



Project Work Plan – 2025 Land Use Plan

PROJECT: **Comprehensive Land Use Plan - 2008-2025**

OBJECTIVE: To develop a comprehensive, long-range plan for addressing community needs to:

- Clearly articulate the community's vision for its future
- Ensure that the community can provide services like police, fire, and refuse collection efficiently while maintaining a relatively low tax rate for its citizens
- Engage community consensus in creating a vision that can guide the Town Board and make future decision-making easier and less politically charged
- Limit the Town's exposure to legal challenges of arbitrariness in its regulatory controls by having a well-crafted Land Use Plan adopted (and if followed)
- Increase the Town of Spencer's viability for additional state and federal resources and grants by having the often prerequisite well-crafted plan that is being followed

TIMELINE: June 2007 - August 2008

- Developed and conducted RFQ process for consulting firms; formed LUP Advisory Committee; identified key issues through public input sessions and surveys; conducted background research and developed vision & development concepts; vetted with Town Board and Planning Board; conducted public hearings; submitted for adoption.

August 12, 2008: Town Board adopted Master Plan

August 2008 - Calendar Year 2025: Implement Plan Strategies

MEASUREMENT OF OBJECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT:

To have developed a comprehensive 2025 Land Use Plan by the end of calendar year 2008 representing the community's vision for its future. For the seated and future Town Boards to be following that plan, and/or amending it as necessary, to develop realistic and representative goals and strategies for guiding the community forward each year.

Town completed Study / Board adopted Land Use Plan 2025 on August 12, 2008



Highlights of Goals, Implementation Strategies, and some of the more-notable follow up items

<div style="background-color: #4a7c59; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">6</div> <h3 style="margin: 0;">SECTION SIX: GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES</h3> <p>Based on the background research, Land Use Advisory Committee guidance and public input received through the survey and meetings, a list of goals have been developed. The Advisory Committee identified the first four issues that were then verified through public input to include the addition of facilitating commerce and industry opportunities, as well as transportation improvements within the Spencer area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve / Revitalize Downtown Retail / Commercial District ❖ Improve the public perception of the Town of Spencer (with special emphasis on quality of life and shopping opportunities), ❖ Protecting existing neighborhoods ❖ Improve the performance and perception of the schools in Spencer. ❖ Facilitate commerce and industry opportunities within Spencer ❖ Facilitate and encourage transportation improvements <hr/> <p>Potential strategies to implement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Improve / Revitalize Downtown Retail / Commercial District <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate a downtown culture and arts district <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Officially designate the downtown area and encourage a mix of uses to create an active community center for culture and arts to include restaurant, entertainment and housing opportunities • Work with development association to develop a four point approach to downtown revitalization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The National Main Street Center has developed a comprehensive and proven approach to downtown success. The four points are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotions ○ Design ○ Economic Restructuring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to connect the business district with the transportation museum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inviting signage could be erected on the museum property to lead visitors to a pedestrian walkway designed to mimic rail crossings – encouraging visitors to walk across the street safely to conduct business in downtown ○ Consider a joint marketing with the Museum where the museum encourages tourists to visit downtown and vice versa ○ Signage and brochures could be developed and on display at the museum • Build off of existing events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take advantage of large events already being held – for example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cruise in ○ Thomas the Tank ○ Other events • Promote a private, nonprofit organization to hire a downtown development manager as funds can be raised <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A "shepherd" is needed to oversee overall strategy and implementation of initiatives for the downtown. Consider the following - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteer or paid position (full or part-time) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Membership ○ Fundraising ○ Consulting services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring expertise on a part-time basis to assist with the management • Downtown Redevelopment/Revitalization Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A detailed overall strategy will be needed to move the downtown efforts forward. The Plan can be derived with various forms of assistance - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCDDA (NC Downtown Development Association) – revise previous plan ○ Small Town Main Street and/or Main Street Program ○ Rural Center Programs ○ Consultant prepared
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⇒ Improve / Revitalize Downtown Retail / Commercial District

- *Town has continued to review and revamp ordinances and list of uses to simplify permitting processes, allow more uses by simple permit, allow multiple uses, and encourage development*
- *Town applied for and has continued to commit resources for the Small Town Main Street program since 2012 (program to assist businesses with developing a sustainable downtown improvement program by the Four-Point Approach™, which in turn builds commercial tax base, which in turn helps offset the effects of more cost-extensive residential services)*
 - *We were recently recognized for our efforts and success with the program. During the past year in the downtown district alone, over \$1.1 million was invested in our very limited downtown area: 14 building rehabs and 9 façade renovations were completed; 3 (net!) new businesses opened in the downtown; 2 net full-time jobs were created.*
- *Connecting business district with NC Transportation Museum (NCTM)*
 - *Town representative(s) has served on each of the NCTM Strategic Site Planning initiatives, which have resulted in (to name just a few): Improvements to NCTM's historically "pedestrian" entrance into downtown; a map of the downtown for NCTM visitors near that entrance for a downtown organization to maintain; wayfinding signage; NCTM partnership with Town on Small Town Main Street initiative; NCTM representation and involvement in downtown merchant association activities; joint marketing and promotions between Town and NCTM / active encouragement to business owners to join in and do the same.*
- *Continued enhancement of the Town's Façade Grant Program to encourage improvements*
- *Continued enhancement of downtown signage, landscape and streetscape design*
 - *Seasonal banners program and upgraded Christmas / holiday decorations*
 - *Downtown crosswalks construction & enhancement project*
 - *Ongoing downtown landscape maintenance despite budget and staffing cuts*
- *Town has consistently provided support for business initiated Cruise-In and cross-promotional NCTM event efforts (planning, staffing, traffic control, resources)*
- *Town has provided staff, support and resources to business association / nonprofit downtown organizations each time they have formed, reformed, or when Town has initiated revitalization catalysts*

- ❖ *Improve the public perception of the Town of Spencer (with special emphasis on quality of life and shopping opportunities)*
 - Partnerships with Rowan Tourism Development
 - How can strategies be developed to help Spencer market itself?
 - Build off of existing events and attractions
 - Explore branding and marketing initiatives
 - Build off of themes unique to Spencer, such as -
 - "Steam and Economic Engines"
 - "Two Tracks – One Great Town"
 - Spencer "Shops" (the museum – old Spencer Shops and people come there to shop – play on words)
 - Town of Spencer, NC-- Home of Spencer Shops
 - "Hear the whistle blow as we grow"
 - Spencer, North Carolina -- Area Center of Culture and Commerce
 - "In the center" theme (see example ad on the following page)
 - Geographic Center of NC
 - Transportation Center with the Museum
 - Unique Raceway Center
 - Culture and Commerce Center

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⇒ Improve the public perception of the Town of Spencer (with special emphasis on quality of life and shopping opportunities)

- Continued outreach to and partnership with Rowan Tourism in downtown marketing initiatives
- Concurrent planning with NCTM led to the development of Rowan Tourism as an official marketing arm of NCTM in 2013
- Town actively helps promote downtown businesses and initiatives through its social media and partnerships with other agencies
- In the absence of an active, organized private/nonprofit downtown organization, Town has continued to act as a communication liaison between NCTM and downtown events
- Staff continues to relay professional advice and resources to Board and groups on ways to promote the Town, including challenges, in a positive light instead of focusing on or inadvertently advertising negatively.

- ❖ **Protecting existing neighborhoods**
 - Advertise and promote historic district incentives
 - Consider current time allocated to Code Enforcement efforts
 - Consider establishing proactive Neighborhood Organizations
 - Conduct a detailed study of vacant lots with infill potential
 - Develop example building types and styles that would fit the character of the neighborhood and possibly accelerate approval process
 - Update inventory of housing stock and its condition in all neighborhoods
 - This may be conducted as part of an overall neighborhood or housing development/redevelopment planning effort



Vacant Corner Lot



Potential "infill" development in keeping with the existing character of the neighborhood

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⇒ Protecting existing neighborhoods

- Actively promoting historic district and other economic incentives for improvements
- Actively training Historic Preservation Commission on Secretary of Interior Standards that can help Historic Preservation and Main Street Solutions funding (and other) grants

- *HPC continues to identify items that can be administratively approved or otherwise streamlined to accelerate the approval process*
- *Code Enforcement staffed full-time 2008-2011. Town was progressively developing program, focused on building proactive / sustainable neighborhood support initiatives. Position was eliminated in FY11-12. Funding for a part-time position was reinstated in FY12-13. Increased funding for code enforcement personnel was amended in FY14-15. As these changes have happened and new staff each time has been recruited, hired and trained, Town continues to again develop code enforcement program with emphasis on building neighborhood-based initiatives, support & partnerships as envisioned from the LUP 2025 findings.*
- *Conducted in-depth "Rental Properties" and Rental Licensing Program studies in 2008, 2010 and 2012/13. Amended and enhanced ordinances. Findings have consistently pointed toward development of neighborhood/volunteer-initiated efforts as the most successful, effective, and sustainable initiatives.*
- *Town continues to study ways to identify and engage neighborhood leaders that can establish and build successful, proactive Neighborhood Organizations as identified in the LUP 2025 plan*
- *Community development block grant secured to abate lead-paint issue and save / fully renovate landmark historic home at 222 N Salisbury Avenue*
- *Partnership with Salisbury Community Development Corporation has focused on educating current and future homeowners in need about financial assistance programs through the SCDC and other partners. As funding becomes available, SCDC has pledged its support of assisting with Block Grants and other "inventory and neighborhood condition efforts" as called for in the LUP 2025. (see also Residential / Housing Strategies goal)*
- *Organizational efficiency study within the Spencer Police Department resulted in a restructuring of positions to better address current crime trends. That and other continuous developments of community policing principles by the department were direct contributors to:

 - *31% net decrease in Major Crimes from 2011-2015*
 - *26.1% net decrease in Total Offenses since 2011-2015**
- *Re-establishing and training a Community Appearance Commission in 2015 to assist with community beautification and neighborhood revitalization efforts (see also Residential / Housing Strategies goal).*
- *Partnership with Historic Salisbury Foundation:

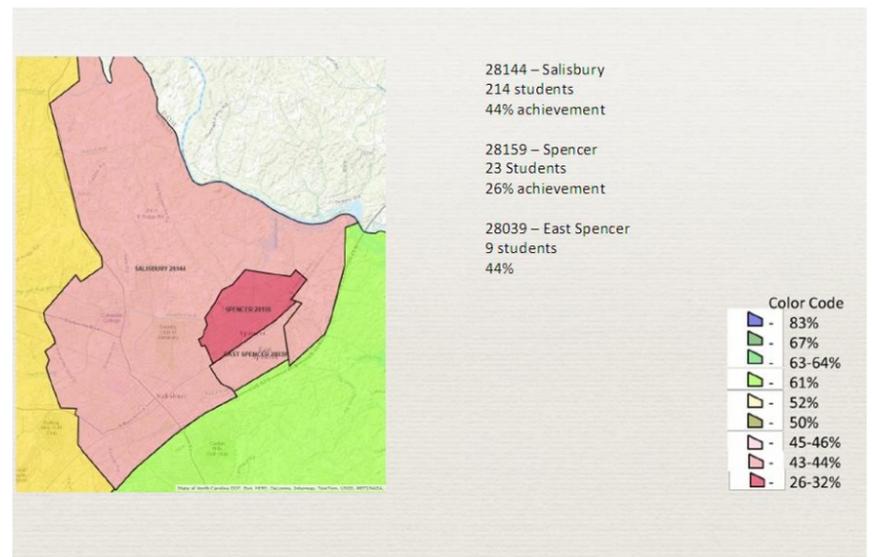
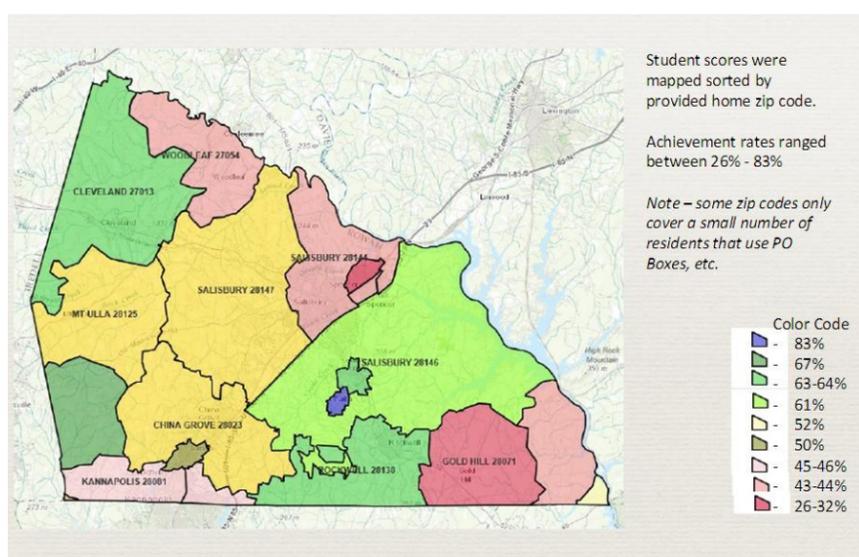
 - *continue to focus on proactively connecting willing owners of blighted or nuisance historic properties with the HSF for potential acquisition or improvement opportunities*
 - *development of this area's first "Paint Pals" program; first project slated for 8/2015*
 - *option is currently developed, extended and pending on a pivotal historic property project that has been in the making for 15+ years**

- ❖ **Improve the performance and perception of the schools in Spencer.**
 - Partner with schools to
 - Identify the key issues
 - Identify areas where the Town and its citizens can help improve the community and schools
 - Consider assistance from the Rowan Partners in Schools
 - Identify other areas across the state that have turned around school perception (For example, Enloe in Raleigh, which became a Magnet School and became a desired school for parents to send their children)
 - Improve connections with the school
 - Facilities at the school are renovated with some new construction
 - Consider and explore the "Safe Routes to School" program
 - Research opportunities to plan for bicycle and pedestrian access to schools
- ❖ **Facilitate commerce and industry opportunities within Spencer**
 - Work closely with Rowan EDC to identify, secure, and promote key development sites / properties
 - Provide marketing data to potential businesses
 - Data and studies can be made available on the Town's website as a free service for potential businesses
 - Data can be updated on a quarterly or annual basis
 - Implement a marketing strategy to attract potential businesses for downtown and for the Town as a whole
 - Utilize Marketing data to target specific businesses within the area and outside of the area to locate in Spencer (detailed strategy and recommendations will be in final plan)
 - Identify necessary utility and transportation improvements that may be needed
 - Provide greater flexibility for businesses within ½ mile of the interstate, to include setback, signage, and parking accommodations
- ❖ **Facilitate and encourage transportation improvements**
 - I-85 bridge construction is a priority
 - Key intersections in town that may need improving

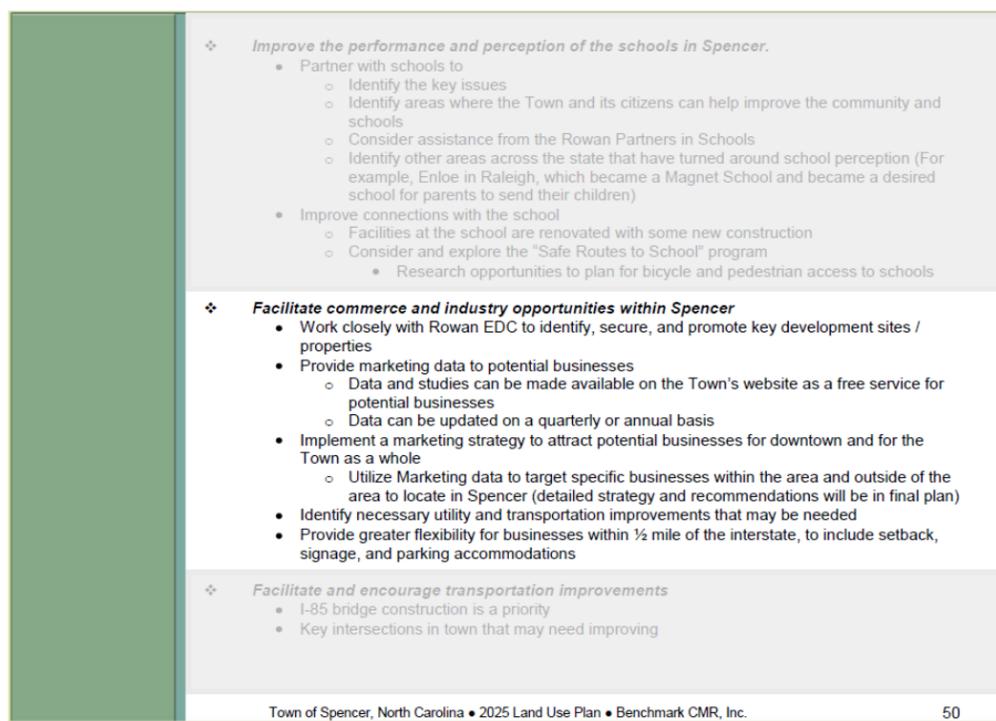
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⇒ Improve the performance and perception of the schools in Spencer

- *Met with schools. In 2008, initiated "Student of the Month Award" recognition at each Board meeting during the school year for each North Rowan School.*
- *Partnered with schools to conduct a "Walk to School Day" in 2008, which helped us received additional Safe Routes To School and other NCDOT Enhancement funding.*
- *Have continued Division-funded/assisted SRTS projects as funding has become available (Harrison Street sidewalks, qualifying portions of a major August 2008 Municipal Agreement project and sidewalk / Bike & Pedestrian studies since).*
- *The Countywide "Community Forum" facilitated by the Gateway Partners in 2013 identified Literacy as a key issue & objective to be tackled. The Town partnered with Rowan-Salisbury School System as it was developing its own strategic plan over the course of the next year. We assisted with community-driven surveys and public input sessions with RSSS, studied the statistics, and the Partners & Rowan-Salisbury School System revealed the findings of the study at a Literacy Summit held in 2014. Town continues to partner with RSSS and Communities in Schools (along with Spencer Council of Churches and others) toward improving literacy initiatives in the county - our focus of course being especially on the North district.*



- *2014 Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes partnership opportunities with schools as a focus of recreational and community-building strategies (see separate Parks and Rec Master Plan goal, currently underway with implementation).*



⇒ Facilitate commerce and industry opportunities within Spencer

- *Town has worked closely with RowanWORKS ("Rowan EDC") on Industrial site selection prospects within the Town's planning and zoning jurisdiction. Amended the ordinance multiple times since 2008 LUP to clear the way for prospective industries (most recently Solar Farms and Recycling uses).*
- *Conducted two studies with Salisbury-Rowan Utilities ~2010 about extension possibilities to the northern- and eastern-most available Industrial properties. Other infrastructure preparation opportunities remain viable and underway; water and sewer extensions in advance of known Industry-specific needs would be difficult, especially to the eastern properties.*
- *Developed an Interstate Business district 2008-09 (Board's final adopted in January 2010) that more readily accommodates retail development associated especially with Interstate-corridors.*
- *Market study, marketing data, targeting potential businesses. See "Small Town Main Street" current goal.*
- *Utility and transportation improvements. See "Connection of Downtown and NCTM to Wil-Cox" and other open/ongoing goals.*
- *See also "NC Finishing Company (High Rock Properties)" current goal.*

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⇒ Facilitate and encourage transportation improvements

- *Partnership with Davidson County, Davidson Tourism, NCDOT Divisions 9 and 10, multi-jurisdiction law enforcement agencies, ALCOA, and others during active I-85 construction. Assisted and partnered with Davidson Tourism to enlist American Society of Landscape Architects (same group that helped us develop Stanback Forest Master Plan) to develop a vision for the Wil-Cox / Fort York / Davidson County and Spencer/Rowan greenways & blueways connection at the Yadkin River (report being finalized & pending release - see Connection of Downtown and NCTM to Wil-Cox goal for more information).*
- *Downtown crosswalks construction and enhancement; partnership with NCDOT to upgrade pedestrian crossing signals at 4th and 5th St crossings; addition of several downtown on-street parking spots negotiated as part of Salisbury Avenue overlay / restriping project (plus the addition of overflow on-street parking along the entire 600 block of Salisbury Avenue); applied and received Division grant in 2008 for major expansion of sidewalks from downtown to Sowers Ferry Road (Town secured sidewalk easements for each property needed within that area).*
- *See "Connection of Downtown and NCTM to Wil-Cox" and other open / ongoing goals.*
- *See also "NC Finishing Company (High Rock Properties)" current goal.*
- *See also "Hwy 70 Bypass (proposed Jake Alexander Blvd N)" current goal.*