

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

### ***6.1 Using the Plan***

This Land Use Plan recommends the following three categories of “tools” that should be used in managing future land use development and growth in Rockingham County: Growth Management Strategies, Growth Management Policies, and Land Classification. Each tool has its own merits, and the following examples illustrate how they can be used when making land use and development decisions:

#### **How to Use Growth Management Strategies**

All listed thirteen strategies are brief descriptions of issues that the County has identified as important to managing future growth and development. However, each strategy is only briefly described in order to gain a sense of “setting a course” for direction. Each strategy needs further study and analysis that goes beyond this Plan’s scope and purpose. The key point is that the growth management strategies are proactive tools for mitigating undesired future land development outcomes in Rockingham County. As conditions change over time or the strategies become implemented, then it may be necessary to update this section of the Land Use Plan.

#### **How to Use Growth Management Policies**

To aid in the effective use of the growth management policies, the following explains for example, how different users can employ the strategies and policies in deciding upon a typical rezoning request:

##### **As Used by the Developer**

The developer or property owner can petition for a rezoning request that is consistent with County policy, thereby increasing the chances for rezoning approval, and minimizing guess work and time wasted.

##### **As Used by the County Staff**

The Rockingham County staff reviews zoning petitions, recommends that the petition be approved or denied, and prepares a written zoning report for the Planning Board. In making their decision and writing the report, the staff reviews relevant planning documents, including plans adopted by the County. Using the adopted policies will facilitate the County staff’s review of the rezoning request. The staff will be able to point out those policies that support the rezoning, and those that are in conflict with the rezoning, thereby shaping the overall staff recommendation.

## **As Used by the Rockingham County Planning Board**

Prior to the regular meeting, each Planning Board member can make his or her own determination as to the consistency of the proposed rezoning with the County's adopted growth strategies and future development policies. As always, the Planning Board should take into account the recommendations of the Rockingham County Land Use Plan in interpreting the true intent of the policies, but may choose to give different weight to different policies.

## **As Used by the General Public**

Residents of Rockingham County can and should reference specific policy statements when speaking in favor of or in opposition to a rezoning request.

## **As Used by the Rockingham County Board of Commissioners**

In its legislative authority to rezone property, the Rockingham County Board of Commissioners has the final word as to whether the rezoning request is consistent with the various plans that affect the property in question. The Board of Commissioners should take into account and weigh the interpretation of policy as employed by the property owner, the Rockingham County Planning Board, County staff, and the general public. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a consistent foundation for decision making.

## **How to Use Land Classification Map**

The Land Classification Map (#16) provides a graphic representation of the recommended arrangement of broad land use classes. The map should be used to guide the general location, scale, type, pattern, and relationship of development proposals. Each proposal should be considered on the basis of its proposed location with regard to the Land Classification Map, and how the proposal is (or is not) consistent with the recommended land class purpose, characteristics, services, and density. As conditions change over time, individual land development decisions may differ from the land use vision represented on the map. Deviations from the recommendations should have a clear basis, and may trigger an update of the plan or map.

## ***6.2 Monitoring the Plan***

The horizon year for this Land Use Plan is 2026. As growth and development occur within the County over the next 20 years, it may be necessary to make periodic revisions to keep this Plan up-to-date. Major changes in infrastructure, roads, and development patterns may trigger an update of this Plan. A periodic review of the document by Planning staff, Planning Board members, and the County Commissioners will insure that the document remains a valuable reference and guide for growth in the community. A suggested minimum frequency for updating this Plan is every 5-7 years.

## **6.3 Implementing the Plan**

### **General Implementation**

A new land use plan raises awareness in the community about its development potential, which often results in an increase in development interest and activities. A new plan can also be the catalyst for creating new public programs and initiatives. Successful implementation of this Land Use Plan requires cooperative action on the part of elected officials, property owners, and the development community. The primary implementers of this Plan will be the Rockingham County Commissioners who will be responsible for interpreting and acting on the recommendations of this Plan when considering development proposals and infrastructure investments, revising policies and ordinances, and establishing new programs and initiatives.

### **Action Steps**

Recommendations within this Plan are organized from general to specific. Chapter 4 identifies key growth and development issues, and presents community input in the form of values, general goals (see page 59), and a desired growth management option (see page 60). These core elements are then articulated in a broad “Land Use Vision Statement” describing the community’s desired future in the year 2026 (see page 64). Chapter 5 provides a set of “Growth Management Strategies” identifying growth issues that the County should consider for further analysis and study, along with specific “Growth Management Policies” to help guide our decision-making process in future land development and managed growth. The following action steps, organized into two categories, are recommended for consideration to help achieve Rockingham County’s vision statement and goals, and to provide a course for direction once this Land Use Plan is adopted:

### **Programs**

- Prioritize Growth Management Strategies for consideration of further study and analysis. Determine adequate levels of staffing, time management, and funding sources necessary to develop and study each strategy.
- Seek expertise and support from the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments (PTCOG) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) concerning development and implementation of access management policies and strategies along major thoroughfares in Rockingham County.
- Open dialogue and seek expertise with local North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) officials in coordinating development reviews and impact analysis.

- Open dialogue with County Schools in an effort to develop alternate funding mechanisms that keep pace with residential growth and maintain adequate funding levels for future education facilities and per capita expenditures.
- Hold discussions with County municipal officials to identify areas most suitable for higher density residential development, and develop incentives to locate growth in these areas.
- Evaluate and clarify direction for code enforcement activities (e.g., the clean-up of junk vehicles, abandoned manufactured homes, and dilapidated homes). Explore options for ordinance amendments, and funding and oversight of these activities.
- Open dialogue with home builders, economic development staff, and municipal officials on the parameters of quality affordable housing for young couples, professionals, retirees, and moderate income workers.

## Projects

- Consider the development of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) in order to develop a vision and prioritize improvements for regional and local thoroughfares. A CTP should also address the relationship between land use planning and traffic generation/flows.
- Consider the development of a master utility plan that provides policy and capital improvement guidance.
- Consider the development of specific area or corridor plans (e.g., US 158) that offer a more detailed analysis of current development conditions and land use recommendations. The County should also consider the updating of existing corridor plans (i.e., US 220 and NC 14).
- Consider the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that addresses promotion, connectivity, and management of greenways, natural corridors, bicycling routes, hiking/horse trails, State parks, and other related trails.
- Consider a broader range of development ordinance amendments to encourage and support implementation of the vision, goals, and policies recommended in this Land Use Plan including, but not limited to, the following suggestions:
  - Reorganize and make them easier to use, understand, and administer.
  - Streamline the development review process.
  - Refine zoning districts and their permitted uses.
  - Transition to uses approved administratively through development standards.
  - Provide more flexibility for small businesses.
- Require more high quality residential development standards (e.g., landscaped entrances, highway buffering, traffic calming islands,

sidewalks, etc.) and incorporate incentives for their use (e.g., density bonus).

- Provide additional development options (e.g., cluster development).
- Provide incentives for mixed-use development in targeted areas.
- Refine Planned Unit Development (PUD) standards and develop incentives for their use.
- Develop low impact subdivision design standards.
- Improve facilitation and enforcement of junk removal from property.