



Development Strategy

Adopted on 04/25/2016

Prepared by:



4055 International Plaza
Suite 200
Ft. Worth, TX 76109

Acknowledgements

The City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Staff provided knowledge, assistance, and insight throughout the process of developing this strategy. The contributions of the following people helped to make this planning process and document possible:

City Council

Hector F. Garcia, Mayor

Hal Gerhardt, Place 1

Brandon Krausse, Place 2

Lee Griffin, Place 3

James Wright, Place 4

Melva Clark, Place 5

Patrick Shelbourne, Place 6

Robert Davis, Place 7, Mayor Pro Tem

Planning and Zoning Commission

William Boese, Place 1

Kay Ivey, Place 2

Larry Clark, Chairperson, Place 3

Ron Holland, Place 4

Cristy McCauley, Place 5

Sergio Molina, Secretary, Place 6

Brad Hearne, Vice-Chairperson, Place 7

Hector Garcia, Primary Liaison

Patrick Shelbourne, Alternate Liaison

City Staff

Greg Vick, City Manager

Zolaina Parker, City Secretary

Jacquelyn Reyff, Planning and Development Manager

Sandra Gibson, Director of Finance and Administration

Bill Crawford, Fire Chief

Marcia Reyna, Human Resources & Civil Service Director

Bradley A. Fraley, Chief Information Officer, Public Information Officer

Lana Ewell, Library Director

Salvador Torres, Parks and Community Services Director

Patricia Rodriguez, Planning & Zoning Specialist

Denise Wilkinson, Economic Development Coordinator

Randy Richards, Building Official

Glen Fowler, Police Chief

Robert Parker, Assistant Police Chief

Paul Hackleman, Director of Public Works

Deby Woodard, Assistant Finance Director, Purchasing Manager

Consultant Team

Freese and Nichols, Inc.

Executive Summary

Introduction

This development strategy has two primary purposes; one, it creates a shared vision for the community, and two, it establishes ways in which the community can effectively realize that vision. The 2016 One Watauga Development Strategy tells the story of who the City is today and what it wishes to become as it grows and redevelops. Watauga is at an opportune crossroad for a new and exciting period in its history. A fresh sense of direction and collective excitement creates the need to build consensus and establish a vision for the City going forward.

The development strategy is a well-defined, long-range planning tool that is intended to be used by City staff, councils and boards, along with citizens. The strategy will guide the community's physical development for 10 years, 20 years, or an even longer period of time. The strategy's intention is to serve as a flexible guide and living document for both current and future decision-makers.

The One Watauga Development Strategy aims for:

- Efficient delivery of public services
- Coordination of public and private investments
- Minimization of potential land use conflicts
- Management of growth in an orderly fashion
- Cost-effective public investments
- A rational and reasonable basis for making development decisions about the community.

This development strategy is not a zoning ordinance, but rather it is a high-level tool utilized by the City to make development decisions. The strategy helps to safeguard coordinated growth even as new development, zoning requests and other development decisions are made. To protect the integrity of the City's neighborhoods and corridors, the strategy helps determine what land uses are appropriate and where such land uses should be located. Ultimately, synchronized land use patterns help to protect private property by maintaining and enhancing value and by protecting property from incompatible uses.

The One Watauga Development Strategy examines realities of existing conditions, demographic implications, areas of growth potential and strategies for improving quality of life. The strategy not only focuses on the physical development of the city, but also the overall goals to become a more livable and economically vibrant community. While the strategy is visionary and outlines citizens' desires, it is also measurable by employing implementation-focused recommendations.

Legal Authority

The State of Texas has established laws with regard to the way in which incorporated communities can ensure the health, safety and welfare of their citizens. State law gives municipalities the power to regulate the use of land, but only if such regulations are based on a strategy. The authority to create a comprehensive strategy is rooted in Chapters 211, 212 and 213 of the Texas Local Government Code.

Chapter 211

Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code allows the government body of a community to regulate zoning.

Chapter 212

Chapter 212 of the Texas Local Government Code allows the governing body of a community to regulate subdivision development within the City limits and also within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), which varies depending upon the population of the community.

Chapter 213

Chapter 213 of the Texas Local Government Code allows the governing body of a community to create a comprehensive strategy for the “long-range development of the municipality.” Basic recommendations for comprehensive planning are to address land use, transportation and public facilities, but may include a wide variety of other issues determined by the community.

Document Structure

A deliberate planning process involving background research, community outreach, visioning, recommendations and implementation was utilized. This process is reflected in this document’s components:

Community Snapshot

To understand where Watauga is going, it is necessary to understand the City’s history. This section serves as the reconnaissance stage for the planning process. This section examines the historical population trends, demographics, existing conditions, and physical constraints to set the baseline from which future planning decisions should be made.

Vision and Goals

The City’s vision reflects many of the tangible and intangible characteristics and values that Watauga desires to preserve and provide for current residents and future generations. This section identifies the primary issues provided by citizens and officials. Goals will ultimately guide action items described within individual chapters and then prioritized in the Implementation Plan.

Future Land Use

The cornerstone of the development strategy is the Future Land Use Plan. This section describes the appropriate land use types within Watauga and graphically depicts the ideal locations for such uses on the Future Land Use Plan Map.

Economic Development

To remain competitive in the region, the City desires a proactive economic development component. This chapter reviews existing information, incentives and programs. A consolidated overview for available information is generated to identify additional opportunities.

Transportation Plan

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a land use and transportation framework that will serve as a guide for mobility decisions. Land use decisions ultimately impact the City's transportation network and therefore this section's Thoroughfare Plan provides classification recommendations that coincide with future land use decisions.

Community and Neighborhood Livability

Livability refers to the many tangible and intangible characteristics that contribute to the City's quality of life. This section provides recommendations pertaining to quality of life issues and provides community character guidelines. Recommendations on aesthetics, landscaping, housing and other design guidelines are provided. The cornerstone of a livable community lies with its neighborhoods, therefore an existing housing conditions analysis is used and associated recommendations are created.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan organizes and prioritizes the recommendations contained within the various strategy elements into an action matrix.



City of Watauga Central Fire Station

One Watauga Guiding Principles

Land Use

Ensure that future development is orderly and efficient, compatible with existing land uses and enhances the overall quality of life.

Responsibly maximize land by providing housing opportunities for all ages, fostering an environment for local commerce, introducing mixed use and promoting recreational uses.

Create unique destinations in Watauga.

Ensure that a high quality of life is maintained and that residents and visitors are able to live, work and play in the community.

Economic Development

Provide new growth opportunities by reimagining, repurposing, redeveloping and reusing underutilized areas.

Focus on attracting and retaining employers and local businesses.

Encourage the development of non-residential services to enhance the tax base and meet the needs of Watauga residents.

Transportation

Ensure a safe and efficient roadway network for current and future needs.

Support an improved pedestrian circulation system.

Coordinate regional transportation system planning efforts to ensure a proactive community response to issues affecting the City.

Neighborhood and Community Livability

Provide quality and attractive neighborhoods with desirable housing options.

Improve existing neighborhoods and invest in their long-term viability.

Ensure Watauga is distinguishable from adjacent communities.

Encourage quality non-residential development that enhances Watauga's visual appearance .

What's inside?

1 Community Snapshot	8
Demographics	8
Regional Relationship	15
Physical Features and Constraints	16
Existing Land Use	18
2 Vision and Goals	24
Purpose	24
One Watauga Guiding Principles	25
Public Involvement	26
Highlight: Online Survey Results	32
Major Opportunities facing Watauga	35
3 Future Land Use	38
Future Land Use Types Defined	39
Future Land Use Map	41
Future Land Use Projections	42
Future Population	43
Future Land Use Key Objectives	45
4 Economic Development	47
Baseline Overview and Current Economic Development Efforts	47
Identification of Key Development and Redevelopment Sites	51
Funding and Incentive Programs	60
Economic Development Key Objectives	66
5 Transportation Plan	68
Existing Conditions	68
Other notable traffic issues include:	74
Transportation Planning	74
Thoroughfare Plan	80
Bicycle and Pedestrian Considerations	81
Transportation Key Objectives	83
6 Community and Neighborhood Livability	85
Neighborhood and Community Livability	86
Current Planning Trends	87
Design Character	91
Community Branding	97
Housing and Neighborhoods	103
Community and Neighborhood Livability Key Objectives	115
7 Implementation Plan	117
The Roles of the Development Strategy	117
Regular Review	118
Updates	119
Implementation Matrix	120



1 | Community Snapshot

Demographics

Planning effectively for the future requires an understanding of current conditions, such as population, demographics, past planning efforts, growth rates, and regional planning context. These factors paint a picture of the current state of Watauga and guide logical, coordinated, informed, and realistic strategies and decisions for the future.

Historical Population

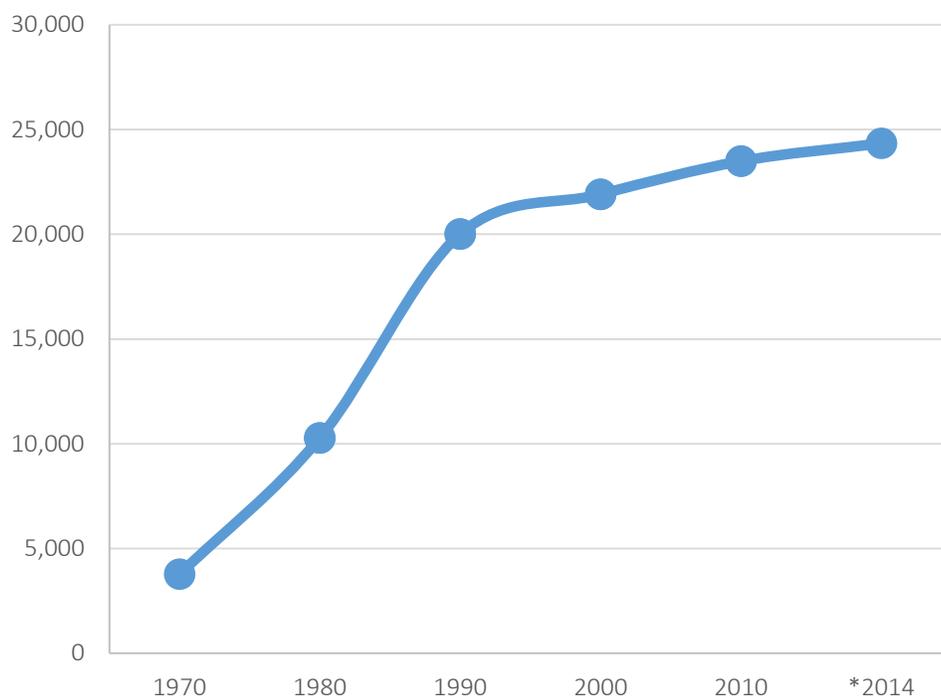
Located approximately 10 miles from downtown Fort Worth, Watauga is home to almost 25,000 residents. From 1970 to 1990 Watauga experienced a large percentage of growth. From 1990 to 2014 the City's growth rate percentage started to decline; however, the total number of residents still continued to increase. The period of high growth can be attributed to the sprawl that the Dallas-Forth area experienced when residents wanted to move out of the central city. Municipalities started to develop and grow all around the outer rings of areas like Fort Worth. Once these cities started to grow, their boundaries became closer to one another, which made annexation of land a challenge. The lower growth rates from 1990 to 2014 can be attributed to this challenge, which is known as buildout. The City will still be able to add more population in the future through redevelopment and infill; however, the rate at which the City grows will drop significantly compared to the historical growth rates.



Figure 1

HISTORICAL POPULATION

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, *estimate



Race and Ethnicity

Race refers to sets of physical characteristics, which is usually a result of ancestry, while ethnicity is a group of people who identify with each other based on nationality or shared traditions. The pie charts in **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** depict the racial and ethnic makeup of Watauga. The City is 77 percent white, which the other 24 percent is a fairly even spread of all other races. For ethnicity, the U.S. Census Bureau only distinguishes between Hispanic and non-Hispanic. Watauga is approximately 75 percent non-Hispanic or Latino. The diversity in race and culture is an asset to the community.

Figure 2

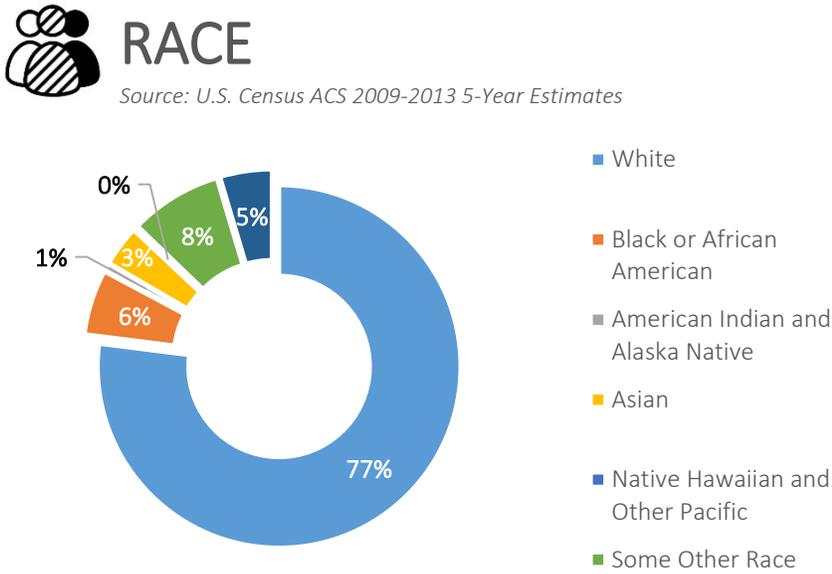
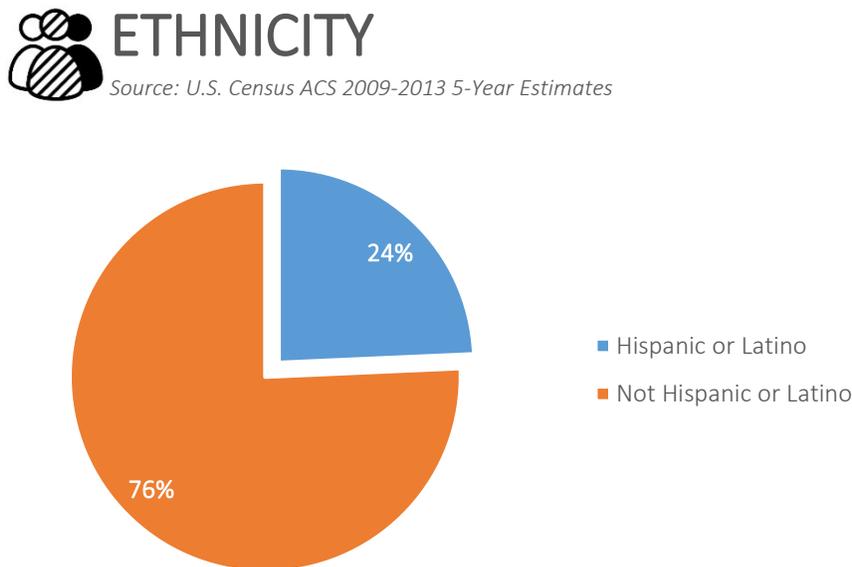


Figure 3



Age and Gender

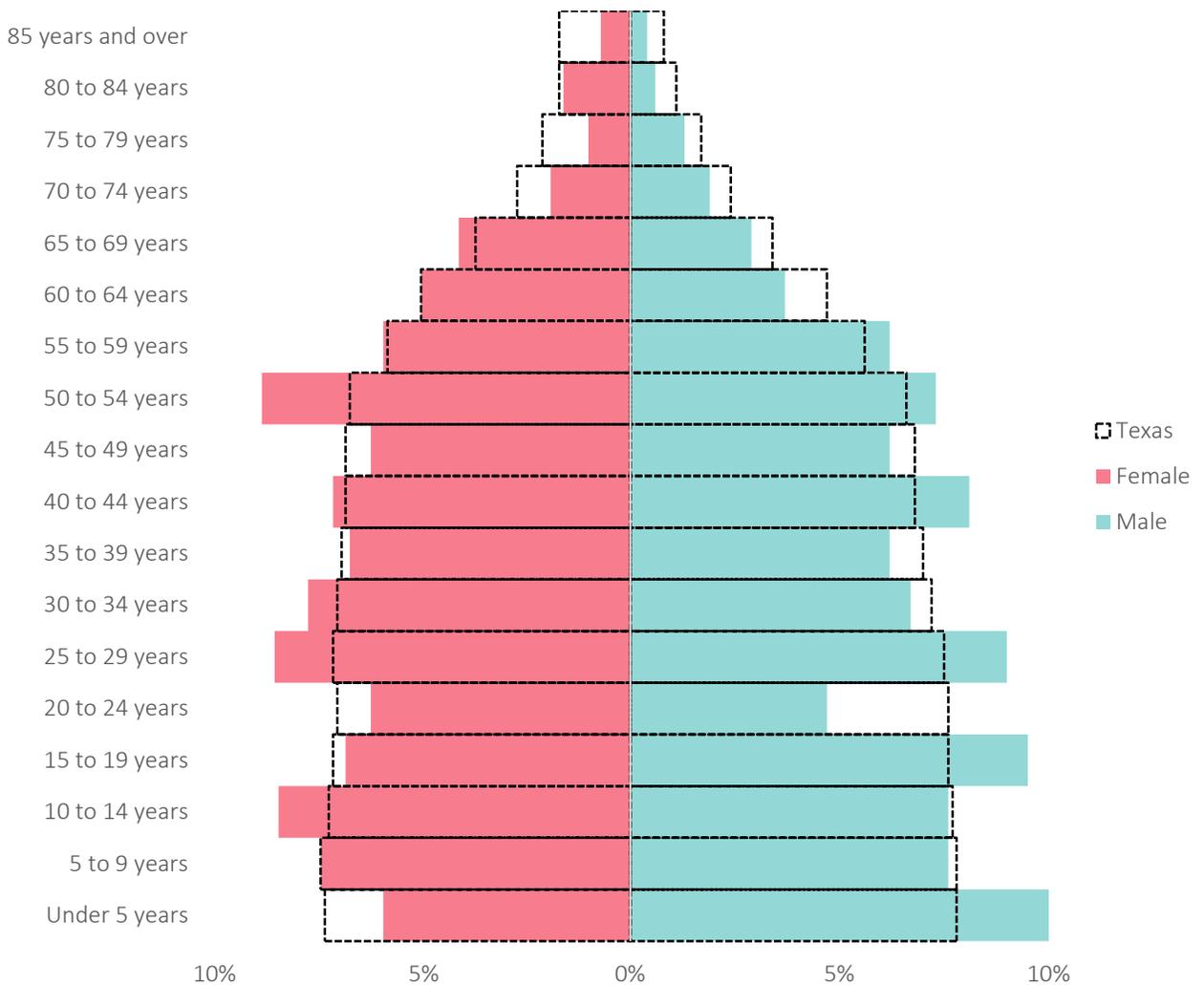
The population pyramid in **Figure 4** depicts the spread of age and gender compared to the State of Texas. Overall, Watauga is not severely lacking in any particular age cohorts. There are some noticeable gaps in males ages 20 to 24 and females in ages 70 and older. The population pyramid reveals that Watauga is primarily made up of young to middle-aged adults with children.

Figure 4



AGE AND GENDER

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates



Educational Attainment

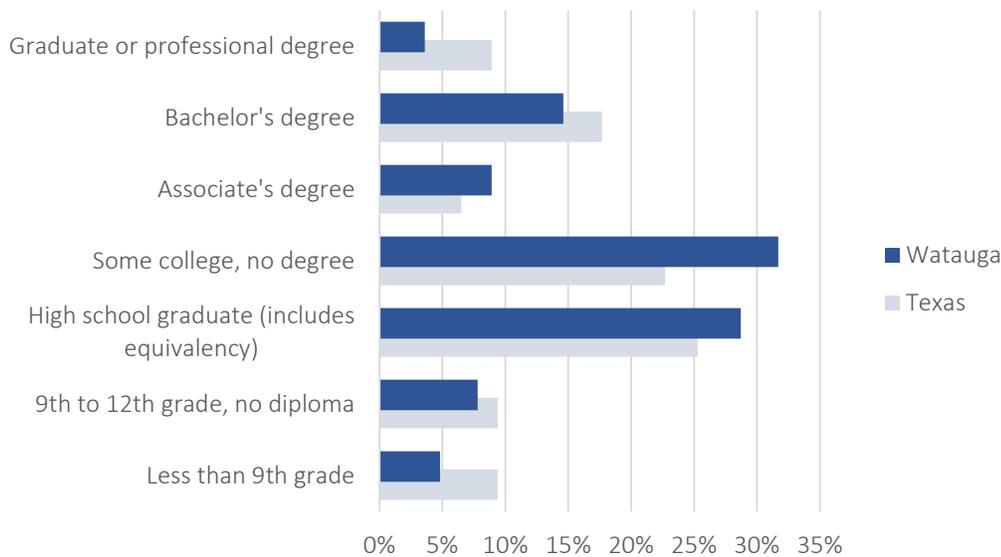
The educational attainment of Watauga residents are fairly spread across all levels. This diversity in education is beneficial to the economy, because there are residents who can fill a wide-range of jobs within the City. The two levels of education with the largest amount of attainment are high school graduate and some college. In these two levels, the City is ahead of the State of Texas averages. Service and retail jobs are typically held by workers in these attainment levels. While Watauga is primarily residential, there are many commercial and retail nodes near the City that are able to provide jobs. A higher attainment level of bachelor's and graduate degrees are generally needed to attract professional service jobs and high-tech industry. The challenge for Watauga is the lack of room to add more buildings for jobs; however, the close proximity to Fort Worth and other parts of the Dallas-Fort Worth region allow the Watauga residents to find appropriate employment.

Figure 5



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates



Income

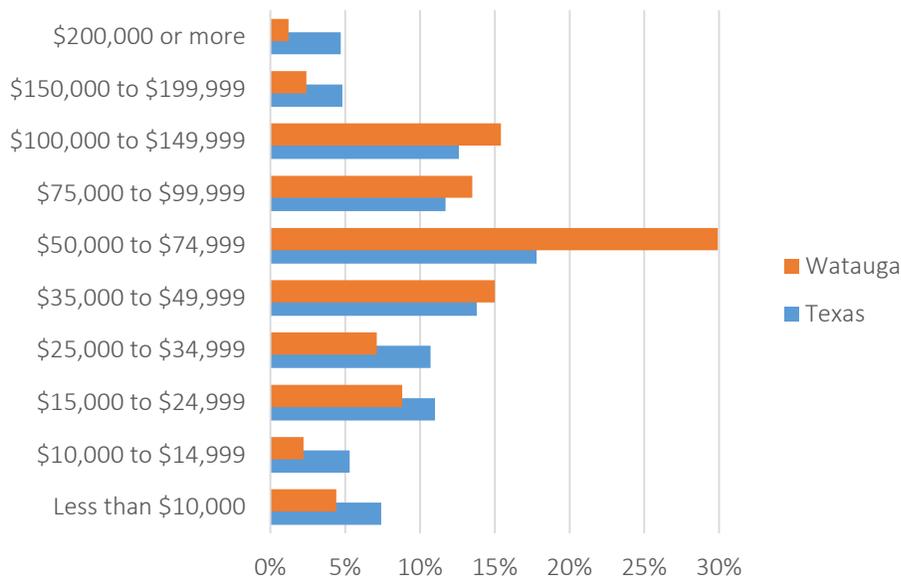
Income can serve as an indicator for the retail market; higher income levels generally mean more disposable income and more retail possibilities, which in turn can translate into a higher tax base for the community. Retail and commercial developments are attracted to purchasing power, along with the number of rooftops in the community. The largest income bracket in Watauga is \$50,000 to \$74,999. The remainder of the income is spread among the other income brackets. The City is lower than the State of Texas in all income brackets lower than \$25,000. This indicates that poverty is not a prominent issue in the City. The City has a mean household income of \$66,348. This gives the City purchasing power and is an asset. Compared to the state average, Watauga has a median household income of \$58,684, above the state average of \$51,900.

Figure 6



INCOME

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates



Employment

Employment opportunities can affect the growth rate of cities. These opportunities are important as they allow people to settle in a community, establish their home and begin a life. If citizens cannot find employment, they are likely to move elsewhere, along with potential revenues in property and sales tax. Cities are generally dependent on businesses to provide employment opportunities that, in turn, pay the citizens' salaries and provide them with the ability to buy and sell goods and pay taxes. The majority of Watauga residents have occupations in the fields of: management, business, science, arts, sales, and office. This correlates with the largest industries that are represented by Watauga residents: retail trade, transportation and warehousing, professional and scientific, and educational services. As expected, due to the educational attainment and income levels, the employment of residents in Watauga is very diverse.

Figure 7



OCCUPATION

of employed population 16 years+ (12,226)

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

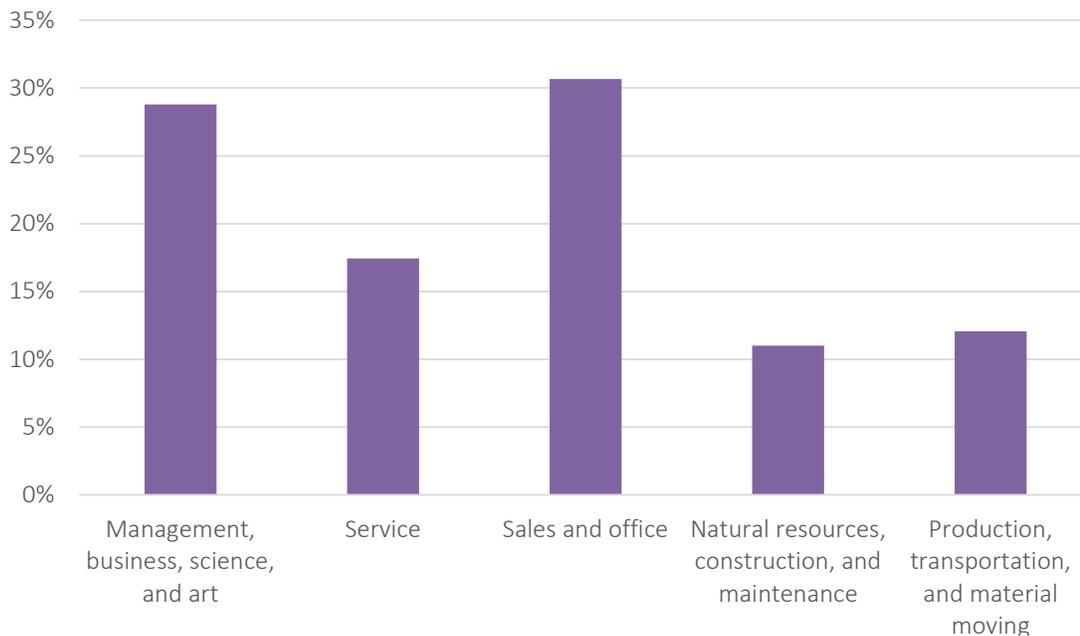


Figure 8



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

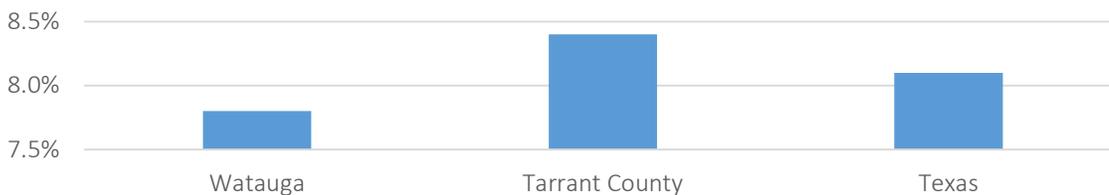


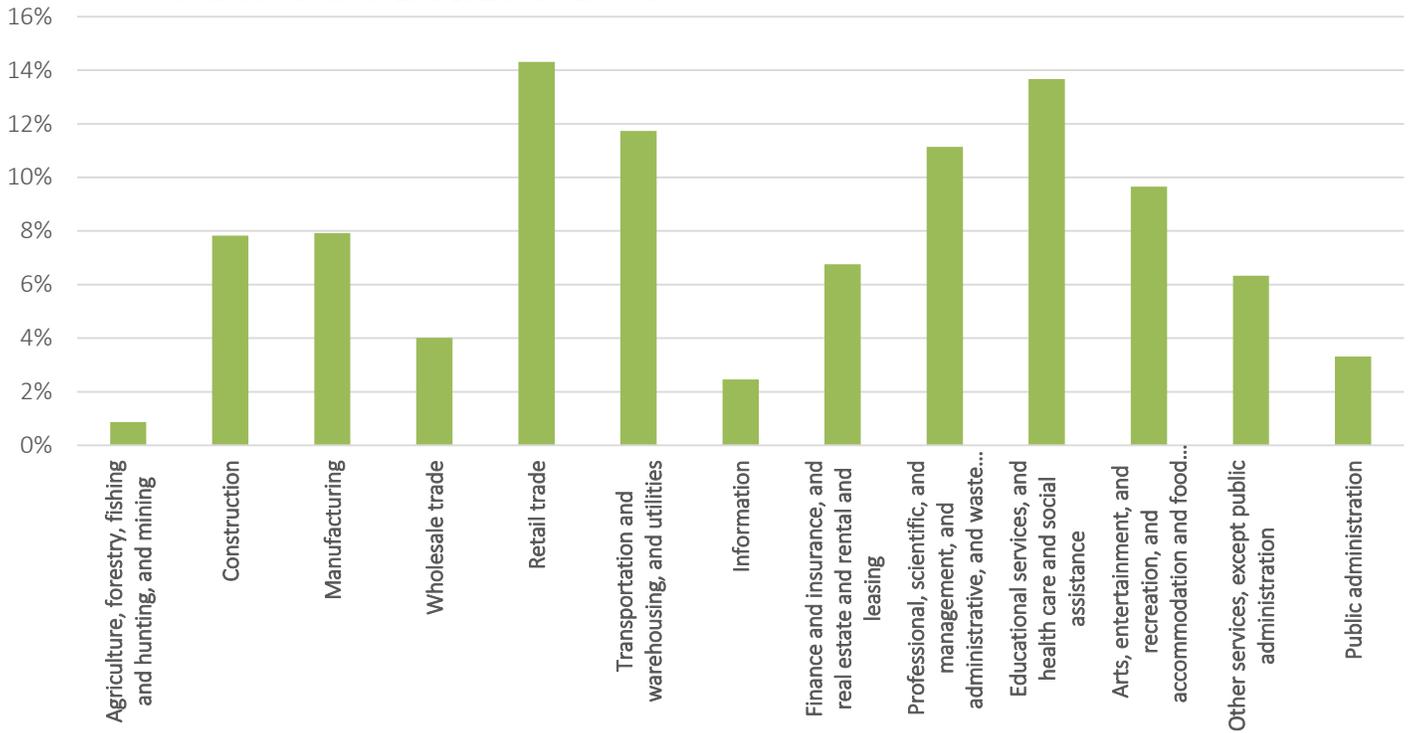
Figure 9



INDUSTRY

of employed population 16 years+ (12,226)

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate



Commute to Work

The main mode of transportation to work in Watauga is by automobile. This is expected in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. However Watauga stands out compared to Texas in carpool statistics. 14 percent of residents in Watauga carpool. This may indicate that residents are concerned about the traffic conditions and are open to alternative modes of transportation.



COMMUTE TO WORK

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Mode of Transportation	Texas	Watauga
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	79.9%	81.5%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	11.1%	14.0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	1.6%	0.5%
Walked	1.6%	0.4%
Other means	1.8%	0.5%
Worked at home	4.0%	3.1%

Travel Time	Texas	Watauga
Mean/Average (Minutes)	25.0	28.4

Regional Relationship

Watauga is located in northeast Tarrant County, east of US Hwy. 377 and north of Loop 820. The City has convenient access to US Hwy. 377, Loop 820, US Hwy. 183, and Interstate 35. By roadway the City is approximately 10 miles from downtown Fort Worth and 18 miles from the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

Watauga lays within The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) planning region, which is the fourth most populous planning area and the fastest growing metropolitan region in the country. The NCTCOG region is expected to continue to experience rapid growth over the next 30 years to an eventual population of 10.5 million people by 2040, an addition of nearly 4 million new residents.

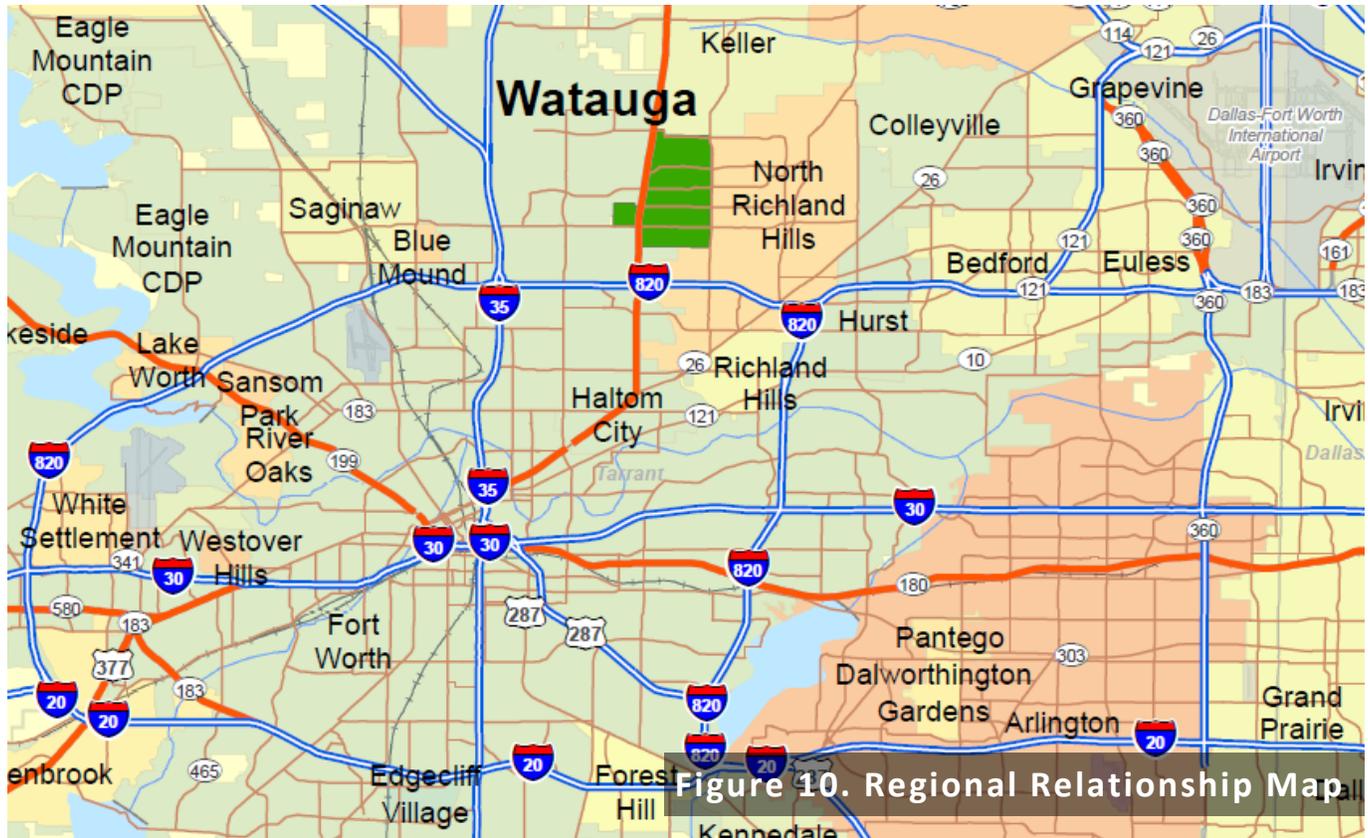
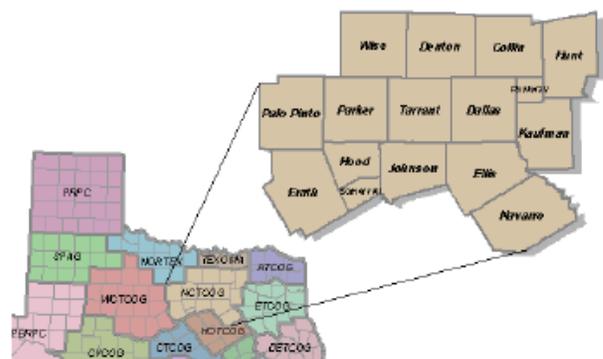


Figure 10. Regional Relationship Map

By 2030, the North Texas region is expected to grow by nearly 3 million people to an estimated population of 9.5 million



NCTCOG Region, Source: NCTCOG website

Physical Features and Constraints

Watauga’s natural and built patterns have influenced the shape and growth of the City. Understanding such features, which ultimately control and regulate City expansion, creates knowledge of how the City became built-out. These patterns are divided into two primary categories: **Natural constraints** that examine the geographical aspects of Watauga and **built constraints** that examine features that have been constructed or added to the City.

Natural Constraints

Floodplain

There is minimal floodplain within the City limits and this land is generally undevelopable or requires mitigation efforts to be considered for redevelopment and infill efforts.

Built Constraints

Surrounding Municipalities

The biggest built constraint for Watauga is the surrounding development and other municipal jurisdictions. The City is completely built out and has no room to expand or annex any land. There is not any ETJ. While this is a challenge for the City, the City staff and Council are able to focus all efforts internally on redevelopment and infill.

Roadways

Due to the constraints of build out, the roadway system in Watauga is essentially buildout as well. While there may be room for some road expansion, the general layout of the grid is already in place. Additionally, US Hwy. 377 divides a small portion of the City limits from the majority of the City.

Utility Easements

There is a large gas pipe easement running from the northwest portion of the City to the southeast portion. This constraint is unavoidable because the gas line is needed to provide necessary services. The City can evaluate the feasibility of using the easement to develop a trail to connect City-wide trail system.

Railroad

The active railroad corridor runs north to south, parallel to US Hwy. 377. This railroad corridor divides a small portion of the City limits from the majority of the City. Vehicular access is not prohibited, but the ease of access may be impacted by the daily train traffic.

Existing Land Use

Understanding the existing land use of Watauga is critical. Fully analyzing current conditions will help plan for the future. Analysis of the current uses throughout the City will reveal areas where infill or redevelopment is possible. The existing land use breakdown of the community represents a low development pattern indicative of suburban cities with populations near 20,000 to 30,000 people. Watauga’s low density residential nature should be attractive to families and retailers alike; who consider population and rooftops as a part of their site selection criteria. Single-family land uses, by far, account as the largest use at 55 percent of the total land uses. Right-of-way and streets comprise approximately 20 percent of the total area, the second largest land use, which is expected. The City is 96 percent developed and only has 4 percent of land to develop. The City will need to start focusing efforts of infill and redevelopment due to the high percentage of developed acreage and the “built-out” environment.

Table 1. Existing Land Use Breakdown

Existing Land Use	City Limits		
	Acres	%	Acres per 100 Persons
Residential			
Single-Family	1,463	55%	6.0
Multi-Family	16	1%	0.1
Non-Residential			
Parks and Open Space	115	4%	0.5
Public/Semi-Public	143	5%	0.6
Office	19	1%	0.1
Retail	160	6%	0.7
Commercial	67	3%	0.3
Equestrian	25	1%	0.1
Right-of-Way	543	20%	2.2
Total Developed Acreage			
	2,551	96%	10.5
Vacant			
	103	4%	0.4
Total Acreage			
	2,654	100%	11.0

Figure 12. Existing Land Use Breakdown

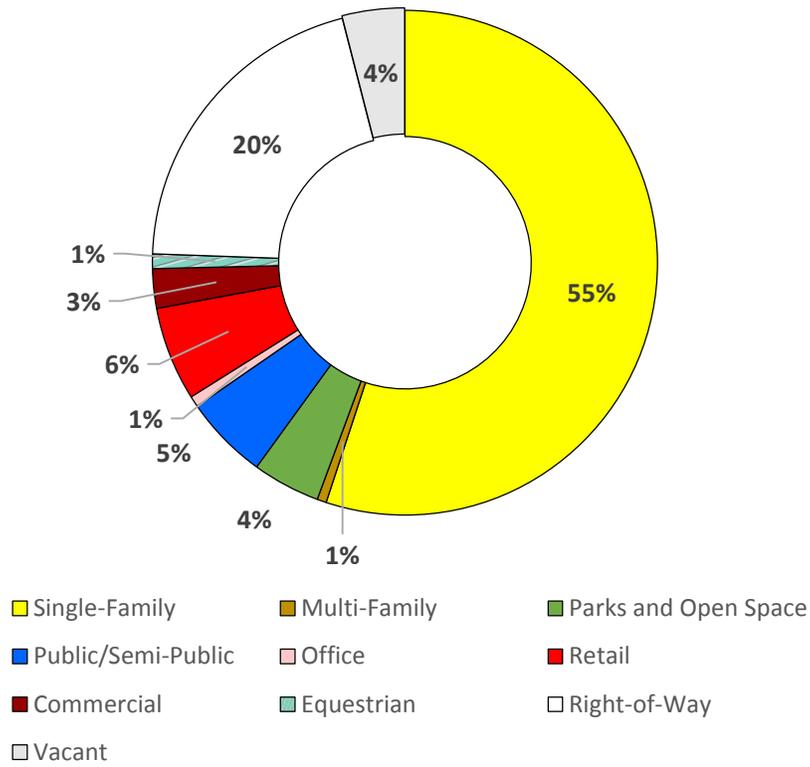


Figure 13. Developed Acreage vs. Vacant Acreage

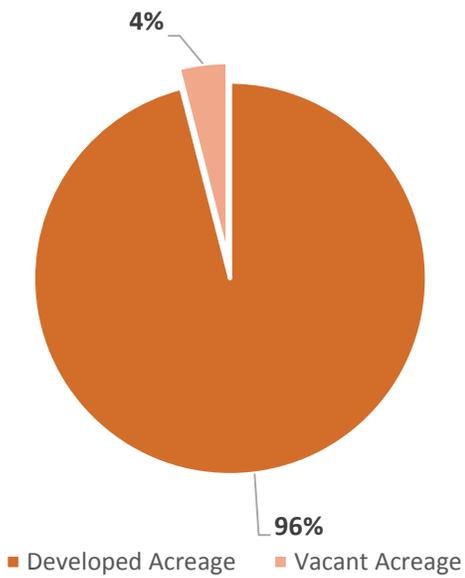
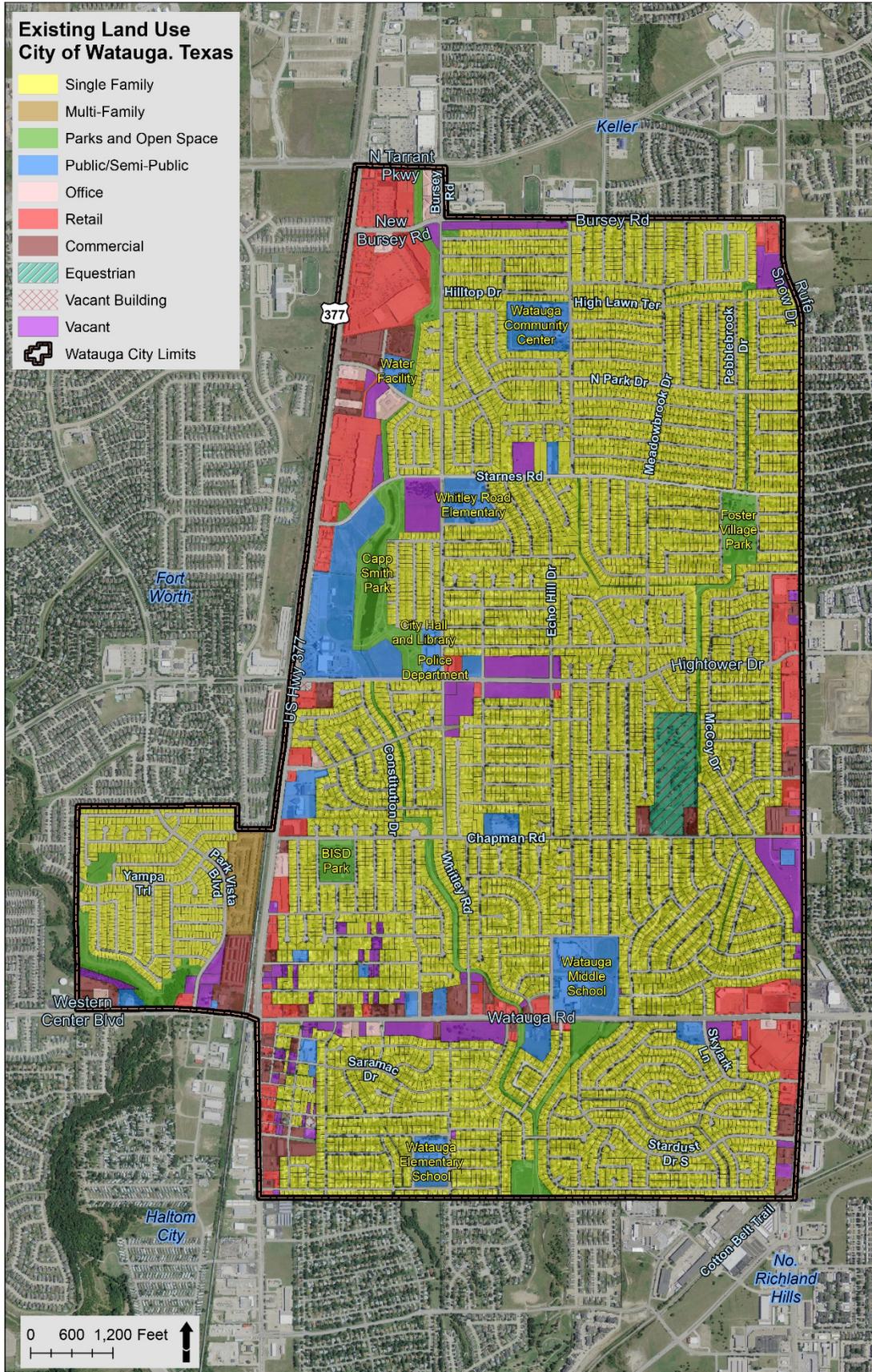


Figure 14. Existing Land Use Map



Analysis of Existing Land Use Types

Single-Family

The City is primarily single-family homes. This type of land use creates a need for city services and facilities, parks and open space, retail, and commercial uses. This land use is generally well-established and will not change uses with limited exceptions.



Multi-Family

There are 16 acres of multi-family designation located in the western portion of the City, on the west side of US Hwy. 377. This designation provides housing options for the residents of Watauga.



Parks and Open Space

The parks and open space are essential to the quality-of-life in the City. The existing parks and open spaces are evenly spread throughout the City. Most parks are City-owned, with the exception of the Birdville ISD Park. There are also parks along creeks and floodplain areas. Capp Smith Park has many outstanding features.



Public/Semi-Public

Public/Semi-Public is the third largest existing land use designation in the City. This can be attributed to the large percentage of single-family homes and the related demand for city services and facilities. The current public/semi-public designation is used for schools, the Watauga Community Center, water facilities, City Hall and Library, and police and fire stations. The current facilities are evenly distributed across the City, and the essential police and fire services are near the center of the City limits. This provides efficient access to all parts of the City.



Office

There are only 19 acres of office designation within the City and they are mostly located in the retail node along US Hwy. 377. There are a few acres of office designation along Watauga Rd. These businesses are dentistry, chiropractic, and hair salons.



Retail

Retail is the second largest existing land use designation in the City. This can be attributed to the large percentage of single-family homes and the related demand for retail and commercial services. The City is situated along US Hwy. 377, which is a vibrant retail corridor. The retail along US Hwy. 377 that is located in the City limits of Watauga is an asset to the community, because it provides tax base, shopping and dining within close proximity.



Commercial

The commercial designation is intended to provide essential services and businesses for the community. A large part of the commercial development is mixed with the retail node along US Hwy. 377. The remaining commercial acres are spread throughout the City in small pockets, generally at intersections.



Equestrian

There is approximately 25 acres of land west of McCoy Rd. and north of Chapman Rd. that is designated as equestrian. This land is home to Full Circle Riding Academy. The land use currently preserves open land and provides rural feel within the City; however, the land is private and not accessible to the public.



A tall, cylindrical water tower with a white top section. The word "WATAUGA" is written in blue, serif capital letters across the top section, with a stylized wave graphic above the letters. The tower is set against a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

WATAUGA

2 | Vision and Goals

Purpose

The intents of the vision and goals outlined within this chapter is to facilitate and encourage compact and efficient development or redevelopment patterns, thus minimizing the costs and other impacts of poor development. What every city needs is a guiding document, such as this, that provides sound, community-based and strategic development guidance for the future.

This chapter highlights Watauga's vision of goals, or guiding principles, which were created through the input and findings of a multi-dimensional public engagement process. This chapter also includes the results of the community survey, key public input themes, town hall workshop input, and Planning and Zoning (P&Z) discussions. A multitude of action items will lead to fulfilling the vision and guiding principles of this development strategy. Many of the goals highlighted in this chapter will overlap and support multiple chapters throughout this strategy, much like the key themes. The key themes emerged from community input and information received during the process, they are:

- Preserve Watauga's unique feel
- Provide new housing options and improve existing neighborhood areas
- Improve existing commercial areas
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity across the City
- Enhance and protect Watauga's community character/identity
- Provide community facilities and amenities, as well as events
- Ensure quality roadway maintenance and projects
- Create community focal points/destinations by attracting unique commercial/retail developments



One Watauga Guiding Principles

The guiding principles are overarching goals intended to promote Watauga’s values, desires, and hopes for the future. Building on direction from the City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and resident input, the following was carefully created to guide the development of this strategy. The guiding principles are high-level statements that set a general direction. Each development strategy topic has defined goals that are directly related to action items in subsequent chapters.

Land Use

Ensure that future development is orderly and efficient, compatible with existing land uses and enhances the overall quality of life.

Responsibly maximize land by providing housing opportunities for all ages, fostering an environment for local commerce, introducing mixed use and promoting recreational uses.

Create unique destinations in Watauga.

Ensure that a high quality of life is maintained and that residents and visitors are able to live, work and play in the community.

Economic Development

Provide new growth opportunities by reimagining, repurposing, redeveloping and reusing underutilized areas.

Focus on attraction and retention of employers and local businesses.

Encourage the development of non-residential services to enhance the tax base and meet the needs of Watauga residents.

Transportation

Ensure a safe and efficient roadway network for current and future needs.

Support an improved pedestrian circulation system.

Coordinate regional transportation system planning efforts to ensure a proactive community response to issues affecting the City.

Neighborhood and Community Livability

Provide quality and attractive neighborhoods along with desirable housing options.

Improve existing neighborhoods and invest in their long term viability.

Ensure Watauga is distinguishable from adjacent communities.

Encourage quality non-residential development that enhances Watauga’s visual appearance.

Public Involvement

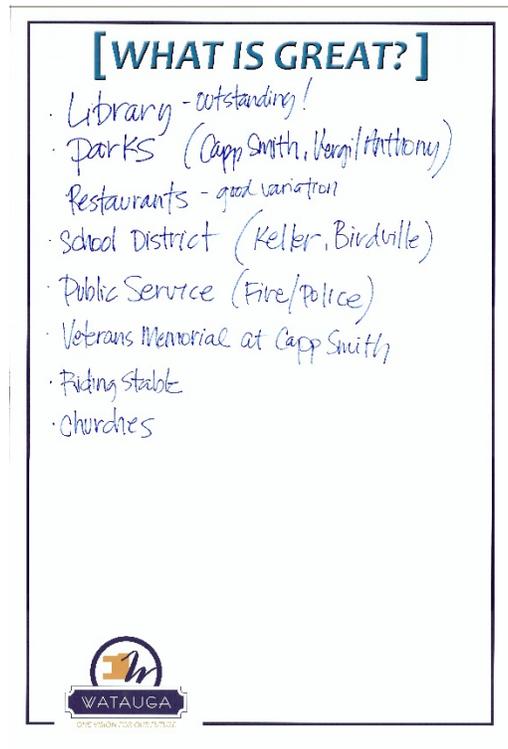
Great planning involves the public and community stakeholders from the beginning of the process, building the strategy on local ideas and values, and creating a sense of ownership in the final strategy. Strategies that have the most public participation are tailored to and owned by the community. The *One Watauga Development Strategy* is derived from a variety of public engagement methods that included P&Z workshops, Town Hall meetings, kid and senior citizen workshops, and an online survey. The City staff also played a vital role in promoting the planning process through social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, email notifications, e-newsletters, and in local publications.



Planning and Zoning Workshops

The existing P&Z Commission served as the advisory taskforce from the beginning of the planning process. The P&Z Commission makes recommendations to City Council to guide land development through zoning, as well as platting and subdividing. Using the existing P&Z Commission to advise the process, directly immersed these key decision makers in building the strategy's foundation and future aspirations—thus, it is more likely to be successfully utilized in everyday recommendations and development decisions.

The P&Z Commission was responsible for overseeing the planning process, formulating development patterns, verifying issues and challenges facing the City, and working with the consulting team to prioritize recommendations. Throughout the planning process, two workshops were held with P&Z members to discuss several major topics, including: economic development, transportation and circulation, neighborhood character and livability. The strategy's key themes were cultivated from many of these focused discussions. At the conclusion of the planning process, the Commission ultimately presented and recommended the final draft strategy to the City Council to begin the adoption process. Of course, implementation of the strategy is a long-term strategy and will require steadfast commitment from staff, citizens and elected officials.

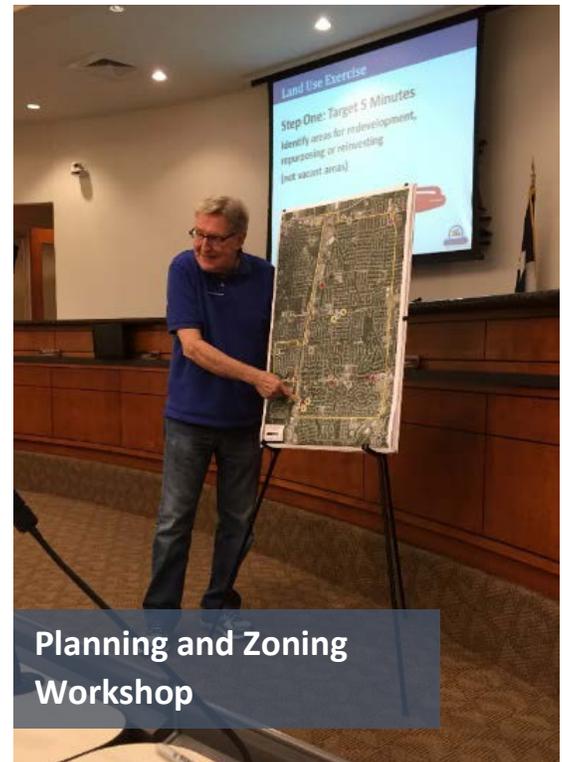


Land Use Scenarios

A land use exercise was conducted with members of the P&Z Commission. The purpose of this exercise was to gather preliminary thoughts on the types of land use that should be considered within Watauga and where those types of land uses should be located.

Attendees were divided into two groups and were given the chance to define land use strategies and create a land use plan for the community. Following, each group presented highlights from their maps to other meeting participants. Each group explained their reasoning behind why certain land uses were located in certain areas and gave innovative ideas on how to improve the overall quality of life. Feedback obtained from meeting participants contributed significantly towards the creation of the Future Land Use Plan and recommendations.

While each land use scenario was different, general consensus existed. New mixed use sites were one of the most consistent and most vocalized land use desires. Members also brought up the need to explore redevelopment areas and new housing options tailored towards seniors or young professionals. Other emphasized uses included upscale business opportunities, outdoor dining, music venues and family-oriented entertainment.



Town Hall Meetings

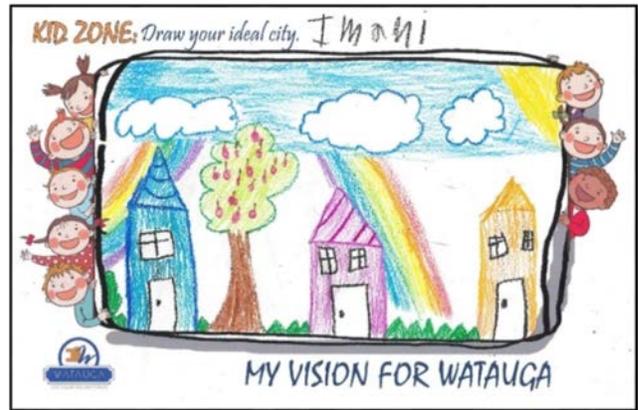
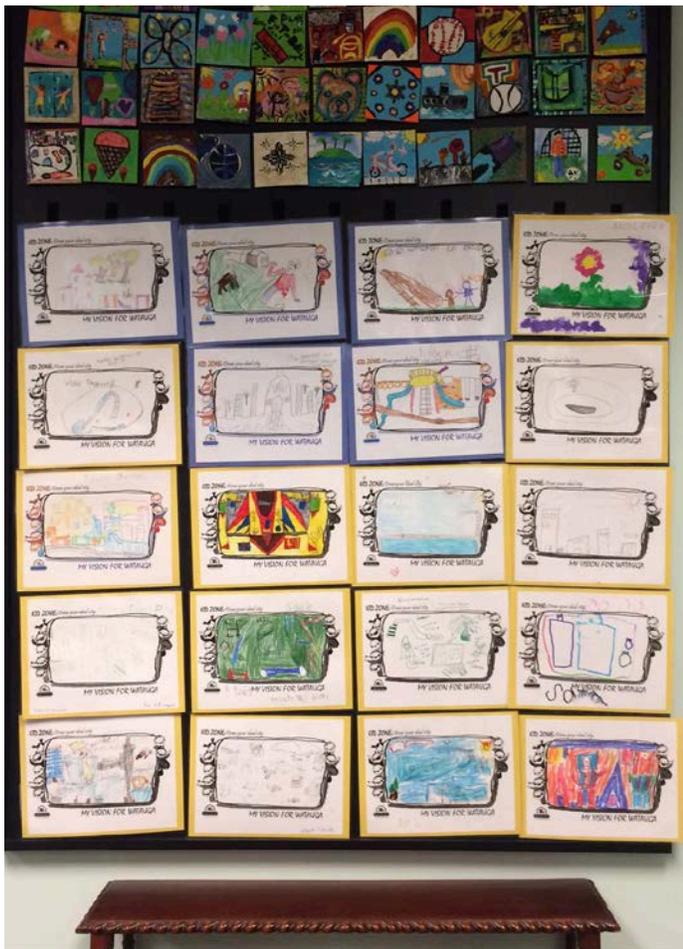
To solicit resident input, City staff advertised a town hall meeting through a variety of platforms. Approximately 75 residents engaged in planning and visioning process by participating in the town hall meeting on November 9, 2015 at the Watauga Community Center. Citizens were asked to identify areas of concern or interest and describe their vision of Watauga in 10 to 20 years with input boards stationed around the room. Meeting participants engaged in large and small group discussions to identify the strengths and opportunities that Watauga has, and the challenges and threats that it faces. Residents discussed technical resources, key issues, and existing and future desires. Handwritten input from the residents include: “A place to walk in daylight or night safely,” that attracts residents and visitors for an experience “that none of the surrounding suburbs can offer.” Residents provided a number of concepts to improve the City’s existing roadways and pedestrian circulation. Additionally, residents voiced interest in items such as:

- More sidewalks, trails, parks and green spaces
- Improved school circulation
- Enhanced buffers between land uses
- Increased architectural standards/requirements
- Tree-lined streets and highways
- Entertainment along Hwy. 377
- More restaurants
- Mixed-use development that is walkable
- Senior living options
- Signage regulations



Kid Zone

An informal drawing exercise was provided during the November 9th Town Hall meeting and also was provided to local schools. Children and their specific needs can often be set aside when faced with intricate municipal operations and functions, thus it was important to give the younger generations an avenue to express their desires and preferences as potential future residents of Watauga. A coloring exercise was given to each student, on which they were asked to draw their ideal city. The results of the exercise were extraordinary and touched on topics like housing, parks, and recreation. Specific requests included more rivers, more housing, a swimming pool, and a water playground.



Interactive Survey

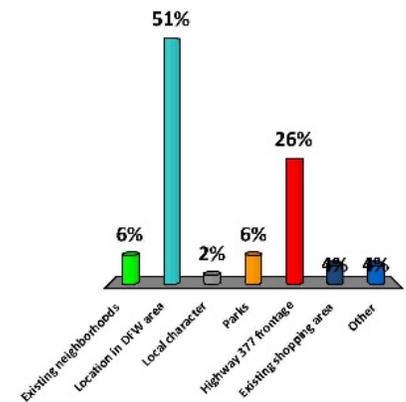
As part of the town hall meeting, attendees participated in a polling exercise with a series of visioning and issue questions and visual preference images. Input was gathered by electronic remotes from each audience member and results are displayed in real time and recorded for later assessment. The images illustrate different land use types, strategies, and visual elements within any particular built environment. The survey results are used to quantify exactly what types of developments are appropriate. In addition, general questions about the city, quality of life and road were polled. Although the polling exercise is not necessarily scientific in nature, it is an effective method of receiving attitudinal-based input. Survey results include the following highlights:

- ‘Home Conditions’ and ‘Unightly/Aesthetics’ were top responses for the greatest issue facing existing neighborhoods.
- Traditional garden style apartments scored the lowest for desirable housing types.
- Mixed-use style housing scored 45 percent as ‘like’ or ‘strongly like’ categories and 41 percent in the ‘dislike’ or ‘strongly dislike’ categories.
- 52 percent of attendees scored Watauga as having ‘fair’ rating in terms of general appearance, only 24 percent scored Watauga as having ‘poor’ rating in terms of general appearance.
- 69 percent of attendees agreed Watauga needs increased commercial development standards.
- 93 percent of attendees would support ‘the reuse, repurposing or redevelopment of older shopping centers.’
- ‘Mixed-use developments’ were identified as the development type missing the most in Watauga.
- Attendees identified ‘Rufe Snow’, ‘Chapman Road’ and ‘neighborhood streets’ as where major road improvements are needed most.
- ‘More sidewalks’ were identified by 58 percent of the attendees as their number one pedestrian circulation need.
- Roundabout street intersections scored 52 percent as ‘like’ or ‘strongly like’ categories and 42 percent in the ‘dislike’ or ‘strongly dislike’ categories.

1. What is the City’s greatest asset?

1. Existing neighborhoods
2. Location in DFW area
3. Local character
4. Parks
5. Highway 377 frontage
6. Existing shopping area
7. Other

Survey Slide



Small Discussion/Focus Groups

Another form of gaining valuable public input is through focus groups—small homogeneous groups that interact with a facilitator to discuss a specific concern or set of issues and provide feedback. Focus groups are most useful in getting information from certain subsets of the overall community, such as specific demographic groups like children and senior citizens. The City hosted informal focus group interviews during November and December of 2015 with elementary school children and with senior citizens from the Watauga Senior Center. The goal of these focus groups was to assess the issues each homogeneous group faced in terms of economic development, land use, and growth. This helps to get a clearer understanding of what can be addressed via the development strategy process.

Watauga Senior Adult Center Workshop

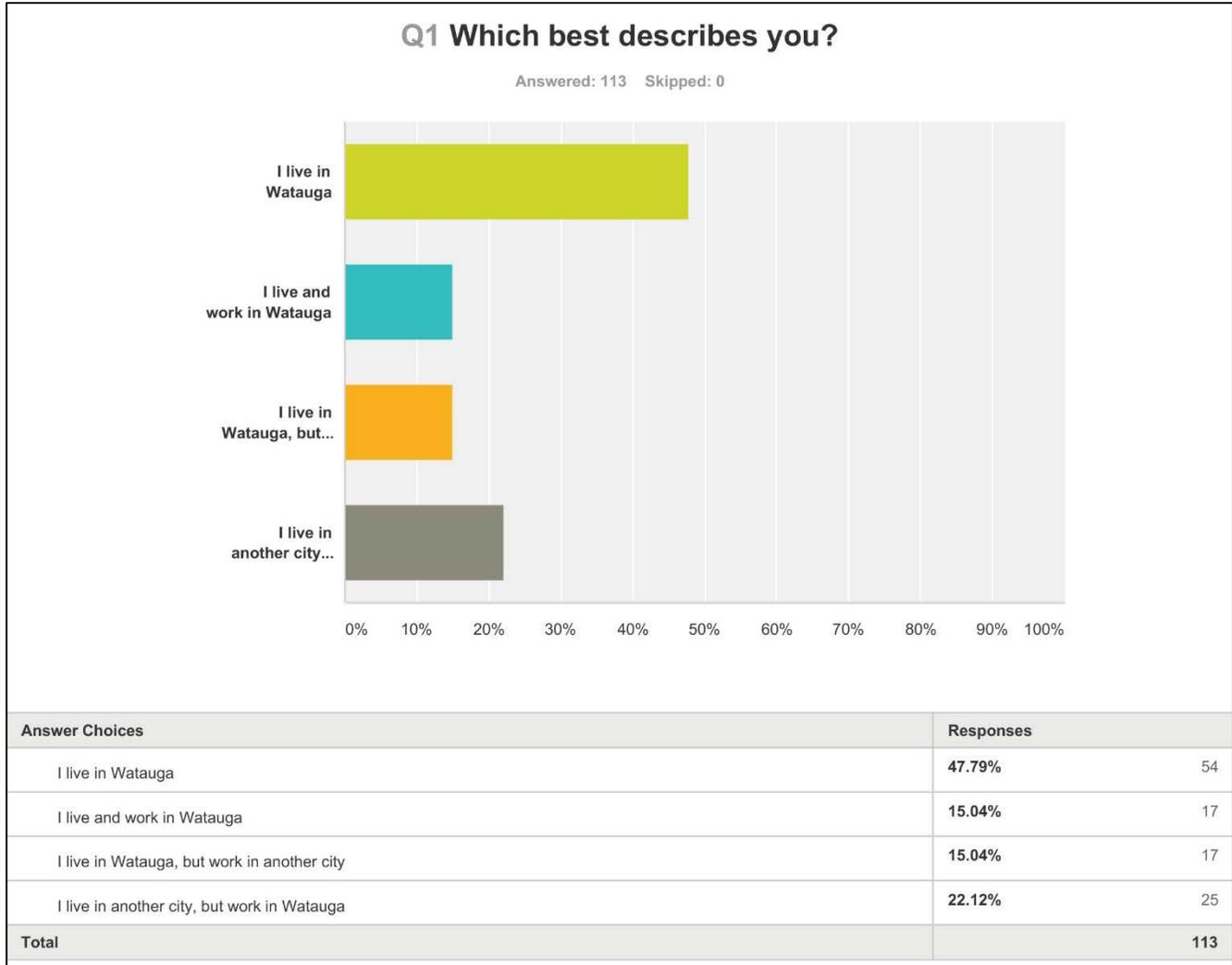
Senior citizens at the Watauga Senior Adult Center participated in a focus group with City staff. Many of the things mentioned during the dialogue were regarding residents' preferred uses, activities and concerns, which provided valuable clues about existing mobility and safety issues, amenities, recreation opportunities, and public services. City staff documented the group's commentary to present to the P&Z Commission so as to help enhance decisions based on community input. City staff listed the following items from the discussion:

- Quiet Zone Railroad crossings are dangerous, and normal railroad crossings should be restored
- Bus/transit service to Alliance retail and medical centers
- A bonfire or campfire location in Capp Smith Park [for the overnight fishing camp]
- Entertainment options, such as a movie theatre
- Cafeteria-style restaurants
- A water park
- School Zone locations at city-wide school campuses should have consistent enforcement times and durations



Online Survey

A 16-question survey was posted and linked to the City’s website. 113 individuals answered the survey. The results of this survey are as follows:



The responses revealed that a higher proportion of long-time residents rather than newer residents participated in the survey—nearly 30 percent of those who answered have lived in Watauga for more than 20 years, while another 21 percent have lived here between 11 to 20 years. Nearly 30 percent of the respondents have lived in Watauga from zero to ten years. The responses given throughout the survey varied little despite the range of ages, years spent living in the community and quantity of answers. Some of the questions asked in the survey were:

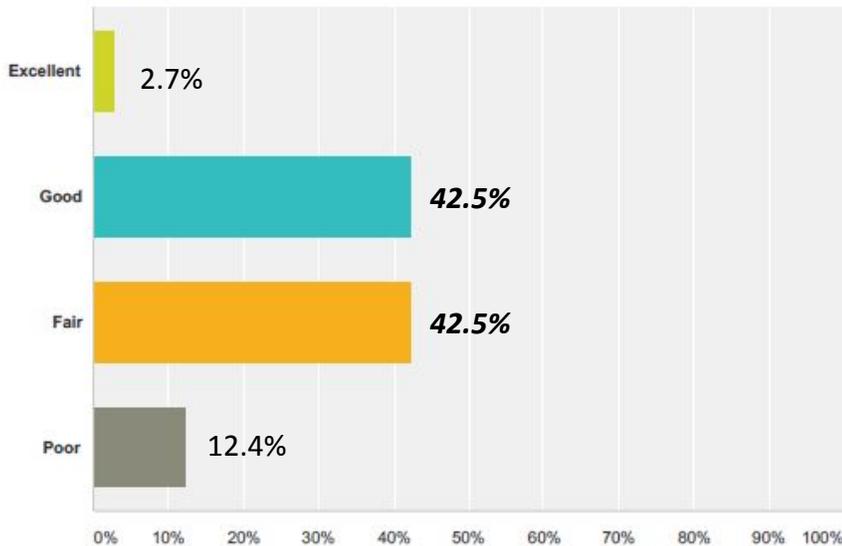
- What was the most important factor for you when you decided to move to Watauga?
- What makes Watauga distinguishable from surrounding communities?
- How would you rate Watauga in terms of overall general appearance?
- What are the two things you like most about Watauga today?
- What would you consider to be Watauga’s greatest opportunity for future improvements?

Highlight: Online Survey Results

45.3%

Of respondents moved to Watauga for the selection of housing/housing prices

How would you rate Watauga in terms of overall general appearance?



What makes Watauga distinguishable from surrounding communities?

- Parks (21 percent)
- Neighborhoods (13 percent)
- Shopping (5.5 percent)
- Schools (0.92 percent)
- Not Sure (34 percent)
- Other (26 percent)

Small-town feel
Affordable housing prices
Location
Watauga Public Library
Safe environment

43.8%

Of respondents consider Watauga's location in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area to be its greatest asset

What would you consider the greatest single issue facing Watauga today?

35.6%

Of respondents chose neighborhoods or housing conditions

21.2%

Of respondents chose infrastructure (i.e., roads, water, sewer, utilities)

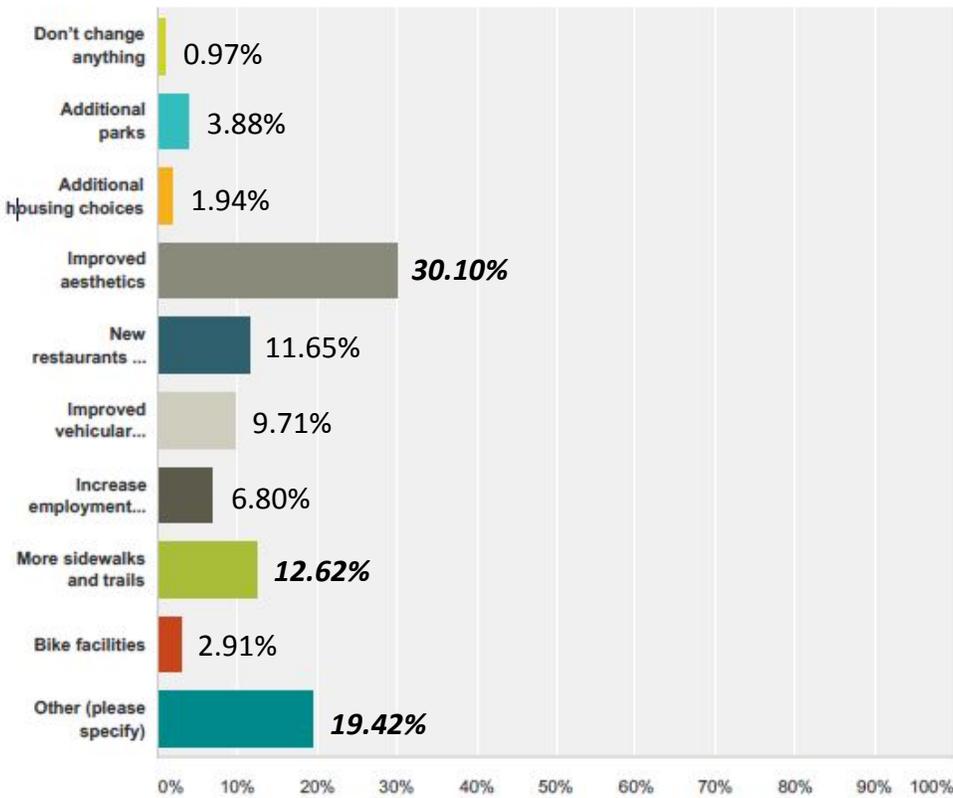
45.6%

Of respondents consider the **redevelopment of existing areas** to be Watauga's greatest opportunity for future improvements



US Hwy. 377

What is your number one desire for Watauga?



- Other (19.42 percent)
 - Repair existing roads
 - More recreation
 - Improved aesthetics
 - Crime prevention/control
 - City pool/water park
 - Town Center/destination
 - Code enforcement
 - Larger community center
 - Parks, sidewalks, bike trails
 - Restaurants and entertainment
 - Efficient spending
 - Economic development

Things liked most in Watauga ...	Things liked least in Watauga...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks (Capp Smith Park) • Location in DFW Metroplex • Neighborhoods • Library • Small-town charm and community character • Friendly, diverse people • Affordable housing • Shopping and restaurants • Community events • Safety • Emergency services • Accessible • Schools • Development pattern/proximity of land uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a lot of city-wide events • Condition and maintenance of older neighborhoods • US Hwy. 377 traffic • Lack of sidewalks • Not enough shopping • Road conditions • Appearance of the community in a few areas • No public pool or water park • Not enough signage denoting Watauga limits • Perceived rise in crime

How important or unimportant are the following to you in terms of Watauga's quality of life?

Amenities	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	No Comment
Appearance of the City	65%	34%	1%	-	-
Safe and easy to walk	61.9%	35.2%	1%	1.9%	-
An effective roadway network	57.1%	38.1%	2.9%	1.9%	-
Parks and trail system	44.7%	51.5%	0.9%	2.9%	-
Recreation centers	39.4%	44.2%	14.4%	2%	-
Enhancing the City's identity	39.1%	41.9%	14.3%	4.7%	-
Local retailers and specialty shops	36.5%	54.8%	7.7%	1%	-
Establishing community focal points	35.2%	44.8%	15.2%	3.8%	1%
National retailers	32.7%	45.2%	19.2%	2.9%	-
Availability of single family homes	32.4%	53.3%	12.3%	1%	1%
Employment opportunities	32.4%	52.4%	12.4%	2.8%	-
Mixed use development	30.8%	34.6%	24%	8.7%	1.9%
Public art	12.6%	44.7%	30.1%	11.6%	1%
Availability of townhomes/condos	5.8%	13.5%	43.7%	33%	4%
Availability of multifamily homes	5.7%	10.5%	41%	39.1%	3.7%

Major Opportunities Open for Watauga

Watauga is in a fortunate position having seen the benefits of investments such as Capp Smith Park, the Watauga Community Center, City Hall and the Library. While the current state of the City is much better than what similar first tier suburb cities are facing throughout the country, Watauga still faces many challenges and many actions remain. The following items are recognized as a conclusion of community input and analysis. Each item identifies a series of new opportunities that raise critical questions that must be addressed to reach the community's vision.

Increasing Tax Base to Support Community Desires

Citizens of Watauga are very proud of and get tremendous use from the existing parks and public facilities. Properly accommodating increases to commercial areas will be imperative to maintain or decrease the current tax rates. Tax generating non-residential uses can help to ensure public amenities continue to serve the community and help to expand upon existing facilities.



Community Center

Imagining Changes to Underutilized Places

Like many cities, Watauga has areas of older shopping centers and homes showing their age. Many of the developments constructed after World War II are now more than 50 years old. Some of these buildings have passed their expected useful life. People want different things now from their homes, offices and stores than they did when these buildings were constructed. Since some of these uses are in desirable locations, it makes sense to re-examine land uses, locations and redevelopment potential.

Enhancing Circulation

Traffic congestion and roadway conditions were key issues repeated throughout the public engagement process. New roadways are not the focus, as Watauga's roadway network is well defined by existing major corridors. Yet, improvements to these existing facilities are desired and could include lane expansions, turning improvements, and access management. In addition, the community overwhelmingly supported an increased trail system, crosswalks, sidewalk improvements and new sidewalk facilities.

Ensuring Quality Development, Identity and Being a Recognizable City

Every community has its own character based on its history, the design styles of its neighborhoods and public places or its natural setting. Character is what helps set one community apart from another. It's one of the reasons people feel connected to the place where they live. Watauga must remain as a distinguishable City from its neighbors. Design elements should include increased wayfinding, gateway and district signage, special districts, streetscapes and design guidelines. Working in concert, these described techniques can help to provide a positive memory of Watauga that increases visitor perceptions and their overall experience.



Community Signage

Improving Neighborhoods

Of Watauga's existing land uses, 55 percent are comprised of single family housing. Of Watauga's existing housing stock, 75 percent of the homes were built before 1990. As existing neighborhoods continue to age, property conditions, home values and identity will remain key issues for home owners. The City must find new ways to help residents invest in their properties while maintaining desirable locations to live and raise families. A multi-tool approach that includes code enforcement, public investment and private-lead initiatives is necessary.

Key Infill Sites

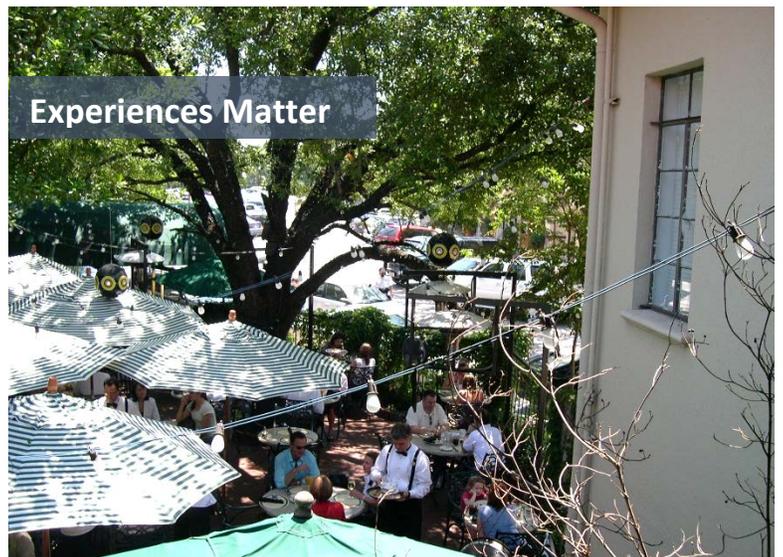
As Watauga approaches full build out, the remaining 100 acres of vacant land will be a key focus. These areas only make up approximately four percent of the City, yet hold the potential to dramatically change Watauga's image, housing choices and to attract new business types. These vacant areas will need to work in concert with infill development and redevelopment as important strategic actions for the future.

Corridors

The growth and future development along the US Hwy. 377 corridor, Watauga Rd., Rufe Snow Dr. and key east-west thoroughfares will continue to impact the local economy and physical development of the City. Visibility and accessibility, by various modes, will be important considerations as businesses continue to seek locations along this major corridor. Beautification and branding along the corridors will also enhance the perception of the City.

New Retail, Entertainment and Industry

Citizens have expressed the desire for something new and different in Watauga. This not only includes increased job diversity but also consumer preferences. As new and different types of industry seek to locate in the City, it will be important to have a variety of different site options available that provide mobility, accessibility and visibility within Watauga. Larger societal trends show the upcoming millennial generation's preference to live and work in authentic urban communities. These communities promote a unique identity and offer a range of daytime and nighttime uses centered on creative and dynamic experiences. Watauga must find a way to build on its market's strength while providing unique options to local residents and visitors. This effort will help Watauga to remain attractive to new generations.





CITY HALL

7105



3 | Future Land Use

Each place that is represented on a map can also be compared to each individual decision that the City makes with regard to land use; these individual decisions can either lead to, or away from, the City attaining its vision. To serve as the City's long-range road map, the Future Land Use Plan establishes an overall framework for the preferred development pattern of the City based principally on balanced, compatible, and diversified land uses. The Future Land Use Map should ultimately reflect the City's long-range statement of public policy and it should be used as a basis for future development decisions. The Future Land Use Plan is not a zoning map, which addresses specific development requirements on individual parcels. The zoning map should be guided by the graphic depiction of the City's preferred long-range development pattern as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Although it is one of several components of this development strategy, the significance of the Future Land Use Plan text and map cannot be overstated. The Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a comprehensive blueprint of the City's vision for its future land use pattern. Specifically, the Future Land Use Plan designates various areas within the City for particular land uses, based principally on the specific land use policies outlined herein.

Development patterns have an intrinsic effect on the characteristics of a city, laying the foundation for where certain activities will take place. Identifying appropriate locations for housing, retail, and commercial land uses is critical to ensuring compatibility and preserving quality of life for residents. Additionally, land use patterns help drive the economic engines of a city. Understanding the interrelatedness of certain activities, such as retail and commercial uses, or manufacturing and warehousing, and identifying how these businesses work together can secure the foundation for future growth. Business requires land and appropriate land uses in close proximity and the same is true for residential housing.

Flexibility could be given to coordinate future land uses with Chapter 4 Economic Development efforts to promote redevelopment and reinvestment at key locations. As an example, such flexibility could include the expansion of mixed use developments in older shopping centers.

Vacant Land in Watauga



Future Land Use Types Defined

The following are brief descriptions of each of the land use types portrayed on the Future Land Use Plan Map. These descriptions are general characteristics that define the land use areas.

Low Density Residential

Single-family detached residential structures are examples of low density residential uses. This category refers to single-family areas with densities similar to the majority of Watauga’s current neighborhoods. In terms of development density, approximately two to four dwelling units per acre are appropriate for this category but does include existing one acre and larger lots. Typically speaking, lot sizes are at least 6,000 square feet and currently range between 7,000 and 7,500 square feet. Low density residential should not be utilized for non-residential uses.

Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential is indicative of smaller single-family detached lots and attached dwelling units, such as Duplexes, Townhomes or Condominiums. Generally speaking, medium density residential areas will have densities between 4.5 and 8 dwelling units per acre. Medium density residential is recommended to be located within close proximity to other mixed residential or mixed land uses to ensure land use compatibility. Medium density residential area is intended to accommodate the City’s need for diversity of housing choices, such that Watauga can offer a full life cycle housing options. Typically speaking, lot sizes are 6,000 square feet or less.

High Density Residential

High density residential land use is characterized by the existing apartment-type units in attached living complexes. This land use category is generally 24 dwelling units per acre.

Local Office/Retail/Commercial

This land use is suitable for light retail, service uses and professional office activities that aim to meet the needs of residents in the vicinity. Building designs should be smaller in scale, typically one or two story and require visibility from roadways. Development should orient towards local traffic, but also allow for a comfortable pedestrian environment. Landscaping is encouraged to keep the area attractive, functional and minimize negative impacts on nearby uses. Uses may include specialty retail, convenience stores, neighborhood retail, small sized restaurants, and services such as small professional office, financial, legal, and insurance.

Regional Retail/Commercial

This designation is intended for non-residential activities that aim to meet the needs of both local and regional residents. This category is associated with major road corridors such as US Hwy. 377 and major intersections. Thus, areas suitable for this designation likely rely on significant daily traffic volumes of both commuters and passerby trips, making the locations particularly attractive for retail and commercial uses. A retail center would be suitable in this land use designation that includes a combination of larger box stores, medium box stores and associated pad sites for uses, such as restaurants and retailers. Banks, hotels and other highway-related commercial services are also appropriate within the district. Building designs should be larger in scale with unique architecture. Development in this area should be unique and high-quality, creating a destination area to attract visitors to Watauga. Regional retail shopping centers should receive high priority within this district. Retail establishments help to generate sales tax for the community, which, in turn, can be used to provide higher level services for residents.

Mixed Use

Areas with this land use designation are intended for a mixture of non-residential and residential land uses. They are referred to as mixed use, because it is envisioned that these areas would be integrated developments of retail, public, office and entertainment, with a residential component. Mixed use areas are intended to provide flexibility for the City and the development community for innovative, unique, and sustainable development to occur. Many of these areas could include housing for seniors or younger generations. Walkable connections to shopping and dining should be key components of the mixed-use areas. A well-thought-out, master planned approach is needed to make certain these development types are coordinated with surrounding developments. Mixed-use design should be oriented around the pedestrian. Buildings should be placed near the front property line and should be oriented towards the street. Additionally, much of the mixed use designation will be located in small pockets. There are two types of mixed use – vertical and horizontal. Vertical mixed use incorporates multiple uses in one building on different floors. For example, a building could have shops and dining on the first floor and residential and office on the remaining floors. Horizontal mixed use combines single-use buildings on one area with a range of uses.

Parks and Open Space

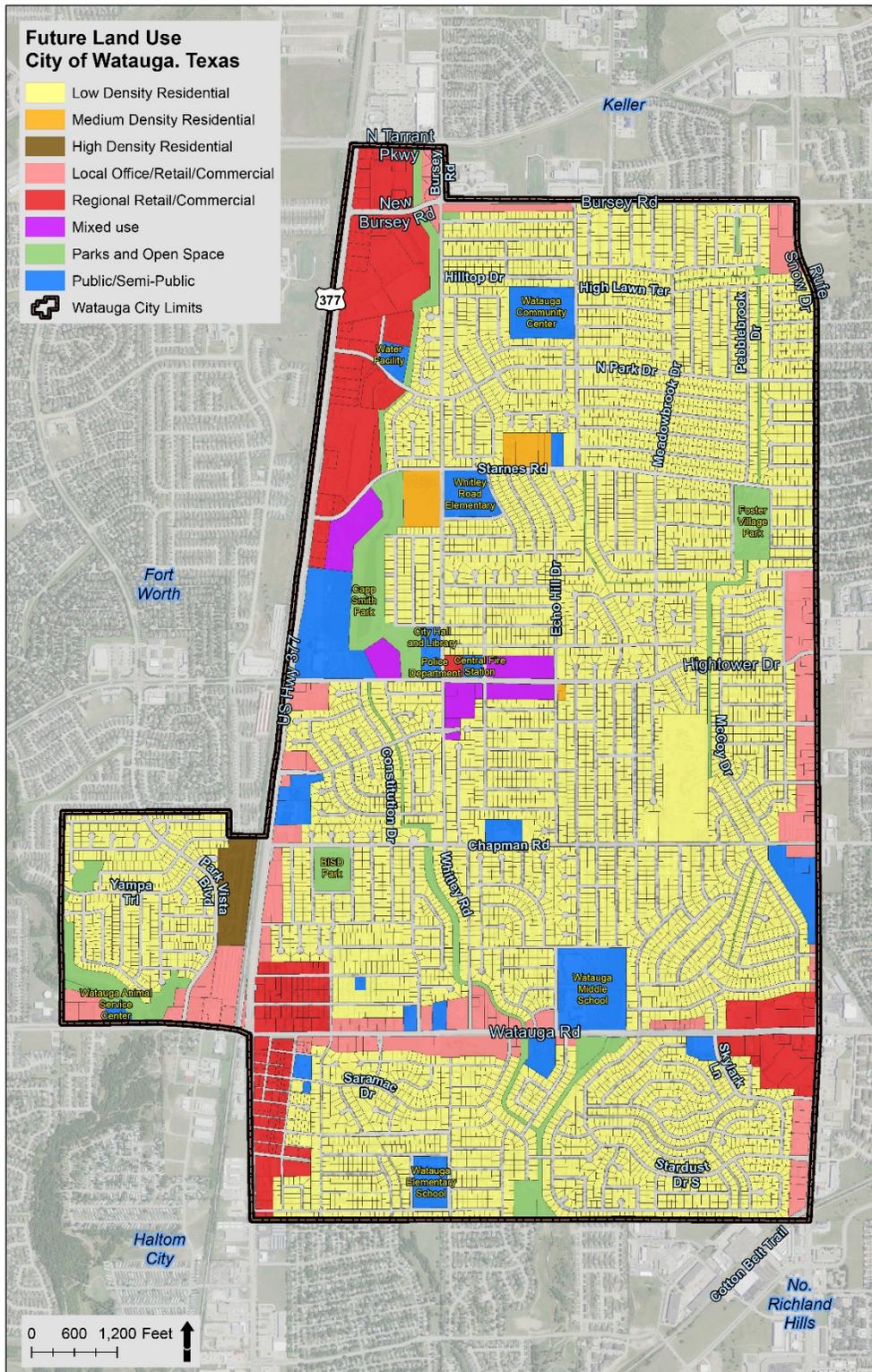
Areas with this land use designation are representative of parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces that are currently in existence or planned. However, parks and open spaces are permitted within any area and are expected to increase with future population. In addition, existing drainage ways and greenbelts are illustrated with this category in association with future trail opportunities.

Public/Semi-Public

This designation is representative of uses that are governmental, institutional, or religious in nature. Public/semi-public may include community facilities, fire and police facilities, schools, churches, and any additional land used by the city for storage or utilities. These uses are generally permitted within any area; therefore, the areas shown on the Future Land Use Plan map include the uses that are currently in existence.

Future Land Use Map

Figure 15. Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Projections

Figure 16. Future Land Use Projections

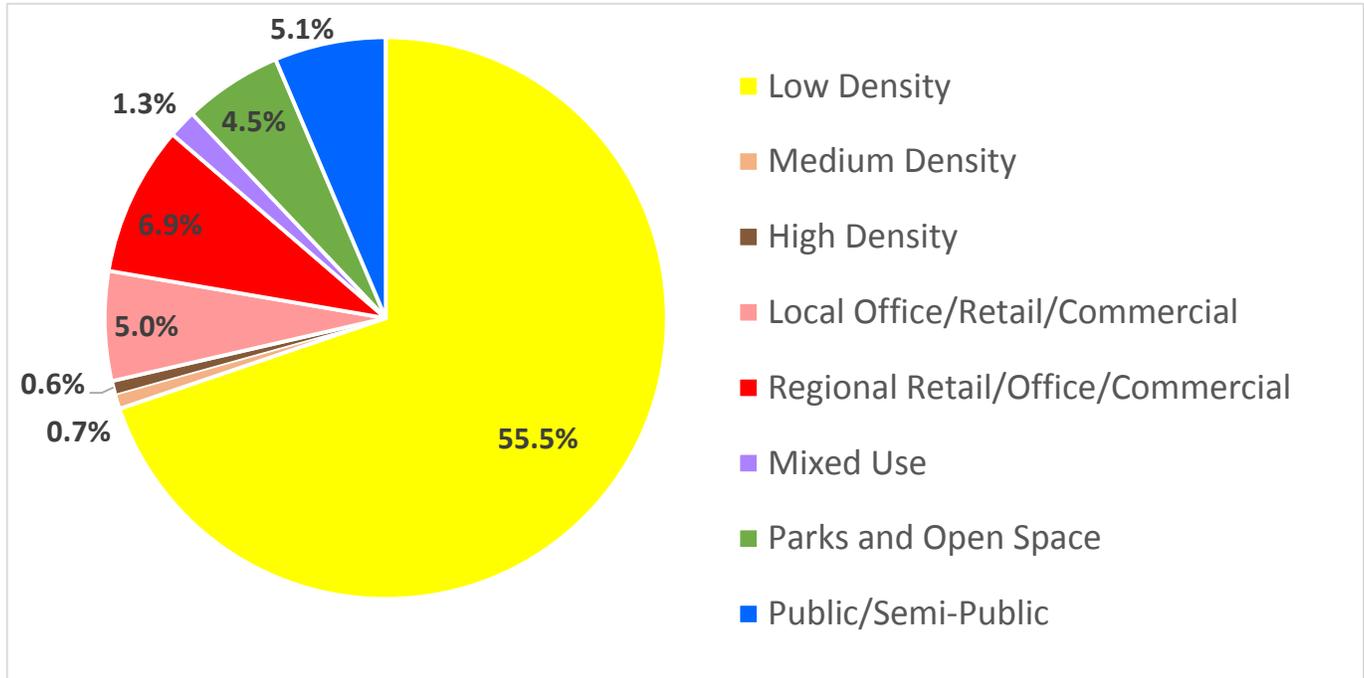


Table 2. Future Land Use Breakdown

Future Land Use	Watauga City Limits		
	Acres	%	Acres per 100 Persons
Residential			
Low Density	1,474	55.5%	5.9
Medium Density	17	0.7%	0.1
High Density	16	0.6%	0.1
Non Residential			
Local Office/Retail/Commercial	133	5.0%	0.5
Regional Retail/Office/Commercial	182	6.9%	0.7
Mixed Use	34	1.3%	0.1
Parks and Open Space	120	4.5%	0.5
Public/Semi-Public	135	5.1%	0.5
Total Developed Acreage	2,111	79.5%	8.5
Right-of-Way	543	20.5%	2.2
Total Acreage	2,654	100.0%	10.6

Source: FNI Data / *based on future 2026 population of 24,920 at a 0.5% growth rate

Future Population

Ultimate Population Capacity

Ultimate capacity, or buildout, is the maximum number of residents the City can support given its current City limits and ETJ; however, Watauga is landlocked and does not have an ETJ. The City has presently reached 94 percent of its buildout, a population of approximately 24,525 persons. This means the City can add about 935 new residents to its existing population. Approximately 36 acres of land in the community remains to be developed with residential uses. Since the City is landlocked and there is a small amount of vacant land, future population growth will come from in-and-out migration and infill/redevelopment opportunities. Growth rates may decline or remain the same once ultimate buildout is reached. To guide the City in planning for how many people may ultimately need to be supported, an assessment of Watauga’s ultimate population is provided within **Table 3**.

Table 3. Ultimate Population Capacity Estimates

Residential Land Use	Vacant Acres	DUA ⁽¹⁾	Occ. Rate ⁽²⁾	PPH ⁽³⁾	% Residential	Future Projected		
						Housing Units	Households	Population
Low Density	17	4.0	96.9%	2.82	100%	67	65	184
Medium Density	4	8.0	96.9%	3.32	100%	30	29	95
High Density	0	24.0	96.9%	3.32	100%	0	0	0
Mixed Use	34	24.0	96.9%	3.32	25%	204	198	656
Ultimate Capacity within Vacant Areas						301	292	935
Current (2015) City Limit Population Estimate						2,345	2,272	23,590
Ultimate Population Capacity						2,646	2,564	24,525

Source: U.S. Census & FNI Data / (1) Dwelling Unit per Acre (Net Acreage) / (2) Occupancy Rate - 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04) / (3) Person per Household - 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (DP04)

Population Projections

Population projections are based on past growth rates. Watauga is very close to buildout; therefore, the projected growth rates are shown at a range of conservative growth rates from 0.2 to 1 percent. Since the City is near buildout, growth rates will slow down or decline once the ultimate population is reached. At a growth rate of 1 percent, the City will reach buildout around 2020. At a slower growth rate of 0.2 percent, the City will reach buildout closer to 2030.

Table 4. Growth Rate Projections Estimates

	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	1.0%
Current	23,590	23,590	23,590	23,590
2016	23,637	23,708	23,779	23,826
2017	23,684	23,826	23,969	24,064
2018	23,732	23,946	24,161	24,305
2019	23,779	24,065	24,354	24,548
2020	23,827	24,186	24,549	24,793
2021	23,874	24,307	24,745	25,041
2022	23,922	24,428	24,943	25,292
2023	23,970	24,550	25,143	25,545
2024	24,018	24,673	25,344	25,800
2025	24,066	24,796	25,547	26,058
2026	24,114	24,920	25,751	26,319
2027	24,162	25,045	25,957	26,582
2028	24,211	25,170	26,165	26,848
2029	24,259	25,296	26,374	27,116
2030	24,308	25,423	26,585	27,387

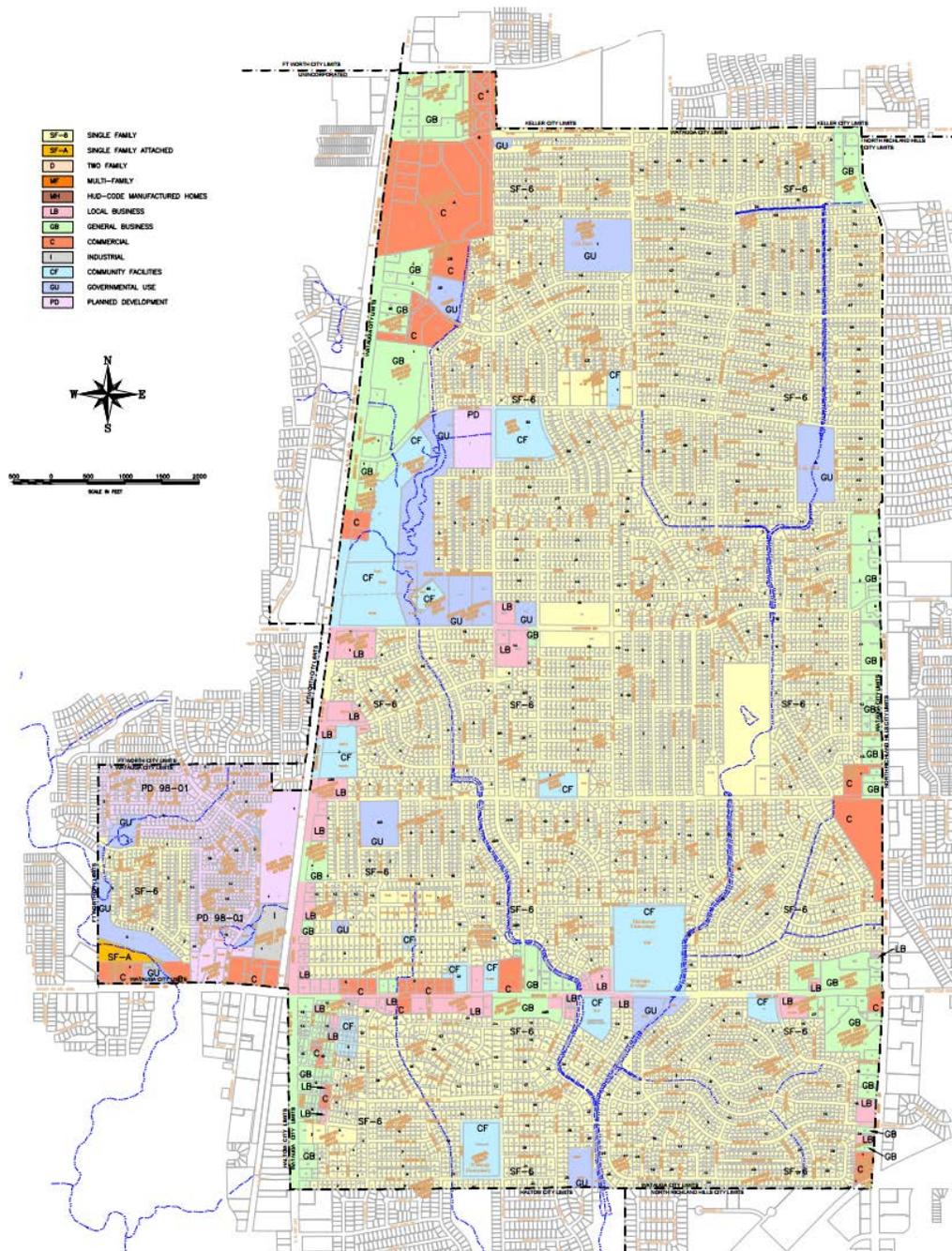
Source: FNI Data

Zoning and the Future Land Use Map

The City's zoning map is shown in **Figure 17**. A zoning map should reflect the Future Land Use Map to the fullest extent possible. It is important to note that the Future Land Use Map is not a zoning map, which legally regulates specific development requirements on individual parcels. Rather, the zoning map should be guided by the graphic depiction of the City's preferred long-range development pattern, as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

Chapter 211 of the Texas Local Government Code states that "zoning regulations must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan." Consequently, the zoning map and zoning decisions should reflect the Future Land Use Map. Therefore, approval of development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan should be avoided.

Figure 17. Current Zoning Map



Future Land Use Key Objectives

- Provide regular review of the One Watauga Development Strategy.
- Coordinate the One Watauga Development Strategy's goals and objectives with other city documents, including the future utility master plans, economic /marketing reports and future park master planning.
- Perform a zoning diagnostic and update the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the Development Strategy recommendations, including special use districts, such as mixed use or town center designations.
- Ensure that future redevelopment and infill development meets the City's level of quality.
- Ensure a diverse mixture of housing choices, prices and sizes to create full life-cycle housing within Watauga single family, medium density and mixed use housing.
- Integrate neighborhood-focused local retail, commercial and office uses away from regionally significant intersections, such as along Watauga Rd., portions of US Hwy. 377, Bursey Rd., Rufe Snow Dr., and within neighborhood units to provide convenience to necessary services.
- Promote non-residential, tax-generating regional retail and commercial activities along US Hwy. 377 and the intersection of Rufe Snow Dr. and Watauga Rd. to diversify and increase the City's tax base.
- Continue coordination with the City of Fort Worth, Haltom City, City of Keller and City of North Richland Hills to promote long-range development projects and compatibility of land uses.
- Establish a mixed-use or town center and incorporate existing uses, such as parks and public facilities, to provide a sense of place.
- Promote appropriate redevelopment opportunities in targeted areas, such as along and near the southern portions of US Hwy. 377, Rufe Snow Dr. and the complete length of Watauga Rd.
- Minimize conflicts with existing residential areas.
- Provide entertainment with family-oriented venues that create opportunities for community gatherings and festivals.
- Maintain current water, wastewater and stormwater master plans.
- Maintain an updated Capital Improvement Program and seek funding opportunities to incrementally implement critical infrastructure needs.



4 | Economic Development

Baseline Overview and Current Economic Development Efforts

Economic development planning is the process by which a community organizes, analyzes, plans and applies its energies to the tasks of improving the economic well-being and quality of life for those in the community. In national trends, the structure of the economy has been evolving into the New Knowledge Economy. To prosper in this new economy, Watauga must:

- Have knowledge of the region's economic function in the global economy
- Create a skilled and educated workforce
- Invest in an infrastructure for innovation
- Create a great quality of life
- Foster an innovative business climate
- Reinvent and digitize government
- Take regional governance and collaboration seriously

The nature of economics is cyclical, based on a combination of factors, including product life cycles, applications of technology, government interventions, and a host of other indicators. Development will happen in a community whether or not it is planned and the community will experience economic changes, whether or not they are desired. The advantage in planning is that communities can anticipate these changes and guide development to the best of their abilities and capacities.

Watauga's vision, as it relates to economic development, is to enhance the quality of life for its residents by providing an attractive and desirable place to live, work, play and grow. An expanded and diversified local tax base is keys to this vision. Additionally, creating quality job opportunities and promoting responsible growth are ways economic development should be used as a tool to implement the vision.

It is important to remember that economic development is more than just the recruitment of new business, but also the redevelopment of lagging business. Watauga strives to create an environment that welcomes new industry, attracts new residents, and creates an incentive package that makes Watauga competitive in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. In other words, economic development encompasses intrinsic characteristics that lay the foundation for a thriving, economically fruitful city.

THREE BASIC TARGETS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING:

Existing business/industry- this refers to efforts aimed at the retention and increased viability of existing local businesses.

New business industry- this refers to efforts aimed at the creation of new business activity within a community, as measured by increases in employment and expansion of the tax base.

Outside investment- this refers to efforts aimed at attracting people into the community to spend money locally.

Summary of Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis

The following is a summary of the information from the Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton). Since the completion of this study, the City has remained nearly at buildout, thus the information gathered from this study is still relevant.

The Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis examines the qualitative aspect of the community's retail opportunities. It is a guide to understanding retail opportunities, but it is not an analysis that indicates unconditional opportunities. The analysis, sometimes called a gap analysis or a supply and demand analysis, identifies the sales demand of those products and services for which Watauga residents and residents of the retail-trade area spend their dollars on. The creation of trade areas establishes the City's local retail outlook and its position in the regional marketplace. The trade area for Watauga was determined utilizing a 10-minute drive-time analysis.

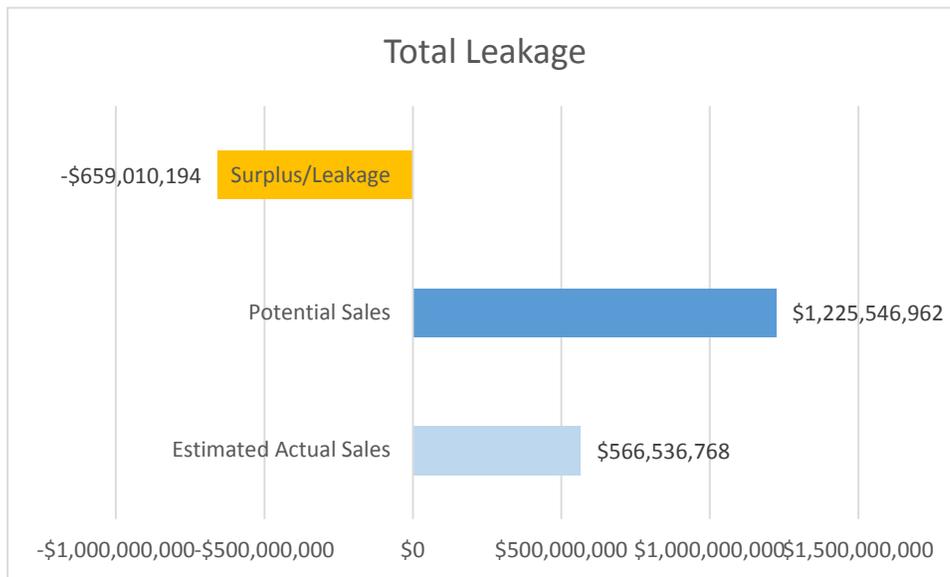


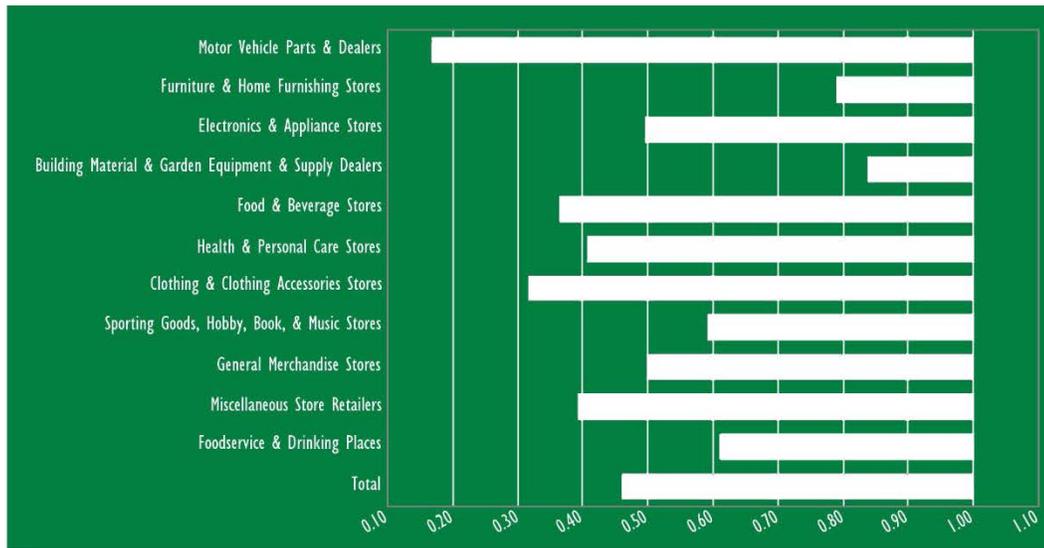
Figure 18. Total Leakage/Surplus Index and Actual and Potential Sales

Source: Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton)

The predominant finding in the retail trade area, which encompasses Watauga, is experiencing noticeable leakage in several major store types. See Figure 19.

Leakage analysis provides an opportunity to identify markets for future growth. Watauga may use the leakage analysis to identify and target certain businesses or opportunities that may not have a presence in the trade area that includes Watauga. Please reference the full Buxton report for quantitation comparisons.

The chart below highlights the leakage/surplus index and potential sales by major store types. To understand this chart, 1.0 means that the demand and sales in the area being analyzed are in balance and equilibrium is met. A number less than 1.0 (0.8, for example) means that demand is exceeding sales and that customers are leaving the area being analyzed. In the example of 0.8, the demand exceeds sales by 20 percent. A number greater than 1.0 (1.2, for example) means that sales are exceeding demand and consumers are coming from outside the City to shop in Watauga. In the example of 1.2, the sales are exceeding demand by 20 percent.



Store Type	Potential	Actual Sales	Leakage
Motor Vehicle Parts & Dealers	272,952,396	46,375,783	0.2
Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores	39,183,109	31,040,876	0.8
Electronics & Appliance Stores	34,911,409	17,325,491	0.5
Building Material & Garden Equipment & Supply Dealers	177,615,984	148,960,802	0.8
Food & Beverage Stores	168,579,861	61,529,187	0.4
Health & Personal Care Stores	66,127,110	27,016,859	0.4
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	75,495,368	24,053,851	0.3
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	28,177,662	16,673,584	0.6
General Merchandise Stores	179,152,066	89,520,844	0.5
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	37,939,466	14,958,415	0.4
Foodservice & Drinking Places	145,412,530	89,081,076	0.6
Total	1,225,546,962	566,536,768	0.5

Figure 19. Leakage/Surplus Index and Actual and Potential Sales by Major Store Types

Source: Watauga Retail Leakage and Surplus Analysis (dated July 13, 2012 and prepared by Buxton)

Current Organizations Supporting Economic Development

City of Watauga

The City of Watauga's Economic Development initiatives currently fall under the Planning and Development department. While Watauga doesn't currently have a separate Economic Development Corporation, the City does encourage development agreements, giving developers sales tax rebates to encourage growth. Additionally the City offers the Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) Program through the Public Works and Finance departments. The WIN Program is strictly a residential program for neighborhood revitalization, providing a 100 percent grant for community-based groups to clean up and repair distressed parts of homes.

Watauga is ideally located to attract businesses, situated in Northeast Tarrant County and in close proximity to Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas. The City has easy access to enhanced transportation systems, including several state and national highways as well as DFW International Airport. In addition, Watauga is the proud home to Capp Smith Park, a spring-filled lake surrounded by lush grass and walking trails; a 9/11 Memorial Site featuring a piece of steel from the World Trade Center; and the only City Water Tower in the world to hold four floors of office space.

Northeast Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce

The City of Watauga is a member of the Northeast Tarrant County Chamber of Commerce, an association encompassing four cities: Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills and Watauga. This four-city area continues to grow at a tremendous rate, an ongoing result of years of collaboration and planning by City officials, education leaders and area businesses. A focused and determined pro-business, pro-education and pro-quality of life approach by all leaders, combined with right-to-work state laws, low taxes and a strong labor force have propelled Northeast Tarrant County into a great place to do business.

Further bolstering the economic development of the area is the current North Tarrant Express project, a cooperative Texas Department of Transportation and multi-city development that expands the critical Northeast Tarrant area corridor extending from I-35 West in Fort Worth to DFW Airport. This \$2.5 billion undertaking will provide for the anticipated traffic growth in the region and adds to the impressive list of economic opportunities this area offers.

For area residents, Northeast Tarrant County has everything. Boasting both new residential communities, as well as established neighborhoods, the family-friendly cities of Haltom City, North Richland Hills, Richland Hills and Watauga offer outstanding housing values and outstanding housing choices.

Easy to get to from anywhere, the Northeast Tarrant area is central to everything. This family-friendly community is close to the major entertainment districts of Fort Worth, Arlington and Dallas and is only a few miles from the famous Fort Worth Stockyards, 20 minutes from the Texas Motor Speedway, 20 minutes from Arlington and the Dallas Cowboys and Texas Rangers and only 30 minutes from Downtown Dallas.

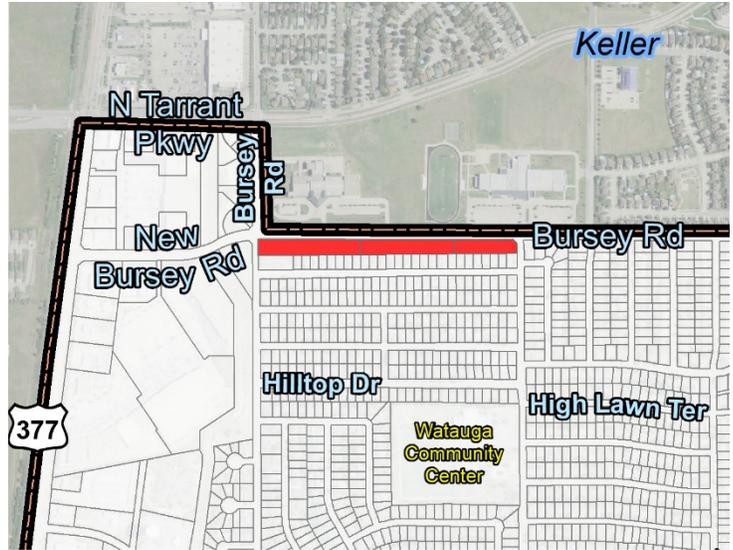
Watauga's pro-business environment and its membership in numerous regional and state economic development organizations provides the assistance needed in bringing business and industry to the area. The City has a bustling business environment of more than 400 small, medium, and large firms, providing a diverse group of goods and services to its citizens. These businesses support a quality of life unsurpassed by most towns of this size. While the business base includes several national chains, more than 75 percent are owned by independent business people, including many franchise opportunities.

Key Infill Sites

Infill sites comprise approximately four percent vacant land within the City. These sites can be further divided into four zones.

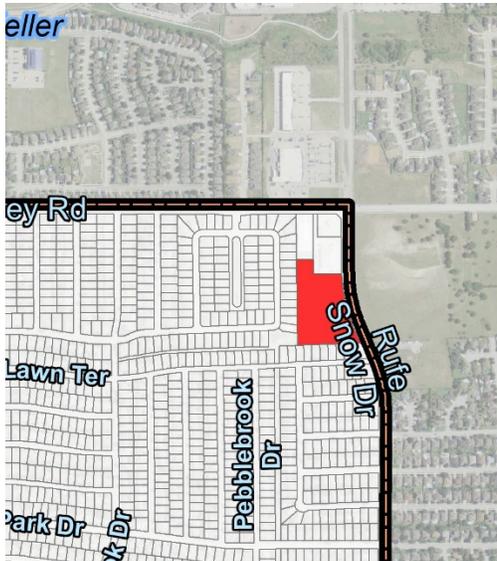
Professional Office Infill

The first infill zone is along the north border of the City. It is bound by Bursey Rd. to the north, Indian Springs Rd. to the east, single-family residential units along Hillview Dr. to the south, and Whitley Rd. to the west. This zone is envisioned to be professional offices. While the parcel depth isn't that large, professional office is a compatible use abutting the single-family residential to the south since the primary occupancy will take place during the day. It is recommended that proper landscaping and screening are installed in between the existing residential area and the future office space to further reduce any hindrances the office space may have on the residential neighborhood. Architectural character and massing of this office infill should fit in with the surrounding neighborhood. Appropriate materials include brick and/or stone. Landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



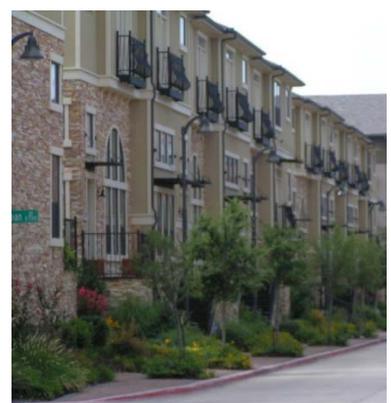
Strip Retail/Office Infill

The second infill zone is at the northeast corner of Watauga. It is bound by existing retail along Bursery Rd. to the north, Rufe Snow Dr. to the east, single-family residential lining High Lawn Ter. to the south, and single-family residential lining Courtney Way to the west. This site is prime strip retail and/or office space. Immediately to the north of this site sits a Dollar General, a Shell gas station, and a small strip of restaurants. North of Bursery Rd. is a neighborhood Walmart and additional strip retail. The proposed strip retail/office infill should serve the surrounding neighborhoods and will bring an additional tax base to Watauga. The character of the new development should match the surrounding neighborhoods in massing and architectural details. Façade materials should include brick and/or stone, and landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



Townhome Infill

The third zone of infill is bound by single-family residential lining Courtside Dr. to the north, Indian Springs Rd. to the east, Starnes Rd. to the south, and single-family residential lining Prairie Dr. to the east. The Future Land Use Plan designates this zone for medium-density residential, such as townhomes. Providing a variety of housing types in Watauga, including townhomes, encourages life-cycle housing. In other words, as residents of Watauga age and downsize their housing needs, they have a place to move to within the City. Façade materials of the townhome infill should include brick, stone, and/or stucco, and architectural details should match those of the surrounding neighborhood. Landscaping materials should include native, drought-tolerant species.



Job Diversity Infill

The fourth and final infill zone is bound by Watauga Rd. to the north, single-family residential lining Stardust Dr. to the east, single-family residential lining Haney Dr. to the south and Lalagray Ln. to the west. Watauga Rd. is a key corridor in Watauga, connecting the commercial along US Hwy. 377 to the commercial node at Rufe Snow Dr. The Future Land Use Plan designates this land as local office/retail/commercial. By encouraging this type of development along the corridor, the City can increase its tax base, as well as provide an opportunity for increased job diversity. Job expansion associated with these parcels could include professional services, leisure/hospitality, information, health care, finance/real estate, retail and construction. With a wide variety of job options, Watauga can keep its residents in the City, as well as attract non-residents. This job diversity infill area should be constructed of brick and/or stone, and architectural details should be in line with the surrounding neighborhoods. Landscaping materials could include native, drought-tolerant species.



Mixed Use Sites

The mixed use concept zones are envisioned to enhance the heart of the City. A special character should take place in this zone, tying together the City's recent investments in Capp Smith Park, City Hall, Library, Police Department and Central Fire Station. Incorporating entertainment, retail and new residential types to expand the City's housing options, these zones will play a critical role in the City's economic development, and if developed correctly, will be a memorable and cherished addition to the region. The concepts described below are ideas of how the City could approach the development of this land. There are many options that can be explored to fit the City's needs and desires. The mixed use site is broken up into two zones. The first zone is on the northeast side of Capp Smith Park, just south of Starnes Rd. and the second zone is located along Hightower Dr., east of Whitley Rd. and west of Echo Hill Dr.

Zone 1

The first zone is on the northeast side of Capp Smith Park and south of Starnes Rd. Here, future development should have a strong visual connection to Capp Smith Park. The envisioned horizontally mixed use character within this zone is compatible with the retail to the west and north of this area, lining US Hwy. 377. Development identity signage at the corner of Starnes Rd. and US Hwy. 377. will indicate that people are arriving somewhere special.

Future restaurant sites could be situated to have patios overlooking Capp Smith Park. Also, design concepts for this site could include buildings oriented towards the street for a welcoming pedestrian feel or towards the drainage channel located through the property; and embracing the open amenity as an asset within this development. The parking layout should be designed to minimize negative impacts to Capp Smith Park. Building types within this zone include single-story restaurant, entertainment and office uses. In addition, the site could yield multi-story mixed-use style buildings. Outdoor amenities could include plazas that act as gathering spaces or a space for outdoor dining and a unique tree grove for people to congregate. It is also envisioned that enhanced streetscape improvements will encourage pedestrian movement along the vehicular corridors, contributing to the zone's desired vibrant character.



Outdoor dining with park connection



Unique outdoor dining and entertainment



Tree grove plaza character



Outdoor dining and mixed use site

Zone 2

The second zone sits along Hightower Dr. and is bound by Whitley Rd. to the west and Echo Hill Dr. to the east. This zone is an ideal location for medium-density attached residential product and zero-lot-line single family residential, as well as a small strip of retail along Hightower Dr. The smaller scale of the medium-density attached product and the zero-lot-line residential is the ideal gradual transition to the existing surrounding neighborhood and, with proper streetscape improvements, this zone will become a continuation of the pedestrian-friendly experience established in Zone 1. Development identity signage should be placed at both ends of the development along Hightower Rd. to ensure wayfinding and a sense of arrival. Plazas are placed at key corners and a trail meanders from the formal sidewalk in front of the medium density attached product along Hightower Dr., down Whitley Rd. Landscaped screen walls surround the edges of the property to ensure the density transition is made with ease.

Figure 21. Zone 2- Concept Ideas



Townhomes lining the street



Zero-lot-line residential

Redevelopment and Reinvestment Areas

The redevelopment and reinvestment locations include areas with older, existing development and should be further assessed. The City should determine the financial gains and feasibility of rehabilitating the existing infrastructure versus soliciting new development. As illustrated in the Property Value Map, several parcels designated at redevelopment/reinvestment areas currently have low property values. With proper investment, these values can increase and bring in more tax revenue for the City.

The following concepts and program examples could be utilized to encourage reinvestment within existing non-residential areas and create more attractive, desirable retail centers. Watauga contains a mix of newly constructed retail, as well as aging retail centers. As new retail centers are planned and constructed in the area, older retail centers will begin to experience increased vacancy rates. These older retail centers can deteriorate due to limited reinvestment to maintain high quality aesthetics. To increase the existing site's long-term viability, City staff and retail site owners should explore the following design and aesthetics techniques.

Parking Areas

Large expanses of pavement for parking do not contribute to a positive visual image. The City should consider either providing incentives for, or requesting parking areas to be placed on the side or the rear of the primary structure and out of the public view. Reducing the number of required parking spaces could be a possible incentive if developers place the parking on the side or rear of the building. Landscaping and screening, which are discussed in more detail later in this section, should also be incorporated into parking areas.

Lighting

Lighting is needed to provide visibility for businesses and safety for patrons within non-residential districts. To avoid adverse impacts, lighting facilities should reflect away from adjacent residential areas. Lighting aesthetics are also important to consider. The City should examine developing a lighting theme to be used at various non-residential centers in order to brand commercial areas as being uniquely related to the corridor's vision.

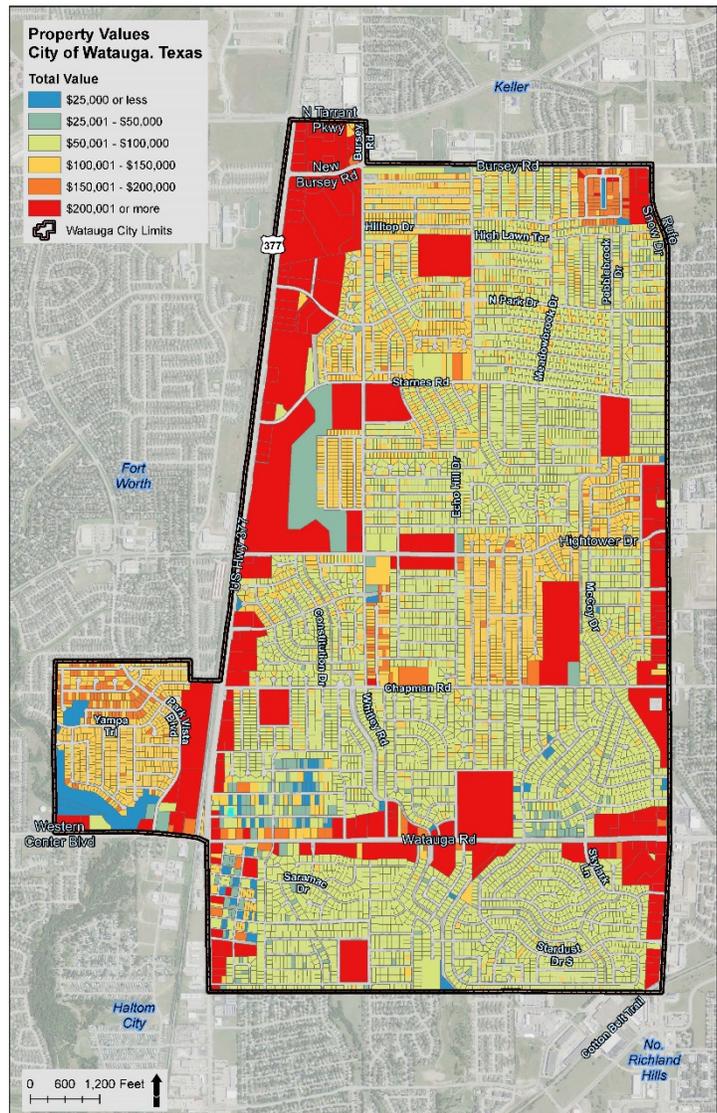


Figure 22. Property Values

Screening

There are many elements that are needed for businesses to operate that are not generally considered to be visually attractive. These various elements include trash receptacles, open storage, expansive parking lots, service areas, and ground- or roof-mounted equipment. Appropriate screening items should include landscaping, landscaping in conjunction with earth berms in parking areas, landscaping in conjunction with masonry walls, parapet walls for roof-mounted equipment, and use of other materials that are compatible with the structure(s).

Landscaping

Landscaping contributes value to property and is an aesthetically pleasing element to incorporate in non-residential areas. Landscaping is particularly important within the mixed-use, infill, and redevelopment and reinvestment areas. Creative stormwater management techniques, such as bio swales and rain gardens along with native plant materials, should be encouraged within these sites.

Building Materials

Materials used for the exterior facades or buildings within non-residential areas should generally be limited to brick, stone, rock, or some variation thereof. Either a City official or City Council should be able to approve alternate materials such as concrete, concrete block, or stucco. Reflective and/or mirrored glass should not comprise a large percentage of the building site in. Metal buildings should likewise not be permitted.

Façade Articulation

The façades of large non-residential structures can be large and visually unappealing. This is referred to as massing. Massing concerns have generally arisen in response to large big-box retailers. While retailers are an asset to Watauga, the large flat walls are not a desired character for the City and therefore architecture façade offsets are recommended.

Retail Revitalization Programs

It is in the community's best interest to actively participate and incentivize redevelopment and property rehabilitation. While such participation initially requires the use of public funds, the returns on investment almost always surpass the public spending. Public/private partnerships involve a cooperative relationship by both the community and a developer. From the development standpoint, the ultimate benefit of a public/private partnership is that it allows the developer to participate in a project that, under normal circumstances, may not have been economically viable. The advantage from the public's standpoint is that a new project adds value and tax base to the community. New development, building renovations and building rehabilitations enhance the overall look, feel and value of the community and can positively impact adjacent



residential neighborhoods. The following are examples of strategies that the City may employ to encourage aesthetic improvements within the corridor’s existing non-residential areas. It is important to note that the following strategies are for illustrative purposes only. Specifics related to each program should be determined by the City’s economic development department and City Council.

Façade Improvement Program

To improve the external appearance of existing non-residential centers, the City may create a façade improvement program. Under this program, the City could match private investment up to a certain dollar amount for façade improvement expenses. For example, the City may choose to match a business owner dollar for dollar up to \$50,000 in improvements, with a minimum investment of \$20,000 required for eligibility. A maximum match should be specified because this program only targets external conditions of a building and not the structure itself. Economic development funds should be utilized for more significant rehabilitation projects.

Retail Landscaping Program

Landscaping has the potential to significantly impact the overall appearance of non-residential centers. Many existing retail and commercial centers in Watauga have minimal landscaping. Many business owners do not have the funding to rehabilitate the exterior structure of their business, therefore a landscaping incentive may entice business owners to perform minor improvements to their property.

Public/Private Partnership

The Public/Private Partnership (PPP) is a significant redevelopment action that may be utilized by the City to encourage and attract development to a specific location. They are generally utilized for large-scale redevelopment projects. This strategy has been highly effective in the Town of Addison, which utilized a PPP to encourage the development of Addison Circle and Vitruvian Park.

Generally speaking, the City would utilize economic development funding to pay for needed infrastructure improvements. The City could also utilize economic development funding to find low interest loans to developers, but traditionally PPP’s require more active participation from the City. In extreme cases, the City may issue General Obligation Bonds to pay for infrastructure improvements, as was done in Addison. If successful, the added value and taxable revenue of the development over time would be significantly higher than the initial investment.

Retail Rehabilitation Program

To encourage redevelopment of existing retail centers, the City may offer low interest loans, matching funds or even grants in exchange for significant rehabilitation. Significant rehabilitation includes improving and modernizing the interior and exterior of existing structures. These incentives are targeted for more expensive rehabilitation projects and likely require a higher degree of public participation to make such investments feasible.



Funding and Incentive Programs

City Incentives

Development Agreements

Watauga offers developers development agreements, providing a sales tax rebate for the development of new commercial infrastructure. Generally speaking, development agreements are contracts between local jurisdictions and property owners. The agreement provides certainty to the developer that his project will be isolated from changes in the jurisdiction’s zoning during the course of development while also providing a benefit to the City.

The Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) Program

The Public Works and Finance departments offer the WIN Program to help rehabilitate residential areas in distress. In partnership with World Changers Organization, 6 Stones Organization and other volunteer organizations, the City provides 100 percent financial grants and manpower to repair critical maintenance issues for those who are unable to perform the necessary repairs to their homes themselves due to circumstances and difficulties beyond their control.

State Incentives

Texas currently provides assistance and incentives through the following programs:

The Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure and Real Estate Programs

The Texas Capital Fund Infrastructure and Real Estate Programs provide a way for an eligible applicant to receive funds to make infrastructure and/or real estate improvements to support a specific business that is expanding or beginning operations. The business is required to create or retain jobs for Texans.



For more information, visit <https://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/RuralEconomicDevelopment/TexasCapitalFund.aspx>

Skills Development Fund

This fund was created to financially assist Texas communities and technical colleges in customized job training for their local businesses. The fund is administered by the Texas Workforce Commission. Grants are provided to help companies and labor unions form partnerships with local community colleges and technical schools to provide custom job training. Average training costs are \$1,000 per trainee (typical costs are \$300-\$400); however, the benefit may vary depending on the proposal.

For more information, visit: <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/skills-development-fund>

The Emerging Technology Fund

The Emerging Technology Fund was created by the State to attract investment in cutting-edge research and technology. Projects are eligible for funding if they will result in the creation of high-quality new jobs and have the potential to result in a medical or scientific breakthrough.

For more information, visit: http://gov.texas.gov/files/ecodev/etf/TETF_Report_FY2014.pdf

Additional Local Economic Development Funding Tools

The following economic development tools can be utilized by the City of Watauga to enhance its economic development activities. Care should be used to fully understand them and their potential costs before selecting these tools.

Rent Subsidy Program

A Rent Subsidy Grant Program is a way to stimulate commercial investment in Watauga. The program utilizes rent subsidies to encourage the filling of previously unoccupied buildings with new businesses. The grant program is intended to enhance the economic development of the City by offering matching grant funds for rent subsidy to help new businesses survive and thrive during their initial months in a previously unoccupied building. This helps with the creation of new businesses and fills empty buildings at the same time. A prospective business may only have one grant limited to no greater than 50 percent of each month's rent, not to exceed a cumulative total of \$5,000 for one year, and the applicant must match the grant amount.

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs)

Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones, or TIRZs, can be described as special districts wherein public improvements are funded with tax revenues resulting from increased property values. The property tax rate paid by property owners is the same as that paid in other areas of a city, but the additional tax paid on the increased property value would be allotted to a special function that would finance improvement projects within a TIRZ. Cities, counties, and other taxing jurisdictions (except school districts) can all participate in a TIRZ; that is, a city can establish a TIRZ, but the county's and other jurisdictions' tax revenues are not automatically affected. They must agree to participate.

The major benefit of such a district is that other taxing jurisdictions can partner with the City and add some or all of their increment to the pool of funds to leverage the public improvements within the district. While school districts cannot realistically participate in a TIRZ, county, college districts, hospital districts and other taxing jurisdictions can potentially double the size of a project, depending on tax rates and participation. Other benefits include the fact that the developer pays their taxes just as they would without a district but receives the public improvement benefits. Also, personal property and inventory taxes are not part of the district, and those additional tax revenues still go to the taxing jurisdictions. Finally, while the City may actually have to issue the debt, because TIRZ revenues are used to pay the debt, revenue bonds can be used rather than general obligation bonds.

The disadvantages are that only public improvements, as defined in the statute, can be paid for by the TIRZ. Also, once the TIRZ District debt is paid off, the district is dissolved, leaving the improvements to be maintained by the general fund of the City. The biggest disadvantage, however, is that TIRZs rely on large increases in taxable property values to create the revenues needed, therefore they are utilized mainly for raw land developments or large-scale redevelopment projects. Many of these projects require demolition of blighted properties, resulting in large increases in property values. Creative TIRZs can take increased tax funds from one developing part of a City and fund improvements in another areas.

It is recommended that the City investigate the feasibility of establishing TIRZs to assist in financing public improvements in specific geographic areas. Tarrant County and other taxing entities should be approached to participate, but regardless of whether these entities are involved, a TIRZ district or districts should still be investigated. The amount of additional tax revenue from improved property valuations from the City alone will likely be significant enough over the long-term to contribute to physical improvements that visibly enhance a geographic area designated as a TIRZ district.

For more information, visit: http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/TIF_TIRZ.pdf

Municipal Management Districts (MMDs)

A Municipal Management District is a special district that can be set up with some of the attributes of both a TIRZ and a PID. It can use a combination of existing and new taxes and also can use special assessments to construct public improvements within the district. It involves a process of being set up either by the City or by special legislation.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/MMD.pdf>

Public or Business Improvement Districts (PIDS/BIDS)

A second category of development incentives are known as Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) or Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). These incentives do not rely on increases in tax revenues, but they do rely on “assessments” or property owners to pay for the public improvements within the district. The City Council, upon petition by the property owners, creates an assessment district and existing properties are assessed based on existing property values and benefit to the property. It is not a tax, because property owners petition to be charged (assessed) an annual assessment fee to provide the revenues needed to pay for the public improvements within the district. An assessment lien is placed on individual properties and is superior to all but other tax liens. The majority of owners, based on the number and value of property owned, have to agree to the improvement plan and the assessment scheme.

One benefit is that, unlike a TIRZ, increases in values are not needed to fund the district, so it is an excellent mechanism for redevelopment projects. A second advantage is that a PID or BID can be created to construct and maintain improvements with no time limit, thereby alleviating the City of the burden. Again, because the debt is paid for by revenues from assessments backed by property liens, revenue bonds can be used to finance improvements. Finally, based on a feasibility analysis, benefits can be assessed at different rates to different classes or properties, depending on use and distance or amount of benefit received. For example, retail uses could also pay a minor portion of the district improvements if they receive benefit.

There may be certain areas such as a town center, where a combination of a TIRZ district and an overlaying PID/BID district could be used. The TIRZ could be used to finance and construct the improvements and the PID/BID could be used to maintain them over time. This would keep the long-term assessments to a reasonable amount but would enable other jurisdictions to partner on constructing the improvements.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/PID.pdf>

State and Federal Programs

The following programs are state and/or federal programs offered for existing and new businesses. This list is representative of current programs but it is not all-inclusive.

Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit

This program was enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature and involves state Franchise Tax Credit for research and development (R&D) expenditures. A qualified business is eligible to receive a credit from the State of Texas for an amount equal to four percent of the business's incremental (as defined by the U.S. IRS) R&D expenditures and a maximum credit of 25 percent of their franchise tax liability in the first year of the biennium, increasing to five percent with a 50 percent cap in the second year of the biennium and thereafter. These benefits apply statewide, with increased credits available for state strategic investment areas (as defined by the State), and include federally designated "urban enterprise communities."

For more information, visit:

<http://investinamericasfuture.org/>

Texas Community Development Block Grant Program (TxCDBG)

The Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Program helps smaller communities in Texas meet infrastructure needs in low- to moderate-income areas. Projects funded by the TxCDBG must benefit at least 51 percent low- to moderate-income persons, which are defined as those who earn equal to or less than 80 percent of the area median family income. Project objectives are required to either aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or include activities designated to meet community development needs that have a particular urgency.

For more information, visit <http://www.nctcog.org/envir/SEEDevEx/tcdp/index.asp>

Small Business Franchises Tax Exemption

This program was enacted by the 76th Texas Legislature (1999) and allows for an exemption from paying the State franchise tax for small businesses. To qualify, small businesses must have gross receipts of less than \$150,000 annually.

For more information, visit: http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/taxpubs/tx98_806.html

Texas Leverage Fund

The Texas Leverage Fund (TLF) is an economic development bank offering an added source of financing to communities that have passed the Economic Development Sales Tax. The Texas Economic Development (TxED) Department may loan funds directly to a local Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) to finance eligible projects. Sales tax revenues pledged by the IDC need only be sufficient to cover projected annual debt service as specified in the TLF Program guidelines. This allows cities to leverage their economic development sales tax and to pursue additional projects.

For more information, visit: http://gov.texas.gov/files/ecodev/TLF_Guidelines.pdf



Bond Financing Options Summary

Bonds may be issued by non-profit development corporations or authorities pursuant to the Development Corporation Act of 1979 (the “Act”). The Act allows non-profit corporations to issue bonds on behalf of cities, counties, conservation or reclamation districts for eligible projects. The purpose of bond financing is to promote new and existing businesses, encourage employment in the state, and increase the tax base of the community where the project is located. The following types of bonds are available:

- Tax-Exempt Industrial Revenue Bonds for Manufacturing Projects: Bonds issued to finance land and depreciable property for manufacturing facilities.
- Exempt-Facility Bonds: Bonds issued to finance certain facilities such as airports, dock and wharf facilities, mass commuting facilities, high-speed inter-city rail facilities, or certain qualified hazardous waste facilities (including certain training and storage facilities).
- Taxable Industrial Revenue Bonds: These bonds typically have higher interest rates than tax-exempt issues, these issues do not have restrictions on the use or amount of the issue.
- Sales Tax Bonds (Bonds issued pursuant to Sections 4A and 4B of the Development Corporation Act): Available only to cities that have passed the local Sales and Use Tax for Economic Development. These can be taxable or tax-exempt bonds, depending on the type of project and business. Issues are primarily for manufacturing or industrial projects, but can also be issued for commercial, recreational, infrastructure, and other types of projects.

Property Tax Rule 9.105

This is a refund of the state taxes (franchise taxes or sales taxes) paid by companies owning certain abated properties. A company that meets the following three conditions may apply for a refund under this tax rule:

- The company has paid property taxes to a school district on property that is located in a reinvestment zone established under Texas law.
- The company is exempt in whole or in part from property tax imposed by a city or county under a tax abatement agreement established under Texas law.
- The company is not in a tax abatement agreement with a school district.

The refund is equal to the amount of property taxes that would have been paid had the company entered into a school district abatement agreement with terms identical to the city or county abatement agreement, not to exceed the net state sales and use taxes and state franchise taxes paid or collected and remitted during that calendar year. The refund amount may also be limited by a statewide appropriation per year for this refund program.

For more information, visit: <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/proptax/law08/rules1.html#9.105>

State Sales and Use Tax Exemptions

- Manufacturing Machinery and Equipment: Applies to leased or purchased machinery, equipment, replacement parts, and accessories that have a useful life of more than six months, and that are used or consumed in the manufacturing, processing, fabricating, or repairing of tangible personal property for ultimate sale, are exempt from state and local sales and use tax. Texas businesses are exempt from paying state sales and use tax on labor for constructing new facilities and the purchase of machinery exclusively used in processing, packing or marketing agricultural products by the original producer at a location operated by the original producer.
- Natural Gas and Electricity: Texas companies are exempt from paying state sales and use tax on electricity and natural gas used in manufacturing, processing, or fabricating tangible personal property. The company must

complete a “predominant use study” that shows that at least 50 percent of the electricity or natural gas consumed by the business directly causes a physical change to a product.

For more information, visit: <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/sales/>

Tax Credits

- Worker Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)- A federal tax credit given to companies that hire employees from certain target groups. The tax credit is used to reduce a company’s federal tax payment in the current tax year, or it can be used retroactively for three years or carried forward for 15 years. The WOTC provides a tax credit of up to 40 percent to employers who hire certified tax eligible employees. The maximum tax credit is \$2,400.
- State of Texas Tax Refund: This tax refund program provides a state tax credit of up to 20 percent of \$10,000 in wages during the first year. An employer may qualify for a state tax refund if the employer:
 - Pays certain State of Texas taxes (franchise, state sales and use, inheritance, etc.);
 - Pays wages during the first year of employment to an employee, who is a Texas resident and has received certain benefits during the month of hire; and
 - Provides and pays for part of the cost of qualifying major medical insurance for the employee.

For more information, visit: <https://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/> and <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/refunds/sales/>

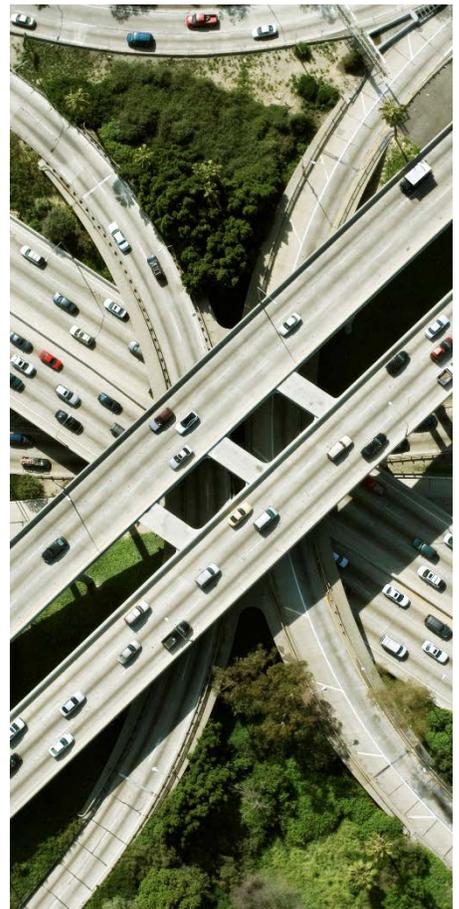
Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI)

Funding from the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI) can go towards the redevelopment of abandoned industrial and commercial facilities where redevelopment is burdened by environmental contamination. The brownfield site must be in an area with low to moderate incomes or benefit people with low- to moderate-incomes and the land must be used for economic development of some sort, not land banking. Sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) this federal grant provides a maximum of \$2 million per grant. BEDIs must be paired with Section 108 Loan Guarantees and receive approval from the local Community Block Grant Entitlement Agency. The primary advantage to the BEDI program is that federal funds are used to improve the quality of the site and the money doesn’t have to be paid back. Conversely, the site is subject to federal government approval, the project requires documentation and expenditures, and development and cleanup must happen together.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/sustdev/landuse/BEDI.pdf>

Economic Development Key Objectives

- Explore the creation of a formal Economic Development Corporation.
- Expand professional office uses.
- Develop a city-wide marketing campaign to leverage current housing stock, proximity to Downtown Fort Worth, and access to major transportation corridors and new toll facilities.
- Encourage development within the infill, mixed-use town center and redevelopment/reinvestment zones through the use of incentives.
- Target identified underserved retail market segments.
- Establish and maintain a forecast of housing-type needs and set periodic goals to meet anticipated housing demand.
- Maintain an incentive database and provide assistance to businesses seeking funding opportunities.
- Maintain current database of available property and building space.
- Continue to monitor and maintain current retail and demographic data relevant to the City.
- Actively pursue development and partnerships for the mixed-use town center.
- Work with existing property owners to improve identified reinvestment and redevelopment areas.





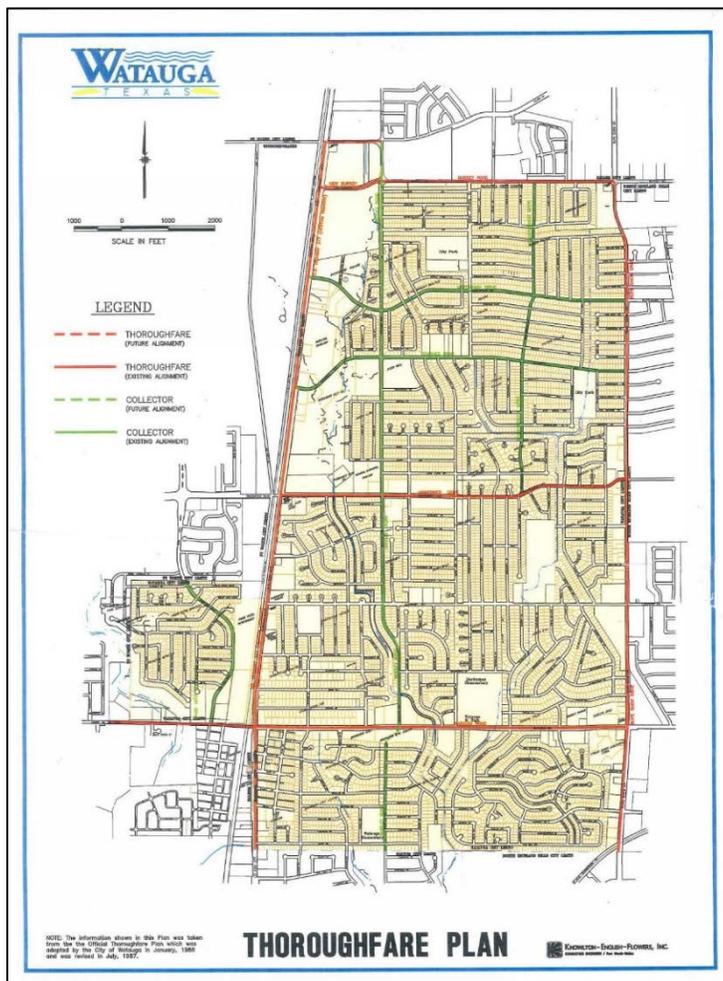
5 | Transportation Plan

Existing Conditions

Existing Functional Classification

Functional street classification recognizes that streets are part of a system having diverse origins and destinations. Functional classifications also describe and reflect a set of characteristics common to all roadways within each class. Functions range from providing mobility for through traffic and major traffic flows, to providing access to specific properties. Characteristics unique to each classification include the degree of continuity, general capacity, and traffic control characteristics. Two general classes of roadways currently define the City of Watauga's thoroughfare network and include: Thoroughfares and Collectors, as shown in the Existing Thoroughfare Plan in Figure 23.

Figure 23. Existing Thoroughfare Plan



Thoroughfares

- **US Hwy. 377** located along the west side of the city is typically classified as principal arterial and provides regional connectivity, not just for the City of Watauga, but for the neighboring cities of Keller, North Richland Hills, Haltom City, and Fort Worth. US Hwy. 377 is currently a 7-lane wide roadway with three lanes in each direction and a center turn lane.
- **Rufe Snow Dr.** is also a principal arterial and provides regional connectivity along the east side of the city. It is a five-lane cross-section between Bursey Rd. and Watauga Rd. It widens to a seven-lane cross-section south of Watauga Rd. North of Bursey Rd., it is a four-lane divided roadway with a wide median. Widening will begin in 2016.
- **Bursey Rd.** traverses east-west along the north limits of the city. It is currently a two-lane roadway within the city and provides access to the South Keller Intermediate School and Indian Springs Middle School. Improvements to Bursey Rd. between Willis Rd. and Whitley Rd. is almost complete with four lanes for traffic.
- **Hightower Dr.** is a two-lane roadway with wide shoulders that runs east-west through the middle of the city. It provides access to residential neighborhoods on the east side, and serves the public facilities including the city hall on the west side.
- **Watauga Rd.** is five-lane roadway within the city limits. It widens to a six-lane divided cross-section to the east and west of the city limits and serves as a regional thoroughfare.

Collectors

Collectors identified in the thoroughfare plan are two-lane wide roadways that connect the local street network to the thoroughfares and include the following:

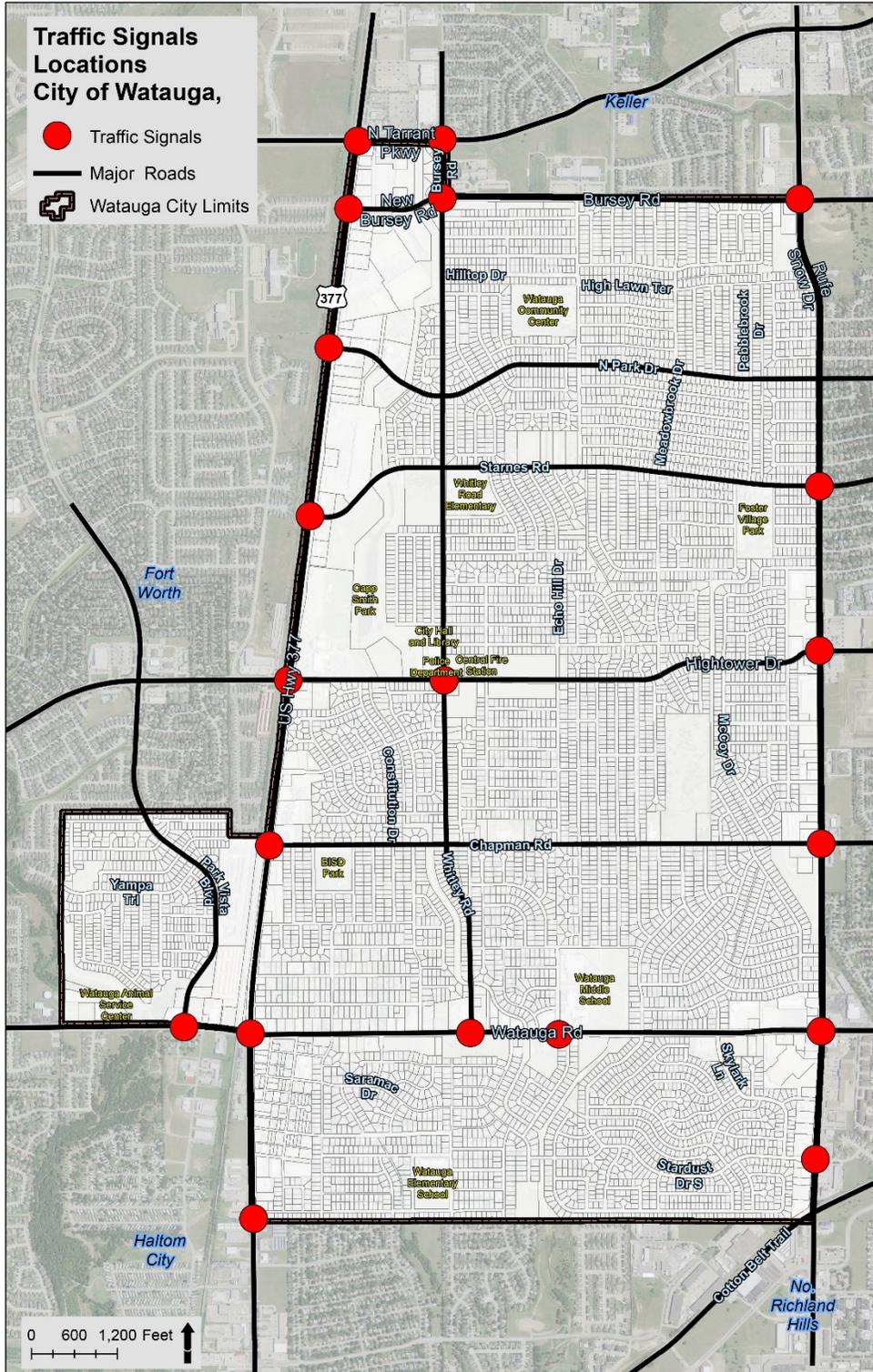
- N. Park Dr. from US Hwy. 377 to Rufe Snow Dr.
- Starnes Rd. from US Hwy. 377 to Rufe Snow Dr.
- Whitley Rd. from N. Tarrant Pkwy. to Watauga Rd.
- Whitley Rd. from Haney Dr. to Shipp Dr.
- Meadowbrook Dr. from Bursey Rd. to Hightower Dr.



Existing Traffic Signal Locations

There are a total of 20 traffic signals located within the city, mostly along the arterial roadway system. As identified in Figure 24, 70 percent of the signals are located on the two major regional roadways of US Hwy. 377 and Rufe Snow Dr.

Figure 24. Existing Traffic Signal Locations

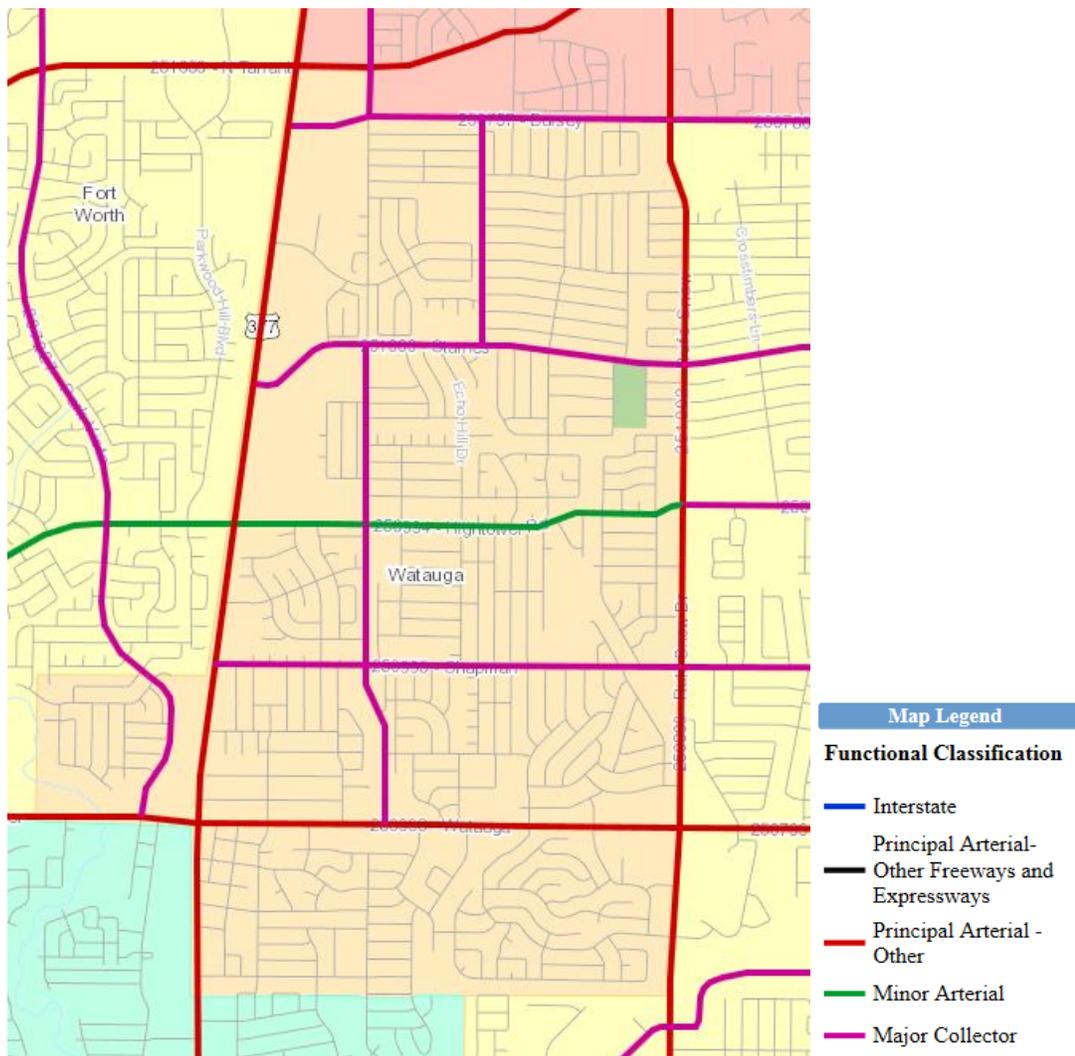


TxDOT Functional Classification

Transportation Planning and Programming (TPP) division of TxDOT works with TxDOT districts, MPOs, and local municipalities to develop and maintain maps showing functional classification of roadways throughout the state. A functional classification map for the roadways in and around the City of Watauga is shown in Figure 25.

US Hwy. 377 and Rufe Snow Dr. located along the west and east sides of the city are classified as Principal Arterials as they provide regional connectivity not just for the City of Watauga, but for the neighboring cities of Keller, North Richland Hills, Haltom City, and Fort Worth. Additionally, N. Tarrant Pkwy. and Watauga Rd. traversing east-west along the north and south limits of the city are also classified as Principal Arterials. Hightower Rd. within the city limits is classified as Minor Arterial. Major collectors within the city limits include Park Vista Blvd., Whitley Rd., Indian Springs Rd., Bursey Rd., Starnes Rd., and Chapman Rd.

Figure 25. Existing Functional Classification map (Source: TxDOT)



Traffic Volumes

Traffic volumes available from TxDOT include the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) counts collected annually on TxDOT-maintained roads. US Hwy. 377 is the only TxDOT maintained facility on the western edge of the City. The latest available counts for year 2015 show an AADT of 33,298 on US Hwy. 377 just south of Hightower Rd. Further south, the AADT was 32,590 just north of Watauga Rd. and 34,314 just south Watauga Rd. Historical AADT traffic counts available at these three locations along the US Hwy. 377 corridor are summarized below. The traffic count data indicates that over the last five years, traffic volumes have decreased with an annual rate of about two percent at locations north of Watauga Rd., and by 2.8 percent annually south of Watauga Rd. The latest 2015 counts have increased over the previous four years, which could be an indication of upward trend.

Table 5. Traffic Volumes

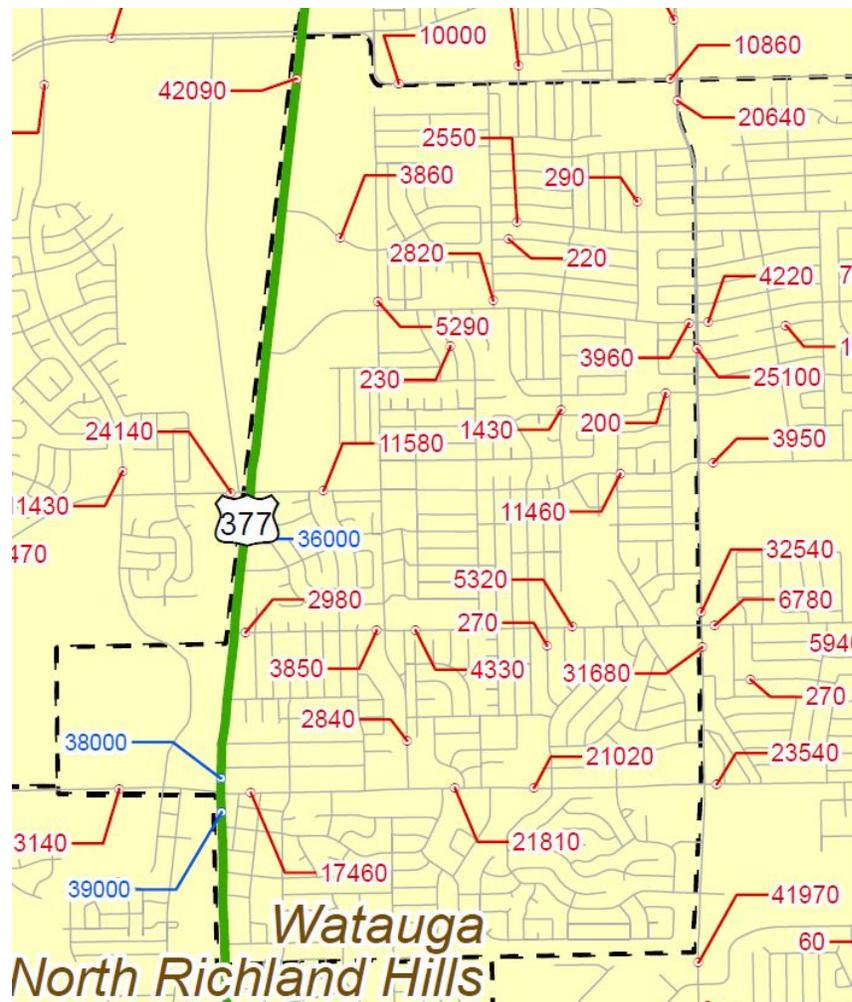
Location along US 377	Annual Average Daily Traffic by Year					Growth Rate
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	
South of Hightower Rd.	37,000	36,000	33,298	29,420	33,298	-2.0%
North of Watauga Rd.	36,000	35,000	32,590	28,917	32,590	-1.9%
South of Watauga Rd.	40,000	38,000	34,314	29,986	34,314	-2.8%

In addition to the AADT counts, TxDOT collects Average Daily Traffic (ADT) counts on TxDOT-maintained roads, county roads and city streets. These counts are collected for each TxDOT district every five years, and are depicted on Urban Saturation Maps. The City of Watauga falls under the Fort Worth District of TxDOT, for which the latest ADT counts are available for year 2009. These ADT counts are shown in Figure 26. Note that these traffic volumes are not adjusted for truck or seasonal variations.

Major Traffic Generators

The major traffic generators within the city limits are concentrated along the east side of US Hwy. 377 corridor and comprised of predominantly commercial and retail establishments. The City is mostly built out with only four percent of the total acreage being vacant land. Opportunities for future development that could become a major traffic generator are limited, and identified under the "Identification of Key Development and Redevelopment Sites" section of Chapter 4-Economic development.

Figure 26. TxDOT Urban Saturation Counts (year 2009)



Existing Traffic Issues

The residents of the City who utilize the roadway and other public infrastructure on a regular basis provide the most valuable insight into the present and recurring issues, such as traffic congestion. To solicit resident input, a town hall meeting was conducted on November 9, 2015 at the Watauga Community Center where citizens were asked to identify areas of concern or interest. Some of the transportation issues identified are listed below:

Public Input at Town Hall

- Use school zone signs with blinking lights
- Please fix bad traffic around schools
- Desire an overpass over US Hwy. 377 to reduce traffic at N. Tarrant and Watauga Rd.
- Congestion is a concern
- More sidewalks are desired, conduct sideway assessment
- How can we improve existing roadways?
 - Better lighting and reflective lane markings along Hightower Dr., Rufe Snow Dr. and Chapman Rd.
 - It was agreed that the worst road in town is Whitley Rd., which is in front of City Hall and is narrow with high traffic
 - Don't focus on lowest bid for work because of the risk of poor workmanship
- Where can we improve pedestrian circulation?
 - Bike lanes for all roads that lead to parks and elementary schools
 - Road narrowing at school crossings
 - Pedestrian bridges
- Enforce code violation of parking on front lawns
- More speed bumps on streets near schools, especially near Watauga Middle School
- Reverse direction near Watauga Elementary School
- Install roundabouts to discourage speeding
- Install dual left northbound lanes at Basswood Blvd. and US Hwy. 377
- Install a bridge to cross over US Hwy. 377
- Widen Whitley Rd. by Whitley Elementary School
- Bike lanes, bike lanes, bike lanes and a City trolley
- Asphalt streets in Park Vista are bumpy
- The stop sign is missing at Hardeman, and it needs to be replaced

Whitley Rd. at Chapman Rd.



Other notable traffic issues include:

- Need for intersections improvements on Hwy. 377 including right turn lanes
- Hwy. 377 congestion issues create excessive queues, which contribute to cut through traffic
- Need to determine future Rufe Snow Dr. roadway cross section and ultimate lanes
- Whitley Rd. needs to be better defined for number of lanes, sidewalks, from north to south areas of the City
- Determine if Watauga Rd. should be a divided road similar to North Richland Hills and Fort Worth
- Need to define functional classifications for Hightower Rd., Starnes Rd. and Chapman Rd.
- Need to determine if north-south oriented minor collector road classifications exist

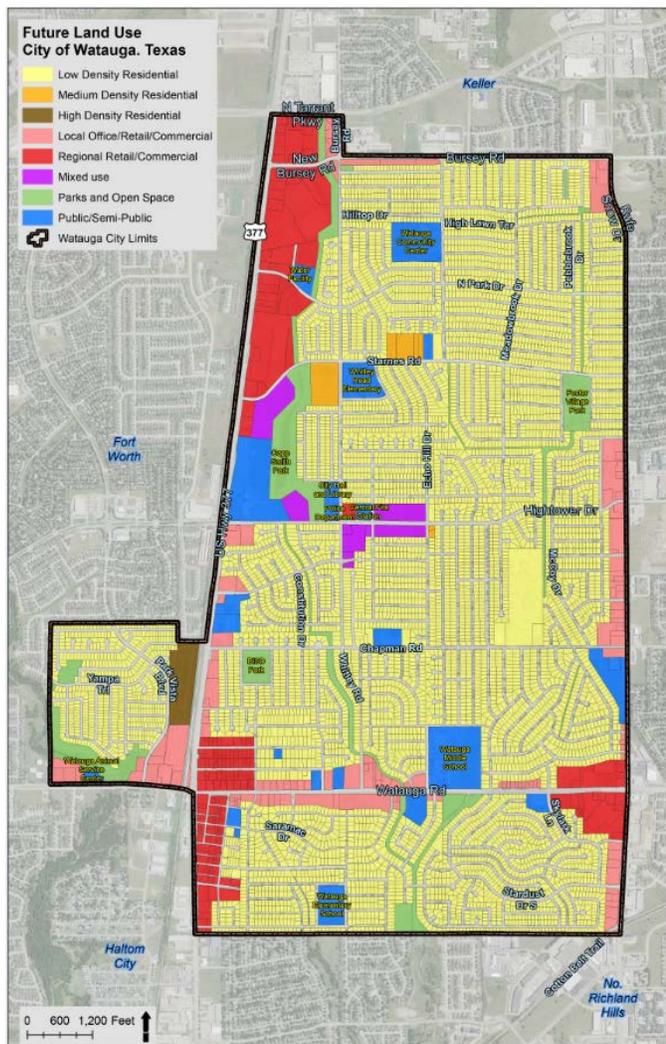
Transportation Planning

Land Use and Transportation

Land use and transportation decisions are intricately related, because they directly influence and impact one another. By coordinating land use and transportation decisions, we can ensure that public resources are allocated effectively and that the city provides the infrastructure network to facilitate development and redevelopment objectives. The future land use plan in shown in Figure 27. Comparing the existing conditions to future land uses highlights the following transportation needs:

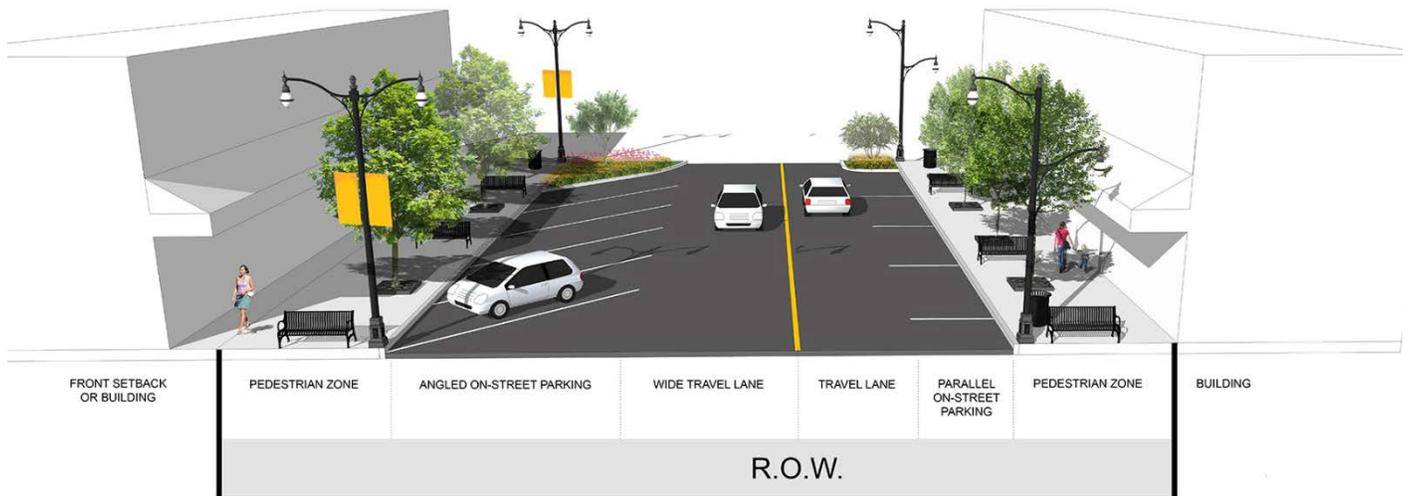
- The currently empty parcels of land along Hightower Rd. between US Hwy. 377 and Echo Hill Dr. are designated for future mixed use development. The proposed development would add traffic to Hightower Rd. which would need access management and specific intersection and roadway improvements.
- Parcels along Starnes Rd. between US Hwy. 377 and Indian Springs Rd. are designated for mixed use and medium density residential development that would add traffic to Starnes Rd.
- Along the south side of Watauga Rd. between US Hwy. 377 and Saramac Dr., the currently empty parcels are designated for local office/retail/commercial land use. When development occurs, more trips would be attracted to the roadway.
- Intersection improvements along US Hwy. 377.

Figure 27. Future Land Use Plan



Context-Sensitive Solutions

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is the practice of developing transportation projects that complement their surroundings and emphasize the scenic, historic, environmental, and other resources, while maintaining functionality. It is a collaborative process that involves all stakeholders in developing street designs that fit into the character of surrounding neighborhoods while maintaining safety and mobility. The key is that elements of the street should complement the context of the surroundings or adjacent development to generate a roadway experience. For instance, a roadway may need to be designed as a six-lane boulevard as it travels through a commercial area, but may need to be altered to a minor street configuration as it travels through a town center or mixed-use area.



CSS Principles

The process of designing CSS roadways is similar to the process of designing traditional thoroughfares in that automobile traffic is considered with traffic counts, traffic demand, and level of service information-gathering efforts. However, the difference is that automobile traffic is only one element considered, among numerous others, in the design of CSS roadways. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) has recently released a publication entitled *An ITE Recommended Practice: Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities*. This publication outlines various principles that should be considered during the design process to arrive at a solution for a context sensitive roadway project. These principles are as follows:

- The project satisfies the purpose and needs as agreed to by a full range of stakeholders. This agreement is forged in the earliest phase of the project and amended as warranted as the project develops.
- The project is a safe facility for both the user and the community.
- The project is in harmony with the community, and it preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic and natural resource values of the area; in other words, exhibits context-sensitive design.
- The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people's minds.
- The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources (time, budget, and community) of all involved parties.
- The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community.
- The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community.

Complete Streets

Complete Streets is a relatively new initiative that aims to maximize the utilization of public rights-of-way for all transportation users, regardless of age or ability. This method uses high-level policy direction to influence everyday decision-making processes in roadway design, rather than design prescription. Complete Streets is not about special projects, but about changing the approach to projects on all streets. It is an incremental approach aimed for long-term results. These policies utilize the entire right-of-way while focusing on safety, comfort, and convenience as well as cohesiveness within the context of the community. Complete Streets makes it easier to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work, which makes the City a better place to live.



Benefits

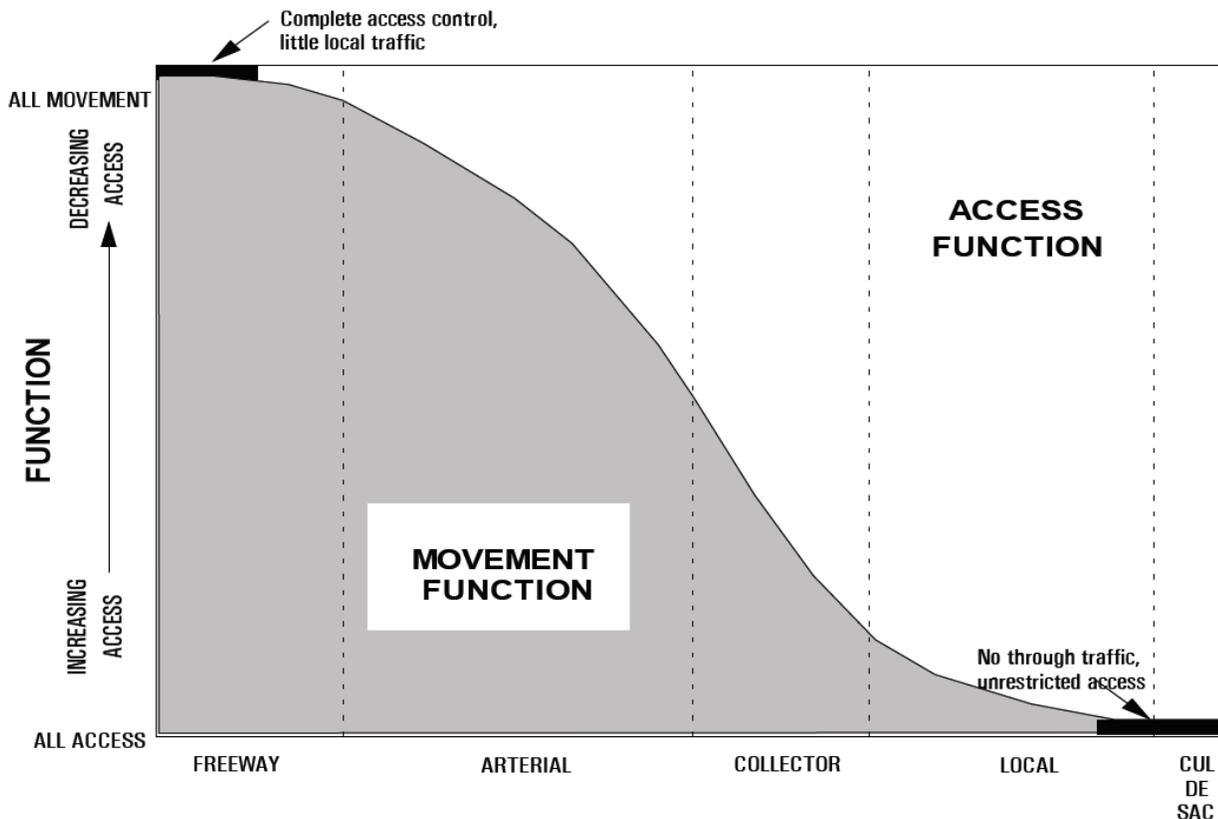
Complete Streets improve safety, provide choices, reduce costs, and lead to better health and stronger economies. By considering the many different users of the roadway, streets can be designed to accommodate everyone and improve the livability of the community.

- **Improve Safety** – Reducing travel speed, which lowers risk to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as including pedestrian infrastructure, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, crossings, median islands and curb extensions.
- **Provide Choices** – By building safe, comfortable, and convenient infrastructure for other modes of transportation, residents are more willing to use them.
- **Reduced Costs** – By reevaluating the needs of the residents and incorporating community input at the beginning of the project, the schedule, scope, and budget can often be reduced. Narrowing the pavement area will also reduce costs.
- **Better Health** – With an aging population, older adults look to be more active. This demographic, along with kids and teens, cannot drive and look for pedestrian and bicycle facilities to become more active and independent.
- **Stronger Economies** – Areas that provide safe and comfortable walkability have lower commercial vacancies and higher home and office space values.

Roadway Design and Functional Classification

The functional classification of streets provides for the circulation of traffic in a hierarchy of movement from one classification to the next. Functional classes can be subdivided further into major and minor designations to further detail their role in the community.

Figure 28. Roadway Hierarchy and Function

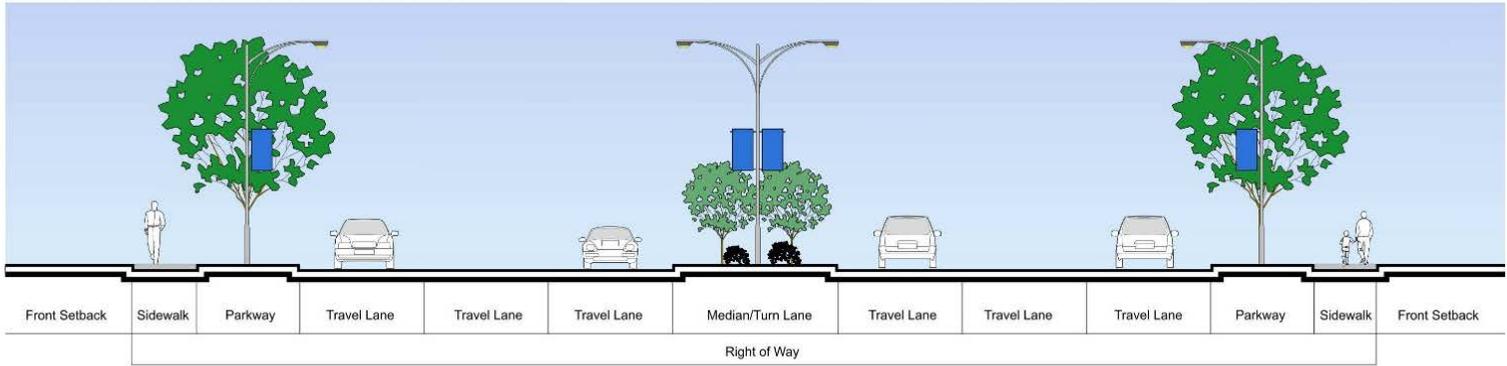


Access and movement functions are directly related in that as inhibited movement increases (speed), points of access decrease and vice versa. This is typically why principal arterials, with a high level of movement, have limited access points where as streets in neighborhood areas have more access points and reduced speed. The proposed Thoroughfare Plan for Watauga recognizes five general classifications for roadways based upon a hierarchical function and include:

Principal Arterial

Four to six-lane divided roadway designed to provide a high degree of mobility, service relatively high traffic volumes, have high operational speeds, and service a significant portion of through travel. The typical right-of-way width would be 100 (four lanes) to 120 feet (six lanes). Parking is never allowed on a principal arterial. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street as appropriate. See Figure 29.

Figure 29. Principal Arterial



Minor Arterial

Three- to four-lane roadways with a similar function to the Major Thoroughfare, but providing a higher degree of local access. This section is typically a curbed roadway, divided or undivided within a minimum 80-foot right-of-way. Parking is rarely allowed on a four-lane minor arterial, but may be allowed on a three-lane minor arterial. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. See Figures 30 and 31.

Figure 30. Minor Arterial

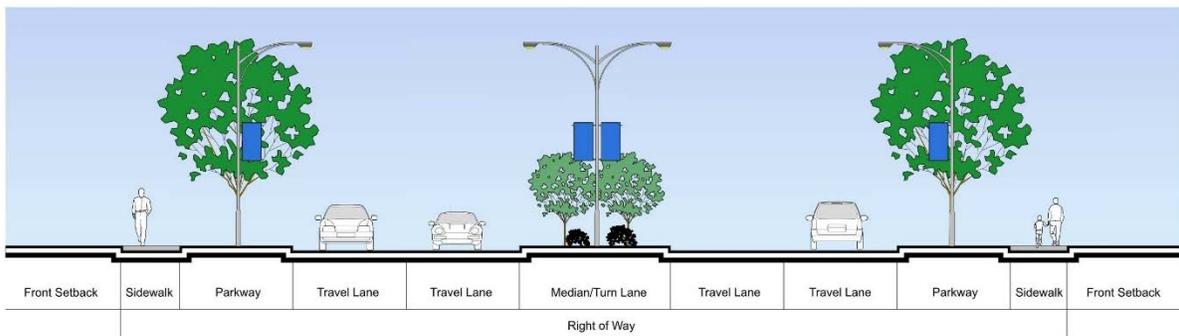
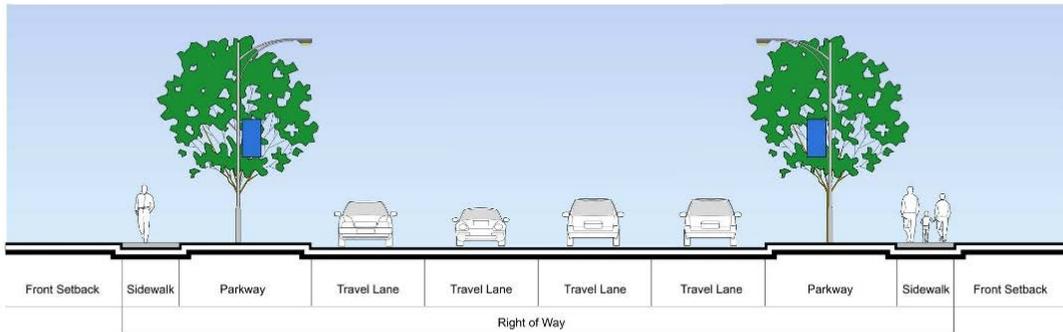


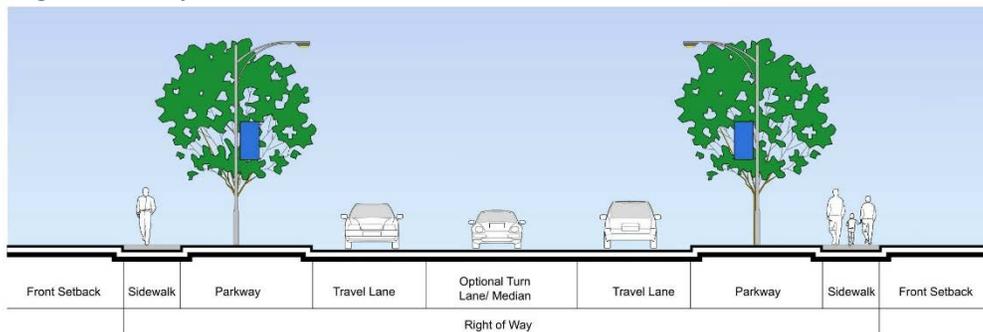
Figure 31. Minor Arterial



Major Collector

Two- and three-lane undivided streets serve as connections between arterials and local roadways. This road type typically serves to support commercial and transitional areas from residential development. However the three-lane section may also serve residential applications. The three-lane section contains a continuous left-turn lane and in residential area may allow for on-street parking. The typical right-of-way width would be 80 feet. Parking is often allowed on a major collector. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. See Figure 32.

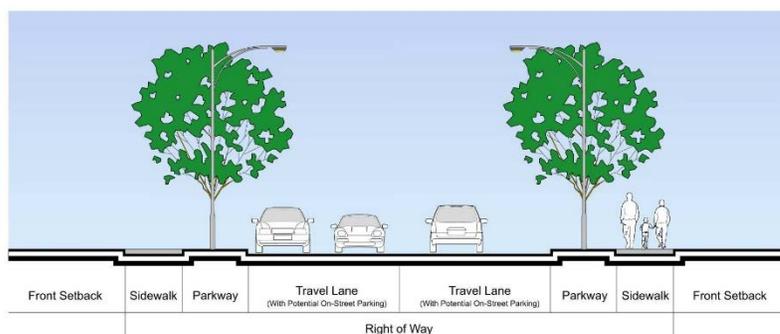
Figure 32. Major Collector



Minor Collector

Similar to the major collector, this road type serves to provide for collection and distribution of traffic between arterial and local streets. This two-lane roadway would serve to support residential and small scale non-residential type development with relatively short trip lengths. The typical right-of-way width would be 60 feet. Parking is usually allowed on a minor collector. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. See Figure 33.

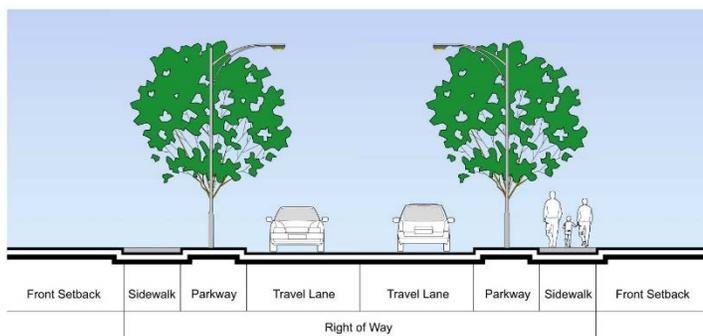
Figure 33. Minor Collector



Local Street

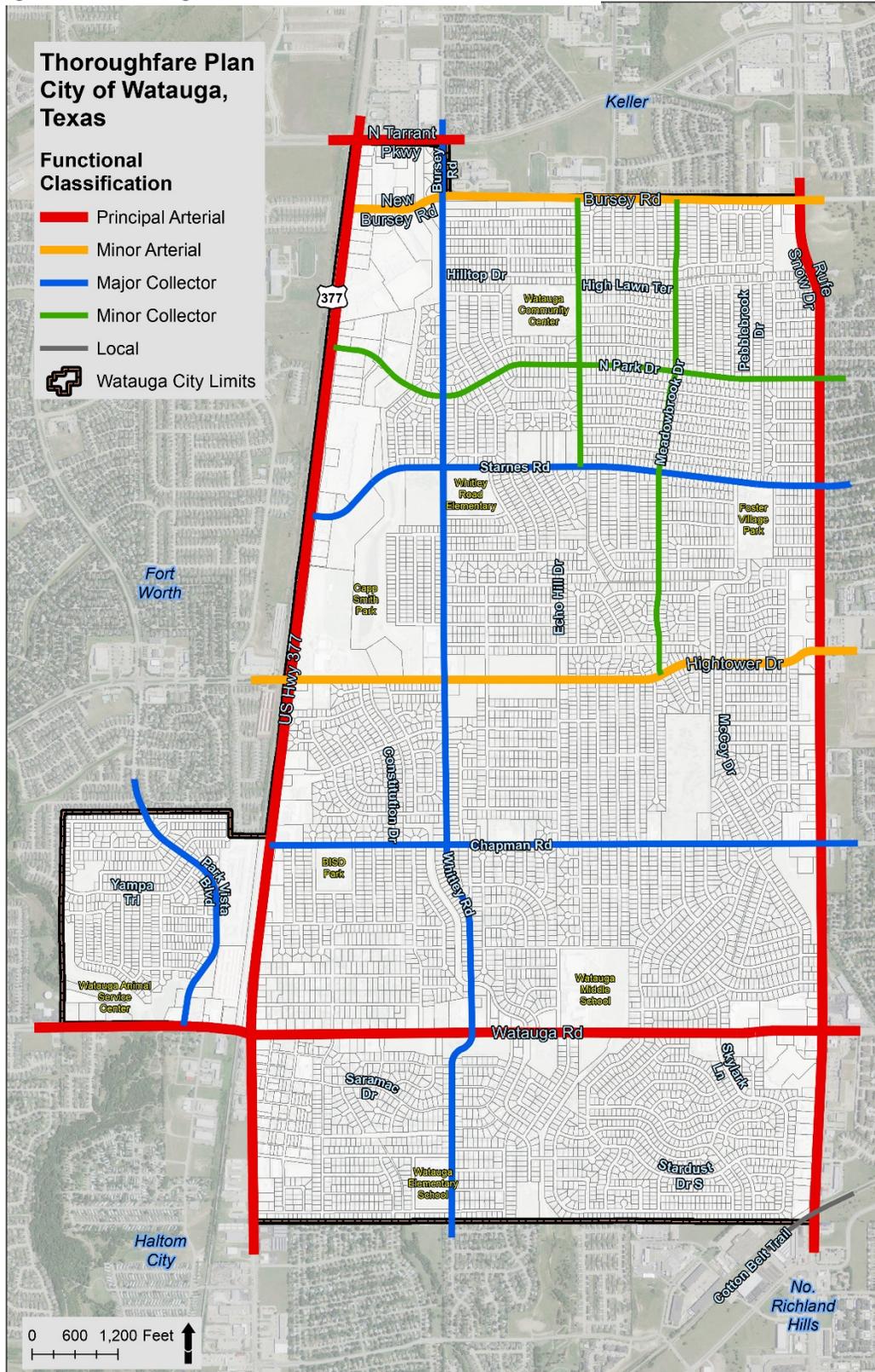
Two-lane streets for accommodating neighborhood traffic. An urban and rural (open drainage) section are contained within a 50-foot right-of-way. Parking is usually allowed on a local street. Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of the street. See Figure 34.

Figure 34. Local Street



Thoroughfare Plan

Figure 35. Thoroughfare Plan



The thoroughfare system forms one of the most visible and permanent physical elements of a community. It establishes the framework for community growth and development and, along with the Future Land Use Plan, forms a long range statement of public policy. By incorporating programmed land uses and densities of the Future Land Use Plan, strategies can be developed that maximize the land use/transportation relationship.

Transportation decisions do not exist within a vacuum, but are directly related to decisions regarding land use and building form. Therefore, the ultimate objective should be to create a balanced transportation system which provides for the safe mobility of residents, considers both current and future needs, enhances connectivity and mobility options, and promotes a more livable community through a proactive planning approach.

Additional consideration is needed for intersection improvements along Hwy. 377. Future coordination with adjacent cities and regional transportation agencies will be required. Specifically, Hwy. 377 intersections with Watauga Rd., Hightower Dr., Starnes Rd. and N. Park Dr. need additional study.

The basic transportation system within Watauga is essentially already established. Following are some of the changes to the functional classification of some of the streets when compared to the existing Thoroughfare Plan:

- Hightower Dr. and Bursey Rd.: Changed to Minor Arterial
- Whitley Rd., Starnes Rd., and Chapman Rd.: Changed to Major Collector
- N. Park Dr., Indian Springs Rd., and Meadowbrook Dr.: Changed to Minor Collector

Bicycle and Pedestrian Considerations

Sidewalks

Walking can be considered the most basic form of transport for the following reasons:

- It is universal: virtually everybody walks and virtually all trips include walking links;
- It is affordable: economically and socially disadvantaged people tend to rely heavily on walking for transport;
- It provides connections between different land uses and areas
- It provides additional benefits, including exercise and enjoyment

Often times the provision of pathways and sidewalks is neglected. Many street improvements are designed to focus on automobile traffic improvements and sometimes do not include pedestrian improvements. Providing sidewalks and trails as a component of the transportation system will encourage walkability by providing a protected pathway and creating a sense of safety. If residents see and identify a clearly delineated pathway to their intended location, they have a sense of security in walking to that destination. This is particularly important near schools to protect the security of children.

Connectivity is a vital component of the sidewalk network. Sidewalks should be intentionally and purposefully designed, rather than implemented in small segments. While sidewalks are generally incorporated in residential areas as new homes are constructed, sidewalks along collector and arterial roadways should be constructed in conjunction with any future roadway improvements. Additionally, a sidewalk program may be utilized to determine significant deficiency areas, particularly near key destination points, and can help to prioritize and implement sidewalk improvements when funding is available.

Bicycle Facilities

On-street facilities may be utilized in situations where road widths are reduced. Generally, bicycle lanes are a minimum of four feet wide (five feet recommended). On-street bicycle routes should be carefully considered and incorporated only where traffic volumes allow for safe bicycle accommodation.

A second method for incorporating bicycle routes is through off-street accommodation. When off-street bicycle accommodations are considered, it is important that either the trail be used for bicycles only, or that it is sufficiently wide to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Narrow pathways that accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians put both bicycles and pedestrians at risk for injury.

Specific bicycle and pedestrian improvements identified to connect to the existing trail network of the adjacent cities include:

- **Connection to Trails in Fort Worth:** There are existing trails within Watauga near the west city limit that can be connected to the existing trail system in Fort Worth. Currently the two trail systems are separated by the Whites Branch Creek. A Bridge would be required within the Fort Worth city limits to provide the needed connection.
- **Connection to Trails in Keller:** City of Keller has an extensive trail network located northeast of Watauga. The nearest trail crosses Rufe Snow Dr. at approximately 1300 feet north of Bursey Rd. intersection which defines the northeast corner of the city limits. A potential connection to this trail would require providing the missing sidewalk section along south side of Bursey Rd. within Watauga.
- **Connection to Cottonwood Trail:** Cottonwood trail is a regional trail that runs along the Cottonbelt Railroad and crosses Rufe Snow Dr. at the southeast corner of Watauga City Limits. A side path along the west side of Rufe Snow Dr. between Star Dust Dr. and Cotton Belt Trl. would provide the necessary connection.
- **Connection to South from Virgil Anthony Park:** In addition, a trail connection from Virgil Anthony Park to Browning Blvd. and ultimately the Cottonbelt Trail is recommended.
- **Side Path along Watauga Road:** A side path, which is essentially a 10-foot wide sidewalk, along north side of Watauga Rd. would help connect the existing trail system west of US Hwy. 377 near Park Vista Blvd. to the proposed on-street bike system along Whitley Rd. and Stardust Dr.
- **Side Path along US Hwy. 377:** A side path, which is essentially a 10-foot wide sidewalk, along west side of US Hwy. 377 from Capp Smith Park to Watauga Rd. This project will require additional pedestrian crossing facilities at Starnes Rd.
- **On-Street Bike Routes:** Whitley Rd. can be designated as an on-street bike route within the City Limits. Appropriate signage would need to be installed to inform the motorists of presence of bicycles on the street sharing the roadway. Another north-south on-street bicycle route could utilize Meadowbrook Dr., Wooddale Dr., and Stardust Dr. Both of the on-street bicycle routes, in conjunction with the side paths and proposed connections to the adjacent cities' trail systems, would enhance the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity for the residents.

Figure 36. Pedestrian Routes



Transportation Key Objectives

- Adopt the Thoroughfare Map and base future transportation improvements on strategies outlined in the Development Strategy.
- Review and update of capital improvements projects annually, and implementing road maintenance, improved medians, repair and reconstruction for existing roadways.
- Conduct sidewalk assessment study and implement highest priority needs.
- Implement improvements to Whitley Rd., Chapman Rd. and Bursey Rd.
- Continue to coordinate with NCTCOG and TxDOT for US Hwy. 377 enhancements including access management and intersection improvements.
- Continue to coordinate and monitor Union Pacific rail line expansion.
- Continue to monitor and explore transportation funding grants and partnerships, such as Safe Routes to School Program.
- Coordinate future pedestrian routes with existing park and trail planning efforts.



WATAUGA

TEXAS

INCORPORATED 1958

6 | Community and Neighborhood Livability

Neighborhood and Community Livability

Livability includes the built and natural environments, social equitability, educational opportunity, and cultural possibilities that add up to the community's quality of life. Planning for, and creating these characteristics may seem difficult, but the intangible nature of certain elements should not serve as a deterrent. A sense of place, civic pride and quality neighborhoods are palpable items to anyone who visits or calls Watauga home. Livability can be felt at community gatherings and seen in quality designed development. Working towards a more livable Watauga is an achievable and valuable task.

Watauga is a unique community with its own values and vision. The following section describes in more detail some of those tangible aspects that, when tailored to fit the needs and vision of Watauga, can help the City to grow in a manner that enhances the quality of its neighborhoods, improves the visual appeal of the City, and helps to create quality neighborhoods and vibrant retail areas. This section is intended to be used to guide decision makers as the City grows.



Current Planning Trends

The practice of urban planning has evolved over time. Today's trends are shaped and guided by in-depth research and lessons learned. The preceding efforts have produced the following planning trends applicable to Watauga:

Mix of Land Uses

A variety of land use types contributes to a neighborhood's walkability and vibrancy. Providing a mix of land uses increases pedestrian activity and helps to create a sense of place within the community. Mixed land uses may be vertical mixed use (typically retail at ground level and office and/or residential on upper levels), or horizontal mixed use (each use is contained within its own structure but planned into a single development). Mixed-use development should be encouraged at key locations within Watauga.



Traditional Neighborhood Design

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) incorporates a number of design features to encourage connectivity and facilitate active neighborhoods. Examples of several TND design features include:

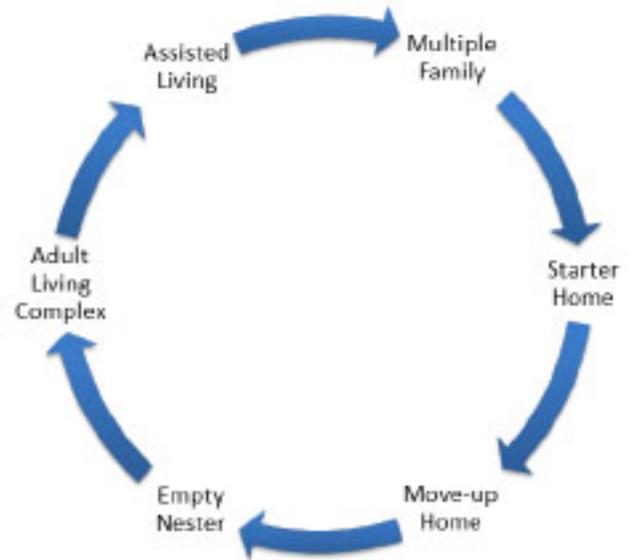
- Connected street grid
- Reduced housing setbacks from the street
- Front porches
- Neighborhood pocket parks
- Distinctive architectural design elements
- Sidewalk and pedestrian integration
- Various housing sizes
- Neighborhood centers accessible by car and foot

The advantages of TND should continue to be explored within Watauga, particularly in areas of future residential development and zoning laws may need to adapt to embrace the above design elements.



Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices

A range in housing options is important to ensure the full life cycle housing is available. Enabling residents to stay within the community throughout their lives, even as housing desires change, is an invaluable component of a city. Smaller starter homes, apartments, townhomes, and retirement facilities are important to ensure adequate housing for young adults, families with children, empty-nesters and retirees. Additionally, a range of housing options combats inequality and provides housing for all income levels.



Walkable Centers

The usage and ownership of the car continues to decline, while populations opt for alternative transportation modes. More feet on the street is leading a renewed focus on pedestrian amenities. To cater to this renewed movement, walkable centers within residential and nonresidential areas should be designed to be pedestrian-friendly through the use of sidewalks, signage, connectivity, seating, landscaping, lighting and scale and placement of buildings in relation to streets. This type of design creates a vibrant street atmosphere which improves the health of residents and promotes a better sense of public safety.

Strong Sense of Place

In large metropolitan areas, cities are faced with the challenge of establishing an identity. Often times, the transition from one city to its neighbor is indistinguishable. Aesthetic appearance and improvements, when combined with community branding, will help to make Watauga distinguishable from its neighbors, giving the City a sense of place. Additionally, neighborhoods with detailed building design, streetscaping, and amenities create local character and charm, which helps to maintain property values over time.



Open Space Preservation, Sustainability, and Water Management

Guiding development towards existing neighborhoods preserves open space, which can support the overall desirability of an area. Flood mitigation, water management, permeable pavements, bioswales, and rooftop gardens are among the many innovative developments in sustainability efforts. Limiting development within floodplains and other environmentally-sensitive areas preserves natural drainage systems and decreases development costs. Planning for the City's water needs for the future is critical and steps can be taken to ensure that there will be enough water for future demand. As the state of Texas comes out of a severe drought, encouraging low-impact, drought-tolerant landscaping is an excellent way to cut down on excessive water use.

Variety of Transportation Choices

Transportation variety generally evokes images of light rail and bus public transit service, but it can also refer to pedestrian connectivity, bike lanes and park-and-ride or carpool facilities. The availability of a range of transportation options provides residents of all income levels with mobility and accessibility. These options provide essential access to employment, healthcare, groceries and everyday goods and services.



Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

An inclusive planning process where citizens are engaged ensures that decisions made by City leaders are reflective of the community's vision. This becomes even more critical as council and commission members change. Additionally, stakeholder, primarily developers, should be involved in the review of development regulations to ensure that standards and processes are reasonable and fair to developers, while reflecting the community's vision. Most importantly, City staff should assume responsibility for coordinating and encouraging collaboration between these different groups.

Community Health

Planning for an active community with adequate infrastructure to support recreation and alternatives to automobile travel helps increase the level of physical activity of all residents. Moreover, the health of a community's residents can be directly impacted through development decisions. Physical design of the built environment, availability of recreational facilities/activities, and incentivized uses are opportunities for cities to have a positive impact on the health of their citizens.

Walkable Neighborhoods

A city's walkability is determined by the availability of pedestrian connections and proximity of residential and retail land uses. By offering an alternative to driving for basic errands, citizens have a healthier option that saves money spent on gas and helps improve air quality. Sidewalks and bike lanes improve pedestrian travel. When these elements are integrated into neighborhoods, citizens can walk or bike to a grocery store, restaurant, or convenience store.

Recreation

Recreational amenities should provide opportunities for increasing physical activity and social interaction. In addition to providing traditional park space, cities should consider developing trail networks with adequate signage and instructional workout stations located along the trails. Other park options include dog parks, or smaller pocket parks that are typically located in a vacant lot of a developed neighborhood. Community gathering places should also be available, such as pavilions, theaters/amphitheaters, and seating areas near water features or public art. Organized events including festivals and parades can encourage community activity, with both physical and social involvement.



Land Uses

Certain land uses, by nature, promote public health, such as the availability of medical care and access to fresh, healthy food. Cities can encourage these uses by ensuring they are permitted uses within the zoning ordinance, and developing incentives to encourage these businesses to locate within the city. Doctor and dentist offices and urgent care centers are often important destinations for families with young children or elderly people. Grocery stores, small neighborhood markets, farmers markets, and community gardens are different options that provide healthy food options. Farmers markets and community gardens can also be beneficial in supporting the local economy, encouraging social interaction, and are typically more environmentally-friendly with reduced transportation and packaging needs. Encouraging the development of grocery stores, small neighborhood markets, farmers markets and community gardens can support residents' access to healthy food options.





Design Character

The character and feel of a community is in many ways defined in the visual realm. A look and feel that is recognizable, charming, and unique helps to define a community's character. As a city, there are numerous elements that play into character. These range from signage and building design to landscaping and street design. Although it may appear to be an inordinate task to plan and implement comprehensive design characteristics, with the proper tools a city can define their character and instill a sense of community pride. Watauga is in an important transition; the existing built environment has many remarkable traits, and these assets should serve as the cornerstones for the future vision. There are some areas, however, such as older commercial corridors, which may be in need of attention. To achieve a cohesive design character, the City should work to transform critical visual elements. These improvements will meet the expectations of the citizens and visitors of Watauga. The following section provides design strategies that should be used as development decisions are made. These strategies are typically codified in the zoning and subdivision ordinance and will help guide citizens and decision makers through the process of revitalizing the design character of Watauga.

Commercial Signage

One important component to enhancing the overall image of Watauga is sign regulations. Regulating commercial signage can reduce visual clutter, creating a positive city image and even help define corridors or districts. Since commercial signage is generally intended to be seen by the driving public, it is important to consider public safety in the regulation process. To achieve this goal, signs should be aesthetically pleasing and effective, but also sized appropriately. This requires context sensitive solutions. For example, along a freeway, signs may need to be larger for people to see them from farther distances and high travel speeds. Often times, pole signs are often used along freeways and high-speed roads. An attractive and effective alternative to a pole sign is an appropriately sized monument sign. This trend is common in many cities across the country and the results have shown a cleaner, more sophisticated city appearance. In residential or pedestrian areas, effective signage may be much smaller in scale. Additionally, sign standards should encourage integration of signage with the surroundings. This may include scale, landscaping materials and building design.



Decisions related to sign regulations must follow the rules set forth in Chapter 216 of the Texas Local Government Code. Chapter 216 establishes the means by which a municipality may regulate the removal, relocation or reconstruction of a sign. When developing sign regulations, the City should determine feasible and fair alternatives. Any new sign regulations must be balanced between the public interest and the needs and rights of the business community. For instance, sign regulations should enhance the roadway by improving the visual appearance and safety, but regulations should allow for businesses to advertise enough to entice their customers or clients to stop.

Finally, sign standards for other areas in the community should reflect the image and character the city hopes to achieve. These goals can be achieved with increased design and material standards for monument signs, the requirement of unified multi-tenant signs for retail shopping centers, and the prohibition of unsightly sign types.

Screening and Buffering

The purpose of screening and buffering is to enhance the visual appearance of the community by separating incompatible land uses, improving the appearance of parking areas and public right-of-ways, minimizing soil erosion, and reducing stormwater runoff. Screening typically focuses more on the visual impacts of the use while buffering focuses more on light and sounds. There are many techniques for screening and buffering. Types of screening include fences, walls, trees or large shrubs placed strategically to help blend a use into the surrounding environment or prevent unsightly items from being seen. Natural screening includes strips of land such as hills or berms, clumps of trees and shrubs or other landscape features that are used to reduce headlight glare and traffic noises. The following screening techniques should be considered:



- The use of masonry walls where residential and non-residential areas abut. Masonry is more durable and requires less maintenance than wood fencing
- Use of trees along the line between the residential and non-residential use, particularly if parking lighting is present, to help mitigate lighting impacts
- Screening of trash receptacles through a masonry or brick wall, an opaque gate enclosure, and required landscaping materials
- Screening of loading docks, when present, through the use of walls, berms and landscaping
- Use of screening walls to hide commercial outside storage areas from the public view and abutting residential areas

Buffering incompatible uses with a tiered system based on adjacent use types can also help to reduce the negative impacts of development. Establishing Level One, Two and Three screening and buffering requirements (where Level One has the minimum requirements and Level Three has the maximum) can help to simplify the process for city staff and developers. More intense commercial uses adjacent to residential uses should have increased buffering and screening requirements (i.e. Level Three) and less intensive uses, such as office adjacent to multi-family should require Level One screening and buffering.

Landscaping

Landscape requirements can enhance the perception of the City, particularly along major corridors. Non-residential landscaping requirements should consider the following:

- Minimum landscape buffer along collector streets and along all arterial streets
- Minimum tree requirements for street frontage
- Minimum number of shrubs based on linear street frontage
- Maximum percentage of turf grass coverage
- Use of native, drought-tolerant landscaping to reduce water use, when possible
- Low Impact Design (LID) landscaping techniques to retain and absorb a portion of a site's stormwater runoff
- Landscaped islands in parking areas



Non-Residential Design Standards

Attractive, quality commercial development requires considering both site design and architectural design. Effective site design must produce safe site circulation for both automobile and pedestrian traffic. This is achieved through strategic ingress and egress points, proper building orientation, parking design and adequate land dedication for landscaping. When these elements work in unison, a commercial development can accommodate high traffic businesses and remain functional. Key elements Watauga should include in their non-residential design standards are:

- Building orientation
- Lot coverage
- Setbacks
- Pedestrian circulation and trail connections
- Number and location of access points
- Access easements
- Parking lot design and parking requirements
- Landscaping requirements
- Screening and buffering requirements
- Location of refuse enclosures

Architectural design guidelines also contribute to the positive image of a city. They guide future development and advance the community character established in the City's Development Strategy. The development of nonresidential design standards should be done with a clear vision of the future of Watauga. Design trends are important and should be researched prior to establishing the standards. However, an emphasis on quality materials and clearly defined and enforceable standards may prove to be of greater value. Quality designed buildings will draw visitors to the area and create a sense of place for residents. City staff should define a list of approved building materials, percentages of masonry coverage, roofing materials, and other design related standards to help guide future development. The City should consider the following factors when developing non-residential design standards:

- Building heights
- Vertical and horizontal articulations
- Entryway design and orientation
- 360-degree architecture
- Façade materials: masonry percentages, mixture of materials, color, prohibited materials
- Façade requirements: awnings, canopies, parapets



Street Character/Design

Median Treatments

The use of medians is recommended as a form of access management and to provide opportunities for increased visual quality. Medians should be used at roadway entrances and along major corridors. Signage, pavers, stone, lighting and plant materials may enhance the overall appearance.

Intersection Enhancements

Intersection enhancements can be used to both increase aesthetics and contribute to community branding. Intersection enhancements, such as pavement treatments, corner plazas, landscaping and decorative lighting may be utilized to improve the aesthetic appeal of a corridor, particularly at major intersections. The addition of the Watauga logo may help brand the corridor. While such an addition may seem subtle, it may help to clearly delineate Watauga to visitors.

Sidewalks

Establishing a well-connected pedestrian network is an effective way to encourage people to travel short distances by walking. Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings are the most common approach to creating the network. Sidewalks allow people to move freely and serve as a significant method of transportation for many people in a small community like Watauga. Sidewalks and their design, notably their relationship to the street, can either be inviting for a pedestrian by having tree cover and a buffer from the street or not inviting by placing pedestrians in the direct sun and closer to moving vehicles.

It is recommended that the sidewalks be incorporated along both sides of all major roadways to provide a safe connection for pedestrians and to enhance the overall aesthetics of the City.

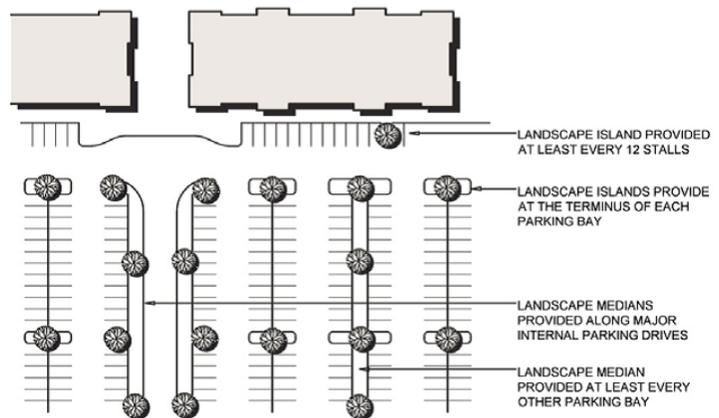
Corridor Landscaping

Landscaping should be utilized at key intersections and site entrances throughout the City. Landscaped areas should include not only large trees and shrubs, but also seasonal color, small trees and plants. Trees near buildings and pedestrian walkways should be pruned up to nine feet in height to ensure safe clearance. Landscape beds and planters should be provided at building entrances and outdoor seating areas. Shrubs, landscape berms and enhanced landscaping, in addition to turf grass, should be used to buffer parking lots from the public view and may also be used to screen loading docks and other visually unattractive areas. Landscaping native to North Texas should be encouraged to protect water resources and ensure drought tolerance.



Parking Standards and Design

Parking lots should be broken up with a landscape median between every other parking bay. Landscape islands containing at least one tree should be provided at the terminus of each row of parking and additionally at every twelve parking stalls. Parking lots greater than 50 parking stalls should consider a landscape median on each side of major internal parking drives. Parking aisles should be arranged perpendicular to building entrances when possible. Surface parking in the front of businesses should be discouraged in pedestrian-oriented environments. In these areas, parking should be encouraged on the side or at the back of a business.



Street Signs and Sign Toppers

The City should continue branded street signs and major intersections with the City's logo. This will help visitors and residents identify these areas as part of Watauga. Additionally, sign toppers for individual neighborhoods within the City should have a uniform look to them. This uniformity might include the same color, shape and/or font.



Connectivity

New development within Watauga should focus on integration of land uses- ensuring that development contains connections, both vehicular and pedestrian in nature, to adjacent land uses. The following strategies will aid in improving overall community connectivity:

- Encourage multiple street connections between adjacent developments
- Ensure that neighborhoods provide access to parks and trails, when present
- Work with developers to incorporate parks and trails as development occurs, either through easement, land dedication or purchase
- Provide sidewalks in all future residential developments
- Provide multi-modal facilities, such as trails and bike paths

Community Branding

The visual monotony that is often inherent to communities within a particular geographic area makes it appear that each one is just like its neighbor. For example, the visual appearance of a community to a traveler along US Hwy. 377 may be very similar to the appearance of any other nearby community. This lack of design variety, especially along major corridors, tends to create anonymity, and it becomes difficult for people to know when they have left one community and entered another. Gateways can provide a strong sense of arrival to, as well as a sense of departure from, the community. These features are the first thing visitors see when they arrive and the last impression visitors have when they leave.

It is important for Watauga to distinguish itself from the surrounding communities and improve the overall visual landscape of the city. Creating a cohesive street sign system throughout the city is a simple first step in the right direction. Gateway features are also a great way to tie the city together. Watauga currently has gateway signage at key entry points into the City as well as a well-branded water tower that can be seen from several points in the City.

Consideration should be given to expanding a uniform branding concept for the City, including street signs, gateways, and key corridor improvements. Hierarchical distinction between primary and secondary gateways and corridors can be achieved through design

An important factor in the design of gateways is to develop an entryway that provides a sense of identity for community while projecting a desirable image for the city. Consideration should be given to establishing a uniform design concept for all gateway areas, and hierarchical distinction between gateways and corridors can be achieved through design modifications for each location. Focusing efforts on targeted areas will help to leave visitors and residents with a positive and memorable experience when traveling through Watauga. Figure 37 identifies gateway signage and key corridor enhancement areas.



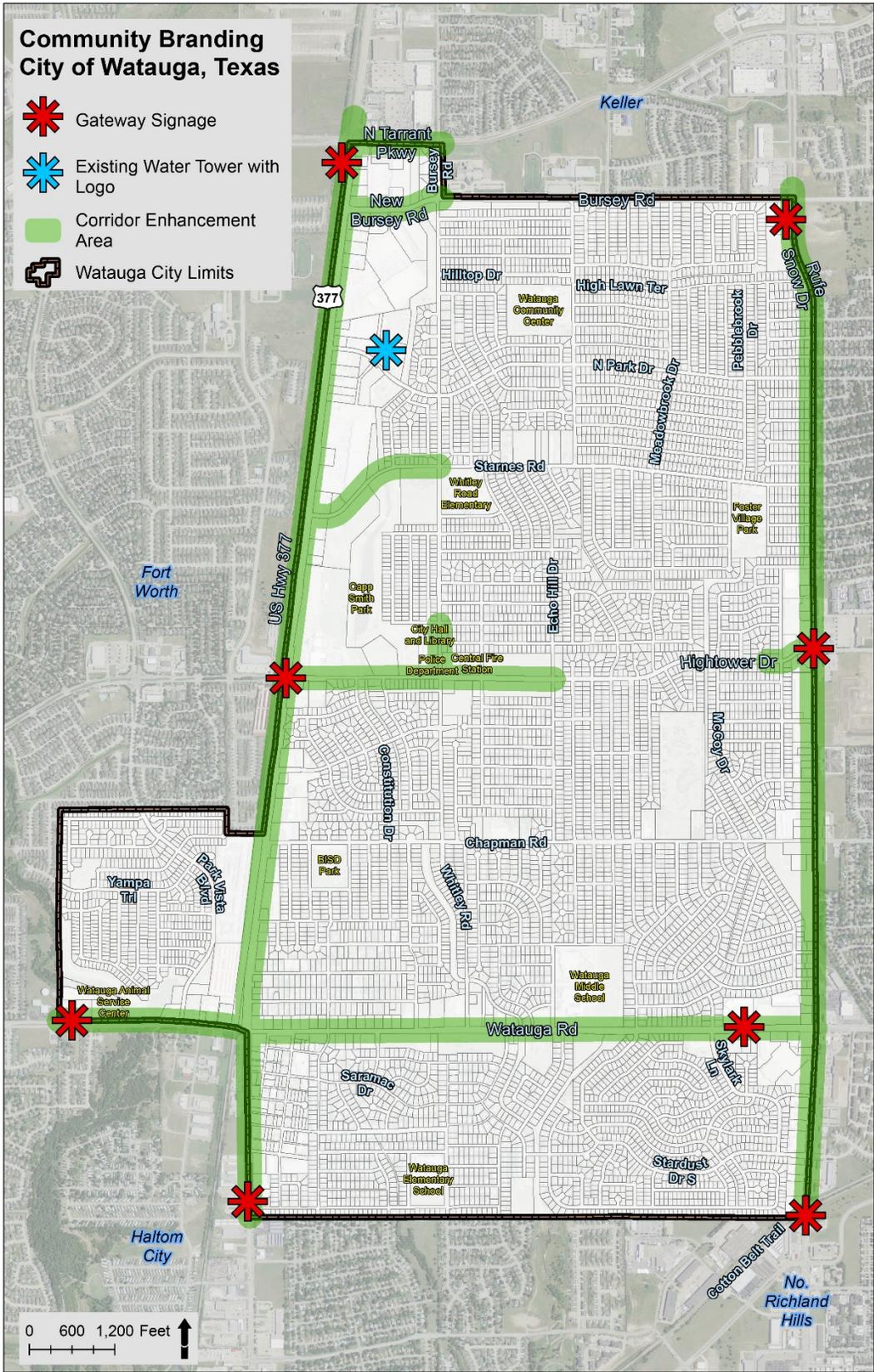


Figure 37. Community Branding

Gateways

The design and location of gateways into the City of Watauga should be guided by several factors. One of the most obvious factors is the number of people using a particular entry point. The most heavily traveled roadway in Watauga is US Hwy. 377. Primary gateways located at the entry points into the City along this corridor should be large in scale and contain recognizable features that identify Watauga. Typical elements include, but are not limited to, monuments, interior and/or exterior lighting and accentuated landscape. The City currently has gateway monuments located at the major city entry points. These locations are ideal for such signage, however it is encouraged that the City pursue further enhancements to make these gateway signs more prominent. Adding additional landscaping around these gateway signs can significantly increase the prominence without incurring major costly renovations. Additionally, these gateway areas may include enhanced medians utilizing masonry columns or low walls, enhanced landscaping, decorative street lighting, street trees, decorative pavement treatments or other identifies that signify arrival into the City. Figures 38 and 39 illustrate conceptual gateway considerations.

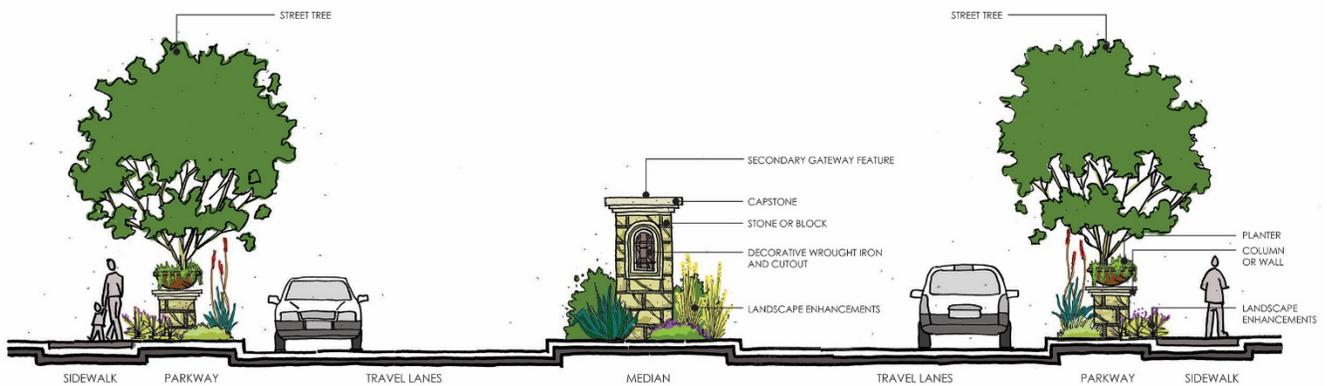


Figure 38. Conceptual Gateway/Corridor Design Street Section



Figure 39. Conceptual Gateway/Corridor Design Plan View

Corridor Enhancement Areas

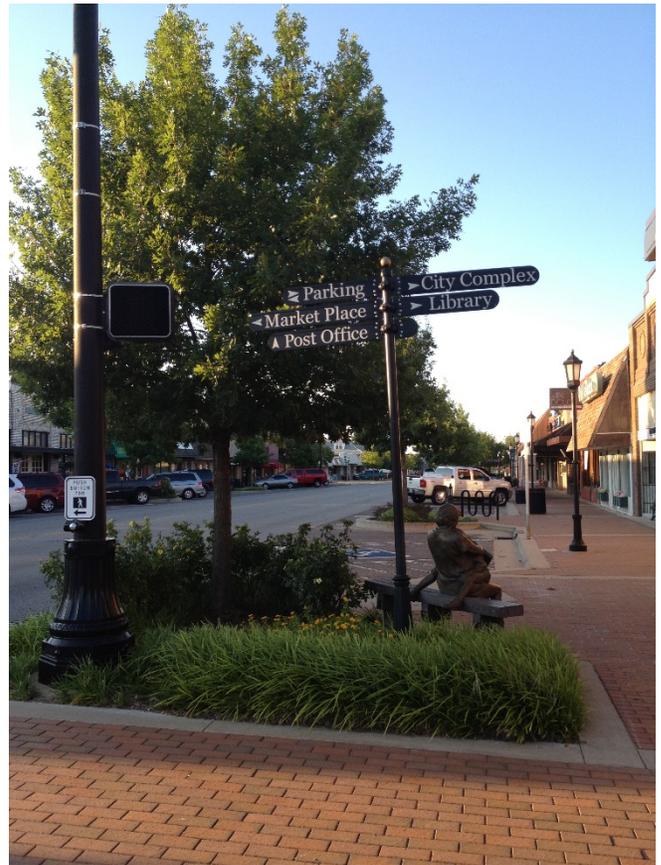
Joined with gateways, corridor enhancements can greatly contribute to the sense of arrival in Watauga. Figure 37 identifies key corridors for the City to consider for future improvement. These corridors were selected because they serve as gateways, are the most highly visible areas, and most traveled by visitors to the City. A few of these efforts are strategically smaller in scale when compared to improving an entire roadway, and will require less investment by the City, while providing a substantial visual impact. Focusing development efforts on these corridors, such as along Starnes Rd. or Hightower Dr. will also advance the branding and community image of Watauga.

Corridor enhancements are created through the use of key design elements. These elements are intended to improve the aesthetics of the area as well as increasing pedestrian activity, and overall beautification. The inclusion of median enhancements are critical to corridor enhancements. Median treatments generally consist of street trees, increased landscaping, raised masonry planter boxes and decorative street lighting with banner flags. Additionally, intersection enhancements improve the look and feel of an intersection within the corridor. These improvements assist in raising awareness of pedestrian traffic and providing visual enhancements to the corridor. The most appropriate elements to include in the intersection enhancements are generally decorative pavement treatments identifying the boundaries of the intersection, pedestrian refuge areas, bollards, corner enhancements such as brick pavers or stamped concrete, low masonry planter boxes, landscape enhancements, and decorative lighting.

The elements described above provide the general ingredients necessary to create effective corridor enhancement. While all elements may not be utilized at each location, the City should consider the most appropriate elements for each designated corridor. The following information is intended to provide guidance for the corridors identified for enhancement.

US Hwy. 377

US Hwy. 377 is the major commercial thoroughfare through the City. Due to the high volumes of traffic, improvements will have a significant positive effect on the City's image. The existing investment of several shopping centers is a great framework and starting point for further investment along this corridor. Building on this investment, the City should continue the enhanced commercial signage along this corridor. Incorporating the City logo with these enhanced commercial signs may also be considered. Coordinated landscaping should also be included to intensify the unified character for US Hwy. 377.



Additional considerations for improvements to this corridor include adding pavement treatments such as brick pavers and pedestrian refuge areas to existing pedestrian crossings to create visual appeal and increase awareness of pedestrian traffic. Streetscape improvements may include corner treatments with decorative placement, bollards, street trees, increased landscape setbacks, masonry planter boxes and decorative street lighting with banner flags. Finally, wayfinding signage along the corridor can help direct visitors and residents to their destination.

Watauga Rd.

Watauga Rd. serves as a key east/west corridor within the City. Median and intersection enhancements are recommended along this corridor. These improvements may include a monument column, similar in design and materials to the primary gateway signs. Alternately, low masonry walls with the City's name and logo fronted by tiered landscaping would create well-defined entry points into the city at both ends of Watauga Rd. Median improvements and decorative lighting as described above would also complement the design of the gateway.

Rufe Snow Dr.

Rufe Snow Dr. is the major north/south corridor on the east side of the City. Since this is a shared corridor with the City of North Richland Hills, the City of Watauga should work closely with the City of North Richland Hills officials and staff to ensure the design of this corridor has a cohesive look and feel. Improvements on the west side of the street might include a gateway monument with landscaping, south of Bursey Rd., enhanced sidewalks, decorative lighting with banners, mass plantings, groundcover, street trees, and pavement treatments at intersections .

Hightower Dr.

New development along Hightower Dr., west of Echo Hill Dr. should include streetscape enhancements such as street trees, masonry planter boxes, secondary gateway signage, and brick or stamped crosswalks. To further add to the enhanced streetscape, parallel parking is encouraged on both sides of the street near future mixed-use areas. This parking application can be a layer of safety, keeping the pedestrian further away from moving traffic while also encouraging vehicles to travel at slower speeds. This character should follow up Whitley Rd. to City Hall and the Library, further unifying this area as a special place in the City.

The small extension of Hightower Dr. west of Rufe Snow Rd. should pull in elements from the Rufe Snow Dr., including street trees, landscaping and sidewalk improvements, to promote Hightower Dr. as a major east/west connector within the City and encourage vehicular and pedestrian traffic to patron this route.



Pedestrian amenities along a commercial corridor



Pedestrian-scale lighting

Starnes Rd.

Similar to the enhancements on Hightower Dr., the improvements along Starnes Rd. should include street trees, masonry planter boxes, secondary gateway signage, brick or stamped concrete crosswalks, decorative lighting with banners, and parallel parking. The elements within this corridor should have a consistent character in coordination with the other enhanced corridors within the City.

New Bursey Rd.

The short stretch on New Bursey Rd., from US Hwy. 377 to Whitley Road should include the same elements as those along US Hwy. 377. This stretch of road acts as a connector between the residential units that line Bursey Rd. on the east side of Whitley Rd. and the commercial development along US Hwy. 377. Commercial and wayfinding signage should be incorporated along this stretch, as well as enhanced sidewalks are encouraged along this corridor, to help promote walkability from adjacent residential leading to the commercial development.

North Tarrant Pkwy.

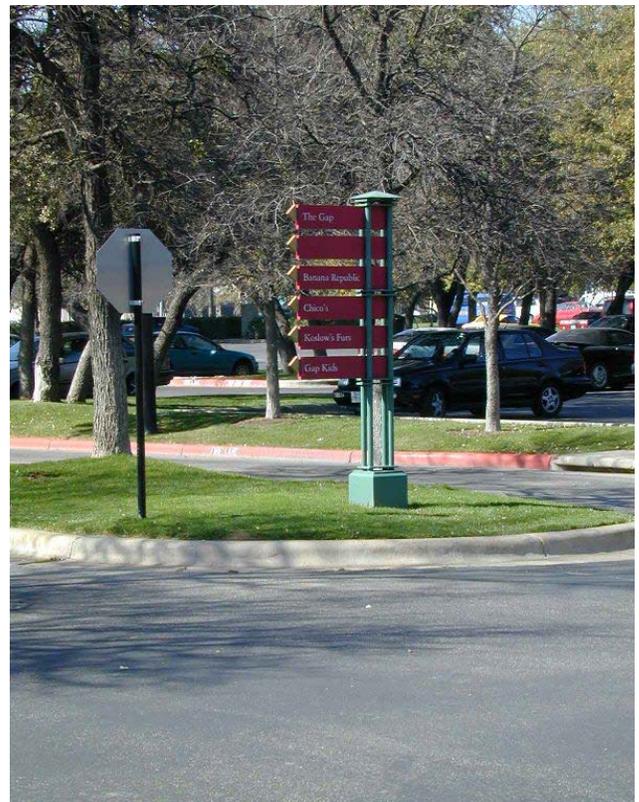
Similar to New Bursey Rd., the short distance of North Tarrant Pkwy., between US Hwy. 377 and Whitley Rd. should act as a connector between the commercial thoroughfare and the residential neighborhood. This corridor should focus on enhanced sidewalks, commercial and wayfinding signage, landscaping elements, and decorative lighting with banners, denoting the entrance into Watauga from the neighboring municipalities.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding ties brand identity with directing residents and visitors to a city's main attractions while also allowing them to discover new attractions or events. Wayfinding should be designed in stages while always maintaining consistency. Stage one wayfinding should be utilized at entry points to the City to direct visitors and residents to attractions. Stage two should be located at the point of destination and serves to identify parking. Stage three should be focused on the pedestrian realm and indicate entry points at the destination. For the City of Watauga to maintain a successful and effective wayfinding system, the signage must feature consistent and recognizable graphics and placement standards. The City should also consider incorporating existing branding elements taken from gateway monuments into all wayfinding signage.



Enhanced intersection streetscape



Wayfinding signage

Housing and Neighborhoods

As an established city, Watauga must continue to reinvest in its existing neighborhoods to promote their long-term vitality. Focusing on neighborhood strategies is important because the existing housing stock in the City must remain competitive with surrounding cities' new residential developments. The goal is for Watauga to retain lifelong residents while also attracting new families and residents. Thriving neighborhoods increase quality of life, support excellence in the education system and help to meet employment center needs. In addition, thriving neighborhoods are vital for positive visitor perceptions, and the ultimate image of Watauga.

The defining characteristics of a thriving neighborhood are generally quality housing occupied by residents who take pride in their homes, properties and neighborhoods. A neighborhood is the setting in which residents develop a sense of belonging. These social ties are developed through everyday social interactions, common interests and simply by being neighbors. It is therefore in the public interest not only to maintain neighborhood conditions, but to also enhance existing neighborhoods with public investment.

Successful housing strategies invoke a variety of techniques, both public and private, and require cooperative actions by property owners, tenants, the City, local organizations and volunteer groups. While personal investment in property is a key component for attractive neighborhoods, the City may also positively impact and encourage private investment by creating and maintaining livable neighborhoods. Livable neighborhoods are those which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Opportunities for neighborhood interaction
- Access to public amenities
- Well-maintained infrastructure
- A sense of community, identity or belonging
- Access to conveniences such as retail, schools and neighborhood services
- Well-maintained housing
- Life-cycle housing

As a first-tier suburb, the City of Watauga has many challenging housing issues. A large portion of the housing stock within the City was constructed during the 1970's and 1980's. The issue of an older housing stock is it creates a marketability challenge, particularly in such a high-growth region as the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The benefit of Watauga, however, is the general livability of the community's neighborhoods, including its general location in proximity to Fort Worth and major interstates, its park system, its quality public facilities and the City's strong vision for the future.

Existing Housing Stock

Understanding the City's existing housing stock plays an important role in developing strategies to preserve and improve Watauga's neighborhoods. Additionally, knowledge of the existing housing stock is useful to identify housing strengths and weaknesses of the existing conditions as well as areas of focus for future planning efforts.

Watauga’s current housing is primarily limited to single-family detached homes. Multi-family housing is present, but does not make up a significant portion of the overall housing stock. Watauga has approximately 8,490 total housing units within the city limits. The majority of the homes within the City are owner-occupied at 78 percent with renter-occupied housing making up the additional 22 percent. Watauga’s vacancy rate is four percent. As seen from the Table 6 below, a majority of the housing stock was built between 1960 and 2009, with the 1980-1989 being the decade of most residential development.

This data tells a story of a community with an abundance of aging homes, limited new development and a need to plan for reinvestment and revitalization. Based on the current housing stock analysis, it is recommended that strategic housing initiatives and revitalization plans be considered in the near-term. These projects will require both city staff and neighborhood residents working together to preserve desirable areas and begin improving areas in need. Almost half (42 percent) of the housing stock is valued between \$50,000 to \$99,999, with another 45 percent valued between \$100,000 and \$149,000. The median value of homes in Watauga is \$104,400, slightly below the state average of \$128,900. With lower than average home prices, Watauga is attractive to home-buyers in the Metroplex.

 **HOUSING**
Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimate

Units	#
Total number of housing units	8,490

Occupancy	%
Occupied housing units	96%
Vacant housing units	4%

Year Structure Built	%
2010 or later	0%
2000 to 2009	14%
1990 to 1999	11%
1980 to 1989	36%
1970 to 1979	26%
1960 to 1969	10%
1950 to 1959	2%
1940 to 1949	0%
1939 or earlier	1%

Value	%
Less than \$50,000	2%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	42%
\$100,000 to \$149,000	45%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10%
\$200,000 to \$299,000	2%
\$300,000 or more	0%

Median value	\$
Watauga	\$104,400
Texas	\$128,900

Housing Tenure	%	Avg. Size
Owner-occupied units	78%	2.85
Renter-occupied units	22%	3.12

Housing Type	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
1 unit, detached	98.9%	81.7%
1 unit, attached	0.7%	1.7%
2 units	0.0%	0.0%
3 or 4 units	0.0%	0.8%
5 to 9 units	0.0%	8.1%
10 or more units	0.0%	7.7%
Mobile home or other type of housing	0.4%	0.0%

Household Type	Owner-occupied	Renter-occupied
Family households	73.8%	27.2%
Nonfamily households	26.2%	72.8%

Table 6. Housing

Housing Conditions

The quality of Watauga’s neighborhoods are integral to the community’s overall character. Maintenance of both private and public property is critical to neighborhood safety, viability, and sustainability. Maintenance of neighborhoods and facilities also affects the larger community. If left unabated, blighted areas create a ripple effect, which impedes other civic objectives, including economic development and private investment.

Another important reason to assess housing conditions is to monitor home values, which affect the income the City receives from property taxes. If a community’s housing stock has deteriorated over time, the City’s tax revenue is negatively impacted. Conversely, if a community experiences quality residential development over a period of time, the tax revenue received by the City is increased. In recent years, the City of Watauga has conducted a property conditions survey. The following sections are based on the 2013 survey criteria and findings:

PROPERTY CONDITION SURVEY CRITERIA	
STRUCTURE RATING-USE SEPARATELY FOR MAIN BUILDING AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS	
A	Adequate weather protection, no deterioration to roof, exterior surfaces, eaves, siding, windows or screens.
B	Slight deterioration of weather protection, roof, exterior surfaces, or eaves. A few broken or loose siding pieces. A cracked window or torn screens.
C	Inadequate weather protection (exposed or unpainted wood), greater than 25% of wall area needs paint. Missing or loose roof material. Some deterioration of eaves. Slight waves in roof line. One broken window with missing glass.
D	Obvious waves or dips in roof line. Eaves and fascia need to be replaced. Large amounts of roofing missing. 25% of the siding pieces missing or decayed. Two or more broken windows.
E	Dilapidated and/or uninhabitable.
FENCE	
A	Fence maintained in good condition.
B	Fence missing a few pickets or leaning slightly or slight deterioration of fence material.
C	Fence not reasonably plumb and/or missing several pickets, or major deterioration of fence material.
D	Fence leaning to a point where it is dangerous or structural members no longer capable of supporting imposed weights.
YARD CONDITIONS	
A	Well-manicured and landscaped yard/lawn.
B	Lawn cut only-edging or trimming needed. Other yard areas need aesthetic treatment (shrubs, etc.)NV
C	Grass and weeds exceed 8 inches in height. Some dead trees or other plant material. Bare patches of lawn area.
D	Grass and weeds exceed 12 inches in height. Large areas of bare ground. Several dead trees and/or shrubs.
DRIVEWAY-SIDEWALKS AND OTHER FLATWORK	
A	All flatwork in good condition.
B	Some very slight cracking (no separation – no displacement) or very minor spalling. NV
C	Slight displacement (less than 1”) of flatwork at joints or at cracks. Spalling exceeds 25% of surface area.
D	Major displacement (greater than 1”) of flatwork at joints or cracks. Portion of the pavement missing or crushed. Spalling exceeds 50% of area.
TRASH, DEBRIS AND/OR OUTSIDE STORAGE	
A	No trash, debris or other outside storage.
B	A few scattered items of trash or litter. A few items of prohibited outside storage.
C	Concentration or accumulation of trash or litter. Several items of prohibited outside storage.
D	Trash, debris or litter or prohibited outside storage covering more than 33% of the yard area.
JUNK OR INOPERABLE VEHICLES	
A	No inoperable vehicles at the premises.
B	One inoperable vehicle at the premises.
C	Two or more inoperable vehicles at premises.
D	One or more junk vehicles on premises.

The City should continue to conduct the annual property conditions survey as this survey determines sound neighborhoods as well as areas that need revitalization or rehabilitation. Figure 40, Neighborhood Housing Conditions Map, compiles the information from the Residential Property Conditions survey and groups neighborhoods into one of three categories; Preservation, Conservation, and Rehabilitation. Understanding where neighborhoods in need are located or clustered can help simplify targeted efforts for revitalization. Further, understanding where sound neighborhoods are located can help to identify where current plans and programs are working best. These such plans and programs may be extended into areas in greatest need.

It should be noted that the Neighborhood Conditions Maps is a broad survey intended to identify the different needs in the various residential neighborhoods of Watauga. The map is not intended to apply to each individual property within the

designated areas, but the quality of the overall neighborhood requires significant repair. Therefore the category used to identify a neighborhood refers to the overall character and not specific homes.

Neighborhood Preservation (NP)

Typically speaking, Watauga’s newer neighborhoods, built in recent years, make up the majority of the Neighborhood Preservation area. The Neighborhood Preservation category is appropriate for areas identified with predominantly sound, quality housing, which includes approximately 30 percent of the residential acreage within Watauga. Additionally, Neighborhood Preservation areas have well-maintained streets, parks, and recreation areas. In areas identified for Neighborhood Preservation, the City should adopt policies to sustain and protect existing desirable conditions.

This can most successfully be achieved by proactive code enforcement in and around these areas as well as the formation of a Neighborhood Association if one does not currently exist. Also important is ensuring that a complementary relationship with adjacent land uses is provided through careful review of development proposals in proximity to the identified areas. An effective Neighborhood Preservation strategy includes the continued provision and maintenance of adequate utilities and community facilities, such as parks, schools and streets. Preservation efforts by Watauga within these areas should minimize the need for future rehabilitation programs. Appropriate City departments can implement the Neighborhood Preservation strategies as part of the normal planning, community development, and code enforcement practices.



Example Neighborhood Preservation structure

Neighborhood Conservation (NC)

The Neighborhood Conservation strategy is appropriate in areas where a majority of the housing stock is in sound condition, but scattered throughout the neighborhood are instances of poorly maintained houses or a public facility of service deficiency that could contribute to the decline of the area. Currently, 70 percent of the residential acreage within the City is considered Neighborhood Conservation and these neighborhoods were primarily constructed before 1990. The intent of the Neighborhood Conservation strategy is to target areas wherein a relatively small amount of effort could be expended to improve the quality of housing and to reduce the likelihood of further deterioration of units.

The City should encourage homeowner maintenance in these areas. Code enforcement should continue their efforts to address code violations, and work with neighborhood organizations to identify code violations. Incentive programs can encourage residents to perform minor and major exterior repairs. Proactive intervention can result in housing units being improved, which would enhance the overall image of the neighborhood and Watauga while preserving the housing stock. Additionally, homes in this area have the opportunity to be evaluated for potential demolition/rebuild strategies. Property values in Neighborhood Conservation areas have not deteriorated to the point where significant investment is unlikely.



Example Neighborhood Conservation structure

Neighborhood Rehabilitation (NR)

The Neighborhood Rehabilitation strategy is appropriate in areas where the housing units are in need of more intensive repair, such as a new roof or a structural repair. (For the purpose of discussions herein, intensive or major repairs are generally those that require a professional to complete.) Currently, none of the neighborhoods fall within in this criteria, however with an aging housing stock, homes in the Neighborhood Conservation category could fall into the Neighborhood Rehabilitation category if small maintenance issues are left unrepaired, leading to further deterioration.



Example Neighborhood Rehabilitation structure

Neighborhood Conditions Analysis

While a majority of the City is comprised of Neighborhood Conservation, additional efforts can be taken to bring a majority of these neighborhoods into the Neighborhood Preservation category. The Neighborhood Preservation areas serve as a model of what's working in the City. The City's neighborhoods are comprised mostly of sound homes and offer quality options for Watauga residents. Again, the City should encourage residents living in Neighborhood Conservation areas to make the needed repairs to maintain attractiveness. For those residents who are not physically or financially able to make the repairs themselves, the City should promote their Watauga Improving Neighborhoods (WIN) program to these particular homeowners, to ensure the repairs are financed and completed.

Toolbox for Housing Strategies and Redevelopment

Many of the neighborhoods that exist today do not have an organized homeowners association, and a dialogue with residents is often difficult due to the limited collaborative structures in place. For neighborhoods to thrive, targeted actions must take place to create a cohesive residential base with well-connected groups of neighborhood leaders.

Watauga established the Watauga Improving Neighborhoods Committee in 2014 as an effort to review and select residential properties that qualify for maintenance and neighborhood revitalization while coordinating volunteer organizations to perform the maintenance. Additionally the committee is tasked to monitor properties, volunteer organizations, and funds to ensure that the projects are being completed and that funds are being utilized appropriately. The formation of this committee is a step in the right direction. Going forward, to keep this strategic focus on neighborhood revitalization, the City should implement a neighborhood outreach program. This would likely require a new hire to be focused on getting to know each existing neighborhood association, acting as a voice for neighborhoods which do not have a neighborhood association, coordinating with partnership organizations, serving as the conduit for communication of neighborhood activities, hosting events to engage residents, and bringing a point of contact to the City that currently does not exist. In addition to the neighborhood coordinator, the neighborhood outreach program should incorporate activities to engage current residents in code enforcement and revitalization activities.

The following are housing strategies and programs Watauga could consider:

Minor Rehabilitation and Replacement Program

The main goal of the Minor Rehab Repair Program is to prevent the decline and deterioration of qualified single-family occupied structures by helping them maintain their home through rehabilitation.

Rental Housing Inspection Program

The purpose of the Watauga's Rental Housing Inspection Program is to protect the vitality and integrity of the City by ensuring its rental housing stock is maintained in a safe and healthy manner and that tenants are provided dwelling units that meet fire, building and health standards through proactive, yet fair and reasonable enforcement of codes and ordinances.

Tarrant County Housing Partnership (TCHP)

The Tarrant County Housing Partnership administers approximately \$1 million in assistance for down payments and closing costs. The financial assistance is provided in the form of a zero-interest loan that is forgivable if the buyer continues to reside in the home for a period of five years or more, based on the amount of assistance.

Neighborhood Renaissance

The Neighborhood Renaissance program is a proactive approach by a City towards improving neighborhoods and attracting reinvestment. The City building official identifies properties that are deemed to be unsafe or dangerous, often properties with significant structural damage that are beyond repair. The City then purchases the existing structure and demolishes the dangerous home. The City then sells the vacant property to a private party under the condition that the new structure has a value approximately five times higher than the sale price of the land. Funds from the sale of the land are placed into an Economic Development fund. This program is beneficial for two primary reasons. First, the project removes dilapidated and dangerous eyesores from neighborhoods. Second, it creates value by incentivizing new, higher quality development within the neighborhood. While dangerous structures should be removed city-wide, the most opportunistic locations should be concentrated in areas where private investment is likely. This will make the program more effective by ensuring that the City is able to sell the vacant property to a private party, rather than maintain ownership of the property indefinitely due to a lack of demand for private investment within certain areas.

Demo-Rebuild

The intent of the Demo-Rebuild program is to make existing neighborhoods in Watauga attractive to private development. The program encourages a private party to purchase an existing home, demolish the existing home and build a new structure containing a higher value than the existing structure. In exchange for demolishing an existing structure and replacing it with one of higher value, the City will assess property taxes on the existing structure, rather than on the new higher value structure, for a period of seven years. Private investment is a key cornerstone of this program and therefore some areas may be more appropriate for this program than others. Stable neighborhoods with access to public facilities, parks, or other amenities are places where people feel comfortable making private investment.

Exterior Incentives

Exterior Incentives are those which encourage private owners to perform minor external improvements to their property in exchange for a City rebate. External improvements may include adding a front porch, new faced or roof replacement, among others. Generally speaking, property owners will spend a specific amount of money on private improvements, such as \$10,000, and the City will rebate the owner 10 percent of total value, or as specified by City Council.

Living Space Expansion Program

In many neighborhoods, the structural condition of an individual property may be in excellent condition, but the structure may not meet the living space desired by the existing resident or the current market environment. A program that encourages the addition of a new living space should be established by the City. Rather than focusing on demolition, this program focuses on adding additional square footage to the existing structure, such as a new section to the home or a second story. Many of the housing types within the City are ranch-style homes that are rectangular in nature. A housing prototype guidebook should be considered by the City that provides several housing expansion options for ranch-style homes, enabling residents to visualize how their existing home could be expanded. The investment in a home expansion can be extensive and therefore certain neighborhoods within the City will be more attractive for significant investment than others.

Housing Prototype Guidebook

The City may consider hiring an architect or urban designer as a consultant to develop a pattern book or housing prototype book for demo-rebuild properties. This guidebook should consider predominant housing patterns within the City, such as predominant lot sizes, and should define various housing styles, designs or options that could be utilized for development within those parameters and constraints. The prototype guidebook should also provide scenarios for maximizing living space on small lots. If desired, many of the housing prototype examples may be pre-approved by the City, encouraging redevelopment by avoiding certain fees or bypassing certain approval processes.

Landscape Incentives

Landscaping has the potential to drastically improve overall appearance of private properties and can significantly enhance the look and feel of neighborhood streets. Landscaping incentives may be used by the City to encourage landscaping enhancements on private property by providing a percentage match on the total amount spent on such improvements. A minimum improvement amount should be provided, such as \$2,000 worth of improvements. It may be beneficial to provide a landscaping guidebook that provides several landscaping options for various housing types. The City may require landscaping improvements to closely follow certain elements within the design guidebook to be eligible for a rebate.

Arborist Consulting Program

The City may consider providing arborist consulting appointments to a community. Residents would be able to schedule a 15-30 minute appointment with the City Arborist where they could discuss landscaping enhancement ideas for their home. This program would help to encourage landscape enhancements on the private sector.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide a direct benefit to individual neighborhoods. They are centrally located to promote use and access by neighborhood residents. Attractive neighborhood parks, with a mixture of passive and active recreational options, provide space for neighbors to congregate and socialize. Picnic areas and grilling areas provide locations for families to enjoy time outdoors, playgrounds create spaces for children to play and basketball courts, volleyball courts or tennis courts provide spaces for youth to play. Parks not only provide a recreational element, but studies have shown that property values adjacent to parks are typically higher to a similar product not adjacent to a park.

Neighborhood Assistance Program

One of the main tools for preserving long-term neighborhood integrity is by establishing an identity to various neighborhoods within the City. Creating a neighborhood assistance program provides organizational tools for residents to create and maintain neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood organizations can then take on a more active role in encouraging private property maintenance and identifying any development issues, because the neighborhood as a whole is viewed in its entirety. The City may also aid the formation of neighborhood identities by placing neighborhood signage toppers on street signs and by creating gateways at primary neighborhood entrances, such as collector roadways. These examples, among others, help to foster a sense of identity, pride and attachment between residents and neighborhoods. City funds may be allocated using an annual grant program. Neighborhood Assistance programs should first be focused on neighborhoods in good condition, primarily those identified within the Neighborhood Preservation and Neighborhood Conservation categories.

Connectivity Enhancements

A determining factor for making neighborhoods attractive for reinvestment is walkability. Generally speaking, the ability for residents to walk to nearby amenities is a highly desirable characteristic. It may be necessary for the City to proactively create or improve sidewalks, pathways, bicycle routes and trails and mitigate any major impediments or barriers to walkability for residents to have convenient access to parks, transit, public facilities and retail.

Faith-Based/Civic Partnerships

Similar to Christmas in July, the City may work with local civic and faith-based organizations to provide more significant aid to various residents within the community. Rather than performing only minor outside maintenance and repair, volunteer groups may select one or several homes for an extreme makeover where more significant repairs or additions may be performed. For example, teams may add internal lighting fixtures, perform roof repairs, kitchen updates or increase the amount of living space. A City building official and builder should be involved to provide technical expertise and coordination. The City may desire to have some monetary contributions towards repairs, but much of the materials, time and effort will likely be donated and volunteered.

Funding Sources

Watauga's WIN program is an excellent program that provides assistance to citizens in need of funding. On top of the WIN program, there are many state and federal grant and loan programs that may be used to improve the condition of a neighborhood. The following are some of the programs currently available. The City should investigate these programs to determine, which would be most helpful in addressing local housing challenges. The City may not be able to utilize some block grant programs until it attains a certain population. However, many of these state and federal programs would not require any monetary contribution from the City, and they would benefit the community through the infusion of funding and related volunteerism that would be part of the implementation of such programs.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG allocates funds for neighborhood revitalization, economic development and the provision of improved community facilities and services through funds from the Housing and Urban Development Department. Proposed CDBG projects must be consistent with the program's priorities of having a benefit to low- and moderate- income residents, the prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or other community development activities that address an urgent threat to public health and safety.

Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP)

The DPAP helps very low- and low-income families purchase a home by providing an interest-free loan, ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the county in which the property is located. Assistance is for the down payment of a house as well as eligible closing costs. The borrowers pays the loan when the home is either sold or refinanced, or at the maturity of the original mortgage. No City participation in funding is necessary.

Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP)

FHIP is a federal program that assists people who believe they have been victims of housing discrimination while attempting to purchase or rent housing. This program is managed through the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is the only federal grant program with the purpose of supporting private partnerships to prevent and overcome housing discrimination.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that addresses issues of poverty all over the world by building affordable and decent housing. Homes are built using volunteer labor and the organization makes no profits on the sales. Homeowners are expected to put in approximately 500 hours of sweat equity into their own home or other projected homes as part of the housing agreement. Mortgage payments for homeowners are deposited into a locally administered Funds for Humanity and the proceeds go towards future construction.

Healthy Homes Program

The Healthy Homes Program addresses many childhood diseases and injuries that are related to hazards in the home, including mold, lead, allergens, asthma, carbon monoxide, home safety, pesticides and radon. This federal program, run through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, provides grants to non-profits, for-profit organizations, state and local governments, federally-recognized Indian Tribes, and colleges and universities. HUD does not provide these grants directly to individuals.

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

HOME provides grants and loans to help state and local governments, in partnership with non-profits, to fund safe, decent, affordable housing to extremely low-, very low-, and low-income families. HOME is the largest Federal block grant to state

and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income families. The flexibility of the program empowers people and communities to design and implement strategies tailored to their own priorities and needs. HOME requires participating jurisdictions to match 25 cents of every dollar the program funds.

Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Program

The Housing Tax Credit Program directs private capital towards the development and preservation of affordable rental housing for low-income households. Funded through the US Treasury Department, the program provides a source of equity for the development of affordable housing, maximizes the number of affordable units added to the state’s supply, and ensured that the state’s affordable housing supply is well maintained. To qualify for the tax credit, either 20 percent or more of the project’s units must be rent-restricted and occupied by individuals whose income is 50 percent or less of the median family income; or 40 percent or more of the units must be rent-restricted and occupied by individuals whose income is 60 percent or less of the median family income. Developers of low-income rental housing use the tax credit to offset a portion of their federal tax liability in exchange for the production of affordable rental housing.

Housing Trust Refund

The Housing Trust Refund is a program that provides funds in the form of no-interest loans for predevelopment expenses, including market studies, site plans, architecture and engineering studies, and other pre-construction expenses. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis to non-profits, for-profit organizations, local governments, public housing authorities, community housing development organizations, and income eligible individuals and families for the acquisition, rehabilitation, and construction of affordable housing.

My First Texas Home- Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP)

Administered through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, My First Texas Home Down Payment Assistance Program helps very low- and low-income families purchase a home by providing a competitive, fixed, low-interest loan for the down payment for first-time homebuyers. Loans range from \$5,000 to \$10,000, depending on the county in which the property is located. The loan can go towards the down payment and eligible closing costs and the borrower pays the loan when the home is either sold or refinanced, or at the maturity of the original mortgage.

Texas Bootstrap Loan Program

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs administers the Texas Bootstrap Loan Program to provide very low-income families with an opportunity to help themselves through “sweat equity.” All participants under this program are required to provide as least 65 percent of the labor necessary to construct or rehabilitate their home. They can contribute to the labor personally or they may build or rehabilitate housing for others. If the owner has a documented disability prohibiting him or her from fulfilling their sweat equity requirement, he or she may fulfill their requirement entirely through noncontract labor assistance from friends, family or volunteers. The maximum Bootstrap loan may not exceed \$45,000 per household. The owner may obtain additional funds from other department and non-department sources as long as the total amount of the amortized repayable loan funds from all sources does not exceed \$90,000.



Community and Neighborhood Livability Key Objectives

- Continue to improve streets, sidewalks and parks in Watauga.
- Maintain Code Compliance efforts.
- Review and update design regulations to incorporate the Development Strategy's recommendations.
- Expand wayfinding signage efforts.
- Continue to improve and expand gateway feature/zones and implement corridor enhancement areas.
- Encourage the development of life-cycle housing, including a diverse range of lot sizes, housing sizes and housing types.
- Maintain and expand neighborhood improvement strategies and continue to monitor neighborhood conditions.
- Develop a recognition program to encourage homeowners and businesses to enhance and maintain their properties with quality exterior upgrades.
- Ensure funding continues for City staff personnel to oversee neighborhood related activities.
- Encourage the formation of Neighborhood Associations and establish regular channels of communication.

part:ly
part:ly
part:ner
part:ner:ship
part:tridge
part:tridge

7 | Implementation Plan

Successful communities establish a clear vision for its future and identify the steps necessary to achieve that vision. This section completes the Development Strategy by providing implementation techniques and priorities that address the vision, recommendations and related policies established herein. This Implementation Plan is structured into a coordinated action program so that City leaders, staff, and other decision-makers can easily identify the steps that are necessary to achieve the vision described within this Plan.

It is also important to note that most cities cannot afford to complete all of the desired tasks at once; therefore it is important to identify priorities that are most critical for achieving the vision. Many of these recommendations will take several years to complete, but this plan will help the City to identify high priorities and allocate funding in future budgets for the more costly projects.

The Roles of the Development Strategy

A Guide for Daily Decision-Making

The current physical layout of the City is a product of previous efforts put forth by many diverse individuals and groups. In the future, each new development that takes place – whether it is a subdivision that is platted; a home that is built; or a new school, church or shopping center that is constructed – represents an addition to Watauga’s physical form. The composite of all such efforts and facilities creates the City as it is seen and experienced by its citizens and visitors. If planning is to be effective, it must guide each and every individual development decision. The City, in its daily decisions pertaining to whether to surface a street, to approve a residential plat, to amend a zoning ordinance provision, to enforce the building codes, or to construct a new utility line, should always refer to the basic proposals outlined within the Development Strategy. The private builder or investor, likewise, should recognize the broad concepts and policies of the Plan so that their efforts become part of a meaningful whole in planning the City.

Development Proposals and the Future Land Use Plan

At times, the City will likely encounter development proposals that do not directly reflect the purpose and intent of the land use pattern shown on the Future Land Use Plan. Review of such development proposals should include the following considerations:

- Will the proposed change enhance the site and the surrounding area?
- Is the necessary infrastructure already in place?
- Is the proposed change a better use than that recommended by the Future Land Use Plan?
- Will the proposed use impact adjacent residential areas in a negative manner? Or, will the proposed use be compatible with, and/or enhance, adjacent residential areas?
- Are uses adjacent to the proposed use similar in nature in terms of appearance, hours of operation, and other general aspects of compatibility?
- Does the proposed use present a significant benefit to the public health, safety and welfare of the community? Would it contribute to the City’s long-term economic well-being?

Development proposals that are inconsistent with the Future Land Use Plan (or that do not meet its general intent) should be reviewed based upon the above questions and should be evaluated on their own merit. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence that the proposal meets the aforementioned considerations and supports community goals and objectives as set forth within this strategy.

It is important to recognize that proposals contrary to this strategy could be an improvement over the uses shown on the map for a particular area. This may be due to changing markets, the quality of proposed developments and/or economic trends that occur at some point in the future after the strategy is adopted. If such changes occur, and especially if there is a significant benefit to the City, then these proposals should be approved, and the Future Land Use Map should be amended accordingly.

Zoning and Subdivision

The usual processes for reviewing and processing zoning amendments, development plans, and subdivision plans provide significant opportunities for implementing the Development Strategy. Each zoning, development and subdivision decision should be evaluated and weighed against applicable recommendations and policies contained within this Development Strategy. The Plan allows Watauga to review proposals and requests in light of an officially prepared document adopted through a sound, thorough planning process. If decisions are made that are inconsistent with Plan recommendations, then they should include actions to modify or amend the Plan accordingly to ensure consistency and fairness in future decision-making. Amending the Subdivision Ordinance and Zoning Ordinance represent two major, proactive measures that the City can take to implement Development Strategy recommendations.

A Flexible and Alterable Guide

The Development Strategy for the City of Watauga is intended to be a dynamic planning document – one that responds to changing needs and conditions. Plan amendments should not be made without thorough analysis of immediate needs, as well as consideration for long-term effects of proposed amendments. The Watauga City Council and other Watauga officials should consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the City and Plan's goals and policies, and whether it will be beneficial for the long-term health and vitality of the City of Watauga.

Regular Review

At one- to three-year intervals, a periodic review of the Development Strategy with respect to current conditions and trends should be performed. Such on-going, scheduled reevaluations will provide a basis for adjusting capital expenditures and priorities, and will reveal changes and additions which should be made to the Plan to keep it current and applicable long-term. It would be appropriate to devote one annual meeting of the P&Z Commission to reviewing the status and continued applicability of the Plan in light of current conditions, and to prepare a report on these findings to the Watauga City Council. Those items that appear to need specific attention should be examined in more detail, and changes and/or additions should be made accordingly. By such periodic reevaluations, the Plan will remain functional, and will continue to give civic leaders effective guidance in decision-making. Periodic reviews of the Plan should include consideration of the following:

- The City's progress in implementing the Plan
- Changes in conditions that form the basis of the Plan
- Community support for the City's and Plan's goals and recommendations
- Changes in State laws

Updates

In addition to periodic annual reviews, the Development Strategy should undergo a complete, more thorough review and update every five years or when changes initiate a need. The review and updating process should begin with a citizen committee similar to the one appointed to assist in the preparation of this Plan, thereby encouraging citizen input from the beginning of the process. Specific input on major changes should be sought from various groups, including property owners, neighborhood groups, civic leaders and major stakeholders, developers, merchants, and other citizens and individuals who express an interest in the long-term growth and development of the City. This input can be easily obtained by re-administering the online survey with every update of the Development Strategy.

An informed, involved citizenry is a vital element of a democratic society. The needs and desires of the public are important considerations in Watauga's decision-making process. Citizen participation takes many forms, from educational forums to serving on City boards and commissions. A broad range of perspectives and ideas at public hearings helps City leaders and the City Council to make more informed decisions for the betterment of the City as a whole. Watauga should continue to encourage as many forms of community involvement as possible as the City implements its Development Strategy.

Implementation Matrix

The following pages summarize the key objectives described within this plan. Each objective has a priority ranking as a tool for implementation.

Key Objectives	Priority Ranking		
	Short-term	Long-term	On-going
Future Land Use			
Provide regular review of the One Watauga Development Strategy.			
Coordinate the One Watauga Development Strategy's goals and objectives with other city documents including the future utility master plans, economic/marketing reports and future park master planning.			
Perform a zoning diagnostic and update the Zoning Ordinance in accordance with the Development Strategy recommendations including special use districts such as mixed use or town center designations.			
Ensure that future redevelopment and infill development meets the City's level of quality.			
Ensure a diverse mixture of housing choices, prices and sizes to create full life-cycle housing within Watauga single family, medium density, and mixed-use housing.			
Integrate neighborhood-focused local retail, commercial and office uses away from regionally significant intersections, such as along Watauga Rd., portions of US Hwy. 377, Bursey Rd., Rufe Snow Dr., and within neighborhood units to provide convenience to necessary services.			
Promote non-residential, tax-generating regional retail and commercial activities along US Hwy. 377 and the intersection of Rufe Snow Dr. and Watauga Rd. to diversify and increase the City's tax base.			
Continue coordination with the City of Fort Worth, Haltom City, City of Keller and City of North Richland Hills to promote long-range development projects and compatibility of land uses.			
Establish a mixed-use or town center and incorporate existing uses such as parks and public facilities to provide a sense of place.			
Promote appropriate redevelopment opportunities in targeted areas such as along the southern portions of US Hwy. 377, Rufe Snow Dr. and Watauga Rd.			
Minimize conflicts with existing residential areas.			
Provide entertainment with family-oriented venues that create opportunities for community gatherings and festivals.			
Maintain current water, wastewater and stormwater master plans.			
Maintain an updated Capital Improvement Program and seek funding opportunities to incrementally implement critical infrastructure needs.			

Key Objectives	Priority Ranking		
	Short-term	Long-term	On-going
Economic Development			
Explore the creation of a formal Economic Development Corporation.			
Expand professional office uses.			
Develop a city-wide marketing campaign to leverage current housing stock, proximity to Downtown Fort Worth, and access to major transportation corridors and new toll facilities.			
Encourage development within the infill, mixed-use town center and redevelopment/reinvestment zones through the use of incentives.			
Target identified underserved retail market segments.			
Establish and maintain a forecast of housing type needs and set periodic goals to meet anticipated housing demand.			
Maintain an incentive database and provide assistance to businesses seeking funding opportunities.			
Maintain current database of available property and building space.			
Continue to monitor and maintain current retail and demographic data relevant to the City.			
Actively pursue development and partnerships for the mixed-use town center.			
Work with existing property owners to improve identified reinvestment and redevelopment areas.			
Transportation			
Adopt the Thoroughfare Map and base future transportation improvements on strategies outlined in the Development Strategy.			
Review and update of capital improvements projects annually, and implementing road maintenance, repair and reconstruction for existing roadways.			
Conduct sidewalk assessment study and implement highest priority needs.			
Implement improvements to Whitley Rd.			
Continue to coordinate with NCTCOG and TxDOT for US Hwy. 377 enhancements including access management and intersection improvements.			
Continue to coordinate and monitor Union Pacific rail line expansion.			
Continue to monitor and explore transportation funding grants and partnerships such as Safe Routes to School program.			
Coordinate future pedestrian routes with existing park and trail planning efforts.			

Key Objectives	Priority Ranking		
	Short-term	Long-term	On-going
Community and Neighborhood Livability			
Continue to improve streets, sidewalks and parks in Watauga.			
Maintain a code compliance efforts.			
Review and update design regulations to incorporate the Development Strategy’s recommendations.			
Expand wayfinding signage efforts.			
Continue to improve and expand gateway feature/zones and implement corridor enhancement areas.			
Encourage the development of life-cycle housing, including a diverse range of lot sizes, housing sizes and housing types.			
Maintain and expand neighborhood improvement strategies and continue to monitor neighborhood condition.			
Develop a recognition program to encourage homeowners and businesses to enhance and maintain their properties with quality exterior upgrades.			
Ensure funding continues for City staff personnel to oversee neighborhood related activities.			
Encourage the formation of Neighborhood Associations and establish regular channels of communication.			