

Community Character



In 2015, historic preservation should be a priority not only for its aesthetic, social, historical and environmental contributions but also because it can contribute to the economic development of our community.

As Forsyth County grows and becomes more urban, the special character of our towns and rural areas is slowly disappearing.

Development is expanding into rural areas, and replacing woodlands, farmland and open space. In urban areas, look-alike strip malls and big box super stores are undermining the special character of our community. Increasingly, people are dissatisfied with not only the quantity but also the quality of our current development patterns and their effect on our character and identity. While we have enjoyed solid growth and a healthy economy in recent years, people are asking: “Is this the best we can do? Can’t new development fit in better and build on our distinctive character? Can’t the community grow and at the same time retain what is beautiful and distinctive about our community?”

The answer is that the community can grow without destroying the things we love. We can have quality growth by retaining trees, open space, parks and greenways, protecting our historic resources, creating attractive community gateways, building boulevards instead of roads, controlling signs and billboards, and demanding high standards in the aesthetics of public and private development projects. We can do it, and we should do it not only because beauty in our environment fulfills a basic human need in all of us but also because increasingly it is good for business.

Our Vision

The *Legacy* Focus Groups envisioned a future where we have built upon our rich Moravian heritage to create a community with a special character and identity.

In the year 2015 we envision that . . .

- ☞ We treasure our rural farmlands, creeks with wide green buffers and walking trails, and lush natural areas like Salem Lake Park.
- ☞ Historic preservation and reuse of buildings is a priority.
- ☞ Attractive community gateways and boulevards convey our sense of pride and caring to visitors.
- ☞ Coordinated directions to attractions, services and events are provided by colorful banners and other attractive signage.
- ☞ Each neighborhood has its own special character.
- ☞ Major businesses show their civic pride through tastefully designed buildings and signage, and distinctive landscaping.

Community Image

Image can be defined as the sum of the feelings that people—residents as well as outsiders—have about our community. Image is important because the success of our community depends very much on how people feel about it. The feelings of residents are sometimes termed “civic pride.” A lack of collective civic pride results in a weak commitment to the community and a reduced interest in working to make it a better place. Just as importantly, our image affects the decisions of outsiders. The image our community has beyond its borders as a place to live, work and do business influences the decisions of individuals and companies considering to move to our area. So our image and reputation are very important. A community with a positive reputation will have a competitive advantage in attracting visitors, residents and business investment.

While the image a community projects certainly includes the character and quality of its public and private leaders and institutions, people are most likely to think of physical features when asked to characterize a community: a vibrant skyline, landscaped boulevards, a striking view, or simply a favorite park or museum. These physical amenities become very important in developing a character or personality attractive to outsiders and capable of instilling pride in local citizenry. Understanding, preserving and building upon our strongest and most distinctive features must guide our development efforts to create and maintain a cohesive and attractive image.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Action Agenda

Goal 1:

A distinctive image that makes the communities within Forsyth County unique and special places.

Objective 1: Quality Design

Use architecture, landscape design and public art to display our pride in the rich history of this area, the diversity of our people, and our many contributions to medicine, education, technology, sports and the cultural arts.

Think of your favorite city or town and then ask yourself why it is special to you. Some of the reasons will probably have to do with design, including: the scale, size and architectural style of buildings; how easy and enjoyable it is to walk from one place to another; the existence of trees and other landscaping; the presence of parks, plazas and other places where people gather; and the quality of statues and other public art. The careful mix of these and other design elements can make a city or town special. Attention to design does matter and without it, a city or town can lose its special character and identity.

Private developers and local governments are beginning to appreciate the importance of good design. Private developers in today’s competitive

market see profit in the competitive edge that high quality design gives to their residential, commercial and office projects. Increasingly for them, good design “pays off.” Local governments have realized that making their town or city look better generates an economic return for the public as well as the private sector. Good design is especially important to those communities seeking to attract tourists and their dollars. The more a community does to protect and enhance its unique characteristics, the more tourists it will attract.

On the other hand, the more a community comes to resemble everyplace else, the less reason there is to visit. Local governments are becoming more aware of the impact they can have on design quality by setting standards and demanding high quality development from the private market and “leading by example” with well designed public projects.

Policies

- Visually display community values and pride in special attractions, major businesses and universities through our architecture, landscape designs, and public art. Emphasize our appreciation of the diversity of our population as well as our unity and harmony.
- Encourage major employers and institutions to display their pride through the design of distinctive headquarters buildings with attractive landscaping, signage design, public spaces and art work.
- Show our pride in our community and educational system by setting high standards of architectural

design and landscape architectural design for public buildings and new schools. Ensure that each new building complements the area in which it is located and the site is developed in a manner to work with its natural features.

Action Agenda

- Consider a policy to earmark a percentage of the cost of new local public buildings and places to be used for public art within the project.
- Prepare a brochure encouraging private developers to voluntarily submit their projects to the Community Appearance Commission (CAC) for comment. Revise the CAC review process to coincide with the rezoning process schedule so that private developers choosing to submit their projects to the CAC for additional review can receive those comments during the rezoning review process.

**Objective 2:
Attractive Roadways**

Display pride in our community through well designed highways and roadways which have ample landscaping, sidewalks, bike lanes, underground utilities and limited signage.

In a 1990 citizen survey conducted by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Community Appearance Commission, a top appearance concern was the impression our major roadways make on visitors and residents alike. Respondents

felt we should focus on improving our streets and highways with more trees and landscaping, bike lanes, and sidewalks. These additions would not only make our streets more attractive, but also encourage people to walk and bike more. The slower pace would allow people to feel more connected to the community and to see and appreciate its beauty more easily. To help address this issue in Winston-Salem, a Roadway Appearance Division has been created to keep the streets and highways of Winston-Salem clean and well landscaped and an urban forester now manages the City’s Street Tree Program.

However, most new roads and road widening projects continue to be built with insufficient attention to aesthetics and alternate means of transportation. Opportunities to include landscaped medians, street trees, sidewalks and bike-lanes in these projects have been missed. New road construction is indeed expensive, but going back and buying additional right-of-way or removing asphalt to create landscaped medians after a road is built is even more expensive. Winston-Salem has learned this in recent corridor improvement projects where obtaining additional easements for planting has been difficult and time consuming. We need to give greater emphasis to maintaining and improving the appearance of our existing roadways and designing new roadways with amenities that make them both functional and attractive for future generations.

In 1993, the Community Appearance Commission also started the popular Community Roots Day. Each April, citizens work together to transform a neighborhood by planting hundreds of street trees. In addition, gateways into our

communities have been identified, landscaping plans prepared and plantings installed along these entry corridors. Special streetscape projects such as Community Crossing, the Southeast Gateway and Liberty Street are also being implemented.

The proliferation of outdoor advertising signs along our roadways was first addressed in the 1985 revision of the Sign Ordinance. Revised standards set more stringent size, spacing, and



The Community Crossing project has beautified University Parkway between downtown Winston-Salem and Wake Forest University with landscaping and other improvements.

zoning district requirements. Action to remove nonconforming signs began in 1992. By 1995, 88 billboards had been removed. Additional progress in this area has been made by establishing view corridors along most of our new major highways. No new billboards are allowed along these corridors. The only remaining nonconforming signs are those along our federal highways where federal law does not allow amortization and the

owners of the signs must be compensated for sign removal.

Policies

- Continue to design and build attractive landscaped entryways into our County, City, and small towns. Incorporate gateway art, signage, and lighting as appropriate. Special emphasis should be placed on improving the view of downtown Winston-Salem on west bound Business 40 near its intersection with US 52 and on east bound Business 40.
- Require that adequate right-of-way is purchased to allow for attractive major roadways. Encourage new multilane thoroughfares and major connector roads to have a “boulevard” appearance with landscaped medians, ample street trees, bike lanes, sidewalks, and where appropriate, the placement of utility lines underground.
- Design new roads to be parkways by working with the natural topography and using grade separation between lanes to create attractive, natural medians.
- Continue to support Winston-Salem’s Roadway Appearance Division. Encourage all communities to provide for high quality maintenance of all public facilities including roadways and parks, keeping them clean and attractive.
- Reduce litter on our roadways by supporting North Carolina’s adopt-a-highway program and enforcing anti-litter regulations.

Action Agenda

- Change state and local street standards to encourage narrower and more aesthetic streets which work with the natural features of a site.
- Encourage the consolidation and relocation of overhead utility lines underground along existing major roadways or to a less visible location. In considering consolidation and relocation, the economic impact on adjacent property owners should be considered.
- Consider a policy to earmark funds to purchase and remove nonconforming billboards along Business 40, NC 421, and US 52.
- Prepare overlay districts with design guidelines for our major roadway corridors. Focus on signage, parking location, building design and landscaping.
- Enhance the appearance of entryways and thoroughfares in the community by revising the Unified Development Ordinances to require reduced sign sizes and heights.

**Objective 3:
Design/Development Guidelines**

Development which promotes a pleasing, livable, and sustainable community through landscaping and good design.

Franchises are contracts granted by national or regional companies allowing someone the exclusive right to operate one of their stores in a specified area. In 1994, there were more than a half million franchise operations in the U.S. accounting for almost 40 percent of all retail sales. The parent companies supply training, equipment, advertising, and very often, a standard architecture for the building. While the proliferation of franchise operations attests to the fact that we love the low-cost goods and services they supply, not many of us love their architecture. The homogenizing effect of red roofs, golden arches, and plastic Kentucky Colonels—surrounded by parking lots and pole signs—have helped turn many communities into “Anywhere, USA.” Does a home improvement center or a fast food restaurant always have to look the same? The answer is, “Of course not.” Franchises can be encouraged and, if necessary, required to make their buildings fit in with and enhance the distinctive and attractive features that make a community special. Often all a community has to do is ask.

When asking does not work and more persuasion is needed, there are other techniques for requiring more appropriate design. Unfortunately, zoning regulations can have only a limited influence on the quality and appearance of these

developments. Our State laws restrict communities from dictating architectural style and details through zoning except in special overlay districts for areas with historic significance or existing distinctive character. One method is creating a set of design/development guidelines which tell and show potential developers how we want special areas in our community to look. Other regulatory tools include corridor overlay zones, sign controls and special use permits.

Trees make our community more livable. They fulfill an important environmental purpose by reducing air and noise pollution, producing oxygen, providing stormwater and soil erosion control, as well as contributing to energy conservation and providing wildlife habitat. Trees also contribute to community pride, quality of life, and economic well being.

The loss of trees and extensive grading during development were top appearance issues noted by citizens in the Community Appearance Commission survey. Too often, all of the trees on a site are cut down so that construction equipment and delivery vehicles can maneuver easily. Grading often includes cutting into the upper part of hillsides leaving very steep slopes, filling in the lower areas, and piping natural drainage ways. Soon there are no trees, no sense of what the natural landform of an area once was and little original character remains. The development community and the County Commissioners recently recognized the importance of environmentally sensitive development by signing the *Land Sensitive Development Agreement* in which the parties agreed that land development should be done in an environmentally friendly manner.

People care about trees. As a result, tree preservation and planting have increased significantly in communities across the U.S. Hundreds of places, both big and small, have established urban greening and street tree planting programs.

The National Arbor Day Foundation fostered this movement by creating the Tree City USA program in 1976. The purpose of this program is to encourage the planting and protection of trees in urban areas. This well known program sets four standards for communities to be included into the program. They are: (1) a tree board or department; (2) an urban forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2/capita; (3) an Arbor Day observance and proclamation; and, (4) adoption of a community tree ordinance. The tree ordinance can set requirements for trees on public property only or include requirements for private development as well. Winston-Salem recently adopted an ordinance for trees on public property and became a Tree City, U.S.A.

Ordinances requiring the protection of trees or limiting grading can raise concern in the business community. However, a growing number of homebuilders and commercial developers have come to realize that planting and protecting trees and retaining natural land forms make economic sense because they make our community more livable and attractive and add value to their projects.

Policies

- Promote neotraditional design principles and creative housing options. Ensure that redevelopment in existing neighborhoods is consistent

Figure 11.1
Design Principles

Much of our commercial development occurs as a shallow depth of commercial use abutting a road, more than likely a very busy road. The clutter of signs trying to out-shout each other for the motorists attention and the location of a sea of parking between the commercial buildings and the roadway results in a cluttered appearance along these heavily traveled routes.

It doesn't have to be this way. Application of good planning and design principles can greatly improve the appearance of these corridors. As the virtual makeover to the right demonstrates, incorporating features like sidewalks, tree plantings, landscaped medians, as well as reduced sign heights and sizes and undergrounding of wiring can greatly enhance the aesthetic appeal of these areas.



with their scale and character and will enhance the social and visual pattern of the community. Utilize neighborhood citizens in the design process.

- Encourage redevelopment and reuse of existing sites and buildings which are visually compatible with the surrounding area.
- Use visual preference surveys to fine tune guidelines to reflect design features preferred by citizens.

Action Agenda

- Develop guidelines for franchised businesses to ensure that they fit in with the unique natural, historic and architectural character of the local area.
- Communities in Forsyth County should seek Tree City, U.S.A. designation and consider adoption of tree ordinances County-wide.
- Consider requirements to preserve a development site’s natural features and topography.
- Develop special downtown districts with design guidelines tailored to each downtown. Require review of development proposals to insure compatibility with the guidelines.
- Prepare guidelines for large scale commercial and multifamily residential developments which encourage them to be both vehicular and pedestrian friendly and interesting and attractive in appearance.

- Develop guidelines to preserve and enhance the unique architectural and landscape qualities of the County’s rural areas.

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**Objective 4:
 Education**

Community understanding of the many benefits which good community appearance provides and the importance of considering aesthetics in every development proposal.

Technology and other forces are changing the way we live and work. In the new century, futurists tell us the workforce is going to be divided into three groups. A third of us will have jobs that allow us to live anywhere we choose. For another third of us, our jobs will provide some constraints on where we live but we will still have a large number of choices. Subsequently, roughly two-thirds of us will be able to live where we choose. That choice will be based on the quality of life that a locality offers. Each of us has his/her own criteria for what constitutes quality of life but certainly environmental quality, aesthetics in the built environment, scenic beauty, community open space, trees and vegetation, and distinctive community character will be important factors for many of us.

In recent years, communities have begun to recognize the important correlation between a community’s physical design and appearance and its economic vitality. As a result, several appearance boards and commissions have been created recently in Winston-Salem, Forsyth County and

in small towns such as Kernersville, Lewisville and Clemmons. These commissions seek to inform and educate citizens, developers and elected officials about the importance of community appearance and to encourage high quality design. Their efforts in conjunction with those of the Historic District and Historic Properties Commissions work to blend the best from the past with the best of today to create community character unique to us.

Recognition and understanding of the importance of community appearance by all citizens is vital to our future. As this education takes place, citizens are seeking higher quality in their built environment and demanding that all development proposals make a positive contribution to our community’s image. Local governments can help continue this movement forward by supporting the work of these commissions and implementing their recommendations. In addition, commissions can ensure that community character and historic preservation are important considerations in all public projects and are incorporated into projects when initial budgets are being determined. Local governments can also encourage private developers to have their projects reviewed by local appearance groups.

Policies

- Support the work of organizations and citizen groups such as appearance commissions, beautification groups, and historic preservation commissions and groups and develop programs such as Community Roots Day which promote good design and an attractive community.

Continue to inform and educate citizens, elected officials, and developers about the strong correlation between community character and the well-being and economic health of a community.

- ❑ Continue to recognize citizens and corporations which contribute to the attractive appearance of the City and County through community appearance awards programs.
- ❑ Encourage private developers to have their projects reviewed by local appearance groups.

Historic Preservation

Rich in local history, Forsyth County retains an impressive inventory of historic resources. An architectural inventory completed in 1978 identified over 200 local properties which have sufficient historical or architectural significance to warrant possible local or national designation. In addition, there are numerous other buildings and sites that are important to our local history and culture.

We list a number of reasons why we seek to preserve this legacy and pass it on to succeeding generations. Individual historic buildings as well as historic areas such as Old Salem, Bethabara and West End provide a link to the past that helps define who we are, provides continuity across generations, and contributes to our sense of place. For many of us, the classic design, rich detail and timeless beauty of our historic structures and districts provide a welcome relief from the housing tracts and strip malls of modern suburban development. In addition, historic preservation contributes to sustainable development—the reuse and recycling of important architectural resources.

We can add to this list an economic reason—historic preservation can be a growth strategy for Forsyth County. Preserved buildings and neighborhoods add to our community’s character and

image and have an impact on our ability to attract new residents, outside investment and tourists. Tourism is now the second largest industry in North Carolina. Tourists are not interested in visiting places that lack character, and look just like every other place. They are attracted to places like Charleston, S.C. and Richmond, Va. which have preserved their special historic character. Our fledgling local movie industry, which pumped 21 million dollars into the local economy in 1997, is dependent on the varied locations provided by our historic neighborhoods and older commercial areas.



Rehabilitation of historic structures can provide jobs and an increased tax base. Over the past 20 years in North Carolina, more than 700 private-sector, income-producing historic rehabilitation projects have been undertaken representing nearly \$325 million in private investment. Now significant new State historic preservation tax

credits, as well as existing federal tax credits are available to developers and home owners. These credits can provide an infusion of money to help us reach our goals for downtown revitalization and older neighborhood reinvestment. Clearly then, historic preservation should be a priority not only for its aesthetic, social, historical and environmental contributions but also because it can contribute to the economic development of our community.

Goals, Objectives, Policies and Action Agenda

Goal 2:

To provide for the identification, protection, and promotion of historic resources as an integral component of quality growth in Forsyth County.

Objective 1: Protection of Historic Resources

Identify, record, and preserve the historic resources of Forsyth County.

Forsyth County has a number of public and private groups concerned with identifying and preserving historic areas and structures. The City of Winston-Salem Historic District Commission oversees several locally zoned historic districts containing concentrations of historic resources. Those include Old Salem, Bethabara, and West End. Exterior alterations to properties within these districts require public review by this nine-member board.

The Forsyth County Joint Historic Properties Commission is charged with the identification and protection of historic properties county-wide. The Commission reviews and recommends individual properties to the governing boards for designation as Local Historic Landmarks. Owners of designated landmarks are eligible to receive a 50 percent property tax deferral, and must apply to

the Commission for approval of alterations to any portion of the designated property. Over 100 properties have received the local landmark designation from the Commission since it was formed in 1976.

Several other private organizations concerned with preservation are active within Forsyth County including the Kernersville Historic Preservation Society; Old Salem, Inc; Historic Bethabara, and others. These private groups are



Korner's Folly, located near the center of Kernersville is one of Forsyth County's most well known nineteenth century residences. Visitors young and old marvel at the unique architecture of the building, with its many rooms, twenty fire places, alcoves and passageways. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a local historic landmark.

often oriented to a specific project or area, but the cumulative effect adds significantly to the community's overall preservation efforts.

Policies

- Consider establishing additional National Register of Historic Places Districts and locally zoned historic districts.
- Consider establishing conservation districts for areas that do not possess the architectural integrity to become locally zoned historic districts.
- Establish historic districts in rural areas and for significant rural landscapes.
- Coordinate the nomination of individual properties to the National Register and the designation of Local Historic Landmarks.

Action Agenda

- Update the County's architectural and archaeological inventories.
- Compile a computer database of inventoried properties, sites, National Register Properties, and Local Historic Landmarks.
- Initiate a process to investigate archaeological resources prior to land development.

**Objective 2:
Community Awareness**

Increase community awareness of, interest in, and support for Forsyth County's historic resources.

Individuals in Forsyth County interested in promoting historic preservation have long recognized the need for a nongovernmental county-wide historic preservation organization. The mission of such a group would be to provide leadership, education and advocacy for Forsyth County's historic and cultural resources. A large and diverse membership would place voices and champions for historic and cultural preservation in all parts of our community. The nonprofit group would be funded primarily with private contributions giving it greater flexibility than the public sector in its preservation and education efforts.

One of the important functions of a local nonprofit organization would be to assist the public sector with outreach and educational programs. History is kept alive not only by protecting historically valuable buildings, landmarks and areas but also through public awareness about the importance and fragility of our historic resources. Activities ranging from workshops in local schools to the observance of "historic preservation week" could be supplemented with electronic outreach on cable TV and the Internet.

Policies

- Coordinate with appropriate neighborhood associations, small towns, and communities to pro-

mote preservation of the area's historic resources and interact with one another on preservation issues.

- Promote widespread distribution of the historic resources inventory.

Action Agenda

- Study the feasibility of establishing a county wide nonprofit historic preservation organization that will maintain a dynamic, broad-based membership and serve as a primary advocate for historic preservation issues.
- Develop an active public education outreach program including government channel cable television programs, technical leaflets on preservation techniques, and a historic preservation Internet site.
- Prepare and publicize a most-endangered list of historic properties in the County.
- Organize a preservation resource library accessible to the public.
- Produce a local historic resources directory for the public.

**Objective 3:
Incentives and Funding**

Identify and initiate funding sources and financial incentives for historic preservation in Forsyth County.

Tax incentives have been an important tool for historic preservation in North Carolina since they were put in place in 1976. Their use has stimulated significant economic development activity. Nearly \$325 million has been spent on restoring income-producing properties. More than 3,800 residential units have been rehabilitated or created through the program, many of the units for low to moderate income families. Many of these commercial and residential projects have taken place in downtowns and surrounding older neighborhoods, places orphaned by sprawl and in need of economic investment.

In 1997, the North Carolina General Assembly approved new state tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects. These credits are being called the finest tax incentives for historic preservation in the United States. Beginning in January 1998, the existing 5 percent credit for income producing properties was increased to 20 percent and can "piggyback" on the 20 percent federal tax credit for a combined credit of 40 percent for qualifying structures.

Owners of private residences and other non-income producing historic buildings are now eligible for a 30 percent state income tax credit. Qualifications for the credit are based on rehabilitation expenditure and established preservation standards.

Only certified historic structures can qualify for the credits. Buildings must be listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places, be certified by the State as contributing to a National Register Historic District, or be contributing to a local historic district certified by the National Park Service. In some instances, these State and federal incentives can be supplemented by Forsyth County’s local program which offers a 50 percent property tax deferral for locally designated historic landmarks.

Owners of houses in historic districts can benefit from these credits. The tax credits could be a boon to downtown Winston-Salem with its concentration of early twentieth century commercial buildings. Using these tax credits to revitalize downtown would require that local property owners agree to declare downtown a National Register Historic District.

The revolving loan fund is another financial tool for preservation of historic resources that has become increasingly important in other communities. Revolving funds are used to help private property owners and nonprofit organizations secure low-interest financing for the restoration and preservation of historic landmarks. With a reserve of money, groups administering revolving loan funds can act quickly to purchase properties threatened with demolition and hold them for resale by buyers who are willing to restore and maintain them. Preservation North Carolina is a nonprofit group that uses a revolving fund to protect historic properties throughout North Carolina. The group has a regional office in Winston-Salem.

Action Agenda

- Establish a financial package to encourage the preservation of historic resources centered around existing state and federal tax credits as well as including local tax incentives, special loan programs, grants and easements.
- Initiate a local revolving fund for the purchase, mothballing, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic properties.
- Prepare information sheets, which will include financial incentive data, on properties suitable for residential rehabilitation and commercial adaptive reuse that will be distributed to the general public and to the development and real estate communities.

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**Objective 4:
 Historic Preservation Alliances**

New organizational relationships and policies that will result in proactive practices for historic preservation in Forsyth County.

Currently, the community is served by two appointed historic preservation commissions—the Winston-Salem Historic District Commission and the Forsyth County Joint Historic Properties Commission. The City-County Planning Board provides administrative and clerical staff as well as an operating budget for each Commission.

The two commissions are currently functioning successfully and are recognized and trusted by the community. Still, having two commissions with similar names and functions creates some confusion on the part of the public and can result in duplication of work and expense. A new City-County Historic Resources Commission (HRC) might serve the community more efficiently and effectively.

Creation of the HRC would result in one leading preservation authority and a clearing house for public information. All preservation activities from public education to approval of Certificates of Appropriateness would be organized through one commission. A single commission in conjunction with a county-wide nonprofit historic preservation organization might prove to be a superior organizational arrangement to reach our historic preservation goals in the new century.

Policy changes as well as new organizational arrangements may be needed to reach our historic preservation goals. One of the most effective and innovative strategies for protecting historic resources at the local level is the demolition by neglect ordinance. In 1991, North Carolina’s enabling legislation was amended to permit demolition by neglect procedures. A demolition by neglect ordinance provides protection to historic resources whose owners might allow their properties to deteriorate to such a degree that the resources would be in danger of losing their significant features or even of falling down. The ordinance requires that designated Local Historic Landmarks or properties within local historic districts be kept in good repair. Under such provisions, a property owner must repair deteriorated

conditions if requested by the City and/or County to do so. These conditions would include such features as: leaking roofs, deteriorated exterior walls, foundations, flooring, chimneys, exterior stairs, porches, and fences.

Coordination at the staff level should also be strengthened. Closer working relationships between the historic resources staff of the City-County Planning Board, the Inspections Division and the Winston-Salem Housing and Neighborhood Development Department could result in better conservation of our historic resources.

Policies

- Strengthen interdepartmental coordination between historic resources staff and the Winston-Salem Housing and Neighborhood Development Department on applying the housing code to historic resources and other issues.
- Work with the City-County Inspections Division to implement existing sections of the state building code that allow flexibility in the interpretation of the code requirements when dealing with local historic resources.
- Monitor all rezonings and land use proposals related to historic preservation issues.

Action Agenda

- Investigate the merger of the Historic District and Historic Properties Commissions into one joint Historic Resources Commission.

- Collaborate with other North Carolina communities to investigate the feasibility of legislation allowing demolition denial authority for significant historic structures.
- Consider adopting a local demolition-by-neglect ordinance for historic properties and enforce it.
- Develop a process for the relocation of endangered historic resources.

Conclusions

Winston-Salem and Forsyth County have a distinctive community character stemming from our rich Moravian heritage, that is visually preserved in our present day community. Our special character is enhanced by rural areas with rolling hills, streams, fields and forested areas; internationally acclaimed industries and schools; and caring and civic-minded citizens. We need to carefully guard and build upon these assets in order to retain our distinctive community character and enhance our unique image.