



*Comprehensive Plan*

This plan and its contents were produced in order to meet the requirements of

North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 160D

This plan was approved and adopted by the Town of Warrenton Board of Commissioners on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2022, based upon the recommendations of the Town of Warrenton Planning Board, the residents of the Town of Warrenton, and in consultation with the Kerr-Tar Regional Council of Governments.

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# Acknowledgements

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*Chapter 1-*  
*Introduction*

## **Purpose**

The basis for completing this planning document is to comply with the statutory requirements of North Carolina General Statute § 160D et. seq., in particular NCGS § 160D-501. After adoption, this plan and its contents will need to be reasonably maintained and updated where necessary by the Town, in order to remain in further compliance with the North Carolina General Statutes.

The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development jurisdiction of the Town, based on an analysis of present and future needs as developed utilizing community input. The State also requires that local governments that are considering a zoning map amendment to approve a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and any other official plans as applicable (N.C.G.S. 160D-605).

The Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning or regulatory document however it does serve as a blueprint or roadmap for the future of the Town of Warrenton.

## **Utilization of this Plan**

As mentioned previously, the Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document, however it does guide the Town's various boards and elected officials when making decisions about the future. There are basically two areas in which the plan is used.

### **1. Official Zoning Map Amendments and Ordinance Changes.**

Rezoning and zoning ordinance amendments must be considered in relation to the comprehensive plan and the Future Land Use Map. With any motion to approve or deny a rezoning or zoning ordinance amendment, a statement regarding the consistency of the proposed changes with the Comprehensive Plan must be approved. The Comprehensive Plan is applicable within the Town of Warrenton's Town Limits as well as the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Warrenton's current ETJ line extends 1.0 mile beyond the existing Town Limits.

### **2. Budget and Project Planning**

The Comprehensive Plan provides guidance during the annual budgeting process, including review of projects contained in a Capital Improvements Plan, consideration of the extension of various utilities and other growth policies, transportation projects including sidewalks, walking trails, etc. and other minor or major improvements as identified through public input.

## **Process**

The drafting of the Warrenton Comprehensive Plan was started in mid-2022 with an initial meeting with the Warrenton Planning Board and other community leaders. A community survey form was drafted and distributed via the Planning Board, Town of Warrenton web site, churches and other establishments throughout the Town. The purpose of this information is to develop a vision and provide insight and direction as to what the community would like to see in the overall plan.

Several meetings were held to review this information and compile key components and themes of the Plan.

The draft of the final plan was reviewed in September and presented to the public for review and public comment prior to final adoption by the Warrenton Town Board. The draft plan was also posted on the Town's website for a minimum of 30 days to allow for public comment.

Also, previously completed studies such as the Warrenton Downtown Streetscape Master Plan Report and Town of Warrenton Downtown Zoning Ordinance Planning Report Review and Recommendations were reviewed and incorporated as a part of this plan for consistency and inclusion with the Comprehensive Plan.

*Chapter 2- History,  
Architecture and  
Demographics*



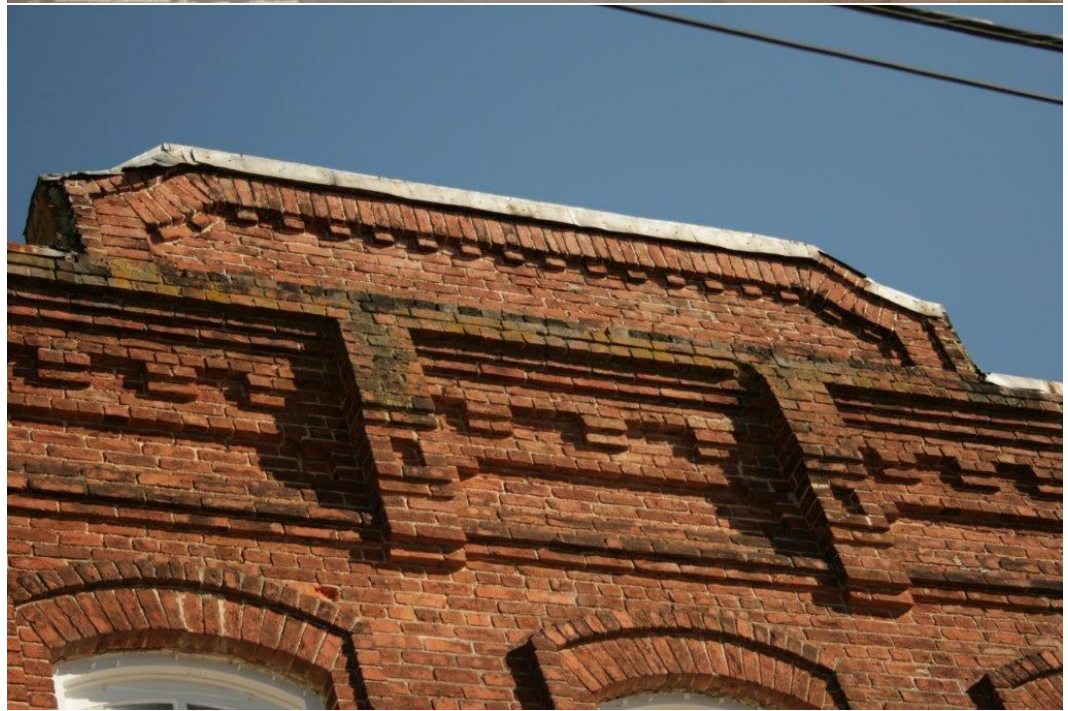
## History, Architecture and Demographics

According to the Sketches of Old Warrenton originally published in 1924, “during the first period, the town consisted largely of a map and survey of the streets, the houses and homes being limited in number, and for the most part unpretentious in appearance. The Warrenton of today in some respects is the most remarkable town in the country. There are many beautiful and convenient homes, all in good repair, with yards and flowers of every variety, and furnished with all domestic comforts.”

Warrenton, the county seat of Warren County, was incorporated in 1779. A plot and survey of the streets and lots and public squares was made in that year by William Christmas, a citizen of Franklin County.

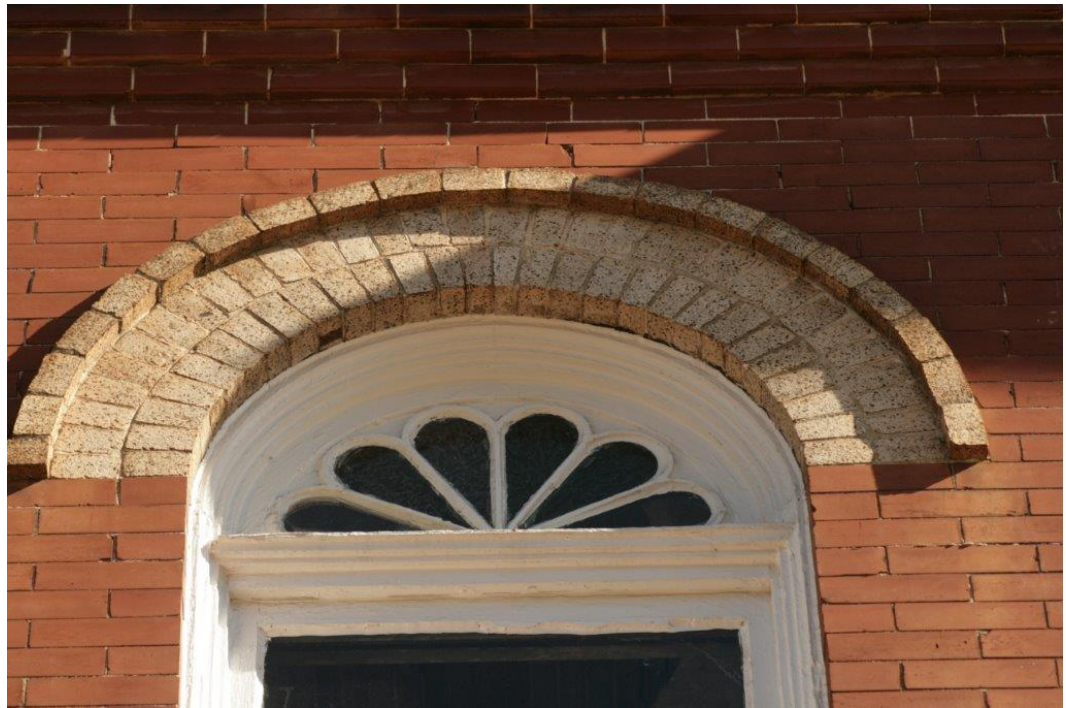
The growth of the town was very slow for the first twenty five years of its existence. It is noted that very few houses were built at that time and the architecture followed no style, the plan of each being original.

As stated in recommendations by the NC Department of Commerce provided to the Town of Warrenton, “The historic development of the downtown is an essential physical and economic asset to the fabric of the Town.” The following pictures are examples of various exterior building design and architecture.









## Population of Warrenton, North Carolina - Where are we now?

There were a number of persons of foreign birth included in the small population of Warrenton in its early days. Based on writings of Ellen Mordecai, she describes several individuals, emigrants from England, Ireland and France, and a hessian who was a teamster and carpenter. There were also members of the Scottish colony that landed at or near Norfolk and then found their way to Warrenton.

The 2020 Census profile has the following ancestry for the Town of Warrenton:

English - 19.7%

French - 40 %

German - 9.7%

Irish - 7.3%

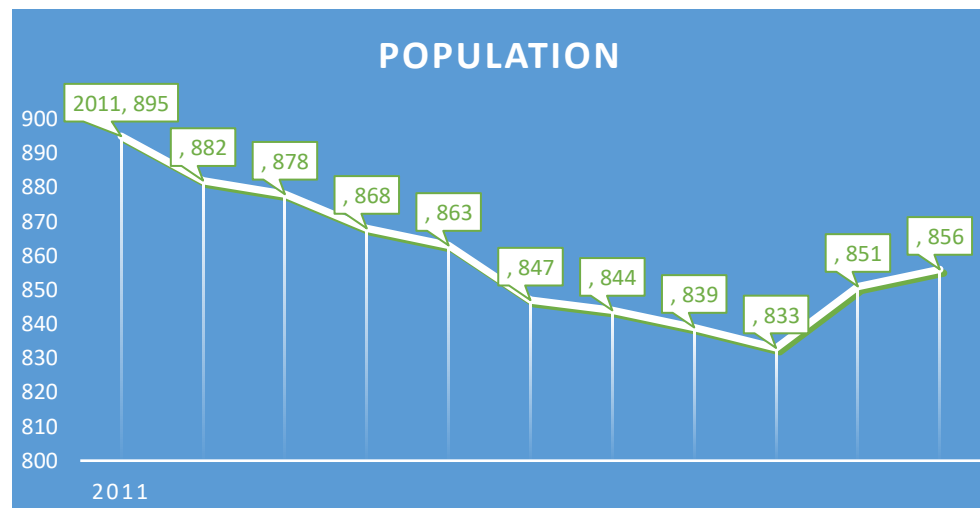
Italian - 3.7%

Norwegian - 1.0%

Polish - 1.0%

Scottish - 0.7%

In accordance with the 2020 US Census, Warrenton's population is **851** people and is the **360<sup>th</sup>** largest city/town in North Carolina.



Median Age in Warrenton is 61.4 compared to 38.9 Median Age in North Carolina. Under 5 years old are represented at 3.9% , under 18 year olds at 10.8%, 18 years and over at 89.2% . 41.3 % of the 18 years and over are over 65.

The largest Warrenton racial/ethnic groups are White (49.2%) followed by Black (37.8%) and Hispanic (6.0%)

27.8 % of the population has a Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Warrenton compared to 34.9% in North Carolina.

The Education Attainment (Population 25 Years and Older) in Warrenton is as follows:

High School or equivalent degree – 31.9 %

Some college, no degree- 15.7%

Associate's degree- 8.7%

Bachelor's degree- 19.3%

Graduate or professional degree- 8.4%

The Medium Household Income is \$38,500.

## *HOUSING*

The Median Gross Rent in Warrenton is \$482 +/- \$105 compared to the Median Gross Rent in North Carolina at \$1,026 +/- \$10.

There are 528 Total Housing Units in Warrenton of 65.9 % +/- 10.4% are Home owned compared to 66.9% +/- 0.4% in North Carolina.

Housing Values are the following:

Less than \$50,000- 7.6%

\$50,000 to \$99,999- 35.1%

\$100,000 to \$149,999- 26.1%

\$ 150,000 to \$199,999- 8.4%

\$200,000 to \$299,999-10.7%

\$300,000 to \$499,999-12.1%

\$500,000 to \$999,999-0.0%

\$1,000,000 or more-0.0%

In 2020, 419 are Occupied Housing Units with 109 being vacant.

# *Chapter 3- Historic Preservation*



*All agree that the Town's Historic District is a community asset and a major contributor to attracting more tourist which are interested in its historic destinations and also making Warrenton to call home.*

*Strategies to promote tourism and preserve existing historic sites and encourage the designation of new sites identified in a previous report provided by the NC Department of Commerce include the following.*

*Strategy 1. Coordinate efforts to incorporate a Downtown Revitalization program in the incorporated Towns of Warrenton, Norlina, and Macon and create improved entrance corridors to the main street areas of Warren County.*

*Strategy 2. Coordinate efforts to with local historical groups to research and inventory potential new historic sites for incorporation in the Historic Registry, market as tourism and history feature of the County.*



*Chapter 4-Survey results  
and action items*

## *Principles and Mission for the Town of Warrenton*

*The Downtown Area is a focal point of the Town of Warrenton and it has worked hard to maintain its small town charm and respecting and preserving its Historic character. In order to do this, the business district must be active, engaging to all segments of the population, and also be prosperous and vibrant.*

What are some of the main issues according to the survey respondents?

- Balancing historical preservation in respect with affordability
- Lack of easily accessible online database
- Standardizing processes to help guide citizens through planning process and explaining the value and significance of historical regulations and safety of streets regarding speeding and obeying the speed limits
- Condition of various city streets throughout Warrenton
- Demolition of old and abandoned houses
- Design of Streetscapes
- Town promotion and developing a destination identity.
- Affordable homes and rentals
- Universal accessible wi-fi
- Improved public school programs

The Town of Warrenton has taken many steps throughout the years to address many of the issues outlined above. Topics discussed will be outlined along with strategy. In order to fully address these issues and create plans for implementation.

## ***GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES AND REGULATIONS ON THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVEL***

The Town of Warrenton works hard to provide its citizens, customers and visitors of the town with the highest quality service and an enjoyable experience while visiting the town.

Government regulation regarding historic properties remain a focal part of town's goals in maintaining and creating regulations that preserve the history of the town but the Planning Board and other respondents saw the need for further regulations and incentives for renovating historic properties.

### ***NEEDED REGULATIONS:***

**A) *Tree Ordinance***- A tree ordinance is needed to properly maintain crepe myrtles and other trees that create a positive canopy and look for the town while limiting clear cutting for new development taking place within the town limits and ETJ of the town.

Implementation- Prepare draft of proposed ordinance for review of planning board and present to town board for review and consideration of approval.

Timeline- it is anticipated that this would take 4-6 months to perform.

It is felt by the planning board and survey respondents that water, air quality is generally pretty good, regulations like this will help preserve those natural resources.

**B) *Building Maintenance/Renovation***- Review of existing ordinances is needed to evaluate any needed additions or modifications to the existing ordinances regarding old and abandoned houses, vacant lots, preserving downtown character, minimum housing standards.

Implementation- Review of existing ordinances and prepare additions and/or modifications for review by the appropriate board prior to consideration of approval by the town board.

Timeline – It is anticipated this would take 6-12 months to complete depending on the scope of the desired review and whether done in segments or phases.

**C) *Traffic and Pedestrian Safety*** – Speeding on Main St is a concern of survey respondents. There is desire for the speed limit to be reduced to 25 mph. There are

speed tracking devices that can be utilized to record data including number of vehicles, speed and other information. This equipment has become less costly and may possibly be purchased with the help of various police department or other traffic related safety grants. Various traffic signs and speed indicators are also available which appear to help with reducing speeding as well as other traffic calming methods.

Implementation- Possible purchase of traffic monitoring equipment and review of any possible grants. Review of any existing traffic citations regarding speeding by the town of Warrenton Police Department. Consult with NCDOT to evaluate existing data and provide assistance relative to possible signage or other traffic enforcement measures.

Timeline- It is anticipated this would take 6-8 months depending on the availability of funds and possible grant cycles if desired to go after grants. Time would need to be allowed to collect and analyze the data.

#### **D) Government Facility**

During discussions of the plan, it was discussed that Warren County is one of seven counties within the state that does not have a DMV or License Plate office to provide service to its local citizens. The nearest office is approximately 23 minutes away in Henderson and 26-34 minutes away in Louisburg. This places a burden on the working citizens of Warrenton to make it to these offices prior to close and utilizing scheduled work hours to accomplish this.

Implementation- Schedule meeting with NCDOT and other state agencies to gather information on how the need for these offices are determined and data needed to determine the exact need.

Timeline- It is anticipated that the first step would be to set up an initial meeting with the appropriate state agency to discuss the need and possibility of securing a local office. The timeline would then be determined after it is determined to be viable and a course of action is established.

## *ECONOMIC GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITIES*

While the town has experienced some growth in the downtown and surrounding areas, survey respondents as well as the planning board recognized the need for other stores such as a grocery store. There is concern that sales tax and other revenues are going to adjacent cities and counties. Affordable housing and rentals would help substantiate the viability for a new grocery store. The community does desire to maintain the small-town features and not particularly interested in big box stores or chain restaurants.

Implementation- Work with a community group to evaluate the need and prepare information and data that would be desirable for investors or operators in establishing a grocery store for the area that meets the needs of the community and is constructed in a new or renovated building which enhances the character of the town of Warrenton. This would also involve working with Warren County Economic Development to help promote the need.

Timeline – This will be an ongoing process, but it is anticipated this will take 1-2 years to recruit and establish this type of business.



*TOWN OF WARRENTON PUBLIC UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE*

According to the 2021 Local Water Supply Plan, the town has approximately 35 miles of water distribution lines and approximately 650,000 gallons of water storage. Water is purchased from Warren County through the Kerr Lake Regional Water system of which

Warren County is a member and part owner. Warrenton can purchase up to 400,000 gallons per day in accordance with the contract which expires in 2037 and the amount of water purchased in 2021 was 157,600 gallons per day.

Warrenton maintains its own wastewater treatment plant and the permit number is NCOO20834. The plant is rated at 2.0 MGD and as of 2021 discharging approximately 614,000 gallons per day.

It will be necessary for the town to continue to analyze its existing infrastructure and replacing aging water and sewer mains and other facilities to insure reliability to its customers as well as operating within state and federal guidelines.

Implementation- Continue to update Capital Improvement Plan and research funding opportunities through grants and low interest loans.

Timeline- Annually (Commonly done with budget process)



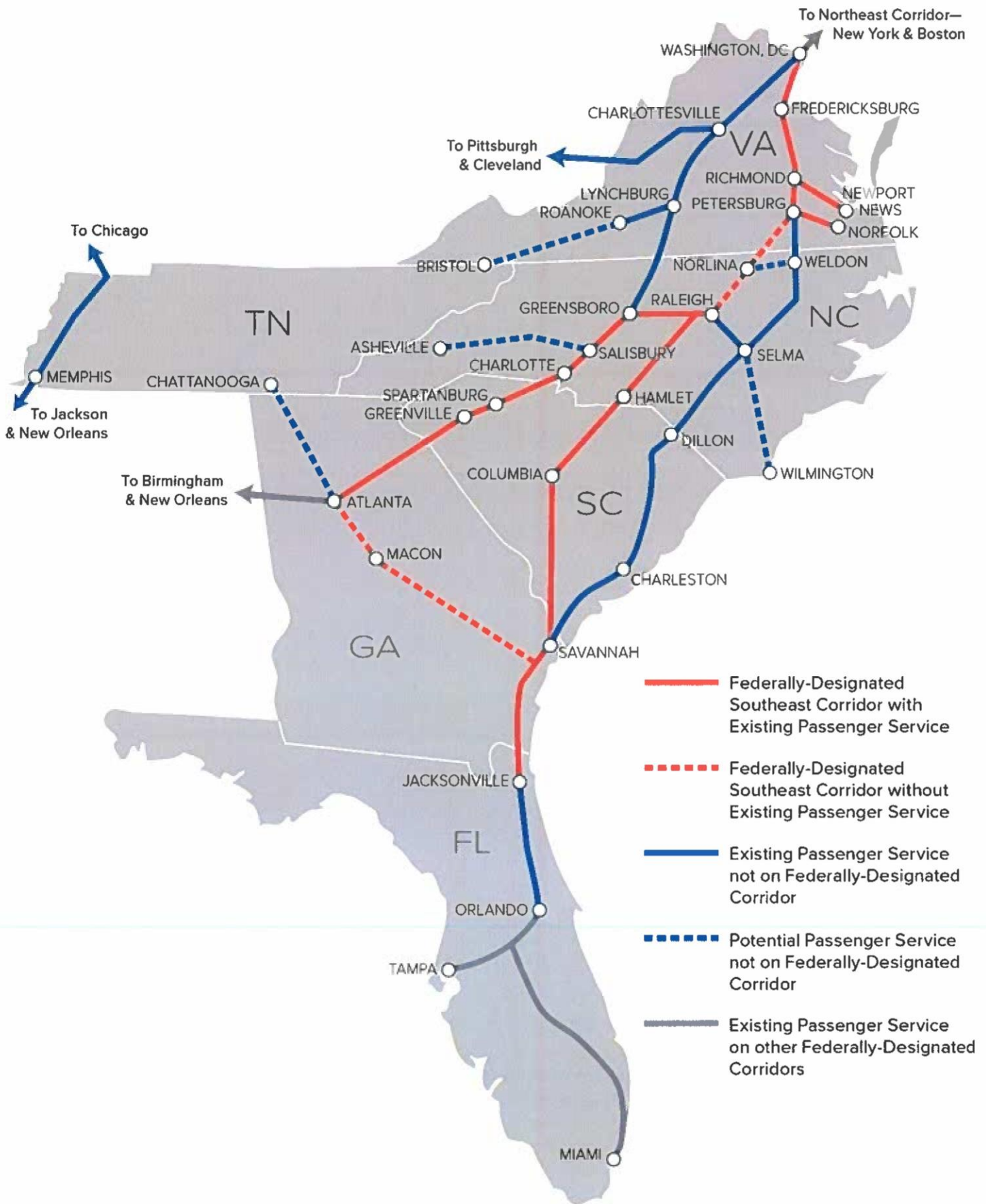


# *Chapter 5- Future Land Use*

## FUTURE LAND USE

The existing Zoning Map for the Town of Warrenton including the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction was reviewed to see if significant changes in development have occurred since the original zoning map and designations were drafted.

The Planning Board and other committee members also discussed various safety improvements regarding the safety of pedestrians regarding speeding, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other components of transportation such as the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor (S Line) which would serve as a corridor from Raleigh, NC to Richmond, Va. The nearby Town of Norlina as well as other cities and towns are competing to be selected as passenger stop. Whereas tracks do not run through Warrenton, it is important to plan for possible strategic transportation corridors which would offer Warrenton as a destination for passengers who may frequent the area via the high speed rail. Any existing spur lines or abandoned rail right of ways should be preserved which would enhance the viability of the project. This would include both the S and A lines. (See overall map on the following page)



APPENDIX A: Existing Warrenton Zoning Map

APPENDIX B: Future Land Use Plan

*Chapter 6- Goals  
and  
Recommendations*

## *Goal 1- Greenways and Parks*

*The health and welfare of the citizens of Warrenton is of the utmost importance to leaders of the community. In 2020, the town worked with NCDOT to complete a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to develop improvements to its bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. It is important to note that hiking and biking trails are part of Warren County's Comprehensive Plan. Therefore it is important that there is collaboration when planning for greenways and parks to insure continuity. It is also necessary to continue partnerships with state agencies, existing and new Homeowner associations to develop opportunities within new developments and also develop subdivision regulations which will help facilitate this in the planning process. Parks are important to the growth of the community in which there are facilities for all ages to enjoy the outdoors. Playground equipment, spray park, disc golf and other similar components or activities at a park possibly utilizing existing property should be evaluated. Cost estimates will need to be provided and the projected costs to be scheduled for funding in a Capital Improvements Plan. Consider grants such as the Parks and Recreation Trust fund Matching grant opportunities to help with funding the CIP.*

## *Goal 2- Affordable Housing*

*Affordable housing is a concern for most communities and a goal identified in a study prepared by the North Carolina Department of Commerce for the Town was "To promote, encourage, and stimulate the conservation of existing housing and the construction of new housing needed currently as well as needed to attract new families to Warren County".*

*This will involve encouraging housing to be built in areas with close access to water, sewer and other infrastructure and services. The town currently has a variation of zoning density levels but the Future Land Use Plan should be further studied by the planning board to update various zoning districts. Consideration should also be given to encourage the extension of water and sewer services through rebates and/or reimbursement to encourage development. A voluntary petition for annexation can be required, if outside of the city, which would help with increasing the tax base and therefore keeping services at an affordable rate.*

### ***Goal 3- Retail/Economic Development***

*One of the major attractions of Warrenton is its preservation of existing historic homes and other historic sites. The downtown area is experiencing the revitalization and use of existing buildings for restaurants, breweries, and other retail establishments. The planning board and citizens who responded to the survey, expressed concern about having a grocery store or market place within the town and keeping the dollars local. It is desired to have the availability of fresh bread, local fruit and produce, and other items that are now not consistently available. Future studies should be done to consider possible incentives relative to building renovation, possible collaboration with county or neighboring food alliances such as Grow to provide lower cost operations for a grocery store or market.*

## *Goal 4-Governmental services and regulations*

*In the surveys as well as discussion by the members of the group who worked diligently to draft this comprehensive plan, there was tremendous desire to improve the services in the community both in the public and private sector. The goal is to continue to improve on regulations and assistance regarding the rebuilding of historic homes in Warrenton and also storefronts and other structures within the downtown area. Therefore it is important to continue to strengthen its rules and regulations regarding the upkeep of property. This would involve the review of existing ordinances to conform to the most up to date practices and conformance with current statutes.*

*It was also noted that there are certain services such as Division of Motor vehicle licenses and license plate offices that are not currently available in Warren County. The goal is to provide data which outlines the need for these services and present the case to state and local officials responsible for these services.*

*The Town of Warrenton will work to ensure the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, natural origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.*