



**Introduction to Phase 1 of the 2021 Land  
Use Plan Implementation:  
TOD Development and Zoning Plan**

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Chris Lawson, Planning Manager

Town Council

9/13/22

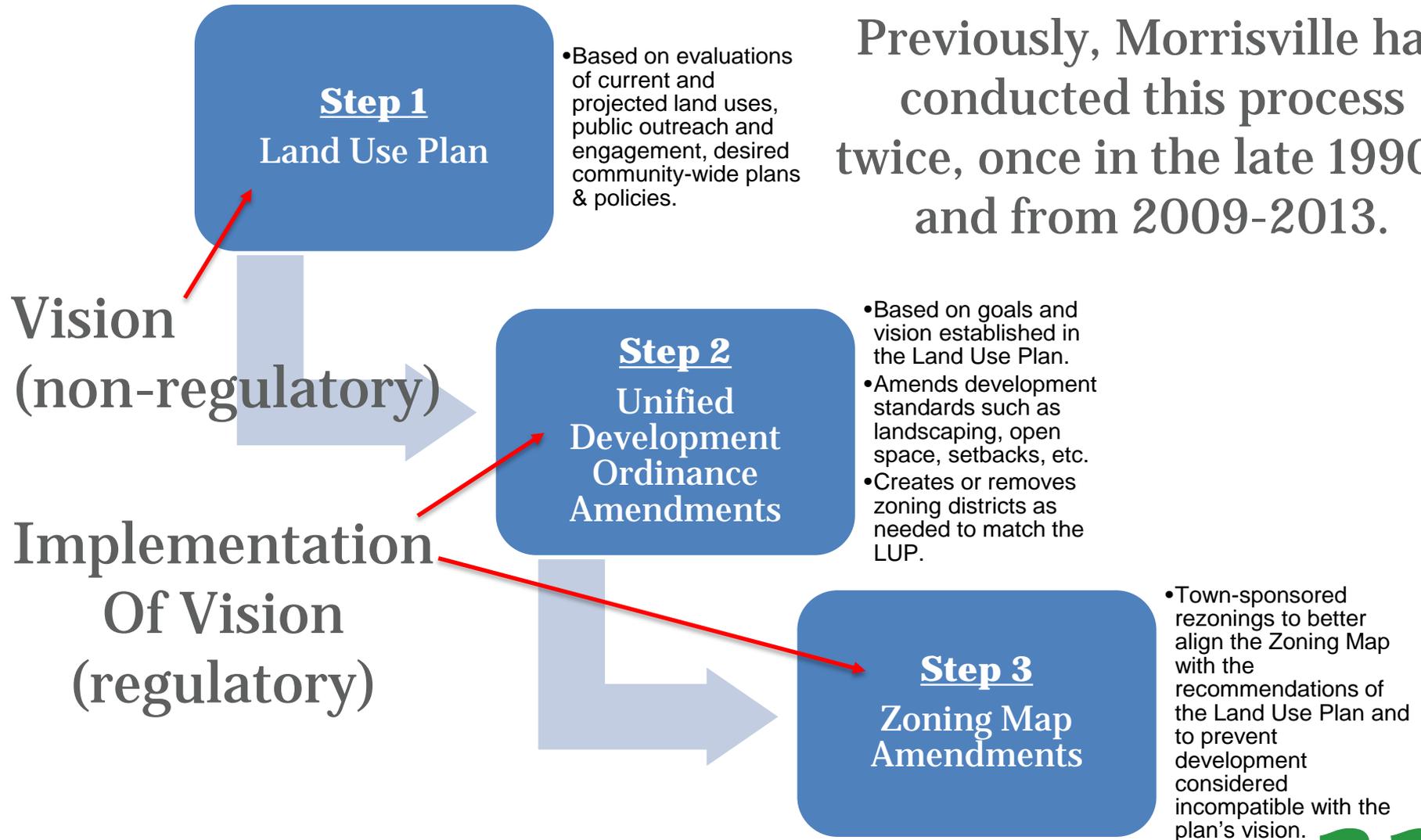
# Process and Timing

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- PZB meetings:
  - August 11: Staff brief and project kickoff
    - Overview of the project.
  - September 14: Houseal-Lavigne conducts work session.
- Town Council meeting:
  - September 13: Staff brief and project kickoff
    - Introduction to Phase 1 – TOD Development and Zoning Plan.
  - October 18<sup>th</sup>: Houseal-Lavigne conducts work session.



# Land Use Plan Flowchart



# 2021 Land Use Plan

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- Town's guiding document for future growth.
  - Establishes 13 future land use categories.
    - Each use category contains future preferred uses, residential densities, and key considerations.
    - Every parcel in Town is labeled with a future land use category as shown on the Future Land Use Map.
  - Identifies Town vision and goals.
  - Subarea planning:
    - 3 subarea plans Town Center, McCrimmon Extension, and the TOD East.
  - Implementation: 40 key action steps.

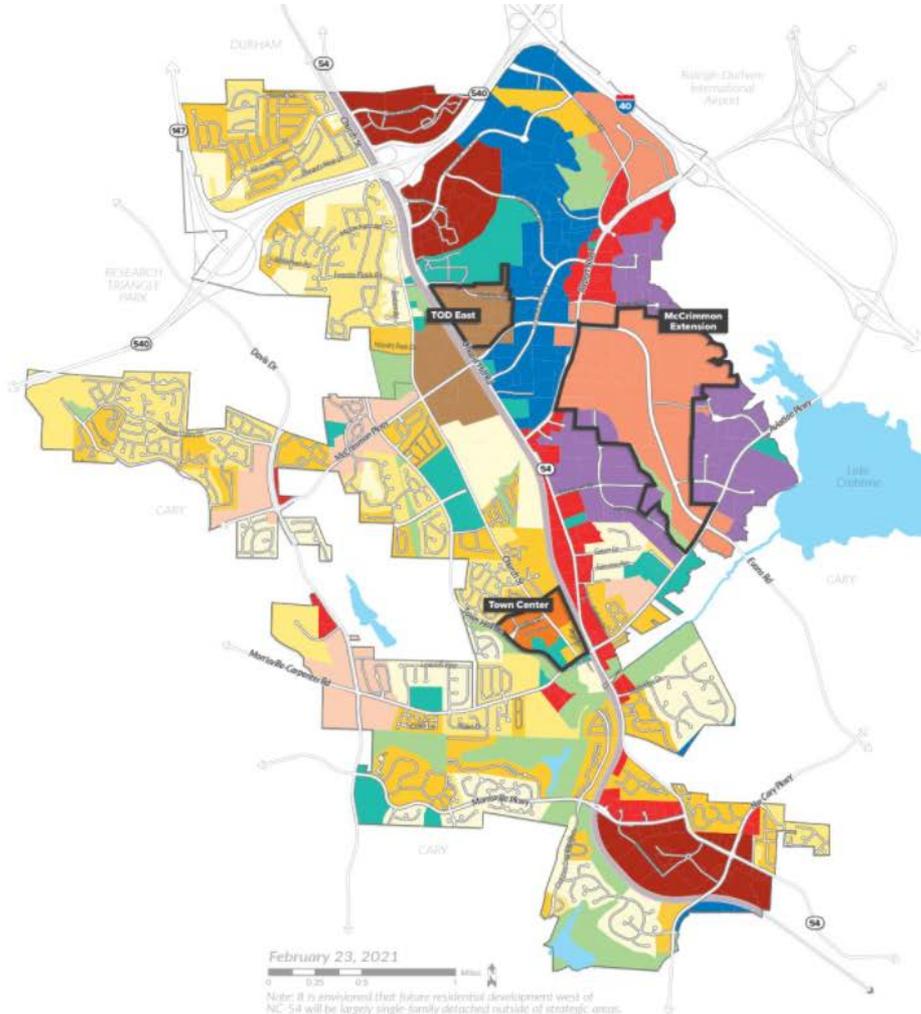


# 2021 Land Use Plan, cont.

## Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map establishes the foundation for the use and development of land within the Town of Morrisville over the next 10 to 20 years. All land parcels within the Town's planning jurisdiction are assigned one of 13 future land use designations, each defining preferred uses, a desired density and character of development. Elements such as future streets, landscape buffers, private open spaces, tree preservation areas and other important considerations, though not illustrated here, are discussed in this and subsequent chapters.

- Low Density Residential**  
Low Density Residential includes neighborhoods of single-family detached homes, typically 4.5 or less dwelling units per acre. These areas are characterized by large lots and the lowest residential density in Morrisville.
- Medium Density Residential**  
Medium Density Residential includes neighborhoods of single-family attached and detached homes, typically between 4.5 and 7.5 dwelling units per acre. These areas are characterized by medium-sized lots and a moderate density of development.
- High Density Residential**  
High Density Residential includes neighborhoods of single-family attached and detached homes as well as multi-family developments, typically 7.5 or greater dwelling units per acre. These areas are characterized by small lots and the highest residential density in Morrisville.
- Neighborhood Activity Center**  
Neighborhood Activity Center features a mix of uses that provide convenient, walkable retail and service options for adjacent neighborhoods. These areas include commercial, residential, entertainment, and office uses that are compatible with the scale and intensity of adjacent areas.
- Business Activity Center**  
Business Activity Center features a mix of uses that provide convenient, walkable retail and service options for adjacent offices and employment centers. These areas include commercial, residential, and office uses in mixed-use centers that are compatible with the scale and intensity of adjacent areas.
- Regional Activity Center**  
Regional Activity Center features a mix of uses that create regional destinations, typically located at key intersections along major transportation corridors. These areas include concentrations of large regional employers, commercial, entertainment, and high density residential along with education and healthcare facilities.
- General Commercial**  
General Commercial includes commercial centers that provide a variety of goods and services to meet local and regional needs, typically located along primary transportation corridors.
- Town Center**  
Town Center features a vibrant mix of uses near Morrisville's historic crossroads that create a destination and focal point for the community. This includes a dense, urban concentration of uses, including residential, commercial, office, entertainment, cultural, and institutional uses with a focus on mixed-use development.
- Office**  
Office includes a broad spectrum of local and regional employment centers in high quality and desirable environments.
- Industrial**  
Industrial includes light- and heavy-industrial uses that contribute to employment opportunities and Morrisville's tax base. Location, visibility, and compatibility with adjacent areas are critical to industrial uses.
- Institutional**  
Institutional accommodates public and semi-public activities such as government buildings, schools, and places of worship.
- Parks & Open Space**  
Parks, Greenways, and Open Space includes all parcels of land exclusively used for outdoor green spaces, recreational areas, and environmental amenities. These provide recreational opportunities to residents and enhance the Town's character. This category does not include private parks and open spaces that are incorporated as supporting uses on larger properties or developments or greenways.
- Transit Oriented Development**  
Transit Oriented Development features a critical mass of development and mix of uses necessary to support nearby transit options. Uses include commercial, residential, institutional, and employment concentrated in pedestrian-scaled environments, with a focus on mixed-use development.



# 2021 Land Use Plan, cont.

## Vision and Goals

The Town of Morrisville's *Land Use Plan* is an expression of the community's desires for the place Morrisville will become in the future. This is outlined by the Plan's vision and further defined through accompanying goals. Together, they provide a flexible guide for decision making and establish a framework for new projects and policies. For context, it is important to understand the intent of these Plan components and how they work together:

- ▶ **Vision.** Describes the desired outcome to be achieved through the implementation of the Plan. They are forward-looking and describe what the community could be like if the goals and recommendations are achieved.
- ▶ **Goals.** Describes desired end situations toward which planning efforts should be directed. Listed in no particular order, they are broad and long-range, and represent an end to be sought, even if they are never fully realized.

Together, the vision and goals provide specific direction and establish the broad picture of what the Town of Morrisville wants to accomplish through its *Land Use Plan*. They were developed based upon analysis of existing conditions and public engagement with residents, the business community, service providers, public officials, and Town staff.

### Vision

*Morrisville will continue to be a thriving and exciting community at the heart of the Research Triangle, building upon the Town's invaluable location and significant development potential. Future growth will meet the needs of existing and future residents while attracting businesses, employers, and new development. This will include housing that is diverse and affordable, shops and restaurants that offer a range of goods and services, and corporate offices and employment centers that generate jobs and make Morrisville a destination for commerce. Land use decisions will be guided by market realities and coordinated with local transportation networks. This will ensure that future growth and development is both healthy and advantageous to the Morrisville community.*

*As Morrisville grows, the Town will retain its unique character and high quality of life. This will include the maintenance and expansion of public services and amenities, particularly municipal and educational facilities. Development will be respectful of environmental assets, such as Crabtree Creek and the local tree canopy, while preserving open spaces and incorporating best practices for sustainability and resiliency. Targeting specific areas for development and investment, the Town will establish lively, mixed-use districts that foster a sense of community. Key among these will be the Town Center, which will create a focal point that acts as the core of the community. The Town will establish a prominent and recognizable image and community brand, which will expand the Town's reputation as a regional competitor and elevate Morrisville as a trailblazer of the Triangle Region.*

### Goals

#### **Environmental Stewardship**

Protect and promote Morrisville's unique and sensitive environmental assets and become a recognized community for sustainability and resiliency.

#### **Strong Community Image**

Establish a strong, clear, positive, and distinct community image, building upon Morrisville's unique character, history, and desirable regional location.

#### **Fiscally Responsible Development**

Strategically manage and promote development that is fiscally responsible and reflects the needs of residents, local businesses, and employers.

#### **Housing Diversity**

Preserve and enhance the diversity, quality, character, safety, affordability, and appeal of Morrisville's housing and neighborhoods to strengthen the Town's desirability as a great place to live.

#### **Economic Development**

Promote innovative and healthy commercial, office, and industrial areas that serve the needs of residents, provide employment, strengthen Morrisville's tax base, and capture a larger regional market.

#### **Establish a Town Center**

Establish a vibrant, mixed-use Town Center that transforms Morrisville's historic core into an exciting, pedestrian-friendly, multi-purpose gathering place that serves as a destination within the community.

#### **Concurrent Transportation Infrastructure**

Strengthen the relationship between land use and transportation to promote an efficient, multi-modal transportation system that enables development and redevelopment.

#### **Support Public Services**

Continue to support and provide high-quality public services, including municipal, emergency response, public safety, and educational facilities, and maintain exceptional infrastructure and utilities throughout Morrisville.

*Note: Goals listed in no particular order*



# Plan Implementation

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- Plan adoption date February 23, 2021.
- Implementation began in summer 2021 with several pre-emptive rezonings to prevent incompatible development along the McCrimmon Extension and in the Transit Oriented Development District. Adjusted boundaries of the Airport Overlay Zoning District to support these rezonings.



# Plan Implementation, cont.

- Additional progress since plan adoption:
  - Adopted amendments to tree preservation, common open space, and landscaping to promote Plan's goal of Environmental Stewardship.
  - Progress on Town Center.
  - Evaluation of proposed rezonings against the Future Land Use Map.
  - Land Use Plan contains 40 Key Action items that are at various stages of implementation.



# Plan Implementation, cont.

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- Additionally:
  - This project will implement a majority of the 40 Key Actions in the 2021 Land Use Plan, but some items will remain or are continuous. These include, but are not limited to:
    - Coordinating with regional partners.
    - Filling sidewalk gaps.
    - Pugh House restoration.
    - Increasing roadway capacity.
    - Development guide for area directly south of Morrisville Carpenter Road.
    - Purchasing additional parkland.



# Plan Implementation, cont.

- Project to implement the 2021 LUP Zoning and Development Standards recommendations broken into 2 phases:
  - 1: TOD Development and Zoning Plan.
    - Includes project kickoff and designing framework, drafting TOD standards, and development plan adoption.
  - 2: Full UDO review and update.
    - Includes review of existing non-residential zoning districts and the zoning map.
    - Review and update of other development standards.



# Successful Implementation

- What does successful 2021 LUP Zoning and Development Standards recommendations implementation look like (1/3)?
  - Strategic non-residential rezonings to prevent incompatible development.
    - Town sponsored rezonings to align the Zoning Map with the Future Land Use Map.
    - Allows existing businesses or development to continue, while preventing redevelopment or expansion of non-recommended uses.



# Successful Implementation, cont.

- What does successful 2021 LUP Zoning and Development Standards recommendations implementation look like (2/3)?
  - Comprehensive review of the UDO and recommended amendments to match the vision identified in the LUP. This could include:
    - Changes to development standards such as landscaping, parking, building design, driveway spacing, height, setbacks, sustainable initiatives, etc.
    - Creation, elimination, or alteration of zoning districts.
    - Amendments to allowed uses within existing zoning districts.



# Successful Implementation, cont.

- What does successful 2021 LUP Zoning and Development Standards recommendations implementation look like (3/3)?
  - Creation of a small area plan and zoning standards for the Transit Oriented Development Zoning District (TOD). This includes:
    - Detailed land-use recommendations, street network design and cross sections.
    - Visualizations for the TOD West and TOD South.
    - Largely form-based zoning code that aids in the development of transit-oriented development and usage of transit.
  - This is Phase 1 of the project and is expected to take 8-12 months.



# **Phase 1 – TOD Development and Zoning Plan**

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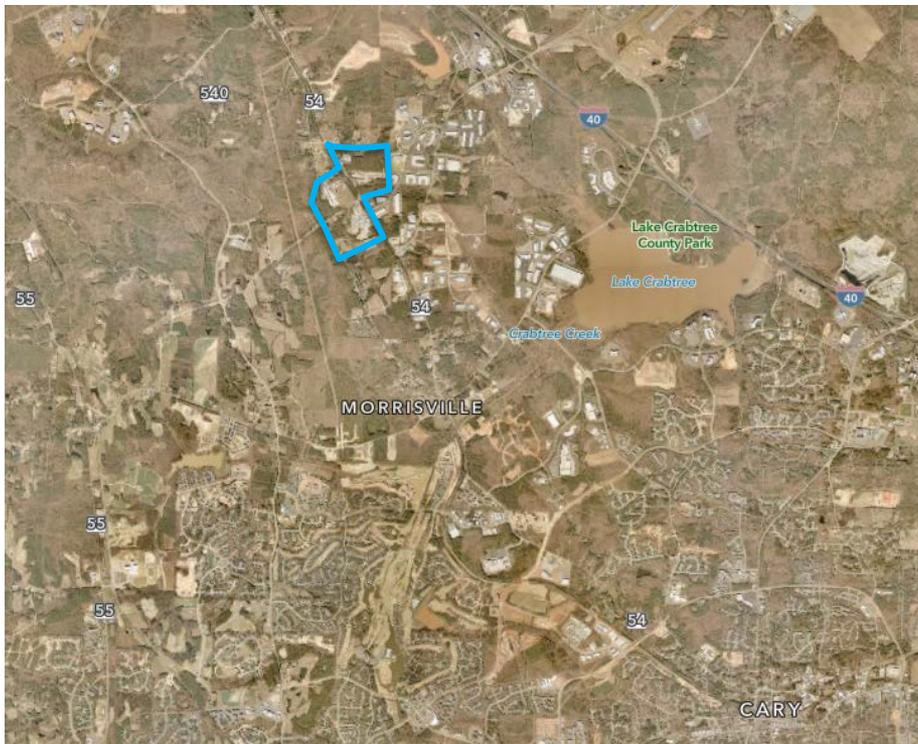
# Why TOD?

- Outside of large urban cores, most post-war zoning evolved over time to *require* car-centric development.
  - Low residential density, large minimum setbacks, large drive aisles, high minimum parking requirements, separation of uses.
- TOD zoning aims to require a *traditional* style of development, placing emphasis on smaller blocks, allowing walkability and the use of nearby public transit, mixing uses, allowing residential densities to support transit services, and open public gathering areas.



# History

- 1999 Land Use Plan: population ~5,000
  - Snapshot in time, text from plan: *In August 1998, the Town Board instituted a moratorium on all residential development over 5 dwelling units/acre until a new land use plan was adopted.*



**Town of Morrisville  
Land Use Plan**



*Adopted by the  
Morrisville Board of Commissioners  
November 8, 1999*



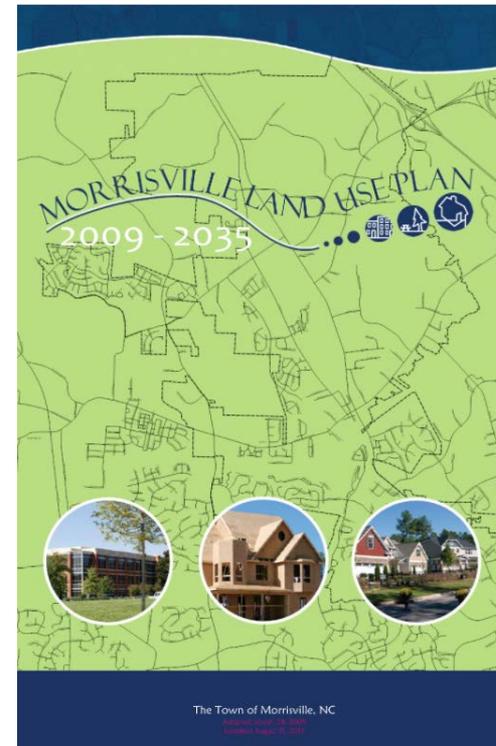
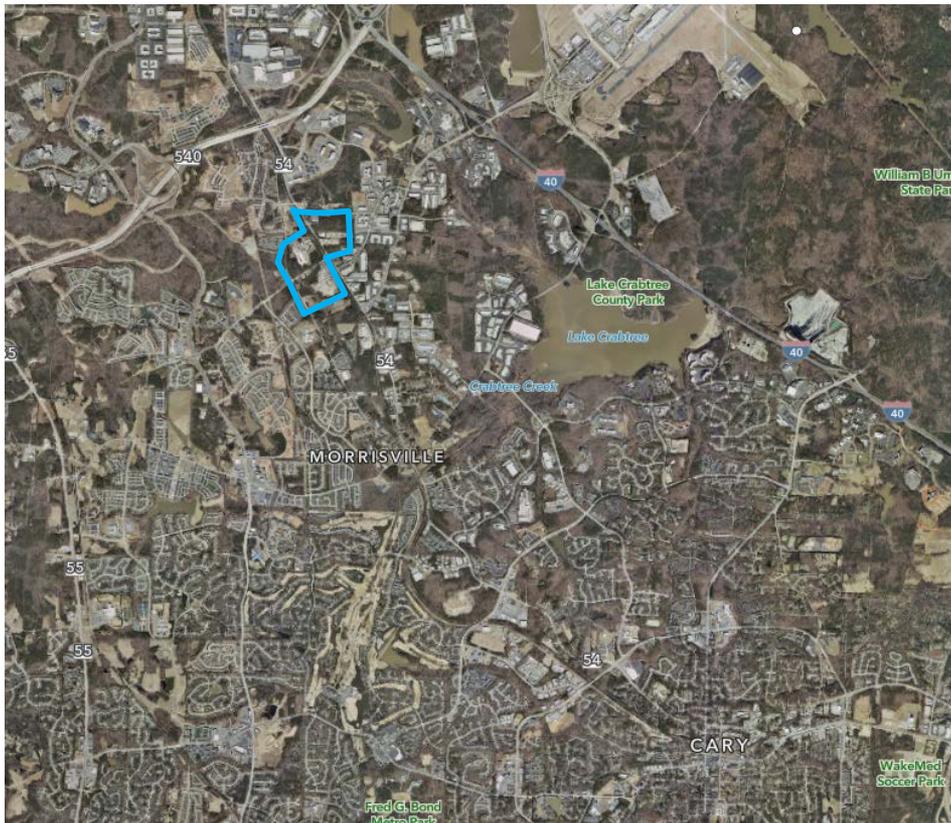
# History, cont.

- 1999 Land Use Plan:
  - Goal 2.4.2 “...provide alternative modes of transportation – mass transit station and pedestrian/bicycle connections.”
    - Objective 2: *Ensure that development around the proposed mass transit station is compatible with and supportive of mass transit.*
    - Implementation Strategy 5: *Develop and adopt local design development guidelines to ensure that development around the proposed mass transit station is compatible with and supportive of mass transit.*



# History, cont.

- 2009 Land Use Plan: population ~18,000
  - Snapshot in time, text from plan: *The quantity of recently approved developments for a small town like Morrisville is quite substantial.*



# History, cont.

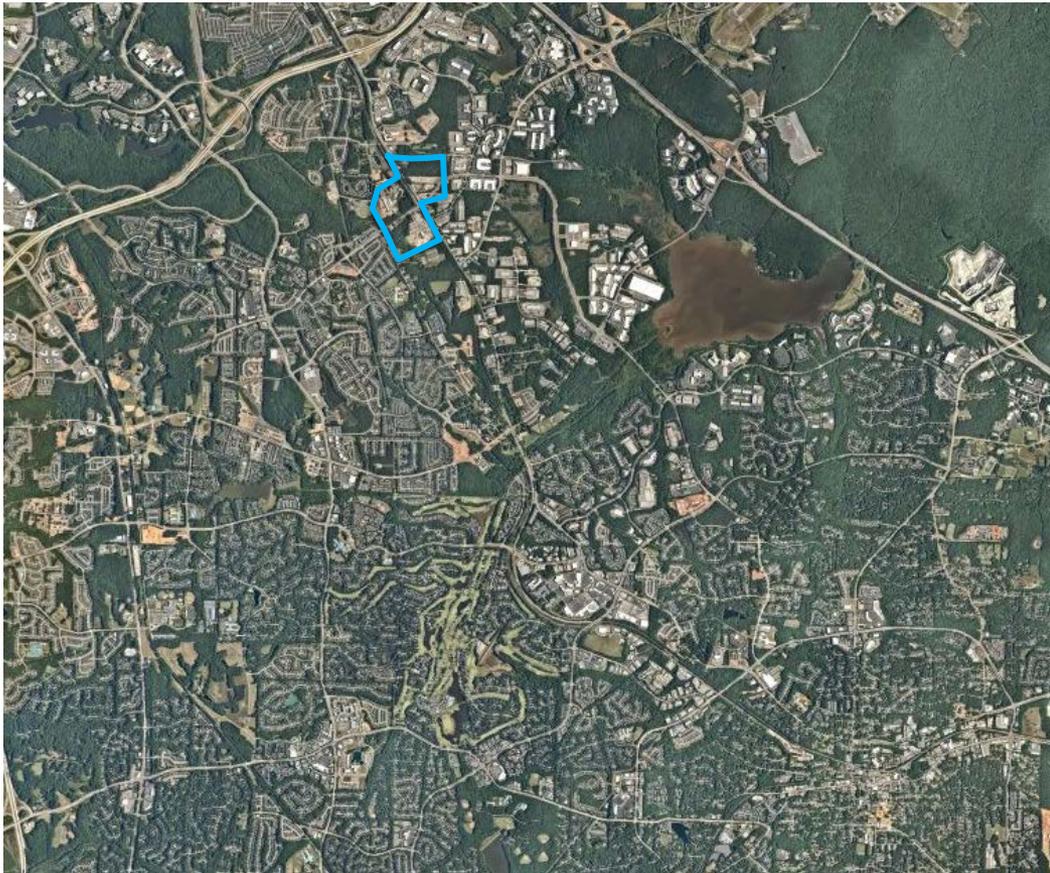
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- 2009 Land Use Plan:
  - Goal 3: Improve transportation mobility by integrating land uses with transportation infrastructure.
  - Policy 3A: Establish development patterns support of a walkable, multi-modal community, including higher-density residential development and complementary land uses in the Town Center and around planned and potential transit and activity centers.



# History, cont.

- 2021 Land Use Plan: population ~29,500



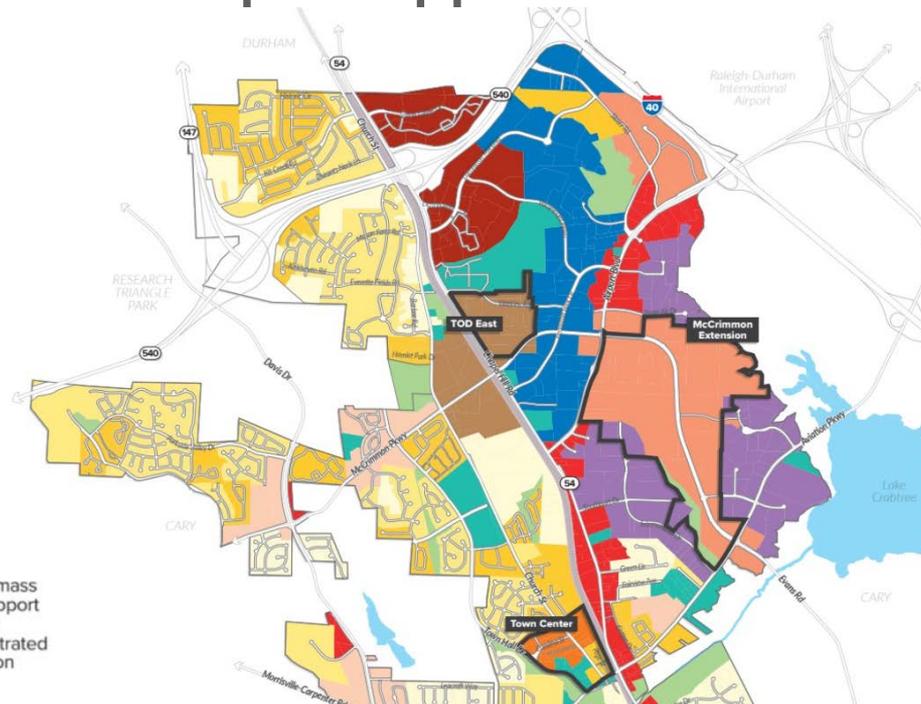
mapping  
**MORRISVILLE**  
Land Use Plan

Adopted February 23, 2021 



# History, cont.

- 2021 Land Use Plan:
  - Identified 3 areas of Town for TOD. ~120 acres.
  - TOD zoning first installed in July 2021 to prevent incompatible development.
  - TOD East subarea plan approved as a subsection of the LUP.



**Transit Oriented Development**  
Transit Oriented Development features a critical mass of development and mix of uses necessary to support nearby transit options. Uses include commercial, residential, institutional, and employment concentrated in pedestrian-scaled environments, with a focus on mixed-use development.



# History, cont.

- 2021 Land Use Plan:
  - TOD East subarea plan approved as a subsection of the LUP.
  - Established general road network and recommended land uses.



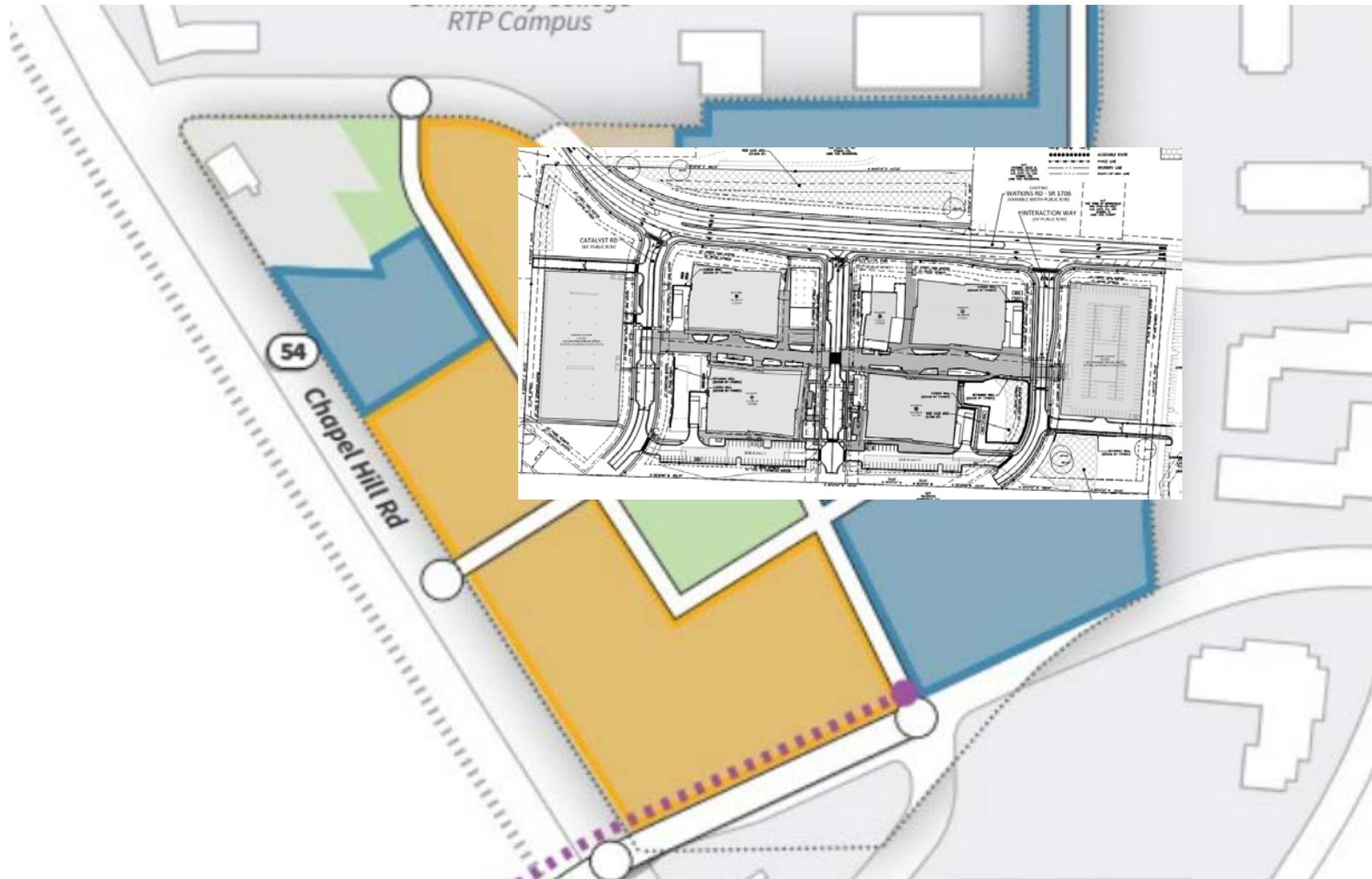
# TOD East Update

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- Prior to Town initiated rezoning to the TOD district in July 2021, a site plan named Discovery at Watkins Road was submitted under the Office/Institutional zoning.
- 565,000 square feet of life science and office space with additional amenity center and restaurant space on 20 acres.
- ~1,200 parking spaces.



# TOD East Update, cont.



# TOD East Update, cont.



Image from: <https://emergesciencecenter.com/about/>



# Phase 1 – Engagement & Modeling

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- Phase 1 includes:
  - Kick off and public engagement (scheduled to begin in September).
  - Design typology (generally identifying desirable options for the TOD).
  - TOD visualizations and workshops with Town representatives.
  - Review of UDO's current TOD regulations and standards.



# Phase 1 – Zoning Standards

- Phase 1 includes:
  - Taking the information learned or established through engagement and modeling and designing TOD district standards.
    - Including design standards related to creating a transit-focused area of Town.
    - Adopted via a largely form-based code.
  - Phase 1 adoption within 8-12 months.
    - Will include a final review by both PZB and Town Council.



# TOD Development Plan

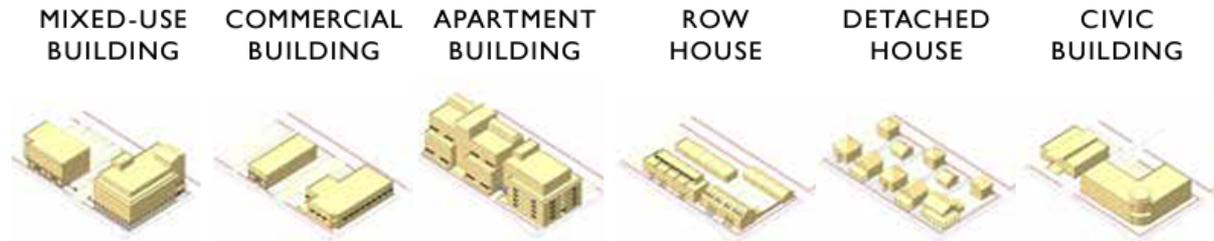
- When adopted, Phase 1 will create the Town of Morrisville's TOD Development and Zoning Plan.
  - Largely form-based code that will guide the design of development that is desirable to the Town and the Town's regional transit partners.
- Form-based codes designate the form, scale, and character of development via text, diagrams and other visuals, rather than distinctions in land-use types.
  - Definition from: [formbasedcodes.org/definition/](http://formbasedcodes.org/definition/)



# Form Based Code Example

## 2.2.2 Building Types Allowed by Frontage

Building types are allowed by frontage as established in the table below. Specific requirements for each building type are shown on the following pages.



FRONTAGE						
■ (BW) Boardwalk	P	--	--	--	--	P
■ (CP) Connector Park	P	--	--	--	--	P
■ (SH-E) Shopping east side of Atlantic	P	--	--	--	--	P
■ (SH-W) Shopping west side of Atlantic	P	--	P	P	--	P
■ (GW) Gateway	P	P	P	P	P	P
■ (BE) Beach	P	--	P	P	P	P
KEY: P = Permitted building type -- = Building type not permitted						



# Next Steps

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- Town Council meeting on October 18<sup>th</sup>.
- The Town's consultants, Houseal-Lavigne, will conduct a workshop with the Town Council in order to begin identifying desirable development options for the TOD.
  - Nik Davis, AICP
  - Jackie Wells, AICP
- Town Council homework.



# Town Council Homework

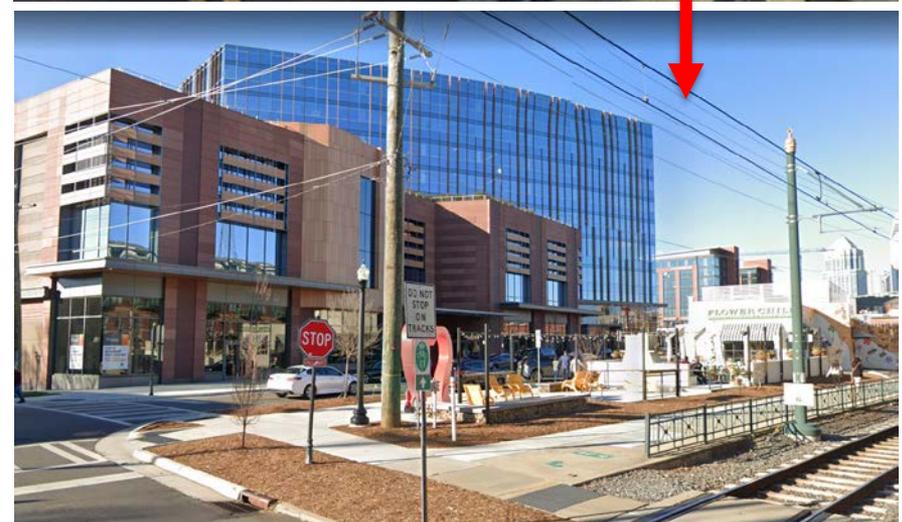
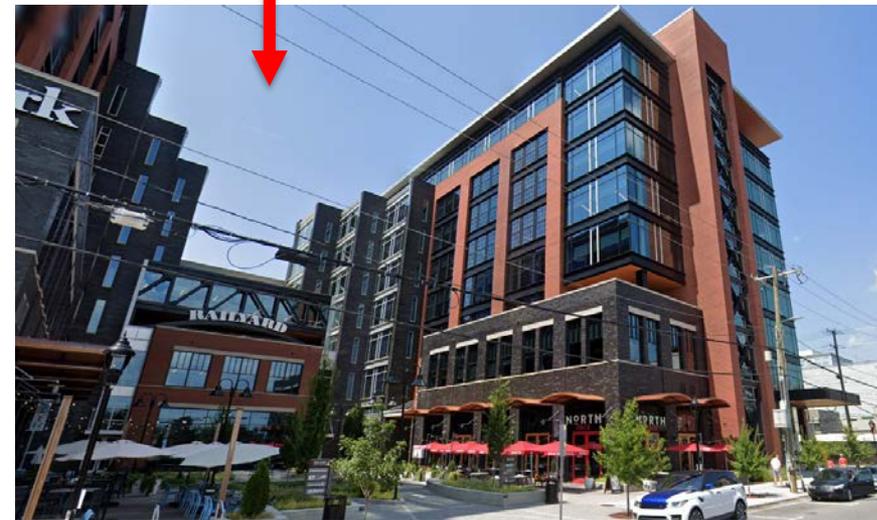
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- Houseal-Lavigne provided a survey link, which will be distributed to Town Council via email.
  - By September 26<sup>th</sup>, please take the survey.
  - This will help Houseal-Lavigne understand Town Council preferences and frame the work session.
  - Open ended questions asking respondents to describe developments that they like. Expected to take 10-20 minutes.



# TOD Example Charlotte, NC

Charlotte's light rail opened in 2007. Both pictures on the top were taken in 2007, while the pictures on the bottom were taken in 2020 or 2021, respectively. They are of the same locations.



# Recommended Reading

- Transit Oriented Development, Explained.
  - Produced by City Beautiful, April 30, 2022.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYsqWIGyRVk>
  - Video is 10:25 minutes.
- What is Traditional Development?
  - Author: Daniel Herriges, June 14, 2019
  - <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2019/6/14/traditional-development#:~:text=The%20traditional%20development%20pattern%20refers,an%20eerie%20similarity%20of%20design.>
  - Not up for reading? There is a 4:37 minute long video summarizing the article at the bottom of the webpage.



# **Town Council Questions**

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