

## ALAMANCE CREEK AREA PLAN UPDATE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### BACKGROUND:

On September 21, 2006, the Guilford County Board of Commissioners adopted the Guilford County Comprehensive Plan. Policy 1.1.2 of the Plan states:

*Policy 1.1.2: Existing Area Plans will be updated to reflect current jurisdictional boundaries, roadway improvements (existing and proposed), and emerging commercial areas, based on the following schedule:*

*Southwest (1989) – fall 2006  
Rock Creek (1988) – winter 2007  
Alamance (1994) – spring 2007  
Northwest (1998) – summer 2007  
Northeast (2000) – summer 2007  
Airport (2002) – fall 2007  
Southern (2002) – fall 2007*

Pursuant to Policy 1.1.2, the Guilford County Planning Department began working on an update of the Alamance Creek Area Plan (originally adopted in 1994).

#### PROCESS

Guilford County staff worked with the Southeast Community Association, an incorporated citizen-based organization involved in planning and economic development efforts in the southeast part of Guilford County, to organize several public meetings between the months of May and November, 2007, to inform area residents and property owners of the update. The update, although originally envisioned only to show new jurisdictional boundaries and to identify roadway improvements and emerging commercial areas since 1994, became more of a comprehensive plan update due to three factors. First, Greensboro's adoption of a new water and sewer service area required that additional thought be given to how the new service area will affect land use. Second, recent local land use decisions produced greater community awareness of land use regulations. Third, members of the Southeast Community Association requested a way to actively participate in shaping future development patterns in the area. As a result of these factors, staff spent additional time gathering and reviewing information that could influence development in the Alamance Creek Area.

In order to accommodate heightened participation, staff held a total of four public meetings to receive input. The meetings were well attended and provided several opportunities for participation, including questionnaires, mapping exercises, issue surveys, and comment forms. Throughout the process, staff met with the City of Greensboro Planning Department staff to review matters related to the City-County Water and Sewer Agreement. Staff presented the plan to the County Planning Board at a public hearing on December 12, 2007 and to the Board of County Commissioners at a public hearing in 2008 (TBA).

## PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED

Citizens identified several issues as important to the Alamance Creek Area in the coming years. The following six issues, listed in order of importance, emerged as most paramount.

Alamance Creek Area citizens generally:

- Desire more commercial services that can be described as personal and neighborhood services. Commercial needs identified include a grocery store, bank, post office, restaurant, pharmacy, medical office, and dry cleaner. Citizens are requesting greater convenience and access to businesses that traditionally serve surrounding residential areas but do not envision intense commercial development throughout the area.
- Like the rural nature of the Alamance Creek Area and want to preserve the natural areas, farmland, and open spaces that make this part of Guilford County unique.
- Seek commercial design standards that ensure not only aesthetically pleasing buildings but also development that is in character with the surrounding area. Such standards should consider building orientation, materials, ornamentation, site lighting, and advertising signage. In addition, there is interest in establishing a limited, mixed use area between Liberty Road and US Hwy 421 at Woody Mill Road that incorporates an integrated and unified development scheme.
- Have concerns about how the area's schools will handle new growth pressure and suggest that future school sites should be examined.
- Want to be more involved in land use decisions that affect their community. Suggestions for fostering more involvement include making more information regarding land use applications readily available on the County website.
- Expect improved landscaped buffers for new development that include protection of existing tree canopy.

## PLAN ALTERATIONS

### 1. Plan Boundary and Area

The incorporation of the Town of Pleasant Garden and Greensboro annexations have reduced the size of the Alamance Creek Planning Area. In addition, areas immediately south of Interstate 40 have been removed from the Planning Area since the Northeast Area Plan, adopted in 2000, provided recommendations for this area. The Northeast Area Plan is slated for update soon.

### 2. Transportation Elements

Several new roadways and road alignments were added to the plan based on information provided by the NCDOT and Greensboro MPO. Specifically, new interchanges are shown on US Highway 421 at Woody Mill Road and Neelley Road. Construction of these interchanges is tentatively scheduled to start in 2010.

Recommended greenway locations, as shown in the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Master Plan, are shown on the plan due to public comments received and adoption of the Plan by the Board of County Commissioners.

### 3. Land Use Elements

In order to ensure consistent Land Use classifications for all area plans, land previously shown as Medium-Density Residential is now shown as Single-Family Residential. The recommended density from the 1994 plan is similar to that recommended by this updated plan. Land previously shown as appropriate for residential development at 1-2 units per acre is now identified as Conditional Residential Single-Family, a designation that recognizes the area's existing rural residential development while acknowledging that the availability of public water and sewer brings the potential for higher density development. See the **Conditional Residential Single-Family** definition below for a detailed description.

Citizens have identified a possible mixed use area between US Highway 421 and Liberty Road in the vicinity of the new proposed interchange at Woody Mill Road. Also identified is a possible higher-density area on the east side of Youngs Mill Road northwest of and adjacent to Interstate 85. Several study areas are shown to highlight locales that merit further review during preparation of the Southeast Quadrant Plan (2009). Lastly, properties currently within the Voluntary Agricultural District or with Bona Fide Farm status have been shown to acknowledge agricultural areas.

#### Definitions:

**AG Rural Residential** – Intended to accommodate agricultural uses, large-lot residential development, and low-density residential subdivisions not connected to public water and sewer with densities generally up to two dwelling units per acre. Anticipated land uses are those permitted in the Agricultural (AG), RS-40 Residential Single-Family, and RS-30 Residential Single-Family, Planned Unit Development-Residential (PD-R), and Rural Preservation (RPD) zoning districts, including but not limited to institutional and recreational uses, as determined by the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Higher densities may be appropriate as determined by the Guilford County Residential Rezoning Matrix.

**Residential Single-Family** – Intended to accommodate low to moderate-density major residential subdivisions, with the higher density developments of up to four dwelling units per acre served by public water and sewer utilities. Anticipated land uses are those permitted in the Agricultural, (AG), RS-40 Residential Single-Family, and RS-30 Residential Single-Family, RS-20 Residential Single-Family, RS-12 Residential Single-Family, and RS-9 Residential Single-Family zoning districts, including but not limited to institutional and recreational uses, as determined by the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Higher densities may be appropriate as determined by the Guilford County Residential Rezoning Matrix.

**Conditional Residential Single-Family** – This area is designated to recognize and preserve existing rural residential development while acknowledging the availability of public water and sewer and the potential for higher density development. The Plan seeks to balance the interests of property owners desiring preservation of the area’s rural character with the rights of land owners to develop property utilizing available infrastructure. Appropriate land uses for developments not seeking public water and sewer are those identified under this Plan’s AG Rural Residential designation. For developments requesting public water and sewer, land uses identified under this Plan’s Residential Single-Family designation may be appropriate, depending on the level of compatibility between the proposed development and surrounding development. Factors to be considered when assessing compatibility include proposed land uses compared to surrounding land uses, proposed density and zoning compared to surrounding density and zoning, the area’s transportation network, water and sewer availability, and any development conditions that enhance compatibility, including but not limited to, development layout and landscaped buffers.

**Residential Multi-Family** – Designated to accommodate existing multi-family and/or new developments with densities between four and twelve dwelling units per acre, as permitted by the Guilford County Development Ordinance’s RS-7 Single-Family Residential, RS-5 Single-Family Residential, and Residential Multi-Family (RM) Zoning Districts. Institutional and recreational uses permitted in the aforementioned districts may also be appropriate.

**Mixed Use** – Designated to recognize an opportunity for a mixture of complimentary and integrated, compatible land uses and/or housing types developed on large tracts under a unified development scheme. Mixed use areas should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle interconnectivity, recreational and/or open space amenities, and high standards of site and architectural design. It is envisioned that mixed use projects will develop under the Planned Unit Development zoning districts of the Guilford County Development Ordinance.

**Moderate Commercial Node**: Intended to accommodate moderate to high-intensity office and commercial uses that provide retail and distributive services for an area beyond the immediate surroundings. A Moderate Commercial Node is identified along current and proposed primary transportation routes and intersections, as envisioned uses rely on fluid access and high visibility. Particular attention should be given to architectural and transportation standards when a Moderate Commercial Node develops. Moderate Commercial Nodes, although not designed to develop as regional shopping centers (Heavy Commercial Nodes) at this time due to current infrastructure limitations and surrounding development context, warrant special consideration in future plan updates to assess infrastructure progression. Moderate Commercial Nodes have an approximate radius of one-quarter of a mile. Examples of expected uses within Moderate Commercial Nodes can be found within the Limited Office (LO), Limited Business (LB), Neighborhood Business (NB), Highway Business (HB), and non-

residential categories of the General Office-Moderate (GO-M) in the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Additional uses may be appropriate as determined by the Guilford County Commercial Rezoning Matrix.

**Proposed Study Area** – Identified to show areas where significant growth potential exists primarily due to recent or future transportation and public utility improvements and existing conditions. Non-residential land uses likely are suitable in these areas. Study areas warrant special consideration in future plan updates to assess infrastructure progression and development patterns, and to provide an opportunity for public comment prior to detailed recommendations.

**Light Commercial** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned Limited Business (LB) that is or could be developed under the LB standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Other appropriate zoning districts for Light Commercial areas include Limited Office (LO) and Neighborhood Business (NB).

**Moderate Commercial** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned Highway Business (HB) that is or could be developed under the HB standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Other appropriate zoning districts for Moderate Commercial areas include Limited Office (LO), Neighborhood Business (NB), Limited Business (LB), General Office Moderate Intensity (GO-M).

**Heavy Commercial** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned General Business (GB) that is or could be developed under the GB standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Other appropriate zoning districts for Heavy Commercial areas include Limited Office (LO), Neighborhood Business (NB), Limited Business (LB), Highway Business (HB), General Office Moderate Intensity (GO-M), General Office High Intensity (GO-H), and Shopping Center (SC).

**Light Industrial** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned Light Industrial (LI) that is or could be developed under the LI standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance.

**Heavy Industrial** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned Heavy Industrial (HI) that is or could be developed under the HI standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance.

**Public Institutional / Open Space** – Designated to recognize land currently zoned Public and Institutional and/or developed with public and institutional land uses. Generally, a Public Institutional designation accommodates mid-and large-sized public, semi-public and institutional uses which have a substantial land use impact or traffic generation potential.

Open Space refers expressly to those properties owned by the City of Greensboro, Guilford County, or the State of North Carolina for the preservation of open space, and is not intended for development of any kind.

**Voluntary Agricultural District/ Bona Fide Farm** – Properties in this category currently have Voluntary Agricultural District or Bona Fide Farm designation. Participation in these programs confers tax and other benefits to the property owner, and is 100% voluntary. They are shown on the map to depict areas of active agricultural production. It is strongly recommended that major residential developments provide landscaped buffers along property boundaries adjacent to working farms in order to mitigate some of the noise, odor, and dust commonly associated with agricultural production.