



## **Citizen Advisory Group Meeting #11**

Carolinas Medical Center – Steele Creek  
13640 Steelescroft Parkway  
November 9, 2010

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*Meeting Purpose: Discuss draft plan policies.*

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

### **2. Recap of Previous Group Discussions**

Natural Environment  
Infrastructure and Public Facilities  
Land Use and Community Design  
Transportation

### **3. Review Draft Concept Map**

### **4. Discuss Draft Plan Policies**

### **5. Wrap-up and Next Steps**

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#### **Steele Creek Area Plan Staff Contacts:**

**Planning:** Alberto Gonzalez, [agonzalez@charlottenc.gov](mailto:agonzalez@charlottenc.gov); John Howard, [jhoward@charlottenc.gov](mailto:jhoward@charlottenc.gov); Melony McCullough, [mmccullough@charlottenc.gov](mailto:mmccullough@charlottenc.gov); Brent Wilkinson, [bwilkinson@charlottenc.gov](mailto:bwilkinson@charlottenc.gov), 704.336.2205

**Transportation:** Andy Grzymski, [agrzymski@charlottenc.gov](mailto:agrzymski@charlottenc.gov); Brian Horton, [bhorton@charlottenc.gov](mailto:bhorton@charlottenc.gov), 704.336.4119

Information about the plan will be posted at [www.charlotteplanning.org](http://www.charlotteplanning.org) throughout the planning process.

# STEELE CREEK AREA PLAN DOCUMENT

## Executive Summary - Working Draft

November 09, 2010

### Executive Summary

The *Steele Creek Area Plan* defines the vision and land use policies for the plan area and provides specific direction to guide future growth and development, consistent with the *Centers, Corridors and Wedges Growth Framework*. This Executive Summary provides the highlights of the plan document, however, much more detailed information can be found in Part I: Concept Plan.

#### Plan Boundary

The Steele Creek plan area is approximately 27,000 acres and has a population of approximately 35,000. The plan area is bounded generally by Shopton Road on the north, North Carolina and South Carolina state boundaries on the south, the Catawba River on the west, and I-485 on the east (See Plan Area Boundary Map).

The area encompasses a diverse mixture of residential, retail, office and industrial land uses. A large portion of the area, particularly closer to I-485, I-77 and South Tryon, includes more intense development primarily located within four Activity Centers—Rivergate and Whitehall / Ayrley Mixed Use Activity Centers; the Westinghouse Industrial Center; and the portion of the Shopton Road Industrial Center that is included within the plan area boundary. Several large industrial parks are also located in the plan area, providing employment opportunities with companies like International Paper, Siemens, Shutterfly and Time Warner Cable.

Much of the plan area is within a Wedge and includes low to moderate density residential developments like The Sanctuary, The Palisades, and Riverwood. The McDowell Nature Center and Preserve is also located within the Wedge and is the oldest nature preserve in Mecklenburg County. Ninety percent of the preserve is undeveloped, forested, rolling terrain along the banks of Lake Wylie. The plan area also includes additional public facilities such as schools, parks, libraries and greenways.

#### Key Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities and constraints that were identified through the public input and an examination of the existing conditions (see Appendix) helped to focus the planning process. Key opportunities identified include proximity to the Catawba River and interstate access, both of which contribute to the uniqueness of this area. Other opportunities include preserving the neighborhoods and natural environmental features; convenience of Activity Centers for shopping, entertainment and employment; and availability of parks and greenways. Some of the major challenges that were identified include the impact of increased development on the natural environment, and lack of public facilities and local street connectivity.

## Summary of Goals and Policies

The *Steele Creek Area Plan* provides goals and detailed policies to ensure that the future envisioned for this area is achieved. Below are the plan goals and a brief summary of the policies.

### Vision Statement

The vision for the Steele Creek area is to create a unique and sustainable community that is a great place to live, work and recreate, while preserving the community's character by incorporating natural and historic features into new development. The community will seek to achieve this vision through the following actions:

- Protecting the Catawba River, McDowell Nature Preserve, natural features and historic places;
- Encouraging a balanced mixture of land uses with enhanced public facilities that include quality schools;
- Developing a safe, accessible and efficient transportation system for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists;
- Encouraging community design that recognizes the natural environment; and
- Creating an interconnected network of parks, greenways and open space amenities.

## Land Use

*Goal:* Establish a land use pattern that offers a mix of land uses and the opportunity to live, work and recreate in close proximity.

### Wedge

Most of the plan area is located within a Wedge as defined by the *Centers, Corridors, and Wedges Growth Framework*. This area is primarily developed with, and zoned for, residential development. The intent of the land use policies is to preserve the character and integrity of neighborhoods in the Wedge, while improving connectivity and access to green spaces, and neighborhood serving land uses.

- Development in the Wedge should remain predominantly lower density residential, typically up to 4 dwelling units per acre.
- Some neighborhood supporting land uses and moderate density housing will be appropriate at strategic locations along thoroughfares as shown on Plan Area Boundary Map.
- Allow an additional 100,000 square feet of retail to be added to the Palisades mixed use town center.
- New development and redevelopment should respect the natural environment, particularly in areas close to creeks, streams and the Catawba River.
- Institutional uses are located throughout the wedge area.
- Civic and or cultural facilities at strategic locations.

### Activity Centers

Activity Centers are intended to be focal points of economic activity. The Mixed Use Activity Centers are typically planned to provide opportunities for "live, work and play" in a highly pedestrian-oriented environment. Industrial "Activity" Centers serve as major economic generators with a strong employment focus. Activity Centers are appropriate locations for new growth and/or redevelopment with enhancements to the supporting infrastructure.

Future development/redevelopment in the Mixed Use Activity Centers should facilitate the transition to a much more pedestrian-oriented form of development. This includes providing for a mixture of uses that are designed to encourage walking; incorporating open space (i.e., fountains, plazas, greenways, paths, pocket parks) into the development; linking to existing and future development; and transitioning existing surface parking to parking structures wrapped with active ground-floor uses.

- Rivergate Mixed Use Activity Center has a mixture of residential, office and retail land uses. In the future, higher intensity development is appropriate with improved connections for pedestrians.
- Whitehall/Ayrsley Mixed Use Activity Center is developed with residential, office, and retail development. The Center also has a large amount of flex/warehouse space.
- Although this area has a large amount of development, a significant amount of development has been approved and it is appropriate for increased intensity development.
- The encroachment of residential areas into the established industrial areas has emerged as an important issue with new growth in the plan area. Support office and industrial land uses within the Industrial Centers and locate employment serving retail uses in strategic locations. Shopton Road Industrial Center. The small portion of the Shopton Road Industrial Center that is located within the plan area boundaries is mostly vacant. This area may develop in the future with industrial land uses.
- Westinghouse Industrial Center. The largest industrial core in the Carolinas transverses through the center of the plan area. While this area is developed with other 20 millions square feet of industrial development. Additional industrial development is appropriate for the area.

### **Community Design**

*Goal: Encourage sustainable development that promotes accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists while integrating green amenities and environmentally sensitive features.*

Community design policies help to ensure that new development and redevelopment complements the existing or desired character of the Steele Creek community. The following policies highlights key community design polices.

- Building and site design in Steele Creek should be reflective of its surrounding built and natural environment and respect existing neighborhoods.
- Development should orient towards an internal street network and provide a landscaped buffer along South Tryon Street to improve the aesthetic quality of the roadway.
- Improved pedestrian connections and accommodations for cyclists and motorists should be provided throughout the plan area to encourage a safe pedestrian and vehicular network for all users.
- Freestanding single tenant buildings should be designed in a manner that facilitates pedestrian mobility and relates to the surrounding center and the overall Steele Creek area.



## ***Transportation/Street Design***

*Goal:* Provide a safe, accessible, and efficient street network for all users.

Achieving this transportation goal will require not only strengthening the relationship between land use and transportation, but also advancing key transportation investments. Transportation policies address both proposed new streets and enhancements to existing streets to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Many of these improvements will likely be accomplished in conjunction with new development and redevelopment. The general locations of the improvements are noted on the Recommended Future Transportation Network Map and the policies are highlighted below:

- Improve area connectivity by providing streets, cross access, internal site circulation, and multiple entrances.
- Upgrade farm-to-market roads and extend/widen key thoroughfares.
- Improve intersections for both vehicular and pedestrian safety and mobility.
- Enhance the pedestrian and bicycle network, and encourage bikeway connections to greenways via contiguous open spaces as new land development occurs. Provide improved block structure (smaller block lengths) to support increased land use intensities, especially within the Mixed Use Activity Centers.
- Consider the need to expand transit service to major nodes of activity as development intensifies.

## ***Infrastructure & Public Facilities***

*Goal:* Provide public facilities to maintain and improve service levels to area residents.

Public facilities that currently serve much of this plan area include public water and sewer, storm water, police (Steele Creek Division), fire, parks and recreation, libraries and schools. Over the last decade, the Steele Creek area has experienced a lot of growth, as this trend continues; additional public facilities will be needed to serve residents and businesses. The following policies highlight key Infrastructure and Public Facilities policies.

New development and redevelopment should be required to set aside open space in the form of natural and/or improved areas and situate development around such areas in a manner that they become a prominent component and amenity of each site.

- Link greenways with other greenways and the Carolina Thread Trail, parks, preserves, neighborhoods, schools, retail centers, Activity Centers, and employment areas.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle access to recreational amenities as development occurs.

## ***Natural Environment***

*Goal:* Encourage environmentally sensitive land development practices.

The protection of the environment which includes the preservation of the tree canopy and other natural features, such as the Catawba River, were identified as primary concerns for area residents during the planning process. The vision developed for the area makes specific mention of “Protecting the Catawba River, McDowell Nature Center and Preserve, natural features, and historic places.” The vision also advocates “Encouraging community design that recognizes the natural environment; and creating an interconnected network of parks, greenways, and open space amenities”. The following policies highlight key recommendations.

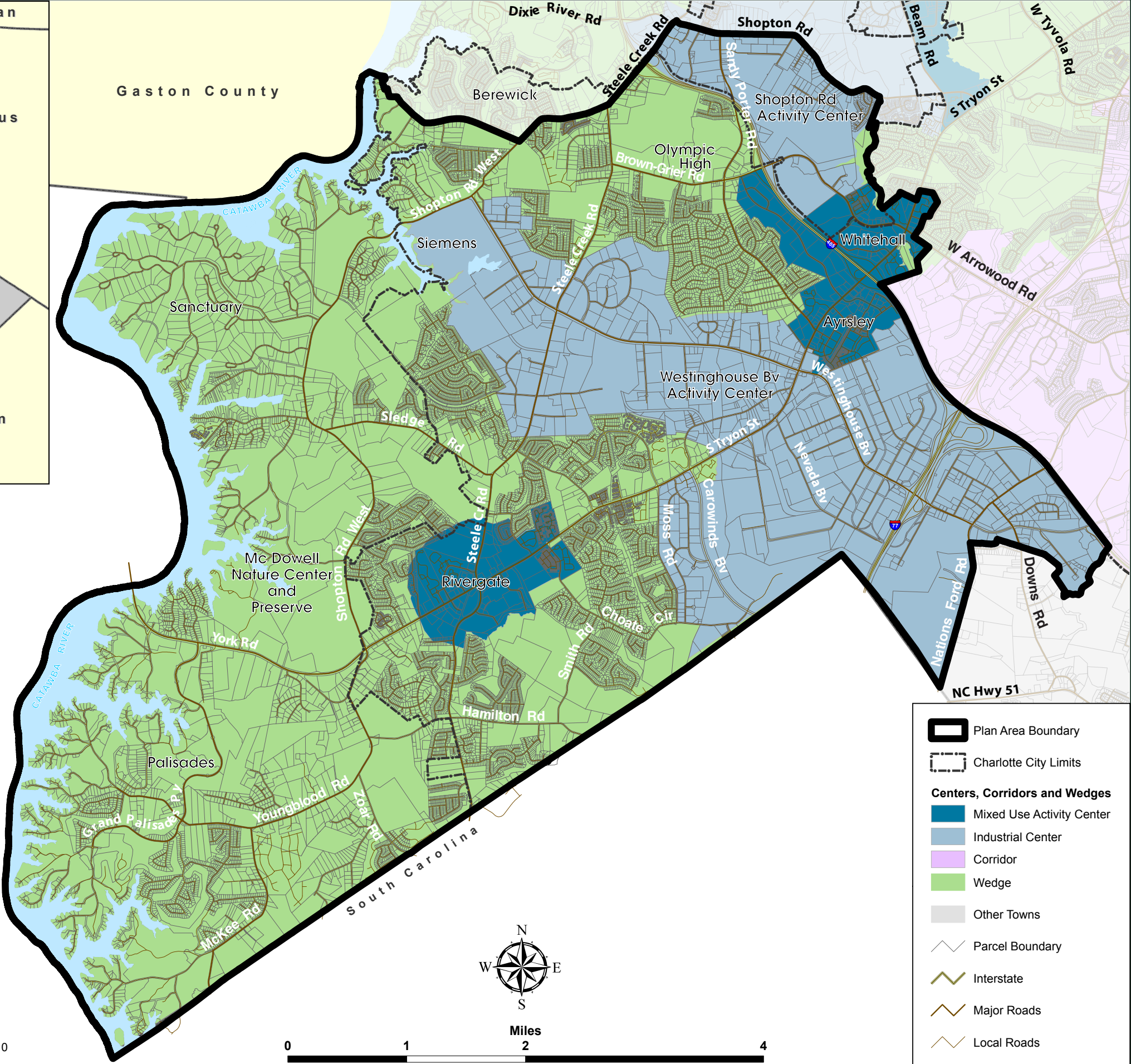
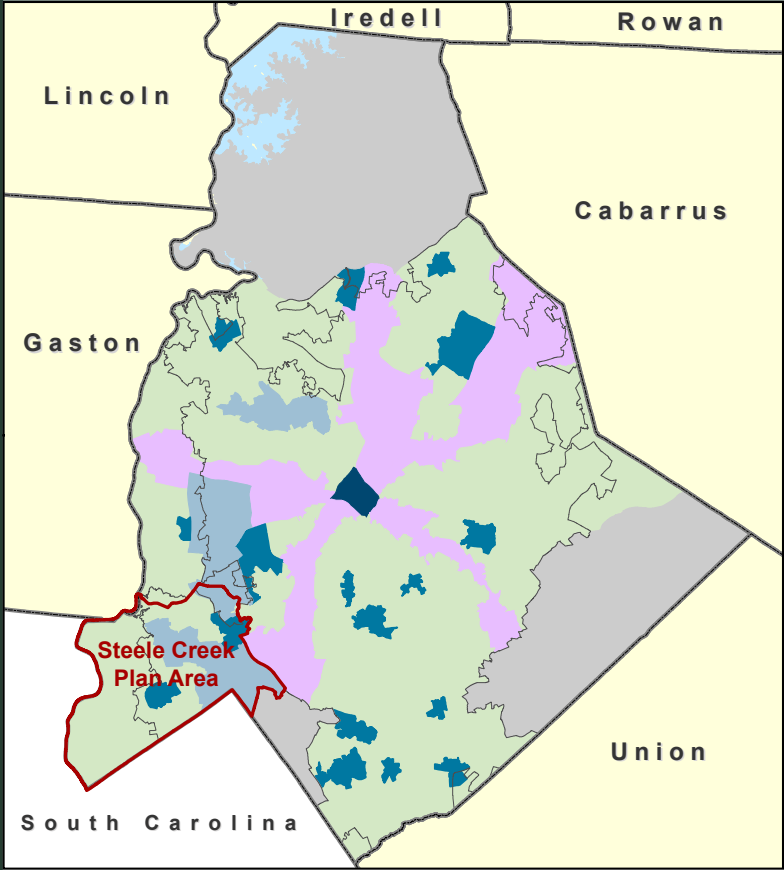
- Incorporate natural features and environmentally sensitive areas into open space areas.
- Preserve tree canopy, native plants and open space by incorporating natural features into development.
- Protect quality of the area’s water supply.
- Develop a network of green spaces that include greenways, nature preserves, parks, and open spaces.
- Balance land use and transportation decisions to minimize air quality impacts.
- Target environmentally sensitive areas when acquiring land for public purposes that could incorporate preservation of these areas.
- Limit development in the floodplains to protect the area’s water quality.

## ***Key Implementation Strategies***

The Implementation Guide identifies strategies to implement the policies in the Concept Plan and is not adopted by elected officials. The Implementation Guide includes a number of improvement projects and is intended to be a guide for staff. Some of the key implementation strategies are:

- Utilize land use and community design recommendations to guide and evaluate development proposals.
- Seek additional street connections as development occurs to improve connectivity within the area.
- Enhance a number of intersections in the plan area to improve traffic flow, area accessibility and safety.
- Explore funding sources for local government participation in development of the street network that will be constructed through the land development process.
- Request easements and/or dedications during the land development process to expand the Walker’s Branch Greenway.

# Steele Creek Area Plan - Plan Area Boundary



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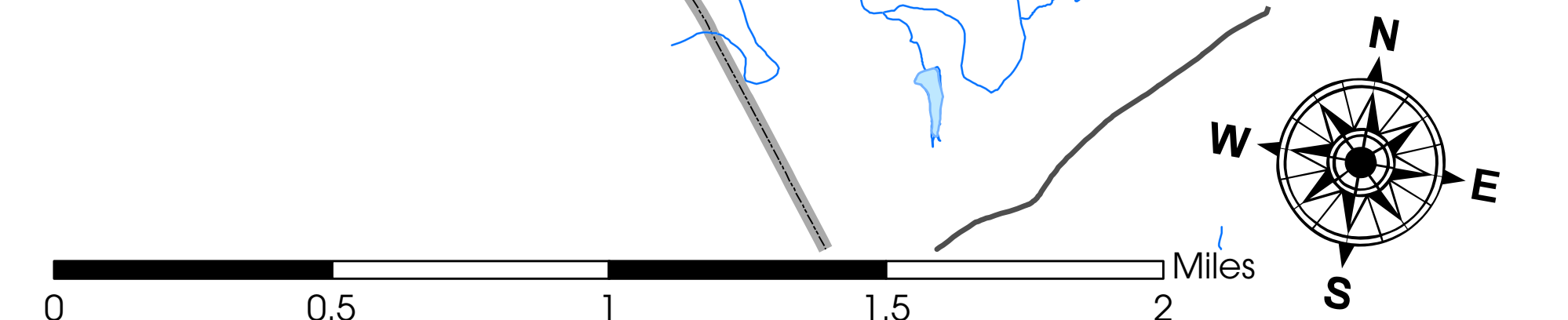
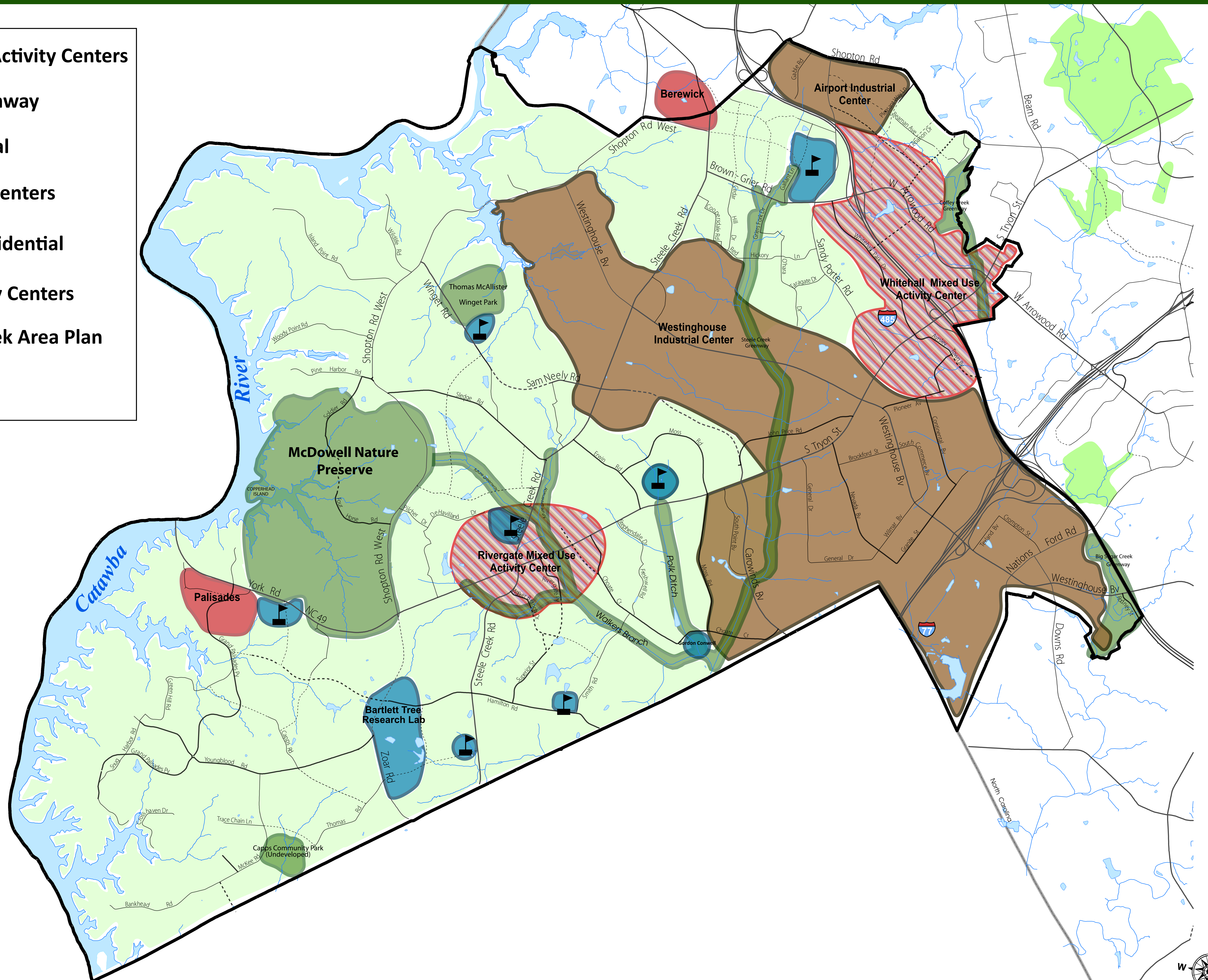
- Plan Area Boundary
- Charlotte City Limits
- Centers, Corridors and Wedges**
  - Mixed Use Activity Center
  - Industrial Center
  - Corridor
  - Wedge
- Other Towns
- Parcel Boundary
- Interstate
- Major Roads
- Local Roads





# Steele Creek Area Plan

## DRAFT Concept Plan





Area	Character	Building Types	Examples
<b>Employment</b> 	Single Use Office and Industrial with supporting retail	Manufacturing, Warehouse, Flex, Retail, Office	
<b>Residential</b> 	Low to Moderate Density residential	Single Family Homes and Townhomes	
<b>Mixed Use/Community</b> 	Mixed/Multi Use Retail, Office and Residential	Large Format Retail, Apartment Homes, Townhomes, Storefront Commercial/Retail and Office	



# Steele Creek Area Plan - Recommended Land Use Policies

**Proposed Landuse Code**

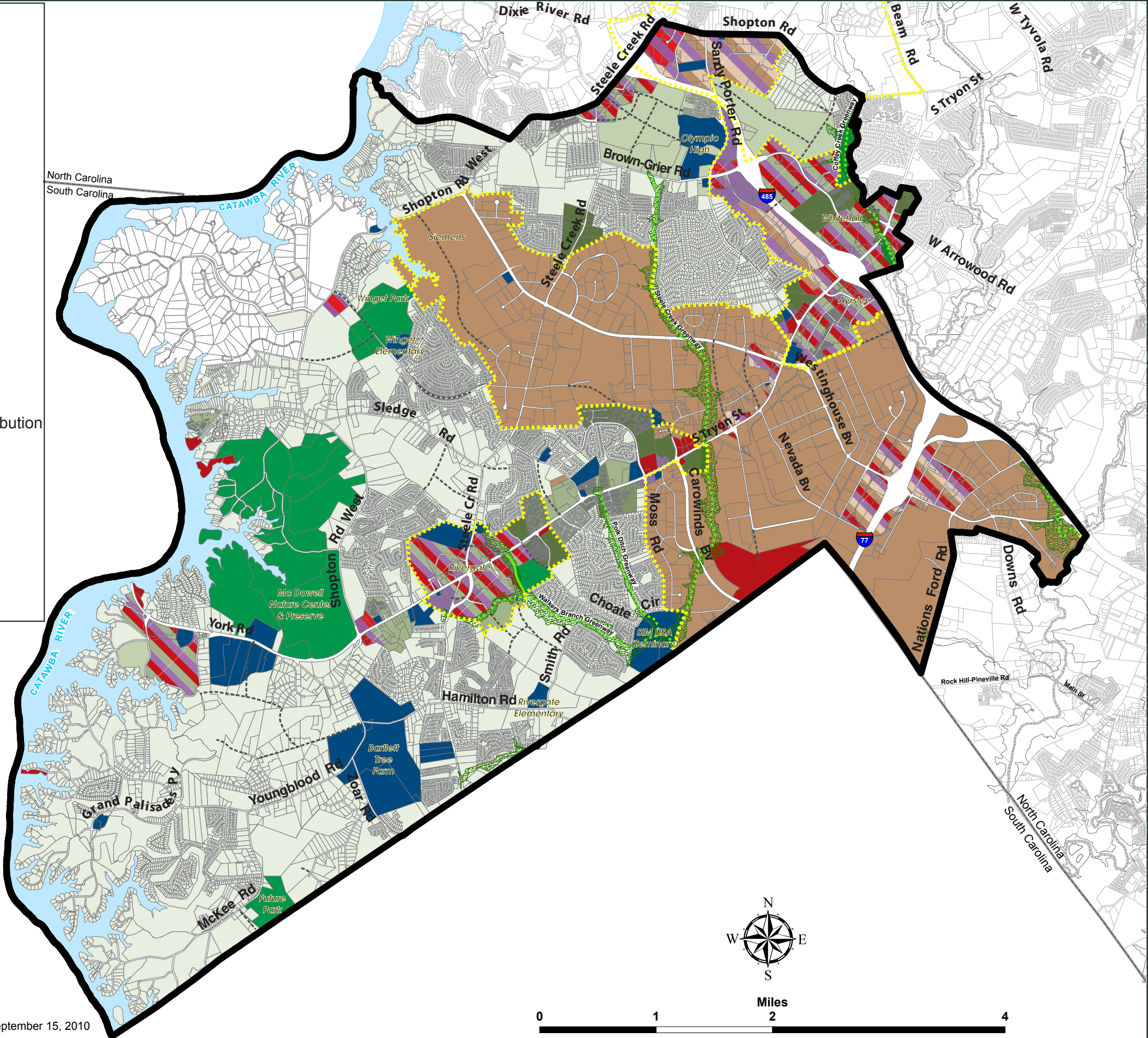
- Residential <= 1 DUA
- Residential <= 4 DUA
- Residential <= 5 DUA
- Residential <= 6 DUA
- Residential <= 8 DUA
- Residential <= 12 DUA
- Residential <= 17 DUA
- Institutional
- Office
- Retail
- Industrial-Warehouse-Distribution
- Park/Open Space
- Residential/Office
- Residential/Office/Retail
- Office/Retail
- Office/Industrial-Warehouse-Distribution
- Office/Retail/Industrial-Warehouse-Distribution

- Activity Center
- New Street\*
- Plan Area Boundary
- 100 Year Floodplain

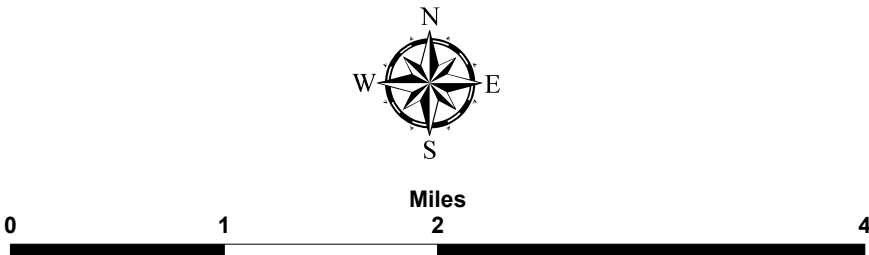
**Greenways**

- Developed
- Proposed

\* Note: The location of the proposed streets is conceptual. Alternative locations, consistent with the intent of the proposed network, will also be considered. Additional streets may be requested to facilitate improved network and connectivity.

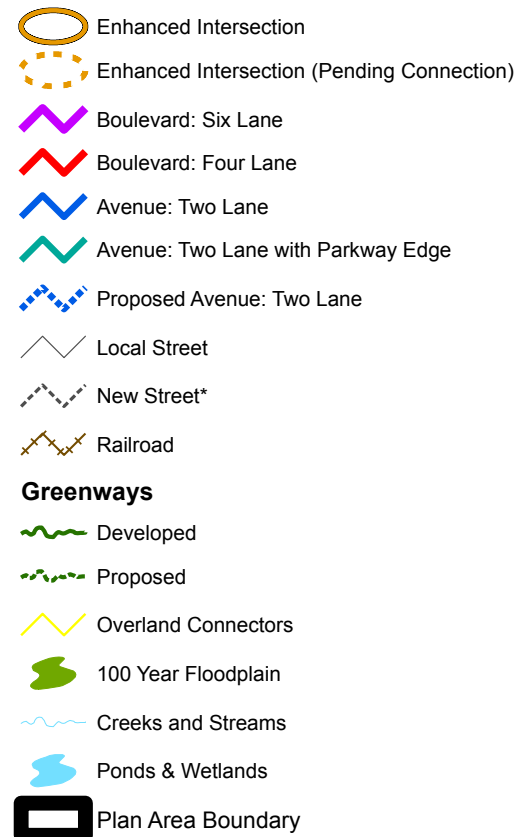


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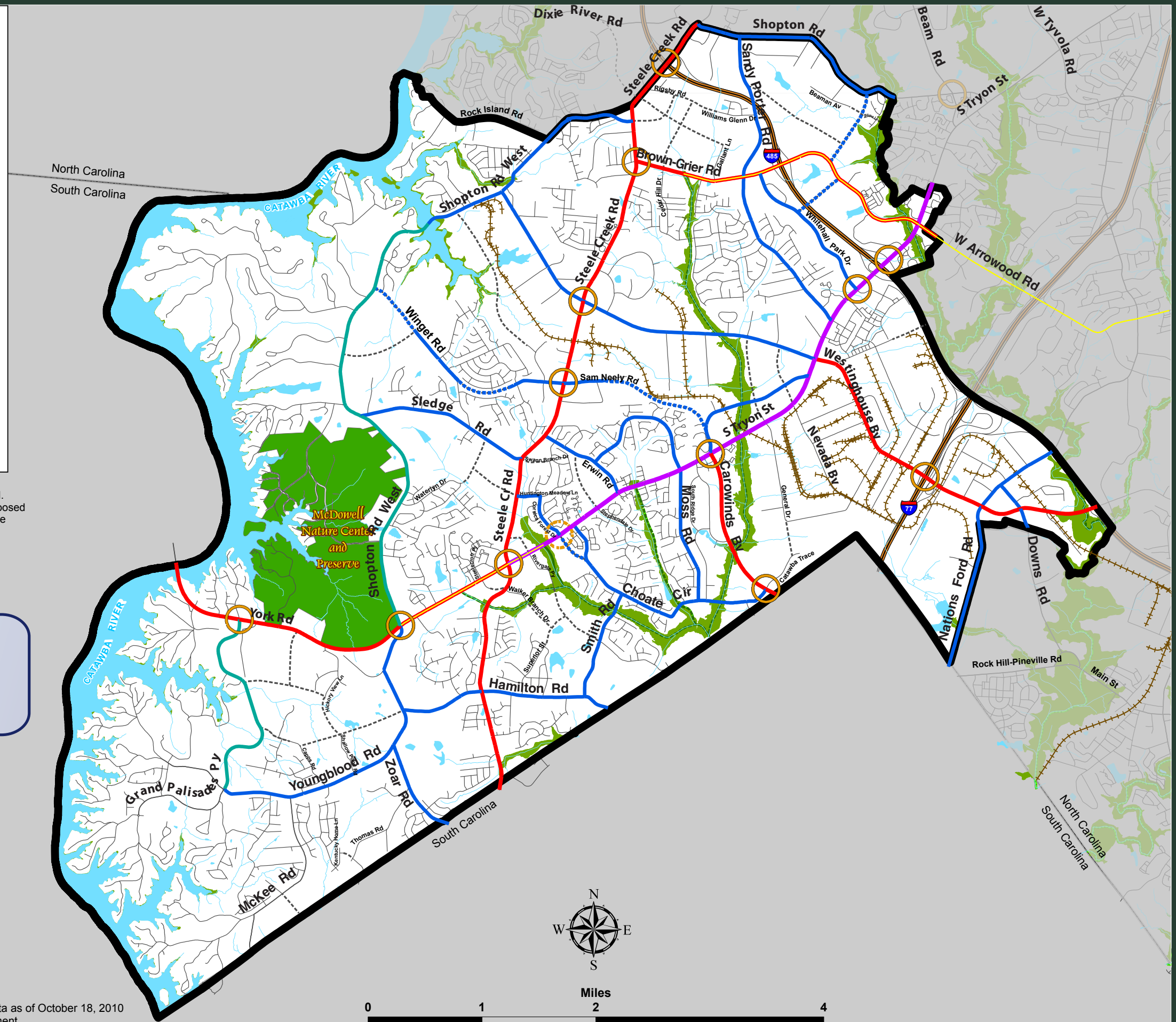


# Steele Creek Area Plan - Recommended Future Transportation Network



\* Note: The location of the proposed streets is conceptual. Alternative locations, consistent with the intent of the proposed network, will also be considered. Additional streets may be requested to facilitate improved network and connectivity.

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