as part of a larger comprehensive conservation program. These districts have assisted private landowners for more

than 75 years to address the issues of soil erosion, flood damage and water quality programs.

Furthermore, PLANWake has a goal to preserve what we can in these rural areas by easing the development pressures that they face. This is inherent in its policies to direct more dense development to the municipalities as opposed to the sprawl that takes up more land, which contributes to a loss of natural resources and increases roadway congestion.

## Voluntary Agricultural District Program

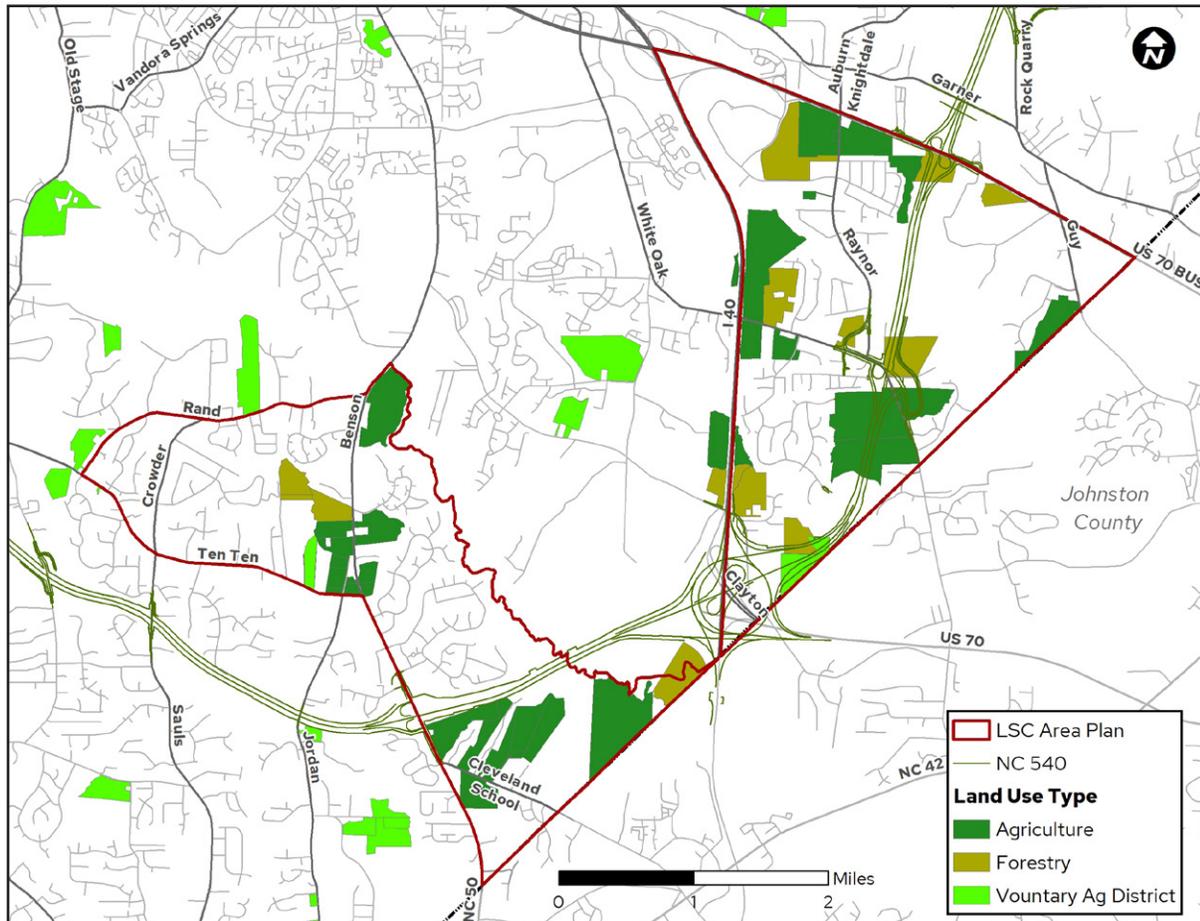
The county also utilizes the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program to preserve these rural areas. This program, adopted in 2002 by the Board of Commissioners, allows owners of farmland to voluntarily agree to keep their land in agricultural use for 10 years. Participating farms or groups of farms would be called “agricultural districts.” Farmers will be free to withdraw from such districts at any time; however, under the new Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) program, farmers would be committed to the full 10 years without being able to withdraw. Benefits that can be provided to agricultural districts under state statute include waivers from water and sewer utility assessments, additional notification provided to buyers of property in the area regarding the presence of farm

operations (provides additional protection from nuisance suits associated with chemical spraying, animal waste odors, etc.), and requires hearings for public projects proposed in agricultural districts.

Participation in the VAD program has a number of benefits:

- Helps promote traditional farming within the community by increasing the visibility of farms around the county.
- Gives farmers a louder voice to affect local government decisions about their land.
- Reduces potential conflicts between farm and non-farm land users.

## Agriculture & Forestry



## Historic Preservation

Wake County has a long history in the preservation movement stemming back to the 1960s when many of its historic resources were being demolished in the name of urban renewal and progress. While many of these resources have been saved over the years, there continues to be a need to identify and preserve those resources that have historical significance to the county and area at-large.

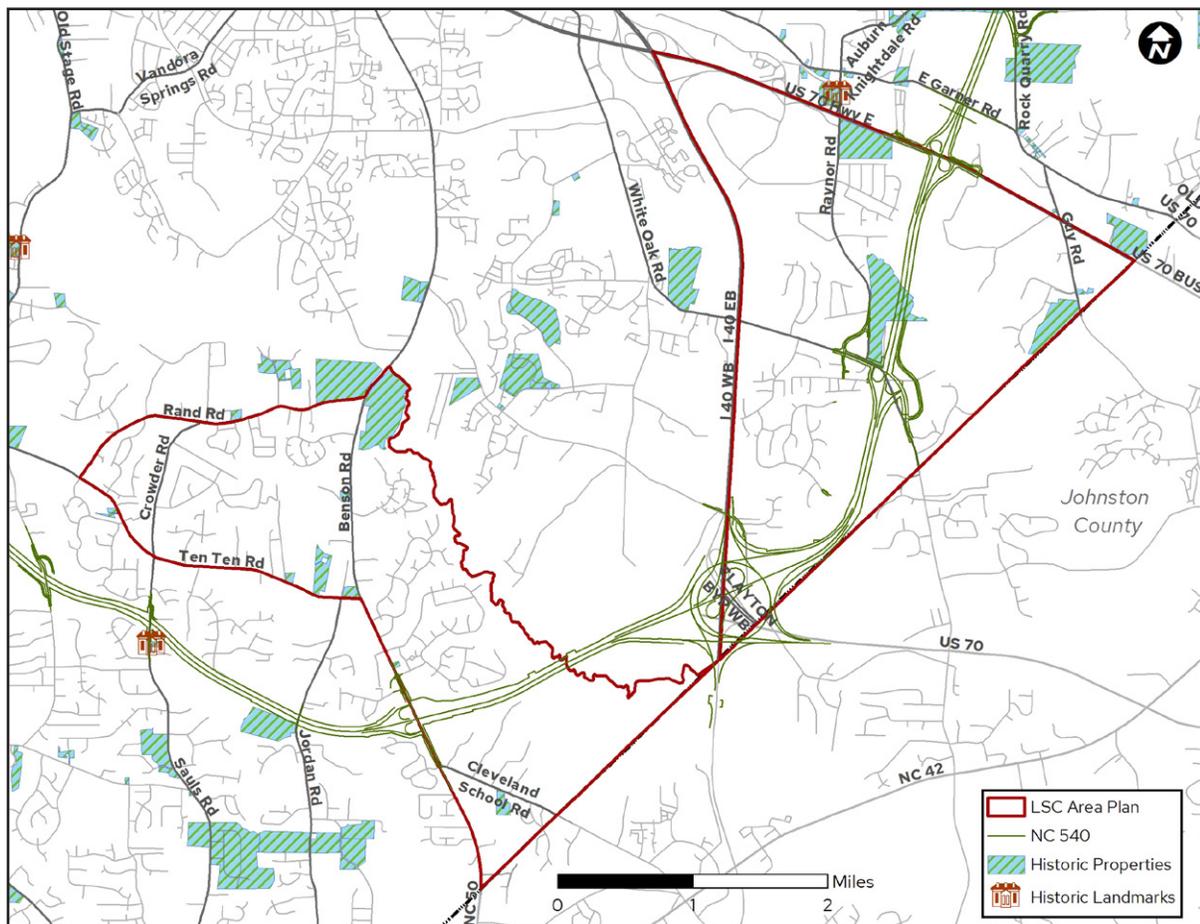
Programs such as the Wake County Landmark Program and the Historic Preservation Easement Program, along with a database of historic properties for sale, act as a safeguard for these resources and an assurance that they will remain as they are in

order to provide the community with the economic and aesthetic benefits they deserve.

The Wake County Historic Preservation Commission's powers and duties include, but are not limited to, maintaining an inventory of these resources, making recommendations for landmark status, reviewing demolition or alteration proposals, and serving as an advisory board for residents who own property with historic resources.

The LSC area has 11 historic properties within its study area boundaries, and an additional seven properties border the study area.

## Historic Properties & Landmarks



In order for a property or place to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it must be significant to American history. Nominations can be made to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which reviews it and determines if it indeed meets the criteria established by the National Park Service (NPS). If the SHPO believes it does, it can be sent to the NPS for listing on the National Register.

While this listing is considered an honor, it does not restrict the use of the property nor does it require the owner to maintain it. The listing does protect the property from negative impacts of any project utilizing federal funding such as transportation (roads, airport, transit), community revitalization or other projects. The project must make an effort to avoid or minimize any adverse effects on the historic properties in the area.

# Swift Creek Land Management Plan

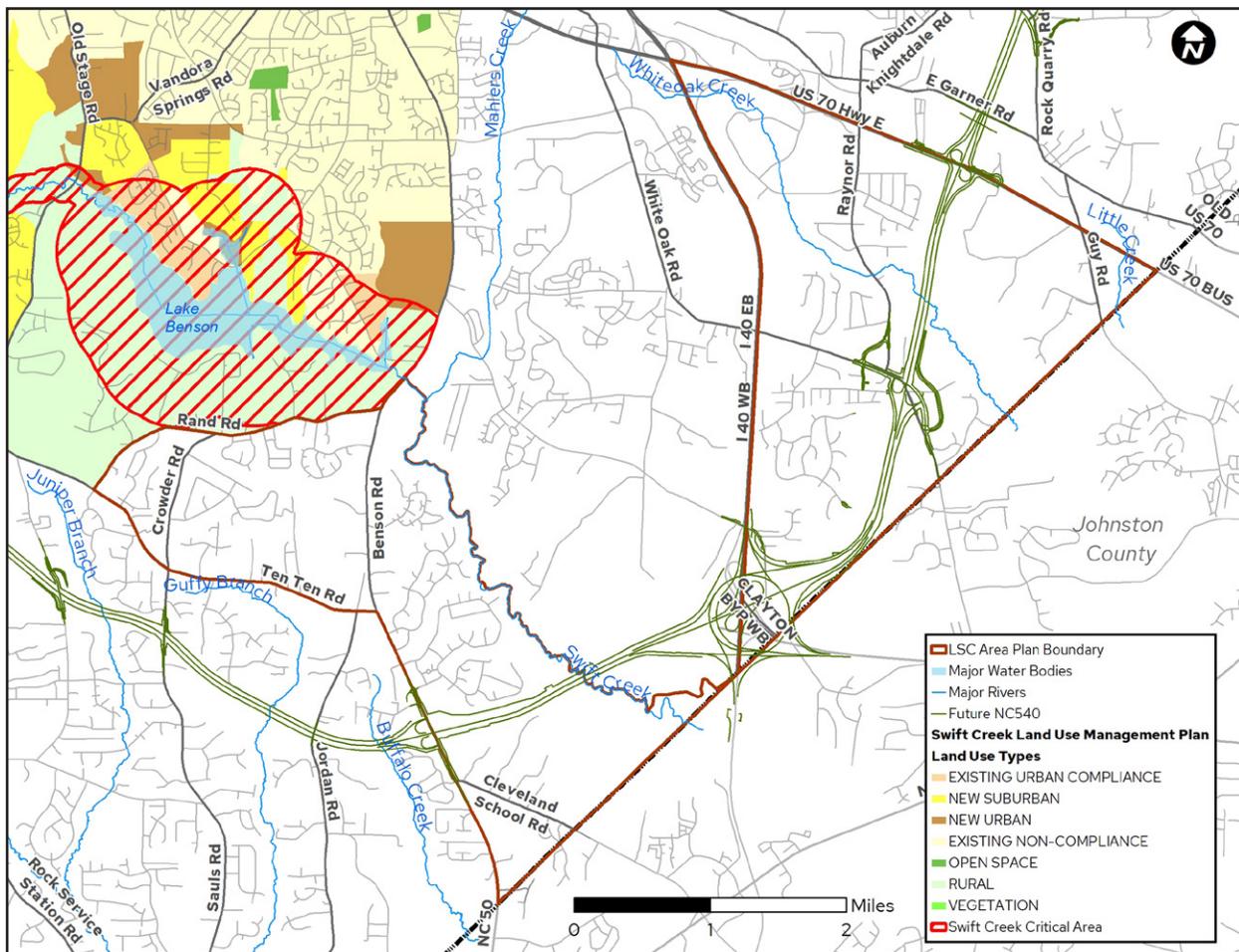
The Swift Creek Land Management Plan (SCLMP) is the result of a cooperative agreement between Apex, Cary, Garner, Raleigh, Wake County and the North Carolina Division of Water Quality to develop a land management plan for the Swift Creek watershed west of N.C. 50 and north of Ten-Ten Road.

The goal of the SCLMP is to preserve water quality in the Swift Creek area to qualify for a Water Supply-II (WS-II) classification. This is a surface water qualification defined by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) to

ensure that surface water bodies are protected from nearby land uses.

While the SCLMP does not fall within the LSC area – the border runs along Rand Road – it does provide context for the impact that development within the LSC Area can have on other areas, especially when it comes to water quality. Furthermore, this bordering area of the Swift Creek watershed is considered a Critical Area, which requires greater constraints on the type and density of development.

## Swift Creek Land Management Plan



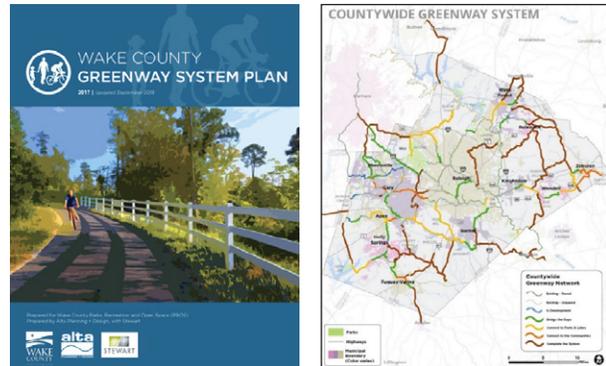
## Open Space and Greenways

Open space is natural land that has not been converted to residential or commercial development. It includes forests, greenways, parks, meadows, wetlands, floodplains and farms. As Wake County's population grows, these areas have begun to face increased pressure from developers, and the county has recognized the need to protect these natural areas for future generations.

Moreover, protecting the remaining natural lands in the county provides residents with a sense of place. Wake County has a long history of environmental stewardship, and the creeks, streams, forests and farms are responsible for creating the communities we live in today. It is vital to preserve these spaces for future generations to enjoy as well.

There are a host of benefits of protecting open space – i.e., buffers along streams and wetlands – and constructing greenways, and these benefits often overlap or affect multiple aspects of our lives. The Wake County Open Space Program has outlined them in its Wake County Consolidated Open Space Plan, and they include economic, environmental and recreational benefits.

The Wake County Greenway Systems Plan focused on the greenways aspect as it is a “[unique] investment that can be made on a local and regional scale that provides such a wide range of



positive impacts. Greenway trails – and the on-road bicycle facilities and sidewalks that connect them – improve quality of life by providing opportunities for transportation, recreation, public health, economic development and environmental stewardship.”

The plan solicited input from a wide range of public and private stakeholders to establish a guideline for creating comprehensive greenway trail connections over the entire county and includes a segment within the LSC area. This segment, part of the plan’s “complete the system” component, crosses Interstate-40 north of White Oak Road, then Raynor Road, and continues southwest toward the Johnston County line. This would provide a direct connection for residents to Garner and points beyond.

## Sustainability

The PLANWake public engagement process reiterated the community’s strong desire to grow, develop and redevelop in a sustainable and resilient manner, and this is represented in PLANWake’s vision. This is underscored by the rapid growth that Wake County has and will continue to experience. All the aspects of our county that make it enjoyable

for residents to live here – job opportunities, quality-of-life investments, education – also make it attractive for those who are looking to move from elsewhere. Regardless of whether someone is a Wake County native or has recently moved here, there is strong consensus that more must be done to ensure the county is a better place for future generations.

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## Conclusion

The Lower Swift Creek Area Plan is the product of a months-long process involving community input, staff research and stakeholder guidance; however, this process should not be considered over at its adoption by the Wake County Board of Commissioners. The plan is not a static document to be placed on a shelf upon its adoption but a living document – one that can be amended based on the needs and vision of the community it serves. Along with these amendments, it is recommended that Wake County Planning staff take steps to update the LSC Area Plan every five years and the give the community a chance to revisit its goals and visions.