



GRAHAM
NORTH CAROLINA



2035
Comprehensive Plan

Planning Conditions Report

March, 2014

Prepared by

CLARION



Planning Conditions Report

This is the first report prepared for the 2035 Graham Comprehensive Plan project. This report is prepared for review by Graham City Staff and the 2035 Graham Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. The information provided in this report will also be provided in summary form at the kickoff community event on April 8, 2014.

The overall objective of this report is to synthesize the technical and community inputs available to date to develop an initial set of planning issues and conditions for consideration as work on the new Comprehensive Plan moves forward.

This report is divided into four sections:

1. Community Issues . . . Page 2

Summarizes and documents community input aimed at identifying critical community issues that should be considered in the development of future city policies. This input was provided by members of the 2035 Graham Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and numerous stakeholders representing various community and business interests, and will be supplemented with input received at the upcoming community event.

2. Key Opportunity Areas Map . . . Page 9

Identifies key opportunity areas in the city with respect to land use, development, and transportation infrastructure.

3. Supplemental Information . . . Page 11

Provides additional community information and trends with respect to community health and the local economy. This information is a supplement to the Graham Community Profile published in February 2013.

4. Plans and Policies . . . Page 20

Summarizes existing plans and policies relevant to the plan project, and highlights critical aspects of these documents that should be considered in this planning effort.

1. Community Issues

The following community conditions have been identified as key issues to be addressed in the planning process. These issues were repeatedly raised by city stakeholders and business interests in the early stages of this planning process, and attention to these issues will likely have a large impact on the future of Graham. Issues identified to date include:

- Existing Community Assets
- Need to Better Define Graham
- Downtown as a Focus for Investment
- Renewed Community Focus on Public Schools
- Graham's Changing Population
- Need to Expand Employment Base
- Need for Enhanced Transportation Options
- Aging Housing Stock
- Importance of Coordination with Regional Partners
- Health of Community Residents
- Aging Infrastructure

Following are descriptions and opinions about these issues, as offered by community stakeholders.

Graham Has Many Assets

Graham is viewed as a stable, historic, residential community. Its historic character and amenities support its small town identity and are the foundational pieces for an evolving downtown environment. It has weathered the national recession better than neighboring communities. It offers an affordable lifestyle when compared with neighboring communities, including low tax rates. Its location between the Triad and Research Triangle regions and being located at the heart of the convergence of Interstates 40 and 85 are critical economic development assets.



The Children's Museum of Alamance County is one of the main attractions in the city's historic downtown that attracts locals and visitors to the area.

Graham Should Better Define Itself

Graham has the benefit and challenge of being located between two of the most dynamic economic centers in the state: the Triad and Research Triangle regions. It is a benefit because of the wealth of assets and opportunities that this locational position provides. It is a challenge because Graham is in the position of competing with more economically active communities for businesses and investment. Graham has an opportunity to leverage its assets and more clearly define the identity of the city and its role in the region. There is opportunity to articulate to others why they shouldn't just pass through but rather stop in Graham, or better yet, relocate to Graham. Graham needs to think strategically about how the outside world views Graham, and develop strategies for improving that image, which may include branding or marketing and focusing on the appearance of interstate interchanges.

Downtown Should Be a Key Focus for Economic and Public Investments

Internally, Graham's key asset is its historic downtown. The downtown area has a well-defined physical character and over the last decade both public and private investments in and around downtown have made an impact on its vibrancy. The Alamance Children's Museum is one of the most notable additions that has raised the visibility of the city within the larger region as a destination for young families. But more is needed to fully realize the potential of downtown. The Courthouse and County offices provide an anchor of civic activity and daytime employees. The cinema and restaurants provide entertainment options. The new Oneida Mill lofts development is revitalizing an old textile mill into new residential units, providing a new housing type within walking distance of downtown. These and other downtown assets form a strong foundation to build upon.



The Graham Cinema is a great example of a vibrant, reuse of an historic building in downtown. The Cinema draws customers to downtown that may also frequent other downtown businesses.

A Renewed Community Focus on Public Schools is Paramount

Graham and Alamance County are in a period of transformation. Textile manufacturing was the leading industry across the county for generations. For years, many people who grew up in Graham knew they were going to pursue a career in this industry, and secondary education was not essential for that career path. The world economy, the State economy, and the local economy have since changed dramatically, but local educational expectations have not kept pace. Student achievement levels in Graham lag behind County and State levels. Community and parental involvement in local schools is variable. The physical condition of schools serving Graham is an issue. And changing demographics, especially the growing number of families with limited English

proficiency, present an additional challenge. Since 1990, educational attainment in Graham has increased, but the city is still relatively less educated than Alamance County or the state on average.

Partly because of the small-town history and culture of Graham, there is considerable pride in the local schools. There is also concern that the bar needs to be raised, that the system needs to evolve from one where basic goals are met to one where high achievement is the target. School concerns focus on facilities, achievement levels, job-readiness of students, and the extent of neighborhood and community involvement. The state of schools affects the quality of life in Graham, and as a result, has a direct impact on the community and economic development efforts to recruit new businesses and new residents to the area. The “Vision for Public Education” recently developed by stakeholders and the Alamance Burlington School System gives voice to these goals and sets out four ways to fulfill the vision: community support, parental involvement, Board of Education commitment, and accountability of local leaders.



Graham Middle was built in 1951 and is the oldest school facility in Graham, and also the most centrally located. The City partners with the school to maintain its athletic facilities, make minor improvements to the school facilities, and provide mentoring for students.

Schools and education are linked to almost every other issue identified to-date in this Comprehensive Plan initiative. Specifically:

- ***Community Well-Being:*** Raising the bar on educational achievement contributes to growth in arts, entertainment, and recreational opportunities.
- ***Economic Development:*** Focusing on training and job-readiness is an important part of maintaining an educated workforce that contributes to economic growth.
- ***Business Recruitment:*** A key indicator reviewed by potential new businesses, employers, and residents is the quality of the local school system.
- ***Shared Facilities:*** Use of school properties and facilities for community purposes related to recreation, fitness, and community events contributes to the health and connectivity of the community.
- ***Healthy Living:*** Focus on healthy physical education and food issues within school environments contributes to the overall health of the city.
- ***Community Engagement:*** Schools are a traditional point of identity and pride in the Graham community, and academic successes help to fuel that pride.

Reaching out to parents, especially new families, and encouraging parental involvement in school activities contributes to an enhanced level of connectedness throughout the community.

Graham has a Changing Population with Evolving Needs

Like many communities across North Carolina and the nation, the “face” of Graham is changing. With the baby boomers reaching retirement, the age of the population is shifting and becoming older. Even with the onset of the large Millennial generation (those generally born between 1980 and 2000), the generations at or reaching retirement age (those born before 1964) comprised 40% of the City’s population in 2010. As they move on to the next stages in their lives, the older generations will require new and additional public and private services to meet their daily needs, such as transportation options, senior recreational activities, and household assistance.

The city’s Hispanic and Latino population has also been growing. In 1990, only 1% of the local population described themselves as Hispanic or Latino. In 2010, that increased to 16%. Today, one of every ten Graham residents of speaking age speaks Spanish at home and speaks English “less than well.” In some schools Hispanic students comprise one-third of the student body. Continued efforts to reach out to and engage Hispanic and Latino families are critical to the achievement of an inclusive, connected community.

Graham’s Economy is Largely Based in a Few Industry Sectors

In 2007, most of the jobs found in the city were in manufacturing. This was followed by retail trade and accommodation and food services, two of the lowest wage industries. Employment opportunities in Graham could be expanded to provide higher wage opportunities locally. Additionally, expanding the local economy to include new industry sectors could create better economic diversity needed to ensure resilience of the local economy.

The city’s assets are an important foundation upon which to consider its future. The historic downtown fabric, ease of access to regional destinations, and affordable quality of life can make the area more attractive to start-up businesses wanting to operate in the region.

Graham Has a Need for Enhanced Transportation Options

Like many communities in North Carolina, most people in Graham drive everywhere they go – to work, home, to shop, and to recreate. However, changing demographics of seniors and immigrant populations, and the changing market preferences of Millennials, are changing this dynamic. People want better access to the places they frequent and they often want options for how to get to these destinations – by car, by bus, by bicycle, or on foot. Across the nation, communities are looking at ways to expand and enhance transportation options as a way of not only improving commute times and reducing vehicle miles traveled, but also for creating new community amenities that are appealing to emerging lifestyle preferences.

Currently, less than 1% of workers living in Graham walk or use other means to get to work. However, 14% of Graham residents carpool without any formal carpool riding coordination program. And nearly 8% of residents have access to no vehicles. These trends suggest that while vehicular travel will continue to be the dominant form of transportation in Graham for the foreseeable future, there are reasons to improve access to and safety for use of alternative modes of travel. The city currently has plans for expanding pedestrian facilities in the community to better serve these interests, and discussions are underway with Burlington and others to establish a fixed route bus service.

Aging Housing and North Graham Neighborhoods Could Benefit from Revitalization

The majority of new residential development occurring in Graham is happening in the south Graham and Hawfields areas. These developments are typically lower-density, single-family subdivisions with few local amenities (although some newer developments are including commercial components). There are potential opportunities to reinvest in and redevelop the aging housing stock in neighborhoods north of Interstates 40 and 85 in the vicinity of downtown. Many of these areas are prime for reinvestment and in need for improvement. These areas can have a significant effect on the visual experience of visitors to the city. The quality and character of these neighborhoods are intrinsically linked to the quality and character of downtown. Improvements to these areas could have a significant impact on the character of the neighborhoods, downtown, and Graham overall.



The Oneida Mills property is in the process of being redeveloped into multifamily housing. This project may serve as a catalyst for further revitalization and reinvestment in the area

Beyond reinvestment, these areas also offer an opportunity to provide a new housing option in Graham for emerging household preferences. Many young professionals and young families are looking to locate into neighborhoods that provide more urban-like experiences within a small town environment. In addition, while the city may provide an affordable lifestyle to many, there are still sectors of the population that would like to find quality housing at an affordable rate. First-time homebuyers and lower wage level workers, such as teachers and public safety professionals, are prime examples of local workforce members that would like to have additional housing opportunities in Graham that meet their needs and their income levels. Providing quality and affordable

housing to the area workforce within a short walk to downtown could reap multiple benefits to the community.



The old Graham School on North Main Street was demolished in 2013. This site provides an opportunity to reinvigorate the north Graham area.

Coordination with Regional Partners is Critical

Graham is a small community within a broad and diverse region. The success of Graham’s future as a vibrant small town and an expanding business market is largely tied to the success of the region to draw new businesses to the area. Coordination with Alamance County, Burlington, Mebane, and other neighbors for future growth and infrastructure is critical. The Piedmont Together Plan is one example of how this coordination is already taking place. The partnership with Mebane and Alamance County to plan for and provide infrastructure that invites business development is another. Regional economic development and business recruitment initiatives are critical - - Graham cannot achieve meaningful economic growth alone.



Communities within the Piedmont Triad are taking a regional approach to plan for the future vision of the 12-county region. Graham’s future is tied to the success and progress of the greater region.

Community Efforts are Focusing on Improving Health of Residents

Partner organizations throughout Alamance County are working to assess the health conditions of local populations. Alamance County ranks 31 out of 100 counties in North Carolina for health outcomes. This means that 30 counties are deemed “more healthy” than Alamance and there are opportunities to improve health outcomes for area residents. Focus is being paid to address the built environment and ways that communities in Alamance can promote healthier and more active lifestyles. There is also a focus on providing healthier food sources in Alamance County, particularly by fostering a stronger local food network.

Investments in Aging Infrastructure

Graham is an old and historic community, which also means that much of the city’s basic infrastructure is aging and in need of repair/replacement. This issue is particularly compelling and challenging for three reasons: (1) Replacement of water, sewer, and stormwater drainage lines is a critical component of encouraging new private investment; (2) Addition of sidewalks and bikeways contributes to mobility and healthy living; and (3) City resources are increasingly constrained while needs for public improvements are growing. The City has a Capital Improvements Program that is now 10 years old; preparation of a new CIP that takes into account the needs and objectives highlighted in the new Comprehensive Plan can be a good vehicle for considering public investment strategies and defining priorities.

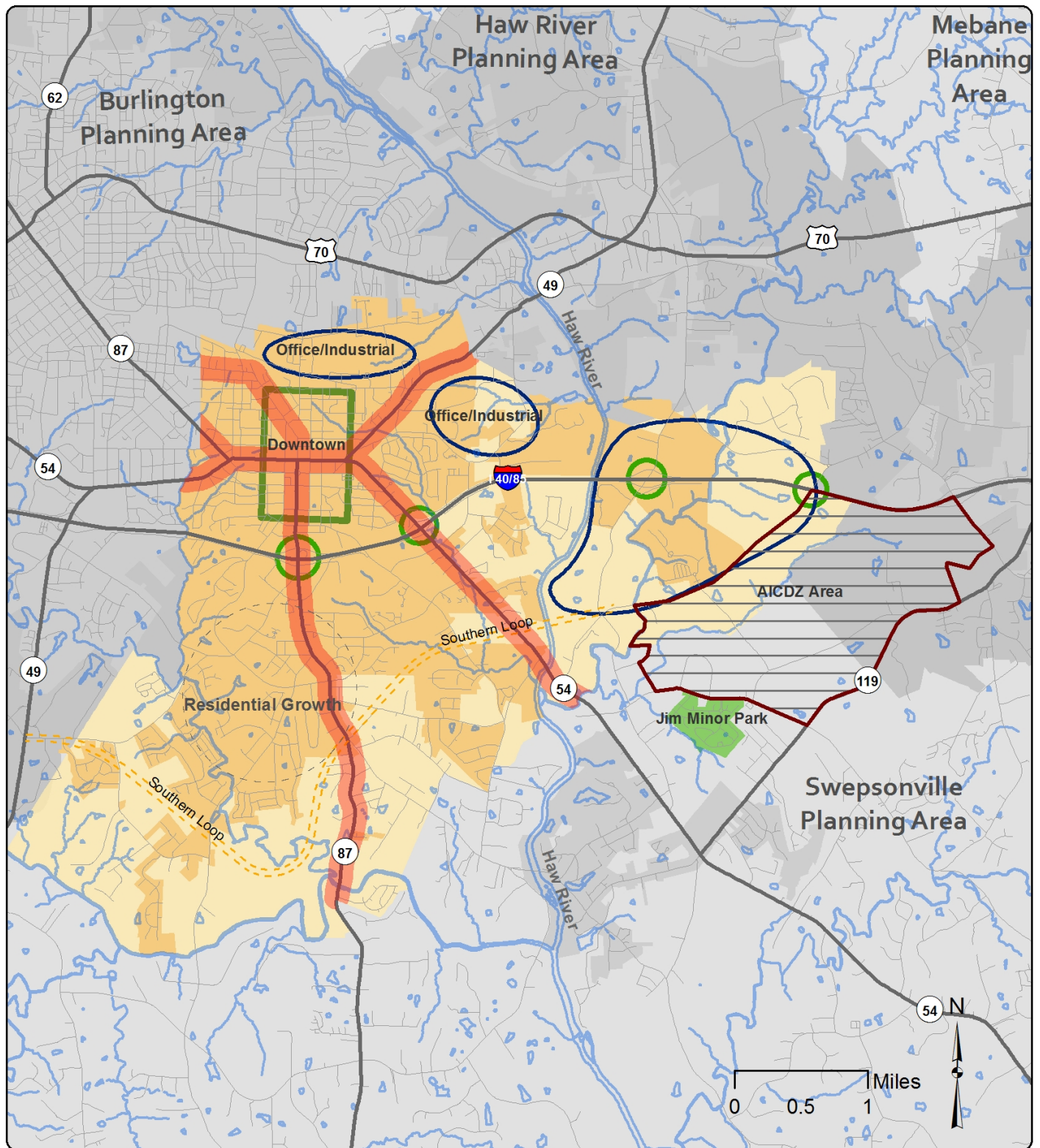
2. Key Opportunity Areas Map

The following Key Opportunity Areas Map identifies the potential opportunity areas for the city with respect to growth, development, and conservation. This map is the first step in generating an updated land use plan – the plan element that will guide the development and conservation of lands into the future.

The Map identifies several critical areas for assessment during this planning effort:

- Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods present one of the biggest opportunities for enhancement of the city's quality of life and community character
- The three existing Interchanges and a proposed fourth interchange are important site considerations for future economic development focus
- Potential redevelopment/infill development for office and industrial sites located north and east of downtown Graham in the North Graham Planning Area
- The proposed Southern Loop roadway will link Burlington and areas in Southern Graham to the eastern portion of the planning area and potentially to I-40/85 at a new interchange
- The Jim Minor Park will likely be a draw for visitors and future development
- The AICDZ Economic Development District – a partnership of Mebane, Alamance County, and Graham is likely the largest economic development driver in the Hawfields Planning Area
- Graham's key community corridors will be important areas for developing policies – to protect historic areas, to promote economic development in targeted corridors, and to redevelop existing development along corridors.

These are all critical considerations for the city as it develops future land use plans and policies to guide development and infrastructure investments.



Graham's Key Opportunity Areas

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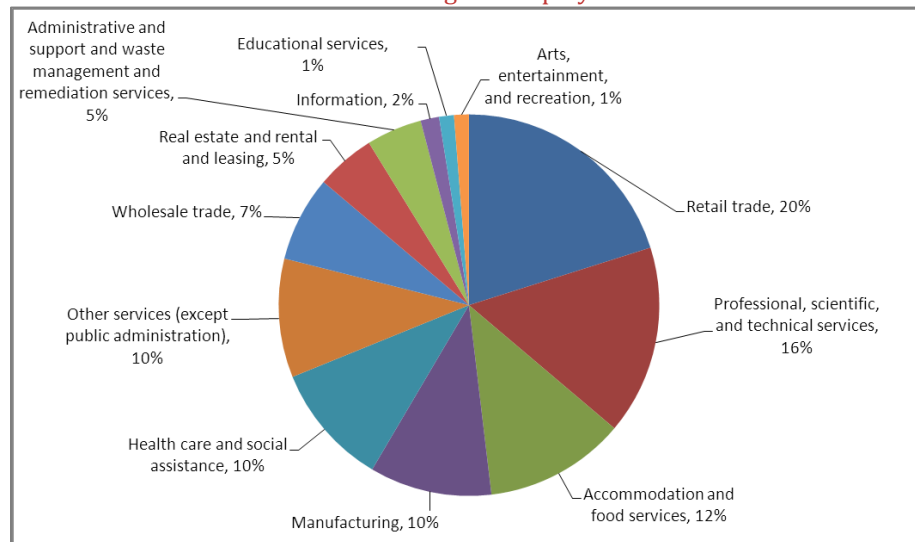
3. Supplemental Information on Community Conditions: Focus on Health and Economy

This section is a supplement to the *Community Profile* report created by Graham in February 2013. The following two sections summarize available data on community conditions relative to the local economy and public health. Partnerships with other agencies and organizations are described in this section.

FOCUS ON ECONOMY

Most economic data collected for smaller communities is captured through the five year economic census undertaken by the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2007 Economic Census reports that the City of Graham was home to 318 employer establishments.¹ Nearly 60% of local employers were comprised of four industry sectors: retail trade; professional, scientific, and technical services; accommodation and food services; and manufacturing. Another 20% are in healthcare and social assistance and other services. Data on the number of employees and their wages at these establishments is not complete to maintain the confidentiality of local businesses.

2007 U.S. Economic Census – Percentage of Employer Establishments in Graham



More complete economic information is available at the county level. In 2012, Alamance County had a total labor force of 73,885, and 66,907 of the workforce were employed leaving unemployment at 9.4%. This is on par with the state average at the time of 9.5%. As of November 2013, this unemployment rate decreased to 6.7% for Alamance, comparable to the state average of 6.6%.

The following table lists job postings in Alamance County as of January 29, 2014. While only a snapshot, this information provides some insight into the types of employment available within Alamance County to the local workforce.

¹ 2012 Economic Census data will not be released until the spring of 2014.

Job Postings in Alamance County – January 29, 2014

Retail Trade	337	32%
Health Care and Social Assistance	197	19%
Accommodation and Food Services	192	18%
Education Services	72	7%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	69	7%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	57	5%
Manufacturing	48	5%
Information	30	3%
Wholesale Trade	25	2%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	24	2%
Totals for January 29, 2014	1,051	100%

NCWorks.gov

Alamance Area Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development

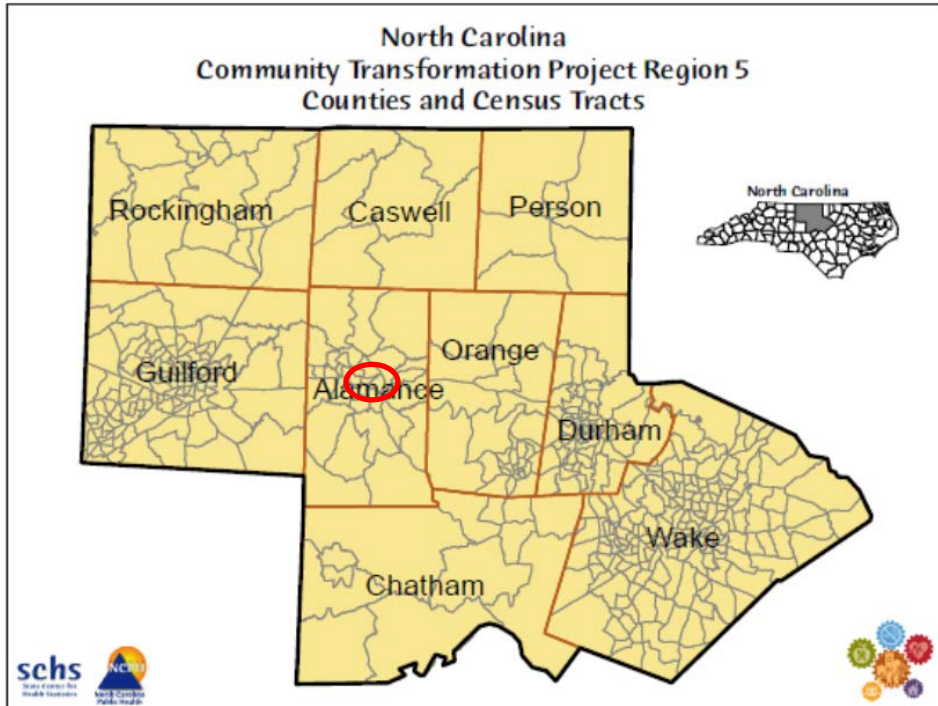
The Alamance Area Chamber of Commerce and Alamance County Economic Development are the two organizations focused on supporting local business expansion and business recruitment to the county. Marketing Alamance County as the “The Carolina Corridor,” these business efforts have had recent successes with the new Walmart perishable foods warehouse and distribution facility in the Hawfields area that will create 450 new jobs and \$100million in investments to the area.

While Graham is the second largest populated municipality in Alamance County and the county seat, it is not the primary target for most of the area’s economic development focus. A combination of infrastructure improvements and strategic land opportunities in Mebane have recruited many new businesses to areas east of Graham, and a larger population and employment base in Burlington attracts investment to the west.

A study contracted in 2005 for Alamance County and the Chamber of Commerce entitled “Alamance County Target Industry Analysis” highlights many factors that may still be true today. The loss of textile jobs has left the county needing to restructure its local economic base. Identified unique attributes and strengths include location, transportation access, water availability, sewer treatment systems, available buildings and sites, strong work ethic of labor force, successful downtown areas, and growing Hispanic communities. Challenges to local economic development include not enough champions to lead economic development efforts, local governments elevating their pro-business approach, improving the visual experience of interstate interchanges, and increasing educational achievement levels of the area workforce.

FOCUS ON HEALTH

In 2013, the City of Graham was awarded a Community Transformation Grant (CTG) through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to include health policies in the comprehensive plan update. This grant program provides communities with funding to improve the health of their citizens. This funding stream is channeled through a state program, which includes objectives for tobacco-free living, active living and healthy eating, and quality clinical and other preventive services. Alamance County and Graham are part of North Carolina's CTG Region 5.



Alamance County Community Health Assessment (2011)

Through a partnership of Alamance Regional Medical Center, United Way of Alamance County, Alamance County Health Department, and Healthy Alamance, a community health assessment was developed in 2011 that provides extensive data and metrics for measuring the state of health for the county's citizens organized under health and social assessment topic areas. Based on these metrics, Alamance County ranks 36th out of 100 NC counties in health-related quality of life.

The Community Assessment is one step in developing a larger community strategy for engaging community partnerships and collective action to achieve marked improvements in the health outcomes of area residents. A key focus is on outreach, education, and capacity-building with local partners to create new programs, increase awareness, and ultimately increase healthy behaviors. Priority health related issues identified in the Community Assessment include access to healthcare, obesity, mental health, and substance abuse. Priority social issues include educational attainment, poverty, homelessness, and domestic violence.

State of the County Health (2012)

Healthy Alamance prepares annual State of the County Health Reports, to continually monitor and score county health along a range of metrics. Outcomes from the 2012 report are summarized below. Alamance County has a slightly higher rate of poverty, persons without insurance, children living in poverty, and households receiving food stamps than the state on average.

Alamance County Health Related Demographics At-A-Glance

	Alamance	North Carolina
Population Below Poverty Level (2006-2010)	16.3%	15.5%
Persons without Health Insurance (2010)	25.7%	22.7%
Children Living in Poverty (2010)	29%	24.6%
Households that Received Food Stamps (Sept. 2011)	10.7%	10.5%
Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (2010)	53.2%	53.9%

Morbidity and Communicable Disease: Cancer was the leading cause of death (22.4%) followed by disease of the heart (21.1%), and chronic lower respiratory diseases (5.6%). These top three causes of death accounted for half of the deaths in the county in 2010.

Maternal and Infant Outcomes: Infant mortality rates have decreased in comparison to previous years, probably as a result of greater outreach to at risk communities and providing prenatal care to maternity clients.

Teen Pregnancy: Teen pregnancy rates in Alamance County declined steadily between 2007 and 2011. The Teen Outreach Program teaches strategies for pregnancy prevention and provides needed assistance to at-risk teens.

Air Quality: Currently, Alamance County does not have a non-attainment status from the U.S. EPA. This means that Federal air quality standards are being met locally. Air quality efforts in Alamance focus on local asthma efforts through the Alamance Child Asthma Coalition. Efforts include public air quality notifications and displays, anti-idling signs, air quality toolkits for teachers, asthma education for childcare providers, and home inspections to identify ways to improve home air quality.

Substance Abuse: Alamance Citizens for a Drug Free Community were awarded a grant in 2010 to survey high schoolers in the Alamance-Burlington School System for alcohol and drug usage rates. Several metrics had increased from previous surveys and others remained constant. This provides a data basis to target specific areas of substance abuse, particularly for teenagers at risk of creating lifelong addictions.

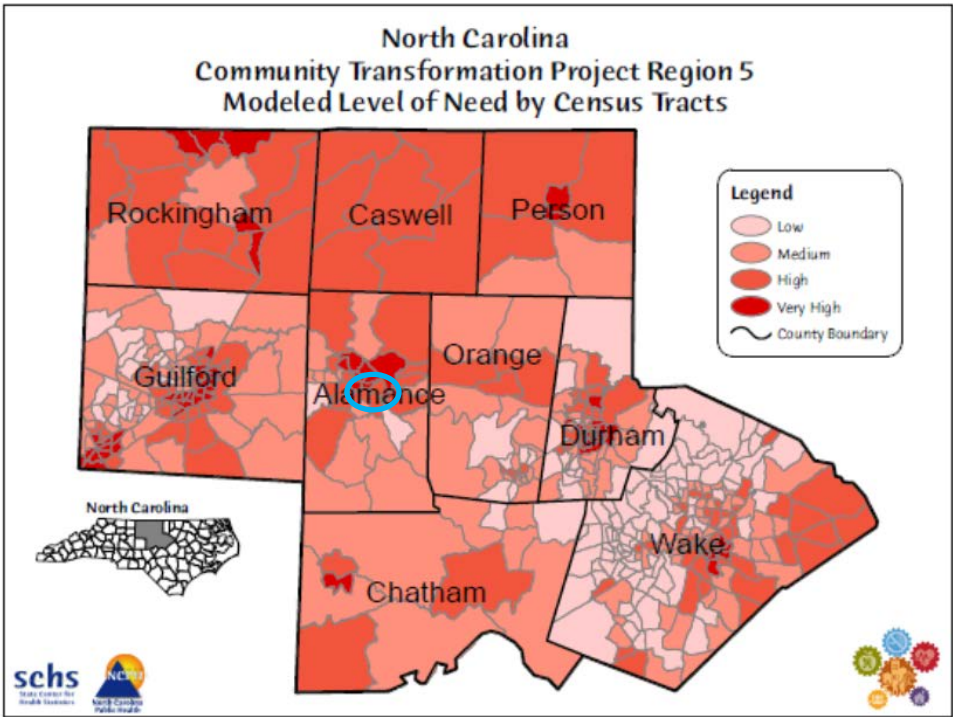
Obesity: The overall rate of obesity in Alamance County is 34%. The Healthy Alamance Wellness and Prevention Coalition was formed to encourage disease prevention and reduce health disparities related to chronic diseases related to obesity (cancer, heart disease/stroke, diabetes). The Coalition has recently been focused on policy development and the role of the built environment on obesity. The Coalition developed programs to encourage healthy behaviors including Graham Walks, a downtown walking program; Be Healthy Now, a 10-week free fitness program

sponsored by community partners; and PARC Passport (Physical Activity and Recreation Challenge), Mebane on the Move, Working on Wellness, and the NC Community Transformation Project which provides regional funding to promote active living, healthy eating and preventative services.

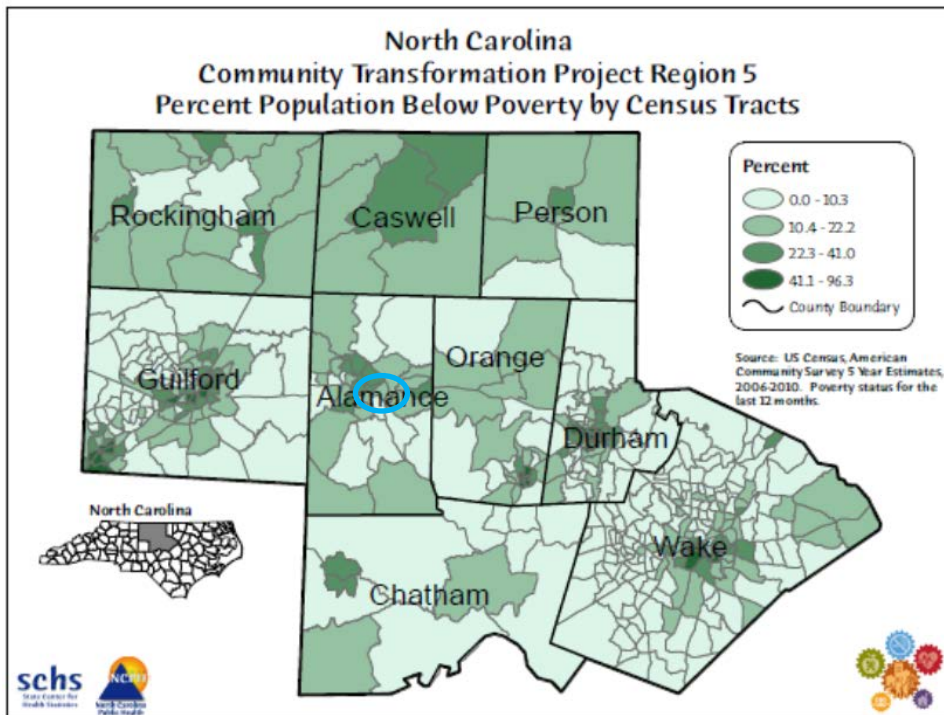
Access to Healthcare-Transportation: Friends and Advocates for Sustainable Transportation (FAST) is a grassroots organization that is raising awareness about the importance of establishing fixed-route transportation service in Alamance County. Burlington is the largest city in the state without any fixed-route service.

Health Indicators

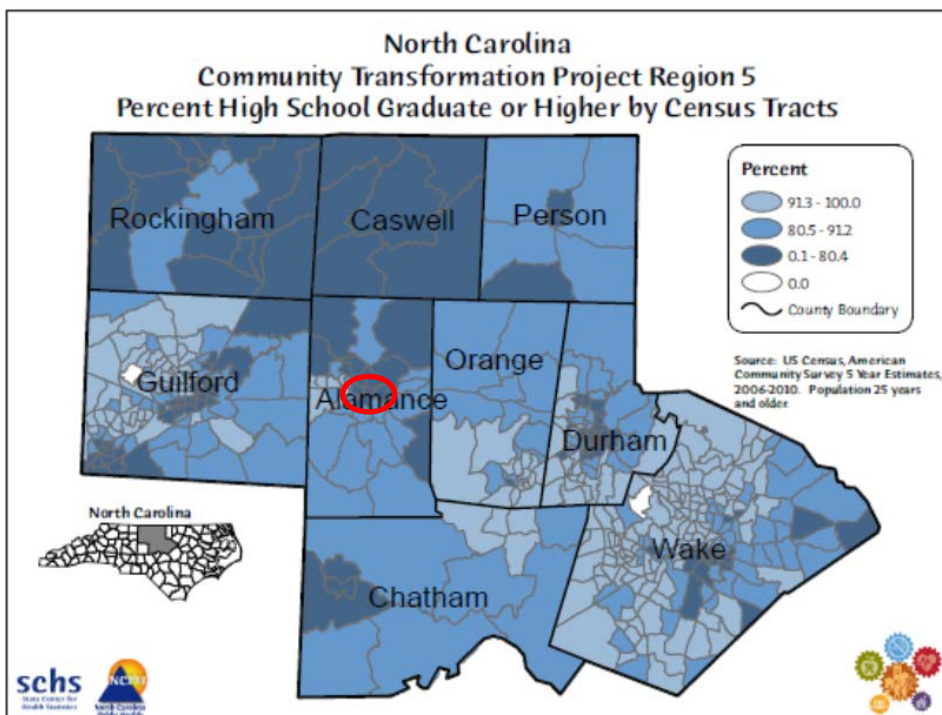
More and more, connections are being made with how we plan and design our communities and the health outcomes and behaviors of local populations. Certain sectors of the population are more at-risk for health disparities due to limited access to resources and education. The following series of maps highlight health indicators for Community Transformation Grant Region 5 that includes Graham. These maps can be used to help shape future policies related to the built environment to foster better health outcomes by understanding the locations of at-risk populations.



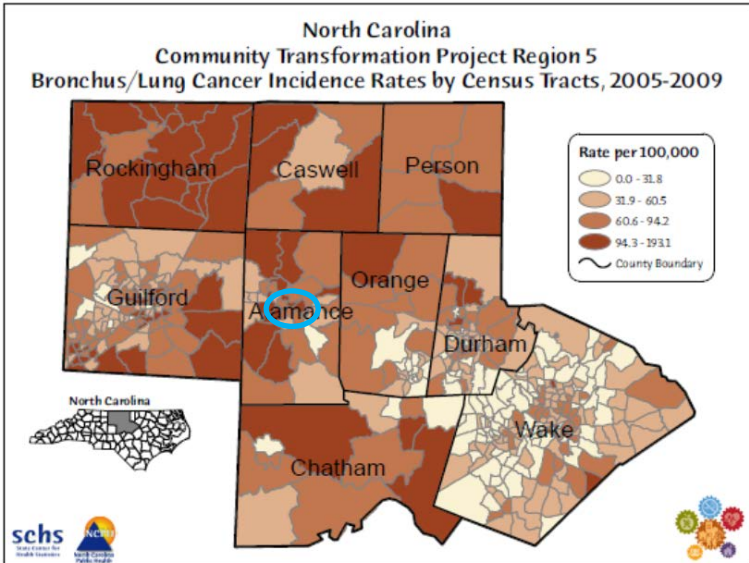
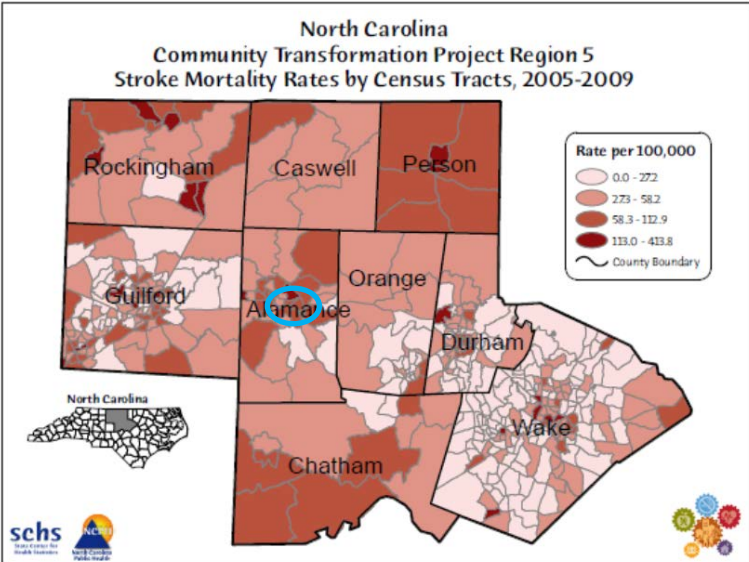
The modeled level of need identifies the geographic extent to which various populations may be at risk for low health outcomes based on demographic, educational, financial, and other personal characteristics. There are areas in Graham identified as having a high and very high modeled level of need.



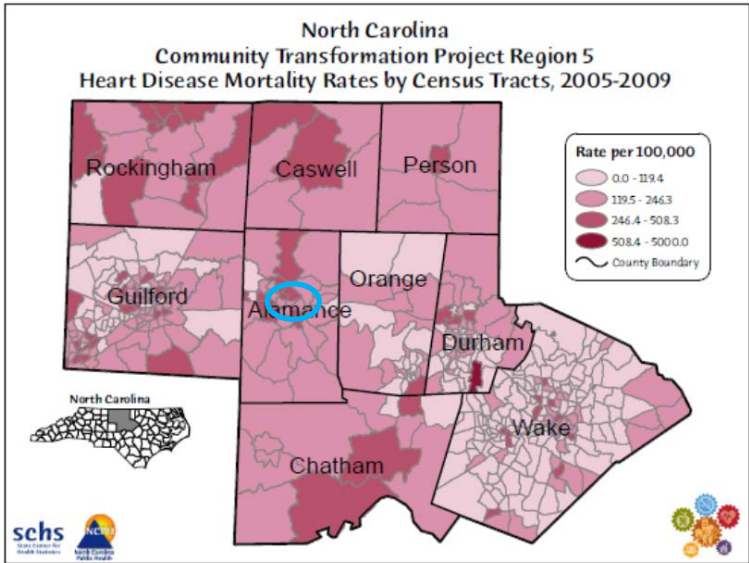
In Alameda County, the largest percentage of persons living below poverty are located within the central portion of the county. Most of these residents reside within Graham or Burlington. Their poverty status suggests they may have more risk of health related issues.



Education levels can also be an indicator of health risk populations. In Alameda County, most of the population that hasn't received a high school degree or higher is located in Graham, Burlington, and the unincorporated parts of the county.



These maps show the rate or incidence for three of the top killers in Alamance County: stroke, lung cancer, and heart disease.

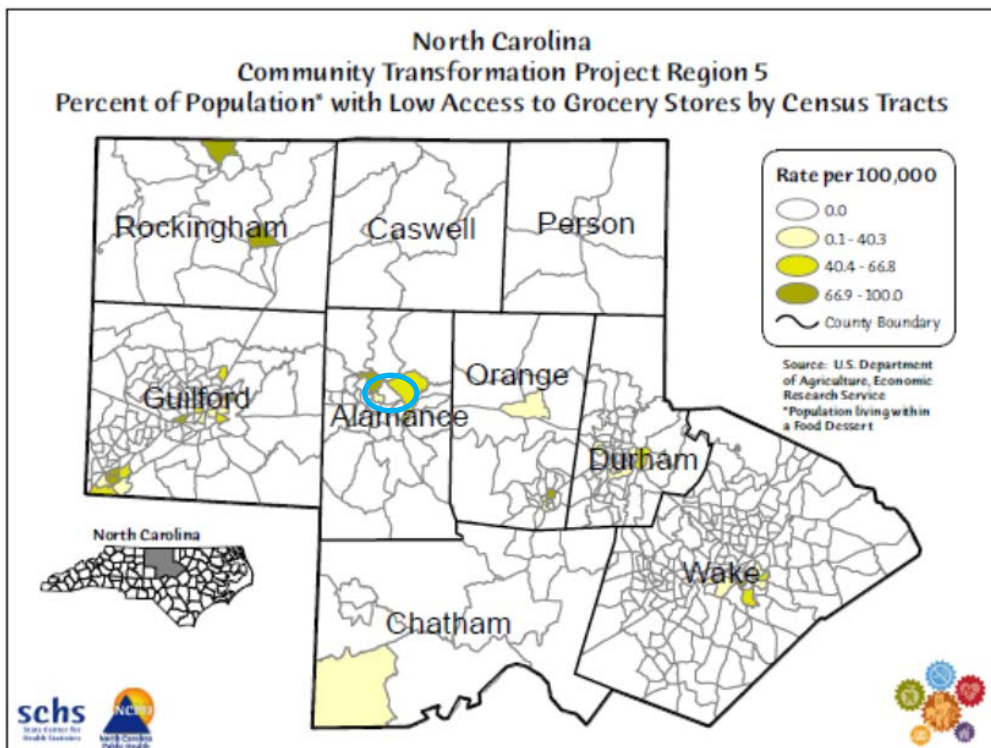


Food Access

There is a growing movement across the nation to provide communities with better access to healthier food that is produced locally. This provides multiple community benefits, including increasing local economic development, increasing choices and options for purchase of food, and increasing health outcomes resulting from increased consumption of local food that is fresher and typically less processed than food transported over long distances. Locally produced food can cost more than food produced through conventional industrial food systems; studies are mixed on the cost comparisons of food from local vs. conventional sources - some local foods cost more than conventionally available alternatives, some cost less. But the health benefits of consuming local food are well documented, and providing choices in the purchase of food for Graham households is desirable.

In Alamance County, there currently are farmer's markets and farm stands in Burlington, Elon, and Mebane. Efforts are underway to establish a farmers market in Graham. Efforts are also underway to develop a Local Food Policy Council for Alamance County to assist in the fostering of a formalized local food system that connects all actors in the food system: farm support businesses, farmers, food processors, packaging, distribution, local food buyers, and waste management.

Some areas of Alamance County have low access to food sources, such as grocery stores. Providing closer access to healthy food sources can increase health outcomes by providing better food choices and reducing reliance on convenience foods. Fortunately, residents of Graham appear to have good access to grocery stores.



Walkability

Walkscore is a national web-based system that measures whether services, destinations, and residences are within walkable distances to each other. Downtown Graham received an 88 Walkscore which is “very walkable.” In contrast, Alamance County overall has a Walkscore of 6, deducing that almost all errands in Alamance County require a car. Downtown Graham’s historic grid pattern was originally designed to create greater connectivity for people between their residences, places of work, and services and recreation they frequent on a regular basis. This model is an excellent pattern for development that offers daily opportunities for downtown goers to park and walk to multiple destinations. While more can be done to promote this type of activity, including improving pedestrian access and parking opportunities, the basic development framework supports pedestrian activities.



Providing opportunities for people to walk to and from destinations in a community has multiple benefits: improving health and promoting exercise, providing greater visibility for local businesses, and encouraging interaction among pedestrians.

4. Current Plans and Policy Foundation

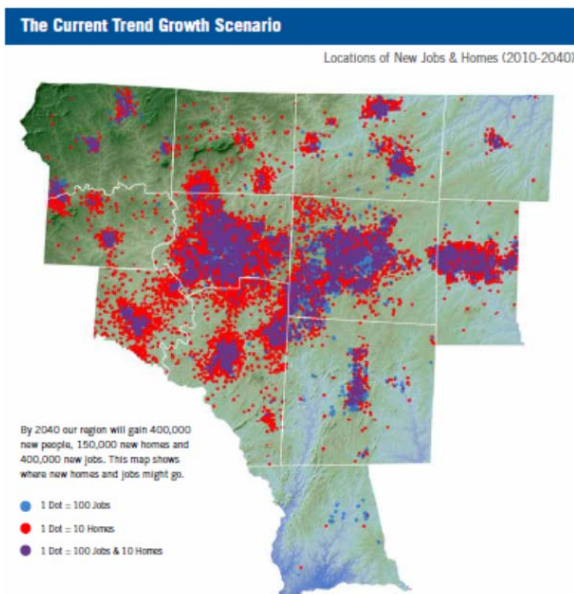
Graham has many existing plans and studies that provide a foundation for current policies and regulations. The following summaries describe the plans active today in setting the course for Graham's future. The policies and action strategies outlined in these documents will be evaluated to determine their relevance to Graham today and whether or not specific policies and actions should be included in the Comprehensive Plan. These documents are grouped into Regional Planning Efforts, General City Plans and Policies, Economic Plans and Infrastructure Plans.

Regional Planning Efforts

Piedmont Together

Graham and Alamance County are located on the eastern edge of the 12-county Piedmont Triad region. By 2040, this region is expected to grow by 25% - from 1.6 to 2 million people. Over the coming quarter century, an estimated 400,000 new people will need 150,000 new homes and 400,000 new jobs in the region.

A recent effort of the PART and the Piedmont Triangle Regional Council is Piedmont Together – set out to achieve a regional vision for growth. Growth scenarios for the region have been developed and are being evaluated by communities in the region to determine the ideal vision for future growth. Alternatives being explored include current growth trends, efficient growth that maximizes use of existing infrastructure, growth focused on making connections, and growth focused on conservation of lands.

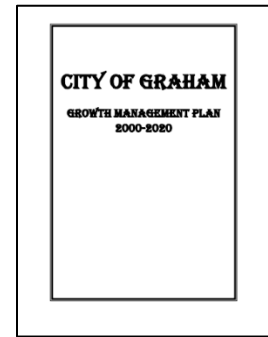


Piedmont Together is a regional effort to plan for growth and development in the Piedmont Triad Region for the next 25 years. The policies and plans that Graham sets in place today will have an impact on the larger region for years to come.

Growth Management Plan 2000-2020

Purpose:

- Serve as a guide for making development decisions that lead to orderly growth
- Build consensus on future development patterns
- Develop goals and policies for individual planning districts



City Guidance:

The plan provides a future vision for Graham as a city that has maintained its small-town atmosphere. It will have a revitalized downtown and attract businesses from the Triad and Triangle regions. Graham will be a city of livable neighborhoods linked by roads, bike trails, and sidewalks. Formerly sprawling development patterns will be incorporated into more compact development patterns that include narrower streets, sidewalks, corner stores, and smaller lots. Graham will offer more open space and rely less heavily on automobiles, while creating a pedestrian-friendly environment. Graham will plan for infrastructure expansion to ensure that citizens continue to be provided with quality services at a reasonable cost.

Goals related to land use include a commitment to improving the community's appearance and reducing the proliferation of commercial strip development along major thoroughfares. Graham's goals for its downtown include a desire to continue revitalization efforts in the CBD and increase regional awareness of Downtown Graham as a shopping and tourist destination. Graham's transportation goals are to increase the number of alternative routes throughout the city and to improve walkability.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The Growth Management Plan focuses on the physical growth and appearance of the community and discusses the infrastructure improvements that will be necessary to accommodate growth. It also identifies issues for each of the City's four planning areas. An evaluation by city staff acknowledges that many of the goals, policies, and strategies outlined in the plan are still relevant today and should likely be included in the updated comprehensive plan.

Development Ordinances (Revised 1999)

Purpose:

To promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the City of Graham and its ETJ through the use of several regulatory tools: zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, flood damage prevention ordinance, and other ordinances.

City Guidance:

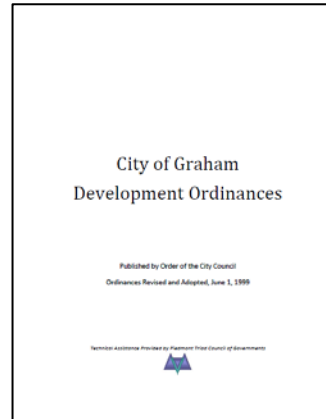
The zoning ordinance is meant to lessen congestion in streets; secure safety from fire; promote good health and general welfare; provide adequate light and ventilation; prevent overcrowding of land; avoid undue concentration of population; and facilitate the adequate provision of services.

The subdivision ordinance serves to provide for the orderly growth of the city, coordination of transportation networks and utilities within proposed subdivisions, the provision of adequate recreation areas, and a desirable distribution of population.

The flood damage prevention ordinance aims to protect human life and health, minimize expenditures for flood control projects, minimize the need for rescue and relief efforts associated with flooding, minimize prolonged business losses and interruptions, minimize damage to public facilities and utilities, help maintain a stable tax base, and ensure potential buyers are aware that property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

Includes policies and tools for regulating growth in the city.



Downtown Visions (1998)

Purpose:

Offer a vision for what a revitalized Downtown Graham could look like through sets of before-and-after images and provide literature on construction, streetscape improvements, and historic preservation.



City Guidance:

Provides guidance for potential revitalization outcomes of Graham’s historic downtown buildings.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

Downtown Visions offers a visual representation of what the downtown could look like and provides inspiration for potential building restoration and streetscape projects.

Destination 2020: Charting a Course for Alamance County's Future

(2003)

Purpose:

Help guide decisions about how to allocate Alamance County's budget to address competing needs.

City Guidance:

The plan offers a vision for the county based on 18 focus areas: education; growth management; transportation; water and sewer services; recreation, parks, and open space; environmental quality; economic development; housing and neighborhoods; historic preservation and rehabilitation; public safety; senior citizens; health care; community appearance; solid waste management; funding to pay for county needs; cultural diversity/acceptance; inter-governmental cooperation/regionalism, and civic involvement and leadership.



Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

As a municipality located within Alamance County, the county's policies are relevant to the City of Graham. The updated Comprehensive Plan should acknowledge and account for the policy direction provided in this plan.

Graham Hazard Mitigation Plan (2002)

Purpose:

Help guide Graham in forming hazard mitigation strategies and provide for growth that is natural hazard resilient.

City Guidance:

The plan identifies significant hazards in Graham, assesses the City's vulnerability to these hazards, assesses the community's ability to respond to these hazards, and sets out goals for mitigation efforts to better protect the community from future hazardous events. Flooding and severe storms are the most likely hazardous events the City should prepare for in the future.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The strategies outlined in this plan identify opportunities to further strengthen the City's built environment to maintain resiliency when experiencing several weather and hazardous conditions.

Economic Plans and Market Studies

Alamance County Target Industry Analysis (2005)

Date of Publication: October 2005

Developed by: Greenfield

Purpose:

Guide future economic development efforts with respect to marketing, recruitment, retention of existing industry, and service and product development.

City Guidance:

The analysis recommends that Alamance County pursue development in several industry areas, including pharmaceuticals, biotech middle stage companies, food processing, and logistics. Other project recommendations include bioprocessing infrastructure, Class A office space, a civic center, old mill revitalization, sound stage/production facilities, expanded sites around the airport, and tourism destination projects. The report also highlights the County's strengths and weaknesses. Graham is called out specifically for "the great deal of daily activity centered in their downtown area."

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

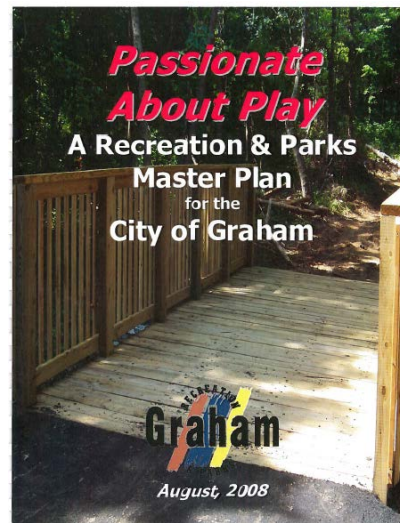
This county-wide plan provides a menu of economic development options that Graham may choose to pursue in its Comprehensive Plan.

Infrastructure Plans

Passionate About Play: A Recreation and Parks Master Plan for the City of Graham (2008)

Purpose

- Provide a snapshot of community recreation needs
- Inventory existing facilities, programs, and conditions
- Prioritize staff, program, and facilities improvements
- Provide a framework of data and information to support decision-making



City Guidance:

Graham is committed to the health of its citizens and acknowledges the role of play and recreation in promoting positive health outcomes. The plan recommends adopting standards for the provision of parkland and recreational facilities to allow the city to better gauge whether priorities are being met. The city’s objective is for parks and open space to occupy 5% of its land area.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

This plan recommends actions to improve recreational opportunities in the city.

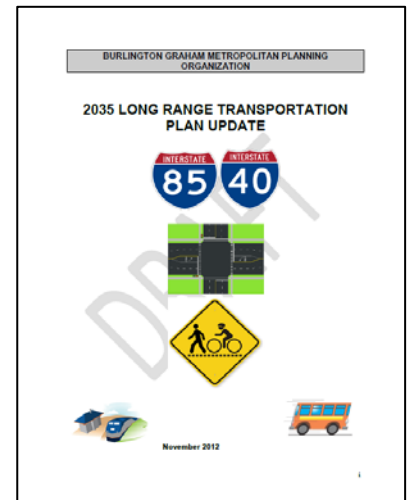
Burlington Graham MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (2012)

Purpose:

- Identify projected transportation demand
- Identify congestion management strategies
- Identify bike/ped transportation facilities
- Assess capital investment and other measures to preserve existing transportation system
- Include design concept and scope descriptions of all existing and proposed facilities
- Reflect multimodal evaluation of transportation, socioeconomic, environmental, and financial impact of the overall plan
- Consider area’s comprehensive long-range land use plan and metropolitan development objectives
- Include financial plan demonstrating consistency between proposed investments and projected revenue sources

City Guidance:

The LRTP includes goals for the street system, congestion management, cycling and walking, environmental justice, public transportation, and the environment. The region strives to develop an efficient street and highway network. Its local thoroughfare system should minimize traffic congestion. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be integrated into the overall transportation network. The transportation system should not disproportionately impact minority and low income population. The region should support efforts to improve mobility for residents. Finally, the transportation system should be developed in a way that preserves and enhances the natural and built environments.



Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The LRTP proposes future transportation projects – several within the City of Graham – that will impact the future physical and economic development of the City.

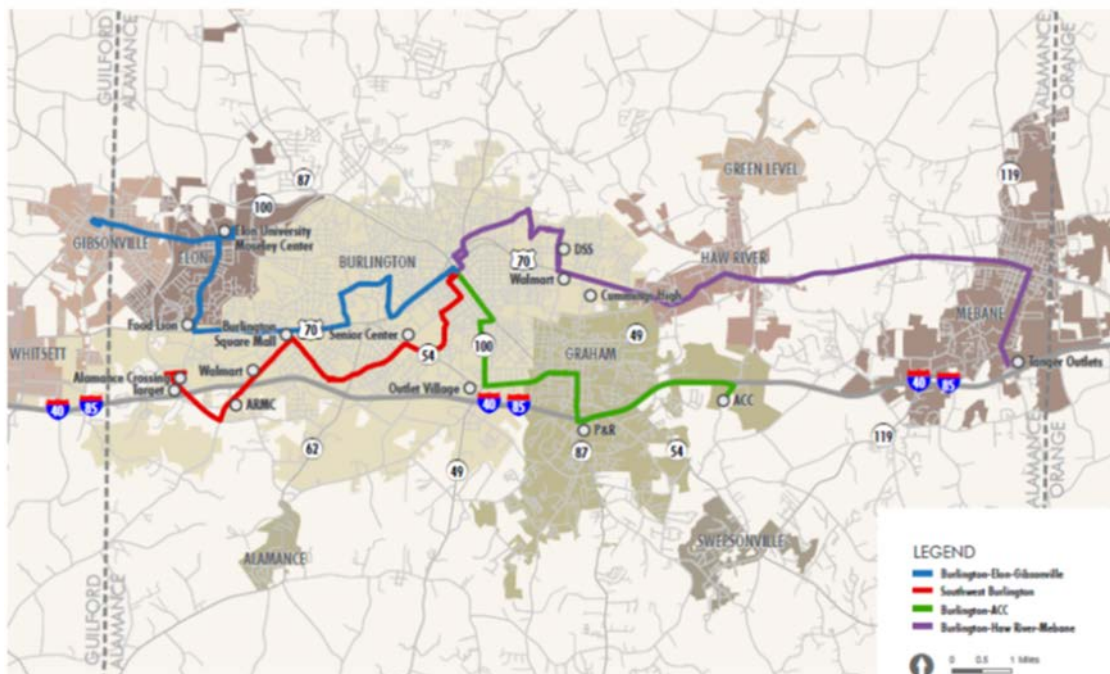
Alamance County Transit Feasibility Study (ongoing - 2014)

Purpose:

To assess the potential for regularly scheduled bus transit service to communities and destinations in Alamance County, including coordination with existing services provided by Alamance County Transit Authority (ACTA) and the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART).

City Guidance and Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The feasibility study is currently being updated. The comprehensive planning effort should track the status of the Transit Feasibility Study update to inform decision-makers of potential policy decisions and opportunities.



Graham Pedestrian Transportation Plan (2006)

Purpose:

Offer an improved alternative transportation network that addresses specific pedestrian safety concerns while recommending key pedestrian routes and connections.

City Guidance:

The vision outlined in the Plan describes a pedestrian-friendly environment with a system of pedestrian facilities that links existing resources and destinations, promotes safety, supports alternatives to automobile travel, increases recreation opportunities, advances mobility, quality of life, and development, and encourages walking.

The Plan's goals include a desire to promote safe walking for all, provide sidewalks and crosswalks in school and commercial areas, and aid in downtown revitalization. Other goals include closing gaps between existing sidewalks, developing greenway trails, improving accessibility for children, the elderly, and the handicapped, reducing traffic congestion, and increasing awareness and promotion of pedestrian needs.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The Pedestrian Plan is an important component in planning for the City's future transportation needs. The strategies included in the plan should be carried forward in the Comprehensive Plan.

Cherry Lane (SR 2123) Corridor Study and Interchange Analysis (2010)

Purpose:

Prepare a transportation corridor study and functional design for improvements to Cherry Lane corridor between NC 54 and I-40/85. It includes environmental screening, proposed land use assessment, development of design concepts, traffic forecast and analysis, and functional roadway designs.

City Guidance and Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

The report focuses on the short-term and long-term transportation needs along this corridor. Several scenarios were assessed for the roadway and surrounding land uses. The assessment includes an evaluation of the current interchanges at Jimmie Kerr and Trollingwood Road and suggests that improvements will be needed in the future to accommodate increased travel demand. The report also assesses a proposed interchange at Cherry Lane and I-40/85, included in the MPOs Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). These transportation facilities should be considered for their impact on future development and economic development opportunities in the City.

Intersection Improvement Study (2009)

Purpose:

- Determine solutions for improving traffic conditions at two intersections:
 - NC 54 (East Harden Street) at NC49 (East Elm Street)
 - NC 54 (East Harden Street) at Riverbend Road/Johnson Avenue

City Guidance:

Study recommends various improvements to improve capacity, safety, and pedestrian access at both intersections.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

This study highlights transportation improvements that could allow for further development in the area.

Corridor Study Report: Southern Loop (2005)

Purpose:

A component of Graham's Thoroughfare Plan, a proposed Southern Loop was studied in 2005 to determine critical environmental issues that may complicate the project, evaluate alternatives, and develop the functional design of the road. This loop is located at the intersection of NC 49 and Monroe-Holt Road Cherry Lane near Jimmy Kerr Road.

City Guidance and Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

This study identifies the functional design and location of the Southern Loop. While not currently funded or slated for future development, this proposed roadway is an important consideration in developing future land use plans for the City.

Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan (2012)

Purpose:

Effectively manage stormwater

City Guidance:

The goals of the Stormwater Management Program include public outreach on storm water impacts, public involvement and participation, illicit discharge detection and elimination, post-construction storm water management in new development and redevelopment, pollution prevention for municipal operations, and monitoring total maximum daily loads (TMDL).

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

Relevant to future infrastructure needs and water quality.

Alamance County Draft Trail Plan (2013 draft)

Purpose:

To develop a coordinated map of recreational trails and greenways in Alamance County and identify proximate recreational amenities and assets along the system of trails

City Guidance:

Provides a mapped summary of recreational assets in Alamance County. The formal plan will likely include specific recommendations and strategies for enhancing the existing system.

Relevance to Comprehensive Plan Update:

Shows current and future trails within the county's system.