



Blueprint Wendell 2030

2020
OCT 14

A collaborative look at the current conditions in Wendell that will help shape plan recommendations.



EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT



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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

● for review only

AN INTRODUCTION TO WENDELL



Wendell is one of the fastest-growing communities in the Southeast, and many of its residents have been a part of that recent boom - nearly 70% of the survey responses the project team received were from people that had lived in Wendell less than five years.



And yet it is the historical nature of the Town, the sense of stability and familiarity that motivates people to stay, move to, and come back to Wendell. Environmental and Cultural Assets have a unique place in Wendell.



As expected, we got excellent feedback and levels of response to our surveys and questions, as well as tremendous insights from a series of focus groups. These are summarized here, as are past plans.



An important part of the *Blueprint Wendell 2030 Plan* is to understand and strengthen that character. This overview of demographics, population and infrastructure is a first step to reaching that understanding.



DEMOGRAPHICS

PEOPLE ARE ATTRACTED TO WENDELL BECAUSE OF THE PROXIMITY TO MAJOR CITIES AND THE SMALL TOWN CHARM. WENDELL IS ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING MUNICIPALITIES IN CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA.

A critical part of the Plan was to understand the context of Wendell, in part through an analysis of data relevant to facts and issues facing the Town today and in the future. This understanding can lead to strategies to

address future issues that arise from growth and changing - sometimes rapidly changing - contexts. Survey information collected from the public is presented throughout the document.



POVERTY

According to the 2018 American Community Survey, nearly 20% of the population is considered to be living at or below the federal poverty level. Affordable housing is important to consider for disadvantaged communities.



VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

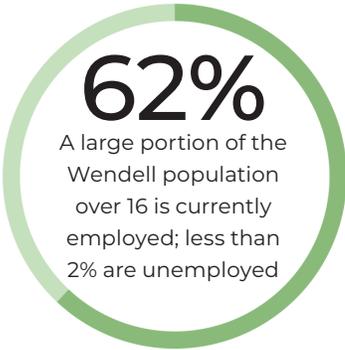
Census data reports that 99% of Wendell's households have access to a vehicle. Alternative means of transportation and accessibility are critical factors to consider for integrating development and mobility needs of Wendell's citizens.

PEOPLE AND WEALTH (NEXT PAGE)

While affordability regularly appears as a reason people choose to live in Wendell, there are substantial variations in the population densities and wealth of residents of Wendell compared to nearby towns. Rolesville's median housing cost is nearly twice that of Wendell, while there appears to be little or no relationship between population density and wealth or housing costs.



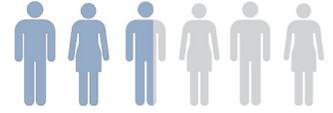
The unemployment rates in Wendell are low, and slightly lower than in nearby communities



54% FEMALE

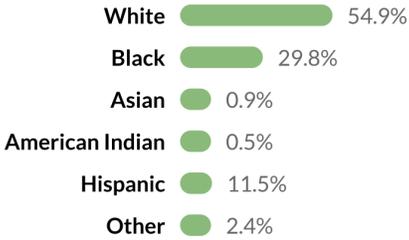


46% MALE



+86%

Population increase from 2000 to 2018

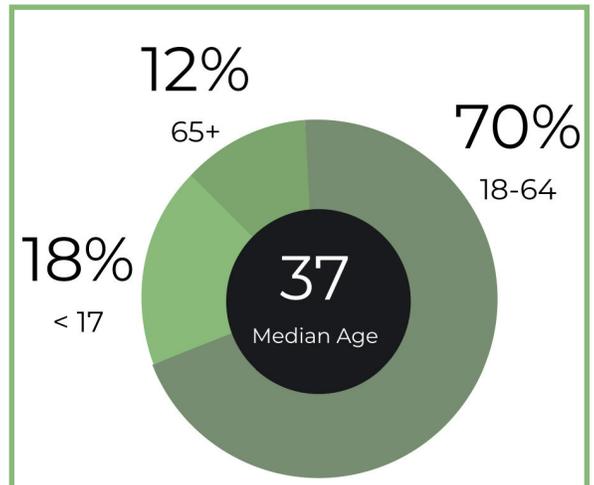


Wendell is diverse culturally, ethnically, and racially



HOMELIFE

The average household size in Wendell is 2.74 persons, slightly lower than or similar to nearby communities like Rolesville, Knightdale, and Clayton. About 13.5% of households have at least one person living with a disability, the highest percent of any of the nearby towns. Median household income has increased by nearly a third from 2010 to 2018 (\$62,651).



WENDELL HAS A SLIGHTLY OLDER AGE BY COHORT COMPARED TO NEARBY COMMUNITIES



For-Sale Home Costs (\$1,000s)

Percent Living in Poverty

Population Density



NATURAL & CULTURAL ASSETS

The area in and around Wendell is rich in pristine green pastures, tall trees, and open spaces that provide an enjoyable setting while walking or driving through Town. The Wendell Parks and Recreation Department provides opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community activities including recreational, cultural and leisure opportunities. The Department offers a variety of programs and special events for citizens of all ages and abilities, serving citizens by constantly providing new and innovative programs as well as high-quality facilities and parks. The Parks and Recreation Department also partners with the Wendell Historic Society for various events, including Fourth of July festivities and Holiday Decorations Walking Tours in December. These opportunities help showcase the historic preservation and beauty that Wendell has to offer.

The Hugh T. Moody trail, located at Wendell Park, includes a two-mile walking trail, utilizing protected areas of the floodplain along Buffalo Creek. Users can expect a shady walk among various plants and species of trees. In fact, natural resources are plentiful in many parts of Wendell. Major water features in the study area include Buffalo Creek located in the center of the study area, and the Little River along the study area's eastern boundary. Much of the areas along Buffalo Creek are preserved for open space and include planned greenway connections. Much of the southern portions of the study area along Lake Myra Road have also been preserved as open space to preserve and protect, maintain and improve this region's quality of life.



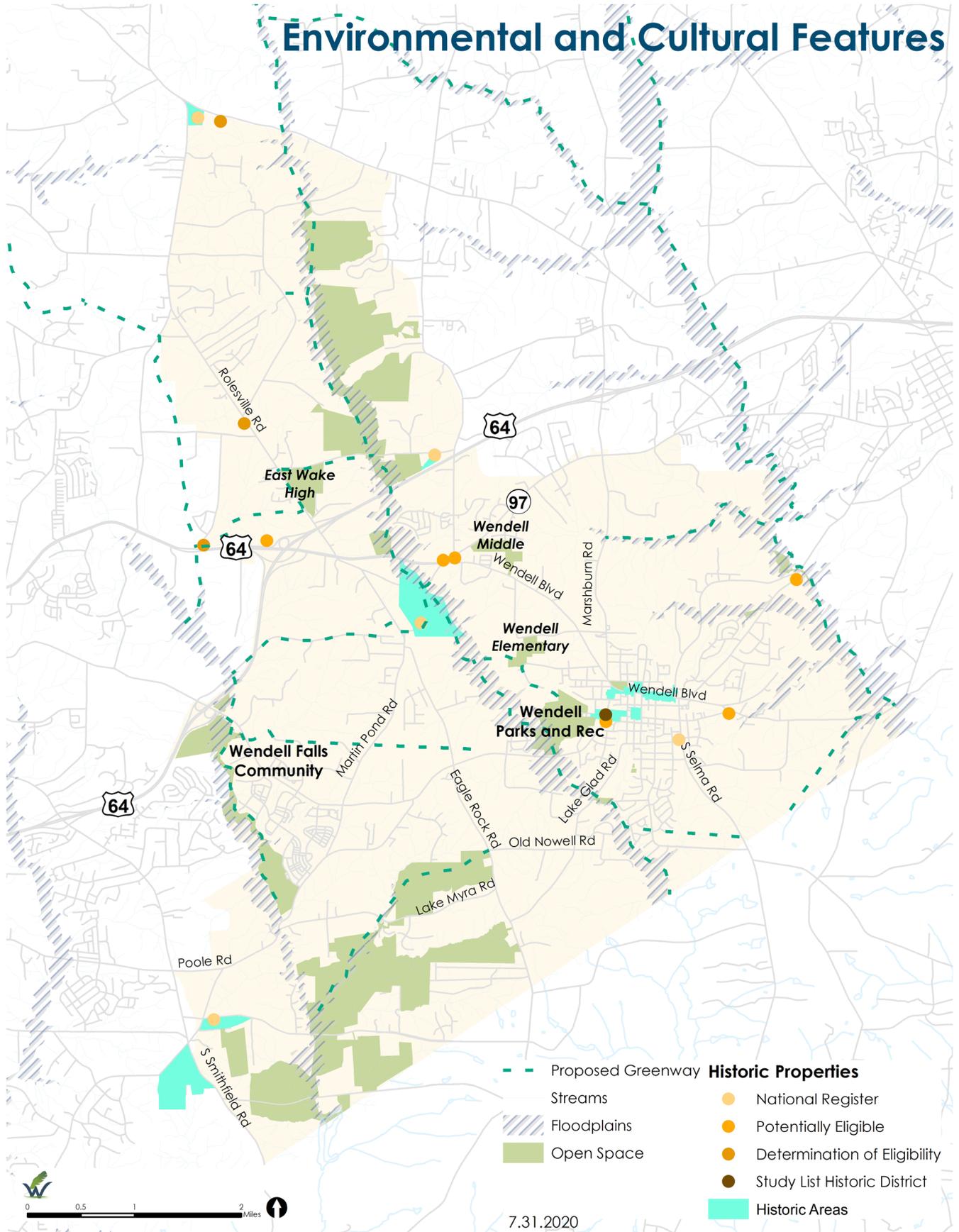
Wendell is changing rapidly. New development and redevelopment all effect the environment. Future planning must include ways to protect and improve existing natural resources while improving the area.



GREENWAYS

Greenways are areas of conservation and recreation, connecting people and places. There are over 20 miles of greenways planned for the Wendell area. This network will offer a place for recreation and an alternative mode of transportation for residents noted by focus groups concerned with social equity issues. Many of the proposed routes will connect with dense neighborhoods and existing sidewalks to increase accessibility.

Environmental and Cultural Features



- - - Proposed Greenway
- ~ ~ ~ Streams
- / / / Floodplains
- Open Space
- Historic Properties**
- National Register
- Potentially Eligible
- Determination of Eligibility
- Study List Historic District
- Historic Areas

7.31.2020

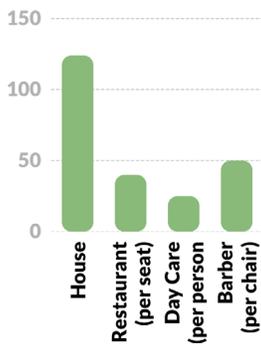
Environmental Features Map



UTILITIES

WATER & SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

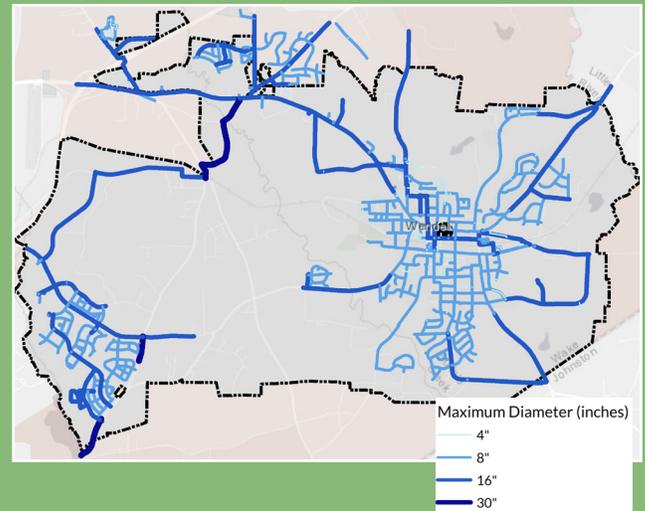
Water and sewer infrastructure play key roles in the continued development and economic health of Wendell. The *Blueprint Wendell 2030 Plan* will employ typical consumption figures for houses and commercial properties to help tie future land use recommendations back to supply, which is governed by Wendell's utility service agreement with the City of Raleigh. Conversations with Raleigh Utilities indicates that no capacity issues are on the horizon.



Typical Water Usage
Gallons per Day (gpd)

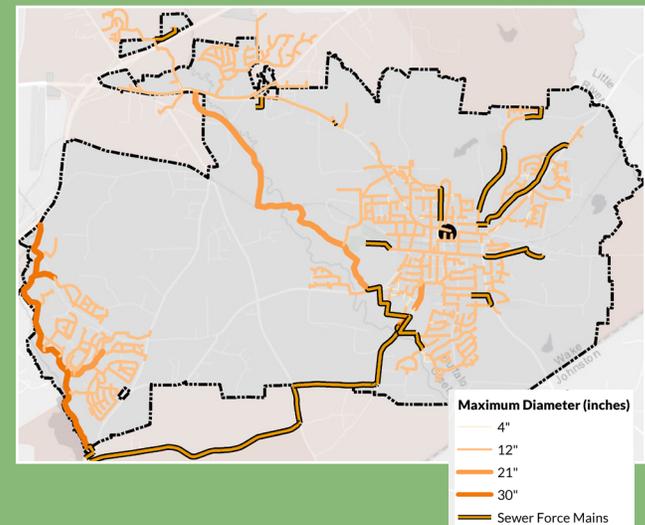
01. Water

The map to the right illustrates the location and sizing of water mains inside the current Town of Wendell limits. Note the gap along Wendell Falls Parkway in the center of town.



02. Sewer

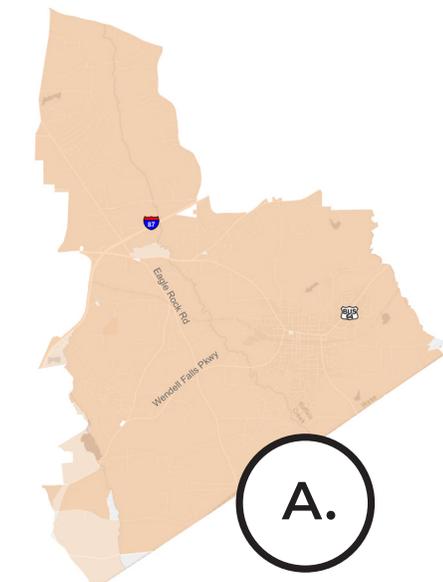
The map to the right shows both the gravity and force (pumped) sewage lines within Wendell. A 30" gravity main does traverse Eagle Rock Road north-south, but the gap between that line and the Wendell Falls community is still prominent.



TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATION

MOBILITY OF PEOPLE, THINGS, AND IDEAS

It is now nearly impossible to consider transportation in the absence of Internet-enabled technology. Apps tell us when the bus will arrive, that the Lyft vehicle is five minutes away, and the best route to take whether driving, walking, or riding a bicycle. These trends will accelerate, merging different travel modes into a more seamless realm of transportation possibilities where shared vehicles, services, and parking become the norm. Only about 4% of Wendell workers commute to jobs in town (right), and the work-from-home trend (and meet-from-home, dine-from-home, etc.) has grown quickly during the pandemic.

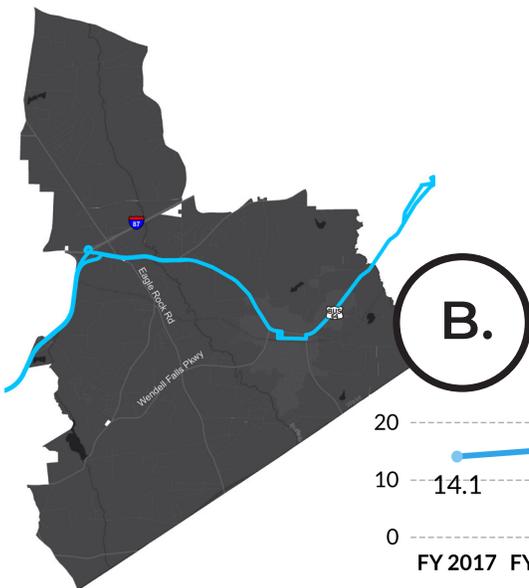


A.

Internet Speeds. Nearly every part of the Wendell planning area has access to 500+mb / second download speeds; access from certain locations may be more spotty or have fewer providers.

B.

Transit Service. Fixed-route service (on-demand service for eligible populations is also available) is provided by GoRaleigh and the ZWX express from the East 4th Street/Main Street park-and-ride lot.



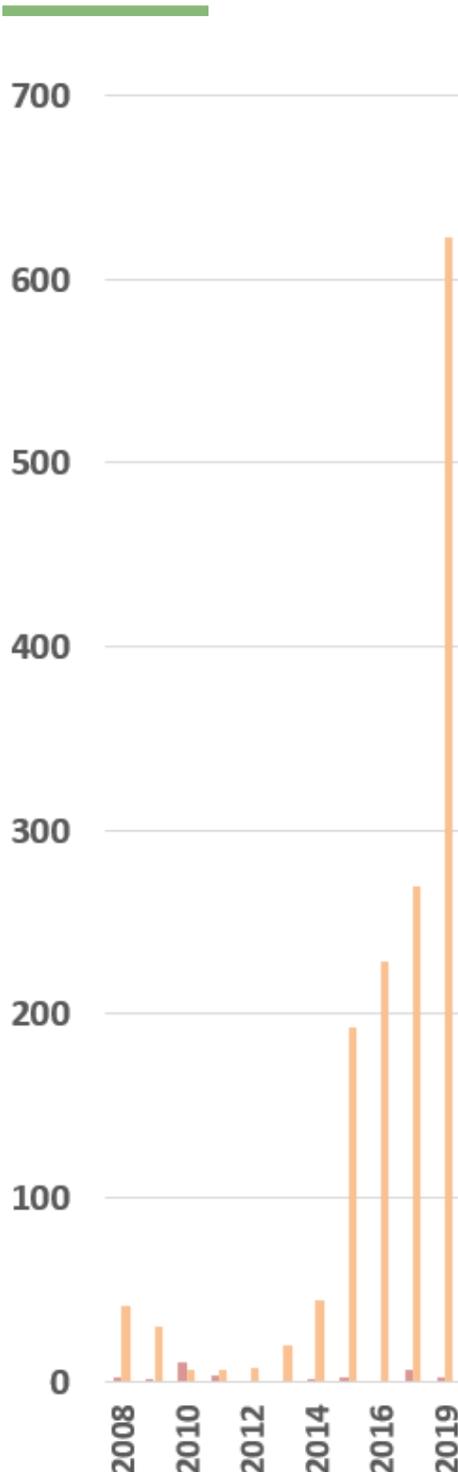
Travel Patterns. Most (93%) workers living in Wendell tend to travel in their own car to work, most of them alone. Wendell has one bus stop for an express route operated by GoRaleigh that provides service to and from WakeMed and Raleigh daily for \$3 one way. This reliance on one mode of transportation has resulted in an average travel time to work of almost 26 minutes. Wendell-based workers traveling less than 10 miles to work fell by 35% between 2002 and 2017, while those traveling between 25 and 50 miles rose by 50%. Women drive, on average, five minutes longer to work than males living in Wendell.

ZWX Ridership, FY 2017-2019 (000s)



LAND & DEVELOPMENT

DEMAND FOR AND SUPPLY OF LAND

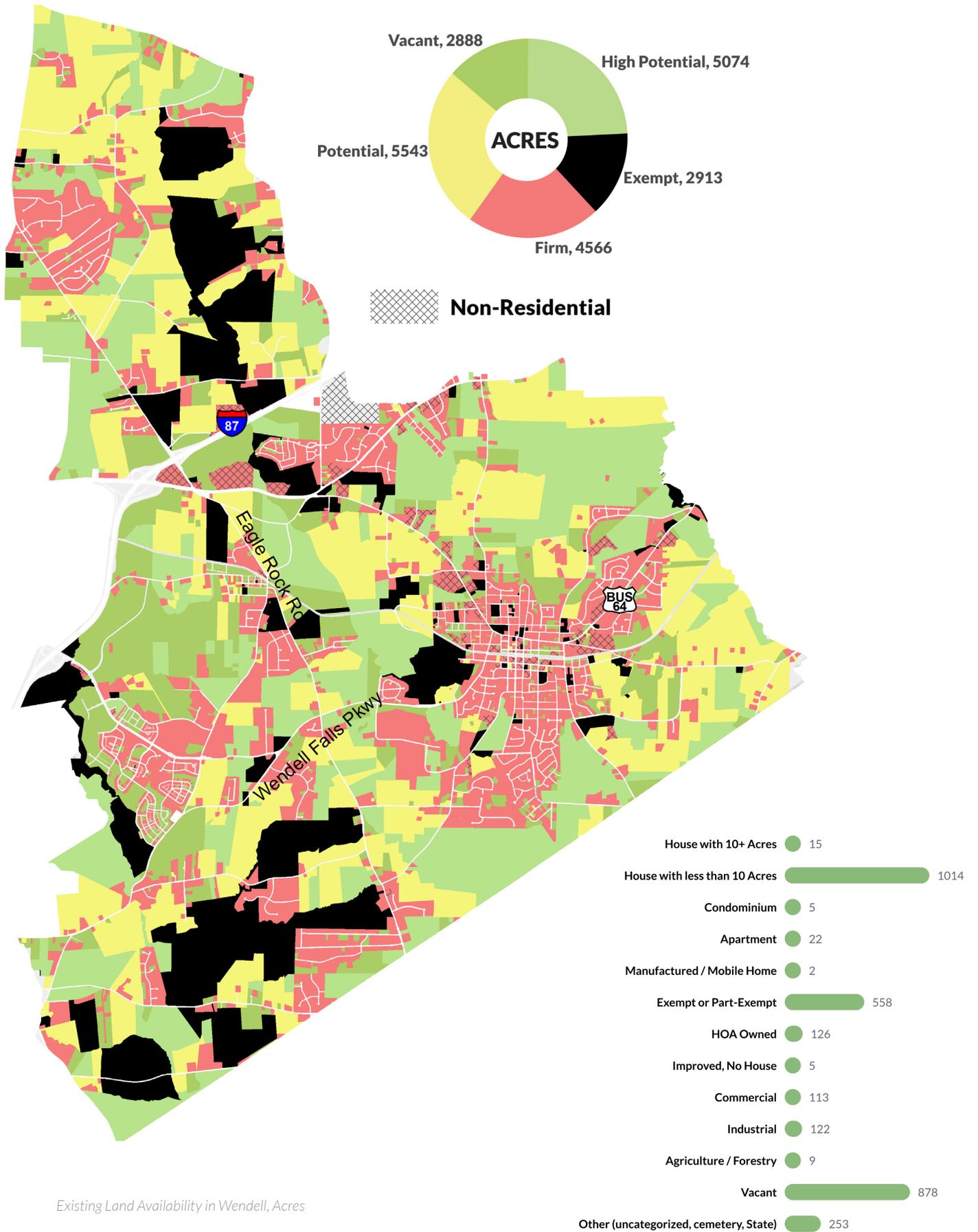


DEMAND. Wendell is a fast-growing town in a fast-growing state. Larger macroeconomic forces, affordable land prices, and proximity to regional destinations like Research Triangle Park (RTP), Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU), and other large employers around the Raleigh urban area will continue to foster growth. Residential permits have increased each year since 2014. Commercial and non-residential uses have lagged behind residential growth, particularly since 2014.

SUPPLY. Land is Wendell's most precious resource, irreplaceable and increasing in value. It is estimated that 13,500 acres in Wendell are vacant or have the potential to redevelop to a more-intense use. Lands classified as "High Potential" for redevelopment include agricultural lands without a building on them now. Lands with "Potential" for redevelopment include other agricultural lands, residential lots greater than 10 acres in size, and lots with manufactured homes. Some lands are unlikely to be redeveloped, like schools, churches, preserved areas, and government facilities.

THE FUTURE. This study forecasted between 714 and 1,408 housing units would be needed through 2030 based on past trends, but recent growth in building permits and planned units greatly exceeds those figures. Accommodation, food service, retail, and health care are promising future employment areas and show a relative deficit compared to Wake County as a whole.

Industry	Wendell Employees (2017)	L.Q. (Wake Co. baseline)	Average Annual Wages	Jobs Added by 2030
Public Administration	50	3.4	\$33,000	43
Educational Services	243	1.8	\$35,000	628
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	60	1.6	\$39,000	99
Construction	138	1.4	\$29,000	184
Manufacturing	268	1.4	\$28,000	-21
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7	1.1	\$19,000	140
Accommodation and Food Services	138	1.0	\$13,000	1207
Retail Trade	447	0.7	\$21,000	654
Transportation and Warehousing	1	0.6	\$38,000	17
Information	8	0.6	\$30,000	-17
Other Services (except Pub. Admin.)	41	0.5	\$20,000	117
Finance and Insurance	45	0.4	\$49,000	169
Health Care and Social Assistance	196	0.3	\$33,000	994
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	24	0.2	\$25,000	188
Administrative, Support, Waste Management, Remediation	41	0.2	\$20,000	238
Wholesale Trade	202	0.1	\$42,000	88



Existing Land Availability in Wendell, Acres



PAST PLANS & RELEVANCY

PAST PLANNING DOCUMENTS PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHT AND BACKGROUND ON THE COMMUNITY AND HAVE INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN. THE FOLLOWING PLANS WERE REVIEWED EARLY IN THE PLANNING PROCESS AS THEY RELATE TO EXISTING CONDITIONS AND FUTURE NEEDS FOR THE TOWN.

2007

2014

2016

2017

Comprehensive Plan

- Transportation Network improvement and policy changes/additions
- Ensure housing choices
- Mixed-Use development and walkable neighborhoods
- Economic development enhancement
- Design standards
- Improvements in downtown

Northeast Area Study

- Bikeway along Wendell Falls Parkway, Wendell Boulevard and US 64 towards Zebulon
- Greenway addition east of US 64 to Zebulon
- Buffalo Creek Greenway north to Rolesville
- Short greenway connections around schools and parks
- Express bus route
- Commuter rail service

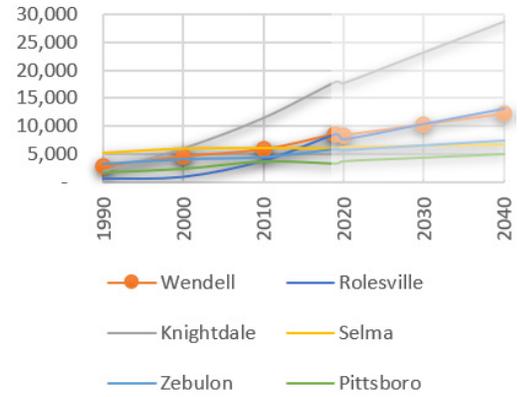
Arterial Plan

- Intersection improvements, roadway widening projects, and new-location roadway projects
- Traffic Improvements in new development areas

Pedestrian Plan

Specific sidewalk, intersection, landscaping, and multi-use path additions and improvements that improve walkability, enhance safety, and enhance Town economics.

THE BLUEPRINT WENDELL 2030 PLAN SHOULD GUIDE THE TOWN FORWARD DURING A PERIOD OF RAPID CHANGE. PAST TRENDS FOR GROWTH ARE LIKELY TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY EXCEEDED IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS.



Population Growth, Past and Trending



Economic Strategic Plan

- Create vibrant downtown
- New library
- Develop infrastructure plan
- Water and sewer additions
- Transportation improvements prioritized based on Economic Development
- Parks and Recreation plan implementation
- Improve greenways
- Improve tourism
- Improve local events

Parks & Recreation Plan

- Need for connectivity
- Desired neighborhood parks
- About 75% of those surveyed say they have traveled outside of Wendell to reach a park
- Greenways, walkways and programs cited as top needs

Northeast Area Study

Still being conducted at the time of this writing, the NEAS Update project is focusing again on transportation, and transportation-land use relationships. Likely to emphasize public transportation more than its predecessor, the project, like the Blueprint Wendell 2030 Plan, is also dealing with the effects of a global pandemic. Changes wrought by technology, limited state financing in the near term, and lifestyle choices continue to make the area's towns and cities attractive to new residents.

Blueprint Wendell 2030

The timeline and major tasks for this project, a major update to the 2007 Comprehensive Plan, are those shown below.

- Initiation (02.20)
- Data Collection (09.20)
- Public Outreach (ongoing)
- Existing Conditions (12.20)
- Draft Plan 03.21)
- Final Plan (06.21)

WE HEARD YOU....

A BIG PART OF A GREAT PLAN IS GETTING AS MUCH INPUT AS POSSIBLE...AND THEN USING IT TO HELP REFINE THE UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES, POINT THE WAY TOWARDS RECOMMENDATIONS, AND ESTABLISH WHICH STRATEGIES TO PURSUE FIRST.

The Wendell Blueprint 2030 Plan used a lot of on-line techniques, including surveys and interactive mapping, as well as focus groups to get at this all-important information and insight. The graphics on the next page summarize only a small part of the survey responses; much more is available at www.blueprintwendell2030.com.

If you could change one thing about Wendell, it would be...

better roads and a plan starting now to improve them ● feeling of acceptance to Diversity and inclusion ● improve the walkability and bikability of the town ● more restaurants ● more affordable for small businesses to open ● less bars and drinking establishments. No golf carts outside of subdivisions ● use space in downtown for new restaurants, offices, shopping, etc. ● more shopping, restaurants, especially restaurants! ● make sure new growth does not overtake downtown and surround areas or lower property values in older neighborhoods ● more sidewalks ● get from Wendell Falls to downtown safely on a bike ● more places to shop and entertain ● downtown can be upgraded and more inviting while keeping the small town friendly safe feel ● the excessive growth has caused a surge in property values. Residents on fixed incomes are struggling to maintain while paying higher tax rates for both the county and the town ● no affordable houses are being built, people are building \$240k townhomes and calling them affordable. If you are going to regulate at least make it benefit someone other than a developer ● more industrial/business development ● more restaurants and shopping. Spruce up Main Street ● be more pedestrian friendly ● more non alcohol related recreational activities for adults ● yard waste pickup would go back to the way it was... ● congestion on the roads especially at Wendell Falls Pkwy/Eagle Rock and Buffalo ● we need to bridge the gap between downtown and Wendell Falls ● kindness from the people who have always lived here. They treat others like outsiders when we are all Wendell residents ● A lot of Wendell's future success, I think, lies in town appearance and maintenance, as well as recruiting small businesses to our already existing infrastructure, when possible, and better utilizing the community spaces we already have ● love the small town vibe ● keep the small town feel without adding all the housing and restaurants ● more parks - each neighborhood should have a play area ● if it ain't broke, stop trying to fixit ● parking ● sidewalk and crosswalks on Hollybrook ● less mega neighborhoods ● we would hope to enjoy more eat-in restaurants & a few other fast food options, along with better shopping areas. However, we love the downtown charm

 **573 surveys completed** *(all surveys)*

 **62% completion rate** *(for the "big" survey)*

 **11:48 time to complete** *(for the "big" survey)*

let's hear it for the hometeam...



of respondents live and / or work in Wendell

... as the rookies take the field...



of resident respondents have lived here less than five years

...and play well with others...



of Wendell worker respondents have worked here less than five years

...for the love of our game.



why respondents came to the Wendell area

67%  agree or strongly agree that landowners should be able to do whatever they want with their land

30%  agree or strongly agree that the free market should determine what is best for land & development

83%  agree or strongly agree that new development should have to pay for improvements to public roads, schools, and utilities that their development impacts or uses

24%  agree or strongly agree that land use policy should restrict future growth, even including no new development

90%  agree or strongly agree that land use policies should protect neighborhoods from noise, pollution, traffic, and other negative consequences of land use development

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?



76%

SAID IT'S US,

supporting the idea that "elected officials, their appointees, and staff have to make case-by-case land use policy decisions with guidance from adopted plans and the public."

DEAD END →



GO BIG & GO GREEN

TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS RANKED HIGHLY FOR MANY, FROM CONGESTION TO LOSS OF MOBILITY FOR SENIORS TO THE NEED FOR MORE TRAVEL OPTIONS.

Few issues enjoyed support as strong as the greening of Wendell, regardless of how the question was asked. About 75% gave greenway connections their highest rating; more parks/outdoor recreation and concerns about loss of open space scored very highly as well. Walking and sidewalks were important to you as ways of getting to and around Wendell.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE....

This is just a small sample of the survey input; see the full results on-line at:

WWW.BLUEPRINTWENDELL2030.COM