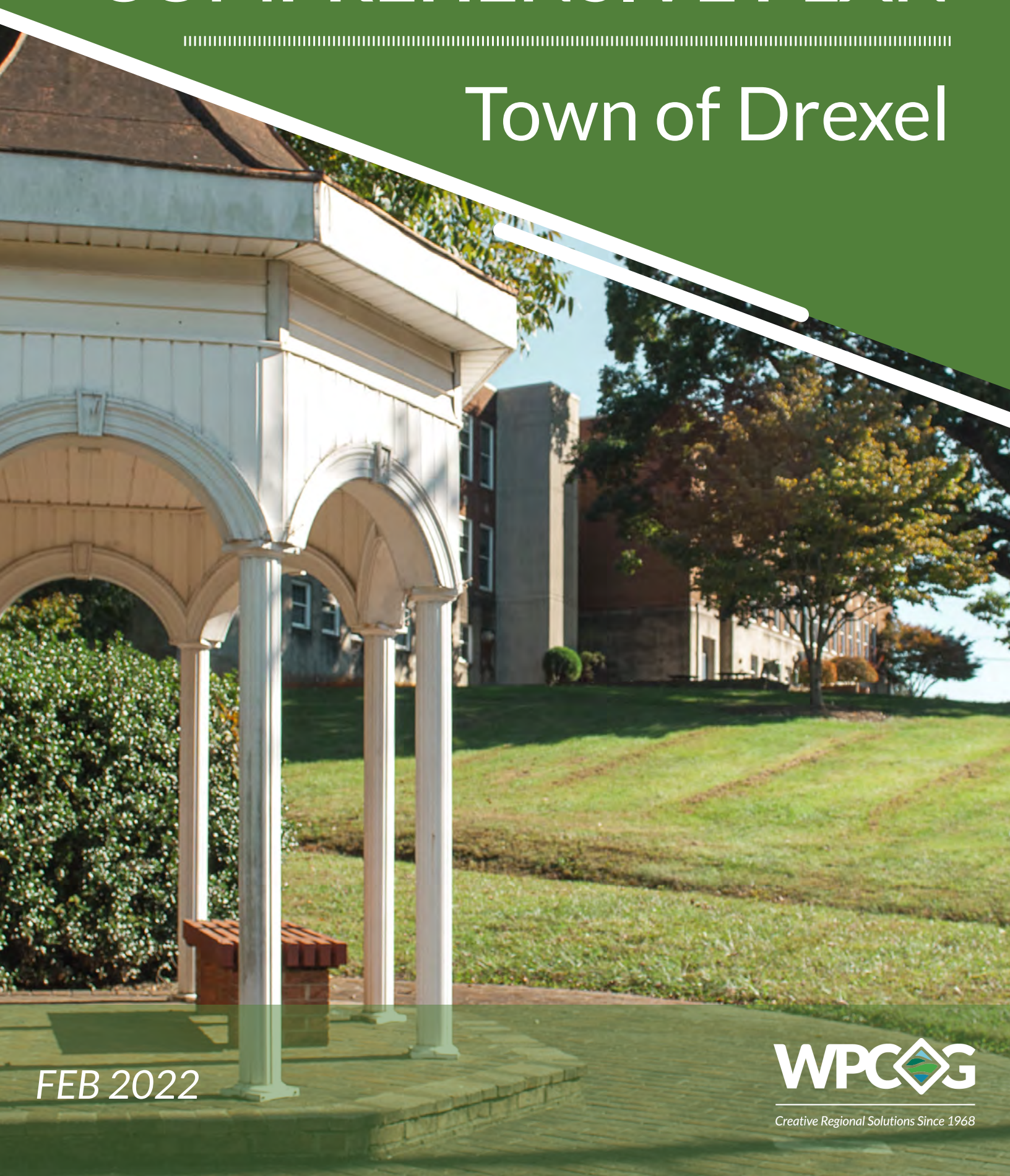


# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## Town of Drexel



FEB 2022



Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## DREXEL RESIDENTS

A special thanks to the residents and business owners that participated in this process to plan and shape the future of Drexel.

## PREPARED BY

Western Piedmont Council of Governments



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# Introduction





# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

According to North Carolina General Statutes, every local government must base their zoning decisions on a long-range plan, which describes policies for land-use and growth management issues. These decisions range from rezoning decisions to transportation regulations to policies governing the uses and subdivision of land. The Town of Drexel Aldermen and the Town of Drexel Planning Department set the creation of this Plan in motion by partnering with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to assist in its development.

The Town of Drexel Comprehensive Plan is a fundamental policy document that will help guide the Town’s growth and development over the next ten to twenty years. The Plan provides a vision of how the Town should look in the future and clearly defines the steps that should be taken in order to realize that vision. The Plan identifies areas where investments should occur and what type of growth should be encouraged in which areas. It establishes a roadmap for how the Town should change - and how the Town should remain unchanged. Board of Aldermen, Planning Board and Staff can use this comprehensive plan as a guide for developing regulations, deciding rezoning cases, developing capital improvement plans, applying for grants, developing its transportation network, extending water and sewer infrastructure, amending its zoning ordinance, drafting its budget, and planning for parks. By following this Plan, the Town of Drexel will continue to create the conditions that encourage orderly growth and economic development well into the future.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Town of Drexel Plan was developed by the Town of Drexel Advisory Committee, a 9-person group consisting of Planning Board members, Board of Aldermen, Town Planning Staff and interested citizens. The Committee conducted a 12-month community outreach, education, discussion and strategic thinking process which resulted in the creation of a draft version of this Plan. The draft version was presented to the Town of Drexel Planning Board and the Board of Aldermen. At the heart of the Plan is a series of recommended growth management strategies in the areas of land use, transportation, public services, economic development, and natural and cultural resources. Upon adoption of this Plan by the Board of Aldermen, the Planning Board and the Town’s planning staff will be charged with prioritizing and implementing the strategies proposed in this document. The Town Plan Advisory Committee consisted of:

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
<b>Scott Dula - Chair</b> Planning & Zoning Board	<b>Jake Eldridge - Vice-Chair</b> Pastor, Drexel FCG	<b>Brian Baird</b> Planning & Zoning Board
<b>Craig Baker</b> Planning & Zoning Board	<b>Sherri Bradshaw</b> Town Manager, Town of Drexel	<b>Jessica Christian</b> Citizen
<b>Scott Coe</b> Planning & Zoning Board	<b>Jonathan Clontz</b> Principal, Hallyburton Academy	<b>Rusty Helms</b> Planning & Zoning Board
<b>Matt Johnson</b> Town of Drexel Alderman	<b>Mike Queen</b> Business Owner	<b>Wayne Whisnant</b> Planning & Zoning Board
<b>Jennifer Yount</b> Citizen		

## CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

There are many steps to creating a high-quality plan for a local government. Planners must collect and analyze data, review maps and charts, consider economic trends and geographic features, consult with dedicated stakeholder teams, and connect with other governments or organizations to check how their plans may affect the one in progress.

The plan will always fall critically short, however, if it does not include the input, feedback and wisdom of the public. The citizens of a place are the ones who know it best. They know its greatest assets and its hardest challenges. They know the highest priorities for an area, and when the plan is done, they are the ones tasked with helping to implement its goals. The Western Piedmont Council of Governments and its planning staff understand the importance of public input and engagement, both for giving a plan legitimacy and for creating a true, community-led and community-oriented document.

While the COVID-19 pandemic forced many municipalities to delay citizen input and engagement meetings over the last year, the WPCOG hosted two public input sessions during the planning process. The first one was held on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the RO Huffman Center, where planners heard from citizens about the most critical issues in the town, and citizens provided input on how they envisioned the Town developing over the coming years. A second public input meeting was held on October 28<sup>th</sup> where citizens dropped in and out of a presentation room, reviewed illustrated boards and maps, and spoke to planners and other citizens about the plan and whether it had missed anything. Public engagement meetings like these allow citizens to come together and talk with staff, local officials, and each other to help guide the creation of a plan and to help review it once it is drafted. Results from the first public meetings listed above are provided in the Appendix A. An online public survey was also conducted to gather additional public comment. The results of the public survey are provided in Appendix B. A formal public hearings held at the Board of Aldermen meeting provided additional opportunities for citizen input.

## THE APPROVAL PROCESS

The Town of Drexel Advisory Committee were presented the draft plan on February 3, 2022. There was a unanimous decision to approve the document and to send a recommendation for approval of the draft plan to the Town Planning Board. The Town Planning Board was also presented the draft plan on February 3, 2022. The Planning Board unanimously approve the document to be sent to the Board of Aldermen for approval. The draft plan was then reviewed by the Board of Aldermen, and a public hearing was held to discuss the adoption of the draft plan at the [REDACTED] Board of Aldermen meeting. The draft plan was approved by the Board of Aldermen on [REDACTED].

## PLANNING AREA

The geographic area included in this Plan includes land located within the Town's borders which is inside the municipal limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJs) of the town (See Figure 1-1: Planning Area).

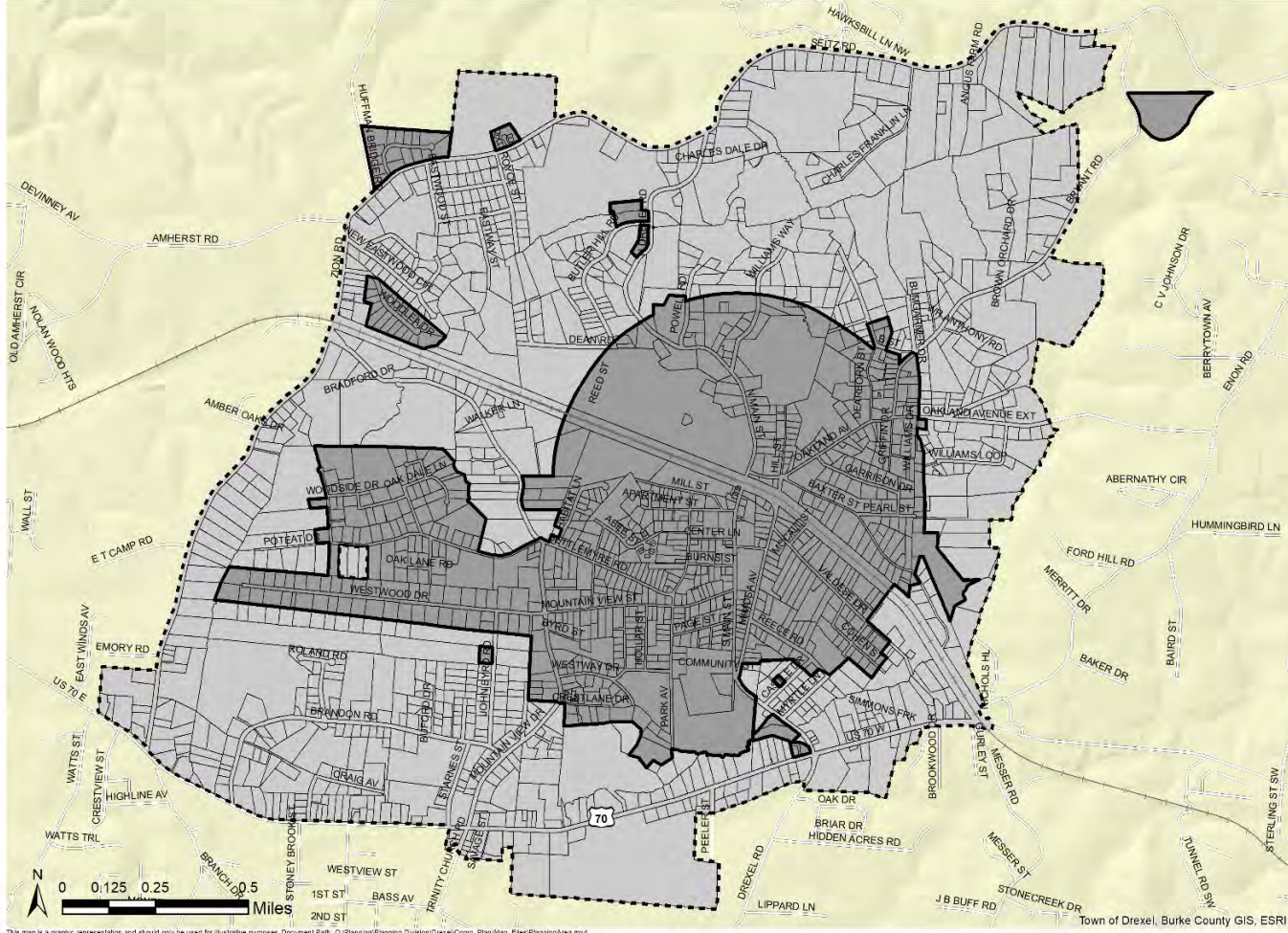
## NEXT STEPS

Upon adoption of this Plan, appropriate changes will be made to the Town's Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, and the Future Land Use section of the plan should be referenced when considering rezoning requests. Comprehensive plans are intended to be living documents. Revisions of this Plan may be necessary based on state law and changing economic conditions. The Planning Board and Town planning staff should review this document periodically to evaluate its effectiveness and to determine if revisions are necessary.



# DREXEL Comprehensive Plan

## PLANNING AREA



### Legend

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Parcels
- Rail Track
- Roads

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# Demographics

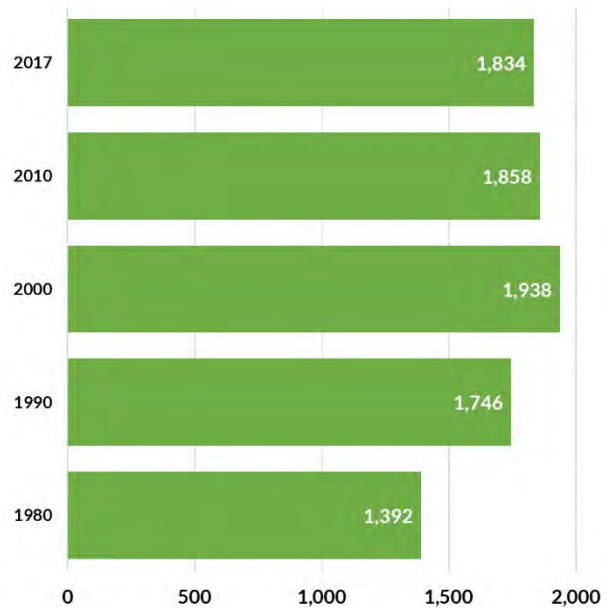


# DEMOGRAPHICS

## POPULATION

The Census count in 1980 for Drexel was 1,392 (Figure 1). As of 2019, the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget estimates that the population of Drexel is 1,834. Table 1 shows population changes between 2000 and 2019 for Drexel, Burke County, the Hickory Metropolitan Statistical Area or MSA (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties), North Carolina and the United States. Drexel lost 80 people between 2000 and 2010, a decrease of 2.4%. The percentage lost was in contrast to the population growth rate of Burke County (2.0%), the Hickory MSA (6.5%) the North Carolina (18.5%) or the US (9.7%) between 2000 and 2010. Estimates from the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget indicate that Drexel lost population between 2010 and 2019. The 2019 Drexel population estimate (1,834) is lower than the Census 2000 population count (1,938). Since 2010, Burke County experienced a population gain of only 748 people, a 0.8% increase. From 2010 to 2019, the population of the Hickory MSA rose by just 2.1%. North Carolina's population grew 10.0% between 2010 and 2019 to 10.5 million. The number of persons in the United States has increased 6.3% from 308.7 million in 2010 to 328.2 million in 2019.

**Figure 1. Drexel Population, 1980-2019**



Source: 1980-2010 Census, US Census Bureau and NC Office of Management and Budget and WPCOG Data Center, 2020.

Table 1. Population Comparison, 2000-2019							
Location	2000 Census	2010 Census	Change 2000-10	% Inc.	2019 Estimate	Change 2010-19	% Inc.
Drexel	1,938	1,858	-80	-4.1	1,834	-24	-1.3
Burke County	89,145	90,912	1,767	2.0	91,660	748	0.8
Hickory MSA	341,851	365,497	23,646	6.5	373,251	7,754	2.1
NC	8,049,313	9,535,483	1,486,170	18.5	10,488,084	952,601	10.0
US	281,421,906	308,745,538	27,323,632	9.7	328,239,523	19,493,985	6.3

Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census, US Census Bureau; 2019 Estimates from the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget and US Census Bureau, 2020.

Whites are the largest race group in Drexel. Over 86% of the Town's population is White (Table 2, page X). Between 2010 and 2014-18, however, the number of Whites decreased by 59 persons to 1,553. African Americans and Asian Americans are tied for having the Town's largest minority group (4.9% of Drexel's population each in 2014-18). The Town's Hispanic population declined from 91 in 2010 to 84 in 2014-18. Since the 2010 Census, Drexel's Asian-

American population has increased by 6 to 88 in 2014-18, which the Town's African American population has grown from 62 to 88 persons.

Table 2. Drexel Population by Race/Ethnic Group, 2010-2018						
Race/Ethnic Group	2010 Census	% of Pop.	2014-2018 ACS Estimate	% of Pop.	Change 2010 to 2014-18 ACS	% Change 2010 to 2014-18 ACS
White	1,612	86.8	1,553	86.8	-59	-3.7%
African American	62	3.3	88	4.9	26	41.9%
American Indian	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0%
Asian American	82	4.4	88	4.9	6	0.7%
Two or More Races	21	1.1	23	1.3	2	9.5%
Some Other Race	66	3.6	37	2.1	-29	-43.9%
Hispanic (Any Race)	91	4.9	84	4.7	-7	-7.7%
White, (Not Hispanic)	1,587	85.4	1,508	84.3	-79	-5.0%

Source: 2010 Census and 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS), US Census Bureau.

Age group population data for Drexel from 2010 to the 2014-2018 ACS is displayed in Table 3. Some age groups gained population between 2010 and 2014-18, while others experienced declines.

Table 3. Drexel Population by Age Group, 2010-2017				
Age Group	2010 Census	2014-2018 ACS Estimate	Change 2010 to 2014-18	% Change 2010 to 2014-18
Under 5 Years	94	80	-14	-14.9
5 to 9 Years	112	118	6	5.4
10 to 14 Years	109	83	-26	-23.9
15 to 19 Years	118	65	-53	-44.9
20 to 24 Years	96	113	17	17.7
25 to 34 Years	218	212	-6	-2.8
35 to 44 Years	225	203	-22	-9.8
45 to 54 Years	270	202	-68	-25.2
55 to 59 Years	120	184	64	53.3
60 to 64 Years	98	150	52	53.1
65 to 74 Years	161	190	29	18.0
75 to 84 Years	144	139	-5	-3.5
85 Years and Over	93	50	-43	-46.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>1,789</b>	<b>-69</b>	<b>-3.7</b>

Source: 2010 Census and 2014-18 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

The older age groups in Drexel have had the some of the most significant population gains since 2010 due to the aging of the “Baby Boomers.” The number of people in the 55 to 59 age group, for example, grew by 64 between 2010 and 2014-18 to 184 persons. The population of 60 to 64 cohort increased 53.1% from 98 in 2010 to 150 in 2014-18.

The largest population loss between 2010 and 2014-18 was in the age 45 to 54 group due to the two economic recessions between 2000 and 2010 causing some younger people to leave Drexel. The population of the 45 to 54 group decreased from 270 in 2010 to 202 in 2014-18. Besides population losses in the 45 to 54 age cohort, substantial population declines also has occurred in two of the youngest age groups (the age 10 to 14 and age 15 to 19 cohorts).



The population of the age 10 to 14 and age 15 to 19 groups in Drexel decreased by 23.9% and 44.9% respectively between 2010 and 2014-18. Significant population growth, meanwhile, occurred in the age 20 to 24 cohort. Persons in this group were born during good economic times in the 1990s. The number of persons in age 20 to 24 group grew from 96 in 2010 to 113 in 2014-18.

The impacts of the increasing older labor force (age 55 to 64) and age 65 to 74 populations on median age can be seen in Table 4. Between 2000 and 2010, the median age in Drexel rose by 5.5 years to 43.6. Drexel’s median age has increased another 4.1% since 2010 to 45.4 years. The Town’s median age is currently higher than Burke County, the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and the United States.

Table 4. Median Age, 2000-2018					
Location	2000	2010	% Change	2014-2018 ACS	% Change
Drexel	38.1	43.6	14.4	45.4	4.1
Burke County	36.9	41.2	11.7	43.6	5.8
Hickory MSA	36.7	40.5	10.4	42.8	5.7
NC	35.3	37.4	5.9	38.6	3.2
US	35.3	37.2	5.4	37.9	1.9

Source: 2000, 2010 Census and 2014-18 ACS, US Census Bureau.

Age group projections are not available for Drexel. The NC Office of State Management and Budget, however, has generated age group projections for Burke County (Table 5, Page X). The population of the 65 to 74, 75 to 84 and 85 years and over age cohorts will continue to grow over the next 20 years as the “baby boomers” grow older. The loss of 25 to 44-year olds in the County from 2000 to 2010 will lead to population declines in the age 45 to 54, age 55 to 59 and age 60 to 64 groups through 2039. The population of the age 15 to 19 and 20 to 24 cohorts is anticipated to decrease by more than 4% and 13% respectively between 2019 and 2039.

Table 5. Burke County Population by Age Group, 2019-2039				
Age Group	2019 Estimate	2039 Projection	Change 2019-2039	% Change 2019-2039
Under 5 Years	4,513	4,912	399	8.8
5 to 9 Years	4,444	5,122	678	15.3
10 to 14 Years	5,351	5,395	44	0.8
15 to 19 Years	6,739	6,464	-275	-4.1
20 to 24 Years	6,372	5,550	-822	-12.9
25 to 34 Years	10,508	11,178	670	6.4
35 to 44 Years	9,601	12,822	3,221	33.5
45 to 54 Years	12,260	11,533	-727	-5.9
55 to 59 Years	6,814	5,148	-1,666	-24.4
60 to 64 Years	6,429	5,344	-1,085	-16.9
65 to 74 Years	10,678	11,892	1,214	11.4
75 to 84 Years	5,947	9,260	3,313	55.7
85 Years and Over	2,154	3,637	1,483	68.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,810</b>	<b>98,257</b>	<b>6,447</b>	<b>7.0</b>

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2020.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

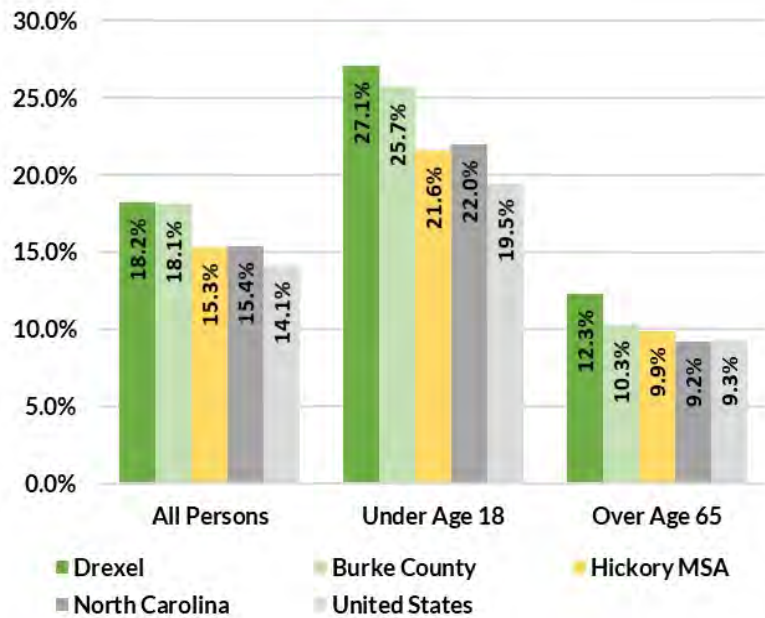
Drexel household income data from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) is revealed in Table 6. Drexel has experienced a 4.3% decrease in median household income from \$39,196 in 2008-2012 to \$37,500 in 2014-2018. Drexel 2014-18 median household income is \$5,016 less than the Burke County median, \$8,741 less than the Hickory MSA median, and is \$14,913 less than the State median. About 31% of Drexel’s households in 2014-18 earn less than \$25,000 a year while 31.1% of households earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year. Another 29.3% of households had incomes between \$50,000 and \$100,000 per year. About 8.6% of Drexel’s households make more than \$100,000 per year.

Table 6. Drexel Income Statistics, 2014-2018 ACS		
Households	2014-2018 ACS	% of Households
<b>Total Households</b>	752	100.0
Households Earning Less than \$25,000	233	31.0
Households Earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000	234	31.1
Households Earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000	220	29.3
Households Earning more than \$100,000	65	8.6
Median Household Income	\$37,500	

Source: 2014-18 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

According to the Census website, the Bureau “uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family’s total income is less than family’s threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty.” Results from the 2013-17 American Community Survey for Drexel show that 326 persons, or 18.2% of the population, were at or below the poverty level (Figure 2). The Town’s all persons poverty rate was slightly higher than Burke County’s. The Drexel’s poverty rate for children under age 18 was higher than the Burke County, Hickory MSA or the North Carolina under age 18 poverty rate. The Drexel poverty rate for persons over age 65, was also higher than the Burke County, Hickory MSA or North Carolina over age 65 poverty rate.

Figure 2. Poverty Rate Comparison, 2014-2018 ACS



Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

# EMPLOYMENT

Employment by industry of Drexel residents from the 2014-2018 ACS is shown in Table 7. About 30.2% of total employment in 2018 was in the education and health care industry. Another 23.7% of employed persons worked in the manufacturing industry. About 7.7% of workers were in the retail trade industry. About 7.7% of workers were in the retail trade industry.

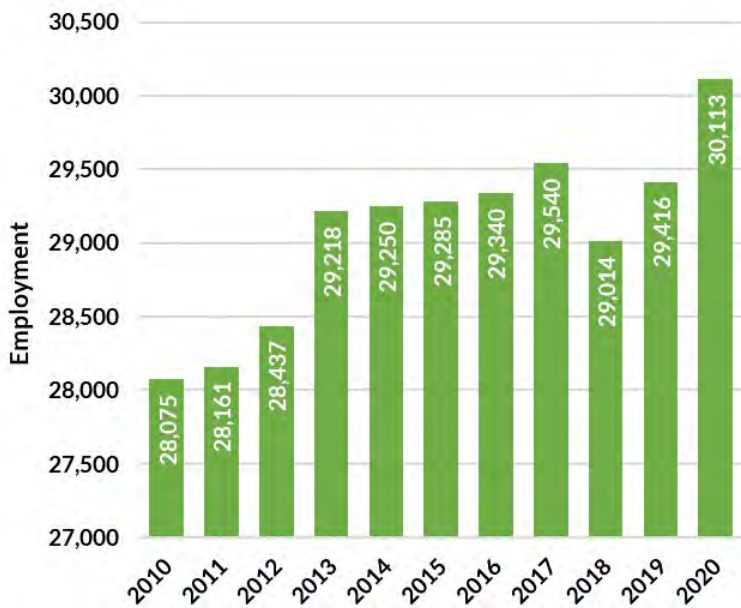
Table 7. Drexel Employment by Industry, 2014-2018 ACS		
Industry	2014-2018 ACS	% of Employed Population
<b>Employed Population</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Agriculture	0	0.0
Construction	31	4.0
Manufacturing	184	23.7
Wholesale Trade	32	4.1
Retail Trade	60	7.7
Transportation/Warehousing/Utilities	11	1.4
Information	0	0.0
Finance/Insurance/ Real Estate	17	2.2
Professional Services	59	7.6
Education and Health Care	235	30.2
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	54	6.9
Other Services	59	7.6
Public Administration	36	4.6

Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

Between first quarter 2010 and first quarter 2012, Burke County employment only grew from 28,075 to 28,437 (Figure 3). The economic recovery led to a 976-employment increase in Burke County between first quarter 2012 (28,437) and first quarter 2019 (29,416). Between first quarter 2019 and first quarter 2020, Burke County employment increased by 697 positions to 30,113.

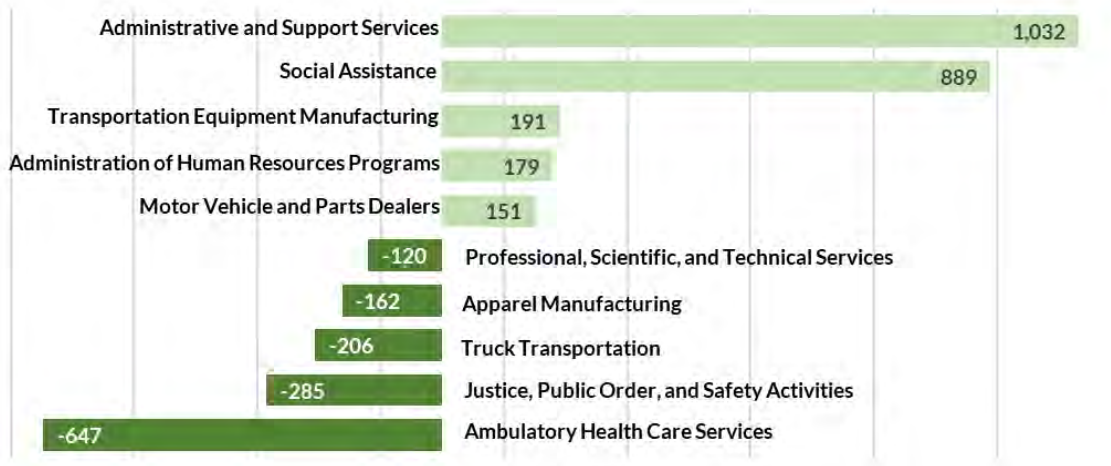
Over the past decade, the biggest employment losses in Burke County have occurred in ambulatory health care services (647), justice, public order and safety activities (285) and truck transportation (206) (Figure 4). The largest employment gains occurred in administrative and support services (1,032), social assistance (889) and transportation equipment manufacturing (191) (Figure 4). One of Burke County's success stories over the past decade is the dramatic drop in its unemployment rate between 2010 and 2019.

Figure 3. Burke County Employment, First Qtr. 2010-2020



Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2020.

**Figure 4. Burke Co. Employment Gains and Losses by Industry Sector. 1st Qtr. 2010-2020**

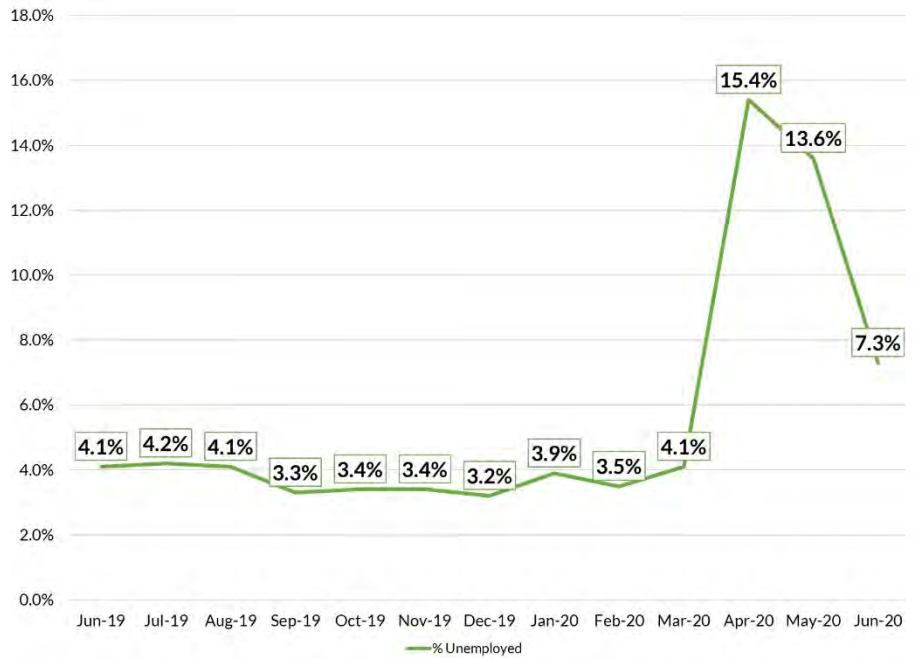


Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2020.

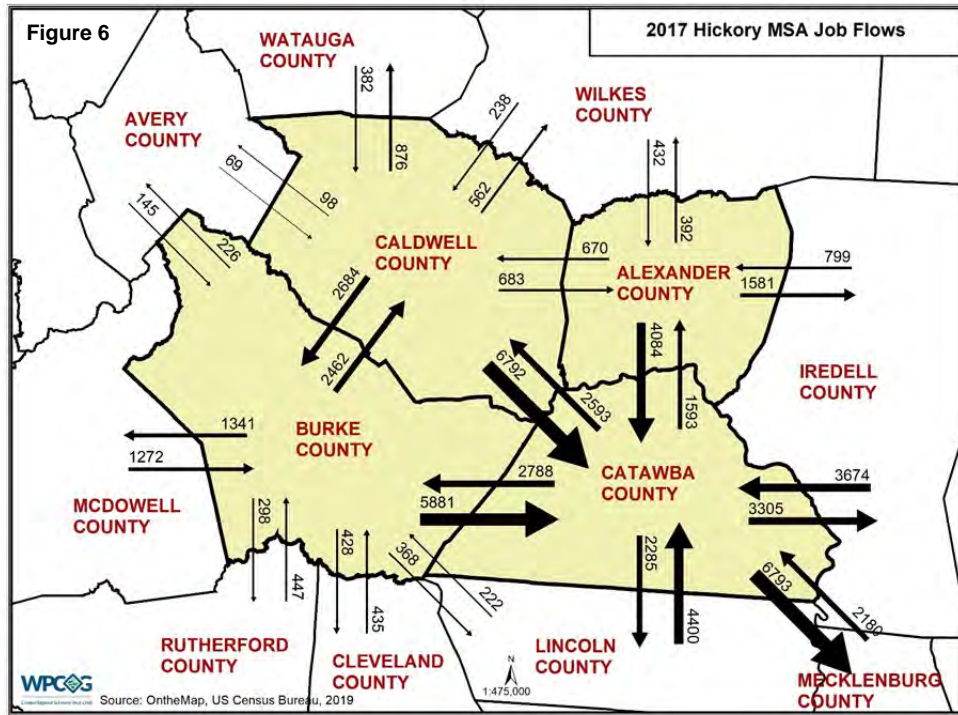
Burke County's unemployment rate spiked to 15.4% in April 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 5). Leading into June 2020, the County's unemployment rate has fallen to 7.3%.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused the number of employed residents to fall from 39,858 in June 2019 to 31,226 in April 2020. Since April, the number of employed residents has increased to 34,735 as of June 2020. Also note that there are about 9,000 more working residents in Burke County than the number of Burke County jobs. This is due to out-commuting workers from Burke seeking employment, mainly in Catawba and Caldwell Counties (Figure 6).

**Figure 5. Burke County Employed Residents and Unemployment Rate, August 2010 to August 2020**



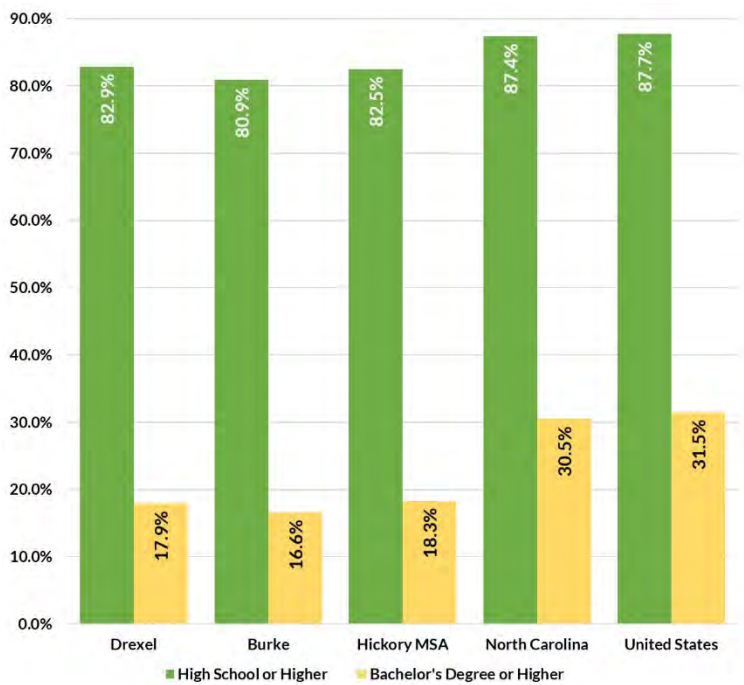
Source: NC Labor and Economic Analysis Division, 2020.



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment levels of the population age 25 and over for Drexel, Burke County, the Hickory MSA, North Carolina and the United States are shown in Figure 7. Data from the 2013-2017 ACS indicates that 82.9% of Drexel’s population age 25 and older has an educational attainment level of high school (or equivalent) or higher with 17.9% having a bachelor’s degree or higher. Drexel had a higher high school or higher (over age 25) educational attainment rate than Burke County and Hickory MSA. Drexel had a higher Bachelor’s Degree or higher (over age 25) education attainment percentage than Burke County, but the Drexel percentage was less than the Hickory MSA, North Carolina, and United States rate.

**Figure 7. Educational Attainment, 2013-2017 ACS**

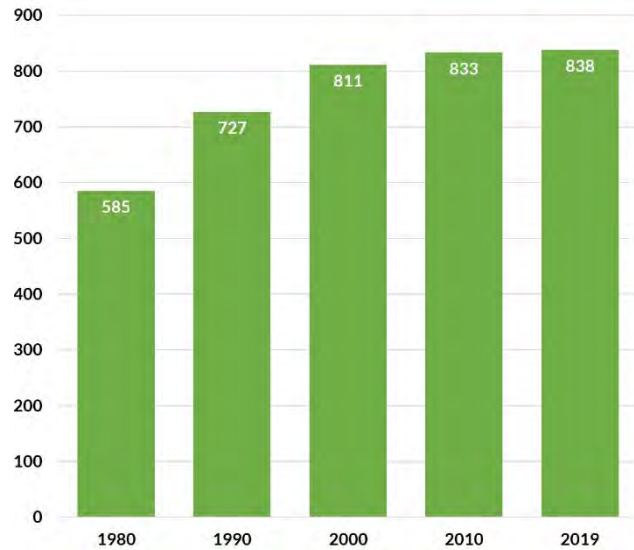


Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.

# HOUSING

The number of housing units in Drexel increased from 585 in 1980 to 838 in 2019 (Figure 9). Most of the housing growth occurred between 1980 and 2000. From 2000 to 2010, about 22 housing units were added in Drexel (Table 8). Drexel's 2.7% percentage housing growth between 2000 and 2010 was significantly lower than Burke County, Hickory MSA, North Carolina or the US housing growth rate. Drexel only added 5 housing units between 2010 and 2019. Drexel's housing growth rate (0.6%) between 2010 and 2019 was lower than Burke County, Hickory MSA, North Carolina or the US housing growth rate over the past decade.

Figure 8. Drexel Housing Units, 1980-2019



Source: 1980-2010 Census and 2019 Housing Unit Estimates, US Census Bureau, and Burke County Building Inspections, 2020.

Table 8. Housing Units, 2000-2019

Location	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	% Inc.	2019	Change 2010-2019	% Inc.
Drexel	811	833	22	2.7	838	5	0.6
Burke County	37,427	40,879	3,452	9.2	41,596	717	1.8
Hickory MSA	144,874	162,613	17,739	12.2	166,320	3,707	2.3
NC	3,523,944	4,327,528	803,584	22.8	4,747,943	420,415	9.7
US	115,904,641	131,704,730	15,800,089	13.6	136,312,356	4,607,626	3.5

Source: 2000-2010 Census and 2019 Housing Unit Estimates, US Census Bureau, and Burke County Building Inspections, 2020.

Data in Table 9 reveals that the percentage of renter-occupied units in Drexel has slightly decrease between 1990 and the 2014-2018. The percentage of renter-occupied housing in Drexel fell from 30.0% of occupied units in 1990 to 29.4% in 2014-18. This is due some housing units changing from renter-occupied to owner-occupied after 2000. As of 2014-18, Drexel had a higher percentage of renter-occupied housing than Burke County or the Hickory MSA, but a lower percentage of renter-occupied units than North Carolina and the United States.

Table 9. Percent Renter-Occupied Units, 1990-2018

Location	1990	2000	2010	2014-2018 ACS
Drexel	30.0	33.2	31.8	29.4
Burke County	25.2	25.9	27.7	27.7
Hickory MSA	25.3	25.7	26.6	28.9
NC	28.6	27.2	33.3	35.0
US	35.8	33.8	34.9	36.2

Source: 2000-2010 Census and 2014-2018 ACS, US Census Bureau.

Table 10 shows a significant increase in the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Drexel between the 2000 Census and the 2008-2012 ACS (41.2%). Median housing value fell slightly (-1.3%) to \$111,900 between the 2008-12 ACS and the 2014-18 ACS. Median home values gained 5.1% and 7.4% in Burke County and the Hickory MSA respectively from 2008-12 to 2014-18. The 2014-18 ACS Drexel median owner-occupied housing value was less than the Burke County, North Carolina and United States median value.

<b>Table 10. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units, 2000 to 2014-2018</b>					
<b>Location</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2008-2012 ACS</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2014-2018 ACS</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Drexel</b>	<b>\$80,300</b>	<b>\$113,400</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>\$111,900</b>	<b>-1.3</b>
Burke County	\$85,900	\$110,800	29.0	\$116,400	5.1
Hickory MSA	\$93,500	\$119,400	27.7	\$128,200	7.4
NC	\$108,300	\$153,600	41.8	\$165,900	8.0
US	\$119,600	\$181,400	51.6	\$204,900	13.0

Source: 2000 Census, 2008-2012 and 2014-2018 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau.







# Transportation



# TRANSPORTATION

Transportation provides community access to the places where residents, businesses, and visitors live, work, and play. Streets and sidewalks are effectively public spaces that visibly contribute to the sense of a place and its unique character. These factors of transportation have been key to developing the Drexel Plan. Town citizens voiced a strong preference for maintaining Town character, while also maintaining, improving, and expanding a street system that enhances Drexel’s community character. This chapter analyzes the goals and future vision of the Drexel transportation network.

## TRANSPORTATION/STREET DESIGN POLICIES

Transportation policies help guide improvements made to existing roadways and set standards for new transportation projects. Policies are in place that require streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation. These improvements will be planned in conjunction with new development and redevelopment. The general locations of potential improvements are noted on Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2.

**Table 3-1: State and Regional Policies**

Policy	Policy Description
Greenway Accommodations	In 2015, NCDOT approved guidelines for the accommodation of future greenways under bridges. The guidelines include a decision-making approach and cost-sharing recommendations.
Complete Streets	This policy requires planners and designers to include other modes of transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian, in all transportation projects in municipal areas under certain circumstances.
Bicycle Policy	This policy details guidelines for the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of bicycle facilities and accommodations.
Pedestrian Policy Guidelines	These policies allow NCDOT to work with local governments to add sidewalks in coordination with highway improvement projects. State funds are available on a sliding scale to match funds provided by the local government, which will be responsible for maintaining the sidewalk.
Administrative Action to Include Greenway Plans	In 1994, the NCDOT adopted administrative guidelines to consider greenways and greenway crossings during the highway planning process. This policy was incorporated so that critical corridors, which have been adopted by localities for future greenways, will not be severed by highway construction.
Bridge Policy	NCDOT’s Bridge Policy establishes design elements for new and reconstructed bridges on the state road system. It includes requirements for sidewalks and bicycle facilities on bridges, including minimum handrail heights and sidewalk widths.

# IMPROVED AREA THOROUGHFARES

Last adopted in 2018, the current Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) did not recommend any improvements within Drexel. During Plan development, comments were received about two intersections needing future enhancements. While these projects are not funded, the recommendations should be added to a future update of the region’s CTP and 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan to consider a future NCDOT project.

## US 70 and NC 114

Future enhancement of intersection for all users, including turn lanes and pedestrian crossings

## Mountain View Dr and Mountain View St

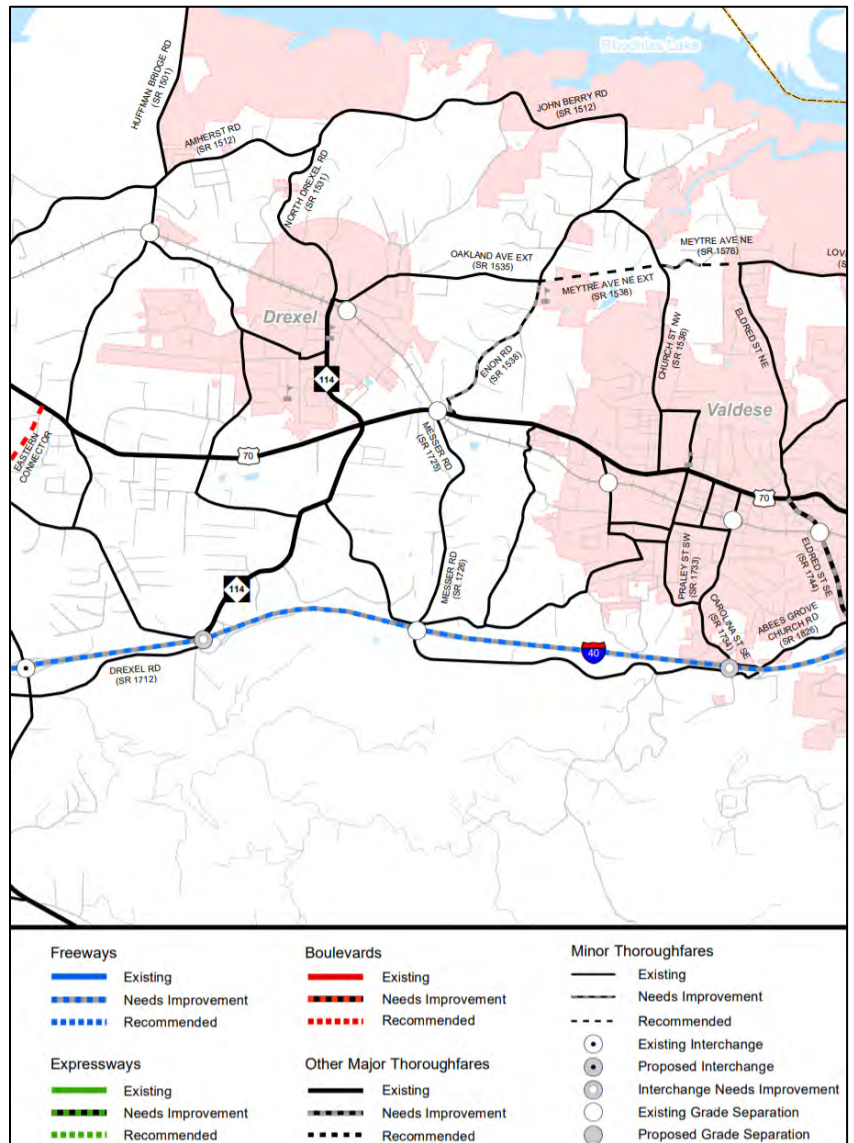
Future conversion to multi-way stop, roundabout, or other traffic-calming intersection

# FUTURE TRANSPORTATION MAPS

Figure 3-1: Drexel Area Future Roadway Network; displays all transportation projects recommended in the regional Comprehensive Transportation Plan adopted in 2018

# IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY

The redevelopment of the Drexel Properties site was consistently noted as a top priority throughout Drexel Plan community engagement. New streets linking to Downtown would help activate and integrate the site within the surrounding community. New streets should be designed in a way to function as a neighborhood extension of Downtown with smaller blocks and sidewalks for walk-friendly connectivity.



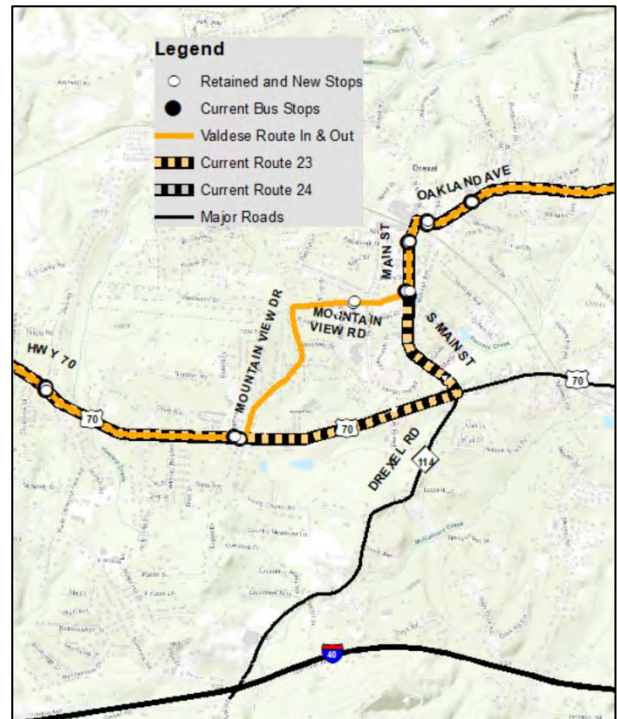
## MAINTAIN EXPANDED TRANSIT SERVICE OPTIONS

Public transportation is a lifeline for many citizens in the Western Piedmont region. Transit services connect people to jobs, schools, grocery stores, medical care, recreational areas, and family. The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA) serves the Greater Hickory MPO planning area, currently operating as Greenway Public Transportation. Greenway Public Transportation provides Demand Response Van Service for areas in Burke County. Van Service must be scheduled 72 hours in advance at 828-465-7643.

Since late 2018, Greenway Public Transportation has also operated a Flex Route service in Drexel that connects to Morganton and Valdese. A Flex Bus Route is different from a Fixed Bus Route in that it still covers a regular route with scheduled bus stops, but also can deviate from the route for special pick-up and drop-off, when scheduled more than 24 hours in advance. Two flex routes connect Morganton and Valdese Hospital via Drexel, one eastbound from Morganton to Valdese and one westbound back from Valdese to Morganton.

Currently, there are eight bus stops within Town limits:

- Drexel Laundry on S Main St
- Downtown Drexel across from Drexel Park
- Oakland Ave across from ATM
- Oakland Ave across from Autumn Care
- Autumn Care on Oakland Ave
- ATM on Oakland Ave
- Drexel Park on Main St
- Drexel Small Business Center on S Main St



Adopted future service changes planned for December 2021 will add another pair of stops on Mountain View St at Hollar St. Just outside Town limits, there is a pair of bus stops on Highway 70 at Drexel Drug and Drexel Primary Care.

## TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Require adequate transportation access to all new and redevelopments in order to provide orderly and efficient traffic flow and maintain current minimum design standards.
  - a. Evaluate transportation access to the Drexel Properties Site and provide flexible improvement scenarios for the realignment of Butler Hill Road and the extension of Reed Street.
  - b. Proactive enforcement of subdivision regulations to ensure installation of infrastructure as development occurs.
  - c. Work with NCDOT to insure that there is proper ingress and egress (i.e. driveway permits) for commercial and industrial uses.
  - d. Monitor the use of the Greenway Transit route through Drexel and adjust as needed.
2. Consider roadway modernization for the following corridors, along with any other identified areas in need of safety improvements.
  - a. Along the N Main Street and N Drexel Road corridor from the intersection of Oakland Ave to the intersection of Amherst Road.
  - b. Along the Drexel Road corridor from the intersection of US 70 to the intersection of I-40.
3. Consider enhancement of the following intersections, along with any other identified areas in need of safety and traffic flow improvements.
  - a. The intersection of US 70 and Drexel Road.
  - b. The intersection of Mountain View Drive and Mountain View Street.
  - c. The intersection of Mountain View Drive and US 70.
4. Create gateways and implement design standards that enhance streetscape and improve traffic flow.
  - a. Incorporate decorative directional signage to town attractions and gathering areas.
  - b. Create gateways and enhance streetscaping along:
    - i. S Main Street and N Main St from Town Limits to Drexel Apartments.



# Resources & Services





# RESOURCES & SERVICES

## PUBLIC SERVICES

Town of Drexel provides water services to its citizens through its own distribution network. The Town of Drexel purchases its water from the City of Morganton. The Town operates 2 elevated tanks for a daily storage capacity of 1.0 MGD. Sewer treatment is processed by the Town of Valdese. The Town of Drexel is also a public power community and a member of North Carolina Municipal Power Agency I. They provide electric service to 1200 customers (See Figure 4-1: Town of Drexel Sewer and Water Lines and Figure 4-2: Town of Drexel Electric Power).

## EDUCATION

The Town of Drexel has Drexel Elementary and Hallyburton Academy. Drexel Elementary is a public elementary school in the Burke County School District. It enrolls 501 students in grades Pre-K through 5th. Drexel Elementary has 16.4 students to every teacher. Hallyburton Academy is a publicly funded alternative school that educates children in Burke County. It enrolls 99 students in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Burke County System includes 14 elementary schools, 5 middle schools and 4 High Schools, 1 Innovative High School, and 4 Alternative Schools.

### ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Burke Middle College  
Burke Virtual Academy  
Hallyburton Academy  
North Liberty

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Drexel Elementary  
Forest Hill Elementary  
George Hildebrand Elementary  
Glen Alpine Elementary  
Hildebran Elementary  
Hillcrest Elementary  
Icard Elementary  
Mountain View Elementary  
Mull Elementary  
Oak Hill Elementary  
Ray Childers Elementary  
Salem Elementary  
Valdese Elementary  
WA Young Elementary

### MIDDLE SCHOOLS

East Burke Middle  
Heritage Middle  
Liberty Middle  
Table Rock Middle  
Walter Johnson Middle School

### HIGH SCHOOLS

Draughn High  
East Burke High  
Freedom High  
Patton High

### INNOVATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

STEAM Academy

There are several institutions of higher education in the area that provide excellent opportunities for advanced learning: Western Piedmont Community College, Appalachian State University, Foothills Higher Education Center, NC School of Science and Mathematics and Lenoir-Rhyne University.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Fire protection in Town of Drexel is provided by both paid and volunteer firefighters. The Drexel Volunteer Fire Department consists of a Fire Chief and 25 volunteers serving an area of approximately 50 square miles.

The Drexel Police Department handles the law enforcement for the Town. Drexel Police Department staffs 5 full time officers and 4 reserve officers.

Residential Solid Waste collection is provided by the Town through Republic Services. The Town of Drexel provides street and sidewalk maintenance, leaf collection, residential yard waste disposal, and bulk item disposal (See Figure 4-3: Town of Drexel Community Facilities).

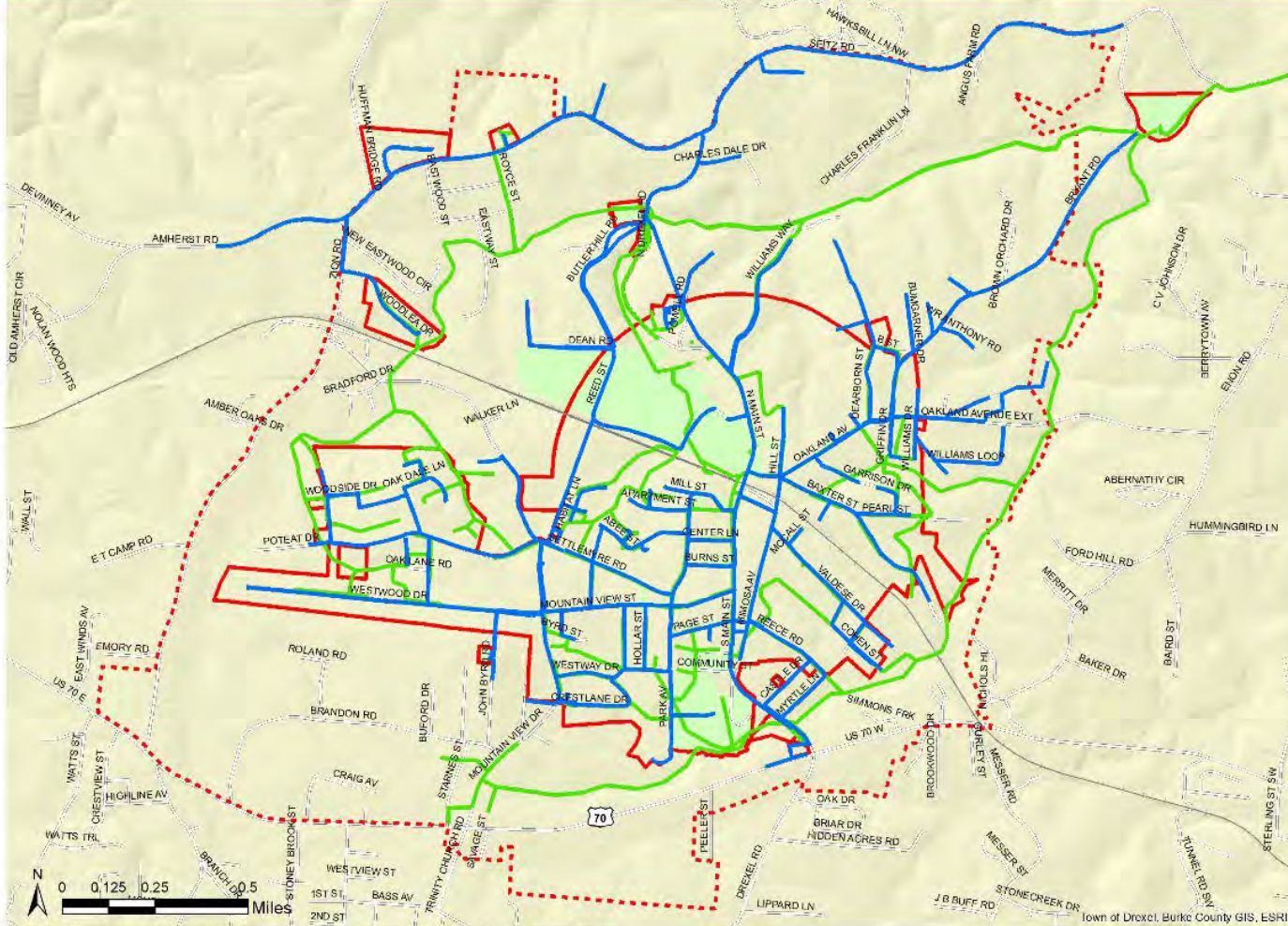


# DREXEL Comprehensive Plan

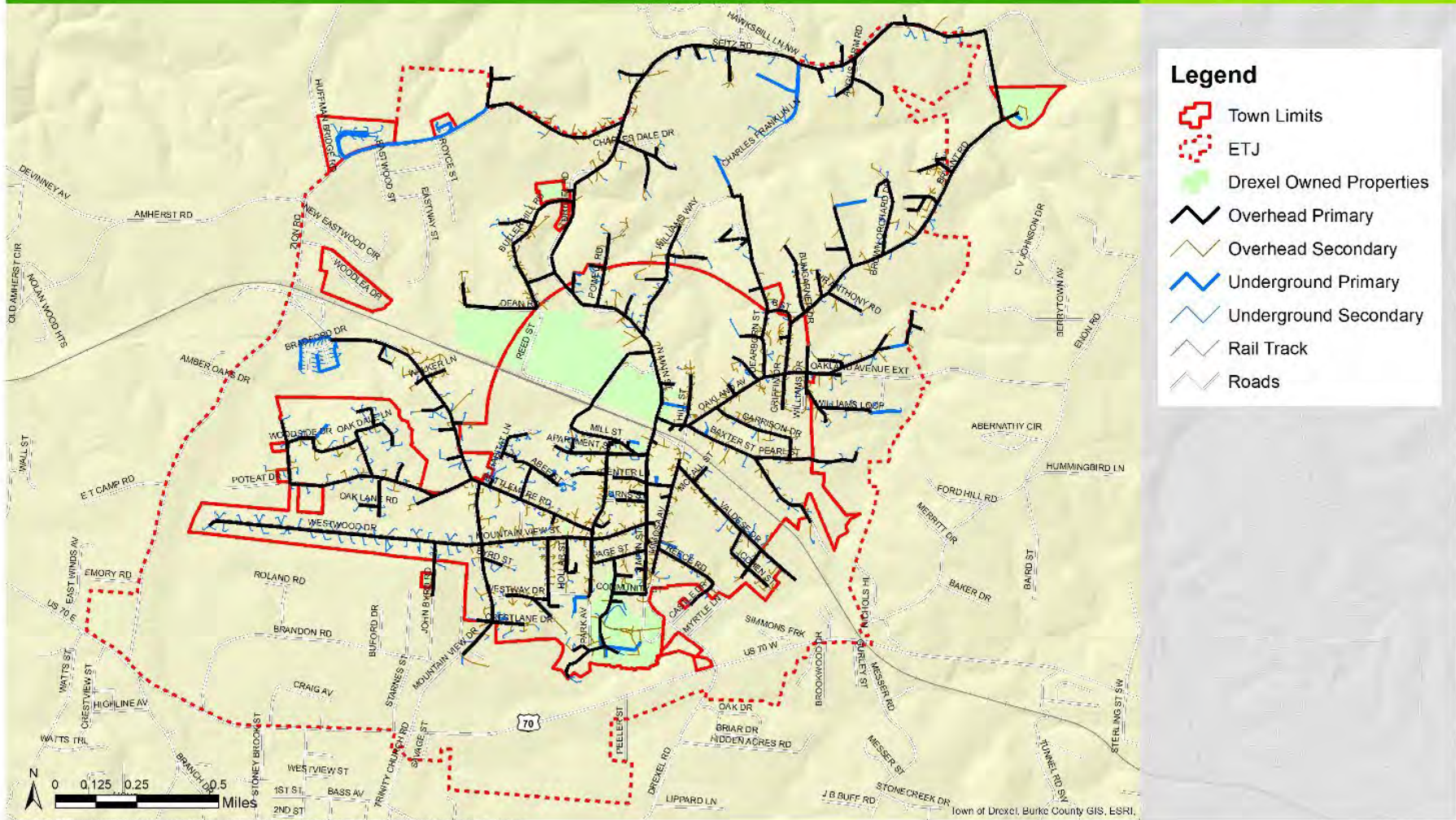
## SEWER & WATER

### Legend

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Drexel Owned Properties
- Water Lines
- Sewer Lines
- Rail Track
- Roads



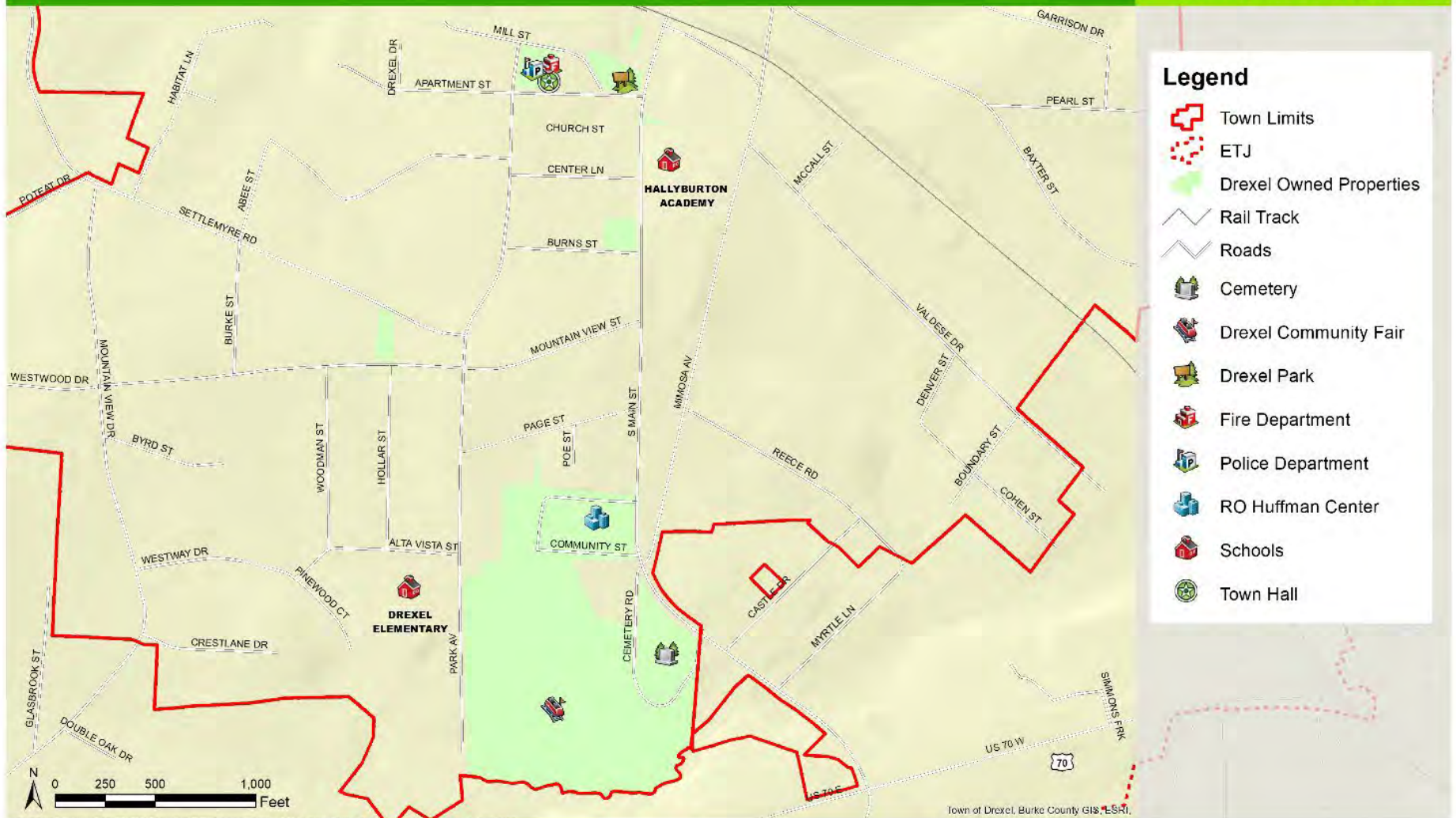
This map is a graphic representation and should not be used to indicate property boundaries. Government of Drexel, Western Piedmont Council of Governments, and the Town of Drexel, Burke County GIS, ESRI.





# DREXEL Comprehensive Plan

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES



## RESOURCES & SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Refer to inventory analysis of existing water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure.
  - a. Prioritize aging infrastructure in need of maintenance or repair.
  - b. Refer to areas in the Future Land Use Map that have been switched from industrial to residential to estimate for new future utility demand.
  - c. Inventory current capacity of utility infrastructure servicing the Drexel Properties Site for future development.
  - d. Monitor for potential grants from federal, state, and local and nonprofit organizations for infrastructure improvements.
2. Utilize new strategies to promote growth in volunteer participation in Town services, events, and beautification efforts.
  - a. Conduct outreach and education to better inform the citizens of the need for volunteers.
  - b. Establish a partnership with local schools for volunteer service hours.
  - c. Establish a partnership with the probation office for community service hours.



# Parks & Recreation





# PARKS & RECREATION

While it is important that we consider the availability of recreation facilities based on current needs and projected increases in population, the development of recreational facilities is also a major tool that can be used to stimulate economic development and tourism. The Drexel Recreation Department manages all youth leagues and is responsible for all programming and maintenance at Drexel recreation facilities, including the RO Huffman Center, adjoining ball fields, and the downtown park.

## COMMUNITY PARKS & GREENWAYS

The Town of Drexel's natural beauty provides a perfect setting for a casual walk or bike ride. Passive recreation can be a very important asset for a community, whether it be for tourism purposes or for local residents. The Town should work to identify and acquire land in strategic locations that will result in open space preservation, the construction of greenways and parks – and other passive recreation opportunities.

## SIDEWALKS & PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

The sidewalk network in Drexel outside the downtown core and adjoining residential neighborhoods is limited. Streets should reflect and support a pedestrian-scaled environment that encourages walking, while also supporting other modes of transportation. It is encouraged that new sidewalks and pedestrian improvements be made along thoroughfares and local streets.

## CONNECT TO FUTURE GREENWAY

A larger plan vision for all of Eastern Burke County is to connect Morganton's existing river greenway and Hickory's funded trail to the Airport along the Catawba River. A spur connection to Drexel is also envisioned to link the community to the river corridor. The spur connection would roughly follow Drexel Rd and N Main St from Amherst Rd to Downtown Drexel. The southern end should be incorporated into the redevelopment of the Drexel Properties site.

## WESTERN PIEDMONT BIKE PLAN

The Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan, adopted in 2016, identifies high, medium, and low priority bicycle routes identified by the four-county region. Drexel has one high-priority and one low-priority segment along the following routes (also displayed on **Figure 5-2** below).

**Figure 5-2: Burke County Regional Bicycle Plan Map** displays all bicycle routes recommended in the 2016 Western Piedmont Bike Plan. Route Segment 4 connects Morganton to Connelly Springs via Drexel, Valdese, and Rutherford College. The recommendations for Route Segment 4 consist of four-foot paved shoulders along US 70 in Drexel (see also **Figure 5-3** below).

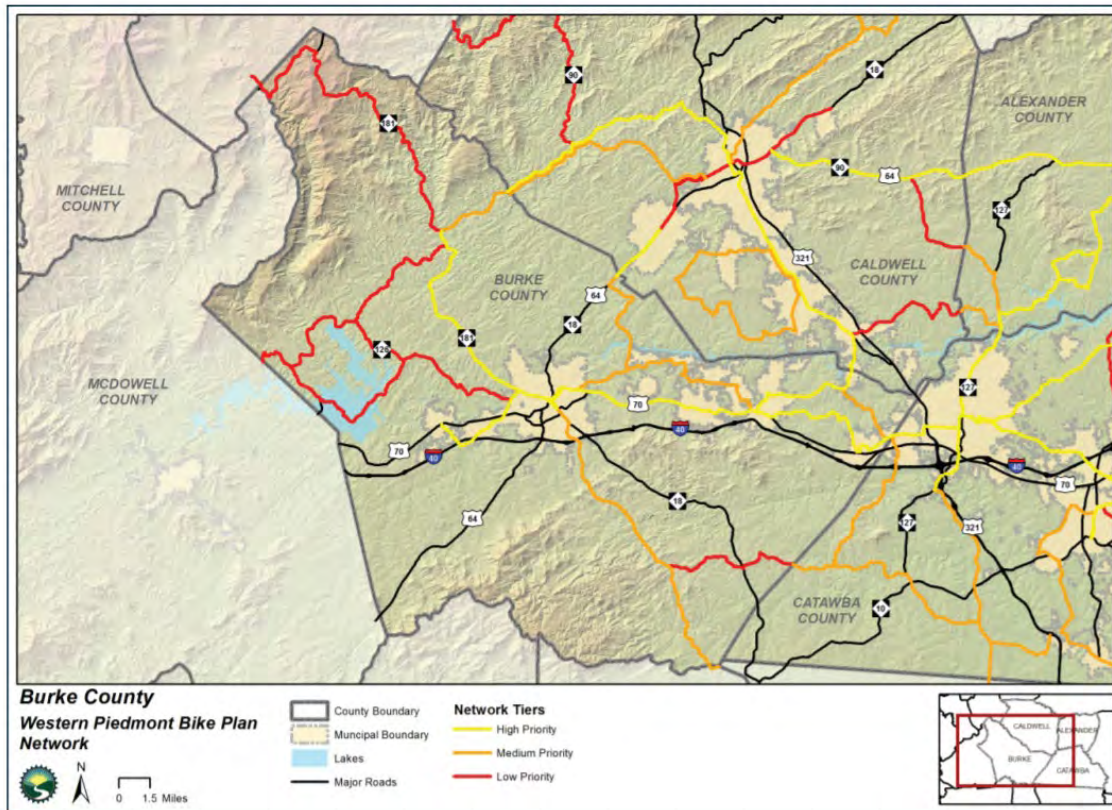
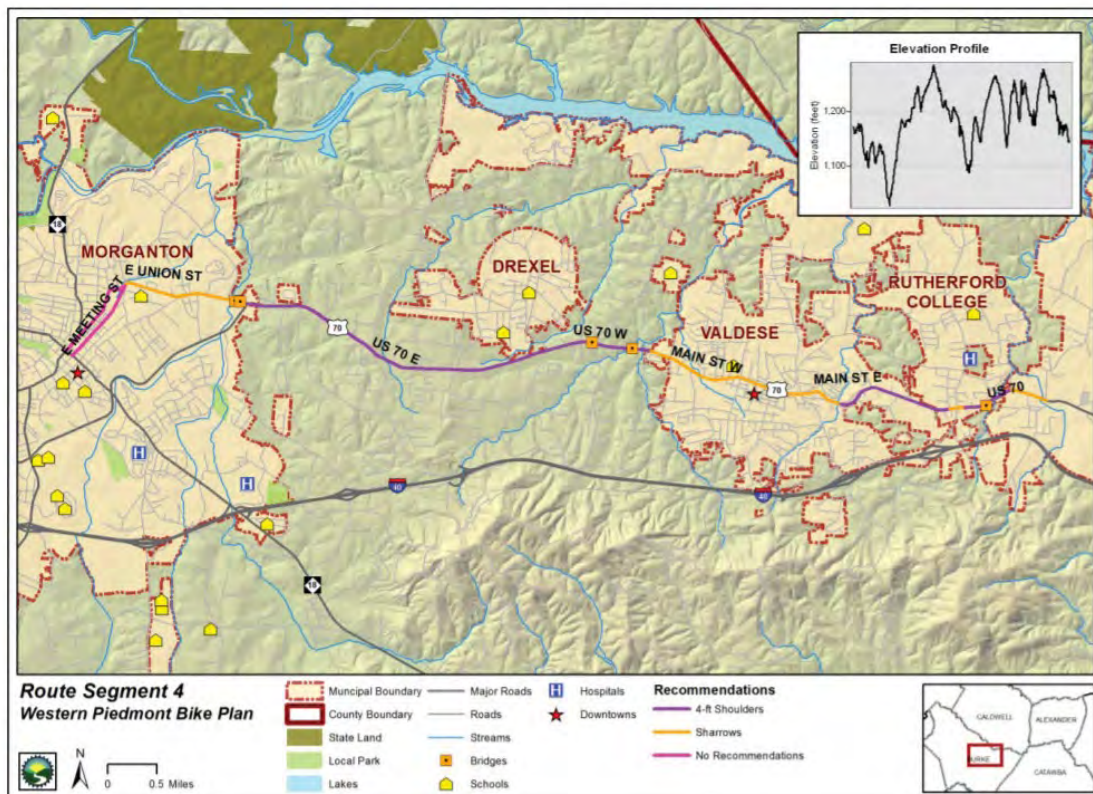
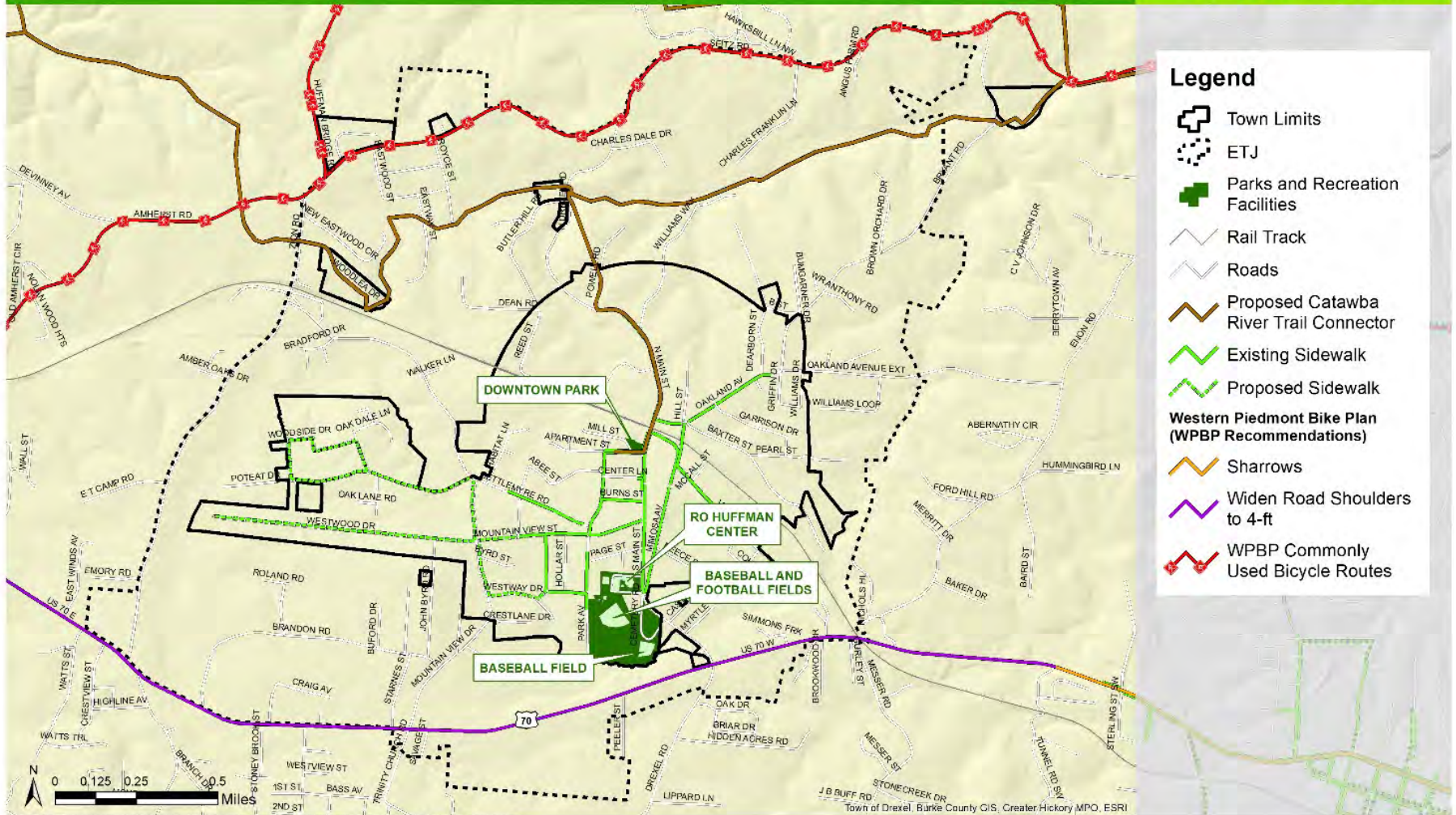


Figure 5-3: Highway 70 Regional Bicycle Plan Map displays all bicycle facility types recommended in the 2016 Western Piedmont Bike Plan along Highway 70 between Morganton and Connelly Springs.

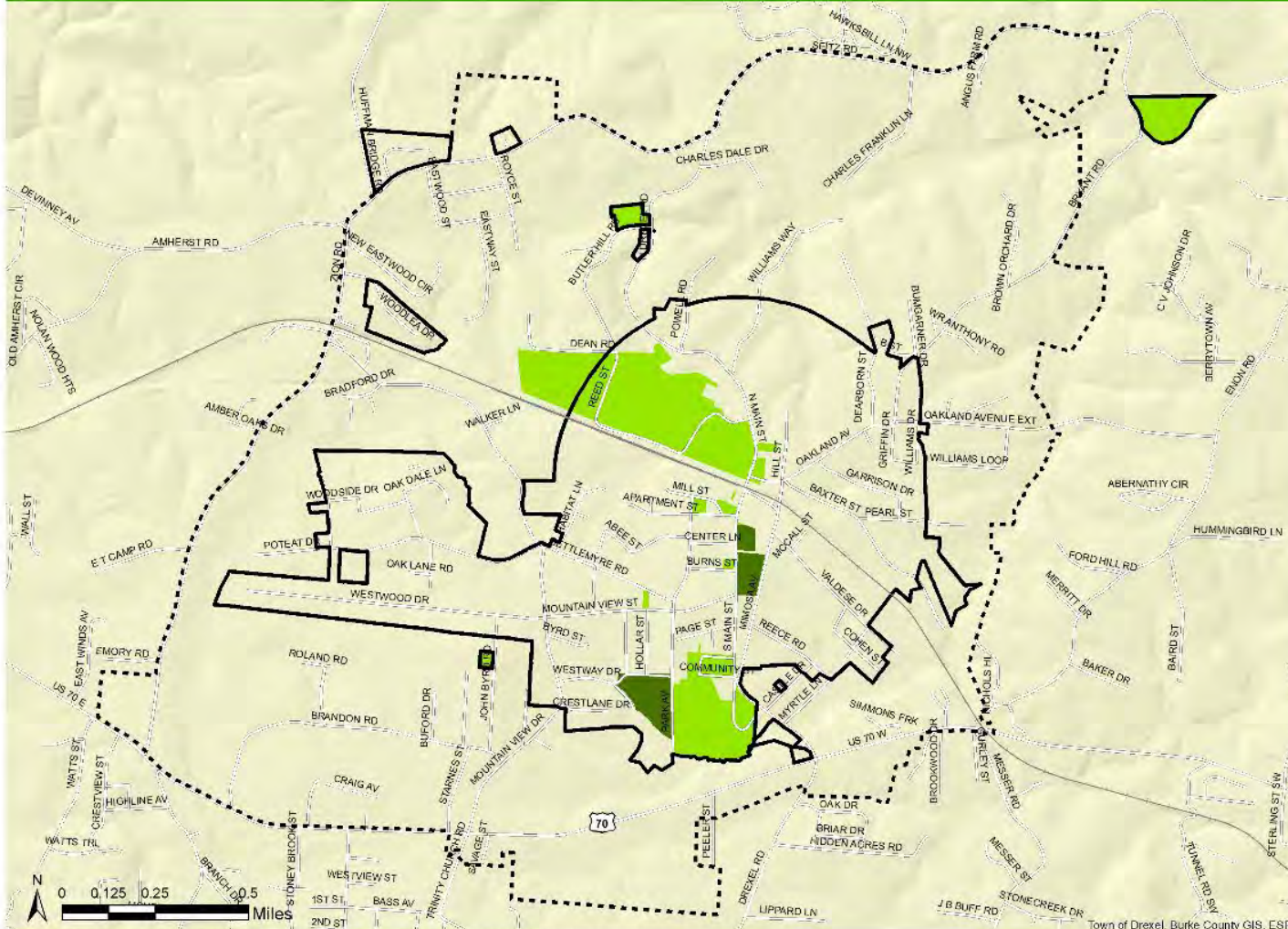


## TOWN OF DREXEL PARKS & RECREATION IN THE FUTURE

In 2016 the Town identified a need to plan for the maintenance and improvement of their Parks and Recreation and to seek the public's input regarding future recreational opportunities. The Town hired the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) to develop a comprehensive town-wide parks and recreation plan. The plan should serve as a road map for the next 15 years, informing policy and budgetary decisions as they relate to recreation. WPCOG staff worked closely with town staff and the Drexel Recreation Committee on the development of the plan.



MANAGED AREAS



**Legend**

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Burke County Board of Education Owned Properties
- Drexel Owned Properties
- Rail Track
- Roads

This map is a graphic representation and should not be used to establish property boundaries. Contact the Planning Department, Town of Drexel, 1000 S. Main St., Drexel, NC 27534 for more information.

## PARKS & RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote walkability and establish trail connections.
  - a. Evaluate a possible trail connection via Howards Creek and N Main St to the planned Catawba River Trail, as the river trail progresses.
  - b. Promote sidewalks and crosswalks connecting residential areas to recreational areas and trails.
2. Maintain and enhance existing recreational facilities in the Town.
  - a. Renovate and modernize R.O. Huffman Recreation Center.
  - b. Expand recreational opportunities provided at R.O. Huffman Recreation Center.
3. Continue to pursue the recommendations provided in the Drexel Parks and Recreation Plan so that grant funding can be obtained from Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF).
  - a. Continue to pursue other grant opportunities for recreational funding.



# Natural & Cultural Resources





# NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

## DREXEL NATURAL RESOURCES

This chapter will evaluate the Town's existing natural characteristics and its relationship to the built environment. Information from this chapter should be used to help guide future land use decisions. For example, development within floodplain areas should be restricted or not allowed because flooding can have disastrous impacts, both in terms of private property damage and the use of tax dollars for clean-up and debris removal.

Specifically, this chapter will examine the environmental factors related to land use planning including watershed and floodplain development, conservation easements, land donations, natural heritage areas, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

## WATERSHEDS

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a body of water such as a river, lake, or stream. It is separated from other watersheds by high points on the land such as hills or ridges. A water supply watershed is an area where water drains to a point and is collected and held then used as a public drinking water source.

Watershed regulations, which were established by State of North Carolina, protect the Town's drinking water supply by limiting the amount of impervious surface that can be developed within a watershed – which in turn reduces the amount of stormwater runoff that enters streams or lakes. Impervious surfaces prohibit water from reaching and percolating into the ground and also facilitate the flow of pollutants such as oil and road salt into nearby bodies of water. Examples of impervious surfaces include paved roads and parking lots, rooftops, sidewalks, and even gravel parking lots.

The entirety of Town of Drexel is in the drainage area for the Catawba River watershed. Burke County's streams and creeks drain into the Catawba River, which then drains into Lake Rhodhiss and into the Catawba River Basin. The entirety of the planning jurisdiction of Town of Drexel is subject to the WS-IV (Water Supply Watershed) Catawba River Protected Area (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). The lake is a major source of drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people throughout the region. Stricter development regulations are imposed in the WS-IV Protected Area and the WS-IV Critical Area. The regulations are a requirement of the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality, and are based on a template ordinance provided by the State and administered by Town of Drexel. The density, or amount, of proposed development is governed by these watershed regulations. Developers may apply for the right to develop more property if they install engineered controls to mitigate stormwater runoff. These laws are designed to protect drinking water from the polluted stormwater runoff that flows into streams, lakes, and rivers from impervious surfaces. In general, development will be more restricted on lands that are closer to drinking water sources.

## FLOODPLAIN

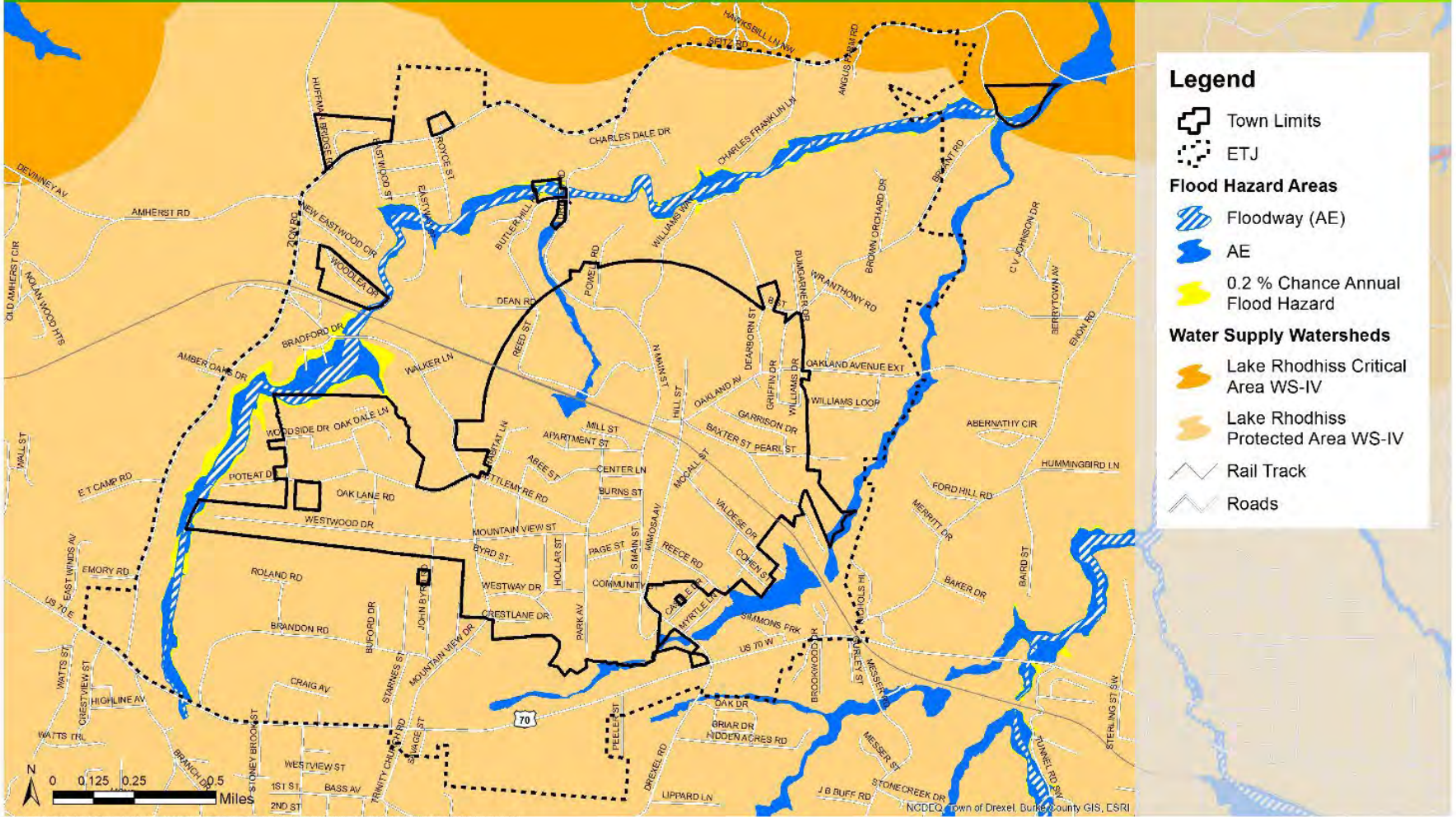
Floodplain regulations are another example of locally enforced, state-mandated laws. The Town has an interest in discouraging development in the floodplain for public safety reasons. In the Town of Drexel, floodplain areas can be found primarily along major waterways, including Howard Creek and Secrets Creek (See Figure 6-1: Water Resources). Within the Town's planning jurisdiction, there are two types of designated flood zones with distinct sets of rules: the Floodway and the Flood Hazard-AE Zone.

The Town participates in FEMA's Flood Damage Prevention and Insurance Program as outlined in the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. Floodplain management is generally defined as a comprehensive program of preventative and corrective measures to reduce losses associated with flooding. Floodplain management measures may include, but are not limited to, land use regulations (including new development and construction policy), construction of flood control projects, flood-proofing, floodplain preservation, acquisition of flood-prone properties, education, and implementation of early warning systems.

The floodway is the channel of a river, or any waterway, and the adjacent land that must be reserved in order to pass the base flood discharge without increasing the identified base flood elevation (BFE). To avoid the risk of sediment, construction, or plant debris being swept downstream, the floodway is classified as a "non-encroachment area" (NEA), meaning that no land-disturbing activity should occur there without the completion of a detailed hydrologic study which proves that the activity will not affect downstream water levels. As a general rule, no structures, other than public bridges, are allowed in the Floodway.

The Flood Hazard-AE Zone denotes areas that have a one percent probability of flooding in any given year. New structures are allowed within the AE Zone if a floodplain permit is obtained. A floodplain permit requires all new construction to meet certain standards. The basement and/or foundation (the lowest floor level) must be elevated to or above the BFE. Many property owners choose to build outside of the floodplain to avoid carrying the necessary flood insurance.

**WATER RESOURCES**



## LAND DONATIONS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE & ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides grants to local governments for the acquisition of land to be used for public recreational use. Additionally, PARTF grants can be used to protect natural and scenic resources or to renovate older park facilities.

Similarly, the NC Land and Water Fund (formerly CWMTF) provides grants to local governments for projects that specifically address water pollution problems. The NC Land and Water Fund may fund projects to acquire land that “represents the ecological diversity of North Carolina”. Town of Drexel should also be aware of the NC Land and Water Fund program and how it can be used to help the Town achieve its natural resource and environmental planning goals.

## CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's preservation-worthy historic places. The Register includes significant properties, which are further divided into buildings, sites, districts, structures, or objects. The National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

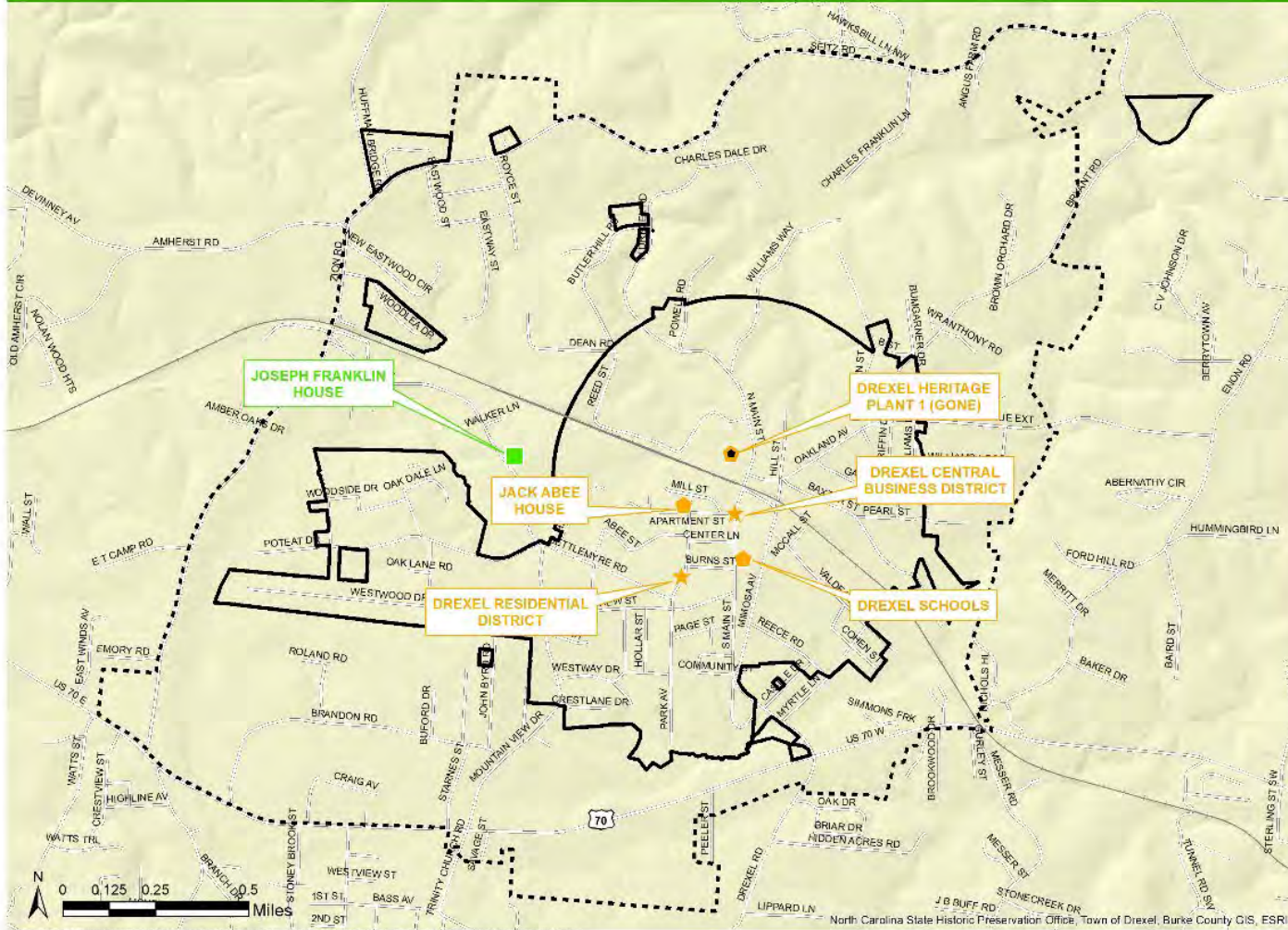
The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) carries out many historic preservation responsibilities including surveying, evaluating and nominating properties for inclusion in the National Register.

If a property meets the criteria to be on the National Register, the National Park Service designates the property as “Determined Eligible” for listing. However, a property so designated will not yet be formally listed in the Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register, but not listed, do not qualify for federal rehabilitation tax incentives, federal tax incentives for preservation easements on historic buildings and sites, or National Park Service grants.

In North Carolina, the placement of a property or district on a "Study List" constitutes the first step toward nomination to the National Register. The Study List identifies properties and districts that are likely to be eligible for the National Register, giving the green light to sponsors and staff to proceed with a formal nomination with reasonable assurance that the property can be successfully nominated.

According to the State Historic Preservation Office, there are thirty-four (34) sites in Town of Drexel that are either listed in the National Register, Determined Eligible or are on the Study List. Figure 6-4: Historic Sites illustrates where those places are located.

HISTORIC SITES



Legend

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Rail Track
- Roads
- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Status**
- Study List individual entry
- Surveyed Only
- Surveyed, Gone
- Surveyed Area center point

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to protect Town of Drexel's natural resources through incentives and ordinances designed to help preserve the rural areas of the Town and safeguard the environment.
  - a. Continue to enforce the WS-IV Water Supply Watershed Regulations to reduce flooding and improve drinking water quality.
  - b. Work with the Foothills Conservancy to evaluate land acquisition proposals that may be eligible for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) or NC Land and Water Fund for grant funding.
  
2. Protect the historic fabric of Town of Drexel through preservation and by assigning importance to structures of known historical value.
  - a. Maintain structures of value that are listed, determined eligible, or on the study list for the National Register of Historic places.



# Economic Development & Tourism





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is the process by which the local economy and the socio-economic well-being of the citizens are improved. Local governments can work with the private sector to create the kind of conditions that lead to economic growth. For example, local governments can recruit major employers to locate in suitable areas, work with existing businesses to encourage growth, or create opportunities for entrepreneurial development.

A primary goal of this Plan is to evaluate the Town’s overall economic climate by examining key aspects that contribute to its economic success (infrastructure, commercial/industrial building stock, land use, zoning, transportation, and environment). In doing so, the Plan can help address the community’s overall goal of strengthening and diversifying its industrial, manufacturing, commercial, and retail sectors.

Burke Development, Inc. (BDI) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supported by private and public funding that is charged with accelerating economic growth in Burke County. The organization work to meet the needs of prospective companies and to facilitate expansion and growth plans for existing businesses in Burke County, NC. It maintains and distributes information on land and buildings available for development, compiles demographic data, coordinate activities with governmental and non-governmental entities and keep abreast of State and Federal economic development programs. BDI also offers orientation tours to prospective companies to showcase the many natural resources and facilities that create the unique quality of life found in Burke County. Table 7-1 shows a list of Burke County’s major employers.

**TABLE 7-1: BURKE COUNTY MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

Employer	Industry	Sector	Employees
State of North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services	Health Care and Social Assistance	Public	1,000+
Burke County Public School System	Education	Public	1,000+
Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private	1,000+
Waterfield Labor Solutions of North Carolina	Administrative Support	Private	500-999
Valdese Weavers	Manufacturing	Private	500-999
Burke County Government	Public Administration	Public	500-999
Leviton Manufacturing	Manufacturing	Private	500-999

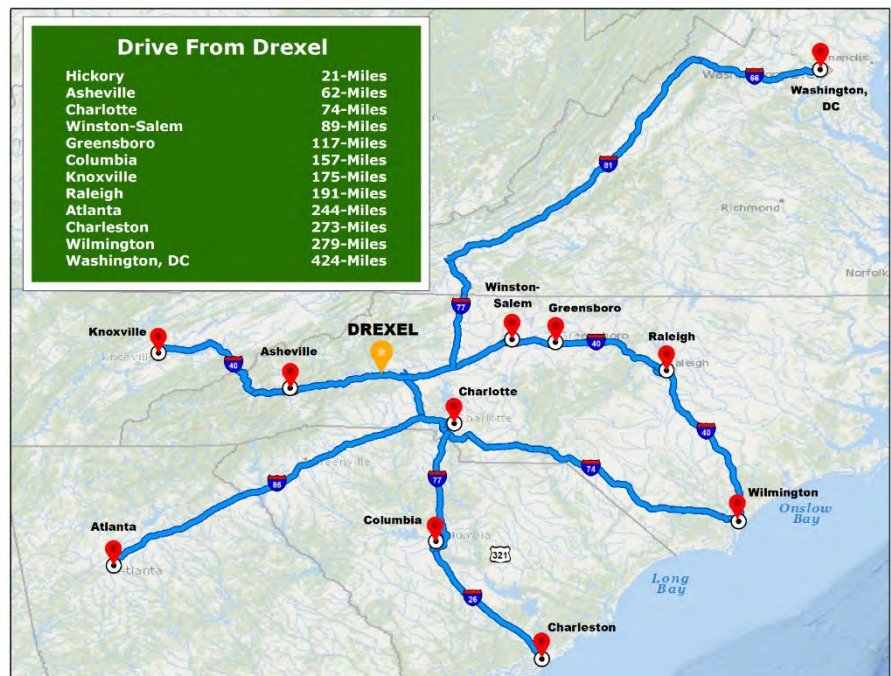
North Carolina Department of Public Safety	Public Administration	Public	500-999
Case Farms	Manufacturing	Private	500-999
Catawba Valley Staffing	Administrative Support	Private	500-999
Continental Automotive Systems, Inc.	Manufacturing	Private	250-499
A Small Miracle, LLC	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private	250-499
Food Lion	Retail	Private	250-499
Wal-Mart	Retail	Private	250-499
City of Morganton	Public Administration	Public	250-499
Western Piedmont Community College	Education	Public	250-499
Bimbo Bakeries USA, Inc.	Manufacturing	Private	100-249
Crothall Healthcare, Inc.	Accommodation	Private	100-249
Molded Fiberglass North Carolina	Manufacturing	Private	100-249
Viscotec Automotive Products	Manufacturing	Private	100-249

<https://www.morgantonnc.gov/city-manager/page/major-employers-burke-county>

Interstate 40 and U.S. Highway 70 run just south of Drexel and the primary exit off of I-40 is Exit 107. In addition to I-40, I-85, I-77 and I-26 are within 50 miles of the Town. Northfork Southern Railway services Burke County by rail and approximately 30 major truck carriers provide ground/freight transportation.

Charlotte and Asheville are about an hour's drive away. Charlotte Douglas International Airport is approximately 70 miles from Drexel and offers about 500 flights per day. General aviation and charter services, as well as housing for

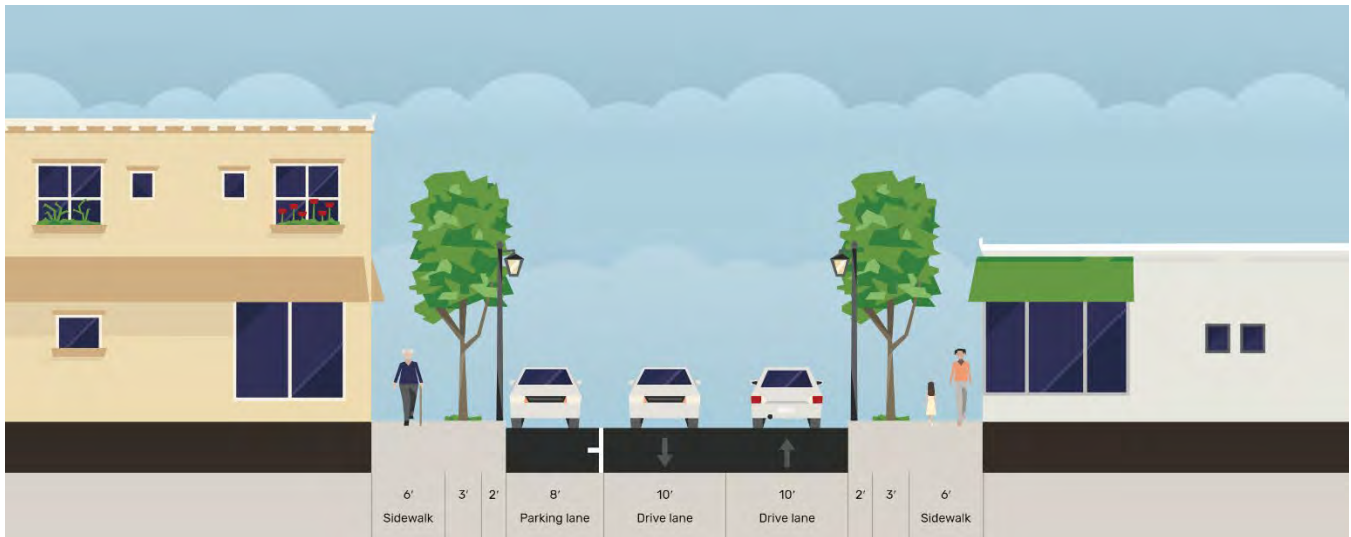
numerous corporate and private aircraft are available at the Foothills Regional Airport approximately seven miles north of Drexel. Figure 7-1 shows the distance from Drexel to other major centers of commerce.



## DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

A prime area for improvement and investment in the Town is the downtown and the adjacent Drexel Properties site. The Drexel Properties site was previously the site of the Drexel Heritage Furniture Plant. Since the demolition of the plant, there has been ongoing environmental cleanup of the site under the supervision of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Health. With the cleanup underway, the property is vacant and available for purchase for new development. As such, interest was expressed by the comprehensive plan advisory committee and the public to re-evaluate the zoning of the property to allow for more mixed uses to encourage industrial, commercial and residential development in the area. This is expressed in recommending the addition of a “Downtown Overlay” zoning district as further defined in the Future Land Use section of Chapter 8: Land Use and Growth Management.

The Downtown Overlay district would also expand on down along South Main Street. This district would look into establishing building design standards, setbacks, parking, landscaping, and land uses that are appropriate for a downtown setting. In addition to the overlay, the existing streetscape within the public right-of-way could be reconfigured to include more planting, lighting, sidewalk, and seating areas to create a more welcoming atmosphere and gateway into the Town. The rendering below illustrate what the reconfiguration of the fifty (50) foot right-of-way along Main Street in the downtown area could look like.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote economic development strategies that will aid in recruitment of viable businesses and job growth.
  - a. Create commercial and industrial marketing materials to promote available sites in the Town's planning jurisdiction.
  - b. Promote available sites for new residential infill and subdivisions.
  - c. Maintain a close relationship with Burke Development, Inc. to keep Drexel actively involved in industrial and economic development potential.
2. Work to attract young adults, families, and new residents.
  - a. Increase the walkability of the Town by adding and maintaining sidewalks and establishing trail connections.
  - b. Enhance the Main Street corridor by adding streetscaping, providing façade grant programs to property owners, and encouraging development that enhances Downtown as a designation.
  - c. Improve access to high speed internet.
  - d. Improve the tax base by evaluating housing stock and developing strategies to increase housing values.



# Land Use & Growth Management



# LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

## LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Good land use planning leads to orderly growth and the efficient provision of Town services to residents, businesses, and visitors. Land use planning helps create neighborhoods where daily needs are located within walking distance. It also helps support or create closer knit neighborhoods and contributes to a sense of community by ensuring that residents have access to a range of activities and amenities that encourage interaction and physical activity (sidewalks, walking trails, and parks). Finally, land use planning helps create the conditions that will encourage economic growth without sacrificing the Town’s scenic beauty, farmland, or other natural assets. The desire of the Town of Drexel is that growth and development is well planned, dictated by a community vision, and defined by a clean environment and the preservation of community character.

The manner in which the land is currently being used, the availability of land which is suitable for future development or redevelopment, and Town of Drexel’s land use regulations each play a part in determining which type of land use will occur in each zoning district. The Town’s overall responsibility is to ensure that land is developed in the most effective and appropriate way in order to promote the health, welfare and public interest of the Town of Drexel residents and stakeholders.

## ZONING DISTRICTS

The Town of Drexel has planning jurisdiction both within Town limits and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), which consists of approximately 2,453 acres. Zoning in Drexel and the ETJ is predominately zoned as a residential district, accounting for approximately 89.7% percent of the areas planning jurisdiction. The remaining 10.3% percent of the Town’s planning jurisdiction is zoned as an industrial or commercial district.

As Table 8-1, “Town of Drexel Zoning” shows, the Town’s current zoning districts closely parallel existing land use patterns. General Manufacturing District (M-1) allow for industrial land uses. The Central Business District (B-1), and Highway Business District (B-2) are the main commercial districts that provide suitable locations for those commercial activities which serve primarily the traveling public. Most of the parcels zoned one of these designations are located along US HWY 70 and North Main Street.

Of the eight residential zoning districts established by the Drexel Zoning Ordinance, the vast majority of land in the Town’s planning jurisdiction is zoned either R-8 High Density Residential Single-Family District, R-12 Residential Medium Density District, or R-20 Residential Low-Density District.

The R-8 Residential High Density District is intended to provide relatively high density living areas and make up 10.9% percent of the parcels within the Town Limits. Housing types in these districts include both immobile and mobile dwellings subject to applicable housing provisions in the Town ordinances. With the intent of high density, these districts allow for two-family and multi-family dwellings as well. It is expected that municipal water and sewerage facilities will be available to these properties.

R-12 Residential Medium Density District is mainly found within the Town limits (32.1% of parcels). This district is established as a district in which the principal use of the land is for medium density, single-family residential purposes, and to provide and protect low density residential areas for those desiring that type of living environment.

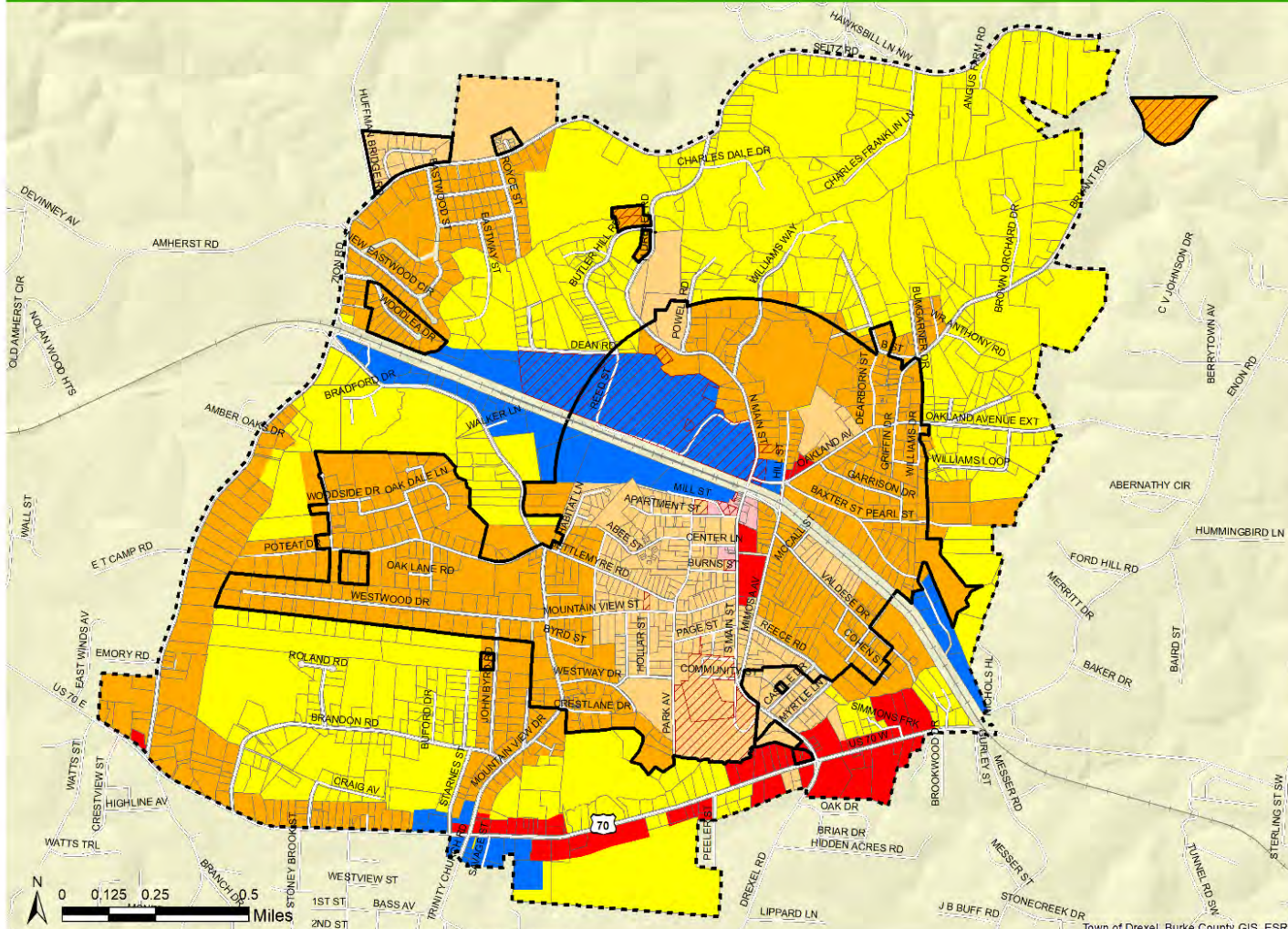
The largest residential zoning districts overall is the R-20 Residential Low Density District. This districts total 46.7 % percent of the parcels located within the planning jurisdiction of Drexel. The R-20 Residential District is for low density residential and agricultural purposes. The regulations of this district is to insure that residential development not having access to public water supplies and dependent upon septic tanks for sewage disposal will occur at sufficiently medium densities to insure a healthful environment. This district was also established to protect agricultural and residential areas from an influx of incompatible uses which would render such areas undesirable for farms and future development.

**TABLE 8-1: TOWN OF DREXEL ZONING**

<b>Drexel Zoning</b>	<b>Total Area (acres)</b>	<b>% Total Area</b>
B-1	5.8	0.2%
B-2	80.7	3.3%
M-1	166.3	6.8%
R-12	787.7	32.1%
R-20	1,145.8	46.7%
R-8	267.3	10.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,453.60</b>	<b>100%</b>



CURRENT ZONING



Legend

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Drexel Owned Properties
- Parcels
- Zoning**
- B-1
- B-2
- M-1
- R-12
- R-20
- R-8
- Rail Track
- Roads

This map is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Document Path: C:\Planning\Planning Division\DrexelComp\_Plan\_Map\_Files\Zoning.mxd  
Town of Drexel, Burke County GIS, ESRI

## EXISTING LAND USE

A land use survey of all properties in the Town of Drexel Planning Area was completed in 2020. Land uses were categorized according to the following primary uses:

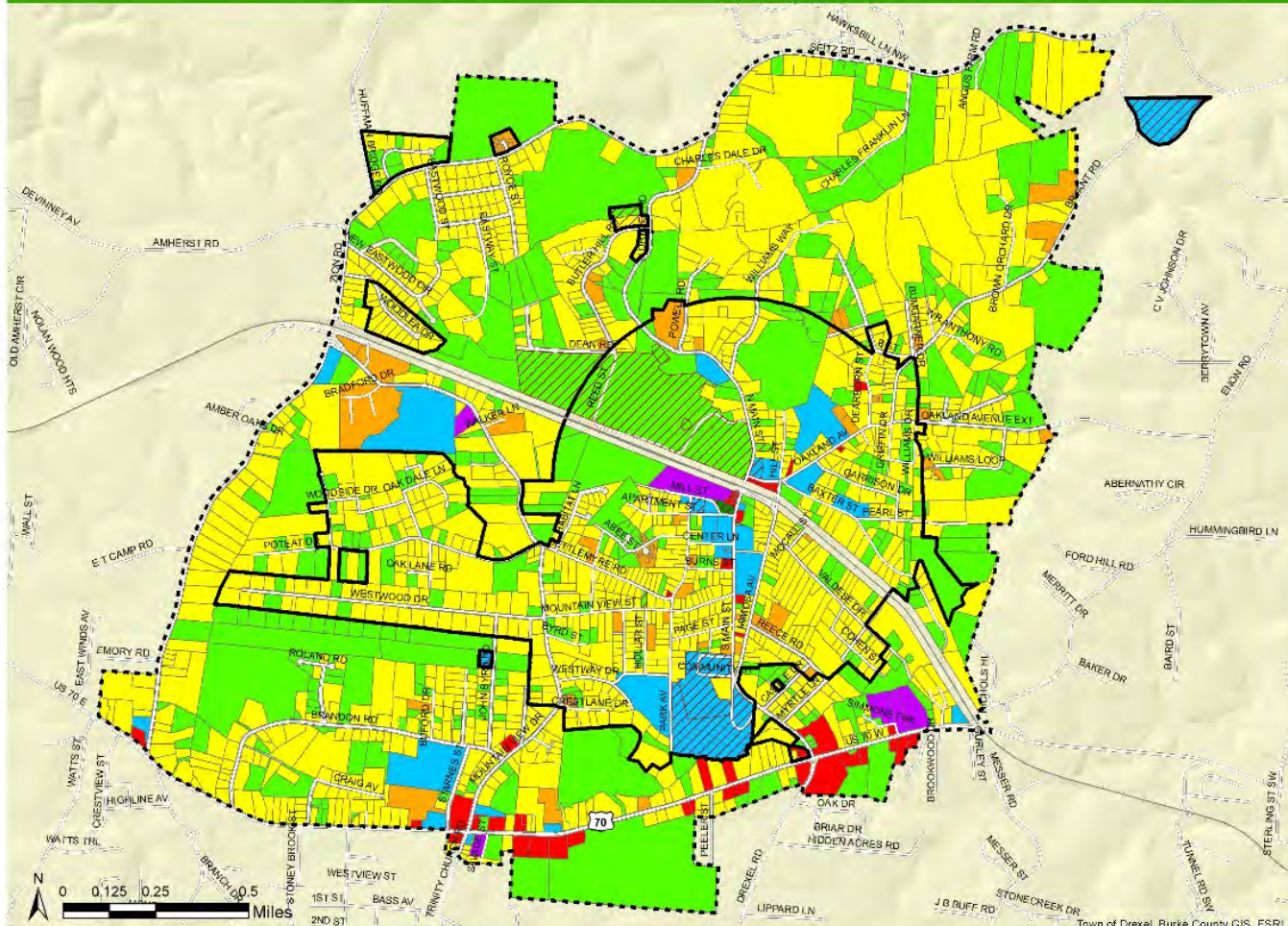
<b>Residential</b>	A parcel containing a residence.
<b>Institutional or Office</b>	A parcel containing any type of medical use concerned with the diagnosis, treatment, and care of human beings. This category also includes public services, and may be operated by a federal, state, or local governments, public or private utilities, public or private schools or colleges, churches, public agencies, or tax-exempt organizations.
<b>Commercial</b>	A parcel containing any type of activity involving the sale of goods or services for financial gain (commercial activity), but does not include parcels containing home occupations or medical offices.
<b>Industrial or Warehouse</b>	A parcel containing any type of business use or activity at a scale greater than home industry involving manufacturing, fabrication, assembly, warehousing, and/or storage.
<b>Open Space or Park</b>	A parcel designated for recreation or deemed open space.
<b>Agriculture or Undeveloped</b>	A parcel not in use or containing agriculture and/or abandoned buildings.
<b>Undeveloped</b> (*Federal, State, Local, or Private Ownership)	A parcel that is undeveloped, owned and maintained by a Federal, State, or Local Government, or private organization dedicated to protecting and conserving lands.

Figure 8-2: Town of Drexel Existing Land Use, displays types of land use across the Town; a quick glance reveals the overwhelming amount of land either developed as residential or agricultural or designated as undeveloped. Residential uses occupy the largest percentage of land use at 53.5%. 35.9% is occupied by agriculture uses or is undeveloped and could be used for agriculture purposes in the future. Table 8-2 summarizes these land uses by acreage and number of parcels.

**TABLE 8-2: EXISTING LAND USE**

<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Total Area (in Acres)</b>	<b>% Total Area (in Acres)</b>	<b>Minimum Parcel Size (in Acres)</b>	<b>Maximum Parcel Size (in Acres)</b>	<b>Average Parcel Size (in Acres)</b>
Agriculture or Undeveloped	430	887.7	35.9%	<0.1	56.7	2.0
Commercial	52	39.6	1.6%	<0.1	5.5	0.8
Industrial or Warehouse	8	21.5	0.9%	1.0	6.7	2.7
Institutional or Office	31	125.0	5.1%	<0.1	19.8	4.0
Multi-Family Residential	77	76	3.1%	<0.1	14.7	1.0
Open Space or Park	2	0.8	0.0%	0.3	0.5	0.4
Single Family Residential	1262	1,322.7	53.5%	<0.1	32.8	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,862</b>	<b>2,473.3</b>	<b>100%</b>			

## EXISTING LAND USE



### Legend

- Town Limits
- ETJ
- Drexel Owned Properties
- Parcels

### Land Use

- Agriculture or Undeveloped
- Commercial
- Industrial or Warehouse
- Institutional or Office
- Multi-Family Residential
- Open Space or Park
- Single Family Residential
- Rail Track
- Roads

This map is a graphic representation and should not be used for any other purpose. Government Policy: It is the policy of the Town of Drexel to provide information to the public in a clear and concise manner.

Town of Drexel, Burke County GIS, ESRI

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

Residential development in Town of Drexel has been clustered within municipal boundaries and Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJ). The majority of residential development has been single-family construction, with 27 new single-family homes compared to no multi-family residential units constructed between 2010 and 2020. During this time, 52% of all new residential development has occurred inside the Town limits.

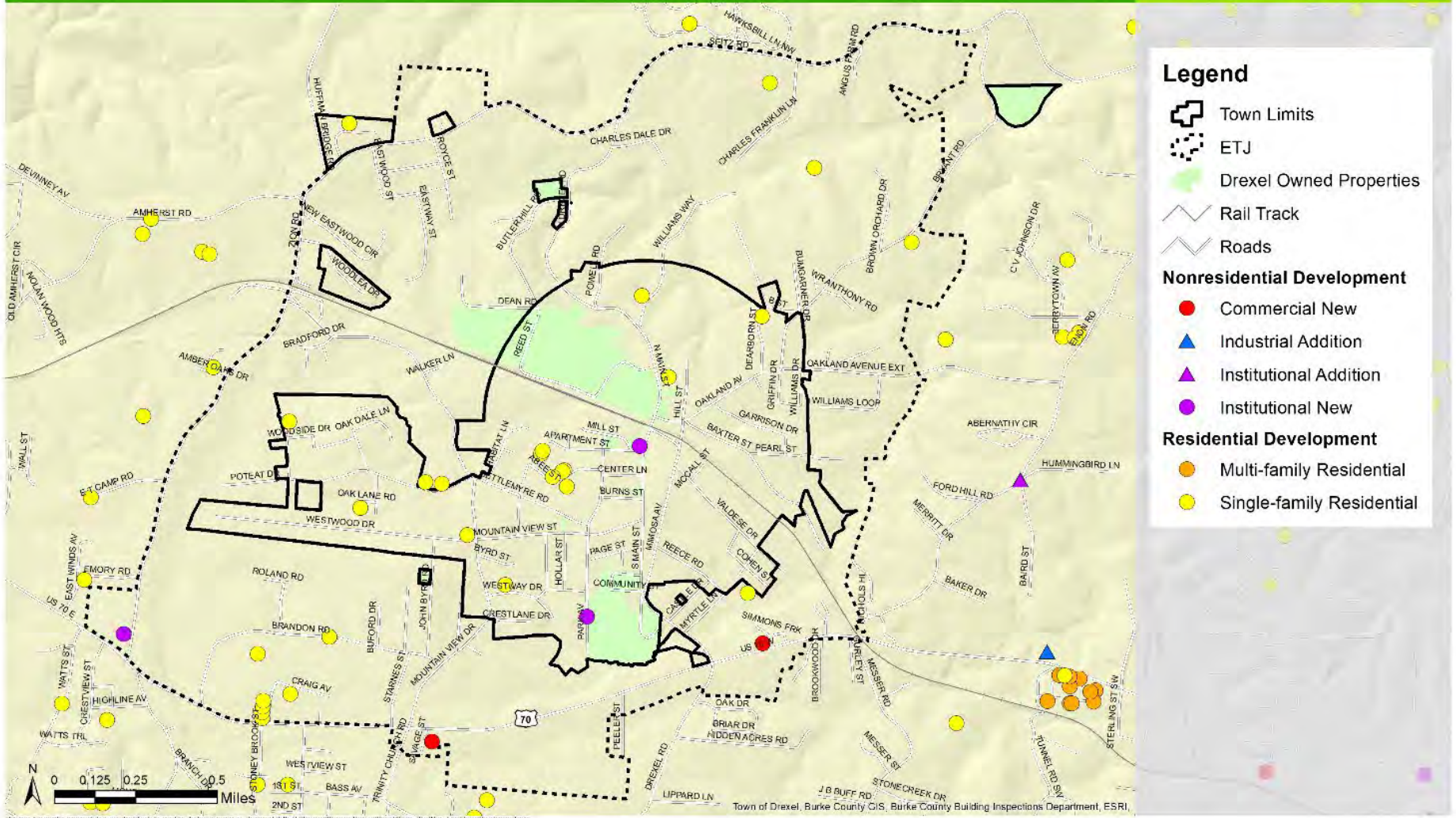
**TABLE 8-3: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2010 - 2020**

Residential	Town of Drexel	Inside Town Limits	Inside ETJ	% Inside Town Limits	% Inside ETJ
Multi-Family Residential	0	0	0	0%	0%
Single-Family Residential	27	14	13	52%	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>

From 2010 to 2020, new non-residential development was also scattered (See Figure 8-3: Residential & Nonresidential Development, 2010-2018). The majority of construction was new, rather than additions to existing structures. There were 5 non-residential construction permits issued between 2010 and 2020. From these permits, 40% of all non-residential development occurred within the Town limits.

**TABLE 8-4: NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2010 - 2020**

Non-Residential	Town of Drexel	Inside Town Limits	Inside ETJ	% Inside Town Limits	% Inside ETJ
Commercial Addition	0	0	0	0%	0%
Commercial New	2	0	2	0%	100%
Industrial Addition	0	0	0	0%	0%
Industrial New	0	0	0	0%	0%
Institutional Addition	0	0	0	0%	0%
Institutional New	3	2	1	67%	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>60%</b>



## FUTURE LAND USE & GROWTH

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee were asked to aid in the determination of what types of future development would be appropriate for the Town of Drexel, where development should be located, and what development standards it should be held to.

The Future Land Use Map (Figure 8-6) was developed to guide zoning and development decisions. Town of Drexel Staff, Planning Board and Board of Aldermen rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy decisions related to zoning, watershed regulations, and infrastructure needs. Drexel Planning staff and the Planning Board should review and update land use regulations to ensure their compatibility with desired types of development as recommended by the Steering Committee.

The possibility of a Downtown Overlay district was discussed by the Committee. This overlay district would be intended to serve the immediate downtown area. The Downtown Overlay would look into establishing building design standards, setbacks, parking, landscaping, and land uses that are appropriate for a downtown setting. The benefits of an overlay include that they can cross over multiple zoning districts and the uses in the zoning district are still allowed as long as they can meet the additional standards of the overlay. Additional design standards can be applied along North Main Street and could include architectural features such as sidewalks, structural aesthetics, parking standards, and façade details for new development.

The Committee also discussed new options for residential land uses. One of these options included allowing multi-family and accessory dwelling units in select residential districts by a Mixed Use Overlay which would permit residential and mixed uses for the industrial parcels along the railroad in downtown. This overlay could be placed in other transitional areas of the Town as well. Another option included allowing for more dense single-family residential development, predominantly around downtown.

Since there is a need for more housing options in the Town and Burke County as a whole, other options the Committee discussed to encourage a diversity of housing options include reviewing current residential zoning districts and amending and promoting appropriate districts to allow multi-family development and townhomes, to preserve established neighborhoods and encourage infill development, and to continue to encourage low and medium density developments as well as allowing high density development with adequate site improvements such as providing open space, paved parking, landscaping, and buffering.

During stakeholder meetings and through the results of public surveys, it became apparent to the Committee that citizens had a clear preference for more commercial and residential development - specifically retail, boutique retail, restaurants, grocery stores, medical offices and recreational opportunities.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

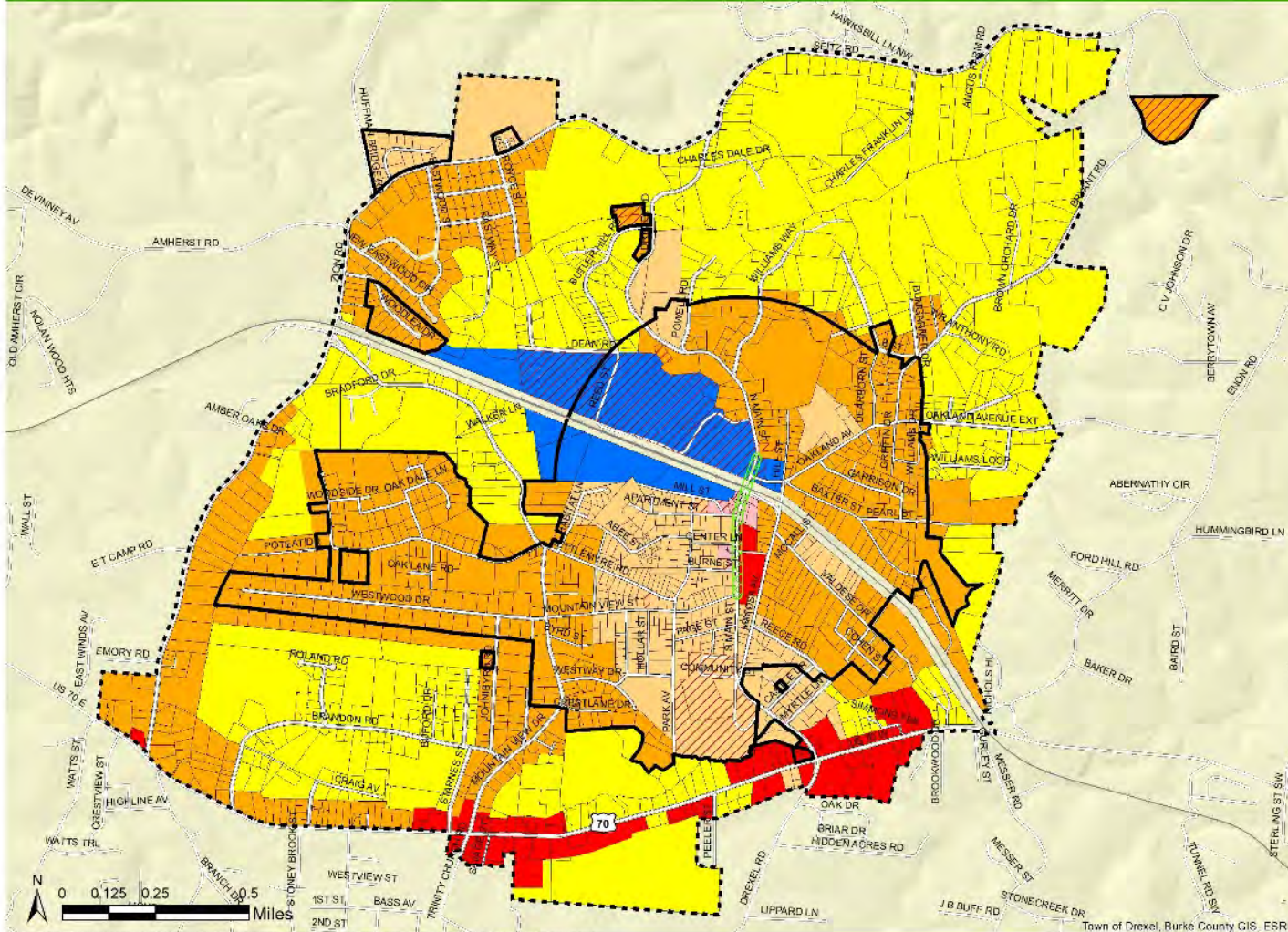
The Future Land Use Map was developed to show the Town's vision. The Drexel Planning Staff, Planning Board and Board of Aldermen rely on the Future Land Use Map to guide policy making related to zoning, watershed regulations, and infrastructure needs. Land use will change over time. Encouraging a more centralized development pattern will allow the Town to avoid the high costs associated with extending water and sewer infrastructure to areas lacking service.

**Future Land Use Designations:** The following future land use designations defined below are shown on the Future Land Use Map on the following page.

- **High Density Residential:** Multi-Family, Single-Family on smaller lots (<8,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as by-right permitted use.
- **Medium Density Residential:** Single-Family and limited Multi-Family (duplex, triplex, ADUs) as by-right permitted use. Other Multi-Family permitted by approved Special Use Permit.
- **Low Density Residential:** Single-Family only as by-right permitted use. Potentially limited duplex and/or ADUs by approved Special Use Permit.
- **Industrial:** Industrial land uses permitted by-right. Same uses allowed as listed in the current zoning ordinance for the M-I District. Examples include all uses listed under Highway Business plus: Manufacture, Process or Fabrication of animal feeds, textiles, electrical products, glass, appliances, machine tools, plastics, rubber products, wood products, etc.
- **Highway Business Commercial:** Same uses allowed as listed in the current zoning ordinance. Examples include all uses listed under Neighborhood and Central Business plus: Animal Hospitals, Assembly Halls, Breweries, Distilleries, Wineries, Building Supplies, Clubs, Trucking Terminals, Funeral Services, Large Child Care Centers, Adult Care Facilities, Wholesale and Warehouse Establishments. Examples of permitted uses with conditions: Cellular Towers, Electronic Gaming/Sweepstakes, Live Music Venues, Mixed Use Buildings.
- **Downtown Business Commercial:** Same uses allowed as listed in the current zoning ordinance. Examples include all uses listed under Neighborhood Business plus: Alcoholic Beverage Stores, Automobile Parks and Supply Stores, Automobile Parking Lots/Structures, Car Wash/Detail Shop, Restaurants (by-right), Feed and Seed Stores, Outdoor Displays, Retail Establishments (department, clothing, sporting goods, etc.), Theaters. Examples of permitted uses with conditions: Mixed Use Buildings, Recreation and Amusement Facility, Wine Shop/Bar, Craft Beer Shop/Taproom.
- **Downtown Overlay:** This district would be intended to serve the immediate downtown area. The Downtown Overlay would look into establishing building design standards, setbacks, parking, landscaping, and land uses that are appropriate for a downtown setting.



## FUTURE LAND USE



### Legend

-  Town Limits
-  ETJ
-  Drexel Owned Properties
-  Parcels
-  Downtown Overlay
- Land Use**
-  High Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Low-Density Residential
-  Industrial
-  Downtown Business Commercial
-  Highway Business Commercial
-  Rail Track
-  Roads

# LAND USE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporate land use design standards to establish a Downtown Overlay District along Main Street from Mountain View Street to Butler Hill Road.
  - a. Develop design regulations for properties along Main Street to include architectural features such as sidewalks, signage, parking standards, and façade details for new development.
  - b. Consider installing art/signage/landscaping and other streetscaping along Main Street and town gateways.
2. Establish the town as a destination that encourages a diversity of commercial and retail options.
  - a. Work with land owners to apply for improvement grants to enhance the appearance of downtown.
  - b. Research options to discourage vacant commercial buildings and use of commercial buildings for storage.
3. Incorporate land use design standards to establish a Mixed-Use Overlay District for the industrial parcels along the railroad in downtown.
  - a. Review and update zoning regulations to allow for mixed industrial, commercial, and residential uses within the mixed-use overlay.
  - b. Develop design regulations such as sidewalks, signage, parking standards, and façade details for new development.
4. Update zoning regulations to encourage a diversity of housing options.
  - a. Review current residential zoning districts and amend appropriate districts to permit multi-family dwellings and townhomes.
  - b. Preserve established neighborhoods and encourage infill development.
  - c. Continue to encourage low and medium density developments as well as allowing high density development with adequate site improvements such as providing open space, paved parking, landscaping, and buffering.
  - d. Evaluate appropriate types of residential dwellings within residential zoning districts.



# Recommendations



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Town of Drexel Comprehensive Plan is intended to be an ever-changing document. The Plan should be evaluated to ensure it stays relevant as the Town grows and changes. The Plan’s essential guiding principles, goals and policies should remain largely unchanged to prevent undermining the overall intentions and integrity of the long-range planning process. Any changes to the Comprehensive Plan should be facilitated through the Advisory Committee and Planning Board and recommended to the Board of Aldermen.

## TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>TR-1</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Require adequate transportation access to all new and redevelopments in order to provide orderly and efficient traffic flow and maintain current minimum design standards.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluate transportation access to the Drexel Properties Site and provide flexible improvement scenarios for the realignment of Butler Hill Road and the extension of Reed Street.</li> <li>b. Proactive enforcement of subdivision regulations to ensure installation of infrastructure as development occurs.</li> <li>c. Work with NCDOT to insure that there is proper ingress and egress (i.e. driveway permits) for commercial and industrial uses.</li> <li>d. Monitor the use of the Greenway Transit route through Drexel and adjust as needed.</li> </ul>		<p>Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Town of Drexel</p> <p>WPCOG MPO</p>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		Updated streets, new streets, pedestrian improvements.

<b>TR-2</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Consider roadway modernization for the following corridors, along with any other identified areas in need of safety improvements.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Along the N Main Street and N Drexel Road corridor from the intersection of Oakland Ave to the intersection of Amherst Road.</li> <li>b. Along the Drexel Road corridor from the intersection of US 70 to the intersection of I-40.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Town of Drexel</li> <li>• WPCOG MPO</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		New roadway modernizations as recommended by adopted plans.

<b>TR-3</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Consider enhancement of the following intersections, along with any other identified areas in need of safety and traffic flow improvements.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The intersection of US 70 and Drexel Road.</li> <li>b. The intersection of Mountain View Drive and Mountain View Street.</li> <li>c. The intersection of Mountain View Drive and US 70.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Town of Drexel</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		New intersection enhancements as recommended by adopted plans.

<b>TR-4</b>
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<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Create gateways and implement design standards that enhance streetscape and improve traffic flow.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Incorporate decorative directional signage to town attractions and gathering areas.</li> <li>b. Create gateways and enhance streetscaping along: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. A. S Main Street and N Main St from Town Limits to Drexel Apartments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those serving on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) for Town of Drexel</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• Planning Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> <li>• Architects/Engineers</li> </ul>	5 years to ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		New design standards implemented into ordinances. Gateway enhances designed and implemented.

## RESOURCES & SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

RS-1		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Refer to inventory analysis of existing water, sewer, and electrical infrastructure.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prioritize aging infrastructure in need of maintenance or repair.</li> <li>b. Refer to areas in the Future Land Use Map that have been switched from industrial to residential to estimate for new future utility demand.</li> <li>c. Inventory current capacity of utility infrastructure servicing the Drexel Properties Site for future development.</li> <li>d. Monitor for potential grants from federal, state, and local and nonprofit organizations for infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Manager</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Engineer</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> <li>• Engineering services</li> </ul>	3-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>	Inventory utilities, create prioritization plan, look for and obtain grants, new infrastructure.	

RS-2		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Utilize new strategies to promote growth in volunteer participation in Town services, events, and beautification efforts.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct outreach and education to better inform the citizens of the need for volunteers.</li> <li>b. Establish a partnership with local schools for volunteer service hours.</li> <li>c. Establish a partnership with the probation office for community service hours.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Manager</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen volunteers</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Probation office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant Writing</li> <li>• Facilitation</li> </ul>	5 years to ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>	Form volunteer committees, facilitate projects, and implement projects.	



# PARKS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>PR-1</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Promote walkability and establish trail connections.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<p>a. Evaluate a possible trail connection via Howards Creek and N Main St to the planned Catawba River Trail, as the river trail progresses.</p> <p>b. Promote sidewalks and crosswalks connecting residential areas to recreational areas and trails.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Staff/Planning</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG MPO</li> <li>• PARTF</li> <li>• LWTF</li> <li>• Burke County</li> <li>• Foothills Conservancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning/WPCOG</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> <li>• Grant Writing</li> </ul>	5 years to ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the Parks and Recreation Plan.</li> <li>• Work to obtain funding</li> <li>• Trail construction.</li> </ul>

<b>PR-2</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Maintain and enhance existing recreational facilities in the Town.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<p>a. Renovate and modernize R.O. Huffman Recreation Center.</p> <p>b. Expand recreational opportunities provided at R.O. Huffman Recreation Center.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Staff/Planning</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• PARTF</li> <li>• LWTF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation of ideas</li> <li>• Grant Writing</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovation of R.O. Huffman</li> <li>• Expansion of recreational programs</li> </ul>

<b>PR-3</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Continue to pursue the recommendations provided in the Drexel Parks and Recreation Plan so that grant funding can be obtained from Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF).	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
a. Continue to pursue other grant opportunities for recreational funding.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• WPCOG Community Development Staff</li> <li>• Town Staff/Planning</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• PARTF</li> <li>• LWTF</li> </ul>	GIS/Mapping Grant Writing	Ongoing
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the Parks and Recreation Plan.</li> <li>• Obtain funding</li> </ul>

# NATURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>NR-1</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Continue to protect Town of Drexel’s natural resources through incentives and ordinances designed to help preserve the rural areas of the Town and safeguard the environment.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<p>a. Continue to enforce the WS-IV Water Supply Watershed Regulations to reduce flooding and improve drinking water quality.</p> <p>b. Work with the Foothills Conservancy to evaluate land acquisition proposals that may be eligible for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) or NC Land and Water Fund for grant funding.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> <li>• Town Planning</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PARTF</li> <li>• LWTF</li> <li>• Foothills Conservancy</li> <li>• WPCOG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG Water Resources Program</li> <li>• WPCOG grant writing assistance</li> </ul>	1-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications submitted to PARTF and LWTF.</li> <li>• Measures put in place to protect natural resources.</li> <li>• Properties under conservation easement.</li> </ul>

<b>NR-2</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Protect the historic fabric of Town of Drexel through preservation and by assigning importance to structures of known historical value.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<p>a. Maintain structures of value that are listed, determined eligible, or on the study list for the National Register of Historic places.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Manager</li> <li>• Town Planning</li> <li>• Interested Citizens</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NC State Historic Preservation Office</li> <li>• Foothills Conservancy</li> <li>• Citizen Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• WPCOG grant writing assistance</li> </ul>	1-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		Structures added to the National Register of Historic Places.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

<b>ED-1</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Promote economic development strategies that will aid in recruitment of viable businesses and job growth.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create commercial and industrial marketing materials to promote available sites in the Town’s planning jurisdiction.</li> <li>b. Promote available sites for new residential infill and subdivisions.</li> <li>c. Maintain a close relationship with Burke Development, Inc. to keep Drexel actively involved in industrial and economic development potential.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burke Development Inc.</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burke County</li> <li>• WPCOG Community Development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• Outreach/Marketing programs</li> <li>• Facebook/Website coordinator</li> </ul>	3-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		Marketing materials produced/new businesses/Facebook and/or website marketing.

<b>ED-2</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Work to attract young adults, families, and new residents.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase the walkability of the Town by adding and maintaining sidewalks and establishing trail connections.</li> <li>b. Enhance the Main Street corridor by adding streetscaping, providing façade grant programs to property owners, and encouraging development that enhances Downtown as a designation.</li> <li>c. Improve access to high speed internet.</li> <li>d. Improve the tax base by evaluating housing stock and developing strategies to increase housing values.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Burke Development Inc.</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG MPO</li> <li>• Planning Board</li> <li>• WPCOG Data Analyst</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• Grant writing</li> <li>• Architect</li> </ul>	3-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		Rise in population in younger age bracket/increase in parks, open spaces, and walking/increase in small businesses

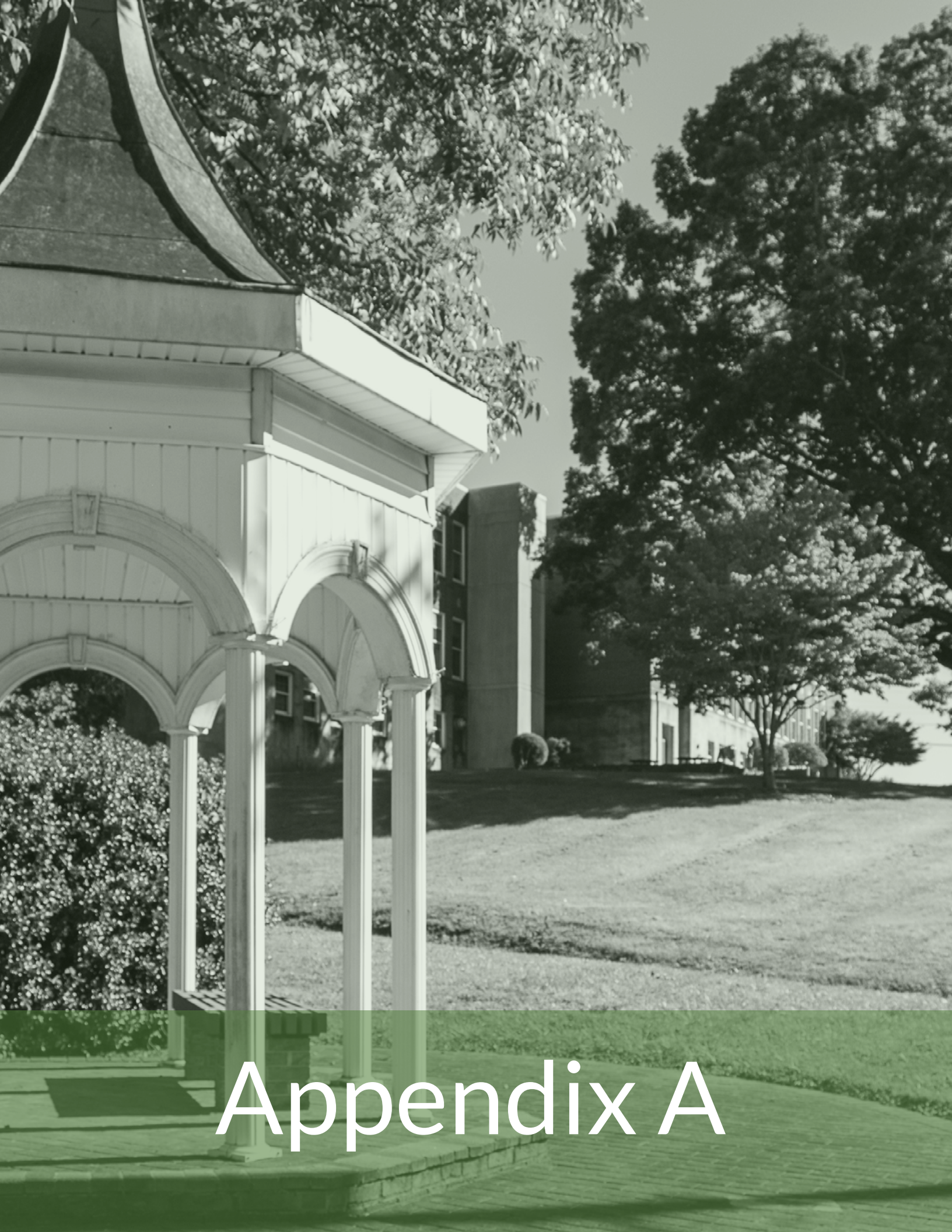
# LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

LU-1		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Incorporate land use design standards to establish a Downtown Overlay District along Main Street from Mountain View Street to Butler Hill Road.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
a. Develop design regulations for properties along Main Street to include architectural features such as sidewalks, signage, parking standards, and façade details for new development. b. Consider installing art/signage/landscaping and other streetscaping along Main Street and Town gateways.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCDOT</li> <li>• WPCOG MPO</li> <li>• WPCOG Community Development</li> <li>• Citizen Volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> <li>• Architect/Engineer</li> </ul>	3-8 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of new design guidelines.</li> <li>• Implementation of art at gateway.</li> <li>• Number of businesses that use new design standards.</li> </ul>

LU-2		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Establish the town as a destination that encourages a diversity of commercial and retail options.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
a. Work with land owners to apply for improvement grants to enhance the appearance of downtown. b. Research options to discourage vacant commercial buildings and use of commercial buildings for storage.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Town Staff</li> <li>• Town Planning Board</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG Community Development</li> <li>• WPCOG Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design guidelines</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> <li>• Planning Staff</li> </ul>	3-8 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Downtown Appearance.</li> <li>• Grant funding obtained.</li> <li>• New grant applicants</li> </ul>

<b>LU - 3</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Incorporate land use design standards to establish a Mixed-Use Overlay District for the industrial parcels along the railroad in downtown.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review and update zoning regulations to allow for mixed industrial, commercial, and residential uses within the mixed-use overlay.</li> <li>b. Develop design regulations such as sidewalks, signage, parking standards, and façade details for new development.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> <li>• Town Planning Board</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG Planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> </ul>	3-8 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of new ordinances.</li> <li>• New construction follows new ordinances.</li> </ul>

<b>LU-4</b>		
<b>STRATEGY NARRATIVE:</b>	Update zoning regulations to encourage a diversity of housing options.	
<b>KEY ACTIONS:</b>		<b>PROJECT INITIATOR(S):</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Review current residential zoning districts and amend appropriate districts to permit multi-family dwellings and townhomes.</li> <li>b. Preserve established neighborhoods and encourage infill development.</li> <li>c. Continue to encourage low and medium density developments as well as allowing high density development with adequate site improvements such as providing open space, paved parking, landscaping, and buffering.</li> <li>d. Evaluate appropriate types of residential dwellings within residential zoning districts.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board of Aldermen</li> <li>• Town Staff</li> <li>• Town Planning Board</li> <li>• Town Planning Staff</li> </ul>
<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERS:</b>	<b>RESOURCES/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDED:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAME</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPCOG</li> <li>• Developers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning staff</li> <li>• WPCOG Planning</li> <li>• GIS/Mapping</li> </ul>	3-5 years
<b>MEASUREABLE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordinance Amendments</li> <li>• Number of new multi-family developments.</li> <li>• Diversification of housing.</li> </ul>



# Appendix A





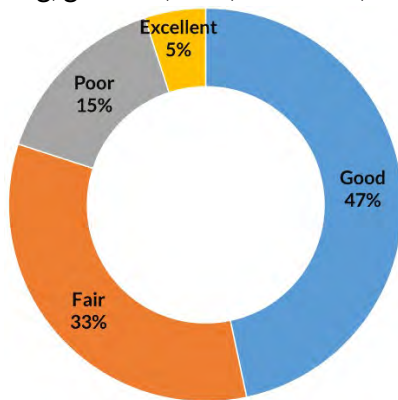
# APPENDIX A: PUBLIC SURVEY

## ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the Comprehensive Planning process, an online public survey was released so that members of the public could provide feedback concerning the following: Community Character, Economic Development, Land Use and Development, Downtown, Recreation, Housing, and Transportation. The survey was available online from May 21<sup>st</sup> to June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021. There were 62 total participants that completed the survey, below are their responses.

### Question 1

How would you rate the strength of community identity/character in Drexel? (Do you feel that your community is supportive, inviting, genuine, safe, desirable, and/or proud?)

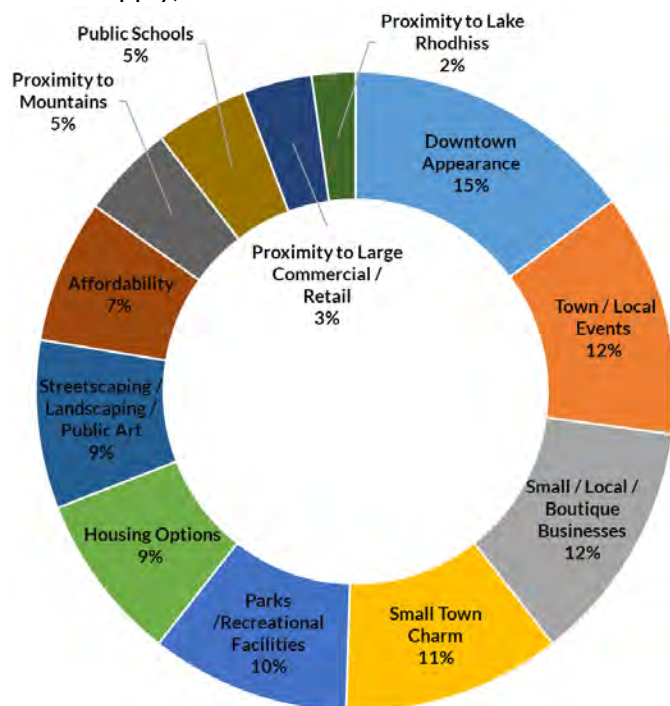


Answer	Percent
Good	47%
Fair	33%
Poor	15%
Excellent	5%

\* Based on 60 responses

### Question 2

Which of the following aspects do you believe will maintain or strengthen community identity/character? (check all that apply)

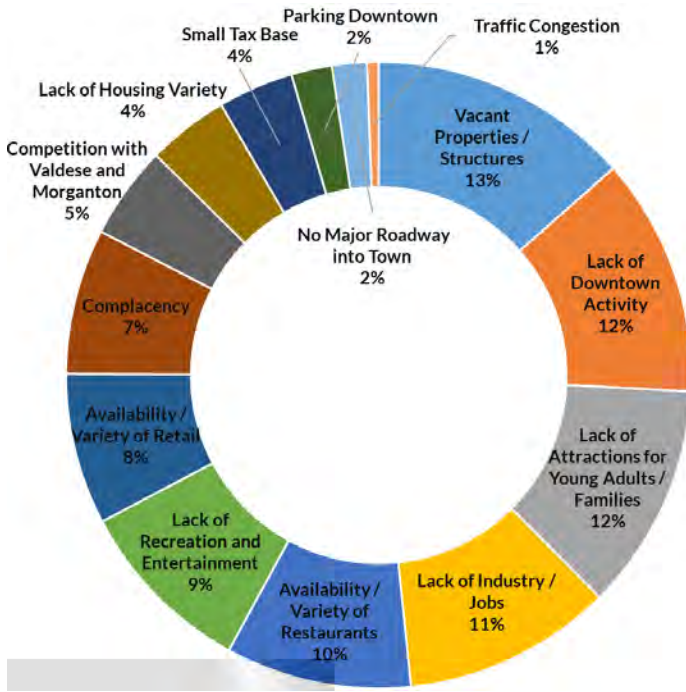


Answer	Percent
Downtown Appearance	15%
Town / Local Events	12%
Small / Local / Boutique Businesses	12%
Parks /Recreational Facilities	10%
Housing Options	9%
Streetscaping / Landscaping / Public Art	9%
Affordability	7%
Proximity to Mountains	5%
Public Schools	5%
Proximity to Large Commercial / Retail	3%
Proximity to Lake Rhodhiss	2%

\* Based on 317 responses

**Question 3**

What aspects do you believe will threaten or weaken the community? (check all that apply)



Answer	Percent
Vacant Properties / Structures	14%
Lack of Downtown Activity	12%
Lack of Attractions for Young Adults / Families	12%
Lack of Industry / Jobs	11%
Availability / Variety of Restaurants	10%
Lack of Recreation and Entertainment	9%
Availability / Variety of Retail	8%
Complacency	8%
Competition with Valdese and Morganton	5%
Lack of Housing Variety	4%
Small Tax Base	4%
Parking Downtown	2%
No Major Roadway into Town	2%
Traffic Congestion	1%

\* Based on 333 responses

**Question 3 Follow-up**

If not listed above, what other aspects do you identify as a community weakness?

Response	Percent
Poor property maintenance	29%
Crime	12%
Lack of Identity/mission	12%
Bar attracting non-locals	12%
Need for housing	6%
Vacant properties	6%
Lack of connection to major road	6%
Lack of things to do	6%
Mobile homes	6%
Loose Animals	6%

\*Based on and 17 topic points discussed in 14 responses.

**Question 4**

What do you like most about the Town of Drexel?

Response	Percent
Overall Small Town Feel	49%
Safety	19%
History	7%
Fond Memories	6%
Affordability	4%
Good Services	3%
Schools	3%
Proximity to other Areas	3%
Feeling of Potential	3%
Un-coded**	1%
Nothing	1%
Natural Setting	1%

\*Based on and 70 topic points discussed in 51 responses.

\*\* Un-Coded are responses that entered, but were illegible or provided no content.

**Question 5**

Describe a vision that you feel embodies the future of the Town of Drexel, or list physical attributes that you want to see.

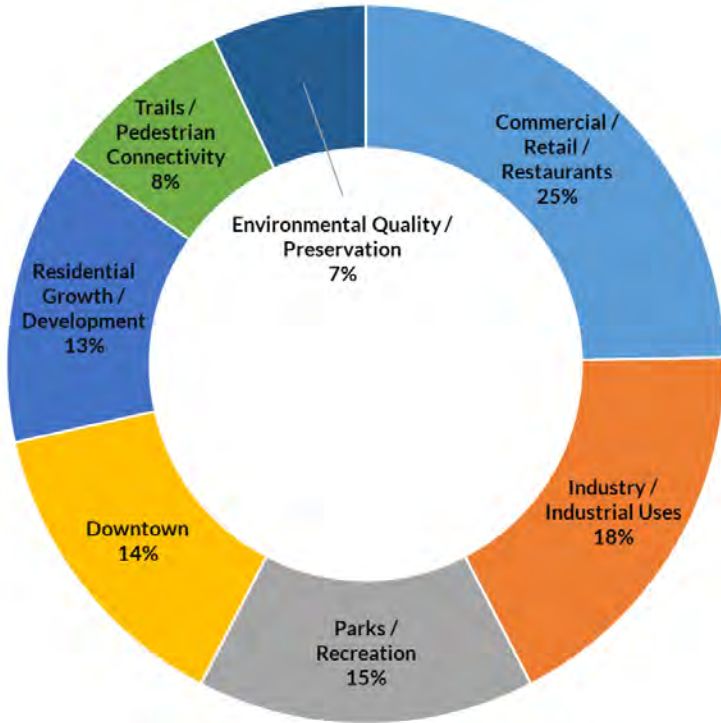
Response	Percent
Attract new businesses	27%
Clean Up Blight	19%
Revitalize Downtown	13%
Upgrade parks	11%
More events	9%
Improve Vision/Identity	6%
More restaurants	3%
Un-coded**	3%
Improve connectivity	3%
Caution of "unreasonable" expectations that may damage town	1%
Nothing	1%
Bring in young leadership	1%
Family Activities	1%
Golf Course	1%

\*Based on and 70 topic points discussed in 54 responses.

\*\* Un-Coded are responses that entered, but were illegible or provided no content.

**Question 6**

What factors are important to the economic vitality of the town? (choose 3)

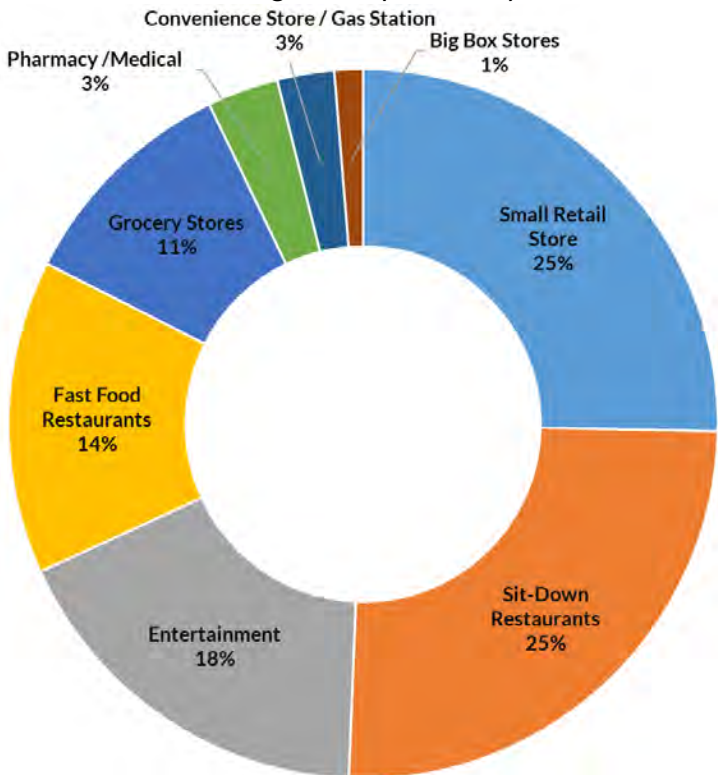


Answer	Percent
Commercial / Retail / Restaurants	25%
Industry / Industrial Uses	18%
Parks / Recreation	15%
Downtown	14%
Residential Growth / Development	13%
Trails / Pedestrian Connectivity	8%
Environmental Quality / Preservation	7%

\*Based on 158 responses

**Question 7**

Which of the following retail options do you feel that there are not enough of in town or nearby area? (choose 3)

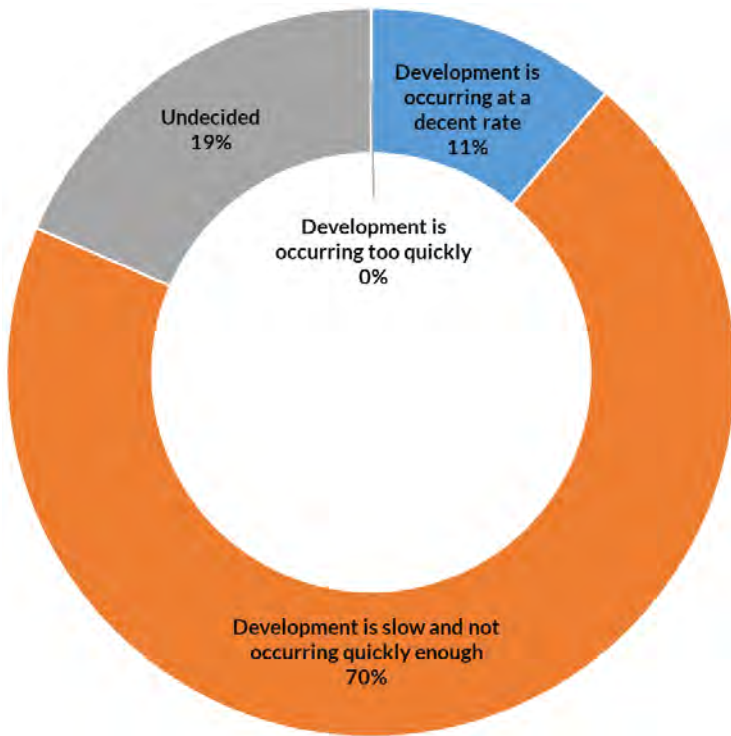


Answer	Percent
Small Retail Store	25%
Sit-Down Restaurants	25%
Entertainment	18%
Fast Food Restaurants	14%
Grocery Stores	10%
Pharmacy / Medical	3%
Convenience Store / Gas Station	3%
Big Box Stores	1%

\*Based on 154 responses

**Question 8**

How do you feel about the pace of growth and development in the Drexel planning area (this includes the town limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction) over the past 10 years? (choose 1)

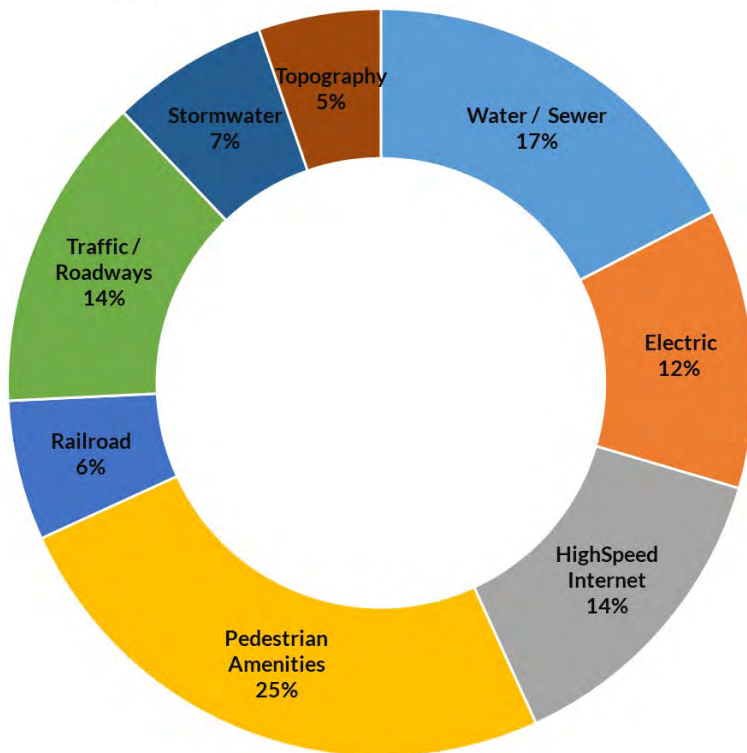


Answer	Percent
Development is occurring at a decent rate	11%
Development is slow and not occurring quickly enough	70%
Undecided	19%
Development is occurring too quickly	0%

\*Based on 54 responses

**Question 9**

What are the biggest infrastructure / environmental issues that impact future development in the Town? (check all that apply)



Answer	Percent
Water / Sewer	17%
Electric	12%
High Speed Internet	14%
Pedestrian Amenities	25%
Railroad	6%
Traffic / Roadways	14%
Stormwater	7%
Topography	5%

\*Based on 132 responses

**Question 10**

What is your vision for Downtown Drexel? Would you like to see more commercial property, building façade updates, landscaping, lighting, restaurants, outdoor seating, etc.?

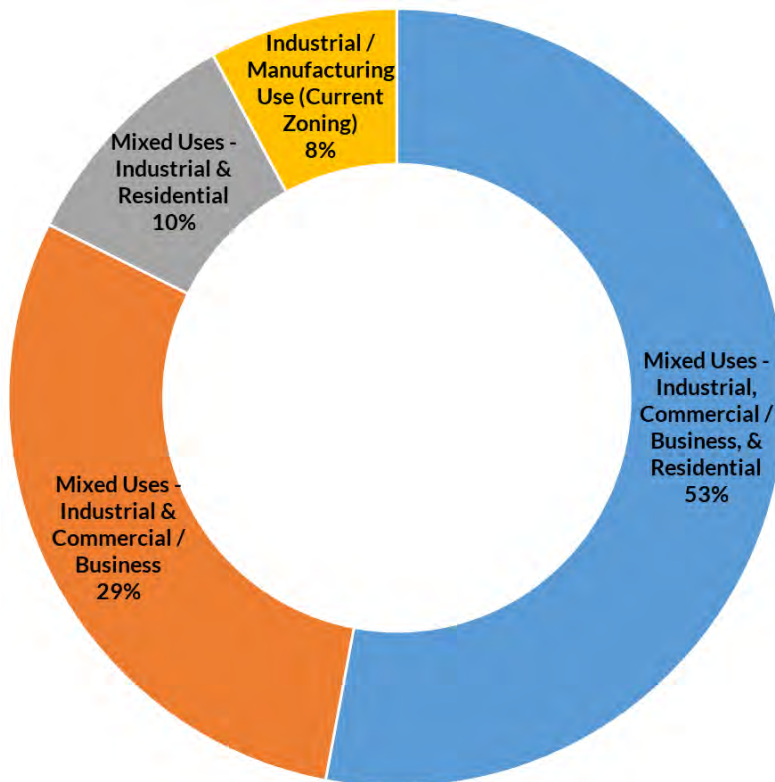
Response	Percent
General downtown renovations and revitalization is needed	25%
Un-coded**	25%
Improve physical look of downtown	13%
More restaurants	9%
Events	9%
Attracting jobs	6%
More retail	6%
Walkability	3%
Trails, parks and recreation	3%

\*Based on and 32 topic points discussed in 28 responses.

\*\* Un-Coded are responses that entered, but were illegible or provided no content.

**Question 11**

What type of development would you like to see take place on the Drexel Properties site (the old Drexel Heritage Furniture 60+ acre property located beside the railroad in downtown).

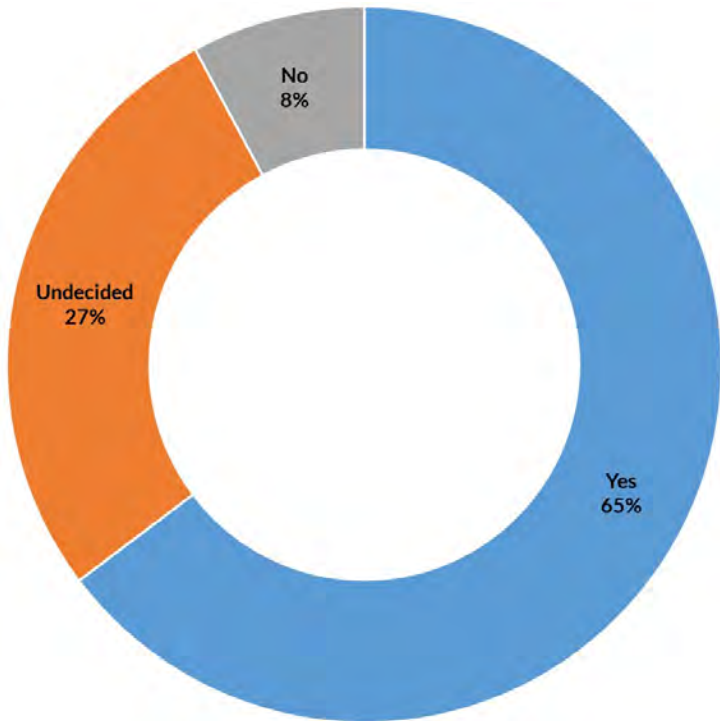


Answer	Percent
Mixed Uses - Industrial, Commercial / Business, & Residential	53%
Mixed Uses - Industrial & Commercial / Business	29%
Mixed Uses - Industrial & Residential	10%
Industrial / Manufacturing Use (Current Zoning)	8%

\* Based on 51 responses

**Question 12**

As part of the Catawba River Trail Project, a connector trail is proposed to connect downtown Drexel to the Catawba River Trail (north of town limits). Would you like to see the town develop this trail connection?



Answer	Percent
Yes	65%
Undecided	27%
No	8%

\* Based on 51 responses

**Question 13**

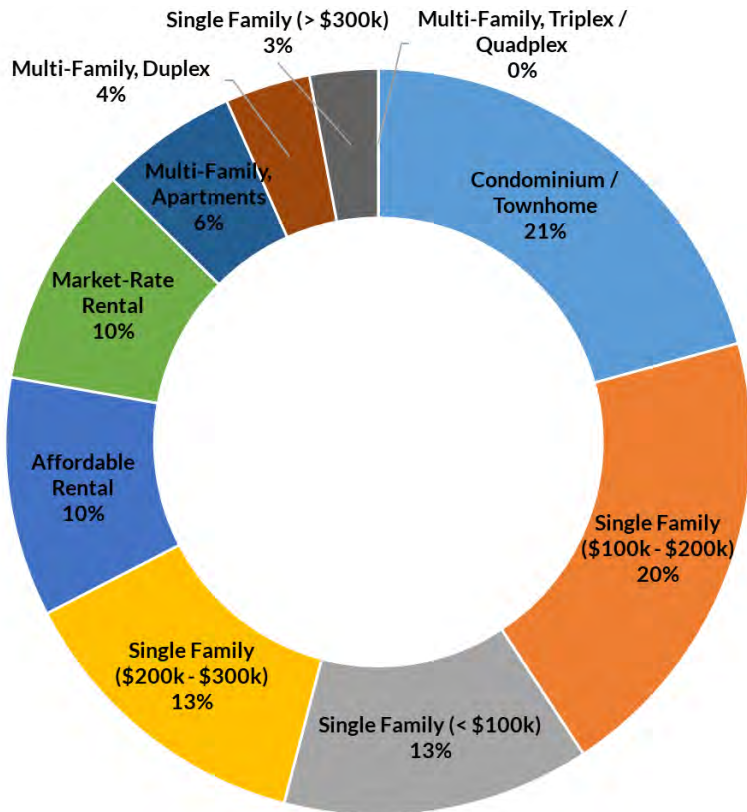
What renovations / expansions would you like to see at R.O. Huffman Recreation Center?

Response	Percent
General renovations	21%
Pool/Water Feature	19%
New types of programs/events	13%
Auditorium/Event Center	10%
Improve park	8%
Exercise Equipment	4%
Improve operating hours	4%
New HVAC	2%
Commitment to maintenance	2%
Improve tennis courts	2%
Connection to Downtown	2%
New Building	2%
Landscaping and beautification	2%
WiFi	2%
None	2%
Improve marketing/communication	2%
Don't know	2%
Ice skating	2%

\*Based on and 52 topic points discussed in 35 responses.

**Question 14**

Which of the following housing types do you feel that there are not enough of in the town? (select top 4)

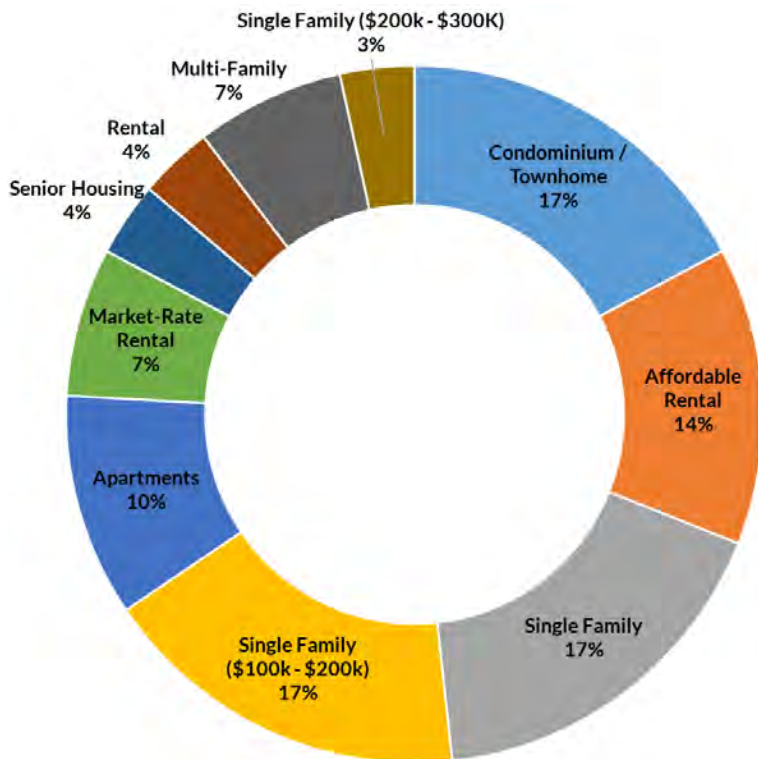


Answer	Percent
Condominium / Townhome	21%
Single Family (\$100k - \$200k)	20%
Single Family (< \$100k)	13%
Single Family (\$200k - \$300k)	13%
Affordable Rental	10%
Market-Rate Rental	10%
Multi-Family, Apartments	6%
Multi-Family, Duplex	4%
Single Family (> \$300k)	3%
Multi-Family, Triplex / Quadplex	0%

\* Based on 135 responses

**Question 15** – follow-up to Question 14

Of those housing options listed above, which one do you believe is needed the most?



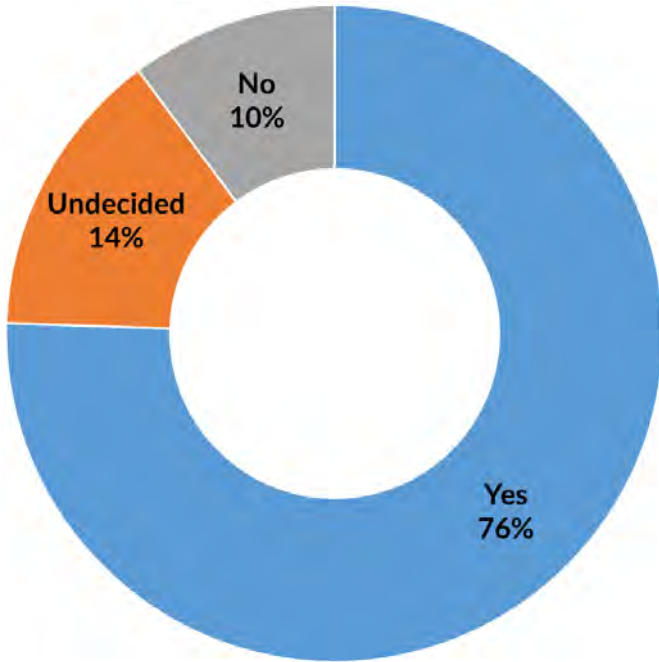
Answer	Percent
Condominium / Townhome	17%
Affordable Rental	14%
Single Family	17%
Single Family (\$100k - \$200k)	17%
Apartment	10%
Market-Rate Rental	7%
Senior Housing	3%
Rental	3%
Multi-Family	7%
Single Family (\$200k - \$300k)	3%

\* Based on 29 responses



**Question 16**

Would you be in favor of enhancing gateway appearance on South Main Street?

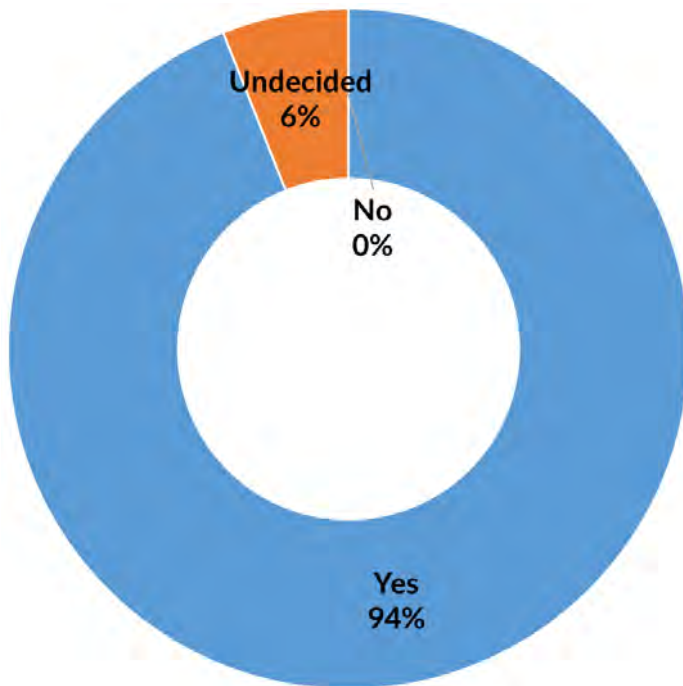


Answer	Percent
Yes	76%
Undecided	14%
No	10%

\* Based on 29 responses

**Question 17**

Would you be in favor of enhancing streetscaping along Main Street to downtown? (this would include enhancing sidewalks and crosswalks, street lighting, landscaping, benches, signage, etc.)

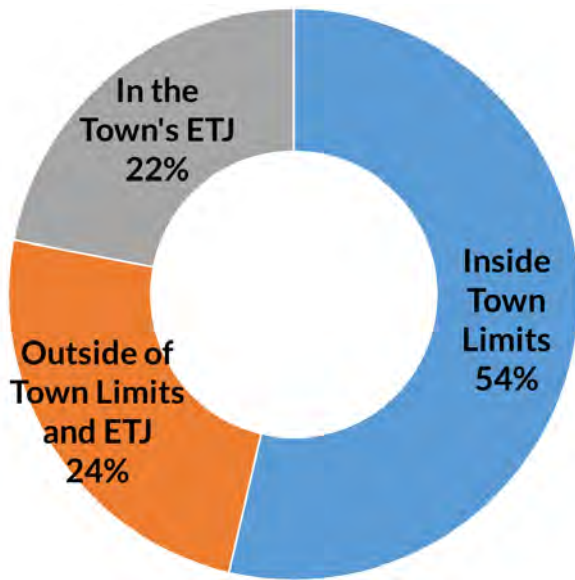


Answer	Percent
Yes	94%
Undecided	6%
No	0%

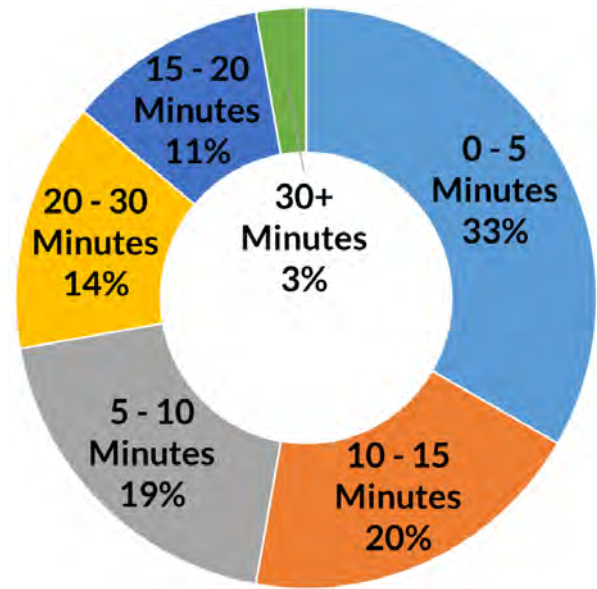
\* Based on 50 responses

**Demographics – Question 1**

Where do you live?



\* Based on 41 responses



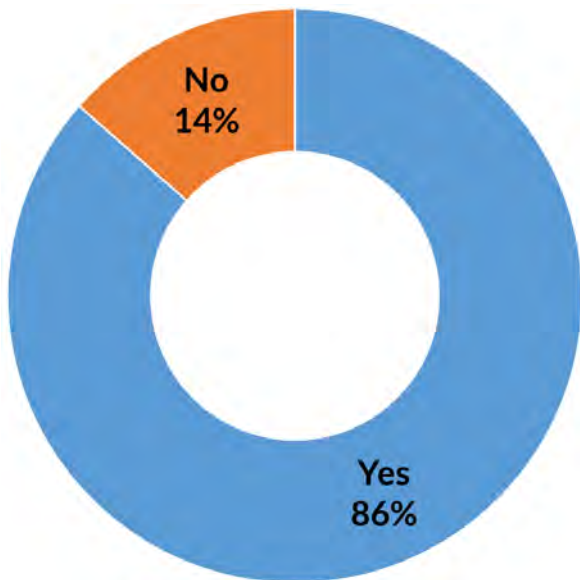
\* Based on 36 responses

**Demographics – Question 4**

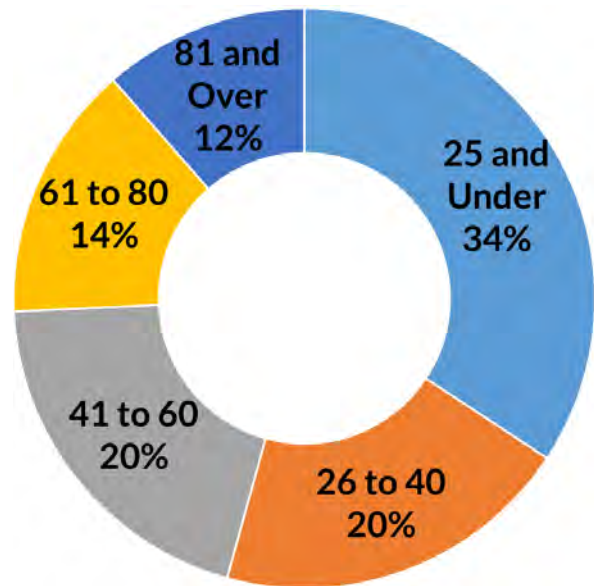
What is your age range?

**Demographics – Question 2**

Do you work / own a business in Drexel?



\* Based on 37 responses



\* Based on 35 responses

**Demographics – Question 3**

How far do you commute for work? (minutes)



# Appendix B



# APPENDIX B: TOWN OF DREXEL COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & RECREATION PLAN 2017