



Section 1:

# PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS OVERVIEW

# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

## Section 1: PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS OVERVIEW



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## Introduction

Located in Union County within the Charlotte metropolitan area and in close proximity to other important regional cities and other job centers, Stallings is on track to become a thriving part of the growth and energy surrounding the Charlotte region. In an effort to meet the community's future needs, Stallings coordinated the efforts of citizens, elected officials, professional leaders, and property owners to create a community vision for the future that will be guided by the *Town of Stallings 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan*.

## Purpose and Scope

The Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan is the culmination of a process where community and business leaders, developers, and residents identified solutions for a variety of growth

challenges. The plan represents the community vision, goals, policies, primary issues, and opportunities that the community has chosen to address and a plan of action for implementation. In addition, it outlines desired development patterns and supporting land uses designed to guide development in a manner that will help Stallings grow and prosper without losing what residents value and love about the area. This intentional approach to development will help Stallings grow jobs and the economy, improve and sustain quality of life, and reduce the cost of providing services.

## What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Comprehensive planning is an important management tool for promoting a strong, healthy community. A

### The Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan Addresses:

- Rapid growth
- Limited land availability for development
- Extensive transportation improvements
- Creation of a unique Town identity
- Improving livability
- Increased non-residential development
- Provision of jobs and services for residents

## The Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan is designed to:

- Articulate the Town's land use and growth vision.
- Provide recommendations and steps towards fulfilling the Town's vision.
- Aid in communicating the Town's growth vision and policies to the development community.
- Serve as a guide that elected officials, appointed officials, and Town staff can use to address challenges and leverage opportunities related to growth and development.





# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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### Who Uses the Comprehensive Plan?

- Potential Investors
- Site Selection Consultants
- Land Developers
- Elected Officials
- Planning Board
- Town Staff
- Residents



comprehensive plan provides a vision, clearly stated and shared by all, that describes the future of the community. It protects private property rights and encourages and supports economic development. The plan can be used to promote orderly and rational development so the town can remain physically attractive and economically viable while preserving important natural resources.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the basis to become more certain about where development will occur, what it will be like, when it will happen, and how the costs of development patterns will be met. It provides a tool for the community to achieve the development pattern it desires, addressing factors such as traditional neighborhoods, infill development, creating a sense of place, providing transportation alternatives, permitting mixed uses, protecting natural resources, and encouraging economic development.

The plan includes text and maps that set forth goals and objectives for guiding future land use and development in the Town. The goals define the vision of the Town and the strategies provide a way to achieve the vision.

### How Will the Plan be Used?

Planning helps the Town invest its money wisely in infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer service, parks and green space and other facilities to maintain and improve the quality of life for its residents.

Town officials and staff will use the information included within the plan to define how land throughout the Town should be developed and identify areas prime for capital investments, infrastructure improvements, and conservation efforts. The plan also includes suggestions of how the community should look, and discusses the importance of how a building is sited, the inclusion of streetscaping and gathering spaces, and the relationship between appearance and community pride.

Unlike a zoning ordinance, the plan does not impose any special regulations on any person or their property. It is a tool that will shape the growth and development of Stallings, serve as a guide for consistent decision-making, and provide important information to residents, business owners, and developers regarding where to live, work, and make property investments. Having an adopted plan also communicates to the region that the Town of Stallings

has a vision, focus, and plan of action to reach its goals.

Town Boards and staff will use the plan to guide work plans and budget decisions, and to inform decisions and discussions about the growth of Stallings. Developers will use the plan to better understand goals and desired development patterns. Residents will use the plan to make property purchasing decisions and to stay informed and involved in the decision making process.

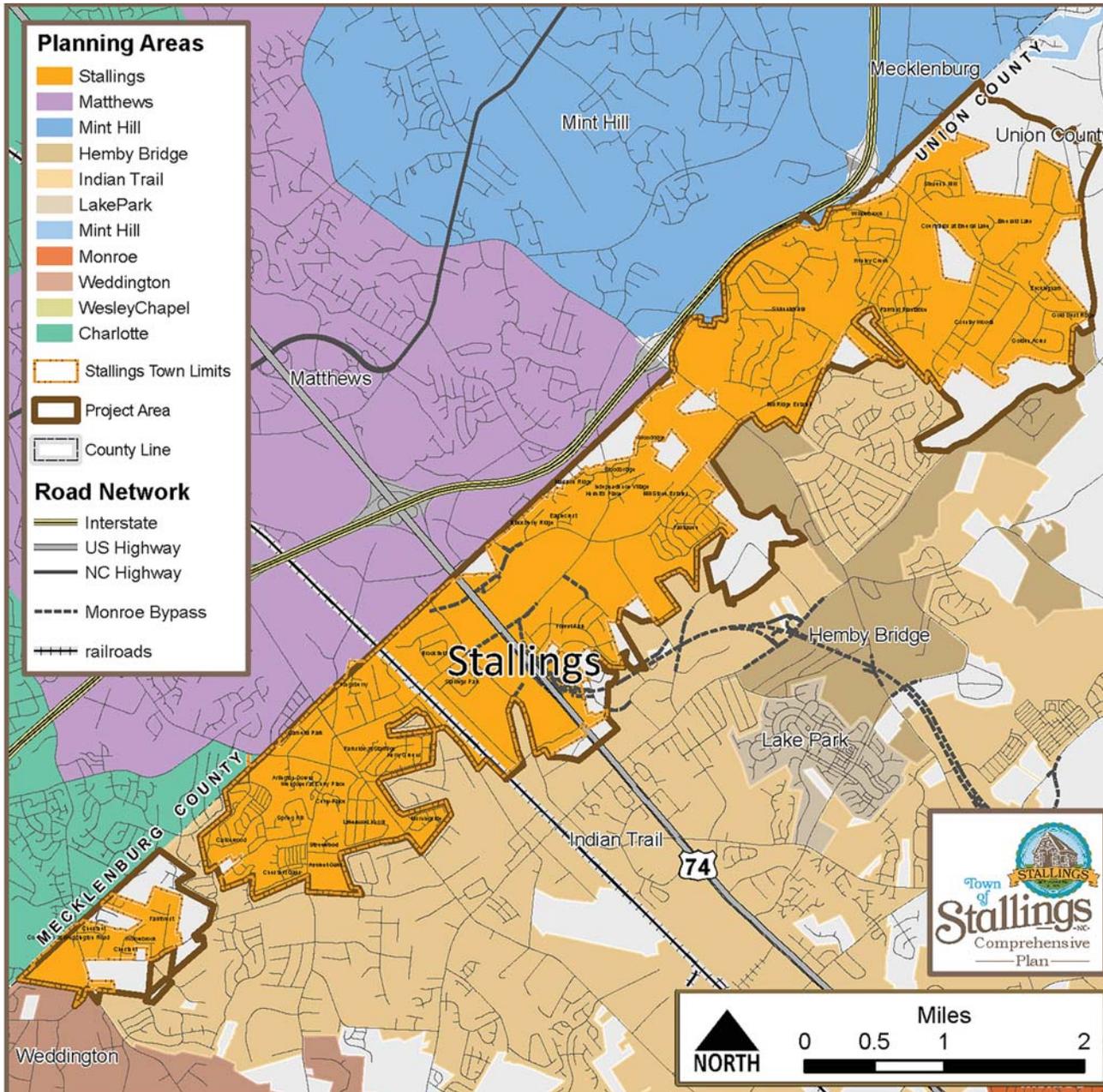
### The Planning Area

The Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan study area encompasses 10.54 square miles. The planning area was determined by expanding Town limits - which consisted of 5,342.69 acres - to include portions of unincorporated Union County. Not included within the planning jurisdiction of nearby towns such as Indian Trail, Matthews, or Hemby Bridge. This expansion added 1,400.57 acres to the planning area that could potentially be annexed into Town limits.



# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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# WHY DO WE PLAN?

- To have a guide for making land use decisions
- To manage the Town's future wisely
- To balance the broad array of community needs, objectives and realities



# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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### Key Guiding Principles:

- Coordinated Growth
- Diversified Development
- Placemaking
- Destination Points
- Adaptive Community
- Regional Collaboration

### Key Guiding Principles

While the vision statements in the succeeding chapters define specific components of the community to concentrate on (such as housing, transportation, economy, recreation, etc.), the key guiding principles provide an overarching framework of what we hope to accomplish in Stallings.

The key guiding principles represent concepts that permeate the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and show up in multiple chapters. Guiding principles can be used on an ongoing basis as a yardstick for measuring progress and a primary filter for determining what is appropriate. Together with the vision statements, the guiding principles become the critical tools for ongoing measurement and assessment of initiatives and results. These principles include:

- Coordinated Growth
- Diversified Development
- Placemaking
- Destination Points

- Adaptive Community
- Regional Collaboration



### Coordinated Growth

The Town values an intentional growth pattern that focuses density at key locations and uses design principles to create a coordinated approach to site and building development. Transportation infrastructure sets the framework for the Town's future land use opportunities and with a finite amount of land available for growth, the Town has placed value on identifying areas where

the future development will have a profound impact on Stallings. The Town's geography is such that key street intersections with Stallings Road (such as Idlewild, U.S. 74 and Old Monroe) form important activity nodes where the land uses have a strong imprint on the Town's future. Development in these areas, in addition to land near the I-485 interchange, and identified redevelopment areas, will define the identity, functionality, aesthetics, and even the future tax base for the Town.

Land use policies are used to *identify these areas and help protect the land from one-off, uncoordinated development* that would be detrimental to the long-term goals of the Town and diminish the Town's revenue base for years to come. In addition, it is important that *consistent aesthetic, site design, public realm, and landscaping standards work to unify the Town's visual identity, from end-to-end, for a coordinated approach to development* that will not happen without Town vision and guidance.



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### Diversified Development

The Town aspires to provide a full range of land uses, from employment and services to residential, at a variety of densities. Historically, the Town's residential growth has been in the form of low density, single-family housing. The limited number of commercial outlets in Stallings have either spread along U.S. 74 or located off Stallings Road, in strip shopping centers or neighborhood centers featuring a grocery store. However, with the exception of retail and small offices, new employment centers have located elsewhere in the county or region.

This land use pattern has contributed to increased traffic congestion, with residents driving out of Stallings for most employment and non-daily retail trips, and spending dollars in nearby com-

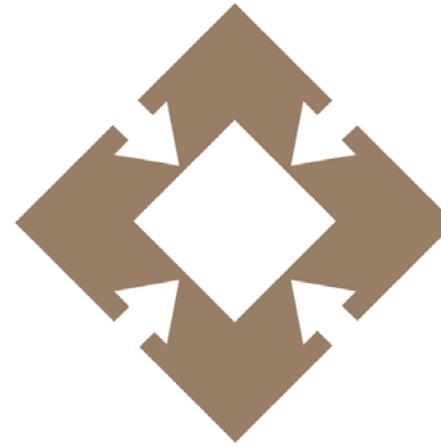
munities. Low-density growth has also used up much of the available land, leaving very few greenfield development sites.

With a primarily residential land use palate and tax base, the Town will need to diversify land uses to add stability and longevity to the Town's finances and to create a vibrant, livable community that provides jobs and services close to home.

Having a *diversified housing stock* can accommodate residents of all stages of life (single professional, young family, empty nesters, and retirees) and allow people to age within their community. It also provides affordable housing for government employees such as police officers and teachers allowing them to live in the community in which they work, and provide quicker responses in case of emergency.

*Having nearby employment and retail opportunities* enhances personal prosperity by leaving more time to spend in the Town and with family. But prosperity is about more than job growth. Business growth is influenced by the quality of life and a development pattern that produces the types of places where people want to spend time and money. Creating places and destinations will require *increased densities at select locations, where a mixture of*

*land uses creates a walkable, vibrant environment.*



### Placemaking

Placemaking is a people-centered approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces that enhances community identity, encourages social interaction, and facilitates economic development. *Successful "places" are connected to their surroundings through multiple access points, are comfortable, safe, and clean, have activities and reasons for people to visit, and provide areas for people to interact.*

The Town values the creation of "community" by developing civic and public gathering spaces that foster a sense of identity and connectedness. Historical growth in Stallings has included single use development that is disconnected





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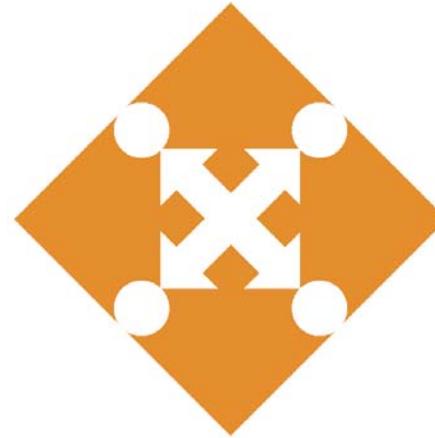
### Qualities of *Destination Communities:*

- high quality growth at key activity centers
- diverse range of land uses
- connectivity
- walkability
- human scaled development

from other uses, and while this land use pattern is common, it is not conducive to creating a sense of community. The Town will focus on providing opportunities for residents to gather, play, recreate, and enjoy nature, culture, and each other.

*The Town can go a long way to developing “places” through site and building designs that focus on people.* Elements such as front porches, streetscape landscaping and sidewalks, door and window placement, and parking lot design can have a major impact on placemaking. Walkability and connected land uses are another important element to creating a place. *Developing a network of safe, accessible, and attractive streets, trails, parks, and open spaces helps to create a sense of community.* This network complements higher density, mixed-use activity centers and provides connections to residential areas, increasing opportunities for physical activity and community building.

Stallings is at a cross-roads, literally, with a multitude of transportation network and land use changes being designed and constructed in the next two decades. The key principle of placemaking will help guide decisions about infrastructure and neighborhood, non-residential, and park development.



### Destination Points

Communities that are intentional about their development, focus on high quality growth at key activity centers, provide a diverse range of land uses, focus on connectivity, walkability, and human scaled development, and make placemaking a priority. These communities *become destinations* that attract others from outside their borders. But, how can Stallings work towards this goal and capitalize on the results?

For Stallings, becoming such a community begins with understanding *what uses and design features will make Stallings unique and attractive to its existing residents and to others outside the community.* *Keeping an eye on regional trends and markets will be key.* Would medical offices and facilities be a draw for non-residents? Would class

A office space fill a niche that is not available in surrounding communities? What recreational facilities are in demand, but not available nearby? What mix of uses and design creates a space where people want to spend their free time? What events and park programming will attract patrons from outside Stallings?

In addition to the physical design and land uses, other person-based infrastructure elements that are needed to develop destinations include:

- Programming and event planning that will create activity in these “places”;
- Community advocates and volunteers that support and promote Stallings;
- Communication channels to let those outside Stallings know about the great community events and venues available in Stallings; and,
- Logistics coordination to handle the groundswell of non-residents that will want to be part of Stallings, for the day or week.

New public and private development proposals should be able to address the question, “Will this project help create



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our community identity, offer benefits to residents, and attract non-residents?” If the answer is yes, site design features should reflect how the site will address these elements.



### Adaptive Community

Change will inevitably occur. That is the fundamental bedrock on which all long-range community planning is based. Stallings is taking a proactive approach by embracing the change in order to create a future for the Town that is intentional and meets the needs of both current and future residents and businesses. The Town seeks to adapt to changing demographics and market conditions by establishing a community that can withstand downturns in the economy, with buildings and infrastructure designed to last beyond the lifespan of a single generation. Being

an adaptive community is about using land wisely to prevent future problems, planning ahead for the growth of Stallings and its surrounding communities, and giving thoughtful attention to the location, type, density, and timing of development. Adapting the community to change will include:

- Redeveloping existing commercial properties;
- Adding new, denser development at key, planned locations where services already exist and new infrastructure can be planned;
- Demanding high quality site design and building materials that will last for generations (regardless of land use);
- Expanding parks and greenways;
- Partnering with regional agencies to provide transit opportunities;
- Protecting water and air quality; and,
- Providing housing and services that meet changing population needs.

These actions will allow the Town to efficiently serve a larger population in the future and respond to changes that are outside of the Town's control.



### Regional Collaboration

The Town's unique geography and proximity to other communities create opportunities for local and regional collaboration on issues and topics that transcend one jurisdiction. Many of the challenges facing Stallings are regional in nature -- transportation, housing, employment, work force, environment -- and decisions made by other jurisdictions can impact Stallings, and vice versa. Regional collaboration has become essential to providing efficient infrastructure and services to residents and businesses within Stallings.

Collaborating with neighboring communities on complex issues can have multiple benefits including savings on procurement, new funding opportunities, and generally greater efficiency.

Many growth issues are **regional** in nature, and do not stop at political boundaries.

**Regional collaboration** is key to planning for:

- local streets
- highways
- transit
- affordable housing
- environmental protection
- employment and workforce development
- water and sewer provision





# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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### Plan Structure:

1. Planning  
**Process**  
Overview
2. Growth and Demographic  
**Trends**
3. Identity  
and Involvement
4. Utilities and  
**Services**
5. **Economy**,  
Business and Workforce

cies with limited dollars. Cooperative relationships among nearby local governments and agencies can have a profound impact on the political influence exerted in the transportation planning process. In addition, funders and institutions are increasingly realizing the importance of addressing complex economic and social issues through greater collaboration, and show preference towards communities that have solid working relationships with their neighbors. Components of collaboration will include identifying an issue, determining partners, seeking consensus, developing an action plan, and evaluating outcomes.

The desire for multi-jurisdictional and regional collaboration will be a key guide for the Town as it grows and develops in the coming decades.

### Plan Structure

The Plan is organized into the following main sections:

#### Section 1: Planning Process Overview

This section introduces the purpose of the plan and sets the context for why a comprehensive plan is needed, what it does, and how it is to be used. It introduces the segments of the plan, talks

about why we plan, the need to update the plan, and how it relates to other plans. It lays out the plan structure, the planning area, the planning process, and community involvement. It captures the values of Stallings and how these values were developed into broad vision statements, which form the foundation of the plan. This section also includes a set of guiding principles that will flow throughout the plan as key elements that transcend individual chapters.

#### Section 2: Growth and Demographic Trends

This section outlines the population and demographic trends in the area and highlights trends that will inform future land use, growth, and development, including challenges and opportunities. National, regional, and local trends include discussion on our aging population, and the growth of the millennial generation and their lifestyle, housing, workforce, and travel preferences. This section also covers the historic growth of Stallings and future population projections.

#### Section 3: Identity and Involvement

This section begins with an introduction of identity and involvement, including what it means, why it is important, and how many features combine to make up community culture. This section maps key areas for Town identification elements, such as signage and landscaping, and includes a discussion of community culture, in terms of events, programming, and activities.

#### Section 4: Utilities and Services

This section begins with an introduction of community utilities and services. The section outlines public utilities (including sewer, water, electric and gas), general availability, and planned expansions. It will also touch on community services, such as police, fire service, EMS, libraries, farmers markets, and schools. Both utilities and services are discussed in terms of existing conditions, issues, and future challenges and needs. This section also discusses multi-jurisdictional coordination as part of service delivery.

#### Section 5: Economy, Business and Workforce

This section begins with an introduction to the existing economy in Stallings.



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It further outlines key market trends in the region, and explores the issues and opportunities of the economic environment. Organizations tasked with providing workforce training, and bringing jobs and services to Stallings, are also described, along with promising opportunities for economic growth and employment, commuting patterns, the use of technology, and the development of medical facilities.

### Section 6: Transportation

This section addresses the transportation challenges that are typical in a growing region, including developing a multi-modal transportation system, congestion, connectivity, and funding. This section outlines the elements of the transportation network (existing and planned), discusses complete streets, and the impact of transportation on land use and vice versa.

### Section 7: Neighborhoods and Housing

This section outlines the elements of a livable neighborhood, housing trends, existing housing, and future housing needs. This section also provides an overview of the importance of

neighborhoods to Stallings (which is primarily known for its residential resources), and describes the existing housing stock, household makeup, and housing costs.

### Section 8: Open Space, Recreation and Environment

This section focuses on open space, recreation and natural resources, and the economic benefits and health benefits of these elements. This section also touches on creating opportunities for active living and healthy eating. This section explores existing park and open space facilities and programming, and outlines elements of healthy, safe environments, including clean water, clean air, adequate drainage, wildlife habitats, flood mitigation, tree canopy, and drought resistance.

### Section 9: Existing and Future Land Use

This section will cover topics related to current and future land use including the amount of land available for development and existing land uses. This section will provide an overview of the future land use categories, called place types, which specify use, form,

and context. The future land use map will illustrate the Town's vision for where specific types of development should be located. Community Growth areas were identified through the process as unique planning areas. For each profile area the plan will outline issues specific to that area, the vision for future development, and recommended development strategies to achieve the vision. This section will end with the identification of overarching goals in this subject area and strategies that the Town can employ to meet these goals.

### Section 10: Implementation Plan

Many components of a land use plan are interrelated. To help identify these connections, the implementation plan includes a matrix of goals and strategies. The matrix illustrates how strategies can work together to meet common goals, and thereby identifies how the Town can most effectively prioritize actions for funding, quicker implementation and partnership development. The matrix makes clear how the guiding principles transcend the individual concerns of each chapter.

## Plan Structure:

6. Transportation
7. Neighborhoods and Housing
8. Open Space, Recreation and Environment
9. Existing and Future Land Use
10. Implementation





# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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### Values and Vision:

Active  
COOPERATION  
Inclusive  
efficient  
Sustainable  
*Supportive of Growth*  
Safety  
*Thriving Town Center*  
Broad Tax Base  
Destinations  
*Transportation Options*  
CONNECTED  
People Oriented  
Housing Choices  
*Walkable*  
AGE IN PLACE  
CONSERVATION

### Community Values and Vision

The following community values and vision statements were developed through multiple conversations with the Steering Committee and incorporate insights and feedback from the community captured during the first and second Open House. These vision statements can be found at the beginning of Sections 3 through 8 and are the foundation of the plan.



#### Identity and Involvement

**Values:**  
*Active Community, Cooperation, Inclusive*

**Vision Statement:**  
*Stallings is a community with a small-town spirit that works together towards its future. The town values quality community design and signature elements that make Stallings unique and identifiable. Community culture is supportive and demonstrated through community events and citizens participate, volunteer, and cooperate for the greater good of the community.*



#### Utilities and Services

**Values:**  
*Efficient, Sustainable, Supportive of Growth, Safety*

**Vision Statement:**  
*Stallings is intentional about providing utilities and services that meet the current and future needs of residents and businesses. Stallings works with private agencies, the state, county, and surrounding municipalities to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and that infrastructure is expanded and maintained to accommodate expected growth.*



#### Economy, Business and Workforce

**Values:**  
*Thriving Town Center, Broad Tax Base, Destinations*

**Vision Statement:**  
*Stallings' business friendly culture and skilled workforce attracts private investments and supports businesses that add jobs and services to the local economy. Stallings is a vibrant destination for office, small business, service, and retail development.*



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### Transportation

*Values: Transportation Options, Connectivity, Safety, People-Oriented*

**Vision Statement:**

*Stallings has a transportation system designed to move vehicles and people quickly and safely, through connected, well designed streets, as well as a series of regional bike and walking facilities. Opportunities for future transit connections are made possible through intentional, directed growth, and regional transportation partnerships.*



### Neighborhoods and Housing

*Values: Housing Choices, Connected, Walkable, Age in Place*

**Vision Statement:**

*Stallings provides housing options for people of all ages and stages of life. The Town's connected, diverse neighborhoods allow residents to enjoy a high quality of life and to age in place.*



### Open Space, Recreation and Environment

*Values:*

*Connected, Active and Passive Recreation, Conservation*

**Vision Statement:**

*With its connected system of open space, parks, greenway trails, and abundant recreational opportunities, Stallings is recognized as one of the most livable communities in the greater Charlotte region. The environment and natural resources are examined and thoughtfully considered as part of the Town's growth strategy.*



# Values and Vision





# Town of Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan

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### Planning Process

The planning process took a year to complete, starting in Summer 2016 and finishing with the presentation of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan to the Town Council in Fall 2017. The process consisted of three open houses, monthly meetings of the steering committee, and biweekly conversations with planning staff. Through these meetings, existing conditions were examined, issues and opportunities were assessed, and the draft plan was presented and revised.

### Community Involvement and Engagement

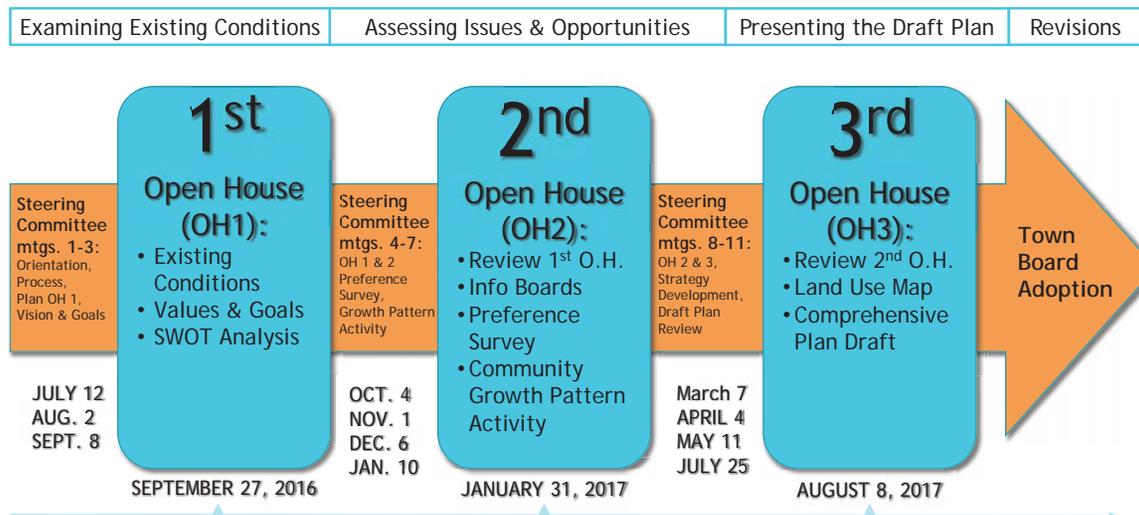
Public engagement is the hallmark of this project and provides the foundation for successful plan implementation. Building strong relationships within the community is critical to making long-term change on an issue as complex and multi-faceted as community growth. However, educating residents and stakeholders about existing conditions and future needs is not enough to change a community's direction related to growth and devel-

opment policy. This overarching people-first approach enabled residents to be active members of their Town and develop a land use vision for current and future residents.

Through this approach, stakeholders gained insight into development barriers and a better understanding of how to connect into local planning processes to shape and direct real change. In addition, the public engagement outcomes will provide guidance to staff and elected leaders, creating support for policy shifts and funding allocations needed to accommodate growth and development in Stallings.



### Planning Process Map



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Ultimately, through open house events, presentations, and surveys, residents, community and business leaders were engaged in the planning process. Efforts towards engaging residents that mirrored the demographics of Stallings included:

- Three Open House events aimed at all segments of the Town's population.
- A 15-member Steering Committee representing various public and private organizations to guide the project.

### Steering Committee

The Stallings Comprehensive Land Use Plan was guided by a multi-agency Steering Committee representing public and private sector organizations interested in growth and development in the Stallings area. The project's Steering Committee, charged with guiding the process, represented a true cross-section of land use, real estate, housing, economic development, and quality of life stakeholders in the community.

The Steering Committee met monthly throughout the project to provide guidance on the process and local information. This group was instrumental in bringing other residents and stakeholders to the Open House events

and communicating with their respective organizations about the project, process, and results. A list of Steering Committee members is included in the Acknowledgements page. The meeting schedule, and meeting agendas are included in the Appendix.

### Open Houses

The Open House events were designed to: afford community members an opportunity to see the direction of the Plan and its preliminary findings; to offer perspective and commentary about the direction and outcome of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan; and to engage with Town staff, elected officials, and Steering Committee members. They were structured to present early findings and allow attendees to comment on what was presented. Participant feedback was used to build the information presented at each subsequent Open House.

During the first Open House participants completed a survey consisting of six questions asking them to identify their favorite places in Stallings, desired transportation features, the biggest challenges in Stallings, and how they would describe Stallings. Favorite places included parks and places to recreate, neighborhoods, schools, and shopping opportunities. Desired trans-

portation features included improved roads, greater street connectivity, and sidewalks and trails. The biggest challenges identified included traffic congestion, lack of office and employment opportunities, rapid residential growth, and the lack of restaurants or commercial spaces. Safe, friendly, and community were some of the most used words to describe Stallings in 25 years.

### Community Preference Survey Findings

During the second Open House, participants completed a survey responding to 37 images of residential, non-residential, and blended/mixed use developments.

Survey results indicate that residents prefer attached housing that looks like a single-family house (duplexes or triplexes), that are well designed, and surround community amenities like parks or playgrounds. Large lot houses, patio homes, bungalows, and traditional 2-story houses are popular single-family housing types. For commercial developments, participants chose community-oriented commercial centers (i.e. anchored by a grocery store) and shopping malls with outdoor pedestrian plazas. Well-planned mixed-use centers offering retail, entertainment, and second-story residential uses were also preferred.





# Community Involvement



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These surveys, survey results, and a summary of responses from each of the three Open House events, are included in the Appendix.

### Project Team

The Project Team was comprised of Town and Centralina Council of Governments staff. This group met on a regular basis from April 2016 to October 2017. The Project Team met to determine project direction (incorporating input from the Steering Committee) to provide regular project status updates, and to exchange technical information.

### Project Web Page

Early in the project, the Town set up a project web page at:

[http://www.stallingsnc.org/planning\\_department.php?Planning-Zoning-Department-Comprehensive-Land-Use-Plan-120](http://www.stallingsnc.org/planning_department.php?Planning-Zoning-Department-Comprehensive-Land-Use-Plan-120).

This web page contains project information for anyone to access, including: project maps, open house boards, the values and community preference surveys, the project vision statements, and other related documents.



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### Comprehensive Land Use Plan

What is a Comprehensive Plan?  
The purpose of a comprehensive plan is to: determine the vision and goals for a town's future; develop a land use map to better achieve these goals; and work with the community to create strategies for reaching these goals and desired land use patterns. The Town of Stallings is embarking on a comprehensive planning process to create a plan that will reflect land use patterns, infrastructure availability, and economic development strategies as well as establish future land use goals. The process will offer multiple opportunities for citizen involvement and input. A key-goal is to develop a user-friendly plan that is well organized and easy to access by staff, appointed and elected boards, the development community, and the public.

Click [here](#) to take the Comprehensive Land Use survey!

Also, click [here](#) to see the Comprehensive Land Use board displays.

PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MAPS AND ZONING
PEDESTRIAN PLANNING
TOWN ORDINANCES
UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE
ZONING CASES
ZONING FORMS

