STAFF REPORT

To: Planning Board of Adjustment

Agenda Title: Comprehensive Plan Update

Staff Contact: Ricky Hurley

Meeting Date: June 2, 2026

Summary:

A proposed amendment to the Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan – Future Land Use Map to change the land use designation from **Institutional** to **Cluster Residential** for the properties located at 2988, 2990, and 2992 Riverside Drive.

Background:

North Carolina General Statutes require that all municipalities in the state adopt a comprehensive plan, the purpose of which is stated in N.C.G.S. §160D-501(a1):

> *A comprehensive plan sets forth goals, policies, and programs intended to guide the present and future physical, social, and economic development of the jurisdiction. A land-use plan uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land. A comprehensive or land-use plan is intended to guide coordinated, efficient, and orderly development within the planning and development regulation jurisdiction based on an analysis of present and future needs.*

The Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2024, responded to various development pressures and rapidly changing conditions affecting the Town by establishing specific goals, objectives, and action steps identified by the Woodfin community. The Plan is advisory in nature and functions as a guiding document with general direction on policy and goals for growth and development of the Town. Comprehensive plans are intended to guide a community for a period of 10-20 years and must be, "reasonably maintained" with land use professionals generally recommending an update every 5-10 years **or** when a significant event or other circumstances would influence the overall vision and/or goals. When this occurs, it is most commonly the result of something that could not have been anticipated when the public engagement and visioning processes were completed.

Two recent events warrant reexamination of the **Woodfin Together** plan. In September of 2024, Hurricane Helene brought widespread devastation to WNC, including the Town of Woodfin. While the existing plan includes goals for sustainability and resilience, a noteworthy takeaway from the response and recovery period was the value of community connections and the recognition that land uses that build and strengthen community are an important component to community resilience. Then, more

recently in May of this year, the State of North Carolina shared a press release with local media announcing that the Craggy Correctional Facility, located within the corporate limits of Woodfin off Riverside Drive, will begin shutting down in the latter half of 2026. Subsequent communication with state officials describes a plan to put the property on the market for sale and redevelopment. The closing of the facility presents a unique and rare opportunity to consider other, more compatible land uses, for the site.

Staff Analysis:

The Craggy Correctional property consists of three tracts of land totaling approximately 286 acres with approximately 26 acres currently utilized by the facility for dormitories, grounds, parking, and support buildings, all of which is currently zoned Heavy Industrial. The site is adjacent to the former Buncombe County landfill which has been adaptively reused for a solar farm, general services garage, and the A-B Tech Training Center. Other surrounding land uses are much less intensive and are dominated by large-lot single-family homesites and open space consisting of natural forest and open pasture.

Topography of the site is rolling hills that steepen as one moves toward the bluffs along the banks of the French Broad River. Environmental constraints include regulated floodplain adjacent to the French Broad River, medium-high stability risks to steep bluffs found throughout the site particularly those along the river with mapped debris flows in some of the same locations. The site is currently served by City of Asheville Water and MSD for sewer.

It is important to note that comprehensive plan "land use designations" are not the same thing as "zoning classifications" which carry with them stricter rules and are linked to the town's development regulations. Land use designations are broader and more general and describe not just what uses are allowed where, but how the town would look and feel.

The current FLUM designation is **Institutional** which is described in the plan as, "*Institutional uses are generally mid- to large-scale in nature and include schools, administrative offices, and other institutional or government owned properties. Such sites may experience high levels of traffic during certain times of the day and week but do not have significant external impacts.*" (p. 26).

The proposed FLUM-designation is **Cluster Residential,** described as, "*Cluster residential areas include developed and undeveloped areas both within and outside of town limits. These areas should be sensitively designed with clustered homes and protected open space and other community amenities.*" (p. 30)

Staff feels that the resiliency lessons learned from Hurricane Helene, combined with the announcement of the prison closure, that a change from **Institutional** to **Cluster Residential** is more compatible with surrounding land uses and better aligned with existing plan goals – more specific considerations include:

- The significant acreage of the property provides opportunity for the planning and construction of a new Woodfin neighborhood
- The current Institutional designation is not consistent with goals for building and strengthening community that can come from housing, neighborhood based non-residential uses, and open space preservation

- The proposed Cluster Residential designation is consistent with the designation assigned to significant areas to the north and south, and
- The proposed Cluster Residential designation better supports and encourages land uses that are consistent with the surrounding residential uses while allowing for separation/buffering from existing non-residential land uses.
- The proposed Cluster Residential designation is better aligned with existing zoning classifications found within both the Town of Woodfin (Mountain Village) and Buncombe County's planning areas (R-1, R3, Open Use).

Lastly, the Woodfin Together plan **Appendix A.1.2 Small Area Planning** includes a list of areas/sites where site specific planning is felt to benefit the larger Woodfin community. Adding the Craggy Correctional facility to this appendix would help to prioritize community engagement to ensure future development on the site meets specific community goals.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend approval of:

1) The proposed amendment to the FLUM as identified on Exhibit B - Proposed Future Land Use Map from **Institutional** to **Cluster Residential**, and
2) A proposed text amendment to Appendix A.1.2 to of the **Woodfin Together** plan to add the "Craggy Correctional facility" to the list of sites warranting a small area plan development.

Suggested Motion:

I move to approve Ordinance No. 2026-09 amending the **Woodfin Together Plan** by:

1) changing the land use designation as shown on the attached Exhibit B – Future Land Use Map Amendment, and
2) adding the Craggy Correctional Facility to **Appendix A.1.2**, **Small Area Planning,** subject to the following conditions:

   (*Board to add additional content here, if applicable.)*

and find that it is reasonable, is in the public interest, is consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request:

1. Uses the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and new developments should be human-scale, inspiring, and designed to align with Woodfin's values of affordability and sustainability (1.1.1, 1.1.4).
2. Promotes long-term fiscal responsibility in new development by encouraging growth in areas with existing services over other areas (1.2.6)
3. Conduct a small area and corridor plans in key areas with potential for growth and development and while making government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents (4.4.2, 4.4.3).
4. Protects floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas and encourages public accessibility to green space where possible (5.1.1, 5.1.2).

Attachments:

1) Zoning Map
2) Exhibit B – FLUM Amendment
3) Aerial
4) Draft Ordinance No. 2026-09
5) Draft PBOA Recommendation

Woodfin Zoning Map

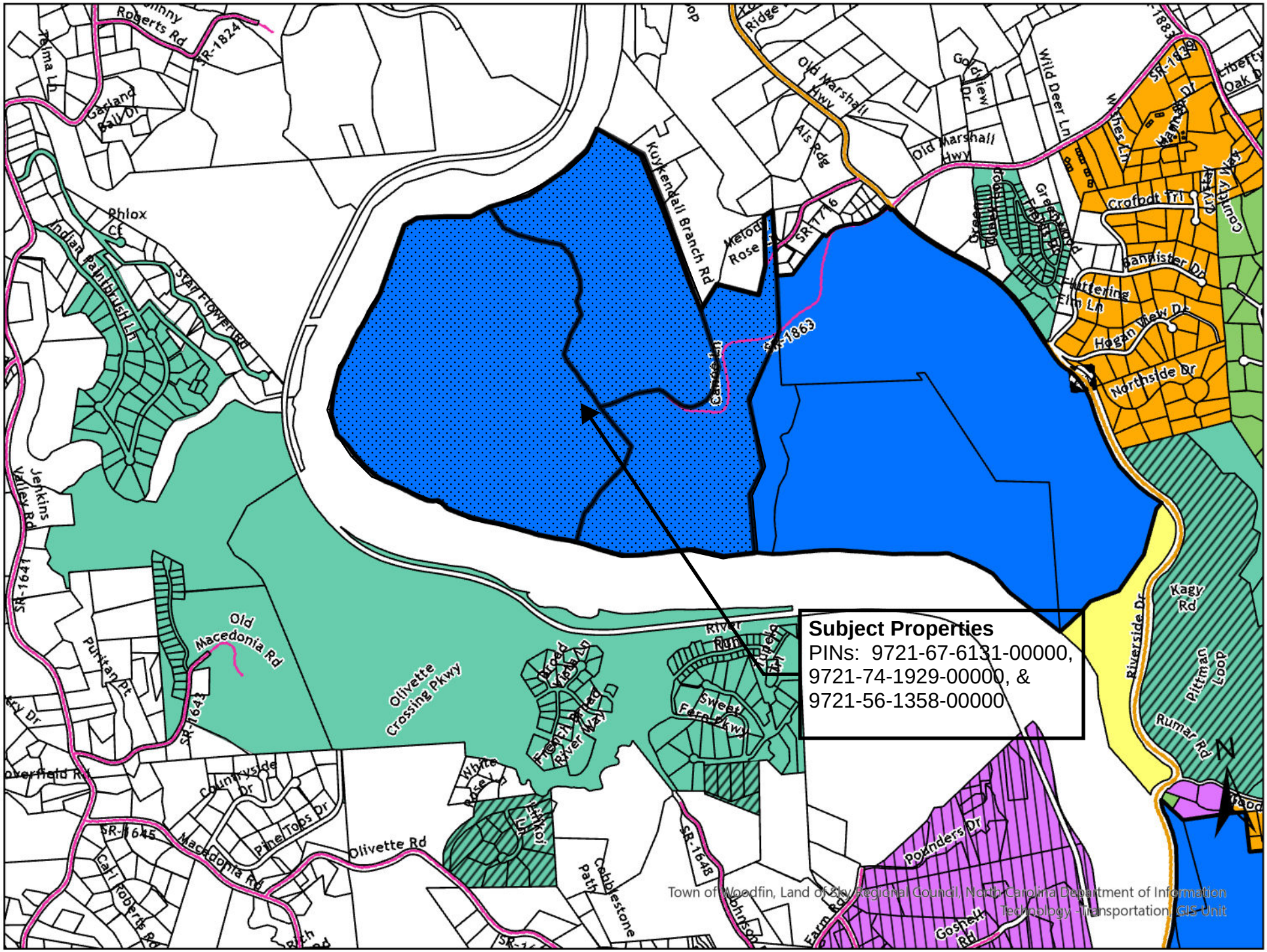
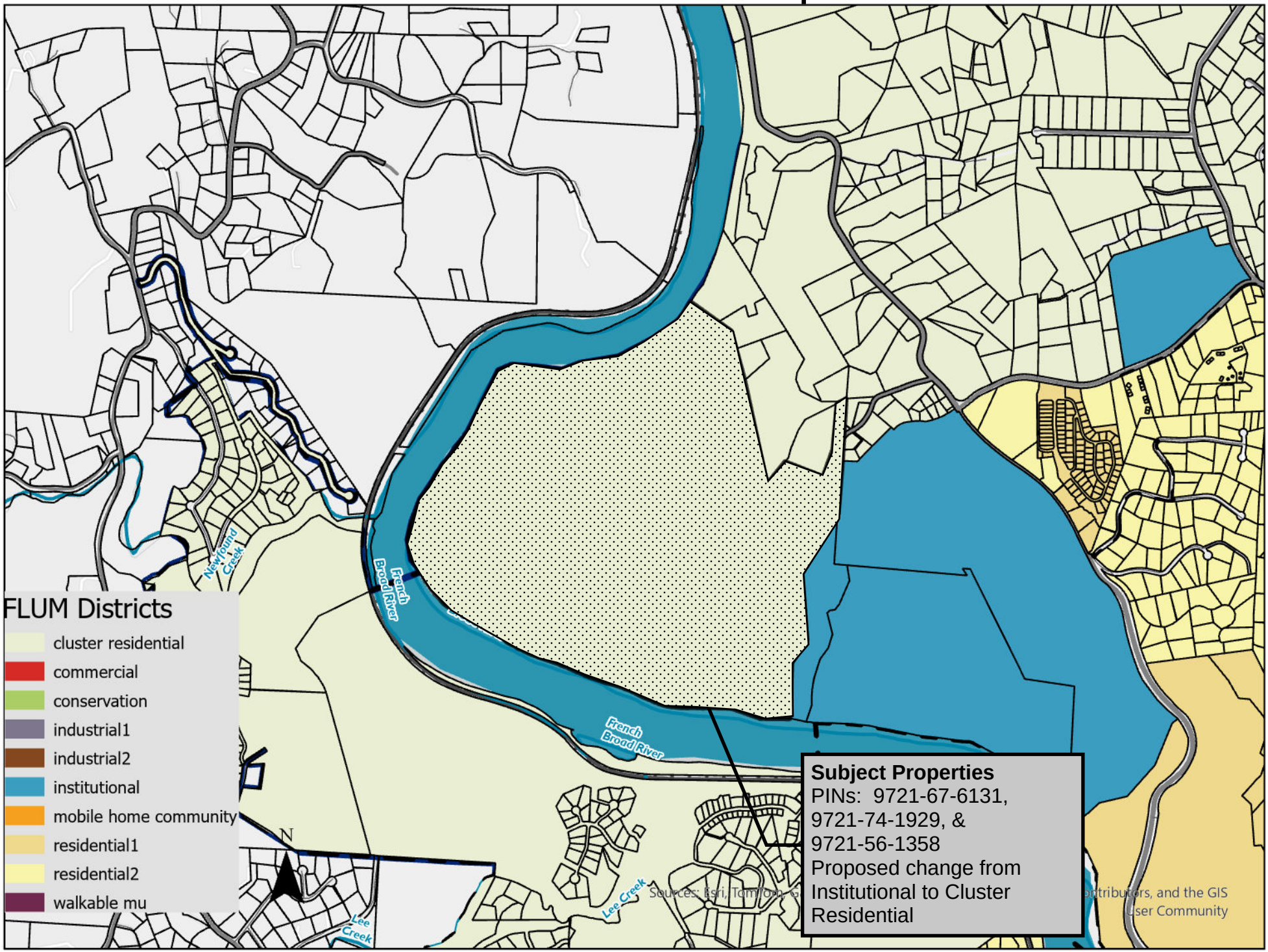
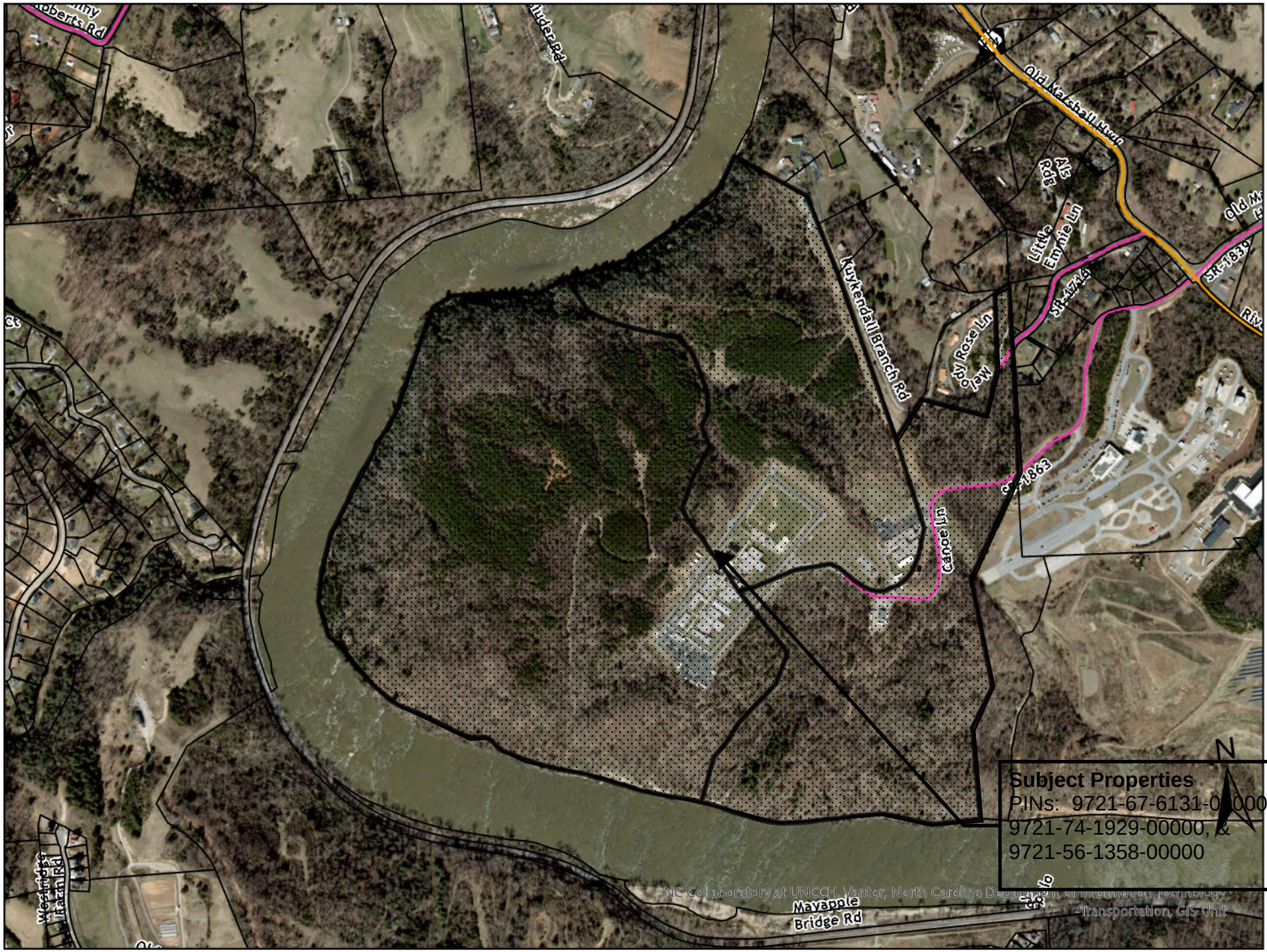


Exhibit B - Future Land Use Map Amendment



Aerial


Roberts Rd
Old Marshall Hwy
Als Rdg
Little Emmie Ln
SR-1744
SR-1839
Kuykendall Branch Rd
Canoe Ln
Mayapple Bridge Rd
N
Subject Properties
PINs: 9721-67-6131-00000,
9721-74-1929-00000, &
9721-56-1358-00000
NC Collaboratory at UNCCH, Vantor, North Carolina Department of Information Technology
Transportation, GIS Unit

ORDINANCE AMENDING THE WOODFIN TOGETHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Ordinance: 2026-09

Passed _____

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute § 160D-501 requires that all North Carolina municipalities prepare, adopt and reasonably maintain a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, on February 20, 2024, the Woodfin town council adopted Ordinance No. 2024-03, establishing the **Woodfin Together** plan as the comprehensive plan for the Town of Woodfin; and

WHEREAS, the plan functions as a long-range planning guide providing policy direction regarding the growth and development of the Town; and

WHEREAS, the Town has established goals for health, transportation, quality of life, economic development, jobs, affordable housing, health, safety, and sustainability in the plan; and

WHEREAS, significant unanticipated events have caused town leaders to reconsider some aspects of the plan; and

WHEREAS, the public hearing for this map amendment has been noticed in compliance with the North Carolina General Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment reviewed the proposed amendments to the Future Land Use Map and plan Appendix at its June 2, 2026, public meeting and voted ___ in support of the proposed changes; and

WHEREAS, the Woodfin Town Council held the public hearing on June 16, 2025, and, after hearing such, made the following required findings:

That the proposed amendment is reasonable and in the public interest and consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request will:

1. Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and new developments should be human-scale, inspiring, and designed to align with Woodfin's values of affordability and sustainability (1.1.1, 1.1.4).

2. Promote long-term fiscal responsibility in new development by encouraging growth in areas with existing services over other areas (1.2.6)
3. Conduct a small area and corridor plans in key areas with potential for growth and development and while making government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents (4.4.2, 4.4.3).
4. Protect floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas and encourage public accessibility to green space where possible (5.1.1, 5.1.2).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Woodfin, that the amendments to the **Woodfin Together** comprehensive plan be adopted:

Section 1: The Future Land Use Map be, and the same is hereby, amended as follows:

The **Woodfin Together** Future Land Use Map designation for the described real properties identified on Buncombe County tax maps as PINs 9721676131, 9721741929, & 9721561358 and recorded in Deed Book/Pages 1475/0375, currently owned by the State of North Carolina is changed from **Institutional** to **Cluster Residential**. A copy of the official future land use map showing said lots are attached hereto as Exhibit "B" and made a part hereof.

Section 2: That Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan, Appendix section A.1.2 Small Area Planning, be amended to include a third study area as follows:

- Craggy Correctional Facility – Create a shared vision for redevelopment and integration of the site into the fabric of the community while encouraging uses and development patterns that support and strengthen community connection, provide housing options, support community-based non-residential uses, and provide access to preserved open space.

Section 3: That all zoning text or map amendments, comprehensive plan amendments, and other land use decisions, will be reviewed for consistency with the Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan and any other applicable adopted land use plans.

Section 4: If any provisions of this Ordinance are for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such provision shall be deemed a separate, independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of any other provision thereof, and to that end, the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 5: This Ordinance shall be effective on this 16th day of June 2026.

Ayes _____

Nays _____

_____
Jim McAllister, Mayor

Attest:

_____

Gena Powers, Town Clerk

RECOMMENDATION FROM
TOWN OF WOODFIN PLANNING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT TO WOODFIN TOWN COUNCIL

Having reviewed the amendment to the **Woodfin Together Comprehensive Plan** on **June 2, 2025,** and having considered information from the planning staff of the Town of Woodfin along with comments from other persons, pursuant to General Statute 160D-501 (Plans), the Town of Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment hereby adopts the following motion, effective June 2, 2025:

The Town of Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment hereby advises the Town of Woodfin Town Council that the proposed recovery plan is reasonable and in the public interest and consistent with town adopted goals and plans, and meets development and other needs of the community in that the request will:

1. Uses the Future Land Use Map to guide development decisions and new developments should be human-scale, inspiring, and designed to align with Woodfin's values of affordability and sustainability (1.1.1, 1.1.4).
2. Promotes long-term fiscal responsibility in new development by encouraging growth in areas with existing services over other areas (1.2.6)
3. Conduct a small area and corridor plans in key areas with potential for growth and development and while making government decision-making accessible and transparent to all residents (4.4.2, 4.4.3).
4. Protects floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and other environmentally valuable and sensitive areas and encourages public accessibility to green space where possible (5.1.1, 5.1.2).

Vote:

This document is a true and accurate statement of the findings and recommendations of the Woodfin Planning Board of Adjustment.

_____ _____

Chair Date