

Land Use Plan

III. The Land Use Plan (General Classifications, Land Use Classifications, and Related Policies)

A. INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Plan sets forth policies intended to influence the timing, type, location, and quality of future development within Wake County's planning jurisdiction so as to efficiently accommodate the growth of urbanized areas within or adjoining Wake County in a manner consistent with the Plan's goals and strategies. It seeks to influence the timing of urban growth via policies based on the urban services concept, which ties urban development intensities to the availability of urban infrastructure. These policies are principally associated with the Plan's General Classifications.

The Plan also seeks to influence the type and quality of future development via policies that promote walkable, livable, and diverse neighborhoods as the primary building blocks of the County's urbanized areas - neighborhoods that accommodate a diversity of housing needs and contain activity centers that serve as the focal point for neighborhood and community activities. These policies are principally associated with the Plan's Land Use Classifications.

B. GENERAL CLASSIFICATIONS AND RELATED POLICIES

1. Introduction

The Wake County Land Use Plan first applies a number of General Classifications to all land in the County's planning jurisdiction. These General Classifications are intended primarily to serve as the basis for application of policies that further this Plan's Goal #1 (to coordinate County efforts to manage growth and development with area municipalities), Goal #2 (to encourage growth close to municipalities to take advantage of existing and planned urban infrastructure), Goal #3 (to encourage the development of mixed-use communities), Goal #7 (to ensure that land use planning is coordinated with transportation planning), and Goal #9 (to maintain the quality of existing and planned surface water supplies of drinking

water).

2. Urban Services Area Classifications

a. Introduction

The four Urban Services Area classifications, taken together, primarily define those areas in the County's jurisdiction expected and intended to be urbanized in the foreseeable future - that is, developed at the range of urban intensities typically found in area municipalities, served by the urban facilities and services typically available in municipalities, and eventually becoming part of an adjacent municipality.

The variation among the Urban Services Area classifications reflects two separate differentiations: (1) those future urbanized areas located within a water supply watershed versus those located outside of a water supply watershed; and (2) those future urbanized areas into which municipal sewer service is projected to be extended in the next 10 years versus those into which municipal sewer service is expected to be extended in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years.

To define this Plan's original Urban Services Areas, planners for the various municipalities in the County were first asked to identify those areas where their municipalities are likely to extend urban services in the foreseeable future, based on current and anticipated urban growth trends, major urban service facilities and transportation corridors (existing and planned), physical constraints to urban service extension (such as topography), and the County's well-established interests in protecting water supply watersheds. This resulted in two Urban Services Area classifications: Urban Services Area and Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed. Only those portions of water supply watersheds that were already largely urbanized or previously planned to be urbanized (e.g., the east and west ends of the Swift Creek water supply watershed), or currently under great pressures to become urbanized (e.g., the protected area of the Jordan Lake water supply

watershed, and that part of the Falls Lake water supply watershed south of Interstate 540 (North Wake Expressway) were classified as Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed.

But these original Urban Services Area classifications did not recognize that urban development needs to occur in conjunction with the availability of urban services, so that the full range of land uses and development intensities which define a healthy, diverse, and livable urban environment can occur in conjunction with the extension or provision of those urban services necessary to accommodate the demands of urban development. Otherwise, current urban development may generate service demands that greatly exceed the capacity of existing water supply, sewage disposal, transportation, recreational, and other facilities that serve it.

The Wake County Water/Sewer Plan, adopted in September 1998, recognized this need - at least as it pertains to water and sewer service. It contained maps showing existing major municipal water and sewer lines and extensions of those lines that are projected to occur by the years 2000, 2005, 2010, 2020, and 2030. In accord with the Recommendations of that Plan, those maps have been incorporated into this Land Use Plan (see Water Facilities Maps and Wastewater Facilities Maps in Section X).

The Water/Sewer Plan also included Recommendations that the County take certain measures to better ensure that urban development within Urban Services Areas is more closely tied to the availability of municipal or other centralized sewer service, as well as to promote the orderly extension or provision of centralized sewer and water service within Urban Services Areas. In accord with those Recommendations, this Plan's original two Urban Services Area classifications were each split in two to distinguish areas projected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the next 10 years (Short-Range) from those expected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years (Long-Range).

The boundary between each Short-Range Urban Services Area and corresponding Long-Range Urban Services Area will be revised as Area Land Use Plans refine projections of how much and where urbanization will occur in the next 10 years, and the Wastewater Facilities

Maps are revised to reflect new projections of where and when municipal sewer service will be extended to serve that urbanization.

Each Urban Services Area classification shown on the General Classifications Map is associated with the one area municipality expected to extend urban services to it and to annex it. [The only exception is the Urban Services Areas encompassing that part of the Research Triangle Park (RTP) located in Wake County. Because the RTP cannot be annexed, the Urban Services Areas that encompass it are not associated with a particular municipality.]

To further Goal #4's call for coordinating County growth management efforts with those of area municipalities, County planners will work closely with a municipality's planners to develop Area Land Use Plans for the Urban Services Areas associated with the municipality, and will solicit their involvement in the development and/or review of any proposed changes to County policies or regulations affecting development within the associated Urban Services Areas (including rezoning proposals).

Furthermore, because Urban Services Areas represent areas expected to become part of their associated municipalities, this Plan sets forth criteria and a process for evaluating a municipality's request for County agreement to the expansion of its extraterritorial planning jurisdiction (ETJ) – see Section IV.

b. Short-Range Urban Services Area (SRUSA)

The Short-Range Urban Services Area (SRUSA) classification applies to all land in the County's planning jurisdiction that:

- (a) is projected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the next 10 years; and
- (b) is not located within a water supply watershed, as designated by the State. [A water supply watershed includes all land that drains down to an existing or planned surface water source of drinking water and is subject to the State's minimum water supply watershed protection regulations.]

Because the availability of centralized sewer service is the principal prerequisite to urbanization, and incorporation into a municipality the principal determinant of other urban services being available, delineation of SRUSAs is based on including those portions of

the "sewersheds" of municipal sewer system extensions projected to occur in the next 10 years (as shown on this Plan's Wastewater Facilities Maps or as subsequently determined by the municipalities) that lie within approximately 1 mile of the extension. [The sewershed of a projected municipal sewer system extension includes land that can be served by gravity flow sewer lines connecting to the projected sewer lines and pump stations.] The SRUSAs are the primary focus of this Plan's policies to further Goal #2's call for encouraging growth close to municipalities, Goal #3's call for ensuring the availability of sufficient land zoned for short-range growth demands, and Goal #7's call for ensuring planning transportation facilities in relation to planned growth and promoting transit-oriented development (see Transitional Urban Development Policies below).

c. Short-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed (SRUSA/WSW)

The Short-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed (SRUSA/WSW) classification applies to all land within the County's planning jurisdiction that:

- (a) is projected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the next 10 years; and
- (b) is located within a water supply watershed.

As with SRUSAs, delineation of SRUSA/WSWs is based on including those portions of the "sewersheds" of municipal sewer system extensions projected to occur in the next 10 years (as shown on this Plan's Wastewater Facilities Maps or as subsequently determined by the municipalities) that lie within approximately 1 mile of the extension. They are distinguished from SRUSAs in that they include water supply watersheds - where the character, intensity, and/or design of development must be managed so it does not degrade the quality of the drinking water source. As such, the SRUSA/WSWs are the primary focus of this Plan's policies to further Goal #2's call for encouraging growth close to municipalities, Goal #3's call for ensuring the availability of sufficient land zoned for short-range growth demands, and Goal #7's call for ensuring

planning transportation facilities in relation to planned growth and promoting transit-oriented development (see Transitional Urban Development Policies below), as well as Goal #9's call for maintaining the quality of existing and planned surface water supplies of drinking water (see Water Supply Watershed Protection Policies in Section V).

d. Long-Range Urban Services Area (LRUSA)

The Long-Range Urban Services Area (LRUSA) classification applies to all land in the County's planning jurisdiction, other than that classified as Short-Range Urban Services Area, that:

- (a) is expected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years; and
- (b) is not located within a water supply watershed.

Delineation of LRUSAs is based on including areas identified by municipal planners as where municipalities are likely to extend urban services in the foreseeable, but that do not yet qualify as SRUSA or SRUSA/WSW. Like SRUSAs, the LRUSAs are the focus of this Plan's policies to further Goal #2's call for encouraging growth close to municipalities, Goal #3's call for ensuring the availability of sufficient land zoned for short-range growth demands, and Goal #7's call for ensuring planning transportation facilities in relation to planned growth and promoting transit-oriented development - but only those policies that attempt to redirect new growth and development towards SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs (at least until the potential for service by municipal sewer and other urban services is great enough for such areas to be reclassified a SRUSAs) and to minimize the extent to which any development occurring in the meantime will preclude or hinder the orderly expansion of municipalities (see Transitional Urban Development Policies below).

e. Long-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed (LRUSA/WSW)

The Long-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed (LRUSA/WSW) classification applies to all land in the County's planning jurisdiction, other than that classified as Short-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed, that:

- (a) is expected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years; and
- (b) is located within a water supply watershed.

As with LRUSAs, delineation of LRUSA/WSWs is based on including areas identified by municipal planners as where municipalities are likely to extend urban services in the foreseeable, but that do not yet qualify as SRUSA or SRUSA/WSW. They are distinguished from LRUSAs in that they include water supply watersheds - where the character, intensity, and/or design of development must be managed so it does not degrade the quality of the drinking water source. Like SRUSA/WSWs, the LRUSA/WSWs are the focus of this Plan's policies to further Goal #2's call for encouraging growth close to municipalities, Goal #3's call for ensuring the availability of sufficient land zoned for short-range growth demands, and Goal #7's call for ensuring planning transportation facilities in relation to planned growth and promoting transit-oriented development, as well as Goal #9's call for maintaining the quality of existing and planned surface water supplies of drinking water (see Water Supply Watershed Protection Policies in Section V). But like LRUSAs, the LRUSA/WSWs are the focus of only those Goal #2, #3, and #7 policies that attempt to redirect new growth and development towards SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs and to minimize the extent to which any development occurring in the meantime will preclude or hinder the orderly expansion of municipalities (see Transitional Urban Development Policies below).

3. Transitional Urban Development Policies

a. Introduction

Development at urban intensities and the availability of urban services are interrelated and should occur concurrently. For example,

development at the full range of urban intensities cannot occur unless served by a centralized sewer system, while development at many urban intensities will generate traffic volumes and patterns that require higher-capacity and more interconnected vehicular and pedestrian facilities than currently exist in the areas to which Urban Services Area classifications apply.

If areas classified as Urban Services Area (whether SRUSA, SRUSA/WSW, LRUSA, or LRUSA/WSW) are to accommodate development at urban intensities and be served by municipal sewer, the County needs to promote the orderly extension or provision of municipal sewer services throughout the USAs, as well as the orderly extension or provision of other urban facilities services necessary to accommodate the demands of that development.

Yet the Plan must recognize that it will take time (at least 30 years) to provide urban facilities and services throughout the USAs, during which time much land within those areas will develop at non-urban intensities consistent with the current nonavailability of centralized sewer service.

To accommodate urban development, the Plan must promote transitional urban development policies in the USAs - that is, policies that define how current development should be designed so as to facilitate its future assimilation into an urbanized area served by urban facilities and services.

Areas classified as Short-Range Urban Services Area (SRUSA) or Short-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed (SRUSA/WSW) are close enough to available municipal sewer service - in distance and/or time - that they should be expected to be able to develop at urban intensities immediately, or in the relatively near future. Thus transitional urban development policies applicable to SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs should strongly promote current development that has urban intensities (provided the other public facilities and services necessary to accommodate urban intensities are available) and is served by the scope, types, and levels of public facilities and services appropriate to urban development.

Because areas classified as Long-Range Urban Services Area (LRUSA) or Long-Range Urban Services Area/Water Supply Watershed

(LRUSA/WSW) are expected to have municipal sewer sometime in the foreseeable future, transitional urban development policies are needed to facilitate their ultimate urbanization.

But because the projected availability of municipal sewer is further off, and thus more uncertain, such policies should be much more limited in scope than those applied in SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs.

The following policies are intended to address the need of transitional urban development policies in Urban Services Areas. [Note: The terms "Urban Services Areas" and "USAs" refer to all areas to which any one of the Urban Services Area classifications apply.]

b. Promote Centralized Water and Sewer Services

The principal impediment to development at the full range of urban intensities is the availability of adequate provisions for sewage disposal. Individual on-site sewage systems (septic tanks and absorption fields) simply cannot accommodate the sewage disposal requirements of development at other than the lowest levels of urban intensity. Development at higher levels of urban intensity can occur only if served by some sort of centralized sewer service - either the extension of a municipal sewer system or an independent community system.

But the availability of such centralized sewer systems in the various Urban Services Areas is currently very limited. Municipal sewer systems generally do not extend into or near the USAs. Although a number of centralized community sewer systems are scattered throughout the USAs, they generally are small and lack excess capacity to accommodate future development on adjacent land. And the opportunity to establish new community systems is substantially hampered by environmental limitations on discharges into area streams.

The principal challenge in promoting development of USAs at the full range of urban intensities, therefore, is to promote the projected extension and/or establishment of centralized sewer service throughout SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs.

The Wake County Water/Sewer Plan adopted in 1998 recognized this and therefore recommended policies that the County (1) require new development in USAs to connect to municipal water and sewer systems wherever

practicable and (2) encourage provision of centralized community water and sewer systems elsewhere in USAs.

The following policies essentially repeat those adopted as part of the Water/Sewer Plan, except that their full application is generally limited to only those Urban Services Areas that are projected to be served by municipal sewer systems extensions in the next 10 years - that is, the SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs.

(1) Throughout Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs), new development should be required to connect to a municipal water and/or sewer system wherever extension of municipal water and/or sewer lines to the development site is practicable (based on the developer's costs of such extension relative to the return the developer might expect from developing to the maximum allowable intensity).

(2) Where connections to municipal systems are not practicable, new development in Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs) should be encouraged to connect to a municipal water and/or sewer system, or to connect to or provide a centralized community water and/or sewer system. This might be achieved, for example, by changing current development regulations applicable in SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs so as to allow the ultimately planned urban development intensities wherever centralized sewer service is provided, providing help in financing extensions and community systems, and/or ensuring reimbursement of up-front costs from subsequent development using the extension or system.

(3) Throughout all Urban Services Areas, new community water and sewer systems should be required to be designed and constructed in accord with the standards applicable to the water and/or sewer system serving the municipality with which the Urban Services Area is associated.

(4) Throughout all Urban Services Areas, new development not served by a centralized water and/or sewer system should be required to at least dedicate the easements necessary to allow its eventual service by a municipal or centralized community water and/or sewer system.

c. Promote Urban Intensities

This Plan uses the term "urban intensities" to refer to the full range and balance of development intensities that, while reflecting the land's capacity to accommodate development, promotes convenient accessibility, fosters the efficient provision of supporting municipal and community facilities and services, and enhances the sense of neighborhood and community. Although the term "urban intensities" includes the low-intensity development currently typical in the fringes of the County's urban areas, it should also include more of the moderate- and high-intensity developments that allow pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, reduced auto dependence and road congestion, and more choice in housing types and costs.

The appropriate range and balance of development intensities may vary among the County's urban areas, but generally should reflect an average intensity that exceeds the average for developed lands inside the municipality that defines the urban area.

Until centralized sewer service is available, however, development must occur at less than urban intensities, or at only the lowest levels of urban intensity. But as urban areas continue to grow, centralized sewer service and other urban services will eventually be extended throughout the Urban Services Areas.

If a lot of development occurs in USAs before such services are available, much land in the USAs may be committed to low-intensity development by the time urban growth and urban services extend out to it. This may result in widespread development whose low intensity and ex-urban character will be incompatible with, and impede achievement of, the planned urban intensities and compact development patterns necessary to accommodate urban growth in an efficient manner.

To avoid, or at least mitigate, this problem, the County needs to ensure that new development in USAs will be at urban intensities if the necessary centralized sewer service is available, and to ensure that other new development is designed to maximize the potential for future infill development at such time as centralized sewer service and other urban services become available. Such infill development should allow urban intensities to be achieved to the maximum extent practicable.

The Wake County Water/Sewer Plan adopted in 1998 recognized the need to promote urban intensities in areas where urban services are planned, and therefore included policies to do so among its recommendations. The following policies essentially repeat those adopted as part of the Water/Sewer Plan.

(1) Throughout Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs), new development served by a centralized sewer system should be encouraged to be developed at urban intensities, provided the types and levels of public facilities and services needed to support and accommodate the urban intensities are available and development intensity is compatible with adjoining existing development and with the orderly expansion of urban development from the adjacent municipality. This might be achieved, for example, by changing development regulations applicable in SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs to allow the ultimately planned urban development intensities wherever centralized sewer service is provided, and/or to apply minimum intensity standards to new development served by centralized sewer systems.

(2) Throughout Long-Range Urban Services Areas (LRUSAs and LRUSA/WSWs), development at urban intensities - or at any intensity greater than which can be accommodated by on-site wastewater disposal systems - generally should be deemed premature and inappropriate until such areas are re-classified as SRUSAs or SRUSA/WSWs in accord with future projections of where and when municipal sewer line extensions will occur to accommodate future urbanization. This policy is based on the assumption that LRUSAs and LRUSA/WSWs generally lack centralized sewer and those types of and levels of other urban facilities and services needed to support and accommodate urban intensities. Higher urban development intensities may be appropriate in LRUSAs and LRUSA/WSWs, however, if and to the extent that centralized sewer services and the other needed urban facilities and services (especially transportation facilities) are available, and that development intensity is compatible with adjoining existing development and with the orderly expansion of urban development from the adjacent municipality.

(3) Throughout Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs), new development (including that not served by a centralized sewer system) should be required to

be designed so as to facilitate the future infill development necessary to achieve urban intensities once centralized sewer service becomes available. This might be achieved, for example, by applying minimum intensity standards to new development served by centralized sewer systems, requiring new subdivisions to be clustered and set aside the maximum area practicable as future development sites, and/or requiring new subdivisions to design lots for the planned urban intensity, but temporarily limit sales and development to combinations of adjoining lots until centralized sewer service becomes available.

d. Promote Urban Transportation Facilities

Centralized water and sewer systems are generally recognized as the principal public facilities and services that define urban areas, primarily because they are traditionally associated with municipalities and are necessary for development at the full range of urban intensities. But other public facilities and services are also strongly associated with urban development.

As development intensity increases, so does population density, the number of opportunities for work, shopping, and leisure activities - and the number and complexity of interactions between a wide range of land uses. Thus urban development intensities create substantially greater demands for the facilities and services necessary to support this increased activity - especially for transportation facilities that can accommodate the increased need for coordinated vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access.

The types and levels of transportation facilities typically found in the County's planning jurisdiction may be sufficient to meet the needs of sparse non-urban development, or even some low-intensity urban development, but are simply inadequate to meet the needs generated by urban development. Furthermore, the character of urban development called for by this Plan - which is to be pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive, with strong access connections both internally and with adjacent neighborhoods - calls for a greater scope of transportation facilities that can provide the framework on which future urban development can occur in an efficient manner. The following policies are intended to ensure that new development in Urban Services Areas is served

by the scope, types, and levels of transportation facilities necessary to efficiently meet the access and circulation demands inherent in a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive urban development

(1) Throughout Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs), new development should be required to be served by the types and levels of transportation facilities that can accommodate the vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access needs of urbanized areas, or are otherwise called for by a land use, transportation, parks and recreation, greenway, or open space plan adopted by Wake County. Such facilities (e.g., streets, bikeways, sidewalks, pedestrian trails, and bus turnouts - including associated drainage facilities) should be required to be designed and constructed in accord with the standards generally applicable in the municipality with which the Urban Services Area is associated.

(2) Throughout all Urban Services Areas, new development should be required to at least dedicate the additional right-of-way or new easements necessary to allow the eventual provision of the types and levels of transportation facilities that can accommodate the vehicular, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access needs of urbanized areas (e.g., streets, bikeways, sidewalks, pedestrian trails, and bus turnouts - including associated drainage facilities) - or are otherwise called for by a land use, transportation, parks and recreation, greenway, or open space plan adopted by Wake County - and that are designed and constructed in accord with the standards generally applicable in the municipality with which the Urban Services Area is associated.

4. Non-Urban Area Classifications

a. Introduction

The two Non-Urban Area classifications, taken together, primarily define those areas of the County's planning jurisdiction into which urbanization is not intended to expand, and thus into which urban services are not intended to be extended - at least not in the foreseeable future. The variation between the Non-Urban Area classifications reflects the differentiation between areas located within a water supply watershed versus those areas located outside of a water supply watershed.

b. Non-Urban Area (NUA)

The Non-Urban Area (NUA) classification applies to land within the County's planning jurisdiction that:

- (a) is not expected or intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future; and
- (b) is not located within a water supply watershed. [A water supply watershed includes all land that drains down to an existing or planned surface water source of drinking water and is subject to the State's minimum water supply watershed protection regulations.]

The NUAs represent areas where extension of municipal sewer is not feasible or desirable in the foreseeable future, and thus where there will be limited capacity to accommodate urbanized development.

c. Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed (NUA/WSW)

The Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed (NUA/WSW) classification applies to land within the County's planning jurisdiction that:

- (a) is not expected or intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future; and
- (b) is located within a water supply watershed.

Like NUAs, the NUA/WSWs represent areas where extension of municipal sewer is not feasible or desirable in the foreseeable future. But with NUA/WSWs, such expectations are based less on the areas' limited capacity to accommodate urbanized development than on implementing well-established County policies to protect water supply watersheds from the potential threats that urbanized development poses to the quality of drinking water supplies. As such, the NUA/WSWs are the primary focus of this Plan's policies to further Goal #9's call for maintaining the quality of existing and planned surface water supplies of drinking water (see Water Supply Watershed Protection Policies in Section V).

5. Non-Urban Area Policies

Areas classified as Non-Urban Area or Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed are generally characterized by more dispersed populations and much lower development intensities than found in urban areas, and by large expanses of open spaces and natural areas that reflect the areas' historical dominance by farming and forestry uses and the unavailability of services necessary for urban development.

Historically, the service needs of people living in such non-urban areas have been most efficiently met by individual landowners themselves (with on-site wells and septic systems, private garbage collection, etc.), rather than by the centralized infrastructure and service systems that serve urbanized areas. This status is expected to continue in to the foreseeable future for areas classified as Non-Urban Area or Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed.

Because of the sparse development patterns and/or low development intensities typical of these areas, the extension of centralized water or sewer systems is simply not cost-effective, and there is generally insufficient volume or concentration of demand for transportation facilities or other public facilities and services typical of urbanized areas to justify the cost of providing them to the same degree or at the same levels as found in urbanized areas.

Accordingly, the following policy is intended to ensure that the provision of public facilities and services in Non-Urban Areas is limited to those that are clearly necessary and cost-effective in areas of very low population and development intensities.

Throughout areas classified as Non-Urban Area or Non-Urban Area/Water Supply Watershed, new development should consist of only those types of land uses and/or development intensities that create service needs which can be adequately accommodated by the types of facilities and levels of service already found in, or typical of, non-urban areas (e.g., private individual on-site water supply and wastewater disposal systems, two-lane roads without signalized intersections, few arterials, no transit service, nonstructural drainage facilities, private garbage collection, sheriff patrols rather than police stations, widely spaced fire stations serving large areas and dependent on volunteer staff and water trucks (or pumping from on-site water bodies), few if any branch libraries) - and

that do not require the scope, types, and levels of facilities and services necessary to, and typical of, urbanized areas.

Municipal sewer systems should not be extended into NUAs and NUA/WSWs, nor should other centralized sewer systems be provided in NUAs and NUA/WSWs, except to the extent necessary to protect public health when existing community wastewater systems fail or many private on-site systems fail in an area.

Land Use Plan General Classifications			
		<i>Outside Water Supply Watershed</i>	<i>Within Water Supply Watershed</i>
Urban Service Area	Short Range Urban Service Area (SRUSA)	SRUSA a) projected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the next 10 years b) not located within a water supply watershed	SRUSA/WSW a) projected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the next 10 years b) located within a water supply watershed
	Long Range Urban Service Area (LRUSA)	LRUSA a) expected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years b)) not located within a water supply watershed	LRUSA/WSW a) expected and intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future, but not in the next 10 years b) located within a water supply watershed
Non Urban Area (NUA)		NUA a) is not expected or intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future b) is not located within a water supply watershed	NUA/WSW a) is not expected or intended to be urbanized and served by municipal services in the foreseeable future b) is located within a water supply watershed

6. General Classifications Map

The Land Use Plan includes a General Classifications Map that shows how the 6 General Classifications described above are applied to land within the County's planning jurisdiction. Because this Plan's Urban Services Area classifications represent areas into which area municipalities are expected to expand, the Map shows each municipality with a different color. Each municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction is shown with a slightly lighter shade of that color.

The Short-Range Urban Services Areas (SRUSAs and SRUSA/WSWs) associated with the projected 30-year expansion of a particular municipality are colored with an even lighter shade of the same color. And the Long-Range Urban Services Areas (LRUSAs and LRUSA/WSWs) associated with the ultimate expansion of the municipality are colored with a still lighter shade of the same color. For example, all areas on the Map colored dark gray represent land within Raleigh's city limits; those areas colored medium-dark gray represent Raleigh's extraterritorial jurisdiction; those areas colored medium-light gray represent the Short-Range Urban Services Areas associated with Raleigh; and those areas colored light gray represent the Long-Range Urban Services Areas associated with Raleigh.

General Classifications that encompass water supply watersheds (SRUSA/WSW, LRUSA/WSW, and NUA/WSW) are distinguished from their non-watershed counterpart by overlaying blue hatching (with the watershed's critical area cross hatched).

As noted in the introduction to the Urban Services Area Classifications, all Urban Services Areas are intended to be associated with a municipality except those Urban Services Areas encompassing that part of the Research Triangle Park (RTP) located within Wake County. Thus the Short-Range Urban Services Areas that encompass the RTP (SRUSA and SRUSA/WSW) are shown with shades of a color independent of that used to depict any of the adjacent municipalities or the Urban Services Areas associated with them.

Temporarily, the boundary between the Urban Services Areas associated with the Town of Holly Springs and those associated with the Town of Apex has not been agreed upon by those municipalities. The areas shown on the

General Classifications Map as "Unresolved Urban Services Area" represent the overlap of areas into which planners from both Holly Springs and each of the adjacent municipalities expect their municipality to extend urban services in the future. As soon as the Town of Holly Springs reaches an agreement with the Town of Apex, as to where the boundary between their Urban Services Areas should be, the Land Use Plan's maps will be amended to reflect the agreed-upon boundary.

In accord with special authority granted it under State law, the Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority has adopted and administers its own zoning regulations to land it owns under and around the Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU). Thus that property is not within the County's planning jurisdiction, and is treated like another municipality by this Plan. RDU is not expected to expand its zoning jurisdiction and does not have its own urban service systems to extend. Therefore although the General Classifications Map colors the RDU property as it would a municipality (with a dark shade of red), there is no extraterritorial jurisdiction or Urban Services Area associated with it.

C. LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS AND RELATED POLICIES

1. Introduction

In addition to the General Classifications described above, the Wake County Land Use Plan also establishes and applies a number of Land Use Classifications to all land within the County's planning jurisdiction. It does so via the Area Land Use Plans included as part of this Plan. The various Land Use Classifications are intended primarily to serve as the basis for application of policies that further this Plan's Goal #3 (to encourage the development of communities that provide adequate land for anticipated demands and allow a mixture of uses), Goal #4 (to encourage maintenance of open space, scenic aspects of rural area, entranceways to urban areas, and transition areas between urban areas), Goal #5 (to encourage the conservation of environmentally significant areas and important natural and cultural resources), Goal #7 (to ensure the quality of existing and planned surface water supplies of drinking water), Goal #10 (to prevent the contamination, and maintain the capacity, of groundwater resources), and Goal #11 (to ensure the provision of adequate and properly

located land for recreational and leisure activities).

The description and policies associated with those Land Use Classifications applied to Urban Services Areas represent the County's vision for how areas so classified will be developed in conjunction with the provision of urban facilities and services that make urban uses and intensities possible. In the meanwhile, a proposed development's consistency with this Plan should be determined based on the development's consistency with this Plan's Transitional Urban Development Policies, as well as its compatibility with the ultimate achievement of the type of development envisioned by the applicable Land Use Classification's description and policies - that is, whether the proposed development would facilitate, or at least not prevent or hinder, achievement of the envisioned development.

Determining Land Use Classifications, developing development policies applicable to each, and deciding where each should apply to different areas in the County's planning jurisdiction takes a great deal of study, mapping, and debate - all with a lot of public participation. Because of the substantial time this would take, this Plan, when adopted in 1997, called for such work to be done over the next 4 years via the development of a series of detailed Area Land Use Plans that would eventually cover all of the County's planning jurisdiction (see Section VIIIA).

As each Area Land Use Plan is developed, it needs to establish and apply a land use classification scheme that best reflects the specific needs of the area. Thus each Area Land Use Plan may very well have a set of Land Use Classifications and related policies that differ from the following rudimentary set of "default" Land Use Classifications and policies, as well as from those Land Use Classifications and policies applied in any other Area Land Use Plan.

The following Land Use Classifications and related policies, as well as the Land Use Classifications Map that depicts their application, are applicable only until replaced by the more refined Land Use Classifications, related policies, and land use classification maps that are developed as part of the Area Land Use Plans.

2. Land Use Classifications and Related Policies

a. Introduction

The Land Use Classifications and related policies that follow reflect the general concept of using the "neighborhood" as the basic unit of urban development. A "**neighborhood**" can be thought of as a largely residential area surrounding a mixed use "activity centers" that serves as the focal point for meeting the neighborhood's shopping, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, and civic needs - and thus towards which the neighborhood is physically and functionally oriented and with which it is closely integrated.

A group of contiguous neighborhoods make up a "**community**," at the center of which is located an activity center that meets the community's large-scale shopping, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, and civic needs - and thus also serves as a significant center of employment.

A group of contiguous communities make a "**region**," at the center of which is located an activity center that meets the region's even larger-scale needs and serves as a primary employment center.

Supplementing those Land Use Classifications that reflect the Plan's "neighborhood" concept for urban development are several other urban Land Use Classifications: Multi-County Regional Activity Center (a special type of very large activity center serving as a major employment center for the entire Triangle multi-county region); and Industrial/Major Employment Area (a concentrated area that primarily meets the region's manufacturing and other industrial needs, or that otherwise serves as a major employment center - e.g., office centers or centers of mixed office and industrial uses).

Non-Urban Areas are principally defined by the Residential classification (with very low densities), with scattered Non-Urban Activity Centers that serve as the focal points for meeting the small-scale shopping, social, educational, cultural, spiritual, and civic needs of the sparsely-developed areas that surround them.

Both Urban Services Areas and Non-Urban Areas may include the following Land Use Classifications, each of which has a special

purpose: Significant Natural or Historic Area;
Special Transportation Corridor, and Special
Function Facility.

b. Table of Land Use Classifications

Land Use Classification	Description
1. Residential	Densities will vary, and will be noted on Map if needed.
2. Urban Neighborhood Activity Center	Primarily convenience retail goods and personal services; small scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential land uses with a neighborhood-wide rather than community-wide emphasis. Accessed by major thoroughfares and bus lines, served by municipal water and sewer. A neighborhood activity center should have a core containing relatively small-scale development that focuses on serving the day-to-day needs and activities of the core area occupants and the population of the immediately surrounding neighborhood. In a neighborhood activity center, the mix of small scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential uses having a neighborhood-wide rather than community-wide emphasis may include: neighborhood grocery store, pharmacy, video rental, dry cleaners, neighborhood restaurant, service station, small medical/dental practice, insurance agency, law firm, elementary school, day care center, church, post office, craft cottage industry, neighborhood recreation, branch library, and single-family detached homes, duplexes, garden apartments, and town homes.
3. Urban Community Activity Center	Combination of retail and personal services, and local job base; moderate-scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential land uses. Accessed by major thoroughfares and public transportation, served by municipal water and sewer. A community activity center should have a core containing relatively medium-scale development that focuses on serving the day-to-day needs and activities of the core area occupants as well as the greater needs and activities of the populations of adjacent neighborhoods. In a community activity center, the mix of moderate-scale urban commercial, office, institutional, industrial, and residential land uses may include: grocery store, drug store, specialty shop, hotel/motel, restaurant, movie theater, medical or dental practice, offices, legal services, elementary or middle school, large day care center, church, community recreation, library, warehousing, community distribution centers, post office, community center, government service branches, and housing such as single-family homes, duplexes, garden apartments, town homes, medium-rise apartments, and living-care facilities.

4. Urban Regional Activity Center	Primary job base, large scale urban land uses and commercial development. Accessed by major thoroughfares and public transportation, preferably including regional rail transit. Served by municipal water and sewer. A regional activity center should have a core containing relatively large-scale and high-intensity urban land uses that are supported by and serve communities within the region. In a regional activity center, the types of large scale urban land uses may include: regional shopping malls, large hotel/motels, large discount retailers, specialty stores, restaurants, large office parks, middle and high schools, community colleges, regional recreation centers, regional library, industrial parks, research and development parks, employment centers and a wide variety of housing densities.
5. Urban Multi-County Regional Activity Center	Primary job base for metropolitan area, major commercial center. Accessed by major thoroughfares and public transportation, preferably including regional rail transit. Served by municipal water and sewer. A multi-county regional activity center has a core containing large-scale and high-intensity urban land uses that are supported by and serve communities within more than one county. In a multi-county regional activity center, the types of large scale urban land uses may include: super-regional, multi functional shopping areas, large hotel/motels, large discount retailers, specialty stores, restaurants, large office parks, higher education centers, colleges, major professional, commercial or government institutions, regional recreation centers, regional libraries, industrial parks, research and development parks, employment centers and a wide variety of housing densities.
6. Industrial/Major Employment Area	An area appropriate for multiple uses, including basic employee services. Land suitable for manufacturing, warehousing, industrial and business uses, research and development, and supporting commercial and residential uses, in a manner appropriate for its location relative to other development and environmental constraints.
7. Non-Urban Activity Center	Primarily convenience retail goods and personal services, or small scale land uses typical of farm-serving uses, appropriate for the location relative to other development and environmental constraints, without significant negative impacts on surrounding community. Accessed by major thoroughfares. A non-urban neighborhood activity center should have small-scale development that focuses on serving the day-to-day needs and activities of the immediately surrounding neighborhood. In a neighborhood activity center, the mix of land uses may include: neighborhood grocery store, convenience store, video rental, neighborhood restaurant, service station, elementary school, day care center, church, craft cottage industry, neighborhood recreation, branch library, and single-family homes or duplexes.

8. Significant Natural or Historic Area	Special natural areas contain significant plant communities, wildlife habitats and associated wildlife corridors, geological features, or other natural, historic, or cultural features that are unique, scarce, particularly vulnerable to disturbance, or are important to the natural ecosystem.
9. Special Transportation Corridor	An area on both sides of an existing or proposed freeway or other major highway within the County's zoning jurisdiction. Can include the viewshed and non-freeway roads which serve as gateways between municipalities.
10. Special Function Facility	A facility or site designated for a special function that could make typical urban development costly or hazardous to public health and safety. Surrounding land uses should be developed with an awareness of the special function and any particular needs, such as emergency evacuation, that may arise from it.

c. Policies for Activity Center Classifications

Designating activity centers allows future opportunities to enhance the tax base, as well as providing focal points for community activities - living, working, shopping, education, recreation, and cultural, spiritual, or civic activities. An activity center should consist of a "core area" containing the most intense land uses, surrounded by mixed uses of decreasing density/intensity, and include a network of pedestrian pathways and a local street system that encourages pedestrian access.

In addition, some activity centers should have access points for existing or potential regional transit services. Some, but not all, activity centers will be designed to encourage use of public transportation. This "transit oriented development" refers to a physical design which allows people to walk from place to place and contains a mixture of land uses and densities of development which will support transit services. For further information, please consult the Triangle Transit Authority's regional transit plan.

The Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) is attempting to implement a regional transit plan for Wake, Durham and Orange Counties, consisting primarily of regional rail and express bus service. The Wake County Board of Commissioners has endorsed TTA's recommendations for a Regional Transit Plan.

d. Residential Development Contribution to Neighborhood Recreation Area

Residential development creates demands for leisure activity opportunities needs for the recreation facilities and services necessary to provide such opportunities. County efforts at addressing recreation needs have largely focused on providing large, resource-based parks that meet regional recreation demands, as well as smaller parks developed in conjunction with schools that meet community demands for active recreation. While the County's efforts may be sufficient to meet the recreation demands of sparse development typical of rural areas, they are simply inadequate to meet the neighborhood-based demands generated by the urban and suburban development found in and planned for the County's jurisdiction. The

following policy is intended to ensure that new residential development can eventually be served by neighborhood recreation facilities.

- New residential development should be required to contribute to providing recreation area sufficient to meet the neighborhood recreation needs of the development's future residents.

3. Countywide Land Use Classifications Map

The Land Use Plan includes a countywide Land Use Classifications Map that shows how the Land Use Classifications and policies described above are applied to those parts of the County's planning jurisdiction where an Area Land Use Plan has not yet been adopted.

The countywide Land Use Classifications Map in the original Land Use Plan adopted in 1997 generally applied the above Land Use Classifications in accord with the previous application of comparable land use classifications by the County's former General Development Plan (GDP) or by adopted municipal land use plans that covered areas in the County's planning jurisdiction. Because the GDP and previously adopted municipal land use plans did not cover all of the County's planning jurisdiction, there were some areas where no comparable land use classifications were previously applied. In these areas, the Land Use Classifications Map included two additions. Based on the County's long-standing policies for protecting water supply watersheds, the Map applied the Residential (≤ 1 du/ac) classification to the nonurban areas of water supply watersheds.

Based on the GDP's policies for spacing activity nodes and a recent study of existing development qualifying as activity nodes, the Map designated a number of Activity Centers in otherwise unclassified areas. Given that the predominant land use and zoning in the County's jurisdiction is residential, and that the Land Use Classifications Map applied commercial Activity Center classifications in otherwise unclassified areas, land not yet classified by the Map will be deemed to be

classified Residential (see Section VI).

In an area where an Area Land Use Plan has been adopted, the countywide Land Use Classifications Map has been amended to replace the "default" Land Use Classifications originally applied to that area with a reference to Area Land Use Plan that established new Land Use Classifications for the area. With adoption of the final Area Land Use Plan, the Land Use Classifications Map will become merely an index map to the areas covered by the various Area Land Use Plans.

The countywide Land Use Classifications Map designates most of the various Activity Center classifications with circle symbol. Such designation is intended to show the general location of the Activity Center, and is not intended to depict boundaries for the classification. To interpret the exact location or boundaries of any Activity Center classification designated by a circle symbol, or of the Center's Core Area, the description, principles, and policies applicable to the classification should be used.

Activity Centers

Neighborhoods, Communities, and Regions

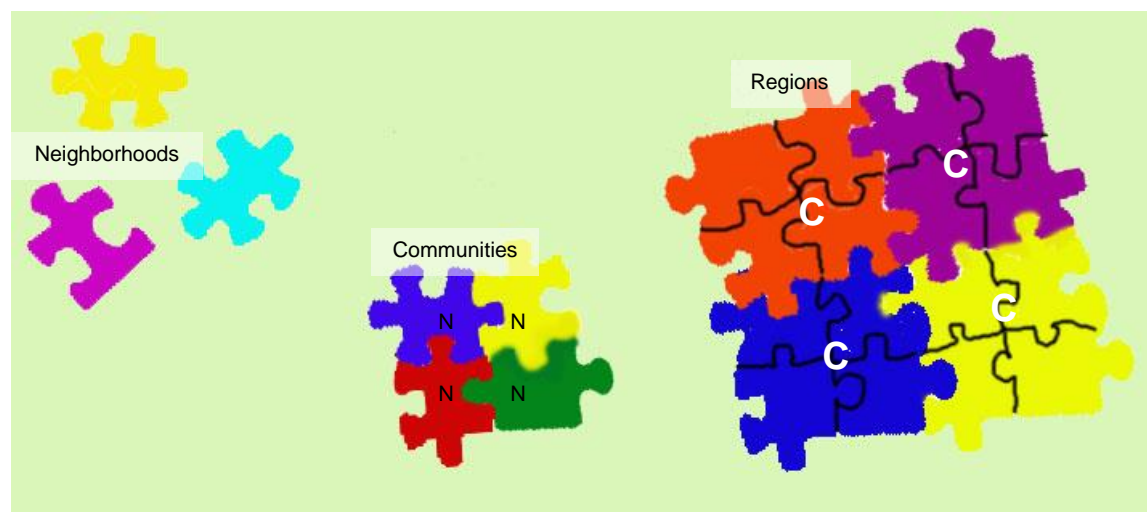
The Board of Commissioners through its adoption of the Wake County Land Use Plan, which includes Area Land Use Plans prepared jointly by the County and its municipalities, endorses as the basic unit of urban development in Wake County a land-use concept consisting of neighborhoods, communities, and regions. Small pieces, or **neighborhoods**, fit together to form medium-sized pieces, or **communities**, and adjoining communities are fitted together to form **regions**. This three-tiered geographic model is explained more below and is the critical framework for understanding activity center concepts.

Neighborhoods are contiguous areas that consist not only of homes, but also parks, schools, shops, and other land uses within their boundaries, which are needed by residents on a daily basis. Neighborhoods' residents support and are served by the **first tier** of public and private facilities, such as grocery stores, drug stores, service stations, neighborhood parks, daycare centers, places of worship, and in some

cases elementary schools. Ideally neighborhoods are designed so every home is no more than about a half-mile from the neighborhood's center-- a convenient walk or bicycle ride.

The next larger piece of the model is the community. A **community** is a collection of adjacent neighborhoods whose residents support and are served by the **second tier** of public and private facilities—facilities needed less often than on a daily basis. These may include uses such as large supermarkets, specialty stores, large discount stores, community parks, large-sized places of worship, specialty medical offices, legal firms, community libraries and fire stations.

The **region** is the largest piece in the model. A region is made up of a collection of adjacent communities. Regions may routinely overlap municipal boundaries and County lines. Regions' residents support the **third tier** of public and private facilities—regional shopping malls, very large employers, high schools, regional parks and hospitals. Neighborhoods, communities, and regions set the stage for understanding activity centers.



Neighborhoods are the smallest basic unit of development. Communities are medium size and consist of a combination of neighborhoods. Regions are large and consist of a series of communities.

Activity Centers

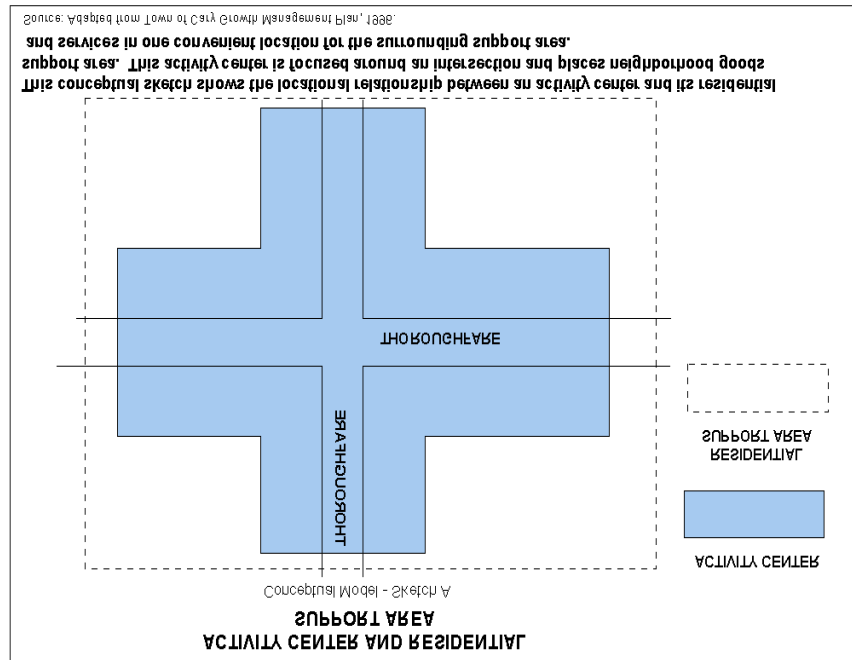
Neighborhoods, communities, and regions are focused *around activity centers*, which mix shopping, services, recreation, and office and institutional uses needed to support the neighborhoods, communities, or regions respectively.

The three types of activity centers (neighborhood, community, and regional) are similar in spatial arrangement and function but differ in size and intensity. Regional centers are larger and more intense than community centers and community centers are larger and more intense than neighborhood centers. Essentially activity centers are compact village centers, which occur in three different sizes, but share a common function and form.

In terms of function, activity centers are surrounded by residential support areas (Conceptual Model--Sketch A); and these two elements serve mutually dependent functions.

Activity centers provide a full mix of goods and services in concentrated locations to optimally serve their residential support areas. Activity centers also provide ideal places for bus (or other transit) stops, since people are more prone to use transit when they can combine its use with trips for goods and services. Conversely, residential support areas provide the population sizes, proximities, and densities necessary for activity centers' transit, shopping, social, educational, and civic uses. There is a mutually beneficial relationship.

Activity Centers are designed to maximize the benefit of public investment in infrastructure and services, consume less land with urban development and mitigate environmental impacts.

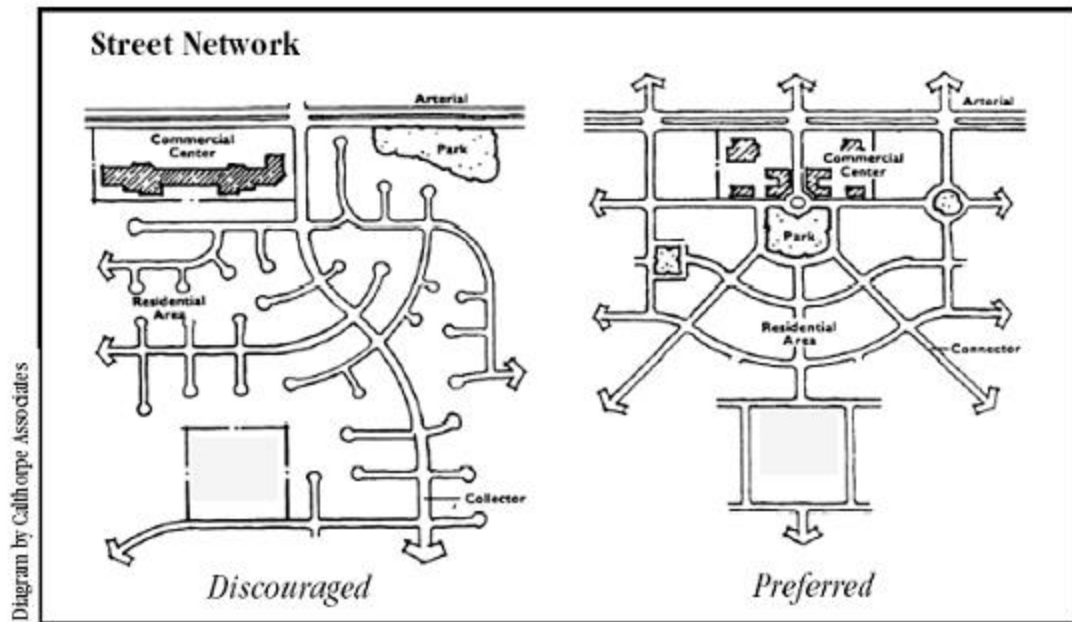


In terms of form, activity centers and their residential support areas are designed as integrated wholes instead of a series of unconnected, unrelated land uses

The centers and residential support areas are compatible in terms of land use type and density and are physically linked to facilitate pedestrian,

bicycle, and vehicle movement between and within the two areas.

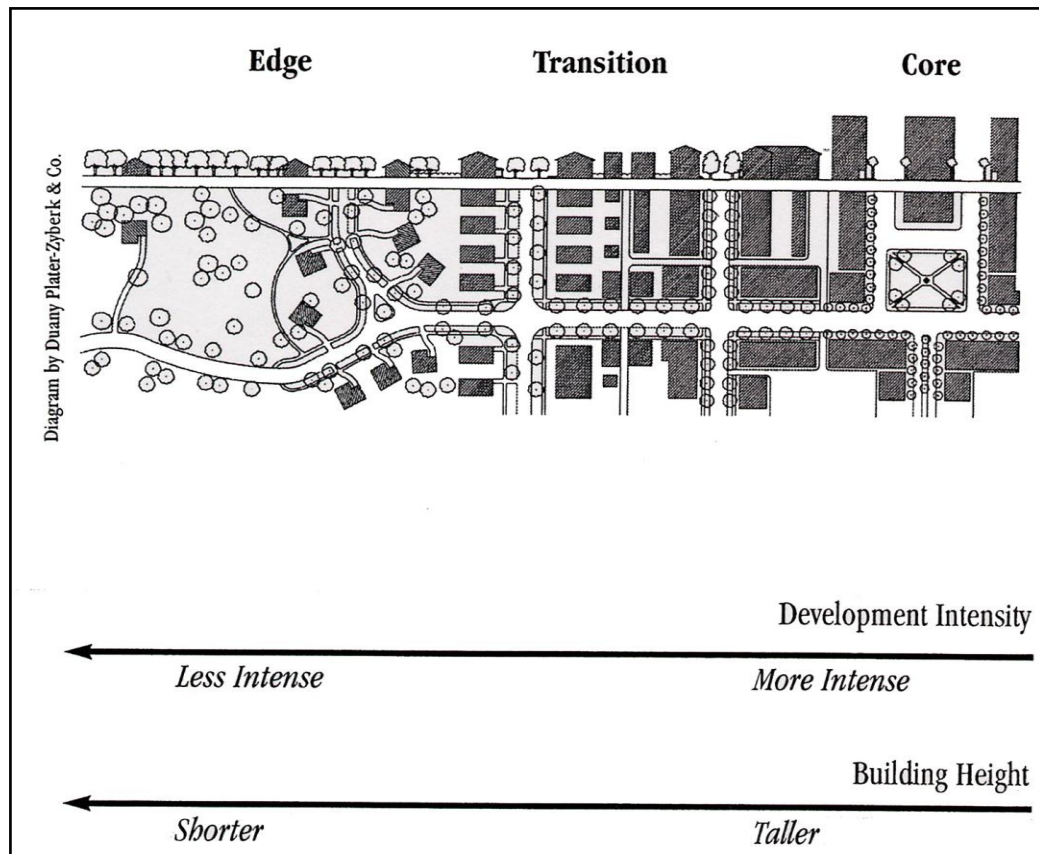
Connectivity is key; residents may walk, bicycle, or drive throughout their neighborhoods and may do so without traveling on abutting thoroughfares.



Connectivity is key for a preferred street network. In the preferred street design, residents may easily walk, bicycle, or drive throughout their neighborhoods, unlike in the discouraged street design with little connectivity.

A design feature that helps ensure activity centers and residential support areas are compatible in terms of land use type and density is **transitional development**. The most intense developments, that is, those that generate the most traffic per square foot or per acre and have the tallest buildings, are located near the center of each activity center. The intensity of development transitions outward towards the edges of activity centers and ultimately to the

edges of their residential support areas. This puts the highest population concentrations adjacent to activity centers' retail uses and transit stops and it ensures smooth transitions to the low-density residential uses at the edges of the residential support areas.



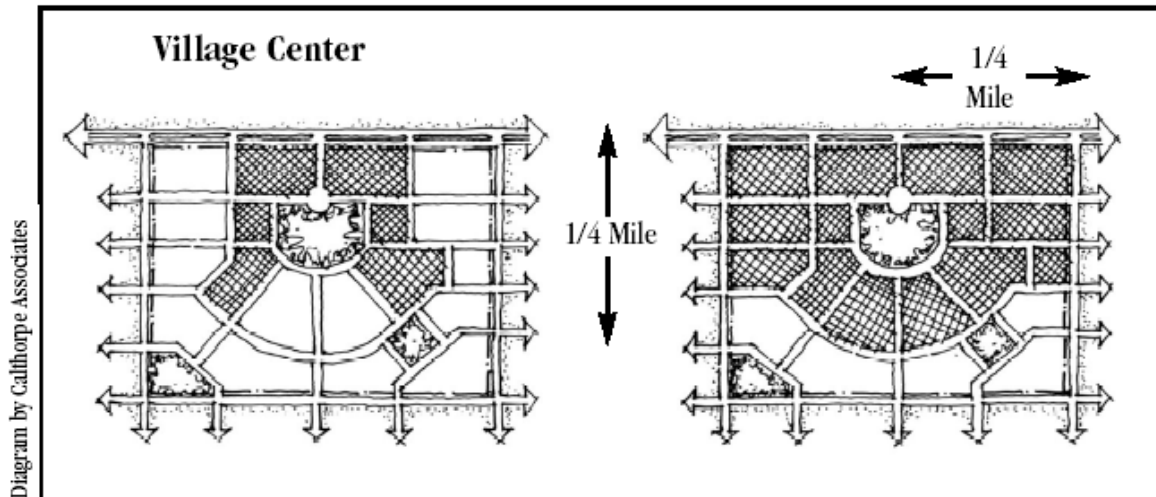
With transitional development, the densest development occurs closest to the core of the activity center. As one moves out from the center, densities decrease as buildings become shorter and more widely spaced.

Another feature central to activity centers and residential support areas are public uses such as parks, open spaces, and plazas that function as neighborhoods' meeting places and recreation areas. These uses provide a public focus and identity for neighborhoods. They combine with shopping, services, and transit stops in a design that enables full-service neighborhoods.

In essence, activity centers and their residential support areas function as villages. However, it is not expected that an activity center will develop as a single entity, under one owner, or that all its uses will be built at the same time.

The intent is that the concept of activity centers will be embodied as each land use is built so that ultimately all uses will function as an integrated and complete activity center.

The quantity, locations, and designs of activity centers help determine the character of neighborhoods, communities, and regions. While these centers will be needed as the County grows, proper planning will be necessary to avoid undesirable impacts. The County fosters proper planning of activity centers by establishing objectives, policies, and design guidelines.



Public parks, open spaces and plazas provide a focus and identity for neighborhoods. They can function as both meeting places and recreation areas.



Objectives

- Broaden the opportunities of citizens to live, work, learn, play, and obtain goods and services in the same neighborhood or community, rather than having to travel long distances on crowded thoroughfares.
- Concentrate basic goods and services and potential transit stops at key points, so as to conveniently serve neighborhoods, avoid strip development, and provide focal points for neighborhood and community activities.
- Promote multiple forms of connectivity so citizens may safely and conveniently walk, bicycle, (or use vehicles) to access shopping, services, and residential areas.
- Foster a variety of housing densities, ownership opportunities, prices, and building types that can compatibly co-exist in neighborhoods and communities.
- Encourage non-residential and residential areas to be compatible and physically integrated in terms of appearance, access, noise, and water and air quality impacts.
- Maximize the benefit of public investment in infrastructure and services.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of the existing environment.

Policies

The following Activity Center Policies and Design Guidelines should apply to all three types of centers (neighborhood, community, and regional) unless a distinction in type is made below.

- Wake County Land Use Plan maps should designate the locations of planned activity centers.
- A neighborhood activity center should contain shopping, services, recreation, and small-scale office and institutional uses needed to meet the day-to-day needs of the neighborhood. Examples are grocery or convenience store, pharmacy, video rental, dry cleaning or laundry, restaurant, service station, medical or dental practice, insurance agency, law firm, small neighborhood business office, school, daycare, church, park, and civic club.
- Centers should be designated at significant road intersections or significant neighborhood or community focal points.
- Residents have had and should continue to have opportunities to offer input on activity center designations.
- Residences, especially higher density residential development such as multi-family, traditional neighborhood

development, or dwellings over shops, with appropriate central water and sewer facilities, are desirable.

- An emphasis should be placed on residential compatibility; uses found incompatible with surrounding residences due to appearance, traffic, noise, odor, etc. should be excluded.
- Community and regional activity centers may have uses permitted in neighborhood activity centers, plus uses that provide goods and services needed less frequently than a daily basis. Examples are shopping malls, hotels, movie theatres, major cultural, educational, or entertainment facilities, car dealerships, and mid to large-size office parks or businesses.
- Appropriate zoning districts for activity centers are Planned Development District and Conditional Use: Residential, Office and Institutional, General Business, and Highway Districts-- or their counterparts in the County's upcoming Unified Development Ordinance.
- Transitional land use is the most desirable pattern of development, especially when centers are next to low-density residential uses.
- The desired land use transition is (moving from a center's core outward to the edges of the residential support area): commercial, civic or office and institutional, multi-family, medium density then low density residential.
- The most intense developments, that is, those that generate the most traffic per square foot or per acre, have tallest buildings, largest parking areas, should be located near the center of each activity center. The intensity of development should transition toward the edges of the activity center and its residential support area.
- Activity Centers should have community or centralized Water and Sewer systems in order to support the required development intensity.
- Activity Centers should meet all environmental standards as required in local, state and federal regulations.

Design Guidelines

Design guidelines provide a flexible means to promote activity center concepts. Developers of activity center uses should strive for conformance with design guidelines, but may use alternative approaches that achieve the same intent.

Activity Center Design Guidelines place an emphasis on achieving safe and efficient access to thoroughfares, highly connected roads and paths, and visual compatibility of activity center uses with each other and with residential districts.

- Transportation improvements as required by Wake County Transportation Plan.

Application

- The ensuing Design Guidelines should apply to activity-center special use applications and conditional use rezonings involving commercial, office, or institutional uses.
- Special use applications and conditional use rezonings should be accompanied by site plans, texts, and graphics as needed to demonstrate their degree of conformity with activity center policies and design guidelines.
- Developers may propose, and the County may accept, alternatives to guidelines when they would achieve the same intent.

Proper Access to Thoroughfares

- Access points should have sight distances that are adequate to permit safe stopping of vehicles. Minimum sight-distances are:

<u>Speed Limit (mph)</u>	<u>Sight Distance (feet)</u>
35	350
40	400
45	450
50	500
55	550

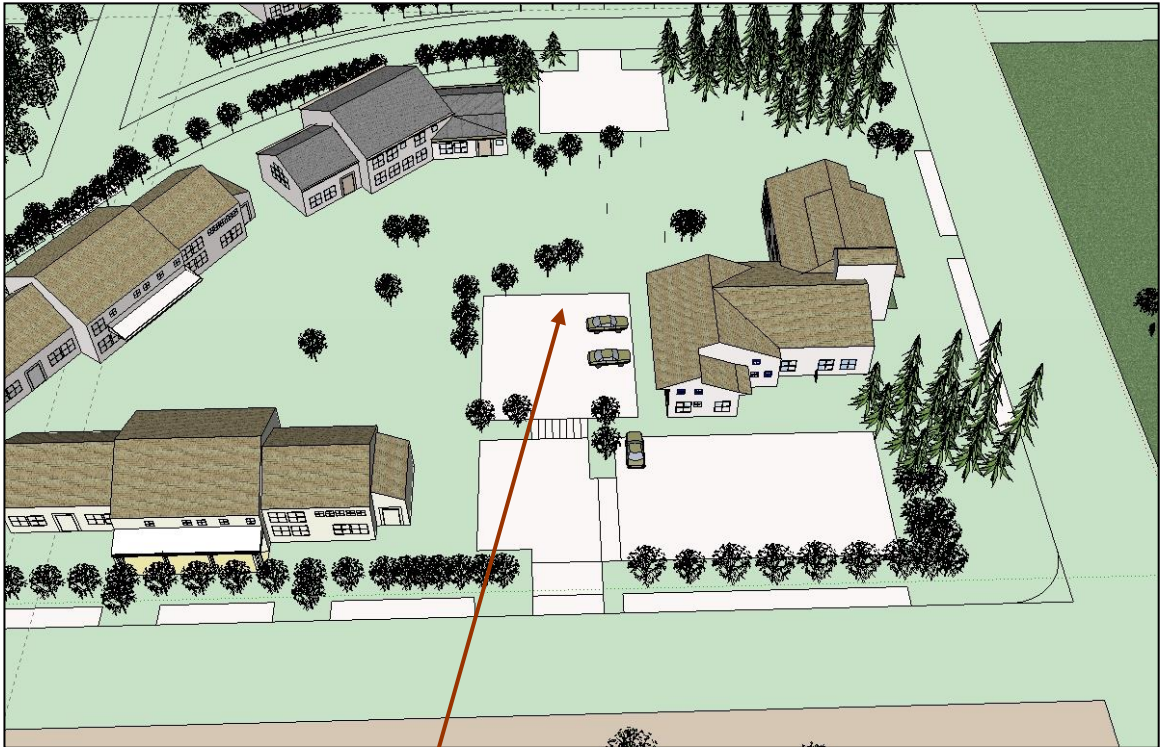
Access points should be located adequate distances (at least 300 feet) from thoroughfare intersections and from other access points to permit safe and efficient traffic flows. Where this is unachievable due to parcel dimensions or natural constraints, access points should be as far away as practicable from intersections and other access points. Vehicular full access will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Each lot should be limited to one point of access to an adjacent thoroughfare, for each 400 feet of lot frontage. Access points should be combined to serve multiple lots or uses whenever practicable.
- Turning lanes or deceleration lanes to NCDOT standards should be installed along abutting thoroughfares.

Connectivity

The site design should, to the maximum extent practicable, include an off-street parking design that:

- Provides parking areas in the interior of a block.



Where practical, site design should include off-street parking located towards the interior of a block.

- Maximizes the internal connection of interior access drives or streets within the project; with surrounding streets, projects, or subdivisions.



Site designs should strive to maximize connectivity between interior access streets and surrounding projects and subdivisions.



- Includes pedestrian access which connects the project with residential areas within, abutting or adjacent to the project.
- Provides a link to any existing or planned greenway that abuts or is adjacent to the project.

Site designs should include pedestrian access so that the project is connected to residential neighborhoods. Ideally, they would provide a link to existing or planned greenways.



Building Architecture and Materials

Buildings should include windows or doors for each story (upper story windows may be real or faux) visible from a residential district or public right of way.

- A residential scale and proportion should be encouraged in neighborhood activity centers. The mass of buildings may be de-emphasized in a variety of ways including varied facades or projecting or recessed sections to reduce apparent bulk. Such breaks in facades should occur at least every 50 feet of building length.
- There should be solid screening for all mechanical equipment, electrical equipment, plumbing vents, ducts or other utility structures that will be visible from a public road or residential district.
- The County's historic preservation ordinance and guidelines supersede above guidelines where applicable.

Landscaping

- Existing trees should be saved whenever practicable. Isolated stands of trees should be preserved and incorporated into the site design.
- Foundation landscaping, including grass and trees or shrubs/hedge plants, should be provided along building fronts and sides. Trees and shrubs/hedge plants should be provided in at least the quantities described in County ordinance for Type B screening, which are: one canopy tree per forty linear feet of wall, one understory tree per thirty linear feet, or one shrub/hedge plant per six linear feet. Any plantings that will be adjacent to thoroughfares should be located consistent with the recommendations in Wake County's Transportation Plan.
- Existing trees and vegetation may be used in lieu of new plantings.

Signs

- Signs that promote common or coordinated themes, colors, and materials for the activity center should be used.
- Lighting impacts of signs should be minimized. Signs legible from residential districts or public roads should not include flashing lights, strings of lights, or beacons.
- Freestanding signs should not exceed eight feet in height and thirty-two square feet in area per side. Smaller signs (four feet in height and eight square feet in area per side) are preferred where they can accommodate the sign's message.
- Building signs (including wall and projection signs) should be no taller than the lower eave line or roofline and project from the building no more than four feet. Their surface area should not exceed five percent of the total area of the building facade(s) on which the signs are located.

The development of Wake County's activity centers will focus compact development in mixed-use village centers that include housing, commercial services and employment opportunities designed with convenient pedestrian and vehicular access from surrounding areas. The County's activity centers will be appropriately located based on meeting the public's needs over the next 25 years.

By identifying the appropriate locations for activity centers we should be able to put safeguards in place so the activity centers can flourish, providing the necessary non-residential uses for the surrounding residential neighborhoods to utilize.

Higher density residential land uses, and non-residential land uses that comply with the land use plan, would be allowed as permitted uses. Only exceptions to the plan would require rezoning or special permits. In order to ensure that needed improvements are made to support new developments, municipalities could include those requirements in their zoning and subdivision regulations.

Activity Center Size and Spacing

- The County's primary aims on size and spacing should be that activity centers will be compatible with neighborhoods' existing residences, road networks, and natural features and will not contribute to strip developments.
- The characters of existing residences, road networks, and natural features will differ by neighborhood and will evolve over time; thus, the County should consider activity

center size and spacing in the context of each neighborhood at the times rezoning or special use applications are filed.

- Generic guidelines on size and spacing will provide frameworks for tailoring activity center proposals to existing neighborhoods; thus, guidelines in the following tables should be used.

Neighborhood Activity Center Guidelines	
Size	Up to 35 acres
Maximum Distance that Non-residential Uses May Radiate Outwards from the Center of the Activity Center (along Roadways)	800 feet
Maximum Depth that Non-residential Uses Should Extend Back from Roadways	500 feet
Minimum Separation from other Neighborhood Activity Centers	1 mile
Minimum Separation from Community or Regional Activity Centers	1.5 miles
Community Activity Center Guidelines	
Size	Up to 120 acres
Maximum Distance that Non-residential Uses May Radiate Outwards from the Center of the Activity Center (along Roadways)	1,600 feet
Maximum Depth that Non-residential Uses Should Extend Back from Roadways	800 feet
Minimum Separation from other Community Activity Centers or Regional Activity Centers	3 miles
Minimum Separation from Neighborhood Activity Centers	1.5 miles
Regional Activity Center Guidelines	
Size	Up to 375 acres
Maximum Distance that Non-residential Uses May Radiate Outwards from the Center of the Activity Center (along Roadways)	2,000 feet
Maximum Depth that Non-residential Uses Should Extend Back from Roadways	2,000 feet
Minimum Separation from other Regional Activity Centers	6 miles
Minimum Separation from Neighborhood Activity Centers	1.5 miles
Minimum Separation from Community Activity Centers	3 miles

Residential Support Areas

- A residential support area, capable of absorbing the demand in the Activity Center market area, should surround each activity center.
 - The activity center and residential support area should be compatible in terms of land use impacts and be linked to facilitate pedestrian, bicycle, and auto movement between the two areas.
 - The residential support area should extend approximately one and a half miles from a neighborhood activity center's main intersection. (The approximate service area of a neighborhood grocery.)
 - Residential support areas may extend five to ten miles or more for community and regional activity centers.
- The following non-residential uses are among – not limited to – uses that may be permitted outside activity centers, provided they would meet County policies and standards and would be compatible with existing residences: home occupations, offices of resident members of professions where such professions are carried on in their respective residences, daycare, parks, low-intensity recreation, libraries, schools, churches, fire or other emergency response facilities, plant nurseries, farmers markets, local agricultural markets, family care homes, group homes, and telecommunications towers.



A residential neighborhood supports an activity center. In ideal residential support areas, pedestrian-, bicycle- and automobile- friendly environments co-exist. Non-residential uses such as daycares or churches may be allowed if compatible with residential uses.

Timing

- It is not expected that an entire activity center will be built as a single development, under a single owner or that all uses will be built at the same time.
- It is intended that activity center characteristics will be embodied in individual uses, so that ultimately all the uses function as an integrated and complete activity center.
- Approval of proposed uses may be postponed to take advantage of future road improvements, or other future facilities, that will better serve activity center uses.

Before approving requested exceptions to activity center policies, the County should find at least the following criteria would be met. If approved the requested exception would:

- Result in a development pattern equivalent or superior to that otherwise achievable.
- Be compatible with the use or value of adjoining properties.
- Be consistent with the intent of County plans and policies.

Fewer and Smaller, Parcel-Based Activity Centers

Symbols, such as circles and triangles, were used to designate activity centers on the Wake County Land Use Plan. Symbols were also used to identify activity centers on all the Area Land Use Plans, with the exception of the most recent, and final, Fuquay-Varina/Garner Area Land Use Plan. The activity centers in the Fuquay-Varina/Garner Area are parcel based. Because most of the County's Land Use Plan Map does not designate the size or extent of its activity centers, those characteristics must be determined on a case-by-case basis, when the Planning Board, Board of Commissioners, and Board of Adjustment consider rezonings and special use petitions.

Although this lack of specificity affords a degree of flexibility in reacting to development proposals, it also requires that the various Boards either go through the process of making a reasoned interpretation of an activity center's size and extent, or rely on such an interpretation made by staff. The Boards have not been willing to go through such an interpretation process or rely on staff's

interpretation, and thus have had a difficult time determining consistency with the Land Use Plan.

The change from symbols to parcel-based activity centers began after the Board of Commissioners' Planning Retreat in 2000. The Board of Commissioners requested that the Land Use Classifications Map show specific boundaries for its activity centers, so that it and the other Boards can avoid having to interpret the size and extent of such centers, or relying on staff interpretations. The Board's Growth Land Use and Environment (GLUE) Committee at a meeting in early 2003, when the draft Activity Center Guidelines were presented to and positively received by the Committee, reaffirmed this policy directive.

The preceding Activity Center Guidelines were used, along with the input of staff and citizens, to determine the boundaries of the Fuquay-Varina/Garner Area Activity Centers. As a part of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update, beginning in 2005, staff will use the new Activity Center Guidelines to evaluate all activity centers in Wake County's jurisdiction. This will give Wake County the opportunity to more accurately identify those areas with the potential of developing as activity centers, and eliminating those locations that should not be developed as activity centers.