



Town of Lillington Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

"Bridging the Cape: Lillington's Vision for Tomorrow"



Town Council & Planning Board Briefing

July 2025

RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

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Presentation Overview

- Project overview
- Community Engagement Process
- Draft Vision Statement
- Issues & Opportunities
- Plan Themes
- Next steps

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A document designed to **guide the future actions of a community.**
- A **vision for the future**, with long-range goals and objectives for activities that affect the local government.
- **Guidance** tool on public and private land development proposals.
- Direction for future activities over a **10 to 20-year period.**
- **Required by NC General Statutes (160-D)** –Local governments must have a “reasonably up-to-date Plan.”

Why is this process important?

- Embodies a **collective vision** of the town through public dialogue.
- Serves as a **guiding & justification tool** when making land use decisions and/or public improvements.
- **Organizes** the Town's goals and objectives for the next 10–20 years.
- Can be a great reference tool for **future grant applications/funding opportunities**.
- Provides guidance for **shaping the Town's appearance** – Ordinance Changes.



A Land Use Plan is...

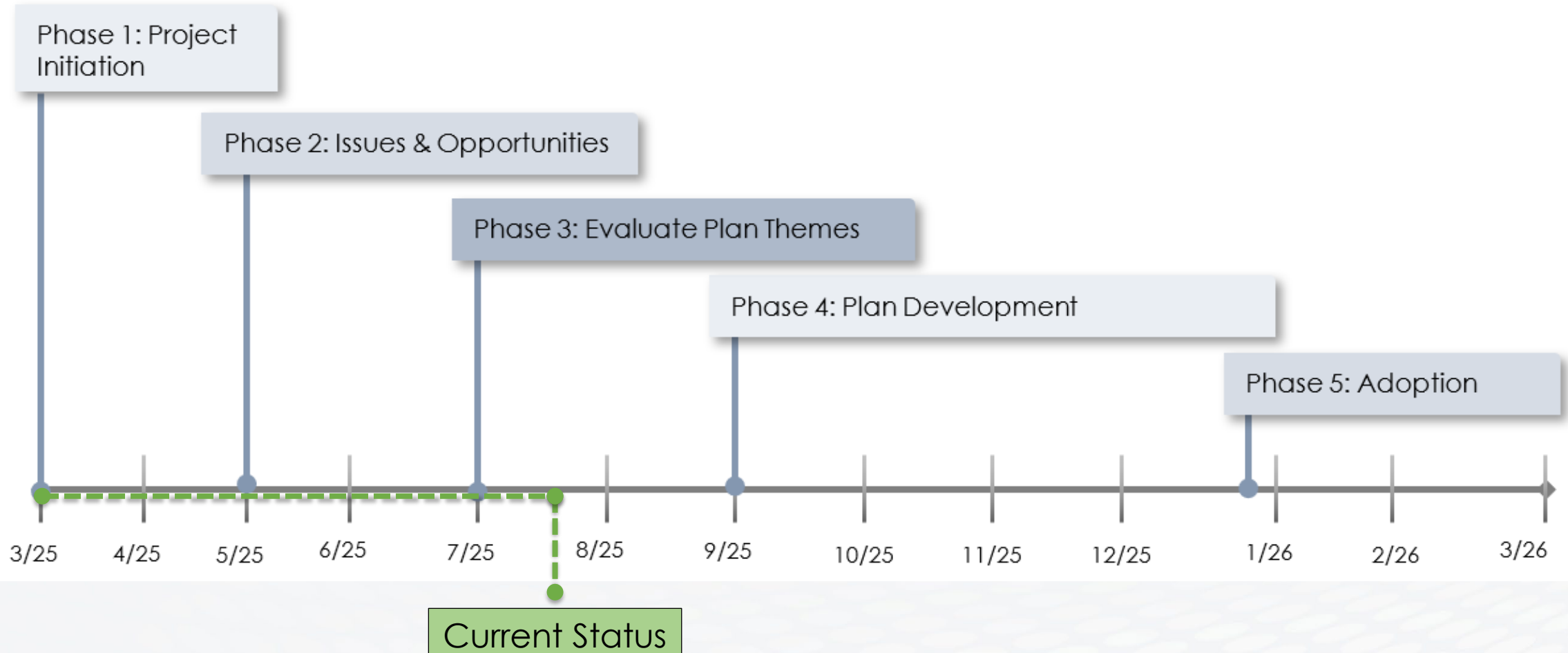
- ▶ A vision for the future
- ▶ A decision-making guide
- ▶ A basis for policy
- ▶ A basis for zoning
- ▶ Flexible & adaptive

A Land Use Plan is not...

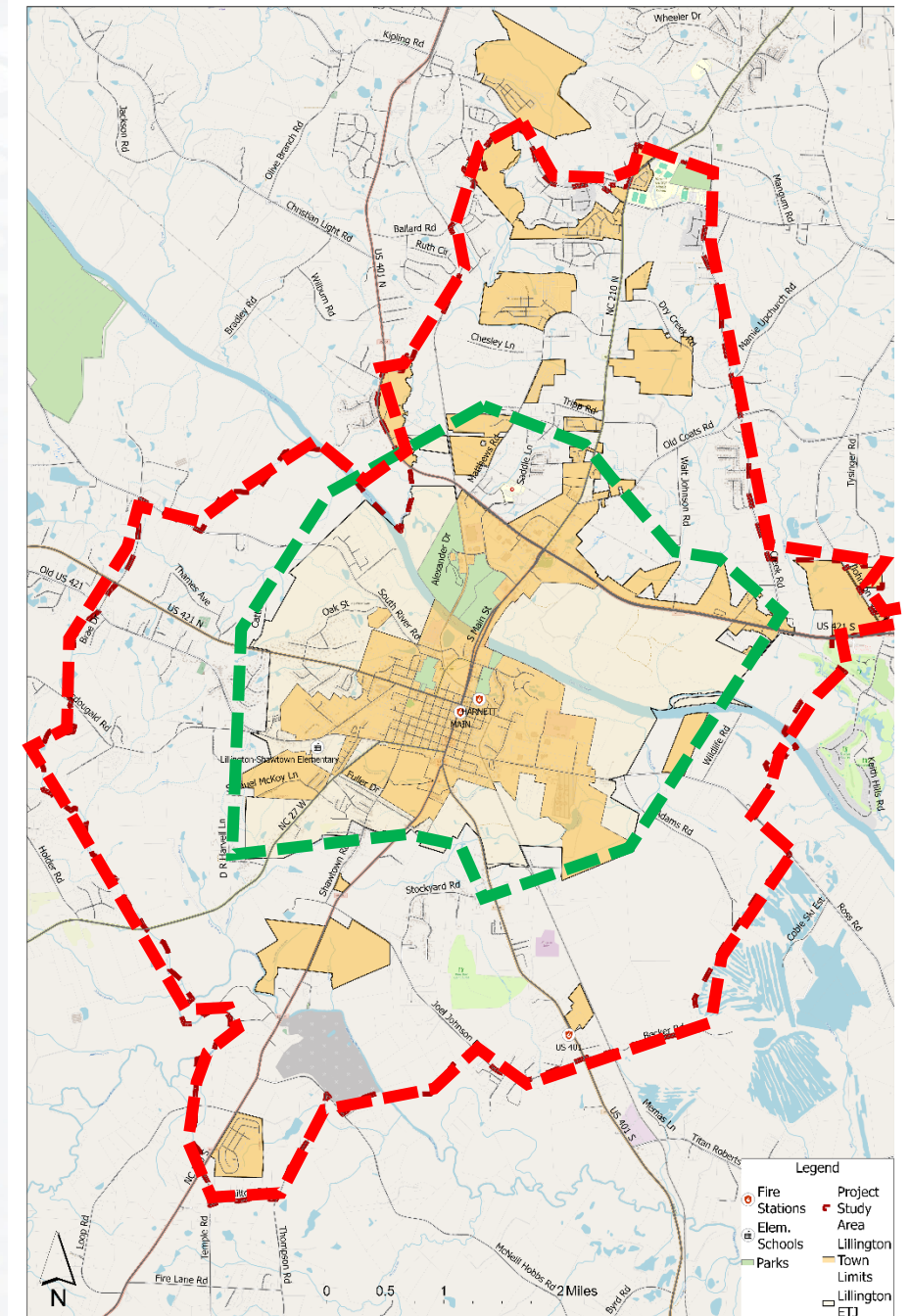
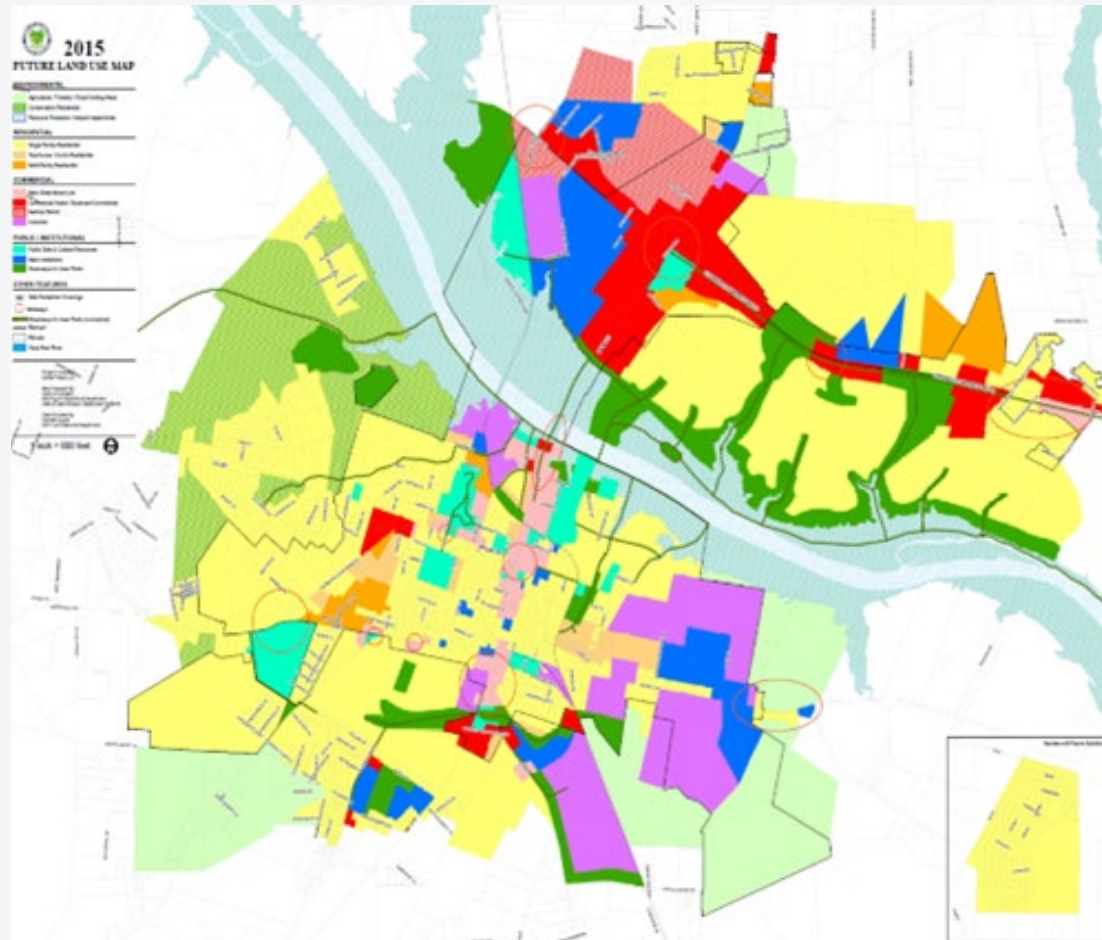
- ▶ A UDO, zoning or subdivision regulatory ordinance
- ▶ Rigid, unchanging policy
- ▶ Specific on scope
- ▶ A tool only used by the town

Project Schedule

PROJECT SCHEDULE



Study Area Map



Community Engagement

- ✓ **Public Survey** – May 1 – June 20
- ✓ **Cape Fear Fest** – May 3
- ✓ **Coffee Shop Drop in** – May 22 (3–5pm)
- ✓ **Community Drop-In Meeting** – June 4 (4–7pm)
- ✓ **Virtual Community Meeting** – June 17 (6pm)
- ✓ **Steering Committee Meetings** – April, May, July

Survey Data

Survey highlights:

- ▶ Open for 2 months
- ▶ 62 Responses
- ▶ 30 Map comments
- ▶ 102 Document downloads
- ▶ 329 Unique website visits



Public Survey

Your voice matters: share your ideas for a better Lillington!

[Take The Survey](#)



Interactive Map

Use the map to drop your comments on specific streets, parks, or roads.

[See Project Map](#)

Key Themes from Public Survey

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IS HIGHLY DESIRED

- Safer pedestrian crossings
- Better design and aesthetics

NEW & IMPROVED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Higher Quality:
 - *Restaurants*
 - *Grocery stores*
 - *Shopping centers*
- Renovate empty storefronts



Key Themes from Public Survey

RENOVATE AND REVITALIZE EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

- Mixed-use is desired in appropriate areas

TRAFFIC AND INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- Balance safety with growth

MORE SIDEWALKS

- In all areas, especially connecting parks to the river



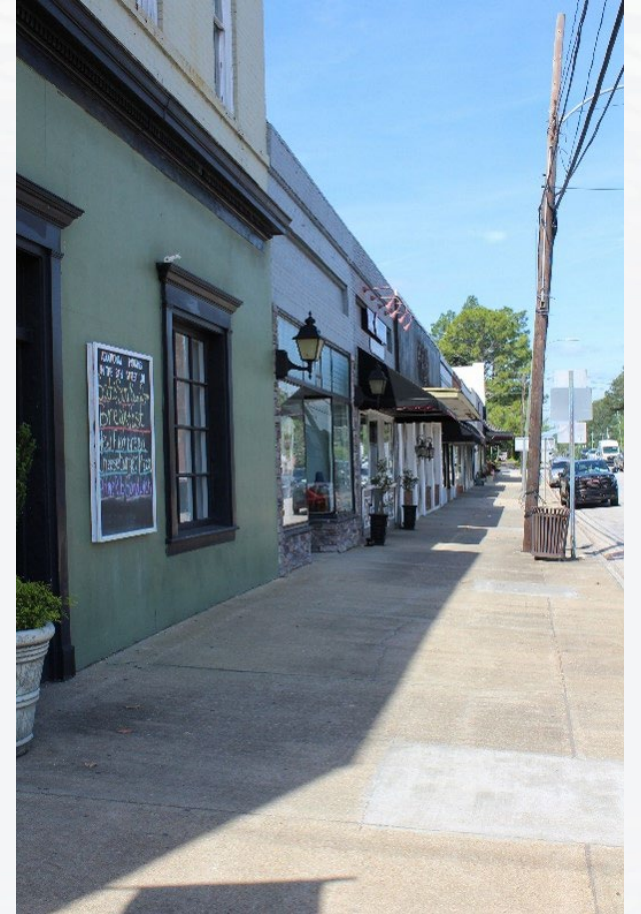
Stakeholder Interviews

- Full day of interviews with 6 groups:
 - ▶ *Downtown Businesses*
 - ▶ *Parks & Recreation/Environmental*
 - ▶ *Public Safety/Institutional*
 - ▶ *Civic/Community Ambassadors*
 - ▶ *Utilities/Transportation*
 - ▶ *Developers/Builders*



Key Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

- **Downtown is a focal point of the community**
 - More shops, restaurants, and destination businesses.
 - Community identity and unite residents.
- **The Cape Fear River is a centralized asset**
 - Unique, positive asset, also a physical divide
 - Branding, identity, and recreational draw
 - Capeton Greenway could bridge both sides (symbolically and functionally).



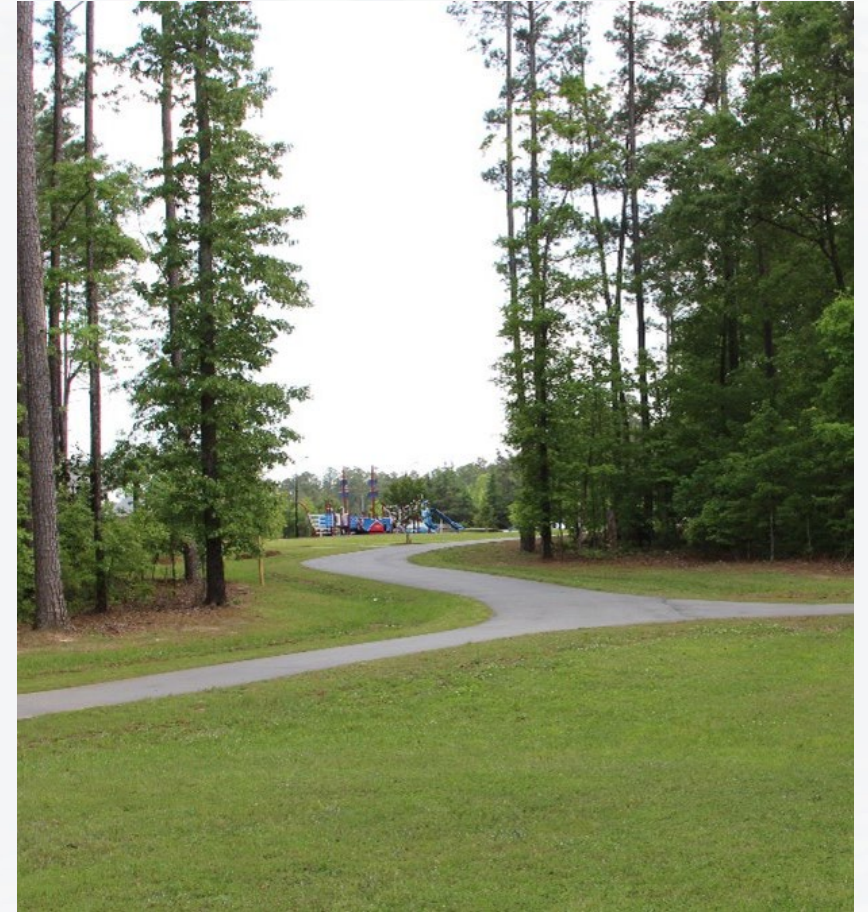
Key Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

- **Balance Across the River**

- Balanced — housing, commercial space, and public services.
- Educate new residents

- **Pedestrian Connectivity**

- Safe, walkable routes to schools, parks, and downtown
- Sidewalk gaps, especially along NC 210 and near Front Street.
- Greenways are seen as essential for quality of life



Key Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

- **Capturing Residents & Workers**
 - Downtown needs to retain daytime workers after hours/weekends.
 - New residents should feel invited to shop, play, and be involved in Lillington.
- **Promote downtown and outdoor lifestyle as community assets.**



Public Workshops (In-person & Virtual)

- **6 Interactive Stations**
 - ▶ Visioning
 - ▶ Housing
 - ▶ Transportation
 - ▶ Parks/Environment
 - ▶ Land Use
 - ▶ Growth
- **Virtual Simulated the In-Person Event**
 - ▶ Responses included
 - ▶ Recording available



Open House Key Themes

Community Identity

- Maintain small-town charm.
- Preserve and promote the Cape Fear River, the riverfront, parks, and trails

Walkability, Safety, and Infrastructure

- Sidewalks, crosswalks, and crossing lights
- Traffic control measures are in high demand.



Open House Key Themes

Growth that Preserves Character

- Infill and established neighborhoods.

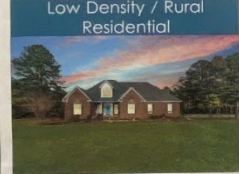
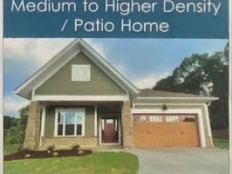
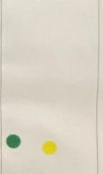
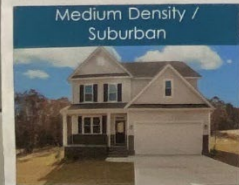
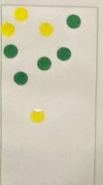
Creating a vibrant Downtown

- Commercial core downtown, surrounded by revitalized residential areas
- Mixed use in appropriate areas

Where would you like to live?
Instructions: Place a dot next to your preferred type of housing.

Townhome or Duplex 	Walkable / Mixed-Use Development 	Higher Density / Apartments 
		

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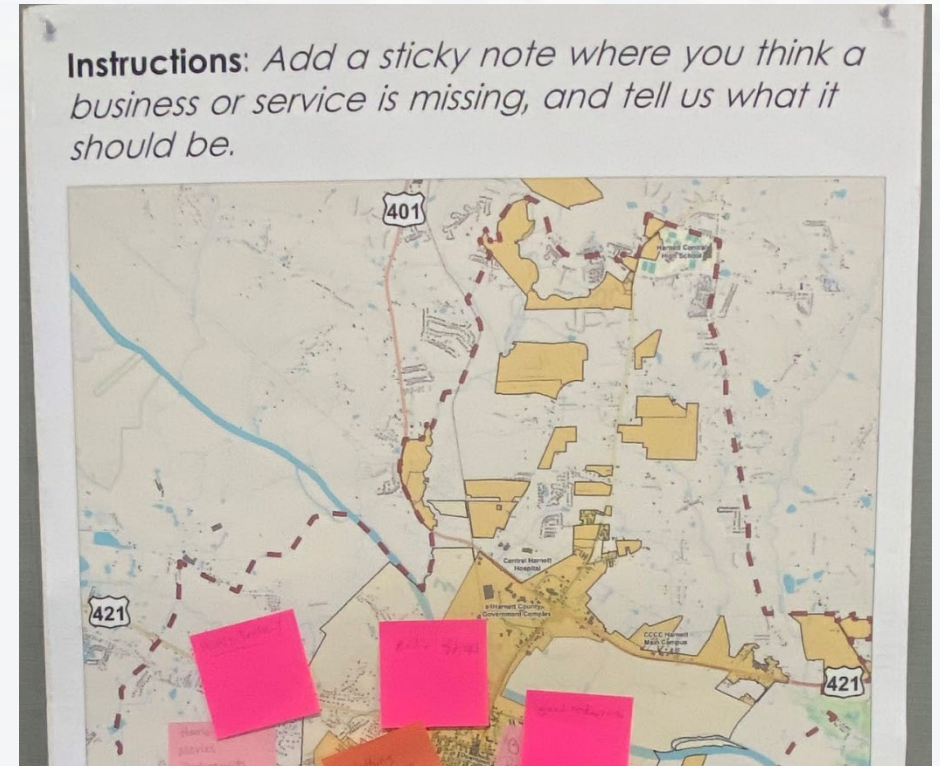
Low Density / Rural Residential 		Medium to Higher Density / Patio Home 	
Medium Density / Suburban 		Infill / Established Neighborhood 	

Open House Key Themes

More Commercial

- More dining options downtown and near the riverfront
- Shopping centers with national anchors

Balanced development on the north and south sides of the river.



Draft Vision Statement

“Lillington is a welcoming, connected community where families thrive and the Cape Fear River unites neighborhoods, nature, and a vibrant downtown, supporting a healthy, engaged lifestyle and a growing local economy.”

Issues & Opportunities

Issues

- Traffic Congestion
- Parking Challenges
- Downtown Aesthetics
- Limited Diversity of Housing Types
- Becoming Bedroom Community
- Cape Fear through Town
- Existing business Inventory is Limited

Opportunities

- Branding & Identity
- Outdoor Promotion
- Downtown Aesthetics
- Pedestrian Connectivity
- More/Updated Commercial Spaces
- Renovate Empty Storefronts

Plan Themes



Revitalized Downtown



**Improve Traffic
Congestion & Safety**



**Expand Pedestrian
Network**



**Prioritize Commercial
Development**



**Preserve Community
Identity**



**Cape Fear River
Connectivity**



Balanced Growth



**Capturing Residents &
Workers**

Next Steps

- Goal Statements
- Implementation Recommendations
- Character Areas
- Future Land Use Map
- Draft plan





TOWN OF LILLINGTON COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

"Bridging the Cape: Lillington's Vision for Tomorrow"

Thank you!