

Town of Coats

Comprehensive Land Use Plan



Adopted: July 10, 2025

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Coats
a peaceful place... a friendly face

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND	4	Floodplain.....	22
Purpose.....	4	Parks & Recreation	23
History	4	2. VISIONING	24
Project Schedule	4	Public Input	24
EXISTING CONDITIONS & PLANS	5	Stakeholder Survey	24
Current Land Use Plan (2015)	5	Community Survey Results	25
Unified Development Ordinance	7	Land Use Priorities:	25
Downtown Streetscape Plan	9	Public Workshops & Meetings.....	27
Healthy Living Assessment.....	9	Defining Issues and Opportunities	27
Market Analysis	9	Issues:.....	27
N.C. 55/N.C. 27 Traffic Counts	9	Opportunities.....	28
Harnett County Greenway Master Plan	11	Vision and Goal Categories.....	28
Harnett County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.....	11	Vision Statement	29
North Harnett Transit Study	12	Goal Categories:.....	31
Community Profile	14	3. GOALS, POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION	32
Population.....	14	Future Land Use Map	32
Housing.....	14	Character Areas.....	35
Age, Race & Income	15	Goals, Policies & Implementation Strategies:.....	39
Education, Employment & Economy	16	References.....	51
Downtown	17	Appendix A (Maps)	52
Infrastructure & Services	18	Appendix B (Survey Results)	59
Roads & Highways	18		
Water & Sewer Utility	18		
Power	19		
Cultural Resources.....	19		
Parks & Natural Resources	21		
Watershed.....	21		

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

PURPOSE

In the summer of 2024, the Town of Coats began updating its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which was last adopted in 2015. According to North Carolina General Statute 160D-501, municipalities must maintain an up-to-date comprehensive plan to continue adopting and enforcing zoning regulations. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan is a strategic guide for managing growth, redevelopment, and improvements over the next 10 to 15 years. Due to nearly a decade passing since the last update, the town recognized the need for a refreshed plan that will provide a framework for accommodating future growth, while preserving Coats' unique character and the quality of life cherished by its residents.

HISTORY

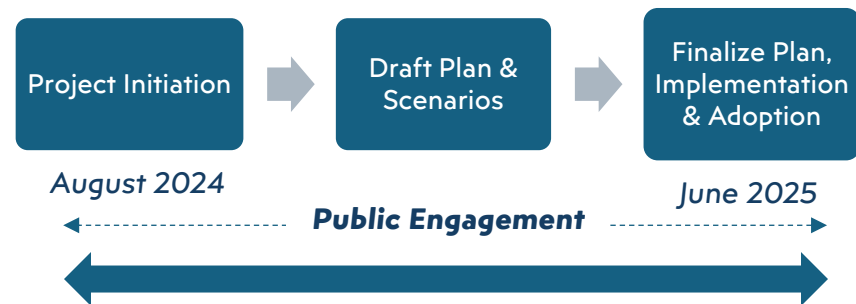
Coats began with James T. Coats, a 26-year-old visionary who purchased 700 acres of farmland in Harnett County and opened a general store. The store attracted farmers and eventually the railroad and depot, sparking growth that transformed his modest land into the Town of Coats.

Coats is also home to North Carolina's first licensed aviator, Alton Stewart. Stewart discovered his passion for flying during World War I at Camp Bragg's Pope Airfield and went on to popularize aviation across the state through his work with Curtiss-Wright Flying Service. Tragically, Stewart died in a plane crash in 1929, but his legacy lives on, honored by his family with a memorial in the Coats Cemetery.

Today, Coats remains a small town that blends modern amenities with a friendly, close-knit community. Many residents commute to Wake County and Fort Bragg, benefiting from the region's job growth while enjoying the town's peaceful atmosphere, which preserves its historical roots.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The Town of Coats undertook a year-long process to update its Comprehensive Land Use Plan, aimed at refining the community's vision for the future. This updated plan offers guidance on key areas such as land use, economic development, recreation, and infrastructure for the coming years. It includes a thorough assessment of the town, along with refreshed goals, recommendations, and a renewed vision. The input from stakeholders, the public, and town leadership was essential in shaping the plan's direction and ensuring it reflected the needs and aspirations of the community.



EXISTING CONDITIONS & PLANS

CURRENT LAND USE PLAN (2015)

The current Town of Coats Land Use Plan, adopted in 2015, serves as a policy guide for managing growth and development in the town. It outlines key goals, objectives, and strategies for land use, zoning, and infrastructure investment to ensure sustainable development while preserving the town's character.

The plan addresses residential, commercial, and industrial development, along with recommendations for transportation, public services, and open space. It emphasizes the importance of balancing growth with the town's small-town charm and historical roots, ensuring that new development aligns with community values and long-term visions for Coats. The goals that guide the plan include Infrastructure, Land Use Factors, Tax Base Factors, Development Objectives, and Cultural & Natural Resources.

The associated future land use map began with the town's current zoning map and considered where compatible and complementing land uses would be suitable in the future. Its purpose is to graphically depict a general land development pattern that seeks to accomplish the goals of the Plan.

While many goals were achieved from the current land use plan, several are still applicable and should continue with the efforts of this update. The following categories outline existing goals from the Town of Coats 2015 Land Use Plan, including an update on the status of each goal.

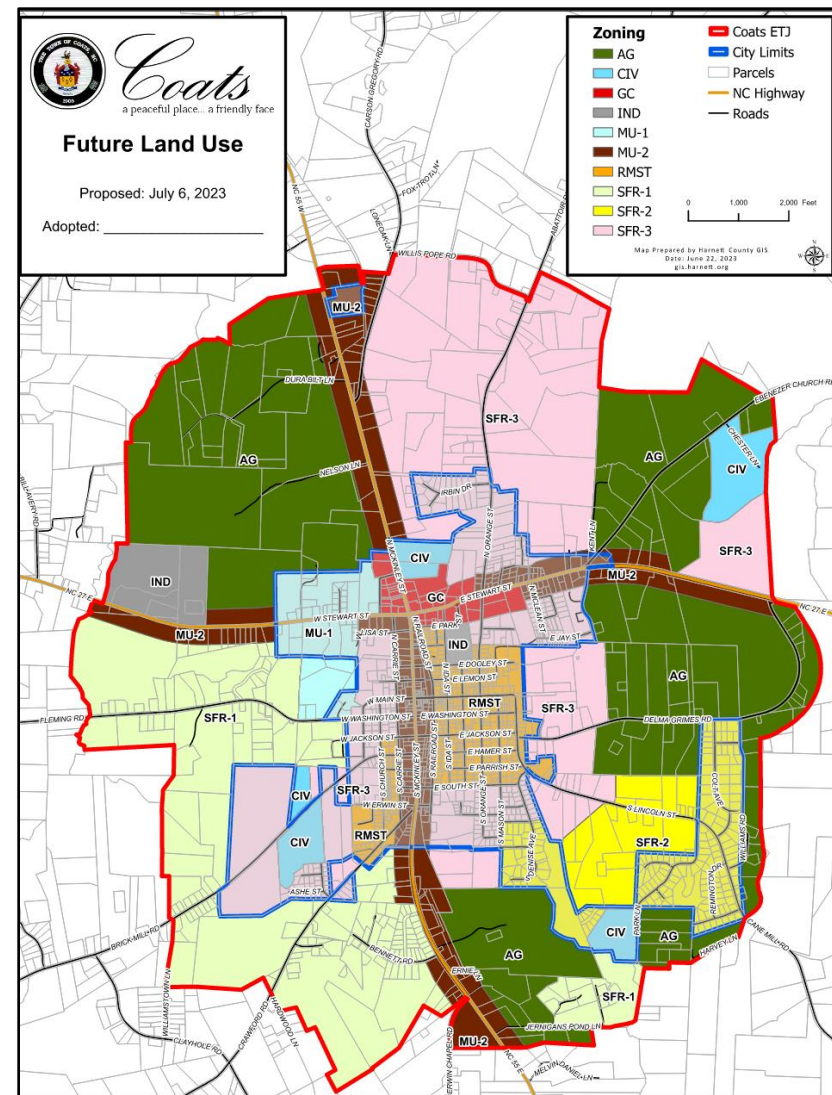


FIGURE 1: CURRENT FUTURE LAND USE MAP (2023 UPDATE)

Infrastructure – A Downtown Streetscape Master Plan was developed with assistance from USDA. This should enhance the sidewalk infrastructure in the Main Street area. Coats is well situated in Harnett County’s adopted Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Plan to be connected to nearby trails and amenities in the wider region. However, no implementation work has started at the town or county level.

There has been limited coordination with NCDOT to protect traffic operations and promote public safety, by adopting an access management plan to limit access along major and minor thoroughfares. Concerns over increasing traffic volumes and safety have been a concern of citizens. However, the town has recently joined the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), which will allow more input when advocating for NCDOT improvements and access to more funding opportunities for road or sidewalk projects.

A State earmark is providing for the upsizing of Harnett Regional Water’s (HRW) Lift Station #4 (Fleming Rd.) as well as increasing capacity downstream from Coats. The town and HRW have designed plans to extend sewer north along N.C. 55.

Land Use Factors – Many goals within the Land Use category were achieved through the updating of the town’s subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance, and watershed ordinance into the Coats Development Ordinance (CDO). The CDO was approved in July 2022 after twelve months of review by builders, citizens, and Planning Board members.

Progress still needs to be made to encourage economic development incentives, and no efforts have been made to attract local food processing, wholesale, and distribution firms. An update of the Future Land Use Map in 2023 identified possible industrial sites on the western edge of the town’s Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), around an existing solar farm.

Tax Base Factors – The new CDO allows for a wide variety of home occupations with additional standards to limit disturbances. An update to the official zoning map directs intensive land uses to areas with existing utilities, including mixed-use zoning along N.C. 55 or commercial zoning along the intersection of N.C. 55 and N.C. 27. Several businesses have improved and re-used existing commercial properties (i.e. restaurant, bar, hair salon, spa, and karate studio) to attract customers to the downtown area.

Using various grant funds, the town has embarked on two major water system projects. The first project includes installing new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) “smart” water meters for all active customers, which improves the operational efficiency of the Public Works staff and customer service. A second major project involved the replacement of 1950’s era asbestos cement waterlines with larger PVC waterlines, valves, and hydrants, which was completed on Railroad Street and N. Ida Street.

There has also been minimal progress made to develop a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan.

In summary, many of the 2015 Plan’s Existing Goals were addressed with the creation of the CDO which was adopted

in 2022. Several examples, spanning multiple goal categories, are outlined below:

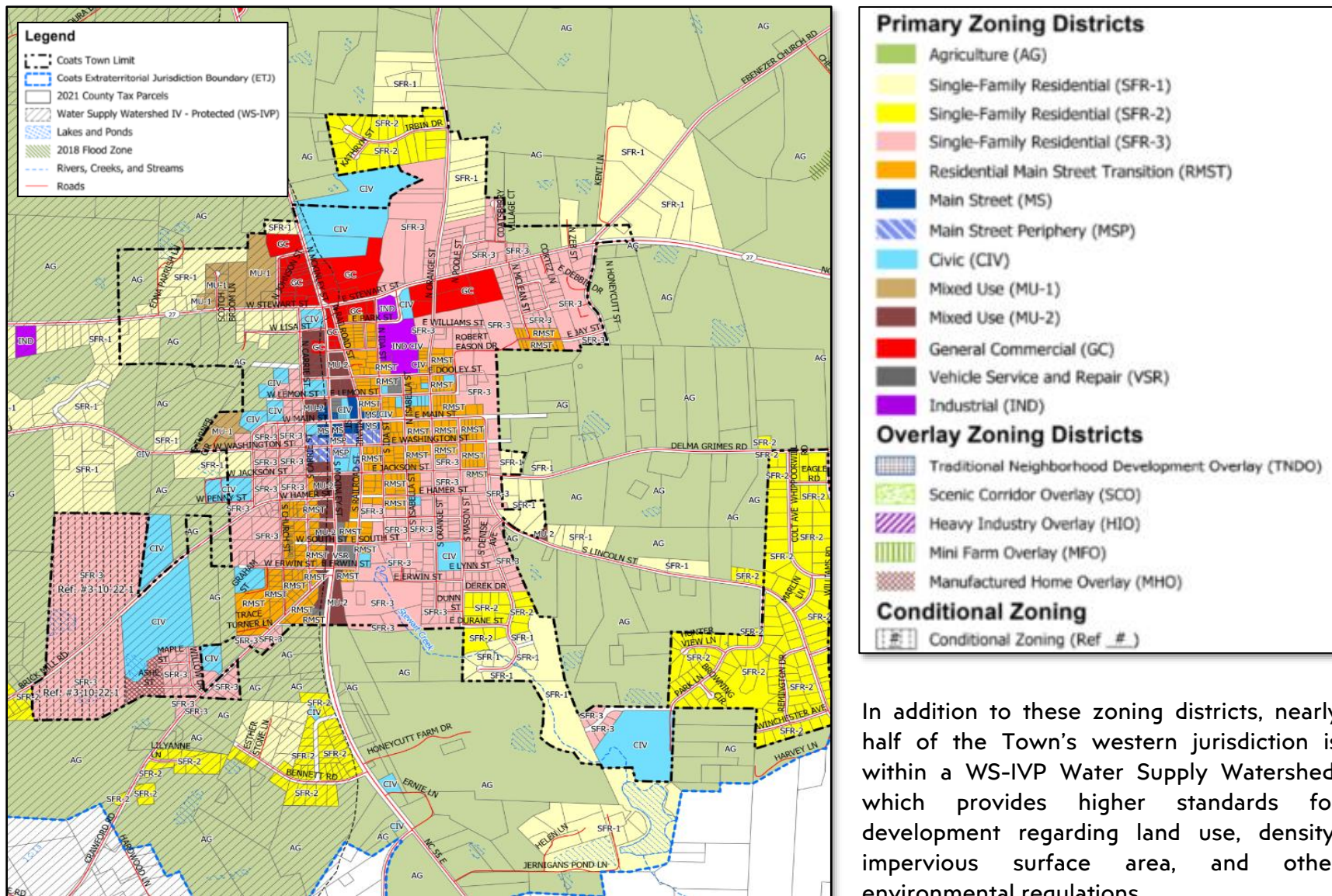
- Exclusive commercial zoning along the intersection of N.C. 55 and N.C. 27 has implemented the goal of identifying commercial nodes for development at major crossroads. The intersection is an area that has water, sewer, and highway infrastructure. The zoning is exclusive to commercial with no option for residential of any density.
- The CDO provided an updated chapter for signage requirements, which will be impactful to commercial areas along major highway corridors.
- The creation of the Residential Main Street Transition (RMST) zoning district supports and promotes infill development that optimizes the use of existing infrastructure.
- New open space requirements necessitate the placement of active and passive recreational facilities close to residential areas and transportation nodes. A minimum five percent reserved open space requirement is in place for major subdivisions.
- A Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay (TNDO) zone was created to permit a mix of land uses, which could potentially reduce travel time and improve convenience.
- The CDO incorporates the Watershed Ordinance, soil and erosion control measures, and floodplain area maps. These standards allow for better planning review of these features, thus protecting the region's streams, wetlands, and forested areas.

- Stream buffers, landscaping and tree conservation are requirements in the CDO, which encourages the conservation of high value natural resources within new developments.

UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

The Town of Coats Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is a regulatory framework integrating zoning, subdivision, and other land use regulations into a single document. Its purpose is to guide development in a way that supports the town's long-term goals, as outlined in the Land Use Plan. The UDO establishes standards for various aspects of development, including land use classifications, building requirements, lot sizes, setbacks, signage, and environmental protection. It ensures that all developments align with the town's vision for growth, sustainability, and preserving community character while complying with state and federal regulations. The UDO includes thirteen conventional zoning districts and five overlay districts. The conventional districts include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ▪ Main Street Periphery (MSP) | ▪ Agriculture (AG) |
| ▪ Civic (CIV) | ▪ Single-Family Residential (SFR-1) |
| ▪ Mixed Use (MU-1) | ▪ Single-Family Residential (SFR-2) |
| ▪ Mixed Use (MU-2) | ▪ Single-Family Residential (SFR-3) |
| ▪ General Commercial District (GC) | ▪ Residential Main Street Transition (RMST) |
| ▪ Vehicle Service and Repair (VSR) | ▪ Main Street (MS) |
| ▪ Industrial (IND) | |



In addition to these zoning districts, nearly half of the Town's western jurisdiction is within a WS-IVP Water Supply Watershed, which provides higher standards for development regarding land use, density, impervious surface area, and other environmental regulations.

DOWNTOWN STREETScape PLAN

In 2022, the Town adopted the Coats Downtown Streetscape Master Plan. The plan provides the vision and framework for improving the streetscape of the roads within the downtown or boundary areas. The goals and objectives included in this plan include improving pedestrian experience and safety, supporting businesses, celebrating local history, and enhancing downtown aesthetics and identity. A phased implementation plan is included, as well as estimates of probable costs.

HEALTHY LIVING ASSESSMENT

The Town of Coats Healthy Living Assessment was an initiative adopted in 2014, designed to evaluate and promote the health and well-being of its residents. The assessment focuses on key factors that influence healthy living, including access to recreational spaces, walkability, transportation options, public safety, and access to healthy food. The plan identifies proposed greenway paths to prioritize. The assessment aims to create recommendations that support healthy lifestyles through improved planning, policy changes, and community engagement, ensuring that Coats remains a vibrant, livable town.

MARKET ANALYSIS

In 2016, the UNC School of Government performed a market analysis of the Town through its Development Finance Initiative (DFI). The analysis summarized the main opportunities in Coats as follows:

- Unique position near Campbell University; students are drawn to downtown amenities.
- Much of the supply of downtown-compatible retail is outside of the downtown (demand being met outside of Town limits).
- Possibilities exist to capture demand downtown while improving the existing building supply.

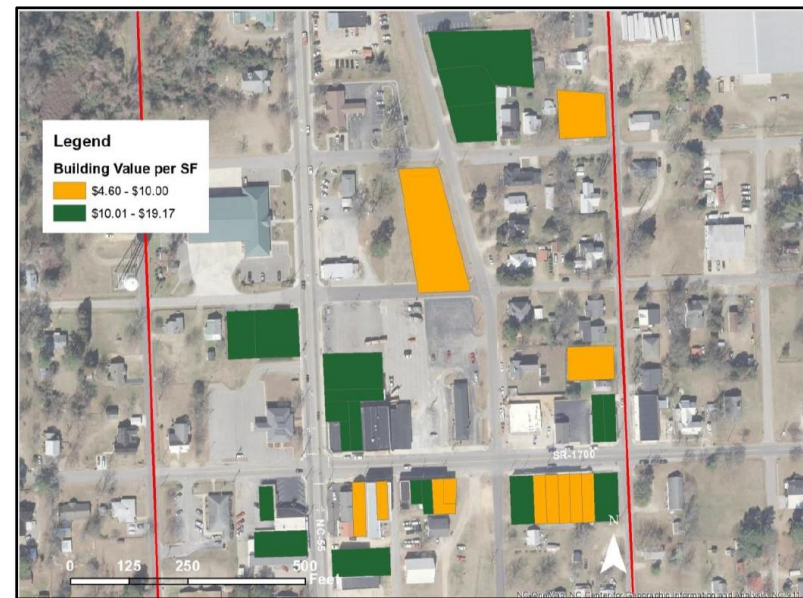


FIGURE 3: UNDERUTILIZED DOWNTOWN PARCELS (UNC DFI ANALYSIS)

TRAFFIC COUNTS / COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (CTP)

There are two main State Routes that run through the Town of Coats, including N.C. 55 (north to south) and N.C. 27 (west to east). Traffic volumes on state roadway facilities are

quantified as annual average daily traffic (AADT) and are provided on the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) AADT Mapping Application. The various AADT segments of the two main corridors are outlined below, according to the latest available data (Nov. 9, 2023):

- N.C. 55
 - Northern Town limits to the N.C. 27– 8,100 AADT
 - N.C. 27 intersection to Main Street – 9,900 AADT
 - Main Street to Erwin Street – 13,000 AADT
- N.C. 27
 - Western Town limits to N.C. 55– 6,500 AADT
 - N.C. 55 to N. Orange St. – 9,500 AADT
 - N. Orange St. to eastern Town limits – 6,800 AADT

These traffic volumes show that the primary vehicular traffic concentrations are on N.C. 55 between Main Street and Erwin Street. The existing adjacent land uses to this segment include single-family residences as well as several commercial businesses. The variety of land use types in this segment highlights the natural development that has occurred historically and the opportunity to plan for controlled future growth to maximize the potential of this vital transportation asset.

Recommendations for each mode of transportation were included in the 2011 CTP. Within the Town of Coats, N.C. 55 and N.C. 27 were both projected to be over capacity by 2035. The CTP proposed project for N.C. 55 is to provide a four-

lane boulevard facility on existing location from the Wake County line to U.S. 421 in Erwin. The CTP project proposal for N.C. 27 was to provide a four-lane boulevard facility with a grass median and turn lanes where necessary.

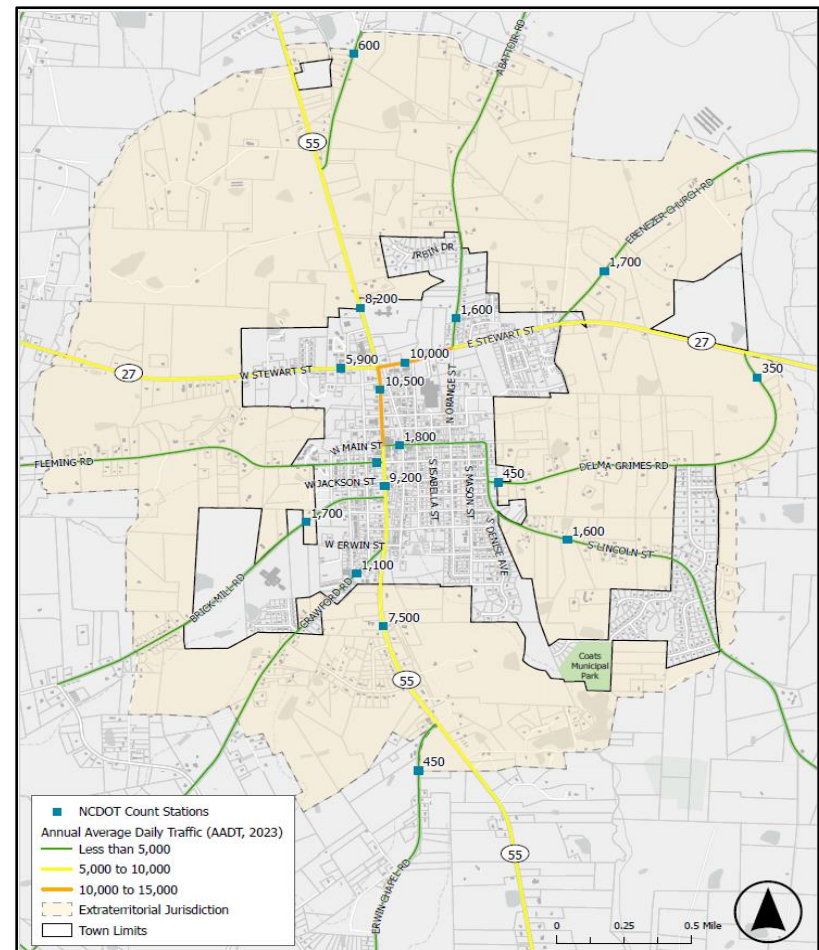


FIGURE 4: ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC MAP

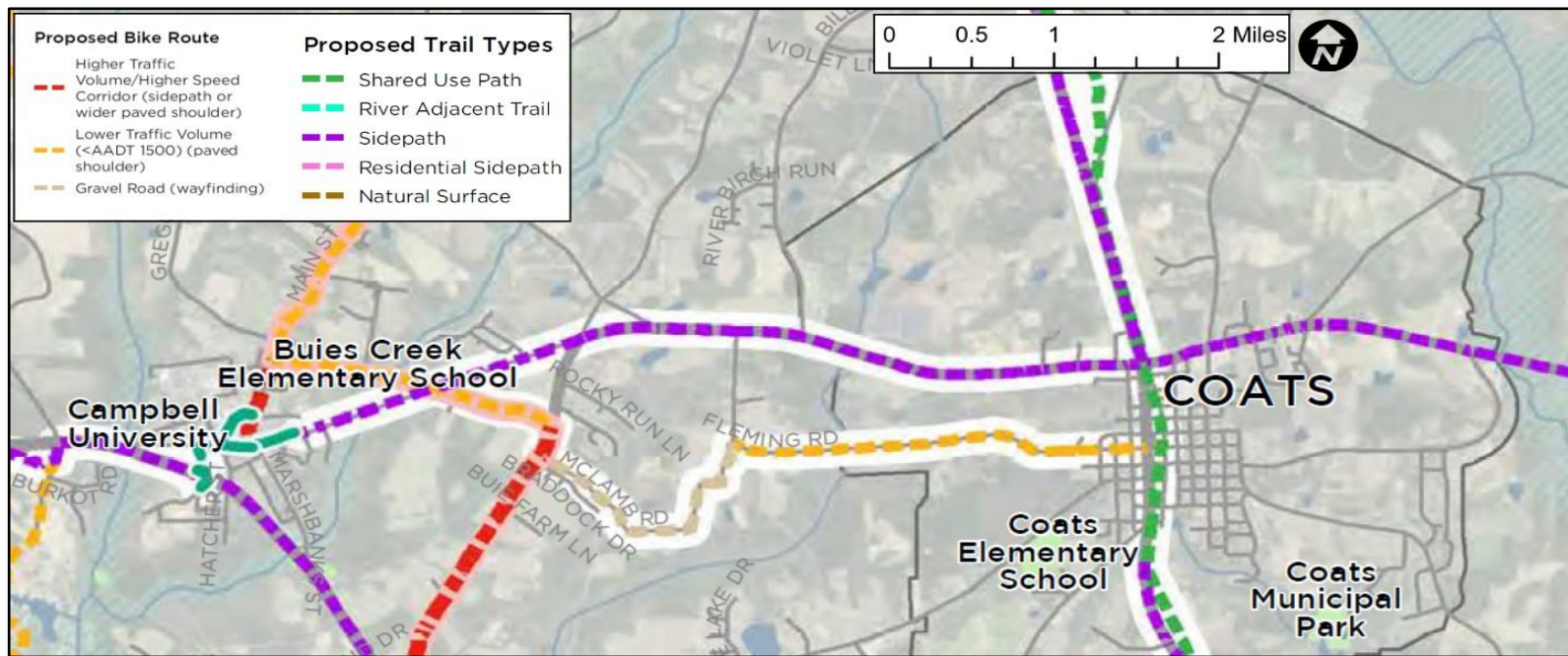


FIGURE 5: PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE LINKS (HARNETT COUNTY BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN & GREENWAY MASTER PLAN)

HARNETT COUNTY GREENWAY MASTER PLAN

The Harnett County Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan was adopted in 2022. The plan focuses on bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway routes to set the stage for a County-wide multi-use trail system that would link parks, schools, municipalities, cultural points of interest, and residential areas within Harnett County.

The most notable project from this plan is a greenway trail from Lillington to Raven Rock State Park. This path continues east along the Cape Fear River, passing through Buies Creek, and connects to Coats via a side path on N.C. 27 and paved

shoulder on Fleming Rd. The plan also provides connectivity from Coats to the Dunn/Erwin Rail Trail via a side path and shared use paths following N.C. 55.

HARNETT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

The Harnett Horizons 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan provided an update to the 2015 Grow Harnett County Comprehensive Growth Plan. The Land Use Plan Update shares the community's vision for its future by outlining policies and recommendations to achieve those goals, which will guide land use, funding, resource distribution, and infrastructure investments for Harnett County. The plan

proposes a Jetport Overlay district just over 2,000 feet from Coats' ETJ on Brick Mill Rd. Understanding the full development impact of the overlay zone is a critical consideration as any voluntary annexation requests or ETJ expansions in areas southwest of town are considered.

NORTH HARNETT TRANSIT STUDY

The North Harnett County Transit Study identifies transit needs of the population and provides transit service recommendations for the portion of Harnett County that joined Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), including the towns of Angier, Lillington, and Coats.

The study provides a recommendation to incorporate micro transit, which is a mix of traditional bus service and ridesharing. This is a cost-effective way to provide residents with local service within Harnett County and connections to other regional centers. If implemented, potential public transportation riders in Coats can request a trip from their service area to other regional destinations or regional buses in Wake County. Figure 7 is a presentation map deliverable promoted on the project's public information website (<https://www.northharnetttransitstudy.com>).

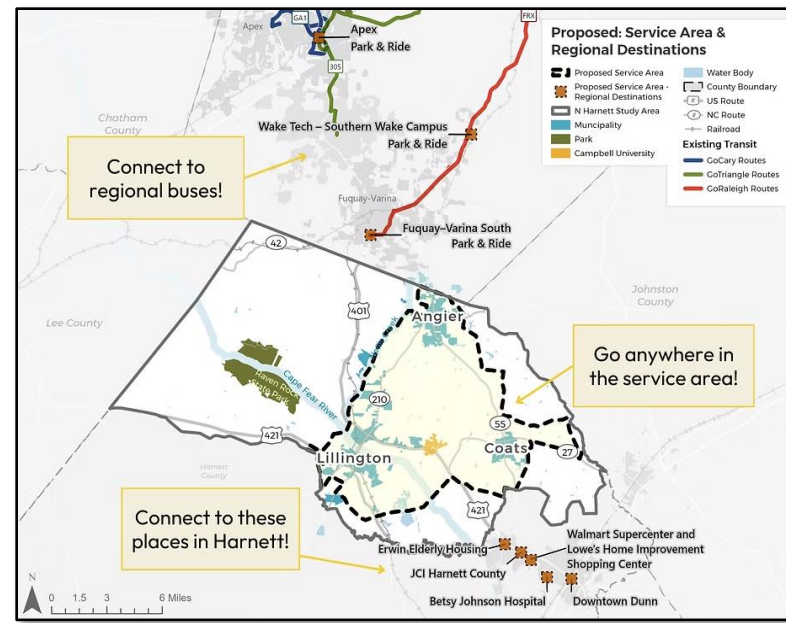


FIGURE 6: NORTH HARNETT TRANSIT STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

PLAN INTEGRATION

Many of the recommendations listed in these plans and documents have been incorporated into this updated comprehensive land use plan to avoid inconsistencies and to promote previous long-range planning initiatives into the future.



FIGURE 7: MURAL ON MCKINLEY STREET HONORING ALTON STEWART, THE FIRST LICENSED AVIATOR IN NC

COMMUNITY PROFILE

POPULATION

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, the Town of Coats had a population of 2,324 within its corporate limits. Data for the town's extraterritorial jurisdiction was not available for that year.

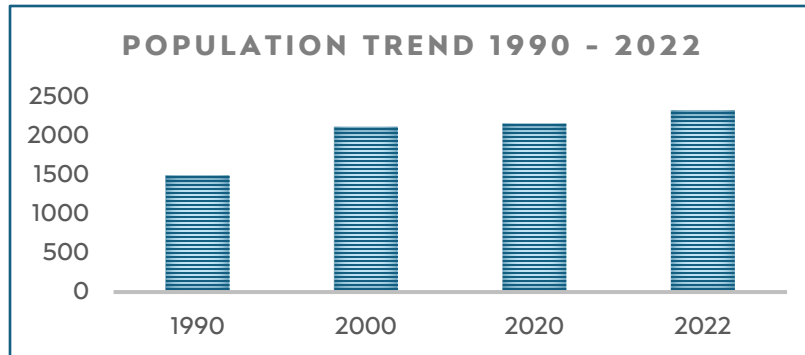


FIGURE 8: COATS POPULATION TREND (ACS 2022)

The population of Harnett County in 2022 was 138,832, 19.9% up from the 115,757 who lived there in 2010. For comparison,

The 2022 population totals for Harnett County communities:

- Angier: 5,348
- Erwin: 4,606
- Dunn: 8,549
- Lillington: 4,566
- Harnett County: 138,832

the US population grew 7.7% and North Carolina's population grew 11.7% during that period.

HOUSING

Coats has just under 1,000 housing units with a median value of \$120,400, which is below the median home value in Harnett County (\$195,900). Over 70% of the units are owner-occupied. Most of the housing units are detached residential. However, the town does offer some new townhomes and multi-family residential units. Since 2000, population growth has increased by approximately 10%. Higher increases are projected in the future increases due to approved preliminary plans and ongoing private construction of three subdivisions.



FIGURE 9: ATTACHED HOUSING ON CHURCH STREET

AGE, RACE & INCOME

With a median age of 36.4, Coats' residents are younger than the North Carolina average of 39.2 and very similar to Harnett County (36.3). The following figures provide a breakdown of the town's population based on age, sex and race.

Coats' median household income is \$42,566, nearly \$22,000 less than the average of Harnett County (\$64,992).

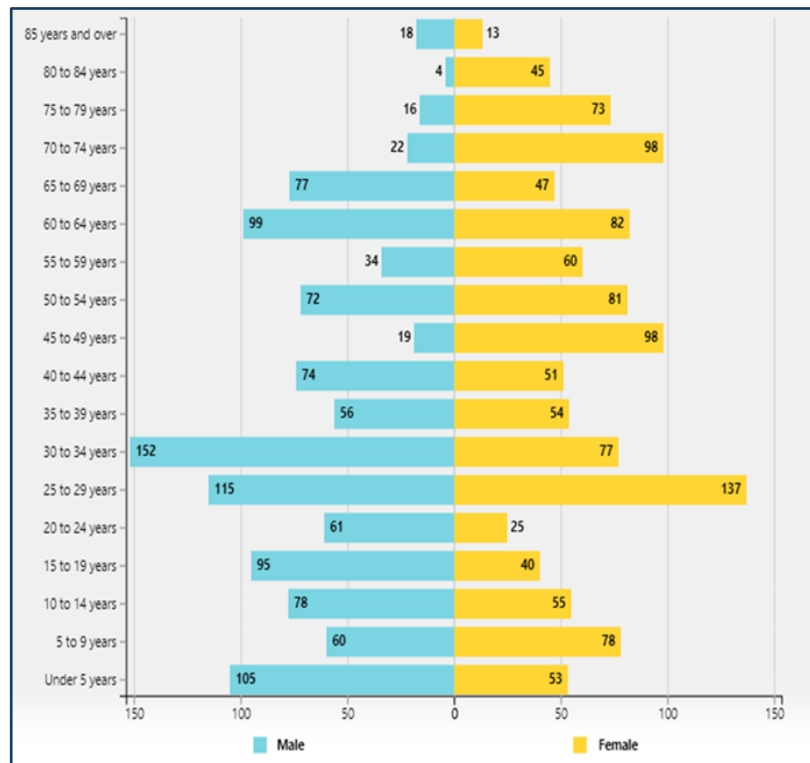


FIGURE 10: POPULATION BY AGE AND SEX

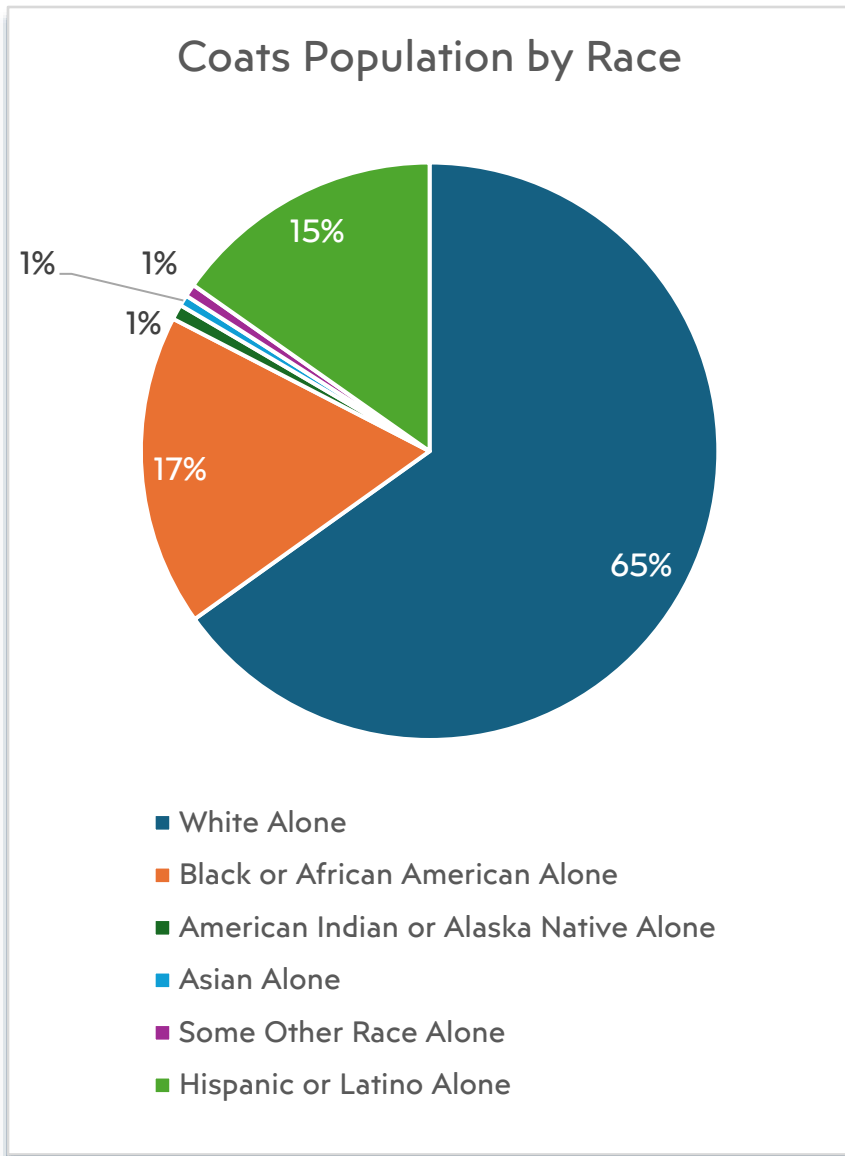


FIGURE 11: POPULATION BY RACE

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMY

The Harnett County School system serves the Town of Coats, a district that includes Coats Elementary, Coats-Erwin Middle, and Triton High Schools.

The population over the age of 25 reported during the 2022 5-year American Community Survey that almost 74% attained at least a high school education, of which 20% had attended some college or received an associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degree at a higher level of education.

Below is a list of the top public and private sector employers in Harnett County from the Harnett County Economic Development Department. According to the County's study, the Harnett County Schools and the Harnett Health System were the two largest employers in the County. While none of these businesses are located within Coats, residents benefit from highway access to all of these local job centers.

The Coats economy is primarily based on services. The combined service portion of economic activities within a one-mile radius of Coats represents approximately 80% of all businesses and employment. Retail trades are about 13% of this segment.

Construction businesses and Educational/Healthcare/Social services account for almost 38% of the Town's economy, leading to the notion that many Coats residents work out of town. This is supported by 2022 NC Department of Commerce data that Harnett County has a net outflow of 20,402 workers.



FIGURE 12: TOP EMPLOYERS IN HARNETT COUNTY

Diversifying Coats' economy through agribusiness, agricultural support, and leveraging nearby institutions like Campbell University could provide a foundation for more sustainable growth. Identifying businesses that address the economic leakage factor, which prevents local spending from flowing outside the community, is key to retaining wealth and generating local employment. A 2021 Harnett County Economic Development report analyzed industry leakage. A few industries with high leakage factors are sporting goods stores, clothing stores, and food services. Complementing this approach with strategic tax base

growth, enhanced public services, and business services to nearby educational institutions would create a more balanced and resilient economic landscape for the town.

Industry Category	Workforce Percentage
Educational and health care, social assistance	19.90%
Construction	17.50%
Retail Trade	13.60%
Professional, scientific and management, administrative, and waste management services	12.20%
Art, entertainment and recreational, food services	11.70%
Other services	7.40%
Manufacturing	5.70%
Public Administration	3.50%
Transportation, warehousing, & utilities	2.70%
Agriculture, forestry and hunting, mining	2.30%
Wholesale Trade	1.40%
Information	1.40%
Finance and insurance, real estate, and rental/leasing	0.70%

TABLE 1: INDUSTRY FOR EMPLOYED POPULATION (AGES > 16)

DOWNTOWN

Over the last decade, downtown Coats has seen a series of improvement efforts aimed at revitalization and community enhancement. These efforts have included:

- Façade improvements – Several new businesses have invested in under-utilized or vacant buildings, enhancing the visual appeal and historic character of downtown buildings.
- Public spaces – The town has invested in upgrading public spaces, and continues to plan for more streetscape improvements such as new lighting, benches, sidewalks, and landscaping, aimed at making downtown more pedestrian-friendly.
- Community events – Coats has encouraged community engagement through regular events like the Farmers Day celebration, Farmers Market, and Christmas on Main which helps bring people to the downtown area and supports local businesses.
- Infrastructure updates – The town has replaced outdated and undersized waterlines downtown. Streetscapes, ADA accessibility, and parking improvements, will make downtown more functional for residents and visitors.

These efforts have helped maintain the small-town charm of Coats while promoting economic activity and community engagement.



FIGURE 13: PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE DOWNTOWN

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

ROADS & HIGHWAYS

The Town of Coats faces challenges with its roadway infrastructure, including both NCDOT streets and Town-maintained streets. The curbed streets in the heart of the commercial areas are prone to flooding, while the ribbon pavement with stormwater ditch-type sections in the residential neighborhoods is similarly vulnerable during major rain events. This type of roadway setup, especially in areas with inadequate stormwater management, can result in standing water and localized flooding, which impacts transportation and safety.

Addressing the flooding issue would require evaluating the existing stormwater infrastructure, considering upgrades such as improved drainage systems, stormwater retention solutions, and roadway resurfacing to enhance permeability and flood mitigation. Incorporating green infrastructure like bioswales or permeable pavement may also be a viable option for improving water management in these areas.

WATER & SEWER UTILITY

The Town purchases treated water from Harnett Regional Water (HRW). The water system is established in a well-gridded pattern and available to customers on most Town streets, serving a vast majority of Town property owners. The town controls water distribution within the approximate boundary its ETJ through the purchase of water from HRW.

The sewer system available to property owners in town is controlled and maintained by Harnett Regional Water. Similar to the water system, the sewer system has been constructed in a gridded pattern serving most property owners in Town. The sewer system includes traditional gravity collection lines, pump stations and force mains that send the waste to the treatment plant in Lillington.

The Town should continue to collaborate closely with HRW on maintaining, expanding, and allocating capacities for infrastructure systems. These decisions are critical, as they can significantly impact land use investments and the Town's economic development potential.

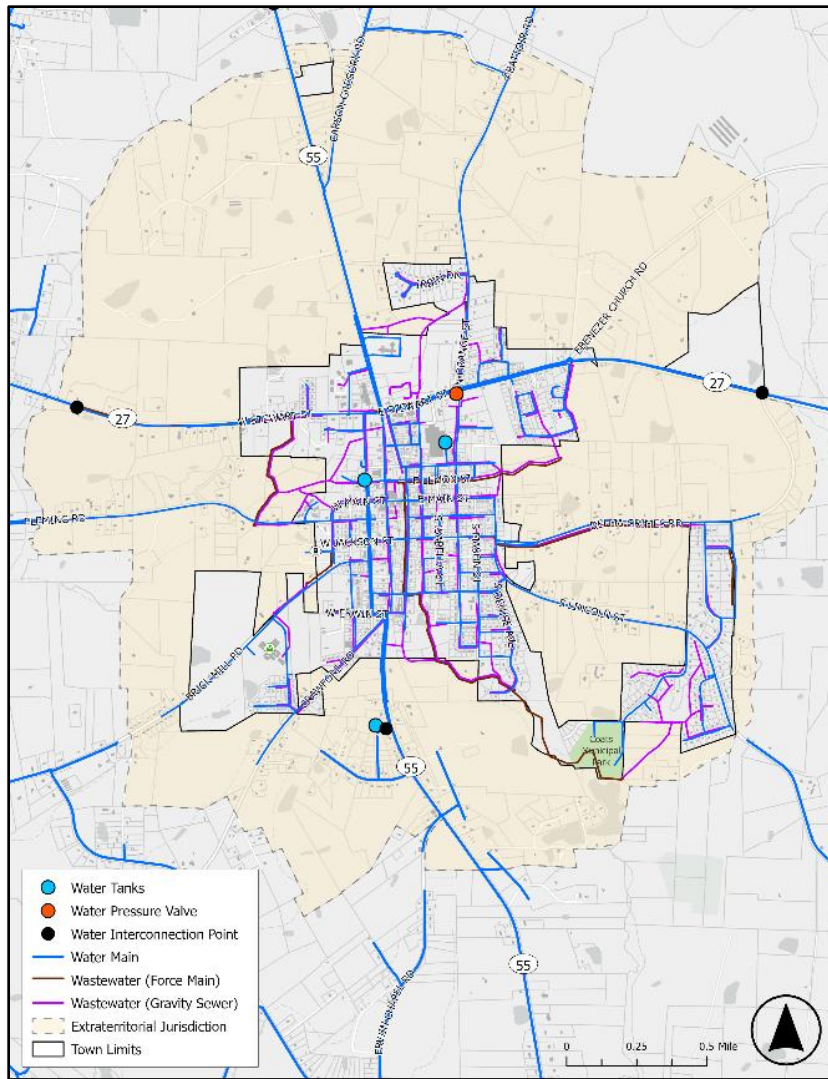


FIGURE 14: WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

POWER

The Town is situated near two major power transmission lines connected to a key regional power generating facility. These transmission lines ensure that local property owners have reliable access to sufficient power, including 3-phase power. Natural gas infrastructure is not available to residents or businesses. There is a 30-acre solar farm located along the western boundary of the Town's ETJ.



CULTURAL RESOURCES

The resurgence of small rural towns continues to be popular in North Carolina. Vibrant downtowns that offer a variety of cultural activities to attract both residents and visitors to small towns are key to their economy. Key drivers of this resurgence include private businesses, non-profit organizations (such as museums, theaters, parks, and civic groups), and programming that fosters a sense of place and community ownership.

For these draws to succeed, a critical mass of residents is often needed to support local businesses and cultural activities, which helps to create a dynamic downtown environment that can be further energized by programming. Many towns are focusing on organizing events like festivals, farmers' markets, sport races, and food and music festivals, all of which celebrate the town's history and culture while attracting both locals and tourists.

In addition to programming, towns are pursuing downtown improvement strategies that include:

- Business incentives to attract new enterprises
- Façade grant programs to enhance building exteriors
- Historic district designations to access grants for rehabilitation
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs for housing
- Energy efficiency incentives
- In-fill housing and commercial development opportunities
- Streetscape improvements to make roads more pedestrian and bicycle-friendly

The Town of Coats offers a variety of cultural activities and events that reflect its community spirit and heritage. Some key cultural activities in Coats include:

Coats Farmers Day Festival: The community's oldest and most well-known annual event, this festival celebrates the town's agricultural roots with live music, food vendors, craft booths, and a parade. It brings residents and visitors together to enjoy local traditions.

Parks and Recreation Events: Coats Parks & Recreation hosts community events focused on youth outreach and youth sports programs at the Coats Park. The children's Easter egg hunt provides opportunities for residents to engage in outdoor fun and community-building.

Historical and Civic Organizations: The Coats Museum plays an important role in preserving local history and heritage. It regularly hosts events and exhibits that highlight the town's past, including the life of its founder, James T. Coats, and notable residents like Alton Stewart, North Carolina's first licensed aviator.



FIGURE 15: HISTORIC PHOTO OF MAIN STREET

Church and Civic Group Events: Local churches and civic organizations often organize activities, such as seasonal fairs, community dinners, and volunteer opportunities, which foster a sense of community and cultural pride.

While having a limited amount of groups and volunteers, Coats has many activities centered around community engagement, local heritage, and family-oriented fun. These events help shape a strong, close-knit sense of identity for community members. Expanding on these traditions by adding new programming and social outlets could further enhance Coats' cultural vibrancy.

PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES

WATERSHED

A watershed refers to an area where water from rainfall and other sources flows toward a body of surface water, such as lakes, rivers, or creeks, which are used for public water supply. In a Public Water Supply Watershed, specific development regulations are in place to protect water quality by controlling land use, especially by limiting impervious surfaces like roads, driveways, and roofs that contribute to stormwater runoff. These regulations help reduce pollutants entering the water supply.

In the Town of Coats, land primarily to the west of N.C. 55 falls within a designated Public Water Supply Watershed (WS-IV-PA, Dunn). Development in this area is subject to the Town's Watershed Protection Regulations, which align with rules from the State's Department of Environment and Natural Resources Division of Water Resources. These regulations primarily focus on limiting impervious surfaces but also permit higher-density developments, such as industrial parks and retail centers, as long as additional stormwater management measures are implemented to minimize environmental impact.

Watershed Protection Regulations can significantly shape how development projects are planned in areas like the one west of N.C. 55 in Coats. Here are a few key ways these regulations might influence future developments:

- *Limitation on Built-Upon Area:* Development projects must limit the amount of impervious surface they create, such as paved roads, parking lots, and

buildings, which could reduce the overall footprint or scale of some projects to ensure water runoff remains manageable.

- *Stormwater Management Requirements:* To mitigate the impact of higher-density developments like industrial parks or shopping centers, developers will need to implement additional stormwater management systems, which can include stormwater retention ponds, permeable pavement, or green roofs to filter and reduce runoff.
- *Higher Density Development Opportunities:* While regulations limit impervious surfaces, they also provide flexibility for higher-density development in the watershed, as long as the required stormwater management measures are included. With proper planning, industrial or retail developments could still occur, offering economic growth while adhering to environmental protections.
- *Approval Process:* Development proposals in the watershed area will need approval from both the town and the State's Division of Water Resources. The additional layer of oversight may extend the timeline for approvals.
- *Increased Costs:* The need for advanced stormwater management systems and careful planning may increase upfront costs for developers. However, these measures help ensure long-term sustainability and may attract investment in a way that aligns with both economic development and environmental protection.

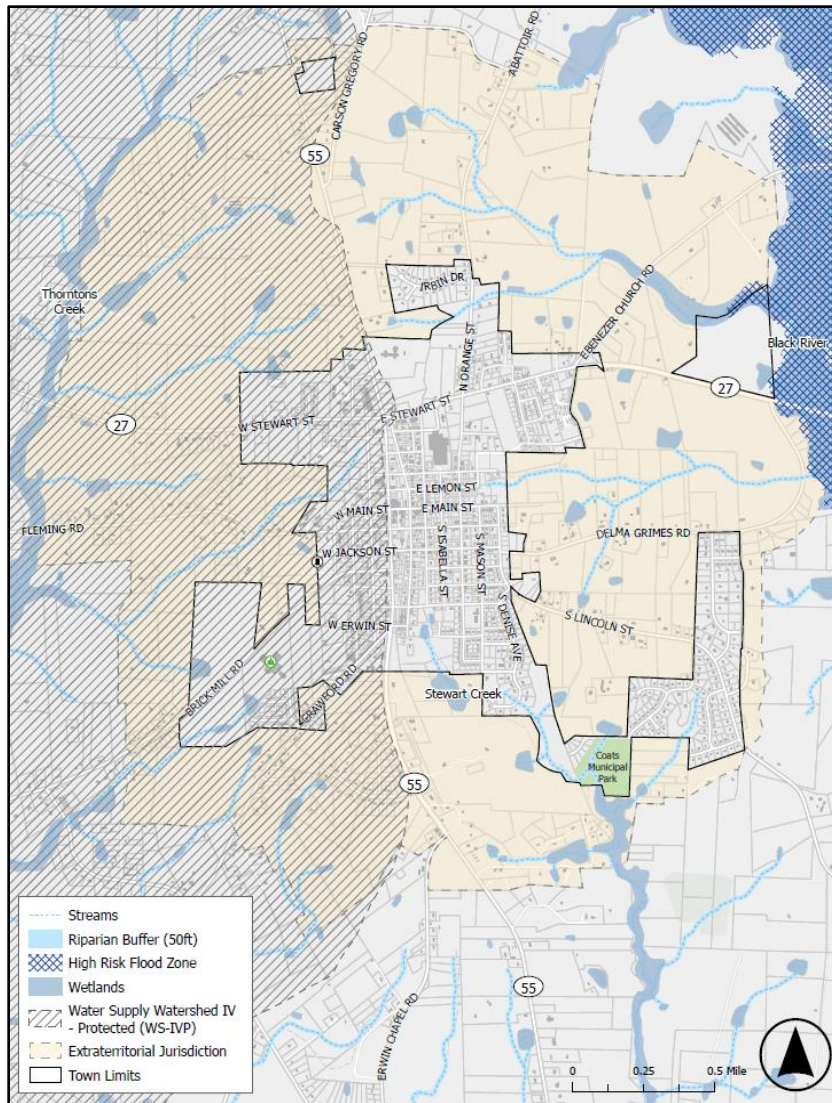


FIGURE 16: ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP

FLOODPLAIN

The North Carolina Flood Maps tool shows that the Town of Coats does not have any mapped floodplains within its corporate limits. However, a small area of Coats' Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), located approximately 0.7 miles east of the Ebenezer Church Rd. and N.C. 27 intersection, is within the Black River floodplain. If Coats chooses to expand its corporate boundaries or ETJ toward the Black River, it will need to enforce its flood damage prevention ordinance to regulate development in these flood-prone areas.

Typically, counties and municipalities discourage development in floodplains and environmentally sensitive areas by not building roads, water, or sewer infrastructure in those locations. If utilities are constructed in these areas, regulations are often enacted to limit or prohibit connections to the infrastructure, helping protect the area from the risks of development in floodplains and wetlands.

PARKS & RECREATION

The Coats Recreation Park was acquired and developed with State and local assistance in 1978. The park is one of the few public open space areas the Town owns and the only public space for active recreation. The facility has lighted baseball/softball fields, a concession stand, playground, pickleball and a basketball court. Programming for this facility is coordinated through the Town's small Parks and Recreation Department, which provides youth soccer, basketball, and baseball/softball programs throughout the year.

The park is located at the end of Park Lane at the rear of Hunter's Run subdivision. The park's lack of central location indicates that the town should actively pursue additional public parks/open space areas that are more centralized for the town's residents. Harnett County has a proposed greenway master plan that would create more active transportation opportunities (greenways, sidewalks, and pedestrian-friendly intersections) in Coats. Upon construction, these paths should form a network that traverses the town, connects the municipal park, opens spaces, and important community assets.

In addition to town-owned parks, the privately owned Liga De Futbol soccer center, off Ebenezer Church Rd., is within the Coats' ETJ. There is an opportunity to partner with this organization to enhance recreation facilities and programs in the future.

The Town's Unified Development Ordinance encourages a pattern of development that incorporates small active uses and connection between local neighborhoods. New development should be connected to the Town's proposed greenway network, schools, existing neighborhoods, and commercial district.



FIGURE 17: COATS RECREATION PARK ENTRYWAY

2. VISIONING

PUBLIC INPUT

Public input was essential in shaping the content of this plan. The engagement process included a stakeholder survey, a community survey, steering committee meetings, a dedicated website, public workshops and discussion during eight regular Planning Board meetings open to the public. The public feedback and data are used to shape the goals, policies, and recommendations. For example, nature parks and passive open space were the most desired park types from the first public engagement open house workshop. Similarly, protecting natural resources was the top land use concern gathered from survey data. These strong preferences directly lead to future land use recommendations for more open space in proximity to downtown and throughout the ETJ.

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

A series of stakeholder surveys were conducted early in the planning process. Town staff engaged individuals from diverse backgrounds to gather feedback on key issues that should be prioritized in the coming years.

The themes in Table 2 are organized by the common responses received from the various stakeholders.

Themes:	Top Responses:
Growth	Should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand existing business, goods & services. Done in a way that preserves land for parks/open spaces.
Housing	Should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the old "mill-town" feel. Be encouraged to support existing & future employment needs. Provide more mixed-use development opportunities.
Economic Development	Should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build upon Coats' most important economic development locations (downtown, major highway corridors, etc.). Fill gaps in local economy by pursuing a greater variety of opportunities.
Quality of Life	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing local events, parks & spaces that bring residents together. Having a vibrant downtown.
Transportation & Mobility	Should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have more welcoming entryways into the Town. Limit traffic congestion where possible.

TABLE 2: STAKEHOLDER SURVEY KEY THEMES

When asked about the most important public improvements the Town of Coats should invest in over the next 10-20 years - parks, downtown, and infrastructure were selected as the most important.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

A community survey was conducted to help shape the recommendations in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The survey was open from October 7 to December 6, 2024. The survey was advertised via flyers, the Town's Farmers Day celebration and social media. Versions of the survey were available online and in paper format. There were 80 responses to the survey. The results of four survey question responses follow this section.

LAND USE PRIORITIES:

Based on the results from the four survey questions regarding land use, protecting natural resources and adding more shopping, restaurants, and commercial opportunities are some of the top land use preferences. Downtown revitalization is also desired. New commercial development is a high priority, and most respondents would prefer to see this occur in more traditional downtown storefronts.

There is also a desire for more greenways, parks and gathering areas. Similarly, protecting key agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands indicates the community's desire to embrace agricultural heritage while supporting commercial development.



FIGURE 18: PUBLIC OUTREACH AT FARMERS DAY 2024

Q2. Which of the following would you like to see more of in Coats?

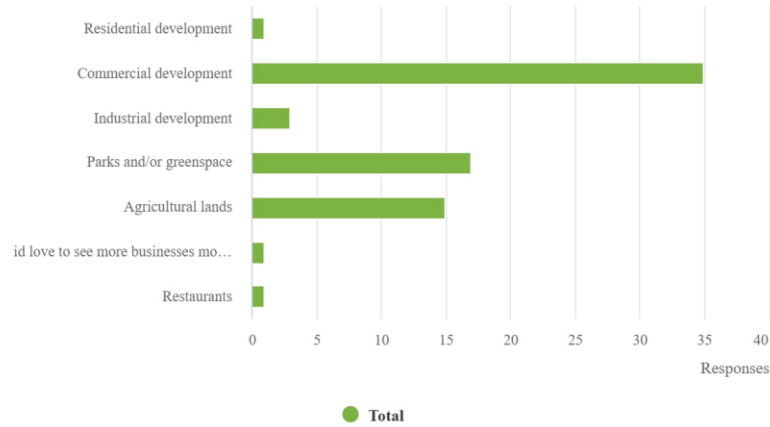


FIGURE 19: SURVEY QUESTION ON LAND USE PREFERENCES

Q8. Please rank the following land use priorities from most to least important.

70 answers

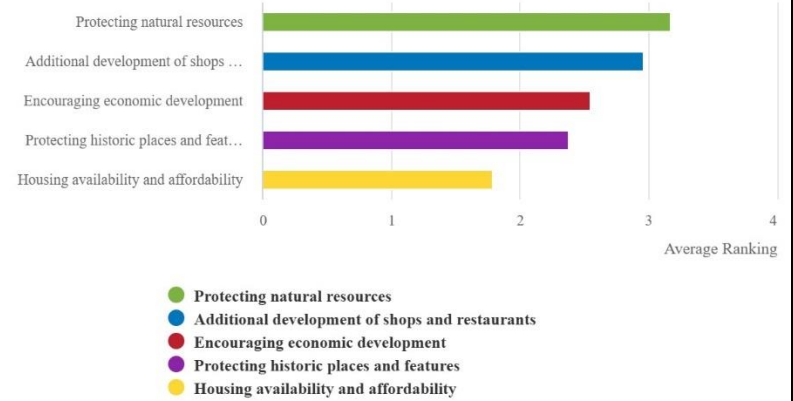


FIGURE 21: SURVEY QUESTION ON LAND USE PRIORITIES

Q6. Please rank the following types of commercial development from most to least needed.

70 answers

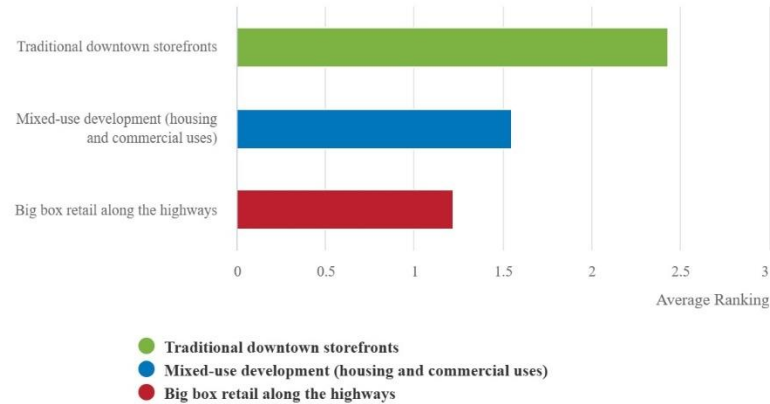


FIGURE 20: SURVEY QUESTION ON COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Q9. Please rate the following priorities for the transportation system in Coats from most to least important.

70 answers

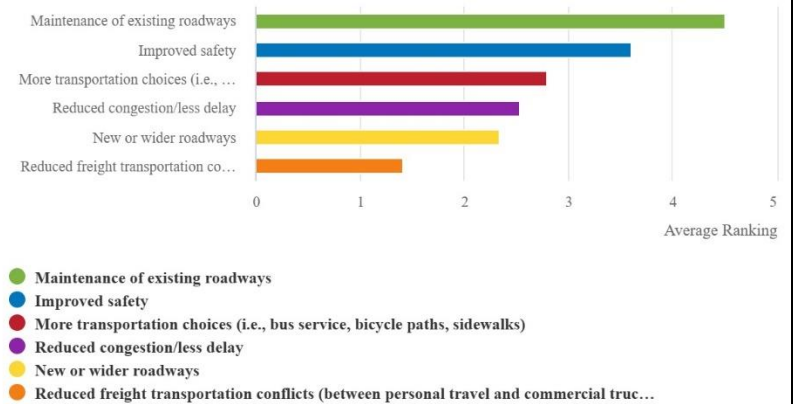


FIGURE 22: SURVEY QUESTION ON TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS & MEETINGS

The first public workshop was held on December 5, 2024. Participants were tasked to provide visual preferences on various residential, commercial, and park development styles.

The second public workshop was held on May 1, 2025. Participants reviewed the draft future land use map and character areas and provided comments.

The Planning Board served as the steering committee for this project, providing initial feedback and assessing the overall direction of the project. The town's project consultant, KCI Associates of NC, P.A., presented updates during the regular monthly planning board meetings of September 2024 (Issues and Opportunities), January 2025 (Public Input Summary), March 2025 (Goals and Policies), and May 2025 (Present Future Land Use Map). All meetings were open for the public to attend and comment.



FIGURE 23: PUBLIC INPUT WORKSHOP ON DECEMBER 5, 2024

DEFINING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Steering Committee described Coats as a quiet, friendly community having the potential to be the “best small town in Harnett County.” The town's issues are related to a general lack of resources available to invest in infrastructure, parks, downtown improvements, and staffing. Opportunities exist due to Coats’ strategic location, connected by highway infrastructure, and surrounded by regional assets. Issues and opportunities based on vision themes generated from stakeholder interviews, Steering Committee discussions, and input received through community engagement activities are summarized below.

ISSUES:

- Underutilized Main Street with unattractive, vacant storefronts.
- Lack of economic development-ready sites or available buildings to attract new businesses.
- No natural gas, direct interstate access, or railroad infrastructure.
- Limited transportation capacity, traffic concerns, roads in need of repair.
- Dependency on Harnett Regional Water (HRW) for sewer investments and upgrades.
- Stormwater runoff frequently overwhelms outdated infrastructure.
- Median household income and home property values are below Harnett County averages.
- Growth areas are constrained by watershed on west and Black River floodplain on east.
- The Town Park is isolated from most neighborhoods and difficult for visitors to find.

- Fear of losing agricultural lands and rural character.



FIGURE 24: CENTRALLY LOCATED REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Coats is well-centered within a regional network of highways and employment centers.
- Campbell University and the Harnett Regional Jetport are strong neighboring institutions.
- Prospects for improved recreational opportunities, specifically youth programs.
- Planned trails and greenways could connect to other parks, schools, and commercial nodes.
- Older commercial buildings (downtown and McKinley St.) can be renovated and reused.
- A small-scale mixed-use development with housing, restaurants, and retail would be a welcome addition to vacant lots surrounding downtown.

- Opportunities exist for controlled and strategic growth that can positively contribute to the town's tax base.

VISION AND GOAL CATEGORIES

The values expressed by citizens through the survey and open house workshop have been organized into the following goal categories:

- 1) Additional **commercial development** is desired. Participants want more choices (restaurants, grocery stores, and shops) locally to keep from traveling to larger urban areas.
- 2) **Improve Main Street** and aim to fill downtown with businesses, restaurants, and gathering spaces. Small-scale mixed-use developments with shops and restaurants are welcome in and around downtown. A thriving downtown district is where the town can showcase its local businesses, community spirit, and culture.
- 3) **Investments in infrastructure are critical.** Maintenance of existing roadways, utilities, and stormwater infrastructure require improvements. Ensuring that revenues are sufficient to cover increasing repair and maintenance costs is key.
- 4) There is concern over Coats' **ability to maintain the road network** to support additional vehicle demand. More transportation choices, particularly sidewalks, greenways, and bikeways, are desired.

- 5) **Manage growth strategically** by guiding new development to the identified growth areas and preserving open spaces that give Coats its rural character.
- 6) **Improve and expand parks.** Nature parks and improved recreation programs for all ages are desired. Sidewalk expansion, greenways, and walking paths are a top priority.
- 7) **Protect natural resources** by limiting development impacts on productive agricultural land and ecologically sensitive areas.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement describes where the Town of Coats wants to be in the future based on the community's values and aspirations, building upon past efforts, and provides insight to ensure the Town of Coats continues to prosper.

“Coats is a quiet, historic town with strong agricultural roots and a diverse community. In the future, it will offer more recreation, green spaces, and local shops, becoming a great place to live, work, and play — a destination for all.”



FIGURE 25: WORD CLOUD - COMMONLY USED WORDS FROM PUBLIC SURVEY

Goal Categories:

**Economic Development:**

Encourage retail and commercial business development by reusing existing buildings and constructing new buildings compatible with adjacent uses.

**Downtown:**

Advance appropriately scaled infill development of vacant lots and redevelopment of existing structures while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

**Infrastructure & Services:**

Provide efficient and well-maintained infrastructure that will serve current needs while continuously planning to ensure services will meet future demands.

**Transportation & Mobility:**

Prioritize connectivity through streets, sidewalks, and trails to promote efficient modes of transportation that connect residents and visitors to local amenities and regional employment centers.

**Land Use & Development**

Encourage well-planned, high-quality residential and commercial development in strategic corridors while preserving open space and environmentally sensitive areas.

**Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Resources:**

Offer diverse recreation opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles, community involvement, and family-friendly living. Preserve Coats' sensitive natural areas, active farmlands, and access to local farm products for future generations.

3. GOALS, POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map and associated character areas are intended to serve as a guide to navigate land use decisions throughout the Town of Coats and ETJ. Legislative zoning map amendments should reference the map; however, the map is not regulatory. The associated character areas may correspond to several associated zoning districts. Any zoning map amendments, not in harmony with the Future Land Use Map, should provide written justification and the map should be updated to reflect any changes that have influenced the decision, such as a new development, road improvement, or a utility line extension.

The map reflects stated land use goals by seeking to:

- Guide higher density residential toward existing sewer availability.
- Revitalize and expand the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods with opportunities for appropriately scaled uses and densities.
- Preserve frontages along N.C. 55 and N.C. 27 (In-town and ETJ) for future businesses and employment centers.
- Designate new open spaces in proximity to existing parks and sensitive environmental areas including streams, floodplains, and wetlands.

Draft character areas and the future land use map were presented to the Steering Committee in advance of the April 3, 2025, Planning Board meeting. After reviewing and discussing the map, and hearing public comments, the committee determined the draft map was ready for public inspection. A public workshop on May 1, 2025, consisted of the project team defining the character areas and their location on the draft future land use map. The public was then invited to view and comment on the draft map and descriptions of the character areas. The Planning Board offered no amendments to the map before it was presented in the final draft form.

Highlights from the Future Land Use Map include:

- **Conservation and Open Space** areas located in the ETJ are adjacent to parks, wetlands, and flood areas, and not well connected to road corridors presently served with utilities. A highlight of the plan is four proposed conservation open space areas, geographically spaced throughout the four quadrants of the ETJ. A proposed conservation area with proximity to downtown would link a town-owned natural area at W. Main St. with a stream and privately maintained stormwater control measure.
- **Single Family Residential** extends from Town limits outward to areas serviced by water and sewer. This

residential growth model is based on a gradual expansion of utility infrastructure and interconnection between old and new neighborhoods. Areas not currently served by sewer are designated as **Rural Residential**. Where limited extensions to the water and sewer system can be made, new developments should be balanced with any nearby farming operations and preservation of natural resources. **Mixed Residential** occupies existing residential areas in town limits where a variety of residential uses could be appropriate in well-connected areas.

- A defined **Downtown Core** is centered around the existing three blocks of E. Main Street. The **Downtown Support** area seeks to guide the extension of the historic Main Street with a variety of uses and walkable streets, which primarily extends North-South on McKinley St. and Railroad St.

- **Commercial Mixed-Use** includes areas on N.C. 27 in town limits and the ETJ. This area allows for a mix of higher density residential and commercial uses that utilize the highway connections, other job centers and customer bases. Commercial Mixed-Use is similarly recommended for N.C. 55 as sewer services may be extended north from the existing town limits.
- **Employment Center** occupies the area closest to the N.C. 27 and N.C. 55 intersection. Desired land uses, such as restaurants, retail, and grocery anchors could enhance the existing commercial nature of this area, while capitalizing on the highway access and connectivity to local neighborhoods.

The full-page future land use map is available in the Map Appendix. In addition, two views of the future land use map, for the entire planning jurisdiction and another focused on the downtown area, are presented on the following page.

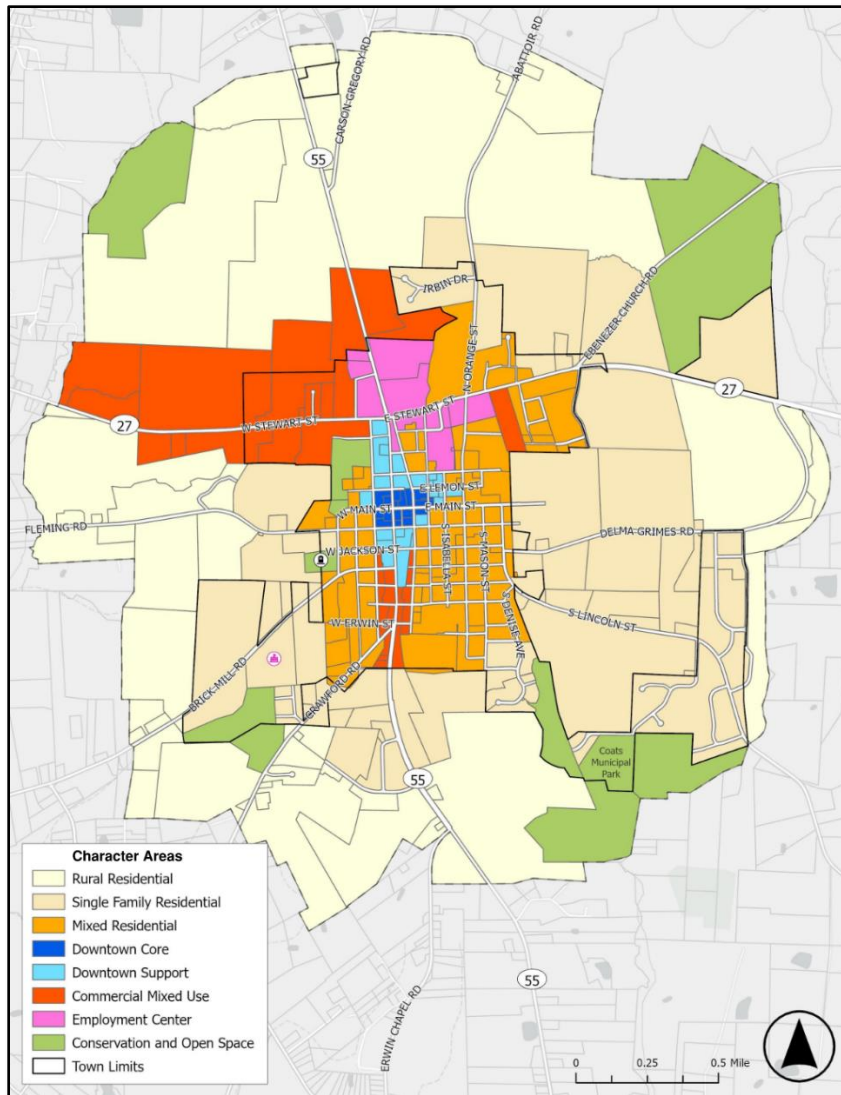


FIGURE 26: FUTURE LAND USE MAP

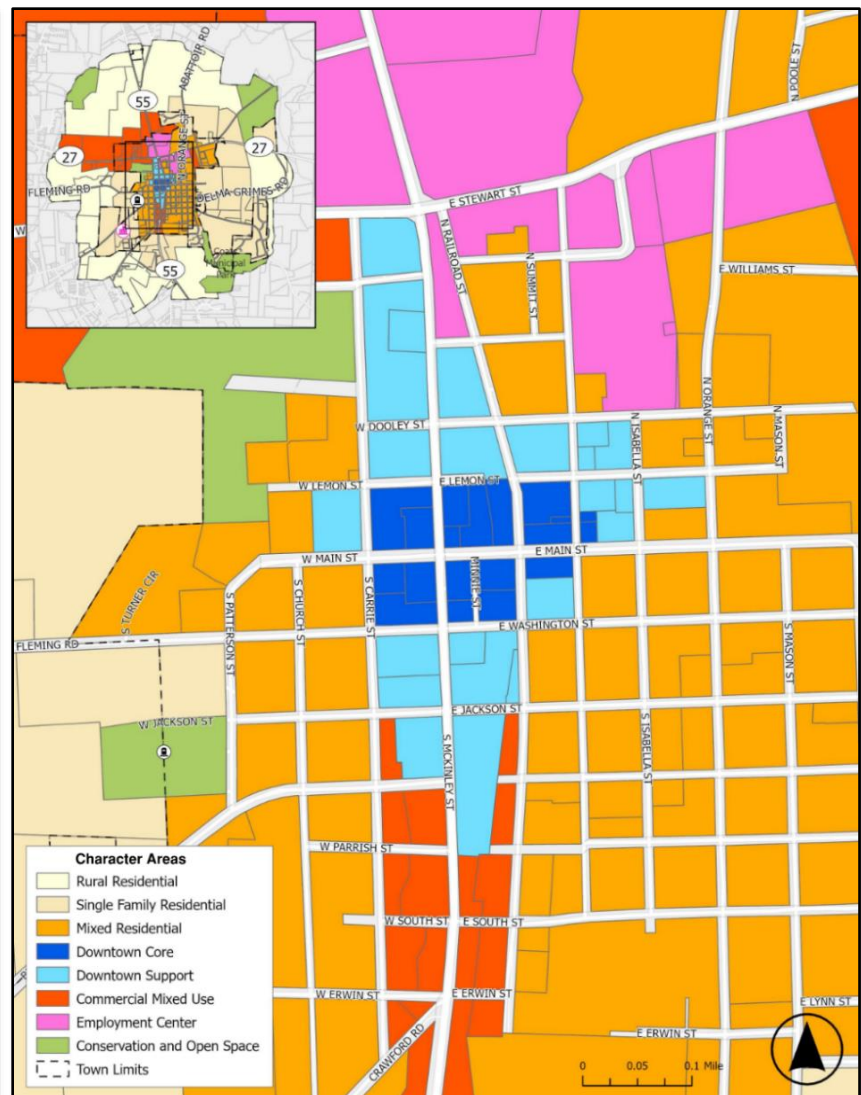


FIGURE 27: FUTURE LAND USE MAP (DOWNTOWN FOCUS)

CHARACTER AREAS

Character areas describe the types of development that should be encouraged in different areas of the town and ETJ. Each area is designed to achieve various development goals with attention given to allowable land use and development intensity.

Conservation and Open Space -- Parks and other forms of open space, including conservation easements. Also includes areas where streams, floodplains and large wetland areas connect to existing assets like parks and schools. Primary uses in these areas will be open space, recreation, forestry, and agriculture.



FIGURE 28: FLOODPLAIN BY BLACK RIVER

Rural Residential – This character type consists of primarily agriculture and forestry uses with existing large lot residential. These areas are located beyond the existing sewer service and typically rely on septic systems for wastewater treatment. The lack of utility infrastructure, the established low density development pattern and agricultural activities in these areas contribute to their rural character. This character area can be enhanced by encouraging only low intensity uses such as agriculture and support industries, low-density single family residential (up to one dwelling per acre), and context sensitive rural design. Conservation subdivisions can be utilized to preserve significant environmental features like forested areas and stream corridors. Rural Residential areas are primarily recommended for areas without existing public sewer. These areas may be reclassified as infrastructure investments and expansions are made in the future.



FIGURE 29: TYPICAL LARGE LOT RESIDENTIAL

Single Family Residential – This area is intended to remain suburban in character and provide for single-family residential neighborhoods. Gross densities of up to three (3) dwelling units per acre depending on zoning, utilities, soils, and character of adjacent development. These areas include lots greater than 11,000 square feet in size. Smaller lot sizes could be permitted as part of a conservation subdivision, which would also include a greater amount of open space to preserve sensitive environmental areas.

Mixed Residential -- Located in areas served by current or planned utilities and near existing or planned commercial services, the Mixed Residential character area permits a mix of housing types including single family detached homes, townhomes, and small-scale multifamily structures that are complimentary of the existing historic residential development. Density should mimic the surrounding area. Additional housing types (including townhomes and apartments) and higher densities may be appropriate as part of planned developments with pedestrian access to Commercial Mixed-Use areas, and not to be located in conflict with historic neighborhoods. Mixed Residential is the primary character area recommended within the existing municipal limits.



FIGURE 30: SINGLE FAMILY INFILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Downtown Support – This area provides for housing options and small-scale commercial uses near the Downtown Core. The character area accommodates a variety of single-use and mixed-use development types with the goal of providing a transition from the Downtown Core to lower density neighborhoods surrounding downtown. Medium to high density housing types are allowed along with retail and office uses. Mixed-use buildings with a focus on pedestrian connectivity to the downtown core are allowed and encouraged.



FIGURE 31: LOCAL BUSINESS ON S. MCKINLEY ST.

Downtown Core -- The Downtown Core includes the historic commercial core of Coats, including frontages along Main Street and S. McKinley Street. These areas include a variety of commercial, service, and office uses. Many buildings are original to Coats' founding and include previously used upper story offices or residences. New development is expected to complement existing structures and be in the range of two (2) to three (3) stories in height. Parking requirements should be reduced compared to the rest of the town's planning area to account for the propensity for walking trips.

Commercial Mixed Use – This area is intended to include a mix of residential housing and compatible commercial

centers. To take advantage of highway frontage and utilities, these areas are recommended along N.C. 27 (W Stewart St.) and N.C. 55 (N McKinley St.). These areas should incorporate commercial uses including grocery stores, office (including medical), restaurants and services, along the road frontage. Higher density residential including small lot single-family, townhomes, and apartments are also allowed and should be well connected to shopping and service destinations by plentiful pedestrian facilities to provide more walking opportunities and enhance access. Any residential area included in a mixed-use project should be located toward the rear of the site, preserving the most visible and valuable highway frontage for commercial use.



FIGURE 32: NEW COMMERCIAL BUILDING ON E. STEWART ST.

Employment -- This area is located around the N.C. 55 and NC 2.7. intersection. It includes the existing Gray Flex Systems, Inc. industry, new E. Stewart St. Commercial shops, and other prime locations for economic development opportunities. Uses encouraged in the Employment areas include but are not limited to intense commercial, light industrial, and offices (including medical). Residential development is rarely appropriate, and only if it is determined to not conflict with existing or future industrial or commercial uses.



FIGURE 33: CENTRALLY LOCATED MANUFACTURING FACILITY

GOALS, POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Goal Category: Economic Development		
Goal Statement: <i>Encourage retail and commercial business development by reusing existing buildings and constructing new buildings that meet the CDO's requirements.</i>		
Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
ED.1	Identify & promote large tracts of land with highway access for economic development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage commercial and office development in character areas designated as Commercial Mixed Use and Employment on the Future Land Use Map.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage commercial development to be compatible and scaled with adjacent land uses.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with Harnett Regional Water (HRW) on development where large water/sewer infrastructure capacities are required.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively work with Harnett County Economic Development to identify suitable land and product (buildings) inventory.
ED.2	Encourage a diverse tax base through business recruitment and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote proximity to Harnett Regional Jetport, Healthcare, and Campbell University with existing and future businesses.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with willing property owners to rezone lands appropriate for commercial development to make it more attractive to developers.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a retail/business component in mixed-use developments along major highways.
ED.3	Continue to promote the Coats as a great place to raise a family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote the Farmers Day Festival, Coats History Museum, and Coats Town Park and encourage a variety of residents to become involved in contributing to their success.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly engage neighborhood leaders to ensure that public safety and service concerns are being addressed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recreational programs and special events focused on youth and families.
ED.4	Recruit businesses based on gaps in market analysis (i.e. hardware, banking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider investment partnerships for public infrastructure upgrades that would allow for growth of targeted businesses.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and market properties that would be ideal for these types of uses.

ED.5	Enhance networks to nearby employment centers and highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Work with NCDOT to explore capacity and safety upgrades along Brick Mill Rd. to provide easier access from Coats to U.S. 421 and the expanding Harnett Regional Jetport.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improve gateway signage and plantings on N.C. 55 and N.C. 27 when entering town limits.

Goal Category: Downtown

Goal Statement: Advance appropriately scaled infill development of vacant lots and redevelopment of existing structures while maintaining a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
DT.1	Encourage higher-density development in and near downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage rezonings to the Main Street (MS) and Main Street Periphery (MSP) zoning districts in the downtown core and downtown support districts to create small-scale mixed-use centers.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the ground floor level of Main Street buildings for retail and commercial uses, while allowing upper-story residential in and near downtown as appropriate.
DT.2	Improve gateways into Downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider improvements such as lighting, street trees, furnishings, and pedestrian crosswalks to signify entry into the downtown district.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate public informational signage to notify the public of upcoming events, meetings, and registrations.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tree cover along pedestrian corridors. Select plantings that require low watering and maintenance.
DT.3	Extend the pedestrian feel of Main Street outwards with targeted block-by-block improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage rezonings in the downtown support to allow private development that fits the character of existing buildings along Main Street.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider improvements to Railroad Street, including the addition of sidewalks, street trees, and additional parallel parking.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage outdoor dining in a way that will not restrict sidewalk access.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that front setbacks place buildings closer to the sidewalk to extend the traditional Main Street “feel” for pedestrians.
DT.4	Encourage the redevelopment of underutilized storefronts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary measures can include partnerships with property owners to create a volunteer window display program for vacant buildings downtown.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit new business, offices, shops, and restaurants that can attract customers associated with Campbell University.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target uses, such as office or retail, that will be compatible with adjacent residential uses.

DT. 5	Improve Visibility and Access to Main Street Amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Incorporate an attractive wayfinding signage program to help guide travelers on N.C. 55 to more easily navigate to parking.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Evaluate the need for an additional public parking lot on any block adjacent to Main Street (vacant lot preferred).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Remove sidewalk obstructions, such as signage, electric boxes, and trash receptacles that may impede pedestrian flow.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Minnie St. (internal alleyway) should be preserved, enhanced, and utilized during special events.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a pedestrian-friendly gathering space and market events that will bring visitors and customers to the downtown area.

Goal Category: Infrastructure & Services

Goal Statement: *Provide efficient and well-maintained infrastructure that will serve current needs while planning to expand services to meet the demands of future growth.*

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
IS.1	Encourage infill development in areas where infrastructure is already provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize infrastructure repairs in the downtown and existing neighborhoods. ▪ Prioritize infrastructure improvements that would help facilitate the building out of vacant lots in town limits. (i.e. recently completed S. Ida St. waterline connection).
IS.2	Manage repairs to maintain an efficient utility system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guided by professional engineering, re-establish a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan and budget accordingly. ▪ Coordinate with HRW on developing additional sewer capacity for new businesses and residential growth. ▪ Pursue state funding for a regionalization merger feasibility study to understand the possible benefits of merging the town's water system with a larger utility provider.
IS.3	Monitor, enforce, and improve stormwater management to prevent flooding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a strategic plan to repair open ditches and restore damaged culverts in areas most impacted throughout town. ▪ Review all stormwater management plans for new development and redevelopment with a critical evaluation of downstream impact on town-maintained infrastructure. ▪ Maintain stormwater regulations that encourage best practices in managing post development stormwater runoff.
IS.4	Maintain adequate police and fire coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan for adequate police and fire personnel and response times to ensure adequate coverage as new subdivisions submit requests for annexation. ▪ Hold outreach events to encourage interaction with the Police Department and to assist with officer recruitment.

Goal Category: Transportation & Mobility

Goal Statement: *Prioritize connectivity through streets, sidewalks, and trails to promote efficient modes of transportation that connect residents and visitors to local amenities and regional employment centers.*

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
TM.1	Prioritize walkability downtown and in nearby neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluate locations for priority pedestrian crosswalks at intersection locations. ▪ Address and fill sidewalk gaps between Main Street and other pedestrian destinations. ▪ Inventory existing sidewalks and prioritize repairs to conform to ADA compliance standards.
TM.2	Support adopted Streetscape Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to pursue grant funding for sidewalks and other pedestrian amenity improvements throughout the downtown core. ▪ Minnie St. (alley) should be preserved and improved. ▪ Develop construction documents for enhanced streetscapes infrastructure for Railroad Street, from Jackson St. to Dooley St. to extend the downtown.
TM.3	Identify and address transportation impacts of commercial development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a Transportation Plan to direct investment and preserve carrying capacities of NCDOT routes entering town limits. ▪ Require non-residential development to include cross-access easements and stubs to internally connect parking lots. ▪ Encourage adequate spacing of driveways to reduce vehicular conflicts, increase pedestrian safety, and improve traffic flow.
TM.4	Encourage interconnection with new development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require stub streets to adjacent properties to allow for future connection and discourage long cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets in new or expanded developments. ▪ Ensure that street patterns of newly developed areas provide access to nearby neighborhoods, parks, and employment areas. ▪ Update CDO to include a requirement that developments of 100 or more single family lots must have two separate, approved fire apparatus access roads

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update CDO to establish thresholds for requiring a Traffic Impact Analysis. Thresholds can be based on a range of daily trip estimates, number of residential units, building area, nearby crash history, or other relevant transportation criteria. ▪ Extend the town's existing street grid network where development occurs along the edge of established neighborhoods.
TM.5	Extend lighting and sidewalks to recreational amenities, schools, and commercial areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider road widening and sidewalk on Brick Mill Road, connecting S. McKinley St. to the Coats Elementary School. Explore the possibility of a Safe Routes to School grant or the Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP). ▪ Add streetlights to critical intersections and neighborhood dark spots where safety issues have been reported.
TM.6	Partner with Harnett County to implement results and best practices of North Harnett Transit Feasibility Study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership with Harnett County, regularly coordinate and promote available transit options to citizens, civic groups, and churches in town.

Goal Category: Land Use & Development

Goal Statement: *Encourage well-planned, high-quality residential and commercial development in strategic corridors while preserving existing agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas.*

Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
LU.1	Utilize the Future Land Use Map when considering land use decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support rezonings that are consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a rezoning is inconsistent, then an amendment to the Future Land Use Map should be created with supporting documentation for the change.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement the recommendations in this plan during development approvals and in development code updates.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Character Area descriptions and recommendations should influence development design and approval decisions.
LU.2	Regularly review and update the Future Land Use Map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Planning Board & Town Council should review the Future Land Use Map when major rezonings occur that result in a map amendment, and update if needed.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update the Future Land Use Map every five (5) years or after changes to infrastructure availability or development trends.
LU.3	Encourage contextually appropriate development in areas well served by utilities, transportation, and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support higher-density residential growth as infill development in areas well-connected and walkable to commercial corridors. (i.e. Main St., S. McKinley St.)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support business development along N.C. 27 and N.C. 55, as well as throughout the historic Main Street and downtown area.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage high quality, planned residential development where utility and transportation capacity exist.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support new residential subdivisions that connect to existing neighborhoods and town-maintained streets.
LU.4	Provide opportunities for affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uphold the Minimum Housing Ordinance when landlords fail to maintain adequate standards on rental properties.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize public investments and maintenance in existing neighborhoods to encourage private investment in older housing stock and residential infill development.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in the CDO is being implemented in a way that is complimentary to neighborhood character. ▪ Consider ways to increase the supply of available housing for senior citizens in search of residences requiring less maintenance and upkeep.
LU.5	Encourage well-designed commercial and mixed-use development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage site design, appearance codes and other development tools that will promote attractive, contextually driven and useful design. ▪ Analyze and remove barriers hindering redevelopment of vacant buildings, particularly along Main Street. ▪ Consider methods to allow flexibility for unique small-scale commercial development.
LU.6	Examine CDO to analyze strengths and weaknesses in zoning and consider amendments to assist in plan implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to assess whether the 1.5-acre minimum lot size in the Agriculture district meets the community's expectations. ▪ Ensure that current use, setbacks, or lot sizes do not prohibit building of community preferences (i.e. village commercial/mixed use). ▪ Evaluate parking requirements for commercial and attached residential (townhome) development to encourage reuse and infill development.
LU.7	Encourage new restaurants, stores, and programs that increase access to local food and connect to Coats' history as a farming center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider incentives to attract new restaurants. Evaluate alternatives to target restaurants that have experienced success in similar markets. ▪ Consider partnerships to promote and enhance the downtown farmers market. ▪ Encourage community gardens on underutilized or vacant lots to increase vibrancy.
LU.8	Preserve areas dedicated to Conservation and Open Space on the Future Land Use map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discourage higher-density developments in areas without adequate utility services. ▪ Consider appropriate buffering around active agricultural operations and working farms. ▪ Work with developers to provide a variety of open spaces, protecting areas of ecological importance such as floodplains, streams, and wetlands.
LU.9		

	Continue enforcement activities and address abandoned properties.	▪ Continue using existing tools to address abandoned properties that present a safety hazard (inspections, rezoning, condemnation, foreclosure, etc.).
		▪ Incorporate code enforcement efforts into a strategic plan helping to revitalize various neighborhoods.

Goal Category: Recreation, Open Space & Cultural Resources

Goal Statement: Offer diverse activities and events that promote healthy lifestyles, community involvement, and family-friendly living. Preserve Coats' rural character, farmlands, and access to local farm products for future generations.

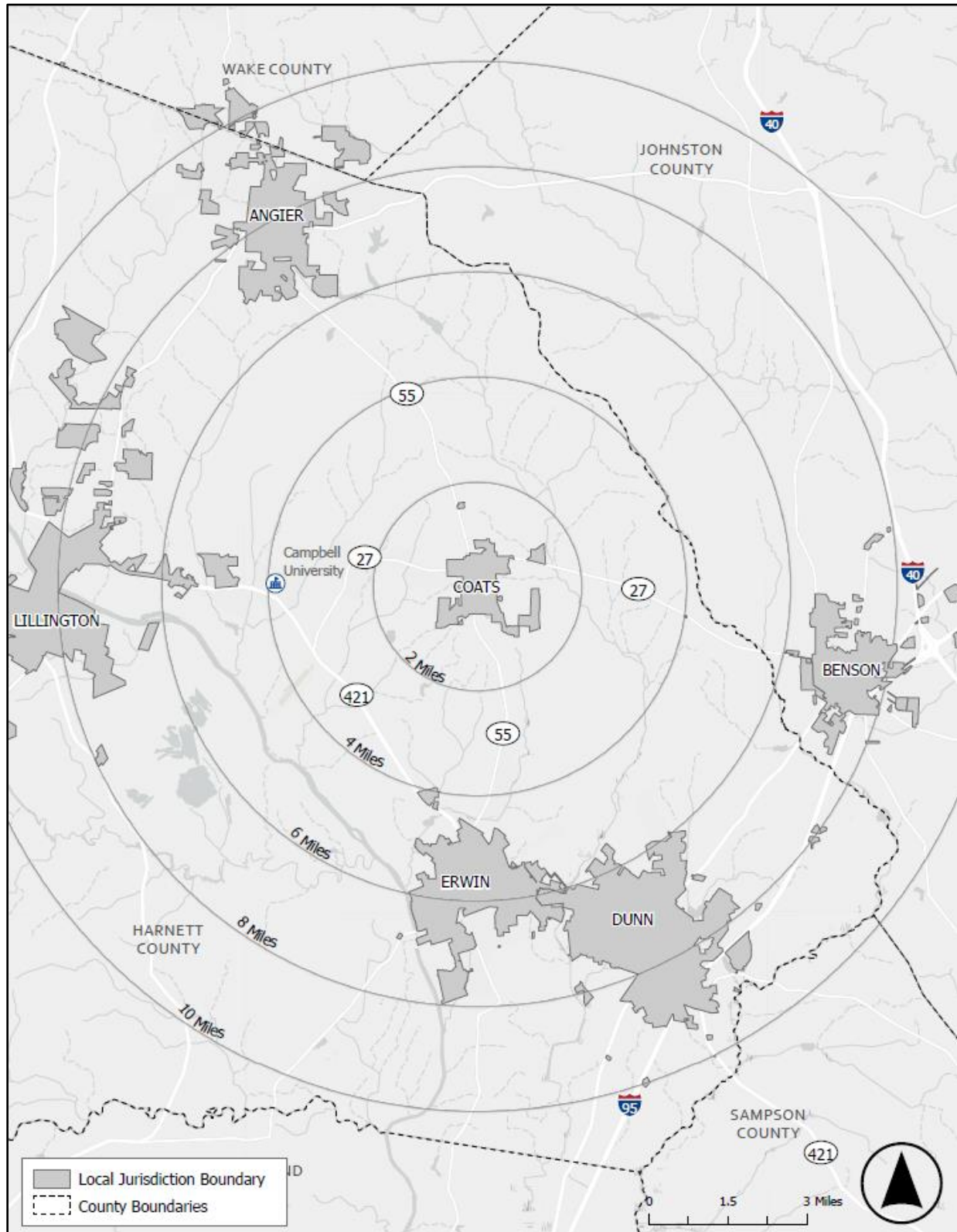
Policy	Policy Statement	Implementation Strategy
ROC.1	Improve the existing Town Park and build new parks for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Park Master Plan for the existing Town Park that establishes a long-range vision for the park, facilities, repairs, and new uses.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide future park investments, staffing, and programming.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify open space and conservation areas on the future land use map as possible locations for new passive parks.
ROC.2	Develop Coats' portion of the greenways planned in Harnett County's Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a conceptual greenway plan to determine the exact placement of greenway trail routes connecting Coats to other points of interest.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the feasibility of connecting existing neighborhoods to the Coats Town Park via a greenway walking and biking path.
ROC.3	Prioritize open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that new residential development provides residents with access to common open space that is functional and usable.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highest quality ecological resources on the site should be preserved for passive recreation. These include wetlands, floodplains, streams, mature existing tree stands, and wildlife corridors.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify in CDO a consistent buffer width along named streams and intermittent streams.
ROC.4	Improve cultural program offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate the historic theater, with public or private investment, to accommodate community events and cultural offerings.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with community groups to create and showcase locally made art throughout town (i.e. barn quilt displays in businesses).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider proactive upgrades and repairs to the Coats Library Branch building.
ROC.5	Protect the land base that supports agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be applied to limit development impacts on productive agricultural land when properties are contiguous to each other (i.e. erosion management and buffering).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Agriculture (AG) zoning minimum lot sizes and frontages are compatible with established rural character.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve working farms and forests in contiguous blocks to maintain a "critical mass" of farms and agricultural land.
ROC.6	Encourage the preservation of mature and healthy trees in new development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Planning Board should regularly review regulations and policies to consider whether tree preservation standards meet community expectations. Consider a requirement to show "heritage trees" over a certain diameter or location (i.e. within 100 ft of a stream or NCDOT road) on preliminary plats. Consider canopy assessments using available lidar data to understand impacts to forested areas. Consider changes to the CDO that incentivizes the preservation of mature trees with reduced dimensional/setback requirements, increased density, and parking reductions.

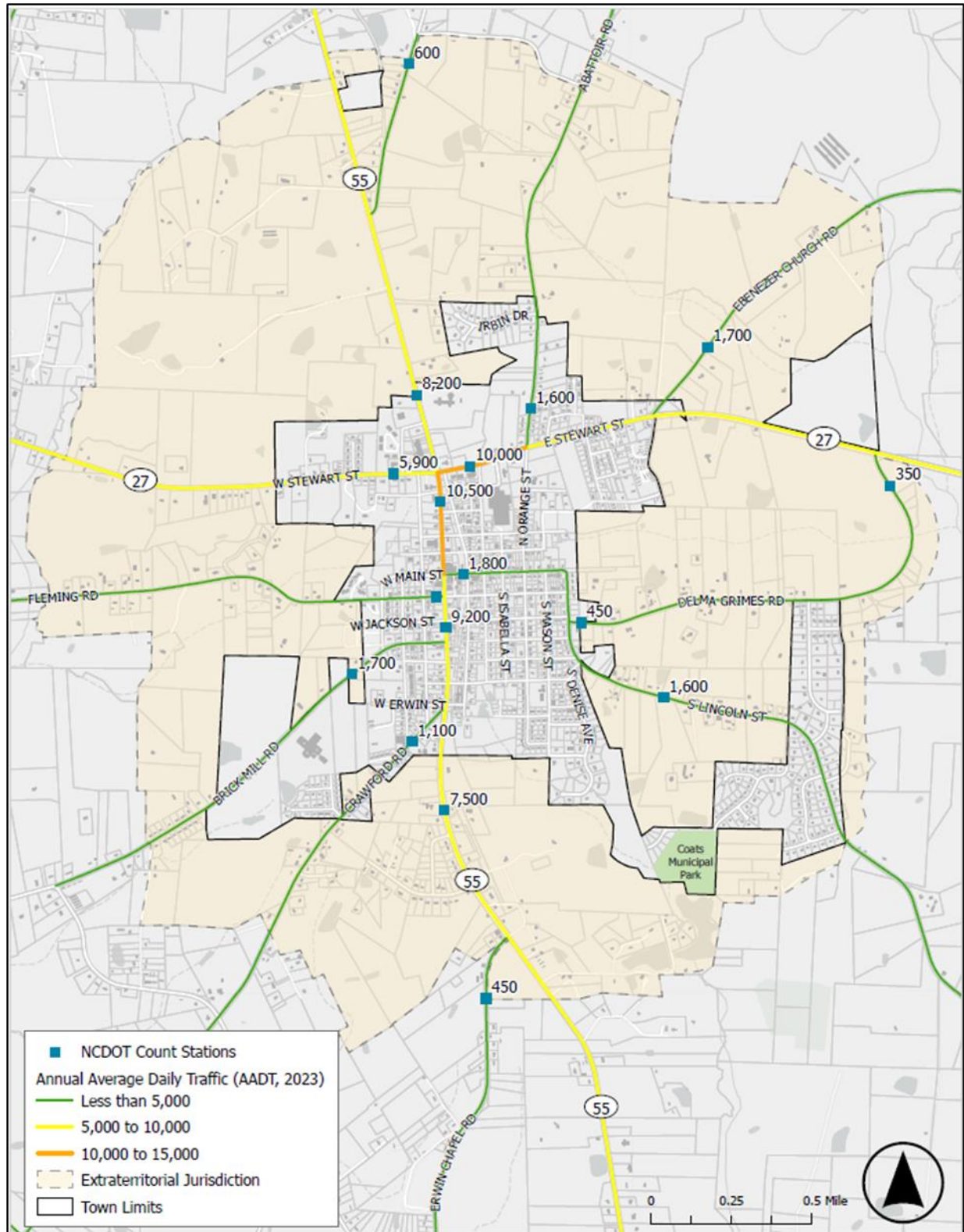
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- Town of Coats. Coats Streetscape Master Plan. Retrieved July 26, 2024.
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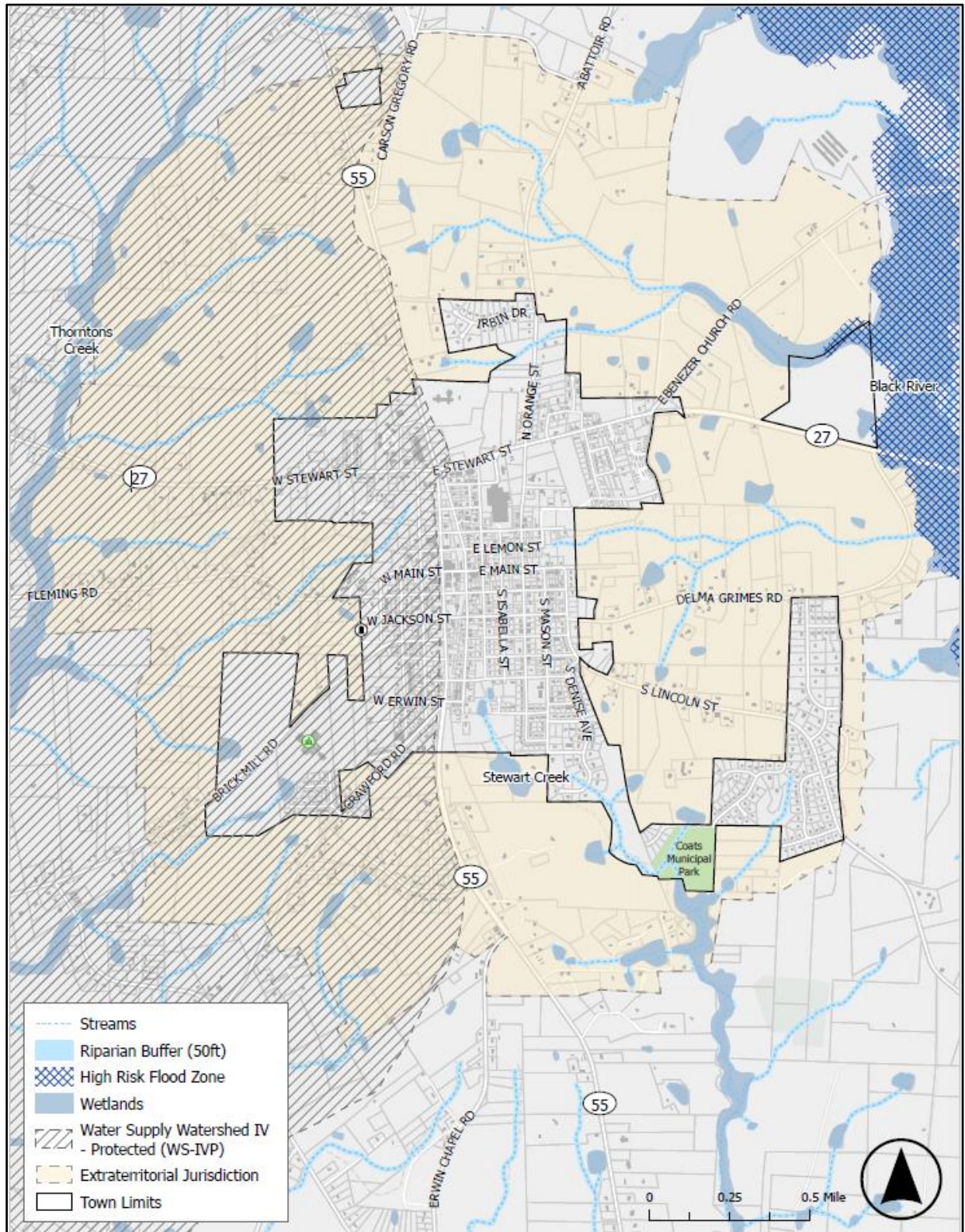
APPENDIX A (MAPS)



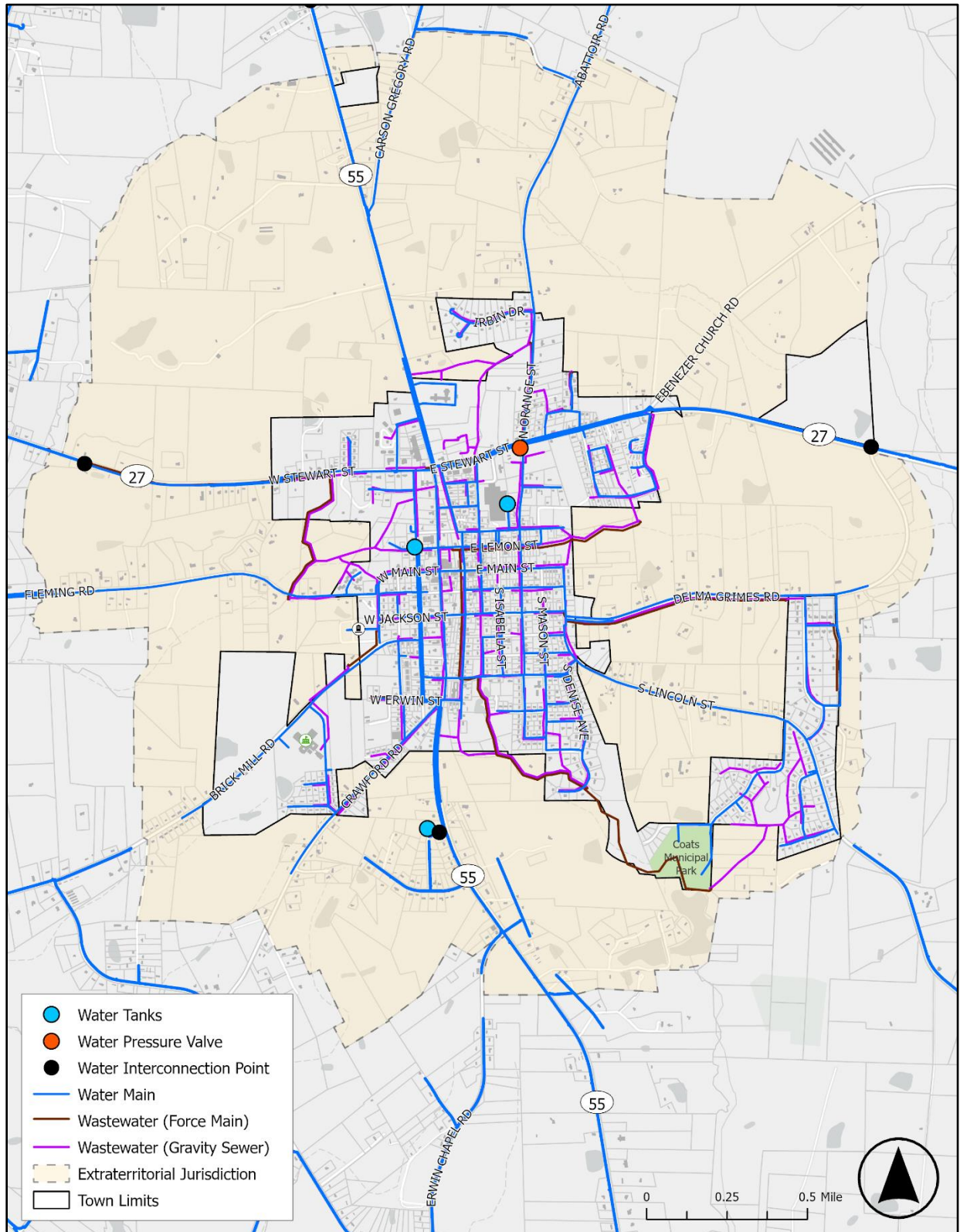
Regional Location Map



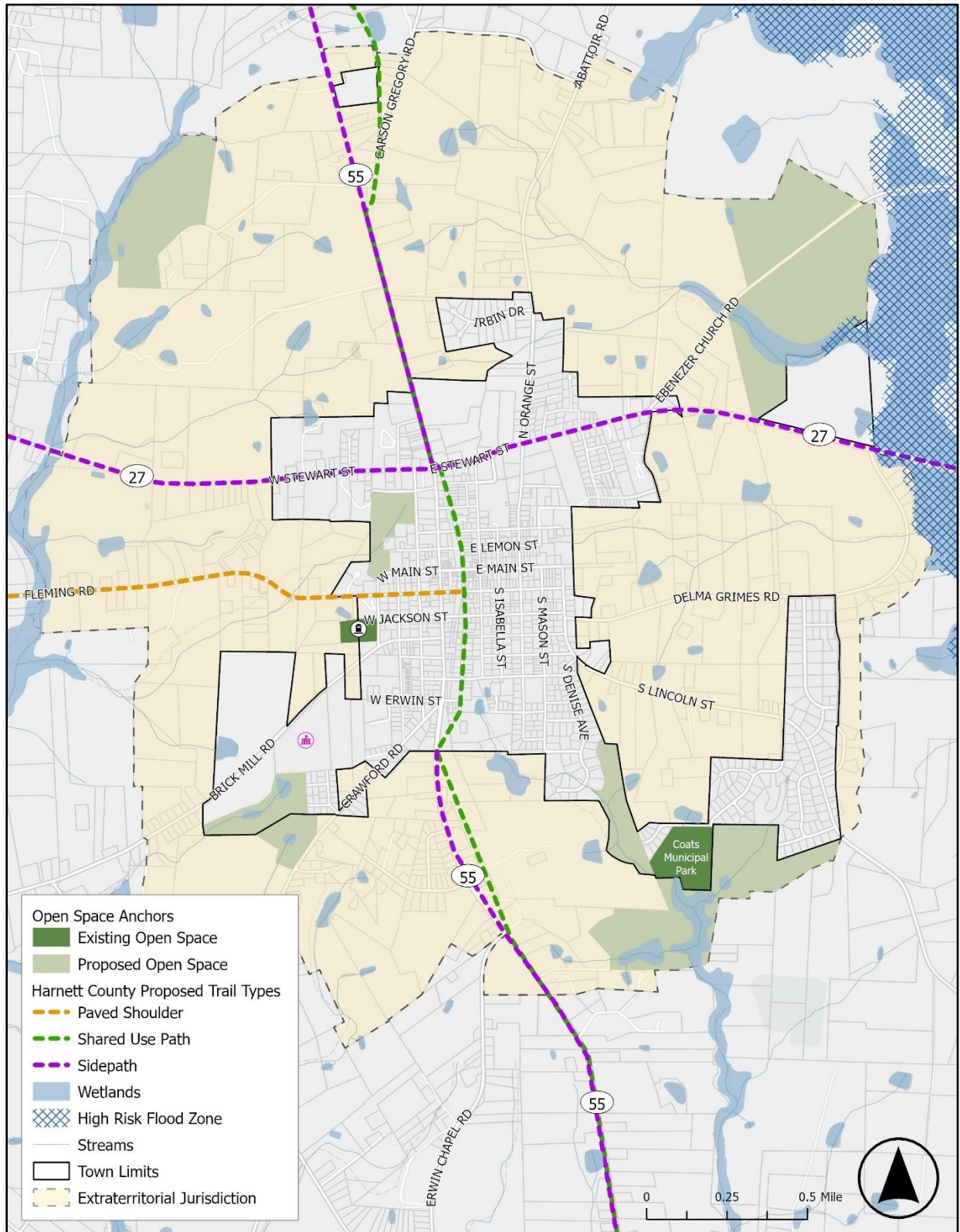
NCDOT Annual Avg. Daily Traffic (AADT) Map



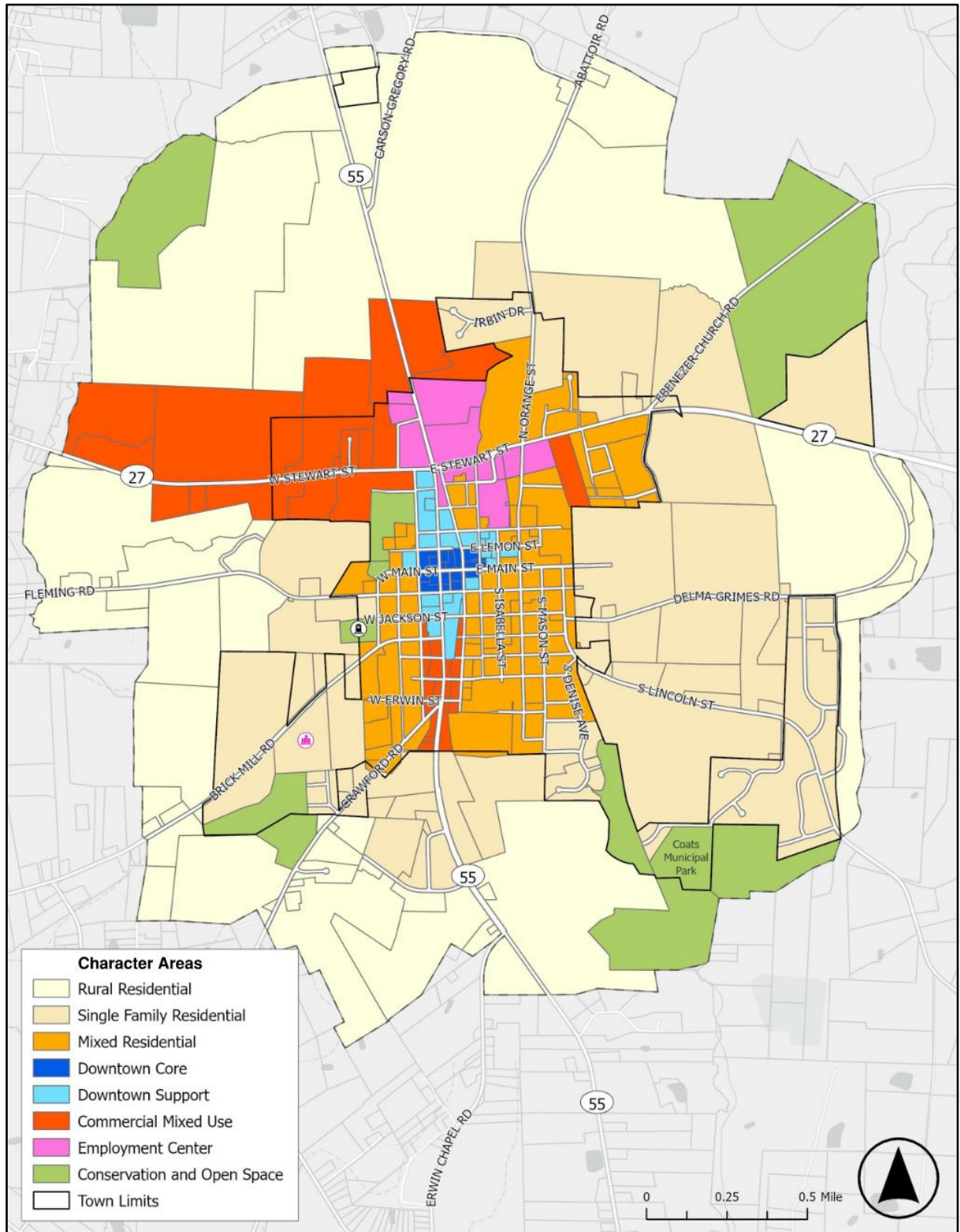
ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES MAP



WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE MAP



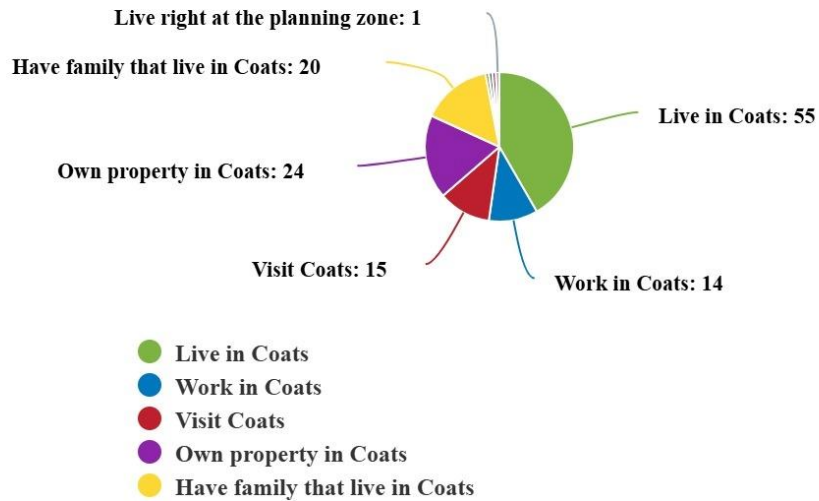
OPEN SPACE & PEDESTRIAN PATHS MAP



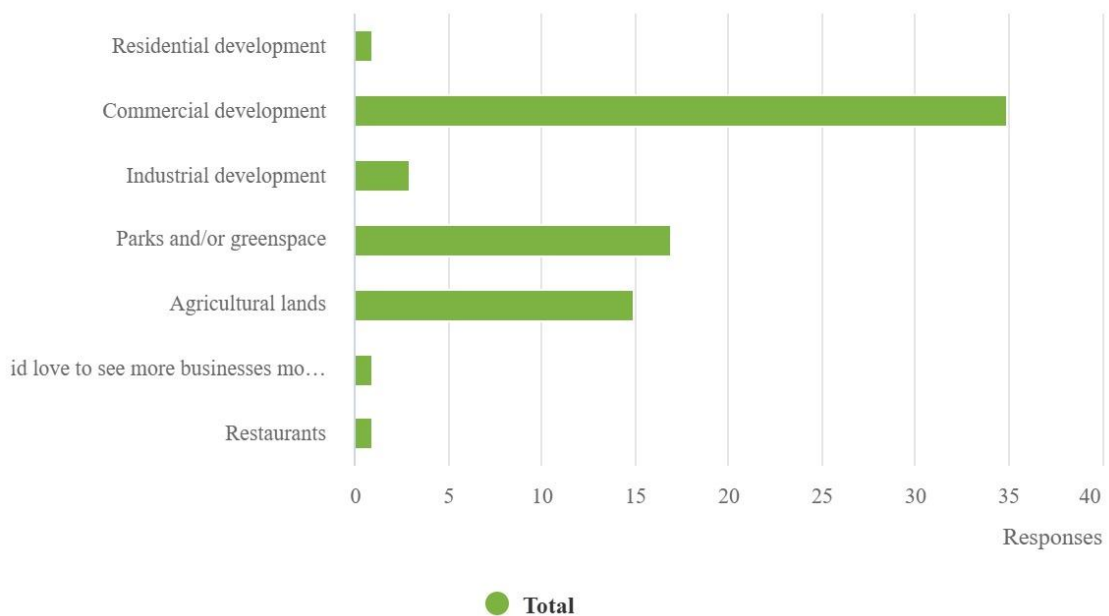
FUTURE LAND USE MAP

APPENDIX B (SURVEY RESULTS)

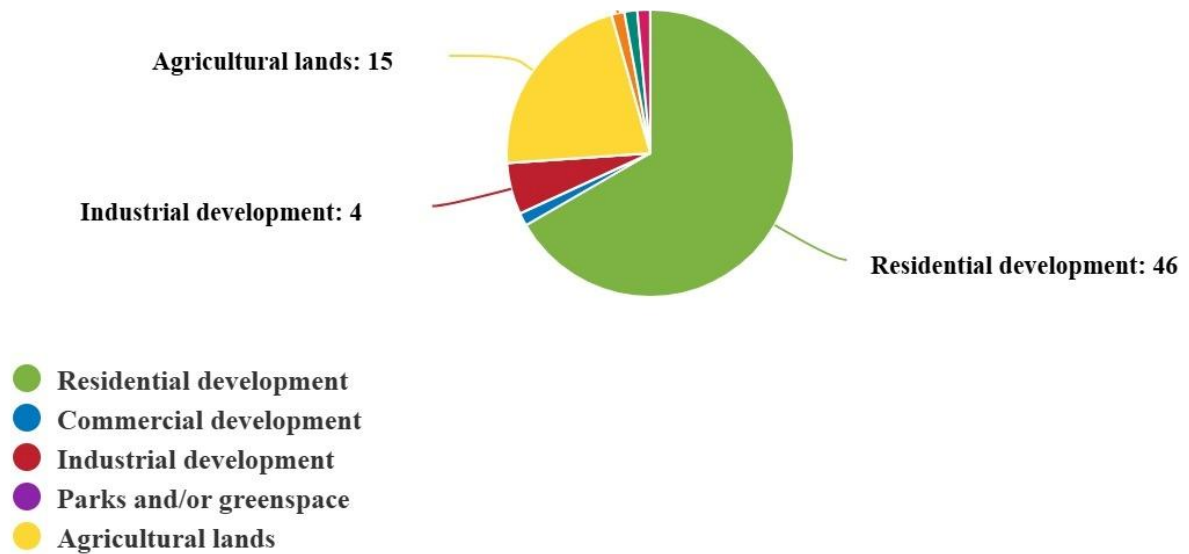
Q1. How would you describe yourself?



Q2. Which of the following would you like to see more of in Coats?

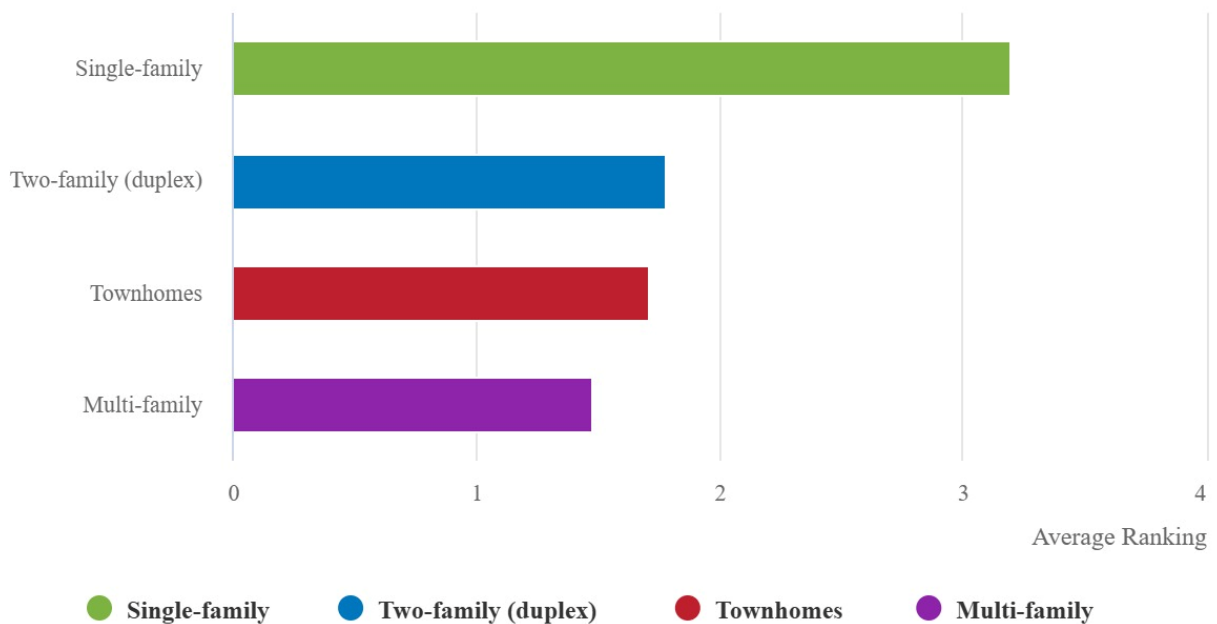


Q3. What type of development do you feel is already plentiful?

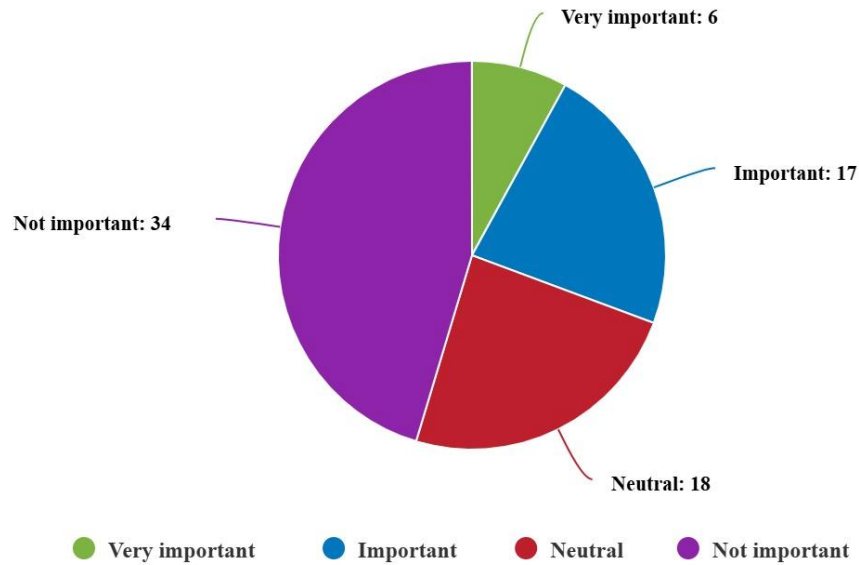


Q4. Please rank the following types of residential development from most to least needed.

68 answers

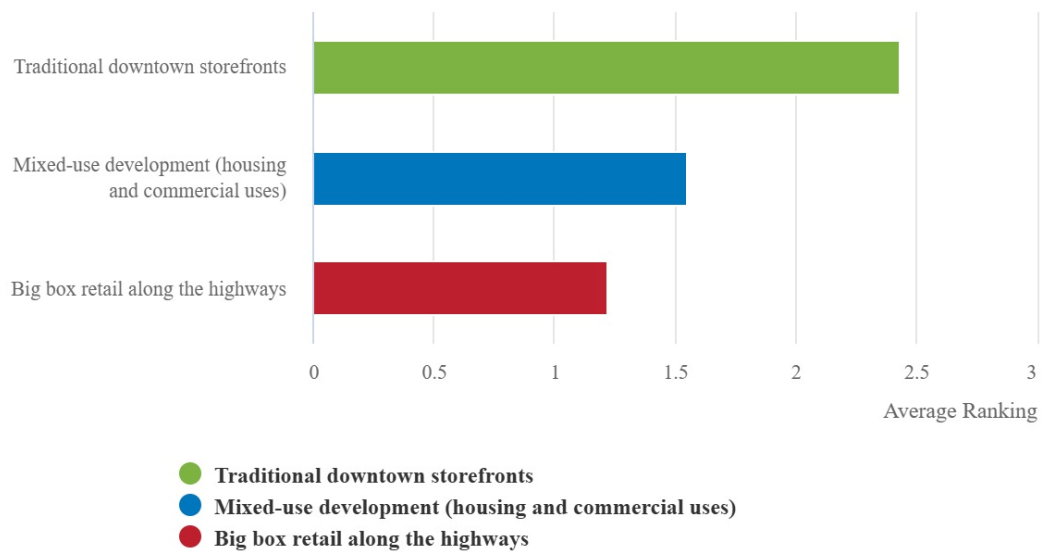


Q5. How important is additional residential development to you?

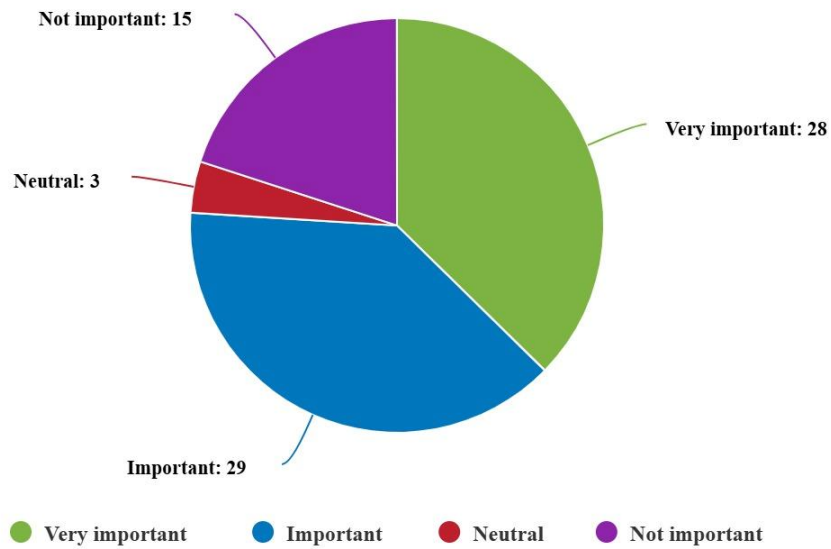


Q6. Please rank the following types of commercial development from most to least needed.

70 answers

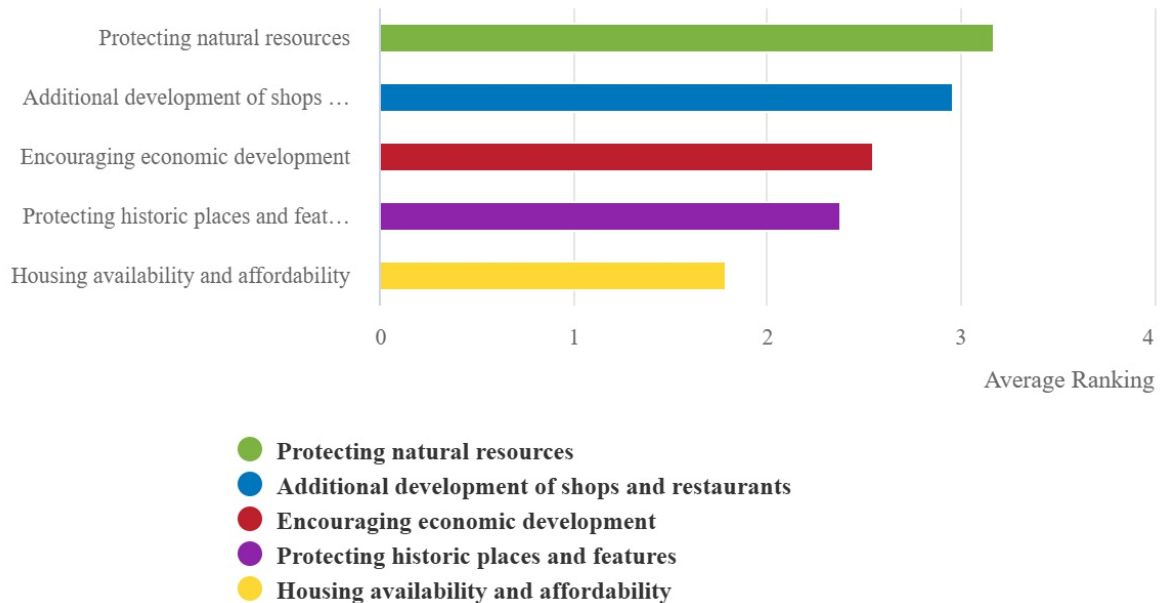


Q7. How important is additional commercial development to you?



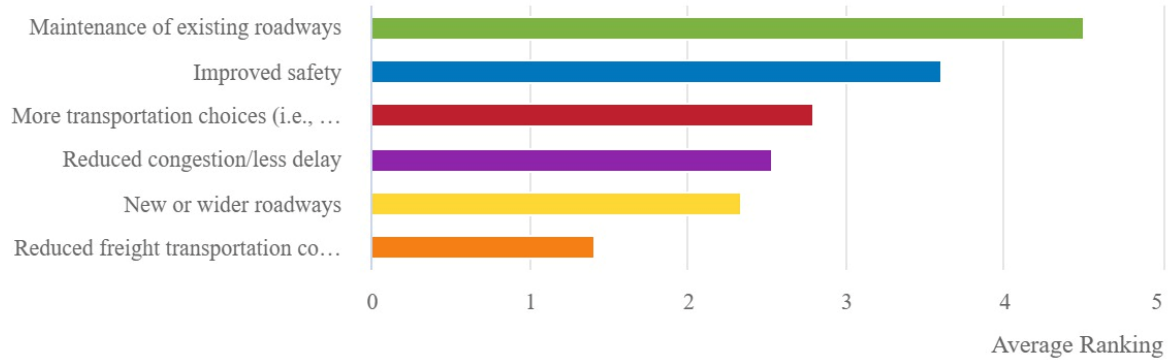
Q8. Please rank the following land use priorities from most to least important.

70 answers



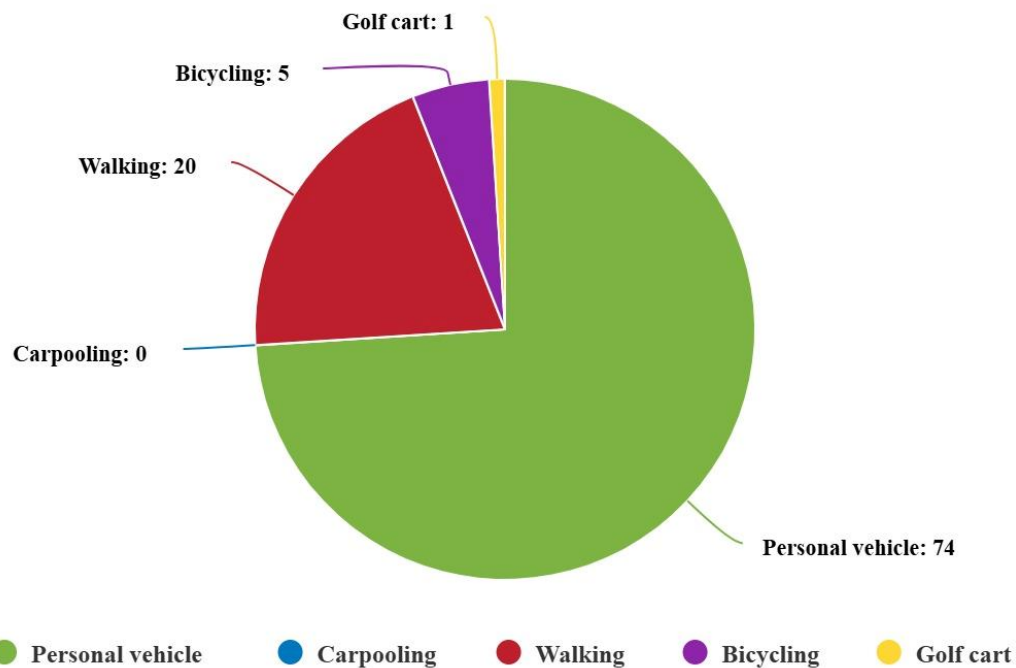
Q9. Please rate the following priorities for the transportation system in Coats from most to least important.

70 answers



- Maintenance of existing roadways
- Improved safety
- More transportation choices (i.e., bus service, bicycle paths, sidewalks)
- Reduced congestion/less delay
- New or wider roadways
- Reduced freight transportation conflicts (between personal travel and commercial trucks)

Q10. How do you prefer to travel within Coats?



Q. 11 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE STUDY TEAM?

1	Boarded up store fronts within the downtown area make for an environment that doesn't feel inviting for visitors/shoppers, nor to new commercial prospects. Businesses don't want to come because nobody does any shopping, and nobody does any shopping because it feels like nobody is in business.
2	Coats is first a farming community; now it has become a bedroom town for commuters to Wake County or a relocation spot for retirees from the north. Its small-town quaint appeal and friendliness is important to many of us that have grown up and raised families in this community. Please don't push commercial growth too much...the farmland being developed into subdivisions is sad for our community. We are losing our identity much like other small town such as Apex, Holly Springs, etc.
3	Coats is known for and celebrates Farmers. I'd like to see agriculture remain a focus. The small town charm is unique and there is nothing wrong with this, growing too big will require more economic pains. Focus on our charm, enhance our community but don't try to reshape us.
4	Coats will thrive without first investing in keeping it's residents from needing to travel to surrounding communities for literally everything. I'm not saying I want chain restaurants and big box stores to dot the landscape, but improvements in parks, beautification of existing right of ways and Town properties, and ordinances that limit slum lords, out of touch property owners, and low quality contractors from sitting on run down real estate is a start. This will free up space for reputable, small town shops to fill. Look for grants, federal funding, and cost share initiatives. The money and resources are out there. Identify greenway corridors on existing easements. Put the cost back on the contractors by requiring improvements to infrastructure to be part of the site plan approval. Look into a fee process in which developers must pay a fee-in-lieu, build infrastructure for credit, or dedicate land for park space. Make the Town attractive. Raise the standards.
5	Encouraging rehab and utilization of existing downtown buildings and adding new mixed use buildings should be priority. Then allow high density residential where there are existing utilities or within proximity. Discourage residential development of lots less than 2 acres.
6	Get rid or change the old unoccupied bad looking buildings downtown
7	I been walking the town for the last couple of weeks. Sidewalk are less desired. Not maintain like they should be. We need more business and a bank it a shame to have a town with no bank. More grocery stores and places to eat not just bars that leave them trash on the side walks. I know this because I walk over it. Beautify our town it look dead. Quite raising taxes on your town with no results people tried if it. Everywhere you look there houses being built. What here to support all these people schools, shop jobs and the list just keep going. To make a town great you

	need to make changes update keep up. Just because we are a small town doesn't mean we can't be on the map.
8	I'd love to do more walking/biking -- I don't live very far from downtown but the road to get there (Lincoln) is too curvy/narrow for me to feel comfortable on foot. Would also love more activities and places to hang out.
9	I hope to maintain the charm of a small farming community, focusing on local businesses, limiting big box and restaurant chain development, limiting residential development so that agriculture is sustained and so that our infrastructure can develop before a large influx of people.
10	I know progress is coming but I do not want to see it destroy our heritage. I want to see Coats progress with moderate commercial growth. The town has already approved several large residential developments. We need to wait and see how these completed developments will affect our way of life. I do not want us to become only bedroom communities such as nearby towns of Angier, Fuquay and Lillington. Measured progress will be good for our community but not excessive progress. I would like Coats to remain with an agricultural landscape with natural green spaces and not manmade green spaces. We are in danger of putting extreme stress on our infrastructure such as roads, schools, and natural resources.
11	i like the rural farm lands around coats, i dont know what all yall can do to preserve it but if you can please try. we dont need more subdivisions.
12	I moved to coats due to the small town nature that focuses a lot on the farm lands. I feel like Coats is one of the few "small towns" that has been staying true to its roots, and has done a fantastic job limiting building and overbuilding like angier and now benson is seeing. If there are plans for development, I would personally like to see the infrastructure in terms of accessibility and roadways be resolved first to prevent some of the congestion issues that other planned towns have seen.
13	Invest in your police department. Erwin, Dunn, Angier, and Lillington have already. Those departments have pushed their criminals out and they have moved to coats because the cost of living is low and they know they only have to deal with one officer. Crime will get worse if you don't make changes.
14	It is very important to plan the growth very carefully. We don't want the over growth of residential homes like Angier just to get tax dollars. To keep our small town atmosphere, avoid large developments with small lots that become bedroom communities which put a strain on our infrastructure. These cookie cutter developments do not blend in with our agricultural roots. Larger lots with smaller developments (like North Leigh) are much more attractive and reflect a more neighborhood feeling. We need to be more aggressive with our economic efforts so people will move here to enjoy our town, not to just move anywhere to get away from high prices of Wake County.

15	It's okay to stay small. There is no need to grow to be like everyone else. The economy is already over building and not filling commercial and residential new builds. Look at the current homes for sale in Coats, and yet your tearing down woods and destroying farm lands to build more homes and for what, for them to sit dormant as well?! Think about the future of not only my kids, but their kids, and their kids. Growth is not always a good thing, and all these towns are about to ruin their futures because they won't know how to live and sustain themselves.
16	It would be nice to clean up the derelict buildings in the downtown area and allow for more small businesses to open. Revitalizing the downtown area would be a great idea. More restaurants would be nice.
17	My main concern is that Coats remains somewhat of a small town, continues to be a safe place to live, and that Main St. buildings gets cleaned up, and filled with shops, restaurants, etc...
18	Need downtown businesses that stay open later than 6 pm and that work together. Youngsville NC is a great example of how a well ran small town should be.
19	No high density housing developments. Preserve the agricultural heritage and small town feel of Coats. NO HIGH DENSITY HOUSING! Single family on 1 acre or more. Stop rezoning!
20	Please don't over develop our small town a few more locally owned shopping options would be nice but our town does NOT need to fall victim to the overdevelopment Wake county and even Angier in Harnett County has seen.
21	Please don't overdevelop our sweet small town
22	Please keep coats a small country town.
23	Please stop development on agricultural land.
24	Preserving opportunities for our agricultural producers to feed our community and world are essential. These properties not only provide food, they also provide green space which is essential for our ecosystem. Residential and commercial growth is essential for our towns future, but balancing all aspects of our local economy will pay great dividends in the future. I also feel that residential lot size should remain closer to RA-30 and 20 in new projects which more closely reflects the values of our community.
25	Some more sidewalks would be nice and also a long term goal would be to connect to the Dunn-Erwin bike trail
26	The developers should have to pay to widen the roads before the houses are put up and they should be a tax for all new house put up for them to pay and not for the people that have lived here all of our lives
27	The Town Manager needs to go. He has brought all of these new houses here and we don't have the infrastructure. We can do better here in Coats.
28	We need more development in order to attract new business. Build more housing developments.

29	We need to offer incentives to businesses to make improvements and utilize our Main Street.
30	We need to protect the businesses we have currently, and then bring in more commercial type stores/restaurants that do not compete with current ones. We need to take care of the community we have first and expand otherwise. Housing won't do anything unless we have things people can do. An old school arcade, pool tables, and ax throwing. Things that will bring the college kids to our town as surrounding town don't have anything to do. You have to drive to Fuquay or Holly Springs for things to do.
31	We would like to see more interaction with Police/Fire Departments with the citizens of Coats. It used to be where Officers cared about the elderly/disabled in this town. Not sure why that stopped. Maybe we need new concerned Police Officials.
32	When land is bought/sold for residential (commercial) use, the buyer and seller must pay to 1. Improve schools, 2. Create or agree to preserve natural habitat 3. 20% or more structures must be affordable to people at, below or near the poverty level.
33	Would like to add sidewalks down highway 27.