

# GASTON COUNTY

## CLT AIRPORT CONNECTED ECONOMIC POSITIONING STRATEGY



SEPTEMBER 2018

## PROJECT PREFACE

MXD Development Strategists Ltd. of Vancouver, Canada (“MXD”) was commissioned by the Greater Gaston Development Corporation (GGDC) and a public-private Steering Committee in September 2017 to conduct an Economic Positioning Strategy for Gaston County.

Reference material used for this report was derived from MXD’s previous assignment in the Charlotte area, as well as from public sector, private sector, and government publications. This information was supplemented by our experience in the planning and development of real estate projects throughout the world.

The figures presented in the report are based on an evaluation of the current general level of the economy in the local market, and neither take into account, nor make provisions for the effect of any sharp rise or decline in local or general economic conditions.

MXD Development Strategists, Ltd. do not warrant that any estimates contained within the study will be achieved, but that they have been prepared conscientiously on the basis of information obtained during the course of this market analysis. Also, any tenant references made in this report are for illustrative purposes only.

## PROJECT TEAM



### Prime Consultant

Development Strategy, Market Analysis, and Urban Planning



### Sub Consultant

Transportation Planning and Engineering



### Sub Consultant

Stakeholder Engagement and Communications

## PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy is a public-private initiative guided by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the Greater Gaston Development Corporation and of the governments that provided financial support for the project. CLT Airport also was represented on the Steering Committee. The Greater Gaston Development Corporation served as a catalyst for the project and managed its execution, as well as providing financial support. The Steering Committee met numerous times during project formation and implementation, and its members were dedicated and knowledgeable. They made highly-important contributions to the success of this effort and to all of them a sincere debt of gratitude is owed.

### The members of the Steering Committee and the organizations or governments they represented:

Miles Braswell, Assistant City Manager	City of Mount Holly
Bill Carstarphen, President and CEO, Pharr	Greater Gaston Development Corporation
Robert Clay, Partner, Coldwell Banker Commercial MECA	Greater Gaston Development Corporation
Thomas Gillespie, Member, City Council and Mayor Pro-Tem	City of Lowell
Stuart Hair, Economic Affairs Director	Charlotte-Douglas International Airport
Houston Helms, Member, Town Commission	Town of Cramerton
Donny Hicks, Executive Dir., Economic Development Comm.	Gaston County
James Inman, City Manager	City of Bessemer City
Heath Jenkins, Town Manager	Town of Stanley
Joel Long, President, Commercial, GSM Services	Greater Gaston Development Corporation
Michael Peoples, City Manager	City of Gastonia
Ryan Schriff, Member, City Council	City of Belmont
Maria Stroupe, Town Manager	Town of Dallas

### Alternates to the members of the Steering Committee also contributed significantly:

Kristy Crisp, Economic Development Coordinator	City of Gastonia
Tiffany Faro, Development Services Director	Town of Dallas
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Adrian Miller, City Manager	City of Belmont
David Pugh, Town Manager	Town of Cramerton
Josh Ross, Economic Development Officer	City of Bessemer City

### The staff of the Greater Gaston Development Corporation that managed the project:

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Vincent Ginski, Strategy and Operations Associate

### The Chairs of the Greater Gaston Development Corporation who served during the project's initiation, execution, and delivery included:

Robert Clay, Partner, Coldwell Banker Commercial MECA  
Joel Long, President, Commercial, GSM Services  
Greg Botner, President & CEO, Wilbert Plastic Services

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF STUDY

In September 2017, the Greater Gaston Development Corporation (GGDC) commissioned MXD Development Strategists Ltd. (MXD) to prepare the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy (Strategy). Through a collaborative public-private approach, the Strategy is designed to fully leverage the County's close proximity and access to CLT Airport and its Intermodal Center.

The foundation for the Strategy lies in Gaston County's strategic location and outstanding connectivity to Target Economic Sectors and Development Opportunity Sites.

**The Strategy will inform and help guide Gaston County in long-range planning and economic development initiatives as they relate to CLT Airport by fulfilling the following objectives:**

- Position Gaston County and its municipalities as the best option outside of Charlotte for CLT Airport and Intermodal Center-related development.
- Inform planning, economic development, and marketing-branding strategies.
- Identify development opportunities and catalyst projects within Gaston County's municipalities to expand recruitment potential.
- Support the economic rationale for improving existing mobility corridors, creating new mobility and economic corridors, and unlocking developable land.
- Put Gaston County on the CLT Airport map for economic development initiatives and company recruitment.
- Provide a platform and framework for implementation.

This Strategy has been prepared under the overall direction of a Steering Committee which includes senior representatives of the GGDC, Key Stakeholders from local governments, and CLT Airport. Funding for the Strategy was provided equally by GGDC members and local governments in Gaston County.

### STUDY TEAM:

Having worked in over 50 countries around the world on similar assignments, MXD is a global leader in leveraging the connectivity at and around airports to identify Economic Cluster Activities, Airport Connected Development Opportunities, and Target End User Industries. MXD assembled a skilled and knowledgeable team that brought local insight and experience to the assignment:

- **Kimley-Horn & Associates** - Charlotte-based Transportation Planning, Infrastructure, and Engineering sub-consultant.
- **Lyerly Agency** - Belmont-based Stakeholder Engagement and Communication sub-consultant.

### STUDY AREA:

Gaston County has a population of over 218,000, making it the fourth largest county in the Charlotte region and the 10th largest county in North Carolina. It has a rich history of textiles and manufacturing and features a mixed urban-rural landscape with many unique cities and towns. Strategically located along I 85 and U.S. 321 on the west side of the Charlotte Metro Area, Gaston County's eastern cities are only a 10-minute drive from CLT Airport and a 20-minute drive from Uptown Charlotte.

## PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Over a nine-month time frame, the Strategy was prepared in four main stages:

- Assessment of Existing Conditions
- Market and Economic Analysis
- Economic Driven Land Uses and Development Strategy
- Implementable Action Plan

The project began with an examination of Existing Conditions and Stakeholder Engagement with Key Stakeholders from Gaston County and surrounding areas. The study team engaged with these Key Stakeholders through various methods, including Focus Group Sessions, One-on-One Meetings, and a Drop-In Open House. Stakeholders represented a variety of economic sectors and organizations including Transportation, Logistics & Distribution, Planning, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Major Businesses, Healthcare, Major Property Owners, Developers, and Education Institutions.

**Significant themes that were revealed through the Stakeholder Engagement process include:**

- Critical need for transportation improvements and the Catawba Crossings project
- Necessity to engage regionally regarding mass transit options
- The outstanding potential of Gaston County for development and redevelopment
- Continue efforts to improve perceptions of Gaston County
- Need to reposition the local workforce and build on skills training programs

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Strategy utilized an Economic Cluster Analysis approach to understand the key pillars of economic activity in the region, as well as major economic trends, challenges and opportunities that impact Gaston County's potential for new economic development.

**The analysis consists of the following components:**

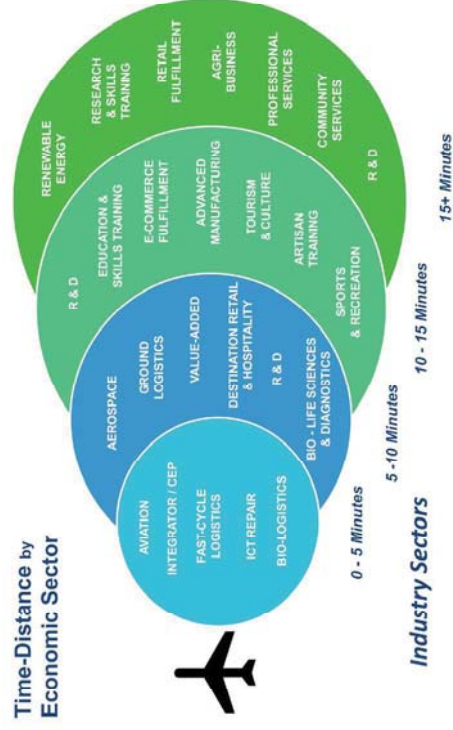
- **Regional Economic Overview** to provide an understanding of North Carolina, and surrounding regions to inform the types of economic activity that would be well positioned in Gaston County.
- **Economic Cluster Analysis** to identify the key pillars of the regional economy, sunset industries and sunrise industries, and potential development opportunities for Gaston County to consider.
- **Current Economic Clusters** which examines clusters that are strongly concentrated in Gaston County, drive the local economy, and offer the majority of local employment.
- **Recommended Economic Clusters** which include those clusters which present the strongest opportunities for Gaston County to pursue based on its proximity to CLT Airport.

## AIRPORT CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT

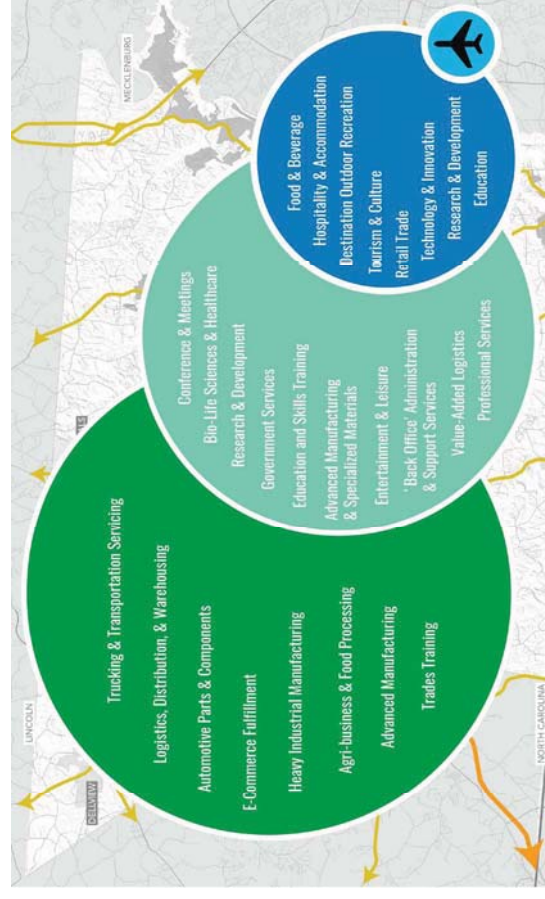
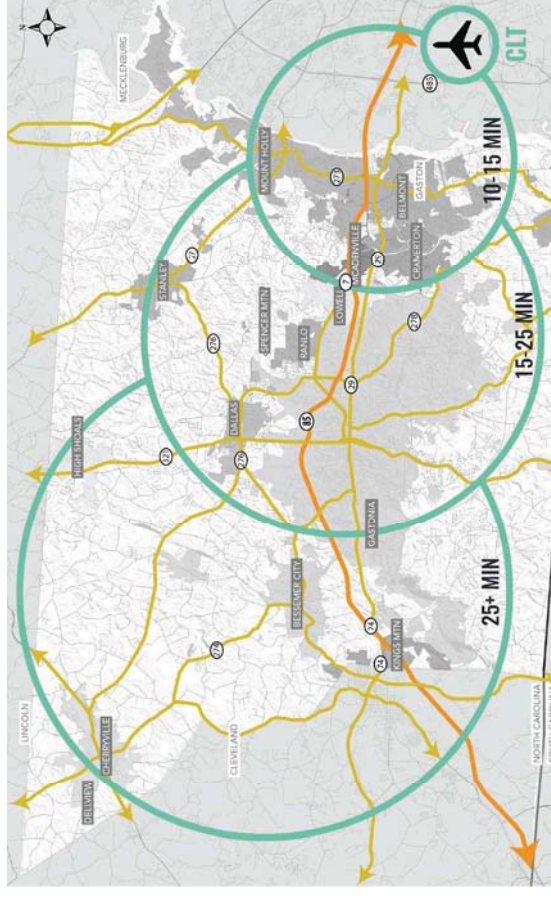
As Charlotte's economy continues to grow, it creates opportunities for growth among businesses that have an economic relationship to CLT Airport. New commercial development that responds to this opportunity is called 'Airport Connected Development'. By leveraging Gaston County's proximity to CLT Airport to attract private/public sector Airport Connected Development industries, new opportunities for regional economic growth will arise.

Industries that value proximity to an airport include Hospitality and Accommodation, Logistics and Distribution, Advanced Manufacturing, Skills Training, and Destination Entertainment, among others.

The figure below illustrates the relationship between different types of Airport Connected Development and their preferred driving distance to an airport. While a small percentage of companies require air-side access – which is expensive and quite limited - the vast majority of Airport Connected Development will locate in less expensive areas where access and travel times to the airport meet their specific requirements.

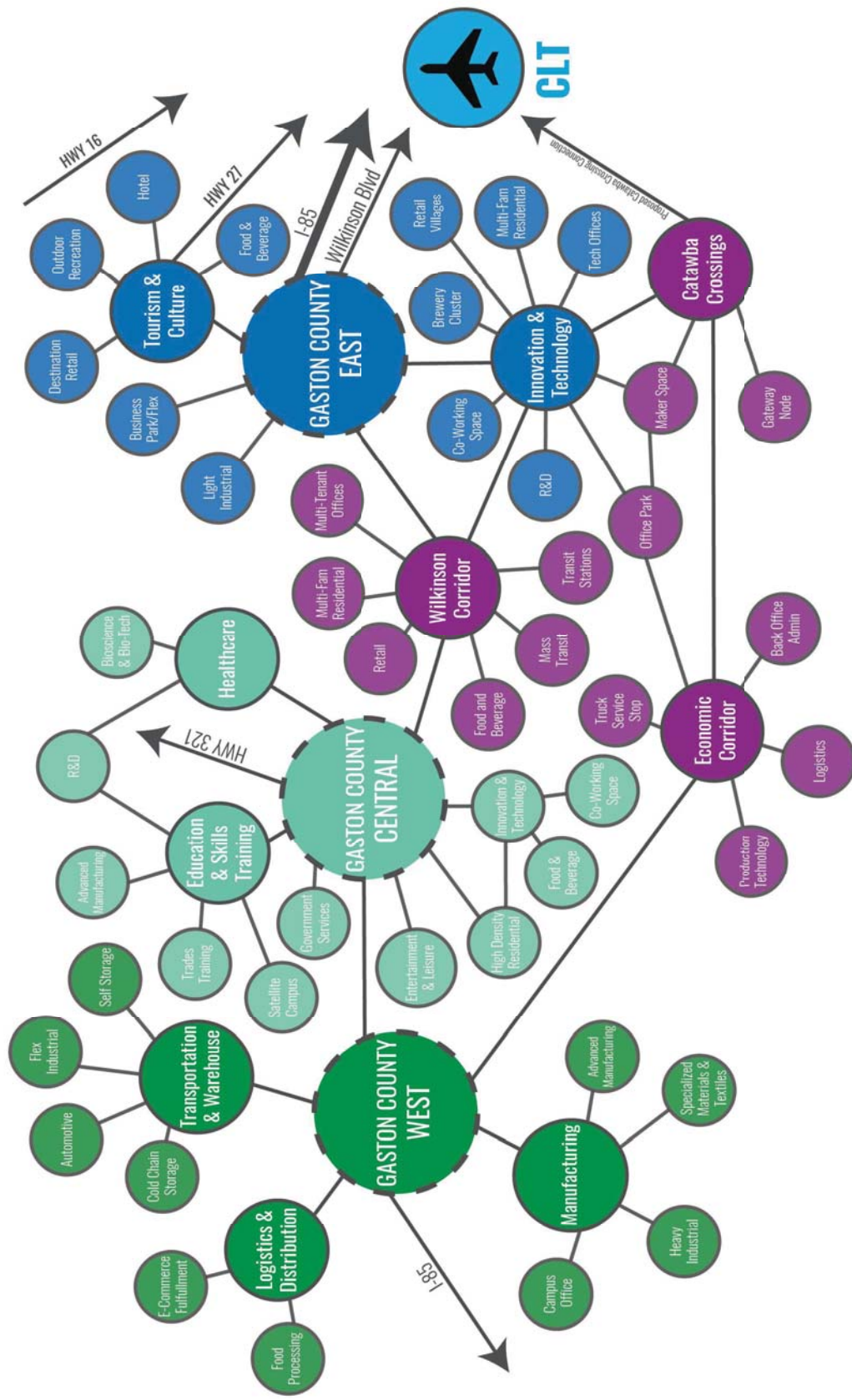


Based on the Airport Connected Development approach, the above figure overlays the time-distance clusters on a map of Gaston County, and the figure below depicts the recommended economic and industry sectors for each time-distance cluster within Gaston



## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Building upon Gaston County's role in Airport Connected Development, the figure below visualizes the associated upstream and downstream economic development that is generated by the primary sectors, and how transportation related initiatives would enable the economic sectors to flourish.



## MARKET ANALYSIS

Real Estate Market Analyses were performed for multiple land use asset classes to determine the Forecasted Real Estate Absorption in Gaston County. The asset classes explored in this Strategy include: Industrial (Warehouse, Flex, Manufacturing), Office, Retail, Hotel, and Residential.

Each of the Market Analyses includes the following elements:

- **Market Overview** of the Charlotte MSA and its component sub-markets, including vacancy, lease rates, absorption, cap rates, trends and other key data shaping development potential.
- **Supply Analysis** to understand the competitive influence of existing developments in the local area, as well as new projects in the development pipeline, to determine a realistic development program.
- **Demand Analysis** to understand the likely drivers for new development in the region over the next 20 years. This absorption forecast is the product of a series of methodologies, including a historically-based projection, an employment-based projection and a working age cohort projection.
- **Market Share Analysis** to estimate the share of the projected development for the Charlotte Metro Area which could be captured by Gaston County over the next 20 years.

Land Use	Gaston County Current Inventory	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption LOW	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption MODERATE	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption HIGH
Office/ Business Park	4.1 m SF	1.6m SF	2.2m SF	2.7mSF
Accommodation	1,500 Rooms	750 Lower Priced 100 Upper Priced	1,000 Lower Priced 139 Upper Priced	1,250 Lower Priced 180 Upper Priced
Retail	5.7m SF	1m SF	1.24m SF	1.5m SF
Light Industrial/Flex	526,000 SF	315,000 SF	420,000 SF	525,000 SF
Warehouse	24m SF	5.8m SF	7.9m SF	9.7m SF
Manufacturing	10.8m SF (est.)	1.9m SF	2.6m SF	3.2m SF
MF Residential	22,500 Units	5,043 Units	6,725 Units	8,406 Units

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS

The Economic Mobility Corridors indicate where opportunities for targeted growth and development could occur across Gaston County. Each Corridor has been identified based on its strategic location, connectivity and relationship with CLT Airport, and ability to improve mobility within Gaston County.

For each Economic Mobility Corridor, the Strategy identifies Strategic Positioning and Planned and/or Identified Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives. The Strategic Positioning considers the functionality, relevance, and connectivity aspects of each Corridor, including its role to improve economic connectivity between Gaston County and CLT Airport, and how the Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives could open up Economic Development opportunities.

The Economic Mobility Corridors that have been identified for Gaston County include:

- T1** Interstate 85
- T2** US 74/29 Bridge
- T3** US 74/29
- T4** Catawba Crossings South
- T5** South Gaston Economic Route
- T6** Catawba Recreation Trail
- T7** Catawba South Shared Mobility Loop
- T8** Highway 27
- T9** New Hope Rd./Route 279
- T10** NC Highway 7
- T11** Cox Rd./Lineberger Overpass
- T12** US Highway 321
- T13** Central Gastonia
- T14** Highway 16

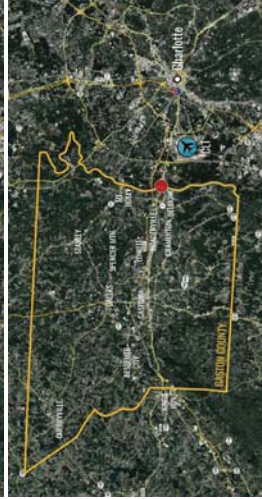


## ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS



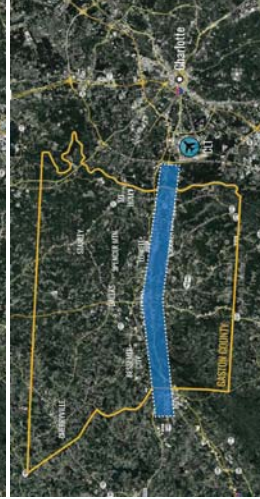
### INTERSTATE 85 CORRIDOR [T1]

- North Carolina's primary Economic Artery.
- Direct connection for commercial and commuter traffic between Gaston County and CLT Airport.
- Approved widening project with all new interchanges, including Main Street/Highway 7 in Belmont, South Gaston Economic Route, & Lineberger Connector Overpass.



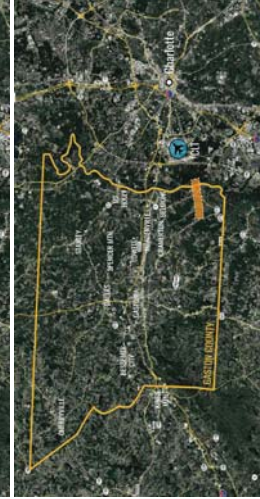
### WILKINSON BLVD. (US 74/29) BRIDGE [T2]

- Aging reliever route for Gaston County that connects to CLT and Charlotte.
- Improvements should establish a cross-section that facilitates various modes of traffic (Commuters, Commercial Vehicles, Cyclists/Pedestrians, Transit).
- Improved Bridge should be flexible to facilitate a potential future Mass Transit Corridor and new mobility technologies.



### WILKINSON BLVD.-FRANKLIN BLVD. (US 74/29) [T3]

- Significant Economic 'Spine' that passes through most municipalities
- Preserve Corridor for potential Mass Transit that could facilitate the evolution of various transit technologies including BRT, LRT, Commuter Rail, Shared Ride Lanes, Autonomous Vehicles.
- Opportunity for high density Mixed-Use TOD focal areas at Proposed Stations.



### CATAWBA CROSSINGS SOUTH [T4]

- Connection between Gastonia, Belmont, and the River District & CLT Airport.
- Would relieve Gaston County from regional traffic congestion on I 85, and establish community growth and economic development in West Charlotte.
- Facilitates strong economic connections and establishes the foundation for a new Economic Mobility Corridor passing through South Gaston County.

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS



### SOUTH GASTON ECONOMIC ROUTE [T5]

- Potential new corridor through greenfield lands for providing fast access to Gastonia, Bessemer City & Kings Mtn, particularly for commercial goods traffic.
- Accelerates economic development in southern and western Gaston County by reducing the drive time connectivity with CLT Airport to less than 15 minutes.
- Intersects with New Hope Rd. at a Town Center Mixed/Multi-Use Development.



### CATAWBA RECREATION TRAIL [T6]

- Contiguous North/South Trail along the linear waterfront at the Catawba River.
- Connect with waterfront park locations, Carolina Thread Trail, and other regional outdoor amenities throughout Belmont, Mount Holly and Gaston County.
- Supports outdoor recreation elements of the Gaston Outside "GO" campaign.



### CATAWBA SOUTH SHARED MOBILITY LOOP [T7]

- Would connect Belmont and South Gaston County (near Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens and South Fork/McLean) with the River District and CLT Airport in Charlotte.
- Could be initially established as a Transit Route, but could have the flexibility to adapt to future mobility technologies for demonstration projects.
- Requires Catawba Crossings South and Improvements to US 74/29 Bridge.



### MOUNT HOLLY HIGHWAY 27 CORRIDOR [T8]

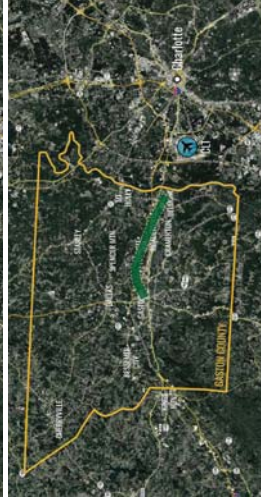
- Direct connection across the Catawba River to I 485, which connects to the west and south of CLT Airport.
- Trucking or Logistics Companies benefit from this seamless connection to CLT Airport, as it relates to moving their products and people.
- Connects to US National Whitewater Center, could be improved by pedestrian bridge.

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS



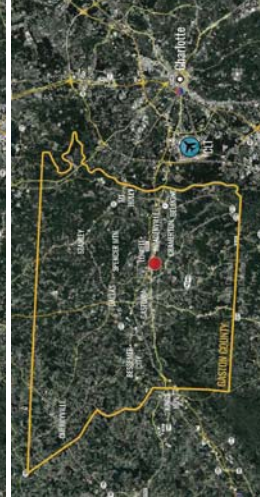
### NEW HOPE ROAD ROUTE 279 CORRIDOR [T9]

- Immediate opportunities to become a “Multi- Modal Complete Street”.
- Once Catawba Crossings is built, will be an Economic Route connecting to CLT’s south side and Intermodal Facility.
- Establishes a “Southeastern Gaston County Economic Triangle”, that connects Gastonia, McAdenville, Lowell, Belmont, Cramerton, River District, and CLT.



### COLLECTION OF VILLAGES ROUTE - HIGHWAY 7 [T10]

- Interlaced chain of “Quaint Villages” flanking Highway 7 corridor between Gastonia and Belmont, also including McAdenville, Lowell and Cramerton.
- “Multi- Modal Complete Street” improvements to facilitate safe and efficient flow of all transportation modes (cars, bicycles, pedestrians).
- Would become a “Regional Tourism Amenity” for residents and visitors.



### COX RD. & LINEBERGER TRACT OVERPASS FROM I 85 [T11]

- Overpass will connect Destination Retail south of I 85 with CaroMont Healthcare Campus and currently undeveloped 450-acre “Lineberger Tract” north of I 85, establishing an important “North/South Connection”.
- Establish “Local Transit Loop” from new Mass Transit Corridor on Wilkinson Blvd. – Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29), as well as TOD nodes.



### HIGHWAY 321 CORRIDOR [T12]

- Primary North/South Route in Gaston County.
- Connects Gastonia and I 85 with Regional Economic Engines including Gaston College, and companies located within the Gastonia Technology Park.
- Would intersect with potential “South Gaston Economic Route” to provide a direct connection between Gastonia with the River District and CLT Airport.

## ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS



### CENTRAL GASTONIA [T13]

- Established plans to improve streetscapes and spur economic development and employment on local mobility routes in Gastonia.
- Improvements to the Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) to include a potential Mass Transit Terminus Station in Downtown Gastonia.
- Expand “Authentic Downtown” environment by connecting FUSE District to Downtown with enhancements to Main Street.



### HIGHWAY 16 [T14]

- Crosses the Catawba River and connects Gaston County with I 485 and Uptown Charlotte.
- Primary connector route for economic activity occurring between Charlotte, Gaston County, and Lincoln County.
- Employment-focused corridor that is well positioned for Advanced Manufacturing, Time Sensitive Logistics, Self Storage, Warehousing, and Mixed-Use Development.

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The Strategy identified ten Economic Opportunity Areas, based on criteria relating to: proximity to the airport, current growth patterns, availability of land for redevelopment/development, and existing industry clusters. Economic Opportunity Areas demonstrate where concentrations of Targeted Economic Opportunities for commercial development, catalytic projects, and urban revitalization are expected to occur within Gaston County. The analysis of each Economic Opportunity Area includes:

- **Strategic Positioning and Economic Connectivity to CLT Airport**
- **Key Map** indicating the Area's location within the Airport Connected Development Time-Distance Clusters
- **Projected Absorption** for each recommended asset class over 20 years, based on the Moderate to High forecasts.
- **Recommended Development Typologies**
- **Recommended Industry Sectors**
- **Potential Catalytic Projects** to accelerate economic development opportunities
- **Transportation & Mobility Initiatives** that could potentially unlock developable land
- **High-level Economic Sector Land Use Map**



#	Opportunity Area
1	Belmont/Abbey Properties
2	McAdenville/Lowell/Cramerton
3	Lineberger/CaroMont
4	Gaston College/Technology Park/Dallas
5	Mount Holly/Stanley
6	Catawba South
7	Central Gastonia
8	South Gastonia
9	Bessemer City/Kings Mtn
10	Northwest Gaston/Cherryville

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



### BELMONT / ABBEY PROPERTIES

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Retail Trade
- Education
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Food & Beverage
- Technology & Innovation
- Research & Development
- Professional Services
- Outdoor Recreation



### MCADENVILLE/LOWELL/CRAMERTON

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

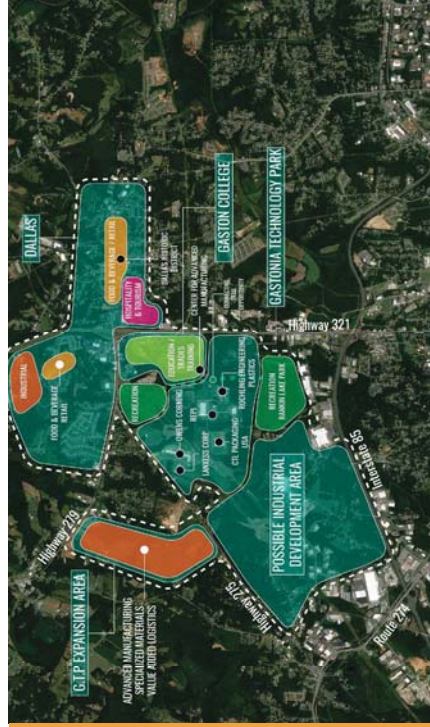
- Food & Beverage
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Destination Outdoor Recreation
- Tourism & Culture
- Technology & Innovation
- Advanced Manufacturing



### LINBERGER / CAROMONT

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Bio-Life Sciences & Healthcare
- Research & Development
- Back Office Administration & Support Services
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials



### GASTON COLLEGE/TECH PARK/DALLAS

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Education & Skills Training
- Research & Development
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials
- Value Added Logistics
- Trades Training
- Professional Services

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS



### MOUNT HOLLY / STANLEY

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Tourism & Culture
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Food & Beverage
- Destination Outdoor Recreation
- Time Sensitive Logistics
- Trucking & Transportation Services



### CATAWBA SOUTH

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Time Sensitive Logistics
- Technology & Innovation
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Tourism & Culture
- Food & Beverage
- Conference & Meetings
- Logistics Distribution & Warehousing



### CENTRAL GASTONIA

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Government Services
- Conference & Meetings
- Entertainment & Leisure
- Professional Services
- Retail Trade
- Back Office Administration & Support
- Food & Beverage



### SOUTH GASTONIA

#### TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:

- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing
- E-Commerce Fulfillment
- Agri-Business & Food Processing
- Aerospace
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials
- Value Added Logistics
- Back Office Administration & Support Services

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

### BESSEMER CITY / KINGS MOUNTAIN

**TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:**

- Heavy Industrial Manufacturing
- Automotive Parts & Components
- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing
- Trades Training
- Trucking & Transportation Services
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agri-Business & Food Processing

### NORTHWEST GASTON / CHERRYVILLE

**TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS:**

- Trucking & Transportation Services
- Automotive Parts & Components
- Heavy Industrial Manufacturing
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing

## CATALYTIC PROJECTS

In order to activate the Strategy, a variety of recommended “Catalytic Projects” have been identified. Based on the findings of the Stakeholder Engagement, Economic Analysis, Real Estate Market Analysis, and Case Study research, the Catalytic Projects effectively leverage the competitive advantage of Gaston County's proximity to CLT, while meeting wider economic development goals for the region.

Catalytic Projects act as anchor magnets to attract related up- and down-stream businesses and sectors, successfully accelerating economic growth as well as deepening the connection between Gaston County and the economic activity generated by CLT Airport.

The Catalytic Projects for Gaston County are defined as being either:

- Transportation and Infrastructure Projects
- Land Use and Development Projects
- Programs and Processes

### Transportation & Mobility Catalytic Projects

- T.4 Catawba Crossings South
- T.7 South Catawba Shared Mobility Loop
- T.10 Collection of Villages Route NC Highway 7
- T.15 Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29

### Land Use & Development Catalytic Projects

- C.1 South Gaston Industrial Development Area
- C.2 FUSE District
- C.3 Transit-Oriented Development Nodes
- C.4 South Belmont Destination Conference Center
- C.5 Temperature Controlled / Cold Chain Distribution Facility
- C.6 Trucking and Heavy Equipment Auction
- C.7 Culinary Incubator
- C.8 Medical Devices Manufacturing & Bio-Life Hub
- C.9 Food Processing and Innovation Facility
- C.10 Truck Servicing and Charging Station

### Programs & Processes Catalytic Projects

- P.1 Mill Adaptive Reuse Program and Incentives
- P.2 Economic Marketing & Communication Campaign: Gaston County's Connectivity to CLT
- P.3 CLT Airport Connection with Gaston College
- P.4 County-wide Public Transportation System

## IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

The Implementation Action Plan indicates the potential partners and stakeholders that could be involved throughout the implementation process of each Catalytic Project or Economic Mobility Corridor. These stakeholders range from State, County, and Municipal bodies, to the private sector and external industry partners. The role that each stakeholder plays in relation to the Catalytic Projects and Economic Mobility Corridors are defined as the following:

- **Planning and Policy:** Contributing planning studies, policy documents, and overarching vision and permissions for the project.
- **Potential Funding Partner:** Provides financial support, investment, tax incentives, grants, and other fiscal sources for the project.
- **Marketing and Advocacy:** Supports the project by promoting its significance and importance to the broader region.
- **Implementation and Development:** Involved with physical implementation including land assembly, site preparation, and construction.

## CONCLUSION

Through a comprehensive and collaborative process, the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy has been designed to identify economic development opportunities that fully leverage the County's close proximity and access to CLT and its Intermodal Center.

The Strategy has identified Target Economic Sectors and Strategic Opportunity Sites which will enable Gaston County to be proactive in attracting new industry sectors and advocate for unique economic development initiatives. Specifically, this strategy has provided the rationale for positioning for Gaston County and its constituent municipalities as excellent options outside Charlotte for CLT and Intermodal Center related development, as well as putting Gaston County on the CLT map for business recruitment and relocation.

The Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Development Strategy Document, which is separate from this Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy report, encapsulates the directions of the comprehensive report and Implementation Action Plan. It represents a succinct summary and call to action for pursuing the regional revitalization of Gaston County. The Development Strategy Document provides an information platform for marketing and implementing development opportunities across Gaston County.

SECTION 1  
**TECHNICAL REPORT**



## 2 INTRODUCTION

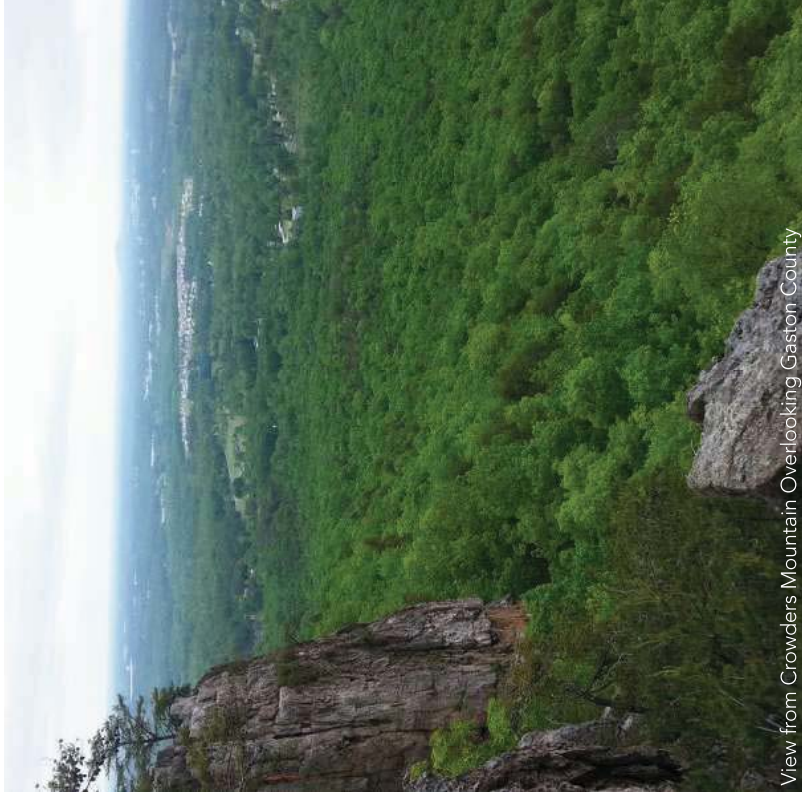
## 2.1 STUDY PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

### OVERVIEW

Through engagement as a stakeholder during the work being completed for Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT) as part of its Airport Area Strategic Development Plan (AASDP), Gaston County and its various municipalities recognized the opportunity and long term value in preparing a synergistic and complementary Economic Positioning Strategy for Gaston County.

Through a collaborative public-private approach, the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy is designed to fully leverage the County's close proximity and access to CLT and its Intermodal Center. Identifying Target Economic Sectors and Strategic Opportunity Sites will enable Gaston County to be proactive in its Long-Range Planning and Economic Development Initiatives. Potential benefits of the strategy include:

- Position Gaston County and its municipalities as the best option outside of Charlotte for CLT Airport and Intermodal Center-related development.
- Inform planning, economic development, and marketing-branding strategies.
- Identify development opportunities and catalyst projects within Gaston County's municipalities to expand recruitment potential.
- Support the economic rationale for improving existing mobility corridors, creating new mobility and economic corridors, and unlocking developable land.
- Put Gaston County on the CLT Airport map for economic development initiatives and company recruitment.
- Provide a platform and framework for implementation.



## PROJECT TEAM

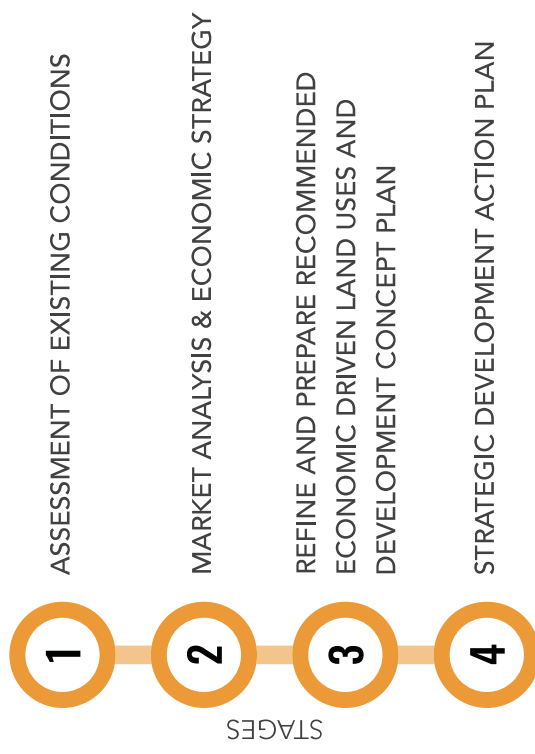
To carry on the momentum created by the CLT AASDP, much of the same consultancy team was retained to develop an Economic Positioning Strategy for Gaston County. The Greater Gaston Development Corporation (GGDC) engaged MXD Development Strategists Ltd. (MXD) in September 2017 to lead this assignment. Having worked in over 50 countries around the world on similar assignments, MXD is a global leader in leveraging the connectivity at and around airports to identify Economic Cluster Activities, Airport Connected Development Opportunities, and Target End User Industries. MXD then assembled a skilled and knowledgeable team that brings local insight and experience to the assignment:

- **Kimley-Horn & Associates** - Charlotte-based Transportation Planning sub-consultant
- **Lyerly Agency** - Belmont-based Stakeholder Engagement and Communication sub-consultant

This study is under the overall direction of a Steering Committee comprised of senior representatives of the GGDC and selected Key Stakeholders from funding organizations and CLT Airport.

## PROJECT STAGES

Over a nine-month timeframe, the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Development Strategy was prepared in four main stages:



Stakeholder Engagement was an integral part of the analysis and was incorporated throughout the study process in order to engage and inform Key Stakeholders about the purpose and approach of the study, gather feedback and input into issues and initiatives, and to share study results and directions. Stakeholder Engagement methods included:

- Stakeholder Focus Group Sessions
- Key Stakeholder One-on-One Meetings
- Stakeholder Drop-In Open House
- Steering Committee Participation



CONVENIENCES TO ATTRACT  
S.C. + FUTURE  
BUSINESSES

ROLE FOR CATAWBA  
CROSSING  
- WORK FORCE  
- FREIGHT

HOW TO OVERCOME  
THE NEGATIVE  
IMPACT OF  
REGION  
- CRIME  
- AMENITIES

CRAFT BEER  
BREWERY  
BUBBLE

D.T. GR  
MANY  
OWNERS  
PERCEPTION  
PROPERTY

WHO CATAWBA  
CROSSING

### 3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

# 3.1 STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

## OVERVIEW

As part of the kick-off process to prepare an Economic Positioning Strategy for Gaston County, MXD Development Strategists along with Kimley-Horn and the Lyerly Agency conducted a series of stakeholder focus group sessions in September 2017.

Key stakeholders from across Gaston County were invited to participate in the focus group sessions, which were divided into clusters of similar interests. The five stakeholder groups included: Transportation, Mobility, Logistics, and Planning; Economic Development Agencies and Chambers of Commerce; Major Businesses, Industries and Healthcare; Major Property Owners, Developers, Property Managers, and Real Estate Community; and Education and Skills Training.

Stakeholders were given an introduction to the purpose of the strategy and an overview to the process and main objectives. Stakeholders were encouraged to share any input they had on hot topic issues or major initiatives affecting Gaston County. The feedback from these sessions allowed the project team to better understand the strengths, challenges, and potential opportunities in the region and provided invaluable insight into local issues from a variety of perspectives.

## STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS



Major Businesses,  
Industries and Healthcare



Major Property Owners,  
Developers, Property  
Managers & Real Estate  
Community



Transportation, Mobility,  
Logistics and Planning



Economic Development Agencies  
and Chamber of Commerce



Education and Skills Training



Stakeholder Focus Group Session - Sept 2017



Stakeholder Feedback and Input

## 3.2 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK KEY THEMES

### OVERVIEW

To help summarize all of the information that was collected, the stakeholder feedback was distilled into eight “Key Themes”. Given the diversity of stakeholders who contributed to the dialogue, these recurring themes are important factors to consider and helped to inform the creation of an Economic Positioning Strategy for Gaston County.

HOT TOPICS & ISSUES

STRENGTHS & INITIATIVES

#### CATAWBA CROSSING

- Critical to providing connectivity between Gaston County and CLT Airport, the River District, and Charlotte Metro
- Needs to accommodate multi-modal travel to stimulate mixed use development
- Will relieve congestion and support mass transit

#### CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

- Limited transportation options amongst Gaston County towns and to Charlotte
- Opportunity for multi-modal greenway and trails connections
- Lack of mass transit

#### NEGATIVE IMAGE PERCEPTION

- Gaston County is not on many real estate broker’s radar
- Gaston County not seen by some as a desirable place to live or work
- Lifestyle, affordability, great schools, and recreational amenities of Gaston County have been overlooked - need to continue to promote assets through Gaston Outside (GO) campaign

#### UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

- Available and affordable land for infill
- Redevelopment opportunities of old mills
- High quality sites/buildings not utilized at highest and best use
- Waterfront is an overlooked asset
- Downtown and “Main St” redevelopment potential
- Lack of and need for Gaston County and town gateways

#### CATALYST PROJECTS

- Potential for satellite education/skills training campus(es)
- Gaston County currently advancing multiple innovative projects (FUSE District, TechWorks, Center for Advanced Manufacturing, Warlick Family YMCA, etc.)
- Could provide rationale for transit to the region

#### EDUCATION / SKILLS TRAINING

- Offered curriculum/programs designed to meet local business and industry workforce needs
- Lack of skilled workers to fill high demand job sectors (rail technician, trucking, and logistics)
- Potential skills training partnership with CLT

#### WORKFORCE + JOBS

- Huge potential to retrain/reposition local talent pool for emerging sectors
- Need to attract high quality businesses and provide appropriate buildings/office space to accommodate them
- Need to attract and retain millennial talent to Gaston County with projects like TechWorks

#### HOUSING

- Current housing supply is not close to town centers or amenities
- Overall lack of multi-family housing options
- Infill and mixed-use potential on affordable land

## 3.3 STAKEHOLDER OPEN HOUSE

### OVERVIEW

The GGDC hosted a Stakeholder Open House on Wednesday May 30th, 2018 at Belmont Abbey College's Haid Ballroom. The Open House provided an opportunity for invited Stakeholders to view the key findings, ask questions, and engage with the overall Economic Positioning Strategy. Attendees ranged from small business owners, to politicians, to public servants, to international company representatives.

The Open House was a milestone event, showcasing the potential of Gaston County, as well as stimulating the ongoing discussion for the Strategy's vision to advance economic prosperity in Gaston County. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions to the consulting team, and provide any further comments or questions on the centrally located Comments board.

The additional feedback from the Open House was critically important to the project's process, and allowed the team to further refine, improve, and enhance the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy.



Stakeholder Open House - May 2018



Chris LeTourneur from MXD presents the Strategy



Key Components from the Strategy on Display



## 4 LOCATION ANALYSIS

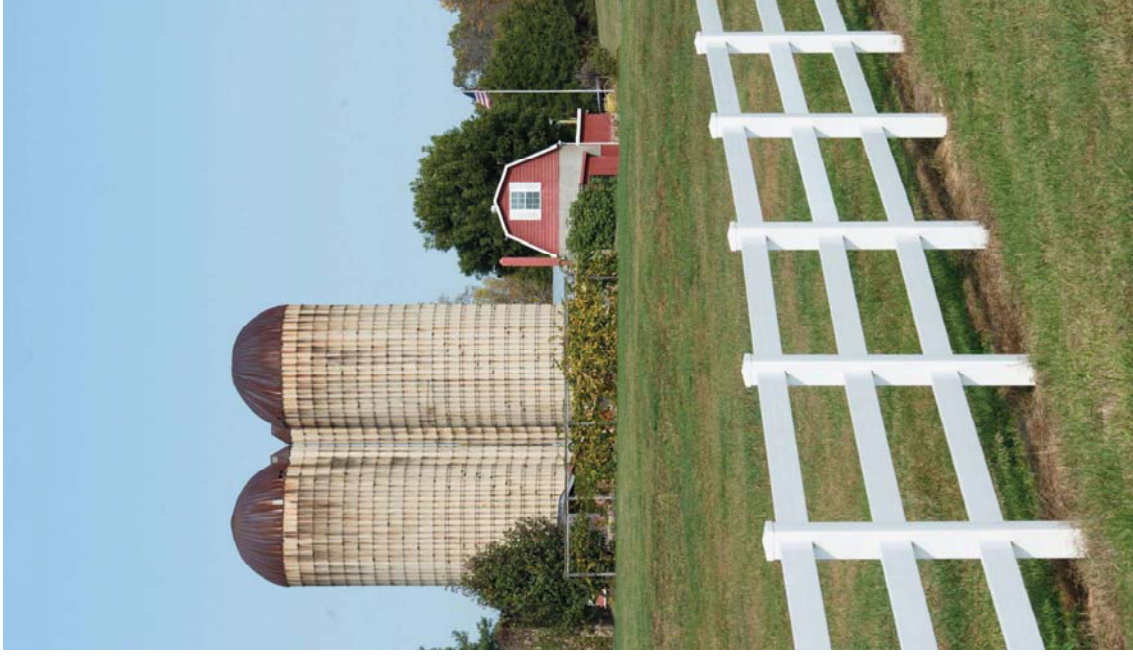
## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

The optimal long-term economic positioning strategy for Gaston County is driven by location dynamics operating over a range of geographic scales. The Location Analysis provides a comprehensive foundation for further exploration of the region's economic clusters and commercial real estate markets.

The analysis consists of the following components:

- **Local Context** to summarize Gaston County area's demographic profile and population dynamics, as well as an assessment of current commercial trends and the County's corridors of growth and development.
- **Regional Planning and Policy Analysis** to gain a deeper understanding of the vision for future development and growth at a regional level.
- **Municipal Planning and Policy Analysis** to gain a deeper understanding of each municipality's goals for Planning & Urban Development, Economic Development, and Transportation & Mobility.
- **Transportation and Connectivity Analysis** to provide an assessment of current transportation corridors, the County's connectivity to surrounding regions, and any future expansion of the roadway network and public transportation systems.
- **Charlotte Douglas International Airport Context** to provide an overview of the CLT Airport Area Strategic Development Plan (AASDP) and its impact on potential commercial development on adjacent areas.



## 4.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

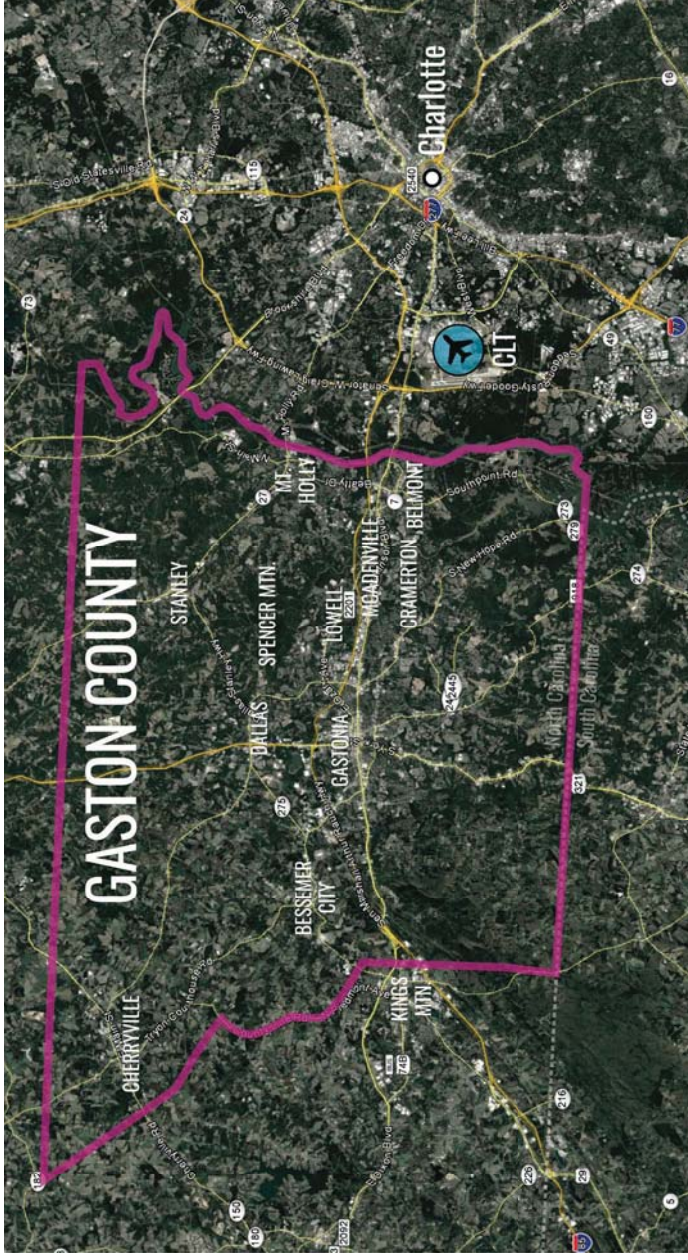
### OVERVIEW

Gaston County is the second largest county in the Charlotte region, covering over 363 square miles of land. It is bordered by Cleveland County to the west, Lincoln County to the north, Mecklenburg County to the east and York County, South Carolina to the south. Gaston County is strategically located along I 85 and U.S. 321 on the west side of the Charlotte Metro Area. The County's eastern-most cities are a 7-10 minute drive from Charlotte Douglas International Airport (CLT).

Gaston County includes a mixed urban-rural landscape and is made up of a collection of cities and towns, ranging from small villages to incorporated cities with over 70,000 people. The total population for Gaston County was approximately 213,442 as of 2015. 65 percent of the total population live in urban areas and many of those areas can be found along the I 85 corridor that runs east west through the middle of the County.

With a long history in manufacturing and the textile industry, Gaston County continues to attract national and international companies to the region. The area also provides easy access to outdoor recreational amenities and an affordable quality of life. Being part of one the fastest growing metropolitan regions in the country provides many advantages,

Figure 4.1 - Gaston County Context Map



but it also presents some challenges - transportation access and connectivity being one. With only four highway crossings over the Catawba River that runs between Mecklenburg County and Gaston County, all vehicular traffic, both commuters and truck traffic are funnelled onto one of these routes in order to access employment centers, businesses, and residential neighbourhoods. Design and approval of the Catawba Crossings project in the south east portion of the county has yet to be agreed upon but

once complete it would have a significant impact on future economic development and transportation access for Gaston County and the region. Having another access route to CLT and its Intermodal Center, as envisioned with the proposed Catawba Crossings South, would contribute greatly to unlocking the potential of strategic land in Gaston County for economic growth and development. The project would also facilitate continued development of strategic projects in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

## TOTAL POPULATION PROJECTION

Population projections for Gaston County were obtained from the North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management (OSBM).

The latest projection was to 2037 and was undertaken in October, 2017.

As shown in Figure 4.2, MXD extended the projection to 2050 with a linear regression based on the OBSM forecast.

Using this methodology, it is anticipated that by 2050 Gaston County will have over 273,000 residents, or approximately 55,000 more residents than today.

## AGE COHORT PROJECTIONS

The OBSM uses a standard population projection method which takes into account natural increase (or decrease) as well as net migration. Additional variables such as race, gender and age cohorts.

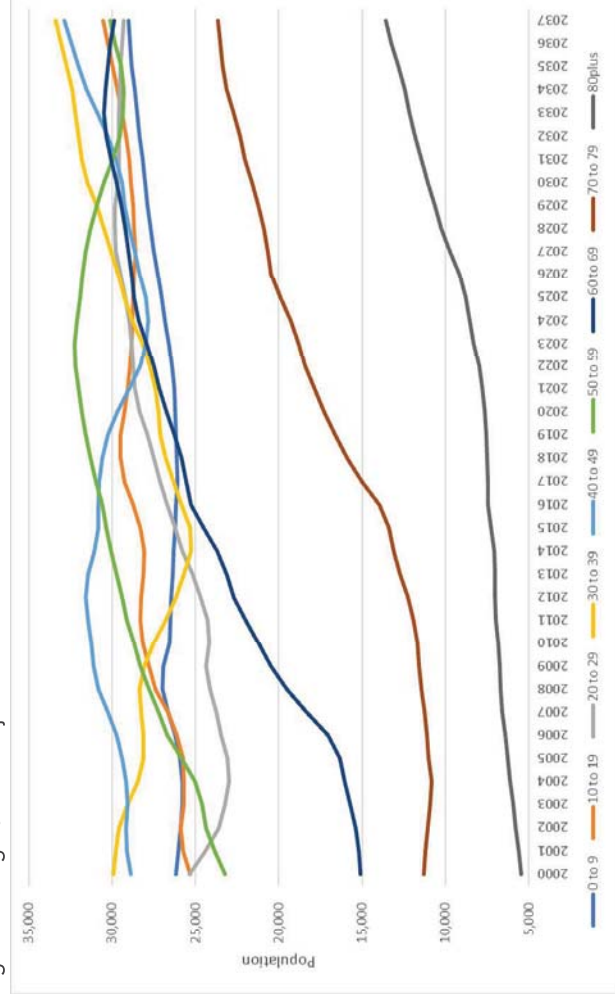
A detailed breakdown of the age cohort projections to 2037, as shown in Figure 4.3, reveals that older age cohorts will be the fastest growing over the next 20 years.

However, family-oriented age cohorts (30 to 49 and 0 to 19) will continue to be the dominant age groups in the County.

Figure 4.2 - Total Population Projection



Figure 4.3 - Age Cohort Projections



## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Gaston County is North Carolina's 10th most populous county and contains 15 census places. The largest municipalities in the County based on population are Gastonia, Mount Holly, and Belmont.

The median household income in Gaston County was \$42,660 in 2015, a moderate increase from 2014. There were also 91,563 employed residents in Gaston County, a 1.35% growth over 2014's 90,343 employees.

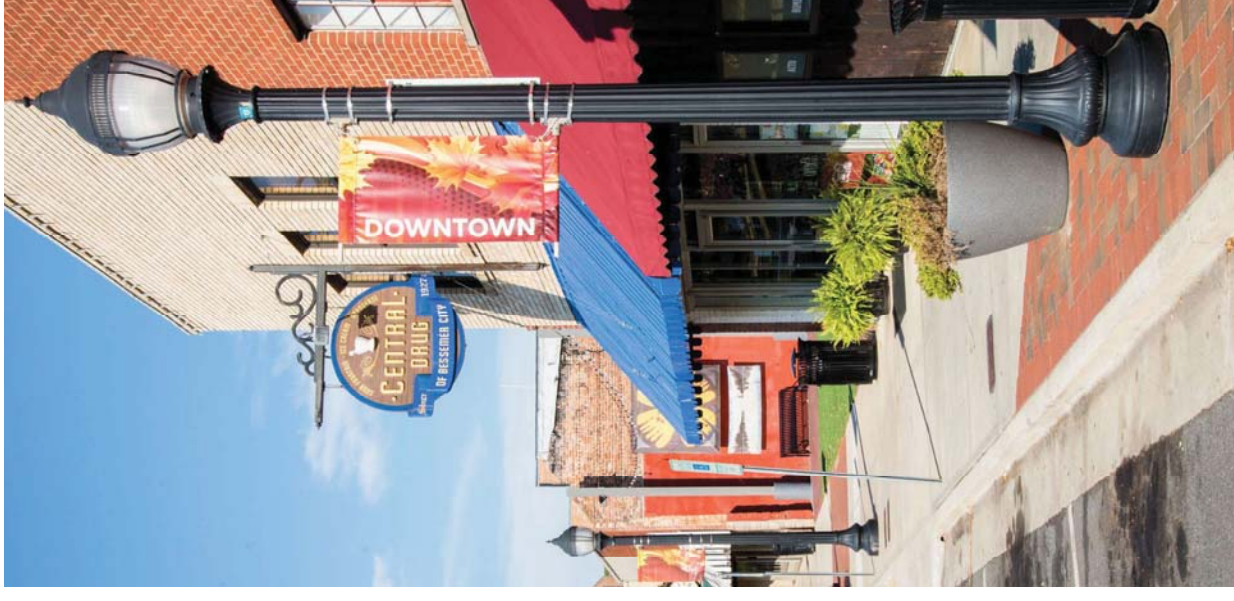
In 2015, 96.4% of the County's residents were US citizens, higher than the national average of 93%. The median age of County-born residents was 40.3. Of residents born outside of the US, Mexico was the most common country of origin, followed by India and Germany. Of all of Gaston County's residents, 156,240 were White and 31,666 were Black. Further, 7.85% of the residents were native speakers of a language other than English, of which Spanish is most commonly spoken.

As Gaston County begins to attract technology, knowledge driven, and advanced manufacturing companies to the area, it is critical that the local workforce is trained with the appropriate education and skills to fill the positions. In 2015, the largest proportion of Educational Attainment of residents was

'Some College', reported at 25.1%. Following this, 22.4% had achieved their High School Diploma, 13.4% have a Bachelor's Degree, 9.1% had an Associate's Degrees, and 5.8% had a Graduate or Professional Degree.

The most common major for graduates with Associate's Degrees in the County was Liberal Arts & Sciences. Gaston College has the largest number of graduates in the County, with 1,309 graduates. In 2015, 541 more women than men graduated from Gaston County's institutions.

In 2015, the median value of residential property was \$125,100, and the average property tax was \$900-1.5k. 66.5% of the County's housing units were owner-occupied, which is higher than the national average of 63.9%. The most common transportation mode was Drove Alone, with an average commute time of 23.8 minutes. Most households have 2 cars, followed by 3 cars.





## COMMERCIAL GROWTH PATTERNS IN GASTON COUNTY

Direct access to interstate highways and close proximity to Charlotte Douglas International Airport makes Gaston County a strategic location for businesses.

Building upon its geographic location and other advantages, Gaston County offers targeted grants and tax incentives which has cultivated a business-friendly environment. Gaston County's Investment Grant Program returns a percentage of property taxes to entitled companies in the form of a grant, and the Economic Development Commission offers free assistance to companies looking to establish a presence in the County. In addition, Gaston College offers no cost training programs for new businesses.

There are five major Business & Technology Parks in Gaston County. These include:

- **Gastonia Technology Park:** 422 acre NC Certified Site suited for advanced manufacturing technology opportunities. Some of the tenants include Repi, Lanxess, Rochling Engineering Plastics, CTL Packaging USA, Dixon Quick Coupling and Owens Corning.
- **SouthRidge Business Park:** 425 acre master-planned park suited for distribution and manufacturing opportunities. Advance

Drainage Systems, Hunter Douglas, Dole Foods and FMC Lithium are tenants.

- **Summit at Court Drive:** 60 acre Class-A business park development suited for medical and office industries.
- **Kings Mountain Corporate Center:** 164 acre privately owned greenfield industrial development. In 1995, HanesBrands acquired 35 acres for the construction of their 370,000 sq foot distribution center, being the major tenant of KMCC. Other companies include Firestone, LNS Turbo and Southern Container.
- **Oaks Commerce Center:** 280 acre privately owned industrial park. 95+ acres have been developed by the tenants of the park, such as Cross Automation, Wilbert Plastic Services, Dixie Industrial Supply, Carus Phosphates, Logisco Kiser-Harris and DePalo Bakery.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis was completed to assess the Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Threats of Gaston County. This analysis informs what should be taken into consideration when introducing new development and planning initiatives in the area.

### STRENGTHS

- Strategically located west of Charlotte along Interstate 85, with eastern Gaston cities only 7-10 minutes to CLT Airport and 20 minutes to Uptown Charlotte
- Historic downtowns featuring home town charm and authentic character
- A number of abandoned textile mills and supporting commercial development that are ripe for redevelopment into unique residential and office spaces
- Abundant water capacity for water intensive industries and primary wastewater system being expanded to accommodate future growth
- Regional amenities include high quality health care, outstanding school district, and recreation opportunities

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Available and affordable land and redevelopment/infill opportunities with old mills and supporting infrastructure
- Local workforce has strong potential for retraining/repositioning to support emerging economic sectors
- Opportunity to leverage the growth happening in and around CLT to benefit Gaston County
- Waterfront and Catawba River are underdeveloped assets

### CHALLENGES

- Limited transportation options within Gaston County, and to and from Charlotte area
- Current transit is not frequent and inaccessible from most areas
- Catawba Crossings project delays
- Negative image perception of Gaston County diminishes value of the region's liveability and assets
- "Out of sight, out of mind" stigma affects real estate community and people new to the region (Gaston County has not been on the broker community's radar)
- Lack of high quality multi-family housing options that are close to amenities, transit, and town centers

### THREATS

- Adjacent counties could propose development projects that directly compete with the recommended development strategy for Gaston County
- The current political climate could further delay the Catawba Crossings South project

## 4.3 REGIONAL PLANNING & POLICY ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Gaston County has taken significant steps towards planning at a regional level. This planning has ranged from economic development frameworks to tourism campaigns, all with the goal of positioning Gaston as an attractive place for businesses to locate and people to live.

This section reviews past regional reports and initiatives that have been conducted by various organizations, to ensure that this Economic Positioning Strategy builds upon and is consistent with the momentum of past efforts and does not reinvent progress.

### GREATER GASTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (GGDC)

#### POISED TO PROSPER REPORT

In an effort to provide a guiding framework, The Alliance for Growth, a special task force commissioned by GGDC, brought together over 100 local business, government, education, and nonprofit leaders to develop the Poised to Prosper report.

This collaborative effort identified a number of recommendations to help accelerate future business and strengthen Gaston County's economic growth competitiveness.

The recommendations included the following major themes:

- **Image/Marketing** - Identify key strengths of Gaston County to include in a positive branding campaign to address negative image perceptions.
- **Transportation/Access** - Continue to make the case for the Catawba Crossings project and conduct a county-wide transportation study that creates a unified vision for Gaston County and identifies project priorities.
- **Entrepreneur/Small Business**- Create hubs to foster entrepreneurial collaboration and address issues of over-regulation.
- **Workforce Preparedness** - Better align employment needs with educational offerings and training programs. Increase workforce preparedness and overall awareness about local career opportunity requirements in the county.
- **New/Expanded Recruiting** - Continue to expand business and investment recruitment initiatives and diversify economic development efforts to include major mixed-use/retail projects. Strengthen business to business communication efforts.

- **Growth/Regulatory** - Review policies and regulations to increase efficiencies and improve building and development approval processes.
- **Sites/Buildings/Infrastructure** - Evolve current land purchase/donated policy in order to better leverage strategic tracts of land for development that could help attract more industry investment in Gaston County.

## GASTON OUTSIDE - GO CAMPAIGN

One of the most visible of the GGDC Alliance for Growth initiatives is the "Gaston Outside" image and branding campaign, which is a celebration of the people, places, businesses and natural beauty that make Gaston County such an attractive place to live, work, play, and invest.



## GASTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (GCEDC)

The GCEDC is dedicated to attracting and retaining desirable businesses and employers to continue improving and diversifying economic opportunities in Gaston County.

The EDC's main functions are to:

- Attract new, quality industry and commerce;
- Help existing industry and businesses grow;
- Stimulate development of appropriate land and buildings;
- Improve area infrastructure, especially water, sewer and transportation;
- Improve the general business climate, including conditions for new industry;
- Inform citizens of the advantages of economic development; and,
- Increase commercial development and job growth.

## GASTON COUNTY LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION PLANS

### 2035 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

The Gaston County Comprehensive Land Use Plan establishes a guide to project and accommodate future growth and development over the next twenty years. The plan also encourages coordination between the County, bordering Counties, and municipalities. The plan identifies eight goals to guide future decision-making in Gaston County:

- **Citizen Awareness** - Develop public education resources for residents in order to increase citizen awareness and knowledge into community issues or opportunities.
- **Transportation System** - Improve the transportation system to include multi-model regional considerations of highways, bicycle and pedestrian connections, mass transit, and connectivity between communities within Gaston County and the larger Charlotte Metropolitan Region.
- **Utilities** - Improve energy, water, and telecommunication throughout Gaston County.
- **Quality of Life** - Enhance quality of life to absorb growth while focusing on

commercial and community resources, walkability, and agricultural preservation.

- **Leadership Collaboration** - Foster communication and collaboration among the leadership of municipalities and the County to coordinate strategic investments.

- **Image** - Improve the image of Gaston County both to current and potential residents, focusing on retaining and increasing the population of young professionals.

- **Natural Resources** - Emphasize the importance of our natural resources through highlighting natural environments and encouraging the use of environmental recreation.

- **Economic Development** - Increase economic development throughout the County by supporting municipalities and improving viable job opportunities.

Further, the plan identifies recommendations for future land use and transportation planning:

- **Review Zoning Code** - Align with the adopted Future Land Use Map.

- **Review Development Standards** - Ensure that the character of areas is maintained.

- **Create Focused Development Areas** - Focus growth outside of municipal areas in areas that are accessible, allow for available services, support existing municipalities, and/or allow for opportunities for investment.

- **Growth Area Plan for Northeast Gaston County** - Due to development pressure, analyze mobility systems, housing possibilities, and other issues that will affect the region.

- **Small Area Plans** - Offer detailed analyses and alternatives for growth for areas with unique needs, including Southwest Gaston County and Tryon.

- **Support Transit Improvements** - Use the Future Land Use Plan to mark appropriate locations for bus stations and pockets of increased density that have the potential for becoming transit nodes.

- **Connectivity** - Increase connections between job centers and skilled and unskilled workers as manufacturing opportunities increase, alleviate congestion and reducing traffic time in major highly-utilized roads, and

determine feasibility of expanded routes to/from employment centers.

- **Improve Safety** - Invest in transit and route extensions with Mecklenburg County, increase transportation capacity, and improve safety conditions with all major transportation modes.
- **Coordination with State and Regional Agencies** - Coordinate with NCDOT, the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), and the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) on intra-city transit initiatives, such as bus rapid transit service

To conform to regional planning policy and direction, all future development and planning strategies should consider the following goals when forming recommendations for Gaston County:

- Expand the multi-modal transportation system (roadways, mass transit, active transportation facilities) in order to improve the current level of access and connectivity to the region;
- Improve the public perception of safety and quality of life in the region so that more people are attracted to living in Gaston County;
- Identify and incubate potential economic development opportunities to increase density near employment nodes and attract high quality businesses and industry sectors to Gaston County; and
- Stimulate opportunities and partnerships that strengthen the talent pipeline for Gaston County industries through re-education, skills training, and workforce preparedness.

## REGIONAL ASSETS AND INITIATIVES

Figure 4.5 displays some of Gaston County's regional assets and initiatives that have resulted from the County's regional planning process and collaborations with neighboring Counties and state agencies, including NCDOT. These assets and initiatives provide advantages that can be leveraged not only by the municipality they are located in, but by the entire County.

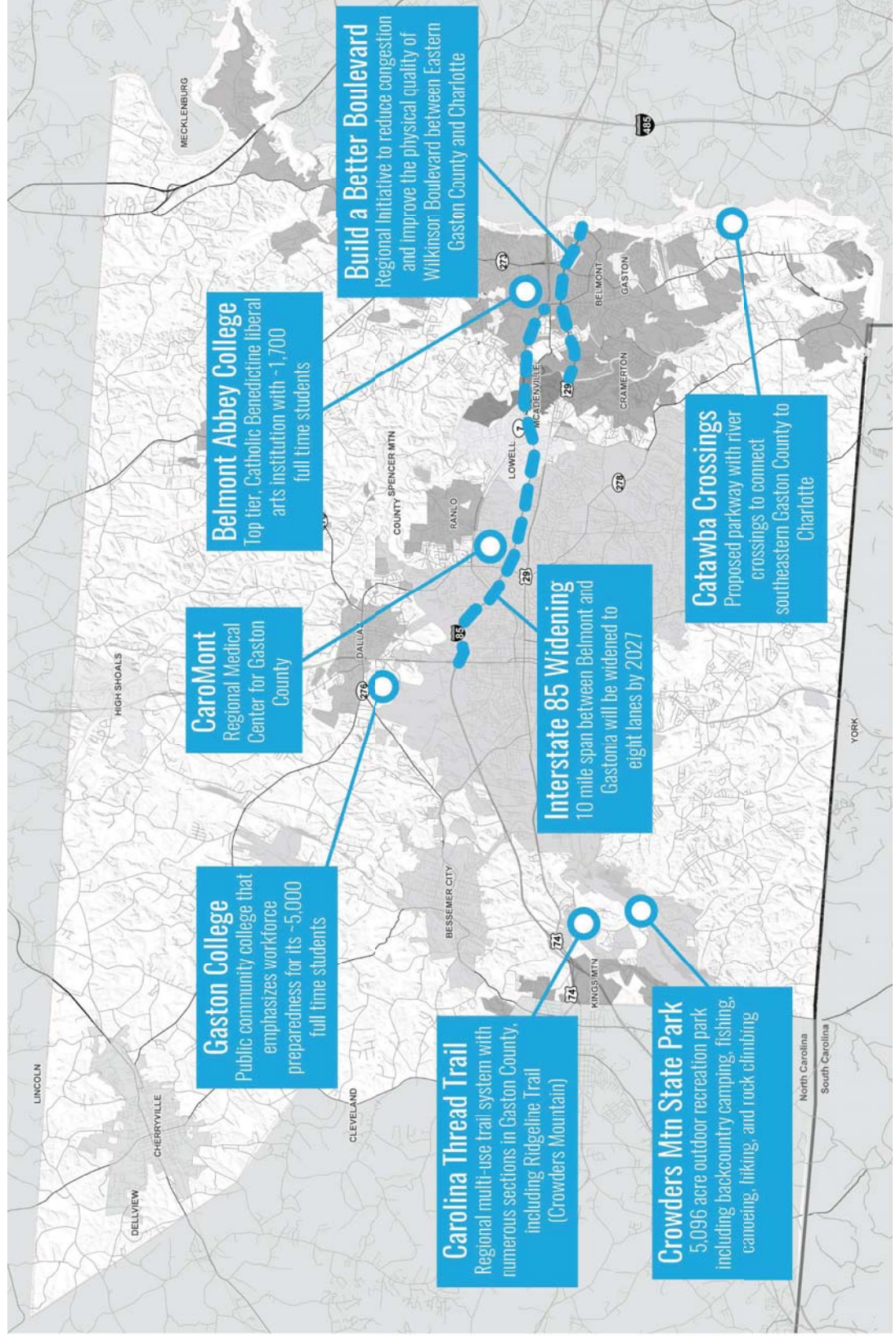


Figure 4.5 - Regional Assets and Initiatives in Gaston County

## 4.4 MUNICIPAL PLANNING & POLICY ANALYSIS

### MUNICIPAL PROFILES

To better understand the makeup of Gaston County and clearly identify, assess, and record the many assets and initiatives throughout the region, profiles of each municipality have been developed.

Each municipal profile begins with a general overview of the city or town's history and defining attributes, physical description, population, prominent industry sectors, and the major employers.

The profile then narrows in on the municipality's relevant plans, policies, and initiatives in regard to economic development and job creation, town planning and high profile urban development projects, and transportation infrastructure and mobility.

Smaller municipalities that have fewer planning documents and initiatives have been included on the final page of this section.

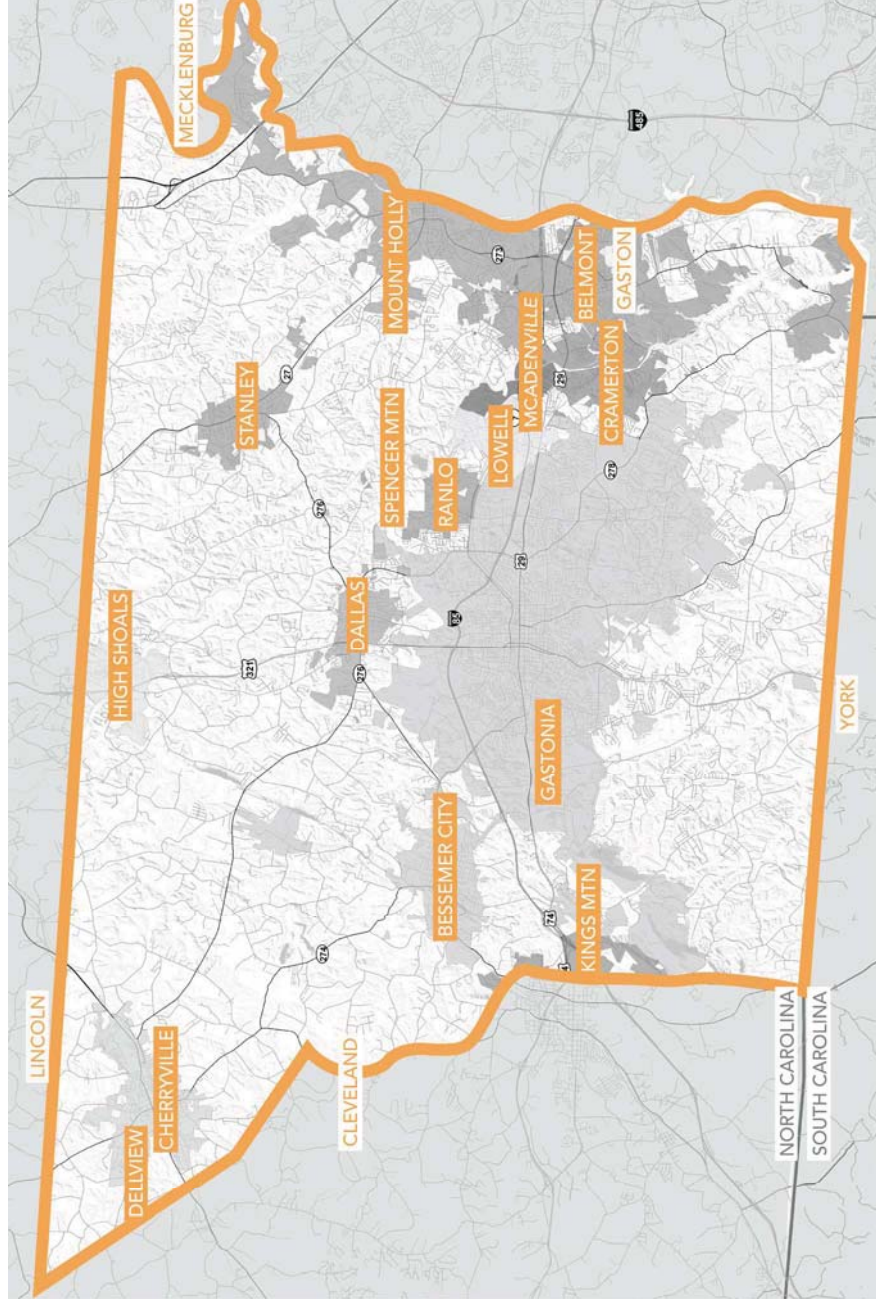


Figure 4.6 - Gaston County Jurisdictional Map



# BELMONT

## OVERVIEW

The City of Belmont is located in the southeast section of Gaston County. It is surrounded by the Catawba River to the east, Lake Wylie to the south, and the South Fork of the Catawba River to the west – equating to 11 square miles in total area. The municipality has experienced moderate growth in the last decade, and recorded a population of 11,077 in 2016. Belmont has a strong historical identity as a former textile mill town, as well as a college town for Belmont Abbey College and the Kimbrell Campus of Gaston College. Its walkable and charming downtown, combined with the nearby Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, attracts significant levels of seasonal tourism each year.

Prominent organizations that are located within Belmont include Duke Energy, Parkdale Mills, and Belmont Abbey. The Oaks Commerce Park, a 280-acre industrial park, is located in the north end of the municipality. Tenants include Cross Automation, Wilbert Plastic Services, Dixie Industrial Supply, Carus Corporation, Baxter Harriss, and DePalo Foods.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Main Street Program:** Revitalizing Belmont's historic downtown district through design and economic restructuring to create jobs, grow businesses, and increase tourism.
- **Gaston Innovation Group:** Non-profit group that is building a technology community in Gaston County. It is developing TechWorks, a technology incubator, in a 12,700 SF renovated mill building in Belmont.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Chronicle Mill:** 6.5 acre site, located in the center of downtown, with 150,000 SF textile mill that is being planned as a mixed-use project. Will include office, commercial, and event venue space.
- **McLean Project:** 670-acre master planned community developed with over 5 miles of shoreline. Will feature commercial space, a marina, recreation area, and ~850 homes.

- **Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2007):** Currently undergoing an updating process to accommodate for future development and population growth.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Belmont Rail Trail Project:** Multi-use path that runs along the railroad corridor, connecting Downtown Belmont, Belmont Abbey, and North Belmont.
- **Pedestrian Transportation Plan (2009):** Recommends intersection improvements, greenways, and new sidewalks for Belmont.
- **Belmont Bicycle Plan (2013):** Guides the improvement of cycling infrastructure and programming in Belmont.



# BESSEMER CITY

## OVERVIEW

Bessemer City is a small municipality located in the western section of Gaston County. The City, totaling 4.8 square miles, is bound by preserved agricultural land to the north, I 85 to the south-east, Cleveland County to the west, and home to a thriving Central Business District downtown. Bessemer City has historically existed as a small self-sufficient textile mill town, which has gradually grown to a population of 5,548 in 2016.

Transitioning away from the textile industry, Bessemer City has repositioned itself into a hub for distribution, manufacturing, and production. SouthRidge Business Park (425 acres) is an economic engine for the municipality. Tenants include Dole Fresh Vegetables, Hunter Douglas, Advanced Drainage Systems— the largest polyethylene pipe and fittings manufacturer in the country, Tosaf USA, and newly announced Dholandia MFG, Inc (2018). Another significant employer includes FMC Lithium Inc., one of the largest producers of lithium in the world, operating on a 900-acre site in the city outskirts.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Retail/Trade Area Opportunity and Gap Analysis (2015):** Commissioned study to help better understand Bessemer City's trade area, as well as current gaps and opportunities for retail offerings especially for downtown.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Main Street Program (2017):** Program dedicated to creating high quality places, building community, and stimulating economic development.

- **Downtown Small Area Plan (2009):** Planning guidelines that build upon the Land Use Plan; meant to improve the authenticity, walkability, and attractiveness of the downtown area. The plan recommends public realm improvements, trail systems, enforced design guidelines, and maintenance.

- **OSAGE Mill Redevelopment Project (2018):** 260,000 SF textile mill in downtown being transformed into a mixed use development, which will include 175 multi-family units, and

30,000 SF of retail and commercial space.

- **Downtown Development Plan (2017):** Outlines opportunities for growth within the downtown, as well as trade area reports, retail leakage analysis, and an overview of city assets and urban development projects
- **Edgewood Road Gateway Plan (2009):** Guides planning for Gastonia Highway (#274) off of I 85 into Bessemer City. Aims to increase vibrancy and productivity of the corridor by transforming it into a catalyst for economic development, and enhancing the streetscape to visually improve the physical gateway into the city.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Bessemer City Pedestrian Plan (2010):** Recommends active transportation policy and infrastructure improvements for Bessemer City.



# CHERRYVILLE

## OVERVIEW

The City of Cherryville is in the northwestern part of Gaston County, with an area of 5.5 square miles and an estimated population of 6,058. Dellview, the smallest incorporated town in Gaston County, is directly adjacent to the west of the city. The City is also along a divide of three watersheds: Muddy Creek, Indian Creek, and Beaverdam Creek.

The main industry in Cherryville has changed from agriculture to textiles to transportation and smaller manufacturing now. The City's largest employers include Keystone Powdered Metal, employing 220 people, the Gaston County Public School System, employing 200 people, Bradington Young Company, employing 187 people, Rutherford Electric Membership Cooperative, employing 186 people, and Beam Construction Company, employing 150 people. Other manufacturing companies include R-Anell Incorporated and Advanced Urethane Solutions, Inc.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Incentives and Grant Programs:** Various programs to encourage businesses to locate in the City and downtown, such as the City Business Improvement Grant Program (matches up to \$5,000 for capital improvement projects to interiors and roofs), the City Façade Grant Program (matches up to \$3,000 per visible exposed side of a downtown building; up to \$12,000 per building), and the Property Tax Grant Program (incentivizes rehabilitation of older buildings in the Downtown Business District).

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Small Town Main Street Master Work Plan (2015):** A third edition of a comprehensive strategy to restore and preserve the historic downtown and attract visitors and businesses by launching Cherryville's new brand.
- **Land Use + Streetscape Master Plan (2017):** A ten-year plan outlining opportunities and

strategies to improve the downtown and surrounding areas, including leveraging the railway corridor, creating a shared alley for pedestrians and autos, and implementing a future framework for downtown growth. The first part of the plan will begin in the winter of 2018.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Cherryville Pedestrian Plan (2009):** A comprehensive guide to the implementation and improvement of pedestrian routes and amenities, and outlines goals to reach the City's vision as walkable and easily accessible.

## OVERVIEW

The Town of Cramerton, named after its founder, Stuart W. Cramer, is in the southeast portion of Gaston County, and is bisected by the South Fork River, where Cramerton's Town Center is located. The Town covers an area of 4.5 square miles. Berry Mountain and Cramer Mountain are both in the southwestern part of the Town, which includes Cramer Mountain Golf Course. Cramerton is also home to Goat Island Park, a 30-acre area in the Town Center. The park is a multipurpose recreation destination consisting of walking trails, river access, disc golf, fishing, fitness stations, playgrounds, and a dog park.

Rich in textile history and having been a model mill village, the Town has experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years from a boom in upscale residential development, with a population of 5,077 as of 2016. Cramerton has grown from a residential community to a recreational destination that is also home to several businesses: Essex Parts Services, ABF Freight, and Syncot Plastics.

# CRAMERTON

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Wilkinson South Small Area Plan (2016) & Market St. Small Area Plan (2018):** Provides guidance to strategic greenfield development properties located on Wilkinson Boulevard.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Land Use Plan (2011):** Provides an updated guide to the 2002 Plan that directs future growth and development. Identifies appropriate development patterns and services needed, as well as new trends and conditions across Cramerton.
- **Residential Design and Traditional Neighborhood Development Standards:** Guiding design principles for residential buildings and planned unit developments.
- **The Villages at Cramerton Mills:** Project will include a mix of 500 single family homes, 384 multi-family homes, 124,000 SF of office/retail space (including medical) and 168,500 SF of light industrial. Potential retail tenants include restaurants, cafes and a market grocery store.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Build a Better Boulevard (2014):** A multi-jurisdictional plan to improve the quality of the significant Wilkinson Boulevard (NC74) important corridor that links the communities of eastern Gaston County. The plan creates informed guidelines for Wilkinson Boulevard, one that continues to serve current and projected traffic needs while also encouraging new opportunities for residents and travelers.
- **Bicycle Plan (2018):** Improves bicycle safety, connectivity, and health and wellbeing through recommending future infrastructure projects and community policies and programs.
- **Pedestrian Master Plan (2008):** Guides the improvement of pedestrian facilities by providing conceptual facility standards and general design guidelines for future development.



# DALLAS

## OVERVIEW

In 1863, the Town of Dallas, named for George Mifflin Dallas, Vice President of the United States under James K. Polk, was incorporated as the first municipality in Gaston County. The Town is located near Gaston County's geographic center, immediately north of the Interstate 85 and US 321 interchange. Dallas comprises of 2.9 square miles of land. High Shoals, a nearby incorporated municipality, is located within Dallas Township.

Dallas remains a principally residential town and “bedroom community,” rather than an industrial one, with a population of 4,734 in 2016. The Town thrived when it served as the original county seat for Gaston County from 1846 to 1911, but it was negatively impacted after the town chose not to bring a railroad through, and the county seat relocated to Gastonia.

Dallas is home to the Gaston County Museum of Art and History, as well as Gaston College's main campus, where 16,000 students attend annually.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Gaston College's Center for Advanced Manufacturing (2017):** State-of-the-art education and training facility that assists companies with re-training existing workforce, producing more technically-trained workers, and attracting new regional manufacturers and industries to the area.

- **N.C. Main Street & Rural Planning Center:** Working to develop a comprehensive economic development strategic plan, including the preservation of the historic aspects of the community.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Land Use Plan (2003):** Outlines land use goals that serve as a guide for growth and development in Dallas, such as maintaining a vibrant and mixed use downtown. Other recommendations include developing a small area plan for the rail corridor, revitalizing the downtown area, and developing gateways into the city.

- **New Business Park Development:** Gaston County Economic Development Commission reported plans to acquire land and develop a new business park on and around a former golf course west of Dallas.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Yearly Street Resurfacing Program:** A pavement management survey system is produced and regularly updated, establishing a prioritized list of street sections to be completed on a worst-to-best basis.
- **Electric Vehicle Quick Charging Station & Electric Hybrid Vehicles:** Two charging stations located at the Courthouse and the Town Hall parking lot. Electric Hybrid Vehicles utilized for meter reading and for other Town uses.



# GASTONIA

## OVERVIEW

The City of Gastonia is the largest city in Gaston County, with an area of 50.7 square miles, and is the county seat of Gaston County. The City began as a small railroad depot, and after the crossing of the now Norfolk Southern and CSX Railroads and the beginning of the textile industry, it started to thrive with more job opportunities. The City has grown steadily from a population initially of 200 to 75,536 in 2016.

Gastonia has a strong manufacturing workforce. Parkdale Inc., a leading manufacturer of cotton products in North America, has its corporate headquarters and two plants in Gastonia. The City's manufacturing industry also has an increasing focus on advanced manufacturing. Gastonia Technology Park, a 422-acre business park, is located in the northern part of the City for advanced manufacturing and technology opportunities, attracting foreign firms, such as CTL Packaging, REPI, Röchling Engineering Plastics, and LANXESS, as well as Ohio-based Owens Corning. Delta Business Park, consisting

of 360 acres of land, in western Gastonia hosts tenants such as NUSSBAUM Automotive Solutions, FAIST ChemTec, and Porter Fabrications. Another business park, the Summit at Court Drive, a 60-acre business park in eastern Gastonia, consists of medical and office uses, including Gaston Family Health Services, National Science Laboratory, Gaston Internal Medicine, and CaroMont Pediatric Partners, among others. Other major employers in the city include Freightliner Corp, Wal-Mart, American & Efird, and Pharr Yarns Inc.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Downtown Development:** The City is encouraging new investment by improving streets and utilities, zoning ordinance modification and offering incentive programs for commercial and residential investments.
- **IDEAL Incentives:** Investment in Downtown Economic Assistance and Livability is an economic incentive program that offers short-

term financial assistance to eligible, new and existing business and property owners.

- **FUSE District:** Multi-purpose and mixed-use development that will be a destination facility for sports entertainment, multi-family residential, and commercial space. Key anchor of the Franklin Urban Corridor.
- **Economic Development Investment Grant Program:** Provides an inducement for new businesses to locate in the City and encourage existing businesses to expand.
- **Southeast Utility Extension Plan:** Will serve over 5.5 square miles in southeast Gaston County. Phase 1 estimated to serve over 9,000 residential units and related commercial areas. Will provide ~6 miles of gravity sewer mains, 2 miles of force mains, along with regional pump stations.

## PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **City of Gastonia 2025 Comprehensive Plan (2011):** Sets forth goals and objectives for future land use and development in the City,



# GASTONIA

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

such as determining where to locate new housing, industry & commercial uses, and how the community should look.

- **Loray Mill Development:** Phase 1 of the project includes 600,000 SF mixed-use development in a retrofitted textile mill. 189 loft apartments, residential amenities, and 80,000 SF of commercial space.
- **Airport Reorientation/Lengthening & Relocation Study (beginning):** Examining whether to lengthen the runway at the existing facility or to build a new airport at a different location.
- **Highland Community Revitalization:** The City of Gastonia is investing in the Highland neighbourhood (north of downtown) to offer housing and amenities, improve streetscapes and facades, and provide retail offerings.
- **HUD Consolidated 5 Year Plan (2015-2020):** Addresses the housing and non-housing needs of the low- to moderate-income households and those with special needs.

## TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Franklin Boulevard Corridor Access and Alternative Development Mobility Strategy (2016):** Study that evaluates the mobility and capacity needs of Franklin Boulevard and the interconnecting streets. Implementation plan includes interim and long term approaches to improving the multi-modal corridor.
- **Franklin Boulevard Corridor Study & Master Plan (2007):** Recommends improvements for redevelopment along the Franklin Boulevard corridor, including node identification, green space expansion, improved mobility and connectivity, and strategic land use planning.
- **Gastonia Transit Expansion Study (2007):** Determines opportunities for expanded public transit services within Gastonia and throughout Gaston County.
- **Gaston Urban Area 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Update: Freight Planning (2007):** A freight planning study to incorporate freight-related issues

- into planning activities with its results incorporated into the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.
- **NC Highway 7 Corridor Study:** Deliverables from the study included site plans to market two potential sites for light industrial and other land use strategies to promote redevelopment. Short and long term projects will be developed to meet the goal of strengthening the economic viability of the NC Highway 7 corridor.
- **Gastonia Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan (2014):** Identifies policies, programs, and physical infrastructure improvements to make Gastonia a safer place to walk.
- **Master Greenway Plan:** Identifies existing, proposed, and expanding greenways throughout the municipality.



# KINGS MTN.

## OVERVIEW

Kings Mountain is a city in both Cleveland and Gaston counties, with its majority in Cleveland County and part of its eastern portion in Gaston County. Originally called White Plains, the City's name was changed to Kings Mountain after the 1780 Battle of Kings Mountain in the American Revolutionary War fought five miles south. The City has a total area of 12.6 square miles, and an estimated population of 10,797 in 2016, of which about 8 per cent is in Gaston County.

Kings Mountain Corporate Center is a 164-acre privately-owned industrial development in Gaston County – HanesBrands is the major tenant with a 370,000-square-foot distribution center. Other major employers in the area include Firestone, LNS Turbo, and Parker Hannifin.

Kings Mountain is a growing area with a range of efficient technologically advanced utility services, allowing opportunities to better meet start-up infrastructure construction needs.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Branding Initiatives:** Recently, the City entered into an agreement with Electricities of North Carolina to assist with the strategic planning and branding of the City.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Main Street Program (2016):** Public-private partnership program that encourages private businesses to invest in downtown revitalization efforts.
- **Comprehensive Plan and Future Land Use Map:** The City is in the beginning stages of a major revision and update to the Plan.
- **Downtown Study:** The City is undertaking this study with N-Focus for streetscape enhancements and infrastructure improvements to enhance the quality of the downtown business district.
- **Patriots Park Improvements (2017):** Construction of a new amphitheater, as well as additional parking spaces, to accommodate community events.

- **Shu Carlton Stadium Renovations (2017):** Upgrades to the home to the Kings Mountain Optimists' Pop Warner football league and the Kings Mountain Force, including the addition of a press box and making the stadium handicap accessible with ramps and handrails.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Comprehensive Pedestrian Master Plan (2014):** Guide for building or improving local pedestrian routes and amenities, including improving pedestrian connections and increasing the level of safety of the current sidewalk system.
- **Bicycle Plan (2011):** A comprehensive guide to the implementation and improvement of bicycle routes and amenities to make Kings Mountain a bicycle-friendly community.



## OVERVIEW

Lowell is a true small town at 3 square miles, with just over 3,500 citizens. The City is nestled between the largest shopping area in Gaston County with part of Franklin Square in the City of Lowell and the rural setting of George Poston Park.

The community is situated along the South Fork River with new housing developments and a greenway taking advantage of the natural beauty of our area. Lowell has one of the lowest tax rates in Gaston County, along with affordable water and sewer rates. Lowell operates its own Police Department and a volunteer Fire Department, which has earned the best business insurance rating in Gaston County.

Lowell is home to a quiet, friendly, connected community but residents can be in the center of Charlotte within twenty minutes. Two exits to I 85 allow residents quick and easy access to the amenities of the Charlotte and CLT Airport.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Business Investment and Growth:** Lowell works with Gaston County's Economic Development Commission for small and large business recruitment, to attract investment and provide employment for neighbouring residential subdivisions.

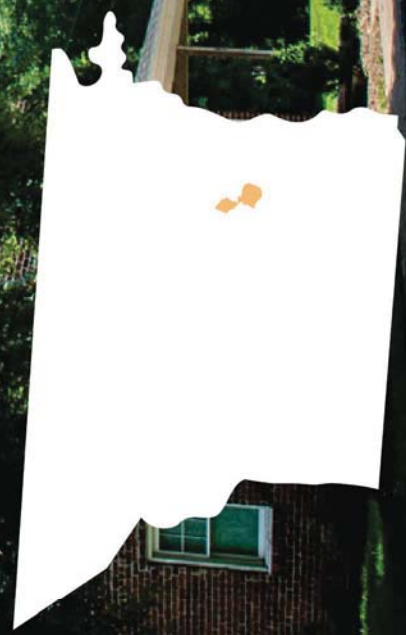
- **Master Planning Committee:** The Committee appointed by City Council promotes economic development by administering grant opportunities for downtown businesses and also provides detailed information regarding available properties for prospective business opportunities.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Downtown Lowell Transportation Study (2017):** Evaluates options for safety and pedestrian improvements to public streets in downtown Lowell. Considers opportunities for enhancements along prominent roadway entrances and addresses parking efficiencies into the downtown.

- **Franklin Boulevard Strategy:** Creation of Exit 22 Boulevard to create access to the Lineberger Property, minimize future congestion of W 1st Street, and to address at-grade crossing concerns with railroad along W 1st Street.

- **Franklin Boulevard Corridor Access and Alternative Development Mobility Strategy (2016):** Study that evaluates the mobility and capacity needs of Franklin Boulevard and the interconnecting streets. Implementation plan includes interim and long term approaches to improving the multi-modal corridor.



# MCADENVILLE

## OVERVIEW

Situated within 1.5 square miles of historic charm, McAdenville is proof that the best things really do come in small packages. McAdenville is a town with a heritage of tenacity, nestled in the rolling hills of Gaston County along the South Fork River. The town was named for Rufus Y. McAden, who built a textile mill there in 1881, along with mill houses, attracting a work force from the North Carolina mountains.

McAdenville is considered to be the first truly modern textile mill town of its time – in 1883, Thomas Edison built and installed a hydroelectric generator to light the mill and mill houses. In more recent years, McAdenville has experienced a revitalization of its residential communities and historic downtown, blending new construction with historic sites, preserving the authenticity of McAdenville's commitment to community.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **McAdenville Table & Market (2017):** Offers patrons a market and butcher shop where they can purchase fresh foods, meats, seafood, craft beer and wine in addition to operating as a restaurant.
- **Pharr:** Since 1939 when it acquired Mr. McAden's mill and mill village, Pharr has been operating in McAdenville. A diverse family business, which in addition to its textile manufacturing operations, operates a real estate business actively developing property in Gaston County, invests in hotel properties throughout the Southeast and operates a hotel management company.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

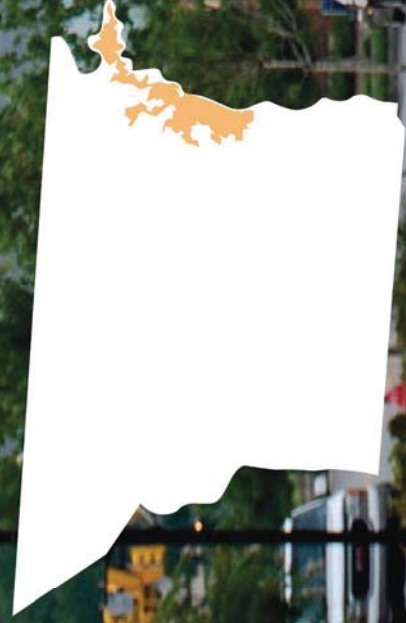
- **Park/Riverfront Greenway & Trail System (2017):** Financed by a public/private partnership, this park network will include paved and natural surface trails, provide river access with a canoe/kayak launch, improve pedestrian access to the downtown

commercial area, and create recreational amenities for the region.

- **South Fork Sewer Project (2018):** Construction of a new wastewater pump station and force main to eliminate the McAdenville Municipal wastewater treatment plant and the Pharr industrial wastewater treatment plant. The consolidation of the two plants into the City of Gastonia's facility will improve local infrastructure as well as pave a path for further economic development along the South Fork River.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Wesleyan Bridge Replacement (2017):** The bridge has an average of 4,400 cars that cross it daily and was replaced for functionality and safety issues.
- **McAdenville Sidewalk Evaluation Plan (2014):** Guides the planning and design of proposed improvements to increase safety and accessibility of pedestrian infrastructure.



# MOUNT HOLLY

## OVERVIEW

The City of Mount Holly is in northeastern Gaston County, just west of the Catawba River and north of Interstate 85. The City is 10 square miles in area and has an estimated population of 15,000. The City was named after the Mount Holly Cotton Mill that was established in 1875 and currently provides industrial and commercial uses. The Woodlawn Mill, built in 1906, was the first mill served with electricity in Gaston County.

The textile industry remains an important part of Mount Holly's economy. The City's major employers include American & Efrid, Inc., the second-largest thread maker internationally and it has its corporate headquarters in the City, employing over 980 people, Daimler Trucks North America with over 630,000 square feet of floor space, and National Gypsum with a 500,000-square-foot plant.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Business Incentive Grants:** Small businesses seeking to expand their existing business or start a new business may apply for small cash grants of maximum \$15,000 per business application.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Strategic Vision Plan (2008):** Outlines the community's values, vision, goals, opportunities, and challenges, as well as focus areas.
- **Downtown Area Plan (2008):** Defines the City's expectations for the future of its historic downtown, the riverfront at its East gateway and how the two relate to each other, including future land use recommendations and catalyst projects.
- **Design Guidelines (2008):** Provides a baseline for quality as growth occurs, establishing a clear definition of urban design standards to preserve architectural character.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Catawba River Corridor Plan (2007):** A greenway master plan that identifies best routing, access and destination points and trail surface material for an 10-mile corridor along the Catawba River. The greenway is part of the Carolina Thread Trail.
- **Comprehensive Pedestrian Master Plan (2013):** Identifies infrastructure improvements for pedestrians in Mount Holly, encouraging people to walk more often.
- **Mount Holly Feasibility Study (2017):** The study's focus area will involve the Hwy 27 bridge to identify opportunities for a regional bike/pedestrian crossing from Mount Holly into Mecklenburg County
- **Comprehensive Bicycle Plan (2018):** As part of a grant received from NCDOT, the plan will begin after 2017.



# STANLEY

## OVERVIEW

Stanley is a town in northeast Gaston County, conveniently located only twenty minutes, or less, from Charlotte, Lincolnton, Denver, and most Gaston County municipalities. With an area of 2.7 square miles, Stanley is home to an estimated population of 3,735. The Town also serves as a shopping and service destination for the greater surrounding area. As one of the oldest towns in the county, Stanley is rich with history that makes the town unique. Stanley is well known for its youth recreation programs, state-of-the-art gymnasium and park and is home to the brand new Stanley Middle School.

Town Council and staff are committed to utilizing the recently adopted Master Plan to redevelop the downtown district and recruit new businesses. Major industry leaders in the town include Deb SBS, Georgia Pacific, U.S. Leisure, Outdoor Lifestyles, and DSM Desotech.

## RELEVANT PLANS, POLICIES, AND INITIATIVES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Economic Development Report (2018):**  
Recent investment of \$6 million dollars of construction for a new sewer interconnect with Two-Rivers Utilities (City of Gastonia). The project ensures the Town has adequate capacity for future industrial facilities and housing development.

- **Community Development Block Grant:**

Awarded \$2 million to rehabilitate oldest portion of sewage collection system.

### PLANNING & LAND DEVELOPMENT

- **Central Business District Master Plan (2018):**

Developing design guidelines, within the CBD to enhance overall urban character, develop green streets, create public spaces along Main Street, utilize vacant buildings for mixed use redevelopment, and encourage density and infill development.

### TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

- **Central Business District Master Plan (2018):**  
Provides recommendations that improve major intersections, reconfigure parking orientation to be parallel with the street, and redesign sidewalks to include outdoor seating and street trees. Extend sidewalks along NC 27 to provide safe pedestrian connection from the CBD to Harper Park on Black Snake Road.



### **RANLO**

The Town of Ranlo is an area of 1.7 square miles with an estimated population of 3,625 in 2016, located northeast of Gastonia. The Town was named after John Calvin Rankin and William Thomas Love, and became known for its textile mills. The top industries for employment are manufacturing, retail trade, and health care and social assistance.



### **SPENCER MOUNTAIN**

Spencer Mountain, with 36 estimated residents in 2016, is a small, 0.5-square-mile town located at the base of Spencer Mountain, south of the South Fork Catawba River and northeast of Ranlo. The Town was founded by Zachariah Spencer. The Town's residents work in the information and accommodation and food services industries.



### **HIGH SHOALS**

High Shoals, once completely owned by the textile company High Shoals Mills, is 2.7 square miles in size. Incorporated in 1973, High Shoals is Gaston County's newest municipality. Its estimated population in 2016 was 735 residents. The majority of the town is located in the Township of Dallas, except for the western portion which is in located in the Township of Cherryville.

## 4.5 TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

This section provides an assessment of current transportation routes, projects, and problem areas within Gaston County, as well as the County's connectivity to adjacent regions. Additionally, this section will explore future enhancements of major roadway networks and public transportation systems.

Gaston County experiences the beneficial and detrimental impacts of bordering rapidly growing urban centers such as the City of Charlotte. In addition to local and interstate traffic on I 85, the travel generated due to Charlotte as a destination for regional employment and national commerce creates significant congestion, which gravely affects Gaston County during the peak AM and PM hours.

Additionally, the primary concentration of current and planned future development in Gaston County is occurring along the I 85 corridor, which is outgrowing the capacity of the route. This congestion is compounded by the recent growth of Mount Holly, Belmont and Gastonia which has created additional local mobility challenges within the county.

### PROBLEM AREAS & ISSUES

#### I 85 CONGESTION

Daily congestion on the portion of I 85 between the Catawba River to Gastonia is the number one traffic issue facing Gaston County. Limited capacity and the large volumes of traffic create significant delays and congestion for this corridor. Additionally, many crashes with limited parallel detour options routinely add to the congestion.

#### ROUTE 29/74 (WILKINSON BOULEVARD) CROSSING OF THE CATAWBA RIVER

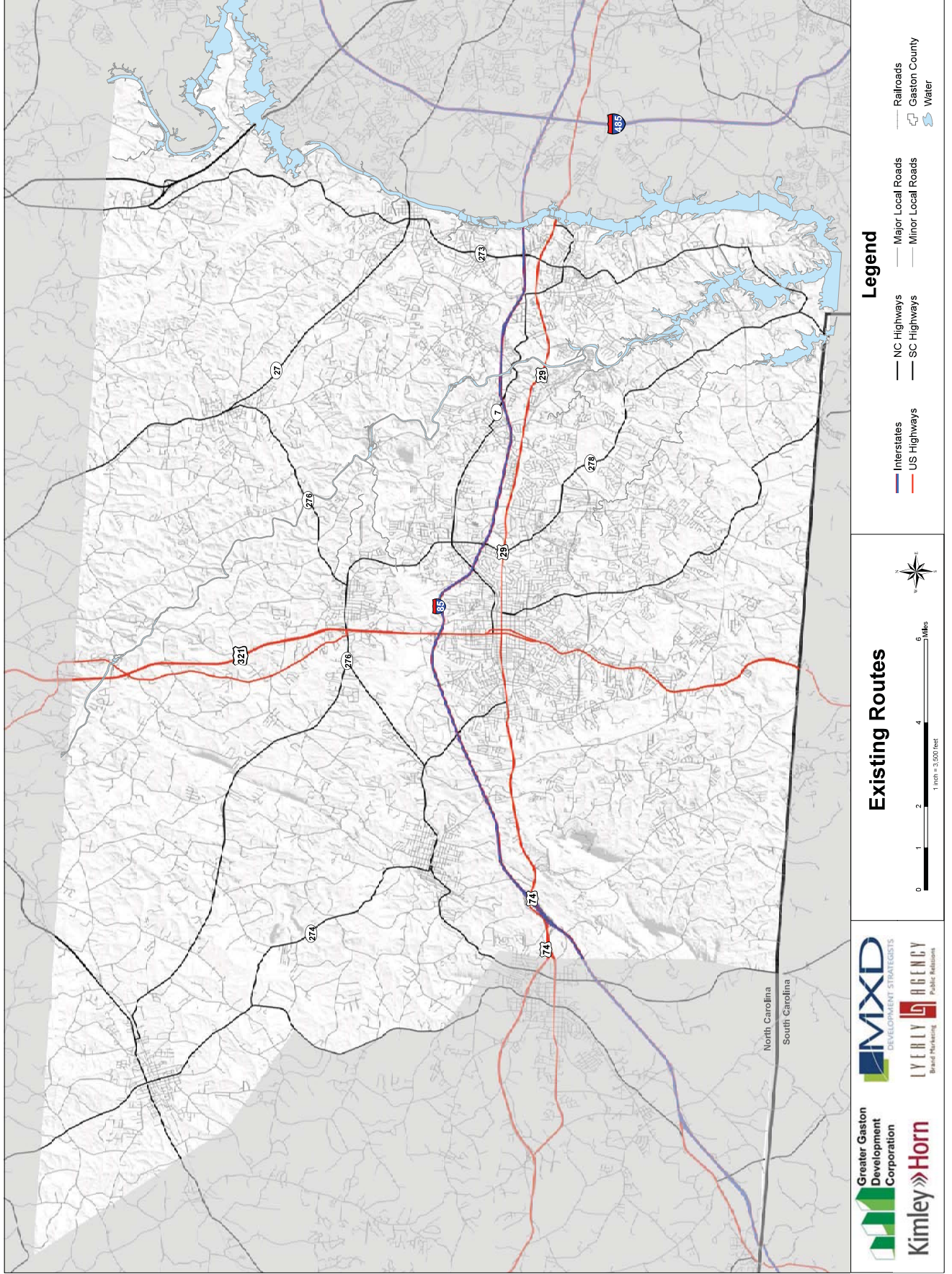
The US Route 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) crossing of the Catawba River is currently utilizing a deteriorated 4-lane undivided bridge. This bridge, constructed many years ago and now deemed 'functionally obsolete', has extremely limited capacity and creates a significant choke point for mobility into Gaston County.

#### BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE CATAWBA RIVER

There are currently no bicycle or pedestrian connections across the Catawba River from Mecklenburg County into Gaston County. I 85 prohibits this type of traffic and US Route 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) is comprised of high speed vehicle facilities with no sidewalks or separated bike lanes.



Figure 4.7 - Map of Existing Routes in Gaston County  
 Source: Kimley-Horn



## PLANNED AND ANNOUNCED PROJECTS

### INTERSTATE 85

*Funded/Construction 2021*

Interstate 85 (I 85) is scheduled to be widened to eight lanes from US 321 (N Chester St.) to NC 273 (Beaty Dr.) utilizing a design-build model with Right-of-Way and construction to begin in 2021. The projected cost for the project (I-5719) is \$257.5 million. The project will be coordinated with a new interchange project (I-5713) at SR 2200 (Cox Mill Rd.) estimated to cost \$1.4 million.

This will have significant impact on Gaston County during construction as traffic seeks alternatives to avoid the project. Once the project is completed it will result in better mobility and less delay for local and Interstate travelers.

### US ROUTE 29/74 (WILKINSON BLVD.)

*Funded/Construction 2019*

US Route 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) from NC 7 (Catawba St.) to SR 2209 (Wesleyan Dr.) is scheduled to receive an adaptive signal system project with Right-of-Way and construction beginning in 2019. The projected cost for the project (U-6038) is \$715,000.00. Although it may not function as a true detour alternative for the I 85 construction project, these enhancements will assist mitigating impacts and provide years of increased efficiency once implemented.

### NC 7 (MCADENVILLE RD)

*Funded/Construction 2021*

NC 7 (McAdenville Rd) from I 85 to US 29/74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) is scheduled for widening to multiple lanes with Right-of-Way in 2019 and construction beginning in 2021. The projected cost for the project (U-3608) is \$4.7 million and provide improved mobility for local traffic south of I 85 between Belmont and Lowell.

### US ROUTE 29/74 (FRANKLIN BLVD.)

*Funded/Construction 2023*

US 29/74 (Franklin Blvd.) from SR 2200 (Cox Rd.) to east of Lineberger Rd. is scheduled for an additional eastbound lane with Right-of-Way in 2021 and construction in 2023.

The projected cost for the project (U-6043) is \$9.2 million and will provide increased capacity and access for businesses and new development.

### NC 279 (NEW HOPE RD.)

*Funded/Construction 2021*

NC 279 (New Hope Rd.) from SR 2478 (Titman Rd.) to SR 2435 (Union-New Hope Rd.) is scheduled to be widened to 3-lanes with Right-of-Way in 2019 and construction in 2021. The projected cost for the project (U-5821) is \$28.7 million and will provide better North-South mobility across southeast Gaston County.

### NC 274 (UNION ROAD)

*Funded/Construction 2025*

NC 274 (Union Road) from Osceola Street to Niblick Drive will be upgraded in 2025 with project (U-5961) at a projected cost of \$11.6 million. This project will enhance traffic for travelers using the facility to access Gastonia as well as the I 85.

### MOUNT HOLLY STRATEGIC VISION PLAN

*Not Funded*

The City of Mount Holly prepared a Strategic Vision Plan update in 2017 to capture how Mount Holly envisions the City and surrounding area to develop and grow. This documents ensures that all development and infrastructure progresses in a coordinated approach to achieve the final vision.

### WILKINSON CORRIDOR COMMITTEE/ BUILD A BETTER BOULEVARD

*Unfunded*

State and local agencies have assembled the Wilkinson Corridor Committee to promote enhancement of the US Route 74 (Wilkinson Blvd.) Corridor. Additionally, The City of Belmont established an award-winning document titled “Build a Better Boulevard” that provides a vision for the future development of the corridor. This collaboration demonstrates the support for improvements in Gaston County.

<p><b>BELMONT - MOUNT HOLLY THOROUGHFARE</b>  <b>Not Funded</b></p> <p>The Gaston Urban Area MPO has proposed a new thoroughfare from Tucker Road in south Belmont to just north of Eagle Road. This route would include an alignment that improves local mobility and provides access to undeveloped parcels of land. It is currently not funded.</p>	<p><b>NC 279 (DALLAS CHERRYVILLE HWY.)</b>  <b>Not Planned - Not Funded</b></p> <p>Identified by the Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy Committee. Widen to multi-lane from NC 150 (Lincolnton Hwy.) to NC 275 (Dallas Stanley Hwy.) This would include a grade separated crossing at the railroad and Studio Drive. The project would establish a safe connection to NC 150 and enhance North-South mobility across Gaston County and north to Lincolnton for western Gaston County.</p>	<p>mobility, safety and reducing traffic volume on Main Street through downtown Stanley. Additionally, the project would increase options for Dallas traffic to get to Mt. Holly and East Lincoln County.</p>
<p><b>PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT ACROSS THE CATAWBA RIVER</b>  <b>Feasibility Study - Not Funded</b></p> <p>A feasibility study relating to pedestrian mobility is currently funded. Proposals are received to establish alternative multi-modal access across the Catawba River.</p>	<p><b>NC 279 (LOWER DALLAS HWY./N NEW HOPE ROAD.)</b>  <b>Not Planned - Not Funded</b></p> <p>Identified by the Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy Committee. Widen to multi-lane from NC 275 (Dallas Stanley Hwy.) to I-85. This leg would open Stanley, Dallas and Cherryville to development with quality access to NC 24, NC 150 and I 85.</p>	<p><b>NC 275 (DALLAS STANLEY HWY.)</b>  <b>Not Planned - Not Funded</b></p> <p>Identified by the Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy Committee. Widen to multi-lane from NC 279 (Lower Dallas Hwy.) to NC 27 (Charles Raper Jones Hwy.) This would include a grade separated crossing at the railroad and West Dallas Road, enhancing</p>
<p><b>THE CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL</b>  <b>Planned - Not Funded</b></p> <p>The Carolina Thread Trail is a multi-use path connectivity plan for trails and greenways across North Carolina, with several connections for Gaston County. This provides a vision to incorporate as part of the bicycle and pedestrian trail infrastructure moving forward in Gaston County.</p>		

Figure 4.8 - Map of 2018-2027 NCDOT STIP Projects  
 Source: Kimley-Horn

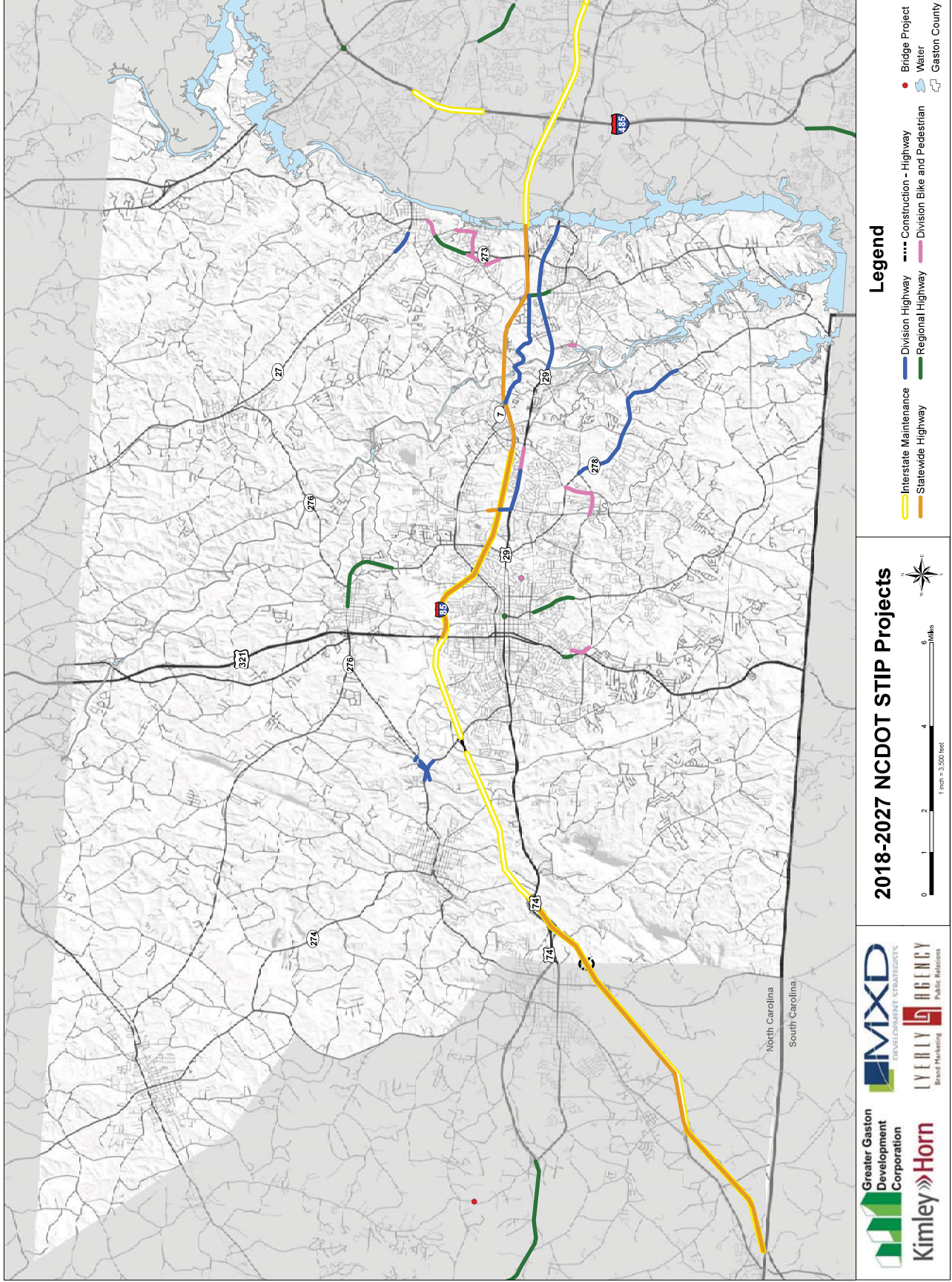
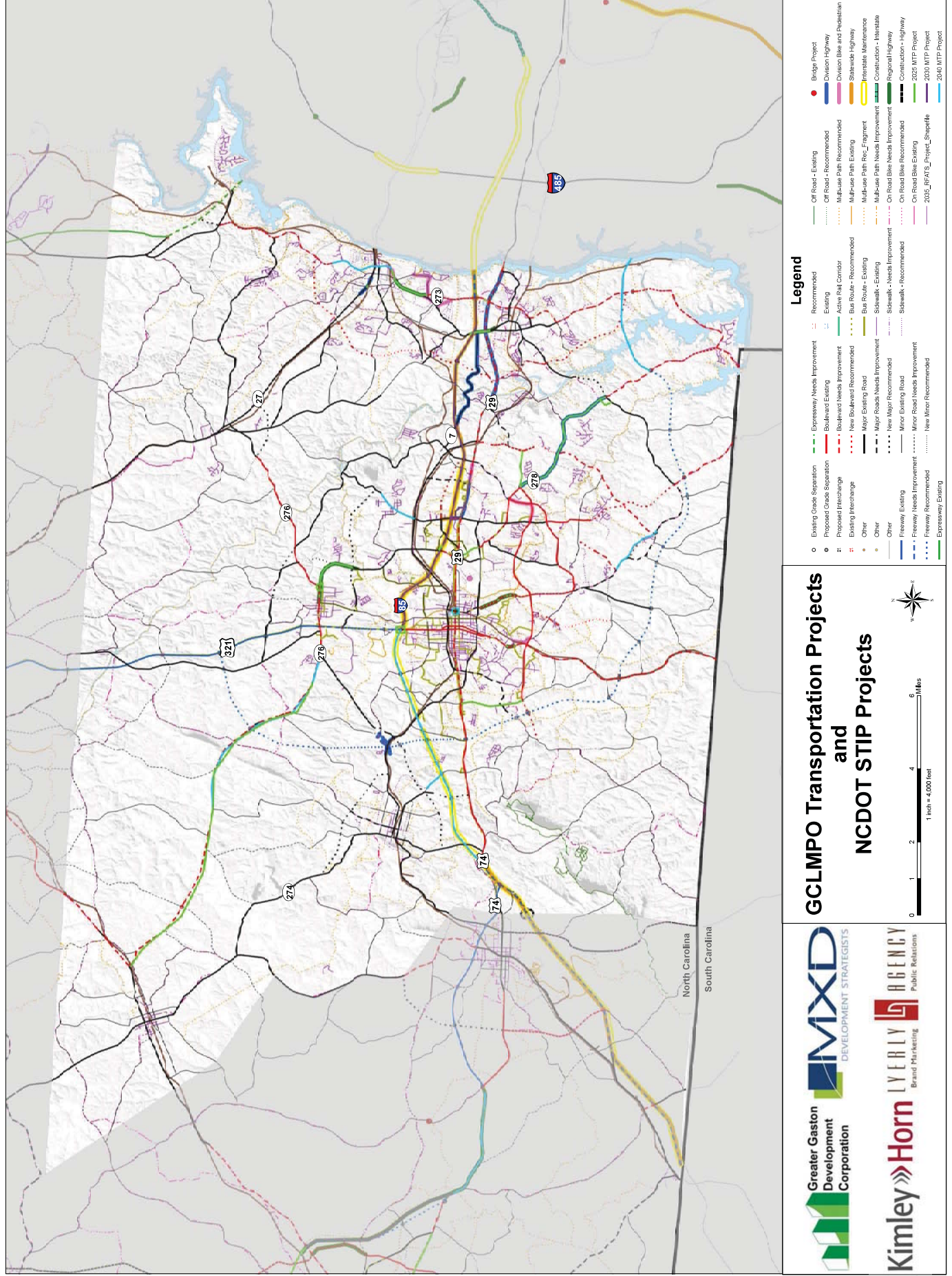


Figure 4.9 - Map of GCLMPO Transportation Projects and NCDOT STIP Projects  
 Source: Kimley-Horn



## 4.6 CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT CONTEXT

### OVERVIEW & TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS

The Charlotte-Douglas International (CLT) Airport Area Strategic Development Plan (AASDP) was published in March 2017 to examine the best and most economically viable uses for acreage surrounding the airport.

The plan's three primary objectives are to:

1. Generate non-aeronautical revenue
2. Identify the highest and best use for vacant and underutilized airport property
3. Ensure future development around the airport is appropriate for an airport environment and does not negatively impact aviation

The plan also strives to create complementary economic positioning with other regions around CLT, including Gaston County.

To stimulate economic growth and define the recommended land use and development framework for the CLT Airport area, three Target Economic Sectors were identified.

The CLT Target Economic Sectors, as shown in Figure 4.10, represent a range of economic activities that relate to the Airport, benefit from locating in its vicinity, require excellent ground transportation connectivity, and are well positioned for growth in the Charlotte economy.

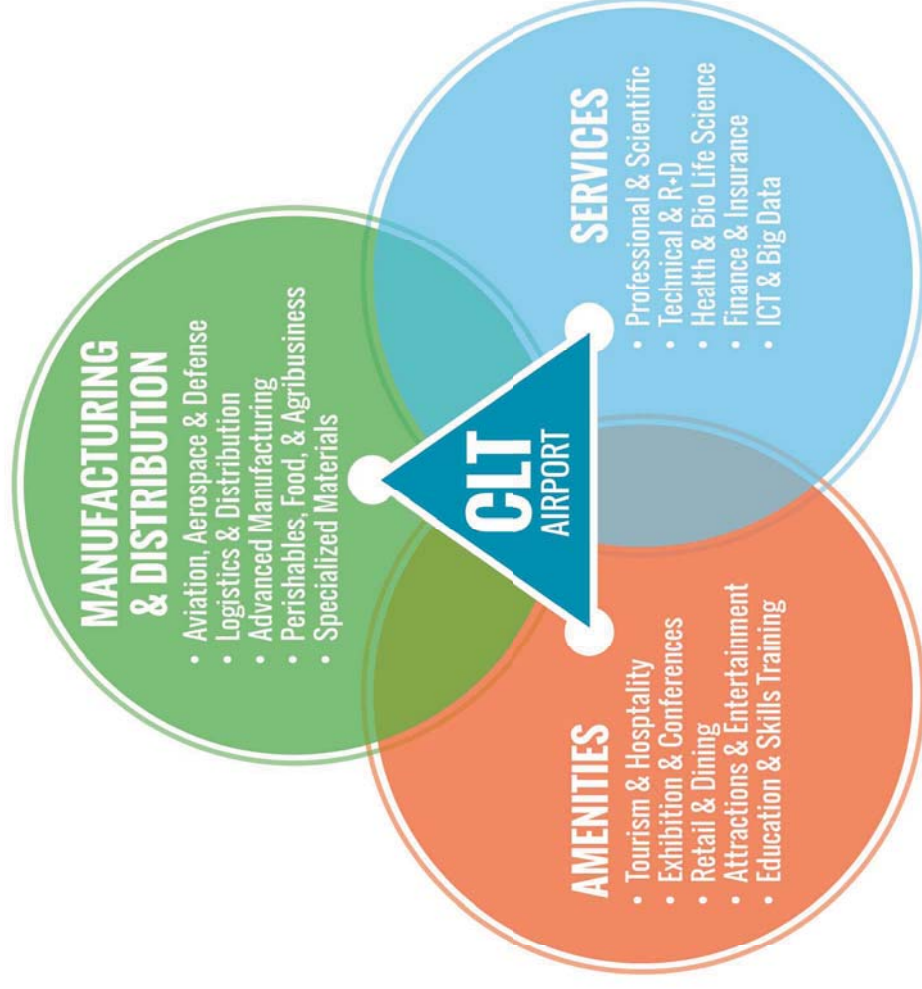


Figure 4.10 - CLT AASDP Target Economic Sectors

## DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The CLT AASDP proposed airport-compatible land uses that are strategically located to maximize the opportunity for new Airport Connected Development, and to attract industries and companies within the Target Economic Sectors. Additionally, CLT is uniquely positioned to attract a variety of new businesses due to its "Tri-Modal" transportation system (airport service, major arterial road and highway connections, and Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility). Overall, the CLT AASDP recommends that 700 acres of coordinated development could occur over the next 20 years.

To triangulate the focus of recommended land uses and development, the CLT AASDP divided the study area into the following development districts:

- CLT Gateway
- CLT South
- CLT West
- Billy Graham Corridor

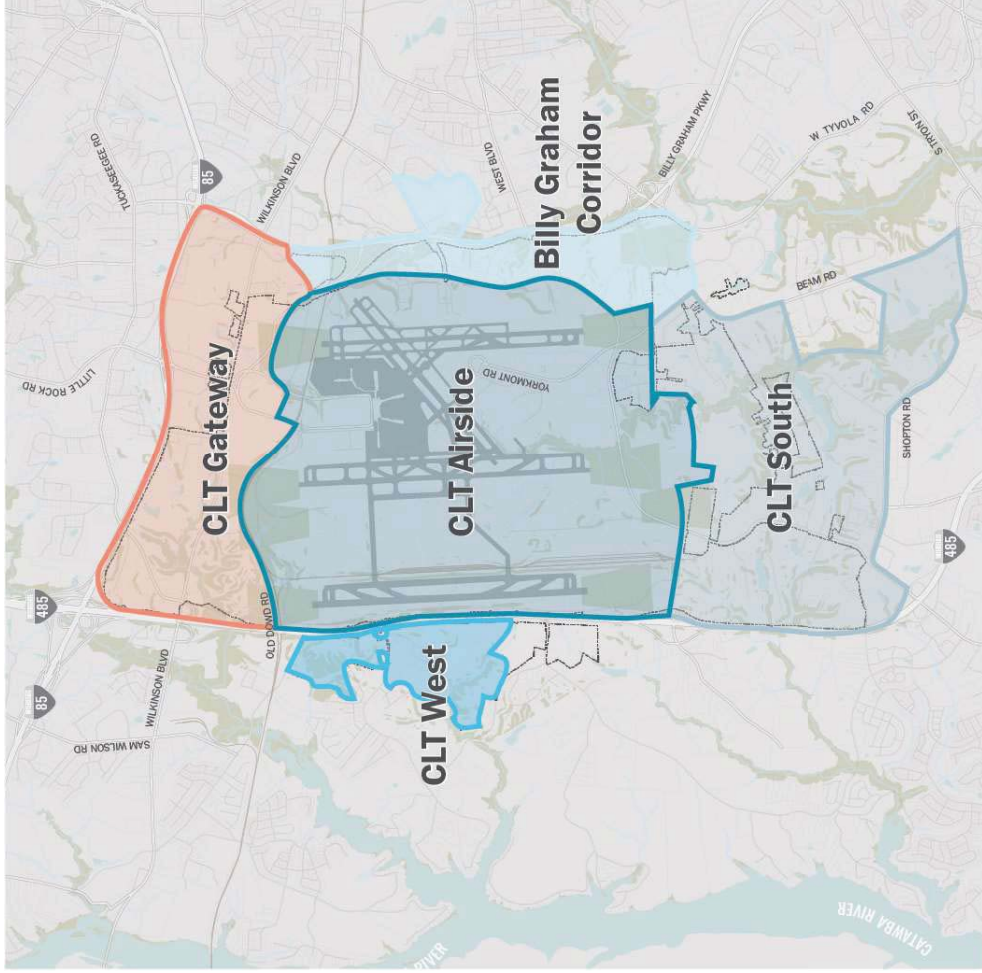


Figure 4.11 - CLT AASDP Development Districts

## DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

This section provides an overview of the strategic positioning and recommended land uses for each of the proposed Development Districts. The complete development strategy is exhibited on the following page as Figure 4.12.

### CLT GATEWAY

This district will transform the 'Front Door' to CLT into a mixed-use urban district for Airport passengers and employees, as well as the broader Charlotte Region. Land uses recommended for CLT Gateway include Retail, Office, Food & Beverage, Hospitality, and Destination Entertainment. Increased investment and economic growth in this district will provide a rationale for a Wilkinson Boulevard Mass Transit Corridor which would link Uptown to CLT. Further, the CLT terminal will be seamlessly connected to CLT Gateway by a proposed Automated People Mover (APM) system.

### CLT SOUTH

CLT South leverages the Airport's Tri-Modal (Air, Road, and Rail) connectivity to create a unique Airport Enterprise Logistics and Distribution district. Recommended tenants include manufacturers, distributors, and specialized supply chain companies within the Aviation, Automotive, and Retail Fulfillment sectors. To strengthen and contribute to the West Charlotte Office and IT sub-market, CLT South will see the development of Business Office Parks and advanced Data Center Warehousing. Local roadway and interchange improvements are required in this district to separate commuter traffic from the freight truck traffic.

### CLT WEST

The recommended land uses for CLT West include Business Park Office, Flex Light Industrial, and Logistics & Distribution will be compatible with the adjacent 'River District' development, and will galvanize interchange and roadway enhancements. Supportive land uses within this district include Compatible Convenience Retail, Select Service Hotel Accommodation, and Destination Retail.

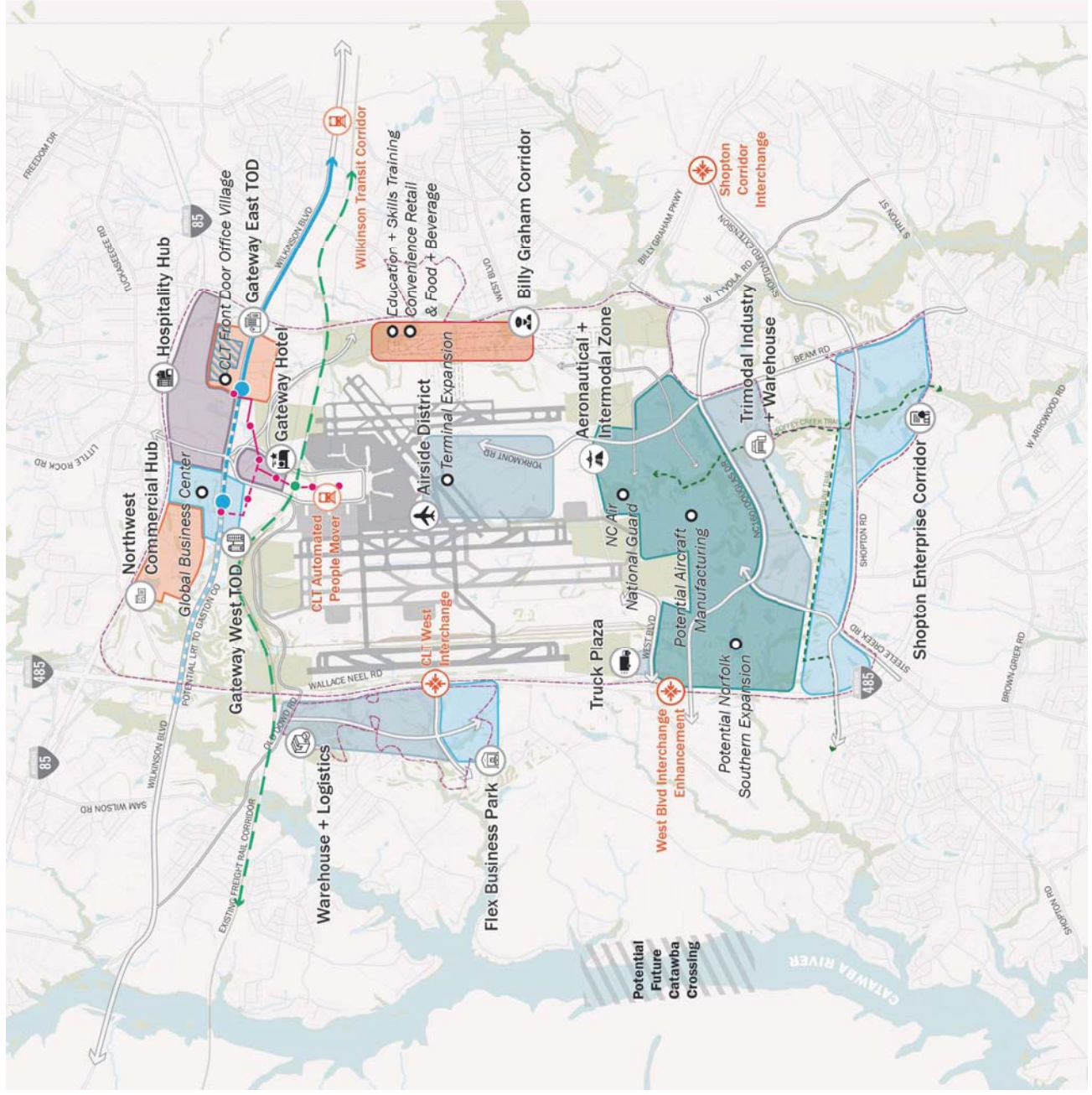
### BILLY GRAHAM CORRIDOR

Building upon the established Workforce & Development and Skills Training activity happening around CLT, this district will provide various amenities including Convenience Retail and Food & Beverage. Flex Light Industrial and short term Commercial uses will be implemented as an interim use before the future 5th parallel runway is built.



Charlotte-Douglas International Airport

Figure 4.12 - AASDP Development Strategy



## IMPLICATIONS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Gaston County is located within a 7 to 30 minute drive time from CLT, and can strategically leverage and promote this proximity to the Tri-Modal transportation system to attract new industries. Economic sectors that benefit from close proximity to an airport can include Skills and Trade Training, Aerospace, Additive Manufacturing, Logistics, Transportation, Perishables, and Agri-business.
- The development strategy for CLT Gateway provides rationale for CATS to implement a Wilkinson Boulevard Mass Transit Corridor, from Uptown to CLT. This Mass Transit Corridor has the potential to continue along Wilkinson Boulevard and into the heart of Gaston County.
- The CLT South 'Airport Enterprise Logistics and Distribution' area will experience continual growth due to the increasingly need for just-in-time logistics and e-commerce fulfillment. By implementing the Catawba Crossings project, these industries could expand west into Gaston County, while still having a direct connection to CLT. This connection would dramatically improve economic development and employment opportunities in Gaston County, as well as providing a secondary relief route for vehicle congestion on I 85 and Wilkinson Boulevard.
- Development of CLT Gateway and CLT West will bring urban density further west, towards the Catawba River. By implementing the Catawba Crossings project and providing enhancements to Wilkinson Boulevard, the urban density can seamlessly leap over the river and into Belmont and eastern Gaston County.



Charlotte-Douglas International Airport



CLT Consolidated Rental Car Facility

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## 5 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

# 5.1 INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

An Economic Cluster Analysis was undertaken to understand the key pillars of economic activity in the region, as well as major economic trends, challenges and opportunities impacting Gaston County's development.

The analysis consists of the following sections:

- **Regional Economic Overview** to provide a foundation for understanding North Carolina, and the regions surrounding Gaston County to help determine the economic clusters and types of economic activity and development that would be appropriate and well positioned within Gaston County.
- **Economic Cluster Analysis** to identify the key pillars of the regional economy, sunset industries and sunrise industries, and potential development opportunities for Gaston County to consider. Standard economic analysis tools such as Location Quotient, Economic Base Model and Shift-Share Analysis are employed to provide an objective analysis.

- **Current Economic Clusters** include those clusters that are strongly concentrated in Gaston County already. These clusters drive the local economy and offer the majority of local employment to residents. Major companies and industry trends are examined for each cluster.
- **Recommended Economic Clusters** include those clusters which present the strongest opportunities for Gaston County to pursue. Each cluster is described in detail to provide actionable recommendations.

## 5.2 REGIONAL ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

### NORTH CAROLINA

As a major center for goods-producing industries, North Carolina was significantly impacted by the 2007-2009 recession. Charlotte and surrounding regions performed better than the rest of the state as its economy is supported by the stable service-providing industries and a growing goods-producing sector.

In North Carolina, economic growth has been driven by a broad range of sectors in recent years. The manufacturing sector has experienced substantial progress, including the creation of 21,000 jobs since the sector declined in 2010. As the backbone of the state's economy, manufacturing still employs one in four North Carolinians.

The textile industry has traditionally held a significant role in North Carolina's economy, providing thousands of jobs and revenue for local and regional economies. At the industry's peak, it represented 16% of total manufacturing production.

In recent decades the industry has experienced significant decline due to outsourced production and automation, however North Carolina has continued to position itself as a resilient leader in textile production as companies have diversified

into more technical market segments. Unique textiles including automotive, medical, aerospace, marine, and military have experienced significant growth and job creation, as well as spurring additional economic development in research and development to support the evolving industry of textile technology.

North Carolina's projected employment growth trends are similar to the national trends, with the leading employment trends to be found in Health and Medical Services, Professional Services, and Wholesale and Retail Trade. Transportation and Warehousing has also benefited recently from the resurgence in Manufacturing throughout the state.

Rapid population growth across the state has generated support for locally-oriented economic clusters, including Retail, Education Services, Health Services and Leisure and Hospitality.



## CHARLOTTE

The Charlotte area has a vibrant economic history which was driven in its early years by a gold rush, cotton processing, and the railroad. The region evolved into a manufacturing hub, propelled largely by the textiles industry but diversifying into a range of manufacturing industries. Mecklenburg County is the largest manufacturing county in the state, which is itself the 4th largest manufacturing concentration in the U.S.

The recent growth of Charlotte's economy is largely driven by its transformation into a service-based economy. A large part of this growth is related to Charlotte's evolution into the third largest banking center in the U.S. This sector has consolidated in recent years and is now generating a surge of start-ups servicing the industry.

Charlotte is also emerging as a hub for financial technology or "fintech", innovation, teaming up with major financial players to create the Charlotte Fintech Initiative to attract new and more innovative financial services startups. Fintech is thriving, particularly in the CBD, as technology incubators support the talent pipeline.

Additionally, Charlotte's data center and technology markets have been expanding

significantly. Since 2016, existing data center capacity has increased by nearly 19% and currently stands at 50.9 megawatts. From 2015 to 2016, Charlotte's technology jobs grew by 31.6%.

Other industry sectors that are driving the Charlotte economy include: Aerospace and Defense-related industries, Professional and Business Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Accommodation and Food Services, and Real Estate industries.

Charlotte's strategic position and connectivity to many thriving domestic markets, gives the area a unique advantage in the supply chain industry. This strength is demonstrated by its large concentration of workers in the Distribution and E-commerce sectors. Jobs associated with these industries are mainly focused on Warehousing and Storage; Resale of Industrial Machinery, Equipment and Supplies, followed by Wholesale Trade Agents, and Brokers.

Hospitality and Tourism accounts for 20,000 jobs being driven significantly by a strong focus on spectator sports, as well as destination attractions including amusement parks and destination attractions.

Charlotte's quickly growing economy is attracting human and investment capital to fuel the expansion of new and innovative economic sectors. Charlotte's target industries for future employment include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Health Care
- Transportation and Logistics
- Financial Services and Fintech
- International Businesses
- Headquarters
- Energy and Power Industries



## GASTON COUNTY

Throughout the 20th century until the 1990's, Gaston County's major employer remained the textile industry. Since then, the textile industry has experienced a major decline in activity because of inexpensive foreign labour outsourcing and imports. To counteract this trend, the County began to establish a more diverse industrial base, while adaptively reusing some textile mills and related infrastructure to serve new industries.

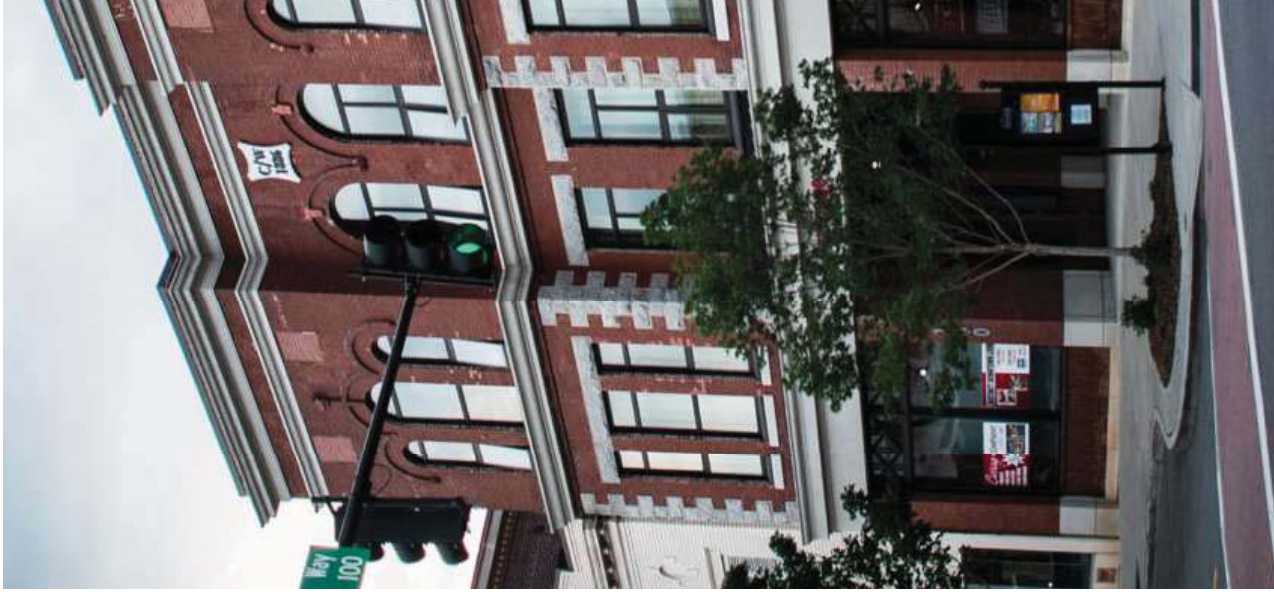
Gaston County continues to maintain a strong manufacturing base, with an increasing focus on the advanced manufacturing sector, including: transportation equipment, specialty chemicals, and plastics. Diversifying the local manufacturing economy is a core goal of Gaston County, as well as investing more resources towards a highly skilled workforce.

In September 2017, Gaston College, with the assistance and support of its partners, opened the Center for Advanced Manufacturing adjacent to the college campus. The facility is designed to accommodate technology-rich industrial programs, including: Mechatronics, Computer-Aided Design (CAD), Plastics and Chemicals Processes, Instrumentation, Alternative Energy, and Robotics.

The County presents a compelling case that it is an outstanding location for industries, with key advantages including its proximity to CLT and the core Charlotte-Mecklenburg urban area, easy access to interstate highways, availability of affordable land, tax incentives, and grants. Some tax incentives and grants include the County's Investment Grant Program, which returns a percentage of property taxes to entitled companies through grants, The Economic Development Commission offers free assistance to companies, and Gaston College trains employees of newly-locating companies and has many programs for existing industries.

Apart from the manufacturing economy, Gaston County contains many Business and Technology Parks that have a range of tenants, such as Gastonia Technology Park and SouthRidge Business Park. Promoting the development of new employment centers is essential to increasing the local tax base and ensuring Gaston County does not become a bedroom community of Charlotte.

Looking forward, municipalities within Gaston County have reported goals of attracting companies and industries that focus on the management of information and technology, internet services, telecommunications, as well as skill training/education and research.



## MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina is east of Gaston County, consisting of 546 square miles of land and a population of 1,034,000 in 2015. The County's top clusters by employment are predominantly Business Services (61,161 employees) and Distribution and Electronic Commerce (37,473), followed by Transportation and Logistics (24,337) and Financial Services (16,164).

According to the Charlotte Regional Partnership, Mecklenburg County has the most manufacturing firms in the state with over 1,275 manufacturing firms. In 2015, Frito-Lay and Nutec Groups opened advanced manufacturing facilities in the county.

Although the County is perceived generally as a financial center, it benefits from a balanced and diverse economy with various growing industries, including biotechnology, motorsports, energy, defense, and aerospace.

Vacancy rates for employment space are well below historic averages: office space (9% vacancy) and flex/manufacturing space (10% vacancy).

Mecklenburg County is becoming known as the New Energy Capital due to its emerging

energy industries. Over 260 companies related to the energy sector operate in the Charlotte region.

Charlotte, at the heart of Mecklenburg County, is the largest urban area in the Carolinas and is the third largest financial services center in the country. The City is home to six Fortune 500 companies. Charlotte also is one of the largest distribution and trucking centers in the country, benefited by the County's locational advantages.

### Mecklenburg County's Major Industries

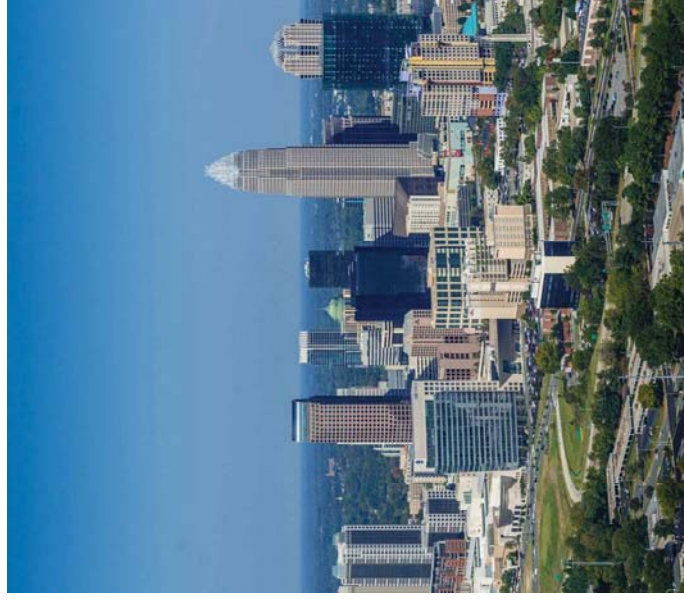
Business Services

Distribution & E-Commerce

Transportation & Logistics

Financial Services

Figure 5.1 - Map of Mecklenburg County, NC



## LINCOLN COUNTY, NC

Lincoln County, North Carolina is north of Gaston County with an area of 307 square miles and a population of 81,035 in 2015. Historically, the County experienced substantial growth in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, including ironworks, saw mills, tanneries, and paper mills. The County's top clusters by employment today are Production Technology and Heavy Machinery, Distribution and Electronic Commerce, Furniture, and Textile Manufacturing.

The County's largest industry is Manufacturing with 4,585 workers, followed by Retail Trade with 3,145 and Construction with 2,394 by the end of 2016. Over the next ten years, the fastest growing sector is expected to be Construction, while the strongest forecast by number of jobs is expected for Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Administrative and Support, and Waste Management and Remediation Services. The industry cluster with the highest relative concentration is Wood/Paper. This cluster employs 1,053 workers and is projected to expand about 0.4% per year.

In an effort to attract industry tenants and create local jobs, the County has built Airline

Industrial Park - the newest Class A Business park in the area. Tenants including Hydac Technology Corporation, a cooling systems manufacturing company, have located in the park. The County is a strategic location for businesses because it has an extensive selection of prime business space, direct access to three major interstates and two airports (Lincolnton-Lincoln County Regional Airport and CLT Airport). Future plans for an Aeronautical Business Park around Lincolnton-Lincoln County Regional Airport are currently in the planning process.

Air. T Inc., an aviation & logistics company, has relocated its corporate headquarters into a new 25,000 square foot facility in Lincoln County. Other significant employers in Lincoln County include RSI Home Products, The Timken Company, Julius Blum Inc., Lowes Home Centers Inc., Cataler North America (Toyota), and VT LeeBoy Inc.

In an attempt to better align student education with the needs of the current and future industry workforce, Lincoln County School System was awarded 1.5 million dollars to initiate a training program in Advanced Manufacturing and Mechatronics. Gaston College maintains a Lincoln County campus and serves the area with a wide range of education and technical programs.

Figure 5.2 - Map of Lincoln County, NC



### Lincoln County's Major Industries

Manufacturing

Retail Trade

Construction

## CLEVELAND COUNTY, NC

Cleveland County, North Carolina is located directly west of Gaston County, with an area of 464 square miles and a population of 96,879 in 2015. Historically, Cleveland County's primary industry was agriculture. This trend continued steadily until the 1960s when manufacturing technology began optimizing the production of agricultural goods and the County was required to become economically diverse.

Cleveland County's current major clusters by employment are predominantly Distribution and Electronic Commerce, followed by Business Services, Textile Manufacturing, and Lighting and Electrical Equipment.

Advantages of Cleveland County include its central location between the Charlotte/NC and Greenville/SC markets, proximity to CLT airport, low cost of doing business (construction and utilities), government financial incentives, as well as access to a quality workforce and a global infrastructure network.

Key industries within Cleveland County include the Automotive, Data Center, Energy Production, and Advanced Manufacturing sectors. Motor vehicles and vehicle parts are manufactured at local operations, such as

KSM Castings, Yutaka, and Eaton.

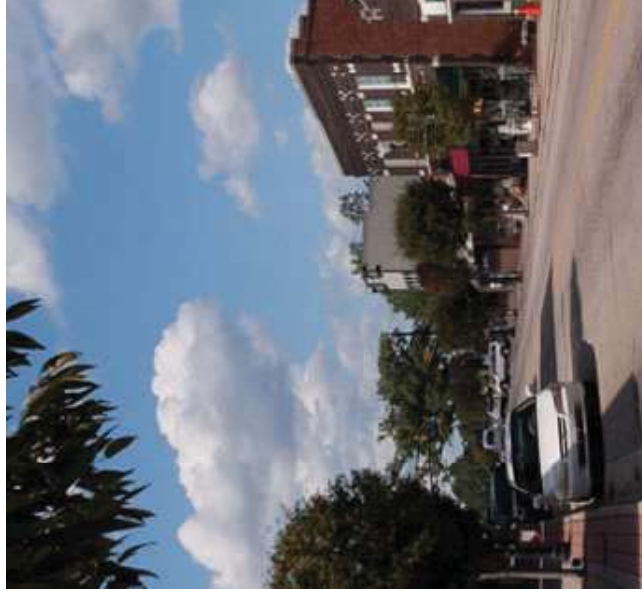
The T5@Kings Mountain Data Center Park is located in the County and contains a 470,000-square-foot Boeing facility, which is a major Fortune 50 company. This facility created more than 100 local jobs, and placed Cleveland at the forefront of this growing and highly sought-after market.

The County is also adding to the Charlotte Region's growing advanced manufacturing and energy sectors with an upcoming Center for Advanced Manufacturing and companies such as NTE, Southern Co., and Duke Cliffside.

### Cleveland County's Major Industries



Figure 5.3 - Map of Cleveland County, NC



## YORK COUNTY, SC

South of Gaston County is York County, located in South Carolina, with an area of 695 square miles and a population of 251,195 in 2015. The County began with a dominant agriculture industry, especially in cotton production, as well as the textile industry. York County contains an extensive transportation network and is located close to the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, and has good connections to the Port of Charleston.

The County's top clusters by employment are Distribution and Electronic Commerce, Business Services, Production Technology and Heavy Machinery, and Health Care. York County's current target industries are Advanced Materials, Chemicals, Transportation Equipment, Food Products, Business and Financial Services, and Distribution and Logistics.

In the Advanced Materials sector, York County's areas of particular concentration include wood products, plastics, and rubber. The County hosts companies, such as Atotech USA, Inc., Composite Resources, and Fomas, Inc. The Chemicals sector includes companies, such as Wikoff Color Corporation, Nation Ford Chemical Company, and Bluestar Silicones.

The transportation equipment sector is one of the County's largest industry clusters, including companies, such as Schaeffler Group USA, Meritor, Daimler Trucks, and Performance Friction Corporation.

York County's Distribution and Logistics sector is growing with more than 50 transportation, distribution and wholesale companies employing over 2,500 people, as well as operating in over 8,000,000 square feet of warehouse space. Some companies in this sector include McKesson, Stanley Black & Decker, U.S. Foods, and FedEx. The Business and Financial Services sector has also experienced significant growth with the recent relocations of Lash Group and LPL Financial, as well as the sizable operations of Wells Fargo and Citi Financial.

In 2016, OneMain Holdings, Inc. (consumer finance), MSI Forks (manufacturing, industrial equipment), and Schaeffler Group USA Inc. (manufacturing) all expanded their operations. During that year, York County was also introduced to new companies, including Crystal Distribution, Inc. (manufacturing, HVAC equipment) and Cabteq Solutions (manufacturing, commercial cabinetry). Four of these companies are manufacturers, which suggests that York County's manufacturing sector is still one of its top sectors.

Figure 5.4 - Map of York County, SC



### York County's Major Industries

Business Services

Distribution & E-Commerce

Production & Technology & Machinery

Health Care

## OPPORTUNITY ZONES

### OVERVIEW

The Opportunity Zone Program is a new community development and federal incentive program established in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide (Economic Innovation Group, 2018).

Opportunity Zones are classified as low income census tracts designated by each state's Governor for further approval by the IRS. Once implemented, the program will provide tax incentives for investors to re-invest their capital gains into businesses and property located within the designated Opportunity Zones. Currently, an estimated 2 trillion in unrealized capital gains remain on corporate balance sheets (NY Times, 2018).

The invested capital in Opportunity Zones are referred to as 'Opportunity Zone Funds', which can be organized as corporations or partnerships. There are limited restrictions on how the Opportunity Zone Funds can be invested, making them a uniquely-flexible economic development tool for disadvantaged communities with limited access to capital.

The program encourages long term investment in low income communities through the following incentives:

- Temporary Tax Deferral for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Zone.
- Permanent exclusion from taxable income of capital gains from the sale or exchange of an investment in an Opportunity Zone (if held for 10 years).
- The basis of the original investment is increased by 10% if the investment in the Opportunity Zone is held for 5 years.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR GASTON COUNTY

There are several Candidate Opportunity Zones across Gaston County. As shown in Figure 5.5 on the following page, the current Candidate Opportunity Zones are located in Lowell, McAdenville, Cramerton, Gastonia, Bessemer City, Kings Mountain, Cherryville, and areas south of Gastonia along York Road.

As this program is being implemented on a rolling basis, there is the potential for additional Opportunity Zones to be designated in Gaston County, as well as in the surrounding counties.

The flexibility of Opportunity Zone Funds welcome a wide range of eligible investments for the designated Opportunity Zone.

Potential investments that would be appropriate in Gaston County include the following uses, among others:

- Commercial Real Estate
- Public Amenities (Community Centers, Libraries, Hospitals, etc.)
- Public Infrastructure
- Affordable Housing
- Mass Transit Extensions
- Start-up Company and R&D Funding
- Innovation Districts

It is critical to note that the Opportunity Zone Program legislation does not provide protection against speculative development, intense gentrification, and displacement.

Municipal and regional governments will need to carefully monitor the pace in which the Opportunity Zones change and develop, and ensure there are local policies in place to ensure residents and businesses receive adequate benefits from the expected revitalization.

# OPPORTUNITY ZONES

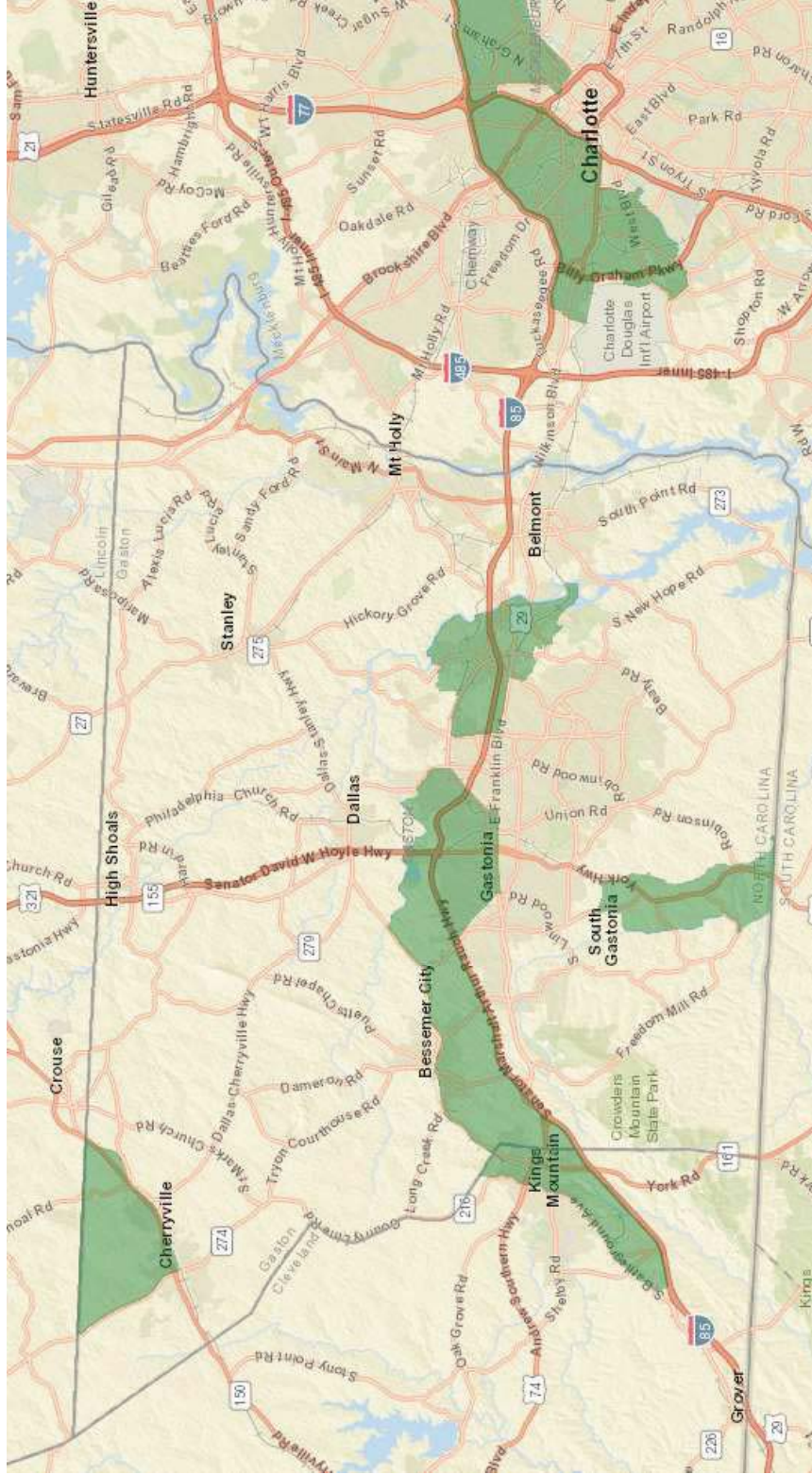


Figure 5.5 - Candidate Opportunity Zones in Gaston County

## 5.3 ECONOMIC CLUSTER ANALYSIS

### OVERVIEW

An economic cluster analysis was conducted to identify the current and emerging economic sectors in Gaston County.

Industry clustering is a key strategy for economic development as it encourages local specialization, facilitates industrial reorganization, encourages networking among firms, enhances workforce development, manages labor supply, and permits a better focus of public resources.

Within each economic cluster, there are sub-clusters of activity that have mutual and inter-related linkages. The economic clusters that are recommended for Gaston County should leverage its rail and road connectivity, as well as its proximity to CLT Airport.

There are two types of industry Clusters:

- **Intra-industry clusters**, where firms within a given industry facing similar problems and utilizing similar technologies, collaborate to solve those problems and develop new products; and,
- **Inter-industry clusters**, where firms belonging to different industries are connected through buyer-supplier chains.

Two types of economic clusters are of key importance to regional development: established clusters which are key pillars of

the local economy, and emerging clusters, which are those that are not yet fully established, and have a potential for growth, given the right conditions and incentives.

Industry cluster analysis provides insight on a regional economy by identifying those industry clusters which are growing in importance and those which are declining. As such, it is the initial step in formulating economic development strategy.

Economic development strategy formulated for industry clusters tends to have a greater effect on regional growth than strategy formulated for individual industries.

This study applies several economic development tools to analyze the growth of industry clusters in Gaston County, including:

- **Location Quotient (LQ):** Compares a given industry's share of the local economy with that same industry's share of the regional or national economy. The LQ is used to understand the growth dynamics of industry clusters, and provides an indication of those clusters that are likely to drive employment, as well as commercial real estate development, over the forecast horizon.

- **Economic Base Model:** Delineates the two components which include base economic activities (export-oriented) and non-basic activities (locally-oriented).

- **Shift-Share Analysis:** Estimates the growth or decline of each industry sector into three components: (1) change related to overall national employment trends for all industry sectors, (2) change related to national industry trends, and (3) most importantly, change related to locally-specific factors.

- **Traded and Targeted Clusters:** Identifies economic clusters in the region which have already been identified by local economic development agencies. Such targeted economic clusters present the opportunity for the alignment with the broader initiatives and investment of multiple stakeholders, adding momentum to existing commercial development plans.

## GASTON COUNTY: EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

A study was made of employment in Gaston County based on a Location Quotient (LQ) analysis. LQ employment mapping analyzes the concentration of different major economic sectors in Gaston County compared to the national average. Sectors with high concentration of employment compared to the U.S. average are located towards the top of the graph. Sectors that are experiencing increasing concentration in the local area compared to the national average are located to the right side of the graph. A comparison was made between 2002 and 2015 to identify how Gaston County's economy has transformed compared to the nation.

Figure 5.6 illustrates the Employment Concentration in Gaston County in 2015 as well as the change in that concentration from 2002 to 2015.

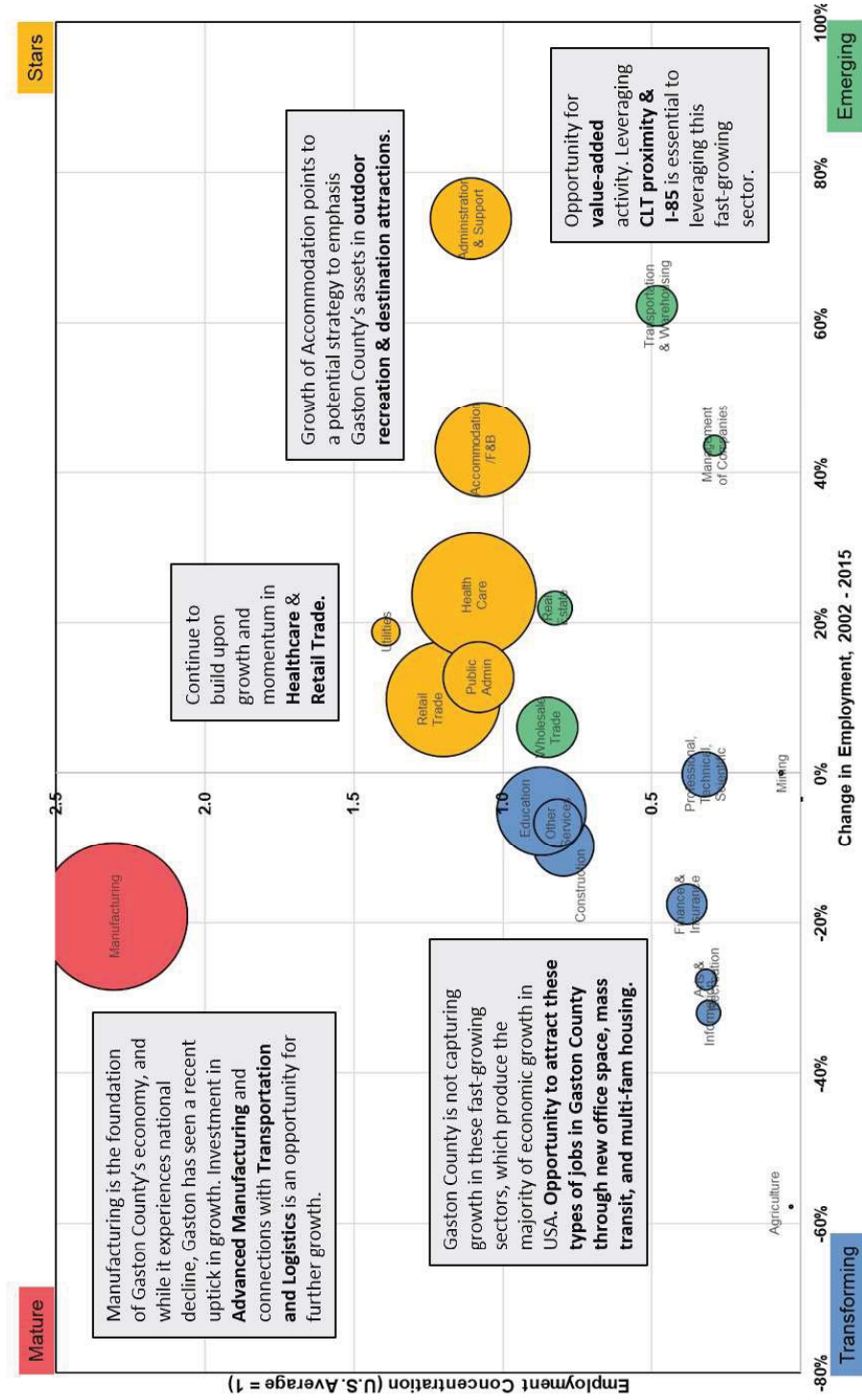


Figure 5.6 - Gaston County Employment Concentration (2002-2015)

## GASTON COUNTY: EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

Change in LQ over a period of time is a useful indicator of whether an industry cluster is growing or declining in concentration in the local area compared to other regions. Industry sectors in a region can be grouped into four categories based upon their current LQ and their change in LQ.

'Stars' are sectors which Gaston County has a strong concentration of activity, suggesting momentum and opportunity. 'Emerging' sectors have less concentration than the national average, but represent potential opportunities for development. The major sector 'Manufacturing' is a 'Mature' sector in the local economy and has been the foundation of Gaston County's economy, but is becoming less concentrated over time. The last group, 'Transforming' sectors represent economic sectors that are quickly growing nationwide, but have traditionally been less concentrated in the local area. Gaston County has the opportunity to capture employment in these 'Transforming' sectors with strategic investment in technology company recruitment, improved transportation and mass transit infrastructure, as well as offering modern office development product.

STARS	EMERGING	MATURE	TRANSFORMING
<p>Sectors that are relatively more concentrated (LQ &gt; 1) in Gaston County compared to nationally and are becoming even more concentrated over time.</p> <p><b>Gaston County "Star" Sectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care</li> <li>• Retail Trade</li> <li>• Accommodation/F&amp;B</li> <li>• Administration &amp; Support</li> <li>• Public Administration</li> <li>• Utilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to leverage the local expertise in Health Care should be studied in depth to better leverage Gaston County's specialization in this large and fast-growing economic sector.</li> <li>• Many of the high growth sectors are associated with lower wages and few spin-off multiplier effects on the economy.</li> <li>• Traded clusters (i.e. export-based) are not well-represented.</li> <li>• Growth of Accommodation points to a potential strategy to encourage growth by emphasizing Gaston County's destination attractions.</li> </ul>	<p>Sectors that are relatively less concentrated (LQ &lt; 1) in Gaston County than the nation, but have become more concentrated locally in recent years.</p> <p><b>Gaston County "Emerging" Sectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation &amp; Warehousing</li> <li>• Wholesale Trade</li> <li>• Real Estate</li> <li>• Management of Companies</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation &amp; Warehousing's growing importance to the County provides an excellent opportunity to introduce additional value-added activity. Leveraging airport connectivity and improved interstate and State highway infrastructure are essential to leveraging this fast-growing sector.</li> </ul>	<p>Sectors that are relatively more concentrated (LQ &gt; 1) in Gaston County than the nation, but are becoming less concentrated over time.</p> <p><b>Gaston County "Mature" Sectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing is the foundation of Gaston County's economy, and while it experiences national decline, Gaston has seen a recent uptick in growth. Continued investment in Advanced Manufacturing, and identifying opportunities to tie into the growing Transportation &amp; Warehousing sector in Gaston County, and Professional, Technical &amp; Scientific sectors metro-wide represent a key opportunity for the County.</li> </ul>	<p>Sectors that are relatively less concentrated (LQ &lt; 1) in the Charlotte MSA than nationally and are becoming even less concentrated over time.</p> <p><b>Gaston County "Transforming" Sectors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education</li> <li>• Construction</li> <li>• Other Services</li> <li>• Professional, Technical &amp; Scientific</li> <li>• Finance &amp; Insurance</li> <li>• Information (Media)</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Mining</li> </ul> <p><b>Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaston County has not traditionally held a strong concentration of Professional, Technical and Scientific employment. However, this is one of the fastest-growing sectors nationwide and metro-wide, and responsible for a majority of economic growth. It is essential to attract these types of jobs to Gaston County particularly for their significant multiplier effect on the local economy.</li> </ul>

## CHARLOTTE MSA: EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

Drawing conclusions from Gaston County's LQ can be aided by a study of how the entire Charlotte metro area has transformed during a similar period. While Gaston County has further expanded its Service-based sectors, the wider Metro has greatly increased its presence in Professional, Technical & Scientific sectors. Much of this type of activity will gravitate to the Charlotte Central Business District as well as its newer transit-oriented developments. However, Gaston County could conceivably compete for companies that might otherwise locate at Charlotte's established but somewhat outdated suburban business parks.

Gaston County has experienced faster growth in **Transportation & Warehousing** compared to the metro area, and should leverage this strength into attracting value-added business that feeds into the global supply chain.

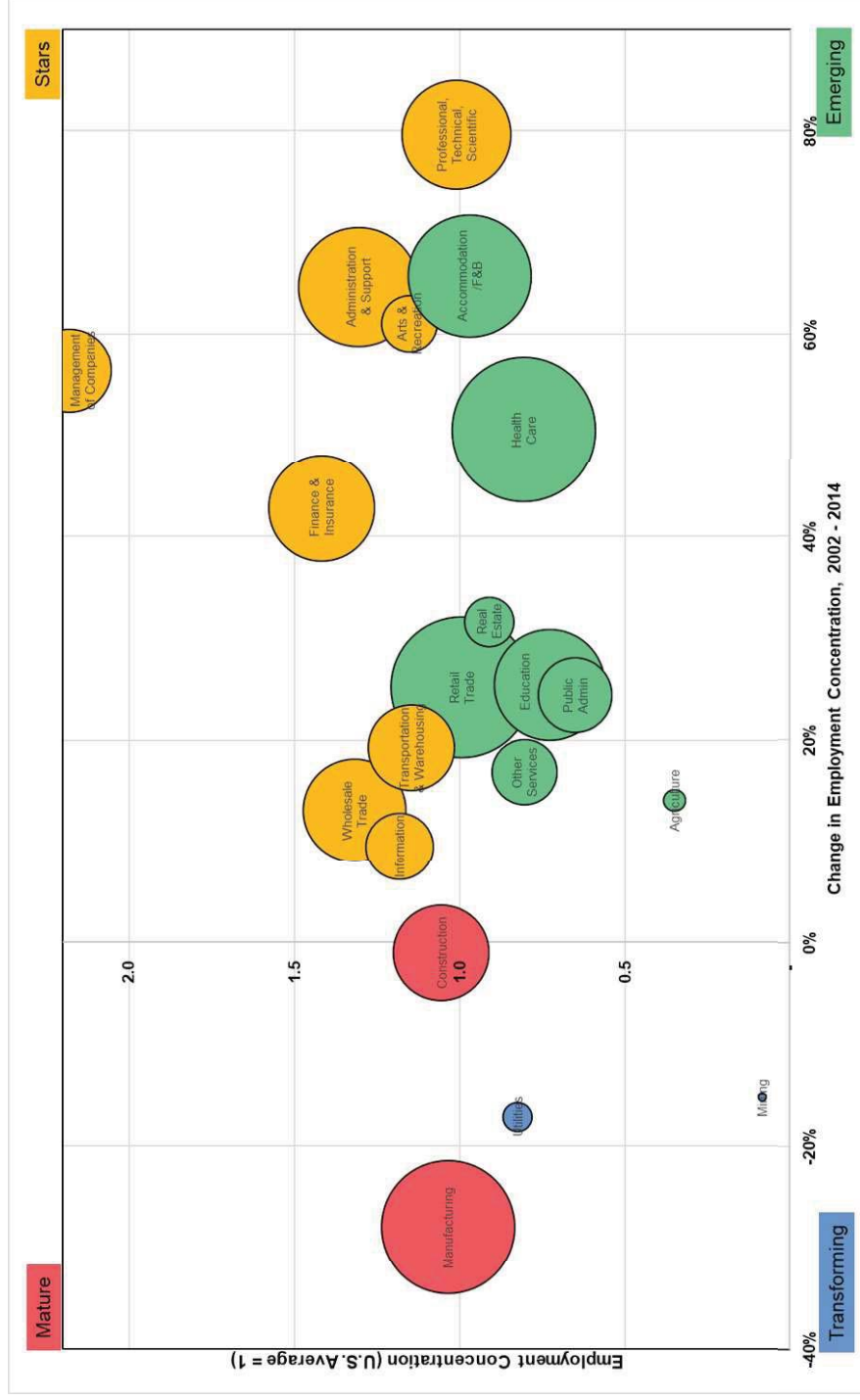


Figure 5.7 - Charlotte MSA Employment Concentration (2002-2014)

## GASTON COUNTY: SHIFT SHARE ANALYSIS

Shift-share analysis was used to measure Gaston County's comparative advantage for various industry clusters over the rest of the nation. Shift-Share compares the overall growth of the entire national economy as well as the growth of a particular industry cluster nationally versus locally. The specific methodology behind shift-share analysis are not elaborated within this report, but a summary of this analysis is detailed below.

The Shift-Share Analysis identifies Gaston County as having comparative advantages over other regions in the U.S. for these industry sectors: **Administration & Support** (ie "back office" activity), **Transportation & Warehousing**, and **Accommodation & Food Services**. According to this analysis, these three industry sectors are key opportunities for Gaston County to capture and build upon when considering future development.

Employment Sector	United States		Gaston County			SHIFT SHARE ANALYSIS					
	Employment 2002	Employment 2015	Change	Employment 2002	Employment 2015	Change	LQ 2002	LQ 2015	National Share	Industrial Mix	Regional Shift
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	871,574	1,041,689	19.5%	45	19	-56%	0.08	0.03	9	0	-36
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	469,949	720,870	53.4%	26	26	0%	0.09	0.07	5	9	-14
Utilities	715,594	784,345	9.6%	500	594	19%	1.12	1.39	100	-52	46
Construction	5,674,910	6,150,010	8.4%	2,952	2,663	-10%	0.84	0.80	588	-341	-536
Manufacturing	13,885,304	12,138,869	-12.6%	18,813	15,209	-19%	2.18	2.31	3,750	-6,116	-1,288
Wholesale Trade	5,120,088	5,715,032	11.6%	2,493	2,644	6%	0.78	0.85	497	-207	-139
Retail Trade	12,404,132	14,046,782	13.2%	8,342	9,162	10%	1.08	1.20	1,663	-558	-285
Transportation and Warehousing	3,718,011	4,630,244	24.5%	750	1,217	62%	0.32	0.48	149	35	283
Information	2,985,822	2,785,734	-6.7%	690	469	-32%	0.37	0.31	138	-184	-175
Finance and Insurance	5,017,461	5,649,363	12.6%	1,427	1,176	-18%	0.46	0.38	284	-105	-431
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,750,248	1,970,936	12.6%	725	884	22%	0.67	0.83	145	-53	68
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5,987,608	8,392,778	40.2%	1,474	1,472	0%	0.40	0.32	294	298	-594
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,616,157	2,280,235	41.1%	250	359	44%	0.25	0.29	50	53	6
Administration & Support	5,941,526	7,759,631	30.6%	2,689	4,674	74%	0.73	1.11	536	287	1,162
Educational Services	9,772,441	11,887,247	21.6%	5,941	5,634	-5%	0.98	0.87	1,184	102	-1,593
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,311,263	18,168,563	47.6%	8,764	10,837	24%	1.15	1.10	1,747	2,423	-2,097
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,585,239	2,003,713	26.4%	479	347	-29%	0.49	0.32	95	31	-258
Accommodation and Food Services	7,966,779	11,002,947	38.1%	4,469	6,394	43%	0.90	1.07	891	812	222
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	3,446,539	3,860,788	12.0%	1,834	1,712	-7%	0.86	0.82	366	-145	-342
Public Administration	4,688,739	6,052,431	29.1%	3,157	3,551	13%	1.08	1.08	629	289	-514
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105,929,384</b>	<b>127,042,207</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>65,820</b>	<b>69,053</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>13,119</b>	<b>-3,423</b>	<b>-9,886</b>

Table 5.1 - Gaston County Shift Share Analysis

## GASTON COUNTY: ECONOMIC BASE ANALYSIS

Economic Base Analysis seeks to distinguish between a region's basic industries (export-oriented) and its non-basic industries (driven by local demand). Industry sectors with significantly higher concentrations of employment than the national average (as measured by the Location Quotient) are considered basic, and therefore are of key importance in generating exports from the region.

Economic Base Analysis provides a broad indication of key exporting industries. For Gaston County, these include **Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Health Care, Administration & Support and Public Administration**. The export value of Gaston County's Manufacturing sector underscores the need to invest in its continued modernization.

Employment Sector	United States			Gaston County			ECON. BASE ANALYSIS			
	Em ployment 2002	Em ployment 2015	Change	Em ployment 2002	Em ployment 2015	Change	LQ 2002	LQ 2015	Basic Em ployment	Non-Basic Em ployment
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	871,574	1,041,689	19.5%	45	19	-58%	0.08	0.03	0	19
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	469,949	720,870	53.4%	26	26	0%	0.09	0.07	0	26
Utilities	715,594	784,345	9.6%	500	594	19%	1.12	1.39	168	426
Construction	5,674,910	6,150,010	8.4%	2,952	2,663	-10%	0.84	0.80	0	2,663
Manufacturing	13,885,304	12,138,869	-12.6%	18,813	15,209	-19%	2.18	2.31	8,611	6,588
Wholesale Trade	5,120,088	5,715,032	11.6%	2,493	2,644	6%	0.78	0.85	0	2,644
Retail Trade	12,404,132	14,046,782	13.2%	8,342	9,162	10%	1.08	1.20	1,527	7,635
Transportation and Warehousing	3,718,011	4,630,244	24.5%	750	1,217	62%	0.32	0.48	0	1,217
Information	2,985,822	2,785,734	-6.7%	690	469	-32%	0.37	0.31	0	469
Finance and Insurance	5,017,461	5,649,383	12.6%	1,427	1,176	-18%	0.46	0.38	0	1,176
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,750,248	1,970,938	12.6%	725	884	22%	0.67	0.83	0	884
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	5,987,608	8,392,778	40.2%	1,474	1,472	0%	0.40	0.32	0	1,472
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,616,157	2,280,235	41.1%	250	359	44%	0.25	0.29	0	359
Administration & Support	5,941,526	7,759,631	30.6%	2,689	4,674	74%	0.73	1.11	456	4,218
Educational Services	9,772,441	11,887,247	21.6%	5,941	5,634	-5%	0.98	0.87	0	5,634
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,311,263	18,168,563	47.6%	8,764	10,837	24%	1.15	1.10	962	9,875
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,585,239	2,003,713	26.4%	479	347	-28%	0.49	0.32	0	347
Accommodation and Food Services	7,966,779	11,002,947	38.1%	4,469	6,394	43%	0.90	1.07	413	5,981
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	3,446,539	3,860,788	12.0%	1,834	1,712	-7%	0.86	0.82	0	1,712
Public Administration	4,688,739	6,052,431	29.1%	3,157	3,561	13%	1.08	1.08	271	3,290
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>105,925,384</b>	<b>127,042,207</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>65,820</b>	<b>69,053</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>12,408</b>	<b>56,645</b>

Table 5.2 - Gaston County Economic Base Analysis

## GASTON COUNTY: TRADED CLUSTERS

Traded Clusters are those which are export-oriented (to other domestic markets or internationally). Traded Clusters are particularly important to local economies such as Gaston County, as they bring in wealth from outside jurisdictions which is then multiplied through local commerce.

Several Traded Clusters are commonly found throughout the U.S. (for example, “Distribution and Electronic Commerce” and “Business Services”), and so while Gaston County may have significant employment in these Clusters, it is not necessarily out of the ordinary. Areas where Gaston County clearly has a much higher concentration of employment than the national average include: Automotive, Textile Manufacturing and Recreational & Small Electric Goods. All three of these Clusters are undergoing rapid evolution and present a strong opportunity to put Gaston County’s economy on the leading edge.

Examining the top Traded Clusters within the entire Charlotte Metro area provides additional insight into the opportunities available for Gaston County to pursue:

- While Distribution & Electronic Commerce and Transportation & Logistics are significant employment Clusters in Gaston County, the rest of the metro area enjoys a much higher concentration of these economic activities. The global supply chain is growing and evolving rapidly, and ancillary job creation significant, including higher-paying entry level positions with opportunity for advancement. This is a key area that Gaston County should build its near-term economic development strategy upon.
- Other Traded Clusters that are heavily concentrated in the Charlotte metro include Financial Services and Insurance Services. While both activities are largely focused on Uptown, there may be an opportunity over time to compete for “back office” activity that might be occurring in suburban business parks at a location in eastern Gaston County.

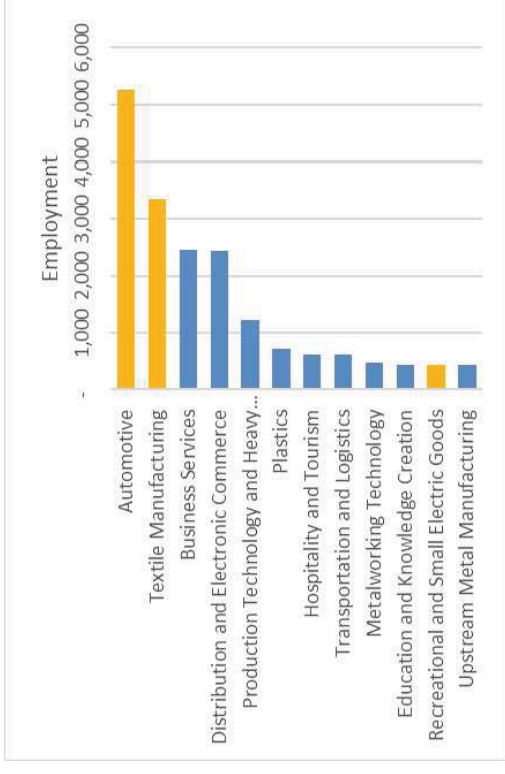


Figure 5.8 - Gaston County – Employment in Top Traded Clusters  
Source: Cluster Mapping USA

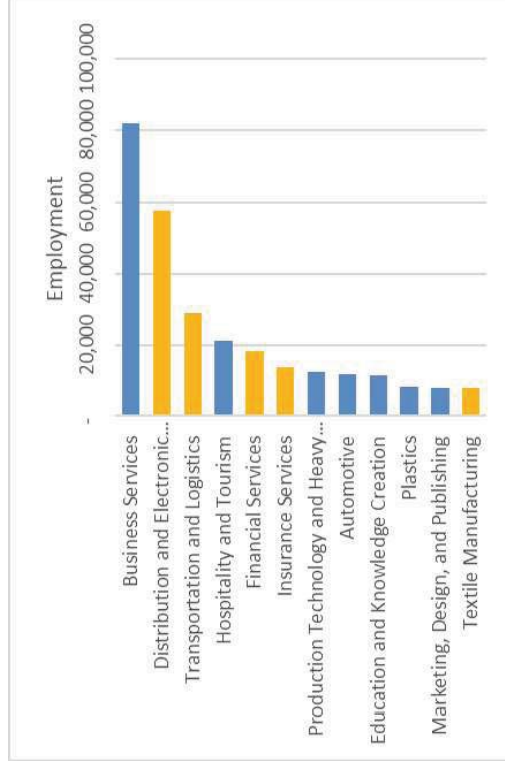


Figure 5.9 - Charlotte Metro – Employment in Top Traded Clusters  
Source: Cluster Mapping USA

## GASTON COUNTY: CLUSTER LINKAGES

Economic Clusters have well-established linkages with other Clusters. An examination of these linkages provides insight on potential economic development opportunities.

Gaston County's key Traded Clusters and their linkages are illustrated in Figure 5.10. Darker lines point to stronger linkages with other Economic Clusters.

**Key takeaways from this analysis are as follows:**

- The Distribution and Electronic Commerce, which Gaston County has an average concentration of, but which the metro area is very strong, has strong linkages to a number of Economic Clusters. This indicates its key importance to future economic development in the County.
- The County's strength in Textiles provide the an opportunity for niche industries in the Apparel and Footwear sector, particularly using new technologies.
- The synergies between Automotive and Recreational Goods manufacturing also point to Clusters that are undergoing rapid evolution such as Production Technology. Gaston County has some strength in this area already, and could leverage this strength into a transition.

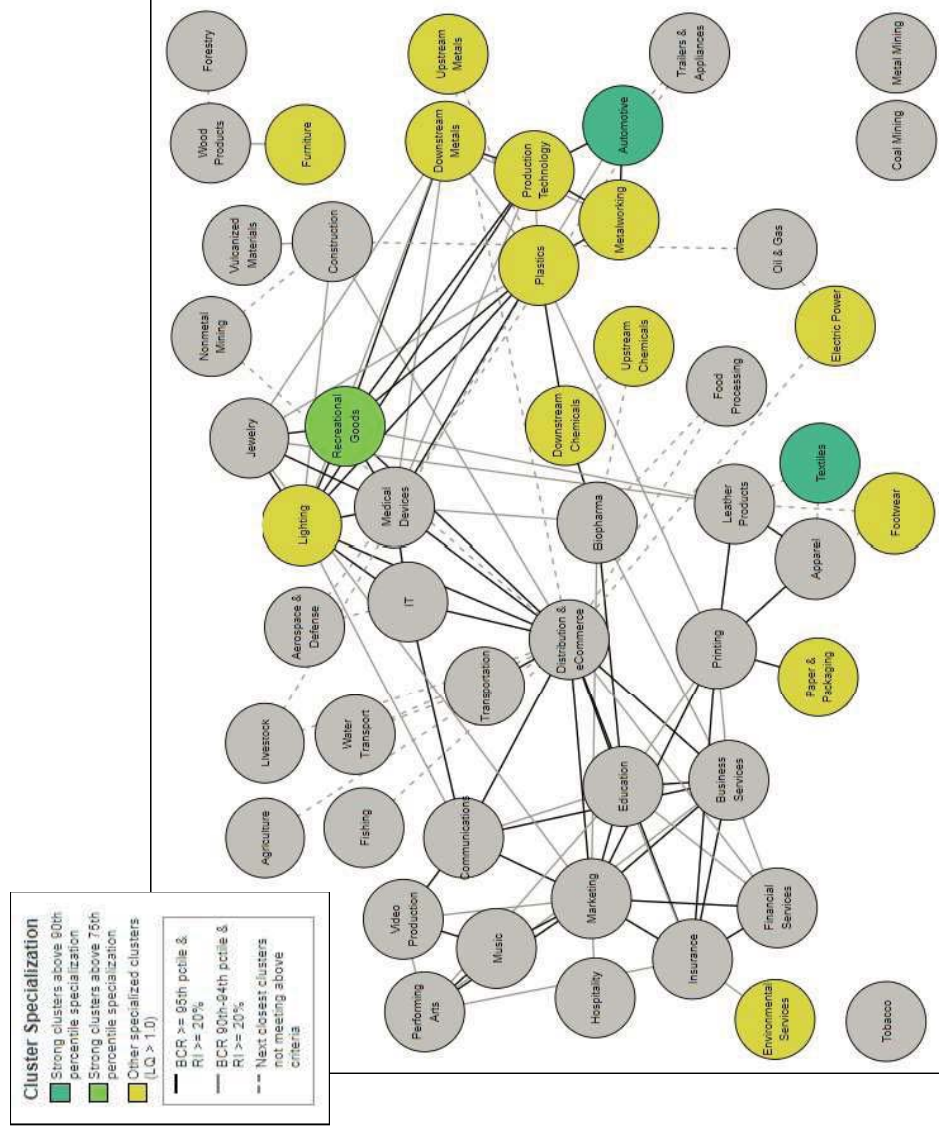


Figure 5.10 - Gaston County - Economic Cluster Linkages  
Source: Cluster Mapping USA

## WORKFORCE INFLOW & OUTFLOW

To better understand employment and commuting patterns in Gaston County, a workforce inflow and outflow analysis was performed. This analysis helps to identify where workers are commuting from for work and how many enter/exit the county for work.

Gaston County net exports workers to the surrounding region and adjacent counties, which means there are more workers in Gaston County than there are jobs. Just over 65,000 people leave Gaston County to get to their place of employment. Due to the close proximity of the City of Charlotte, almost half of this outflow goes to Mecklenburg County. As shown in Figure 5.11, workers are also commuting out to other surrounding counties, albeit in much smaller numbers, and include: Lincoln County, Cleveland County, Catawba County, and York County in South Carolina.

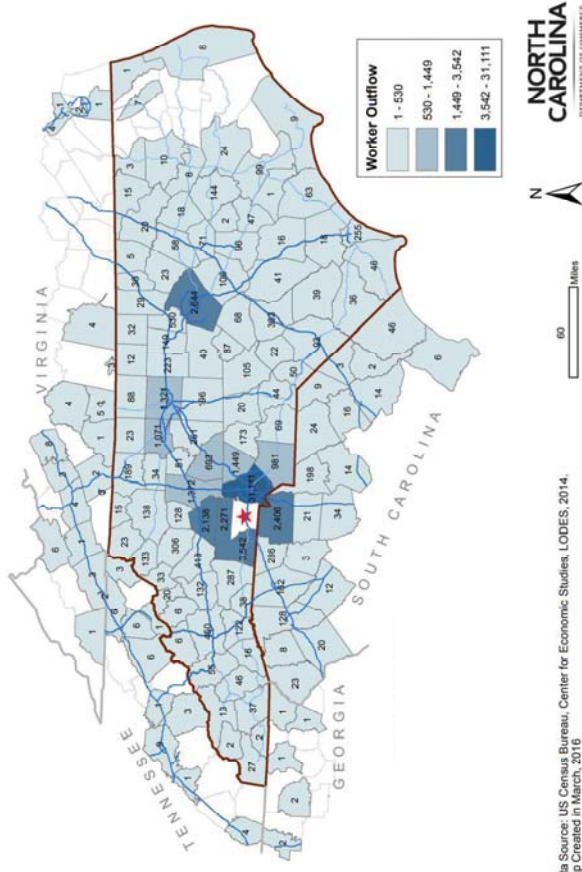
Worker inflow, as shown in Figure 5.12, shows similar geographic patterns with slightly more workers coming in from counties to the west of Gaston County. The largest share of worker inflow is coming in from Mecklenburg County, and Charlotte in particular.

Workforce patterns are important for businesses to consider when setting up or expanding as access to skilled labor and the availability of workers within a close distance is important.

### INFLOW / OUTFLOW SUMMARY

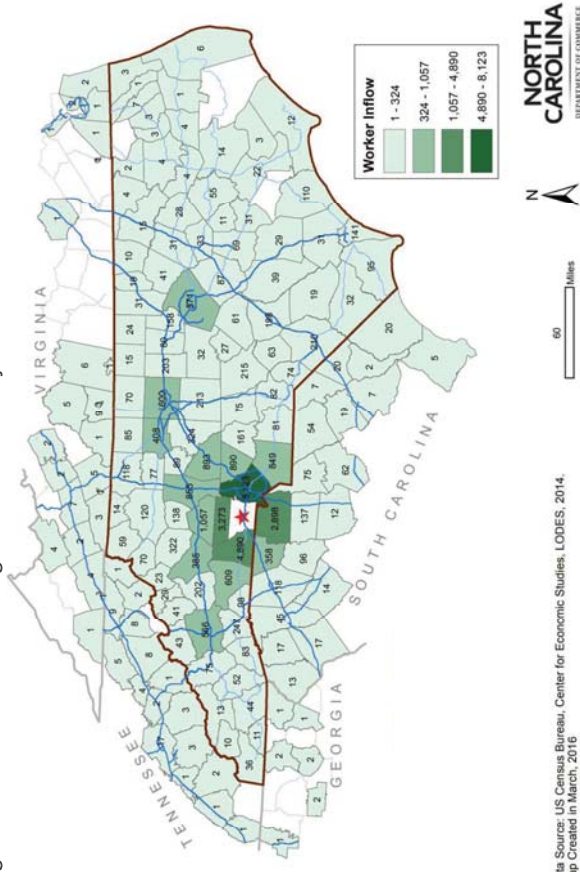
Living outside but employed within Gaston County: **36,783**  
 Living within but employed outside Gaston County: **65,440**  
 Living and employed in Gaston County: **37,009**

Figure 5.11 - Workers Commuting out of Gaston County



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LODES, 2014. Map Created in March, 2016.

Figure 5.12 - Workers Commuting into Gaston County



Data Source: US Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LODES, 2014. Map Created in March, 2016.

## 5.4 CURRENT ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

### MANUFACTURING

Leading industries in manufacturing include Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, Textile Mills, and Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing. Each industry currently employs over 2,000 workers, with Transportation Equipment Manufacturing leading at 4,201, but with Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing leading in the number of establishments at 88. By the end of 2016, there was a total of 14,219 employees in manufacturing and 295 establishments.

The manufacturing sector is experiencing an era of uncertainty and disruption as many technological, political, and geographical forces have transformed how goods are produced and supplied, as well as consumer buying habits. Primary drivers to this shifting sector include technology disruption within factories and the increased automation of tasks, consumer buying habits preferring a faster production process, and foreign outsourcing of production to lower the cost of business.

Several investments have been made throughout Gaston County to remain on the leading edge of the manufacturing sector, particularly in advanced manufacturing. Gaston College's 21,000-square-foot Center for Advanced Manufacturing and the Western North Carolina Apprenticeship Alliance's college programs for advanced manufacturing degrees are strong examples of collaboration between education and industry to prepare the future workforce for an uncertain future. Gaston College has developed the unique Apprenticeship 321 program which includes a number of Gaston employers.

The advent of Advanced Manufacturing has provoked a manufacturing renaissance for Gaston County. Businesses including CTL Packaging USA have announced expansion plans for their 166,000-square-foot advanced manufacturing plant, and Owens Corning operates a dedicated advanced manufacturing facility in Gastonia.

Figure 5.13 - Regional Employment in the Manufacturing Sector

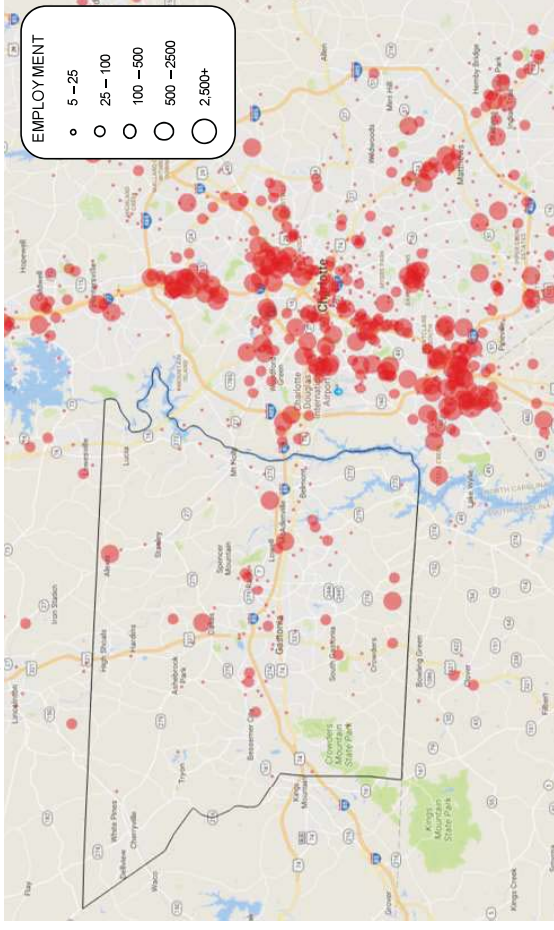
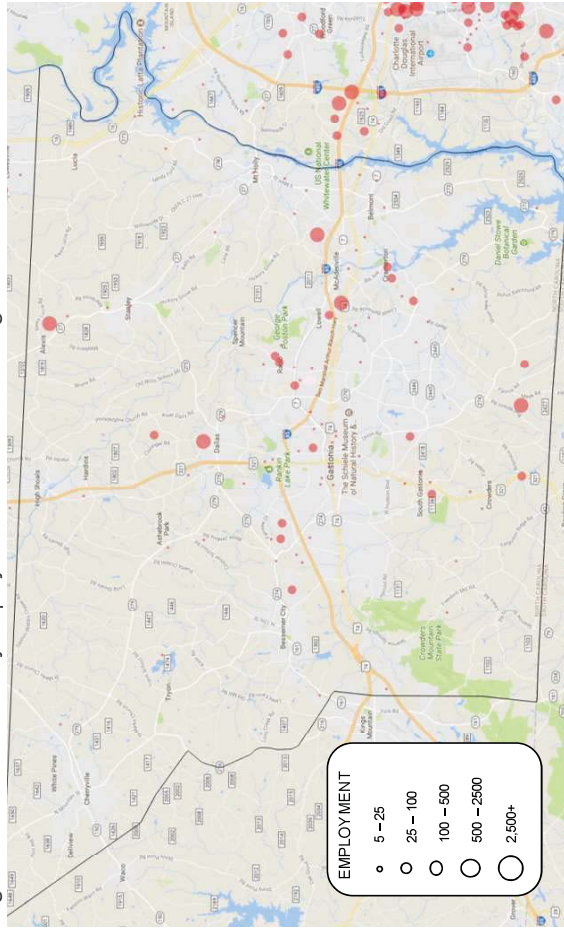


Figure 5.14 - Gaston County Employment in the Manufacturing Sector



## MANUFACTURING

Examples of Major Manufacturing Companies in Gaston County as reported by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

- Freightliner Corp: 1000+
- American & Efrid LLC: 1000+
- Wix Filtration Corp: 1000+
- Pharr Yarns Inc: 500-999
- Dole Fresh Vegetables Inc: 500-999
- Industrial Fabricators Inc: 250-499
- Beverly Knits Inc: 250-499
- Stabilus Inc: 250-499

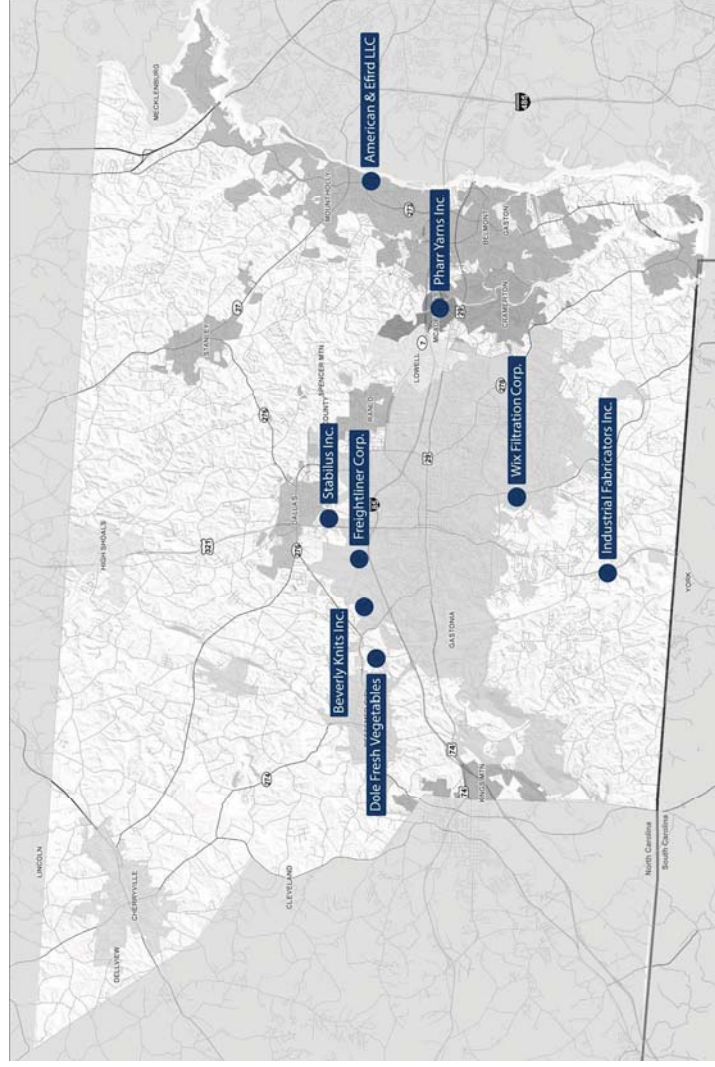
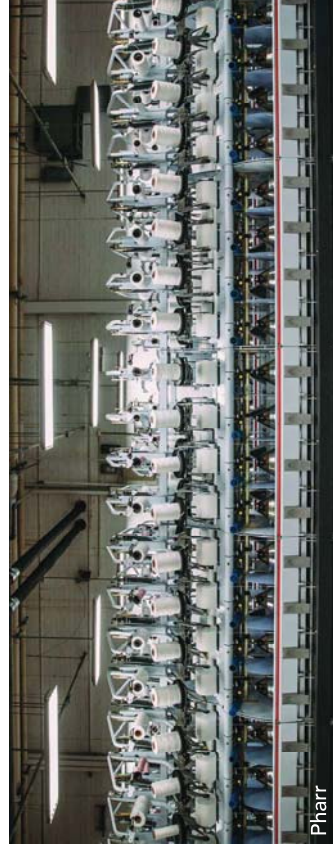


Figure 5.15 - Major Manufacturing Companies in Gaston County

## HEALTHCARE

This sector employed 11,373 people and encompassed 432 establishments in 2016. The leading industries are Ambulatory Health Care Services, with 4,324 employees, and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, with 2,497 employees. In particular, Offices of Physicians contribute 2,186 employees and 103 establishments.

CaroMont Health, Gaston County's largest employer with over 4000 employees, is a regional, independent, not-for-profit health care system. CaroMont Health has established a strong presence throughout Gaston County, and has cultivated a regional hub for Healthcare and Medical services at the CaroMont Regional Medical Center in Gastonia. Gaston County has developed a medical office park adjacent to the hospital, which now has ten buildings with more than 250,000 square feet of space. CaroMont has agreed to make \$200 million in campus-based capital investments over the next decade, as well as providing \$450,000 per year to promote community health and invest in the development of active lifestyle options.

CaroMont Health offers the latest advancements in medical technology: an expansive surgical suite with stereotactic technology, which utilizes computer simulation, microscopic surgery and x-ray images to achieve pinpoint accuracy. CaroMont also offers a level III neonatal intensive care unit for high risk infants and a pre-adolescent psychiatric center. Overall, CaroMont Health has five affiliate companies, including a network of 46 primary and specialty physician offices. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) and CaroMont partnered with Gaston County Government to operate a full wellness program to improve the health of employees. BCBSNC is also working with physician assistant training programs at colleges in the state to encourage PAs to work in rural areas.

Figure 5.16 - Regional Employment in the Healthcare and Support Services Sector

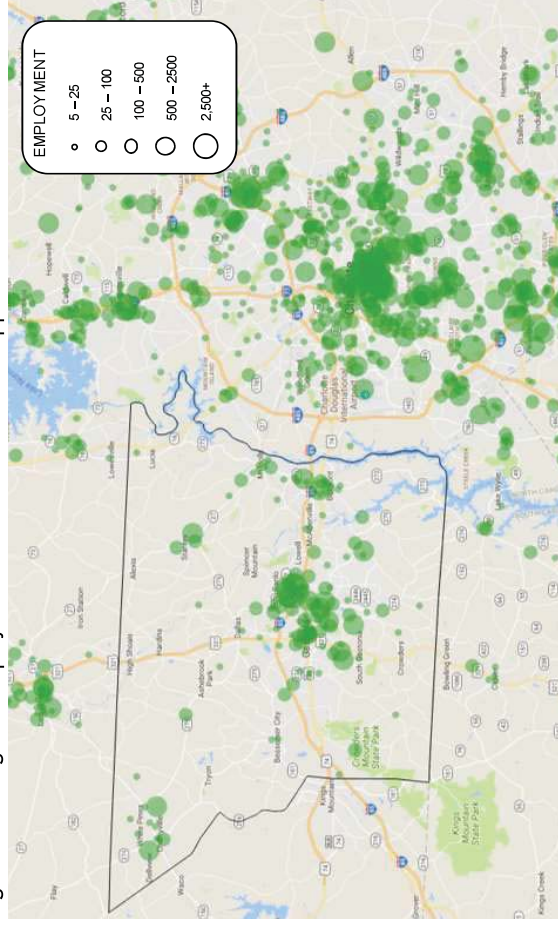
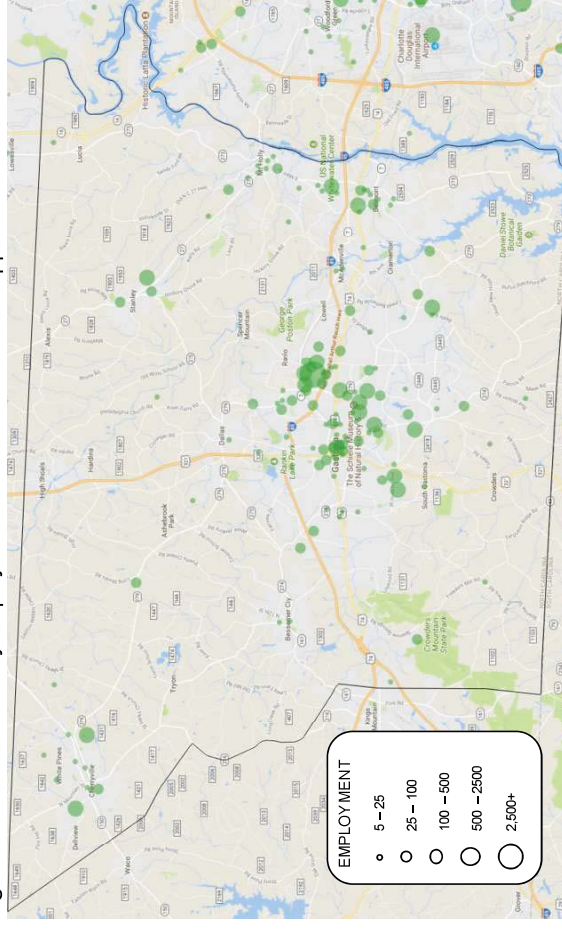


Figure 5.17 - Gaston County Employment in the Healthcare and Support Services Sector



## HEALTHCARE

Examples of Major Healthcare Companies in Gaston County as reported by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

- CaroMont Health (A Corp): 1000+
- Gaston Family Health Services: 250-499
- Holy Angels Inc: 250-499
- Atrium Health: 250-499

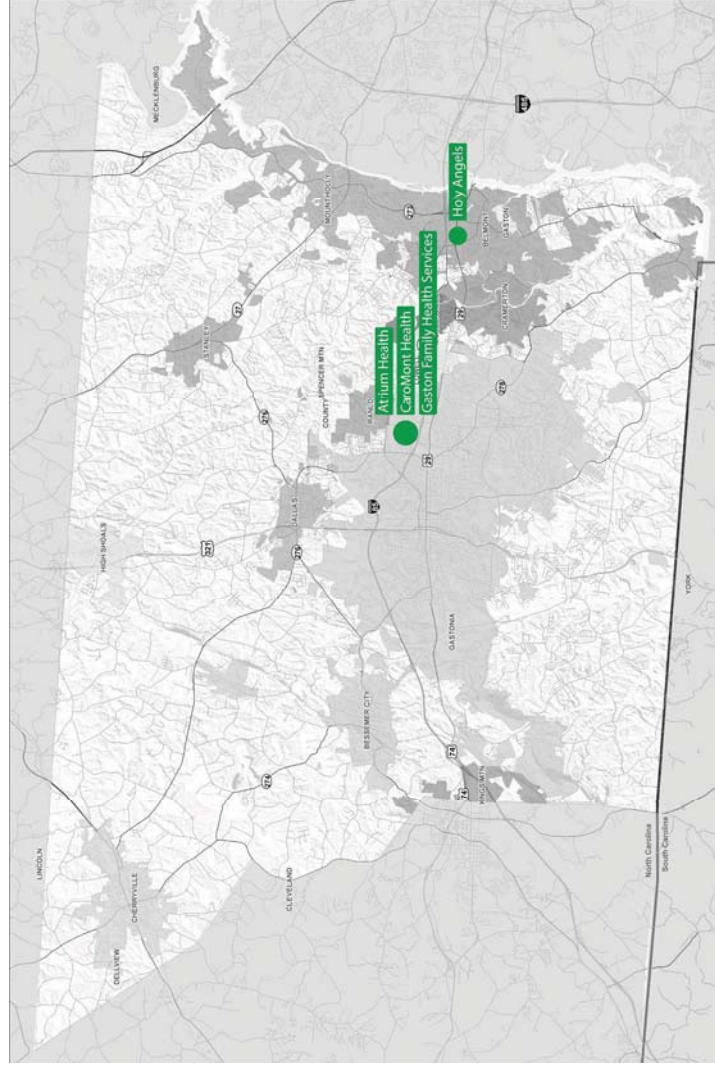


Figure 5.18 - Major Healthcare Organizations in Gaston County

## RETAIL TRADE

9,614 people worked in the Retail Trade sector in 639 establishments in 2016 with Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers and Food and Beverage Stores as the leading industries, both of which employed over 1,400 people.

Retail Trade institutions are spread throughout all of Gaston County to support local communities, however major clusters of Retail Trade employment are located along the Wilkinson Boulevard corridor, as well as the towns of Gastonia and Belmont. Typically, these jobs are low skill and low paying, with limited education required for employment. Retail Trade employees are generally employed on shift schedules at all periods of the day and night, and a substantial number are dependent on public transportation to get to work.

In recent years, the region has experienced growth in a burgeoning Food & Beverage sector that includes unique restaurants, as well as craft breweries and distilleries. This is changing the perception towards Retail Trade employment, as artisan Food & Beverage institutions require skilled employees with extensive knowledge of cuisine/spirits.

The Gaston County Commission has funded a Public-Private Site Development Initiative to plan new retail, office and industrial sites. As of May 2016, more than 90,500 square feet of multi-tenant retail space was under construction and another 114,378 square feet were proposed in projects. Recent regional retail announcements include River District, a large-scale mixed-use project with 500,000-square-feet of retail space just east of the Catawba River. The Villages of Cramerton Mills with 124,000-square-feet of office, retail and institutional space, and Belmont Town Center with more than 105,000-square-feet of retail space, as well as an adjacent 12,000-square-foot building with more retail space.

Figure 5.19 - Regional Employment in the Retail Trade Sector

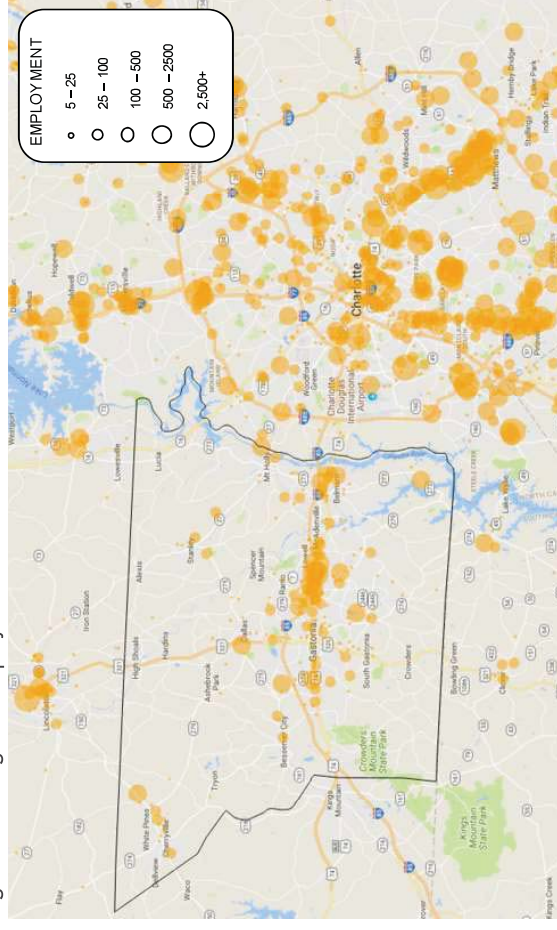
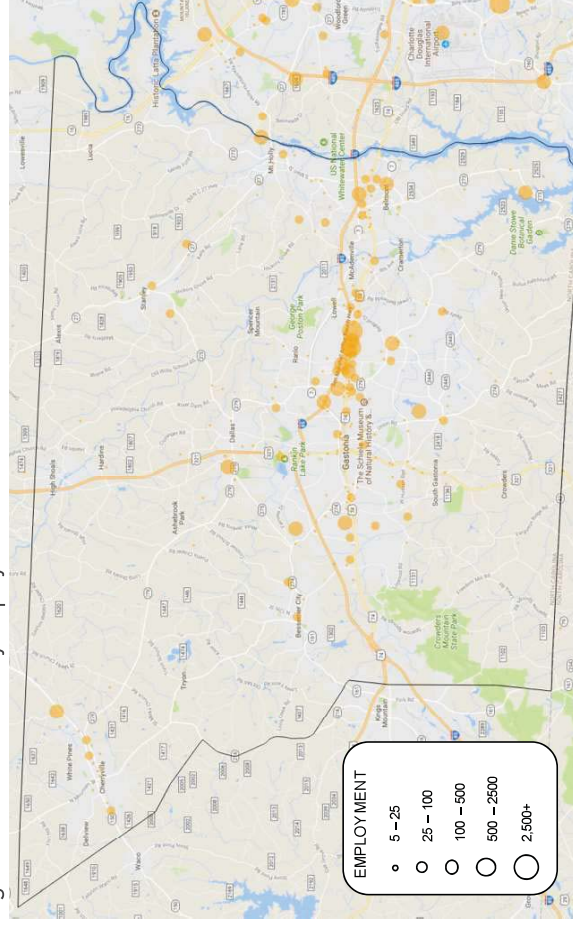


Figure 5.20 - Gaston County Employment in the Retail Trade Sector



## RETAIL TRADE

Examples of Major Retail Trade Companies in Gaston County as reported by the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

- Wal-Mart Associates Inc: 1000+
- Food Lion: 500-999
- BI-LO LLC: 250-499
- Lowes Home Centers Inc: 250-499

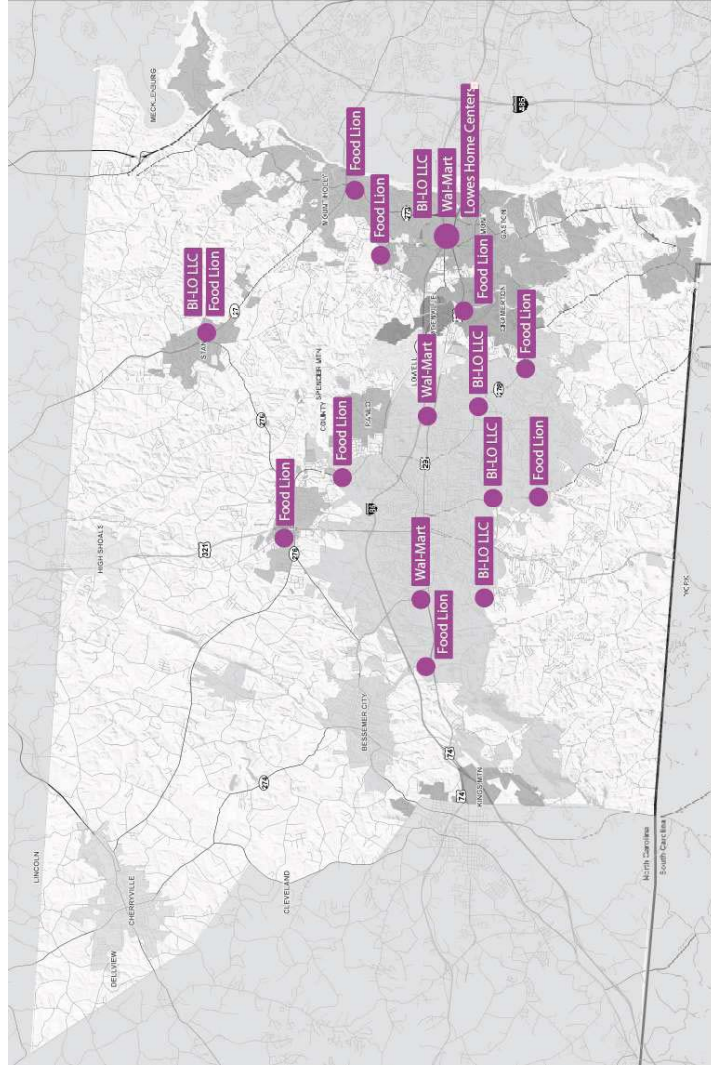
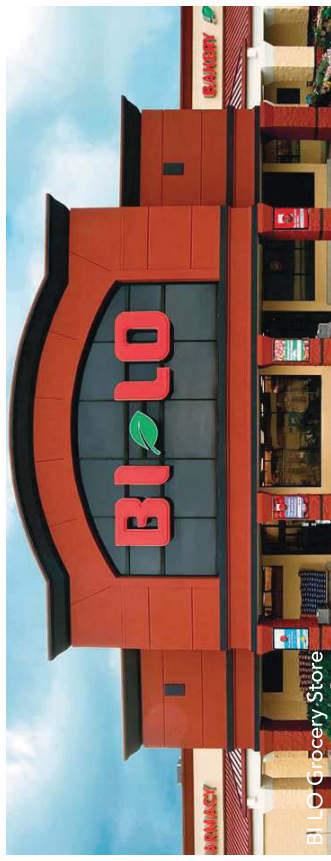


Figure 5.21 - Major Retail Trade Companies in Gaston County

# 5.5 AIRPORT CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT

## OVERVIEW

Gaston County and Charlotte businesses rely upon CLT Airport to connect the area to destinations across the United States and around the world. This connectivity offers the Charlotte Region a significant competitive advantage that helps attract new businesses, particularly international companies, and supports a high quality of life for employees. In addition to moving people, CLT moves air cargo, including express courier packages, mail, online purchases, and high-value perishables.

As the economy of the greater Charlotte Region grows, it creates opportunities for growth among businesses that have an economic relationship to CLT. New commercial development that responds to this opportunity is called 'Airport Connected Development'. Facilitating private sector Airport Connected Development across Gaston County will create new opportunities for regional economic growth that have not yet been realized.

Figure 5.22 illustrates the relationship of different types of Airport Connected Development and their preferred driving distance to an airport. While companies that directly interact with airplanes must locate on airside land, many companies do not have this requirement and may choose to locate in adjacent areas. When considering CLT, Gaston County is located within the dark blue (10 minutes) to dark green (15+ minutes) rings of this diagram.

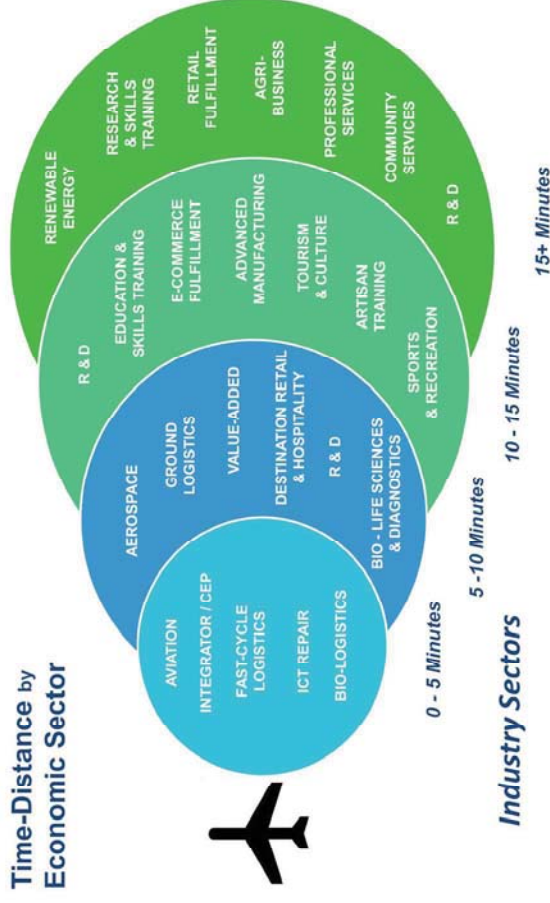


Figure 5.22 - Time-Distance by Economic Sector

Figure 5.23 below illustrates the relationship between growth of several sectors of the economy, their specific land use and transportation requirements, and the opportunity that is created for new Airport Connected Development.

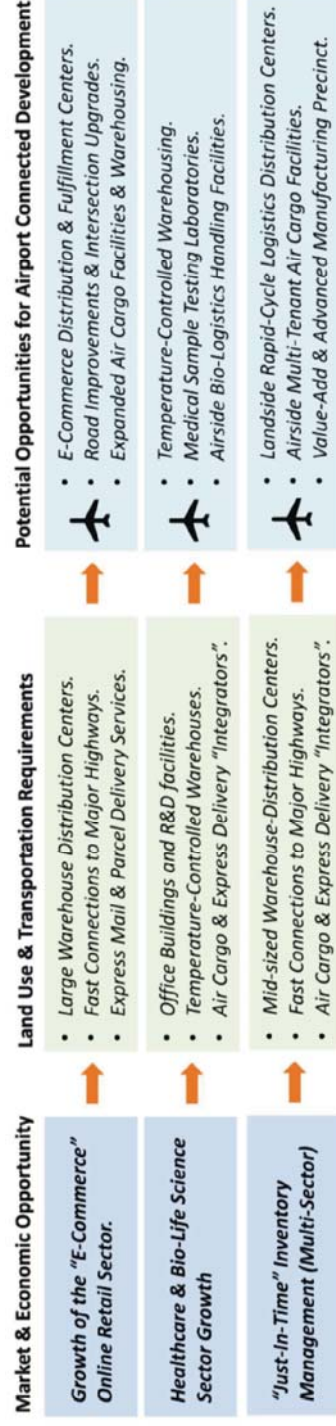


Figure 5.23 - Examples of Airport Connected Development Opportunities

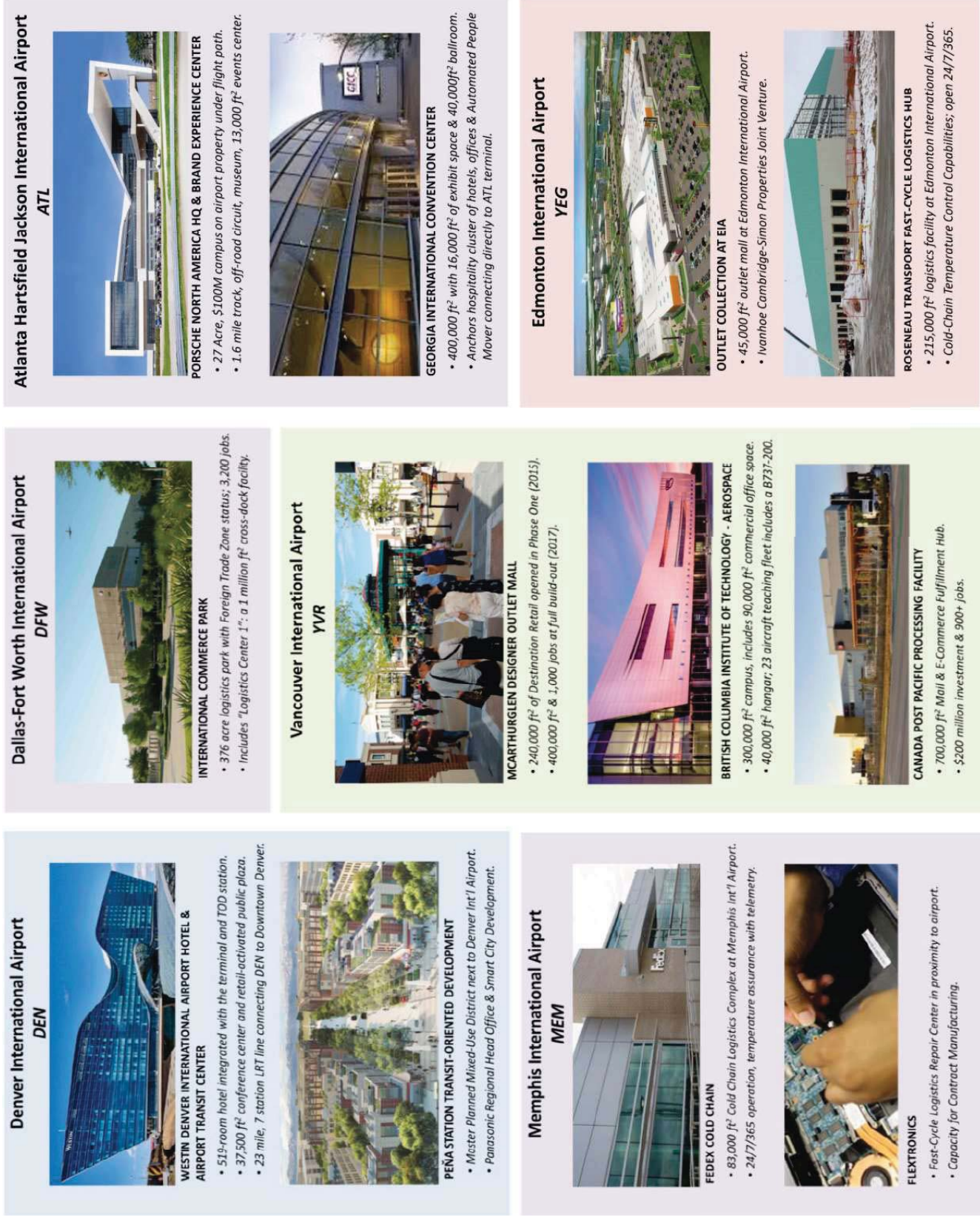
## EXAMPLES OF AIRPORT CONNECTED DEVELOPMENT

The projects illustrated in Figure 5.24 on the following page, highlight examples of the diversity of current Airport Connected Development projects across the United States and Canada. Most of the illustrated projects are commercial developments initiated and built by the private sector. There are also examples of the public sector pursuing Airport Connected Development, including skills training and technical education campuses, as well as national mail processing facilities, among others.

In addition to these global examples of Airport Connected Development, a wide variety of economic sectors and activities are appropriate for development within a 10 - 25 minute drive from an airport. This sectors include the following:

- Hotel & Accommodation
- Destination Entertainment
- Logistics & Distribution
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Office & Business Parks
- Education & Skills Training
- Meetings & Convention
- Recreation & Leisure
- Transit Oriented Development

Figure 5.24 - Examples of Airport Connected Development



## FRANKFURT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Location: Frankfurt, Germany  
Size: 5,600 acres of land  
Runways: 4  
Destinations: 300  
Passengers (2017): 64.5 million



There are three major developments around Frankfurt International Airport:

- The Mönchhof Logistics Park: Developed and marketed via Fraport Real Estate Mönchhof GmbH & Co. KG, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fraport AG
- 100-hectare Mönchhof Logistic Park, to be opened in 2019 for forwarders, logistics companies and aviation-related businesses
- Gateway Gardens: Three private companies; Fraport AG, Groß & Partner Grundstücksentwicklungsgesellschaft mbH, and OFB Projektentwicklungs GmbH are jointly involved in the project in cooperation with the City of Frankfurt
- Gateway Gardens, a new 350,000m<sup>2</sup> district to be completed by 2021 that will include offices, services, hotels, conference space, education and research institutes, recreational facilities, F&B, and retail outlets
- Cargo City, around 270,000m<sup>2</sup> to house 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouse space and office and parking facilities that are being added to the already existing 980,000m<sup>2</sup> that houses 2,000 companies and government agencies
- The area is served by a high speed railway station that connects to adjacent municipalities



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- By partnering with three private companies, the City of Frankfurt is able to deliver a comprehensive plan that generates economic development by leveraging airport connectivity
- Mönchhof Logistics Park's comprises of logistics and airport-related companies that require an optimally accessible location to hotel, commercial, and food & beverage establishments

## INCHEON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Location: Incheon, South Korea

Size: 7,400 acres of land

Runways: 3

Destinations: 300

Passengers (2017): 62 million

- Songdo International Business District (IBD) is a \$40 billion “smart city” community built on reclaimed land adjacent to the Incheon International Airport
- Opened in 2009, the Incheon Bridge provides direct access between the Songdo (IBD) and Incheon International Airport
- Incheon Bridge provides Songdo IBD access to the airport in 18 minutes, and 60 minutes to Seoul
- Songdo IBD is within the Incheon Free Economic Zone and is being built to become one of the world’s top economic centres, boasting access to 1/3 of the world’s population within a 3.5 hour flight
- Masterplan calls for 100 million square feet new city on 1,500 acres, 40 million square feet of commercial, 35 million square feet of residential, and 10 million square feet of retail
- The Songdo IBD currently has:
  - 50,000 residents and 50,000 jobs
  - 1,000 retail and hospitality businesses are open and operating
  - 1,600 domestic and global companies



### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Incheon Bridge, and direct access to Seoul city center provides the economic development success for the rapidly evolving community
- Integrating smart city technology like real time bus service and sensors within the area enables residents and businesses to increase business efficiencies, as well as promote alternative mobility options for commuters and freight

# DALLAS/FORT WORTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Location: Dallas, Texas  
Size: 6,900 acres of land  
Runways: 7  
Destinations: 229  
Passengers (2017): 67 million

- Dallas-Forth Worth (DFW) Metroplex has the largest concentration of corporate headquarters in the United States of America.
- 46+ Fortune 1000 companies have chosen to locate their headquarters within the Metroplex and Airport area
- DFW's annual economic impact on North Texas has risen to \$37 billion
- DFW supports 228,000 jobs in the region, with an overall payroll of \$12.5 billion annually

## There are two major Business Centers in the DFW area:

### International Commerce Park

- \$6M+ Annual Non-Aeronautical Revenue to DFW and 3,200 jobs
- International Commerce Park I: 404,500 square foot warehouse and distribution center

### New Gateway Logistic Center:

- 5-building, 1.4 million square foot industrial complex, building ranging from 211,000 to 374,000 square feet
- This project will be located on the last large development sites at the Airport, to be completed by Fall 2018



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A high performance market in DFW area encourages lenders to finance the construction of major industrial projects at and around the Airport area
- The Gateway Logistics Center leverages immediate highway access for logistics and distribution uses

## 5.6 TARGET ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

### GASTON COUNTY - CLT TIME-DISTANCE CLUSTERS

Figure 5.25 overlays the Airport Connected Development concept of Time-Distance Clusters on a map of Gaston County. This visualization provides an understanding of how Gaston County is conceptually divided between three rings based on their proximity to CLT Airport. Although this type of analysis is flexible and not absolute, it directly informs where different economic sectors would locate.

**'Gaston County East':** The first ring, located 10 - 15 minutes away from CLT, includes Belmont, Mount Holly, Cramerton, and McAdenville. These municipalities benefit from close proximity to CLT and Uptown Charlotte, waterfront access to the Catawba River, business parks, and tourism to recreational amenities and charming town centres. The proposed Catawba Crossings project would connect this ring to CLT and the Charlotte area.

**'Gaston County Central':** Gastonia, Lowell, Dallas, Spencer Mountain, Stanley, and Ranlo comprise the second ring, approximately 15 - 25 minutes from CLT. This area includes a large proportion of employment centres, including various Manufacturing and Industrial company headquarters and operations, as well as CaroMont Health's medical cluster and Gaston College. This ring has limited land availability, but is experiencing pressure for employment and residential development.

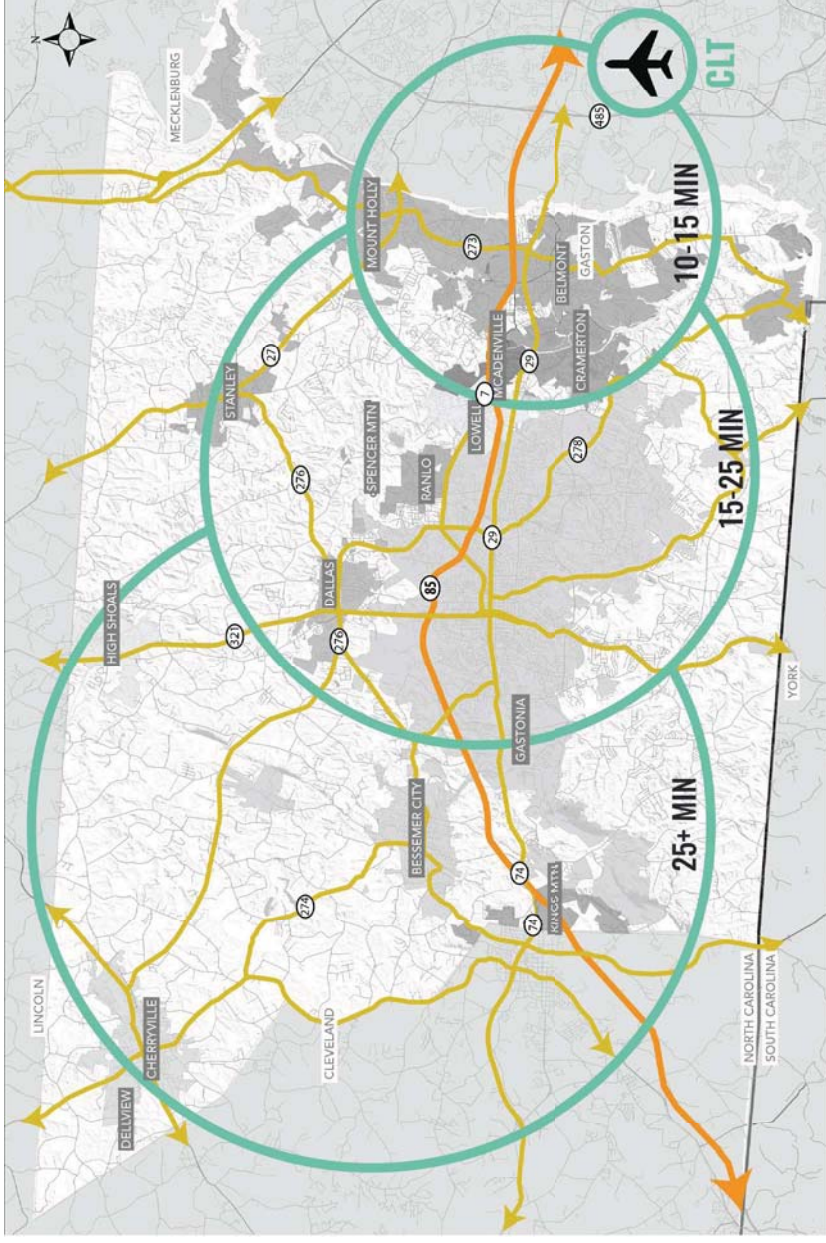


Figure 5.25 - Gaston County - CLT Time Distance Clusters

**'Gaston County West':** The third ring, located the farthest from CLT at 25+ minutes, includes Bessemer City, Kings Mountain, Cherrville, and High Shoals. This area is primarily rural and has large tracts of land with availability for development. Heavy Industrial, Manufacturing, and Transportation companies have located in this ring to benefit from access to the I 85, as well as to separate the expansive and heavier operations away from residential areas. Further, land is more affordable in this ring, making it ideal for large format warehouse buildings and industrial operations.

## GASTON COUNTY - CLT AIRPORT CONNECTED ECONOMIC POSITIONING DIRECTIONS

Figure 5.26 depicts the recommended economic and industry sectors for Gaston County, based on the Airport Connected Development concept. Gaston County can leverage its strategic location and close proximity to CLT to capture new and emerging economic sectors that are directly and indirectly connected to airports and multi-modal transportation hubs.

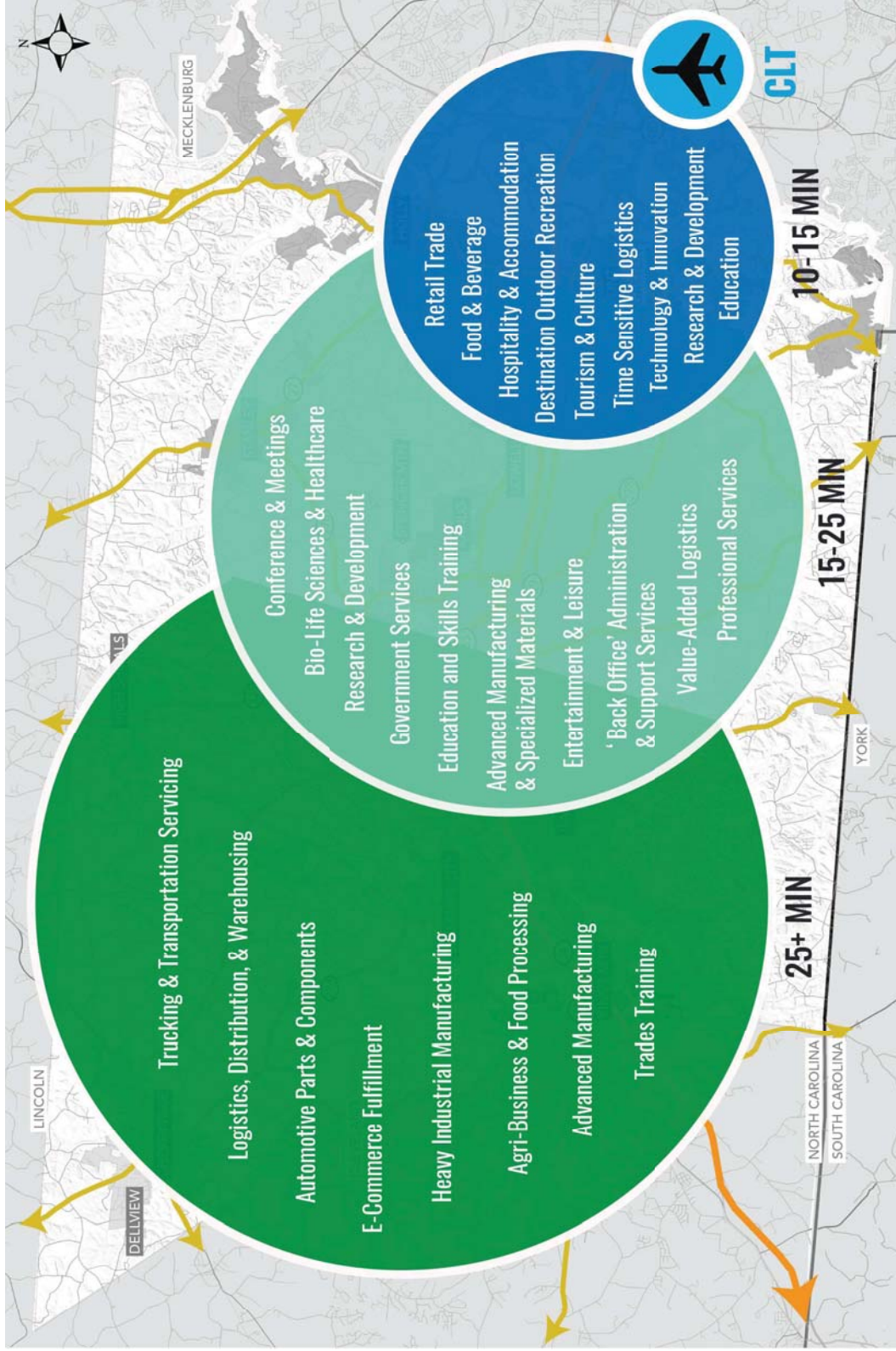


Figure 5.26 - Gaston County - CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Directions

## GASTON COUNTY TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS

Based on the recommendations generated from the Airport Connected Development approach, as well as ongoing Stakeholder Consultation, Case Studies, Economic Analysis, and Market Analysis; Figure 5.27 illustrates the target economic sectors for Gaston County. Figure 5.27 also visualizes the associated upstream and downstream economic development that is generated by the primary sectors. Further, this visual highlights significant transportation related initiatives that would enable the target economic sectors to flourish.

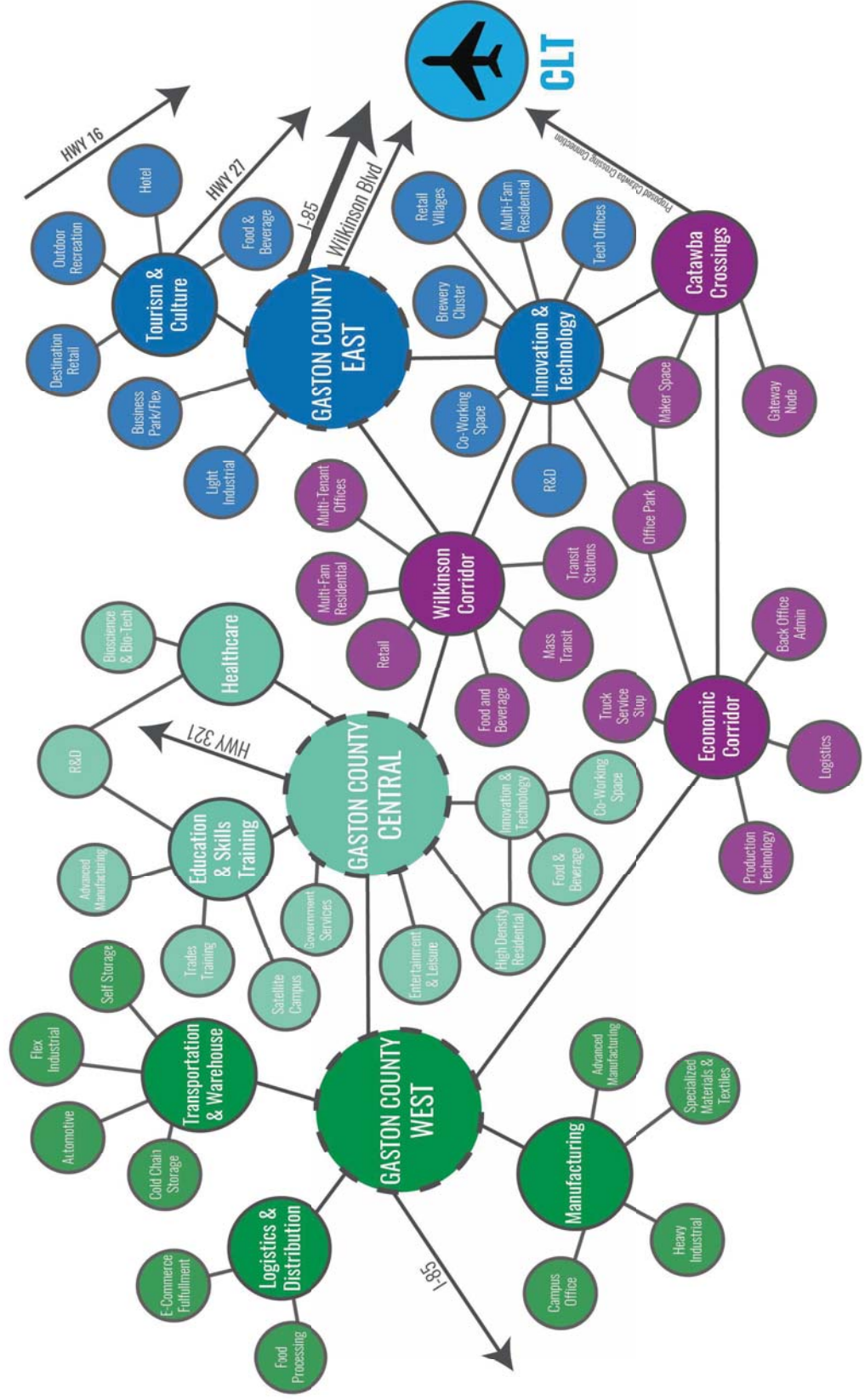


Figure 5.27 - Gaston County Target Economic Sectors



# 6 MARKET ANALYSIS

# 6.1 INDUSTRIAL MARKET ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

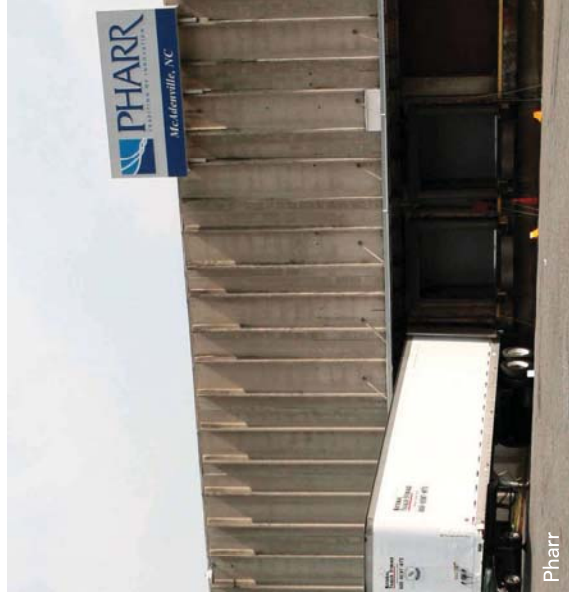
An Industrial Analysis was undertaken to assess and define the opportunity for industrial real estate development across Gaston County over the next 20 years.

This study reviews industrial market conditions, analyzes competitive supply and identifies potential demand segments in order to objectively forecast the subject properties' long-term industrial development potential.

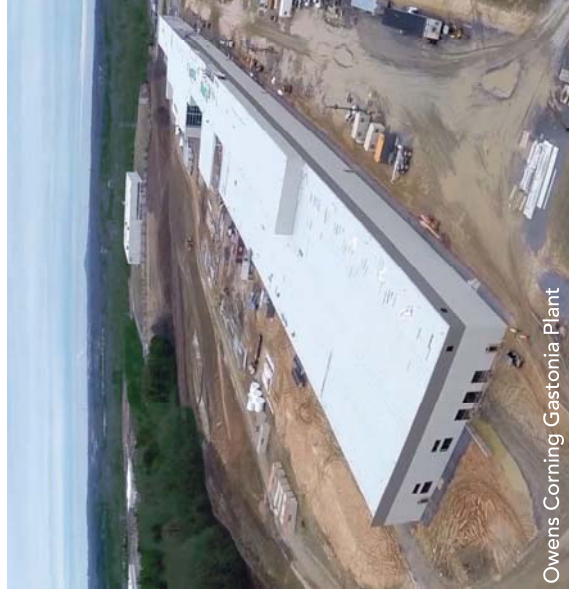
The Industrial Analysis consists of the following components:

- **Industrial Market Overview** to understand the important trends occurring at a regional scale which have direct bearing on industrial development within the study area.

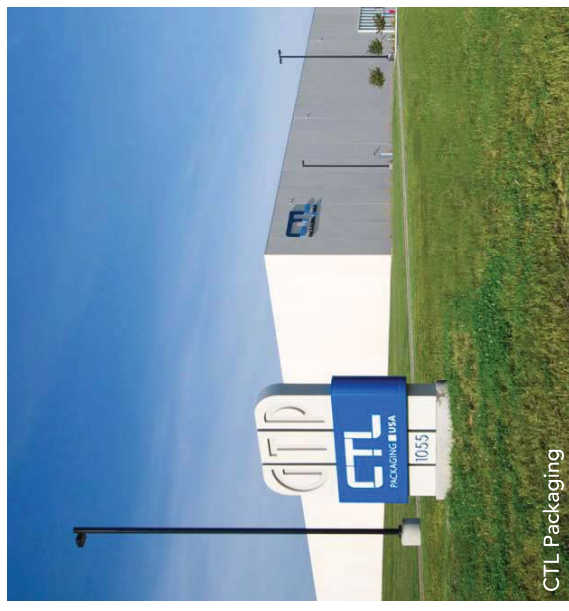
- **Industrial Supply Analysis** to analyze and understand the various industrial precincts which Gaston County will compete with in order to determine a realistic development program.
- **Industrial Demand Analysis** to understand the likely drivers for industrial space in the region. Economic and employment projections are used to forecast the demand for industrial space in the region over the next 20 years.
- **Market Share Analysis** to estimate the proportion of new industrial floorspace introduced to the local area which could be captured by parcel development in Gaston County.



Pharr



Owens Corning Gastonia Plant



CTL Packaging

## INDUSTRIAL MARKET OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of Warehouse, Manufacturing, and Flex Industrial space within Gaston County.

### WAREHOUSE

Gaston County reported a current inventory of 23,665,362 square feet of warehouse industrial space. Despite the influx of new construction across the region, which is over 3.4 million square feet, Gaston County maintained a 12.2% share of the Metro's warehouse inventory. Vacancy rates have slowly decreased, reported at 12.6% (Q3-2017), from 14.2% (Q2-2014). However, vacancy rates for warehouse space remain relatively high in Gaston County despite the rapid decline across the rest of the Metro area (now below 5%). The average asking rent for warehouse space is \$3.19 PSF (2017), moderately lower than the Metro average of \$4.73 PSF (2017). Lastly, the average annual absorption between 2014-2017 is 137,000'SF.

Industrial construction and leasing for the larger warehouses has been driven by e-commerce and last-mile logistics operations. Cushman & Wakefield estimate that e-commerce now represents a quarter of all industrial leasing in the USA. These modern logistics facilities are in demand across the region, particularly in suburban markets with excellent interstate and highway accessibility (such as Gaston County).

### MANUFACTURING

Gaston County's long history in the textile industry, as well as availability of developable land and proximity to CLT Airport and Interstate routes, has resulted in a large inventory of single-site manufacturing buildings. The approximate total inventory of manufacturing space within Gaston County is 10.8 million square feet, of which approximately 4 million square feet was built after 2010.

To identify a total inventory of manufacturing space for this study, an independent research process of historic brokerage reports, press releases, and remote sensing through aerial mapping software was undertaken, as well as detailed discussions with local stakeholders.

These figures are approximate as the total inventory of manufacturing space is not officially reported or calculated. Additionally, it is difficult to quantify a definite figure as many of the current manufacturing building stock are either abandoned, going through the process of renovation or retrofits, or are not leased for 'manufacturing' uses.

### FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Gaston County has a current inventory of approximately 525,769 square feet of flex industrial space, which equates to 2.2% share of the Metro Area flex inventory. Flex market vacancy rates are low, at 6.2% (Q3-2017), as demand for this type of industrial space is experiencing an all-time high. Asking rents for flex space averaged at \$5.16 PSF in 2017, significantly lower than the Metro average of \$8.49 (2017).

Historically, there has been a limited supply of flex space being built, despite the increasing demand. As of early 2018, there were no major flex developments under construction in Gaston County. As vacancy is low and continues to decline, the achievable asking rents for flex space will likely increase to the point where new development is supportable.

The average annual absorption of flex space (2014-2017) is 13,667 SF. As the recent resurgence of Advanced Manufacturing within Gaston County is anticipated to accelerate the absorption of flex space, the projected annual absorption between 2020-2040 is 14,973 SF.

# INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY ANALYSIS

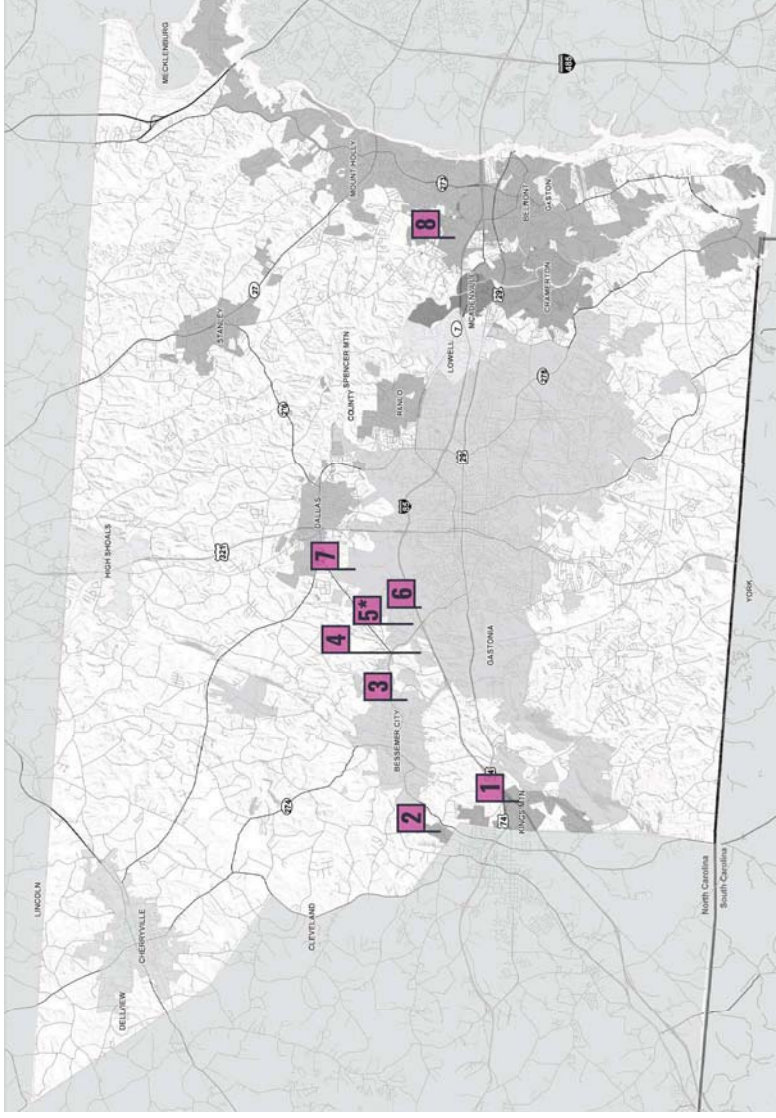


Figure 6.1 - Map of Industrial Competitive Inventory

Figure 6.1 highlights the locations of major light industrial and business parks throughout Gaston County. As a primarily manufacturing based economy, it is clear that many established industrial parks already exist along the I 85 corridor.

The northwest area of Gaston County, comprised of municipalities including Gastonia, Bessemer City, and Kings Mountain, has captured much of the current industrial development. This was due to a large supply of affordable, vacant land, rural-urban form, and access to I 85 which is the connecting route to Atlanta.

As Gaston County continues to attract advanced manufacturing industries, it will require additional industrial space for companies to locate. This future development creates an opportunity to designate a new industrial hub or corridor in Gaston County, potentially in the south area of Gastonia. This would be facilitated by the Catawba Crossings project and the eventual extension of that corridor westward towards I 85.

#	Location	Development Name	Format	Size SF (Approx)
1	Kings Mountain	Kings Mountain Corporate Center	Light Industrial	1,489,000
2	Kings Mountain	Kings Mountain Industrial Park	Light Industrial	763,000
3	Bessemer City	Southridge Business Park	Light Industrial	548,000
4	Gastonia	Delta Business Park	Light Industrial	268,000
5	Gastonia	Industrial Pike Park	Light Industrial	N/A
6	Gastonia	Northwest Boulevard Industrial Park	Light Industrial	N/A
7	Gastonia	Gastonia Technology Park	Light Industrial & Office	802,000
8	Belmont	The Oaks Commerce Center	Light Industrial	733,000

## FLEX INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS

The Demand for Flex Industrial space in Gaston County was projected out over the 20-year forecast horizon.

Two approaches were used:

- A **“Fair Share”** approach which assumes Gaston County will continue to hold its current share of the Charlotte Metro’s Flex inventory over time, adjusting for submarket trends in vacancy and rental increases.
- A **“Market Share”** approach, which compares Gaston County’s proximity to other submarkets, the amount of developable land suitable to Flex development, market position overlap and other attributes.

The Fair Share model suggests that approximately 200,000 square feet of new Flex space will be in demand in Gaston County over the 2021 to 2040 forecast horizon. However, the Market Share approach indicates demand for 477,000 square feet to 795,000 square, with a Moderate scenario indicating 636,000 square feet. The discrepancy between the two results is positive for Gaston County, suggesting that Flex is under represented in the submarket.

It is important to note that this a Baseline analysis encapsulating historical market indicators. Significantly higher demand for Flex could result from Economic Development initiatives.



# FLEX INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS (FAIR SHARE)

## Market Analysis Assumptions

Project Year 1 of Operations	2021
Balanced Vacancy Rate <sup>(1)</sup>	6.00%
Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)	0.4%
Gross Bldg SF Per Employee	1,500

<sup>(1)</sup> State at which market is "balanced" and can support new development.

<sup>(2)</sup> Proportion of new construction which is redevelopment of obsolete stock (does not require new acreage).

## Metro Absorption Forecast Summary

Forecast Model	CAGR	SF/Yr	Total 2020-2040
Historic-based Projection <sup>(1)</sup>	1.91%	419,336	8,386,722
Employment Projection <sup>(2)</sup>	1.88%	412,750	8,254,994
Gross Metropolitan Product Projection <sup>(3)</sup>	2.31%	507,155	10,143,104
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2.03%</b>	<b>446,414</b>	<b>8,928,273</b>

(1) Sourced from CoStar, JLL and Cushman Wakefield for 1982-2016

(2) Based on NC Department of Commerce employment projections.

(3) Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Submarket Summary

Submarket	Current Market Conditions (Q3 - 2017)				Historic Market Conditions (Q2 - 2014)				Absorption Projection Adjustment Factors						
	Total Inventory SF	Total Vacancy SF	Total Occupied SF	Total Vacancy %	4Q Net Absorption	Under Construction SF	Asking Rents	Inventory SF	Total Vacancy %	Occupied SF	Asking Rents	Share of Absorption	Rental Growth	Submarket Momentum	Overall
Airport West	4,533,002	408,624	4,124,378	9.0%	\$5.38	-	\$5.38	4,205,831	9.9%	3,789,454	\$7.79	0.91	1.04	0.97	
Central	547,466	6,070	541,396	1.1%	\$15.00	0	\$15.00	547,560	11.0%	487,328	\$16.19	0.93	0.89	0.91	
East	3,128,724	58,077	3,070,647	1.9%	\$6.36	76,836	\$6.36	3,015,674	15.9%	2,536,182	\$6.49	1.01	0.95	0.98	
North	4,945,302	364,377	4,580,925	7.4%	\$9.16	96,909	\$9.16	4,318,555	9.7%	3,899,655	\$8.21	0.98	1.07	1.03	
Northwest	448,593	2,000	446,593	0.4%	\$8.16	-2,000	\$8.16	503,821	3.0%	488,706	\$7.47	0.77	1.05	0.91	
Southwest	4,609,215	415,549	4,193,666	9.0%	\$7.69	113,385	\$7.69	4,129,814	19.4%	3,328,630	\$7.68	1.06	0.96	1.01	
Cabarrus County	2,674,143	153,685	2,520,458	5.7%	\$10.68	-55,219	\$10.68	2,062,585	4.6%	1,967,706	\$7.86	1.07	1.31	1.19	
Gaston County	525,769	32,598	493,171	6.2%	\$5.16	-	\$5.16	486,985	7.1%	452,409	\$5.16	0.91	0.96	0.94	
Lincoln County															
York County	2,027,893	44,357	1,983,536	2.2%	\$5.41	257,182	\$5.41	1,446,261	0.8%	1,434,691	\$8.62	1.16	0.60	0.88	
<b>Entire Market Area</b>	<b>23,440,107</b>	<b>1,486,337</b>	<b>21,954,770</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>\$8.49</b>	<b>487,093</b>	<b>\$8.49</b>	<b>20,717,086</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>18,384,762</b>	<b>\$8.18</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Table 6.1 - Fair Share Analysis for Flex Industrial (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

# FLEX INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS (MARKET SHARE)

Submarket	Drive Time Isochrone (Minutes)	Submarket Development Momentum (1) 1 = Low 5 = High		Market Position Overlap with Site (2) 1 = Low 5 = High		Availability of Developable and Entitled Land (3) 1 = Low 5 = High		Proximity-Based Level of Competition	Submarket Development Momentum-Based Level of Competition	Market Position Overlap	Land Availability-Based Level of Competition	Subject Site Estimated Market Share of Submarket Absorption
		1 = Low	5 = High	1 = Low	5 = High	1 = Low	5 = High					
Airport West	11	4.09	4	4	5	83%	49%	80%	50%	16.2%		
Central	16	3.83	1	1	2	39%	51%	20%	71%	2.8%		
East	23	4.12	3	3	5	19%	49%	60%	50%	2.8%		
North	21	4.32	3	3	5	23%	48%	60%	50%	3.2%		
Northwest	14	3.82	4	4	5	51%	51%	80%	50%	10.4%		
Southwest	18	4.24	3	3	5	31%	48%	60%	50%	4.5%		
Cabarrus County	36	5.00	4	4	5	8%	44%	80%	50%	1.4%		
Lincoln County	18	0.00	4	4	5	31%	100%	80%	50%	12.3%		
York County	19	3.70	4	4	5	28%	52%	80%	50%	5.7%		
<b>Gaston County</b>		<b>3.94</b>			<b>5</b>					<b>7.1%</b>		

(1) Quantitative measure based on rental premium, growth of rents and development momentum of submarket.

(2) Qualitative assessment of market positioning and industrial function of submarket vis-à-vis subject property's development vision.

(3) Qualitative assessment of quantity of developable land, entitled for Industrial, and range of available development parcels.

## Gaston County - Development Program & Land Requirements (Cumulative)

Scenario	2025		2030		2035		2040	
	Gross Bldg Area (SF)	Net Developable Acres	Gross Bldg Area (SF)	Net Developable Acres	Gross Bldg Area (SF)	Net Developable Acres	Gross Bldg Area (SF)	Net Developable Acres
<b>Conservative</b>	113,000	649	235,000	1349	356,000	2043	477,000	2738
<b>Moderate</b>	151,000	867	313,000	1796	474,000	2720	636,000	3650
<b>Aggressive</b>	189,000	1085	391,000	2244	593,000	3403	795,000	4563

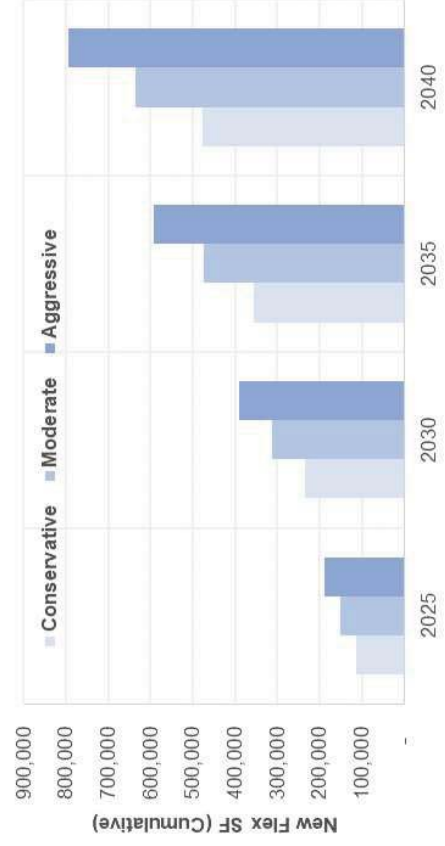


Table 6.2 - Market Share Analysis for Flex Industrial (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

## WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS

The Demand for Warehouse Industrial space in Gaston County was projected out over the 20-year forecast horizon.

Two approaches were used:

- A “Fair Share” approach which assumes Gaston County will continue to hold its current share of the Charlotte Metro’s Warehouse inventory over time, adjusting for submarket trends in vacancy and rental increases.
- A “Market Share” approach, which compares Gaston County’s proximity to other submarkets, the amount of developable land suitable to Warehouse development, market position overlap and other attributes.

The Fair Share model suggests that approximately 7.9 million square feet of new Warehouse space will be in demand in Gaston County over the 2021 to 2040 forecast horizon. However, the Market Share approach indicates demand for 5.8 million square feet to 9.7 million square feet, with a Moderate scenario indicating 7.8 million square feet. The close alignment of results from these two different approaches indicates Gaston is realizing its potential as a Warehouse submarket in the metro area.

It is important to note that this a Baseline analysis encapsulating historical market indicators. Significantly higher demand for Warehouse could result from Economic Development initiatives.



# WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS (FAIR SHARE)

### Market Analysis Assumptions

Project Year 1 of Operations	2021
Balanced Vacancy Rate <sup>(1)</sup>	6.00%
Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)	0.4%
Gross Bldg SF Per Employee	1,500

<sup>(1)</sup> State at which market is "balanced" and can support new development.

<sup>(2)</sup> Proportion of new construction which is redevelopment of obsolete stock (does not require new acreage).

### Metro Absorption Forecast Summary

Forecast Model	CAGR	SF/Yr	Total 2020-2040
Historic-based Projection <sup>(1)</sup>	1.91%	3,485,564	69,711,277
Employment Projection <sup>(2)</sup>	1.88%	3,430,817	68,616,335
Gross Metropolitan Product Projection <sup>(3)</sup>	2.31%	4,215,525	84,310,497
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2.03%</b>	<b>3,710,635</b>	<b>74,212,703</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Sourced from CoStar, JLL and Cushman Wakefield for 1982-2016

<sup>(2)</sup> Based on NC Department of Commerce employment projections.

<sup>(3)</sup> Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

### Submarket Summary

Submarket	Current Market Conditions (Q3 - 2017)						Historic Market Conditions (Q2 - 2014)						Absorption Projection Adjustment Factors		
	Total Inventory SF	Total Vacancy %	Total Occupied SF	Asking Rents	4Q Net Absorption	Under Construction SF	Total Inventory SF	Total Vacancy %	Total Occupied SF	Asking Rents	Share of Absorption	Rental Growth	Submarket Momentum	Overall Momentum	
	19,696,180	3.9%	18,934,418	\$4.99	1,206,395	460,520	17,193,087	5.1%	16,316,240	\$4.16	1.00	0.98	0.99	1.00	
Airport West	4,472,993	4.4%	4,277,873	\$10.16	-31,565	-	4,010,332	6.2%	3,761,691	\$4.33	0.98	1.93	1.45	0.98	
Central	10,274,301	6.7%	9,580,963	\$4.91	-343,707	-	9,677,654	3.5%	9,338,936	\$5.33	0.89	0.76	0.82	0.89	
North	31,422,545	4.2%	30,116,024	\$4.92	513,688	508,330	27,847,089	4.2%	26,677,511	\$4.27	0.98	0.95	0.96	0.98	
Northwest	13,439,963	8.0%	12,370,323	\$3.51	-168,629	-	12,969,875	5.5%	12,275,432	\$3.99	0.87	0.72	0.80	0.87	
Southwest	39,962,353	3.5%	38,576,267	\$5.14	1,423,522	1,138,950	36,791,431	5.2%	34,878,277	\$4.03	0.96	1.05	1.00	0.96	
Cabarrus County	19,346,330	5.2%	18,335,157	\$4.81	684,749	1,060,786	15,235,125	20.9%	12,050,984	\$4.78	1.32	0.83	1.07	1.32	
Gaston County	23,665,362	12.6%	20,683,526	\$3.19	12,490	-	23,627,892	14.2%	20,272,731	\$2.22	0.88	1.18	1.03	0.88	
Lincnoln County	6,651,751	7.1%	6,177,228	\$2.53	363,766	-	6,537,011	18.4%	5,334,201	\$2.83	1.00	0.73	0.87	1.00	
York County	24,737,396	5.3%	23,438,474	\$5.04	376,478	554,512	17,734,870	4.9%	16,865,861	\$3.40	1.20	1.22	1.21	1.20	
<b>Entire Market Area</b>	<b>193,669,174</b>	<b>5.8%</b>	<b>182,490,253</b>	<b>\$4.73</b>	<b>4,037,187</b>	<b>3,723,098</b>	<b>171,644,366</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>157,771,864</b>	<b>\$3.88</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	

Table 6.3 - Fair Share Analysis for Warehouse Industrial (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

# WAREHOUSE INDUSTRIAL DEMAND ANALYSIS (MARKET SHARE)

Submarket	Drive Time Isochrone (Minutes)	Submarket Development Momentum (1) 1 = Low 5 = High		Market Position Overlap with Site (2) 1 = Low 5 = High		Availability of Development and Entitled Land (3) 1 = Low 5 = High		Proximity-Based Level of Competition	Submarket Development Momentum-Based Level of Competition	Market Position Overlap	Land Availability-Based Level of Competition	Subject Site Estimated Market Share of Submarket Absorption
		1 = Low	5 = High	1 = Low	5 = High	1 = Low	5 = High					
Airport West	11	3.42	5	5	5	83%	51%	100%	50%	21.0%		
Central	16	5.00	3	3	1	39%	41%	60%	83%	8.1%		
East	23	2.82	5	5	3	19%	56%	100%	63%	6.6%		
North	21	3.30	5	5	3	23%	52%	100%	63%	7.3%		
North west	14	2.74	5	5	4	51%	56%	100%	56%	16.0%		
South west	18	3.44	5	5	3	31%	51%	100%	63%	9.8%		
Cabarrus County	36	3.68	5	5	5	8%	49%	100%	50%	1.9%		
Lincoln County	18	2.98	5	5	5	31%	54%	100%	50%	8.4%		
York County	19	4.16	5	5	5	28%	46%	100%	50%	6.4%		
<b>Gaston County</b>		<b>3.54</b>			<b>5</b>					<b>10.5%</b>		

- (1) Quantitative measure based on rental premium, growth of rents and development momentum of submarket.
- (2) Qualitative assessment of market positioning and industrial function of submarket vis-à-vis subject property's development vision.
- (3) Qualitative assessment of quantity of developable land, entitled for Industrial, and range of available development parcels.

**Gaston County - Development Program & Land Requirements (Cumulative)**

Scenario	2025	2030	2035	2040
<b>Conservative</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	1,442,000	2,910,000	4,379,000	5,846,000
Net Developable Acres	8276	16701	25132	33551
<b>Moderate</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	1,923,000	3,880,000	5,838,000	7,795,000
Net Developable Acres	11037	22268	33506	44737
<b>Aggressive</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	2,404,000	4,850,000	7,298,000	9,744,000
Net Developable Acres	13797	27835	41885	55923

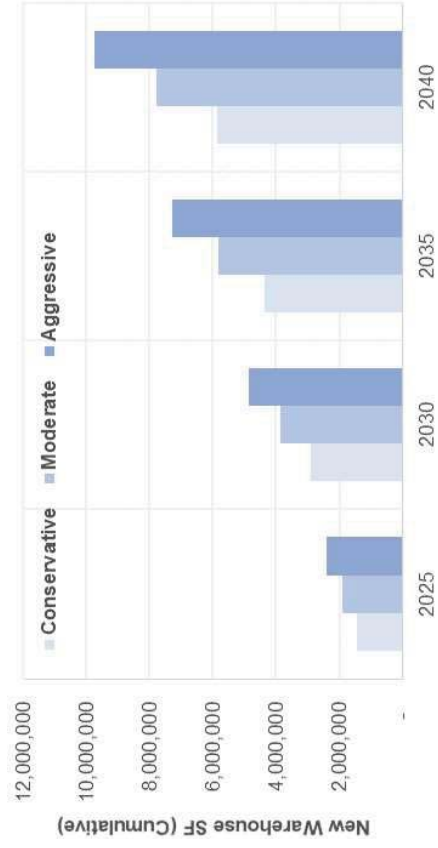


Table 6.4 - Market Share Analysis for Warehouse Industrial (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

## 6.2 OFFICE MARKET ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

An Office Analysis was undertaken to identify the long-term opportunity for Office/Business Park property development in Gaston County over the 20-year forecast horizon. The key objectives of this analysis are to identify the types of office functions that would fulfill potential voids in the marketplace, and the right development size to match the identified market opportunity.

The analysis consists of the following components:

- **Office Market Overview** of the Charlotte MSA and its component sub-markets, including vacancy, lease rates, absorption, cap rates, trends and other key data shaping office development potential.

- **Supply Analysis** to understand the competitive influence of existing office developments in the local area as well as new projects in the development pipeline.
- **Demand Analysis** to estimate the likely demand for office space in Gaston County. This absorption forecast is the product of a series of methodologies, including a historically-based projection, an employment-based projection and a working age cohort projection.
- **Market Share Analysis** to identify the share of the Charlotte MSAs projected office development which could be captured by Gaston County over the next 20 years.



Gastonia City Hall



CaroMont Health Professional Office Building

## OFFICE MARKET OVERVIEW

Office development within Gaston County has traditionally been extremely limited. Over the past decade, parcels that were originally zoned for office space have remained underutilized or have been rezoned for other land uses. For example, the land previously zoned for office near North New Hope Road and Remount Road in Gastonia has been recently rezoned to allow for construction of the new Tru by Hilton hotel.

The majority of the Gaston County office space inventory consists of single story buildings (free standing or adjacent to an industrial building) or units within strip malls. There are currently no new significant office developments being planned in the County.

The current inventory of office space in Gaston County is 4.1 million square feet, which equates to a 4% share of the Metro inventory. The vacancy rate, as of Q3-2017, was reported at 4.6%. The office market has experienced a steady decrease in vacancy (7.5% in Q2-2014), and is below the 5% threshold that supports new speculative development.

Office rental rates have increased, but not yet at a rate that the reduced vacancy rate would suggest. Current asking rents are \$14.39 PSF (2017), which are significantly lower than the Metro average at \$23.54 PSF. Opportunity exists for additional office space at affordable rates to be developed within Gaston County, especially in areas that benefit from close proximity to CLT Airport.

This office opportunity could be threatened by newly proposed office space in adjacent areas which would directly compete with any new development in Gaston County. New office development is being recognized at the CLT Gateway Node, as well as the planned River District, both of which are within the 5-10 minute drive from

CLT Airport. However, a steadily increasing employment growth rate across the region has supported the construction of new office space, Charlotte added 30,200 jobs in 2017, an increase of 3.5%.

As of Q4 2017, the Charlotte area saw over 1.3 million square feet in completions, and over 1.9 million square feet under construction. This includes an additional 500,000 square feet of urban Class A office being planned. It's forecasted for absorption to keep pace with new deliveries, indicating a growing market over the next few years.

For the Charlotte area, data from major brokerage reports have been varied, as they all use different indicators and methods to classify office space. Rental rates have increased to approximately \$25.93 - \$26.77 per SF (roughly 9.3% increase year over year), with Class A space reaching \$32.47 PSF (a 6.28% increase year over year). Further, vacancy rates in 2017 range from 8.7% to 11.5% for the entire market, which remain relatively stable since 2015. Class A space sits at around 13.7% vacancy.

Notable projects under construction include: "The Edison at Arrowood" (Airport) to be completed Q2-2018, with 120,000 square feet; "Legacy Union" (CBD) to be completed Q2-2019, with 853,073 square feet; and "300 West Summit" (Midtown) to be completed Q3 2018, with 63, 933 square feet.

## OFFICE SUPPLY ANALYSIS

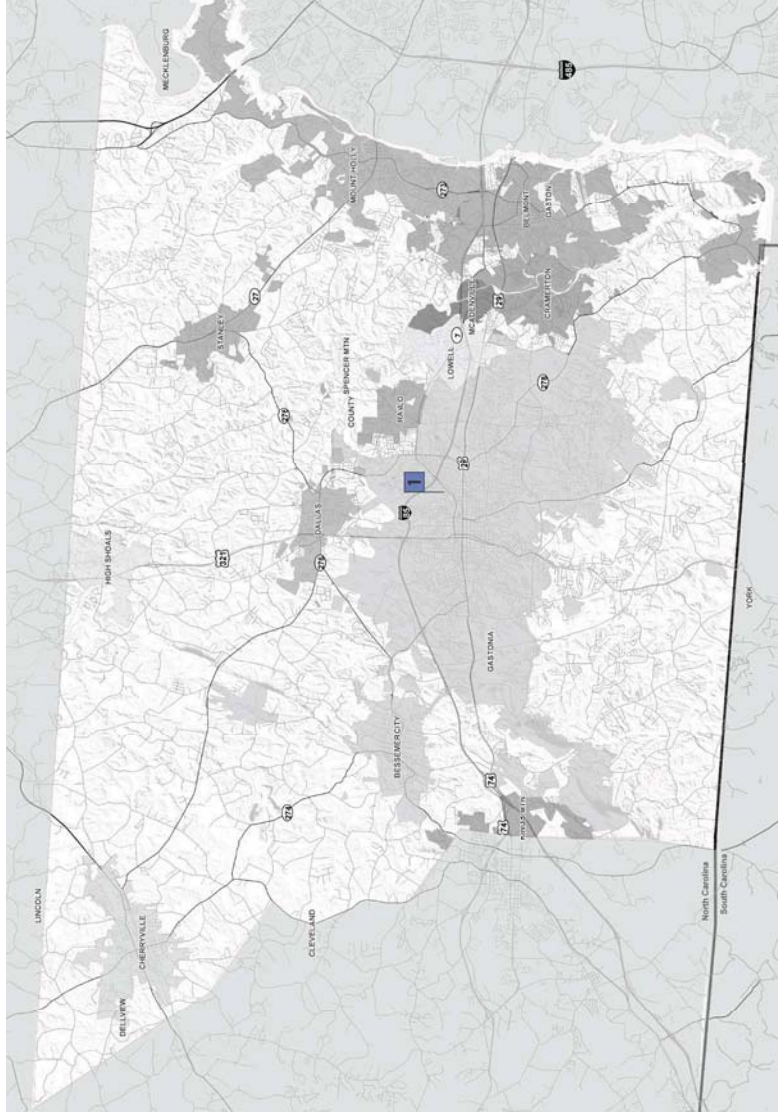


Figure 6.2 - Map of Office Competitive Inventory

As shown in Figure 6.2., there is a significant lack of major multi-tenant office space in Gaston County. This refers to office space development that can be leased by new or relocating companies, and does not include noted clusters of office space that are solely utilized by CaroMont Health, Gaston College, local companies, and various municipal governments.

Currently, Gaston County does not have adequate amount of office space required to accommodate the knowledge economy and its relevant industries, despite being closely located to Charlotte and its quickly growing urban centre and financial services economy.

To build off of Charlotte's momentum and attract companies that are not primarily manufacturing based to Gaston County, the development of more available and high quality office space is imperative.

#	Location	Development Name	Format	Square Footage (Approx)	Age (Approx)
1	Gastonia	Summit at Court Drive	Office Complex and Flex	105,000	N/A

## OFFICE MARKET ANALYSIS

The Demand for Office space in Gaston County was projected out over the 20-year forecast horizon.

Two approaches were used:

- A **“Fair Share”** approach which assumes Gaston County will continue to hold its current share of the Charlotte Metro’s Office inventory over time, adjusting for submarket trends in vacancy and rental increases.
- A **“Market Share”** approach, which compares Gaston County’s proximity to other submarkets, the amount of developable land suitable to Office development, market position overlap and other attributes.

The Fair Share model suggests that approximately 1.6 million square feet of new Office space will be in demand in Gaston County over the 2021 to 2040 forecast horizon. The Market Share approach indicates demand for 1.6 million square feet to 2.7 million square feet, with a Moderate scenario indicating 2.2 million square feet.

It is important to note that this a Baseline analysis encapsulating historical market indicators. Significantly higher demand for Office could result from the Economic Development Strategy resulting from this study and other initiatives.



# OFFICE DEMAND ANALYSIS (FAIR SHARE)

## Market Analysis Assumptions

	2021
Project Year 1 of Operations	2021
Balanced Vacancy Rate <sup>(1)</sup>	7.00%
Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)	35.0%
Gross Bldg SF Per Employee	300

<sup>(1)</sup> State at which market is "balanced" and can support new development.

<sup>(2)</sup> Proportion of new construction which is redevelopment of obsolete stock (does not require new acreage).

## Metro Absorption Forecast Summary

Forecast Model	CAGR	SF/Yr	Total 2020-2040
Historic-based Projection <sup>(1)</sup>	1.76%	1,682,394	33,647,873
Employment Projection <sup>(2)</sup>	2.07%	1,978,724	39,574,486
Gross Metropolitan Product Projection <sup>(3)</sup>	2.31%	2,208,142	44,162,833
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2.05%</b>	<b>1,956,420</b>	<b>39,128,397</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Sourced from Cushman & Wakefield

<sup>(2)</sup> Source: NC Department of Commerce projection and Woods & Poole projection.

<sup>(3)</sup> Source: NA Global, Lhman Associates, NC Office of State Budget and Mgmt.

## Submarket Summary

Submarket	Current Market Conditions (Q3 - 2017)										Historic Market Conditions (Q3 - 2015)						Absorption Projection Adjustment Factors																						
	Total Inventory SF			Direct Vacancy SF			Sublet Vacancy SF			Total Vacancy %			Asking Rents (Class A)			YTD Net Construction			Total Inventory SF			Vacancy %			Occupied SF			Asking Rents (Class A)			Share of Absorption			Rental Growth			Overall Submarket Momentum		
	Inventory SF	Vacancy SF	SF/Yr	Vacancy SF	Vacancy %	Total Vacancy %	Occupied SF	Asking Rents (Class A)	YTD Net Construction	Under Construction SF	Total Inventory SF	Vacancy %	Total Vacancy %	Occupied SF	Asking Rents (Class A)	YTD Net Construction	Under Construction SF	Total Inventory SF	Vacancy %	Total Vacancy %	Occupied SF	Asking Rents (Class A)	Share of Absorption	Rental Growth	Overall Submarket Momentum														
Airport	13,344,231	1,669,832	13,627	12.6%	12.6%	11,674,399	\$19.83	72,498	382,034	13,037,504	13.8%	13.8%	11,238,328	\$18.75	-	-	-	13,037,504	13.8%	13.8%	11,238,328	\$18.75	0.99	0.97	0.98														
CBD	21,836,797	2,229,873	41,038	10.4%	10.4%	19,606,924	\$30.82	236,129	853,073	22,488,912	7.4%	7.4%	20,824,733	\$27.75	-	-	22,488,912	7.4%	7.4%	20,824,733	\$27.75	0.90	1.02	0.96															
Cleveland County	1,796,705	112,188	-	6.2%	6.2%	1,684,537	\$12.72	3,492	20,901	1,758,086	5.6%	5.6%	1,659,633	\$13.60	-	-	1,758,086	5.6%	5.6%	1,659,633	\$13.60	0.97	0.86	0.91															
Coiswold	450,104	6,345	-	1.4%	1.4%	443,759	\$23.73	4,576	-	451,560	5.0%	5.0%	428,982	\$20.45	-	-	451,560	5.0%	5.0%	428,982	\$20.45	0.99	1.06	1.03															
East Charlotte	3,089,860	211,107	-	6.8%	6.8%	2,878,753	\$15.64	88,158	30,000	2,791,602	6.5%	6.5%	2,610,148	\$13.61	-	-	2,791,602	6.5%	6.5%	2,610,148	\$13.61	1.06	1.05	1.05															
Gaston County	4,081,688	188,270	-	4.6%	4.6%	3,893,428	\$14.39	37,092	-	4,025,623	7.5%	7.5%	3,723,701	\$14.08	-	-	4,025,623	7.5%	7.5%	3,723,701	\$14.08	1.00	0.94	0.97															
Fedell County	4,255,735	248,290	22,951	6.4%	6.4%	4,007,445	\$17.31	54,707	22,492	3,955,719	11.5%	11.5%	3,500,811	\$16.84	-	-	3,955,719	11.5%	11.5%	3,500,811	\$16.84	1.10	0.94	1.02															
Matthews	2,777,225	398,786	3,255	14.5%	14.5%	2,378,439	\$17.21	53,361	-	3,026,309	13.1%	13.1%	2,629,863	\$16.33	-	-	3,026,309	13.1%	13.1%	2,629,863	\$16.33	0.87	0.97	0.92															
Milwaton	9,537,525	340,905	46,923	4.1%	4.1%	9,196,620	\$27.91	186,833	383,371	8,767,559	5.2%	5.2%	8,311,646	\$23.26	-	-	8,767,559	5.2%	5.2%	8,311,646	\$23.26	1.06	1.10	1.08															
Northeast/L77	5,678,664	340,852	20,240	6.4%	6.4%	5,337,812	\$21.02	10,821	11,629	5,465,996	10.3%	10.3%	4,902,460	\$19.86	-	-	5,465,996	10.3%	10.3%	4,902,460	\$19.86	1.04	0.97	1.01															
Northwest Charlotte	1,308,523	63,651	-	4.9%	4.9%	1,244,872	\$17.15	15,632	10,834	1,369,684	4.2%	4.2%	1,312,157	\$20.99	-	-	1,369,684	4.2%	4.2%	1,312,157	\$20.99	0.91	0.75	0.83															
Park Road	1,242,057	84,701	-	6.8%	6.8%	1,157,356	\$24.49	-24,985	-	1,216,634	8.7%	8.7%	1,110,969	\$18.24	-	-	1,216,634	8.7%	8.7%	1,110,969	\$18.24	1.00	1.23	1.11															
Plaza Midwood/NoDa	1,911,214	16,760	-	0.9%	0.9%	1,894,454	\$13.93	202,056	169,730	1,726,729	6.5%	6.5%	1,614,491	\$13.61	-	-	1,726,729	6.5%	6.5%	1,614,491	\$13.61	1.12	0.94	1.03															
South Charlotte	2,737,717	140,971	1,150	5.2%	5.2%	2,596,746	\$21.24	141,002	-	2,430,926	10.6%	10.6%	2,173,248	\$24.35	-	-	2,430,926	10.6%	10.6%	2,173,248	\$24.35	1.14	0.80	0.97															
South/485	6,941,112	602,732	56,963	9.5%	9.5%	6,338,380	\$29.21	340,967	30,000	6,163,286	10.6%	10.6%	5,509,977	\$24.35	-	-	6,163,286	10.6%	10.6%	5,509,977	\$24.35	1.10	1.10	1.10															
Southpark	5,708,885	677,092	50,173	12.7%	12.7%	5,031,793	\$30.20	-36,035	-	5,770,505	12.4%	12.4%	5,054,962	\$26.59	-	-	5,770,505	12.4%	12.4%	5,054,962	\$26.59	0.95	1.04	1.00															
Union County	2,473,878	168,224	300	6.8%	6.8%	2,305,654	\$18.04	24,942	-	2,271,789	9.0%	9.0%	2,067,328	\$17.49	-	-	2,271,789	9.0%	9.0%	2,067,328	\$17.49	1.07	0.94	1.01															
University	8,392,286	864,114	15,672	10.5%	10.5%	7,528,172	\$21.55	-45,912	-	8,320,834	8.8%	8.8%	7,588,601	\$19.56	-	-	8,320,834	8.8%	8.8%	7,588,601	\$19.56	0.95	1.01	0.98															
York County	6,615,330	224,326	1,972	3.4%	3.4%	6,391,004	\$20.32	48,559	530,504	5,507,557	5.5%	5.5%	5,204,641	\$18.35	-	-	5,507,557	5.5%	5.5%	5,204,641	\$18.35	1.17	1.01	1.09															
<b>Entire Market Area</b>	<b>104,179,546</b>	<b>8,588,999</b>	<b>274,264</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>95,590,547</b>	<b>\$23.54</b>	<b>1,413,893</b>	<b>2,444,568</b>	<b>100,546,414</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>91,466,681</b>	<b>\$21.56</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>100,546,414</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>91,466,681</b>	<b>\$21.56</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>															

Table 6.5 - Fair Share Analysis for Office (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

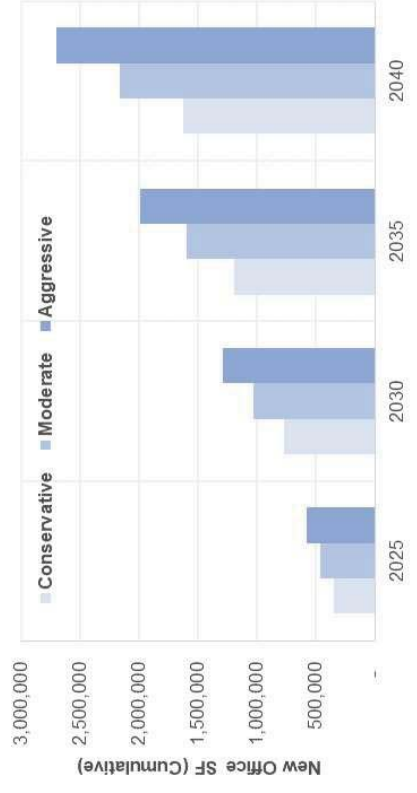
# OFFICE DEMAND ANALYSIS (MARKET SHARE)

Submarket	Drive Time Isochrone (Minutes)	Submarket Development Momentum		Market Position Overlap with Site		Availability of Developable and Entitled Land		Submarket Development Momentum		Market Position Overlap	Land Availability - Based Level of Competition	Subject Site Estimated Market Share of Submarket Absorption
		1 = Low 5 = High	1 = Low 5 = High	1 = Low 5 = High	1 = Low 5 = High	Proximity-Based Level of Competition	Momentu- Based Level of Competition					
Airport	10	4.41	3	5	100%	50%	60%	14.9%				
CBD	15	4.31	1	1	44%	83%	20%	3.7%				
Cleveland County	5	4.10	5	5	100%	51%	100%	25.7%				
Cotswold	22	4.61	2	4	21%	49%	40%	2.2%				
East Charlotte	25	4.73	3	4	16%	48%	60%	2.6%				
Iredell County	50	4.57	5	5	4%	49%	100%	1.0%				
Matthews	20	4.11	3	4	25%	51%	60%	4.3%				
Midtown	15	4.85	1	2	44%	47%	20%	3.0%				
Northeast/I-77	23	4.52	4	4	19%	49%	80%	4.1%				
Northwest Charlotte	11	3.72	5	5	83%	54%	100%	22.3%				
Park Road	13	5.00	1	1	59%	47%	20%	4.6%				
Plaza Midwood/NoDa	16	4.63	2	1	39%	48%	40%	6.3%				
South Charlotte	16	4.36	2	3	39%	50%	40%	4.9%				
South/485	18	4.94	2	4	31%	47%	40%	3.2%				
Southpark	23	4.47	1	1	19%	49%	20%	1.6%				
Union County	52	4.52	5	5	4%	49%	100%	0.9%				
University	23	4.40	2	4	19%	50%	40%	2.1%				
York County	21	4.92	5	5	23%	47%	100%	5.3%				
<b>Gaston County</b>		<b>4.35</b>		<b>5</b>				<b>5.5%</b>				

(1) Quantitative measure based on rental premium, growth of rents and development momentum of submarket.

(2) Qualitative assessment of market positioning and industrial function of submarket vis-à-vis subject property's development vision.

(3) Qualitative assessment of quantity of developable land, entitled for Industrial, and range of available development parcels.



## Subject Site Development Program & Land Requirements (Cumulative)

Scenario	2025	2030	2035	2040
<b>Conservative</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	347,000	771,000	1,196,000	1,620,000
Net Developable Acres	23	51	78	106
<b>Moderate</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	462,000	1,028,000	1,594,000	2,160,000
Net Developable Acres	30	67	105	142
<b>Aggressive</b>				
Gross Bldg Area (SF)	578,000	1,285,000	1,993,000	2,700,000
Net Developable Acres	38	84	131	177

Table 6.6 - Market Share Analysis for Office (Excerpt of Key Inputs)

# 6.3 RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

## INTRODUCTION

A retail analysis was undertaken to determine the feasibility for developing retail (shopping, dining and entertainment) in Gaston County over the 20-year forecast horizon. The retail analysis examines the various competitive nodes in the marketplace as well as the various demand segments that would support retail across the county over the coming years.

The key objectives of this analysis are to identify the types of retail functions that would fulfill potential voids in the marketplace, and the right development size to match the identified market opportunity.

The retail analysis consists of the following:

- **Retail Market Overview** to summarize regional trends that are impacting the retail sector.
- **Supply Analysis** to determine the current state of the local retail market, and to define the competitive influence of current and future retail centers and districts.
- **Demand Analysis** to quantify the demand for additional retail space in the local market over the next 20 years, based on potential consumer segments (local residents, workers, and tourists staying in the area).
- **Market Share Analysis** to estimate the proportion of new retail floorspace introduced to the local area which could be captured by parcel development or redevelopment in Gaston County.



## RETAIL MARKET OVERVIEW

Gaston County's retail development inventory mainly consists of strip mall units and 'big box' large format style stores. Notable shopping malls in the County include Eastridge Mall (Gastonia) and Abbey Plaza Shopping Center (Belmont). There currently are no new significant developments or projects being planned with large retail components.

The current inventory of retail space in Gaston County is 5.7 million square feet, which equates to an 8% share of the total Metro inventory. When compared with the current population, Gaston County has 27 square feet of retail space per person. Within the total inventory, Shopping Centers comprise 3.57 million square feet, Power Centers comprise 858,000 square feet, and Malls comprise 1.26 million square feet. The total inventory of smaller scale street retail is unknown.

The vacancy of retail space in Gaston County is relatively high when compared to the Metro average. Shopping Centers reported 10.4% vacancy (Metro average: 6.9%), Power Centers reported 8.1% vacancy (Metro average: 4.7%), and Malls reported 8.3% vacancy (Metro average: 6.9%). Additionally, rental rates for retail space in Gaston County average between \$13 - \$26 PSF, as compared to the Metro average of \$14 - 23 PSF.

Retail has experienced very limited development across the Metro, despite being the fastest-growing urban area in the country. Charlotte's most recent retail real estate report (Q1 2017) stated there were seven retail deliveries during the quarter, totaling 67,159 square feet. Both figures were significantly lower than the prior quarter, as well as the previous year. It marked the first time in at least a decade that the number of deliveries fell below double digits and the square footage dropped below 100,000.

Charlotte has a healthy outlook for new retail space deliveries potentially over the next decade. Major projects underway with a commercial component in the area include "River District", which will include over 500,000 square feet of shops and restaurants over the next 20 years, "Stonewall Corridor" with 350,000 square feet of retail space, and "Camp North End" with 200,000 square feet of retail. (CP Executive, 2018). Examples of projects currently being built with a smaller retail component include "Tryon Place" (35,000 sq ft), "Montage Apartments" (11,000 sq ft), and "Northwood Ravin Stonewall" (8,000 sq ft) (Charlotte Agenda, 2017).

Despite steady investment in retail space, many real estate analysts indicate that the U.S. retail sector is slowing down due to oversaturation in the market, as well as pressure from e-commerce operations. This trend will likely continue in 2018 and mainly affects department stores, specialty apparel, and regional grocery.

Online sales growth and excess supply will likely continue to restrict development for major new retail development in Gaston County over the near term. Food & Beverage and Convenience offer the best retail opportunity for Gaston County, as well as repositioning new retail inventory away from large format power centers and towards boutique Food & Beverage and street oriented retail.

# RETAIL SUPPLY ANALYSIS

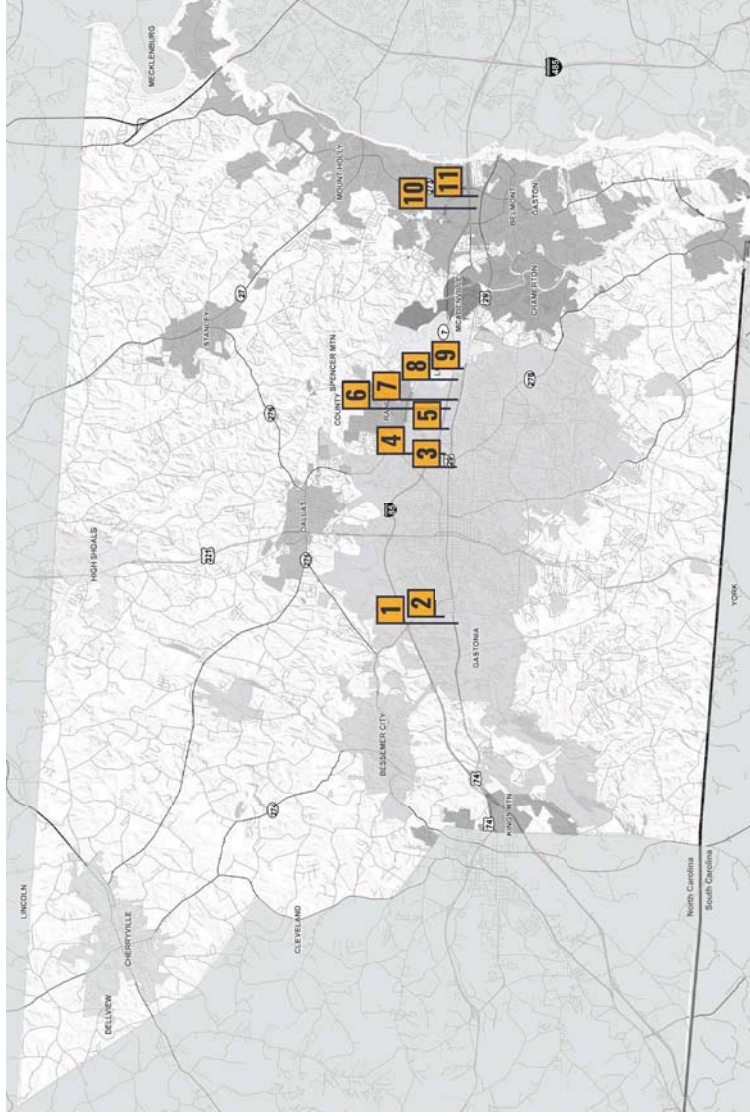


Figure 6.3 - Map of Retail Competitive Inventory

#	Location	Development Name	Format	Size SF (Approx)	Anchors
1	Gastonia	Dixie Village Shopping Center	Strip Retail Center	222,528	Wow Supermarket, Goodwill, Big Lots, Value Village
2	Gastonia	Walmart Retail Center	Big Box Retail	213,700	Walmart
3	Gastonia	Akers Shopping Center	Strip Retail Center	415,737	Gabe's, Jackson's Cafeteria, Ollie's Bargain Outlet
4	Gastonia	Eastridge Mall	Enclosed Mall	919,557	Matthews Belk, Dillard's
5	Gastonia	Gaston Mall	Power Center	331,000	Target, Dick's Sporting Goods, TJ Maxx
6	Gastonia	Home Depot / Toys'R'Us	Big Box Retail	173,300	Home Depot, Toys'R'Us
7	Gastonia	Franklin Square	Power Center	534,185	Walmart, Ross, Best Buy
8	Gastonia	Franklin Square III	Strip Retail Center	272,181	Kohl's, Gander Mountain, PetSmart, Books-A-Million, Old Navy
9	Gastonia	The Shops at Franklin Square	Strip Retail Center	134,300	Ashley HomeStore
10	Belmont	Lowe's / Walmart	Power Center	340,000	Lowe's, Walmart
11	Belmont	Abbey Plaza Shopping Center	Strip Retail	124,000	Rose's, Big Lots

Figure 6.3. illustrates the distribution of retail space throughout the County. Having an understanding of where existing retail is located will inform where new retail space should be developed in the future.

The majority of current retail space is clustered in the eastern section of Gastonia, along the Wilkinson Boulevard towards McAdenville and Cramerton. Other retail development is located in Belmont on the lands owned by Belmont Abbey College, as well as the western edge of Gastonia.

Prevalent retail typologies include Big Box Retail, Strip Retail Centers, and Power Centers. Despite being historically popular in lower density areas, those types of development are fronted by large parking lots, are not easily accessed by transit, and do not provide unique or innovative retail experiences that are preferred by millennial consumers.

## RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

The Demand for new Retail space in Gaston County was projected out over the 20-year forecast horizon.

Data on Retail spending per capita for County residents was collected from Claritas. This included 21 different merchandise categories (Footwear, Limited Service Restaurants, House & Home, etc.).

This per capita figure was then applied to the current and projected County population to arrive at an aggregate expenditure number for each of the merchandise categories.

Dividing the aggregate expenditure potential by a sales productivity figure (sales per square feet) for each merchandise category determines the amount of supportable square feet of retail on a category basis.

Recent changes in consumer behavior (particularly the move towards online shopping, and the increased spending at restaurants over retail shops) were projected out to 2040 to account for the changing retail landscape.

Overall, 1.24 million square feet of new Retail space is estimated to be supported by Gaston County residents over the 2020 to 2040 period.

**1.24 million SF of new Retail, F&B  
and Entertainment space by 2040.**

Figure 6.4 & 6.5 - Supportable SF of Retail in Gaston County, 2020 to 2040

Category	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Annual Growth
Grocery & Specialty Foods	824,261	854,070	884,959	916,968	950,144	0.71%
Pharmacy	308,500	330,970	355,077	380,941	408,693	1.42%
Alcohol & Tobacco	154,612	154,767	155,922	155,078	155,235	0.02%
Personal Services	316,321	328,567	341,288	354,503	368,232	0.76%
Department Stores	397,574	355,943	318,672	285,432	255,432	-2.19%
Clothing Stores	425,817	444,262	463,506	483,585	504,539	0.85%
Shoe Stores	41,520	43,318	45,194	47,152	49,195	0.85%
Jewelry Stores	55,301	57,810	60,432	63,174	66,041	0.89%
Health & Beauty	78,211	87,067	96,926	107,902	120,121	2.17%
Home Furnishings & Accessories	232,462	244,801	257,796	271,482	285,897	1.04%
Electronics & Appliances	193,045	203,791	215,136	227,112	239,758	1.09%
Home Improvement & Gardening	280,090	300,784	323,008	346,874	372,507	1.44%
Books & Multimedia	39,106	36,178	33,469	30,964	28,646	-1.54%
Sporting Goods & Outdoor Recreation	84,228	85,698	87,194	88,717	90,267	0.35%
Toys & Hobbies	65,510	66,654	67,818	69,002	70,207	0.35%
Miscellaneous Specialty	83,741	88,880	94,334	100,123	106,269	1.20%
General Merchandise	903,776	964,407	1,029,108	1,098,154	1,171,842	1.31%
Full Service Restaurants	271,133	304,180	341,257	382,854	429,526	2.33%
Limited Service Restaurants	307,710	339,575	374,741	413,549	456,381	1.99%
Family Entertainment & Concessions	49,658	52,166	54,801	57,569	60,477	0.99%
Pubs, Bars & Nightclubs	28,045	29,927	31,935	34,077	36,364	1.31%
<b>Total SF</b>	<b>5,142,643</b>	<b>5,373,814</b>	<b>5,631,572</b>	<b>5,915,084</b>	<b>6,225,773</b>	<b>0.96%</b>

Category	2021	2025	2030	2035	2040
Grocery & Specialty Foods	5,877	29,809	60,698	92,708	125,883
Pharmacy	4,368	22,470	46,577	72,441	100,192
Alcohol & Tobacco	31	154	310	465	622
Personal Services	2,412	12,246	24,967	38,181	51,911
Department Stores	-	-	-	-	-
Clothing Stores	3,626	18,444	37,688	57,768	78,721
Shoe Stores	354	1,798	3,675	5,633	7,676
Jewelry Stores	493	2,509	5,131	7,873	10,740
Health & Beauty	1,696	8,856	18,715	29,690	41,910
Home Furnishings & Accessories	2,417	12,339	25,334	39,020	53,435
Electronics & Appliances	2,103	10,746	22,090	34,067	46,712
Home Improvement & Gardening	4,021	20,694	42,917	66,784	92,417
Books & Multimedia	-	-	-	-	-
Sporting Goods & Outdoor Recreation	292	1,470	2,966	4,489	6,039
Toys & Hobbies	227	1,144	2,307	3,491	4,697
Miscellaneous Specialty	1,003	5,139	10,593	16,382	22,527
General Merchandise	11,813	60,631	125,332	194,378	268,066
Full Service Restaurants	6,309	33,048	70,124	111,722	158,393
Limited Service Restaurants	6,124	31,865	67,030	105,839	148,671
Family Entertainment & Concessions	492	2,508	5,143	7,911	10,819
Pubs, Bars & Nightclubs	367	1,881	3,889	6,032	8,318
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,023</b>	<b>277,750</b>	<b>575,488</b>	<b>894,873</b>	<b>1,237,751</b>

## RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS CONT'D

Less than 500,000 SF of new retail space was introduced to the Charlotte Metro between Q3-2014 and Q3-2016, despite being one of the fastest-growing metro areas in the U.S.

The impact of online sales as well as the over-supply conditions since the 1990's account for the limited new Retail development.

Occupancy rates are reaching low enough levels to support new development in the wider Metro, but Gaston County lags on absorption.

Table 6.7 - Market Share of Retail in Gaston County, 2014 to 2016

Submarket	Shopping Centers, Q3 2016			Power Centers, Q3 2016			Malls, Q3 2016		
	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates
Cabarrus County	3,668,451	93.7%	\$12.58	1,368,684	94.4%	\$14.80	2,357,794	99.9%	-
Chester County	565,558	88.5%	\$6.93	0	-	-	0	-	-
Downtown	18,026	100.0%	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
E Charlotte	5,939,024	93.7%	\$15.61	1,160,773	97.3%	\$21.16	0	-	-
Gaston County	3,569,165	89.6%	\$13.28	858,021	91.9%	\$20.00	1,256,661	91.7%	\$26.00
Iredell County	4,191,908	92.6%	\$13.90	960,170	98.5%	-	519,341	72.5%	\$10.01
Lancaster County	1,189,857	92.7%	\$6.66	0	-	-	0	-	-
Lincoln County	1,521,693	90.0%	\$12.15	0	-	-	0	-	-
N Charlotte	1,708,958	95.2%	\$19.96	506,072	99.4%	\$29.30	519,105	99.3%	\$24.00
NE Charlotte	4,435,476	92.8%	\$18.14	1,371,908	91.4%	-	268,882	97.3%	\$0.00
NW Charlotte	2,485,024	86.0%	\$11.88	617,471	99.2%	-	1,250,520	100.0%	-
Rowan County	1,725,263	92.7%	\$9.12	0	-	-	319,659	72.1%	-
SE Inner Charlotte	4,654,512	94.5%	\$20.91	0	-	-	1,869,857	99.8%	\$28.00
SE Outlying Charlotte	3,235,695	96.0%	\$21.10	2,383,266	88.9%	\$25.60	2,528,646	97.6%	\$22.66
SW Charlotte	1,485,663	96.7%	\$18.11	1,127,496	99.5%	\$28.00	0	-	-
Union County	3,463,263	93.2%	\$12.98	574,293	92.5%	-	384,045	94.4%	-
York County	4,464,032	94.7%	\$15.44	0	-	-	815,551	100.0%	\$23.68
<b>Total / Averages</b>	<b>48,321,568</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>\$14.30</b>	<b>10,928,154</b>	<b>95.3%</b>	<b>\$23.14</b>	<b>12,090,061</b>	<b>93.1%</b>	<b>\$19.19</b>

Submarket	Shopping Centers, Q3 2014			Power Centers, Q3 2014			Malls, Q3 2014		
	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates	Total GLA	Occ %	Rates
Cabarrus County	3,750,650	93.5%	\$16.20	1,365,964	97.7%	\$20.07	2,357,794	99.8%	\$40.50
Chester County	577,213	94.2%	\$10.28	0	-	-	0	-	-
Downtown	18,026	100.0%	-	0	-	-	0	-	-
E Charlotte	5,904,116	83.0%	\$12.34	1,150,428	93.5%	\$19.75	0	-	-
Gaston County	3,552,137	85.1%	\$10.60	865,190	95.1%	\$20.00	1,264,508	96.8%	\$27.88
Iredell County	4,174,809	88.2%	\$13.91	954,095	94.9%	\$17.00	519,341	71.4%	\$10.46
Lancaster County	1,160,466	89.4%	\$12.42	0	-	-	0	-	-
Lincoln County	1,525,519	85.9%	\$10.08	0	-	-	0	-	-
N Outlying Charlotte	1,586,420	90.8%	\$18.44	487,673	98.9%	\$25.03	519,105	98.0%	\$34.78
NE Charlotte	4,549,503	93.7%	\$17.26	1,261,669	92.3%	\$20.00	517,530	73.7%	-
NW Charlotte	2,405,753	87.0%	\$10.40	617,072	97.6%	\$25.00	1,096,719	100.0%	-
Rowan County	1,769,072	92.9%	\$8.68	0	-	-	319,659	53.2%	-
SE Inner Charlotte	4,696,583	90.6%	\$21.44	0	-	-	1,858,643	98.3%	\$28.00
SE Outlying Charlotte	3,302,616	93.7%	\$19.11	2,393,090	96.9%	\$28.40	2,530,524	95.4%	\$27.21
SW Charlotte	1,287,315	64.4%	\$16.78	1,111,966	99.4%	\$26.22	0	-	-
Union County	3,373,244	90.1%	\$12.80	652,269	97.7%	\$9.01	384,045	95.3%	-
York County	4,192,637	91.7%	\$11.85	0	-	-	819,071	93.3%	\$21.48
<b>Total / Averages</b>	<b>47,826,079</b>	<b>88.9%</b>	<b>\$13.85</b>	<b>10,859,416</b>	<b>95.9%</b>	<b>\$19.88</b>	<b>12,186,939</b>	<b>94.2%</b>	<b>\$17.62</b>

## 6.4 HOTEL MARKET ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

A Hotel Market Analysis was undertaken to determine the feasibility of developing accommodation in Gaston County over the next 20 years.

The market analysis helps to identify the various demand segments that would support accommodation over the coming years, and the type of hotel product that would fulfill the greatest need in the market.

The Hotel Market Analysis consists of the following:

- **Hotel Sector Overview** to summarize important regional trends that are impacting the hotel sector, as well as trends impacting the local tourism industry.
- **Supply Analysis** to understand the overall health and trajectory of the accommodation market, the competitive influence of the

existing hotel base as well as new accommodation projects in the pipeline.

- **Demand Analysis** to project the overall demand for additional hotel rooms in Gaston County over the next 20 years.
- **Market Share Analysis** to identify the share of the Charlotte MSA's projected hotel development which could conceivably be captured by Gaston County over the next 20 years.



Hamptons Inn, Belmont



Holiday Express



Best Western

## HOTEL MARKET OVERVIEW

Gaston County saw approximately \$251.7 million in tourism revenue in 2016, a 4.2% increase from the year prior, and moderate increase from \$177 million in 2009 (Visit North Carolina). Gaston County ranks 17th among North Carolina's 100 counties in total annual visitor expenditures. However, Gaston County's tourism revenue growth (4.2%) is equal to Cabarrus (4.2%), but lower compared to other counties such as Iredell (5.7%), Union (5.8%), and Cleveland (5.8%).

Overall, Gaston County has approximately 20+ hotels, with an inventory of 2,809 Lower Priced rooms and 426 Upper Priced rooms (2017). The hotel market averaged a 72% occupancy rate in 2017 (68.1% occupancy for Lower Priced and 74.9% occupancy of Upper Priced). New developments for hotels and accommodation product have slowly been keeping up with the pace of demand in the county. With a high occupancy rate of 72% and visitor growth forecasted to average 2.84% growth per annum, Gaston County has an opportunity to introduce more product and increase the market supply.

Average daily rates (ADR) in 2017 were reported as \$81.34 for Lower Priced rooms, and \$122.61 for Upper Priced rooms. When taking occupancy rate into consideration, this equates a Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR) of \$55.36 for Lower Priced rooms, and \$91.82 for Upper Priced rooms. RevPAR is used across the hotel industry to assess the hotel market's ability to fill its available rooms at an average rate. Increasing the hotel market's average RevPAR means that its average room rate or its occupancy rate are increasing. These performance figures suggest there might be room for additional full service hotels if the ADR's can be achieved.

The Gaston County hotel market experiences consistent growth with new projects coming down the pipeline. Downtown Gastonia saw the

ongoing development of a boutique hotel, Ascend, which will have a total of 105 rooms. In November 2017, Tru by Hilton, was approved for construction and will be located at the intersection of North New Hope Road and Remount Road, closely located to Interstate 85. It will add an additional 100 rooms to the market's supply.

In addition, a Hilton Garden Inn is nearly completion at the intersection of Interstate 85 and Cox Road. It will become the first full-service hotel property in the general area. The hotel will include a 119 rooms, a restaurant, conference, and over 5,000 square feet of meeting space.

Construction for new hotels has been robust throughout the Metro region. As of 2018, there are 45 hotel development projects in Charlotte, most of which are limited-service offerings. 9 hotels have begun site work and construction, which will add approximately 1,092 guest rooms to Charlotte's hotel inventory by 2019. The remaining 36 projects are still in various stages of planning. Over the last three years, the Greater Charlotte area has reached occupancy levels in the 70's, with average daily rates ranging between \$95 to \$110, with more premium rates in desirable locations averaging \$125 to \$160.

Going forward, overall occupancy is anticipated to decline modestly over 2018, especially with the entrance of new supply over the next two years. However, ADR's are expected to remain strong, as well as anticipated growth in RevPAR, which will strengthen demand and Gaston County's position in the regional hotel market.

## HOTEL SUPPLY ANALYSIS

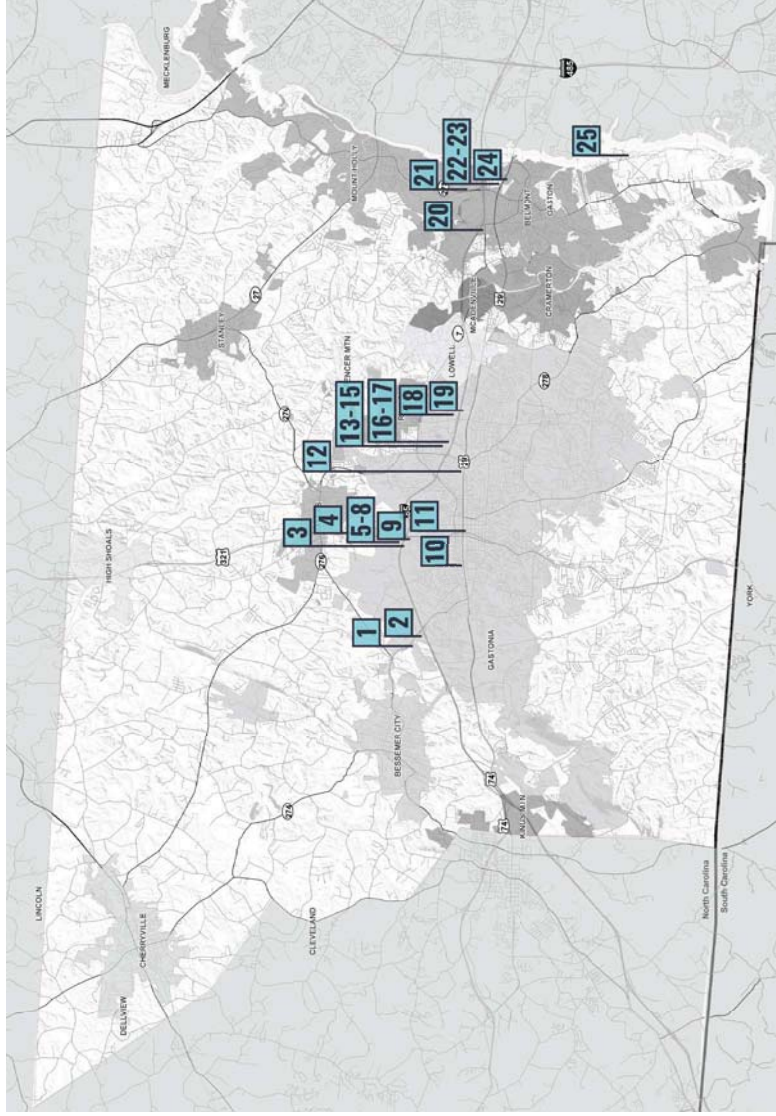


Figure 6.6 - Map of Hotel Competitive Inventory

Figure 6.6 depicts the current supply of Hotels and Accommodation throughout Gaston County. Similar to Retail and Food Services development, the majority of Hotels are located along the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) and I 85 corridor between Belmont and Gastonia. The hotels are primarily affordable and mid-size, ranging from 2 - 125 rooms, and rank between 2 - 3.5 stars.

There are notable gaps in the existing Hotel Supply, specifically within McAdenville, Cramerton, Dallas, and Mount Holly. As Accommodation and Food Services were identified as a key sector that Gaston County should consider when attracting future development, and many of these municipalities have targeted lifestyle and recreation tourism industries, Gaston County could consider additional mid-range and luxury hotels in these areas.

#	Location	Development Name	Number of Rooms	Class (Stars)
1	Gastonia	Affordable Suites of America Gastonia NC	28	2
2	Gastonia	Express Inn and Suites	125	2
3	Gastonia	WoodSpring Suites Charlotte Gastonia	121	2.5
4	Dallas	Hill Top Motel	N/A	N/A
5	Gastonia	Econo Lodge	100	2
6	Gastonia	Holiday Inn Express Charlotte West - Gastonia	81	2.5
7	Gastonia	Motel 6 Gastonia	59	2
8	Gastonia	Red Carpet Inn & Suites	100	2
9	Gastonia	Days Inn Gastonia - West of Charlotte Kings Mountain	71	2
10	Gastonia	Budget Inn - Gastonia (Previously)	85	2
11	Gastonia	Midtown Motor Inn - Gastonia	52	2
12	Gastonia	Gaston Inn	60	N/A
13	Gastonia	Courtyard Charlotte Gastonia	130	3
14	Gastonia	Fairfield Inn by Marriott Charlotte Gastonia	90	2.5
15	Gastonia	Comfort Suites	108	2.5
16	Gastonia	Best Western Gastonia	62	2.5
17	Gastonia	Hampton Inn Charlotte-Gastonia	107	2.5
18	Gastonia	Super 8 Gastonia	45	2
19	Gastonia	Hilton Garden Inn (under construction)	119	N/A
20	Belmont	Hampton Inn Charlotte-Belmont	85	2.5
21	Belmont	Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Charlotte Airport-Belmont	65	2.5
22	Belmont	American Motel	13	N/A
23	Belmont	Heritage Inn	25	N/A
24	Belmont	Abbey Inn	22	N/A

## HOTEL MARKET ANALYSIS

The Gastonia-Northwest submarket was examined with five years of historical data collected by CBRE Hotels.

Approximately 1,500 of the submarket's 3,235 rooms are located in Gaston County. Economy hotels ("Lower Priced" in this analysis) are dominant in Gaston County, constituting 2,809 (87%) of total inventory. There are just 426 Upper Priced rooms in the submarket. An additional 117 rooms will be introduced with the new Hilton Garden Inn under development for Gastonia.

Demand is forecast to grow by 2.84% based upon CBRE Hotels data. A residual room analysis indicates that by 2041, Gaston County could support an additional 1,000 Lower Priced Rooms and 100 to 150 more Upper Priced Rooms.



Figure 6.7 - Map of Gastonia-Northwest Hotel Submarket

Gastonia/Northwest Submarket - Upper Priced

Submarket - Historic Performance										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Supply	426	426	426	426	426	426				
Inventory (Rooms)	426	426	426	426	426	426				
Supply Annual Growth	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%				
Net Inventory Change (Rooms)	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Supply (Million Room Nights)	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155				
Demand										
Occupancy Rate (%)	73.4%	72.5%	77.4%	77.9%	75.0%	74.9%				
Demand (Million Room Nights)	0.114	0.113	0.120	0.121	0.117	0.116				
Residual Room Demand	6	2	23	25	13	12				

Submarket - Demand Forecast	
Projected Visitor Growth CAGR	2.84%

100 to 160 more Upper Priced Hotel Rooms supportable by 2041

Submarket - Projected Residual Room Demand																										
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041		
Supply	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	
Inventory (Rooms)	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543	543
Supply Annual Growth	27.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%																				
Supply (Million Room Nights)	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20
Demand																										
Demand (Million Room Nights)	0.120	0.123	0.127	0.130	0.134	0.138	0.142	0.146	0.150	0.154	0.158	0.163	0.168	0.172	0.177	0.182	0.187	0.193	0.198	0.204	0.210	0.216	0.222	0.228	0.234	
Occupancy Rate (%) Projected	60.4%	62.1%	63.9%	66.7%	67.6%	69.5%	71.5%	73.5%	75.6%	77.8%	80.0%	82.2%	84.6%	87.0%	89.4%	92.0%	94.6%	97.3%	100.0%	102.9%	105.8%	108.8%	111.9%	115.1%	118.4%	
Submarket Residual Room Demand (Baseline)	-36	-26	-17	-7	3	14	24	35	47	58	70	82	95	108	122	135	149	164	179	194	210	226	243	260	277	

Gaston County - Supportable Rooms																								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041
Aggressive (60% Market Share)	-21	-16	-10	-4	2	8	15	21	28	35	42	49	57	65	73	81	90	98	107	117	126	136	146	156
Moderate (46% Market Share)	-16	-12	-8	-3	1	6	11	16	21	27	32	38	44	50	56	62	69	75	82	89	97	104	112	120
Conservative (40% Market Share)	-14	-11	-7	-3	1	5	10	14	19	23	28	33	38	43	49	54	60	66	72	78	84	91	97	104

Table 6.8 - Supportable Upper Priced Hotel Rooms (Excerpts of Key Inputs)

Gastonia/Northwest Submarket - Lower Priced

Submarket - Historic Performance										
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Supply										
Inventory (Rooms)	2,886	2,885	2,837	2,813	2,814	2,809				
Supply Annual Growth	0.0%	0.0%	-1.7%	-0.8%	0.0%	-0.2%				
Net Inventory Change (Rooms)	0	-1	-48	-24	1	-5				
Supply (Million Room Nights)	1.053	1.053	1.036	1.027	1.027	1.025				
Demand										
Occupancy Rate (%)	57.6%	57.7%	64.9%	67.4%	68.2%	68.1%				
Demand (Million Room Nights)	0.607	0.608	0.672	0.692	0.711	0.698				
Residual Room Demand	-416	-413	-201	-129	-79	-110				

Submarket - Demand Forecast	
Projected Visitor Growth CAGR	2.84%

Submarket - Projected Residual Room Demand																									
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	
Supply																									
Inventory (Rooms)	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809	2,809
Supply Annual Growth	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%																				
Supply (Million Room Nights)	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03
Demand																									
Demand (Million Room Nights)	0.718	0.738	0.759	0.781	0.803	0.826	0.849	0.874	0.898	0.924	0.950	0.977	1.005	1.033	1.063	1.083	1.124	1.156	1.189	1.222	1.257	1.293	1.330	1.367	1.367
Occupancy Rate (%) Projected	70.0%	72.0%	74.1%	76.2%	78.3%	80.6%	82.8%	85.2%	87.6%	90.1%	92.7%	95.3%	98.0%	100.8%	103.7%	106.6%	109.6%	112.7%	115.9%	119.2%	122.6%	126.1%	129.7%	133.4%	133.4%
Submarket Residual Room Demand (Baseline)	85	141	198	257	318	380	444	510	578	647	719	793	869	947	1,027	1,109	1,194	1,281	1,371	1,463	1,558	1,656	1,756	1,859	1,859

Gaston County - Supportable Rooms																								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041
Aggressive (60% Market Share)	51	64	119	154	191	228	266	306	347	388	431	476	521	568	616	666	716	769	823	878	935	993	1,054	1,115
Moderate (53% Market Share)	45	75	105	136	168	201	235	270	306	343	381	420	460	502	544	588	633	679	727	775	826	877	931	985
Conservative (40% Market Share)	34	56	79	103	127	152	178	204	231	259	288	317	347	379	411	444	478	512	548	585	623	662	702	744

Table 6.9 - Supportable Lower Priced Hotel Rooms (Excerpts of Key Inputs)

1,000 more Lower Priced Hot Rooms supportable by 2041

# 6.5 MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL ANALYSIS

## MULTIFAMILY MARKET ANALYSIS

A high-level Multifamily Residential Analysis was undertaken to identify approximately how many new Multifamily (Condo, Apartment, Townhouse) units will be in demand in Gaston County over the 2020 – 2040 forecast horizon.

As described previously, population projections for Gaston County were obtained from the North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management (OSBM). A total of 47,333 new residents are anticipated in Gaston County between 2020 and 2040.

The number of new households was projected based on population growth, average household size, and trends in average household size. A total of 23,725 new households are anticipated for Gaston County between 2020 and 2040.

Maintaining Multifamily’s current 27% share of all housing in Gaston County, a total of 6,725 new Multifamily units are anticipated to be required in Gaston County from 2020 to 2040.

MF Residential Market Analysis	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
County Population	217,254	219,405	221,578	223,772	225,988	228,226	230,486	232,769	235,074	237,402	239,753	242,127	244,525	246,947	249,393	251,863	254,357	256,876	259,420	261,989	264,587
% Ann. Pop. Growth	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%	0.99%
Avg. Hhld Size	2.61	2.61	2.60	2.60	2.59	2.59	2.58	2.58	2.57	2.57	2.56	2.56	2.55	2.55	2.54	2.54	2.53	2.53	2.52	2.52	2.51
Households	83,239	84,225	85,222	86,232	87,254	88,289	89,336	90,396	91,468	92,554	93,654	94,766	95,892	97,032	98,186	99,354	100,536	101,733	102,944	104,171	105,413
Annual Growth in Households	986	998	1,010	1,022	1,035	1,047	1,060	1,073	1,086	1,099	1,112	1,126	1,140	1,154	1,168	1,182	1,197	1,211	1,226	1,243	1,551
Cumulative Growth in Households	986	1,983	2,993	4,015	5,050	6,097	7,157	8,229	9,315	10,415	11,527	12,653	13,793	14,947	16,115	17,297	18,494	19,705	20,932	22,174	23,725
% Living in MF Units (Rental & For-Sale)	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%	27.0%
Annual Local Demand for MF Units	266	269	273	276	279	283	286	290	293	297	300	304	308	312	315	319	323	327	331	335	419
Est. % of Demand from Outside Market	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Total Annual Demand for MF Housing	279	282	287	290	293	297	300	305	308	312	315	319	323	328	331	335	339	343	348	352	440
Cumulative Demand for MF Housing	279	562	848	1,138	1,431	1,728	2,029	2,333	2,641	2,953	3,268	3,587	3,910	4,238	4,569	4,904	5,243	5,586	5,934	6,285	6,725

Table 6.10 - Gaston County Multifamily Residential – Demand Forecast Model 2020 to 2040

## MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL TRENDS

### URBAN LIFESTYLE, EVEN IN THE SUBURBS

Multifamily products are attracting all adult cohorts, but their true targets seem to be Millennials and Empty Nesters (50-somethings) seeking an Urban lifestyle, many of whom could afford single detached housing.

Most people choosing Multifamily over single detached are seeking high-service, high-amenity living. These Millennials are willing to make the trade-off of smaller/higher density living spaces for a close-in location near like-minded people. There is a general trend of older and/or more family-oriented households preferring the suburbs, and younger households preferring urban locations, but this can vary significantly by market.

Both groups are seeking a “low-maintenance, urban—or at least walkable—experience, enhanced by amenities and technology that create a communal live-work-play nirvana”. For many households, renting is the only affordable way to live in or near Downtown.

Suburban multifamily renters are also seeking urban-type amenities and atmosphere, which is driving demand for transit-oriented, higher density mixed-use developments. The key factor is what activities and amenities that can be reached within 20-minutes that don’t require driving on a highway. On-site amenities that support a more urban lifestyle, such as rooftop communal areas, and at-grade retail (or at least convenience retail nearby) are also proving attractive with suburban multi-family audiences.

### AFFORDABILITY

There is a growing imbalance between the target market for multifamily rental and for-sale product, compared to the high-end product that developers are introducing to the market.

High construction costs and land prices make luxury buildings more financially feasible for developers, but the price point is beyond the means of most middle-class multifamily households. This imbalance in supply and demand has resulted in builders developing smaller units, often 8-10% smaller than the standard size of a decade ago. An emphasis on multi-functional spaces and amenities is being made to offset the smaller sizes.

An extreme version of this downsizing is the “micro” apartment which average 250 to 350 SF, typically renting at about 65% of a market’s 1-Bedroom unit average. Such units are targeted at Millennials who spend most of their time out of the home. This format is suited to Downtown areas of very expensive real estate markets. Micro-units raise significant questions as to the long term viability and who future tenants will be once the Millennial demographic has grown out of such youthful-oriented developments.

High development costs have also accelerated interest in reducing operating expenditures through energy-savings systems such as variable refrigerant flow HVAC system, a central solar hot water system, LED lighting, rainwater collection, and turbines powered by wind and natural gas.

## MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL TRENDS

### AMENITIES

Although apartments and condominiums are being downsized, common areas in buildings are being expanded upon and improved. The quantity and quality of amenities a building offers now frequently determines its rentability or salability.

Younger renters and condo buyers are more social than older generations in their use of public space for socializing, working and extending their living space outside of their unit. Traditionally common space was looked at but rarely used by tenants and residents.

Technology is being deployed in common areas are being equipped with high-speed WiFi, multiple outlets and USB ports, café facilities, as well as durable furniture designed to accommodate lengthy stays and laptop work.

Higher end buildings are featuring common spaces more akin to boutique hotels in their layout and décor, as well as the services provided such as concierges. Rooftop decks and terraces are now essential design elements for mid- and high-rise buildings. These places typically include plentiful comfortable seating, sound systems, big-screen televisions, barbecue grills and other “resort-like” features.

Fitness centres have been a traditional staple in larger multifamily buildings, but this amenity is also evolving. A greater emphasis on socializing and health/wellness education is transforming the physical space, and adding more experiential features such as a climbing wall. Space for bicycle parking, storage, and even repairs is increasingly important amenity. Lastly, pet-friendly buildings are providing animal grooming services and recreational areas for pets.

### TECHNOLOGY

Technology is rapidly growing as an essential amenity, as well as a tool to help tenants and property managers lower their respective operational costs.

Technology changes so quickly that developers and building owners are struggling to accommodate the next wave of change, such as Internet TV access, the Internet of Things, and other emerging tech.

Cloud-connected devices which permit tenants to monitor and regulate their lighting, heating, and cooling are a fast-growing trend.

A second technology is state-of-the-art on-premises package lockers (“smart lockers”) that email or text message tenants when their parcels are delivered. This is increasingly vital as people switch to online shopping. This feature is likely to be a for-pay service for tenants. The optimal ratio of lockers to residential units is likely 1:6 based on recent studies.

Technology is key to driving a building’s sustainability, which is now an industry standard necessary for marketing to green-conscious consumers (particularly young adults).

## 6.6 MAJOR COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

### INTRODUCTION

This section outlines a selection of notable major commercial development projects within and directly adjacent to the Gaston County region. Most projects, with the exception of the U.S. Whitewater Center, River District, and Catawba Casino are located within Gaston County.

The projects within Gaston County are listed in regard to the current stage of completion, including: Proposed & Planning Stages and Completed. Most of the projects incorporate a mix of uses and have the potential to revitalize areas and stimulate economic development in the community.

These projects have been influential in providing multi-family housing, retail space, recreation opportunities, and unique experiential places for Gaston County. However, the current or future success of these projects are direct competition for any future development that Gaston County intends to introduce in the coming years. It is critical to understand these projects and the audiences they serve to ensure that all future development is compatible, complementary, and builds upon their momentum.

### OUTSIDE GASTON COUNTY



### RIVER DISTRICT

River District is a mixed-used, master planned community from Lincoln Harris and Crescent Communities that would see development occur over multiple phases. Located on 1,378 acres between the Catawba River and I-485, to the east of Gaston County, River District plans for a mix of uses including: 8 million square feet of office, 500,000 square feet of retail, 1,000 hotel rooms, 2,500 multi-family units, 2,000 single family homes, and 550 acres of open green space. A network of multi-use trails and multi-modal streets will provide a range of transportation opportunities. The Catawba Crossings project would provide a bridge that would directly link the River District to southern Gaston County.

### U.S. NATIONAL WHITEWATER CENTER

Opened in November 2006, the U.S. National Whitewater Center is non-profit athletic training and outdoor recreation facility offering activities, such as whitewater rafting, canoeing, rock climbing, kayaking, hiking, and mountain biking. Located in to the east of Gaston County in Charlotte, the facility is approximately 700 acres of land adjacent to the Catawba River. The Center is known for the world's largest and complex recirculation artificial whitewater river, costing the facility \$38 million to build and \$6.8 million per year to maintain. Several Gaston County cities helped to fund the Center, and the City of Mount Holly is exploring the possibility of linking directly to the Center via a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge.

## PROPOSED & PLANNED PROJECTS IN GASTON COUNTY



### KING'S MOUNTAIN CATAWBA CASINO

The Catawba Indian Nation has plans to build a 220,000-square-foot gaming and entertainment complex in King's Mountain just west of where I 85 meets the Andrew Jackson Highway, in Cleveland County. While final details of the plans are still to be finalized, the proposal also includes a 750 room hotel along with other guest services and amenities. The casino resort would need a strategic development partner as well as an operator. If completed, The King's Mountain Catawba Casino would be North Carolina's third primary casino complex.



### FUSE DISTRICT

The FUSE (Franklin Urban Sports and Entertainment) District is an urban revitalization project that envisions a multi-use sports and year-round entertainment complex to be developed on multiple sites between Downtown Gastonia and Loray Village. The FUSE District would be anchored by a new sports and entertainment stadium, and incorporates multi-family housing and commercial development into the area. The redevelopment of approximately 16 acres of blighted land and the Trenton Mill would help encourage reinvestment in the area and promote economic development initiatives.



### OSAGE MILL

Osage Mill was built in 1893 and once functioned as a cotton and textile mill. The mill closed its doors in 1995 and has remained largely vacant to this day. Similar to the revitalization and re-purposing that brought new life to Loray Mill in Gastonia, plans are in the works to restore the 260,000 square foot mill structure to include 175 to 200 apartment units, 30,000 square feet of commercial retail space, as well as some tenant amenities and service space. With its close proximity to downtown Bessemer City, the revitalization of Osage Mill is anticipated to bring great value to the community.

## COMPLETED



### CHRONICLE MILL

Built in 1901, Chronicle Mill sits on a 6.5-acre site just east of downtown Belmont and was Belmont's first textile Mill. The once thriving mill has been vacant for several years but new owners have a vision to restore the historic mill and redevelop the space into a mixed-use office and commercial space. The renovation would encompass 135,000 square feet of space and could accommodate a brewery, a large meeting and events venue, an outdoor amphitheater, commercial office space, and a boutique hotel. The Chronicle Mill is of historical importance to Belmont, and its renovation and restoration would preserve important parts of the community's past.



### WARLICK FAMILY YMCA

The new Warlick Family YMCA is built on a 110-acre site at the edge of Robinwood Lake. The \$23 million complex replaced the aging Central Branch YMCA near downtown Gastonia with 48,000 square feet of space for new indoor pools, workout space, a two-story climbing center, and a gymnasium. In addition to outdoor athletic fields, the new YMCA takes full advantage of its natural setting with walking trails, a day camp village, and the ability to host water activities such as kayaking and canoeing on Robinwood Lake.



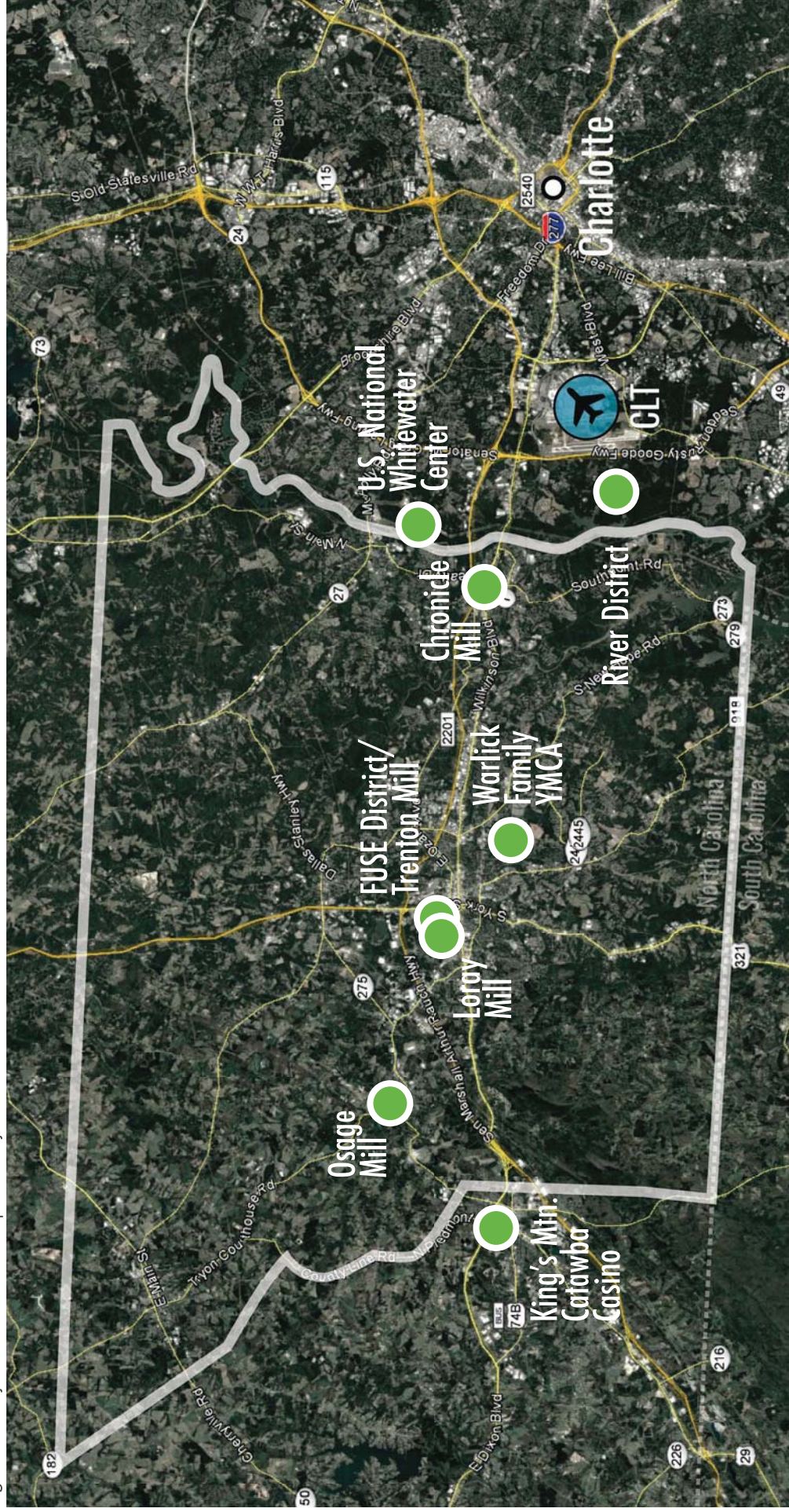
### LORAY MILL

Loray Mill Village is a neighbouring area surrounding Loray Mill within downtown Gastonia. The Mill and its surrounding area was established as a community by the families in the area in 1902, and was bought by Firestone, Inc. in 1935. The Mill closed in 1993, but today acts as a centerpiece of the Village at six stories tall. The reconstruction and renovation of Phase I began in April 2013. The 600,000-square-foot Loray Mill became part of a mixed-use community. Phase I offers 189 loft apartments available for rent and 80,000 square feet of commercial/retail space. Surrounding the mill, revitalization efforts include a new city park.

## COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUMMARY

While not an exhaustive list of every commercial project underway in the region, this section provides a good sense of where current development projects are occurring and the different typologies and mix of uses they include. Figure 6.8 displays the locations of the aforementioned commercial development projects, indicating that they are all largely concentrated along or near the I 85 and Wilkinson Boulevard corridors. This reaffirms that the central corridor is critical to the growth and success of Gaston County, and that future development, as well as mass transit or transportation infrastructure, should be located along this corridor to complement, build upon the momentum, and serve the critical mass that will be generated by these current projects.

Figure 6.8 - Major Commercial Development Projects



## 6.7 GASTON COUNTY FORECASTED ABSORPTION

The Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy is built upon a Market and Economic Analysis that utilizes industry-standard methodologies to produce the illustrated Forecasted Absorption by land use asset classes across Gaston County. The Projected Absorption reflects the County's market-supportable share of new development over the next 20 years, factoring in major announced land development initiatives including the FUSE District, and undeveloped land.

As illustrated in the table below, Gaston County's Forecasted Absorption considers 'Low', 'Moderate', and 'High' economic growth scenarios, and utilizes the 'Moderate' scenario for allocation.

The Forecasted Absorption model identifies the total number of new building space, measured in square feet (SF) or number of hotel rooms, for each type of development that are supported by the economic and real estate analysis.

Land Use	Gaston County Current Inventory	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption LOW	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption MODERATE	Gaston County 20-Yr Potential Absorption HIGH
Office/ Business Park	4.1 m SF	1.6m SF	2.2m SF	2.7mSF
Accommodation	1,500 Rooms	750 Lower Priced 100 Upper Priced	1,000 Lower Priced 139 Upper Priced	1,250 Lower Priced 180 Upper Priced
Retail	5.7m SF	1m SF	1.24m SF	1.5m SF
Light Industrial/Flex	526,000 SF	315,000 SF	420,000 SF	525,000 SF
Warehouse	24m SF	5.8m SF	7.9m SF	9.7m SF
Manufacturing	10.8m SF (est.)	1.9m SF	2.6m SF	3.2m SF
MF Residential	22,500 Units	5,043 Units	6,725 Units	8,406 Units

Table 6.11 - Gaston County 20 Year Potential Forecasted Absorption

SECTION 2  
ECONOMIC POSITIONING STRATEGY



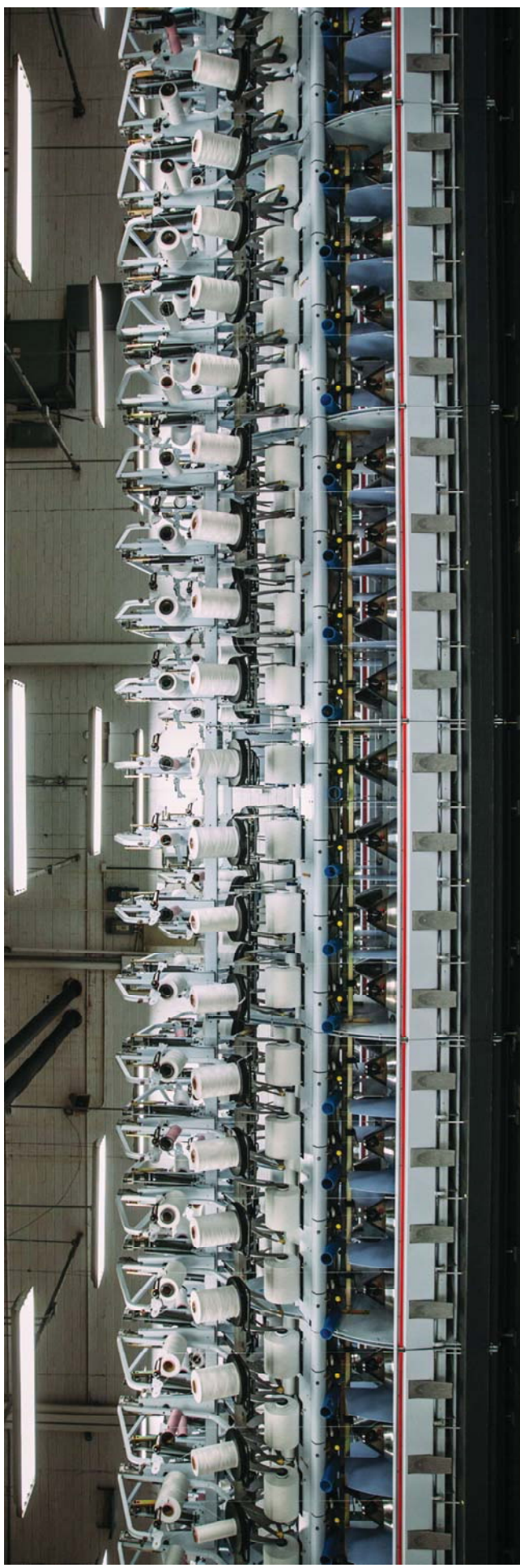
# 7 LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy establishes a framework for embracing Target Economic Sectors. This Framework is comprised of:

- **Economic Mobility Corridors** which include Enabling Transportation and Mobility Initiatives to enhance economic connectivity within Gaston County and with CLT Airport.
- **Economic Opportunity Areas** which allocate Target Sectors and Market Opportunities across the various communities and business areas of Gaston County, in order to stimulate economic development and catalytic projects.
- **Development Typologies** that respond to the real estate, site, and employment needs of Target Economic Sectors and complement existing activities and areas in Gaston County.
- **Catalytic Projects** that will act as magnetic anchors to stimulate and accelerate targeted economic development.



## 7.2 ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS

### OVERVIEW

The Economic Mobility Corridors indicate where opportunities for targeted growth and development could occur across Gaston County. Each Corridor has been identified based on its strategic location, connectivity and relationship with CLT Airport, and ability to improve mobility within Gaston County.

For each Economic Mobility Corridor, the Strategy identifies **Strategic Positioning** and **Planned and/or Identified Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives**. The Strategic Positioning considers the functionality, relevance, and connectivity aspects of each Corridor, including its role to improve economic connectivity between Gaston County and CLT Airport, and how the Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives could open up Economic Development opportunities.

The following Economic Mobility Corridors that have been identified for Gaston County are illustrated in Figure 7.1.

- T.1 Interstate 85
- T.2 Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge
- T.3 Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29)
- T.4 Catawba Crossings South
- T.5 South Gaston Economic Route
- T.6 Catawba Recreation Trail
- T.7 Catawba South Shared Mobility Loop
- T.8 Mount Holly Highway 27
- T.9 New Hope Road/Route 279
- T.10 Collection of Villages Mobility Route - NC Highway 7
- T.11 Cox Road & Lineberger Overpass of Interstate 85
- T.12 US Highway 321
- T.13 Central Gastonia
- T.14 Highway 16

Figure 7.1 - Gaston County Economic Mobility Corridors



- T1** Interstate 85
- T2** US 74/29 Bridge
- T3** US 74/29
- T4** Catawba Crossings South
- T5** South Gaston Economic Route
- T6** Catawba Recreation Trail
- T7** Catawba South Shared Mobility Loop
- T8** Highway 27
- T9** New Hope Rd./Route 279
- T10** NC Highway 7
- T11** Cox Rd./Lineberger Overpass
- T12** US Highway 321
- T13** Central Gastonia
- T14** Highway 16

## 7.2.1 INTERSTATE 85 CORRIDOR [T1]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Interstate 85 is the backbone of Gaston County and North Carolina's primary northeast to southwest economic artery. It connects Gaston County to Charlotte, Concord, Greensboro, Burlington, Raleigh/Durham, and Richmond/Petersburgh to the northeast, as well as to Spartanburg, Greenville, Atlanta, and Montgomery to the southwest. Interstate 85 provides the direct connection for commercial and commuter traffic between Gaston County and CLT Airport, as well as the peripheral Interstate 485 and the North/South Interstate 77 in Charlotte.

Planned enhancements to Interstate 85 will vitally stimulate the economic well-being and growth of Gaston County. While the Corridor provides close connections (particularly of less than 20 minutes) with CLT Airport for various existing and targeted "Airport Connected Economic Sectors", it also provides an accessible, affordable and enhanced place to live, work, play and stay.



Figure 7.2 - Map of Interstate 85 Corridor

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Interstate 85 widening from Belmont to Gastonia.
- New Interstate 85 interchange with Main Street at NC Highway 7 in Belmont.
- Interstate 85 overpass connecting the north of Interstate 85 Lineberger Tract with the south of Interstate 85 Franklin Square shopping Corridor and Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29).
- Improvements to the Interstate 85 at US Highway 321 Interchange.
- New Interchange of the potential new South Gaston economic route with Interstate 85 in vicinity of the cross-over of Interstate 85 with Franklin Route 29.

## 7.2.2 WILKINSON BLVD. (US 74/29) BRIDGE [T2]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The existing Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge over the Catawba River provides a reliever route to I 85 between Gaston County and CLT Airport, Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. This route is heavily traveled by commuters and an increasing amount of commercial goods truck traffic. The current cross-section of the existing bridge is narrow, lacking any emergency lanes, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or pedestrian features, and has not designated lanes for public transit or HOV Lanes from other vehicle traffic.

Improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge will be completed in conjunction with planned improvements to the South Fork River bridge on Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) to establish a consistent six lane cross-section that better facilitates these various modes of traffic, as well as “pedestrian, bicycle and alternative mobility” modes. Improvements to both bridges should consider the integration of public transit to establish a much stronger connection between Gaston County and CLT Airport, Charlotte, the River District and Mecklenburg County. Recognizing the initiatives of Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS), the City of Charlotte and CLT Airport should assess opportunities for providing mass transit service from Uptown Charlotte to the CLT Airport Terminal Gateway Area, potentially along the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Corridor, and consider improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge which are flexible to facilitate potential future mass transit corridor and technologies.

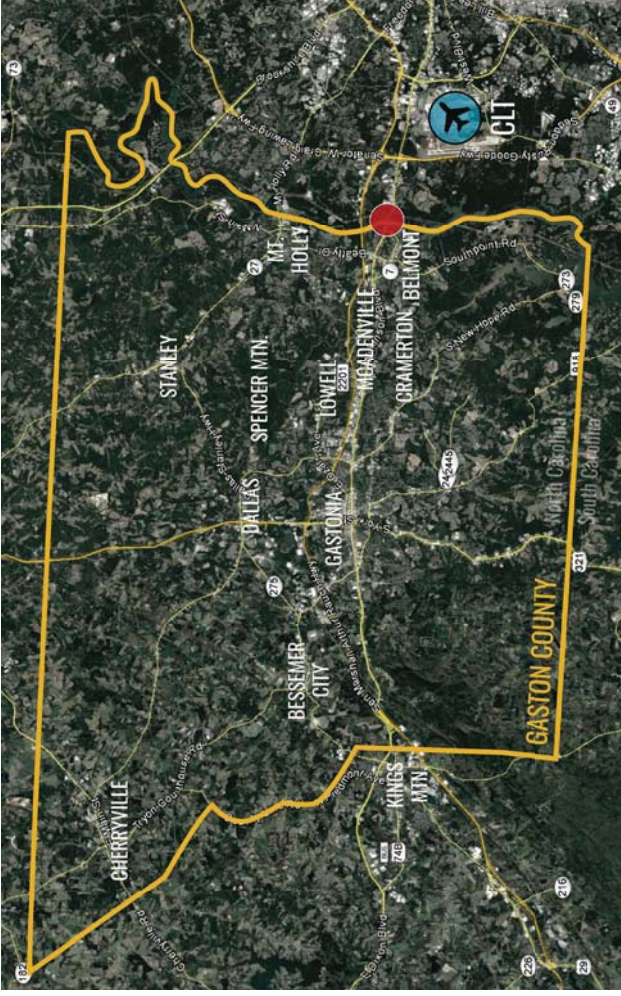


Figure 7.3 - Map of Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Improved Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge over the Catawba River.
- Defining a mass transit corridor along Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Corridor, including within an enhanced Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge over the Catawba River

## 7.2.3 WILKINSON BLVD.-FRANKLIN BLVD. (US 74/29) [T3]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) provides a vital connection between Gaston County with Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, including the closest geographic link between CLT Airport's terminal with Gaston County. The continuation of Wilkinson Blvd. turns into Franklin Blvd. as it proceeds west through Gastonia, ultimately connecting back with Interstate 85 at Bessemer City (in the vicinity of Kings Mountain).

The Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) corridor is the most important economic corridor that passes through the center of Gaston County, touching on the jurisdictions of Belmont, McAdenville, Lowell, Cramerton, Gastonia and Bessemer City. Various north/south road routes connect with the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) corridor including Route 273, Belmont Main Street, Hickory Grove Road/Market Street/Wesleyan Drive/8th Avenue, New Hope Road Route 279, Cox Road and US Highway 321, providing further connections to Mount Holly, Stanley, Dallas and other parts of Gaston County.

The Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) corridor represents Gaston County's strongest mobility asset and should be properly leveraged to stimulate economic development and manage growth. Accordingly, infrastructure improvements to this important corridor would facilitate this economic activity in an intentional and strategic way.

In conjunction with improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) bridge over the Catawba River, a profound opportunity exists to preserve the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) corridor as a potential future mass transit corridor. This Gaston County-wide strategic planning initiative would embrace the initiatives of Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS), the City of Charlotte and CLT Airport to explore opportunities for providing mass transit service from Uptown Charlotte to the CLT Airport terminal gateway area, by continuing this mass transit service into and across Gaston County, using the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Corridor from the Catawba River to Downtown Gastonia. Such a mass transit corridor should be planned to involve a flexible evolution of technologies that could range from bus rapid transit (BRT), to light rail transit (LRT), to commuter rail, to shared ride service lanes, to autonomous transit vehicles.



Figure 7.4 - Map of Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) Corridor

## **WILKINSON BLVD.-FRANKLIN BLVD. (US 74/29) [T3]**

### **STRATEGIC POSITIONING CONTINUED**

The major intersections of north/south road routes in Gaston County crossing Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) corridor would provide locations for potential station areas, stimulating demand for focal points of higher density mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD), where people would live, work, play, and stay in Gaston County.

Improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Corridor, including this potential future mass transit corridor and improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge over the Catawba River would be an important mobility initiative that would reduce the drive-time travel distance between CLT Airport and the communities of Gaston County.

### **PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:**

- Improved Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge over the Catawba River.
- Improvements to Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) from Belmont to Gastonia, including South Fork River bridge constructed to accommodate potential Mass Transit.
- Defining a potential mass transit corridor along Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) 9 from Gastonia to the Catawba River, connecting to CLT Airport and Charlotte.
- Preserving a potential mass transit station areas at Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29)'s intersections with Route 273 and with Main Street, as potential cluster density mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) Areas.
- Preserving a potential mass transit station area at Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29)'s intersection with Market Street.
- Preserving potential mass transit station areas at Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29)'s intersections with Cox Road and the east-end of Franklin Square, that extend to Downtown Gastonia, which would become concentration points for infill development and redevelopment with medium density mixed-use transit oriented development (TOD).

## 7.2.4 CATAWBA CROSSINGS SOUTH [T4]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Establishing a potential future Catawba Crossings South connection between the western side of the Catawba River in South Belmont/South Gaston County, with the River District and CLT Airport on the east side of the river would provide a strong economic connection between CLT Airport and Gaston County, while establishing the foundation for creating a new economic mobility corridor passing through South Gaston County.

Transportation and mobility plans for the River District and CLT Airport already identify major new roads that would connect Interstate 485 and CLT Airport with a potential future Catawba Crossing South in vicinity of the recently announced and approved River District community. As well, CLT Airport and the developers of the River District have recognized the merits of establishing an additional crossing of the Catawba River in this location, to provide alternative relief from regional traffic congestion on Interstate 85, and establish well-managed community growth and economic development in West Charlotte and the River District.

A new Catawba Crossings South would dramatically reduce the drive-time between CLT Airport's south side (including the Norfolk Southern Intermodal Logistics Facility) to less than 10 to 15-minutes, facilitating considerable economic development in South Gaston County, starting in Belmont, then emanating west to Gastonia and Bessemer City/Kings Mountain, establishing the basis for a "South Gaston County Economic Corridor". These crossings would also facilitate the opportunity to establish a multi-mode "mobility loop" between Belmont, CLT Airport and the River District, in conjunction with the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) Bridge. The creation of a potential future Catawba Crossings South should be designed to facilitate commuter and commercial goods traffic, as well as "pedestrian, bicycle and alternative mobility" modes, and public transit.

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Future Catawba crossings south connecting South Belmont and Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Establishment of a Belmont alternative mobility loop that would connect with CLT and the River District.
- Eastern reaches of a potential future South Gaston County Economic Connector Route.

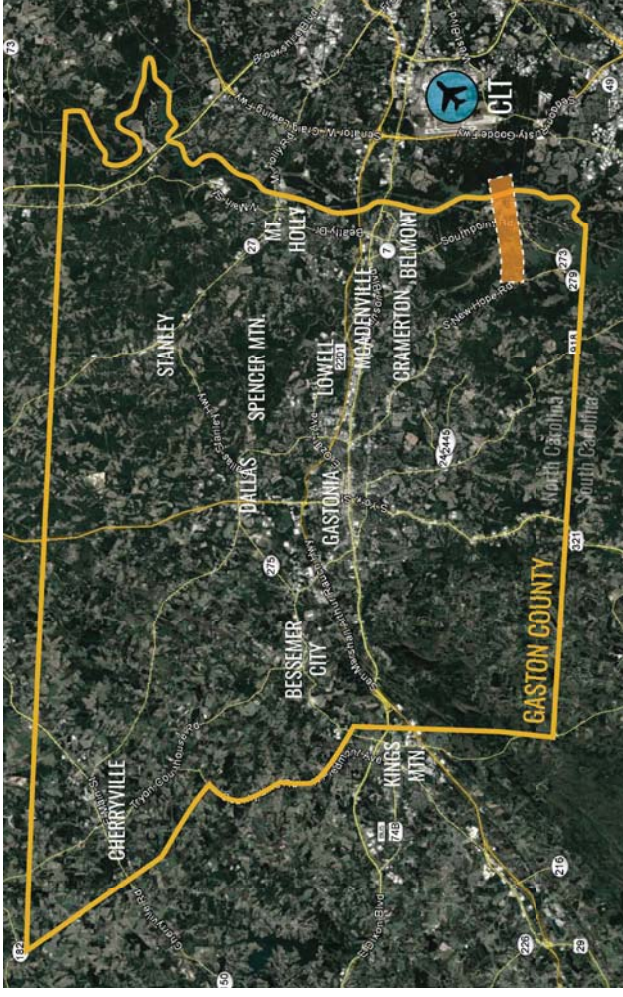


Figure 7.5 - Map of Catawba Crossings South

## 7.2.5 SOUTH GASTON ECONOMIC ROUTE [T5]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

A potential new Catawba Crossings South connection, connecting the western side of the Catawba River in Belmont and Gaston County with the River District and CLT Airport on the east side of the river, would establish the starting point for creating a potential “South Gaston Economic Route” through greenfield lands, and providing fast access to Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain, particularly for commercial goods traffic.

This potential South Gaston Economic Route would have a profound positive impact for regional growth management and stimulating/accelerating economic development in Gaston County by reducing the drive-time connectivity with the south side of CLT Airport (including the Norfolk Southern Intermodal Logistics Facility) to less than 10 to 15-minutes. This route would also provide more direct economic connections between CLT Airport with Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain, by establishing an alternative commercial goods route and commuter route relieving the pressure and congestion currently experienced along Interstate 85 in Gaston County. The intersection of this new potential South Gaston Economic Route with New Hope Road Route 279 would facilitate the opportunity for a major intersection/interchange around which a higher density form of town center mixed-and-multi-use development of retail, office and multi-family residential uses could be developed, stimulating employment and places to work and live in close-proximity.



Figure 7.6 - Map of South Gaston Economic Route

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Creation of a potential future South Gaston County economic route that connects the potential Catawba Crossings South Bridges with Belmont, South Gaston County, Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain.
- Intersections of potential future South Gaston Economic Route with Route 273, New Hope Road Route 279, US Highway 321, Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) and Interstate 85.

## 7.2.6 CATAWBA RECREATION TRAIL [T6]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Gaston County enjoys a significant linear waterfront along the Catawba River, which presents the opportunity to establish a contiguous North/South Catawba Recreation Trail. This potential trail could interact with waterfront park locations while connecting with the Carolina Thread Trail and other trail networks through Belmont, Mount Holly and Gaston County.

A potential Catawba Recreation Trail should incorporate a "multi-use" cross-section that safely facilitates various modes of pedestrian mobility, as well as bicycle traffic, and it may be separate from the grade street networks, or in some cases, paralleling streets.

Promotion of the Catawba Recreation Trail through the Gaston Outside "GO" campaign could stimulate recreational tourism from the region and beyond.

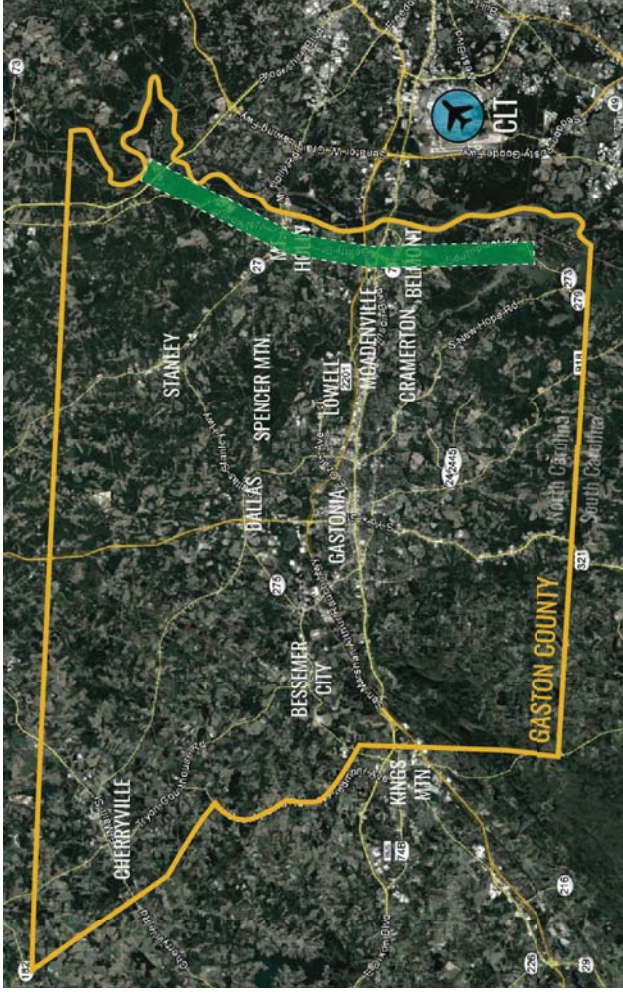


Figure 7.7 - Map of Catawba Recreation Trail

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Declaring a North-South recreation corridor paralleling the Catawba River (Lake Wylie).

## 7.2.7 CATAWBA SOUTH SHARED MOBILITY LOOP [T7]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Once the potential future Catawba Crossings South bridges are built, connecting Gaston County with the River District and CLT Airport, the opportunity would exist to design these bridge crossings to accommodate all modes of mobility, including passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and goods traffic, as well as “shared and alternative mobility” modes such as mass transit, autonomous vehicles, ride share and shared ride vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrian mobility.

With this potential multiplicity of modes designed into these crossings, the opportunity would exist to establish a “shared mobility loop” connecting Belmont and South Gaston County (near Stowe Gardens and South Fork) with the River District and CLT Airport in Charlotte. The developers of the River District have already identified their interest in considering such alternative mobility modes to connect the River District with CLT Airport. If implemented, the shared mobility loop could be a demonstration project of many new types of mobility and technology.

Increasing this potential route across the Catawba River would allow flexibility for connecting into this system and using the Route 273 corridor through Belmont to form a loop connecting back to the CLT terminal area, then south (paralleling Interstate 485) to CLT Airport’s west and south sides (including the Norfolk Southern Inter-Modal Logistics Facility), and the River District, providing a recognized “shared mobility loop for moving residents, employees and visitors between CLT Airport, the River District, Belmont and Gaston County. At a minimum, this route could be established as a transit route, but could have the flexibility to adapt to future mobility technologies.

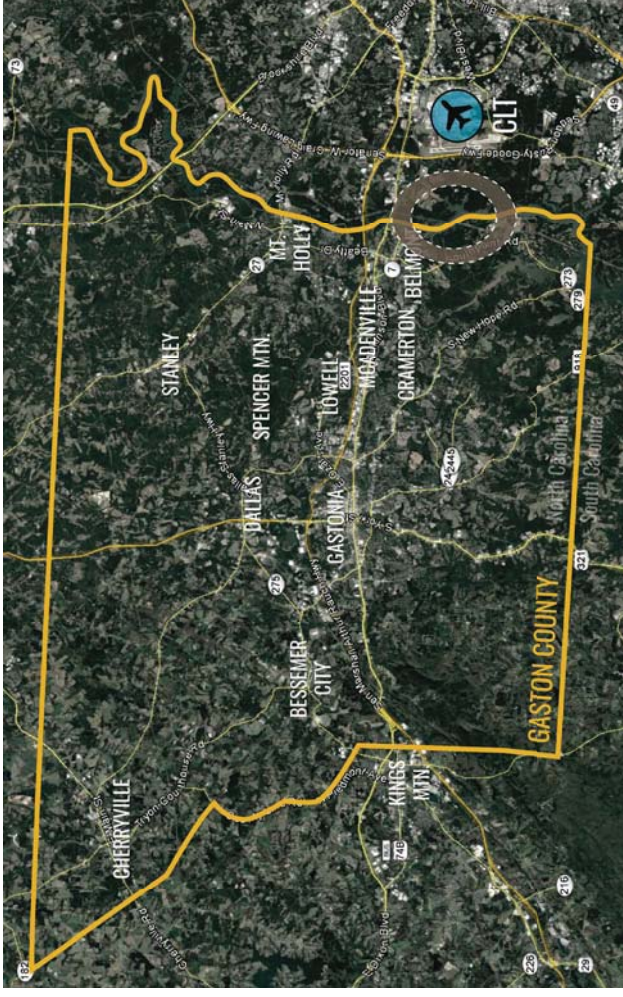


Figure 7.8 - Map of Catawba South Shared Mobility Loop

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Future Catawba crossings connecting South Belmont and Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Establishment of a Belmont alternative mobility loop that would connect with CLT and the River District.

## 7.2.8 MOUNT HOLLY HIGHWAY 27 CORRIDOR [T8]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The northeast sector of Gaston County already benefits from a direct connection on Highway 27 across the Catawba River from Mount Holly to Interstate 485 in Mecklenburg County, which connects to the west and south sides of CLT Airport, and well as to the CLT Airport central terminal area by way of either Interstate 85, I-485, or Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29).

This Highway 27 route also connects Gaston County with the U.S. National Whitewater Center, directly across the Catawba River from Mount Holly. This center is already an established outdoor recreation destination that could be better connected with Mount Holly and Gaston County with a multi-use pedestrian/bicycle trail connection that would feed into the larger Gaston County/Catawba River West/Carolina Thread Trail networks. Companies including Freightliner benefit from this close-proximity to CLT Airport, as it relates to moving their products and people, including the distribution of parts and specialized assemblies.

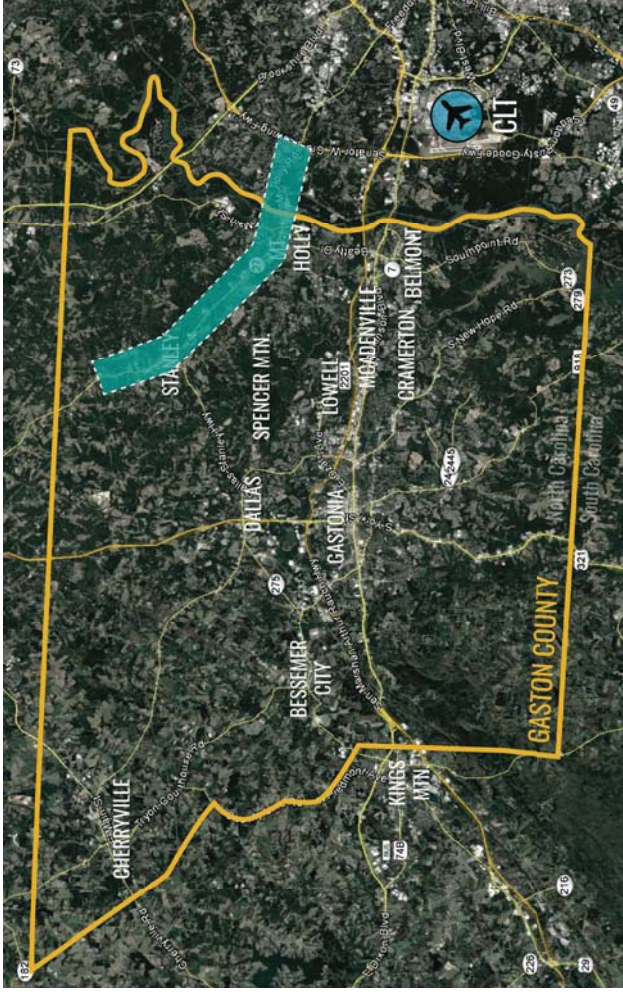


Figure 7.9 - Map of Mount Holly Highway 27 Corridor

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Enhancements to Route 27 to support seamless truck movements to Interstate 485.
- New pedestrian and bicycle multi-use pathway bridge crossing of the Catawba River connecting Mount Holly to the U.S. National Whitewater Center.

## 7.2.9 NEW HOPE ROAD ROUTE 279 CORRIDOR [T9]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

New Hope Road Route 279 provides an important existing connection from Gastonia and Cramerton to the southwest reaches of Gaston County, including the areas of the Stowe Gardens and South Fork community. There are immediate opportunities to enhance New Hope Road to become a “multi-modal complete street” accommodating vehicle and bicycle lanes, as well as enhanced streetscape features and intersections.

If a potential future new Catawba Crossings South connecting southwestern Gaston County with the River District and CLT (Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to the west), New Hope Road would become a vital economic route, providing a fast connection to CLT’s south side, which is the location of the Airport’s Intermodal Norfolk Southern Logistics Facility.

New Hope Road Route 279 would provide the opportunity to establish a “Southeastern Gaston County economic triangle”, that connects Gastonia, McAdenville, Lowell, Belmont, Cramerton with the River District and CLT Airport’s south side. The southeastern point of this economic triangle will stimulate an economic node at the convergence of New Hope Road Route 279 with the potential future new Catawba Crossings South in vicinity of Route 273, that could introduce a mixed-use development opportunity area that would embrace the Stowe Gardens, South Fork, the Catawba River Waterfront and potential future redevelopment or re-use of the Plant Allen Site.



Figure 7.10 - Map of New Hope Road Route 279 Corridor

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Improvements to New Hope Road Route 279 as a multi-modal complete street (with bicycle lanes) south of Gastonia to South Fork, to connect Gastonia with the potential new Catawba crossings south bridges and South Gaston economic route.
- Potential major intersection/interchange at New Hope Road Route 279 with a potential future South Gaston County economic route.

## 7.2.10 COLLECTION OF VILLAGES MOBILITY ROUTE - NC HIGHWAY 7 [T10]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The traditional manufacturing and mill history of Gaston County has evolved an interlaced chain of small cities and towns that have the look and feel of "villages" that flank the old NC Highway 7 corridor meandering between Gastonia and Belmont. These "villages" include McAdenville, Lowell and Cramerton. In conjunction with the Carolina Thread Trail and Gaston County Trail Network, as well as better connections to the Catawba River and Gaston County's outdoor recreation assets, the opportunity exists to establish NC Highway 7 as a "collection of villages mobility route" that would connect these various towns.

Enhancements could be made to NC Highway 7 incorporating "multi-modal complete street" improvements to facilitate the safe and efficient flow of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. These improvements would establish NC Highway 7 as a "tourist attraction", providing amenities for local residents and businesses, while also attracting regional visitors and tourists from CLT Airport, all in close-proximity to the CLT airport terminal gateway Area.

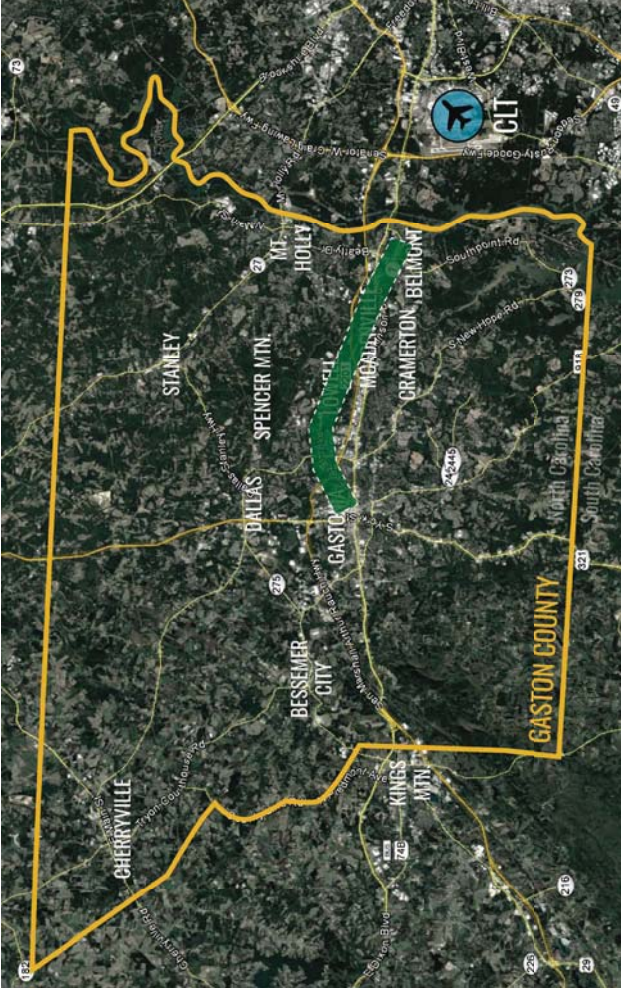


Figure 7.11 - Map of Collection of Villages Mobility Route - NC Highway 7 Corridor

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Establishing NC Highway 7 as a "multi-modal complete street" for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Improvements to Hickory Grove Road/Market Street/Wesleyan Drive/8th Avenue for connecting McAdenville (from NC Highway 7) to Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29), and on to Downtown Cramerton, including the ability to become a "multi-modal complete street" for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Improvements to the NC Highway 7 and its connections with Interchanges with US Highway 321 and Interstate 85.

## 7.2.11 COX ROAD & LINEBERGER OVERPASS OF INTERSTATE 85 [T11]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Cox Road corridor connects the Franklin Square/Eastridge Mall retail destination south of Interstate 85 with the CaroMont Healthcare Campus and currently undeveloped “Lineberger Tract” north of Interstate 85, establishing an important “north/south” connection which intersects with Interstate 85 and Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) in Gastonia and beyond to the west.

Additionally, a new overpass of Interstate 85 is planned to connect the Franklin Square area with the 450-acre undeveloped Lineberger Tract. Together, Cox Road and the new overpass connection to the Lineberger Tract would facilitate a potential “local transit loop, to circulate residents, employees, patients, shoppers and visitors between the CaroMont Healthcare campus and Lineberger Tract with the Franklin Square/Eastridge Mall retail destination.

As well, such a loop would connect to the improved Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) and potential future mass transit and station areas that could be incorporated into the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) Corridor. The intersection of these north/south connections would facilitate future higher density mixed-use transit-oriented development (TOD) around these potential mass transit station areas.

With such connection to potential future mass transit in the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) Corridor, the travel-time for employees and residents would be dramatically reduced for getting to/from the CaroMont Healthcare Campus. The Corridor would further facilitate future development of the Lineberger Tract, as well as to reduce the travel time to/from CLT Airport.

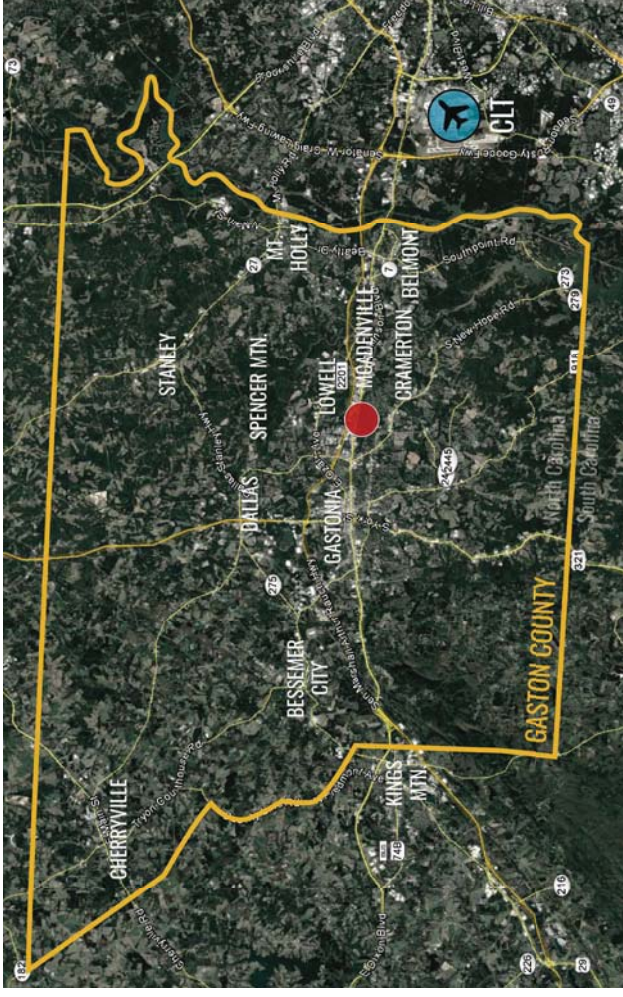


Figure 7.12 - Map of Cox Road & Lineberger Overpass of Interstate 85

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Establishing Cox Road as a north-south connector road with bicycle lanes and local transit loop connecting the CaroMont Healthcare campus and Lineberger Tract (north of Interstate 85) with the Eastridge Mall/Franklin Square shopping corridor (south of Interstate 85).
- Interstate 85 overpass connecting the north of I 85 Lineberger Tract with the south of I 85 Franklin Square shopping corridor and Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29).

## 7.2.12 US HIGHWAY 321 CORRIDOR [T12]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

US Highway 321 serves as the primary north/south economic route through Gastonia and Gaston County, providing direct connections for freight traffic to access Interstate 40, a national east-west corridor reaching major cities including Nashville, Memphis, Oklahoma City, and eventually Los Angeles. More locally, the corridor facilitates connections between Gastonia and Interstate 85 with Gaston College and the Gastonia Technology Park, both of which are key economic engines for Gaston County.

If a potential future new Catawba crossings south was created in conjunction with a South Gaston economic route, the connection of this route with US Highway 321 would provide a direct connection between Gastonia with the River District, CLT Airport and Southwest Charlotte/Mecklenburg County. With improvements to US Highway 321 between Gastonia and this new route, the drive time between Gastonia and CLT Airport's south side (including the Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility) would be reduced to less than 20 minutes.



Figure 7.13 - Map of US Highway 321 Corridor

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Improvements to the Interstate 85 at US Highway 321 interchange.
- Improvements to the intersection of US Highway 321 with NC Highway 7.
- Improvements to US Highway 321 from Interstate 85 south to the future potential new South Gaston County economic route.
- Intersection of US Highway 321 with potential future South Gaston County economic route

## 7.2.13 CENTRAL GASTONIA [T13]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The primary mobility routes that connect central and Downtown Gastonia with the rest of Gaston County and beyond, including CLT Airport, Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to the east, include Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) (east/west), NC Highway 7 east/west) and US Highway 321 (north/south).

Improvements are already planned to the connection of NC Highway 7 to provide better direct access between Downtown Gastonia with Interstate 85, as well as along US Highway 321 to the north of Downtown. These improvements will also spur redevelopment along these corridors for economic activity and employment. Being situated within the 15 to 25-minute drive time from CLT Airport, these improvements would help to reduce this drive-time. Additionally, improvements to the Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) corridor to include a future potential mass transit corridor would provide better public transit connections between Gastonia and CLT Airport, for residents, businesses, employees and visitors.

The historic main street of Downtown Gastonia has already seen various streetscape improvements to create a “pedestrian friendly” environment. The opportunity exists to continue this energy along the western reaches of Main Street to connect it with the planned FUSE District redevelopment area and Loray Mill mixed-use project.

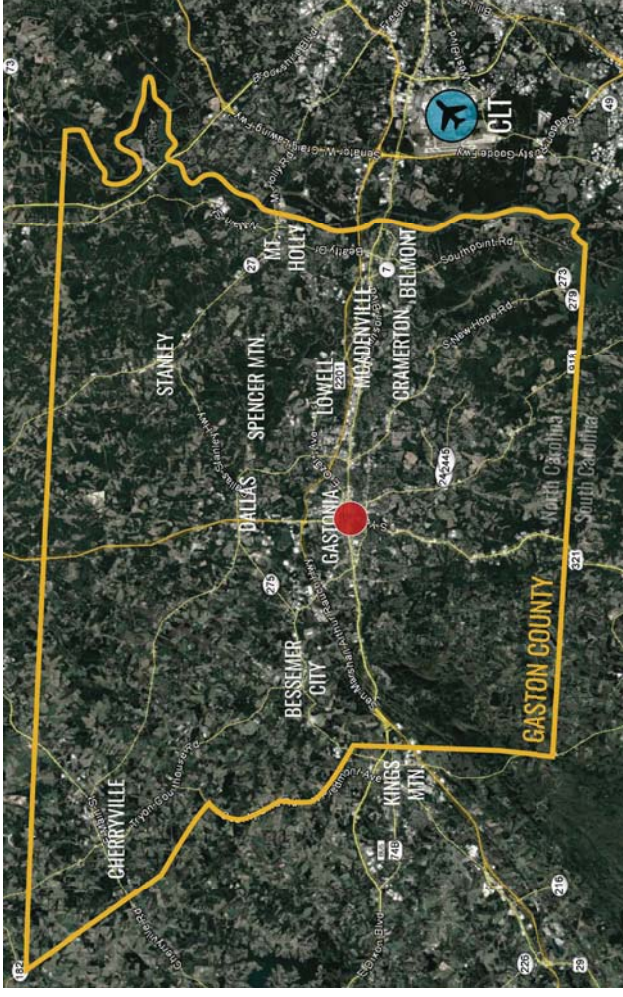


Figure 7.14 - Map of Central Gastonia

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Improvements to the connection of NC Highway 7 from Downtown Gastonia to Interstate 85.
- Improvements to US Highway 321 between Downtown Gastonia and Interstate 85.
- Improvements to Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) to include bicycle lanes and pedestrian friendly crossings.
- Continuation of the Downtown Main Street streetscape improvements to include sidewalks and a pedestrian friendly environment connecting the FUSE District to Downtown.

## 7.2.14 HIGHWAY 16 [T14]

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Highway 16 Corridor is one of the four routes in Gaston County that cross the Catawba River. It provides northeast Gaston County communities with a direct connection to Uptown Charlotte, as well as access to Interstate 485 that leads to CLT Airport.

To the north, Highway 16 additionally provides the primary connection into Lincoln County from Mecklenburg County, passing through the municipality of Mount Holly. Lincoln County has a growing economy in the manufacturing sector, ranging from subsectors including Production Technology, Heavy Machinery, Furniture, and Textiles. This growth has resulted in development pressure, particularly for flex/office and industrial product.

To leverage the connectivity of Highway 16 to Lincoln County and CLT Airport, the Corridor is well positioned for Advanced Manufacturing, Time Sensitive Logistics, Self Storage facilities, and general Warehousing development. Mixed-use development, including retail, amenities, and food & beverage, are recommended to support the evolving employment-focused Corridor.



Figure 7.15 - Map of Highway 16

### PLANNED AND/OR IDENTIFIED ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

- Enhancements to Highway 16 to support seamless truck movements to Interstate 485.

## 7.3 SECONDARY ECONOMIC MOBILITY CORRIDORS

### OVERVIEW

Two additional routes have been identified as potential mobility and access improvement areas. While they are not high priority transportation corridors for movement within Gaston County, both areas add economic value and efficiency to future transportation routes.



Figure 7.16 - Map of South Fork Recreation Trail

### SOUTH FORK RECREATION TRAIL

The South Fork Recreation trail is a 2-mile natural surface trail that begins from McAdenville Dam and continues north, adjacent to the South Fork of the Catawba River. The trail is an ideal location for outdoor recreation such as hiking and mountain biking, and provides residents with an easily accessible trail within the suburban area. The route cuts under the I-85 bridge and heads north along the river ending at a neighborhood entry, which allows it to become a part of biking commuting routes for those moving to and from Ranlo, Lowell, McAdenville, and Belmont. Improvements to NC Highway 7, including the potential transformation of NC Highway 7 into a “multi-modal connector route” (Catalytic Project T.10), can lead to complete network of urban commuting routes with the South Fork Recreation Trail, reducing car dependency for those wishing to access South Fork Trail and live further away from easier access.



Figure 7.17 - Map of Highway 279/275

### HIGHWAY 279/275

Highway 279/275 is a route that covers west to east connections in the northern part of Gaston County. It connects Stanley from the east, down to Dallas, and goes out westward to Cherryville. This route has been identified by the Gaston County Economic Positioning Strategy Committee to be funded for improvements. These improvements include widening from NC 279 (Lower Dallas Hwy.) to NC 27 (Charles Raper Jones Hwy.). This would include a grade separated crossing at the railroad and West Dallas Road, enhancing mobility, safety and reducing traffic volume on Main Street through Downtown Stanley. Additionally, the project would increase options for Dallas traffic to get to Mount Holly and East Lincoln County.

## 7.4 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AREAS

### OVERVIEW

Economic Opportunity Areas demonstrate where concentrations of Targeted Economic Opportunities for commercial development, catalytic projects, and urban revitalization are expected to occur within Gaston County. While some Opportunity Areas including Belmont/Abbey Properties and Gaston College/Technology Park/Dallas have already established an identity for themselves within the broader County, many of the other Economic Opportunity Areas have been defined by progressive industry trends and economic development opportunities that are compatible with each area's strategic location. Additionally, the analysis of each Opportunity Area includes Projected Absorption over 20 years based on the Moderate to High forecasts, as well as Catalytic Projects and Transportation & Mobility Initiatives that would enable and accelerate economic development opportunities and real estate absorption. Figure 7.18 illustrates where each Economic Opportunity Area is located in Gaston County.

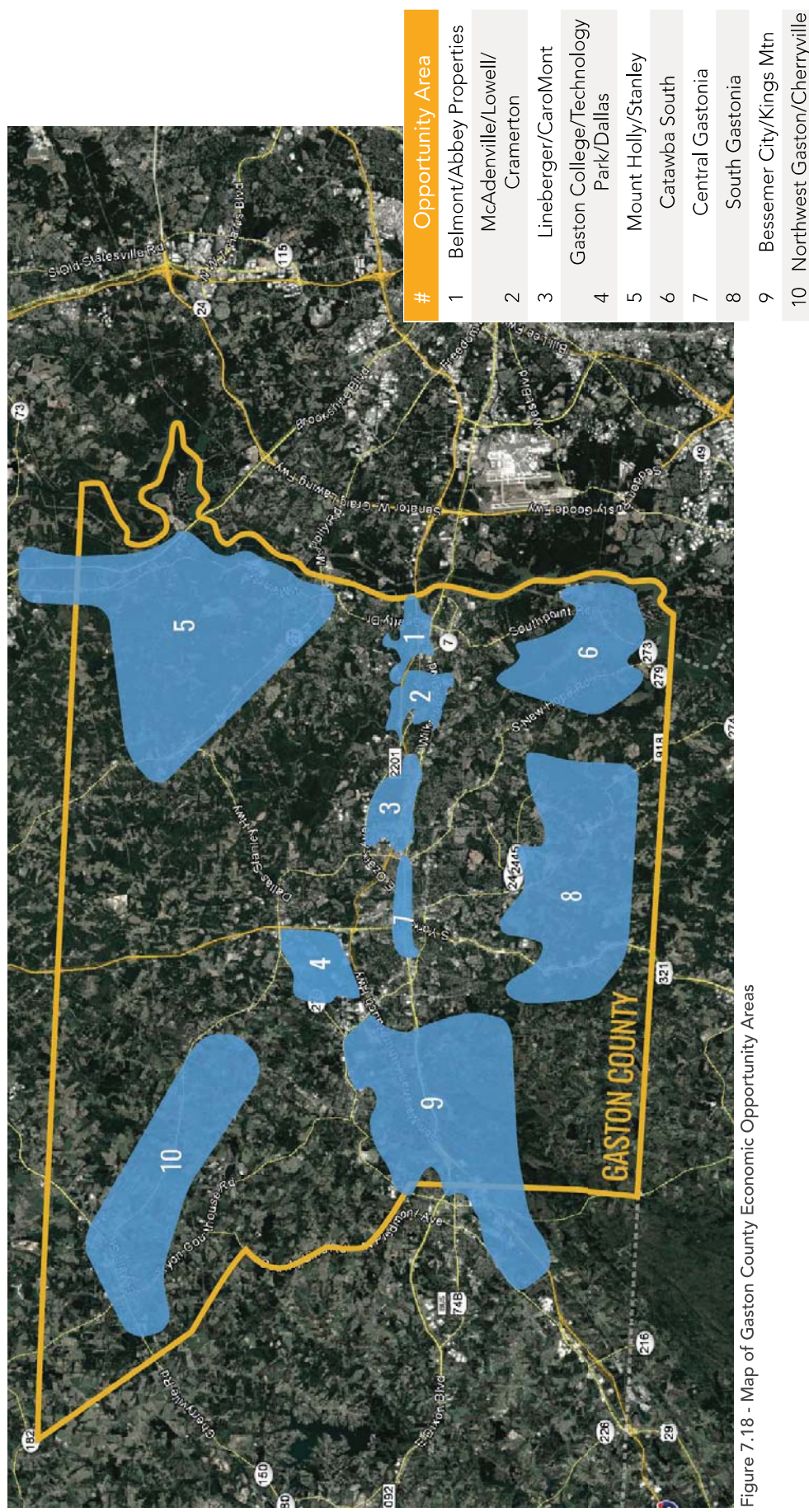


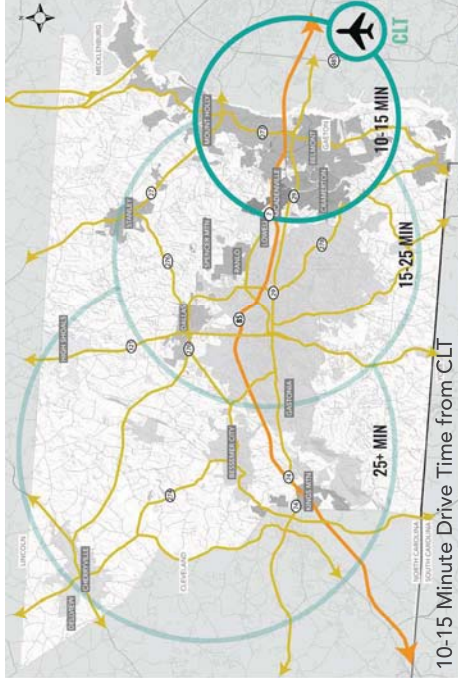
Figure 7.18 - Map of Gaston County Economic Opportunity Areas

## 7.4.1 BELMONT & ABBEY PROPERTIES

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Strategically situated at the eastern gateway to Gaston County, the Belmont and Abbey Properties Opportunity Area flanks the north and south sides of Interstate 85, as well as between Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) and Interstate 85. This Opportunity Area currently benefits from the shortest drive-time distance between Gaston County and CLT Airport, and direct proximity to Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Being within the 15 minutes (or less) drive time from CLT, and with the amenity of the Catawba River (Lake Wylie), and established Downtown Belmont, as well as the Belmont Abbey Properties, this Opportunity Area is well-positioned for targeting medium density development and economic activities.

Recognizing the initiatives underway by the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) and CLT Airport to explore opportunities for connecting mass transit, between Uptown Charlotte and CLT Airport along the Wilkinson Boulevard Corridor, the Belmont and Abbey Properties Opportunity Area would be the first urban node for any potential future extension of this mass transit system into Gaston County. This potential mass transit corridor could be part of larger improvements to the Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) crossing of the Catawba River (Lake Wylie), and would facilitate new and infill mixed-use development in this Opportunity Area, particularly at the nexus of Wilkinson Blvd. (US 74/29) with SR273 and Interstate 85 and Blvd. (US 74/29) with Main Street at SR7 and Interstate 85.



### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

Situated within the 15 to 20-minute drive time ring from CLT Airport, the Belmont and Abbey Properties Opportunity Area would be the closest economic concentration to CLT in Gaston County. This strategic location would be ideal for facilitating hotel, hospitality and amenity development, as well as advanced manufacturing, particularly for items involving specialized materials technology. The Belmont Abbey College and TechWorks also establish connecting points for Education, Innovation and Advanced Skills Training that could leverage proximity to CLT Airport for entrepreneurial ventures and “start-up scale-ups”, who rely on moving their products and people through CLT Airport. There is also an emerging E-Commerce/Distribution node evolving west of CLT Airport involving Amazon and others, that could cross over into the Opportunity Area

The allure of Belmont’s established Downtown and Culinary/Craft Brewery environment provides an amenity for the population base that relies on CLT Airport for business, travel and employment. Additionally, the amenity-rich Catawba River (Lake Wylie) waterfront provides recreation a leisure-rich residential place to live in proximity to CLT Airport. Potential future mass transit and alternative mobility connections to CLT Airport and Charlotte would establish and accelerate the demand for nodal mixed-use TOD multi-modal Hubs within this Opportunity Area, including medium density multi-family residential and office/Business park development.

## BELMONT & ABBEY PROPERTIES

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Retail Trade
- Education
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Food & Beverage
- Technology & Innovation
- Research & Development
- Professional Services
- Outdoor Recreation
- Healthcare

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Office/Business Park: 440,000 SF
- Light Industrial/Flex: 42,000 SF
- Retail: 322,400 SF
- Warehouse: 395,000 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 171 Keys
- Multi-Family Residential: 1,300 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Nodes
- NC Highway 7 Complete Street
- South Catawba Shared Mobility Loop
- Economic Marketing & Innovation Campaign
- Culinary Incubator

### ENABLING TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY GESTURES

- Interstate 85 widening.
- New Interstate 85 interchange with Main Street at SR7.
- Improved Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29) Bridge
- Declaring a North-South Recreation Corridor paralleling the Catawba River (Lake Wylie).
- Mass Transit Corridor along Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29)
- Future Catawba Crossings connecting South Belmont and Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Alternative Mobility Loop that would connect with CLT
- Eastern reaches of a Future South Gaston Economic Route

### PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

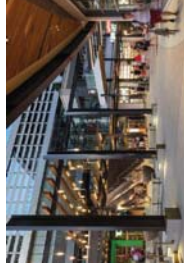
#### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Mixed Retail, Office, Entertainment, Dining & Events  
1.0 to 2.5 FAR



#### CREATIVE CAMPUS OFFICE

Amenity-rich Class A Office Space with Co-Working Areas  
0.3 to 1.0 FAR



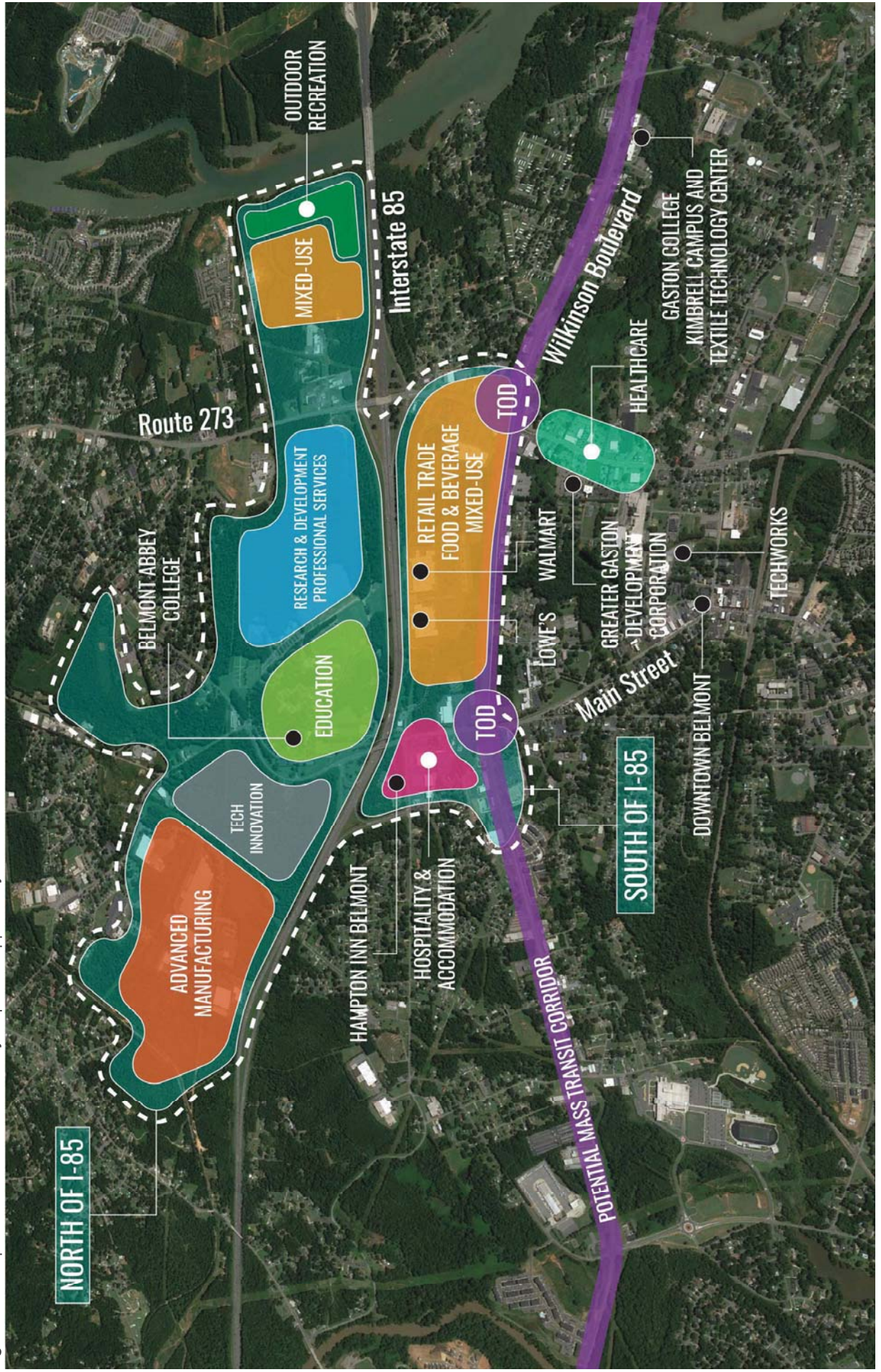
#### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Stacked Apartment Residential Units  
1.2 to 1.5 FAR



# BELMONT & ABBEY PROPERTIES

Figure 7.19 - Map of Belmont & Belmont Abbey Properties Opportunity Area



## 7.4.2 MCADEVILLE/LOWELL/CRAMERTON

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

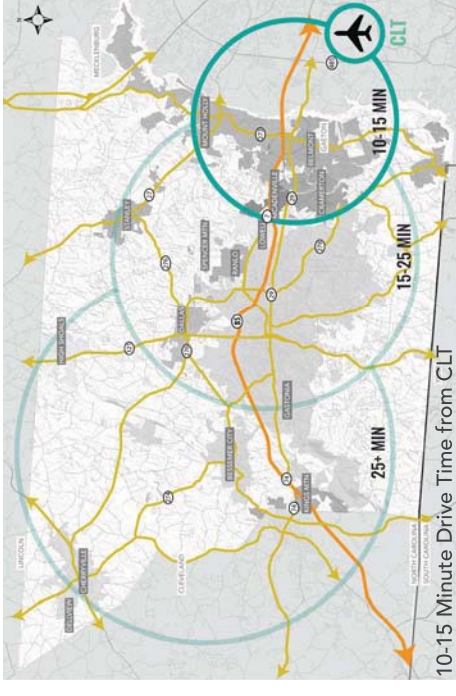
Also in close-proximity to CLT Airport and Belmont, within the first ring of economic activity emanating west from the Belmont/Abbey Properties Gateway is the collective McAdenville/Lowell/Cramerton Opportunity Area. This area is comprised of a chain of historic “Mill Villages” orientated around traditional manufacturing that is experiencing a renaissance with the advent of next generation materials manufacturing and mixed-use development. Pharr has already established and is implementing development plans for repositioning McAdenville as a “mixed-use community” with a diversity of “village-scale residential” uses, as well as a Downtown Main Street. Additionally, Pharr is in the planning stages of re-purposing a historic mill structure on the South Fork river to create a culinary and outdoor recreation destination that will include restaurants, shops, community amenities, art, and culture.

The quaint charm of McAdenville, Lowell and Cramerton provides an attractive and affordable location to live, work and play in an integrated chain of communities held together by NC Highway 7 and Hickory Grove Road/Market Street/Wesleyan Drive/8th Avenue, which could be improved to function as a “multi-modal complete street”. The convergence of this route with an improved Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29) could involve a future mass transit corridor connecting east at Belmont, CLT Airport and Uptown Charlotte, as well as west to Gastonia. As the South Fork River bridge is reconstructed, constructing it so that it could accommodate future Mass Transit is also important. Development of mixed-use development nodes around the potential transit station areas is recommended.

The close proximity to Belmont and CLT also provide opportunities for new business ventures to establish and scale-up, or to leverage from the existing anchor companies in Gaston County that are already involved in Specialized Materials ranging from textiles to composites and plastics, such as Wilbert Plastics, Owens Corning, CTL Packaging, Rochling Engineering Plastics (from Germany) and Repi (from Italy).

### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

Situated within the 10 to 15-minute drive time ring from CLT Airport, the McAdenville/Lowell/Cramerton Opportunity Area features pockets of village residential neighborhoods that could accommodate CLT Airport and aviation industry employees. As well, with CLT Airport’s economic direction to be a hub for facilitating Specialized Materials handling and the machines that manufacture materials that go into items ranging from Aerospace and High Performance Vehicle Components, to Perishable Food Packaging, Bio-Life Sciences Devices and Specialized Assemblies, opportunities exist in this Opportunity Area to expand the scope of Next Generation Materials Manufacturing and facilitate the research and development of new material concepts.



## MCADENVILLE/LOWELL/CRAMERTON

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Food & Beverage
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Destination Outdoor Recreation
- Tourism & Culture
- Technology & Innovation
- Advanced Manufacturing

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Retail: 37,200 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 125 Keys
- Multi-Family Residential: 500 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Nodes
- NC Highway 7 Complete Street
- Pharr Mill redevelopment and waterfront recreation destination

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Interstate 85 widening.
- Improvements to Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29), including South Fork River bridge constructed to accommodate potential Mass Transit
- Establishing NC Highway 7 as a “Multi-Modal Complete Street” for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Defining a Mass Transit Corridor on Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29).
- Preserving a potential Mass Transit Station Area at Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29) and Market Street.
- Improvements to Hickory Grove Road/Market Street/Wesleyan Drive/8th Avenue for connecting McAdenville (from NC Highway 7) to Wilkinson Blvd. (Route 74/29), and on to Downtown Cramerton, including the ability to become a “Multi-Modal Complete Street”

## PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### CONVENIENCE RETAIL

Food Port,  
Restaurants, & Retail  
Services  
Up to 0.3 FAR



### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Mixed Retail, Office,  
Entertainment, Dining  
& Events  
1.0 to 2.5 FAR



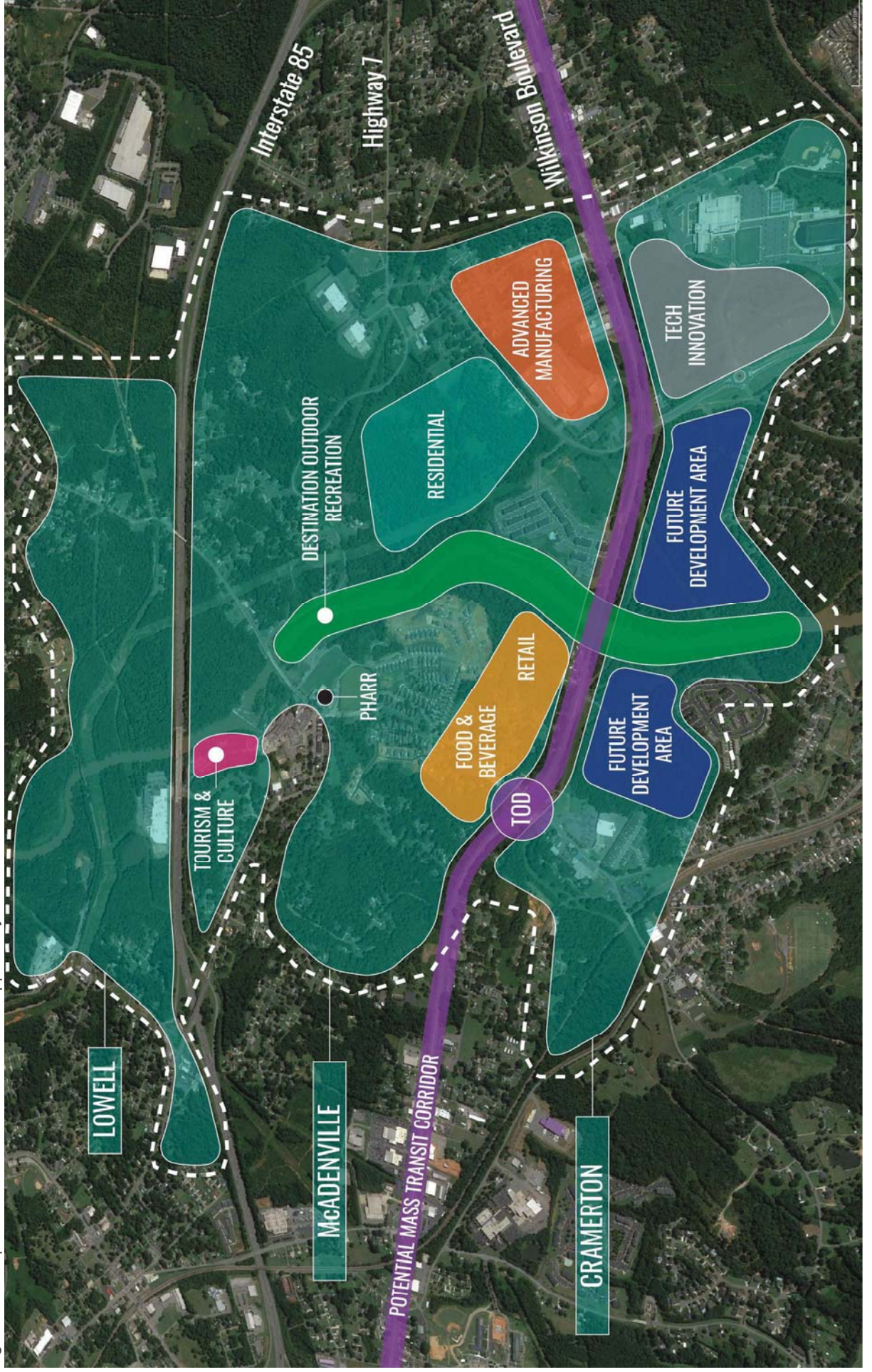
### BUSINESS HOTEL

Select Service Hotel  
Up to 1.5 FAR



# MCADENVILLE/LOWELL/CRAMERTON

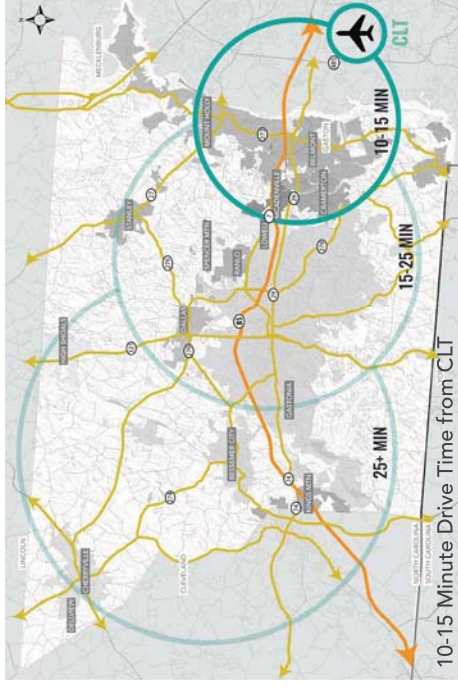
Figure 7.20 - Map of McAdenville/Lowell/Cramerton Opportunity Area



### 7.4.3 CATAWBA SOUTH STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Catawba South Opportunity Area has alternative economic futures. The status quo economic future involves leveraging the renowned Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens attraction and nearby Southfork development (single-detached residential), as well as the Catawba River waterfront as an attractive “suburban residential area”, that would anchor itself around outdoor recreation, leveraging its proximity to the river and Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens.

The alternative more assertive economic future would be facilitated by the creation of a potential new South Catawba Crossings Bridges connecting CLT Airport and the River District with Gaston County and Belmont in the vicinity of the Plant Allen power facility. This new connection would facilitate a wide variety of uses that would benefit from very close proximity to CLT Airport and the River District, which would include Business Park Offices, Flex Business Park, E-Commerce Logistics and Distribution Warehouses. As well, the Catawba River waterfront provides a tremendous and alluring location for a destination waterfront hotel and conference center, similar to the Texan Gaylord Marriott Convention Center, which is 10 minutes-drive from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport (“DFW”) and fronts Grapevine Lake. The potential new South Catawba Crossings South would connect the western side of the Catawba River (in Belmont and Gaston County) with the River District on the east side of the river, acting as a potential extension of the River District. They would also establish the starting point for creating a potential “South Gaston economic route” through greenfield lands, and providing fast access to Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain, particularly for commercial goods traffic. The intersection of this new potential South Gaston economic route with New Hope Road Route 279 would facilitate the opportunity for a major intersection/interchange around which a higher density form of town center mixed-and-multi-use development of Retail, Office and Multi-Family Residential uses could be developed, stimulating employment and places to live in close proximity.



#### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Catawba South Opportunity Area currently lies within an approximate 25-minute drive time from the north side of the terminal of CLT Airport, and 35-minutes from the south side Logistics and Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility of CLT Airport (pending traffic conditions). However, with the creation of the potential new South Catawba Crossings Bridges that would connect CLT Airport and the River District with Gaston County in the vicinity of the Plant Allen power facility, the drive time between CLT Airport’s south side with Gaston County and the Catawba South Opportunity Area would be drastically reduced to only 10 minutes or less, facilitating various development opportunities ranging from E-Commerce Logistics and Distribution Warehouses to Flex Business Park and Office uses.

## CATAWBA SOUTH

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Time Sensitive Logistics
- Technology & Innovation
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Tourism & Culture
- Food & Beverage
- Conference & Meetings
- Logistics Distribution & Warehousing

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Office/Business Park: 440,00 SF
- Light Industrial/Flex: 42,000 SF
- Retail: 148,800 SF
- Warehouse: 790,000 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 285 Keys
- Manufacturing: 260,000 SF
- Multi-Family Residential: 1,400 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- South Catawba Shared Mobility Loop
- Catawba Crossings
- South Gaston Industrial Development Area
- Economic Marketing & Innovation Campaign
- South Belmont Destination Conference

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

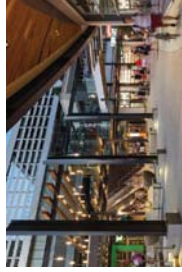
- Future Catawba Crossings connecting South Belmont and Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Eastern reaches of a Future South Gaston Economic Connector Route.
- Establishment of a Belmont Alternative Mobility Loop that would connect with CLT and the River District.
- Potential major Intersection/Interchange at New Hope Road Route 279 with a Future South Gaston Economic Route.
- Declaring a North-South Recreation Corridor paralleling the Catawba River (Lake Wylie).

### PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

#### GATEWAY MIXED-USE VILLAGE

Mixed Retail,  
Entertainment, Dining  
& Events

10 to 20 Acres  
1.0 to 2.5 FAR



#### LIGHT/ FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Office &  
Warehouse.

3 to 10 Acres  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR



#### LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

Warehouse  
Single & Multi Tenant  
10 to 20 Acres  
Up to 0.5 FAR



# CATAWBA SOUTH

Figure 7.21 - Map of Catawba South Opportunity Area



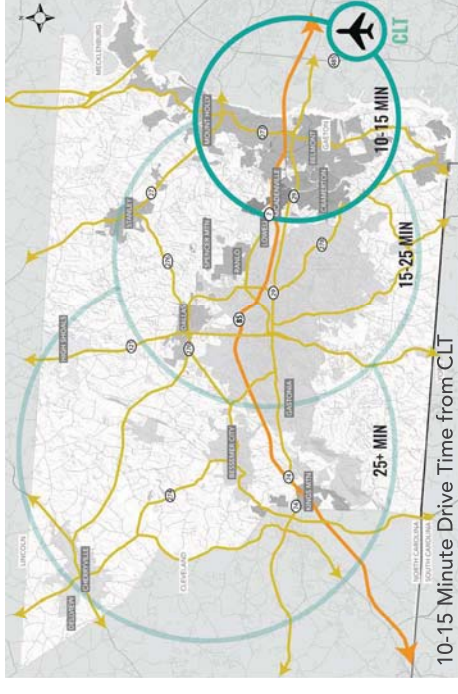
## 7.4.4 MOUNT HOLLY/STANLEY

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Mount Holly/Stanley Opportunity Area already has numerous flourishing economic components, including the charming Downtown areas of Mount Holly and Stanley, as well as the Freightliner Trucks Facility. As well, the proximity of Mount Holly to the Catawba River provides a foundation for Outdoor Recreation and Leisure. The U.S. National White Water Center is situated directly adjacent to Mount Holly, establishing an anchor for outdoor recreation activity.

Plans are being pursued to define a potential “pedestrian-oriented multi-use pathway and crossing” connecting Mount Holly with the U.S. National Whitewater Center, which would strengthen Mount Holly’s Tourism and Hospitality Sectors, which have already seen positive returns from the Gaston Outside “GO” campaign. Paired together with the Downtown food and beverage atmosphere, including craft brewery restaurants, the recreational lifestyle has been embraced by Mount Holly and Stanley.

The Freightliner Truck Facility has provided an anchor for attracting “up-and-downstream” businesses, such as Fleet Maintenance, that service the trucking industry. The traditional textile mills in this opportunity area have demonstrated the ability to re-position their research and development, as well as manufacturing towards next generation specialized textile, which is spawning a growing opportunity for a cluster of “Specialized Textiles” in the Mount Holly/Stanley Opportunity Area.



### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Mount Holly/Stanley Opportunity Area sits within the 10 to 15-minute drive time (first ring) connecting with CLT Airport, with this Opportunity Area’s close-proximity to CLT Airport by way of the Highway 16 and Highway 27 North Crossing of the Catawba River to Interstate-485 provides a direct connection to both the north, west and south sides of CLT Airport. This close-proximity to CLT Airport and the wide availability of land provide an opportunity for potential E-Commerce, Logistics and Distribution Warehouse uses in this area.

This close-proximity and seamless connection to CLT Airport also provides opportunities for companies such as Freightliner Trucks to benefit from the just-in-time supply chain as it relates to the distribution of parts, components and specialized assemblies.

## MOUNT HOLLY/ STANLEY

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Tourism & Culture
- Hospitality & Accommodation
- Food & Beverage
- Destination Outdoor Recreation
- Time Sensitive Logistics
- Trucking & Transportation Services

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Light Industrial/Flex: 42,000 SF
- Retail: 37,200 SF
- Warehouse: 395,000 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 137 Keys
- Manufacturing: 260,000 SF
- Multi-Family Residential: 406 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- Mill Adaptive Reuse Program and Incentives

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- New Pedestrian-Oriented Multi-Use Pathway Bridge Crossing of the Catawba River connecting Mount Holly to the National Whitewater Center.

### PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

#### CONVENIENCE RETAIL

Food Port,  
Restaurants, & Retail  
Services  
Up to 0.3 FAR



#### BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Select Service Hotel  
Up to 1.5 FAR



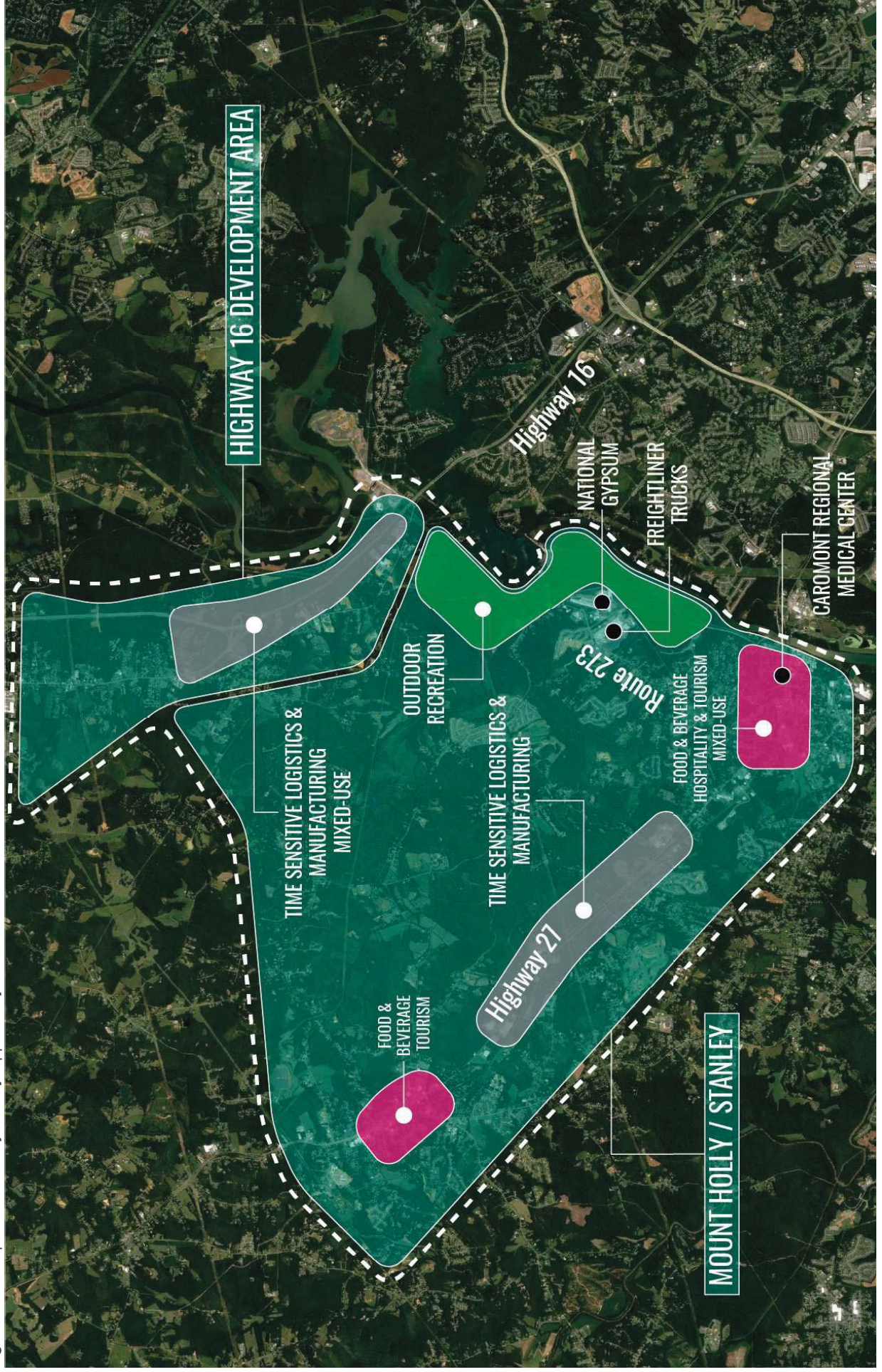
#### LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

Warehouse  
Single & Multi Tenant  
Up to 0.5 FAR



# MOUNT HOLLY / STANLEY

Figure 7.22 - Map of Mount Holly/Stanley Opportunity Area

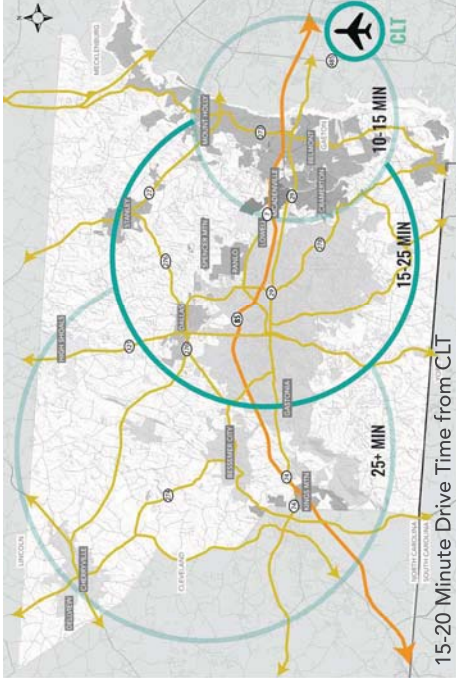


## 7.4.5 LINEBERGER/CAROMONT

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Lineberger/CaroMont Opportunity Area is already a regional focal point for a variety of economic activities ranging from the CaroMont Healthcare Campus (North of Interstate 85, Eastridge Mall, and Franklin Square destination shopping corridor, south of Interstate 85 flanking Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29). Additionally, there is a contiguous tract of 450-acres of undeveloped land referred to as the “Lineberger Tract” directly adjacent to CaroMont Campus north of I 85.

New development is already evolving in this Opportunity Area, primarily of Hotels and Retail uses. These retail uses include national brand and large format stores, which have county-wide appeal, drawing customers from throughout Gaston County and beyond. This area benefits from considerable exposure to Interstate 85 and Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29), stimulating this regional destination draw. Cox Road provides the north-south connective mobility between the North of Interstate 85 CaroMont Healthcare Campus and currently undeveloped Lineberger Tract, and includes an interchange with Interstate 85. Additionally, a new overpass and connector route to Lowell has been planned to reconnect the south of Interstate 85 with the Lineberger Tract and funding is being sought to unlock development opportunities. Improvements to Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) and the introduction of a potential future mass transit corridor along this route would facilitate opportunities for one to two transit stations in the Lineberger/CaroMont shopping corridor (south of Interstate 85), establishing nodal points for intensification with mixed-use infill development, including medium density residential, office uses and food/beverage clusters.



### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Lineberger/CaroMont Opportunity Area is located at the eastern edge of the 15 to 25-minute drive time (second ring) connecting with CLT Airport. CaroMont Health (one of the largest employers in Gaston County) acts as an anchor for fostering additional Health, Medical and Bio-Life Science sectors, for infill development, as well as for potential expansion of Bio-Related Industries such as Medical Devices, Prosthetics, Supplies and Advanced Bio-Manufacturing on the adjacent Lineberger Tract. Paired together with the nearby Plastics and Specialized Materials Manufacturing sectors, as well as Gaston College and Belmont Abbey College, and the just-in-time supply chain opportunities associated with direct proximity to CLT Airport, the CaroMont Healthcare Campus and Lineberger Tract are ideally positioned to accommodate Bio-Medical Device Manufacturing and Specialized Logistics and Handling. There may also be the opportunity for Healthcare Data Management and Bio-Financial Administration, services that increasingly want to be located near Hospitals and Airports. The Lineberger Tract is also well-positioned to facilitate the development of Business Park Flex Space for accommodating Research and Development, Advanced Manufacturing and International Enterprises who rely on moving their products and people through CLT Airport, as well as benefiting from Foreign Trade Zone (“FTZ”) 57.

# LINEBERGER/CAROMONT

## TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Bio-Life Sciences & Healthcare
- Research & Development
- Back Office Administration & Support Services
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials

## PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Office/Business Park: 660,000 SF
- Light Industrial/Flex: 168,000 SF
- Retail: 396,800 SF
- Warehouse: 395,000 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 148 Keys
- Manufacturing: 390,000 SF
- Multi-Family Residential: 2,500 Units

## CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Nodes
- Medical Devices Manufacturing & Bio-Life Hub
- Economic Marketing & Innovation Campaign
- NC Highway 7 Complete Street

## PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### OFFICE BUSINESS PARK

Traditional Multi-Tenant Office Space  
Up to 1.0 FAR



### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Mixed Retail, Office, Entertainment, Dining, Residential & Hotel  
1.0 to 2.5 FAR



### CREATIVE FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Innovation & Manufacturing Makerspace  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR

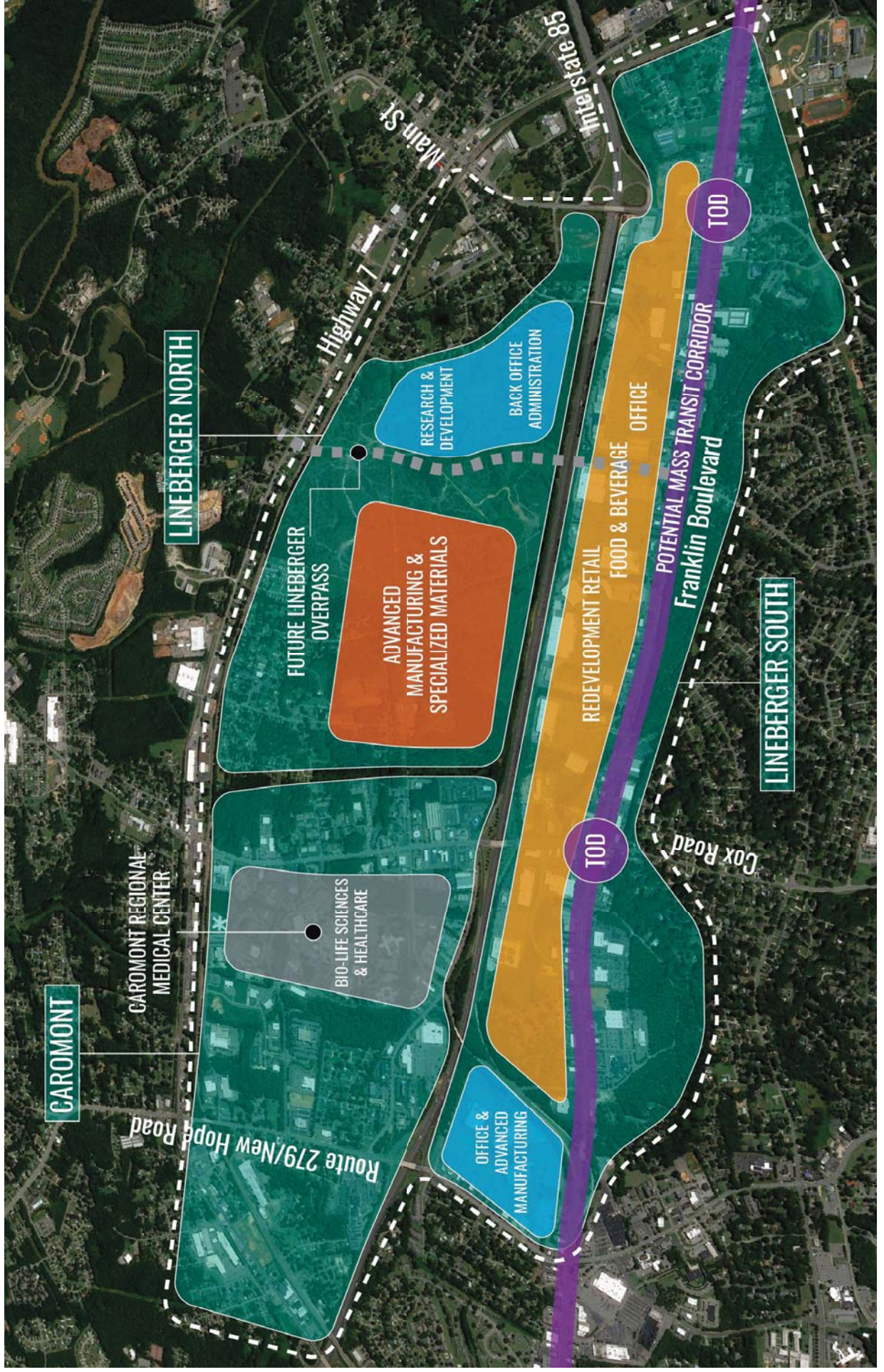


## ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Interstate 85 widening.
- Interstate 85 overpass connecting the north of I 85 Lineberger Tract with the south of I 85 Franklin Square shopping corridor and Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29)
- Improvements to Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29)
- Establishing Cox Road as a North-South Connector Road with Bicycle Lanes and Local Transit Loop connecting the CaroMont Healthcare Campus and Lineberger Tract (north of I 85) with the Eastridge Mall/Franklin Square shopping corridor (south of I 85).
- Defining a Mass Transit Corridor along Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) (from Charlotte, CLT Airport, Belmont and Cramerton from the east, continuing west to Gastonia).
- Preserving potential Mass Transit Station Areas at Cox Road and the east-end of Franklin Square, which would become concentration points for infill development and redevelopment with medium density Mixed-Use Transit Oriented Development (“TOD”).

# LINEBERGER/CAROMONT

Figure 7.23 - Map of Lineberger / CaroMont Opportunity Area



## 7.4.6 GASTON COLLEGE/GASTONIA TECHNOLOGY PARK/DALLAS

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Gaston College/Gastonia Technology Park/Dallas Opportunity Area is a thriving economic engine for Gaston County, representing Gaston County's convergence of Advanced Education, Skills Training, Innovation, Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and International Investment. Gaston College, located in Dallas, has historically prepared the work force for careers in traditional manufacturing and maintaining the equipment and machinery that drive manufacturing. The recent addition of the new Gaston College Center for Advanced Manufacturing and the College's innovative 321 Apprenticeship Program reflects this area's direction to stimulate careers and furnish industry with talent for Advanced Manufacturing, particularly for sectors involving Specialized Materials and Machinery.

Gastonia Technology Park, which is currently being expanded, demonstrates the County's success in attracting international businesses involved in various sectors, including the Advanced Manufacturing of Plastics and Specialized Materials. Companies operating in the Technology Park include Owens Corning, CTL Packaging, Rochling Plastics, and Repi. Demand for additional development by these companies and sectors has already identified expansion opportunities. These anchor companies stimulate the opportunity for clustering related up-and-downstream companies, suppliers and services, as well as additional specialized manufacturing, warehousing and distribution for the items manufactured from the Specialized Materials and Plastics. In addition to large lot single user sites, the Park would also be ideally suited for multi-tenant flex space, to incubate emerging new companies, as well as international satellite operations, while providing the opportunity for these companies to "scale-up" and grow into larger facilities. In conjunction with Gaston College, there is also an opportunity for introducing an "Advanced Manufacturing and Specialized Materials Innovation Incubator", which could be a joint initiative of the local and international companies already present in Gaston County, CLT Airport, and American Airlines, among others. Directly adjacent to the Technology Park, Dallas is ideally located for additional opportunities in industrial and manufacturing space, as well as retail, food & beverage, and hospitality to support the growing employment area.

### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Gaston College/Gastonia Technology Park/Dallas Opportunity Area sits within the 15 to 25-minute drive time (second ring) connecting with CLT Airport. This proximity to CLT Airport suggests there is the opportunities to forge Workforce Development and Skills Training for careers in employment at CLT Airport and its many Airport-Related Businesses, ranging from Aerospace Parts Materials and Manufacturing to Smart Airport Mechatronics Systems (including Baggage Handling Systems, Security Systems, Building Mechanical Systems, Fleet Vehicles, etc.). In particular, the Gaston College's Center for Advanced Manufacturing could be a partner with CLT to expand its curriculum to include Airport Systems Mechatronics programs. Expansion and infill of the Gastonia Technology Park with Light Industrial Flex Space for accommodating Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics for Plastics and Specialized Materials has direct implication for attracting additional international companies that use CLT Airport for moving their people and products. The presence of German and Italian companies in the Technology Park already symbolizes the global reach of the Park to establish an international concentration point for the excellence in Materials Manufacturing and Specialized Materials, as well as the Mechanical Processes and Equipment Tooling that facilitates Advanced Manufacturing.

# GASTON COLLEGE/GASTONIA TECHNOLOGY PARK/DALLAS

## TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Education & Skills Training
- Professional Services
- Research & Development
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials
- Value Added Logistics
- Trades Training

## PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Office/Business Park: 330,000 SF
- Light Industrial/Flex: 42,000 SF
- Retail: 24,800 SF
- Warehouse: 395,000 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 137 Keys
- Manufacturing: 390,000

## PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### OFFICE BUSINESS PARK

Traditional Multi-Tenant Office Space  
Up to 1.0 FAR



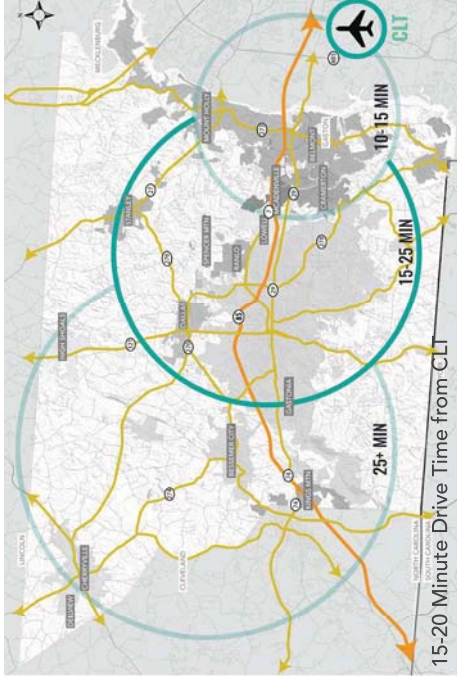
### LIGHT/ FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Office & Warehouse.  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR



### EDUCATION & SKILLS TRAINING FACILITY

Classrooms, Teaching Labs, Workshops  
0.5 to 1.15 FAR



## CATALYTIC PROJECTS

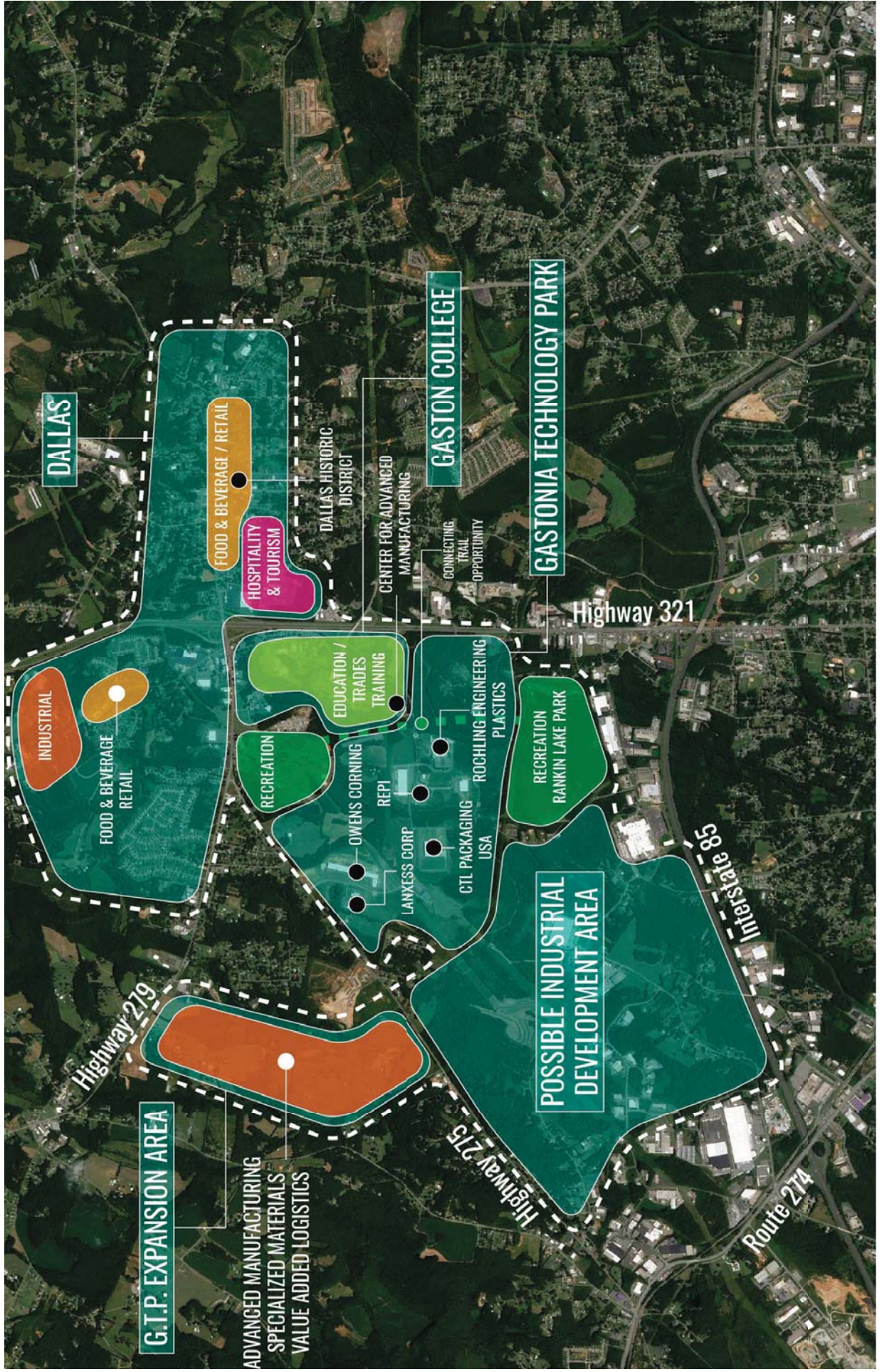
- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- CLT Airport Connection with Gaston College
- Economic Marketing & Innovation Campaign

## ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Improvements to the Interstate 85 at US Highway 321 Interchange.
- Improvements to the NC Highway 7 and its connections with Interchanges with US Highway 321 and Interstate 85.

# GASTON COLLEGE/GASTONIA TECHNOLOGY PARK/DALLAS

Figure 7.24 - Map of Gaston College/Gastonia Technology Park/Dallas Opportunity Area



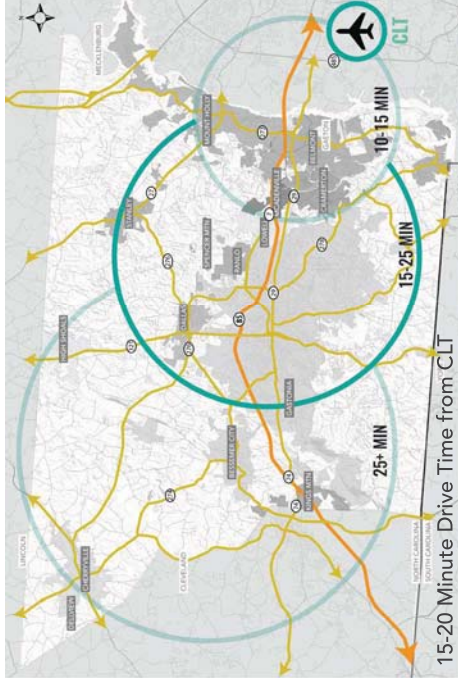
## 7.4.7 CENTRAL GASTONIA STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Downtown Gastonia and the Central Gastonia Opportunity Area are at the heart of Gaston County and serve as the Government Services Center for the County. Considerable efforts and investments are already underway in Gastonia to introduce new adaptive reuse projects and economic activity including the FUSE District and Loray Mill redevelopment, attracting a range of new residents, businesses and employees to Gastonia.

Led by the City of Gastonia, the FUSE District Redevelopment Area sees the demolition and clean-up of the former Sears Warehouse Building property and adjacent sites, to be redeveloped with a spectator sport multi-use stadium with destination Food & Beverage facilities. This initiative is the anchor for the larger redevelopment of adjacent properties with a variety of medium to higher density Multi-Family Residential and Office/Employment uses in Mixed-Use buildings, including Retail and Restaurants/Food and Beverage at the street level. One such example is the redevelopment of the Trenton Mill, located directly adjacent to the multi-use stadium.

The FUSE District strategically anchors the west-end of Gastonia's Main Street, and provides the important connection of activity between Downtown Gastonia and the Loray Mill Mixed-Use project. The nearby Loray Mill redevelopment has involved the re-purposing of the former Firestone Fibers Textile Mill Building into a state-of-the-art Loft Apartment Mixed-Use complex, which includes a Brew Pub/Restaurant, Retail Shops, Fitness Club, Services and Office Space in the recognizable brick building. This package of uses and the unique re-purposed building have attracted a broader spectrum of demographics to Gastonia, and set-up the opportunity for working and living in an integrated community. The general area features a large inventory of historic mills that present potential opportunities for adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment into mixed use, office, cultural, Food & Beverage, or multi-family residential infill projects. Financial incentives and grants are imperative to attracting developer investment and successfully implementing these types of projects. Further, Two Rivers Utilities, the consolidated utilities provider for Gastonia and Cramerton, has invested \$65 million into wastewater facility improvements. The groundbreaking facility includes the first ultrafiltration membrane system in North Carolina and has the capacity for 80 million gallons. As 12 million gallons are currently being treated, this new facility has been built with significantly larger capacity that can support new commercial and residential development in Central and South Gastonia.

Downtown Gastonia also features a historic Main Street that has already seen various streetscape improvements to create a "Pedestrian Friendly" environment. The historic brick buildings that line Main Street are already going through a renaissance seeing Culinary Food and Beverage/ Restaurant Concepts take positions at the street level, and offering opportunities on their upper floors for Mixed-Use Multi-Family Residential or Office Space, which could specifically appeal to "Lifestyle" companies and start-up businesses, that could involve Technology and Innovation.



## CENTRAL GASTONIA

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING CONTINUED

Various County Government Offices, as well as the Gastonia Convention Center are located in Gastonia, establishing a foundation of employment services and activity in Downtown. As well, the existing Transit Hub is situated on the east side of Downtown, which could be incorporated into a potential future Mass Transit Corridor along Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29), as a possible Primary or Terminus Station. This Station would stimulate the enhancement and re-tenanting of Downtown Main Street buildings, as well as the introduction of additional new higher density Mixed-Use buildings around this Station area.

Improvements are already being planned to enhance Downtown Gastonia's connection with Gaston County and towards CLT Airport and Charlotte including an enhanced NC Highway 7 corridor between Downtown Gastonia and Interstate 85, as well as along US Highway 321 to the north of Downtown. These improvements will also spur redevelopment along these corridors for economic activity and employment.

### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

Downtown Gastonia and the Central Gastonia Opportunity Area are within the 15 to 25-minute drive time (second ring) connecting with CLT Airport. As an established and authentic Downtown, Gastonia provides a wonderful place for Airport Area employees to live and play in an "Urban Environment". In conjunction with Gaston College and the Gaston Technology Park, there could be opportunities for incubating Technology and Innovation companies in the renovated Downtown Brick Buildings of Gastonia, as well as in the FUSE District and at Loray Mill, particularly for entrepreneurs who are seeking an integrated live, work and play lifestyle in an authentic historic, yet forward thinking place.

Some of these start-ups could involve the technology and processes that go into Advanced Manufacturing, Specialized Materials and Bio-Devices. There are also opportunities to embellish the Food and Beverage Vibe of Gastonia. These opportunities would correlate well with the strong presence of these sectors in Gaston County, as well as the connectivity with CLT Airport for moving employees and products, including perishable foods and products. In particular, there could be the opportunity for Gastonia to attract foreign international businesses and become their Urban Hub for administrative functions, that may have relationships to existing and future Manufacturing and Specialized Materials and other companies.

## CENTRAL GASTONIA

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Government Services
- Conference & Meetings
- Entertainment & Leisure
- Professional Services
- Back Office Administration & Support
- Retail Trade
- Food & Beverage

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Office/Business Park: 330,000 SF
- Retail: 86,800 SF
- Hotel/Accommodation: 137 Keys
- Multi-Family Residential: 1,500 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- FUSE District
- Loray Mill
- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- Downtown Gastonia Primary or Terminus Station
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Nodes
- Mill Adaptive Reuse Program and Incentives

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Improvements to the connection of NC Highway 7 from Downtown Gastonia to Interstate 85.
- Improvements to US Highway 321 between Downtown Gastonia and Interstate 85.
- Improvements to Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) to include Bicycle Lanes and Pedestrian Friendly crossings.
- Continuation of the Downtown Main Street street-scape improvements to include sidewalks and a Pedestrian Friendly environment connecting the FUSE District to Downtown.

## PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### MIXED-USE RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL

Mixed-use development, retail, hotel, amenities on ground floor, offices above  
1.0 to 2.0 FAR



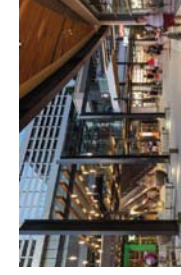
### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Stacked apartment residential units.  
1.2 to 1.5 FAR



### CREATIVE CAMPUS OFFICE

Adaptive Reuse Office Space with Co-working area.  
0.3 to 1.0 FAR



# CENTRAL GASTONIA

Figure 7.25 - Map of Central Gastonia Opportunity Area

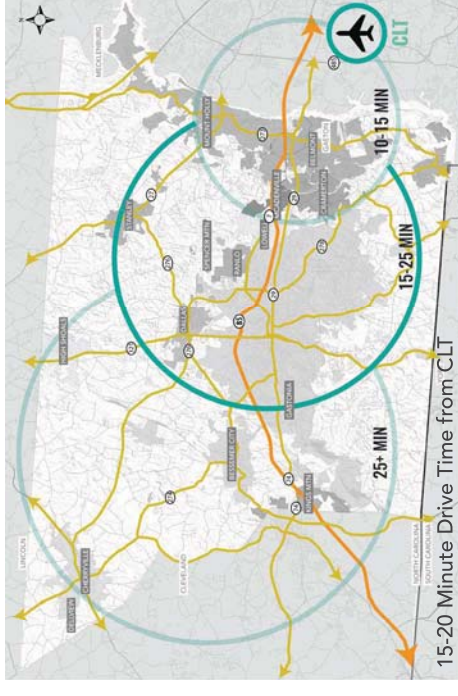


## 7.4.8 SOUTH GASTONIA STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Extending south from Downtown Gastonia by way of US Highway 321, the City of Gastonia has made strategic long range planning and infrastructure investments to prepare South Gastonia for future development. This area is already the location of the Gastonia Municipal Airport and Gaston Country Club, which are existing economic engines and amenities for the County, and could be further leveraged. As well, the recently opened Warlick Family YMCA facility is an outstanding amenity for the County that has already established significant membership and utilization levels. This facility was created using a foundational not-for-profit philanthropic funding approach, which involves many of the large companies and their ownership from throughout Gaston County. These tremendous economic assets can be leveraged to provide amenities for current and future residents and employees in Gastonia and Gaston County.

Gastonia Municipal Airport presents an opportunity to embrace General Aviation, as well as specific businesses that require just-in-time movement of sensitive products (such as medical and bio-products). The City of Gastonia is currently undertaking a study to explore lengthening the runway to 5,001 feet, so that the airport could serve as a reliever airport for CLT's general aviation traffic. General Aviation opportunities include establishing Aircraft and Aerospace Services that support General Aviation, such as aircraft repair, overhaul, refitting and fleet management, as is seen at other County Airports across the USA, involving companies such as Pilatus, Cessna, Gulfstream and Ball Aviation. There is also an opportunity for Gastonia Airport to enhance its General Aviation Base Operations, as Concord Airport has so successfully achieved, to accommodate the storage of General Aviation aircraft. The potential expansion of the Airport would positively benefit from the "South Gaston Economic Route" and the direct connectivity to CLT it would provide.

A fundamental game changer for South Gastonia and the County would be the potential development of the Catawba Crossings South connecting CLT Airport and the River District with Southern Gaston County, together with the creation of a new "South Gaston Economic Route" that would intersect with US Highway 321 and New Hope Road, south of Gastonia. These potential enabling road improvements would open-up the South Gastonia Opportunity Area for considerable future development, particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, Warehouse and Manufacturing enterprises.



## **SOUTH GASTONIA**

### **ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT**

The South Gastonia Opportunity Area is within the 15 to 25-minute drive time (second ring) connecting with CLT Airport. Should the Catawba Crossings South and South Gaston Economic Route be created, this drive-time would potentially decrease to less than 15 minutes, stimulating and accelerating interest particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, E-Commerce, Temperature Controlled Logistics, Warehouse, Specialized Materials and Manufacturing enterprises that would benefit from large affordable sites within less than 15 minutes-drive to CLT Airport's South Logistics Area and the CLT-Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility.

Additionally, Gastonia Municipal Airport offers an alternative for relocation of General Aviation Services and Aircraft Base Operations away from CLT Airport, which is in alignment with the long-term plans for CLT Airport. With the potential Catawba Crossings South and South Gaston Economic Route, as well as improvements to Interstate 85 and the Wilkinson Blvd.- Franklin Blvd. (Route 74/29) Corridor (potentially including a Mass Transit Corridor), Gastonia Municipal Airport would provide companies with General and Private Aviation services in close proximity to Gaston County, the emerging River District, CLT Airport and Charlotte.

## SOUTH GASTONIA

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing
- E-Commerce Fulfillment
- Agri-Business & Food Processing
- Advanced Manufacturing & Specialized Materials
- Aerospace
- Value Added Logistics
- Back Office Administration & Support Services

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Light Industrial/Flex: 63,000 SF
- Retail: 148,800 SF
- Warehouse: 1,975,000 SF
- Manufacturing: 520,000 SF
- Multi-Family Residential: 600 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- South Gaston Industrial Development Area
- Catawba Crossings
- CLT Airport Connection with Gaston College
- Temperature Controlled/Cold Chain Distribution Facility

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Creation of the Catawba Crossings South connecting Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Creation of a South Gaston County Economic Route that connects the potential Catawba Crossings South with Belmont, South Gaston County, Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain.
- Improvements to US Highway 321 from Interstate 85 south to the future potential new South Gaston County Economic Route.
- Improvements to New Hope Road Route 279 as a Multi-Modal Complete Street (with bicycle lanes) south of Gastonia to South Fork, to connect Gastonia with the potential new Catawba Crossings South and South Gaston Economic Route.

### PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

#### LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

Warehouse  
Single & Multi Tenant  
Up to 0.5 FAR



#### LIGHT/ FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Office &  
Warehouse.  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR



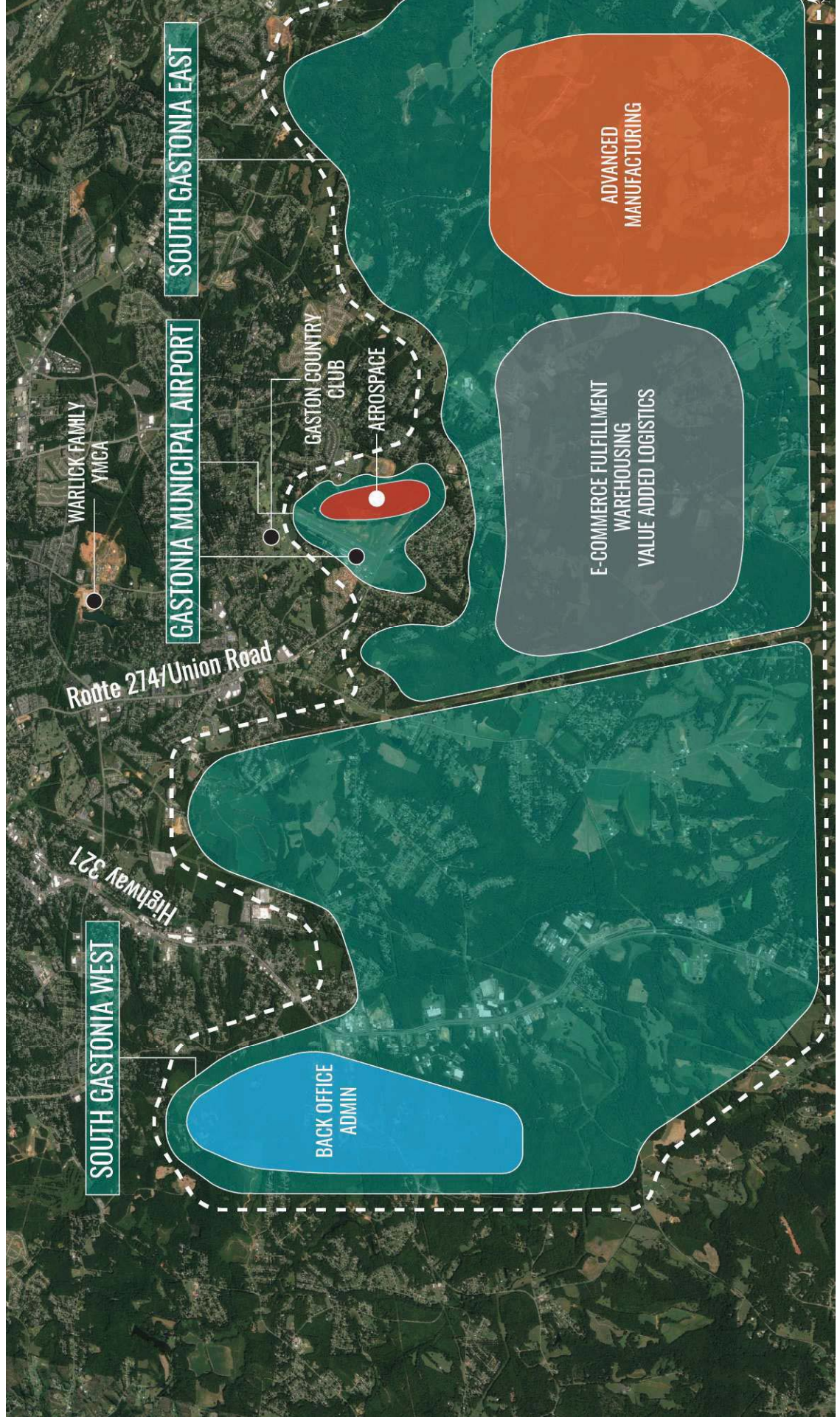
#### OFFICE BUSINESS PARK

Traditional Multi-  
Tenant Office Space  
Up to 1.0 FAR



# SOUTH GASTONIA

Figure 7.26 - Map of South Gastonia Opportunity Area



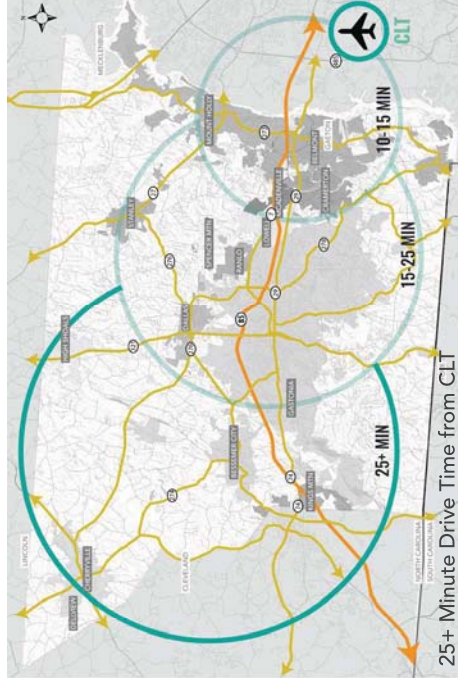
## 7.4.9 BESSEMER CITY/KINGS MOUNTAIN

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity Area is already the location of various larger scale Logistics and Distribution and Manufacturing functions, involving sectors ranging from Retail Distribution (such as Bay Valley Food) to Automotive Components (such as Firestone Fibers), to Food Processing (including Dole Foods). An appeal of this Opportunity Area includes the large tracts of affordable undeveloped land, and peripheral proximity to the South Carolina state line, for moving products in all directions, without getting caught in the congestion of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County Metro Area.

A fundamental game changer for the Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity area would be the potential creation of the Catawba Crossings South and new "South Gaston Economic Route". These potential enabling road improvements would open-up this Opportunity Area for considerable future development, particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, Warehouse and Manufacturing enterprises.

Additionally, Crowders Mountain is already an Outdoor Recreation destination which could be further leveraged in Bessemer City and Kings Mountain.



### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity Area is a 25+ minute drive time (third ring) connecting with CLT Airport. Should the potential future Catawba Crossings South and South Gaston Economic Route be created, this drive-time would potentially decrease to less than 20 minutes, stimulating and accelerating interest particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, Parts Distribution, E-Commerce, Temperature Controlled Logistics Food Processing, Packaging & Perishables, Warehouse, and Manufacturing enterprises that would benefit from large affordable sites within 20 minutes-drive to CLT Airport's South Logistics Area and the Charlotte-Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility.

## BESSEMER CITY/KINGS MOUNTAIN

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Agri-Business & Food Processing
- Heavy Industrial Manufacturing
- Automotive Parts & Components
- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing
- Trucking & Transportation Services
- Trades Training

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Light Industrial/Flex: 21,000 SF
- Retail: 37,200 SF
- Warehouse: 2,370,000 SF
- Manufacturing: 520,000 SF
- Multi-Family Residential: 200 Units

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

- South Gaston Industrial Development Area
- Food Processing and Innovation Facility
- Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Nodes

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Creation of the Catawba Crossings South connecting Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Creation of a South Gaston County Economic Route that connects the potential Catawba Crossings South with Belmont, South Gaston County, Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain.
- Intersection/Interchange of US Highway 321 with the future potential new South Gaston County Economic Route.
- New Interchange of the potential new South Gaston Economic Route with Interstate 85 in the vicinity of the cross-over of Interstate 85 with Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29).

## PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

Warehouse  
Single & Multi Tenant  
Up to 0.5 FAR



### LIGHT/ FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Office &  
Warehouse.  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR



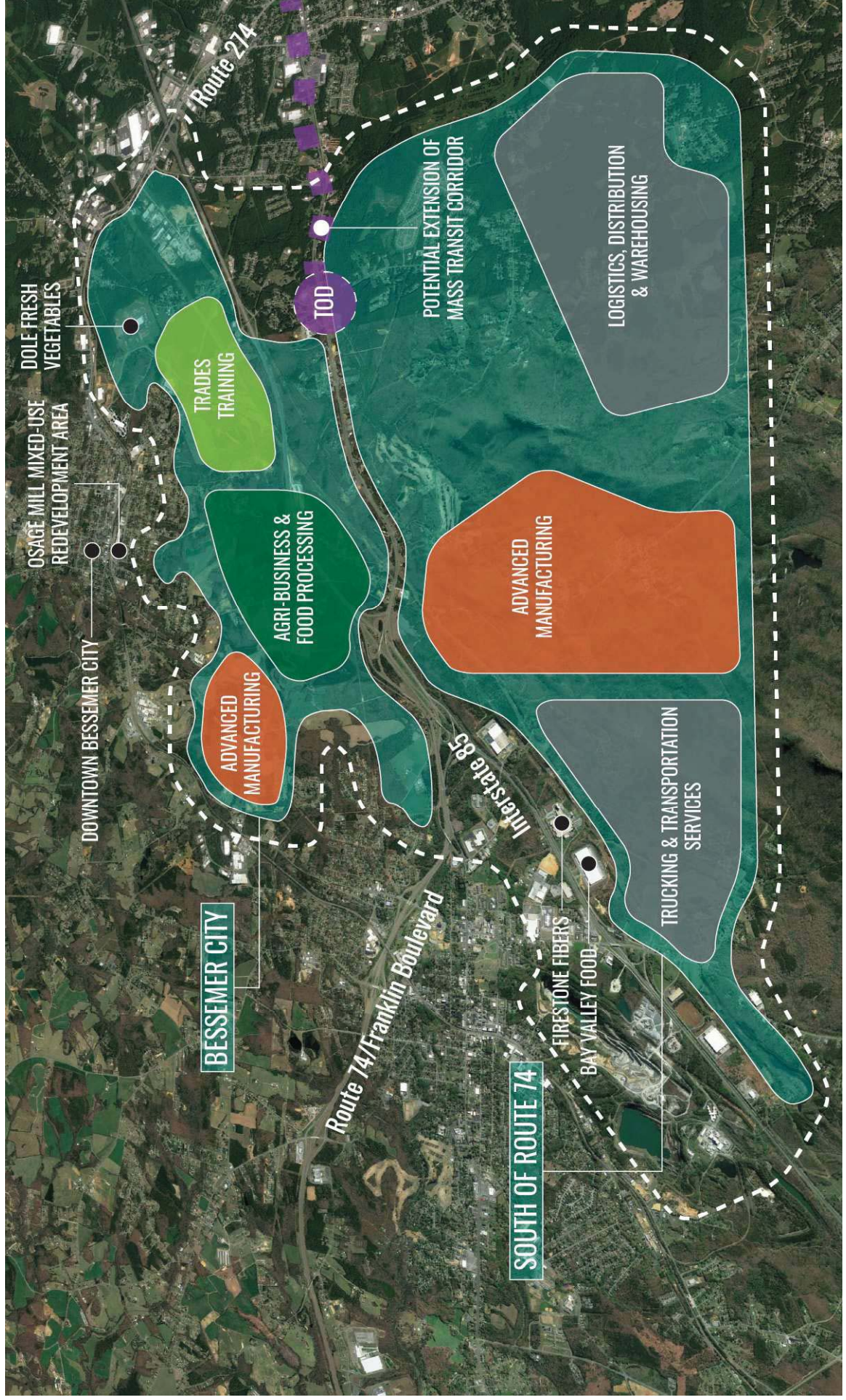
### HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Utilities, Heavy  
Equipment,  
Manufacturing  
0.2 to 0.6 FAR



# BESSEMER CITY/KINGS MOUNTAIN

Figure 7.27 - Map of Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity Area



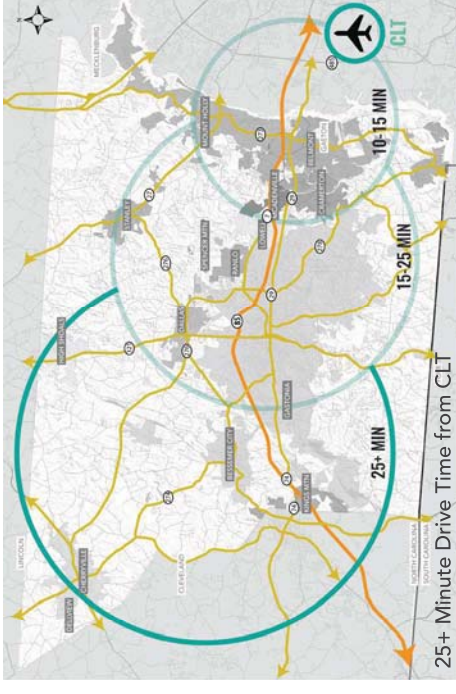
## 7.4.10 NORTHWEST GASTON/CHERRYVILLE

### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

As consideration for potential relocation of the Gastonia Municipal Airport to accommodate a longer runway system that could handle a wider variety of aircraft types and sizes, 700 acres of property was consolidated in the vicinity of Route 1609 (Long Shoals Road) and Highway 279, between Bessemer City and Cherryville in Northwest Gaston County. Future development of this area is subject to sewer and water servicing.

This Opportunity Area benefits from its proximity to the Logistic, Distribution, Food Processing, Automotive and other sectors that are already present in the nearby Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity Area. The Northwest Gaston/Cherryville County Opportunity Area would also benefit from the nearby industrial development and transportation & trucking support services including JC Propst Trucking and FleetNet America.

Like for the Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity area, the creation of the Catawba Crossings South and new “South Gaston Economic Route” would fundamentally transform the economics of the area. These potential enabling road improvements would potentially accelerate this Opportunity Area for future development, particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, Warehouse and Manufacturing enterprises (in conjunction with similar economic activities in the Bessemer City/Kings Mountain Opportunity Area).



### ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY WITH CLT AIRPORT

The Northwest Gaston/Cherryville County Opportunity Area is within the 25+ minute drive time (third ring) connecting with CLT Airport. Should the potential future Catawba Crossings South and South Gaston Economic Route be created, this drive-time would potentially decrease to less than 25 minutes, stimulating and accelerating interest particularly for larger site Logistics, Distribution, Parts Distribution, E-Commerce, Temperature Controlled Logistics Food Processing, Packaging & Perishables, Warehouse, and Manufacturing enterprises that would benefit from large affordable sites within 25+ minutes-drive to CLT Airport's South Logistics Area and the Charlotte-Norfolk Southern Intermodal Facility.

## NORTHWEST GASTON/CHERRYVILLE

### TARGET ECONOMIC SECTORS & USES

- Trucking & Transportation Services
- Automotive Parts & Components
- Agri-Business and Food Processing/Packaging
- Heavy Industrial Manufacturing
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics, Distribution & Warehousing

### PROJECTED ABSORPTION OVER 20 YRS

- Warehouse: 1,185,000 SF
- Manufacturing: 260,000 SF

### CATALYTIC PROJECTS

No Catalytic Projects will be immediately implemented in this opportunity area.

### ENABLING MOBILITY GESTURES

- Creation of the Catawba Crossings South connecting Gaston County with CLT Airport and the River District.
- Creation of a South Gaston County Economic Route that connects the potential Catawba Crossings South with Belmont, South Gaston County, Gastonia, Bessemer City and Kings Mountain.
- New Interchange of the potential new South Gaston Economic Route with Interstate 85 in the vicinity of the cross-over of Interstate 85 with Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29).

### PRIMARY GUIDING DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

#### LOGISTICS & DISTRIBUTION

Warehouse  
Single & Multi Tenant  
Up to 0.5 FAR



#### LIGHT/ FLEX INDUSTRIAL

Combined Office &  
Warehouse.  
0.3 to 0.5 FAR



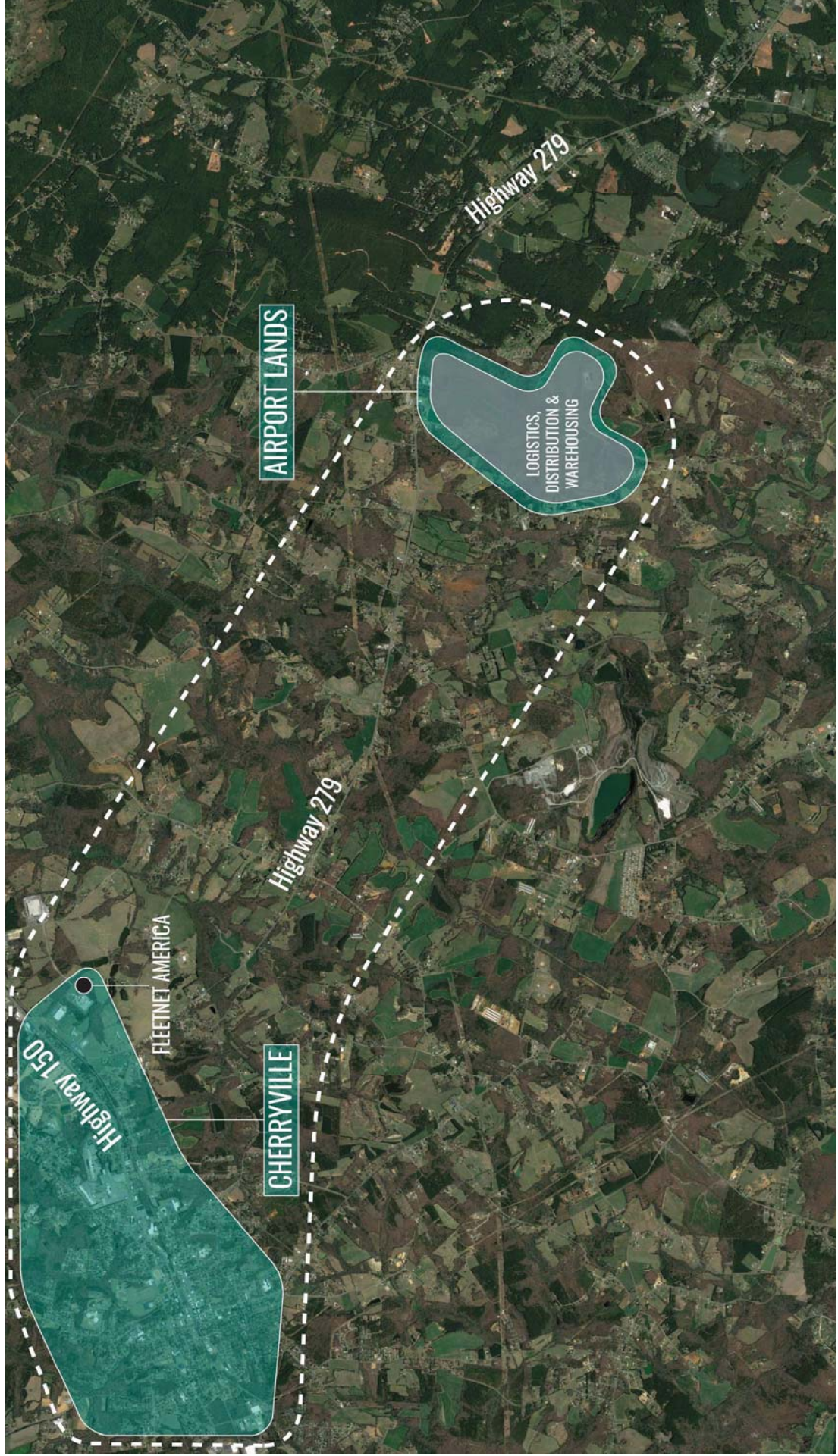
#### HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

Utilities, Heavy  
Equipment,  
Manufacturing  
0.2 to 0.6 FAR



# NORTHWEST GASTON/CHERRYVILLE

Figure 7.28 - Map of Northwest Gaston/Cherryville Opportunity Area



## 7.5 RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT TYPOLOGIES

### INTRODUCTION

The following section illustrates a series of Development Typologies that include a brief description of the physical form and potential employment uses, as well as the level of density, amount of developable land required, achievable employment density, and the potential parking ratio.

Additionally, each Development Typology is connected to multiple Target Economic Sectors that have been recommended for Gaston County. These examples do not represent an exhaustive list of the possibilities for fulfilling each Economic Opportunity Area's full potential, but rather provide concrete and implementable concepts that can be realized in Gaston County.



## GENERAL LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

A single story building or complex that is lower density than flex business space, and can be single or multi-tenant. Primarily used for manufacturing and distribution purposes, but can also include small amounts of office, lab, and R&D space.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:900 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 100,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 2 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Logistics & Distribution



## FLEX BUSINESS PARK (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

A commercial development space that is flexible and can be used as office space, light industrial, warehouse, or a mixture of all three depending on consumer need. Typically, flex is at least 25% office space.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:900 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 100,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 3 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Healthcare & Biosciences



## ADVANCED MANUFACTURING (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

A single-use building that focuses on the manufacturing and distribution process of goods. Typically double-height to accommodate larger-item goods. Can have up to 25 foot ceiling heights.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:1,200 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 100,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 2 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Education & Skills Training



## WAREHOUSE & LOGISTICS (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Commercial buildings that can include warehousing, storage, added value processing, packaging, inventory, and distribution of various goods. E-commerce distribution is a rapidly growing sub-sector for this development typology.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:1,500 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 50,000 to 500,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 1 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Logistics & Distribution



## TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED FACILITY (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

A specialized warehouse and distribution facility dedicated to cold storage. A requirement for agri-business and health & life sciences companies who require specific temperatures for shipping goods. Can include freeze/chill spaces, along with processing areas.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:5,000 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 50,000 to 200,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 1 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Agri-business
- Logistics & Distribution
- Healthcare & Biosciences



## TECH OFFICE CLUSTER (OFFICE)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Class A office complex buildings that either sit on one large parking podium with terraced landscape features or surface lots with large amounts of landscaping.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:300 SF

FAR: 0.3 to 0.4

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 50,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 4 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Innovation & Technology
- Healthcare & Biosciences
- Education & Skills Training
- Advanced Manufacturing



## CREATIVE CAMPUS (OFFICE)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Intentionally casual campus establishes an urban ruralism that situates amenities and collective workspaces together. Akin to a scaled-up co-working space with generous outdoor work space appealing to creative industries. Class-A office with large multi-tenant floorplates open to shared amenities below.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:300 SF

FAR: 0.3 to 0.75

Tenant Spaces: 50,000 to 250,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 5 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Innovation & Technology
- Healthcare & Biosciences



## START UP COMPLEX (OFFICE)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Compact, mixed-use development featuring transit-oriented and walkable environment, attractively designed building façade and flexible leasing-term; creating an ideal habitat for start-ups and small offices.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:250 SF

FAR: 0.5 to 0.75

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 20,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 4 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Innovation & Technology
- Healthcare & Biosciences
- Education & Skills Training



## RETAIL CENTER (COMMERCIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

A retail center focused on delivering daily shopping needs and services to local employees, residents, and drivers passing through the area. Typically anchored by food & beverage outlets, along with small grocery and a gas bar. Single story with surface parking.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:350 SF

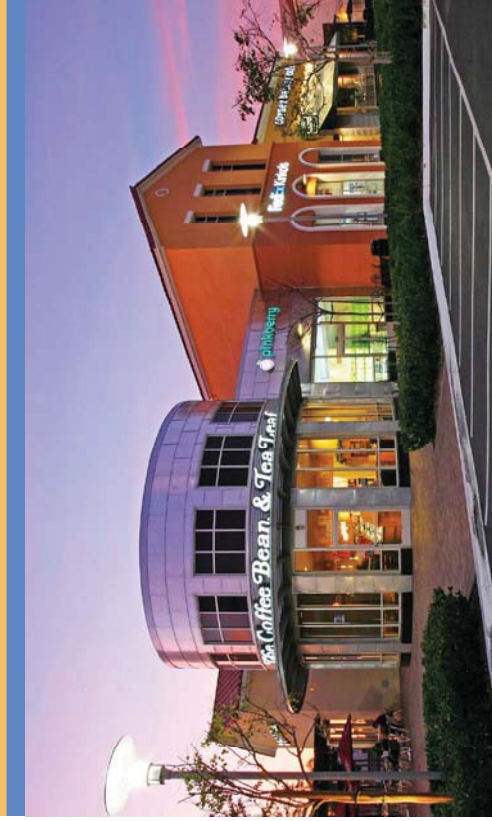
FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 30,000 to 75,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 4 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Retail Trade
- Tourism & Culture



## MIXED USE CENTER (MIXED USE COMMERCIAL)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Compact, mixed-use development with retail and amenities on the ground floor, with small offices above. Typically two to four stories in height, with parking either in an adjacent podium, or surface park in behind the buildings.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:1,500 SF

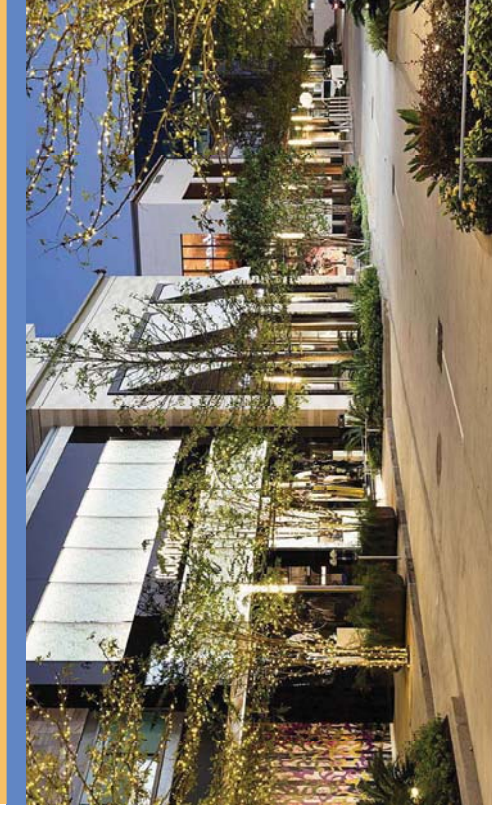
FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 50,000 to 500,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 1 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Retail Trade
- Tourism & Culture



## HISTORIC ADAPTIVE REUSE (MIXED-USE CENTER)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

Historic or architecturally significant buildings that have been re-purposed into large, mixed-use developments that contain retail, restaurants, office, and residential uses. Mix of uses is site specific and depends on the characteristics of the building and surrounding area.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:1,500 SF

FAR: 0.2 to 0.3

Tenant Spaces: 70,000 to 500,000 SF

Parking Ratio: 1 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Retail Trade
- Tourism & Culture



## CREATIVE CAMPUS ADAPTIVE REUSE (OFFICE)

### DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

The regeneration of large, underutilized industrial buildings into inspiring and collaborative office spaces. Raw materials and unfinished aesthetics combined with an open-concept are conducive to fostering innovation-oriented environments.

### TYPICAL METRICS

Employment Density: 1:250 SF

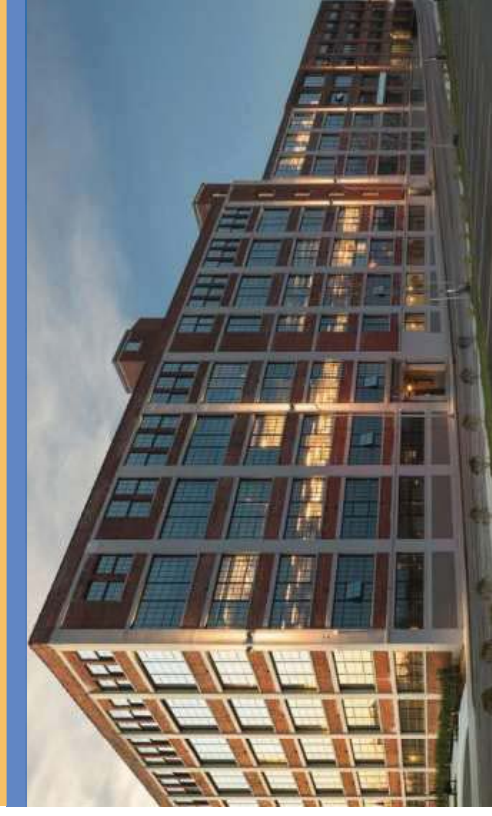
FAR: 0.5 to 0.75

Tenant Spaces: 10,000 to 20,000+ SF

Parking Ratio: 4 per 1,000 SF

### TARGET CLUSTERS

- Innovation & Technology
- Education & Skills Training
- Healthcare & Biosciences





## 8 CATALYTIC PROJECTS

# 8.1 INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

In order to activate the Gaston County CLT Connected Economic Positioning Strategy, a variety of recommended “Catalytic Projects” have been identified. Based on the findings of the Stakeholder Engagement, Economic Analysis, Real Estate Market Analysis, and Case Study research, the Catalytic Projects effectively leverage the competitive advantage of Gaston County’s proximity to CLT, while meeting wider economic development goals for the region. These Catalytic Projects act as anchor magnets to attract related up- and down-stream businesses and sectors, successfully accelerating economic growth as well as deepening the connection between Gaston County and the economic activity generated by CLT.

The Catalytic Projects for Gaston County are defined as being either:

- **Transportation and Infrastructure Projects**
- **Land Use and Development Projects**
- **Programs and Processes**

### Transportation & Mobility Catalytic Projects

- T.4 Catawba Crossings South
- T.7 South Catawba Shared Mobility Loop
- T.10 Collection of Villages Route NC Highway 7
- T.15 Mass Transit Corridor on US 74/29

\*Numbering relates to the Economic Mobility Corridor section (7.1)

### Land Use & Development Catalytic Projects

- C.1 South Gaston Industrial Development Area
- C.2 FUSE District
- C.3 Transit-Oriented Development Nodes
- C.4 South Belmont Destination Conference Center
- C.5 Temperature Controlled / Cold Chain Distribution Facility
- C.6 Trucking and Heavy Equipment Auction
- C.7 Culinary Incubator
- C.8 Medical Devices Manufacturing & Bio-Life Hub
- C.9 Food Processing and Innovation Facility
- C.10 Truck Servicing and Charging Station

### Programs & Processes Catalytic Projects

- P.1 Mill Adaptive Reuse Program and Incentives
- P.2 Economic Marketing & Communication Campaign: Gaston County’s Connectivity to CLT
- P.3 CLT Airport Connection with Gaston College
- P.4 County-wide Public Transportation System

## T.4 CATAWBA CROSSINGS SOUTH

### OVERVIEW

The Catawba Crossings South Catalytic Project includes a new road connection from South New Hope Road to a new bridge across the South Fork River, a new road across the South Point peninsula towards the Allen Steam Plant, and a new bridge across the Catawba River to the River District development and CLT Airport. Improved transportation access is a fundamental necessity for Gaston County to grow and prosper economically.

This project would increase direct access between Gaston County and the broader Charlotte Metro, as well as relieving I 85 and Wilkinson Boulevard bridges from crippling vehicle congestion. The connection with Charlotte and CLT Airport is vital for all aspects of economic development including the commuting workforce, freight, just-in-time logistics, and tourism, among others. The Catawba Crossings South project would connect to the proposed South Gaston Economic Route, and unlock land located in South Catawba and South Gastonia for large lot development (warehousing, advanced manufacturing, logistics & distribution, flex business parks, e-commerce fulfillment). Catawba Crossings South will connect the existing residential communities in South Belmont with the innovative River District development in Mecklenburg County, so the project will need to accommodate automobiles, pedestrians, cyclists, and heavy equipment trucks. Additionally, a new community hub and mixed use village could be established on the Belmont side of the Catawba River bridge to complement the River District and spur dynamic economic development for the area. This new crossing is critical to the long term development potential of both the River District and the CLT Airport southern areas.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Help unlock and utilize available land in South Gaston for economic development.
- Congestion issues along I 85 and Wilkinson Blvd. require a reliever route from Charlotte and CLT Airport.
- River District project will create additional demand for new transportation connections.

### OUTCOMES

- New transportation infrastructure will improve access and stimulate commercial development.
- Faster and more efficient connections for residents and businesses.
- Creation of new community hub and mixed-use village in South Belmont.



### CASE STUDY

#### INCHEON, SOUTH KOREA

- Opened in 2009, the Incheon Bridge provides direct access between the Songdo International Business District (IBD) and Incheon International Airport
- Incheon Bridge provides Songdo IBD access to the airport in 18 minutes, and 60 minutes to Seoul
- Songdo IBD is within the Incheon Free Economic Zone and is being built to become one of the world's top economic centres, boasting access to 1/3 of the world's population within a 3.5 hour flight

## T.7 SOUTH CATAWBA SHARED MOBILITY LOOP

### OVERVIEW

The South Catawba Shared Mobility Loop Catalytic Project could provide a designated route that accommodates all modes of mobility, including: passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and goods traffic, as well as “Shared and Alternative Mobility” modes such as Mass Transit, Transit, Autonomous Vehicles, Ride Share and Shared Ride Vehicles, Bicycles, and Pedestrian Mobility. Using the Catawba Crossing South project as the primary linkage, the Mobility Loop could connect Belmont and South Gaston County (near Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens and the South Fork River) with the River District and CLT Airport in Charlotte. The Developers of the River District have already identified their interest in considering such Alternative Mobility modes to connect the River District with CLT Airport.

Constructing this potential route across the Catawba River might allow flexibility for connecting into this system and using the Route 273 corridor through Belmont to form a Loop connecting back to the CLT Terminal Area, then south (paralleling Interstate 485) to CLT Airport’s west and south sides (including the Norfolk Southern Inter-Modal Logistics Facility), and the River District, providing a recognized “Shared Mobility Loop” for moving Residents, Employees and Visitors between CLT Airport, the River District, Belmont and Gaston County. At a minimum, this route could be established as a Transit Route, but could have the flexibility to adapt to future mobility technologies.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Lack of mobility options and transit alternatives between CLT Airport and Gaston County.
- River District employers and residents will require connections to TOD nodes and Belmont.
- Next generation mobility systems are in-demand and flexible to support multiple modes.

### OUTCOMES

- Designates an area for creating and testing technological advances in mass transit.
- Increases local ridership of public transportation by offering convenient and next generation options.
- Provides another method to cross the Catawba River.



### CASE STUDY

#### INNISFIL, ON, CANADA

- Town of Innisfil partnered with Uber to provide shuttle service on a designated route after identifying that a traditional bus system would be financially infeasible
- Saves the town \$8 million a year compared to door-to-door bus service
- Trips are subsidized by the town by \$5.62 per passenger, where a bus route would require \$33 per passenger
- Town provides flat rate fares for key destinations, as well as a \$5 discount per ride for destinations within Innisfil

# T.10 COLLECTION OF VILLAGES ROUTE - NC HIGHWAY 7

## OVERVIEW

By transforming NC Highway 7 into a Complete Street to cultivate a “multi-modal connector route”, which could offer a unique outdoor recreation and tourism destination within Gaston County. The route could connect Belmont and McAdenville, as well as providing access to Lowell, Cramerton, and the CaroMont Health campus. It might also connect to the proposed mass transit station and transit-oriented development in McAdenville. The route could also provide access to regional trail systems like the Carolina Thread Trail for additional outdoor exploration. Complete streets create a liveable and safe environment that respond to the needs of the community and local transportation context. They typically include sidewalks, bike lanes, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and clear signage. The multi-modal route could connect to local parks, recreational facilities, food & beverage establishments, employment areas, and residential communities to help foster connectivity amongst an otherwise car dominated area. Further, as creative and innovative companies value high quality amenities such as bike lanes when choosing a location for their operations, the multi-modal route could be an easily implementable, sustainable, and attractive selling point that would generate economic development along NC Highway 7, as well as elevating Gaston County’s presence with these types of companies. These improvement of NC Highway 7 could contribute to strengthening the presence and economic viability of the Corridor for new redevelopment opportunities, as envisioned by the City of Gastonia NC Highway 7 Corridor Study.

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Limited active transportation connections between Gaston County employment areas.
- Liveability and placemaking measures complement redevelopment opportunities and economic vitality.

## OUTCOMES

- Regional tourism destination of outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, innovation companies, and food & beverage.
- Reduction of traffic congestion through promoting sustainable transit alternatives.
- Elevates the presence of Highway 7 into a significant economic development corridor.



CASE STUDY

## SEATTLE, WA, USA

- The newly opened 520 Bike & Pedestrian Path features a 11-mile path along westbound lanes of Highway 520
- The route connects multiple adjacent communities including Seattle, Bellevue, Redmond, and Bothell
- Points of interest include parks, technology companies, vibrant commercial centers, and the university
- Connects users to 60 miles of regional trails across the region
- Path is accessible for bike riding, running, and walking and is expected to be used by 1,000 people each day

# T.15 MASS TRANSIT CORRIDOR ON US 74/29

## OVERVIEW

This Gaston County-wide Catalytic Project would embrace the initiatives of Charlotte Area Transportation System (CATS), the City of Charlotte and CLT Airport to explore opportunities for providing Mass Transit service from Uptown Charlotte to the CLT Airport Terminal Gateway Area, by continuing this Mass Transit service into and across Gaston County, using the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Corridor from the Catawba River to Downtown Gastonia.

The route would include multiple transit stops within Belmont, McAdenville, Dallas, and Gastonia. Such a Mass Transit Corridor should be planned to could involve a flexible evolution of technologies that could range from Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), to Light Rail Transit (LRT), to Commuter Rail, to Shared Ride Service Lanes, to Next Generation Autonomous Transit Vehicles.

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Overwhelming congestion on I 85 and Wilkinson Blvd./Franklin Blvd. (US Route 74/29) has created demand for alternative mobility options for commuters.
- Leverage the potential expansion of Charlotte's mass transit (LRT) from Uptown to CLT Airport along Wilkinson Blvd.

## OUTCOMES

- Employees can get to work easily, affordably, and on time.
- Improved internal connectivity, as well as with CLT Airport and Uptown Charlotte.



CASE STUDY

## CLEVELAND, OHIO, USA

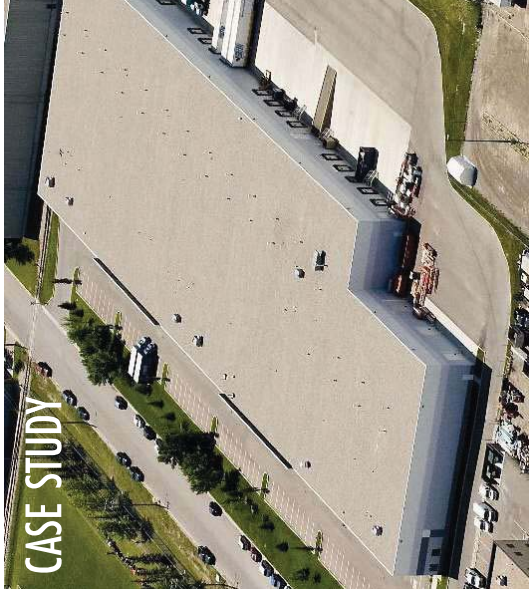
- The Cleveland HealthLine is one the best performing BRT lines in the USA
- The BRT line services over 5 million passengers per year
- Features include a dedicated bus lane for 80% of the route, traffic signal preference, overhead coverage, and seating at stations for boardings
- The HealthLine is credited with generating \$6.3 billion in local economic development
- The BRT has induced job growth and facilitated job clustering along the route, effectively doubling the number of jobs in the area

# C.1 SOUTH GASTON INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA

## OVERVIEW

Building off the recommended South Gaston Economic Route Corridor and the connectivity to CLT that would be unlocked through the Catawba Crossings South project, the South Gaston Industrial Development Area project could transform the currently underutilized and inaccessible land into an employment center for logistics, manufacturing, warehousing, and back-end office uses. Currently underutilized, the land within this area is affordable and can be viably serviced by the extra capacity available through Two Rivers Utility.

As Mecklenburg County is approaching full build out, this project might position Gaston County to capture more advanced manufacturing, fast cycle logistics, and other large lot development as the land is relatively affordable and strategically located to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. When implemented, this project could shift a significant portion of major new industrial and manufacturing development to the south end of Gaston County, therefore preserving the US Route 74/29 Corridor for urban intensification, residential, lifestyle, office, commercial space, and mass transit.



## BALZAC, ALBERTA, CANADA

- The County is capturing industrial development from the adjacent City of Calgary
- Affordable and available land for large footprint development
- Provides tax incentives to businesses
- Located 2 interchanges from Calgary International Airport, 10 minute drive
- Secured the Western Canadian Amazon Distribution Centre in 2017
- Has attracted Destination Retail to the area, as well as Residential development

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Utilize available and affordable land for economic development opportunities, instead of residential housing.
- Abundant servicing capacity from City of Gastonia.

## OUTCOMES

- Major employment area for Advanced Manufacturing, Technology & Innovation, Logistics & Distribution, and Business Office Parks.
- Companies could have direct connection to CLT Airport via South Gaston Economic Route and Catawba Crossings South.

## C.2 FUSE DISTRICT

### OVERVIEW

The FUSE (Franklin Urban Sports and Entertainment) District is an urban revitalization project that is currently in the planning and development phases with the City of Gastonia. This Catalytic Project is unique as it is already being implemented in Gaston County, and can effectively leverage its strategic location on Franklin Boulevard and close proximity to CLT Airport to spur additional economic development.

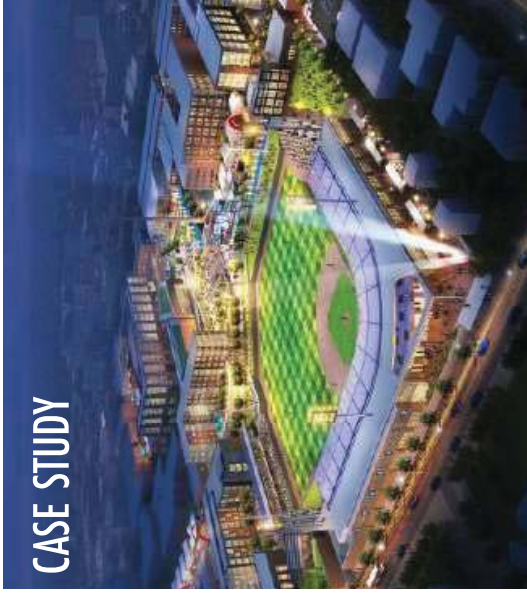
The FUSE District envisions a multi-use sports and year-round entertainment complex that will revitalize 16 acres of underutilized parcels between Downtown Gastonia and the Loray Mill project. A variety of uses will make up the destination entertainment hub, including a new multi-use stadium, multi-family residential housing, and commercial development (retail and food & beverage). The project will encourage reinvestment in the area including redevelopment of the historic Trenton Mill, and enable further spending activity in local hotels, retail, and services. The proposed Mass Transit Corridor that runs along Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) will have a terminal station in Downtown Gastonia, which will be located within walking distance from the FUSE District. Once constructed, this project will become a regional destination for sports and entertainment that can leverage its direct transportation connectivity to attract individuals flying through CLT Airport or residing in Uptown Charlotte.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Underutilized site in a central, urban location that is ripe for redevelopment and revitalization.
- Lack of modernized sports facilities and entertainment venues across Gaston County.

### OUTCOMES

- Year-round sports & entertainment complex that will refresh the downtown area.
- Mixed-use development will accommodate modern office, multi-family, and commercial spaces.
- Supports the regional tourism industry, and creates a new reason to visit Gaston County.



### CASE STUDY

## HIGHPOINT, NC, USA

- Currently under construction as of 2018, BB&T Point Stadium is a new 5,000-seat multi-use stadium
- Plans were recently unveiled for development in the area around the stadium, Phase 1 includes a festival plaza, a 120-room hotel, two office buildings, 30,000 sq ft of retail space, 120-unit apartment, and a parking deck for 510 vehicles
- The project is financed by a \$50m investment from the city and \$80m from the developer, and is expected to create 500 jobs



## C.3 TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) NODES

### OVERVIEW

To increase ridership for the Wilkinson Blvd.-Franklin Blvd. (US 74/29) Mass Transit Corridor and generate local economic development across Gaston County, each proposed station area could be transformed into a transit-oriented development (TOD) hub, which would include the development of modern office, multi-family residential, hospitality, food & beverage, and commercial space. This could build off the current retail offerings and major companies located along this corridor.

These development nodes could act as the 'first view' of Gaston County for riders of the mass transit system. Unique retail and culinary options and place-making measures will activate the public realm, creating a walkable and pedestrian friendly environment for visitors. Multi-tenant office space envisions a collaborative ecosystem for like-minded companies that prefer a denser and more urban environment. Companies that value high frequency transit access, quality office space, amenity rich surroundings, as well as direct connectivity to the airport, would consider the TOD hubs ideal for locating their professional operations.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Lack of modern multi-tenant and mixed-use developments across Gaston County.
- Gaston County's image can be enhanced by creating unique, attractive, and pedestrian-friendly hubs.

### OUTCOMES

- Improved walkability and quality of life for residents without access to vehicles.
- Attract new talent and businesses that value urban environments and mass transit.
- High quality multi-family housing for millennials that cannot afford to live in Charlotte.



### OAKLAND, CA, USA

- Considered a national model for livable communities by effectively bringing services to a dense area
- The village is adjacent to the Fruitvale BART station, one of the busiest stations in East Bay
- Fruitvale Village is a mixed-use development that includes retail, office, and multi-family residential
- Includes designated affordable housing for residents
- Wide pedestrian plazas through the village host weekly farmer's markets and event spaces



## C.4 SOUTH BELMONT DESTINATION CONFERENCE

### OVERVIEW

The South Belmont Destination Conference Center Catalytic Project could become a destination attraction by hosting a wide range of events and conferences in the Charlotte Metro area. As a primary economic development tool for local communities, conference centers provide a diversity of jobs, generate direct and indirect spending, and increase tax revenue. The Catawba Crossings South project, connecting the South Catawba Opportunity Area with CLT Airport and Charlotte, could unlock the development potential for this project. Ideal conference centers are located in areas adjacent to airports for ease of transportation for attendees. Due to its close proximity to CLT via the Catawba Crossings South project, Gaston County should leverage its strategic location by exploring options for conference venues, whether as part of a hotel or a stand-alone space. The conference center would not necessarily compete with established venues in Charlotte, but rather provide a lower cost alternative located in a riverfront and charming hometown atmosphere. Additionally, the conference center might serve as an amenity for the local residents as a place to gather, dine, and host regional events and meetings.

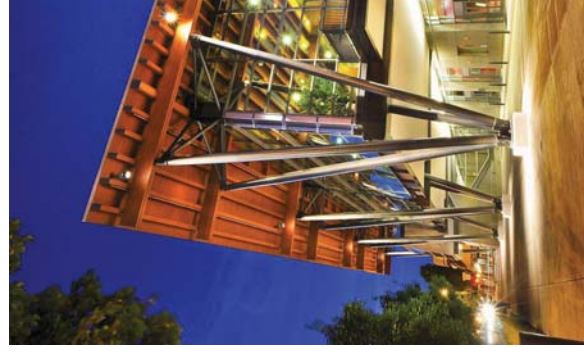
**Recommended Size:** 80,000 to 120,000 SF

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Anchor development project that supports economic rationale for the Catawba Crossing South project.
- Destination event companies look to reduce costs by finding affordable land for venues outside of major urban centers and close to international airports.

### OUTCOMES

- Host for significant events to stimulate tourism activity for Gaston, CLT, and Charlotte.
- Improve commercial attractiveness of the South Belmont area.
- Major destination on the Gaston County side of Catawba Crossings South with downstream economic benefits.
- Create new hospitality, retail trade, food & beverage, and management jobs.



### CASE STUDY



### DENVER, CO, USA

- Opening in Late 2018, the Gaylord Rockies will become a premier destination in Colorado with meeting and convention space
- The resort is a 10-minute drive from Denver International Airport and will include 1,501 guest rooms, 485,000 square feet of flexible meeting space, 5 outdoor event spaces, 8 dining outlets and other hotel amenities.
- The project is expected to create 1,500 jobs and has booked over 600,00 room nights so far

# C.5 TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED/COLD CHAIN DISTRIBUTION

## OVERVIEW

Temperature Controlled/Cold Chain Distribution Facilities typically locate their space adjacent to international airports and major highways to streamline the transport of goods. By introducing this type of facility in Gaston County, it could promote the area as an ideal location for companies to warehouse a wide range of products due to its proximity to CLT as well its immediate access to I 85. Companies would benefit from potential cost savings in their supply chain logistics by using a warehouse that is not necessarily immediately located on expensive airport land, but is close enough to provide the same level of efficiency. The distribution facility should be built to accommodate a diversity of industry products including chemicals, food items, pharmaceuticals, vitamins and supplements, as well as other dry goods that do not require temperature controls. Detached office, security, and storage space should be built with the facility to support the general options.

**Recommended Size:** 50,000 to 150,000 SF

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Leverages interstate and highway connectivity, proximity to CLT, and the availability of affordable land.
- Captures the economic activity of specialized logistics industries before surrounding regions implement a similar strategy.

## OUTCOMES

- New distribution facilities and employment opportunities for Gaston County residents.
- Supports regional economy by having a distribution chain in place and 'ready to go' for new-to-the-area businesses to integrate into their operations.



## MISSISSAUGA, ON, CANADA

- The ADLI Logistics warehouse provides flexible supply chain solutions for temperature sensitive products
- Includes chemical, ambient, cold/refrigerated, and temperature/humidity storage
- Customers include manufacturers and distributors for industries including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, vitamins & supplements, chemicals
- Helps in creation of effective supply chains, develop unique transportation and distribution solutions



# C.6 TRUCKING AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT AUCTION

## OVERVIEW

Direct access to major interstate and highway routes, as well as proximity to the Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility and CLT Airport, positions Gaston County with a feasible opportunity to pursue the transportation and trucking industries. The Trucking and Heavy Equipment Auction Catalytic Project could provide businesses of Gaston County, and of surrounding areas, with a formalized center to buy and sell used transportation equipment, heavy equipment, trucks, and other assets. Apart from the transportation industry, the Auction might facilitate the buying and selling of heavy equipment for a wide range of industries, including construction, agriculture, manufacturing, lifting and material handling, and oil & gas. This Catalytic Project could directly support the new light/flex industrial and logistics & distribution development that is recommended for the south and west sections of the County. It is also appropriate and productive use of parcels that are too expensive or difficult to adequately service for full scale development. Being located on the edges of a major urban center, Gaston County has the transportation route connectivity, as well as large tracts of available land that is needed for a Trucking and Heavy Equipment Auction Center.

**Recommended Size:** 30,000 to 120,000 SF facility. 60 to 100 acre site

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Available large parcels of unused land with access to highways and interstates.
- Attracts and Supports industry sectors including Transportation & Trucking and Logistics & Distribution.
- There is currently no regional trucking and heavy equipment auction serving Charlotte.

## OUTCOMES

- Increases local economic activity with a regional draw of buyers and sellers.
- Easier access to heavy equipment and trucks for emerging transportation-based businesses.



## CHILLIWACK, BC, CANADA

- A global asset management and disposition company offering solutions for buying and selling used heavy equipment
- Auction center for construction, concrete, agriculture, forestry, and other industrial heavy equipment
- Expansion to include collector car auctions, and online bidding
- In 2016, US\$4.33 billion of heavy equipment was bought and sold at Ritchie Bros public auctions.
- Now has 44 auction sites in 13 countries worldwide



## C.7 CULINARY INCUBATOR

### OVERVIEW

The Culinary Incubator Catalytic Project would allow food-based entrepreneurs to grow their business in a commercial 'makerspace' for food and connect with likeminded individuals. An incubator not only provides shared co-working space for business owners, but also teaches the regulatory, food supply, marketing, and customer side of the business. Food artisans can showcase and test their products on the market, and residents have access to craft food options and an opportunity to support local businesses. Urban settings are not required for culinary incubators as currently 40% of incubators in the USA are located outside of city centers. Leveraging off the microbrewery culture that is expanding into Belmont and the proposed mass transit line and multi-tenant office development, this project would offer a unique food & beverage experience that is well positioned for 'up and coming' communities and preferred by millennials. Food-based businesses such as restaurant clusters, food halls, and craft breweries have become integral components of real estate development. According to the Urban Land Institute, restaurants account for almost 50% of retail growth in the USA, up from 33% in 2009. In 2016, American consumers spent more money dining out at restaurants than they did purchasing groceries. This is the first time that dining out spending surpassed grocery spending for an average family, and this has resulted in transformative implications for how commercial real estate is strategically developed. As culinary incubators and craft breweries tend to cluster amongst each other, this project can become a regional destination for locals, as well as a nearby and convenient attraction for individuals traveling through CLT Airport for business and leisure.

**Recommended Size:** 100,000 to 150,000 SF. 6 to 8 acre site, built in phases.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Compatible food & beverage use for re-purposed warehouses or mill buildings.
- Eatery clusters are key anchors of new real estate developments.
- Local artisanal food vendors need a place to bring their products to market.

### OUTCOMES

- Supports small food-based businesses and ventures.
- Introduces diverse, local, and unique culinary options to the region.
- Attractive amenity for millennials looking to live or work in Gaston County.



CASE STUDY

### SANTA ANA, CA, USA

- Located in Downtown Santa Ana, the East End Incubator Commercial Kitchen is a rentable space for caterers, food trucks, pop ups, farmers market vendors, and other incubator concepts
- The facility offers Dry / Cold / Freezer storage, and access to all kitchen utilities, each commercial kitchen is fully self-contained
- Work space has a collaborative entrepreneurial environment with opportunities to sell and sample on-site at specialty food markets, and host classes or dinners

## C.8 MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING & BIO-LIFE HUB

### OVERVIEW

The Medical Device Manufacturing & Bio-Life Hub should include a facility used to produce technical medical devices for a variety of modern healthcare needs. Leveraging the presence of CaroMont Health as one of the largest employers in Gaston County, the hub would provide a new dimension for research and employment within the industry by introducing advanced manufacturing and technology. As a new industry sector for Gaston County, exploring options in advanced biomedical manufacturing will diversify the area's employment demographics and potentially connect the evolving healthcare workforce needs to program offerings within Gaston College and other training facilities. This would widen the range of opportunities for young adults wishing to study in Gaston County, and support hundreds of new jobs that require higher skilled labor. The Medical Device Manufacturing and Bio-Life Hub would be located in an area with direct access to major highway routes to CLT Airport in order to fulfill the just-in-time logistics needs that are critical to this industry.

**Recommended Size:** 40,000 to 350,000 SF

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Success of CaroMont Health can be leveraged for additional and diversified growth in bioscience.
- Available land located directly beside CaroMont Health Campus, with highway connections and proximity to CLT.
- Gaston County is already a leader in many forms of advanced manufacturing.

### OUTCOMES

- Make Gaston County a regional leader in bioscience and healthcare.
- Creates highly skilled, well paying job opportunities.
- Potential curriculum connections with Gaston College and Belmont Abbey College.



### CASE STUDY

### MARLBOROUGH, MA, USA

- Located in a small city with a population of 39,977, Boston Scientific's Marlborough location is home to their Endoscopy, Urology and Pelvic Health Divisions, as well as professional roles in Research & Development, Quality, Marketing, Sales Training and Finance
- 30 miles west of a major City, Boston (Gastonia to Charlotte is 22.9 miles) and 16 miles east of Worcester
- 4 buildings over a 119-acre campus
- Direct access to 3 interstates (495, 290, and 90)



## C.9 FOOD PROCESSING & INNOVATION FACILITY

### OVERVIEW

The Food Processing and Innovation Facility would establish a commercial operation that manufactures, packages, labels, or stores food for human consumption, but does not provide food directly to a consumer. Apart from distribution and manufacturing, these facilities typically feature a research & development department or innovation lab to experiment with new food practices and offer incubation services for local farmers. Through partnering with Gaston College or other education institutions, as well as local technology and existing food processing companies and CLT Airport, this facility would generate a new economic industry for Gaston County. Facilities must be located in purpose-built building that accommodate for high levels of infrastructure, utilities, and insulation usage, as well as ‘chill’ and clean rooms for food handling. Food Processing and Innovation Facilities are critically dependent on highway, rail, and airport connectivity to meet their business goals, which positions Gaston County as the right fit for this type of development.

**Recommended Size:** 200,000 to 650,000 SF

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Access to airports and interstates are critical for successful operations.
- Complementary to logistics & distribution and advanced manufacturing that already exists in Gaston County.

### OUTCOMES

- Diversifies the economy by growing Agri-Business innovation in Gaston County.
- Promotes and develop educational programs with local institutions.
- Creates a range of high quality job opportunities.



### CASE STUDY

#### LEDUC, AB, CANADA

- The Agrivalue Processing Business Incubator is a multi-tenant facility dedicated to the development of new agricultural technologies and supplies, enabling new food processors, and encouraging the growth and expansion of the food industry
- Core services include product and process development, analytical services, sensory evaluation, food science, business planning, cost accounting, legal advice, marketing, distribution, and quality assurance
- The facility has close proximity to the Airport and direct highway access



# C.10 TRUCK SERVICING & CHARGING STATION

## OVERVIEW

The Truck Servicing and Charging Station would be a highly accessible facility that includes a variety of uses including fueling, basic servicing, B-double access and short-term parking areas. The station should feature integrated charging stations for electric trucks and personal vehicles. A portion of the site could be dedicated to fueling for standard vehicles, along with a small amount of convenience retail, services, and food & beverage options.

**Recommended Size:** 2 to 4 Acres



## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Directly supports the proposed logistics, distribution, and e-commerce fulfillment development in South Gaston.
- Transition to sustainable modes of transportation, including electric vehicles and trucks.

## OUTCOMES

- Convenient amenities and facilities to support commercial truck drivers.
- Accommodate local motorists who have adopted electric vehicles.



# P.1 MILL ADAPTIVE REUSE PROGRAM & INCENTIVES

## OVERVIEW

The adaptive reuse of old, underutilized industrial mills is a trend across the country, however this process can be difficult to pursue as retrofitting and permitting costs can outweigh the cost of demolition and re-building a modern development. To preserve the industrial mill heritage of Gaston County, an Mill Adaptive Reuse Program or Incentive should be implemented to help developers and property owners feasibly retrofit the interior for new uses, while retaining the original features of the structure. While these sites may not be used for industrial purposes again, they provide authentic opportunities for community enhancement and re-purposing for unique office and retail space, as well as potential multi-family residential as was demonstrated by the successful Phase 1 of the Loray Mill project. Protecting the authentic and architecturally stunning building stock is critical for Gaston County to differentiate itself from Charlotte and Mecklenburg County when attracting creative and technology companies, millennials, food & beverage establishments, and events.

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- High costs of retrofitting and permitting have made adaptive reuse projects very difficult for prospective developers.
- Innovative office, commercial, and residential spaces are needed to support diverse business models and creative industry tenants.

## OUTCOMES

- Increases the number of historic mill and building re-purposing projects, and reduces demolitions.
- Supports small business and property owners throughout the entire process.
- Creates housing that addresses live/work units and other unconventional workspaces.



## GREENSBORO, NC, USA

- In 2012, Self-Help Venture Funds takes over ownership of the Revolution Mill and begins work on a \$100 million redevelopment
- Redevelopment created 1,200 jobs over 18 months, a payroll of \$25m
- Home now to more than 75 businesses, 240,000 sq ft of office, meeting & conference, 142 loft apartments, shops and restaurants
- Self-Help is a nonprofit community-development organization focused on providing financial services to create thriving communities and neighborhoods



## P.2 ECONOMIC MARKETING CAMPAIGN: GASTON COUNTY'S CONNECTIVITY TO CLT AIRPORT

### OVERVIEW

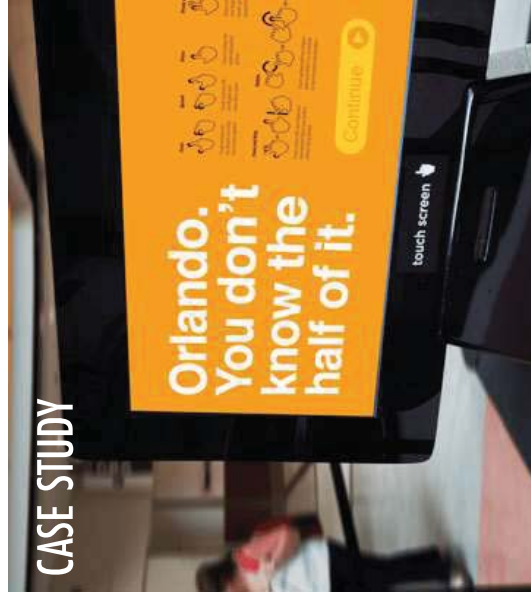
An Economic Marketing Campaign will establish Gaston County as an attractive hub for business investment by highlighting the area's connectivity to CLT Airport, access to major highways including Interstate 85, strong labor force and Gaston College, as well as tax incentives. By specifically promoting the area's proximity to CLT, Gaston County can attract innovative companies that look for international airport accessibility as a key criterion during their site selection process, and might not have initially considered Gaston County as a viable option. Through a targeted Economic Marketing Campaign, Gaston County can reinvent its identity as a highly attractive and flexible business environment that offers affordability and seamless connectivity to CLT Airport, as well as Charlotte – the fastest growing metro area in the country. The Gaston Outside "GO" Campaign, currently underway, includes many elements of the recommended Economic Marketing Campaign. From digital advertising in the Charlotte Business Journal highlighting catalytic developments like the Warlick YMCA and the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, to displays and advertising at Urban Land Institute and airport conferences, the development and business elements of the "GO" Campaign are an excellent start for Gaston County.

### WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Communicate Gaston County's role in Airport-Connected Development.
- Use the airport as economic rationale for financial and transportation investment.
- Attract businesses to 'jump the river' based on Gaston County's commitment to airport-related economic sectors.

### OUTCOMES

- Targeted commercial investment that will subsequently create jobs and increase tax revenue.
- Generates new public-private partnerships to increase the economic diversity of the region.



### CASE STUDY

### ORLANDO, FL, USA

- Created by the city's Economic Development Committee, the campaign tries to get businesses to move to the Orlando area by dispelling the myth that the region is all about tourism
- Public-Private partnership of over 40 companies to help fund the effort
- Campaign began in 2015 and spends about \$2 million a year
- Goal is to draw 17% more jobs, \$600 million in new payroll, \$1 billion in gross regional product and \$2.2 billion in sales to Orlando.



# P.3 CLT AIRPORT CONNECTION WITH GASTON COLLEGE

## OVERVIEW

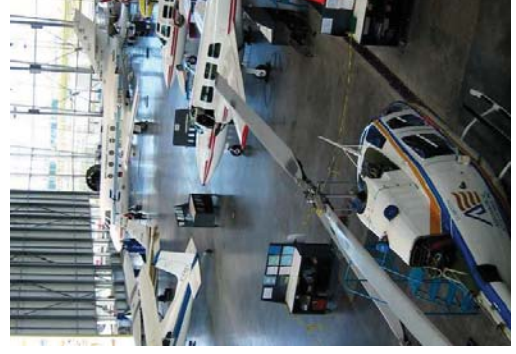
International airports offer the opportunity to facilitate and invest in education and training programs that respond to the evolving workforce needs of the aerospace and aviation industries. Working with Gaston College, CLT Airport can begin to recognize potential worker shortages and identify the 'in demand' technical skills within the industries. By initiating an intentional and targeted liaison connection with CLT Airport, Gaston College can better understand the current industry needs, and in turn offer programs and courses that pro-actively train students who reside in Gaston County to transition into employment roles with the airport. An aerospace or aviation related education program would fit appropriately to the current program offerings at Gaston College, which include industrial-related programs, technical programs, and vocational school programs.



## CASE STUDY

### CALGARY, BC, CANADA

- Art Smith Aero Centre occupies 17 acres at Calgary International Airport
- Home to School of Transportation for programs in aviation, opened in 2004 as there was a foreseeable significant shortage of skilled worker in the aviation industry
- Features a 21,000 sq ft hangar that can accommodate a 737-700
- 7 state-of-the-art classrooms, 13 labs for sheet metal, composite material, avionics, etc.
- Includes 110,000 sq ft concrete apron and 18,000 sq ft ancillary asphalt apron



## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Provides exposure and training for in-demand skills that are not currently addressed.
- Leverages momentum from Gaston College's successful Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

## OUTCOMES

- Increase job-ready, locally-grown talent for aerospace and aviation related industries.
- Gaston College remains relevant and up to date with current industry trends and labor needs.
- Facilitate cross-jurisdictional collaboration, problem solving, and innovation.

# P.4 COUNTY-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

## OVERVIEW

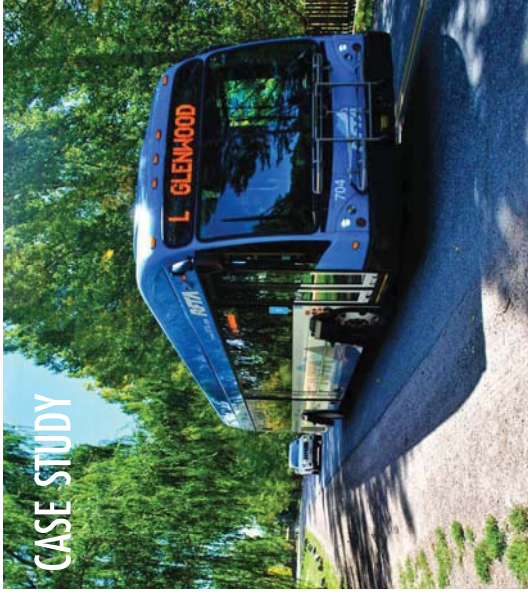
Implementing a county-wide public transportation system would represent a significant commitment to cross-jurisdictional collaboration and policymaking, equitable mobility, and new economic activity by Gaston County municipalities. As Gaston County is an urban-rural county with large distances between some communities, transit options are limited. Current options include Gastonia Transit routes, seasonal tourism and event routes, express buses to Charlotte and CLT Airports, and 'ACCESS' which offers coordinated transportation service to all of Gaston County using scheduled routes and demand-response services. Success of the public transportation system would critically depend on collaboration and funding contributions from all benefitting municipalities, as well as compatibility with future CATS expansions. This county-wide Catalytic Project could generate economic activity for the entire region by unlocking new areas for transit-oriented development (TOD) nodes, helping commuters get to work, bringing shoppers to retail centers, supporting downtown cores, and meeting the needs of festivals and events with a regional draw.

## WHY THIS WORKS FOR GASTON COUNTY

- Public transit options in Gaston County are fragmented, isolated, and infrequent.
- Employees are unable to take transit to several employment areas.
- Current vehicle traffic congestion issues indicate demand for new mobility options.

## OUTCOMES

- Employees can get to work easily, affordably, and on time.
- County-wide collaboration can work with CATS to implement a mass transit corridor.
- All municipalities receive the diverse economic benefits of having public transit.



## ASPEN, CO, USA

- Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) is the 2nd biggest transit system in Colorado, and largest rural transit system in the U.S.
- RFTA installed the first rural Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in 2013.
- The 70-mile service region (Kings Mtn. to Belmont is approx. 20 miles) includes from Aspen to Glenwood Springs and Rifle, an estimated regional population of 32,000
- RFTA has a \$32.8 million operating budget, and has received \$5 million in Federal/State grants and assistance
- Fleet includes 169 vehicles





## 9 IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

To cultivate economic development opportunities for each Opportunity Area in Gaston County by leveraging the area's proximity to CLT Airport, and further justify investment in regional transportation improvements such as the Catawba Crossings project, the Implementation Action Plan prioritizes the various Catalytic Projects and Economic Mobility Corridors into the dimension of time. Each has been strategically rolled out over short, medium, and long term time frames, including:

- **Short Term:** Years 0 to 10
- **Medium Term:** Years 10 to 20
- **Long Term:** Years 20+

The Implementation Action Plan also indicates the potential partners and stakeholders that could be involved throughout the implementation process of each Catalytic Project or Economic Mobility Corridor. These stakeholders range from State, County, and Municipal bodies, to the private sector and external industry partners. The role that each stakeholder plays in relation to the Catalytic Projects and Economic Mobility Corridors are defined as the following:

- **Planning and Policy:** Contributing planning studies, policy documents, and overarching vision and permissions for the project.
- **Potential Funding Partner:** Provides financial support, investment, tax incentives, and grant/bursary sources for the project.
- **Marketing and Advocacy:** Supports the project by promoting its significance and importance to the broader region.
- **Implementation and Development:** Involved with physical implementation including land assembly, site preparation, and construction.

The Catalytic Projects are divided into three distinct categories: Land Use & Development Projects, Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives, and Programs & Processes, which is clearly illustrated in the following pages. The Land Use & Development Catalytic Projects have been specifically sorted by the Opportunity Area they are located in, while Enabling Transportation & Mobility Initiatives and Programs & Policy have not, as they provide benefits to the entire County. Additionally, some of the identified Economic Mobility Corridors are 'future forward' recommendations and, as such are not currently established in Gaston County. In the Implementation Action Plan, these select Corridors have been additionally identified as Catalytic Projects as they spur economic development opportunities by leveraging connectivity to CLT Airport.



# 9.3 TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY INITIATIVES ACTION PLAN

**PLANNING** (Icon: Document)

**POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNER** (Icon: Money)

**MARKETING & ADVOCACY** (Icon: Megaphone)

**IMPLEMENTATION & DEVELOPMENT** (Icon: Gear)

**0 TO 10 YEARS** (Short)

**10 TO 20 YEARS** (Medium)

**20 YEARS +** (Long)

TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY	COUNTY			MUNICIPALITIES												OTHER / EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS						
	GASTON COUNTY	GASTON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT	GREYHOUND GASTON CORPORATION	BELMONT	BESSEMER CITY	CHERRYVILLE	CRAMERTON	DALLAS	GASTONIA	KINGS MOUNTAIN	LOWELL	MCADDEVILLE	MOUNT HOLLY	STANLEY	CARDMONT HEALTH	GASTON COLLEGE	CIT AIRPORT	RIVER DISTRICT	QUALIFIDE AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM	NORTH CAROLINA TRANSPORTATION	INTERURBAN ORGANIZATION	
T 1 INTERSTATE 85 CORRIDOR	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 2 WILKINSON BLVD (US 74/79) BRIDGE	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 3 WILKINSON BLVD-FRANKLIN BLVD (US 74/29)	Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 4 COWBRA CROSSINGS SOUTH	Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 5 SOUTH GASTON ECONOMIC ROUTE	Long	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 6 CATHARA RECREATION TRAIL	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 7 CATWALK SOUTH PARK MOBILITY LOOP	Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 8 MOUNT HOLLY HIGHWAY 27 CORRIDOR	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 9 NEW HOPE ROAD ROUTE 279 CORRIDOR	Short to Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 10 NC HIGHWAY 7 COLLECTION OF VILLAGES	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 11 COX ROAD & LIMELEGER OVERPASS OF I 85	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 12 US HIGHWAY 321 CORRIDOR	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 13 CENTRAL GASTONIA	Short	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 14 HIGHWAY 16	Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp
T 15 MASS TRANSIT CORRIDOR ON US 74/29	Medium	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp	Plan, Fund, Mktg, Imp

Table 9.2 - Action Plan: Transportation and Mobility Initiatives

# 9.4 PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES ACTION PLAN

**PLANNING**  
 POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNER  
 MARKETING & ADVOCACY  
 IMPLEMENTATION & DEVELOPMENT

**0 TO 10 YEARS**  
 SHORT

**10 TO 20 YEARS**  
 MEDIUM

**20 YEARS +**  
 LONG

PROGRAMS & PROCESSES	TIMING	MUNICIPALITIES													OTHER / EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS											
		COUNTY	GASTON COUNTY	EASTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	GREATER GASTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	BELMONT	BESSEMER CITY	CHEEKYVILLE	CRAMERTON	DALLAS	GASTONIA	KINGS MOUNTAIN	LOWELL	MACDENVILLE	MOUNT HOLLY	STANLEY	CAROLINA HEALTH	GASTON COLLEGE	CLT AIRPORT	RIVER DISTRICT	CHARLOTTE AREA TRUST SYSTEM	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION			
P 1 MILI ADAPTIVE REUSE PROGRAM AND INCENTIVES	SHORT																									
P 2 ECONOMIC & MARKETING & INNOVATION CAMPAIGN	SHORT																									
P 3 CLT AIRPORT CONNECTION WITH GASTON COLLEGE	SHORT																									
P 4 COUNTYWIDE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM	SHORT TO MEDIUM																									

Table 9.3 - Action Plan: Programs and Processes

## 9.5 SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The Implementation Action Plan compliments and summarizes the key findings and direction of the overarching Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy, particularly the findings of the Economic and Market Analysis which resulted in the Forecasted Absorption Table, the Opportunity Areas, and Economic Mobility Corridors which comprises the Land Use and Development Strategy.

The Action Plan profiles the diverse collection of Catalyst Projects and Economic Mobility Corridors to help understand how each of these recommended actions work together seamlessly to define the character of future development in Gaston County, while leveraging the connectivity with CLT Airport. Further, the Implementation Action Plan indicates how specific enabling actions can be accomplished with the support of stakeholders to attract industry interest and build momentum across Gaston County.

Through a comprehensive and collaborative process, the Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy has been designed to identify economic development opportunities that fully leverage the County's close proximity and access to CLT and its Intermodal Center. The strategy has identified Target Economic Sectors and Strategic Opportunity Sites which will enable Gaston County to be proactive in attracting new industry sectors and advocate for unique economic development initiatives. Specifically, this strategy has provided the rationale for positioning for Gaston County and its constituent municipalities as excellent options outside Charlotte for CLT and Intermodal Center related development, as well as putting Gaston County on the CLT map for business recruitment and relocation.

The Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Development Strategy Document, which is separate from this Gaston County CLT Airport Connected Economic Positioning Strategy report, encapsulates the directions of the comprehensive report and Implementation Action Plan. It represents a succinct summary and call to action for pursuing the regional revitalization of Gaston County. The Development Strategy Document provides an information platform for marketing and implementing development opportunities across Gaston County.



# APPENDIX A

# APPENDIX A - POTENTIAL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

## OVERVIEW

This appendix offers potential companies in which the County could partner with in order to implement the Catalytic Projects.

### C.1 SOUTH GASTON INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA

1. **Prologis** – Logistics real estate company that partners with manufacturing and distribution companies.

Location: International company with a presence in the Charlotte market

2. **Majestic Realty Co** – Largest developer and owner of master-planned business parks in the U.S. The company's portfolio includes industrial, office, retail, sports and entertainment projects.

Location: Headquarters in Southern California with regional offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Denver, Fort Worth, Las Vegas, Laredo and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

3. **Panattoni Development Co.** – An international company that specializes in industrial real estate and warehouse development. With over 24 offices in the U.S., Canada and Europe, the company is responsible for over 302 million square feet of development.

Location: Orange County, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Chicago, Houston, Phoenix, Dallas, St. Louis

4. **Beacon Partners** – A privately held company that develops and acquires office and industrial buildings in North and South Carolina.

Location: Charlotte, NC

### C.4 SOUTH BELMONT DESTINATION CONFERENCE

1. **Gaylord Hotels** - A large convention hotel brand under the umbrella of Marriot International.

Location: Headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee

2. **Lowе Destination Development** – The hospitality subsidiary of Lowе Enterprises which constructs and invests in luxury resorts, hotels and residential communities across the U.S.

Location: Los Angeles, California

## APPENDIX A - POTENTIAL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

### C.5 TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED / COLD CHAIN DISTRIBUTION

- 1. Stellar** - Leadership in industrial refrigeration for food processing plants and cold storage facilities. Stellar has expertise in refrigeration for food and distribution, pharmaceutical, petrochemical and power generation markets.  
Location: Jacksonville, Florida
  - 2. The Opus Group** – Expertise the development, design and construction of logistics, warehousing and food production facilities. Opus has experience in constructing state-of-the-art temperature-controlled facilities that suit the unique needs of a wide variety of organizations.  
Location: Corporate headquarters are in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with regional offices in Denver, Des Moines, Indianapolis, Kansas City, St. Louis, Phoenix, and Chicago.
  - 3. Lineage** – A leading warehousing, logistics and cold storage company. The company has one of the largest facility networks in the United States.  
Location: Colton, California
  - 4. Americold** – An international company that serves as a major provider of temperature-controlled warehousing. The facilities offer additional features and capabilities such as blast freezing, tempering, food processing, and pick and pack.  
Location: Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia
- ### C.6 TRUCKING AND HEAVY EQUIPMENT AUCTION
- 1. Ritchie Bros Auctioneers** – A global asset management and disposition company that specializes in buying and selling used heavy equipment, trucks and other assets.  
Location: U.S. headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska
  - 2. Mid-South Machinery Auctions Inc.** – A construction equipment auctioneering company.  
Location: W. Monroe, Louisiana
  - 3. Martin & Martin Auctioneers, Inc** – Multi-purpose auction and equipment sales company based in the Southern United States.  
Location: Pelzer, South Carolina

## APPENDIX A - POTENTIAL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

### C.7 CULINARY INCUBATOR

1. **Community Culinary School of Charlotte** – A non-profit culinary academy that provides culinary training and life skill development in the food service industry for adults who face challenges obtaining employment.  
Location: Charlotte, NC
2. **North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services** – Owns and operates regional farmers markets in North Carolina.  
Location: Raleigh, NC
3. **Charlotte Independent Brewers Alliance (CIBA)** – A alliance that seeks to protect and promote independent craft brewers who are based in Mecklenburg.
4. **Capitol Broadcasting Company Real Estate** – The real estate arm of Capitol Broadcasting Company Inc. A notable project was the redevelopment of the Rocky Mount Mills lands into a craft beer incubator with supporting retail, residential and commercial uses.  
Location: Raleigh, North Carolina

### C.8 MEDICAL DEVICE MANUFACTURING AND BIO-LIFE HUB

1. **North Carolina Biotechnology Center** – NCBiotech offers funding programs to assist with technology development and company growth.  
Location: Research Triangle Park, NC
2. **Columbia Construction Company** – An architectural, engineering and construction company that has experience with the construction and renovation of biotechnology, pharmaceutical, healthcare, medical device and manufacturing facilities for established companies as well as start-ups.  
Location: North Reading, Massachusetts
3. **Protecs** – A project and construction management company that has experience working with medical device clients to assist with the development of turn-key facilities. Protecs builds manufacturing plants, as well as corporate research and development facilities.  
Location: Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania
4. **Fluor** – An international company that specializes in facility design-build for the life sciences sector. The company has experience in designing and building a variety of life science facilities including pilot plants, lab space, medical facilities, and commercial manufacturing space.  
Location: Headquarters in Irving, Texas.

# APPENDIX A - POTENTIAL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

## C.9 FOOD PROCESSING AND INNOVATION FACILITY

- 1. Gray Construction** – A company that specializes in design-build and construction management of food and beverage facilities across the U.S.  
Location: Headquarters in Lexington, Kentucky
- 2. Spanda Industrial** – A commercial and industrial contracting company that offers services in design-build, land development, retrofitting, and steel building. Food processing plant construction is one of the company's areas of expertise. They are involved in both new build and renovation projects.  
Location: California, Nevada, Sacramento
- 3. Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) Incubator Farm Project** – The CESF is a partnership between the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and North Carolina State University. The CESF partners with communities to turn available land into new farm incubators.  
Location: Raleigh, North Carolina
- 4. Gaston County Economic Development Commission** – Assists with the strategic development of available land and buildings by offering a customized package of information to companies that are completing a location analysis.
- 5. Golden Leaf Foundation** – A non-profit that partners with rural communities in North Carolina to increase economic opportunities.  
Location: Rock Mount, NC

# APPENDIX A - POTENTIAL COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

## P.1 MILL ADAPTIVE REUSE PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES

- 1. Cross Street Partners** – A real estate company that specializes in adaptive re-use of historic buildings and brownfield remediation. Cross Street partners with American Communities Trust (ACT) to work on projects that are focused on community development.  
Location: Baltimore, Maryland
- 2. North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (Restoration Services Branch)** – This department reviews and provides technical assistance to all federal and state preservation tax projects.
- 3. White Point Partners** – A private real estate investment firm that specializes in the acquisition and development of multi-family, office and retail opportunities in the southern United States. This local commercial real-estate firm has been involved in a number of adaptive re-use projects in the Charlotte area.  
Location: Charlotte, NC
- 4. Perkins + Will** – A multidisciplinary design firm with an international presence. The company offers expertise in adaptive reuse, brownfield remediation, and preservation planning.  
Location: Headquarters in Chicago, Illinois.
- 5. CBG Building Company** – A U.S. based construction company that has experience in renovation/adaptive reuse projects.  
Location: Headquarters in Washington, DC, with regional headquarters in Woodland Hills, California, San Diego, California, Lewisville, Texas and Tampa, Florida.