

Town of Dallas

Agenda

MAY 24, 2022

5:00 PM

BOARD OF ALDERMEN – WORK SESSION MEETING

Rick Coleman, Mayor

Sam Martin

Frank Milton

Darlene Morrow

Jerry Cearley, Mayor Pro-Tem

E. Hoyle Withers

ITEM SUBJECT

Pages

-
- 1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**
 - 2. Approval of Agenda with Additions or Deletions**
 - 3. New Business**
 - A. CERRI Presentation 2
 - B. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Presentation 28
 - C. Budget Discussion 95

TOWN OF DALLAS, NORTH CAROLINA

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

DESCRIPTION: CERRI Presentation

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3A

MEETING DATE: 05/24/2022

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

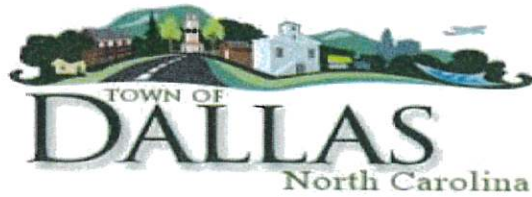
In November 2021, the Town began a Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) with the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, a division of the NC Department of Commerce. A local workgroup was formed, comprised of elected officials, Town staff, business owners, citizens, and county stakeholders. Workgroup meetings were held monthly through March 2022.

Mr. Jeff Emory, Community Economic Development Planner Southwest Prosperity Zone NC Department of Commerce, facilitated the project and meetings. He will present the final report and plan.

Attached is a copy of the final report and plan for review.

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

BOARD ACTION TAKEN:



Town of Dallas

Economic Resiliency Assessment and Diversity Report

Prepared by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Introduction

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center’s Rural Planning Program (RPP) developed the Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) to help local governments recover from the economic impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and build local economies that are more resilient to future crises.

The initiative will also enable communities to address COVID-19 impacts by supporting affected businesses and communities, provide technical assistance to retain existing and hire new employees, offer a range of skills training and workforce development projects to help employees compete for high-quality jobs, and develop and implement strategies to diversify regional economies to create jobs in new or existing industries.

The CERRI and the Economic Diversity Report, services developed as part of the CERRI, will help each participating community understand the structure of its local economy and factors in its resilience.

This service will be provided by RPP and may lead to a local cluster analysis. The service may also define the need for further or outside assistance with cluster or value chain analysis, targeted market studies, talent development, economic gardening, development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and other program development plans as supported by the CERRI. The report can be used to inform a strategic planning process and state and federal grant opportunities.



Downtown Dallas and the old courthouse

There are several scale issues and data limitations with studying Dallas's business climate. Some variables are available at the town or place level, others at the zip code level, and other variables only available at the county level. The unit of government (town, zip code, or county) will be specified with each data variable.

The following analysis and data represent a detailed look at what drives Dallas' workforce and economy. To further analyze the different types of data used, consult the source page at the end of this report.

Summary Demographics

Location-Dallas is centrally located in Gaston County and once served as the county seat. It is approximately four miles north of Gastonia and 24 miles west of Charlotte, the largest city in North Carolina. Lincolnton is 13 miles to the north. Dallas is 2.89 square miles in land area. Major highways serving Dallas are Interstate 85 to the south, and US Highway 321, which intersects the town running north and south. The zip code for the town limits of Dallas is 28034.

Population-The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the total population of the Town of Dallas in 2020 is 5927. This is approximately 32% growth in ten years and reflects significant growth. To put this in perspective, the 2010 census estimated the 2025 population of Dallas to be slightly under 5900, which means the town outperformed the 15-year growth estimate in 10 years.

Age-Zip code level data shows that the number of Millennials living in the 28034 zip code area is just under the national average for a community of its size. The number of individuals close to retirement in the same area is about average. The median age in the Town of Dallas is 39.3 years.

Population Characteristics



Source: EMSI Zip Code

Race-Racial diversity in the Town of Dallas is low and not projected to see significant change over the next five years.

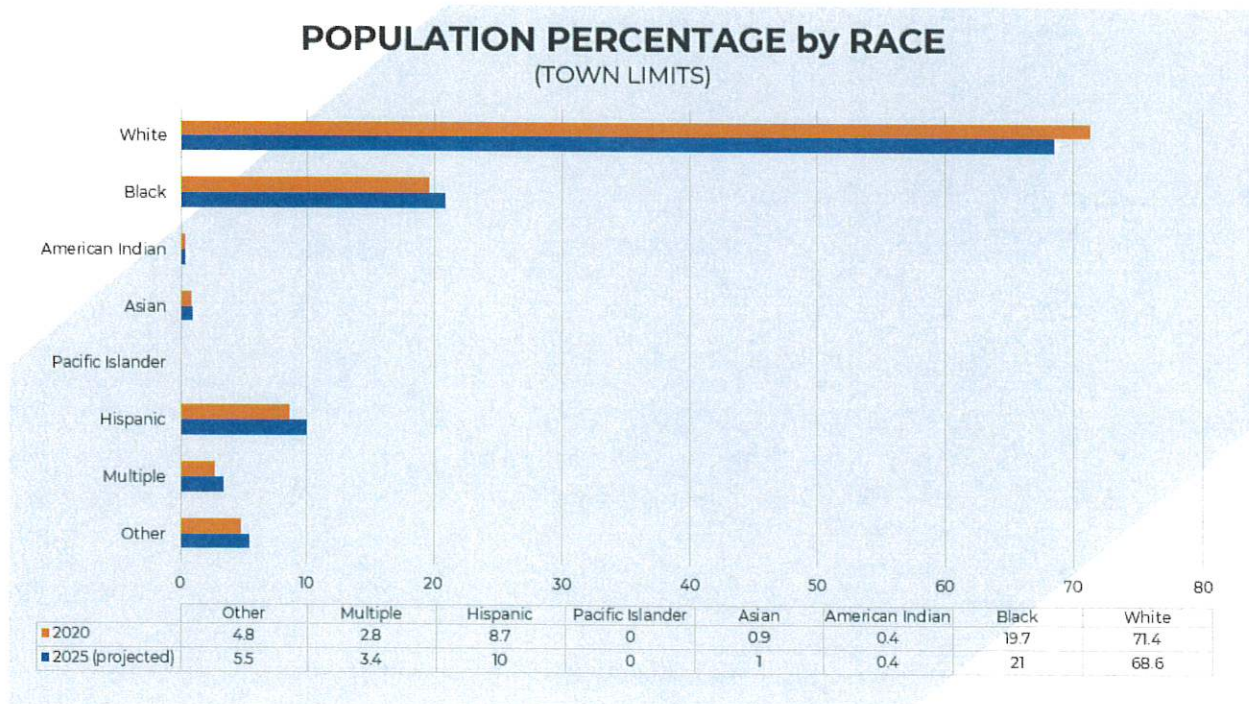
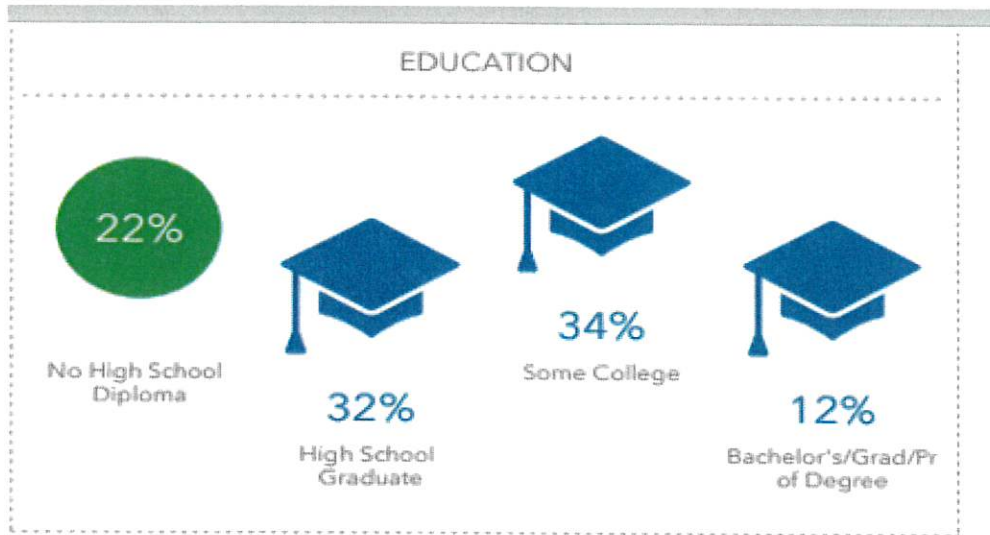


Figure 1 Source: US Census Bureau, ESRI Forecasts

Education-Just over one-third of working-age adults in the Town of Dallas has achieved some college education, with another 12% having earned a bachelor’s degree or higher. Additionally, 32% of working-age adults have received a high school diploma or equivalent. 22% of Dallas residents have less than a high school diploma.



One Gaston County public school is located within the town limits of Dallas, Carr Elementary School. Residents are also served by Costner Elementary, North Gaston Middle School, and North Gaston High School. The main campus of Gaston Community College is located in the Dallas Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The closest state public university to the Town of Dallas is the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, approximately 30 miles from the town.

Economic Summary

For purposes of economic data presented for this report, the address for the town hall was used, 210 N. Holland Street. For example, the information shown as five miles actually takes in a significant portion of northern Gastonia; three miles gets close to Bessemer City and Ranlo. On the other hand, one mile does not even consider the complete town limits of Dallas because a significant portion of town located west of Highway 321 is beyond one mile from the town hall address. Some data is just for the town limits and will be noted that way. The map below should serve as a helpful reference for reviewing the various data.

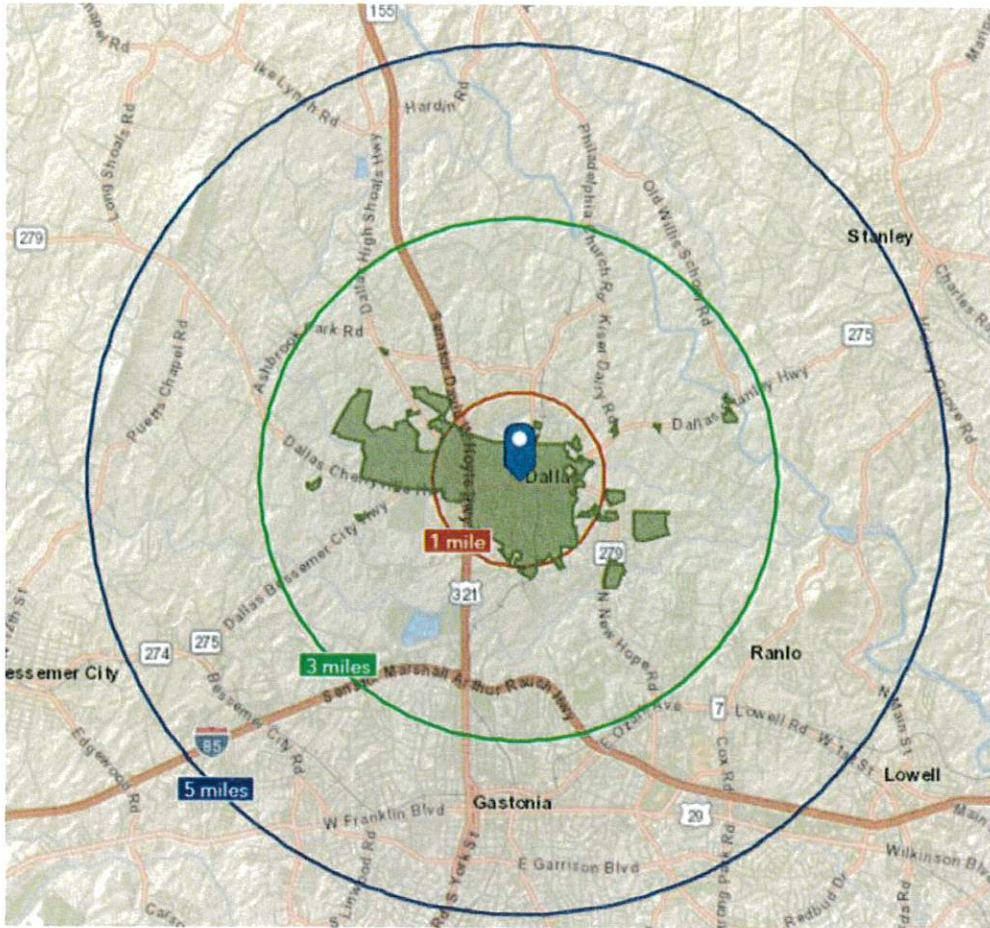


Figure 2 represents a 5-, 3-, and one-mile radius from Dallas town hall, 215 N. Holland Street.

Average Disposable Income-The below chart reflects average disposable income for a 1, 3, and 5-mile radius from town hall.

Average Disposable Income

1-Mile Radius	3-Mile Radius	5-Mile Radius
\$40,472	\$46,351	45,524

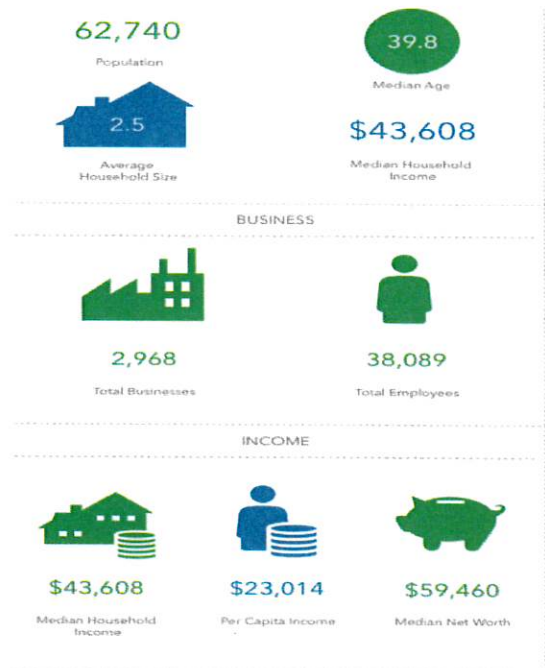
What is Disposable Personal Income?

After-tax income. The amount that U.S. residents have left to spend or save after paying taxes is important not just to individuals but to the whole economy. The formula is simple: personal income minus personal current taxes.

(US Bureau of Economic Analysis)



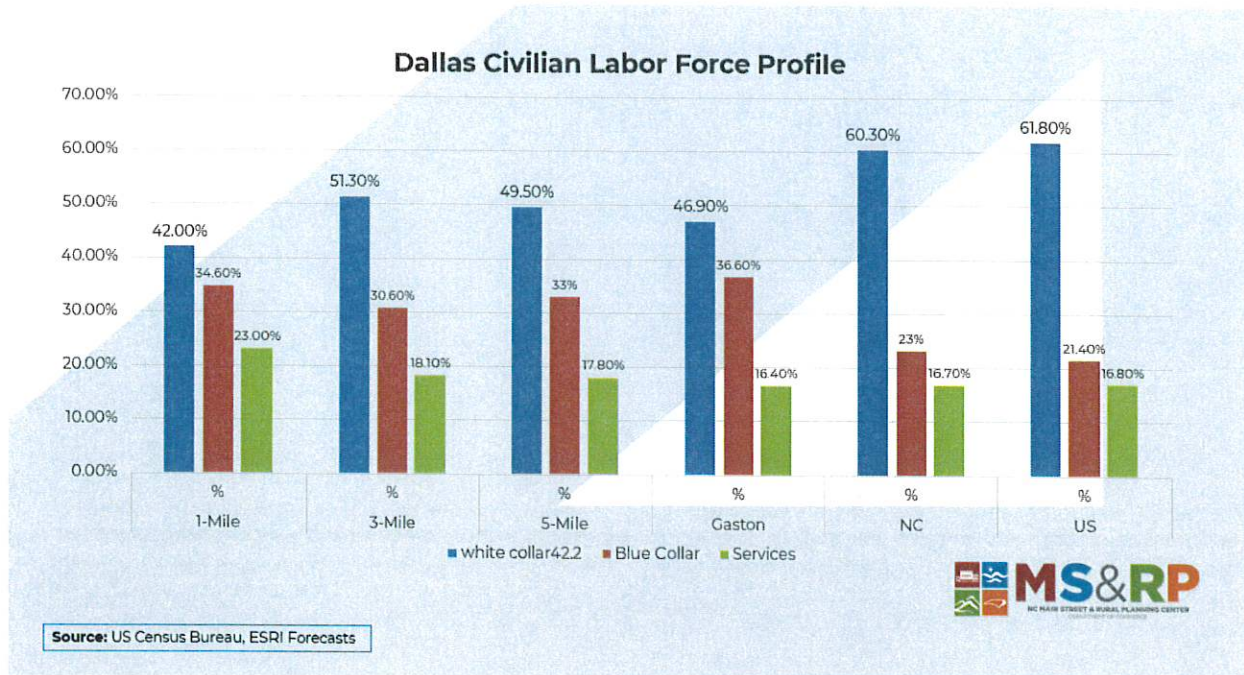
Source: ESRI Town Limit



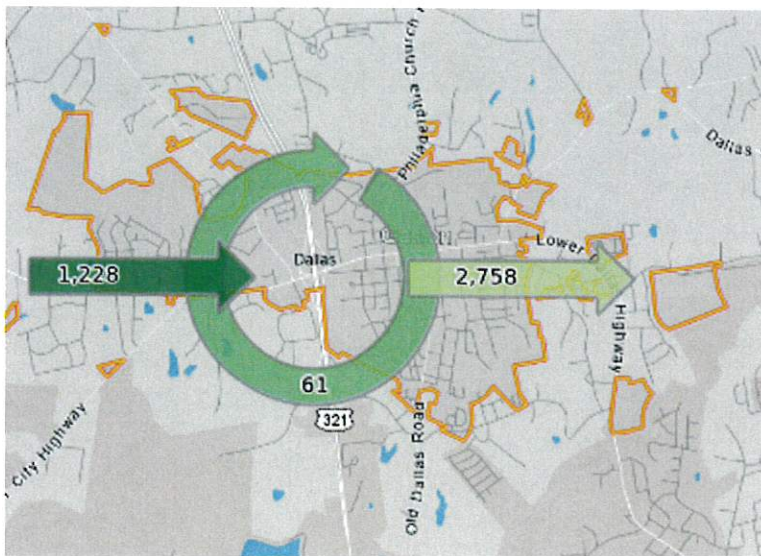
Source: ESRI 5 Mile

The above information reflects economic data from the Dallas town limits compared to the five-mile radius from town hall. The population estimate for Dallas in 2020 was 5537, compared to almost 63,000 for a five-mile radius. This five-mile radius includes a northern portion of the City of Gastonia. The median income for the town limits is \$45,259, compared to \$43,608 at the five-mile radius. Please note that while there are roughly 200 businesses in Dallas, that number expands to almost 3000 within five miles. Dallas's median net household worth is \$71,288 and drops to \$59,460 within the five-mile radius of town hall.

Dallas Civilian Labor Force Profile-The graph below reflects the Dallas labor force by white-collar, blue-collar, and services. The numbers reflect the one, three, and five-mile radius from town hall, Gaston County, state of North Carolina, and the US. The white-collar labor force percentage within a mile of the Dallas town hall is 42%. Three miles out is 51%, and five miles out is 49.5%. The total white-collar labor force for Gaston County is approximately 47%. For North Carolina, it is 60.3%, and it is almost 62% for the US. The blue-collar labor force percentage for the US is 21.4%, and for North Carolina, it is 23%. The blue-collar labor force for Gaston County is 36.6%. The rate for the one, three, and five-mile radius of town hall ranges from 30-34%. The service industry accounts for 23% of the labor force within a one-mile radius of town hall. The percentage for three and five miles, respectively, is 18.1 and 16.5 percent.



Travel/Distance Direction-The following image reflects travel patterns for Dallas employees in 2019. The below graph showed 1,228 workers entered the Dallas town limits code area for work, while 2,578 left the Dallas area. Predictably, roughly 50% of Dallas residents who leave for employment are heading in a south/southeast direction toward the cities of Gastonia and Charlotte.

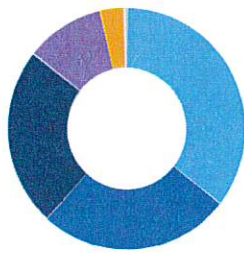


Approximately 40% of Dallas residents traveled less than 10 miles to work in 2019. Thirty-six percent traveled 10 to 24 miles, and 12.7% traveled a distance of 25-50 miles. Almost 12% traveled a distance greater than 50 miles. Charlotte and Gastonia accounted for 50% of Dallas residents who left each day for employment.

Business Characteristics-The Business Characteristics graph below shows the size of businesses in the Dallas zip code area. Note that over 60% of businesses in Dallas have fewer than ten employees, with over 35% having fewer than five employees. Only 15 Dallas zip code area businesses have more than 50 employees. Small business size can be an important part of resiliency. When fewer workers are let go when a business closes, other businesses can absorb those workers and reduce the impact on the local economy.

Business Characteristics

Business Size



	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	35.5%	142
5 to 9 employees	26.0%	104
10 to 19 employees	24.0%	96
20 to 49 employees	10.8%	43
50 to 99 employees	3.3%	13
100 to 249 employees	0.3%	1
250 to 499 employees	0.3%	1

Business Characteristics

EMSI ZIP CODE

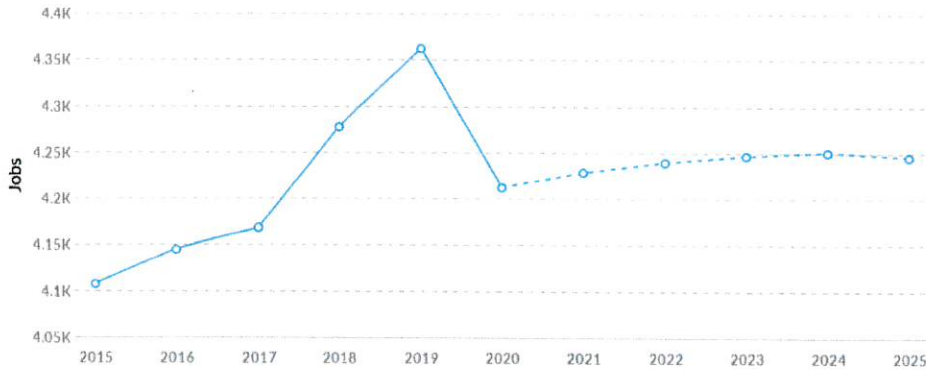
**Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com is third-party data provided by Emsi to its customers as a convenience, and Emsi does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with other published Emsi data. In most cases, the Business Count will not match total companies with profiles on the summary tab.*



Job Trends-From 2015 to 2020, jobs increased by 2.6% in the Dallas zip code area (28034) from 4,107 to 4,212. This change outpaced the national growth rate by 1.3%.

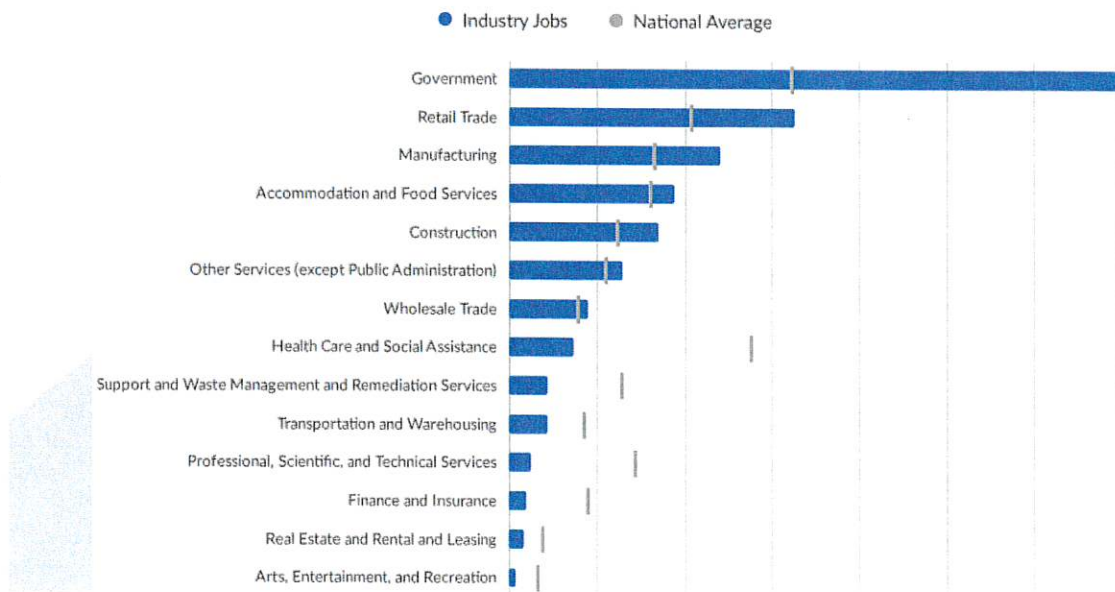
Job Trends

From 2015 to 2020, jobs increased by 2.6% in Dallas, NC (in Gaston county) (ZIP 28034) from 4,107 to 4,212. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 1.3% by 1.3%.



Largest Industries-The below graph shows the most prominent industries within the Dallas zip code area from 2015 to 2020 and how those industries compared to the national average. The grey lines represent the national average, and the blue bar shows what industry types were prevalent in Dallas in that time period. Dallas exceeded the national average for government, retail, manufacturing, food services, and construction. Health care, waste management, and warehousing industries could be focused on to attract to the Dallas area.

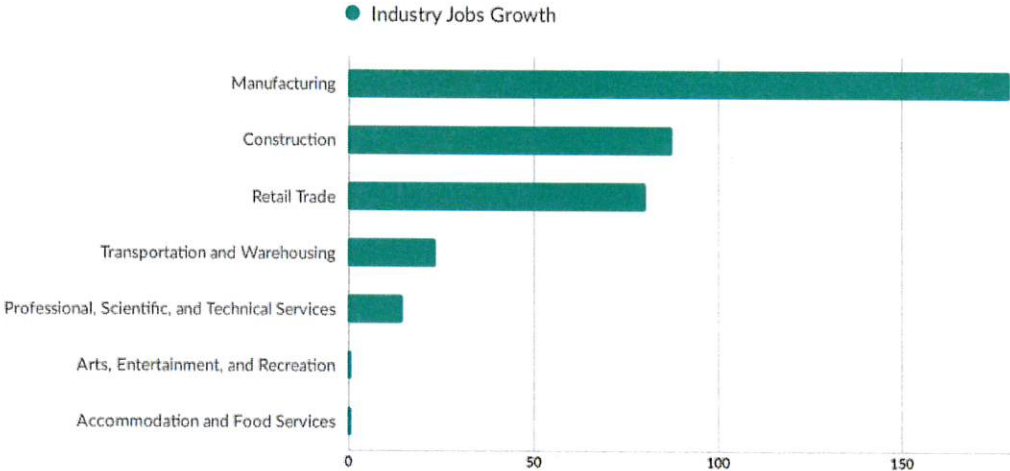
Largest Industries



Top Growing Industries-Top growing industries for the 28034- zip code are shown below in 2020. Note that Retail Trade and Manufacturing are at the top of the list for the largest and top growing industries. The largest industry is government, which includes the many jobs in the zip code area related to Gaston College.

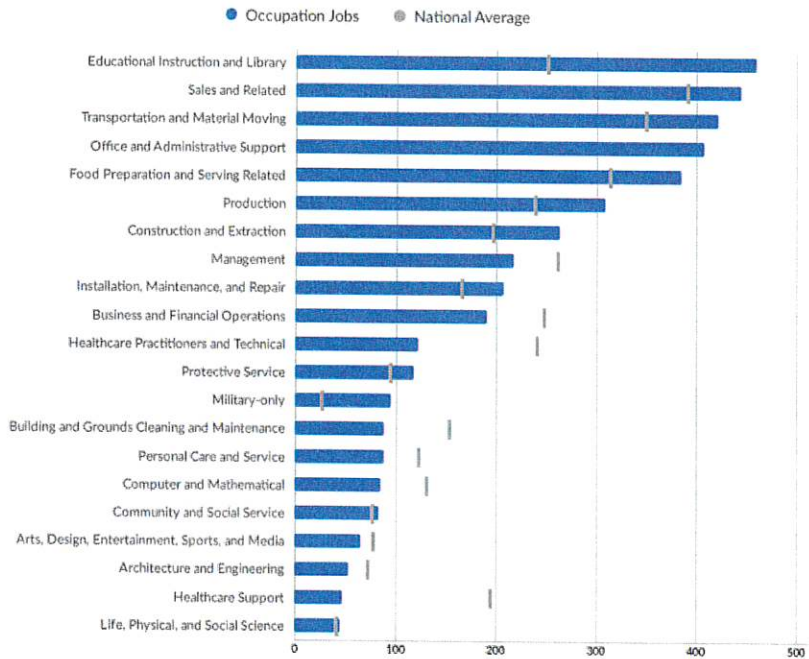


Top Growing Industries

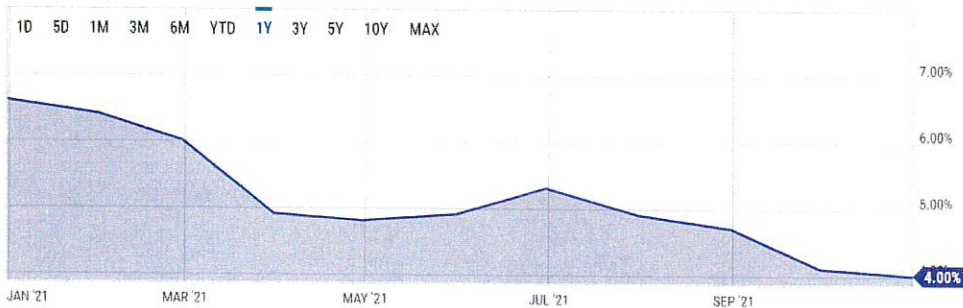


Largest Occupations-The below graph again reflects the impact of educational-related occupations in the zip code area. Educational instruction is the top-rated occupation, followed by sales and related, transportation and material moving, office and administrative support, and food preparation and serving related. The zip code area has more educational instruction and library occupations than the national average, along with sales, transportation, and food prep.

Largest Occupations

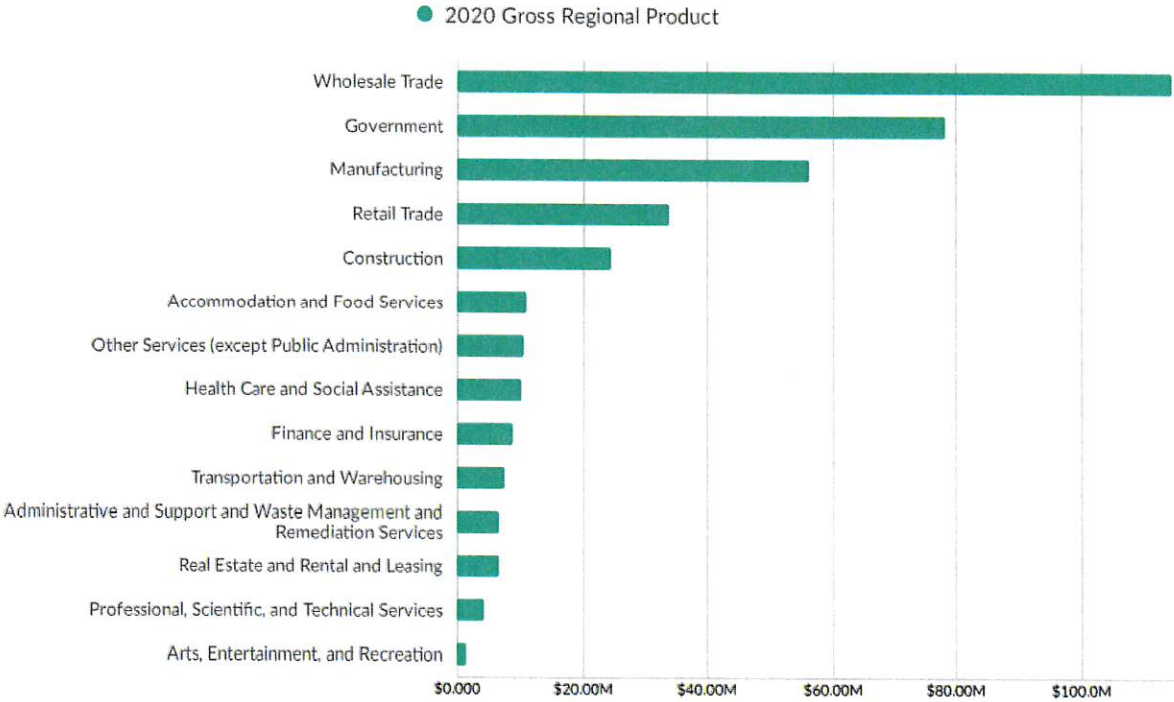


Unemployment Rate-The below graph reflects the history of Gaston County unemployment since January of 2021.



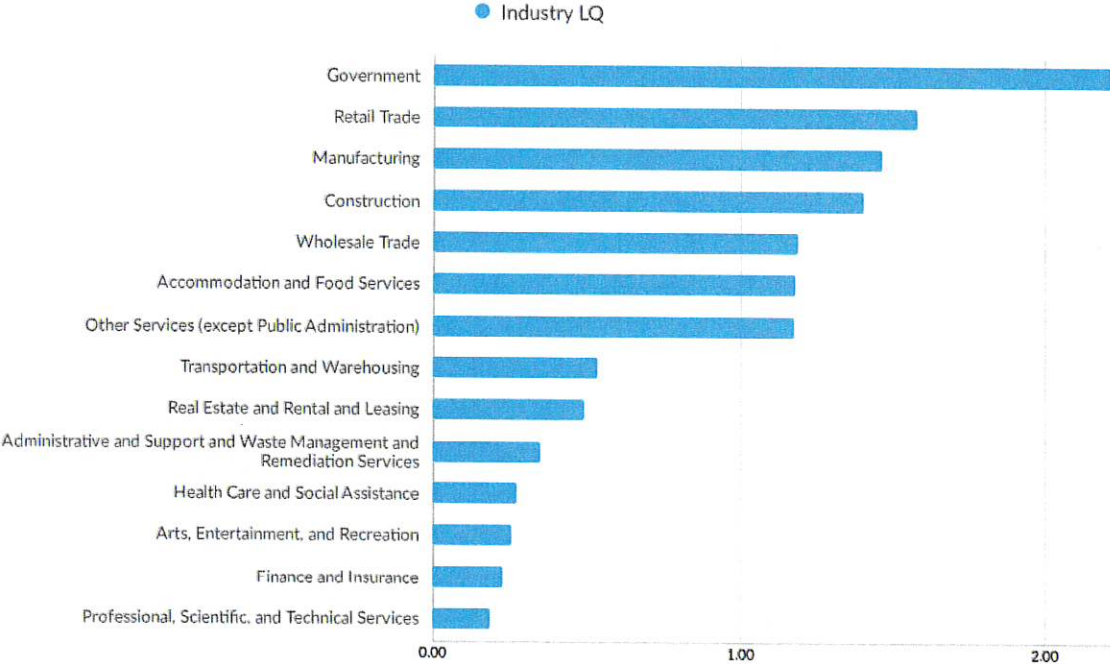
Gross Regional Product-Gross Regional Product (GRP) is a monetary measure of the market value of all final goods and services produced in a region over a period of time. The table below shows the rankings of industries in the Dallas zip code for 2020. Wholesale Trade, Government, and Manufacturing topped the list.

Top Industry GRP



Location Quotient (LQ)-A location quotient is an analytical statistic that measures a region's industrial specialization relative to a larger geographic unit (usually the nation). An LQ is computed as an industry's share of a regional total for some economic statistic (earnings, Gross Domestic Product by region, employment, and similar measures) divided by the industry's share of the national total for the same statistic. For example, an LQ of 1.0 in farming means that the region and the nation are equally specialized in farming, while an LQ of 1.8 means that the region has a higher concentration in farming than the nation. The below graph shows the top LQ for the Dallas zip code area. Government, retail trade, manufacturing, and construction rank high, while health care, arts, entertainment and recreation, finance and insurance, and professional, scientific, and technical services rank lower than the national average.

Top Industry LQ



Emsi Q2 2021 Data Set | www.economicmodeling.com

Final Thoughts/Conclusion

Highlights of the above information include:

- From 2010 to 2020, the population of Dallas grew by 32%, from 4,500 to slightly over 5,900.
- The number of individuals at retirement age in the Dallas zip code area is average for an area its size.
- Dallas is on par with the nation for millennials who are in their prime work life and could potentially take over for those retirees.
- Racial diversity in the town limits is low, with approximately 70% of the population being white. A diverse community can be attractive to younger people and entrepreneurs.
- More than a third of Dallas residents have a high school diploma, and 34% have some college education. 12% have earned a bachelor's degree or higher.
- The median household income in Dallas is \$45,259.
- Within a one-mile radius of the Dallas town hall, 42% of workers are classified as white-collar, 34.6% as blue-collar, and 23% fall in the services category. The state average for white-collar is 60.3%, 23% blue-collar, and 16.8% services.
- Approximately 1228 workers enter the Dallas zip code area for work each day, while 2578 leave the zip code area. Of those who leave, roughly 50% go to Gastonia and Charlotte.
- There are approximately 400 businesses in the Dallas zip code area. Of these, 246 have fewer than ten employees, which illustrates that small businesses are the backbone of local economies.
- From 2015 to 2020, jobs increased by 2.6% in the Dallas zip code area, compared to a national average of 1.3%.
- The largest industries in the Dallas zip code area are Government, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.
- The top growing industries are manufacturing, construction, and retail trade.
- The five largest occupations in the zip code area are education, sales and related, transportation and material moving, office and administrative support, and food preparation and serving.
- In January of 2021, the unemployment rate for Gaston County was over 6.5%. By November of 2021, it was slightly over 4%.

Conclusion: This report is a starting point for trends and growth and is meant to assist the town with economic development and recruitment efforts. However, this report is not to be considered a comprehensive analysis of the economic drivers and industries that comprise the economy of Gaston County or the Town of Dallas. When looking at data (data sets at the county level, zip code level, and town or place level), the scale issues present challenges when making inferences about the area's business diversity. Other tools, such as local cluster analysis, could serve the town well by taking a more in-depth look at the largest and fastest-growing industries in the area.

Sources of Information

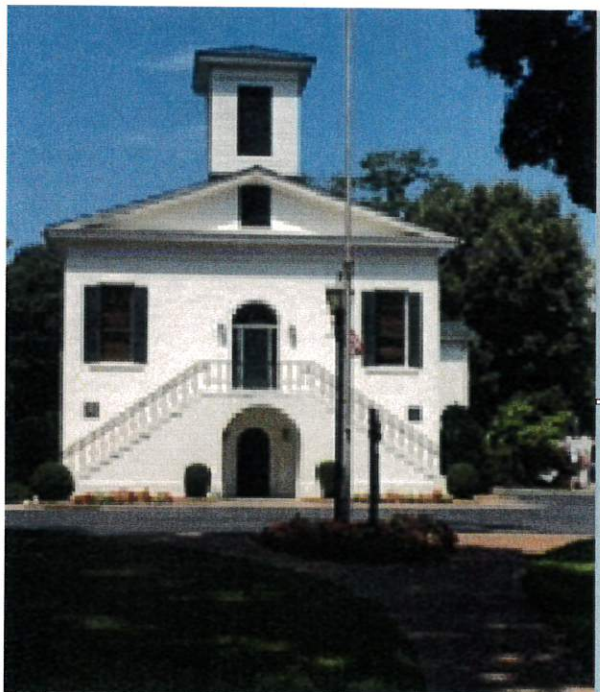
- ESRI Business Online Analyst, Demographics, Tapestries
www.esri.com
- Quick Facts, NC: www.census.gov/quickfacts
- Access NC:
accessnc.commerce.state.nc.us
- US Census On The Map:
onthemap.ces.census.gov
- EMSI Economic Modeling Data
www.economicmodeling.com
- Economic Diversity in Appalachia: A Research Report and Economic Development Tool
economicdiversityinappalachia.creconline.org/

Disclaimer: This report was prepared by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's Rural Planning Program (RPP). Information contained in the report is primarily from EMSI and checked against sources above. Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained within is accurate, however, no warranty is made about the accuracy of this report by the RPP or its sources.

Limitations of this data are to be expected, given the RPC's use of different data sources and each data source's collection and classification methods.



Town of Dallas
Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative
May 24, 2022



Acknowledgments

Town of Dallas Board of Aldermen

Rick Coleman, Mayor
Hoyle Withers
Jerry Cearley
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Executive Summary

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's Rural Planning Program (RPP) has developed a Community Economic Recovery and Resiliency Initiative (CERRI) to help local governments recover from the economic impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and build local economies that are more resilient to future crisis.

This report is intended to offer guidance to local leaders in the Town of Dallas on expanding and improving support structures for local small business owners and boosting the local economy in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This document is meant to complement and build on other local planning efforts.

The recommendations in this report were drafted by the local workgroup, as chosen by town officials, with assistance from the NC Department of Commerce staff utilizing feedback from community stakeholders, business owners, and other relevant economic data. The conversations and meetings began in November of 2021 and went through March of 2022.

This report will focus on economic recovery strategies related to **community economic resiliency and small business support**.

Background

Dallas is centrally located in Gaston County and once served as the county seat. It is approximately four miles north of Gastonia and 24 miles west of Charlotte. Lincolnton is 13 miles to the north. Dallas is 2.89 square miles in land area. Major highways serving Dallas are interstate 85 to the south, and US Highway 321, which intersects the town running north and south.

Per the US Census Bureau, the population of Dallas in 2020 is 5927. This represents approximately 32% growth in ten years, which is significant.

Prior to work beginning by NC Commerce staff, the Dallas governing body adopted a memorandum of understanding and resolution, setting forth the parameters by which all work would take place. A requirement of the CERRI process is the formation of a local workgroup and group of stakeholders. The workgroup was put together by town officials, and the stakeholders were chosen by members of the workgroup and town officials.

Information Gathering

The first meeting of the workgroup took place on November 2, 2021. After introducing Dallas elected officials and appointed staff, state officials introduced themselves and explained the purpose of CERRI and the process for completing the project. The technical team then presented data that will be utilized to conduct an economic resiliency and diversity assessment. A final report of the data will be presented to the town as part of a complete set of deliverables per the agreement between Dallas and NC Commerce.

An exercise was then held to compile a list of economic drivers for Dallas. Economic Drivers for this process are considered things critical to the success of the Dallas economy. In no particular order, the workgroup came up with the following.

- Town events
- Gaston College
- Grocery Stores
- Population Growth
- Housing in Dallas and surrounding areas
- Small businesses
- Quality of life
- Manufacturing
- New Businesses
- Centrally located in Gaston County, proximity to Charlotte, Gastonia
- Market and growth
- Highways

The second workgroup meeting was held on December 7, 2021. One highlight of the meeting was to go over the results of an online survey each workgroup member was asked to complete. A summary of the responses is listed below. Another focus of the December meeting was to complete an exercise to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for the Town of Dallas. The results are listed after the summary of the survey.

1. **What makes Dallas a great place to live, work and play?** Affordability and proximity to Charlotte, small-town feel and atmosphere, convenience to surrounding towns and cities, lower taxes, efficient utilities, not overcrowded with big chain stores.
2. **What role should Dallas play in the regional economy?** Be a place folks can live, work, and play, take advantage of two industrial parks, Gaston College, close proximity to major airport and Charlotte, promote under-utilized parcels of land.
3. **What businesses should Dallas attract?** Destination type retail and sit-down restaurants, more events, and festivals, more manufacturing.
4. **What are the greatest under-valued and under-developed resources in Dallas?** Land outside the city limits that could be developed for recreation areas, downtown Dallas-walk and bike mobility, Gaston College presents great opportunities, particularly with having a sports program, vacant buildings, town square, and courthouse.
5. **What goods and services or quality of life amenities are missing in Dallas?** Retail, food, nightlife, trails and biking paths, nicer restaurants, quality housing, take advantage of Biggerstaff Park.
6. **What concerns do you have about Dallas's future?** Leaders who do not want to see the town grow, traffic patterns, change not moving fast enough, lack of resources for the town's population growth.

7. **What were the most significant issues faced by local residents during the pandemic?** Mental health, employers' inability to attract quality employees, loss of connection with other folks, children falling behind in school, and difficulty finding quality daycare for children.
8. **What were the challenges faced by businesses and their lasting impact?** Employee shortage, impatient customers, drop in customer base, supply chain issues, rising costs of products.
9. **Please describe other issues that arose in Dallas because of the pandemic.** Confusion around state and county directives, children, had inadequate interaction with teachers and classmates, the need for small business support was evident.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Variety of restaurants/bars 2. Auto service dealers 3. Walkability 4. Centrally located in the county 5. Community pride/location 6. Gaston College 7. Biggerstaff Park 8. Variety of businesses 9. Proximity to Charlotte airport/highways/destinations 10. Tech industrial park 11. Cleanliness 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Museum is underutilized 2. Need more retail 3. Unused/vacant buildings 4. Uninterested property owners 5. Need diversity in entertainment 6. Insular community/impedes progress 7. Need civic/business partners to assist the town 8. Customers do not support local/don't like alcohol
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit/develop civic/business organizations 2. Improve relationship with college 3. Cooperation/partnerships between small businesses 4. Create/improve chamber of commerce/merchant association/volunteers 5. New town planner position 6. Courthouse square 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traffic congestion/DOT issues 2. Labor market 3. Supply Chain 4. Surrounding towns/cities-recruiting Dallas businesses 5. Unknown complications of COVID

In addition to the economic driver exercise, workgroup interviews, and SWOT analysis, a business survey was sent by email to local businesses, and interviews were held with local stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals that may live, work, or own property in town. Stakeholder interviews were focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on the community and allowed interviewees to share their vision and perception of the business community and local government.

The business survey response was limited, but concerns were expressed, as seen in the other information gathering exercises and surveys. The ability to recruit, train, and retain qualified employees is a significant issue. A lack of foot traffic downtown and in stores due to COVID-19 is also a concern. We also learned that most businesses rely on a business website, social media, and word of mouth for marketing and advertising.

The stakeholder interviews are summarized below.

- 1. What do you view as Dallas's greatest strengths?** Small town feel, location, strong parks and recreation program, business park, an agricultural center, Gaston College, connection to I-85 and Highway 321, small-town flavor.
- 2. What do you view as Dallas's most significant weaknesses?** Not progressive, the apathy of citizens, no sit-down restaurants, lack of commerce, not prepared for the growth that is coming, not enough room to accommodate new housing, parks & recreation not as strong as once was.
- 3. What do you view as Dallas's greatest opportunities?** Take advantage of what younger citizens have to offer, support local businesses of all types, Gaston College athletics, great strategic location, available land, and buildings downtown.
- 4. What do you view as Dallas's greatest threats?** Not growing like surrounding towns, getting left behind, highway construction may cause travelers to avoid Dallas, drug and alcohol addiction.
- 5. What are some of the impacts of COVID-19 in Dallas?** Decrease in foot traffic, less vehicular traffic, closure of retail space, school attendance decrease, friends and family with long term health impacts, more people working from home.
- 6. What changes could be made to improve the quality of life in Dallas?** Recruit new business and industry, provide infrastructure to businesses outside town limits, welcome all races of people, better housing, more programs for youth, maximize potential around the beautiful courthouse, visionary thinking from leaders.
- 7. What actions could be taken by the town to improve programs and services?** Emphasize historic town square, prepare for an influx of citizens, progressive thinking, invest in parks and recreation and other programs for youth.

Topics To Pursue for Plan

The third meeting of the workgroup was held on February 8, 2022. The main focus was to discuss topics the town may wish to pursue further in developing the final plan. Listed below is a summary of the topics discussed.

- Gaston College
- Recreation Department
- Need for designated resources for placemaking initiatives
- Need for incentives for underutilized properties to motivate owners to sell or upgrade
- Need for some type business/merchants association
- Food truck expansion and events on the square

- New economic development office
- Work to attract a hotel
- Marketing
- Development of old Dallas jail

After the third meeting, the technical team agreed to take the topics discussed and begin work on a first draft of the economic recovery workplan. After presenting a draft of the work plan at the final workgroup meeting on March 15, the team presented the final proposed plan to the Dallas Board of Aldermen for their consideration and adoption.

Analysis and Recommendations

The Dallas CERRI workgroup developed the following recommendations for policies, programs, and projects to further support the small business community in Dallas, improve the quality of life for residents, and boost the local economy.

Economic Strategy #1. Take advantage of geographic location and interstate and highway accessibility to expand downtown opportunities.

Goal: Encourage additional dining, shopping, and event/entertainment opportunities in the Dallas business district.

Objectives: Increase investment in public facilities, private buildings, and local businesses.

Actions:

1. Continue to Develop partnership with Gaston College. While the town has traditionally had a positive working relationship with Gaston College, new opportunities now exist due to the towns and college's growth and the formation of athletic programs at the college.
 - a. Work with NC Department of Transportation to finalize funding from CMAC grant to complete sidewalk connection from town to college.
 - b. Explore the possibility of shuttle service from town to college.
 - c. Meet with Gaston College representatives regularly to discuss town and college initiatives.
 - d. Work with local businesses to provide incentives for students, parents, and visitors to college.
2. Undertake marketing and branding campaigns to improve signage, website, and overall communications with residents and the business community.
 - a. Adopt a new logo that incorporates town and Gaston College colors, design, etc.
 - b. Include new logo branding on town-owned website, vehicles, buildings, signage, and other relevant areas.
 - c. Take advantage of proximity to I-85 and Hwy 321 and historic town square to plan and market town services/events.

3. Take actions to support small businesses in the central business district and throughout town.
 - a. Create a commercial property and local business inventory utilizing the NC Main Street property inventory template. Utilize Gaston County GIS to retrieve necessary information.
 - b. Consider a menu of local incentives to be available to small businesses in downtown and businesses in general. Consult with neighboring towns for examples of incentive programs that have successfully recruited additional customers. Consult with town attorney before adoption.
 - c. Conduct town facilitated events that allow small businesses opportunities to network with one another and speak directly to town officials about areas of concern. Use the event to educate small businesses on available resources through the town, the Small Business Center, Gaston Business Association, Gaston Economic Development, and other agencies.
 - d. Work to create a "buy local" campaign. Recognition of the crucial role small businesses play in creating jobs and strengthening community cohesion is rising. Creating community coalitions is vital to support local independent businesses and build thriving communities. Partners for such an effort would again include the town, Small Business Association, Gaston Business Association, and a group of local business champions.
 - e. Consider amending the food truck ordinance to allow additional trucks during regular workdays and special events. Allow downtown businesses to partner with food truck providers for special promotions.

Economic Strategy #2: Build upon Dallas's current quality of life.

Goal: Meet the daily needs of residents, workforce, local businesses, and visitors.

Objective: Improve and create new business and recreational opportunities in Dallas.

Actions:

1. Complete Recreation Master plan to improve recreation programs offered to all Dallas residents and improve chances for funding services.
 - a. Form committee or use existing committee to work with staff.
 - b. Explore options for assistance in completing the plan, such as consultants that specialize in recreation services or COG.
 - c. Survey citizens to gain input on what recreational services and facilities are desired by all ages.
 - d. Include in plan options for trails, downtown walkability, and bike mobility. Discuss options with the NC Department of Transportation
2. Work with Gaston Economic Development and Gaston Business Association to recruit a hotel to Dallas.

- a. Conduct a process to identify available sites.
 - b. Put together a recruitment package that incorporates traffic counts, nearby industries, and food options in close proximity to the site.
 - c. Identify and send recruitment packages to hotel developers.
 - d. Research process to establish hotel occupancy tax.
3. Create a group of "Champions" to promote all things Dallas. Dallas needs a structured group of individuals that meet regularly to address a wide range of town-related topics.
- a. Identify individuals to serve on a committee or commission. The group should be diverse in makeup and consist of citizens, business owners, town officials, educational representatives (including Gaston College), economic developers, etc. Eight to ten people is probably a good size to consider, not including volunteers needed for specific events.
 - b. A town representative should be appointed to provide administrative support to the committee. The town should also schedule meetings and provide guidance on the topics to be addressed. A set of by-laws should be adopted.
 - c. Regular updates from the committee should be made to the Town board.

Dallas – Economic Recovery Work Plan - 2022

Implementation Strategy: Dallas will use a dual approach focused on Community Economic Resiliency and Small Business Support to implement their economic recovery and resiliency initiative.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY STRATEGIES		Community Economic Resiliency	Small Business Support
<p>Take advantage of geographic location and interstate and highway accessibility to expand upon downtown opportunities</p> <p>Goal: Encourage additional dining, shopping, and event/entertainment opportunities in Dallas business district</p> <p>Objectives: Increase investment in public facilities, private buildings, and local businesses</p>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop partnership for community development with Gaston College 2. Undertake town wide marketing campaign 3. Take advantage of historic town square in planning for future services/events and pursue general downtown beautification strategies 	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local groups to create buy local campaign 2. Create building inventory of downtown business district properties 3. Research and consider local incentive options for local businesses 	
<p>Build upon the current quality of life in Dallas</p> <p>Goal: Meet the daily needs of residents, work force, local businesses, and visitors</p> <p>Objectives: Improve and create new business and recreational opportunities in Dallas</p>	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop Recreation Master Plan 2. Work to recruit hotel 3. Discuss with NC Department of Transportation a partnership to improve walkability and biking options in Dallas 	<p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a committee to “champion” all things Dallas 2. Complete move of Economic Development Office into more visible and user-friendly location 3. Expand food truck options and special events 	

TOWN OF DALLAS, NORTH CAROLINA

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

DESCRIPTION: Comprehensive Land Use Plan Presentation

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3B

MEETING DATE: 05/24/2022

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Town of Dallas is in the process of updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Dallas' current Land Use Plan was developed in 2003. The Town utilized the consulting services of the Centralina Regional Council for this project. Representatives from Centralina Regional Council will be in attendance to conduct the presentation of the draft plan.

The plan has been released for public comment through May 27th. An Open House event will be held at the Historic Courthouse on Thursday, May 26th from 6:00 – 8:00 pm.

Attached is a copy of the draft plan for review.

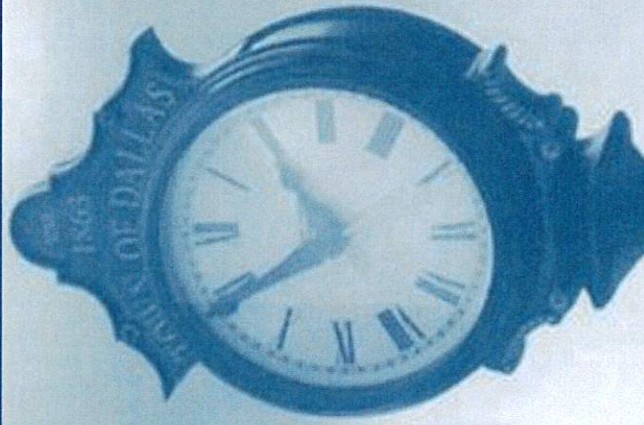
MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

BOARD ACTION TAKEN:

TOWN OF DALLAS

2030 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

Adopted MONTH DAY, 2022



Acknowledgements

Town Staff

- o Nolan Groce, Development Services Director
- o Brian Finnegan, Town Planner

Steering Committee

- o Glenn Bratton
- o Rick Coleman
- o Johnny Denton
- o Carla Howell
- o Frank Milton
- o Alexandra Pizza
- o Reid Simms
- o Kevin Stines
- o Hoyle Withers

Planning Board

- o Curtis Wilson, Chairman
- o Glenn Bratton, Co-Chairman
- o Gene Brown, Planning Board Member
- o John O'Daly, Planning Board Member
- o Reid Simms, Planning Board Member
- o Thomas Smith, Planning Board Member
- o Troy Traversie, Planning Board ETJ Member
- o Tiffany Faro, Planning Board Alternate

Board of Alderman

- o Rick C. Coleman, Mayor
- o Jerry Cearley, Mayor Pro-Term
- o Samuel S. Martin, Board of Alderman Member
- o Frank Milton, Board of Alderman Member
- o Darlene Morrow, Board of Alderman Member
- o E. Hoyle Withers, Board of Alderman Member

Consultant Team

- o Centralina Regional Council



CENTRALINA
REGIONAL COUNCIL

1. Introduction	
a. Purpose	1
b. Planning Process	1
c. Document Organization	1
d. Plan Development Schedule	2
2. Existing Conditions	
a. History	3
b. Study Area	4
c. Contributing Plans	5
d. Demographics	11
e. Economy	14
f. Housing	17
g. Mobility	20
h. Parks and Recreation	26
i. Infrastructure and Services	28
j. Economic Development	31
k. Cultural and Natural Resources	32
l. Land Use	33
3. Community Vision & Goals	
a. Community Engagement Summary	36
b. Survey Results	38
c. Main Themes from Public Engagement	45
d. Vision Statement & Guiding Principles	45
4. Future Land Use	
a. Future Land Use Categories	48
b. Future Land Use Map	55
5. Policy Recommendations	
a. Economic Development	56
b. Cultural Resources	57
c. Transportation & Mobility	58
d. Community Facilities & Services	61
e. Housing	62
f. Land Use	63

PURPOSE

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

PLANNING PROCESS

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

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

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

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

PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE



PLACEHOLDER FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

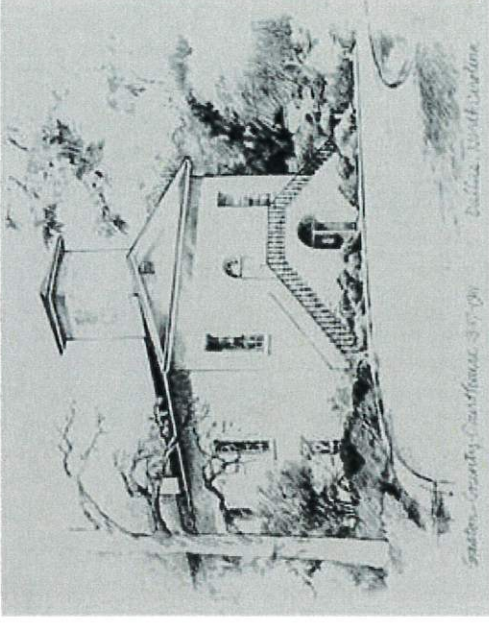
2. Existing Conditions

HISTORY

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

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

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



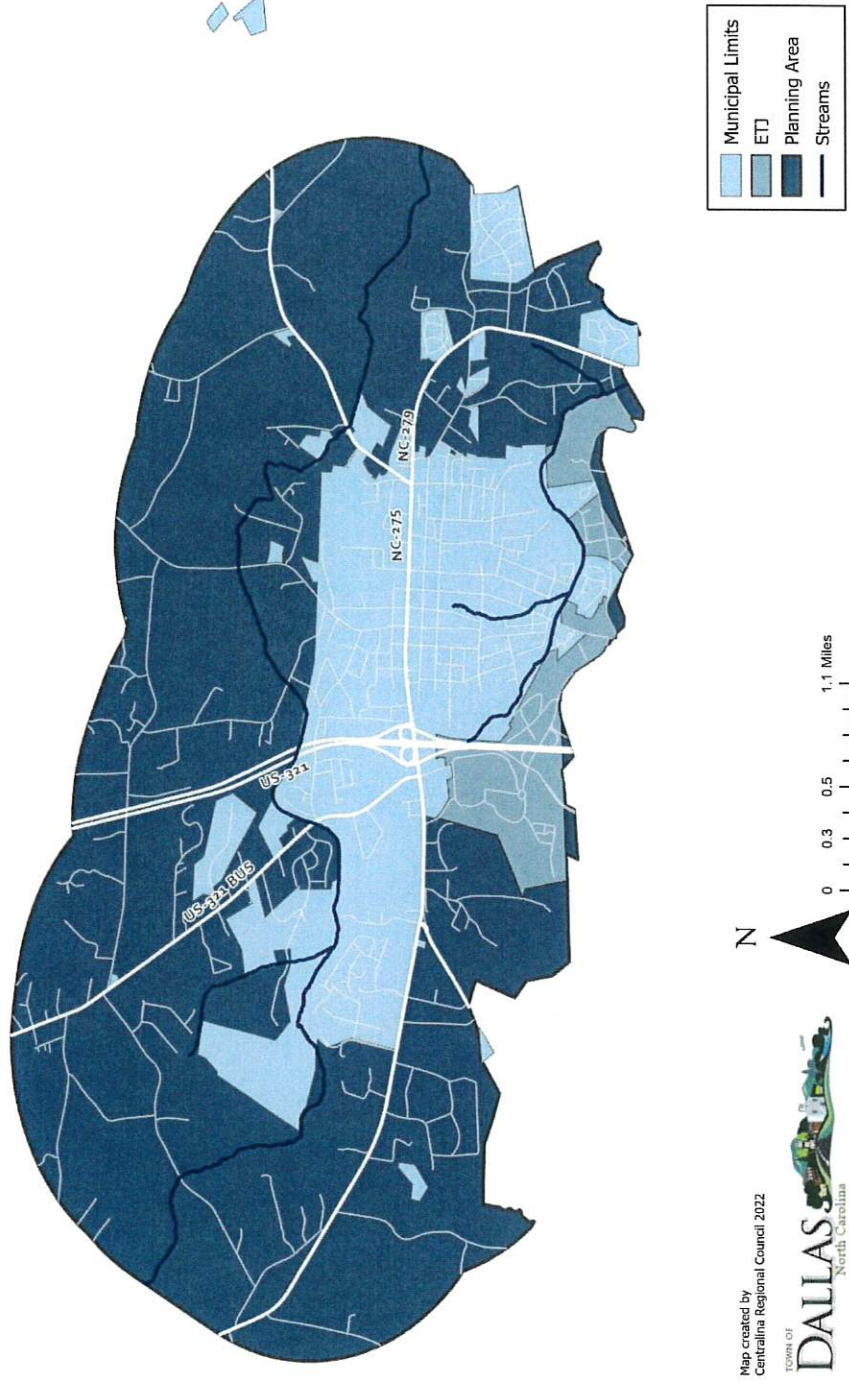
The Dallas Courthouse, at the center of Courthouse Square, has been the center of civic and social life since the Town's inception



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

STUDY AREA

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



CONTRIBUTING PLANS

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

Town of Dallas

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

Gaston County

- Gaston County 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan

GCLMPO

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

Other

- State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)

ZONING ORDINANCE & ZONING MAP

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

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

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

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

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

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

TOWN CENTER PLAN (2013)

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

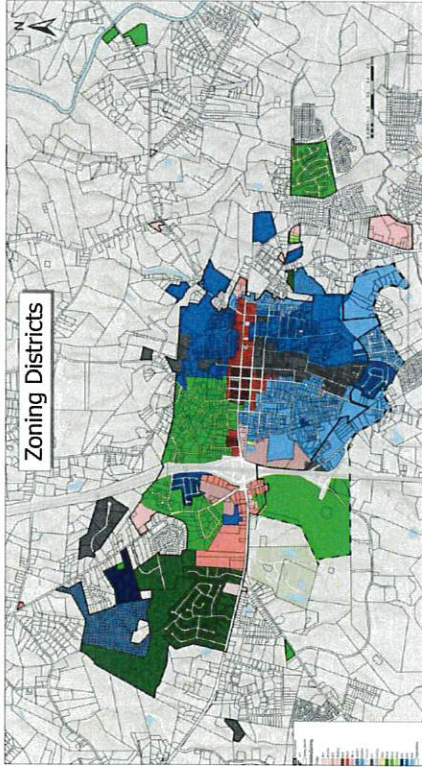


Figure 1: Town of Dallas Zoning Districts Map

This map is the informational program only. All information provided is subject to change without notice. The map is for informational purposes only. © 2023

TOWN OF DALLAS LAND USE PLAN (2003)

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

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

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

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

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



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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT (2018)

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

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

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

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

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN PLAN DRAFT (2021)

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

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

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

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

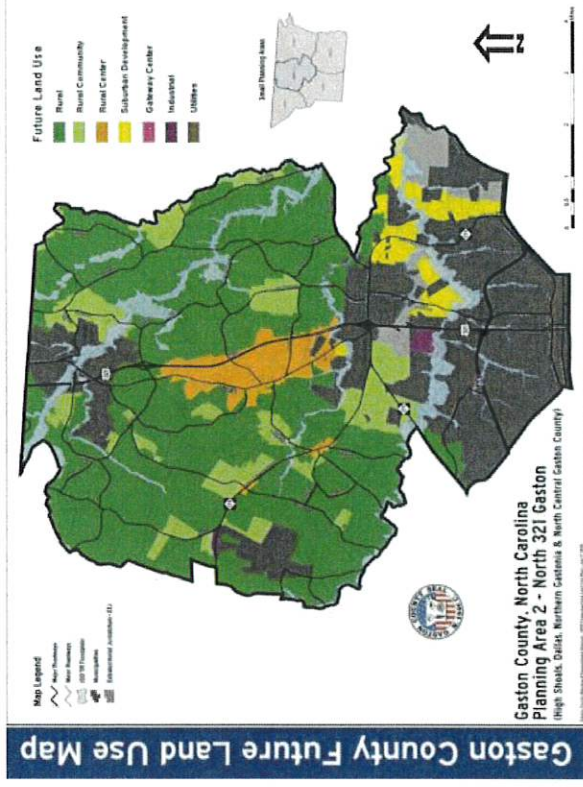
GASTON COUNTY 2035 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

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

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

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

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



Source: Gaston County Planning & Development Services

Figure 3: Future Land Use Map for 'Area 2' in the Gaston County Land Use Plan

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

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP)

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

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

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

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

In addition, several projects in the Town of Dallas jurisdiction are included as “Unmet Needs”, which means that there is no current funding for the projects, but they have been identified as priorities. The 2050 GCLMPO MTP was adopted on March 24th, 2022 and can be found on the GCLMPO website.

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

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

Unlike the MTP, the CTP does not include specific transportation projects or improvement schedules, but instead represents the status or completeness of the

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

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

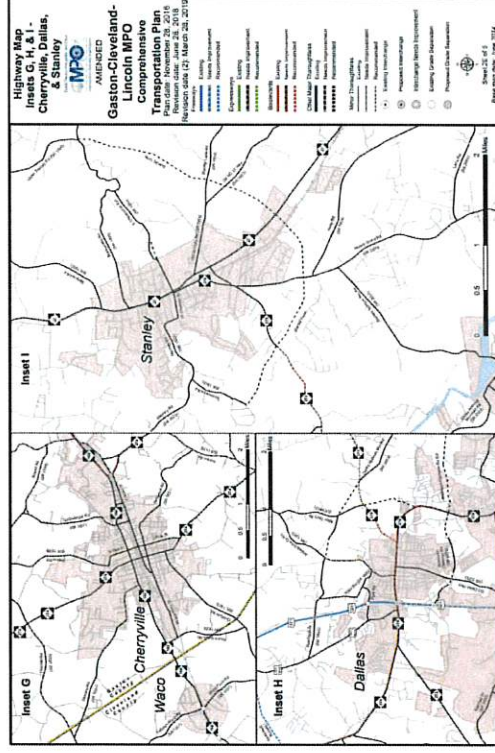


Figure 4: CTP Highway Map for Dallas

STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN (STIP)

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

DEMOGRAPHICS

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

POPULATION GROWTH

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

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

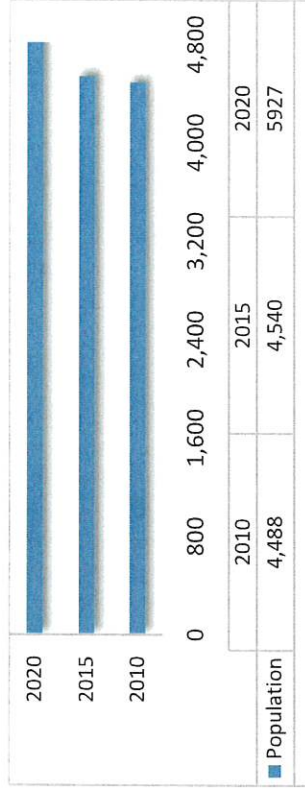


Figure 5: Population growth in Dallas

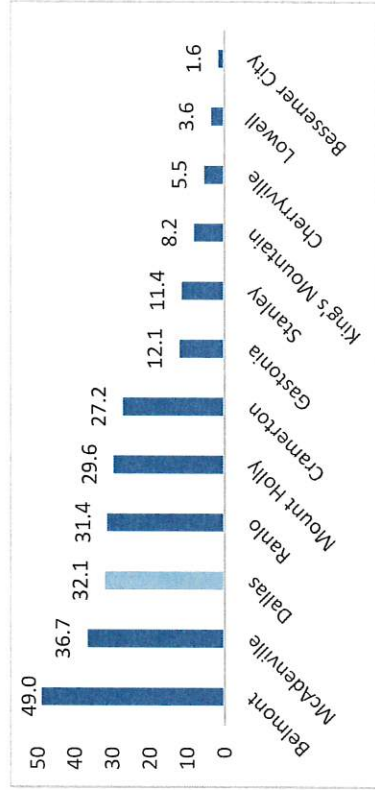


Figure 6: Population growth for Gaston County municipalities, 2010-2020 [NOTE: Dellview, Spencer Mountain, High Shoals not shown]

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

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

Figure 7: Population, population growth, and increase in land area for Gaston County municipalities [NOTE: Delview, Spencer Mountain not shown]

AGE

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

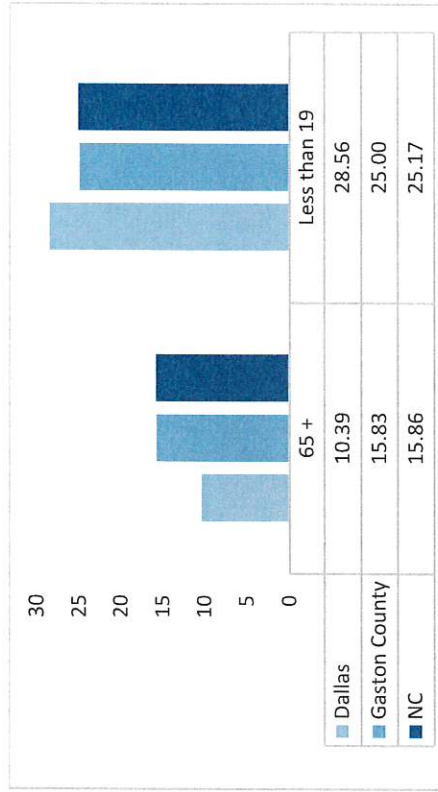


Figure 8: Percent of population with an age of 65+ and less than 19

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

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

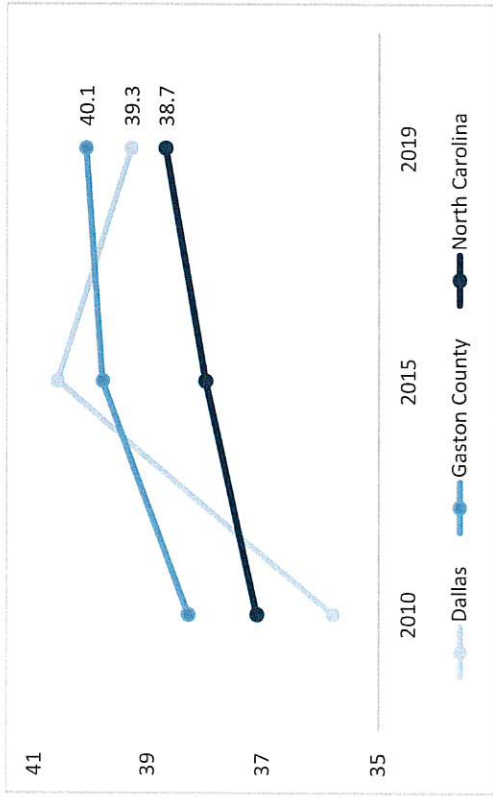


Figure 9: Change in median age, 2010-2019

RACE & DIVERSITY

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

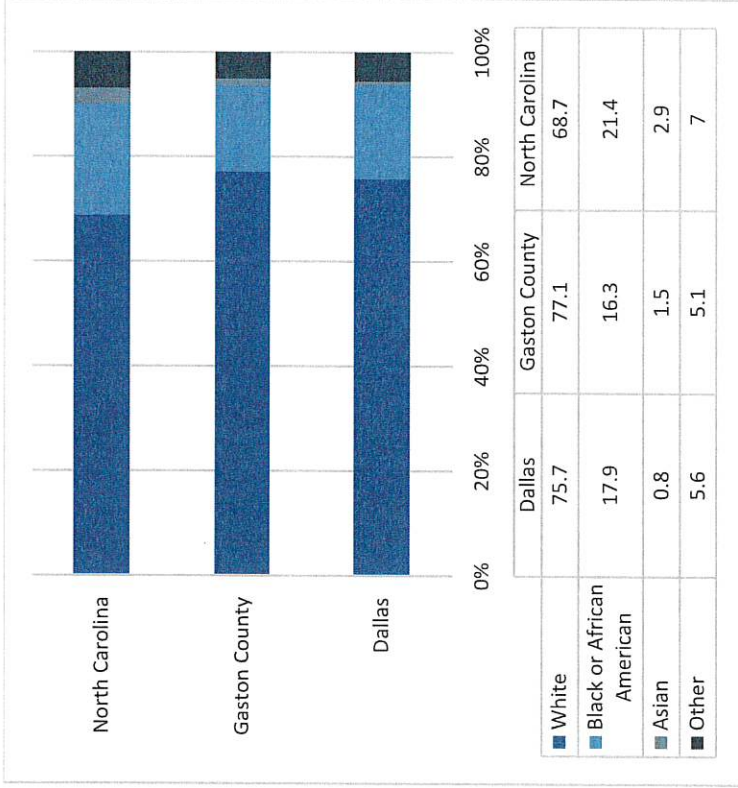


Figure 10: Race, 2019

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

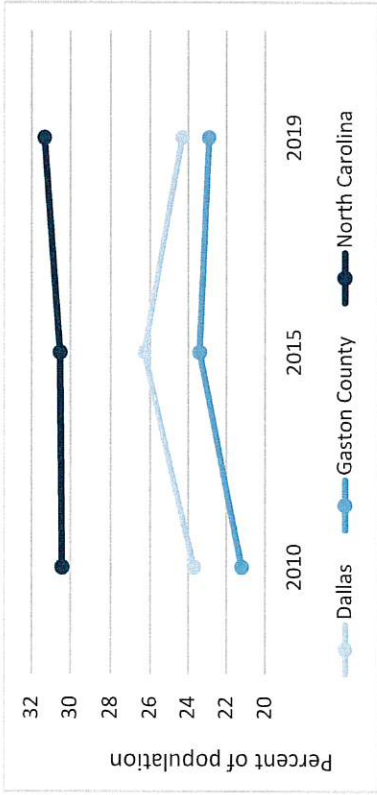


Figure 11: Change in non-white population, 2010-2019

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

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

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

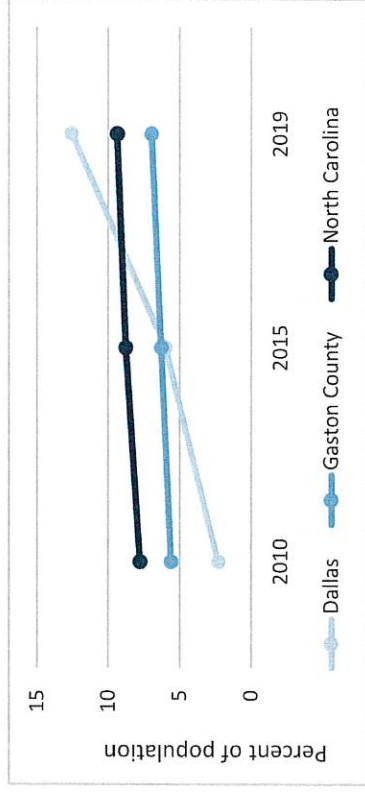


Figure 12: Change in Hispanic/Latino population, 2010-2019

ECONOMY

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT

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

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

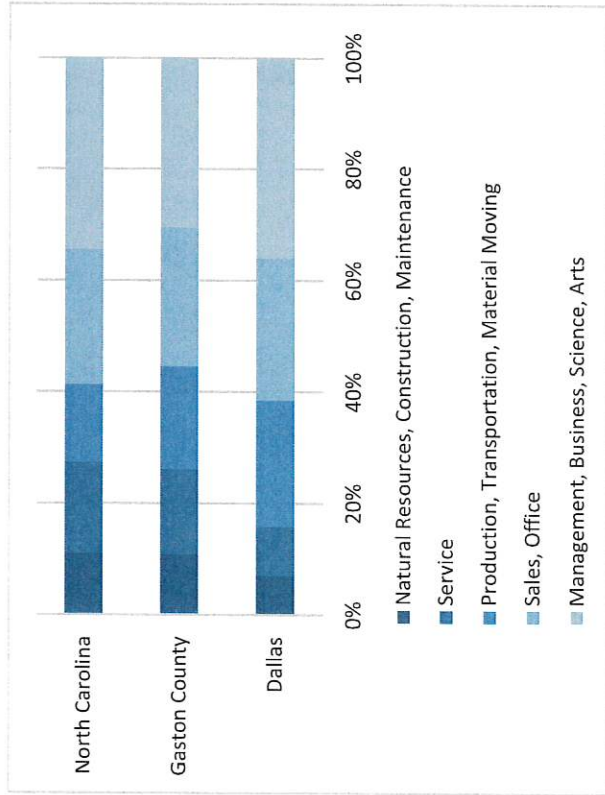


Figure 13: Employment by Occupation, 2019

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

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

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

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

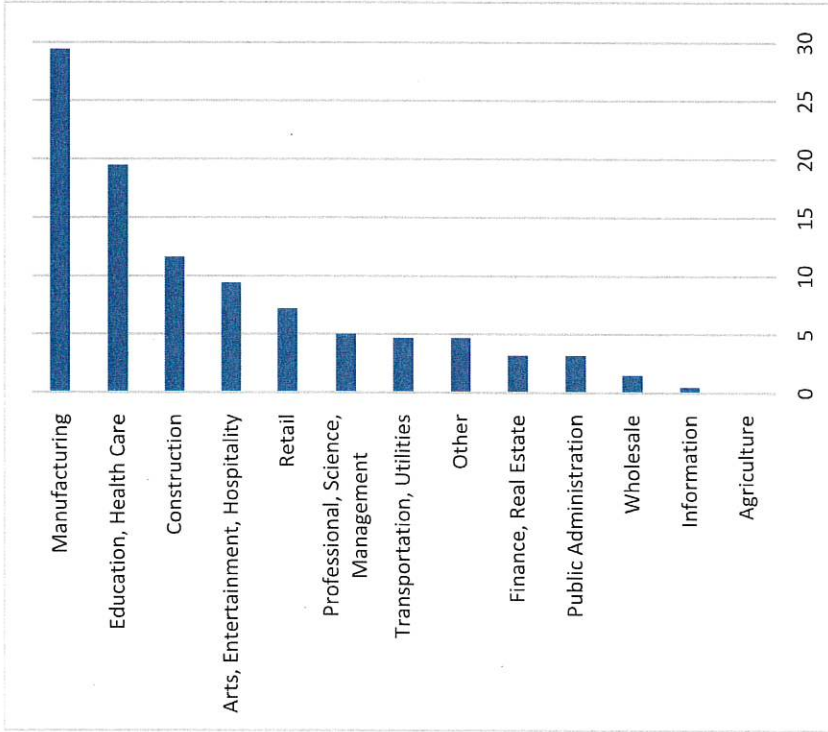


Figure 14: Employment by Industry, 2019

INCOME, EDUCATION, AND POVERTY

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

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

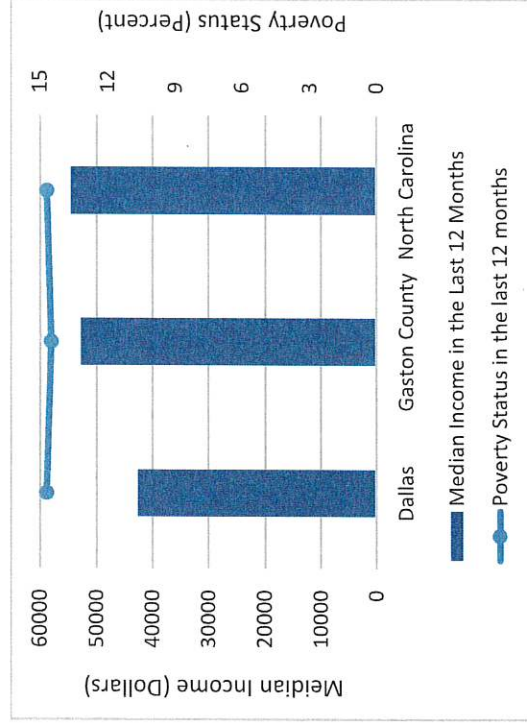


Figure 15: Median Income & Unemployment, 2019

One potential area in which Dallas could improve is in the educational attainment of its residents. As of 2019, the Town of Dallas had a lower percentage of residents with a High School degree or a bachelor's degree than either Gaston County or the state. Further, although the number of people with high school and bachelor's degrees has been increasing

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

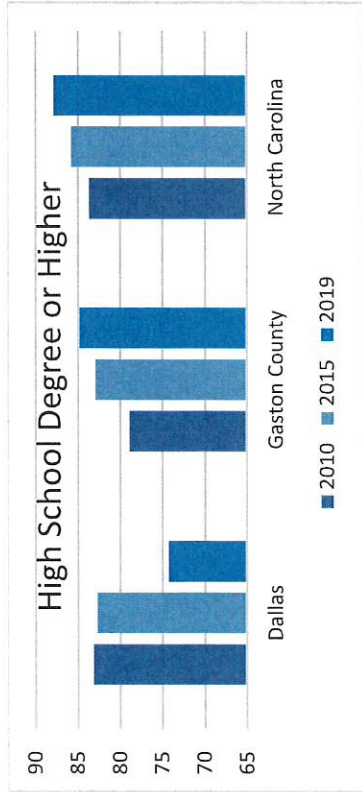


Figure 16: Change in percent of people with a high school degree or more, 2010-2019

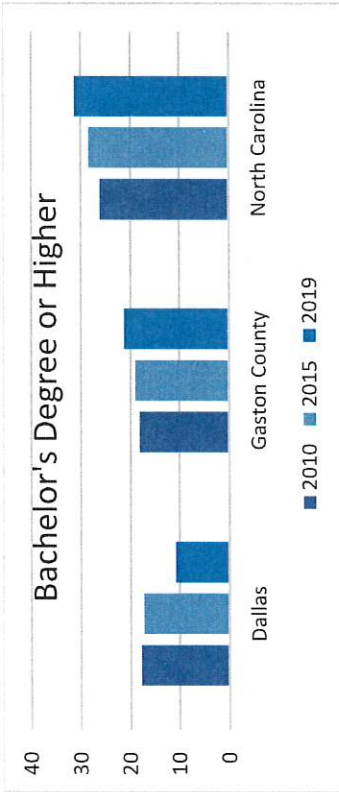


Figure 17: Percent of people with a bachelor's degree or more

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

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

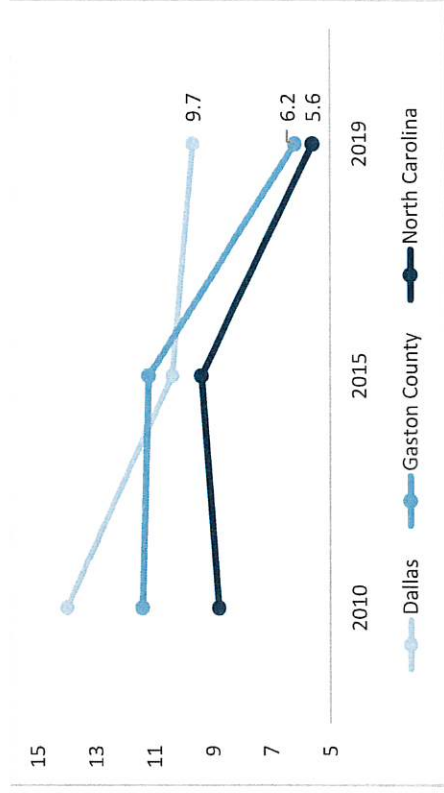


Figure 18: Change in unemployment rates, 2010-2019

HOUSING

COST OF HOUSING

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

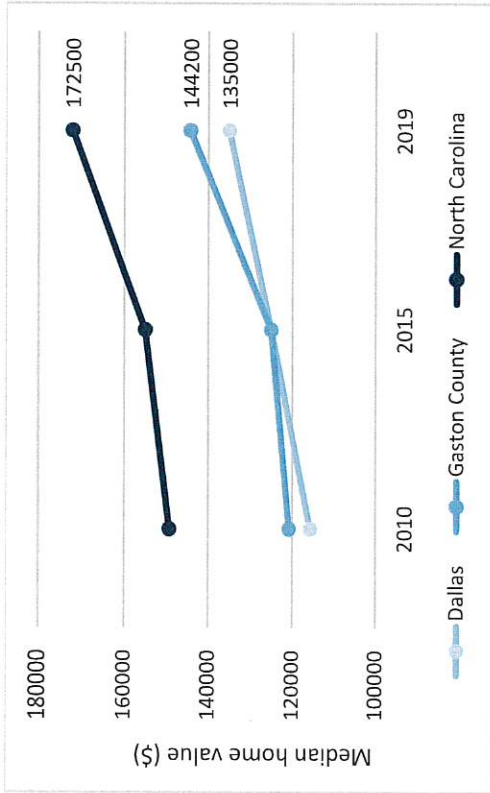


Figure 19: Change in median home values, 2010-2019

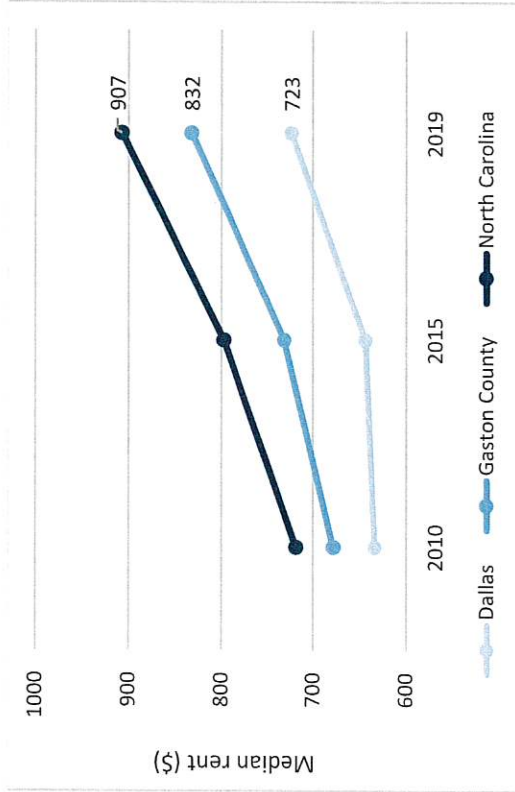


Figure 20: Change in median rent, 2010-2019

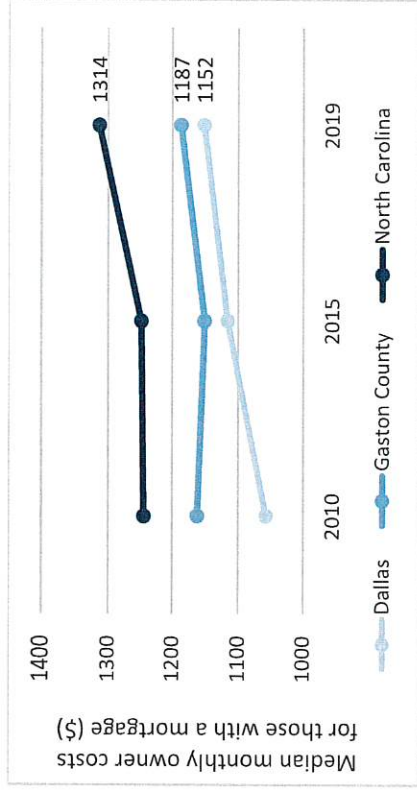


Figure 21: Change in median monthly owner costs for houses with mortgage, 2010-2019

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

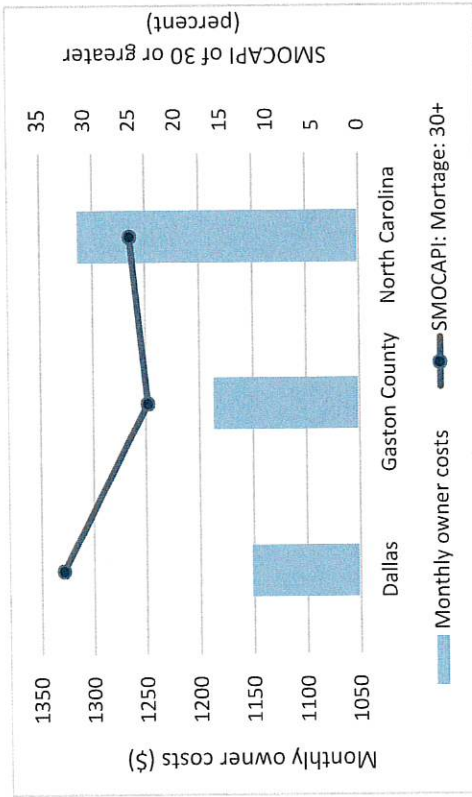


Figure 22: Monthly owner costs, as a total and as a percentage of median income, 2019

HOUSING STOCK

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

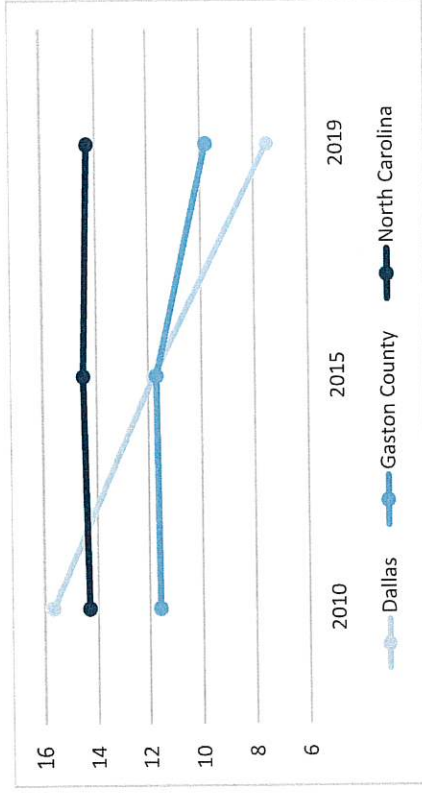


Figure 23: Change in vacancy status, 2010 - 2019

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

TYPES OF HOMES

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

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

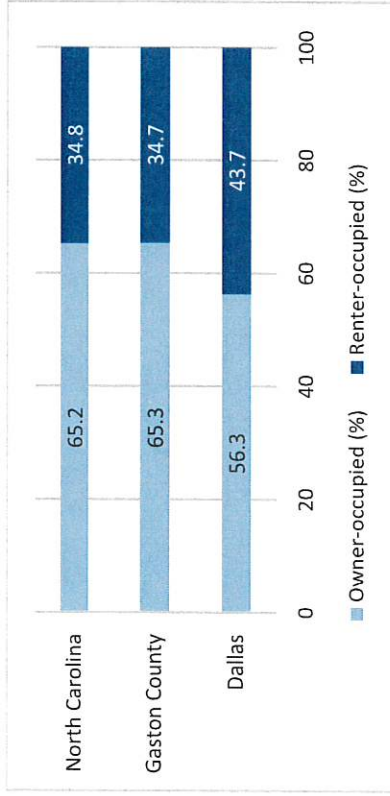


Figure 24: Occupancy rates, 2019

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

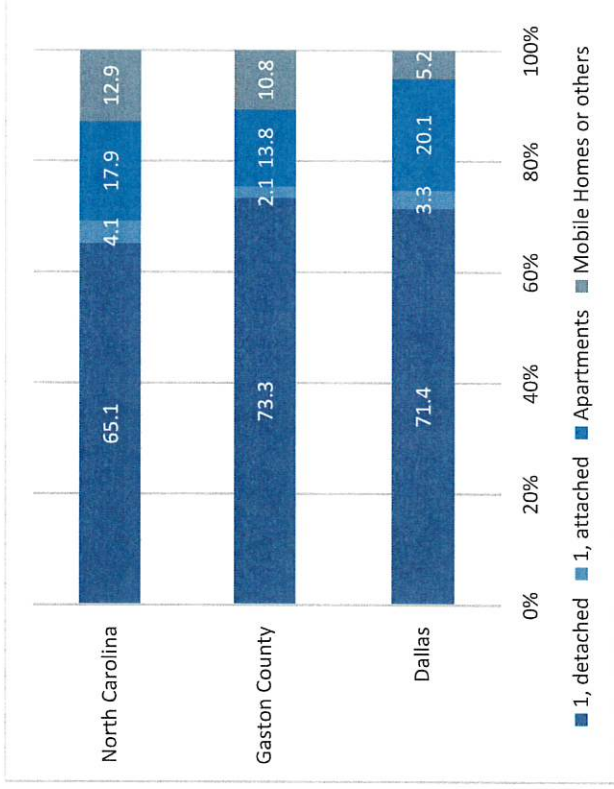


Figure 25: Types of homes

MOBILITY

ROADS

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

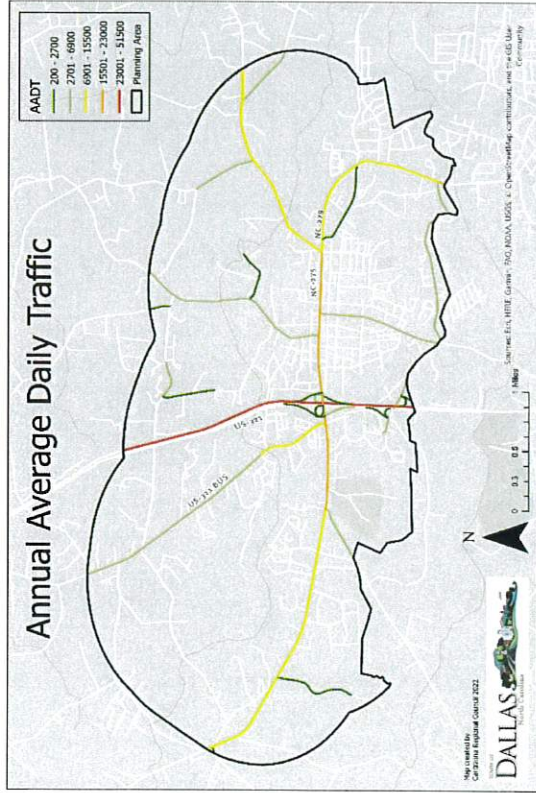


Figure 26: Annual Average Daily Traffic

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



Figure 27: W Trade St

The Town of Dallas also maintains a large network of local roadways. In total, 46.6 miles of the 96.7 total miles of roadway in the Dallas planning area – or about 48 percent – are locally maintained. Many of the local roads are in the historic town center, where they have a gridded, connected layout. A large portion of local roads are also located closer to the urban periphery, typically adjacent to residential developments. By contrast, these roads are less connected and are often dead ends. Increasing street connectivity was a theme that emerged from public engagement, and policies which address how residential streets are configured will be paramount in addressing it effectively. In general, most transportation policies should target locally maintained roads, as the town has more control over changes than it does with state-maintained roadways.

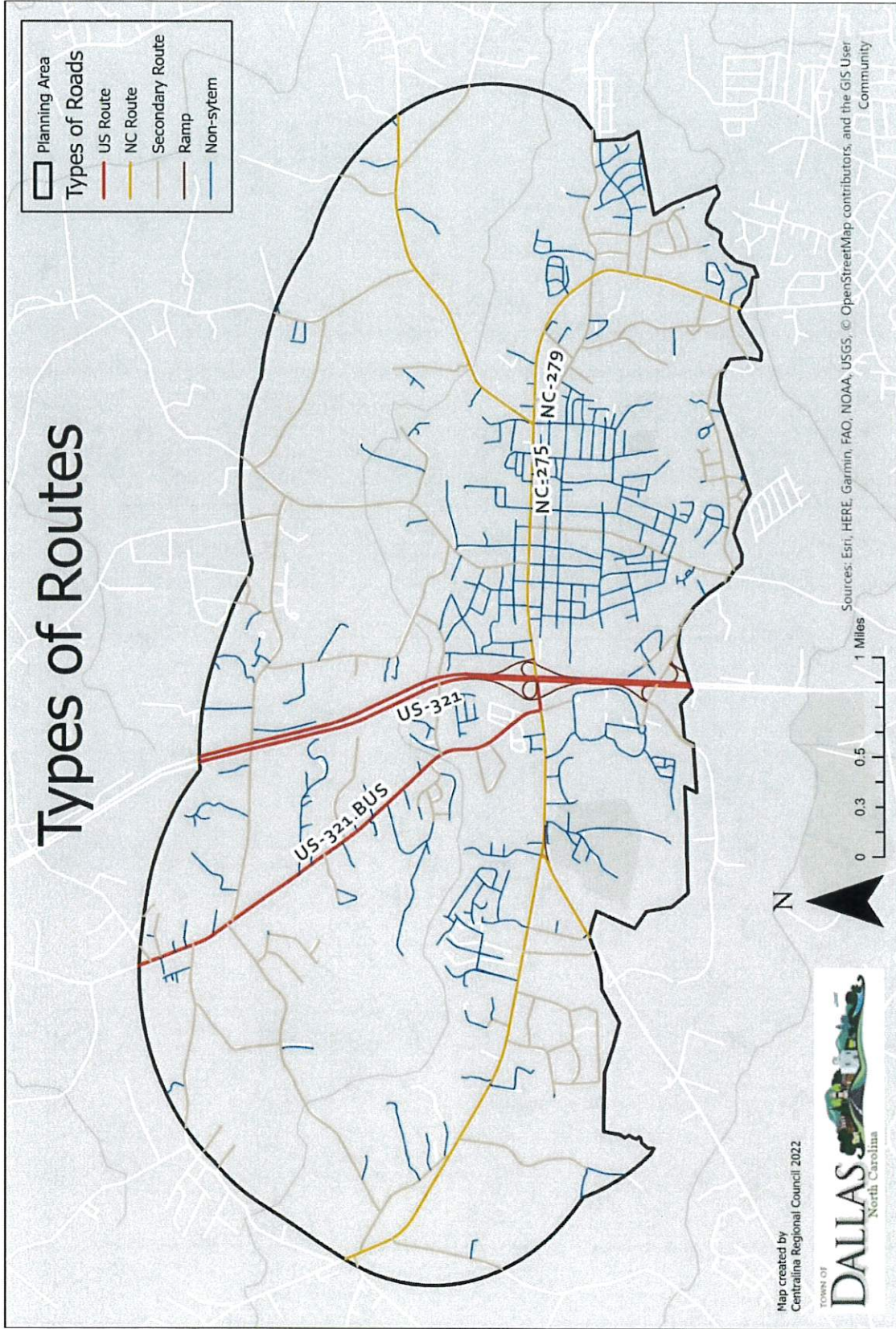


Figure 28: Different Classifications of Roadways

PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE NETWORK

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

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

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

existing infrastructure, as well as the recommendations from the draft plan, are shown on Page 24. The recommendations are focused on providing more overall coverage across all facility types, but they are also targeted to fill key gaps and provide greater connectivity. For example, the recommendations would provide greater connectivity between Gaston College and downtown, and they would also provide a direct connection to Dallas from the adjacent Carolina Thread Trail.

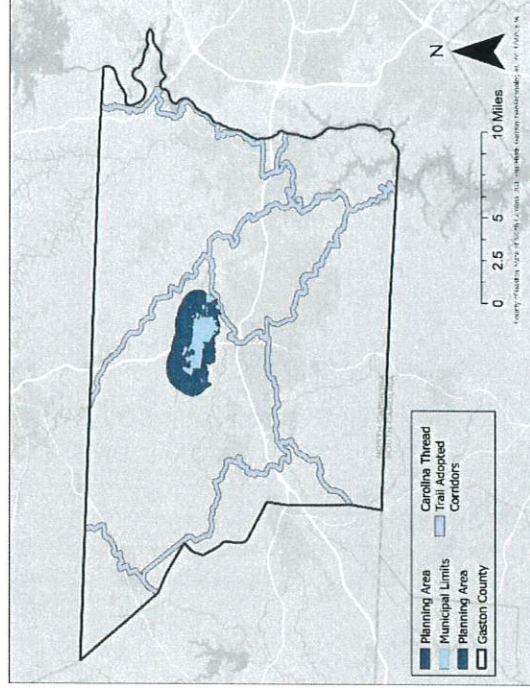


Figure 29: Adopted Corridors for the Carolina Thread Trail

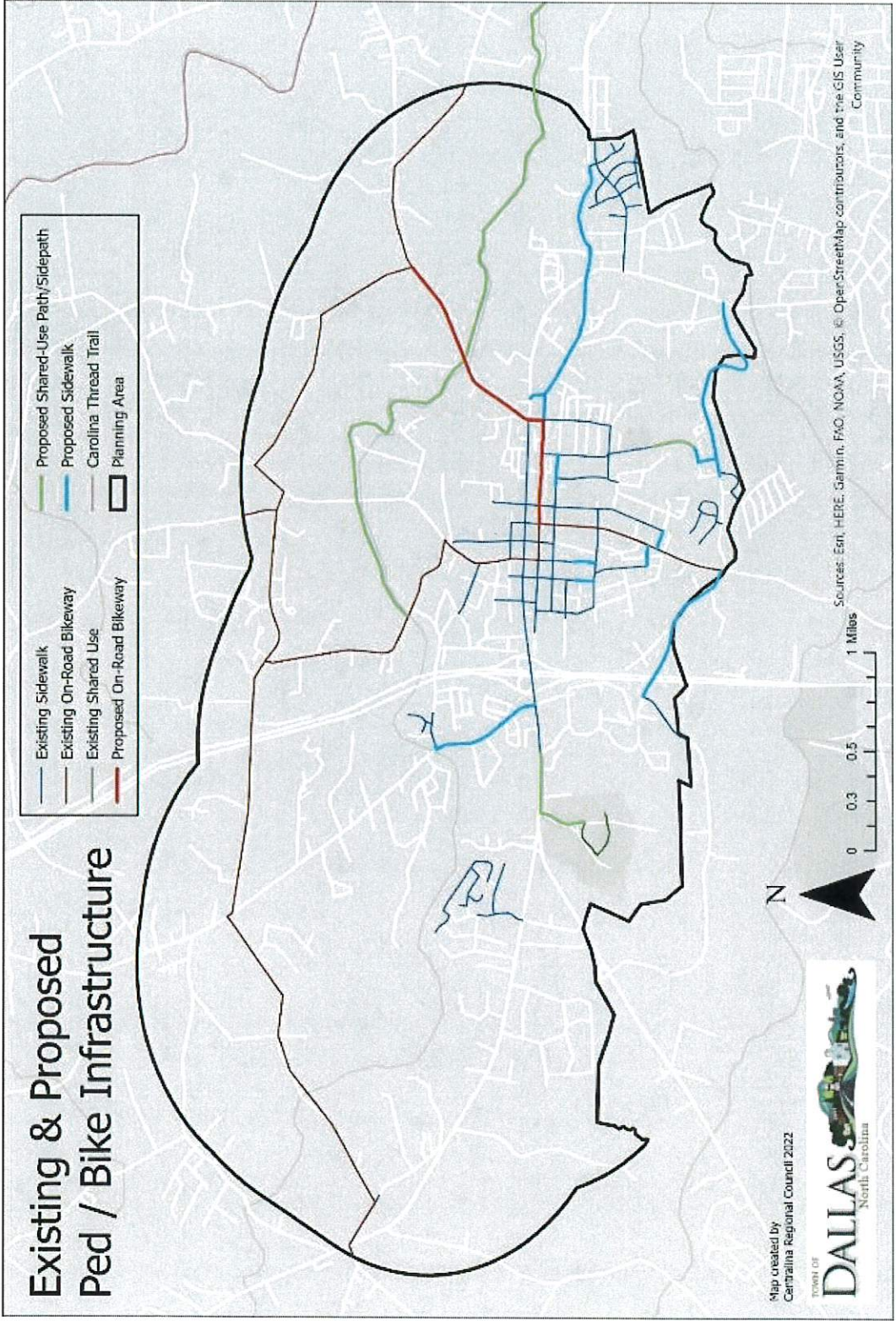


Figure 30: Existing and Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

OTHER

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

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

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

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

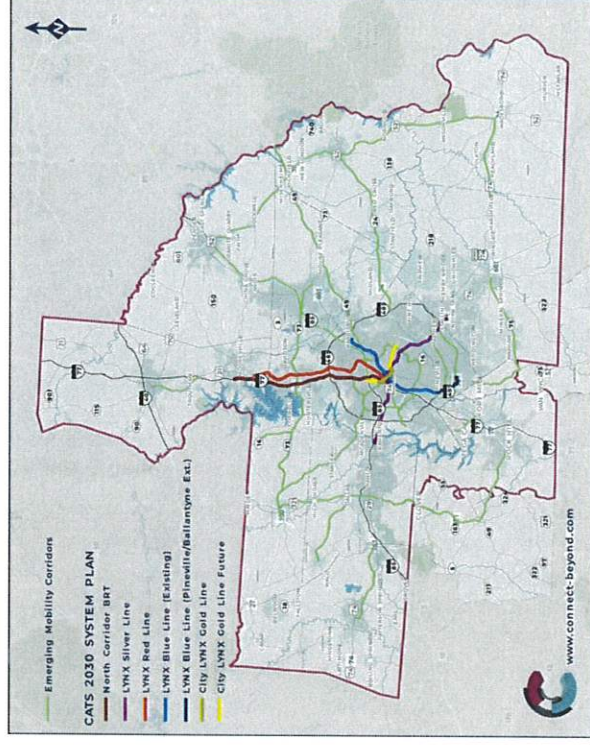


Figure 31: Emerging Mobility Corridors from the CONNECT Beyond plan. Two corridors are within Dallas's planning area.

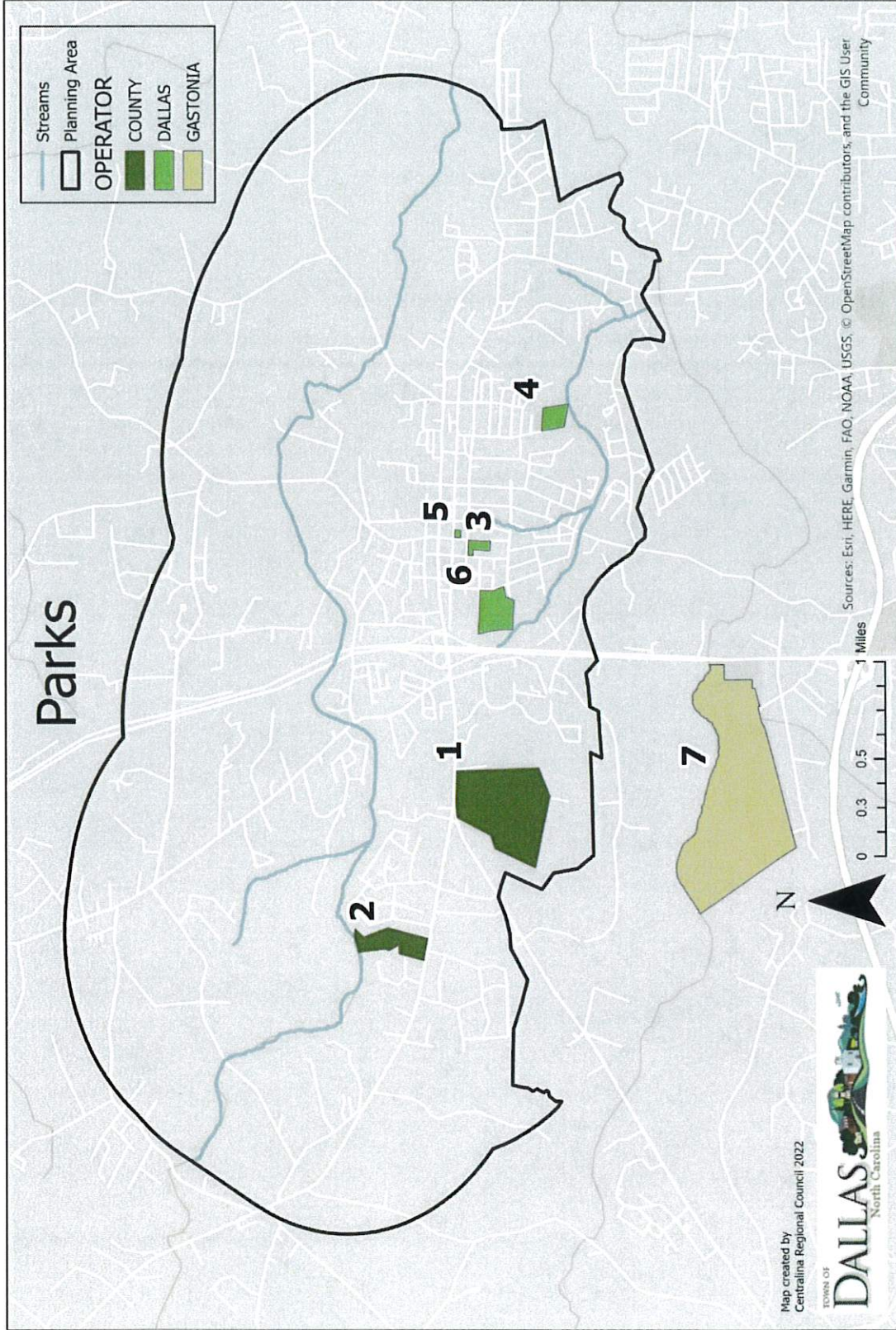


Figure 32: Parks in or Near the Dallas Planning Area

PARKS & RECREATION

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

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

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

county to ensure that improvements directly benefit the community.



Figure 33: Dallas Park

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



Figure 34: Jaggars Park

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

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

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

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

UTILITIES

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

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

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

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

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

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



Figure 35: Sewer map

POLICE

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

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

FIRE & RESCUE

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



Figure 36: Vehicles owned and operated by the DVFD

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

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

TOWN GOVERNMENT

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

The town is also supported by other departments such as the Office of the Town Clerk, the Finance Department, and the Development Services Department. These departments conduct the day-to-day work which is required to operate the town. As the town grows, new employees—or entire departments—may be needed to handle the increased workload that will result from new development and new residents.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A major focus for the Town of Dallas is to pursue policies and initiatives which support the long-term economic vitality of the community. The town does not have any dedicated economic development personnel, but it utilizes partnerships with existing organizations to pursue economic development strategies. For industrial development or redevelopment, the town works with the Gaston County Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The county offers grants to both small and large businesses, and it also conducts strategic planning efforts such as the Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy. Dallas also utilizes state resources such as the Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

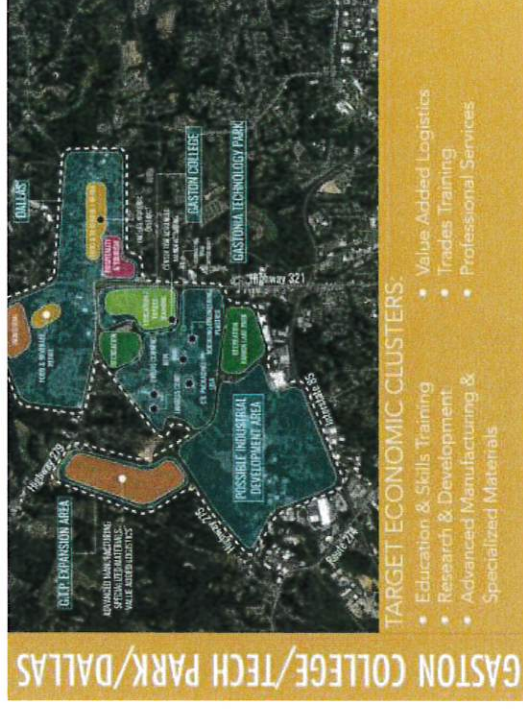


Figure 37: Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy

While county and state-level assistance are invaluable, they do not always provide the level of nuance or resources needed for the town to pursue its own economic objectives. Dallas does offer grant assistance of its own through the Façade Grant Program, as well as marketing assistance through the town website and social media platforms. However, given the importance of economic development expressed in this plan's public engagement as well as pre-existing plans, the town should pursue localized economic development solutions as a top priority. Specific recommendations will be addressed in a later chapter.

CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

CULTURAL

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

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

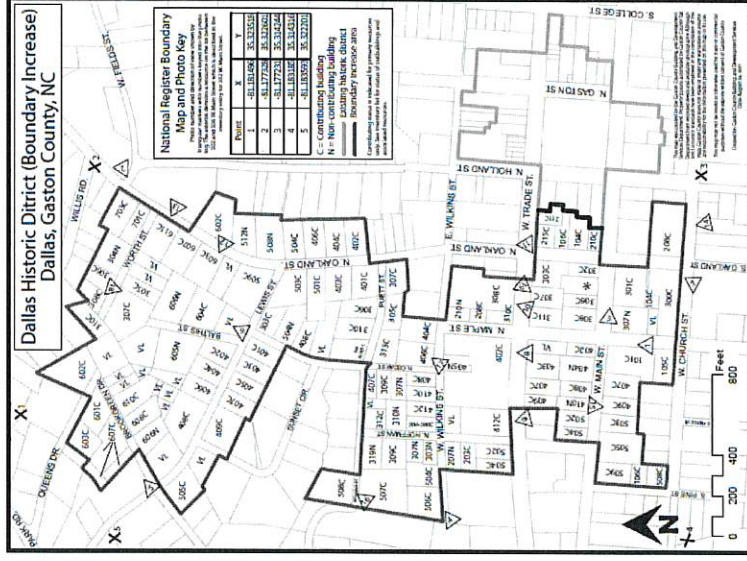


Figure 38: Boundary Increase for the Dallas Historic District

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

EDUCATION

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

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

ENVIRONMENTAL

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

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

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

LAND USE

EXISTING LAND USE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

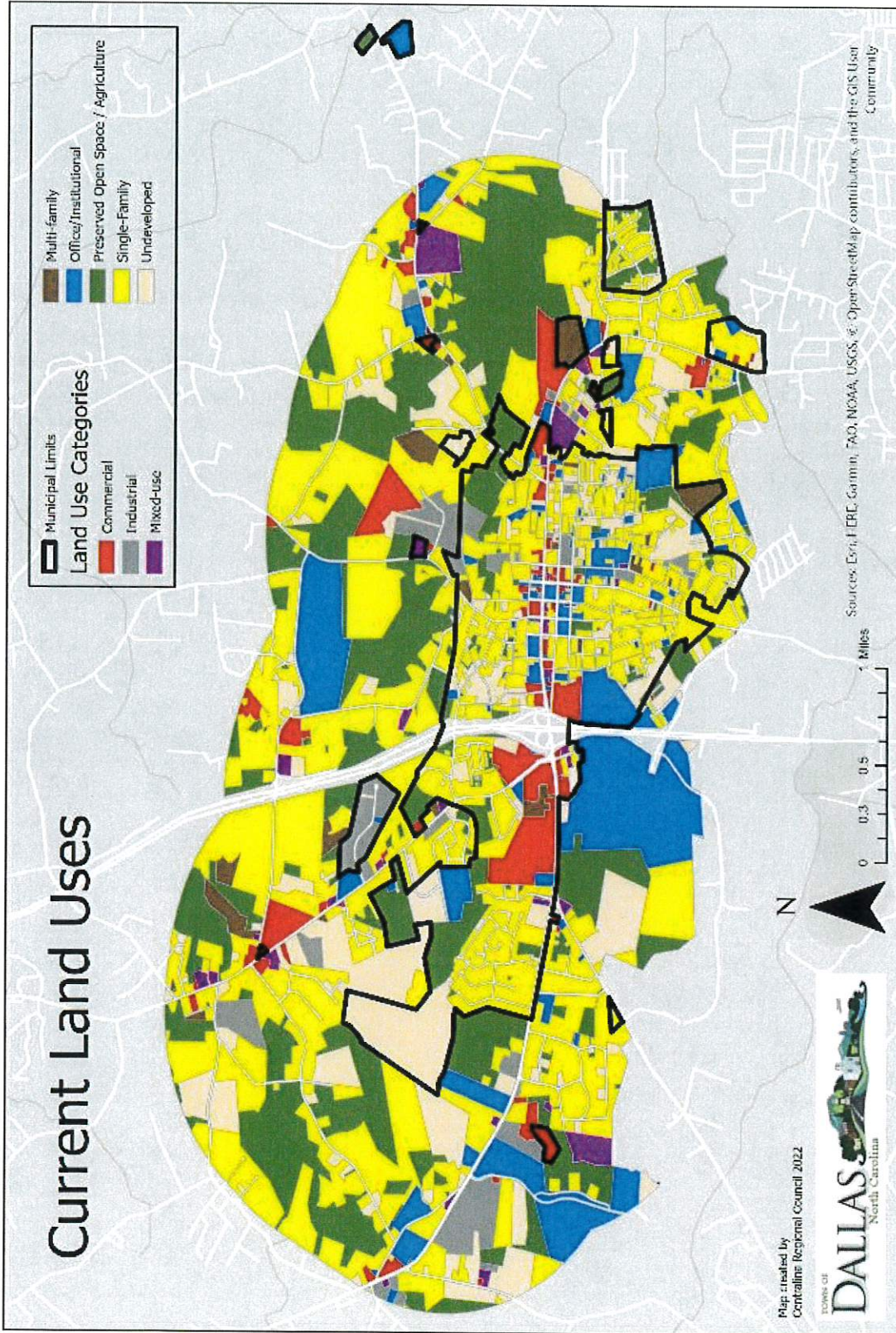


Figure 40: Current Land Uses in the Dallas Planning Area

3. Community Vision & Goals

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

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

SURVEY

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

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

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



Placeholder for Community Engagement Timeline

Figure 41: Community Engagement Timeline

STEERING COMMITTEE

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

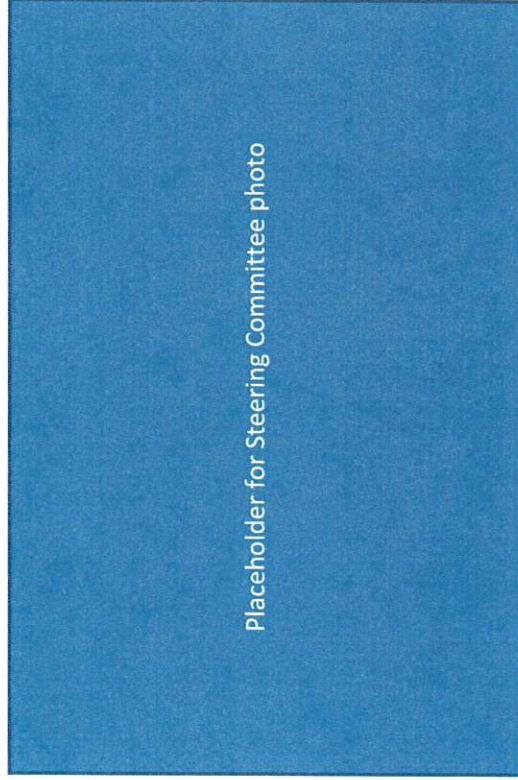


Figure 42: Steering Committee



Figure 43: Community Members at the First Open House

OPEN HOUSE

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

TOWN STAFF

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

COMMUNITY LEADERS

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



Figure 44: Placeholder for picture

SURVEY RESULTS

COMMUNITY SURVEY 1

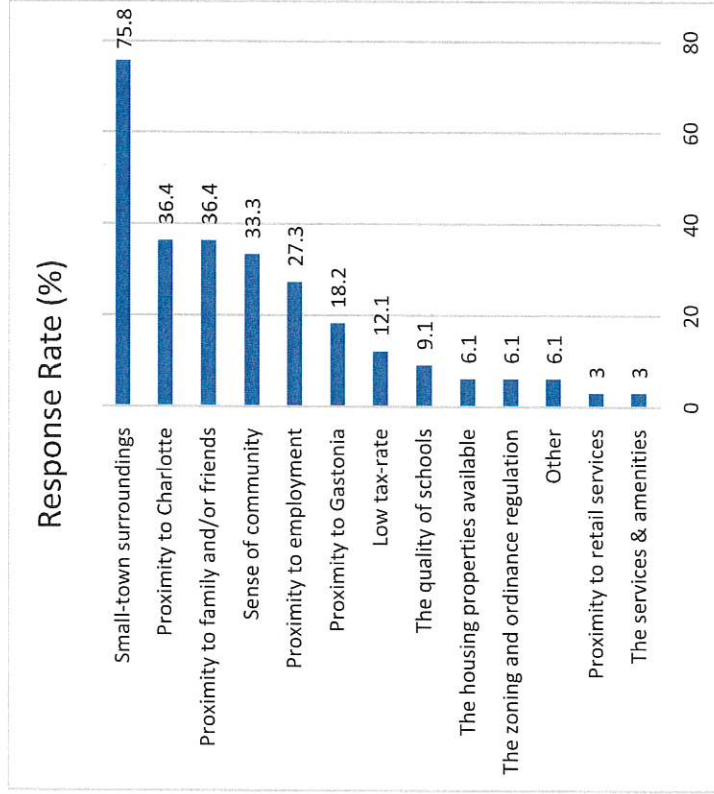
The first community survey, conducted in late-2020, was meant to gauge residents' opinion on major topic areas such as town character, current challenges, and priorities. When asked to describe Dallas using adjectives, survey respondents used terms such as 'small', 'comfortable', and 'peaceful'. These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

safe
small rural
comfortable unique
progressive suburban entrepreneurial peaceful
charming

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

out. Retail, services, and amenities ranked low on the list of reasons, which may reflect a desire amongst survey respondents for more commercial development.

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



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

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

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

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

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

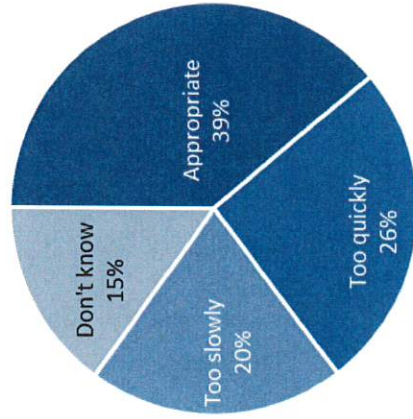
1. Encourage small-town charm
2. Preserve natural and culturally important features
3. Walkable neighborhoods
4. Support a family-friendly and inclusive community

COMMUNITY SURVEY 2 & 3

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

Growth And Development

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



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

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

Recreation And Open Space

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

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

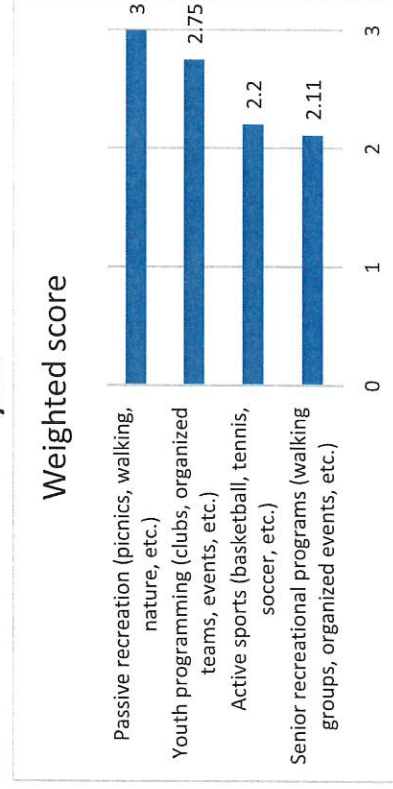
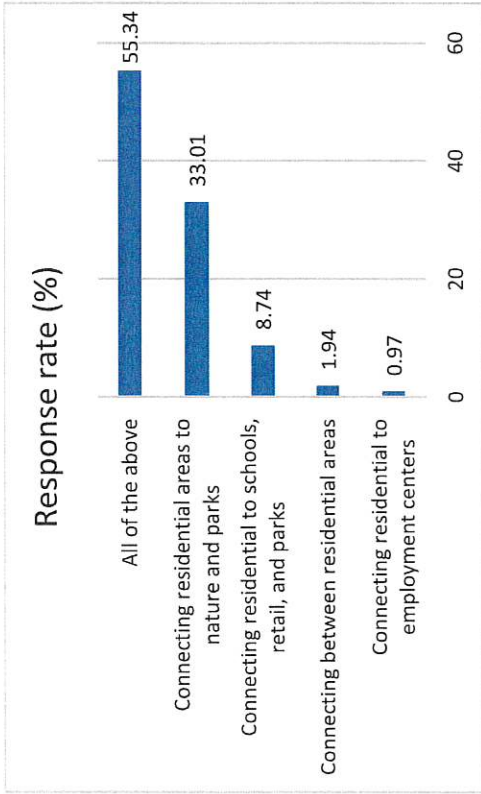


Figure 49: How should the Carolina Thread Trail be incorporated into the Town?



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

Downtown Dallas

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

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

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

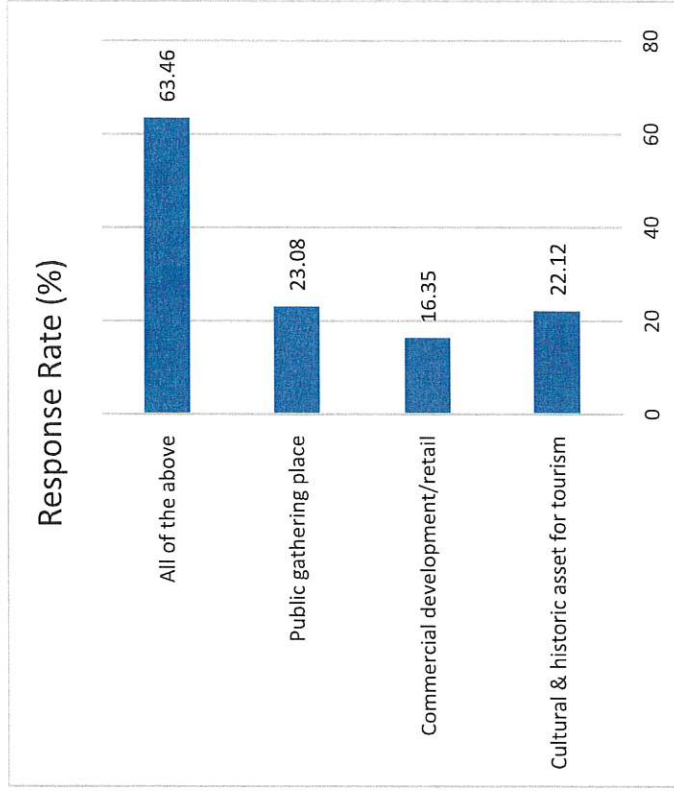
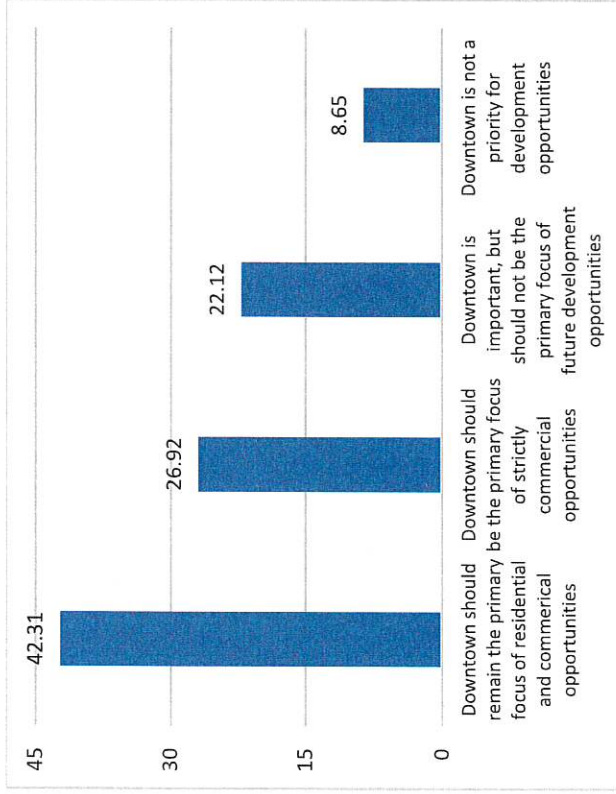


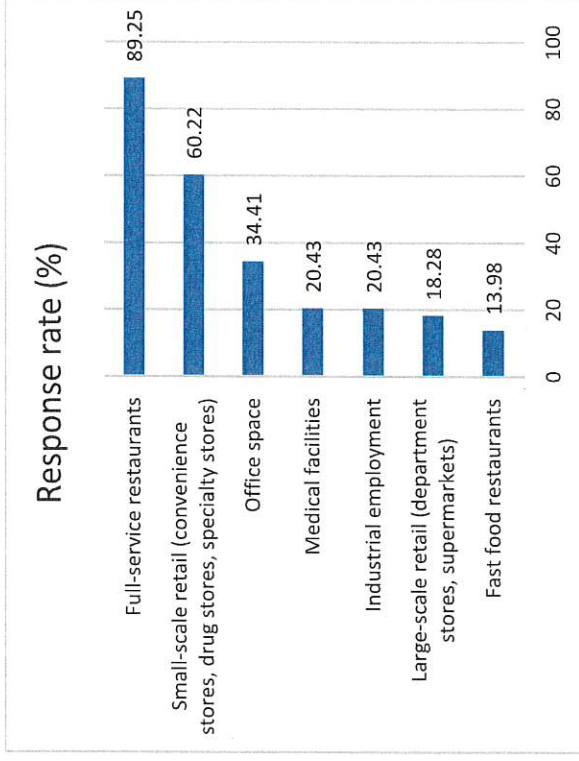
Figure 51: Should downtown still be the primary focus for residential and commercial development opportunities?



Shopping, Restaurants And Entertainment

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

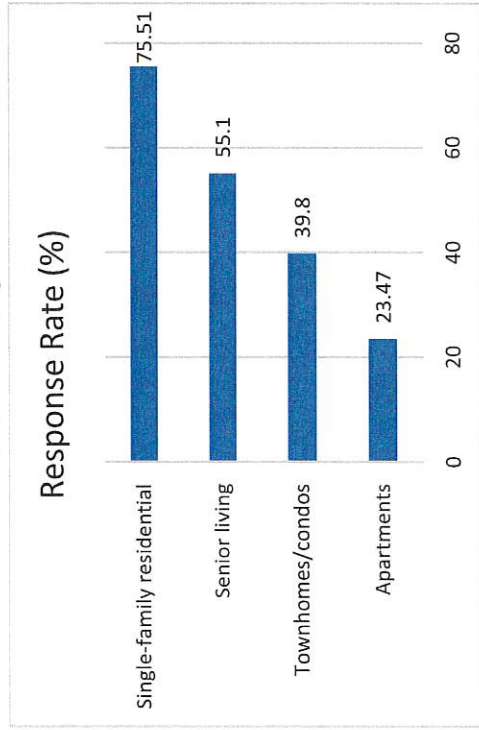
Figure 52: What types of commercial development should Dallas encourage?



Housing Choices

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

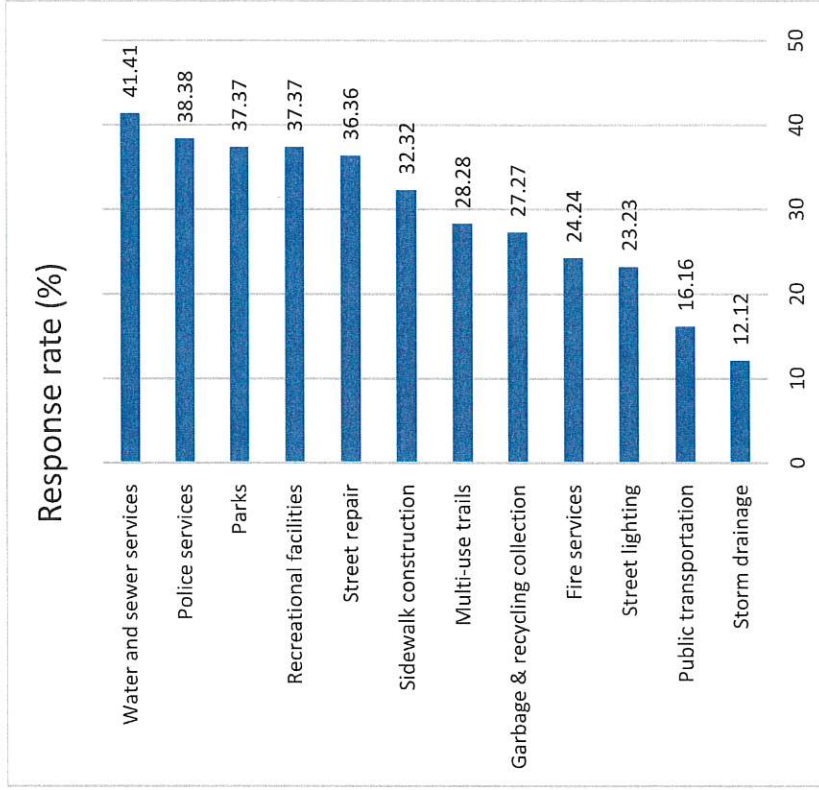
Figure 53: What types of residential development should Dallas encourage?



Community Facilities And Infrastructure

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

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

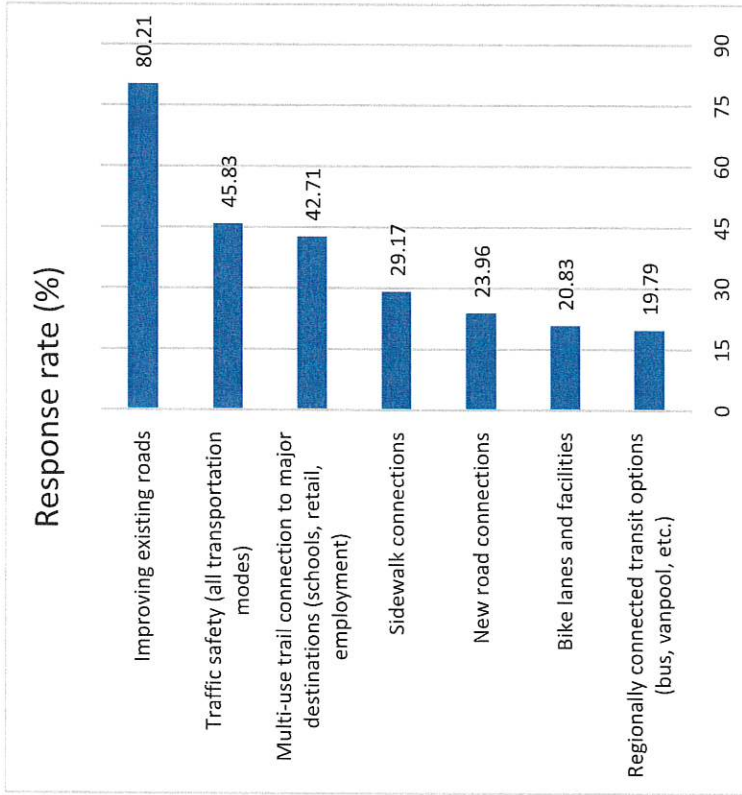


Transportation

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

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

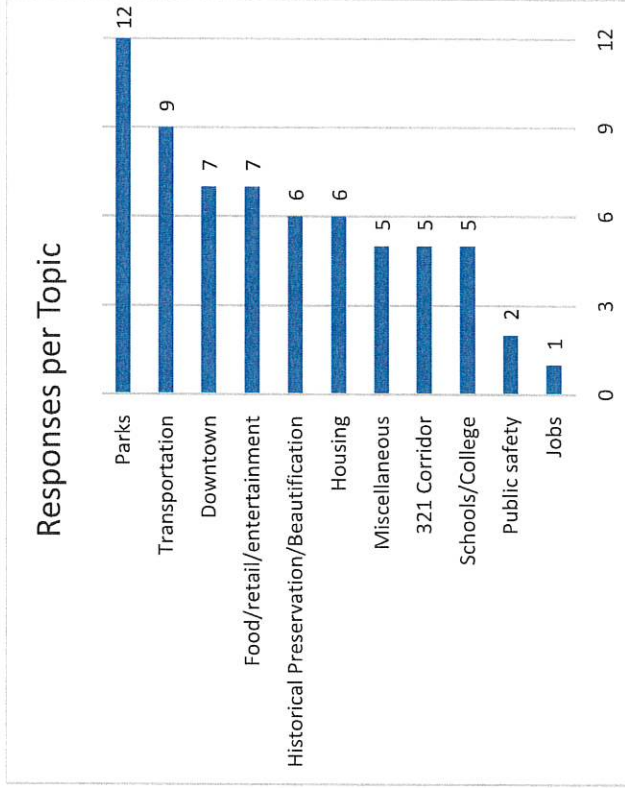
Figure 55: What areas of transportation infrastructure are most important to Dallas’s long-term vitality?



Open-ended Questions

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

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



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

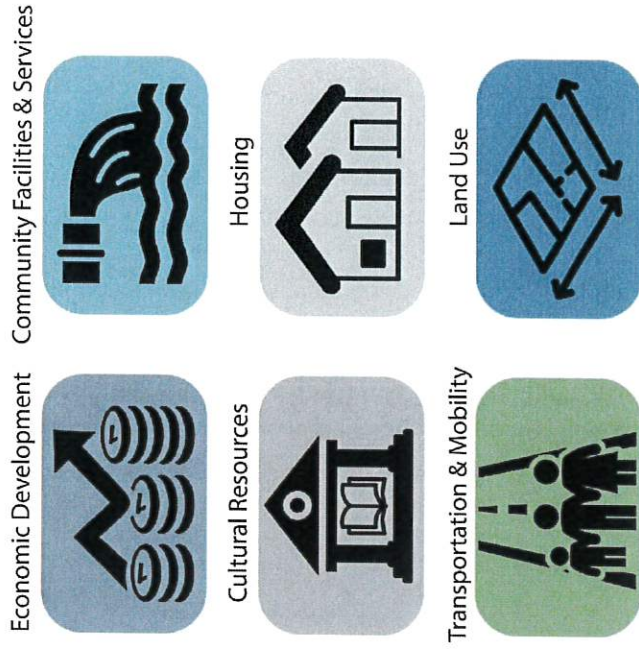
MAIN THEMES FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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

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

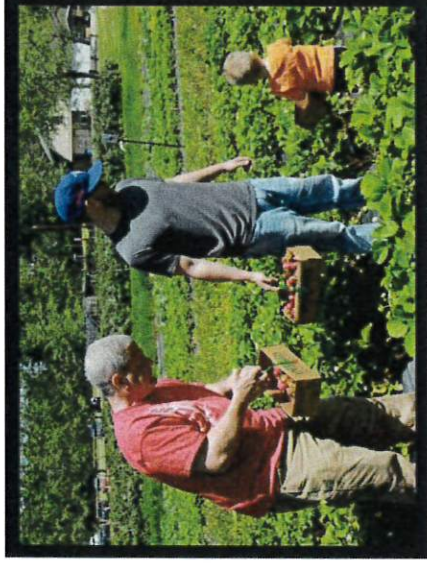
VISION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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



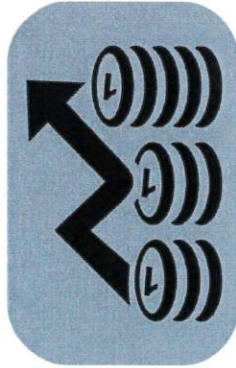
TOWN OF DALLAS VISION STATEMENT

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



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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



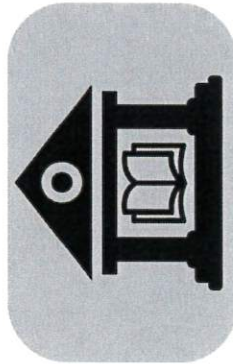
“Foster a Distinctive Community that is Economically Competitive in the Region”

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



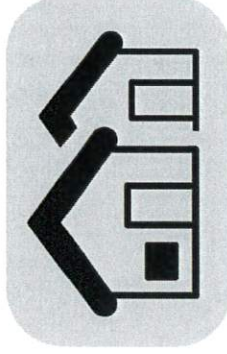
“Provide Well-Maintained and High-Quality Community Facilities Services, and Programs”

CULTURAL RESOURCES



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

HOUSING



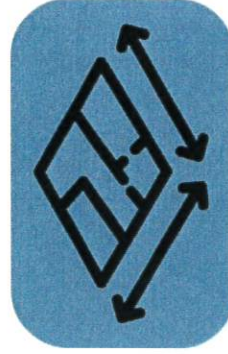
“Create a Diverse Inventory of Housing While Preserving the Character of Existing Residential Areas”

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



“Ensure a Connected, Safe and Accessible Transportation System”

LAND USE



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

4. FUTURE LAND USE

FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORIES

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

In total, the following twelve community types were utilized:

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

Town Center

The Town Center is the main area of economic, entertainment, and community activity.

Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage

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

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

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



Mixed-Use Neighborhood



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

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

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

Urban Neighborhood



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

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

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

Multi-family Residential



Multi-family residential neighborhoods are generally formed as complexes or communities, with a relatively uniform housing type and density throughout. They support the highest residential density in the suburban landscape, and may contain one of the following housing types: condominiums, townhomes, senior housing, or apartments.

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

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

Single-family Residential



Single-family residential zones are generally formed as subdivisions with a relatively uniform housing types and densities. This category supports a range of single-family housing types, from large-lot, low density homes to small-lot residential neighborhoods. The category may also include single family attached housing, such as townhomes, where appropriate.

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

Rural Living



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

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

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

Suburban Mixed-Use Center



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

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

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

Industrial Center



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

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

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

Government Facility



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

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

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

Education Campus



The Education Campus community types incorporates all educational related land uses. For university/college campuses, the category includes all of the academic buildings, residence halls, athletic facilities, equipment, or other ancillary uses needed to support an institution for higher education.

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

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

Health Care Campus

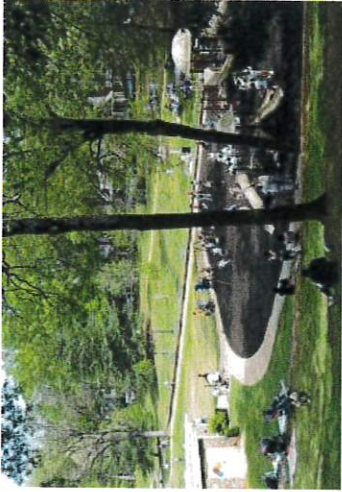


A health care campus includes various medical and medical-related uses, such as primary care, outpatient surgery, birthing centers, and other specialty

services. Some uses are relatively large in scale, and may include a hospital, teaching facilities, research and rehabilitation centers, and private medical office buildings. Larger healthcare uses may be oriented in a campus setting, with large buildings connected via walkways, structured parking, or an internal network of streets for circulation.

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

Recreational Open Space



Recreational Open Space comprises land dedicated for active and passive recreational uses. These areas are designated to exclude development and to

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

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

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

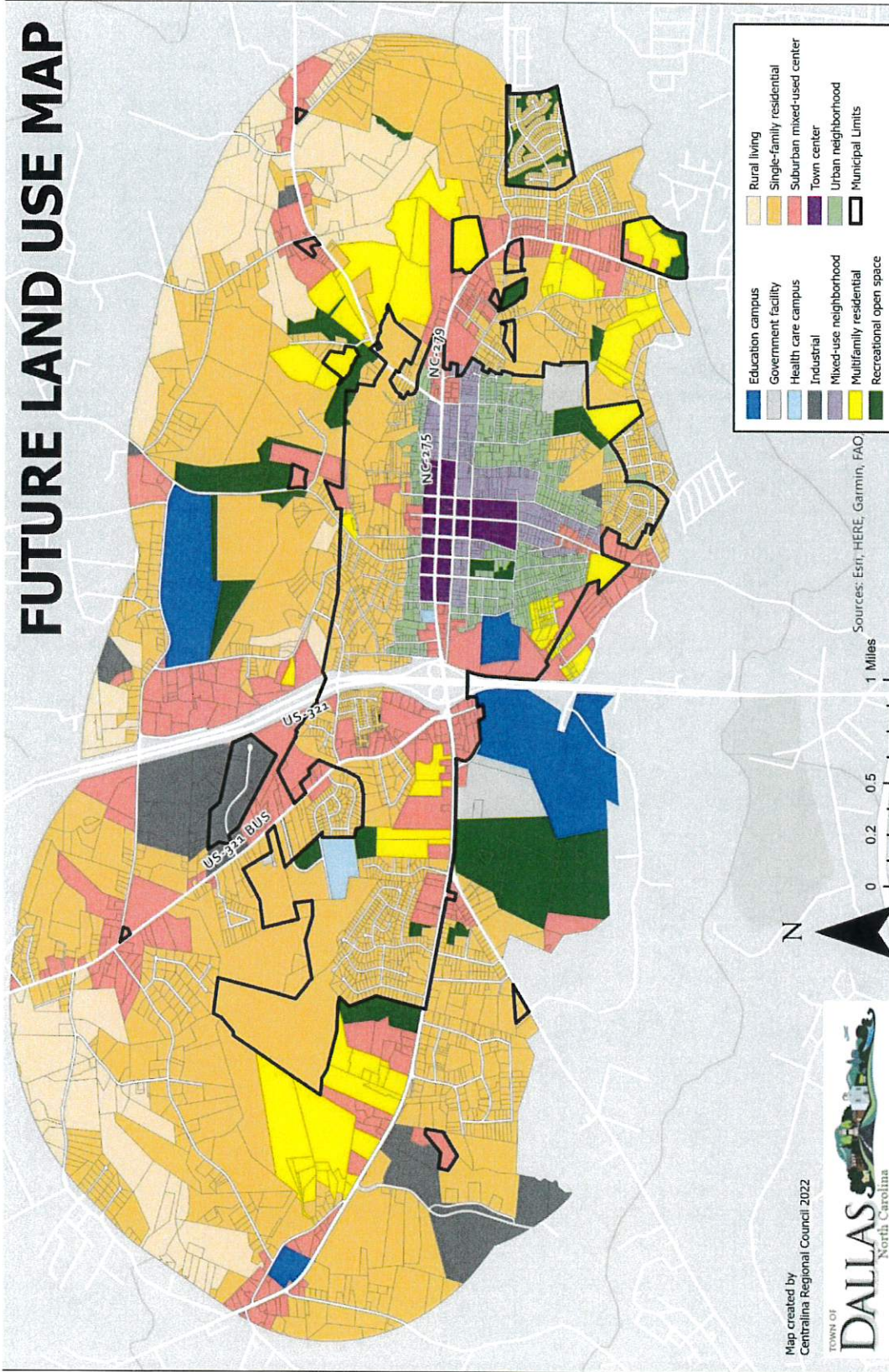
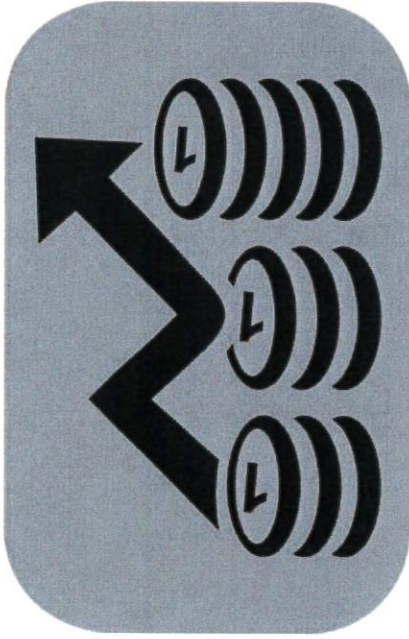


Figure 57: Future Land Use Map for the Town of Dallas

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



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

1.1 -- Create an Environment That is Conducive to Small

Business Development

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

- 1.1.4 -- Help businesses apply for funding opportunities or grants

1.2 -- Recruit Major Employers to Promote Economic Diversity

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

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

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

1.4 -- Leverage Existing Resources to Maximize Economic Development Opportunities

- 1.4.1 -- Form 'Town and Gown' committee (comprised of representatives from Gaston College and the Town of Dallas) to augment economic development opportunities between Gaston College and the Town of Dallas
- 1.4.2 -- Plan for economic development initiatives that accommodate incoming Apple Creek Business Park labor force
- 1.4.3 -- Strategically plan for the expansion of existing water, sewer, and electric utility facilities in the planning area
- 1.4.4 -- Continue implementing existing plans such as the Economic Development Assessment and Town Center Plan

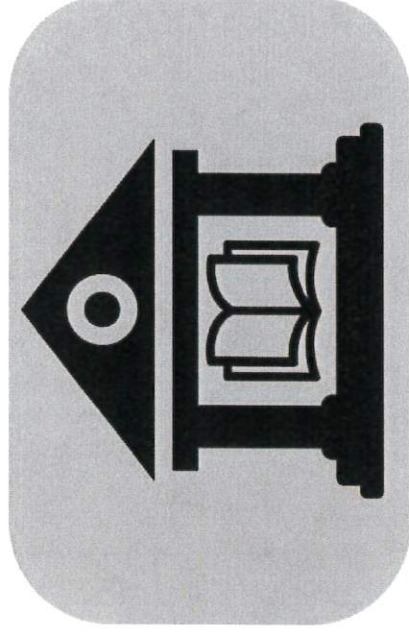
1.5 -- Increase Strategic Planning efforts along the US-321 Corridor

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

1.6 -- Identify champions to implement Economic Development Strategies

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

2) CULTURAL RESOURCES



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

2.1 -- Revitalize and beautify the Central Business District

- 2.1.1 -- Evaluate incentive program opportunities to promote building revitalization efforts among local property owners.

- 2.1.2 -- Improve the appearance of streets in downtown through landscaping, street plantings, and decorative lighting.
- 2.1.3 -- Explore opportunities to establish a formalized park or plaza within the Central Business District.

2.2 -- Enhance wayfinding and placemaking throughout the community

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

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

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

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

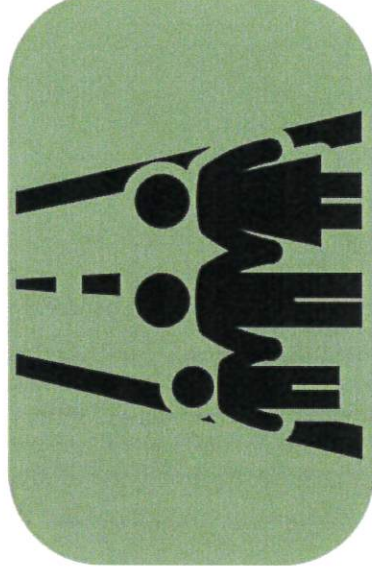
- 2.4.1 -- Investigate the suitability of various sites as a community event venue.

- 2.4.2 -- Host more reoccurring town events, such as the Christmas parade
- 2.4.3 -- Strategically plan for how to utilize the new Gaston Aquatic Center for events & tourism

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

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

3) TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4) COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES



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

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

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

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

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

4.3 -- Revitalize existing recreation facilities

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

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

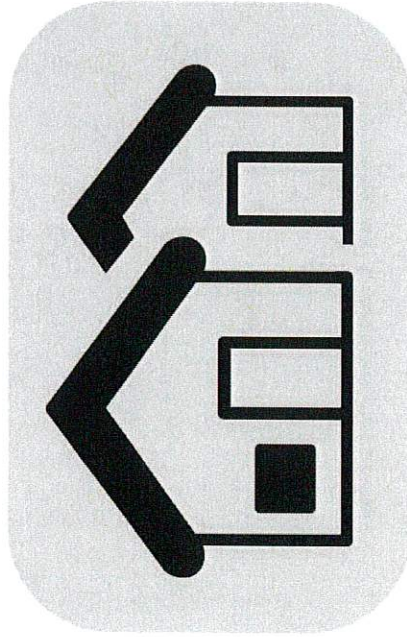
- 4.4.1 -- Assess and strategically plan for utility service area boundaries in coordination with Two Rivers

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

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

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

5) HOUSING



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

5.1 -- Maintain the Value and Integrity of Existing Neighborhoods

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

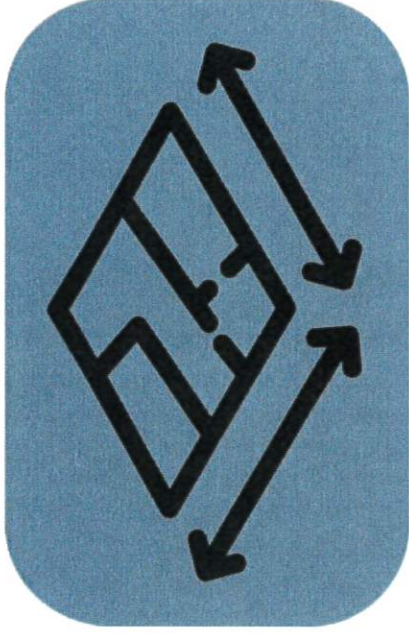
5.2 -- Ensure new residential development is compatible with existing built environment

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

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

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

6) LAND USE



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

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

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

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

6.1 -- Promote Land Conservation

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

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

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

6.3 -- Encourage walkable and mixed-use development.

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

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

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

TOWN OF DALLAS, NORTH CAROLINA

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

DESCRIPTION: Proposed Budget

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3C

MEETING DATE: 5/24/2022

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Town Staff is proud to present the proposed budget for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year. The proposed budget totals \$18,247,221. This budget represents emerging from COVID, dealing with unprecedented inflation, and continuing to provide outstanding service to our community; all while remaining fiscally responsible with Town resources.

Attached are sheets highlighting each fund and department. Each of the attached sheets will be discussed during the work session.

MANAGER RECOMMENDATION:

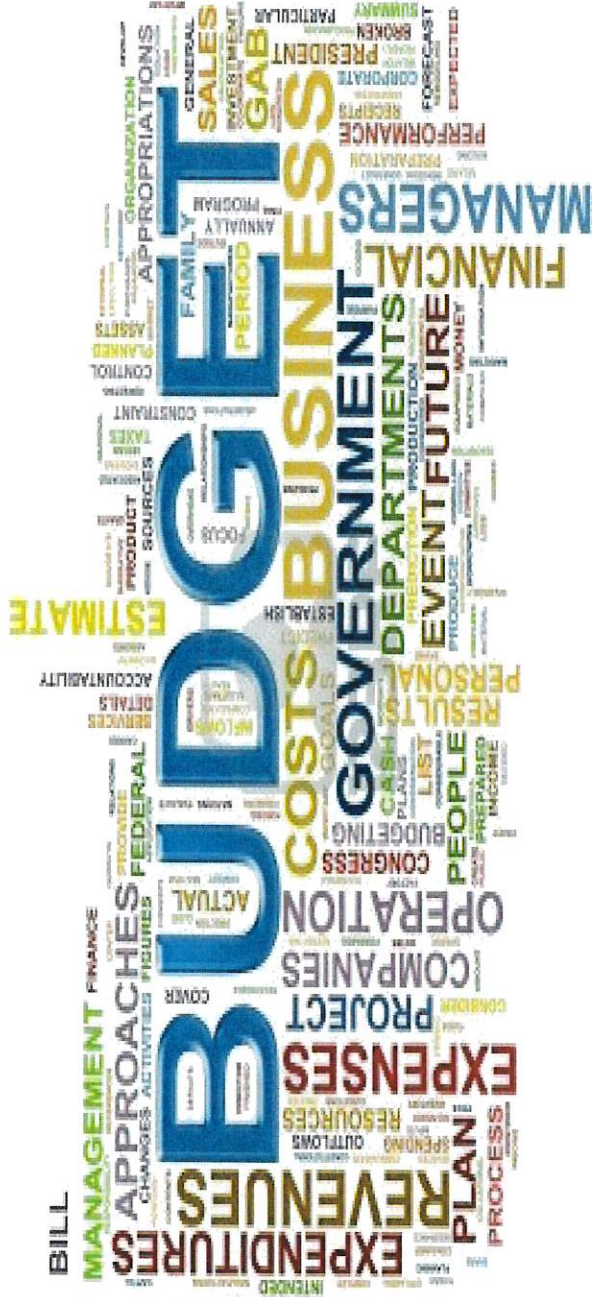
BOARD ACTION TAKEN:

TOWN OF DALLAS – DRAFT BUDGET

Total Draft Budget \$18,247,221

3.46% increase over FY 2021-22 budget of \$17,636,463

Projecting to Use a Total of \$1,108,248 of Fund Balance Across Operating Funds
 82.7% increase over FY 2021-22 appropriation of \$606,740



Personnel Compensation & Benefits

Across-the-Board Increase: 8.5%

12.10% Non-LEO Retirement Contribution (up from 11.35%)

13.10% LEO Retirement Contribution (up from 12.04%)

Holiday Bonus raised to \$1,200/fulltime &
\$400/permanent part-time

No New Positions Budgeted



General Fund Departments

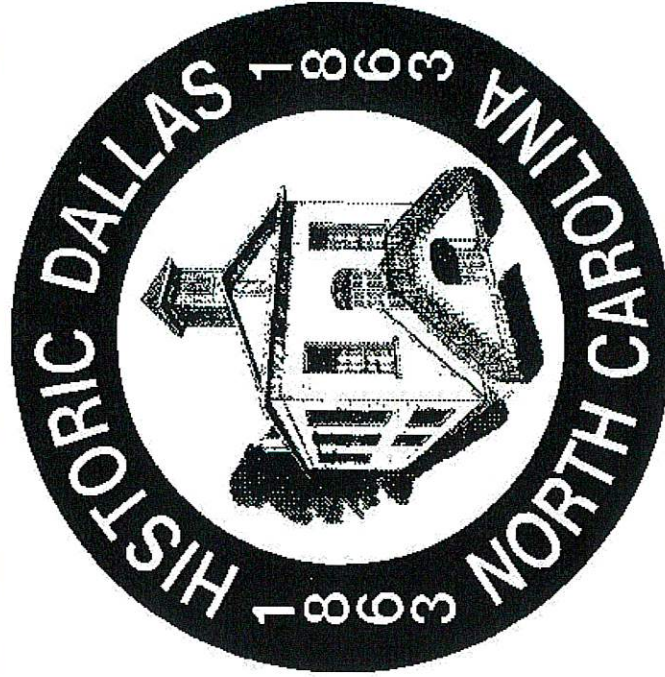
Administration - \$382,165
5.05% increase

Board & Attorney - \$77,178

Development Services - \$320,430
24.41% increase
UDO Ordinance Rewrite = \$85,000

Courthouse - \$73,025
50.25% increase
Gutter & Fascia Repair = \$15,000
Grounds & Building Contract Maintenance - 18% increase

Police - \$2,153,674
15.73% increase
9 Desktop Computers = \$17,129 (100% Grant Revenue to Offset)
3 Interceptors (Carryover) = \$161,042 (Financing Revenue to Offset)
LESA = \$36,835
Phones/Car Hot Spots = \$19,200
K-9 Supplies & Training = \$13,600
Vehicle Fuel = \$50,524 (33% increase)



General Fund Departments

Fire - \$541,674

3.85% decrease (less \$24,350 for ladder truck outfit)
Part-time pay for Assistant Chiefs = \$10,000 (\$5,000 ea.)
Life Insurance for Firefighters = \$3,000
Pension Plan Benefit for Retirees = \$3,000

Powell Bill - \$133,072

Street - \$310,900

12.80% decrease (no Capital Equipment purchases)

Recreation - 375,113

6.61% increase

Referee/Umipire Fees - 18.42% Increase
Grounds Maintenance & Supplies - 14% increase
Concessions & Sports Uniforms - 13.31% increase

Solid Waste - \$557,133

23.77% increase

Vehicle Fuel - 33% Increase
Knuckleboom Truck - \$90,000 (Split w/Electric)



Water/Sewer Fund Highlights

Total Fund Budget \$3,343,660
16.41% **decrease** over FY 2021-22 budget of \$4,000,202
Projecting to Use a Total of \$16,300 Fund Balance
89.06% **decrease** over FY 2021-22 appropriation of \$148,943



NO WATER OR WASTEWATER RATE INCREASES PROPOSED

Debt - Water Line Project, Work Vehicles - \$263,003

Distribution & Collection - \$2,188,166

15.71% **decrease** (less Projects to be funded through ARPA)

Waste Water Rate Study/CIP = \$45,000

Vehicle Fuel - 33% increase

Two Rivers Rate Increase - 5%

Trackhoe = \$76,960

Water Treatment Plant - \$671,481

11.25% **increase**

Replace Truck #114 = \$30,000

Plant/Testing Contract Services - 6.88% increase

Chemical Supplies - 20% increase

Waste Water Treatment - \$484,013

39.54% **decrease** (less Interconnect Project w/Two Rivers)

Plant/Testing Contract Services - 6.88% increase

Chemical Supplies - 20% increase

Electric Fund Highlights

Total Fund Budget = \$9,316,176

4.11% increase over FY 2021-22 budget of \$8,948,206

Projecting to Use a Total of \$390,382 Fund Balance

125.47% increase over FY 2021-22 appropriation of \$173,141

NO ELECTRIC RATE INCREASE PROPOSED

(Last rate increase January 1, 2012)

Electric Charge to Duke Energy = \$5,180,561 (anticipated 2.0% Duke rate increase)

Rate Study/CIP = \$25,000

Replace FD Generator/Upgrade Town Hall Generator = \$100,700

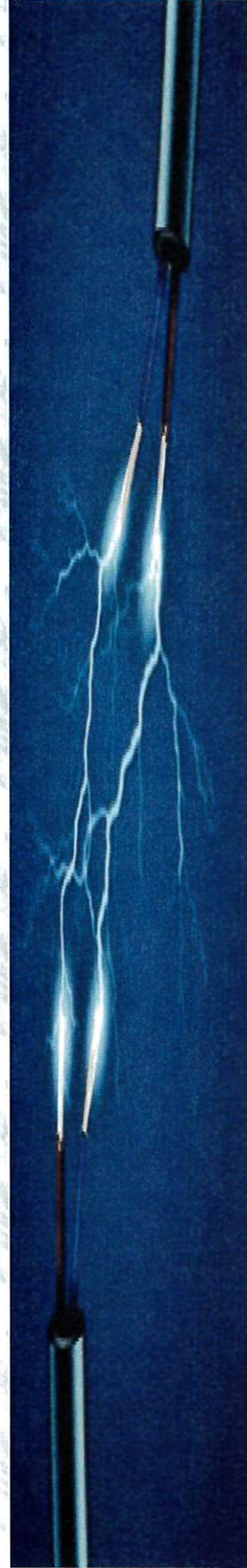
Knuckleboom Truck = \$90,000 (Split w/Solid Waste)

Vehicle Fuel – 33% increase

Maintenance/Testing Contract Services – 6.14% increase

Debt = \$25,846 (Small Bucket Truck)

General Fund Transfer = \$885,733



Stormwater Fund Highlights

Total Fund Budget = \$324,371

59.08% increase over FY 2021-22 budget of \$203,901

Projecting to Use a Total of \$112,919 Fund Balance
No Fund Balance was appropriated in FY 2021-22 budget

NO STORMWATER ERU RATE INCREASE PROPOSED

S. Holland St. Project = \$241,245

