



Fort Mill
OUR PATH FORWARD



Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT
JANUARY 6, 2026

PREPARED BY:  **BOLTON & MENK**



A WORD FROM THE MAYOR

"Those that fail to plan, plan to fail" rings so very true in a municipality.

Due to the location near an airport and a large city with a thriving job market, the Town of Fort Mill has experienced a doubling of population in a very short period of time. While those factors are important, many find so much more to like about our Town. It is a dream destination for those looking for an excellent school system, tree lined streets, public parks, parades, and little leagues. The very essence of community.

Growth is both a benefit and a challenge while working to preserve our unique environment. Planning provides a framework to navigate this growth, ensuring we seek minimal impact and maximum benefit to our residents.

Through a complete and thorough process that included Council, staff, focus groups, surveys, public input, and the dynamic leadership of Bolton and Menk, we are proud to present this Comprehensive Plan. This document serves as a potential roadmap – a guide to help us evaluate future opportunities and make informed decisions as Fort Mill evolves over the next 5, 10, and 20 years. While it captures many ideas, it is designed to be reviewed often and adapt to the changing needs and resources of our community.

- Mayor Guynn Savage



Historic Image of Downtown Fort Mill | Fort Mill History Museum

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Councilman Allen Garrison
- Councilman Ben Hudgins
- Councilman Chris Moody
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Image (Left): Fort Mill Town Hall

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Comprehensive Plan Summary

Our Path Forward is the Town of Fort Mill's community planning initiative, which includes the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and Parks and Recreation Plan. This document focuses on the Comprehensive Plan (the Plan), which sets a long-term vision to shape the Town, protect community character, and safeguard Fort Mill's unique identity.

Input from residents, business owners, and stakeholders helped shape the Plan, providing a 20-year framework for the Town's future. Building on previous planning efforts, it updates policies and strategies to address current challenges while identifying immediate steps to advance the Town's vision.

Serving as a roadmap for Town leaders and partners, the Plan informs decisions on development, infrastructure, parks, and public services in ways that reflect community values and support a thriving, resilient Fort Mill.



Rendering of Downtown Fort Mill

Planning Process

The Plan was shaped through an inclusive engagement process designed to reflect the voices of Fort Mill's residents, businesses, and community partners. Outreach combined in-person activities and digital tools to reach people across ages, backgrounds, and neighborhoods.

Engagement was structured to ensure input was gathered at key milestones throughout the planning process. The Plan was developed over the course of four phases.

Planning Phases



Comprehensive Plan Planning Phases

Efforts to build awareness included a project website, flyers, social media campaigns, email updates, and pop-up events at community locations. Input was gathered through a town-wide survey, three Steering Committee meetings, three stakeholder focus group sessions, and two public open houses.

This approach ensured broad participation, elevated underrepresented voices, and built consensus around a shared vision for Fort Mill's future.

Engagement by the Numbers



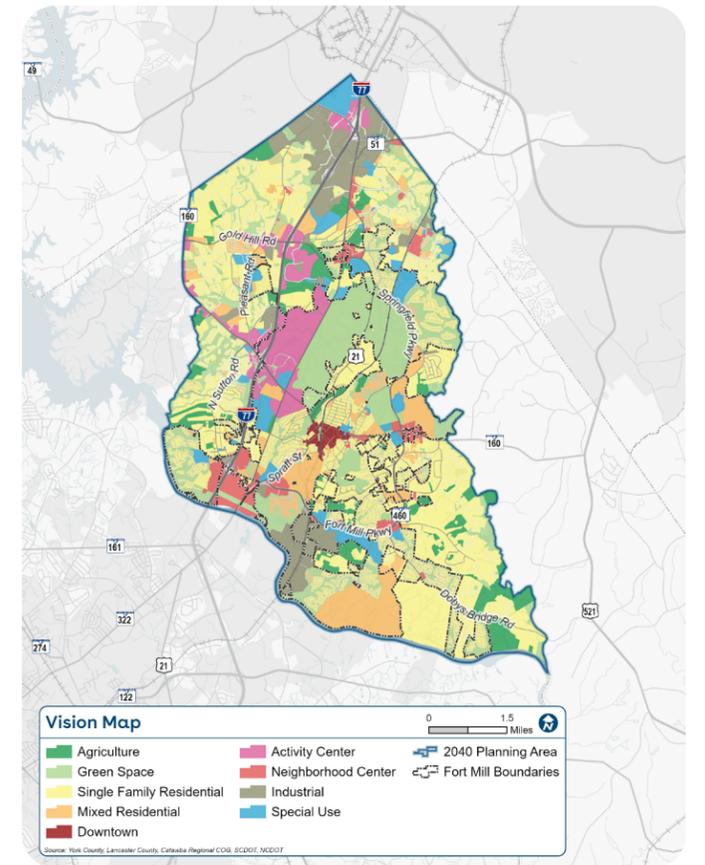
Vision

The vision for Fort Mill's future is expressed through a clear statement, supported by goals, objectives, and guiding principles.

"Fort Mill will be a thriving, connected community; defined by its unique character, anchored by its history, and strengthened by its people."

Future Land Use

These elements come together in the Future Land Use and Conservation Plan—the "Vision Map"—which illustrates how growth and conservation priorities will shape the Town over the next 20 years. The map is further explained through definitions of Place Types that describe the character and role of different areas within Fort Mill.



Fort Mill Vision Map

Goals of the Plan

Developed from the guidance of community stakeholders, Town leadership, and staff, the Goals are to be used as guideposts for the plan, to provide direction for future planning, and to inform decisions of the Town and its partners as changes are managed over the next two decades. The Goals directly align with each of the 10 planning elements required by the State of South Carolina for a comprehensive plan.



Community Facilities

Fort Mill will achieve a high level of service in its delivery of infrastructure and programs.



Natural Resources

Fort Mill will manage its future to continually prioritize and protect its natural systems and resources.



Population

Fort Mill will be a thriving community that offers opportunity, belonging, and a high quality of life for residents.



Priority Investment

Fort Mill will guide strategic investments to support growth, enhance livability, and strengthen key areas.



Resiliency

Fort Mill will be a community well positioned to anticipate and respond to natural, social, and economic conditions.



Transportation

Fort Mill will be a safe and connected community with a network of mobility options.



Cultural Resources

Fort Mill will successfully celebrate its history through the preservation of cultural assets and traditions.



Economic Development

Fort Mill will be a prosperous community where businesses and entrepreneurs thrive.



Housing

Fort Mill will seek a variety housing options that meet the needs of residents at varying life and income levels



Land Use

Fort Mill will be a vibrant, complete community with a balanced blend of land uses.

Big Ideas

Community feedback shaped ten “Big Ideas” to guide Fort Mill’s future. These concepts reflect the town’s values and aspirations, offering a framework for investment, development, and decision-making.

1. Integrate Trails, Opens Spaces, and Amenities into the Community

Expand trails and open space, connect to the Carolina Thread Trail, and weave amenities into neighborhoods.

2. Enhance Connections to the Catawba River

Improve access, extend the Founders Trail, and add parks and recreation opportunities.

3. Enhance Town Operational Capabilities

Strengthen staffing, training, and systems to support long-range planning and project delivery.

4. Weave a Community Tapestry

Launch programs like gardens and history walks that connect residents to Fort Mill’s identity.

5. Create a Downtown Anchor

Invest in a civic hub such as a branch of the York County Library System or cultural space to further activate and bring people downtown.

6. Support Redevelopment of the Mill

Revitalize the historic Williamson Mill for modern use while honoring its legacy.

7. Invest in Mobility

Fund scalable transportation solutions to reduce congestion and expand access.

8. Community-Driven Housing Strategy

Partner with residents to create housing solutions that reflect local needs.

9. Establish a Legacy of Investment in Arts, Culture, & Entertainment

Encourage private and local support to expand cultural opportunities.

10. Streets for All Ages and Abilities

Improve safety through better design, slower speeds, and pedestrian/bike infrastructure.



Conceptual Rendering of Riverwalk along the Catawba River

Chapter I. About the Plan

FORT MILL
TOWN HALL

ABOUT THE PLAN

Developing the Plan

The Town of Fort Mill's Comprehensive Plan, under the umbrella of Our Path Forward, establishes a long-term vision to guide growth, preserve community character, and protect the town's unique identity. This plan reflects input from residents, business owners, and stakeholders and is designed to help the community think about Fort Mill's future over the next 20 years. Building on previous planning efforts, it updates policies and strategies to address the town's current challenges and opportunities.

The Plan outlines a vision for Fort Mill's future and identifies strategies to achieve it. While providing a long-term framework, it also highlights near-term actions the Town can take in the coming years to support the overall vision.

The Plan serves as a roadmap for Town leaders and partners, guiding decisions on development, infrastructure, parks, and public services in ways that reflect community values. Coordinated with other Town initiatives, policies, and regulations, the Plan provides direction for departments, partner agencies, and stakeholders working to shape a thriving and resilient Fort Mill.



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church

In 2024, the Town of Fort Mill hired Bolton & Menk, Inc. to lead the development of the Comprehensive Plan as well as the other Our Path Forward initiatives: the Downtown Master Plan and the Parks and Recreation Plan. Working closely with Town staff, the project team reviewed existing plans and studies, analyzed current conditions, engaged the public through surveys, workshops, and focus groups, and developed a plan that meets South Carolina state requirements while reflecting local priorities. The Plan was developed over the course of four phases:

Phase 1 – Issues and Opportunities

- Review background studies, mapping, and demographic/housing data
- Analyze growth trends and future scenarios
- Develop a broad public engagement approach

Phase 2 – Vision, Goals, and Growth Framework

- Convene steering committees and stakeholder groups
- Engage the public through surveys, workshops, and interactive tools
- Shape vision, growth alternatives, and priorities from input

Phase 3 – Implementation Strategy

- Identify strategies and actions to achieve plan goals
- Refine recommendations with input
- Draft the Comprehensive Plan

Phase 4 – Plan Adoption

- Gather feedback from Council, committees, stakeholders, and the public
- Finalize the plans
- Adopt formally by Town Council

State Requirements

A comprehensive plan is a critical legal tool for informed decision-making, guiding growth, and enhancing quality of life. South Carolina's Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act ([SC Code Title 6, Chapter 29](#)) requires municipalities to maintain an updated plan addressing ten statutory planning elements.

The law requires the municipalities to assess the plan every five years, update it every ten years, and adopt it by ordinance following a public hearing. This ensures that zoning and land use decisions remain consistent with the adopted plan and the Town's long-term goals.

The Plan was developed to meet these requirements. Each planning element includes an assessment of current conditions, a statement of goals, and strategies for implementation.



Mayor Savage and Assistant Town Manager Pettit at the Downtown Design Workshop

Comprehensive Plan Elements

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into the following key elements:

1. Population

Demographic trends, household composition, and projections

2. Economic Development

Workforce, employment, and key economic sectors

3. Natural Resources

Parks, waterways, agricultural and forest lands, wildlife habitats, floodplains

4. Cultural Resources

Historic buildings and sites, unique areas, and institutions

5. Community Facilities

Infrastructure and services, including utilities, fire protection, medical, and educational facilities

6. Housing

Existing conditions, affordability, and potential regulatory barriers

7. Land Use

Current and future uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, and open space

8. Transportation

Roads, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and coordination with land use

9. Priority Investment

Recommended projects and funding priorities for infrastructure and facilities

10. Resiliency

Planning for natural hazards, flooding, and public safety

Chapter Cover: Fort Mill Town Hall and Walter Y. Elisha Park

Organizing the Plan

I About the Plan

Introduces the purpose of the plan, the study area, how to use the document, and the studies and plans that informed it.

II The Planning Process

Summarizes the timeline and key community engagement activities that shaped the plan.

III Fort Mill Today

Highlights major issues and opportunities facing the town, with references to technical appendices for more detailed information.

IV Our Path Forward

Presents the vision, goals, and guiding principles for the town. Includes the Future Land Use and Conservation Map and defines character areas throughout Fort Mill.

V Recommendations

Provides high-level strategies for the Plan's elements.

VI Implementation Plan

Outlines implementation strategies, identifies near-term initiatives, and links goals, policies, and supporting strategies to guide action.

VII Appendices

Contains supporting technical materials, including policy and ordinance reviews, demographics, physical assessments, and a summary of community engagement.

Planning Jurisdiction

Planning and Development Regulation in South Carolina

Under South Carolina law, municipalities have the authority to adopt comprehensive plans and implement zoning and land use regulations within their corporate limits. The Town of Fort Mill uses this authority to guide growth, land use, and development in alignment with community priorities. While the law does not grant automatic regulatory authority beyond the town limits, Fort Mill coordinates with York County and neighboring jurisdictions when appropriate for regional planning and infrastructure.

Planning Area

The Our Path Forward Plans address the Town of Fort Mill and its planning area, which includes the corporate limits and surrounding areas important for coordinated planning. The planning area is defined using 2020 Census tracts 610.04, 610.06, 610.07, 610.08, 610.11, 610.12, 611.01, 611.03, and 611.04, with boundaries generally following the Catawba River, Sugar Creek, the North Carolina–South Carolina state line, and the western edge of Tract 610.04.

Downtown Study Area

Downtown is a central focus within the planning area, encompassing Main Street, surrounding commercial and residential districts, and key corridors that connect downtown with parks, civic spaces, and other community destinations. This area is fully within Fort Mill town limits, and it includes the Downtown Fort Mill Historic District and part of the Tom Hall Corridor District. More detailed recommendations and strategies for downtown are provided in the Downtown Master Plan.

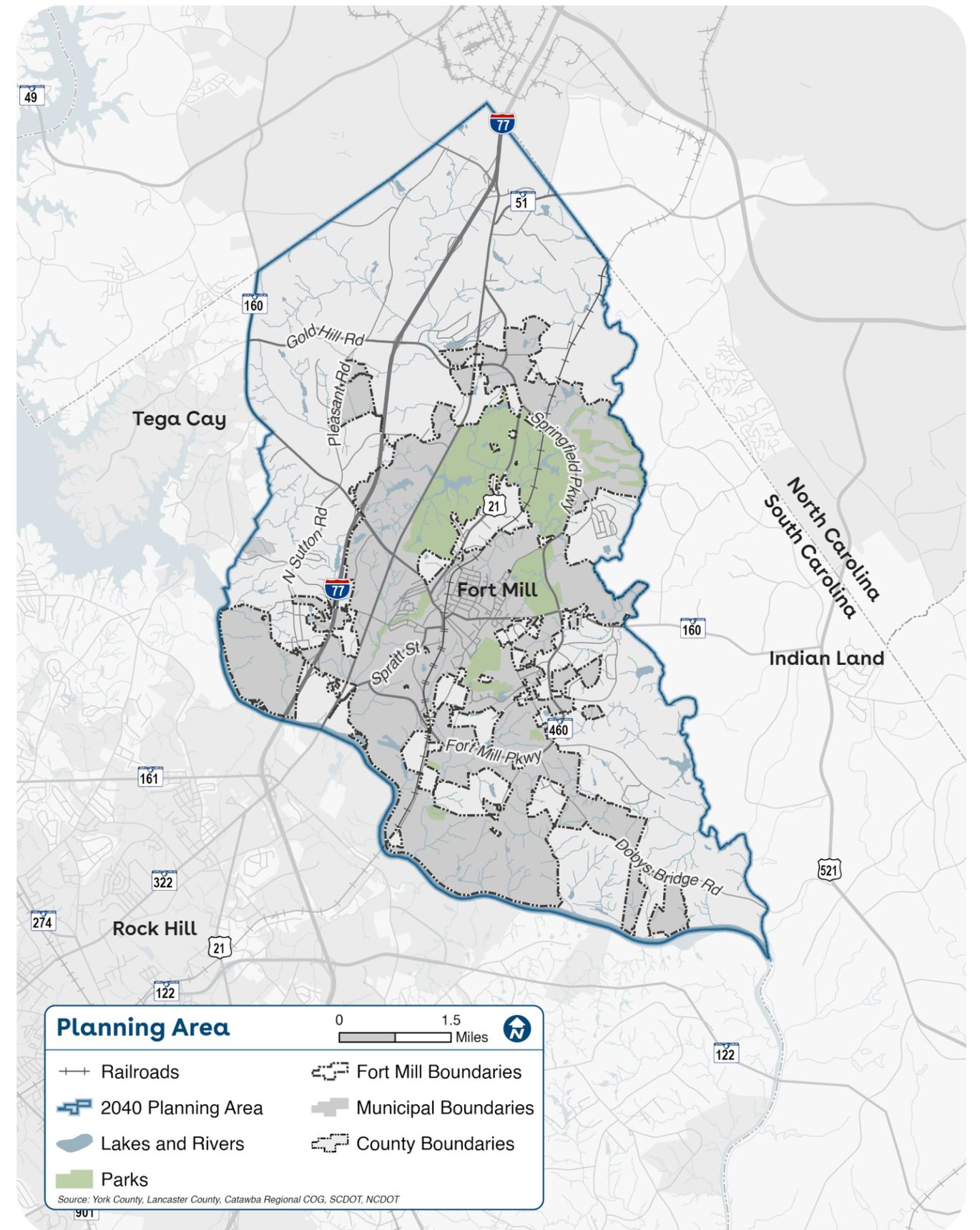


Figure I.1 - Town of Fort Mill & Planning Area | Esri

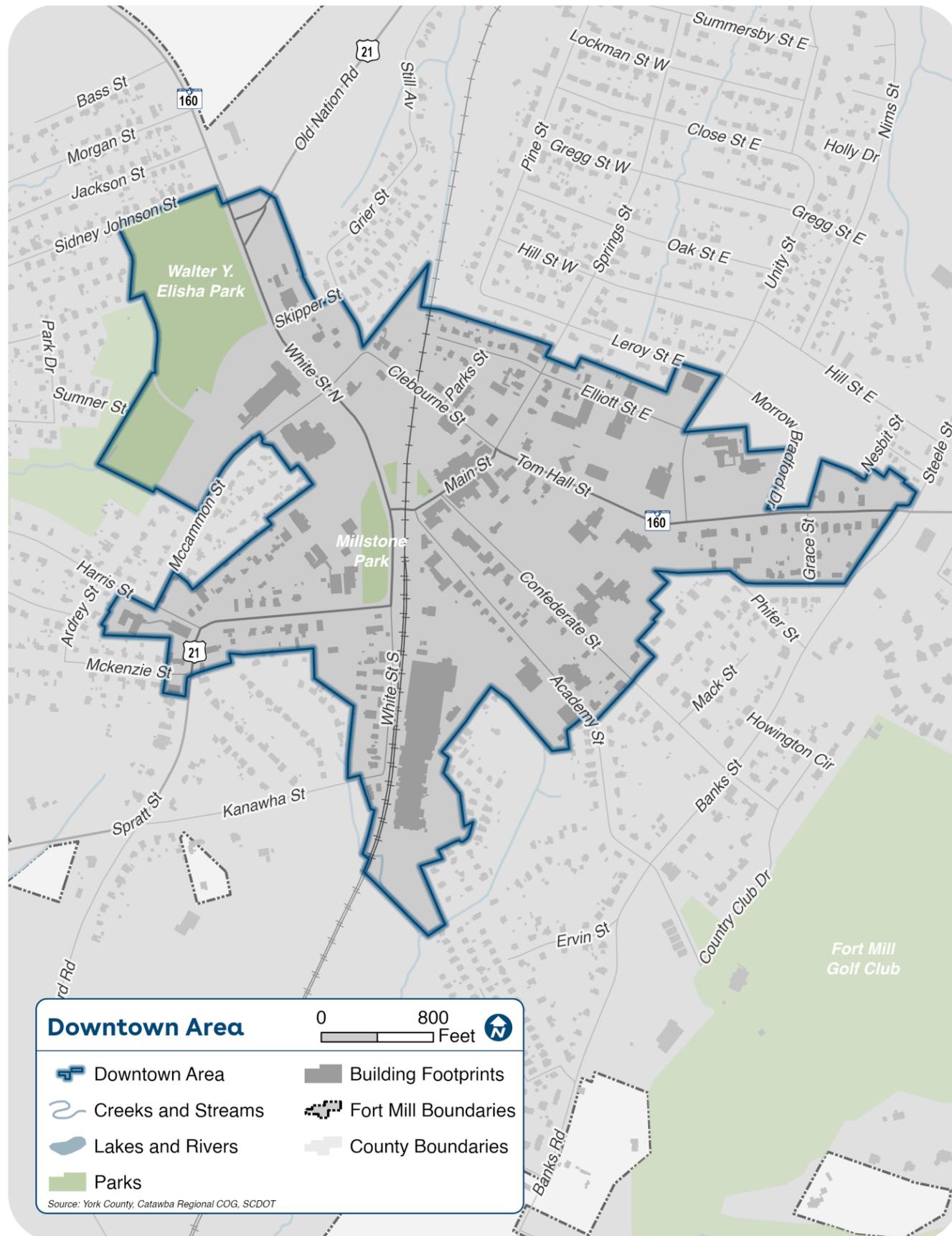


Figure I.2 - Town of Fort Mill Downtown Study Area | Esri

Policy Analysis

Existing plans, ordinances, and policies were reviewed to understand their current and potential impact on Fort Mill’s growth and development. This analysis identifies the town’s opportunities and challenges and informs the goals, policies, and implementation strategies of the Our Path Forward Plans. The Plans will serve as a strategic guide for future decision-making and community investments, supporting thoughtful and coordinated growth in the years ahead.

Previous Planning Efforts

2024-2025 Fort Mill Budget Development & Project Planning Summary

The Town’s management team and department heads finalized the [FY 2024–2025 Budget](#), refining project scopes and costs based on the recently presented Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The General Fund Budget, approved by Town Council in September 2024, totals \$39,208,590 and includes \$197,200 from the fund balance, with no proposed millage increase. The rate remains at 85.7 mills, ensuring consistent funding for Town services and projects without raising the property tax burden.

Town of Fort Mill Trail Master Plan (2024)

The [Trail Master Plan](#) guides the development, maintenance, and funding of multi-use paths and trails to enhance active transportation and recreation. It builds on previous regional plans and focuses on paved trails, natural surface trails, and sidepaths to fill critical network gaps. During its development, priority projects were identified by community needs and connections to schools and parks.

Town of Fort Mill Long-Range Facility Needs Plan (2023)

The Town evaluated its existing facilities and forecasted future needs to guide renovations, additions, or new construction over the next ten years. As a result of the study and careful consideration of all options, the Town moved forward with the purchase of 123 and 205 N. White Street,

the latter of which is to become the home of Town Hall and the Fort Mill Police Department. In February 2025, several employees and departments relocated from Town Hall at 200 Tom Hall Street to 205 North White Street. Not only did this help with long-range facility needs, but it helped preserve one of the town’s most iconic and historic buildings.

Town of Fort Mill 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2020)

The [2040 Comprehensive Plan](#) established goals and strategies for guiding future land use and development, covering transportation, economic development, land use, housing, natural and cultural resources, community facilities, and public health. It provided a policy framework for sustainable growth and preservation of the town’s character and emphasized collaboration with regional partners. Because the plan was adopted before the Resiliency chapter was added to state planning requirements, it does not fully align with current South Carolina regulations.

Town of Fort Mill, SC Historic District Design Guidelines (2016)

These [guidelines](#) ensure rehabilitation and redevelopment align with the town’s historic character while promoting cultural, environmental, and economic sustainability. They apply to properties within the Historic Preservation Overlay District (HPOD) and other designated sites. Town staff and the Historic Review Board evaluate projects, issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness before construction. Fort Mill has 70 historic properties within the HPOD, National Register of Historic Places, or Downtown Historic District, with two individually listed properties outside town limits.

Fort Mill Wastewater System Master Plan Update (2015)

To support growth, the Town updated its water and sewer master plans, including calibration and validation of the hydraulic model, and developed a Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize system improvements through 2050.

Plan Consistency

Internal Plan Consistency

The Town’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan (2020), Trail Master Plan (2024), and Historic District Design Guidelines (2016) share a unified vision for a connected, vibrant, and resilient Fort Mill. Together, they integrate land use, transportation, recreation, and historic preservation to balance growth with community character. This alignment strengthens coordinated decision-making, ensuring that mobility, infrastructure, and reinvestment efforts complement preservation and sustainability goals.

Key Alignment Across Internal Plans

Complete Streets & Multimodal Transportation

All plans support safe, accessible streets and multimodal connections, with the Trail Master Plan providing detailed design standards.

Economic & Community Development

Trails, downtown preservation, and infrastructure investment are recognized as key drivers of economic vitality.

Land Use & Growth Management

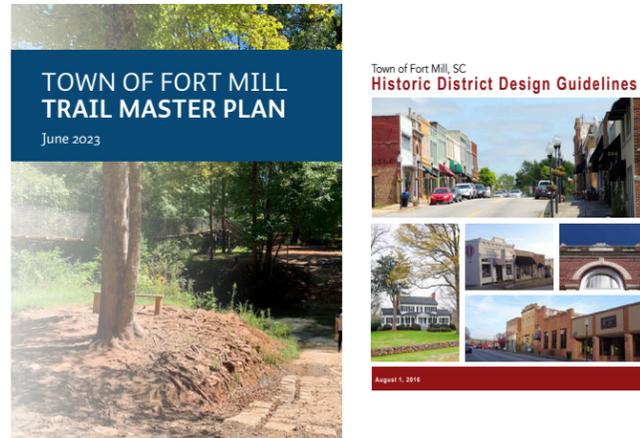
Strategies align around annexation, mixed-use development, housing options, and preserving open space through connected trails.

Cultural & Historic Preservation

Historic guidelines and cultural resource planning reinforce Fort Mill’s identity while encouraging engagement.

Infrastructure & Community Facilities

Plans coordinate public infrastructure improvements with enhanced recreational and mobility facilities.



Fort Mill Trail Master Plan and Fort Mill Historic District Design Guidelines | Town of Fort Mill

Overall Opportunities & Needs

Balanced Growth and Economic Development

- Support strategic development that preserving Fort Mill’s small-town character
- Align public and private investments to promote job growth, business expansion, and workforce development, while ensuring infrastructure, housing, and community services grow sustainably

Greenways & Outdoor Recreation

- Expand parks, trails, and greenways to enhance quality of life, recreation opportunities, and community connectivity
- Invest in these spaces to preserve natural resources and create a more resilient landscape

Modernized Infrastructure & Community Facilities

- Continue improvement of water, sewer, and utility services as needed to support Fort Mill’s growing population
- Ensure schools, emergency services, and public facilities meet future demands

Environmental Stewardship & Resiliency

- Advance sustainability initiatives, conservation efforts, and climate resilience strategies to protect natural resources and promote a healthier environment

Historic Preservation & Strengthening Downtown

- Preserve and celebrate Fort Mill’s historic character while enhancing downtown as a vibrant, community-centered destination

- Support local businesses, public spaces, redevelopment, and cultural activities to maintain economic vitality, charm, and sense of place

Transportation & Mobility

- Enhance road networks, public transit, and pedestrian/bike infrastructure to improve accessibility, connectivity, and safety
- Reduce congestion and support a more efficient, multimodal system through transportation investments

Safe, Inclusive & Connected Community

- Foster public safety, accessibility, and age-friendly design through infrastructure improvements and emergency services
- Strengthen livability and community well-being through walkable neighborhoods and well-designed public spaces

Preserve Neighborhoods & Create More Housing Opportunities

- Encourage a variety of housing types to meet the needs of all income levels, ages, and household sizes
- Support affordable and multi-generational housing while preserving the character of existing neighborhoods to promote economic stability, workforce housing, and walkable communities



Rock Hill 2030 Comp Plan Update, Connect Rock Hill Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan, City of Tega Cay Comp Plan | City of Rock Hill and City of Tega Cay

Plan Consistency with Neighboring Jurisdictions & Relevant Agencies

Fort Mill’s planning efforts align with neighboring municipalities and regional agencies to support aligned growth, infrastructure, and transportation planning. Plans from Rock Hill, Tega Cay, and York County complement Fort Mill’s vision. Regional partners, including Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG), Rock Hill – Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS), and Catawba Lands Conservancy, help guide economic development and transportation initiatives, fostering collaboration and supporting long-term growth objectives.

City of Rock Hill

Located southwest of Fort Mill across the Catawba River, Rock Hill is York County’s largest city. Its planning efforts focus on sustainable growth, downtown revitalization, and infrastructure improvements to support a growing population and economy. Key planning efforts from Rock Hill that relate to Fort Mill include:

- [Rock Hill 2030 Comprehensive Plan – Existing Conditions Update \(2021\)](#)
- [Rock Hill 2030 Comprehensive Plan – Vision Plan Update \(2021\)](#)
- [Connect Rock Hill Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan \(2017\)](#)

City of Tega Cay

Located northeast of Fort Mill along the Catawba River, Tega Cay is known for its residential communities and recreational amenities. Its planning efforts focus on preserving residential character while managing growth and land use. Key planning efforts from Tega Cay that relate to Fort Mill include:

- [City of Tega Cay Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update \(2020\)](#)

York County

York County’s planning and investment efforts support growth management, infrastructure, and regional connectivity, with several initiatives directly impacting Fort Mill:

- [York Forward 2035 Comprehensive Plan Update \(2023\)](#) including its [future land use map](#)
- [York County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan \(2018\)](#)
- [Pennies for Progress](#)
- [Fort Mill and Tega Cay Bike Route 4 Map](#)

York County Economic Development (YCED)

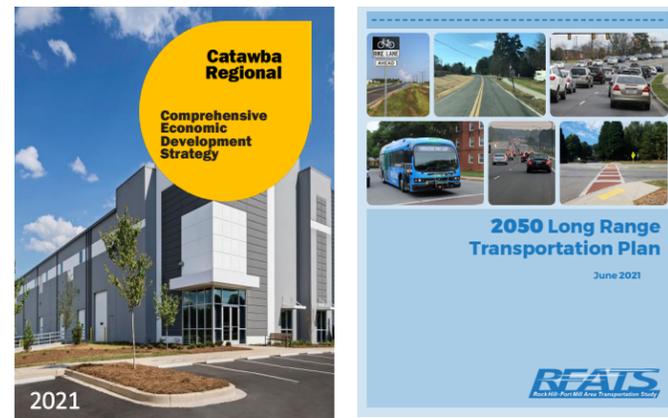
YCED helps to drive business growth, workforce development, and infrastructure investment to support job creation and long-term economic health. Its key plans and reports include:

- [YCED Economic Indicators Report \(2024\)](#)
- [Countywide Economic Development Strategic Plan \(2021\)](#)

Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG)

Serving Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York counties since 1971, CRCOG supports planning, economic development, and financial assistance, helping the region secure funding for infrastructure, growth, and community development.

- [Catawba Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\) \(2021\)](#)
- [Greater Charlotte Regional Freight Mobility Plan \(2016\)](#)



Catawba Regional CEDS and RFATS Long Range Transportation Plans | Catawba Regional Council of Governments, RFATS

Rock Hill – Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS)

The designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for urbanized areas of York and Lancaster counties, RFATS coordinates federally required regional transportation planning to secure funding and guide multimodal infrastructure investments.

- [2050 Long Range Transportation Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [2055 Long Range Transportation Plan \(2025\)](#)
- [Collector Street Network Plan \(2017\)](#)
- [RFATS Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Connectivity Plan \(2016\)](#)
- [Annual Listing of Obligated Projects for Federal FY 2024 \(2025\)](#)
- [FY 2024–2033 Transportation Improvement Program \(2024\)](#)
- [FY 2024–2033 TIP Update: Conformity Determination \(2024\)](#)

Catawba Lands Conservancy

A nonprofit land trust dedicated to permanently conserving and managing land for public benefit in North Carolina’s Southern Piedmont. A key initiative is the Carolina Thread Trail, a 15-county network of trails, blueways, and conservation corridors across NC and SC, connecting over 2.3 million residents.

- [Carolina Thread Trail State Line to Fort Mill Feasibility Study \(2024\)](#)

Town Governing Structure

The Town of Fort Mill’s governing body consists of a mayor and six council members. Four council members are elected by ward, while two members are elected at-large. The Town has adopted a council–manager system of governance, wherein the mayor and council members exercise the legislative and policy-making powers vested in them. The administrative functions of the town are carried out by a professional town manager appointed by the council.

Town Administration

The Fort Mill Town Council sets policy and hires a full-time professional Town Manager as the Chief Executive Officer that oversees day-to-day operations of the Town and its staff. The Administration Department includes the offices of the Town Manager, Assistant Town Managers, and the Town Clerk.

The Town Manager is responsible for the management and oversight of all Town departments, which includes more than 300 full-time and part-time employees. This position drafts and submits the annual budget to Council each year for approval. The Manager also provides budget and financial oversight for the Town’s General Fund, Enterprise Fund and annual Capital Fund.

Planning Department

The Fort Mill Planning Department is responsible for promoting the efficient, orderly, and sustainable development of the Town’s built environment through the consistent application of zoning, land use, and development policies adopted by the Town Council.

The department plays a key role in advancing economic development, enhancing community quality of life, conserving natural resources, and balancing the interests of private property owners with those of the broader public. These efforts contribute to establishing Fort Mill as a premier destination for living, working, learning, and conducting business.

Planning support, technical assistance, coordination, and advisory services are provided across the following areas:

- Zoning
- Subdivision Planning
- Annexation
- Land Use Planning
- Historic Preservation
- Economic Development
- Open Space and Land Conservation
- Downtown Redevelopment
- Smart Growth Strategies

Fort Mill Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is comprised of seven citizens appointed by the Fort Mill Town Council. The Planning Commission’s duty is to engage in a continuous planning program for the physical, social and economic growth, development and redevelopment of the Town of Fort Mill. In carrying out this responsibility, the Planning Commission makes recommendations to Town Council on zoning and annexation issues, reviews and approves subdivisions and new commercial developments, and continuously reviews and recommends changes to the Town’s comprehensive plan, capital improvements plan, and development related ordinances.

Historic Review Board

The Historic Review Board (HRB) is composed of seven appointed members and has the duty and responsibility of reviewing and approving proposed alterations to exteriors of buildings, new construction, and demolition of any property within the Town’s historic district, any property within the zoning authority of the Town of Fort Mill which has been accepted to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as designated by the US Department of Interior, and buildings or groups of buildings within the zoning authority of the Town of Fort Mill which have been designated a local historic landmark by the Fort Mill Town Council upon the recommendation of the HRB. Additionally, the Town of Fort Mill HRB is the reviewing body for local facade improvement grants and the local historic tax credit program known as the Bailey Bill.

Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Zoning Appeals is comprised of seven citizens that, as provided for by South Carolina legislation, hears appeals of the zoning ordinance and requests for appeals to the written decision of the zoning administrator. The Board of Zoning Appeals is appointed by Town Council and is staffed by the Planning Department.

Chapter II. The Planning Process



THE PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

Our Path Forward, which includes the Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and Parks and Recreation Plan, was developed with a strong commitment to intentional and meaningful community engagement. The planning process for the Comprehensive Plan was designed to reach a broad cross-section of residents, stakeholders, and community partners through both in-person engagements and digital tools.

Engagement activities included public open houses, stakeholder focus group listening sessions, and regular meetings with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Town Council. An online, town-wide comprehensive survey provided additional opportunities for community members to share their feedback. Outreach was further supported through the project website, email updates, social media posts, and informational materials distributed throughout the community. These efforts ensured that residents of all ages, backgrounds, and neighborhoods had a voice in shaping Fort Mill's future.

A detailed summary of the engagement process can be found in Appendix IV.



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church

Public Engagement Plan

A comprehensive community engagement strategy was developed for the Plan to ensure input was gathered from residents of all ages, backgrounds, and areas of Town. The Town of Fort Mill promoted upcoming events and surveys through a combination of flyers, printed materials, email updates, and posts on the Town's social media platforms. Project information was also shared on the Town's website and distributed at community spaces, through community partners, at public meetings, at the Strawberry Festival information tent, and at the Farmers Market to broaden awareness and encourage widespread participation.

Engagement Goals

- Identify stakeholder groups
- Utilize a variety of engagement tools, strategies, and activities geared to reach all identified stakeholder groups
- Establish meaningful involvement of lower-income and underrepresented populations
- Gather meaningful feedback from stakeholders that informs the development of recommendations
- Leverage opportunities to collaborate with project partners on outreach efforts
- Provide project information to the public in a timely and effective manner
- Ensure that stakeholder questions and concerns are heard and addressed to the extent practicable
- Maintain and strengthen the relationships among the project partners
- Document the progress and effectiveness of the communications plan
- Ensure that project partners agree with vision, goals and recommendations for successful plan implementation and adoption

Cover: Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY	
Strategy	Who It Reaches
Steering Committee Meetings	Key community leaders and advisory members
Stakeholder Focus Group Sessions	Targeted interest groups
Technical Committee	Town and county staff
Policy-maker Briefings	Decision makers and elected officials
Public Survey	General public and broad community
Open Houses	Residents and stakeholders
Pop-up Events	Underrepresented and lower-participation groups

Figure II.1 - Engagement Strategy

Building Awareness

- Project Website & Branding
- Flyers and Informational Materials
- Email Updates
- Social Media Campaigns (shared by the Town)
- Pop-Up Events at key community locations
- Presentation by the Planning Director at the Downtown Co-Op about the Comprehensive Plan

Gathering Input

- Online Comprehensive Plan Community Survey
- Three Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meetings
- Three Stakeholder Focus Group Listening Sessions
- Two Public Open Houses

Engagement by the Numbers



Engagement Schedule (2025-2026)

February

- Kick-off Meeting
- Engagement Plan
- Launch Town Webpage
- Tour of Study Area

March

- Stakeholder Focus Group Listening Sessions #1, #2, and #3

April

- Open House #1
- Comprehensive Plan Survey Begins
- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #1

May

- Policy-maker Workshop

June

- Open House #2
- Comprehensive Plan Survey Ends
- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #2

July

- Preparation

August

- Internal Technical Committee Meetings

September

- Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3

October

- Town Council Presentation
- Draft Plan Release

November

- Planning Commission Presentation

December

- Public Hearing

January

- Plan Adoption



Open House #2 at Fort Mill Elementary School



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church



Mobility Focus Group Listening Session at Fort Mill Town Hall

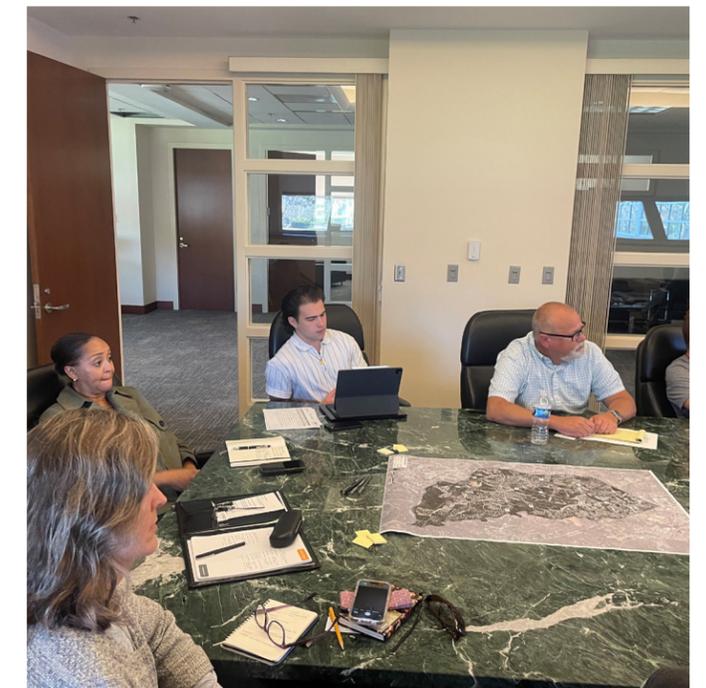
Engagement Activities

Stakeholder Focus Groups

Three focus groups were held on March 26 and 28, 2025, at Fort Mill Town Hall, focusing on:

- Vision
- Mobility
- Land Use / Economic Development

Participants emphasized the need for strong partnerships between government, schools, and businesses to manage growth while preserving Fort Mill's small-town character. Key priorities included improving transportation and pedestrian connectivity, expanding trails and transit options, revitalizing Main Street and community spaces, supporting workforce development, attracting jobs, and encouraging smart infill and mixed-use development. Feedback highlighted challenges such as traffic congestion, rising housing costs, limited municipal resources, and balancing growth with open space and infrastructure capacity. Insights from these sessions informed recommendations for the Comprehensive Plan, including strategies for mobility, land use, and economic development.



Land Use Focus Group Listening Session at Fort Mill Town Hall



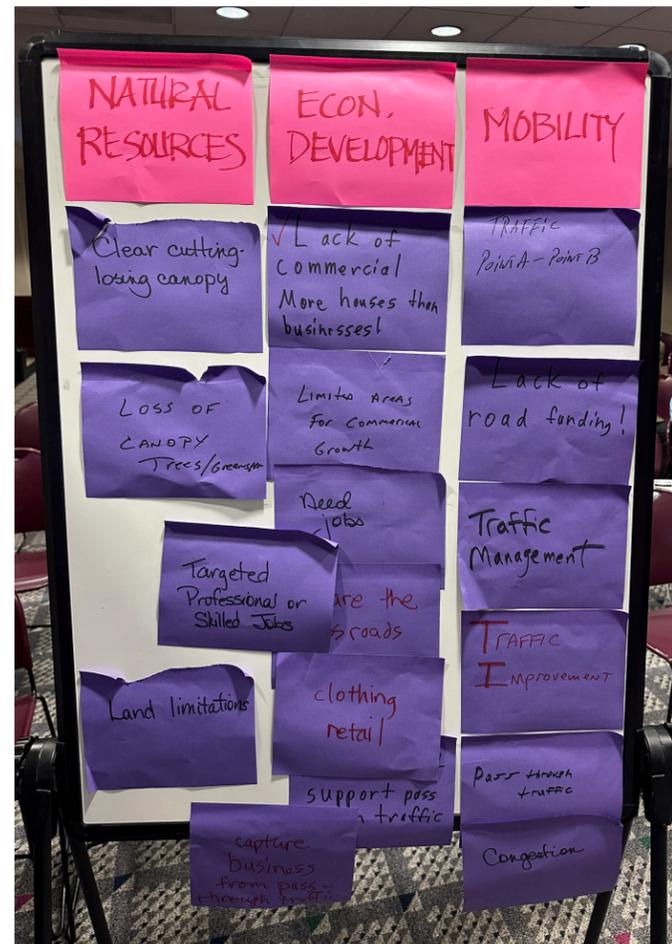
Policy-maker Workshop at Fort Mill Town Hall

Policy-maker Workshop

On May 12, 2025, the Our Path Forward consultant team convened Town Council and key decision-makers to review community input, survey results, and emerging themes for Fort Mill’s Comprehensive Plan. Through presentations and a visioning exercise, participants identified shared priorities including responsible growth, regional collaboration, improved walkability, expanded parks and gathering spaces, stronger communication, and more local jobs, particularly downtown. The discussion emphasized protecting Fort Mill’s small-town character while ensuring development aligns with infrastructure capacity. Feedback from the workshop refined the draft vision, set priorities, and shaped targeted strategies for plan implementation.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, made up of community leaders, residents, and business owners, provided oversight and input throughout the planning process. Members served as a sounding board for the project team, helped refine the draft vision, goals, and priorities, and promoted broader community engagement to ensure the plan was responsive to community needs.



Policy-maker Workshop at Fort Mill Town Hall



Steering Committee Meeting #3 at Fort Mill Town Hall

Open Houses

The Plan’s planning process included two public open houses to share progress and gather feedback. The first, held April 9, 2025, at Unity Presbyterian Church, drew about 65 participants who reviewed initial findings, identified challenges and opportunities through interactive stations, and helped launch the Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. The second, on June 11, 2025, at Fort Mill Elementary School, attracted about 20 participants and presented updated materials including survey results, a draft vision, scenario planning concepts, and emerging “Big Ideas.” Both events also featured concurrent planning efforts for the Downtown and Parks & Recreation Master Plans, and featured a Junior Planners’ Station to engage younger residents. Feedback from these sessions informed the Plans’ vision, goals, and implementation strategies.



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church



Open House #1 at Unity Presbyterian Church



Open House #2 at Fort Mill Elementary School

Surveys

Community Survey

The Comprehensive Plan Community Survey was open from April 9 to June 13, 2025. The Town of Fort Mill promoted the survey widely—at community events, in gathering spaces, via mass emails, and with the help of organizations like HOAs, the Fort Mill School District, Downtown businesses, and the Anne Springs Close Greenway. Flyers were posted throughout town, and physical surveys were distributed in areas that are often underrepresented.

A total of 865 people participated in the community survey. Respondents shared strong support for preserving Fort Mill’s unique identity while addressing the impacts of rapid growth. Key themes included community safety, walkability, environmental protection, and access to high-quality parks, education, and development.

More detailed results, including charts and key insights, can be accessed by scanning the QR code to the right or by clicking the link provided here: <https://arcg.is/WD0r40>



Comprehensive Plan Community Survey Header

Top Concerns for Fort Mill’s Future

- Effects of population growth (increased traffic, sprawl, etc.)
- Community safety and appearance (crime, vacant/underutilized buildings, etc.)
- Environmental health (climate, tree canopy, water quality, etc.)
- Quality education (early childhood, K-12, higher education, continuing education, etc.)
- Parks, trails, & recreation (proximity, quality, etc.)

Looking ahead, what are your top 3 concerns for Fort Mill?

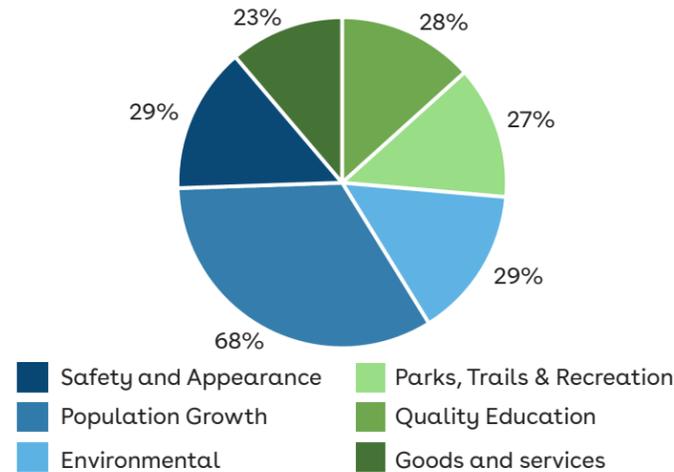


Figure II.3 - Top Concerns for Fort Mill's Future

What Quality Developments Means to the Community

- Good streetscape (wide sidewalks, street/shade trees, bike lanes, etc.)
- Good architectural design (appropriate scale, fits in with its surroundings, etc.)
- Walkable, safe environment

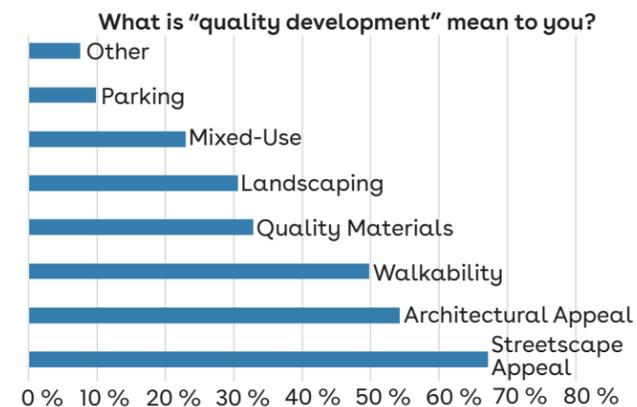


Figure II.4 - Quality Development

Top Community Priorities

- Preserving open space
- Maintaining Fort Mill’s distinct character and sense of place
- Preserving farmland and critical environmental areas
- Ensuring that new development is walkable and efficiently designed
- Community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

What are your top priorities for Fort Mill’s future?

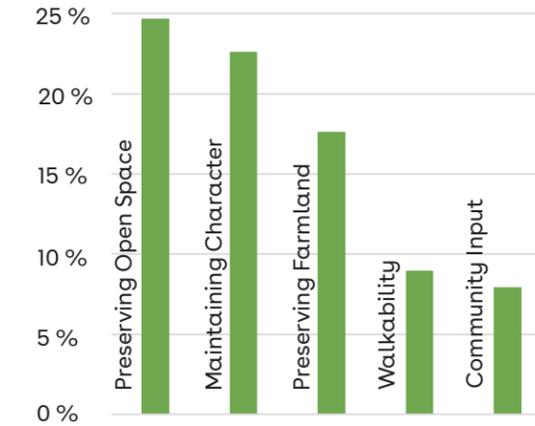


Figure II.5 - Top Community Priorities

Top priorities for Parks, Greenways, and Trails

- High quality and connected system of greenways
- Parks that protect environmental health and natural resources (stormwater, air quality, and wildlife habitat)
- Neighborhood parks that meet the daily needs and year-round needs of nearby residents
- Parks that improve residents’ health and wellness
- Park based activities and programs that enliven our communities (fitness classes, movie festivals)

What are your top priorities for Fort Mill’s parks system?

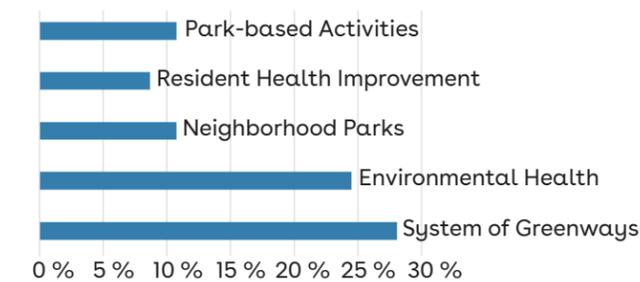


Figure II.6 - Top Priorities for Parks System

Top priorities for Improving Walkability and Bikeability

- Streets with continuous sidewalks
- Walking trails
- Greenway trails
- Bikeways and bike lanes
- Streets with lower speeds

What are your priorities for making Fort Mill more walkable and bikeable?

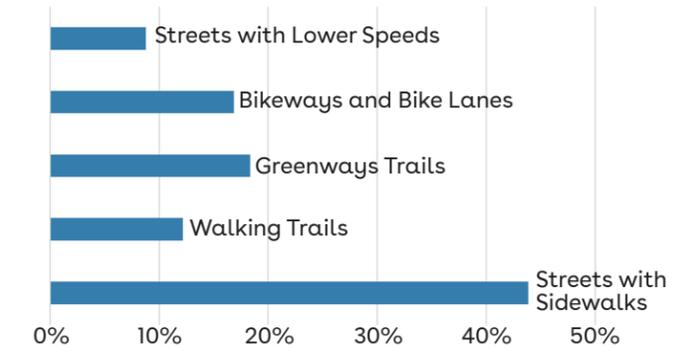


Figure II.7 - Top Priorities for Walkability and Bikeability

Other Notable Insights

- 61% of respondents believe Fort Mill currently has enough housing units
- Most respondents identified shopping and dining as the town’s greatest need
- 40% travel outside of Fort Mill daily for their basic needs; 47% do so weekly
- The importance of preserving the natural environment received an average rating of 4.8 out of 5
- Fort Mill’s current walkability and bikeability received an average score of 2.2 out of 5
- Respondents could select multiple ideal modes of transportation: 68% said walking, and 65% said driving
- Respondents broadly agreed that Fort Mill is a safe, welcoming, and high-quality place to live

Chapter III. Fort Mill Today



FORT MILL TODAY

As one of the fastest-growing municipalities in both the state and the nation, Fort Mill benefits from its strategic position within the Charlotte Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), a dynamic ten-county region spanning both North and South Carolina. This advantageous location along Interstate 77 provides direct access to Charlotte's employment centers while preserving Fort Mill's distinct character as a thriving suburban community. The Town is bordered by Rock Hill to the southwest, Tega Cay to the west, and Indian Land to the east, offering commuters, families, and businesses access to a major metro area while enjoying a high quality of life, recreational amenities, and a strong sense of community.

Established in 1873, the Town of Fort Mill has a rich history shaped by early indigenous settlement, colonial trade routes, and textile manufacturing. Named after a colonial-era British fort and a grist mill along Steele Creek, its early growth was shaped by the Catawba Nation and Scotch-Irish settlers who arrived in the mid-18th century. The Town flourished as a textile hub, following the establishment of the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company in 1887. The textile industry remained dominant for over a century, with Springs Industries playing a pivotal role in the Town's economic landscape. While the textile industry declined in the early 21st century brought change, Fort Mill successfully transitioned into a diverse and modern economy, now home to major employers.



Weekends on Main | Town of Fort Mill

Fort Mill's growth is driven by both economic opportunity and a high quality of life. Known for its top-ranked schools, abundant recreational amenities, and strong sense of community, the Town blends its historic charm with modern amenities. Downtown Fort Mill retains much of its 19th-century character, with Main Street featuring well-preserved buildings, and local businesses.

The Town's natural assets, including the Catawba River, parks, and green spaces, further enhance its appeal. Residents and visitors enjoy outdoor recreation access and opportunities at parks, trails, and the 2,100-acre Anne Springs Close Greenway which offers hiking, biking, and equestrian trails.

Transportation has long played a crucial role in the Town of Fort Mill's development, from early trade routes like Nation Ford Road to the construction of the Charlotte, Columbia & Augusta Railroad in the 1850s. Today, the Town remains well-connected through major highways, including US Highway 21 and Interstate 77, Norfolk Southern rail service, and its proximity to Charlotte Douglas International Airport. These transportation assets, combined with Fort Mill's strategic location, continue to support its rapid residential and commercial expansion.

In 2023, Fort Mill celebrated its 150th anniversary with yearlong events. Annual festivities include the South Carolina Strawberry Festival, Independence Day Celebration, and Fort Mill Fall Festival. Public art contests and historical programs showcase the Town's pride in its past and vision for the future. As Fort Mill grows, careful planning is key to preserving its history, natural resources, and community values. With a rich history, strong economy, and suburban appeal, it remains a dynamic and desirable place to live, work, and visit in the Charlotte region.

Cover: South Carolina Strawberry Festival at Walter Y. Elisha Park | Nathan Bingle, Town of Fort Mill



South Carolina Strawberry Festival at Walter Y. Elisha Park | Nathan Bingle, Town of Fort Mill

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population, Historic Trends, & Projections

Town of Fort Mill

The Town of Fort Mill has experienced rapid growth over the past two decades. The population increased from 7,587 in 2000 (U.S. Census) to 11,773 in 2010, a growth rate of 55.2%. By 2020, the population had more than doubled again to 24,614, an increase of 109% since 2010. The 2023 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the Town's population at 33,626, underscoring Fort Mill's explosive growth. Nationally, Fort Mill ranked 7th in the U.S. for growth among places with more than 20,000 residents, reflecting its strong economic opportunities and community appeal.

Planning Area

Growth in the planning area has been significant. Defined by 2020 Census tracts 610.04, 610.06, 610.07, 610.08, 610.11, 610.12, 611.01, 611.03, and 611.04, the area's boundaries generally follow the Catawba River, Sugar Creek, the North Carolina–South Carolina state line, and the western edge of Tract 610.04. The population grew from 19,970 in 2000 to 36,000 in 2010 (an 80.3% increase) and reached 65,270 by 2020 (an additional 81.3%). At that time, the planning area accounted for about 23% of York County's population. The 2023 ACS estimates 70,097 residents with a median age of 38.3, closely aligned with York County overall. Growth here has far outpaced South Carolina's statewide rate of 10.7% between 2010 and 2020.

Planning Area 25-Year Population Difference



Figure III.1 - Planning Area Population | ACS, US Census

York County

York County's growth has been steady but slower than Fort Mill and the planning area. The county's population grew from 164,614 in 2000 to 226,971 in 2010 (37.9% increase) and then to 283,899 in 2020 (25.1% increase since 2010). The 2023 ACS estimates York County's population at 298,320. Projections from the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) anticipate continued steady growth, with the county expected to surpass 400,000 residents by 2040.

Population Demographics

Racial Breakdown

According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the planning area is predominantly White (67.2%), similar to Fort Mill (67.2%) and higher than York County (56.5%). The planning area has a slightly higher share of Asian residents (6.9%) compared to Fort Mill (5.3%) and York County (3.1%). The Hispanic population is also somewhat larger in the planning area (8.1%) than in Fort Mill (6.8%) or York County (6.7%).

By contrast, the percentage of Black residents in the planning area (11.6%) is lower than in Fort Mill (12.3%) and significantly lower than York County (18.4%). Other racial groups in the planning area, American Indian (0.4%), Some Other Race (2.9%), and Two or More Races (7.6%), are broadly consistent with both Fort Mill and York County.

The 2024 Esri Diversity Index for the planning area is 57.6, close to South Carolina's 59.1. However, the planning area has a higher share of White residents (67.2% vs. 56.5%) and a lower share of Black residents (11.6% vs. 25.0%) than the state overall.

Age Distribution

27% of people in the planning area are under the age of 18, 60% are between the ages of 18-64, and 13% are over the age of 65, according to 2024 Esri.

Language Diversity

According to the 2023 ACS, 13.2% of households in the planning area speak a language other than English at home, exceeding both Fort Mill (7.5%) and York County (9.7%).

Housing

A housing unit is a single residence, such as a house or apartment. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the planning area contained 24,893 housing units, more than double Fort Mill's 9,248 units, but far fewer than York County's 114,656 units.

In 2024, Esri estimates the planning area has 26,658 households with an average household size of 2.74 people. Between 2010 and 2020, the household growth rate in the planning area increased by 6%, reflecting continued residential demand.

Housing in the planning area is well-occupied. The 2020 Census reported a 96.0% occupancy rate, slightly higher than Fort Mill's 95.5% and York County's 95.0%. The vacancy rate is 4.0%, with most vacant units listed "for sale only" (22.2%).

The housing market is predominantly owner-occupied. In 2024, 76.5% of units were owner-occupied, while 19.5% were renter-occupied, showing a slight increase in homeownership since 2020. Fort Mill's homeownership rate (84.4%) exceeds both the planning area and York County (76.7%), underscoring the town's strong appeal for families and professionals seeking a suburban lifestyle.

Housing values are notably high. The median home value in the planning area is \$465,596, with over 60% of homes valued between \$500,000 and \$750,000 (Esri 2024). Rental costs are moderate in comparison: the 2023 ACS reports a median gross rent of \$1,382, slightly lower than Fort Mill (\$1,437) but slightly higher than York County (\$1,360).

Historic Population Trends

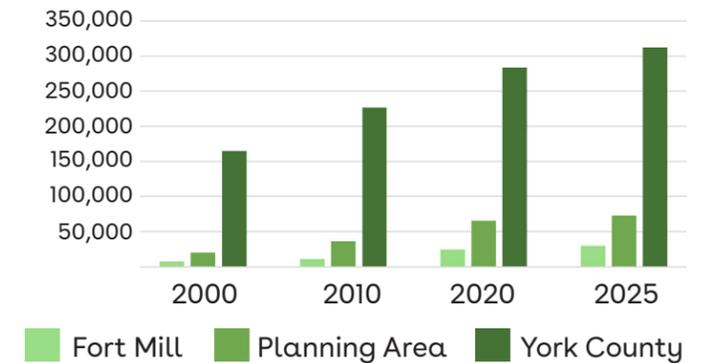


Figure III.2 - Historic Population Trends | Esri, US Census

Planning Area Housing Unit Occupancy Type

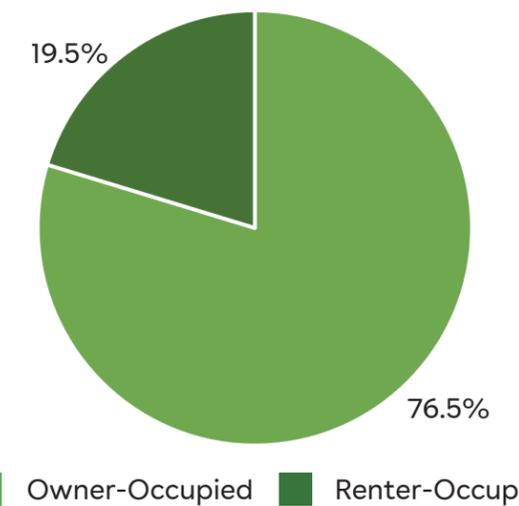


Figure III.3 - Planning Area Housing Unit Occupancy Type | Esri

Planning Area Housing

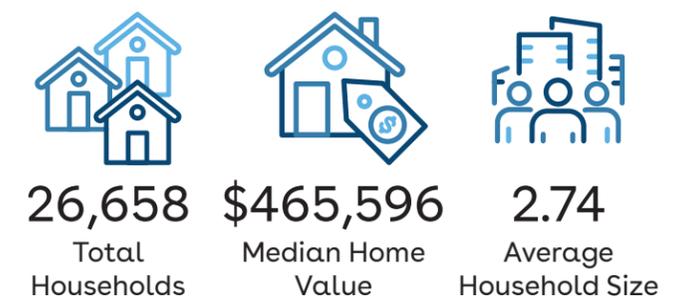


Figure III.4 - Planning Area Housing Infographic | Esri

Education

According to 2024 Esri, educational attainment in the planning area is as follows:

- 3.8% have no high school diploma
- 14.2% hold a high school diploma
- 24.7% have some college or an Associate degree
- 55.2% hold a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctorate degree

The planning area demonstrates a highly educated population, with more than half of residents (55.2%) holding at least a Bachelor's degree. This share is higher than York County (39.6%) but slightly lower than Fort Mill (58.1%), underscoring the town's strong concentration of college-educated residents.

Income

The planning area demonstrates a strong economic base. According to the 2023 ACS, the median household income is \$114,363, well above York County (\$86,860) but below Fort Mill (\$127,537). The poverty rate is just 4.5%, lower than York County (9.7%) but higher than Fort Mill (3.7%).

Based on 2024 Esri, the median disposable income in the planning area is \$95,731. The median net worth in the planning area is \$547,388, and the per capita income is \$54,453.

Planning Area Income & Financial Health



\$54,453
Per Capita Income



\$114,363
Median Household Income



2.75%
Poverty Rate

Figure III.5 - Planning Area Income | Esri

Employment

According to the 2023 ACS, employment levels are consistent across the region. The employment rate in the planning area is 67.6%, nearly identical to Fort Mill (67.8%) and slightly above York County (64.8%).

Commute patterns show some key differences. The average commute time in the planning area is 25.0 minutes, shorter than both Fort Mill and York County (27.2 minutes each). Esri data (2024) indicates that most residents drive alone to work (70%), while smaller shares carpool (6.3%), walk (0.5%), or use public transportation (0.4%). No reported commuters bike to work.

The distribution of commute times reflects a largely suburban travel pattern: 18.7% commute 15–19 minutes, 15.2% commute 20–24 minutes, and 14.6% commute 25–29 minutes. Remote work is also significant, with an estimated 23% of residents working from home.

All detailed demographic information for Fort Mill can be found in Appendix I.

Planning Area Educational Attainment

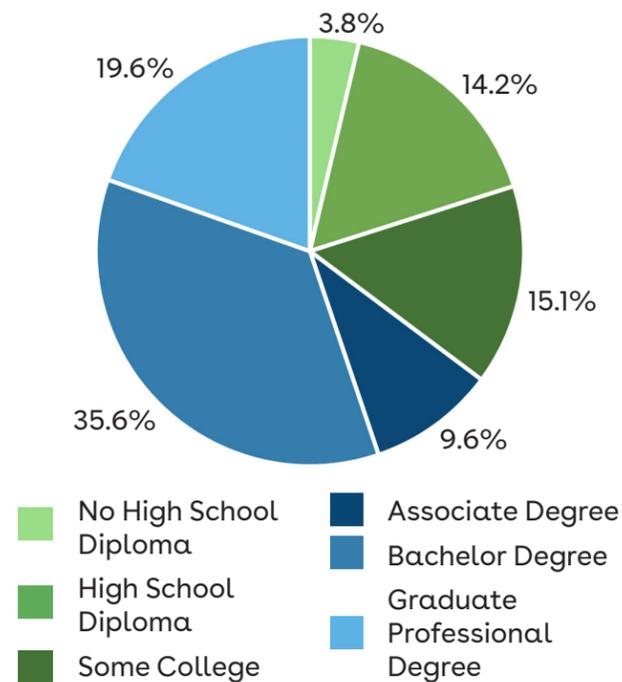


Figure III.6 - Planning Area Education Attainment | Esri

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Current Economic Status

Fort Mill has experienced significant economic growth, supported by a diverse labor force and thriving industries such as finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and professional services. Both major employers and small businesses contribute to job creation and economic stability. According to the 2023 ACS, 7.2% of residents moved from outside South Carolina, compared to 3.3% in York County, highlighting the town's attractiveness due to employment opportunities, quality schools, and amenities.

The Town and York County have implemented strategic initiatives and business incentives to attract investment, diversify the economy, support entrepreneurship, expand infrastructure, and enhance downtown Fort Mill. The Town has adopted the Bailey Bill tax incentive for rehabilitated historic properties and offers a facade improvement grant program for its historic district.

Fort Mill's goals include promoting downtown vitality, maintaining a high quality of life, and fostering a sustainable, diversified economy. Its excellent schools, entertainment options, and natural resources further drives the local economy.

Development Statistics

Fort Mill and the planning area has a strong and diverse workforce with relatively low unemployment compared to Fort Mill, York County, and South Carolina overall. Major employers include:

- Ross Stores, Inc. - Distribution Centers
- LPL Financial - Regional Headquarters
- Shaeffler Group USA, Inc.
- U.S. Foods, Inc.
- Shutterfly, Inc.
- Piedmont Medical Center
- Daimler Trucks North America
- Stanley Black & Decker

Fort Mill benefits from its proximity to Charlotte, I-77, Charlotte Douglas International Airport, and regional rail corridors, which support a varied mix of industries such as finance/insurance, healthcare, manufacturing, professional services, and retail.

Overall, the planning area contributes significantly to York County's economy, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all businesses and total employment.

For detailed labor force, unemployment, industry composition, and business base statistics, see Appendix I.

Business Partners & Initiatives

The Town of Fort Mill offers local incentives to support downtown revitalization, historic preservation, and business investment. Regional and countywide partners complement these efforts by providing broader economic development programs, funding opportunities, and workforce support.

Town of Fort Mill

- Provides local tools such as facade grants, historic property tax assessments, and abatements for qualifying businesses.

Fort Mill Economic Partners (FMEP)

- A nonprofit that promotes local economic growth, connects employers with resources, and advocates for community improvements.

York County Economic Development (YCED)

- Leads countywide recruitment and retention, offering tax incentives, workforce training, and long-term strategic planning.

Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG)

- Supports regional planning, infrastructure funding, and small business financing programs.

For detailed descriptions of incentives, programs, and initiatives, see Appendix I.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Community Facilities

The Town of Fort Mill is a vibrant community known for its small-town charm, historic downtown, excellent school system, and scenic surroundings. The town's character is defined by a mix of natural beauty, cultural heritage, and recreational amenities. Residents and visitors enjoy access to green spaces, parks, and trails, while the historic downtown area provides a hub for local businesses, community events, and cultural activities. Preserving and enhancing these assets is key to maintaining Fort Mill's unique identity and supporting its continued growth and quality of life.

Education Facilities

The Fort Mill School District (York County School District 4) serves the planning area with 21 schools, including 12 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 3 high schools.

- Elementary Schools: Doby's Bridge, Flint Hill, Fort Mill, Gold Hill, Kings Town, Orchard Park, Pleasant Knoll, River Trail, Riverview, Springfield, Sugar Creek, and Oak Grove Academy
- Middle Schools: Banks Trail, Forest Creek, Fort Mill, Gold Hill, Pleasant Knoll, and Springfield
- High Schools: Catawba Ridge, Fort Mill, and Nation Ford

Schools located outside of the planning area include Tega Cay Elementary, Gold Hill Elementary, and Gold Hill Middle Schools. In August 2026, Flint Hill Middle School will open within the planning area, bringing the district's total to 22 schools.



Fort Mill School District Logo | Fort Mill School District

Parks & Recreation Areas

Fort Mill offers a variety of recreational spaces that contribute to community health and quality of life:

- Anne Springs Close Greenway
- Doby Bridge Park
- Calhoun Street Park
- Harris Street Park
- Steele Street Park
- Banks Athletic Park
- Veterans Park
- Confederate Park
- Walter Y. Elisha Park
- Millstone Park

Other Facilities

The Town supports cultural, recreational, and social engagement through a network of community facilities, including:

- Walter Y. Elisha Park Amphitheater
- Fort Mill Community Playhouse
- Fort Mill History Museum
- Fort Mill YMCA at the Complex (& Baxter Close YMCA in planning area)
- Fort Mill Community Center



Veterans Park in Downtown Fort Mill

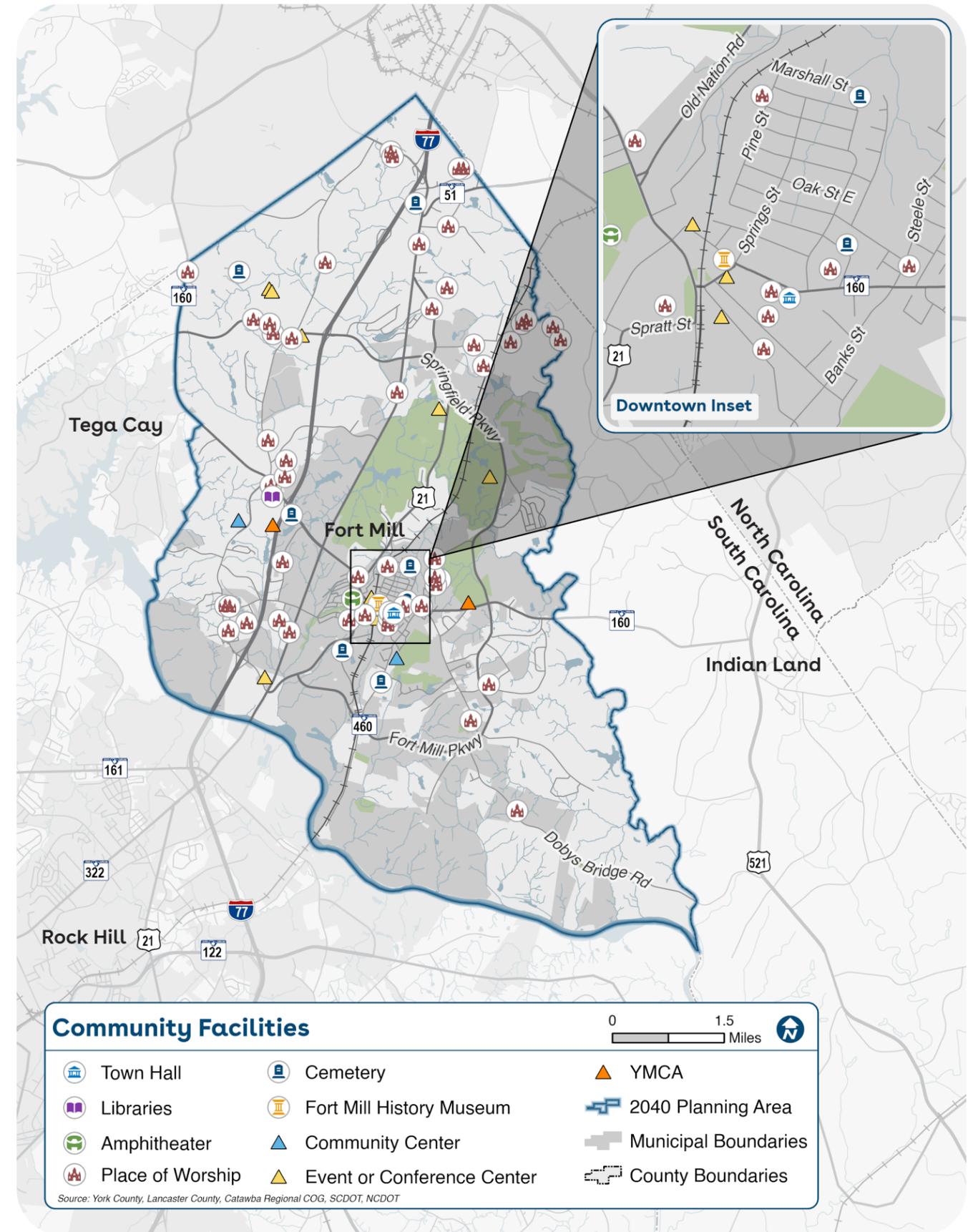


Figure III.7 - Community Facilities Map | Esri

Natural Environment & Climate

Natural & Scenic Resources

The Catawba River, over 200 miles long and named for the Catawba Indian Nation, has shaped Fort Mill's history for nearly 12,000 years. It supported settlements, trade, and industry, and it remains a key cultural and natural feature.

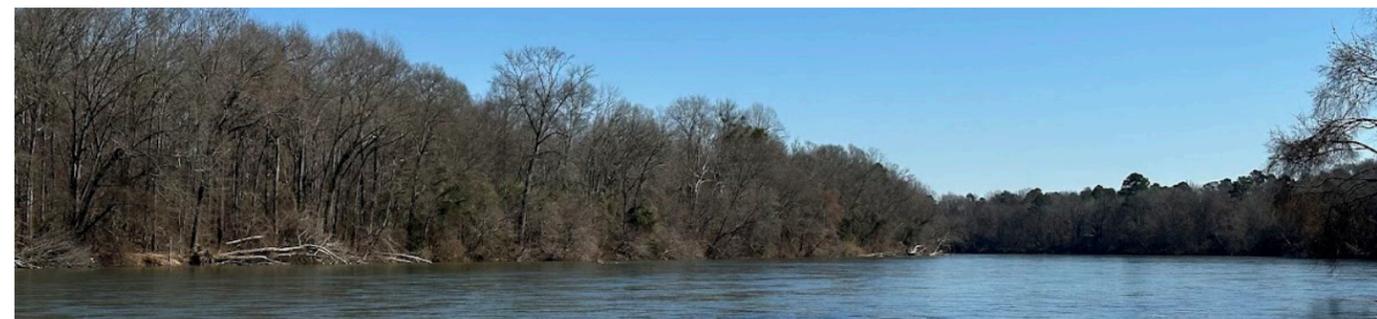
Sugar Creek, on the eastern side of the planning area, feeds into the Catawba River and has historically been difficult to access, with recent cleanup efforts led by the Catawba Riverkeeper, Fort Mill, and York County Stormwater staff. Steele Creek flows from North Carolina to the Catawba, passing through Anne Springs Close Greenway and hosting rare fish such as the coastal shiner, redbfin pickerel, and Carolina darter.

Wetlands & Floodplains

Floodplains are primarily along the Catawba River, Steele Creek, and Sugar Creek, with smaller waterways like Jackson Branch and Blankmanship Branch also contributing. Wetlands are concentrated along Steele and Sugar Creeks, with the largest areas in the northern portion of the planning area.

Waterways & Watersheds

The planning area spans two main watersheds: the Fishing Creek Reservoir–Catawba River Watershed in the southern portion, and the Sugar Creek Watershed to the north. A small portion of the Lake Wylie–Catawba River Watershed exists near SC 160 in Tega Cay.



Catawba River and Fort Mill Riverbank

Soil Types

Fort Mill contains 28 soil types ranging from poorly to excessively drained, with most soils considered very deep. Common series include Wynott, Pacolet, Mecklenburg, and Georgeville.

Topography

Located in South Carolina's Piedmont region, elevations range from 436 to 728 feet, averaging around 587 feet. The area features gently rolling hills, flatlands, streams, and small bodies of water, contributing to its scenic landscapes.

Agriculture & Open Space

Agricultural land makes up 6.8% of the planning area (1,870.5 acres) and has declined with development. Remaining areas are concentrated west of N Sutton Road and Pleasant Road, north of Gold Hill Road and downtown, particularly near US 21, Old Nation Road, and Springfield Parkway.

Prime Farm Land

Prime farmland has optimal soil, moisture, temperature, and slope for producing crops, including cultivated land, pasture, and forestland (excluding urban areas and water). Not all prime farmland shown is actively farmed.

Canopy Cover

The planning area includes 19.05 square miles of tree canopy, densest near Anne Springs Close Greenway and the southern portion along the Catawba River and Sugar Creek.

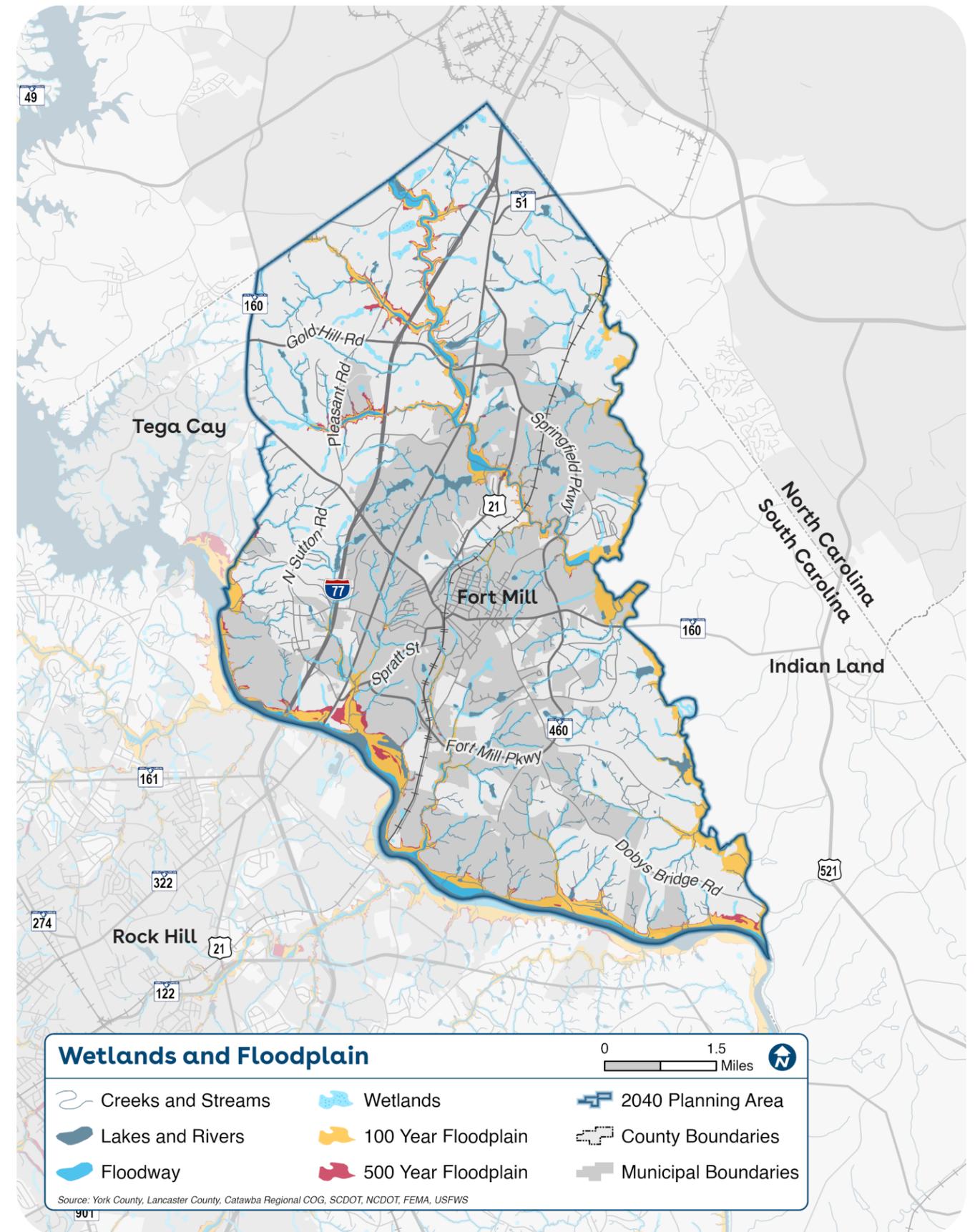


Figure III.8 - Wetlands and Floodplain Map | Esri

Land Use

Existing land use classifications describe how land is currently utilized and provide insight into development patterns and future growth opportunities. Key classifications within the planning area include:

- Agriculture: Land for farming and livestock, now limited.
- Parks / Open Space: Land preserved for recreation, conservation, or aesthetics.
- Residential:
 - Low Density: Single-family homes on large lots.
 - Low / Medium Density: Single-family homes with some townhomes.
 - Medium Density: Mix of single-family, townhomes, and small multifamily units.
 - High Density: Apartments and condominiums near commercial hubs and transit corridors
- Commercial: Retail, offices, restaurants, and other businesses.
- General Business / Light Industrial: Offices, warehouses, and small-scale industrial uses supporting employment.
- Industrial: Manufacturing, processing, and warehousing.

- Institutional: Schools, hospitals, government, and religious uses.
- Vacant: Undeveloped land, representing growth and redevelopment opportunities.
- ROW / Easement / Utilities: Land for roads, sidewalks, and utility corridors.

More detailed descriptions of each land use classification are provided in Appendix III.



Recreation Fields at Comporium Athletic Park

EXISTING LAND USE TABLE				
Existing Land Use Classification	Town of Fort Mill		Planning Area	
	Acreage	Percent	Acreage	Percent
Agriculture	486.8	4.2%	1,870.5	6.8%
Parks / Open Space	3,927.8	34.2%	5,275.3	19.11%
Residential	3,139.9	27.3%	12,035.6	43.6%
General Business	349.1	3%	2,192.3	7.9%
Commercial	125.8	1.1%	628.7	2.3%
Industrial	16.3	<1%	236.4	<1%
Institutional	998.7	8.7%	1,349.5	4.9%
Vacant	2,426.3	21.1%	3,913.4	14.2%
ROW/Easement/Utilities	22.24	<1%	103.98	<1%
TOTAL:	11,492.9	100%	27,605.6	100%

Figure III.9 - Existing Land Use Table | Esri

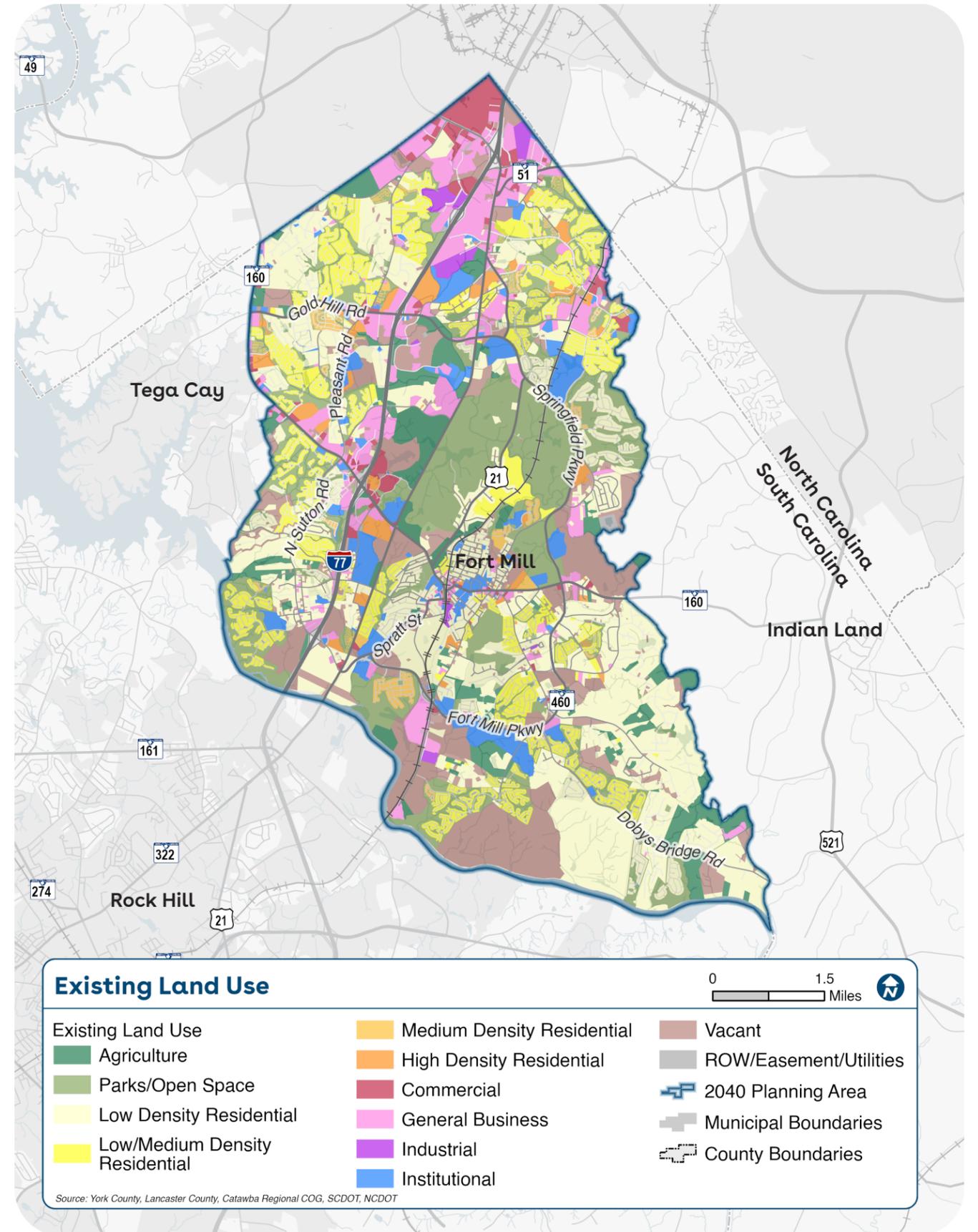


Figure III.10 - Existing Land Use Map | Esri

Zoning

Zoning is a key regulatory tool used to manage land use and guide development within specific areas or districts. By dividing land into zones and establishing regulations for each, zoning ensures that new developments align with community goals. Effective zoning policies consider market conditions, helping commercial projects meet local demand while supporting economic vitality. These policies are essential for fostering a balanced and thriving business environment.

The Town of Fort Mill has 28 zoning classifications, each with specific regulations for land use, density, and development standards. These classifications, summarized in Appendix III, fall into four general categories: residential, commercial & mixed-use, industrial & institutional, and planned & overlay districts. The Fort Mill Board of Zoning Appeals reviews requests for variances and special exceptions, providing flexibility while ensuring developments remain consistent with the Town's vision.

Because the planning area includes properties outside the town limits, York County zoning classifications were also reviewed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of applicable regulations.



Board of Zoning Appeals Flyer and Fort Mill Zoning Ordinance | Town of Fort Mill

ZONING TABLE			
Fort Mill Zoning Classification		Acreeage	Percent
Residential Zoning		2,538.1	9.0%
R-10, R-12, R-15, R-25	Residential	2,027.6	7.2%
R-5	Medium Density Residential	188.2	0.7%
GR, GR-A	Medium to High Density Residential	282.4	1.0%
RT-8	High Density Residential	39.9	0.1%
Commercial & Mixed-Use Zoning		6,847	24.1%
LC	Local Commercial	85.1	0.3%
HC	Highway Commercial	660.5	2.3%
MXU	Mixed-Use Development	6,101.4	21.5%
Industrial & Institutional Zoning		1,291.7	4.6%
LI	Light Industrial	21.9	<0.1%
GI	General Industrial	532.0	1.9%
INST	Institutional	737.8	2.6%
Planned & Overlay Districts		2,222.8	5.2%
PND	Planned Neighborhood Development	1,422.3	5.0%
HP	Historic Preservation	74.1	-
THCD	Tom Hall Street Corridor	60.1	-
UD	Urban Development	2.6	<0.1%
RC	Resource Conservation	60.8	0.2%
COD / COD-N	Corridor Overlay District	514.6	-
TCP	Transportation Corridor Protection Overlay District	88.3	-
TOTAL:		12,899.7	42.9%
York County Zoning Classification		Acreeage	Percent
Residential Zoning		6,937.9	24.4%
RMX-6, RMX-10, RMX-20	Residential Mixed Use	2,266.2	7.9%
RSF-30, RSF-40, BV	Residential Single Family/Traditional Neighborhood	4,671.7	16.5%
Commercial & Mixed-Use Zoning		600.2	2.1%
-	Neighborhood Commercial	66.1	0.23%
-	General Commercial	534.1	1.9%
Industrial & Institutional Zoning		1,470	5.2%
-	Industrial Development	398.4	1.4%
-	Light Industrial	871.3	3.1%
-	Office and Institutional	200.3	0.7%
Development & Others		7,200.8	25.4%
-	Outdoor Amusements	256.1	0.9%
-	Planned Development	2,115.7	7.5%
RUD, RUD-I	Rural Development	3,128.2	11.0%
-	Urban Development	927.7	3.3%
-	Agricultural Conservation	773.1	2.7%
TOTAL:		16,208.9	57.1%
OVERALL TOTAL		28,371.5	100%

Figure III.11 - Zoning Table | Esri

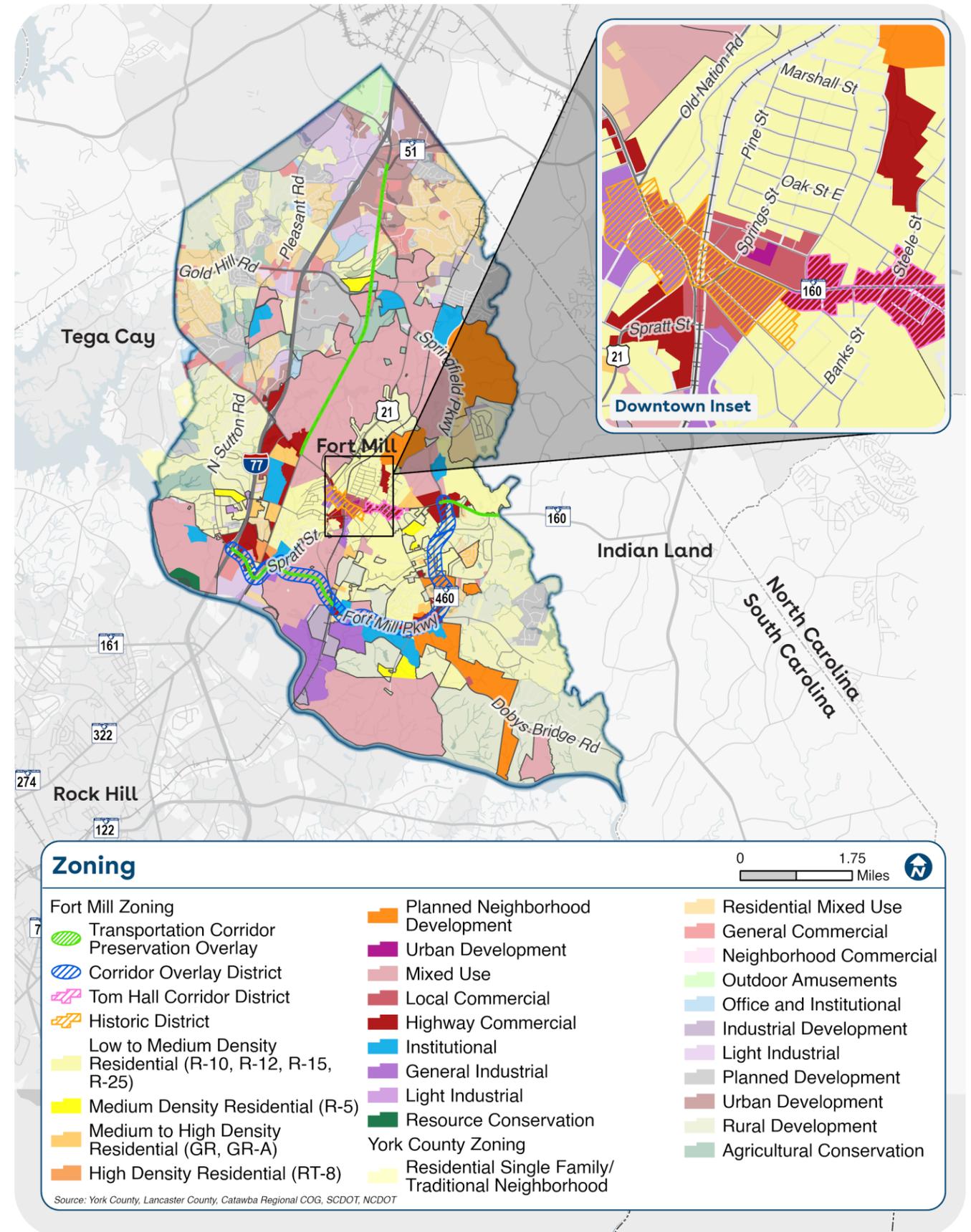


Figure III.12 - Zoning Map | Esri

Historic Districts

The Town of Fort Mill actively promotes historic preservation to protect its significant buildings. The Downtown Historic District, listed on the National Register on June 11, 1992, centers on Historic Main Street and features commercial buildings that reflect the town’s growth while maintaining historic integrity.

In 2016, Historic District Design Guidelines were adopted. The district continues to include Main Street, extending from Walter Y. Elisha Park to Monroe White Street and First Baptist Church, preserving the character of Fort Mill’s historic downtown.



Fort Mill Downtown Historic District | Visit York County

Mobility

Effective transportation is critical to Fort Mill’s continued growth, helping alleviate congestion, support residents and businesses, and connect neighborhoods and commercial areas. The planning area is car-dominated, with 70% commuting alone, 6.3% carpooling, less than 1% walking, biking, or using transit, and 22.8% working from home.

I-77 bisects the area north–south, while SC Highways 51, 160, and 460 run east–west. Downtown centers along SC 160 and US 21 Bypass, linking the town core to surrounding neighborhoods. Southern areas are rapidly developing along local and collector roads, while northern areas feature established residential and commercial hubs. A connected transportation network is essential to maintain mobility, support growth, and accommodate both daily commutes and regional travel.

Functional Classification

Roadways are classified by their purpose, traffic volume, connectivity, and access. In Fort Mill and the planning area, there are five functional classes:

- **Interstate:** High-speed, long-distance routes, e.g., I-77 (55–60 mph).
- **Principal Arterial:** Connect major cities with high traffic; limited access, e.g., US 21 Bypass and US 60.
- **Minor Arterial:** Moderate-length trips linking arterials and local roads, e.g., Springfield Parkway, Gold Hill Road, Doby’s Bridge Road.
- **Major Collector:** Connect local roads to arterials, balancing access and circulation, e.g., Fairway Drive, Williams Road, N Sutton Road, Pleasant Road.
- **Local:** All other roads providing direct access to land uses with lower speeds and short travel distances.

Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure

Fort Mill adopted its Trail Master Plan in March 2024 to guide the development and maintenance of trails and sidepaths, promoting active transportation. Sidewalks exist in newer residential areas, while older areas lack connectivity. Planned sidepaths along Springfield Parkway, SC 160, and Fort Mill Parkway aim to improve pedestrian access near schools.

Public bike facilities are limited, but natural surface trails along the Catawba River and the Anne Springs Close Greenway, a private 2,100-acre park with 40+ miles of trails, provide recreational opportunities. Sidepaths will also accommodate bicyclists for daily travel.

The Carolina Thread Trail is a regional network of connected greenways, trails, and blueways. The Carolina Thread Trail State Line to Fort Mill Feasibility Study (2025) explored nine corridors to extend the trail network beyond the NC-SC state line. The study prioritizes the use of existing greenway and utility easements.

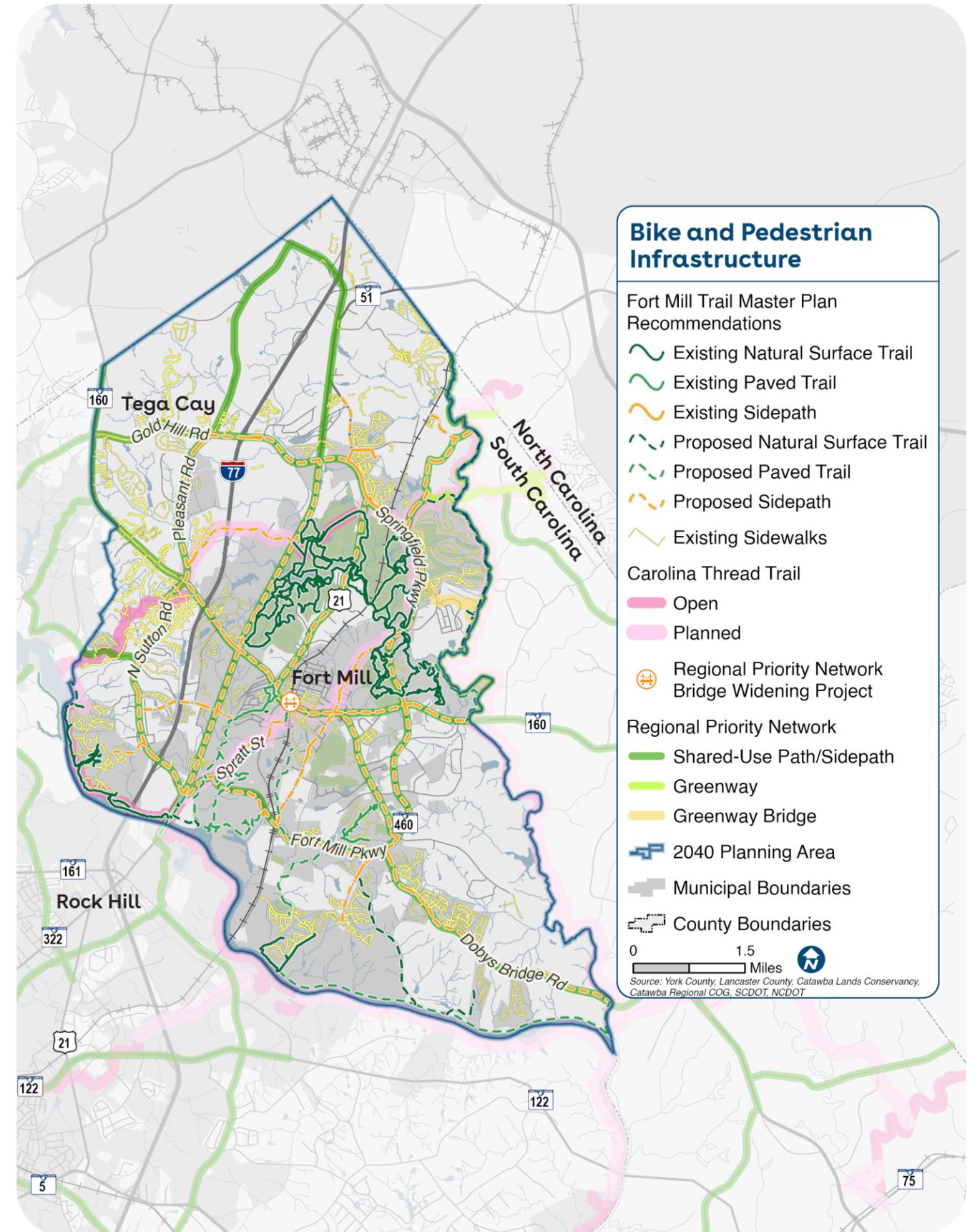


Figure III.13 - Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure Map | Esri

Crash History

From 2020–2023 (pedestrian and bicycle) and 2018–2023 (fatalities), most crashes occurred outside Fort Mill but within the planning area, primarily along I-77 and western SC 160. Pedestrian crashes in town were more frequent than vehicle fatalities or bicycle crashes, mainly near SC 160, Catawba Ridge High School, and River Trail Elementary along Fort Mill Parkway.

CRASHES WITHIN PLANNING AREA			
Crash Type	Number of Crashes	Location	
		Within Town Limits	Outside Town Limits
Traffic Fatality	33	7	26
Pedestrian	31	12	19
Pedalcycle	8	0	8
TOTAL COUNT:	72	19 (26%)	53 (74%)

Figure III.14 - Crashes within Planning Area | Esri

Transit

Fort Mill is served by CATS express routes:

- 82X Rock Hill Express: Weekday service along I-77 with stops at Cabela's Drive and Baxter Village.
- Route 42 Carowinds Boulevard: Weekday service through the northern planning area at key stops on Carowinds Boulevard and Springhill Farm Road.

York County offers the Council on Aging Access program, including Essential Service (door-to-door medical and shopping trips) and Ride-to-Work within Rock Hill.

Fort Mill Economic Partners has proposed a microtransit pilot program to Fort Mill Town Council. The initiative would use an app-based electric vehicle service to connect key commercial areas such as Baxter Village, Kingsley, and downtown. Goals include reducing traffic congestion, improving parking access, and promoting economic activity.

Railroad

There is one rail line that passes through the planning area which is owned by Norfolk Southern. There are three crossings at Main Street, Spratt Street, and Regent Parkway. These crossings see four, three, and three, trains per day respectively. All crossings have gate arms and warning lights.

Airport

There are no airports within the planning area. The nearest is Rock Hill – York County Airport (approximately 10 miles west), serving general aviation and corporate flights. Charlotte Douglas International Airport (approximately 20 miles north) provides domestic and international service.

Local, County, & SCDOT Projects

The Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a six-year plan for federally funded transportation projects, with SCDOT planning improvements over the next six years. Pennies for Progress is York County's sales and use tax program, funding local roadway projects to improve safety and efficiency.

A list of STIP and current Pennies for Progress projects is available in Appendix III.



Norfolk Southern Railroad South of Main Street

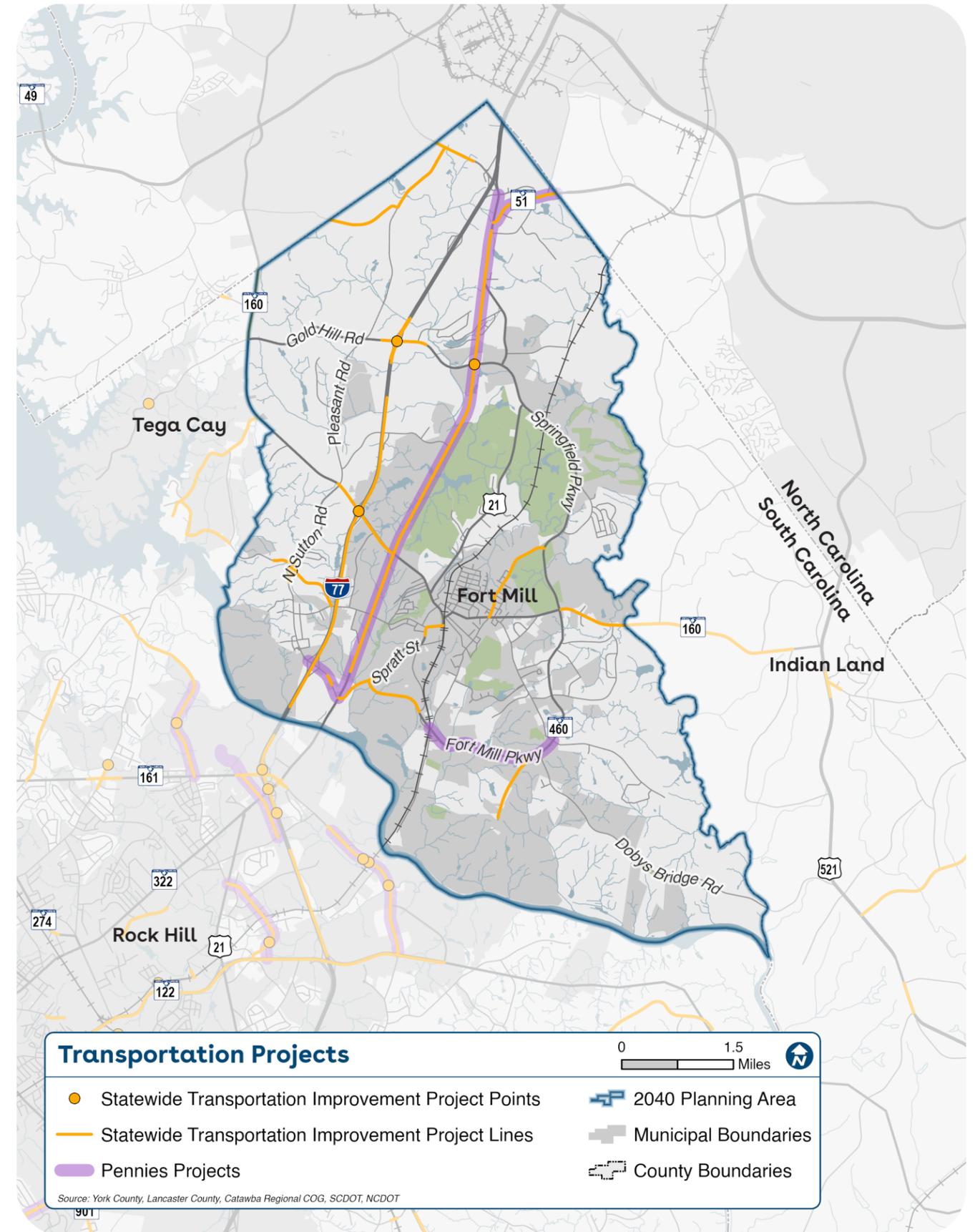


Figure III.15 - Transportation Projects Map | Esri

Public Safety & Infrastructure

Water and Sewer Service Areas

The planning area is served by multiple water and sewer providers, ensuring service coverage across all parts of Fort Mill. The providers include:

- Fort Mill Water Service: Services much of the southeastern portion, including downtown Fort Mill and surrounding neighborhoods
- York County Water Service: Serves the northern and northeastern sections
- Blue Granite Utility Service: Operates in a smaller portion south of Gold Hill Road
- Fort Mill Sewer/Riverview Water Service & Riverview Water Service: Cover areas near Riverview, west of I-77, and along Sutton Road
- Tega Cay Water Service: Provides water infrastructure to portions west of the planning area boundary
- Rock Hill Water Service: Serves areas south of the Catawba River, outside the planning area

Infrastructure is largely concentrated in developed areas, expansion is planned for growing regions. Some developed areas still lack both water mains and sewer lines, including the Foxwood neighborhood, the area around Williams Road, sections along Holbrook Road, part of Old Nations Road, and areas farther out along SC 160 and Doby's Bridge Road.

The Town increased water and sewer rates by 4% in 2024 to account for increases from the wholesale water provider, City of Rock Hill, and to cover the costs associated with maintaining infrastructure and facilities.

Sewer Service

Sanitary sewer service covers over 8,000 customers. The Town maintains collection mains and wastewater treatment, while property owners maintain lateral lines from structures to the main. Treated wastewater is discharged into the Catawba River.

Water Service

Fort Mill provides water distribution and storage for residential and commercial customers. The system includes two elevated storage tanks and mains ranging from 1.5" to 24" in diameter. Service lines from the main to meters are maintained by the Town, and all potable water is purchased from the City of Rock Hill, sourced from Lake Wylie.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities

The Town operates a wastewater treatment plant on Spratt Street with a current capacity of 3.0 million gallons per day, serving more than 8,000 customers. Ongoing modernization will increase capacity to 4.5 million gallons per day.

Solid Waste Facilities

The Town of Fort Mill provides garbage, recycling, and curbside debris collection for residential properties within town limits. In addition, York County offers waste disposal services through two nearby collection and recycling centers in the planning area:

- Fort Mill East Collection & Recycling Center near W. Hensley Road
- Baxter Collection & Recycling Center off Steele Creek Road

Both centers accept household waste, recyclables, and other approved materials to meet the community's needs.

Broadband, Cell, & Internet Utilities

The planning area has excellent broadband coverage, with a little more than half of the area at 100% access. The remaining areas are very close, with Census Tract 610.08 at 99.4% access and Tracts 611.04 and 611.03 both at 99.3% access. To close this gap, an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded project was awarded to extend broadband access in Census Tract 611.03, south of Fort Mill Parkway between Spratt Street and Banks Road. This initiative aims to enhance digital infrastructure and ensure more residents have reliable high-speed internet access.

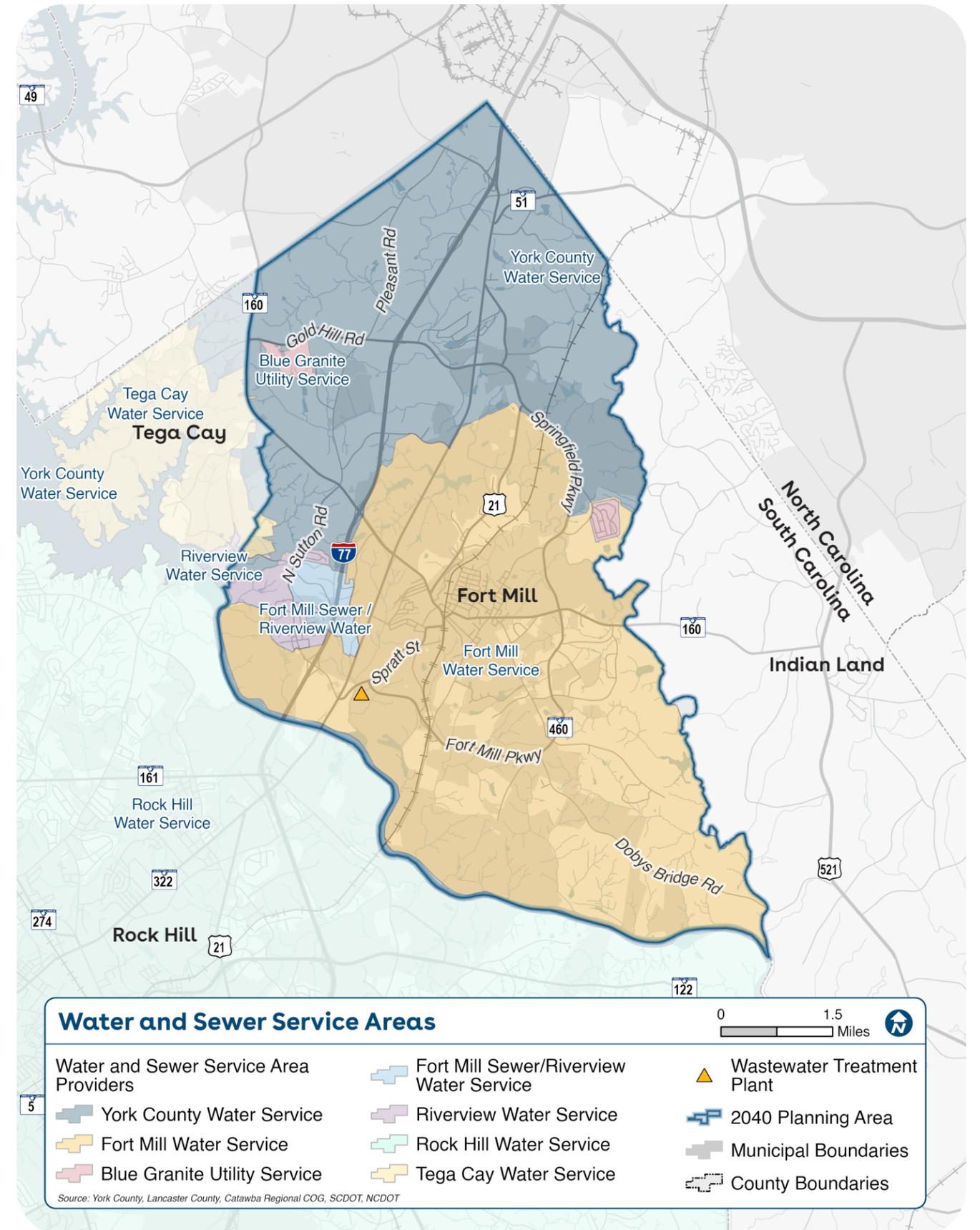


Figure III.16 - Water and Sewer Service Areas Map | Esri

Electric Utilities

The planning area is primarily served by Duke Energy and York Electric Cooperative. Duke Energy serves much of downtown Fort Mill, in the southeast, and additional parts in the north. York Electric Cooperative serves most of the north, west, and portions of the southeast, purchasing power from Duke Energy wholesale. Rock Hill Utilities supplies electricity to the City of Rock Hill, but its service area lies outside the planning area, south of the Catawba River. Additionally, scattered properties throughout the planning area have unknown electric providers, either with or without existing structures.

Gas Utilities

York County Natural Gas Authority provides natural gas throughout York County, including Fort Mill. Carolina Pipeline Company is the York County Natural Gas Authority's source of supply.

Fire Services

The Fort Mill Fire Department (FMFD), established in 1915, operates two stations in downtown Fort Mill and near Catawba Ridge High School. FMFD has 54 full-time firefighters, 4 part-time, and 8 administrative staff, responding to roughly 1,600 calls per year. Flint Hill and Riverview Fire Departments also provide independent coverage in the planning area.

A third fire station will be located near the entrance of the Masons Bend subdivision. It is in the planning stages for construction.



Town of Fort Mill Water Tower near N. Doby's Bridge Road

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

EMS is provided by Fort Mill Rescue Squad, Station 13 Piedmont EMS, and Piedmont Medical Center Gold Hill Emergency Department. Fort Mill EMS operates from downtown and Flint Hill, with 4 ambulances, a quick-response SUV, an all-terrain vehicle, and a rehab trailer, offering first-response care and patient transport.

Law Enforcement

The Fort Mill Police Department (FMPD), headquartered in Town Hall on N. White Street, employs 72 sworn officers and 10 civilian staff, providing law enforcement, crime prevention, and emergency response. The York County Sheriff's Office District 4, based in the Fort Mill Public Library, covers unincorporated areas and supports FMPD with 16 deputies for investigations, emergency response, and public safety.



Fire Truck at Fort Mill Fire Department | Town of Fort Mill



Fort Mill Police Department at Walter Y. Elisha Park Event | Fort Mill Police Department

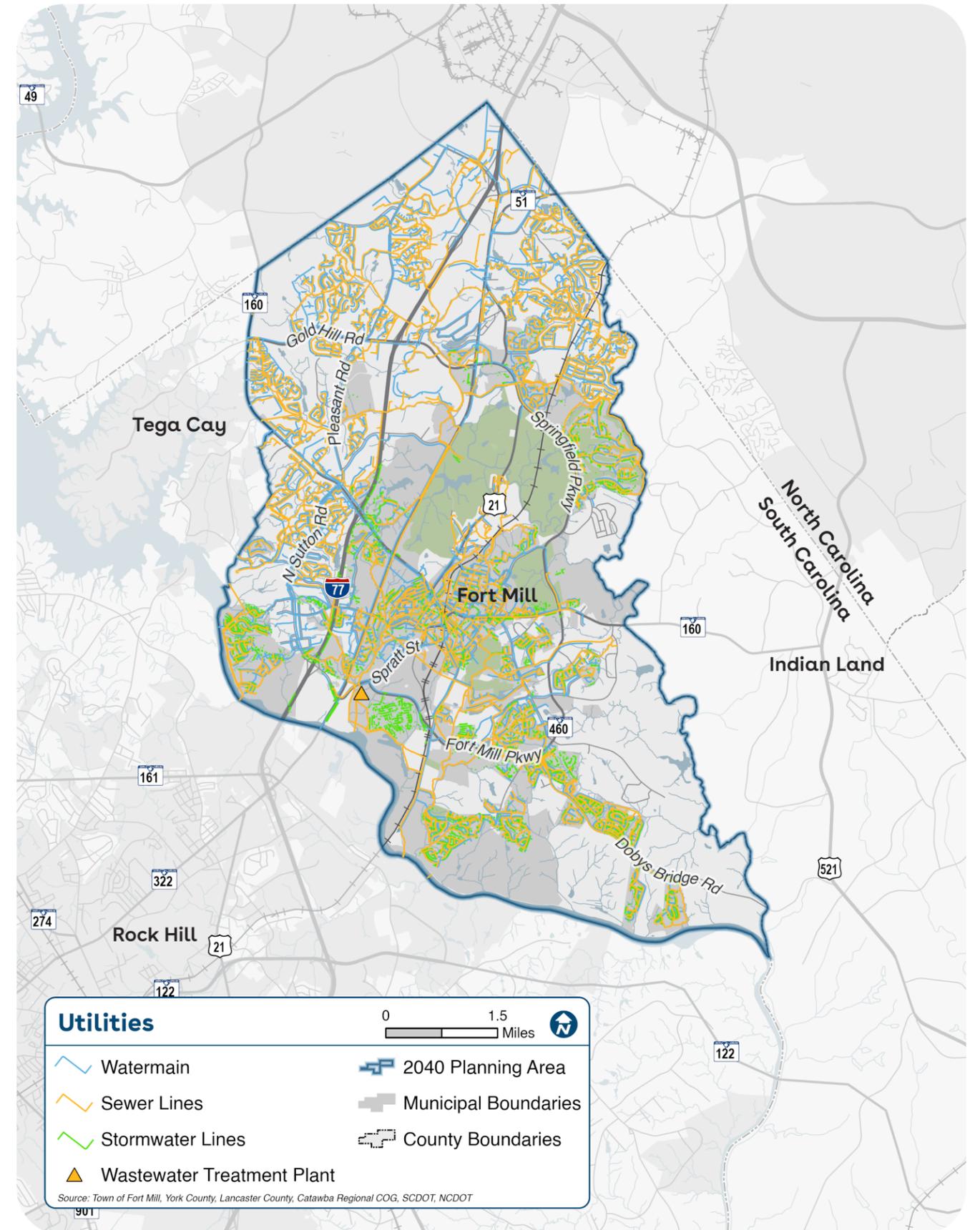


Figure III.17 - Utilities Map | Esri

MARKET ANALYSIS

Market analysis plays a critical role in shaping strategies that guide Fort Mill's growth while preserving the town's character. Understanding consumer behavior and identifying where gaps exist in the market helps align retail recruitment with community needs.

Custom Trade Area

Each retailer applies its own site selection criteria to determine whether a location will support a profitable store. While municipal boundaries, radius rings, and drive-time areas provide an initial framework, a refined trade area provides a clearer picture of consumer behavior.

For Fort Mill, the trade area has been defined using a combination of drive-time modeling, mobile data analysis, geographic boundaries, and proximity to competing shopping destinations. This analysis indicates that the community's primary customer base is best represented by a 10-minute drive time trade area. This boundary reflects the consumers most likely to shop and dine in Fort Mill on a regular basis, offering a practical and data-supported basis for evaluating market opportunities.



Fort Mill Custom Trade Area (10-Min Drive Time)

Fort Mill Custom Trade Area Demographic Snapshot

- Population: 70,489 (current estimate)
- Projected Population (2029): 80,056
- Average Age: 37 (male), 39 (female)
- Households: 28,005
- Median Household Income: \$113,151
- Average Household Size: 2.64 people
- Average Housing Value: \$577,111

GAP Analysis

This analysis utilized STI:PopStats as the provider for Consumer Demand and Supply by Establishment (commonly referred to as GAP analysis). While several demographers provide retail gap data, STI:PopStats and Retail Strategies rely on well-established national data sources and methodologies to ensure accuracy.

Market Supply

- Derived from annual retail sales and expenditure data, based on U.S. Census Bureau's monthly and annual Census of Retail Trade (CRT) Reports and the Economic Census. Establishment counts come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Consumer Demand

- Derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE).

Gap Calculation

- The difference between consumer demand and market supply represents either an opportunity gap or a surplus for each merchandise line in the specified geography.
 - A positive value indicates an opportunity gap (demand exceeds supply).
 - A negative value indicates a surplus (supply exceeds demand).

While data is rarely perfect, proper analysis provides valuable insight into areas of opportunity. The GAP Analysis is one of several tools used to highlight focus categories for recruitment. Importantly, the emphasis is on identifying categories with growth potential rather than relying solely on raw dollar amounts.

Largest Opportunity Gaps in Fort Mill

- Full-Service Restaurants: \$53,010,878
- Limited-Service Eating Places: \$52,081,983
- Grocery Stores: \$40,596,344
- Clothing Stores: \$22,275,098
- Electronics & Appliance Stores: \$12,551,321

These categories demonstrate the strongest potential for success based on consumer spending patterns and market analysis. To capitalize, Fort Mill should:

- Establish a focused recruitment team for retailers and restaurants.
- Maintain a prospect list for immediate outreach when vacancies arise.

Tapestry Segmentation

Esri's Tapestry Segmentation classifies U.S. neighborhoods into 67 lifestyle segments based on consumer traits and residential characteristics, blending demographics with geography to help communities understand their market. Segments are determined using household composition, personal traits, and housing characteristics, highlighting differences in lifestyle, purchasing behavior, and retail demand.

In the Fort Mill trade area (3-mile radius of downtown), the dominant segments include Middleburgs, Boomburbs, Workday Drive, Family Foundations, and Metro Fusion. These segments represent a mix of suburban families, young affluent households, commuting residents, multi-generational families, and urban-oriented young adults, each with distinct retail preferences.

Walkability Assessment

A walkable downtown is highly valued by consumers, local businesses, and municipal leaders. Walkability is a critical component of community vitality and economic development, as it shapes how residents and visitors interact with the built environment. Downtown Fort Mill has a Walk Score of 62, reflecting a moderately walkable environment where some daily errands can be accomplished on foot.

A community's Walk Score is generally determined by analyzing three factors:

- Proximity: Distance between boundaries and destinations.
- Infrastructure: Presence of safe and connected pathways for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Variety: A mix of restaurants, retailers, and services to support daily needs.

Downtown Fort Mill Walkability Demographic Snapshot (20-Minute Walk Radius)

- Residents: 2,629
- Median Age: 40.9
- Businesses: 208
- Employees: 1,635



Downtown Fort Mill Walkability Assessment (20-Min Walk Time)

COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED NEEDS

Through the Our Path Forward process, Fort Mill residents shared their ideas, concerns, and aspirations through workshops, open houses, surveys, focus groups, and steering committee meetings. Each comment was carefully documented in an Issues & Opportunities spreadsheet, revealing recurring themes and priorities that reflect the community's values and vision for the future. These insights form the foundation for planning considerations.

Access and Connectivity

- Expanding trail and greenway connections to link parks, neighborhoods, and downtown.
- Improving walkability through sidewalk networks and multi-use paths.
- Enhancing bike infrastructure along major corridors like Fort Mill Parkway.
- Encouraging development that supports pedestrian access and neighborhood connectivity.
- Creating safe and accessible routes to schools, shopping, and recreation.

Aesthetics

- Preserving Fort Mill's small-town identity while embracing thoughtful growth.
- Enhancing downtown character through facade improvements and placemaking.
- Preserving historic elements such as statues and historic buildings.
- Promoting visually appealing gateways and corridors.
- Encouraging design that reflects community values and heritage.



Affordability

- Addressing rising housing costs and displacement concerns, especially in legacy neighborhoods.
- Supporting development of dignified, attainable housing options.
- Preventing gentrification in historic residential areas around downtown.
- Promoting housing diversity to meet the needs of all income levels.
- Ensuring affordability for both renters and homeowners.



Community Life

- Creating vibrant community spaces such as indoor centers and performance venues.
- Investing in public amenities like splash pads, upgraded parks, and libraries.
- Supporting events and programs that foster a sense of belonging.
- Enhancing recreational opportunities for all ages.
- Preserving Fort Mill's welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.



Economic Opportunity

- Supporting small and local businesses, especially in the downtown core.
- Improving access to commercial space and reducing barriers to entrepreneurship.
- Attracting desirable retail, healthcare, and professional services.
- Revitalizing key corridors to boost economic vitality.
- Developing a strategic economic vision independent of county reliance.



Education & Partnerships

- Expanding higher education opportunities through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Building new schools and libraries to meet growing demand.
- Strengthening partnerships with universities and community organizations.
- Promoting lifelong learning and youth engagement.
- Collaborating regionally to align educational and planning goals.



Growth Management

- Evaluating infrastructure capacity to support future development.
- Coordinating land use and utility planning with population projections.
- Investing in self-sufficient systems to reduce external dependencies.
- Replacing aging infrastructure to ensure long-term resilience.
- Managing growth to preserve community character and livability.



Health & Wellness

- Enhancing recreational facilities and play areas across the town.
- Expanding access to sports complexes and public fitness spaces.
- Promoting equitable access to health and wellness services.
- Reimagining underutilized spaces for broader community use.
- Supporting active lifestyles through trail and park development.



Safety

- Prioritizing pedestrian and cyclist safety through infrastructure improvements.
- Addressing dangerous intersections and school zone traffic concerns.
- Developing training facilities for emergency services and utilities.
- Implementing traffic calming and Vision Zero strategies.
- Ensuring safe access to public spaces and community events.



Sustainability & Environment

- Protecting tree canopy and natural landscapes through preservation efforts.
- Advancing trail systems and river access for recreation and conservation.
- Promoting green infrastructure and low-impact development.
- Activating open spaces with art, gardens, and fitness amenities.
- Encouraging conservation easements and strategic land acquisition.

BIG IDEAS

Building on the themes identified through community feedback, Fort Mill's Our Path Forward process shaped a set of ten Big Ideas. These bold, actionable concepts reflect the town's values, character, and aspirations. They respond directly to the issues and opportunities raised by residents and offer a framework for guiding future investment, development, and decision-making. Together, they represent a shared vision for a thriving, connected, and resilient Fort Mill.

1. Integrate Trails, Opens Spaces, and Amenities into the Community

Implement the Trail Master Plan to strengthen connections across Fort Mill, weaving together the town's rich history—from milling and weaving to textiles and agriculture—with enhanced development that integrates trails, open space, and amenities into a unified, people-centered network linked to the Carolina Thread Trail.

2. Enhance Connections to the Catawba River

Improve access to the river and extend the Founders Trail, creating more ways for residents and visitors to enjoy this natural feature. Pursue links to nearby parks and consider new park spaces to broaden recreational opportunities.

3. Enhance Town Operational Capabilities

Develop a Long-Range Personnel Plan to support the Capital Improvements Plan and improve project delivery with training and system upgrades.



Integrate Trails, Open Spaces, and Amenities into the Community | Charlotte Observer



Enhance Connections to the Catawba River | Carolina Thread Trail



Weave a Community Tapestry | Augusta University

4. Weave a Community Tapestry

Launch an initiative for residents to “tie their thread” to Fort Mill through quality-of-life programs and flexible service opportunities like community gardens or a history walk.

5. Create a Downtown Anchor

Invest in a civic space that further activates public life, serves families, and brings people downtown—like a branch of the York County Library System with indoor/outdoor learning, recreation, and/or cultural space.

6. Support Redevelopment of the Mill

Revitalize the historic Williamson Mill through private-sector leadership and return it to modern, productive use that honors its legacy.

7. Invest in Mobility

Fund a scalable solution that meets current needs and adapts to future growth, improving mobility, reducing congestion, and expanding access for all residents.



Create a Downtown Anchor | UCLA Library

8. Community-Driven Housing Strategy

Create a community-driven housing strategy developed in close partnership with residents and neighborhoods, ensuring solutions reflect local voices, needs, and shared priorities.

9. Establish a Legacy of Investment in Arts, Culture, & Entertainment

Encourage private and local benefactors to make legacy investments in community enhancements to complement the public investments outlined in the plan.

10. Streets for All Ages and Abilities

Improve street safety for all by improving roadway design, slowing speeds, and expanding pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure—especially to support children walking and biking to school, reduce traffic, and promote healthier, more sustainable travel options.



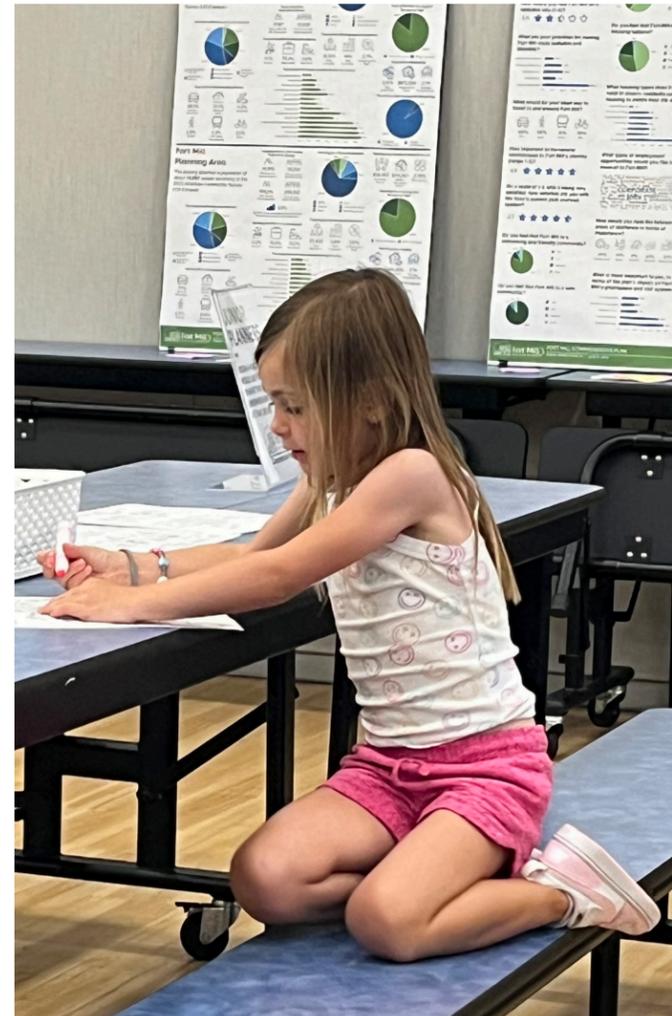
Streets for All Ages and Abilities | South End Charlotte

Chapter IV. Our Path Forward



OUR PATH FORWARD

As Fort Mill anticipates significant changes over the next two decades, the Town will encounter both new challenges and opportunities while planning to serve current and future residents. Through this planning process, the ideas and aspirations of community members and stakeholders are captured in a comprehensive “Vision,” summarized in this section. This Vision serves as the core of the plan, embodying the community’s collective goals and agreed direction. The Vision for Fort Mill’s future includes the following key aspects:



Young participant at the Our Path Forward Open House #2

Defining Our Path Forward

This section holds the three defining questions that were posed early in the planning process:

- As we look to the future, how much growth can we anticipate?
- As we grow, where should new development occur?
- What type of development should be supported that promotes our town’s character and quality of life?

The Vision

The Vision for Fort Mill’s future is articulated through a forward-looking statement, accompanied by Goals, Guiding Principles, a Future Land Use and Conservation Plan (Vision Map), and Place Types. This section establishes the foundation for guiding Fort Mill’s future, providing strategic direction for the Town and its partners as they navigate the opportunities and challenges of the coming twenty years.

Focus Areas

This section offers conceptual illustrations of how different areas within the Town of Fort Mill might evolve when the community’s Guiding Principles and defined Place Types are thoughtfully applied. These examples are not prescriptive but rather serve as possible pathways toward realizing the community’s Vision in each unique location.

Case Studies

This section presents case studies from other communities, showcasing effective planning practices and how the Town might develop by using Guiding Principles and Place Types. The examples highlight results, insights, and possible relevance to the town.

Cover: South Carolina Strawberry Festival at Walter Y. Elisha Park | Nathan Bingle, Town of Fort Mill



South Carolina Strawberry Festival at Walter Y. Elisha Park | Nathan Bingle, Town of Fort Mill

Defining Our Path Forward

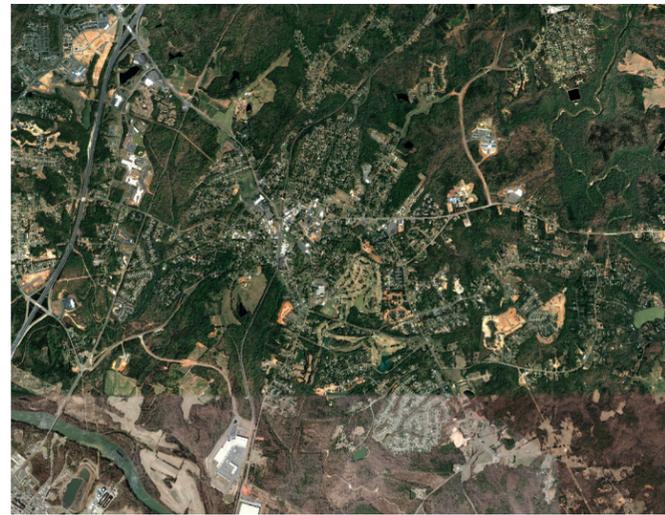
In defining the future vision, the community considered answers to important questions, which were posed in the early stages of the planning process. Below, information pertaining to those questions is presented. This information helped residents and other stakeholders formulate opinions about potential changes to the development pattern and gives context to the components of the “The Vision” that follows.

As We Look to the Future, How Much Growth Can We Anticipated?

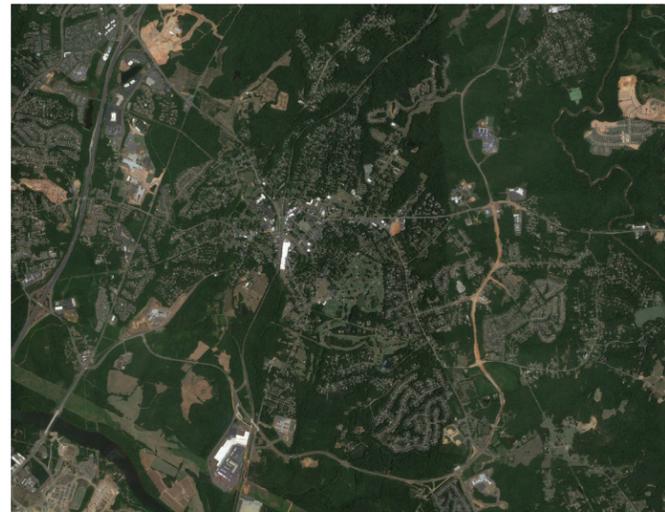
Recent trends indicate Fort Mill is poised to grow in population over the next several decades. In 2023, the population of Fort Mill was 33,626, an 8.82% increase year-by-year from 2022. Previously, in 2022, Fort Mill’s population was 30,900, an increase of 10.60% compared to a population of 27,939 in 2021. The numbers suggest that the population has not reached its peak yet and is showing a trend of further growth.

As growth occurs, it brings about various changes. Growth can lead to increased investment, which may affect the economic stability of the community. It can also result in greater competition for land and housing, higher prices, and additional demands on the Town’s infrastructure and services. Understanding the extent of growth Fort Mill might experience allows the community to prepare for these changes, optimize positive outcomes, and address potential challenges.

Community survey respondents ranked the effects of population growth as their top concern as it relates to sprawl, traffic, the environment, and community resources.



2005 Aerial | Google Earth



2015 Aerial | Google Earth



2025 Aerial | Google Earth

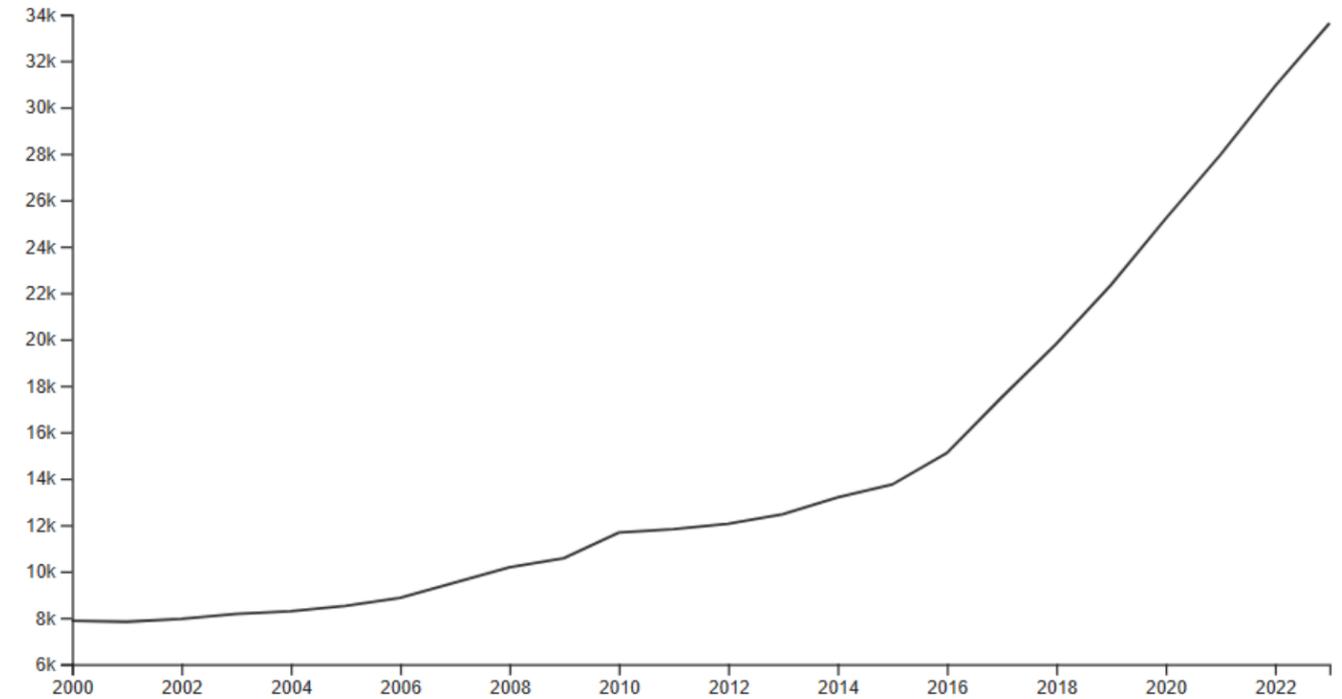


Figure IV.1 - Fort Mill's Population from 200 to 2023 | Neilsburg, U.S. Census Bureau (Population Estimates Program)

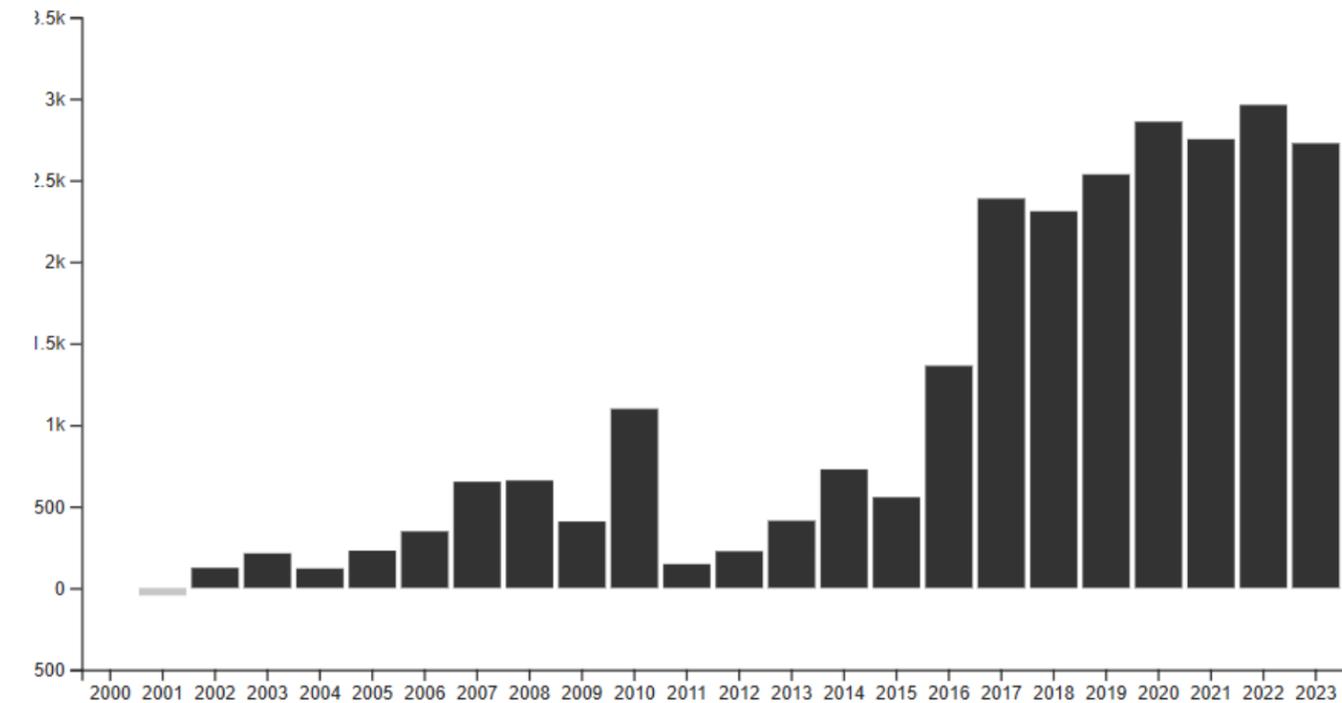


Figure IV.2 - Fort Mill Annual Population Growth Rate | Neilsburg, U.S. Census Bureau (Population Estimates Program)

As We Grow, Where Should New Development Occur?

The second question to address is, “Where should growth—such as new housing, businesses, and expanded support services—be accommodated?” An initial step in this process involves mapping the development status of parcels to identify the available “land supply,” which represents potential sites for future growth. Next, an evaluation is conducted to determine which uses—residential, commercial, or industrial—are likely to be suited to the available land, considering parcel characteristics that affect development potential.

Land Supply

The total area within the town and the planning area is 27,605 acres. Approximately 65% (18,004 acres) of this land has already been developed, lies within right-of-way (ROW), and is unlikely to be considered for redevelopment. Around 9% is protected by conservation easements or other land preservation mechanisms. The remaining acreage consists of either undeveloped (vacant) land or underdeveloped areas suitable for redevelopment. These two categories comprise the “land supply,” totaling 9,601 acres, which will be evaluated for potential future development or conservation.

The Land Supply Map depicts the distribution of the categories of development status. The status of parcels within the town and the planning area can be described as follows:

- **Developed** - The level of investment is high and such parcels are not likely to redevelop over the next 20 years.
- **Protected** - Parcels of land are protected as public parks, cemeteries, state-maintained parkland, or privately-owned conservation easements.

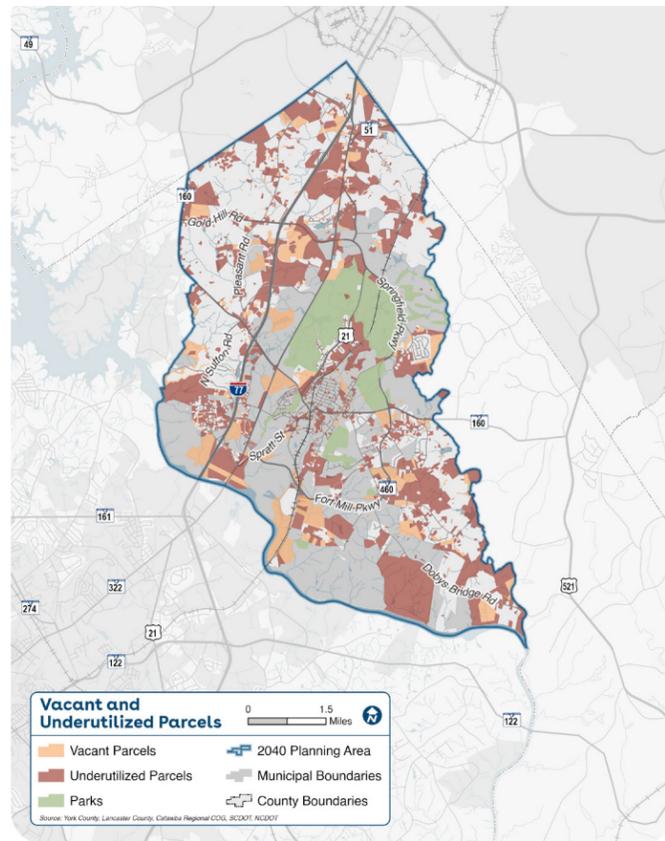


Figure IV.3 - Vacant and Underutilized Parcels | Esri

Town Limits	Acreage	Square Miles
Vacant	1156.69	1.81
Underutilized	508.75	0.79
Total	1665.44	2.60

Figure IV.4 - Town of Fort Mill Vacant and Underutilized Parcels | Esri

Planning Area	Acreage	Square Miles
Vacant	2641.73	4.13
Underutilized	6959.30	10.87
Total	9601.03	15.00

Figure IV.5 - Planning Area Vacant and Underutilized Parcels | Esri

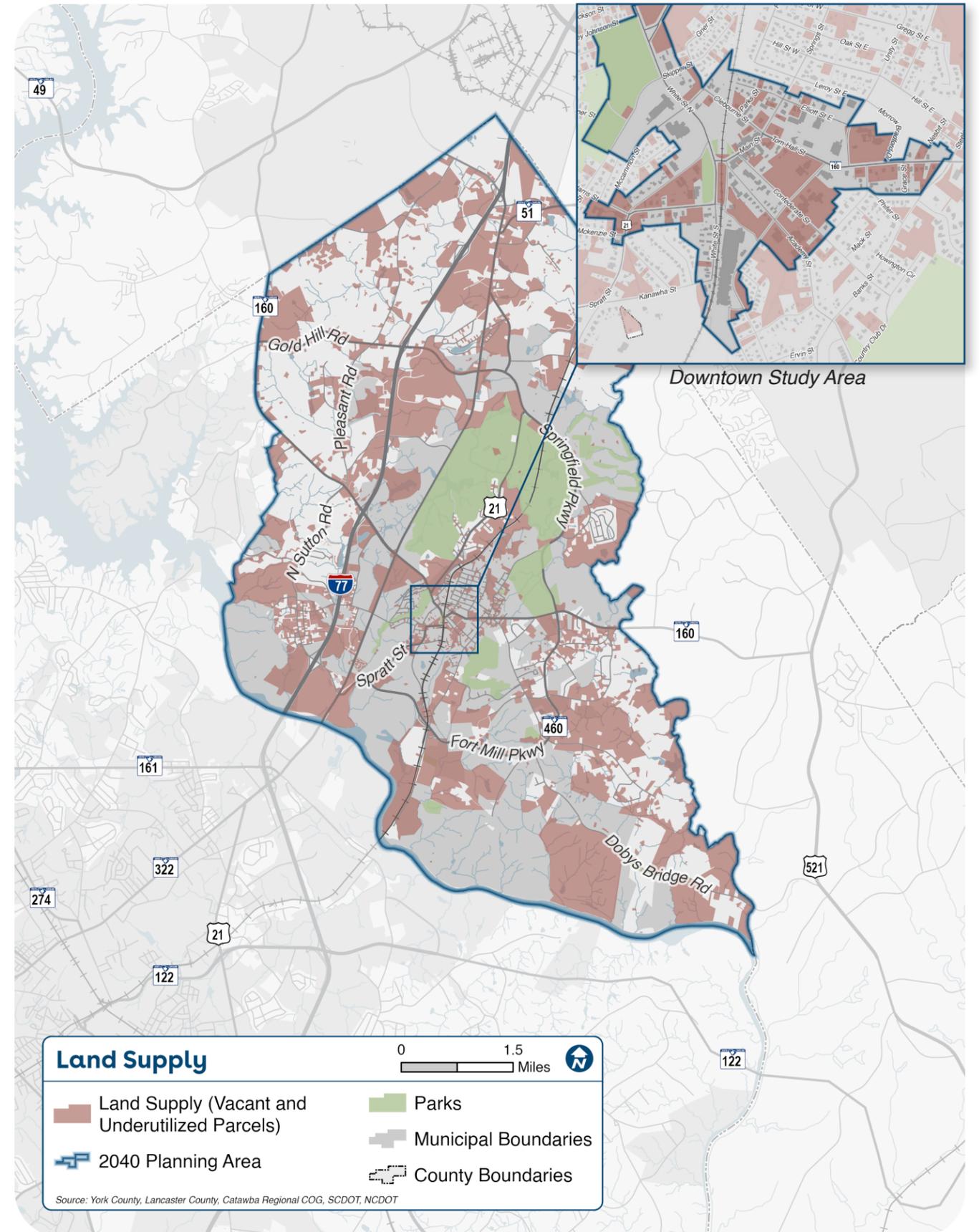


Figure IV.6 - Land Supply | Esri

Land Suitability

Land suitability refers to a site's ability to support specific uses, based on factors like infrastructure, access, and parcel size. Suitability analysis identifies areas for future residential, commercial, and industrial development, highlighting where land competition may be high. Some locations are fit for multiple uses, but areas with floodplains, wetlands, or valuable vegetation score lower due to their conservation importance, as shown on the three maps.

Residential Suitability Factors

- A closer proximity to schools indicates a higher suitability
- Roads with lower signed speeds and traffic volumes indicate higher suitability
- A closer proximity to water and sewer utilities indicates a higher suitability
- Within city boundaries indicates higher suitability
- Less environmental constraints (including floodplains, floodways, lakes, and slopes over 20%) indicate higher suitability
- Parcels already zoned for residential use and mixed use indicate a higher suitability
- Parcels with the current land use of residential or mixed use indicate higher suitability
- A closer proximity to industrial land use indicates a lower suitability
- A closer proximity to agricultural districts indicates a lower suitability



Residential, Agricultural and Industrial Land Uses | Google Earth

Commercial Suitability Factors

- Proximity to minor arterial, principal arterial or major collector roads indicate the highest suitability
- A closer proximity to water and sewer utilities indicates a higher suitability
- Within town boundaries indicate higher suitability
- Less environmental constraints (includes floodplains, floodways, lakes, and slopes over 20%) indicate higher suitability
- Parcels already zoned for commercial use indicate higher suitability
- Parcels with the current land use of commercial indicate higher suitability
- A closer proximity to agricultural districts indicates a lower suitability
- Proximity to parcels zoned for residential use indicates a higher suitability
- Proximity to major intersections indicates a higher suitability

Industrial Suitability Factors

- Parcels with 50 acres or more indicate higher suitability
- Parcels within proximity to interstates, interchanges, and active freight rail lines indicate higher suitability
- Within city boundaries indicates higher suitability
- Less environmental constraints (includes floodplains, floodways, lakes, and slopes over 20%) indicate higher suitability
- Parcels already zoned for industrial use indicate higher suitability
- Parcels with the current land use of industrial indicate higher suitability
- Proximity to parcels zoned for residential use indicates a lower suitability
- A closer proximity to agricultural districts indicates a lower suitability
- Parcels with flat terrain indicate a higher suitability

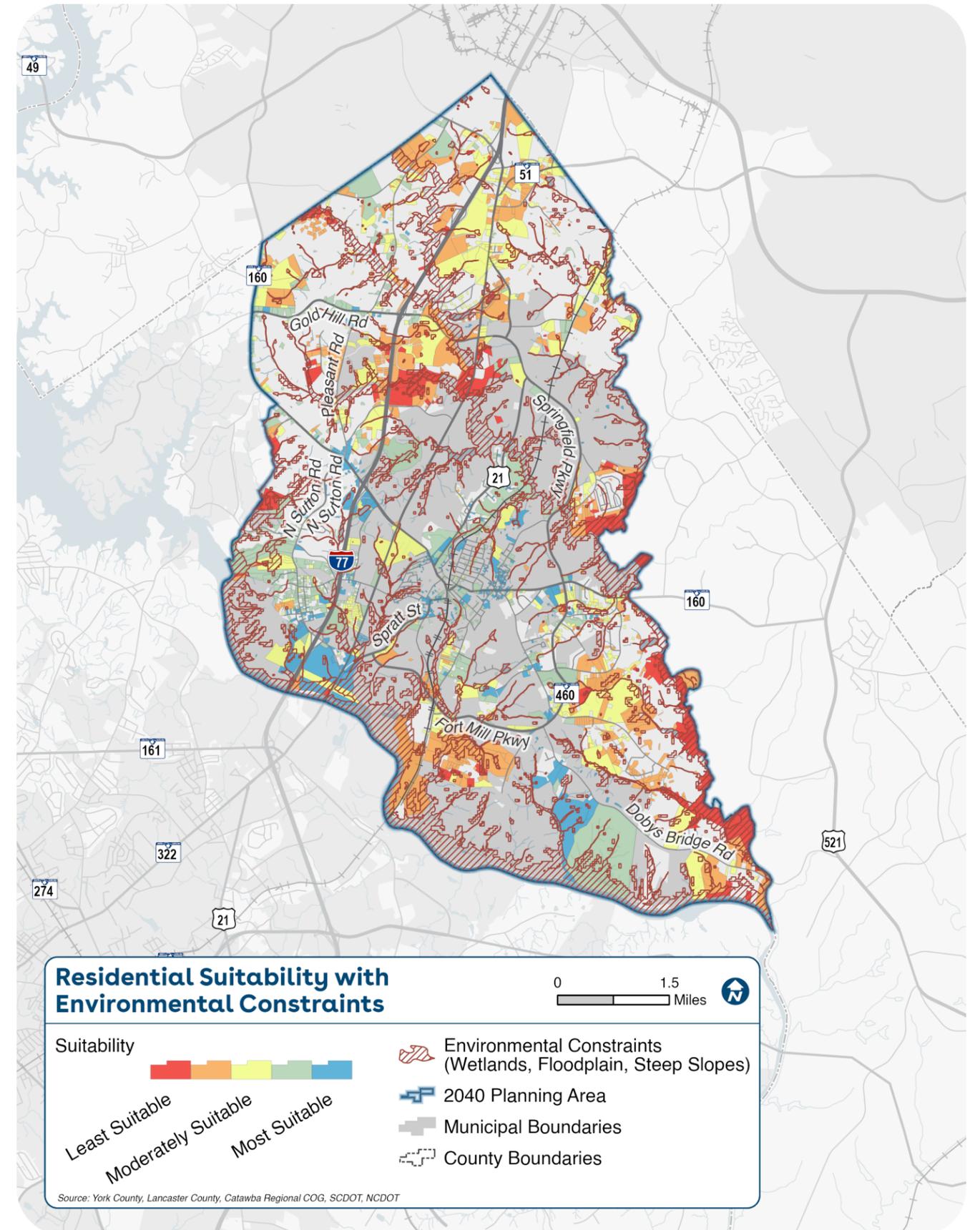


Figure IV.7 - Residential Suitability with Environmental Constraints | Esri

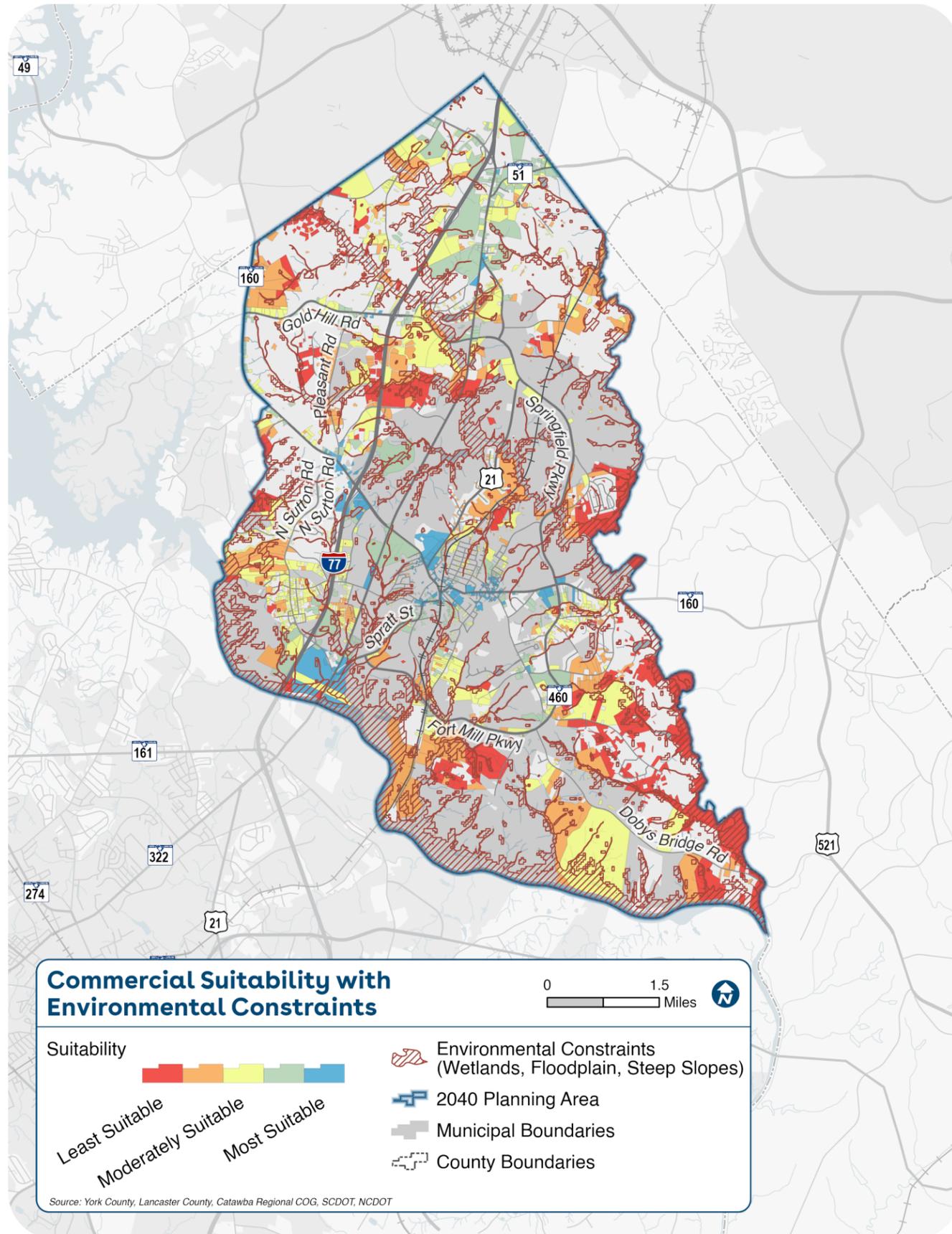


Figure IV.8 - Commercial Suitability with Environmental Constraints | Esri

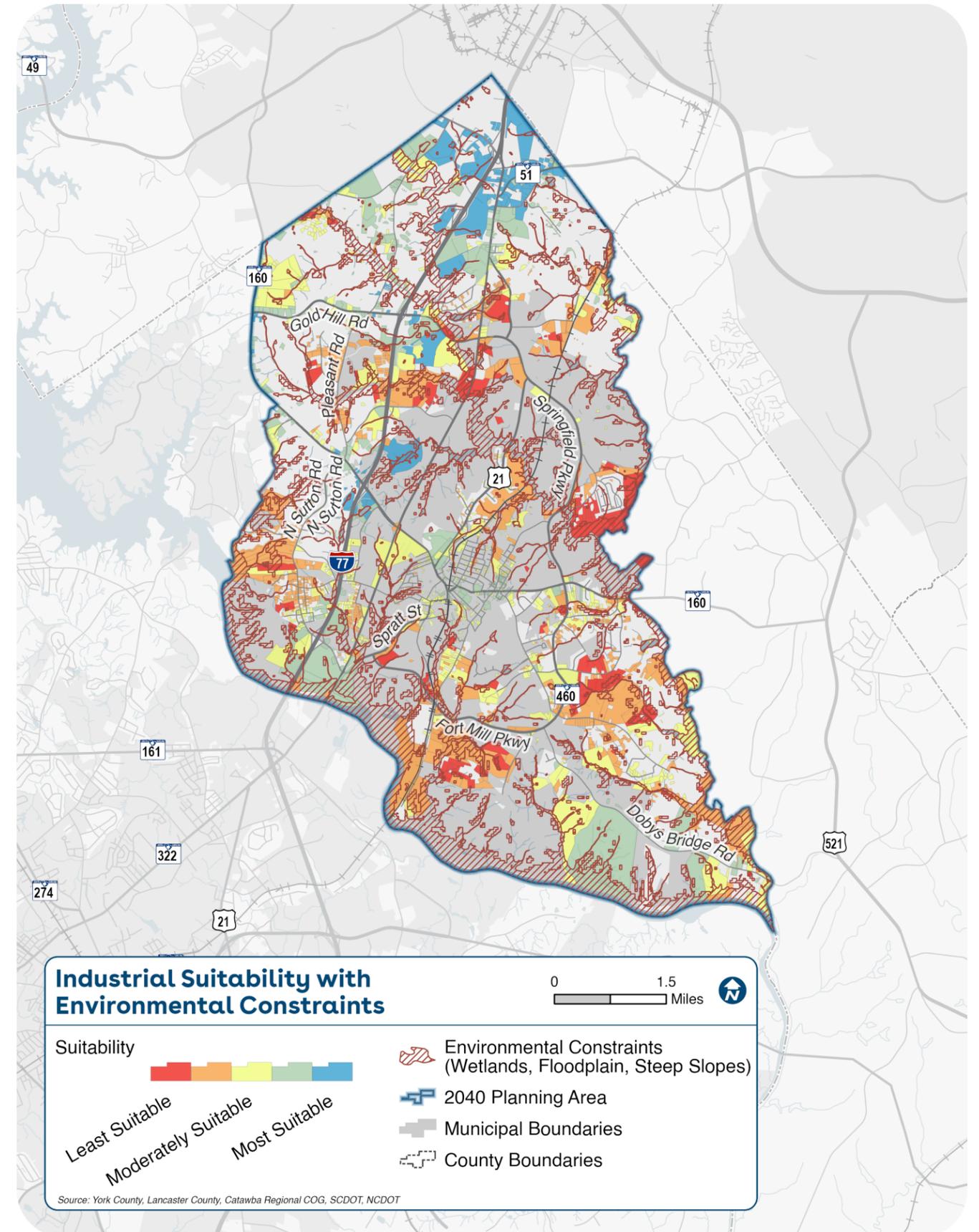
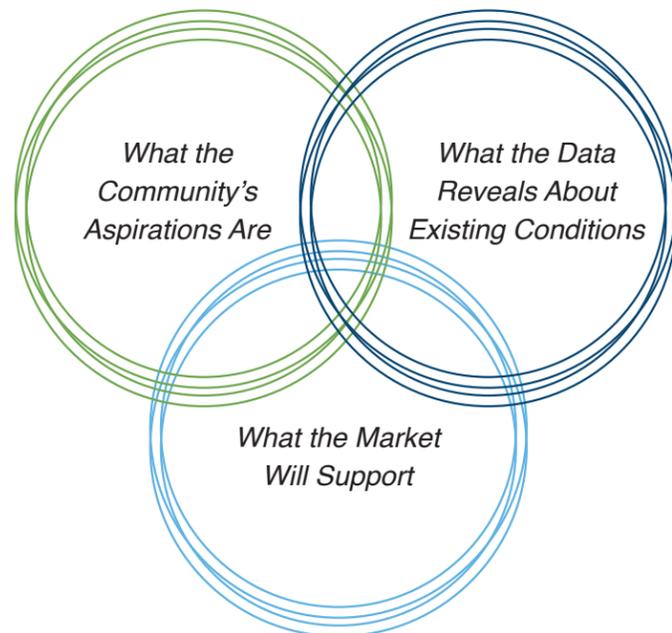


Figure IV.9 - Industrial Suitability with Environmental Constraints | Esri

What Kind of Development Should Be Supported That Promotes Our Town's Character and Quality of Life?

Mirroring the current development pattern, future land use within the planning area will continue to consist of both residential and nonresidential uses. However, the distribution and nature of these uses may shift over time as ongoing growth, evolving market dynamics, increased real estate values, and regulatory frameworks established by State and Federal authorities influence development design.

The planning process offers an important opportunity for the community to define its expectations and objectives concerning land use, thereby contributing to the establishment of a comprehensive local development framework. Gathering community input on preferences for specific types of uses helps to clarify a range of uses that are likely to gain support in the future. The accompanying input diagram identifies three primary factors in evaluating feasible alternatives for future land use and conservation, with community preferences forming one critical component of this evaluation.



Top Community Priorities

- Preserving open space
- Maintaining Fort Mill's distinct character and sense of place
- Preserving farmland and critical environmental areas
- Ensuring that new development is walkable and efficiently designed
- Community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

What are your top priorities for Fort Mill's future?

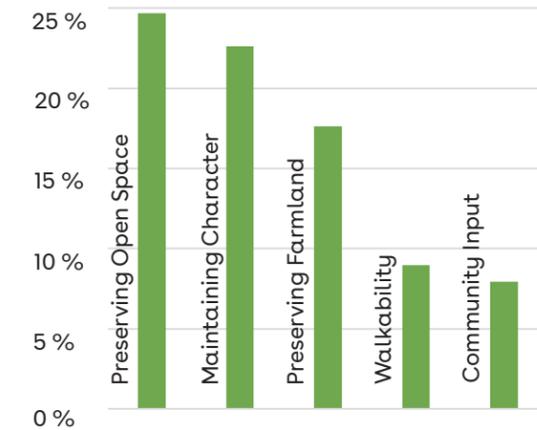


Figure IV.10 - Community Survey Priorities

In determining what kind of development is appropriate in the future, three factors are taken into consideration: the data about available land, the market conditions, and the community's expectations and aspirations.



Participant at the Open House #2 provides input on future land use preferences

THE VISION

The "Vision" for Fort Mill's future is articulated through a Vision Statement, accompanied by clearly defined Goals, Objectives, and Guiding Principles—all of which are integrated within the Future Land Use and Conservation Plan, also known as the Vision Map. The Vision Map is further clarified by definitions of the Place Types illustrated on the map.



Goals of the Plan

Developed from the guidance of community stakeholders, Town leadership, and staff, the Goals are to be used as guideposts for the plan, to provide direction for future planning, and to inform decisions of the Town and its partners as changes are managed over the next two decades. The Goals directly align with each of the 10 planning elements required by the State of South Carolina for a comprehensive plan.



Community Facilities

Fort Mill will achieve a high level of service in its delivery of infrastructure and programs.



Natural Resources

Fort Mill will manage its future to continually prioritize and protect its natural systems and resources.



Cultural Resources

Fort Mill will successfully celebrate its history through the preservation of cultural assets and traditions.



Population

Fort Mill will be a thriving community that offers opportunity, belonging, and a high quality of life for residents.



Economic Development

Fort Mill will be a prosperous community where businesses and entrepreneurs thrive.



Priority Investment

Fort Mill will guide strategic investments to support growth, enhance livability, and strengthen key areas.



Housing

Fort Mill will seek a variety housing options that meet the needs of residents at varying life and income levels



Resiliency

Fort Mill will be a community well positioned to anticipate and respond to natural, social, and economic conditions.



Land Use

Fort Mill will be a vibrant, complete community with a balanced blend of land uses.



Transportation

Fort Mill will be a safe and connected community with a network of mobility options.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Overview

The Our Path Forward Comprehensive Plan establishes a set of Guiding Principles that serve as the backbone of the recommendations for each of the State-required planning elements. These principles provide a bridge between Fort Mill's long-term aspirations and the practical strategies needed to achieve them. They draw on widely recognized planning best practices while being adapted to the town's local context, ensuring that growth is both thoughtful and sustainable. Collectively, the principles highlight Fort Mill's commitment to preserving community identity, supporting high-quality design, and creating memorable places that enhance daily life.



Walkable Design | LandDesign

Guiding Principles



1. Balanced Growth

Support a thoughtful mix of housing choices, from single-family neighborhoods to smaller-scale options, so that young professionals, families, and long-time residents can all find a place in Fort Mill.



2. Strengthening Community Character

Use storytelling, design, and placemaking to celebrate Fort Mill's history and create public spaces where people gather, connect, and feel proud of their community.



3. Connected Living

Improve sidewalks, greenways, and safe street connections to make it easier for people to walk, bike, or drive to schools, parks, jobs, and everyday needs.



4. Quality of Life for Every Generation

Ensure that future growth maintains excellent schools, parks, and services while also providing opportunities for residents of all ages and incomes to thrive.



5. Stewardship of Natural Assets

Protect Fort Mill's creeks, trees, and open spaces, and use green infrastructure to manage stormwater and create healthier, more beautiful neighborhoods.



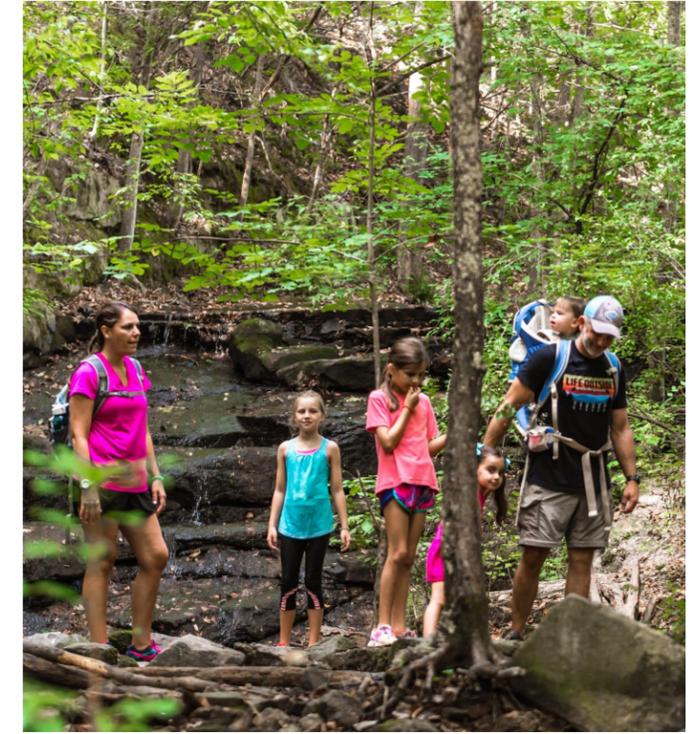
6. Resilient and Future-Ready

Plan proactively for growth, infrastructure needs, and environmental changes so that the community remains strong and adaptable over the next twenty years.



7. Partnership and Collaboration

Work closely with residents, local businesses, schools, and regional partners to carry out the community's vision together.



Family Hiking at Anne Springs Close Greenway | ASCGreenway



The Greens at Fort Mill | The Greens Apartments Fort Mill

THE VISION MAP

A Shared Vision

Establishing a shared “Vision” for the future involves assessing various options so the community can consider trade-offs and select an appropriate direction. The Future Land Use and Conservation Map, or “Vision,” is based on input gathered during the planning process, market considerations, environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity, and other factors influencing land suitability for different purposes. It outlines recommended development patterns consistent with stated Goals and Objectives. The Vision Map uses “Place Types,” which are land use categories defined in the following subsection, to show suggested areas for future development and specify the anticipated type and intensity of that development.

Planning Area

The Vision Map addresses the Town of Fort Mill and its planning area, which includes the corporate limits and surrounding areas important for coordinated planning. The planning area is defined using 2020 Census tracts 610.04, 610.06, 610.07, 610.08, 610.11, 610.12, 611.01, 611.03, and 611.04, with boundaries generally following the Catawba River, Sugar Creek, the North Carolina–South Carolina state line, and the western edge of Tract 610.04.

Using the Vision Map

The Vision Map is meant to provide a framework for future land use decisions and, as such, supports written policies and offers additional guidance with respect to the application of land development regulations (e.g., zoning and subdivision), the provision of services, and the prioritization of capital investments in support of the future development pattern. While the map shows the planning area as a whole, the Town of Fort Mill only has jurisdiction over development within the boundaries of the Town.

Place Types

Place types are classifications of development and conservation. The use of such classifications instead of land use categories is a modernized approach to describing existing and future development and distinguishing each area from others. Place types depict the character within the planning area and each place type can be described in terms of:

- Land Uses (defines how land is developed and what activities are allowed)
- Scale & Density of development (lot sizes, building heights, and building setbacks)
- Connectivity (street types, resulting block patterns, modes of transportation supported)
- Open Space (appropriate amount, variety of types, such as a formal green versus a natural area)

Community survey respondents ranked Fort Mill's quality of life the top determinant on what defines the town's character.

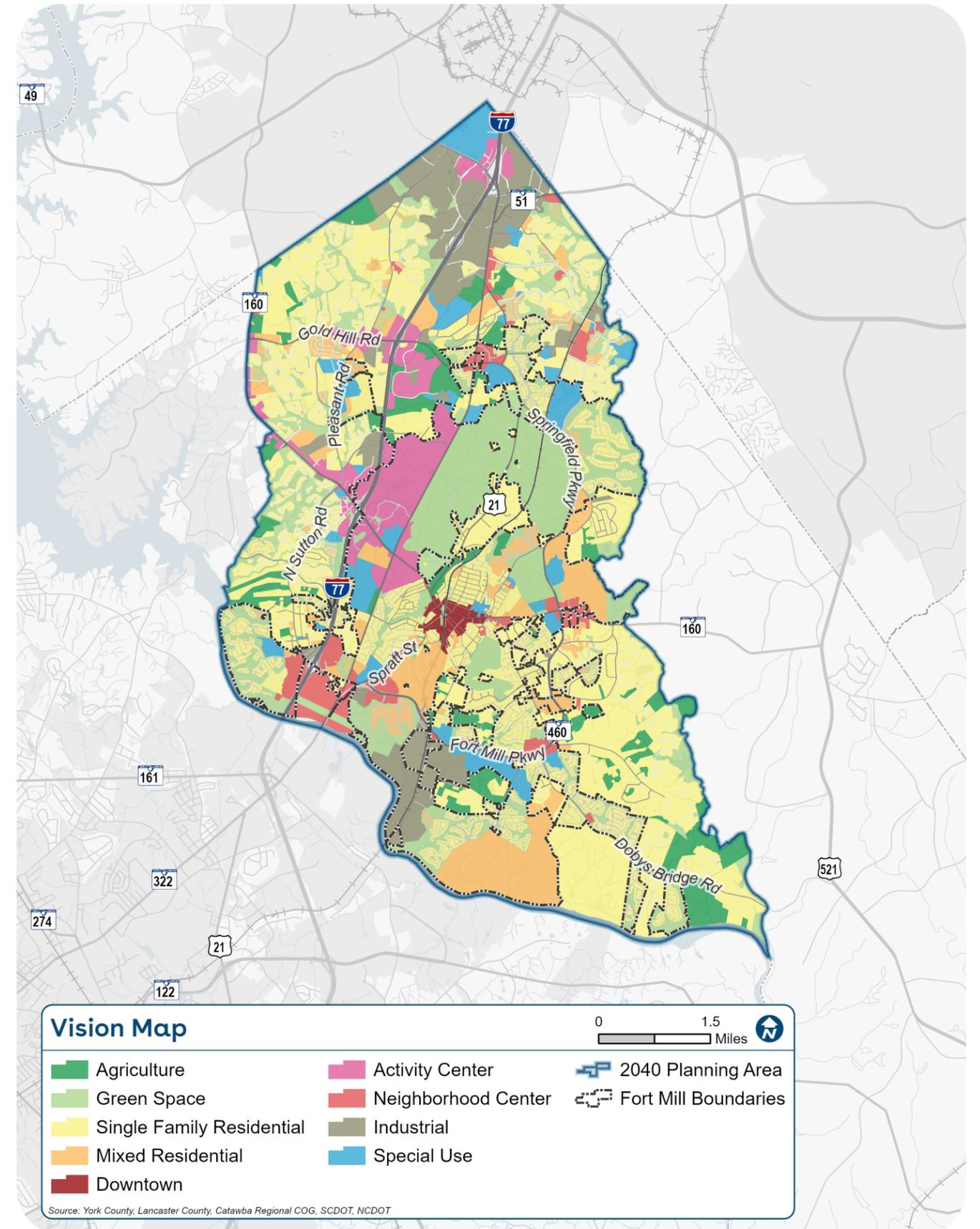


Figure IV.11 - Fort Mill Vision Map

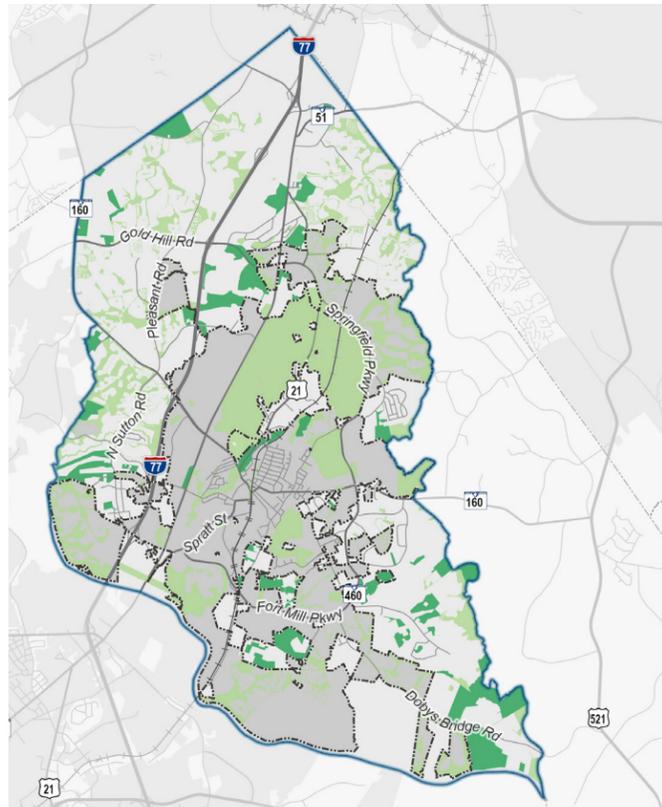


Figure IV.12 - Open Space Place Types Map

Open Space Place Types

Agriculture

These areas are primarily working lands, including cropland, pasture, and timberlands.

Green Space

These areas include parks, floodways, floodplains, conservation lands, and sites of historical/cultural significance.

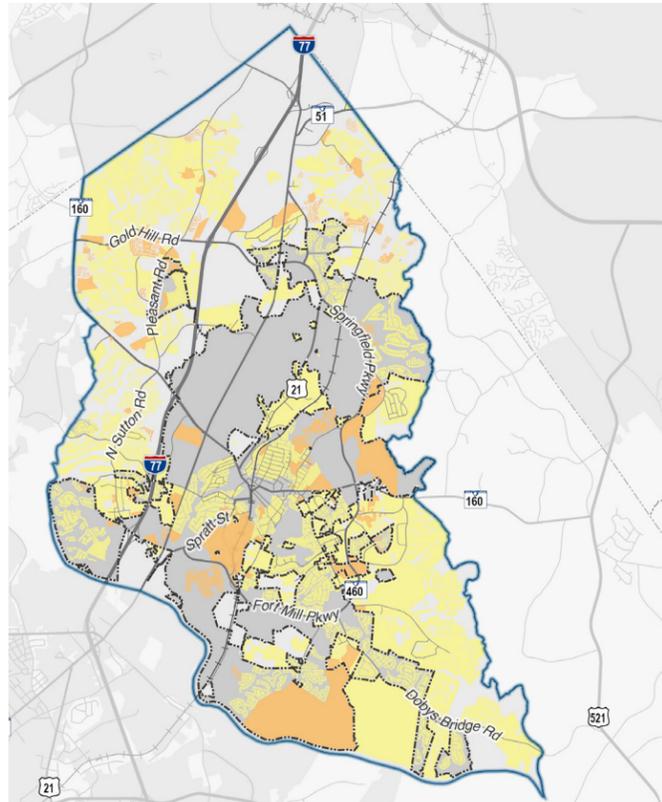


Figure IV.13 - Living Place Types Map

Living Place Types

Single Family Residential

These areas include low- to moderate-density residential development, primarily consisting of single-family detached homes.

Mixed Residential

These areas are characterized by mixed residential development comprising single-family and attached single-family units, such as townhomes and duplexes and a small amount of multi-family units.

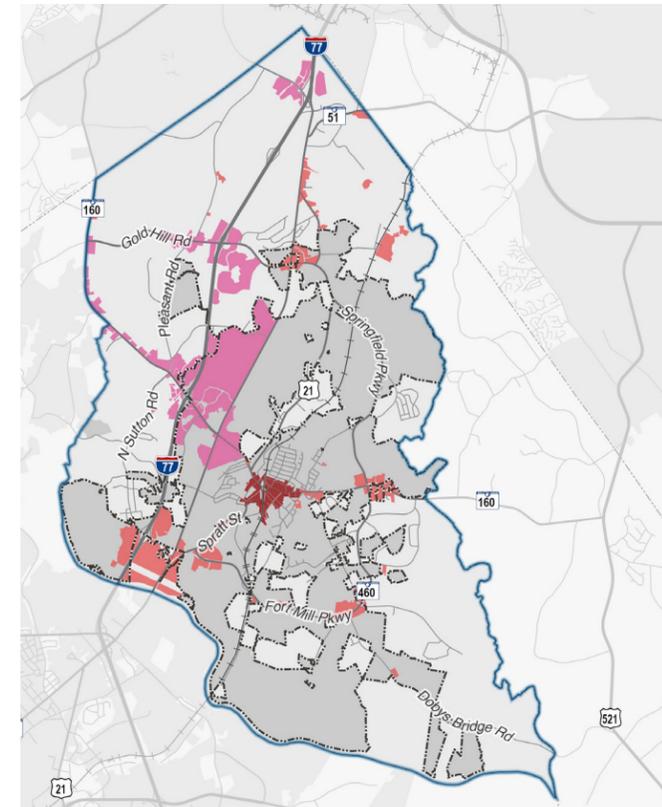


Figure IV.14 - Centers Place Types Map

Centers Place Types

Downtown

This is the community's civic and activity hub, featuring governmental and civic uses, retail, restaurants, offices, and services, along with a mix of housing types.

Activity Center

These areas serve as centers of activity with a mix of retail, restaurants, services, offices, civic uses, and diverse housing types.

Neighborhood Center

Small centers with local-serving uses may be located within walking distance of and complement surrounding residential uses.

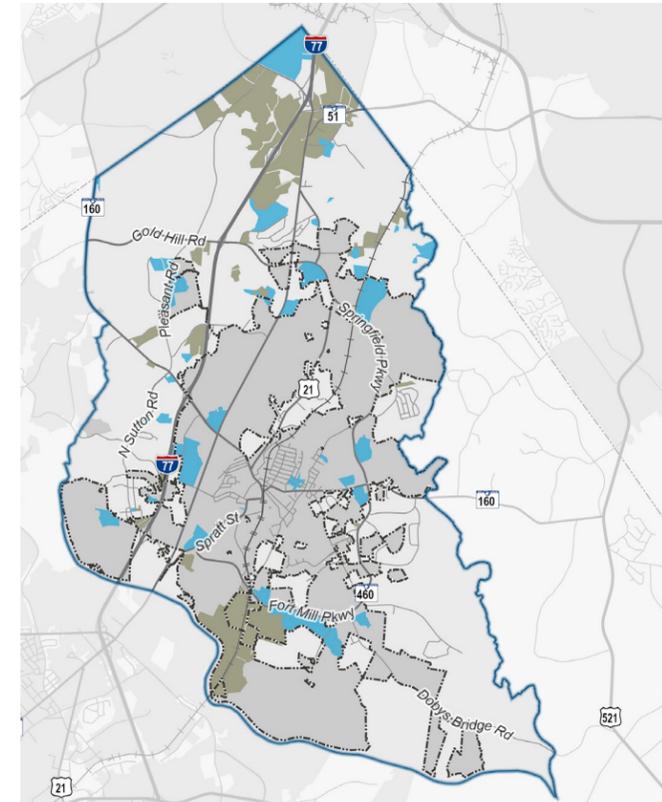


Figure IV.15 - Employment Place Types Map

Employment Types

Industrial

These areas support manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, production, assembly operations, water and sewer treatment plants, major power plants, and landfills.

Special Use

These areas include institutional (education, healthcare, religious), recreation, entertainment, and civic uses.

Investing in a Network of Open Space

The open space network includes the Green Space and Agriculture place types. This configuration supports a development pattern that is consistent with what is seen in Fort Mill today.

By placing a 50'-100' buffer along existing and proposed trails, streams, creeks, and the Catawba River could result in preservation of natural systems, tree canopy, natural habitat, bio diversity, water quality, and other environmental health indicators.

Carrying forward the philosophy of conservationist Anne Springs Close, there is value in developing strategies that protect sensitive natural systems while maintaining the character and quality of life associated with Fort Mill.

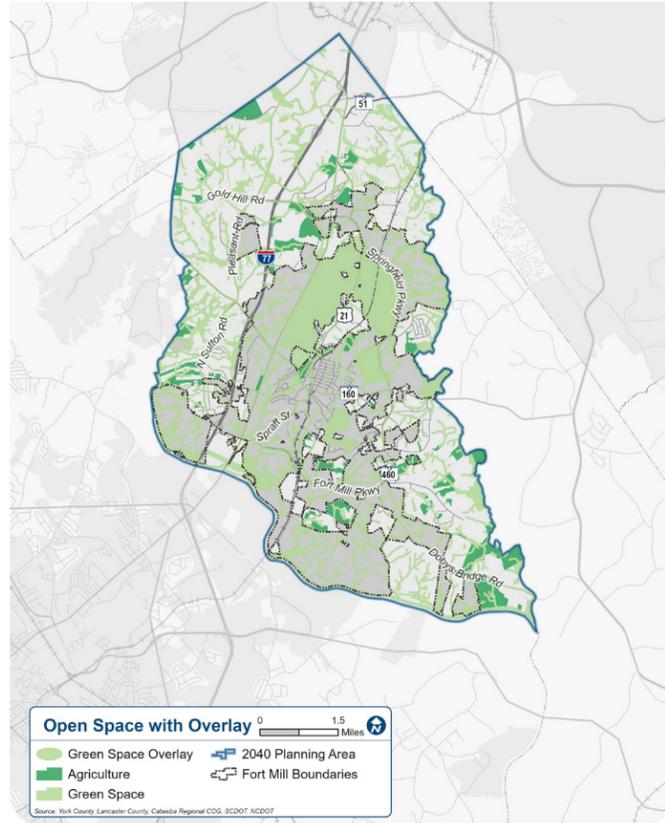


Figure IV.16 - Open Space with Green Space Overlay

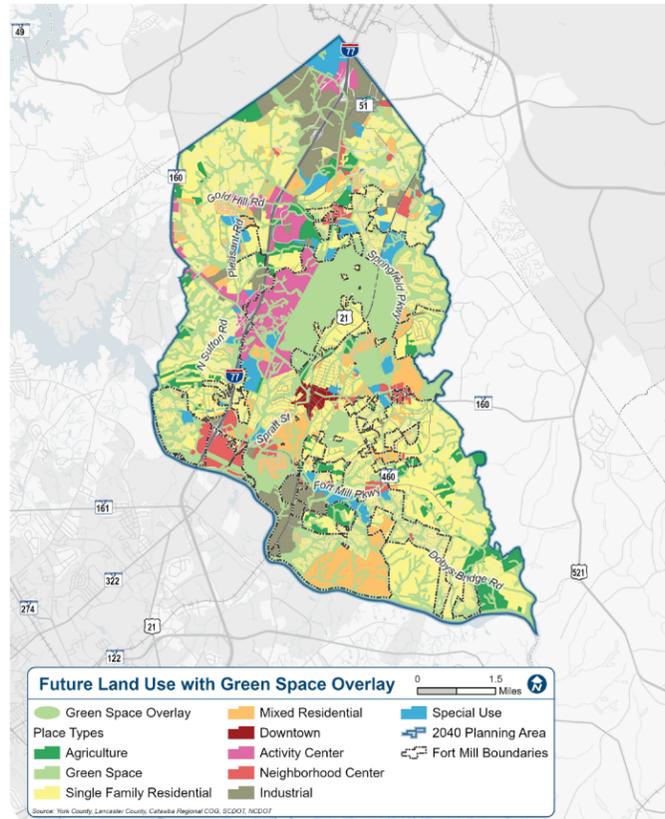


Figure IV.17 - Fort Mill Vision Map with Green Space Overlay

Place Types By Acreage

TOWN OF FORT MILL				
Future Place Types	Acres	Acres Percent	Square Miles	Square Miles Percent
Agriculture	123.4	1.1%	0.2	1.1%
Green Space	3,957.3	34.5%	6.2	34.5%
Single Family Residential	2,613.4	22.8%	4.1	22.8%
Mixed Residential	1,906.51	16.6%	3.0	16.6%
Downtown	149.8	1.3%	0.2	1.3%
Activity Center	863.8	7.5%	1.3	7.5%
Neighborhood Center	469.3	4.1%	0.7	4.1%
Industrial	502.73	4.38%	0.8	4.38%
Special Use	884.19	7.71%	1.4	7.71%
Green Space Overlay (Trail and Stream Buffers)	4,108.36	-	6.4	-
Total:	11,470.4	100.0%	17.9	100.0%

Figure IV.18 - Fort Mill Future Place Types Breakdown

PLANNING AREA				
Future Place Types	Acres	Acres Percent	Square Miles	Square Miles Percent
Agriculture	1,817.2	6.6%	2.8	6.6%
Green Space	5,954.8	21.6%	9.3	21.6%
Single Family Residential	10,873.6	39.4%	17.0	39.4%
Mixed Residential	2,673.0	9.7%	4.2	9.7%
Downtown	149.8	0.5%	0.2	0.5%
Activity Center	1,540.5	5.6%	2.4	5.6%
Neighborhood Center	907.2	3.3%	1.4	3.3%
Industrial	2,210.3	8.0%	3.5	8.0%
Special Use	1,4456.0	5.2%	2.3	5.2%
Green Space Overlay (Trail and Stream Buffers)	8,075.4	-	6.4	-
Total:	27,572.2	100.0%	17.9	100.0%

Figure IV.19 - Planning Area Future Place Types Breakdown

Community survey respondents ranked environmental health as one of their top priorities when planning for Fort Mill's future.

Agriculture

These areas are primarily working lands, including cropland, pasture, and timberlands. Limited development may be appropriate, such as single-family homes and accessory uses that support or are compatible with agricultural and forestry operations.

Uses & Building Types

- Farms
- Managed timber
- Single-family homes
- Home-based businesses
- Farm stands

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Curvilinear
- Connectivity:
 - Minimal; one or two access points along adjoining roads
- Street Types:
 - Private drives
 - Local 2-lanes

Open Space

- Natural Areas, including floodplain preservation areas
- Fields and pastures
- Managed forests and woodlands

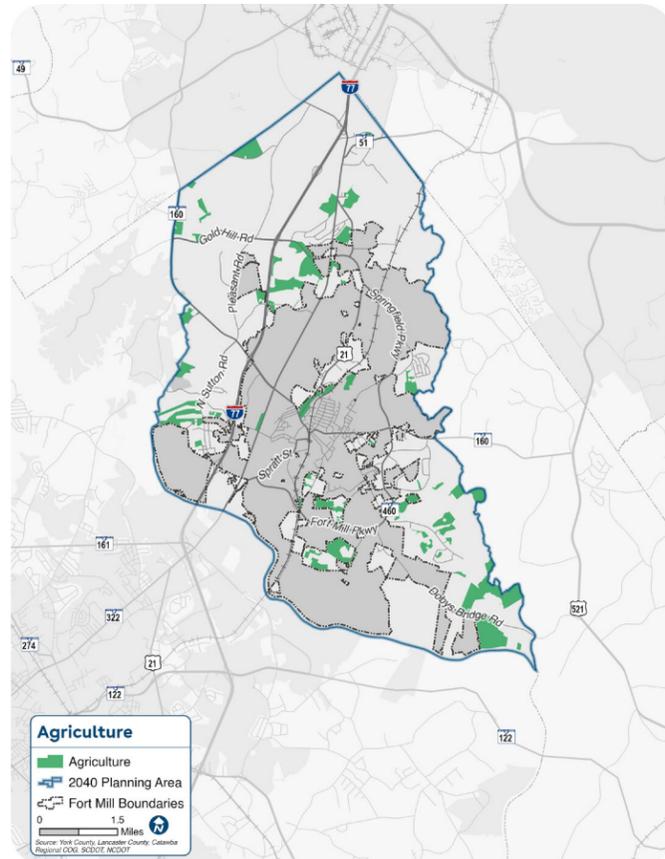


Figure IV.20 - Agriculture Place Types Map



Green Space

These areas include parks, floodways, floodplains, conservation lands, and sites of historical/cultural significance. Development is limited and typically supports public access, recreation, natural resource protection, and environmental management. They may include large, publicly maintained facilities for passive and active recreation. Smaller-scale recreation spaces may be in other place types.

Uses & Building Types

- Parks, including ballfields, playgrounds, tennis courts, golf courses, arboretums, gardens, pools, and splash pads
- Small visitors' centers, restrooms, visitor parking, picnic shelters, other day use amenities
- Privately protected lands
- Regulated lands (stream buffers, floodplain, etc.)
- Nature preserves and passive parks
- Historic sites and structures (museum homes)

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern: Curvilinear
- Connectivity:
 - Vehicular access points to surrounding development and road network
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives
 - Local 2-lanes

Open Space

- Wide variety of passive spaces (walking paths, bike trails, open fields, natural areas, and conservation lands)
- Active recreation spaces (ballfields, playgrounds, splash pads)

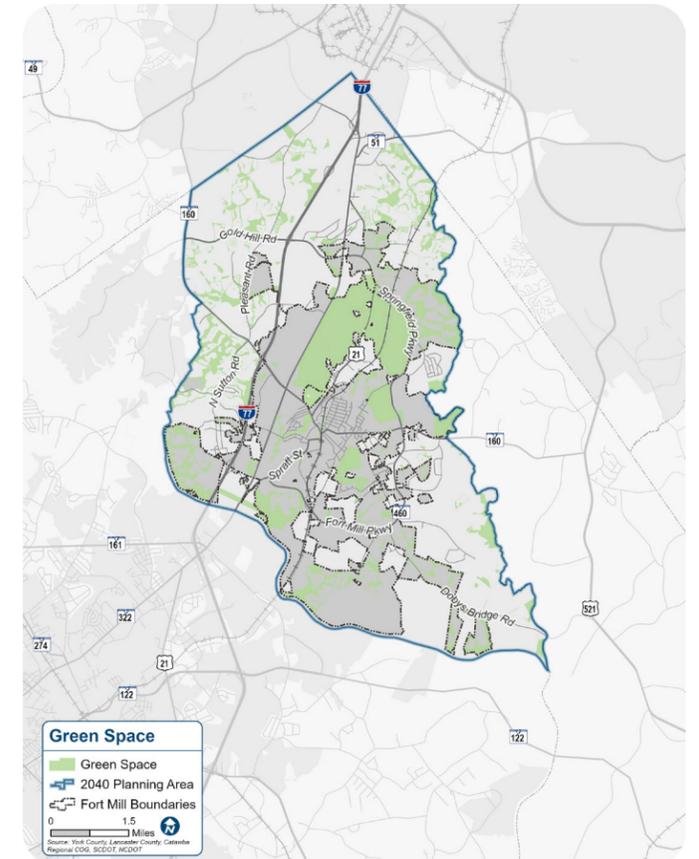
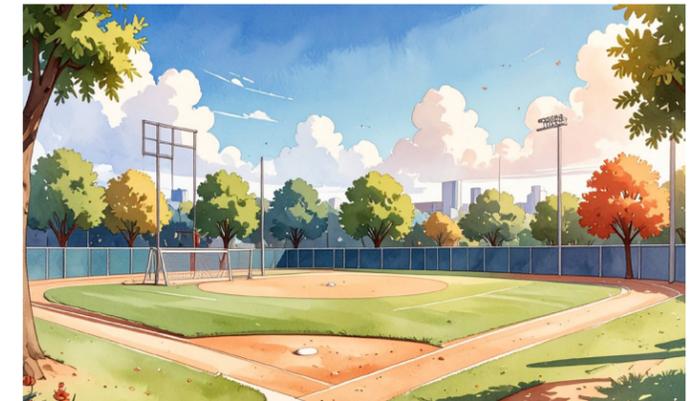


Figure IV.21 - Green Space Place Types Map



Single Family

These areas include low- to moderate-density residential development, primarily consisting of single-family detached homes. A mix of housing types is encouraged to support intergenerational neighborhoods. Pocket and neighborhood parks are interspersed throughout, with trails connecting these spaces and linking to adjacent developments. Conservation design, which allows smaller lots in exchange for more open space, may be preferred, especially when it enables higher overall density.

Uses & Building Types

- Large-lot single-family detached homes
- Medium-lot single-family detached homes
- Small-lot single-family detached homes
- Conservation subdivisions (clustered small-lot homes with open space)
- Accessory dwelling units
- Amenity buildings (clubhouses)

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Grid, modified grid, or curvilinear with cul-de-sacs as needed to address topography and other physically challenged features
- Connectivity:
 - Moderately connected internally and externally (to adjacent development)
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives, alleys
 - Local 2-lane, local 2-lane divided

Open Space

- Pocket parks
- Informal greens
- Neighborhood parks
- Trails

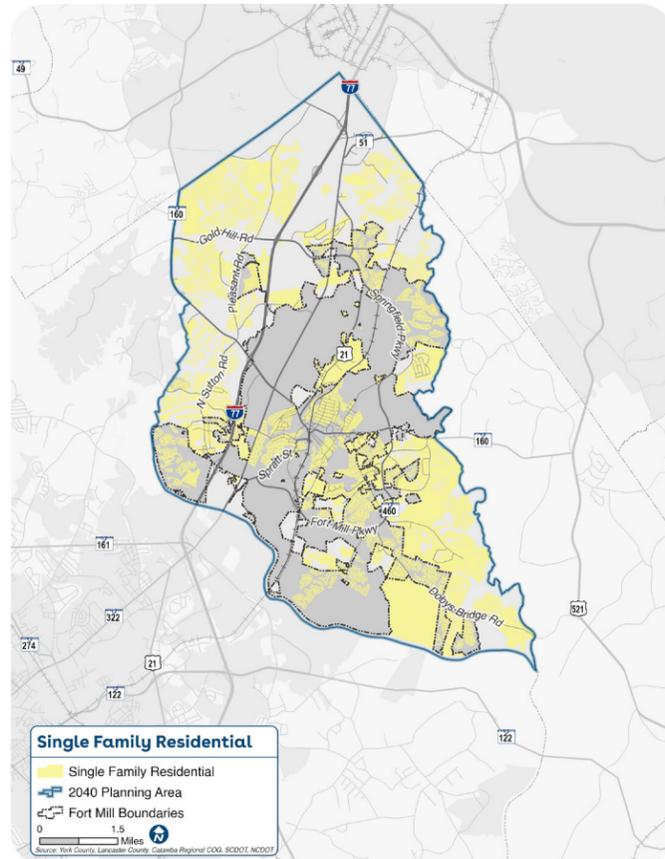


Figure IV.22 - Single Family Place Types Map



Mixed Residential

These areas are characterized by mixed residential development. Predominantly comprising single-family detached homes on small lots but may include attached single-family units, such as townhomes and duplexes and a small amount of multi-family units. The mix of housing types are intended to create intergenerational neighborhoods. Improved open spaces in the form of greens, pocket parks, and neighborhood parks are interspersed. Sidewalks and trails within are located to connect parks as well as provide links to trails and walkways in neighboring development.

Uses & Building Types

- Medium-lot single-family detached homes
- Small-lot single-family detached homes (including patio homes)
- Pocket neighborhood cottages
- Attached single-family (townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, etc.)
- Small-scale multifamily (condos, apartments)
- Accessory dwelling units
- Amenity buildings (clubhouses)

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Grid, modified grid
- Connectivity:
 - Highly connected internally and externally to adjacent development
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives, alleys
 - Local 2-lanes, local 2-lanes divided

Open Space

- Formal and informal greens
- Pocket parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Trails

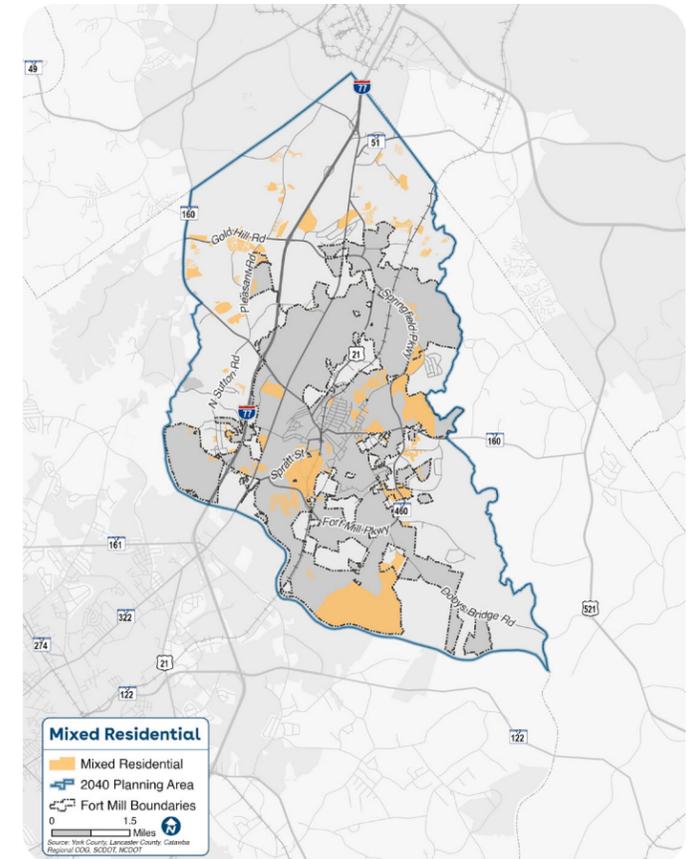


Figure IV.23 - Mixed Residential Place Types Map



Downtown

This is the community's civic and activity hub, featuring governmental and civic uses, retail, restaurants, offices, and services, along with a mix of housing types to complement nonresidential uses and ensure a vibrant center with a 24/7 population. Uses may be mixed horizontally or vertically. Buildings are typically two or more stories, with connected streets, short blocks, pedestrian facilities, and open spaces like plazas and greens.

Uses & Building Types

- Civic uses including governmental offices and services
- Retail, mostly small-format
- Restaurants
- Movie theaters, entertainment venues
- Museums
- Lodging (hotels, inns)
- Personal services (branch banks, dry cleaners, tailors, hair and nail salons)
- Small to medium-sized offices
- Attached single-family (townhomes)
- Multifamily (condos, apartments)
- Upper floor residential lofts
- Artists' studios
- Event spaces (greens, amphitheaters)

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern: Grid, modified grid
 - Max Block Length: 400'
- Connectivity:
 - Highly connected internally and externally via sidewalks, bike paths, and trails
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives, alleys
 - Local 2-lanes, local 2-lanes divided
 - Collectors

Open Space

- Small gathering spaces such as greens, plazas, courtyards, outdoor dining areas, and pocket parks

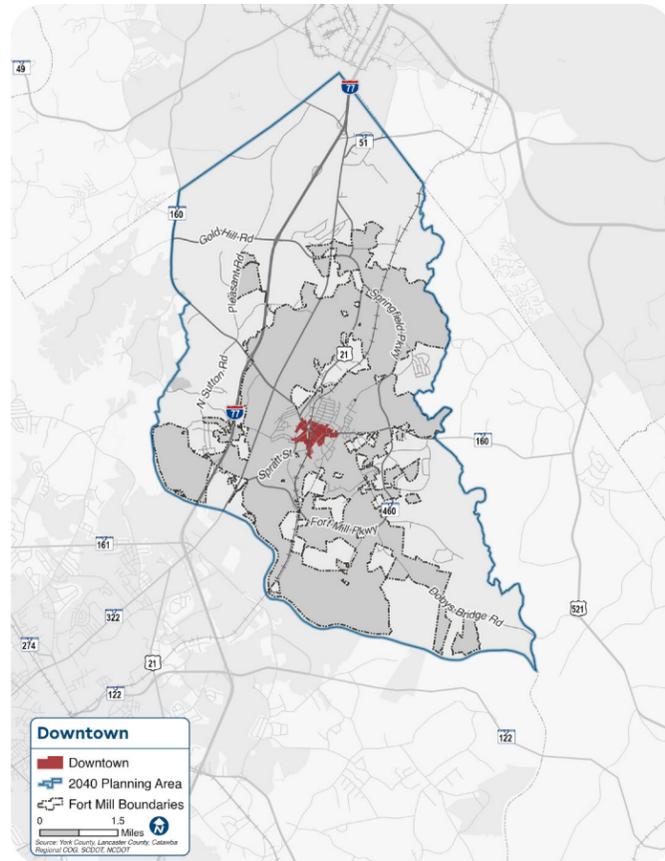


Figure IV.24 - Downtown Place Types Map



Activity Center

These areas serve as centers of activity with a mix of retail, restaurants, services, offices, civic uses, and diverse housing types. Uses may be mixed horizontally or vertically within buildings. Buildings of two or more stories are common, and connected streets include short block lengths and pedestrian facilities. Open space is integrated in the form of active plazas, courtyards, and greens.

Uses & Building Types

- Retail and restaurants
- Movie theaters
- Personal services (branch banks, dry cleaners, tailors, hair and nail salons)
- Small to medium-sized offices
- Institutional uses
- Civic uses, including governmental offices and services
- Attached single-family (townhomes)
- Multifamily (condos, apartments, upper floor units in mixed-use buildings)
- Parking structures

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Grid, modified grid

Connectivity:

- Highly connected internally and externally to adjacent development, while also including many pedestrian amenities
- Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives
 - Local 2-lanes, with on-street parking
 - Collectors

Open Space

- Plazas and pocket parks
- Formal and informal greens
- Neighborhood parks and trails
- Gathering spaces

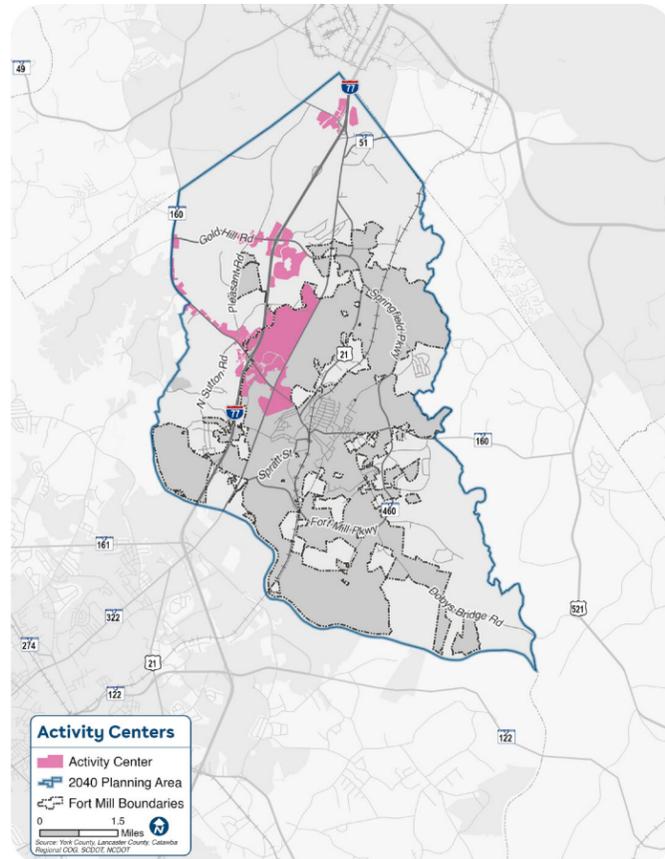


Figure IV.25 - Mixed Residential Place Types Map



Neighborhood Center

Small centers with local-serving uses may be located within walking distance of and complement surrounding residential uses. Typical uses include grocery and drug stores, coffee shops, dry cleaners, branch banks, and restaurants. Open space is in the form of active greens and courtyards.

Uses & Building Types

- Grocery stores and in-line tenants (drug stores, restaurants, branch banks, personal services)
- Small schools
- Daycare centers
- Community centers
- Small-scale civic uses (branch libraries)
- Small-scale government uses (post offices)
- Parking structures

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Grid, modified grid
- Connectivity:
 - Moderately connected externally to adjacent development and high internal connectivity
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives

Open Space

- Small gathering spaces such as formal and informal greens, pocket parks, courtyards, outdoor dining areas, etc.

When the Comprehensive Plan is updated, Place Types, including areas shown as neighborhood centers, should be reexamined to determine if they should be considered activity centers, based on factors such as additional growth, expanded transportation infrastructure, or other evolving conditions.

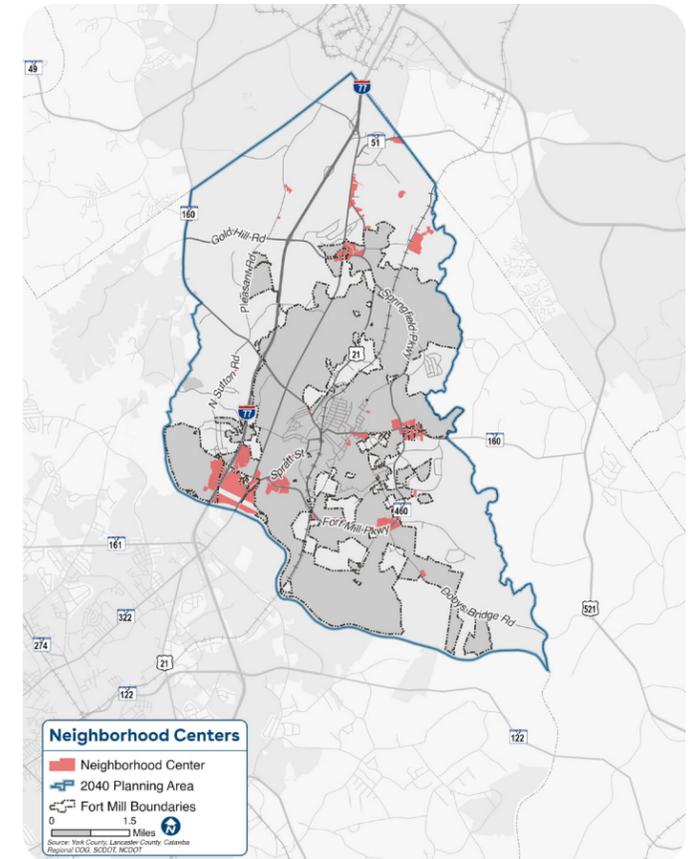


Figure IV.26 - Neighborhood Center Place Types Map



Industrial

This area supports heavy and light manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, production, assembly operations, water and sewer treatment plants, major power plants, and landfills. Sites and building footprints are typically large, and they are close to major transportation corridors and are generally buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from adjacent properties. Most of the open space is on site, privately managed, and intended for use by the building occupants. Streets are often private, designed for truck access, and access may be limited by security mechanisms (gates, etc.).

Uses & Building Types

- Light industrial –research and development, light manufacturing, warehousing, logistics, flex space
- Heavy manufacturing (produces odor, dust, or noise)
- Governmental operations – utilities, water and sewer treatment plants, power plants, landfills

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern:
 - Curvilinear
- Connectivity:
 - Highly connected externally to nearby interstates and other arterials, and moderate internal connectivity
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives
 - Local 2-lanes
 - Collectors

Open Space

- Small gathering spaces such as greens, plazas, courtyards, outdoor dining areas, and pocket parks

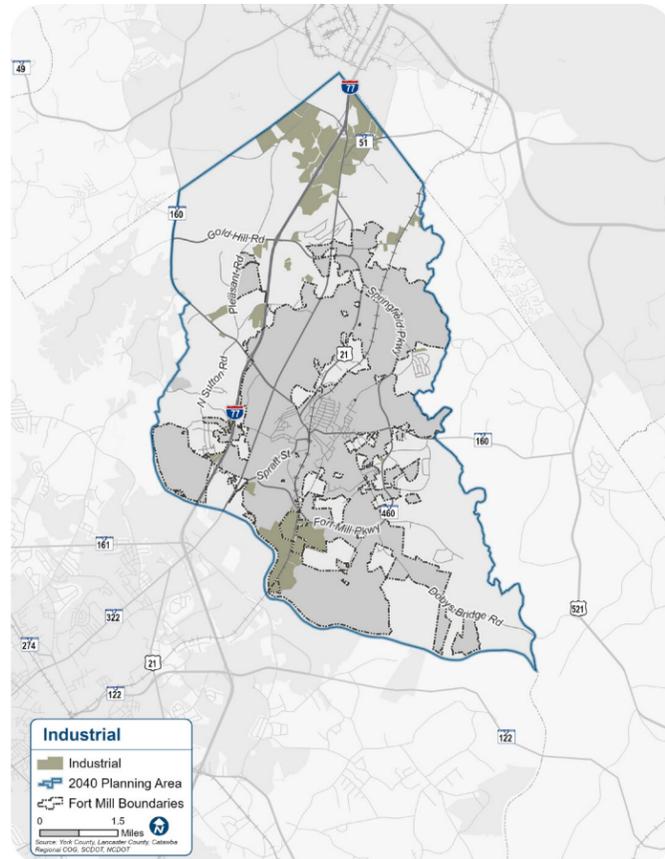


Figure IV.27 - Industrial Place Types Map



Special Use

These areas include institutional (education, healthcare, religious), recreation, entertainment, and civic uses. The scale of such uses demands large tracts of land and generate activity that requires a high level of accessibility. Often designed in a campus-like setting, multiple buildings may comprise a single place.

Uses & Building Types

- Schools and associated campuses
- Indoor public recreation facilities, including gyms, pools, and community centers (large)
- Places of worship (large)

Street/Block Pattern

- Street Pattern: Varies
- Connectivity:
 - Highly connected externally to nearby interstates and other arterials, and moderate internal connectivity
 - Trail and sidewalk access
- Street Types:
 - Private drives
 - Local 2-lanes
 - Collectors

Open Space

- Playgrounds
- Ballfields and sport courts
- Walking trails or paths
- Private outdoor dining or gathering areas

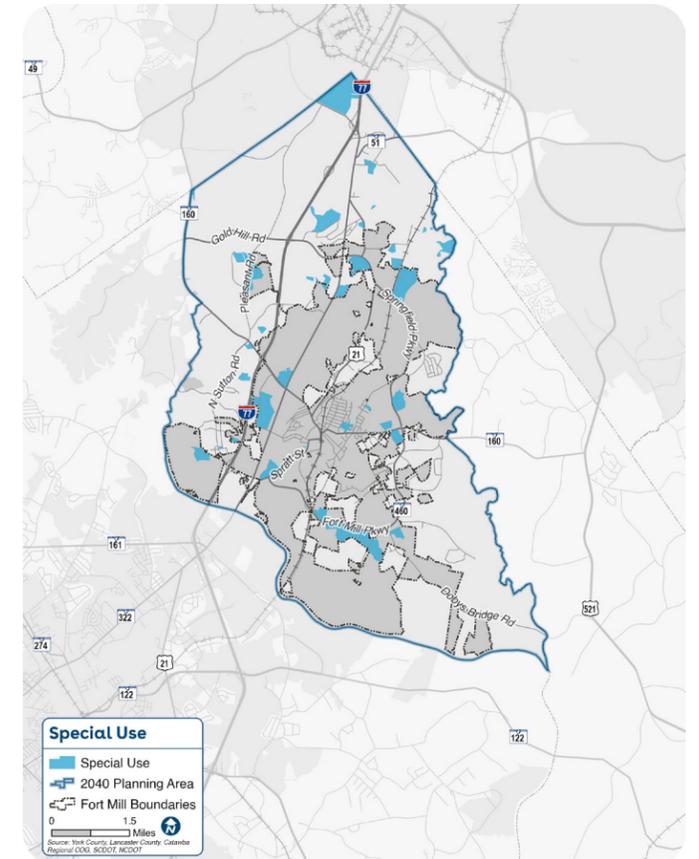


Figure IV.28 - Special Use Place Types Map



FOCUS AREA CONCEPT

As the town's planning area grows and changes, certain areas may experience development pressures in the near term. Through the planning process these areas are identified to assess development possibilities consistent with the Vision Plan map. The following **conceptual** illustration depicts one example of many possible outcomes for the identified focus area. By considering parcels together, decisions regarding future development can be made to use land efficiently while following the community's vision.

The Catawba River at US 21

Located at the nexus of US 21 and the Catawba River, the focus area is one of the remaining opportunities for Fort Mill to create an intentional destination that can serve as a recreational destination, connecting generations to the historic Catawba River. Bounded by Fort Mill Parkway to the north, the Elizabeth community and strawberry fields to the east, Rock Hill to the south, and I-77 to the west. Located within the focus area, is a town-owned island. Adjacent land uses include the Fort Mill Wastewater Treatment Plant, a large utility easement that bisects the focus area, a recreational trail that follows the river, commercial uses to the northern boundary, the Rock Hill River Walk and entertainment uses south of the river. The area has a considerable portion within the 100-year flood plain, lush forest land that shades slopes, valleys, and the Dye Branch Creek tributary.

This concept explores how commercial, office, and residential uses could be situated within a scenic destination that weaves together a series of outdoor recreation uses, entertainment venues, an expanded trail system, outdoor education facilities, and historical heritage sites.



Figure IV.29 - Conceptual Plan Rendering of the Focus Area

River District



Conceptual Rendering of Kayak Launch on the Catawba River



Conceptual Rendering of River District Riverwalk



Conceptual Rendering of a Concert in the River District Amphitheater

Chapter V. Recommended Actions



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Actions Overview

The Comprehensive Plan outlines a strategic framework to guide Fort Mill’s future growth, development, and quality of life. Each planning element is structured around goal statements, key issues, opportunities, and actionable recommendations. Where applicable, case studies highlight successful strategies from other communities.

These recommendations align with the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act (SC Code Title 6, Chapter 29), ensuring that local policies and land use decisions support long-term goals. Together, they provide a clear path toward sustainable and resilient growth.

The Goals—shaped by input from community members, Town leadership, and staff—serve as the foundation of the plan. They are designed to inform future planning efforts and decision-making over the next 20 years. Each goal corresponds to one of the ten planning elements required by South Carolina state law.

For each element, the plan presents a goal statement, identifies key issues and opportunities, and outlines recommendations for future action. These insights are grounded in extensive community engagement, including workshops, open houses, surveys, focus groups, and steering committee meetings. A comprehensive Issues & Opportunities spreadsheet captures recurring themes and priorities, reflecting the community’s values and vision. Specific implementation projects describe how the Town can advance its updated community vision on the ground in the years ahead. Case studies are included where relevant to demonstrate how similar strategies have been implemented elsewhere.

Cover: Kingsley Town Center

Elements of the Plan



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

“Fort Mill will achieve a high level of service in its delivery of infrastructure and programs.”

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Lack of indoor performance venues
- Limited higher education opportunities
- Incomplete trail connections between parks
- Outdated library infrastructure
- Limited river access and public park space

Opportunities

- Add splash pads for families
- Upgrade Walter Y. Elisha Park play area
- Support expansion of arts and culture downtown

Recommendations

1.01 - Pursue Funding Options for Constructing Priority Trails Identified in 2024 Trail Master Plan

Expanding Fort Mill’s trail network will require a combination of local, regional, and state coordination and funding. By leveraging the Town’s connection to the Carolina Thread Trail, Fort Mill can strengthen its competitive position for grants and partnerships. At the same time, prioritizing smaller sidewalk links and natural paths will help fill connectivity gaps and link larger trail systems together.



Carolina Thread Trail

1.02 - Develop Property Owner and Landowner Trail Outreach Program

Successful trail implementation often depends on willing property owners. An outreach program can provide education on the benefits of trail easements, address concerns, and build long-term relationships that support expansion of the Town’s trail and greenway system.

1.03 - Determine Appropriate Uses for 123 North White Street Site as Community Facility or Economic Development Opportunities

This centrally located site presents an opportunity for reinvestment that serves community needs. A thoughtful evaluation of potential uses should consider community facility needs alongside redevelopment and economic development opportunities, ensuring the site contributes to Fort Mill’s long-term vision.

1.04 - Explore Partnership Opportunities with Fort Mill School District

The Fort Mill School District and the Town both invest heavily in facilities that serve residents. Collaborative planning for shared use of recreation facilities, meeting spaces, and other resources can maximize the benefits of public investment and create broader community access.

1.05 - Investigate Ways to Partner with the York County Library System to Locate a Facility in the Town

A branch of the York County Library System in Fort Mill would serve as both an educational resource and a community gathering space. Identifying ways to partner with the York County Library System could help create opportunities in the future.

1.06 - Implement Key Projects in New Parks & Recreation Master Plan

The Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2026) identifies specific priorities for expanding recreational opportunities. Advancing these projects will ensure the Town continues to meet growing demand for active and passive recreation, sports facilities, and community gathering spaces.

1.07 Implement Key Projects in New Downtown Plan

Downtown Fort Mill is the civic and cultural heart of the community. Implementing recommendations from the Downtown Plan will reinforce downtown as a vibrant and welcoming hub.

1.08 Establish Land Banking Program for Future Community Facility Needs

As Fort Mill grows, land for schools, parks, and civic buildings will become more difficult to secure. Establishing a land banking program will allow the Town to proactively acquire and preserve strategic sites to meet future community facility needs.

Case Study

Shared Town Hall & Library Building - Matthews, NC

Located in downtown Matthews, NC, just steps from the bustling Trade Street, is the shared use of Town Hall and Charlotte-Mecklenburg branch library. Hundreds of avid readers, catalog perusers, and public Wi-Fi users pass through the doors of the ground floor library every day. Upstairs, houses the Town Hall, complete with council chambers, various department offices, and meeting spaces.

The busiest branch library in the system, the Matthews Library, has become an anchor destination in downtown. Users visit the library, access easy parking, and often set out on foot to visit the various downtown businesses, eateries, and boutiques - all within an easy walking distance from their favorite literary haunt.



Town of Matthews, NC Town Hall and Library | CM Library

CULTURAL RESOURCES

"Fort Mill will successfully celebrate its history through the preservation of cultural assets and traditions."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Need for community events to maintain small-town feel
- Risk of losing historic buildings like Williamson Mill
- Threats to downtown's authentic character
- Limited historic district boundaries

Opportunities

- Promote facade renovations downtown through the Facade Improvement Grant Program and the Bailey Bill
- Reinforce Fort Mill's identity as a self-sufficient town
- Celebrate our agricultural and textile heritage, art, and music
- Find ways to partner with the Catawba Indian Nation
- Develop cultural preservation policies
- Expand heritage tourism and education

Recommendations

2.01 Create Blue Ribbon Commission to Recommend and Recruit Community Legacy of Investment in Arts, Culture, and Entertainment

Establishing a dedicated Blue Ribbon Commission would help Fort Mill catalyze continued private philanthropy to pair with public funding and build a long-term framework for arts, culture, and entertainment investment. This group could bring

together local leaders, artists, business owners, and residents to identify priorities, recruit partners, and secure resources that celebrate Fort Mill's identity while expanding cultural opportunities.

2.02 Work with our partners to Bring History Into the Community

The Town has a wealth of stories and artifacts that can be woven into the fabric of daily community life. By partnering on projects that connect historical elements to new community facilities and public spaces, Fort Mill can honor its heritage while enriching the experience of residents and visitors alike.

2.03 Explore Opportunities for Community Art

Art has the potential to enliven public spaces, strengthen identity, and create a sense of belonging. Building on current efforts, including the Arts District concept in the Downtown Master Plan, Fort Mill can expand opportunities for public art installations, performances, and cultural programming. Partnerships with the Fort Mill School District, Winthrop University, and other regional institutions could provide resources and creative talent to sustain these initiatives.

2.04 Explore Opportunities for Cultural Programs at New Community Center

The planned community center represents an opportunity to integrate cultural programming into a new public gathering space. Music, theater, art, and educational programs could be hosted in the facility, providing a hub for creativity and inclusivity. By designing the center with cultural activities in mind, Fort Mill can ensure the space supports diverse interests and strengthens the community's cultural life.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Fort Mill will be a prosperous community where businesses and entrepreneurs thrive."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- No dedicated economic manager in town
- Complex development ordinances
- Limited high-paying job centers

Opportunities

- Attract employment centers while preserving character
- Encourage mixed-use development with strong commercial focus
- Recruit desirable businesses (e.g., retail, healthcare)
- Compete for federal/state funding
- Revitalize key corridors like US-21 and Tom Hall Street (SC 160)

Recommendations

3.01 - Review Zoning Ordinance to Support Emerging Business Opportunities and Pop-up/Micro Retail Arrangements

Update the zoning ordinance to accommodate pop-up and micro-retail arrangements, giving entrepreneurs more flexibility to test new ideas and meet community demand. These provisions can encourage local business growth and foster a vibrant, adaptable commercial environment.

3.02 - Assess Permit Review Procedures to Identify Ways to Streamline Them Without Sacrificing Quality

Efficient development review processes are critical to maintaining Fort Mill's competitiveness while upholding community standards. Assessing current permit procedures can identify ways to clarify requirements, improve communication, and shorten the review process without compromising the quality or integrity of development outcomes. This effort is already underway and can build trust and collaboration between the Town, developers, and residents.

3.03 - Explore Enhanced Partnership with York County Economic Development to Recruit Corporate Headquarters

Corporate recruitment represents a significant opportunity for Fort Mill to strengthen its economic base. By enhancing its partnership with York County Economic Development, the Town can attract corporate headquarters and high-quality employers, particularly in strategic areas such as Kingsley (north), the Gold Hill Road corridor, and Sutton Road at I-77. Coordinated recruitment can expand employment opportunities and reinforce Fort Mill's role as a regional economic hub.



Recruit Corporate Headquarters

3.04 - Consider Funding Position that Focuses on Economic Development and Strategic Partnerships

Dedicated staffing in economic development could assist in advancing Fort Mill's long-term goals. Establishing a funded position that focuses on recruitment, programming, and stakeholder coordination would strengthen the Town's ability to form strategic partnerships, support local businesses, and attract new investment. This role could serve as a catalyst for aligning public and private efforts.

3.05 - Prepare Economic Development Strategic Plan

A strategic plan for economic development would provide Fort Mill with a clear vision for growth that balances opportunity with community values. Such a plan should align public investments with sustainability principles, prioritize public investments that enhance quality of life, and create measurable goals for retaining and attracting businesses. This framework would guide decision-making, identify priority projects, and establish accountability for economic initiatives.

3.06 - Promote New Commercial Options to Reduce Reliance on Nearby Communities

Many residents currently travel outside of Fort Mill for retail, professional services, and health care. Expanding local commercial options would help meet community needs, strengthen the local economy, and reduce reliance on nearby communities. Building on recent leakage analysis, the Town can identify priority sectors and pursue targeted strategies to attract new services and businesses.

Case Study

Business Recruitment and Expansion Program - Charlotte, NC

The City of Charlotte's business recruitment and expansion team works with mid-sized to large companies who are looking to relocate or establish a new facility in Charlotte, as well as current Charlotte companies looking to expand their operations.

The team works closely with regional economic development agencies, including Mecklenburg County Economic Development, Charlotte Regional Business Alliance and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, to help companies make the decision to relocate to or expand in Charlotte. The business recruitment team does this through assisting companies by:

- Providing labor market and demographic information.
- Assisting with real estate and property searches.
- Connecting to local education and workforce development partners.
- Establishing incentives programs.

Since assuming the role of business recruitment and retention project management in 2018, this team has resulted in more than 13,400 new jobs, 4,250 jobs retained and \$1.5 billion in capital investment.



Lowe's Global Technology Center | Childress Klein

HOUSING

"Fort Mill will have a variety of housing options that meet the needs of residents at varied life and income levels."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Rising costs displacing longtime residents
- School concerns over high-density housing
- Need for dignified affordable housing
- Overcrowding from dense developments
- Tight housing on small plots by large developers

Opportunities

- Limit apartment construction
- Address gentrification in historic neighborhoods
- Support affordable housing
- Balance housing growth with traffic and livability

Recommendations

4.01 - Conduct Housing Study to Identify Opportunities to Promote Appropriate Workforce Housing

A comprehensive housing study will help Fort Mill better understand its current housing stock, unmet needs, and future demand. By focusing on opportunities for workforce housing, the Town can identify strategies to provide attainable options for teachers, first responders, service workers, young families, and seniors who want to live in the community. The study will also highlight gaps in housing diversity and inform future policy adjustments.

4.02 - Review Zoning Ordinance to Identify Ways to Diversify Housing Options

Zoning plays a central role in determining the type, scale, and affordability of new housing. Reviewing Fort Mill's zoning ordinance can reveal opportunities to expand housing choice through tools like accessory dwelling units, mixed-use development, allowable uses, and flexible lot standards. These adjustments would allow for more diverse and inclusive housing types that reflect the needs of current and future residents.

4.03 - Explore Projects and Potential Grants with Other Organizations to Repurpose Unused Land for Workforce Housing

Partnerships are critical to addressing housing needs. By collaborating with nonprofits, regional agencies, and housing organizations, Fort Mill can pursue projects that repurpose vacant or underutilized land for workforce housing. Identifying grant opportunities and leveraging external funding will reduce the financial burden on the Town while advancing its housing goals.

4.04 - Develop Redevelopment Overlay District/Neighborhood Conservation District to Help Ensure Appropriate Redevelopment

As Fort Mill grows, ensuring that new development complements existing neighborhoods is essential. Creating a redevelopment overlay or neighborhood conservation district would establish design standards that protect community character while allowing for thoughtful reinvestment. A pattern book could further guide development by providing visual examples of compatible design, materials, and scale, ensuring that redevelopment of properties enhances surrounding neighborhoods.



Conduct Housing Study

LAND USE

"Fort Mill will be a vibrant, complete community with a balanced blend of land uses."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Zoning and tax structures need optimization
- Downtown lacks economic activity balance
- Storage/distribution centers changing character
- Zoning needs to align with goals

Opportunities

- Encourage walkable job centers
- Revitalize corridors
- Preserve small-town character
- Promote sidewalk and trail connectivity
- Explore shared parking downtown

Recommendations

5.01 - Update Fort Mill Zoning Ordinance to Help Implement Updated Future Land Use Map and Address Other Code Considerations

The Town should revise the Fort Mill Zoning Ordinance to implement the updated Future Land Use Map and address related code considerations. Revisions may include requiring open space and trail connections, encouraging retail at community edges, ensuring projects mitigate transportation impacts and promote high-quality design, expanding housing options, creating walkable nodes, and supporting appropriately scaled density, particularly moderate density in the downtown core. Additional updates could balance downtown uses, provide adaptable

zoning along key corridors, limit over-concentration of certain uses, and guide intentional, community-aligned growth.

5.02 - Align Utility Policies with Land Use Goals

The Town should establish policies and procedures that ensure utility investments support land use objectives. For example, a tiered system of utility reimbursement could be implemented to encourage development patterns that align with Town goals.

5.03 - Small Area Plan for I-77/Sutton Road Interchange

A small area plan should be prepared for the I-77/Sutton Road interchange to guide development at this key site. The plan should consider river access, Town-owned properties, preferred development character, and coordination with the delayed Sutton Road widening project, currently anticipated for 2029.

5.04 - Trail Overlay District

The Town should create a Trail Overlay District that requires easements and trail construction for new developments. This district should ensure connectivity, coordinate with stream restoration efforts, and promote appropriate integration of development with the trail network.



Trail Overlay District

NATURAL RESOURCES

"Fort Mill will manage its evolution to continually prioritize and protect its natural systems and resources."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Need for tree replacement funding
- Dead/diseased trees unmanaged
- Limited public access to lakes and rivers
- Deforestation concerns
- Lack of greenway connectivity

Opportunities

- Fully implement the Trail Master Plan
- Expand Sugar Creek Blueway
- Create river access parks and gathering spaces
- Promote conservation easements
- Activate open spaces with art and fitness
- Hire a tree arborist (on-staff or consultant)

Recommendations

6.01 - Develop and Implement Plan to Improve Public Access to Catawba River

Building on the Founders Trail, this plan would expand access points, add amenities, and strengthen trail connections to make the river more usable as a community resource.

6.02 - Develop Plan to Protect Fort Mill Tree Canopy

The Town could establish a tree preservation and planting program for downtown and neighborhoods, supported by a licensed arborist and participation in Tree City USA.

6.03 - Work with Conservation Organization to Protect Sensitive Natural Areas

Partnering with conservation groups would help safeguard biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems, including green buffers along streams, creeks, and proposed trail corridors, as well as historic areas such as Nation's Ford.

6.04 - Consider Enhanced Conservation Standards Near Impaired Waterways and/or Flood-prone Areas

Enhanced conservation standards for new development would help protect steep slopes, preserve streambanks, and create habitat corridors that reduce flood risks.

6.05 - Encourage Landowners to Preserve Open Space through Programs like York County Forever

Through voluntary conservation programs, landowners could preserve natural resources, maintain open space, and contribute to regional preservation goals.

6.06 - Prepare Conservation Development Standards

New standards would prohibit clear cutting, preserve buffers, and encourage development designs that conserve natural features.

6.07 - Partner with York County and Lancaster County to Conduct Sugar Creek Streambank Restoration Project

A coordinated effort with county partners would restore Sugar Creek and address erosion and washouts identified in the 2025 Carolina Thread Trail Feasibility Study.

POPULATION

“Fort Mill will be a thriving community that offers opportunity, belonging, and a high quality of life for residents.”

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Balancing quality of life with job growth
- Divided sentiment on growth pace
- Lack of inclusive planning
- Limited public engagement methods
- Poor communication of town goals

Opportunities

- Embrace diverse populations
- Improve transparency and outreach
- Promote inclusive community identity

Recommendations

7.01 - Launch Initiative to Connect Residents to Community Through Public Service Projects

This initiative would give residents opportunities to “weave their thread” into Fort Mill through local projects, neighborhood grants, and student internships.

7.02 - Develop Property Owner Outreach Program to Share Benefits of Being in Incorporated Limits to Fill Jurisdictional Donut Holes

An outreach program could help property owners understand the benefits of incorporation, including improved services and governance, while addressing current inequities such as double water and sewer rates.

7.03 - Explore Growth Infrastructure Management Tools to Help Keep Pace with Growth

The Town could consider revising existing tools such as impact fees and transportation level of service standards or consider new tools such as an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance to ensure infrastructure expands in step with new development.

7.04 - Enhance Public Communication on Town Activities and How to Participate

Strengthening communication efforts would allow the Town to use more accessible methods to engage residents, share Council actions, and explain goals and processes in a clear and transparent way.

7.05 - Establish Town Citizens Academy

Creating a Citizens Academy would help cultivate the next generation of community champions and leaders, following the examples of successful programs in York County and Tega Cay.

PRIORITY INVESTMENT

“Fort Mill will guide strategic investments to support growth, enhance livability, and strengthen key areas.”

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Need for intentional downtown investment
- Overemphasis on quantity over quality
- Outdated stormwater infrastructure
- Limited regional collaboration
- Insufficient staffing for planning

Opportunities

- Use data-driven planning tools
- Make long-range plans actionable
- Align decisions with community goals
- Compete for business and retail opportunities



Capital Maintenance Program

Recommendations

8.01 - Review Utility Agreements for Long-term Sustainability

The Town should continue reviewing existing utility agreements to ensure long-term resilience, including pursuing a second connection to Rock Hill, exploring emergency connections, and planning for a Town-owned drinking water treatment facility.

8.02 - Identify Means to Engage Neighbors and Regional Partners to Build Greater Cross-Jurisdictional Cooperation

Building stronger partnerships with nearby jurisdictions and regional organizations will be important for addressing shared challenges and pursuing opportunities that extend beyond Fort Mill’s boundaries.

8.03 - Enhance Town Capital Maintenance Program

Expanding the Town’s capital maintenance program to systematically address roads, sidewalks, trails, water, sewer, and stormwater—and incorporating these needs into the Capital Improvement Plan—will help ensure infrastructure is well-maintained and future-ready. Where available, use grant funding to multiply our local investments.



Capital Improvement Plan

RESILIENCY

"Fort Mill will be a community well positioned to anticipate and respond to natural, social, and economic conditions."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Vulnerability to flooding and climate risks
- Lack of early warning systems
- Limited green infrastructure
- Poor coordination across jurisdictions

Opportunities

- Preserve natural topography
- Protect wetlands and forests
- Expand urban tree canopy
- Develop multi-modal evacuation routes
- Access federal/state resilience funding



Emergency Generator

Recommendations

9.01 - Enhance Personnel Plan to Improve Long-Term Town Budgeting

Extending the Town's personnel planning horizon to at least ten years will improve long-term budgeting, help anticipate staffing needs, and ensure sustainable allocation of resources.

9.02 - Enhance Project Delivery Capabilities to Facilitate Implementation of Town Projects

Providing staff training, enhancing project delivery systems, and maintaining regular communications will strengthen the Town's ability to implement projects efficiently and effectively.

9.03 - Continue Installing Back-up Power at Key Town Facilities

The Town should continue exploring grants and installing generators at critical facilities, including all pump stations, to ensure uninterrupted service during emergencies.



York County Emergency Management Vehicle

9.04 - Partner with York County to Update 2018 York County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Collaboration with York County will allow Fort Mill to review, assess, and train staff on the updated hazard mitigation plan to improve preparedness and resilience.

9.05 - Develop Policies and Procedures to Enhance Communication

Creating clear policies and procedures will support the implementation of systems for real-time alerts and evacuation guidance, improving public safety during emergencies.

9.06 - Develop Green Initiative to Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Flooding

A comprehensive green initiative can reduce stormwater impacts and urban heat through ordinance standards, public investment policies, potential retrofits, and adjustments to the stormwater utility fee.

9.07 - Develop Public Education on Hazard Preparation

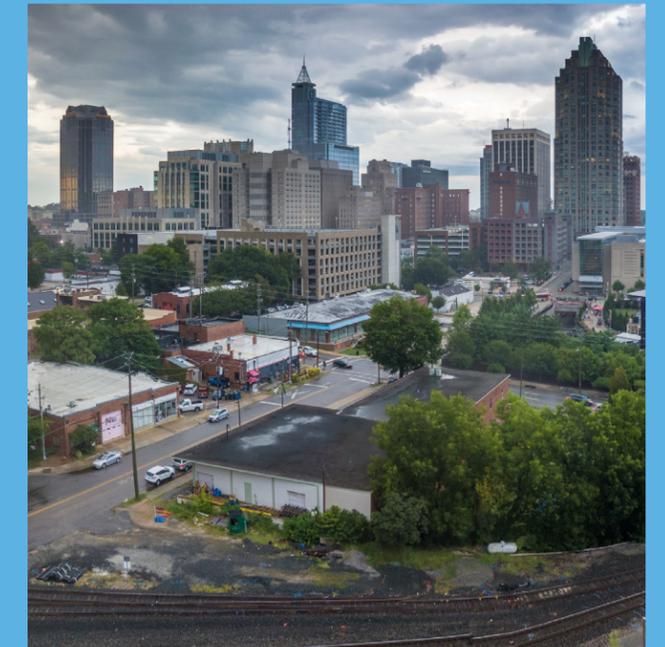
Design and implementation of a public education program on hazard preparation can better prepare community members for hazard events, saving time, money, and potentially lives.

Case Study

Ready Raleigh - Raleigh, NC

Ready Raleigh is a citywide emergency preparedness program designed to help residents plan for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The program includes downloadable guides, checklists, and workbooks for households, as well as public alerts and education campaigns.

Developed by the City of Raleigh's Emergency Management team, Ready Raleigh also integrates real-time operational dashboards to monitor incidents, coordinate resources, and improve situational awareness during emergencies. The initiative strengthens community resilience and ensures faster, more informed responses to hazards.



Ready Raleigh
A guide for disaster preparedness



Raleigh

Ready Raleigh Emergency Handbook | City of Raleigh, NC

TRANSPORTATION

"Fort Mill will be a safe and connected community with a network of mobility options."

Community Identified Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Dangerous intersections and pedestrian zones
- Inadequate sidewalk and bike infrastructure
- Traffic congestion and poor bypass routes
- Traffic flows in school zones
- Lack of ADA compliance and connectivity

Opportunities

- Install traffic signals and calming measures
- Expand bike lanes and multi-use paths
- Partner with County, State, and Federal funds to expand capabilities in implementing projects
- Build pedestrian bridges (e.g., Railroad or Catawba River)
- Improve sidewalk networks near schools and parks
- Explore microtransit and regional trail systems



School Crossing Sign and Crosswalk

Recommendations

10.01 - Identify and Fill Missing Links in Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

The Town, working with other jurisdictions as applicable, should prioritize neighborhood connectivity by filling missing links in the pedestrian and bicycle network, including continuous sidewalks, cul-de-sac connections, and greenway extensions.

10.02 - Establish Vision Zero Program to Reduce Traffic Injuries and Deaths

Vision Zero is a safety approach that aims to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries. Implementing a Vision Zero program will improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through measures such as crosswalks, sidewalks, ADA-compliant facilities, flashing school zone lights, expanded bike lanes and multi-use paths, and enhanced traffic calming near schools. The program should also address unsafe crossings on high-speed roads through better infrastructure or rerouting, and consider reduced speed limits and crossing guards where appropriate.

10.03 - Explore Smaller-Scale Transit Options Such as Micro Transit

The Town should explore smaller-scale transit solutions, including micro transit, to enhance mobility options for residents and improve access to key destinations.

10.04 - Collaborate with RFATS to Update Collector Road Plan

Fort Mill should review the RFATS collector road guide and work with regional partners to prioritize road connections near Catawba Ridge High School and between Downtown and neighborhoods such as Elizabeth and Kingsley. This collaboration will help shape public and private road construction to improve connectivity and traffic flow.

10.05 - Work with SCDOT to Install Traffic Signals at Key Intersections

The Town should coordinate with SCDOT to identify locations where new traffic signals would improve safety and traffic operations at key intersections.

10.06 - Work with SCDOT to Identify Possible Bicycle-Pedestrian Improvements Across the Catawba River

Collaborating with SCDOT will allow the Town to assess opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian improvements across the Catawba River, enhancing connectivity and promoting alternative transportation options.

10.07 - Work with SCDOT and Fort Mill School District to Identify Additional Ways to Enhance Roadway Safety Near Schools

As the Town grows and traffic volumes increase, ensuring safe roadway conditions around schools is paramount. This project will build on existing efforts in order to address safety concerns in these locations.

10.08 - Work with SCDOT to Study and Implement Traffic Signal Improvements to Enhance Intersection Efficiencies

Intersections often create a bottleneck that can inhibit the flow of local traffic. This project will work with SCDOT to make traffic signal improvements to help intersections function more efficiently.

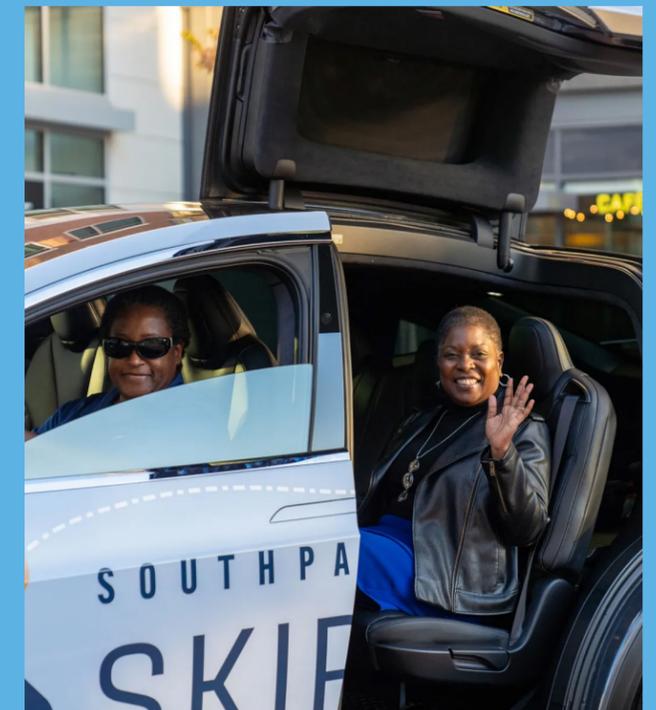
Case Study

SouthPark Skipper Micro Transit Service - Charlotte, NC

The SouthPark Skipper is a free, on-demand microtransit service launched in November 2024 to improve mobility within Charlotte's SouthPark business district. Operated by Freebee and funded by SouthPark Community Partners, the service runs daily from 9 AM to 9 PM using a fleet of electric vehicles.

Developed in partnership with the City of Charlotte, the Skipper is a key deliverable of the SouthPark Forward 2035 Vision Plan, which aims to create a "park-once" environment and enhance access to over 350 shops, restaurants, and services. Riders use the Freebee app to request rides anywhere within the municipal service district.

The pilot program supports Charlotte's strategic mobility and sustainability goals by offering flexible, low-carbon transportation where traditional transit options are limited.



SouthPark Skipper | SouthPark Community Partners

Chapter VI. Implementation Plan

*"This is the South,
the on a bun"*

- MARTY SMITH



IMPLEMENTATION

Drafting and adopting the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan is the first step. The next step is implementation. This chapter outlines how Fort Mill can move smoothly from planning to action to implement the Comprehensive Plan on the ground in the years ahead. It includes three components:

- Recommended Implementation Projects
- Short-Term Implementation Projects List
- Plan Management Policies

Recommended Implementation Projects

Each of the recommendations listed in Chapter V consists of a specific numbered implementation project that the Town of Fort Mill and its partners can put into action. The projects listed in Chapter V are organized under the 10 plan elements to help community stakeholders and other readers find the proposed initiatives for the topics in which they are most interested. These projects draw from the toolbox of implementation techniques available to local governments in South Carolina. Each of them falls into one of the following four categories:



Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3
Cover: Bossy Beulah's on N. White Street



Ordinances

Requirements for where new development projects can locate and what design standards they must meet.



Public Investments

Parks, streets, greenways, community facilities, and other community improvements funded with public monies.



Programs and Policies

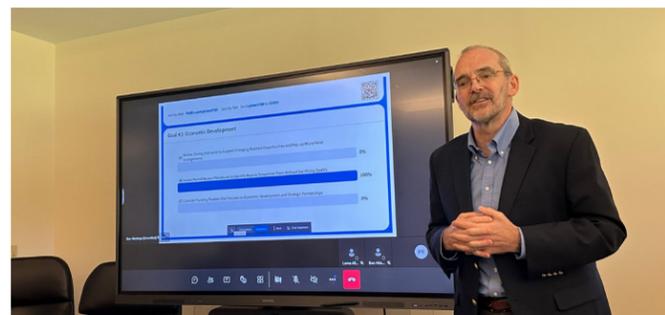
Public initiatives such as a community tree planting program and policies such as how to request neighborhood traffic calming measures.



Follow-Up Studies and Plans

Analysis of specific issues and detailed plans for specific areas in the community to better understand local circumstances and develop a shared path forward.

The projects listed here represent decades of work by the Town and its partners, so the plan also identifies a portfolio of potential short-term projects drawn from this list, which is discussed in the following section.



Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Meeting #3

Short-Term Implementation Projects List

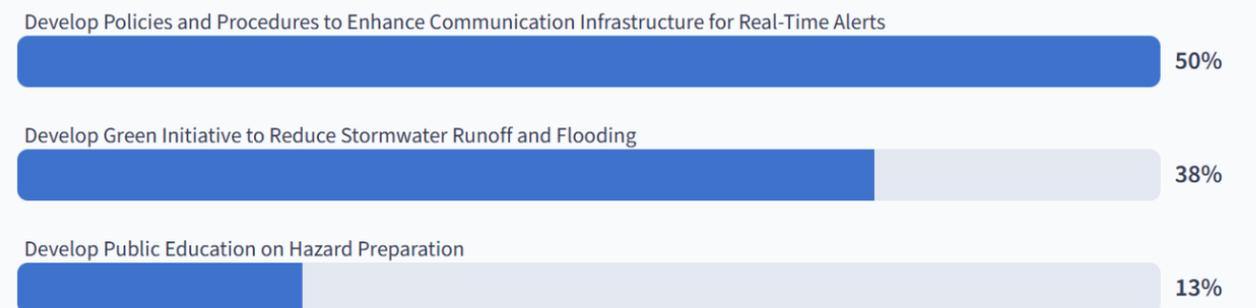
To develop a meaningful and manageable portfolio of action steps, the project team used a collaborative approach to identify initiatives that should be considered for short-term implementation. First, the consultant team used its expertise working in other communities to identify promising project ideas that support each of the ten plan goals. Then it held a series of three virtual Technical Committee meetings with Town staff who have expertise working in the Fort Mill community to review this list and make additions, subtractions, and revisions. In addition, this team picked a subset of projects that should be considered for short-term action.

Finally, the project team used instant polling to get input from community stakeholders serving on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee regarding which of the potential short-term projects should be priorities for action. The results of this process provide key input on which projects to initiate first. The final decision on which projects to pursue is also shaped by Town funding and logistical considerations.

Does the Town have the necessary staff capacity and expertise in place, or can it find consulting assistance to provide these resources? If the project requires public funding, can the Town afford it, and if so, when? Considerations such as these also factor into the timing of when to initiate the various plan implementation projects. The result of this review process is a set of short-term projects that is well-aligned with the plan goals, feasible for the Town and its partners to implement, and impactful in advancing the plan vision.

The projects selected as candidates for potential short-term action have been compiled in a special table to be maintained by Fort Mill staff outside the plan so that staff can make adjustments as needed as they develop more information about each initiative. This list was brought forward through the board review and adoption process at the same time as the plan to provide the public and the Planning Board and Town Council with an opportunity to provide review and comment. With the final list approved by Town Council in hand, the Planning Director, the Town Manager, and senior staff can move apace to begin organizing and resourcing the initial set of plan implementation measures.

Goal #9: Resiliency



Sample of instant polling responses logged by members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee regarding which potential short-term implementation projects should be priorities for action.

POTENTIAL SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS			
Element	Number	Project	% of Votes
Community Facilities	Goal #1: Community Facilities		
	1.01	Pursue Funding Options for Constructing Priority Trails Identified in the 2024 Trail Master Plan	29%
	1.02	Develop Property Owner and Landowner Trail Outreach Program	0%
	1.03	Determine Appropriate Uses for 123 North White Street Site as Community Facility or Economic Development Opportunities	71%
Cultural Resources	Goal #2: Cultural Resources		
	2.01	Create Blue Ribbon Commission to Recommend and Recruit Community Legacy of Investment in Arts, Culture, and Entertainment	0%
	2.03	Explore Opportunities for Community Art	29%
	2.04	Explore Opportunities for Cultural Programs at New Community Center	71%
Economic Development	Goal #3: Economic Development		
	3.01	Review Zoning Ordinance to Support Emerging Business Opportunities and Pop-up/Micro Retail Arrangements	29%
	3.02	Assess Permit Review Procedures to Identify Ways to Streamline Them Without Sacrificing Quality	57%
	3.04	Consider Funding Position that Focuses on Economic Development and Strategic Partnerships	14%
Housing	Goal #4: Housing		
	4.02	Review Zoning Ordinance to Identify Ways to Diversify Housing Options	0%
	4.04	Develop Redevelopment Overlay District/Neighborhood Conservation District to Help Ensure Appropriate Redevelopment	100%
Land Use	Goal #5: Land Use		
	5.01	Update Fort Mill Zoning Ordinance to Help Implement Updated Future Land Use Map and Address Other Code Considerations	100%
	5.03	Prepare Small Area Plan for I-77/Sutton Road Interchange	0%
	5.04	Establish Trail Overlay District	0%

Figure VI.1 - Potential Short-Term Implementation Projects Table

The % of Votes column shows the results of instant polling by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee on which potential short-term implementation projects should be prioritized for action.

POTENTIAL SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS			
Element	Number	Project	% of Votes
Natural Resources	Goal #6: Natural Resources		
	6.01	Develop and Implement Plan to Improve Public Access to Catawba River	71%
	6.02	Develop Plan to Protect Fort Mill Tree Canopy	29%
	6.06	Prepare Conservation Development Standards	0%
	6.07	Partner with York County and Lancaster County to Conduct Sugar Creek Streambank Restoration Project	0%
Population	Goal #7: Population		
	7.01	Launch Initiative to Connect Residents to Community Through Public Service Projects	57%
	7.05	Establish Town Citizens Academy	43%
Priority Investment	Goal #8: Priority Investment		
	8.01	Review Utility Agreements for Long-term Sustainability	57%
	8.03	Enhance Town Capital Maintenance Program	43%
Resiliency	Goal #9: Resiliency		
	9.05	Develop Policies and Procedures to Enhance Communication Infrastructure for Real-Time Alerts and Evacuation Guidance	50%
	9.06	Develop Green Initiative to Reduce Stormwater Runoff and Flooding	38%
Transportation	Goal #10: Transportation		
	10.01	Identify and Fill Missing Links in Ped-Bike Network	14%
	10.03	Explore Smaller-Scale Transit Options Such as Micro Transit	57%
	10.07	Work with SCDOT and Fort Mill School District to Identify Additional Ways to Enhance Roadway Safety Near Schools	14%
	10.08	Work with SCDOT to Study and Implement Traffic Signal Improvements to Enhance Intersection Efficiencies	14%

Plan Management Policies

The final piece of the Plan Implementation Framework is the Plan Management Policies. These are key principles that elected officials, upper management, and department heads should communicate and reinforce to make full use of the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan in local and regional decision-making and to drive plan implementation forward. The principles include the following:

Principle A:

- Make review of the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan by the elected and appointed boards, Town staff, and community partners a systematic practice when making public and private decisions, especially regulatory revisions, public investments, and land use and infrastructure policy decisions.

Principle B:

- Emphasize the importance of collaboration by all Town departments in supporting the implementation of the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan.

Principle C:

- Review adopted plans for alignment with the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan and with each other.

Principle D:

- Track progress in implementing the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan by providing an annual update to the Town's upper management and elected and appointed boards on implementation projects pursued over the past year, and ones planned for the coming year.
- Discuss progress on implementing the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan, make any project adjustments and course corrections that are appropriate, and identify resources needed moving forward.

Principle E:

- Maintain the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan as a living document by making regular updates to reflect evolving community conditions and policy perspectives, with a review at least every five years, and an update at least every ten years, as required under South Carolina state law.

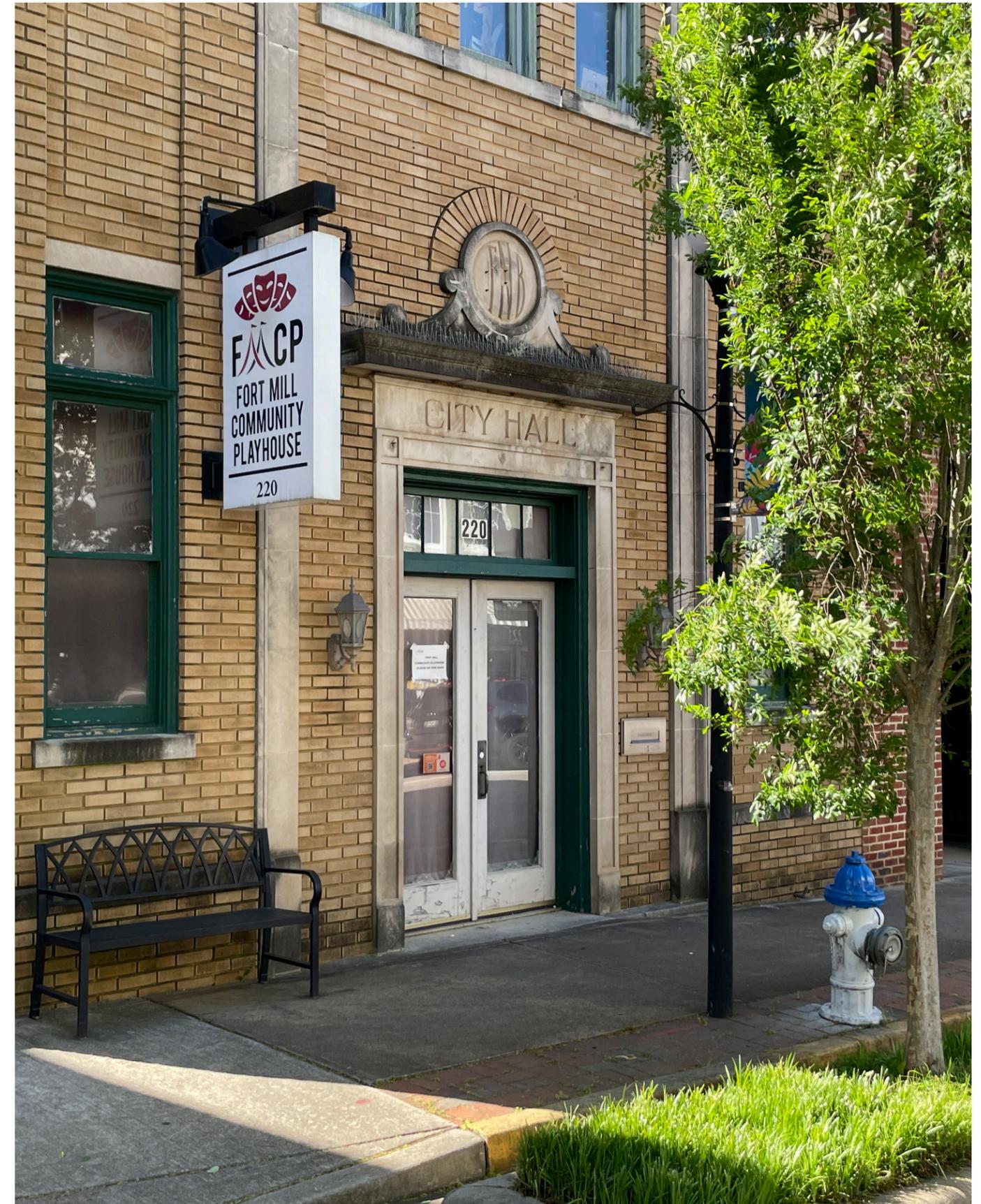
South Carolina Code on Plan Updates

Title 6, Chapter 29, Article 3 of the South Carolina Code of Laws notes that “The local planning commission shall review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years.”

Using the Short-Term Implementation Projects List maintained by Town staff and the Plan Management Policies outlined in this chapter, the Town will work systematically to implement the Fort Mill Comprehensive Plan and advance the shared community vision that it describes on the ground. In so doing, it will improve the lives of current and future residents and community stakeholders, and make Fort Mill an even better community in the years ahead.



Millstone at Millstone Park



Fort Mill Historic City Hall & Fort Mill Community Playhouse



Fort Mill
OUR PATH FORWARD



Comprehensive Plan

