



Rutherford County Rural Village Workshop

9/21/2021



ABOUT NCGrowth

NCGrowth-SmartUp is an award-winning applied economic development university center with a goal of directly addressing inequality, poverty, underemployment, and other factors that keep people and communities from reaching their greatest potential. NCGrowth's team includes expert staff across the Carolinas, academic advisors from multiple universities and hundreds of local partners. Together we are transforming communities by (1) providing technical support to promising businesses so they can grow, hire more people, and create wealth; (2) helping towns/counties/tribes create robust local economies with equitable opportunities for residents; and (3) providing policymakers across the U.S. the tools to learn how to achieve success. Learn more at ncgrowth.unc.edu.

NCGrowth-SmartUp is part of CREATE, an economic development research center at the UNC Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise working to tackle the problem of severe and increasing wealth inequality by generating shared economic prosperity through a combination of research, data analytics, homegrown interventions, and policy development. Learn more at createprosperity.unc.edu.

This work is supported by the Economic Development Administration and the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise.

ABOUT CPNI

The Construction Professionals Network Institute, Inc. (CPNI) is a non-profit initiative focusing on construction industry-related projects and community service throughout the State of North Carolina. CPNI volunteers its members' design and construction industry expertise as a catalyst to empower communities across North Carolina to improve their physical and economic environment. CPNI offers the comprehensive professional and technical expertise of its membership and collaborating partners in the form of workshops tailored to assist communities and engage local governments and community leaders to facilitate discussions and efforts toward redevelopment strategy, community engagement, visioning, and financial considerations.

Learn more at www.cpni-nc.org.



ABOUT Wesley Community Development Corporation

Wesley Community Development Corporation (WCDC) is an innovative nonprofit real estate firm that helps faith-based organizations repurpose their assets. WCDC seeks to strengthen churches, improve economic sustainability of churches, address housing needs, and create community development initiatives by working with them to help understand how their campuses and land can better fit their vision and serve their communities.

Created in 2002 from a grant by The Duke Endowment, WCDC has overseen over \$75 million in development of church real estate. They offer a wide variety of services including consultation, visioning, design, construction oversight, real estate analysis and brokerage. WCDC is passionate about guiding churches step by step through their transformational journey.

Learn more at www.wesleycdc.com/.



Authors

Eve Lettau

Economic Development Analyst, NCGrowth

Eve Lettau is a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is enrolled in the City and Regional Planning program, specializing in economic development. She's passionate about the relationship between good jobs and good housing opportunities. Prior to graduate school, Eve worked at the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development and the New York City Economic Development Corporation.

Jessica Wilkinson

Economic Development Manager, NCGrowth

As NCGrowth's Economic Development Manager, Jess Wilkinson works with local government entities across North Carolina to research and apply economic development strategies to create good jobs and equitable opportunities. Jess earned her master's from Duke's Sanford School of Public Policy. Prior to graduate school, Jess worked as an analyst at the U.S. Agency for International Development on global HIV prevention programs.

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Attendees

CPNI Workshop Team

Mike Barnes, Principal, Thomas & Hutton
Janet Brooks, Director of Business
Development, Clark Nexson
Michael Cole, Principal, ColeJenst & Stone;
Bolton & Menk, Inc.
Krissy Ferguson, Associate Principal, LS3P
Pat Fogleman, Executive Director, CPNI
Gary Hubler, Principal, FWA Group
Phil Jones Vice Chairman, CPNI
Greg Shelton, Founder and CEO, Shelton Law
Carolinas

NCGrowth

Jessica Wilkinson, Project Manager
Eve Lettau, Analyst

Wesley CDC Team

Joel Gilland, President and CEO
Max Glover, Intern
Mack King IV, Senior Broker
Lisa Morgan, Project Coordinator
Brandi Turner, Vice President of Finance

Workshop Attendees

R.J. Aiken, Social Justice & Equality Coordinator,
Blue Ridge Hope
Mel Ailiff, Executive Director, Rutherford
Housing Partnership
Anita Behrns, Director, Washburn Community
Outreach Center
Nell Bovender, Retired, Rutherford Housing
Partnership
Amy Bridges, Downtown and Community
Development Manager, Town of Forest
City
Erin Burleson, Interim Director of Family
Ministries, Salem UMC
Sam Burleson, Lead Pastor, Salem UMC

Don Cason, Executive Director, Rutherford
Tourism Development Authority
Wanda Rae Clary, Faith Community Health
Ministry Coordinator, Atrium Health
Amy Cooke, Administrative Council Chair, Salem
UMC
Paul Davis, Manager, Rutherford County
Farmers Market
Tim Davis, Lay Leader, Salem UMC
Lori Dickson, Physician, Organization
Birgit Dilgert, Economic Development Director,
Rutherford County
Kent Dorsey, Director, Washburn & Dorsey
Funeral Home
Steve Garrison, County Manager, Rutherford
County
John Harrill, Owner, Drop-In Family Market
Thad M. Harrill, Vice President of Community
and Workforce Education, Isothermal
Community College
Jeff Hill, Operations Manager, Rutherford
County Transit
Cherry Smith
Pam Hurley, Director, Atrium Health
Ann Hutchins, Manager, Washburn General
Store
Laura Hutchins, Salem UMC Member
W.D. Hutchins, Salem UMC Member
Kaleb Johnson, Director, Rutherford County
EMS
Jill Miracle, Community Impact Director, RHI
Legacy Foundation
Keys Pendleton, Retired Pastor, Pleasant Grove
UMC and Pisgah UMC
Clarke Poole, Executive Director, Rutherford
County Chamber of Commerce
Justin Radford, Worship Leader, Salem UMC
Mark Ralls, Direct Superintendent, WNCCUMC
Allyson Smith, Assistant Executive Director, Blue
Ridge Hope
Shonnie Streder, Vitality Associate, WNCCUMC
Caroline Wood, Salem SPRC

Executive Summary

CPNI and NCGrowth worked with Wesley CDC to facilitate a two-day workshop. The goal of the workshop was to introduce and receive community feedback regarding the development of a potential rural village center. The potential site for this rural village center is on land owned by Salem United Methodist Church, located near Bostic, NC. The workshop was attended by NCGrowth, CPNI, Wesley CDC, and stakeholders from Salem UMC. These stakeholders were a mixture of church members and representatives from the community. Conversations revolved on the assets of Rutherford County and Bostic, community needs, and community preferences regarding a potential village center.

Based on these conversations CPNI and NCGrowth produced several recommendations, which are included in this report. This report provides an overview of the workshop, briefly reviews some demographic and economic data, provides recommendations, and relevant case studies to help guide Salem UMC to its goal of building a rural village center.



Introduction

Rutherford County, like many rural communities in North Carolina, experienced drastic changes to the community with the loss of the region's textile industry. A rural village center presents the opportunity to help mitigate some of these effects by providing a place to deliver essential services and by developing a greater sense of community through partnership with existing community organizations, municipalities, and non-profits.

The rural village concept includes a large, central building and potential housing opportunities surrounding the center. The central building will provide flexible touchdown space for various community services depending on community needs. Flexibility will allow the center to adapt to a changing community and economic conditions.

Wesley Community Development Corporation (WCDC), a 501 (c) 3, is leading the effort to develop the Rural Village Center concept. The Rural Village Center Initiative was born out of a meeting with Wesley CDC, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, and the Governor's Office of Strategic Partnerships.

Wesley has proposed that Salem UMC adjacent to Bostic, North Carolina be the location of the first rural village prototype. Wesley chose Salem UMC based on many factors, one of the most important being the impressive community impact the church already has. The church, under Pastor Sam Burleson's leadership, attracts congregants from all over Rutherford County and



Figure 1: One way Salem UMC engages in community outreach is through the on-site thrift store.

beyond. The congregation is young and has already demonstrated their desire to play a more active role in county community development. A result of that desire is the Salem UMC Outreach Center. Located behind the steeple, the center contains a thrift store and a food pantry. People beyond the congregation are invited to use the resources available at the outreach center. On days when the food pantry is open, the Outreach Center receives upwards of 200 visitors per day from four surrounding counties.

Salem UMC has the unique opportunity to further examine community needs in Rutherford County and to work with Wesley CDC and other partners to develop a rural village center. A rural village center can help to fulfil Salem UMC's mission to serve the community.

This report provides preliminary recommendations for Salem UMC and Wesley CDC as it engages in the process of developing a rural village center. The report begins by providing an overview of the rural village workshop facilitated by CPNI, NCGrowth, and Wesley CDC with community stakeholders and congregants from Salem UMC. Next, the report provides demographic and contextual information about what community needs exist in the county. After, the report enumerates the feedback received from participants at the workshop about the rural village concept. The report concludes with recommendations and case studies that may provide helpful context as the project progresses.

Workshop Overview

On June 24 and 25, 2021, CPNI and NCGrowth facilitated a workshop in partnership with Wesley Community Development Corporation. Members invited to the workshop included members of Salem United Methodist Church and representatives of key social service providers in Rutherford County. The workshop took place at the Salem United Methodist Church in Bostic, North Carolina. The purpose of the workshop was to assess both community attitudes about and feasibility of developing a rural village center on church-owned property. The workshop also took inventory of the town and county's existing community assets, challenges, infrastructure gaps, and service gaps to inform what could potentially be included in a facility. The workshop included two community listening sessions facilitated by CPNI. In these sessions, participants could voice their concerns and desires for the project.



Figure 2: Phil Jones begins the first day of the workshop with a listening session.

Day one of the workshop began with a tour of Rutherford County led by Pastor Sam Burleson of Salem UMC and Nell Perry Bovender of the Rutherford Housing Partnership. The tour allowed team members from NCGrowth, CPNI, and Wesley CDC to view the county, identify potential needs that could be fulfilled by a rural village center, and learn about the community's history and context.

After the tour, the first community listening session began. Wesley CDC began the session by presenting the rural village concept to participants. This was followed by a presentation from NCGrowth that provided an overview of county social, demographic, and economic data.

The first day concluded with a community listening session led by CPNI. Topics covered included:

- What brings this community together?
- What makes this community a good place to live?
- What could further improve the community?
- Does the community want more growth?
- What does the community desire?

Day two of the workshop consisted of a second community listening session led by CPNI. Topics covered included:

- What should the rural village look like?
- What steps do we take to get there?

Thirty-four community members participated in the workshop. Participants represented various sectors and organizations, including Salem UMC, education, health, non-profit, agriculture, and business. Further community engagement is needed to ensure the rural village partners with

organizations and provides resources that will be beneficial to residents in the county, beyond Bostic.

Rutherford County Rural Village Workshop Agenda

Day One: June 24, 2021

1. **11:00 pm – 12:00 pm:** Bus Tour with Local Guides
2. 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Lunch
3. 1:00 pm – 1:15 pm: Introductions
 - a. CPNI & NCGrowth
 - b. Wesley CDC
 - c. Community Participants
4. **1:15 pm – 1:45 pm:** Rural Village Concept Introduction, *Wesley CDC*
5. **1:45 pm – 2:15 pm:** Town and County Data Overview, *NCGrowth*
 - a. Demographics
 - b. Market and Economic Conditions
6. **2:15 pm – 3:15 pm:** Open Forum, *Community Participants*
7. 3:15 pm – 3:35 pm: Break
8. **3:35 pm – 4:00 pm:** Continue Open Forum, *Community Participants*
9. **4:00 pm – 5:00 pm:** Tour of Potential Rural Village Site

Day Two: June 25, 2021

1. **9:00 am – 10:00 am:** Recommendation Development, *CPNI, NCGrowth, & Wesley CDC*
2. **10:00 am – 10:45 am:** Visioning, *Community Participants*
 - a. What should the rural village look like?
 - b. What steps do we take to get there?
3. 10:45 am – 12:00 pm: Recommendations

County Tour

The tour provided an overview of the county's assets and areas of improvement that may be useful in developing a rural village center. The tour included both rural and more urban parts of the County. It highlighted the housing stock, various neighborhoods, and vacant textile mills.

Locations visited included:

- Bostic, including the historic Washburn Store and the Lincoln Center
- Forest City, including downtown and the Facebook data center
- Henrietta and Caroline, communities that were hit particularly hard by the closing of textile mills
- Graham Town, a historically Black community in Rutherford County



Figure 3: Nell Bovender describes housing information to the NCGrowth, CPNI, and Wesley CDC teams along the tour of Rutherford County

Demographic and Economic Information

The rural village center will serve not only Bostic, but it will also serve populations in Rutherford and surrounding counties. Demographic and housing data provides context into what needs exist in the community. This data can translate into potential partnerships or design guidelines to ensure the rural village best serves the needs of Rutherford County.

Population

Since 2010, the population for Rutherford County has hovered around 67,000 people.¹ However, estimates from the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management have projected that the county's population will increase 5% to about 72,000 in 2029.² Trends predict that future increases in population will be due to residents moving to the area, not from an increase in births within the county.³ These residents are predicted to be older, aged 55 and above. Trends also show that there's a projected decline in the younger population of the county, specifically the population aged 15 or less.⁴

¹ Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)(SE), ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 15, 2021.

² Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)(SE), ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 15, 2021.

³ Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)(SE), ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 15, 2021.

⁴ Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)(SE), ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 15, 2021.

Race and Ethnicity

Rutherford County is home to about 67,000 residents.⁵ About eighty seven percent of the county identifies as white. About 10% of the county identifies as Black.⁶ This is slightly skewed from the state, where 69% percent of residents as white and 20% identify as Black.⁷ The county also has a lower concentration of Hispanic-identifying residents than both the state and county. About 4% of residents in Rutherford County identify as Hispanic, compared to 9% in the state and 18% in the country.⁸

Age

The median age in the county is 45.⁹ This is slightly older than the median age of the state and country which are both 38. About 41% of residents in the county are between the ages of 45 and 74.¹⁰ Only about 20% of county residents are under the age of 18.¹¹ This shows that the county has an aging population.

Education

According to GreatSchools.org, Rutherford County has 18 schools serving students from preschool to 12th grade. Sixteen of those are a part of the public school system. The county has one community college, Isothermal Community College in Spindale. However, Blue Ridge Community College has campuses nearby in Henderson and Transylvania counties. Nearby 4-year institutions include UNC-Asheville (58 miles from Rutherfordton) and Gardner-Webb University (23 miles from Rutherfordton).

In 2019, of the population aged above 25, 67% of county residents had either a high school diploma, GED, or some form of college.¹² The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree was 12%.¹³ About 16% of residents had less than a high school education.¹⁴

Income and Poverty

As of 2019, the median household income of residents in Rutherford County was about \$43,000.¹⁵ This is higher than the town of Bostic, where the median household income is about \$33,000.¹⁶ However, these are significantly lower than those of the state and country, which are about \$55,000 and \$63,000 respectively.¹⁷

⁵ Social Explorer Tables: ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates)(SE), ACS 2019 (5-Year Estimates), Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau, accessed June 15, 2021.

⁶ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

⁷ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

⁸ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

⁹ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁰ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹¹ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹² Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹³ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁴ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁵ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁶ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁷ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

Based on the income to poverty ratio, 43% of families in the county are poor or struggling.¹⁸ Individuals in this category have incomes less than twice the poverty level and may need some form of supplementary assistance.

In 2019, about 6% of residents in the county had some form of supplemental security income (SSI). This consists of payments to individuals with disabilities. Many recipients of SSI also receive SNAP-EBT benefits or Social Security income, yet the qualifications for these programs are slightly different. This is higher than the state amount.

Economic Conditions

Industry and Occupations

The economy of Rutherford County employs about 23,000 individuals.¹⁹ The largest industry is manufacturing (22%).²⁰ Rutherford County specializes in manufacturing, when compared to the nation overall. This is supported by the high concentration of production and transportation occupations in the county. In the county, about 15% of workers are in production jobs and 7% are in transportation jobs.²¹

The second largest industry in the county is health care and social assistance, which represents 16% of the workforce.²² Because of the place-based nature of this industry, this indicates that not only are many workers in the county employed in this industry, but that there's also a high demand for jobs in this field. Jobs in this field include, healthcare practitioners (7% of the workforce), health care support (4% of the workforce), and food preparation (4% of the workforce).²³

Unemployment

As of May 2021, about 5.9% of the labor force in Rutherford County was unemployed.²⁴ This is slightly higher than the state's unemployment rate of 4.5%, taken at the same time.²⁵ However, the county is on par with the nation which saw a 6% unemployment rate in April 2021.²⁶

Since the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county's unemployment rate has improved significantly. As of May 2020, the peak of the pandemic, the unemployment rate in the county was about 17%.²⁷ While the economy has undergone significant recovery, the unemployment rate is still slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels.

¹⁸ Social Explorer tables, accessed June 15, 2021.

¹⁹ ESRI Total Residential Population Forecasts for 2020," accessed June 14, 2021.

²⁰ ESRI Total Residential Population Forecasts for 2020," accessed June 14, 2021.

²¹ ESRI Total Residential Population Forecasts for 2020," accessed June 14, 2021.

²² "ESRI Civilian Labor Force Profile for 2020," accessed June 15, 2021.

²³ "ESRI Civilian Labor Force Profile for 2020," accessed June 15, 2021.

²⁴ Department of City & Regional Planning (2020). Carolina Tracker: A Resource for Recovery, <https://carolinatracker.unc.edu/>, accessed on July 28, 2021, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA.

²⁵ "Unemployment Rates, Seasonally Adjusted", Bureau of Economic Statistics, 2021.

²⁶ "Civilian Unemployment Rate", Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed June 15, 2021.

²⁷ Department of City & Regional Planning (2020). Carolina Tracker: A Resource for Recovery, <https://carolinatracker.unc.edu/>, accessed on June 15, 2021, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA.

Firms

There are about 2,200 firms in the county.²⁸ About 39% of firms in the county are in the service industry.²⁹ Notably, the largest category of service-oriented businesses is health-related services. About one fifth of firms in the county are retail oriented, with many operating as restaurants and gas stations.³⁰

Housing Conditions

As of 2019, Rutherford County has about 34,000 housing units, 193 of those are in Bostic.³² In both the county and town, most occupants are homeowners, but about a little over a quarter of the population in both locations rent.³³ The county has a slightly high vacancy rate at about 22%. This is higher than Bostic's, where about 16% of units are vacant.³⁴

About 70% of the housing structures within the county are single-family detached homes. However, both the county and town have a significant number of mobile homes, 20% and 25% respectively.³⁵

Median values of the homes within the county and town range widely. However, homes within the county tend to be valued higher, with a median value of \$118,000.³⁶ Homes in Bostic have a median value of \$89,000.³⁷ These values are significantly lower than those for the state and country, where median homes values are \$173,000 and \$218,000 respectively.³⁸

Median gross rent in the community is lower than the state and country. The median gross rent for Rutherford County is \$636.³⁹ The median gross rent in Bostic is lower, at about \$508.⁴⁰ About 40% of renters in the county are cost burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their monthly income on rent.⁴¹

According to data analysis on housing absorption, Rutherford County can absorb both new market rate and affordable housing rental units.⁴² Notably there's high demand for subsidized and affordable rental units in the county. The highest demand for these units is situated around Rutherfordton and Lake Lure. Analysis shows that Rutherfordton can support 340 subsidized senior rental units.⁴³ Lake Lure could support up to 68 subsidized senior rental units. Rutherfordton can also support 670 subsidized family rental units. Lake Lure can support up to 120 subsidized family rental units.

²⁸ "ESRI Business Summary for 2020", accessed on June 15, 2021.

²⁹ "ESRI Business Summary for 2020", accessed on June 15, 2021.

³⁰ "ESRI Business Summary for 2020", accessed on June 15, 2021.

Summary

Given the data, the needs in Rutherford County include, elder services, education, workforce training, housing, poverty alleviation, and childcare. The rural village center must take these needs into account

Indicator ⁵	Bostic	Rutherford County
Bostic Population	302	66,599
Total Housing Units	193	34,401
Median Age	53	45
Poverty Rate	11%	12%
Median Household Income	\$33,438	\$42,608
Unemployment Rate	9%	6%
Population with Some College or Higher	49%	51%
Population with Bachelor's or Higher	8%	18%

Community Feedback

Community feedback about the rural village concept was collected through the community listening sessions and by a survey disseminated by the Wesley CDC. Feedback can be divided into two group: community needs and design preferences.

Stakeholders provided information about community needs and ways a rural village center may help to fulfill these needs.

Community Needs Identified During Workshop

Potential community needs that may be satisfied by a rural village include:

- Highspeed broadband access
 - Stakeholders identified a widespread need for broadband access with download speeds greater than 20 megabits per second. This was particularly important during remote learning and working during the COVID-19 pandemic. If schools are closed in the future, a rural village center with high-speed internet can provide a place for students and teachers to learn and work. Additionally high-speed internet can allow for other economic development and business developing, educational opportunities for adults, and job training for rural residents.
- Workforce housing
 - Residents and data also noted a strong need for affordable and safe housing, specifically for the local workforce. The available housing within the county is

neither affordable nor safe for some of key workforce members, including teachers and health care workers.

- Drug rehabilitation services
 - Workshop participants noted a strong desire for drug rehabilitation services for rural residents. Opioid use is a large concern for community members. The rural village center could provide touchdown space for the various non-profits tackling this issue in Rutherford County.
- Physical therapy
 - Workshop participants noted a desire for physical therapy services for older populations. Physical therapy clinics are in the more urban parts of the county, like Rutherfordton and Forest City. Because of limited transportation options for older populations, a touchdown space for these services in Bostic could allow for easier access to these necessary services.
- Inter-generational care
 - Co-locating care for both children and older populations has many benefits, including alleviating feelings of alienation for older folks and educational enrichment for children. Additionally, childcare can be cost prohibitive, so embracing a low-cost model that serves both the young and old can better serve rural Rutherford County.
- Mental Health Services
 - Mental health services were noted as important throughout the workshop. Space and services to process the changes the community has undergone over the past 30 years.

Community Design Desires for Rural Village Center

Stakeholders from Bostic and Salem UMC also expressed how the rural village center should fit into the environment.

- Rural Context
 - A major desire expressed was that any proposed development fit into the rural context of Bostic and the Washburn Community. This could be achieved through material use, density, and architectural features. It's important that anything developed shouldn't feel out of place but should contribute to the existing sense of place within Washburn. Some existing architectural features include brick and lap siding.



Figures 4 and 5: The Bostic Lincoln Center (top) and the historic Bostic Town Hall (bottom) are examples of iconic architecture in Bostic. These properties show common design features, density, and material use found in Bostic.



Figure 6: The historic Washburn General Store is another example of design features that should be considered when designing the rural village center. This building uses brick siding and a hanging front porch.

- Flexibility
 - Participants noted the importance of flexibility. Spaces within the rural village center should be designed to accommodate a variety of uses. This will ensure that the community space remains useful and relevant in the future when conditions of Rutherford County may change. It will also allow a wide variety of organizations to use the space to maximize the impact the center will have.
- Not a church
 - The rural village center, while potentially affiliated with Salem UMC, should not look like a church. It was important to participants that a wide range of communities feel comfortable and welcome in the space regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation. This will help to avoid “steeple stigma.”
- Sense of community
 - Workshop participants noted the devastation the loss of the mills had on the community. The community defined itself in part through the mills, and their loss impacted residents county-wide. The rural village center should be designed to serve as a community connector in a similar way as the mill.

General Observations

Rutherford County Land Use Planning and Zoning

During our tour of the county and subsequent discussions, we discovered that the County has no substantial Land Use Plan or Zoning Ordinances. This appears to have led to random development and significant substandard, unmaintained, and abandoned properties. While the larger municipalities in the County have plans and zoning along with code enforcement, the County itself does not. We also heard that there is currently no political will to develop these plans and codes. The Team recommends that County leaders work to get elected officials to embrace the idea of planning, zoning, and code enforcement. Without this, the unincorporated areas of the County will continue to develop in a haphazard and detrimental way. Growth will happen, but not in a sustainable way that benefits the residents of Rutherford.

Support Organization Coordination

During our Workshop, we heard about many organizations in the County focused on helping those in need. It appeared to us that these organizations are operating mostly in isolation without coordination of effort. This sometimes leads to overlapping and inefficient support of the people in need. The Team recommends that an effort be made to develop a group or committee to coordinate and focus the efforts of these support agencies.

Recommendations

Recommendations for developing a rural village center on Salem UMC land in Bostic are separated into three categories: Site specific recommendations, potential use recommendations, and governance recommendations.

Site Specific Recommendations

- Ensure the design of the rural village center enhances the character of Bostic and Washburn
 - Participants were concerned about the impact that a rural village center could have on the density and character of the area. Construction and development in Bostic will be very apparent due to its size in density. It's important that any rural village center should echo the existing built environment.
 - Buildings in the town that can be used to define the character of the area are the Washburn General Store, Bostic Town Hall, or the Bostic Lincoln Center.
- Develop frontage along Sunshine Bostic Highway (if possible)
 - To enhance the area's unique sense of place, it's recommended that the rural village center be developed with some portion of frontage along Bostic Sunshine Highway. This will ensure that the center is visible and accessible. It will also enhance the "main-street" feeling along the corridor.
- Potential site designs are included in Appendix A of this report.



Courtesy of Mike Barnes

Figure 7: One design option may include the village center located adjacent to the church, along Bostic Sunshine Highway. Any future workforce housing could be located behind the church and village center.

Governance and Administration

- Develop a cross agency council to manage and operate the facility
 - Some participants noted the desire to ensure that the facility was not managed and operated by the church. This will ensure that the church doesn't operate outside of its capacity. Specifically, this group could help determine how the building will be maintained and what the building ownership structure looks like. However, the church should remain involved in the rural village center in some capacity.
 - Examples of common non-profit governance models include, advisory boards, cooperative governance, patron governance, and management team. Each of these models allow for different levels of involvement by Salem UMC.
 - Establishment of a separate 501 (c) 3 with Church representation on the Board of Directors should be considered.
- Determine financing model
 - The managing body should work with Wesley CDC to determine how the financing will be provided for both construction and operation of the rural village center.
- Develop vision and strategic plan
 - The governing body should work to develop a vision for how the rural village will serve residents of Rutherford County. This vision should be based on community feedback, including potential uses discussed in the workshop. A community engagement strategy that solicits county-wide feedback should be undertaken to supplement the workshop feedback.

Potential Use

- Recruit organization involvement
 - The governing board should develop relationships with organizations that may use the rural village center. These organizations should be in line with community wants and needs, as well as the vision of the rural village center.
- Plan for Workforce Housing
 - Housing should be a part of the overall master plan for the area. Workshop participants noted a desire for safe and affordable housing for teachers and other essential workers.
- Use data to inform potential uses
 - The uses found in the rural village center should reflect community needs. These can be those referred to in previous sections, such as a daycare, mental health services, and others.

Design Case Studies

In designing the rural village center, designers should look at examples of other rural towns that have a defined sense of place. The rural village center should aim to enhance the existing architectural features along Bostic Sunshine Highway. Marvin and Valle Cruces are examples of rural communities that have undergone some development but have done so in a way that preserves the unique character of the community.

- Marvin, NC
 - The town of Marvin is a bedroom community outside of Charlotte. Like Bostic, the community is engaging in planning around developing a village center. Residents and town representatives have noted the importance of ensuring new development aligns with what already exists. While Marvin has a different demographic make-up and is considerably more affluent, Marvin is engaging in a process to develop a contextually appropriate community center.
 - Marvin is like Bostic in that it doesn't have a typical "downtown." The town is working towards developing a sense of place with a town center through zoning and design regulations.



Figure 8: The Village of Martin is using design regulations to develop a sense of place within its community.

- Valle Cruces, NC
 - Valle Crucis is a community in Watauga County, North Carolina. Like Bostic, it's rural, historic, and is adjacent to larger communities. While small, Valle Crucis does have a cohesive sense of place due to similar architectural features and building materials. The design of the rural village center can help Bostic develop a more cohesive sense of place, like that captured in Valle Cruces.

Faith-Based Community Resources

Faith based communities have always practiced helping those less fortunate. Today, this tradition is stronger than ever. The Outreach Center at Salem UMC is just one example of how the church serves others. Other faith communities also incorporate community centers and affordable housing into their missions. Salem UMC can look to these case studies to learn more about how faith-based community centers and affordable housing can function.

Shared Use Facilities

Faith based organizations can serve as catalysts for community change by opening up facilities to the broader public. This is one of Wesley CDC's core missions. Shared use occurs when schools or churches allow the public to use existing facilities or when faith organizations develop facilities for the community. Shared use spaces enable churches to further impact their communities by providing resources that otherwise wouldn't be available. Shared use facilities emphasize the link between spiritual, mental, and physical health.³¹ The rural village center is related to the concept of shared use. A rural village center, governed in part by Salem UMC, will allow the church to further impact Rutherford County and beyond.

- Creek Wise Park, Marion, NC
 - Grace Baptist Church developed a multi-use park to help reach community members outside the congregation. Through a diverse coalition of partnerships including foundations, the Cooperative Extension, and the local hospital, the church was able to build Creek Wise Park. The park served as a way for the church to unite separate community based organizations and multiply the community development effort.
- Gracepark, Marion, NC
 - In 2013 Grace Community Church opened a community park. Like Salem UMC, the Grace had already been a community anchor, running a food pantry and operating a childcare facility. Grace wanted to build off those efforts and develop a park that would not only serve congregants, but all community efforts. Fundraising and organizational partnerships helped the project be successful. After the park was opened, the church engaged in a community needs survey to determine what other resources the community may benefit from.

Affordable Housing

More and more faith-based communities are leveraging their assets to provide their communities with affordable and workforce housing. Churches are in a unique place to address some of the barriers to developing affordable housing in rural places, where developments typically won't qualify for federal funding. Arrangements can vary from churches leasing land to

³¹ Congregation to Community: Shared Use by North Carolina Faith-Based Organizations.

non-profit developers to churches giving land to non-profit developers as a development contribution.

- St. Francis Apartments at Cathedral Square in Denver, CO³²
 - In 2016, St. Francis Cathedral and a non-profit engaged in a partnership to build a facility with permanent affordable housing and a community center in Denver. This building has 49 one-bedroom apartments serving previously homeless residents. Housing is another way that the church is building on its mission to help serve the homeless in the community. The project is subsidized by Denver's public housing authority and the state. However, residents do pay 30% of their incomes in rents. This project did receive tax credits from the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

³² "New Project: Saint Francis Apartments." DenverInfill Blog, November 11, 2018.
<https://denverinfill.com/2016/06/new-capitol-hill-project-saint-francis-apartments-at-cathedral-square.html>.



Figure 9: The St. Francis Apartments at Cathedral Square was a partnership between a church and a non-profit organization to develop community space and affordable housing in Denver, CO. The design and density of this project match the context of Denver but can be modified depending on where the project is located. | Photo's courtesy of DenverInfill.com

- YIGBY (Yes in God's Backyard)
 - YIGBY is an organization in San Diego that helps churches and faith communities leverage their land to develop affordable multi-family housing units. Their goal is to help congregations develop mission-driven housing solutions that contribute to their financial health. The organization has partnered with other mission-driven non-profits service different populations, including veterans, families, and those with addiction. Wesley is uniquely positioned to accomplish a project like this at Salem UMC. Notably, financing for many of these projects is provided by Self Help Credit Union, a Durham-based community development finance initiative that also operates in North Carolina.³³

³³ Yes In God's Backyard. Accessed July 29, 2021. <https://yigby.org/>.

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Appendix A.

Potential Site Designs

Site designs for the rural village center are included courtesy of Michael Cole of ColeJenest & Stone. These designs show potential siting options of the rural village that abide by the design recommendations in throughout this report.a