Key Findings:

- The ordinance requires Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) for projects creating as little as 5,000 square feet of impervious surface, exceeding the NPDES Small MS4 permit's 1-acre minimum threshold.
- The ordinance is unpopular among residents, particularly single-family homeowners, due to high compliance costs and administrative complexity.
- Enforcement has been inconsistent, leading to confusion, non-compliance, and inefficiencies in stormwater management.
- Staff time and resources dedicated to enforcing the ordinance could be reallocated to broader, community-wide stormwater initiatives.
- Inspection requirements, developed with previous state guidance, need revision to align with the NPDES permit and the Town's Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP).
- The lower threshold has not reduced the number of impairments in the Swannanoa River.

Recommended Changes:

1. Adjust the SCM Threshold:
    - Increase the minimum impervious surface threshold from 5,000 square feet to half an acre (21,780 square feet) to reduce regulatory burdens while maintaining stormwater benefits.
    - Classify projects into high-density (requiring periodic permit renewals) and low-density (monitored for built-upon-area changes).
2. Revise Inspection Requirements:
    - Amend the ordinance to allow property owners or any qualified professional to conduct annual SCM inspections, keeping records on-site.
    - Modify the SWMP to:
        - Require low-density SCMs to be inspected by the Town once per permit cycle.
        - Require high-density SCMs to be inspected twice per permit cycle.
    - Town-led inspections will maintain NPDES compliance, ensuring accountability without undue burden on property owners.

3. Refocus Stormwater Management Strategies:
    - Rescind post-construction permits for properties that would no longer be subject to the revised threshold, reducing financial strain on homeowners.
    - Develop a community-wide SCM program, reallocating resources to voluntary or incentivized stormwater improvements.
    - Enhance education and outreach initiatives to promote best practices in stormwater management.
4. Clarify and Streamline Regulations:
    - Update ordinance language to ensure consistency between post-construction stormwater regulations and sedimentation and erosion control regulations.
    - Improve permitting clarity to align enforcement with the Town's broader stormwater goals.

By implementing these changes, the Town can ensure a more effective, equitable, and sustainable approach to stormwater management while maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements and improving public trust in local governance.