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SECTION III: FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A. Introduction

The future land use plan or “map” is an essential tool for implementing land use planning. The map is intended to serve as a guide for the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners when they review private development proposals and make decisions on the location of public facilities.

The land use plan also provides the framework upon which zoning and subdivision regulations and the capital improvements program should be based. In fact, the preparation of a land use plan and map is mandated by legislation as a prerequisite for zoning. North Carolina General Statute 153A-341 states that:

Zoning regulations shall be made in accordance with a comprehensive plan and designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare ; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to avoid undue concentration of population; and to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements. The regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, as to the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout the county. In addition, the regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration to expansion and development of any cities within the county, so as to provide for their orderly growth and development.

A land use plan is intended to accomplish three primary objectives. These objectives are as follows:

- To promote economic efficiency by coordinating the size and location of publicly provided future community facilities with the location and intensity of future private residential, commercial, and industrial activity.
- To optimize resources by allocating land for its most suitable use. For example, a county may want to encourage industrial development on sites accessible to existing water and sewer lines and in areas with suitable soil conditions. Or, a county may choose to arrange land uses in such a way as to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- To provide a land use form that reflects the vision of the county’s residents, is unified, avoids conflicting land uses, optimizes resources, preserves the county’s character and is pleasing: providing open space, vistas and distinguishable districts.

It is important that Franklin County understands that merely completing the land use plan, illustrating the county's vision for the future, does not ensure that its objectives will be met. Franklin County must continuously work at accomplishing plan implementation and maintaining an effective planning program. Significant changes to Franklin County's management of growth should occur. In contemporary planning, the most discussed concept is "smart development". In reality, this concept is not a new idea. It is simply the blending of many existing ideas. Smart development adheres to six basic principals which are described as follows:

Principle 1: Efficient Use of Land Resources

Smart development supports the preservation of land and natural resources. These benefits result from compact building forms, in-fill development, and moderation in street and parking standards. Compact building patterns preserve land for town and neighborhood parks as well as local woods and wetlands. Furthermore, compact development shortens trips, lessening dependence on the automobile, and therefore reducing levels of energy consumption and air pollution. Finally, a compact development pattern supports more cost-effective infrastructure than does low-density fringe development.

Principle 2: Full Use of Urban Services

The same frugality of land development supports efficient use of public and private infrastructure. Smart development means creating neighborhoods where more people will use existing services like water lines and sewers, roads, emergency services, and schools. Inefficient land use, whether within or outside urban areas, places a financial strain on communities trying to provide for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure needs.

Building compactly does not mean that all areas must be densely developed. Rather, the goal is an average density for the area, at a level that makes full use of urban services. Averaging allows for areas to have a mix of low-, medium-, and high-density development. Mixing densities to encourage efficient use of services also means requiring a high level of building and siting compatibility, encouraging neighborhoods to have both character and privacy.

Careful street sizing and the accommodation of some parking on streets reduces impervious surfaces and efficiently uses urban services by saving on land acquisition, construction, and maintenance costs. In short, streets should be sized for their use: lower density areas that have little through traffic are best served by slower, narrower streets, while transportation corridors that move district-wide traffic need wider travelways.

Principle 3: Mix of Uses

Locating stores, offices, residences, schools, and recreation spaces within walking distance of each other in compact neighborhoods with pedestrian-oriented streets promotes:

- independence of movement, especially for the young and the elderly who can conveniently walk, cycle, or ride transit;
- safety in commercial areas, through around-the-clock presence of people;
- reduction in auto use, especially for shorter trips;
- support for those who work at home, through nearby services and parks; and
- a variety of housing choices, so that the young and old, singles and families, and those of varying economic ability may find places to live.

Mixed-use examples include a corner store in a residential area, an apartment near or over a shop, and a lunch counter in an industrial zone. Most codes prohibit the co-location of any residential and commercial buildings. This prohibition is based on the functional and architectural incompatibility of the buildings. Using design standards, in tandem with mixed-use zoning, overcomes incompatibility. Additionally, limitations on commercial functions, such as hours of operation and delivery truck access, may be necessary. More fundamentally, to gain the full benefits of a mix of uses, buildings must be conveniently connected by streets and paths. Otherwise, people will still be inclined or required to use cars, even for the shortest trips.

Principle 4: Transportation Options

Transportation must be safe, convenient, and interesting. These performance factors affect sidewalk and street design, placement of parking, and location of building fronts, doors, and windows. Well-designed bike lanes and sidewalks protect people from vehicle accidents. Orienting windows and doorways to the sidewalk increases awareness of street activity and the safety of the streetscape.

Convenience begins with a connected network of streets that provides alternative routes with reasonable walking distances between destinations. A properly designed network also promotes neighborhood safety by routing the heaviest traffic around neighborhoods, without sacrificing street connectivity.

Providing compact, mixed-use development connected by safe, convenient, and interesting networks of streets and paths promotes:

- walking, cycling, and transit as viable, attractive alternatives to driving;
- less traffic congestion and air pollution;
- the convenience, density, and variety of uses necessary to support transit;
- a variety of alternative routes, thereby dispersing traffic congestion; and
- lower traffic speeds, making neighborhoods safer.

Principle 5: Detailed, Human-Scale Design

Community acceptance of compact, mixed-use development requires compatibility between buildings to ensure privacy, safety, and visual coherency. Similar massing of

buildings, orientation of buildings to the street, the presence of windows, doors, porches, and other architectural elements, and effective use of landscaping all contribute to successful compatibility between diverse building types.

Human-scale design is also critical to the success of streets and paths as preferred routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. In general, smart street design considers the role of pedestrians along with that of vehicular traffic, emphasizing the quality of the walking environment. For instance, parallel parking may be considered a hindrance to vehicle flow, but, for pedestrians and shop owners, on-street parking is a benefit because it reduces speeding traffic and protects the sidewalks.

Designing streets that are balanced for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists promotes the development of community through the informal meeting of neighbors. Neighborhood safety is improved, since neighbors can more easily come to know one another and watch over each other's homes.

Principle 6: Development Review

Franklin County's ability to adopt smart development principles will, of necessity, require an examination of its development review process. Primarily, the review should focus on ways that the review process can be streamlined so that developers are encouraged to apply the principles. Frustrating, costly, and time-consuming delays due, in part, to inflexible standards, regulations, and processes will discourage innovative approaches to development and design. Providing for flexibility and certainty in the application of standards, including provision for performance standards and administrative approval of "minor" variances, can help promote creative development that complies with the principles. Effective use of Planned Unit Developments (PUD's) can also relieve some of the regulatory barriers for developers and lighten the administrative load for planners, as can adopting a flexible process for applying design review standards.

While the smart growth concept may not be suited to every community, it will support Franklin County's objective of preserving its rural atmosphere and aid in preserving its natural resources by encouraging the development of neighborhoods and communities that may be "self sustaining".

B. Land Use Categories

Franklin County's Land Use Plan includes eight separate land use categories (see Map 18). Each land use category has associated zoning districts. These zoning districts specify the allowable uses for each of the land use categories. A complete list of the land use categories utilized in the land use plan and the zoning districts that should be included in each category is provided below.

LAND USE CATEGORIES and CORRESPONDING ZONING DISTRICTS:

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE - CON-D

COMMERCIAL - NB, HB, and RB

OFFICE/INSTITUTIONAL/MULTI-FAMILY - O/ I

AGRICULTURAL/RESIDENTIAL - AR

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL - AR, R-80, R-40, and R-1

LOW-MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL TRANSITIONAL - AR, R-15*, and R-8*

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL - LI

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL - HI

MIXED USE EMPLOYMENT - O/I, NB, HB, RB, and LI

*As the county water and sewer services are extended into Low-Medium Density Residential Transitional areas, R-8 and R-15 uses may become suitable.

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS:

AR	AGRICULTURE-RESIDENTIAL	NB	NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS
R-80	RESIDENTIAL (Water Supply Watershed District II)	RB	RURAL BUSINESS
R-40	RESIDENTIAL (Water Supply Watershed District I)	HB	HIGHWAY BUSINESS
R-15	RESIDENTIAL	O/I	OFFICE INSTITUTIONAL
R-8	RESIDENTIAL	LI	LIGHT INDUSTRY
R-1	RESIDENTIAL	HI	HEAVY INDUSTRY
PUD	PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT		CON-D CONSERVATION DISTRICT (county floodplain along Tar River)

Note: A description of the allowable uses for each zoning district can be found in the Franklin County Zoning Ordinance.

See Appendix IX for a summary of zoning density requirements. NOTE: Where in effect, the following densities apply—WSII one dwelling/80,000 sq ft; WSIII one dwelling/40,000 sq ft; WSIV one dwelling/20,000 sq ft.

It should be noted that the municipal extraterritorial jurisdictions in Franklin County are not included in the county’s planning jurisdiction and are not part of the county’s Land Use Plan.

C. Locational Aspects of Land Use

The purpose of this section is to describe the reasoning behind the location of land uses as shown on the land use map. It should be noted that the land use plan depicts a desired or optimum pattern of land uses. For land areas that are already developed, the desired land use may not be consistent with the existing land use. In cases where the planning process resulted in a desired land use that deviated from the existing land use, preferred land use is indicated. The following provides an example of a case in which an existing land use would not be indicated on the map: An industry might locate in an area that was considered “rural” ten years ago. As the years go by, development occurs, urban areas of the county expand, and eventually the industry finds itself in an

urbanized setting surrounded by residential development. This situation has resulted in a conflicting land use. In this case the existing land use of the industrial property is industrial but might be shown on the land use map as Office/institutional/Multi-Family, a more suitable and compatible use for a residential area.

Generally, the land use map was drafted with consideration given to key land use issues (identified on page I-48); preservation of the county's existing land use form which is comprised of districts, paths, urban nodes, landmarks, and edges (see pages II-24 through II-29); existing plans for the development of public facilities; development constraints and existing zoning patterns. It should be stressed that although the future land use map indicates a desired pattern for future land use, it is not being suggested that the land uses portrayed cannot be deviated from. However, it is recommended that as the need for changes in the land use map become apparent that the map be revised and approved by the Board of Commissioners. A general description of land use by type follows the map.

MAP 18 - FUTURE LAND USE MAP

1. *Commercial*

In the attempt to avoid strip commercialization, commercial land uses have been provided in nodes located at the intersections of thoroughfares. At intersections that are accessible to water and/or sewer service(s), larger commercial nodes have been provided.

These commercial nodes will serve as commercial focus areas. The circular shapes of the commercial nodes are not intended to be applied literally. They are intended to represent a concept or desire to concentrate commercial development in a predominantly nodal fashion. It should also be noted that the location and size of the commercial nodes included in the plan are not intended to be static. As the area surrounding the commercial nodes develop, larger node definitions and possibly even shifts in location from one intersection to another may be warranted. In addition, as the commercial nodes located in the outlying areas of the county's planning jurisdiction develop, they should be buffered from surrounding areas by office/institutional/multi-family land uses. The exact size of the required buffer has not been predetermined. The required buffer width should be determined when the ultimate extent of the commercial node is known. As a result, it will be necessary to periodically revise the future land use map as development continues and patterns change. Recommendations for the review and update of the county's future land use map are included in the policy statement section of this document.

Commercial development should also be allowed in the area designated as Mixed Use Employment.

2. *Mixed Use Employment*

Although there are several areas located within the county's municipal extraterritorial jurisdictions that are accessible to water and sewer service, very few areas exist within Franklin County's planning area. The mixed use employment area shown on the future land use map represents the portion of the county that is most accessible to water and sewer service. This area is bordered by the Town of Franklinton to the north, the Town of Youngsville to the south, US 1 to the west, and Cedar Creek Road (SR 1116) to the east. County water service is provided along the US 1 corridor and county sewer service is provided along Cedar Creek Road (SR 1116). The Mixed Use Employment area is designed to provide convenient employment, shopping, and service facilities by promoting compact development of commercial, office, light industrial, and service uses. Due to the variety of allowed uses within the Mixed Use Employment land use category, any new development or redevelopment should be done with extra consideration given to surrounding land uses. In particular, with the exception of limited support services, new development should not infringe on existing residential areas. This will help keep potential land use conflicts to a minimum.

3. *Conservation/Open Space*

Conservation/Open Space land uses have been located in areas where there is the potential for flooding (100-year floodplain) or the need for buffering. Hosley Forest, a 250-acre state-owned open space area near Centerville, has also been classified as conservation/open space. Buffering is used to separate areas that may have the potential to become conflicting land uses. Buffering has been discussed further in the industrial land use section of this addendum.

The land use plan does not attempt to delineate future park sites for the following reason: If the county were to express interest in acquiring specific sites for public use too far in advance it could drive the cost of real estate up unnecessarily. In addition, Franklin County has adopted a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1999) which discusses options for future Parks and Recreation expenditures. This land use plan supports all of the recommendations and directives included in the county's Parks and Recreation Plan.

Conservation/Open Space buffers adjacent to industrial developmental should be maintained at a width based on the type of industry and its potential to create compatibility problems.

4. *Residential*

Residential land uses have been divided into three separate land use categories based on associated variable residential densities. These categories include: Agricultural Residential, Low Density Residential and Low-Medium Density Residential Transitional. The location of residential land uses was based on existing residential development patterns, constraints to development (i.e. floodplains, wetlands, etc.), and the location of infrastructure such as water, sewer, and the transportation network.

Low-Medium Density Residential Transitional land use has been provided in areas that currently have water or sewer service or where plans exist to extend water or sewer service. As these areas receive county services, higher residential densities should be allowed. "In-fill" development or development of vacant parcels accessible to water and/or sewer service should be encouraged.

Low density residential land use has been provided in the southern half of the county, "in-filling" areas where there are no existing or planned water or sewer services. Although no water or sewer extensions are planned in these areas, the fact that they are located in the southern half of the county, where development pressures are the greatest, they are likely to become unstable for development at densities higher than those recommended by the county's Agricultural/Residential classification.

Agricultural/residential land use has been located primarily in the northern half of the county where development pressures are the least. These areas are not suitable for development at high densities and will serve as a holding area for agricultural uses and future development if conditions and demand permit.

At the present time, there are very few areas in Franklin County's planning jurisdiction that have water and sewer service. As a result, Franklin County has not zoned any property residential R-8 or R-15 which allows multi-family development as a conditional use. The future land use plan supports the county's policy of not encouraging multi-family development in areas that do not have public water and sewer services. However, there are a few areas of the county that have or will have water and sewer service in the near future that could accommodate multi-family development. These areas include parcels adjacent to the US 1 corridor from the NC 96 interchange south almost to the Wake County line and the following intersections: US 401 and M.C. Wilder Road (at Royal), US 401 and Tarboro Road (Harris Crossroads), May Crossroads Road and Peach Orchard Road, and NC 39 and M.C. Wilder Road. Although these areas are shown on the future land use map as an industrial corridor and commercial nodes, multi-family development could be accommodated in these areas.

In response to the extension of county services and the demand for affordable living, the county may consider revising its Zoning Ordinance to include a multi-family zoning district where multi-family development is an allowable use as opposed to allowed as a conditional use.

5. Industrial

Industrial land uses are located on NC 56 between Franklinton and Louisburg and along the US 1 corridor. A mix of light and heavy industrial uses is provided. The Franklin County Zoning Ordinance provides the following definitions for light and heavy industrial districts.

a. Light Industrial District (LI)

The purpose of this district is to establish and protect industrial areas for the use of light manufacturing operations and for the distribution of products at wholesale. The following standards are established for this district and designed to promote sound permanent light industrial development, and to protect nearby areas from undesirable aspects of industrial development: (1) all assembly and/or manufacturing be confined within the building, (2) all outdoor storage be screened from public view by opaque fencing, screening, or landscaping, limited to rear and side of the principal building, if hazardous and/or unsafe, shall meet all local, state, and federal environmental requirements, and must be on the premises of the business, and (3) any one applying for a LI permit must demonstrate that no adverse impacts such as noise, groundwater, air, pollution, and

vibrations are created by the proposed use, beyond the lot boundaries of the use. This district shall be located adjacent to and/or with direct access to thoroughfare roads or streets.

b. Heavy Industrial District (HI)

The purpose of this district is to establish and preserve areas for heavy industrial and related uses and is designed to accommodate all but the most objectionable industries; however, industries permitted by right are required to minimize their emission of smoke, dust, fumes, glare, noise, and vibrations. The following standards are established for this district and designed to promote sound permanent heavy industrial development, and to protect nearby areas from undesirable aspects of industrial development: (1) outside storage must be screened from public view by opaque fencing, screening, or landscaping, (2) outside storage shall be limited to the rear and side of the principal building, (3) storage of unsafe (corrosive, flammable, or explosive materials) or hazardous material shall comply with any local, state, or federal requirements, and (4) outside storage must be on the premises of the business. This district should be separated from residential areas whenever possible by natural or structural features such as sharp breaks in topography, strips of vegetation, or traffic arteries. This district shall be located adjacent to and/or with direct access to thoroughfare roads or streets.

The land use plan supports the county's objective to locate industrial development adjacent to major thoroughfares. The land use plan supports new industrial growth in the areas designated for industrial use by the county's zoning ordinance. However, the re-zoning of parcels for additional industrial development on NC 56 between Franklinton and Louisburg should not be allowed. Although water service is provided along this corridor, the current state of NC 56 would not accommodate large volumes of additional truck traffic. The US 1 corridor and planned industrial parks should be the most desirable locations for future industrial development in the county.

Industrial land use has also been provided in the southern tip of the county along the US 64 corridor. This area has excellent highway access and should be reserved for future industrial development.

All of the industrial areas indicated on the Land Use Plan have been buffered with either Office/Institutional/Multi-Family or Conservation/Open Space land uses. Buffering has been provided to help prevent land use conflicts between industrial development and neighboring land uses. The width of the buffer should be based on the type of industry and its potential to create compatibility problems. It is not the county's intention to acquire land to be utilized as buffer areas, but rather to encourage industries to incorporate adequate buffers into their development plans.

6. *Office/Institutional/Multi-Family*

Office/Institutional/Multi-Family land uses have been located primarily in areas that have already been developed or require buffering to prevent potential conflicting land uses. For example, as stated above, Office/Institutional/Multi-Family land uses have been located between commercial/industrial and residential land uses throughout the county's planning area. In addition, Office/Institutional/Multi-Family land uses have been utilized along transportation corridors to help preserve carrying capacity and to serve as a buffer from the roadway.

D. Summary of General Principles Used to Develop the Land Use Plan

The Franklin County Land Use Plan was drafted with consideration given to the following:

- Key land use issues (identified on page I-48)
- Preservation of existing land use form
- Existing plans for the development of public facilities
- Location of water and sewer services
- Development constraints
- Existing zoning patterns
- Desire to concentrate commercial development in nodes
- Limiting potential land use conflicts
- Preservation of existing residential neighborhoods
- Desire for in-fill development