

SECTION THREE:
Land Use and Development



BENCHMARK INCORPORATED

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Planning, Community Development and Management

*Kannapolis, NC / Kinston, NC / Columbia, SC
209 Centergrove Road PO Box 430 Kannapolis, NC 28083
(704) 933-5990*

While Catawba County is certainly becoming more developed and more ‘urban’ in nature, it still consists of a large amount of rural and farm lands. As described in the Environmental Conditions Section of this Report, Catawba County can claim more than 20,000 acres of cropland and more than 115,000 acres of timberland (early 1990's estimates). These two non-urban uses represent approximately 210 square miles; roughly half of the County. Furthermore, nearly half of the County’s population is now located within incorporated areas. These numbers all seem to paint a picture of a changing County; one with a generous amount of rural, undisturbed land and at the same time one with a number of emerging centers of human activity. This section attempts to create a general land use inventory and begins to explore the land use trends that are developing in specific areas of the County.

Trends in the Northeast Planning Area

The Northeast Planning Area, commonly referred to as Oxford, is projected to be one of the fastest growing areas of the County in coming years. Currently, most of this area’s industrial and commercial development is along I-40 and Highway 70 from Highway 16 North in Conover to Claremont. The eastern side of Conover consists of perhaps the largest concentration of industry in Catawba County. Portions of Claremont are beginning to emerge as major industrial areas as well. Residential development in this area is mostly concentrated in and around Conover and Claremont with growing developments (mostly along Rock Barn Road) outside of the cities. Extension of water service by the City of Conover along Highway 16 North will help clear the way for continued residential development in this area. The Catawba River serves as the northern and eastern boundary of this area. Many parts of this section of the River are not conducive to the type of water craft activities that parts to the south experience. However, more passive recreational opportunities could abound here. In fact, the County’s first Park - Riverbend - is located in this area off Highway 16 along the Catawba River.

Trends in the North-Central Planning Area

This area is influenced primarily to the south by Conover. Hickory has grown to the very edges of this Planning Area. Conover serves parts of this area with water and/or sewer services thus facilitating much of the extra-urban growth that has occurred here. Outside of Conover, the area includes concentrations of small residential subdivisions along Houston Mill Road, Section House Road and the northern part of Springs Road. Most of the industrial development here is in the western portions of Conover. Like the Northeast Planning Area, the North-Central Area is still largely undeveloped.

Trends in the St. Stephens Planning Area

This area is comprised of established, primarily middle-class, single-family neighborhoods with a commercial spine (Springs Road) consisting of mostly older business establishments that target the immediate surrounding neighborhoods. Despite the fact that the St. Stephens area includes a significant residential population that is growing, the area has yet to experience the rapid new commercial investment that is found along Highway 127 and Highway 70 in Hickory. With the recently announced Wal-Mart at Springs Road and Kool Park Road, this trend may be changing.

Significant parts of this area are served with municipal services and are already incorporated into the City of Hickory. This annexation trend is likely to continue as the growth-driven demand for municipal services continues. Even though this is one of the more densely populated of the County planning areas, plenty of vacant land still exists for continued growth.

There is limited industrial development that exists in this Planning Area. Most of it is along and around Highland Avenue.

Trends in the Hickory Urban Area

Much of the Hickory Urban Area is near build-out; that is, most of the land is either built-upon or is unsuitable for building. The exception to this is found in northwest Hickory (census tract 103) where some land still exists and is available for new development. The land use pattern found in Hickory is one of large scale residential development in both the northeast and northwest quadrants. These residential areas are split by heavy commercial development along Highway 127 (north of downtown) and Highway 70 (east and west) and the Downtown/Union Square area. Most of the City's industrial development is located in the southwestern and southeastern portion of the City along Highland Avenue and Tate Boulevard and along US Highway 321 North.

Trends in the East Newton Planning Area

The East Newton Planning Area is the industrial development side of the City of Newton and its environs. Most of the industrial development has occurred along the east-west railroad tracks and northward towards Conover to Highway 70. Most of the residential development has occurred to the south of the railroad tracks. Like the Hickory Urban Area, much of this planning area is nearly built-out. Highway 16 serves as a mixed-use dividing line between the East and West Newton planning areas. Approximately one-half of this area is incorporated, mostly by Newton and partly by Conover.

Trends in the West Newton Planning Area

Similar to East Newton, this area is mostly built-out. Highway 16 serves as a spine between the East Newton and West Newton Planning Areas. Highway 16 consists of a mixture of residential, commercial and limited industrial development, none of it large in scale. Highway 321 Business is located here and is mostly commercial on the northern end near Highway 70 and largely office and institutional to the south near Highway 10 (County Government Center, County Justice Center). The majority of the land here is devoted to older, single family residential homes. Most of the land in this Planning Area is incorporated by the City of Newton.

Trends in the West-Central Planning Area

This area is a relatively small planning area with a high growth center around the northern part of the Mountain View community. The area stretches from Robinson Road in the east to the western County line; and from Highway 70 in the north to Bethel Church Road in the south. The northern portion of the new US 321 Freeway is located here and will have tremendous development influence. This area includes the River Road interchange and the planned Sandy Ford interchange. The I-40/321/127 interchange provides the Mountain View community and surrounding land with good accessibility to all parts of the County and beyond. The southern portions of Hickory and Long View in this Planning Area represent a high growth area for both municipalities: Long View southward to I-40 and Hickory towards the Mountain View community. The Town of Brookford is also located here. This mill town has changed very little over time. However, the new freeway will disrupt portions of the Town and may even bring some limited development pressures that have never been seen before.

With the exception of Highway 70, most of the development patterns here are limited to older, established single-family residential neighborhoods with a growing amount of convenience commercial development to serve them. Highway 70 is heavily developed with mostly automobile-oriented strip commercial development.

Trends in the Southwest Planning Area

This area includes the communities of Propst Crossroads, Cooksville, Plateau and Blackburn. It also includes some of the Mountain View Community south of Bethel Church Road including the neighborhoods of Deerfield and Homestead. The area is largely low density residential or rural with only a small amount of commercial development at some of the crossroad communities. The trend is for continued low density residential except in the Mountain View community where future municipal services may facilitate new residential growth. There are no incorporated areas in this Planning Area.

Trends in the South-Central Planning Area

This area contains all of the new US 321 Freeway south of Sandy Ford Road and contains the Highway 10 and the Startown Road interchanges. These two interchanges represent the most immediate growth potential. Virtually all of the land in the southern half of this planning area, including the Freeway, is undeveloped or is farmland or timberland. The only significant activity in the southern portion of the area is the Blackburn Landfill. The general areas of influence here involve Newton growing to the west along Highway 10, Maiden growing to the northwest and west towards the Startown Road interchange with US 321 and Hickory growing southward along Startown Road. Conover is essentially blocked by Hickory and Newton from annexing any of this area. A few years ago, the City of Newton annexed a significant portion of the Startown Community. In recent years, the Town of Maiden has grown northward along Hwy. 321 Business and westward along West Maiden Road to the new 321 Freeway interchange at Startown Rd.

The northern portions of the South-Central Planning Area has developed similarly to the Mountain View and St. Stephens communities with older, moderate density residential neighborhoods and a scattering of convenience commercial opportunities. Highway 70 in this Planning Area has a mixture of smaller commercial establishments and large commercial and industrial developments. Many relatively large tracts of land still exist along this stretch of Highway 70.

Trends in the East-Central Planning Area

The East-Central Planning Area is located to the east of Newton and Conover, south of Highway 70 and north of Highway 16 South. This area is significant influenced by the City of Newton and to a lesser degree by Conover. However, it is primarily an area that includes the industrial strip along Highway 70 between Conover and Claremont. Claremont's ever increasing tax base is evident in this Planning Area. The residential development is almost exclusively segregated to the northern part of this area (around Highway 10 and north to Highway 70). Murray's Mill is located in this area as are the communities of Balls Creek, Witherspoon Crossroads and parts of Bandys. Also found here are the residential developments of Shangri-La and Shamrock Park. The old County landfill is located in this area.

Trends in the South Planning Area

Heavily influenced by Maiden in the west, this area lies southwest of Highway 16 South and includes all of the southwest side of Highway 16 South from Highway 150 to the Newton City limits. It is bounded in the west by Highway 321 Business which splits the Town of Maiden in half. The Hwy. 321 Business corridor between Maiden and Newton is home to a number of industrial operations. Highway 16 South includes mostly older residential homes

with driveway access to the highway and some commercial nodes at major crossroads. Most of the land in this area is lower density residential (several acres per home). There are virtually no concentrated higher density residential subdivisions in this area. In addition to Maiden, the area includes the communities of Drums Crossroads, Providence Mill, and Olivers Crossroads.

Trends in the Southeast Planning Area

Far and away the largest of the designated County Planning Areas, the Southeast is also one of the fastest growing, one of the least connected to the rest of the County and the one with the likelihood for the most growth-related issues to be dealt with. This planning area could not be any more diverse. The area surrounding the Town of Catawba is very rural in nature but has some development potential along Highway 70 and Highway 10. The rest of the Planning Area (except the land adjacent to Lake Norman) is largely undeveloped. Roads such as Sherrills Ford Road, Little Mountain Road and Hopewell Church Road are virtually untapped for development. Conversely, land around the Lake is becoming very developed at densities similar to some urban areas.

The influences of Lake Norman are not to be underestimated. Rapid growth is beginning to occur here without a single municipal service available. The road network that has been created by land developers along both sides of Highway 150 is extensive. Due to a lack of public sewer service, development here is often limited to half acre lots or greater. However, for an unincorporated place the density is still very high in certain areas around the Lake. The vast majority of the Southeast Planning Area's population likely lives within a mile of Lake Norman or the Catawba River.

Island Point Road is of particular concern when exploring land use issues. This approximately three mile long road has huge development potential with only one way in and out. As this area becomes developed with more and more residences, traffic will become more burdensome. With the Southeast area's strong ties to employment and entertainment in Charlotte, peak hour traffic on this four mile dead-end road will likely need to be remedied over time. Brawley School Road in Iredell County poses a similar, but much more ominous threat. Density limitations have been placed on that road to address these same issues.

While no specific data exists to determine commuting patterns and shopping habits in this area, general discussions with residents suggest that Sherrills Ford/Lake Norman residents shop and are entertained mostly in Mooresville and northern Mecklenburg County and work in and around Charlotte. For good schools, less congestion and somewhat less expensive waterfront living, the 45 minute to one-hour commute appears to be worth it for a growing number of people. This trend is not apt to change any time soon.

Construction Activity

Since 1990 Catawba County has experienced an increase in the overall number and value of building permits issued. One area of increase is new residential development, showing a significant growth trend in the County. The total number of permits issued for all development in 1990 was 1,143 and grew by more than 50% to 1,797 in FY 1996. The largest increase was in FY 1996, when the total was up 11% over FY 1995. This corresponds with the overall upswing in permit activity in 1996, the highest since 1990. *(Please note that the building permit information in this section does not include the City of Hickory or its planning jurisdiction. The City has its own Building Inspections Dept. which has permitting data at the tract level available only for the past two years.)*

With 1992, 1994, and 1995 as exceptions, the building permit value rose somewhat gradually (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). The largest increase was in 1994 when the value of all permits was up over 56% from the previous year. This was due to substantial increases in the value of residential permits (30.52%), commercial and industrial permits (128.17%) and church and school permits (101.1%). Notwithstanding 1992 (which experienced a 30.84% increase) and 1994, the value of permits generally rose between four and fifteen percent. The only significant decrease in building permit values occurred in 1995 after extremely high growth in 1994. The resulting decrease was 31%. This relatively low year also contributed to a high growth rate in 1996 (33%).

Table 3.1
Building Permit Value (in millions), Catawba County, 1990-1994*

Permit Type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Residential	\$30.62	\$31.30	\$35.38	\$55.98	\$73.08
Commercial & Industrial	\$17.29	\$17.07	\$34.62	\$15.12	\$34.50
Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Totals	\$52.62	\$57.75	\$75.56	\$78.83	\$123.48

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. * Until 1994 building permits were compiled by calendar year.

Table 3.2
Building Permit Value (in millions), Catawba County, FY 1994 - FY 1997*

Permit Type	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Residential	\$67.34	\$64.29	\$64.83	\$76.44
Commercial	n/a	\$6.52	\$17.18	\$13.78
Industrial	n/a	\$3.31	\$29.07	\$9.07
Total	\$107.51	\$87.20	\$129.27	\$124.31

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. *Since FY 1994 building permits have been compiled by fiscal year. "n/a" indicates data was not available during these years.

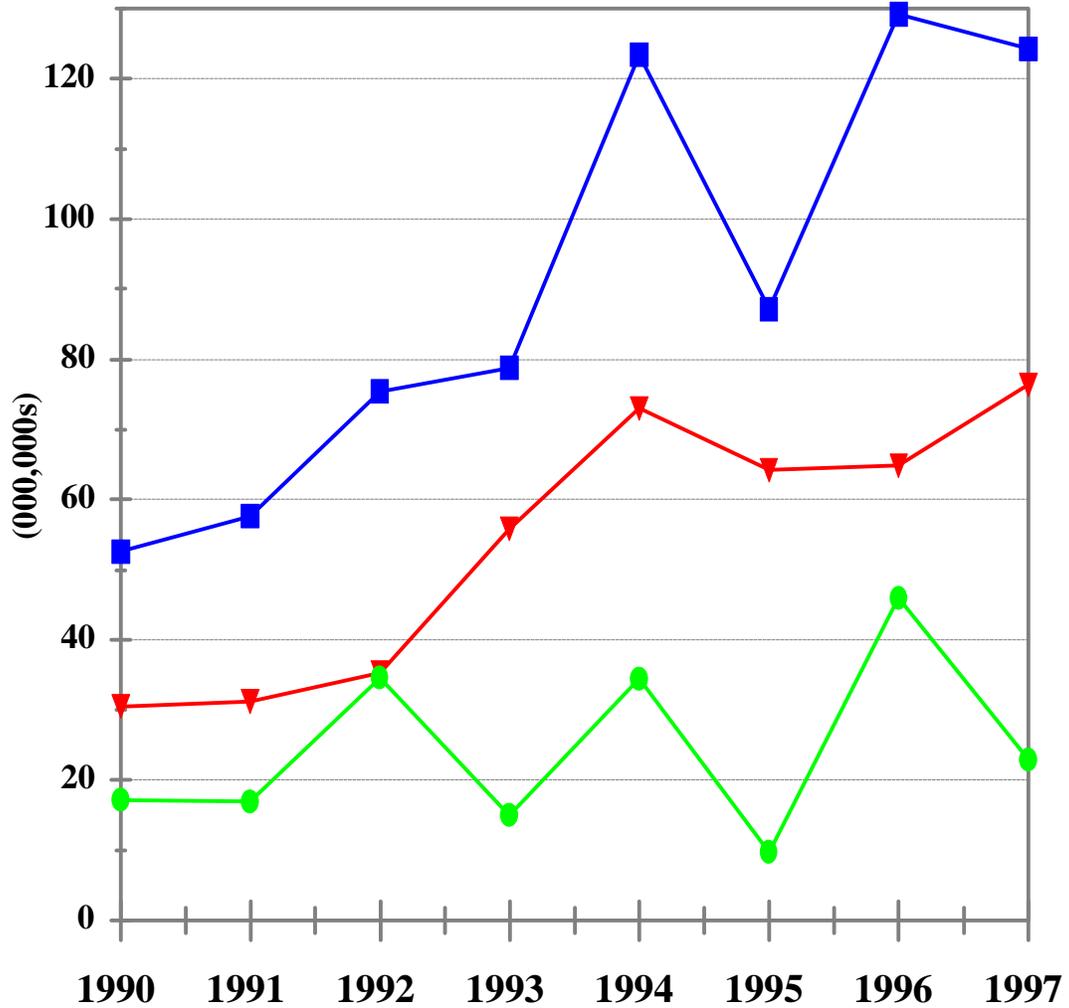
For comparison purposes the graph attached to the preceding two tables reflects the calendar year 1994. The inspections department's change from calendar year to fiscal year in 1994 creates an analysis problem. To get a totally accurate number for 1994 it is necessary to reference either of the associated tables. However, for depicting the overall development pattern we have included the calendar year only. This is true for each of the graphs related to the tables in this section.

Other than new residential permits, the County does not track new development individually. Commercial, industrial, school, and church permits are all lumped together as new and existing. Only new residential permits are broken down from overall residential permits and can actually show growth trends. The overall number of permits issued for new stick-built residential construction during the 1990-1998 time span grew by 56%. The total number issued in 1998 was 608, up from 390 in 1990. The average growth rate per year was 8.5% with the highest growth occurring in 1996 (25%). New residential development contributed to around 35% of the total permit activity between 1990 and 1998. Therefore, new development had a higher than average effect on the permit trends for this period.

While the number of new stick-built homes was on the upswing, manufactured home permits also grew from 352 in 1993 to a high of 740 in FY 95 and 650 in 1998 (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). The highest amount of manufactured home permitting growth occurred between 1993 and 1994. During this year the number of manufactured homes increased by 292 units or 83%. This was the point at which the number of manufactured home permits issued surpassed those of stick-built structures. When comparing manufactured home and stick built home permitting data, it should be understood that the number of mobile home permits may be skewed somewhat by relocations and upgrades.

Graph 3.1

Building Permit Value 1990-1997



—▼— Residential

—●— Commercial & Industrial

—■— Total

Table 3.3
Residential Building Permits, Catawba County, 1990-1994*.

Permit Type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Stick-Built Residential	390	412	476	510	486
Manufactured Homes	n/a	n/a	n/a	352	644

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. * Until 1994 building permit information was compiled each calendar year. "n/a" indicates data was not available during these years.

Table 3.4
Residential Building Permits, Catawba County, 1994-1997*.

Permit Type	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Stick-Built Residential	449	560	662	608
Manufactured Homes	740	720	598	650

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. *Starting in 1994 building permit information has been compiled each fiscal year (was compiled both ways in 1994).

As is typical, commercial and industrial growth was somewhat sporadic during this time. Unfortunately, permit information for the years before 1996 was not broken down into the two uses, making analysis somewhat incomplete. However, the number of permits issued each year for commercial and industrial buildings did increase overall since 1990 by 64% or by an average growth rate of 10.6% (see Tables 3.5 and 3.6). The number of commercial and industrial permits fluctuated from a low in 1991 of 102 and a high in FY 1998 of 234. Commercial and industrial permits comprised between 9% and 13% of the total permits issued throughout this nine year period.

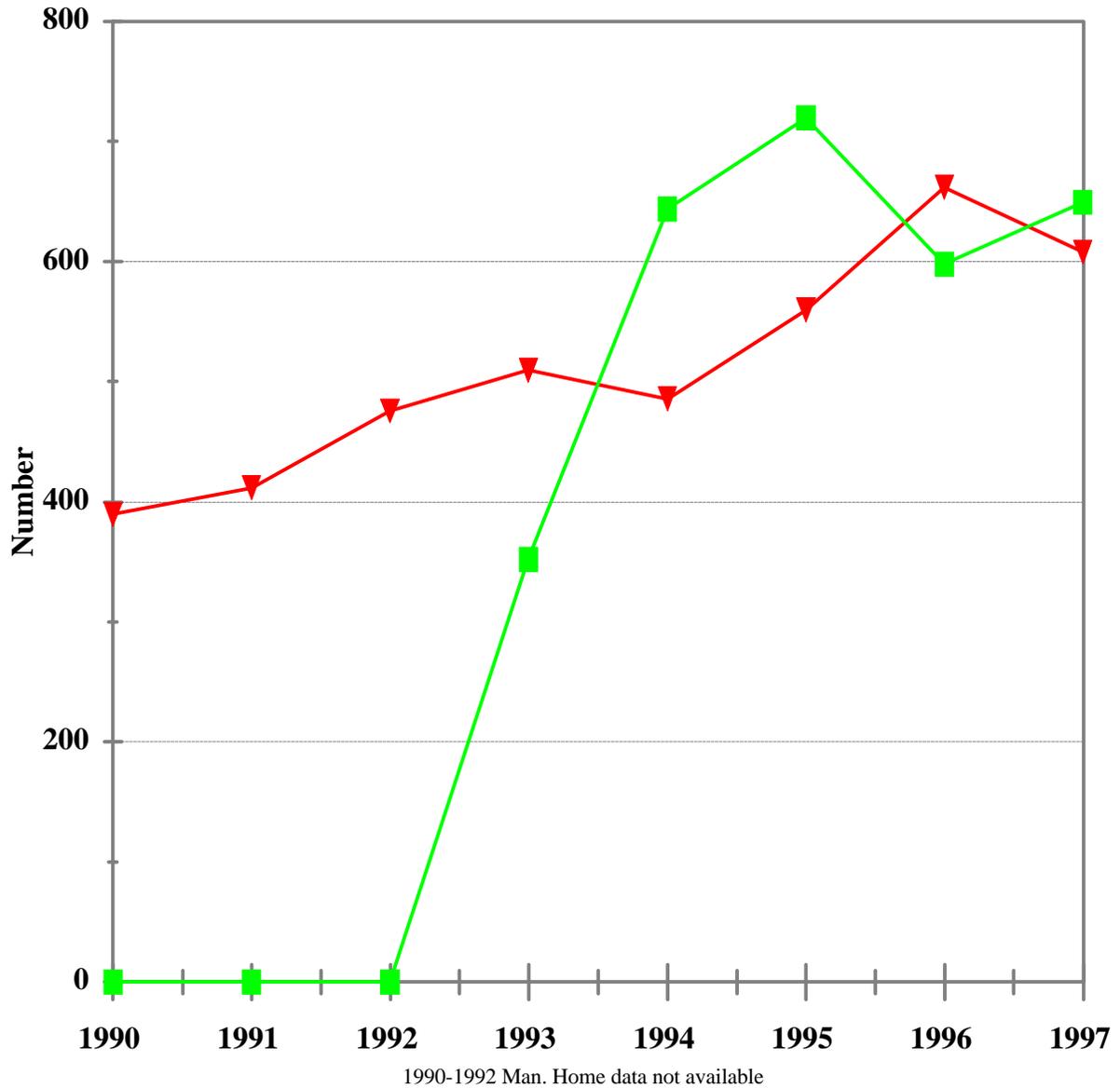
Table 3.5
Building Permits by Use, Catawba County, 1990-1994*.

Permit Type	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Residential (Total)	998	1,012	1,050	1,090	1,122
New Residential (Stick-Built)	390	412	476	510	486
Commercial & Industrial**	123	102	112	124	191
Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	1,143	1,154	1,280	1,413	1,485

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. * Until 1994 building permit information was compiled each calendar year. "n/a" indicates data was not available during these years.

Graph 3.2

Residential Permits by Type 1990-1997



▼ Stick-Built

■ Manufactured Homes

Table 3.6
Building Permits by Use, Catawba County, 1994-1997*

Permit Type	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Residential (Total)	1,056	1,208	1,216	1,364
New Residential (Stick-Built)	449	560	662	608
Commercial**	n/a	77	174	192
Industrial	n/a	13	46	42
Total	1,412	1,564	1,689	1,797

Source: Catawba County Inspections Department. * Until 1994 building permit information was compiled each calendar year. ** Until 1995-1996 commercial and industrial permits were combined. "n/a" indicates data was not available during these years.

Residential development activity in Catawba County has been rapidly increasing since 1991. During years 1991 and 1992, there were no clear residential growth areas outside of the Hickory Urban Area. Since 1992, most of the residential development has been in St. Stephens, West Newton and the Southeast Planning Area. From 1995 to 1996 St. Stephens experienced a massive 681% increase in permitted residential dwelling units. No other area has had such dramatic growth. Over the past two years (1996-97), the St. Stephens, North-Central and Northeast Planning Areas have collectively accounted for more than forty (40) percent of all new residential dwellings. These locational growth trends are described in more detail in the Population and Demographics Section.

Zoning and Subdivision Activity

Not surprising, similar to building activity, land development activity has also been increasing over the past several years. The number of major subdivisions approved by the Planning Board has steadily increased since 1991. Collectively the increase in the number of approved subdivision lots from 1991 to 1997 has been over 150%. Additionally, each year close to 200 minor subdivisions have been approved (minor subdivisions have no new street construction or are lots created for family members).

Table 3.7 follows graph.

Graph 3.3
Building Permits by Use

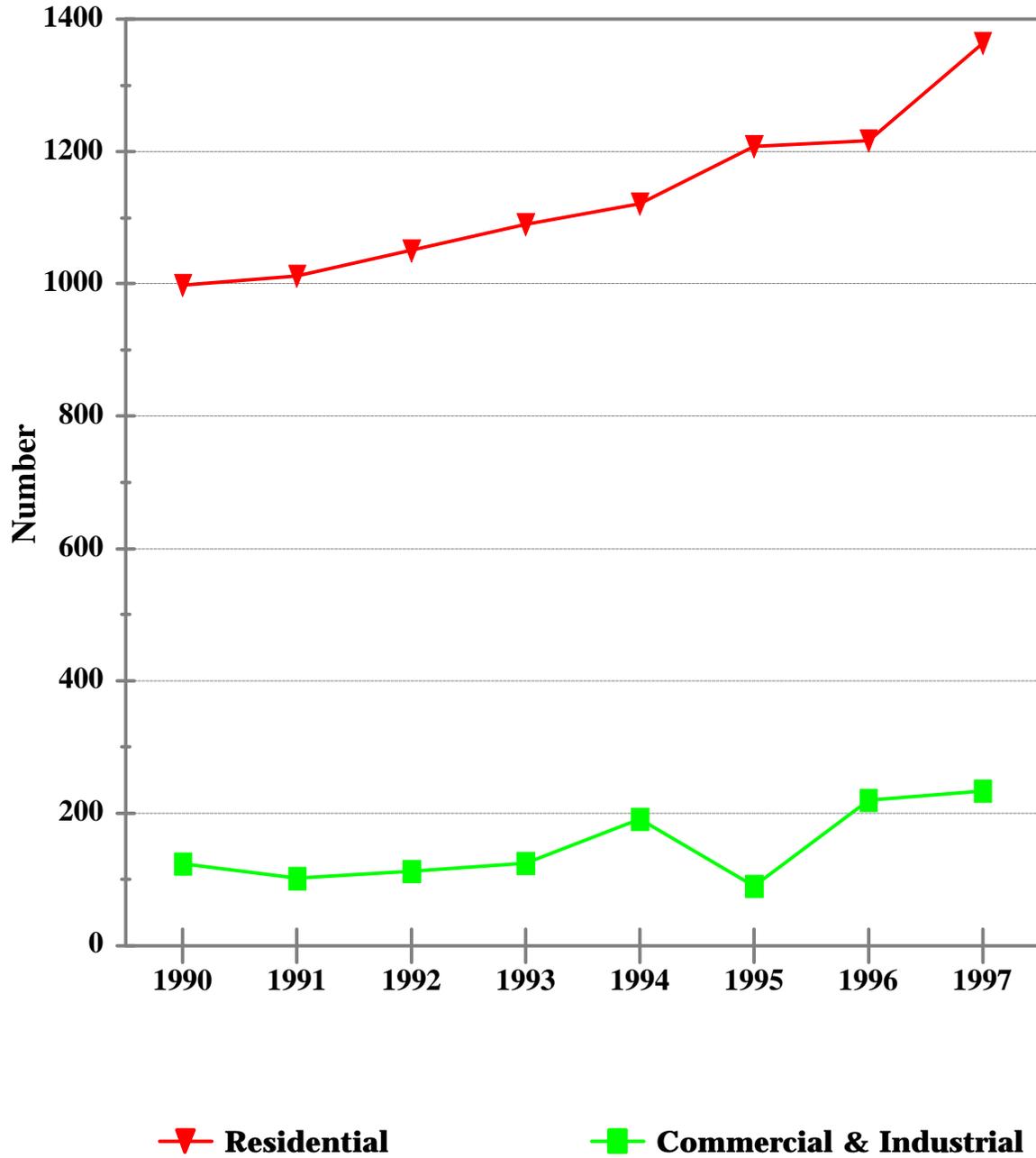


Table 3.7
Major Subdivisions Approved, Catawba County, 1991-1997*

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of Subdivisions Approved*	15	30	21	33	26	33	34	29
Lots Approved	264	332	434	423	347	637	866	720
Percent Increase in Lots	n/a	25.8%	30.7%	-2.5%	-18.0%	83.6%	36.0%	-20.2%

Source: Catawba County Planning and Zoning Department *Final major subdivisions only.

Corresponding to the strong subdivision activity, well over 1,000 zoning compliance permits were issued each year since 1991. The majority of the activity is of course single family permits: stick built and mobile homes. Historically (at least as far back as the data exists) more zoning permits for mobile homes have been issued year to year than stick-built homes. However, in 1997, for the first time this decade, more stick-built home zoning permits were issued in Catawba County than mobile home zoning permits. That is a significant change and is partly due to tougher dimensional and appearance standards for mobile homes that have been adopted by the County. However, the trend again reversed itself slightly in 1998.

Table 3.8
Zoning Permit Activity, Selected Categories, Catawba County, 1991-1997*

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Stick Built Homes	422	408	450	504	397	464	541	548
Single-wide Mobile Homes	393	368	423	510	488	415	243	270
Double-wide + Mobile Homes	122	171	209	238	249	272	291	320
Non-Residential	36	33	53	68	45	55	46	57

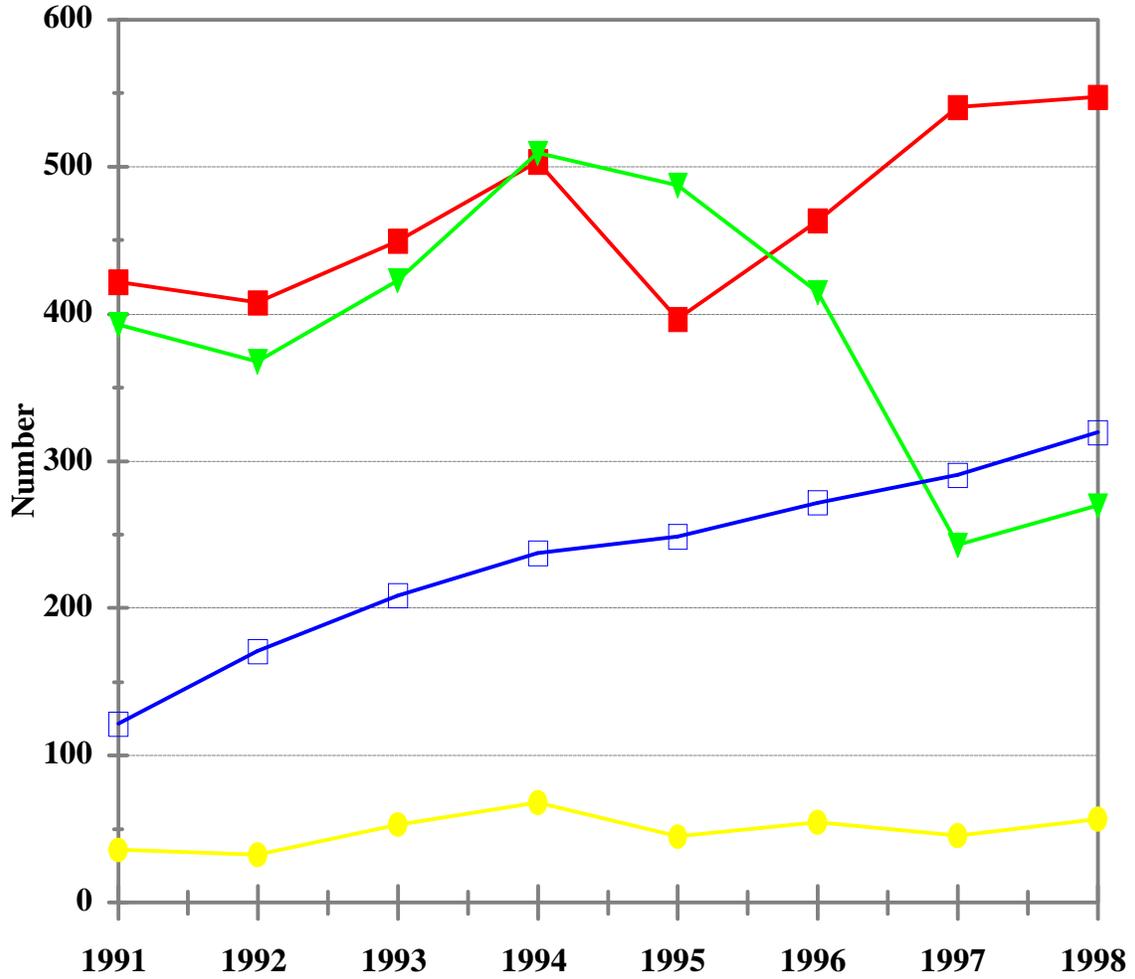
Source: Catawba County Planning and Zoning Department. *Does not include municipalities

Median New Home Prices and Affordable Housing

With the recent economic gains experienced by North Carolina as a whole it is to be expected that housing prices should rise also. This has been the case in many North Carolina counties, including Catawba. However, the challenge has been to keep a fair share of the market in the “affordable” range. Factors such as lower interest rates and a strong local and State economy have allowed many individuals to purchase newer, and in many cases, more expensive homes.

Graph 3.4

Selected Categories, 1991-1998



Source: Catawba Co. Planning Dept.

- Stick Built
- ▼ Single Wide Mobile Homes
- Multi-Sectioned Mobile Homes
- Non-Residential

However the need for affordable housing is evident based on Catawba County’s high number of manufacturing jobs and the overall aging of the County’s population.

Considering the aforementioned issues and the local housing demand, a home priced between \$90,000 and \$110,000 is considered affordable. This designation includes condominiums, townhomes, and modulars, which have historically been priced below traditional detached single family homes. When considering the median new home sales price, these newer and generally less expensive options have helped to lower otherwise skyrocketing single-family home prices back down to earth. However, after reviewing the following table it is apparent that affordable housing is beginning to be replaced in many areas by the construction of higher priced homes.

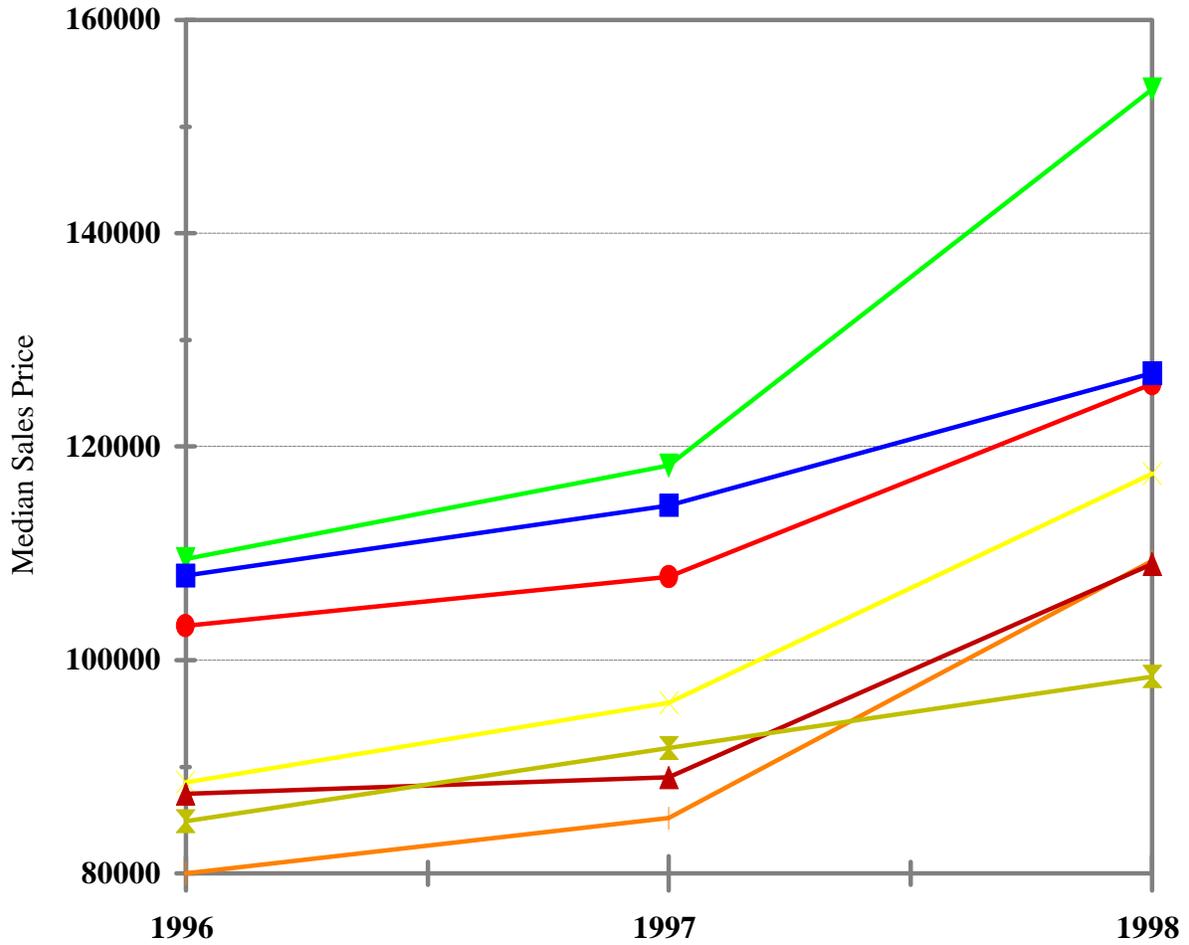
Table 3.9
Median Home Prices for New Construction

County	1996	1997	1998	97-98 Change
Catawba	103,190*	107,795*	125,900	16.7%
Union	109,500	118,234	153,500	29.8%
Cabarrus	107,950	114,500	126,900	10.8%
Iredell	88,575	96,000	117,500	22.3%
Lincoln	80,000	85,200	109,325	28.3%
Gaston	87,450	89,000	109,000	22.4%
Rowan	84,900	91,800	98,500	7.2%

Source: Carolina Multiple Listing Services and Catawba Valley Multiple Listing Services. *Includes Caldwell & Alexander County Sales Prices

The previous table shows that Catawba County is somewhat in line with the median new home sales prices of other counties in the region. However, one misleading aspect of the previous table is that the Catawba County Multiple Listing Service has historically included Caldwell and Alexander Counties when compiling regional statistics. Therefore, the housing prices for Catawba County alone in 1996 and 1997 would likely have been higher and the percentage of change between 1997 and 1998 would likely have been less if those true numbers had been compiled. However, the information does show that although a typical new home built in Catawba County is not considered affordable, new housing prices are not increasing at the higher rate of some of the other counties in the area. When taking into consideration the overall wealth index, and the state of the local economy Catawba County may be able to absorb a median home sales increase better than other counties such as Rowan or Iredell.

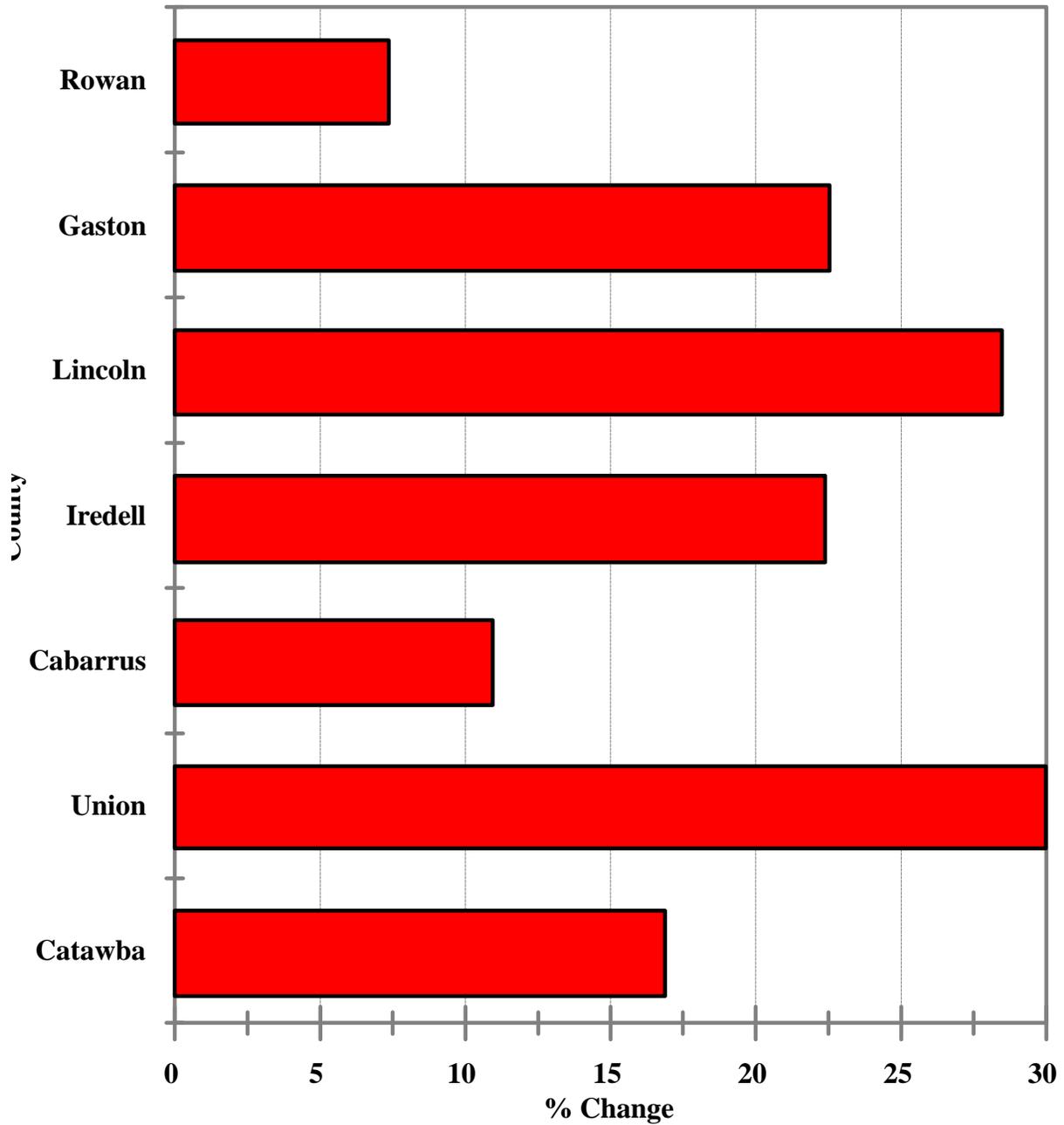
Graph 3.5 Median New Home Prices



- Catawba
- ▼ Union
- Cabarrus
- ✕ Iredell
- + Lincoln
- ▲ Gaston
- ✕ Rowan

Graph 3.6

97-98 % New Home Price Change



Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance provides for the division of the County's planning jurisdiction into nine (9) *Primary Zoning Districts* with the following designations and purposes:

- *R-1 Residential District.* The R-1 District is intended to accommodate low-intensity single-family residential development and the necessary governmental and other support facilities necessary for sound suburban development. The R-1 District shall normally be located adjacent to similar classifications to complement those designations. Manufactured homes and multi-family developments are prohibited in this district. The R-1 District may include bona fide farms.
- *R-2 Residential District.* The R-2 District is intended to accommodate low-density residential development, agriculture, and the necessary governmental and other support services in the more rural portions of Catawba County. All types of manufactured homes and multi-family developments are permitted in this district. The R-2 District may include bona fide farms.
- *R-3 Residential District.* The R-3 District is intended to accommodate a mix of residential uses, plus the necessary governmental and other support services required for sound development. Limited types of manufactured homes and all multi-family developments are permitted in this district. The R-3 District may include bona fide farms.
- *O-I Office and Institutional District.* The O-I District is intended to provide a transition zone between residential and commercial or industrial uses and districts. It is also intended to accommodate a mixture of moderate-density residential, office and institutional uses in appropriate locations in the county. Access to the sites from minor residential streets shall be discouraged.
- *C-1 Commercial District.* The C-1 District is intended to provide land for the sale of convenience goods and limited personal services to residents of the immediate neighborhood. These districts shall be located at intervals of at least one mile along arterials and collector streets preferably at intersections.
- *C-2 Commercial District.* The C-2 District is intended to provide land for the provision of convenience shops and specialty retail goods and business and personal services to the traveling public and the residents neighborhoods. The C-2 District shall be located with direct access to arterial and collector streets. Proposals for larger sites offering a greater amount of goods and services shall use the planned development

approach contained in section 515.200 et seq.

- *C-3 Commercial District.* The C-3 District is intended to recognize those uses which developed under previous county land use regulations, but which are not appropriate to the standards under these new regulations. This classification shall not be extended from the locations designated on the official zoning atlas nor shall new C-3 areas be designated.
- *E-1 Light Manufacturing District.* The E-1 District is intended to provide for the development of areas devoted to light manufacturing, processing and assembly uses, warehousing, distribution and servicing enterprises and limited office activities controlled by performance standards to limit the effect of such uses on uses within the district and in adjacent districts.
- *E-2 Intensive Manufacturing District.* The E-2 District is intended to provide areas for intensive manufacturing, processing and assembly uses, controlled by performance standards to limit the effect of such uses on adjacent districts.

In addition to the nine (9) primary zoning districts, the Zoning Ordinance provides for the following *Planned and Special Districts* with the following designations and purposes:

- *Planned Development Districts.* Within districts now existing or which may hereafter be created, it is intended to permit establishment of new Planned Development (PD) Districts for specialized purposes where tracts, suitable in location, area, and character for the uses and structures proposed, are to be planned and developed on a unified basis. Suitability of tracts for the development proposed shall be determined primarily by reference to the adopted land use plan and to the performance standards of the separate categories of planned developments with due consideration given to the existing and prospective character of surrounding development.

The following Planned Development Districts are provided:

PD-H Planned Development - Housing Districts

PD-SC Planned Development - Shopping Center Districts

PD-O-I Planned Development - Office and Institutional Districts

PD-MU Planned Development - Mixed Use Districts

PD-IP Planned Development - Industrial Park Districts

- *Historic Districts.* The historic districts of the County, hereinafter referred to as the ‘districts,’ are among the most valued and important assets of the County. They are established for the purpose of protecting and conserving the heritage of the County and the State; for the purpose of safeguarding the character and heritage of the districts by preserving the individual districts as a whole and any individual property herein that embodies important elements of its social, economic, cultural, political or architectural history; for the purpose of promoting the conservation of such districts for the education, pleasure and enrichment of residents of the districts, the County and the State as a whole; for the purpose of fostering civic beauty; and for the purpose of stabilizing and enhancing property values throughout the districts, thus contributing to the improvement of the general health and welfare of the citizens of the County and the residents of the districts. No Historic District is currently applied anywhere in the County.

- *Special Districts.* It is the intent of the Zoning regulations to permit creation of special districts:
 - (1) In general areas officially designated as having special and substantial interest in protection of existing or proposed character, or of principal views of, from or through the areas;

 - (2) Surrounding individual buildings or grounds where there is special and substantial interest in protecting such buildings and their visual environment; or

 - (3) In other cases where special and substantial interest required modification of otherwise applicable zoning regulations, or repeals and replacement of such regulations, for the accomplishment of the special purposes for which the special district is established.

The following Special Districts are provided:

- Lake Norman Surface Water District
- Watershed Protection District
- Mountain Protection District
- Catawba River Corridor District
- 321-Economic Development District

In the Zoning Ordinance, each primary zoning district has it’s own list of uses that corresponds to the purposes of the districts. Principal uses are either ‘permitted uses’ or ‘special uses’ permitted only on application to the Board of Adjustment. Planned, Historic, and Special Districts generally modify the list of permitted uses or impose greater restrictions or standards. Maximum residential densities for dwelling units per acre of land permitted in the four (4) principal zoning districts that permit dwellings are as follows:

Table 3.10
Minimum Lot Size by Zoning District

Utility Availability	R-1	R-2	R-3	O&I
Without both Public Water and Sewer	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
With one utility	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
With two utilities	12,500	12,500	10,000	10,000

Source: Catawba County Zoning Ordinance. Note: These numbers reflect one dwelling unit per lot.

Maximum lot coverage and maximum building height is 30 percent and 35 feet, respectively, in each of the districts. For the non-residential primary zoning districts, the following intensity of development standards apply (see Table 3.11):

Table on Following Page

**Table 3.11
Selected Non-Residential Dimensional Standards**

District	Min. Lot Area (in sq. feet)	Max. Floor Area Ratio	Max. Height (in feet)
C-1	20,000	1:5	35
C-2	40,000	1:3	50
C-3	20,000	1:3	35
E-1	40,000	1:3	45
E-2	60,000	1:2.5	45

Source: Catawba County Zoning Ordinance.

Beyond the general development standards, the Zoning Ordinance provides appearance criteria for manufactured homes, supplemental regulations for certain other uses and specific minimum development standards for 28 categories of special uses. The Ordinance also has development standards for off-street parking and a requirement for buffers and screening between adjacent land uses which are dissimilar in character.

Subdivision Ordinance

The Subdivision Ordinance regulates the division of land throughout the County’s jurisdiction. Development styles and use standards are dictated by the Zoning Ordinance. Except for some exceptions, public streets are required and the streets have to be paved to NCDOT standards. Public water and sewer are required where available and feasible for extension. Minor subdivisions may be approved by the County Planner whereas major subdivisions are subject to review and approved by a Subdivision Review Board.

Prior to final plat approval, all required improvements shall have been completed or their installation guaranteed by a financial security document acceptable to the County.

Manufactured Home Park Ordinance

The County has a Manufactured Home Park Ordinance which applies within its jurisdiction and which operates in conjunction with the Zoning Ordinance. Manufactured Home Parks are permitted as a Special Use in the R-2 Residential District and are regulated by the Manufactured Home Park Ordinance. Parks are required to have a minimum of five (5) acres in order to develop. Where public water and sewer are available the minimum individual space size is 5,500 square feet. Otherwise the minimum space size is 12,000 square feet. A community or public water system is required and ten percent (10%) of the total park (up to two (2) acres) must be set aside for recreation areas.

Distribution of Zoning Classifications

Most of Catawba County (165,146.79 out of 183,984.27 acres) is classified with the R-2 zoning district. This district permits manufactured homes. All other districts are somewhat evenly distributed throughout the County (see graph). Rezoning requests have generally ranged between 10 and 20 per year for the past decade. They have been evenly distributed among residential and non-residential (mostly commercial) requests. Some of the largest requests have been several hundred acres in the southeastern and north-central planning areas where residents have requested rezonings from R-2 to R-1. Most of the R-2 to R-1 rezoning requests since 1991 have been granted, usually at the wishes of the surrounding property owners.

Another large rezoning was the County-initiated rezoning of about 2,000 acres in the US 321 Corridor to the 321-ED districts to promote higher quality development patterns in this corridor.

VisionQuest 2010 Applicability

The County's Comprehensive Plan, VisionQuest 2010 describes the Land Use and Development Goal as follows: *"To provide for an efficient, equitable, and compatible distribution of land uses within Catawba County and to establish innovative, efficient and equitable planning tools and appropriate planning processes to properly guide the growth of the County."* VisionQuest also lists 64 policies and 11 recommended actions specifically related to land use and development. These are addressed as part of the Growth Strategies Report.

Graph 3.7 County Zoning District Acreage

