CHAPTER 3

Growth Management

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Chapter 3.
Growth Management Plan

Goal:
Manage growth and development to reduce sprawl, create a more compact and balanced urban development pattern, and preserve open space and rural character. Emphasize compact development in appropriate locations to accommodate our growing population.

Introduction
Legacy 2030’s Growth Management Plan is a tool used to help direct future growth; protect existing neighborhoods, natural areas, farmland, and employment sites; and target areas for redevelopment and revitalization. A well thought out and consistently supported growth management plan should reduce sprawl, create a more compact and balanced development pattern, support more transportation options, and preserve open space and rural character.

The Growth Management Plan developed as part of the 2001 Legacy Plan sets the framework for Forsyth County’s physical development. It provides guidance by identifying where growth should be concentrated based on the goal of making efficient use of our limited land resources. Forsyth County first started using a growth management plan in 1987 with the adoption of Vision 2005. The 2001 Legacy Plan further refined the growth management concept and created the Ten Guiding Principles of the Legacy’s Growth Management Plan with the input of Forsyth County citizens. The Ten Guiding Principles are still very relevant to our future challenges as we look to the year 2030. Additionally, the federal and our State government have established six livability principles that align very closely with Legacy’s Ten Guiding Principles.

Under Legacy Growth Management Plan, Winston-Salem’s Downtown has become more vibrant and citizens enjoy diversity in housing choices including more urban-style housing units in and near the Downtown. Commercial development has been encouraged in activity centers as designated in the 2001 Legacy Plan. Numerous ordinance changes protect the environment and promote design excellence. Older industrial buildings are being given new life as residential, office, research, and commercial uses in and around Downtown. Current efforts to plan for a streetcar system and regional rail as well as increasing pedestrian and bike accommodations could broaden our transportation choices and help focus development more in the future.

Designating growth areas and encouraging balanced growth are goals that have been a bit more difficult to influence with growth management policies. Much of the area that was designated as Future Growth in the southeastern section of the county has been receiving a good deal of development attention, including the construction of the Dell and Caterpillar facilities, planned improvements for Union Cross Road, new residential development, and the Heart of the Triad effort. In terms of balanced growth, the west side of Winston-Salem continues to see more new development than the east side, but there are indications of progress. The Housing Authority of Winston-Salem is looking at a major new mixed-use project in the Cleveland Avenue area and several community development corporations are actively seeking new development and revitalization on the east side of Winston-Salem and north of the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter. Under the Revitalizing Urban Commercial Areas Program, older commercial areas are undergoing much needed improvements.

### Ten Guiding Principles of the Legacy Growth Management Plan

- Create a vibrant city center
- Seek variety in neighborhoods
- Designate growth areas
- Focus commercial development
- Provide transportation choices
- Protect environmental quality
- Encourage balanced growth
- Promote design excellence
- Recycle and reuse land and buildings
- Follow through on implementation

### Livability Principles Established at the Federal and State Levels

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods — rural, urban, or suburban
### Figure 3-1. Urban to Rural Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Development Pattern Features</th>
<th>Transitional Development Pattern Features</th>
<th>Suburban Development Pattern Features</th>
<th>Urban Development Pattern Features</th>
<th>Downtown Development Pattern Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXISTING CONDITIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scattered housing and farms</td>
<td>Scattered subdivisions and farms</td>
<td>Larger housing lots</td>
<td>Smaller housing lots</td>
<td>Attached urban housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal services not provided</td>
<td>Both larger housing lots and clustered development</td>
<td>Municipal services</td>
<td>Municipal services</td>
<td>Municipal services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural roads</td>
<td>Some municipal services provided</td>
<td>Wider roads</td>
<td>Alleyways</td>
<td>Major office and commercial development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sidewalks</td>
<td>Rural roads link new subdivisions to major roads</td>
<td>Few sidewalks</td>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
<td>Alleyways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural tourism</td>
<td>Scenic</td>
<td>Lack of street connectivity</td>
<td>Grid street pattern</td>
<td>Sidewalks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small convenience shops</td>
<td></td>
<td>Some horizontal mixed use</td>
<td>Vertical mixed use</td>
<td>Grid street pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Larger shopping centers/newer strip commercial</td>
<td>Small commercial nodes/first shopping centers</td>
<td>Vertical mixed use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Major industrial/business parks</td>
<td>Older strip development</td>
<td>Rehab of old industrial structures for other uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rehab of old industrial structures</td>
<td>Tallest buildings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 3 - GROWTH MANAGEMENT**
The Development Continuum

To understand how the Growth Management Plan influences development and how to make it more effective, it helps to first look at typical development patterns and how growth management plans are structured for a community. Development patterns tend to form a continuum from rural to urban (Figure 3-1). Differences in street and block configuration, building type, residential density, transportation options, natural features, and access to municipal services contribute to the variety of development patterns.

Most traditional development for towns and cities in the United States started with a compact core and a mixture of land uses. Dense commercial development occurred in downtowns, which were laid out in a grid street pattern surrounded by compact urban neighborhoods. Industrial and office uses were located downtown or nearby, providing easy access to employees who could walk, or in some cases, take streetcars to their jobs, with streets radiating out of the downtown. The commercial core served the residents of the city as well as the residents of agricultural communities coming to town to trade for goods and services.

After World War II, as more people were able to own vehicles and buy homes, the Interstate Highway System began to develop. Auto-dominated suburbs were built farther from the urban core and began to override traditional development patterns. Cheap fuel costs added to the popularity of the automobile and suburban living. As a result, urban growth patterns began to expand outward into previously rural areas. While the Interstate Highway system and other major freeways provided benefits such as increased access to remote areas and linkages between cities, these roads had other consequences including the development of suburbs. New federally backed housing financing programs made the dream of home ownership in a subdivision attainable for many middle- and even moderate-income families.

The focus of development shifted from a compact urban core to scattered, low-density, auto-oriented communities with a separation of land uses. Radial streets that provided access to the urban core and were once lined with homes became stripped with commercial uses. Street patterns became more curvilinear and the cul-de-sac became a standard feature of suburban neighborhoods. Many subdivision tracts were developed with only one or two points of access, forcing more traffic on to major thoroughfares. Residential lots became larger as the suburban development pattern became popular and neighborhoods became more racially and economically segregated. Offices and industrial uses followed the population out of the core downtown area, requiring cars for daily commutes and service needs. Shopping malls and centers replaced downtowns as the hub of shopping activity.

Many downtowns lost part of their historic fabric as surface parking lots and large footprint buildings replaced original buildings. Older, small-scale commercial and industrial areas were abandoned for newer shopping centers and suburban industrial parks, leaving large areas of declining buildings and infrastructure near the center city. With the outward movement of office and commercial uses, access to needed services became an issue for inner city residents. In some areas, the character of rural communities was changed by scattered subdivisions that expanded outward.

Though the growth in suburban and small town areas continues throughout the country, many cities are experiencing a renewed interest in traditional growth patterns. Downtowns are seeing a resurgence of housing, retail, restaurants and entertainment venues. Traditional forms of transit, such as rail and streetcar, are back in demand. Old industrial and office buildings are being rehabbed for a variety of uses. Residents, particularly empty nesters and Generations X and Y, are moving back to the inner city and are enjoying the convenience of living close to downtown. Suburban areas are being retrofitted with sidewalks, bike paths, and other infrastructure citizens now desire. Rural areas are seen as valuable resources for both aesthetic purposes and as part of the local food movement.

From the very urban to the very rural, history has defined this rich variety of places where people can work, live, and play. In recognition of this diversity, many communities have developed growth management plans to recognize and nurture the distinct characteristics of their communities. Specific strategies can then be formulated to protect and improve the character of each growth management area, which may include incentives, regulations or other tools.
Objectives, Policies, and Action Agenda

Objective 1: Growth Management
Concentrate development within the serviceable land area of Forsyth County with the highest densities at city/town centers, activity centers and along growth corridors. Ensure Growth Management Area designations reflect current or desired development patterns. Consider Legacy 2030 policies when evaluating zoning proposals and public infrastructure proposals.

Legacy 2030’s Growth Management Plan (Map 3-2) centers on the development patterns in the Urban to Rural Continuum (Figure 3-1) and is underpinned by the constraints of the Muddy Creek Basin (Map 3-1), the portion of the county that can be easily and efficiently served by sewer. Downtown Winston-Salem, town centers, activity centers and growth corridors are the best places to encourage growth in Forsyth County. The county is divided into five Growth Management Areas (GMAs):

- **GMA 1 (City/Town Centers)** includes Downtown Winston-Salem and the centers of Forsyth County’s small towns. It promotes a dense, mixed-use
and pedestrian-oriented urban form and is the hub for government and private employment.

- **GMA 2 (Urban Neighborhoods)** includes the areas of Winston-Salem built primarily before 1950. This part of the city includes intermixed areas of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development featuring smaller lots, sidewalks and a grid street pattern.

- **GMA 3 (Suburban Neighborhoods)** consists of neighborhoods built after World War II, and is where most development has occurred in recent decades. The area has a more separated growth pattern of different land uses with subdivisions that cater to specific housing styles and price ranges, featuring curvilinear streets that often lack connectivity.

- **GMA 4 (Future Growth Area)** is adjacent to GMA 3, but does not currently have public sewer or other public infrastructure necessary to support urban or suburban development. Significant development in this area is discouraged until plans for development are prepared and utilities become available. Once these services are available, sites in GMA 4 should be treated the same as GMA 3 when making land use recommendations.

- **GMA 5 (Rural Area)** is located at the fringes of Forsyth County and is beyond the area that can be provided with public sewer and other services in a cost-effective manner. This area is intended to remain very low density residential and agricultural in character.

(See **Figure 3-2** at the end of this chapter for Growth Management Area challenges, opportunities, and goals.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topical Plans and Area Plans</strong> Use the Growth Management Plan as a guide for policies and recommendations in topical and area plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zoning and Land Use Decisions</strong> Consider Growth Management Plan policies when making zoning and land use decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Needs</strong> Consider growth needs based on expected population and the limited amount of land available for growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countywide Planning Coordination</strong> Ensure land use planning is coordinated between the City of Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, and other municipalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City and County Coordination</strong> Ensure coordination between all City and County departments that manage growth and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transportation Improvements</strong> Coordinate transportation improvements with land use (see Chapter 5, Transportation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Investment Decisions</strong> Use the Growth Management Plan when making public investment decisions, particularly sewer extensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Future Growth Areas</strong> Provide public facilities to Future Growth Areas only when Growth Management Area 3, Suburban Neighborhoods, approaches full development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 2: Compact Growth in Appropriate Areas
Create tools that increase the overall residential density in GMAs 1, 2, and 3, as well as along growth corridors and in activity centers. Work with the community to understand the importance of increasing densities at select locations within Growth Management Areas. Focus on quality development with good design.

Increased overall residential density was a primary goal discussed in the 2001 Legacy Plan. However, the overall population density in Winston-Salem has actually decreased from 2.9 persons per developed acre in 2000, to 2.7 persons per acre in 2010 (see Chapter 2, Trends). While progress has been made, there still is not enough land used for higher-density residential development in strategic locations. Increased residential density in central Winston-Salem is critical because it concentrates population where public infrastructure is already in place and where a variety of transportation choices will be located in the future. Growth concentrated in GMAs 1 and 2 is more cost-effective from a public service delivery standpoint, reduces the pressure for development in the Future Growth Area, preserves open space and rural areas, and avoids traffic congestion and costly new infrastructure.

Activity centers have the potential to accommodate denser mixed-use development. Growth corridors linking activity centers to Downtown Winston-Salem, town centers, or each other, are generally located on major arterial roads and can accommodate the increased residential densities critical in establishing a robust public transit system. Primary corridors are intended to function as future multimodal transportation arterials. Secondary corridors are major roadways that typically link activity centers in suburban neighborhoods and in some cases link town centers to one another. Secondary corridors will be identified in the area plan process (see Chapter 13, Area Plans). Select locations along secondary corridors could have concentrations of higher density housing and may become transit corridors. The revised Growth Management Plan (Map 3-2) shows the general location of proposed activity centers, most of which already exist and have been identified in area plans over the past 10 years. More specific boundaries will continue to be identified through the area plan process.

In spite of the need for increased residential densities, options other than single-family homes are not often developed in Forsyth County. Perceptions of increased density are often associated with examples of unattractive design, crime, and lower housing values, and are hard to overcome in spite of the fact that some of our most high end new housing options are multifamily or cluster designs. In some older neighborhoods, many residents remember the fight to keep historic homes in place while apartments moved into their neighborhood. In lower-income areas, the association of density with crime has been a reality for decades. While new HOPE VI and other urban developments are slowly changing perceptions, there is still a long way to go.
### Policies

**Growth Corridor Density** Encourage higher residential densities along growth corridors to create the critical mass needed for transit to be viable.

**Growth Corridor Development Types** Promote a mixture of office, retail and housing along growth corridors that do not contribute to strip development.

**Activity Center/Growth Corridor Housing** Encourage the inclusion of housing at higher residential densities in activity centers and appropriate locations on growth corridors.

**Gentle Density** Encourage the creation of gentle density in urbanized areas (see Chapter 11, Neighborhoods and Towns).

**Density Bonuses** Continue to allow density bonuses where appropriate.

**Downtown Winston-Salem Densities** Encourage increased densities in and around Downtown Winston-Salem, where urban infrastructure already exists.

**Accessory Dwelling Units** Encourage the use of accessory dwelling units in appropriate locations (see Chapter 11, Neighborhoods and Towns).

**Density and Compatibility** Consider design compatibility standards for increased residential densities.

### Action Agenda

**3.2.1. Zoning Overlay Districts** Study the feasibility of zoning overlay districts for growth corridors and activity centers that emphasize mixed-use development, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and design compatibility for surrounding land uses.

**3.2.2. Activity Center and Growth Corridor Boundaries** Continue to better define the boundaries of growth corridors and activity centers through the area plan process.

**3.2.3. Housing Variety** Use the area plan process as an opportunity to discuss gentle density and the benefits to the community of a variety of housing types.

**3.2.4. Compatible Design** Create design guidelines or examples for higher-density housing to make density more compatible with its surroundings.

**3.2.5. Density Workshops** Hold neighborhood workshops on density issues focused on compatibility and design.

**3.2.6. Accessory Dwelling Units** Allow detached accessory dwelling units by right in some single-family zoning districts with design requirements or other specific criteria.

**3.2.7. Attached Dwelling Unit Feasibility** Study the feasibility of low to moderate density attached units by right in some single family zoning districts with design requirements or other specific criteria.

**3.2.8. Zoning Ordinance Changes** Consider other changes to the zoning ordinance that encourage appropriate increased density, such as density bonuses.
Objective 3: Limited Public Investment in the Rural Area

Use the Growth Management Plan as the basis to concentrate growth in GMAs 1, 2, and 3 while preserving farmland, open space, and rural character in the Rural Area.

Growth Management Area 5, the Rural Area, holds the majority of Forsyth County’s agricultural land, open space, and wilderness. This area is intended to remain very low-density residential and agricultural in character. Providing public sewer in this area would be very costly since it lies outside the Muddy Creek Basin, thus requiring expensive pump stations and more mains to serve each of the sub-basins that drain in other directions. Without public sewer, the Rural Area will be much more likely to contain only scattered, very low density residential uses in addition to agricultural uses and woodlands.

Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Area Development</strong></td>
<td>Minimize the conversion of undeveloped land into residential subdivision development in Forsyth County’s Rural Area by limiting the extension of public sewer into the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural Uses</strong></td>
<td>Preserve agricultural uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Road Building</strong></td>
<td>Limit road building in the Rural Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural Tourism and Recreation</strong></td>
<td>Continue to encourage agricultural tourism and recreation opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3.1. Sewer Extension</strong></td>
<td>Do not extend sewer in the Rural Area, except to address documented public health concerns.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Forsyth County is expected to grow by 120,000 people by the year 2030. If we keep developing our land in a scattered, low-density pattern, we will use every available part of the county. However, if we concentrate this growth in areas that can accommodate it – and even benefit from it – we will have plenty of room for our projected growth and much more. In addition to a strategy that takes advantage of infill and redevelopment opportunities, Downtown Winston-Salem, town centers, activity centers, and growth corridors are the best places to encourage more growth.
GMA 1. Downtown and Town Centers

**Challenges**
- Need for additional retail
- Higher than desired vacancy rates for office space
- Complexities in conversion of old buildings
- Need for affordable housing Downtown
- Historic properties in need of rehabilitation
- Need streetscape improvements
- Unsightly surface parking lots
- Perceived lack of parking
- Need for better connectivity between Center City and activity centers

**Opportunities**
- Resurgence of downtown activity
- Cultural center of the county
- Return of two-way streets
- National Register Districts established in sections of Downtown
- Return of Downtown housing
- Rehabilitation and redevelopment of eastern Downtown with Goler development and Wake Forest Innovation Quarter
- Winston Overlay District to help guide building and site design

**Goals**
- Attract more retail and entertainment
- Encourage more residential development at higher densities
- Create retail space on the first floor of buildings
- Continue to develop the Wake Forest Innovation Quarter
- Promote reuse of older buildings
- Promote design excellence
- Promote deck parking over surface parking
- Modernize and transform public transit offerings connecting activities and neighborhoods
- Attract a downtown grocery store
Challenges

- Deteriorating commercial – both small nodes and strip
- Need for residential rehab in some areas
- Deteriorating industrial uses
- Day-to-day services not available in some neighborhoods
- Loss of population in some areas
- Few facilities for the elderly
- Need for preservation of historic structures outside local historic districts
- Old infrastructure
- Crime issues in some areas
- Poor quality infill in some neighborhoods
- Loss of large-variety trees

Opportunities

- Reduction in parking standards for older commercial buildings
- RUCA Program encourages investment in older commercial areas
- Resurgence of neighborhood associations
- Interest in reuse of industrial sites for housing or mixed-use development
- Numerous National Register Districts
- Successful HOPE VI projects
- Buses available in many areas
- Bike lanes being developed on some streets
- New infill ordinance for GMA 2

Goals

- Some parks in need of updates
- Promote housing options for older residents
- Revitalize older strip commercial areas
- Reuse/rehab of older industrial structures
- Identify growth corridors for quality infill, density, and transit
- Control and reduce crime
- Encourage accessible transportation choices
- Modernize and transform public transit offerings
- Retrofit greenways and small parks
- Improvements to older parks
- Revitalize brownfields
GMA 3. Suburban Neighborhoods

Challenges

- Aging shopping centers
- New commercial rezoning can hurt older commercial areas
- Lack of open space
- Residential default zoning creates problems with retention of industrial/business sites
- Rapid growth strains infrastructure
- Some housing deterioration
- Lack of pedestrian orientation
- Some congested roads
- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of sidewalks within neighborhoods and along thoroughfares
- Post-WWII development will soon be considered historic
- Few safe routes for cyclists

Opportunities

- New street standards require sidewalks
- Bike routes developed
- Planned Residential Developments require purposeful open space
- Some new shopping centers using more pedestrian-friendly designs

Goals

- Encourage mixed-use development
- Increase density at activity centers and growth corridors at planned locations
- Consider program to improve and retrofit aging shopping centers or greyfields
- Create industrial site preservation program
- Construct additional sidewalks
- Retrofit roads to meet demands, include bike lanes
- Create new parks and greenways as development spreads
- Extend transit as appropriate
GMA 4. Future Growth Area

Challenges

- Residential may follow new schools into areas with little infrastructure
- Not ready for major development pressure
- Lack of retail
- Residential default zoning creates problems with retention of industrial/business sites
- Existing roads have limited capacity to handle significant development
- Lack of connectivity

Opportunities

- Saves expenses of infrastructure outlay before more developable land is needed

Goals

- Work with schools to build in areas that can best be served with infrastructure
- Provide services in orderly fashion
- Approve appropriate commercial development at select nodes
- Create industrial/business site preservation program
Problem(s) with subdivisions on package plants
Losing farmland to development
Losing rural lifestyle
Some scattered, inappropriate highway business or industrial types uses

Challenges
- Problems with subdivisions on package plants
- Losing farmland to development
- Losing rural lifestyle
- Some scattered, inappropriate highway business or industrial types uses

Opportunities
- Tax benefits for agricultural uses
- Agricultural Tourism Program in place
- Scenic beauty
- Economic development through local foods movement

Goals
- Preserve agricultural uses
- Provide limited rural services
- Limit road building
- Do not extend sewer, except to address documented public health concerns
- Encourage subdivisions that conserve open space and rural vistas
- Encourage tourism and recreation opportunities
- Do not rezone property to more intense districts
**Activity Centers**

- Cluster services in convenient locations
- Develop strategies for redevelopment where needed
- Develop strategies for creating a sense of place
- Promote mixed-use development
- Accommodate cyclist, pedestrians, and transit users

**Goals**

- Cluster services in convenient locations
- Develop strategies for redevelopment where needed
- Develop strategies for creating a sense of place
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**Development Considerations**

- Compatibility with surrounding residential areas
- Retrofitting or redevelopment of older commercial areas
- Many centers only commercial development
- Walkability, access, and traffic issues
- Develop strategies for redevelopment where needed
- Develop strategies for creating a sense of place
- Promote mixed-use development

**Growth Corridors**

- Currently designed for autos only
- Roadways are not attractive
- Protection of existing historic neighborhoods
- Discouraging homogeneous single-family and sprawl

**Goals**

- Create multimodal transportation facilities
- Promote construction of sidewalks, bike lanes
- Develop design standards for growth corridors
- Encourage attached single-family, multifamily and mixed-use developments where appropriate

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