

# Section II: Current Conditions



## Current Conditions

### Land Capacity Map

A land capacity map was generated for the Town of Mineral Springs using The Geographic Information System (GIS), a computer based mapping system. GIS software is capable of integrating a variety of individual characteristics for a given geography and producing a map that shows the development capacity for land within the town. Characteristics used for generating the capacity map for Mineral Springs included viewsheds, grade, soil type, streams and stream buffers, topography, zoning, infrastructure availability, and existing development. These “layers” were compiled on top of each other to create the capacity map, where land is ranked on a scale of High, Moderate, Low, and Unavailable for Development. For instance, parcels with poor soil conditions, steep slopes, and within stream buffers are areas that would be poor candidates for development and thus graded as having “Low” capacity. Areas registered as “Unavailable for Development” are those tracts that are protected by various conservation easements or others where landowners express clear intentions for preservation over development. Other areas “unavailable for development” are those parts of town already designated as subdivisions. The capacity map serves as a starting point for discussing appropriate locations and densities of new development within Mineral Springs, and is used to determine appropriate types of development within the town, or if appropriate, to identify areas where development should be curtailed or limited in order to meet the clearly stated goals of town residents.

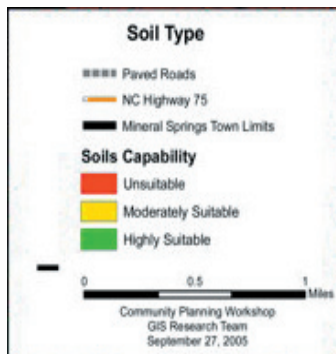


Fig. 10 MS Soils Suitability Legend

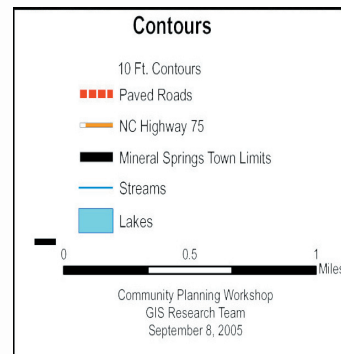


Fig. 11 MS Spring Topography Legend

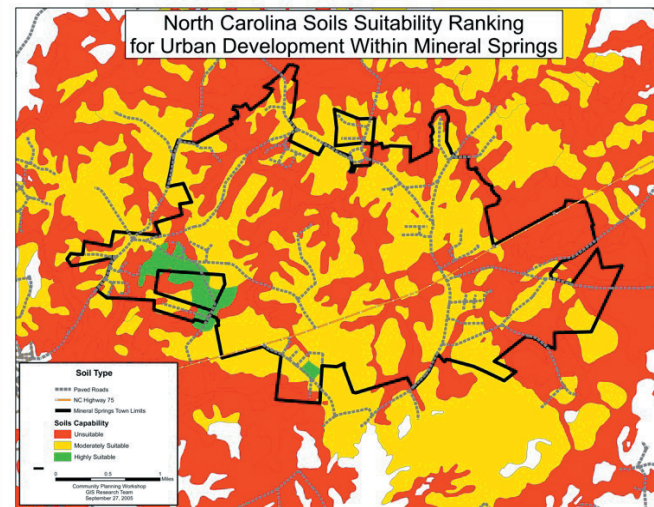


Fig. 10

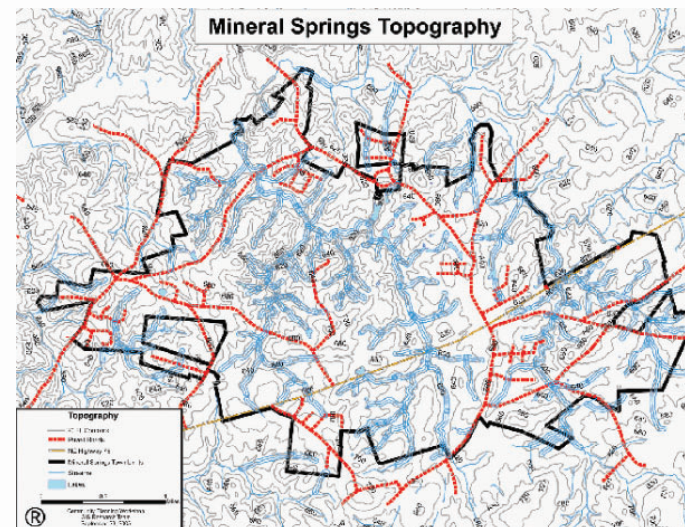


Fig. 11

# Mineral Springs Vision Plan

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Current Conditions



## Mineral Springs Land Capacity Map

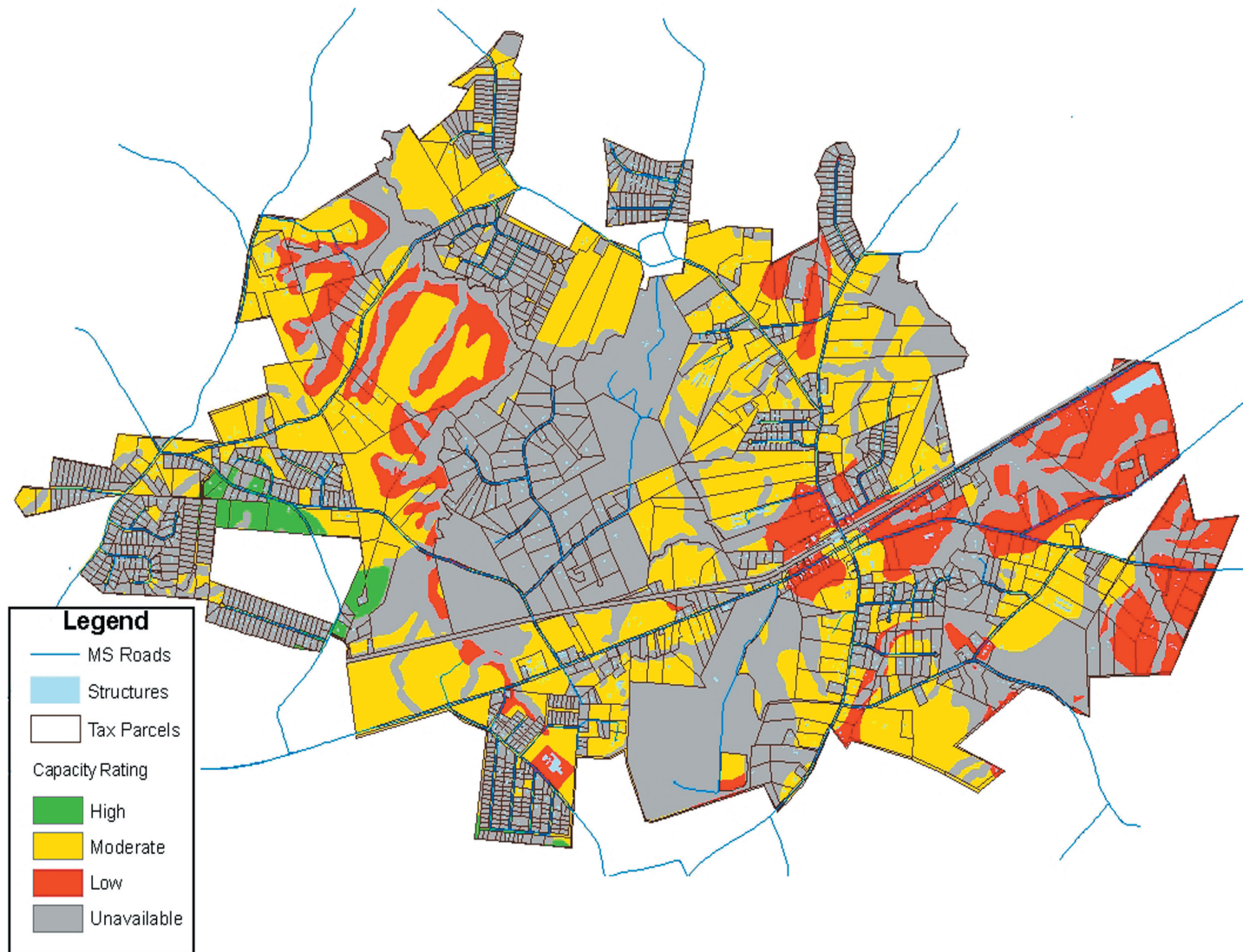


Fig. 12

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### *Environmental Analysis*

To understand better the unique environmental assets of Mineral Springs, an environmental and physical survey team conducted a viewshed analysis by subjectively analyzing the landscape features of the city. The goal was to assess the natural landscape and highlight areas with tree stands, beautiful vistas, and picturesque rural character that are consistent with the opinions expressed by local residents. The team collected a large number of digital photos throughout the town and inventoried scenic views, for example, along McNeely Road and Collins Road. In another example, driving northeast along Pleasant Grove Road, deep woodlands line both sides of the street, providing an attractive balance of woodland and open space. As a result, the group was able to create a subjective map indicating areas of the town that are very rural in character, moderately rural in character, and less rural in character. This type of visual aid can be used to determine appropriate development typologies and to suggest that future development in these areas must reflect their ecological balance and physical beauty. Most importantly, the environmental and physical survey highlights qualities of the rural environment in Mineral Springs that are quickly being lost in Union County.



*“I feel it  
is vital to  
the community  
to have a town  
park with  
hiking and  
bike trails.”*

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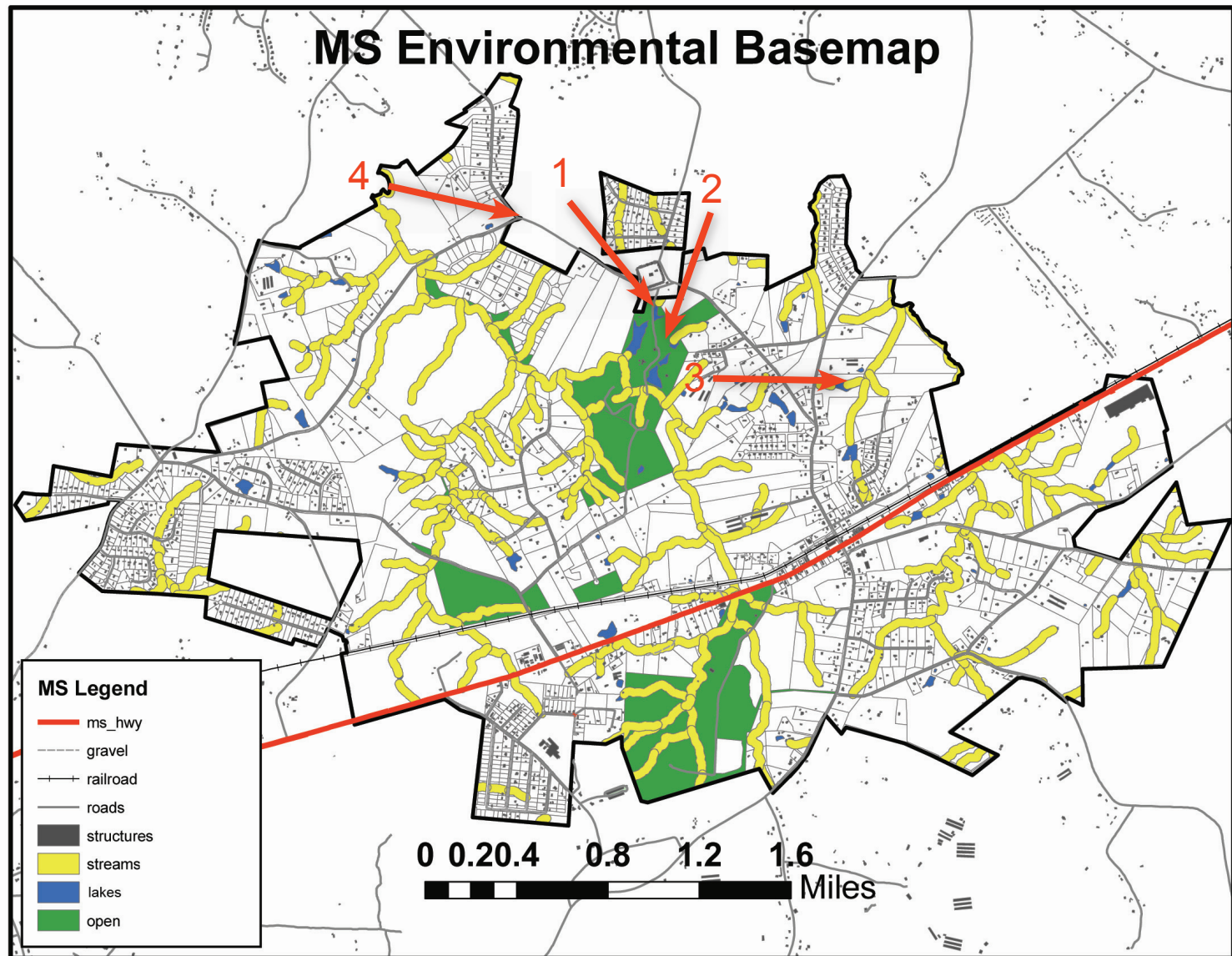


Fig. 13 Key to landscape views (i)





Fig. 14 View 1



Fig. 15 View 2



Fig. 16 View 3



Fig. 17 View 4



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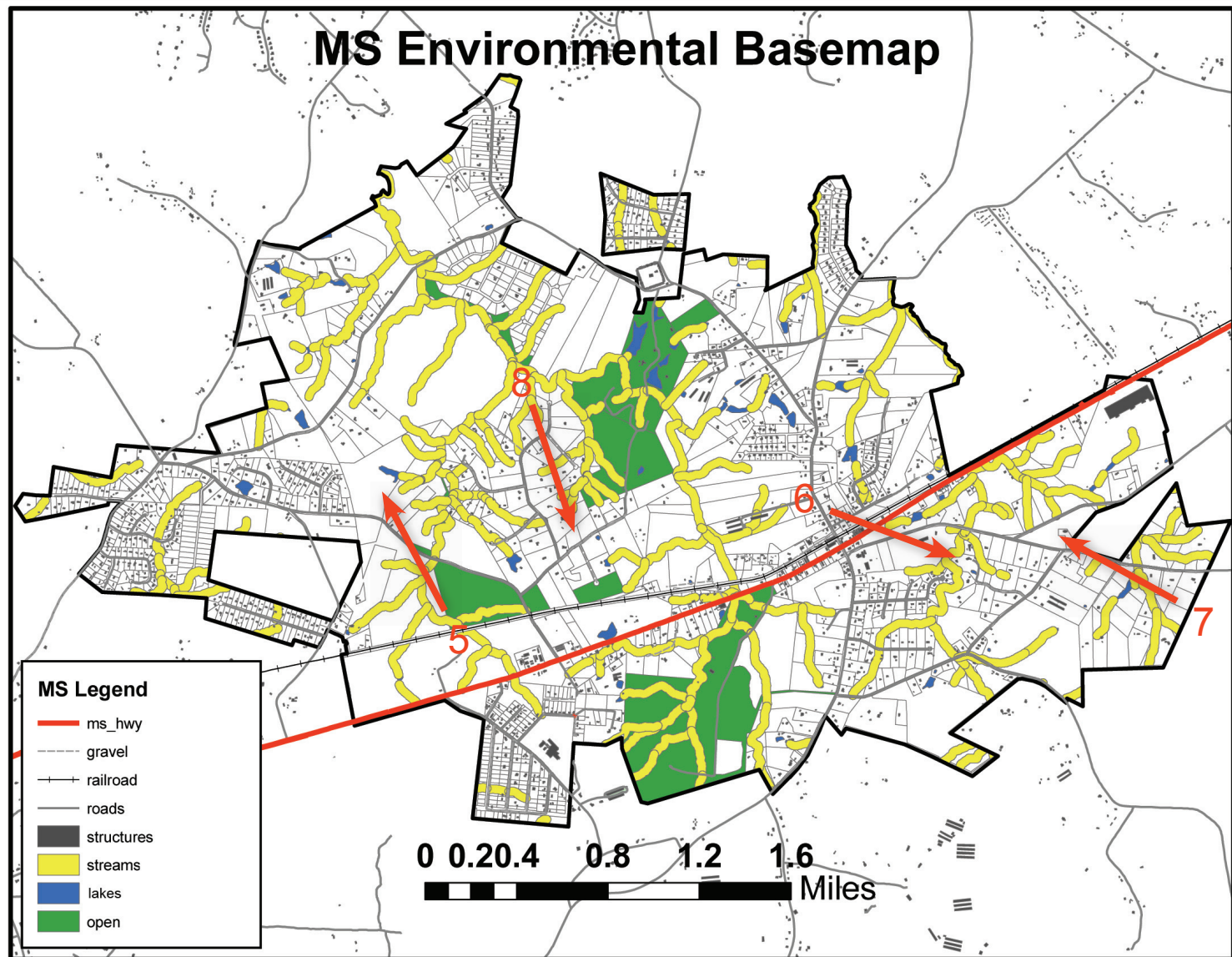


Fig. 18 Keys to landscape views (ii)





Fig. 19 View 5



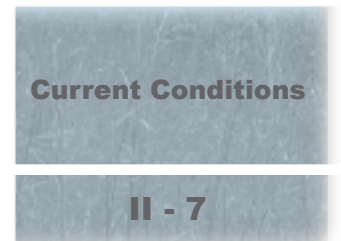
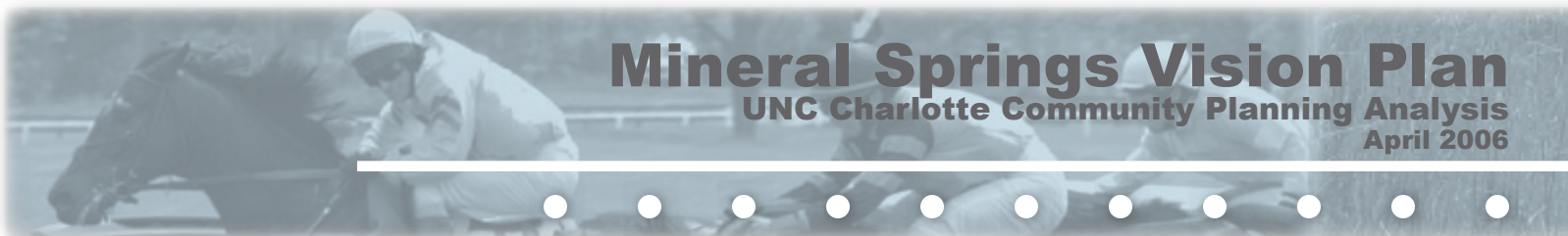
Fig. 20 View 6



Fig. 21 View 7



Fig. 22 View 8





### *Regulatory Context: Zoning Ordinance Analysis*

An evaluation was completed which considered the current zoning ordinance and its ability to successfully manage future development. The analysis consisted of looking at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in both the zoning and the subdivision ordinance. The assessment was completed with the consideration of the town's concerns for the future as illustrated in the survey.

1. Strengths are elements of existing ordinances that promote community vision.

- Firm regulations on lot subdivisions.
- Promotion of the desired character through the downtown overlay.
- Required dedication of park land or in lieu fees and landscaping regulations.
- Overlay defines concrete boundaries for the downtown.

2. Weaknesses are areas within the zoning ordinance that should be strengthened in order to promote the town vision.

- Throughout the ordinance the words “encourage” and “suggest” are used, these should be replaced with stronger words such as “shall” and “require”.
- In section 4.17 regarding protection and retention of existing large trees, this regulation is needed, but lacks specific direction and allows opportunities to avoid the requirement.
- The ordinance does not allocate methods to preserve large tracts and key parcels of open space. \* As stated in the strength section, section 406.1 of the subdivision ordinance requires that open space is dedicated. This regulation, however, is tailored to major subdivisions and does not provide for the protection of some key viewsheds or large tracts of land.



- In Article 14, the section regarding floodplain regulation, requirements for stream buffers and floodplain sections are weak. There is a lack of flexibility with in the zoning ordinance in relation to site circumstances.

3. Opportunities are defined as a chance to implement regulations at the onset of development that promote chosen alternatives.

- Regarding section 5.6 of the zoning ordinance, this section requires that a market analysis be completed to show the economic feasibility for any shopping center plan.
- Also regarding section 5.6, the size of the shopping center, the ordinance currently “encourages” that shopping centers be less than 75,000 square feet. In order to maintain the rural atmosphere the size should be changed to have a maximum of 50,000 square feet.
- The location of the Queens Cup Steeplechase is within the city limits. This provides a unique opportunity for the implementation of equestrian based zoning which in turn will promote a town “theme”.

- Another prospect is the implementation of Form Based Zoning Codes. Form Based Codes emphasize the regulation of physical form rather than a controlling use.
  - Mineral Springs contains many large undeveloped tracts of land which provide enormous preservation opportunities through zoning regulations.
4. Threats are loopholes within the zoning ordinance that could overwhelm a small town with high-density housing and strip development.
- The ordinance currently requires that any commercial development obtain approval from the Town Council. This regulation gives the Council an enormous amount of control over any future businesses. The zoning

ordinance, however, does not detail specific standards and direction for the development. This section could become a threat in the case that future council members have differing views from those who developed the ordinance.

- According to the Mecklenburg Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) both Hwy. 75 and Potter Road have been designated as major thoroughfares with 100 foot right-of-ways (possible 4 lanes); if not planned for appropriately, this could negatively affect the downtown.
- The last threat to the town is the location of sewer lines.

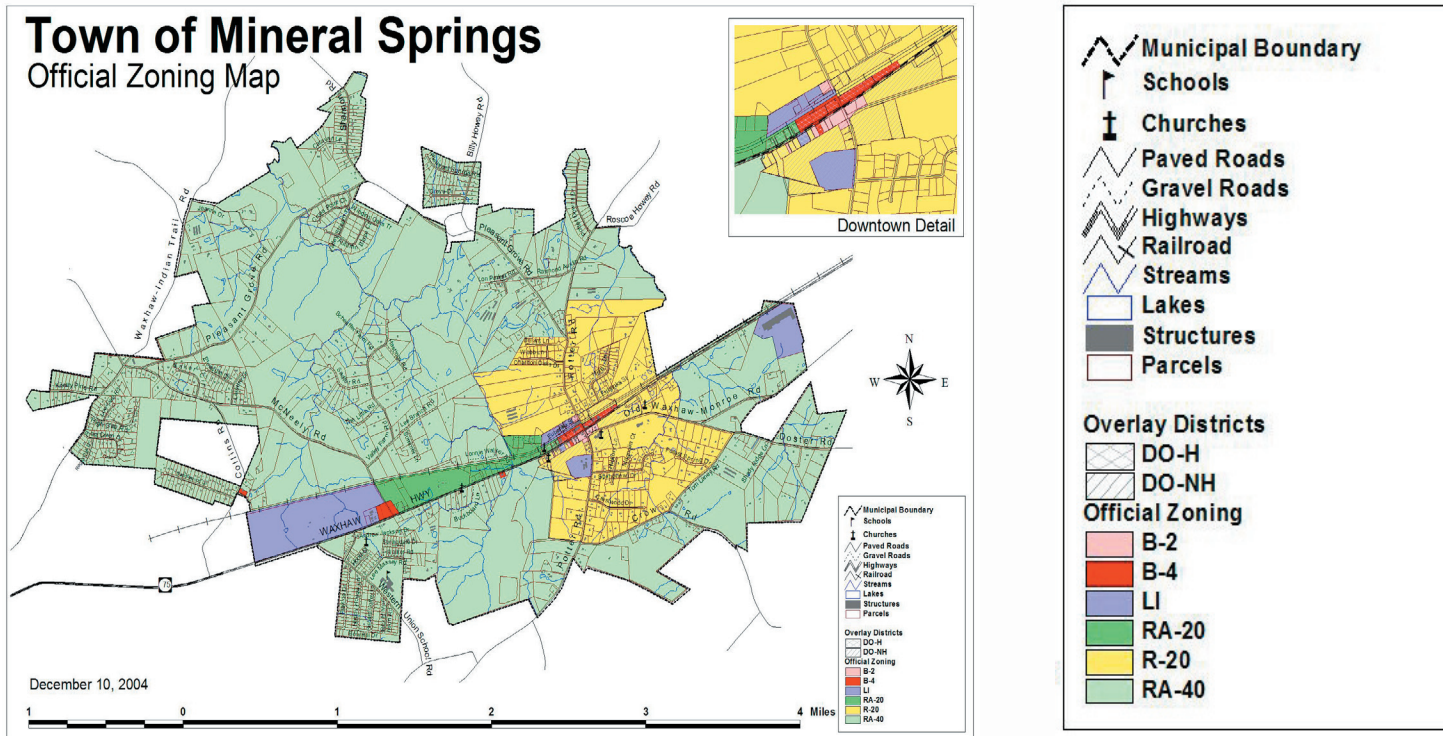


Fig. 23

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