



Helping Your Community Vision Take Flight!

Community Planning Services for the Upper Coastal Plain Region



Green Heron Planning has assembled a team of outstanding planning and design professionals to assist communities in the UCPCOG region. We bring decades of experience to help you develop a shared community vision and implement it successfully on the ground. We love our work and would welcome the chance to assist your community with its planning needs.

Here are some of the services we provide:



**1. Land Use Plans &
Comprehensive Plans**

**2. Small Area Plans &
Downtown Plans**



3. Site Concept Plans

4. Effective Plan Implementation



Contact us for a free consultation today!

919-625-1250 bhitchings@greenheronplanning.com greenheronplanning.com

Meet Our Team!



Ben Hitchings, FAICP, CZO
Principal, Green Heron Planning, LLC



GREEN HERON PLANNING, LLC

- Former Planning Director in Morrisville and Chapel Hill
- More than 30 years of experience; has prepared award-winning plans and codes
- Fellow at UNC School of Government who develops planning guidance and trains planners across North Carolina
- Former President, North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association



Meg Nealon, AICP, PLA
Principal, Nealon Planning, PLLC



- Planner/Landscape Architect with excellent land use design skills
- More than 30 years of experience
- Extensive experience with private sector master planning
- Former Chair, NC Board of Landscape Architects



Lorna Allen, PLA, ASLA
Landscape Architect & Urban Designer, Bolton & Menk



**BOLTON
& MENK**

Real People. Real Solutions.

- Seasoned project manager
- Engagement lead for Bolton & Menk
- Former Senior Urban Designer for City of Charlotte Urban Design Center
- Named an 8 80 Cities Knight Foundation Emerging City Champion



Grant Meacci, PLA, FASLA, LEED AP
Principal Landscape Architect & Urban Designer, Bolton & Menk



**BOLTON
& MENK**

Real People. Real Solutions.

- Former Assistant Planning Director for City of Charlotte
- Managed Charlotte Urban Design & Preservation Division and Raleigh Urban Design Center
- Landscape architecture practice leader for Bolton & Menk
- Has extensive experience with plans and designs in both the public and private sector

Contact us for a free consultation today!

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Sample Projects



A Conceptual Design for the Seal Building Site (2024)

Town of Stantonsburg, NC

How do you turn a grassy lot with a historic building façade into a dynamic central gathering place for the community? Work with stakeholders and community leaders to develop a compelling conceptual design for how to redevelop the site and prepare preliminary cost projections to understand the resources needed. Then present an effective project implementation strategy and work with the Town to catalyze dynamic funding partnerships to make it happen! Green Heron Planning led this project with Nealon Planning.

Local reference: Brian Hawley, MPA, Town Manager, Town of Stantonsburg
(bhawley@townofstantonsburg.com; 252.238-3608 (o); 252.479.0191 (m))

Sample Projects



Matthews Comprehensive Plan (2024)

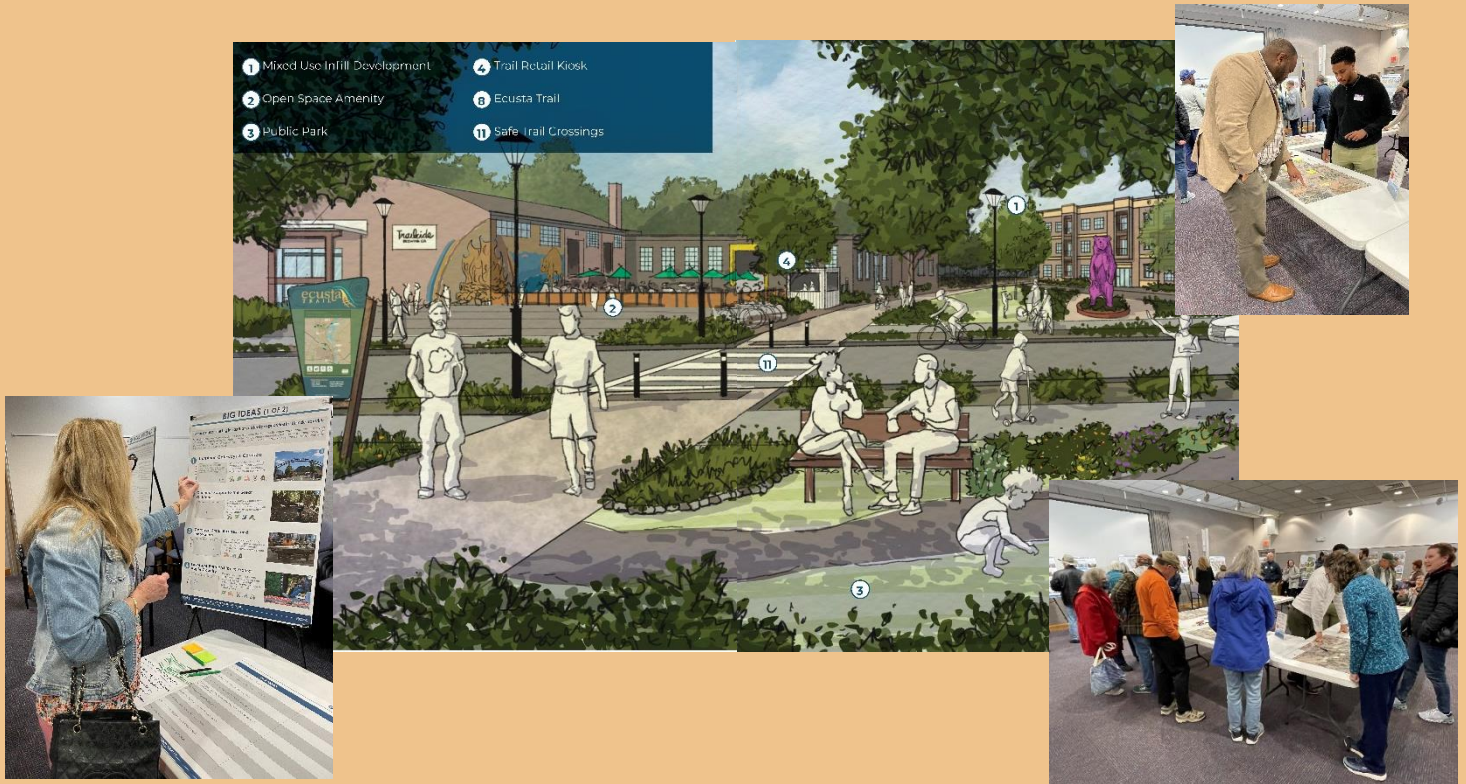
Town of Matthews, NC

Located near Charlotte, the Town of Matthews wanted to create a new comprehensive plan and downtown master plan to help it manage rapid growth and maintain a high quality of life.

To do this, it hired Bolton & Menk to lead a consultant team that included Nealon Planning and Green Heron Planning. Together, they conducted extensive public engagement to develop a shared vision for the community. Bolton & Menk worked to help the community describe its desired future while understanding the realities of existing infrastructure. Nealon Planning worked with community members to communicate expectations for future redevelopment in key locations in a way that supports the overall land use vision. Three areas were selected as opportunities for reinvestment. Each illustration depicts a mix of uses, demonstrating the transformation of sites while retaining some of the anchors; reimagining the locations of some existing businesses; introducing new, complementary uses; demonstrating better utilization of land available; enhancing existing neighborhoods; and integrating residential uses to add to the vibrancy of each place and the viability of each as business locations. In turn, Green Heron Planning conducted a policy review of existing Town plans and documents, helped with the public engagement, and led the development of a customized set of implementation measures to help the community move successfully from planning to implementation. The resulting documents identify specific policies and investments that inform development decisions throughout the town and provide specific guidance on the growth of the downtown to give the Town the policy tools needed to shape private and public investment in the years ahead. The Matthews Town Council unanimously adopted the plan in May of 2024.

Local reference: Jay Camp, AICP, Planning Director, Town of Matthews, (jcamp@matthewsnc.gov; 704.708-1226)

Sample Projects



Hendersonville Downtown Master Plan and Gen H Comprehensive Plan (2024)

City of Hendersonville, NC

In response to rapid growth, the City of Hendersonville hired Bolton & Menk, Nealon Planning, and Green Heron Planning to prepare a new Downtown Master Plan and Gen H Comprehensive. The project included extensive public engagement that included dozens of presentations and pop-up events, community surveys, roundtable discussions, community open houses, community advisory committee meetings, and policymaker workshops. The resulting Downtown Master Plan serves as a comprehensive framework for guiding decisions regarding downtown's future growth, preservation, and development. It includes Design Guidelines that prioritize new development that aligns with the area's scale, fosters cohesion between buildings and pedestrian spaces, and respects nearby residential neighborhoods. In so doing, it will help preserve the downtown's unique character while enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

The Downtown Master Plan is embedded in a dynamic new comprehensive plan that includes ten updated goals for the community and five focus area concept designs for how to shape development in selected locations. The plan concludes with an action component that identifies a set of impactful and doable implementation measures to help the community pursue appropriate conservation and development over the next generation. In August 2024, the City Council unanimously adopted the Gen H Comprehensive and Downtown Master Plan.

Local reference: Lew Holloway, Director, Community Development Department (lholloway@hvlnc.gov; 828-233-3219)

Sample Projects



Moncure Small Area Plan (2023)

Chatham County, NC

How do you empower community residents and other stakeholders to develop a shared vision for conservation and development around a new electric vehicle manufacturing facility that was the largest economic development project in the history of North Carolina? Develop a Small Area Plan with the community for how land should be used and growth should occur in this semi-rural part of Chatham County, NC! In response to a March 2022 announcement that automaker VinFast had selected Chatham County as the location of its first North American assembly plant for electric vehicles, the County engaged a team of consultants that included Nealon Planning and Green Heron Planning to conduct a small area planning process with the community. The project team documented existing conditions, drafted a market assessment, and conducted extensive public engagement, which was used to prepare four potential scenarios for conservation and development. Then the consulting team analyzed potential benefits and impacts from each scenario, and used this information and additional public input that it received to craft a recommended pattern for future land use. Next, Green Heron Planning worked with County staff and stakeholders to prepare an impactful and manageable portfolio of action steps to help the County move quickly and effectively from planning to implementation. The resulting plan, supported by stakeholders ranging from environmentalists to developers, defines a pattern of development that emphasizes natural resource protection while facilitating economic development opportunities.

Local reference: Jason Sullivan, Planning Director, Chatham County (jason.sullivan@chathamnc.org; 919-542-8233) or Chance Mullis, AICP, CZO, Assistant Planning Director, Chatham County (chance.mullis@chathamnc.org; 919-545-8366).

Sample Projects



Belville

Reorganized by 1777, the town of Belville is poised for development that is in response to demands for housing, commercial services, and industrial space in the presence of migration. This plan builds on the work completed to date to address gaps and update the plan to reflect the town's current and future needs. The plan also provides a framework for future development and growth. The plan also provides a framework for future development and growth. The plan also provides a framework for future development and growth.

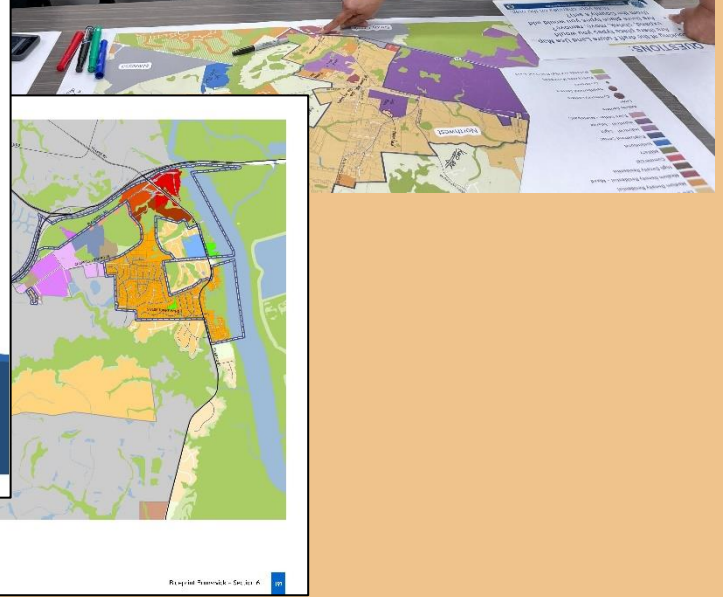
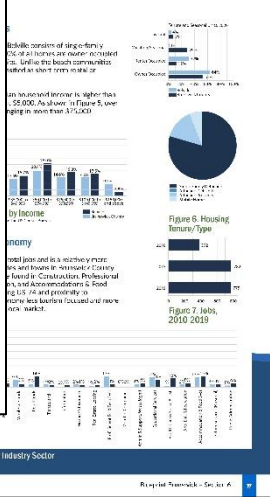
Existing Land Use & Development Pattern

Belville's existing land use is primarily residential, with a mix of single-family and multi-family housing. The town also has some commercial and industrial areas. The plan identifies areas for future development and growth, including new residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Environment

The town's environment is primarily rural, with a mix of agricultural and natural areas. The plan identifies areas for future development and growth, including new residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

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Land Use Plans for Six Small Towns in Brunswick County (2023)

Brunswick County, NC

How do you help six small towns in Brunswick County meet the planning requirements of Chapter 160D in a timely and meaningful manner? Conduct special community workshops to include them in the planning process underway for the County, and then prepare a special section for each of them in the resulting plan. Nealon Planning led the project with help from Green Heron Planning. Together, they conducted impactful and efficient data collection, community outreach, and land use planning, and then prepared a thoughtful and manageable list of implementation strategies. The resulting town plans were adopted as part of Blueprint Brunswick to provide a well-coordinated planning framework for the county moving forward.

Local references: Kirstie Dixon, Planning Director, Brunswick County (kirstie.dixon@brunswickcountync.gov; 910.253-2027) or Helen Bunch, Planner III, Brunswick County (helen.bunch@brunswickcountync.gov; 910-253-2035)

Sample Projects



Envision Johnston 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (2023)

Johnston County, NC

How do you help a fast-growing county on the urban fringe manage change? Update its ordinances to comply with state law and draft a new Comprehensive Plan. A suburbanizing rural county on the urban fringe, Johnston County was the fastest growing county in North Carolina from 2010 to 2020, with a 29% increase in population. As a result, the county is undergoing a transformation from sweet potatoes to subdivisions, particularly in its northwestern quadrant, but many residents have expressed a desire to maintain the county's rural character and

agricultural way of life for future generations as this change occurs. As a result, Nealon Planning and Green Heron Planning worked with an advisory committee and community stakeholders to direct growth to areas that could best support it with infrastructure and services, and protect natural resources and the working landscape in other locations. In August 2023, the Commissioners adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan for how to grow in the years ahead, developed with input from thousands of stakeholders in Johnston County.

Local reference: Braston Newton, Planning Director, Johnston County (braston.newton@johnstonnc.com; 919-989-5150)

Sample Projects



Mebane, NC
Technical Memorandum #4 (Draft)

TO: City Manager, Development Director, Town of Mebane
FROM: Green Heron Planning, LLC
SUBJECT: Draft Recommendation Revisions to the Landmarks Sector

Mebane, NC
Technical Memorandum #3 (Draft)

TO: City Manager, Development Director, Town of Mebane
FROM: Green Heron Planning, LLC
SUBJECT: Draft Recommendation Revisions to the Recreation and Open Space Sector
DATE: December 20, 2023
ATTACHMENTS: Draft Recommendation and Open Space Sector (Section 6)

Mebane, NC
Technical Memorandum #2 (Draft)

TO: City Manager, Development Director, Town of Mebane
FROM: Green Heron Planning, LLC
SUBJECT: Draft Recommendation Revisions to the Nonconformities Article
DATE: December 20, 2023
ATTACHMENTS: Draft Recommendation and Article (Article 1)

Mebane, NC
Technical Memorandum #1 (Draft)

TO: City Manager, Development Director, Town of Mebane
FROM: Green Heron Planning, LLC
SUBJECT: Discussion Draft of Recommended Revisions to the Table of Permitted Uses
DATE: November 22, 2023
ATTACHMENTS: Discussion Draft of Recommended Revisions to the Table of Permitted Uses

The technical memorandum is a review of the Table of Permitted Uses in the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This is a key part of the City's growth management and development process. The UDO is a legal document that sets the rules for how land can be used in the City of Mebane. It is a key part of the City's growth management and development process. The UDO is a legal document that sets the rules for how land can be used in the City of Mebane. It is a key part of the City's growth management and development process.

1. Add a definition for...
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Table of Permitted Uses

The Table of Permitted Uses is a key part of the UDO. It sets the rules for how land can be used in the City of Mebane. It is a key part of the City's growth management and development process. The UDO is a legal document that sets the rules for how land can be used in the City of Mebane. It is a key part of the City's growth management and development process.

1

Updates to Unified Development Ordinance (2023)

City of Mebane, NC

How do you help a fast-growing town update its development ordinances to match changing community expectations? Work with staff to prepare a series of targeted revisions to the Unified Development Ordinance, and hold community open houses to engage the community. Key topics addressed included updating the Table of Permitted Uses, revising the sign ordinance, changing the section on nonconformities, updating the requirements regarding parks and open space, revising the language on landscaping and buffers, and making extensive updates to the definitions. The City Council adopted the first round of updates in 2022, and the second round in 2023. In this way, Green Heron Planning helped the City improve its development standards in a cost-effective manner.

Local reference: Ashley Ownbey, Development Director (919-963-9990, aownbey@cityofmebane.com)

Sample Projects

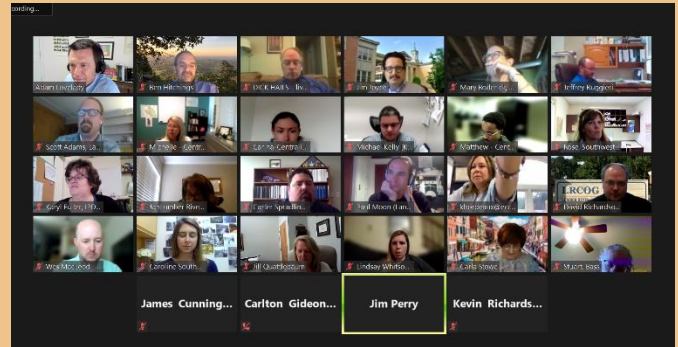


PlanNC Guidebook

A Practitioner's Guide to Preparing Streamlined Community Plans



UNC SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



Chapter 160D Ordinance and Planning Guidance (2022)

North Carolina

How do you help local governments across North Carolina comply with the largest update to the N.C. planning statutes since 1923? Develop and deliver a multi-media training program composed of publications, workshops, and customized technical assistance to help local governments update their development ordinances. The UNC School of Government (SOG) followed this by launching the PlanNC initiative to help communities draft a streamlined and impactful community plan to comply with the Chapter 160D planning requirements. As an SOG fellow, Ben Hitchings helped lead 160D training workshops, conducted customized code scans, was the lead author of the *PlanNC Guidebook: A Practitioner's Guide to Preparing Streamlined Community Plans*, and provided technical guidance to help planners and communities comply with the requirements of Chapter 160D. SOG won an outstanding planning award from the N.C. Chapter of the American Planning Association for this work.

Local reference: Adam Lovelady, Professor of Public Law and Government, UNC School of Government (adamlovelady@sog.unc.edu; 919-962-6712)

Sample Projects



Economic and Downtown Development Master Plan

Loris, SC

The City of Loris, a historic small Town that acts as a gateway for those heading to the beach, is experiencing significant growth. In response to rapid growth, the City of Loris' leaders wanted to develop an Economic and Downtown Master Plan to guide the revitalization of its downtown district and encourage new business and residential development opportunities. This planning effort was completed in conjunction with the Waccamaw Council of Governments' Comprehensive Plan. Both teams worked together to prepare and distribute a public survey to understand the community's needs and desires to make the City of Loris an attractive place to live and work. The Bolton & Menk team worked with the city and stakeholders to create a master plan document to provide a framework for immediate and future revitalization and redevelopment efforts through achievable and actionable implementation strategies.

See how the City of Loris is bringing their vision to life! Click here to watch the video showcasing key redevelopment sites identified in the Economic and Downtown Master Plan.

<https://youtu.be/PgciEvTyzfs?si=a05Od7cFAOL0oDjR>

Local reference: William (Clay) Young, City Administrator, City of Loris, SC
(williamyoung@cityofloris.org; 843-756-4004)

Sample Projects



Downtown Master Plan

Westminster, SC

Bolton & Menk is leading the planning, urban design, engagement, and placemaking of this project. We partnered with Studio Main to assist with design and engagement and Retail Strategies/Downtown Strategies to prepare the economic market analysis for development opportunities. The master plan involves a robust engagement effort including multiple steering committee meetings, stakeholder conversations, and an in-person public workshop. The final report includes identification of catalyst projects that can ignite redevelopment and investment within the downtown area. The final presentation to the council will include recommendations and big ideas with suggestions and strategies for implementation.

Since adoption in 2023, the city has begun implementing recommendations from the plan which includes downtown branding, Main Street streetscape project, festival street project, and public space implementation.

Local reference: Kevin Bronson, City Administrator, City of Westminster, SC
(kbronson@westminstersc.org; 864-647-3200)

Sample Projects



Downtown Design Guidelines

Florence, SC

Developed in 2005, the Florence Downtown Design Guidelines serve as the standards for city staff, residents, and appointed design review board members tasked with reviewing projects in Florence's historic districts. Since then, the city's ordinance has been regularly updated and the Downtown Design Guidelines have remained unaltered since their adoption nearly two decades ago.

Bolton & Menk is working with the City of Florence to develop a new image-based design guideline document that provides updates to the district base maps, addresses new materials, technologies and building applications, expands on and clarifies the approval process, and provides updated historic standards. A robust public engagement process that involves downtown business owners, historic neighborhood residents, and the general public will be conducted to ensure that this plan meets the community needs and that the final product provides clear, concise, and implementable strategies and processes.

Local reference: Clint Moore, Assistant City Manager, City of Florence, SC
(cmoore@cityofflorence.com; 843-665-2047)

Sample Projects



Yadkin River District Small Area Plan

Spencer, NC

Bolton & Menk worked with the Town of Spencer to develop a small area plan and development plan called the Yadkin River District. This study focuses on the area around the Wilcox Bridge, the Town's new Trailhead Park, the old NC Finishing Company property, the properties along US Highway 29, and other properties in the area. Bolton & Menk provided planning and economic development services in connection with the development of the Yadkin River District. By looking closely at the site's physical aspects, market-supported uses, and the Town's capacity to assist in the redevelopment of the former NC Finishing Company site, the team crafted a compelling and implementable strategy.

Local reference: Peter Franzese, Town Manager, Town of Spencer, NC (704-633-2231)

Contact us for a free consultation today!

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