The City of Newton 2019 Strategic Growth Plan

Acknowledgements

The Newton Strategic Growth Plan was produced through a collaborative effort between the City of Newton staff, Creative Economic Development Consulting led by Crystal Morphis, and Appalachian State MPA Intern Colt Jensen.

The City of Newton would like to thank Mayor Ann Jordan and the Newton City Council, City of Newton residents, Newton for their participation and input. A full list of public forum participants can be found in appendix 1(a) - 1(c).

City of Newton staff participating in the Newton project included City Manager Todd Clark, Assistant City Manager Sean Hovis, Director of Public Works James "Dusty" Wentz, Public Works GIS specialist Tricia Sauliner-Littlejohn, Police Chief Vidal Sipe, Fire Chief Kevin Yoder, Planning Director Randy Williams, Assistant Planning Director Alex Fulbright, Recreation Director Sandra Waters, Public Information Officer Alex Frick and Downtown Newton Development Coordinator Shannon Johnson.

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Introduction

After the adoption of Newton's 2015 Strategic Growth Plan, the Newton City Council and Staff prioritized the implementation of each of the action items contained in the 2015 plan. By spring of 2019, many of the non-recurring action items had already been completed, and considerable progress had been made in virtually every aspect of implementing the 2015 Strategic Growth Plan.

In May of 2019, the City of Newton contracted with NC Electricities to complete an update of the Economic Development portion of the Strategic Growth Plan. Also in May of 2019, the City of Newton hired MPA Intern Colt Jensen to complete an update of all other aspects of the Strategic Growth Plan. Newton's 2019 Strategic Plan is designed to clarify ways to attract new residential and commercial development to Newton, as well as promote local entrepreneurship.

After meeting with Newton staff, Creative Consulting carried out focus groups with key community stakeholders in order to complete a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. After these stakeholder meetings, both Creative Consultant's and Colt Jensen completed a thorough data analysis.

Portions of the data, SWOT, and staff analysis were shared with the public and City Council in a series of three public meetings held on consecutive Thursdays in July of 2019. After public and City Council feedback was received during this series of public meetings, a rough draft of the 2019 Strategic Growth Plan which was created and presented to City Council. Council gave final input on the Strategic Growth Plan document and verified a series of "Action Items" based on community assets and challenges.

History of Newton

The City of Newton was Chartered as a county seat for newly formed Catawba County, that was established in 1842. Newton developed around Catawba County's Greek Revival Courthouse, built in 1847, which caused controversy due to its location away from the county's center. An 1842 survey of Catawba County put Newton squarely at its center (North Carolina Statutes called for a County's Seat to be located within 2 miles of its geographic center), but a new survey

Barringer Homestead- the small building to the left of the main house was used as the first meeting room for Catawba County.

conducted in 1846 disputed those earlier findings, placing present day Conover at Catawba County's center. Regardless, Newton had established itself as the focal point of County activities and founded the first meeting place for County business within the borders of Newton at Matthias Barringer's homestead, located just 3 miles south of the center of town. M.L. McCorkle became the first County employee hired as Clerk of Court, during an early meeting of the County's elected officials at the makeshift meeting hall. By 1847, Catawba County erected its first permanent courthouse on property located in the center of what would become downtown Newton, and thereby solidifying Newton both in name and practical terms as the County's center. The City of Newton received its charter in 1855.

The origin of Newton's name is split into two camps, both attributing the name to Nathaniel Wilson, the man who led the campaign to establish Catawba County, but each with different stories to why he chose the name. The first story told by one of the Catawba County Historical Association's founders, J.Y. Killian, was that Wilson's son was born on December 25, 1842, which coincided with the 200th birthday of Sir

1847 Greek Revival Courthouse

Isaac Newton, for which the boy was named. In turn, the town was named for Wilson's son. The second account told by Matthew L. McCorkle, one of Newton's first residents and a lawyer, challenges that assertion. According to McCorkle, the town's name came from Wilson's admiration of the Patriots during the American Revolution, and therefore named the town Newton in honor of Lt. Newton who fought with the "Swamp Fox," Francis Marion, of the South Carolina Militia. Whichever account is correct, Newton first appears in supplementary

legislation dating back to 1843 but did not receive its charter from the state of North Carolina until late 1855.

A Courthouse has been prominently located in the center of downtown Newton since 1847, and has served as the focal point of Newton's development. The first structure, built in 1843 was a two room building with a central chimney, residing on the property of Matthias Barringer. By 1845, bidding began

on a permanent courthouse, a Greek Revival structure that was built by local men and constructed from local materials. The structure stood as a grand testament to Catawba County's place in North Carolina, a center for government, and a cornerstone of the community for which Newton would quickly build around. As an affirmation of this fact, Newton's population doubled in size by 1849, and soon added mercantile stores, blacksmiths, a bootmaker, saddlers, a lawyer's office, banks, a hotel, taverns, churches and homes in and around the square.

The 1850's brought the promise of a railroad line and the prosperity that comes with it. Several of Newton's prominent residents promoted and contributed both money and political capital to see the Western Railway line come through Newton. After an initial meeting with the project engineer, Newton was determined to be unviable as a stopping point along the new western line, which would run from Salisbury to Morganton. The cost for bringing the line into town would be more than $176,000 ($5 million in today's market) and be an impractical expenditure. At this point, Newton's residents, having been one of the strongest supporters of the new western railroad, used their political and personal clout to force a compromise. A branch line, running from Hickory Tavern 9 miles back into town would facilitate Western Railroad with an eventual connection with Newton and then north to Morganton. It was Newton's efforts to force a compromise that would help establish the town of Conover, settling at the crossroads of this newly placed "Y" junction.

Downtown Newton circa 1890 - this is currently the oldest known picture of Downtown Newton.

During this time, local church leaders proposed and developed Catawba College, first housed at the old Grace Reformed Church, "White Church", and beginning as an academy for young men. The first College facility was erected in 1856 and built just south of downtown Newton at the end of College Avenue. The college would thrive in Newton growing from its single-room at Grace Reformed Church to a modest campus with both female and male dormitories, two instructional halls, an auditorium, a cafeteria, a 2,000 volume library and science laboratory. Catawba College helped define life in Newton for the last half of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th, bringing a morally focused, conservative sensibility to the town's politics and practices until its move to Salisbury in 1923.

Like much of the South, Newton suffered some of its hardest times during the 1860's as a Civil War loomed over the nation and took hold by 1861. Records of Newton's activities are sparse during this period, and only a handful of accounts place several dozen Newtonians with the Confederate army or describe the impact on the area. The town weathered the conflict and began again to rebuild its momentum towards a new decade of progress and prosperity.

By the late 1890s, more than a dozen stores surrounded the courthouse square, and new investors began building factories and mills within the city limits. The town's first organized real estate venture supported the influx of workers to the area. It's during this time that Newton established a solid industrial foundation, commercial consolidation and its place as the center point of Catawba County politics. Newton's population during the last half of the 19th century almost doubled in size every ten

years; starting with 200 residents in 1860, 500 residents in 1880 and approximately 1,500 residents by 1900.

One of Newton's most honored traditions began in the summer of 1889, the first "official" Soldier's Reunion. Local veterans of the Civil War had been meeting for several years prior at the Hickory Fair, marching in local parades and gathering during the summer months on the lawn of the Catawba County Courthouse for picnics and reunions, but a statewide push by a rapidly growing veterans association in 1889 helped establish an official event in Newton. What would become an annual event, taking place the third week in August each year, is now the oldest continually running soldier's reunion in the United States. To this day, people come from all across Catawba County to march in the parade, hear guest speakers and music, enjoy food and shopping in tents and shops around the courthouse square and socialize with their neighbors. The town hits its zenith during this week, alive with activity both day and night.

The twentieth century brought with it rapid change: Industrialization, the Great Depression, two major wars and two major police actions, Civil Rights and desegregation, economic highs and lows, yet Newton faced each success with modesty and each challenge with a "can do" spirit. Newton was becoming a town of two identities, one a thriving business and growing industrial community and the other a charming and traditional southern town.

Soldier's Reunion Parade - circa 1920s

By 1916, Newtonians had settled into the business of living and prospering from a period of economic growth, spurred by industrialization and an influx of manufacturing and workers to the region. But the signs of war could once again be seen in the air, only this time it was overseas and not in their midst. Newton wrestled with the issue of US involvement, and the majority of Newton residents even voted to reelect Woodrow Wilson, who had promised to keep America out the war, but by late 1916, US involvement seemed certain. In this same year, Catawba County experienced its first of two major floods. The flood of 1916 effectively cut Catawba County off from the rest of the state leaving only the Smyre trestle south of Newton passable. It was weeks before ferries began to bring supplies and mail, across the Catawba River, and roads and electricity were restored around town. Several Newton residents lost their homes to flooding or roof damage caused by torrential rain, the Observer News Enterprise's building flooded, and days after the rain subsided another storm brought lightning, which struck the Corpening Livery Stables. Once the flood waters receded, Newton was quickly back to business and Newton's industrial spirit could be seen by the newly introduced automobiles that had become a frequent sight, skirting around town. The Great War would become America's focus by 1917 and shift Newton's attention and purpose for the next few years.

The Great War brought with it economic challenges and perceived mistrust regarding Newton and Catawba County's large German heritage. Many Catawbans identified with their German ancestry and many even openly supported the German cause in the early days of the war, but once Newton started

sending young men to fight, its residents began trumpeting both local and national patriotism. During this time, Newton saw shortages of heating coal, wood and wheat. The County began enlisting men at the courthouse for the newly issued draft, and Newton battled other Catawba County towns for bragging rights over war bonds and patriotic endeavors. Newton was also fortunate at this time to suffer few losses to the Spanish flu that swept through Western North Carolina in 1918. In 1919, the Great War ended, and Newton returned to progress and the promise of a future without concerns of war.

The 1920's brought another 1,200 residents to Newton (most with automobiles), the population was now double that of 20 years prior (3,000+ residents), making way for Newton's first gas station (City Service Station), and the women's suffrage movement allowed Newton's white women to vote in their first town election. Newton also wrestled with Prohibition and bootlegging throughout the 1920's, as the roads through Newton fed the supplies to Gastonia and Gaffney, SC. The hardest fought battle would come regarding the roads themselves, as the state set out to construct a road connecting the county seats from Shelby to the Wilmington. Newton's location, much like its earlier confrontation with the railroads, would be a detriment. After three separate court battles and a final hearing by the State Supreme Court, Newton won a challenge that would have seen the new Highway 10 bypass the town altogether. The new Highway 10 would eventually run through Newton out to Catawba just two blocks south of the Courthouse doors.

Ohio State Senator Robert A. Taft delivering a stump speech on the 1924 Courthouse steps, during his 1940 Presidential election campaign against Franklin D. Roosevelt.
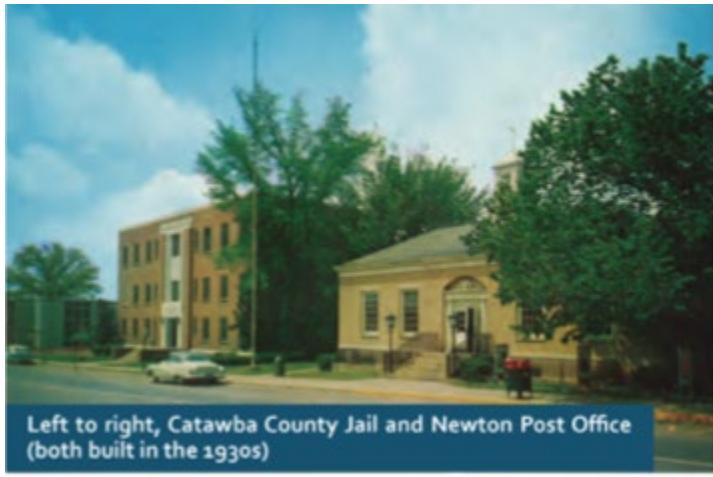
Having served for seven decades as a testament to Catawba County's government and a focal point of Newton's development, the 1847 Greek Revival Courthouse began to show the wear of time. By 1921, it was evident that Courthouse no longer supported the demands of a growing county and thus a newer larger structure was needed. A bond referendum led by the leaders of Newton and Hickory commissioned the development of a Neoclassical structure that could house all of the County's business. Now the County Court, commission, clerk, register of deeds, sheriff and school superintendent could be found in one central location.

Initially, Newton was unscathed by the Stock Market crash of 1929. Businesses were still investing in the area, the two banks recorded the highest assets ever in that year, local celebrations and events went on as usual, and only one family in the area found hardship that year with the loss of work and their home. By early 1930 things would rapidly change starting first with the loss of the local high school to a fire with limited insurance to replace the structure and the closing of several of the local textile mills, some operating only sporadically and even then with a skeleton crew. Although there was no official census of out-of-work residents, it was estimated at the time that more than 30% of Newton's workforce was unemployed. Newtonians, as did all of Catawba County, began bartering for goods and services. Trade-in-kind became a way of life during this period. Newton residents were settling their bills with grain, eggs, clothing, physical labor or any civilized means at their disposal, but some looked to unlawful activities to make ends meet, as burglaries and armed robberies became an issue. The Shuford National

Bank opened its basement level to the newly formed Newton Relief Unit, which gathered clothing, food and supplies to be distributed to those in need.

The "New Deal," ushered in by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, had immediate impacts in Newton and Catawba County. Work slowly picked up at the local mills and the numerous young men who were still unemployed joined the local Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) Camps which were responsible for replanting local forests and completing or repairing local and regional infrastructure. The Newton Camp was formed in 1937. In 1933, Newton and Conover, under pressure from the State, would combine school systems using Federal Emergency Relief Funds to construct a high school that could accommodate both populations. New regulations for industry through the National Industrial Recovery Act (at the time, known as the NRA) would also impact the local workforce, as local textile workers saw an increase in pay and hours and businesses around the square coordinated their hours of operation to meet new federal standards. By the late 1930's, Newton along with the majority of Catawba County was seeing real results and slow but steady economic improvement.

Left to right, Catawba County Jail and Newton Post Office (both built in the 1930s)

Newton had stabilized by 1940, as businesses and the town fought their way out of a decade or economic turmoil. In many ways, Newton had become a classic Southern town with a busy central square with businesses both new and old housed in buildings that were old yet familiar to the community. Its small town atmosphere enveloped a bustling political and governmental center for the County, and residents were beginning to enjoy better times. 1940 also brought the second major flood to the region and necessitated the cancellation of that year's Soldier's Reunion Parade due to the inaccessibility of the town to many of Catawba County's residents.

On the international scene, Newtonians could see that yet again war seemed inevitable. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the US's entrance into World War II, Newtonians leaped into action. Newton residents along with their neighboring cities, men both white and black, showed up to the Catawba County Courthouse to register for the draft or enlist with local outfits. As material resources and goods necessary for the war effort became more and more scarce, Newton, as did the whole of the country, began rationing, recycling and unifying under the American cause. Newton also put forth a tremendous effort in raising bonds for the war, and was recognized for their efforts by the naming of B-25 bomber, the "Spirit of Newton" and a B-29 "Superfortress" named the "City of Newton" out of respect for its pilot, a Newton resident. By 1944, more than 5,000 Catawba County residents were serving or had served in a branch of the armed services.

The impact of the number of men and women serving would no more be acutely felt than the outbreak of Polio in the region in late 1944. Catawba County was only surpassed by Chicago regarding the swiftness and impact of the Polio outbreak. So many cases were reported in the County by summer's end, the local medical community insisted the immediate need for a center to treat patients. Thus, the

"Miracle of Hickory" came to be, as county residents helped construct a framed-tent hospital, resting near the shores of the Catawba River, and built in less than 3 days. Newton felt the full impact of the outbreak and had the misfortune of being the first city in Catawba County to report an adult to die of the disease.

In the decades following World War II, Newton settled into a period of economic growth and prosperity, largely resulting from America's thrust into the forefront of international politics, diplomacy and military power. Returning veterans turned their focus to family and business and like the rest of the country, Newton welcomed a generation of "baby boomers" and a period of economic growth that would see the next generation building bigger and better housing, infrastructure, new businesses, and take advantage of a growing

A Car accident draws onlookers at the intersection of South College and A Street, circa 1949.

entertainment industry and national past-times. Downtown Newton would expand in the 1950s, seeing the addition of several new businesses, and many of the old facades would be replaced with "modern" storefronts. Citizens went from a single car per household to multiple cars; home construction increased dramatically and subdivisions and community planning became a part of the American vernacular. Newton would hire its first Town Manager in 1950, and end annual mayoral elections, extending the term to two years and aldermen to every four. Television, once a novelty for the rich, could now be found in almost every house, and disposable income would become a household word. Many Newtonians would refer to the decades after WWII as the best of times, the pinnacle of the "American Dream." Several of Newton's men left again for war, this time called a police action, in Korea, the impacts of which were barely felt in the community, but felt acutely by those whose sons had gone overseas to serve.

A group of unidentified students pose for a picture in front of Central High School, circa 1960s.

The 1960's Newton focused on growing National movements including Civil Rights and desegregation of schools and the possibility of a war in Vietnam. Newton, as did much of North Carolina, moved to improve the lives of Blacks at their local institutions but did little towards fully integrating those students into their "white" institutions. Another major occurrence was the development of Interstate 40 which forced some County residents to sell their homes and relocate, but the economic impact paid dividends throughout the region, as faster thoroughfares to trading partners opened, and slow, winding drives made way for faster, straighter roads.

The late 1960s and early 1970s brought political, economic and civil turmoil. The Civil Rights movement gained more and more steam as the decade rolled on and by 1970 the local school systems moved to fully integrate black and white students. Some local tensions and fighting in the Hickory area put Newton on alert, but for the most part integration, at least for Newton, happened without incident.

The 1970s saw the "baby boomer" generation come to the forefront as community leaders. Newton's prosperity grew, and bond referendums offered support to various industrial facilities, furniture manufacturing, an expansion of sewer and water services, and Newton hit an operating budget of 1 million dollars, a milestone for the city. The budget began to double each year for several years after, as the City's infrastructure and business opportunities spurred new growth. Capital improvements included new parking facilities downtown and in cooperation with the County, an extension of water lines paid with federal funds to reduce pollution. By 1973, global demands, rising energy costs and inflation would force many local businesses to sell to outside parties or shut their doors. As the economy turned from recession after 1975, the City of Newton focused on constructing its first City Hall, elected its first female alderman (Mary Bess Lawing), and in the face of rising energy costs, joined with several local communities to purchase a power plant (Electricities).

Catawba County Justice Center

1980 brought a new Justice Center located on Northwest Boulevard and the construction of the area's second mall (Valley Hills Mall). While the Justice Center brought more and more county business to Newton, the mall caused the relocation of many stores in the area, including the closing of Belk's on the Courthouse Square. The 80s marked a major turning point in the County's cultural and economic focus, as attention turned from the center of the county towards Hickory. Newton in response, began a more aggressive annexation strategy as it tried to break free of a rapidly closing window of available land and resources. Courthouse Square, once thriving with business and commerce saw close to a third of its storefronts empty and forced the City to look towards downtown revitalization efforts through a national push of the "Main Street" program.

As Newton struggled with its place as the County seat but no longer the economic focus, several bright spots opened around the square. In 1992, the Catawba County Historical Association moved into the old 1924 Courthouse, having been used as county offices until 1991, and established a museum dedicated to the history of Catawba County. The auditorium at the old high school was renovated and became a performing arts center, and the Green Room Community Theater moved in bringing a highly praised cultural offering to town.

Competition not from within but outside America's borders would be Newton's greatest challenge of the 1990s and into the early 2000s as many local industries moved to foreign soil. The "Global Market" had arrived with the introduction of the Internet and the ability of the average person to access information, goods and services from the convenience of their home. Newton businesses would have to embrace a new kind of commerce.

Post-2000, Newton faced two separate economic downturns and the loss of the majority of its textile and manufacturing base. Many of the shops and businesses closed their doors around the town square, and like the majority of the country struggled with an aging population and infrastructure. As the national economy shows signs of improvement, Newton appears to be capitalizing on the momentum as the city's focus turns to the possibilities of renewed Downtown revitalization, business development, streetscapes and attracting a new generation of young professionals to the area.

Today the Old 1924 Courthouse on center square is still the home of the Catawba County Historical Association and a Museum dedicated to the history of Catawba County. New businesses have moved into those once vacant spots around the downtown square, and downtown loft apartments have offered living space and a built-in customer base. Several industrial areas have seen facelifts or an influx of new immigrant communities bringing their cultural influences and hard working mentality. Meanwhile, Newton seems poised to do as it has done before, face any challenge head-on and not just persevere but progress.

Newton Data Analysis
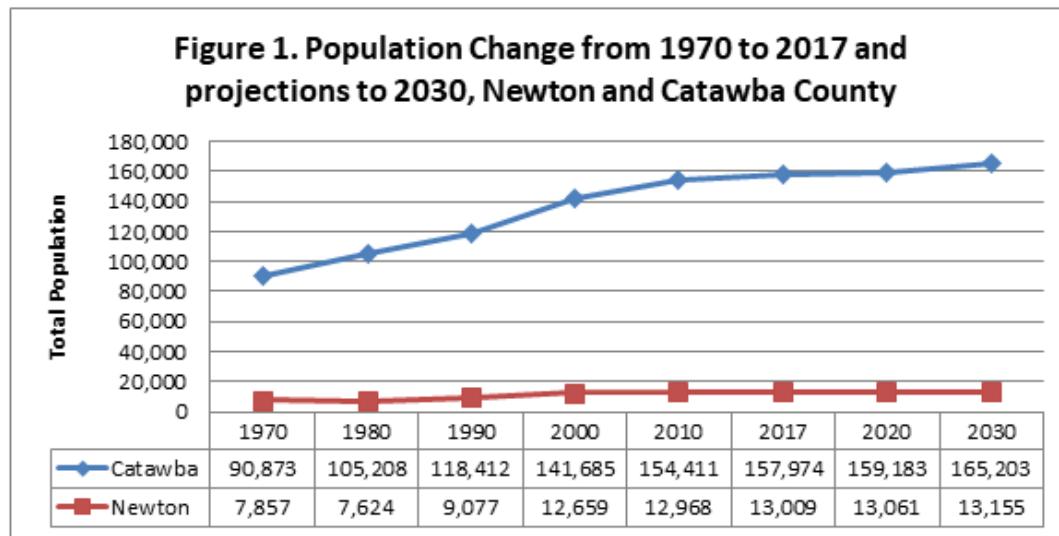
This discussion was included because this data analysis will not provide an exact representation of conditions in Newton, but rather the best estimates and projections of current and future conditions.

Measures of Population, Housing, Economics and Social Health

This section of the Plan reveals information about how the population, housing and economics of Newton compared to Catawba County and North Carolina. The data also examines past and present trends for Newton. The analysis can be used to predict future conditions in the city and to develop goals and objectives of the Plan.

Population Trends

Between 1970 and 2000, Newton's population increased 61.1% from 7,857 to 12,659 (Figure 1). This population growth was due to a combination of annexations as well as population growth within Newton city limits. Between 1970 and 2000, Catawba County's population grew 55.9% from 90,873 to 141,686. The population growth was driven by in-migration (more people moving into the County than out of the County) due to employment increases as well as Catawba County's birth rate exceeding the County death rate. Between 2000 and 2010, Newton's population grew only 2.4% to 12,968 as the rate of annexations slowed considerably and fewer housing units inside Newton city limits. Catawba County grew by 8.9% to 154,411 from 2000 to 2010. From 2010 to 2017 population growth in both Newton and Catawba slowed significantly due to the lasting effects of the 2008 economic downturn. The economic downturn led to a large reduction in in-migration. From 2010 to 2017 Newton grew slightly by .5% and Catawba County only grew by 2.3%.

Figure 1. Population Change from 1970 to 2017 and projections to 2030, Newton and Catawba County

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	2020	2030
Catawba	90,873	105,208	118,412	141,685	154,411	157,974	159,183	165,203
Newton	7,857	7,624	9,077	12,659	12,968	13,009	13,061	13,155
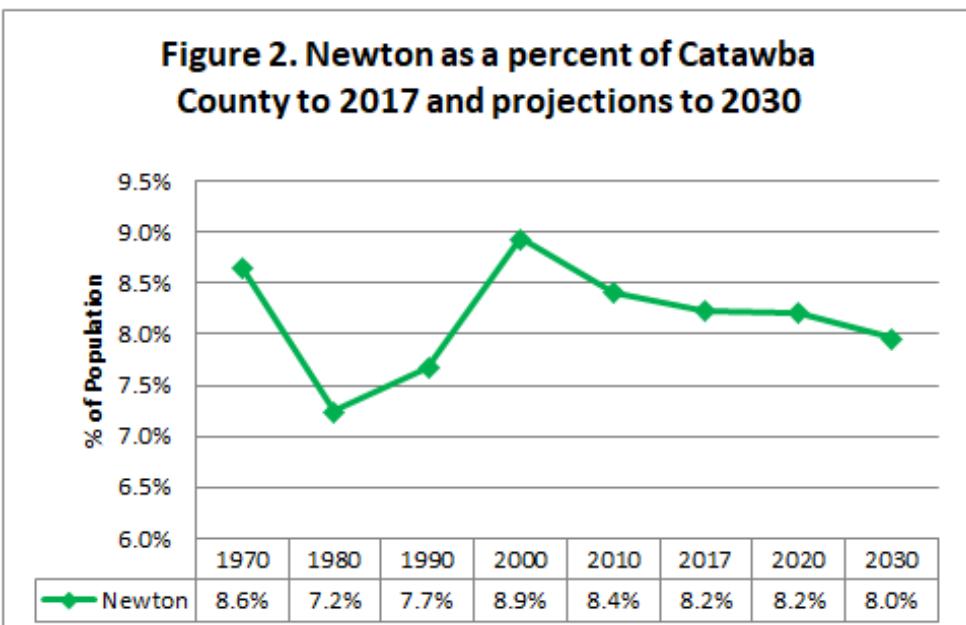
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, WPCOG Data Center 2017

The North Carolina Office of State Planning projects a steady 3% growth rate for Catawba County until 2030. All of this projected growth will be a result of in-migration. The State predicts an in-migration of just over 7,000 persons to Catawba County by 2030. During the same period of time North Carolina

estimates that the death rate will actually slightly exceed the birth rate in Catawba County, meaning no natural population growth through 2030.

While the 2030 growth projection for Catawba County has increased by about 6,000 persons since the last strategic growth plan in 2015, the County's projected growth rate is still far behind historical averages. Ultimately, how much population Catawba County and Newton gain over the next twenty years will depend on future job growth. Rapid job growth will lead to population increases while employment decreases will cause the County's and Newton's population to decline.
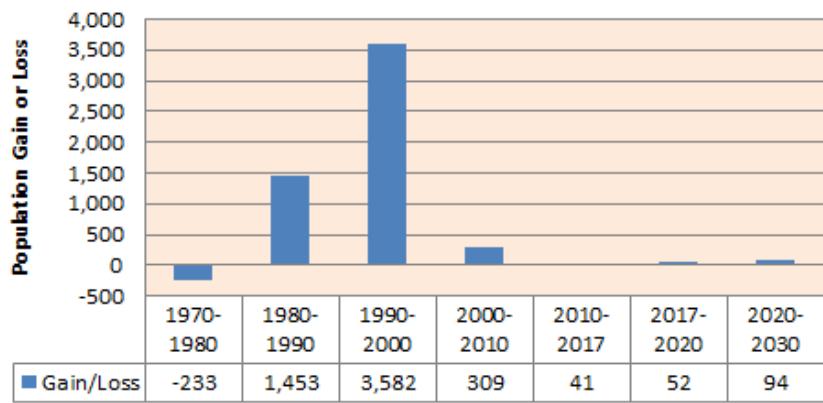
In 1970, Newton's population represented 8.6% of Catawba County's population. By 1980, Newton's proportion fell to 7.2%, meaning that the County was growing at a faster pace than Newton. In 2000, Newton rebounded to having 8.9% of Catawba County's population. In 2010, Newton's population equaled 8.4% of the County's population. By 2017, Newton comprised 8.2% of Catawba County's population, down slightly from 2010. Newton's population, as a percentage of Catawba County's population is projected to continue a slight decline to 8% by 2030, because Catawba County's population growth rate is projected to be several percentage points higher that Newton's population growth rate. Since the 2030 population number seen in Figure 2 is only a projection, how quickly Newton grows over the next two decades will depend on future annexations and economic conditions.

Figure 2. Newton as a percent of Catawba County to 2017 and projections to 2030

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	2020	2030
Newton	8.6%	7.2%	7.7%	8.9%	8.4%	8.2%	8.2%	8.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, WPCOG Data Center 2017
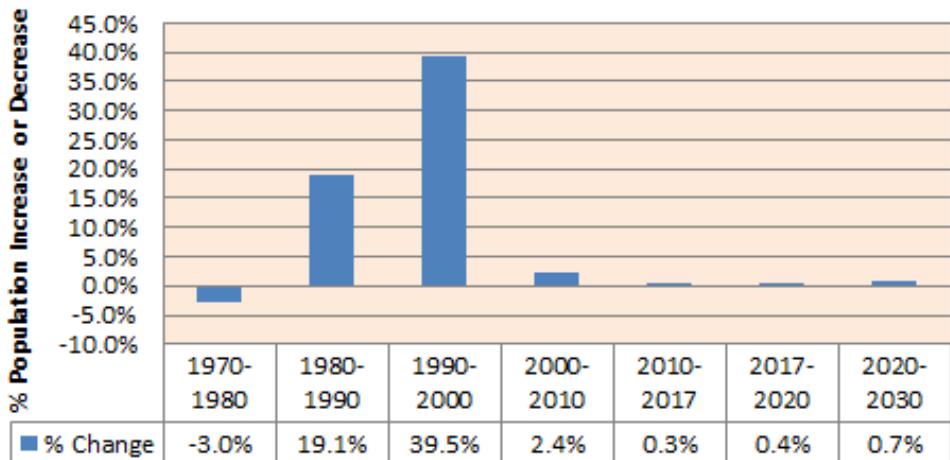
Newton's population declined by 233 persons between 1970 and 1980 (Figure 3). The City gained 1,453 (19.1%) persons in the 1980s and grew 39.5% (3,582 persons) during the 1990's due to job growth and annexations (Figures 3 & 4). Little population growth has occurred since 2000. Without significant job growth or annexation, less than 1% growth is projected through 2030.

Figure 3. Gain or Loss of Population from 1970 to 2017, with Projections to 2030

	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2017	2017-2020	2020-2030
Gain/Loss	-233	1,453	3,582	309	41	52	94

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, WPCOG Data Center 2017
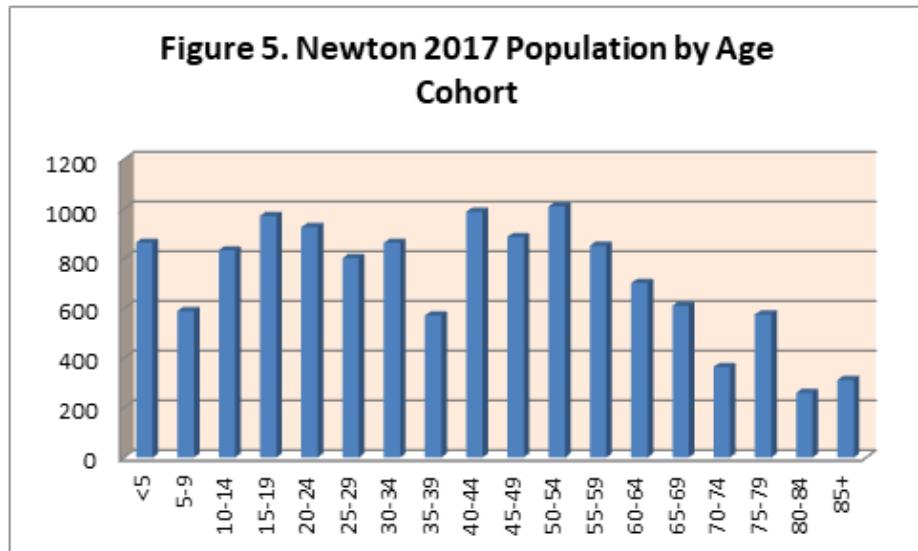
Figure 4. Percent Change in Population, City of Newton, 1970 to 2017, with Projections to 2030

	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2017	2017-2020	2020-2030
% Change	-3.0%	19.1%	39.5%	2.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NC Office of Management and Budget, WPCOG Data Center 2017

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan
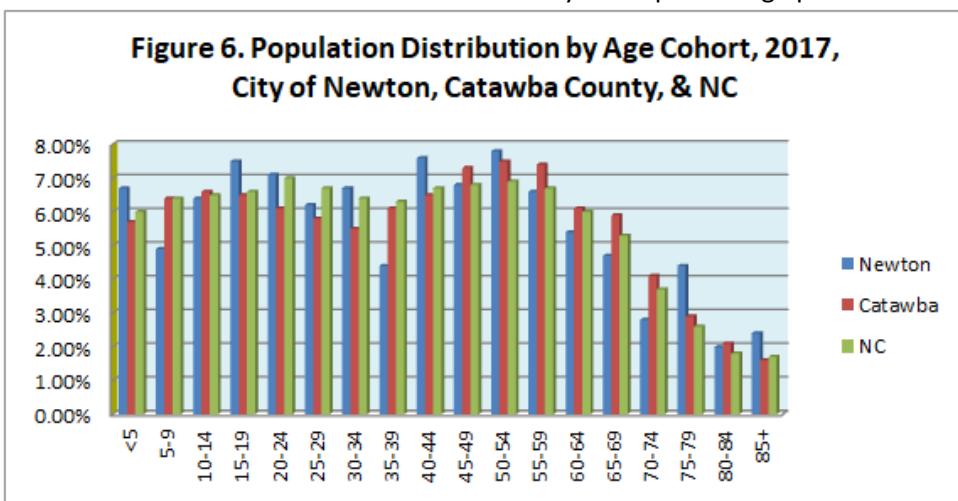
Age Group Trends

Newton's 2017 population by 5-year age cohorts is displayed in Figure 5. The Largest 5-year age cohort in Newton in 2017 was the 50-54 age cohort (1011 persons). The results show the influence of families with young children in Newton. The strongest age cohorts were 40-44, 45-49, 50-54 followed by those under 5, 10-14, 15-19 and 20-24. As of 2017, Newton also had a large number of persons (575) from 75-79.
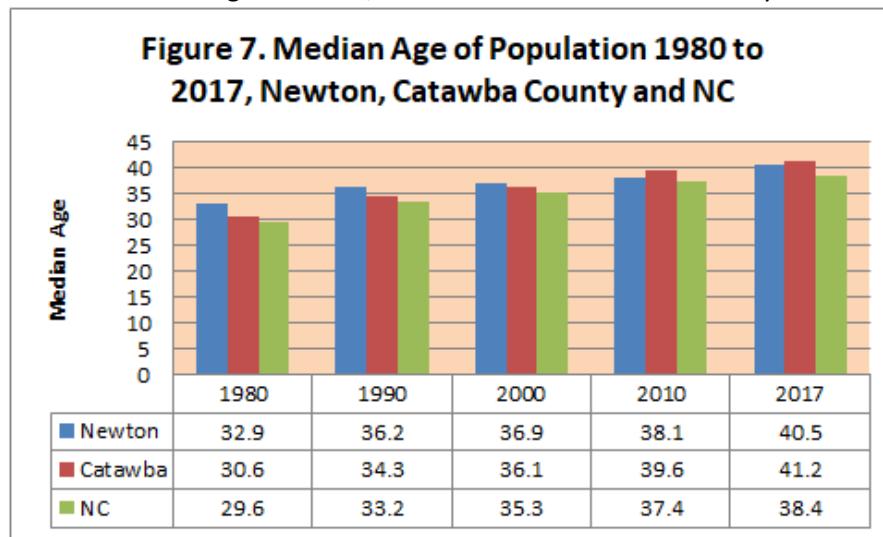
Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Data from the American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year) may be used to make comparisons of age distribution between Newton, Catawba County, and the State (Figure 6). Results reveal that Newton has a great proportion of persons under 5, 15-19, 40-44, 50-54, 75-79, and over 85 than Catawba County or North Carolina. Conversely, Newton has a lower proportion of persons 5-9, 25-29, 35-39, 55-59 and 60-69 than Catawba County or North Carolina. When combined the 25-35 (young working family) demographic in Newton trials the state of North Carolina by three percentage points.

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

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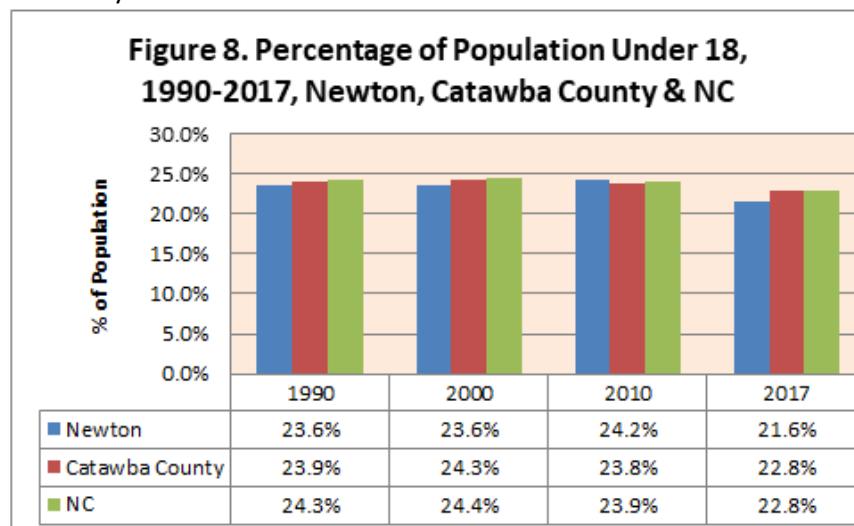
Data seen in Figure 7 shows how the median age of the City, the County and North Carolina has been increasing since the 1980s as the baby boomer generation grows older. The median age for Newton has increased from 36.2 in 1990 to 40.5 in 2017. The median age in Catawba County has grown by 6.9 years since 1990. In 2017 the Median age was 38.4, lower than both Catawba County and Newton.

Figure 7. Median Age of Population 1980 to 2017, Newton, Catawba County and NC

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017
Newton	32.9	36.2	36.9	38.1	40.5
Catawba	30.6	34.3	36.1	39.6	41.2
NC	29.6	33.2	35.3	37.4	38.4

Source: 1980-2010 Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Figures 8, 9, 10 and 11 show age group patterns since 1990 for Newton, Catawba County and North Carolina. From 1990 to 2017 the proportion of Newton's population under 18 fell from 23.6% to 21.6%. Since 2010 the percentage of Newton's population under 18 has dropped 2.6%. This decrease appears to be in line with County and State trends which each decreased at least a percentage point in the proportion of their population that is under 18. The overall decrease, among the County, the City and North Carolina, is likely due to the decreasing birth rate. However, Newton's 2.6% decline was more than double the decline of the State or Catawba County which indicates that the City has struggled to attract families to the City.
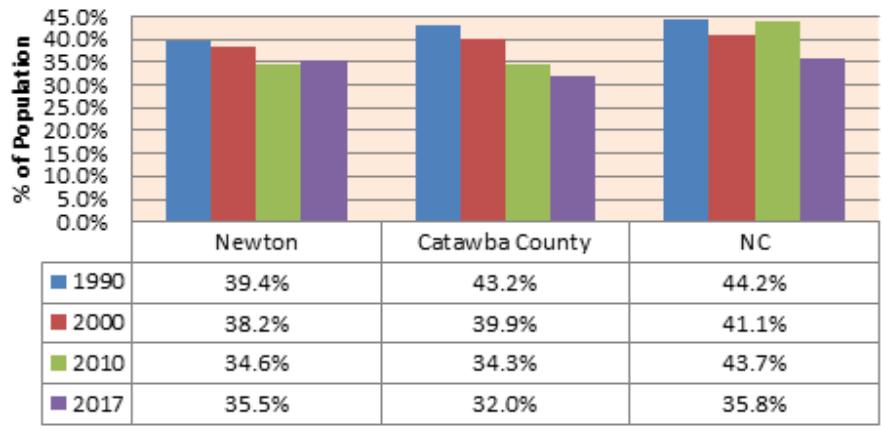
Figure 8. Percentage of Population Under 18, 1990-2017, Newton, Catawba County & NC

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Newton	23.6%	23.6%	24.2%	21.6%
Catawba County	23.9%	24.3%	23.8%	22.8%
NC	24.3%	24.4%	23.9%	22.8%

Source: 1980-2010 Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Data in Figure 9 reveals that after decreasing steadily from the 1990s to 2010, the proportion of the population between 18 and 44 has increased slightly (.9%) from 2010-2017. This increase is likely due to

the comparatively large number of 18-24 year old's in Newton. However, this group is difficult to retain as metropolitan areas such as Charlotte and Raleigh tend to attract large numbers of young people.
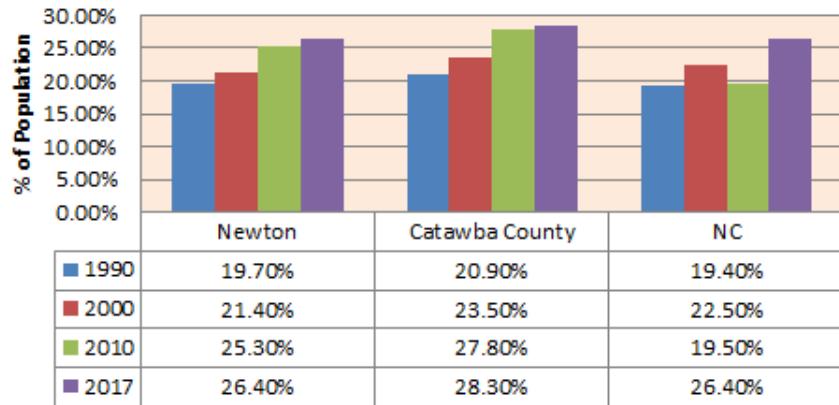
Figure 9. Percent of Population 18-44, 1990-2017, Newton Catawba County, & NC

	Newton	Catawba County	NC
■ 1990	39.4%	43.2%	44.2%
■ 2000	38.2%	39.9%	41.1%
■ 2010	34.6%	34.3%	43.7%
■ 2017	35.5%	32.0%	35.8%

Source: 1980-2010 Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Newton is equal to the state in the proportion of persons from 45-64. The City of Newton, the County and the State have all increased by at least 7% in the proportion of persons 45-64.
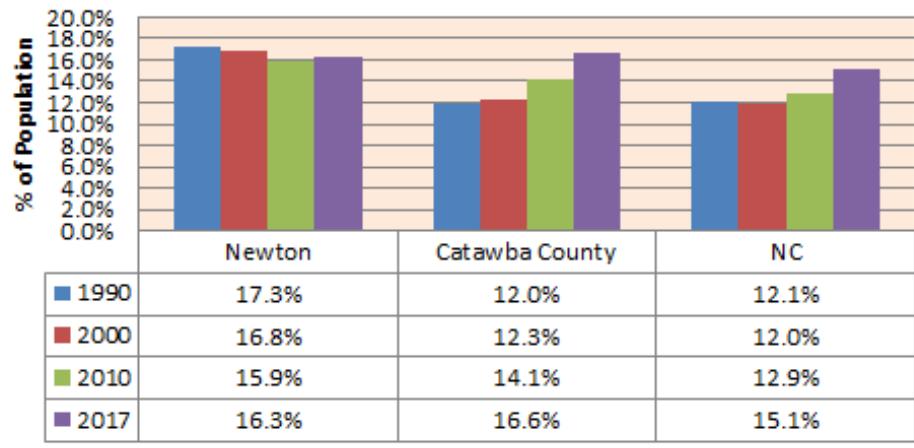
Figure 10. Percent of Population 45-64, 1990-2017, Newton, Catwaba County, & NC

	Newton	Catawba County	NC
■ 1990	19.70%	20.90%	19.40%
■ 2000	21.40%	23.50%	22.50%
■ 2010	25.30%	27.80%	19.50%
■ 2017	26.40%	28.30%	26.40%

Source: 1980-2010 Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Since 2017, Newton, Catawba County and the State all have a higher percentage of persons age 65 and over in 2010. This upward trend in the percentage of citizens over the age of 65 will likely continue to increase as more baby boomers reach 65 and life expectancy increases.
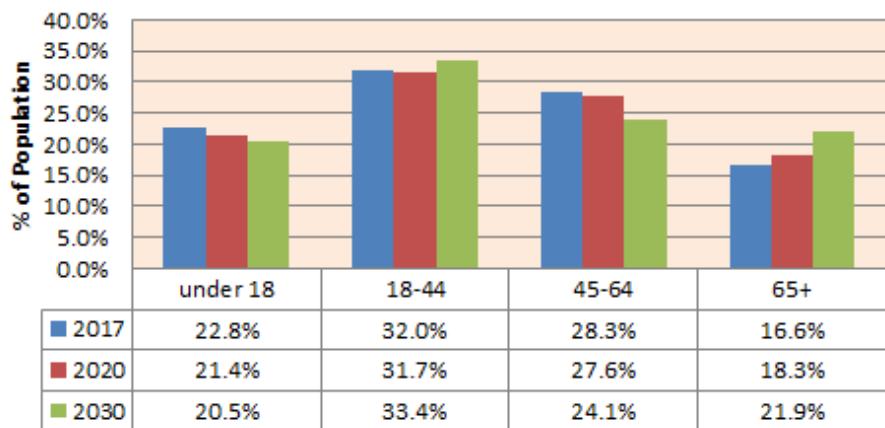
Figure 11. Percent of Population Over 65, 1990-2017, Newton, Catawba County, & NC

	Newton	Catawba County	NC
1990	17.3%	12.0%	12.1%
2000	16.8%	12.3%	12.0%
2010	15.9%	14.1%	12.9%
2017	16.3%	16.6%	15.1%
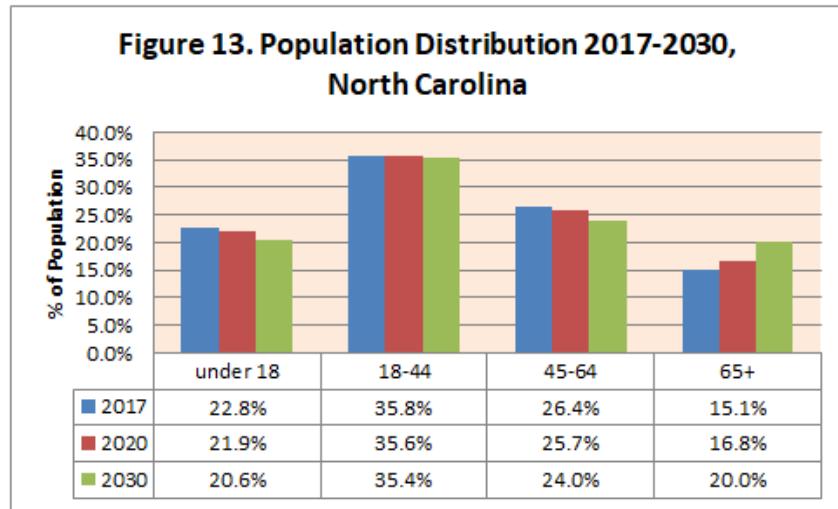
Source: US Census 1990-2010, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Although age group projections for Newton are not available, an analysis of age group projections for Catawba County and North Carolina reveal probable age group trends for Newton. Projections seen in figures 12 and 13 indicate that the proportion of population age 65 and over will continue to increase over the next 20 years as baby boomers grow older. The proportion of the population under 18, meanwhile, is expected to fall over the next 20 years as birth rates continue to decline. The percentage of population between 18 and 44 is expected to increase in Catawba County, but decrease slightly at the State level. This 18 to 44 category is primarily composed of the millennial generation, who together with baby boomers will comprise more than 50% of the County's population by 2030. For the 45-64 age group, a lower proportion of population is anticipated for Catawba County and North Carolina.

Figure 12. Population Distribution by Age Cohort 2017-2030, Catawba County
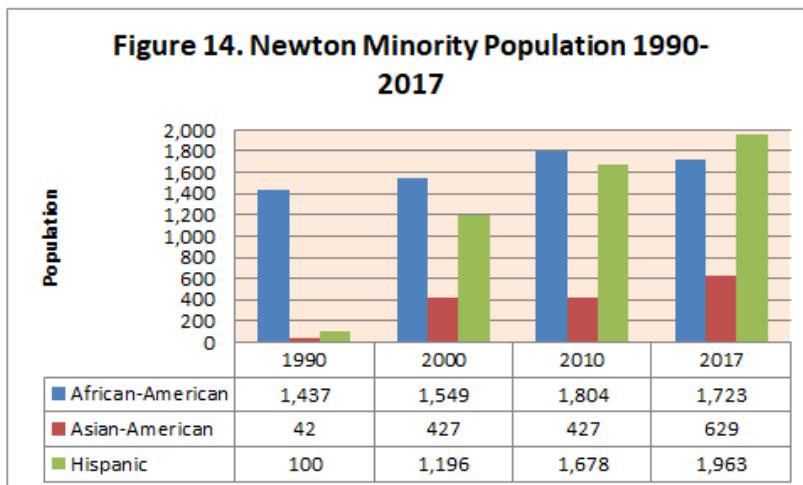
	under 18	18-44	45-64	65+
2017	22.8%	32.0%	28.3%	16.6%
2020	21.4%	31.7%	27.6%	18.3%
2030	20.5%	33.4%	24.1%	21.9%

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2017

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Figure 13. Population Distribution 2017-2030, North Carolina

	under 18	18-44	45-64	65+
2017	22.8%	35.8%	26.4%	15.1%
2020	21.9%	35.6%	25.7%	16.8%
2030	20.6%	35.4%	24.0%	20.0%

Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2017

Population by Age and Ethnicity
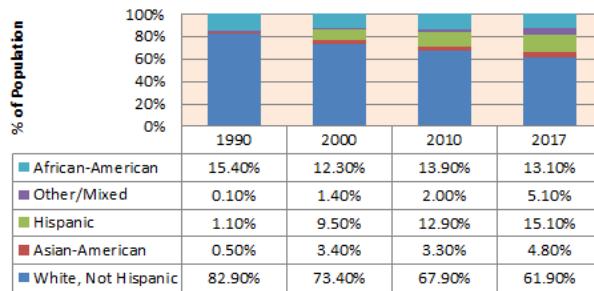
Figure 14 shows population trends for Newton's three largest minority groups (African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics) from 1990 to 2017. As of the 2010 Census, African-Americans were the largest minority group in Newton. However, the African-American population decreased by 81 people from 2010 to 2017, while the Hispanic population grew by 285 persons. In 2017, Hispanics are the largest minority group. The Hispanic population has increased exponentially since 1990, growing by over 1800 persons.

Figure 14. Newton Minority Population 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
African-American	1,437	1,549	1,804	1,723
Asian-American	42	427	427	629
Hispanic	100	1,196	1,678	1,963
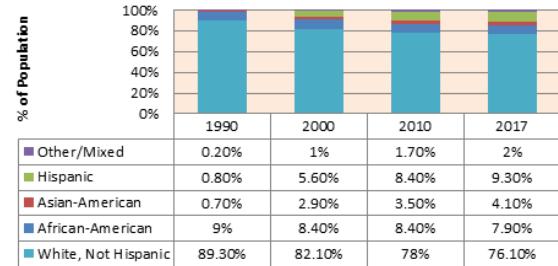
Source: 1990-2010 Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

In 2017, African Americans equaled 13.1% of Newton's population compared to 7.9% of Catawba County's population and 21.2% in North Carolina (Figure 15, 16, 17 and 18). African-Americans comprised a lower percentage of Newton's population, because of a small decrease in the African-American population and an increase in Newton's overall population. Overall the African-American population has increased 286 persons since 1990.

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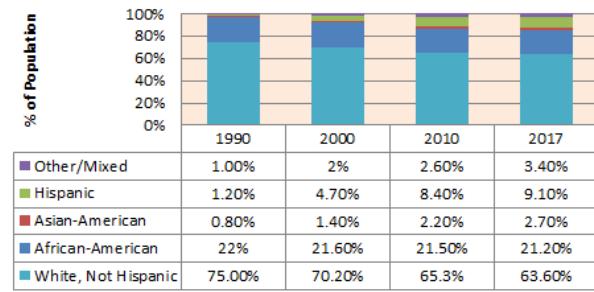
Figure 15. Ethnic/Racial Composition of Newton's Population, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
African-American	15.40%	12.30%	13.90%	13.10%
Other/Mixed	0.10%	1.40%	2.00%	5.10%
Hispanic	1.10%	9.50%	12.90%	15.10%
Asian-American	0.50%	3.40%	3.30%	4.80%
White, Not Hispanic	82.90%	73.40%	67.90%	61.90%
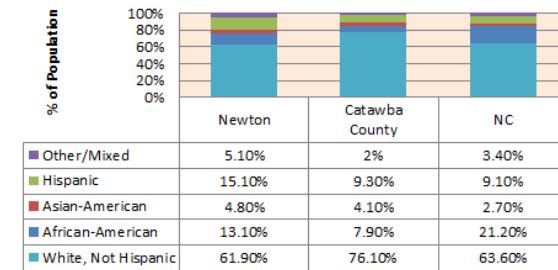
Figure 16. Ethnic/Racial Composition of Catawba County, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Other/Mixed	0.20%	1%	1.70%	2%
Hispanic	0.80%	5.60%	8.40%	9.30%
Asian-American	0.70%	2.90%	3.50%	4.10%
African-American	9%	8.40%	8.40%	7.90%
White, Not Hispanic	89.30%	82.10%	78%	76.10%

Figure 17. Ethnic/Racial Composition of North Carolina, 1990-2017

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Other/Mixed	1.00%	2%	2.60%	3.40%
Hispanic	1.20%	4.70%	8.40%	9.10%
Asian-American	0.80%	1.40%	2.20%	2.70%
African-American	22%	21.60%	21.50%	21.20%
White, Not Hispanic	75.00%	70.20%	65.3%	63.60%

Figure 18. 2017 Ethnic/Racial Composition of Newton, Catawba County, & NC

	Newton	Catawba County	NC
Other/Mixed	5.10%	2%	3.40%
Hispanic	15.10%	9.30%	9.10%
Asian-American	4.80%	4.10%	2.70%
African-American	13.10%	7.90%	21.20%
White, Not Hispanic	61.90%	76.10%	63.60%

Source: The American Community Survey 2013-2017 (5-year), US Census Bureau

Over the past two decades Hispanics have been the fastest growing minority group in Newton, Catawba County, and North Carolina. The 2020 Census will likely confirm the 2013-2017 ACS estimate that Hispanics are the largest minority group in Newton.
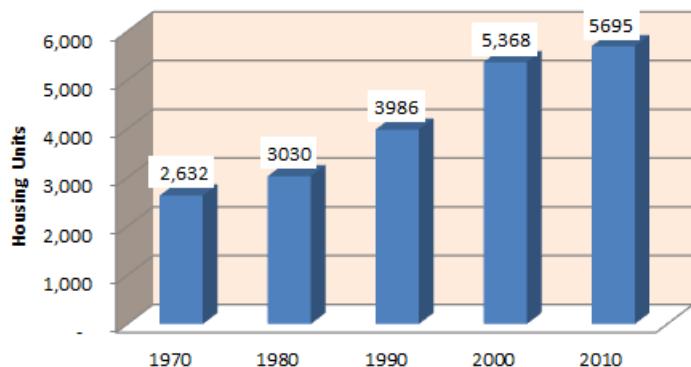
Newton's Asian-American population, which is mostly Hmong, increased from 42 in 1990 to 427 in 2010 as immigrants moved into the City. Since 2000, as immigration out of Southeast Asia has been restricted, no Asian-American population growth occurred from 2000 to 2010. The Asian-American population may have increased, but the over 200 person increase by the ACS is likely a high estimate. Other estimates used by Creative Consulting, who produced the economic development portion of this strategic growth plan, at 4.2% in 2017, which would only be a .1% increase since 2017.

Housing Trends

Between 1970 and 2010, the number of housing units in Newton grew from 2,632 to 5,695 (Figure 19). Most of Newton's housing growth during the last 40 years occurred during the 1980s and 1990s when 2,300 housing units were added. The number of new housing units grew via a combination of annexations and housing growth inside the City limits.
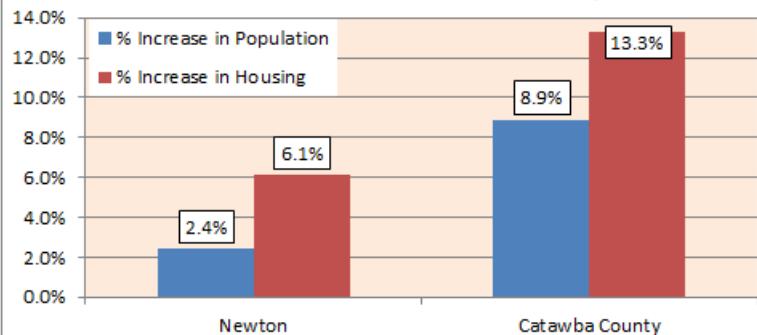
Between 2000 and 2010, only 327 housing units were gained inside the Newton City limits. The 6.1% housing growth from 2000 to 2010 was still nearly three times the rate of population growth (2.4%) (Figure 20). The data thus shows the number of vacant housing units has increased in recent years. For Catawba County the number of new houses between 2000 and 2010 increased by 13.3% while its population grew only 8.9%.

Figure 19. Newton Housing Units, 1970-2010

Year	Housing Units
1970	2,632
1980	3030
1990	3986
2000	5,368
2010	5695

Source: 1970-2010 Census, US Census Bureau
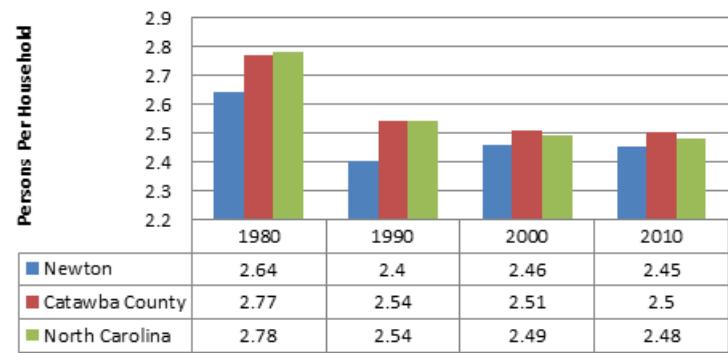
Figure 20. Percent Increase in Population Relative to Percent Increase in Housing, 2000 to 2010, Newton and Catawba County

	% Increase in Population	% Increase in Housing
Newton	2.4%	6.1%
Catawba County	8.9%	13.3%

Source: Census 2000-2010, US Census Bureau

Changes in Newton's average household size have followed similar trends as those experienced in Catawba County and North Carolina over the past 30 years (Figure 21). From 1980 to 2010, average household size has decreased for the City of Newton, Catawba County, and the State as birth rates fall and more persons over 65 live alone. From 2000 to 2010, there was little net change in the average household size in Newton.
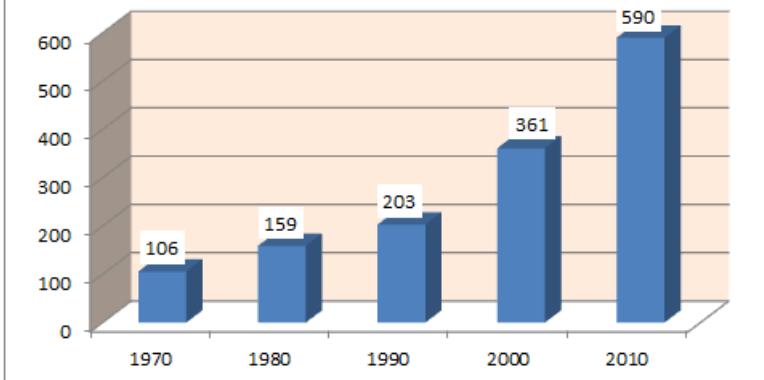
Figure 21. Average Household Size, 1980-2010, Newton, Catawba County and NC

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Newton	2.64	2.4	2.46	2.45
Catawba County	2.77	2.54	2.51	2.5
North Carolina	2.78	2.54	2.49	2.48

Source: 1980-2010 Census, 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

The number of vacant housing units in Newton has been increasing since 1970 (Figure 22). Between 2000 and 2010, the number of vacant housing units in Newton grew from 361 to 590. The data in Figure 22 matches well with the data in Figure 20, which showed the number of housing units rising much faster than the City's population.
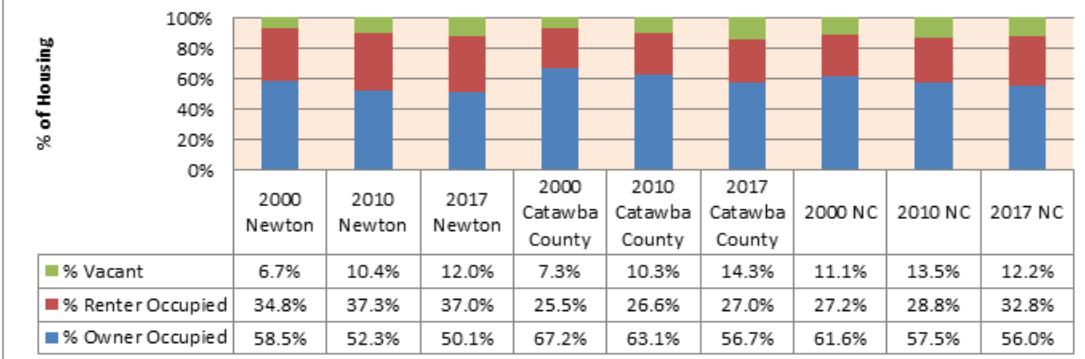
Figure 22. Newton Vacant Housing, 1970-2010

Year	Vacant Housing Units
1970	106
1980	159
1990	203
2000	361
2010	590

Source: 1970-2010 Census, US Census Bureau

Figure 23 compares the percentage of Newton homes that are vacant, renter-occupied, or owner-occupied with Catawba County and North Carolina. From 2000 to 2017, the percentage of vacant homes in Newton grew from 6.7% to 12%. In 2017, Newton had a slightly lower percentage of vacant homes than North Carolina (12.2%), and a lower percentage than Catawba County (14.3%).

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Figure 23. Percent of Housing Units by Tenure, 2000 to 2017, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	2000 Newton	2010 Newton	2017 Newton	2000 Catawba County	2010 Catawba County	2017 Catawba County	2000 NC	2010 NC	2017 NC
% Vacant	6.7%	10.4%	12.0%	7.3%	10.3%	14.3%	11.1%	13.5%	12.2%
% Renter Occupied	34.8%	37.3%	37.0%	25.5%	26.6%	27.0%	27.2%	28.8%	32.8%
% Owner Occupied	58.5%	52.3%	50.1%	67.2%	63.1%	56.7%	61.6%	57.5%	56.0%

Source: 2000 and 2010 Census, 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

From 1990 to 2010, the median value of owner-occupied housing units in Newton has more than doubled from $49,200 to $101,600 (Figure 24). That 106.5% increase in home values is more than the rate of inflation between 1990 and 2010 (78.2%). However, since 2010, the rate of inflation 13.5% has surpassed the increase in home prices (7.8%). Newton remains a very affordable housing alternative compared to other locations in Catawba County, Mecklenburg County, or the State. Mecklenburg County was included to evaluate the incentive of living in Newton, but working in Mecklenburg County which is especially relevant given the four lane expansion of NC 16. Once completed, NC 16 will provide direct 4-lane access Charlotte/Mecklenburg County from Newton. The median home value in Newton in 2017 was $21,000 less than Catawba County, $51,400 less than the North Carolina median, and $94,300 less than Mecklenburg County. It is important to point out that the age of Newton's housing stock tends to lower the median value of homes in the City.
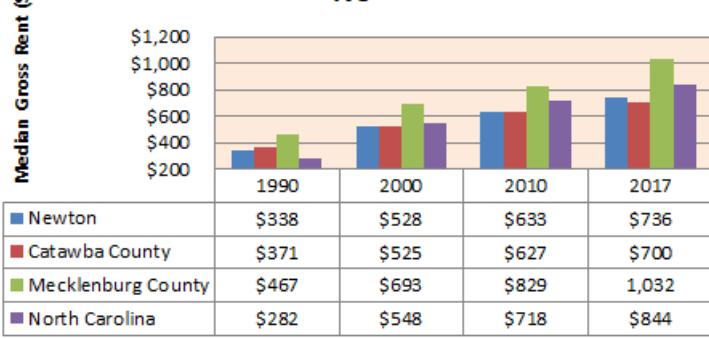
A closer look at renter-occupied housing costs reveals that median rents in Newton have risen from $338 in 1990 to $736 in 2017 (Figure 25). This 117% increase in median rent is also higher than the rate of inflation between 1990 and 2017. Newton's 2017 median gross rent was slightly higher than Catawba County's median gross rent ($700), but significantly lower than both the North Carolina median ($844) and the Mecklenburg County median ($1,032).

Figure 24. Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing 1990 to 2017, Newton, Catawba and Mecklenburg County, & NC

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Newton	$49,200	$83,900	$101,600	109,600
Catawba County	$62,300	$103,300	$130,300	139,900
Mecklenburg County	$86,300	$141,800	$185,100	203,900
North Carolina	$65,300	$108,300	$149,100	161,000

Source: 1990- 2010 Census, 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau
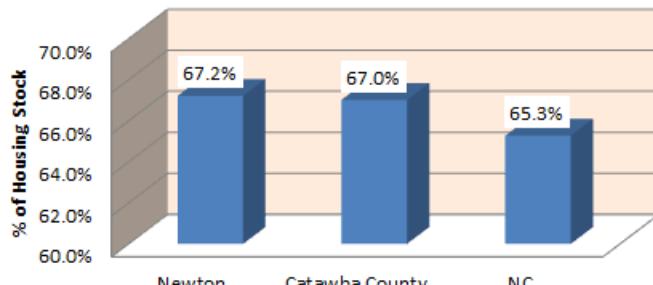
Figure 25. Median Gross Rent 1990 to 2017, Newton, Catawba and Mecklenburg County, & NC

	1990	2000	2010	2017
Newton	$338	$528	$633	$736
Catawba County	$371	$525	$627	$700
Mecklenburg County	$467	$693	$829	1,032
North Carolina	$282	$548	$718	$844

Source: 1990-2010 Census, 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau
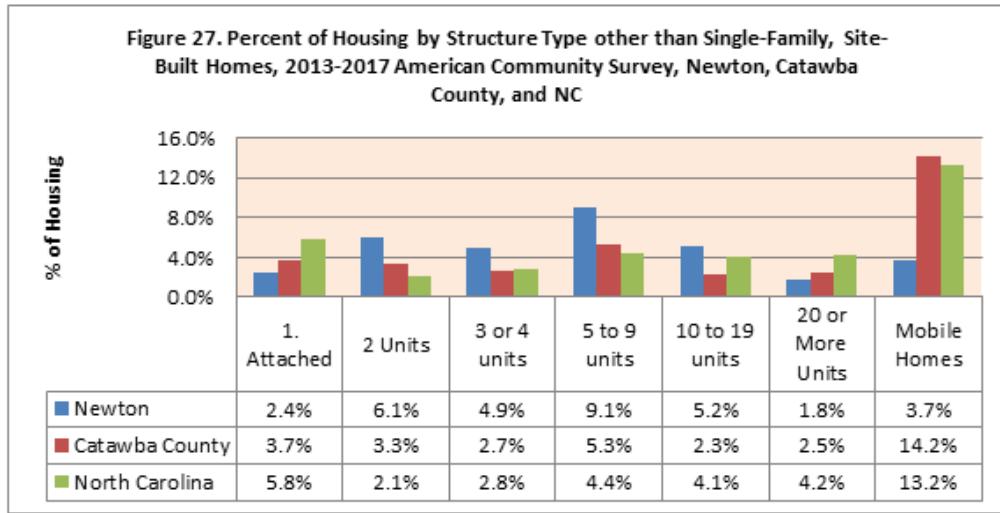
Data from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) reveals that 67.2% of housing units in Newton are site-built, single-family homes (Figure 26). The survey results are a few percentage points higher than the data tabulated for North Carolina (65.3%), but similar to Catawba County (67%).

Figure 26. Percent of Housing that is Single-Family, Site-Built, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

Newton: 67.2%
Catawba County: 67.0%
NC: 65.3%

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau
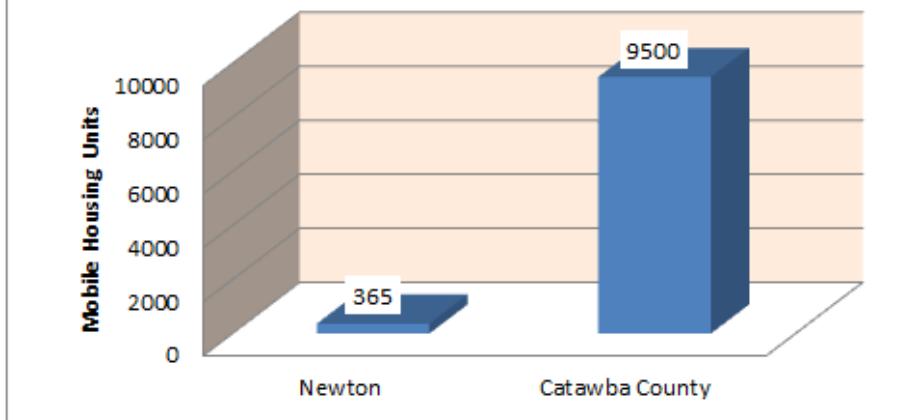
Data in Figure 27 indicates that Newton has a higher percentage of multi-family units than Catawba County and North Carolina, but a much lower percentage of mobile home units than Catawba County or North Carolina. For example, 6.1% of housing units in Newton (2013-2017 ACS) are two-unit duplexes. Newton has nearly double the percentage of duplexes as Catawba County (3.3%), and nearly triple the percentage of duplexes as North Carolina. Besides duplexes, Newton also has a much higher percentage of rentals in five to nine unit apartments (9.1%) than Catawba County (5.3%) or North Carolina (4.4%). Newton does have a lower percentage of renter-occupied units in large apartment buildings (20 or more units) (1.8%) than Catawba County (2.5%) or North Carolina (4.2%)

Figure 27. Percent of Housing by Structure Type other than Single-Family, Site-Built Homes, 2013-2017 American Community Survey, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	1. Attached	2 Units	3 or 4 units	5 to 9 units	10 to 19 units	20 or More Units	Mobile Homes
Newton	2.4%	6.1%	4.9%	9.1%	5.2%	1.8%	3.7%
Catawba County	3.7%	3.3%	2.7%	5.3%	2.3%	2.5%	14.2%
North Carolina	5.8%	2.1%	2.8%	4.4%	4.1%	4.2%	13.2%

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau
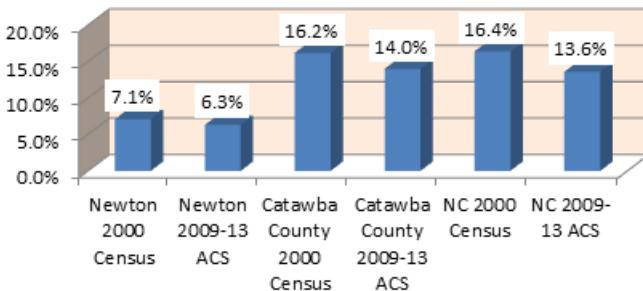
Inside Newton, there are 365 mobile homes compared to 9,500 in Catawba County (Figure 28). The percentage of housing stock in mobile homes has been decreasing in Newton. In 2009-2013, only 6.3% of housing units are mobile homes compared to 7.1% of homes in the 2000 Census (Figure 29). This trend is not surprising since only single-family site-built and multi-family units have been added in Newton since 2000. The percentage decline in mobile homes in Newton is similar to mobile home percentage declines seen in Catawba County and North Carolina. The 2013-2017, ACS did not have statistically significant data regarding Mobile Housing Units in Newton.

Figure 28. Mobile Housing Units, 2009-2013 ACS, Newton and Catawba County

Source: 2009-2013 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

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Figure 29. Mobile Homes as a Percentage of All Housing, 2009-2013 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

- Newton 2000 Census: 7.1%
- Newton 2009-13 ACS: 6.3%
- Catawba County 2000 Census: 16.2%
- Catawba County 2009-13 ACS: 14.0%
- NC 2000 Census: 16.4%
- NC 2009-13 ACS: 13.6%
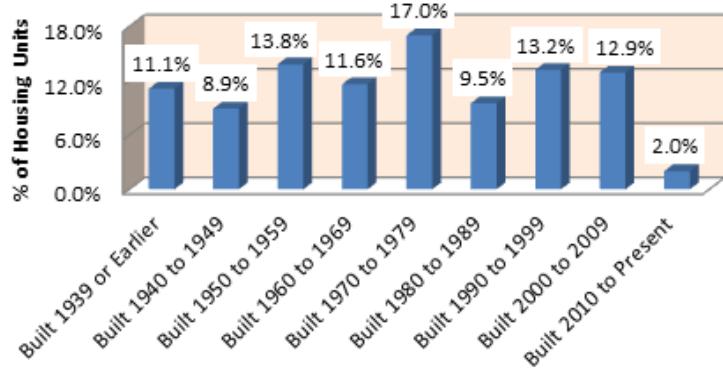
Source: 2000 Census, 2009-2013 (5-year) American Community Survey: US Census Bureau

A significant challenge Newton will face in future years is the aging of its housing stock. Figure 30 shows the percentage of Newton housing stock by the age of the unit. Only 14.9% of homes were built 2000 or later. About 45.4% of all housing in Newton was built before 1970.
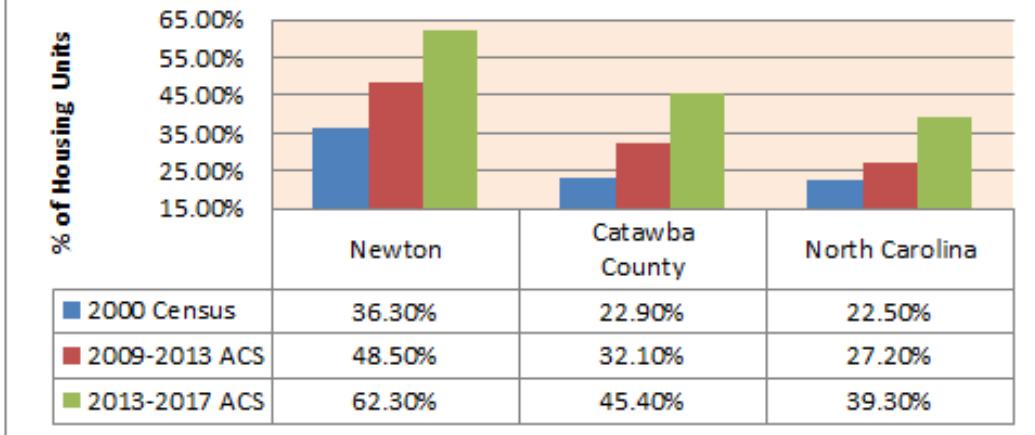
In 1990, only 25.7% of homes in Newton were more than 40 years old. Data from the 2013-2017 ACS indicates that by the end of the decade it is likely that over 60% of Newton's homes will be 40 years or older (Figure 31). The percentage of Newton's homes likely to be 40 years or older at the end of the decade, however, is much higher than homes in Catawba County (45.5%) and North Carolina (39.3%). As the improving housing market continues to increase the rate of new home construction (Table 2), these percentages could decrease. However, even with an improved housing market and increased new home construction in the latter part of this decade, Newton's housing stock is still much older than the County and State.

Figure 30. Percent of Newton Housing Units by Age, 2013-2017 ACS

% of Housing Units

- Built 1939 or Earlier: 11.1%
- Built 1940 to 1949: 8.9%
- Built 1950 to 1959: 13.8%
- Built 1960 to 1969: 11.6%
- Built 1970 to 1979: 17.0%
- Built 1980 to 1989: 9.5%
- Built 1990 to 1999: 13.2%
- Built 2000 to 2009: 12.9%
- Built 2010 to Present: 2.0%

Source: 2009-2013 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Figure 31. Percent of Housing that is Over 40 Years Old, 2000 to 2017, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	Newton	Catawba County	North Carolina
■ 2000 Census	36.30%	22.90%	22.50%
■ 2009-2013 ACS	48.50%	32.10%	27.20%
■ 2013-2017 ACS	62.30%	45.40%	39.30%

Source: 2000 Census, 2009-2013 ACS, and 2013-2017 ACS, US Census Bureau

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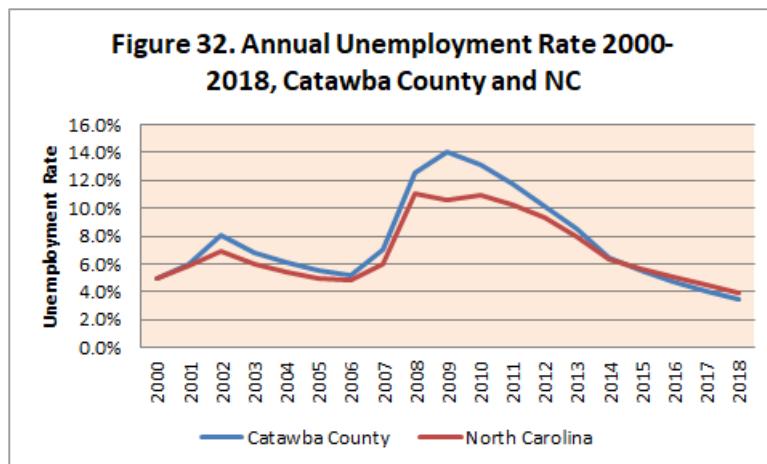
Economic Trends
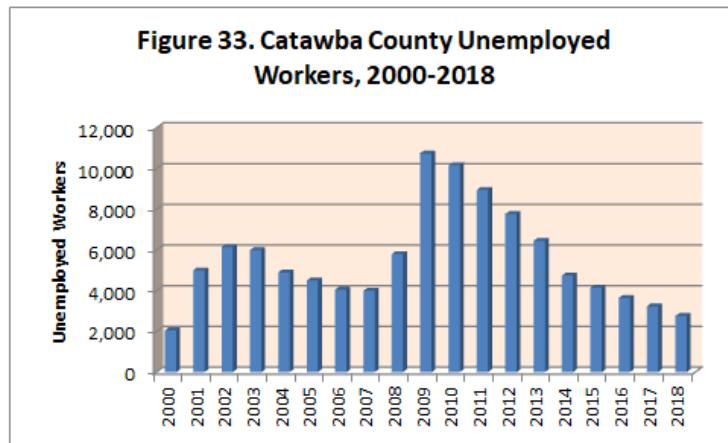
Employment/Unemployment

Several trends are seen in Figure 32. First, since 2015, the unemployment rate in Catawba County has been slightly lower than the North Carolina rate. Also, as the State suffered unemployment impacts from the two previous recessions (2001-2003 and 2008-2011), Catawba County's unemployment rate has spiked to much higher levels. For example, Catawba County's annual unemployment was 13.7% in 2009 compared to 10.4% in 2009 for the state. Catawba County's unemployment spikes can be contributed to the higher than average manufacturing employment, which tends to be more susceptible to economic recessions.

Figure 32. Annual Unemployment Rate 2000-2018, Catawba County and NC

Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

Data seen in figure 33 reveals that corresponding levels of persons counted as "unemployed" with unemployment rates shown in Figure 34. In 2009 and 2010, more than 10,000 Catawba County workers were counted as unemployed. Since 2010, the number of unemployed workers has declined by more than 72% (7,411).
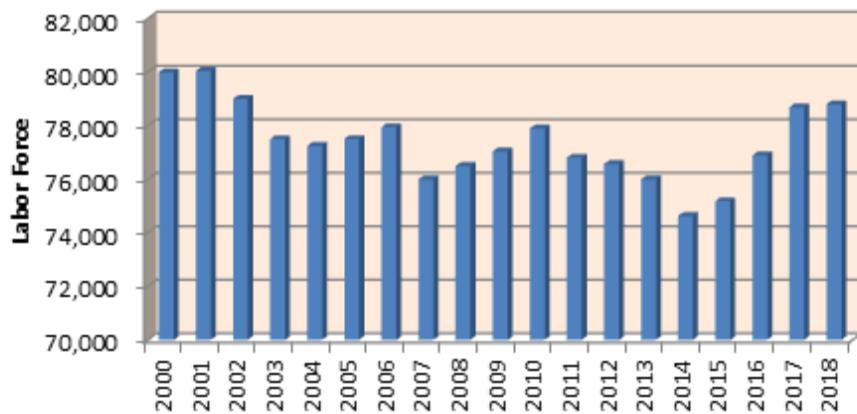
Figure 33. Catawba County Unemployed Workers, 2000-2018

Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

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Declines in the unemployment rate can occur in two ways: 1) an increase in the number of employed workers, or 2) a decrease in the number of persons counted in the labor force. Catawba County's labor force includes persons 16 and older who are employed or actively seeking work. It does not include retirees or full time students. The labor force can also decline if persons over 16 move out of the area. Catawba County's labor force peaked in 2001 at 80,330 (Figure 34). In 2018, the labor force in Catawba County was at its highest point (78,802) since 2002 (79,000). The steady increase in labor force participation from 2014-2018 leveled off from 2017-2018 with the labor force only adding 113 workers from 2017 to 2018 compared to adding 1,797 workers to the labor force from 2017-2018. This slowing in the growth of the labor force is not representative of a decline in economic conditions, but instead the labor force is likely nearing its natural capacity.

A labor force reaches natural capacity when there are no more persons within the County willing or able to actively seek employment. For example, when economic conditions decline, a portion of persons usually leave the labor force because of a lack of employment prospects. As economic conditions improve the labor force usually grows naturally as more people return or begin to actively seeking employment as a result of improved job prospects. However, there is a limit to how many people can or will join the workforce. Natural growth is different from migratory labor force growth which occurs when there is a net gain in the number of persons actively seeking employment through relocation. Migratory growth means more people seeking employment move into the County than move out of the County.
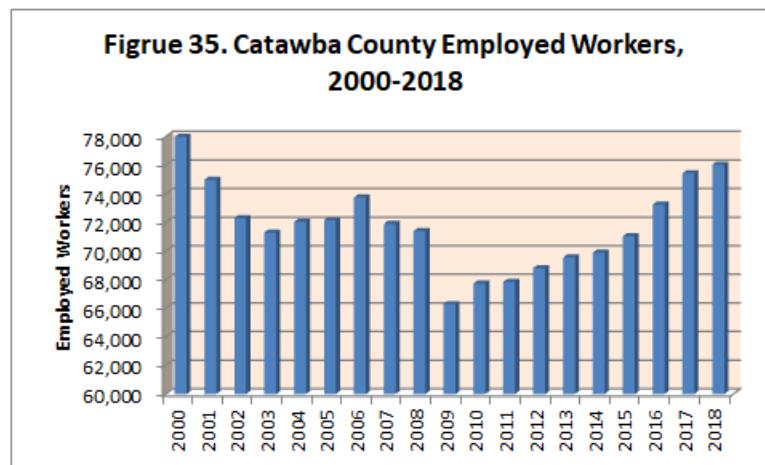
Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018
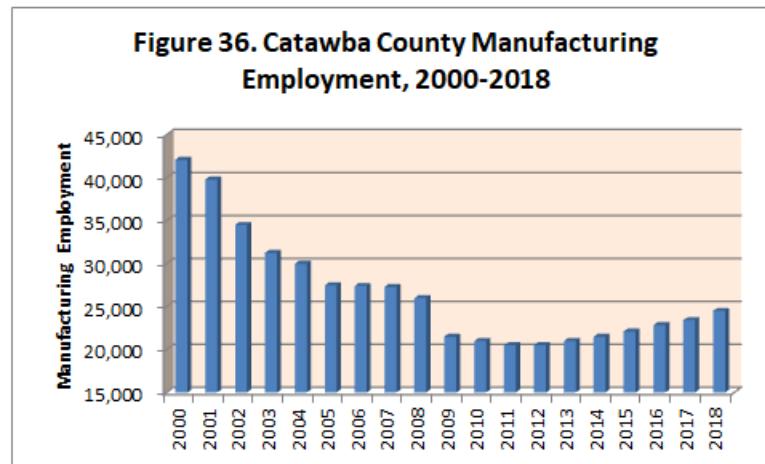
In 2018, employment in Catawba is at its second highest point in the last 18 years, with 76,041 Catawba County residents employed. The peak employment year in 2000 seems to be somewhat of an outlier since its 78,000 residents employed is nearly 2,000 more than the next closest years (1999, 2001, and 2018). This increasingly high number of employed Catawba County residents shows that the reduction in

unemployment from 2010 to 2018 was caused by an increase in employment, not a reduction in the labor force.

Figrue 35. Catawba County Employed Workers, 2000-2018

Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

Most of Catawba County's employment losses over the past 18 years are attributable to declines in manufacturing jobs. Manufacturing jobs equaled 43,054 in 2000. By 2018, the number of manufacturing jobs had fallen to 24,150. In other words, between 2000 and 2018, Catawba County lost over 43% of all manufacturing employment. However, since 2012, manufacturing employment has increased by more than 3,600 jobs.

Figure 36. Catawba County Manufacturing Employment, 2000-2018
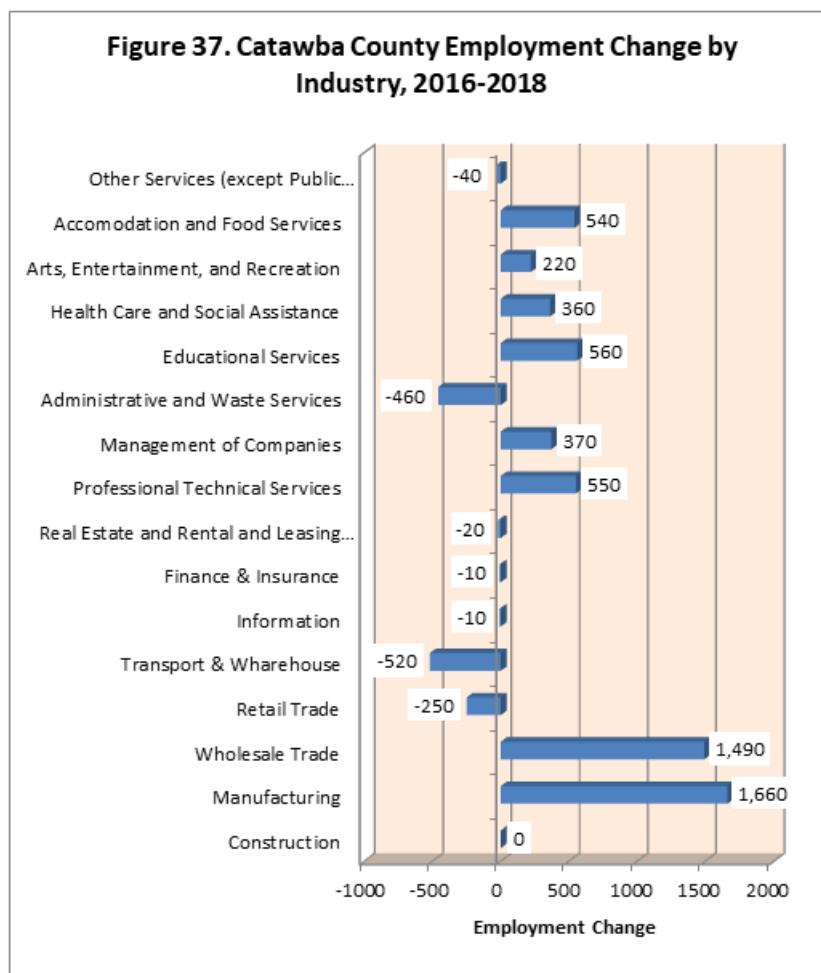
Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

Catawba County employment changes by industry since the first quarter of 2016 are shown in Figure 37. More than 3,000 jobs have been created in manufacturing and "wholesale trade" industries. Wholesale trade includes forklift operators and other positions related to distribution centers which generally pay higher wages.

Other Catawba County industries with significant employment gains over the past two years include professional technical services (550), educational services (560), and accommodation and food services

(540). While accommodation and food service jobs are usually part-time, low paying jobs with limited benefits, professional technical services and educational service jobs are typically higher paying positions (Figure 42).

Several Catawba County industries have lost employment since 2016 including: Transportation and Warehouse employment (520), Administrative and Waste Services (460) and Retail Trade (250). The loss of Transportation and Warehouse employment is particularly concerning given the industry's strong pay. Administrative and Waste services includes temp agency positions, which are low paying positions with limited benefits. Administrative and Waste services jobs typically decline as the economy strengthens and businesses are able to higher their own full or part-time employees. Retail trade is also a low pay and low benefit employment industry. Retail trade has struggled in recent years as a result of the increasing prevalence of online shopping.

Figure 37. Catawba County Employment Change by Industry, 2016-2018

Industry	Employment Change
Other Services (except Public...)	-40
Accomodation and Food Services	540
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	220
Health Care and Social Assistance	360
Educational Services	560
Administrative and Waste Services	-460
Management of Companies	370
Professional Technical Services	550
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing...	-20
Finance & Insurance	-10
Information	-10
Transport & Wharehouse	-520
Retail Trade	-250
Wholesale Trade	1,490
Manufacturing	1,660
Construction	0

Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

Recent American Community Survey results show that Newton has a lower labor force participation rate than Catawba County or North Carolina (Figure 38). Only 56.5% of Newton residents over age 16 are in the labor force compared to 62.5% in Catawba County and 62.6% in North Carolina. The principal reason Newton has a lower labor force participation rate than the County or State is because of the higher
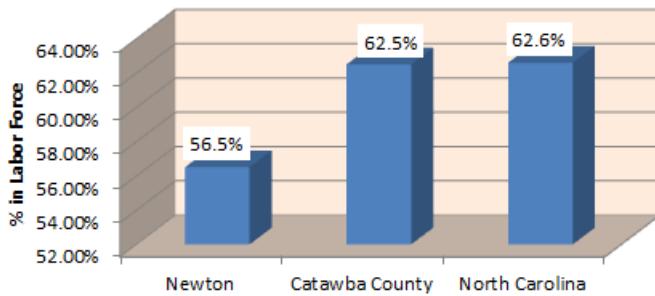
proportion of retirees that live in Newton. Newton has a similar labor force participation rate among women (51.7%) to Catawba County (51.7%) and North Carolina (51.9%).

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Data in Figure 40 reveals the percentage of workers by occupation for Newton, Catawba County, and North Carolina. Both Newton and Catawba County have a much higher percentage of workers in production, transportation, and material moving occupations than the North Carolina total. This result is not surprising since manufacturing has a much stronger presence proportionally in Newton and Catawba County than in North Carolina as a whole. Newton has a much lower proportion of workers in management, business, science, and arts occupations than Catawba County or North Carolina. The percentage of sales and office occupations is similar to the County and the State.

Figure 40. Percent of Workers by Occupation, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC
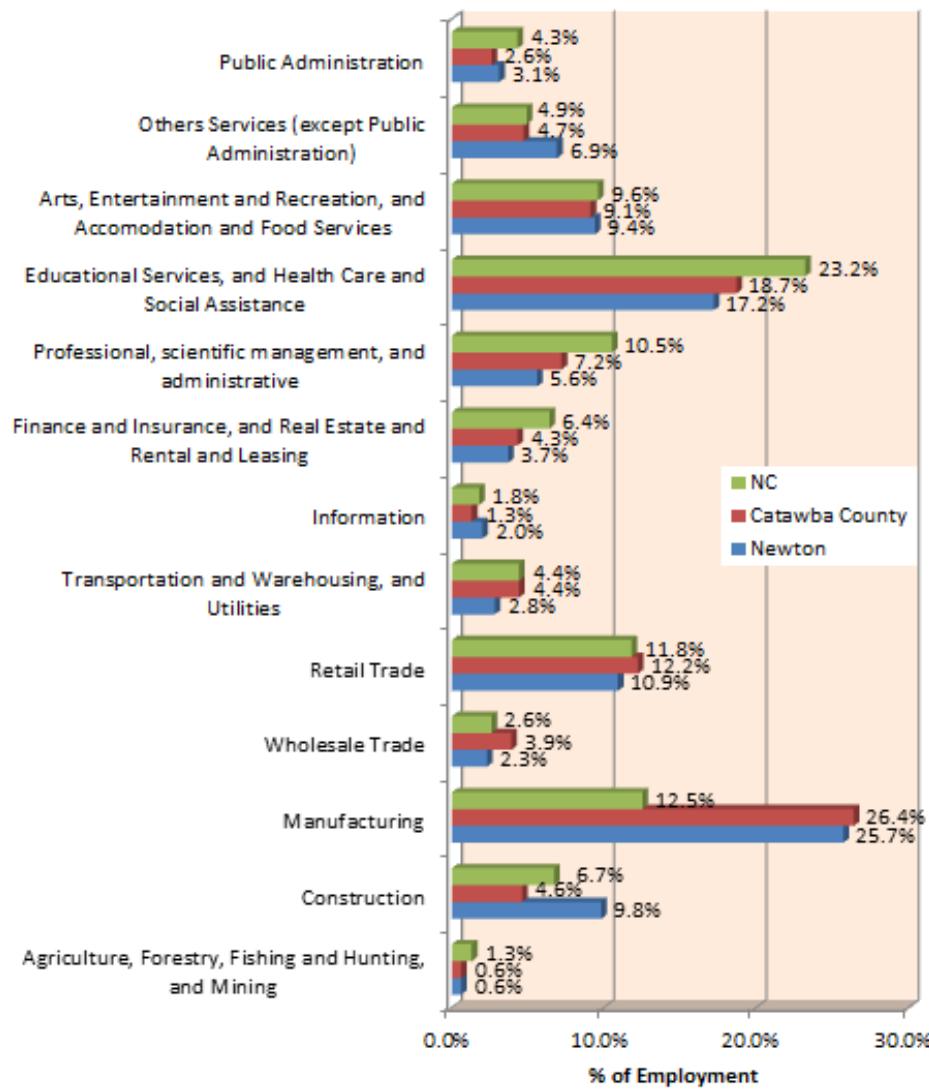
Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

ACS results for the percentage of employment by industry for Newton, Catawba County, and North Carolina are displayed in Figure 41. Both Newton and Catawba County have a much higher proportion of residents working in the manufacturing industry than the North Carolina average. The number of higher paying manufacturing jobs has helped Newton and Catawba County average wages stay closer to the North Carolina average wage. Newton also had a higher percentage of working residents in construction (9.8%) than the County (4.6%) or the State (6.7%).

Newton had a slightly higher proportion of workers than Catawba County, but not the State. The State surpasses Newton in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Accommodation, and Food Services, as well as Public Administration. Newton has a lower proportion of workers in all other industries except "Other Services (except public administration)" which includes repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services, religious, and other nonprofit organizations and private households.

Figure 41. Percent Employment by Industry, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

Industry	NC	Catawba County	Newton
Public Administration	4.3%	2.6%	3.1%
Others Services (except Public Administration)	4.9%	4.7%	6.9%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Accomodation and Food Services	9.6%	9.1%	9.4%
Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance	23.2%	18.7%	17.2%
Professional, scientific management, and administrative	10.5%	7.2%	5.6%
Finance and Insurance, and Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	6.4%	4.3%	3.7%
Information	1.8%	1.3%	2.0%
Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities	4.4%	4.4%	2.8%
Retail Trade	11.8%	12.2%	10.9%
Wholesale Trade	2.6%	3.9%	2.3%
Manufacturing	12.5%	26.4%	25.7%
Construction	6.7%	4.6%	9.8%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	1.3%	0.6%	0.6%

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Income

For most industries in 2018, the North Carolina median hourly wage was higher than Catawba County's (Figure 42, data for Newton not available). Catawba County's cumulative median hourly wage ($20.51) was two dollars lower than the State median wage ($22.69). Catawba County only exceeded the State median hourly in three industry sectors: 1. "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation" 2. "Real Estate and Rental and Leasing Services" 3. "Retail Trade".

Figure 42. Median Hourly Wage by Industry Group, 2018, Catawba County and NC
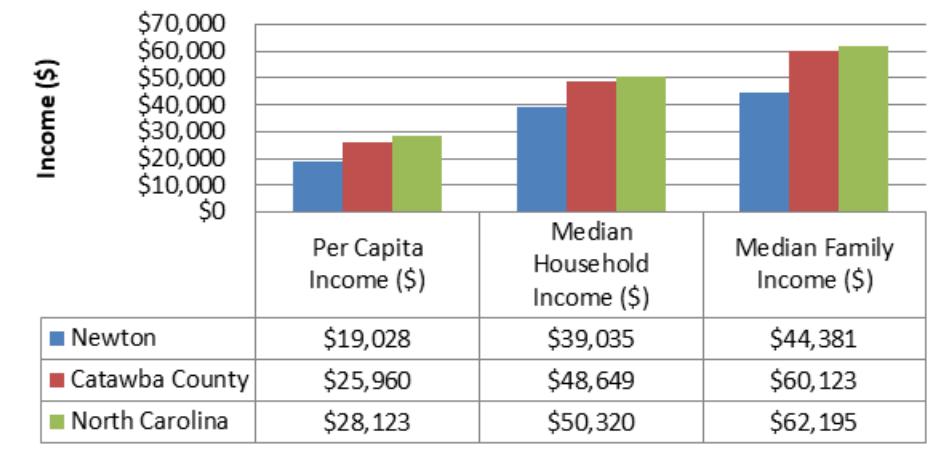
Source: Lead Economic Analysis Division (LEAD), NC Department of Commerce 2018

*Median Hourly Wage data was unavailable for Utilities, Mining, and Agriculture in Catawba County

Measurements of income include per capita income, median household income, and median family income. Data from these measurements reveal that Newton residents have considerably less income than other areas (Figure 43). For example, Newton's per capita income, according to the 2013-2017 ACS ($19,028), is $6,932 less than Catawba County's ($25,960) and $9,095 than North Carolina ($28,123). Newton's median household income of $39,035 is 18.9% less than Catawba County's and 22.4% less than North Carolina's median household income. Newton's median family income of $44,381 was $15,742 less than Catawba County and $17,814 less than North Carolina.

Figure 43. Measures of Income, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	Per Capita Income ($)	Median Household Income ($)	Median Family Income ($)
■ Newton	$19,028	$39,035	$44,381
■ Catawba County	$25,960	$48,649	$60,123
■ North Carolina	$28,123	$50,320	$62,195
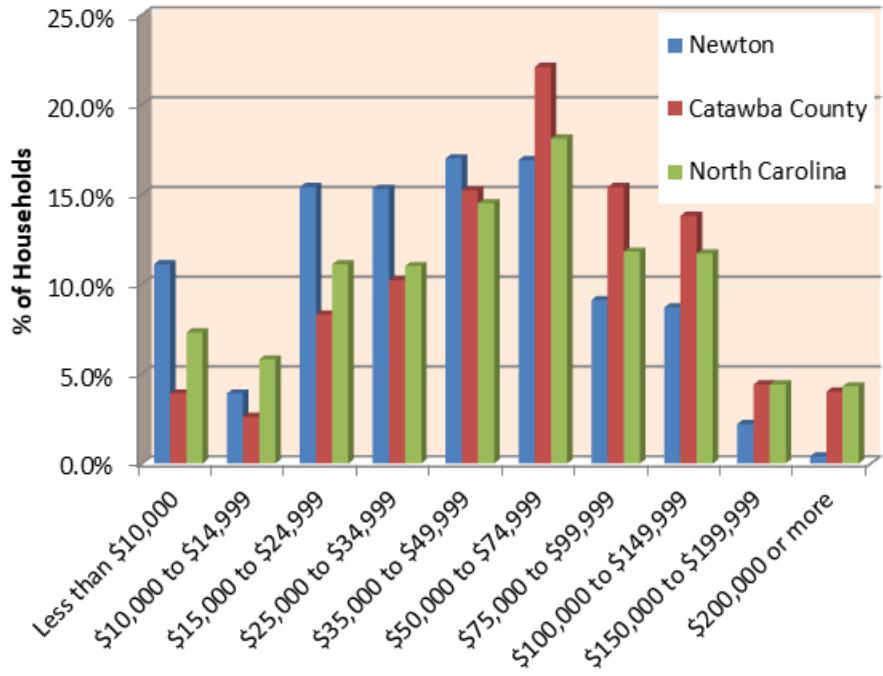
Source: Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Data found in Figure 44 clearly show the dramatic differences in income distribution between Newton and Catawba County/North Carolina. Over 10% of households in Newton earn less than $10,000 a year. This rate is nearly five percentage points higher than the State and almost triple Catawba County's rate (3.9%). Newton also has a higher percentage of incomes between $15,000 to $50,000 than the County or the State.

Newton has a much lower percentage of higher-earning income households than Catawba County or North Carolina. Only 9.1% of households in Newton earn between $75,000 and $99,999 compared to 11.8% of households in North Carolina and 15.4% in Catawba County. In Newton, 8.7% of households made between $100,000 and $149,999, while 11.7% of households in North Carolina and 13.8% percent of households in Catawba County made between $100,000 and $149,999.

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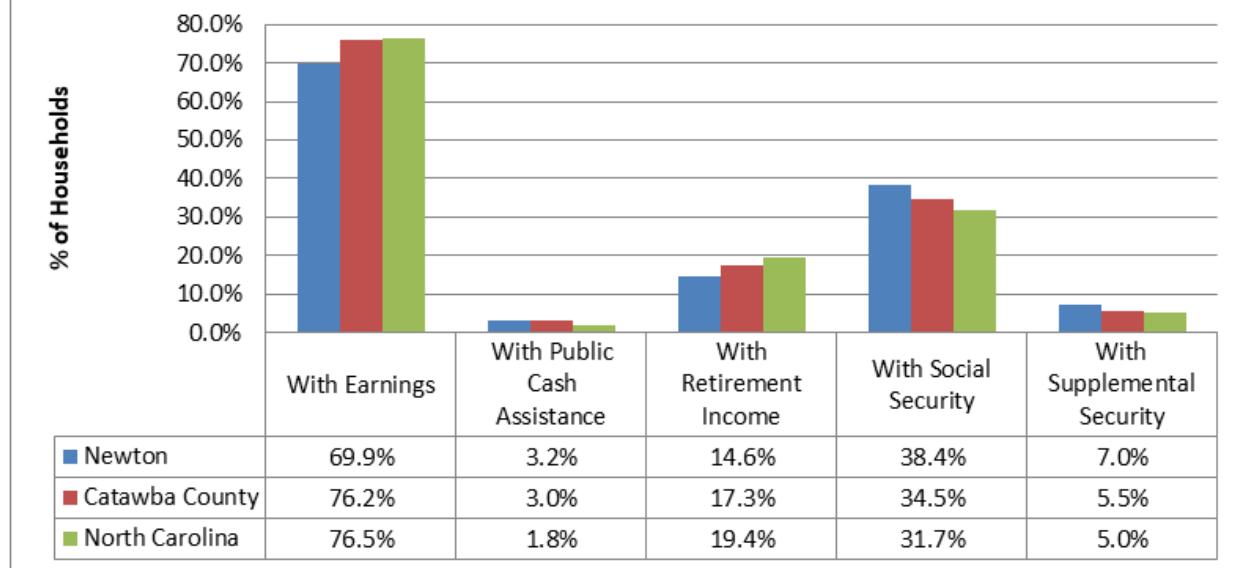
Figure 44. Percent of Households by Income Range, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

Source: Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

About 70% of Newton households receive income from earnings (Figure 45). A total of 6.3% and 6.6% fewer households gain income from earnings in Newton than in Catawba County and North Carolina respectively. More than one-third of Newton households receive money from social security. The result is not surprising given the large number of retirees in Newton. Newton, however, has a lower percentage of households with additional retirement income than Catawba County and the State. The lower number of households with additional retirement income at least partially explains the higher percent of lower income households in Newton compared to Catawba County or North Carolina.

Figure 45. Percent of Households with Various Sources of Income*, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	With Earnings	With Public Cash Assistance	With Retirement Income	With Social Security	With Supplemental Security
Newton	69.9%	3.2%	14.6%	38.4%	7.0%
Catawba County	76.2%	3.0%	17.3%	34.5%	5.5%
North Carolina	76.5%	1.8%	19.4%	31.7%	5.0%
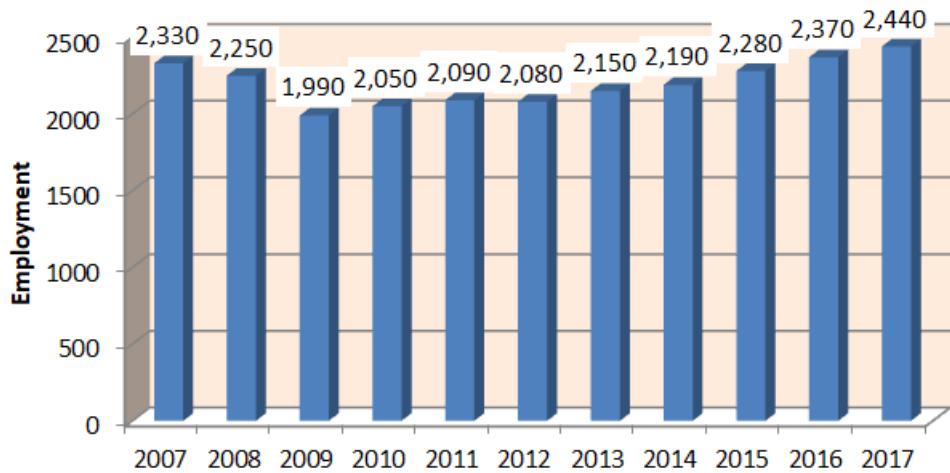
Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau
*Households can receive earnings from more than one source of income source such as social security and other retirement income.

Travel and Tourism

Tourism can help drive sales for local businesses in Newton as well as provide local tax revenues for the City and jobs for local residents. Tourism also provides employment for County citizens. Catawba County tourism employment trends are displayed in Figure 46. Jobs from Catawba County tourism have increased from 1,990 in 2009 to an all-time high of 2,440 in 2017. An increase in sports tourism and festival or event tourism has likely been responsible, at least in part, for this rise in tourism employment. Furniture tourism is also important to Catawba County. There are over half a million shoppers visiting The Hickory Furniture Mart alone, according to the Hickory Metro Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Tourists spend millions of dollars in Catawba County each year. From 2007 to 2017, Catawba County tourism expenditures increased from $215.17 million to $277.27 million (Figure 47). Since the 2009 recession, tourism expenditures have been steadily increasing to record high $277.27 million in 2017. Catawba County ranked 16th in tourism impact among North Carolina's 100 counties in 2017.

Figure 46. Catawba County Tourism Employment, 2004-2017

Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce (LEAD) for Visit North Carolina, 2017

Figure 47. Catawba County Tourism Expenditures ($Millions), 2007-2017

Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce (LEAD) for Visit North Carolina, 2017

Local tax receipts from Catawba County tourism grew $1.51 million from 2007 ($6.93 million) to 2017 ($8.44 million) (Figure 48). During the recession in 2009, local tax receipts bottomed out at $5.94 million, and since that time tax receipts have steadily increased. The North Carolina Department of Commerce estimated, in 2013, that tourism expenditures represented a $123.50 tax saving for each Catawba County resident.

Figure 48. Catawba County Local Tax Reciepts from Tourism ($Millions), 2007-2017

Source: North Carolina Department of Commerce (LEAD) for Visit North Carolina, 2017
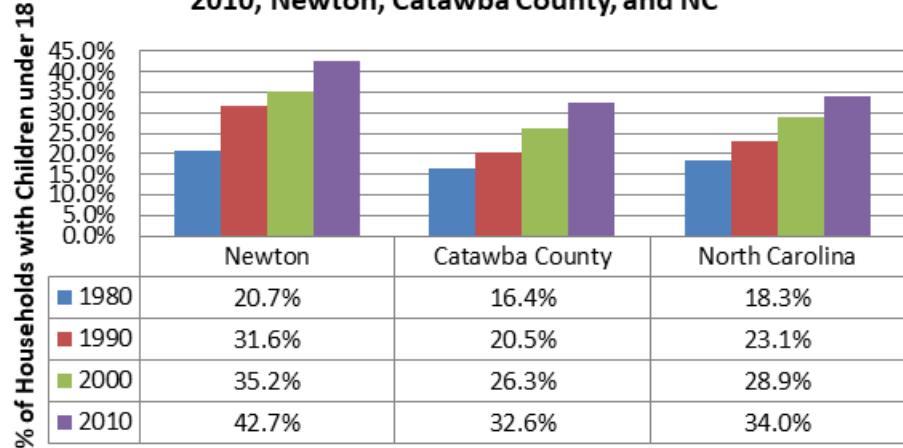
Socio-Economic Trends

Households

Census 2010 data reveals that Newton has 5,105 households. About one-third of households include persons under 18, while 28.5% (1,457) have individuals 65 years and older. About 30% (1,542) of householders live alone. A total of 3,279 (64.2%) of the 5,105 households in Newton are considered "family households." Types of families include husband-wife families (2,164 households or 42.4% of all households), female householder, no husband present (838 households or 16.4% of all households) and male householder, no wife present (277 households 5.4% of all households). A sum of 842 households in Newton (16.5%) are husband-wife families with their own children under age 18, 487 (9.5%) are female householder, no husband present with children under age 18 and 142 (2.8%) are male householder, no wife present with own children under age 18.

Figure 49 shows trends in single-parent households with children under age 18 over the past three decades in Newton, Catawba County, and North Carolina. Newton's percentage of single-parent households with own children under age 18 has more than doubled between 1980 (20.7%) and 2010 (42.7%). Newton's percentage of single-parent households with their own children under age 18 is also much higher than Catawba County's or the State's

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Figure 49. Percent of Households with Own Children Under 18 that are Single Parent Households, 1980 to 2010, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	Newton	Catawba County	North Carolina
■ 1980	20.7%	16.4%	18.3%
■ 1990	31.6%	20.5%	23.1%
■ 2000	35.2%	26.3%	28.9%
■ 2010	42.7%	32.6%	34.0%
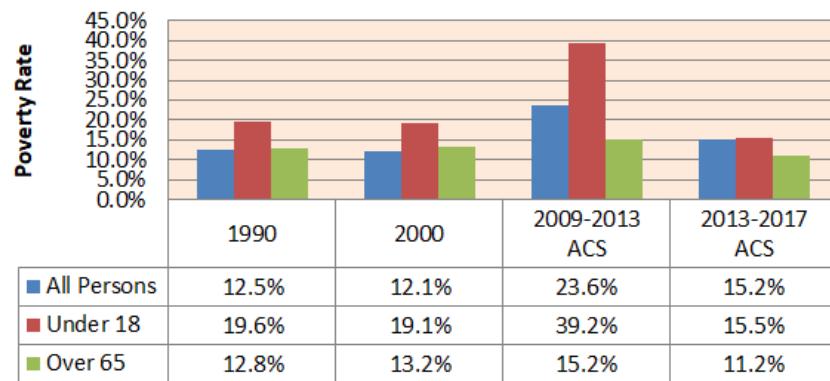
Source: 1980-2010 Census, US Census Bureau

Poverty
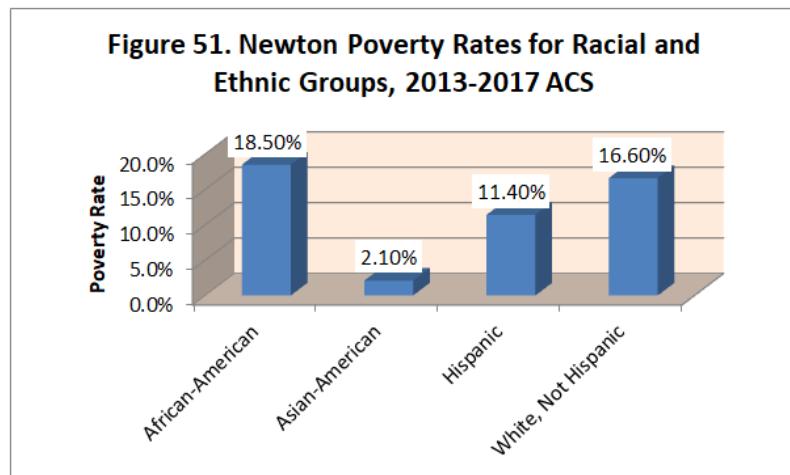
As with the unemployment rate, the poverty rate in Newton grew drastically during the 2009 economic recession. The poverty rate nearly doubled from 2000 to 2013 (2013 results are from the 2009-2013 ACS). However, since 2013 Newton's overall poverty rate has fallen by over 8% (Figure 50), and in 2017 was below the North Carolina statewide poverty rate of 16.1% and one percentage point higher than Catawba County (14.2%). The poverty rate for persons over 65 is much lower than poverty rates for other groups since most persons over 65 receive social security benefits. The 2018 federal poverty level for a family of four is an annual income of $25,100 or less. Results from the 2013-2017 American Community Survey show that 1,974 of Newton's level below the poverty threshold.

Figure 50. Newton Poverty Rates for All Persons, Persons Under Age 18, and Persons Over Age 65, 1990 and 2000 Census, 2009-2013 ACS and 2013-2017 ACS

	1990	2000	2009-2013 ACS	2013-2017 ACS
■ All Persons	12.5%	12.1%	23.6%	15.2%
■ Under 18	19.6%	19.1%	39.2%	15.5%
■ Over 65	12.8%	13.2%	15.2%	11.2%
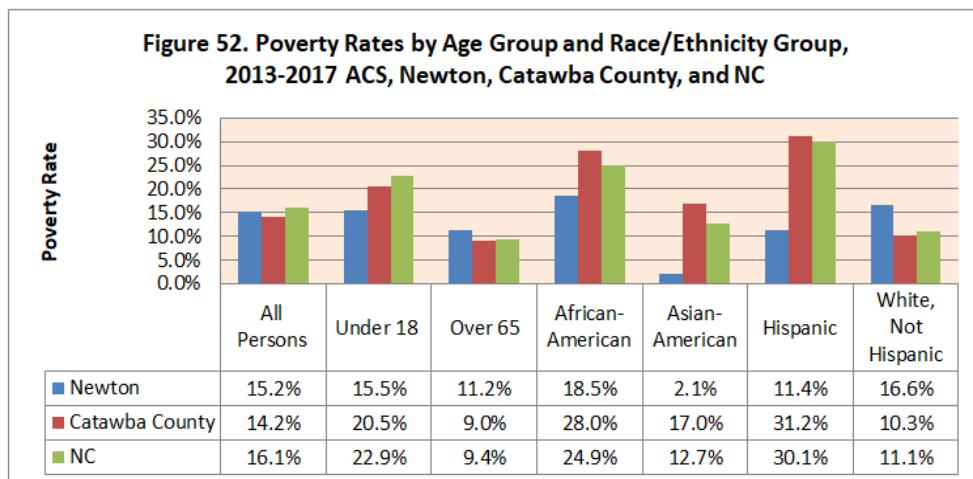
Sources: 1990 and 2000 Census, 2009-2013 ACS, and 2013-2017 ACS, US Census Bureau

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Figure 51 shows poverty rates from the 2013-2017 ACS for racial and ethnic groups. Over 18% of African-American's in Newton have household incomes below the poverty level, the highest percentage of any ethnic group. An estimated 1,334 or 16.6% of Newton's White, Non Hispanic population live below the poverty line. Only 2.1% of Asian-Americans in Newton are below the poverty income threshold. Poverty for each ethnic group, except non-Hispanic white persons, has been at least reduced by 50% since the 2009-2013 ACS. For non-Hispanic white persons poverty has only been reduced 1.4%.

Figure 51. Newton Poverty Rates for Racial and Ethnic Groups, 2013-2017 ACS

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

Figure 52 compares Newton's current poverty rates by age and race/ethnic group to Catawba County's and North Carolina's poverty rates. Newton is lower than Catawba County and the State in all age and ethnic groups except for non-Hispanic white persons and those over 65. The highest rates of poverty were among non-Hispanic white persons which equaled 16.6% in Newton, 10.3% in Catawba County, and 11.1% in North Carolina. The poverty rate for those over 65 in Newton was around 2% higher than Catawba County and the State.
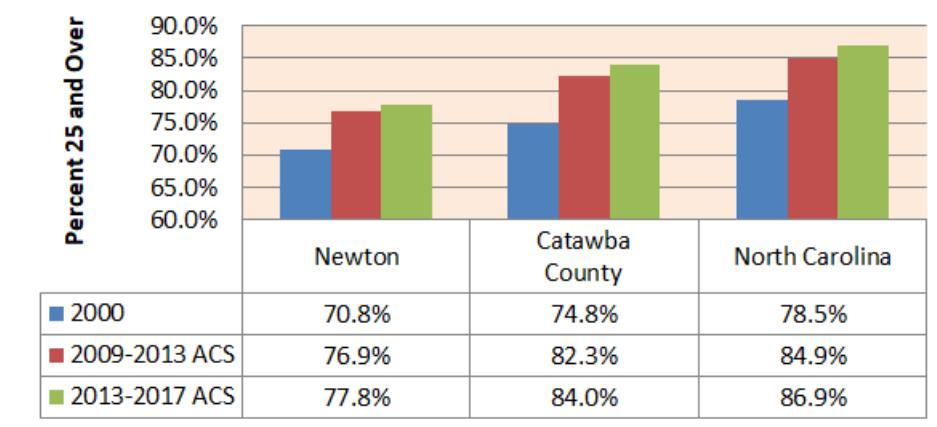
Figure 52. Poverty Rates by Age Group and Race/Ethnicity Group, 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	All Persons	Under 18	Over 65	African-American	Asian-American	Hispanic	White, Not Hispanic
Newton	15.2%	15.5%	11.2%	18.5%	2.1%	11.4%	16.6%
Catawba County	14.2%	20.5%	9.0%	28.0%	17.0%	31.2%	10.3%
NC	16.1%	22.9%	9.4%	24.9%	12.7%	30.1%	11.1%

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

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Educational Attainment

American Community Survey results for 2013-2017 estimate 77.8% of Newton residents age 25 years and older have a high school diploma or equivalent (Figure 53). The most recent results are 7% higher than the 2000 Census. A lower percentage of Newton residents 25 and older had an educational attainment level of high school or equivalent than Catawba County and North Carolina residents.
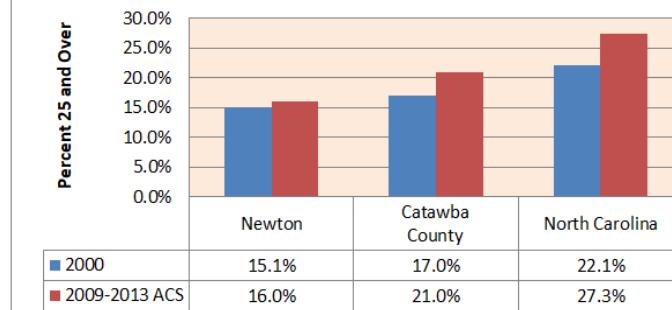
Figure 53. Percent of Persons Age 25 and Over with a High School Diploma or Equivalent, 2000, 2009-2013 ACS & 2013-2017 ACS, Newton, Catawba County, and NC

	Newton	Catawba County	North Carolina
2000	70.8%	74.8%	78.5%
2009-2013 ACS	76.9%	82.3%	84.9%
2013-2017 ACS	77.8%	84.0%	86.9%

Source: 2000 Census, 2009-2013 (5-Year) American Community Survey and 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

About 16% of Newton residents age 25 years and older have a bachelor's degree or higher, according to the 2009-2013 ACS results (Figure 54). The margin of error for bachelor's degree attainment in the 2013-2017 ACS was too large to be used in this data analysis. The percent of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher is less than one percent higher than the 2000 Census. In contrast, Catawba County and the rest of North Carolina have seen significant increases in bachelor's or higher graduates since 2000. Over 20% of persons have a bachelor's degree or higher in Catawba County, and over 25% of persons age 25 or older have a bachelor's degree or higher in North Carolina.

Figure 54. Percent of Persons 25 and Over With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2000 and 2010 Census, Newton, Catawba County, and North Carolina

	Newton	Catawba County	North Carolina
2000	15.1%	17.0%	22.1%
2009-2013 ACS	16.0%	21.0%	27.3%

Source: 2013-2017 (5-Year) American Community Survey, US Census Bureau

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Building Permit Activity

The long-lasting negative impact of the 2008 economic recession on residential and nonresidential development in Newton finally appears to be dissipating. Table 1 displays the recent increase in residential building permit activity between 2017 and 2018. For example, in 2017 the number of single-family building permits more than doubled from 6 in 2016 to 15 in 2017. In 2018 single-family building permits increased 140% from 15 in 2017 to 36 in 2018. The estimated value of permits also increased by nearly 500% from 2016 to 2018.

Table 1. Newton New Single-Family (Site Built) Permits, 2013-2018							
Permit Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Single-Family Permits	1	7	6	6	15	36	71
Single-Family Estimated	$237,767	$1,368,198	$1,080,343	$1,010,434	$2,312,957	$4,810,111	$10,819,810

Source: Catawba County Building Inspections Permit Data Center, WPCOG Data Center 2018

While new residential activity occurred throughout the region, the City was most heavily along concentrated E 11th Street in the McRee Trace community and along McKay Farm Road in the South Lakes community (Map 2). As these residential developments near completion, the number of single-family residential permits issued each year may drop. However, given economic conditions, the number of single-family residential permits should continue to exceed 2013-2016 levels unless another recession were to occur.

MAP 2
City of Newton
Building Permits
2015-2018

Building Permits
★ Commercial (12 permits)
★ Industrial (5 permits)
★ Institutional (8 permits)
★ Single Family Residential (63 permits)
★ Multi-Family Residential (14 permits)
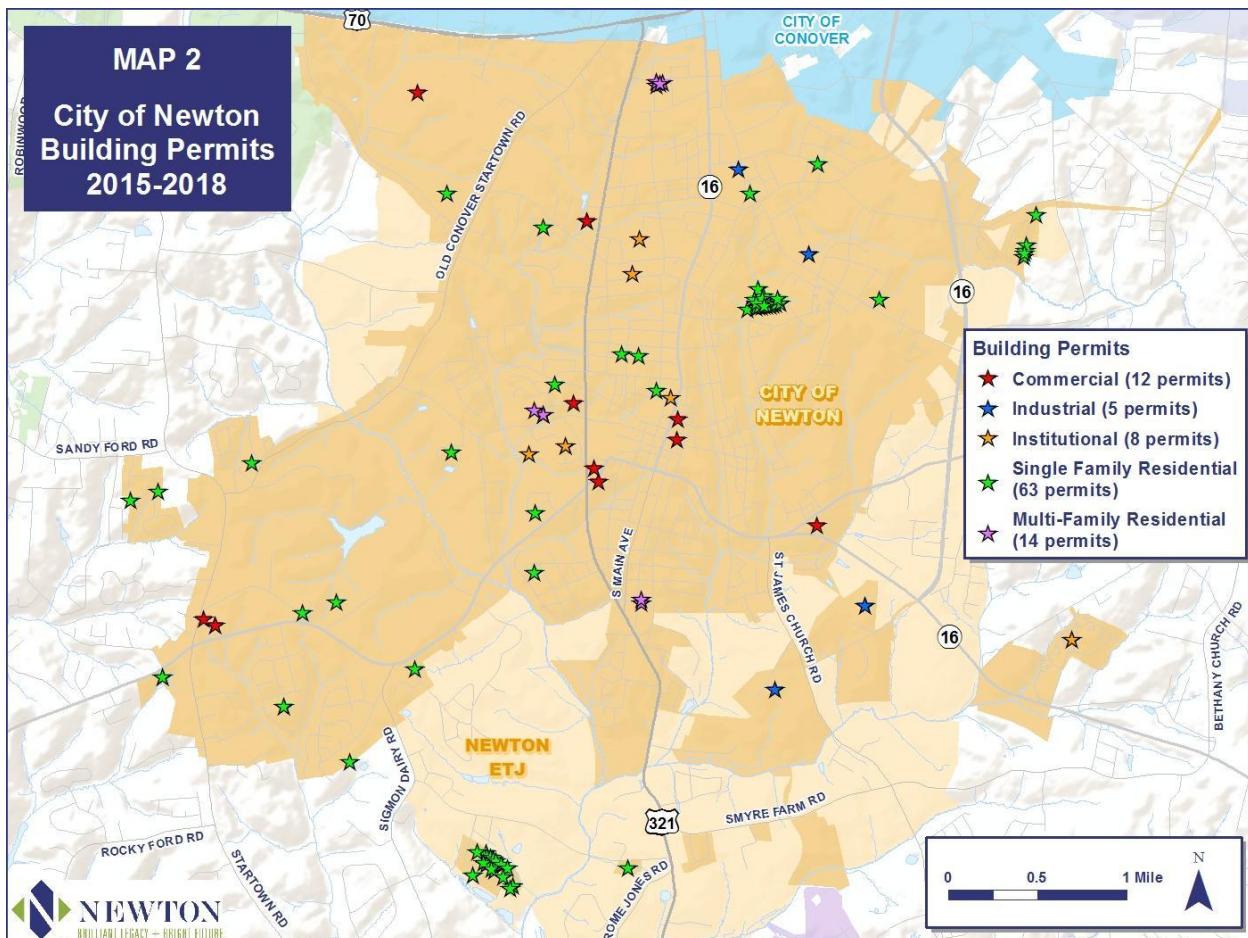
Table 2 shows major nonresidential development (defined as a new permit, alteration, or addition with an estimated construction cost greater than $100,000), divided into commercial, industrial, and institutional permits. Many of the institutional permits issued went to Catawba County, with their renovation of the government center and prison expansion, or the Newton-Conover school system.
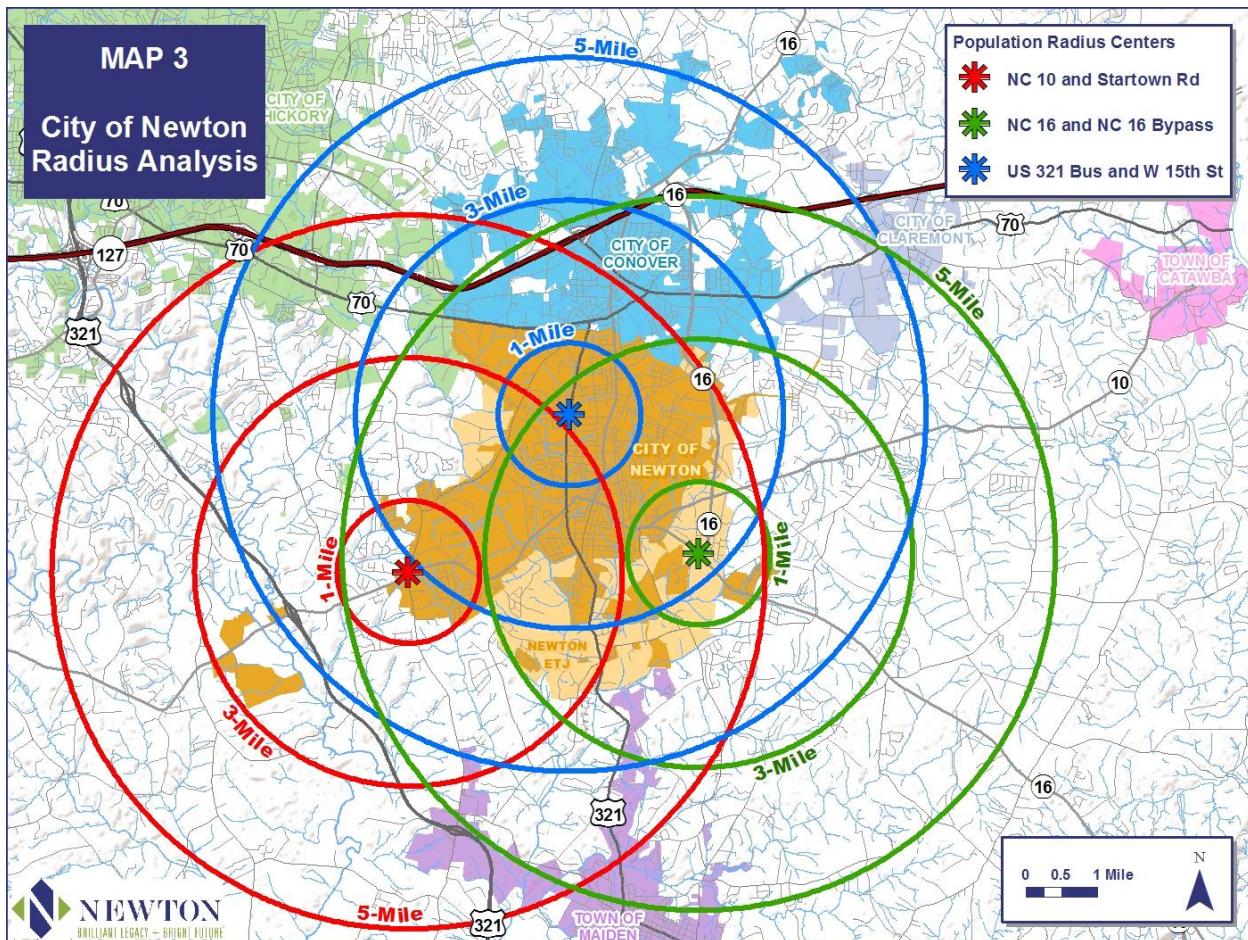
There were three nongovernmental organizations that generated permits in excess of $10 million during a calendar year. Abernathy Laurels invested $11 million in 2016 in opening a new wing of their retirement community on NC 16. Room and Board opened a new distribution center in the Newton Corporate Center with an investment of $16 million. Finally, ZF Chassis Systems made an investment totaling over 17 million dollars in their Newton facility.

Table 2. Newton Nonresidental Permits, 2013-2018							
Permit Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Commerical	4	1	5	7	7	6	30
Commerical Estimated Construction Costs	$ 2,653,362	$ 280,000	$ 3,863,960	$ 2,906,687	$ 3,404,744	$ 5,771,808	$ 18,880,561
Industrial	2	1	2	1	8	1	15
Industrial Estimated Construction Costs	$ 1,561,230	$ 350,000	$ 685,900	$ 282,699	$ 34,398,230	$ 1,600,000	$ 38,878,059
Institutional	3	8	1	7	2	5	26
Institutional Estimated Construction Costs	$ 9,154,689	$ 24,169,538	$ 264,832	$ 13,894,530	$ 7,662,740	$ 1,156,683	$ 56,303,012
Total Non-Residential Permits	9	10	8	15	17	12	71
Total Non-Residential Estimated Construction Costs	$ 13,369,281	$ 24,799,538	$ 4,814,692	$ 17,083,916	$ 45,465,714	$ 8,528,491	$ 114,061,632

Source: Catawba County Building Inspections Permit Data Center, 2018

Newton Radius Analysis

To get a better understanding of the retail market in Newton, radius analyses were completed inside Newton city limits. One, three, and five-mile radius calculations of population, housing and income (one-mile radius income data not available) was completed for the following intersections: 1) NC 10 and Startown Road 2) NC 16 South and NC 16 By-pass and 3) US 321 Business (Northwest Blvd.) and West 15th Street (Map 3). The results of the analysis can be seen in Table 3.

The results show that the 1-mile, 3-mile, and 5-mile radius of US Highway 321 Business and West 15th Street had the most population and housing units. For the 3-mile and 5-mile radius NC 10 and Startown Road had the highest median household income ($54,370 for the 3-mile radius and $50,691 for the 5-mile radius) followed by US 321 Business and West 15th Street ($44,817 for the 3-mile radius and $48,083), and finally NC 16 South and NC 16 By-Pass ($42,499 for the 3-mile radius and $47,701 for the five mile radius. Map 3 also shows that much of the 3-mile and 5-mile radius of US 321 Business and West 15th street are located in Hickory and Conover. These municipalities already have several shopping centers including NC Highway 16 and I-40 near the intersection of US Highway 70, I-40 and Startown Road (Hickory).

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The NC Highway 10 and Startown Road radius analysis showed higher median incomes at the 3-mile and 5-mile radius. However, population counts were the lowest of the three locations. There is an established Food Lion shopping center, Exxon gas station with Subway and Dollar General at that location. NC Highway 16 South and NC Highway 16 By-pass in southeast Newton had the next highest incomes at the 3-mile and 5-radius due to the wealthier households near NC Highway 16 closer to Denver and the Sherrills Ford area. It is also the furthest away from retail centers in Hickory and Conover.

Table 3. Newton Radius Analysis			
NC 10 and Startown Road			
	Population	Housing Units	Median Household Income
1-Mile Radius	2,212	822	N/A
3-Mile Radius	11,423	4,546	54,370
5-Mile Radius	31,689	12,768	50,691
NC 16 South and NC 16 By-Pass			
	Population	Housing Units	Median Household Income
1-Mile Radius	1,460	624	N/A
3-Mile Radius	16,927	6,951	42,499
5-Mile Radius	34,871	14,618	47,701
US 321 Business (Northwest Blvd) and West 15th Street			
	Population	Housing Units	Median Household Income
1-Mile Radius	3,171	1,445	N/A
3-Mile Radius	19,928	8,401	44,817
5-Mile Radius	41,970	17,515	48,083
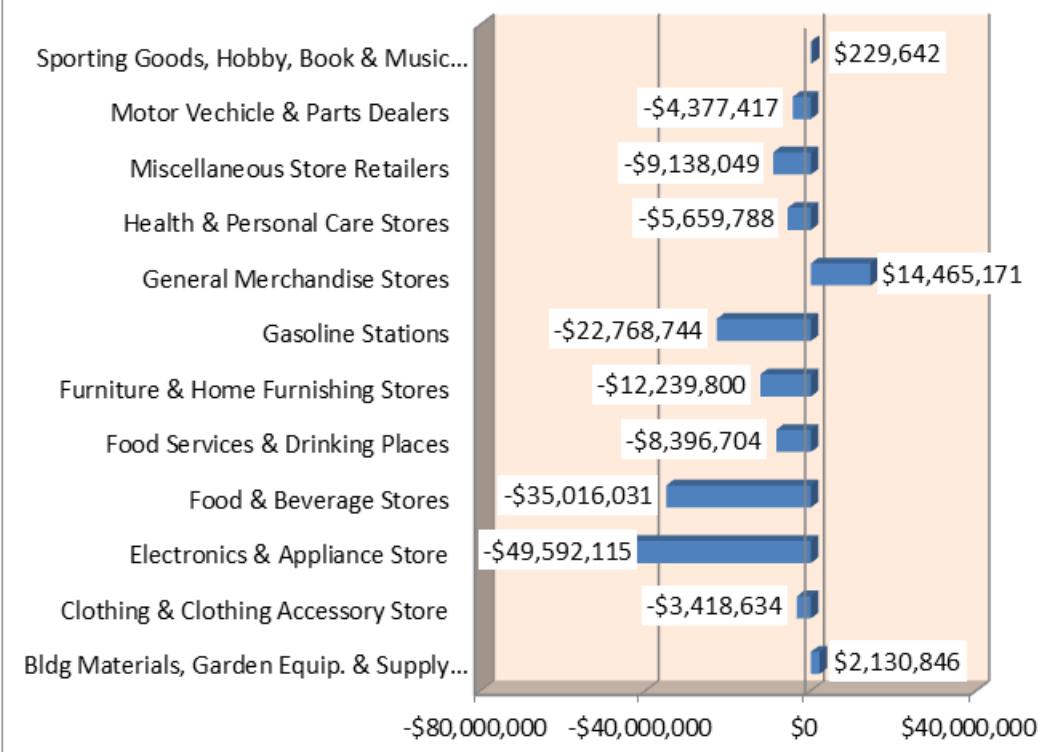
Source: US Census and US Census Missouri Data Center, 2017

Retail Surpluses and Leakages

In 2018, NC Electricities produced a retail market report for Newton. Included in the report is a series of tables and graphs that show retail surpluses (+$) and retail leakages (-$) for the City. A retail surplus occurs when retail sales for a given area (or retail supply) exceeds the retail potential (or retail demand) in a given area. In other words, a retail surplus occurs in a market where customers (and therefore sales) are drawn in from outside the trade area. A retail leakage occurs when the retail potential (or retail demand) of a given area exceeds retail sales for a given area (or retail supply).

Figure 55 shows Newton's 2017 estimated retail leakages and surpluses by major retail category. Overall, Newton had a net retail leakage of $123,508,117 in 2017. The biggest retail surplus occurred in General Merchandise Stores ($14,465,171). Newton's largest retail leakages were Electronic and Appliance stores ($49,592,115) and Food and Beverage stores ($35,016,031). For Newton to expand its retail market, it will need to either increase the retail surpluses that currently exist, or reduce the retail leakages out of the City.

Figure 55. Newton Retail Surpluses (+$) and Retail Leakages(-$) by Retail Category, 2017

Category	Value
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music...	$229,642
Motor Vechicle & Parts Dealers	-$4,377,417
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	-$9,138,049
Health & Personal Care Stores	-$5,659,788
General Merchandise Stores	$14,465,171
Gasoline Stations	-$22,768,744
Furniture & Home Furnishing Stores	-$12,239,800
Food Services & Drinking Places	-$8,396,704
Food & Beverage Stores	-$35,016,031
Electronics & Appliance Store	-$49,592,115
Clothing & Clothing Accessory Store	-$3,418,634
Bldg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply...	$2,130,846

Source: Electricities NC and ERSI, 2017

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

Newton Data Analysis: Summary

An analysis of demographic, economic, social and retail data for Newton yields the following:

1. The State Office of Budget and Management predicts only slight population growth in Newton through 2030.
2. Newton's largest 5-year age cohort in 2017 was between 50 and 54 years old.
3. Over the next 20 years the Newton will be impacted by the aging of the "baby boomer" generation and the potential loss of 24-35 year olds.
4. The Hispanic community now constitutes the largest minority group in Newton with the African-American community as a close second. Projections show that Newton will continue to become more ethnically diverse over the next 20 years.
5. The number of vacant housing units has grown dramatically over the last 10 years. Over 12% of homes in Newton are vacant.
6. Newton's housing values are lower than Catawba County and surrounding areas.
7. Newton's housing stock is much older than surrounding areas. Nearly 50% of homes in Newton were built before 1970.
8. Only 56.5% of Newton's population over age 16 is in the labor force.
9. Newton has a higher percentage of workers in production, transportation and material moving than surrounding areas, but a lower percentage of management, business, science and arts occupations than surrounding areas.
10. Newton's median household income is more than $7,000 less than Catawba County and more than $8,000 less than North Carolina. Newton also has a much lower percentage of higher-earning income households than Catawba County or North Carolina.
11. Newton has a much higher percentage of single-parent households with children (42.7%) than Catawba County (32.6%) or North Carolina (34.0%).
12. From 2013 to 2017 the percentage of Newton's residents that have household incomes below the poverty level has decreased by 8% and is now estimated to be below the Statewide poverty level for North Carolina. Poverty among the African-American, Hispanic, and Asian communities was cut by over 50% from 2013 to 2017.
13. Newton has a much higher percentage of the population over age 25 with less than a high school education, and a much lower percentage of the population over age 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher than Catawba County or the State.
14. During 2017 and 2018 the number of residential single family residential permits doubled each year. From 2016-2018 institutional, commercial, and industrial entities in Newton invested more than $60 million into their facilities.
15. The tourism industry in Catawba County is at an all-time high in terms of employment, local tax receipts, and expenditures.
16. Newton has an estimated annual retail leakage of more than $120 million. Retail surpluses in general merchandise stores are offset by retail leakages in electronics and appliance stores and food and beverage stores.

Infrastructure

Newton Public Utilities

The City of Newton provides municipal water, sewer, and electricity as publicly-owned utilities available to the majority of Newton's residences. Newton operates a water treatment plant, two water towers, waste water (sewer) treatment plant, seven sewer pump stations, and all the water and sewer main lines that provide service to Newton properties. Newton is an ElectriCity; it is a member of North Carolina Municipal Power Agency as a partial owner of the Catawba Nuclear Plant. The City distributes power generated by the Catawba Nuclear Plant to customers in the City. It owns two electrical substations and the infrastructure to dispense electricity to its customers.

The public utilities are financed through two separate enterprise funds, the Water and Sewer Fund and the Electrical Fund. An enterprise fund relies entirely upon the fees and usage charges for the operation of a business enterprise. General fund money (money collected from property tax and other levies) cannot be used to supplement enterprise funds nor can enterprise fund revenues be used to supplement other government operations. An enterprise fund is generally run like a business.

Newton Water System

System Overview
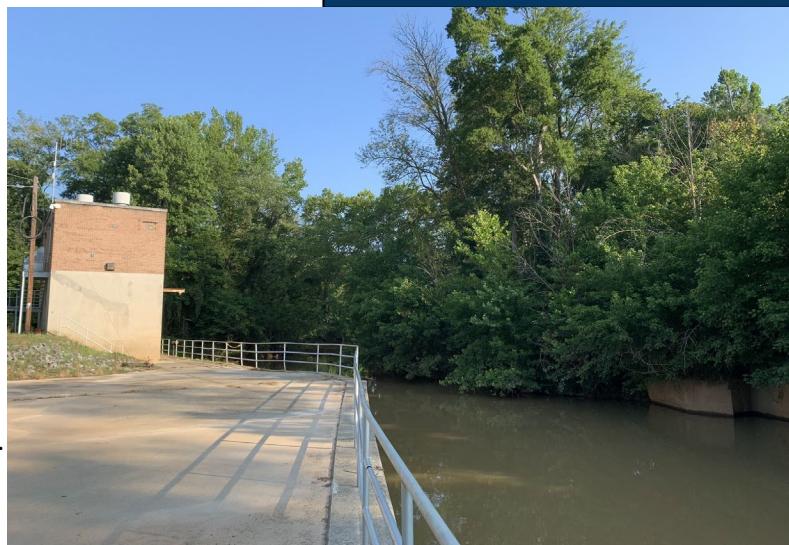
Water for the City of Newton comes from an intake on Jacob's Fork, a tributary of the Catawba River. The water quality of Jacob's Fork is of exceptionally high quality because its 475 acre watershed is mostly undeveloped with limited agriculture. There are also no waste water treatment discharge points upstream of the of the Jacob's Fork raw water intake. Raw water is pumped from the intake a Jacob's Fork Park to the City Lake. This reservoir has been in service since 1937 and holds 45 million gallons, which is about a ten day supply. In the reservoir, sediment settles out, improving turbidity and clarity of the water before going to the Water Plant for treatment. The overall quality of water in Newton's system requires minimum treatment. The Water Plant has the capacity to treat eight million gallons per day (MGD), but it is only permitted for 5 MGD. The current average daily demand is 3.75 MGD with peak demand of 5 MGD during the summer. Energy United, the City's largest user at about 1.6 MGD, supplies water to Taylorsville, Alexander County, Troutman, and West Iredell County. The storage capacity of the

clear well at the Water Plan is 2 million gallons, and the old water plant also had storage and pumping capacity that is required for system operation.
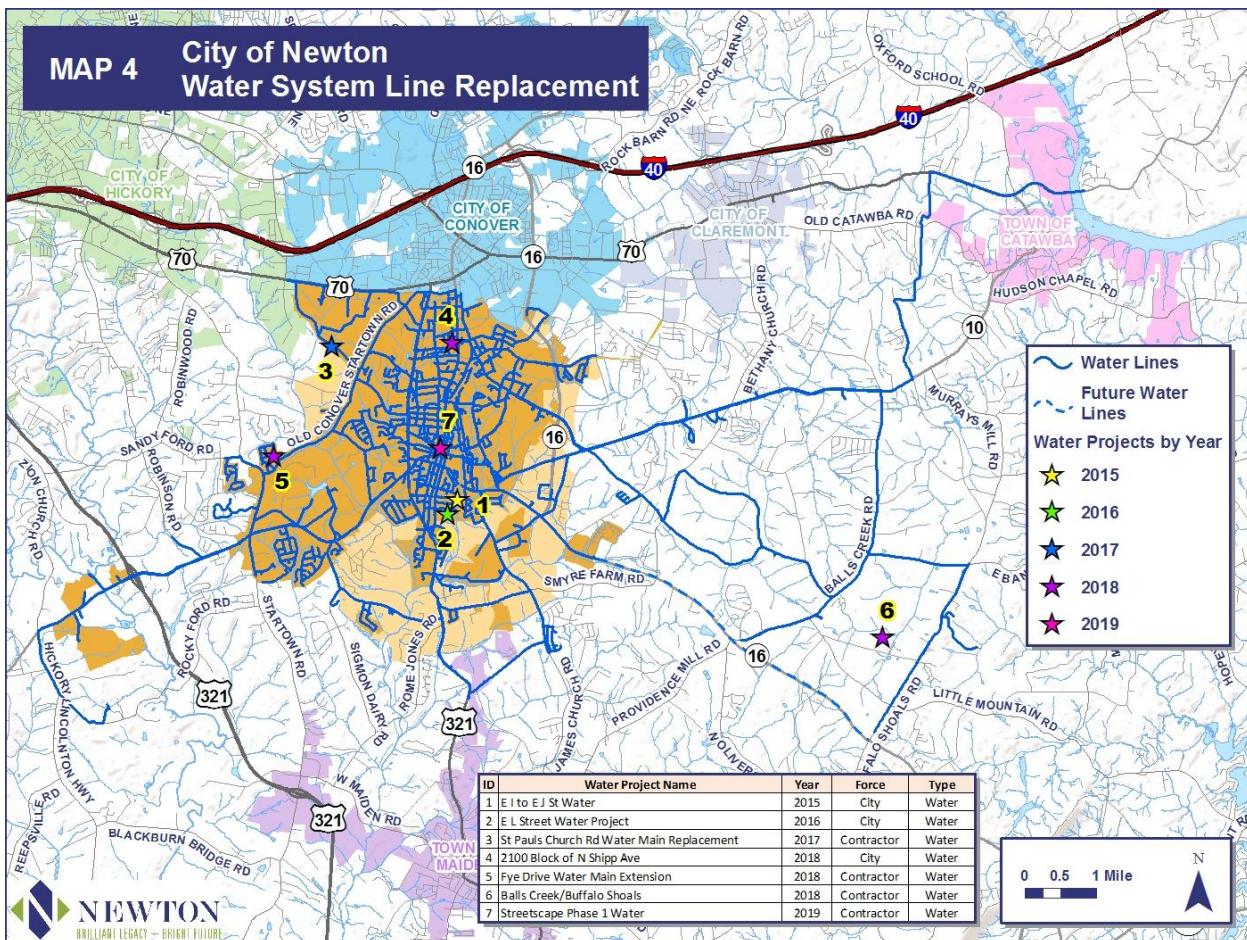
Newton's water system has operated, in some manner, for over a century. A majority of the oldest infrastructure is located around the Courthouse square. In the 1980s, a Public Works crew found a wooden water line in this area that was still in excellent working condition; it leaked only where it was fitted to modern pipes. All of the wooden water lines were out of service by the early 90's. Another wooden waterline, that was not in use, was discovered in 2019 during the first phase of the Downtown streetscape project.
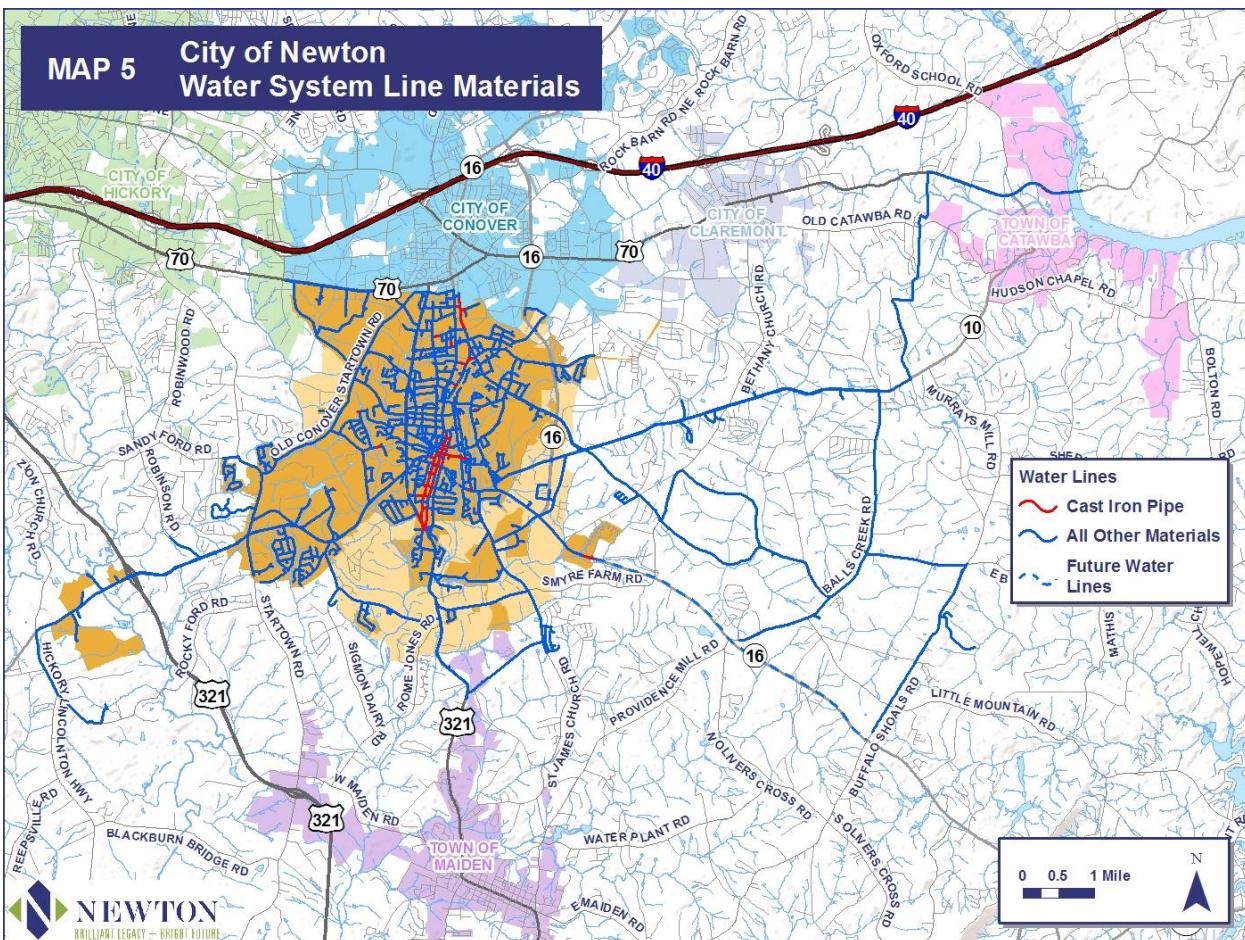
In the 1950s, the City expanded the system along US Highway 70 in response to commercial development. During the 1970s, the system was upsized for large volume industrial users such as textile manufacturers.

Raw Water Intake at Jacob's Fork

Residential development in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the catalyst for another expansion of the system.

MAP 4 — City of Newton
Water System Line Replacement

Legend:
— Water Lines
- - Future Water Lines

Water Projects by Year
★ 2015
★ 2016
★ 2017
★ 2018
★ 2019

ID	Water Project Name	Year	Force	Type
1	E I to E J St Water	2015	City	Water
2	E L Street Water Project	2016	City	Water
3	St Pauls Church Rd Water Main Replacement	2017	Contractor	Water
4	2100 Block of N Shipp Ave	2018	City	Water
5	Fye Drive Water Main Extension	2018	Contractor	Water
6	Balls Creek/Buffalo Shoals	2018	Contractor	Water
7	Streetscape Phase 1 Water	2019	Contractor	Water

0   0.5   1 Mile

NEWTON
BRILLIANT LEGACY ~ BRIGHT FUTURE

MAP 5 — City of Newton Water System Line Materials

Recent Developments

During the last five years, City Council has approved a three phase streetscape project in downtown Newton around the Courthouse square. The primary objective of this project is to replace all underground infrastructure, including water lines. The first phase of this project has been completed, and the second phase is in the bidding process. In total, since 2014, over $4.3 million has been invested in maintaining and refurbishing water lines and infrastructure within the City of Newton. Of that $4.3 million, $1.9 million was invested in water line and infrastructure maintenance, $419 thousand was spent on maintaining the Water Treatment Plant. The remaining $2 million was spent to install smart metering, or Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology. The investments in the WTP are detailed in Map 6.

Old WTP

2

Completed
1. **Sludge Valve Actuators**
2. **Clearwell Inspections**
3. **Back Wash Valves**
4. **Chlorinators**

Work in Progress
5. **Filters**
6. **Sludge Rake Replacements**
7. **City Lake Ditch Clearing**

City of Newton
Water Treatment Plant

City Lake

Feet
1000

20" DIP

DIP 20"

PVC 2" DIP

16"

2" PVC

DIP

CLAY 10"

DIP

DIP

DIP 20"

DIP

6"

6" PVC

10

2

1

6

5

3

4

7

0   50   100 Feet

Sewer Data

⊚ Manholes

∼ Gravity Main Sewer Lines

Water Data

▪ Water Meter

⊕ Public Hydrant

⋈ Gate Valve

⋈ Other Valve

∼ Water Lines

N

MAP 6
Water Treatment Plant Projects

NEWTON
BRILLIANT LEGACY + BRIGHT FUTURE

The installation of AMI technology, or smart metering technology, allows meters to be read remotely, which reduces staff time needed to record water usage and complete the billing process. The new AMI system also allows the City to alert customers to leaks on private property much more quickly than the previous metering system, and has improved customer service capabilities. Customer service personnel can now see when exactly when peaks or high volumes of usage occurred which can explain variation in monthly billing.

While the downtown streetscape project is the largest project in terms of dollars spent. The streetscape will replace .15 miles of the aged iron water lines. The City of Newton has also completed other large projects, each costing over $100,000, including the following: Buffalo Shoals Rd to Balls Creek Elementary, St Pauls Church Road water main replacement, Fye Drive Water Main Extension, and Shannon Brook Phase III. The Buffalo Shoals Road to Balls Creek Elementary created a loop in the water line system where there were previously two dead ends. Looped water lines are preferred to dead ends because water keeps moving through the system so that the water does not get stagnant at the end of the line. Dead end lines have to be flushed periodically and this requires significant staff time. In total, the City of Newton has replaced 4.68 miles of aged iron water lines since 2014.

Upcoming Projects

The City of Newton will continue will implement the final two phases of their downtown streetscape project, and will complete the project by early 2021. These phases will complete the replacement of the aged water and sewer lines and infrastructure in downtown Newton. System wide maintenance and line replacement is also in progress. Three water valve replacements along Northwest Blvd are scheduled to occur within the next five years. Several rehabilitation projects on the main water line are scheduled to take place within the next five years. These projects include work on the main water line on West A Street, South Caldwell Ave, S Davis Ave, East F St, East G St, N Shipp from 20th Street to 21st Street, and West C Street from Bost Ave to West D St. Water main extensions are also planned on Fannie Bolick Dr and Pope Dr.

The Water Treatment plant has a few projects scheduled including updating the SCADA system at the Water Treatment Plant and rebuilding the Water Treatment Plant Filter. There are also plans to convert the plant to a liquid fluoride system. Since 2014, a database with all water lines in the Newton City system has been created with a priority list for line replacements. Priority status is based on the number of maintenance work orders and the funding for these replacements has been increased in recent years by City Council. All line maintenance is coordinated with street repairs in order to maximize Powell Bill funding.

Through a collaborative financing agreement with Catawba County, water lines will be extended along NC Highway 16 as it is expanded to four lanes. With expansion the expansion of water lines, new users may voluntarily annex into corporate limits to avoid out-of-city rates.

Issues Facing the Water System
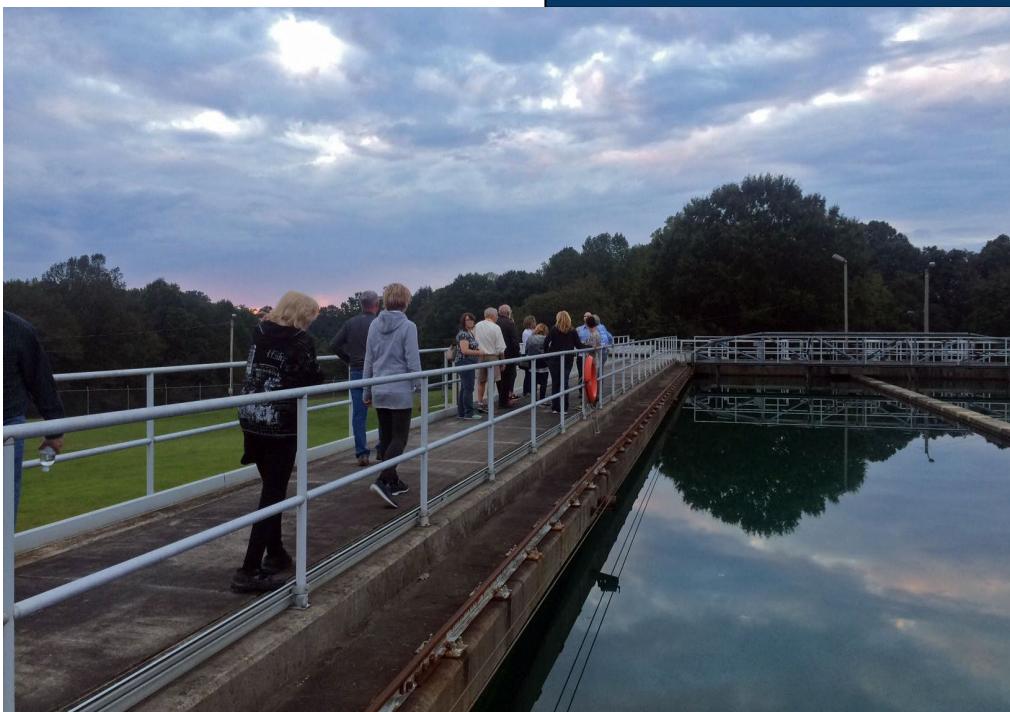
Even with numerous projects already completed, Newton's water system still has significant obstacles in the short-term and long-range future. The age and material of lines are the biggest issue facing the City. Most of the water lines are made of cast or ductile iron (see map 5 for the material of the water lines). Although these lines have lasted decades, corrosion and decay have impaired the system. Water does not flow as efficiently through corroded iron pipes and breaks are more prevalent.
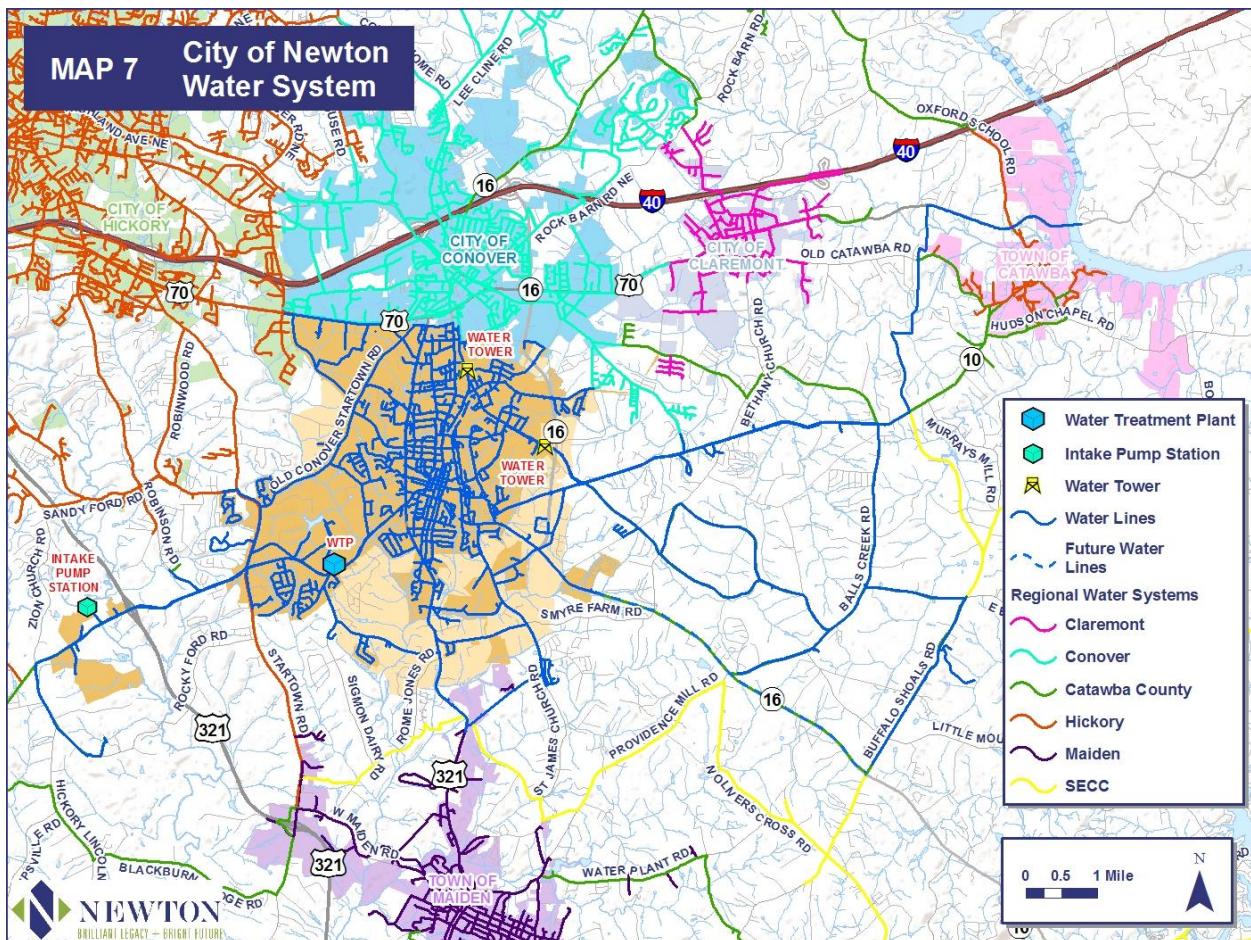
The Water Plant and City Lake also face age and useful life issues. The water plant was built to be rehabilitated and upgraded while in use; the exception is the treatment basin behind the plan. Other parts and equipment can be improved with ceasing operation. Large upgrades to the equipment need to be made over the next 10 years to prolong the life of the facility. The earthen dam at the City Lake is also a concern. Standing water around the dam may indicate seepage problems. An engineering assessment of the dam would compile a cost estimate and establish a timeline to fix issues at the dam.

Storage of water could also be a concern. There is a 10 day supply in the City Reservoir. The old water plant is used for storage along with the clear well at the Water Plant. If there is significant growth or if large water users, such as textile industries, re-enter the Newton Service area, ensuring enough stored water is a potential challenge. This could be a problem if there is prolonged equipment malfunction that kept new water from entering the system.

Within the existing City limits, there are very few properties without water service. Newton is limited on areas for potential water line expansion due to its   close proximity to neighboring water systems.

Newton's Water Treatment Plant

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

MAP 7   City of Newton Water System
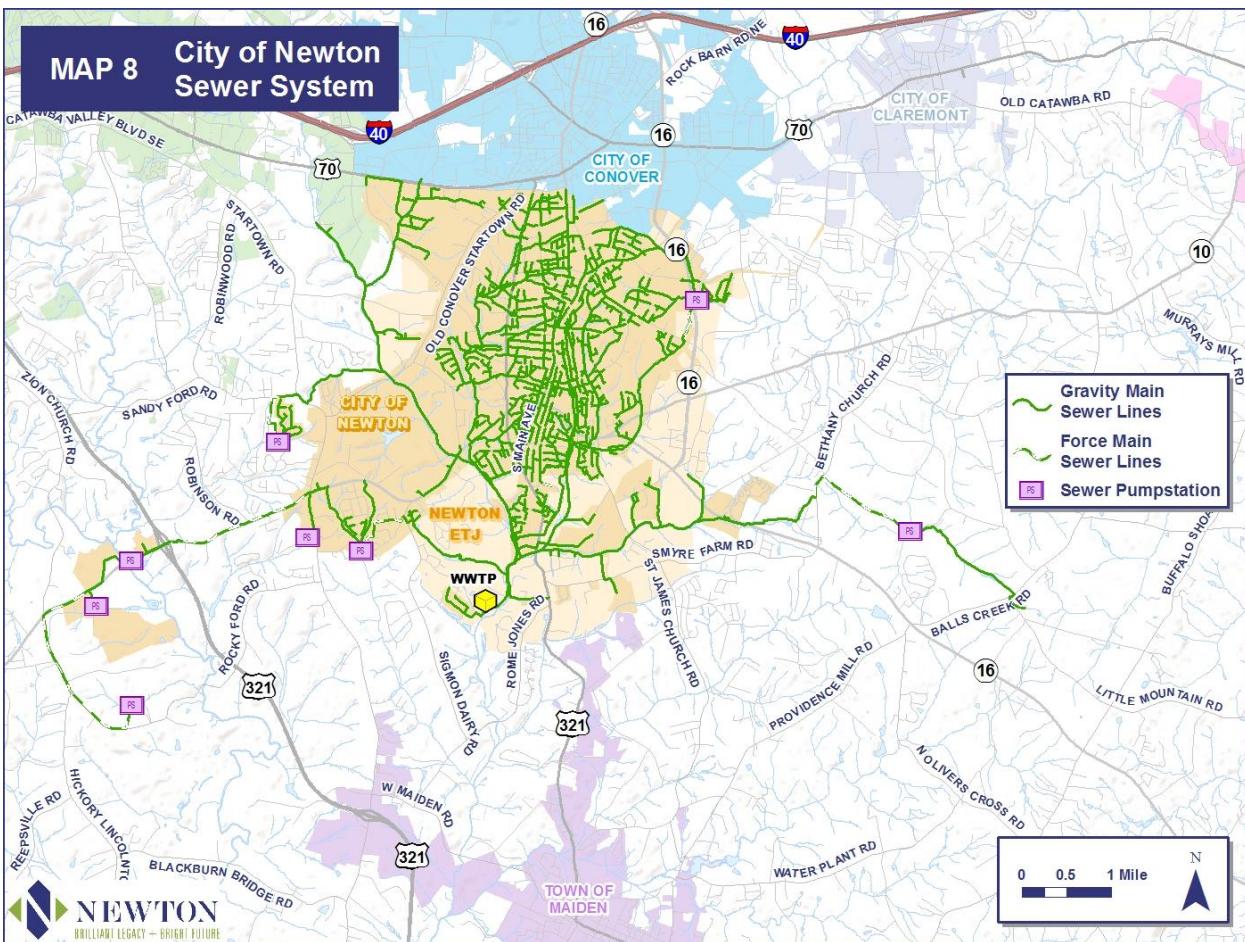
Newton Sewer System
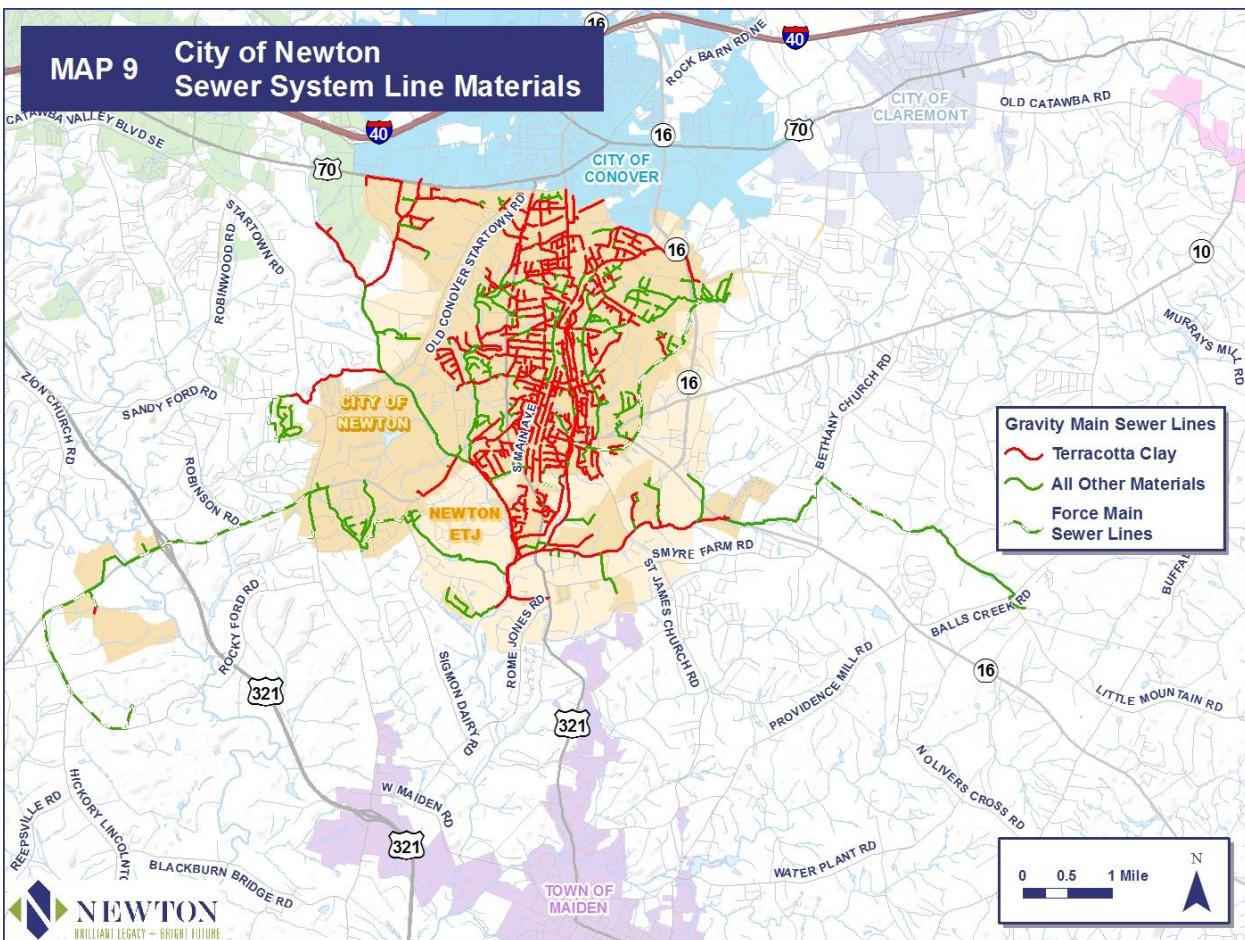
System Overview

Newton's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), The Clark Creek WWTP, has been in service since 1977 and is located on McKay Road. It is permitted to treat 5 MGD per day, but has the potential to expand to 7.5 MGD. The current average demand is 1.7 MGD. Like the water system, the sewer system has been negatively affected by the loss of textile manufacturing. Parts of the sewer system are nearly a century old. The expansion of the sewer system paralleled the water system with an upsize occuring in the 1970s with the growth of textile industries in the area.

MAP 8 — City of Newton Sewer System

Most of Newton's downtown and those areas immediately adjacent to downtown are served with sewer utilities. There are significant portions of Newton west of US 321-B that do not have access to sewer. The system is also hampered by the material and age of most of the service lines. There are 40 miles of terra cotta (clay) pipes in downtown and areas immediately adjacent to downtown. The ongoing downtown streetscape will replace .18 miles of this pipe. Terra cotta pipes, especially older pipes, are subject to breakage, which allows inflow and infiltration of rainwater into the sewer system. Heavy rain events dramatically increase the amount of sewage the WWTP has to treat. (Map 9 shows the material of the sewer lines).
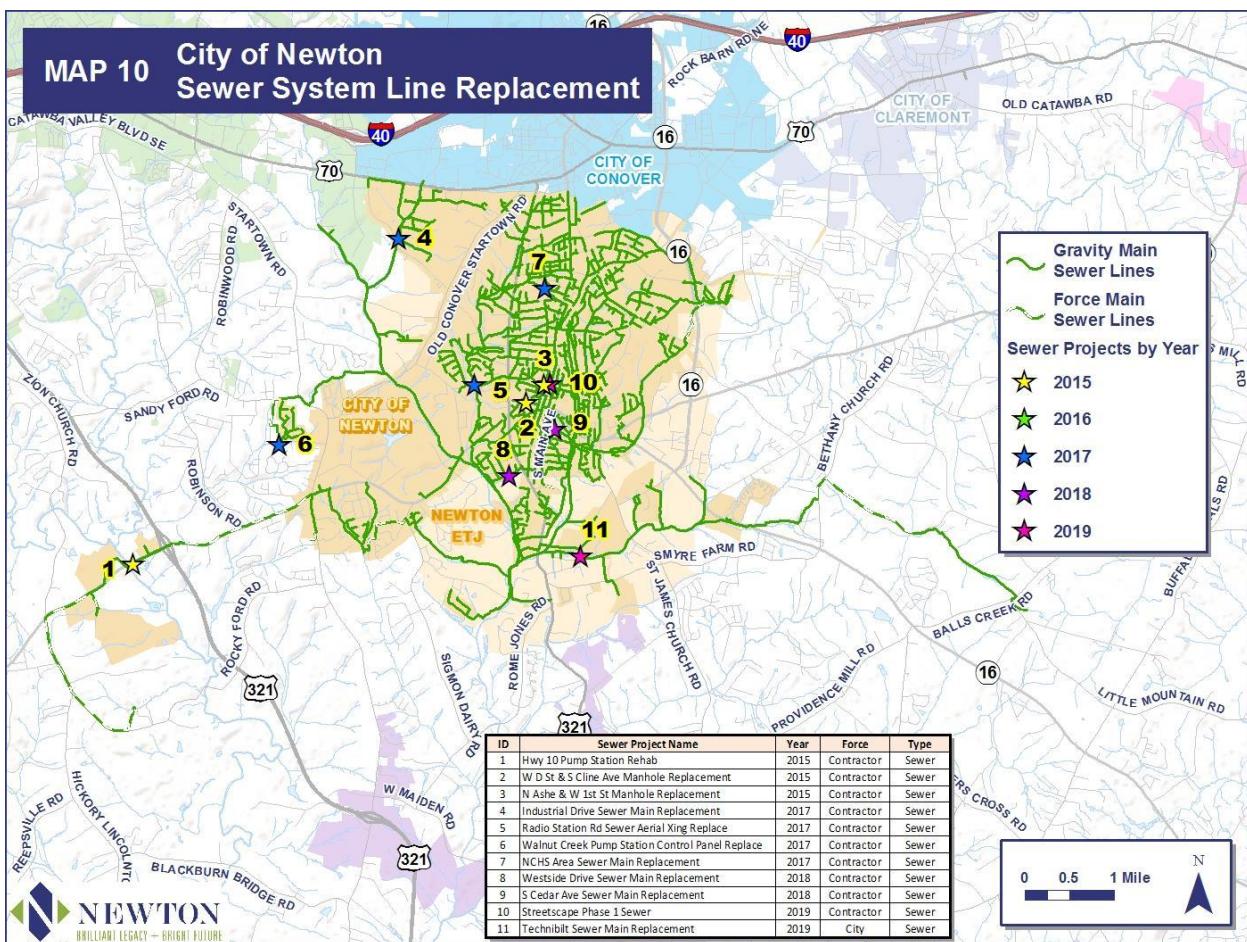
City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

MAP 9 City of Newton Sewer System Line Materials

Gravity Main Sewer Lines
Terracotta Clay
All Other Materials
Force Main Sewer Lines
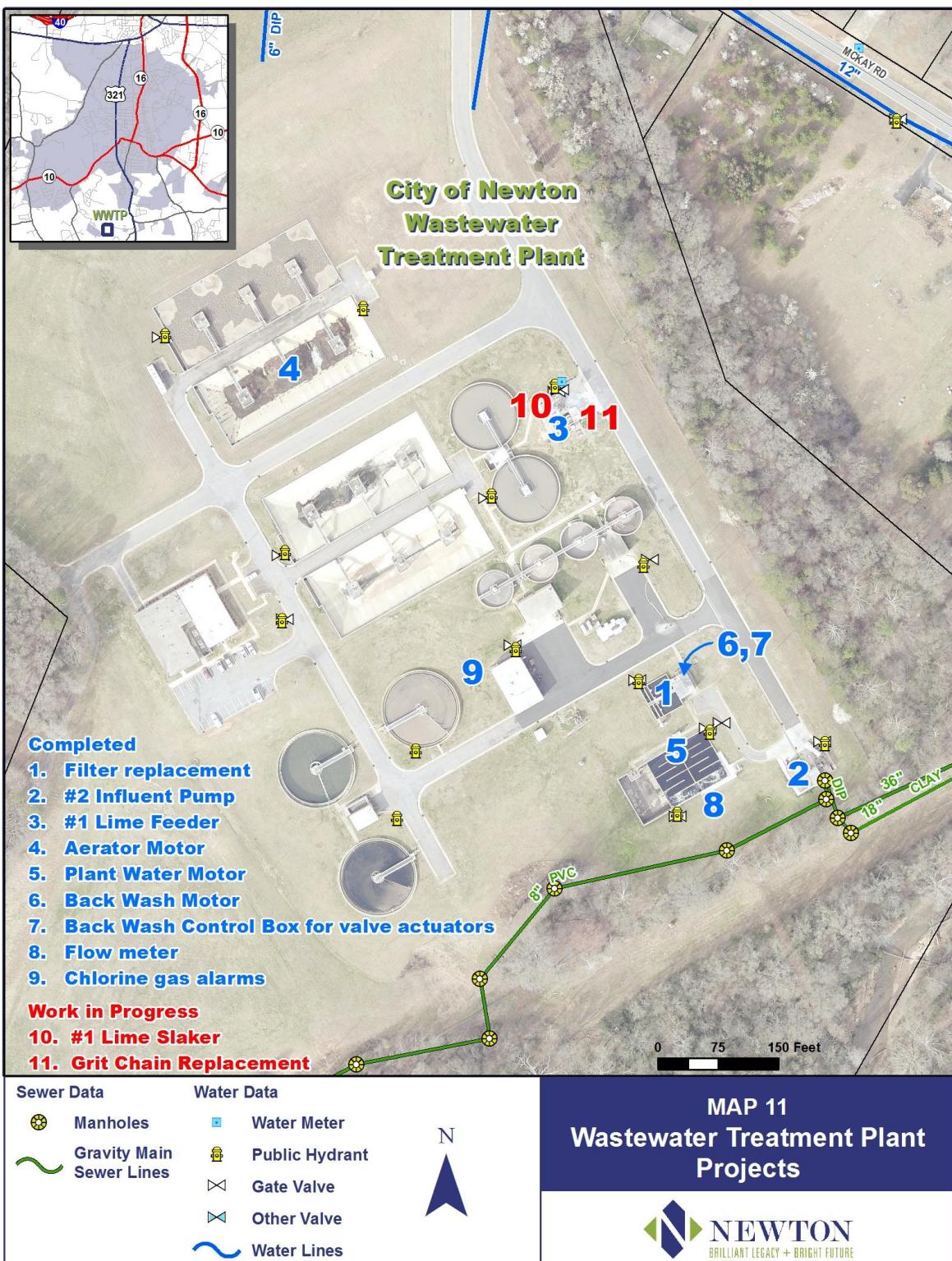
Recent Improvements

The City has taken a progressive approach to upgrading the sewer system, similar to its stance with the water system. It has spent over $3.58 million since 2014 to upgrade and maintain Newton's wastewater system, including spending $528,724 to maintain the WTTP. Recent WWTP projects are detailed in map 11. Major improvements include: the rehabilitation of the Highway 10 pump station, Newton-Conover Highschool area sewer main replacement, Westside Drive Sewer Main Replacement, S Cedar Ave Sewer Main Replacement, Snow Creek phases II, III, IV. Like the water lines, sewer lines are now priority listed by work order volume, and all line maintenance is coordinated with street repairs and paving to maximize Powell Bill funding.

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

MAP 10 — City of Newton Sewer System Line Replacement

Legend:
- Gravity Main Sewer Lines
- Force Main Sewer Lines

Sewer Projects by Year
- ★ 2015
- ★ 2016
- ★ 2017
- ★ 2018
- ★ 2019

ID	Sewer Project Name	Year	Force	Type
1	Hwy 10 Pump Station Rehab	2015	Contractor	Sewer
2	W D St & S Cline Ave Manhole Replacement	2015	Contractor	Sewer
3	N Ashe & W 1st St Manhole Replacement	2015	Contractor	Sewer
4	Industrial Drive Sewer Main Replacement	2017	Contractor	Sewer
5	Radio Station Rd Sewer Aerial Xing Replace	2017	Contractor	Sewer
6	Walnut Creek Pump Station Control Panel Replace	2017	Contractor	Sewer
7	NCHS Area Sewer Main Replacement	2017	Contractor	Sewer
8	Westside Drive Sewer Main Replacement	2018	Contractor	Sewer
9	S Cedar Ave Sewer Main Replacement	2018	Contractor	Sewer
10	Streetscape Phase 1 Sewer	2019	Contractor	Sewer
11	Technibilt Sewer Main Replacement	2019	City	Sewer

0   0.5   1 Mile

NEWTON
BRILLIANT LEGACY – BRIGHT FUTURE

City of Newton
Wastewater
Treatment Plant

Completed
1. Filter replacement
2. #2 Influent Pump
3. #1 Lime Feeder
4. Aerator Motor
5. Plant Water Motor
6. Back Wash Motor
7. Back Wash Control Box for valve actuators
8. Flow meter
9. Chlorine gas alarms
Work in Progress
10. #1 Lime Slaker
11. Grit Chain Replacement

Sewer Data

⊛ Manholes

〜 Gravity Main Sewer Lines

Water Data

▪ Water Meter

⛽ Public Hydrant

⋈ Gate Valve

⋈ Other Valve

〜 Water Lines

N

MAP 11
Wastewater Treatment Plant Projects

NEWTON
BRILLIANT LEGACY + BRIGHT FUTURE

Upcoming Projects

Rehabilitating miles of aged and outdated sewer lines and infrastructure is the primary priority moving into the next decade. Within the next five years, significant portions of the main sewer line will need to be rehabilitated. Sections of the main sewer line on West A Street, East A Street and Main Ave, East 11th St., Mylinda and Glendale, E Herman St, S Forney Ave, and S Cedar Ave are all scheduled for maintenance or replacement. Additional projects on the main sewer line are scheduled within the next ten years. Two pump stations are scheduled to have their Flygt pumps replaced. Additional maintenance to the WWTP will also be needed as it has surpassed 40 years in age.

**Issues Facing the Sewer System**
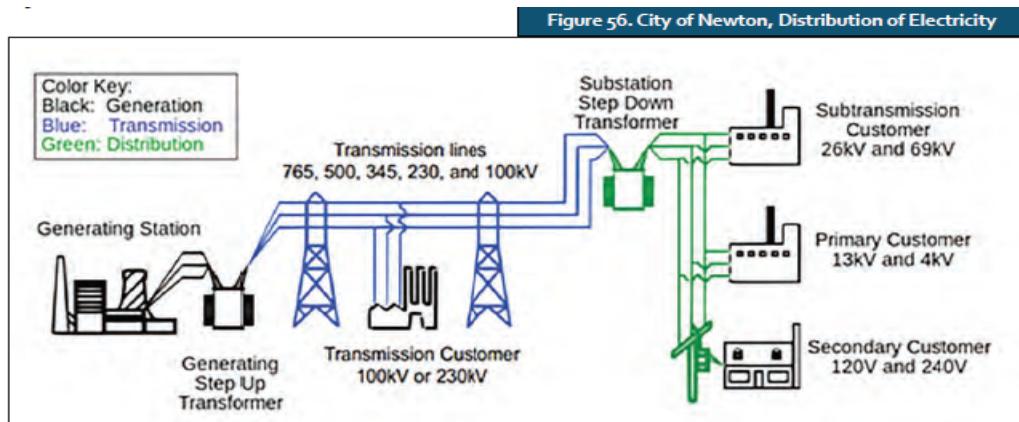
The biggest issue facing the sewer system is the age of the infrastructure. Older terra cotta lines are broken and cracked by tree roots over time. There are 40 miles of clay sewer lines in the City. During rain storms, these broken pipes are infiltrated by rain water that is carried to the WWTP. This water has been treated just like regular sewage. On particularly heavy rain days, the WWTP can treat a flow rate of 12.5 MGD for a short amount of time. A 2004 study estimated that the City was treating an excess of 500,000 extra gallons per day because of inflow and infiltration. Approximately 10% of the sewer lines are treated for root control every year but this does not alleviate the problem. These lines need to be upgraded to modern standard PVC pipe.

Newton Waste Water Treatment Plant

Like the Water Plant , the WWTP will need to have major upgrades over the next decade to extend its life. The WWTP has significant remaining capacity since textile industries moved out of the region. Although the capacity is not used, all the equipment and the facility must be maintained to meet state standards. Another major issue facing the sewer system is possible extension to the Startown area. The citizens of this area have voiced their concerns about being in the City limits but not having access to sewer. If Startown sewer extension were to be undertaken it would be a large project that would take intense coordination with property owners, citizens and entire neighborhoods in order to be completed in a timely and cost-effective manner. A 2017 cost analysis found that it would not be cost effective to extend sewer lines to some, but not all of the Startown community's residents. Additionally, existing homes currently utilizing septic tanks may be unlikely to immediately connect to an extended sewer main line.

Newton Electrical System

Figure 56. City of Newton, Distribution of Electricity
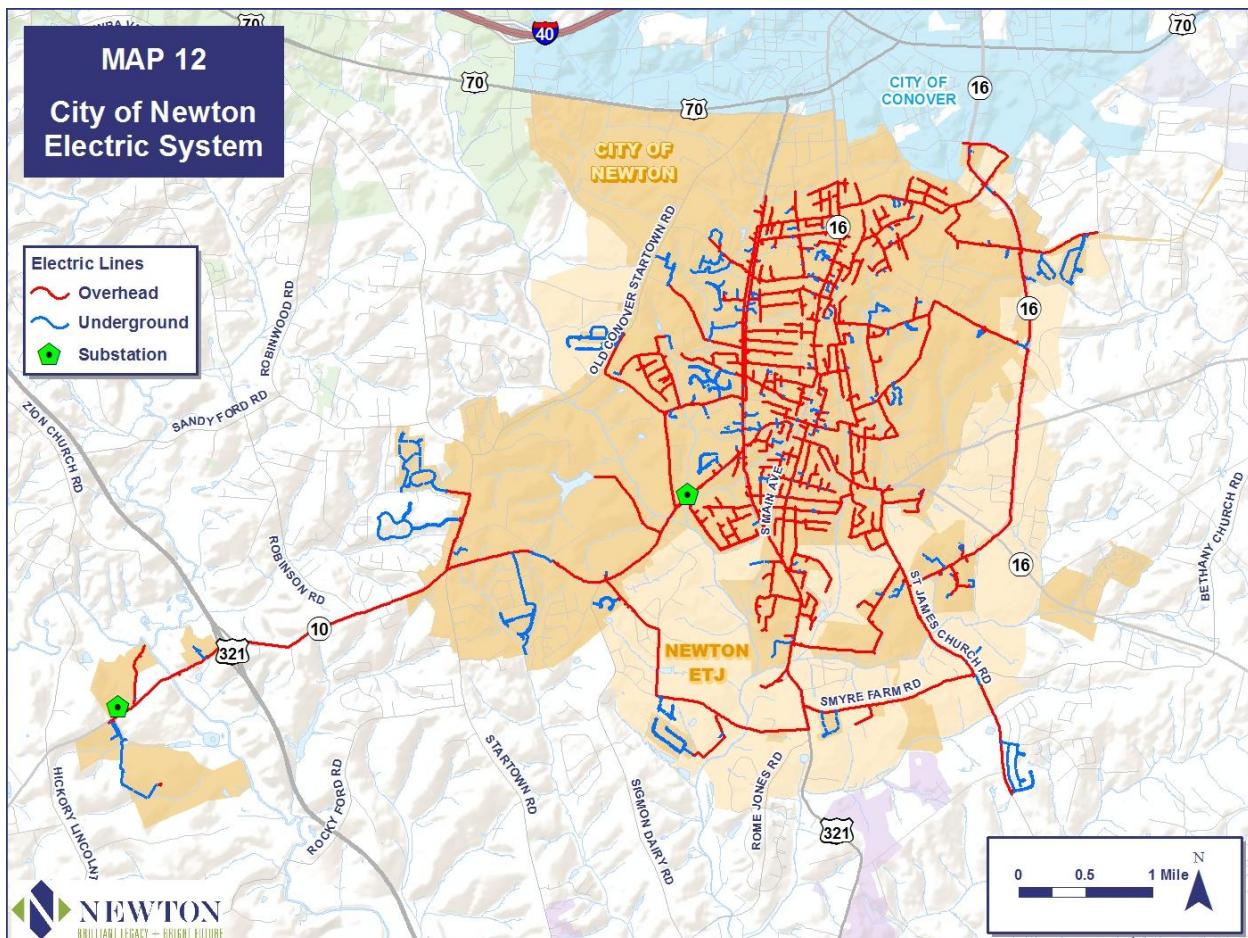
System Overview

Newton is a member of the North Carolina Municipal Power Agency (NCMPA1), which means it is an ElectriCity. This is a group of 19 municipalities in western North Carolina that have a 75% ownership in one of the two reactors at the Catawba Nuclear Plant. This plant is owned by NCMPA1 but operated by Duke Energy and produces 832 megawatts (Mw) of power. Newton owns 2.1146% stake in the plant.

The City is responsible for the distribution of electricity. It operates the substation step down transformer and is responsible for getting the energy from the substation to the point of use. Figure 56 illustrates this process.

Last year, Newton purchased 157,413,460 kilowatt hours (Kwh) from the NCAMP1. Since 2005, electric power purchase has increased 33.8%. The City owns and operates 2 substations. One substation is on NC Highway 10 and the other substation is located at Jacob's Fork Park. The Highway 10 substation has a capacity of 30 Mw and the substation at Jacob's Fork has a capacity of 27 Mw with potential to expand an additional 25-30 Mw.

Newton maintains approximately 125 miles of distribution lines. The average total demand is 25-30 Mw for the City's 3960 residential, 463 commercial, and 30 industrial customers. The usage diversity per Kilowatt hour is as follows: 32.3% residential, 32.9% commercial, and 34.8% industrial. The City has 11 Peak-shaving generators that can supply approximately 19MW, which are employed during peak times of electric use to keep costs low for the City.

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

MAP 12
City of Newton Electric System

Recent Improvements

The electrical system has its own enterprise fund which is fairly robust. As far as utilities provided by the City, electrical is the easiest to establish but the most difficult to maintain. The City has been proactive with this infrastructure as well, spending $1.5 million on SmartGrid projects. For the electrical system, this includes remote-read meters and other equipment that helps automate distribution. Other projects include redundant distribution lines installation, and LED street light. The City is in the process of shifting all of streetlights in the City of Newton to energy efficient LED bulbs.

Upcoming Projects

A location for a new electrical substation and distribution lines have been planned to prepare for anticipated residential and commercial growth. Further SmartGrid, PeakShaving and AMI projects are also planned in order to reduce costs and improve response times. Finally, 10 miles of fiber optic cable will be installed to enable faster communication.
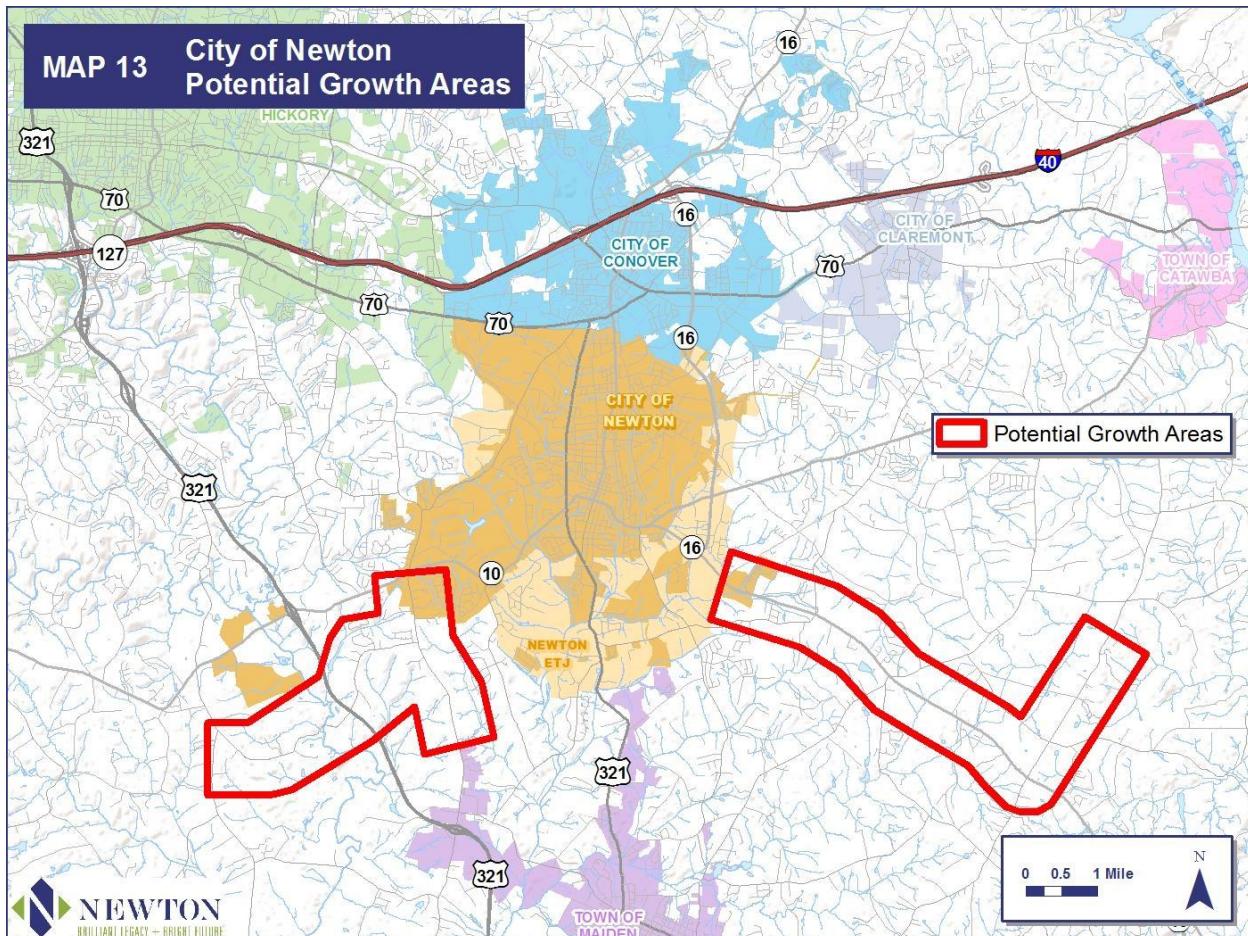
Any expansion to the electrical system has to comply with Federal and State guidelines. The City serves most the customers inside the corporate limits and Duke Energy serves most of the users outside of the corporate limits. Duke Energy also serves many of those within Newton's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction.

When new users move to areas near the City limits, the customer may have a choice for an electrical provider. For most users, the City's rates are very competitive with Duke Energy, but for a large energy user, tenths of a cent difference in the rates could be very significant. Expansion possibilities exist from new service loads around Newton.

The electric infrastructure is also hampered by the cost of redundant equipment. There are 12 diesel generators to be used in case of power outages. These multi-million dollar pieces of equipment are expensive to purchase as well as expensive to operate and maintain.

Future Growth Areas

Map 13 shows the potential growth areas for the City of Newton. Potential growth areas are based on the plans for water line expansion along NC 16 on the southeastern side and along Startown Road on the southwestern side of Newton. If public utilities are extended into these locales, it is likely that these areas could be voluntarily annexed into the City. If annexation does occur in those areas, the City would also have to provide all other municipal services such as solid waste, police and fire protection.

Infrastructure Action Items

Water System

- Continue to prioritize the replacement of aged iron water lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc.
- Move forward on the construction of a two million gallon freshwater storage tank
- Include engineering assessment and planning into the CIP for upgrades to the water plan to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for the next 20 years.

Sewer System

- Include engineering assessment and planning into the CIP for upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for the next 20 years.
- Continue to prioritize the replacement of aged terracotta water lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc.

Electrical System

- Consider the feasibility of developing a new electrical rate structure
- Evaluate the possibility of creating a rate stabilization fund to absorb wholesale increases
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of implementing battery or solar storage peak shaving
- Analyze electrical line extensions into unserved areas

General Public Works

- Collaborate with the City to create a supervisor training program for employees who are promoted to supervisory positions.
- Carry out a man hour needs assessment study in public works to accurately assess staffing levels

City of Newton

2019 Strategic Growth Plan

Transportation

Regional Transportation Setting

The City of Newton is located in central Catawba County. While Newton is not located directly on an interstate, it is well positioned between several major interstate highways and US Routes:

- I-40 east (Statesville and Winston-Salem)
- I-40 west (Hickory and Asheville)
- NC 16 south (Charlotte)
- NC 16 north (Taylorsville and Wilkesboro)
- US 321 north (Hickory and Boone)
- US 321 south (Gastonia)

Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO)

The Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) conducts transportation planning in cooperation with the state and federal government in the four county region of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties. Cooperatively, the Greater Hickory MPO also works with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to develop transportation plans, travel models, thoroughfare plans, transit plans, bicycle and pedestrian plans. Also, the Greater Hickory MPO works with the state on funding issues such as environmental impacts and air quality. The MPO also works with local governments to coordinate land use with transportation planning.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a federally required long-term planning document that lists the transportation improvements and policies to be implemented in the GHMPO area. The plan provides an assessment of future area transportation needs, issues and recommendations, along with future transportation investment recommendations. The MTP is updated every five years and covers a 25-year span.

Project Prioritization Process

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) now uses a transparent, systematic, and data-driven process for prioritizing the major transportation in the state and making investment decisions. Projects are evaluated based on their merit through an analysis of the existing and future conditions, the benefits the project is expected to provide, the project's multi-modal characteristics, and how the project fits with local priorities. Each of the Department's six modes of transportation (highway, ferry, rail, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, and aviation) uses a data-driven approach for ranking projects. The outcome of the Strategic Prioritization Process serves as input for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and likewise the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP).

Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP)

While local area transportation plans provide most of the research and rationale to recommend an overall plan and necessary highway improvements in the area, the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) is a document that identifies the most critical projects and their schedule for design, right-of-way purchasing and construction.
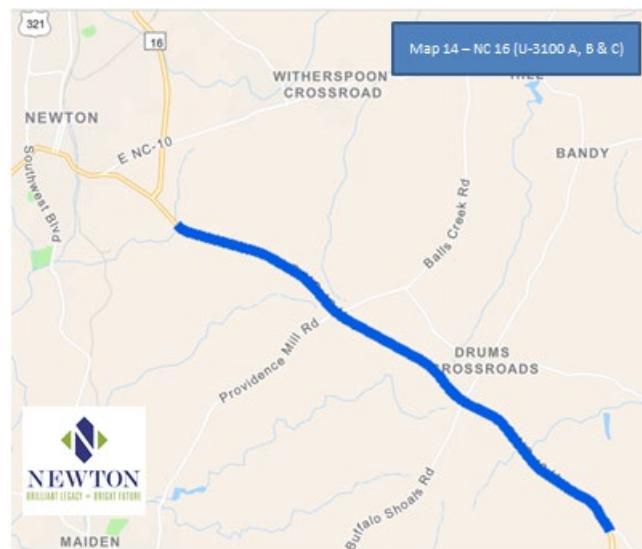
The :TIP, as it is commonly referred to, is a cooperative priority-setting process involving the State DOT and local governments represented on the Greater Hickory MPO. The LTIP sets forth those transportation projects which, based on a variety of criteria, are to receive priority for funding over the ensuing seven-year period for transportation planning organizations across the state.

Transportation Projects in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

NC 16

NC 16 is a major north-south radial serving the Newton-Conover area as well as eastern Catawba County. It also serves as a valuable link to the Charlotte urban area and Alexander County.

The STIP recommends that NC 16 be widened to a 4-lane divided boulevard with a superstreet design from Tower Road (SR 1895) to Claremont Road (SR 1801). The STIP project is listed as R-3100 (A, B and C). Segment "A" from Tower Road to Caldwell Road and Segment "B" is from Caldwell Road to Claremont Road. Segment "C" from Claremont Road to NC 16 has been completed. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled for 2020 and construction is scheduled for 2021.

NC 150
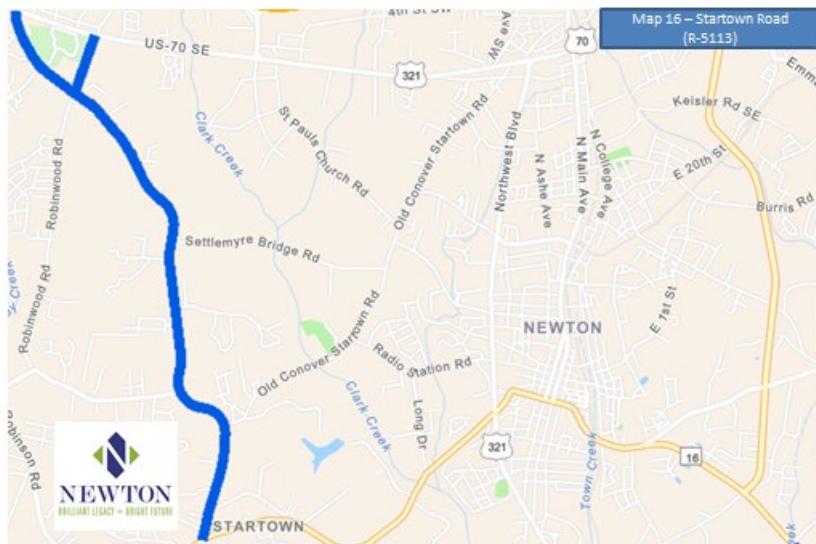
NC 150 is a major east-west route between Shelby, Lincolnton, and Mooresville (I-77). A portion of NC 150 goes through the southeast corner of Catawba County.

The STIP recommends NC 150 be widened from 2-lanes to four-lane median divided from NC 16 in Catawba County to I-77. The STIP Project is listed as R-2307 (A and B). Segment "B" is from I-77 in Mooresville to Harvel Road (SR 1902) in Catawba County. Right-of-way acquisition for Segment "B" is

scheduled to be complete in 2019 and construction is also scheduled for 2019 Segment "A" is from Harvel Road in Catawba County to NC 16 in Catawba County. Right-of-way acquisition for Segment "A" is scheduled to begin in 2023 and construction is scheduled for 2025.

Startown Road (SR 1005)

The major north-south thoroughfare serves travel in the southern part of the planning area. It provides a connection to the regional commercial center off US 70 and the developments along its corridor. Except for congestion on the northern end, no traffic problem currently exists on this facility. The link with the proposed McDonald Parkway, which connects to Startown Road at US 70, will create a north-south system providing service for travel between the southern part of planning area and the core industrial and business districts in eastern and northern Hickory. Traffic on Startown Road is expected to increase to a level that is well beyond the practical capacity of this 2-lane facility.

The STIP Project is listed as R-5113 and recommends that the section of Startown Road between NC 10 to US 70 be widened to a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled for 2022 with construction scheduled to begin in 2024.

US 321

This highway is a major north-south facility serving the Western Piedmont area of North Carolina. It connects the Charlotte/Gastonia urban area to the major furniture and textile industrial area of Hickory/Lenoir and to the tourist areas of Blowing Rock and the Blue Ridge Parkway before it crosses into Tennessee. In the Greater Hickory MPO, US 321 provides a critical connection between the Hickory urban area and other towns in Caldwell County such as Lenoir, Hudson, Sawmills and Granite Falls. In certain sections of this highway, the daily traffic volume will be over capacity by 2020. Other sections will be over capacity by 2030 and 2040.

Currently, the portion of US 321 from US 70 in Catawba County to US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir is programmed in the TIP for improvements and widening. It is listed as Project U-4700 (A, B &C). It also includes B-4450 which is the widening of the bridge over the Catawba River to 6-lanes. Right-of-way money was allocated in the 2018-2027 STIP. Previously, the intersection at US 321 and US 64/NC 18 in Lenoir was programmed in the STIP to be upgraded to an interchange but is not currently listed in the STIP.

It is critical to preserve the remaining integrity of US 321 by strictly limiting any further direct commercial access onto this facility.

Transportation Projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a federally required long-term planning document that lists the transportation improvements and policies to be implemented in the GHMPO area. The plan provides an assessment of future area transportation needs, issues and recommendations, along with future transportation investment recommendations. The MTP is updated every five years and covers a 25-year span.

Burris Road and Extensions (SR 1746)

This 2-lane road serves the industrial area of eastern Newton. Currently, this facility terminates at Travis Road (SR 1734). Extending this facility to Heart Drive (SR 1929) will provide a much-needed connector for traveling between Newton and the City of Claremont. This connection will especially benefit local commuters by providing an efficient alternative for travel between the residential areas in Claremont and the industrial center in eastern Newton. Second, the facility will allow for future development in the area. A rural 2-lane road is recommended.

Catawba Valley Boulevard and Extension (Hickory-Newton)

Catawba Valley Boulevard is located on the south side of the Valley Hills Mall extending from Robinson Road (SR 1146) to Startown Road (SR 1005). This 5-lane facility serves major commercial and residential developments and provides a connecting service between Startown Road and Robinson Road.

The proposed extension will connect Catawba Valley Boulevard to Twentieth Street in Newton and create a major east-west facility paralleling US 70. Due to anticipated high growth on US 70, future travel demands are expected to increase exponentially causing major congestion problems along this facility. This proposed road will also create an efficient route to link Hickory and Newton. A 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median is recommended west of Fairgrove Church Road. East of Fairgrove Church Road, a 2-lane rural cross-section is recommended.

Cloninger Mill Road-Kool Park Road (SR 1400) and Section House Road (SR 1491)

This facility provides a major travel service for the traffic in the northeastern part of the planning area extending from NC 127 in northern Hickory to US 70-A in Conover. The northern section of Section House Road should be realigned to improve the offset intersection at Springs Road. This facility will provide an efficient route for traveling between northern Hickory and I-40 by bypassing Conover's CBD

via the proposed Conover-Startown Road Extension and the Newton-Conover Loop, this facility will also serve as a valuable link for commuters between the residential area in northern Hickory and the major industrial centers in Conover and Newton.

Although no traffic problems currently exist, the future traffic volume is expected to more than double. To accommodate the projected traffic, it is recommended that this facility be widened to a 4-lane boulevard with a grass median.

Conover-Startown Road (SR 1149) and Extension

Currently, this 2-lane facility serves western Newton by providing a connection between Startown Road and US 70. The proposed extension to Section House Road will facilitate the travel between the anticipated residential growth in western Newton and the Conover West Industrial Park off of US 70, as well as other industrial centers off US 70-A in Conover. In addition, the combination of this facility with the Section House Road-Kool Park Road-Cloninger Mill Road will form a major north-south corridor serving the entire central part of the planning area. A multi-lane cross-section is recommended.

Emmanuel Church Road (SR 1732)

This major thoroughfare provides service between NC 10 and the major industrial center in eastern Newton and Conover. Traffic problems are currently being experienced in the vicinity of the Emmanuel Church Road, McLin Creek Road and SR 1739 (Emmanuel Church Rd) juncture. High anticipated growth in the area will further deteriorate the traffic condition on Emmanuel Church Road.

Several improvements are recommended for this facility. Emmanuel Church Road should be extended westward to connect to the proposed Newton-Conover East Loop. Second, the geometry at the Emmanuel Church Road, McLin Creek Road and SR 1739 to connect to McLin Creek Road. Finally the section of Emmanuel Church Road between this intersection and NC 10 should be widened to multi-lanes. These improvements will maximize the efficiency of this facility, allowing it to serve future traffic at a more acceptable level. A 2-lane extension to the south connecting Emmanuel Church Road to SR 1804 (Bethany Church Rd) is also recommended. This extension will create a continuous north-south road serving the area east of Newton and Conover.

Fairgrove Church Road and Extensions

Functioning as a major north-south facility, this project (Previous STIP U-2529) will provide a major service between the southeast and northwest sections of the planning area. As part of the loop system around Newton and Conover, Fairgrove Church Road and its extensions will provide a safe and efficient route for through and truck trips to reach other major routes in the planning area. Currently, traffic must zigzag through a number of discontinuous routes in the Newton area to reach these destinations. The southern extension of the project also will play an important role in the future growth of the City of Newton. This improvement will open up landlocked properties on the west of the city. This facility is expected to carry a mixture of travel, mainly internal and external-internal trips.

It is recommended that Fairgrove Church Road be extended northward to Section House Road and southward to NC 10 in Newton. The extensions are recommended to have a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median. The existing 3-lane section of Fairgrove Church Road should be widened to multi-lanes.

Keisler Road and Extension (Newton)

This 2-lane facility is located in the industrial area in eastern Newton. Currently, it is a dead-end road serving the industrial sites along its corridor. The proposed extension of this facility will create a continuous east-west facility connecting Keisler Road to US 70 on the west and SR 1731(Keisler Dairy Road) on the east. This facility will provide a connecting service for the travel between the industrial area and other major thoroughfares such as Emmanuel Church Road, NC 10 and US 70. It will also open up land in eastern Newton for development. A 2-lane cross-section is recommended for the extension.

McKay Road (SR 2014) and Extension (Newton)

This minor thoroughfare links SR 2013 (Sigmon Dairy Rd) to US 321 in the southern fringe of the planning area. The extension of this facility will connect to Smyre Farm Road (SR 1884) to create a major east-west facility serving the residential communities in southern Newton. A cross-section of two lanes is recommended for the extension.

NC 10

NC 10 is a major radial that serves the southern part of the planning area. Development along the corridor is sparse except for the section through downtown Newton where it serves a mixture of residential and commercial businesses.

The downtown Newton section has been experiencing extreme pressure created by a few factors. First, as a merged facility (NC 16 merges onto NC 10 at this section), traffic volume on this section has been heavy. The second factor is the high number of trucks that use the facility. Coupling with the poor design of the facility itself, these factors have made travel through this section of NC 10 very dangerous, especially during peak hours.

Except for the section east of NC 16, travel pressure on the rest of NC 10 is expected to increase dramatically due to high growth rate along NC 10 corridor. The completed US 321 freeway south of US 70 has relieved some pressure on NC 16, especially truck trips, which also improved the section of NC 10 through Newton. The proposed Newton-Conover Loop will further reduce the travel demand on this section by diverting trips away from NC 10 and NC 16. It is recommended that the section of NC 10 between NC 16 and US 321 Business maintain its current configuration due to impact widening would have on the existing community. On the section of NC 10 between US 321 Business and the US 321 freeway, traffic volumes are expected to exceed capacity for a 2-lane road. Widening to a cross-section of a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median is recommended for this section.

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

Newton-Conover Loop System

This recommended loop system encircles the entire Newton and Conover urban area. It facilitates travel between suburban areas by connecting the radials before they converge to both cities' Central Business Districts. Through and regional travel will certainly benefit by being able to circumvent the busy downtown areas. Most of the proposed construction of the Newton-Conover Loop System will be on new route; however, some existing local streets will also be incorporated. The recommended cross-section for the Loop is a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median. For the benefit of discussion, the Loop has been divided into four parts: North, East, South and West.

- **Northern Portion** - This part of the Loop extends from Twelfth Avenue Drive NE (SR 1441) to NC 16 in Conover to serve the northern part of the City of Conover. The North Loop is a part of the TIP Project U-2531. A portion of this loop is also a part of the North Crosstown Loop.
- **Eastern Portion** - This part of the Loop serves the eastern part of the Newton-Conover urban area from NC 16 South in Newton to NC 16 North in Conover. This facility will remove a considerable amount of through and truck traffic from the downtowns of both Newton and Conover, which will reduce the travel demand on the road system in these areas. The Loop is particularly important to the City of Newton because it opens up the landlocked properties on the eastern part of the City for new development. It also provides the only major entrance to the City from I-40. This portion has been completed.
- **Southern Portion** - This part of the Loop is included in TIP Project U-3450 and extends from NC 16 South to NC 10 in southern Newton. It comprises two new location sections and two existing sections of East "P" Street and East "P" Street Extension between NC 16 and Saint James Church Road. The Newton-Conover South Loop serves traffic that enters the Newton-Conover area from the south, connecting them to the East and West Loop. This facility also provides access service for the projected developments in southern Newton especially the industrial area between US 321 and Saint James Church Road. The Newton-Conover South Loop is programmed as TIP Project U-3450.
- **Western Portion** - This part of the Loop extends from NC 10 in Newton to the proposed Newton-Conover North Loop. It consists of three sections: 1) NC 10 in Newton to Fairgrove Church Road; 2) Fairgrove Church Road itself; and 3) the extension from Fairgrove Church Road to the North Loop. This project is the main part of the TIP Project U-2529. North Crosstown Loop

Southern Corridor

Southern Corridor Currently, NC 10 is the only major thoroughfare that serves the southern part of Hickory and Newton. This 2-lane highway mostly provides for travel to and from the City of Newton. The Southern Corridor has been proposed to serve the area between the NC 10 and US 70/ I-40 corridors connecting four future growth areas in the region -- western Newton, River Road/US 321 interchange, Mountain View and southern Brookford. The link between this project, the Newton-Conover Loop, the Northern Crosstown and Hildebran-Shelby Road (SR 1206)/Costner Road (SR 1780) would form an east-west system in the planning area. This system will facilitate the suburban travel as well as the inter-city travel between Hickory, Newton, Conover, Long View and eastern Burke County.

The recommended Southern Corridor extends from the City of Newton (NC 16 Business) on the east to the Exit 119 in Burke County on the west. The corridor consists of the widening of Settlemyre Bridge Road (SR 1165), River Road at the US 321 South interchange, Bethel Church Road (SR 1176) and Hildebran-Shelby Road (SR 1206)/Costner Road (SR 1780). Between these roads are the new location segments. The recommended cross-section for this project is a 4-lane divided boulevard with a grass median. The Southern Corridor is needed to serve the future travel in the southern part of the planning area. The Southern Corridor is programmed as previous STIP Project U-2532.

*In the previous plan (Greater Hickory Urban Area Transportation Plan – Technical Update #2) the Southern Corridor connected to Exit 121 and 33rd Street in Long View. The alignment in Mtn. View also was further north and went through the Waterford Subdivision and Olde School Subdivision.

Also the alignment has been adjusted slightly north at NC 127.

SR 1806 (Yount Road), SR 1807 and Extensions

Both of these facilities terminate at Claremont Road in the eastern fringe of the planning area. They provide a connecting service between southern Catawba County and the planning area and the housing development along their corridors. The proposed extensions will connect these routes to the Emmanuel Church Road Extension, improving the service between southern Catawba County and the industrial development in eastern Newton. A cross-section of two lanes is recommended.

West A Street and Extensions (Newton)

This facility extends from Conover-Startown Road to Coulter Avenue in eastern Newton. It provides for crosstown travel in Newton and serves a mixture of development along the corridor. The proposed eastern extension will connect West A Street to NC 16. The western extension will connect the facility to Conover-Startown Road. The combination of West A Street and its extensions will create a continuous east-west facility serving the Newton area and connect the major thoroughfares in the area. It will also create opportunities for growth in western Newton area. A cross-section of 2 lanes is recommended for the extensions.

* In the previous plan (Greater Hickory Urban Area Transportation Plan – Technical Update #2) West A Street Extension continued across Milton Street to Startown Road on the west side and connected with First Street Ext. on the east side.

Public Transportation

Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority

The Western Piedmont Transit Authority operating as Greenway Public Transportation, provides van service to residents of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties, and Bus service to residents in the cities of Conover, Hickory and Newton. With its creation on July 1, 2008, the Western Piedmont

Regional Transit Authority became the first rural-urban transit Authority in the State of North Carolina. The City of Newton currently has 33 transit stops along 7.88 miles.

Pedestrian and Bicycling Facilities

Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan

The Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan (WPBP) is intended to improve safety, access, and mobility for cyclists by developing a network of designated routes that connect municipalities and other major destinations in the region. The WPBP identifies needed improvements to existing roadways, prioritize the improvements, and develop a signage plan to mark the identified routes. Currently, there are four routes identified that intersect the city limits of Newton that are highlighted in the WPBP.

City of Newton Pedestrian Plan

As a result of the adoption of the 2015 Strategic Growth Plan, the City of Newton applied for and received an NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant. Consultants from Alta Planning + Design were hired with this NCDOT grant funding and completed Newton's Pedestrian Plan in 2017. This plan contains an analysis of existing pedestrian mobility conditions, policies, and programs within the City of Newton. The 2017 Pedestrian Plan also contains recommendations for improving pedestrian mobility.

Bicycle Facilities
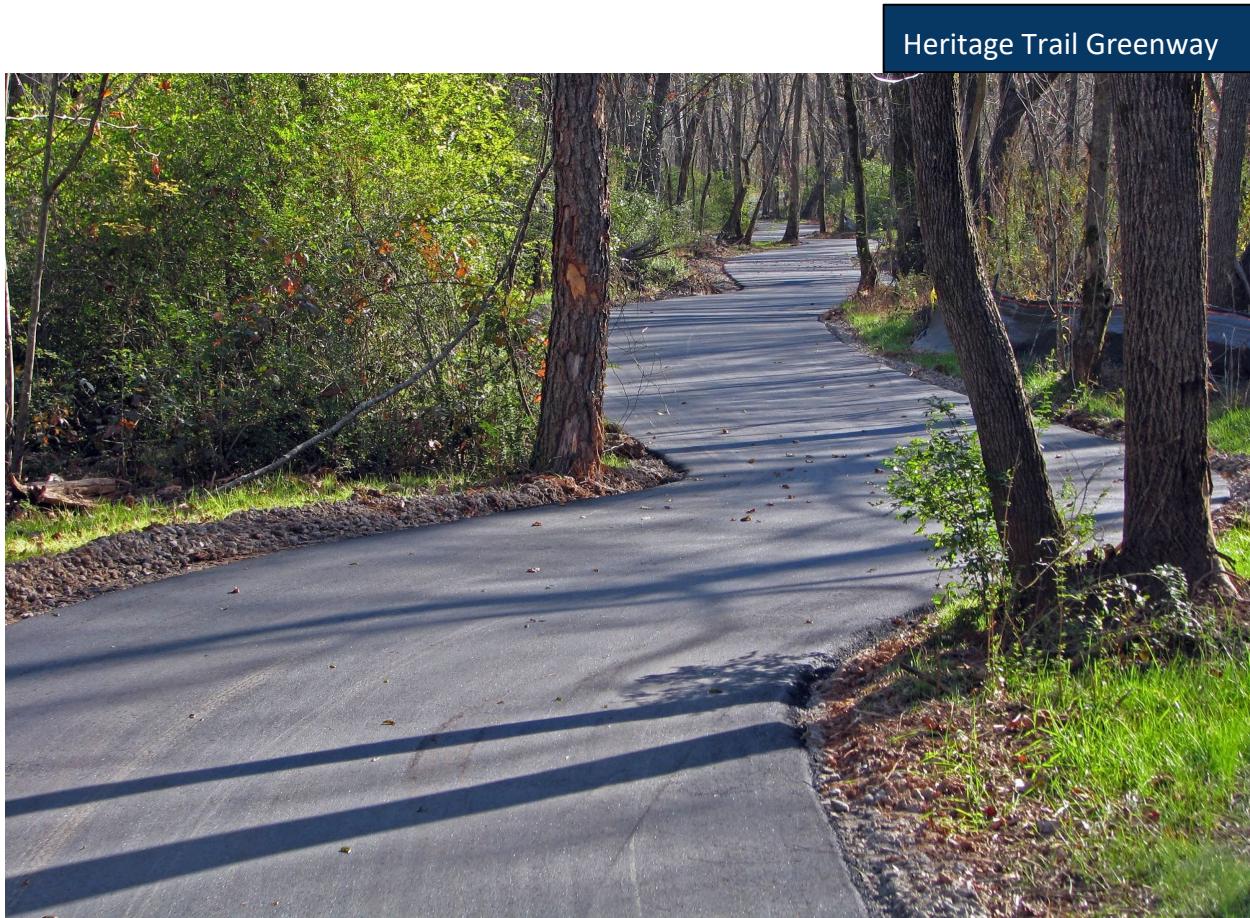
Newton is currently adding bicycle lanes to their downtown as a part of their of the downtown streetscape project. These bicycle lane installations are being made because of recommendations from Newton's 2017 Pedestrian Plan and the WPBP. By 2021, the streetscape project will have installed bicycle lanes on the sections of Main Avenue, West A Street, College Street, and First Street directly adjacent to the 1924 courthouse. Outside of these downtown bicycle lanes, the only designated bicycle facility currently in Newton is the Heritage Trail Greenway.

Greenways

The Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance has proposed a greenway loop around Newton. The trail, which is called the Heritage Trail, will allow the opportunity for cyclists and pedestrians to travel on a system of trails and greenways that would be off-limits to motorized vehicles. The portion of the Heritage Trail

through the southwest area has been adopted as the Catawba County Section of the Carolina Thread Trail.

Map 20 details the proposed "Town Creek" extension of the Greenway trail system in Newton. This Greenway extension would connect Southside Park with the 1924 Courthouse square and downtown Newton.

Heritage Trail Greenway
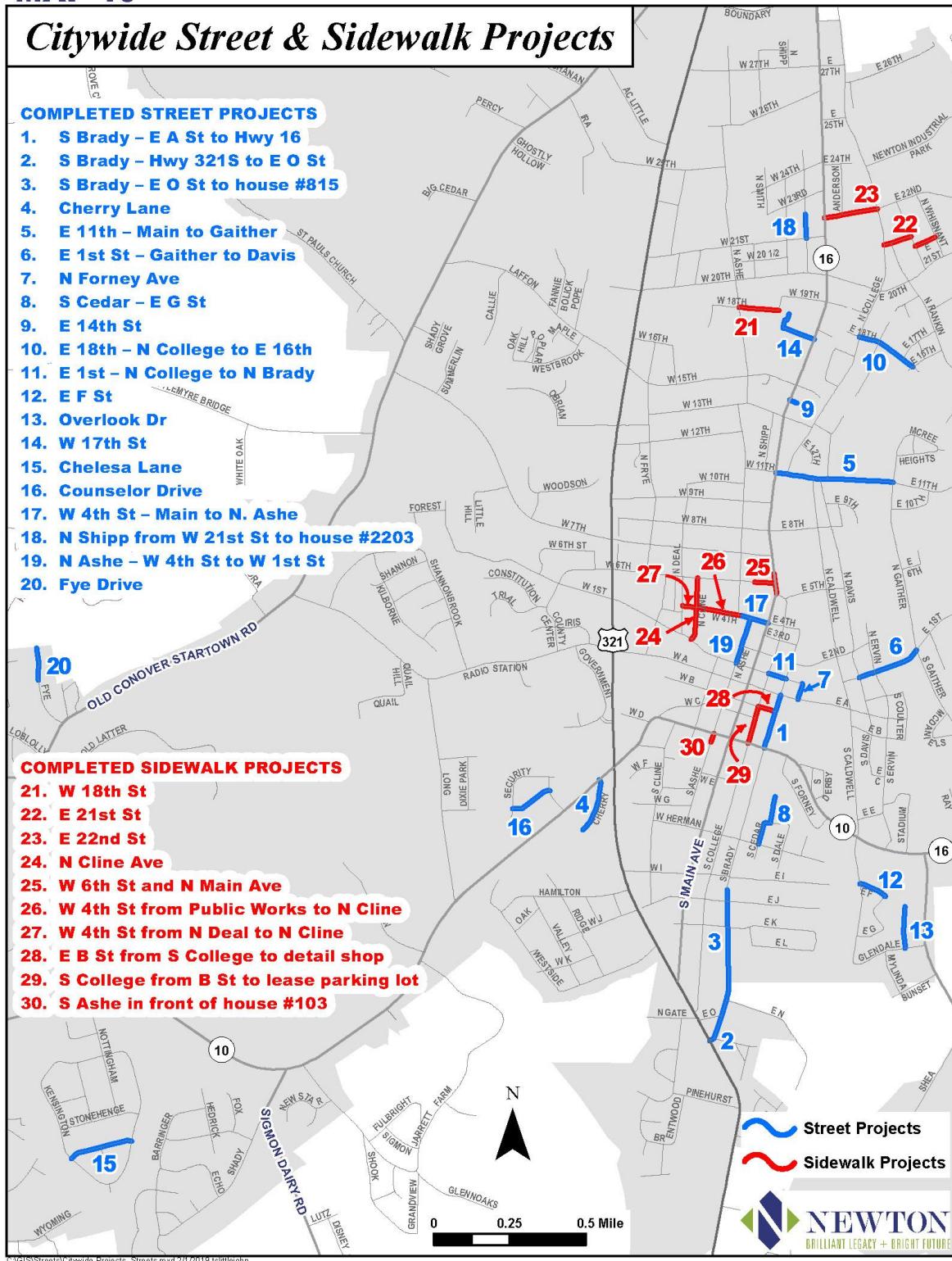
Sidewalks

The majority of existing sidewalks in Newton are located in the core area of the city. This area contains over 25 miles of sidewalks. Notable locations without sidewalks within the core area include the majority of US 321 Business and NC 10/16 west of South Caldwell Avenue. In the southeast area of the city, there are sidewalks along South Brady Avenue in front of the Agriculture Center and in the east side of the city sidewalks exists along East 11th Street and in the Mayfair Subdivision. Map 18 details all existing sidewalks in Newton and the dotted lines recommend extensions to the Newton sidewalk system. Map 19 shows all street and sidewalk projects completed in the City of Newton from 2015-2018.

Map 18 – Existing and Proposed Sidewalks

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

MAP 19

Citywide Street & Sidewalk Projects

COMPLETED STREET PROJECTS
1. S Brady – E A St to Hwy 16
2. S Brady – Hwy 321S to E O St
3. S Brady – E O St to house #815
4. Cherry Lane
5. E 11th – Main to Gaither
6. E 1st St – Gaither to Davis
7. N Forney Ave
8. S Cedar – E G St
9. E 14th St
10. E 18th – N College to E 16th
11. E 1st – N College to N Brady
12. E F St
13. Overlook Dr
14. W 17th St
15. Chelesa Lane
16. Counselor Drive
17. W 4th St – Main to N. Ashe
18. N Shipp from W 21st St to house #2203
19. N Ashe – W 4th St to W 1st St
20. Fye Drive

COMPLETED SIDEWALK PROJECTS
21. W 18th St
22. E 21st St
23. E 22nd St
24. N Cline Ave
25. W 6th St and N Main Ave
26. W 4th St from Public Works to N Cline
27. W 4th St from N Deal to N Cline
28. E B St from S College to detail shop
29. S College from B St to lease parking lot
30. S Ashe in front of house #103

Street Projects
Sidewalk Projects

0   0.25   0.5 Mile

N

NEWTON
BRILLIANT LEGACY + BRIGHT FUTURE

C:\GIS\Streets\Citywide Projects_Streets.mxd 2/1/2019 tslittlejohn

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

Transportation Action Items

Project Prioritization Process

● Continue to work with the MPO to select the best candidate projects for NCDOT's Project Prioritization Process to be included in the STIP

Highway Projects

● Identify Roads that are critical to mitigating traffic congestion and creating links to existing and future arteries in the region

Public Transportation

● Discuss adding at a new Greenways bus stop on Northwest Boulevard near West 20th Street to provide access to the Walmart Neighborhood Market

Bicycle

● Add bicycle lanes to the following streets:
    ○ S Cline Ave (West J Street to West D Street)
    ○ S Brady/North Brady (Southwest Blvd. to E 4th Street to N College Avenue)
    ○ E 20th Street to Rankin Avenue (S Brady Avenue to Newton City limits)
    ○ Extend S Main Avenue/N Main Avenue (Southwest Blvd. to Conover City Limits)

Greenway

● Extend the Greenway from NC 10 to Southside Park by working to implement the Town Creek extension of the Heritage Greenway trail

Sidewalks

● Follow recommendations from the 2017 Pedestrian Plan regarding sidewalk extensions and maintenance, specifically those detailed on Maps 5.1-5.5 of the Pedestrian Plan.

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan
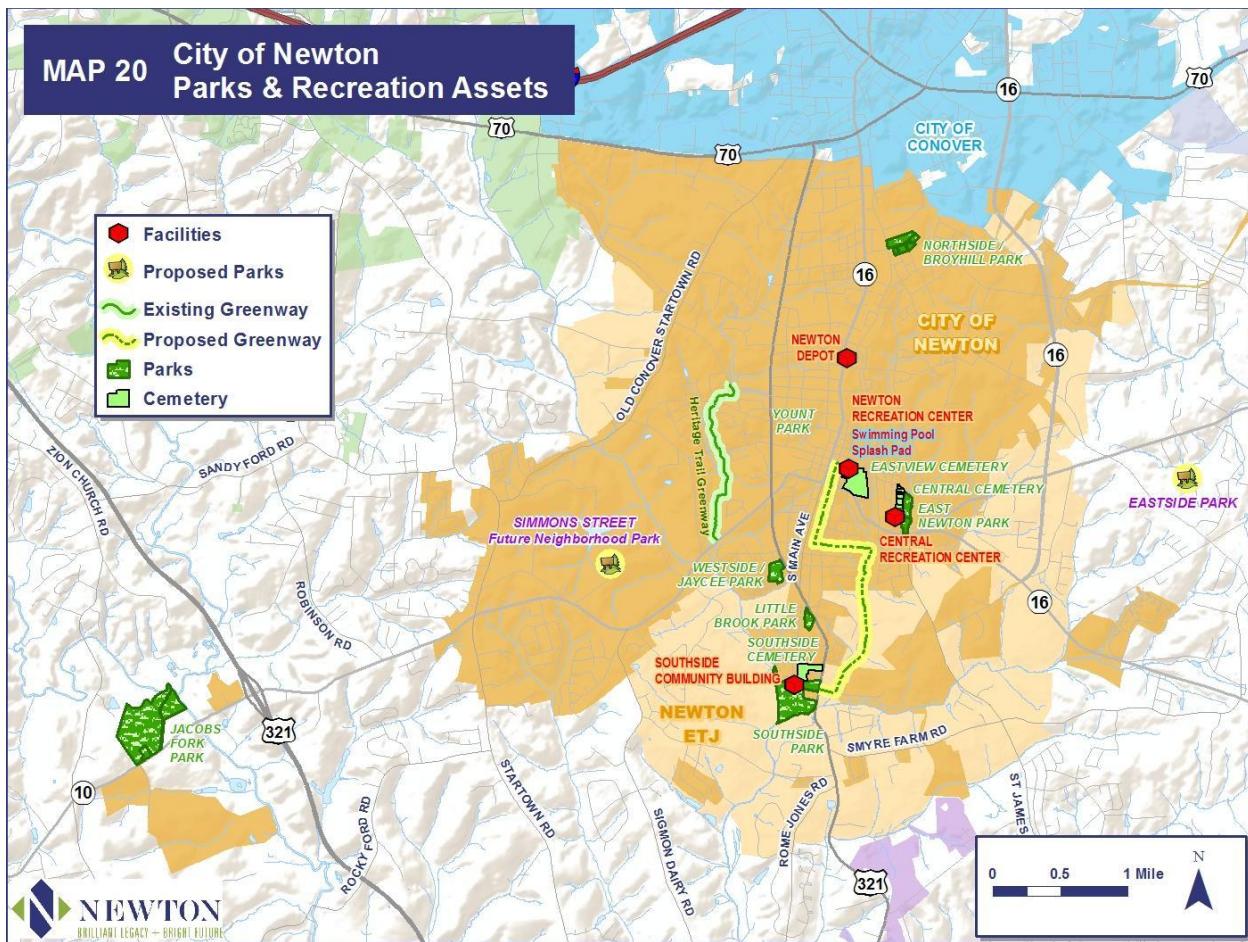
Parks and Recreation

Overview

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for six parks, four community buildings, and three cemeteries (Map 20). From the north to the south, the department's facilities are:

Those who wish to use the Amphitheatre will still have to complete all other aspects of the Special Events Application which I have attached.

Northside/Broyhill Park – 602 East 22nd St. This 12-acre park contains youth baseball and soccer fields, a lighted softball field, two tennis courts, a basketball court, a playground, a walking trail and two horseshoe pits.

Newton Depot – 1123 North Main Ave. This former train depot is available for rent for private parties like every other facility for which the Recreation Department is responsible. It has a kitchen and can seat 60 people. The depot building houses a museum with historical and educational artifacts as well as a model railroad. Behind the museum there are several historic railcars for visitors to tour. The depot also

installed a music pavilion. The Newton Depot draws around 6,000 thousand visitors a year and is seeking to further develop a strategy to attract tourists to the depot.

Yount Park – 29 East A St. Yount Park is a downtown "pocket park" across from the Catawba County History Museum. Yount Park will undergo extensive renovations during phase II of the downtown streetscape.

Newton Depot

Newton Recreation Center – 23 South Brady Ave. The Newton Recreation Center is the Department's headquarters and has the most amenities of all the sites: a gym for basketball and volleyball, an indoor soccer field, walking track, fitness room, three classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and a pickle ball court. The swimming pool and splash pad are both on site and the Eastview Cemetery is adjacent.

Central Recreation Center – 304 South Ervin Ave. This site is also known as the former "Central High School". The gymnasium is still in use, but the classroom buildings behind the gym need to be renovated or demolished. A new HVAC unit was recently installed in the gymnasium to provide Air Conditioning to those using the gym during summer months. East Newton Park and Central Cemetery are adjacent to this site. East Newton Park has a ballfield, shelter, concession area, restroom, concession, lighted basketball court, and a playground.

Westside/Jaycee Park - 1020 Southwest Blvd. This 9-acre park has four lighted tennis courts, a lighted ballfield, a playground, a walking trail, four horseshoe pits and a basketball court.

Little Brook Park – 1330 Southwest Blvd. Little Brook Park is a ½-acre park with picnic tables with a park bench bordering a stream.

Southside Park – 1775 Southwest Blvd. This 27-acre park behind the National Guard Armory has a large open area, a one-mile walking trail, a playground, an amphitheater, two shelter areas, a one mile exercise trial, two sand volleyball courts, and two horseshoe pits. The Southside community building with meeting space for 90 and the Southside Cemetery are located within this park.

Jacob Fork Park – 3730 NC Highway 10. Jacob Fork Park is the City's largest and Newest park. The 100-park has a 2.5-mile mountain bike/hiking trail known as The Woodland Loop Trial, a bicycle pump track, two lighted softball fields, a disc golf course, and a canoe launch.

Heritage Trail Greenway – The Department also maintains 1.5 miles of greenway that runs from West 7th Street to Highway 10 West.

The Frank and Sue Jones Amphitheatre – North Main Ave. in front of the Catawba County History Museum. This amphitheater was installed in 2019 during phase I of the downtown Newton streetscape projects, and is used to host concerts and other public activities.

The Frank and Sue Jones Amphitheatre

Participation Rates

The Parks and Recreation Department collects participation statistics that can be grouped into five categories: tournaments/special events, swimming, league sports, classes, and other. Tournaments and special events attract the highest number of participants. Often these participants and spectators are from out-of-town, so on event days, the Recreation Department's impact on the local economy is significant. Table 4 shows that tournament and special event participation rates have nearly doubled since Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-2014. This is mostly due to the addition of the popular Movie in the Park event series. However, even without the addition of these two events, Tournament and Special Event Participation Rates are up 29 percent.

Table 4. Tournaments & Special Event Participation Rates			
Activity	FY 13-14	FY 17-18	% Change
Cross-Country Meets Combined	1,125	1,465	30.2%
United Way Track Meet	1,000	1,750	75.0%
Soldiers Reunion 5k	455	156	-65.7%
Greater Smokey Mtn. Basketball Shootout	408	216	-47.1%
Time to Remember Luminary Display	200	500	150.0%
Spooktacular Costume Contest	200	150	-25.0%
Soldiers Reunion 30-60-100 Bike Ride	125	275	120.0%
Carolina Select Volleyball	125	149	19.2%
Soldiers Reunion Senior Citizens Dance	75	68	-9.3%
Arbor Day Tree Planting	55	35	-36.4%
Basketball Skills Clinic	50	125	150.0%
Youth Football Camp	30	35	16.7%
Soldiers Reunion Pet Mania	30	75	150.0%
Movies in the Park (3 Dates Combined)	-	1,500	N/A
Western Youth Mites Basketball Tournament	-	144	N/A
Total	3878	6643	71.3%

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan

The swimming pool hosts open swim (which has seen 76% growth since FY 13-14), day camps (573 participants last summer), a July 4th pool party, water aerobics and swimming lessons. Table 5.

Table 5. Swimming Pool Participation Rates			
Activity	FY 13-14	FY 17-18	% Change
Public Swim	1,760	3,114	76.9%
Day camps	831	573	-31.0%
July 4th Pool Party	60	121	101.7%
Water Aerobics	27	32	18.5%
Swimming Lessons	21	18	-14.3%
Total	2699	3858	42.9%

Recreational league sports contribute a smaller number of participants than tournaments and swimming activities, but the numbers of participants in season-long team sports is meaningful. Low-income Newton households that cannot afford to join travel leagues depend on the Recreation Department's sports leagues. The most popular sport is soccer with 405 youth participants and 192 youth indoor soccer participants. Girls volleyball is the next-most-popular sport, followed by basketball, football, baseball, tennis and pickleball. Due to the significant restructuring of some league sports, comparative numbers from FY 2013-2014 were not available. Recreation Director Sandra Waters says that there is an increasing demand for a lacrosse league, and plans to offer the sport as soon as the Department can build a regulation-size soccer/lacrosse field at Jacob Fork Park.

Table 6. League Sports Participation Rates	
Activity	FY 17-18
Youth Soccer	405
Girls Volleyball	224
Indoor Youth Soccer	192
Basketball	176
Football	72
Baseball	66
Youth Tennis	22
Adult Tennis	16
Pickle ball	40
Total	1213

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Table 7. Class Participation Rates	
Co-host with Council on Aging	participants
Senior Citizen Holiday Breakfast	150
Senior Citizen Flu Shots	75
AARP Driver Safety Program	12
Senior Citizen Yoga	23
Senior Citizen Tae Chi	10
Co-Host with CVCC	
Quilting: Back to Basics	13
Quilting: Back to Basics Workshop	14
Needle Fun	17
Needle Fun Workshop	13
Line Dancing	8
Stained Glass: Beginning	19
Stained Glass: Advanced	19
Intermediate Shag Dancing	10
Recreation Dept. Classes	
Scrapbook Classes	30
Rook Club	15
Fitness Room	192
Gymnastics	72
Total	692

During the creation of the Recreation Department's master plan, professional insight from a consultant team consisting of SageDesign and Alta Planning + Design was utilized. Also, members of the Newton community were surveyed and public meetings were held to determine the short-term and long-term needs of the Recreation Department. As a result of this master plan, the Recreation staff has begun to input recreational data into the PRORAGIS database. Utilization of this database allows Newton to have the ability to compare Recreation data with communities of a similar size in North Carolina.

Near-Term Plans: Connectivity and Revitalization

The Recreation Master Plan recommends several near-term considerations:

- **Greenways, Walking, Biking, and Sidewalk Connectivity:** Public meeting participants repeatedly highlighted greenways and improved sidewalk connectivity as a high priority and recreational need. Since this master plan was completed in 2016, a pedestrian plan has been completed. This pedestrian plan assessed sidewalk gaps, connections to schools, and linkage of parks, as well as the possibility of adding crosswalks, signage, and curb cuts. The streetscape project downtown will implement some of the actions suggested by the Pedestrian Plan. Continued implementation of this plan should be a primary priority.

- **Staff:** The town of Newton provides a wide range of programs, special events, and activities for residents and visitors. The Master plan consulting team found that, based upon the number of staff and programs provided, Newton is currently maximizing resources for programs. In order to keep up with trends and resident program needs, the City of Newton should assess the feasibility of providing additional staff in order to help meet increasing demand for programming. This additional should be focused on special populations (including the Hispanic and Hmong populations), special events, and park maintenance.

Long Term (5-10 years) Plans: Expansion of Existing Parks & Future Growth

During the creation of the Recreation Department's master plan, professional insight from a consultant team consisting of SageDesign and Alta Planning + Design was utilized, members of the Newton community were surveyed, and public meetings were held to determine the short-term and long-term needs and direction of the Recreation Department. The Recreation Master Plan recommends several long term considerations:

- **Expansion and Growth:** Since 2010, the Newton Recreation department has added a number of new facilities including: a disc golf course, a mountain bike trail at Jacob's Fork Park, lighting for the softball field at Jacob's Fork, a downtown amphitheater, and a splash pad. The Recreation Master Plan states "while the results of all the past studies, growth, and recreational needs don't illustrate the immediate need for new park development, it is recommended that Newton plan for future growth as land is still available in the areas identified as 'gaps in service area [by the Masterplan]'. These are areas that fall outside the walking radius and also fall within the area identified on the demand analysis maps." Based on Master Plan survey responses the creation of a dog park is a high citizen priority. The Newton City Council is also considering the addition of several pocket parks in Newton to reach previously underserved communities within Newton. In addition to the potential for a dog park and "pocket parks", phases II & III of the development of Jacob's Fork Park are still under consideration. These phases would add a regulation size soccer field to the Jacob Fork Park. As Newton grows and demand for programming increases, it may become necessary to consider the creation of additional parks in order to meet the needs of citizens.

Public Safety

The City of Newton has a professional Police Department and Fire Department that provides services to citizens 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The fire department has a total staff of 48 members. There are 47 employees in the Police Department. Both departments employ full-time, part-time and support personnel.

Newton Police Department

Structure of the Department

The Newton Police Department has 35 sworn full-time police officers, 1 sworn part-time police officers, 9 full-time, and 2 part-time support staff positions. The department is comprised of the patrol division, criminal investigations division, and support services division. The patrol division operates on the basis of five 12-hour shifts, two permanent day shifts, and two permanent night shifts. Newton's police force does rotate day and night shift personnel. Each road patrol shift is managed and supervised by a lieutenant and sergeant. The City is divided into four patrol zones. Patrol officers are assigned to each of the four zones with the lieutenant and sergeant providing backup assistance.

Officers are dispatched to incidents by the Newton police department's emergency communication center, which is staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The emergency communication center was recently renovated. During the renovations, the emergency communication technology in the center was upgraded to improve the storage of communication data and the speed of dispatch locations.
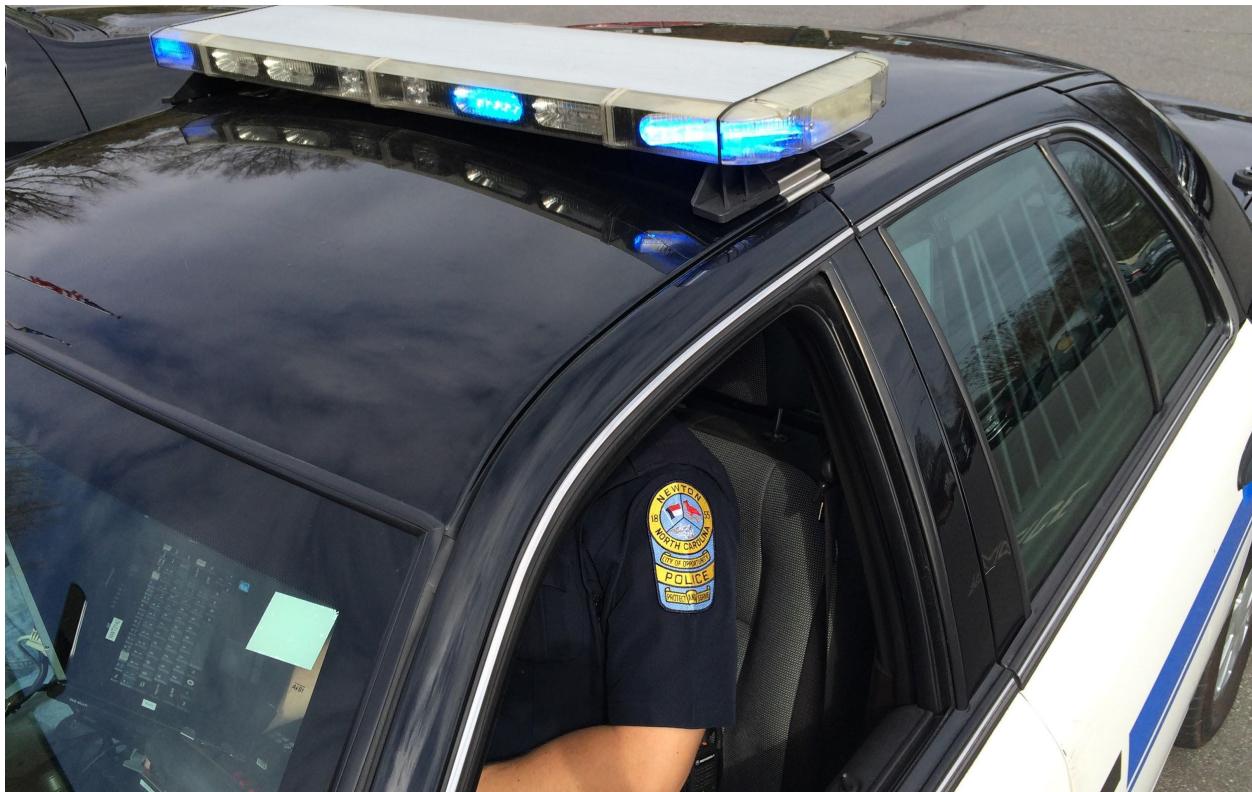
The City of Newton has one sworn full-time police officer for every 371 citizens. Table 8 compares Newton's officer-to-citizen ratio to other municipalities in the region.

Table 8. Municipality Police Officer-to-Citizen Ratio				
Municipality	Sq. Mi.	Population	Full-time Police	Ratio of Population to Full-time Police
Newton	13.1	12,991	35	371/1 Officer
Hickory	29.2	40,157	116	346/1 Officer
Conover	10.6	8,288	27	307/1 Officer
Lenoir	18.6	17,890	42	426/1 Officer
Morganton	19.1	16,478	60	275/1 Officer
Lincolnton	8.2	10,574	33	320/1 Officer
Gastonia	49.7	74,381	170	437/1 Officer

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year, American Community Survey, police data obtained from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting data for 2016

Impact of Annexation

With the large annexation of the Startown community in 1988, the city limits almost doubled in size. This caused a realignment of patrol zones to include the newly annexed property and the addition of four new officers to the police department. If Newton's infrastructure is expanded and there are new annexations into the City limits, the police force will once again need to be expanded and new facilities erected. An expansion of facilities of personnel would be very costly and require a great deal of advanced coordination and planning.

Community Policing

Community policing began in Newton in 1991 when the department adopted the Community Oriented Policing Approach in an effort to reduce violent crime and drug activity. Community Policing builds a strong bond between the community and police officers. Officers have more day-to-day interaction with the community; this gives the officers an opportunity to address specific policing concerns. After former Newton Police Chief Don Brown was elected Sheriff of Catawba County in November 2018, Newton hired a new police chief, Vidal Sipe. Chief Sipe has placed a significant emphasis on the importance of community policing since becoming police chief in February of 2019.

Chief Sipe issued the following statement on community policing:

"The Newton Police Department is committed to building and maintaining relationships with the community while providing the highest quality of police service to keep our citizens and visitors informed and safe. Community policing is the philosophy of our department and is embraced by every member of this organization. We will communicate with the citizens of Newton and share some of our on-going efforts in order to maintain and build public trust.

The Newton Police Department will continue to partner with our community and maintain the confidence of those whom we serve through the daily efforts of our entire staff. We will conduct ourselves in a professional manner while enforcing state and federal laws as well as local ordinances. Our staff will treat everyone whom we come in contact; with dignity and respect without prejudice or favor to any specific group or individual.

Through the public's trust and support, the Newton Police Department will provide a safe environment for our community to thrive."

In addition to this statement, Chief Sipe has been instrumental in establishing regularly scheduled public meetings in East Newton. East Newton is home to many of Newton's African-American citizens. These regularly scheduled meetings have allowed the East Newton community to have a voice in the affairs of the City. Previous to these meetings many in the East Newton community felt that their voice went unheard by the City.
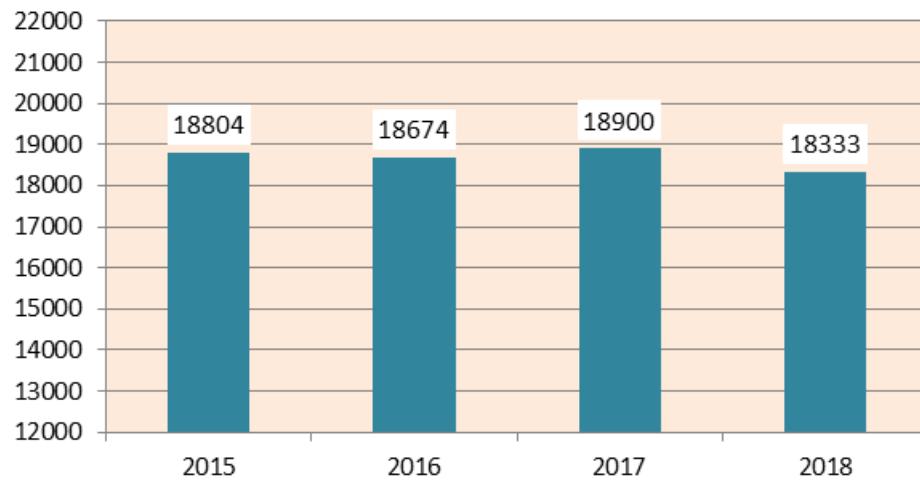
Several positive changes have already occurred as a result of these meetings. First, an HVAC unit was installed in the Central High School gymnasium. Central High School was a segregated African-American high school from the Jim Crow Era that is located in East Newton. Central High School has since been converted into a parks and recreation facility. This HVAC unit allows visitors to play air conditioned indoor basketball during the summer months. Temperatures in Newton frequently reach the upper 90s during the summer, so the air conditioning reduces the likelihood of dehydration or heat stroke for athletes in the gymnasium. Secondly, the East Newton park which had been closed temporarily due to safety concerns was reopened. These significant changes and several smaller changes have begun to rebuild trust between the East Newton Community and the City of Newton.

Further, community policing plans that are currently under consideration include; the hiring of a full-time downtown police officer, diversifying the police force to remove lingual and cultural barriers between officers and the community, and expanding community outreach.

Service Calls

Figure 57 charts the number of service calls the police have received from 2015-2018. A service call is a request from a citizen for law enforcement response. Since 2015, calls for service have actually dropped 2.5%. However, since 2015, calls for service have remained relatively constant (within a 600-call range). This stability and slight decrease in the number of calls for service, is likely reflective of improved community partnerships and improving economic conditions in Newton.

Figure 57. Police Calls for Service 2015-2018

Criminal Activity in Newton since 2015

Table 9 and Table 10 show criminal activity according to index crimes in Newton. These index crime categories conform to the nationally accepted Uniform Crime Reporting system (URC) and are referred to as Part I crimes. Part I crimes are considered serious in nature and/or cause injury to someone during the commission of the crime; part I crimes are sorted between crimes against property and crimes against persons. Table 9 shows the property related crimes reported in Newton from 2015 to 2018. Overall, property crimes have decreased since 2015. However, the individual categories of property crimes of Burglary, Auto Theft, and Arson have increased steadily since 2015. The increases in these individual categories is interesting, because economic conditions have improved significantly since 2015.

Table 9. City of Newton, Property Crimes 2015-2018

Crime	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2015-2018
Burglary	95	103	126	135	42.11%
Residential	71	71	87	71	0.00%
Non-Residential	24	32	39	64	166.67%
Larceny	342	299	273	273	-20.18%
Auto Theft	12	13	14	15	25.00%
Arson	3	1	4	6	100.00%
Property Totals	452	416	417	429	-5.09%

Table 10 shows violent crimes against persons reported in Newton from 2015-2018. No murders have occurred in this four-year span, and the incidents of rape have decreased by over 50%. All other categories of violent crimes, except individual robbery, have increased since 2015 with a 40% increase in assaults. This increase in violent crime is again especially concerning given the strong economic conditions in Newton during the year of 2018. However, when property and violent crimes are combined, Part I crimes are down 2.5% since 2015.

Table 10. City of Newton, Violent Crimes 2015-2018

Crime	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2015-2018
Murder	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Rape	9	5	2	4	-55.56%
Robbery	6	5	4	8	33.33%
Commercial	2	1	2	5	150.00%
Individual	4	4	2	3	-25.00%
Assault	40	27	42	56	40.00%
Totals	55	37	48	68	23.64%

L.E.A.D Policing in Newton

Since 2015, Newton has implemented a Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (L.E.A.D.) program. L.E.A.D. is a pre-arrest diversion program that utilizes officer discretion to divert low level drug offenders from the traditional criminal justice system and into treatment. This linkage to services operates within a harm reduction framework to include intensive case management. In 2017, the N.C. Department of Public Safety estimated the cost of inmate incarceration is $85.18 per day. The N.C. Department of Public Safety also estimated the daily cost per L.E.A.D. case was $29.17 which is nearly one-third the price of incarceration. In the Newton program, L.E.A.D. participants were almost 80% less likely to be arrested within the first 6 months.

Newton Police Department Arrests

Table 11 illustrates the number of arrests made by Newton Police from 2015 to 2018 for property crimes. Arrests have increased slightly despite an overall decrease in reported crimes. However, the increase in burglary, arson, and auto theft arrests align with increases of reported crimes in those individual categories.

Table 11. Arrests made by Newton Police for Property Crimes

Crime	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2015-2018
Burglary	11	26	22	23	109.09%
Residential	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Non-Residential	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Commercial	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Larceny	58	84	58	45	-22.41%
Auto Theft	1	5	6	4	300.00%
Arson	0	3	1	1	100%
Property Totals	70	118	87	73	4.29%

Table 12 charts the arrests made by the Newton Police Department from 2015 to 2018 for violent crimes. The increase in violent crimes reported appears to be linked to the increase in the number of arrests for violent crimes.

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Table 12. Arrests made by Newton Police for Violent Crimes

Crime	2015	2016	2017	2018	% Change 2015-2018
Murder	1	0	0	1	0.00%
Rape	2	0	0	0	-200.00%
Robbery	4	3	1	4	0.00%
Commercial	2	0	0	2	0.00%
Individual	2	3	0	2	0.00%
Assault	18	21	18	24	33.33%
Totals	25	24	19	29	16.00%

Criminal Activity in Newton relative to County Unemployment Rate

Figure 58 charts Part I Crimes, violent and property, against the Catawba County unemployment rate over the 2010-2018 time period. Figure 58 shows a negative correlation between the number of unemployed workers in Catawba County and Part I Crimes. This suggests that as the number of unemployed decreases so does the number of Part I crimes. However, crime has increased slightly since 2016 despite decreases in the number of unemployed workers.

Figure 58. Comparison of Newton's Part I Crimes Reported with Catawba County Number of Unemployment, 2010-2018

|	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Part I Crimes Reported	666	623	497	468	471	507	453	465	497
Unemployed Catawba County	10,246	9,037	7,779	6,459	4,683	4,142	3,640	3,238	2,761
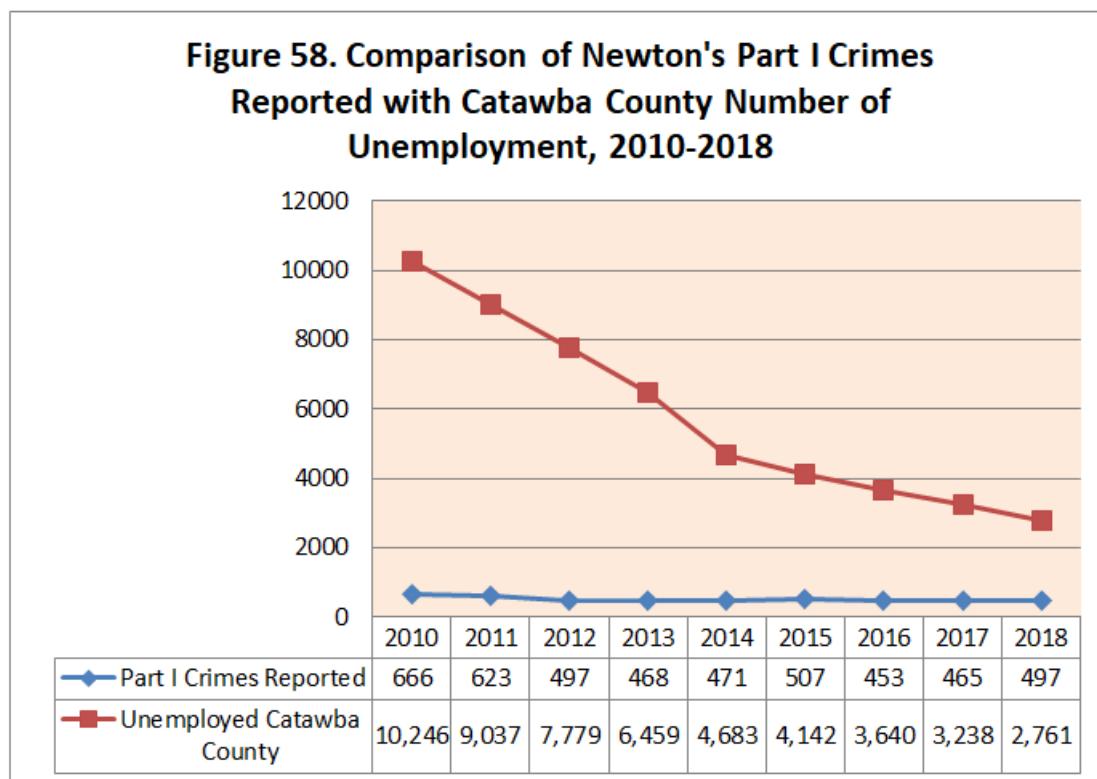
Figure 59 compares the Catawba County unemployment rate to the occurrences of auto theft and arson in the city of Newton. Similar to figure 58, Arson and auto theft decreased in correlation with the unemployment rate from 2010 until 2016 before increasing slightly from 2016-2018.

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Figure 59. Catawba County Unemployment Rate, Auto Theft and Arson Crimes, City of Newton
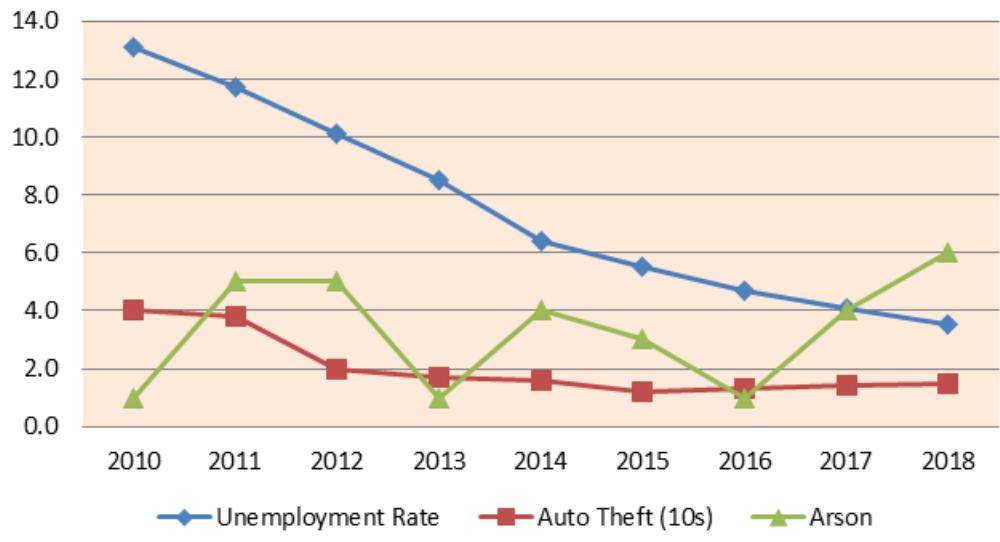
Figure 60 compares the Catawba County unemployment rate to the occurrences of assaults and robberies in the City of Newton. Assault and robbery peaked in 2013 before decreasing until 2016 and 2017 respectively. In 2018, both assault and robbery both increased.

Figure 60. Catawba County Umeployment Rate, Assault and Robbery, City of Newton
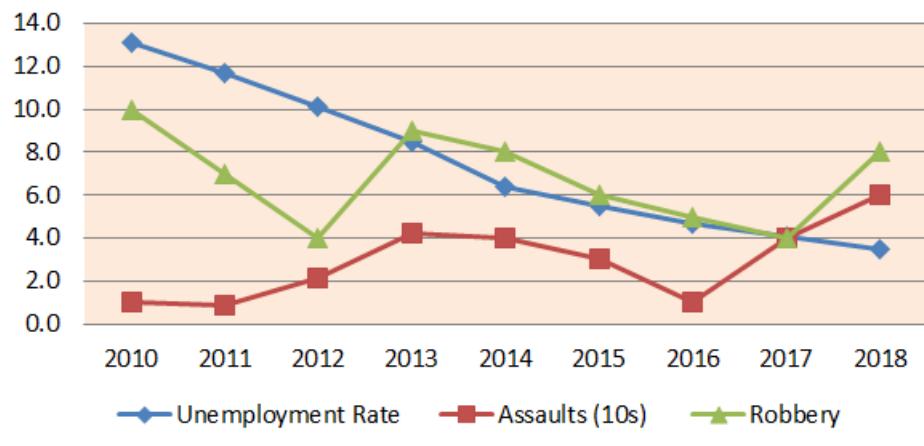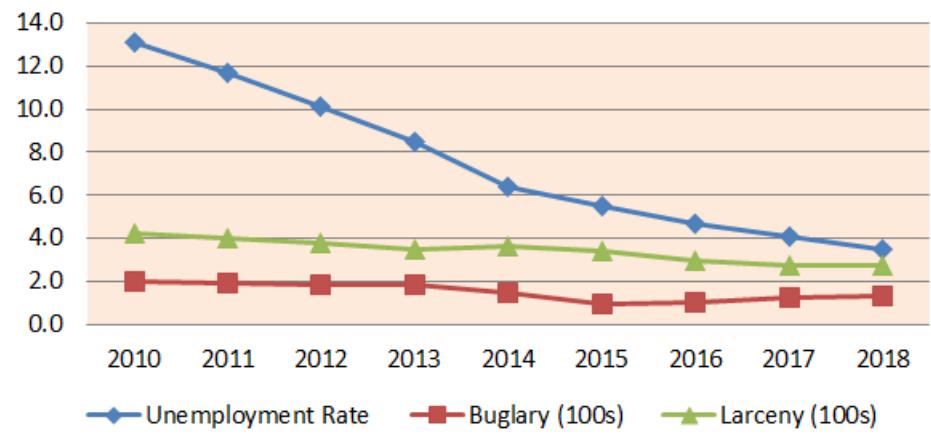
Figure 61 compares the Catawba County unemployment rate to the occurrences of burglaries and larcenies in the City of Newton. The number of both burglaries and larcenies have remained low from 2010 to 2018.

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Figure 61. Catawba County Unemployment Rate, Buglary and Larceny, City of Newton

Traffic Concerns

MAP 21

City of Newton
Motor Vehicle Accidents
January 2017 to December 2018
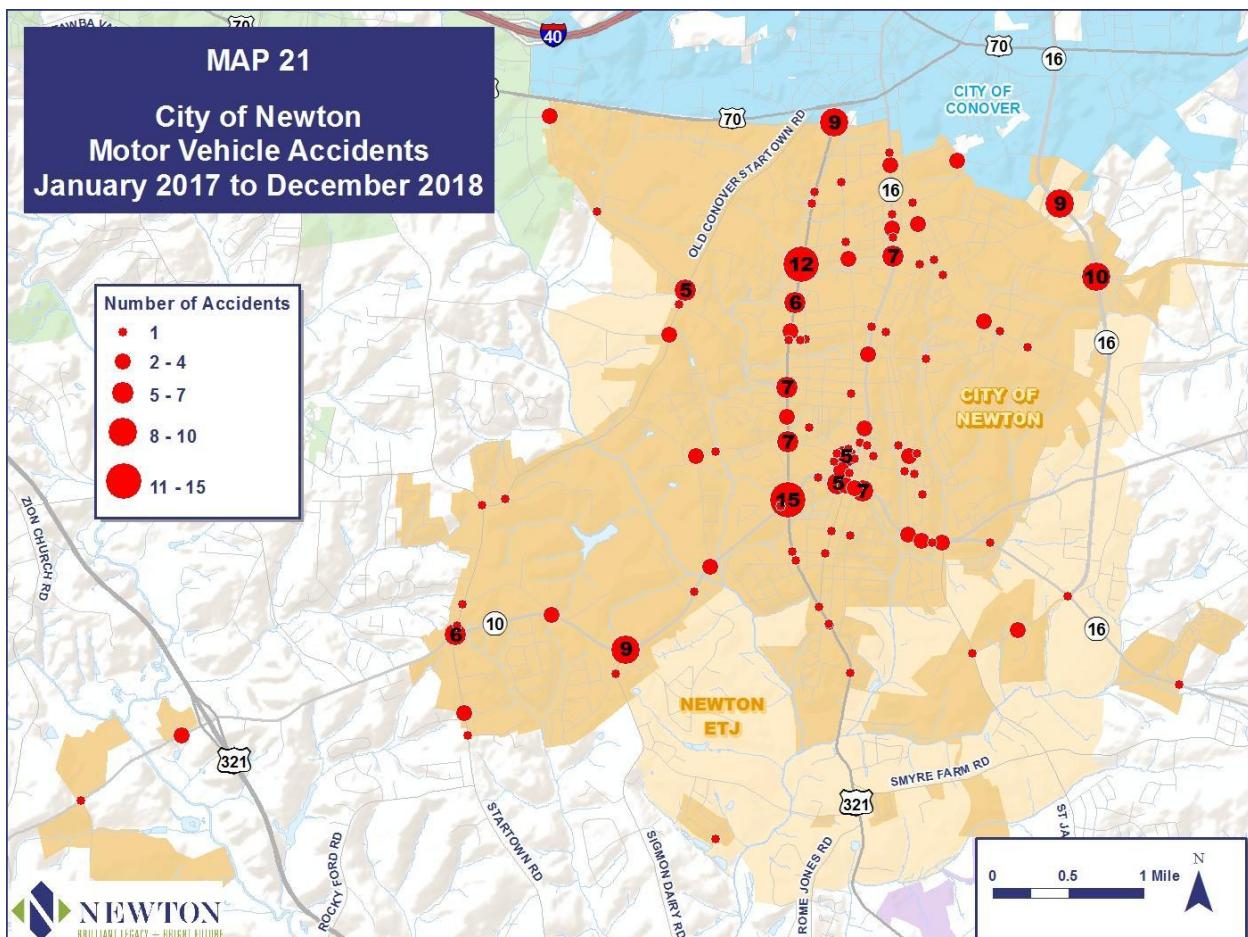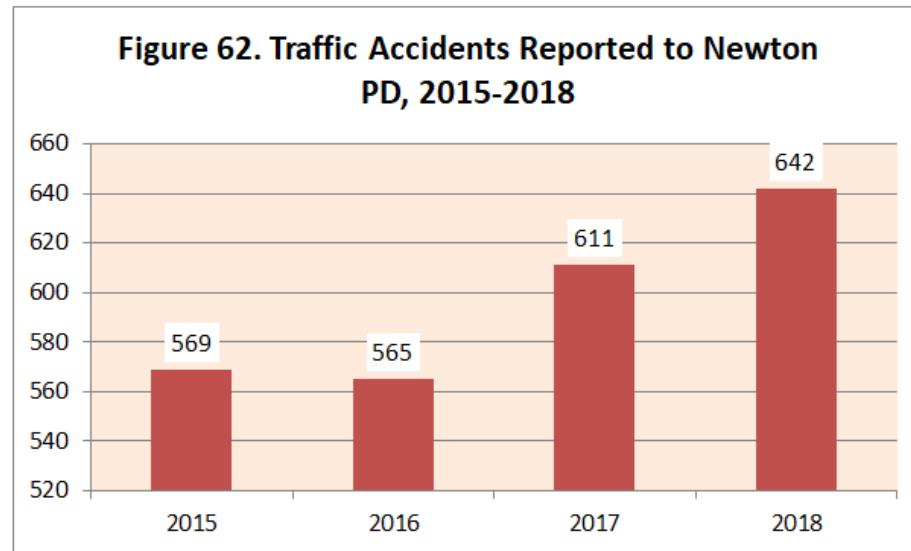
Figure 63 shows traffic accidents in Newton from 2015-2018. Since 2015, traffic accidents have increased 12.8%. Map 21 shows the distribution of traffic accidents from 2015-2018. Most accidents happen along high-traffic routes, such as US 321-B (Northwest and Southwest Blvd), and Main Avenue.

Figure 62. Traffic Accidents Reported to Newton PD, 2015-2018
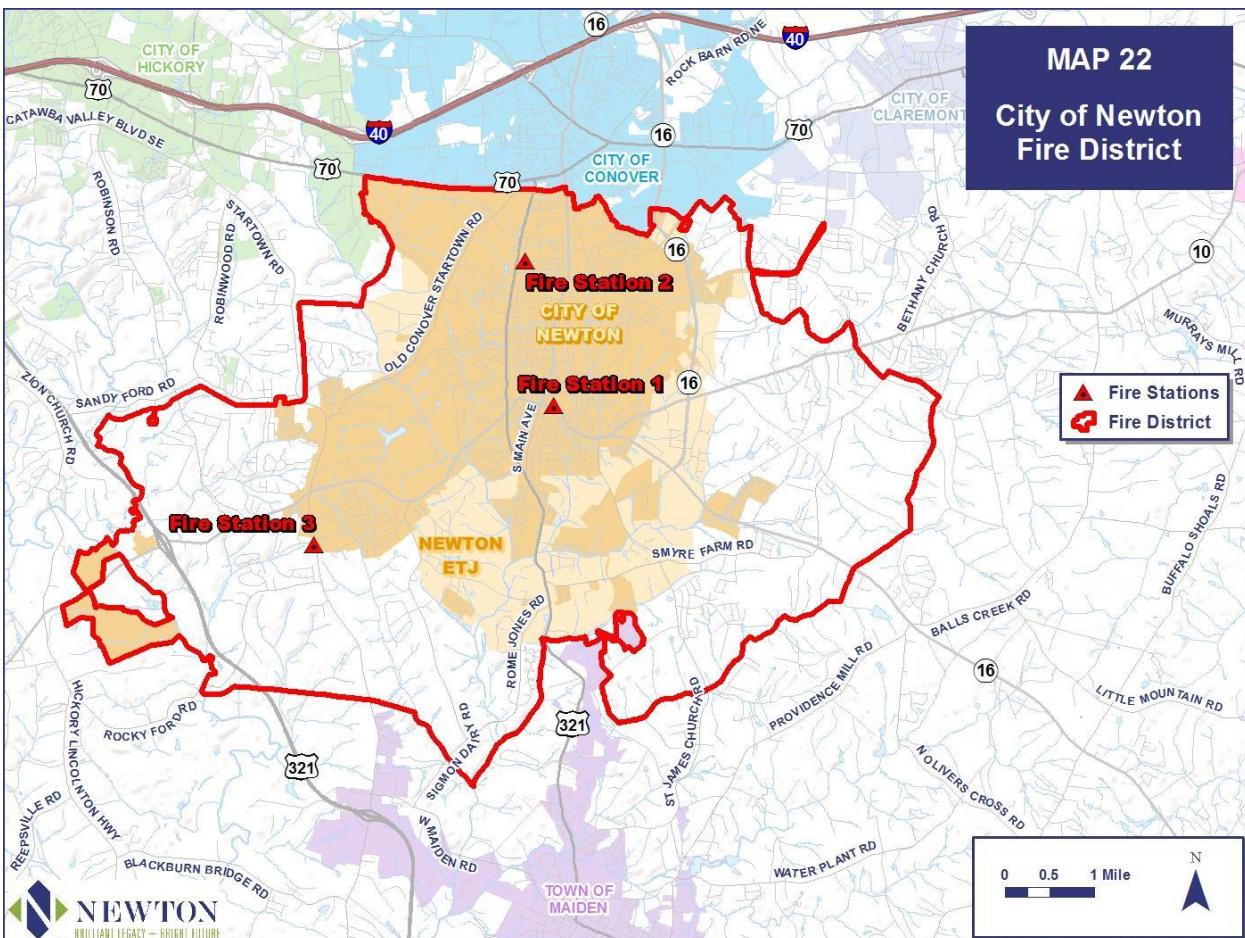
Fire Department

Structure of the Department

Newton has a professional fire department that has operated with a paid firefighting staff since 1926.

The firefighters work out of three different stations: Headquarters Station (119 S. Brady Avenue), Station 2 (560 West 21st Street), and Station 3 (4197 Startown Road). Map 25 shows the coverage area of Newton's Fire Department and the stations.

City of Newton   2019 Strategic Growth Plan
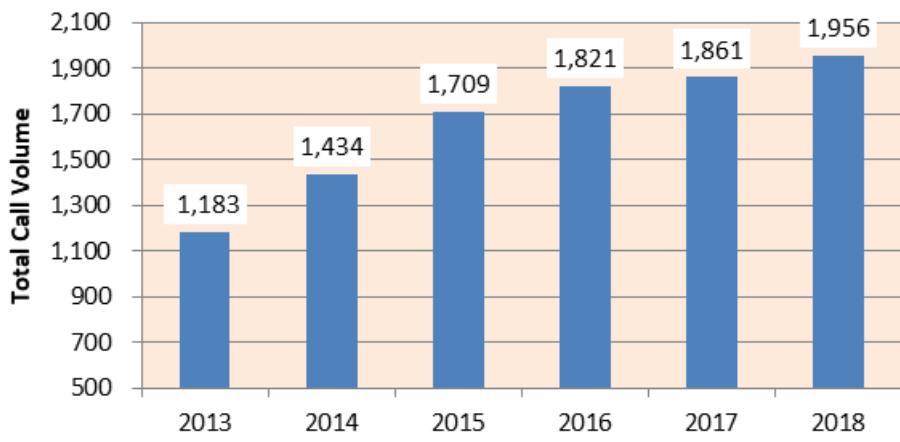
The Newton Fire Department is the second largest fire department in Catawba County and serves a population of 19,200 in an area of 38.3 square miles. The department protects more than just the 13 square miles of Newton; it provides fire protection for a section of Catawba County. This large geographical area of the County is in a rural setting without significant commercial or industrial density. There is a significantly larger volume of calls from within the City limits than from the County area. In 2018, the Fire Department received 1559 calls from inside the City limits compared to 397 calls from the County; only 20% of those calls were outside of Newton limits.

The Fire Department does receive limited funding from the County's fire tax collection from the areas outside of the City limits. The City of Newton is responsible for over $3.2 million in revenue for the Fire Department, with Catawba County contributing $604,000 for 2018. Catawba County also provided interest free financing for a rescue truck that will be used to help meet the increasing call volume, that is partially a result of expanding the fire district.

**Figure 63. City of Newton, Fire Department Annual Total Calls**
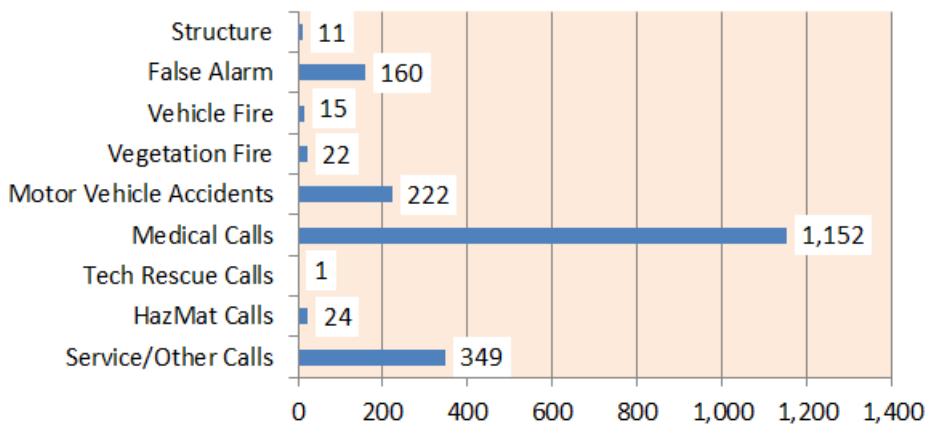
The Fire Department employs 37 full-time and 11 part-time firefighting personnel with one full-time civilian administrative assistant. This roster includes one full-time and one part-time fire inspector. The department also consists of the fire chief, a deputy fire chief, a fire marshal, a fire educator, fire captains, a safety officer, apparatus engineers, and firefighters. Crew members include individuals certified as Emergency Medical Technicians and Confined Space and Trench Rescuers. Since 2015, the City's Insurance rating has gone from a 4 to 3; only the Cities of Hickory and Claremont have a level 3 fire rating in Catawba County.

The department transitioned from a volunteer to a professional, paid department in 1998-1999. In 2017, the Newton Fire department received the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant from FEMA. This grant allowed the City to add six additional firefighting positions with 75% funding from FEMA for the first two years and 25% funding for a third year. This grant has allowed Newton to reach staffing levels that allow three crew members to be at all three stations 24-hours a day. As this grant expires, the city must assume the full responsibility of funding these positions.

Figure 63 displays the number of calls for the Fire Department from 2013-2018. Calls have increased by 65% in the last six years.

Fire department personnel respond to a variety of calls. Figure 64 shows the different types of calls that have been received by the Fire Department. Medical calls dramatically outpace all other calls. Service calls, motor vehicle accidents, and false alarms also make up a significant portion of the Fire department call volume.
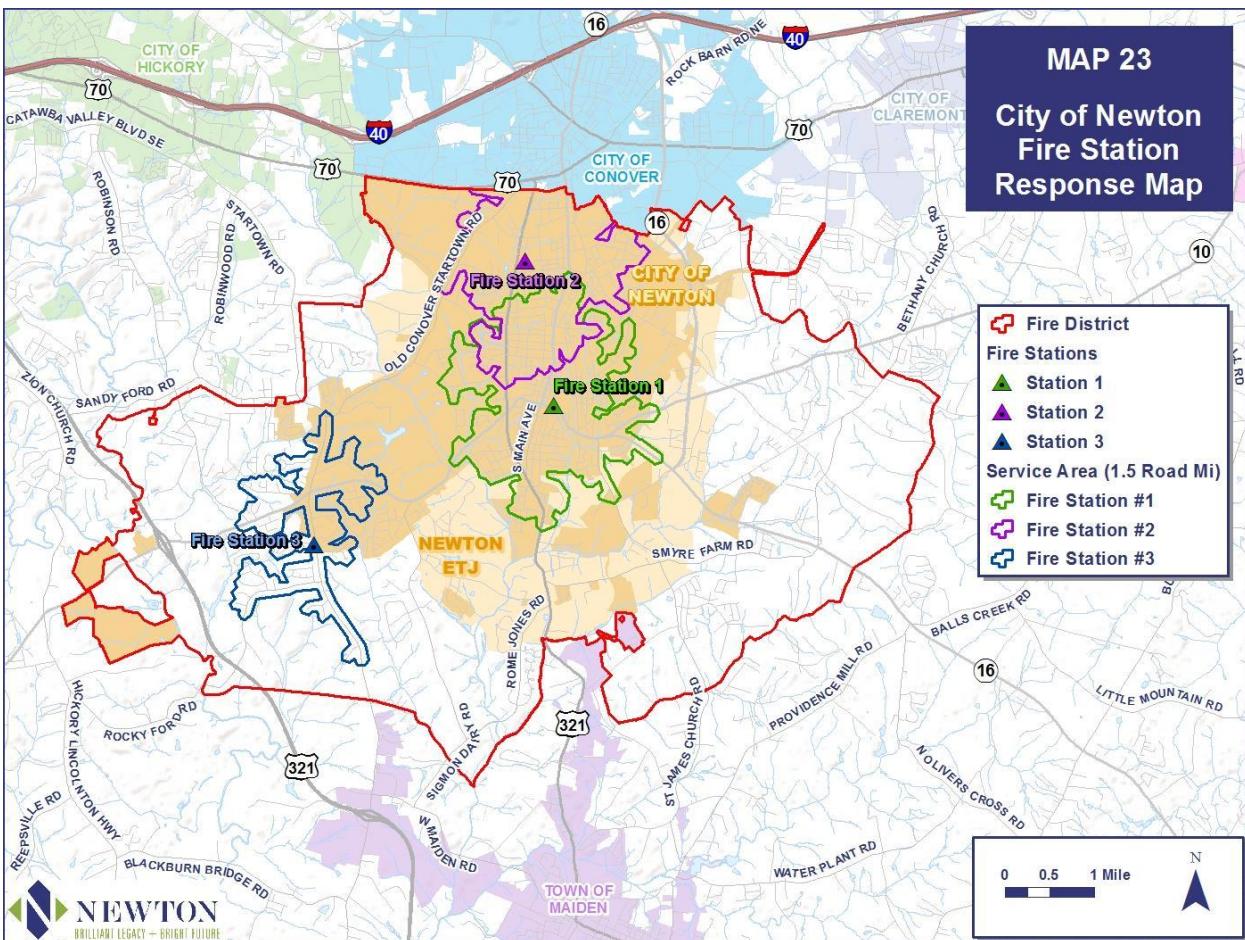
Figure 64. City of Newton Fire Department Call Volume for 2018

Category	Value
Structure	11
False Alarm	160
Vehicle Fire	15
Vegetation Fire	22
Motor Vehicle Accidents	222
Medical Calls	1,152
Tech Rescue Calls	1
HazMat Calls	24
Service/Other Calls	349

The department provides many other services such as distributing smoke detectors, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors as well as installing car seats, issuing burn permits, and completing fire inspections.

Issues Facing the Fire Department

Several challenges face the Fire Department. The biggest issue concerning fire protection is the location of Newton's three Fire Stations. One of the NCDOI criteria considered in the calculation of Newton's fire insurance rating is the percentage of the district that is within a 4 minute, or 1.5 mile, radius of each station. Map 23 shows areas within 1.5 miles of each of Newton's three fire stations. Map 23 shows that stations 1 and 2 have significant overlap, and some portions of the city within the traditional municipal limits (meaning, not including Newton's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), satellite annexations, or the expanded fire district that covers a portion of Catawba County) are not within 1.5 miles of a fire station. This lack of coverage in some areas of Newton could be an impediment to continuing to decrease Newton's Fire Insurance Rating. The last location station study was conducted in 2012 before the construction of Fire Station 1, or the main fire station. A new station study should be conducted to gauge the lifespan of stations 2 and 3 and to determine potential relocation sites for each station based on growth projections and radial coverage of the existing fire district.

MAP 23
City of Newton
Fire Station
Response Map

Abandoned and vacant buildings also pose a challenge for the Fire Department, especially buildings downtown and vacant industrial buildings. Downtown has been established as the fire district that needs to meet stricter fire regulations. The vacant buildings have been checked and cleared of combustible material, but staff has difficulty identifying and maintaining contact with property owners in order to gain access for inspections. This is also important when the property owner wants to change the use of the building or attempts to occupy it without notifying City staff.

The Fire Department will be impacted if the City grows due to annexation. If the City expands along NC 16 southeast of Downtown or along Startown Road southwest of Downtown, new facilities and staff will have to be acquired to adequately serve newly annexed areas.

Public Safety Action Items

Police Department

- Actively recruit minority, especially Hispanic, BLET participants/graduates for the police force:
- Sponsor minority candidates, especially Hispanic candidates, through BLET if there are no minority graduates.
- Outreach to local high schools and regional colleges (ASU, UNC-Charlotte, CVCC, WPCC, CCC&TI, etc.) to recruit minority applicants for BLET.
- Use existing programs (DARE, Newton 101, etc.) for public outreach about employment potential, requirements and possible sponsorship with police force.
- As City expands infrastructure with annexation intentions, include budget for officers.

Fire Department

- Coordinate with Public Works Department to upgrade water infrastructure to meet Fire Code & maximize fire protection. Prioritize downtown rehabilitations downtown and around industrial areas.
- Improve condition and access of abandoned or vacant industrial buildings and downtown buildings to reduce fire risk. Work with Downtown Newton Development Association and Main Street program to establish a Historic Commission, or work with property owners, DNDA, Main Street Program and Planning Commission, to help regulate appearance, safety, and access of buildings downtown.

Appendix 1(a): Transportation and Infrastructure Public Meeting – July 11, 2019 Attendees

Ann Ford	Citizen
Laddie Ford	Citizen
Bill Powell	Citizen
Jerry Hodge	Council
Roy Johnson	Council
Shelly Orr	Citizen
Ed Sain	Council
John Stiver	Council
Jennifer Stiver	Citizen
Sandy Allen	Citizen
Michael Houser	Citizen
Randy Isenhower	Citizen
Mitchell Jordan	Citizen
Yerby Ray	Citizen
John Sigmon	Citizen
Anne Wepner	Council
Lora Dellinger	Citizen
Tom Rowe	Council
Anne Jordan	Mayor
Sandra Waters	Staff
Brandon Elrod	Staff
John Cilley	Staff
Chris Little	Staff
Amy Falowski	Staff
Randy Williams	Staff
Alex Frick	Staff
Gavin Stewart	Hickory Daily Record
Vidal Sipe	Staff
Cindy Hull	ONE Newspaper
Vickie Thomas	Staff
Sean Hovis	Staff
Dusty Wentz	Staff
Colt Jensen	Intern
Todd Clark	Staff
Kevin Yoder	Staff

Appendix 1(b): Parks and Public Safety Public Meeting – July 18, 2019 Attendees

Roy Johnson	Citizen
Sherry Sigmon	Citizen
Josh Cumming	Citizen
Rick Settlemyre	Citizen
Tom Rowe	Council
Jeremy Petty	Citizen
Greg Bailes	Citizen
Twyla Deese	Citizen
Lindsay Robins	Citizen
Shelley Orr	Citizen
Anne Wepner	Council
John Stiver	Council
Becky Stiver	Citizen
Laddie Ford	Citizen
Jeff Allen	Citizen
Karen McDougal	Citizen
Jennifer Stiver	Citizen
Ed Sain	Council
Jody Dixon	Council
Sandra Waters	Staff
Brandon Elrod	Staff
John Cilley	Staff
Chris Little	Staff
Amy Falowski	Staff
Randy Williams	Staff
Alex Frick	Staff
Gavin Stewart	Hickory Daily Record
Captain Cline	Staff
Cindy Hull	ONE Newspaper
Vickie Thomas	Staff
Sean Hovis	Staff
Dusty Wentz	Staff
Colt Jensen	Intern
Todd Clark	Staff
Kevin Yoder	Staff

Appendix 1(c): Downtown Newton, Growth Management and Community Image and Appearance – July 25, 2019 Attendees

Roy Johnson	Citizen
Jerry Hodge	Council
Sherry Sigmon	Citizen
Anne Jordan	Mayor
Suzanne White	Newton Library
Mitchell Jordan	Citizen
Jeff Allen	Citizen
Sandy Allen	Citizen
Greg Cranford	Citizen
Jennifer Stiver	Citizen
Ed Sain	Council
Jerry Hodge	Council
Greg Bailes	Citizen
Addie Shuford	Citizen
Kris Armstrong	Citizen
Randy Armstrong	Citizen
Mitch Ball	Citizen
Yerby Ray	Citizen
Cathy Banner	Citizen
Twyla Deese	Citizen
David Henry	Citizen
Gail Robinson	Citizen
John Stiver	Council
Tom Rowe	Council
Sandra Waters	Staff
Brandon Elrod	Staff
John Cilley	Staff
Spencer Hodges	Staff
Amy Falowski	Staff
Randy Williams	Staff
Alex Frick	Staff
Vidal Sipe	Staff
Cindy Hull	ONE Newspaper
Vickie Thomas	Staff
Dusty Wentz	Staff
Kevin Yoder	Staff

Appendix 2: Action Item Suggestions Received During Public Meetings

The following proposed action items appear in the order they were suggested. Suggestions were provided in public meeting discussions, Business Advisory Committee meetings, community stakeholder group interviews, department head interviews and through written questionnaire responses provided by public meeting attendees.

Transportation

- Geographically balanced transportation funding (not concentrating transportation spending all in the downtown region or another area).
- Cooperatively mitigating commercial freight traffic downtown. Ideas included locating a staging area for Renwood Mills trucks.
- Create a unique City of Newton gateway near Dale Earnhardt Chevrolet to bring the expanded NC 16 traffic into Newton rather than motorists to unknowingly bypass the City. Ideas included a digital billboard, and a larger and more uniquely landscaped City of Newton Gateway sign.
- As cars become more fuel efficient and cars transition to electricity consider alternative funding (rather than Powell Bill) to fund street projects.

- Increased implementation of the recommended extensions and maintenance of Newton's sidewalks, greenway and bike lanes by the 2017 Pedestrian Plan. Improving non-vehicular connectivity was brought up repeatedly at various meetings.
- Continuing to add and advertise City owned parking in downtown Newton.
- Reevaluate zoning ordinances to consider stronger sidewalk regulations for developer, including connecting any new sidewalk to an existing sidewalk (wherever possible).
- Strengthen Newton's partnership with the NCDOT to continue to aide in the timely completion of NC 16.
- Expand the historic downtown lighting fixtures that surround the 1924 Courthouse beyond the Courthouse square to improve community image and reduce unlit or poorly lit areas to improve walking safety at night.

Historic Downtown Light Fixture

Infrastructure

- Conduct a cost benefit analysis on transitioning from the aging generators that are used for "peak shaving" to reduce electrical costs to battery storage.
- Seek to establish Newton as destination for electric car charging. Increased signage advertising electric charging stations, advertising dining, recreation and entertainment opportunities for those who are waiting for their car to charge.
- Consider options for extending water/sewer lines to the unserved portions of the City. Including a plan to meet the needs of the Startown community.

- Determine what the approach the city should take to implement federally mandated stormwater management. The primary suggestion was a stormwater enterprise fund
- Consider alternatives to water and sewer rate increases to cover the increasing cost of maintaining aging water and sewer infrastructure.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of system wide electric distribution automation
- Carry out a man power and work hour study in Public Works to assess staffing levels
- Analyze the possibility of creating a rate stabilization fund to absorb wholesale increases
- Assess the feasibility of a new utility rate structure to minimize the need for rate increases

Parks and Recreation

- Increase the speed of implementing the connectivity suggestions of the 2016 Parks Master Plan as well as increasing staffing (increase staffing compensation to reduce turnover), and the pace of equipment and parks infrastructure replacement.
- Foster more dog friendly policies in City owned properties and encourage private businesses to do the same. Including having designated areas for leashed dogs, signs indicating dog friendly status, and more doggy bad towers.
- Seek increased grant funding to install a full-size soccer field at Jacob's Fork Park
- Create a dog park to allow NC Hwy 16 travels a place to stop and walk their dog in addition to providing the service to locals
- Coordinate and increase the level of programming for seniors with the Catawba County Council on Aging.
- Partner with the Newton Public Library to offer Hmong and Hispanic outreach programming. Consider hiring a Hispanic outreach coordinator.
- Add more amenities to the park for parents to engage with as they visit the parks with their children. Include more greenspace, natural water features, and pocket parks.
- Consider the creation of an athletic complex to facilitate more travel sports tourism
- Conduct a risk analysis to determine which park areas and amenities are most at risk of flooding to reduce the long-term costs and impact of increased flooding.
- Expand the number of bike trails on park properties and work to improve connectivity between parks through trails and sidewalks.
- Evaluate city land inventory to see if any property could be sold to a hotel developer. A hotel would also facilitate sports tourism by allowing teams to stay closer to fields and courts in Newton. An occupancy tax generated by a hotel would also grant Newton more power with the Hickory Metro Visitors Bureau. The idea of bringing a hotel to Newton was repeatedly brought up.

Public Safety

- Improve policies around police feedback. Officers should give face-to-face feedback on any situation they are called to.

- Improve community policing by increasing officers time out of their car through walking and biking, as time allows. Increase the police patrol staff to reduce time constraints that reduce the time an officer can spend out of the car.
- Consider the hiring of a full-time downtown police officer to build relationships and trust with the business community and citizens downtown.
- Officer's presence at the soup kitchen and fireworks at the park was requested
- Some version of cordial, kind, or nice customer feedback was mentioned in every groups writing
- Continue to meet with the East Newton Community and consider expanding these meetings to other groups (Hmong and Latino).
- Improve police visibility at special events
- Conduct a station location study for the fire department to determine where fire stations 2 & 3 should eventually be relocated.
- Expand the police force to include one more officer per platoon, one additional administrator, one additional telecommunication specialist, and establish a downtown officer in order to provide officers more community policing time with a goal of improving community trust and perception of policing in Newton
- Assess the possibility of a joint fire and police station near Abernathy Laurels in order to cover potential growth communities along NC Highway 16.
- Improved lighting at the intersection of St. Paul's Church Road and Old Conover Startown Road
- Consider providing City sponsored first aid and CPR courses for Newton's citizens (especially those who take care of aging parents)

Growth Management

- Seek additional ways to address vacant housing in Newton
- How can the city attract a Hotel, additional Bed and Breakfast locations, and AirBnB hosts
- Continue to build on the momentum of the east Newton meetings
- Create a staff position for economic development for all of Newton. This idea was also mentioned repeatedly. Suggestions for this position included marketing Newton, telling Newton's story, as well as facilitating economic development in Newton.
- Consider adding more event venues
- Strengthen regional partnerships with EDC, chamber of commerce, visitors bureau, etc.
- Actively tell Newton's story
- Consider the construction of an industrial park on the expanded NC Highway 16
- Create a plan for, and conduct a cost-benefit analysis of, public safety expansion (facility and personnel), and municipal utility line extensions to serve additional communities along NC Highway 16

Community Image and Appearance

- Form a Historic Preservation Commission
- Explore adding additional murals and public art across Newton
- More active use of public space (ex. Swings), not just passive parks

- Gateway on 321: "Something Big", innovative and unique to draw traffic to downtown Newton
- Partner with the DNDA to continue to strengthen the Folk Art Festival as Newton's signature festival, and to facilitate events planned and organized by outside groups.
- Newton's last comprehensive zoning ordinance was passed in more than 30 years ago. Create and adopt a new comprehensive zoning ordinance that is designed to facilitate growth and community image and appearance.
- Consider courses of action or regulation to improve the appearance of entrance corridors
- Seek positive press to help tell Newton's story
- Digital signs at entrances with events, attractions, and businesses rotating

Downtown Newton

- Explore incentives and regulations regarding storefront appearances and vacant downtown buildings.
- Partner with the DNDA to provide digital marketing support to local business downtown
- Create a comprehensive plan to facilitate the development of underutilized spaces downtown
- Continue to seek opportunities to increase and market parking in downtown Newton
- Improve access to downtown bathrooms
- Hanging and more specific wayfinding signage
- Additional downtown events – music/food/drink (additional DNDA staff to help plan these events)
- Implement elements of smart cities in Newton

Internal Operations

- Develop a human capital improvement plan in order to schedule staffing and compensation increases
- Switch human resources record storage from manual paper storage to electronic storage
- Invest in cyber security infrastructure to improve Newton's data security
- Conduct a cost benefit analysis on implementing an incentivized wellness program
- In order to improve the physical security of City facilities transition all traditional key locks to electronic card locks
- Implement a supervisors training program for those promoted to leadership positions.

Appendix 3: Discussion of Data

The data used for this document's data analysis comes exclusively from the US Census Bureau, the NC Office of Budget and Management, the Lead Economic Analysis Division of the NC Department of Commerce, and Catawba County Building Inspections. These sources are all publicly available and official government sources. The only exception is the retail surplus and leakage study data that is visualized in Figure 55. This data came from a study done by ERSI and was provided by Electricities.

Some of the US Census data, specifically the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data, relies on statistical estimates that are based on US Census Bureau survey data. Sometimes the amount survey data for a given area is too small to produce a statistically significant estimate. An estimate that is statistically insignificant means the result is not especially valid or reliable. Even when there is sufficient survey data to produce a statistically significant result, there is always a margin of error for these estimates. For example, the 2013-2017 American Community Survey by the US Census Bureau estimated the population of Newton to be 12,991 citizens with a margin of error of .18%. This is a relatively small margin of error that indicates strong confidence that this population estimate is correct. However, what this estimate truly means is that the US Census bureau is very confident that the population of Newton is between 12,967 and 13,015 (one margin of error above and below their central estimate). This may seem like a relatively small variation since it is less than 100 people, but if the population of Newton is truly 12,967 (the lowest estimate within the margin of error), then the City has experienced population decline since the 2010 Census. However, this estimate tells us that it is much more likely that the population of Newton is at 12,968 or above meaning the population of Newton has grown slightly since the 2010 Census.

There can also be methodological (meaning, the method by which an estimate is calculated) variations that produce different estimates even when the data comes from the same source. For example, the US Census Bureau produces Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for various areas including counties and cities. In 2017, this Annual Estimate calculated a population estimate of 13,070 for Newton. The 5-year 2013-2017 American Community Survey, which is also done by the US Census Bureau, estimated the population of Newton to be 12,991 individuals. Neither of these estimates is necessarily wrong or better than the other, they simply use different methods to calculate their estimates. It is impossible to determine the accuracy of these estimates until the results of the 2020 Census are released.

For this data analysis, I have chosen to primarily use the 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) data, because the ACS incorporates real survey data from individuals actually living in Newton into their statistical estimates. Other methodologies rely on sources such as housing data to produce their estimates, and may not be as well suited as the ACS to a city of Newton's size.

The only source that avoids margin of error and variations in methodology is the official decennial census that is carried out by the US Census Bureau. However, since it has been nearly 10 years since the last official census, it is unlikely that the numbers from the 2010 US Census reflect current conditions in Newton, Catawba County or North Carolina. Waiting at least another two years for the release of the data from the 2020 Census would delay a much-needed update to the Strategic Growth Plan which could hinder future growth. For this reason, statistical estimates were used in an effort to reflect the most current conditions and trends in Newton and related regional communities.

Appendix 4: Strategic Plan Action Items

City of Newton Strategic Growth Plan – 2019

1. Economic Development	Action 1.1: Thriving Business and Entrepreneurs
	Actions 1.1.1: Name a city staff person to serve as the Small Business Liaison. The Liaison will be the point of contact for small business and entrepreneur inquiries to the city, guide the business owner/entrepreneur through the regulatory process, and connect him/her with business resources. o Inform Catawba EDC and other partner agencies of the Liaison so the office can make small business and entrepreneur referrals to the city. o Train city staff to send all business inquiries to the Liaison as the single-point-of-contact. o See the City of Columbus, OH, Small Business Concierge https://www.columbus.gov/Small-Business/About-Your-Concierge/ as an example program.
	Actions 1.1.2: Using data from the retail leakage report in the appendix, fill in the retail gaps. There are gaps in building materials, garden equipment, shoes, office supplies, sporting goods, and others. There are also gaps in special food restaurants. The information can be used to counsel existing small businesses on areas of inventory expansion and to counsel new business start-ups. o Share the information with the Small Business Center at Catawba Valley Community College to share with their customers. o Explore the Economic Gardening https://www.nationalcentereg.org/ concept as a roadmap for how the Liaison can assist businesses. The concept uses research and market data to help companies expand and grow. o The Business Advisory Council can use the information when working with business owners – businesses can expand their inventory to capture leakage.
	Actions 1.1.3: Continue to support ag-related businesses. o Include value-added farm products and agri-tourism in the starter kits described on the next page. o Include information on the city's website about farm related tourism. o Promote "agrihood" developments, housing developments centered around community gardens.
	Actions 1.1.4: Seek to establish a microloan program administered by the Business Advisory Council. o Focus on microloans (as little as $1,000), since there are other loan programs in the region that fund larger projects. As an example, Yadkin County has a successful microloan program that has supported small business start-ups that have grown over time. o Mountain BizWorks https://www.mountainbizworks.org/ has model lending programs and can be a resource. o Some organizations seed the loan program with a grant. USDA Rural Development has provided grants in the past.
	Actions 1.1.5: Commit to completing the One-Stop Permitting Process recommended in the 2015 Strategic Growth Plan. See the Chatham County model, which includes a technical review team approach to streamlining the permitting process.
	Actions 1.1.6: Encourage the development of business space for start-ups and solo entrepreneurs. o Explore if the Newton Library Branch could be a partner in providing co-work space. o Explore if county office buildings in Newton have excess space that could be turned into
	Actions 1.1.7: Market and promote Newton as a small business start-up location. o Place "starter-kits" on the website, such as how to start a restaurant, food truck, hair salon, and other popular businesses. ▪ Include in the starter kit connections to local training programs for employees and support (example: culinary program for restaurants).

o Use the Valdese "6 Steps to Doing Business in Valdese" marketing flyer as a template for a general information piece on starting a business in Newton. This is an overview to supplement the detailed information on the "Opening a Business in Newton" information. Post on the website.

Actions 1.1.8: Incorporate succession planning into the services provided by the Business Advisory Council.
o Organize a cadre from the Business Advisory Council with expertise in management and business planning to serve as mentors to business owners. Survey business owners to inventory who is less than five years from retirement and target them for succession planning support. See this blog for statewide resources: http://www.creativeedc.com/succession-planning-as-a-bre-tool/.
o Utilize the Small Business Technology Development Center to offer seminars on succession planning.

Actions 1.1.9: Promote the business cooperative ownership model to groups with limited capital interested in starting a business. Burlington Beer Works is a well-known cooperative in Burlington, NC, that started a brewery and restaurant in downtown Burlington as a catalyst for redevelopment.

Actions 1.1a: Leverage Catawba County EDC resources for industrial development

Actions 1.1a.1: Support the EDC's Existing Business Retention and Expansion program by:
o Participating in industry visits when appropriate.
o Sharing utility usage information to aid in identifying at-risk companies.
o Participate in industry appreciate events.

Actions 1.1a.2: Define Newton's value proposition for Catawba County's target sectors: Auto Parts Manufacturing, Food Processing, Advanced Textiles, Data Centers, and International Firms. Value proposition assets discovered during this planning process include:
o Semi-skilled workforce
o Access via Hwy 16 to Charlotte and I-85
o International diversity of population

Actions 1.1a.3: See recommendations below on working with the EDC to develop industrial sites and buildings.

Actions 1.2: Infrastructure to Support Economic Growth

Actions 1.2.1: Continue the Downtown Streetscape and Utility Rehabilitation Project, implementing phases 2 - 5. Phase 1 was funded directly by the city budget. If needed, fund phases 2-5 with a bond referendum as the City of Sanford did. Sanford included downtown streetscape, facilities, and a wide range of quality of life amenities.

Actions 1.2.2: Complete the Hwy 16 waterline project. This will allow for business growth along the citizen-ranked top priority corridor for development.

Actions 1.2.3: Continue to invest in water and wastewater treatment plant upgrades to ensure Newton has sufficient capacity for the future.

Actions 1.2.4: The Newton Streetscape Master Plan & North Newton Master Plan recommends improvements to NC 16/NC 10 to make it easier for people to live in Newton and commute to the Charlotte area. This would be with support from NC DOT.

Actions 1.2.5: The Hwy 16 corridor was ranked as the highest priority for city development/redevelopment efforts.
o In cooperation with the county, develop a gateway enhancement plan at the Hwy 16/Bus 16/Dale Earnhardt intersection.
o Develop a wayfinding signage plan along Hwy 16 inside and outside the city, in cooperation with the county, directing traffic to services in Newton.

Actions 1.3: Inventory of Business Space for New and Expanding Businesses
Actions 1.3.1: The Hwy 16 corridor was ranked as the highest priority for city development/redevelopment efforts. o Create an overlay district with specific incentives for vacant building revitalization, beautification, and overall investment. See Asheville's Innovation Districts as an example.
Actions 1.3.2: With support from Catawba County EDC, identify and rank potential industrial development sites in the city. o Create a due diligence plan to assess the development potential of the sites. For those sites that meet eligibility criteria, submit for the ElectriCities' Smart Sites qualification program and then on to the NC Dept. of Commerce Certified Sites Program. o Create a conceptual development plan and calculate economic impact (ROI) to determine how much the city should invest in development.
Actions 1.3.3: Be a strong partner in the county spec building development program. Catawba County EDC has successfully facilitated the development of several spec buildings. Support a spec building in Newton in a similar partnership as the others have been developed.
Actions 1.3.4: Bus 321 and Hwy 70 were ranked lower priorities for redevelopment by citizens; however, inventory vacant and available commercial space in corridors and keep information updated on the website.
Actions 1.4: A Vibrant Downtown
Actions 1.4.1: New business recruitment and development was the #1 priority of citizens in downtown development. Utilize city incentive tools to support business growth. o Continue the city façade program. o Consider adding other incentive programs that encourage specific, desired investments. Examples include: ▪ Columbia, SC, Vacant Building Redevelopment Grant – a matching grant for the redevelopment of vacant buildings ▪ Wilson, NC, Pedestrian-Oriented Rent Subsidy – a rent subsidy for downtown businesses that generate foot traffic (note the program was successful for many years but is currently suspended) ▪ Hickory has a package of redevelopment grants which includes a matching landscape grant.
Actions 1.4.2: Proactively recruit infill retail based on the retail leakage study. Use the information to market to retail establishments in neighboring markets to open a second location in Newton.
Actions 1.4.3: Expand the Downtown Streetscape and Utility Rehabilitation Project (#3 priority on citizen survey) to incorporate a larger area of the downtown. The first phase of redevelopment has been very successful and supported by the community.
Actions 1.4.4: Residential development is a priority for downtown development. It is addressed below.
Actions 1.4.5: Combat blight with code enforcement, supporting the Appearance Commission, and demolition of derelict properties. Community Development Block Grant funds can be used for demolition. Review the City of Shelby policy of funding demolition in each budget year, tackling blight on a consistent basis.
Actions 1.4.6: Activate downtown spaces by continuing to hold city events in spaces like the new amphitheater.
Actions 1.4.7: Parking was mentioned several times in the citizen survey. If the city hasn't completed a parking study recently, put one on the planning agenda. It is often not a case of too little parking; rather, it is often the case of poor signage directing people to parking. In addition to signage, cities are investing in lighting and safety features to ensure people are comfortable parking off-street, like behind buildings. o Consider second floor residential in a review of downtown parking needs.

Actions 1.5: Amenities that will Attract Residents and Tourists

Actions 1.5.1: Overall appearance and beautification were rated as the most important quality of life amenity. Continue to support the work of the Appearance Commission and Code Enforcement.

Actions 1.5.2: Facilitate a wide range of housing development options. Housing is noted as a critical need by employers trying to recruit new employees to Catawba County. 70% report having had recent issues recruiting and retaining employees due to housing. There are housing needs in multi-family, senior, and single-family.
o Consider lower tap and other city fees for infill residential development where the city has already made an investment in infrastructure.
o Explore city investments in infrastructure (road extensions, sidewalks) that will encourage residential development.
o Investigate adopting a similar incentive program as Morganton's Downtown Housing Improvement Program.
o Recruit developers who have completed residential projects in the region.

Actions 1.5.3: Noted above, but important to re-emphasize, is the expansion of the Downtown Streetscape and Utility Rehabilitation Project. It is a key component of the amenities package for Newton to attract housing.

Actions 1.5.4: Beautify gateways and entrances to the city and seek to develop a visitor center.
o Seek a partner to develop a visitor center. It could be housed as a satellite chamber of commerce, in the rail museum, inside a small business in downtown, inside the Old Post Office Playhouse, or as a partnership with a nonprofit.
o Some of the gateway projects should be done in conjunction with the county. Garden clubs and horticulture high school and community college programs could be good partners for design and installation of landscaping.

Actions 1.5.5: Incorporate connectivity of greenways, bike trails, and walking paths into the capital improvement plan.

Actions 1.5.6:Look for a recreation grant and/or nonprofit partner to participate in the development of a dog park.

Actions 1.5.7: Seek a private partner for an RV park development. The city could invest in infrastructure to the site as an inducement. A company with an existing RV park in the region would be a good target.

Actions 1.5.8: Seek the Certified Retirement Community designation as a marketing tool.

Actions 1.5.9: Activate cultural arts spaces in the city by holding meetings and events in venues such as the Old Post Office Playhouse.

Actions 1.5.10: Continue to support the Newton Public Art Commission and projects like the Newton Art for the Public.
o Expand to include a mural grant program, matching the cost of murals up to a specific amount (similar to façade grants).
o Consider developing an art "theme" for Newton, like the painted pigs in Lexington or the Hokie birds of Blacksburg, VA. Visuals such as these helps define a brand and image for a city.

Actions 1.6: Market Newton as a Choice Location for Business, People, and Tourists

Actions 1.6.1: Update the city website with an economic development page including information on incentives, marketing messages, and progress on the strategic plan.
o Make the drop-down menu under "Business" consistent with the sidebar menu. For example, "Commercial Development" only appears under the sidebar menu but has good information. Move "Opening a Business in Newton" to the main menu drop-down as it has key information.

o Place information on incentives and grant programs on the website.
o Connect to the Catawba County EDC, as that website has a wealth of industrial development information.
o Create marketing flyers for the most marketable commercial/industrial and data center/business parks and post on the website as links on the "Available Properties" page.
  ▪ Break apart retail and commercial spaces from industrial spaces listed.
  ▪ For those properties without a marketing flyer, add some details like square footage and ceiling height.
o Create a basic marketing brief on why a business should consider locating in Newton and post on the "Business" part of the website.
o Add a few business testimonial videos to the "Made in Newton" page.
o Add a statement at the top of the "Fees and Charges" page listing the Small Business Liaison contact.

Actions 1.6.2: Internal Marketing and Public Relations
o The city has a Public Information Officer but would benefit from a Marketing and Communications staff position to:
  ▪ Push out marketing messages
  ▪ Connect with and leverage county tourism and economic development marketing programs, events, and messaging.
  ▪ Add a calendar of events to the city website, include events in and around Newton to encourage visitors to day-trip and stay overnight in Newton.
  ▪ Continue the quarterly mailed newsletter.
    • Citizens say they want communications via social media (#1), city website (#2), and traditional newspaper and news media (#3).

Actions 1.6.3: Social Media was the #1 answer, by far, to the question about how citizens learn of events, news, and happenings.
o Facebook and Twitter are current and regularly posted. Instagram is linked to the city's webpage but needs postings. This is a great way to reach potential tourists and visitors.
o There are several Newton videos on the YouTube channel linked to the city's website, but the videos are not directly posted to the website. To increase views, place video links on appropriate pages on the website.

Actions 1.6.4: Leverage a partnership with Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority.
o Compile Newton tourism assets as a package and promote day trip and stay-over itineraries. This could happen under a sub-committee of the Business Advisory Council focused on tourism and promotion.
o Target convention groups coming to Hickory with specific Newton information packages.

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2. Downtown Newton

Actions 2.1.1: Implement a downtown redevelopment/revitalization investment program

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Actions 2.1.2: Continue to work with developers to create downtown residential living options.

Actions 2.1.3: Encourage downtown businesses to be open later during weekdays and weekends.

Actions 2.1.4: Add additional amenities including a dog park, and a pocket-park to attract commercial and residential development

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Actions 2.1.5: Install street signs that designate Downtown as a historic District

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Actions 2.1.6: Encourage small business development including restaurants and breweries.

	Actions 2.1.7: Continue adding streetscapes in downtown Newton.
	Actions 2.1.8: Partner with DNDA to provide digital marketing support to downtown businesses
	Actions 2.1.9: Seek opportunities to increase the number of parking spaces downtown while simultaneously promoting the location of existing public parking lots downtown
	Actions 2.1.10: Develop a comprehensive plan to facilitate the development of underutilized downtown spaces and buildings
	Actions 2.1.11: Create a staging area for commercial freight traffic to mitigate downtown traffic congestion
	Actions 2.1.12:: Coordinate with the DNDA to encourage the creation of more dog friendly businesses and downtown spaces
3. Community Appearance and Image	Actions 3.1.1: Develop a new destination for Newton (eg. Sports complex)
	Actions 3.1.2: Review corridor overlay district regulations to align appearance standards with economic development goals and objectives
	Actions 3.1.3: Implement Streetscape Project / Phase II North Newton Area
	Actions 3.1.4: Continue to maintain a comprehensive street tree inventory and install trees consistent with recommendations from the Tree Board
	Actions 3.1.5: Strengthen and grow the Folk Art Festival as Newton's signature event
	Actions 3.1.6: Review and strengthen nuisance, minimum housing and non-residential maintenance codes
	Actions 3.1.7: Partner with DNDA to facilitate downtown events organized by Newton's citizens
	Actions 3.1.8: Assess a potential partnership with the United Arts Council or Keep Catawba County Beautiful in order to create additional public arts projects (Ex. Downtown murals, painted hydrants, etc.)
	Actions 3.1.9: Create unique gateway signage in order to guide NC 16 traffic to downtown Newton

	Actions 3.1.10: Extend historic downtown lighting fixtures beyond the courthouse square

4. Growth Management	Actions 4.1.1: Update the City's Comprehensive Plan
	Actions 4.1.2: Update residential and commercial plan review process
	Actions 4.1.3: Encourage residential growth by recruiting developers and develop appropriate incentives, including but not limited to, the provision of utilities
	Actions 4.1.4: Assess annexing unincorporated areas as allowed under state law to encourage growth in the Highway 16 and Highway 10 corridors
	Actions 4.1.5: Develop and document a comprehensive strategy to create new residential housing in Newton to attract residents to the City.
	Actions 4.1.6: Assist in creating additional retirement communities in Newton.
	Actions 4.1.7: Create one-stop permitting process for Newton businesses, developers and residents.
	Actions 4.1.8: Explore the possibility of creating an industrial park along NC 16
	Actions 4.1.9: Develop incentives and a plan to bring a hotel to Newton
	Actions 4.1.10: Hire a full-time marketing and economic development professional to help Newton tell its story, highlight Newton's central location and spur economic growth
	Actions 4.1.11: Live stream public meetings
	Actions 4.1.12: Revive the former executive committee in order to provide mentoring for local entrepreneurs
	Actions 4.1.13: Conduct a comprehensive update of Newton's zoning ordinance since some sections of Newton's zoning ordinance date back to 1972.

5. Transportation and Mobility	Actions 5.1.1: Maintain a comprehensive street condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of streets scheduled for paving or reconditioning

	Actions 5.1.2: Update existing sidewalk plan including a comprehensive sidewalk condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of sidewalks scheduled for construction or reconditioning
	Actions 5.1.3: Revisit the Transportation Improvement Program to prioritize projects relevant to the construction of roads that are critical to mitigating traffic congestion and creating links to existing and future arteries in the region
	Actions 5.1.4: Continue to work with State Legislators, Catawba County, and adjacent municipalities to complete construction of Highway 16 between Claremont Road and Tower Road
	Actions 5.1.5: Work with the MPO to select the best candidate projects for NCDOT's Project Prioritization Process to be included in the STIP.
	Actions 5.1.6: Public Transportation - Add new transit stop on Northwest Boulevard near West 20th Street to provide access to the Walmart Neighborhood Market.
	Actions 5.1.7: Bicycle - Add bicycle lanes to the following street: · S Cline Avenue (West J Street to West D Street) · S Main Avenue/N Main Avenue (Southwest Blvd. to Conover City Limits) · S College Avenue (Southwest Blvd. to N Main Avenue) · S Brady/North Brady (Southwest Blvd. to E 4th Street to N College Avenue) · E 20th Street/Rankin Avenue (N Main Avenue to E NC 10) NC 10/NC 16 Business (S Brady Avenue to Newton City Limits)
	Actions 5.1.8: Sidewalks - Apply for Surface Transportation Program – Direct Attributable (STP-DA) and Transportation Alternative (TA) funds through the MPO to supplement the construction of prioritized sidewalks needs.
	Actions 5.1.9: Implement the Town Creek Extension of the Greenway system
	Actions 5.1.10: Consider new funding sources for street and sidewalk maintenance to supplement declining Powell Bill funds
	Actions 5.1.11: Accelerate the pace of sidewalk maintenance and expansion of the sidewalk system according to the recommendations of Newton's 2016 Pedestrian Plan to increase and improve pedestrian mobility and connectivity.
	Actions 5.1.12: Review sidewalk zoning requirements for private developers and determine if changes are necessary in order to further improve the connectivity within Newton.
	Actions 5.1.13: Incorporate municipal traffic accident data into municipal road planning initiatives
6. City Utilities	Actions 6.1.1: Develop and implement a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems

Actions 6.1.2: Generate a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems

Actions 6.1.2A: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to waste water treatment plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for next 20 years.

Actions 6.1.3: Build and/or acquire redundant critical infrastructure (facilities & equipment)

Actions 6.1.4: Construct a new electric delivery station

Actions 6.1.5: Construct a new 2-million-gallon fresh water tank

Actions 6.1.6: Develop engineering plans and financing for construction of water & sewer utilities in Startown

Actions 6.1.6A: Before installation, establish public outreach/partnership with a definitive timeline for expanding sewer into the Startown neighborhoods to maximize new sewer users.

Actions 6.1.7: Develop a plan to replace the public works corporation yard/facility

Actions 6.1.8: Continue to coordinate long range water supply study with CW-DAG-2055

Actions 6.1.9: Evaluate the need for a long-range sanitary sewer capacity study

Actions 6.1.10: Implement a stormwater utility enterprise fund

Actions 6.1.11: Construct critical water lines on Highway 16, Balls Creek Road, and Buffalo Shoals Road in cooperation with Catawba County

Actions 6.1.12: Construct critical water lines on Rocky Ford Road in cooperation with Catawba County

Actions 6.1.13: Analyze the construction of water and sewer lines in unserved portions of the city

Actions 6.1.13A: Work to encourage entire neighborhoods hook onto sewer.

Actions 6.1.14: Maintain a definitive in the CIP for replacing aged iron water lines based on usage, failure rate, etc.

Actions 6.1.14A: Maintain definitive timeline in the CIP for replacing aged terra cotta sewer lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc.

Actions 6.1.15: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to water plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for the next 20 years
Actions 6.1.16: Coordinate water line improvements with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds
Actions 6.1.16A: Coordinate sewer line rehabilitation with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds.
Actions 6.1.17: Place all utilities underground in streetscape areas.
Actions 6.1.18: Offer competitive rates/service for any new electric customers that may have a choice of provider
Actions 6.1.19: Require by ordinance all new or upgraded electric lines in downtown to be placed underground.
Actions 6.1.20: Ensure entire neighborhoods hook onto sewer
Actions 6.1.20 Analyze the possibility of creating a rate stabilization fund to absorb wholesale price increases
Actions 6.1.21: Evaluate new electrical rate structures
Actions 6.1.22: Conduct a cost-benefit analysis for the implementation of battery or solar peak shaving technologies to replace aging generators
Actions: 6.1.23: Implement system wide electric distribution automation
Actions 6.1.24: Carry out a man power or work hour study in order to asses Public Works staffing levels

7. Public Safety	Actions 7.1.1: Actively recruit minority, especially Hispanic, BLET participants/graduates for the police force: • Sponsor minority candidates, especially Hispanic candidates, through BLET if there are no minority graduates. • Outreach to local high schools and regional colleges (ASU, UNC-Charlotte, CVCC, WPCC, CCC&TI, etc) to recruit minority applicants for BLET. Use existing programs (DARE, Newton 101, etc) for public outreach about employment potential, requirements and possible sponsorship with police force.
	Actions 7.1.2: As City expands infrastructure with annexation intentions, include budget for officers.

Actions 7.1.3: Coordinate with Public Works Department to upgrade water infrastructure to meet Fire Code & maximize fire protection. Prioritize downtown rehabilitations downtown and around industrial areas.
Actions 7.1.4: Improve condition and access of abandoned or vacant industrial buildings and downtown buildings to reduce fire risk. Work with Downtown Newton Development Association and Main Street program to establish a Historic Commission, or work with property owners, DNDA, Main Street Program and Planning Commission, to help regulate appearance, safety, and access of buildings downtown.
Actions 7.1.5 Expand the police force to include a full-time downtown officer in order to improve police officer visibility and relationships with downtown businesses
Actions 7.1.6: Conduct a Fire Station location analysis in order to determine if existing fire stations should be relocated at the end of their useful life
Actions 7.1.7: Assess the possibility of a joint police and fire station near Abernathy Laurels in order to position Newton for potential future growth
Actions 7.1.8: Continue to meet with community groups in East Newton and seek out meetings with additional diverse community organizations in order to strengthen community trust in public safety
Actions 7.1.9: Develop a procedure for ensuring that citizens receive officer feedback after the resolution of an emergency situation
Actions 7.1.10: Encourage officers to spend more time out of their cars (whenever time and staffing levels allow) to improve community policing efforts.

8. Recreation	
	Actions 8.1.1: Determine the outcome of Central High School and develop associated implementation strategies
	Actions 8.1.2: Complete Jacob Fork Park Phases II and III, including a regulation sized soccer field
	Actions 8.1.3: Create a strategy to support tourism with emphasis on the Historic 1924 Courthouse and museum and the Newton Depot
	Actions 8.1.4: Set aside matching funds or whole project cost to complete Heritage Trail Greenway including completion of the Town Creek extension
	Actions 8.1.5: Continue to develop activities/programs that serve the senior adult population including, but not limited to, the creation of a senior center
	Actions 8.1.6: Construct a dog park

	Actions 8.1.7: Construct a columbarium or mausoleum
	Actions 8.1.8: Construct a regulation size soccer field
	Actions 8.1.9: Develop a community garden
	Actions 8.1.10: Resurface Tennis Courts at Broyhill & Jaycee Park, and schedule playground equipment replacement in the CIP
	Actions 8.11: Offer Hmong and Hispanic outreach programming, and assess the possibility of hiring an outreach coordinator
	Actions 8.1.12: Develop a long-term plan to address park infrastructure that is within a flood zone
	Actions 8.1.13: Prepare to complete a city-wide Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2026
	Actions 8.1.14: Construct an athletic complex to capitalize on youth sports tourism

9. Internal Operations	Actions 9.1.1: Create and implement a Human Capital Improvement Plan that would establish a timeline for conducting and implement pay studies, adding personnel positions, and replacing employee technology.
	Actions 9.1.2: Develop a supervisor training program for recently promoted employees
	Actions 9.1.3 Conduct a cost benefit analysis of implementing an incentivized wellness program
	Action 9.1.4 Budget for a complete transition to digital records storage
	Actions 9.1.5: Assess the feasibility of completely transitioning to keycard activated locks to improve employee safety, reduce key costs and lockouts

Appendix 5: Accomplishments and Improvements

City of Newton Strategic Growth Plan Accomplishments – 2015 Plan

2. Downtown Newton	Actions 2.1.1: Strengthen the Downtown Newton Development Association (DNDA) by funding a full-time Downtown Coordinator position and provide funding from marketing/events
	Actions 2.1.2: Develop additional parking downtown
	Actions 2.1.4: Add additional amenities including a splash pad, outdoor theatre space and mini park to attract commercial and residential development
	Actions 2.1.7: Work with developers to create downtown residential living options.
	Actions 2.1.8: Encourage small business development including restaurants and breweries.
	Actions 2.1.9: Encourage downtown businesses to be open later during weekdays and weekends.

3. Community Appearance and Image	Actions 3.1.3: Implement Streetscape Phase I
	Actions 3.1.5: Amend Downtown (B3) Zoning regulations to encourage investment
	Actions 3.1.6: Create a new signature festival or downtown event
	Actions 3.1.7: Develop a comprehensive street tree inventory and install trees consistent with recommendations from the Tree Board (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 3.1.8: Create a new public art program

4. Growth Management	Actions 4.1.2: Update residential and commercial plan review process (on-going/recurring)

	Actions 4.1.3: Encourage residential growth by recruiting developers and develop appropriate incentives, including but not limited to, the provision of utilities (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 4.1.6: Assist in creating additional retirement communities in Newton. (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 4.1.8: Improve online permitting and customer service (on-going/recurring)

5. Transportation and Mobility	Actions 5.1.1: Complete a comprehensive street condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of streets scheduled for paving or reconditioning (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 5.1.2: Update existing sidewalk plan including a comprehensive sidewalk condition analysis survey and establish a revised priority list of sidewalks scheduled for construction or reconditioning (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 5.1.3: Complete the City's wayfinding project with welcome signs and landscaping
	Actions 5.1.4: Continue to work with State Legislators, Catawba County, and adjacent municipalities to complete construction of Highway 16 between Claremont Road and Tower Road (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 5.1.5: Work with the MPO to select the best candidate projects for NCDOT's Project Prioritization Process to be included in the STIP. (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 5.1.7: Investigate the feasibility of changing Newton's one-way street system back to two-way traffic in the downtown area
	Actions 5.1.8: Greenway - Apply to NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative for funding assistance for a Pedestrian Plan.

6. City Utilities	Actions 6.1.1: Develop and implement a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 6.1.2: Generate a plan to expand city infrastructure to meet anticipated population growth and to replace outdated systems (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 6.1.2A: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to waste water treatment plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for the next 20 years. (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.6: Asses public support for a bond referendum supporting a massive street resurfacing and sidewalk construction project

Actions 6.1.7: Develop engineering plans and financing for construction of water & sewer utilities in Startown

Actions 6.1.8: Develop a plan to replace the public works corporation yard/facility

Actions 6.1.9: Continue to coordinate long range water supply study with CW-DAG-2055

Actions 6.1.10: Evaluate the need for a long-range sanitary sewer capacity study

Actions 6.1.12: Construct critical water lines on Highway 16, Balls Creek Road, and Buffalo Shoals Road in cooperation with Catawba County

Actions 6.1.14: Analyze the construction of water and sewer lines in unserved portions of the city (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.15: Establish definitive timeline in the CIP for replacing aged iron water lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc. (on-going/recurring)
·   Concentration in the downtown area first, with emphasis on streetscape area.
·   Coordinate with Fire Department about replacing water lines that do not meet fire code for the greatest impact on fire protection

Actions 6.1.15A: Establish definitive timeline in the CIP for replacing aged terra cotta sewer lines, based on usage, failure rate, etc. (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.15B: Include engineering assessments and planning into the CIP for upgrades to water plant to maximize the life of the facility and equipment for next 20 years (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.16: Coordinate water line improvements with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.16A: Coordinate sewer line rehabilitations with street resurfacing projects to get greatest leverage of Powell Bill funds. (on-going/recurring)

Actions 6.1.17: Implement a Smart Metering Project

Actions 6.1.18: Place all utilities underground in streetscape areas.

Actions 6.1.19: Offer competitive rates/service for any new electric customers that may have a choice of provider (on-going/recurring)

7. Public Safety	Actions 7.1.5: Coordinate with Public Works Department to upgrade water infrastructure to meet Fire Code & maximize fire protection. Prioritize downtown rehabilitations downtown and around industrial areas. (on-going/recurring)
	Actions 7.1.6: Improve condition and access of abandoned or vacant industrial buildings and downtown buildings to reduce fire risk. Work with Downtown Newton Development Association and Main Street program to establish a Historic Commission, or work with property owners, DNDA, Main Street Program and Planning Commission, to help regulate appearance, safety, and access of buildings downtown. on-going/recurring)
	Actions 7.1.8: As Abernathy Laurels expands, work with the community to ensure adequate service, especially responding to medical calls

8. Recreation	Actions 8.1.1: Complete a citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan within the next 3 years
	Actions 8.1.2: Identify capital projects utilizing Sue Jones estate funds. (Splash pad, Lighting at Jacob's Fork Park, Disc Golf Course, Outdoor Stage)
	Actions 8.1.13: Greenway – Apply to NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative Planning for funding assistance with a pedestrian plan
	Actions 8.1.4: Create a strategy to support tourism with emphasis on the Historic 1924 Courthouse and museum and the Newton Depot
	Actions 8.1.6: Locate a new operational facility for the recreation maintenance staff
	Actions 8.1.7: Develop activities/programs that serve the senior adult population including, but not limited to, the creation of a senior center
	Actions 8.1.12: Complete a citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan