

SMITHFIELD



TOWN PLAN



VOLUME 1: INTRODUCTION

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Table of Contents

Plan Overview	1
Plan Purpose	2
Plan Organization	2
Planning Process	3
Relationship to Other Plans	4
Vision & Goals	5
Background & Analysis	7
History	8
Economy	10
Demographics & Housing	13
Age & Income	15
Land Use	19
Parks & Natural Resources	23
Cultural Resources	27
Transportation	29
Community Engagement	43
Overview	44
Public Engagement Opportunities	45
Stakeholder Interviews	46
Public Meeting Input	47
Surveys	47
Additional Outreach	48

List of Figures

Figure 1: Project Schedule	3
Figure 2: Timeline	9
Figure 3: Workflow Patterns	11
Figure 4: Sales Tax Revenue	11
Figure 5: Small Area Overview - Housing	14
Figure 6: Population By Age	16
Figure 7: Median Age	16
Figure 8: Geographical Comparison	17
Figure 9: Median Household Income	18
Figure 10: Existing Land Use	19
Figure 11: Existing Land Use Map	20
Figure 12: Downtown Land Use	21
Figure 13: Land Supply Within Smithfield ETJ	22
Figure 14: Park Access	24
Figure 15: Local Waterways and Floodplain	25
Figure 16: Historic Districts Map	27
Figure 17: Functional Classifications Map	30
Figure 18: Average Annual Daily Traffic Map	32
Figure 19: Crash Locations Map	34
Figure 20: Pavement Quality Map	36
Figure 21: Bridge Locations Map	37
Figure 22: Air and Rail Map	38
Figure 23: Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Map	40
Figure 24: Emergency Services Map	42

List of Tables

Table 1: Job by Industry Sector	10
Table 2: Demographics of Neighboring Jurisdictions	13
Table 3: Small Area Comparison - Housing	14
Table 4: High Volume Roadways	31

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Plan Overview



PLAN PURPOSE

Comprehensive plans are the principle tool used by local governments to provide policy guidance for long-term decisions related to managing growth. A comprehensive planning process gives a community the opportunity to step back and see the big picture. Through analysis and discussion of issues and topics over a long period, planners, public officials, and community members have a chance to discuss both compatibilities and potential points of conflict among different visions, goals, and policy directives for the town.

This Town Plan serves as an update to the 2003 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and serves as an updated Transportation Plan. It is part of the Town's ongoing efforts to guide local development in response to the changing needs of the community. Specifically, the Smithfield Town Plan seeks to address transportation, land use, economic development and recreation priorities. This document is intended to be a reference for the general public and for people investing in land and development within Smithfield. The plan should be reviewed and may be amended periodically in response to population changes, land use trends, or to facilitate the Town's goals.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Smithfield Town Plan is organized into four sections that are described below.

Volume 1: Introduction

This section of the plan provides an introduction to the plan and includes a description of the plan's purpose, the planning process, a summary of input received and background research and analysis results.

Volume 2: Comprehensive Growth Management Element

This section of the plan includes policy recommendations that are targeted at addressing priority goals related to land use, economic development, downtown, neighborhoods, parks, and community character. This section includes a Future Land Use Map that identifies the preferred growth pattern recommended for the Town, and policies and strategies that are meant to guide the design of new development, town services and public and private investment. The Growth Management Element also includes an Action Plan that outlines priority implementation steps to address key issues in the near-term.

Volume 3: Transportation Element

The Transportation Plan identifies priority transportation issues and makes recommendations related to the design and alignment of roadways in town. It also includes corridor and intersection improvement priorities and key bicycle and pedestrian recommendations.

Volume 4: Appendix

The Appendix includes information that is supplemental to the first three sections of the Plan including a more detailed accounting of public involvement results, transportation project sheets, additional maps and a study of the economic contribution of trails in Smithfield.

PLANNING PROCESS

The process of creating the Smithfield Town Plan provided opportunities for local residents to shape the future vision and identity of their neighborhoods and the Town. The planning process started with an in-depth examination of previous plans and analysis of the changing demographic and market trends in Smithfield. Over the course of several months, multiple community outreach activities engaged local residents to help ground-truth the findings of the analysis phase and to provide input regarding the character of future growth in the town. The project schedule for the Town Plan is shown below.

Comments and visions from community members directly influenced this plan.

Results from months of regularly-scheduled steering committee meetings, two well-attended public workshops, and an online survey served as the basis for many of the recommendations and goals within this plan. Recommendations were also crafted based on best practices and analysis of unique situational factors that impact development.

FIGURE 1: PROJECT SCHEDULE



Plan Goals

- Establish a vision for transportation and land use in Smithfield
- Identify needs and deficiencies
- Guide growth and development
- Recommend specific projects and strategies
- Create an action plan for implementation

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Smithfield Town Plan complements and builds on several other local plans. An in-depth assessment was conducted to understand the key components and gaps within previous plans. The plan assessment included the review of the 2003 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, the Johnston County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, the Smithfield Parks and Recreation Plan Update, the Unified Development Ordinance, the Mountains To Sea Trail Master Plan, the Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation Plan of Work, the Capital Area MPO Southeast Area Study and a number of other plan documents. This plan review helped strengthen the components of both the transportation and land use elements of this document. While this Plan replaces the 2003 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, it also expands the scope of the 2003 plan. By combining the common elements of a growth management plan with those of a transportation plan, this Plan will serve as a framework for creating a cohesive land use and transportation environment supporting residents and visitors while addressing current needs and planning for future growth. This Plan also serves as an interim update to parts of the 2017 Smithfield Parks and Recreation Plan by building on existing parks and recreation goals. Through consideration of the relationship between land use decisions and open space needs, this Plan includes long-range planning for future parks and recreation needs.

With the adoption of this Town Plan, the Plan will be used to secure project funding, guide infrastructure investment decisions, coordinate with future development, and shape policy and program decisions. This Plan will act as the primary document guiding land use policy and transportation infrastructure in Smithfield and may inform regulatory changes.

WHY PLAN?

Planning is an essential tool for communities to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of its residents through growth management and prioritization of projects that strengthen communities. Planning also helps protect property values and investments. Without local planning, communities are vulnerable to future development being dictated by someone else. In North Carolina, enabling legislation gives cities and counties the authority to adopt and implement planning regulations.

VISION & GOALS

The vision for the Town of Smithfield was derived from work with a steering committee and feedback from the public through surveys and at public meetings. The vision statement is meant to organize the community around a shared, big-picture vision of the future.

The vision is for the Town to be a place of opportunity with small-town charm that is true to its historic character. Investments will be made in downtown, connections between neighborhoods, to and along the Neuse River. Growth will be balanced, including between residential and non-residential land uses. The environment and natural resources will be respected and will be key to enabling healthy lifestyles and a high quality of life.

Plan Goals

Five goals helped to guide both the transportation and land use plans as a means to unify the plans and organize recommendations. The Growth Management Element focuses on the first four goals. The Transportation Element centers around the Move and Connect Goal.

VISION

Smithfield will be a **place of opportunity** for everyone. It will grow in ways that are **true to its history, character and charm** by investing in a **vibrant downtown** and **connections to the river**, **balancing growth**, and creating **safe, healthy neighborhoods**.



Balanced Growth

Grow in a smart, fiscally responsible way and balance new residential growth with new commercial and industrial development. Encourage business opportunities while maintaining and improving gateways and key commercial corridors. Coordinate land use and transportation decisions while respecting environmental features and existing neighborhoods.



Vibrant Downtown

Downtown Smithfield will be the economic, cultural and social center of the community. Activate downtown by encouraging a high-quality built environment through reuse, redevelopment and infill that builds on downtown's existing strengths including its historic charm. Work with partners to market and program downtown to foster community connections and a variety of visitors.



Healthy Neighborhoods

Strengthen neighborhoods by supporting enhancements and reinvestment. Encourage healthy lifestyles by connecting neighborhoods to parks, open space and recreation opportunities. Create a high-quality educational system to give future generations opportunities for success and opportunities for interaction to knit together a community fabric that is rich and diverse.



Community Character

Enhance the community's existing small-town identity and promote thoughtful growth and a unique sense of place. Focused enhancements to policies, processes and places to incrementally improve gateways, commercial areas, historic assets and neighborhood design.



Move and Connect

Create a balanced transportation system that connects people to destinations with a safe, efficient, and equitable network that accommodates drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists, with a particular focus on providing safe access for people of all ages.

Background & Analysis



The Neuse River // Undated // Credit: Johnston County Heritage Center

HISTORY

Smithfield's origins are deeply tied to the Neuse River. In 1759, John Smith established Smith's Ferry at the site of his ferry operation offering portage across the Neuse River. Following construction of the Johnston County courthouse nearby, John Smith's son dedicated 100 acres to create the Town of Smithfield in 1777. The town's initial footprint only spanned three blocks east of the Neuse River from Hancock Street to Church Street. In addition to this 100 acres, John Smith Jr. provided 50 acres along the Neuse as common public space for the people of the town. This tree-shaded area is still preserved as public land along the Neuse River.

Agriculture, including slave labor, constituted a large portion of Smithfield's economy for several generations. In 1770, the state legislature built a tobacco warehouse near Smith's Ferry for shipping tobacco to New Bern; many decades before the crop's heyday in the county. By the mid-1800s, however, Johnston County was one of the top tobacco producing counties in the state and a tobacco auction warehouse was constructed in Smithfield in 1898. Cotton also constituted a large part of the local economy at this time and several cotton mills were established in town.

Although less heralded, moonshine played a major role in Johnston County commerce and culture. Moonshine operations proliferated after the Civil War with Smithfield acting both as the center of celebratory police raids and an active bar scene. Smithfield is still an entertainment center of Johnston County with a growing number of bars and restaurants.

Historically, Smithfield was not located along the initial rail routes built in the state, resulting in the town's slow, but steady growth. Much of the town's development during the 20th century resulted from local government infrastructure, institutions such as First Citizens Bank (est. 1898 as the Bank of Smithfield) and Johnston Community College (est. 1969), and a variety of downtown businesses serving county residents and tourists.

More recently, Smithfield has benefited from new development north and west of town as well as from re-investment in the historic downtown. Notably, the Ava Gardner Museum moved to a renovated building in downtown Smithfield, attracting ~12,000 visitors each year since it opened its doors in 2000.

FIGURE 2: TIMELINE

Third St.
1900



The Depot
1916



Market St.
1925



Ashley W. Smith House.
1950s



Third St.
1960s



ECONOMY

As the second largest municipality in Johnston County, Smithfield has many assets that provide the foundation for the town's economy. Proximity to Interstate 95, CSX Rail, Johnston County Regional Airport, and major employment centers in Raleigh and Clayton help bolster the local economy. Likewise, Johnston Community College (JCC), located near downtown, is a powerful recruiting tool for the entire county as the college tailors its curriculum to meet the needs of existing and potential industries.

Smithfield's position as the county seat also makes it the civic center of Johnston County. Other assets include the Carolina Premium Outlets shopping center, Johnston Health hospital, the Neuse Riverwalk and Buffalo Creek Greenway, and the many businesses in historic downtown - all which contribute to the town's tax base and employment opportunities. Furthermore, Smithfield is poised for future growth due to capacity of the town's water system, Johnston County's sewer system, and quality of life advantages including the town's parks and recreation system.

Industries and Employment

As the table below indicates, Smithfield's economy is a mix of industries related to service and production. Retail Trade and Health Care/Social Assistance are the top employment sectors, followed by Educational Services, Public Administration, and Entertainment and Accommodations. The major employers in town are Johnston County Public Schools and Health Services, Johnston Health hospital, and Johnston County Government. Commuting patterns shown in the Figure 2 on the next page indicate there is a jobs-housing imbalance, as over 92% of employees in Smithfield do not live in town. Despite the town's many economic assets, unemployment is an issue. Smithfield's 8.8% unemployment rate is higher than both Johnston County as a whole (7.6%) and the state (5%).

Table 1: Job by Industry Sector

INDUSTRY SECTOR	TOTAL	PERCENT
Retail Trade	2,942	19.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,514	16.7%
Educational Services	2,018	13.4%
Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation, Food Services	1,909	12.7%
Public Administration	1,640	10.9%
Manufacturing	1,189	7.9%
Professional and Technical Services; Management, Administrative	969	6.4%
Finance and Insurance; Real Estate and Rental	612	4.1%
Other Services	369	2.4%
Construction	320	2.1%
Wholesale Trade	290	1.9%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	182	1.2%
Information	109	0.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	16	0.1%
	15,079	100%

Source: *Census on the Map, 2017*
 Statistics for entire ETJ

FIGURE 3: WORKFLOW PATTERNS



Although Smithfield is a major employment center in Johnston County, less than 8% of the 15,079 people employed in town also live in the Smithfield Planning Area (*Source: Census on the Map, 2017, Data for ETJ*).

Retail Sales

Between Brightleaf Boulevard, downtown and the Carolina Premium Outlets shopping center, Smithfield provides much of the retail shopping for the county. As such, a sizable portion of the town's General Fund is derived from sales tax revenue. Local Option Sales Tax constituted for more than \$2.5 Million (or 18.3%) of Smithfield's General Fund for the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.

Though less substantial, Occupancy and Tourism Taxes levied on all short-term lodging rentals provided an additional \$255,516 to the 2017-2018 General Fund.

FIGURE 4: SALES TAX REVENUE



Local option sales tax revenue from retail sales alone accounted for \$2,535,424 of Smithfield's \$13.88 million general fund during the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.

Downtown Area and Tourism

Downtown Smithfield is home to a variety of businesses that attract Johnston County residents and visitors. There are three historic districts in town including the Downtown Smithfield Historic District and two residential historic districts (Brooklyn and North Smithfield). The Downtown Historic District is comprised of 24 buildings with many examples of Art Deco and Classical Revival architecture. Several of these buildings have been renovated to upgrade interior spaces while preserving the exterior facades. The residential historic districts, North Smithfield and Brooklyn, are significant assets to downtown as well. As intact neighborhoods, Brooklyn and North Smithfield enhance the downtown

experience and support downtown businesses. A map of historic districts is included on page 27.

With the substantial number of government services and rich history, as evidenced by the Johnston County Heritage Center's presence, Smithfield has historically been both the civic and historic heart of Johnston County. Events such as the Smithfield Ham and Yam Festival as well as concerts and events downtown not only bring the community together, but draw large numbers of visitors. The greenway is another major asset to downtown, providing space for outdoor recreation and community gatherings at the amphitheater. Although there are an increasing number of restaurants and bars in Smithfield that contribute to an active nightlife, there is a marked decrease in activity within downtown during the evening as much of downtown is comprised of institutional and office uses that are only open during regular business hours. This represents an opportunity for strategic renovation and redevelopment in downtown to increase vibrancy.

Downtown Smithfield has room for improvement in other areas too, including:

- Increasing activity on nights and weekends
- Creating more active storefronts on key streets
- Addressing concerns about parking
- Strengthening the sense of place through defined district edges
- Attract pedestrian-friendly infill residential development in support of downtown



Smithfield's historic Howell Theatre on Third Street has been a major downtown destination since the theater opened in 1935. The building is part of the Downtown Smithfield Historic District.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSING

Smithfield is growing at a slow, but steady pace. The combination of affordable home prices, proximity to Raleigh and major highways, and small town charm prompt people to move to Smithfield and for current residents to stay. As of 2018, the Town's population totaled 12,367 and in 2017 the median age of residents was 44.7. Smithfield's population, is on average, older than Johnston County, North Carolina, and its peer communities.

Population Growth

Smithfield is expected to experience population growth in the future. Recently, there has been an increase in subdivision proposals and a reduction in the number of days homes for sale stay on the market. According to the Triangle J Council of Governments, projections for 2045 estimate the population in and around the Smithfield ETJ will grow significantly (TJCOG, Connect 2045). Census data indicates a 1.94% annual growth rate between 2010 and 2018 which is higher than the growth rate between 2010 and 2016. Based on a 2% growth rate the Town's population could exceed 19,500 in 2040.

Table 2: Demographics of Neighboring Jurisdictions

POPULATION	SMITHFIELD	CLAYTON	SELMA	WILSON'S MILL	BENSON	DUNN
2016	11,746	18,553	6,325	2,433	3,542	9,762
2010	10,966	16,116	6,073	2,277	3,311	9,263
% Change (2010-2016)	7%	15%	4%	7%	7%	5%
Annual Growth Rate	1.2%	2.5%	0.7%	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%
Median Age						
2016	44.7	36	31.9	28.2	40.7	43.6
2010	45.3	33.8	33.9	31.1	31.2	40.3
Poverty						
2016 % below poverty level	24%	8%	37%	13%	35%	27%

Source: 2016 Census Data

Smithfield is one of eleven municipalities in Johnston County. Clayton, Selma, Wilson's Mills, Benson, and Dunn (Harnett County) share similar demographic characteristics with Smithfield.

DID YOU KNOW?

Johnston County's population (189,045) exceeds the population of many of its neighboring counties, excluding Wake County. Between 2010-2016, the total population of Johnston County grew by 12.09%. Harnett County grew at a similar, but slightly faster pace with 13.55% population growth during the same time period.

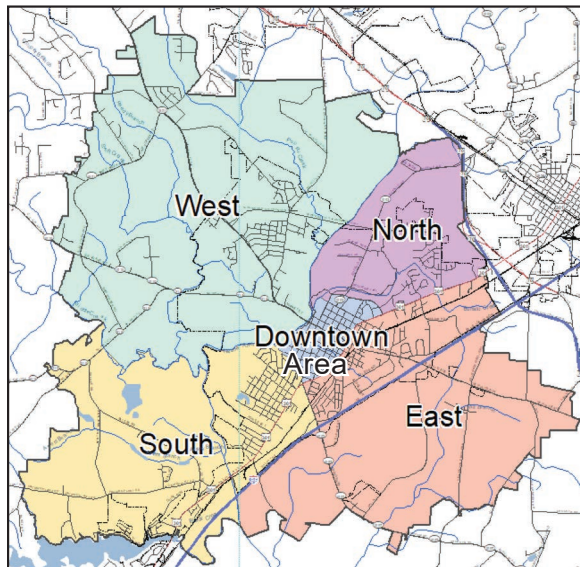
Source: Estimates of Total Population of North Carolina Counties for July 1, 2016, NC Office of State Budget and Management

Housing

Analysis of Smithfield's housing stock shows there are 5,090 housing units in town with an average of 2.5 person per household (2017 American Community Survey). The median home value in town is \$123,900; lower than the median home value of Johnston County (\$147,500) and the State (\$157,100). Disaggregating Smithfield's home values and other housing characteristics reveals stark differences among geographic areas in town, as shown in the figure below. The western and eastern areas of the Town's ETJ have the lowest home values. Ensuring high standards in new development may help increase home values in the long-term.

In terms of housing type, the majority of Smithfield's housing stock (68%) is single unit, detached homes. Many homes in Smithfield sit empty as the town's vacancy rate was 11.6% in 2017. This presents a slight concern as empty residences weaken neighborhood stability by creating gaps in social fabric of neighborhoods and providing empty spaces that may foster unwanted activities. Another concern is the fact that nearly the same number of households are occupied by renters (48%) as by home owners (52%). This speaks to the fact that home ownership may currently be financially unfeasible for many in Smithfield. Low home ownership rates are especially significant in the downtown area and the eastern part of Smithfield. Targeted efforts to increase the number and quality of owner occupied housing in these areas may be needed as a component of reinvestment initiatives.

FIGURE 5: SMALL AREA OVERVIEW - HOUSING



Home ownership and household income vary greatly throughout Smithfield. The west, south, and north areas of town have a markedly higher median household income, while the greater downtown area (which includes some surrounding historic neighborhoods), the north, and the south have the highest home values.

Table 3: Small Area Comparison - Housing

HOUSING UNITS	DOWNTOWN AREA	WEST	SOUTH	NORTH	EAST
Total	1,090	1,734	1,369	891	1,085
Owner Occupied	326	987	802	422	409
% Owner Occupied	30%	57%	58%	47%	38%
Median Income	\$29,524	\$39,306	\$50,615	\$40,074	\$28,038
Median Home Value	\$189,925	\$120,217	\$194,336	\$172,703	\$106,402

Source: Esri

Note: Statistics include entire ETJ

AGE & INCOME

Median age and the distribution of age across a population are important determinants of community character. Not only is age directly tied to income, different age groups have distinctly different needs.

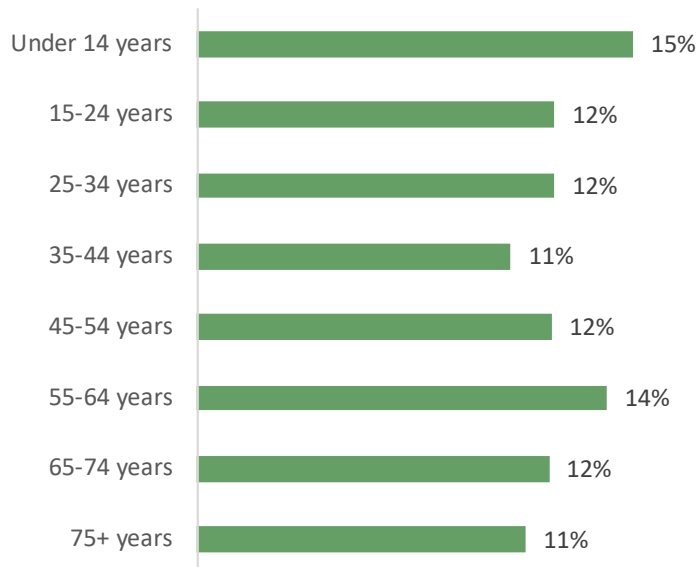
Age

The median age of Smithfield's population is 44.7. This is greater than that of Johnston County, the state of North Carolina, and the nation. Disaggregating the population into age groups, or cohorts, shows Smithfield has a fairly even population distribution. People under the age of 14 constitute 15% of the population and the next largest age cohort is 55-64 years with 14% of the population. A total of 23% of Smithfield's population is past the typical retirement age of 65 years and another 15%, those under 14 years of age, are too young for the labor force. With the other 1,600 people in the 54-65 age cohort nearing retirement age, it is vital for Smithfield to continue planning for the services and infrastructure that will support this population. Currently, there are several amenities in town that support an aging population including the Department of Social Services, Smithfield Senior Dining Center, Johnston County Area Transit System on-call transit service, Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center, HealthQuest Fitness and Wellness Center, hospital, Country Club of Johnston County and a variety of neighborhoods retailers.



Age is often linked with whether or not a person is able-bodied. To accommodate Smithfield's aging population, identifying and addressing roadway features, such as crossing distances and crossing times can help ensure safety throughout town.

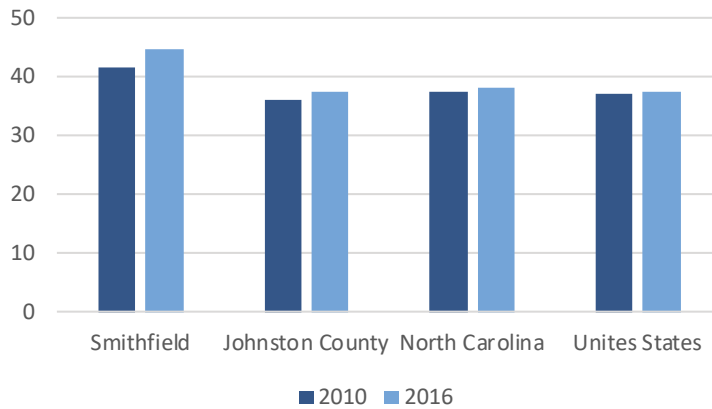
FIGURE 6: POPULATION BY AGE (2016)



Grouping Smithfield’s population into age cohorts, as shown above, reveals that people over age 55 make up 37% of the population and residents under 25 make up 27%.

Source: Census American Community Survey, 2016

FIGURE 7: MEDIAN AGE



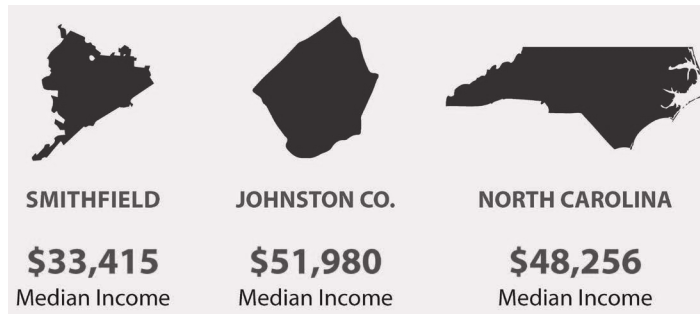
Between 2010 and 2016, the median age in Smithfield increased from 41.6 to 44.7. The median age of the population at the county, state, and national level also increased during this 6-year time period. On average, Smithfield has continued to have a relatively older population.

Source: Census 2010 and Census American Community Survey, 2016

Income

The median household income in Smithfield is \$33,415. Similar to home value, this is also lower than that of Johnston County and the State of North Carolina. Higher income areas include south Smithfield, the edges of the planning area on the west and east and on the north side of Holt Lake. Lower incomes are concentrated in east Smithfield. Recruiting well paying jobs to the Smithfield area and investing in education programs are important to address income disparity in the Town.

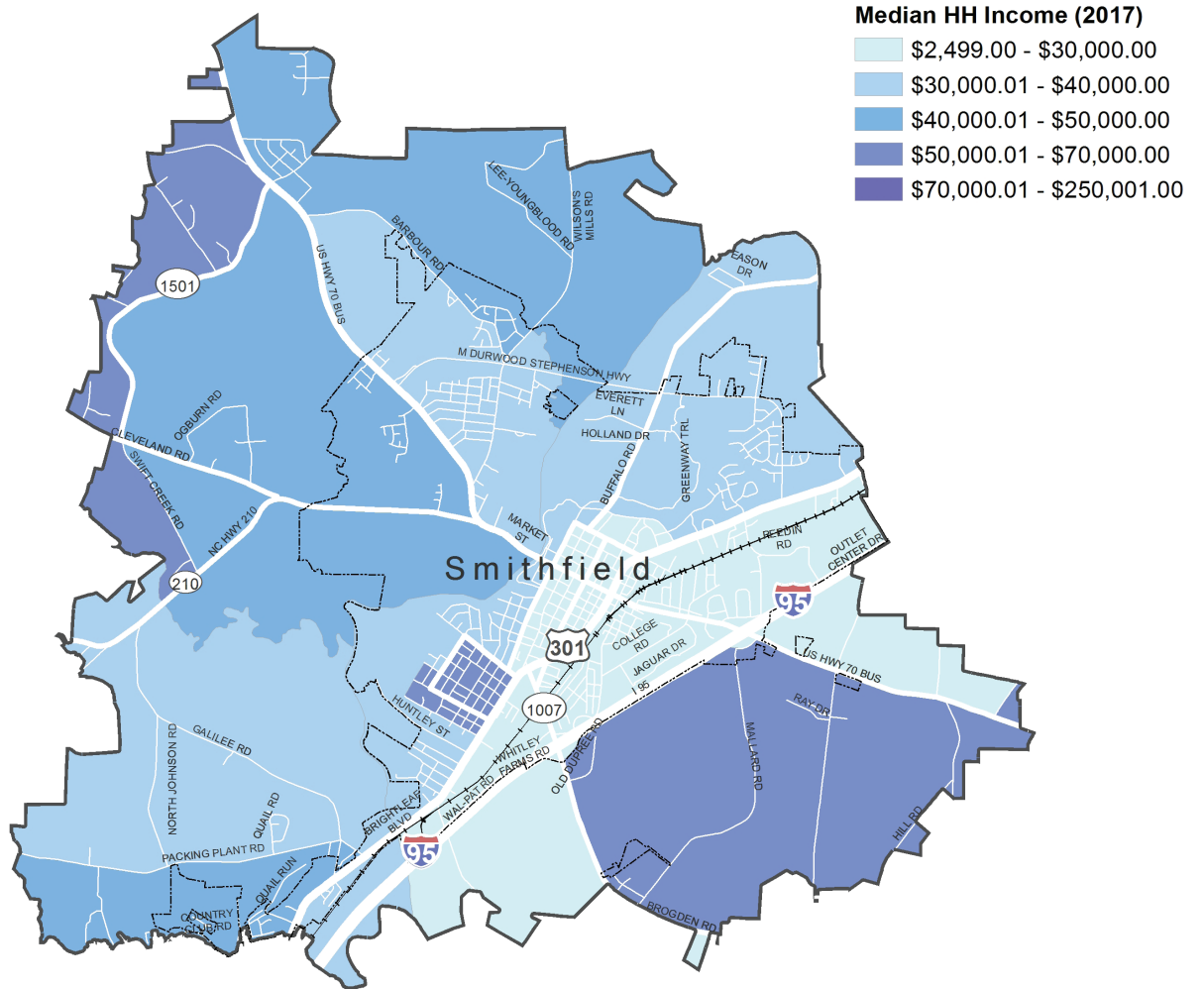
FIGURE 8: GEOGRAPHICAL COMPARISON



In 2016, the median household income in Smithfield was approximately 35% less than the median household income for Johnston County as a whole.

Source: 2016 American Community Survey; US Census Bureau

FIGURE 9: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: Census American Community Survey, 2017

Median household income in the Smithfield Planning Area varies greatly. Highest incomes highlighted in the darker blue census block groups in the map above. Lower incomes are located primarily in east Smithfield.

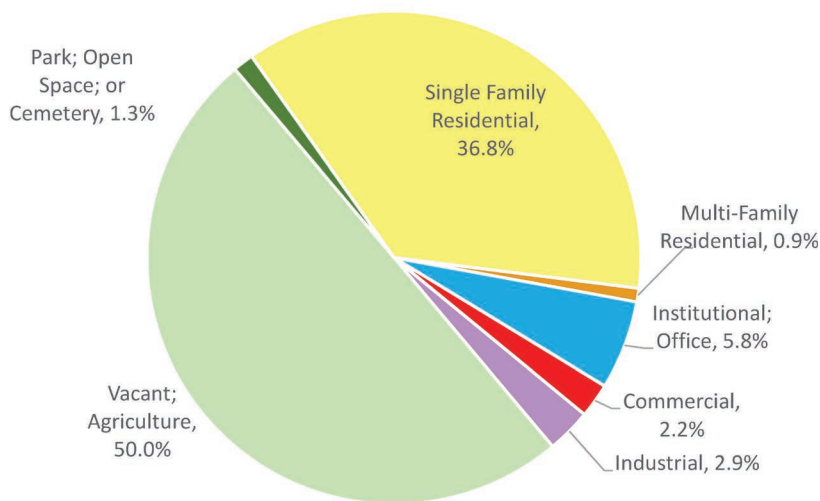
LAND USE

Existing land use in Smithfield reflects the town's agricultural past, with exactly half of all land within the Smithfield ETJ being agricultural or vacant land. As the existing land use map (Figure 10) shows, non-residential development is primarily in downtown, along major roadways, and in some instances adjacent to the Neuse River.

Current land use patterns contribute to the following issues and trends:

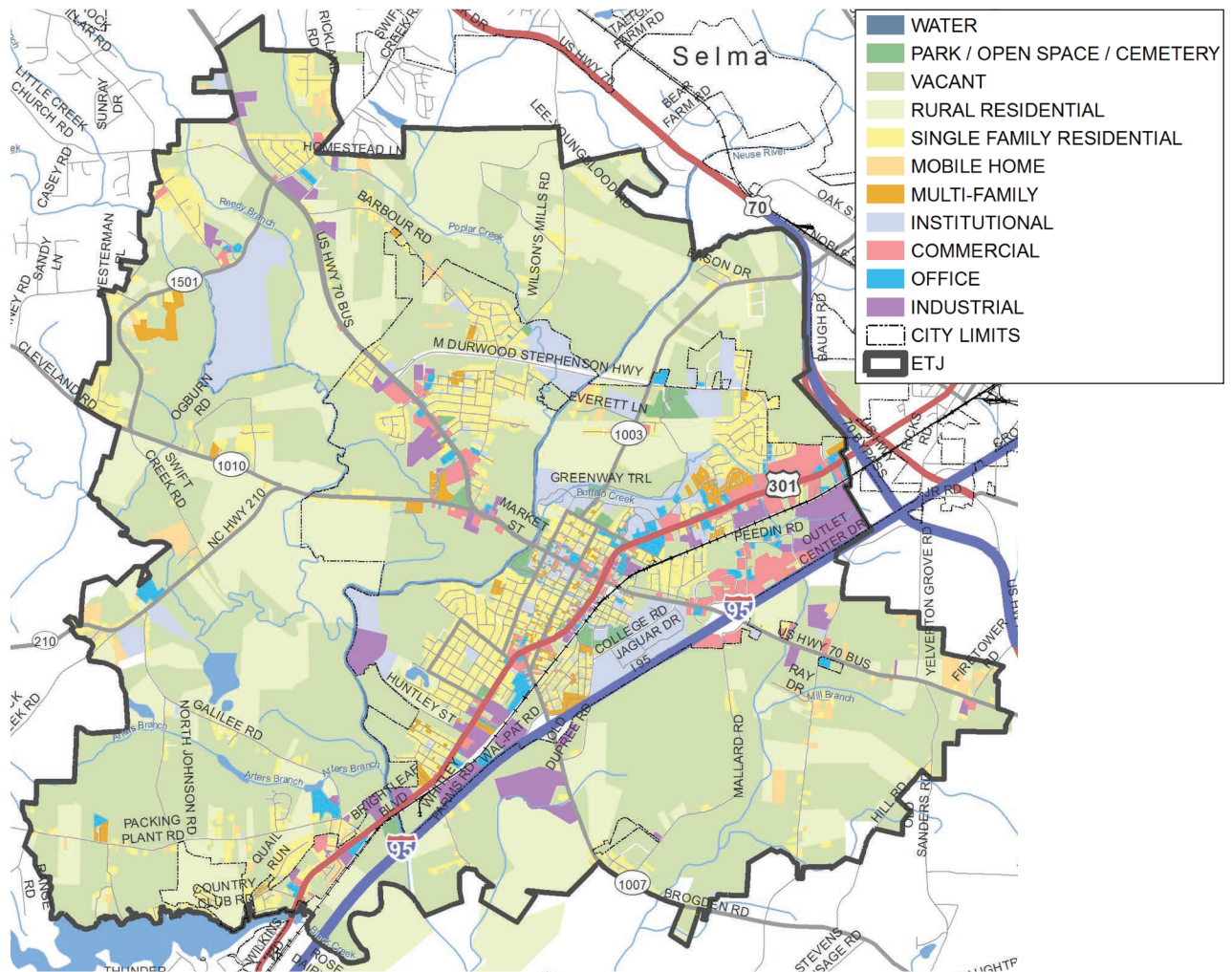
- Need for flexibility in the downtown business district to accommodate active uses and residential
- Vacant commercial areas along gateways into town
- Need to balance tax base and support local jobs
- Strip zoned commercial land may exacerbate vacant, underutilized commercial properties
- Increasing residential development pressure and demand for a mix of housing types

FIGURE 10: EXISTING LAND USE



The chart on the left shows existing land use. Following Vacant and Agricultural land, Single Family Residential is the most prominent land use in Smithfield. Office and Institutional uses nearly equal Commercial and Industrial combined.

FIGURE 11: EXISTING LAND USE MAP

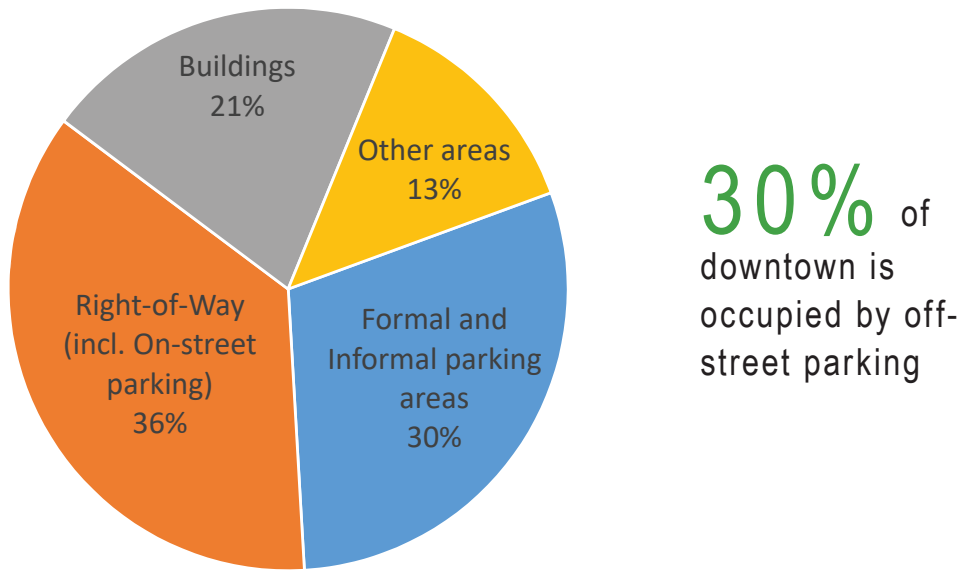


In many areas, non-residential uses are mixed with residential areas. Industrial uses tend to be along the Neuse River and major transportation routes. Agricultural and vacant lands dominate the periphery of town. See the Appendix for a full size map of Existing Land Use.

Land Use Downtown

Downtown Smithfield contains nearly every category of existing land use, making it a place where the Live, Work, Play motto is truly attainable for a variety of people. This also makes it challenging to create a cohesive look and feel in downtown. The significant amount of land dedicated to parking downtown exacerbates this challenge. A study of land use in the downtown conducted as part of this plan found that off-street parking lots constituted 24 of the 82 acres in the study area - more than the area covered by buildings or other structures (17.3 acres). Right-of-way, including on-street parking, accounted for another 30 acres in the downtown study area. Improving wayfinding and ensuring on-street parking spaces are only used for short-term parking and not occupied by employees can improve availability of on-street parking.

FIGURE 12: DOWNTOWN LAND USE



Land Supply

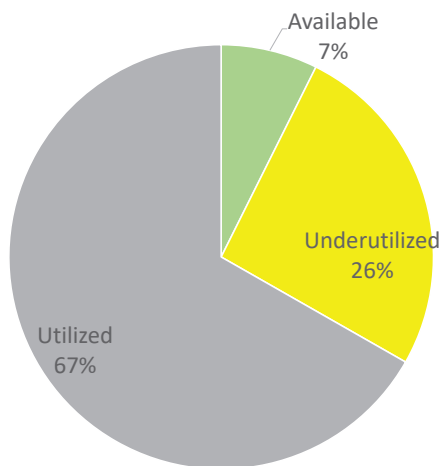
Land supply is generated by comparing the ratio of the value of structure to land for each parcel. It does not take into account environmental constraints (wetlands, brownfields, undevelopable land, etc.) or owner intentions, such as a generational desire to preserve family farms. Although not a perfect measure, it is useful as a general measure for visualizing which parts of a community are more likely to be developed or redeveloped. Based on parcel data, land was categorized as follows:

- **Available:** no structures of any significance. Generally, these are undeveloped parcels, which includes most agricultural fields.
- **Utilized:** primary structure value that is more than the land value. Generally these are developed parcels with inhabited structures, either residential or non-residential.
- **Underutilized:** primary structure value that is less than the land value. Generally this indicates land that is ripe for redevelopment or not being utilized in a highest and best purpose.

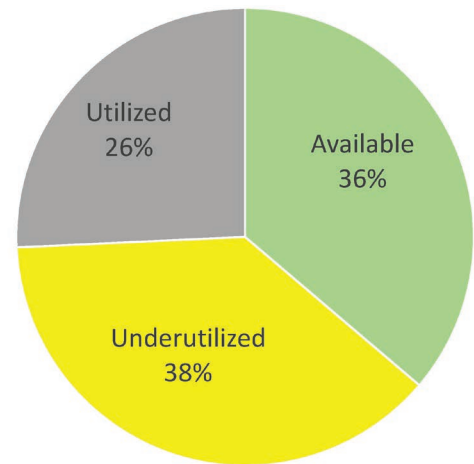
A significant proportion of the parcels in downtown Smithfield (33%) is either Available or Underutilized. This statistic includes a number of large off-street parking lots and properties with lower value buildings. In comparison, a much greater proportion of the land in the Smithfield City Limits and ETJ is considered to be Utilized. See the figure below for a summary of the Land Supply. See the Appendix for a map of the Land Supply.

FIGURE 13: LAND SUPPLY GRAPHS

17,000
acres of Available and Underutilized Lands in City Limits and ETJ



Land Supply in Downtown Smithfield



Land Supply in Smithfield & ETJ

20
acres of Available and Underutilized Lands in the Downtown Area

PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES

From its establishment as a town, access to nature has been a central part of life in Smithfield. The original 50 acres along the Neuse River dedicated for “commons” is now the location of several of Smithfield’s most prominent outdoor amenities including Smithfield Town Commons Park, Neuse River Amphitheater, and the Neuse River Walk.

Parks

The Smithfield Parks and Recreation Department maintains seven parks totaling 113 acres of parkland. Smithfield has just over 270 acres of public land, which includes parks, conservation easements, and cemeteries. Currently, there are 3.1 miles of completed greenways and trails in town with an additional 23 miles planned.

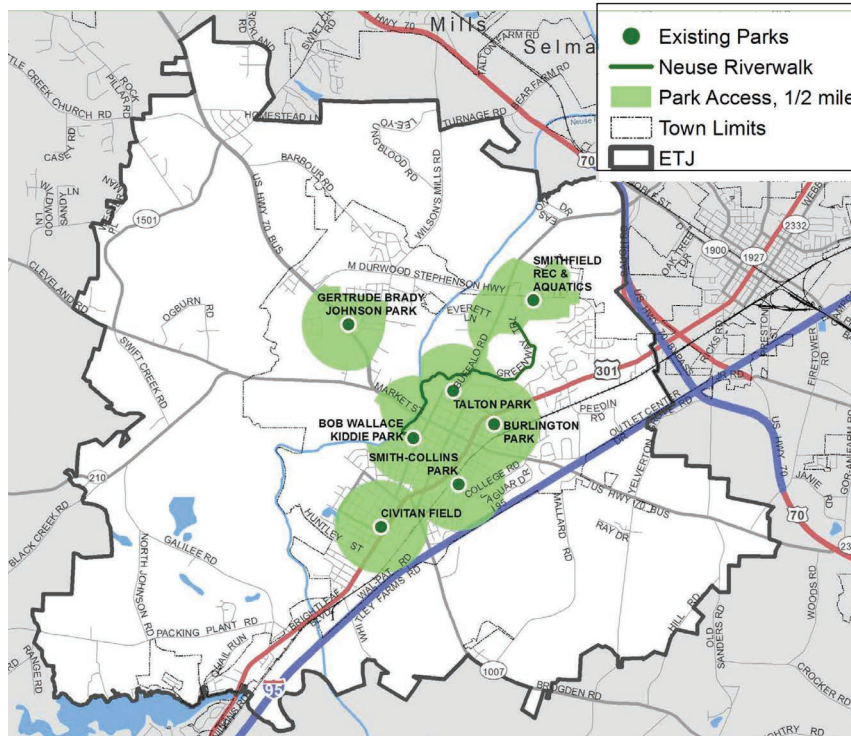


Smithfield’s park system offers a variety of passive and active recreation options.

Parks Level of Service

Although there are several ways to measure Level of Service (LOS) for parks, typically LOS is a function of the number of parks to the number of people within a given distance. As the map on the following page shows, Smithfield’s seven parks are primarily located in central Smithfield with several in and around downtown. Currently, only 46% of homes are within half a mile of a park. The Smithfield Parks and Recreation Department hopes to improve this by fulfilling their goal of providing a park within half a mile of all Smithfield residents. Other issues affecting the Parks LOS are the need for maintenance in certain parks and desire among residents for new or different facilities such as splash pads, dog parks, and trails.

FIGURE 14: PARK ACCESS



Based on a parks level-of-service (LOS) analysis conducted as part of the Town Plan, several areas of the Planning Area are well served by parks. However, additional roadway, pedestrian and bicycle connections could increase access to parks and in some areas, additional parks may be needed to serve existing residents or future development.

CURRENT ACCESS TO PARKS		
Residential parcels within 1/2 mile of a trail or park	2,132	46%
Total Residential Parcels	4,659	

Trails and Natural Resources

The Mountains-To-Sea Trail (MST) is a state-wide trail that seeks to connect the Smoky Mountains in the west to the Outer Banks in the east. While several sections are already built, including the Neuse River Walk in downtown Smithfield and the Buffalo Creek Greenway, other sections are still in the planning and development stages. The MST calls for a trail connection from Smithfield to Clayton, which would contribute recreational opportunities for local residents and provide potential economic development opportunities through tourism. Johnston County recently signed an agreement to support the completion of the trail and hired a Parks, Greenway & Open Space Coordinator to assist with the completion of the trail through the county. The East Coast Greenway (ECG), a growing network of trails that connects Maine to Florida is also planned to follow the Neuse River through Smithfield.

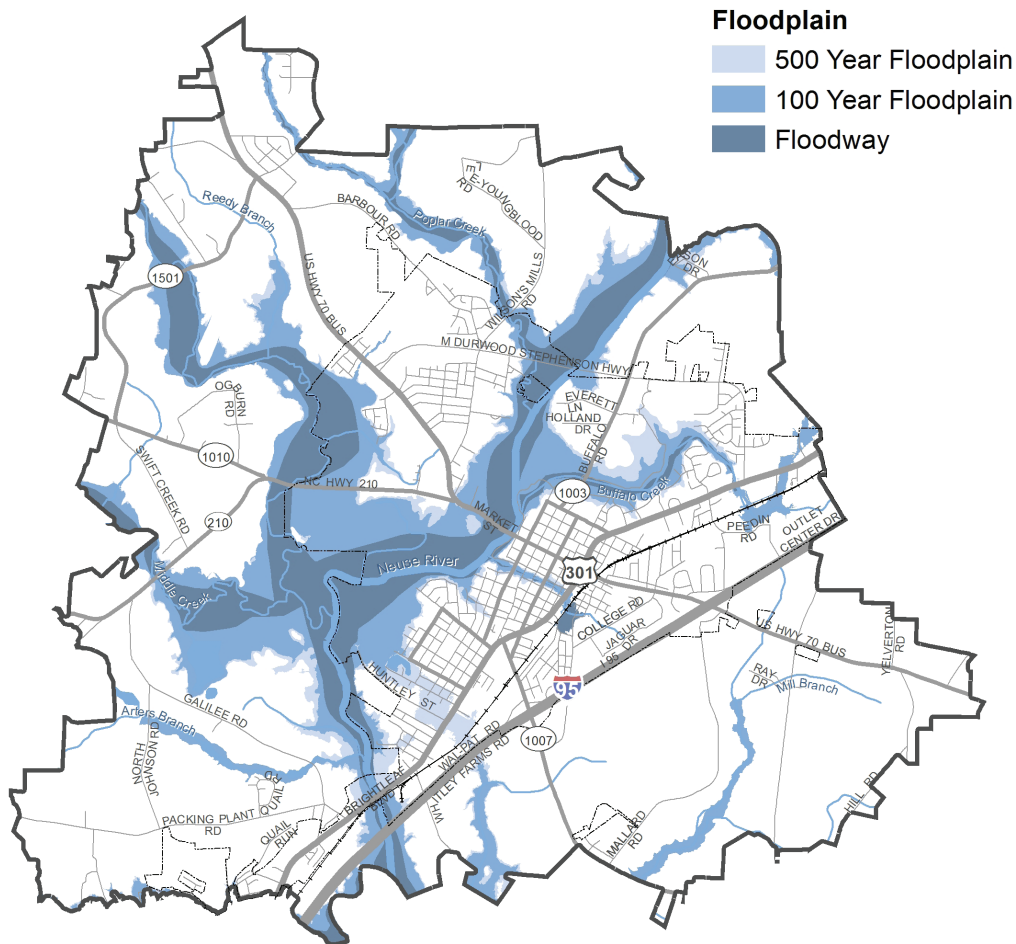
DID YOU KNOW?

There are four designated Natural Heritage Areas within the Smithfield ETJ, including a small portion of Holt Lake and the Black Creek Swamp in the far southwest corner of the ETJ. Natural Heritage Areas are locations recognized by the state for containing significant biodiversity.

See the Appendix for a Map of Natural Resources, including Natural Heritage Areas.

The Neuse River, which supported much of the early commerce in Smithfield is the primary natural feature in town. The map to the right shows the Neuse River and its tributaries in relation to the floodplain, major transportation routes, and downtown. In total, 19% of the land within the Smithfield Municipal Limits and ETJ is in the floodplain or the floodway. This equates to 5,000 acres of land. Flooding, a concern expressed by many community members during the planning process, is a persistent hazard in Smithfield (Hurricane Matthew in 2016 resulted in 26 claims in the Town under the National Flood Insurance Program for a total of \$1,779,173 in payments and 8 funded buyouts (source: Smithfield Planning). The Planning Area also contains many wetlands with just over 6,800 acres of land identified as wetlands. Future growth must recognize the inherent challenges and risks associated with development in and near wetlands and the floodplain.

FIGURE 15: LOCAL WATERWAYS AND FLOODPLAIN



The floodplains of the Neuse River and tributaries (i.e. Swift Creek, Middle Creek, Buffalo Creek and Spring Branch) are defining features in the landscape of Smithfield. These floodplains present development constraints as well as recreational opportunities.

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CULTURAL RESOURCES

Smithfield has an array of cultural resources that contribute to quality of life and to the local economy. There are several outlets for visual and performing arts in town. The Neuse Little Theater produces several live shows each year and hosts a summer theater camp. Concerts are common at the Neuse Amphitheatre and during special events such as the Downtown Smithfield Rhythm & Brews concert series. Additionally, the Frank Creech Art Gallery at Johnston Community College (JCC) regularly hosts regional art exhibits and special events. Smithfield's agricultural history is another major cultural resource. Agri-tourism, such as the annual Ham and Yam Festival, celebrate this history. Other cultural resources in Smithfield include the Ava Gardner Museum, five stops along the Ava Gardner Heritage Trail, one of the only remaining Freedman's Bureau schools in the country, the first school for free blacks in Johnston County (established in 1869), and four historic districts.

There are three designated National Register historic districts in town including the Downtown Smithfield Historic District and two residential historic districts (Brooklyn and North Smithfield). The Downtown Historic District is also a designated local historic district. Boundary increases for the North Smithfield Historic District and the Brooklyn Historic District as well as the Ivanhoe Mill Village are under study by the State Historic Preservation Office for potential nomination to the National Register. The two residential historic districts and the Ivanhoe Mill Village are not included in a zoning overlay and are not subject to any additional regulations or protections. The downtown district is protected as an overlay-zoning district, which provides legal protection during the development process to ensure exterior changes to buildings are in-line with the historic character of the area. Development or building alternations within this district area reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The

FIGURE 16: HISTORIC DISTRICTS MAP



overlay, however, does not regulate uses of properties within the historic districts. Historic districts are approved by the Town Council after an extensive public review process that involves notifying all residents in the proposed district and, at minimum, two public hearings.

Brooklyn and North Smithfield are the oldest intact neighborhoods in town. The North Smithfield Historic District is located only a few blocks north of Market Street. The district was established in 2000 and is comprised of residential areas designated in the original 1777 town plan. The Brooklyn Historic District is located two blocks south of downtown. Much of the neighborhood was converted from farmland in the mid-1880s with the majority of historic homes built between 1870 and 1950. Brooklyn contains a variety of architectural styles including Queen Anne, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Victorian.

The Ivanhoe Mill brought many families to town around the turn of the 20th Century. The mill workers spun cotton yarn for hosiery and underwear. The mill was built east of Tenth St, near the Atlantic Coast Line Tracks, which provided a shortcut between Wilson and Dillon.

The Downtown Smithfield Historic District was established in 1993. It has 24 properties within a two-and-one-half block area, all of which are brick masonry and primarily contain only one or two stories. Most of the historic buildings in downtown were built during a 50 year time-period between the 1890s and the early 1940s. The downtown district is also home to the Johnston County Heritage Center, located in the First Citizens Bank Building. The Heritage Center is a popular attraction for tourist, locals, and educational field trips as it operates rotating museum exhibits and manages a variety of cultural archives.

“In the downtown district, street-level storefronts punctuate the brick facades and create a streetscape rhythm of inset openings and projecting awnings.”

- Smithfield Historic Preservation Guidelines



Market St. // Undated // Johnston County Heritage Center

TRANSPORTATION

Functional Classification of Existing Roads

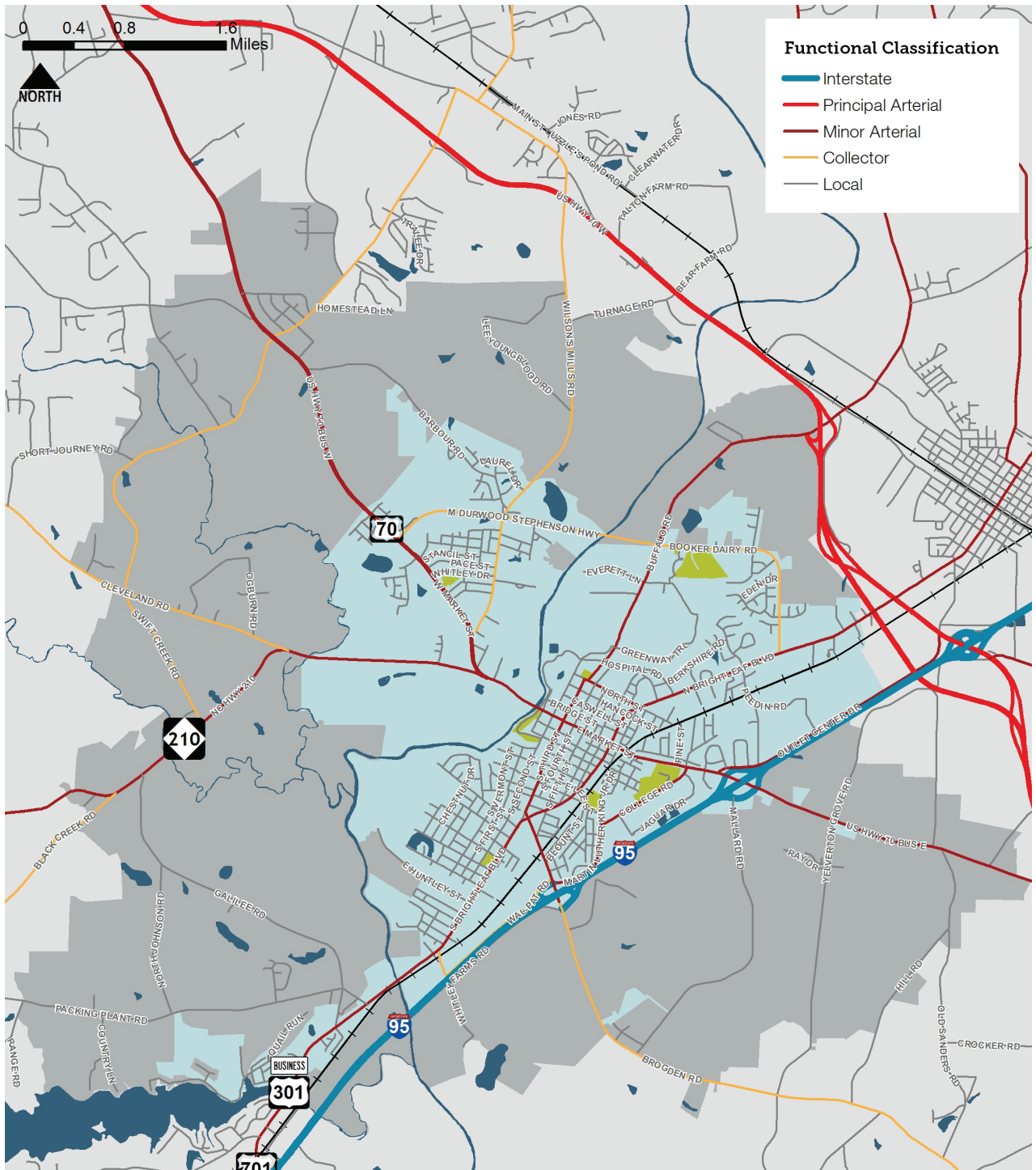
The classification of streets into several functional categories aids in communication among policy makers, planners, engineers, and citizens for expanding the transportation system. The functional classification system groups streets according to the land use served (or to be served) and provides a general designation of the type of traffic each street is intended to serve. The functional classification system primarily defines the street in terms of roadway design and character, as well as operational features for the movement of vehicles.

The primary function of local or neighborhood streets is to provide access. These streets are intended to serve localized areas or neighborhoods, including local commercial and mix-use land uses (i.e. low speeds, low volumes, short distances). Local streets are not intended for through traffic. The primary purpose of a collector street is to collect traffic from neighborhood and local level streets and distribute it to other thoroughfares. The arterial is designed with the intent to carry more traffic than is generated within its corridor (i.e. higher speeds, higher volumes, and longer distances). Limiting access points (intersections and driveways) on arterials enhances mobility.

PROMINENT ROADS IN SMITHFIELD BY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION TYPE

- **Interstate**
 - I-95
- **Principal Arterial**
 - US-70
 - US-70 Bypass
- **Minor Arterial**
 - US-70 Business (Market Street)
 - Brogden Road
 - Buffalo Road
 - College Road
 - E & W Market Street
 - Outlet Center Drive
 - Martin Luther King Jr Drive
 - N & S Bright Leaf Boulevard
- **Minor Arterial continued**
 - N & S Third Street
 - NC 210
 - NC 96 N
 - North Street
 - US 301 S
 - US 70 Business
- **Major Collector**
 - Booker Dairy Road
 - Cleveland Road
 - M Durwood Stephenson Highway
 - Swift Creek Road
 - Wal Pat Road
 - Wilson's Mills Road
- **Minor Collector**
 - Black Creek Road

FIGURE 17: FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS MAP



High Volume Roadways

The majority of roads within the study area have under 10,000 daily traffic trips. I-95 has the highest volume ranging from 40,000-45,000 vehicles per day. Other roadways with high volumes can be found in the table below.

Table 4: High Volume Roadways

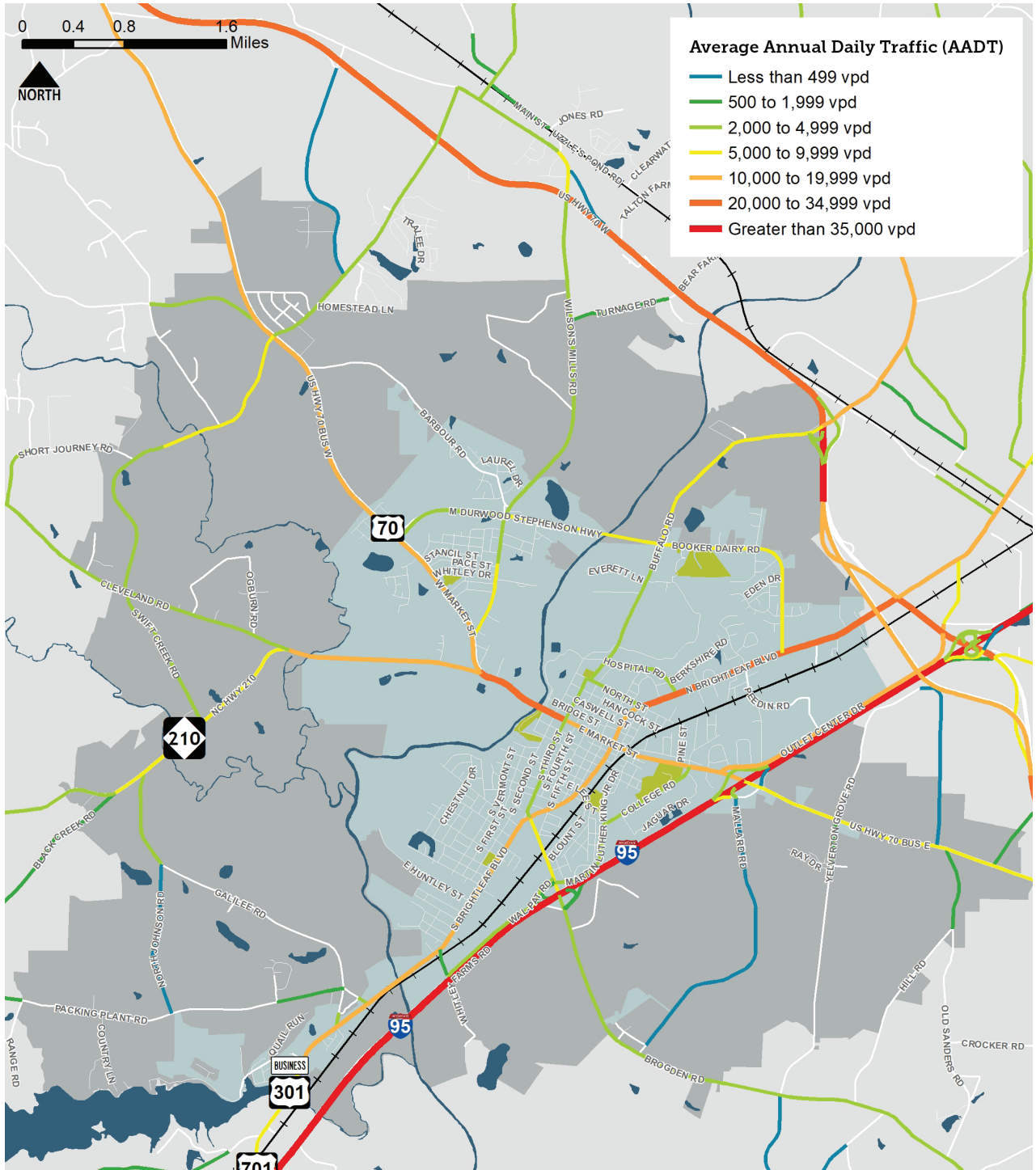
ROADWAY	MEDIAN VEHICLES PER DAY
E Market Street	16,666
US 301 (N/S Bright Leaf Boulevard)	15,888
US 70 Business	13,000
W Market Street	14,000

Existing Volume to Capacity

The Town of Smithfield planning area is included in large part within the Triangle Regional Travel Demand Model. When looking at the future year 2040 congestion of the existing and committed network (E+C), the following roads within the study area are projected to be over capacity:

- E and W Market Street
- S Third Street
- Wilson's Mills Road
- Buffalo Road
- US 70 Business

FIGURE 18: AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT) MAP



High Crash Rate Intersections

The majority of crashes in the Smithfield area fall along US 301 and US 70 Business. The most common crash types along these two roads are classified as an angle or side collision, and a rear end.

TOP 5 HIGHEST CRASH INTERSECTIONS

- E Market Street at 3rd Street
- E Market Street at 4th Street
- N Brightleaf Boulevard at Booker Dairy Road
- N Brightleaf Boulevard at Peedin Road
- W Market Street at Front Street



E Market Street at 4th Street



E Market Street at 3rd Street



N Brightleaf Boulevard at Booker Dairy Road

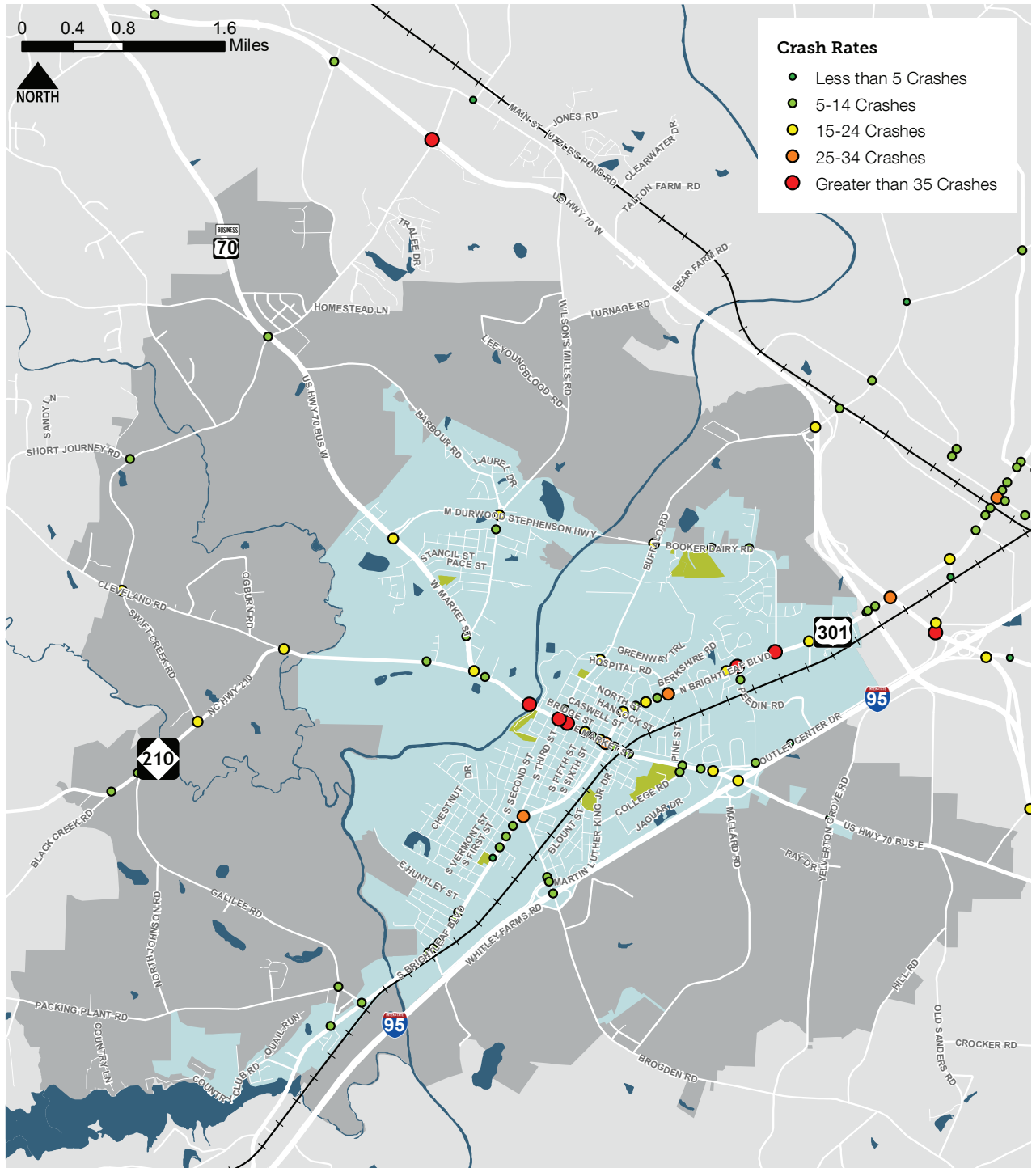


N Brightleaf Boulevard at Peedin Road



W Market Street at Front Street

FIGURE 19: CRASH LOCATIONS MAP



Pavement Quality

The North Carolina Department of Transportation rates roads based on eight characteristics: Alligator Cracking, Traverse, Rutting, Raveling, Oxidation/Weathering, Bleeding, Ride Quality, and Patching. Most of the state-owned roads within Smithfield have a pavement quality of fair or better. However, several roads have sections that are in poor condition, as seen in red in the map below. These roads are: Booker Dairy Road, Buffalo Road, NC 210, Swift Creek Road, as well as several neighborhood roads and the I-95 southbound ramp. It should be noted that the Town maintains strictly local streets within the Town limits and the ETJ. The Town does not maintain any streets outside of the corporate limits.

Bridge Locations

There are eleven state-maintained bridges that fall within Smithfield town limits or within the Smithfield extraterritorial jurisdiction area and eleven bridges that fall just outside of these boundaries. Many of these provide crossing over the Town's many creeks and streams, while others, like those on I-95, act as grade separated crossings for roadway and railroad crossings.

Air and Rail

One CSXT main north-south route runs through Smithfield providing rail access to points along the Eastern Seaboard. The rail line includes at-grade crossings with Wal Pat Road, Brogden Road, E Lee Street, and Peedin Road. Additionally, the rail line crosses E Market Street via a grade-separated bridge.

Johnston Regional Airport, opened in June 1978, is located in the northern portion of the Smithfield extraterritorial jurisdictional area and generally serves the greater Raleigh metropolitan area. The airport offers Duke Life Flight, an emergency air and ground service, and features a 5,500 foot runway and a new terminal constructed in July 2014. In January 2019, Blue Line Aviation announced that they would be building a state-of-the-art hanger and flight school for both private and commercial air at Johnston Regional Airport. Interestingly, the Johnston County Economic Development department resides at the airport due to its proximity to US 70 Business.

FIGURE 20: PAVEMENT QUALITY MAP

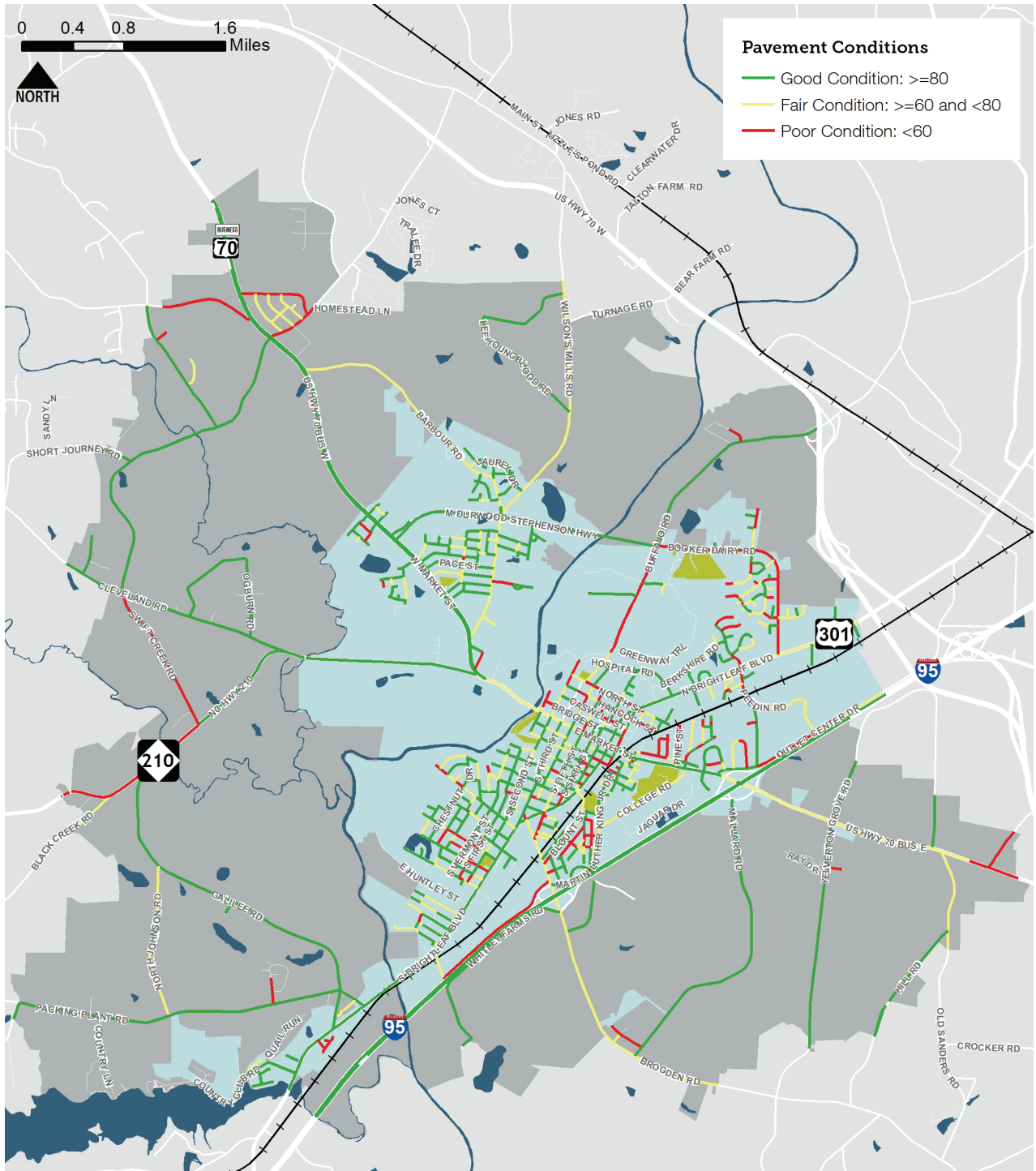


FIGURE 21: BRIDGE LOCATIONS MAP

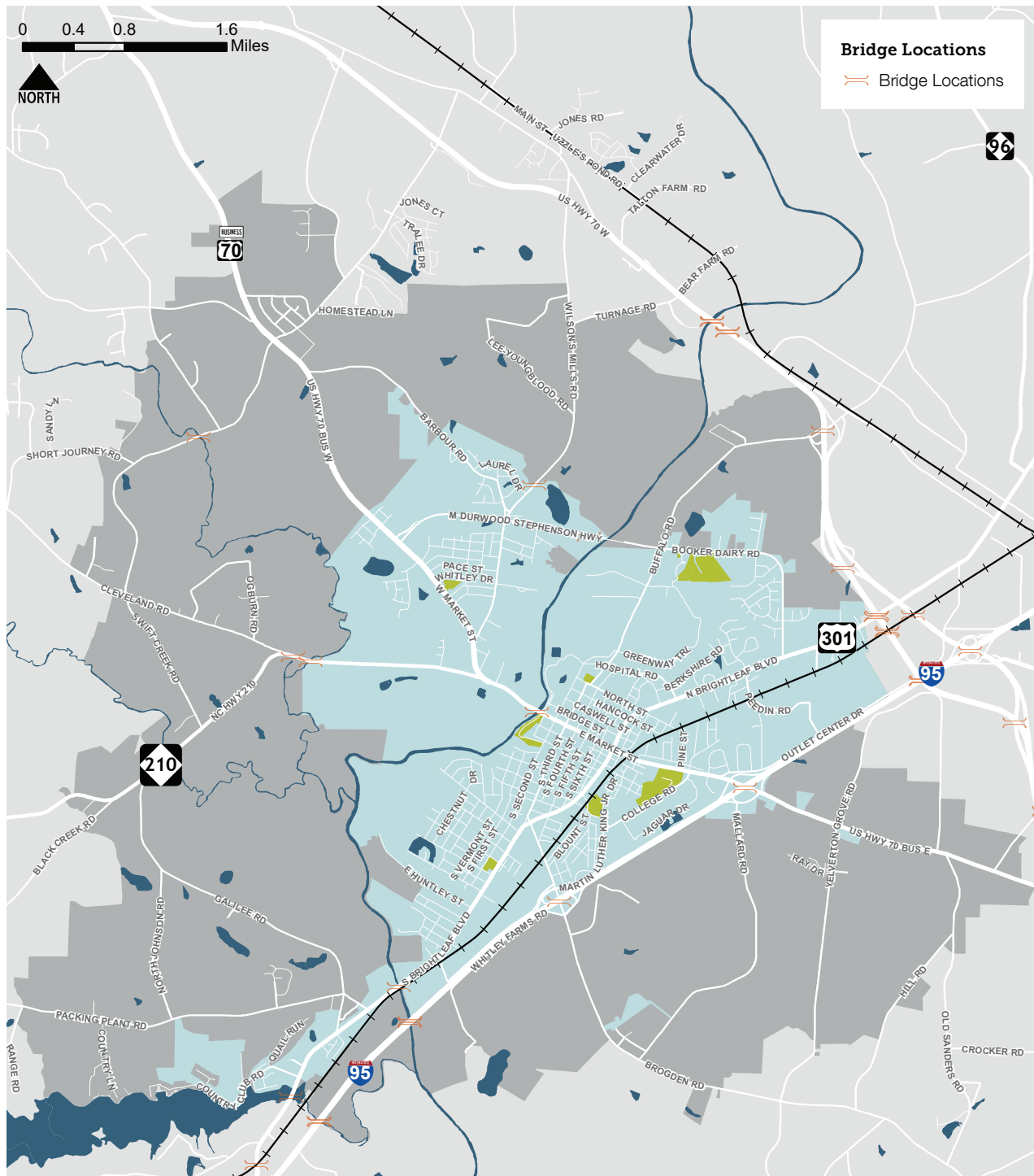
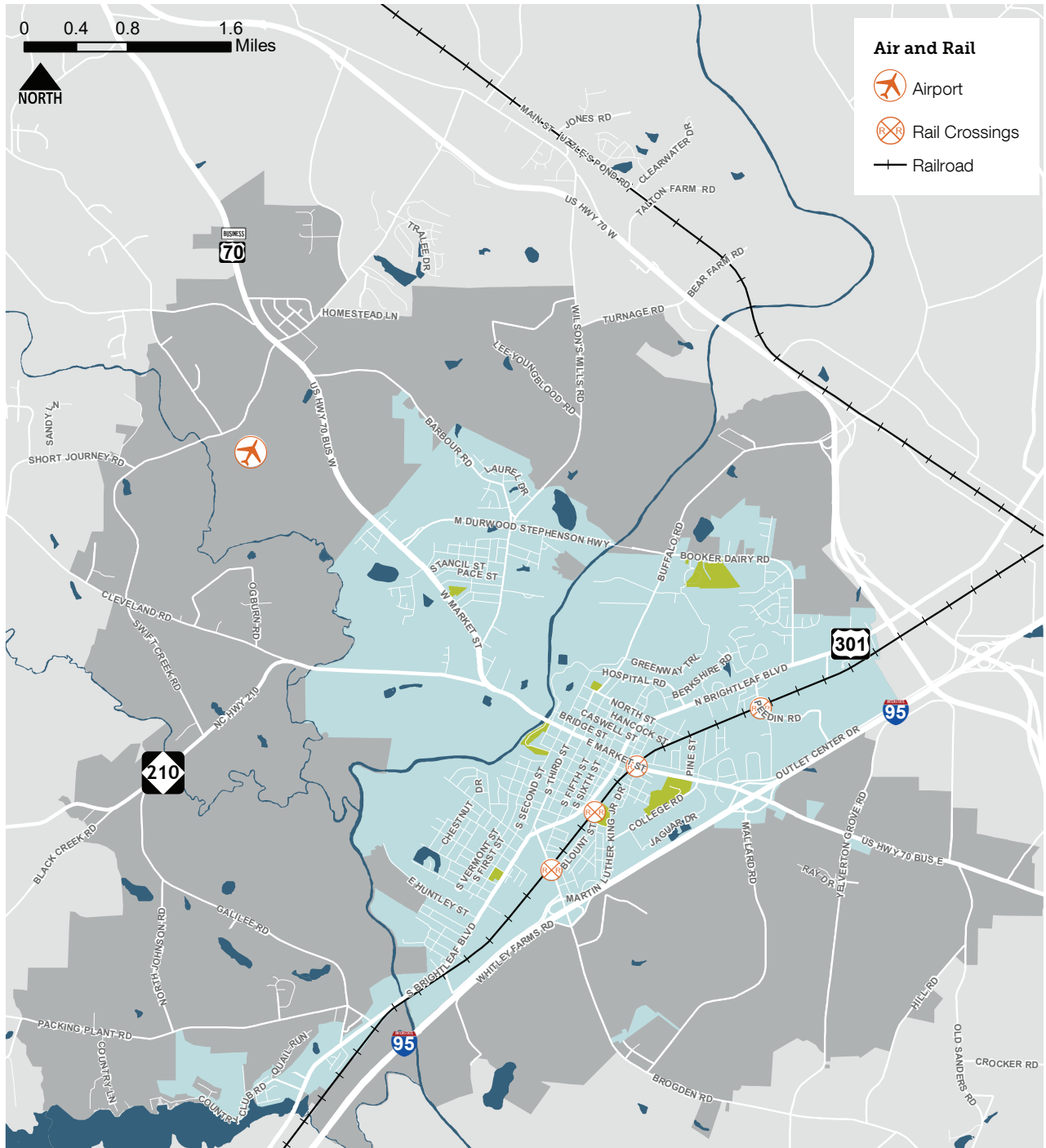


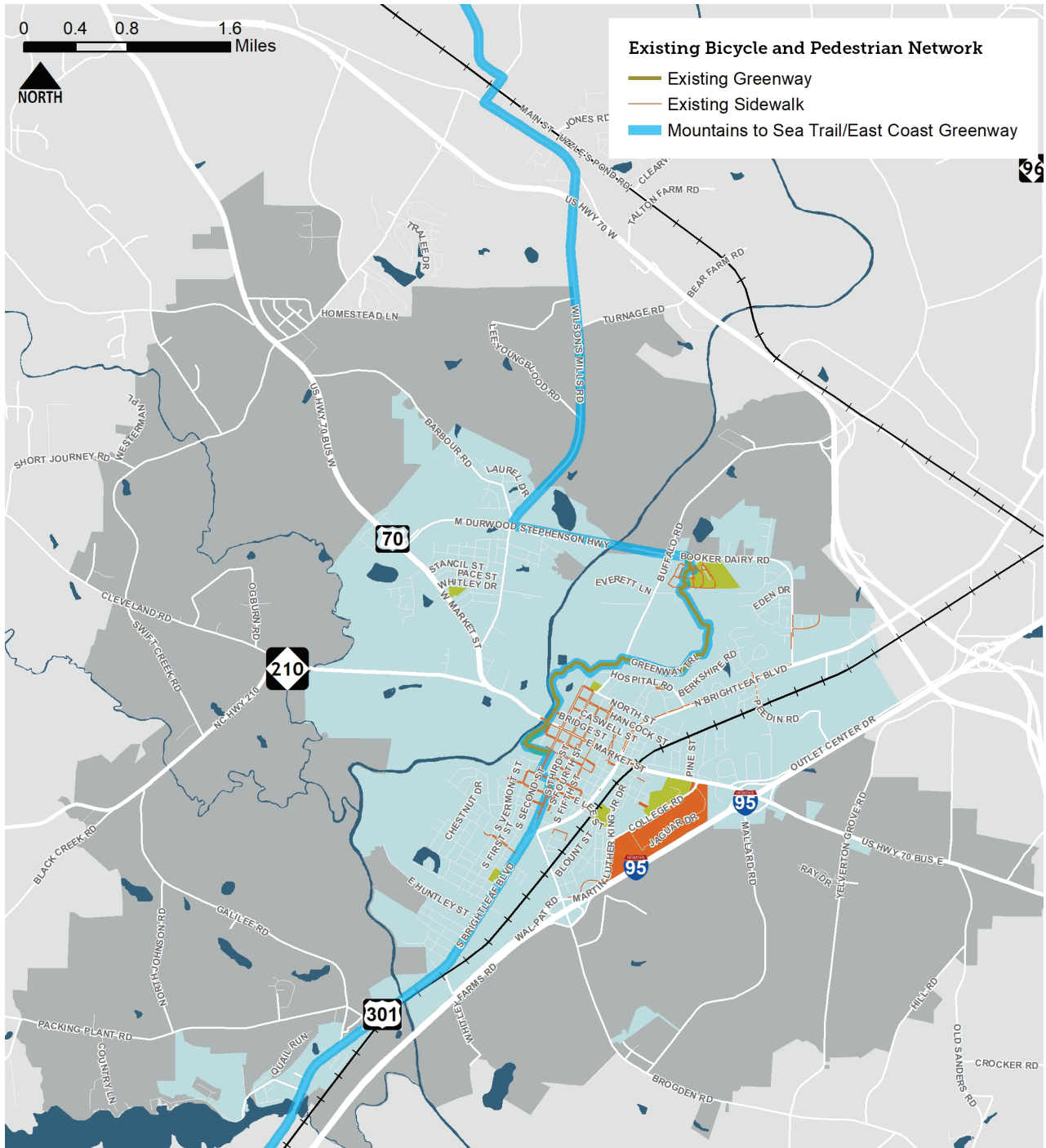
FIGURE 22: AIR AND RAIL MAP



Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Two greenways run through the Smithfield area: the Mountains-to-Sea Trail and the East Coast Greenway. The East Coast Greenway is a greenway system that runs 3,000 miles from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida. Six of these miles traverse through Smithfield on both on-road and trail facilities. The Mountains-to-Sea Trail runs approximately 1,200 miles across North Carolina from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks. Users of the trail have the option to hike on trails and roads within Smithfield or use the paddle route along the Neuse River. Running 3-miles in length, Buffalo Creek Greenway is the only off-road portion of both the East Coast Greenway and the Mountains to Sea Trail. Other than these, Smithfield has sidewalks in most of the downtown grid as well as in several park areas however many of them are in poor condition. There are currently no marked bicycle facilities.

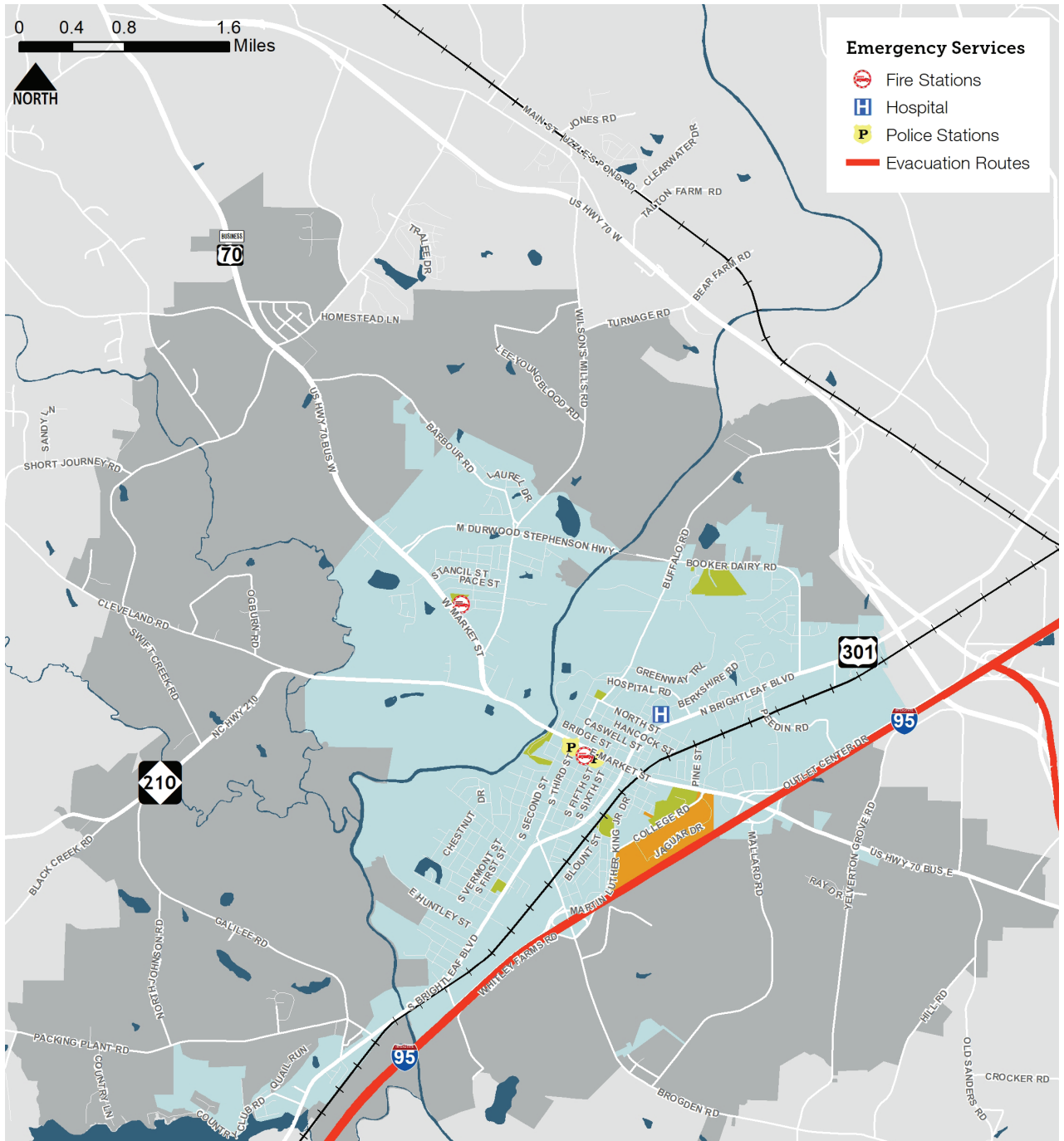
FIGURE 23: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK MAP



Emergency Services

There is one evacuation route within the study area; I-95 runs diagonally across the southern portion of the study area running southwest to southeast. Just outside of the Smithfield extraterritorial jurisdiction is another evacuation route; US-70 runs southwest to southeast away from the coast, cutting through the north-central portion of the study area. Smithfield's emergency services is comprised of two fire departments, one located off of W Market Street next to Gertrude Brady Johnson Memorial Park and one off of E Market Street in downtown Smithfield, as well as one police department located next to the downtown fire station. The Johnston County Sheriff's Department is also located in downtown Smithfield. Additionally, Johnston Health, part of the UNC Health Care system, offers almost 30 different services including cardiology, birthing and delivery, and Da Vinci robotic surgery.

FIGURE 24: EMERGENCY SERVICES MAP



Community Engagement



Ham and Yam Festival table where citizens commented on what their priorities were for the town.

OVERVIEW

Community Engagement is a critical component of creating plans and necessary to ensure that this plan meets the needs and aspirations of Smithfield. This project involved multiple methods of outreach to connect with as broad of a slice of Smithfield as possible: a study area tour, multiple stakeholder interviews, 8 steering committee meetings, a booth at the Ham and Yam Festival, two public workshops, online and paper surveys, and a project webpage on the Town's website.

Steering Committee

A 17 person steering committee, comprised of residents, business owners, and representatives of education and government organizations, met 8 times throughout the planning process. As part of their work, the steering committee completed a SCORE exercise to identify the town's Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks, and Expectations. See the Appendix for the full SCORE results.

Committee members had the opportunity to:

- Provide direction for the development of the plan
- Establish a guiding vision and plan goals
- Share local knowledge of land use and transportation deficiencies and needs
- Share public engagement opportunities with family, friends, and coworkers
- Vet multimodal and land use recommendations
- Review the plan's final content

Public workshops were held at various locations, including Smithfield Fire Department on 4th Street and the Smithfield Recreation and Aquatic Center. Steering committee meetings were held at Town Hall.



Project team walking tour

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

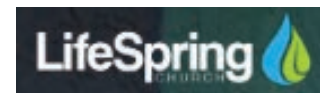
- ✓ Stakeholder Interviews: May 2018
- ✓ Ham and Yam Festival: May 5, 2018
- ✓ Public Workshop #1: September 2018
- ✓ Online Survey #1: September- October 2018
- ✓ Public Workshop #2: February 2019
- ✓ Online Survey #2- February- March 2019



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

On May 2, 2018, six focus groups were interviewed to identify issues and opportunities for Smithfield as it moves forward. Key takeaways from these interviews can be found below.

- There is a demand for higher density in Smithfield, but it should be in key locations
- There will be increased residential demand in the Kelly Road extension area
- Connectivity should be encouraged
- Downtown housing needs to be revitalized
- Concerns about parking and traffic on Market Street
- Desire for park improvements and increased access to river and greenway
- The roundabout near the Outlet Center needs to be either removed, or made more functional
- Sidewalks need to be connected and in good condition throughout the town
- Need to brand and market the town and appeal to young families
- Need for targeted business recruitment and more good jobs in town



PUBLIC MEETING INPUT

Two public meetings were held to inform the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan. The first meeting was held in September, 2018 at the Smithfield Recreation and Aquatics Center. The open house style workshop was held from 6-8pm and had several activities designed to solicit feedback on specific issues in different areas of town. Over 70 people attended and input received led to the development of the vision and goals for the plan and shaped recommendations in the Plan.

The second public meeting was held at the fire station in February of 2019 from 6-8pm. Recommendations from the Town Plan were shared to develop transportation, land use, economic development and recreation priorities. Approximately 40 persons attended the meeting and gave feedback. A formal presentation on the plan was given in the beginning of the workshop and the remainder of the meeting was open house format for attendees to engage with materials and give feedback on information on planning topics at 6 Stations. The meeting was advertised in both English and Spanish. Specific outreach was performed to engage churches and community leaders. Laptops and paper copies of the survey were provided for participants at the meeting to take the plan survey. A summary of input received at both public meetings is included in the Appendix.



SURVEYS

To ensure a broad range of perspectives were involved in the Smithfield Town Plan, an online survey was designed to provide a tool for community input. Phase I of the survey launched on August 20, 2018 and was available online through October 23, 2018. Through the publicinput.com platform, the survey allowed participants to identify both land use and transportation issues, as well as share with the project team what they most valued about Smithfield. In total, 189 people participated in this phase of the survey. Participants provided more than 1,200 data points and 181 comments. Phase II of the survey ran in the spring of 2019 and resulted in 175 participants which provided more than 1,400 responses. Survey results are included in the Appendix.

Preferred Development Styles



The images above show preferred development styles for neighborhood, residential, and commercial categories based on votes from the Visual Preference Survey that was administered at the first public meeting and via the online survey.

ADDITIONAL OUTREACH

Stakeholder interviews were conducted early in the process which included meetings with district representatives, business owners, community leaders, realtors, town staff, state agencies and institutions.

Informal feedback was gathered at a booth at the 2018 and 2019 Ham and Yam Festival, as well as at the 2018 and 2019 Smithfield-Selma Strong event. Citizens provided ideas on their priorities for the Town.