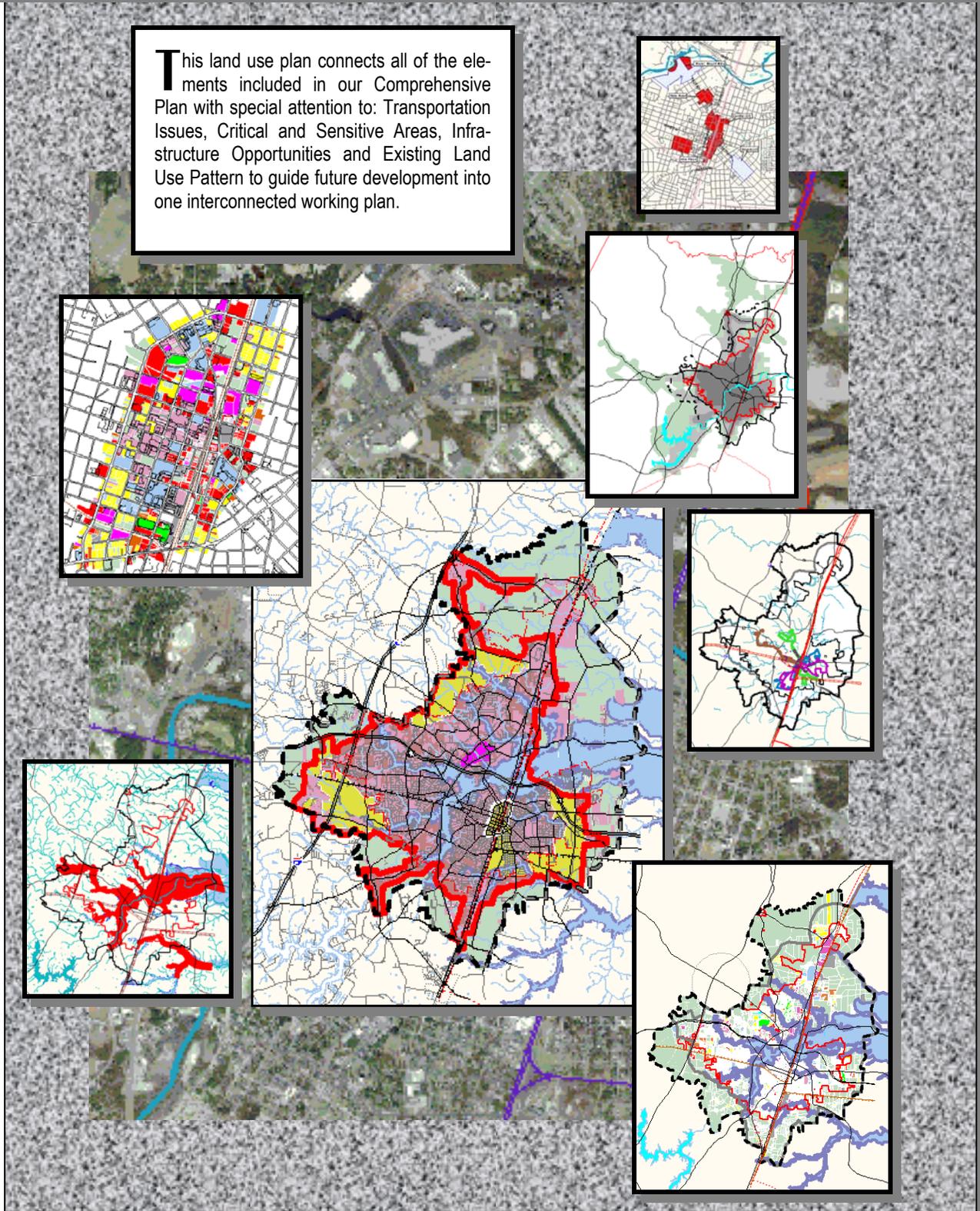


LAND USE

This land use plan connects all of the elements included in our Comprehensive Plan with special attention to: Transportation Issues, Critical and Sensitive Areas, Infrastructure Opportunities and Existing Land Use Pattern to guide future development into one interconnected working plan.



I. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Since land use patterns illustrate the development character and development interrelationships in the community, land use planning is an indispensable piece of the framework for establishing long-term planning policies. The following review of the current land use inventory in the Study Area shows how the City of Rocky Mount has developed in the past and suggests ways for it to develop in the future.

A. EXISTING LAND USE INVENTORY

1. Single-family Residential

Single-family development is scattered throughout the City with large clusters along the CSX rail line west of US 301, north and south of US 64, east of I-95, west of Church Street surrounding the downtown district, east of the CSX Railroad surrounding the downtown district, and west of the northern US 301/US 301 Bypass interchange. Additional single-family parcels and subdivisions can be found in outlying agricultural areas and scattered throughout the City.

The majority of the municipal area is zoned for single-family residential development. Several zoned areas have not been built to capacity and still have land available for single-family development.

2. Multi-family Residential

Newer multi-family development has occurred in the outlying areas of the City along thoroughfares with supporting commercial uses. Boarding houses, along with small apartment buildings, are located Downtown. Multi-family structures are found in more contemporary developments indicated by curvilinear streets and open areas. Mobile home parks have been developed outside of the corporate limits. Examples of multi-family uses include apartment dwellings (2,3,4,5+ units per structure), group quarters (boarding houses, retirement home) and mobile home parks.

A significant amount of land has been zoned for multi-family development. Multi-family zones exist in the areas surrounding the downtown district, along major thoroughfares such as US 64 and US 301, and in outlying clusters. A limited amount of land within the City has been zoned for mobile home park development.

3. Parks And Outdoor Recreation

City parks account for the majority of the land used for recreation purposes. Battle Park, located northwest of the downtown district just south of US 64, is the largest park located in the Study Area. Other significant recreation uses include Benvenue Country Club, Northgreen Country Club,

and Sunset Park. Sunset Park includes an amusement park, water spray area, tennis and basketball courts and boating access. Examples of land uses within this category include parks, golf courses and hiking/bicycle trails.

4. Office Land Uses

Office land uses are located throughout the City with the main concentrations along commercial thoroughfares. Clusters exist in the downtown area, along Sunset Avenue, Bethlehem Road and US 64 east of I-95. Examples of land uses within this category include banks and medical offices.

5. Government, Educational, Religious And Related Land Uses

City schools, Nash and Edgecombe Community Colleges, North Carolina Wesleyan College, and religious properties account for the majority of land designated as governmental and/or institutional. In addition to the Wesleyan College site, there are 29 schools located within the planning area. There are governmental offices located in the downtown area and several City facilities spread throughout the planning area. Examples of land uses within this category include post offices, police/fire stations, churches and cemeteries.

6. Commercial And Related Land Uses

The majority of commercial services are located along major thoroughfares such as Business 301 and US 301 Bypass. Additional concentrations are found along Sunset Avenue west of US 301 and the entire length of Church Street. Examples of land uses within this category include shopping centers, convenience stores and restaurants.

Current zoning has designated much of the land along US 301 Bypass and Church Street (Business 301) for commercial use. The largest tracts of commercial land are found near the US 64/US 301 Bypass interchange. Additional commercial zones are found in scattered sites along minor corridors, such as Cokey Road and Raleigh Road/Raleigh Street.

7. Transportation, Communications And Utilities

The majority of this land use is in the form of street and railroad right-of-ways. Other components include CSX Railroad and rail yard, electrical substations, the City water plant located on Sunset Avenue, and the City's wastewater treatment plant located on NC 97 near the eastern corporate boundary.

8. Industrial, Resource Extraction And Related Land Uses

Industrial areas and land used for resource extraction are spread throughout the planning area with the main concentrations along the CSX Railroad north of US 64, US 301



Bypass, US 64 east of I-95 and at the US 64/Falls Road interchange. Examples of land uses within this category include light and heavy industry, warehousing, mining and quarrying.

Heavy industrial districts have been established along the CSX Railroad north of US 64, and south of the rail line split, at the southwestern corner of the US 64/I-95 interchange, and in the vicinity of Airport Road and Old Rocky Mount-Battleboro Road.

9. Agriculture, Undeveloped And Water Areas

The majority of agricultural and undeveloped land is located in the outer portions of the Study Area with the largest percentage being in Edgecombe County. Scattered sites do exist within the City limits as vacant property that is zoned for residential and/or commercial use. The Tar River and its tributaries are also included in this category. Examples of land uses within this category include farms, vacant land, lakes, and rivers.

B. UNDEVELOPED, UNDERDEVELOPED, REDEVELOPMENT, REVITALIZATION SITES

These areas are predominately agricultural and have been left undeveloped due to a lack of transportation and utility services and amenities such as schools, shopping and entertainment. A lack of water and sewer service outside of the corporate limits of Rocky Mount has prevented intensive development in those areas. The extension of utility services will affect the development of these agricultural areas.

Within the city limits, such land is scattered with larger concentrations in the vicinity of the Tar River, US 64 and Belmont Farms. Land along the Tar River has been left undeveloped due to floodplain restrictions and environmental concerns related to industrial development. Land along the highway system may be undesirable for residential development due to excessive noise and air pollution associated with auto/truck traffic.

Since much of the undeveloped land outside the corporate limits will remain so due to flood hazards or threats to the environment, redevelopment and revitalization efforts can best be accommodated within the city limits. Established land use patterns and infrastructure within the city limits support further development and/or revitalization efforts. The area outside of the city limits has less established land use patterns and infrastructure and therefore may lend itself to more scattered, less intensive development.

C. DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

For the most part, Rocky Mount does not possess significant constraints on development with the exception of those areas bound by rivers and streams, more specifically the Tar River and its associated floodplain. Development is prohibited within the floodway and limited within the floodplain. Non-intensive uses such as open space and/or agriculture are the most appropriate land use in these areas. Multi-family, commercial and/or industrial developments have too negative of an impact on the environmental quality of the Tar River and its adjacent environs to take place in those sensitive areas.

Development opportunities exist inside the city in areas where undeveloped land is present. These areas have the necessary infrastructure to develop and will naturally develop in the next 25 years. Other development opportunities exist in the outer-lying areas of the city where infrastructure is present or would easily be extended to these areas with little or no government investment.

II. GOAL

Land use plans and regulations that provide flexibility and preserve residential neighborhoods, encourage commercial development, enhance community appearance, revitalize the downtown core, compliment the area's character and environmental appeal and encourage the preservation and reuse of historic structures

III. OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A. OVERVIEW

The Land Use Plan seeks to encourage a balanced development pattern in the future, one that emphasizes "Inward Growth" that targets the Downtown area and Central Business District and promotes "Outward Growth" that focuses on areas on the periphery of the City.

This balanced approach is intended to ensure that the City encourages a broad mix of residential, commercial, office, industrial and public development that meets the needs of the community over the next few decades. This balanced approach also is intended to encourage revitalization of declining parts of the City, stabilization and strengthening of threatened parts of the City, and initiation of new developments that blend well with existing areas.



1. Adopt And Implement The Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan describes specific ways to improve land use management. It outlines objectives and strategies and establishes priorities, in terms of immediate, short-term, mid-term and long-term actions for the City to take. The City Council should adopt and implement the Comprehensive Plan, following as closely as possible the schedule for implementation of its component policies. Once adopted, the Comprehensive Plan should be used as a policy guide for decisions on land use and all other geographic and functional planning in the Study Area.

2. Continue To Implement Flood Mitigation Efforts Resulting From Hurricane Floyd

The City should maximize the floodplain management program as the lynchpin of its strategies to mitigate flood hazards. Development regulations and accurate maps are critical tools for guiding the appropriate use and protection of the floodplain. The City should update its floodplain regulations and encourage best management practices to mitigate flood hazards. The City should raise public awareness of how National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) benefits the community and strive to increase its rating within the NFIP Community Rating System by undertaking creditable activities identified through the floodplain regulations. The City should also support the state's floodplain mapping project.

B. PRINCIPLES

The following principles are statements of purpose intended to describe the strong intent of future growth for Rocky Mount. They provide direction to the overall Comprehensive Plan.

1. Future development will be balanced to meet the needs of the community

Development in the future will be balanced in order that all the needs of the community will be met. This includes a fair geographic distribution of development throughout Nash & Edgecombe Counties, balance between residential and non-residential development, balance between existing business areas and new areas on the City's periphery, balance between development and conserved open space, and balance to ensure that infrastructure meets development needs. This balance will support and promote the City's quality of life.

2. The Reinvestment In Existing Infrastructure In The Downtown Must Occur

Downtown Rocky Mount has suffered from loss of retail, office and employment opportunities. This has left the area with many deteriorating or deteriorated structures. The City must focus development funds toward existing infrastruc-

ture in the Downtown. In order for this area to become attractive to new businesses and activity, public improvement projects must occur. It is essential that streets, street lighting, curbs, gutters, sidewalk, and related pedestrian amenities are improved to spur sound growth and economic prosperity as well as informational infrastructure such as fibre-optic lines for communication..

3. Growth On The Periphery Must Occur In The Designated "Smart Growth Areas"

The "Smart Growth Areas" were chosen for future development due to their access to existing public or private central water and sewer systems and other utilities (gas and electric). Giving priority to development projects in these designated areas will save the City time, money and valuable resources that may be used for redevelopment and reinvestment in existing structures.

4. Rocky Mount Will Continue As A Regional Center

Rocky Mount will continue as the retail, services, financial, industrial, and cultural leader of the metropolitan area and the larger region. The City will continue to benefit from its location as a key crossroad in eastern North Carolina, with excellent rail and interstate access. This also reflects the City's strength as a regional center. Actions by the City, adjacent counties and the state should reinforce the City's regional role.

5. The Downtown Will Be The City's Preferred Location For Government, Offices, Businesses, And Cultural Institutions But It Will Strengthen Its Retail And Housing Components

The City's Downtown area will be its preferred location for government, corporate headquarters, retail and other small businesses, and cultural institutions. Cultural facilities destroyed by Hurricane Floyd will be reconstructed in the Downtown area. The City will continue efforts to expand and strengthen retail and tourism in the Downtown area and will work towards increasing the amount of housing. Together, this will help to create a vibrant urban center.

6. Major Corridors Will Continue As The City's Primary Retail And Office Locations, But The City Will Facilitate Balance In Encouraging Future Businesses Throughout The City

The City's major commercial corridors (US 301 and US 64, Benvenue/Jeffreys Road, Winstead and Sunset Avenues) are the strong retail and office corridors. The City will continue to strive to locate businesses in other appropriate



locations around Rocky Mount, including the Downtown and Community Enterprise District. This will help to stabilize neighborhoods, bring jobs closer to people's homes and meet the retail needs of the City's east side neighborhoods.

7. All Neighborhoods Will Be Improved To Create Outstanding Places For Residents

The City benefits from a broad mix of neighborhoods and a range of housing options for its residents. The City will continue to improve its existing neighborhoods to create "neighborhoods of choice" that ensure all residents benefit equally from stable property values, good recreation and education facilities, access (transit, auto, walking and bicycling), safety and neighborhood business. Neighborhood retail business will be appropriately located to provide neighborhood-scale goods and services.

8. Transportation

Rocky Mount has always benefited from a good transportation network, with excellent interstate and highway access and strong rail service. The transportation system will continue to strengthen through efforts by the City, State and rail operators. At the same time, access for pedestrians & cyclists will be improved.

9. The Open Space System Will Be Expanded

The open space system—including parks, recreation facilities, and natural areas—will be expanded as the City grows. This will occur consistent with the Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan. Special focus will be given to the City's declining neighborhoods that need revitalization. The Tar River Trail, which is an outstanding natural resource, will continue as a focus for creating a continuous greenway.

10. Floodplain Considerations Will Play A Larger Role In The City's Development And Infrastructure Decisions

Floodplain considerations have had an impact on development in parts of the City. The flooding that resulted from Hurricane Floyd will have a profound, long-term impact on the development of the City. Future land use and infrastructure decisions will recognize these limitations, which will affect the way in which Rocky Mount grows in the future. Stronger floodplain regulations will provide better management of flood prone areas and will limit property damage.

C. PROMOTE THE PLANNED GROWTH AREA IN THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT

The Planned Growth Area is defined to be that land which has the greatest investment of City infrastructure outside the land areas designated as Critical & Sensitive. All areas

to be considered for designation as Smart Growth Areas must be selected from the Planned Growth Area.

1. Promote Infill Growth and Revitalization Opportunities in the Planned Growth Area

The Planned Growth Area is made of land which is undeveloped and currently developed. The development of those remaining parcels, which are currently undeveloped or underdeveloped, is called Planned Infill Growth. The infill opportunities within the current City Limits are the primary focus for ideal development patterns but it must be recognized that there is insufficient land existing in this category to provide all of the projected growth requirements to the year 2025. The Planned Growth Area designated outside the City Limits will satisfy that additional requirement. Properly and sensitively done, this infill will enrich the neighborhood and increase the value. Smart Growth Principles encourage infill, the conservation of open space and the investment in existing neighborhoods. The promotion of walkable scale communities that are pedestrian friendly with varieties of housing and transportation choices benefit the community by conserving resources and improving the quality of life.

2. Promote Smart Growth Areas as selected from the Planned Growth Area

Each of these areas will have distinct opportunities for development. Some will have distinct needs for investment. The City must balance those needs and provide incentives only in the most efficient manner to promote quality of life, economic improvement and balanced growth.

Smart Growth Areas are defined as two distinct types:

- The Inward Growth Areas which focus on revitalization of a defined area with specific needs that will benefit the entire community in that improvement process. The two areas selected include the Downtown Smart Growth Area and the C.E.D. Smart Growth Area.
- Outward Growth Areas which are selected as having significant undeveloped land to contribute to the required growth projected in the year 2025. The market forces already provide significant inducement to growth in these areas. Outward Growth Areas then become an opportunity to manage growth in a positive manner consistent with Smart Growth Principles.

3. Encourage Balanced Growth Consisting Of A Combination of "Inward" And "Outward" Growth

Balanced Growth must also be sought that provides a reasonable combination of "Inward" and "Outward" growth. Balanced growth strives to maintain an equilibrium in



growth within the City and growth on the periphery of the City by seamlessly blending together and promoting growth in both areas. Implementing this balanced growth strategy necessitates stressing compatibility among adjacent uses and connectivity between areas.

4. The inclusion of land within the Smart Growth Areas is not tied to any overriding financial incentive program.

At some point in the future the City may choose to designate an area for financial incentive funding should that funding support the stated goals of the Comprehensive Plan. We currently see examples of such targeted funding now in the façade improvement grant programs for our Downtown Smart Growth Area. Therefore any financial incentives to be applied by the City will be done with dedicated targeting designed to maximize the benefit/cost ratio. The intention is to channel limited City funds into areas that are suited for growth or revitalization.

5. Promote Smart Growth Areas as opportunities for distinctive new patterns of development

The inclusion of land within a Smart Growth Area may provide unique opportunities to develop singular design standards consistent with developmental goals for that particular area. These issues will be open for additional planning in the Tier 2 planning process. Cluster development options, higher density development patterns, mixed-use land patterns have proven to be positive elements in the right configuration in other communities. The City should devote additional efforts to the study of these developmental types for applicability to our City. Selected from the Planned Growth Area, new development must meet certain density (for residential land use) and intensity (for industrial, commercial, and office use) requirements. The requirements and developmental bonuses for central water, sewer, density and intensity are intended to ensure that development in such areas is supported by urban services and are relatively compact.

D. PROMOTE A RATIONAL LAND USE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Land development can contribute to the vitality of the whole community when land uses are sited, developed and serviced in an appropriate and consistent manner. It is critical that the land use development pattern be guided to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These strategies recommend ways for the City to encourage a development pattern that is equitable, consistent and rational.

1. Oppose Land Use, Development And Zoning Decisions That Are Not Consistent

With The Comprehensive Plan

The City should promote a rational development pattern and continue to consider the potential positive and negative impacts of development decisions. The City should discourage land use, development and zoning decisions that are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The updated zoning code and subdivision regulations will assist with implementation by establishing new, consistent standards for development of specific properties.

2. Oppose Rezoning and Infrastructure Improvements That Create A “Leap Frog” Development Pattern

“Leap frog” residential development is costly, degrades the environment and results in congestion. The City should discourage rezonings and infrastructure improvements that would support this development pattern. This should include raising awareness among the public of the problems associated with this type of development. The City should also ensure that development regulations strongly discourage “leap frog” residential development.

3. Encourage Development To Occur Concurrently With The Supporting Infrastructure To Maximize The City’s Capital Investments

Future development and the infrastructure necessary to support such development should occur concurrently.

4. Study Annexation Potential And The ETJ Boundary Based On The Comprehensive Plan And Development Trends

Annexation decisions should be related to the City’s short-term annexation goals. They should be based on knowledge of the City’s development trends and utility considerations, as well as an understanding of the benefits and challenges of annexing a particular area. The City should periodically review the ETJ boundary within the context of the Comprehensive Plan and study annexation potential. Any changes proposed to the ETJ boundary for Rocky Mount should be proposed to the appropriate county governments after discussions with adjacent municipalities that could be affected by or may have plans for lands within the desired ETJ.

E. ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR APPROPRIATE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Residential development can help the City address many of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan—for example, affordable housing, increased open space, reduced flood hazards. The City should set specific objectives for new developments and assist developers in meeting these objectives



by using tools such as bonds, City funds, public-private partnerships, and tax or zoning incentives. These strategies describe ways for the City to achieve this objective.

1. Facilitate Compatible Reinvestment, Redevelopment And Infill Residential Development In Existing Neighborhoods Throughout The City

Rocky Mount's existing neighborhoods that are threatened by or experiencing disinvestments and decline should be strengthened to ensure all residents live in acceptable—even outstanding—residential environments. The City should target reinvestment, redevelopment, and infill residential development for the community's older neighborhoods, ensuring compatibility with these areas. Investments in open space, pedestrian improvements, landscaping, and safety will also create an atmosphere that encourages concurrent private investment.

2. Encourage New Residential Development To Locate Adjacent To Existing Residential Development, Where Utilities Are Available To Build Stronger Neighborhoods By Connecting Roads And Sidewalks

One way to enhance opportunities for appropriate new development is by facilitating compatible new residential development and targeting these opportunities to existing residential areas throughout the City. These neighborhoods offer existing roads and utilities, as well as access to resources for infrastructure improvements. New subdivision should connect with existing subdivisions to minimize isolation. This includes roads, sidewalks, and bike path connections. Encouraging developers to add open space to new developments could also be used as a way to blend neighborhoods together while at the same time providing needed recreational areas to serve new residents.

3. Promote Office Development And Limited Multi-family Development As Suitable Buffers Between Single-family Neighborhoods And Highways, Commercial And Industrial Areas

Certain land uses can act as buffers between areas of different density. In some cases, office and multi-family developments can provide an appropriate and compatible transition from highway, commercial and industrial areas to single-family neighborhoods. These niches provide prime land for housing and office use that offer advantages to residents and employees interested in a higher density area closer to shops and services. The City should determine the conditions under which this type of land use will

be encouraged, identify a limited number of sites that meet these criteria and promote development of these sites for these uses. The zoning ordinance should be reviewed to provide more options for multi-family uses, making it easier to control the size and type of multi-family developments in order to minimize the conflicts with locations near existing developments.

F. SUPPORT APPROPRIATE COMMERCIAL AND OFFICE DEVELOPMENT

Commercial and office development is critical to the City's economic health. The City should target appropriate and optimal sites and provide development incentives. At the same time, the City should balance commercial and office development with Downtown revitalization. Finally, commercial and office development should happen in ways that increase quality of life in areas of the City that would most benefit from it—from improving access to shops and services, to increasing employment opportunity, to encouraging the start of new businesses. These strategies describe ways for the City to pursue commercial and office development.

1. Direct Highway-Scale Commercial Development Along Major Highways And Adjacent To Existing Concentrations

Highway scale commercial development is most appropriate along major highways (US 301 and 64 Bypass) where it can be accessed and adjacent to existing similar uses where it can be serviced by vendors and suppliers. The City should identify and promote available sites in these areas for highway-scale commercial development and ensure that adequate buffers are provided between these land uses and other, less intensive or lower density uses.

2. Direct Community-Scale Commercial Development To Occur In Appropriate Locations

Community-scale commercial development should occur in appropriate locations (US 64 Business, Benvenue and Jefferys Roads). The City should identify and promote sites that are appropriate for community-scale commercial development and ensure that adequate buffers are provided between these land uses and other, less intensive or lower density uses. The number of these sites should be limited to key locations.

3. Support Neighborhood-Scale Commercial Development Where Such Uses Support Neighborhoods, Meet Local Needs And Are Located At Key Crossroads, Especially At Major Intersections



Supporting neighborhood retail in appropriate locations strengthens neighborhoods, and neighborhood retail improves economic viability of neighborhoods. Furthermore, it makes housing in these areas more marketable, reduces the need for residents to travel elsewhere for basic goods and services and builds a sense of community. The City should support neighborhood retail through zoning decisions, economic incentives, partnerships and community participation in development decisions.

4. Support Office Development In Existing Locations And Facilitate Corporate Offices In The Downtown Area

Office development is important to the community's overall economic health. The increased presence of Downtown offices would provide a workforce-based market to support new downtown shops, services and housing, thus creating a dynamic cycle that would enrich the Downtown revitalization strategies. The City should identify sites that would be appropriate for offices and promote development of these sites.

G. FACILITATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The City should continue to facilitate industrial development. This should include continuing to invest and/or facilitate industrial park development. However, it also should include identifying appropriate industrial areas within the City limits, particularly since most industrial development is occurring outside the City.

V. PLAN

A. OVERVIEW

A community's land use pattern reflects decades of development that has occurred in response to construction of infrastructure, zoning and other measures undertaken by the community. Understanding this pattern and its relationship with established regulations is necessary in determining how to formulate future development policies. This section includes: the Existing Land Use; Future Land Use; Planned Growth Areas; Critical, Important and Sensitive Areas and Regional Opportunities.

1. Existing Land Use

The Study Area is comprised of the land within the Rocky Mount corporate limit, adjacent properties in the Rocky Mount extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and an additional expansion area that is beyond the current ETJ. The Study Area contains approximately 56,187 acres and falls under the City's jurisdiction for planning and land use control. Table 4-1 shows the amount of existing land in the Study Area that is in developed, undeveloped and critical and

sensitive areas and the location of these categories of land use.

	a	b		a + b
Land Category	Developed Acres	Undeveloped Acres	Critical and Sensitive Acres	Total Acres (a+b)
Study Area/ Total	24,347	31,840	9,123	56,187

2. Planned Growth Area

Planned Growth Area (PGA) are areas where growth and development would be encouraged and can best be accommodated and supported over a 20-year period. The PGA would include existing and proposed local transportation networks, water, sewer and other utility systems and most other infrastructure and public facilities needed to support growth and excluding the Critical and Sensitive areas with in our Study Area. Planned Growth Area has a heavy emphasis on from infill growth, producing a compact City development.

Map 4-2 is an overlay map that was produced to identify the areas in the Study Area that are serviced by the five main utilities: water, gas, electric, sewer and roads. Overlaying these five utilities allowed us to determine which areas were more suited for future development. If an area has four of the five utilities present, it was chosen over an area that has only one utility present.

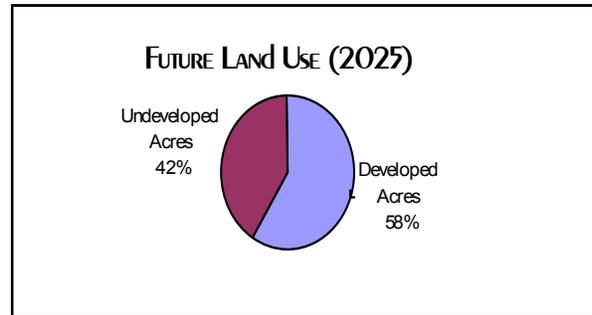
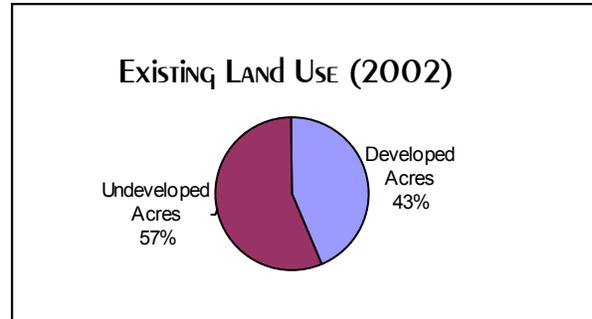
3. Future Land Use

Using a variety of traditional and evolving techniques, tools and plans, we have identified the Planned Growth Area and five "Smart Growth Areas" in order to establish balanced "Inward" and "Outward" growth. The Planned Growth Area is defined on Map 4-3 as well as the sub-category noted as Smart Growth Areas. Balanced growth aims to encourage growth within the infill—undeveloped land available outside while at the same time fostering new growth on the City's periphery. The Southeast, West and Northwest Smart Growth Areas provide the opportunity for "Outward Growth" while the Downtown Smart Growth Area and the Community Enterprise District Smart Growth Area provides for "Inward Growth" and "Revitalization."



Based on the population growth projections of 35% over the next twenty-five years that were presented in Chapter 3, the City will need approximately 8,000 acres of developed land by the year 2025. Table 4-2 shows the distribution of future land use in the undeveloped, developed and critical and sensitive categories, and Charts 4-3 and 4-4 compare developed and undeveloped land in the years 2002 and 2025. The 8,000 acres of land that is projected to be developed by 2025 will be located in the Planned Growth Area.

	a	b		a + b
Land Category	Developed Acres	Undeveloped Acres	Critical and Sensitive Acres	Total Acres (a+b)
Study Area/ Total	32,868	23,319	9,123	56,187



A. “Outward Growth” Smart Growth Areas

Selected from the Planned Growth Area, are three Smart Growth Areas: Southeast Planning Area, West Planning Area and the Northwest Planning Area. The Smart Growth Areas were chosen from the Planned Growth Area, already designated by it’s existing infrastructure. The City should encourage future growth to these specific areas by positive policies that will accomplish goals of Smart Growth such as pedestrian-friendly communities with transportation choices and an intensity of development. These Smart Growth Areas will consist of a majority of residential uses with neighborhood and community services as appropriate.

Southeast Smart Growth Area

This area was selected for its utility infrastructure and for the newly completed Springfield Road section which provides the crucial impetus for future development. It is important that the City of Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County establish specific incentive programs to promote development and growth in this planning area. Other programs may be part of an incentive package that is intended to support Smart Growth development in the Southeast Smart Growth Planning Area. The City should participate financially with the developer in the construction of collector streets and major drainage structures in these priority development areas. The City should make surplus land available to developers for private housing, expedite development review and waive zoning, subdivision and building permit fees. The City should also fund commercial revitalization strategies for façade improvement or rental assistance.

West Smart Growth Area

Recently, Nash Central High School has located in this planning area. The school has provided infrastructure that will make future development likely and possible with little or no government investment. The need for residential housing is also going to become evident in this area.

Northwest Smart Growth Area

This Outward Growth Area is projected to occur more slowly than the other two areas. The City’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) has also identified a road construction project in this area by constructing a bypass on the northwest side of the City connecting US 301 to Winstead Avenue just north of Hunter Hill Road. This road would provide the necessary infrastructure for future growth and development. This anchoring element, The Northwestern Connector Road, is not yet in place and is not slated to start construction until 2009. When completed, the growth pattern in this area will be changed to a higher intensity and pace. It is projected that residential development will likely dominate the area with related services to compliment the needs of those residents.

B. “Inward Growth” Smart Growth Areas

The inward growth consists of two areas: the Downtown Smart Growth Planning Area and the Community Enterprise District Smart Growth Area. The attention must be aimed at directing new development into these inward “Smart Growth Areas”. Under the Comprehensive Plan, Land Development Code and Capital Improvement Plan and Program, City funding of certain growth-related projects would be directed to these inward “Smart Growth Ar-

eas.” These Smart Growth areas must meet City guidelines for intended use (including minimum density requirements), design (including community design or appearance) and adequacy of plans for sewer and water systems. Existing areas where economic development is desired are eligible.

Downtown Smart Growth Planning Area

The image that citizens and visitors have of a City is usually created by its downtown; it is a powerful symbol of the city’s vitality or lack of it. Downtown Rocky Mount is the center of its history, culture and heritage. Unfortunately, much of the Downtown Area has suffered from loss of retail, office and employment; many deteriorating or deteriorated structures; deterioration in public improvements such as streets, street lighting, curbs, gutters, sidewalk, and related pedestrian amenities and other factors that substantially impair or arrest sound growth and economic development.

In order to promote infill and community reinvestment in our downtown, the City must make the downtown an attractive and convenient place to locate retail & office business, schools, public facilities, government, cultural institutions, churches, and residences. In order to improve the downtown areas yet maintain existing historical structures in an architecturally compatible and attractive manner, there must be strict commercial building code enforcement by the City and establishment of an overlay zone that sets up design guidelines and appropriate criteria for the exterior appearance, maintenance, repair and improvement of buildings.

Presently, there are grant incentive programs that promote a reinvestment in the Downtown. The Central City Revitalization Business Incentive Program is designed to provide inducements to encourage businesses to locate within distressed areas of the City, create jobs and increase the tax base within these areas of the City. The Central City Building Improvement Grant Program is another grant program that provides financial incentives to encourage the improvement of existing commercial structures and the preservation of significant historic structures within the Central City boundaries. Rental assistance programs are also offered by the City of Rocky Mount for the Downtown. The City of Rocky Mount’s “Downtown Master Plan,” begun in Fall 2002, will provide further direction for Downtown development and include issues such as, design standards, economic strategies, transportation, land use, housing and community development.

Community Enterprise District Smart Growth Area

The Community Enterprise District was established to create a Zoning Overlay District for sustainable community development that will foster the development of livable and vibrant community through comprehensive approaches that coordinate economic, physical, environmental, community

and human development. The Community Enterprise District permits specific activities that support the revitalization of the defined area and identifies the conditions under which such activities can occur. The provision allows for child care centers in residential neighborhoods for a 24- hour time period and also qualifies this area for federal funding programs with Community Development Block Grants.

