

**Town of Huntersville**  
**Downtown Plan Steering Committee**  
**Draft Master Plan Outline**  
**November 30, 2022**

**Overview.**

The information and documents referenced below are outlined as a **DRAFT In Progress** intended for use by the Steering Committee to support discussions during Meeting #14 on December 1, 2022. Feedback from the Committee will be used to complete the Final Master Plan document in advance of Committee Meeting #15 on December 15, 2022. Several map-based products should be reviewed along with this outline – they can be found at <https://www.letsplanhuntersville.org/steering-committee> under the December 1 Meeting header.

**Final Strategy – Preliminary ‘Working’ Outline.**

- I. Key Recommendations.
  - A. Infrastructure (including Transportation, General Infrastructure Systems, and Environment and Open Space).
  - B. Land Use and Urban Design.
  - C. Economic Development.
  
- II. Development Focus Areas and Potential Key Catalytic Projects.
  - A. Economic Development (Public and Private).
  - B. Infrastructure Development (Transportation (All Modes) and Open Space).
  - C. Implementation and Phasing Strategy.
  
- III. Next Steps.

**Phase 3 - Final Strategy & Master Plan.**  
**DRAFT In Progress**

**I. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**A. Infrastructure Recommendations.**

- 1. Transportation.
  - a. Existing Arterial Streets and Intersections:
    - (Gilead Rd, HWY 115/Old Statesville Road, Main Street).
    - Continue collaboration with NCDOT to ensure roadway construction for its Main Street Improvement Project advances per designs with safe, multimodal access (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian) in accordance with adopted Town plans and policies.
    - Convene with NCDOT and Norfolk Southern to share considerations and discuss feasibility for potential roadway design modifications and/or enhancements including traffic lane and circulation/turning movement patterns, sidewalk widths and streetscape amenities, and on-street parking relative to the U-5908 Main Street project (currently under construction) segment(s) located at the intersections of

Huntersville-Concord Road and Church Street and the Norfolk Southern railroad crossing.

- Consider extending the 25 MPH traffic zone continuously along HWY 115/Old Statesville Road between the new roundabouts under construction at the intersections of Main Street at Fourth Street and Mt Holly-Huntersville Road.
  - Convene with NCDOT to provide update on current Downtown and Subregional context and share considerations and discuss feasibility for potential roadway design criteria relative to the U-5807 Gilead Road project to ensure multimodal access (vehicular, bicycle, and, pedestrian) in accordance with adopted Town plans and policies. Note: It is understood this Project is currently advancing per the NCDOT STIP - Verify timing and opportunity to include updated designs.
  - Convene with NCDOT relative to the U-5114: HWY 21/Statesville Road and Gilead Road project to share considerations and discuss feasibility for Town's desired intersection alignment (chicane toward east), design (signalized or roundabout), and extension (continuation of Commerce Center Dr to the Town's Holbrook St. Extension Project – recently completed).
  - (Re)Prioritize Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) roadway projects and funding allocation, if possible, to support and enhance level of service per potential design alternate(s) for key NCDOT streets including: Gilead Road, Huntersville-Concord Road, Main Street, and HWY 115/Old Statesville Road.
  - Enhance existing and identify and preserve potential new opportunities for north/south multimodal street (vehicular, bike, and pedestrian) intersections and connections across Gilead Road to increase mobility with pedestrian-oriented street grid and block patterns.
- b. Downtown and Adjacent Neighborhood Streets.
- Update Town's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) roadway projects and funding allocation to include proposed new streets and improvements to targeted existing streets within the Downtown area.
  - Inventory, catalogue, and illustrate existing street types, design cross-sections, and general conditions.
  - Clarify existing street right-of-way widths along with associated ownership and maintenance responsibilities - NCDOT, Town, or Private.
  - Enhance existing and identify and preserve potential new opportunities for east/west multimodal street (vehicular, bike, and pedestrian) intersections and connections between and across HWY 115/Old Statesville Road and Main Street to increase mobility with pedestrian-oriented street grid and block patterns.
  - Establish **Downtown Street Design Guidelines** for new and pre-existing/retrofit street types.
  - Explore implementation of innovative Woonerf street type within commercial and residential context.
  - Develop street and sidewalk improvement strategy for pre-existing adjacent neighborhood streets to encourage lower traffic speeds and enhance pedestrian safety, walkability, and connectivity with Downtown.
  - Advance evaluation of proposed new east/west street connection between Commerce Center Drive, and HWY 115/Old Statesville Road and Main Street

per the Downtown Transportation System Plan (2014-2015) and the adopted 2040 Community Plan – Downtown Regulating Plan / Character and Connections Map – including but not limited to: potential street alignment(s), design criteria (design speed, cross-section(s) and intersections, etc.), and integration with existing land ownership and uses. The proposed East/West Connector Street is defined with three incremental Segments A-C, which are contingent upon key items including:

**Segment A - Between Commerce Center Drive and Sherwood Drive:**

Key Contingent Items:

- A. CMS approves funding for new Huntersville Elementary School.
- B. Street design is integrated appropriately with new school site and building.
- C. CMS conveys land to town for street right-of-way.
- D. CMS provides town right of first refusal for property fronting Gilead Road.

**Segment B - Between Sherwood Drive and Old Statesville Road:**

Key Contingent Items:

- A. East/West Connector Street Segment A is fully funded and constructed.
- B. Street design is integrated appropriately with Holbrook Park and adjacent properties.

**Segment C – Between Old Statesville Road and Main Street:**

Key Contingent Items:

- A. East/West Connector Street Segments A and B are fully funded and constructed.
- B. Norfolk Southern approval for a Railroad Corridor crossing at Second St.

c. Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities.

- Create a **Downtown Sidewalk Improvement Plan** to establish street-specific design guidelines for improving conditions of existing sidewalks within the Downtown core area and extending sidewalk pathways and connections to adjacent and emerging neighborhoods.
- Bridge existing gaps in pedestrian and bicycle mobility and connectivity with new and/or enhanced trails and sidewalks within and between Public Greenways and Parks, and the Downtown core.
- Identify, inventory, categorize, and value existing street and sidewalk conditions for potential improvement by associated ownership entity and maintenance responsibilities. Consider implementation of an online, interactive **Mobility Improvement Geolocation Map & Strategy** to pinpoint specific sidewalk damage or other impediments deterring pedestrian and bicyclist access, which can be prioritized for improvements by associated ownership and maintenance entities.
- Establish and reinforce requirements for regular maintenance and service activities relative to street access and interface with adjacent streetscapes including garbage pick-up and on-street deliveries.

d. Public Transit – Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Commuter Rail Transit (CRT) Station Area Plan.

- Establish a Station Area Planning (SAP) Team to help guide and provide proactive feedback to Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) as they advance

short, medium, and long-term planning consideration for its proposed BRT and CRT corridors.

- Prepare **BRT** and **CRT Station Area Plans** for both stations, which clearly define the SAP Key Components and functional criteria within the context of the 1/4-mile station area and greater Downtown.
- Prepare a comparative analysis for the BRT Station location Option A and Option B proposed by CATS to evaluate and share specific considerations for preference by the Town.
- Reevaluate and update the 2008 CRT Station Area Plan prepared by CATS in accordance with expected SAP Key Components and functional criteria, subject to future review by Norfolk Southern.
- Ensure current Transportation Plans (including Roadway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Plans) accommodate and support multimodal access to the BRT and CRT Station Area.
- Increase and enhance multimodal (vehicular, bike, and pedestrian) access and safety within 1/8-mile of the BRT and CRT Station Areas.
- Evaluate existing bus stop locations and ridership in the Downtown and create a **Bus Stop Improvement Plan**, which ensures accessibility and enhances safety and comfort. Explore opportunities for integration of public art and downtown wayfinding signage.
- Explore implementation of innovative mobility solutions such as on-demand public transit to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and provide options for first and last-mile access to the existing Huntersville Gateway Park and Ride Lot, and future BRT and CRT Stations.
- Explore short and long-term planning and funding opportunities for potential innovative transit technologies including:
  - Local and county-wide autonomous electric vehicles (EVs) [cars and pods] networks and charging infrastructure per update of the 2019 NC Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Plan update (tentative August 2022) lead by NCDOT and Centralina in accordance with:
    - The NC Clean Transportation Plan mandated by Executive Order (EO) 246.
    - National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure formula funding plan mandated by the U.S. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).
  - Hyperloop high-speed transportation system connecting between Huntersville and other Lake Norman area Towns together with Charlotte. Potential strategies and infrastructure include Underground per Elon Musk's The Boring Company, and Overhead per Virgin Hyperloop.
  - Air-Taxi services via small, piloted and pilotless aircraft designed for short passenger hops in and around cities. The technology is currently in development stages by Boeing, Airbus SE, Embraer SA, Joby Aviation, and Vertical Aerospace Group Ltd.

e. Parking - Distribution, Supply and Demand.

- Review and revisit the recommendations outlined within the Town of Huntersville *2006 Downtown Parking Study*\* including:
  - Conduct a more detailed parking study.
  - Consider street improvements to allow for more on-street parking.
  - Consider establishing shared-use parking agreements.
  - Consider adopting an In-Lieu Fee System to fund future public parking.
  - Implement a maximum off-street parking limit.
  - Allow on-street parking to count toward required parking.
  - Revise the existing parking ordinance to provide additional design and quantitative guidelines for development and uses within the Downtown context.

\*Note: The *2006 Downtown Parking Study* was prepared with projected need for parking according to the 2005/2006 Master Plan and prior to the construction of the parking structure serving the Huntersville Town Center/Discovery Place Kids building.

- Create a **Downtown Parking Plan**, which builds on the recommendations of the *2006 Downtown Parking Study* and incorporates current conditions and the 2022 Downtown Master Plan upon final adoption.
- Collaborate with existing property and business owners to evaluate existing off-street parking conditions and potential funding mechanisms for improvements including but not limited to:
  - Vehicular access and circulation efficiency (automobile and service vehicles) within and between adjoining lots.
  - Pedestrian safety, accessibility, and circulation within and between adjoining lots, and adjacent sidewalks and building entrances.
  - Wayfinding signage – vehicular and pedestrian.
  - Surfacing materials, landscaping, lighting, drainage (including integration of potential stormwater strategies such as pervious pavers, bioretention areas, and underground vaults).
- Identify location(s) and approaches for potential future public, shared parking facilities (surface and/or structured) as determined appropriate relative to site parcel and block size and geometry, street access, and demand per existing and potential future adjacent and nearby development program.

## 2. General Infrastructure Systems.

- Coordinate development program and intensity in conjunction with existing infrastructure capacities and/or phase in accordance with Town’s CIP.
- Recognize the Water and Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County (WSACC) existing wastewater basin status and capacity limits and impact on timing and phasing of potential future development on the eastern Downtown area.

## 3. Environment and Open Space.

### a. Terrestrial Systems.

- Conduct a comprehensive **Arborist Tree Assessment Report** to inventory conditions of the existing tree canopy within the Downtown area.

- Identify existing wooded areas to consider for potential preservation and use to supplement public greenway and open space systems in the Downtown area.
  - Consider recalibrating tree preservation requirements, mitigation strategies, and/or provide incentives to developers for contributions to a **Downtown Tree Fund/Bank** set up by the Town for the planting and maintenance of trees elsewhere in the Downtown area.
  - Create **Urban Forestry Design Guidelines** outlining sensitive approaches to the integration of new development within pre-existing wooded areas, which facilitate the preservation of a maximum number of trees.
- b. Public Greenways, Trails, and Parks.
- Enhance wayfinding signage within Public Greenways and Parks, and throughout the Downtown to promote locations and activities, and encourage community and visitor access.
  - Identify existing features within parks for potential future design and material enhancements including but not limited to decorative hardscapes, light fixtures, railings and fencing, furniture (benches, waste/recycle receptacles, bicycle racks, etc.), public art installations, shelters, playground equipment, etc.
  - Implement Holbrook Park post-construction inspection and clean-up of internal and perimeter wooded areas and understory brush.
- c. Stormwater Systems.
- Identify primary existing stormwater problem areas within the Downtown and develop potential on-site and/or upstream mitigation and improvement strategies.
  - Conduct a detailed **Downtown Stormwater Study** to determine feasibility for a potential 'regional' stormwater approach for the Downtown area.
  - Identify and encourage preservation and/or consider purchase of larger land parcels (or portions of) as stormwater capture sites for implementation of potential **Regional Stormwater Strategy** in harmony with the existing topography, and flow patterns and drainage basins together with existing and potential future development intensities within each quadrant of the Downtown area.
  - Encourage and implement innovative and creative stormwater features within open spaces and 'Green Streets' as intentional and visually appealing amenities, which are designed, scaled, and integrated sensitively within the surrounding context – urban/developed and natural/undeveloped areas of the Downtown.
  - Pending feasibility and implementation of **Regional Stormwater Strategy** and associated facility(s), consider potential **Stormwater Banking and Mitigation Program** for existing and future development in the Downtown area.

## **B. Land Use / Urban Design Recommendations.**

1. Adopted Town Documents, Ordinance & Policies.

- Consider an update and expansion of Building and Lot Type definitions and regulations within the existing Zoning Ordinance and/or create new Types to include broader range of varieties with the Downtown area.

For example: Currently, the Apartment Building and Lot Type Regulations covers a broad range of potential building forms and configurations (one size fits all approach); which could contain at least three, however typically a much greater quantity of dwelling units depending on the lot size. Therefore, to provide guidance supporting an incremental approach to implementation of Apartment buildings in harmony with smaller lots located within the Downtown Area; consideration should be given to breakdown the Apartment Building and Lot Type into smaller categories – such as:

- Small (3-15 Dwelling Units).
- Medium (16-50 Dwelling Units).
- Large (More than 50 Dwelling Units).
- Consider review of Development Plan (By-Right and Rezoning) submittals to include evaluation of adherence to the adopted Master Plan and proposed **Downtown Urban Design Guidelines** document (see below).
- Development Plan submittal checklist should include requirement for provision of an Urban Context Plan, whereby the proposed project is depicted within the surrounding ¼ mile context.
- Consider additional community engagement process(s) for review of Development and Rezoning Plan submittals within the Downtown including collaborative charrettes together with town staff and department heads, adjacent neighborhoods, and other community stakeholders.

## 2. Urban Design Guidelines.

- The existing Urban Design Guidelines *2008 Design Guidebook* provides good and broad guidance for design of development throughout the entire Town. However, a new and separate **Downtown Urban Design Guidelines** document should be created to provide specific guidelines focused on the design of new and existing development improvements within the Downtown area - including but not limited to building form and design, open space, and streets.
- Include urban design strategies for sensitive transition and integration between Downtown and adjacent existing and emerging neighborhoods.
- Craft proposed **Downtown Urban Design Guidelines** to clearly describe and encourage form-based and context sensitive approach to design of new development.
- Identify, inventory, categorize, and value existing building and site conditions for potential retrofit improvements to encourage and enhance compliance with proposed **Downtown Urban Design Guidelines**.

## 3. Existing Land Use and Development Site Typologies, Form, and Program.

- Define and reinforce appropriate pattern(s) and hierarchy of development and open space in the Downtown (Tier 1 and Tier 2) with intentional building frontages and complimentary building sizes to frame streets and open spaces which transition sensitively between adjacent neighborhoods.

- Follow and enforce proposed **Downtown Urban Design Guidelines** to encourage form-based and context sensitive approach to design of new development.
- Update and expand the Building and Lot Type definitions and design criteria established within the current Zoning Ordinance and/or consider the formation and inclusion of new Types.
- Consider establishing a **Downtown Overlay District**, with clear boundaries and regulations and/or guidelines in support of the adopted Master Plan.

**C. Economic Development Recommendations.**

1. Existing Ownership Patterns: Town-Owned & Private-Owned Assets.
  - Identify underutilized private properties (or portions of) and engage owner(s) to consider opportunities including Access and/or Parking Agreements, Land Swaps, Purchase, or Public Private Partnerships (P3).
  - Inventory existing Town-Owned properties and establish/reevaluate strategic planning for future sale, swap, use, and/or potential additions per aggregation with acquisition of adjacent parcels.
  - Recognize and plan for a phased approach to potential future development based on the realities of existing land ownership patterns and associated parcel sizes, geometries, and street frontage.
  
2. Existing Development Activity Types and Patterns: Recent, Emerging & Future.
  - Engage and encourage collaboration with developers and landowners to share and coordinate recent, emerging, and potential future development concepts and/or intensions per short, medium, and long-term planning horizons.
  - Facilitate potential joint-development approaches with multiple developers and landowners.
  - Encourage incremental, smaller scale, infill development congruent with existing land ownership, and parcel sizes and geometries.
  - Encourage implementation of shared parking and/or joint access agreements.
  
3. Business and Community Development: Support and Leadership.
  - Establish and reinforce **Best Practices Criteria** to elevate design quality of existing and new development to enhance commercial viability and success.
  - Establish mechanism(s) for management of existing and new commercial activity such as a **Main Street Program** or **Business Improvement District (BID)**.
  - Identify, inventory, categorize, and value existing building and site conditions for potential improvement.
  - Provide intentional and active marketing and recruitment for local and new business development in the Downtown.

**II. DEVELOPMENT FOCUS AREAS and POTENTIAL KEY CATALYTIC PROJECTS.**

**A. Economic Development.**

1. Public:
  - a. Town Center Parcel.
  - b. Town Hall (New) & Civic Parking Structure.
  - c. Town Hall (Existing).



- d. Main Street Town Parcel.
  - e. Cultural / Performing Arts Center.
  - f. CMS Huntersville Elementary School.
2. Private:
- a. Main Street Mixed-Use Block.
  - b. American Legion Site & Building.
  - c. Huntersville-Concord Rd & N Church St Corner Mixed-Use Block.
  - d. 100 Ranson Street Site & Building.
  - e. White Hill Senior Apartments.
  - f. Hunter Village Assisted Living.

**B. Infrastructure Development.**

1. Transportation (All Modes):
- a. NCDOT Gilead Road Project.
  - b. Maxwell Avenue Woonerf (Shared Street).
  - c. Walters Street & S Church Street – Improvement & Extension.
  - d. Holbrook Street Extension.
  - e. Gibson Park Drive - 0 Improvement.
  - f. Huntersville-Concord Road – Street Curve Improvement.
  - g. Huntersville-Concord Road & Second Street - Intersection Improvement.
  - h. The Seam Trail & Church Street – Co-Location & Improvement.
  - i. East/West Connector Street.
2. Open Space:
- a. Huntersville Town Square.
  - b. Holbrook Park Extension.
  - c. Gilead Road Neighborhood Park.
  - d. Magla Mills (Walters Street) Neighborhood Park.
  - e. S Church Street Greenway Park.
  - f. Gibson Park.
  - g. Regional Stormwater Facilities.

**C. Implementation and Phasing.**

1. Work in Progress; Committee input on elements above needed first.

**III. NEXT STEPS**

**Master Plan Graphic Exhibits**

(Found Under the December 1 Meeting at <https://www.letsplanhuntersville.org/steering-committee>)

- DRAFT Key Recommendations by Organizing Principle
- DRAFT Master Plan & Quadrants
- DRAFT Vision Plan