

# Policy Area 1: Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development



## Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

### DESIRED FUTURE

#### More Local Restaurants

- Restaurants/places to meet and greet
- Restaurants with outside and inside seating

#### Proper Planning and Design

- Commercial development with some kind of standard like Oak Ridge
- Water treatment system for defined service area for controlled commercial development
- Arch design parameters for new businesses that preserve the nature of Summerfield

#### More Grocery Options

- More stores for shopping for groceries

#### Limited Growth In

- Very little commercial zoning

#### Redevelopment

- Clean up the Dollar General Plaza

*Either America is a shopping center or the one shopping center in existence is moving around the country at the speed of light.*

**Russell Baker\***,  
1985

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\*A brief biographical description of all persons quoted in this document is provided at the back of this plan.

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### No Big Box Stores

- Big box stores!
- Big box commercial development (Wal-Mart)

### Excessive, Incompatible Commercial Development

- Commercial development that does not reflect community “feel” and ambiance and charm
- No more commercial development at corner of 150/Lake Brandt
- Inconsistency of architectural standard
- Stop overdevelopment (redundant bus/serv)

### Good Restaurants Not Available

- Lack of restaurant options

### No Fast Food Franchises

- Burger King, McDonalds, etc

### No More Strip Centers and Shopping Centers

- No more cheap strip malls

### Vacant Commercial Buildings

- No vacant commercial buildings (Old Food Lion, etc)

### Town Council/Zoning Board Comments From Joint Kick Off Meeting:

### Plan for Appropriate Commercial Development

- Controlling commercial development, not allowing SFD to become a mini Greensboro
- Give a lot of thought to our commercial areas: where, what size, walking, what stores
- Commercial development to help tax base



The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and from comments made by members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Commercial Development**.

## Common Objective for Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development

The Town of Summerfield shall prefer commercial development that reflects the feel, ambience, and charm of a small rural community. Commercial developments should be located, designed, and scaled to complement rather than detract from residential development forms, and enhance existing commercial areas.



## Policies for Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development

**Policy 1.1:** New and redeveloped commercial properties shall avoid monolithic or standardized **FRANCHISE-STYLE ARCHITECTURE**, especially such that the building itself becomes a recognizable sign. Building architecture should employ brick, stone, wood, or like and similar building materials consistent with the detailing of Summerfield's early commercial properties, as exemplified by the Town Hall or the Brittain House.

**Policy 1.2:** **OUTSIDE LIGHTING AND SIGNAGE** shall be understated and attractive. Commercial **SIGNAGE** should be effective in creating an awareness of area businesses, not because of its height and size, but rather due to its appealing, uncluttered design.

**Policy 1.3:** Groups of commercial uses should be located in **VILLAGE LIKE-CLUSTERS** set back from major roads.

**Policy 1.4:** For new commercial developments, a continuous **BUFFER OF TREES** should be retained or planted along main roadways.

**Policy 1.5:** Commercial buildings and parking areas should be situated **AMONG TREES** and well-placed landscape plantings. Landscaped areas shall also be provided where necessary to **BUFFER ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES** from commercial activity, and to help absorb stormwater runoff.

**Policy 1.6:** Commercial site plans should consider **SHARED DRIVEWAYS**, and plan for existing and future **CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE PARKING LOTS** of adjoining businesses, so as minimize unnecessary and sometimes dangerous turning movements on to and off of area roadways.

**Policy 1.7:** To minimize automobile dependency and to enhance opportunities for social interaction, **APPROPRIATELY DESIGNED AND SCALED SMALL BUSINESSES** may be located within convenient walking or biking distances of residential areas. particularly when planned as part of a newly developed neighborhood or mixed use development.

*The first thing required is that both architects and the public should consider their buildings more from the point of view of their effect on the whole town. So long as the architect and each client thinks only of his own building, how individual and how noticeable he can make it, little progress in the total effect can be expected. . .*

**Sir Raymond Unwin**  
1909

*If the problem of urban transportation is ever to be solved, it will be on the basis of bringing a larger number of institutions and facilities within walking distance of the home.*

**Lewis Mumford**,  
January, 1954

**Policy 1.8: NEIGHBORHOOD-SERVING SMALL BUSINESSES** may also be considered for locations near (and for the convenience of) pre-existing residential areas, provided that careful attention is given to compatible design, type of business, adequate buffering, and other neighborhood protective factors. The general consensus of nearby residents, as evidenced at a properly held public hearing by Town government, would also need to be apparent.

**Policy 1.9: LARGER-SCALED COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS** shall be directed to suitable locations away from residential areas, thereby protecting and enhancing property values.

## Notes and Commentary

### *Grocery Store Size Compared to the Typical Big Box Retailers*

A question came up during the Comprehensive Plan Committee meeting as to the size of grocery stores relative to “big box” retailers. According to the Food Marketing Institute, today’s typical grocery store averages 47,000 square feet and draws from a market area within a 1 to 2 mile service radius. With regard to store size, the industry is moving in two directions at once—larger to compete with Wal-Mart Supercenters, and smaller to capture untapped, niche markets, often located in more urban areas. PCC Natural Markets stores, for example, tend to be about half the size of a typical grocery store. These stores, averaging 25,000 square feet, enable the Seattle-based chain to save on lease, operating, and maintenance costs. Wal-Mart’s smallest offering, the Neighborhood Market, comes in at a sizeable 40,000 square feet. (Planetcitizen, 2008)

Big box discount stores typically range in size from 80,000 square feet to 130,000 square feet, with some approaching as much as 200,000 square feet. Retailers such as Target, Wal-Mart, and Kmart may have building footprints from 2 to 4 times the footprint of the average grocery store. (Municipal Research and Service Center of Washington, May 2005)

### ***Economic Impact of Locally Owned Versus National Chain Stores***

Citizens attending the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan expressed strong interest in promoting local, independently owned businesses rather than franchise-style businesses. Significantly, studies have shown that independently owned businesses have a greater economic impact on the local economy than do national chain stores. One study, for example, found that spending \$100 at a locally owned independent store created an additional \$68 in local economic activity, while the same expenditure at a national chain store produced only \$43 of additional economic activity.



Four factors apparently account for the difference:

- (1) The locally owned, independent businesses had a larger local payroll because all of their management functions were carried out locally rather than at corporate headquarters.
- (2) The locally owned, independent businesses spent more than twice as much procuring local goods and services from other local businesses.
- (3) The locally owned, independent businesses kept more of their profits local, and
- (4) The locally owned, independent businesses donated more to local charities.

Since per capita spending averages over \$10,000 per year at the retail level, just a small percentage shift in spending from local businesses to chains, or vice versa, can have a significant impact on the local economy.

\* The firm Civic Economics conducted one such study for the Andersonville neighborhood on the north side of Chicago, Illinois.

\*\* 2006 Institute for Local Self-Reliance, *Reviving Locally Owned Retail*, Stacy Mitchell



### ***Local Businesses, Community Character and Long Term Prosperity***

Several studies have also shown that local businesses, as opposed to franchises, tend to create and sustain the unique character of the places they inhabit. As retail areas across the country have become increasingly homogenous, uniqueness has become a rare and valuable asset. At a time when technology has made it possible for many people to work almost anywhere, Summerfield's character and quality of life may well be its most important economic development asset, and the key to its long-term prosperity. There is good reason to support planning and land use policies that limit overdevelopment of "Anywhere USA" retail and encourage the kind of human-scale, shopping districts in which locally owned businesses can thrive.

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*Source: Civic Economics*