

GUILFORD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources Element

Goal #1: To seek a balance between the built environment and the protection and preservation of the County’s natural, historic, and cultural resources through prudent management, public education, participation and outreach, appropriate regulations and enforcement, and active partnerships with stakeholders.

Objective 1.1: Promote “context sensitive” development that respects and protects the natural, historic, and cultural assets and amenities of Guilford County.

Policy 1.1.1: Support clustering for projects with significant environmental challenges to afford the greatest protection of natural resources. *[Planning staff, On-going]* (See Housing policy 2.4.1)

Policy 1.1.2: Utilize the County’s GIS system to create and/or update map layers locating natural assets and amenities, protected lands, current and future parks, dedicated open space, and places of historic and/or cultural significance. *[GIS/Planning/CED, beginning spring 2007]*

Policy 1.1.3: Create incentives that recognize or reward innovative project designs that respect, assimilate, and protect on-site and adjacent assets and amenities, natural, cultural, historic and recreational. *[Planning staff, spring 2007]* (See Future Land Use objective 1.5 and Transportation objective 1.3)

Objective 1.2: Thoroughly review and revise, as necessary, existing development regulations and standards to promote creativity and/or flexibility in project design to better integrate natural and built components.

Policy 1.2.1: Review the Subdivision section of the Development Ordinance, and pursue amendments as deemed necessary to foster more creativity and infuse land stewardship. *[Planning staff/Design Community, initiate fall 2006]*

Policy 1.2.2: Review Mixed-Use Development standards in the Development Ordinance, and pursue amendments as deemed necessary, to foster more creativity in design. *[Planning Department, winter 2007]* (See Housing policy 2.4.7)

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- Policy 1.2.3: Create incentives to stimulate development of infill and underdeveloped sites with public water and/or sewer access. *[Planning staff/City staff, fall 2006]* (See Housing objective 1.2)
- Policy 1.2.4: Utilize the County’s Environmental Review Board in conjunction with the drafting of future Development Ordinance amendments. *[Planning & Development staff/ERB, as deemed appropriate]*
- Objective 1.3: Pursue prompt remedial or corrective actions in regard to infractions involving soil erosion, illegal dumping, watershed, and floodplain regulations; prudently utilize enforcement procedures, as deemed necessary, to obtain compliance.
- Policy 1.3.1: Utilize scheduled site inspections to assure on-going project compliance with erosion control, watershed protection, and floodplain regulations. *[Planning & Development/CED staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.3.2: Provide timely investigations and responses to citizen generated complaints regarding potential violations of environmental regulations. *[Planning & Development / Environmental Health staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.3.3: Follow the progression of enforcement procedures, as stated in the Development Ordinance, to resolve situations of non-compliance. *[Planning staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.3.4: Work collaboratively with external agencies charged with environmental enforcement responsibilities (e.g., NC Division of Water Quality) on issues outside the scope of local control. *[NCDENR/Planning & Development staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.3.5: Increase responsiveness to citizen complaints regarding landfills and illegal dumping by pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding with NCDENR for local enforcement and inspections. *[CED, On-going]*
- Objective 1.4: Promote the expansion, restoration, and protection of Guilford County’s land, water, and air resources through respectful management of development, acquisition of sensitive areas, responsible waste management, and public education.

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- Policy 1.4.1: Review contents of the “Early Action Compact” document, evaluate and seek continuation of successful strategies and initiatives to address air quality issues. *[PTCOG/PART/Planning staff, On-going]* (See Transportation policy 1.6.1)
- Policy 1.4.2: Use the County’s Open Space Committee to evaluate and rank potential sites for public acquisition utilizing dedicated bond funds. *[CED/Open Space Committee, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.3: Provide support to the Environmental Review Board and Open Space Committee to foster public education efforts and promote land stewardship campaigns. *[Planning & Development/CED staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.4: Explore alternative funding sources to support and expand open space acquisitions. *[CED/Open Space Committee, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.5: Support retention of viable agricultural areas by encouraging traditional and nontraditional farm uses, including for example agri-tourism, organic farming, and viticulture; provide technical assistance in conjunction with Cooperative Extension, state and federal programs, and conservation organizations. *[Cooperative Extension/Planning staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.6: Diligently protect the County’s surface water resources by thorough watershed and erosion control plan review and site inspections, delineation and protection of stream corridors, timely investigations of alleged violations, and adherence to use restrictions within watershed tiers. *Planning & Development staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.7: Continue annual stormwater pond maintenance inspection program. *[Planning & Development staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.4.8: Survey County owned properties and inventory water quality devices thereon as required pursuant to NPDES Phase II. *[Planning & Development staff, fall 2006]*
- Policy 1.4.9: Incorporate drought-tolerant and native species into the landscape code for usage around water-bodies, within farm

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buffers, and other appropriate areas. *[Planning staff/Cooperative Extension, spring 2007]*

Policy 1.4.10: Support public information campaigns related to water conservation/use reduction efforts. *[Municipal service providers/Environmental Health, On-going]*

Policy 1.4.11: Acquire information concerning the quality and quantity of groundwater resources to form baseline information for future monitoring purposes. *[NCDENR, annual estimates]*

Policy 1.4.12: Support efforts to protect existing forested areas and to establish new forest growth, especially in areas buffering streams, lakes, and other wetlands; in areas of steep slopes; in areas buffering agricultural uses; and in critical natural habitats. *[Open Space Committee, On-going]*

Policy 1.4.13: Investigate opportunities to incorporate “firewise” landscaping design standards into the Development Ordinance. *[Planning/EMS staff, spring 2007]*

Objective 1.5: Seek a continuous open space system throughout Guilford County and beyond, preserving wetlands, floodplains, stream corridors, and uplands of significant ecological value and/or greenway connections.

Policy 1.5.1: Continue to implement recommendations of the Guilford County Open Space Report. *[CED, On-going]*

Policy 1.5.2: Incorporate Development Ordinance requirements of floodplain dedication, when applicable, during the review, approval and recording of new subdivisions. *[Planning staff, spring 2008]*

Policy 1.5.3: Continue to support, both with staff and technical resources, the Haw River State Park initiative and other multi-jurisdictional open space and recreational initiatives. *[CED/Open Space Committee/Planning staff, On-going]*

Policy 1.5.4: Update the County’s “Future Open Space and Parks” Map. *[CED/GIS, winter 2007]*

Objective 1.6: In conjunction with interested stakeholders, support public information/awareness endeavors to promote land stewardship and alternative means of private land dedication and preservation.

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- Policy 1.6.1: Provide linkages on the Department’s website for non-governmental and not for profit entities engaged in private land dedication and preservation endeavors. *[CED/Planning, fall 2006]*
- Policy 1.6.2: Support alternatives such as conservation easements, “less-than-fee simple” transactions, and life estates, to promote land stewardship and private land dedication/preservation. *[CED/Planning/Piedmont Land Conservancy, On-going]*
- Policy 1.6.3: The County will participate in local and regional forums designed to enhance public awareness of land stewardship alternatives. *[CED/Planning, On-going]*
- Objective 1.7: Collaborate with regional efforts to address multi-jurisdictional issues such as air quality, stormwater management, solid waste, Jordan Lake nutrient loading, and NPDES Phase II.
- Policy 1.7.1: Guilford County will participate in regional efforts that address multi-jurisdictional environmental issues such as air quality, stormwater management, NPDES Phase II and Jordan Lake nutrient loading. *[Planning & Development staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.7.2: The County shall seek partnerships with other affected jurisdictions to develop mutually beneficial, cost-saving strategies, to address environmental issues. *[Planning & Development staff, beginning winter 2007]*
- Policy 1.7.3: The County will host local forums to educate design professionals and other stakeholders on emerging environmental regulations, and their impact on future land development. *[Planning & Development staff, On-going]*
- Policy 1.7.4: Investigate alternative funding/revenue sources to help offset future costs associated with Guilford County’s compliance with un-funded State and Federal environmental mandates. *[Planning & Development staff, spring 2007]*
- Objective 1.8: Encourage the use of clean fuels and clean fuel technologies; support new construction methods, materials, and practices that are structurally sound yet environmentally friendly.

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Policy 1.8.1: Organize a multi-disciplinary team to review and recommend acceptance of new construction technologies, methods, materials and practices that are environmentally friendly. [*Inspections/Planning and Environmental Health, beginning fall 2006*] (See Housing policy 2.1.1)

Policy 1.8.2: Investigate public/private opportunities to promote the use and availability of clean and alternative fuels throughout Guilford County. [*CED, On-going*] (See Transportation objective 1.2)

Policy 1.8.3: Encourage and support local research of new and evolving changes in construction technologies by local colleges and universities. [*Planning/Colleges, initiate dialogue winter 2007*] (See Housing policy 2.1.2)

Objective 1.9: Acting as the lead agency, the County will continue to partner with local municipalities to implement and update the County's solid waste management plan, in order to ensure the protection of the public health and the environment.

Policy 1.9.1: Continue and expand existing public education programs that encourage proper disposal of solid waste and discourage littering and illegal dumping. [*CED, On-going*]

Policy 1.9.2: Increase responsiveness to solid waste-related citizen complaints by instituting a Memorandum of Understanding and Delegation of Authority with NCDENR for local landfill inspections, by amending the County Solid Waste Ordinance to add strength to enforcement and to mirror the MOU, by pursuing cooperation from cities and towns to inspect and investigate environmental matters within the incorporated areas of the County, by implementing a surveillance program for illegal dumping and by enforcing state and local environmental laws and ordinances. [*CED, spring 2007*]

Policy 1.9.3: Expand recycling and disposal options, and ensure the availability of solid waste services for all County residents. [*CED, On-going initiative*]

Policy 1.9.4: Ensure that all current and future state recycling mandates and landfill bans are properly implemented. [*CED, On-going*]

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Policy 1.9.5: Expand our solid waste management planning partnership by fostering relationships with other counties and cities in the Triad, for the purpose of developing regional solid waste management planning and programs. *[CED, spring 2007]*

Policy 1.9.6: Assist with the distribution of public information related to recycling. *[CED, On-going]*

Objective 1.10: To preserve, protect, enhance, and support historic and cultural resources throughout Guilford County.

Policy 1.10.1: Continue to support the efforts of the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission, as lead agency, in conjunction with other local public and/or private programs and services. *[Planning staff/GCHPC, On-going]*

Policy 1.10.2: Increase public awareness and appreciation of Guilford County's rich historic and cultural traditions through outreach campaigns, websites, publications, and educational forums. *[GCHPC, On-going]*

Policy 1.10.3: Pursue the creation and initial seed money for a "revolving fund" or similar low/no interest loan pool to support acquisition, restoration and maintenance of structures of significant historical value. *[Planning staff/BOCC, spring 2008]*

Policy 1.10.4 Consider the waiver of building fees, site development fees, and other regulatory fees, in conjunction with the relocation or restoration of structures of significant historical value. *[Planning staff/BOCC, summer 2008]*

Policy 1.10.5 Seek new and expanded partnerships with governmental and private organizations dedicated to historic preservation and the protection of cultural resources. *[Planning staff, On-going]*