

# **CHAPTER 7**

## **LAND USE ELEMENT**

### **FLORENCE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Completed By:**

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**Chapter 7**  
**Land Use Element**  
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Section 1: Introduction

Land use and development patterns in Florence County are the result of a complex interaction of demographic trends, economic circumstances, and social attitudes. Technological changes in areas such as transportation and construction, and the availability and cost of natural resources, including land, water, and energy, also have helped shape existing development patterns.

The forces that influence land development are constantly evolving. Consequently, factors impacting land use form are dramatically different today from those which acted to shape land use patterns in the past. Lifestyle preferences, size and configuration of household, levels of personal income, available transportation modes and the composition of the economy are a few of the variables responsible for the current geographic distribution of land use and activities.

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**Section 2: Existing Land Use**

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In order to plan for the future, it is essential to have an understanding of the past and the existing use of land produced by it. This will help determine future expectations and dimension the degree of departure, if any, from established patterns of growth and intensity which may be applied in presently undeveloped areas.

Land in Florence County is used for a multitude of activities, and includes everything from farms to golf courses, houses to fast food establishments, and hospitals to graveyards. And all uses are interconnected. The location of any given impacts in some way the larger environ of which it is part.

For purposes of this study, a survey of existing land use was conducted by the Florence Municipal-County Planning Commission on a parcel by parcel basis. Existing land uses were recorded in both general and specific categories. General categories include Residential – single family, multi-family, and mobile home- Public and Semipublic, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Woodland, and Vacant. Specific designation were recorded for certain large scale uses and community landmarks. Results of the inventory are presented on an accompanying Existing Land Use Map.

Over one-half of the county is in woodlands; over one-quarter is in cropland, and approximately 15 percent is in urban/ built up land.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources prepared in 1992 a digital land cover map of the state, including Florence County. Land cover in Florence County generally is divided on the map into six broad categories.

From an aerial perspective, these six land use groups present a mosaic land use pattern illustrated on the following map. The urban/built up area represents a constantly changing land mass, fluid like quick silver, running into agricultural, grasslands, and forested areas, continually altering its boundaries in response to change wrought by growth and development.

That the existing land cover will continue to change over time is undeniable. After all, projections for the year 2015 show an increase of roughly 20,400 people. The impact of this many people will alter existing land uses. How prepared the county is to accommodate and influence these changes may well depend on its commitment to the comprehensive planning process, not just this Plan.

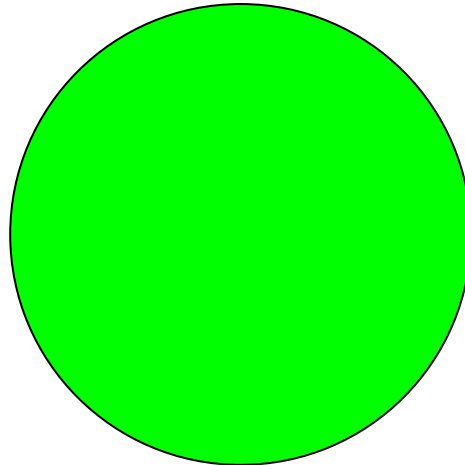
**TABLE I**  
**General Land Use Inventory**  
**Florence County**

<b>Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent County</b>
Urban/ Built Up Land(1)	76,531	15
Incorporated	19,904	04
Unincorporated	56,627	11
<b>Rural</b>	<b>434,957</b>	<b>85</b>
Cropland	131,812	26
Woodland	293,435	57
Other	9,710	02
<b>Total</b>	<b>511,488</b>	<b>100</b>

(1) Includes idle and unused land within municipal and built up unincorporated areas.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Agricultural, 1992; Forest Statistics for South Carolina, 1994.

### Existing Land Use (Acres)



Comprehensive planning is more than a plan, it is a process, according to the **Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994** (6-29-510), which will result in the systematic preparation and continual reevaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of Florence County.

Urban/Built-up areas are found principally in and around the nine municipalities in the county, most notably Florence. Forty-one percent of the population resides in built-up incorporated areas, while 59 percent reside in the unincorporated areas of the county, principally built-up. That development outside of municipalities generally is of lower density accounts in part for the disparity in the amount of urban built-up land shown on Table II. South Carolina annexation laws also play a major role in limiting the expansion of corporate boundaries to include all contiguous urban/ built-up areas.

While the incorporated areas (cities and towns) contain most of the concentrated development, the unincorporated areas contain most of the development.

All roads support and access some type of development, generally low intensity and rural in nature. Also, there are numerous unincorporated communities throughout the country, with relatively low intensity development concentrations.

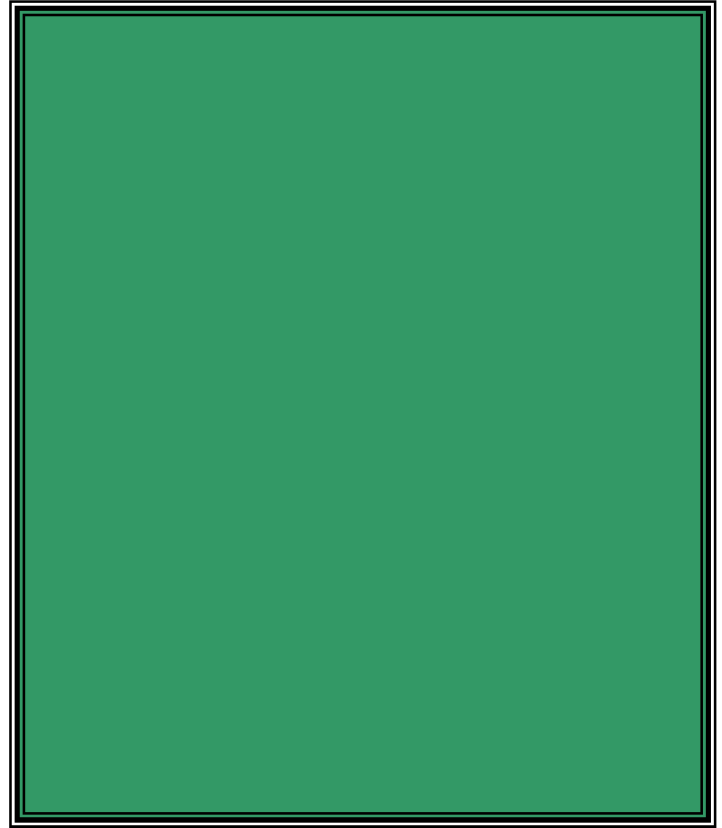
From a composite of the country, the most prominent use outside the Florence (City) urban area appears to be mobile or manufactured homes, which is not surprising in the view of the expanding rate of such housing state wide, especially in the rural areas. Their presence is not as significant in most municipalities because of zoning restrictions.

Additionally, the rural landscape is lined with single-family homes along most roads, and spotted with churches and commercial uses at key intersections, in rural communities, and in free-standing locations along highways and major roads.

Industrial uses are more concentrated in the Florence (City) urban area, on SC-24 near the Pee Dee River and along I-95, at least some of the larger ones. A fewer smaller industrial are located in the rural areas of the county and in and around Lake City and Johnsonville.

The new Honda Plant will be located on a 500acre tract just outside Timmonsville.

Although most roads in the county are flanked by development, it is generally low density and sparse. This is not the case in the Florence urban area however, Here, most streets radiating from the City are stripped by high intensity commercial and mixed use development, including US-76, US-301, the I-20 spur, US-52, SC-13, SC-343, and SC-51. Also Alligator Road to the south, supports high intensity strip development, as well as SC-24 to the north.



That development is taking a toll on the historically agricultural base of the county is well founded. Few agricultural areas remain in the Florence urban area, and many of those in the more rural areas have given way to more intense development, as illustrated by the Existing Land Use Map accompanying this study.

The largest residential concentrations in the unincorporated areas are located west and southwest of the City of Florence, influenced in all likely hood by the pull of I-20. Intense commercial development on US-52 north west of Florence also stems from the pull of I-20.

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### **Section 3: Existing Physical Form**

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The physical form of the county is a reflection of previous development decisions, land use constraints and capabilities. The extent to which the existing form is altered in the future will depend in large measure on decisions and policies made in 1998, particularly those relating to land use and infrastructure. Withholding infrastructure from agricultural and woodlands, for example, will effectively control, and contain the urban form, which will result in rural resource conservation. The urban form also may be shaped by zoning and development regulations.

Containment in this context does not equate to *zero* movement of infrastructure and development into agricultural areas and woodlands, however. It means planned, orderly expansion of urban/built-up areas, cognizant of:

- the impact on natural and historic resources.
- the cost of extending or upgrading infrastructure to serve new areas, as opposed to optimizing the utility of existing infrastructure and urban land resources, and
- the role of agricultural and woodlands in a balanced environment.

Clearly, the county's physical form will change over time, but the extent of change should relate to land needs for urban development within an enlarged urban environment, as opposed to *hopscotch* intrusion into rural, agricultural, and wooded areas.

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### **Section 4: Land Use Trends**

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As the county grows and continues to develop, more and more land is changing from farmland and woodland to residential, commercial, and industrial use, supported by more roads, schools, churches and other public and semi-public uses.

From 1978 to 1992, the county lost over 86,000 acres in farmland or nearly one-third of all farmland. Farmland dropped from 55 to 38 percent of all land in the county during this period.

In all likelihood, much of the "lost" farmland in Florence County has been developed in one way or another, as farmland soils are conducive to urban development, generally posing fewer constraints than other idle or developed land. As a consequence, urban or more intense development generally occurs at the expense of farmland, which accounts in some measure for the loss of farmland on Florence County.

The county's population increased from 1978 to 1992 by approximately 11,700, while farmland decreased by 86,599 acres. If we carry this ratio forward, the projected population increase of approximately 20,400 by the year 2015 would remove from the county another 150,000 acres of farmland. But such a scenario is likely a stretch, as the amount of lost farmland would be far more than needed to accommodate development if development proceeds in an orderly, planned manner without *leapfrogging* from farm to farm.

**TABLE II**  
**Land Area, By Political Jurisdiction**

	Land Area		Population (1997)
	Square Miles	Acres	
<b>Incorporated Areas</b>	31.1	19,904	50,109
Coward	3.4	2,176	600
Florence	14.6	9,344	33,500
Johnsonville	1.6	1,024	1,566
Lake City	4.4	2,816	7,800
Olanta	0.9	576	704
Pamplico	1.9	1,216	1,341
Scranton	0.8	512	1,000
Timmonsville	2.4	1,536	2,598
Quinby	1.1	704	1,000
<b>Unincorporated Areas</b>	768.1	491,584	73,256
<b>Total County</b>	799.2	511,488	123,488

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1990; Florence County Municipal/County Planning Commission, 1997

**TABLE III**  
**Florence County**  
**Land in Farms (acres)**

	1978	1982	1987	1992	Change (1978-1992)
<b>Cropland</b>	155,477	151,600	136,465	131,812	-23,665
<b>Woodland</b>	112,988	81,789	57,766	53,300	-59,688
<b>Other</b>	12,956	14,238	15,457	9,710	-3,246
<b>Total Farmland</b>	281,421	247,627	209,688	194,822	-86,599
<b>Percent Farmland</b>	55%	48%	41%	38%	

Source: U.S. Census of Agricultural, Selected Years



**Section 5:**

**Urban/ Built-up Land Needs**

The addition of 20,400 people will create a need for approximately 7,000 acres of development, based on land use-to population ratios common to South Carolina.

Over the years, our firm has compiled land use and population data from over 30 local surveys. We have found the average consumption of land in unincorporated areas to be approximately .34 acres per person, allocated among the four basic land use classifications: residential, commercial, industrial, public, and semi-public.

<b>TABLE IV Population to Acreage</b>		
<b>Land Use Classification</b>	<b>Land Use Requirements (acres per person)</b>	<b>Percent of Development</b>
Residential	.21	62.0%
Commercial	.01	3.0%
Industrial	.08	24.0%
Public & Semi-Public	.04	11.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>.34</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Vismore & Associates, Inc.

Using these allocations for Florence County, we are able to estimate not only the amount of land required to meet development demands, but general acreage requirements by land use classification as well, Table V.

Not all future development will come from the rural register, of course. These will be infilling of existing subdivisions and new development in built-up areas, effectively reducing the need for raw underdeveloped land. Still, the impact on currently un-built areas will be measurable.

Residential use will comprise the bulk of all new development, occupying approximately 4,300 additional acres by the year 2015.

**TABLE V**  
**Florence County**  
**Land Use Projections**  
**By Type (additional developed acreage)**

Land Use Classification	Average Annual Consumption	2015 Total Consumption
Residential	240	4,300
Commercial	10	200
Industrial-Business	95	1,700
Public & Semi-Public	45	800
<b>Total (acres)</b>	390	7,000

Source: Vismore & Associates, Inc.

Future industrial land use is perhaps the most difficult to estimate with any degree of accuracy, due to a multitude of factors, not the least of which the county's ability to secure and accommodate new industry. The county's existing industrial record notwithstanding, who is to say how successful it will be in its quest for new industry and business development?

Suffice to say, most future industrial development will occur in the unincorporated areas, as in the past, due to added overhead (taxes) of municipal locations and the preference of industries to avoid such taxes.

However, commercial expectations in the unincorporated areas are relatively low because of the traditional role of cities as commerce centers. But stagnant municipal boundaries, and the outward movement of residential development have created an enlarging commercial market in unincorporated areas. It could exceed the three percent share allocated by Table V to future development.

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**Section 6: Land Use Issues**

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Land Use issues are defined as problems or concerns, both real and perceived. From a review and assessment of existing land use conditions in the county, and input from the County Planning Staff and Land Use Committee, the following list of issues has been identified.

1. **Future development** of Florence County,
2. **Siting locations and safety** of mobile homes,
3. **Conservation** of quality of life, historic resources, natural resources, residential areas, and a balanced physical environment,
4. **Location** of potentially incompatible land use,

5. **Infrastructure** development and timing or concurrency,
6. **Appearance** of land use and development,
7. **Land use development practices** that produce illogical lot configurations (i.e. flag lots, land locked lots, etc.), contribute to off-site problems (i.e. storm water runoff, traffic hazards, lower property values, etc.), and are insensitive to natural resources,
8. **Urban sprawl** and the consequences thereof,
9. **Urban Corridor development.**

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**Issue 1: Future Development of the County**

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Future development and the consequences thereof are perhaps the most critical land use issues facing the county.

That the county will continue to grow is inevitable. The manner and direction in which it moves will depend in large measure on actions and decisions by planning and governmental officials. Where is the county going? What does it want to look like in the future? How will it get to where it is going? What are the trade offs? These are basic questions about planning and managing growth and development of the county in an orderly, positive manner, to ensure it's sustainability for future generations.

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**Issue 2: Siting, Location, and Safety of Mobile Homes**

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As a lower cost alternative to conventional stick-built housing, mobile and manufactured homes are increasingly impacting the landscape and tax base of Florence County, as indicated in the Housing Element. Unfortunately, much of this housing has scarred the landscape and lowered the tax base, because of the physical condition of such units and the manner in which they have been established. This is not to conclude that mobile and manufactured housing should be prevented from locating in the county or relegated to obscure locations, but clearly the situation is such that stronger more meaningful development guidelines and standards are needed to address the issues of:

- ✓ location
- ✓ siting or setup, and
- ✓ safety and habitability.

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**Issue 3: Conservation of quality of life, historic resources, natural Resources, residential areas, and a balanced physical Environment.**

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The conservation issue is broad in scope covering most physical resources responsible for quality of life, including historic and natural resources, quality residential areas, and a balanced physical environment.

As development inevitably impacts and changes the physical appearance of Florence County, these are the things that need to be monitored and protected to ensure their longevity.

In reality, everything that contributes to quality of life should be preserved and enhanced, not just the resources listed herein, but everything that makes Florence County an attractive place to live, work, and recreate.

Outside federal wetlands regulations and flood plain restrictions, little is being done at this time to conserve natural resources in Florence County.

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**Issue 4: Location of potentially incompatible uses.**

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Public support for planning generally is based on the premise that not all uses are compatible and that separation of buffering between incompatible uses is essential to the protection of property values, environments, and resources.

Home owners and land owners, environmentalists and the general public alike are concerned when new development creates an incompatible situation, i.e. lowers property values, heightens traffic congestion, emits pollutants, alters accepted environmental conditions, scars the landscape, or is just plain ugly.

How this plan responds to the juxtaposition of incompatible land uses may well mirror the future landscape of the county.

Not all use is complementary to or compatible with its surroundings, existing or proposed. Any infringement by uses adversely impacting prevailing environmental conditions generally is met by resistance from affected property owners.

Land use incompatibility is a universal issue. It is no less an issue in Florence County, surfacing every time a new use or project impacts an existing residential area or environmental resource. Depending on the nature of the project, the compatibility issue ranges from non-controversial to NIMBY proportions (not in my back yard).

To address this issue, the county has enacted zoning regulations for some unincorporated areas, and all municipalities have adopted zoning. Still, the issue of land use incompatibility persists.

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**Issue 5: Infrastructure development and timing or concurrency.**

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While not a land use issue as such, land use and development are contingent on infrastructure, i.e. water, sewer, roads, etc.

The extension and/or improvement of infrastructure can and does determine the carrying capacity of and influence the use of land. Decisions and policies to withhold or extend urban infrastructure, for example, may do more to shape the future of the county than any other thing, including zoning. Without urban infrastructure, rural areas of the county will remain rural. And with upgraded infrastructure, urban areas may become more concentrated and land utilization more efficient.

Also, there is the matter of financing infrastructure improvements, and getting the most efficient return on investments. Planned and orderly extension and/or upgrading of infrastructure, concurrently with development will guarantee immediate return on investments, making the process more cost effective.

In sum, the infrastructure issue is one of **where and when** to extend and/or upgrade, as this issue more than any other holds key to the future form and intensity of land use in Florence County.

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**Issue 6: Appearance of land use and development.**

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There is a saying “ You don’t get a second chance to male a first impression.” This is true for counties as well. How Florence County is perceived to prospective residents, industry, business, and visitors is crucial to its future well being. Existing land use projects a visual image of the county and plays a major role in future development by attracting like uses. Quality development generally attracts quality development and blight begets blight. This is not always true, of

course, but rarely does quality development take place in a blighted area, unless major resources have been committed to renewal.

The physical image of Florence County is tempered by a number of features, both negative and positive. Based on survey observations they include:

<u>Negative Features</u>	<u>Positive Features</u>
Signs & Billboards	Cultural & Historic Resources
Commercial Clutter	Attractive, high profile industries
Strip Commercial development along most urban arterial streets	Woodlands & Farmlands
Poorly developed mobile home parks	Frances Marion University
	Natural resource areas

These and other features combine to form a mosaic of the county. The key to improving the image is to eliminate or reduce negative features and expand and accentuate positive features.

Appearance is identified here as a county issue, but in reality it is an issue confined principally to those areas burdened by negative physical features. Quality developers and responsible land owners routinely address the issue of appearance. It is a matter of individual and community pride. For others, the issue of appearance may need to be regulated or mandated.

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**Issue 7: Land use development practices that produce illogical lot configurations (i.e. flag lots, land locked lots, etc.), contribute to off-site problems (i.e. storm water run-off, traffic hazards, lower property values, etc.), and are insensitive to natural resources.**

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Most, if not all, land use problems are created by development practices:

- ✓ that are insensitive to surrounding development and natural resources,
- ✓ that create illogically configured lots and parcels, and
- ✓ that produce or contribute to off-site problems.

This issue is currently addressed in several regulatory documents, including City and County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and flood plain and wetlands regulations.

That this issue is still with us is evidence that these documents have had less than the desired affect on development practices. As a result, each should be reviewed in light of a common objective to enhance the outcome of development and ameliorate the impact on its surroundings.

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**Issue 8: Urban sprawl and the consequences thereof.**

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The Florence urban area is a prime example of urban sprawl.

The term *urban sprawl* refers to several distinct urban development patterns. In its broadest definition, it refers to a pattern of low-density suburban development that has spread out around most cities in this county during the postwar era. More narrowly applied, it refers to premature leapfrogging or “highway ribbon” development or low-density scattered development that occurs beyond the current perimeter of contiguous development. A synthesized definition of urban sprawl drawn from planning literature is:

*Unplanned, uncontrolled, and uncoordinated single-use development that does not provide for an attractive and functional mix of uses and/or is not functionally related to surrounding land uses and which variously appears as low density, ribbon or strip, scattered, leapfrog, or isolated development.*

Urban sprawl is viewed by most as wasteful of land and resources, costly to serve, damaging to the environment, and unsightly, among other things.

To better manage and address the issue of sprawl an urban growth boundary is recommended for the Florence urban areas, one which will encourage in-filling and optimize infrastructure investments.

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**Issue 9: Urban corridor development.**

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Most major urban arterial streets and roads have been stripped by development, with little evidence of commercial and business concentrations in nodes or centers separated by open space and low density use. As a result, this issue is not as much about limiting strip commercial development in favor of strategically located business nodes, as it is about traffic control, appearance, and intensity of development.

The infusion of open space, landscaping, curb cut controls, signage controls, project design, and aesthetic measures should be applied to existing and future development along all major urban corridors to help retain the carrying capacity and improve the appearance and safety of such roads.

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**Section 7: Land Use Goals, Strategies**

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As the county moves inevitably toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there needs to be a clear vision of the kind of future county residents want- a growth plan supported by goals and strategies. The essence of such a plan is embodied in the following vision statement:

**To provide a sustainable quality of life in a physical environment characterized by:**

- *Quality housing and residential areas,*
- *A balanced physical form, rural and urban*
- *Greenway, open space and recreational opportunities,*
- *Attractive building design and land development, and*
- *Adequate infrastructure support provided in a timely manner.*

In furtherance of this vision and in response to issues raised in Section 6 of this document, the following goals and strategies are set forth:

Goal	Description
1	Conserve and effectively use natural resources threatened by development.

- 2 Enhance the quality and appearance of development and physical settings.
- 3 Articulate an arrangement of land uses which will promote land use compatibility, protect property values and environmental resources, and meet the needs of future development.
- 4 Optimize investments in existing infrastructure; prevent premature development of farmlands and woodlands, and maintain a balanced environment, urban and rural.
- 5 Protect and sustain the character of existing residential areas.

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**Goal 1: Conserve and effectively use natural resources threatened by development.**

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Conservation of natural resources, including historical resources, is essential to the retention of quality of life characteristics.

Conservation is not always an easy sell, however, especially where regulatory measures are proposed, as it impacts property rights. But conservation may be accomplished in a number of other ways as well, including:

- 3 Educating the public, property owners, and developers on the aesthetic, social, and economic importance of natural resources, and the need for their conservation.
- 3 Incorporating and integrating natural and historic resources into development projects to uniquely signature such projects and conserve resources in the process.
- 3 Identifying precisely the location, nature, and extent of all existing and potential resources to be conserved, so that developers and property owners can mitigate or adjust development plans to avoid or incorporate such resources into the planning and development process, providing for responsible utilization as a means of conserving them for present and future generations to enjoy.

In addition to appealing to ones sense of appreciation of his surroundings, there are regulatory means of accomplishing preservation, including federal wetlands and flood plain regulations, currently in effect.

Other recommended conservation strategies include:

- 3 Amending local zoning Ordinances to provide density bonuses in exchange for green space conservation.
- 3 Promote cluster subdivisions with design features such as open space, greenways, wildlife corridors, wetland preserves, farmlands, etc. as a means of enhancing development, conserving resources, and maintaining a balanced environment.
- 3 Amending or enacting subdivision (development) regulations to require open space and resource conservation as a requisite to site development.

- 3 Amending or enacting development regulations to require the use of Best Management Practices (BMP's) in dealing with the development of resource areas.

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**Goal 2: Enhance the quality and appearance of development and physical settings.**

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A positive, pleasing physical appearance contributes not only to a healthy, natural, and culturally rich environment, but is likely to attract economic development as well.

To improve the physical appearance of the County, the following strategies are recommended:

- ✓ Amend zoning regulations to establish “overlay districts” along all major streets and gateways into municipalities establishing design and appearance standards.
- ✓ Amend zoning regulations to address signage and its impact on visual sensibilities throughout the county.

Currently, there are no sign regulations in the unincorporated areas of the County, nor in the Town of Scranton. Elsewhere, sign regulations vary in scope and content.

- ✓ Promote responsible development along all major streets and highways, sensitive to surrounding uses and scenic resources.
- ✓ Amend zoning regulations to require landscaping as part of any non-residential and multi-family projects. Also encourage landscaping, beautification, paint-up, fix-up of properties through volunteer pride programs.
- ✓ Rid the County of eyesores.

Vacant dilapidated mobile homes, junk yards, and poorly maintained mobile home parks should be targeted for removal or enhancement.

Enforcement of existing codes and ordinances likely would improve the situation.

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**Goal 3: Articulate an arrangement of land uses which will promote land use compatibility, protect property values and environmental resources, and meet the needs of the future development.**

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This goal is directed at the heart of planning, deciding what land will be developed and the intensity of that development. It is a matter of directing growth and development in such a manner as to preserve and perpetuate both rural and urban environs, neighborhoods, and natural resources, and creating a land use pattern characterized by:

- ❖ Stable, attractive, and diverse neighborhoods,
- ❖ Quality employment parks and centers, properly integrated and disbursed within urban, built-up areas,
- ❖ Convenient, accessible, diverse, and attractive retail and business nodes and complexes,
- ❖ Points of identity and places where people want to visit or live near,
- ❖ Quality public services and facilities which provide an infrastructure support system for new development, and
- ❖ An arrangement of land uses which optimizes investments in existing infrastructure, and minimizes investments in new and expanded infrastructure.

Such an arrangement is proposed by the accompanying Plan Map, which is an integral part of this document.

Strategy for implementation calls for:

- ✓ Enlisting plan input and support by property owners, developers, and the general public.
- ✓ Adopting the Plan and the Plan Map by ordinance of participating councils.
- ✓ Amending local development regulations and policies as necessary to accomplish Plan Map compliance.

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**Goal 4: Optimize investments in existing infrastructure, prevent premature development of farmlands, and maintain a balanced environment, urban and rural.**

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This is perhaps the broadest of the several goals established by this Plan. It speaks to the issues of:

- ✓ Urban sprawl,
- ✓ Land use efficiency,
- ✓ Cost containment of infrastructure in support of development, and
- ✓ Conservation of natural and rural resources.

Recommended strategies for implementing this goal include the following:

- ✓ Establish urban growth boundaries; discourage urban sprawl.

This goal embodies the ingredients of an urban growth doctrine, including the establishment of urban growth boundaries, providing for urban and rural lifestyles.

An urban growth boundary (UGB) is a planning tool that provides guidance for future growth by establishing a dividing line between areas appropriate for urban-and-suburban-level development and areas appropriate for agricultural, rural, and resource uses. They are a means of preventing sprawl development and directing growth. They provide a legal basis or justification for local decision-making at the urban edge. Land appropriate for future urban and suburban uses are included within the boundary, while lands that should remain rural fall outside the boundary.

The UGB is typically set for a ten to twelve year period and should allow for adequate development opportunities within the boundary for this time period. While it is necessary to reexamine the boundary during this period and possibly make revisions, it should remain fairly consistent in order to maintain the market's confidence in the UGB's effectiveness. Consistently in the location of the boundary provides local governments and service providers with the knowledge needed to budget for capital improvements and infrastructure investment within the UGB.

An urban growth boundary, sometimes called a development service district, defines areas already provided with or planned for public services—sewer, water, roads, police, fire, and schools—where growth should occur. It recognizes and establishes both rural and urban environments.

People residing in rural areas are there generally for one of two reasons. They appreciate rural lifestyles, or they engage in agricultural. Change, though often inevitable, usually is accompanied by resistance. The question, therefore, is how to accommodate more people and more development without compromising rural values. It is not easy.

It will require change in development principles and practices. Land is not an infinite resource. More people will have to share the same amount of land. Continuation of past development practices will perpetuate urban sprawl and compromise rural resources, gradually changing the rural character of the landscape.

Aside from conserving rural lifestyles and resources, UGB's:

- ✓ **Encouraging urban area revitalization and infill,**
- ✓ **Improve the tax base** through redevelopment of underutilized sites and lots occupied by obsolete uses,
- ✓ **Save money on infrastructure** by targeting growth to areas already served by public sewer, water, schools, recreation facilities, etc. and defining the limits of new and expanded infrastructure,
- ✓ **Reduce traffic congestion** by limiting the number and length of trips.

Longer travel distances to places of employment accounted for approximately one-third of the increase in vehicle miles of travel in the 1980's, even without taking population growth into consideration.

- ✓ **Conserve rural resource land.**

Outside of the boundary, natural resource lands and farming lands are conserved. Setting the limits on urban expansion gives landowners a sense of permanence for their agricultural lands which may encourage them to continue to invest in their farming operations. Conserving agricultural lands will help maintain and protect the county's agricultural base and support rural character.

The difficulty in adapting to a growth doctrine is that land use projections notwithstanding, we are unable to determine precisely how much land should be open to new development. As a result, growth boundary lines should include an element of flexibility, and observe where possible, physical features such as wetlands, swamps, streams, corridors, and other natural impediments.

The concept of an urban growth boundary, however flexible, must be embraced and supported by all applicable service providers to be effective. It is, after all, both a regulatory and a policy issue, often transcending political and service area jurisdictions.

As such, several initiatives working in tandem are recommended, including:

1. Regulating the use and intensity of development based on a boundary divide—rural and urban.
2. Establishing mutually agreed to policies of all affected urban service providers to withhold urban services from area beyond the growth boundary line, and/or,
3. Placing with the initial developer the financial responsibility for all public improvements, with recoupment from later developers, as opposed to the public sector, and/or,
4. Developing for proposed projects outside the growth boundary line performance evaluation criteria.

Under the third initiative, development would be allowed to leapfrog the growth boundary if the developer feels that a location outside the boundary is not premature, and he can make a go of the project. If he is wrong, he bears the brunt of the loss of infrastructure express, not the taxpayer or general public.

This approach relies on the market to set efficiency limits to urban growth by compelling new development to pay its own way. In this context, the market is instrumental in the formulation of land policy regarding growth boundaries.

Still, project locations outside an established urban growth border should be reviewed for appropriateness with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and mitigated for compatibility with its proposed surroundings. In this regard, mitigation should take the form of a **performance evaluation**.

Rural development proposals, outside urban growth boundaries, should be evaluated based on a system of soil suitability and quality, and consideration of such factors as (1) impact on agricultural, natural resources, historic, recreation, scenic, and other resources; (2) site economic viability such as farm size, land ownership, and investments, and; (3) access to public infrastructure, and necessary public, social, personal, and business services.

- ✓ Create an organization/administration structure capable of implementing containment policies relative to utility extension.

Expand membership on the Florence County Planning Commission to include ex-officio positions for the school districts and the major utility providers.

Unilateral decisions to relocate or build new schools and to extend or limit the extension of sewer lines directly impacts the movement of development. The current structure of the Planning Commission does not provide for a voice or a seat for these agencies. It should. Their input and cooperation are essential to a growth policy in support of this goal.

- ✓ Enact “ common” growth boundary containment policies and/or regulations to include schools, utilities, density zoning, transportation, and recreation facilities.
- ✓ Amend the County’s Subdivision (development) Regulations to require rural conservation and design alternatives beyond the urban growth boundary, and open space networking interconnecting rural development nodes.
- ✓ Encourage “ infill ” of existing subdivisions by providing bonus densities, where practical.
- ✓ Facilitate, in a timely manner, potential development sites within the defined growth area.

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**Goal 5:                      Protect and sustain the character of existing residential areas.**

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- ✓ Enact policies which would restrict rezoning activity that would disrupt the stability of existing quality residential neighborhoods.
- ✓ Identify, and protect through zoning, unzoned residential areas in the County from potential incompatible uses.
- ✓ Complement and/or add transitional use belts (zones) around existing subdivisions where needed to better address commercial encroachment and ameliorate potential land use conflicts. Also provide for transitioning in lot sizes, densities, and other characteristics from residential area to residential area.
- ✓ Monitor neighborhood conditions for signs of deterioration or change that would jeopardize land values and/or the sustainability of such areas.
- ✓ Enact bufferyard requirements where missing from existing ordinances to better protect residential areas.

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**Section 8: Land Use and Development Policies.**

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In addition to Land Use Goals and Strategies set forth herein, the following development policies are hereby established. They form the basis of the planning process by providing criteria to evaluate land proposals.

**General Policies**

- ✓ Encourage planned and orderly growth consistent with:
  1. The Land Use Plan Map for the county,
  2. The county's ability to extend or provide public services and facilities in support of development, and
  3. Land Use and Development Goals and Strategies contained herein.

**Residential Policies**

- ✓ Provide opportunities for an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sites and prices in order to meet current and projected housing needs of county residents in keeping with their financial capabilities and preferences.
- ✓ Encourage new housing development to strive toward the best principles of site planning and residential design.
- ✓ Promote new and innovative approaches to residential development which will expand housing opportunities and/or minimize public and private costs.
- ✓ Encourage and promote residential development in subdivisions of parks, as opposed to strip locations fronting on major highways.
- ✓ Ensure that the level and type of proposed residential development will be compatible with the physical limitations of the land and established land uses.
- ✓ Ensure compatibility in transitioning between different types of housing, size of housing, lot sizes, and other characteristics from residential area to residential area.
- ✓ Coordinate the expansion of residential development with information regarding potential impacts on schools, water and sewer systems, drainage, transportation systems, and other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Maintain and/or revitalize existing neighborhoods, communities, and rural settlements exhibiting signs of decay and transition.

### **Industrial Policies**

- ✓ Pursue the development of planned industrial parks and discourage the location of industry other than agri-industry in rural in natural resource areas.
- ✓ Encourage the development and/or expansion of industrial uses which do not produce excessive noise, smoke, dust or other particulate matter, vibration, toxic or noxious waste materials, odors, fire and explosive hazards or other detrimental impacts to the environment.
- ✓ Promote the location of industrial uses in areas which have compatible soils, drainage and other environmental characteristics which do not pose severe constraints to site preparation.
- ✓ Coordinate the location of industrial developmental with the provision so appropriate road, rail and pipeline facilities and information regarding potential impacts on community facilities, utilities, adjacent and nearby land uses and environmental features.
- ✓ Identify and reserve appropriate lands for future industrial development and protect these lands as well as existing industry from encroachment by interim land uses which would detract from, would be incompatible with, or would preclude their future industrial utility.
- ✓ Encourage the location and development of industrial uses in areas which will maximize the potential for safe, efficient and compatible operations while minimizing excessive infrastructure improvements and service costs to both industry and government.
- ✓ Guard against the location of uses such as hog farms and processing plants which could substantially damage environmental resources and amenities.

### **Public Services and Community Facility Policies**

- ✓ Prioritize and extend public services and facilities in support of higher density developments with existing needs and developing areas designated on the Land Use Plan Map.
- ✓ Curb extension of community facilities in support of higher density development in rural designated and/or zoned areas.
- ✓ Coordinate all capital improvement plans of the various utility providers in the unincorporated areas of the county to assure they are mutually supportive and comply with overall growth and development concepts.
- ✓ Assess the availability of public services and facilities prior to making decisions which impact undeveloped areas of the county.

- ✓ Promote development in those undeveloped areas of the county presently served or planned for water, sewer and other services.
- ✓ Discourage the use of septic tanks and settling ponds for all but low-density residential development in the rural areas of the county.

### **Transportation Policies**

- ✓ Promote the development of a more comprehensive and inclusive transportation system to better meet the needs of county residents.
- ✓ Ensure adequate right-of-way for future improvements and expansions through dedication and building setback requirements based on hierarchical systems of roads.
- ✓ Protect the safety and traffic-carrying capacity of major interchanges and thoroughfares with a combination of design, land use, setback, and curb cut controls.
- ✓ Ensure safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems in new subdivisions.
- ✓ Protect airport facilities against potential hazards to flight operations created by adjacent land uses.
- ✓ Encourage the development of and map (using official map legislation) an expanded arterial street system radiating from the City of Florence, cross hatched with a grid system of super blocks, linking and accessing subdivisions. Such a system would supplement the existing arterial network serving the Florence Community, reduce traffic congestion, and help facilitate vehicular movement in the future.

### **Open Space and Recreation Policies and Distribution**

- ✓ Optimize the location of new park and recreation facilities to meet the diverse needs of needs of county residents.
- ✓ Secure future sites for recreation activities by identifying land and water areas having the best combination of natural features, size and location suited for the type of experiences to be provided.
- ✓ Preserve the positive qualities of areas which have important recreational, scenic, historic, Archaeological, education and aesthetic values.
- ✓ Encourage land development practices that reserve open space and conserve on-site resources.

### **Natural Resources Utilization and Conservation Policies**

- ✓ Protect, maintain and enhance the county's natural resources for future generations to share and enjoy.
- ✓ Ensure that the development of land and water resources proceeds in a manner consistent with resource capabilities.

- ✓ Protect water quality and water sheds.
- ✓ Protect agricultural areas from premature and indiscriminate encroachment of development which would usurp their utility or be incompatible with agricultural operations.

### **Commercial Policies**

- ✓ Ensure that commercial establishments are designed to minimize their impact on traffic circulation and adjacent land uses.
- ✓ Encourage the clustering of commercial establishments in nodes which are convenient to population concentrations.
- ✓ Discourage strip commercial development.
- ✓ Prohibit the encroachment of commercial development into established residential areas.
- ✓ Coordinate commercial development with information regarding the potential impact on the Comprehensive Plan, community facilities, transportation system, adjacent and nearby land uses and the environment.

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## **Section 9: Land Use Plan (Map)**

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The Land Use Map is an expression of geographic objectives, presented in map form. It establishes development objectives for various areas of the county.

Inherent in Plan (Map) objectives are policies dealing with the treatment of development. These policies represent legislative intent on the part of elected officials to meet development objectives for the various geographic areas of the county.

Land use and development objectives are identified on the Plan Map by the use of colors and symbols. They are based in part on factors influencing development, i.e. growth projections, existing land use, land use potential, land use constraints, land use issues, and land use goals.

The various categories illustrated on the Plan Map include:

#### **Economic Activity Areas**

- High Intensity Economic Nodes**
- High Intensity Economic Corridors**
- Low Intensity Economic Nodes**
- Rural Community Nodes**
- Industrial- Business Areas**

#### **Transitional Areas**

#### **Residential Areas**

- Existing Residential**
- Developing Residential**

#### **Rural Resource / Agricultural Areas**

## Major Parks and Open Space

Following are **objectives** and **policies** for guiding development within each of the above map categories.

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## ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AREAS

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Economic activity areas or EAA's designated on the Plan Map contain uses providing employment and commercial opportunities and/ or generally suited to the development of such uses, i.e. business, commerce, wholesale, industry, government, services, etc. These areas are further classified on the basis of their function and intensity of development, i.e. high intensity, low intensity, and rural.

Areas predominately devoted to or planned for regional or general commercial use are designated high intensity nodes and/or corridors. Areas designated as low intensity nodes are intended to be convenience service centers, and rural community nodes are intended principally to meet limited service, commercial, and social needs of rural residents. Economic uses spread over a larger area are classified not as nodes, but as Industrial- Business areas.

Where economic activity circles or nodes appear on the Plan Map, the intent is to promote cluster development, in keeping with the planned intensity and use of such areas.

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## HIGH INTENSITY NODES

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### Objective

This is an inclusive economic or business designation. The objective is to concentrate general commercial development and economic activity in these areas, and to minimize the impact of such uses on neighboring properties, the transportation network, and environmental resources. Further, the objective is to encourage and promote the economic vitality and ability of the county, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas, to compete in a regional market by concentrating economic activities, thereby strengthening the draw of such areas through "cumulative attraction".

### Strategy

- ✓ Provide investment incentives for concentrating development in such nodes.
- ✓ Channel higher intensity development to such areas, by prohibiting it elsewhere.
- ✓ Provide urban infrastructure to such areas.

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## HIGH INTENSITY CORRIDORS

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### Objective

The objective of the high intensity development corridor concept is to support continued development and economic strengthening of designated High Intensity Corridors, and to enhance the appearance, improve the safety, and retain the carrying capacity of such corridors.

### Strategy

- ✓ Enact regulations to govern the development of these corridors in a manner that:

1. Minimizes the impact on traffic movement and the carrying capacity of such corridors,
  2. Promotes safety,
  3. Addresses appearance and alignment of buildings,
  
  4. Makes landscaping an integral part of all future development,
  5. Promotes street tree plantings and the greening of such corridors, and
  6. Addresses signage and the proliferation thereof.
- ✓ Limit high intensity corridor development to areas so designated, and prohibit such high intensity strip development on other streets and roads.

For the purpose of this study, high intensity use corridors are defined by two or more of the following conditions, and illustrated on the Plan Map.

1. High traffic volumes.
2. Continuous line of development, with relatively few unbroken stretches,
3. Frequent curb cuts often accessing small lots,
4. Public sewer availability, existing or planned.

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## **INDUSTRIAL – BUSINESS AREAS**

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### **Objective**

The objective of the Industrial–Business designation is twofold, (1) to create industrial and business development opportunities and (2) to protect existing industrial and business interest from incompatible development.

Areas so designated have been determined to be suitable to such development based on soil conditions, access, and infrastructure (existing or planned).

### **Strategy**

- ✓ Identify and map areas with industrial and business potential, and take appropriate action to reserve such areas for future development.
- ✓ Promote the development of industrial and office parks within such areas.
- ✓ Facilitate such areas for industrial and business development.
- ✓ Reduce through zoning, site design , and/or buffer requirements potential conflicts between business/ industrial uses (existing and future) and residential uses.

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## **LOW INTENSITY NODES**

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### **Objective**

The objective of this design is to concentrate convenience and service establishments in proximity to residential areas, and to encourage strip commercial development as an alternative.

### **Strategy**

- ✓ Restrict through zoning the use of such areas to convenience and service establishments, and related uses.
- ✓ Prohibit core uses targeted for these nodes from strip locations along other high intensity corridors.

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## **RURAL COMMUNITY NODES**

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### **Objective**

The objective of this classification is to sustain and support rural community centers as an integral part of the rural environment, serving the commercial, service, social, and agricultural needs of nearby rural residents.

### **Strategy**

- ✓ Promote clustering of development in rural areas, as opposed to striping rural routes.
- ✓ Promote mixed use development (i.e. commercial and residential) of such nodes, thereby strengthening the community concept.

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## **TRANSITIONAL AREAS**

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Transitional areas may be characterized as mixed use “buffer strips” between potentially incompatible uses such as commercial and residential, or larger mixed use areas in a state of change.

### **Objective**

The objective of this designation is two-fold: (1) to recognize mixed uses areas and guide the development or redevelopment of such areas to ensure an orderly outcome of the transitional process, and (2) to ameliorate through a limited use buffer area or strip the potential impact of economic development activity on established residential areas.

### **Strategy**

Strategies for implementing transitional area objectives include the following:

- ✓ Regulate the transitional process in such areas so as to enhance environmental conditions and maintain or improve property values.
- ✓ Evaluate all proposed use changes in such areas to determine the impact on the transitional process, and accommodate change only where substantial improvement or strengthening of the area would result- guide the transitional process in the best interest of the county.

The strategy for areas bordering residential subdivisions is to establish a limited mixed use buffer zone to moderate transition between economic activity areas and residential areas.

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## **EXISTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

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Existing residential areas represent one of the most important resources in the county. As such, the retention and protection of such areas are paramount.

## Objective

The objective of this designation is to identify and protect the character and present use of residential resources (existing neighborhoods and subdivisions) and to prohibit development which would compromise or infringe on the prevailing character or combined use of such resources for residential purposes. Also, this designation is designed to promote in-filling of such areas with like uses as an efficient means of meeting future housing demands, and limiting sprawl.

## Strategy

The following strategies are designed to implement the objective of this classification.

- ✓ Identify and map such areas.
- ✓ Structure and apply zoning and development regulations aimed at protecting the use and integrity of such areas.
- ✓ Monitor existing subdivisions for sign of change of use and/or deteriorating conditions, and take appropriate action to stabilize and/or revitalize such areas for continued residential use.

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## DEVELOPING RESIDENTIAL AREAS

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This is where most future residential development is expected to take place based on trends, availability of existing and/or planned infrastructure, and environmental conditions.

## Objective

The objective of this designation is to promote and accommodate in an orderly manner residential development in areas so designated.

## Strategy

The following strategies are recommended for implementing the above objective:

- ✓ Regulate development within such areas to ensure land use compatibility.
- ✓ Back residential subdivisions along arterial streets; discourage strip residential development and control curb cuts along such streets.
- ✓ Enact habitability, siting, and safety standards for manufactured homes, and promote compatibility with conventional dwellings.
- ✓ Amend subdivision regulations to address conservation of in-site resources and the integration of such resources into site design.
- ✓ Ensure that the level and type of proposed residential development will be compatible with the physical limitations of the land and established land uses in the surrounding area.

- ✓ Provide opportunities for an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sites, and prices in order to meet current and projected housing needs of county residents in keeping with their financial capabilities and preferences.
- ✓ Promote new and innovative approaches to residential development which will expand the variety of housing opportunities and/or minimize public and private costs.

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## **RURAL RESOURCES/ AGRICULTURAL AREAS**

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Most areas shown on the Plan Map generally are outside the path of projected development, characteristically rural and predominately undeveloped or in agricultural use at this time. Moreover, few changes to these areas are anticipated during the life of this Plan, provided urban sprawl is kept in check. The retention of open lands, and wetlands which make up a large part of this area, are essential for clean air, water, wildlife, many natural cycles, and a balanced environment among other things. Even more essential from an economic perspective are the agricultural lands and farming operations in this area. These areas also provide a **rural environment** preferred by many people over subdivisions and higher density urban or community settings.

### **Objective**

The objective of this classification is to conserve rural characteristics and resources, particularly agricultural, and maintain a balanced rural-urban environment.

### **Strategy**

Strategies designed to implement this objective include:

- ✓ Setting an urban growth boundary which would limit urban intrusions into such areas.
- ✓ Monitoring and mitigating proposed changes which would alter or compromise the rural character of such area.
- ✓ Amending subdivision regulations to encourage cluster development with open space-agricultural land set asides as an alternative to large lot development.
- ✓ Prohibit through zoning high intensity development from the area.

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## **MAJOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE**

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This classification identifies all existing and proposed major parks and open space, including wetlands.

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## **Section 10: Land Use Compliance Matrix**

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Nowhere is a plan more essential than in decisions involving zoning or rezoning. In fact, 6-29-720 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976 (Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994) states that “**regulations (zoning) must be in accordance with comprehensive plan...**” But unless the plan is clear regarding what constitutes compliance, it may not succeed as a guide to compliance.

To clarify the intent of this Plan and what constitutes “accordance” therewith, the use of a Compliance Matrix is recommended. The Matrix, presented on Table VI establishes criteria and parameters for determining compliance. It

summarizes land use objectives, and identifies major use groups which meet these objectives, as well as use groups which are at variance with the Plan. In short, it establishes a guide for determining when **development is in accord with plan map objectives**. It directly links the Plan with the zoning ordinance (and map), establishes clear compliance criteria.

Plan-map designations and the accompanying description on the Matrix establish the objectives if a given classification and the type of development which fulfills those objectives.

Plan map objectives may be met and plan compliance accomplished whenever land uses identified in the “accord column” of the Matrix are permitted by zone district regulations and uses at variance with the compliance matrix are denied location. Depending on the objective of a given plan map designation, land use options range from few to many.

Areas designated Existing Residential, for example, allow very few alternatives. This means that any request to establish a zone district which permits other than single-family dwellings and support uses should be denied as it is not in accord with Plan map objectives. This limited zoning response makes a strong statement for stability and conservation of existing residential areas so classified on the Plan Map, which is the Plan Map objective.

Where Plan Map objectives are brought into question, the matter should be reassessed by the Planning Commission to determine if they are still representative of the areas in question. If they are, any zoning change at variance should be denied on the grounds of “non-compliance.” If, however, there is a deficiency in the Plan or conditions or objectives have changed over time, the Plan itself should be amended. In this way, the Commission will continually evaluate the Plan for relevance and applicability.

The entire process- evaluating development and zoning proposals on the basis of the Compliance Matrix- is designed to better infuse the Plan and the Planning process into the development and zoning process.



**TABLE VI  
FLORENCE COUNTY  
PLAN COMPLIANCE MATRIX**

<b>ZONE DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
<b>PLAN MAP LEGEND</b>	<b>PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES (SUMMARY)</b>	<b>USES IN ACCORD WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>USES AT VARIANCE WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>
<b>ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AREAS</b>			
High Intensity Nodes	Create strong diversified business centers capable of competing in a regional company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Multi-Use Retail</li> <li>❖ Institutional</li> <li>❖ General Business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Residential</li> <li>❖ Industrial</li> <li>❖ Wholesale</li> </ul>
Low Intensity Nodes	Create limited retail and business centers to serve neighboring residential areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Convenience retail</li> <li>❖ Convenience service</li> <li>❖ Limited business</li> <li>❖ Small scale institutional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Residential</li> <li>❖ Industrial</li> <li>❖ Wholesale</li> <li>❖ Big box retail</li> </ul>
Rural Community Nodes	Sustain and strengthen rural community centers to serve and meet in part the needs of rural area residents, including commercial, service, social, and agricultural support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Small scale retail</li> <li>❖ Residential single-family</li> <li>❖ Small scale service &amp; business uses</li> <li>❖ Social and small scale institutional uses</li> <li>❖ Agricultural support uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Multi-family residential</li> <li>❖ Industrial</li> <li>❖ Big box retail</li> <li>❖ Wholesale</li> </ul>

<b><u>ZONING DISTRICTS CHARACTERISTICS</u></b>			
<b>PLAN MAP LEGEND</b>	<b>PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES (Summary)</b>	<b>USE IN ACCORD WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>USES AT VARIANCE WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>
High Intensity Corridors	Strengthen the economic vitality, enhance the appearance, and maintain the carrying capacity of such corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ General retail and business uses</li> <li>❖ Industrial uses</li> <li>❖ Institutional uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Residential uses</li> </ul>
Industrial – Business Areas	Create industrial and business development opportunities, and protect industrial and business interest from incompatible development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Industrial and business uses</li> <li>❖ Institutional uses</li> <li>❖ Wholesale and warehousing uses</li> <li>❖ Big box retail</li> <li>❖ Mixed-use planned development</li> <li>❖ Existing residential and infill of existing subdivisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ New residential subdivisions</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSITIONAL AREAS</b>	Guide new or development and/or redevelopment in a manner that: (1) is area sensitive to surrounding land uses, (2) promotes the highest and best use of land, and (3) is designed to have a positive impact on the transitional process, enhancing the physical attributes of an area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Any and all land uses consistent with the objective of this area designation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Any land use inconsistent with the objectives of this designation</li> </ul>

<b><u>ZONING DISTRICTS CHARACTERISTICS</u></b>			
<b>PLAN MAP LEGEND</b>	<b>PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES (Summary)</b>	<b>USE IN ACCORD WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>USES AT VARIANCE WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>
<b>EXISTING RESIDENTIAL</b>	Protect and sustain existing residential areas, including property values and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Single-family detached, site built dwellings</li> <li>❖ Manufactured housing compatible with design characteristics, safety, and habitability standards required of site built housing</li> <li>❖ Institutional uses in support of and compatible with residential uses, e.g. schools, churches, parks, and recreation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Most non-residential uses, including commercial, industrial, and business uses</li> <li>❖ Multi-family residential uses</li> <li>❖ Mobile and Manufactured homes not meeting standards for inclusion with single-family site built dwellings</li> </ul>
<b>DEVELOPING RESIDENTIAL</b>	Promote and accommodate in an orderly manner new residential development, and permit the housing industry to respond to changing market demands for various types of housing at varying densities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Residential uses, including single-family, multi-family, townhouses, patio homes, manufactured homes.</li> <li>❖ Institutional uses in support of and compatible with residential development, e.g. school, churches, recreation facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Non- residential uses, including commercial, industrial, and business uses</li> </ul>

<b>PLAN MAP LEGEND</b>	<b>PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES (Summary)</b>	<b><u>ZONING DISTRICTS CHARACTERISTICS</u></b>	
		<b>USE IN ACCORD WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>USES AT VARIANCE WITH PLAN MAP OBJECTIVES</b>
<b>RURAL RESOURCES AGRICULTURAL AREAS</b>	Conserve rural characteristics and resources and maintain a balanced rural-urban environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Single-family site built and manufactured dwellings</li> <li>❖ Agricultural uses</li> <li>❖ Small scale retail uses</li> <li>❖ Agricultural related industrial uses</li> <li>❖ Institutional uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ High density residential uses</li> <li>❖ Big Box retail</li> <li>❖ Uses generally in conflict with rural values and characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>MAJOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE</b>	Identify and incorporate wetlands and park facilities into the planning process, and protect wetlands from encroachment and misuse by development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Active and passive recreation where compatible with conservation efforts</li> <li>❖ Natural, open, or forested use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All development other than recreational, active or planned</li> </ul>



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## **Section 11: Key Recommendation and Implementing Strategy**

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Having developed a Comprehensive Plan in accord with the directives of the Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994, including the establishment of goals for the seven elements of the Plan, we are now faced with the question of implementation.

Both theoretical and practical consideration guide the action program which must follow planning. The theoretical aspect involves determination of priorities, scope, and location for action on the basis of need. The practical consideration is a matter of financing and political expediency.

Considering each, three broad based strategy initiatives are recommended, as follows:

1. Establish planning as a process.
2. Revise, Consolidate, and Reestablish Zoning and Development (Subdivision) Regulations of all local governments, in accord with the Local Planning Enabling Act of 1994, and the Comprehensive Plan.
3. Organize to achieve planning goals.

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### **1. Establish Planning As A Process**

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One of the principals mandates of the new planning enabling legislation (1994 Act) is for the local planning commission to *develop and maintain a planning process which will result in the systematic preparation and continued reevaluation and updating of those elements considered critical, necessary, and desirable to guide the development and redevelopment of its area of jurisdiction.*

As a process, planning begins logically with those entrusted with the responsibility- the Planning Commission and the various participating councils. But to be effective it needs broad base community or citizen support.

#### **Garner Public Participation and Support for the Plan and the Process**

Developers, realtors, institutions, and the general public alike are responsible for the many individual decisions influencing future development. They must feel that the Plan offers sound solutions to growth problems. If so, voluntary Plan compliance and implementation may be expected.

To secure needed confidence and acceptance by the public, their participation in the planning process is essential. First, public participation and involvement can promote public understanding and solicit support of the plan. Second, it can expose the plan to a broad spectrum of thought and input from individuals and groups whose reaction may take significant improvements in the original.

There are several ways in which to secure citizen involvement. It may be accomplished through public hearings, announcements, citizen advisory meetings, selected contacts with community leaders, etc. Also, the dissemination of draft copies of the plan to interested groups and conducting informal discussions have proven to be successful.

Additionally, plan acceptance and support may be accomplished through the process of educating the public at large. Throughout the critical formative stages of Plan and the process, news releases and editorials may be used to get the message across to the public as to what is being done, and enlist their participation and support.

### **Adopt the Plan**

The Plan should be given official status. Upon recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Plan should be adopted by all participating governments (councils), in accord with Section 6-29-530 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended, having given not less than 30 days notice of time and place of a public hearing on the Plan.

With the adoption of the Plan by ordinance, as required by the code, any changes or deviations should be preceded by amendment. This will mandate Plan compliance on all development matters, and fully infuse the Plan and the planning process into the decision making process.

### **Maintain the Plan**

No Plan is truly comprehensive, and no long-range plan provides more than approximate guidelines for the future. A plan is an organized selection of what appears at a particular time to be the best means to reach what seems to be desirable goals. Both the goals and the means of reaching them may change however, and there must be continuing assessment if the plan is to retain utility. There also must be an enlarging scope of planning in response to a growing awareness that socio-economics as well as physical improvements lie within the realm of public planning.

This document represents what now appears to be desirable goals and objectives based on the best knowledge available. As new data becomes available, it should be analyzed to see whether revisions of the Plan is needed. As new means of implementation are known, the Plan should be revised to determine what might be expedited without compromising the Plan. As change evolves, it should be reflected by the Plan.

Only in this way will the Plan retain validity and credibility. In fact, the Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (6-29-510) requires that the *Planning Commission review the comprehensive plan or elements of it as often as necessary, but not less than once every five years, to determine whether changes in the amount, kind, or direction of development of the area or other reasons make it desirable to make additions or amendments to the plan. The comprehensive plan, including all elements of it, must be updated at least every ten years.* More realistically, it should be and is recommended as an annual, on going process.

### **Coordinate the Plan with Plans of Other Agencies**

Cooperation and coordination with other decision-making agencies and institutions in the area, especially the school districts, utility providers, the Highway Department, etc., can spell the difference between success and failure. Interaction with “outside” agencies active within the county also may help establish planning as a process and acceptance of the Plan as a guide to development.

Copies of the Plan should be forwarded to all affected agencies and institutions for their use and understanding relative to local positions regarding development and/ or redevelopment within the county.

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## **2. Revise, Consolidate, and Reestablish Zoning and Development (subdivision) Regulations of all Participating Local Governments, in Accord with the Local Planning Enabling Act**

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The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for zoning and development (subdivision) regulations. It follows therefore that such regulations be amended and modified once the Plan is updated to ensure Plan implementation. Moreover, the

Planning Enabling Act requires that all land use and development regulations be reestablished in accord with the Act on or before May, 1999.

Further, the intent of all participating governments is to develop a common, unified land development ordinance for use throughout the respective jurisdictions of each.

Toward this end, a proposed new consolidation ordinance is recommended and scheduled as a follow-up to the Comprehensive Plan.

Based on plan directives, expressed in issues, goals and objectives, the proposed consolidated ordinance should include new or modified provisions designed to:

1. Protect existing residential areas.
2. Better mediate and regulate the siting of certain land uses falling generally into the NIMBY class (NOT IN MY BACKYARD).
3. Better address the issue of mobile and manufactured homes.
4. Restructure organizational and administrative provisions to comply with the 1994 Planning Act.
5. Improve appearance of development along all major roads and highways.
6. Revise sign regulations in an effort to improve the siting and restrict the proliferation thereof.
7. Require landscaping as a part of all commercial, industrial, and institutional development.
8. Add green space and conserve natural energy.
9. Implement an urban growth strategy, and protect rural areas from urban sprawl.
10. Expand zoning throughout the county.
11. Buffer existing land uses and resources from potentially incompatible development.

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### **3. Organize to Achieve Planning Goals**

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The key here is to expand the Planning Commission to include ex-officio representatives from the school districts and the public utility providers. Without their input on a regular basis, many of the goals of the Plan, particularly urban growth containment, cannot be achieved.

#### **Conclusion**

This document is to be used as a reference and guide to the future development of all jurisdictions represented by participating governments in Florence County. It speaks to specific as well as general issues and concerns, and is designed to better infuse comprehensive planning and the planning process into the day-to-day decisions affecting development.

It should be reviewed not as a static or rigid document but as an elastic guide to development, accommodating change within its broader confines. And, as required by the South Carolina Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of

1994, it should be reviewed for accountability at not less than 5-year intervals and updated at the 10 year anniversary, or earlier. In this way, it will remain an effective and current blueprint for future development.

If used as recommended, the Plan should produce for the County and all participating governments an orderly development process, and an improved environment. It will happen when local residents and officials get behind the Plan and process, and push for implementing legislation, policies, and budgets to move the Plan to the forefront of the decision-making process, as it impacts development.