

# N·FOCUS

Local Government Services

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## Memo

To: Morven Town Council

From: Tom Weitnauer, AICP

Date: April 22, 2022

Re: Town of Morven Town Plan 2040 – Land Use Plan

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N-Focus, Inc., is excited to provide you with the attached Town Plan 2040 - Land Use Plan. We request your review of this important document prior to our presentation to you during the May 2 Town Council meeting. This Town Plan was approved by the Planning Board on April 19, 2022 and was recommended to the Town Council for consideration of adoption by ordinance. The purpose of providing this document in advance of the Town Council meeting is to allow you sufficient review time.

**As this document is voluminous, we suggest you initially skip the first few background chapters while proceeding to the more substantive chapters 5-9 where you will find insightful guidance for leadership in moving the Morven forward.**

After you review chapters 5-9, you may want to then review chapters 1-4. These background chapters on the community profile, demographics, and the Town's resources provided the foundation for goals and action steps in later chapters. These early chapters also serve as critical documentation the Town will reference for bonus points when applying for competitive grants from federal, state, and regional sources, to garner bonus points for financial assistance to fund projects such as public parks.

Hot links throughout the digital PDF copy, denoted by underlined blue text, will take you to supporting and relevant documents cited in the Plan.

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**An Ordinance for Adoption  
of the  
Town Plan 2040 - Land Use Plan**

*Ordinance #* \_\_\_\_\_

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Morven Town Council has called for the development of a land use plan in accordance with G.S. 160D-501; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Morven Town Council procured a consultant and directed the Planning Board to undertake such a planning process; *and*

**WHEREAS**, on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 the Town of Morven Planning Board, by unanimous vote, recommended the adoption of *Town Plan 2040 Land Use Plan* in accordance with the procedures of G.S. 160D-501(c) and Article 6 of G.S. 160D; *and*

**WHEREAS**, a public legislative hearing was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2022; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Morven Town Council continues in its commitment to the future of Morven.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED**, by the Town of Morven Town Council to adopt the *Town Plan 2040 Land Use Plan* as the requisite plan for the Town and to implement the foundational principles of the plan through strategic initiatives as deemed responsible and fiscally sound by this and future Town Councils.

Adopted this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tim Watkins, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_

Corinthia Lewis-Lemon, Town Clerk

SEAL

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**TOWN OF MORVEN**  
**Town Plan 2040**  
**Land Use Plan**



*April 22, 2022 DRAFT*

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended by Morven Planning and Zoning Board: April 19, 2022

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Planning Board Approved

# Town of Morven Land Use Plan 2040

## TOWN OF MORVEN

Morven Town Hall  
301 Main Street  
Morven, NC 28119

**Adopted by the Town Council:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Town Council

Timmy Watkins, Mayor  
Marjorie Cole, Council Woman  
Corinthia Lewis-Lemon, Council Woman  
Rhonda Liles, Council Woman  
Rachel Melton, Council Woman  
Brandon Smith, Councilman

### Planning and Zoning Board

Casey Butler  
Katrina Carr  
James Flowers III  
Janet Peguese  
Alvis Snow  
Huston Pratt (Alternate)

### Administration Department

Corinthia Lewis-Lemon, Town Clerk  
Belinda Scales, Deputy Water Clerk

### Planning Department

Corinthia Lewis-Lemon, Town Clerk

### Planning Team

Tom Weitnauer, AICP, Town Planner, Lead Author  
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Planning Board Approved



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Planning Board Approved

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# 1. WHY PLAN OUR TOWN?

The purpose of the ***Town of Morven Land Use Plan 2040*** (“Town Plan”) is to provide information and perspective used to pinpoint and prioritize actions to support a resilient, self-sustaining community. The Town Plan must encourage economic opportunities, while at the same time maintaining the character and resources essential to Morven in a vibrant, growing urban region. An up-to-date plan balancing the changing trends, environmental mandates, and the Town’s vision is essential to the success of Morven and its inhabitants. Information contained in the Town Plan should serve as the basis for both investment and future development decisions.

Morven Town Plan has been designed for regular use by citizens, businesses, investors, leadership, and agencies in making decisions affecting the future of Morven. This Town Plan is vital to making informed decisions that will both account for current conditions while maintaining perspective about the future when doing so. A Town Plan is the foundation of almost all capital improvement and growth decisions. ***Adoption of Town Plan 2040 is not the end; it is a consensus on where to begin!***

## 1.1 About Town Planning

Long-term planning for the future of a community is vitally important. One tool to guide the future of a community is the planning process and adoption of a land use plan. Part of a land use plan is designed to provide an overview of a community’s existing conditions and physical development. The main function of the plan is to serve as a guide to a community’s future development policy. The goals of a land use plan aim to:

- involve the community in developing a long-term vision,
- address what should be maintained or changed in the future to achieve that vision,
- identify future land uses in an overall community-wide context,
- identify and prioritize needed future infrastructure improvement aimed at supporting the vision, and
- provide implementation guidance as to the private and public investment strategies to realize the vision.

Part of the on-going planning process is monitoring the plan’s progress as a fluid document. §N.C.G.S. 160D does not set a specific time frame for updating the comprehensive plan, but it does call for plans to be “*reasonably maintained.*” As recommended by the UNC School of Government, “*factors determining reasonableness would include rate of growth and change as well as physical, economic, and social conditions so professional practice calls for comprehensive plans to be updated every 5-10 years. If the community has experienced rapid change, then an update every five years may be more defensible.*” ***Planning is an ongoing process!***

## 1.2 Official State Policy

The State of North Carolina requires local governments in NC General Statute 160D to adopt a plan to be eligible for certain funding, powers and authority by July 1, 2022. The plan is to be used as an assurance to the public that local decisions are made with a perspective on the future implications of pending decisions, and to affirm that public accountability and fiscal responsibility are considered as part of the decision-making process.

Decisions made about public spending and growth can often appear centered around individuals involved and how they may benefit. When governing board decisions adhere to an adopted plan, those individual interests are balanced with others affected by the outcome of decisions, which include citizens, property owners, and businesses.

### 1.3 Statutory Reference

*Town of Morven Land Use Plan 2040* shall serve as the adopted plan pursuant to §N.C.G.S. 160D in the planning and regulation of development.



## 2. ABOUT MORVEN

### 2.1 Town of Morven’s Philosophy

We're "Morven Strong" ....When things knock us down as a community, we get back up and press on. We are Stronger together than apart, and we hold true to our past to help guide us to a better future.

### 2.2 Town of Morven Background

#### 2.2.1 Location

The Town of Morven, North Carolina is located within Anson County. The Town, bisected by US Highway 52 (north/south) and NC Highway 145 (west/east), is approximately 10 miles south of the Town of Wadesboro. Based on current Census data, the Town’s corporate limits encompasses approximately 1 square miles of land area.

**Health Care Facilities:** While there are no hospital facilities within the corporate limits of the Town, there are several major medical facilities in the general vicinity including:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Distance from Morven</b>	<b>Services:</b>
Wadesboro Health and Rehabilitation Center - Wadesboro	6.3 mile	Rehabilitation Center
Primary Health Choice & A Primary Choice, Inc – Wadesboro	8 miles	Mental Health Services
Lillie Bennett Nursing Center - Wadesboro	8.2 miles	Nursing Home
Anson Health & Rehabilitation - Wadesboro	8.3 miles	Rehabilitation Center
Corner Stone Treatment Facility	9 miles	Assisted Living Facility
Meadowview Terrace of Wadesboro - Wadesboro	11.3 miles	Assisted Living Facility
Atrium Health Carolinas Medical Center – Wadesboro	13.7 miles	Full Service Hospital
Pinehurst Surgical Clinic – Rockingham	17.8 miles	Surgical clinic
First Health Moore Regional Hospital - Rockingham	18.1 miles	Full Service Hospital
FastMed Urgent Care – Rockingham	18 miles	Urgent care and general family care medical services
Scotland Memorial Hospital - Laurinburg,	38.9 miles	Full Service Hospital
First Health Moore Regional Hospital - Pinehurst	47 miles	Full Service Hospital

**Census Statistical Area:** The Town is in a region defined as the *Charlotte Metropolitan Area*, which is also a part of the *Charlotte-Concord Combined Statistical Area (CSA)*. Located in the Piedmont region of the state, the CSA includes urban/suburban areas in and around the City of Charlotte in both North and South Carolina, the largest in the Carolinas, is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States (US) and the fourth largest in the Southeastern US.

According to 2020 census estimates, the CSA has:

- Total land area of approximately 3,200 sq. miles;
- A population estimate of 2,636,883 (population 18% population increase from the 2010 Census)<sup>1</sup>;

### 2.2.2 History

**Anson County:** The county was formed in 1750 from portions of what is now Bladen County and named for Admiral George Lord Anson, a British admiral who circumnavigated the globe from 1740 to 1744. For a time, Anson County was one of the largest territories in the colony of North Carolina whose boundaries extended as far west as the Mississippi River. As the region continued to grow and be settled, portions of historic Anson County became Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Anson, and Union Counties.

The county seat, Wadesboro, was established in 1783 and was known as *New Town* until 1787, when it was renamed for Revolutionary War soldier and North Carolina legislator Col. Thomas Wade.

Anson County was home to a considerable population of Catawba and Cheraw Indians, whose settlements along the Pee Dee River offered important trading outposts. Today, the Pee Dee River region in the county's northeast is home to the 8,443-acre Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge, one of ten such refuges in the state.

**Morven:** Named by Scottish settlers for their home, the original Town was established in 1823 but destroyed during the Civil War. When the railroad arrived two miles west of the original settlement, Morven was reestablished west in its present location along U.S. Highway 52 south of Wadesboro. According to the Town website:

*The Town of Morven (Morvern) is of Scottish dissent from the earlier settlers from England and Scotland est. 1883. The name Morven (Morvern) means Camerons in Scotland. Morven was settled in the midst of trees, swamp and woodlands, and was served by highways and railways, over two hundred years ago when the earliest settlers were here.*

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<sup>1</sup> The CSA has a slightly larger population of 2,797,636 as this area includes the City of Albemarle and Shelby.

### 3. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The development of a Town Plan first requires that identification and analysis of certain key growth factors be performed. The intent of the analysis is to ensure that policies contained in the Town Plan address current problems, trends, and issues facing the community, including the immediate area. The key growth factors included for analysis are discussed in several subject areas within the Town Plan. Collectively, these key growth factors summarize past and present conditions, while providing the essential yardsticks for estimating future conditions.

The U.S. Census Bureau prepares a detailed statistical portrait for local governments, counties and states of their respective social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics through the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) products. The ACS 5-year estimates are constructed as period estimates and reflect the average characteristics over the five year period. In general, unless a user knows how the estimate for each characteristic is trending over time, it is not accurate to consider the 5-year estimate as an estimate at any given point within the 5 year period. However, under certain conditions, the ACS estimates can serve as a proxy. Figures from the U.S. Census Bureau *2015-2019 American Community Survey*, released on December 10, 2020, were used in several instances in developing the Community Profile for the Town of Morven, as detailed in this section. Rather than refer to the 5 year period (2015-2019) throughout the narrative in this section, the last year of 2019, will be used for brevity, but the full five year period will be noted as the source for tables and charts. On November 10, 2021, the U.S. Census issued a press release that the Bureau must delay the 2016-2020 ACS 5-year data release originally targeted for December 2021. Additional time is needed to continue refining their methodology so that they can minimize the impact of nonresponse bias due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In their methodology of defining what is a current residence in the American Community Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau considers everyone who is currently living or staying at an address for more than two months is considered a current resident of that address. This means that their expected length of stay is more than two months, not that they have been staying in the housing unit for more than two months at the time when the survey is conducted. Persons away from their residence for two months or less, whether in the United States or overseas, on a vacation or on a business trip, are considered to still be a resident at the address, and the unit is classified as occupied and eligible for inclusion in the survey. Persons away from their residence for more than two months are considered not to be a resident. For the ACS, if no one is determined to be a current resident in the sampled housing unit, it is classified as vacant.

Data contained with this element is derived from two (2) sources, namely:

1. The 2020 Decennial Census; and
2. The 2019 American Community Survey (ACS).

In those instances where actual Decennial Census data is still not yet available, this Document utilizes ACS data. It is important to understand the differences between these two data sources:

- Decennial Census data represents a ‘physical count’ of all residents occurring every ten years;
- American Community Survey (ACS) produces population, demographic and housing unit estimates based on data samples (i.e. does not represent a physical county of all residents). Data is collected on either a monthly or annual (i.e. yearly) basis.

Due to the COVID pandemic, the US Census Bureau experienced challenges in securing full participation in the Decennial Census. There are noticeable discrepancies in some data sets, most notably population, from Census and ACS data. In completing this Document, the best available data was utilized. In those cases where a disparity exists, steps have been taken to try and document those differences and provide an explanation.

### 3.1 Population

#### 3.1.1 Population Growth

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated the Town of Morven’s population in 2020 at 548 persons. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 249 households in the Town of Morven in 2020 with an average household size of approximately 2.51 people. Households include related family members, non-related individuals and people living alone. The count of households excludes group quarters. Section 3.1 provides figures within the Town of Morven town limits using U.S. Census Bureau figures.

The population of the Town of Morven decreased between 1990 and 2010, with a gradual increase between 2010 to 2020 as illustrated in Table 3.1.1A and Figure 3.1.1.A.

**Table 3.1.1.A: Town of Morven Decennial Population Estimates and Growth Rates**

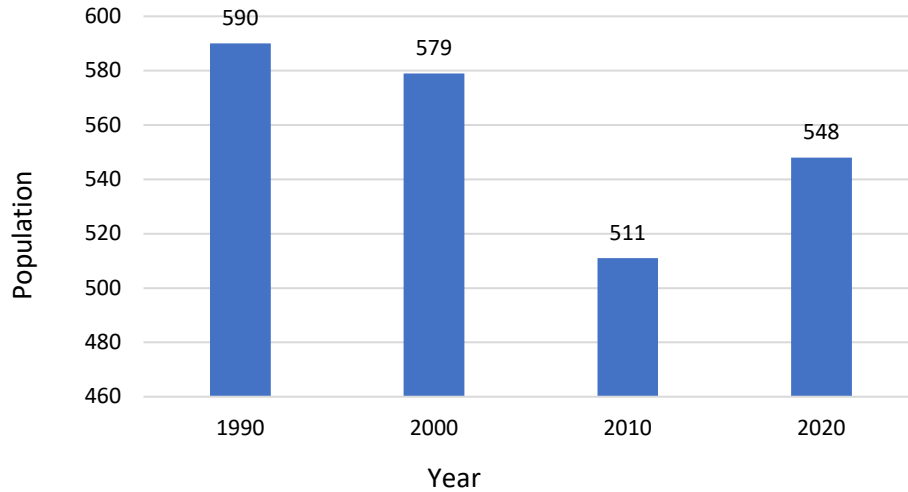
Year	Town of Morven Population	Morven’s Population Annual Increases/Decreases	Between Years
1990	590		
2000	579	-0.2%	1990-2000
2010	511	-1.2%	2000-2010
2020	548	0.7%	2010-2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey





**Figure 3.1.1.A: Town of Morven Decennial Population Estimates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Table 3.1.1.B illustrates the percentage of Morven population to the total population of Anson County throughout the past 20 years has remained relatively stable between approximately 2% to 2.5%.

**Table 3.1.1.B: Town of Morven to Anson County Population Comparison**

Year	Morven	Anson County	Morven's Population to Anson County's Population
2000	579	25,275	2.3%
2010	511	26,948	1.9%
2020	548	22,095	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

The population estimates for each year between 2010 to 2020 have been estimated annually by the U.S. Census Bureau. As illustrated in Table 3.1.1.C and Figure 3.1.1.B, the population has fluctuated every year from 2010 to 2018. There is no viable/measurable data metric available explaining the fluctuation.

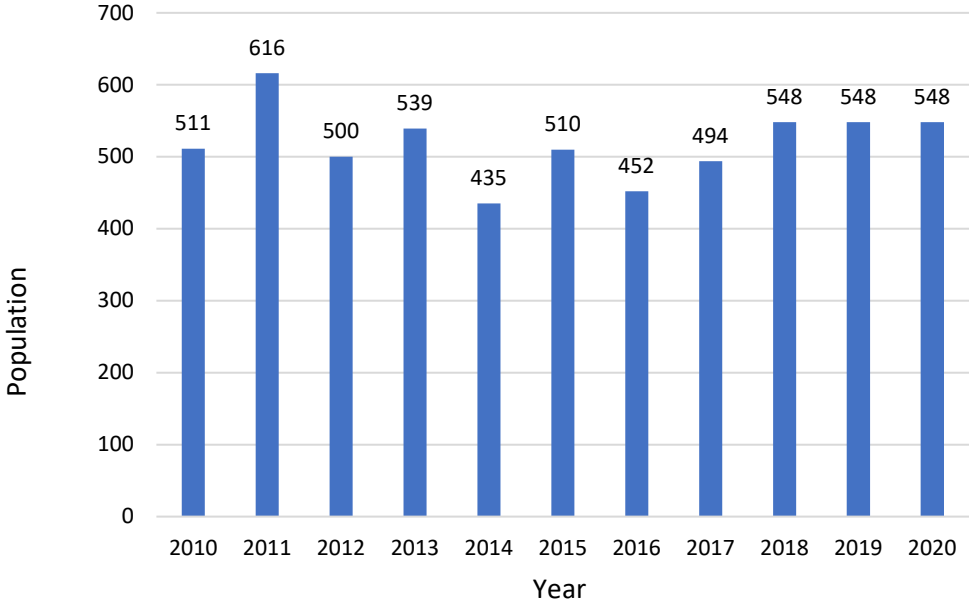
What the data does demonstrate, however, is that the average rate of population growth within the Town for the last decade is 1.63%.

**Table 3.1.1.C: Town of Morven Population - Annual Estimates and Growth Rates**

Year	Population	Growth Rates
2010	511	
2011	616	20.55%
2012	500	-18.83%
2013	539	7.80%
2014	435	-19.29%
2015	510	17.24%
2016	452	-11.37%
2017	494	9.29%
2018	548	10.93%
2019	548	0.00%
2020	548	0.00%
	Average Growth Rate	1.63%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

**Figure 3.1.1.B: Town of Morven Population - Annual Estimates**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.1.2 Diversity

Within the Town of Morven, for residents reporting one race alone (319 people), the U.S. Census Bureau’s Decennial Census data indicate:

- 18.81% of residents identified themselves as White;
- 80.25% identified themselves as Black or African American;
- 0% of residents identified themselves as American Indian and Alaska Native;
- 0.3% were Asian; and
- Approximately 0.63% identified as some other race.

Approximately 10 residents identified themselves as being two or more races.

**Table 3.1.2.A: Town of Morven Population by Race Alone**

Race or Ethnicity	Number	Percent Total Population (319 people)
White	60	18.81%
African American	256	80.25%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0.00%
Asian	1	0.31%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
Some Other Race	2	0.63%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census Data, Margin of error does not always equal 100%

Figures from the *Decennial Census* shown in Table 3.1.3.B indicate an estimated 97.8% of people in Morven identified themselves as non-Hispanic/Latino origin. People of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Table 3.1.2.B: Town of Morven Population by Hispanic or Latino Not Hispanic or Latino**

Race or Ethnicity	Percent Total Population
Not Hispanic or Latino	97.8%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.1.3 Population by Age and Sex

As previously indicated, the Town has a total population of 548 residents, of which 50.5% were females and 49.5% were males.

Median age is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the measure that divides the age distribution into two equal parts: one-half of the cases falling below the median value and one-half of the cases falling above the median value.

The median age of Morven residents is 42.5 years.

An estimated 32.3 percent of the population was under 18 years, 23.7 percent was 18 to 44 years, 30.0 percent was 45 to 64 years, and 13.9 percent was 65 years and older.

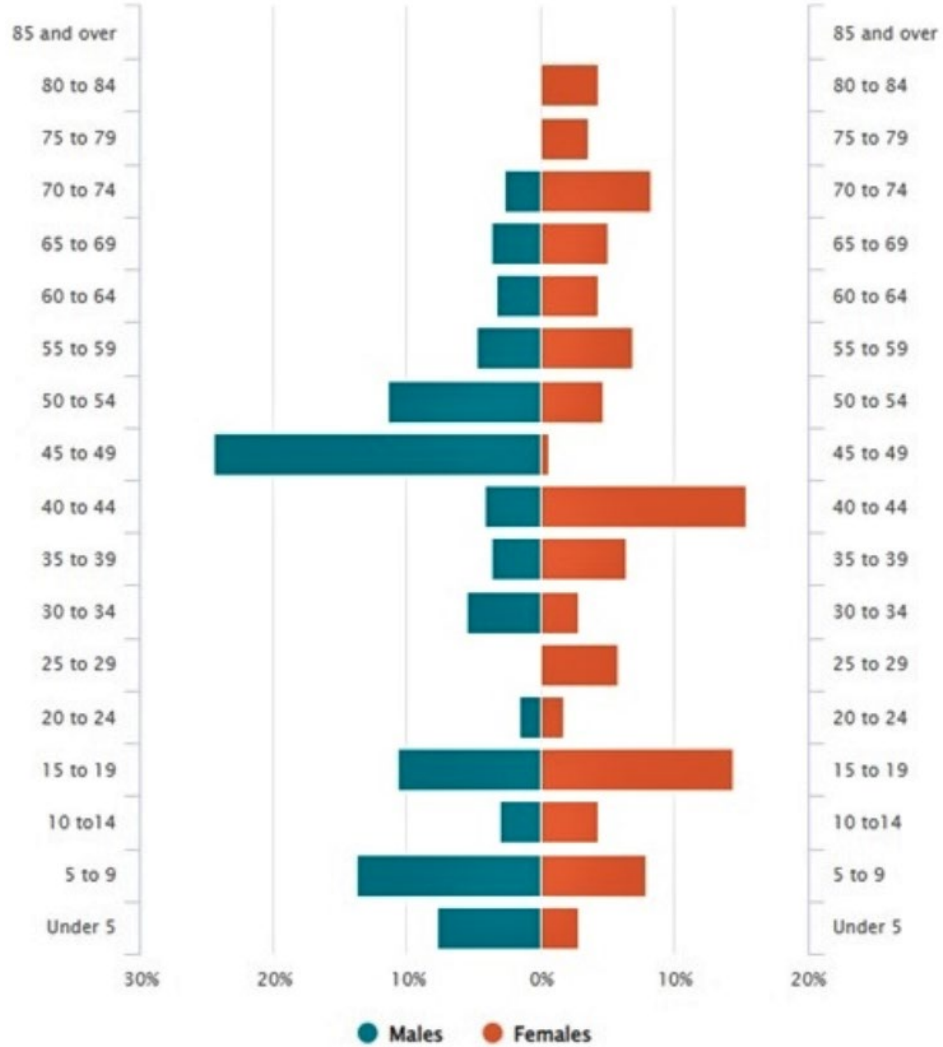
**Table 3.1.3: Town of Morven Population by Age and Sex**

Age	Percent Male	Percent Female
Under 5	7.7	2.9
5 to 9	13.7	7.9
10 to 14	3.0	4.3
15 to 19	10.7	14.4
20 to 24	1.5	1.8
25 to 29	0.0	5.8
30 to 34	5.5	2.9
35 to 39	3.7	6.5
40 to 44	4.1	15.5
45 to 49	24.4	0.7
50 to 54	11.4	4.7
55 to 59	4.8	6.9
60 to 64	3.3	4.3
65 to 69	3.7	5.1
70 to 74	2.6	8.3
75 to 79	0.0	3.6
80 to 84	0.0	4.3
85 and over	0.0	0.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey



### Population by Age and Sex for Morven, 2015-2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

## 3.2 Housing

### 3.2.1 Occupied Housing Characteristics

As previously indicated, Morven has approximately 249 total housing units. Of these, approximately 213 were occupied (85.5%) or had people living in them while the remaining 36 units (14.5%) were unoccupied/vacant.

Of the occupied housing units:

- 44.6% (95 units) were occupied by owners (also known as the homeownership rate);
- 55.4% (118 units) were occupied by renters.

The average household size of owner-occupied houses was 2.51 and in renter-occupied houses it was 2.63.

24.9% of householders of these occupied houses had been living within their residence since 2017, while 27.2% moved into their residents in 1989 or earlier. Households without a vehicle available for personal use comprised 17.4% of the local housing stock while another 8.5% had three or more vehicles available for use.

In comparing occupancy data, Table 3.2.1.A denotes the Town has a lower, overall, percentage of housing units occupied by homeowners when compared to Anson County and the State.

**Table 3.2.1.A: Homeownership Rates**

Jurisdiction	% of Owner Occupied Units	% of Renter Occupied Units
Town of Morven	44.6%	55.4%
Anson County	66.1%	33.9%
State of North Carolina	65.2%	34.8%

In 2019, the median property value for owner-occupied houses in Morven was \$57,900.

Of the owner-occupied households (95 units) 29.5% or 28 units had a mortgage while the remaining 70.5% (67 units) were owned free and clear, that is without a mortgage or loan on the house. The median monthly housing costs for owners with a mortgage was \$564.00 and for owners without a mortgage it was \$384.00.

For renter-occupied houses, the median gross rent for Morven was \$638.00. Gross rent includes the monthly contract rent and any monthly payments made for electricity, gas, water and sewer, and any other fuels to heat the house.

Households that pay 30% or more of their income on housing costs are considered cost-burdened. As illustrated in Table 3.2.1.B cost-burdened households in the Town of Morven accounted for only 0% of owners with a mortgage, 28.4% of owners without a mortgage, and 71.7% of renters in 2019.

**Table 3.2.1.B: Morven Occupants with a Housing Burden**

House Value	Percent
Owners with mortgage	0%
Owners without mortgage	28.4%
Renters	71.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.2.2 Housing Stock

In 2019, the U.S. Census estimated only 8 (3.2%) of occupied residential structures in the Town of Morven have been built since 2000. The majority of local housing units (88.7%) had been built prior to 1990. These figures do not account for houses built since 2019.

**Table 3.2.2: Town of Morven Occupied Housing Units by Age in 2018**

Year Built	Number Structures	Percent Structures
Built 2014 or later	0	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2013	0	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	8	3.2%
Built 1990 to 1999	20	8.0%
Built 1980 to 1989	60	24.1%
Built 1970 to 1979	21	8.4%
Built 1960 to 1969	21	8.4%
Built 1950 to 1959	44	17.7%
Built 1940 to 1949	20	8.0%
Built 1939 or earlier	55	22.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.2.3 Housing Types

As previously indicated, the Town has approximately 249 housing units based on available UD Census data. Of these units:

- 70% are single-family units (i.e. not attached to any other structure or attached to one or more structures commonly referred to as "townhouses" or "row houses");
- 10% were multi-family structures (buildings that contained two or more units); and
- 20% were mobile homes.

Remaining housing units were classified as "other," which included boats, recreational vehicles, vans, etc.

**Table 3.2.2: Town of Morven Housing Types**

Housing Types	%
Single Family (Site Built)	70%
Mobile Homes	10%
Multi-family	20%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

Available Census data indicates the average number of bedrooms within the residences within are further broken down as follows:

- No bedroom: 0 units;
- 1 bedroom: 0 units;
- 2 bedrooms: 0 units;
- 3 bedrooms: 45 units;
- 4 bedrooms: 33 units;
- 5 or more bedrooms: 171 units

### 3.3 Economy

#### 3.3.1 Household Income

Household income calculations consist of the income of all individuals aged 16 years and older in the household.

When analyzing the distribution of household income in the Town of Morven, most households fall into the \$15,000 to \$24,999 income range (27.2%), followed by the \$50,000-\$74,999 (18.3%) and \$25,000 -\$34,999 (12.2%) range. Refer to Table 3.3.1.

Median household income divides the household income distribution with one-half of the cases falling below the median and one-half of the cases falling above the median. For households, the median income is based on the distribution of the total number of households, including those with no income. The median household income in the Town of Morven for full time year-round workers was \$31,453 per year.—Male full-time year-round workers had median earnings of \$31,977. Female full-time year-round workers had median earnings of \$22,143.

**Table 3.3.1: Town of Morven Household Income by Range**

Income Range	% of Total Population
Less than \$10,000	15.0
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.3
\$15,000 to \$24,999	27.2
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12.2
\$35,000 to \$49,999	6.6
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.3
\$75,000 to \$99,999	15.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2.8
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.0
\$200,000 or more	0.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

#### 3.3.2 Median Household Income

Median income is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the amount obtained by dividing the total income of a particular statistical universe by the number of units in that universe. The median income is the amount that divides the income distribution into two equal groups, half having income above that amount, and half having income below that amount. Mean income is the amount obtained by dividing the total aggregate income of a group by the number of units in that group. The mean or average income is higher than median income. The Town of Morven's median household income is fairly consistent with Anson County, but both are below the Median income for North Carolina.



**Table 3.3.2: Median Income Comparison**

Jurisdiction	Median Household Income
Town of Morven	\$31,453
Anson County	\$34,831
State of North Carolina	\$52,413

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.3.3 Poverty Rates

The U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If the total income for a family, or unrelated individual, falls below the relevant poverty threshold, then the family (and every individual in it) or unrelated individual is considered in poverty. Since poverty is determined by the circumstances of individual families (e.g., family size, income thresholds and income), there is no single poverty rate for an entire jurisdiction or geographic area.

As Table 3.3.3 illustrates, the Town of Morven’s percentage of people in poverty, as well as the percent of children in poverty, are significantly higher than those figures in Anson County and North Carolina.

**Table 3.3.3: Poverty Level Comparison**

Jurisdiction	% of People in Poverty	% of Children in Poverty
Town of Morven	29.6%	40.7%
Anson County	19.5%	30.1%
State of North Carolina	15.4%	22.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

According to available 2015-2019 Census data, 40.4% of households in Morven received SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistance. An estimated 36% of households receiving SNAP benefits had children under 18, and 33.7% of households that received benefits had one or more people 60 years and over.

An estimated 48.8% of all households receiving SNAP benefits were families with a female householder and no husband present. An estimated 48.1% of households receiving SNAP had two or more workers.

When compared to Anson County as a whole, 22.6% of households received SNAP assistance further broken down as follows:

- 43.6% of households receiving SNAP benefits/assistance had children under 18;
- 37.5% of households had one or more people 60 years and over;
- 44.6% of all households receiving SNAP were families with a female householder and no husband present; and
- 19.6% of households receiving SNAP had two or more workers.

### 3.4 Education

#### 3.4.1 Educational Attainment

Of Morven residents 25 years and older, 63.8% of residents have a least a high school education or equivalent. An estimated 36.2% did not complete high school. Based on current Census Data, approximately 11.3% of local residents had a bachelor's degree or higher

Morven has a higher percentage of people who did not graduate from high school than Anson County and North Carolina as illustrated in Table 3.4.1. Both Morven and Anson County has a higher percentage of residents with a high school diploma or equivalency than that State.

The total school enrollment in Morven was 182 in 2015-2019. Nursery school enrollment was 15 and kindergarten through 12th grade enrollment was 146. College or graduate school enrollment was 21.

**Table 3.4.1: Educational Attainment Comparison for Population Aged 25 and Over**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Town of Morven</b>	<b>Anson County</b>	<b>State of North Carolina</b>
Less than High school diploma	36.2%	19.3%	11.4%
High school diploma or equivalency	40.3%	40.2%	25.6%
Some college, no degree	7.5%	21.5%	20.6%
Associate's degree	4.7%	7.8%	10.1%
Bachelor's degree	3.3%	8.1%	20.5%
Graduate or Professional degree	8.0%	3.2%	11.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

#### 3.4.2 Public Schools

Residents within the Town are served by the Anson County School System, which currently serves approximately 3,300 students (i.e. kindergarten through high school) through the following institutions:

- 6 Elementary/Primary schools;
- 1 Middle school;
- 2 High schools, including an early college program.

Anson County Schools also operates Anson Academy, an alternative education program for students in grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> located in Wadesboro NC.

Children residing in Morven will attend the following schools:

- Morven Elementary School - 6715 US-52, Morven, NC 28119;
- Anson Middle School - 832 US-52, Wadesboro, NC 28170; and
- Anson Highschool - 96 Anson High School Rd, Wadesboro, NC 28170

### 3.4.3 Colleges and Universities

Morven is conveniently located in proximity to the following colleges, university, and technical school campuses:

College / University	City	Distance From Town of Morven
South Piedmont Community College Campus	Wadesboro, NC	9 miles
Northeastern Technical College	Cheraw, SC	14 miles
South Piedmont Community College – Polkton Campus	Polkton, NC	17.8 miles
Wingate University	Wingate, NC	30 miles
St. Andrews University	Laurinburg, NC	40 miles
South Piedmont Community College – Charlotte Campus	Charlotte, NC	45 miles
Johnson C. Smith University	Charlotte, NC	63 miles
Pfeiffer University – Charlotte Campus	Charlotte, NC	66 miles
Gardner-Webb University (Charlotte Campus)	Charlotte NC	66 miles
UNC – Charlotte	Charlotte, NC	68 miles
Davidson College	Davidson, NC	86 miles
UNC – Greensboro	Greensboro NC	97 miles
NC State University	Raleigh, NC	108 miles
Winston Salem University	Winston Salem NC	112 miles
Duke University	Durham NC	122 miles

As the region continues to grow, more educational and specialized job training opportunities will become available.



### 3.5 Workforce

#### 3.5.1 Employment

In Morven, the U.S. Census reported that in 2019, 59.3% percent of the population age 16 and over (245 people) were employed while 38.3% were currently not in the labor force.

An estimated 65.7% of the people employed were private wage and salary workers; 17.1% were federal, state, or local government workers; and 17.1% were self-employed in their own (not incorporated) business.

As presented in Table 3.5.1.A., the largest number of the Town’s citizens in the workforce (aged 16+) are employed in the *production, transportation, and material moving* occupation (92 people, or 37.6% of the 245-member workforce). The second largest workforce category was *service* occupations (62 people, or 25.3%).

**Table 3.5.1.A: Occupations for Civilian Employed Population 16 Years and Over**

Occupation	Number	%
Management, business, sciences, and arts occupations	30	12.2%
Service occupations	62	25.3%
Sales and office occupations	17	6.9%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	44	18%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	92	37.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

In 2019, the civilian employed population in Morven, aged 16 years and older, worked in the following industries.

**Table 3.5.1.B: Employment by Industry**

Industry	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	11.4%
Construction	0.0
Manufacturing	32.7%
Wholesale trade	0.0
Retail trade	0.0
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	0.0
Information	0.0
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	0.0
Professional, scientific, & management, & administrative and waste management services	4.5%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.4%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	14.3%
Other Services, except public administration	12.7%
Public administration	4.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.5.2 Commuting Patterns

As reported by the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 61.2% of Morven workers drove to work alone in 2015-2019, and 34.3% carpooled. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 20.4 minutes to get to work. Table 3.5.2 presents Morven workers' modes of travel to work.

**Table 3.5.2: Town of Morven Commuters' Methods of Transportation**

Transportation Method	% of All Workers
Car, truck, van -- drove alone	61.2%
Car, truck, van -- carpooled	34.3%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0%
Walked	4.5%
Other means	0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

### 3.6 Future Trends Projection - *How does Morven prepare?*

Recognizing trends and how market dynamics can and do change, will enable Morven to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations looking at buying or renting a home, starting or growing a business, and finding Morven a good place to visit. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging community members will choose to remain. A vibrant and sustainable community is one where both the new and existing home markets are attractive to future generations and allow for aging members of the community to remain in the community by offering a variety of housing products near jobs, services and events.

According to contemporary real estate experts, the "50+" real estate market is changing. In these next few years, Generation X (those born between the years 1964 and 1977) will be joining the Boomers (born between 1946 and 1963) and Matures (between 1927 and 1945), making serving the age 50+ market both a challenging puzzle as well as an opportunity for both communities and the real estate industry itself.

A recent insightful online posting on RISmedia.com (a real estate trade site) states: "For the **Mature** buyers, those born between the years 1927 and 1945, the decision to move can be an emotional and complicated process. The sense of obligation to the family home may be a burden and a comfort at the same time." The posting goes on to state: "**Baby Boomers** are savvy home buyers. They approach the transaction with high expectations and confidence. They consider the home a reflection of their lifestyle, so image and status are important. Whether they are downsizing, upsizing, or purchasing a second home, vacation home, or investment property, they know what they want and how to tell you about it." And finally, the post states: "Newbies to the 50+ group, **Generation X** stands out because of their strong need for independence and practical yet cautious approach. They take on the responsibility of gathering information and rely strongly on facts and documentation. They ask a lot of questions and don't want to get burned. They expect their home to complement their lifestyle and not the other way around."

Preparations to embrace current and projected trends are a partnership of land development and real estate industries with local government leadership. New housing construction should address gaps in the market product offering; therefore, land development specifications appearing in the Town's ordinances must be adequate to accommodate these trends. Replacing the town's antiquated zoning ordinance, adding specifications for land development which creates new streets and supporting infrastructure, and maintaining quality control over the implementation of these standards must be prioritized to protect property rights of all parties while creating common-sense opportunities that don't setup for failures in the future.

As with the housing markets, ever changing trends in consumption, product development, technology and generational shifts in personal choices/values must be considered when making decisions about commercial and other non-residential growth. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community, where traditional values accompany craftsmanship must embrace the presence of technology in everyday life, commerce, and business. Innovation is an ever-increasing component of the economy at all levels; therefore, it must be considered in the formation of growth policy serving these innovators if we are to adapt and survive global influence on everyday life. *(See Chapters 6 and 8 of this document).*



## 4. NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

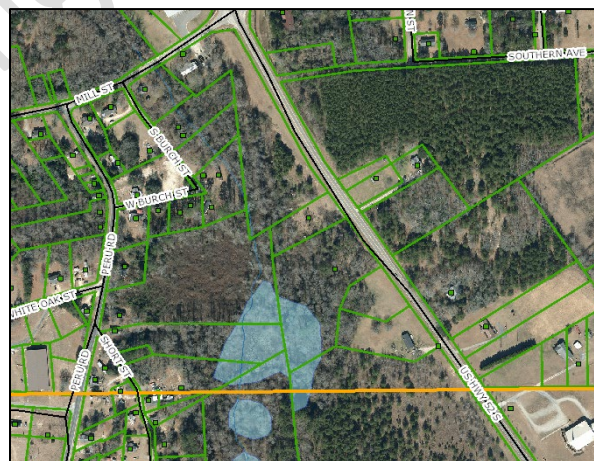
### 4.1 Natural Resources

#### 4.1.1 Water Resources

Water provides both recreational and life sustaining resources for the Town and the region as a whole. The Town is adjacent to the following waterways:

Waterway Name:	General Location:	State Classification:	State Description:
South Fork of Jones Creek	North of Morven	Class C	From source to Jones Creek
Mill Creek	South of Morven corporate limits	Class C	From source to Pee Dee River

The South Fork of Jones Creek starts southwest of Wadesboro near NC Highway 109 and flows east above the Town of Morven into the Pee Dee River south of Blewett Falls Lake. According to available map data, there is a water feature running south of Mill Steet, west of US Highway 52 south, through town.



This water feature is currently unnamed/unclassified by the State of North Carolina.

Identified waterways are predominately Class C waters, defined by the State of North Carolina Division of Water Resources (DWR) as:

*Class C waterways: Waters protected for uses such as secondary recreation, fishing, wildlife, fish consumption, aquatic life including propagation, survival and maintenance of biological integrity, and agriculture. Secondary recreation includes wading, boating, and other uses involving human body contact with water where such activities take place in an infrequent, unorganized, or incidental manner.*

The Town and Anson County are within the Yadkin- Pee Dee River watershed basin (hereafter 'the Basin') and the Uwharrie Lakes Region. The Basin, which has its origins near Blowing Rock, is approximately 7,221 square miles in area making it the second largest in North Carolina containing:

- A total of 5,862 miles of streams/rivers;
- 22,988 acres of lakes; and
- Home to 21 individual counties and 93 incorporated municipalities.

The Basin ultimately drains into the Atlantic Ocean in Winyah Bay, east of Georgetown, South Carolina.

Major tributaries of the Basin, most notable the Pee Dee River, traverse the County and provide a range of benefits to local residents, most notably: recreation, fishing, drinking water supply and, as permitted by the State, wastewater discharge.

The Basin is composed watershed sub-basins, some of which are designated by the State as water supply watersheds (i.e. serves as public drinking water sources). Within the water supply sub-basins, the areas closest to public water supply intakes are further regulated to limit the density of development and minimize the potential for polluted runoff to reach the intakes

**The Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge:** The Refuge, established in 1963, is a wildlife/migratory bird sanctuary consisting of approximately 8,500 acres of diverse landscape including hardwood forests, croplands, wetlands, and open waterways. Documented endangered wildlife species having habitats in the Refuge include:

- The bald eagle,
- Little blue heron, and
- The robust redhorse sucker.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service does also allow carefully managed public use activities such as hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education within the Refuge.

#### **4.1.1.1 Water Sports**

There are no park facilities within the corporate limit(s) of the Town. There are, however, numerous facilities in an around the Town offering water access as a recreational amenity, namely:



<b>Facility:</b>	<b>Distance from Town of Morven:</b>	<b>Water Sport Services Offered:</b>
City Pond – Wadesboro, NC	7.6 miles	Fishing and Boat rentals
NC Wildlife Access/Boat Landing – off NC Hwy 109	18 miles	Boat access to the Pee Dee River
Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge	19 miles	Fishing

#### **4.1.1.2 Water Supply**

Public water supply is provided by the Pee Dee River. The Anson County utilities department provides water and wastewater service throughout the county.

#### **4.1.2 Land Resources and Geography**

The highest elevation of the Town along the western corporate limits near the intersection of Rosehaven Road and Robinson Bridge Road is approximately 408 ft. above mean sea level (msl). From this point, there is a significant elevation change towards West Main Street (370 ft. msl) approximately 600 ft. away and Mill Street (338 ft. msl) approximately 1,500 f. south of Main Street. Property near Mill Street is a collection of moderately to poorly drained soils and areas encumbered by identified special flood hazard area.

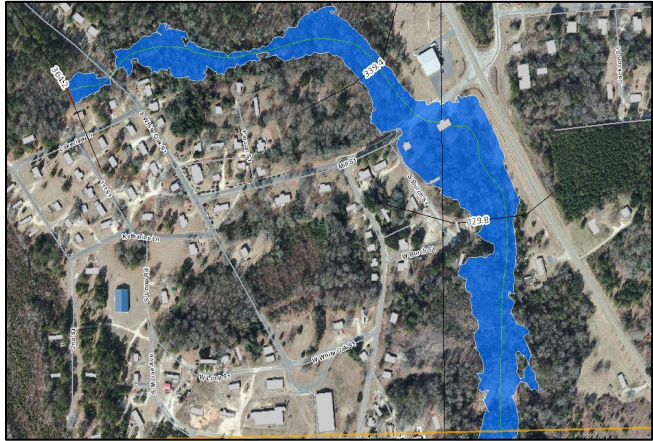
The eastern portion of the Town also has a significant change in elevation from East Main Street (350 ft. msl) towards Cemetery Street where the elevation tops out again at approximately 406 ft. msl. Much of the Town has a gentle to significant rolling topography throughout.

According to the Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service dataset published in 1994, as well as Anson County GIS data, indicates the Town is composed on the following groups of soils:

- Ailey Loamy Sand: Well drained, slowly permeable soils formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments on uplands having a typical slope range from 2 to 15 percent;
- Emporia Loamy Sand: Moderately well drained, slowly permeable soils formed in sandy and loamy marine sediments on uplands having a typical slope range from 2 to 10 percent;
- Johnston Sandy Loam: Poorly draining soil characterized by frequent flood events having a typical slope range below 2 percent:
- Pelion Loamy Sand: Moderately well drained, slowly permeable soils having a typical slope range between 2 to 15 percent;
- Rains Fine Sandy Loam: Poorly draining soil having a typical slope range below 2 percent
- Wakulla Sand: Well drained, rapidly permeable soils formed in sandy Coastal Plain sediments on uplands and stream terraces having a typical slope range from 0 to 15 percent.

In general, soils within the community contain significant levels of nutrients and moisture and are characterized as having good drainage and infiltration of water. They are easy to till in support of agricultural operations and for growing most plant species. Soils with clay deposits will, generally, have poor drainage.

As indicated herein, there are areas within the Town encumbered by special flood hazard areas. Soils in these areas have marginal or poor drainage characteristics:



*Source: State of North Carolina Flood Risk Information System (FRIS)*

**4.1.2.1 Agricultural**

From a regional perspective, Anson County has a robust local agricultural with prominent crops including soybeans, corn, wheat, hay, and cotton. There are several prominent livestock operations within the county, comprised of chicken and turkey breeding operations. Timber and other forest products are also prevalent in the region.

On both a local and County level, residents are engaging in efforts to protect agricultural lands and preserve a semblance of the areas historical agricultural economy.

As indicated in Section 4.1.2, the majority of soils in and around the Town are suitable to support agricultural operations. Streams connected to the Pee Dee River water system provide a ready source of water for irrigation as well.

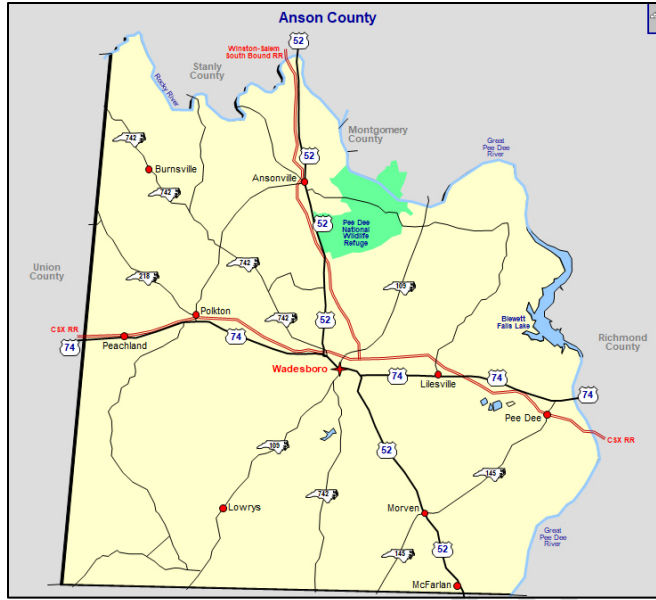
**4.1.2.2 Recreation**

Currently, the Town does not operate recreation facilities (i.e. parks). A detailed description of available parks, cultural resources, and other similar amenities, both within the Town and Anson County, is detailed in Section 4.2.1 of this Document.

**4.1.2.3 Transportation Facilities**

Anson County has several State and Federal roadways within its boundaries, including:

- US Highway: US Highway 52 and 74
- State Routes: NC Highway 109, 145, 218, and 742



The Town has access to US Highway 52 (running north/south) and NC Highway 145.

The region is part of the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization (RRRPO), a multi-jurisdictional entity made up of 17 local governments, NC Department of Transportation (DOT), US DOT, and other providers of transportation services jointly planning for transportation improvements for members. The organization's primary duties include:

- Development, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation (NCDOT) long-range, local and regional multimodal transportation plans;
- Provide a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process;
- Develop and prioritize suggestions for transportation projects that should be included in the State's Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); and
- Provide transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations and persons.

While Morven is not a participating member of the RRRPO, it can receive ancillary benefits from local roadway improvements of member communities.

In 2017, the RRRPO identified several projects in Anson County as part of the DOT's STIP process including replacement of 5 bridges and the construction of the Wadesboro Bypass, a new freeway connecting US 52 north of Wadesboro to US 74 east of Wadesboro making travel to Charlotte quicker.



#### 4.1.2.4 Growth

As detailed in Section 2.2 of this Document, the Town is located within the *Charlotte Metropolitan Area*. In 2020, the US Census Bureau estimated the region had a population of approximately 2,236,883. This figure represented an 18% population increase from the 2010 census.

Given identified development trends, and population forecasts referenced herein, the region's population is projected to continue increasing over the next 20 to 30 years.

## 4.2 Cultural Resources

### 4.2.1 Parks and Recreation, Outdoor Adventure and Community Outreach

There are no park facilities within the corporate limits of the Town.

There is a community center, specifically the Moven Community Building located at 207 Main St, operated by Anson County and managed/rented by the Town.



Interested parties can complete rental applications for submittal to staff, which are available on the Town's website.

Morven is also the home of a local non-profit community center, located at 229 Main St. The *HOLLA! Community Development Center* works to motivate parents and students to excel in school providing mentoring, tutoring, life skills, and coaching to students.

As detailed on the group's website (<https://www.holla.ws/>) the center offers the following programs:

- **Little Miss HOLLA!:** Youth enrichment program for girls ages 6-13. participating in community service, team building dance routines, learning etiquette and poise, development of self-confidence. The 6-month long program ends with a pageant demonstrating learned skills, which also serves as an organizational fundraiser;
- **Read and Reel Summer Camp:** Four week camp for children ages 6-13 focusing on literacy through various planned activities such as reading and writing workshops, guest speakers, and field trips;
- **5K Walk/Run Into the Freedom of Literacy:** An organizational fundraiser to bring awareness to the amazing world of literacy and support projects;

- **Reading Challenge:** A challenge between local elementary schools with the top readers in each participating school's Advanced Reading program recognized and rewarded for their efforts. The school with the most books read is also recognized and receives a donation of books to its' library;
- **HOLLA!/YCC Mentoring Program:** Collaboration between HOLLA! and Anson High School's Youth Career Connect (YCC) providing exposure to different professions, mentoring, and internships to 9th-12th-grade students;
- **Scholarships: Mary E Little and M R Bell Excellence in Achievement:** Named for two influential members of Anson County, each scholarship is in the amount of \$500 and are awarded to Anson High School's college-bound seniors. Seniors are selected by their grades, community involvement, volunteerism, and future goals;
- **Collegiate Cookout:** Celebration for college-bound seniors. Seniors receive dorm and school supplies donated by local businesses. Additionally, high school juniors are provided with information about financial aid, and North Carolina's colleges and universities;
- **HOLLA! Eagles Tennis Team:** Teams include children and teens who compete throughout NC, in Charleston, SC, and Ft. Lauderdale, FL. The overall goal is to teach and improve the skills of its' members while instilling discipline on and off the court.



**ANSON COUNTY:** In addition to the parks providing water sport activities noted in Section 4.1.1.1 of this Document, Anson County is home to several open space destinations and parks drawing visitors throughout the region. This includes the following organized spot activities:

- Girls softball (ages 4 to 15),
- Baseball (ages 9 to 12),
- Tee ball and coach pitch (ages 4 to 8), and
- Micro and youth soccer (up to 12th grade)

County recreational facilities include:

1. Wadesboro City Park - located at 1000 Gatewood Street Wadesboro: Offering two picnic shelters, a playground, restrooms, and a 0.8-mile walking trail;
2. City Pond - located on NC Hwy 742 Wadesboro: Featuring a 190-acre municipal lake with picnic shelter, boat rentals, bank fishing, and playground;
3. Little Park - located at 845 Airport Road Wadesboro: Ballfields, soccer fields, tennis courts, playground, picnic shelters, swimming pool, walking trail and a 2-acre pond;
4. Ray Shelton Ballfield - located on S. Rutherford Street Wadesboro: Lighted softball field (managed by the Anson County Board of Education);
5. Field of Dreams Ball Park – located at 281 S. Main Street in Polkton: Features three ball fields (baseball and softball);
6. Peachland Park – located off Old School Road in Peachland: Paved walking trail, a baseball field, a soccer field, playground equipment, restrooms, and picnic shelters;
7. Hatcher Park – located at 206 Cowan Street in Lilesville: Playground and picnic shelters.

## 4.3 Historic Resources

### 4.3.1 Heritage Preservation and Tourism

While the Town of Morven does not contain natural heritage sites or historic structures, Anson County does have several structures/properties listed within the National Register of Historic Places, namely:

1. Boggan-Hammond House and Alexander Little Wing (210 Wade Street Wadesboro) - Built by Captain Patrick Boggan in the 18th century, the Boggan-Hammond House was the first restored historic building in Anson County.  
The Alexander-Little Wing was added to the original Boggan-Hammond House in 1839;
2. Billy Horne Farm (Polkton) - An historic farm and national historic district including four buildings (a two-story weatherboard frame house, a tenant house, granary, and carriage house) and two sites (the farm and Horne Family Cemetery);
3. Chambers-Morgan Farm (White Store) - An historic farm and national historic district with four buildings (the Greek Revival style house, blacksmith shop, barn, and car shed), three sites (two ponds, cemetery, and farm landscape), and six structures (“light house”, chicken coop, two corn cribs, well, and pumphouse);
4. Leavitt House (Wadesboro) - Constructed in 1832 as a residence for Norfleet Boggan, this is the oldest commercial building still in use in Anson County. The building has also been used as an inn with an additional wing being added in 1867 to house an expanded kitchen and a funeral home operated by Harvey Leavitt, Sr. in 1935. The building is currently being used as a museum displaying the Tom Little Artifacts, the F.C. Allen Arrowhead collection, and a Wadesboro High School Museum and Memorabilia room;

5. US Post Office Building (105-111 Martin St. in Wadesboro) - Designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect and built in 1932-1933, it's a two-story rectangular building of cream brick with limestone trim in a Classical/Colonial Revival style. It was added to the National Register of Historical Places in 1987;
6. Westview Cemetery (Wadesboro) – An historic cemetery added to the National Registry in 2015;
7. Wadesboro Downtown Historic District (Wadesboro) A 32-acre national historic district including 81 contributing buildings, one contributing structure and one contributing object (Confederate Memorial Monument) in the governmental and commercial core of the City of Wadesboro. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

Anson County also has a number of historic cemeteries including:

- Auld Cemetery in Pee Dee,
- Eastview Cemetery in Wadesboro,
- Joseph Ingram Cemetery near Lilesville,
- Old Sneedsborough Cemetery near Morven,
- Samuel Spencer Cemetery near Lilesville,
- Westview Cemetery in Wadesboro, and
- The William Little Cemetery near Wadesboro.

Anson County has a historical society working to provide educational, cultural, and recreation benefits for the residents of Anson County while working with local groups to preserve identified local historic structures/landmarks. At the writing of this Document, the local Anson County Historic Preservation Commission is not active. There are plans, however, to restart the commission.

#### **4.3.1.1 Downtown Morven**

What is commonly referred to as 'downtown Morven' is a collection of retail and business operations at the intersection of US Highway 52 and Main Street (NC Highway 145). The 'downtown core' is bordered on the east by the existing Town municipal complex (301 East Main Steet) and the Morven Community Building (207 Main Steet).

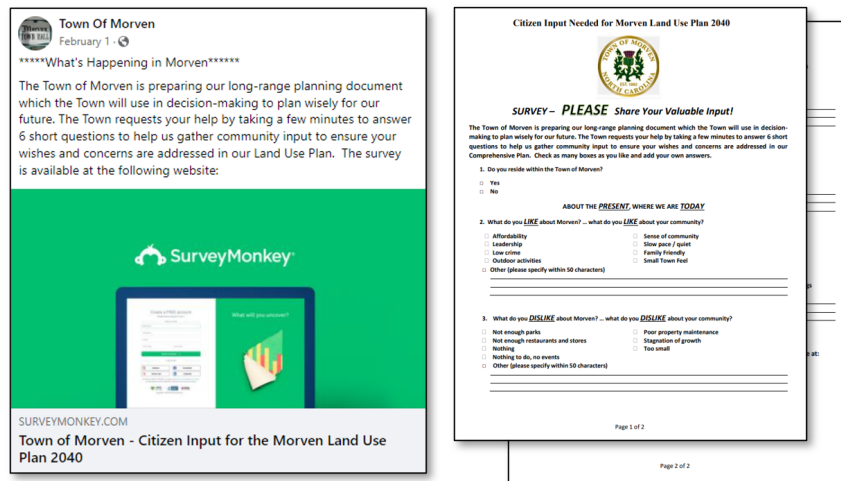
## 5. VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

Determining what is important to a community is important. Information gathered through an online survey and survey handouts helped establish the foundation of the plan. Results from surveys were summarized and ranked in order of popularity to provide “value statements” about Morven. These statements provide the foundation for the preparation of goals and objectives. From these goals and objectives, the team crafted strategies for Morven’s needs.

### 5.1 Community Participation – *What does our community want?*

The Town of Morven staff conducted the following activities to solicit community input:

- Advertised the online survey on the [Town’s Facebook](#) account for five weeks;
- E-mailed a description and survey link to citizens in the Town’s e-mail database; and
- Provided printed surveys at Town Hall’s counter.



Input from the survey is included in the summary data in this section to illustrate responses to the survey interview questions.

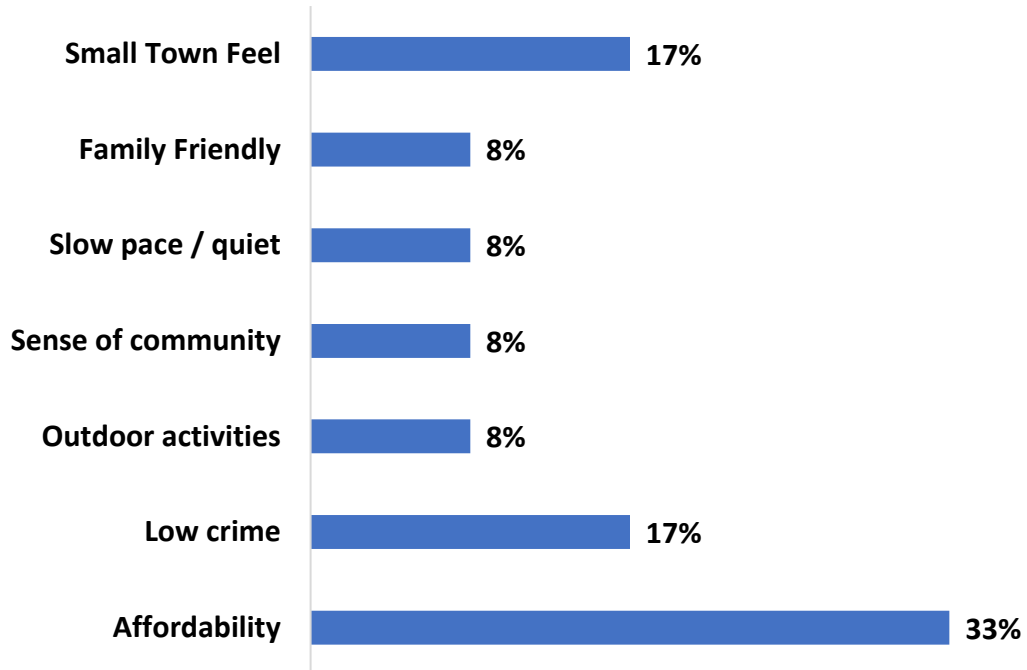
The following sections highlight the process, results and opportunities for action. Interview responses were categorized and grouped separately for each of the six questions asked:

1. Do you reside within the Town of Morven?
2. What do you like about Morven (present)?
3. What do you dislike about Morven (present)?
4. What wishes do you have for Morven (future)?
5. What fears do you have for Morven (future)?
6. What should be the #1 priority for Morven moving forward?

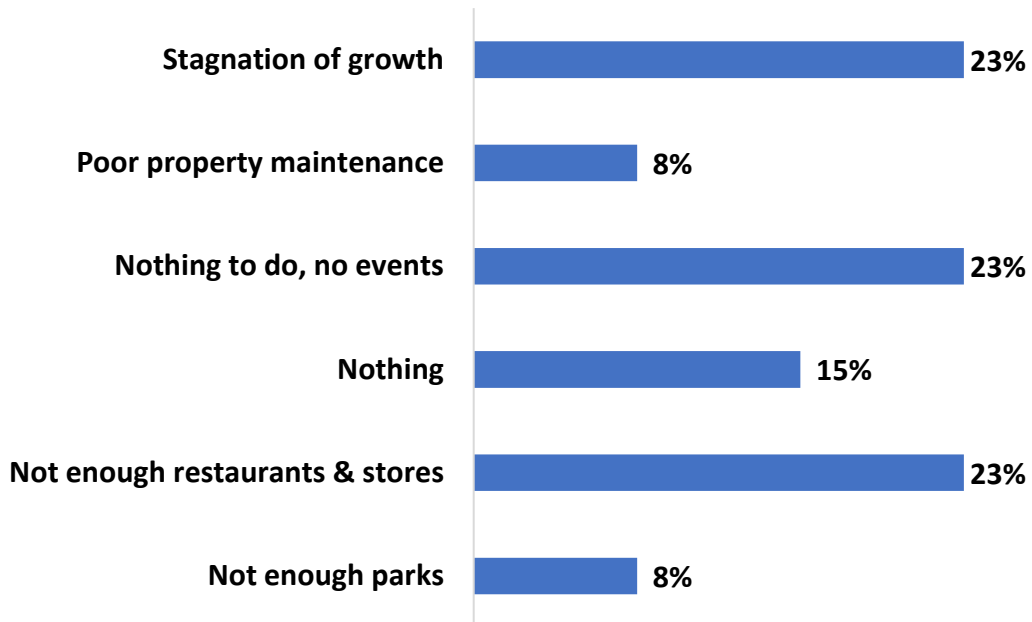
Responses were then cataloged for ranking purposes enabling the results to be summarized graphically. The following pages illustrate responses in order of their respective frequency rankings. The following charts illustrate responses to the survey.



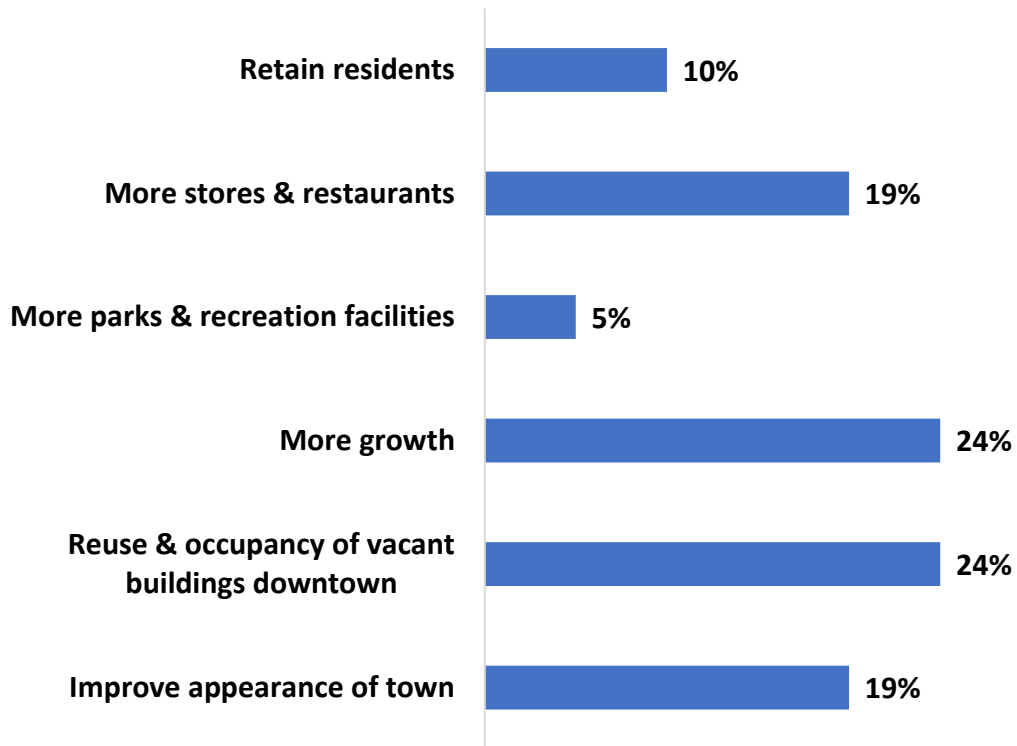
### ***What do you like about Morven?***



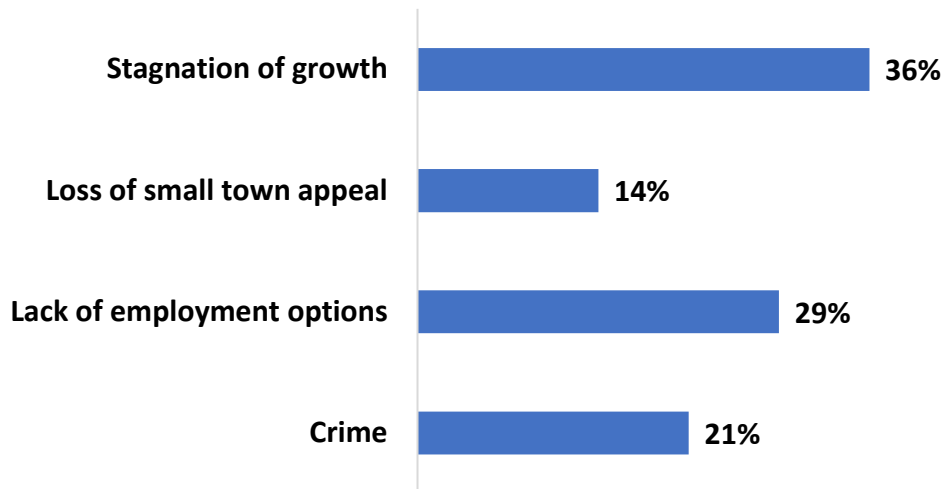
### ***What do you dislike about Morven?***



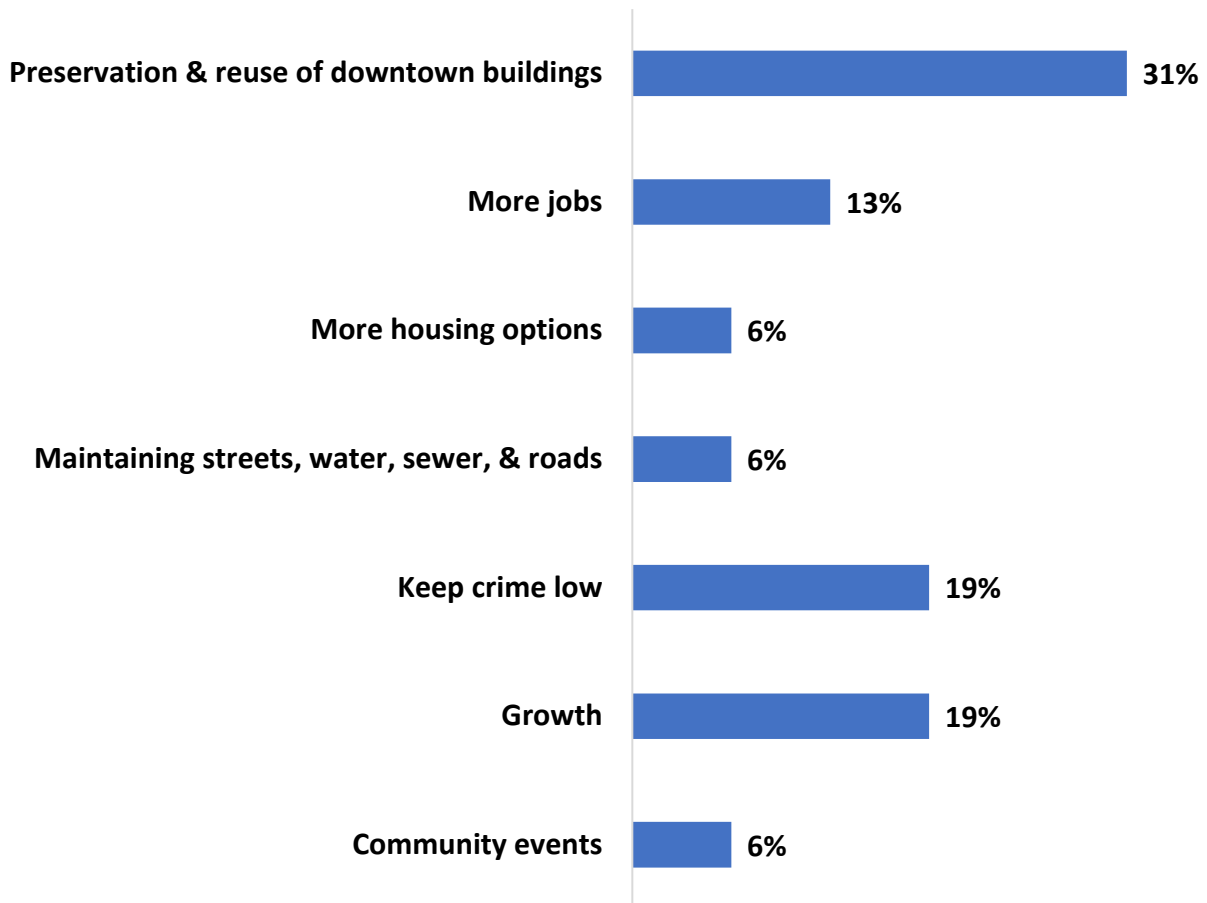
***What wishes do you have for Morven?***



***What fears do you have for Morven?***



## What should be the #1 priority for Morven moving forward?



The rankings indicate ***'Preservation and Reuse of Downtown Buildings'*** (31%) as the 1<sup>st</sup> priority. This answer was consistently emphasized by related answers to survey questions, namely:

- *'What do you like about Morven?'* respondents indicated *'Small Town Feel'* (17%) and *'Sense of Community'* (8%).
- *'What do you dislike about Morven?'*, respondents tied their top three answers with: *'Not Enough Restaurants and Stores'*, and *'Stagnation of Growth'*. It should be noted 15% of respondents indicated there was *'nothing'* they disliked about the Town of Morven.
- *'What wishes do you have for Morven?'*, One of two tied top answers at 24% was *'Reuse and Occupancy of Vacant Buildings Downtown'*. Another tie of 19% of respondents indicated desires for *'More Stores and Restaurants'* and to *'Improve appearance of the Town'*.
- In responding to the question *'What fears do you have for Morven?'*, 36% indicated *'Stagnation of Growth'* and *'Lack of Employment Options'* (29%). 14% of respondents expressed the fear of *'Loss of Small-Town Appeal'*.

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority, there was a tie for **'Keep Crime Low'** and **'Growth'** (19%). These priorities and related responses are detailed below.

- *'What do you like about Morven?'* respondents indicated *'Low Crime'* (17%) and *'Family Friendly'* (8%).
- *'What do you dislike about Morven?'*, respondents tied their top three answers with: *'Not Enough Restaurants and Stores'* and *'Stagnation of Growth'*. 8% of respondents indicated there were concerned with *'Poor Property Maintenance'*.

As previously indicated herein, 15% of respondents indicated there was 'nothing' they disliked about the Town of Morven.

- *'What wishes do you have for Morven?'*, resulted in the top answer, by a large majority of, being tied at 24% with *'More Growth'* and *'Reuse and Occupancy of Vacant Buildings Downtown'*.
- In responding to the question *'What fears do you have for Morven?'*, 36% indicated *'Stagnation of Growth'* and 21% indicated *'Crime'*.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked priority was **'More Jobs'** (13%) with priorities and related responses detailed below.

- *'What do you dislike about Morven?'*, respondents tied their top three answers with: *'Not Enough Restaurants and Stores'* and *'Stagnation of Growth'*..

As previously indicated herein, 15% of respondents indicated there was 'nothing' they disliked about the Town of Morven.

- *'What wishes do you have for Morven?'*, resulted in the top answer, by a large majority of, being tied at 24% with *'More Growth'* and *'Reuse and Occupancy of Vacant Buildings Downtown'*. 19% of respondents also indicated a desire to have *'More Stores and Restaurants'*.
- In responding to the question *'What fears do you have for Morven?'*, 36% indicated *'Stagnation of Growth'* and 29% indicated *'Lack of Employment Options'*.

There was a three-way tie for the 4<sup>th</sup> ranked priority between **'More Housing Options'**, **'Community Events'** and **'Maintain Streets, Water, Sewer, and Roads'** (6%) with priorities and related responses detailed below.

- *'What do you like about Morven?'* respondents indicated *'Outdoor Activities'* (8%).
- *'What do you dislike about Morven?'*, respondents indicate *'Nothing to do, No Events'* (23%) with 8% of respondents indicated there were concerned with *'Poor Property Maintenance'* and *'Not Enough Parks'*.
- *'What wishes do you have for Morven?'*, respondents indicated *'Improve Appearance of Town'* (19%), *'Retain Residents'* (10%), and *'More Parks and Recreation Facilities'* (5%).

**Final Priorities.** Since responses for priorities two and four resulted in a tie, with respect to survey answers for *'What should be the #1 priority for Morven moving forward'*, it was necessary to add percentages to arrive at prioritizing the final list of goals for Morven. The priority of *'Growth'* and *'More Jobs'* were also combined as they share many of the same goals/objectives.

Three of the answers to the question, *'What should be the #1 priority for Morven moving forward?'* produced answers that have a scope and impact exceeding what can be accomplished by land use planning alone. Having said that, there were important concerns expressed by respondents of the Plan's community input so they were shared with the Town's Administrative Department to identify additional action(s) that can be taken to address same. Those priorities include *'Maintaining Streets, Water, Sewer, and Roads'* and *'Community Events.'*

After combining tied answers with their related answers and taking the concerns listed above that have broader impact(s)/solutions than can be addressed by town planning activities alone, community concerns fall into the following final priorities.

- ***'Preservation and Reuse of Downtown Buildings'***
- ***'Growth and More Jobs'***
- ***'Keep Crime Low'***
- ***'Community Events'***
- ***'More Housing Options'***
- ***'Maintain Streets, Water, Sewer, and Roads'***

### **5.1.2 Social Media Platform**

Social media applications (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.) have become commonplace. Ninety percent of Millennials (adults born between 1982 and 1998) use social media on a regular basis, along with 77% of adults born between 1966 and 1981. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), Baby Boomers' use of social media has tripled since the year 2010, and 35% of those aged 65 and older report using social media regularly. Social media has revolutionized the way we communicate with each other (just as the telephone once did) and has become a vital means of interaction between individuals, organizations, and communities.

Local governments are using social media for outreach to constituents, for transparency in their operations, and to increase citizen participation. Common uses of social media include crime prevention and police assistance, emergency alerts and severe weather updates, local activities and event registrations, construction updates and road closings, advertising job openings, public service announcements, and announcements of Town Council and advisory board meetings. According to the [Institute for Local Government](#), local governments increasingly find social media to be more than just a means of disseminating information, and see it to help staff, citizen advisory groups and elected officials make better decisions, broaden community engagement and improve public discourse, and ultimately to increase trust in government.

The Town of Morven assisted in using the [Town's Facebook](#) account to facilitate community participation. After adoption, the Town can continue to use their social media and their existing [Town's website](#) to build support for implementation of the Town Plan 2040. As a tool for citizen engagement, the Town's social media platform can help the *Morven Town Plan 2040 Land Use and Master Plan* remain fresh and in the forefront of this dialogue, becoming a 'living' document to help Morven achieve its goals.



#### **5.1.2.1 Strategy: Develop a Consolidated Social Media Platform**

Below are near-term action steps the Town of Morven can take to expand its social media platform and widen its digital footprint. The [International City Management Association](#) has a wealth of resources to assist the Town in this endeavor.

1. **Continue to update and expand social media.** The Town can continue to use its official website to work closely with Town departments to provide current information to the public. Following are the most immediate priority tasks recommended for the Town's social media.
  - a. **Complete the Town website and fill in missing content.** Update outdated and missing content throughout the website, especially in key areas.
  - b. **Improve search engine optimization and functionality.** The Town website could be better optimized to add a search box for users. Currently, the only terms yielding search results are those found in existing headings and content of a page already open.
  - c. **Explore whether appropriate at this time to open new social media applications.** On the Town's website homepage, new social media accounts, in addition to its existing Facebook account, could include Twitter and Instagram. Even if posts are infrequent in the beginning, opening accounts now would ensure that the Town can claim the appropriate and authorized 'handles' (e.g., @townofMorvennc, etc.) and create topical and relevant hashtags (e.g. #visitMorvennc, etc.)



## 5.2 Goals-Objectives-Strategies

The objectives and strategies appearing under each goal appear in priority rankings based upon the number of public comments. These may be pursued as deemed appropriate by the Town, its citizens, and businesses.

### 5.2.1 Goal 1: **PRESERVATION AND REUSE OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS!**

**5.2.1.1 Objective 1: Preserve the small-town appeal of Morven while encouraging compatible business growth through development of revised development standards and specifications.**

***Strategy 1: Create a Main Street District (MS) through zoning standards and specifications with architectural design standards and specifications as well as development incentives designed to allow existing business to grow and encourage compatible new development.*** Careful consideration will go into the preparation of design standards and specifications that reinforce the small town feel through an understanding of architectural and urban design principles that direct the placement and massing of structures.

Attention will be also given to what may be considered the public realm, typically composed of streets, sidewalks, and civic spaces to help guide the Town's decision-making of details when investing in light posts, outside furniture, landscaping and sidewalk surfaces.

***Strategy 2: Give attention during preparation of the new Main Street District (MS) to address development standards of adjacent properties and streets.*** As the new Main Street increases in development interest and popularity as a destination for commerce, entertainment and civic events, it is important to allow adjacent areas to have the option to transition to new uses that may offer supportive roles through the service sector, such as professional offices, while remaining compatible to adjacent residential uses. This transition also helps add to the number of employees and the private-sector clients who may become frequent patrons of restaurants and businesses along Main Street. Dismissive planning of support areas to Main Streets inadvertently restricts the primary destination streets from maximizing their potential in retaining the community-cherished small town feel.

The UDO can provide flexibility to allow access for parking, deliveries and other utilitarian functions at mid-blocks.

***Strategy 3: Have the Town consider adaptive reuse of historic structures for public uses before designing new structures.*** There may be existing historic structures contributing to the small town feel of Morven that are in need of significant reinvestment beyond the current property owner's abilities to provide. As opportunities arise, the Town will explore whether such historic structures may be repurposed into a government use.

**Strategy 4:** *Have the Town consider context-sensitive designs when it is time for Town-owned buildings to be constructed so that designs reinforce the small-town feel.*

The architectural style of publicly owned buildings has historically provided inspiration for privately developed buildings which often mimicked many design elements to create a cohesive sense of place. Large investments by the Town of Morven for civic buildings can positively or negatively have a domino effect on the designs of private-sector investments in land development. To successfully respond to the community's desire to retain a small-town atmosphere, the Town must dedicate resources to design structures which emulate enduring qualities expressed by the community. An example of this principal was the design for the Town of Edenton, North Carolina's new Police Headquarters building. Its design was inspired by the Town's historic cotton mill and although it served a large governmental function, the building blended in well with the surrounding historic neighborhood and instantly created a sense of pride for the Town and area residents.

**Strategy 5:** *Incorporate a sense of small-town ambiance in public infrastructure.*

Details within the public realm of a town can be as important as the privately-owned buildings themselves for maintaining a tangible small town look. When the Town of Morven is tasked with selecting sidewalks, outside furniture, utility posts and even landscaping, the Town should have a pre-selected palette of elements from which to order that are in harmony with the small-town ambiance

**5.2.2 Goal 2: GROWTH AND MORE JOBS!**

**5.2.2.1 Objective 1: Harness the imminent opportunities of regional expansion while managing growth within Morven.**

**Strategy 1:** *Encourage private investment within Morven by updating development ordinances to encourage desired development and establish quality standards and specifications to protect the environmentally sensitive and historically relevant assets of the Town.*

**Strategy 2:** *Adopt Required Review Procedures. Adopt required review procedures and standards and specifications for development in the new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).*

**5.2.2.2 Objective 2: Ensure quality development within the Town of Morven.**

**Strategy 1:** *Encourage development first in areas where existing infrastructure and convenient proximity to Town services are already provided.* The first wave of the community's expanding business market will be directed, through application of the Future Land Use Map and Zoning Map, to areas where utilities and services are already provided.

**Strategy 2:** *Prepare a new UDO with standards to assure quality growth.* The new unified development ordinance (UDO), currently being prepared, will address the community's priorities to attract business and manage growth to ensure safety and quality.



**5.2.2.3 Objective 3: Have a good plan and ordinances so projects achieve the mission of the plan.**

***Strategy 1:*** ***Adopt Town Plan 2040 to establish Morven as a successful community and a partner in the future growth and re-development of the area.*** Establishing a clear vision and the action steps to achieve the goals established by the Town is the first task toward a bright future. (See section 8.5 of this document.)

***Strategy 2:*** ***Prepare and adopt a new UDO establishing standards and specifications for new development and re-development consistent with Town Plan 2040.*** The replacement of antiquated ordinances with relevant modern development standards will establish Morven as a leader in proactively seeking to refresh itself into a 21st century community. (See section 8.5 of this document.)

**5.2.2.4 Objective 4: Ensure the types of businesses permitted and their respective development standards at key locations improves visitors' first impressions; strengthens the Town's identity as having a modern and healthy economy; and attracts customers from within and outside of Morven.**

***Strategy 1:*** ***At the time of this Town Plan's adoption, the existing zoning map and the existing Zoning Ordinance are in the process of being updated and replaced with a new map and Ordinance to ensure Town staff, property owners, interested developers, the Planning Board, and the Town Council have a clear path forward in investment and rezoning decisions consistent with the Future Land Use Map and this and other related goals, objectives and strategies.*** (See 8.4.1 of this document.)

***Strategy 2:*** ***As a complement to Strategy 1, ensure the types of businesses that are NOT permitted at key locations (i.e., at Town's major entrances, along major roadways, and at Morven's main intersections), have options to locate at strategically planned locations to ensure their ability to locate, relocate, potentially expand, and thrive among compatible land uses.*** (See 8.4.1 of this document.)

**5.2.2.5 Objective 5: Adopt standards and specifications and take actions that attract new businesses within downtown with higher development and code enforcement standards to assure quality development.**

***Strategy 1:*** ***Ensure the new UDO encourages investment in downtown. The UDO should integrate architectural design standards and enhanced enforcement requirements.*** (See 8.5.1 of this document.)

***Strategy 2:*** ***Improve way-finding throughout the Town to enhance the visitor experience. Local directional signage will help guide the visitor to shopping, services, accommodations, and food/beverage businesses in Morven.*** The Town should consider future design and funding of a way-finding sign program as the Town grows. (See 6.8.2.2 of this document.)

**5.2.2.6 Objective 6: Support existing businesses and encourage additional businesses outside the downtown area that complement and not compete with downtown.**

***Strategy 1: Ensure Town standards and specifications encourage growth and expansion of businesses. The Town's new UDO should identify different commercial zoning districts with varying permitted uses and development standards.***

**5.2.2.7 Objective 7: Foster growth in local-craft businesses.**

***Strategy 1: Incorporate in the new UDO standards and specifications that respond to challenges associated with expanding and attracting local-craft businesses in downtown Morven.*** Restaurants, artisan specialty shops, and entrepreneurs producing products high in craftsmanship within proximity to each other will generate interest and establish Morven as a destination.

Ensure the UDO acknowledges the fiscal challenges a start-up business would have if required to develop property under the same conventional standards and specifications as a national retailer regarding minimum lot area, building setbacks, minimum parking and other site development standards. Adopt standards and specifications that allow conversions of existing structures into new uses, encourage shared parking, and provides flexibility in building setbacks to respond to unique lot dimensions.

Adopt administrative review procedures sensitive to challenges faced by local craft businesses to improve their successful start-up and future expansions in Morven.

### **5.2.3 Goal 3: KEEP CRIME LOW!**

**5.2.3.1 Objective 1: Safe Neighborhoods.**

***Strategy 1: Identify and continue practices that consistently achieve low crime rates throughout Morven neighborhoods.***

**5.2.3.2 Objective 2: The Town of Morven will explore ways to receive training in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and apply CPTED concepts to Town-owned properties.**

***Strategy 1: Upon future formation of a Planning and Zoning Department and a Police Department, staff will collaborate to seek funding to receive CPTED training. CPTED is the intentional design of the physical environment in ways that reduce or remove identifiable crime risks.*** CPTED concepts are composed of: natural surveillance (increases visibility); natural access control (controls access); and territorial reinforcement (promotes a sense of ownership).

**5.2.3.3 Objective 3: Upon future formation of a Planning and Zoning Department and a Police Department, staff of these departments will apply principles of CPTED, after receiving training, to their areas of authority to help reduce crime.**

**Strategy 1:** *Planning and Zoning Department staff will promote the use of CPTED concepts while reviewing site plans of new development.*

**Strategy 2:** *Staff will promote the use of CPTED concepts by performing reviews of town-owned property and generating a prioritized list of retrofit projects, and complete them as funding allows.*

**Strategy 3:** *Police Department staff will offer property surveys to homeowners and businesses; and provide recommendations for making changes to bring their property into compliance with CPTED concepts.*

**5.2.3.4** **Objective 4:** **Complete a light audit of the Town to determine if there is a correlation between crime levels and poorly illuminated areas.**

**Strategy 1:** *In poorly lit areas, the Town will coordinate with local residents and businesses to erect additional outdoor lighting to increase security and visibility.*

**5.2.3.5** **Objective 5:** **Work with local neighborhoods to establish neighborhood watch programs educational outreach programs.**

#### **5.2.4 Goal 4: COMMUNITY EVENTS!**

**5.2.4.1** **Objective 1:** **Encourage community events co-hosted by local businesses and the Town.**

**Strategy 1:** *Provide businesses with periodic Town support staff and resources to attract residents and visitors to Morven for events (i.e., parades, Veterans Day ceremonies, holiday events, and concerts) to increase pride in the community and raise exposure to local businesses.*

**5.2.4.2** **Objective 2:** **Plan for the development of outdoor civic event spaces.**

**Strategy 1:** *Explore properties the Town could lease for the construction of public plazas for community events.*

**5.2.4.3** **Objective 3:** **Explore existing town-owned property and property the Town could acquire or lease for community events.**

**Strategy 1:** *Explore existing town-owned properties the Town could repurpose or new property the town could acquire to construct public plazas for community events. Through the development process, new park plazas and amenities could be coordinated for operation by the Town and/or community partners. Utilizing new property tax revenues can partially fund civic spaces and a community event planning position as development occurs.*

**5.2.4.4 Objective 4: Identify opportunities to add parks as the number of neighborhoods grow.**

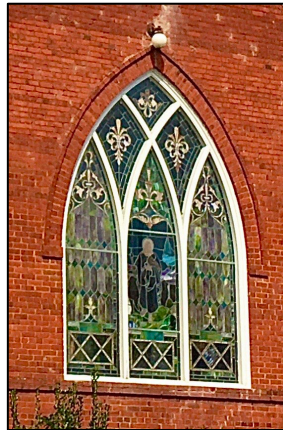
**Strategy 1:** *Explore properties the Town could acquire to construct public parks.*

**Strategy 2:** *Identify opportunities for new development to provide parks in their plans.*

**5.2.4.5 Objective 5: Pedestrian Pathways.**

**Strategy 1:** *Require developers construct sidewalks in new neighborhoods and commercial developments.*

**Strategy 2:** *Prepare, fund, and implement a sidewalk master plan so the town may start budgeting toward building a sidewalk system connecting existing and future neighborhoods to schools and town amenities.*



**5.2.5 GOAL 5: MORE HOUSING OPTIONS!**

**5.2.5.1 Objective 1: Identify which barriers currently exist in Morven that inhibit it from being a more family friendly community.**

**Strategy 1:** *Identify whether the following barriers exist in Morven that inadvertently inhibit it from being family oriented:*

- *Lack of affordable housing;*
- *Exclusionary and single-use zoning;*
- *Insensitive urban design;*
- *Property tax too high;*
- *Lack of services;*
- *Lack of quality education; and*
- *Crime.*

**5.2.5.2 Objective 2: Continue to support housing at affordable prices.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Continue to offer practices within the Town's ability to foster development of housing at affordable prices.*

**5.2.5.3 Objective 3: Ensure the zoning map and the UDO, to be prepared after adoption of this plan, advance interests of families in the approval process of siting child-care facilities.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Review the zoning map to ascertain if zoning districts where child-care facilities are allowed are convenient to neighborhoods and employers.*

***Strategy 2:*** *Ensure the future UDO's approval process for child-care facilities balances convenience to families while ensuring compatibility to surrounding land uses.*

**5.2.6 GOAL 6: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE!**

**WATER:**

**5.2.6.1 Objective 1: Continue to work with Anson County on the development and implementation of a long-term water allocation agreement. The Town will need to secure guarantees for long-term water allocation to plan for anticipated/desired growth.**

***Strategy 1:*** *Develop a formal schedule to meet with County officials to review water usage to more effectively plan for Town water needs.* Meetings should occur, at a minimum, every 2 years to review water usage rates.

***Strategy 2:*** *Update local ordinances to include Anson County utility officials as a review partner in all subdivision and non-residential site plan review projects to ensure utility opportunities/constraints are properly identified and addressed during the plan review process.*

***Strategy 3:*** *Working with the County staff, develop a long-range water service plan for the community including a schedule for regular servicing of lines (i.e. cleaning, flushing, etc.), installation and upgrading of utility lines, provision of water for fire suppression services (i.e. installation of fire hydrants), and addressing of water quality issues.* This service plan will also identify how Morven and Anson County can coordinate local educational efforts for members of the community.

**SEWER:**

**5.2.6.2 Objective 2: Address the Town's long-term sewer needs. The Town will need to secure guarantees from Anson County for long-term sewer allocation to plan for anticipated/desired growth.**

**ROADWAYS:**

**5.2.6.3**            **Objective 3: Address the Town's long-term road maintenance needs.**

**Strategy 1:**    *Complete an assessment of all locally maintained roadways as part of the annual budget process.*

**Strategy 2:**    *Develop and implement a local roadway maintenance master plan.*

**STORMWATER:**

**5.2.6.4**            **Objective 1: Prepare, fund, and implement a stormwater master plan so the Town may start budgeting towards the design of a community stormwater system.** This plan will be designed to cover existing developed areas and identify how new development will be expected to 'tie into' the system and augment the Town's stormwater system.

**Strategy 1:**    *Update the Town UDO to develop comprehensive stormwater management standards.* This includes thresholds for redevelopment projects (residential and commercial) to install and maintain stormwater management systems.

**SIDEWALKS AND BICYCLE LANES:**

**5.2.6.5**            **Objective 5: Prepare, fund, and implement a sidewalk/greenway and bicycle lane master plan so the Town may start budgeting toward building a sidewalk and bicycle system connecting existing and future neighborhoods, town amenities, and local businesses.**

**Strategy 1:**    *Install crosswalks at key intersections to facilitate safe pedestrian access to key areas within the community.*

**Strategy 2:**    *Ensure connectivity to parks and natural areas.*

**Strategy 3:**    *Ensure access is ADA compatible for universal access.*

**5.2.6.6**            **Objective 6: Require developers to construct sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in new neighborhoods and commercial developments.**

**Strategy 1:**    *Update the Town UDO to require installation of sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes as part of residential and non-residential developments.*

## 6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Morven, North Carolina is located within Anson County. The Town, bisected by US Highway 52 (north/south) and NC Highway 145 (west/east), is approximately 10 miles south of the Town of Wadesboro. Based on current Census data, the Town's corporate limits encompasses approximately 1 square miles of land area. The Town is in a region defined as the *Charlotte Metropolitan Area*, which is also a part of the *Charlotte-Concord Combined Statistical Area (CSA)*. Located in the Piedmont region of the state, the CSA includes urban/suburban areas in and around the City of Charlotte in both North and South Carolina, the largest in the Carolinas, is one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States (US) and the fourth largest in the Southeastern US.

Morven was named by Scottish settlers for their home, (Morvern), the original Town was established in 1823 but destroyed during the Civil War. When the railroad arrived two miles west of the original settlement, Morven was reestablished west in its present location along U.S. Highway 52 south of Wadesboro

### 6.1 Why Focus on Economic Development

Economic development is critical to a community for two reasons: 1) to provide an employment and income base for the community; and 2) to enable a community's leadership to maintain the lowest reasonable rates for its utility rate payers and taxpayers.

Effective economic development starts with the latter. Prudent management procedures for the efficient and effective operations of both utility enterprises and tax revenue systems will ensure that all money due to both the Town and the County is collected. Effective collection allows leadership to establish and maintain the lowest responsible rates for all rate payers and taxpayers.

#### 6.1.1 Utility Rates

Achieving low utility rates for customers of the Town always begins with proper maintenance and operations of utilities while carefully managing the expansion of such systems. Maintenance of existing systems should emphasize quality control to eliminate leaks, account for water and wastewater usage, and avoid contamination. Placing an emphasis on these important factors will provide one way of improving the return on the investment by both the Town and the County for rate payers.

Another important approach to improving the return on public investment is to carefully manage the growth and expansion of the system. Extensions should be prudently studied and examined to determine the effective advantages to the current rate payers of such expansion and ensure sound decision making. Extensions without annexation may increase utility revenue, but at the same time may expose the rate payer, and taxpayer, to financial obligations while the benefactor of the extension shares little or no risk in the cost of the extension. Exceptions should only be considered when public health is at risk and annexation is not eligible; therefore, obtaining a voluntary petition for annexation to be held until eligibility is attained can protect the Town, its rate payers and taxpayers.

A third important factor in increasing the return on the public's investment in the utility enterprises is to encourage infill development and redevelopment. Improving under-developed and under-utilized areas of existing development within the Town can increase

the return on investment in existing infrastructure and contribute greatly to reducing utility and property tax rates.

### **6.1.2 Property Tax Strategy and Other Taxes Collected**

The maintenance of low property (ad valorem) tax rates always begins with the prudent and effective management of reporting and collecting the other revenue sources towns receive in order to reduce reliance on property taxes. Emphasis on effective data reporting enables the retrieval of several types of taxes already paid by our citizens and businesses every day that can easily be overlooked in the absence of effective reporting practices.

The Utility Franchise Tax is a tax on utility billings collected by electric, gas, telecommunications and cable television companies that is distributed back to the Town by the respective utility. If the utility companies do not have current information reflecting the Town's boundaries, then inaccurate reporting to the State by the utility company results in reduced distributions to the Town by the State.

Another tax already paid by the taxpayer daily is the State tax on motor vehicle fuels, commonly known as the Powell Bill. The state distributes this tax to towns based upon a combination of population and street mileage maintained by the town. As towns' street networks grow by accepting new subdivision streets for maintenance, the Powell Bill data reporting must keep pace. Immediately upon completion of new streets, the Town should update its Powell Bill information during the next reporting cycle, so the Town begins bringing that revenue, already paid by the taxpayer, back to Morven to increase the funding available for maintenance. A new street may retrieve significant revenues over time before any repair cost are experienced.

State sales tax distributions to the Town are controlled by the County. The sales taxes collected and redistributed within a county may return to the Town by either population or property valuation-based formulas - determined in North Carolina by the local County Commissioners. This system is a counter-productive system in that counties often compete with towns for growth so they may keep a larger share of sales tax distributions to be shared locally. The only effective role a town may have in successfully growing its recovery of the sales tax collected by local businesses is through the careful management of the utility enterprises. Provision of stormwater, potable water, and sanitary sewer has a profound effect on the location of businesses; and towns that manage their systems with an emphasis on return on investment can improve their share of local sales tax recovered by supporting growth within the boundaries of the town.

Property taxes are the major source of local discretionary funding for routine services such as recreation, sanitation, public safety and administration. Maximizing the recovery of the taxes already collected by the state can reduce the level of taxation required of property owners.

### **6.1.3 Jobs and Economic Base**

The economic base of a community is the collective group of business activities that bring money into the Town by providing a product or service. The category of "production, transportation, and material moving occupations" occupations has been the top sector in



recent years bringing money into Morven, followed by “service occupations.” The non-basic sectors including commercial development (driven by residential development) are typically that part of the local economy providing services and products sought by the basic sector workers and others, such as the dry cleaners, pharmacy, grocery store and repair service businesses. When “travel and tourism” is part of the economic base, many businesses serve both purposes; restaurants are a good example because they serve both local and non-local customers routinely. “Hotels and other hospitality” businesses can serve both the tourism and corporate sector of our future economic base.

The economic base establishes a true purpose for the community. The jobs created by the basic sector businesses are the obvious direct benefit of the economic base. Jobs are critical because much of the impact of the economic base depends on how well money is distributed throughout the community, and jobs are the primary method of distribution. Automation often tends to allow economic activity to skim over the surface of a community and not have as deep an impact. One way to maximize a positive economic impact of the local economic base sector business community is to establish local relationships with companies and enterprises to provide as much local support and local resources as possible to increase distributions of wealth locally.

Increases in the value of local properties by infill development and redevelopment of under-utilized areas help lower property taxes for all taxpayers, further improving the local return on the investments made in existing infrastructure (*See Section 6.1.2 of this document*).

## **6.2 Current Economic Profile - Conventional Sectors**

### **6.2.1 Production, Transportation, and Material Moving**

The largest number of the Town’s citizens in the workforce are employed in the “production, transportation, and material moving” occupations, making up 37.6% of the workforce. The second most numerous categories are “service” occupations, making up 23.3% of the workforce. (*See Table 3.5.1.A in section 3 of this document*)

These occupation groups are all commercial in nature and show that the commercial sector is not only the key to Morven’s success, but these sectors will flourish when given the proper business climate and innovative options to attract attention. The updating of local zoning standards and specifications, as discussed in section 8, will improve the business community’s options for innovative development.

A healthy commercial services sector is critical to supporting strong industry; therefore, practical standards and specifications such as zoning rules and non-residential property maintenance codes must be administered to support the sector. Standards and specifications must be updated to protect property rights while preserving natural resources and establishing reasonable standards for enhancing the appearance of all new development and redevelopment. Equally important to updating the Morven development ordinances is professional administration to ensure equal and fair treatment to all Morven’s businesses and citizens. Proper implementation will enhance these industries and occupations, allowing them to become more prosperous.

### **6.2.2 Manufacturing, Education Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance**

Manufacturing, Educational services, health care, and social assistance have been important to Morven's historic growth. These businesses represent a vital sector in Morven's area economy providing jobs to many residents. (See Table 3.5.1.B in section 3 of this document)

## **6.3 Importance of the Infrastructure Networks**

Infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications, high-speed internet, roads, railroads, and airports make up the core infrastructure for a community. These networks often seem unrelated; however, lack of coordination between these unique systems can result in poor decisions regarding land use development.

Municipal utilities such as water, stormwater, sewer, streets, sidewalks and greenways generally represent most hard structure utilities. These utilities generally are based upon the network of streets and roads.

Non-municipal services such as electric, telecommunications, natural gas and broad-band fiber generally utilize flexible conduits for their conveyances. These service providers are typically located within or adjacent to public street and road right-of-way and therefore utilize much of the same network for distribution.

Coordination among these various service providers, as well as other governmental counterparts such as the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Anson County and other providers, is also vital to efficient operations of Morven's utilities and public works functions. Conducting periodic meetings to review planned improvements and proposed developments by private development interests can often improve the level of service to all of Morven's businesses and citizens by identifying opportunities for cost savings through coordination. Inclusion of representatives of these various agencies on a local technical review committee coordinated by the Town's professional planning department will reduce costs to Morven rate and taxpayers.

Examples of cooperative initiatives may include provision of services for manufacturing facilities, where dual feed electrical supply, water, sewer, and a host of other functions can be coordinated ahead of time to ensure appropriate capacity is provided and corridor limitations are foreseen. Projects to consider should be evaluated based on merit to the Town's utility rate and taxpayers.

## **6.4 Existing Business Retention and Expansion**

Diverse businesses including resilient job creators, specialty markets, professional services, health professionals, and food and beverage establishments supplemented by small industry, craftsmanship, and artistic endeavors (both for-profit and non-profit) will be required if Morven is to refresh its local purpose in the region. Without this emphasis we risk becoming commercially stagnant and even franchise and chain business enterprises may choose not to develop with the Town of Morven. For existing business to remain healthy and expand, it is vital that careful land use planning and a future UDO has standards and specifications that allow expansion while consciously assessing compatibility between land uses and when incompatibility exists or may exist with expansion, that business have attractive options of where they may locate within the Town of Morven.

With existing availability of the railroad, the Town should continuously explore which existing businesses are dependent on the railroad's ability to serve them so development approvals and decisions unintentionally hamper the railroad's access to businesses are balanced with mutual progress of protecting railroad freight with businesses and residential developments not directly dependent on the railroad infrastructure.

## 6.5 Tourism, Travel and Hospitality

Projects that enhance the tourism experience in Morven should be considered and programmed into capital budgets over time to stimulate a continuation of new investment (both public and private) for the ever-changing tourism based industry.

### 6.5.1 Heritage Tourism

Heritage Tourism is defined by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic, and natural resources." It is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism and hospitality industry overall, and a major focus of the [State of North Carolina's tourism promotion](#) efforts.

Opportunities for the growth of Heritage Tourism include businesses that provide support services for artists and craftspeople. Such businesses include tool and musical instrument repair, wholesale, retail, and distribution of specialty materials used in the creative arts (weaving, basket-making, blacksmithing, pottery, woodworking, etc.), and services provided to residents and tourists such as demonstrations, guided tours, private lessons, and programming for public institutions and private and non-profit entities.

### 6.5.2 Recreation and Parks

The Town of Morven does not have a Parks and Recreation Department and there are no park facilities within the corporate limits of the Town. However, Anson County is home to several open space destinations and parks drawing visitors throughout the region. This includes the following organized spot activities:

- Girls softball (ages 4 to 15),
- Baseball (ages 9 to 12),
- Tee ball and coach pitch (ages 4 to 8), and
- Micro and youth soccer (up to 12th grade)

County recreational facilities include:

1. Wadesboro City Park - located at 1000 Gatewood Street Wadesboro: Offering two picnic shelters, a playground, restrooms, and a 0.8-mile walking trail;
2. City Pond - located on NC Hwy 742 Wadesboro: Featuring a 190-acre municipal lake with picnic shelter, boat rentals, bank fishing, and playground;
3. Little Park - located at 845 Airport Road Wadesboro: Ballfields, soccer fields, tennis courts, playground, picnic shelters, swimming pool, walking trail and a 2-acre pond;
4. Ray Shelton Ballfield - located on S. Rutherford Street Wadesboro: Lighted softball field (managed by the Anson County Board of Education);

5. Field of Dreams Ball Park – located at 281 S. Main Street in Polkton: Features three ball fields (baseball and softball);
6. Peachland Park – located off Old School Road in Peachland: Paved walking trail, a baseball field, a soccer field, playground equipment, restrooms, and picnic shelters;
7. Hatcher Park – located at 206 Cowan Street in Lilesville: Playground and picnic shelters.

#### **6.5.2.1 Bicycling and Hiking**

Currently, Morven does not have sidewalks or recreational walking trails within its corporate limits. As identified in the [Anson County Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2040](#), adopted April 2021, *“Multimodal transportation is lacking in Anson County and its municipalities...A countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian plan and infrastructure would strengthen mobility, be a tourism asset, and provide needed access to jobs, healthcare, and daily services.”*

#### **6.5.2.2 Angling (Fishing)**

Fishing is available in the area at the Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge, located approximately 20 miles north of Morven.

#### **6.5.2.3 Canoeing and Kayaking**

A canoe launch along the Carolina Thread Trail is available in the Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge, located approximately 20 miles north of Morven.

## **6.6 Manufacturing**

Leadership boards of local government, both municipal and county, traditionally feel an obligation to emphasize traditional manufacturing; however, traditional manufacturing may only be a small part of the future economy of Morven and most other small towns. Traditional manufacturing blends traditional manufacturing with forward thinking values of naturally sourced and locally produced materials to produce tangible goods for a value added industry.

While these traditional opportunities do exist, Morven must recognize there are also pitfalls to placing all hope on ‘traditional industry’ – a sector that may inevitably employ humans to manage facilities that are designed for a specific level and duration of productivity. The reality is that smaller facilities are often the disposable ones. Larger facilities require a larger investment and typically are considered long-term commitments.

Technological innovation and globalism are fueling transformational change in both our cultural and business environments as discussed below.

### **6.6.1 Economic Transformation**

An increasingly mobile workforce is utilizing digital, web-based technology – the ubiquitous ‘mobile app’ – that enables a business owner or employee to work from anywhere.

The global pandemic COVID-19 that emerged in late 2019 and has dragged on through 2022 led many employees to remain home, at least temporarily, to help reduce the spread of the virus. Employees who were fortunate enough to remain employed while working from home replaced face-to-face meetings with computer-based meeting

platforms, such as Zoom.+ As mentioned in an article entitled, “[What is the Future of Cities](#),” appearing in NPR’s Planet Money on May 19, 2020, author Greg Rosalsky reported how some major companies signaled that remote work from home is here to stay. The article quotes Harvard University professor Ed Glaeser, whom Rosalsky calls the leading scholar of urban economics, as saying that, at least in the short run, how large dense cities, having large employment centers, may suffer in the foreseeable future, while companies open small offices in more affordable lower-density mid-sized cities where employees may work remotely, once the pandemic is over or significantly subsides.

Many jobs are no longer tied to a specific location. Anyone with a Smartphone and an idea can become an entrepreneur. As stated above, technological innovation and globalism are fueling transformational change in the cultural and business environment.

Opportunities for Morven in this new economic realm are directly related to the ‘quality of place’ issues that are explored throughout this Plan, while recognizing tourism, crafts, and other natural resource-based sectors. When employers, innovators and entrepreneurs can choose to live and work anywhere, it is quality of place – in addition to the basics of infrastructure and support services – that is often the deciding factor.

Morven has the attributes to successfully compete in this age of global commerce. The Town can glean from other proven economic development strategies and build its foundation by retaining young talent and attracting innovators from the greater region and around the country.

#### **6.6.1.1 APP Based Economy**

The ‘app-based’ economy isn’t just creating a new digital platform for freelance work. It is spawning a host of new economic activity. For example, more than a million ‘makers’ sell jewelry, clothing, craft supplies and tools, and all manner of home goods and accessories through the online marketplace

#### **6.6.1.2 SHARING (or SHARED) Economy**

The well-known lodging website [Airbnb](#) and similar accommodation platforms such as [Love Home Swap](#) and [onefinestay](#) have close to a million ‘hosts’ in nearly 200 countries. [Uber](#) and [Lyft](#), two other mainstays in the emergent realm of ‘crowd-based capitalism’, are transforming how we think about transportation. Uber, which started with four people around a desk and two cars on the streets of San Francisco, is a global phenomenon, serving over six continents with well over 1,000,000 drivers.

#### **6.6.1.3 GIG Economy**

The GIG economy is part of a shifting cultural and business environment fueled by technological innovation and globalism. An increasingly mobile workforce is utilizing digital, web-based technology that enables employees to work from anywhere, so that jobs are no longer tied to a specific location. Companies such as Uber, Lyft, and AirBnB are examples of this emergent realm.

The workforce of this new ‘gig’ economy largely consists of freelance ‘independent contractors’ who can select among temporary jobs, referred to as ‘gigs’ (hence the term), and short-term projects from anywhere in the world. Likewise, employers can select the

best individuals for specific projects from a 'global' labor pool and are no longer confined to any given area.

Opportunities for Morven in the GIG Economy are directly related to the speed and quality of digital connectivity and the 'quality of place' issues that are explored throughout this Plan.

## **6.7 Economic Development Opportunities**

Several opportunities exist for Morven to re-establish a strong economic base. The following topics focus on first steps for advancing in the '21<sup>st</sup> Century'.

### **6.7.1 Innovation Districts**

Innovation Districts are an outgrowth of the culture and technology driving today's economic transformation. Instead of focusing economic development efforts on isolated campuses or business parks, Innovation Districts focus on clustering start-ups and incubators in compact, amenity-rich areas (i.e., walkable downtowns, mixed use districts, etc.) where a mix of entrepreneurs work in collaborative spaces and share knowledge and resources (a staple of the 'Shared Economy'). Existing incentive programs would be paired with a partnership of 'innovation cultivators' – the companies, organizations, and other groups that support the growth of individuals, firms, and their ideas. They include incubators, small business and technology development centers, community colleges, local high schools, job training firms and others advancing specific skill sets for the innovation-driven economy. The initial focus should be a future downtown 'cluster' of businesses utilizing available properties, beginning with development of a single 'innovation space', or business incubator.

### **6.7.2 Home-based Businesses**

Technological innovations make it imperative to re-examine and update zoning provisions that limit or prohibit work at home. The Town should analyze the content and impact of existing standards and specifications with an attitude toward implementation and enforcement that encourages entrepreneurship, creativity, and individual expression while protecting neighborhood residential character.

### **6.7.3 Small Business Incubator**

The Town should explore the necessary public-private partnerships and funding sources to plan and develop business incubators in available manufacturing space. The incubator's mission would be to recruit, develop, and stimulate entrepreneurial talent in the region in order to foster economic growth, strengthen and diversify the local economy, and create new jobs. For example, a partnership-funded non-profit organization would lease (or own) a building that provides support services such as high-speed broadband internet, utilities, reception, and security, along with amenities like audio-visual equipment, conference rooms, and distance-learning capability. A collaborative effort with the community college could offer support systems such as business plan and marketing strategy development, technical assistance, funding proposal preparation, and more.

#### **6.7.4 Collaboration and Regional Partners**

Economic development has been a major element of regional initiatives in recent years. All contain a host of economic development strategies to achieve the goals of job creation, talent retention, and entrepreneurship. The Town should take a leadership role in implementing those strategies that will help the community benefit from its world-class natural and cultural resources by tapping the technological potential of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy, opening Morven and the region to the global marketplace.

The IRS tax code encourages long-term, private capital to invest in eligible low-income rural and urban communities, called Opportunity Zones, across the United States. The Town of Morven is not within a designated [Opportunity Zone](#). The Town may want to explore the process and benefits of seeking designation as an opportunity zone. The closest communities in the program are Piney Grove to the east and Wadesville to the west.

### **6.8 Economic Development *ACTION ITEMS!***

The economic development opportunities Morven enjoys clearly fit into three categories. These are described as “Immediate”, “Programmable” and “Opportunity”.

#### **6.8.1 Immediate Action Items:**

The following immediate action items should be prioritized to accomplish in earnest. These items are intended to begin producing immediate results and improve the personality of Morven as a community addressing its goals.

##### **6.8.1.1 Eliminate obstacles to the goals set by the Town in this plan.**

Clearly identify opportunities and obstacles within local zoning policies to encourage business attraction, retention and expansion. Ensure walkable options for visitors requiring flexible alternatives. Establish clear signage standards to alleviate clutter and establish fairness among businesses. Establish opportunistic standards for business types in manufacturing, commercial service, and home-based business sectors to stimulate opportunity while establishing specifications for development to protect these investments, neighborhoods and the environment as mutual benefactors. Standards and specifications must be evaluated to support additional action items below.

#### **6.8.2 Programmable Action items:**

The following programmable action items should be assigned to specific teams or departments to develop the ways and means to accomplish the tasks.

##### **6.8.2.1 Install local way-finding signage.**

Local directional signage will help guide the visitor to the concentration of automotive services, motorcycle services, accommodations, and food/beverage businesses in Morven.

##### **6.8.2.2 Establish partnerships**

Resources for collaboration and support of economic development initiatives are not always consolidated into one neat package. The resources in North Carolina flow into communities and regions through multiple agencies. Organizing strategic interagency partnerships and participating in effective ways often becomes cumbersome; therefore,

identifying the best partnerships and managing effective relationships among those partnerships should be a defined responsibility of either the Town Manager or Town Planning and Zoning Administrator.

The Town should explore the necessary public-private partnerships and funding sources to plan and develop business incubators and available manufacturing space. (See 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of this document.)

**6.8.3 Opportunity Based Action items:**

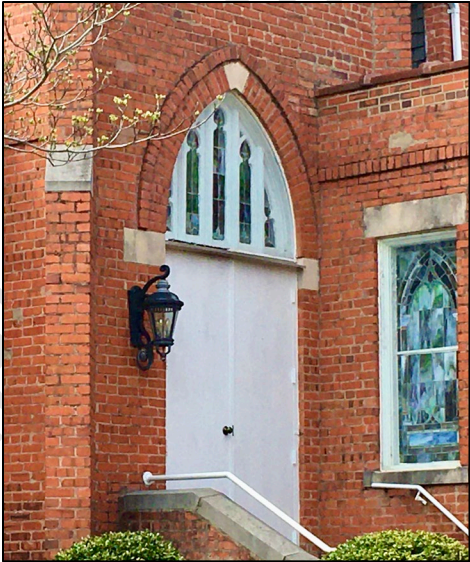
The following opportunity-based action items will require continuous planning and forethought to recognize opportunities to act.

**6.8.3.1 Support growth and expansion of eco-tourism businesses.**

Support for growth and expansion of both existing and new businesses serving the motoring tourist with overnight and seasonal housing accommodations, RV camping (not as a permanent residence), base camp facilities, extended vehicle parking, outfitters, outpatient medical services, automotive services/repairs, and food/beverage services located within close proximity to one another.

**6.8.3.2 Establish criteria for financial participation in opportunities to expand the job and property tax base through strategic expansion of infrastructure.**

Establish clear criteria for expansion of infrastructure (broadband, stormwater, potable water and sewer systems) based upon measurable benefits and a “return on investment” business model. Criteria should also include contingency factors for public health and welfare needs when potable water and sanitary sewer needs are critical.





## 7. INFRASTRUCTURE

### 7.1 Water and Sewer Utility Systems

Utility services (i.e. water and sewer) are provided and managed by Anson County.

#### 7.1.1 Water Supply

As previously indicated within this Document, public water supply is provided by the Pee Dee River. The Anson County utilities department provides water service throughout the county. The existing water system has a maximum capacity of 16 million gallons per day and a planning maximum capacity of 12 million gallons per day, with a peak load of 10 million gallons.

The Town has approximately 29 hydrants located throughout the community.

According to the County's website, the 2019 Anson County Local Water Supply Plan indicates that the water supply is operating at 47% demand versus percent supply.

#### 7.2.3.1 Water Supply Action Steps

As indicated herein, water supply to Morven is currently not a limiting factor for future development in the town. As part of this long-range planning effort, the Town will continue to coordinate with Anson County on possible water system extension to serve additional clients consistent with applicable utility policy.

#### 7.1.2 Sewer Service

The County operates a wastewater collection system and a wastewater treatment plant with a 3.5 million gallons per day permitted and discharges into the Pee Dee River.

### 7.2 Transportation Network

Recognizing trends and how peoples' preferences can and do change over time will enable Morven to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations into the future. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate and remain, while aging members will choose to age in place. This can be achieved by creating and sustaining a transportation system that is successful in meeting both the existing and anticipated needs of a diverse community that multiple generations will find attractive by including transportation options and choices that are safe, attractive and convenient.

One of the most common components of the transportation network and most visible characteristics of a neighborhood is the *street*, often taken for granted even though it can change everything about a neighborhood. The street strongly influences how people behave in their community. The following questions are presented to stimulate thoughts about neighborhood streets as an example of how important this simple concept is.

- Does the street have room to pass another car?
- Does the street have room for a visitor or emergency vehicle to park in front of a home or business?
- Does the street feature ditches or curbing for drainage?
- Does the street include sidewalks along its route?

The answers to these questions clearly define the character of the neighborhood, *for example*: neighborhood streets lined with ditches for storm-water conveyance will cause people to walk in the street just to visit a neighbor, or they may even give cause for residents to choose to drive a block away to visit that neighbor. By contrast, neighborhood streets containing curbing with sidewalks set back from the curb encourage people to spend time outside to walk or play together. Streets designed properly provide a place to learn to skate or ride a bike. The street with sidewalks becomes the neighborhood's central gathering place, where multiple generations of citizens associate in many ways. The properly designed street will change the characteristics of human behavior and contribute to improved and healthy lifestyles. How many times have you heard concerns about kids not getting enough exercise? Well, maybe our streets have not helped much with that problem. We can do better. We can improve the quality of neighborhoods in many ways.

Beyond the neighborhood street is a network of collector streets, often called arterials. These collector streets or arterials connect the neighborhood streets to the thoroughfares and highways that bring us all together. Streets also provide our principal connections to other modes such as airports and railroads. The following information about our transportation network and the actions we can take locally to improve how this network serves Morven's citizens and businesses will provide the foundation for many decisions facing the Town.

### **7.2.1 Roads and Highways**

Major thoroughfares in Morven include Main Street and US Highway 52.

The region is part of the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization (RRRPO), which has identified several projects in Anson County as part of the DOT's STIP process addressing local transportation needs. This includes replacement of two functionally obsolete bridges (i.e. they no longer meet current standards for lane width and load-carrying capacity) and one structurally deficient bridge (require significant maintenance, rehabilitation, or replacement and cannot carry certain freight loads).

In 2012, a comprehensive transportation plan (CTP) was finalized to assist local governments make long-range transportation decisions. The CTP includes an assessment of alternative modes of transportation such as transit, walking, and cycling, and identifies recommendations for solutions that provides for the safe, efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sensitive use of the transportation system, while addressing current and future travel needs. Recommendation(s) from the CTP include:

A. US 74:

- Upgrade existing four-lane facility to interstate standards from Union County to Old Prison Camp Rd (SR 1249) and from west of the Lilesville town limits to Anson County. Interchanges are recommended at Clinton Ave. (Peachland), the proposed NC 218 Connector (Polkton) and NC 145. A grade separation is recommended at the rail crossing east of Lilesville;
- Wadesboro Bypass: Construct a four-lane freeway north of Wadesboro from Old Prison Camp Rd. (SR 1249) to west of the Lilesville town limits. Interchanges are recommended at US 74/Old Prison Camp Rd. (SR 1249), NC 742, US 52, NC 109, the proposed US 52 Bypass, and at US 74 west of the Lilesville town limits. Grade separations are recommended at the three rail crossings in addition to Brown Creek Church Rd. (SR 1641), Airport Rd. (SR 1645), Winfree Rd. (SR 1713), and Wall St. west of Lilesville.
- Upgrade US 74 from Old Prison Camp Rd. (SR 1249) through Wadesboro to west of the Lilesville town limits to boulevard standards by converting the existing 5-lanes into a 4-lane median divided facility.

B. US 52:

- TIP Project R-2320: Widen to a four-lane divided boulevard from US 74 in Wadesboro to NC 24/27 in Albemarle (Stanly County). This project will include constructing a bypass on new location east of Ansonville from Fries Blvd. to Jack's Branch Rd. (SR 1637);
- Widen to a four-lane divided boulevard from US 74 in Wadesboro to the proposed US 52 Bypass and to a four-lane divided expressway from the proposed US 52 Bypass to South Carolina.
- Wadesboro Bypass: Construct a four-lane bypass of Wadesboro at expressway standards from US 52, 0.2 miles north of Old US 52 (SR 1127), to the proposed US 74 Bypass. Interchanges are recommended at US 52, US 74 and the proposed Wadesboro Bypass. A grade separation is recommended at the rail crossing.

C. NC 218 Connector: It is recommended that a two-lane minor thoroughfare be constructed from NC 218 to US 74 west of the Polkton municipal limits. A grade separation is recommended at the rail crossing.

D. NC 742 Extension: NC 742 is recommended to be extended from US 52 to NC 109.

Unfortunately, Morven was not designated as having any roadway improvements as part of the CTP planning effort. As a result, roadway and transportation improvements will have to begin as a local effort.

On a County/regional level, Anson County's Strategic Freight Network (SFN) was identified as part of the 2016 Greater Charlotte Regional Freight Mobility Plan. The SFN consists of roads (US HWY 74 and 52 and SR 218), rail lines (CSX and NS), airports (Anson County Airport), and intermodal facilities.

### **7.2.1.1 Road and Highway Specific Action Steps**

Several areas of Town have been identified for Mixed use/Commercial land uses as these areas should be encouraged to be redeveloped or enhanced as vacant or underperforming properties are replaced. (See 8.4.1 and Figure 8.4.1 of this Document.) This includes those portions of Main Street and US Highway 52 to expand/create a true downtown development district.

The Town should continue to foster reinvestment and infill development along Main Street near Town hall and the Morven Community Building as part of downtown branding/restoration efforts and US Highway 52. This should include development of sidewalks/pedestrian pathways and bicycle lanes. Further study is necessary to focus on connecting existing neighborhoods to what is intended to become the Town's redefined 'downtown core'.

While the Town is not a participant within the RRRPO, local leaders shall continue to cooperate with regional planning efforts designed to address local traffic infrastructure needs expanding economic development opportunities for the community.

## **7.2.2 Railways**

Anson County is served by CSX, a Class 1 railroad line providing service to the Port of Wilmington and by short line rail from Winston-Salem Southbound (WSS), operated by Norfolk Southern. The rail line is located approximately 12 miles north of the Town, near Wadesboro.

### **7.2.2.1 Railway Specific Action Steps**

While the NCDOT Rail Division's Comprehensive State Rail Plan is not a financial or capital plan, it does provide a blueprint for potential future rail investments and priorities through 2040.

Rail is a crucial factor in economic development and is an efficient alternative to over the road transport. Other than the benefit of transporting high quantities of product, rail has some major environmental advantages.

There are numerous factors driving freight movement and will shape the changes in rail volumes over time, providing opportunities for local communities to expand economic development opportunities. Typically, a rail company considers many factors when examining the possibility of expanding its service through spur lines to new industrial user (i.e. location of line, location of user, shipping volume, frequency of shipping, etc.). As part of the Town's continuing economic development efforts, additional effort/study may be warranted to ascertain the viability of expanding rail connectivity.

### **7.2.3 Aviation**

There is no airport facility within the Town's corporate limits.

Anson County manages/operates an airport, specifically Jeff Cloud Field, in Wadesboro approximately 14 miles north of the Town. The facility includes two asphalt runways (Runway 16 and Runway 34) measuring 5498 by 100 ft averaging 125 aircraft per week (i.e. single-engine, multi-engine, helicopters, and ultralights). Future airport expansion and the encouragement of air related businesses could provide an opportunity for the region in terms of job growth and increased transportation connections.

The Town is also located approximately 70 miles from the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.

#### **7.2.3.1 Aviation Specific Action Steps**

The Town of Morven will continue to cooperate with the County regarding assistance associated with the Anson County Airport and with regional planning efforts designed to support future economic development activities at the Charlotte-Douglas International Airport.

### **7.2.4 Bicycle and Pedestrian**

As identified in the [Anson County Comprehensive Plan, Vision 2040](#), adopted April 2021, "*Multimodal transportation is lacking in Anson County and its municipalities...A countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian plan and infrastructure would strengthen mobility, be a tourism asset, and provide needed access to jobs, healthcare, and daily services.*"

#### **7.2.4.1 Bicycle Facilities**

The Town does not include designated bicycle facilities nor bike lanes within its corporate limits.

#### **7.2.4.2 Pedestrian Facilities**

As previously identified within this Document, the Town does not have sidewalks within the Town limits. As such, most all intersections throughout the Town limits do not include marked crosswalks or pedestrian cross signals. Current development standards do not require installation of sidewalks in residential subdivisions.

#### **7.2.4.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Action Steps**

Within the future UDO, the Town should establish specifications for adequate street construction by developers for both bicycle and pedestrian safety. (See sections 7.2.4.1, 7.2.4.2 and 8.5.1 of this document.)

### **7.2.5 Transit Service**

Anson County Transportation System (ACTS) provides paratransit services to doctor's appointments, nutrition sites, work, post-secondary school, shopping facilities and recreational functions via two transportation services: regularly scheduled routes and demand response.

- Regularly scheduled routes transport individuals to the same destination on a consistent bases and includes:
  - Nutritional routes for the elderly to the Peachland, Wadesboro, and Morven meal sites;
  - Work training routes; and
  - Work routes through Wadesboro.
- Demand response transportation is a more flexible option that provides transportation to individuals who request transportation, with 24-hour notice, to medical appointments, shopping trips, and other approved destinations (does not transport to religious or political functions).

All ACTS's vehicles are equipped with lifts which make transporting passengers who use a wheelchair or have other mobility limitations easy. If additional assistance is needed, a friend or family member can accompany the passenger free of charge.

ACTS charges a fee per hour and mile for each route, versus by passenger. As a result, the cost can be split between multiple passengers and be more affordable based on how much the service is utilized by a business or human service agency.

**7.2.5.1 Transit Service Action Steps**

The Town will continue to support regional public transport regional transit services. At this time, however, the Town is not financially able to fund its own/independent transportation service. Local population is also not sufficient to warrant such a service currently.



## **8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **8.1 Analysis of Existing Land Use and Development Patterns – *Where to Begin!***

Morven is not unlike many other small towns in the Carolinas in that it experienced much of its transformation during the post-World War II era when the industrial expansion led to better paying jobs and when increased automobile ownership enhanced individual mobility, while the inter-city and intra-city highway network was greatly expanded. The dramatic impact of this combination on American cities and towns was not foreseen and the problems associated with rapidly changing communities that followed led to long periods of decline in their once-vibrant core downtown areas.

### **8.2 The Plan - *What do we want our community to be? How do we get there?***

#### **8.2.1 Housing Growth**

Recognizing trends and how market dynamics can and do change will enable Morven to position itself as a welcoming community for multiple generations looking at buying or renting a home. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community where both the new and existing home markets are attractive to future generations and allow for aging members of the community to remain in the community by offering a variety of housing products.

According to contemporary real estate experts, the "50+" real estate market is changing. In the next few years, Generation X will be joining the Boomers and Matures; serving the 50+ market will become a challenging puzzle for both communities and the real estate industry.

#### **8.2.2 Commercial/non-residential Growth**

As with the housing markets, ever changing trends in consumption, product development, technology and generational shifts in personal choices/values must be considered when making decisions about commercial and other non-residential growth. This approach to planning reinforces the community's desire to create a place where younger people will desire to locate, while aging members will choose to remain. A community, where traditional values accompany craftsmanship must embrace the presence of technology in everyday life, commerce, and business.

In order to grow commercial and non-residential offerings a community must create opportunities for success. The first step is to promote interest in both residents and visitors alike. By increasing the presence of people in commercial setting, the critical mass necessary for businesses to sustain themselves will ensure vibrancy as the tourism visitors flow into and through the community. To accomplish this, the local zoning ordinance in existence at the time of this plan adoption, must be repealed and replaced with development standards and specifications to promote refreshing internal growth.

### 8.3 Existing Land Use Issues – *Recognizing the Problems of our Past*

A plan, any plan, is only as good as the community's commitment to implement. While implementation strategies vary widely depending on the specific goals and objectives, many strategies will often include some form of incentive, motivation, criteria, or specifications for new growth, development and construction. Throughout various sections of this document there are descriptions of incentives and motivations offering opportunities for success; however, a plan can fail when the criteria and specifications are inconsistent with the plan. The following subsections describe the challenges Morven faces with policies in effect at the time of adoption of this plan. The discussion continues in sections 8.4 and 8.5 of this document with insight on recommended new approaches to refreshing Morven's economy and stimulating investment in Morven's future. These recommended policy changes are designed to achieve the goals, objectives, and successes noted and illustrated in this plan.

As a prelude to the discussion, Jonathan Coppage, a visiting senior fellow at the 'R Street Institute' researching urbanism and civil society posted an article challenging leadership to re-think how we administer and regulate development. The following excerpts are from his article posted by the American Planning Association October 20, 2016.

*"Establishing by-right development and streamlining local permitting processes will allow developers to respond nimbly to market demands and will relieve the "guilty until proven innocent" status of new building development, which depresses construction starts across the country by [delaying and inhibiting](#) housing projects. What's more, adopting leaner codes would remove obstacles to the countless smaller developers and would-be builders who want to invest in strengthening their local communities, but currently can't afford to navigate the vast regulatory burdens and uncertain futures awaiting anyone who tries to build in America today. Trulia economist Ralph McLaughlin [found](#) that these regulatory delays may have an even bigger impact on housing production than zoning restrictions."*

*"Main Street-style development — the "storefront on the first floor, apartments rented out above" style that forms the core of any older town's historic center — is a residential building form that uses first-floor commercial space to serve community members and enliven a neighborhood. This low-rise density helps prop up the balance sheets of towns responsible for running utilities all the way out to suburban developments, as former city planner and engineer Charles Marohn [has repeatedly demonstrated](#). It also keeps a constant set of the "eyes on the street" that Jane Jacobs identified as necessary for safe streets; renters keep an ear out for burglars after business hours and shopkeepers keep the same at bay during the day. It is, in other words, the core of any successful town-building."*

#### 8.3.1 Utility Policies at the Time of Plan Adoption

Public water and sewer systems often provide the stimulus or "plant the seeds" for growth. Growth that is simply chasing utilities will result in higher rates for all rate payers and the resulting inefficiencies in other services will drive up taxes. The most effective way to keep tax and utility rates lower, increase the return on investment of the existing systems, and provide adequate revenue for the operations and maintenance of these systems is to be very deliberate in the extension of utilities. For the most part, the Future Land Use Map has been developed to focus redevelopment and new development of



sufficient densities in areas where utilities already exist or are already programed to be extended.

### **8.3.2 Land Development and Construction Ordinances at the Time of Plan Adoption**

“Land development” includes the installation of infrastructure as the first step toward new building construction. This phase of a project involves land planning that leads to civil engineering to establish the layout of roads and buildings. The criteria or specifications included in these ordinances should accomplish some basic objectives including:

- Ensure the purchaser or owner receives a safe and reliable building product,
- Ensure the state and federal mandates are satisfied to avoid penalties, and
- Ensure the result does not increase the burden on other tax and utility rate payers without deliberate determination that such increases are for the overall benefit of the community.

The following sections describe how ordinances in effect at the time of plan adoption are counter-productive to the objective set forth in this document. A recommended approach to replace these policies and ordinances is described in section 8.5 of this document.

#### **8.3.2.1 Zoning Code**

Specifications for criteria and specifications for new and existing development are currently being prepared in a new Zoning Code. The Zoning Code evolved over time from an early state model ordinance. Replacing the town’s antiquated zoning ordinance, adding specifications for land development which creates new streets and supporting infrastructure, and maintaining quality control over the implementation of these standards must be prioritized to protect property rights of all parties while creating common-sense opportunities that avoid growth and development failures in the future.

#### **8.3.2.2 Subdivision Ordinance**

The Town is currently preparing a new unified development ordinance. Adoption of new standards will establish cost saving measures for the tax and utility rate payer for all new subdivisions. When new streets are built properly, they last longer and are far less costly to maintain. These new streets must also be reported to the NCDOT upon completion to ensure the local share of the fuel tax collected from every motorist when they purchase fuel, will be returned to the Town. When these fuel taxes are returned each year, they can do more for the older streets where repairs may be warranted.

Subdivision criteria and specifications also improve utility performance and reduce cost to serve all rate payers. By establishing specific criteria for the location of lines we can reduce confusion and improve the effectiveness of future maintenance and repairs. Each utility is designated a specific location in or near the street.

#### **8.3.2.3 Floodplain Management**

The Town is currently preparing a new unified development ordinance which will adequately address land use in floodplains.

## 8.4 Future Land Use – *Where We’re Going Next!*

The exciting aspects of this plan are not captured by the issues we’ve faced or the problems we believe we have, but the opportunities we have before us. The opportunities to build upon our previous successes are the greatest asset the businesses and citizens of Morven possess. This plan recognizes those attributes, identifies the community stakeholders’ goals, and crafts a vision of our future. Along with the actions we must undertake to achieve the goals stated in this document, this plan provides the foundation for systematic decision-making by businesses, citizens, prospective investors in our community, and leadership at various levels.

Simply stated, the key to our success is to increase the population of the community by reasonable numbers in order to increase the economic activity to a level that will support the services we desire. The three groups to focus our energy on are as follows:

- Retain our young adults by creating the hometown they dream about.
- Attract newcomers by offering the dynamic small-town feel they seek.
- Encourage opportunities for our citizens to age-in-place through local options for senior living.

Creating an attractive atmosphere in Morven will contribute toward our efforts to attract young adults to return, to come home when they seek that long-term location to settle into. These same investments will attract the newcomers seeking a special small-town atmosphere with lifestyle opportunities they find attractive. When a community feels good about itself it shows and that will become its greatest attribute in attracting visitors who just want to be a part of it all. That’s what successful towns do, they become special by taking deliberate steps toward that goal and they reap the rewards when they do it well.

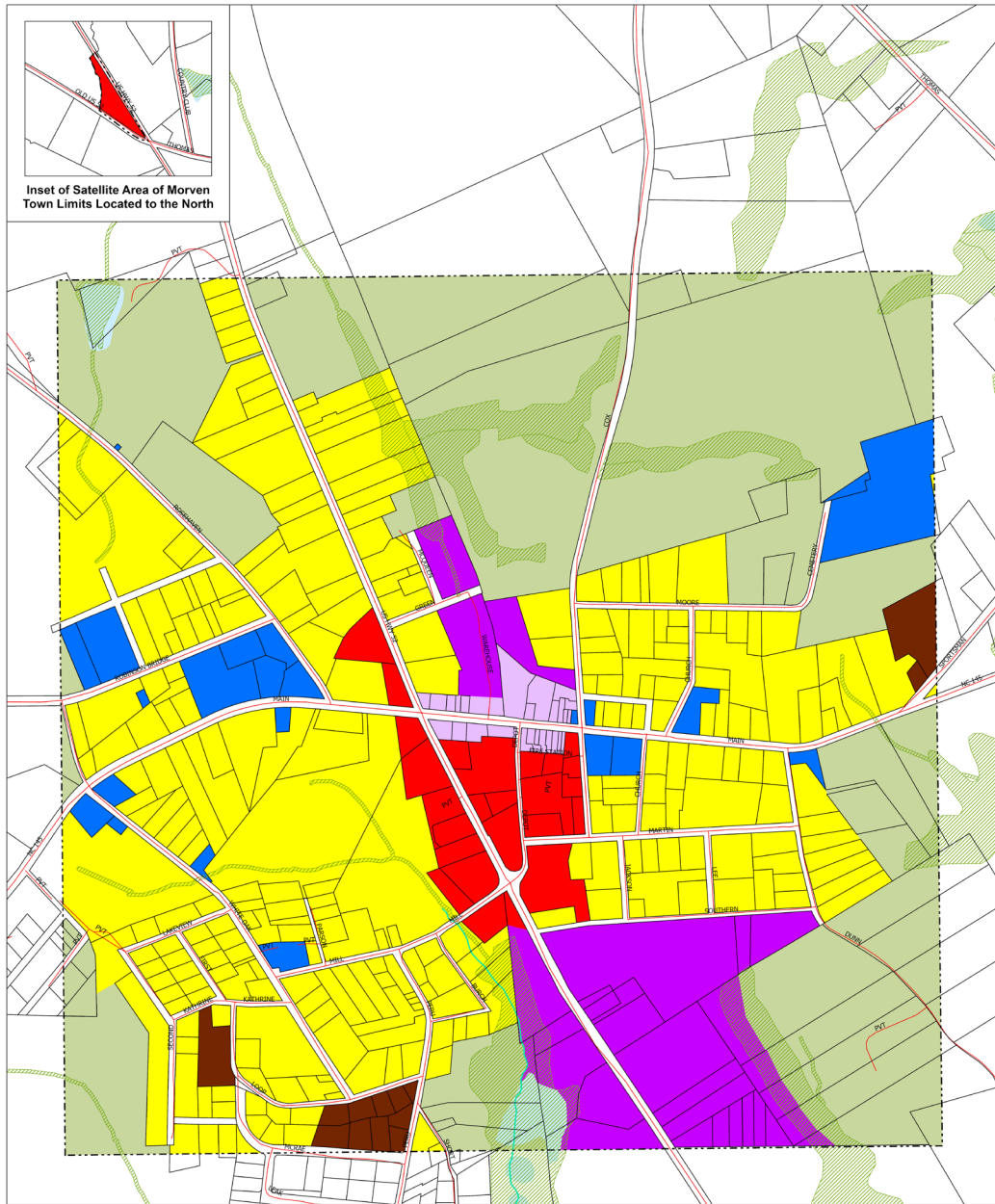
The following “steps” provide guidance for implementing the recommendations of this plan. While they are not rigid in their order, their importance is unwavering to the future success of Morven in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 8.4.1 Refresh Morven by Developing Underutilized Areas “Close-in” First

Focusing attention on strategic locations to reignite interest to enhance existing commercial development can boost investment by re-thinking development in the corridors. Incentives to refresh and redevelop strategic sites in existing underutilized locations where existing infrastructure and location dynamics combine to support successful new investments will reinforce property values within these strategically important locations. The ***Future Land Use Map*** appearing Figure 8.4.1 depicts a pattern of development to accommodate a combination of residential, non-residential and mixed-use growth and redevelopment. The map serves as the overall plan to guide decisions about future infrastructure investments and other public services for Morven’s future growth. ***Zoning changes are required by North Carolina statute to be made based upon both reasonableness and consistency with this plan.***



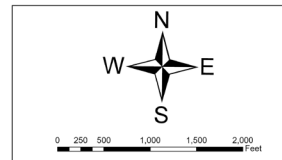
**Figure 8.4.1 Future Land Use Map**



*Future Land Use Map*

Morven, NC April 22, 2022 DRAFT

- Morven Town Limits
- Rivers and Streams
- Roadways
- Parcels
- Lakes and Water Bodies
- ▨ Wetlands
- Rural
- Neighborhood
- Town Center
- Transitional Neighborhood
- Civic
- Commercial
- Employment/Manufacturing
- Mixed Use



Sources: Town Limits & Parcels: Anson County, NC GIS, February, 2022  
 Wetlands: USFWS, May 1, 2021  
 Prepared by: N-Focus, Inc.  
 Package: Morven\_LHI\_20220422\_Layrnt3  
 PDF: Morven - Future Land Use Map 20220422.pdf

#### **8.4.2 Preservation and Conservation Areas**

Given Morven's role in local governance in Anson County, our most effective tools for preservation and conservation are the moderation of growth and expansion of our municipal services and the policies governing expansion of the systems we operate. By working together with our counterparts at the county level we can stimulate investments where warranted and discourage investments in areas that will not be good for either Morven or Anson County. This approach leaves these lands completely under the control of their locally elected officials. The only time Morven officials will be involved is when the topic of municipal service levels is explored.

#### **8.4.3 Future Growth beyond the Town Limits**

The outward expansion and growth of Morven must be guided by a combination of this plan and the information gathered when examining specific development plans and proposals in the future.

When considering growth and development proposals outside Morven's municipal limits, priority must first be given to the existing businesses and citizens, utility rate payers and property taxpayers. The following questions should be made a part of the formal consideration of request for annexation and extension of services, whether publicly or privately funded:

- Will the project contribute to the overall wellbeing of Morven's business and citizen well-being?
- Will the project contribute to the reduction of cost overall for services to current rate payers on the system?
- Will the project avoid the obligation of debt by the rate payer or taxpayer generated revenues in order to serve the project?

**When these questions are answered by a resounding "yes", the project is likely worthy of further consideration; however, if not, the project should be avoided.**



### **8.5 Re-thinking Morven's Zoning - A Common Sense Approach!**

#### **8.5.1 Planning, Zoning and Development – The Town 'Plans and Specs'**

The traditional approach to land development ordinances in North Carolina was to adopt several different ordinances with individual topics based in the enabling legislation of the State. However, today provisions have been made to combine these varied ordinances into a single or unified development ordinance or UDO as they are commonly known. The

UDO approach brings everything into one, albeit lengthy, ordinance with the benefits of consolidation eliminating the confusion over administration and procedure for the business or citizen undertaking a project. No longer would the applicant need to research separate ordinances to compile the criteria and specifications for their project. The exceptions to this consolidation or unification remain the building code governing structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical standards plus certain state and federal mandates governing the environment.

Preparation and adoption of a new UDO is required to accomplish two primary objectives: to modernize the Town's criteria and specifications to meet current statutory requirements, and to make certain the criteria and specifications are designed to help Morven thrive once again.

This approach emphasizes the adopted plan and then seeks to achieve the goals of the plan. Tying the Town Plan to the UDO not only achieves statutory compliance but transforms the role of zoning from regulatory in nature into more of a set of criteria and specifications.

This *'plans and specs'* approach to town building improves the relationship of the Town with its businesses and citizens by establishing objectives, then administering the new UDO to simply achieve those objectives. By using common sense policies to encourage re-use and reinvestment in Morven, the Town can reduce tax and utility rates as the plan is implemented. This approach benefits all Morvens' businesses and citizens.

An article published in The Raleigh News & Observer, by community columnist Eric Johnson, entitled "[North Carolina's Rural Areas Need Investments that will Draw Young People,](#)" March 3, 2020, summarized the findings of a recent study conducted by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Johnson works for the UNC College Board and the College of Arts and Sciences. UNC-Chapel Hill hosted a panel of scholars and pundits to determine how college students are selected and what they choose to do with their lives. The panelists' concern is that young people go off to four years of college and emerge with no sense of obligation to their home communities. Graduates collect their diplomas and move to big cities. The article notes that a student stood up at the end of the event and asked, "I'm from a small town, why should I move back?" The article's author addressed that question by stating, "...the kind of things that draw graduates back home are the kind of things that benefit everyone: a strong sense of local identity, an openness to new ideas and new people, infrastructure that encourages connection rather than isolation."

According to the article, at the same event, Zach Mannheimer of Alchemy Community Transformations gave a fascinating talk about rethinking economic incentives. He said, "North Carolina should stop trying to recruit companies and industries and instead focus on investments that recruit *people*." "What's unique about your community?" he asked. "What can your community do to incentivize more people to come here?" The article recapped the response to that question with, "That usually means public spaces downtown, art and cultural projects that puts a singular stamp on the community, and the patience to nurture small businesses instead of pining for a big corporate savior." The article ended with, "Not everyone in North Carolina is going to live in Raleigh or Charlotte,

no matter how hard we try to cram them all in. If the State is going to keep growing like ragweed, we need vibrant small towns and welcoming rural places.”

Another article posted online at [RISMedia Daily e-News written by Suzanne De Vita](#) on November 3, 2016 discussing a report from the Urban Land Institute’s (ULI) and PwC’s, “[Emerging Trends in Real Estate® 2017](#),” analyzes trends-to-come in both the U.S and Canada housing markets. Ten “gateway” markets, as defined in the report—those with both a diverse economy and “niche” neighborhoods—will stand above the rest (It should be noted that the Raleigh-Durham market has been identified as the number 7 “gateway” market in the nation). The report highlights the importance of practical zoning standards and specifications to meet the needs in today’s real estate market. Ms. Vita writes: “*Both on the investor side and the user side of the market, optionality—not just one use, not just one user, not just one user profile—may be gaining favor as a way to navigate the cross-currents of volatile markets,*” the report’s authors state. “*Optionality from a user standpoint allows for the adjustment of space needs to vary in terms of size, location, and use on an as-needed basis.*”

The trends discussed in the report point to a need for communities to be very deliberate in how they establish development related standards and specifications, including how they implement such non-conventional approaches to stimulating investment in the community.

As described in section 8.3.1.1 of this document, today’s businesses seek “hot spots” for business location. This clustering of complementary businesses (i.e. shopping, dining, etc.) draws potential customers to locations where their interests or needs can be met. Location economists call this agglomeration. The benefit of agglomeration to the customer is both improved choices and typically better pricing of goods and services. A simple example of this phenomenon can be seen in a portion of downtown Morven, where several personal services establishments (salons and barbershops) are located within proximity of one another.

The best remedy for Morven’s existing underutilized commercial areas is to encourage re-use and re-development through new zoning criteria and specifications. This approach can work well provided there is a commitment to areas where the investment in infrastructure has already been made. Once the Town has reinvigorated these areas, then growth beyond the current Town Limits should be studied to determine benefits for the Town’s businesses and citizens.

Policies that promote the success of neighborhoods, businesses and civic uses alike are far more desirable to all persons involved; promote a more viable future of the community; and preserve the investments made by property owners in the community. This approach respects property rights in balance: the rights of one property owner, the rights of the adjacent or nearby property owner(s), and the interests town-wide linked to a vibrant community.

Black’s Law Dictionary defines ‘property rights’ as “***The rights given to the person or persons who have a right to own the property through purchase or bequest. These are basic rights in any society though absolute right for a property is rare in any society.***”

Law Dictionary: [What is PROPERTY RIGHTS? Definition of PROPERTY RIGHTS \(Black's Law Dictionary\)](#)

In North Carolina, and in most states, municipalities are created for the provision of services to the benefit of its businesses, citizens and property owners. The decision to reside in close proximity with others and to share in the provision of beneficial services provided by an organized local government defines the purpose of municipalities: 'to facilitate mutual benefits to those choosing to reside within a municipality'. Therefore, municipalities inherently seek to balance property rights for the mutual benefit of those affected by the actions of the individual. This compromise on the absoluteness of property rights is therefore an understanding that rules may be enacted for the benefit of the greater community. Simply stated, when adjacent property owners must lose something of value to them for another property owner to gain, then an action or decision by that individual must not be particularly beneficial to the community. These assumptions of mutual benefit, the foundation of a municipality or community, are the basis for the establishment of rules governing development and the up-keep of properties within a municipality.

The challenge becomes how well a community balances those rules with the protections of individual property rights, rather than to unreasonably suppress them.

A balanced and fair approach to the establishment of rules, standards and specifications must be the norm, not the exception. Focusing on the goals of the community rather than restricting a community out of fear or unwarranted bias must become the established culture and philosophy when making policy. The replacement of the current ordinances governing land development with professionally administered innovative policies instills trust and support for the municipality while creating greater opportunity.

First and foremost, in the effort to invigorate Morven is the approach to new housing construction. This plan, and the future preparation of a new UDO, should address gaps in housing market product offerings and land development specifications appearing in the Town's ordinances. The new provisions must be adequate to accommodate these trends. Replacing the Town's antiquated zoning ordinance, adding specifications for land development (which creates new streets and supporting infrastructure), and maintaining quality control over the implementation of these standards, will be the priority. This approach will protect property rights of all parties while creating common-sense opportunities that avoid growth and development failures in the future. *(See 8.2.1 of this document.)*

Zoning districts in the future UDO should establish and describe the character various neighborhoods and non-residential parts of Morven. These new districts should replace all existing districts and be accompanied by opportunity-driven district standards: opportunities for both growth and preservation of natural areas.

The following descriptions of districts or zones the new UDO should establish describe the character of the various neighborhoods and non-residential parts of Rutherfordton. These new districts should replace all existing districts and be accompanied by opportunity-driven district standards: opportunities for both growth and preservation of natural areas.

Careful consideration must be given when crafting the criteria and specifications for development to avoid as much non-conformity or “grandfathering” as possible. While some properties may not avoid a non-conforming (grandfather clause) status, it is very important to make as much existing development compliant as reasonably possible. This attempt should not be misguided into making fundamentally poor choices in drafting the UDO, nor should it fail to recognize the role of property maintenance rules.

#### **8.5.1.1 Agriculture District**

The Agriculture District (AG) is established to protect lands used for agricultural production, agriculturally based businesses and related activities. Farmland is a defining element of Morven’s traditional identity and the protection of these lands aids in preserving the character of the Town until such time as new development is preferred by the Town. Listed uses are limited, with an emphasis on uses that are agricultural in nature. Development density is very low to encourage preservation of agricultural lands while discouraging large lot residential subdivision type development and excessive septic system utility. The Agriculture District can also be used to preserve open spaces.

#### **8.5.1.2 Single Family Residential Districts**

The Single-Family Residential Districts (SFR-1, SFR-2 and SFR-3) provide for the completion of existing residential neighborhoods and the development of new residential neighborhoods. Allowed building/lot types in the Single-Family Districts are Detached House. Listed uses are restricted to Single-Family, including duplex (two-family), homes and their accessory uses. Neighborhoods in these districts are the dominant land use in Morven and are a major element in defining the character of the community. Standards for the Single-Family Residential Districts promote that new development maintains the character of the community. The Single-Family Residential Districts permit the completion and conformity of conventional residential subdivisions already existing or approved in sketch plan form by the Town of Morven prior to the effective date of these regulations.

#### **8.5.1.3 Residential Main Street Transition District**

The Residential Main Street Transition District (RMST) provides for the completion of residential neighborhoods in the residential area(s) surrounding the Main Street and contiguous Civic Districts through in-fill development. The intent of this district is to recognize that gradual transformation of existing development to high quality mixed density residential development is needed to support the central core of the Town. Higher density residential development allows a greater number of households to walk or bike, thus supporting businesses while reducing the parking demand and providing environmental and health benefits. Allowed building/lot types in these districts are the Detached House, Attached House, and Multi-family Building. Streets in the Residential Main Street Transition District should be interconnected, with streets and sidewalks providing a connection from Morven’s Main Street and other mixed-use districts to the Single-Family Residential districts surrounding these neighborhoods. A range of housing types is encouraged. Criteria for the mix of building types establishes compatibility.



#### **8.5.1.4 Main Street District**

The Main Street District (MS) provides for new development, revitalization, reuse, and infill development in Morven's core downtown. A broad array of uses is listed to enable the needs of residents and visitors to be met. Allowed building/lot types in this district are Urban Workplace, Shop-front, Detached House, Attached House, Multi-family Building, and Civic Building. The development pattern seeks to integrate shops, restaurants, services, workplaces, civic, educational, and higher density housing in a compact, pedestrian-oriented environment. The Main Street District serves as the hub of the surrounding neighborhoods and of the broader community. The Main Street District may be expanded over time to meet the needs of the growing community for downtown facilities and services. Expansion of the Main Street District shall be contiguous and not separated from the primary district area.

#### **8.5.1.5 Civic District**

The Civic District (CIV) provides a location for educational, medical, governmental, religious, and other institutional uses. Large developments in the Civic District are encouraged to provide a master plan to the Town. Institutional uses in the Civic District are required to provide pedestrian connections on their campuses and, to the extent possible, develop an internal street system with structures fronting on the streets. Parking should not be the dominant visible element of the campuses developed for institutional uses. Providing a unique district for civic uses will establish uniform standards.



#### **8.5.1.6 Mixed-Use Districts**

The Mixed-Use Districts (MU-1 and MU-2) are established to provide opportunities for both compatible and sustainable re-development where underutilized commercial properties already exist as well as infill sites where site specific land planning of new development creates opportunities for businesses and various housing designs sharing community amenities and enhancements. Existing auto-oriented street, lot, and building designs can create uncomfortable pedestrian environments; however, with careful site planning these areas will allow a greater number of residents to walk or bike to businesses and services with an interconnected network of streets and sidewalks. Allowed building/lot types are Highway Commercial, Urban Workplace, Shop-front, Detached House, Attached House, and Multi-family. Dominant uses in this district are residential, retail and office. The Mixed-Use Districts are expected to serve Morven residents as well as persons who travel from surrounding communities. The development pattern in this district acknowledges the role of the automobile, with parking and access provided to promote safety for the motoring public. Development standards in the Mixed-Use

Districts promote the creation of a pleasant pedestrian-friendly auto-oriented environment while enabling a compatible transition to uses in adjacent neighborhood districts.

#### **8.5.1.7 US Highway 52 Commercial District**

The US Highway 52 Commercial District (C-52) is established to provide opportunities for compatible, resilient and sustainable development along the US Highway 52 corridor. Development standards in the C-52 district acknowledge that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation. Development and design standards encourage pedestrian scale development along a secondary street network serving larger projects. Goals of the C-52 district include providing a pleasant calm environment for motorists, a safe environment for pedestrians within a network of streets and pedestrian facilities; promoting the safety of motorists, cyclists and pedestrians; and preserving the capacity of the transportation network outside the core area as shown in the adopted Town Plan. Uses in this district include commercial goods & services, employment, and some limited small-scale industrial. Allowed building/lot types include Highway Commercial, Urban Workplace, and Shop-front.

#### **8.5.1.8 Vehicle Service and Repair District**

The Vehicle Service and Repair District (VSR) is established to provide locations for specific uses that, due to their unique characteristics and importance to the community, and the traveling public, require different criteria and specifications than typical commercial development. Development standards in the Vehicle Service and Repair District acknowledge that the automobile is the primary mode of transportation in suburban communities and there is a vital need for such businesses to be located in close proximity to one another. Uses within the Vehicle Service and Repair District are buffered from adjacent uses. The dominant uses in this district are vehicle oriented and/or dependent and include vehicle-based services, vehicle repair shops and disabled vehicle storage areas. The Vehicle Service and Repair District is reserved for uses which require broad maneuvering spaces and avoid pedestrian interaction with potentially hazardous conditions. Goals of the Vehicle Service and Repair District include providing a pleasant environment for motorists, a safe environment for pedestrians along the network of streets and pedestrian facilities; promoting the safety of motorists and pedestrians; and preserving the capacity of Main Street and its interconnecting network of streets outside the core area as shown in the adopted Town Plan. Uses in this district include heavy commercial goods and services for motor vehicles, and some limited industrial. Allowed building/lot type is Highway Commercial.

#### **8.5.1.9 Industrial District**

The Industrial District (IND) is established to provide locations for industrial uses that, due to the scale of the buildings and/or the nature of the use, cannot be integrated into the community. Uses within the Industrial District are buffered from adjacent uses. The dominant uses in this district are manufacturing and warehouse storage. Small scale manufacturing and storage that is compatible with less intensive uses can and should be located in other non-residential or mixed-use districts. The Industrial District is reserved for uses which require very large buildings and/or large parking and loading facilities.

#### **8.5.1.10 Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District**

The Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District (TNDO) provides an alternative opportunity applicable only upon request for a Zoning Map Amendment for the development of new neighborhoods and the revitalization or extension of existing neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are structured upon a fine network of interconnecting pedestrian-oriented streets and other public spaces. Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND's) provide a mixture of housing types and prices, prominently sited civic or community building(s), stores/offices/workplaces, and churches to provide a balanced mix of activities. A Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) has a recognizable center and clearly defined edges; optimum size is a quarter mile from center to edge. A TND is urban in form, is typically an extension of the existing developed area of the Town and has an overall residential density of up to eleven (11) dwelling units per acre. TNDO districts should have a significant portion of land dedicated to improved open spaces, and reserve un-improved open spaces where environmentally sensitive areas are located.

#### **8.5.1.11 Scenic Corridor Overlay District**

The Scenic Corridor Overlay District (SCO) is established to protect the pastoral scenes and open spaces that provide a sense of arrival for residents and visitors traveling the major entrance roads and gateways to the Town. The pastoral scenes and undeveloped property along the entrance roads and gateways contribute significantly to Morven's community character and sense of place. The Scenic Corridor Overlay District provides development options for the owners of the property abutting the entrance roads and gateways. The goal of this district is to protect the scenic value of the corridors through a mix of incentives and development standards. These standards will preserve the suburban character of the Town by maintaining the sense of a suburban corridor in an urban environment; provide an aesthetically appealing experience for those traveling the corridor; provide multi-modal transportation options for travel; and promote a safe transportation corridor for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

#### **8.5.1.12 Heavy Industry Overlay District**

The Heavy Industry Overlay District (HIO) is established to protect all environments from the negative impacts of certain activities and types of development. It is the intent of this district to provide and permit certain public and private heavy industrial uses and facilities that incorporate hazardous materials and/or scientific technology, including wholesale, distribution, storage, processing, manufacturing and production. However, it is required that industries in this district take all necessary actions including but not limited to installation of apparatus and technological equipment available to prevent negative impacts on the environment and the community from the emissions of smoke, dust, fumes, noise and vibrations and other activities and/or products resulting from such hazardous industrial activities in accordance with federal, state and local regulations.

#### **8.5.1.13 Mini Farm Overlay District**

The Mini Farm Overlay District (MFO) permits buildings to be grouped on a site, parcel, or property in order to optimize the use of land and resources for both residential and agricultural purposes. By clustering development at a density no greater than one unit per developed acre, projects developed in accordance with these standards can obtain density bonuses while preserving unique natural features for agricultural use. The Mini

Farm Overlay District mandates the dedication of both agricultural land and open space with density bonuses provided as an incentive for adhering to the standards. It is the intent of this district to be used for new development in undeveloped outlying areas of the Town and its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Allowed building/lot type is Detached House.

#### **8.5.1.14 Manufactured Home Overlay District**

The Manufactured Home Overlay District (MHO) is established to protect the standard of living and neighborhood conditions. Established standards that will enable the use of innovative manufactured homes with a higher aesthetic standard will invigorate these communities. Non-conforming manufactured home parks that have not received approval for continuation would be amortized over a period of time to allow the owner/operator to meet reasonable financial payback expectations in accordance with accepted practices in North Carolina. Existing parks could be limited to less fundamental standards and specifications, while new parks are required to meet a higher standard. These parks may be ideally suited for alternative designs such as Tiny House, Park Model and other styles of housing where installation standards are considered temporary. The overlay could be expanded to apply to permanent installations of innovative manufactured housing in subdivisions or parks in accordance with G.S. 160D-909.

### **8.5.2 Development Agreements**

Accommodating current and projected trends require a partnership of land development and real estate industries with local government leadership. Shifts in social values, particularly among different age groups, indicate a strong propensity to consume goods and services in vastly different ways than prior years. In order to meet the expectations of what consumers' desire, land development will need to change the way it has been functioning since the 1970's. No longer do people rely solely upon the personal automobile for their daily needs. Today, generations young and old are finding new means of sharing within their daily lives as described in sections 3.6, 6.4 and 8.2 of this document. Therefore, local governments must find new ways to manage growth that is inclusive of a diverse and expectant population, development agreements are a new tool for local governments that many find effective in accomplishing new concepts.

Development agreements are a relatively new addition to the local government toolbox that has been recently modified to improve the way development specifications are established for a property. Having been authorized by the North Carolina legislature over a decade ago for the purpose of addressing larger phased developments and the need to hold entitlement to land development approvals for extended periods of time, the development agreement has opened a new avenue to creative design and town building. Section 19 of Session Law 2015-246 amended the statutes to remove the minimum size and maximum term of agreements. The changes effectively opened the window of opportunity just in time to create enormous flexibility in how new land development projects could be structured.

Today, development agreements offer a developer, landowner and the Town the ability to structure common sense approaches to projects that protect property rights and enable effective approvals and administration of projects when all sides agree. Ideally, the development agreement will not be used unwisely by local governments but will be

utilized to offer higher degrees of trust. Trust, in the form of stability, eliminates concern that changes in elected local leadership will impact how a project progresses from start to finish.

The development agreement cannot substitute standards and specifications for development but can offer two substantial benefits: it can establish opportunities for participation by the local government and it can freeze zoning standards in place for the life of the agreement.

### **8.5.3 Ordinance Administration**

A new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) is currently being prepared to implement this plan and must be administered by experienced professionals to ensure protection of the rights of businesses and citizens. Such fair and unbiased administration must be proactive and seek to help these businesses and citizens achieve the successes they may seek that are consistent with both the adopted Town Plan and the new UDO.

Proactive administration includes:

- Assisting businesses and citizens inquiring about their proposal and how their ideas fit into the comprehensive plan.
- Ensuring all inquiries enjoy all the privileges of the UDO.
- Providing accurate and prompt information to enable the business or citizen to rely on the information in making very important decisions.
- Identifying invalid permits and determining how to administer.
- Identifying non-conforming uses (showing on map), sending letters to describe how property rights will be preserved and limits on changes to the non-conforming use.
- Meeting with Anson County Inspections Department to establish protocol for future projects.
- Preparing a guide on the “Table of Permitted Uses” to describe 1) why so extensive, 2) why include unwanted uses, and 3) how to use.
- Providing customer service functions to include Town of Morven’s Planning and Zoning Administrator administering final Certificate of Occupancy (CO) following all inspections by appropriate Town staff and County Inspections.

### **8.5.4 Water and Sewer Utility Extension and Service Policy**

Reviewing and where appropriate, updating the Town’s extension and service policies, should clarify both requirements and incentives for property owners. *(See 8.3.1 and 8.5.1 of this document.)*

Any and all proposed development within Morven’s extraterritorial jurisdiction requiring water and sewer access must be accompanied by a petition for voluntary annexation. In areas where voluntary annexation petitions would not be eligible at the time a request for connection is made, the Town should require a petition by the property owner that is binding on future owners allowing the Town to proceed with annexation when the statutory criteria is met.

### **8.5.5 Stormwater Utility – An Innovative Alternative to Reduce Development Costs**

Another way to improve the financial attractiveness of Morven for new investment seizes an opportunity still in its infancy among municipalities. This approach should be

considered when and if the need is deemed either beneficial to the community or mandated by the State and/or federal agencies responsible for water quality. Under State and federal stormwater rules emerging across North Carolina, local governments are often tasked with either requiring new development to install stormwater facilities (BMP's) or requiring existing property owners of larger development to begin retrofitting stormwater BMP's in areas that were developed prior to certain years, or both. These rules promulgated by the State and federal agencies mandate local governments to restore natural pre-development flow conditions measured in both quality and quantity when new development is approved. These requirements are very costly and often impact development feasibility in significant ways.

An innovative new alternative to these expansive (and expensive) development requirements is to approach this mandate with a new municipal utility service created in part to finance the installation and maintenance of the required retrofits and to meet the needs of both new development and re-development with common-sense solutions. With a public utility, developers can not only enjoy reduced costs up front, but localities can enjoy enhanced tax base resulting in lower taxes throughout the jurisdiction when compared to the impact upon the pattern of development the traditional alternative of individual on-site BMP's create.

Planning Board Approved

## 9. BLUEPRINT FOR MORVEN - SUMMARY AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

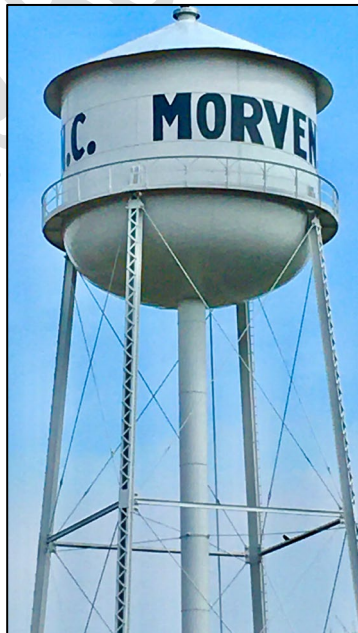
### 9.1 Summary

The responsibility to implement this plan lies with the Town of Morven's Town Council. Through its leadership, this plan will serve as the blueprint for refreshing revitalizing growth. The core area of Morven will be strengthened, opportunity for economic success will be established, and the foundation for decision making will be provided.

The tasks associated with implementation will require a steady long-term focus on achieving goals. To identify and prioritize the many tasks associated with implementation of this plan, the following table illustrates which steps to take when, and who should be responsible. These tasks are accompanied by a range of costs for overall budgeting. Seeking partnerships to share in the risk and the reward of joint ventures will improve the success and reduce the cost to the businesses and citizens of Morven.

### 9.2 Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040

The information appearing in the Action Items Table 9.2 *Blueprint for Morven: Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040* provides a quick reference guide format for the ultimate prioritization of the actions and recommendations of this plan.



**Table 9.2 BLUEPRINT FOR MORVEN: Actions to Implement Town Plan 2040**

Check-off	Adopted _____ by the Town Council & Recommended by Planning and Zoning Board on April 19, 2022	Target year	Plan Reference(s)	Notes	Responsible group
<b>ROUND 1 <i>Getting our house in order!</i></b>					
A	<b>Adopt new Unified Development (Zoning &amp; Subdivision) Ordinance (UDO)</b> to help preserve and foster reuse of downtown buildings.	Mid 2022	5.2.1, 5.2.1.1, 5.2.2.2, 5.2.2.5, 5.2.2.7, & 8.4.2		Planning Town Board
A	<b>Adopt up-zoning of strategic properties</b> in key locations to add residential choices, mixed-uses and commercial development.	Mid 2022	5.2.1, 5.1.2.1, 8.4.1, 8.4.2, & 8.4.3		Planning Town Board
<b>ROUND 2 <i>Reintroducing Morven to the world</i></b>					
A	<b>Keep social media updated</b> to provide current information to the public.	Ongoing	5.1.2 & 5.1.2.1		Administration
B	<b>Initiate a way-finding signage program</b> to direct people to and within Morven.	2024	5.2.2.5 & 6.8.2.1		Administration Public Works
<b>ROUND 3 <i>Continue to create a vibrant downtown Morven</i></b>					
A	<b>Adopt standards and specifications that attract new businesses within downtown with higher development standards</b> to assure quality development.	Mid 2022	5.2.1, 5.2.2.5, & 5.2.2.7		Planning Town Board
<b>ROUND 4 <i>Expanding Morven's contribution to the region to benefit our local businesses</i></b>					
A	<b>Adopt a new UDO with standards and specifications that respond to challenges associated with expanding and attracting local-craft businesses</b> to foster growth.	Mid 2022	3.6, 5.2.2.7, 6.4, 6.5.1, & 6.6.1		Planning Town Board