

# Waxhaw



**COLLABORATIVE GROWTH STRATEGY**



## TOWN MANAGER'S MESSAGE

The Town of Waxhaw has experienced tremendous growth over the last ten years. When I was hired to build Waxhaw's Planning Department in 2019, we saw a strong opportunity to gather input from the community and put together an intentional plan for Waxhaw's future. We know from trends that growth is inevitable, and it's easy to see why. Waxhaw is a wonderful place to raise a family, start a business, and enjoy local restaurants and shops.

However, in the boom of growth, it can also be easy to lose sight of the needs and wants of our community. That's why, over the last year, the Planning Department has hosted public input sessions and surveys, and spent months preparing the documentation that will become Waxhaw's revised Future Land Use Plan & Land Development Code.

In this brief summary of Waxhaw's Collaborative Growth Strategy, you will find the results of this public input and how the town will be implementing this feedback through the Future Land Use Plan and Land Development Code.

I have the unique perspective of leading and working closely with our town Planners over the last year as Planning Director before I was appointed Town Manager in March 2020. As a Waxhaw resident and town employee, I've witnessed Waxhaw's challenges and opportunities firsthand and oversaw our Planners work to address these head-on.

*Jeffrey Wells*

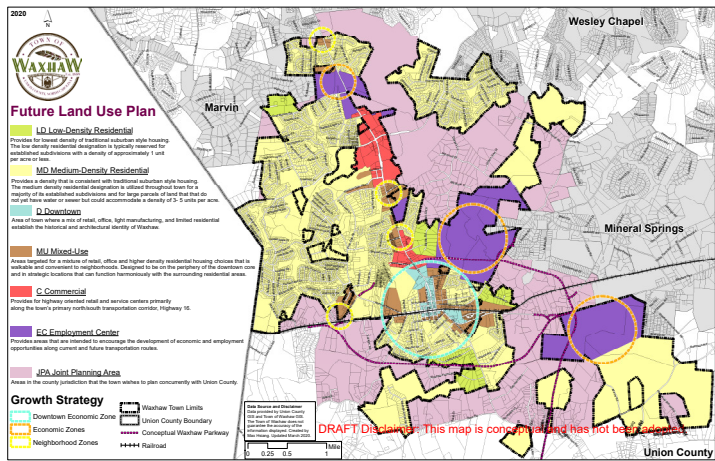
Jeffrey Wells, AICP  
Town Manager

*“Waxhaw is a wonderful place to raise a family, start a business, and enjoy local restaurants and shops.”*

# SUMMARY

As the region around us grows, Waxhaw is faced with increasing challenges to preserving the town's unique charm, while serving the growing needs of its residents and businesses. Over the past year, our community has expressed a clear need for greater walkability and street connectivity to relieve traffic congestion, a growing demand for local jobs and commerce, and a commitment to make downtown a destination that is safe, friendly and vibrant.

With this purpose in mind, the Waxhaw Collaborative Growth Strategy sets forth strategies that will guide development for decades to come. It begins with these fundamental tools:



## THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

helps guide where residential, non-residential, or a mix of uses should happen.

## THE WAXHAW ZONING MAP

depicts the entire municipal area PRE-ZONED to be consistent with the new Future Land Use Map.

## THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

replaces the Unified Development Code Ordinance as the regulatory tool for planning and zoning administration.

Find out more about what these changes mean for your property and your community in this summary document.

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# PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS

Planning for Waxhaw's future development starts with gathering input directly from the Waxhaw Community. Over four months in 2019, the Planning Department provided four opportunities for residents to weigh in with their comments and ideas, including two "open house" style public input sessions and two online surveys. All four were advertised on Waxhaw's official social media pages, website, via news flash, and in the Tri-W Newspaper.

The in-person open house sessions were held on September 26th and October 24th in the Niven Price building in downtown Waxhaw. At the first session in September, the attendees identified where and how they wanted to see more opportunities to live, work, shop, and play in Waxhaw. The self-guided stations had interactive maps, surveys, and opportunities to speak with Planning Department staff to share input. The October session allowed participants who attended to review and react to the outcomes of the first session and take the ideas further.

Concurrent with the open house sessions, the first online survey ran from September 18th through October 25th. It asked participants to identify exactly where more opportunities to live, work, shop, and play should be located in Waxhaw. In the second survey, open from November 6th through December 10th, the survey asked participants to share what challenges and opportunities Waxhaw is facing.

2 Open House Sessions  
2 Online Surveys

94 Public Input Session Attendees  
407 Survey Responses Collected



## KEY THEMES

From the public input gathered in 2019, four key themes emerged:

### TRANSPORTATION

Improve Waxhaw's traffic congestion problems

### LOCAL CHARACTER

Maintain Waxhaw's small-town charm as it continues to grow

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

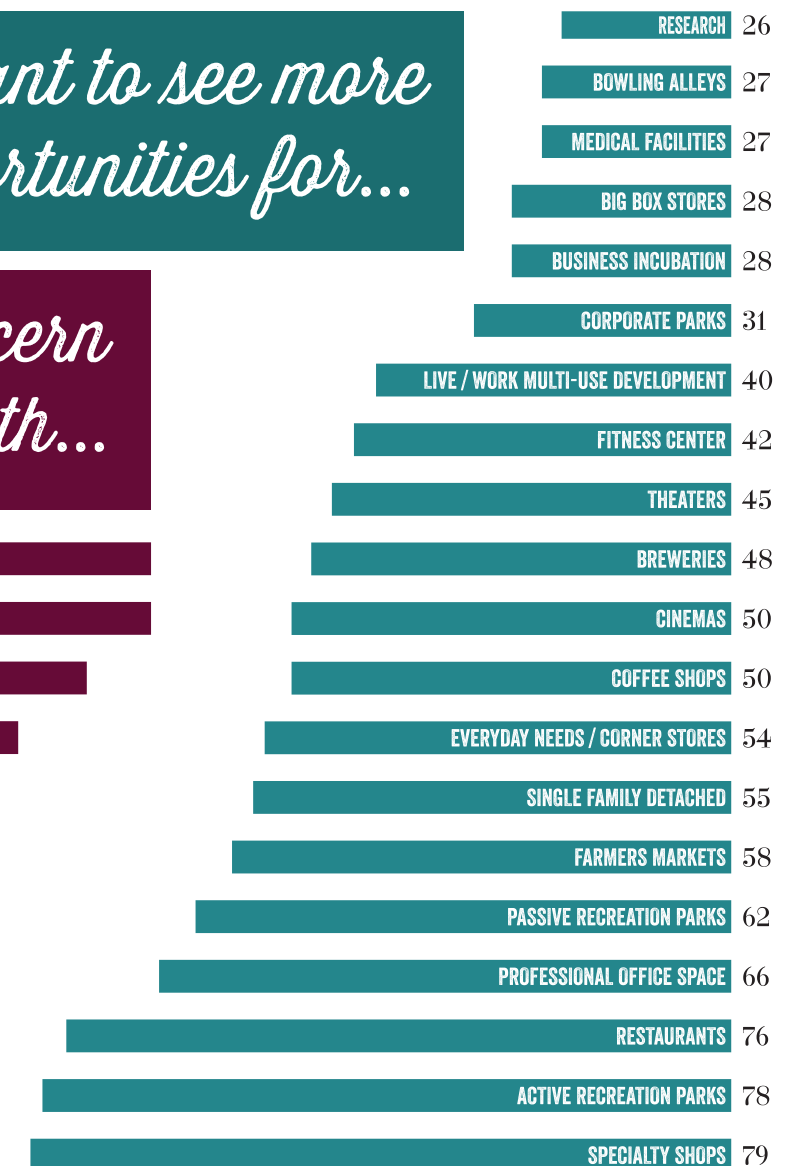
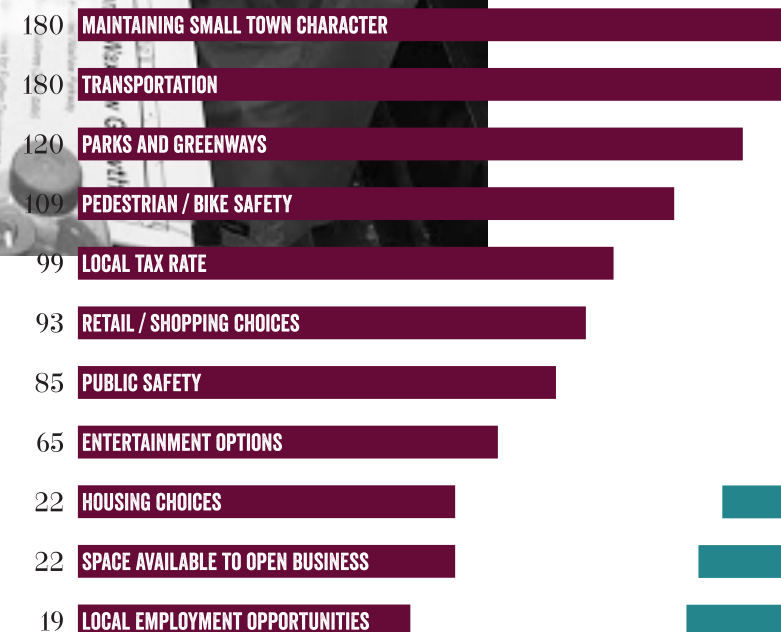
Increase opportunities for local commerce to thrive

### WALKABILITY

Improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to viable destinations

*I want to see more opportunities for...*

*Areas of concern for growth...*





## DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

The four key themes are interrelated and call for a coordinated solution that can address all of the issues together. With this goal in mind, Waxhaw Planning Staff has designated three types of unique growth areas to serve as targets for development as the Town continues to grow. Each of these “Centers” is strategically located and pre-zoned to attract a specific blend of land uses.



### Downtown Economic Center

The Downtown Economic Center zone is an extension of Waxhaw’s historic downtown area. This zone would contain a mix of retail, office, and light manufacturing uses. This zone could also offer a range of housing choices: single-family detached homes, townhomes, and limited upper story residential housing.



### Employment Center

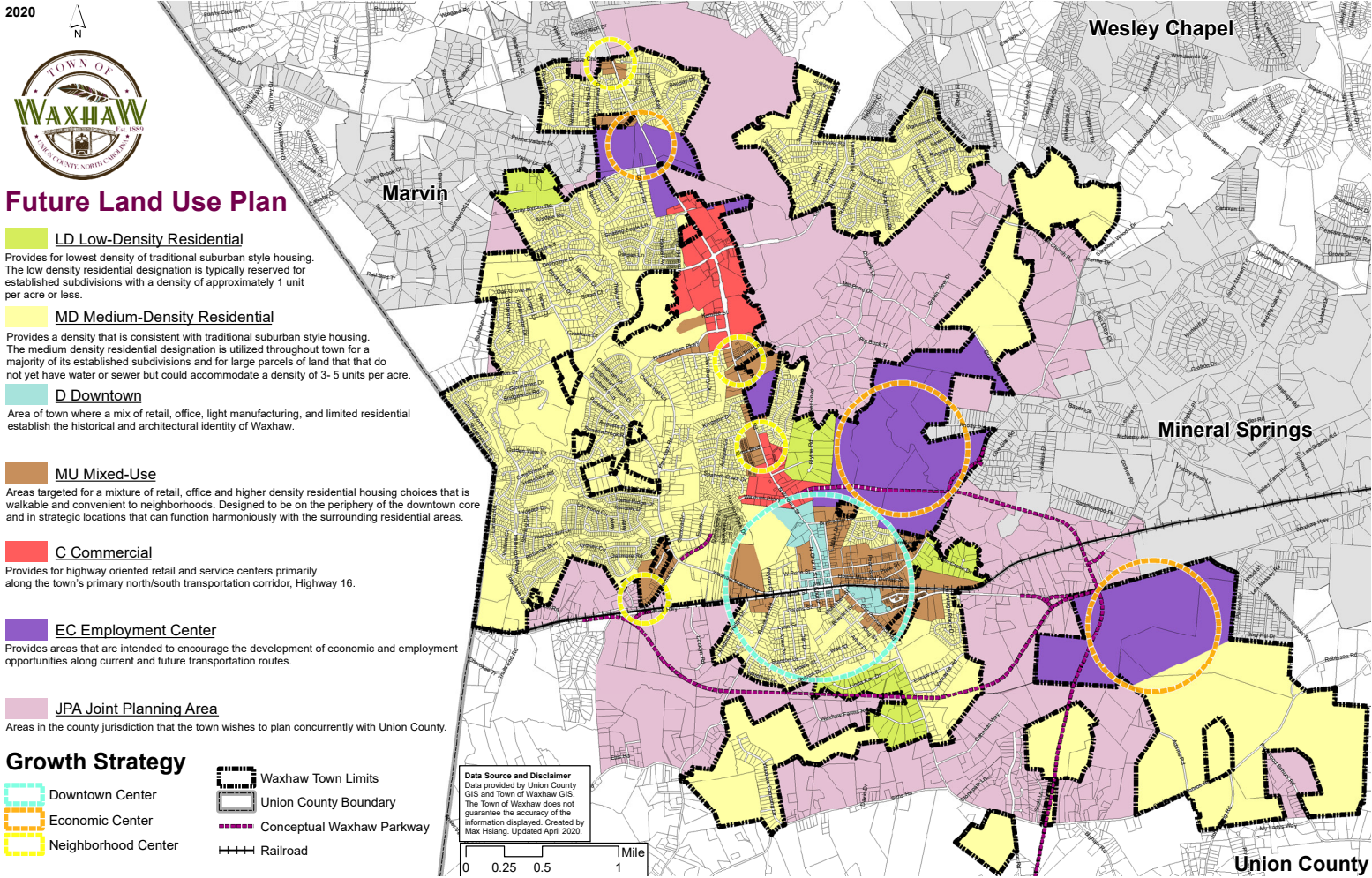
This development zone will be a major employment and economic center, built on large undeveloped parcels of land. Employment Centers would be located along existing and future major transportation routes, and there would be some housing opportunities in these zones.



### Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood Centers will be compact areas at a neighborhood scale. They will contain a mix of offices, public space, community facilities, and medium density housing choices. These will be a walkable setting, located conveniently near surrounding neighborhoods.

# FUTURE LAND USE MAP



The Future Land Use Map reflects Waxhaw’s planned growth strategy. It features locations for the three Development Zones with dashed circles. This eMap is organized around five themes: job creation, building and diversifying tax base, joint planning areas with Union County, diversifying housing stock, and economic development.

### JOB CREATION

- Allow highly skilled citizens more local opportunities
- Keep more trips local
- Support local commerce

### BUILD & DIVERSIFY TAX BASE

- Work towards sustainability
- Encourage growth in Waxhaw development centers

### JOINT PLANNING AREAS

- Plan for desired uses in Donut Holes
- Coordinate with Union County to plan “gap areas”

### DIVERSIFY HOUSING STOCK

- Provide greater housing choices
- Attract young professionals to live here”

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create opportunities for:

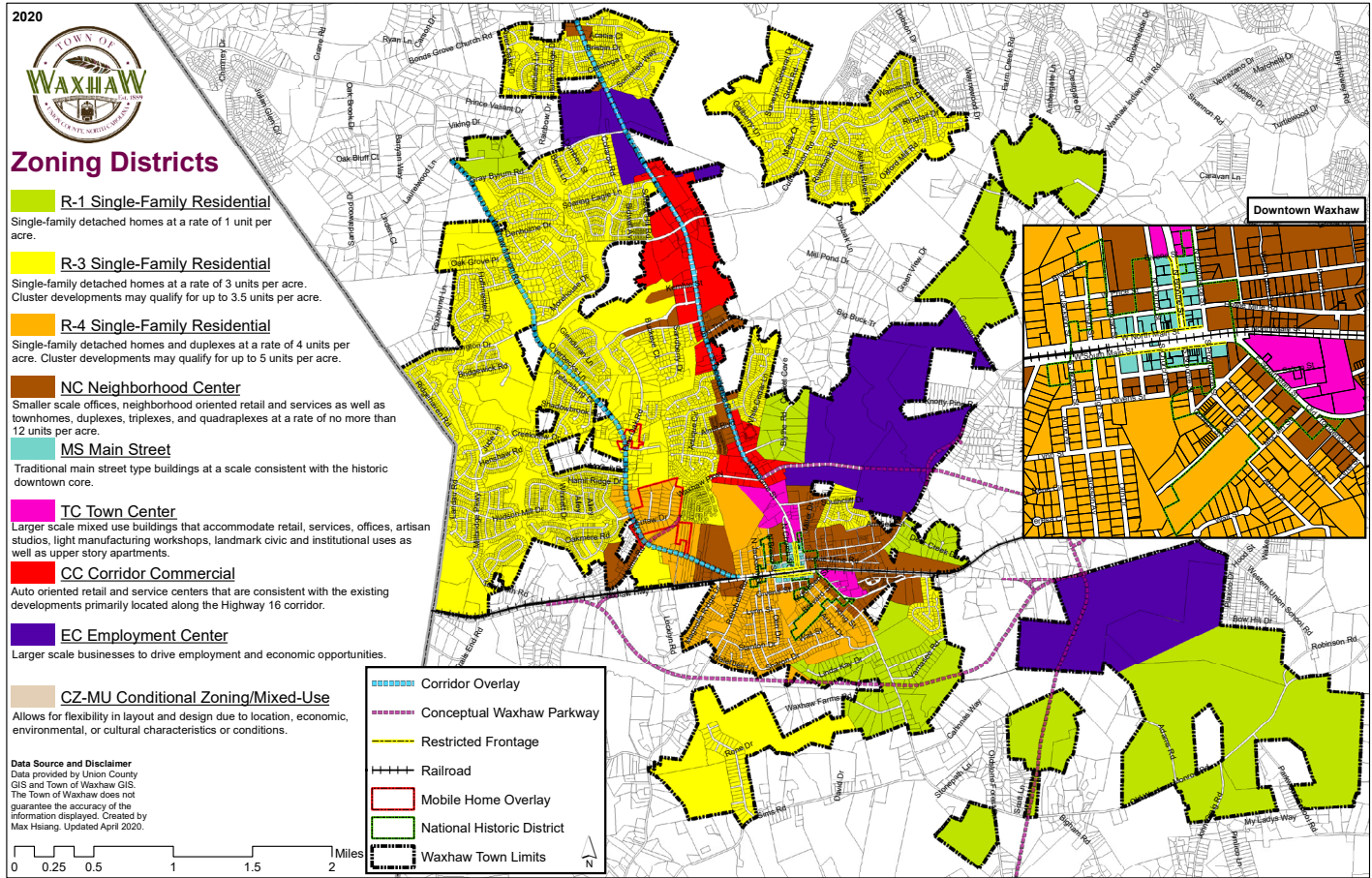
- Research & Development
- Hi-Tech Manufacturing
- Corporate Parks



# ZONING

The Waxhaw Zoning Map reduces Waxhaw’s Zoning Districts from 17 zones to 8 zones. This change reflects the community’s goals and expectations for Waxhaw’s future growth. Shown below are Waxhaw’s current zoning districts and how they are encompassed in the proposed zoning districts.

	Residential	Mixed Use	Commercial	Industrial	Downtown
CURRENT	R-1 R-2 R-3 R-4	RM-1 RM-2 NMX OIS UN	C-1 C-2 C-3 C-4	I-1 I-2	MS TC
PROPOSED	R-1 R-3 R-4	Neighborhood Center NC	Corridor Commercial CC	Employment Center EC	MS TC



# LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE GOALS

The Land Development Code (LDC) is replacing the former Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) for the Town of Waxhaw. The purpose of the LDC is to ensure that development within the town maintains a consistent look and feel to preserve the small town charm Waxhaw is famous for. The LDC

provides guidelines for the exterior design of incoming establishments, outdoor signage requirements, as well as a new zoning map. The LDC will serve both the Waxhaw community and potential developers by clearly communicating the town’s goals in an easy-to-follow format.

Zoning law is the primary way that the Town regulates land use. But while zoning designations permit certain types of development to occur, it does not mean that the current land use of that property will necessarily change in the immediate future.

With the new zoning districts applied to Waxhaw’s Zoning Map, several changes are notable:

- 1 The town intends to pre-zone the entire jurisdiction to be consistent with our revised future land use plan.
- 2 Due to the reduction of districts, many properties will see a change in their zoning district designation; but may not see a significant change in zoning requirements.
- 3 Properties that were once governed by Conditional Use and Conditional Zoning Districts will begin as general zoning districts. Conditional Use zoning will no longer be allowed by NC law. This change will result in a more streamlined development process. Conditional Zoning Districts will remain an option for petitioners in rezoning requests.
- 4 Approved and vested development projects under the current UDO can continue forward unabated per NC law.
- 5 Properties within the designated Development Centers are likely to see increased market activity as this new growth strategy begins to take effect.

The LDC is being developed with these goals in mind:

## A MORE SIMPLIFIED CODE

- The LDC will have a better flow easily understood by staff and developers
- Thirteen chapters with appendix
- Eight primary zoning districts, two overlays, and one conditional zoning option

## DIRECT LINK TO ADOPTED PLANS FOR:

- Transportation
- Pedestrian Improvements
- Parks & Recreation

## CONTENT NEUTRAL SIGN ORDINANCE

- Consistent with recent amendments to state law

## NEW ZONING MAP

- Waxhaw will pre-zone areas to fit the desired growth strategy



MS MAIN STREET

- Buildings along Waxhaw’s Main Street that are aligned with the look and feel of the historic buildings in this area. This may include a variety of storefront retail, eating and drinking establishments, artisan studios, general office space, and some upper story apartments.
- Designed to help maintain downtown Waxhaw’s streetscape and promote the preservation of the historic main street buildings.



R-1 RESIDENTIAL

- Single-family detached homes at a rate of 1 unit per acre, in a harmonious pattern with the rural character of Waxhaw’s surrounding areas.
- Traditional suburban housing in areas that might not have access to public water and sewer service.



TC TOWN CENTER

- Larger scale mixed use buildings that include retail, services, offices, artisan studios, light manufacturing workshops, and landmark civic and institutional uses.
- Designed to create an active urban core to provide employment, access to daily needs, entertainment, and housing.



R-3 RESIDENTIAL

- Single-family detached homes at a rate of 3 units per acre, in harmony with existing residential subdivisions in Waxhaw.



CC CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

- Auto-oriented retail and service centers that are consistent with existing developments located along the Highway 16 corridor.
- Retail and service uses that are conveniently accessed by automobile while providing pedestrian access as well.



R-4 RESIDENTIAL

- Single-family detached homes and duplexes at a rate of 4 units per acre.
- Development around Waxhaw’s downtown area to encourage walkability while preserving the small town character of downtown Waxhaw.



EC EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

- Larger scale businesses to promote employment and economic opportunities for a variety of industries.
- Office parks, light or high tech industrial campuses, and warehouse or distribution facilities that are well connected to current and future regional transportation routes.



NC NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

- Smaller scale offices, neighborhood-oriented retail and services, as well as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and quadraplexes at a rate of no more than 12 units per acre.
- Compact and walkable mixed use neighborhoods near downtown Waxhaw.





# LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE STRUCTURE

To simplify Waxhaw's development guidelines, the Land Development Code (LDC) has been streamlined to a total of thirteen chapters.

- 1 General Provisions
- 2 Administrative Agencies
- 3 Administration and Enforcement Procedures
- 4 Zoning Districts, Dimensional Requirements, and General Use Regulations
- 5 Subdivision Regulations
- 6 Design Standards
- 7 Streets, Driveways, and Parking
- 8 Buffering, Landscaping, and Lighting
- 9 Environmental Regulations
- 10 Signs
- 11 Non-Conforming Situations
- 12 Historic Preservation
- 13 Definitions

## WINTER 2020-21

- Adoption

## FALL 2020

- Conduct public hearings for new LDC and Zoning Map

# FAQ & NEXT STEPS

## WHERE WILL APARTMENTS BE ELIGIBLE FOR DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE NEW WAXHAW LAND USE PLAN?

Apartments will be allowed only within the Growth Districts but with the following restrictions.

In Downtown Waxhaw, apartments will be permitted only on the upper stories of Town Center and Main Street zones where retail or office space occupies the ground floor. In Neighborhood Centers, apartments can be developed only on upper stories as well and must have retail or office space on the ground floor.

Employment Centers will be the only development zone where apartments can be built from the ground up, and a Special Use Permit or Conditional Zoning will be required to do so.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THE WAXHAW COLLABORATIVE GROWTH STRATEGY, PLEASE CONTACT BLAIR ISRAEL AT [BISRAEL@WAXHAW.COM](mailto:BISRAEL@WAXHAW.COM).**

## Timeline

### SPRING-SUMMER 2020

- Draft LDC complete
- Planning Board & BOA revisions
- Public Input on Future Land Use and zoning map
- Prepare final draft and formatting

### SUMMER-FALL 2020

- Review final draft with Board of Commissioners
- Prepare final edits