

# 06

# MOBILITY

To provide **equitable and affordable choice** in how residents and visitors **move** around Belmont.

As the community grows, Belmont faces new transportation challenges. Our transportation vision, as defined through the Belmont Multimodal Plan, envisions a community with a multimodal transportation network that gives people the freedom to move around the City efficiently and safely by whichever mode they choose. The plan contains recommendations including roadway projects, pedestrian improvements, bicycle facilities, and transit, along with policies and actions to support that identified vision.

The Multimodal Plan was developed in alignment with the Our Belmont Comprehensive Land Use Plan to ensure comprehensive growth strategy where land use and transportation visions support one another. Representative findings and takeaways are presented in this chapter, and the full plan is incorporated into this document by reference.

Belmont’s population growth, age distribution, and economic disparities highlight the need for varied transportation services and multimodal infrastructure. The presence of younger residents and seniors calls for a more diverse transportation network that emphasizes choice, safety, and affordability.



*This icon represents “Mobility” content.*



Image: Intersection of Main Street and Catawba Street (City of Belmont)

The City’s transportation network is predominantly reliant on single-occupancy vehicles (SOV), with 70% of workers driving alone to their jobs. Public transit usage is minimal, constituting only 4.7% of commuters, indicating a potential area for enhancement in Belmont’s transportation strategy. Around 36% of households have access to only one vehicle or none at all, indicating that a significant segment of the population could benefit from increased investment in other mobility options.

Commute times for residents vary, with a significant portion of the population experiencing moderate travel durations between 15 to 34 minutes. This range indicates a relatively manageable commute for most residents but also reflects the potential for congestion and delays, particularly during peak hours. A cohesive multimodal system can encourage alternative transportation options while reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Safety concerns are highlighted by Belmont’s crash history, which includes 11 fatal injuries, 20 incapacitating injuries, and over 2,000 incidents of property damage over the latest five-year period (2019-2024). This suggests a critical need for improved traffic safety measures and infrastructure upgrades to enhance the overall safety of the transportation network.

## HEADLINE FINDINGS

The Belmont Multimodal Plan aims to create a comprehensive, forward-thinking mobility strategy that supports the City’s growth while maintaining connectivity, safety, and sustainability.

**Accommodating future growth on our network requires a focus on congestion management, safety, and increased choice.** Resources are limited, and our geography is fairly constrained, which limits the amount of roadway infrastructure that can be built. Targeted roadway improvements, along with investment in other modes of travel, will ease the burden of congestion.

**Belmont’s Downtown, neighborhoods, and natural amenities offer key destinations for the community.** The Multimodal Plan prioritizes investment in places that people most want to get to, enabling the City to make smart, defensible decisions about what to invest in next.

**Safety is a critical consideration for the City’s future transportation vision.** Implementing the Vision Zero Action Plan recommendations and the Multimodal Plan will ensure that future investments in the transportation network improve safety for all people in the community.



# GOAL 4

# MOBILITY

To provide **equitable** and **affordable choice** in how residents and visitors **move** around Belmont.

## POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

### POLICY 1. The City should promote solutions to manage existing and future congestion.

- 1.1. Project** – The City should encourage the reduction of single occupancy vehicle travel by expanding public transit, promoting carpooling and active transportation, developing park-and-ride facilities, supporting TOD, and raising public awareness.
- 1.2. Project** – The City should prioritize capital roadway improvements by upgrading key corridors, enhancing intersections, expanding capacity, and incorporating multimodal infrastructure.
- 1.3. Project** – Utilizing forecasting tools to predict future congestion, the City should identify high-impact areas, and inform proactive infrastructure planning and congestion management strategies.
- 1.4. Project** – The City should assess the viability of transit and other multimodal options along South Point Road to move people more efficiently and manage congestion.
- 1.5. Project** – The City should optimize operations and signal timing for efficient travel through key corridors.

### POLICY 2. The City should provide increased multimodal transportation solutions.

- 2.1. Project** – The City should implement existing and future multimodal plans by

developing infrastructure that supports public transit, walking, biking, and other sustainable transportation options.

- 2.2. Project** – The City should identify key corridors and destinations for bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- 2.3. Project** – Regional trail connectivity should be enhanced by linking Belmont’s local trails with surrounding networks.
- 2.4. Project** – The City should create a framework for the prioritization of space for multimodal options.

### POLICY 3. The City should improve local neighborhood connectivity to enhance access to transportation options.

- 3.1. Project** – Working with private developers, the City should construct pedestrian walkways and bikeways to link neighborhoods with surrounding services and destinations.
- 3.2. Project** – The City should partner with neighborhoods to prioritize traffic calming measures that improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds in residential areas.
- 3.3. Project** – The City should identify opportunities to improve street grid connectivity by reducing the frequency of dead-end streets.

### POLICY 4. The City should improve roadway safety for all users.

- 4.1. Project** – The City should conduct safety

audits of high-crash corridors and intersections to identify needed improvements.

- 4.2. Project** – The City should implement traffic calming measures such as speed humps, raised crosswalks, and roundabouts to reduce vehicle speeds in high-risk areas.
- 4.3. Project** – The City should improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure to separate vulnerable users from motor vehicle traffic.

### POLICY 5. The City should enhance safe access to schools.

- 5.1. Project** – The City should install crossing guards, signage, and crosswalks in school zones.
- 5.2. Project** – The City should collaborate with Gaston County Schools to develop Safe Routes to School programs and encourage walking and biking among students.
- 5.3. Project** – When considering infrastructure upgrade priorities, the City should install and enhance sidewalks and bike lanes within a half-mile radius of schools to increase safety and accessibility.
- 5.4. Project** – The City should coordinate with Gaston County Schools to encourage locating new schools in places that will enable more students to walk to school and to reduce the length of trips for parents who drive their children to school.



**POLICY 6. Working with its partners, the City should strengthen regional transportation connectivity.**

- 6.1. Project** – The City should support efforts to identify future roadway connections across the Catawba River into Mecklenburg County’s future River District development.
- 6.2. Project** – The City should work with regional partners to improve transit access between Belmont and major employment centers in the region.
- 6.3. Project** – The City should develop regional trail connections that link Belmont’s trail system with surrounding jurisdictions.
- 6.4. Project** – To better serve its heavy commuter population, the City should explore options for expanding park-and-ride facilities and express bus services to regional employment hubs.

**POLICY 7. The City should expand and enhance transit options.**

- 7.1. Project** – The City should identify high-demand corridors and expand bus service, including increased frequency and extended hours.
- 7.2. Project** – The City should improve transit stops by adding shelters, seating, and real-time transit information displays.
- 7.3. Project** – Working with NCDOT when necessary, the City should develop transit priority lanes or signal prioritization at key intersections to improve transit reliability and

- reduce delays.
- 7.4. Project** – The City should support efforts to identify future Silver Line transit connections to Mecklenburg County.

**POLICY 8. The City should enhance quality of life and accessibility by improving transportation options.**

- 8.1. Project** – The City should increase access to parks, greenways, and trails through enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- 8.2. Project** – The City should encourage the use of low-emission and electric vehicles (EVs) by planning for and promoting private and public charging infrastructure.
- 8.3. Project** – To reduce air pollution, the City should support multimodal transportation that decreases dependence on single-occupancy vehicles.

**POLICY 9. The City should update development codes to support multimodal connectivity and complete streets.**

- 9.1. Project** – The City should require new developments to incorporate complete street designs that accommodate walking, biking, and transit.
- 9.2. Project** – The City should update zoning and subdivision regulations to promote street grid connectivity and discourage disconnected street layouts.

- 9.3. Project** – The City should cultivate a diversity of cultural uses.
- 9.4. Project** – The City should implement requirements for bicycle parking, sidewalks, and transit access in new developments.

**POLICY 10. The City should align transportation policies with local and regional planning goals.**

- 10.1. Project** – The City should coordinate transportation investments with regional partners to ensure seamless connectivity across jurisdictions.
- 10.2. Project** – Transportation improvement projects should be aligned with land use plans to promote smart growth and reduce sprawl.
- 10.3. Project** – The City should regularly review and update transportation policies to reflect the vision and priorities outlined in this document and regional transportation plans

EXISTING MULTIMODAL NETWORK

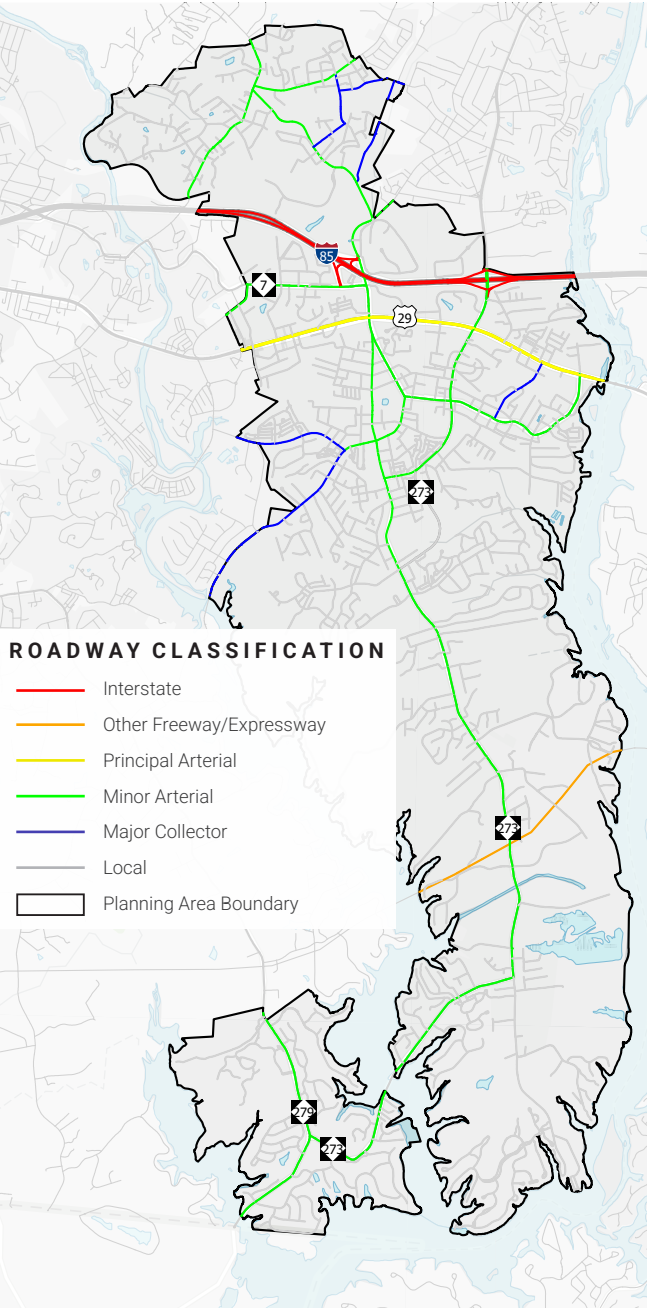
The Multimodal Plan study area reflects the same Planning Area boundary as the Our Belmont Comprehensive Land Use Plan. This study area includes diverse residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and significant natural and historic landmarks. The multimodal transportation network serving this area is comprised of roadway facilities, pedestrian and bicycle networks (including sidewalks, dedicated and shared bicycle facilities, greenways, and trails), and public transportation.

ROADWAY FACILITIES

Belmont, North Carolina’s roadway classification system organizes roads by function and traffic volume. Key classifications include:

- **Interstate Highways:** I-85 facilitates high-speed, long-distance travel, connecting Belmont regionally and nationally.
- **Principal Arterials:** Wilkinson Boulevard (US 29/74) handles high traffic volumes, linking Belmont to nearby cities and major highways.
- **Minor Arterials:** Roads like NC 273 (Park Street) connect local traffic to principal arterials and highways.
- **Collectors:** Streets—such as Central Avenue—gather traffic from local streets to arterial roads.
- **Local Roads:** Residential streets prioritize access to homes and businesses.

Key routes like I-85 provide regional and national access, while Wilkinson Boulevard (US 29/74) and NC 273 link local traffic to major highways, allowing travel throughout the City and beyond. As Belmont grows, traffic congestion considerations impact residents commuting in and out of Belmont.



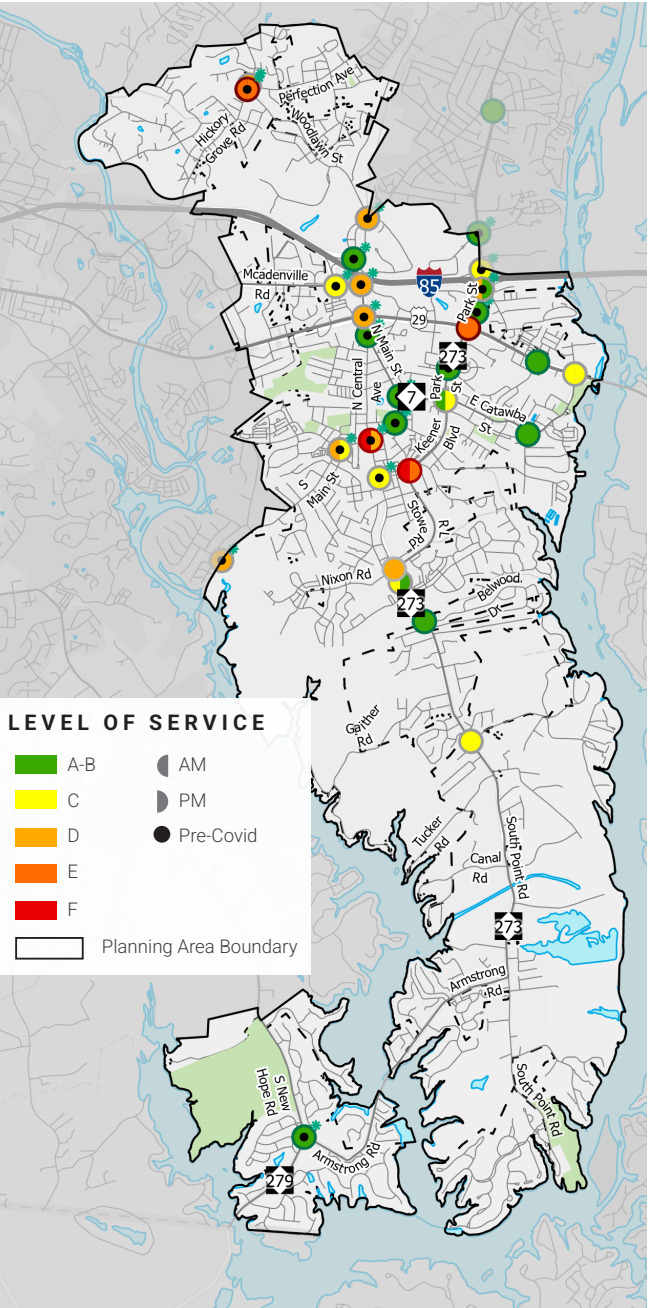
Map: Roadway Classification Map (Kimley-Horn)

Belmont’s roadways see a wide range of traffic volumes, with AADT values from 300 to 146,000 vehicles per day. High-traffic routes like I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard are key arteries for local and regional travel, while residential streets handle much lighter, intercity traffic. Some residential streets however serve as cut-through options to avoid congestion, impacting quieter neighborhoods.

The Level of Service (LOS) in Belmont is a key metric used to evaluate the performance of roadways based on traffic flow and congestion. LOS is graded on a scale from A to F, with A representing free-flowing traffic and F indicating severe congestion and delays. The data reveals that most road segments and intersections maintain a satisfactory level of service, rated between A and C. However, certain high-traffic areas, particularly along I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard, along with some key intersections along South Point Road, experience lower LOS, ranging from D to E, reflecting higher congestion levels during peak hours. These insights are critical for planning future infrastructure improvements to enhance traffic efficiency and safety across Belmont’s transportation network.

Most of Belmont’s roadways maintain a good LOS, rated A to C, ensuring smooth traffic flow. However, busier areas like I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard face congestion challenges, with LOS ratings dropping to D or E during peak hours.

LOS	What it means
LOS A	Vehicles almost completely freely-flowing and unimpeded
LOS B	Reasonably free-flow operations and mostly steady speeds
LOS C	Flow with speeds near the free-flowing speed, some restricted maneuverability
LOS D	Speeds start declining, more queuing
LOS E	At capacity with no space; any disruption can cause delay
LOS F	Full breakdown in traffic operations



Map: Level of Service Map (Kimley-Horn)



SIDEWALKS

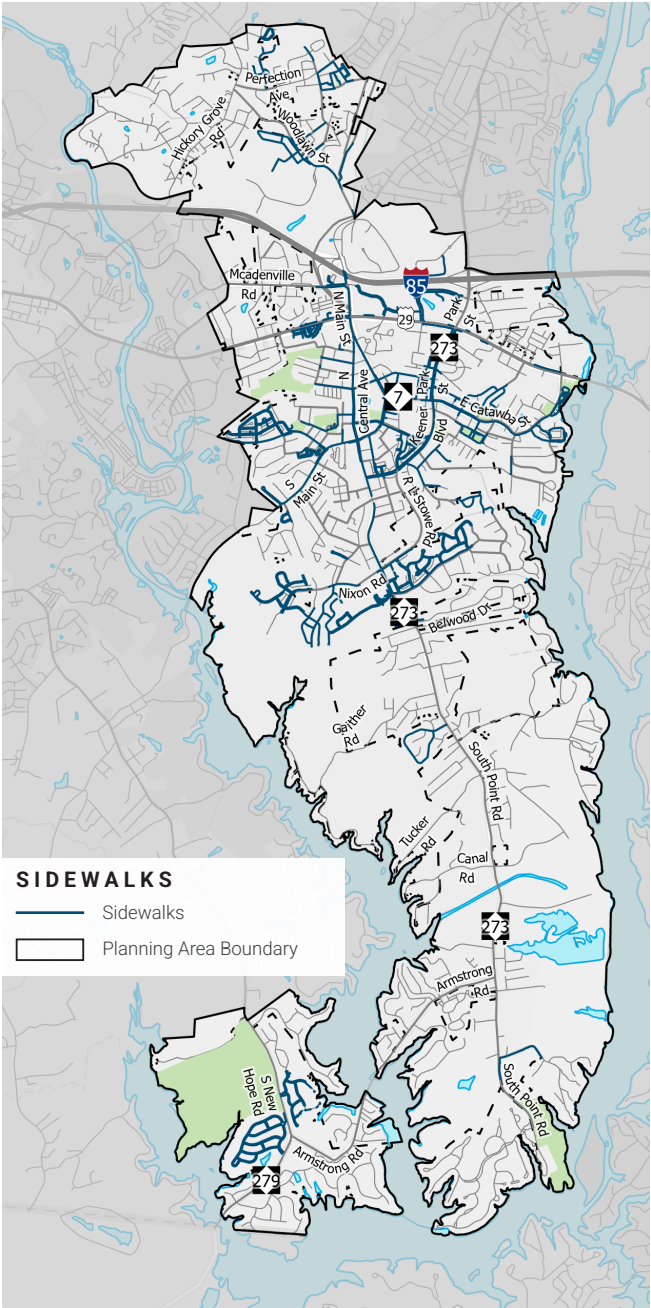
Sidewalks in Belmont, North Carolina, play a crucial role in promoting walkability and helping ensure the safety of pedestrians. Sidewalks are defined as a paved path for pedestrians on the side of a road. The data showcased earlier in the report underscores the need for improved pedestrian infrastructure to encourage walking as a viable mode of transportation. Enhancing and expanding the sidewalk network, particularly in residential areas and near key destinations, can significantly boost pedestrian safety and accessibility, fostering a more connected and walkable community.

BIKE ROUTES

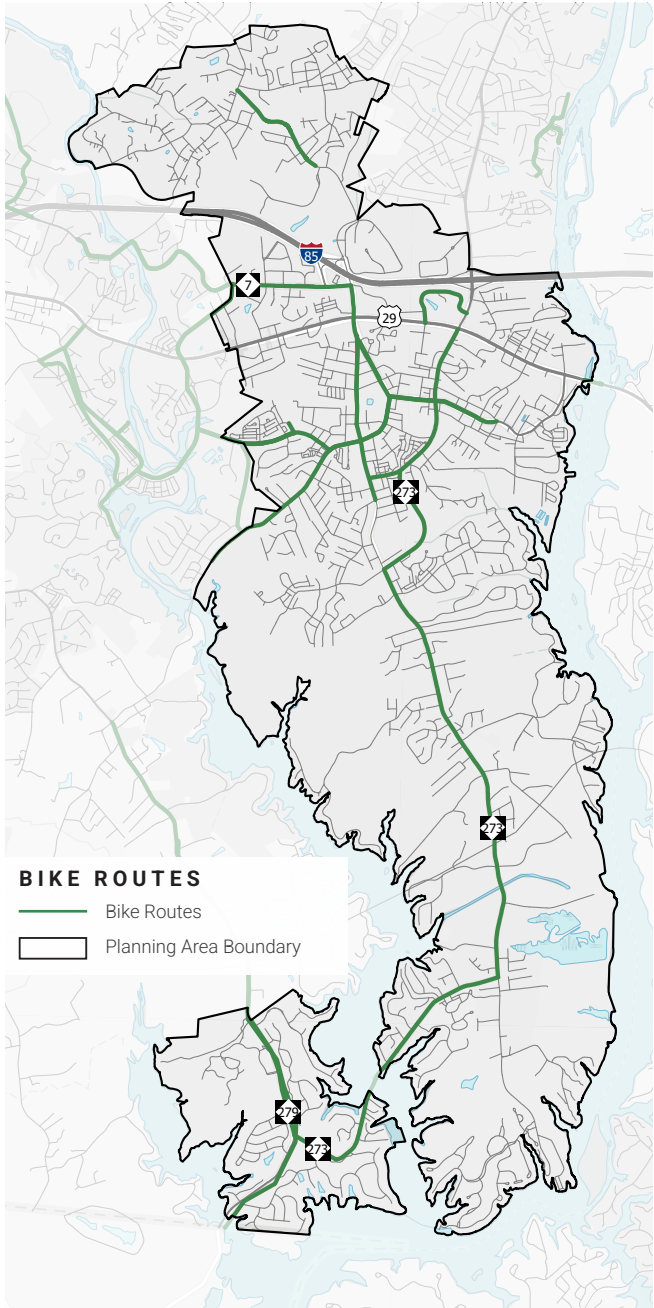
Currently, Belmont largely lacks dedicated bicycle infrastructure except for bike lanes on Catawba Avenue. Census data indicates a low current usage of biking for commuting. By developing a comprehensive network of dedicated bike lanes and safe biking routes that connect residential areas with key employment and recreational destinations, Belmont can promote more transportation choices, manage traffic congestion, and enhance the overall health and well-being of its residents. The map on the adjacent page highlights the existing bicycle network.

TRAIL NETWORK

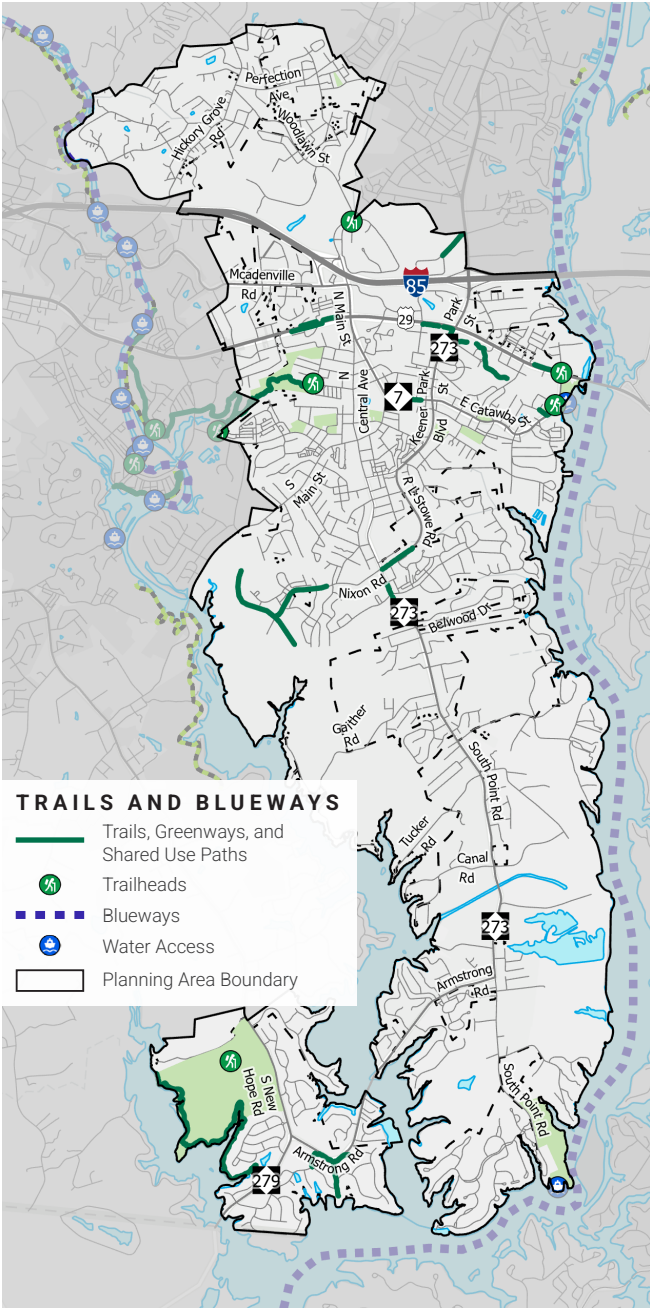
The trail network in Belmont, North Carolina, offers residents and visitors a scenic and recreational option for walking, biking, and connecting with nature. A trail is defined as a small, paved or unpaved path that encourages multiple modes transport alternative to vehicular transport. Trails typically run through parks or natural spaces. A well-maintained trail network not only supports healthy lifestyles but also strengthens community ties and increases the City's attractiveness as a place to live and visit. The map on the adjacent page highlights the existing trail network.



Map: Sidewalk Map (Kimley-Horn)



Map: Bike Route Map (Kimley-Horn)



Map: Trails and Blueways Map (Kimley-Horn)



EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT

Currently, the only existing fixed route transit connection in Belmont is the CATS 85X Gastonia Express, which provides an express connection between Charlotte and Gastonia with a stop and park and ride serving Belmont at the Abbey Plaza Shopping Center. Belmont has expressed interest in moving this stop to a proposed mobility hub slightly further west on Wilkinson Boulevard.

Gaston County ACCESS provides full-county demand response coverage with the goal of identifying and arranging efficient and economical transportation services for all requests. ACCESS also operates two deviated fixed route transit services connecting Gastonia’s Bradley Bus Station to Bessemer City and Gaston College’s Dallas campus, though neither serve Belmont directly currently.

GastonACCESS and new innovations by GoGastonia offer potential opportunities to provide additional service coverage across the county while addressing the transportation challenges Belmont faces.

POTENTIAL TRANSIT EXPANSIONS

GoGastonia offers an on-demand van service that replaces Gastonia’s former fixed route bus service. The program is an innovative, new option that provides flexible transportation throughout Gastonia. While GoGastonia doesn’t directly serve Belmont at this time, it may be worth expanding or emulation on the eastern side of the County.

Similarly, with Gaston County ACCESS operating deviated fixed route services, the type of connection Gastonia has with Bessemer City and Gaston College could be worth emulating with a reliable weekday connection between Belmont and Gastonia.

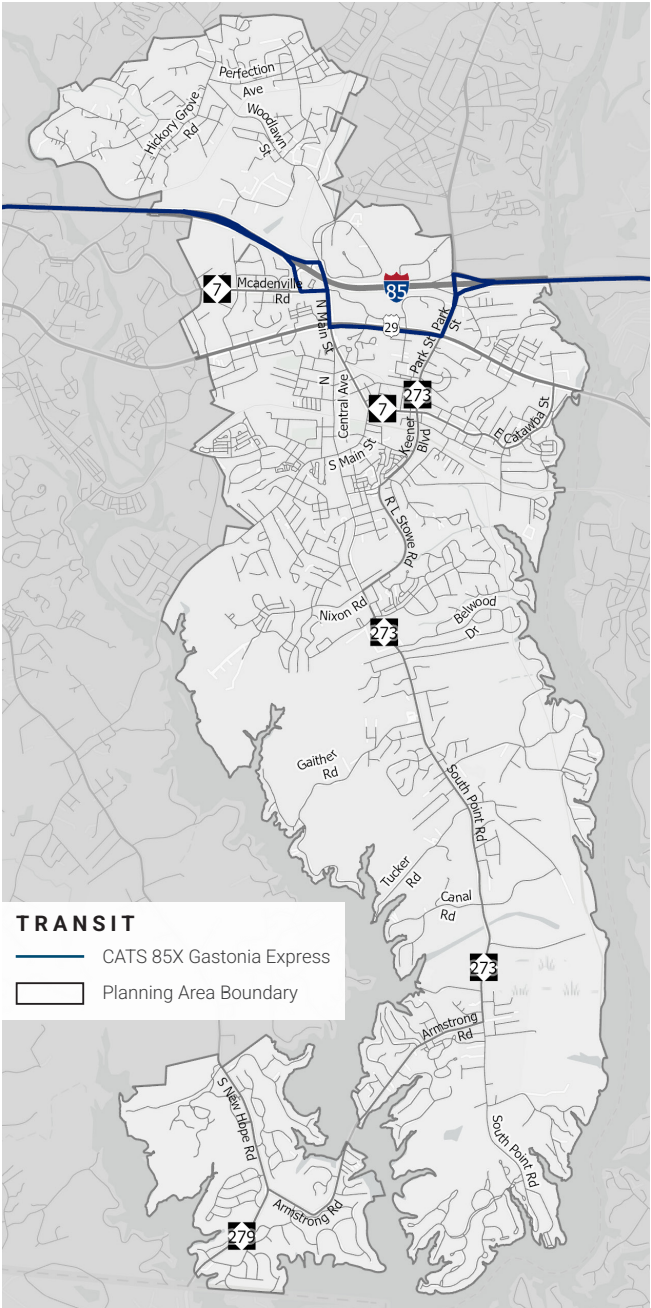
These two regional transport options service residents locally and have potential to be a future solution to Belmont’s growing and congested local and regional corridors.



Image: Parking Sign in Downtown Belmont (City of Belmont)

In addition, the City of Charlotte recently adopted the 2055 Transit System Plan as a means to serve the corridors and communities in the area. The Transit System Plan includes systemwide bus frequency upgrades, including goals of expanded service on express services, as well as the buildout of several rapid transit corridors radiating out from Uptown Charlotte. The Plan will advance economic mobility, while supporting innovation and sustainability to connect communities through an increase of transit options.

Within the Transit System Plan, the LYNX Silver Line light rail line is currently proposed to reach as far west as Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. However, Belmont is included within the plan as a “future potential Silver Line extension if/as funding allows”. While funds will likely not be available to plan or implement a Silver Line connection to Belmont within the life of this plan, there is still a growing need for high-speed transit from Charlotte to Belmont, which this plan highlights and considers.



Map: CATS 85X Gastonia Express Route (Kimley-Horn)



MODE CHOICE AND MOBILITY

MOBILITY PATTERNS AND SAFETY

The City's transportation network is predominantly reliant on single-occupancy vehicles (SOV), with 70% of workers driving alone to their jobs. Public transit usage is minimal, constituting only 4.7% of commuters, indicating a potential area for enhancement in Belmont's transportation strategy. Vehicle access within households is relatively high, with the majority having one or two vehicles. However, 3.39% of households do not have access to a vehicle, pointing to a segment of the population that could benefit from improved public transportation and alternative mobility options.

The City's commute times vary, with a significant portion of the population experiencing moderate travel durations, primarily between 15 to 34 minutes. This range indicates a relatively manageable commute for most residents but also reflects the potential for congestion and delays, particularly during peak hours. A more cohesive multimodal system can encourage alternative transportation options while reducing congestion, and improving air quality.

Safety concerns are highlighted by Belmont's crash history, which includes 11 fatal injuries, 20 incapacitating injuries, and over 2,000 incidents of property damage. The data from NCDOT from 2019-2024 suggests a critical need for improved traffic safety measures and infrastructure upgrades to enhance the overall safety of the transportation network.

COMMUTING

Belmont experiences significant commuting activity, characterized by a high inflow and outflow of workers. Taking this into consideration, there is a marked reliance on transportation infrastructure to support daily travel. Almost all residents commuting out of Belmont travel into Charlotte. This commuting pattern underscores the need for efficient transit options, especially towards major employment hubs such as Uptown Charlotte.

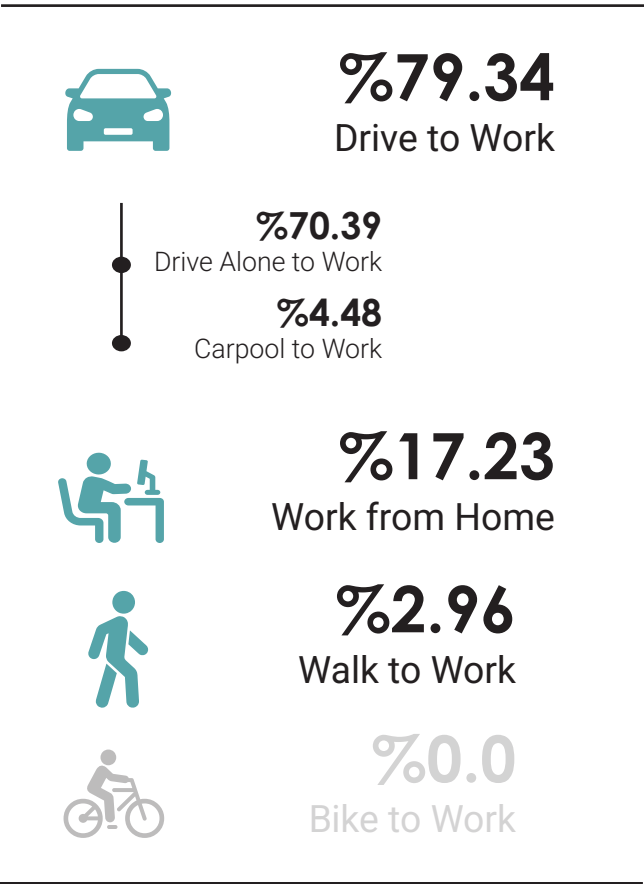


Figure: Commuting by Travel Mode (ACS 2023 5-year estimates; Kimley Horn)

DRIVING ALONE TO WORK

The data reveals a heavy reliance on single-occupancy vehicles for commuting. A significant majority of workers—73.7%—drive alone to their place of employment. This is followed by carpooling, which accounts for 18% of workers, though larger carpools are rare. Public transit usage remains low at 4.7%, and alternative modes such as walking, bicycling, or using motorcycles are minimally utilized. Additionally, 18% of the workforce works from home, reflecting a growing trend of remote work. This reliance on driving alone highlights the need for improvements in public transportation, carpooling incentives, and infrastructure to support alternative modes of transportation to manage traffic congestion and promote a more sustainable commute.

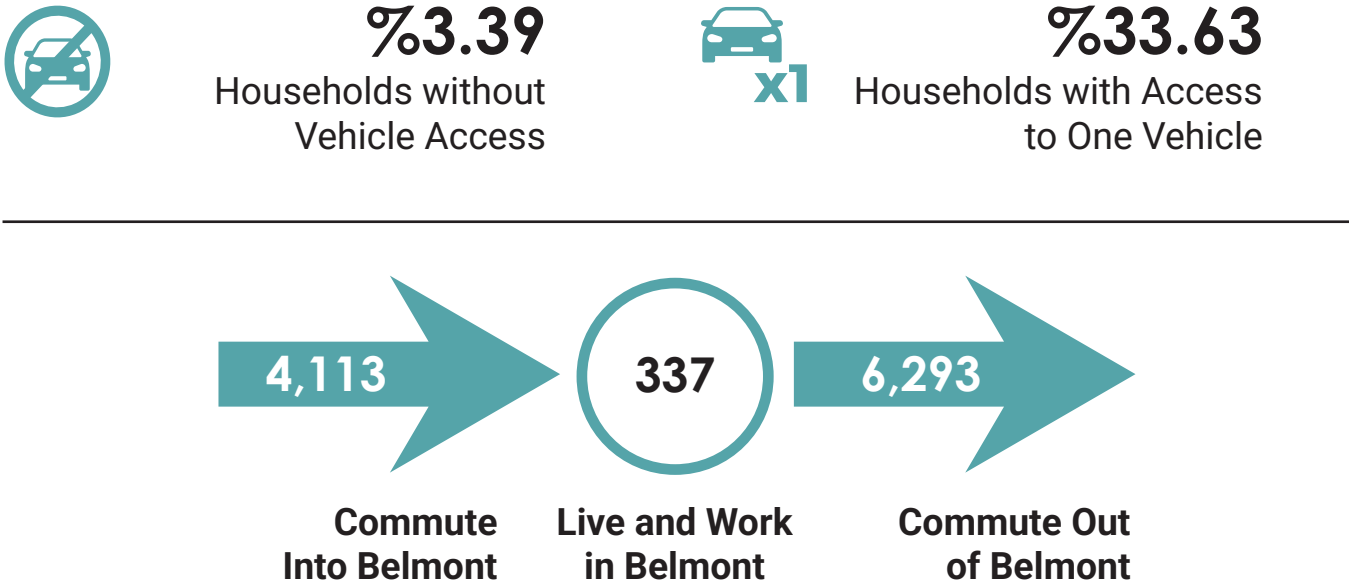


Figure: Household Vehicle Access and Commuting Patterns (ACS 2023 5-year estimates; Kimley Horn)

WALKING TO WORK

Walking to work is currently a minimally utilized mode of transportation, with very few residents choosing this option. To encourage walking, there is a need for enhanced pedestrian infrastructure—such as well-maintained sidewalks, safe crossings, and pedestrian-friendly routes—particularly in areas with higher residential density and proximity to employment centers. Improving these facilities can promote walking as a viable and healthy commuting option or recreational activity for Belmont residents.

BIKING TO WORK

Biking to work in Belmont, North Carolina, is an underutilized mode of transportation, with no residents—according to census data—opting for this eco-friendly commute. To increase the appeal of biking, Belmont needs to invest in dedicated bike lanes, secure bike parking, and safe biking routes that connect residential areas with key employment centers. Promoting biking can not only help manage traffic congestion and environmental impact

but also improve the overall health and well-being of the community.

OTHER TRANSIT OPPORTUNITIES

Belmont offers other forms of transportation and transit opportunities at the local, and regional level. Ride-share options such as Uber or Lyft, or Share the Ride NC support transit within the city. Belmont also offers a stop on the Charlotte CATS 85x Gastonia Express bus providing peak service connecting the city to Uptown Charlotte and Gastonia.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

BELMONT’S HIGH INJURY NETWORK (HIN)

The Belmont HIN combines the 15 most dangerous streets and the 15 most dangerous intersections throughout the planning area. These locations were selected utilizing crash data highlighting the areas with the highest rate of crashes and the most severe crashes. It is important to note that I-85 was not included in the network due to the complicating factors in alleviating crashes on interstates.

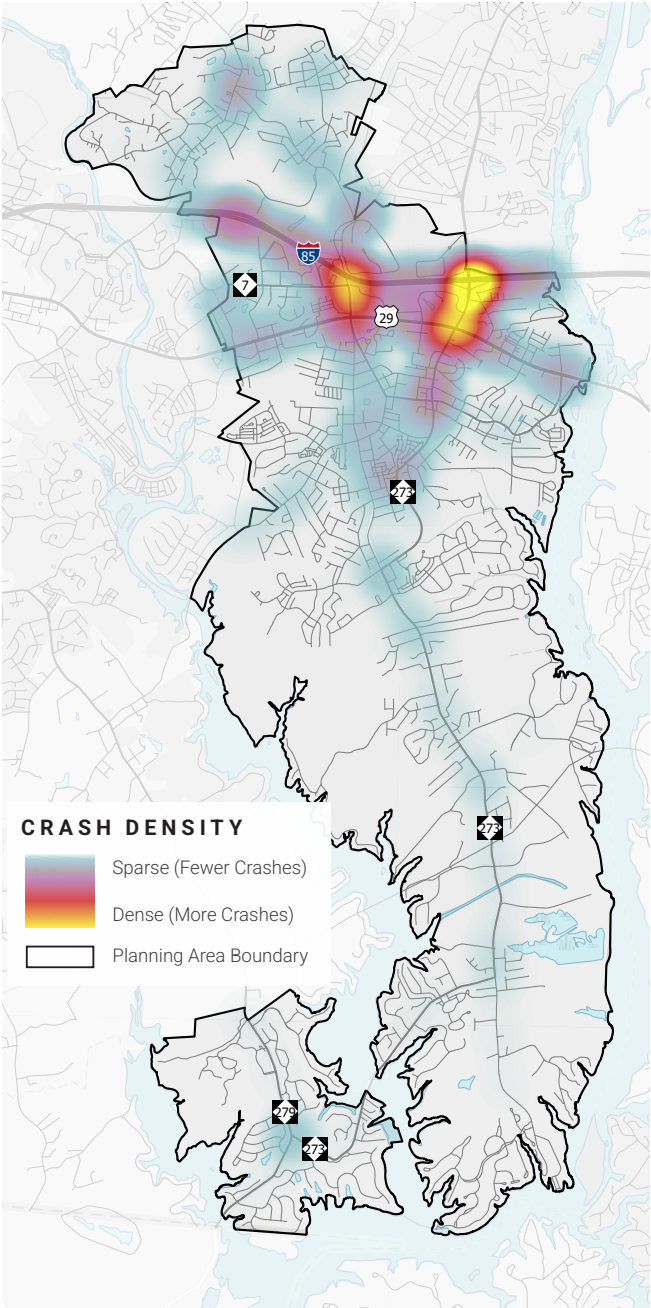
CORRIDOR CRASH RATES

The top 15 corridors saw at least one fatal or disabling crash, or at least 15 crashes per year, calculated during the study period. These corridors were responsible for 60% of all crashes and 59% of fatal and severe crashes. The top 15 intersections had similar results, with at least one fatal or disabling crash, or at least 4 crashes per year, during the same study period. The HIN intersections were responsible for 21% of total crashes and 6% of fatal or disabling crashes.

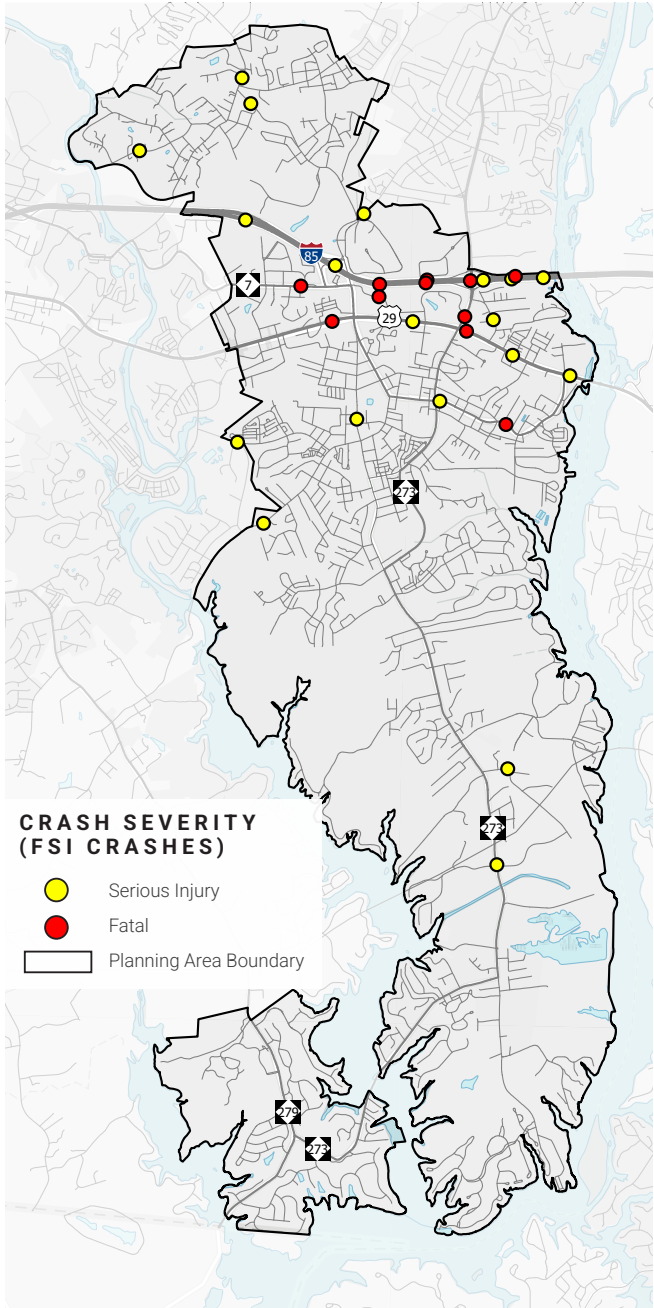
PRIORITIZATION

After locating and analyzing the top 15 corridors and intersections to include in the HIN, a prioritization methodology was formulated to rank and prioritize specific locations along the HIN for near-term funding and implementation. To calculate the location priorities, each location was assigned a score out of 40 possible points based on crash types and severity, the surrounding infrastructure and land use context, as well as alignment with existing projects and recommendations. Below are the criteria weights:

- Crash Severity (25%)
- Vulnerable Road Users (20%)
- Infrastructure Characteristics (15%)
- Equity Areas (15%)
- Sensitive Destinations (15%)
- Project Feasibility (10%)



Map: Crash Density Heat Map for 2019-2025 (Kimley-Horn)



Map: Fatal and Severe Injury Crashes for 2019-2025 (Kimley-Horn)

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Several factors contribute to crashes in Belmont. Speeding was a factor in 5% of crashes, driving under the influence in 4%, and distracted driving in 22%. Demographically, seniors (ages 65+) were involved in 19% of crashes, while young drivers (ages 15-19) were involved in 13%, despite making up only 7% of the population.

FATAL AND SEVERE INJURY CRASHES

Fatal and severe crashes tended to occur on streets with higher traffic volumes that serve as the community's major arterials and connectors. Out of 3,107 that occurred in Belmont, just over 1% or 32 crashes, resulted in fatality (11 crashes) or severe injury (21 crashes). Belmont has experienced 2.2 fatalities per year and has an annual fatality rate of nearly 15 fatal per 100,000 people. Data included was accessed through Belmont's Vision Zero Plan.

COMMON CRASH TYPES

The most common types of crashes, which made up 68% of total incidents—but only 16% of fatal and disabling crashes—were rear-end collisions (39%), sideswipe collisions in the same direction (18%), and angle collisions (11%). These common crashes highlight areas where targeted safety measures could reduce the overall number of incidents.

LEADING THE WAY WITH VISION ZERO

The data underscores the importance of the Vision Zero initiative in Belmont, which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries. This involves creating a shared community vision for traffic safety, gathering and analyzing data, identifying priority locations, and implementing strategies to address safety concerns. The ongoing efforts will focus on pursuing funding for traffic safety improvements, leading community events, and continually monitoring and benchmarking success.



KEY DESTINATIONS

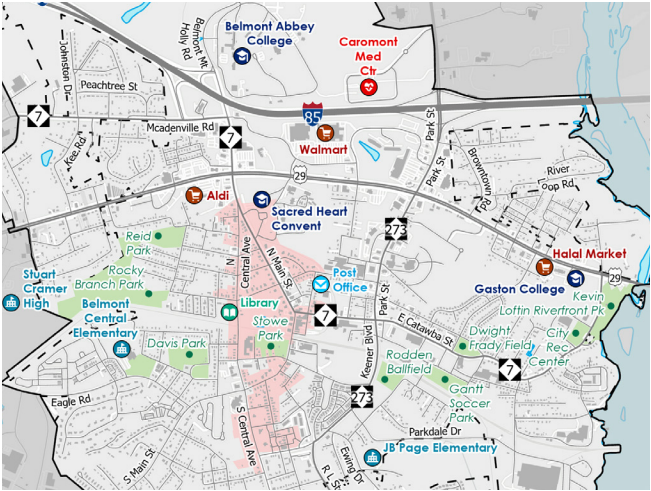
At the heart of the city is the Downtown Belmont Historic District, covering 1,700 acres and showcasing Tudor Revival, Bungalow/Craftsman, and Colonial Revival architecture.

Belmont is home to a variety of parks and greenspaces, from world-class gardens and trails at the Daniel Stowe Conservancy and Seven Oaks Nature Preserve to smaller parks across the heart of the city such as Rocky Branch Park, Stowe Park and Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park. Belmont is also only a short distance from the U.S. National Whitewater Center, offering activities such as rafting and kayaking.

For community programs and other resources, the Belmont Public Library and the recently-opened CityRec Center provide recreational and educational programs and provide opportunities for hosting events.

The Belmont area is also home to several colleges, including Belmont Abbey College’s main campus and Loughridge Center, Gaston College’s Kimbrell Campus, and St. Joseph College Seminary.

Other major destinations across the study area include Caromont Medical Center, area schools, and various supermarkets.



Map: Downtown Belmont Destinations (Kimley-Horn)

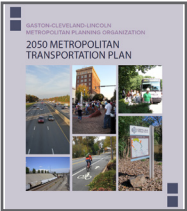


Map: Key Belmont Destinations (Kimley-Horn)

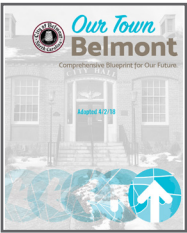
EXISTING TRANSPORTATION PLANS

A review of previous transportation plans was conducted to inform the foundation and recommendations of the Multimodal Plan. By examining the recommendations and findings from these key documents, the project team can integrate insights and strategies into the multimodal planning process. This review ensures that the Belmont Multimodal Plan builds upon past work, aligns with regional goals, and addresses the community's evolving needs.

KEY PLANS REVIEWED:



• **Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) (2022):** The 2050 MTP outlines a comprehensive transportation strategy for the region through a multimodal transportation network, encompassing roadway, transit, freight, bicycle, pedestrian, and aviation modes.



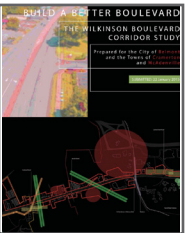
• **Our Town Belmont: Comprehensive Blueprint for Our Future (2018):** The prior Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Belmont provides a strategic framework for managing the city's growth, development, and land use through 2038.



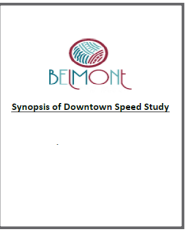
• **Belmont Pedestrian Master Plan Update (2023):** This Pedestrian Master Plan update aims to create a safe, accessible, and enjoyable pedestrian environment for all ages and abilities.



• **Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Gaston County Communities (2009):** This Carolina Thread Trail plan lays out a framework for a comprehensive network of greenways and trails across the county.



• **Build a Better Boulevard: The Wilkinson Boulevard Corridor Study (2015):** This plan maps out the comprehensive redevelopment of Wilkinson Boulevard, considering its historical context, current state, and future potential.



• **Downtown Belmont Speed Study (2023):** Conducted by the Belmont Police Department in 2023, this study assesses pedestrian safety, traffic flow, and accessibility in downtown Belmont.



PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

Prioritization is an important part of the process of taking project recommendations from lines on paper to reality. By aligning project prioritization with community values, previous plans, and connections with the greatest need, the City can evaluate what should be emphasized first with limited resources to have the greatest impact and benefit for the transportation network. To this end, several criteria were identified based on the community vision for the transportation network. These include local connectivity, regional connectivity, implementation, demographics and community context, public input, safety, and multimodal access. The following section explains how each of these topics is guiding the planning process.

The recommendations in the following pages outline targeted improvements across multiple travel modes, each designed to enhance safety, accessibility, and connectivity throughout the community. These multimodal strategies aim to close gaps in the existing network, support future growth, and create a transportation system that works for everyone whether traveling by car, foot, bike, or transit.

IMPLEMENTATION (20%)

- **Constructability and Maintenance:** Evaluating constraints that effect initial construction and accessing potential long-term maintenance, repair, and operational costs.
- **Funding:** Evaluating the potential options for funding and likelihood to receive that funding.
- **Project Location:** Assessing project location in relation to municipal boundary for ease of implementation.

**Methodology:** Projects received points based on constructability and ease of maintenance (based on a scale from easy, medium and hard), inclusion in previous plans, and whether the project is within the municipal border.

LOCAL CONNECTIVITY (15%)

- **Enhanced Mobility to Key Destinations:** Improving multimodal access to downtown, retail centers, and essential community features such as libraries, recreation centers, and schools to support local economic and social activity.
- **Neighborhood Connectivity:** Strengthening connections between residential areas in Belmont to help ensure accessible transportation options for all users.

**Methodology:** Projects received points based on access to various destinations, including downtown, retail, libraries, community centers, neighborhoods, and schools.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY (15%)

- **City and Employment Hub Connectivity:** Expanding multimodal connections between Belmont and regional job centers, transit stations, and neighboring municipalities to enhance workforce mobility and economic development.
- **Regional Parks and Trail Access:** Improving safe and efficient routes to regional parks, greenways, and recreational areas, supporting active transportation and environmental sustainability across the broader region.

**Methodology:** Projects received points based on their connectivity to places outside Belmont or major employment centers. Projects were scored on a yes/no basis for connections to City and employment hubs, and received a separate yes/no scoring for connections to regional parks and trails.

MULTIMODAL ACCESS (15%)

- **Seamless Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity:** Strengthening links between bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and trails to create a continuous, safe, and accessible active transportation network.
- **Transit Integration for All Modes:** Enhancing multimodal connections to transit by improving first/last-mile access through sidewalks, bike lanes, and trail linkages within a 1/4-mile buffer.
- **Equitable and Sustainable Mobility Options:** Expanding infrastructure that supports walking, biking, and transit to reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and promote a more accessible and environmentally friendly transportation system.

**Methodology:** For roadway projects, projects received points if a bike or pedestrian project is planned along the same route as the roadway project. For bike and pedestrian projects, projects received points if they helped fill gaps in the current bike/pedestrian network. (0—doesn't address gaps, 0.5—somewhat addresses gaps, 1—yes addresses gap)

PUBLIC INPUT (15%)

- **Community Driven Decision-Making:** Ensuring transportation improvements reflect the public's most preferred projects by actively engaging residents, gathering input through surveys and meetings, and prioritizing initiatives that align with community needs and aspirations.

**Methodology:** Analyzed interactive map for comments, then utilized comments to formulate three categories based off the number of comments supporting a given project.

SAFETY (15%)

- **Reducing Crash Risk and Severity:** Addressing high-crash locations by analyzing total crashes, severity levels (K/A/B/C), and risk factors to implement targeted safety improvements for all road users.
- **Enhancing Public and Traffic Safety:** Improving roadway design and multimodal infrastructure based on traffic volumes (AADT) and public safety concerns to create a safer environment for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

**Methodology:** Projects received points if along the High Injury Network (HIN) established in Belmont's Vision Zero Action Plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT (5%)

- **Equitable Transportation Access:** Prioritizing multimodal investments that serve minority communities and low-income residents, ensuring equitable access to jobs, healthcare, and essential services.
- **Mobility and Economic Opportunity:** Enhancing transportation options for communities with limited vehicle access, supporting workforce mobility, and connecting residents to employment centers to drive economic growth.

**Methodology:** Projects received points based on their overlap with census tracts with minority populations, low income households, or zero vehicle households that exceeded the community average.



ROADWAY RECOMMENDATIONS

Roadway improvements focus on enhancing the function and safety of Belmont’s primary corridors. These include intersection upgrades, traffic calming measures, access management strategies, and complete street design principles that support all users—not just motorists. Prioritizing these improvements helps mitigate congestion, improve safety, and better manage the flow of vehicles through key areas of the City.

WIDENING AND ROAD REDESIGNS

Several of Belmont’s major corridors in the northern and southern parts of the planning area are planned for widening or a redesign for smoother traffic flow and safety.

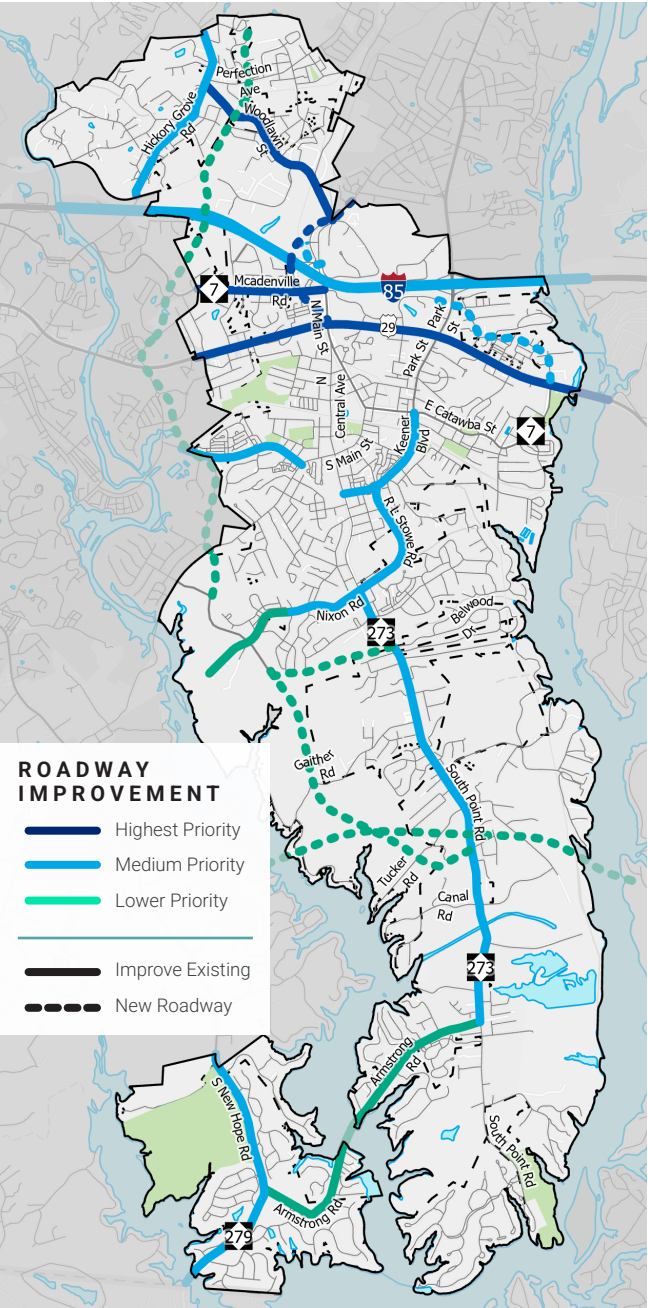
Roadway projects often also provide opportunities for other improvements for people walking or biking, especially when they overlap with a multimodal project and at intersections along the corridor.

NEW ROADWAYS

New roadways added to improve connectivity. Belmont’s proposed roadway network includes a new western north-south roadway acting as a bypass and connection to Mount Holly, a new east-west connection in the southern part of the City, a new connection bypassing Wilkinson Boulevard, and a proposed freeway bridge for an additional east-west connection across the Catawba River.

PRIORITIZED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Improvements to the roadway network would begin with a focus on projects along the major corridors that connect central Belmont to places to the north, east and west as the highest priority. Other major corridors such as South Point Road, New Hope Road, and Eagles Road were medium priorities that would help improve the local roadway network, while projects for completely new roadways emerged as the lowest priority.



Map: Recommended Roadway Improvements by Priority Level (Kimley-Horn)



Image: Intersection of S Main Street and Mill Street (City of Belmont)

ROADWAY	PROJECT EXTENTS	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY
Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment	I-85 to Planning Area Boundary	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Highest Priority
Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment	I-85 to Wilkinson Blvd	4-Lane Undivided Boulevard	Highest Priority
Woodlawn St	Hickory Grove Rd to Belmont-Mt Holly Rd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Highest Priority
McAdenville Rd	Main St to Planning Area Boundary	4-Lane Boulevard w Center Turn Lane	Highest Priority
Wilkinson Blvd	Across Planning Area	6-Lane Boulevard	Highest Priority
Northeast Loop Connector	Hawley Ave to Wilkinson Blvd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
Belmont Abbey Connector	Belmont-Mt Holly Rd to Wimmer Cir	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
I-85	Through Planning Area	8-Lane Freeway	Medium Priority
Hickory Grove Rd	Through Planning Area	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
RL Stowe Rd	Keener Rd to South Point Rd	4-Lane Boulevard w Median and turn Pockets	Medium Priority
South Point Rd	Nixon Rd/RL Stowe Rd to Armstrong Rd	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Medium Priority
New Hope Rd	Planning Area Boundary to Planning Area Boundary	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Medium Priority
Eagle Rd	Planning Boundary to Main St	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
Keener Blvd	Central Ave to R L Stowe Blvd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
Keener Blvd	RL Stowe Rd to Catawba St	4-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Medium Priority
Armstrong Rd	New Hope Rd to South Point Rd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Lowest Priority
Catawba Crossings	Across Planning Area	6-Lane Boulevard	Lowest Priority
Belmont Middle School Connector	Future Roadway to South Point Rd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Lowest Priority
South Fork Pkwy/Belmont Mt-Holly Lp	South end of existing South Fork Pkwy to South Point Rd	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Lowest Priority
South Fork Pkwy/Belmont Mt-Holly Lp	Carolina Riverside Blvd to Thomasville Dr	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Lowest Priority
South Fork Pkwy/Belmont Mt-Holly Lp	Main St to Thomasville Dr/Peach Orchard Rd	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Lowest Priority
South Fork Pkwy/Belmont Mt-Holly Lp	Thomasville Dr/Peach Orchard Rd to Planning Area Boundary	4-Lane Divided Boulevard	Lowest Priority
Nixon Rd	Western End to South Point Rd	2-Lane Boulevard w Median & Turn Pockets	Lowest Priority

Figure: Table of Prioritized Roadway Improvements (Kimley-Horn)



PEDESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Creating a safe, connected pedestrian network is essential for walkability and community health. Recommended improvements include new sidewalks, sidewalk gap closures, and shared-use paths that offer safer and more comfortable routes for people of all ages and abilities. These investments are especially important near schools, parks, transit stops, and downtown areas, where pedestrian activity is highest.

SIDEWALKS

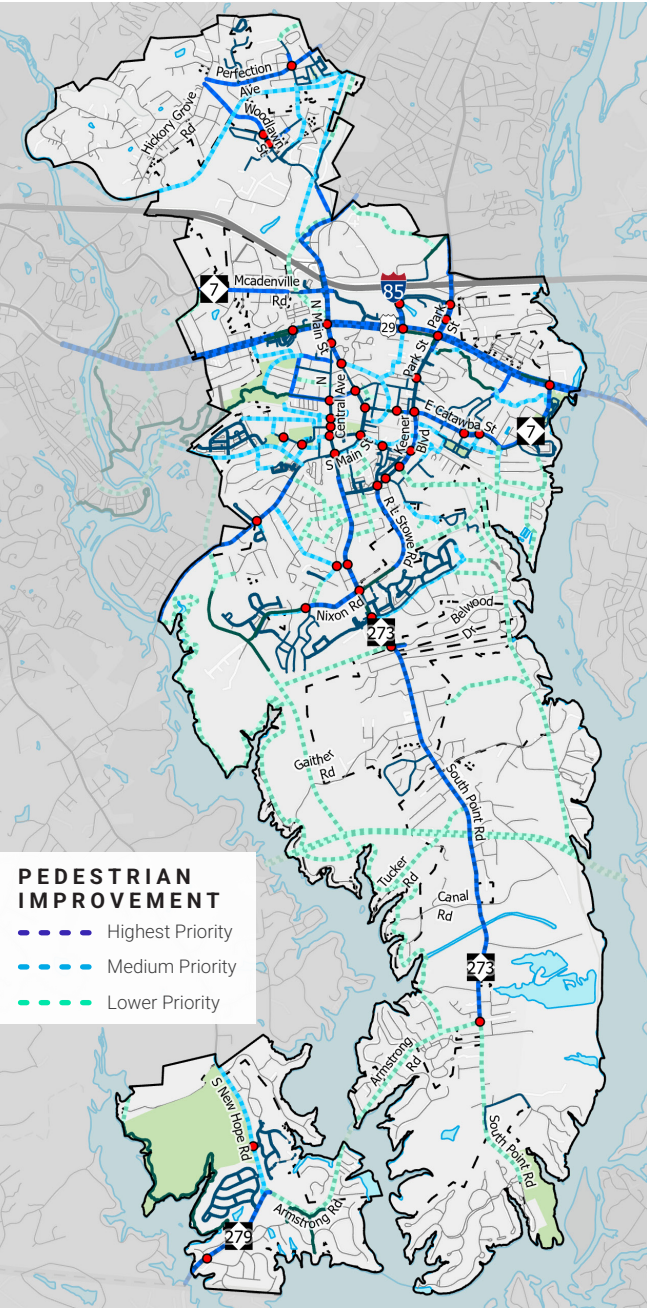
Paved paths, usually alongside roadways, for people walking or rolling. Sidewalks are generally the backbone of any pedestrian facility network and are critical to accessibility and safe connectivity. Belmont’s planned pedestrian network focuses on providing new sidewalk connections where they don’t currently exist and filling critical gaps in the existing sidewalk network.

SHARED USE PATHS

Generally wider than sidewalks, shared use paths provide connections for people walking as well as people biking. These paths are usually separated from the road by more greenspace or a physical barrier. While some shared use paths (sidepaths) follow roadways like sidewalks, Belmont’s planned network also includes rail trails along railroad alignments, paths that follow power line easements, and greenways that follow rivers and creeks.

PRIORITIZED PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

Within Belmont’s planned pedestrian network, key connections along some of the most critical corridors are treated as highest priority, including filling sidewalk gaps on Catawba Street and new facilities along Wilkinson Boulevard, South Point Road, Park Street, Main Street/ Belmont Mount Holly Road, Nixon Road, and Woodlawn Street. Several planned rail trails and other additional connections are medium priority projects, while other shared use paths and minor sidewalks on residential roads are lower priority.



Map: Recommended Pedestrian Improvements by Priority Level (Kimley-Horn)



Image: High-Visibility Crosswalk and Curb Ramps (City of Belmont)

ROADWAY	PROJECT EXTENTS	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY
Wilkinson Blvd	South Fork Crossing to Catawba River Crossing	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
R L Stowe Rd	Keener Blvd to Existing SUP	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
South Point Rd	Belwood Dr to Armstrong Rd	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Nixon Rd	Existing MUP to South Point Rd	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
N Main St	Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment to N Main St/Mercy Drive	Greenway	Highest Priority
S New Hope Rd	Seven Oaks Preserve Trailhead to Armstrong Rd	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
South Point Rd	Nixon Rd to Johnson St	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
S Main St	Dogwood Lane to South Fork River	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Perfection Ave	City Limits to Planning Area Boundary	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Park St	McLean Ave to CaroMont Pkwy	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
E Catawba St	Wilkinson Blvd to CityWorks Driveway	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
McAdenville Rd	Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment to Existing Sidewalk	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Belmont Mt Holly Rd	Woodlawn St to Rail Trail	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Hawley Ave	Walmart Driveway to Wilkinson Blvd	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Off Road	Existing MUP to Catawba St	Greenway	Highest Priority
Keener Blvd	Catawba St to Parkdale Dr	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
S New Hope Rd	Seven Oaks Preserve Trailhead to SC State Line	Greenway	Highest Priority
Belmont Mt Holly Rd	Woodlawn St/Wimmey St to Forney Ave	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
E Catawba St	Tucker St to Chronicle Mill	Shared-Use Path	Highest Priority
Woodlawn St	Cason St to Belmont-Mt Holly Rd (gaps)	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Pebble Creek Dr	Food Lion Driveway to Perfection Ave	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Lincoln St	Sacco St to Central Ave	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Sacco St	Woodrow Ave to Lincoln Ave	Sidewalk	Highest Priority

Figure: Table of Prioritized Pedestrian Improvements (Kimley-Horn)



ROADWAY	PROJECT EXTENTS	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY
Sixth St	Catawba St to Wilkinson Blvd (Gaps)	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
W Woodrow Ave	Sacco St to Main St	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Perfection Ave	Hickory Grove Rd to City Limits	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Nixon Rd	South Point High to South Point Rd	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Mcadenville Rd	Planning Area Boundary to Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Belmont Mt Holly Rd	Oak Trl to Wilkinson Blvd	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Perfection Ave	Pleasant St to Moses Rhyne Dr	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
New Hope Rd/Armstrong Rd	Conservancy Dr to Seven Oaks Landing	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Woodlawn St	Hickory Grove Rd to School St	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
School St	Woodlawn St to Apricot St	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
E Catawba St	Sixth St to Thirteenth St	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Belwood Dr		Sidewalk	Highest Priority
South Point Rd	Stowe Rd to Cedar Tree Dr	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Park St	Hawley Rd/Browntown Rd to Wilikinson Blvd	Sidewalk	Highest Priority
Abbey Creek Greenway	Park St to Catawba St (gaps)	Greenway	Medium Priority
Eagle Rd	Lakewood Dr to Main St	Shared-Use Path	Medium Priority
Rail Trail	Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment to Woodlawn St	Greenway	Medium Priority
Rail Trail	Woodrow Ave to Glenway St	Greenway	Medium Priority
Ferrell Ave	Hospitality Ln to Burns Mitchell Dr	Shared-Use Path	Medium Priority
S New Hope Rd	Belmont City Limits to Armstrong Rd	Shared-Use Path	Medium Priority
Rail Trail	Main St to Woodrow Ave	Greenway	Medium Priority
I-85 Crossing	Hawley Ave to Compassion Dr	Greenway	Medium Priority
Rail Trail	Cason St to Belmont City Limits	Greenway	Medium Priority
Rodden Field Connector	Hawthorne St to Childers St	Greenway	Medium Priority
Park Connector	Stowe Park to Rocky Branch Park	Greenway	Medium Priority
Hawley Ave	Wilkinson Blvd to Harley Ave	Shared-Use Path	Medium Priority
Reid Park Connector	Lincoln St to Rocky Branch Trail	Greenway	Medium Priority
Ewing Dr	Charles Dr to Gilchrist Cir	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Stowe Rd	South Point Rd to Samuel Pickney Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Nixon Rd	Amberley Crossing Dr to Shannon Dr (gaps)	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Julia Ave	Armstrong Ford Rd to South Point Rd	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Willerine Dr	Nixon St to Julia Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Park Dr	Park Dr to Oak Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Tenth St	Catawba St to Edgemont Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Mellon Rd	Armstrong Ford Rd to Belmont Village Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Cason St	Burton St to Cason St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Oak St		Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Oak St/Myrtle St	Park Dr to Central Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Kingston St	Eagle Rd to Park Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Elizabeth St	Eagle Rd to Park Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Ferrell Ave	Harris St to Burns Mitchell Dr	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
S Main St	Central Ave to McLeod Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
McLeod Ave	Main St to Hawthorne St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Lincoln St	Wilkinson Blvd to Sacco St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Acme Rd	Cason St to Woodlawn St (gaps)	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Vine St/Fifth St Extension	Brook St to Flowers Ct	Sidewalk	Medium Priority

Figure: Table of Prioritized Pedestrian Improvements - Continued (Kimley-Horn)

ROADWAY	PROJECT EXTENTS	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY
Tucker St	Catawba St to Brook St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Brook St	Keener Blvd to Fifth St Ext	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Brook St	Seventh St to Tenth St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Merewood Rd/Vesta St	Eagle Rd to Summerfield Pl	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Cason St	Cherry St to Woodlawn Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Cason St	Cason St to Cason St	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Burns Mitchell Dr	Park Dr to Ferrell Ave	Sidewalk	Medium Priority
Off Road	RL Stowe Rd to Parkdale Dr	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Parkdale Dr	Keener Blvd to Tenth St	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Eastwood Dr/South Fork Pkwy	Carolina Riverside Blvd to Eagle Rd	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Off Road	Caromont Pkwy to Belmont-Mt Holly Rd	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Armstrong Rd	New Hope Rd to South Point Rd	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
South Fork Pkwy	Current end of South Fork Pkwy to South Fork Trail	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Elmore St/Powerline St/Hugh St Connections	Hugh St to North St	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Belmont Middle School Driveway/Off Road	South Point Road to South Fork Pkwy	Shared-Use Path	Lowest Priority
Lakewood Rd	Stream Path SUP to Catawba River Path	Shared Use Path	Lowest Priority
South Fork River Trail	Armstrong Rd to Armstrong Ford Rd	Greenway	Lowest Priority
Parkdale Dr/Stove Thread Rd	River Dr to Catawba River	Shared Use Path	Lowest Priority
Railroad	Parkdale Dr to Catawba Crossings	Greenway	Lowest Priority
Tucker Rd	South Fork River Trail to South Point Rd	Shared Use Path	Lowest Priority
Catawba Crossings Boulevard	South Fork River Crossing to Catawba River Crossing	Shared Use Path	Lowest Priority
Off Road	Pebble Creek Dr to City Limits	Greenway	Lowest Priority
Southfork Dr Connector	Point Crossing Ct to South Fork Pkwy	Shared Use Path	Lowest Priority
Oakland Ave Connector	Oakland Ave to Rocky Branch Trail	Greenway	Lowest Priority
Timber Ridge Rd Connector	Timber Ridge Rd to Railroad Trail	Greenway	Lowest Priority
Parkdale Dr	Keener Blvd to City Limits	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Cason St	Cason St to Cherry St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Ewing Dr		Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Todd St	Sacco St to Central Ave	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Johnson St	Central Ave to Prince St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Peach Orchard Rd	McAdenville Rd to Lake Dr	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Parkdale Dr	Tenth St to Landing Rd	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Samuel Pinckney Dr	Stowe Rd to Amanda Ln	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Dorie Dr	Stowe Rd to Hanks Creek Ln	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Kenwood St	Main St to Glenway St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Davis St	Woodrow Ave to Kenwood St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Piedmont St/River Dr	Tenth St to Linestowe Dr	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Faires Ave	Armstong Ford Rd to Powerline Ave	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
North St/Henry Ave	Hugh St/Julia Ave to RL Stowe Rd	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
East Ave	Keener Blvd to South St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Vesta St	Eagle Rd to Vesta St	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Elmore St	Faires Ave to Central Ave	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
South Point Rd	Armstrong Rd to South Point Beach Park	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Amanda Ln	Dorie Dr to N of Deas Dr	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
Prince St/Bryant St	Johnson St to McLeod Ave	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority
South St	Central Ave to East Ave	Sidewalk	Lowest Priority

Figure: Table of Prioritized Pedestrian Improvements - Continued (Kimley-Horn)

BICYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

To support active transportation and reduce vehicle dependence, the plan recommends a range of bicycle facilities. These improvements help create a cohesive bicycle network that links neighborhoods with key destinations and regional trails. Design treatments are tailored to the context of each corridor to ensure comfort and safety for both experienced and casual bicyclists.

BIKE LANES

A painted lane on a roadway dedicated to bicycles. The majority of Belmont’s proposed bicycle network consists of standard bike lanes.

SHARED LANES

A location where bicycles and vehicles share a lane marked for bicycle traffic. Also known as “sharrows” after the symbol used to indicate the shared lane. Shared Lanes are usually used in locations without enough right of way to add lanes and with slow enough traffic for the mixing of cars and bikes to be less dangerous.

SEPARATED BIKE LANES

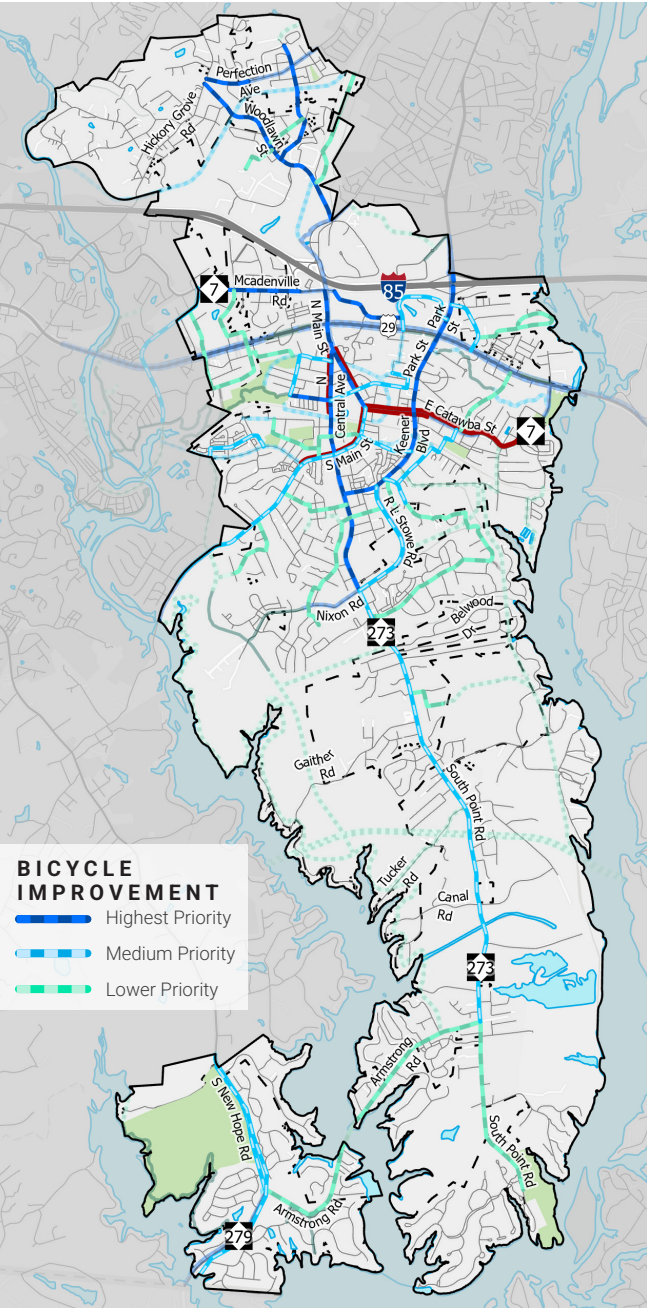
A bike lane separated from vehicle traffic for additional safety and comfort. The separation can range from a painted buffer to physical separation via a curb, flex posts, or other separators. Belmont’s planned network includes a separated bike lane along Park Street north of Downtown.

PAVED SHOULDERS

The paved portion of a roadway outside the lane lines on the side of the road. On more rural roadways where full bike facilities are unlikely to exist, paved shoulders can help provide a safer route for people biking.

PRIORITIZED BICYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

Belmont’s bicycle facility recommendations focus on creating a connected network in the north and central parts of the City first, and then expanding out the backbone to other major corridors and connections.



Map: Recommended Pedestrian Improvements by Priority Level (Kimley-Horn)

ROADWAY	PROJECT EXTENTS	IMPROVEMENT	PRIORITY
Central Ave	Main St to RL Stowe Rd	Bike Lane	Highest Priority
Keener Blvd	Central Ave to Catawba St	Bike Lane	Highest Priority
Woodlawn St	Hickory Grove Rd to Belmont-Mt Holly Rd	Paved Shoulder	Highest Priority
Park St	Catawba St to I-85	Separated Bike Lane	Highest Priority
Central Ave	N Main St to S Main St	Shared Lane Markings	Highest Priority
Main St/Belmont-Mt Holly Rd	McAdenville Rd to Catawba Ave	Other Bike Feature	Highest Priority
Caldwell Farm Rd	End of Proposed Shared Use Path to Hawley Ave	Bike Lane	Highest Priority
Acme Rd	Arc Dr to Woodlawn St	Bike Lane	Highest Priority
Park St	I-85 to CaroMont Parkway	Bike Lane	Highest Priority
McAdenville Rd	Peach Orchard Rd to I-85 Interchange/Proposed Belmont-Mt Holly Rd Realignment	Paved Shoulder	Highest Priority
Woodrow Ave	Sacco St to Central Ave	Other Bike Feature	Highest Priority
South Point Rd	RL Stowe Rd to Armstrong Rd	Bike Lane	Medium Priority
Main St/Armstrong Ford Rd	Central Ave to Cimarron Blvd	Bike Lane	Medium Priority
Hawley Ave	Wilkinson Blvd to Park St	Bike Lane	Medium Priority
New Hope Rd	Armstrong Rd to Planning Boundary near Worrells River Rd	Paved Shoulder	Medium Priority
RL Stowe Rd	Keener Blvd to South Point Rd	Shared Lane Markings	Medium Priority
Main St	Catawba St to Central Ave	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
New Hope Rd	Planning Boundary to SC Border	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
Browntown Rd	Park St to Wilkinson Blvd	Bike Lane	Medium Priority
Peach Orchard Rd/Lakewood Rd	McAdenville Rd to Lake Dr	Paved Shoulder	Medium Priority
Fifth St/Vine St	Ewing Dr to Catawba St	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
Assembly St	Eagle Rd/Eastwood to Eagle Rd/Assembly St	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
McLeod Ave	Main St to Keener Blvd	Shared Lane Markings	Medium Priority
Sacco St	Lincoln St to Woodrow Ave	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
Lincoln St	Sacco St to Central Ave	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
Woodrow Ave	Central Ave to Hawley Ave	Other Bike Feature	Medium Priority
Ewing Dr	Keener Blvd to Charles Dr	Bike Lane	Medium Priority
Armstrong Rd	New Hope Rd to South Point Rd	Paved Shoulder	Lowest Priority
Ewing Dr/Amanda Ln/Stowe Rd	Charles Dr/Ewing Dr to Stowe Rd/South Point Rd	Bike Lane	Lowest Priority
River Loop Rd	Browntown Rd to River Loop	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Sixth St	Catawba St to Wilkinson Blvd	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Morning Glory Ave	Ewing Dr to end of street	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
North St/Greenwood Ave/Shannon Dr	South Point High Fields to RL Stowe Rd	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Mellon Rd/Southfork Dr	Armstrong Ford Rd to Point Crossing Ct	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Secrest Ave/Gaston Ave	Armstrong Ford Rd to Central Ave	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Park Dr	Burns Mitchell Dr/Ferrell Ave to Oak St	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Oak St/Myrtle St	Oak St/Main St to Myrtle St/Main St	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Lincoln St	Mason St to Reid Park	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Belmont Ave	Full length of street	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
School St	Woodlawn St to Acme St	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Cason St	Woodlawn St to Cherry St	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Forest Hill Rd/Timber Ridge Rd		Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
South Point Rd	Armstrong Rd to South Point Beach Park	Paved Shoulder	Lowest Priority
Kee Rd/Barnes St/Mason St	McAdenville Rd to Wilkinson Blvd	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Mason St	Hubbard St to Wilkinson Blvd	Other Bike Feature	Lowest Priority
Georgia Belle Ave/Hubbard St	Peach Orchard Rd to Oakland Ave	Paved Shoulder	Lowest Priority

Figure: Table of Prioritized Bicycle Improvements (Kimley-Horn)



TRANSIT RECOMMENDATIONS

Although regional transit priorities have shifted, particularly with changes in CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) planning, transit remains an essential component of Belmont’s multimodal vision. Additionally, in accordance with the goals of coinciding plans, Belmont does not support the greenfield alignment projects being pursued by GDOT. To build a more connected and inclusive transportation network, the plan recommends several strategies to support and expand transit opportunities in the near and long term.

SUPPORT MICRO-TRANSIT PILOT PROGRAMS

Belmont has expressed support at the council level for exploring micro transit solutions—flexible, on-demand services that can serve neighborhoods and key destinations not accessible by fixed-route transit. These services can act as a vital first-mile/last-mile connector, especially in low-density areas where traditional bus service is not feasible. Nearby Gastonia has already implemented a similar service (GoGastonia) and could be partners in establishing this microtransit zone.

EXPLORE PARK-AND-RIDE OPPORTUNITIES

To support regional commuting and reduce congestion, park-and-ride lots should be evaluated near high-traffic corridors like Wilkinson Boulevard and I-85. These facilities can complement future express buses, micro transit, or carpooling initiatives and help connect Belmont residents with transit options to Charlotte and beyond.



COORDINATE WITH REGIONAL TRANSIT AND LONG-TERM HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT OPTIONS

While CATS’ priorities may have shifted, Belmont should remain engaged in regional transit discussions and position itself for future high-capacity transit connections. Long-term opportunities could include:

- Belmont Trolley connecting downtown with Belmont Abbey College and eventually Mount Holly and other parts of Gaston County
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Wilkinson Boulevard
- Express bus service to Charlotte employment hubs
- Enhanced rail connectivity through regional coordination

DEVELOP MOBILITY HUBS

As identified in the Connect Beyond regional mobility framework, mobility hubs serve as centralized points where travelers can transfer between modes such as walking, biking, micro transit, or regional transit. Belmont should consider planning for future mobility hubs along key corridors, particularly:

- Near Wilkinson Boulevard
- Around major employment centers
- In Downtown Belmont

These hubs should include amenities such as bike parking, wayfinding, waiting areas, EV charging, potential park-and-ride facilities, mapping and route information, and shelters.

SUGGESTED MOBILITY HUB LOCATIONS

Location is important when planning mobility hubs since they need to be in locations that work to connect across multiple modes. While these locations are flexible, the following are four locations that could potentially make good locations for intermodal mobility hubs.

Wilkinson Boulevard between Main Street and Park Street:

- CATS 85X Gastonia Express
- Near I-85, US 29, and NC 273
- Available land along Wilkinson Boulevard High Capacity Transit Corridor
- Near several shopping centers

Main Street/McAdenville Road Park and Ride:

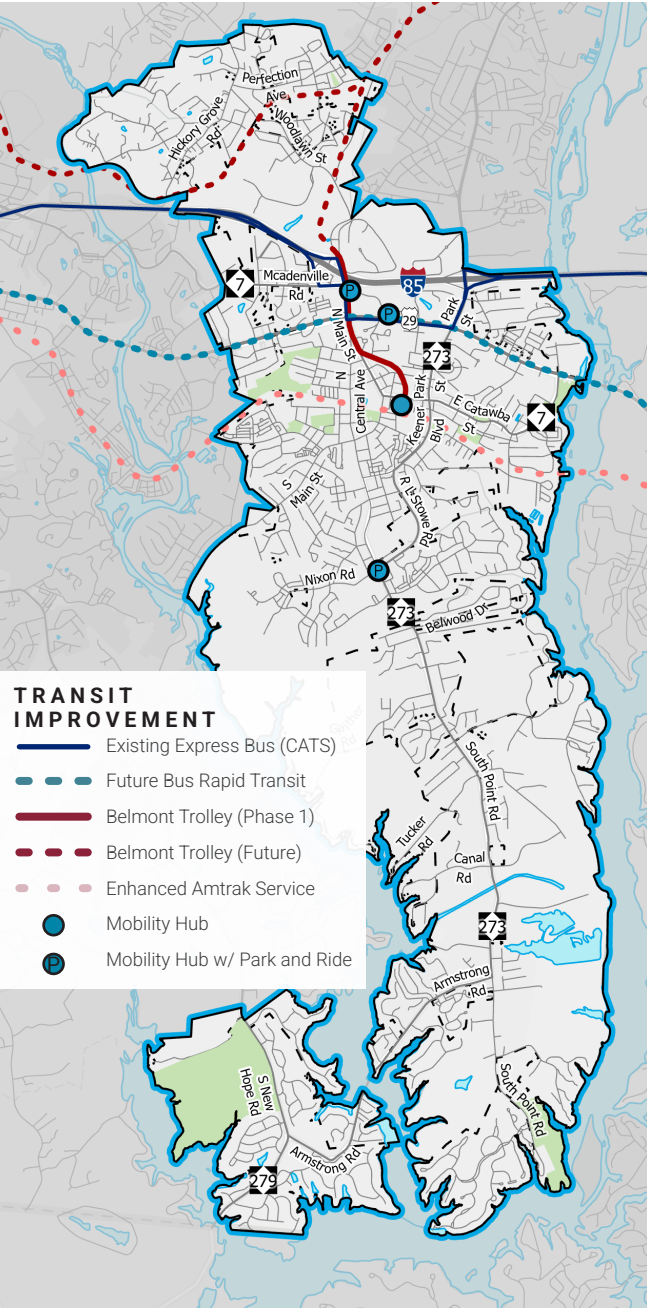
- Available land near I-85 interchange
- Along CATS 85X and proposed Belmont Trolley

Belmont Trolley Car Barn/Station:

- Proposed as a central destination and downtown hub
- Terminus of proposed Belmont Trolley
- Potential for Amtrak intercity rail station

RL Stowe Road/South Point Road:

- Major intersection in south central Belmont
- Gateway to southern Belmont
- Nearby apartments, retail, and schools



Map: Recommended Transit Improvements (Kimley-Horn)

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

To bring these recommendations to life and build momentum for long-term investment, a series of ten demonstration projects have been identified. Each demonstration project was selected based on its potential to address a known issue, improve safety for vulnerable users, and build support for future implementation.

While the ten selected demonstration projects primarily focus on roadway and bike/ped improvements, transit-related elements could also be included as part of a demonstration project, particularly within the proposed Wilkinson Boulevard corridor improvements. A pilot micro transit service, park-and-ride enhancements, or a temporary mobility hub installation could serve as an early action item to test concepts and gather community feedback.

This chapter of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan provides a high-level overview of the ten selected projects. Full profiles, project descriptions, locations, cost estimations (2025 dollars), and conceptual designs can be found in the full Multimodal Plan.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Implementing the Multimodal Plan will require a coordinated approach to funding and partnerships. While many of the recommendations in this plan are ambitious, a wide range of local, state, federal, and private funding mechanisms can be leveraged to bring these projects to life. The full Multimodal Plan outlines key strategies and potential partners that can help support both short-term improvements and long-term infrastructure investments.

Some of these critical opportunities include leveraging developer partnerships to deliver needed multimodal infrastructure, seeking state and federal funding for capital improvements, and exploring advocacy pathways to expand the capacity for local option sales taxes to fund transportation improvements in North Carolina.

ROADWAY-FOCUSED IMPROVEMENTS

A

**WILKINSON BOULEVARD**  
From Planning Boundary (South Fork) to Planning Boundary (Catawba River)

B

**RL STOWE ROAD**  
From Keener Boulevard to South Point Road

C

**SOUTH POINT ROAD**  
From Nixon Road/RL Stowe Road to Armstrong Road

D

**NEW HOPE ROAD**  
From Planning Boundary (near Worrells River Road) to Planning Boundary (near State Line)

E

**NIXON ROAD**  
From South Fork Parkway to South Point Road

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED IMPROVEMENTS

A

**CATAWBA STREET**  
From Main Street to Wilkinson Boulevard

B

**PERFECTION AVENUE**  
From Hickory Grove Road to planning boundary

C

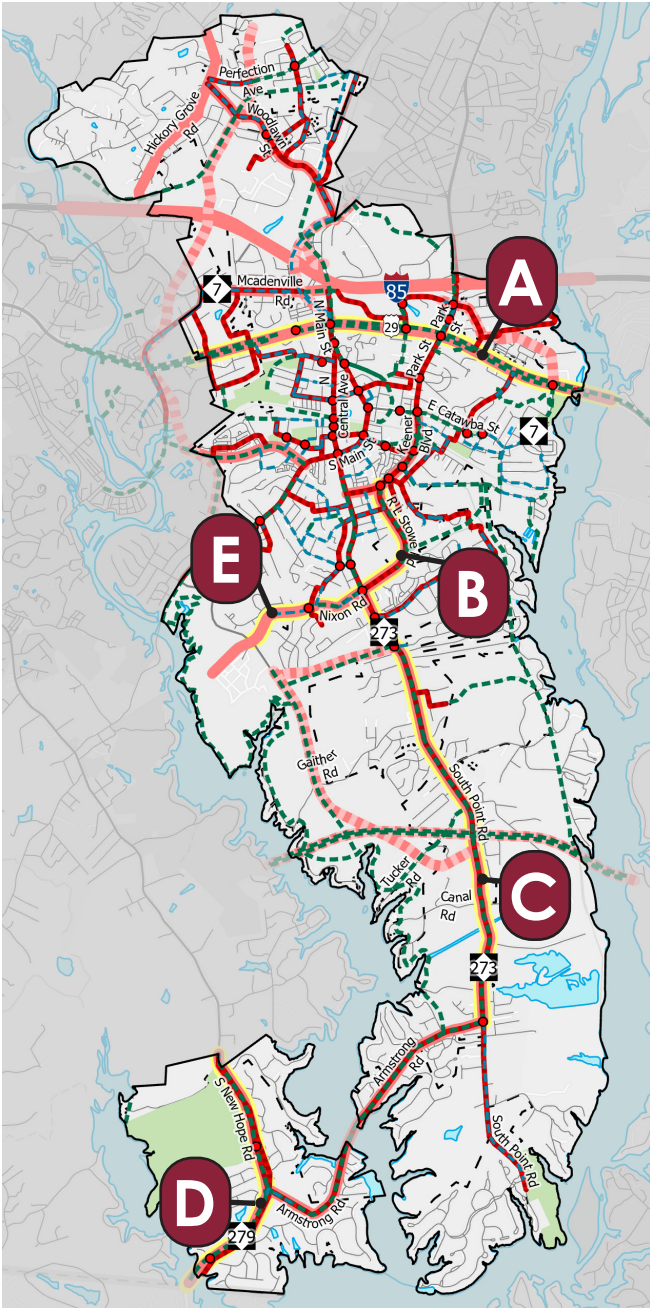
**WOODROW AVENUE**  
From Rocky Branch Trail to Park Street

D

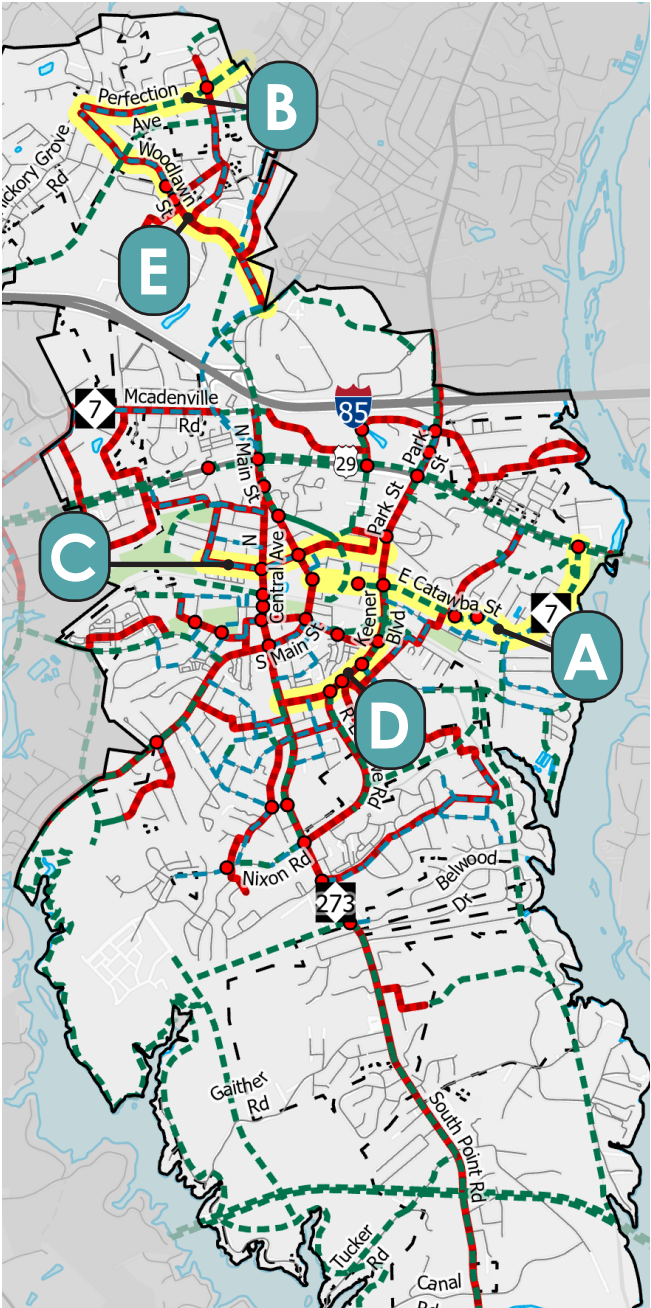
**KEENER BOULEVARD**  
From Central Avenue to Catawba Street

E

**WOODLAWN STREET**  
From Hickory Grove Road to Belmont-Mt Holly Road



Map: Roadway-focused Improvements (Kimley-Horn)



Map: Bicycle/Pedestrian-focused Improvements (Kimley-Horn)



OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

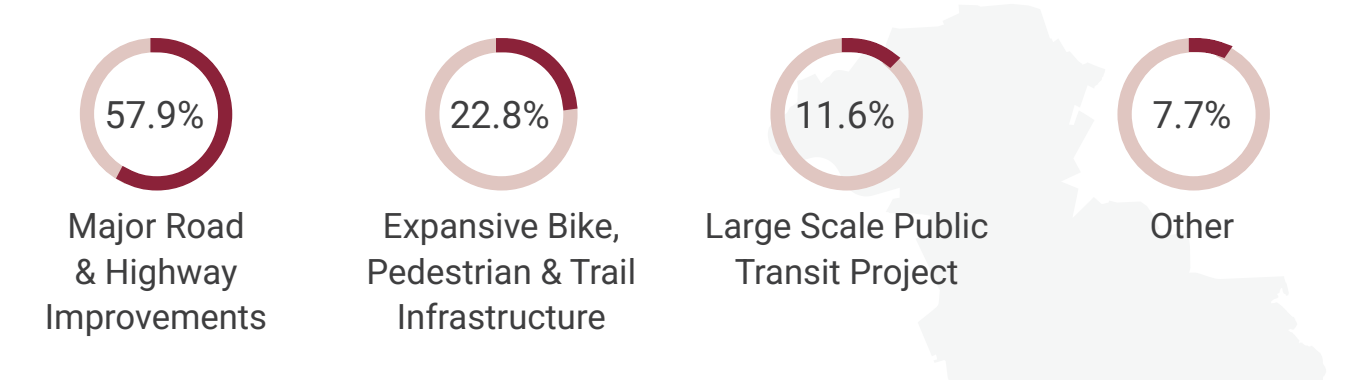
- Residents desire a balanced approach to transportation investment, with a fairly even mix of large capital investments along with smaller maintenance efforts.
- Congestion management is a critical priority for the community, but with a balanced emphasis on safety improvements.
- The majority of the community would like to see investment in road and highway improvements. However, almost 50% agreed that they would walk, bike, or take transit more often if better options were available.
- Peak-hour traffic causes significant commute delays, especially along key corridors that lack sufficient roadway capacity or multimodal alternatives.
- Belmont’s anticipated growth may increase travel demand, requiring proactive multimodal planning to prevent worsening congestion
- Need for new developments to follow transit- and pedestrian-friendly designs.
- Low public transit use due to limited coverage, convenience and awareness reinforce new and existing traffic issues.
- Incomplete sidewalks and bike lanes create safety risks.
- Crash rates, including 31 fatal/incapacitating injuries during the last five years, highlight a need for safer streets and intersections.
- Limited funding challenges infrastructure improvements, necessitating prioritization and a diversification of sources.

MOBILITY

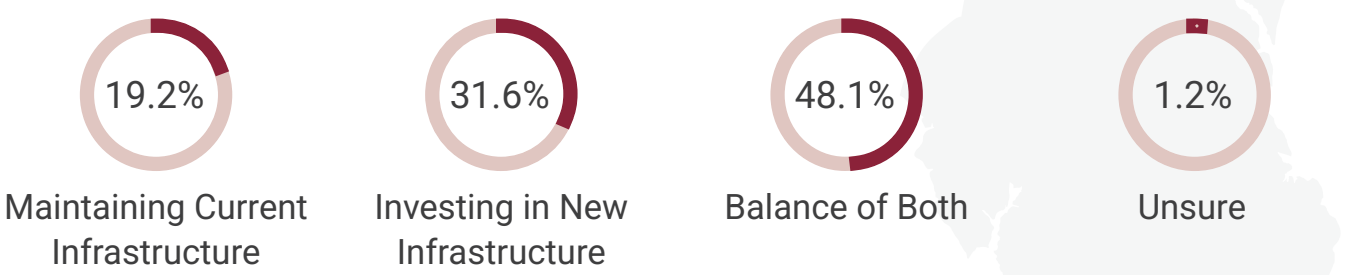
2024-2025 community outreach findings



“IF BELMONT COULD ONLY FOCUS ON ONE MAJOR TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS, WHAT WOULD YOU PREFER?”

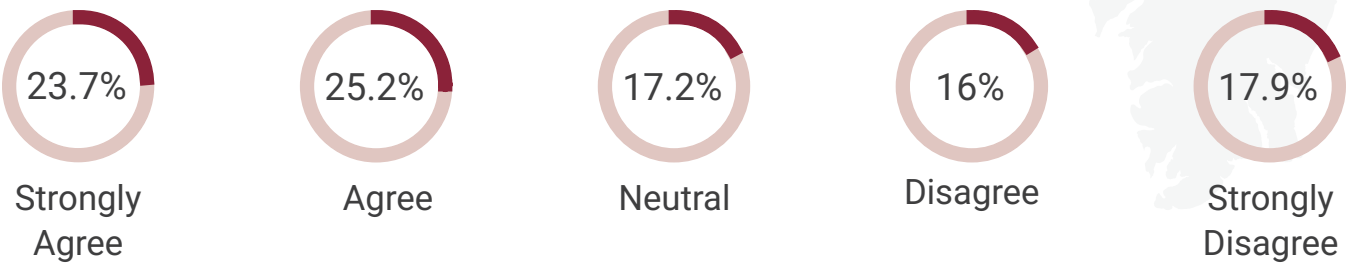


“WHICH DO YOU VALUE MORE?”



Nearly 80% of residents believe New Infrastructure is key to Belmont’s future.

“I WOULD WALK, BIKE, AND/OR TAKE TRANSIT MORE IF I HAD BETTER ACCESS TO THESE OPTIONS.”





07

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

To protect and enhance the character of Belmont by building on our heritage, protecting historic resources, embracing surrounding rivers and lakes, improving community appearance, and promoting social and economic diversity.

With its bountiful natural resources, rich history, and family-friendly neighborhoods, Belmont exudes small-town charm, all while in close proximity to Charlotte, a major regional hub.

These qualities have proven attractive to many, and as Belmont inevitably continues to grow, it is critical to preserve the elements that make this City unique while providing for new social and economic opportunities. The goal of this plan’s Community Character element is to nurture Belmont’s existing cultural, historic, and natural assets while still allowing the City to evolve and meet the needs of future generations. Through thoughtful planning and community engagement, Belmont can leverage its unique qualities and fortify its community character.

DEFINING BELMONT

Above all, community engagement, conducted across eight workshops, several pop-up events, and through various virtual channels, helped to define the overarching vision for Belmont outlined in this plan. Out of 2,000+ comments heard, respondent’s definitions of Belmont in three words were some of the most insightful.



This icon represents “Community Character” content.



Image: Downtown Belmont set amongst leafy neighborhoods (source: Belmont Trolley via Facebook).

“What three words best describe Belmont?”

As demonstrated by the “word cloud” graphic below, it is clear Belmont residents are overwhelmingly positive about their community. Popular words like “charming,” “community,” and “friendly,” exemplify this, while “quaint” and “small town” reflect Belmont’s beloved ambiance.

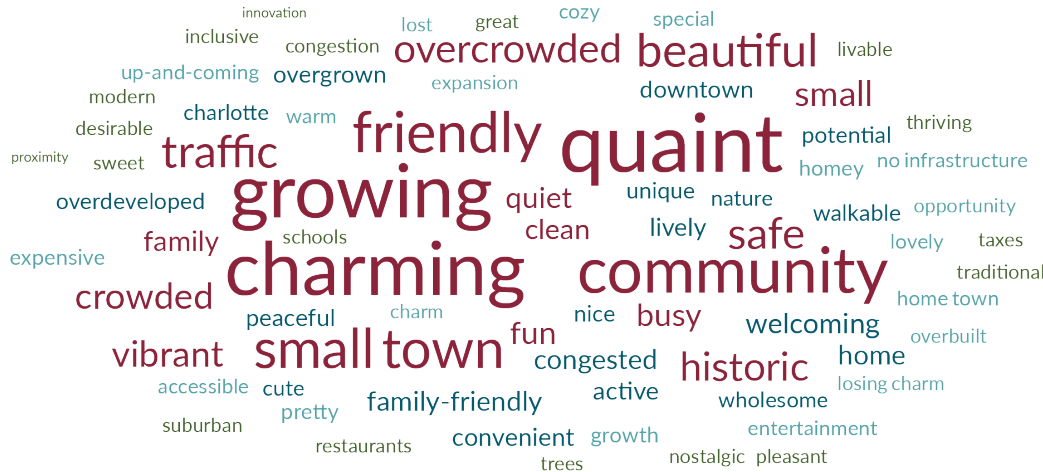
These words highlight the City’s past and present –with the positive aspects to be considered a force this plan harnesses to ensure a better future and that doubles down on what makes Belmont ... *Belmont!*

HEADLINE FINDINGS

Safe, stable and attractive neighborhoods are essential to Belmont’s quality of life. Easy access to amenities and other parts of the City keep them desirable, as does preservation of the existing mill communities consisting of modest homes, brick detailing, and other elements.

A strong Downtown is a strong Belmont. The City’s active, historic Downtown supports its small-town feel and family-friendly identity apart from other suburbs.

Environmental integrity is key. The adjacent rivers, lake, and lush tree canopy are core to Belmont’s character.





# GOAL 5 COMMUNITY CHARACTER

To protect and enhance the character of Belmont by building on our heritage, protecting historic resources, embracing surrounding rivers and lakes, improving community appearance, and promoting social and economic diversity.

## POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

### POLICY 1. The City should preserve the authenticity of Downtown.

- 1.1. **Project** – Using the Land Development Code and marketing efforts, Belmont should encourage a mix of uses that are complementary with each other and Downtown's character.
- 1.2. **Project** – Working with building owners, Belmont should focus on attracting small, independent businesses to Downtown that cater to a pedestrian-oriented environment.
- 1.3. **Project** – Encourage a wider range of Downtown eateries with diverse cuisine and health-focused options.
- 1.4. **Project** – Create a detailed Downtown Master Plan that identifies infill potential, establishes a marketing strategy, proposes the location(s) for structured parking, and identifies key architectural elements.
- 1.5. **Project** – Encourage appropriately scaled residential development Downtown, such as upper floor housing units above commercial uses.

### POLICY 2. New development on the edges of Downtown should serve as effective transitional land uses to surrounding residential areas.

- 2.1. **Project** – Investigate additional zoning districts to implement desired form on the edge of Downtown. These should be intentional form-based codes that regulate building design more than use types.

- 2.2. **Project** – Encourage small to medium-sized uses that do not require significant land assembly.

- 2.3. **Project** – Allow retail uses on the edges of Downtown, such as neighborhood services in residential areas that will serve adjacent residents.

### POLICY 3. The Reid, North Belmont, and East Belmont neighborhoods should be supported through new investments that enhance their unique character without causing displacement.

- 3.1. **Project** – Ensure that the policies and standards of the Land Development Code support and strengthen these existing neighborhoods as well as areas determined to have a specific character.
- 3.2. **Project** – Work to attract a range of neighborhood-scale housing typologies to each of these neighborhoods, where possible.
- 3.3. **Project** – Leverage the potential of East End to provide a revitalized commercial core (Village Center) for East Belmont and generate stronger connections to Downtown.
- 3.4. **Project** – Discourage residential development and improvements that are out of scale and character within existing residential areas that can lead to or worsen the effects of gentrification.

### POLICY 4. Future development should be designed to contribute to a dynamic and accessible waterfront along portions of the peninsula.

- 4.1. **Project** – Both public and private development(s) should leverage public, common access to the shoreline where possible.

### POLICY 5. The City should coordinate with the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission and other community groups advocating for historic preservation to preserve key landmarks and districts in the community.

- 5.1. **Project** – Survey properties in and around Downtown every five years to determine if any deserve local designation.
- 5.2. **Project** – Investigate expansion of Belmont's National Historic District.
- 5.3. **Project** – Advocate for and encourage methods to protect the urban fabric, historic architecture, and community character of the City Center.
- 5.4. **Project** – Advocate for the preservation and reuse of the former City Hall building.
- 5.5. **Project** – Work with Belmont's historical organizations to expand both guided and self-guided walking tours, possibly during National Historic Preservation Month, among other activities that raise awareness.



**POLICY 6. The City should take steps to create a sense of arrival to Belmont.**

- 6.1. Project** – New development around identified entry points to the City should include a highly visible gateway monument with modern branding and statement landscaping.
- 6.2. Project** – Enhance the City’s gateways by cultivating the right mix of land uses and controls through changes in the Land Development Code and Zoning Map, particularly along Wilkinson Boulevard.
- 6.3. Project** – Embrace critical road construction projects, such as the Wilkinson Boulevard (US-29/74) bridge replacement and the I-85 widening project, as an opportunity for community beautification.
- 6.4. Project** – Continue to utilize the City’s *2020 Belmont Brand Guidebook* and any successive document, to design and implement new wayfinding signage within the City.

**POLICY 7. The City should celebrate its distinct neighborhoods and districts while improving a sense of unity.**

- 7.1. Project** – Work to better connect both the commercial and residential areas of Downtown through mobility, recreation, and visible branding.
- 7.2. Project** – Create a branding and connectivity plan for North Belmont and East Belmont while keeping with the overall brand standards established for the City.

**POLICY 8. The City should formally promote and protect the architectural character of key buildings and districts.**

- 8.1. Project** – Develop Design Guidelines for Belmont’s historic Downtown that are reinforced through incentives and advocacy.
- 8.2. Project** – Review the Land Development Code for its effectiveness in reinforcing distinct character elements and allowance of vernacular architectural styles.
- 8.3. Project** – Increase investment into Belmont’s Facade Enhancement Grant Program and consider expanding its eligibility to commercial structures in other areas of the City.

**POLICY 9. Small-town charm, historic and environmental integrity, a family-friendly atmosphere, and safe, stable, attractive neighborhoods are essential elements of Belmont’s character that need to be preserved as the City evolves.**

- 9.1. Project** – Ensure the Land Development Code and other relevant policies allow property owners to build new development that respects the old, essential fabric of the City, such as historic development patterns, uses, and other design characteristics.
- 9.2. Project** – Recruit more youth and teen-oriented retail, entertainment, and leisure activities that target this growing age group.

**POLICY 10. The City’s existing building stock is an important community asset that should be maintained through adaptive reuse and preservation techniques when feasible.**

- 10.1. Project** – Encourage appropriate adaptive re-use of older buildings by developing an inventory of existing underutilized or vacant buildings, identifying potential appropriate uses for each building given its location and context within the City, and market buildings for appropriate uses.
- 10.2. Project** – Ensure that adaptive reuse is not prevented or discouraged through unnecessary Land Development Code restrictions or building regulations.
- 10.3. Project** – Establish standards of best practices for adaptive reuse and preservation in the City Center and beyond.

**POLICY 11. The City should proactively pursue redevelopment of sites that are incongruent with the character Belmont seeks to reinforce.**

- 11.1. Project** – Identify abandoned or underutilized properties, particularly former mills or other large industrial sites, and work with the private sector to facilitate their character-appropriate redevelopment. Some sites may be historically eligible.
- 11.2. Project** – Encourage and assist Duke Energy with transitioning a portion of the Allen Steam Station property to another use or uses that supports the Belmont community, such as a regional park and recreation facility.

**POLICY 12. The City should amend and enforce current nuisance regulations as needed to address property deterioration.**

- 12.1. Project** – Review the current Nuisance Code to identify problems and opportunities, and adopt revisions as needed.
- 12.2. Project** – Address the condition of existing commercial properties that are deteriorating or dilapidated through enforcement of property maintenance codes and the Land Development Code.

**POLICY 13. The City should work to reduce the amount of litter along streets, within public spaces, in waterways, and at the rivers’ edge.**

- 13.1. Project** – Continue to advocate for Keep Belmont Beautiful and coordinate with Catawba Riverkeeper and other organizations to identify and intervene in areas that necessitate waste clean-up.
- 13.2. Project** – Continue to participate in and market Keep Belmont Beautiful’s biannual clean-up days.
- 13.3. Project** – Create “adopt-a-road,” “adopt-a-river,” and similar programs.
- 13.4. Project** – Provide adequate trash and recycling facilities in public areas throughout the City to reduce litter.





Image: Main Street (source: City of Belmont)



Image: Homes on Linestowe Dr (source: Compass Real Estate)



Image: Waterfront at McLean (source: Keystone Custom Homes)



Image: Hawthorne Park (source: Zillow)

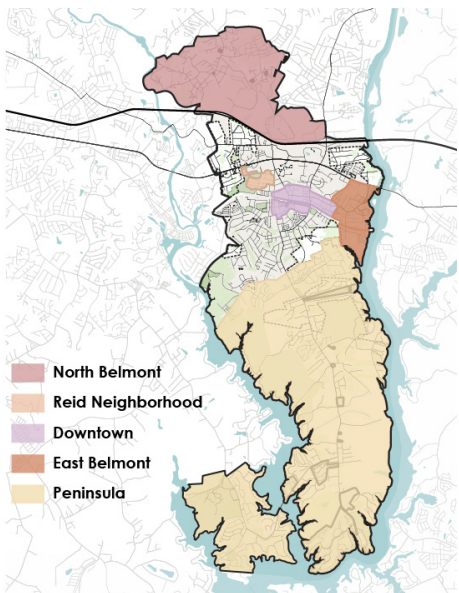
### A CITY OF DIVERSE CHARACTER

Despite a planning area of just 20 square miles, Belmont is a striking mosaic of distinct neighborhoods and districts constructed across three centuries. In recent decades however, it has been dominated by a generally suburban growth pattern, whereby each of the City's areas varies considerably in its character, density, and style.

The oldest of these, the traditional mill villages, situated within walking distance of the textile mills that built and owned them until the 1970s and 1980s, remain largely occupied and well-cared for. Prominent examples include the Crescent Mill Village (now Adams Bluff), North Belmont, and East Belmont, where residents all have strong commitments to their neighborhoods and push for them to continue to be viable, thriving communities into the future.

Other identifiable districts that contribute to the character of Belmont include those that make up Downtown and its immediate context, as well as the varied newer neighborhoods throughout the South Point and McLean areas of the peninsula.

This diverse mix of neighborhoods and areas each contribute to Belmont's overall charm in their own way, making it essential to recognize these variations and harmonize them into a strategic plan for measured, tasteful growth across the Planning Area.



Map: Areas of Belmont (data source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)

### DOWNTOWN

The streets and blocks within and near the historic commercial center of Belmont are cherished for their quiet, family-friendly atmosphere, historic building patterns and homes, and mature tree canopy. Housing sizes, ages and styles range widely from block to block and often even within blocks. There is also variability in housing types in certain areas where accessory dwellings, duplexes, and slightly higher density residential development mix with single-family detached homes.

The Downtown neighborhood includes a National Register of Historic Places district originally listed in 1996, boasting Main Street's most distinctive structures and several adjacent homes of varying architectural styles. Ten properties are also locally designated by the Gaston County Historic Preservation Commission. To preserve these assets for Belmont's future generations, consideration should be given to expanding the district and encouraging more properties to become local landmarks.

Today, Downtown Belmont is expanding. Recent projects like Chronicle Mill, a redevelopment of the historic textile site completed in 2023, and the Imperial Lofts infill project added desirable residential housing options closer to walkable amenities and services located downtown.

Moreover, an increasing appetite by the community for further infill and adaptive reuse projects within and adjacent to Downtown presents an incredible opportunity to extend the district and offer new, complementary uses. In addition to housing and workplace options, other re-use opportunities include additions to the impressive existing restaurant scene, art galleries and shops.

The Downtown Belmont Development Association (DBDA) and Main Street are committed to enhancing businesses and aesthetics within each of the three distinct districts in Downtown Belmont: Historic Downtown, Chronicle, and East End. As interest in this area continues to expand, a

proactive look should be taken at these district boundaries, and the boundaries of the Center City Small Area Plan, to ensure that new development compliments the style and distinct character elements that exist today. Additionally, Belmont should develop a new Downtown Master Plan and consider crafting Downtown Design Guidelines to be promoted through incentives and/or updates to the Land Development Code.

Beyond Main Street, this guidance could be harnessed to shape infill development on the edges of Downtown, creating effective transitions to the district's immediate context. To the north and south, there are traditional single-family neighborhoods; to the west, there are parks, open space and some adjacent gravel lots suitable for redevelopment.

During public engagement, 97.4% of survey respondents noted Downtown Belmont or Stowe Park as a city-defining location, illustrating this core area's importance to the community. Overall, strengthening downtown through targeted new investment and actions that enhance its character must be a top priority of this plan.



Image: Main Street (DBDA), Chronicle Mill Apartments (source: BB+M Architecture), Catawba Street (DBDA)



BELMONT'S NEIGHBORHOODS

EAST BELMONT

Spanning a large area between Downtown and the Catawba River, bounded by both Wilkinson Boulevard and the freight rail line, East Belmont represents a diverse collection of land uses and deep, historical ties to the former textile industry.

Critically, East Catawba Street also serves as a gateway to Downtown, with a significant swath of land visible to travelers from I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard. As this plan prioritizes strengthening the sense of arrival to Belmont, several opportunities for high-impact beautification, infrastructure, and even infill development projects on the City's edges and highest traffic routes are in East Belmont.

Concerning what's on the ground today, there are many neighborhood styles in East Belmont, ranging from established single-family detached homes developed primarily as mill housing, to neighborhoods comprised solely of manufactured housing. Housing sizes, ages, and styles vary widely, but homes generally have a small to medium-sized footprint. Multi-family complexes are present here as well, though generally in the form of smaller multifamily units and quadruplexes.

Older commercial developments and underused vacant land also occupy notable portions of the area and offer significant opportunities for future investments. Streetscape improvements and facade upgrades have already been made along two primary blocks, but underutilized buildings and surrounding vacant land have left this node isolated. Fostering residential infill development on these adjacent empty parcels and continuing the enhanced streetscape to Downtown could foster a better sense of place in this area.

Another major opportunity is the shoreline in East Belmont which is relatively underdeveloped, presenting significant potential here for a vibrant waterfront district. Such a destination would build on existing mixed uses in

the area, which include a marina, multi-family housing, and several businesses. Assets like Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park, the new Belmont Recreation Center and Belmont Skate Park are also nearby – as are possible connections for a future greenway. A Small Area Plan may prove useful to better define and guide development goals in this part of Belmont.

REID NEIGHBORHOOD

The Reid Neighborhood, located immediately northwest of Downtown and just south of Belmont's two main corridors (Interstate 85 and Wilkinson Boulevard), is a historically Black neighborhood named after African American educator and prominent citizen, Charles Jesse Bynum Reid. This intact neighborhood primarily includes small to medium-sized single family detached homes but is currently experiencing infill that may change its character.

With new developments far exceeding the median value of housing being built in most areas of Belmont, the opportunities for purchase and renovation underscore the importance of preserving naturally occurring affordable housing in the Reid Neighborhood, as well as exploring further attainable housing opportunities on infill sites. A neighborhood rich in history, it exemplifies Belmont's vision of a family-friendly community.

A central asset of the community is the site of the former Reid High School, which closed in 1966. Today, the aptly-named Reid Park, one of Belmont's most popular green spaces, is currently on this site, along with nearby Hood Memorial African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Zion Church and Rocky Branch Park. In between, on Sacco Street, Charles Reid's childhood home still stands.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD AND INFILL DEVELOPMENTS

In Belmont, the Land Development Code (LDC) requires a minimum of forty acres for Traditional Neighborhood



Image: Historic Single-Family Home near Reid Park and Downtown Belmont (source: Coldwell Banker Homes)

Developments (TNDs) whereas infill development is characterized by no new infrastructure required (such as no new streets or utility lines) to support a proposed development and/or subdivision. Though constructed after 1990, neighborhoods such as Eagle Park, Hawthorne Park and Belmont Reserve represent a return to the pedestrian-focused urbanism that dominated Belmont's foundations and early history and are examples of this type of development. These places echo the railroad and mill-oriented neighborhoods that once represented the majority of the city, offering housing diversity for families of all sizes, transportation choice and integrated green space. These neighborhoods are often characterized by walkable, tree-lined streets, on-street parking, rear service alleys and raised first floors with porches or stoops in the front.

During public engagement, residents highlighted the ability of their families to remain in the same neighborhood throughout different stages of life that demanded larger or smaller homes, as well as the opportunity for their children to grow into their own rowhouse or townhome down the block before single-family properties were within financial reach. Eagle Park residents enjoy easy foot or bicycle access to Belmont Elementary School,

while those living in Hawthorne Park can comfortably walk to downtown businesses and events, supporting local businesses.

While this development style is not desirable everywhere, TND and infill opportunities represent two of the most efficient strategies of development in Belmont. By clustering homes in close proximity to one another, and allowing for a mix of lot sizes and attached and detached housing styles, this type of development results in less street lengths (mileage) overall with far fewer linear-feet of utility lines, less infrastructure requiring public maintenance, and the creation of more taxable properties per acre, all while providing a safe, highly desirable community atmosphere.

Overall, the TND typology contributes to Belmont's distinct, family-focused and historically-rooted community character. Continuing to cultivate this style of infill growth on vacant land around Downtown and in mixed use areas (see Section 3, "Land Use") will be important in maintaining the city's fabric and sense of place.



Image: Traditional Neighborhood Development Style in Belmont's Infill Communities (source: Belmont Realty)



SOUTH POINT PENINSULA

The South Point Peninsula is characterized by newer, single-family residential development, with many neighborhoods situated along Lake Wylie and its coves. Built as subdivisions, often with over 100 homes, these residential developments are organized around a small network of collector streets with few surrounding commercial or public uses. Aside from the water and a marina/ restaurant, the area’s most prominent amenity is the Daniel Stowe Conservancy, situated off of New Hope Road. At nearly 400 acres, this destination represents Belmont’s largest green space.

Overall, the neighborhoods in this area are generally wealthier than the rest of the City with the exception of the highest income Downtown-adjacent communities, with median home value above \$400,000 across the entire primary peninsula (see Section 5, “Economy”). Significant changes are not currently proposed to the existing development pattern, which means that this will likely continue to be the case, depending upon how Gaston County conducts its future land use reviews - and considering Belmont’s limited influence outside of its jurisdiction.

While peaceful, most of these neighborhoods tend to be less walkable internally due to limited shade (tree canopy)



Image: New Single-Family Residential Development in South Point Peninsula (source: Google Earth)

and a lack of sidewalks, though newer developments like Overlake and The Conservancy include them. This condition exists externally beyond each neighborhood onto key arteries like South Point, New Hope and Armstrong Roads, where pedestrian access to most locations outside of these neighborhoods is limited.

In fact, community feedback revealed residents in this area named traffic congestion on South Point Road as their foremost issue, a symptom not only of lacking potential multi-modal transportation options, but even more so, isolation from the retail, services and institutions necessary to help residents meet every day needs. This is one of several reasons this plan advocates for a Village Center (or centers) further south on the peninsula.

With the South Point Peninsula representing the vast majority of the planning area’s remaining undeveloped land, Belmont should be alert as developers seek to capitalize on the opportunity. Certainly, zoning appropriately and advocating to the private sector for envisioned commercial development, as well as incentivizing the incorporation of more diverse housing types (such as clustered single family units), will be key to cultivating a higher-functioning area.

Finally, identifying additional locations to create public waterfront access along the peninsula will be critical



Image: Public Waterfront Access Along South Fork River Near Reflection Pointe (source: Duke Energy)

to preventing the complete privatization of Belmont’s remaining shoreline.

Locations like South Point Beach Park and its boat ramp, near Reflection Pointe, are extremely popular throughout the warmer months, allowing all residents to enjoy Belmont’s waterfront. Such access points incorporated as part of each new, shoreline-adjacent development (either as publicly-dedicated and accessible open space or private common amenities), will effectively increase the City’s relationship to the water and make it an even more desirable place to live. A recently approved schematic plan (under a conditional zoning) by Del Webb creates publicly accessible trails along the South Fork River and represents a step in the right direction. This should serve as a model to maximize benefit from new private investment.

NORTH BELMONT

An informal area encompassing both Belmont and Gaston County land north of I-85, North Belmont is characterized by sprawling streets lined with older, more affordable homes with smaller lots and set-backs.

North Belmont is also associated with Belmont Abbey, a major historic landmark of the region. Belmont Abbey - a Benedictine monastery and small Catholic liberal arts

college - also provides a unique identity for Belmont, as does its sister institution, the Sisters of Mercy Convent. The Abbey’s neo-Gothic architecture is visible from I-85 and its beautiful campus is a distinctive landmark on the north side of Belmont. Detailed planning for the Abbey’s extensive landholdings has been directed by the Montcross Small Area Plan, which covers much of North Belmont and has facilitated major recent developments, including the CaroMount Health Belmont Medical Center.

Benefiting from close freeway access, the area is also interspersed with industrial development, including The Oaks Business Park.

Like other areas of Belmont, such as East Belmont and the Reid Neighborhood, many of the homes here are mill village houses that hearken back to the textile age. These smaller homes, often of clapboard construction, provide important naturally-occurring affordable housing for many of Belmont’s residents. These homes are also becoming more popular within the region, especially among younger households, for their greater affordability and more traditional community design elements. These homes provide a house size missing from the new home market which is desirable for both entry-level and aging residents.



Image: Belmont Abbey College campus (source: Belmont Abbey College)

Image: Residential Street Pattern and Streetscape Conditions in South Point Peninsula (source: Zillow)





Image: Various land uses in North Belmont (source: Google Earth)

Above all, North Belmont is both physically and perceptually separated from the rest of the City due to the barrier posed by I-85 and the industrial and institutional uses that border this corridor. To better integrate this area, it is necessary to **improve connectivity** by expanding multi-modal transportation opportunities. **Further pursuit of the Belmont Rail Trail concept**, which may eventually be accompanied by a privately operated Belmont Trolley, will drastically improve safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle access between North Belmont and Downtown.

Community feedback has also communicated the desire to **revitalize deteriorating buildings, reduce nuisances and blight, and expand the variety of commercial and mixed-use development available** to meet needs locally. Where aging industrial facilities are located, particularly along the railroad line(s), they negatively impact adjacent neighborhood land value, while vacant or underutilized commercial spaces along Woodlawn Street and Hickory Grove Road (outside the City Limits) are in desperate need of a face lift to improve marketability.

Outlining a bright future for North Belmont are **two planned Village Centers**, designed to build on local services already available along Perfection Avenue. **Increased housing**

diversity and additional commercial integration in these areas will greatly improve the quality of life for North Belmont’s residents.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREAS

Neighborhood Conservation Areas are defined as areas possessing unique and distinctive features, history, identity and character that are unanimously considered worthy of conservation. In Belmont, these tools have so far been used sparingly to enforce low density development in naturally sensitive areas and are suggested as overlay districts identified in the 2018 Future Land Use Map.

New Conservation Areas could also be used to reinforce historic character in the face of neighborhood change, should there be sufficient public support and subject to enforceability under North Carolina law(s). Conservation Area stakeholders could collaborate with the City to create Neighborhood Conservation Plan(s) (a set of best practices) to facilitate the revitalization, maintenance, and protection of the area’s character and quality of life. Doing so will better ensure that residents and property owners are at the forefront of decisions regarding what aspects of the neighborhood should be preserved and what should be introduced.

Neighborhood Conservation Plans should include the preparation of design guidelines that encourage compatible uses that further enhance the neighborhood’s character and limit those that would radically alter the existing conditions. Neighborhood characteristics such as massing, building scale, parcel size, and building orientation should be the focus for protection, though individual building details may also be addressed. Regulation and enforceability of these plans by the City itself will be strictly limited based on current North Carolina statutes. Infill development of vacant or underused lots should be encouraged as well. These plans should also identify funding opportunities to enhance the neighborhood’s infrastructure, amenities, aesthetics, and safety.

Plans can be enforced by Conservation Overlay Districts that define specific provisions, such as permitted and encouraged uses and development guidelines that specify allowable building forms and any standards that would ensure that the character is maintained in a way that is unique to each area.

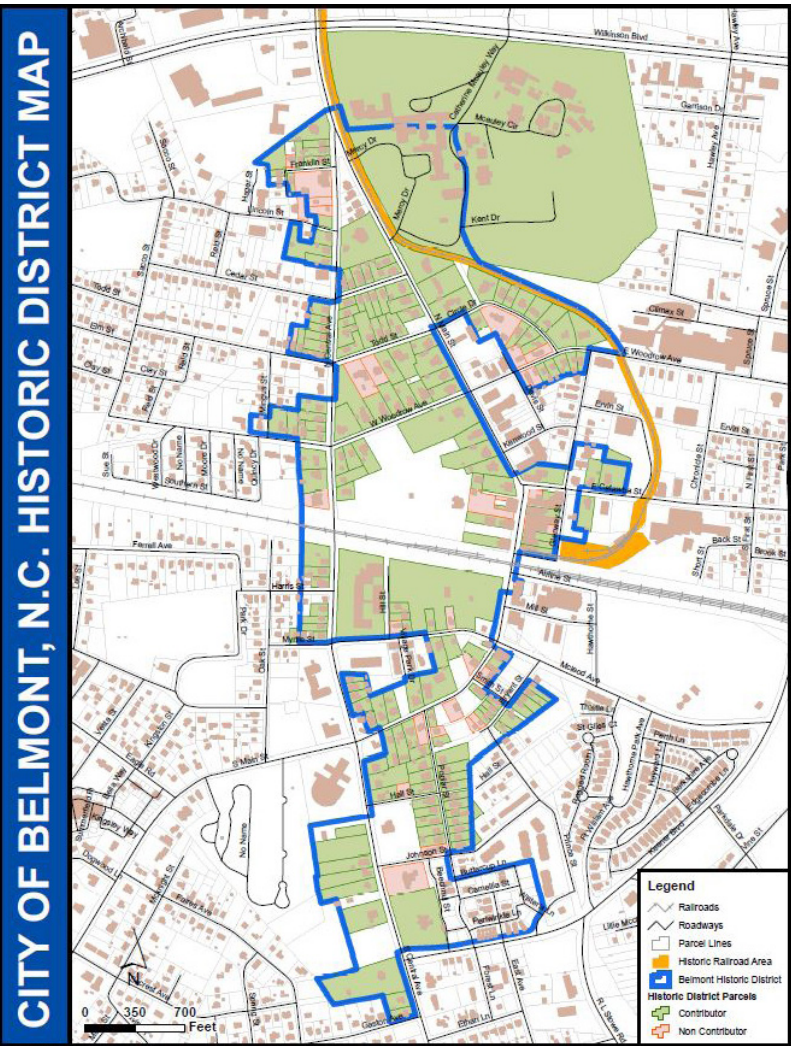
HERITAGE & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

From the legacy of the textile industry to the plethora of historic buildings, Belmont’s historic character is a defining element of the City’s identity. In addition to providing a unique sense of place, history and heritage add interest to the community, showcasing the region’s evolution and growth to attract social and economic opportunities. To safeguard these assets and ensure they continue to be cherished and enjoyed by future generations, it is essential that the City integrate preservation efforts with plans for growth.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

Belmont’s historic architecture is primarily concentrated in the Downtown area, though mill housing and other historic residential development is prevalent across several core neighborhoods. Even the McLean area at the southern end of the peninsula features two stately homes from the mid-1800s, preserved while the new neighborhoods have sprung up around them. Whenever possible, the City should work to preserve historic and otherwise notable buildings.

In 1996, the Downtown Belmont Historic District (one of the oldest in the state) was designated on the National Register of Historic Places. The district catalogs and draws attention to 264 historic resources that roughly stretch from Wilkinson Boulevard to Keener Boulevard. In addition to most of the commercial buildings along Main Street, the district also boasts Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and Bungalow/American Craftsman style homes, many of which were built during the textile boom of the early 20th century. Also included is the Sisters of Mercy



Map: Belmont historic district map (data source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)

campus. Belmont Abbey College and its 1876 historic basilica were listed in 1993 under a separate historic district.

Historic designations like this help highlight the importance of Belmont’s historic heritage, foster community pride, and unlock key income tax credits that can be used to fund qualifying restoration efforts. However, they do not restrict how a property is used, or even prevent its demolition.



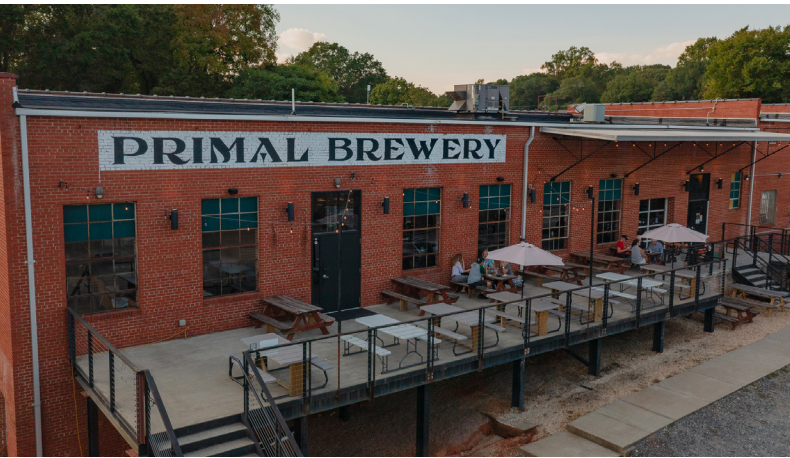


Image: Adaptive reuse (source: City of Belmont)

As such, beyond advocating for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, **Belmont should encourage local historic designation(s), which could offer more robust protections and grant opportunities.** Additionally, Belmont should complete the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) survey of properties – especially those in and around downtown – every five years to determine their eligibility and educate property owners about the potential benefits of local designation.

Public education campaigns may also help deepen the knowledge of and appreciation for Belmont’s history and heritage. The City can help cross-promote educational efforts by other local groups to bring awareness as **community feedback has revealed a desire for expanded historical programming - such as guided and self-guided walking tours** - that would create new recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. Working with local and regional preservation groups is key to propelling these efforts.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive reuse entails the repurposing (often involving renovation) of an existing building or site to a new use. In addition to breathing new life into structures that would have otherwise continued to deteriorate or have been demolished, this development method reduces the need for new

construction and minimizes the associated environmental impacts. Through adaptive reuse, Belmont can encourage the preservation of its historic fabric, foster economic development and create unique spaces that reflect the City’s past while still accommodating future growth.

To realize this, Belmont should **ensure that adaptive reuse is encouraged through enabling zoning legislation, land use, and building incentives.** Additionally, Belmont should **maintain an inventory of older and vacant buildings** and work with the community, developers, and other stakeholders to determine and market the most appropriate alternatives for their redevelopment.

BALANCING THE PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

With the benefits of formal historic designation and adaptive reuse in mind, Belmont should take an approach to growth that honors historic building patterns while still allowing space for new construction, preferences and change.

**The key will be to strike a balance between the past, present and future.** This can be achieved through the thoughtful integration of new development types and styles that avoid overwhelming the existing built environment.

For example, the need for character-appropriate growth is most acute around Downtown. To address this, the **creation of a new Downtown Master Plan is recommended,** outlining catalytic sites (such as Stowe Park and adjacent properties) and placing an emphasis on new projects that require small to medium-scale land assemblage, allowing the identity-rich district to evolve gradually. Furthermore, creating a new **“Downtown Transitional” zoning district could be a useful tool to cultivate less intense commercial and mixed use growth where the district’s edges meet single-family areas** - as long as downzoning of properties is not involved.

Overall, Belmont has a finite amount of remaining developable land, and even less that has never been

developed before. Intentional planning to continue the character established by neighborhoods in each area, employment of conservation and preservation tools, and consideration for district edges will be necessary to strengthen historic roots and adapt the wider community in the face of change.

NATURAL RESOURCES

LEVERAGING BELMONT’S NATURAL RESOURCES

Belmont’s geography and natural resources have been instrumental in shaping the City’s development and overall character. To be sure, Belmont’s parks, gardens, trails and waterways are valued assets that provide the community with a wide array of recreational opportunities. Protecting and expanding these resources is essential, not only for preserving Belmont’s natural beauty, but also for maximizing the social and economic benefits they provide. **Ensuring adequate public access to (and connectivity between) Belmont’s natural resources is critical** to accomplishing this goal.

EMBRACING THE WATERFRONT

Situated on a peninsula surrounded by Lake Wylie and the Catawba and South Fork Rivers, **the 17-mile waterfront has long been one of Belmont’s defining features.** Ironically, most of the shoreline is currently inaccessible



Image: Kayaking on the Catawba river (source: Go Gaston NC)



Image: Dining on the Catawba river (source: Go Gaston NC)

and invisible to the public, severely limiting recreational and economic opportunities Belmont could otherwise benefit from. As of 2025, the waterfront is primarily occupied by private single-family residential development, industrial uses and vacant open space. Some lakefront neighborhoods do not even reserve private shoreline green space or docks for homes across the street from the water, limiting access further.

While this trend reflects similar land use in peer cities, nearby **Cornelius and Davidson are both trying to maximize their available shorelines by offering opportunities for the entire area to enjoy the water.** Likewise, Mount Holly has begun to offer more accessible waterfront dining opportunities to the greater community.

With that said, **there is potential to create a more dynamic, accessible waterfront that better showcases Belmont’s natural beauty, promotes tourism and provides new opportunities** to the community. This is especially true of East Belmont, which offers one of the few remaining areas of shoreline that has not been entirely deeded to private residential development. In line with stakeholder desires, this area could be consciously cultivated into a mixed use district, providing memorable waterfront access near existing city parks and to Downtown. See Section 3, “Land Use” for more on this potential Village Center.



**Partnerships - and leadership - with private stakeholders** will be necessary to redevelop this area, as well as other locations of interest along the waterfront. For example, Belmont could collaborate with Duke Energy through open dialogue, design charrettes, case study review and so on to encourage redevelopment of a portion of the Allen Steam Station property for public use, following the site’s transition to a battery facility.

**Whenever possible, Belmont should encourage private development to grant public access to the waterfront.** In addition to new parks and redevelopment efforts, even simple initiatives, such as the expansion of kayak access points will benefit the community, supporting access to the thirty-one mile Catawba River Blueway system, now part of the Carolina Thread Trail network.

PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

As a common good, the preservation of natural resources is the responsibility of residents and city officials alike. Still, local government must act as an environmental steward that proactively guides and encourages their protection.

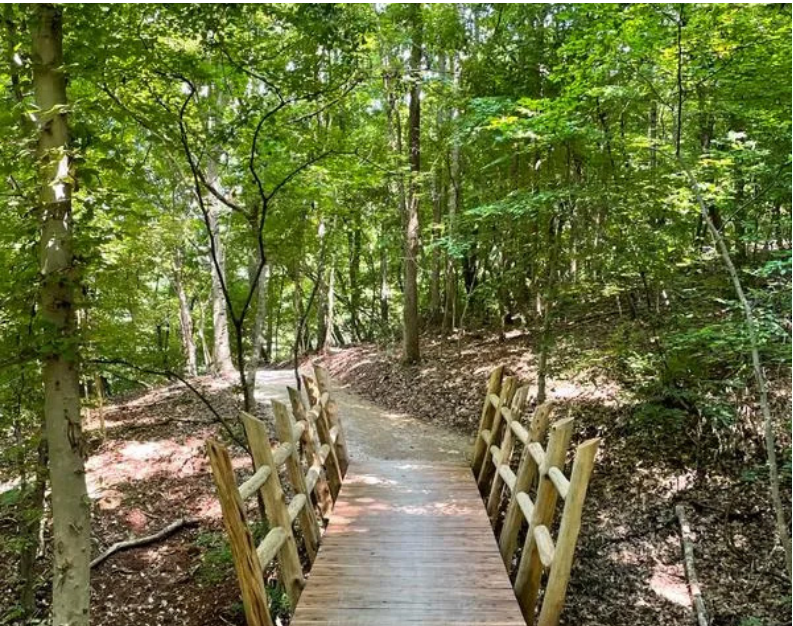


Image: Rocky Branch Trail (source: Carolina Thread Trail Map)

Examples of recommended initiatives include educational programming and signage to increase public awareness, activation of areas adjacent to streams to provide access for shoreline stabilization and organized cleanup efforts, all of which bring awareness to Belmont’s natural amenities. The City should establish adopt-a-road, adopt-a-river and similar programs to help recruit volunteers with the common goal of reducing litter and ensuring continued vitality of natural resources. Collaborating with existing organizations and community groups, such as the Catawba Riverkeeper and Keep Belmont Beautiful, can help facilitate environmental preservation efforts.

By creating opportunities for community engagement in environmental preservation, the City of Belmont can also help cultivate a strong sense of pride and unity that further enhances the overall character of the area.

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE

ADDRESSING NUISANCES AND BLIGHT

**Belmont should closely consider how nuisances and blight impact its appearance, and consequently, its character and residents’ sense of pride and place.** Ensuring the City is beautiful, inviting, and livable can also increase property values and attract new economic investment.

In pursuit of this, the City should **regularly review its Nuisance Code and make revisions** that would improve the City’s appearance and overall quality. Additionally, the City should work closely with the community to identify and address emerging concerns.

**Today, this issue is most pressing along Wilkinson Boulevard**, where facade deterioration and underutilized commercial properties negatively impact the character and image of the City. **During several rounds of public engagement, stakeholders cited reversing this trend as a top priority.**

In decades to come, high-capacity transit connectivity to

Charlotte may spur overall revitalization along this corridor. However, **Belmont cannot afford to continuing waiting for such an investment catalyst.** Instead, injecting city funds to support key aesthetic upgrades throughout and actively **pursuing developers with incentives to build along the corridor** could foster significant change far faster.

To accomplish this, the City should **increase investment in its Facade Enhancement Grant Program and consider expanding its eligibility to commercial structures outside of Downtown.** In the case of Wilkinson Boulevard, Belmont should also continue close coordination with Montcross, LLC and their evolving infill development vision, which has already significantly helped generate new, image-shifting economic activity. In parallel, the City can proactively invest in transportation and utility infrastructure to encourage private investment for smaller projects.

Finally, addressing nuisances and blight goes hand in hand with improving public safety concerns that are essential to maintaining Belmont’s family-friendly atmosphere. For example, the maintenance of street trees, vegetation and lighting can help ensure visible, pedestrian-friendly sight lines. Working with NCDOT’s typically rigid framework to champion multimodal improvements and beautification upgrades to Wilkinson Boulevard could create outsized positive effects.

GATEWAYS: LASTING IMPRESSIONS OF BELMONT

As the first and final areas encountered by those moving towards and through the City, gateways have an enormous impact on guiding individuals’ overall perception of the community. Accordingly, Belmont should ensure its gateways help define the community’s boundaries, identity, and tone. Land uses, structures, signage and their overall aesthetic appearance should cater to a positive perception of the City’s character.

Belmont’s main gateways include New Hope Road (NC-279) entering from York County, the east and west ends of I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard, as well as Park Street

(NC-273), Catawba Street and Main Street leading into downtown. These gateways should be improved to better signal arrival to and departure from the City.

Gateway plans should include a highly visible gateway monument or monuments, statement landscaping, relevant land uses and ongoing maintenance. Certain development opportunities – such as the proposed widening of the Wilkinson Boulevard bridge – may also offer opportunities to incorporate gateway redevelopment strategies.

Gateway redevelopment efforts desperately needed on Wilkinson Boulevard have already been implemented in an example project on East Catawba Street. In 2023, several “East End” buildings were fitted with facade upgrades that removed pre-fabricated metal panel coverings from the 1970s intended to “modernize” their appearance. Returning the buildings to their former glory has significantly elevated the appearance of this gateway to Downtown and improved the areas’ economic trajectory.

BRANDING & WAYFINDING

Over the last decade, Belmont has deployed significant branding and wayfinding signage, helping to enhance mobility, promote its assets and amplify a sense of cohesion. As this is gradually upgraded to reflect the City’s new branding, installments should continue to inform the public of major facilities, services, landmarks and attractions, facilitating better navigation **to these destinations. This will be especially critical to strengthen connectivity between North Belmont and the rest of the City, as well as bridging Downtown to East End and the waterfront.**

As part of citywide initiatives, including wayfinding deployment, **branding can also be tailored to specific neighborhoods** to highlight their unique characteristics. This could be an important tool to **amplify the identity of core historic neighborhoods facing change, such as the Reid, North Belmont, and East Belmont neighborhoods.**

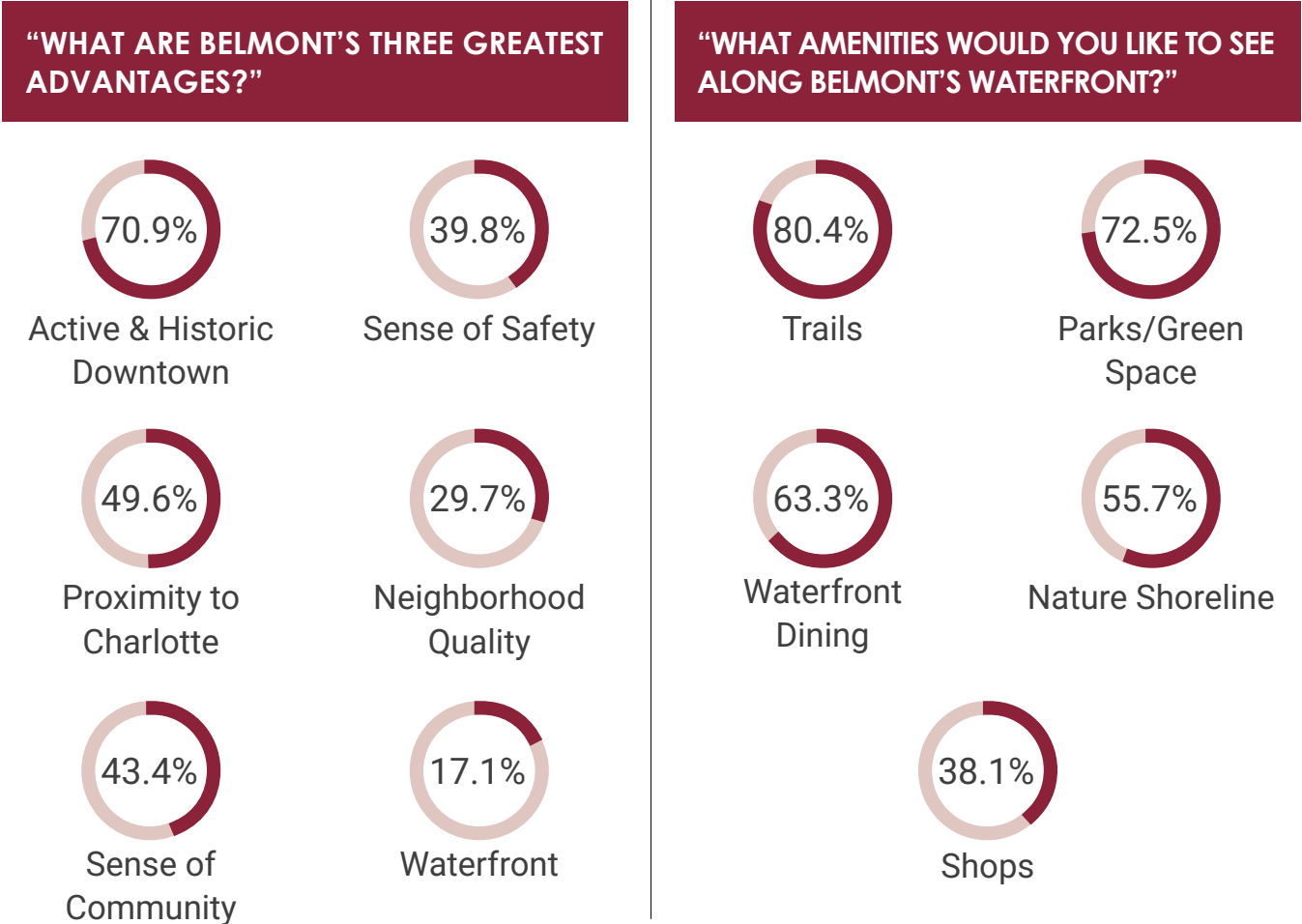


OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

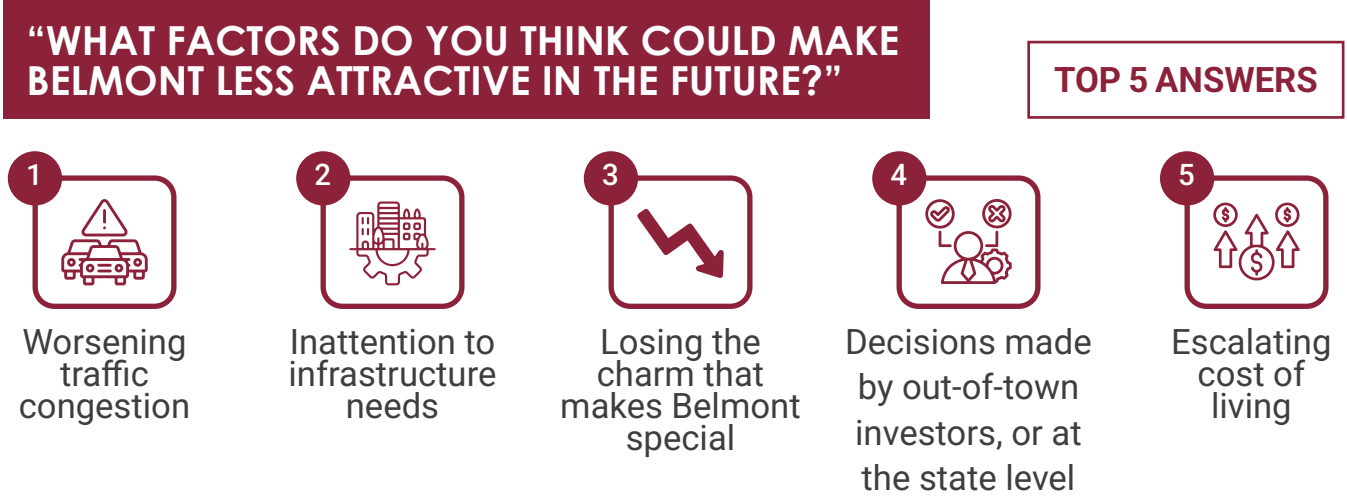
- Belmont has a strong, historic Downtown that separates it from other suburban communities and strengthens its sense of identity.
- Cultivating a mixed use waterfront destination presents a clear opportunity to capitalize on community desires and bolster Belmont’s connection to its shoreline.
- Upcoming changes to Wilkinson Boulevard provide the ideal opportunity to create gateways that clearly signal the arrival to and departure from Belmont and Downtown in a presentable manner.
- Large abandoned or underutilized properties, particularly industrial, are ripe for redevelopment.
- No current City organization or agency exists to support properties and districts on the National Register of Historic Places –other than Gaston County.
- Residential development and housing renovations that significantly increase building mass and worsen the effects of gentrification are becoming more common.
- Though also a challenge, new development can help bolster Belmont’s identity by contributing to the expansion of Downtown and creating connections to the waterfront.
- Physical and psychological separation of North Belmont from the rest of the City is a challenge for commerce, identity, and policymaking.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

2024-2025 community OUTREACH findings



97.4% of respondents noted Downtown or Stowe Park as defining Belmont locations. Only 34.0% mentioned the river or waterfront, demonstrating underutilization.





08

PARKS & RECREATION

To ensure a range of opportunities for all citizens to enjoy and engage with the outdoors.

Quality parks, open space, and recreational opportunities are essential to maintaining and growing Belmont’s reputation as a livable city. These are undeniable elements of a healthy, vibrant community that connects citizens both to each other and to the environment in ways few other land uses can. They are also a key aspect of Belmont’s economy, acting as sites for local events, tourism drivers, and more.

Today, Belmont offers a diverse parks portfolio, including gathering spaces such as Stowe Park, athletic fields, the trail-focused Rocky Branch Park, a skatepark, waterfront green space, and a state-of-the-art indoor Recreation Center (opened in 2023). At 143 acres in total, each park varies in its level of programming and the types of facilities it offers.

When considering the externally operated Daniel Stowe Conservancy (non-profit) and South Point Beach Park (Gaston County), the Planning Area’s green space nearly quadruples (549 acres). These parks are critical recreation destinations, especially for those living at the southern end of the City. However, while Daniel Stowe accounts for 65.6% of the Planning Area’s parkland, the facility charges admission fees for certain elements of the property and is thus not a truly public open space.



This icon represents “Parks & Recreation” content.



Image: Stowe Park in Downtown Belmont (source: Visit Belmont via Facebook).

In recent decades, Belmont has worked to extend its recreation offerings beyond parks, establishing multiple greenways to provide safe connectivity throughout the City, gradually implementing local stretches of the multi-state Carolina Thread Trail vision. These will eventually support trail oriented development, improving walkability and bikeability citywide.

Beyond this, continuing to capitalize on Belmont’s natural amenities (see Section 10, “Environment”) through the designation of new parks facilities will help to keep pace with new development. This is especially important because new public green spaces will serve the entire city, not just adjacent new neighborhoods. For that reason, this Plan establishes a new target of up to 10% of Belmont’s city limits to be reserved as park space. While this total may include private regional or athletic facilities, the goal should be for new park spaces to be public.

To accomplish this, Belmont can still promote a wide variety of Development Types based on its Future Land Use Map (see Section 03, “Land Use”), as “Parks & Natural Areas” remain a complementary use in all scenarios, offering gathering spaces, a natural reprieve, acting as buffers, and more to connect everyone to the outdoors and a wider range of healthy activities.

HEADLINE FINDINGS

Belmont is positioned to be the region’s premier outdoor recreation destination, supporting an active lifestyle culture. Quality access, both visual and physical, to Belmont’s 17 miles of river frontage and other abundant natural resources is valued and essential to its quality of life and character.

At 481 acres, 6.2% of land within city limits is currently park space, with a goal set to reach 10% at build-out. The city should focus on building true public green spaces and capitalize on opportunities for partnership with other public entities, such as Gaston County.

Belmont should ensure new park investments include a variety of equipment and experiences. As new parkland is designated and aging facilities are upgraded, these sites should offer needed community amenities, including a dog park, splash pads, and restrooms.

Investment in greenway connectivity will multiply park and economic impact. By building better pedestrian and bicyclist access to green spaces from Downtown, Village Centers and neighborhoods, Belmont can leverage its parks investment as a cohesive experience, promote tourism, and even boost adjacent property values.





# GOAL 6 PARKS & RECREATION

To ensure a range of opportunities for all citizens to enjoy and engage with the outdoors.

## POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

**POLICY 1. The City should continue its investment into park programming to maintain a well-rounded experience for residents and visitors.**

- 1.1. Project** – Continue to host active recreation classes and events to improve the health of all City residents, particularly seniors.
- 1.2. Project** – Maintain the quality of programming directed at City youth, extending beyond the summer months.

**POLICY 2. The City should expand access to existing infrastructure and create new opportunities for recreational walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized transportation modes.**

- 2.1. Project** – Actively pursue construction of the 10-foot wide Belmont Rail Trail alongside the City’s inactive rail corridor.
- 2.2. Project** – Continue developing the Abbey Creek Greenway as an off-street alternative to Wilkinson Boulevard for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized uses.
- 2.3. Project** – Continue to invest in the Rocky Branch Trail and identify new ways to improve safe bicycle access to its trailheads from Downtown and other parts of the City.

**POLICY 3. Residents should have visual and physical access to the 17 miles of river and lake frontage that serve as a defining edge and vital part of Belmont.**

- 3.1. Project** – Develop and market recreational events in waterfront parks and along trails.

**3.2. Project** – Improve directional and informational signage along publicly accessible waterfront areas, with a focus on birding and fishing.

**3.3. Project** – Explore a partnership with Catawba Riverkeepers to develop waterfront educational content and resources.

**3.4. Project** – Invest in the Catawba River Blueway with as much supporting infrastructure as possible.

**POLICY 4. Quality parks and recreational opportunities are essential elements of a healthy, vibrant community and must be preserved and expanded upon.**

**4.1. Project** – Increase the percentage of land use attributed to parks and recreational open space to 10% of total land area (currently 6.2% in City Limits, not including private tree save).

**4.2. Project** – Ensure new development meets or exceeds established parks levels of service addressed in the adopted Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan (2019).

**4.3. Project** – As Belmont’s City Limits expand, continue to acquire new property for additional parks and recreation facilities via purchases, leases, or negotiations as part of approved developments seeking annexation.

**4.4. Project** – Develop and program new park sites in accordance with the adopted Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan.

**4.5. Project** – To accommodate additional recreation program participation, the City should continue or expand its partnership with Gaston County Schools to share athletic facilities.

**4.6. Project** – The City should seek to achieve the highest and best use for the Ford Center.

**POLICY 5. The City should prioritize the addition of park equipment and facilities that are currently missing, as well as the maintenance and reimagining of existing facilities to create a more well-rounded experience for residents and visitors.**

**5.1. Project** – Diversify amenities at City parks, including adding a splash pad and other activities.

**5.2. Project** – Add restrooms to public parks whenever possible.

**5.3. Project** – Ensure that playgrounds and trails have adequate shade, mature tree canopy, and sufficient seating.

**5.4. Project** – Retool aging sports parks to fit modern recreation demands, including the creation of new outdoor pickleball courts.

**5.5. Project** – The City should develop a bicycle park with a pump track and/or bicycle playground.

**5.6. Project** – The City should create a dedicated dog park to serve its residents.



IMPORTANCE OF GREEN SPACE

Parks and natural areas are intended to set aside land for open spaces at a range of scales and to preserve key environmental features. Parks should be developed –and/or preserved– in areas suitable for passive or active recreation and may include a range of natural and constructed spaces such as trails, athletic facilities, playgrounds, and similar uses.

PLANNING FOR GREEN SPACE

In planning for these functions, Belmont’s Future Land Use Map (see Section 03, “Land Use”) includes two categories:

- 1. “Parks & Open Space” Future Land Use Classification, which distinguishes areas to be perpetually used or newly cultivated to serve park or environmental preservation functions. Current parks within the Planning Area are also given this designation.
- 2. “Parks & Natural Areas” Development Type, promoting the inclusion of these areas in all other Future Land Use Classifications. For example, land within the “Suburban Neighborhood” classification should develop such that it includes not only low to medium residential densities, but also quality community parks and preserved natural lands that result from clustering techniques.

Overall, these categories encompass conventional parks and open spaces as well as important hydrological features such as floodplains, wetlands, and streams. Unlike park spaces, natural areas should include only trails and support structures such as picnic shelters and maintenance facilities. When required, road and accessway design should conform to the natural features of the site and only minimally intrude into protected areas to preserve their integrity.

Future parks in Belmont should include large parks in the North Belmont, South Fork and Southern Peninsula areas, as well as pocket parks, river launches, boardwalks, and other small facilities integrated throughout the community. Specific requests during public engagement included waterfront spaces, a dog park, bicycle pump track, additional pickleball courts, a splash pad, and playground facilities (ex. monkey bars). These resources add character to both neighborhoods and Belmont as a whole, enhancing quality of life.

While privately-held green spaces, such as amenities provided by homeowners associations, commercial courtyards, or rooftop greens, are also beneficial to community character, these should not be counted toward Belmont’s park space target (10% of City jurisdiction). Beyond concerns about fair access, private parks can gradually alleviate pressure on the government to dedicate public green space that is better leveraged for events and tourism. This concept is especially important when considering investments in waterfront open space.

Finally, all parks and natural areas should be well connected to the greater community, particularly through greenways, and serve as part of a larger network of public open spaces, maximizing Belmont’s combined recreational investments.



Image: Fishing pier at Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park (source: Visit Belmont via Facebook)

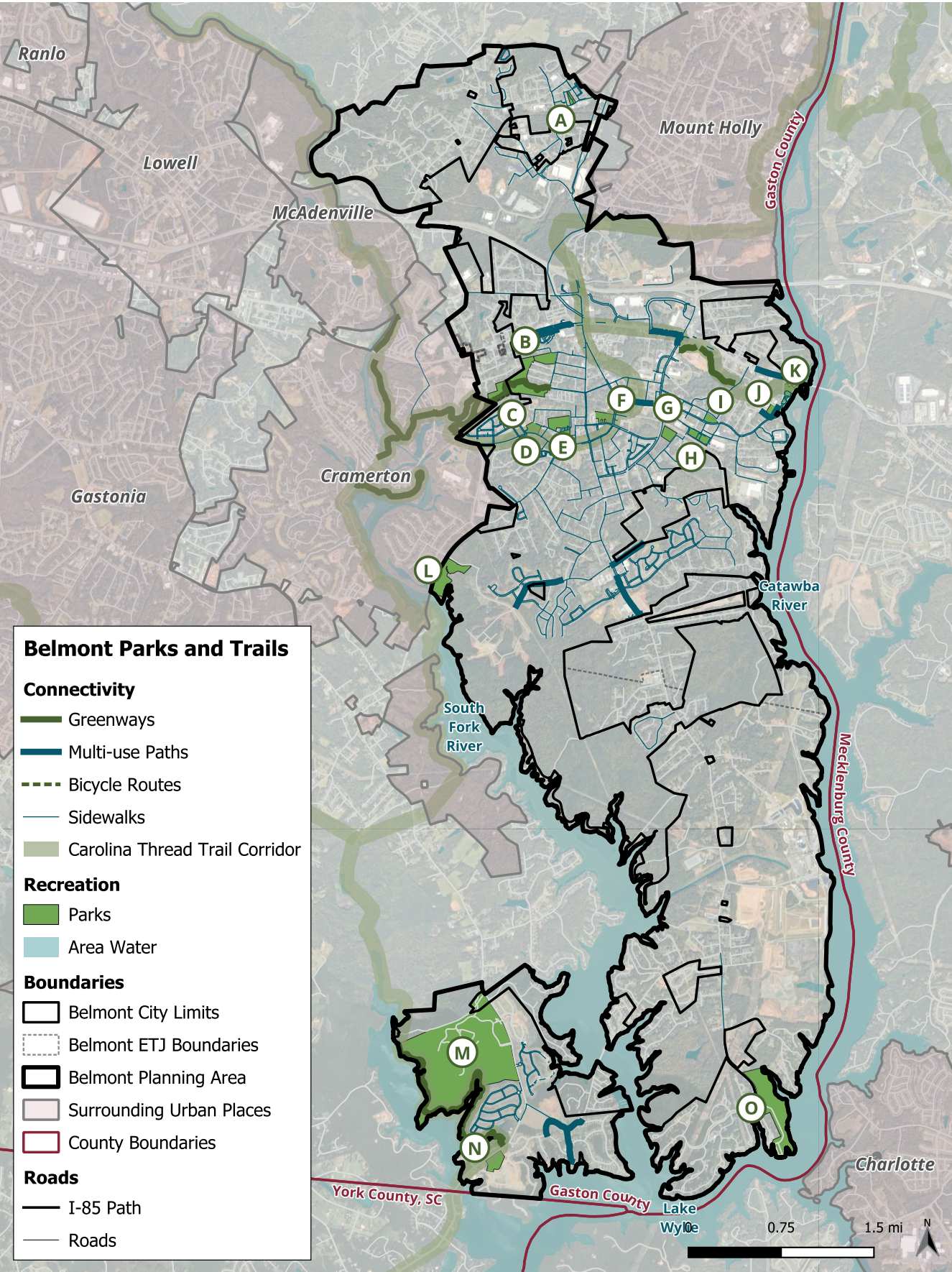


Image: Map of Existing Parks & Trails (source: Plusurbia Design)





Figure: Parks of Belmont (source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)

PARKS OF BELMONT

Belmont is home to 12 city-operated public parks, CityRec –an impressive indoor recreation facility, South Point Beach Park –a waterfront space managed by Gaston County, and the non-profit Daniel Stowe Conservancy. Together, these represent an admirable green space portfolio of 549 acres, 143 of which are the responsibility of Belmont Parks & Recreation.

Currently, the City’s 2019-2029 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan outlines the need for an additional 160 acres of City parkland by the end of the decade. Already making progress, in early 2025, over 34 new acres were designated between two future parks on Armstrong Ford Road (“New Park 1”) and S. New Hope Road (“New Park 2”). These facilities have yet to be named.

A wide variety of classes, camps, and athletic programs are also run by the Parks & Recreation Department, which are frequently at capacity. To accommodate additional participation, the City should continue or expand its partnership with Gaston County Schools and other regional partners to share athletic facilities.

STOWE PARK

In many ways, Stowe Park acts as the heart of Belmont and its Downtown. The perfect complement to Main Street, it is also home to some of the community’s most memorable events, including the Garibaldi Festival, BooFest, and Movies in the Park. The park’s more programmed lower portion offers a playground, fountain, restrooms, and a stage, while the open, upper portion is frequently used for events. As part of continued Downtown investment, upper Stowe Park should be enhanced to better support events and other functions, including the future of the adjacent former middle school.

WATERFRONT PARKS

Three green spaces offer waterfront access in Belmont, with each operated by a different group. Under the City’s Parks & Rec. Department is Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park,

a very popular green space located directly across E. Catawba Street from the CityRec Center. The park features a playground, pavilion with restrooms, an impressive wood fishing pier, creative seating, and a kayak launch. Paired with a short trail leading to a public boat launch, Kevin Loftin offers a well-rounded waterfront experience.

Near the end of South Point Road, South Point Beach Park also offers convenient public access to Lake Wylie, including many of the same features at nearly six times the acreage. Unique among parks in the Planning Area, it is home to a swimming area and sand beach. Outside of City Limits, it is maintained by Gaston County.

RECREATIONAL PARKS

Belmont’s reputation as an active community is reinforced by its parks, the majority of which are or feature athletic fields/courts, including: Reid Park, Belmont Central Field, Davis Park, Rodden Field, Ebb Gantt Park, Crescent Park (Dwight Frady Field), and the CityRec Center. Mostly older, these green spaces are dispersed between several neighborhoods, but all located in Central Belmont. The largest of these is Davis Park, at 12.4 acres.

Alternatively, Rocky Branch Park offers trail-focused recreation in a forested setting of over 40 acres through a replicable example of multi-jurisdictional collaboration. Belmont’s trailhead is situated off Woodrow Avenue, four blocks from Downtown, while the other is located in Cramerton, south of Stuart W. Cramer High School.

DANIEL STOWE CONSERVANCY

The renowned Daniel Stowe Conservancy (formerly “Botanical Garden”) is located within Belmont’s boundary and boasts 337 acres of rolling meadows, woodlands, and lakefront property. The Trailhead Store provides a retail option for the broadly residential peninsula, while formal gardens, a conservatory, visitor’s pavilion, and miles of trails make Daniel Stowe a regional destination. In 2023, the facility completed a long-range strategic master plan.





Image: (Left) Entrance to hiking trail (source: Single Tracks); (Top Right) Downtown Carolina Thread Trail sign (source: City of Belmont); (Bottom Right) kayakers on the Catawba (source: Catawba Lands Conservancy)

GREENWAYS & BLUEWAYS

In the future, Belmont will boast a formal, interconnected system of greenway trails throughout the community, made possible via a combination of creek corridors, utility easements, and NCDOT inactive railroad rights-of-way. When complete, this system will link neighborhoods together and provide public waterfront access to both sides of the peninsula.

This ambitious initiative aligns with Gaston County’s Comprehensive Plan, which envisions greenway connectivity between its major communities and key regional destinations like Crowders Mountain State Park and the Daniel Stowe Conservancy.

GREENWAYS TODAY

Today, Belmont has limited greenway mileage, represented by the partial Abbey Creek Greenway, Rocky Branch Trail, and the Duke Kimbrell Trail, which connects to the Daniel Stowe Conservancy. Leveraging private dollars, the first portion of Abbey Creek Greenway was constructed in partnership with “The Reverie.” Future segments will connect to Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park.

Perpendicular to Abbey Creek, the Belmont Rail Trail will eventually intersect it while connecting North Belmont

to Downtown. Through the pursuit of grants, aided by targeted public investment, Belmont can eventually build out these trails and complete a fully-connected system.

FUTURE CONNECTIVITY

Priority areas for greenway development should be between existing city parks, schools, residential neighborhoods and Village Centers in accordance with the mapped vision and in support of the Carolina Thread Trail (CTT) network. For pedestrian/ bicyclist safety and comfort, greenways should also offer alternatives to major vehicular corridors, such as Wilkinson Boulevard and the future Catawba Crossings.

CATAWBA RIVER BLUEWAY

Part of the CTT network, the Lake Wylie portion of the Catawba River Blueway is a 27-mile flatwater paddle route from the Mountain Island Lake Dam to Tega Cay, SC. About one-third of the blueway follows the shoreline of Belmont’s Planning Area, highlighting the City’s opportunity to improve route access by providing additional public canoe and kayak launches. Signage and marketing improvements could also foster increased use, while the future Waterfront Village Center could capitalize on related tourism growth (see Section 03, “Land Use”).

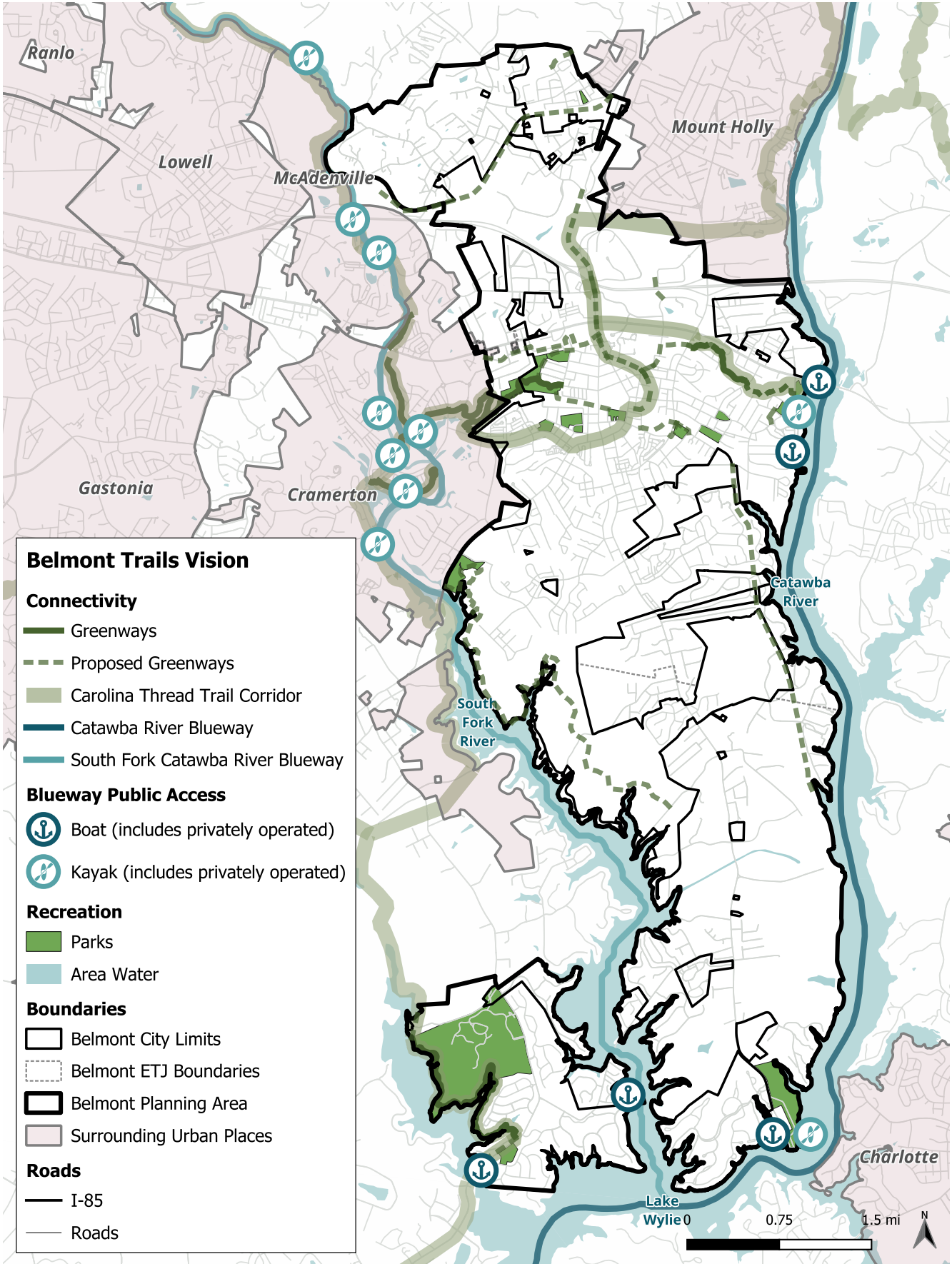


Image: Belmont Trails Vision (data source: City of Belmont) (design: Plusurbia Design)



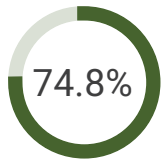
OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

- The Daniel Stowe Conservancy provides Belmont with a regional, independently maintained parks and recreation asset.
- Private development activity bolsters the ability for the City to offer new parks investments, especially as part of conditionally-approved projects.
- Older sports-focused parks are prevalent in Central Belmont and could be updated to support modern green space desires.
- Increasing population growth and pressure to use land for something other than parks and open space will continue.
- Intergovernmental and inter-organizational coordination has proven cumbersome in some cases. Partnerships are key to a successful parks and open space program.
- Readily available public water-related activities –similar to those offered by the US National Whitewater Center nearby– are a tremendous opportunity for Belmont.
- Recreation-based and/or themed amenities, retail, and branded products are under-leveraged opportunities by both the City and some of the local businesses.
- Future visions for the Carolina Thread Trail pass through Belmont. The City can realize the benefits of this by constructing more greenway mileage, as well as amenities for blueway users, such as access points and destinations.

PARKS & RECREATION

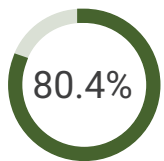
2024-2025 community OUTREACH findings

“WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE PARKS/ GREEN SPACE WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF YOUR HOME?”

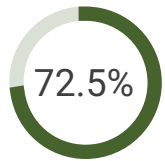


Yes! Nearly three-quarters of Belmont residents surveyed said they would like to be able to walk to Parks/ Green Space.

“WHAT AMENITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ALONG BELMONT’S WATERFRONT?”



Trails



Parks/  
Green Space

Belmont residents would like to see more waterfront trails and park space! When asked about cities Belmont should model itself after, respondents provided dozens of answers, but many cited “access to parks and nature” as a top quality.

“WHERE DO YOU GO TO ACCESS OUR REGION’S RIVERS AND LAKES?”

1. Tuckaseege Park (Mt. Holly)
2. Goat Island Park (Cramerton)
3. Kevin Loftin Riverfront Park
4. South Point Beach Park
5. Seven Oaks Trails



“HOW DO YOU USE OUR REGION’S RIVERS AND LAKES?”

TOP 5 ANSWERS

1

Kayak or Paddle Board

2

Riverfront Walking Trails

3

Fishing

4

Watching Wildlife

5

Boating



# 09 INFRASTRUCTURE

To ensure **high quality, efficient and effective infrastructure** throughout Belmont.

Without reliable infrastructure, Belmont cannot sustain itself or grow in ways that support its economy, citizens, or environment. **Aligning growth and land use policies with infrastructure implementation, maintenance and expansion plans** will help ensure Belmont’s viability and security well into the future.

Belmont provides critical infrastructure and support services to ensure public safety and welfare. These vital services and infrastructure are generally funded from tax revenues, municipal fees, and assessments that are allocated to various entities that provide them directly. Like most municipalities, Belmont relies on both the public and private sectors to be able to meet these needs.

When we refer to a place’s infrastructure –especially from a planning and municipal perspective– we are most commonly referring to the physical systems that keep things running. Also known as public works projects or public utilities, these typically include the initial installation and ongoing maintenance of systems that provide resources such as potable (drinking) and fire-fighting water, stormwater runoff control, wastewater (sewerage), energy (natural gas, electric, etc.), data and communication, solid waste and recycling disposal, and transportation networks.



*This icon represents “Infrastructure” content.*



Image: Belmont CityWorks (source: Gaston Gazette)

Often, civic services such as police, fire, EMS/rescue, and parks and recreation operations are also considered part of a municipality’s infrastructure systems.

All of these systems directly affect –or are affected by– the way in which Belmont continues to grow. **This section will focus on the three most critical systems: water, stormwater and wastewater.** Note that transportation networks - as a component of Belmont’s infrastructure - is covered in more detail in Section 06, “Mobility.”

## HEADLINE FINDINGS

Many components of Belmont’s infrastructure have evolved in an ad hoc, as-needed basis rather than in a **proactive response to careful long-range planning**. This is not unusual among cities across the United States. Infrastructure changes are usually a reaction to immediate needs, emergencies, and unforeseen circumstances, rather than being implemented in advance.

Some of Belmont’s existing infrastructure dates back to its establishment in 1895 or earlier, particularly related to the historic mills and neighborhoods immediately surrounding them. This situation has led to a mix of old and new systems concentrated in different areas of the

City. Continued inventory and assessment of these, along with a plan to repair or modernize the areas in need, is in the City’s best interest.

Belmont stands to benefit from its increasingly proactive stance on public policy initiatives and “getting out ahead” of issues that might otherwise be overlooked. Leaders are actively seeking examples of best practices and tested measures from other municipalities to improve their infrastructure systems.

Concurrency is key to maintaining Belmont’s infrastructure. Municipal concurrency is a planning tool that ensures new development does not strain a city’s public infrastructure and services (like roads, sewer, and water) by requiring that these services are available at the time of development or that the developer provides necessary improvements. This helps to manage growth and ensures that infrastructure can support the increased demand generated by new development.

Belmont has engaged professional, outside consultants to conduct an assessment of its infrastructure systems, particularly its wastewater and stormwater systems, in parallel with this plan update. The key findings, takeaways, and action plan(s) have been considered in this document.





# GOAL 7

# INFRA- STRUCTURE

To ensure **high quality, efficient and effective infrastructure** throughout Belmont.

## POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

**POLICY 1. The City should schedule infrastructure expansion and maintenance at times that are minimally disruptive to city residents.**

**1.1. Project** – Make use of the City Connect platform, as well as temporary on-location signage, to advertise the timeline for substantial infrastructure maintenance projects, both upcoming and underway.

**POLICY 2. The City should require all private development to meet robust stormwater and erosion control standards, as well as comply with post-construction stormwater management requirements, to minimize the need for public infrastructure installation and maintenance.**

**2.1. Project** – Regularly evaluate and update the Stormwater Ordinance to ensure appropriate levels of restriction, detention requirements, and other improvements.

**2.2. Project** – Stormwater management standards should act to address the amount of runoff generated by development, pollutants carried by runoff, and the rate at which stormwater leaves a site.

**2.3. Project** – Advocate for vegetative buffers along the waterfront as the most effective method of erosion prevention.

**POLICY 3. The City should prioritize infrastructure improvements consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), where feasible, with a goal of city-wide compliance.**

**3.1. Project** – Ensure accommodations for mobility challenged residents, such as tactile curb ramps and audio cues at crosswalks.

**3.2. Project** – Improve the accessibility of its digital platforms and communication systems in order to more effectively disseminate important information.

**POLICY 4. The City must align growth and new land uses with infrastructure maintenance and expansion plans to ensure Belmont’s continued appeal as a place to live and grow a business.**

**4.1. Project** – Extend sewer service to new land, when possible, as it is annexed into the City.

**4.2. Project** – Routinely audit the level of sewer service where existing service exists, and gradually replace aging infrastructure.

**4.3. Project** – Work to prevent sewage overflow and runoff into waterways.

**POLICY 5. The City must ensure infrastructure can meet demand both immediately and in the future.**

**5.1. Project** – Prior to development approval, applicants should provide a detailed infrastructure capacity analysis in a form suitable to Planning and Public Works Department staff.

**5.2. Project** – Develop a policy or plan to better ensure adequate provision of water and wastewater services for existing and proposed land uses.

**5.3. Project** – Develop a GIS toolkit to track all current and future water, stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure, including hydrant locations.

**5.4. Project** – All water and sewer materials installed should be standardized by the City through a new standard set of details.

**5.5. Project** – Implement its agreement with Charlotte Water to provide more cost effective sewage treatment for Belmont, meeting its growing needs.

**POLICY 6. The City should strive for all city departments to have adequate staffing and the ability to meet the daily needs of Belmont residents.**

**6.1. Project** – Set population-linked metrics for adequate staff in each department in order to monitor needs as Belmont grows.



**6.2. Project** – Anticipate and plan for Citywide infrastructure needs in advance (instead of reacting to them) by consistently retaining outside engineering, policy, and other consultants to assist its staff.

**POLICY 7. The City should place special emphasis on investments in fire and police coverage to meet the service goals of these departments.**

**7.1. Project** – Review its annual budget and capital improvements projects plan related to fire and police services to ensure funding needs are met, addressing the trend of increasing annual service demand.

**7.2. Project** – Construct an additional fire station in North Belmont to improve response metrics, as recommended by the 2023 Fire Department Station Location Analysis.

**7.3. Project** – Allocate necessary resources to resume the Fire Inspection Program.

**7.4. Project** – Follow the replacement schedule for fire equipment established by the NFPA.

**7.5. Project** – Actively encourage existing businesses to take advantage of the Police Department’s Threat Assessment abilities by marketing this service.

**7.6. Project** – Require that the Police Department provide Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) input for new developments during plan review to be incorporated into projects from their inception.

**7.7. Project** – Implement the recommendations outlined in the 2024 Vision Zero Safety Action Plan.

**POLICY 8. The City should leverage annual capital planning efforts to identify infrastructural maintenance needs and develop a plan for remediation.**

**8.1. Project** – Calibrate annual maintenance funds based on the length/extent of the City’s infrastructure network.

**8.2. Project** – Plan how to invest collected system development fees and any additional payments provided by developers to offset taxpayer burden.

**POLICY 9. The City should invest in IT infrastructure to develop better network coverage and bandwidth across all parts of the City.**

**9.1. Project** – Embrace smart IT solutions wherever is advantageous.

**9.2. Project** – Bridge the digital divide by offering free public wifi throughout Belmont, especially where it is needed by vendors during events, such as in parks and along Main Street.

**9.3. Project** – Work with telephone companies to improve cellular service throughout the peninsula.



WATER SYSTEM

Water services within most of Belmont are provided by the City’s Public Works Department’s Water and Sewer Division and extend to the area shown on the Water Service Area Map. Drinking water is drawn from Lake Wylie (Catawba River) and treated at the City’s Water Treatment Plant. The plant has the capacity to treat 10 million gallons of water per day. According to local officials, the plant has excess capacity and will be able to provide water service for the foreseeable future as Belmont continues to develop.

Beyond the core service area, Belmont has extended a large water main southward along South Point Rd to the Reflection Pointe and McLean developments that could accommodate future water service throughout much of the peninsula with the installation of additional service lines. Water services have been provided to the Planning Area southwest of the South Fork River by suspending a water main from the NC-273 bridge.

Unincorporated portions of the Planning Area are generally not provided with public water service and currently operate individual and community wells as their source of water. However, state law mandates that individual properties near Duke Energy’s Allen Steam Station must be provided with municipal water service to avoid any potential groundwater contamination.

These factors indicate that much of the Planning Area currently does, or could have, expanded water service in the future. Providing details on this topic, Belmont’s 2008 Peninsula Water and Wastewater System Master Service Plan describes improvements necessary to serve large undeveloped areas within the City service area. In 2016, Belmont completed a Water Master Plan that confirmed the findings of the 2008 Master Plan.

STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

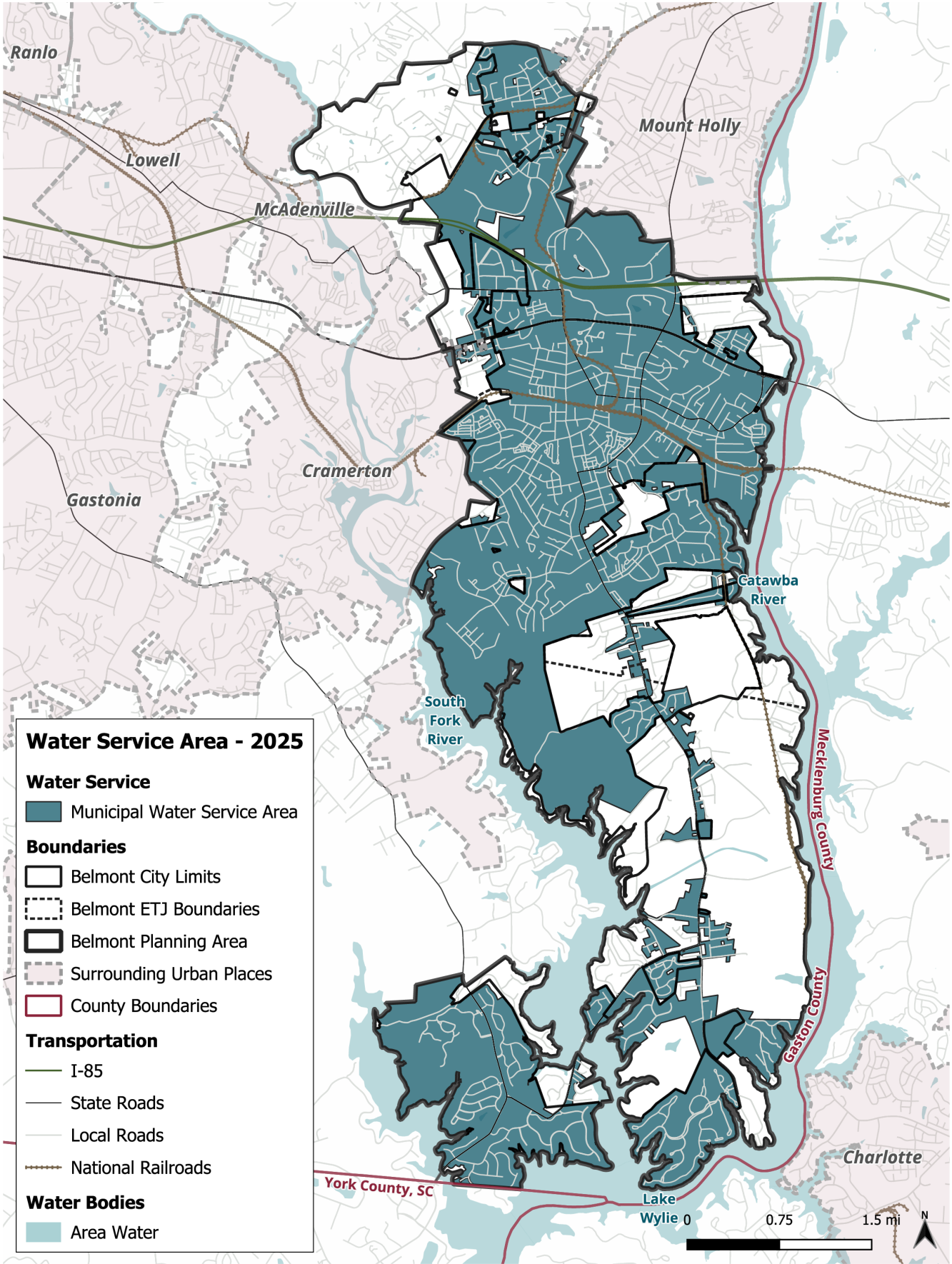
Belmont was designated a Phase II Stormwater community by the State of North Carolina and must meet the US Environmental Protection Agency’s guidelines for stormwater management. Most importantly for this plan, development is required to meet stormwater control standards during site development and post-construction stormwater standards that act to address the amount of runoff generated by development, pollutants carried by runoff, and the rate at which stormwater leaves a site.

Stormwater management falls under the Belmont Department of Public Works and follows Gaston County’s Stormwater Control Ordinance that exceeds the minimum State requirements. Administration of the City’s portion of this ordinance is funded entirely through a stormwater fee collected from properties within City Limits. Closely aligned with but separate from this ordinance is Gaston County’s Sedimentation and Soil Erosion Control Ordinance that focuses on controlling the downstream impacts of land development during construction.

Belmont has also established a minimum requirement for pervious surfaces in new development. These surfaces allow stormwater to penetrate the ground and become absorbed, rather than running off into the natural and/or artificial drainage system. For example, single-family residential lots must have a minimum of 50-percent pervious area, while high-density development permits depend on a metric of pervious surfaces and watershed classification(s). Given the increased intensity of rainfall and new development, additional requirements and best practices are recommended to mitigate runoff.

STREET TYPOLOGIES

The predominant stormwater drainage method for Belmont’s standard street typologies is a curb and gutter system with underground storm drains. However, in areas with inadequate stormwater systems or in low-impact development areas, an open drainage system may be used. This method consists of appropriately sized drainage swales adjacent to the roadways, which capture and allow stormwater infiltration back into the soil.



Map: Belmont Municipal Water Service Area (data source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)



WASTEWATER SYSTEM & CAPACITY

Belmont’s wastewater treatment and service is primarily provided by the Public Works Department’s Utilities Division. Belmont owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility with the capacity to treat 10 million gallons of wastewater per day. The plant is currently operating under capacity and is expected to be able to provide additional treatment capacity for the foreseeable future.

However, in October of 2024, Belmont’s City Council voted unanimously to implement a moratorium on new major subdivisions and commercial developments due to identified wastewater capacity concerns centered around an area south of Henry Chapel Road, served by the Morgan’s Branch Pump Station. A May 2024 report confirmed that expanding this pump station would put the downstream eight-inch force main over capacity. The moratorium will remain in effect until the existing capacity constraints at the pump station are resolved.

Altogether, the City uses 23 active public and private pump stations to move sewage from areas that cannot reach the wastewater treatment facility in eastern Belmont by gravity flow. As with potable water, sewer services reach the Planning Area southwest of the South Fork River through a force main from the NC-273 bridge.

Outside this system, an area in the western portion of the City is served by Two Rivers Utilities via a wastewater treatment facility in Cramerton. Unincorporated portions of the Planning Area are not provided with public sewer service and currently operate on-site septic systems. These factors indicate that much of the Planning Area has or could have sewer service as the system is expanded.

Most recently, Belmont has been coordinating with Charlotte Water to enhance wastewater services as part of the Stowe Regional Project. This involves replacing the existing Belmont Wastewater Treatment Plant with a new pump station and wastewater pipelines. As a result, Belmont’s sewage output will travel to Charlotte for treatment, providing more efficient wastewater service and meeting the future needs for communities in

northwestern Mecklenburg and eastern Gaston Counties.

This color-themed map is organized by sewer basin, showing capacity challenges and opportunities at build-out (see the Future Land Use Map in Section 03, “Land Use”). This information is based only on Lift Station capacity and does not account for gravity challenges.

Wastewater basins in need of upgrades to support the community’s future vision are classified as **Critical Priority Sewer Areas** or **Priority Sewer Areas**, depending on the extent of capacity investment required. In some cases, Critical Areas represent key opportunities to forge private sector partnerships for utility upgrades that support planned Village Center development. For example, sewer upgrades near the proposed Waterfront Village Center could be supported by one or multiple developers, adding necessary capacity that also reduces bottlenecking at the treatment plant to its south.

Priority Areas will be addressed through a mix of public sector investments and creative partnerships, depending on their context. Concerning the system today, recent drawdown tests found Greystone Pump 2, Morgans Branch, Reflection Pointe, and South Point Ridge Pump 2 exhibit an average drawdown capacity to design capacity ratio below 0.9. This suggests possible wear and tear.

Should there be additional wastewater allocation from new development within the South Point area, it should be coordinated with an upgrade to the Morgans Branch pump station and its force main, which are at risk for sanitary sewer overflow during a major storm event.

Citywide, Belmont will maintain a wastewater capacity model over the coming years to track new development permitting alongside infrastructure improvements. Called LUCID, this software program allows for a data-driven understanding of the infrastructure needs associated with new developments as they are proposed, guiding projects to areas better prepared to support growth and/or suggesting best practices to ensure projects account for their share of needed infrastructure.

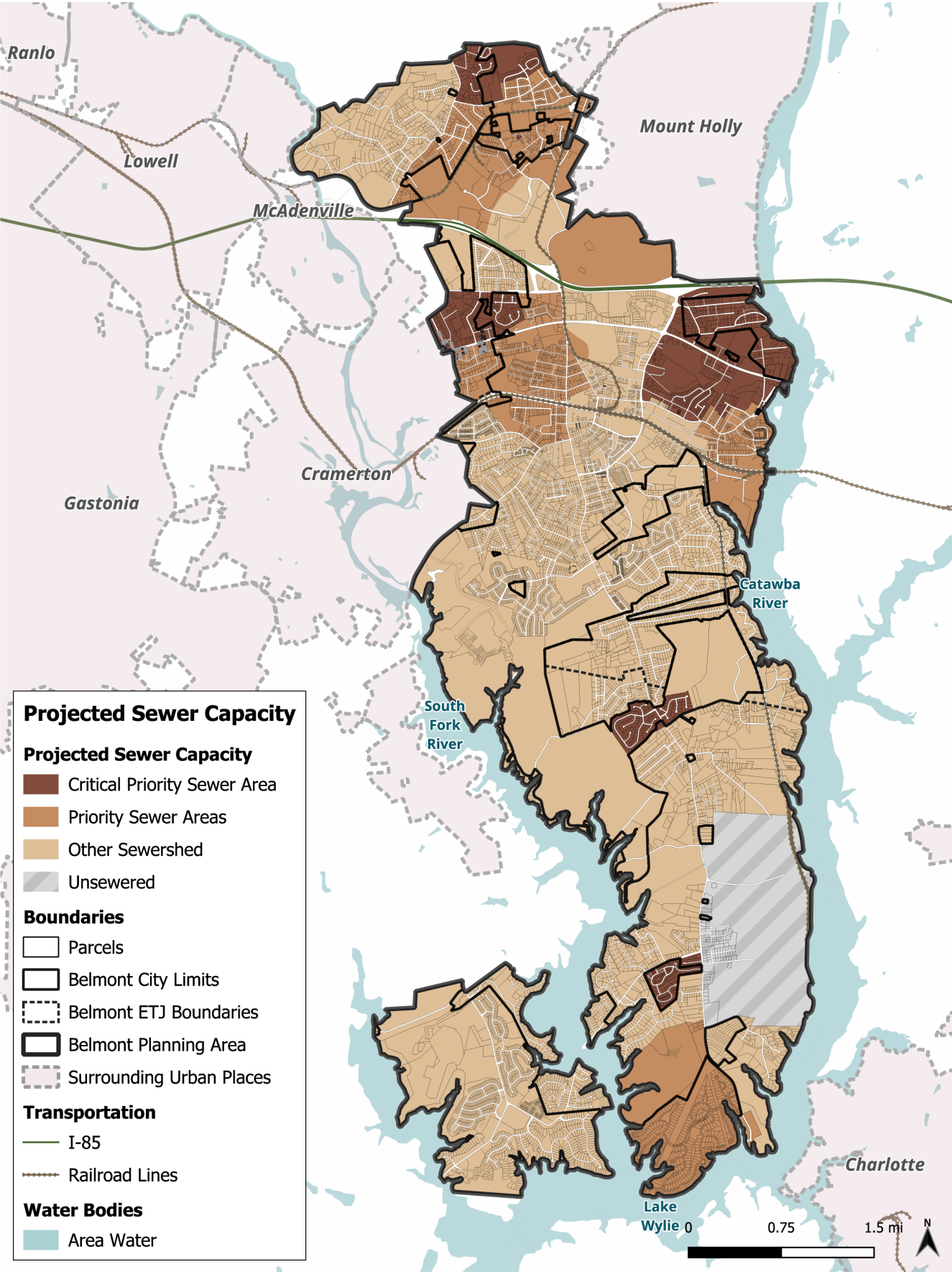


Image: Projected Sewer Capacity (data source: WithersRavenel, City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)



OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

- Overcoming identified capacity constraints could be funded through partnerships with private developers as part of higher density projects.
- New interlocal partnerships around utility delivery, such as with Charlotte Water, can support more efficient services and potentially lower rates for Belmont.
- Based on analysis of Belmont’s wastewater treatment system, infiltration by stormwater into the system has been determined to be a significant limiting factor.
- Lack of redundancy in all of Belmont’s infrastructure systems continues to be a critical issue, especially as growth places stress on these systems and natural disasters test their reliability. Current planning demonstrates a vision to create redundancy that has yet to be realized.
- Despite Belmont’s “small town feel,” it has some of the infrastructure requirements of a larger municipality. Balancing this both financially and aesthetically will be a challenge.
- Funding and staffing to enhance and maintain Belmont’s infrastructure, primarily within its Public Works Department, should be prioritized.
- Some of the city’s infrastructure dates back to the mills and villages that surrounded them and has not been significantly upgraded in many instances.
- New alternate methods of distributing essential utilities and infrastructure within cities are becoming more proven, available, and efficient as technology changes.



# 10

# ENVIRONMENT

To protect the natural environment of Belmont as a critical public asset.

A high-quality natural environment is essential to Belmont’s character and livability. Water quality, tree canopy, animal habitat, erosion, and storm resiliency are among many concerns that must be addressed. This is because Belmont’s citizens and their future depend on the protection of the City’s natural resources and the careful implementation of human interventions that affect them.

For much of the Piedmont region’s history, the natural environment shaped the way villages, towns, and cities developed. Major roads and rail lines followed ridges, town centers were typically built on high ground, and, for the most part, development stayed out of lowlands subject to known flooding. Commerce and industry often followed these patterns. Until adequate infrastructure existed, houses were typically located where soils were suitable for cesspools and septic tanks. In early Belmont, housing was also aggregated around the mills that were built along the primary rail lines. Eventually, public water followed roads, and development was located where it could drain by gravity to public sewer lines, usually placed in draws near creeks and rivers.

Today’s cities are still influenced by the natural environment, which is increasingly threatened by haphazard growth and climate change, as well as



Image: Daniel Stowe Conservancy (source: American Society of Landscape Architects)

development pressures creating impacts farther and farther from the original downtown core. Understanding Belmont’s natural resources and setting is therefore important to understand how it should plan for its future.

It is also worth noting that **preservation of Belmont’s natural environment** –whether that meant maximizing natural tree canopy, controlling soil washout into the South Fork River, or expanding park and waterfront access– **was one of the foremost concerns of city residents** during this planning process.

This section is therefore intended to catalogue and describe the various natural characteristics of Belmont and how successful environmental stewardship of each can be achieved.

## HEADLINE FINDINGS

The environmental impacts of Belmont’s growth and development are among the top concerns of residents. Regardless of their overall home density, new single-family subdivisions largely clear cut their sites during development, resulting in a rapid loss of tree canopy and accelerated erosion. Property owner’s rights to develop their land and meet growing housing demand must be balanced with the City’s goal to do so responsibly and in

a way that protects the environmentally sensitive areas of the community.

Belmont has the opportunity to strengthen environmental defense efforts by implementing an updated Stormwater Ordinance. Currently under update by the City’s Department of Public Works, this tool and its enforcement will allow better planning for project drainage.

Less than 20-percent of Belmont’s Planning Area has slope, soil, or hydrological constraints with the potential to significantly restrict development. This presents a significant opportunity to primarily shape undeveloped areas through zoning and underscores the need to consciously preserve open space.

Cluster development along the peninsula, near streams, and other sensitive areas presents the best way to preserve tree canopy and limit other environmental issues. This development technique maximizes open space preservation by shifting new buildings onto a portion of the site, reserving the rest for conservation through easements or public ownership. See Section 03, “Land Use” for more information.



This icon represents “Environment” content.





# GOAL 8 ENVIRON- MENT

To protect the natural environment of Belmont as a critical public asset.

## POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

**POLICY 1. The City should strive to achieve sustainable, well-managed growth, preserving the environment and maintaining the efficiency of infrastructure investments.**

**1.1. Project** – Capitalize on incentives offered by Duke Energy for energy-efficient infrastructure as well as assistance provided by tools such as the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission’s Green Growth Toolbox.

**1.2. Project** – Continue to review proposed developments to ensure they meet federal and state standards for floodplain development.

**1.3. Project** – Continue to enforce regulations established by the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (NCDENR), which include a two-part, 50-foot development buffer on the Catawba River mainstream and the North Carolina portion of Lake Wylie.

**1.4. Project** – Coordinate with Catawba Riverkeepers and the Lake Wylie Marine Commission to encourage increased buffers that exceed NCDENR minimums in priority areas of the shoreline.

**1.5. Project** – Adjust public lighting schedules to more accurately correspond with sunrise and sunset to reduce electricity expenditures during daylight hours.

**1.6. Project** – Consider sustainability and conservation implications in all decision-making processes.

**1.7. Project** – Continue to encourage density-shifting cluster development to protect on-site natural resources. Consider regulatory changes to promote and incentivize increased conservation of land area while maintaining overall site development densities.

**POLICY 2. The City should protect air and water quality to provide Belmont residents with the safe and healthy environment they deserve.**

**2.1. Project** – Continue to enforce the adopted Watershed Protection Ordinance and look for ways to enhance its effectiveness.

**2.2. Project** – Continue cooperating with Gaston County to inspect development for erosion control, limiting any sediment discharge into Lake Wylie or the South Fork River.

**2.3. Project** – The Department of Public Works should implement the updated Stormwater Ordinance to regulate all stormwater post-development and cooperate with Gaston County to monitor areas within the Planning Area but outside of City Limits.

**2.4. Project** – Routinely reassess the City stormwater fee.

**2.5. Project** – Work to remediate pollution in surrounding water bodies.

**2.6. Project** – Promote non-vehicular transportation options to reduce emissions and improve air quality.

**POLICY 3. The City should preserve its scarce and valuable natural resources, including its pristine waterfront and mature tree canopy, which are bound to its identity.**

**3.1. Project** – The zoning ordinance should continue to permit off-site offsets for required parks, open space, and impervious areas when planning staff deems appropriate but also allow applicants to submit additional creative solutions for consideration on a case-by-case basis.

**3.2. Project** – Protect valuable water resources by prohibiting incompatible or potentially hazardous land uses within 500-feet of creeks and rivers.

**3.3. Project** – Continue to enforce the limits on site clearing which were updated in the tree ordinance in 2020 and seek additional ways to limit unnecessary loss of tree canopy.

**3.4. Project** – Remove invasive species from public property, especially parks.

**3.5. Project** – Consider public stewardship of these resources by incorporating regular maintenance, restoration, and outreach education programs into the budget and responsibilities of the Public Works Department.

**3.6. Project** – Seek out partnerships with land conservancies to identify opportunities on vacant parcels to protect significant areas.



**POLICY 4. When and where possible, the City should limit the amount of new impervious surfaces.**

**4.1. Project** – Track the subdivision of already-developed parcels to ensure new construction remains in compliance with impervious surface and open space requirements, allowing the City to meet its goals.

**4.2. Project** – Remediate existing drainage issues on public property.

**4.3. Project** – Coordinate and balance the policies, projects, and programs set forth in Section 09, “Infrastructure,” as they are closely associated and interdependent with goals related to Belmont’s environment.

**POLICY 5. The City should encourage a diversity of native street tree types to enhance visual interest, reduce vulnerability to disease and pests, and add wildlife habitat.**

**5.1. Project** – Encourage the planting of all required trees, rather than payment in lieu or similar alternatives.

**5.2. Project** – Protect existing wildlife by preserving tree canopies in both contiguous areas and segmented tree clusters, combined with best practices for habitat conservation.

**5.3. Project** – Update Belmont’s approved tree list to account for changes in available supply, hardiness, and climate factors.

**POLICY 6. The City should focus on improving resident health by cultivating a built environment, implementing projects, and hosting events that are conducive to a healthy lifestyle.**

**6.1. Project** – Always consider how policies made by decision-makers (staff and/or elected) impact various populations, access to goods and services, equity, and more in parallel with issues related to the environment.

**6.2. Project** – Pursue opportunities to educate staff, elected officials, and residents about how the built environment affects community health.

**6.3. Project** – Coordinate with the Gaston County Department of Public Health to address identified needs within Belmont and its Planning Area, such as better transportation connections, food deserts, health access, etc.

**6.4. Project** – Develop and adopt tools to routinely consider the health and safety impacts of new projects, policies, plans, and programs.

**6.5. Project** – Promote environmental education and placemaking opportunities to bring awareness to Belmont’s environmental assets.

**6.6. Project** – Coordinate and balance the policies, projects, and programs set forth in Section 08, “Parks & Recreation,” as they are closely associated and interdependent with goals related to Belmont’s environment.



TOPOGRAPHY

A topographical analysis was conducted using data provided by the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Web Soil Survey (WSS). Slope values were grouped into four classifications by the level of probable development constraint, ranging from low to high. A fifth category, “Highly Urbanized Land,” is also derived from the WSS findings and includes land most intensely covered by streets, parking lots, buildings, and other structures.

In general, slopes of 8% or less are considered to pose low to no development constraint. These sites can easily be used or graded level to support any type of development.

By contrast, slopes between 8% and 16%, including excavated soils (Udorthents) are considered to pose low to moderate development constraints and are best suited for residential and light commercial projects, but often require retaining walls to address uneven ground.

Slopes from 17% to 24% are considered moderate and can be suitable for low density residential development, but are not usable for commercial or industrial development.

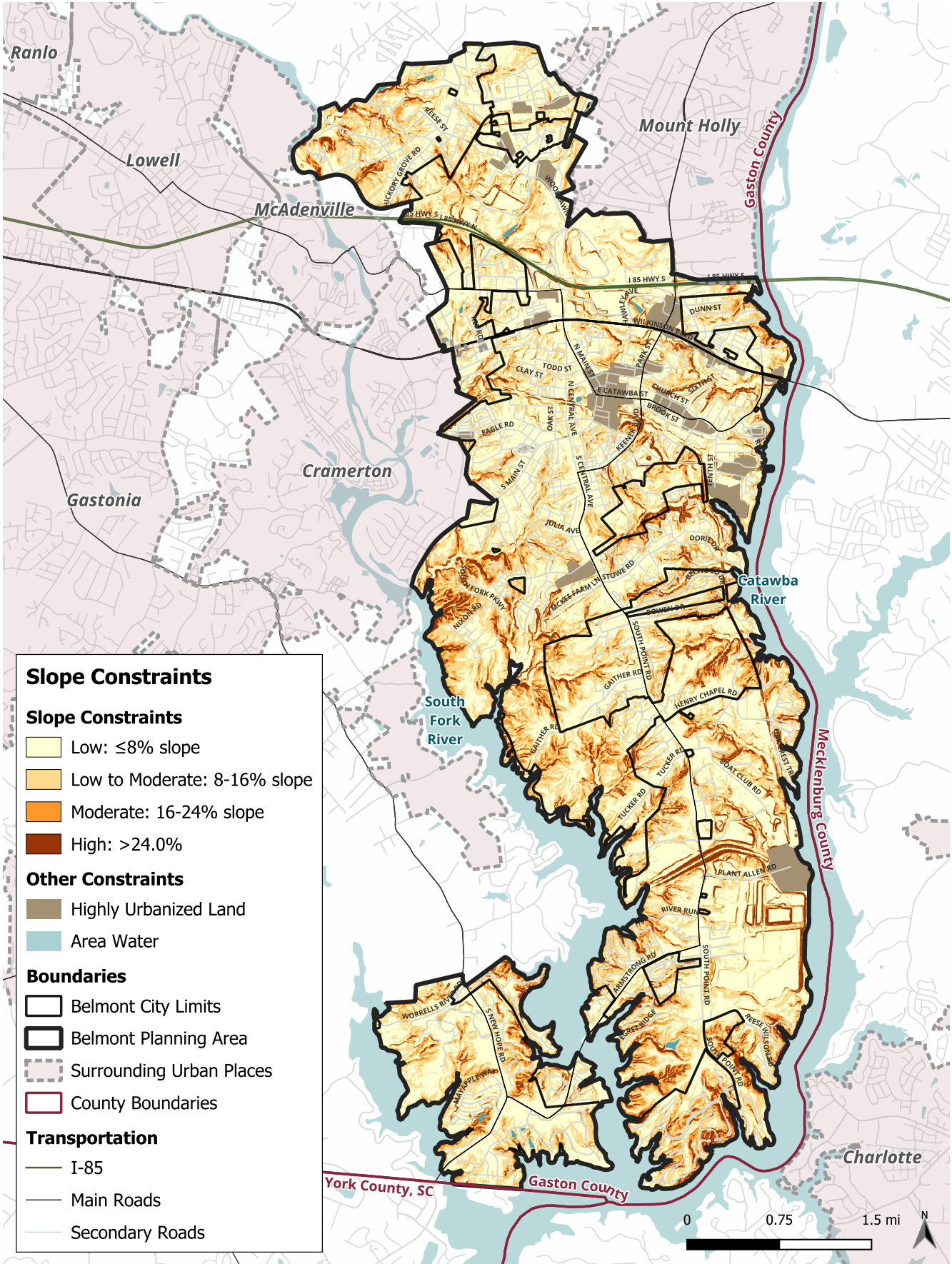
Finally, areas with slopes of greater than 24% are considered to pose a high level of constraint for any type of development. These areas are best reserved as conservation easements or other open spaces.

Overall, more than half of the Planning Area (54%) is relatively flat and provides little to no constraint to development. An additional quarter of the land in the Planning Area poses low to moderate constraints. These small slopes are scattered throughout the Planning Area.

Areas where topography poses a moderate constraint to development are primarily found along the banks of small streams and creeks that feed into the Catawba and South Fork Rivers, representing 14% of all land in the Planning Area. Places with the steepest slopes (beyond 24%) that pose the highest constraint to development are limited, with the highest concentration located at the southern point of the primary peninsula.

In general, the topography of Belmont and the surrounding areas is conducive to development –which can be thought of as an asset. However, this can also be detrimental from an environmental standpoint if left unchecked. To meet environmental goals, intentional conservation and open space land must encompass more than just the steepest slopes.

Image: (Top) Curvilinear roadway and gentle slopes (source: Redfin); (Bottom) Slopes and lakefront residential development (source: Redfin).



Map: Slope constraints map (data source: USDA, City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)



SOILS

The USDA's Web Soil Survey also provides detailed soil composition data that can be used to determine suitability for development. Constraints to development related to soil suitability were analyzed by comparing suitability for residential homes (without a basement) to soil suitability for those with septic tank absorption fields. Suitability for septic tanks was included in the analysis because public water is not currently available in much of the Planning Area (see Section 09, "Infrastructure").

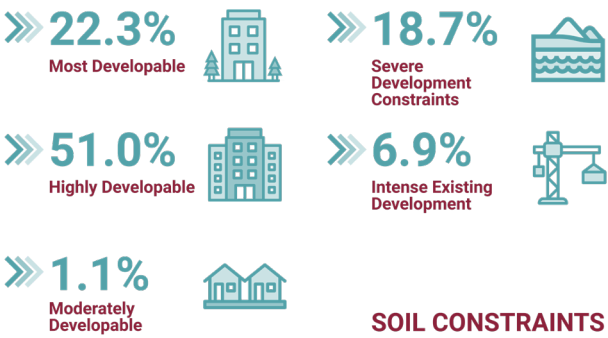
Perhaps unsurprisingly, lack of access to public water (and sewer) service can impact the intensity of new development. In Belmont, connection to these utilities is required for all uses except single lot developments in the Rural Residential (R-R) zoning district. The Suburban Residential (S-R) zoning district also allows for this on lots one acre and larger with certain conditions. The consideration of these factors provides a series of development suitability indicators that range from the most developable to soil conditions that are very limited for development.

The soils for 22.3% of Planning Area land exhibit slight to no limitations to the construction of dwelling units, whereas an additional 51.0% has moderate limitations. Both classifications have moderate favorability for the installation of septic systems, and represent the vast majority of Belmont's developable area.

Another 1.1% features soils suitable for residential construction but generally infeasible for septic tanks.

Soil conditions for 18.7% of the Planning Area are very limited, with one or more features that are unfavorable for residential construction. These soils are located throughout the Planning Area and are considered unfavorable for development for one or more reasons such as slope, flooding, and/or poor drainage.

"Excavated Soils," refer to udorthents –a type of soil in North Carolina composed of areas where the natural



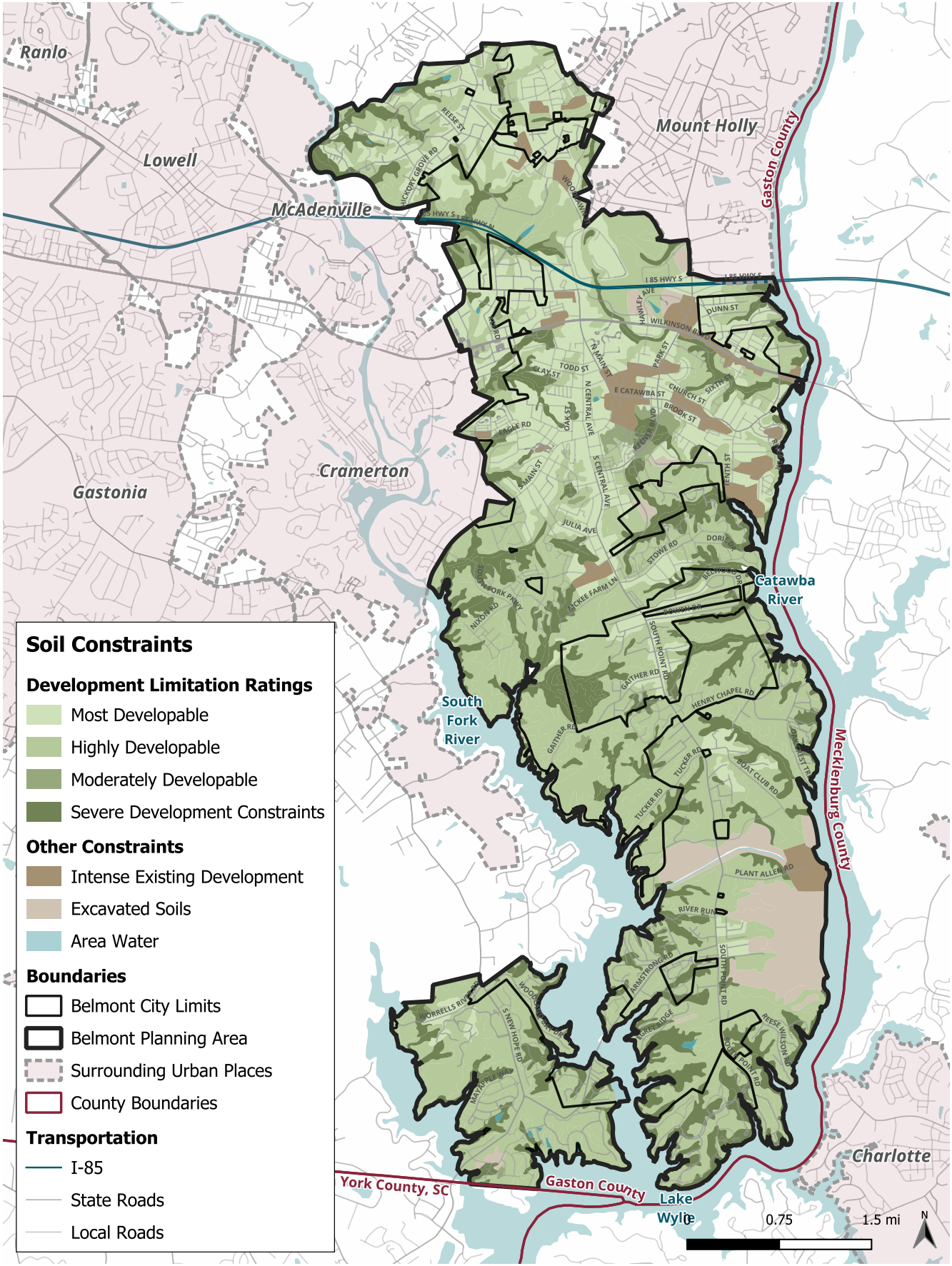
earth has been altered by digging, grading, or filling. In Belmont, cut and fill areas resulting from previous or ongoing development at the time of data capture (2024) have this classification, as well as the coal ash burial underway at the Allen Steam Station.

When absent of other hazards, udorthents are considered to pose low to moderate development constraints and are best suited for residential and light commercial development. These soils account for 6.9% of the Planning Area.

"Intense Existing Development" represents areas already occupied by significantly dense or impervious development, presenting infill projects in these areas with their own unique challenges. The majority of these sites have "excavated soils" as their underlying classification.

Finally, while known soil contamination is present around the power plant site, like most other cities, it is likely contamination exists elsewhere throughout Belmont. Typically identified only when sites are developed, these are usually the result of commercial and industrial wastes from older facilities, operations, and unreported incidents.

Often referred to as "brownfields," these sites must be catalogued and remediated in accordance with the latest best practices established by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), and others.



Map: Soil constraints map (data source: USDA, City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)



HYDROLOGY

Belmont’s Planning Area contains portions of three creek basins and one water supply watershed. The last of these, the Lake Wylie Class IV Water Supply Watershed (WSW), is located in the northeast portion of the Planning Area, north of Henry Chapel Road and east of South Point Road, Central Avenue, Woodlawn Street, and Hickory Grove Road. It largely overlaps with the portion of Belmont located within the Mountain Island Lake Catawba River Watershed.

The Critical Area of this WSW extends 2,500 feet inland of the Catawba River and covers several distinct neighborhoods and land uses. The Critical Area places certain state-mandated restrictions on both high and low density development and requires safe stormwater drainage systems. These are key constraints that will impact future Village Center-focused redevelopment along the Lake Wylie shoreline.

Floodplains within the Planning Area are based upon 100-year flood events and are derived from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Floodplain areas are quite limited within the Planning Area and are concentrated along the South Fork River, Catawba Creek, Fites Creek, and several unnamed tributaries to the Catawba River and South Fork River.

The water table (or groundwater level) in Belmont is variable but within reach of reasonable well depths. The USGS North Carolina Water Science Center monitors the ongoing quality of this groundwater via at least nine public wells and several private systems that allow discovery of pollutants such as sewage components, lithium hydroxide, coal ash compounds, and more.

WATERSHED REGULATIONS

In 1993, Belmont adopted a Watershed Protection Ordinance to meet state requirements targeted at improving drinking water quality, or conversely, limiting

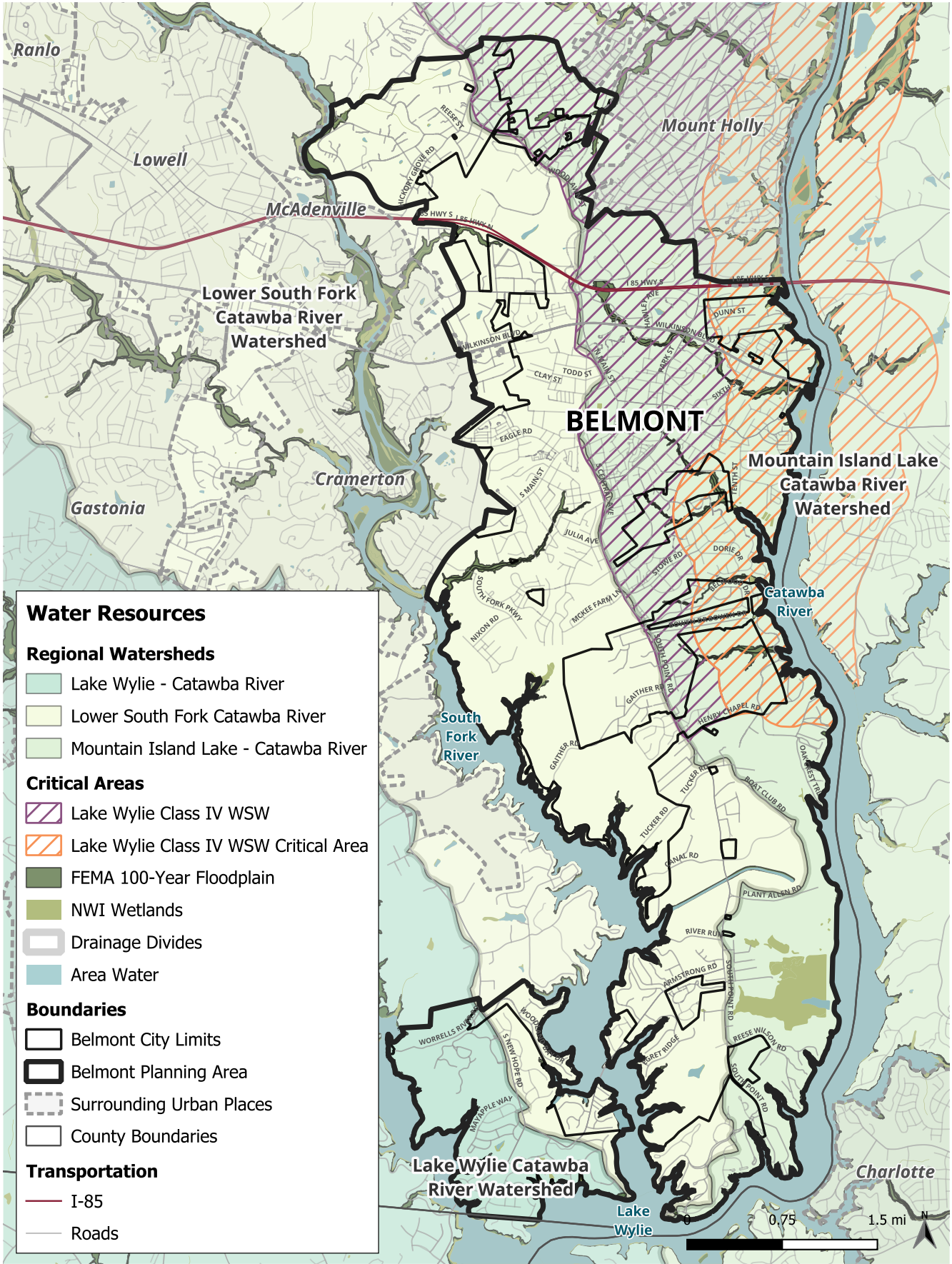
the cost and extent of treatment needed, by regulating the intensity of development with respect to surface water supplies. The Planning Area includes both Critical Areas and Protected Areas as classified by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ).

This ordinance exists separately from zoning and subdivision regulations but impacts the land use and subdivision of all parcels in the watershed. Development within the designated Critical Area is limited to two dwelling units per acre or 24% built-upon area for the low-density option and 24-50% built upon area for the high-density option. This aligns with the maximum densities allowed in the Suburban Residential (S-R) and South Point Peninsula Overlay (SPP-O) zoning districts.

Within the remainder of the WSW, development is also limited to two dwelling units per acre for the low-density option, but allows 24-70% built upon area for the high-density option. Additional regulations established by the state include a two-part, 50-foot buffer on the Catawba River mainstream and the North Carolina portion of Lake Wylie.

FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS

All communities containing a regulated floodplain (as defined by FEMA) are required to adopt a Floodplain Management Ordinance that meets or exceeds National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements. Belmont has floodplain associated with all major waterbodies and some minor creeks. The NFIP requires a permit for any construction or development in a regulated floodplain defined as a Special Flood Hazard Area. Belmont must review these proposed developments to ensure they meet federal and state standards. Gaston County currently provides this review on behalf of Belmont through an interlocal agreement. Compliance helps to reduce liability for property loss from flooding.



Map: Water Resources (data source: City of Belmont) (design: Plusurbia Design)





Image: Flooded dock on Lake Wylie (source: Reddit)

### DISASTER RESILIENCE

Following Hurricane Helene in September 2024, Charlotte-area communities along the Catawba-Wateree River System experienced historic levels of flooding, with portions of Gaston County along Mountain Island Lake bearing the worst of the impacts.

Though better protected due to its position at the end of the three lake system, Lake Wylie also saw dangerous levels of floodwater, prompting the City of Belmont to issue voluntary evacuations for residents along four waterfront streets.

Fortunately, floodplain regulations that have largely prohibited recent development within the impact zone and the presence of flood-adaptable green spaces along the waterfront minimized local damage.

To ensure maximum resiliency for future disaster-level storm events, new development along Belmont’s waterfront should be constructed with variable water levels in mind, using tiers of green space and hardscaping to create meaningful, adaptable public space.

### WETLAND REGULATIONS

Wetlands are vital to sustaining a variety of plant and animal species, and also play a role in mitigating pollutants and stormwater runoff. Though mostly natural in origin, certain human-constructed features such as ponds, lakes, bioretention facilities, and the like can become bona fide wetlands over time. Regardless of origin, their protection is crucial to the continued health of Belmont and its natural environment –a topmost concern of community stakeholders.

These important natural features are regulated by the North Carolina Division of Water Resources and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Any disturbance to a regulated wetland requires a permit from these agencies.

In Belmont, wetlands are primarily confined within the floodplains, river tributaries and within Duke Energy’s Allen Steam Station property. In fact, the National Wetlands Inventory maintained by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has defined a 142-acre portion of the 996-acre property as an “impounded wetland” which has transitioned from a natural, low-lying area to serving as “polishing ponds,” treating runoff from repositories of coal ash –the by-product of coal burning.

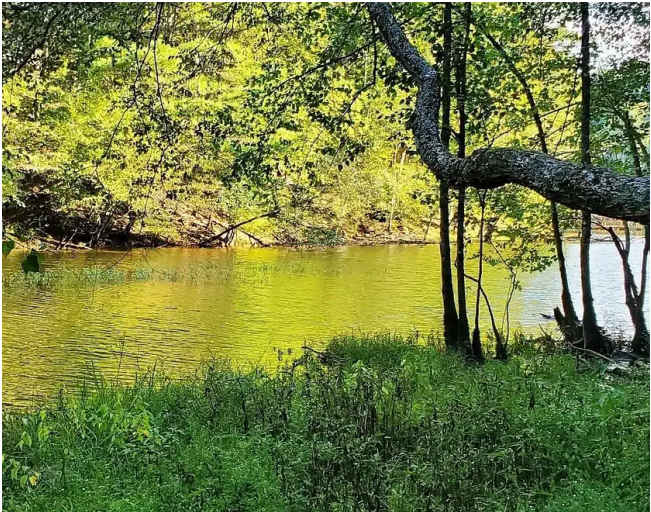


Image: Catawba River system (source: Redfin)

### EROSION CONTROL

As a function of topography, groundcover, soil condition and water runoff, erosion is a critical environmental issue –especially for a city like Belmont with rivers along most of its perimeter that receive stormwater, sediment and contaminants from adjacent higher elevations. In fact, erosion was noted as a top stakeholder concern during public engagement, with workshop participants sharing how the influx of soil runoff into the South Fork River from recent development has rendered more of the waterway inaccessible by boat in recent years.

In light of this, and in addition to the watershed, floodplain, and wetland considerations described above, how Belmont manages water runoff from both natural areas and those disturbed by development and other human activities is a priority.

Belmont continues to promote the use of pervious surface materials, such as such as pavers, gravel, stone, and turf to reduce the amount of surface runoff and related erosion and flooding across the Planning Area. This strategy offers key advantages over conveying stormwater offsite, which typically increases runoff speed and volume.

Because erosion control regulations are primarily focused on developments that are one acre or greater, the City should also start to address stormwater issues in areas seeing increased infill development.

### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Belmont is designated as a Phase II Stormwater Community by the State of North Carolina and must meet the EPA’s corresponding guidelines for stormwater management. Most importantly for this plan, each project is required to meet stormwater control standards during site development, as well as post-construction standards that act to address the amount of runoff generated by development, pollutants carried by that runoff, and the rate at which stormwater leaves a site.

Stormwater management is cooperatively conducted by Gaston County and Belmont’s Department of Public Works. Together, they administer a Stormwater Control Ordinance that meets the minimum requirements of the Phase II program. Closely aligned with –but separate from this ordinance– is Gaston County’s Sedimentation and Soil Erosion Control Ordinance that focuses on managing the downstream impacts of land development during construction.

Administration of Belmont’s portion of the County’s Stormwater Control Ordinance is funded entirely through a stormwater fee. This fee is levied on properties located only within the corporate limits of Belmont, and should be routinely revisited for its fairness and effectiveness.

Beyond concerns with the stormwater fee, public engagement highlighted citizen’s uneasiness about the adequacy of current erosion standards, citing they are out of date and/or do not include critical areas, such as the South Fork River. This ordinance is currently being updated by Belmont’s Department of Public Works to regulate all stormwater post-development. Cooperation with Gaston County must continue in order to monitor areas within the Planning Area but outside City Limits.



Image: Development along the South Fork River(source: Google Earth)



TREE CANOPY

From increasing property values, to maintaining Belmont’s community character, reducing the urban heat island effect, and improving local air quality, trees offer a multitude of benefits. To support the preservation of existing tree canopy and ensure regrowth of that which is cleared for new development, Belmont’s Land Development Code includes requirements for tree save and new plantings.

The current ordinance emphasizes the protection of heritage trees, planting a diversity of native species, and provides on-site tree save requirements for various development types. For single-family residential, all tree save must be provided on-site. To provide flexibility, other uses may exercise varying degrees of off-site solutions.

Affirming its commitment to tree preservation, in 2010, Belmont was designated as a Tree City USA municipality by the Urban and Community Forestry division of the North Carolina Forest Service. An Arbor Day Foundation Program, it acts as a framework for community forestry management, where the Tree City USA status is earned by meeting four criteria each year. These are maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least two dollars per capita on urban forestry, and celebrating Arbor Day.

Through its participation, Belmont continues to celebrate the importance of its tree canopy while seeking to reverse the net loss of this community asset as soon as possible.

TREE CANOPY CHANGE

Belmont’s tree regulations are critical, as sprawling new development represents the leading cause of canopy loss in the Planning Area. According to data provided by the Global Forest Watch –established by the World Resources Institute (WRI), Gaston County lost 10,141 acres of tree cover between 2014 to 2022, a loss equivalent to 7.0% of its tree cover area in 2000.

Though Belmont has also experienced decreased tree cover, the City recently completed its own tree canopy assessment, which tracked only a 2.6% decline (202 acres) between 2014 and 2022. This undertaking helped to pinpoint the areas of most prevalent canopy loss, but in some cases, revealed where tree canopy has been regained as a result of new plantings that were required after initial clearing.

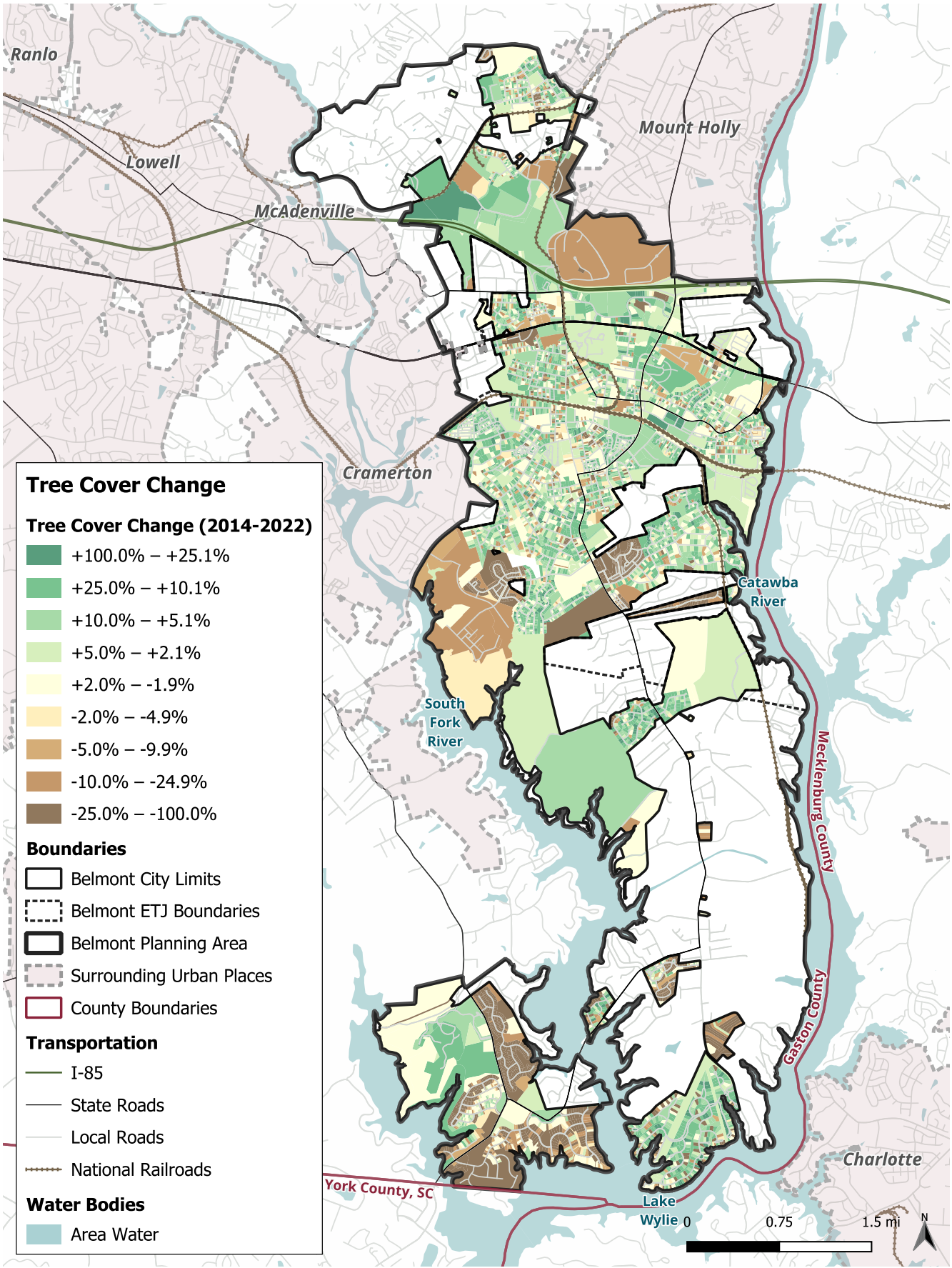
Examining the map, the largest canopy changes during the eight year period are concentrated in several distinct areas. Recent residential development accounts for the most dramatic changes, though commercial and industrial projects, particularly north of I-85, have also contributed to this total.

Notable sites of tree loss include the CaroMont Medical Center campus between I-85 and the Mount Holly boundary, the Carolina Riverside (Del Webb) community along the South Fork River, and multiple new neighborhoods in the McLean area of the peninsula. The substantial canopy loss across all of these sites is consistent with ongoing development. While these areas show significant change, it is important to note that tree planting efforts will help mitigate losses since, given time, trees are a regenerative resource.

For example, most parcels within Belle Meade, Stowe Pointe, and Hawthorne Park exhibit positive tree canopy change, showcasing preservation and replanting efforts that have offset some of the clearing required for development. These localized gains illustrate how proactive management and reforestation can counterbalance losses.

LEVERAGING NEW DEVELOPMENT

Overall, if implemented intentionally, new development can actually provide a key opportunity to re-establish biodiversity and supplement the natural environment



Map: Tree canopy coverage map (data source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)





Image: Tree-lined path at Belmont Abbey College (source: Plusurbia Design)

by adding to the tree canopy and creating meaningful, substantial, connected, and preserved open spaces.

Trees planted along streets and in natural open spaces quickly become part of the environment by default. They provide shade, offset impervious surfaces, and give character to the community. In fact, the majority of the street typologies proposed in the Land Development Code include street trees in their design and should be incorporated into future transportation improvements. Furthermore, establishing parks, greenways, lawn areas, bioswales, and similar features represent an act of purposefully increasing the amount of natural open space.

Instead of developing in ways that diminish Belmont’s coveted natural resources, change and new investment can help preserve them through the use of myriad flexible land planning and zoning techniques that go beyond the tree ordinance, such as density shifting to cluster developments (see Section 03, “Land Use”) and offsets for parks, open space, and impervious areas.

PARKS & NATURAL AREAS

Belmont is rich with both natural and human-created areas that can be used for passive and active recreation, sustaining biodiversity and preserving land. The designation and promotion of public parks, protected areas, and preserves throughout Belmont has been a consistent objective in recent years.

See Section 08, “Parks & Recreation” for current analysis and recommendations on these topics, as well as how they relate to a strong local environment and improved quality of life.

LOCAL INITIATIVES

Belmont has been proactive with regard to protecting its natural resources and guiding development in ways that seek to minimize impacts on the environment.

As part of this goal, the City’s Planning Department currently works with a citizen board called the Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB), which is comprised of several members of the community and has a specific set of duties and responsibilities. The ESB currently has four subcommittees with a focus on trees, bees, recycling, and energy.

The Department of Public Works oversees amendments to Belmont’s Tree Ordinance, which are presented by the Planning Department for recommendation. On October 5, 2020, Belmont’s City Council approved a significant revision to Chapter 11 of the Land Development Code to update its Landscape and Tree Ordinance. This was accomplished after a thorough review and “in order to protect, preserve, and proliferate canopy coverage.”

In 2019, Belmont became the 90th municipality in the nation to achieve “Bee City USA.” This designation is awarded by a national nonprofit organization that encourages city leaders to celebrate and raise awareness of the contribution bees and other pollinators make to our world by endorsing a set of commitments to create sustainable habitats for pollinators. The “Bee City USA” designation is renewed annually, based on the celebration of the bee community through a proclamation, public awareness activities, and various educational opportunities.

Overall, continued progress in the policy areas of tree protection, pollinator and ecosystem support, recycling, energy, and similar topics will be necessary to meet Belmont’s environmentally-focused community goals.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Although not regulatory, certain regional plans in effect within the greater Charlotte metropolitan area include Belmont and have the potential to influence development decisions, the allocation of resources, and the provision of services. One such plan, CONNECT Our Future, provides a framework for guiding and investing in growth. In particular, its aim is to create:

- Sustainable, well-managed growth for quality of life, preserving the environment and maintaining the efficiency of infrastructure investment.
- A safe and healthy environment with good air and water quality.
- A strong, diverse economy that provides jobs throughout the region.
- Strong partnerships with non-profit organizations such as the Catawba Lands Conservancy, Catawba Riverkeepers, and others.



Image: Development on the lakefront (source: Jome Listings)





# ALLEN STEAM STATION: A VISION WORTHY OF THE FUTURE

Chapter 6 of Belmont’s 2018 Comprehensive Land Use Plan called for efforts to “proactively work to create a collaborative long-term vision for (the) Allen Steam Plant.” This was an action item under the heading of Economic Development that anticipated the closure of the plant and remediation of coal ash deposits produced and located there. In April 2022, Chapter 6 was reviewed by planning staff in order to determine progress on the action items and recommend revisions to City Council. This action item remained a priority, among others.

Since that time, the plant’s owner and operator, **Duke Energy**, has continued with the closure and remediation procedures as required by its February 2020 consent order with NCDEQ. This process is ahead of schedule and the 2038 deadline with construction of four permanently encapsulated coal ash impoundments underway and demolition of the plant itself tentatively scheduled as soon as 2025.

Duke Energy has stated that new construction on this site is not viable –including what would be required for solar farms similar to the 42 they currently operate in North Carolina– two of which have been constructed and brought online recently in Cleveland and Cabarrus Counties. Instead, the current “reuse” plan is to transform 8 acres into a battery storage system, which will connect to the Duke Energy grid, storing power when available to redistribute during peak demand.

Though the plant is located outside of Belmont’s City Limits, it occupies at least 996 acres of Planning Area land spanning across lower-middle section of the peninsula. Despite limited resuse for battery development, the remaining natural land that existed prior to 1957 now

stands the chance of laying isolated and fallow forever.

*Is this the end for almost 1,000 acres, or is Belmont positioned to advocate for something different?*

Across the world, mines, quarries and even landfills have been repurposed for public use and to generate alternate sources of revenue. The EPA’s RE-Powering America’s Land Initiative encourages renewable energy development –primarily solar and wind– on current and formerly contaminated lands, landfills, and mine sites when such development is aligned with the community’s vision for the site.

With alternative energy uses largely ruled out by Duke, other creative adaptations might represent a more viable path toward reuse.

In Sanguhar, Scotland, renowned cultural theorist, land artist, and architectural historian Charles Jencks was commissioned to take the 55-acre derelict Crawick Coal Mine site and “put it back on the map” as a competitive artland and visitor attraction.

The much-anticipated **Crawick Multiverse** opened in 2015, inviting people with the words, “whether you are interested in cosmology, science, art –or just want to walk your dog, enjoy a picnic, or savour the beautiful landscape– we look forward to welcoming you.”

Thinking boldly, there is no reason that Belmont cannot have its own inspiring attraction that follows this and other examples, transitioning the site into an enduring new community asset.



**Image:** (Top) Crawick Multiverse (source: [crawickmultiverse.co.uk](http://crawickmultiverse.co.uk)); (Bottom) Render of Allen Steam Station site with completed coal ash impoundments (source: [businessnc.com](http://businessnc.com))



OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

- Belmont’s community members identified the City’s natural environment as one of its greatest assets and are interested in exploring options to preserve tree canopy and water quality.
- A new Stormwater Ordinance will help Belmont make strides toward runoff mitigation while combating erosion and sediment influx into regional waterways.
- Clear-cutting for new development has quickly reduced tree cover and created other adverse effects across the Planning Area.
- Environmentally-sensitive cluster developments can help respond to growth concerns while protecting tree coverage and limiting site disruptions. This represents an alternative to large lot single-family developments.
- Impervious surface tracking systems are currently limited in their ability to identify parcels linked with developments already approved, specifically those approved as low density, which are capped at 24-percent build-out.
- Closure of the Allen Steam Station may provide a platform for City and County-led conversations about new opportunities for the site.
- There is a need for greater consideration of the impacts of policy decisions on Public Health and Sustainability.
- The new vision and plan for the Daniel Stowe Conservancy is a model for other locations that could similarly promote awareness of Belmont’s precious ecosystems.

ENVIRONMENT

2024-2025 community outreach findings

RATE THESE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DIRECTIONS:



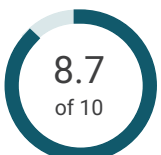
*Protecting water quality and limiting sediment discharge into Lake Wylie and the South Fork River should be a priority to ensure these resources remain healthy and accessible.*



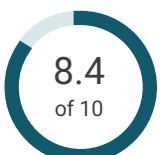
*Belmont must work to **preserve its valuable natural resources** currently under threat, including its **mature tree canopy** and **pristine waterfront**.*



*Belmont should work to **minimize challenges with stormwater and flooding** through prompt infrastructure upgrades and regulations that harmonize development with environmental protection.*



*Belmont should **encourage a diversity of street trees and other plant species** to enhance visual interest, reduce vulnerability to disease and pests, and add habitat for native wildlife.*



*Belmont should **consider the implications on sustainability and resiliency in all decision-making** processes to ensure actions are forward-thinking.*

*Of all sections in this Comprehensive Plan, proposed Environmental policy directions ranked the highest during Survey 2, with an average of 9.0. This demonstrates considerable consensus among the public that Belmont’s natural environment is a top priority.*



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

To partner with surrounding jurisdictions, state agencies, utility providers, and other non-local external entities to promote the interests of Belmont's citizens and to ensure the ongoing success and quality of life within the greater Charlotte metropolitan region.



*This icon represents "Intergovernmental Relations" content.*

Belmont is part of a thriving region that is experiencing both shared success and shared challenges. Building and maintaining effective partnerships with surrounding municipalities, county governments, regional organizations, and state agencies significantly strengthens Belmont's capacity to sustainably manage its own growth and chart its own course, actively responding to external forces.

Situated in this dynamic context, Belmont cannot insulate itself from neighboring cities such as Charlotte, Gastonia, Mount Holly, McAdenville, and Cramerton. This can be seen in the commuting, freight movement, shopping, and leisure patterns that cross city, county, and state lines every day, intricately linking every community.

Cooperative regional planning ensures coordinated growth and development, addressing common challenges and capitalizing on shared opportunities. To build on this, Belmont should continue to pursue regional dialogue and collaboration in areas including transportation improvements, economic development, and environmental management, ensuring regional decisions reflect Belmont's priorities and benefit the broader community.



Image: I-85 corridor, underpinning Belmont and the Charlotte Metropolitan Region (source: crexi.com).

One of Gaston County's greatest strengths lies in its relationships among municipalities, non-profits, and other regional organizations, such as the Gaston County Economic Development Commission, Catawba Riverkeeper, and the Catawba Lands Conservancy, which doubles as the driving force behind the Carolina Thread Trail. While it will be important for Belmont to start and continue its own regional dialogues, forging deeper partnerships with existing organizations is often the most straightforward way to spur action.

As an example of planning with the region in mind, Belmont must target growth strategies that consider neighboring visions, particularly Gaston County's, as almost 4,100 acres of the Planning Area sits outside Belmont's City Limits and Extra-territorial Jurisdiction. Though the City cannot exercise development control outside these boundaries, understanding what is allowable or envisioned can help Belmont to better accommodate compatible uses within City zoning areas or as parcels request annexation.

The regional perspective is also important when considering environmental and transportation planning, as poorly planned growth in a neighboring community can result in major soil erosion or traffic generation events

that impact Belmont's waterway health, roads, and other infrastructure. That is, without any real change within the City, major shifts or events in adjacent communities can significantly impact Belmont.

That said, Belmont must also play its part to enact policies that promote regional environmental quality (ex. cluster development for new peninsula neighborhoods and a revised Stormwater Ordinance) and transportation infrastructure (ex. participation in regional multimodal projects) for the benefit of its neighbors as well as itself.

## HEADLINE FINDINGS

To effectively plan for itself, Belmont must collaborate. Most important is regional coordination in the areas of land use, environmental conservation, transportation, economic prosperity, and emergency and public services.

Neighboring communities are planning for growth that will impact Belmont. In many cases, this new development may be beneficial to Belmont residents, by offering new destinations and employment opportunities, but will also increase traffic and competition.

Belmont school enrollment has slightly decreased, but schools are still near capacity. This mirrors related trends.





GOAL 9  
INTERGOV-  
ERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS

To partner with surrounding jurisdictions, state agencies, utility providers, and other external entities to **promote the interests of Belmont’s citizens** and to ensure the ongoing success and **quality of life within the greater Charlotte metropolitan region.**

POLICIES, PROJECTS + PROGRAMS

**POLICY 1. The City should strive to be aware of the impacts of future development and planning in adjacent jurisdictions.**

- 1.1. Project** – Monitor plans, developments, transportation projects, and infrastructure availability in adjacent jurisdictions, including at local, county, regional, and intermediate levels.
- 1.2. Project** – Work with adjacent jurisdictions to capitalize on opportunities and mitigate negative impacts of land use, development, transportation projects, and infrastructure.

**POLICY 2. The City should seek relationships and partnerships with the private, non-profit, and public sectors to create quality community elements.**

**POLICY 3. The City will partner with other jurisdictions and service providers to establish effective working relationships and collaborate toward future successes.**

- 3.1. Project** – Ensure Belmont is well represented on regional task forces and committees.
- 3.2. Project** – Coordinate closely with Gaston County Schools to keep school capacity abreast of Belmont population growth and to provide input on the location of new facilities.
- 3.3. Project** – To advance regional economic development, the City should ensure a mechanism for collaboration, work to determine a lead agency, develop a strategic framework for collaboration, and create a work plan.

- 3.4. Project** – Collaborate on the pursuit of regional grants or other funding opportunities.
- 3.5. Project** – Maintain and explore other productive intergovernmental service contracts (ex. building permits) in order to serve Belmont citizens.

**POLICY 4. The City should actively cultivate social infrastructure, and strive for every resident to be well-informed and conversant in relevant regional land use matters.**

- 4.1. Project** – Enhance the ways Belmont communicates directly with residents and actively promote public registration for the new City Connect program at every opportunity.
- 4.2. Project** – Partner with local schools to educate students on how local government works and to cultivate the next generation of civic leaders.
- 4.3. Project** – Strive for the most qualified, professional workforce possible and routinely revisit employee pay scales to remain competitive with peer communities for top talent.
- 4.4. Project** – At least one Planning Department staff member should participate in the Gaston County and Municipal Planners (GCaMP) meeting each month to support regional coordination and communication.



REGIONAL PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Among other factors, the ongoing regional development boom necessitates conversations between Belmont and its neighbors, particularly those with which it shares boundaries and infrastructure. The City must structure its planning, land use, and other policies with an awareness of Gaston County (which overlaps with its Planning Area) and other adjacent jurisdictions to identify any inconsistencies and their potential impact.

In this Comprehensive Plan, growth intentions depicted by the Future Land Use Map (see Section 03, “Land Use”) align with those of Gaston County. For instance, peninsula areas external to Belmont’s ETJ are classified as “Semi-rural Neighborhood” in this document, mirroring the “Suburban Neighborhood” future land use designated by the County. From there, Belmont provides a more specific idea of the development types that could coexist within that classification (low-medium density residential, parks and natural areas), but the vision remains similar. Differences in density regulations and utility availability remain key factors developers must take into account.

By proactively participating in joint planning initiatives, Belmont will ensure its residents’ priorities are reflected in broader planning efforts, exercising influence on County and regional visions.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Belmont’s environmental resources, including Lake Wylie, the Catawba River, and its South Fork, require regional cooperation for effective management and preservation. As such, Belmont is committed to actively participating in regional environmental initiatives that focus on watershed protection, floodplain and stormwater management, and habitat conservation.

By collaborating with regional partners, Belmont can more effectively preserve its valuable natural resources, improve water quality, and ensure sustainable land use practices that benefit all communities in the region.

EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

Transportation infrastructure is a prime example of regionalism, as the impacts of projects –and the costs to mitigate those impacts– expand well beyond any individual locality’s borders. Belmont’s strategic position along Interstate 85 and near Charlotte Douglas International Airport further emphasizes this, not to mention over 99-percent of Belmont workers commute in or out of the City daily (see Section 05, “Economy”).

In light of this, Belmont should continue to actively collaborate with regional transportation authorities, such as the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO), to enhance road networks, public transit options, and multimodal connectivity, ensuring transportation systems adequately support regional growth and local accessibility needs.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Economic prosperity in Belmont is intrinsically linked to regional economic health. Collaborating with economic development agencies, educational institutions, and workforce organizations throughout the region, Belmont should continue to strive for a robust environment that supports small businesses, attracts new investments, and aligns workforce training with market needs. Coordinated economic initiatives will amplify Belmont’s opportunities and ensure a competitive regional position that benefits both the City and its neighbors.

Examples of independent community facilities focused on economic development include TechWorks Gaston, a STEM accelerator focused on countywide workforce



Image: (Top Left) Lakefront development (source: Compass Real Estate); (Top Right) Small business office (source: WSOC TV); (Bottom Right) Emergency response vehicle (source: South Point Fire Department)

development and business incubation. The organization also doubles as an anchor for Downtown Belmont.

Another example of a regional institution, Gaston College’s Textile Technology Center, is also located in Belmont, providing testing services, product prototyping, and sample production to regional textile businesses. The campus’ Fiber Innovation Center, opened in 2025, represents its latest \$16.5M expansion, as well as a significant new investment on Wilkinson Boulevard.

Supporting these examples and other independent initiatives focused on shared regional prosperity will be important to the future of Belmont and Gaston County.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Given the interdependent nature of emergency services between communities, Belmont will continue to strengthen its relationships with Gaston County Emergency Management and regional public safety partners. This includes partnerships with Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) throughout the Planning Area, such as the Community VFD on Perfection Avenue (North Belmont), as well as Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties for water rescues. Through coordinated emergency

response planning and resource sharing, Belmont and its regional partners will enhance readiness for emergencies and improve collective response capabilities, ultimately ensuring the safety and well-being of all of Belmont residents.

PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES

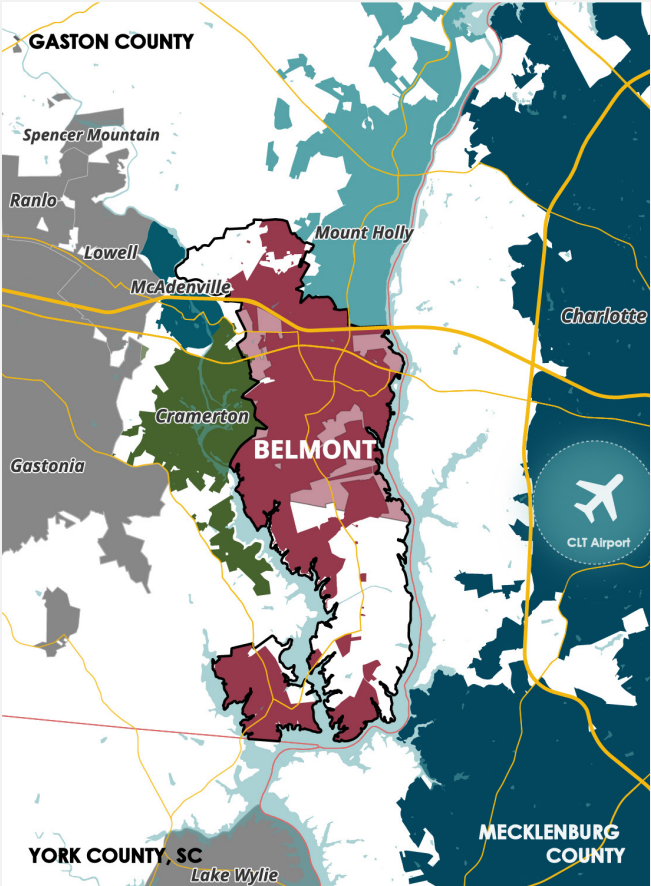
Finally, Belmont is committed to seeking innovative partnerships to deliver necessary public services and facilities. Cooperative agreements, such as joint-use facilities, shared procurement arrangements, and mutual aid for public safety, maximize resources and foster effective service delivery across jurisdictions. This type of collaboration enhances Belmont’s ability to offer quality public services while managing costs and optimizing resource utilization during challenging budget years. A current example is the pending wastewater agreement between Belmont and Charlotte Water, which would lower costs and better accommodate growth.

By maintaining open lines of communication among officials and stakeholders, Belmont ensures continual responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities, reinforcing the City’s commitment to sustainable regional collaboration.





ADJACENT PLANS & GROWTH TRENDS



Map: Belmont and adjacent communities highlighted in this section (source: City of Belmont, design: Plusurbia Design)

BELMONT’S NEIGHBORS

At the nexus of three dynamic counties, Belmont is far from the only community in the area experiencing dramatic shifts in population and development. The impacts of these trends on its neighbors will create larger, regional effects that will be felt within Belmont. These will include new destinations, job opportunities, shopping, and housing options, but will also result in increased traffic, changing land use, and even annexation that will reshape the regional map. Understanding how Belmont’s neighbors are planning for the next two decades will better inform this Comprehensive Plan and how Belmont will address its future.

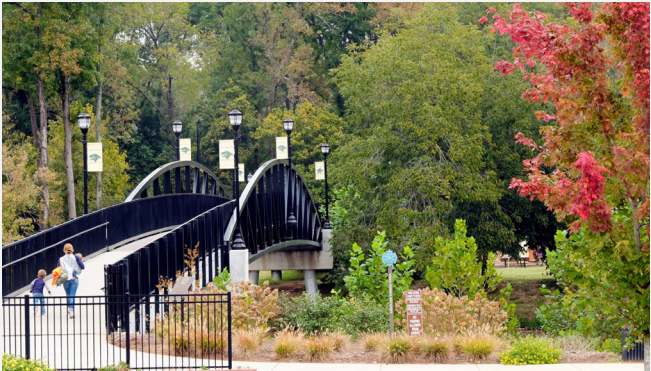


Image: Goat Island Park, Downtown Cramerton (source: Town of Cramerton)

CRAMERTON

[www.](#) [View plan here](#)

The most recent version of the *Town of Cramerton Land Use Plan* was adopted on June 2, 2022. The goal of the document is to provide a clear vision for future growth and development through 2044. The plan includes general recommendations for facilitating quality and diversity in new development, maintaining the integrity and character of existing neighborhoods, continuing revitalization and development of the downtown area, and further enhancing parks and open spaces.

Similar to Belmont, Cramerton’s plan highlights the river as a key opportunity for new mixed use development that follows the compact, mill village model. The community has also prioritized the development of a robust multimodal transportation network, which will include several pedestrian and bicyclist-forward connections stretching into Belmont as part of the Carolina Thread Trail network.

Finally, if the proposed Catawba Crossings boulevard from Charlotte is constructed, it will also pass through Cramerton. The plan outlines the necessary preparedness for such a transition.



Image: Main Street McAdenville (source: Town of McAdenville)

MCADENVILLE

[www.](#) [View plan here](#)

Adopted on June 14, 2022, McAdenville’s *Town Plan 2040* outlines the next 15 years of development for the small community. Originally a textile mill company town like most of its neighbors, the Pharr Corporation (Pharr Yarns) still operates within McAdenville and remains a major landowner.

The 2040 Town Plan aims to preserve and enhance the community’s identity above all else, guiding new development to be similar in scope and intensity to McAdenville’s established character. Other major priorities include maintaining and upgrading local infrastructure, enhancing community safety, diversifying the job market, promoting events and tourism, expanding downtown through adaptive reuse, and increasing housing options. McAdenville is projected to add only about 100 residents by 2040, but faster growth could noticeably impact travel times on I-85 and Wilkinson Boulevard.



Image: Main Street Mount Holly (source: Yancey Realty)

MOUNT HOLLY

[www.](#) [View plan here](#)

Adopted on June 15, 2020, *Plan Mount Holly: A Framework for the Future* serves as the guiding planning document for Belmont’s northern neighbor. The community’s aspirations are divided into a Land Plan and a Park Plan, aligning future growth, land use planning, and green space investments with the values and opportunities presented to the community.

Key strategies include cultivating several unique mixed use centers throughout the City, investing in strong, multimodal corridors, promoting infill (particularly near downtown), and achieving a diversified housing portfolio. Design and identity are highlighted as other priorities that will promote Mount Holly as a unique destination, a technique already well implemented by Belmont.

The area immediately adjacent to Belmont, along Beatty Drive (NC-273), is designated by the plan as a key “Gateway Center” to the east and a “Neighborhood Center” to the west. These classifications envision different scaled mixed use centers with various residential densities, safe multimodal transportation options, and pedestrian-oriented development. Not unlike the land just across the City Limits in Belmont, much of the “Gateway Center” area is owned and strategically developed by Montcross, LLC.





**Image:** Gastonia, Gaston County seat (source: Wikimedia Commons)

GASTON COUNTY

[!\[\]\(666e09182d4cd268646ea700ea60dcdf\_img.jpg\) View plan here](#)

Since 2010, Gaston County has experienced moderate growth and is now the fifth-most populous county in the Charlotte metropolitan region. Much of this growth has been absorbed by the communities closest to Charlotte, including Belmont and Mount Holly. County-wide development patterns are guided by the *2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, which was adopted on September 27, 2016.

The 2035 Plan outlines key goals and objectives that include improving public education and other citizen resources –critical for Belmont as all public schools are operated by Gaston County, developing better multimodal connectivity, supporting economic development across its 15 municipalities, and reshaping its image to focus on recreation opportunities like Lake Wylie and Crowders Mountain. The plan also emphasizes regional collaboration as the key to enhancing public services and improving quality of life.

At the time of this plan adoption, Gaston County has begun the process to update their comprehensive plan to outline the county's vision for 2050. Cross-jurisdictional collaboration and public engagement remain critical to ensure Belmont's voice is considered in this new vision.



**Image:** Charlotte growth in Uptown and South End (source: Multi-Housing News)

CHARLOTTE & MECKLENBURG COUNTY

[!\[\]\(cf531ed27e91483460120fcc057b3901\_img.jpg\) View plan here](#)

Belmont's eastern neighbor, Mecklenburg County, has also seen an uptick in large-lot waterfront subdivisions developed on the Catawba River opposite Belmont and Mount Holly. Proximity to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport and the U.S. National Whitewater Center, located just north of the I-85 bridge, are key nearby attractions.

Most importantly, the proposed 1,378-acre "River District," located west of I-485 and across the Catawba River from Belmont, may prove to be the most impactful development in the area. When completed, it could include up to 8 million square feet of office space, 500,000 square feet of retail and services, 1,000 hotel rooms, and over 5,000 residential units, ranging from single-family to multi-family and retirement care. Also under discussion is the construction of "Catawba Crossings," a connector boulevard and bridge from the River District to Belmont.

On a broader scale, Charlotte's growth is guided by *Charlotte Future 2040*, adopted June 21, 2021. Its "West Outer" section is most relevant to Belmont, which envisions the River District as future "Regional Activity Center," continued industrial development along I-85 and near the airport, and residential or park preserves near the river.



**Image:** 2025 terminal lobby expansion at Charlotte Douglas International Airport (source: Gresham Smith)

CHARLOTTE DOUGLAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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In March 2017, Charlotte Douglas International Airport released its *Commercial Development Strategy*, an action guide for implementing the *CLT Airport Area Strategic Development Plan*. Together, the development of 694 acres of land controlled by the Airport is outlined for the next two decades. This includes a mix of aviation and non-aviation uses complementary to the site, focusing on the target areas of 1) Manufacturing and Distribution, 2) Amenities, and 3) Services. A more detailed vision of the Airport's northern landholdings, called the "Destination District" has been released, based around a future Silver Line light rail station on Wilkinson Boulevard. Its focus includes mixed use development, hotels, and flex office space.

Closer to Belmont, the "CLT West" area is envisioned as a warehouse and logistics hub, just north of the anticipated River District. The resulting increase in direct and indirect employment, as well as the development of competing regional destinations, will impact Belmont and its future.



**Image:** Downtown Rock Hill, York County's largest city (source: Visit York County)

YORK COUNTY, SC

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A rapidly growing county, second only to Mecklenburg in terms of metro population, York County is located south of Belmont and borders several miles of Lake Wylie. *York Forward*, adopted on March 6, 2023, serves as its Comprehensive Plan and seeks to promote intentional growth patterns to address sprawling development. The guiding document is organized by South Carolina's 10 required Comprehensive Plan elements.

Most relevant to Belmont, land use recommendations for the Lake Wylie area are predominantly single-family and rural residential, with mixed use and commercial development supported at the SC-274/49/557 intersection and along SC-49 to the shore. This existing suburban node also serves Belmont's southernmost peninsula residents, who are farthest from Belmont Town Center (Harris Teeter area). In York County, a future Village Center is planned near the Buster Boyd Bridge, which will offer more walkable, mixed use development.

Commuter traffic from York County into North Carolina is of major concern to Belmont residents, given the stressed capacity of South Point Road, a problem perpetuated by continued residential development on both sides of the lake.



SCHOOLS

Of all intergovernmental relations topics discussed during public engagement, none garnered close to the interest of public schools.

Seven public schools, including three elementary schools, one primary school (grades PK-1), a middle school, South Point High School, and Stuart Cramer High School, served 4,275 students from Belmont and nearby/surrounding areas during the 2022-23 school year –the latest data available. Interestingly, this represents a decrease of 298 students since 2016, when nearly all schools were noted as operating at or over capacity. Belmont Middle School was the only institution studied that experienced an uptick in students between these two years.

Overall decreasing K-12 student numbers mirror other trends about Belmont’s population (see Section 05, “Economy”), which is projected to continue to grow in age. This could be due to existing residents choosing to stay in the community, aging in place while their children pass through school as well as post graduation.

Another explanation for this trend could be shifts amplified by the pandemic, where more families migrated to private schools, charter schools and homeschooling. In fact, according to *The Carolina Journal*, North Carolina charter school enrollment experienced a whopping 12-percent increase between 2019-2022.

Regardless, Belmont’s public schools remain an essential fixture of the community, and are all part of the Gaston County public school system.

In planning for growth, the District utilizes population growth projections developed by Gaston County, as well as 10- and 20-year projections provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Also considered is local knowledge of planned large residential developments and new job centers. As Belmont continues to grow, many new neighborhoods will likely house families with children who will attend Belmont schools, underscoring the need for coordination with Gaston County to keep development tracking current for ongoing regional school planning.

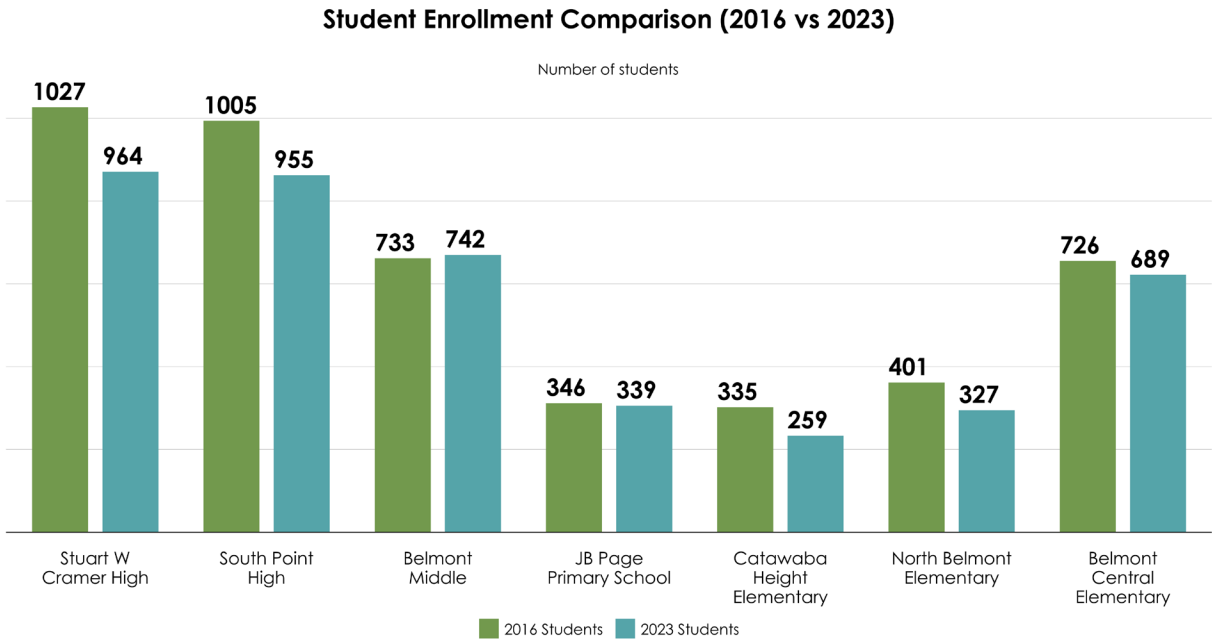
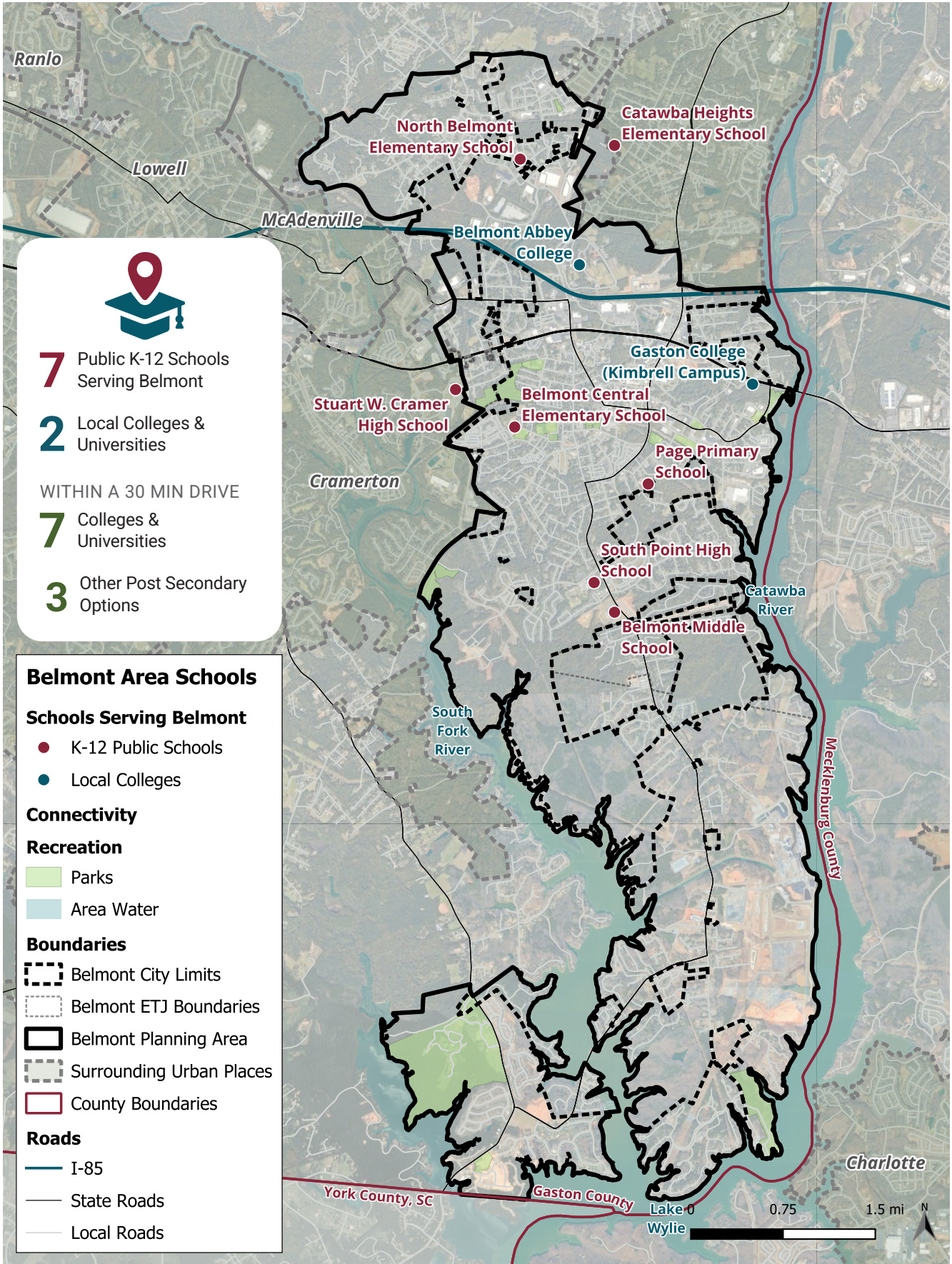


Figure: Belmont public schools enrollment (data source: Gaston County Schools, design: Plusurbia Design)



Map: Locations of schools within Belmont (data source: Gaston County Schools, design: Plusurbia Design)



## OPPORTUNITIES & HURDLES

- Opportunities for partnership and sharing of resources –such as certain enforcement responsibilities– with adjacent municipalities may increase as they continue to grow.
- Communities surrounding Belmont continue to plan for and permit new development, meaning Belmont will have to accommodate growth regardless of whether it occurs within its own City Limits.
- Many of Belmont’s schools remain at or near capacity, despite a slight decrease in students from 2016.
- Straddled by two rivers, Belmont is especially susceptible to regional impacts to water quality and regulations that affect flooding.
- Overlapping emergency service providers and County land within Belmont’s Planning Area can create responsiveness and level of service discrepancies.
- Future pressures for annexation, encroachment, and other similar burdens from nearby Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and other municipalities must be anticipated.
- The vision, decisions, and policies set by Gaston County directly affect Belmont and ideally should be done in partnership at every level.
- Belmont has distinguished itself as a leader among its peer communities in eastern Gaston County and can continue to make forward-thinking decisions that create positive impacts on the region.



12

APPENDICES



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OUR BELMONT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
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