

# Introduction to the Legacy Update

3/22/11

## The Original Legacy Plan

A Comprehensive Plan is an official public document that is used to guide the growth and development of a community. The original *Legacy Comprehensive Plan* adopted in 2001 (to be referred to as the *2001 Legacy Plan*) was a major initiative taken by the City-County Planning Board to assist citizens with the development of a vision for Winston-Salem and Forsyth County's future. The Planning Board appointed a 21-member Legacy Steering Committee with representatives from across Forsyth County to guide the visioning process. Over 100 citizens were enlisted by the Steering Committee and organized into eight focus groups. "Forsyth County Tomorrow" (to be referred to as The Vision), is the result of their efforts. The Vision calls for growing smarter and better by managing future development. In fact, the title of the plan document, *Legacy*, identifies the overarching theme – we are stewards of the community and we have an obligation to protect and enhance it as our legacy to future generations.

The Vision was used as the basis for drafting the *2001 Legacy Plan* including goals, objectives, policies and an Action Plan. Numerous public meetings with citizens, stakeholders and organizations were held throughout the plan process. When completed, the *2001 Legacy Plan* was adopted by Winston-Salem, Forsyth

County and the seven smaller incorporated municipalities.

To ensure movement on the Action Plan contained in the *2001 Legacy Plan*, a Legacy Oversight Committee comprised of twelve citizens has charted its implementation. A progress report was prepared annually and presented to the elected bodies. In 2006, the Committee conducted a five-year benchmark study using twenty-three indicators and benchmarks related to the goals and objectives of the *Legacy 2001 Plan*. The benchmarking process shows success in some areas such as transit usage, an increase in the downtown housing stock and overall housing affordability. The benchmarks showing less success include the relatively low amount of new development on the east side of town, no increase in the overall density of all new development and little improvement to water quality.

## Why a Legacy Update? Three Good Reasons...

**1) The Need for an Updated Action Plan and Policy Guide:** A great deal of progress has been made since the adoption of the *2001 Legacy Plan*. Of the 149 action items, 105 have been completed with the remaining items no longer relevant or in need of an update. The *2001 Legacy Plan* also serves as a policy document that guides many other planning initiatives. These planning initiatives can be broken into three basic program

areas: Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) revisions and monthly development review; topical (or special subject) plans; and Area Plans (see **Figure 1, Legacy Planning Cycle**).

The comprehensive plan provides guidance to each of these program areas through its goals and objectives. Since the adoption of the *2001 Legacy Plan*, all relevant UDO ordinance changes have been completed, all topical plans recommended by *Legacy* have been written and adopted, and Area Plans for all but the rural areas of the entire county will be completed by the end of 2011. The relevancy of The Vision developed by Forsyth County citizens is still sound and even more applicable to today's environment, but it is time to update and extend the *2001 Legacy Plan* and detail additional implementation efforts that help achieve the goals.

**2) New Local and National Issues:** New trends and issues that have come to the forefront in Forsyth County as well as the nation provide another reason for an update to the *2001 Legacy Plan*. Downtown Winston-Salem has made a major comeback in housing, entertainment and the arts. The Heart of the Triad effort has put a regional focus on community development. A new national emphasis has been put on topics such as sustainability and

community health. Rising gas prices and congested roads have brought renewed interest in transit, walking and bicycling. The changing economy continues to bring challenges and opportunities. These important issues can be addressed through the plan update process.

**3) Our Changing Demographics:**

Last and most important are changes in our local demographics. Chapter Two, Updated Trends, discusses the projected increase in both our population and employment in relationship to our dwindling land resources. Forsyth County can expect to see 120,000 additional people by 2030, bringing our population total to almost half a million. How do we apply The Vision to accommodate this growth and keep and improve the quality of life we currently have?

**Themes for the Legacy Update**

Three themes will tie the chapters in the **Legacy Update** together. Look for the following icons throughout the **Legacy Update** process and document.



**Sustainable Growth:** Sustainable growth is the wise use of physical resources which allows us to not only meet our current needs, but have resources for the needs of generations to come.

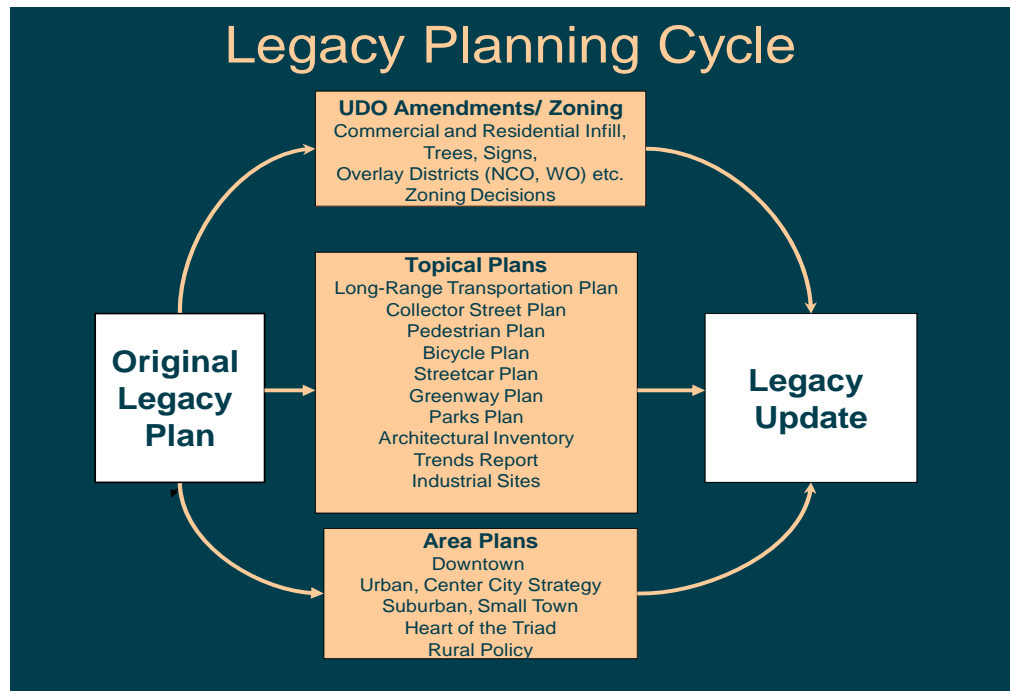


**Livable Design:** Livable design through thoughtful development can enhance the safety, prosperity, beauty and quality of life for residents. Livable design is tied to all aspects of a community including housing, neighborhoods, transportation options, facilities, commercial areas and open spaces.



**Fiscal Responsibility:** Fiscal responsibility deals with providing infrastructure and services to citizens in an efficient manner so that tax rates can remain lower through orderly cost-efficient growth.

*Figure 1: Legacy Planning Cycle*



## Moving Ahead – Organization of the Legacy Update

The **Legacy Update** is organized as follows:

**The Legacy Update Framework:** The first three chapters set the stage for planning:

- 1) *Legacy in Review - The 2001 Legacy Plan* goals, objectives and accomplishments;
- 2) *Updated Trends - Demographics, trends and future development capacity*; and
- 3) *Growth Management Plan - The use of Growth Management Areas to guide development in a cost-efficient and sustainable manner.*

**The Legacy Update Functional Elements:** the next six chapters address in more detail opportunities and issues discussed in the Updated Trends and Growth Management Plan chapters:

- 4) *Land Use - Land use principles and how they support the Growth Management Plan*;
- 5) *Transportation - Future transportation options and the relationship between transportation and land use*;
- 6) *Update on Economic Development - The changing economy and how we meet new challenges for jobs and industry*;

- 7) *Environmental Quality and Sustainability* – Environmental issues in our community and the use of green technology;
- 8) *Healthy Living* – Planning issues and policies that affect the health of our citizens; and
- 9) *Update on Community Character* – Attributes of our community that make it special and give it a “sense of place”.

### **The Legacy Update Geographic Elements:**

The next three chapters take the opportunities and issues discussed in the Functional Chapters and tie them to geographic areas of Forsyth County:

- 10) *The Future of Downtown and the Center City* – Continuing the revitalization of downtown Winston-Salem;
- 11) *Neighborhoods* – Strengthening our neighborhoods through policies and actions; and
- 12) *Rural Policy* – Strategies for conserving the character of our remaining rural areas.

**Implementation Tools:** The last three chapters compile the recommendations of the previous nine chapters and discuss how they will be implemented through existing processes and programs:

- 13) *Land Use Regulations* – Potential changes to our Unified Development Ordinances and guidance for development review that will help better align how our community grows with the vision and goals of the **Legacy Update** plan;
- 14) *Area Plans* – Continue to use a community-based planning process to bring the general recommendations of the **Legacy Update** to sections of the county; and
- 15) *Key Public Investments* – Strategic public infrastructure investments that will help shape community development in a way that is consistent with the **Legacy Update**.