

CHAPTER VIII

D. Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan

1. What is an Area Land Use Plan?

a. Introduction

With the adoption of the Wake County Land Use Plan in 1997, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to complete area plans for fifteen Urban Services Areas along with five Non-Urban Areas. The Land Use Plan classifies all the land in Wake County's planning jurisdiction as one of six general classifications: Short-Range Urban Services Area; Long-Range Urban services area; Short-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed; Non-Urban Area; or Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed. County planners have been working with municipal planners and actively involving the public in order to refine the General Classifications Map, as well as the land use classifications in the text map. In November 1999, the Board of Commissioners amended the Land Use Plan to add policies defining how current development in Urban Services Areas (USAs) should be designed in terms of its intensity and its provision of water, sewer, and transportation facilities and recreation areas.

These Area Land Use Plans replace the countywide Land Use Classifications Map for the area covered by the Plans. They revise and expand land use classifications on adopted joint plans with municipalities, expand upon the land use aspects of the water-supply watershed protection plan, and create new plans where no joint plans have been adopted with municipalities or in non-urban areas. These area plans re-evaluate the USA boundaries in terms of where municipal sewer will be extended by 2010. These area plans have a long-term time frame and incorporate the objectives of emphasizing the development of communities; encouraging development in and around municipalities; maintaining resources including natural areas, historic sites, major wildlife corridors, potential parks and greenways; and coordinating with transportation plans. These area plans also address open space.

b. Southeast Study Area

The area of the Southeast Wake Area Land

Use Plan covers Wendell and Zebulon's Urban Services Areas plus a part of the Robertson's Pond watershed which is classified as a Non-Urban Area; the study area, which consists of 27,363 acres of land, is bordered on the north by Riley Hill Road, NC 97, and the Little River watershed, on the northeast by Franklin County, on the southeast by Johnston County, and on the west by Rolesville Road, the proposed US 64 Bypass, Marks Creek, and Smithfield Road. The communities, which make up the unique character of the Southeast area include, Martin Center, Roberts Crossroad, Bunn Lake, Lizard Lick, Eagle Rock, and Wakefield.

c. Public Participation

Wake County, Wendell, and Zebulon planners, with the help of residents from the study area, have developed a plan for Southeast Wake. Three Area Plan public meetings were held to allow residents from the area to participate in the planning process by sharing their ideas and concerns. Public meetings were held on November 18, 1999 at the Wendell Town Hall, April 4, 2000 at the Zebulon Council Chambers, and June 8, 2000 at the Wendell Town Hall. At the November meeting, an open house was held and an issues survey was distributed to attendees. Forty people attended. Of those, fifteen percent responded to the survey (see summary of issues).

d. Results of public participation

Important issues identified by persons responding to survey ranked in order according to priority are as follows:

1. Provide for the development of business/industrial parks, and major employers.
2. Provide for compatible development.
3. Land use plan that reflects land owners preferences in developing their property.
4. Provide for mixed-use development.
5. Provide for open space/greenway.

e. Land Use Plan Goals

Four goals of the Plan were identified as a

result of public participation, which are as follows:

- Provide for the development of business/industrial parks, and major employers.
- Focus concentrated development in mixed-use activity centers that include commercial services and employment opportunities.
- Encourage growth that will take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure so that municipalities are able to provide basic public services in accordance with their adopted plans.
- Protect the character of the area by preserving significant natural features, historic resources and the cultural heritage.

f. Purpose of Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan

The Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan (map and text) replaces the countywide Land Use Classifications Map for the Urban Services Areas (USA) of the Towns of Wendell and Zebulon. The Plan is designed to provide guidelines for managing growth and development. The Plan encourages growth close to the municipalities and takes advantage of existing and planned infrastructure, such as transportation, and water and sewer facilities. The Plan encourages higher densities and a wider range of land uses where existing and planned short-range community facilities and infrastructure can support them. Also, the Plan is used as follows:

- Identifies activity center locations for commercial, office, and industrial /employment centers.
- Defines appropriate residential densities.
- Guides and advises in review of rezoning request, site plans, and the expansion of municipal jurisdiction.
- Helps with decisions in acquiring land for greenways and parks.

The Plan uses the concept of activity centers to encourage development of integrated land uses, and community facilities, such as parks, libraries, and schools, as focal points for the areas as they develop. The emphasis of the Plan is on defining the form, function, allowed uses and mixing of uses. The Plan addresses development trends and attempts to maintain

the character of the area, while allowing growth to occur. Plan concepts include:

- Mixed and concentrated land uses
- Higher density residential land uses
- Transit oriented development
- Open space/greenways

g. What does the Future Hold for the Communities

The outlying urbanizing areas include crossroad communities. Almost all of these crossroad communities are designated as activity centers. While emphasis is planning for the future of these areas, a priority is to preserve their rich character.

2. Principles from Adopted Land Use Plan

[The suggestions from public participation that are included in the study are implemented through the Area Land Use Plan's land use classifications outlined below.]

a. Features of Plan

The Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan has a long-term time frame whose objective is to encourage development in and around the two municipalities. The Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan replaces the countywide Land Use Classifications Map covering Wendell and Zebulon's Urban Services Areas plus a part of the Robertson's Pond Non-Urban Area. The Plan concentrates intense land uses within activity centers at major intersections within the USA. Additionally, the Plan designates residential densities within the Short-Range and Long-Range Urban Services Areas and identifies potential areas for greenways (To view a map of the Southeast Area Land Use Plan plan, click on "Other Area Land Use Plan Maps" in the column on the left).

b. Wendell USA

- Wendell's Long-Range Urban Services Area is expanded to include part of the Robertson's Pond Watershed, adding 3,971 acres.
- Three Neighborhood Activity Centers: (1) Intersection of Eagle Rock Road and Martin Pond Road (parcel specific); (2) Southeast side of the intersection of Rolesville Road and Davis Town Road; (3) South side of the intersection of Riley Hill Road and Riley Hill School

Road. The core area of UNACs is 5 to 25 acres.

- A Community Activity Center is designated at the interchange of the proposed US 64 Bypass near Taylor Road (core area: 10 to 50 acres).
- The Community Activity Center boundary (defined by parcels) at the intersection of NC 97 and US 64 Business has been changed by deleting a parcel from east side of Old Battle Bridge Road and adding a parcel on west side of that road.
- A Regional Activity Center and Industrial/Major Employment Center are designated around the intersection of US 64 and Rolesville Road northwest of Town.
- Residential densities: (1) Low density residential (< 2.3 units per acre) is designated for the Long Range USA including part of Robertson's Pond watershed; (2) Medium density (3-6 units per acre) is planned within the Short-Range USA; (3) Higher density residential (> 6 units per acre) is planned in the Short-Range USA on fringe of activity centers. The medium and high-density residential classifications are comparable to Wendell's residential zoning classifications.

c. Zebulon USA

- Zebulon's Short-Range Urban Services Area is expanded east of Town to the County line, changing approximately 500 acres from Long-Range USA to Short-Range USA.
- Neighborhood Activity Center designations: (1) Intersection of NC 96 and Proctor Street adjacent to the Town's ETJ; (2) Intersection of Old US 64 and Rosinburg Road (core area: 5-25 acres).
- A Community Activity Center is designated at the intersection of NC 97 and NC 39 (core area: 10 to 50 acres).
- A Multi-County Regional Activity Center and an Industrial/Major Employment Center is designated around the intersection of US 264 and NC 39.
- Low density residential (< 2.3 units per acre) is designated for the Short Range and Long Range USA.

d. Activity Centers

An activity center is a location where people come together for the purpose of work, shopping eating, learning, or recreation in a safe clean and attractive setting. Activity centers will encourage the development of integrated land uses, and community facilities, such as parks, libraries, and schools, as focal points for the areas as they develop.

e. Activity Centers' General Principles

Activity centers are designed to bring about multiple services at specific intersections, usually where major thoroughfares intersect. The activity center concept is to provide for concentrated mixed-use development, which includes commercial services, employment opportunities, and residential housing designed with convenient pedestrian and vehicular access from surrounding areas.

- Form a distinctive character that helps the surrounding community better identify with the activity center, and interact and incorporate their daily living with it.
- Cluster a mutually supportive mix of land uses to provide a focal point that integrates daily activities.
- Ensure that adjacent uses are compatible in use and scale.
- Ensure that the location of new development complement and preserve existing natural landforms and trees, open space, and historic resources.
- Connect to municipal water and sewer where practicable and other new development be designed to facilitate future urban infill.

f. Land Use Classifications

- Neighborhood Activity Centers
- Community Activity Centers
- Regional Activity Centers
- Multi-County Regional Activity Center
- Industrial/Major Employment Center

The specific uses within each nonresidential classification are defined in the Wake County Land-Use Plan document. For general reference activity centers are defined as follows:

g. Urban Neighborhood Activity Centers

The Urban Neighborhood Activity Center is at significant road intersections that serve

predominately local traffic and is in an area that is geographically positioned to serve a residential area. The area is largely residential with a mixed-use core that serves as a focal point for the neighborhood in meeting retail service needs. Primarily convenience retail goods and personal services, or small scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential land uses with a neighborhood-wide rather than community-wide emphasis.

h. Urban Neighborhood Activity Centers Core

The core area should contain relatively small-scale development that focuses on the day-to-day needs of the core area occupants and the population of the immediately surrounding neighborhood. These are centers for neighborhood activity that include grocery stores, offices, drug stores, service specialty stores, as well as some convenience stores such as gas stations. Medium to high-density residential development is allowed where municipal water and sewer are available. The Core area will range from 5 to 25 acres. The Core area is located in the middle of the activity center.

i. Urban Community Activity Centers

Combination of retail and personal services, civic, educational, and social uses that serves the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. A community activity center consists of a mix of moderate-scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential land uses.

j. Urban Community Activity Centers Core

A community activity center should have a core containing relatively medium-scale development that focuses on day-to-day needs and activities of the core area occupants as well as the greater needs and activities of the people living in the adjacent neighborhoods. The areas are accessed by major thoroughfares and public transportation, and served by municipal water and sewer.

Core uses may include: grocery store, drug store, specialty shop, restaurant, medical or dental practice, legal service, and automobile sales, service, and repair shops. Higher density residential development, such as multi-family, would be included with greater than 6 units per acre. Core area 10 to 50 acres.

k. Urban Regional Activity Centers

These centers are primarily job base served by

municipal water and sewer, incorporating large-scale urban land uses and commercial development. These areas are identified for the development of large office parks. Corporations requiring space for office and research and development will occupy these master planned developments. In a regional activity center, the types of large scale urban land uses may include: regional shopping centers, large hotels/motels, middle and high schools, community colleges, industrial parks, research and development parks, employment centers, and a wide variety of housing densities.

l. Multi-County Regional Activity Centers

Primary job base served by municipal water and sewer accessed by major thoroughfares and public transportation, preferably including regional rail transit. These centers include urban land uses that are supported by and serve communities within more than one county. The types of large scale urban land uses may include: large hotels/motels, professional office centers, outdoor commercial recreation, regional recreation centers, industrial parks, research and development parks, employment centers, higher education centers, major professional, commercial, or government institutions, and super-regional and multi-functional shopping areas.

m. Industrial/Major Employment Centers

Major employment centers are areas appropriate for multiple uses, including basic employee services. Land suitable for manufacturing, warehousing, industrial and business uses, and research and development, and supporting commercial and residential uses, in a manner appropriate for its location relative to other development and environmental constraints. These areas are located along US 64 Business (Wendell Boulevard) at its intersection with US 64 and Rolesville Road (planned for 2 additional lanes) and the planned US 64 bypass, and at the intersection of US 264 and NC 39. These sites were chosen for their accessibility, landmass, and the ability to be served by municipal water and sewer. They are located on the fringes and at gateways to the area. As the commute to existing employment centers, such as Research Triangle Park, grows more difficult, these major employment centers may offer additional employment opportunities for the community. Ideally, these centers would offer many citizens an opportunity to live and work in Wendell and Zebulon.

n. Residential Land Uses

Residential densities are prescribed for the Short-Range and Long-Range Urban Services Areas. Low-density residential is designated for the Long-Range Urban Services Areas. Medium- and High-Density residential classifications (comparable to the Town of Wendell's residential districts) are applied within the Short-Range Urban Services Area of Wendell.

o. Low Density Residential

This land use designation is intended to provide areas for large lot development. Acceptable development types in this category include subdivisions with conventional layouts as well as cluster developments. The low-density designation allows 2.3 or less dwelling units per acre, which is within range of residential densities within ETJ areas of Wendell and Zebulon. Low-density residential development is generally within Long-Range Urban Services Areas and areas which are environmentally sensitive, or have unique natural features, such as Robertson Pond.

p. Medium Density Residential

Medium density residential areas would be developed at a density of from 3 to 6 dwelling units per acre when municipal water and sewer become available. These development patterns generally consist of single-family homes located on lots less than one half acre in size. Within this designation, developments could be designed in various ways and still meet the density requirements, such as the conventional subdivision or cluster development.

q. High-Density Residential

The high-density residential category provides areas for small lot single-family development and for multi-family developments, both ownership and rental. The densities permitted would be more than 6 dwelling units per acre with the availability of municipal water and sewer. High-density residential areas are designed to mesh with various activity centers both to provide the market and to serve as a buffer between intense commercial activities and medium density residential. As the region continues to develop transit options, high-density development should be equipped with transit stops, park and ride, and other facilities that encourage alternative means of travel.

High-density residential development should complement the other residential areas and provide a subtle transition from activity centers

as well as the moderate density residential areas of town. Landscaping and parking as well as architecture should be designed with the goal of softening rough edges, such as stark buildings and large expanses of concrete, sometimes associated with high-density residential developments.

r. Open Space

The Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan encourages preservation of important open spaces particularly in wetlands, floodplains, and other areas that should remain relatively undisturbed. The 100-year floodway along Buffalo Creek, Marks Creek, and Little River are potential locations for a "greenway corridor" and are highlighted on the Land Use Classifications Map to alert landowners. Benefits of open space preservation are environmental protection for water supplies, rare plant and animal communities and ecosystems. Additional benefits include keeping areas at high risk for flood damage undeveloped, preserving significant historic and cultural resources and providing recreational opportunities.

The County recognizes the need to balance continued growth with the need to preserve important spaces. The Open Space Grant Program is part of Wake County's broader Open Space Plan to preserve land such as forests, meadows, fields, wetlands, floodplains, and other undisturbed areas.

The Wake County Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC), an eight-member citizen group, was appointed by the Board of Commissioners to advise staff on open space preservation issues. The Open Space Grant Program is an initiative created by OSAC to collaborate with local organizations in preserving our significant natural resources. The grant program provides funding to organizations in Wake County to acquire and plan for acquiring land with unique qualities that should be preserved. Any municipality, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, local or State land management agency (including Wake County) that has a purpose which includes the expansion of the preservation and conservation of open space in Wake County is eligible to apply for and receive grants.

The Neuse River regulations require land uses in the basin to reduce their cumulative nitrogen contribution to the river by 30 percent. The regulations require the establishment and/or maintenance of 50-foot vegetated buffers (the first 30 feet must be forested) around all

affected perennial and intermittent streams as well as all ponds on these streams.

s. Historic Preservation

The Southeast Wake Area Land Use Plan encourages the preservation of historic resources, especially those eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and for designation as local historic landmarks.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's honorary list of buildings and places significant in American history. Properties listed in the National Register can include, but are not limited to residences, commercial buildings, barns and other agricultural buildings, farm complexes, neighborhoods, archeological sites, as well as other structures and significant landmarks. The National Park Service in conjunction with each state's Historic Preservation Office administers the National Register (NR) program.

The Wake County Historic Preservation Commission administers a program to honor locally significant historic properties. A local historic landmark is an individual building, structure, site, area, or object, which has historical, archeological, or cultural significance and has been recognized by official designation for its importance. A landmark is designated in an ordinance adopted by a local governing body. An owner of a privately owned landmark is eligible to apply for an annual 50% property tax deferral, as long as the special character of the historic property is maintained. There is no direct correlation between National Register listing and local designation, however, properties may be honored with one or both of these designations.

For more information about either of these programs, contact the Wake County Historic Preservation Commission staff at 856-6322 or 856-6327.

Wake County has a comprehensive list of its historic resources that include the architectural traditions, styles, and forms that define the history of Wake County. Most of these properties are an integral part of the community. The historic sites that are in the Southeast study area include older residences, stores, churches and farms.

Historically significant sites in the study area include:

- Hephzibah Baptist Church, organized in 1809, National Register (NR) Study List.
- Oaky Grove-Wake County plantation, Turnipseed Road, (1818), Significance: local interest. NR and local historic landmark.
- Eagle Rock, Significance: local interest.
- Hood-Anderson Farm, Eagle Rock on SR 2366 (1830-1840), NR
- Bennett Bunn Plantation, NR, local historic landmark.
- Harmony Plantation, Riley Hill Road (early 19th century), NR Study List.
- Horton Farm, Riley Hill Road (1910), NR Study List.
- Avera-Winston House, north of US 64 at SR 2324 (1874), NR Study List.
- Edgemont Store US 64 Business.
- George W. Duke Complex, SR 2310, NR Study List.

t. Thoroughfares

The thoroughfare system is comprised of interstate/freeways, major thoroughfares, and minor thoroughfares. Examples of thoroughfares within the study area include NC 39, NC 97, U.S Highway 64, proposed U.S. Highway 64 Bypass, and US Highway 264. The Regional and Major Industrial/Employment Centers are served by highways and major thoroughfares which provide good access capable of accommodating and dispersing commercial and industrial traffic.

3. Summary of November 18, 1999 Issues Survey

An issues survey was distributed to 40 people who attended the November 18, 1999 open house at the Wendell Town Hall. Of those, fifteen percent responded to the survey on growth and development. The important issues, which were identified, are listed below.

- Provide for business/industrial parks and other employers
- Provide for compatible development between uses
- Land use plan which reflects land owners preferences in developing their property
- Provide for mixed-use development
- Provide for neighborhood, community parks, open-space
- Public involvement in the land use process

- Allow for higher density residential land classifications
- Prohibit landfills near residential areas
- Traffic is viewed as a problem
- Disliked mixed-use development
- Liked community to remain rural
- Liked growth and development
- Growth and development should be slow
- County should pre-zone land to implement land use plan
- Need Improvements to infrastructure
- Disliked sprawl

4. Points of Interest Map

5. To view the Southeast Area Land Use Classifications Map: **see "Land Use Plan Maps"**.

