

Introduction

We live in an exciting and challenging time. Globally, major economic, social and technological changes are occurring at an accelerated pace. Those external forces, combined with increased growth and development locally, are changing the face of our community. Anticipating our future and planning for change has become more important than ever. The special State enabling legislation that created the City-County Planning Board requires it to plan for the future—to develop consensus goals and strategies to guide the development of our community. *Vision 2005*, the previous plan, was adopted in 1987. Given the accelerated pace of change, the City-County Planning Board concluded several years ago that it was time to begin preparation of a new plan that would guide us into the 21st century. This *Legacy* development guide is the result of a community-wide effort to develop a common vision of that future.

The first step in planning for our community's future was to envision the kind of future we want. "Forsyth County Tomorrow," our future vision, is the result of a community wide effort guided by the *Legacy* Citizens Steering Committee and the more than 100 members of the *Legacy* Focus Groups. Completed in 1997, "Forsyth County Tomorrow" was adopted by the City-County Planning Board, Forsyth County and its eight municipalities and serves as the frame-

work for the goals, policies and action agenda items in *Legacy*.

The *Legacy* Citizens Steering Committee then began drafting a plan—developing the goals, policies and specific actions that would be needed to move us toward our vision of the future.

The City-County Planning Board has been committed to an inclusive citizen-driven planning process throughout the development of *Legacy*. The Planning Board believes that a planning process that is inclusive and open, that reflects the values of all segments of the community, and that achieves community consensus will result in a planning document that has the broad public support needed to fund and implement its recommendations. The Planning Board formed the *Legacy* Citizens Steering Committee at the beginning of the planning process to ensure broad community representation in the preparation of the new plan. Numerous public meetings and meetings with stakeholder groups and organizations were held throughout the process of preparing the plan which resulted in numerous changes to early drafts of the plan.

Plans to guide the growth and development of a community go by a variety of names—Comprehensive Plan, Master Plan, City Plan, General Development Guide, and others. No matter what

title is used, these plans traditionally are a general, long-range policy guide for decisions concerning the overall growth and development of the community.

This *Legacy* development guide focuses on the physical growth and development of our community but also addresses quality of life issues like education, community safety, citizen involvement, diversity and integration. The recommendations for future development patterns are general in nature, rather than narrowly focused on decisions for land use at specific sites. The recommendations are long-range because considera-

tion is given to the problems and opportunities which may arise in our community to the year 2015. Finally, *Legacy* is dynamic. Benchmarks are built in that will measure progress in achieving goals. They are part of an annual review process that can trigger revisions and changes in

Visioning is the first step in a process by which a community decides the kind of future it wants and then plans how to achieve it.

strategy to adapt to new situations and meet new challenges.

Although adopted as an official public document, *Legacy* is not a development ordinance and does not carry the force of law. It does, however, serve as a guide and a catalyst for the establishment or revision of development ordinances and other implementation tools. These include zoning, subdivision, and environmental ordinances and capital improvements programs. The growth management plan map in chapter three serves to illustrate how and where the *Legacy* policies and recommendations will be carried out. This mapped information is general in nature and not appropriate for determining the suitability of a particular site for any specific use. A series of more detailed area plans, one of the action agenda items called for in this plan, will provide more specific land use guidance.

Forsyth County includes, in addition to Winston-Salem, seven smaller municipalities - Bethania, Clemmons, Kernersville, Lewisville, Rural Hall, Tobaccoville and Walkertown. The City-County Planning Board currently exercises planning authority over four of these communities - Bethania, Rural Hall, Tobaccoville and Walkertown. The remaining three municipalities have taken over control of local planning. Clemmons, Kernersville and Lewisville each has its own planning board with final planning decisions made by each governing board. In establishing their own planning authorities, each of these communities has adopted its own development plan. This *Legacy* development guide complements, but does not replace, these local plans. If any provisions of local development plans dif-

fer from *Legacy*, then the specific provisions of the municipality's local plan shall be considered the controlling provisions. By adopting *Legacy*, each of the municipalities with local planning authority endorses its policies and recommendations. However, locally adopted plans are the final authority in planning and zoning matters.

This document consists of fifteen chapters. The "Forsyth County Tomorrow" vision statement is chapter one. Chapter two, Growth Trends, analyzes national, State and local trends that will affect how we grow and develop in the first two decades of the 21st century. It provides data and analysis of changing demographics, development patterns, economic trends, and new technologies that provide a foundation for the discussions in the chapters of the plan that follow. Chapters three through thirteen focus mainly on development related topics but treat associated quality of life issues as well. Each of these chapters includes an assessment of existing conditions and develops goals, policies and an action agenda intended to help us realize our vision. The Action Plan, chapter fourteen, contains all the specific action agenda items included in *Legacy*. They are organized around eleven functional headings which identify the group that has primary responsibility for initiating and directing the tasks to be completed. A schedule for beginning work on each item is included. The final chapter, Benchmarks, identifies a series of measures to be used in gauging progress in achieving the goals of *Legacy*.

Several themes weave together the individual chapters of *Legacy*. Better managing future growth and development to reduce sprawl and

create more compact development patterns is emphasized. *Legacy* stresses the need to promote transit-oriented development that reduces traffic congestion and air pollution. Retaining our distinctive community character by protecting farmland, open space and historic resources and revitalizing our downtowns and older neighborhoods are additional themes. The title of this document, *Legacy*, identifies the overarching theme—we are stewards of the community and land that has been passed to us, and we have an obligation to protect and enhance it as our legacy to our children and grandchildren.

Adoption

The following table lists the dates of adoption of *Legacy* by elected boards in Forsyth County.

Board	Date of Adoption
Forsyth County	9 April 2001
Lewisville	12 April 2001
Winston-Salem	16 April 2001
Rural Hall	14 May 2001
Clemmons	28 May 2001
Tobaccoville	7 June 2001
Bethania	14 June 2001
Walkertown	14 August 2001
Kernersville	9 October 2001