



Blueprint Burke

A Strategic Land Use Plan

2016-2030



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Section 1 Introduction



History

Burke County is located in the western portion of North Carolina and is bordered by McDowell County to the west, Caldwell County to the northeast, Avery County to the north, Catawba County to the east, and Rutherford and Cleveland Counties to the south. Burke County was formed in 1777 when it was cut off from Rowan County. Originally, Burke County included all of the territory now occupied by Alexander, Buncombe, Caldwell, Haywood, Lincoln, McDowell, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Watauga, and Yancey counties. Burke County was named for Thomas

Burke, an Irish settler who later became the third governor of the state of North Carolina (1781-1782). The settlers of Burke County were largely Scottish, Irish, English, and Moravian, coming from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and the eastern part of the Carolinas. Immigrants from the Waldensian Valley of the Italian Alps also settled in the eastern part of the county.

The development of the county was initially spurred by the construction of the Norfolk-Southern Railroad in the 1880s. The railroad encouraged the development of industry and various small towns and villages along its length. The Pisgah National Forest extends into the northwest section of the county. The county also contains the Catawba River, Rhodhiss Lake, and Lake James. Overall, the topography of the county is rugged with more level areas in the central section. The topography of central Burke County is shaped by the Piedmont Plateau, in the northern part of county the landforms are shaped by the Appalachian Mountain Region, and the southern part of the county they are a result of the formation of the South Mountains.

Location

The major interstate highway in Burke County is I-40, which runs east-west. Other major roads in the county include U.S. 70, U.S. 64, N.C. 181, and N.C. 18. Municipalities within Burke County include Morganton, the largest municipality and county seat, Glen Alpine, Drexel, Valdese, Rutherford College, Connelly Springs, and Hildebran; as well as portions of Rhodhiss, Hickory, and Longview.

The total land area of the County is 505 square miles. The current population (2015) is estimated to be at 90,723. Regardless of the population estimates used to project the future growth of Burke County, good planning practices will help to maintain the high quality of life enjoyed by today's and tomorrow's residents.

Past Planning Efforts

In 2002 the Burke County Strategic Plan recommended that the county pursue a small area planning process in nine distinct geographic areas of the county. These nine small area plans would come together to replace and update the last comprehensive land use plan which was adopted in 1993. As of 2011, five (5) small area plans were completed. Due to the change in the economic climate of Burke County it was decided to abandon the small area plan concept as older small area plans were quickly becoming obsolete and the process could not adequately represent the quickly evolving social and economic changes occurring in Burke County. In 2015 it was decided to create a strategic land use plan which would represent the entire county, based on individual policy areas instead of geographic regions.

Vision Statement

“The Burke County Land Use Plan seeks to promote planned economic, recreational, and residential growth in harmony with areas most suitable for development while preserving community character and protecting the county’s rural and natural areas.”

The policies and Future Land Use Map set forth in this plan communicate an overall growth strategy for Burke County. General guiding principles include:

- Open dialogue and communication between all stakeholders to encourage public input and support.
- Economic and residential growth along key transportation corridors including NC 70, Interstate 40, NC 18, and NC 64.
- Preservation of rural open spaces for agricultural uses.
- Promotion of outdoor recreation areas to include Lake James, Lake Rhodhiss, Lake Hickory, the Catawba River, John’s River, Linville Gorge, Pisgah National Forest, Lake James State Park, and South Mountain State Park.
- Expansion of alternative transportation options and the upgrading of existing roads and transportation infrastructure.
- Coordination between rural and urban entities to promote joint development ventures and recreational opportunities such as the Fonta Flora State Trail from Morganton to Lake James.
- Expansion of utilities and internet capabilities to underserved regions of the county to include a strong push for County-wide Broadband access.
- Enhancing the health and well-being of the citizens of Burke County to include an aggressive parks, recreation, and trails strategy.

These general policies illustrate the overall intentions of this Land Use Plan and should be utilized in conjunction with the appropriate Land Use Policy Section and the Future Land Use Map contained herein to determine specific policy decisions for Burke County.



Demographic and Statistical Data

It is critical in any land use planning project to examine statistical data which represents developmental growth in the project area. This plan will examine construction trends over the past ten years as well as population and employment data.

When analyzing growth trends in a county, several different factors are taken into account. One of these is construction. Economic variables have affected construction in the county over the past ten years. Most notable is the loss of the furniture industry. Construction patterns can be measured by examination of building permits in the following tables.

New construction in Burke County peaked during the years 2006/2007 and has declined ever since then. The numbers seem to have leveled off somewhat since 2011 and 2012. It should be noted that this analysis does not represent all building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits issued during this time frame for residential and commercial projects. Only permits issued for new construction were included. Renovation and change of use permits were not included.

The results are displayed in the following tables.



New Residential Construction

The graph above indicates the 10 year trend for new residential construction within Burke County. The figures represent the following types of residential construction activity.

Single family detached, Single family attached, Modular Homes, Single-wide manufactured homes, double-wide manufactured homes, and modular homes. Residential permits have declined from a high of 499 in 2006 to a low of 145 in 2014. This represents a 71% drop since 2006, when the housing market reached its peak.

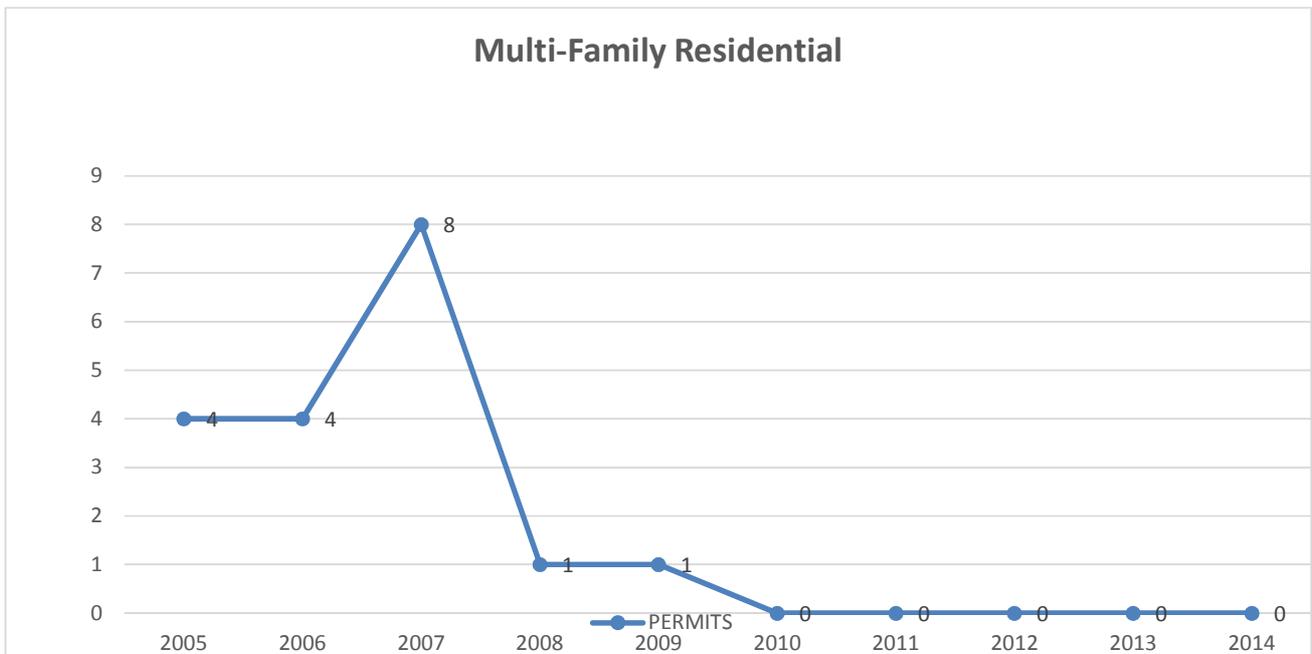
The financial crisis of 2008 is the reason behind an overall drop in single-family housing permits. The same crisis has effected all other housing types as well. Though some improvement has been seen over that past 12 months, the housing market has been slow to recover from this crisis due to an oversaturation of repossessed homes and a compendium of federal regulations, primarily affecting financial institutions and their customers. Both the Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, commonly referred to as the Doff-Frank”, is supposed to lower risk in

various parts of the U.S. financial system. The Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 (SAFE Act) mandates a nationwide licensing and registration system for residential mortgage loan originators (MLO's).

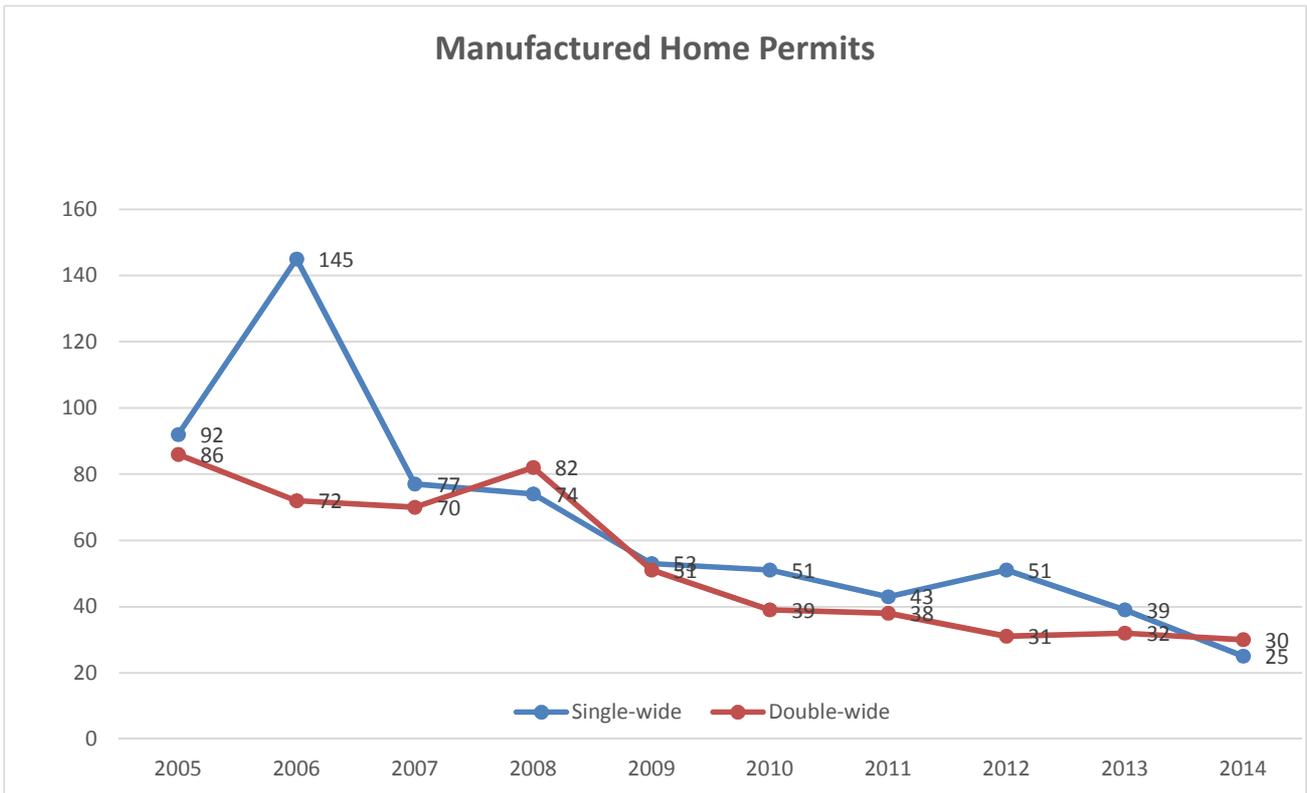


Residential Construction

Single family dwelling: A building designed for or occupies exclusively by one (1) family in a single dwelling unit. Single family dwellings include Modular Homes.

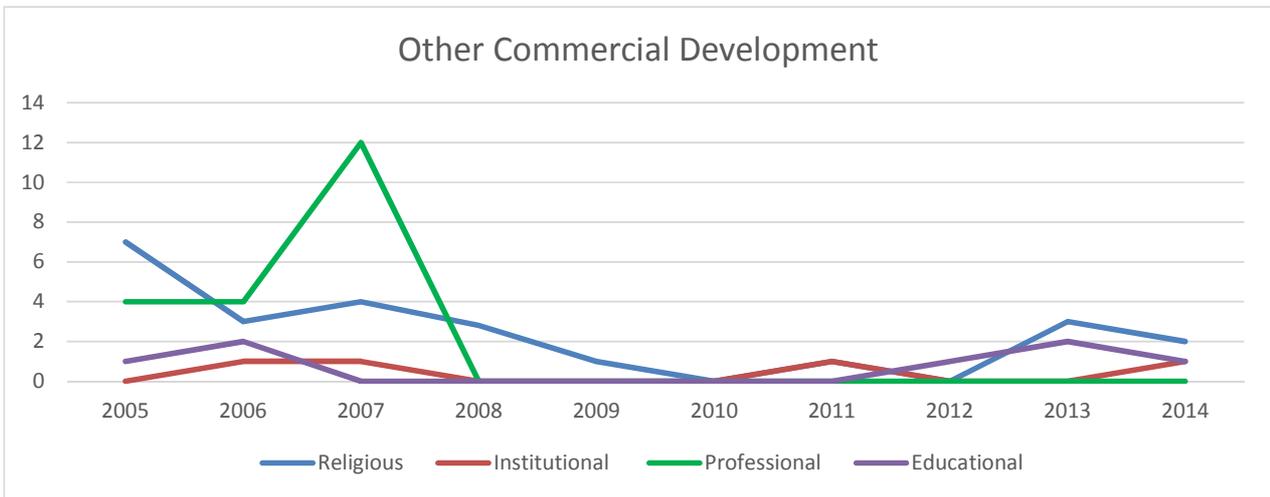
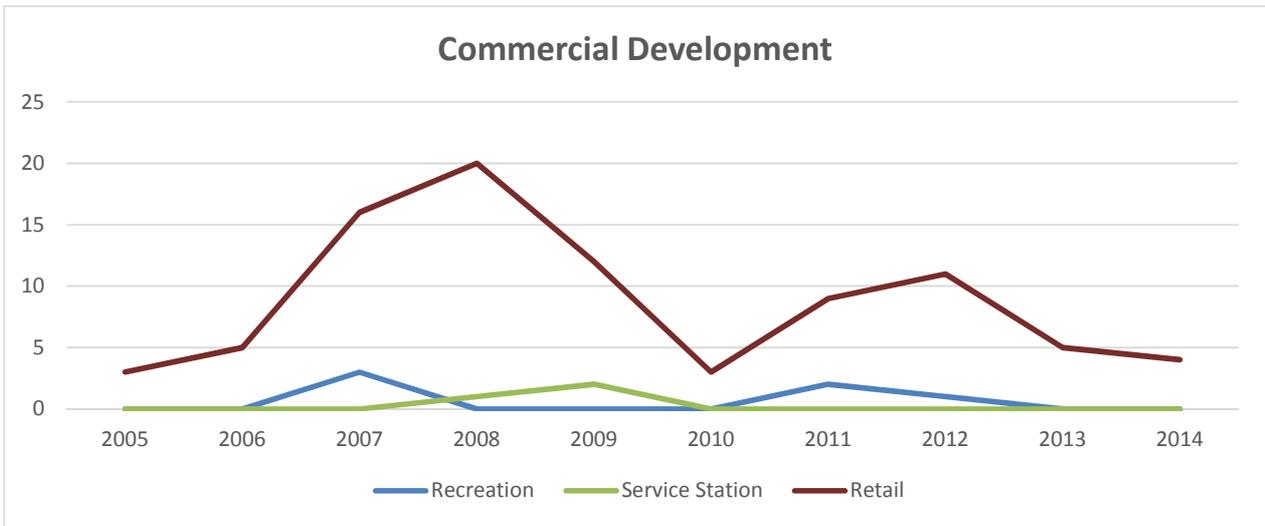


Multi-family dwelling: A building or portion thereof used for or designed as residence for three (3) or more families living independently of each other and doing their own cooking therein including condos, townhouses and apartments. Multi-family housing construction has been completely absent for the past six years. Although this type of housing has increased rapidly state-wide, especially in urban areas, it has not materialized in rural areas. Burke County does not traditionally have a history of multi-family development.

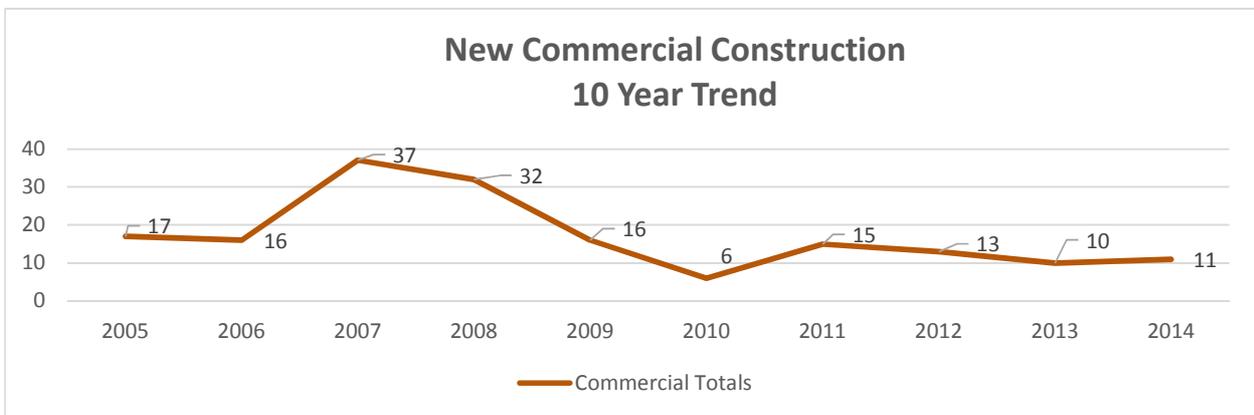


Manufactured home: A dwelling unit, constructed after July 1, 1976 that meets or exceeds the construction standards of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There has been an 82 percent drop in manufactured home permits since their peak in 2006 until 2014. This shift is also attributed to the Financial Crisis of 2008. Loss of jobs, double digit unemployment, foreclosures, and government mandated home loan restructuring hit the overall housing market hard .

A Commercial Use is an activity of a business enterprise, occupation, or employment that is carried on for the primary objective of making and sustaining a profit.



Buildings or portion of buildings uses by business, professional, religious, charitable and fraternal offices or agencies wherein services are performed involving predominantly administrative, professional, or clerical operations.



New Commercial Construction

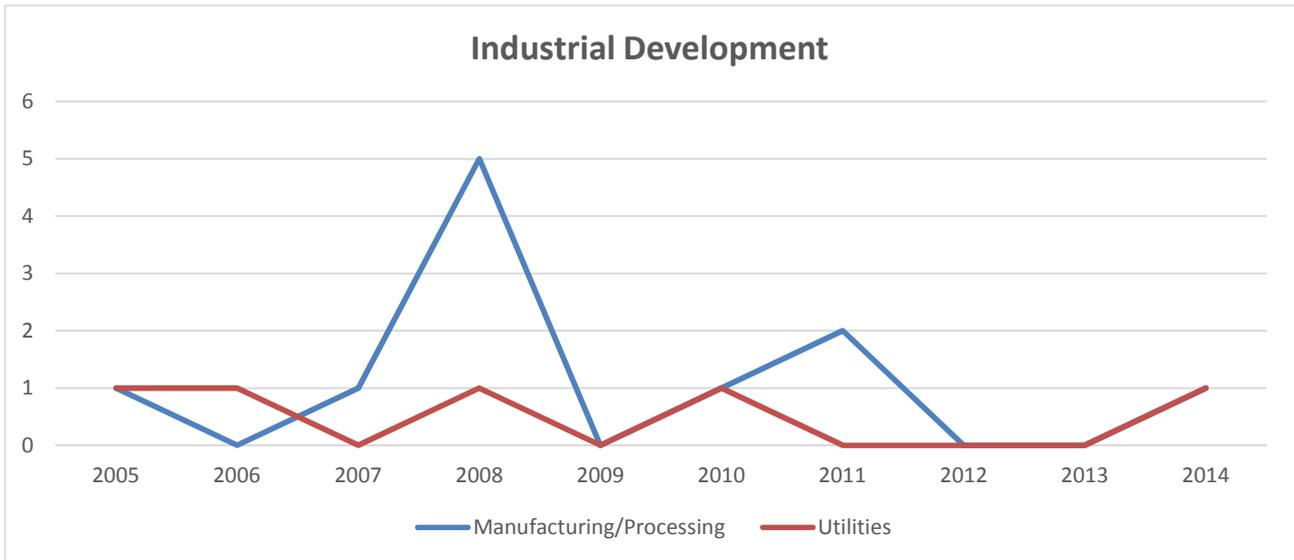
The graph above indicates the 10-year trend from new commercial/industrial construction within Burke County. The figures represent the following types of commercial/industrial activity:



Food Service, lodging, Recreation, Religious, Industrial, Institutional, Professional Office Space, Retail, Public Utilities, and Service Stations. All of the business sectors shown above were affected by the economic recession of 2008 and Burke County is still feeling those affects in 2016.



As of the second quarter of 2015, Burke county is employing 598 workers in the construction industry at an average wage of \$630.00 per week (Source: N.C. Dept. of Commerce).



An Industrial Use is an activity including resource extraction, manufacturing, warehousing, storage, distribution, shipping, and other related uses.

Burke County had once been a thriving industrial area within western North Carolina. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed a gold rush and the rise of timber, textile and furniture industries and an influx of state institutions. Unfortunately, the gold, textile and furniture industries have suffered in recent years.



Burke County is working hard to re-establish its industrial base. There are several successful manufacturers of automobile and electronic components within Burke County and the furniture industry is starting to make a comeback. Recently, efforts have also focused on the entertainment, retirement and outdoor recreation industries. As of the second quarter of 2015, Burke County is employing 7, 951 workers in the manufacturing industry at an average wage of \$800.00 per week (Source: N.C. Dept. of Commerce).

The state still has a strong presence in Burke County with Broughton Hospital, the J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center, North Carolina School for the Deaf, and the future North Carolina School for Math and Science.



Broughton Hospital

Established in 1883, **Broughton Hospital** serves approximately 800 patients per year and employs approximately 1200 staff members, with a \$98 million annual operating budget. In 2011, Broughton began hiring temporary and contract staff to help control overhead costs. Broughton will complete a new facility in 2016 that will house the hospital departments and patient divisions under one roof, on the existing grounds. The main building will be preserved as a historical landmark to be used as office space.

The **North Carolina School for the Deaf** one of two primary public schools established in 1894 for hearing-impaired students in first through 12th grade in North Carolina. The school offers an education program as well as vocational rehabilitation service on campus for students after graduation.



The school is on a national historic district campus in Morganton, North Carolina with 12 buildings on 160 acres of land. The school now has an annual budget of over \$10 million. The historic district encompasses 14 historic buildings constructed between about 1891 and 1939.



J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center (JIRDC), located in Morganton, is the state-operated developmental center for North Carolina's western region. Riddle provides services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), complex behavioral challenges and/or medical conditions whose clinical treatment needs exceed the level of care available in the community.

Population

Census data also provides indicators of development. Between Census 2000 and Census 2010 the county's population grew 2% from 89,148 to 90,912. However population estimates from 2010 to 2013 show a decrease of 1.5% to 89,552. The chart below shows population changes by age group from the 2000 census to the 2010 census. The largest increases in population occurred in the 60 to 64 age range and most increases occurred in the age ranges from 45 years of age and older. The only other age group that showed an increase was the 15 to 19 age group. All other age groups showed a decrease. The numbers are displayed below.

Historical

Age Group	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change 2000-2010	% Change 2000-2010
Under 5 Years	5,509	5,068	441	8.0
5 to 14 Years	12,289	11,157	1,132	-18.5
15 to 24 Years	11,533	12,209	676	10.7
25 to 34 Years	12,530	9,727	2,803	-22.4
35 to 44 Years	13,878	12,160	1,718	-12.4
45 to 54 Years	12,343	13,800	1,457	11.8
55 to 59 Years	4,936	6,151	1,215	24.6
60 to 64 Years	4,144	5,967	1,823	44.0
65 to 74 Years	6,693	8,272	1,579	23.6
75 to 84 Years	3,926	4,725	799	20.4
85 Years and Over	1,367	1,676	309	22.6
Total	8,9148	90,912	1,764	2.0

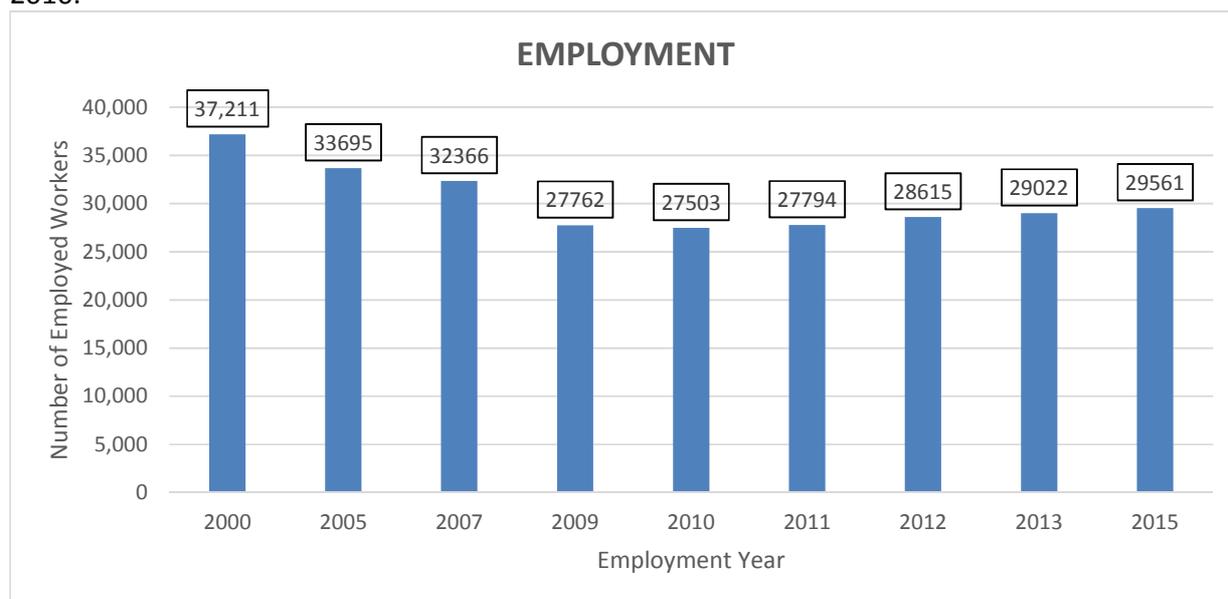
Projected

	2020 Estimates	Change 2010-2020	% Change 2010-2020
Under 5 Years	4,380	688	-13.6
5 to 14 Years	9,347	1,810	-32.8
15 to 24 Years	12,349	140	6.1
25 to 34 Years	10,301	574	5.9
35 to 44 Years	9,243	2,917	-24.0
45 to 54 Years	11,529	2,271	-16.5
55 to 59 Years	6,492	341	5.5
60 to 64 Years	6,189	222	3.7
65 to 74 Years	10,267	1,995	24.1
75 to 84 Years	5,648	923	19.5
85 Years and Over	1,940	264	15.8
Total	87,685	3,227	3.5

Population numbers are significant as they provide insight into what age groups are moving into and out of the county. Land use policies can be engineered in a manner to encourage growth in these areas when we identify the motivations of individuals in various stages of their lives.

Employment

Employment trends are important to research as the availability of jobs can have an effect on residential patterns. Individuals are more likely to relocate in order to find work. Employment numbers in Burke County have dropped from 37,211 in 2000 to 27,503 in 2010. This is noteworthy and can be attributed to a decline in manufacturing (furniture and textiles) and the collapse of the housing market. As noted in the housing section, there has been a 71% drop in new housing permits between 2006 and 2014. Though current employment figures are not close to pre-recession numbers, Burke County has seen an overall increase in employment since 2010.



Current Employment Statistics

Industry	Jobs
2015Q1: Employment - Construction	555
2015Q1: Employment - Manufacturing	8082
2015Q1: Employment - Wholesale Trade	420
2015Q1: Employment - Retail Trade	2668
2015Q1: Employment - Transportation	412
2015Q1: Employment - Information	91
2015Q1: Employment - Finance and Insurance	341
2015Q1: Employment - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	168
2015Q1: Employment - Professional and Technical Services	461
2015Q1: Employment - Management of Companies and Enterprises	32
2015Q1: Employment - Administrative and Waste Services	983
2015Q1: Employment - Educational Services	1964
2015Q1: Employment - Health Care and Social Assistance	4973
2015Q1: Employment - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	128
2015Q1: Employment - Accommodation and Food Services	2333
2015Q1: Employment - Other Services Ex. Public Admin	435
2015Q1: Employment - Public Administration	2205

Section 2 Plan Purpose

Future land use plans provide a foundation and guide for local governments to use when deciding land use matters. Desired land use characteristics may influence zoning and conditional use



Historic Morganton Courthouse

decisions as well as economic development efforts. These plans are important in providing for the current and future needs of Burke County. County planners and policy makers such as the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Board of Commissioners use the plan to develop land use regulations such as the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance. Additionally, land use plans offer guidance when deciding land use cases such as re-zonings, ordinance amendments, and conditional use permits.

Good plans form a basis for how a community envisions their future. Areas of concern or special need are identified and resources may be allocated to those areas as needed. In addition, areas of opportunity are identified and the building blocks of development established in order to bring new life and interest in a community.

It is vital to involve citizens in the planning process. This is done through public meetings with committees and interest groups. Citizens provide insights that are not always apparent to staff members and county officials.

Thoughts and ideas are then prioritized and categorized in a manner so that a general set of goals and policies for future development can be established.



Linville Gorge

Section 3 Plan Process and Implementation

Process - The planning process began with the establishment of a steering committee comprised of citizens, business owners, realtors, and staff members. In order to develop a strategic land use plan the committee was tasked with identifying important growth and development issues present in the county. From there a series of meetings were held in order to approve a vision for Burke County, develop principles to achieve this vision, and review existing and future land use maps. The meetings were held at 11:30 am on the third Wednesday of the month in the County Commissioner’s Boardroom.



Land Use Plan Committee Meeting

A timeline for development of the plan was as follows:

March 2015	Introductions, Overview of Process, Review of existing land use, development trends in recent years
April 2015	Identification of Policy Areas
May 2015	Development of Transportation land use policies/Introduction of Housing Issues
June 2015	Development of Housing policies/Introduction of Infrastructure

August 2015	Development of Economic Development/Recreation policies
October 2015	Development of Agriculture/Environmental policies
November 2015	Staff Plan Development
December 2015	Staff Plan Development
February 2016	Review Draft Plan
May 2016	Adopt Final Plan

Implementation- Land use plans are the basis for land development regulations. These plans must be consulted and statements of consistency must be adopted when changes are made to county land use ordinances. In addition, the land use plan identifies the county's perspective on other matters of development such as the local economy, transportation, and the environment. The plan should be current and readily available to individuals dealing in land use. It is recommended that the plan be updated and reviewed a minimum of every five (5) years.

The Land Use Policies in Section 5 represent general principles that affect all development within the county. Specific policies should be identified to support proposed development and amendments to land use maps and regulations. These policies should be used in conjunction with the Future Land Use Map in Section 6 to determine if the proposed development is desired in the identified location. Statements of consistency in support of or against proposed development should contain references to these two sections.

County staff will primarily use the plan to generate reports for the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners when citizens make a development request. Staff may also use the plan when consulting with outside agencies such as the council of government or various state agencies to identify county positions on land use issues.

The Planning Board will review all land use proposals before the Board of Commissioners. They will use the plan to support their recommendations on land use matters. The board may ask for further information beyond what has been provided by staff. More emphasis may be placed on different areas of the plan and the proposed development. The Planning Board will then make a recommendation for approval or denial to the Board of Commissioners.

As the legislative body, the Board of Commissioners will make the final decision on land use matters. The board will review the recommendation of the planning board and staff reports to make a decision. Like the Planning Board, the Board of Commissioners may ask for more information or further review. Once a decision is made a statement of consistency will be adopted and specific areas of the plan identified which support the decision.

Citizens and developers will find it helpful to consult the plan before making development requests. This will increase the chances for a successful development request and reduce staff work and time.

Section 4 Existing Land Use and Regulations

Existing land uses in the county were identified and mapped by staff. These uses were divided into the categories shown below:

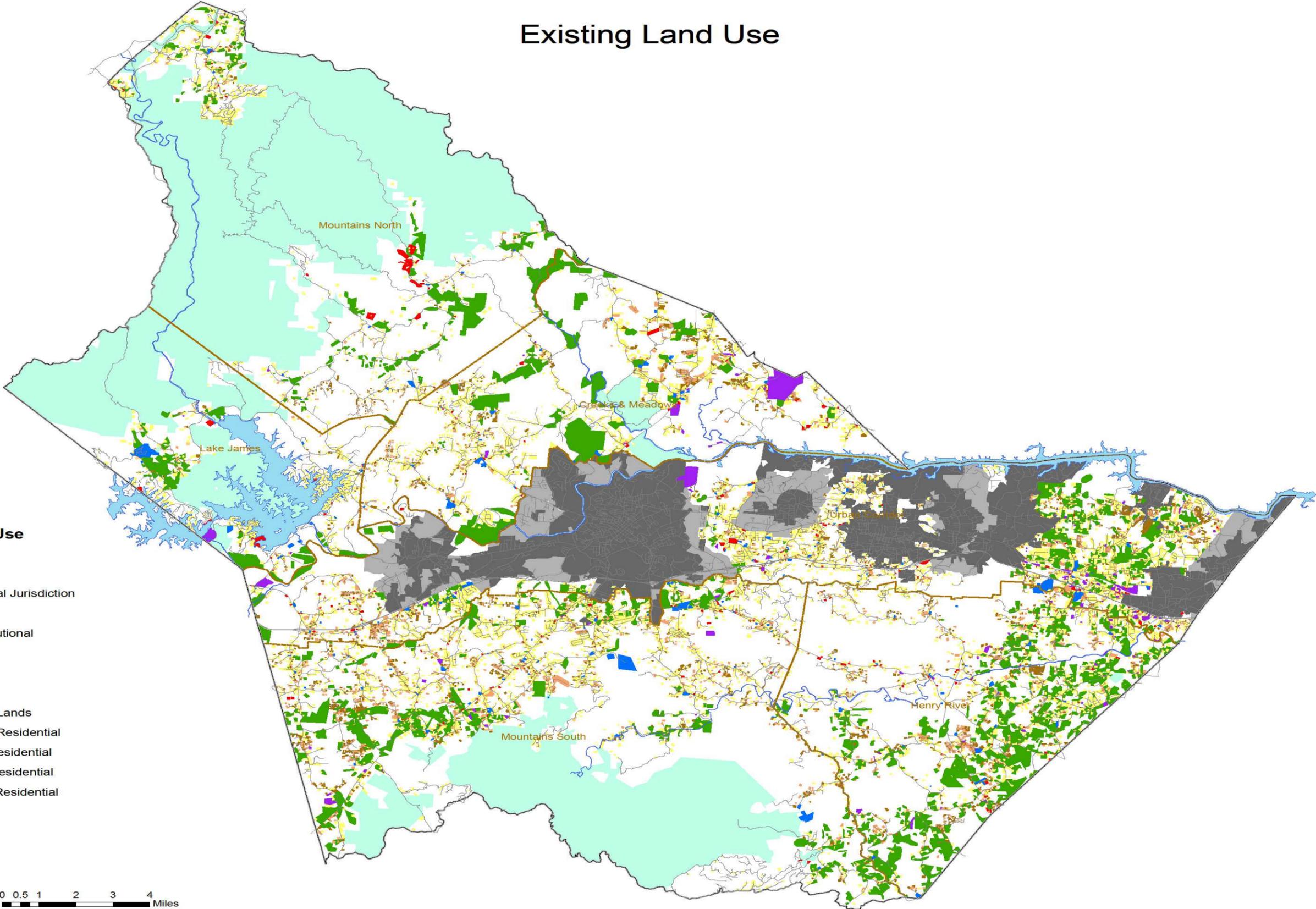
Land use	Total Acres	Percentage of County
Agriculture	19960	6.0%
Commercial	764	0.2%
City	27197	8.2%
Double-wide Manufactured	2985	0.9%
Extra Territorial Jurisdiction	9466	2.9%
Industrial	1297	0.4%
Multi-family Residential	88	0.0%
Office / Institutional	1305	0.4%
Parks / State Land	76316	23.1%
Single-family Residential	15850	4.8%
Single-wide Mobile Home	3505	1.1%
Vacant Land	172092	52.0%

Primary land uses tend to be located in specific areas of the county. For example, agricultural land is primarily located in the eastern part of the county. Industrial and commercial land uses are most likely to be found along the I-40 Corridor. National Forest land is primarily located in the northern, southern, areas of the county and State Park land is located in the western section of the county.

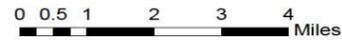
Burke County strongly supports economic development, and to that end, has created a Rural Mixed Use (R-MU) zoning district (*Page 20*). The R-MU district comprises approximately 60 percent of the land area within the county and as the name implies, allows a mixture of all land uses. Within this use district, anything from residential homes to auto repair garages to state facilities and institutions to mining quarries can be found.

The existing county land use map shows the current state of land uses in the county. This map helps to develop the future land use map in Section 6. The results are documented on the following maps.

Existing Land Use



- Legend**
- Focus Areas
 - Existing Land Use**
 - LUCode**
 - City
 - Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
 - Commercial
 - Office & Institutional
 - Industrial
 - Vacant
 - Agriculture
 - Parks / State Lands
 - Single-family Residential
 - Multi-family Residential
 - Single-wide Residential
 - Double-wide Residential



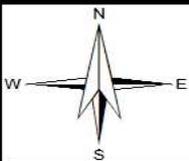
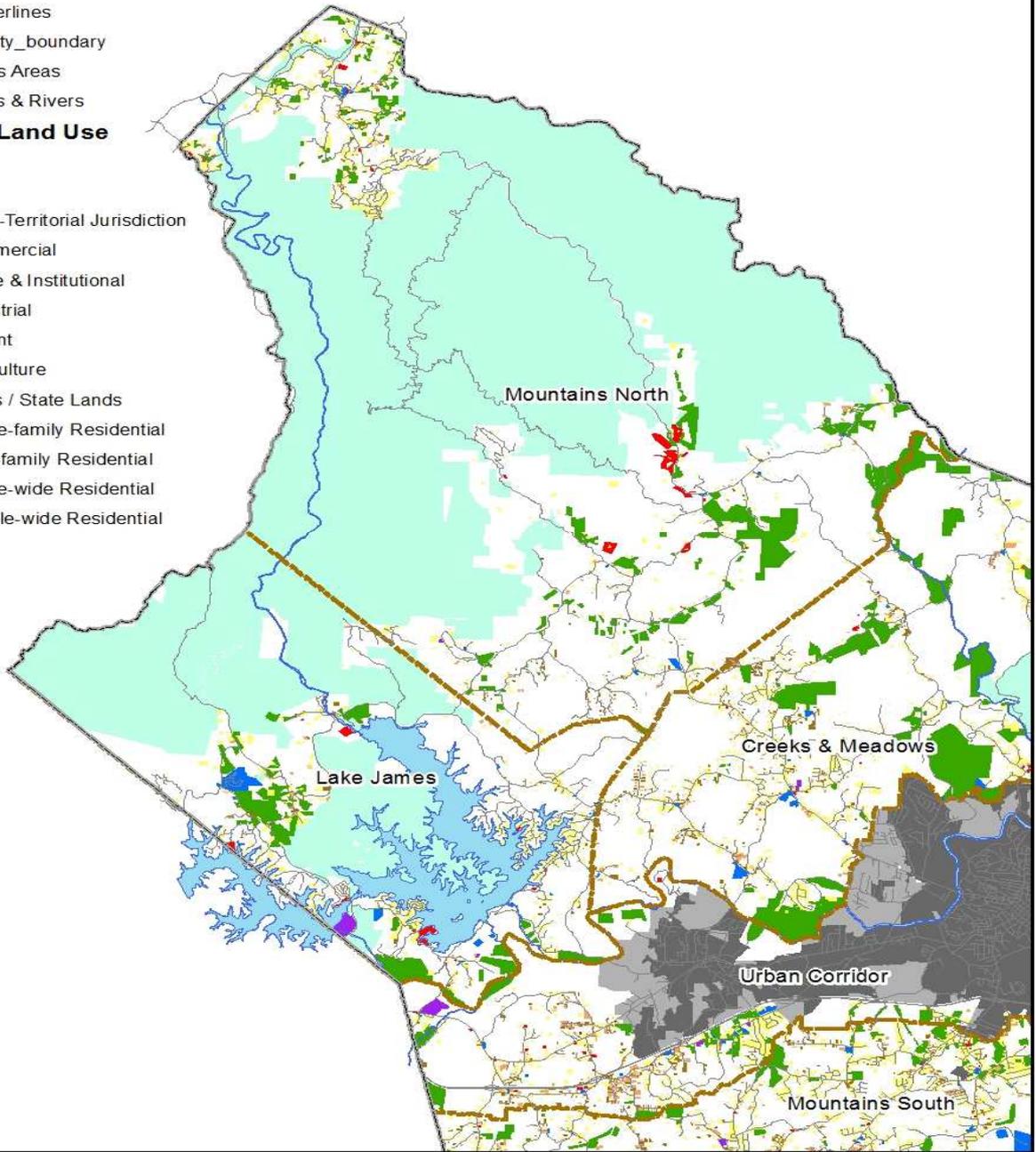
Legend

- Centerlines
- County_boundary
- Focus Areas
- Lakes & Rivers

Existing Land Use

LUCode

- City
- Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction
- Commercial
- Office & Institutional
- Industrial
- Vacant
- Agriculture
- Parks / State Lands
- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Single-wide Residential
- Double-wide Residential

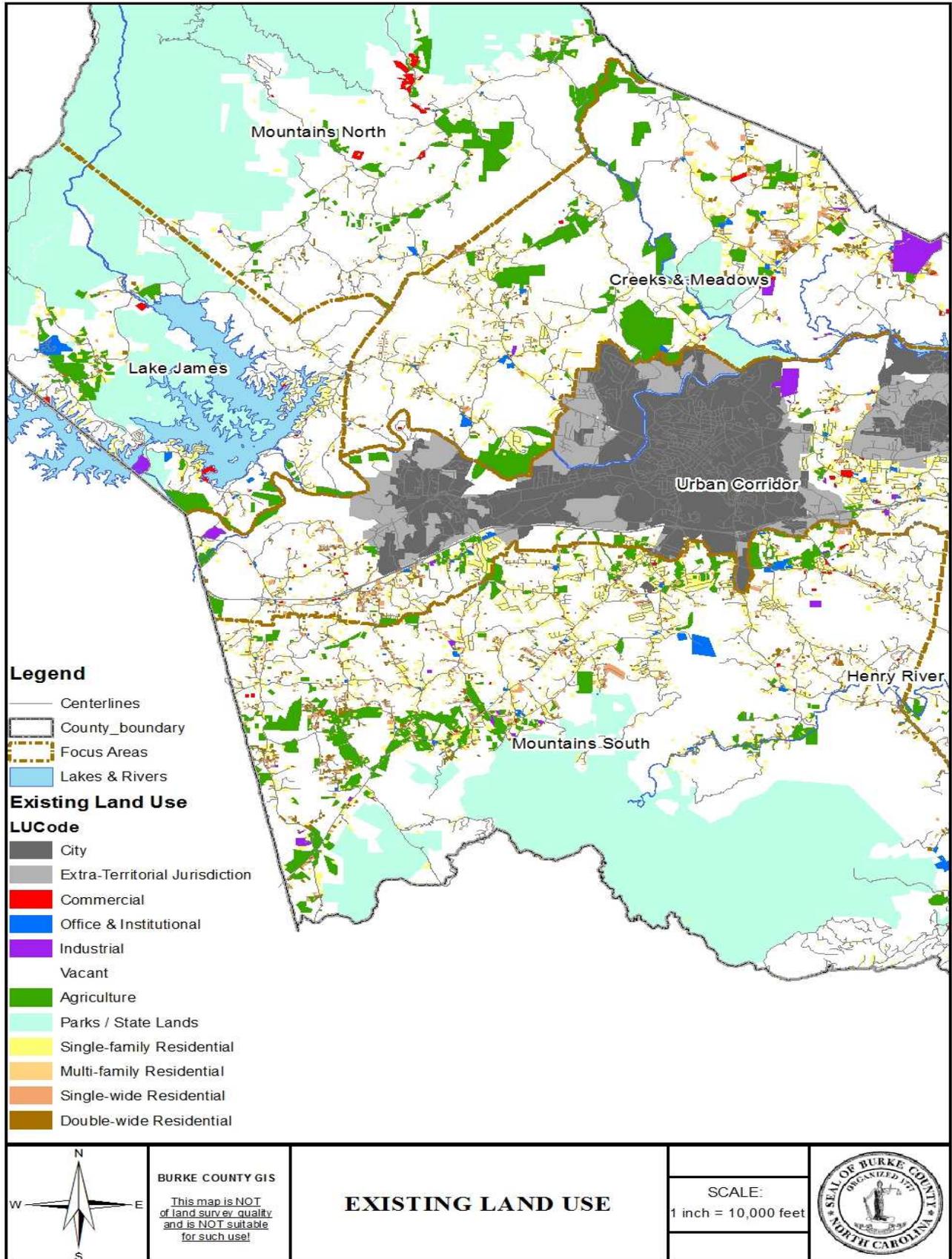


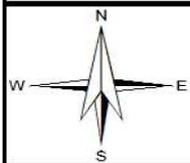
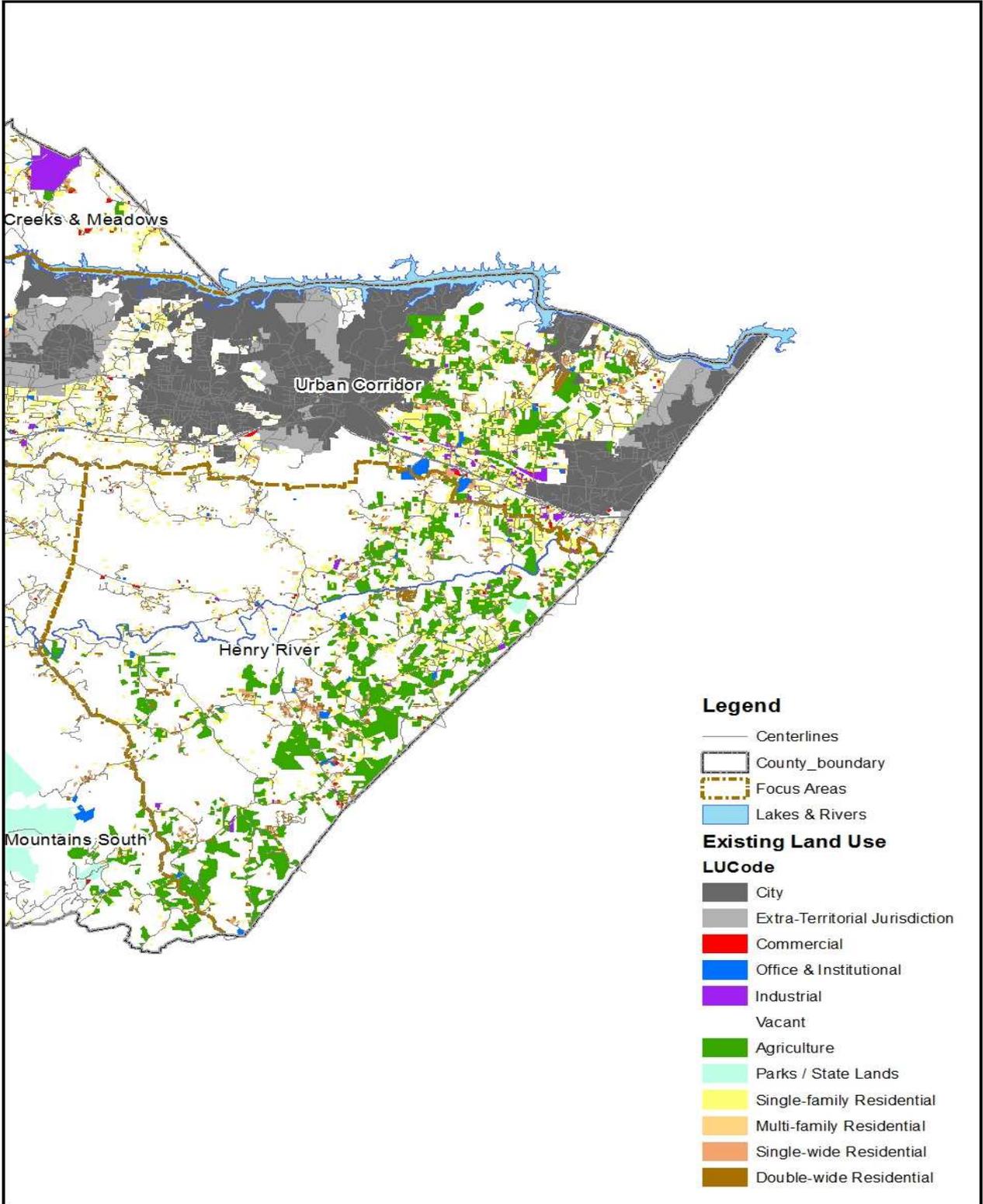
BURKE COUNTY GIS
 This map is NOT of land survey quality and is NOT suitable for such use!

EXISTING LAND USE

SCALE:
 1 inch = 10,000 feet







BURKE COUNTY GIS
 This map is NOT of land survey quality and is NOT suitable for such use!

EXISTING LAND USE

SCALE:
 1 inch = 10,000 feet



In addition to the existing land use data, the current zoning designations are included. Zoning regulations dictate which uses are permitted in each district. The current zoning districts for Burke County are as follows:

R-1 Residential District

The R-1 Residential District is composed of high to medium density single-family site built and modular homes in areas that have now, or are likely to have in the future both water and sewer availability. The R-1 district may also be located in areas without these services, but at reduced density levels. The characteristics of the district, and the uses allowed there, are primarily residential in nature. The regulations of this district are intended to discourage any use that, because of its character, would substantially interfere with the development of single-family residences which would be detrimental to the quiet residential nature of the areas included in this district.

R-2 Residential District

The R-2 Residential District is very similar to the R-1 district, however this district also allows multi-section mobile homes and multi-family housing options. These areas should also be served by public water systems and, in most cases, by private on-site septic systems. Allowable uses in this district are also sensitive to the residential character of the area and non-residential uses are limited.

R-3 Residential – Agricultural District (formerly R-A)

The R-3 Residential District is a less restrictive medium density residential district that allows a broader range of residential uses including single and multi-section mobile homes and a greater variety of compatible non-residential uses in areas that may be less suburban in nature. Public water should be available to most areas within this district.

O-I Office and Institutional District

The O-I Office and Institutional District is designed to provide a wide range of professional and economic office space, as well as space for public and quasi-public uses. The regulations are intended to provide for adequate traffic access and parking facilities in addition to prohibiting any use which, because of its character, would interfere with the office/institutional nature of this district. The Office Institutional District is eligible for voluntary parallel conditional rezoning process set forth in Article IX-A.

N-B Neighborhood Business District

The N-B Neighborhood Business District is intended for the use of those businesses and other uses which are properly located near rural service centers.

G-B General Business District

The G-B General Business District is established to provide suitable locations for those commercial activities which serve the general public, including those which function rather independently of each other. The General Business District is eligible for voluntary parallel conditional rezoning process set forth in Article IX-A.

IND Industrial District

The IND Industrial District is established as a district in which the principal use of land is for industrial and warehousing uses which normally seek large tracts of land where the operations involved do not detract from the development potential of nearby undeveloped properties. The Industrial District is eligible for voluntary parallel conditional rezoning process set forth in Article IX-A.

R-MU Rural Mixed-Use District

The R-MU district occurs in more rural areas of the county where the availability of public services such as water and sewer may not be available in the foreseeable future. Such a district allows low-density residential and non-residential development to occur in greater variety, and with fewer restrictions, than in more urbanized portions of the county. Lower density development will result in fewer conflicts between adjacent landowners and can contribute to maintaining the rural appearance of the area.

L-I Light Industrial District

The Light Industrial District (L-I) is established for uses that would not have significant negative environmental or land use impact on surrounding residential or business districts. Permitted uses will not create any substantial noise, smoke, vibration, odor, or traffic that may endanger the health and safety of the surrounding area. This district will have a minimal impact on the surrounding properties and area with the follow restrictions:

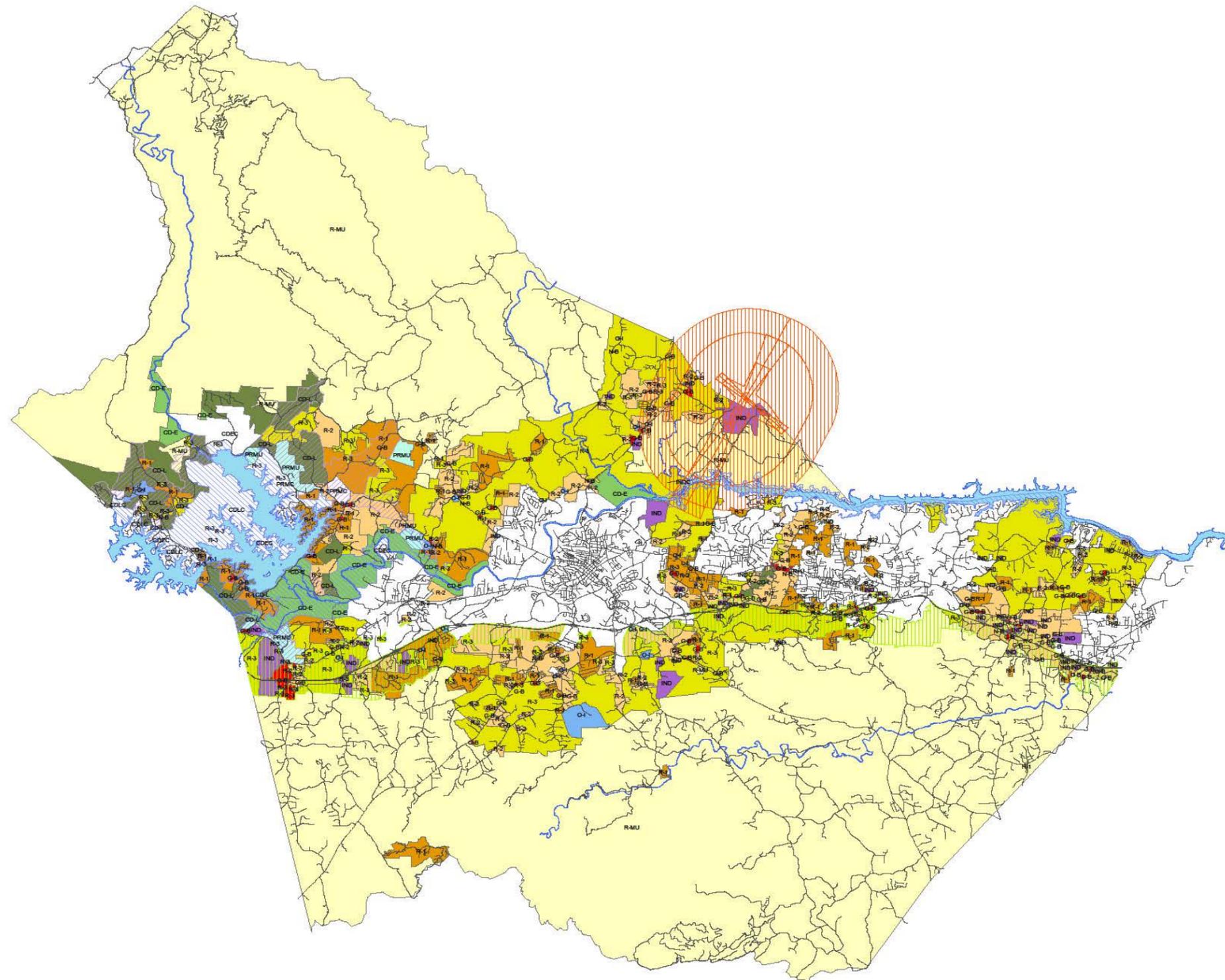
Conservation Districts

The Conservation (C-D) Districts allow a limited amount of low density residential development and associated uses in order to provide adequate protection for environmental areas and wildlife habitat, protect viable working farms, maintain the integrity or rural viewsheds, and limit the amount of potential property damage associated with existing natural hazards. Subdivisions in either Conservation District are required to set aside a minimum of 25% of the total project area as permanent open space and no more than 50% of this open space may be dedicated for public or private recreational use. If dedicated for private recreational use, the property must be maintained by the property owners association or other county approved entity. If the property is dedicated for public use, then it shall be maintained by the County or other county approved entity. No more than 50% of this open space may be dedicated for public or private recreational use. The balance of the open space must be protected in its natural state to preserve the environmental integrity of the overall project area as much as possible. Structures sited on parcels within conservation districts must be located within a designated building envelope which may not include flood areas, buffer strips, slopes in excess of 25%, or wetlands. Major proposed developments of this type having over 50 lots are strongly encouraged to rezone to a Conservation Parallel Conditional District.

Official Zoning Map Burke County North Carolina

Legend

- Streets
- Grid
- Lake Overlay
- Scenic Overlay
- I-40 Overlay
- Airport Overlay
- Lakes & Rivers
- R-1 Residential Low Density
- R-2 Residential Medium Density
- R-3 Residential
- R-MU Rural Mixed Use
- PRMU Planned Residential Mixed-Use
- PRMU-CD
- CD-L Low Density Conservation
- CD-L-CD Low Density Conditional
- CD-E Estate Lots
- CD-E-CD Estate Lots Conditional
- N-B Neighborhood Business
- G-B General Business
- GB-CD General Business Conditional
- O-I Office & Institutional
- L-I Light Industrial
- IND Industrial
- IND-CD



This map is hereby adopted as the Official Burke County Zoning Map.
This the ___ day of _____, 20__.

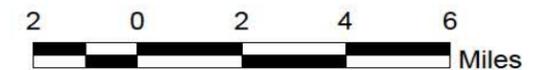
Maynard M. Taylor, Chair
Burke County Board of Commissioners

Kay Honeycutt, Clerk to the Board

The Official Zoning Maps of Burke County,
were approved on December 17, 1996
and became effective January 1, 1997.
Revised: May, 2013

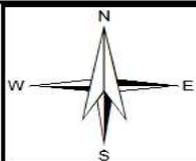
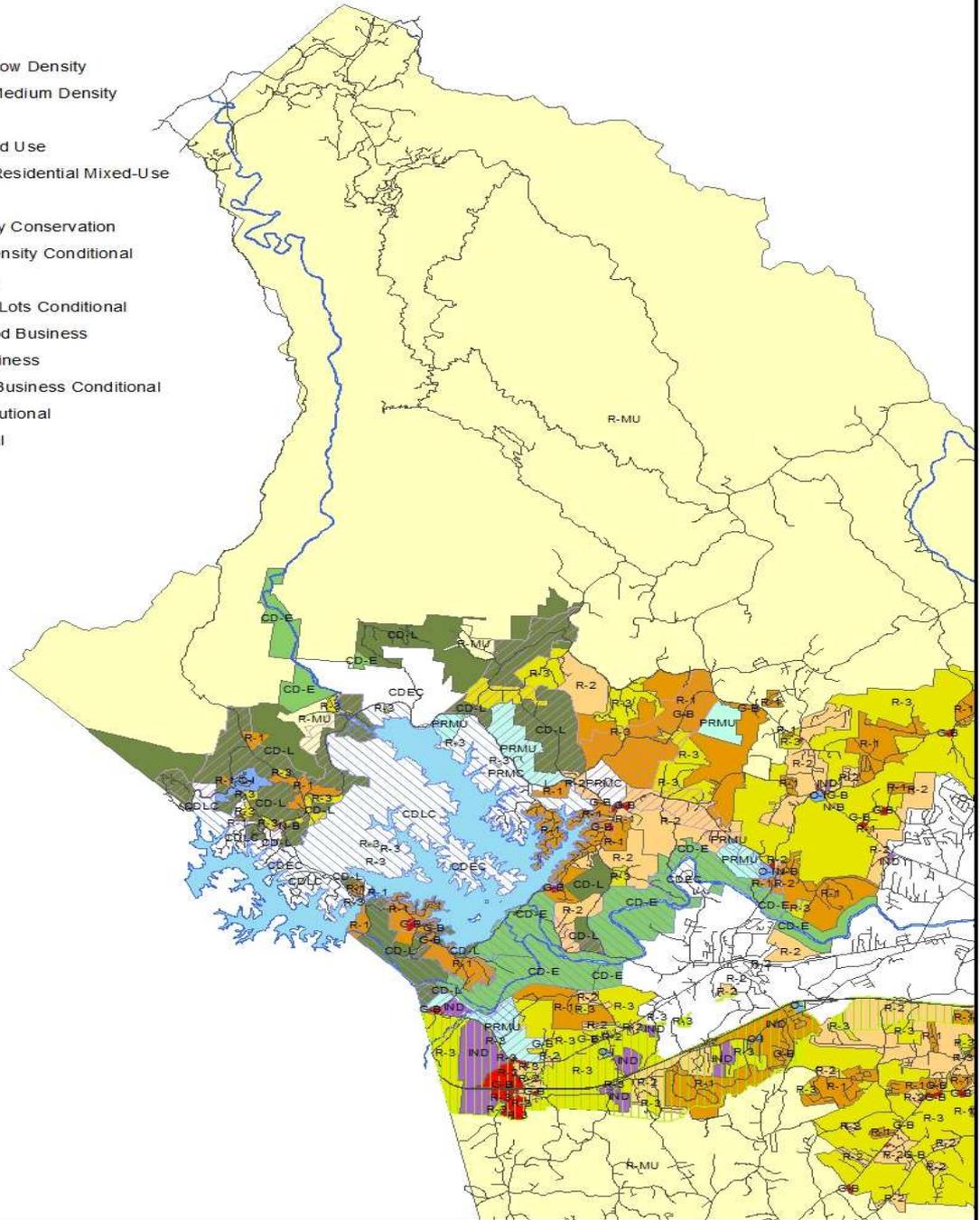


This map was compiled from information provided by the
Community Development Department.
Prepared by: Burke County GIS



Legend

- Streets
-  Lake Overlay
-  Scenic Overlay
-  I-40 Overlay
-  Airport Overlay
-  Lakes & Rivers
-  R-1 Residential Low Density
-  R-2 Residential Medium Density
-  R-3 Residential
-  R-MU Rural Mixed Use
-  PRMU Planned Residential Mixed-Use
-  PRMU-CD
-  CD-L Low Density Conservation
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-  IND Industrial
-  IND-CD

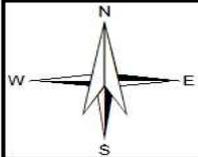
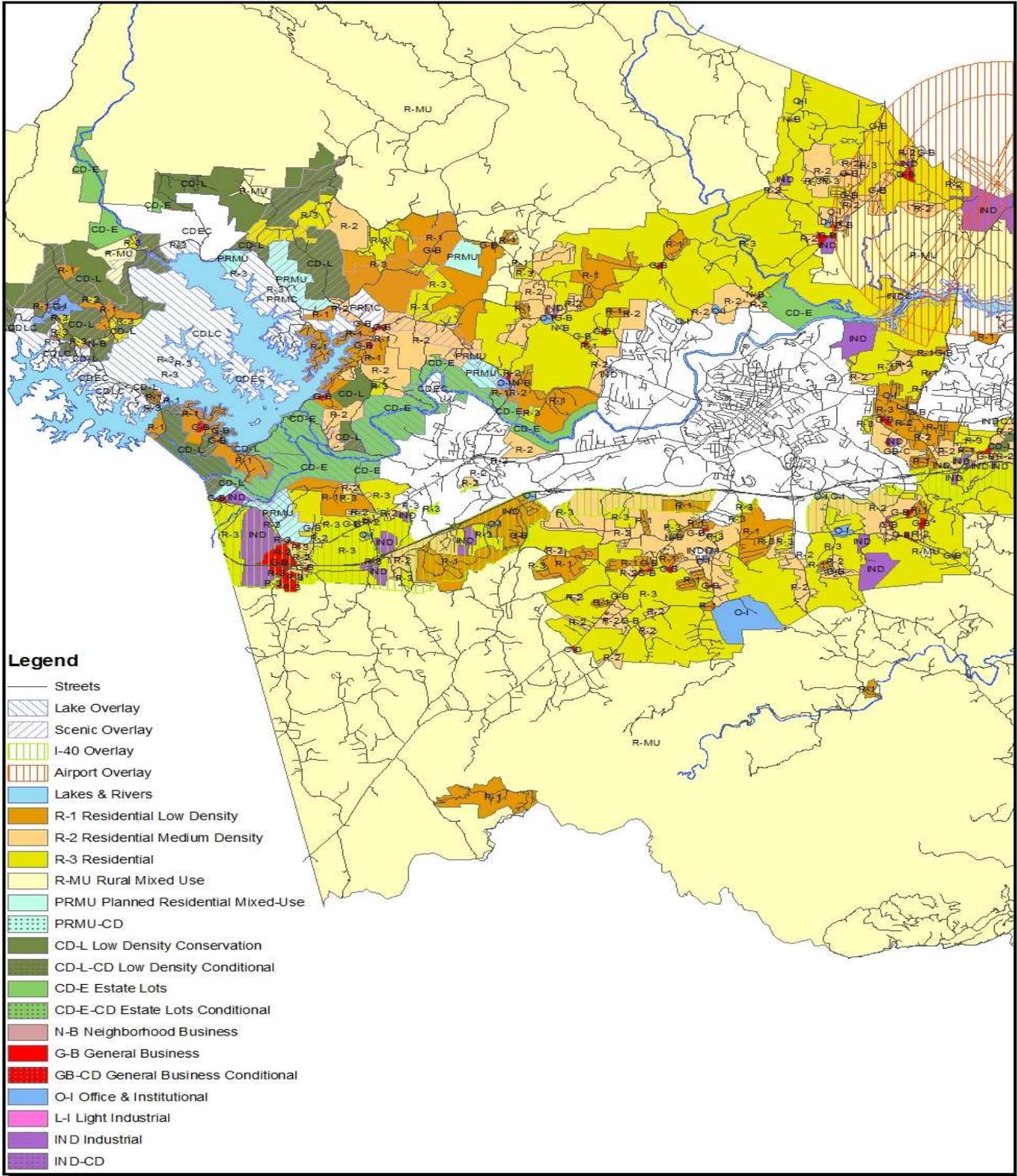


BURKE COUNTY GIS
 This map is NOT
 of land survey quality
 and is NOT suitable
 for such use!

EXISTING ZONING MAP

SCALE:
 1 inch = 10,000 feet



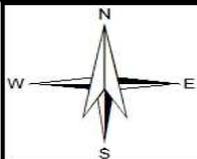
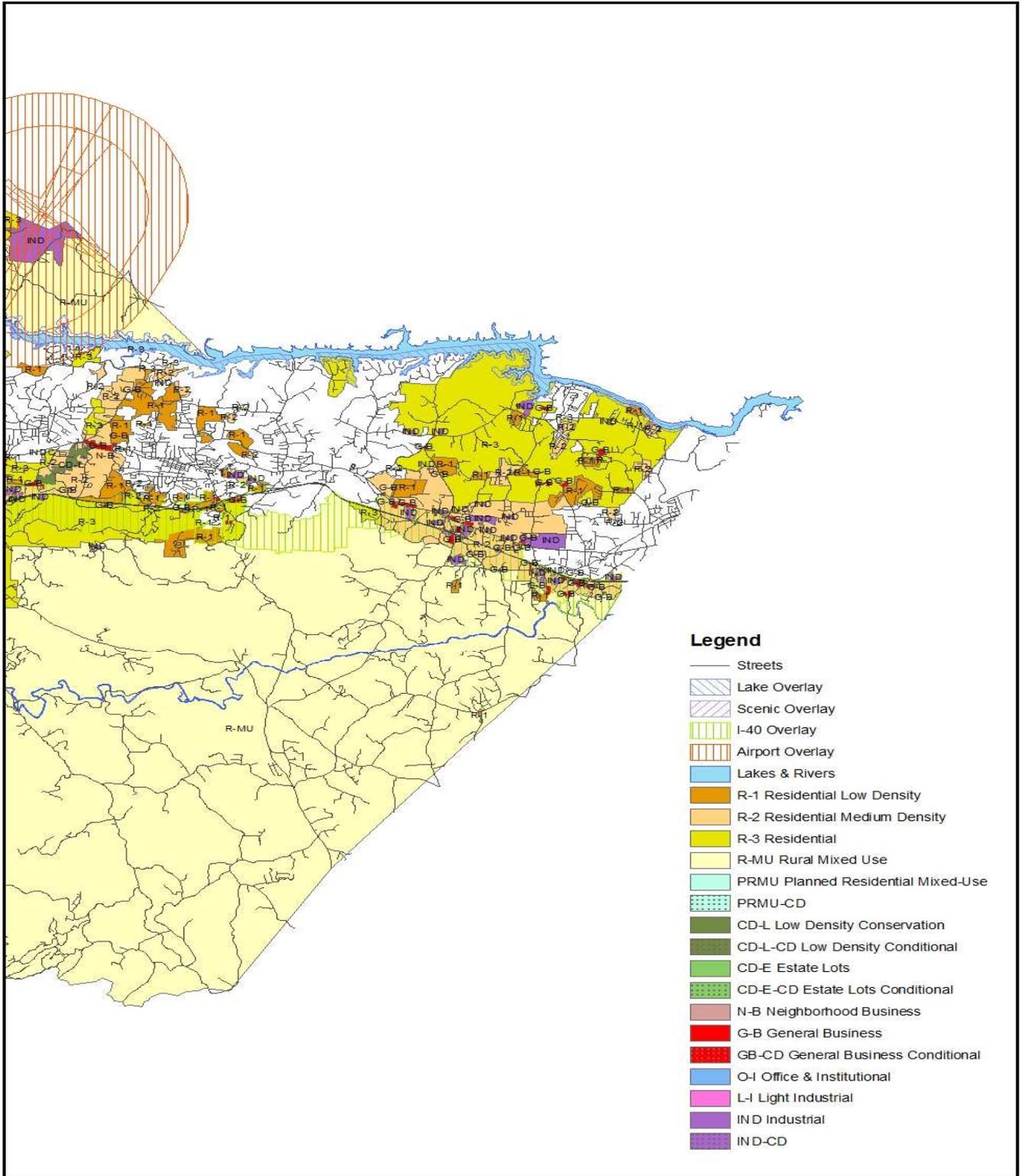


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EXISTING ZONING MAP

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EXISTING ZONING MAP

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Section 5 Land Use Policy Areas

Economic Development

Goal: To provide a positive economic climate that encourages business to prosper, provides citizens with good paying full-time jobs, supports entrepreneurship, and helps business to succeed, promotes growth in a flexible fair and efficient manner.

- 1.1- Identify sites that provide opportunities to promote the natural and historic features that are unique to Burke County such as Lake James, Catawba River, Pisgah National Forest, Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, Quaker Meadows, etc. Work with the Burke County Tourism Board and municipalities to encourage and promote the tourism industry.
- 1.2- Develop policies and plans to encourage infrastructure expansion such as water and sewer lines, broadband services and networks and transportation facilities.
- 1.3- Work with Burke Development Inc. to identify opportunities to retain and encourage expansion of existing industries and businesses.
- 1.4- Coordinate and support Western Piedmont Community College in providing classes for worker advanced training in critical technical areas.
- 1.5- Promote existing and develop future pre-certified industrial park projects with municipalities and/or adjoining counties. This could potentially offset associated costs and increase the benefits and amenities available to potential businesses.



- 1.6- Create an inventory of underutilized and vacant structures and properties for re-use and redevelopment opportunities.
- 1.7- Balance development with aspects of a high quality of life, i.e., natural beauty, access to the outdoors, low crime, excellent schools, and outstanding health care. High quality of life issues will draw new residents, visitors and businesses and help retain existing ones.
- 1.8- Allow and promote multiple types of economic development opportunities so that a diverse economy can be achieved which will appeal to a wide range of population groups. This could be higher density, mixed use type developments.

- 1.9- Ensure that land use laws are fair and flexible allowing for diverse land uses within each geographic region of the county.
- 2.0- Add Form Based zoning practices to the Zoning Ordinance

Housing

Goal: Encourage a variety of residential development to meet the needs of a diverse county population.

2.1- Develop policies that allow for higher density development in the primary growth areas near municipalities and along the I-40 and US 70 urban corridor. This could include single, multi-family and temporary housing options.



2.2- Promote mixed use development near more urbanized areas and at selected nodes throughout the county. Additional buffers and setbacks are recommended to protect adjacent residential uses.

2.3- Promote additional single family development where existing infrastructure is located along NC 126 and other secondary growth areas and transportation corridors.

2.4- Evaluate options for allowing more accessory dwelling units, multigenerational homes, granny flats, in-law units, etc., throughout the county.



2.5- Actively seek to phase out non-conforming housing structures as they become dilapidated or vacant in areas where specific types of housing are desirable.

2.6- Actively seek the removal or repair of uninhabitable structures, both stick-built and manufactured housing units.

Agriculture

Goal: Support and maintain a viable traditional agricultural base while encouraging specialty farm and agritourism businesses.

- 3.1-** Develop a Voluntary Agricultural District Program through the Agriculture Extension Office. This program can reduce the number of potential conflicts for property owners that purchase property near agricultural land uses. The program can help preserve agricultural lands and increase the identity and pride in the agriculture community.



- 3.2-** Work with the Agricultural Extension Office to ensure that “best practices” are used for agricultural activities. This will minimize negative impacts on the environment and surrounding property owners.

- 3.3-** Identify Voluntary Agricultural Districts and bona fide farms on the county’s Geographic Information System (GIS) so that county staff and developers will be aware of them and plan accordingly.

- 3.4-** Encourage initiatives that will promote the “local food movement.” The average age of farmers is increasing and the number of farms is declining. The local food movement is another option that encourages younger farmers and smaller farms to remain in agriculture production.

- 3.5-** Develop a program in conjunction with local non-profit land conservancies and the Agricultural Extension Office to educate farmers and large property owners about the financial benefits of establishing permanent conservation easements for the purpose of preserving farmland and other natural resources.



- 3.6-** Explore land use density exchanges as a means to protect farmland in the county.

Transportation

Goal: To provide the citizens of Burke County with an efficient, safe, and reliable multimodal transportation system.



4.1- Work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) to secure funding to bring all I-40 interchanges up to current USDOT engineering standards

4.2- Actively lobby the NCDOT for funding for multi-modal transportation projects. Work with other local government agencies such as the GHMPO, municipalities, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation to develop priorities.

4.3- Support the expansion of passenger rail service to Western North Carolina via the Salisbury to Asheville rail corridor.

4.4- Work with the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (Greenway Transit) to offer fixed route public transit services in areas of Burke County that could support such service.

4.5- Provide a pedestrian and bicycle system that allows greater access and linkage between public transit, schools, parks and other major activity centers. Work with NCDOT to establish a bicycle lane designation along NC 181 & 126. Coordinate plans with municipalities and existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities to create links.



- 4.6- Work to provide multi-use trails for an alternative appearance such as the Fonta Flora State Trail and a connector trail from Lake James to Morganton.
- 4.7- Work with NCDOT to identify road improvements at high traffic and congested intersections near schools such as Oak Hill Elementary and Table Rock Middle schools.
- 4.8- Work with NCDOT to evaluate improvements to the US 70 corridor such as additional turn lanes, increasing pavement width, addition of traffic signals, etc.
- 4.9- Work with NCDOT to prioritize bridge replacement, particularly one-lane bridges and to ensure that the widths are sufficient to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
- 4.10- Work to secure funding for the widening of Benfield Landing Road.
- 4.11- Develop access management guidelines for inclusion in the county's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations.
- 4.12- Support efforts to promote air service, economic development initiatives, and transportation access to Foothills Regional Airport.
- 4.13- Develop transportation patterns that are consistent with and mutually reinforce land-use efforts in general.



Greenway provides Fixed Route transportation service in the cities of Conover, Hickory, and Newton, Flex Route service in the Town of Taylorsville and Dial-A-Ride, service in the counties of Alexander, **Burke**, Caldwell, and Catawba.

Infrastructure

Goal: To provide for the acquisition, maintenance, and expansion of existing water, sewer, solid waste, broadband, and recreational facilities and resources.

5.1- Encourage expansion of broadband services and networks (both wireless and fiber) by reducing construction costs in the following areas: right of ways, permitting, pole access, building access, build out requirements and requiring conduit or fiber installation during road and other types of construction.

5.2- Work with cable and satellite providers to expand services throughout Burke County.

5.3- Work with water and sewer providers to identify underserved areas and areas with growth potential to expand services. The Burke Cooperative Water Board, the County, and area municipalities should work together to continue evaluating regional water and sewer needs.



5.4- Promote sustainable development practices to ensure good water quality throughout areas designated as water supply watersheds especially in “critical areas.”

5.5- Require connections to water and sewer utilities when a connection is available or when failures or expansions occur.

5.6- Develop policies that promote higher density development where adequate infrastructure already exists.

5.7- Evaluate and maintain relevant and current utility ordinances

Recreation

Goal: Provide recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages & abilities in Burke County.

- 6.1- Expansion of existing and future trails and greenways should be evaluated for interconnectivity potential with other local, state and federal jurisdictions.
- 6.2- Encourage multi-use facilities and resources that will appeal to a wide range of age groups serving all residents and visitors throughout the county.



Lake James State Park



- 6.3- Cooperate with other local, state and federal jurisdictions in their long-range recreation plans so that mutual benefits can be realized.
- 6.4- Coordinate the implementation of policies in this Plan with the Burke County Recreation Plan.
- 6.5- Promote existing recreation options throughout the county.
- 6.6- Maintain and improve resources and infrastructure in existing recreation areas.

- 6.7- Explore and promote inter-local recreation and community foundation program expansion opportunities.
- 6.8- Support local festivals such as events at Lake James and other areas of the county.
- 6.9- Work with the private sector and the Burke County Chamber of Commerce to expand lodging opportunities in the county.



Environmental

Goal: To protect, support and enjoy Burke County’s natural environment, through stewardship of its natural resources, managing forest resources, and expanding recreational opportunities.

7.1- Work closely with other county and state departments to ensure that land use activities have a minimal negative impact on the natural environment.

7.2- Identify natural conservation areas on the county’s Geographic Information System (GIS) whose main purpose is for conservation activities. These lands could be used to expand parks, open space, historic sites, etc.



Linville Gorge/Table Rock

7.3- Review existing land use ordinances to ensure that appropriate areas are identified for large lot development and potential cluster development so that regulations are in place to guide these types of development.

7.4- Explore land use density exchanges as a means to protect open space and natural conservation areas in the county.



7.5- Work closely with the state to identify impaired waters and develop and implement strategies for restoring them and to prevent future degradation of water quality.

7.6- Work with the county health department to identify areas where private septic systems are failing and implement corrective measures. Older recreational vehicle and mobile home parks in the Lake James area should especially be monitored.

Section 6 Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map included in this plan is a visual representation of the general land use patterns identified for Burke County for the next 15-20 years. This map is general in nature and should be used as a guide along with the remainder of the plan when making land use decisions. Furthermore, this map is not intended to address the specific land use patterns of every individual parcel of land but to show general trends within geographic areas. Individual parcels may not conform exactly to overlaying land use areas.

The Future Land Use Map has three primary land use classifications which include Primary Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, and Rural/Agricultural Areas. Special planning areas were identified within the county as well and overlap with the three primary land use classifications. These special planning areas were identified as areas that have characteristics which distinguish them from the primary classifications and require special consideration by decision makers. Furthermore, several economic development nodes and industrial nodes were identified within the county and were included on the map.

Primary Growth Areas- Areas located within and directly adjacent to existing municipal corporate limits. Primary growth areas are areas of existing development and should have easy access to infrastructure, utilities, and transportation corridors such as Interstate 40 and US 70. These areas contain a mixture of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Higher density development can be anticipated in these areas.

Secondary Growth Areas- Areas with many of the same attributes as Primary Growth Areas such as access to infrastructure, utilities, and transportation corridors or reasonable expectations of access in the near future. Development in these areas may not be in place currently and existing development will generally be less dense than Primary Growth Areas.

Rural/Agricultural Areas- All other areas of the county not designated as a Primary or Secondary Growth Area are designated as Rural/Agricultural Areas. These areas are typically considered rural in nature and access to infrastructure and utilities will be more limited. Suitable uses include farming, pasture land, forestry, or other uses which require large tracts of undeveloped land, varying hours of operation, the production of noise or odors, and the use of large slow moving vehicles. Residential uses either scattered among large tracts of land or located within rural residential subdivisions are expected. Also other commercial, institutional, and industrial development is expected as needed to support the residential and agricultural nature of the area.

Other uses which may be deemed undesirable in densely populated areas are also expected to exist in these areas and are expected to be situated in a manner to minimize their negative effects on their surroundings. Examples of such uses include but are not limited to energy generation, airports, landfills, sewage and water treatment, and fuel storage. Sustainable rural economic growth, environmental protection, and quality of life shall be pursued at all times.

Special Planning Areas- These areas have unique characteristics and/or special environmental, scenic, or historic significance which require special consideration in land use matters. Some of these areas include state or federal lands within the county boundaries.

Lake James Special Planning Area- This area includes Lake James and parts of the surrounding lake overlay and scenic overlay zoning districts as well as Lake James State Park and some lands belonging to North Carolina Wildlife. The natural and environmental resources in the area make it a center for multiple outdoor recreation uses as well as major residential subdivisions. In addition, watershed and shoreline protection regulations are important in this area as Lake James is the beginning of the Catawba River Basin which provides water and electricity to multiple cities and counties in North and South Carolina. It is necessary to balance development and recreational uses while maintaining the area's natural resources.

Pisgah National Forest Special Planning Area- A large portion of the northern end of Burke County is part of the Pisgah National Forest. The national forest designation focuses on conservation, timber harvesting, agricultural uses, watershed protection, wildlife, and recreation. Included in this area is the Pisgah Loop Scenic Byway, one of North Carolina's designated scenic byways consisting of roads with scenic, historic, and cultural significance. The 47 mile loop encircles Linville Gorge and provides access to recreational destinations such as Linville Falls, Table Rock, and Hawksbill Mountain. NC 181, the primary travel route to northern Burke and Avery County is a part of the loop along with Old NC 105.

South Mountains Special Planning Area- This area includes lands making up South Mountain State Park, one of the states most rugged areas, and the areas directly around the park. The South Mountains are part of the larger Blue Ridge Mountains and are home to numerous trails, streams, and waterfalls. The park is a destination for individuals who wish to hike, fish, mountain bike, and camp. Special attention is needed for the areas directly adjacent to the state park in order to continue to preserve the ecosystems within the park.

Economic Development and Industrial Nodes- Economic Development and Industrial Nodes are small areas where commercial or industrial development has been located and additional development of similar uses is encouraged. These areas encourage the creation of jobs and help to bring services to rural areas of the county outside of the primary and secondary growth areas. These nodes are generally located on arterial thoroughfares and have reasonable access to utilities. Development considerations include the adequacy of the transportation network to support additional vehicular traffic, access to and expansion of utilities and other infrastructure, and minimizing impact on adjoining properties.

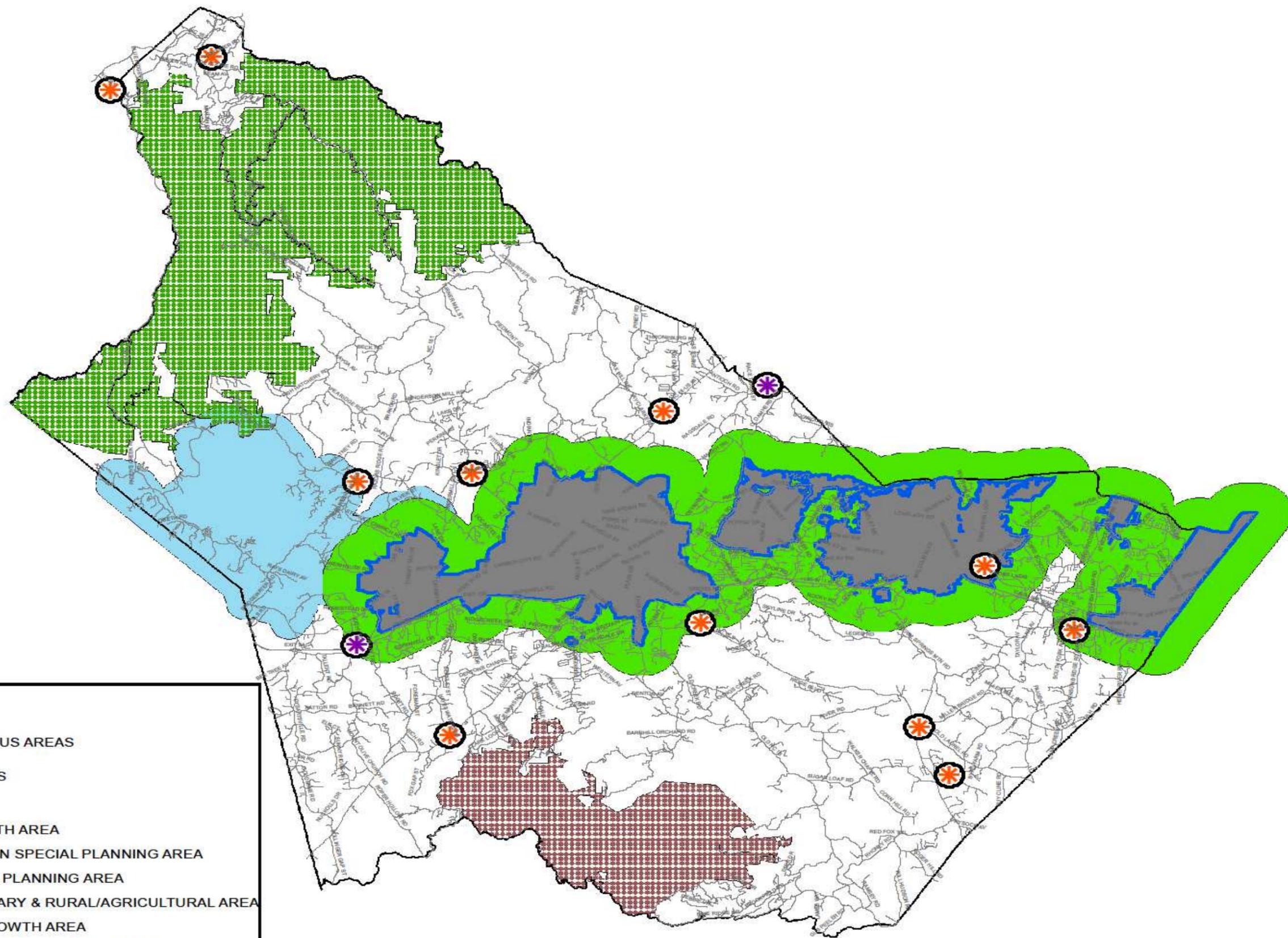
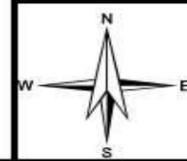


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Burke County Future Land Use Map

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SCALE:
1 inch = 10,250 feet



Legend

- INDUSTRIAL FOCUS AREAS
- ED FOCUS AREAS
- CENTERLINES
- PRIMARY GROWTH AREA
- SOUTH MOUNTAIN SPECIAL PLANNING AREA
- PISGAH SPECIAL PLANNING AREA
- COUNTY BOUNDARY & RURAL/AGRICULTURAL AREA
- SECONDARY GROWTH AREA
- LAKE JAMES SPECIAL PLANNING AREA

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