

SOUTHERN GUILFORD 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 Southern Guilford Area Plan (originally adopted in 2002).

PROCESS

Guilford County staff began the update by compiling current zoning and jurisdictional data and reviewing adopted long-range transportation plans and future land use plans from area municipalities. In addition, developing commercial areas and new public water and sewer service areas were identified. Staff consolidated this new information with the recommendations of the original plan and prepared an updated draft map. The draft map, as well as the original plan, was presented at a public meeting on May 22, 2008 at the Pleasant Garden United Methodist Church. The public and original committee members were invited to participate. Comments ranged from limiting commercial expansion into residential areas to continuing the viability of active agricultural lands. After receiving input, staff prepared the final updated plan and presented it at a public hearing of the Guilford County Planning Board on September 10, 2008 and the Board of County Commissioners on _____, 2008.

PLAN ALTERATIONS

Plan Boundary and Area:

The Town of Pleasant Garden adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2008. As a result, the Southern Guilford Area Plan now recommends future land use planning within Pleasant Garden be in accordance with Town plan and policies. Boundaries have also been revised to reflect Greensboro annexations, resulting in a marginal reduction in the size of the Southern Guilford Planning Area. Lastly, US Highway 421 now serves as the eastern boundary of the Plan, as the Alamance Creek Area Plan Update (2008) covers lands east of this highway.

Transportation Elements:

Several on-going and future roadway improvements have been added to the Plan. These include Interstate 74 (US Highway 311 Bypass) and potential thoroughfare routes as shown on adopted Thoroughfare Plans. The upgrade of US Highway 220 to Interstate standards (Interstate 73) is planned to begin after 2012. The Plan also identifies new planned interchanges and

improvements to US Highway 421 at Woody Mill Road and Neelley Road. Construction of these interchanges is tentatively scheduled to start in 2010. Finally, recommended greenway locations, as presented in the adopted Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Master Plan, are shown on the plan.

Land Use Elements:

In order to best ensure consistent Land Use classifications amongst all area plans, new classifications used in other updates have been added. However, the recommendations of the previous plan are carried forward with this update through classification definitions (see definitions section). Additional supplemental information is provided with this update, namely areas where this Plan and municipal plans overlap, and the locations of voluntary agricultural districts. Land use classifications in a few areas were altered to reflect current development or zoning. Previously recognized local and regional commercial “bubbles” are now represented by Light, Moderate, and Heavy Commercial nodes, depending on scale and in accordance with other Area Plan updates. The Plan defines future study areas as well in order to highlight locales that merit further review during preparation of the Southwest and Southeast Quadrant Plans (2009)

Definitions:

Agricultural – Areas that generally are used for crop, animal, and forest product production. Scattered homes and institutional uses such as churches are common. Major residential development consisting of less than two-acre lots is not appropriate.

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.

Rural Land Area – Areas not to be intensely developed with residential, commercial, or industrial uses. Recreational uses, farming, very limited business development, and low-density residential development (1 unit or less per acre) are appropriate. Major residential subdivisions should use landscape buffers when adjacent to Bona Fide Farms to heighten compatibility.

Residential Single-Family – Designated to accommodate existing and new 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. Current and future land uses include 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.

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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.

Light Industrial – Designated to recognize land depicted as Industrial on the original Plan or 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 depicted as Industrial on the original Plan or land currently zoned Heavy Industrial (HI) that is or could be developed under the HI standards of the Guilford County Development Ordinance.

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).

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– 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.

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County/Municipal Plan – Areas within the Southern Guilford Area Planning Area where municipal future land use recommendations exist. These include the City of Greensboro’s Water and Sewer Service Area, the Town of Jamestown at Interstate 85 Business and Vickery Chapel Road, and the City of High Point in the vicinity of Interstate 85 Business and Riverdale Road. Analysis of development requests in these areas should include collaboration with the relevant jurisdiction if public utilities are to be provided.

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 Node - Intended to accommodate low-intensity office, institutional, and commercial uses that, in conjunction with one another, provide professional, personal, and support services for nearby residential areas. Light Commercial Nodes are not designed to develop with large, isolated non-residential developments that are out of character with the surrounding development pattern. Particular attention should be given to architectural standards, as recommended by this plan, when Light Commercial Nodes develop. Light Commercial Nodes are designed to be located and generally confined to the identified intersections on the Future Land Use Map. Examples of expected uses within Light Commercial Nodes can be found within the Limited Office (LO), Neighborhood Business (NB), and Limited Business (LB) Zoning Districts of the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Additional uses may be appropriate as determined by the Guilford County Commercial Rezoning Matrix.

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. Moderate Commercial Nodes 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.

Heavy Commercial Node - Intended to accommodate high-intensity commercial uses that provide regional retail and distributive services. Heavy Commercial Nodes are identified at two Interstate interchanges. Particular attention should be given to architectural standards when a Heavy Commercial Node develops as their locations are highly visible. Heavy Commercial Nodes are predicted to be major retail centers with shopping centers and “big box stores” catering to shoppers within and beyond a ten mile radius. Heavy Commercial Nodes should be large enough to accommodate the envisioned uses. Examples of expected uses within Heavy Commercial Nodes can be found in the Highway Business (HB), Shopping Center (SC), and

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Planned Unit Development – Mixed (PD-M) categories of the Guilford County Development Ordinance. Additional uses may be appropriate as determined by the Guilford County Commercial Rezoning Matrix.

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