

CITY OF LOWELL
2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan



April 13, 2021

Adopted: April 13, 2021, Ordinance No. 5-2021
Recommended by the Lowell Planning Board: March 2, 2021

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City of Lowell
Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2040

CITY OF LOWELL

Lowell City Hall
101 West First St.
Lowell, NC 28098

Adopted by City Council: April 13, 2021, Ordinance No. 5-2021

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PURPOSE

The State of North Carolina requires local governments in NC General Statute 160D to adopt a plan to be eligible for certain funding, powers and authority by July 1, 2022. The plan is to be used as an assurance to the public that local decisions are made with a perspective on the future implications of pending decisions, and to affirm that public accountability and fiscal responsibility are considered as part of the decision-making process.

Decisions made about public spending and growth can often appear centered around individuals involved and how they may benefit. When governing board decisions adhere to an adopted plan, those individual interests are balanced with others affected by the outcome of decisions, which include citizens, property owners, and businesses.

City of Lowell Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2040 shall serve as the adopted plan pursuant to §N.C.G.S. 160D in the planning and regulation of development.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

LOCATION

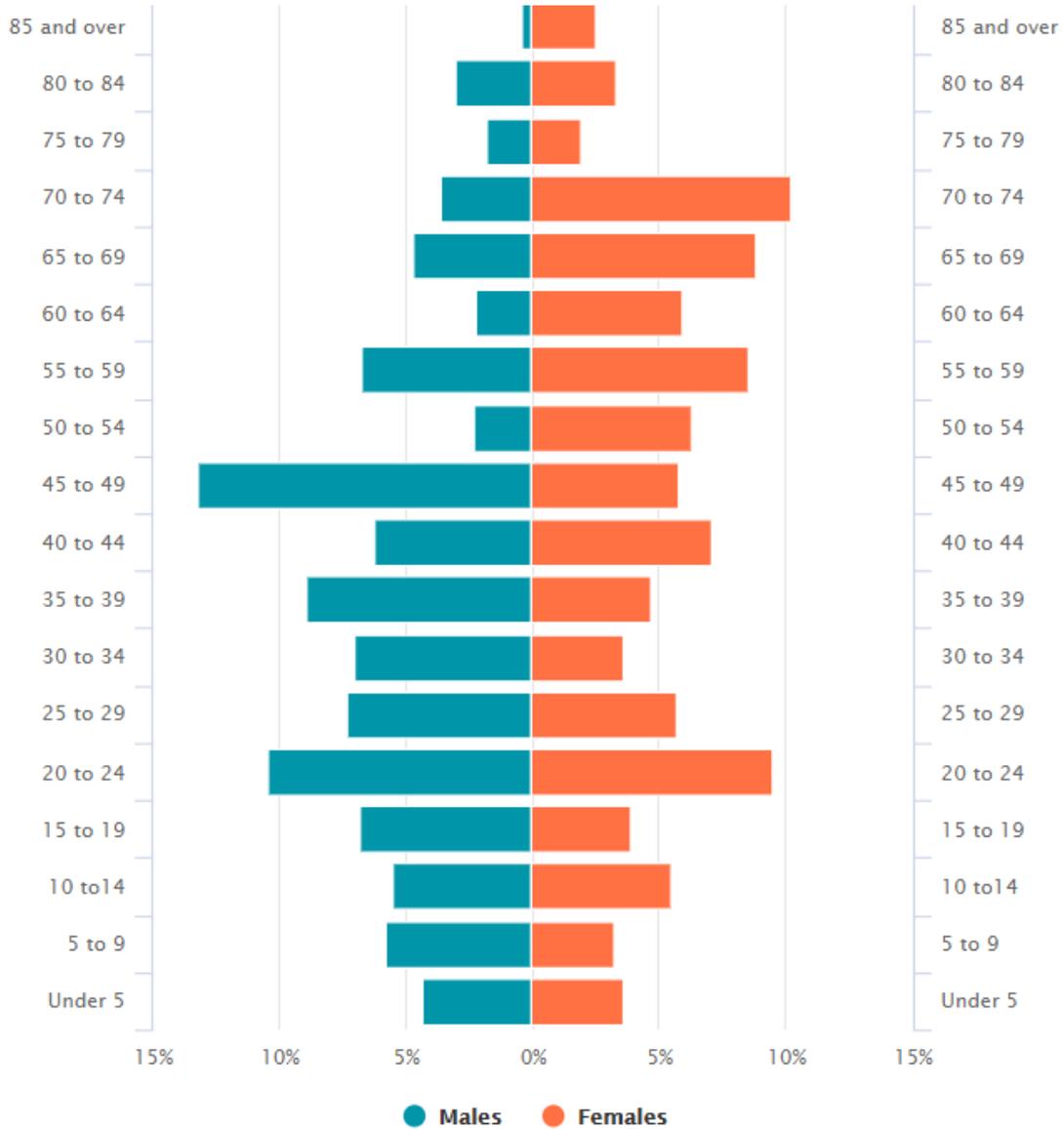
The City of Lowell, North Carolina is located in eastern Gaston County, between Charlotte and Gastonia. Lowell enjoys easy access to I-85 and US HWY 74. Two Rivers Utilities provides [regional water](#) service for Lowell and other municipalities in the County and beyond.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The U.S. Census Bureau prepares a detailed statistical portrait for local governments, counties and states of their respective social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics through the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) products. The ACS 5-year estimates are constructed as period estimates and reflect the average characteristics over the five year period. In general, unless a user knows how the estimate for each characteristic is trending over time, it is not accurate to consider the 5-year estimate as an estimate at any given point within the 5 year period. However, under certain conditions, the ACS estimates can serve as a proxy. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau *2015-2019 American Community Survey*, released on January 30, 2020, are summarized provided below to provide demographic, economic, and cultural factors for the City of Lowell. Rather than refer to the 5 year period (2015-2019), the last year of 2019, will be used for brevity, but the full five year period will be noted as the source for tables and charts.

In 2019, Lowell had a total population of 3,640 – 1,784 (49.0%) females and 1,856 (51.0%) males. The median age was 41.4 years. An estimated 17.1% of the population was under 18 years, 37.4% was 18 to 44 years, 25.5% was 45 to 64 years, and 20.0% was 65 years and older.

Population by Age and Sex for Lowell in 2015-2019



For people reporting one race alone, 72.7% were White; 16.3% were Black or African American; 0.0% were American Indian and Alaska Native; 2.9% were Asian; 0.0% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 3.8% were some other race. An estimated 4.2% reported two or more races. An estimated 12.0% of the people in Lowell were Hispanic. An estimated 65.5% of the people in Lowell were White non-Hispanic. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

In 2019, there were 1,305 households in Lowell. The average household size was 2.75 people. The median income of households in Lowell was \$53,810. An estimated 5.6% of households had income below \$10,000 a year and 1.6% had income over \$200,000 or more. In 2019, 19.6% of people were in poverty. An estimated 29.9% of children under 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 17.9% of people 65 years old and over. An estimated 17.6% of people 18 to 64 years were below the poverty level.

In 2019, Lowell had a total of 1,433 housing units. Of these housing units, 86.5% were single-family houses either not attached to any other structure or attached to one or more structures (commonly referred to as “townhouses” or “row houses”). 6.5% of the housing units were located in multi-unit structures, or those buildings that contained two or more apartments. 7.0% were mobile homes, while any remaining housing units were classified as “other,” which included boats, recreational vehicles, vans, etc. 2.7% of the housing inventory was comprised of houses built since 2010, while 15.4% of the houses were first built in 1939 or earlier. The median number of rooms in all housing units in Lowell was 5.4 rooms, and of these housing units 57.3% had three or more bedrooms.

In 2019, Lowell had 1,305 housing units that were occupied or had people living in them, while the remaining 128 were vacant. Of the occupied housing units, the percentage of these houses occupied by owners (also known as the homeownership rate) was 67.1% while renters occupied 32.9%. The average household size of owner-occupied houses was 3.02 and in renter-occupied houses it was 2.21. 24.0% of householders of these occupied houses had moved into their house since 2015, while 20.1% moved into their house in 1989 or earlier. Households without a vehicle available for personal use comprised 3.3% and another 26.1% had three or more vehicles available for use.

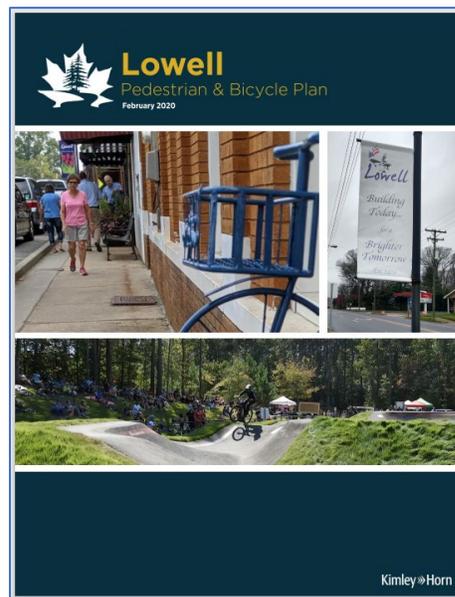
In 2019, the median property value for owner-occupied houses in Lowell was \$117,700. For renter-occupied houses, the median gross rent for Lowell was \$840. Gross rent includes the monthly contract rent and any monthly payments made for electricity, gas, water and sewer, and any other fuels to heat the house. Households that pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened. In 2019, cost-burdened households in Lowell accounted for 8.8% of owners with a mortgage, 11.0% of owners without a mortgage, and 42.5% of renters.

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PLAN PREPARATION AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Determining what is important to a community is critical. Four community plans have been developed and adopted in recent years after citizen engagement. As allowed by §N.C.G.S. 160D-501(a1), the following three plans, adopted by the City of Lowell City Council, shall be made a part of this City Plan 2040 and shall be referenced by Planning Department staff, and appointed and elected officials when considering land use decisions to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development within the City of Lowell: Lowell Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan; I-85: Exit 22 Gateway Master Plan; and Franklin Boulevard Corridor Access and Alternative Mobility Strategy. Planning processes for these plans included opportunities for citizen engagement in plan preparation and adoption as summarized below.

[Lowell Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan](#) dated February 2020
City of Lowell City Council adopted the Plan on October 13, 2020.



Summary of the Plan and Citizen Engagement: The development of the City of Lowell Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan was funded through a grant awarded by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation through its Planning Grant Initiative and a local match. The pedestrian and bicycle network recommendations were developed by layering existing condition data with the needs, input, and feedback of the outreach efforts. A detailed scoring process was created that assessed each project on a variety of criteria to produce a prioritization table of recommended projects.

Public outreach was a critical part of this process and was incorporated into every phase of planning. The outreach took three main forms including a steering committee made up of local officials, experts and community leaders; online surveys to reach a broad range of people; and public workshops to get in-depth input from community members. The Steering Committee met four times over the course of several months in 2019. The Steering Committee had four distinct roles: Assist with development of the comprehensive bike plan: Provide feedback on the plan

elements throughout the planning process; Act as a conduit for your organization; and Provide expert knowledge and local insights.

An online survey was distributed widely via the City of Lowell and various members of the project Steering Committee. The survey was open from March 8 to April 8, 2019 and gathered respondent's attitudes toward existing conditions, as well as asked for priority ways the network could be improved.

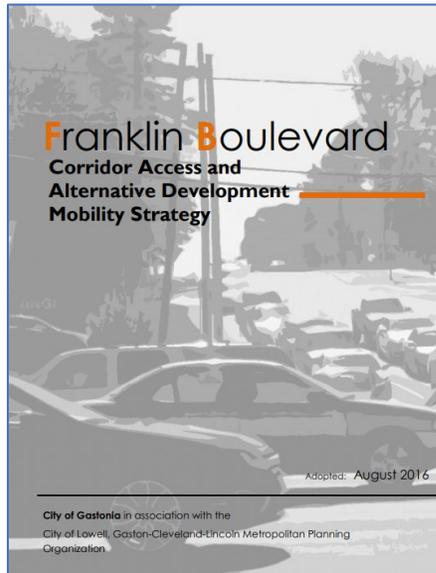
The plan's first public workshop was held on Thursday, March 28, 2019 at Lowell City Hall. The workshop was a drop-in opportunity for attendees to participate in several interactive stations and provide valuable feedback to be incorporated into the planning process. A second public workshop was held on Tuesday, September 24, 2019 at Holbrook Middle School. The workshop followed an open house format and was a drop-in opportunity for attendees to review the core elements of the plan and specifically the facility and policy/programmatic recommendations. The workshop was held during a local community event at Holbrook Middle School and many stopped by the project booth to review the materials and engage with the project team.

[I-85: Exit 22 Gateway Master Plan](#) dated September 1, 2020
City of Lowell City Council adopted the Plan on November 10, 2020.



Summary of the Plan and Citizen Engagement: This Small Area Plan illustrates the optimum development of the Study Area located at Exit 22 of I-85 into the City of Lowell. The plan is a comprehensive "Vision" providing the City, landowners, and residents a guide for how to zone, invest and build in the years to come. The City may facilitate the vision through strategic investments in new streets, water, sewer, re-zonings, open space development and cycle/greenway improvements, when beneficial Private Public Partnerships present themselves. To that end, important Civic amenities such as parks, cycle ways, and pedestrian greenways are shown in their approximate locations. If fully embraced and regional growth patterns continue, the Lowell Gateway Plan as illustrated by this vision can become a reality within the next 20 years. The City Council adopted the Gateway Master Plan after an advertised public hearing held on November 10, 2020.

[Franklin Boulevard Corridor Access and Alternative Mobility Strategy](#) dated August 2016
City of Lowell City Council adopted the Strategy on October 10, 2016.



Summary of the Plan and Citizen Engagement: The 2016 Franklin Boulevard Corridor Access and Alternative Development Mobility Strategy was completed by the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization in coordination with Gastonia and Lowell. The study evaluated connectivity and mobility options within the I-85 corridor for various travel modes. The study included recommendations for intersection improvements at Exit 22 (I-85 and South Main Street) to address peak hour congestion. The study also reviewed options for extending Lineberger Road southwest of downtown Lowell to I-85. The proposal calls for a series of distributor roads between Exits 21 and 22 to allow for a new I-85 interchange with the Lineberger Road extension. This extension may help alleviate future congestion along S. Main Street and W. 1st Street in Lowell. The study also considered extending West 3rd Street from North Main Street to NC 7 to help alleviate peak hour congestion on Main Street heading toward I-85. The Franklin Boulevard study also called for improvements along S. Main Street such as bike lanes, center medians, and streetscape landscaping. These improvements would enhance the aesthetics of downtown Lowell's primary gateway.

Two community meetings were held for each community within the study area. The Gastonia meeting was held on March 16, 2015 and the Lowell meeting was held on March 30, 2015. At each of the community meetings, the project team provided an introduction to the planning process associated with the study and briefed the attendees on the activities scheduled for the meeting. Each activity was facilitated with the purpose of identifying priority issues and concerns from community members.

Participants were asked to write down one word that came to mind about their HOPES and another word that described their FEARS. This exercise provided a quick snapshot of the participant's current perception of the community, including issues that needed to be addressed and resources that should be leveraged. The FEAR questions helped the project team understand the participant's desire for the future. In some cases, the vision question also revealed what the

participants feel is the reality for the community if change does not occur. The word cloud images, below, highlight the thoughts of the participants.

Gastonia Community Hopes and Fears

Hopes

- Ease Congestion
- Safety
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities
- Alleviate Congestion

Fears

- Increases in Congestion
- Negative Impacts to Neighborhood and Property Values
- Connection of Residential Streets to Franklin Blvd.

Lowell Community Hopes and Fears

Hopes

- Mixed Use Development
- Greenspace/Gateway to the City
- More Pedestrian Friendly Intersections
- Thriving Business Community

Fears

- No Development
- Poor/Over Development
- Congestion
- No Action from this Plan

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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

FUTURE LAND USE

The exciting aspects of this plan are not captured by the issues we have faced or the problems we believe we have, but the opportunities we have before us. The opportunities to build upon our previous successes are the greatest asset the businesses and citizens of Lowell possess. This plan recognizes those attributes, identifies the community stakeholders' goals, and crafts a vision of our future. Along with the actions we must undertake to achieve the goals stated in this document, this plan provides the foundation for systematic decision-making by businesses, citizens, prospective investors in our community, and leadership at various levels.

Simply stated, the key to our success is to increase the population of the community by reasonable numbers to increase the economic activity to a level that will support the services we desire. The three groups to focus our energy on are as follows:

- Retain our young adults by creating the home-town they dream about.
- Attract newcomers by offering the dynamic small-town feel they seek.
- Encourage opportunities for our citizens to age-in-place through local options for senior living.

Creating an attractive atmosphere in Lowell will contribute toward our efforts to attract young adults to return, to come home when they seek that long-term location to settle into. These same investments will attract the newcomers seeking a special small-town atmosphere with lifestyle opportunities they find attractive. When a community feels good about itself it shows and that will become its greatest attribute in attracting visitors who just want to be a part of it all. That is what successful Cities do, they become special by taking deliberate steps toward that goal and they reap the rewards when they do it well.

Focusing attention on strategic locations to reignite interest to create a new City center and enhance existing commercial development can boost investment by re-thinking development in the corridors. Incentives to refresh and redevelop strategic sites in existing underutilized locations where existing infrastructure and location dynamics combine to support successful new investments will reinforce property values within these strategically important locations. The ***Future Land Use Map***, appearing on Figure 1, depicts a pattern of development to accommodate a combination of residential, non-residential, and mixed-use growth and redevelopment. The map serves as the overall plan to guide decisions about future infrastructure investments and other public services for Lowell's future growth. ***The Growth Opportunities Map***, appearing on Figure 2 of this City Plan 2040, encompasses the boundary, and slightly beyond, of the adopted [L-85: Exist 22 Gateway Master Plan](#). ***Zoning changes are required by North Carolina statute to be made based upon both reasonableness and consistency with this plan.***

NEW UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO)

The City has contracted to prepare a new UDO consistent with this plan. The new UDO is being prepared nearly simultaneously with the preparation of this City Plan 2040 both of which are scheduled to be completed in the early-to mid- 2021.

Adoption of the new UDO will accomplish two primary objectives:

- To modernize the City's criteria and specifications to meet current statutory requirements, &
- To make certain the criteria and specifications are designed to help Lowell continue to thrive.

This '*plans and specs*' approach to City building improves the relationship of the City with its businesses and citizens by establishing objectives, then administering the UDO to simply achieve those objectives. By using common sense policies to encourage re-use and reinvestment in Lowell, the City can reduce tax and utility rates as the plan is implemented. This approach benefits all Lowell's businesses and citizens.

The new UDO standards will establish cost saving measures for the tax and utility rate payer for all new subdivisions. When new streets are built properly, they last longer and are far less costly to maintain. These new streets must also be reported to the NCDOT upon completion to ensure the local share of the fuel tax collected from every motorist when they purchase fuel, will be returned to the City. When these fuel taxes are returned each year, they can do more for the older streets where repairs may be warranted.

Subdivision criteria and specifications also improve utility performance and reduce cost to serve all rate payers. By establishing specific criteria for the location of lines we can reduce confusion and improve the effectiveness of future maintenance and repairs. Each utility is designated a specific location in or near the street.

The new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) will adequately address land use in floodplains. This ordinance is mandatory in order to be eligible for the National Flood Insurance Program administered by the federal government. The new UDO will adequately address land uses and use specifications, (i.e. lot size, coverage, etc.), and stream buffers within these sensitive areas.

The administration of the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) consistent with this plan must be performed by experienced professionals to ensure protection of the rights of businesses and citizens. Such fair and unbiased administration must be proactive and seek to help these businesses and citizens achieve the successes they may seek that are consistent with both the adopted City Plan 2040 and the new UDO.

The criteria or specifications included in these ordinances should accomplish some basic objectives including:

- Ensure the purchaser or owner receives a safe and reliable building product,
- Ensure the state and federal mandates are satisfied to avoid penalties, and
- Ensure the result does not increase the burden on other tax and utility rate payers without deliberate determination that such increases are for the overall benefit of the community.

The best remedy for Lowell's existing underutilized commercial areas is to encourage re-use and re-development through new zoning criteria and specifications. This approach can work well provided there is a commitment to areas where the investment in infrastructure has already been made. Policies that promote the success of neighborhoods, businesses and civic uses alike are far more desirable to all persons involved; promote a more viable future of the community; and preserve the investments made by property owners in the community. This approach respects

property rights in balance: the rights of one property owner, the rights of the adjacent or nearby property owner(s), and the interests City-wide linked to a vibrant community.

The following descriptions of districts or zones the new UDO should establish describe the character of the various neighborhoods and non-residential parts of Lowell. These new districts should replace all existing districts and be accompanied by opportunity-driven district standards: opportunities for both growth and preservation of natural areas.

Careful consideration has been given when crafting the criteria and specifications for development to avoid as much non-conformity or “grandfathering” as possible. While some properties may not avoid a non-conforming (grandfather clause) status, it is very important to make as much existing development compliant as reasonably possible. This attempt should not be misguided into making fundamentally poor choices in drafting the UDO, nor should it fail to recognize the role of property maintenance rules.

Agriculture District

The Agriculture District (AG) is established to protect lands used for agricultural production, agriculturally based businesses and related activities. Farmland is a defining element of Lowell’s traditional identity and the protection of these lands aids in preserving the character of the City until such time as new development is preferred by the City. Listed uses are limited, with an emphasis on uses that are agricultural in nature. Development density is very low to encourage preservation of agricultural lands while discouraging large lot residential subdivision type development and excessive septic system utility. The Agriculture District can also be used to preserve open spaces.

Single-Family Residential Districts

The Single-Family Residential Districts (SFR-2, SFR-3 and SFR-4) provide for the completion of existing residential neighborhoods and the development of new residential neighborhoods. Allowed building/lot types in the Single-Family Districts are Detached House. Listed uses are restricted to Single-Family, including duplex (two-family), homes and their accessory uses. Neighborhoods in these districts are the dominant land use in Lowell and are a major element in defining the character of the community. Standards for the Single-Family Residential Districts promote that new development maintains the character of the community. The Single-Family Residential Districts permit the completion and conformity of conventional residential subdivisions already existing or approved in sketch plan form by the City of Lowell prior to the effective date of these regulations.

Residential Main Street Transition District

The Residential Main Street Transition District (RMST) provides for the completion of residential neighborhoods in the residential area(s) surrounding the Main Street and contiguous Civic Districts through in-fill development. The intent of this district is to recognize that gradual transformation of existing development to high quality mixed density residential development is needed to support the central core of the City. Higher density residential development allows a greater number of households to walk or bike, thus supporting businesses while reducing the parking demand and providing environmental and health benefits. Allowed building/lot types in these districts are the Detached House, Attached House, and Multi-family Building. Streets in the Residential Main Street Transition District should be interconnected, with streets and sidewalks providing a connection from Lowell’s Main Street and other mixed-use districts to the Single-

Family Residential districts surrounding these neighborhoods. A range of housing types is encouraged. Criteria for the mix of building types establishes compatibility.

Main Street District

The Main Street District (MS) provides for new development, revitalization, reuse, and infill development in Lowell's core downtown. A broad array of uses is listed to enable the needs of residents and visitors to be met. Allowed building/lot types in this district are Urban Workplace, Shop-front, Detached House, Attached House, Multi-family Building, and Civic Building. The development pattern seeks to integrate shops, restaurants, services, workplaces, civic, educational, and higher density housing in a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment. The Main Street District serves as the hub of the surrounding neighborhoods and of the broader community. The Main Street District may be expanded over time to meet the needs of the growing community for downtown facilities and services. Expansion of the Main Street District shall be contiguous and not separated from the primary district area.

Civic District

The Civic District (CIV) provides a location for educational, medical, governmental, religious, and other institutional uses. Large developments in the Civic District are encouraged to provide a master plan to the City. Institutional uses in the Civic District are required to provide pedestrian connections on their campuses and, to the extent possible, develop an internal street system with structures fronting on the streets. Parking should not be the dominant visible element of the campuses developed for institutional uses. Providing a unique district for civic uses will establish uniform standards.

Mixed-Use Districts

The Mixed-Use Districts (MU-1 and MU-2) are established to provide opportunities for both compatible and sustainable re-development where underutilized commercial properties already exist as well as infill sites where site specific land planning of new development creates opportunities for businesses and various housing designs sharing community amenities and enhancements. Existing auto-oriented street, lot, and building designs can create uncomfortable pedestrian environments; however, with careful site planning these areas will allow a greater number of residents to walk or bike to businesses and services with an interconnected network of streets and sidewalks. Allowed building/lot types are Highway Commercial, Urban Workplace, Shop-front, Detached House, Attached House, and Multi-family. Dominant uses in this district are residential, retail and office. The Mixed-Use Districts are expected to serve Lowell residents as well as persons who travel from surrounding communities. The development pattern in this district acknowledges the role of the automobile, with parking and access provided to promote safety for the motoring public. Development standards in the Mixed-Use Districts promote the creation of a pleasant pedestrian-friendly auto-oriented environment while enabling a compatible transition to uses in adjacent neighborhood districts.

Interstate Highway 85 Commercial District

The Interstate Highway 85 Commercial District (C-85) is established to provide opportunities for compatible, resilient and sustainable development along the Interstate Highway 85 corridor. Development standards in the Interstate Highway 85 Commercial District (C-85) acknowledge that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation. Development and design standards encourage pedestrian scale development along a secondary street network serving larger projects. Goals of the Interstate Highway 85 Commercial District (C-85) include providing a

pleasant calm environment for motorists, a safe environment for pedestrians within a network of streets and pedestrian facilities; promoting the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians; and preserving the capacity of the transportation network outside the core area as shown in the adopted City Plan. Uses in this district include commercial goods & services, employment, and some limited small-scale industrial. Allowed building/lot types include Highway Commercial, Urban Workplace, and Shop-front.

US Highway 74 Commercial District

The US Highway 74 Commercial District (C-74) is established to provide opportunities for compatible, resilient and sustainable development along the US Highway 74 corridor. Development standards in the US Highway 74 Commercial District (C-74) acknowledge that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation. Development and design standards encourage pedestrian scale development along a secondary street network serving larger projects. Goals of the US Highway 74 Commercial District (C-74) include providing a pleasant calm environment for motorists, a safe environment for pedestrians within a network of streets and pedestrian facilities; promoting the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians; and preserving the capacity of the transportation network outside the core area as shown in the adopted City Plan. Uses in this district include commercial goods & services, employment, and some limited small-scale industrial. Allowed building/lot types include Highway Commercial, Urban Workplace, and Shop-front.

Vehicle Service and Repair District

The Vehicle Service and Repair District (VSR) is established to provide locations for specific uses that, due to their unique characteristics and importance to the community, and the traveling public, require different criteria and specifications than typical commercial development. Development standards in the Vehicle Service and Repair District acknowledge that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation in suburban communities and there is a vital need for such businesses to be located in close proximity to one another. Uses within the Vehicle Service and Repair District are buffered from adjacent uses. The dominant uses in this district are vehicle oriented and/or dependent and include vehicle-based services, vehicle repair shops and disabled vehicle storage areas. The Vehicle Service and Repair District is reserved for uses which require broad maneuvering spaces and avoid pedestrian interaction with potentially hazardous conditions. Goals of the Vehicle Service and Repair District include providing a pleasant environment for motorists, a safe environment for pedestrians along the network of streets and pedestrian facilities; promoting the safety of motorists and pedestrians; and preserving the capacity of Main Street and it's interconnecting network of streets outside the core area as shown in this adopted City Plan. Uses in this district include heavy commercial goods and services for motor vehicles, and some limited industrial. Allowed building/lot type is Highway Commercial.

Industrial District

The Industrial District (IND) is established to provide locations for industrial uses that, due to the scale of the buildings and/or the nature of the use, cannot be integrated into the community. Uses within the Industrial District are buffered from adjacent uses. The dominant uses in this district are manufacturing and warehouse storage. Small scale manufacturing and storage that is compatible with less intensive uses can and should be located in other non-residential or mixed-use districts. The Industrial District is reserved for uses which require very large buildings and/or large parking and loading facilities.

Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District

The Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District (TNDO) provides for the development of new neighborhoods and the revitalization or extension of existing neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are structured upon a fine network of interconnecting pedestrian-oriented streets and other public spaces. Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND's) provide a mixture of housing types and prices, prominently sited civic or community building(s), stores/offices/workplaces, and churches to provide a balanced mix of activities. A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) has a recognizable center and clearly defined edges; optimum size is a quarter mile from center to edge. A TND is urban in form, is typically an extension of the existing developed area of the City and has an overall residential density of up to eleven (11) dwelling units per acre. TNDO districts should have a significant portion of land dedicated to improved open spaces, and reserve un-improved open spaces where environmentally sensitive areas are located.

Scenic Corridor Overlay District

The Scenic Corridor Overlay District (SCO) is established to protect the pastoral scenes and open spaces that provide a sense of arrival for residents and visitors traveling the major entrance roads and gateways to the City. The pastoral scenes and undeveloped property along the entrance roads and gateways contribute significantly to Lowell's community character and sense of place. The Scenic Corridor Overlay District provides development options for the owners of the property abutting the entrance roads and gateways. The goal of this district is to protect the scenic value of the corridors through a mix of incentives and development standards. These standards will preserve the suburban character of the City by maintaining the sense of a suburban corridor in an urban environment; provide an aesthetically appealing experience for those traveling the corridor; provide multi-modal transportation options for travel; and promote a safe transportation corridor for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

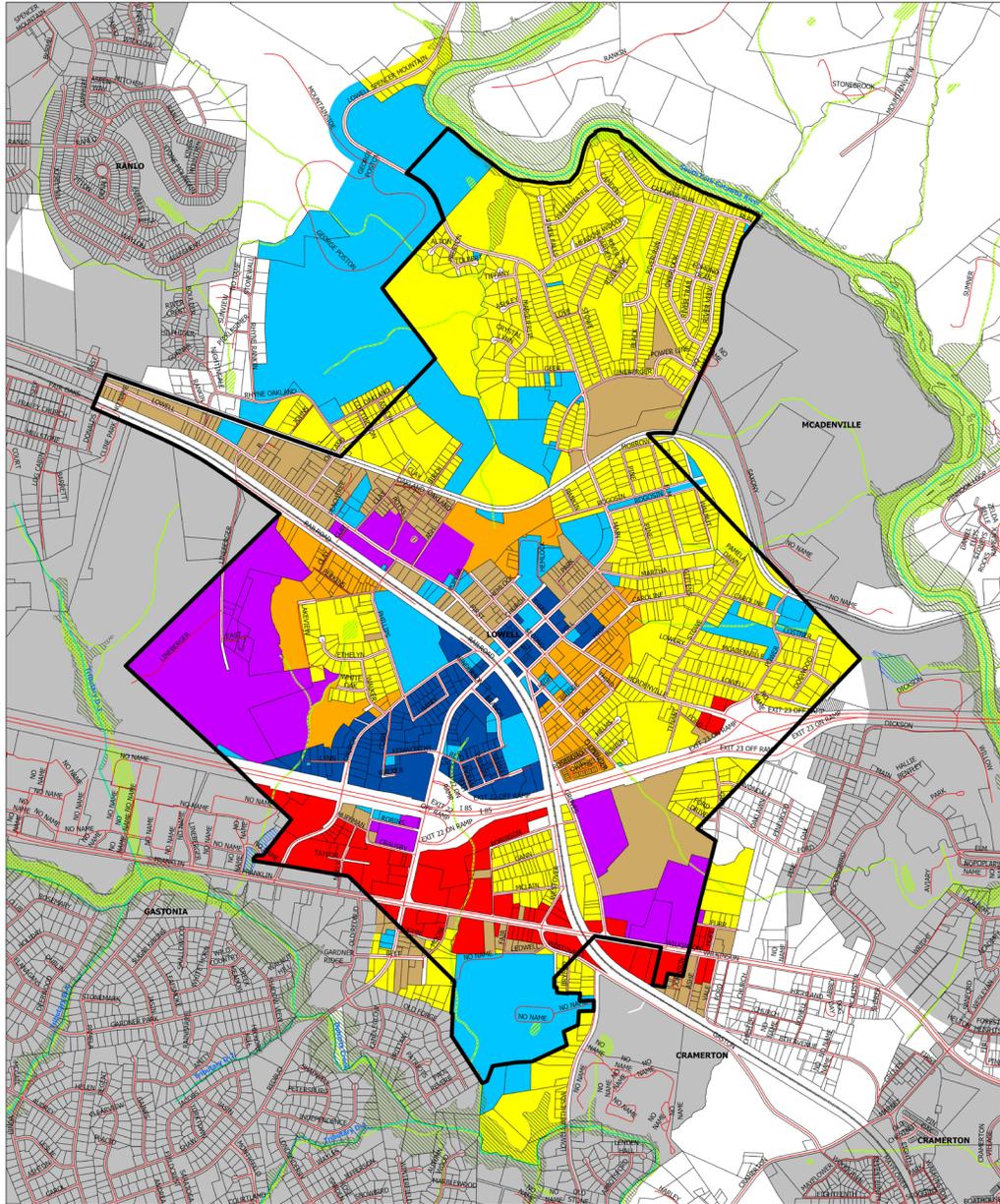
Heavy Industry Overlay District

The Heavy Industry Overlay District (HIO) is established to protect all environments from the negative impacts of certain activities and types of development. It is the intent of this district to provide and permit certain public and private heavy industrial uses and facilities that incorporate hazardous materials and/or scientific technology, including wholesale, distribution, storage, processing, manufacturing and production. However, it is required that industries in this district take all necessary actions including but not limited to installation of apparatus and technological equipment available to prevent negative impacts on the environment and the community from the emissions of smoke, dust, fumes, noise and vibrations and other activities and/or products resulting from such hazardous industrial activities in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

Mini Farm Overlay District

The Mini Farm Overlay District (MFO) permits buildings to be grouped on a site, parcel, or property in order to optimize the use of land and resources for both residential and agricultural purposes. By clustering development at a density no greater than one unit per developed acre, projects developed in accordance with these standards can obtain density bonuses while preserving unique natural features for agricultural use. The Mini Farm Overlay District mandates the dedication of both agricultural land and open space with density bonuses provided as an incentive for adhering to the standards. It is the intent of this district to be used for new development in undeveloped outlying areas of the City and its ETJ. Allowed building/lot type is Detached House.

Figure 1 *Future Land Use Map*



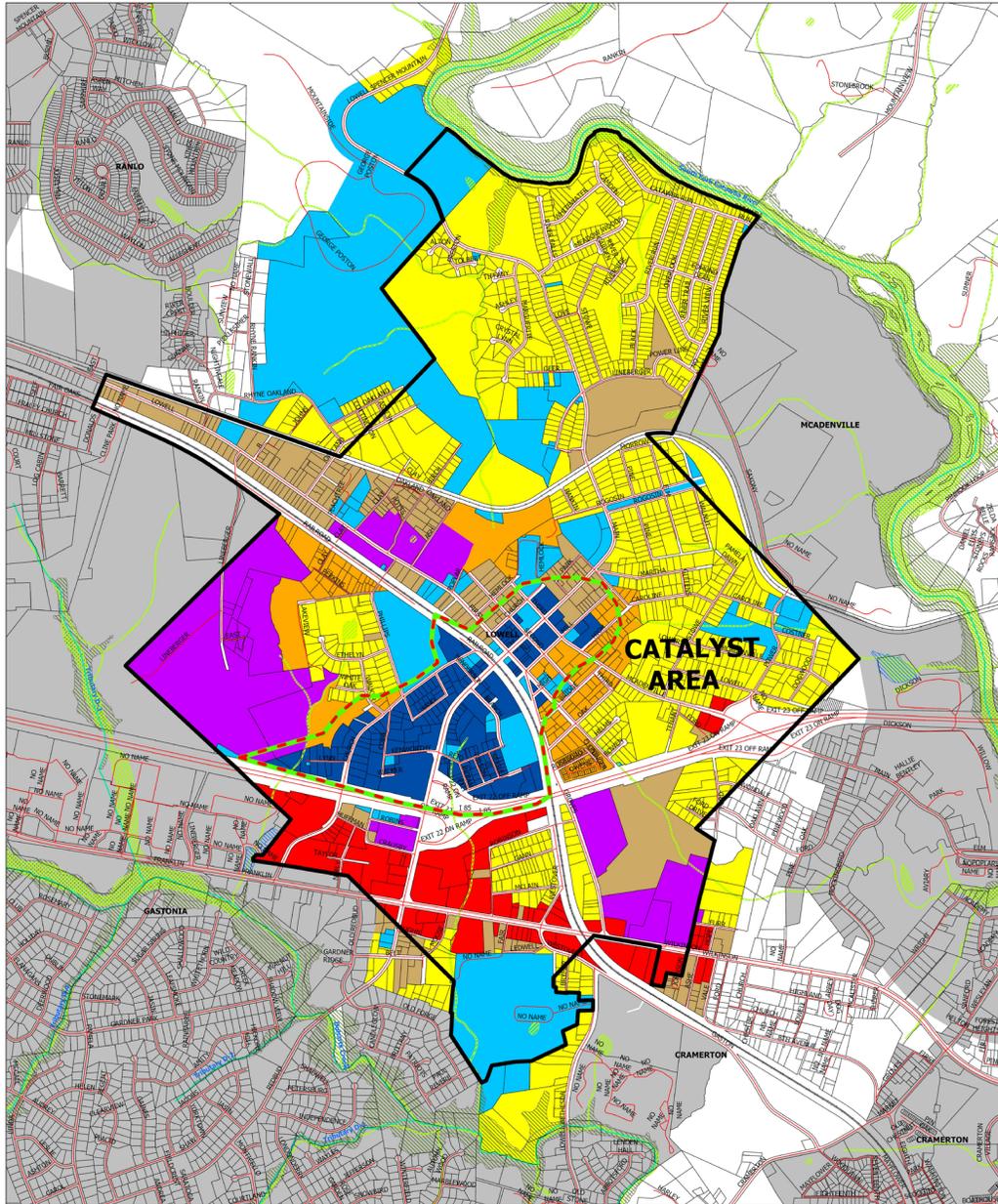
Future Land Use Map

Lowell, NC April 13, 2021

- Roads
- Railroads
- Centerlines of Streams / Rivers
- Water Bodies
- 2018 Flood Zone
- Wetlands Identified by USFWS
- Lowell City Limit
- Surrounding Municipal Jurisdictions
- 2021 County Tax Parcels
- Rural
- Neighborhood
- Transitional Neighborhood
- Downtown Gateway
- Civic
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Employment/Manufacturing

Sources: Source of Wetlands Data: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), October 1, 2020
 The source of the 2021 parcel data is Gaston County Planning GIS
 Prepared by: N-Focus, Inc.

Figure 2 *Growth Opportunities Map*



Growth Opportunities Map

Lowell, NC April 13, 2021

- Roads
- Railroads
- Centerlines of Streams / Rivers
- Water Bodies
- 2018 Flood Zone
- Wetlands Identified by USFWS
- Lowell City Limit
- Lowell Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Boundary
- Surrounding Municipal Jurisdictions
- 2021 County Tax Parcels
- Catalyst Area - Downtown Gateway
- Rural
- Neighborhood
- Transitional Neighborhood
- Downtown Gateway
- Civic
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Employment/Manufacturing

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.5 Miles

Sources: Source of Wetlands Data: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), October 1, 2020.
 The source of the 2021 parcel data is Gaston County Planning GIS
 Prepared by: N-Focus, Inc.