

# CHAPTER 4: VISION, GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND POLICIES

## PART 1: Vision Statement

The Vision Statement is a narrative that paints a picture and shared vision of what the Town can achieve following the adoption of the Land Use Plan 2032. The narrative is intended to be ambitious and inspirational, depicting the community's collective desires and providing an overlay for other community plans, policies, and decisions, as well as a guide to actions in the wider community.

### Town of Sims Land Use Plan - 2032

#### Vision Statement

The residents and visitors of the Town of Sims and its surrounding community would witness the following in the year 2032.....

Sims continues to preserve its **historic small-town atmosphere** within the **rural character of its surrounding area** to foster a strong sense of belonging for its residents. The Town is transitioning with its new residents in 21<sup>st</sup> century homes while maintaining a safe and secure community for all.

The **Downtown Business district** is redeveloping and expanding with a diverse mix of boutique and specialty shops and an outdoor café accessible by sidewalks.

A shopping center was just completed on the outer edge of the town's ETJ and an assembly operation located in Gateway North district with the assistance of our county and state economic development partners.

A grand opening is scheduled at the **new Community Center** for socially engaging events. The residents enjoy a high quality of life and services while participating in **community events and governmental activities**.

The Town continues to provide **safe interconnectivity between neighborhoods** through transportation planning and resources.

The community **maintains its unique and scenic natural systems and open spaces** of its surrounding rural area through a combination of land use policies, regulations, and stewardship.

The Town remains committed to the protection of our environment, life and property through the planning for flooding and storm drainage with the assistance of planning and resource partners.

*Authored by Vision Statement Sub-committee (Donnie Sherrod, Earl Campbell, Matt Creech, Miranda Boykin, and Don Payne) and consented to by the LUP Advisory Committee.*

## **PART 2: Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Policies**

During any land use and development planning process, community participants will tend to identify their respective needs and issues, which, in turn, will fall into the several major land use and community development elements. In the case of this Plan, the following seven Land Use and Community Development Elements (or compartments) were identified: **Community Facilities, Transportation, Residential Development and Preservation of Neighborhoods, Economic Development, Natural and Environmental Resources, Appearance/Character/Design, and Intergovernmental Collaboration.**

The Advisory Committee identified the issues and considerations for each of the land use elements and then drafted goals, implementation strategies, and policies to address those needs and issues. This approach to planning land use and development provides both a connection to the land use regulations and sets up ideas and proposals for community development projects.

The following describes the issues, considerations, goals, implementation strategies, and policies for each of the seven land use elements. The goals, implementation strategies, and policies were developed in sequence to support attaining the goal of each land use element. They are also designed to allow adaptability and flexibility over time, which means that the Town's Board of Commissioners, Planning Board, staff, appointed advisory committees together with public involvement will review and adjust parts of the Plan over time as new trends and information presents itself.

The following defines and guides the Advisory Committee in developing the Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Policies as presented in the Land Use Plan – 2032:

**Goals** describe a broad and long-range statement of the community's desired objectives and preferences to be achieved for each of the major land use elements of the Plan. Goals are general statements of desired outcomes of the community. While often broadly written, goals should be stated specifically enough so that it is possible to assess whether progress has been made in achieving them. The goal for each of the major land use element is a part of the Town and community's vision of its ideal future.

**Implementation Strategies** within each land use element provides the more specific approach to attaining the desired goal of that land use element or sub-element

and provides measurable implementation strategies or projects to be considered for the Implementation Action Plan matrix. Implementation strategies, while advancing each of the land use element goals, also advance an aspect of the community's shared vision.

**Policies** are "operational" guidance or actions that a community will undertake to meet the goals and strategies. Communities have many policies; some will relate to the comprehensive plan, while others may not. Some of the policies may be existing or some are newly created within the planning process. Some policies will require further action by the local government such as an ordinance or funding or partnering.

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

### **Issues**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee identified a variety of **Community Facilities Issues** as follows:

**Water and Sewer Systems:** (1) Update existing water and sewer systems- meters, tank, radio-read meters, and plan for expansion; digital maps with all meters, valves, lines located. (2) Extend water lines, sewer lines or both lines to areas to corporate limits or to the ETJ limits to access property for a developer.

**Community Center:** (1) Remodel, rebuild, or replace Community Center. (2) Build a new facility to replace the current Community Center for meetings, offices, senior activities, and other community needs.

**Recreation:** (1) Expansion of Community Park to include play equipment or activities for all age groups and abilities; (2) New sports facility (dog park, athletic field, sports arena, skate park) or park in another location near the center of population.

**Other Public Facilities:** (1) Add directional signs to direct public to the park and to Town Hall (from Main Street and also from 264 Hwy); (2) Consistent Street lighting and Town lighting for sense of safety; (3) Town Hall -- purchase property around current site when available and enlarge as Town grows, e.g., parking lot updated, create online payments and expand online services; (4) Library; (5) Community garden.

**Town Administration:** (1) Continue to require petitioning of annexation for properties requesting both Town water and sewer services and remain flexible in consideration of special circumstances and instances where it may prove to be in the best interest of the Town to not require annexation. (2) To provide the best service to the Town's citizens and maintaining Town properties and facilities is the best way to ensure quality service, efficient use, and appearance. (3) To request cooperation of property owners and, if necessary, to utilize available laws to enforce health and safety codes in order to require the elimination of blighted and unsafe conditions.

**Consideration:**

The Town has a small and mostly part-time staff. The current Board of Commissioners has realized the need to increase the hours of availability at Town Hall to provide full service to its citizens. The Town Administrator is also designated as the Director of Public Utilities in the Water and Sewer Ordinances with responsibilities to oversee both the financial and physical maintenance and development of the Town's water and sewer systems. The Town utilizes the assistance of a private sector engineering firm to oversee the maintenance and development of the systems and the services of a part-time Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC), who oversees testing, reporting, and maintenance of the systems.

**Community Facilities Goal**

To provide orderly government and high-quality services, including a mix of recreation and cultural opportunities and community events for all ages, well-maintained public infrastructure, encouragement of community involvement and a strong sense of community. To follow well-planned and current land use strategies in order for its citizens to enjoy a high quality of life and community.

**Implementation Strategies for Community Facilities**

- Create and continually update a Capital Improvement Plan for all Town owned facilities as a financial planning tool;
- Collaborate with Town Engineer to apply for grants to make needed improvements to water distribution and sewer collection systems;
- Continue to plan for community events;

- Increase outreach to the community for dissemination of information, connectiveness, and obtain volunteers;
- Plan for Community Park expansion and a potential second park.

### **Community Facilities Policies**

- a) To continue to update, maintain, and invest in the existing water and sewer systems' assets and equipment, with latest technology and financial planning, to provide quality services to existing customers and prepare for expansion;
- b) To consider, with proper planning and financial support, the extension of water and/or sewer lines strategically to areas beyond the corporate limits to areas of the ETJ in order to foster growth and systems' finances in Town's best interest;
- c) To continue to require petitioning of annexation for properties requesting both Town water and sewer services and remain flexible in consideration of special circumstances and instances where it may prove to be in the best interest of the Town to not require annexation. Continue to maintain the difference in the water and sewer rates between in-town versus out-of-town customers in order to secure equitable compensation for the administration of those services;
- d) To continue to maintain and plan for remodeling and/or expansion of the Community Center, at its current location, based on facilities needed and supported by the community. Consideration for future planning of remodeling/expansion may include interim measures with transitioning to new future location and building.
- e) To provide orderly government and provision of high-quality services with the understanding of the balancing of tax and utility revenues and cost of staff and services as growth occurs.
- f) Continue to increase communication and interaction with citizens and encourage volunteerism for specific tasks.
- g) Continue to plan for community events, which brings the community together, and encourage volunteers to assist.
- h) Continue to maintain the Community Park with at least incremental modest improvements to preserve and enhance this valuable community asset.

- i) Based on recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Committee, the Board of Commissioners will consider planning capital improvement planning and financing of agreed upon improvements over fiscal years and through phases of development, including another park which meets all levels of physical and mental abilities.
- j) Continue requiring adequate street lighting and street signs in new developments, and survey by observation, request additional street lighting and signs in existing developed areas within Town limits.
- k) Continue to make Town Hall improvements to improve efficiency of operation and growth, and to provide needed services to citizens and customers. In addition, plan for medium and long-term expansion and improvements, including reserving funds over time for capital projects.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Issues:**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee identified a variety of **transportation related issues** as follows:

- **Street/Road System:** 1) Town Streets -- Need to plan for upkeep, adding turning lanes, speed limits, stop lights, additional and wider ADA streets, and maintenance; 2) State roads/ highways -- Stop lights, as needed, curb and gutter, sidewalks, widening, clean up, and, as needed, closed streets; 3) additional parking and parking for businesses; and, 4) need to rename Wall Road since it is so similar to the current Wall Street.
- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Paths:** 1) Walkable Community where sidewalks are needed on State roads within city limits and added to other Town streets to make Sims a safe, walkable Town with crosswalks, as needed, with access between Town Hall, Park, major shopping areas, and new development; and, 2) Bike friendly lanes.

**Drainage:** (1) New drainage infrastructure, maintenance and repairs, including curb and gutter in new development and in existing town streets where needed; and (2) enclosure of all drainage ditches within all subdivisions and main roadways; this will improve appearance as well as help control pests.

### **Consideration:**

Many of the Town's streets were originally platted and paved (and repaved) years ago for a small-town residential area without concern for sidewalks. During those early years, the Town did have an underground network of drainage pipes installed. Since the early 2000's, new subdivision streets have been added to the Town's Street system with open drainage ditches and no sidewalks.

The Town receives annual installments from the Powell Bill Fund to be used for municipal street and drainage maintenance. Because of the size of the Town and small total combined street lengths, the funding received, each year, is not adequate enough to do street work very much. Thus, the funds have been saved over the course of several years in order to afford significant paving or drainage projects in addition to planning and completing all projects.

### **Transportation Goal**

To improve transportation mobility by integrating land uses with transportation infrastructure and to develop a balanced, efficient, safe, and attractive network of transportation for the movement of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists through, around, and into the Town.

### **Implementation Strategies for Transportation**

- Continue to communicate with NCDOT directly and/or through the UCPRPO developed Comprehensive Transportation Plan the Town's transportation needs and wishes;
- Plan for facilities to accommodate pedestrian friendly access to key facilities;
- Update land use regulations to require adequate off-street parking especially for commercial development.

### **Transportation Policies**

- a) Continue to maintain working relationship with the NCDOT District Engineer's office and the Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization in order to request needed improvements within the adopted Comprehensive Transportation Plan, coordinate improvements with Town needs on State roads, and learn about special programs.

- b)** Request from NCDOT safety facilities and equipment or make adjustments on current facilities/equipment as needed, including traffic calming devices and speed limits adjustments.
- c)** Strategically use Powell Bill and Town funds (for Powell Bill ineligible activities) to maintain, repair, and improve Town streets, drainage issues, safety features, and install sidewalks.
- d)** Use the Zoning Ordinance to require adequate off-street parking in new development and work with property owners of existing development to realize the safety and customer convenience in providing adequate off-street parking.
- e)** Take steps to protect those unopen and platted streets for potential access to future development.
- f)** Through land use regulations and planning, encourage and require, when appropriate, interconnected street patterns and safe development exiting.
- g)** Continue to be mindful of and, when appropriate, take steps to eliminate existing duplication or sound alike street names in order to avoid unnecessary confusion by First Responders as well as delivery services.
- h)** Update the land use regulations to ensure adequate sediment control and storm drainage facilities in new development and obtain resources to inventory and improve storm drainage facilities in existing developments within the Town.
- i)** In recognizing the importance of pedestrian safety and the need for pedestrian access to key Town and commercial facilities, to request sidewalks to be installed by NCDOT when making improvements on State roads. In addition, the Town will endeavor to install sidewalks and other pedestrian safety facilities to ensure pedestrian safety and access on Town maintained streets where needed.
- j)** Continue to work with the Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization (RPO), to provide local input to the developed plans for bikes routes through the Sims area and to continue to advocate for both bike and pedestrian pathways as a means of transportation as well as source of recreation within the Wilson County (and jointly with its municipalities) Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

## **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT and PRESERVATION of NEIGHBORHOODS**

### **Issues:**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee identified the following **residential-related issues** as follows:

**Should continue to:** 1) add new housing developments for mid-income families, and 2) to go by and follow current residential zoning district regulations

**Should consider:** 1) adding townhomes or townhomes with space between them, 2) retirement homes or living assisted area/ development, 3) Duplexes, cluster development, mixed use, and current residential trends, i.e., tiny homes, mother-in-law suits, etc., 4) no mobile home parks, 5) residential growth along 264 Alt, in town, and expand out, Main Street toward Rock Ridge, Flat Rock Road, 6) remove abandoned/ run down homes or renovate those homes needing help with funding from fed/state resources.

### **Considerations:**

The Land Use Advisory Committee reflected on both homes of the original residential Heritage Neighborhood, rural residential homes (ETJ) as well as the more recent in-town residential developments and were pleased with how the Town's rural small-town character has been maintained. After discussions recognizing the predominantly single-family composition (all single-family but one duplex) and the styles of the newly constructed homes in Town, the Advisory Committee was willing to investigate and accept the more recent trends and types of housing provided that density, location, and scale are considered in relation to respecting existing housing developments. In this vein, the Advisory Committee wanted to place some emphasis on preservation of existing neighborhoods.

### **Residential Development and Preservation of Neighborhoods Goal**

To provide for housing types and densities that meet the area's market demand while maintaining and preserving existing neighborhoods, encouraging rehabilitation or redevelopment of deteriorating areas, infill development as well as increasing the confidence to invest in all residential properties.

## **Implementation Strategies for Residential Development and Preservation of Neighborhoods**

- Update the land use regulations to reflect approved residential development and preservation policies, including new look at higher density and more types of homes.
- Develop code enforcement procedures and process(es).
- Seek residential rehabilitation, reconstruction, or construction resources for low-to-moderate income residents.
- Update the land use regulations to provide for additional means of screening between incompatible uses relative to residential.

## **Residential Development and Preservation of Neighborhoods Policies**

- a) Update the Town's land use regulations relating to other styles and medium-to-higher density housing in order to accommodate the private market for multifamily and provide for appropriate standards for development design.
- b) Make high-density residential compatible with low-density residential land use, while accommodating a mix of housing types.
- c) Provide areas for single-family subdivision development near existing single-family development (at similar densities) to promote continuity and accommodate latest trends in residential development.
- d) Allow "accessory" residential units, manufactured homes (aka mobile homes having a HUD inspection sticker), and other special residences in light of latest trends under special circumstances or standards, and in certain areas within the territorial jurisdiction.
- e) Secure assurances through land use regulations for maintenance of common grounds, appropriate homeowners' association provisions, etc.
- f) Encourage an increase code enforcement program to address property maintenance and substandard housing conditions.
- g) Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in existing residential subdivision areas of the Town and its ETJ.
- h) Consider housing rehabilitation grant programs to assist with low and moderate-income homeowners.

- i) Encourage and allow for the development of Senior or retirement housing.
- j) Recognize the small-town land area and proximity of uses in considering and enacting provisions within the Town's land use regulations for additional means of screening and buffering (natural or man-made) between residential uses and zoned areas and uses considered to be incompatible.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Issue:**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee identified the following **economic development related issue** as follows:

**Should continue to:** Leave residential-agricultural (zoning) as it is until area or land is needed for other uses.

### **Considerations:**

1) a grocery store in Sims (3x), 2) a mixed-use shopping area (small businesses); retail shopping with specialty stores as well as multi-purpose stores like Walmart; shopping center (3x), 3) either a small restaurant or a fast-food franchise store (McDonald's, Burger King, Hardees); indoor or outdoor dining seating – all three meals with bar is ok; food trucks (3x), 4) either an updated gas station or a food and fuel store (2x), 5) to allow commercial and light industrial development along Highway 264 and Main Street or Green Pond Rd. with setbacks behind viable residential development (2x), 6) to allow for heavy industrial in specified areas (outside commercial and light industrial areas) like in an industrial park; US Hwy 264 exit, Green Pond Rd and Bruce Rd. area (2x), 7) a larger post office building, 8) a community bank, 9) no gambling facilities: computer or otherwise, 10) no adult entertainment (strip clubs, bars/nightclubs), 11) pharmacy, 12) exercise facility and/or indoor sports facility, 13) medical facilities, 14) use business space available currently for retail use on daily basis, not churches once a week, and (15) collaborate with State/ local organizations to help foster development (NC Commerce, UCPCOG, etc.).

**Considerations:** As the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee reflected on the desire to grow more shopping, services, and industrial opportunities, it also stated that the economic development should be strategically managed with regards to types of businesses, scale, location, and appearance in order to keep in character with the community. The Advisory Committee discussed the need to update the land use

regulations and the Official Zoning Map in order to manage and encourage economic development. It also recognized property owners will have to become interested in redevelopment and/or new development opportunities, and collaborative partners are needed.

### **Economic Development Goal**

Together with economic development partners, promote efforts to revitalize downtown commercial area; support successful small businesses and industries, strategically expand commercial and light industries opportunities using compatible mix uses when appropriate, which will provide diverse employment opportunities to strengthen the Town's tax base and to increase local job, retail, and services options.

### **Implementation Strategies for Economic Development**

- Update Zoning Ordinance and Map to reflect economic development policies and Future Land Use Map in types of commercial uses and locations.
- Implement activities that pave the way for redevelopment, infill development, and adaptive reuse.
- Develop an ongoing list of available commercial sites and buildings.
- Establish a business association and make connection with Wilson Chamber of Commerce.

### **Economic Development Policies**

- a. Update the Town's Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map to permit and encourage both small scale businesses, suitable for certain areas of Town, and larger scale developments, in other areas of the Town's land use regulations jurisdiction.
- b. Enact provisions, within the land use regulations, to stipulate relevant and appropriate conditions on commercial/industrial uses to be located near residential uses or zoned areas in order to provide better compatibility.
- c. To collaborate with county, regional, and State economic development organizations to assist the Town foster the types of development that will generate desired economic development growth in accordance to the Town's community land use vision and policies;

- d. To put in place and perform activities (e.g., listing of available buildings or parcels) and improve access to information that will accommodate prospective developers or proposed business owners seeking compatible development opportunities.
- e. To facilitate the development or placement of facilities which generate economic activities, e.g., State agency office that generates customers, etc.
- f. To include within the community's land use vision and to update the Land Use Regulations to accommodate and preserve the compatible agricultural operations and ancillary uses located within the Town's extraterritorial jurisdiction.;
- g. Encourage start-up businesses as well as existing businesses in need of assistance to use the technical assistance and other resources available at community college's Small Business Center and State sponsored small business centers.
- h. Encourage and support business owners to seek economic development (job creation) types of grants and/or loans from state and federal funding; and,
- i. At the appropriate point when the numbers of businesses increase, encourage business owners to form a chamber of commerce like organization using volunteers to promote and improve the local business environment and to promote membership in and use the technical assistance of the Wilson Chamber of Commerce.

## **NATURAL and ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

### **Issues and Considerations**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee discussed and recognized the following **natural and environmental resources related issues and considerations** as follows: Due to the increase in residential development in recent years, especially those occurring around the edges of Town limits reaching out into the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee had a heightened sense of awareness of the potential for development of any type intersecting with the pristine areas of its ETJ. Much of the ETJ is farmland and a vital part of the rural character of the community. There is a respect and desire to preserve these areas. The streams, floodplain, wetlands maps/figures in Chapter 3: Current Conditions as well

as the Neighborhoods Map show the streams, ponds, and wetlands in various locations throughout the surrounding Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. These areas contain much of the community's surface water, trees, and other vegetations, wildlife habitats, hydric soils, and floodplains. The Advisory Committee is recommending the Town and surrounding community be good stewards for these natural areas.

The Town has already considered and planned for the community's resilience and sustainability in its efforts to plan for hazard mitigations (with the County), transportation planning with the County and region, and its considerations for soils, surface and ground water, wetlands and forest preservation, and agricultural preservation.

### **Natural and Environmental Resources Goal**

Preserve environmental quality of the community by conserving open space, farmland, and sensitive land areas while preserving local character and natural environmental features within the design of new development and redevelopment projects and by committing to do its share of sustainable measures.

### **Implementation Strategies for Natural and Environmental Resources**

- Collaborate and communicate with appropriate Wilson County, state, regional, and federal agencies to enforce and protect natural and environmental resources.
- Include references to the enforcement (and reason for) of environmental or natural resource preservation in the updates of land use regulations.
- Participate in Hazard Mitigation Planning during updating process.
- Inventory and study the existing drainage system for improvement projects.
- Modify current land use regulations for improved drainage, minimize impervious surfaces, and include reasonable best practices.
- Encourage the planting and use of trees and vegetation in land use regulations.

### **Policies for Soils**

- a) Continue to acknowledge the Wilson County Environmental Health regulations within the Town's land use regulations and allow for larger lot sizes in the areas of the ETJ not served by the Town's public sewer system.

- b) Continue to recognize the Neuse River Basin buffer regulations to protect wetland soils in the Town land use regulations and during the enforcement of the same.
- c) Recognize and support whenever possible the Wilson County Agricultural Development Plan to assist with the preservation of prime farmland within the Town's ETJ portion of the County in order to preserve the land necessary for production of crops and income-producing agricultural products.

#### **Policies for Surface and Ground Waters**

- a) Appropriately protect via regulations and support of collaborative agencies the significant water streams, and bodies, riparian areas, and wetlands so that their important functions and values are retained as new development occurs.
- b) Continue to participate in and collaborate with the Wilson County and NC Emergency Management efforts in hazard mitigation planning and to assist with floodplain regulation enforcement.
- c) Continue to include Neuse River Basin buffer rules in order to conserve and protect wetlands within the Town's ordinances and enforcement of development regulations.
- d) Promote and include in the Town's land use regulations standard and reasonable development practices that will reduce or minimize the amounts of impervious surfaces resulting from certain development to reduce and minimize storm drainage.
- e) Promote, use, and require within its land use regulations the best management and reasonable practices to control or minimize erosion and sedimentation.
- f) Inventory and study the existing drainage system in order to look for opportunities to improve the storm drainage capacity to protect properties and life. Seek opportunities for funding projects that will improve the Town's drainage system and its capacity.
- g) Modify, as necessary, the Town's land use regulations to improve the storm drainage system for current and future development.

- h) Continue to encourage and implement the practice of clearing of open storm drainage ditches of debris and vegetation and to educate and provide awareness to the public on preventive measures and cleaning of debris from storm drains.
- i) Continue to support and recognize the Wilson County Environmental Health regulations relating to its regulation and monitoring of septic systems and wells within the Town's ETJ area.
- j) Continue to cooperate and collaborate with the NC Division of Waste Management to investigate potential sites and regulate and monitor hazardous waste sites.

#### **Policies for Air Quality**

Continue to attend workshops and cooperate with regional transportation and air quality planning efforts.

#### **Policies for Forest and Tree Preservation**

- a) Include and promote development standards that encourage the preservation of natural areas and other valuable land through conservation type subdivisions (cluster development) and natural settings within development projects.
- b) Consider a tree management or preservation program, e.g., Tree USA Program, that encourages proper management and educational efforts.
- c) Include trees and other vegetation requirements or encouragement within its land use regulations for subdivisions, buffer areas and screening, and natural drainage areas.
- d) Consider incorporating trees and other vegetation as part of the Town's identity and character.

#### **Policies for Community Resilience and Sustainability**

- a) Continue to participate in every aspect of hazard mitigation planning for the Town and the County.
- b) Continue to participate in and contribute to all aspects of the transportation planning that it performed at the regional Rural Planning Organization for all of its local communities.

- c) Continue to factor in the natural resources preservation measures into land use policies and regulations for both the present and future land development within the Town and its ETJ.
- d) Where circumstances permit and does not oppose other key town policies and considerations, allow for clean energy initiatives to improve efficiency and better energy long term for the community.

## **APPEARANCE, CHARACTER, and DESIGN**

### **Issues and Considerations**

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee discussed and recognized the following **appearance, character, and design related issues and considerations** as follows:

It was agreed that the **visual appearance** of a community leaves an impression on visitors as well as residents of the community. This impression suggests a quality of life and a community attitude that may be positive and/or may not be positive. The images project the Town's pride and character – we take care of things, or we don't or a mix of the two.

**Rural character of a small-town community.** The positive aspects or indicators of the small-town rural character can be both natural (wooded areas, open fields, wetlands, peace and quiet) and man-made (trees along streets, two-lane roads, architecture, historic buildings, planted fields) characteristics. The Advisory Committee has discussed the desire to retain the community's rural and small-town characteristics and yet adapt to current changes, market forces, and factors where the community benefits from its strategic location to urban centers and places of employment, availability of land, small-town friendliness, and real estate marketability.

**Appearance and design part of this land use element** can influence the community's identity or character as well as how the community's effort to retain positive appearance aspects to foster its rural and small-town character/identity and to use those elements within the design of buildings, signs, natural screening and landscape, and other key features of the community. By recognizing and attending to this concept, the Town and community will display its pride as well as its character.

### **Appearance, Identity, and Design Goal**

Ensure that Sims retains and preserves a small-town atmosphere by integrating attractively and sustainably designed new complimentary uses that foster a sense of place while protecting the environment and rural character of its surrounding area.

### **Implementation Strategies for Character and Identity**

- Recognize and identify the various neighborhoods and planning areas by name in the Future Land Use Plan Map and Strategies.
- Add provisions in the land use regulations that preserve the scale and character of the neighborhoods while offering opportunities for new and mixed uses and growth.
- Plan for and budget for strategic sidewalks and street crossing or calming areas.

### **Character and Identity Policies**

- a) Recognizing the importance of displaying the Town's pride and positive character, devote resources to maintaining various aspects of the Town and community's character and Identity, e.g., community involvement and volunteerism, continued committee time and work, look for innovation and new ideas, awareness and recognition programs, and financial resources from sponsors, fundraising, and town budget.
- b) Determine a symbol or theme that the residents feel represents the identity or character of the Town and surrounding community to be used in various ways to promote the "brand" of the community.
- c) Identify, recognize, and encourage the uniqueness of each of the distinct neighborhoods within the community.
- d) Enhance pedestrian friendly access and the quality of public gathering areas within established parts of town.
- e) Continue to promote current and potential new community events as part of maintaining a sense of community.
- f) Encourage an increase code enforcement program to address property maintenance and substandard housing conditions.
- g) Encourage reinvestment and redevelopment in existing residential subdivision areas of the Town and its ETJ.

### **Implementation Strategies for Appearance**

- Plan for and install Welcome Signs at the four gateways into Town.
- Plan for and implement beautification projects.
- Include trees and vegetation requirements and/or options in land use regulations.
- Plan and implement community clean-up projects.

### **Appearance Policies**

- a) Enforce the town nuisance ordinances on weed control, junk and abandoned vehicles, and abandoned structures.
- b) Solicit volunteers for a “Adopt-A-Highway” style program to clean up debris and trash from road ditches with an emphasis on the four gateways.
- c) Include in the land use regulations the requirement and/or encouragement for the use of trees and vegetation in subdivision developments, as buffer or screening between incompatible uses, natural drainage features, and large-scale development landscaping.
- d) To maintain rural and natural character and appearance, include in land use regulations the requirements for conservation of natural resources, e.g., wetland soils and vegetation (Neuse River Basin buffer rules), flood prone areas, and allowing rural compatible uses.
- e) Consider future land use policies and land use regulations that require and/or encourage appealing gateway corridors into town.
- f) Through Town funds and/or fundraisers, plan for and install appealing welcome signs at appropriate locations on all four gateway entrances to town.
- g) Consider the Tree City USA program and the NC Division of Forestry tree planting program or other resources for tree management resource and new growth in strategic locations.
- h) Through volunteers, plan and implement strategically located beautification projects and plantings.
- i) The four pathway or gateways into the town will be a priority consideration in some of the appearance improvement and beautification projects.

### **Implementation Strategies for Design**

- Establish a town symbol and design committee to make recommendations.
- Incorporate symbol and other adopted design features strategically into town displays, etc.
- Add provisions to land use regulations to maintain character of “Heritage” Neighborhood.
- Add to or incorporate wayfinding and directional signs as part design and appearance of the town.

### **Design Policies**

- a) Through committee and community input, determine if there is or are feature(s) which best displays the Town and surrounding community’s character (who we are or what represents us) and its pride. As discussed, this feature can be a symbol from the community’s history or a common feature or landmark.
- b) Once a symbol is determined, begin to gradually incorporate it into town letterhead, welcome signs, banners, facilities’ sign, and other opportunities.
- c) Where the opportunity presents itself, using the same input process with property and/or store owners, determine if there are colors and design aspects to be incorporated in the downtown area.
- d) If certain color(s) or vegetation(s) are considered as part of the design representation of the town and community, incorporate them in various beautification projects throughout the community and encourage the residents and businessowners to include them as well.
- e) Maintain design and dimensional requirements in land use regulations to ensure that future development reflects scale and character appropriate to the “Old Town” are of the Town.
- f) Consider incorporating mural signs depicting historic locations or other approved forms of public art in both public and private sector development.
- g) Incorporate where feasible wayfinding and directional signs, street signs, street furniture, and street lighting along with other appearance and design elements to improve the overall design and appearance of various locations.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

### Overall Issues and Considerations

The Current Conditions chapter of the Plan described a number of instances where the Town of Sims worked with local, regional, and State partners in order to carry out activities, improvements, and/or comply with oversight. All communities, especially a small-size town, cannot function on its own without having other governmental partners and sometimes non-governmental partners to collaborate with in regard to certain governmental and land development related activities.

The Town of Sims, because of its size and tax base, has not had the ability to hire full time employees. Thus, the Town had to rely on part-time workers, contractors to perform needed and/or required services, and volunteers. As the Town began to and continues to grow and face the many administrative and regulatory obligations, maintenance of public facilities, and managing development, the Board of Commissioners began to increase the hours of staff availability at Town Hall and rely on contractors more often to assist with aging facilities or managing growth.

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee reviewed a list of collaborative partners and received presentations from several of them, e.g., NC Dept. of Transportation District Engineer, Upper Coastal Plain Rural Transportation Planning Organization, NC Rural Economic Development Division, City of Wilson, Wilson County Agricultural Cooperation Extension Agency, and Wilson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Advisory Committee reviewed and discussed the list of the various types of partners, but with special attention to the following key areas or functions where the Town relies on governmental and non-governmental land use related partners: **water and sewer collaborators, land use regulations/building inspections partners, transportation collaborators, and natural and agricultural resources partners.**

### Intergovernmental Collaboration Goal

To foster an environment of collaboration and cooperation with relevant local, regional, State, and Federal partners to develop strategic services, plans, and assistance in order to provide and ensure opportunities for improved quality of life and economic development.

### **Implementation Strategies for Intergovernmental Collaboration**

- Increase the involvement of Commissioners with certain collaborative agencies or partners to increase effective involvement and results.

### **Policies for Intergovernmental Collaboration**

Continue to cooperate and coordinate with Wilson County and City of Wilson water and sewer partners in maintaining the existing secondary water supply and wastewater treatment arrangements to provide quality services to the Town's customers and prepare for expansion.

- a) Continue to work and coordinate with the Wilson County Board of Commissioners, County Management, and various county departments and agencies to ensure mutually beneficial services.
- b) Continue to participate in the regional planning efforts for transportation, hazard mitigation, economic development, etc. to gain benefits for the Sims jurisdiction as well as the region.
- c) Seek and be open to partnering with various governmental agencies and foundations in applying for funding or other resources to provide services, improvements, or information to improve the community.

## **CHAPTER 5: LAND USE PLAN COMMUNITY SURVEY**

From the inception of the Land Use Advisory Committee, members voiced the importance of having Sims proper and the Town's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction area [hereafter, termed Sims in Chapter 5] residents involved in developing the 10-year Land Use Plan. However, in the 2021-2022 Committee's process, an unforeseen roadblock, the Covid upsurge, occurred which prevented the Land Use Advisory Committee from meeting directly with Sims' residents individually or in groups to gather preliminary information regarding their perspectives of what they wanted for their Town to become. Thus, due to the pandemic's increase and challenge of hosting in-person meetings with Sims' residents to provide opportunities to be engaged in the Land Use Plan, the Land Use Plan's Advisory Committee developed a Community Survey (Appendix A) to be mailed out to the Sims' households.

### **Procedure:**

During the winter of 2021-22, with the latest pandemic surge present, the Committee decided to produce a written Community Survey to be sent out to Sims' households to gather their thoughts and input related to past Advisory Committee's discussions. An outside consultant and Chair of the Land Use Advisory Committee met and developed a draft of the Community's Survey. The anonymous survey's draft was then reviewed by Sims' Mayor and Advisory Committee members. Survey adjustments were made per their recommendations, and about 400 Land Use Plan Community Surveys with Cover letter were mailed (minus those identified by Postal Service as "undeliverable"), and 41 responses were received. This questionnaire (N = 400) was based on the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee's many discussions, and deemed necessary due to the State's Covid restrictions. No demographics were requested unless the person(s) in the household (N = 9) wanted to volunteer. If respondent volunteered, the person was asked to provide their name, phone number, address, and area/skills the person wanted to share. The Survey's (see Appendix A) questions asked residents about specific topics identified by the Advisory Committee. Respondents, if directed, could check as many qualities/factors as they wanted while

some responses called for just one answer. Participants could also fill in the *Other section* provided in most questions at the end of the question's listed options (Refer to **Appendix A**). The "Other" option gave respondents an opportunity to add their own input if their answer was not among one of the listed options(s). Under the Result section (below) survey questions pertained to the following topics followed by the top responses and associated responses by number. Please refer to Appendix A to examine all of the questions and number of responses for each question's options.

### **Results and Discussion:**

Though there were only 41 surveys out of 400 mailed (minus those marked undeliverable from Postal Service), it is difficult to surmise the exact number of participants who contributed to the survey since the Committee requested only one survey per household be completed and submitted either by postal services, email, or online. The entire Survey, including the respondent's reactions to the "Other" opportunity to provide their own views, may be found in Appendix A. Survey results in this section include those items listed by the Advisory Committee under each question. Survey results will be presented in the aggregate to the Committee to supplement its work on some aspect(s) of the Land Use Plan policies and *help shape the Vision Statement* for the community, which includes both the Town and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction area surrounding the Town.

Thirty-one Town residents/households and 10 surrounding area resident/households completed this Survey. Top qualities and characteristics residents liked/enjoyed about the Sims area included being friendly and caring (31 responses); mix of older and newer homes (23 responses); trees and plants (22 responses); safety record (20 responses); rural area vistas of surrounding area (16 responses); and community events (7 responses). These responses were not surprising to The Advisory Committee since Sims started out as a very rural community and many of the original homes are still standing within the Town's limits and new growth is spreading out into the ETJ surrounding area.

Respondents, for question three, identified aspects the Town can improve upon including more shopping options (26 responses); certain appearance issues (22

responses); new business incentives (eighteen responses); additional parks and recreation (12 responses); and access to Town's utility services (4 responses). Respondents indicated several community facilities they appreciated including the Town Park (27 responses); Public water and sewer (18 responses); Town Hall (13 responses); and the Community Center (11 responses). Not surprising, with all of the new housing additions being built, sidewalk improvements (20 responses) and Community Center (9 responses) improvements were identified in relation to "Any Improvements." Residential housing recommendations included senior housing (13 responses); townhouses (10 responses); and garden apartments and bed and breakfast inn (8 responses each). The reader must keep in mind, this is a 10-year Land Use Plan; so, as the Town is growing, the median age is 38 (Table 3), but in 2032 the needs and wants of this peer group will change just as the needs of those currently 48 years or older or younger than 38. Due to the location of Sims and lower cost of living, many residents commute to their jobs and have identified several commercial developments that would be within a close proximity to their homes rather than having to get back into their vehicles and travel, again, over the weekend for groceries, hardware, etc. Commercial development(s) respondents would patronize or use if located in the Sims area are listed below. For an entire listing of commercial developments, please refer to Appendix A.

| <b>Qualities and characteristics</b>     | <b>Number of Responses</b> |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Grocery Store                            | 33                         |
| Restaurant (Please no fast food 1)       | 30                         |
| Farmer's Market, Fruit & Vegetable Stand | 27                         |
| Lawn & Garden Supplies                   | 24                         |
| Hardware Store                           | 22                         |
| Specialty Shops                          | 17                         |
| Gift, Novelty & Souvenir Stores          | 12                         |
| ATM (BBT or Wells Fargo ATM--1)          | 12                         |
| Veterinary Clinic: 9                     | 9                          |
| Professional Offices:                    | 8                          |
| Personal Services                        | 8                          |
| Home Furnishing                          | 8                          |
| Lodging                                  | 7                          |
| Hobby, Toy Stores                        | 7                          |
| Mini-Storage Units                       | 6                          |

Suggested locations for new commercial development included 23 responses for US 264 Alt towards Wilson; 21 responses for downtown or near the center of Sims; 17 responses for Green Pond Road and US 264 Interchange; and 15 responses for US 264 Alt (toward Bailey).

Respondents favored several amenities and safety features to improve upon including more walking/exercise trails (21 responses) and sidewalks (responses 18); Welcome to Sims Sign (16 responses); library, Street Lights, and Crosswalk Markings on 264 Alt (12 responses each); another park/recreation area (10 responses); benches throughout the Town and Park (9 responses); more off-street parking (8 responses); park activities for those with disabilities and street signs (7 responses each); and, senior activities (5 responses). With the new growth within Sims proper and surrounding area, it's not surprising residents are wanting more walking/exercise trails

and sidewalks since they are safer than walking on the streets or the shoulder with the risk of getting hit by a car or twisting an ankle, or worse. Encouraging folks to visit Sims may start with a welcoming Sims "Welcome" sign. The other amenities and safety features identified by the respondents will be welcome for all ages of the residents in and outside the Town's limits.

The Land Use Advisory Committee would like to thank those residents in participating in the Survey since it gave them insight as to what is important to them and will assist in the Committee writing the Town's 10-year Vision Statement.

## CHAPTER 6: FUTURE LAND USE STRATEGIES

"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." Jane Jacobs

**Introduction:** This is the step where the Sims community applies the Vision Statement, goals, implementation strategies, and policies established for each land use element in Chapter 4 across the planning jurisdiction. However, the Town's planning jurisdiction with its large Extraterritorial Jurisdiction has diversity in the nature of its land, infrastructure, and land uses. In order to plan for the differences in the various areas and their potential for the next 10 years, the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee established neighborhoods or planning areas. Then, the Advisory Committee identified and applied the type of development to each of the sixteen (16) neighborhoods along with strategies to assist with its vision for each neighborhood.

As part of reviewing what the Town's closest and larger neighbors are predicting for the future growth of the Sims area of Wilson County, the Advisory Committee interviewed the City of Wilson's Chief Planning and Development Officer regarding the trends and plans for development along the Raleigh Road Parkway corridor and its impact on Sims' portion of the corridor (US 264-Alt). As shown in the following, the planning for Sims and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction took into account the views and predictions of the Wilson County 2025 Comprehensive Plan along with information provided by the County's Planning Director.

### **Part 1: Scan of Neighbors' Views on Sims Area Future and Potential Growth**

#### **Wilson County's Views**

A scan of the **Wilson County 2025 Comprehensive Plan**, adopted in May 2008, shows the Northwestern Planning Area of the County where Sims and the Old Fields Township are located. This planning area borders Johnston County to the southwest and southern Nash County to the west with the City of Wilson to the east with all of these neighbors being major growth areas. **The Plan states that: "The northwestern area is the fastest growing unincorporated area in Wilson County."**

The Planning Area Population Details chart shows this area as the “the highest rate of growth between 2000 and 2020.”

The Wilson County 2025 Comprehensive Plan established a “Future Land Use/Growth Management Map displaying four broad categories: **Rural Growth Areas, Secondary Growth Areas, Primary Growth Areas, and Conservation Areas**. The Future Land Use/Growth Management Map designated the Sims and its ETJ area as “**Secondary Growth Area**” (Transitional), which was applied to areas or land adjacent to municipalities where available urban services would allow for moderate and transitional development. “It is expected these areas will likely see heavier growth in a 10-to-20-year time-frame as these areas may transition to more urban settings. It is important to recognize appropriate development patterns now to promote orderly growth for years to come. Also, effort should be made to respect and protect existing agricultural lands from development encroachment that may be adjacent to these transitional areas.”

#### **City of Wilson’s Views**

A review of the **Wilson 2030 Comprehensive Plan**, adopted April 2010, shows the City’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction boundary on its west side to cross Raleigh Road in the vicinity of the Merck Road intersection. The City’s Planning Area extends westward on Raleigh Road to slightly beyond its intersection with US 264 (Bypass) to cover a small area on US 264-Alt. The City’s Plan shows a Primary Growth Area along Raleigh Road in bordering lands on both sides of its intersection with I-95. This area has experienced considerable commercial growth (primarily gas stations, food establishments, and hotels) to service I-95 customers and the Merck Company Industrial Park. There is City water and sewer service in this area, and there has been a number of satellite annexations in the commercial center, since 1991, as a result of the need for sewer service.

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee invited the City’s Chief Planning and Development Officer, Rodger Lentz, to provide insights and update as to the extent of future growth along the City’s Raleigh Road Corridor and its potential impact westward to the eastern US 264-Alt. corridor area leading into the Town’s Extraterritorial

Jurisdiction. He reported the City of Wilson is not interested in annexing or servicing any area west of US 264 because it is not financially feasible due to the requirement to provide all the city's services to that area, including fire protection (fire station). The City of Wilson has other higher priority areas to provide services to and the area west of the commercial growth center around the I-95 interchange node and any area west of this node is not a priority and the area west of US 264 is under County jurisdiction.

## **Part 2: Neighborhoods/Planning Areas**

As described previously, because of the diversity of the areas within the Town's planning jurisdiction, the LUP Advisory Committee took some time and effort to identify neighborhoods and planning areas throughout planning area. Those neighborhoods are depicted on **Figure 16: Neighborhoods & Planning Areas Map** (on next page) and are designed to provide "place names" to identifiable areas where various growth strategies can be applied considering differences and potential of each. The neighborhoods were identified as follows:

1. Downtown Business
2. Heritage Neighborhood
3. Magnolia Place Neighborhood
4. The Pointe
5. Stapleford
6. Sims Southside
7. Stotts Crossroad Neighborhood
8. Southeast Neighborhood
9. Winborne Neighborhood
10. Flat Rock
11. Quarry
12. Sims Park Place
13. Gateway North
14. Gateway East
15. Northeast
16. Northwest

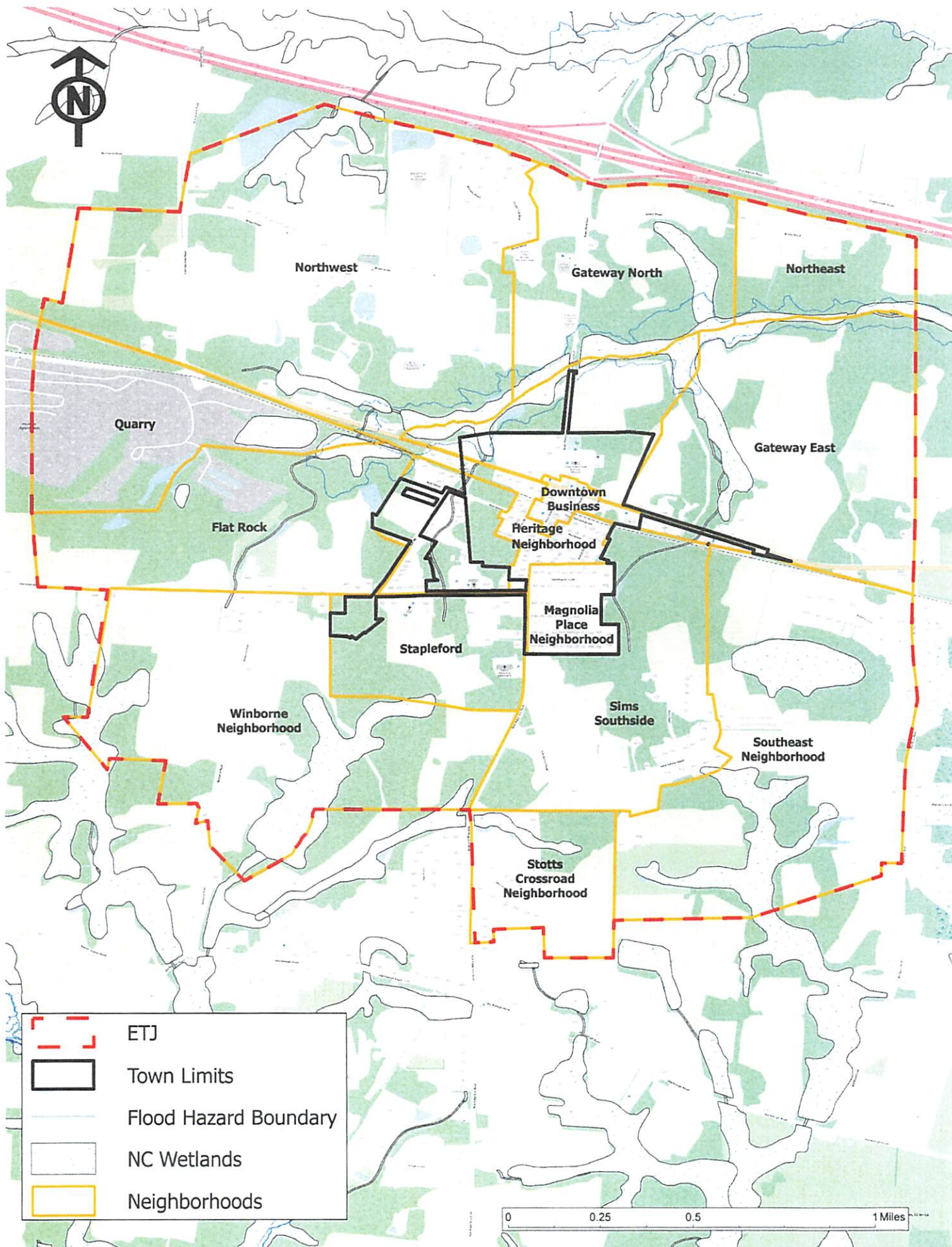
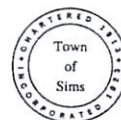


Figure 16

# **Town of Sims** Neighborhoods & Planning Areas



### **Part 3: Future Land Use & Strategies Map**

To determine land use and development strategies for each of the identified neighborhoods or planning areas for the next 10 years, the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee hosted a public workshop on June 7, 2022, to obtain from each of the citizen participants their preferred “development concept” for each neighborhood. In addition, the participants were asked to describe any positive images which would support and depict what the participant had in mind for the identified preferred development concept 10 years from that date.

The development concepts used by the Advisory Committee with the public participants during the workshop, which were applied to the neighborhoods, are defined and described as follows:

1. A place to **PRESERVE**: to safeguard, to protect, and preserve as it is, does not mean no development at all; just very limited.
2. A place to **CONSERVE and ENHANCE**: to help conserve existing area as is, but allow for enhancements and compatible improvements and modifications, e.g., sensitive infill development, use preservation with design or appearance enhancements/improvements in order to preserve character of neighborhood.
3. A place to **TRANSFORM or REDEVELOP**: to encourage the redevelopment and transformation of existing developed area or parts of an area to provide opportunities to improve, grow and evolve, e.g., for residential areas to allow sensitive mixed density and home choices; for commercial areas to allow mixed use and redevelopment projects. This may or can mean expansion of an existing developed area.
4. A place of **GROWTH – Managed**: for an area of potential new growth for either residential or commercial or mixed-use development, e.g., new subdivisions, townhouse development, shopping center, managed commercial

sites, mixed use projects, etc. This may mean public investment in supporting infrastructure in some situations.

Members of the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee recorded the preferences and comments of each of the participants for each neighborhood during the workshop with a small group discussion approach rotating through five tables. After the public input workshop, the participants' development concept preferences and comments for each neighborhood were placed in a summary document, **“Workshop Results and Observations”** (see **Appendix B**), together with a description of the predominant land uses and current zoning designation(s) for each of the neighborhoods. In addition, professional observations were added by the Zoning Administrator based on the preferences and other land use and development factors as reminders and considerations.

In addition to the Results and Observations summary, the Land Use Advisory Committee was provided a **“Toolbox of Strategies”** (see **Appendix C**) worksheet describing a list of potential implementations and/or development strategies or “tools” available within each of the four development concepts. Most of the strategies listed came from the approved implementation strategies and policies reviewed and approved in Chapter 4. These strategies fell into one of four types or categories: 1) land use regulations, 2) utilizing partners to assist, 3) town investment and involvement, and 4) volunteers to collaborate and assist.

The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee met to review both the Neighborhoods and Planning Areas Map along with the Workshop Results and Observations Summary. With the approved Vision Statement and Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Policies for each of the land use elements in mind, the Advisory Committee reviewed the results summary, strategies, and map, made observations, nominated a development concept, and voted on the development concept neighborhood by neighborhood until all 16 neighborhoods or planning areas were completed. As shown below, for several of the neighborhoods/planning areas, The Advisory Committee added footnotes or “modifiers” to some in order to clarify the concepts.

The following is a list of the designated “Development Concept” for each of the neighborhoods or planning areas:

1. **Downtown Business** – Transform/Redevelop

**Modifiers:** because of limited space and area, it is suited best for small businesses; limit scale of structures to fit surroundings; and allow for expansion of zoning district.

2. **Heritage Neighborhood** – Conserve and Enhance

3. **Magnolia Place Neighborhood** – Conserve and Enhance

4. **The Pointe** – Conserve and Enhance

**Modifiers:** Enhance with sidewalks and street lighting.

5. **Stapleford** – Conserve and Enhance

6. **Sims Southside** – Conserve and Enhance (continued on next page)

**Modifiers:** On western end close to town services recognize potential for residential development; preserve farmland for eastern half.

7. **Stotts Crossroad Neighborhood** – Conserve and Enhance

8. **Southeast Neighborhood** – Preserve

**Modifier:** Require large residential lot to enhance the rural character.

9. **Winborne Neighborhood** – Preserve

**Modifiers:** Preserve farmlands and maintain as Residential Agricultural zoning; require large residential lot to enhance the rural character; Limited development in farming areas.

10. **Flat Rock** – Preserve

**Modifiers:** Preserve farmlands and maintain as Residential Agricultural zoning; recognize the potential for residential development on eastern section next to current town limits where lot size would be smaller than RA requirements, but larger than Town’s R-10 zoning requirements.

11. **Quarry** – Preserve

12. **Sims Park Place** – Conserve and Enhance

**Modifiers:** Expand the Community Park; allow a mix of residential and commercial or mixed-use development all within or respective of scale in the southwest portion; residential only in northeast portion.

**13. Gateway North – Growth (managed)**

**14. Gateway East – Growth (managed)**

**Modifiers:** No (continuous) strip development; require minimum size sites for commercial development; allow a mix of residential and commercial uses or mixed-use developments; use planned unit development or site plan review tools to manage appearance, pedestrian safety, drainage, and traffic control.

**15. Northeast – Preserve**

**16. Northwest – Conserve and Enhance Western Half** (from the western boundaries of current salvage yard and the trucking company properties westward to the ETJ and neighborhood boundaries. **Transform/Redevelop** eastern balance of this neighborhood.

**Modifiers:** Preserve farmlands and rural character of western portion; downsize zoning district and uses in western section to achieve more compatible uses with surrounding residential uses.

The **Future Land Use and Strategies Map, Figure 17** shows the Town of Sims' planning area with the 16 neighborhoods or planning areas and depicting each neighborhood with its respective "Development Concept" as outlined above. This map also includes **symbols for four gateways entrances** into the center of the community. The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee recognized the importance of the four gateways with respect to various land use and community development goals, implementation strategies and policies. The map also shows the location of streams and wetlands in order to depict some of the **development constraints** that exist in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction planning area.

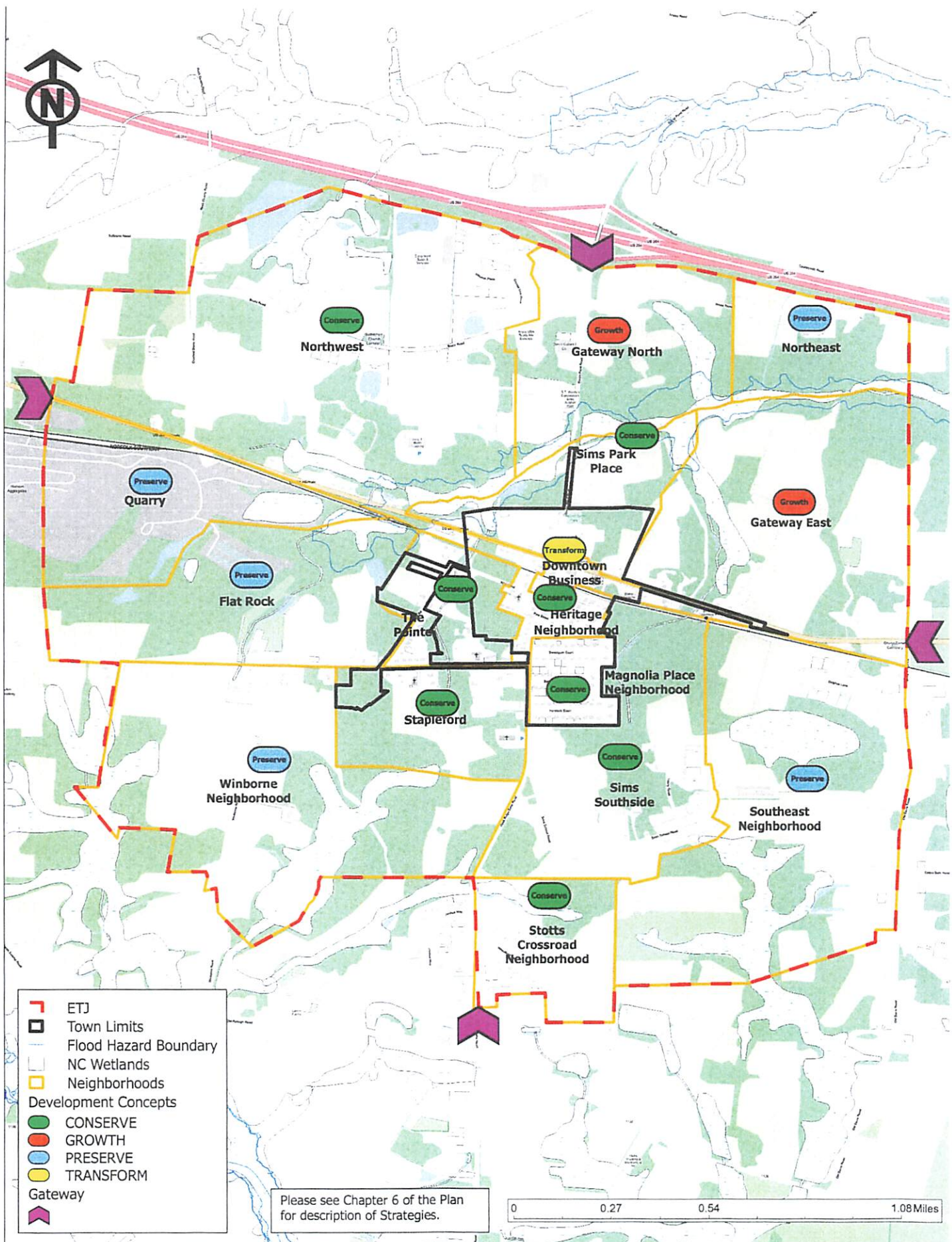
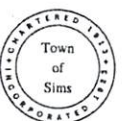


Figure 17

# Town of Sims Future Land Use and Strategies



## CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES (Action Plan)

As with any long-range plan, it is vital for its implementation to organize and present the strategies or actionable activities in a manner which helps the Board of Commissioners, Town administration, planners, and community volunteers to view not only what needs to be accomplished, but also how the activities relate to the larger picture of the Town's Vision. The community has identified a number of strategies and activities, whether they be small or large steps, to achieve its goals within the respective seven land use elements.

The recommended strategies, activities, and projects will fall into one of the six **Categories of Implementation:**

- **Regulations and Standards**
- **Programs and Initiatives**
- **More Targeted Planning and Study**
- **Capital Investments**
- **Partnerships**
- **Coordination of Volunteers**

**Two Vital Considerations:** (1) The Implementation Strategies (Action Plan) matrix ideally should be reviewed periodically several times each year by the Town administration (including Board of Commissioners) with assistance from the Planning Board or members of the Land Use Plan Advisory Committee. **At least once per year at budget review and workshops, this Action Plan should be reviewed for projects (status and/or planning) in coordination with Capital Improvement Plan and budgetary discussions for next fiscal year.** (2) Because of the small staff size, **the outreach, organizing, and coordination of volunteers** is critical to the success of achieving many of the Implementation Strategies, activities, and projects. **This also helps to provide not only community involvement, but also a sense of community citizenship, ownership, and pride.**

### **Table 23: Implementation Strategies**

The **Implementation Strategies matrix in Table 23 (below)** provides a blueprint, which breaks down all the various activities or projects into discrete parts making the activities manageable for review, planning, action, and even adjustments. The Implementation Strategies were identified from the recommended Goals, Implementation Strategies, and Policies of each of the seven land use elements listed in Chapter 4. The Advisory Committee prioritized the strategies or actionable items and a sub-committee placed and organized them in the matrix **based on the priorities for “near-term” (1 to 2 years), “mid-term” (3 to 5 years), and “long-term” (6 to 10 years)**. The Land Use Plan Advisory Committee found that some activities were “on-going” for the duration of the Plan. These were activities/projects that needed to be written down and noticed as a reminder.

The Implementation Strategies matrix also details the “Goals Addressed”, the “Responsible Entity”, “Potential Partners”, “Estimated Costs”, “Funding Sources”, and “Next Steps” to assist providing critical considerations for each of the action items at a glance and reminder for planning purposes. Like any other governmental management tool, it needs attention and can be adjusted.

Table 23: Implementation Strategies (Action Plan) Matrix

| <i>Strategies into Action</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Priority</i>     | <i>Goal Addressed</i>                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Responsible Entity</i>                                                              | <i>Potential Partners</i>                                                       | <i>Est. Cost</i> | <i>Funding Sources</i>                                       | <i>Next steps</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Short-term (1–2 years)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                        |                                                                                 |                  |                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Seek Rehabilitation and/or Reconstruction grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | High (8 Green dots) | Residential Dev. & Preservation                                                                                                                                                                           | Town of Sims (as applicant)                                                            | Wilson Co. through NC Housing Finance Agency; Neighborhood Revitalization Grant | TBD              | NC Housing Finance Agency; Neighborhood Revitalization Grant | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Communicate with Wilson County leadership of desire for NCHFA funding.</li> <li>(2) Identify housing units in need of rehabilitation assistance.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Update Land Use Regulations & Zoning Map to<br>1) improve types of commercial development;<br>2) Encourage trees & plants in land use regulations<br>3) improve drainage & include best practices;<br>4) preserving natural resources in ordinances<br>5) improve types of residential developments;<br>6) provide for additional screening or buffers;<br>7) Preserve scale, density & character of neighborhoods including Heritage Neighborhood<br>8) Require adequate off-street parking | High (9 Green dots) | 1) Economic Development;<br>2) Appearance<br>3) and 4) Natural & Environmental Resources;<br>5) and 6) Residential Dev. & Neigh. Preservation;<br>7) Character, Appearance, & Design<br>8)Transport-ation | Town of Sims Regulations Advisory Committee, Planning Board and Board of Commissioners | Zoning Administrator                                                            | Approx. \$5,000  | Town funds                                                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Continue Advisory Committee review of proposed amendments to Subdivision Regulations.</li> <li>(2) Approve the proposed amendments to Subdivision Regulations.</li> <li>(3) Distribute copies of revised Subdivision Regulations to key participants and upload to website.</li> <li>(4) Advisory Committee to begin review of Zoning Ordinance and Map.</li> </ol> |

Table 23: Implementation Strategies (Action Plan) Matrix

|                                                                                             |                     |                                   |                               |                                        |     |                                       |                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Collaborate with Town Engineer to apply for grants to repair & improve water/sewer systems  | High (7 Green dots) | Community Facilities              | Director of Public Utilities. | Green Engineering, ORC.                | TBD | NC State Revolving Fund, CDBG-I, USDA | (1) Monitor and identify needs<br>(2) Work with Green Eng. on solution & funding                                                      |
| Plan for improved pedestrian access to key facilities                                       | High (6 Green dots) | Transportation                    | Town Administrator            | Upper Coastal Plain RPO, NCDOT Dist. 2 | TBD | NCDOT TAP, Powell Bill, Town funds.   | (1) Identify needs and locations<br>(2) Strategic Transp. Investment program<br>(3) Respond to NCDOT TAP                              |
| Establish a town symbol & design and incorporate adopted town symbol into town displays     | High (6 Green dots) | Character, Appearance & Design    | Events Committee              | College Art Dept.                      | TBD | Town funds                            | (1) Events Committee continue to discuss,<br>(2) Reach out to college art dept. for assistance                                        |
| Recognize and identify neighborhoods in planning Future Land Use Map & Strategies           | High (5 Green dots) | Character & Identity              | Beautification Committee      | Neighborhood leaders                   | TBD | Donations and Town funds              | (1) Form beautification committee<br>(2) Establish communications<br>(3) Identify projects                                            |
| Plan for Community Center renovations and potential for new Center and/or Multi-Purpose Ctr |                     | Community Facilities              | Community Center Committee    | Construction design partner            | TBD | Town funds                            | (1) Form study committee<br>(2) Survey for needs<br>(3) Space analysis & design<br>(4) Renovation decisions<br>(5) Identify locations |
| Study existing drainage networks and plan improvements for available grants                 |                     | Natural & Environmental Resources | Town Admin.                   | Green Engineering; NC State            | TBD | Powell Bill funds; Grants             | (1) Study elements of drainage network;<br>(2) Apply for funding                                                                      |
|                                                                                             |                     |                                   |                               |                                        |     |                                       |                                                                                                                                       |

Table 23: Implementation Strategies (Action Plan) Matrix

| ONGOING ACTIVITIES                                                                                              |         |                                           |                                       |                                   |     |            |                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Develop code enforcement procedures & process                                                                   | Ongoing | Residential Development & Neighborhood    | Town Administrator and Board of Comm. | Town Attorney; Zoning Admin.      | TBD | Town funds | (1) Identify the issues<br>(2) Establish/update procedures;<br>(3) Initiate enforcement    |
| Continue outreach to community & dissemination of information                                                   | Ongoing | Community Facilities                      | Town Admin.                           | Town Clerk; Events Comm.; and BOC | TBD | Town funds | (1) Identify chairperson<br>(2) Establish welcome packet;<br>(3) Start town newsletter/web |
| Perform Capital Improvement Planning for water/sewer, park, pedestrian friendly facilities and community center | Ongoing | Character & Identity Community Facilities | Town Admin.                           | Green Eng. Zoning Admin.          | TBD | Town funds | (1) Continue to update water & sewer CIP;<br>(2) Separate CIP – other capital improvements |
| Continue to plan for and expand community events                                                                | Ongoing | Community Facilities                      | Events Committee                      | Volunteers                        | TBD | Town funds | (1) Continue to plan & expand<br>(2) Host annual & all events                              |