

# The Town of Summerfield Comprehensive Plan



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010



# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Objectives and Policies



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010

Our Town  
Our Plan



# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan

## Our Town Our Plan



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Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
**Our Town Our Plan**



# Objectives and Policies

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- Growth Factors Statistical Analysis
- Growth Factors Map Atlas
- Action Agenda
- Executive Summary



# Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan

## PLANNING FOR SUMMERFIELD

This Comprehensive Plan marks a major new phase of the Town of Summerfield's relatively young planning program. The following chronicles the history of planning in Summerfield since its incorporation:

- 1996** The Town of Summerfield is **incorporated**. Proper planning and growth management are identified as major priorities for the new town government.
- 1997** In June, Town Council adopted the **Town of Summerfield Unified Development Ordinance**. The ordinance has since been amended many times to address emerging development issues.
- 1998** In January, Town Council established a **Long Term Planning Committee** to prepare a plan for the community. The LTPC met for over 2 years to develop a **Long Range Plan for Summerfield**.
- 1998** In June, Town Council adopted the **Northwest Area Plan**, prepared by the Guilford County Planning Department, as an interim guide for growth and development.
- 2000** In November, Town Council adopted the **Long Range Plan** prepared by the Long Term Planning Committee. The Plan set many recommendations, since carried out, that focused mainly on the use of the Town's Development Ordinance to achieve desirable land use patterns.
- 2003** In January, Town Council commissioned a **Market Analysis and Commercial Needs Assessment** to identify the location and character of several commercial nodes in the community. The study employed a "*highest and best use*" evaluation, along with some public input, to determine its findings as to the location of certain commercial development locations.
- 2004** In June, Town Council appointed a **Town Core Committee**, "*to recommend conceptual changes to the Summerfield Development Ordinance for the Town Core*".
- 2005** In January, the Town Core Committee presented its **Findings and Recommendations for the Town Core**, including recommendations for several new Zoning Districts. At the same time, recognizing a lack of consensus on the recommendations, the report called for a Small Area Plan to directly involve more property owners and businesses.
- 2007** In June, Town Council appointed a **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee** charged with responsibility for guiding the preparation of a first ever *comprehensive* plan for Summerfield.
- 2008** In July, Town Council, the Zoning Board and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met in a joint workshop to identify growth and development issues for the new **Comprehensive Plan**.
- 2008** In September, the **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee** hosted a special town meeting at which over 600 growth issues concerning the future of Summerfield were identified by some 170 citizens. The Steering Committee then met monthly to develop objectives, policies, and actions for each of 12 priority policy areas identified by the public.

Collectively, all of the Town's plans and ordinances make up a local planning program intended to properly guide quality development in Summerfield. This new Comprehensive Plan is intended to build upon the Town's previous planning initiatives, while adding some of the most current and effective planning principles and methods to the Town's growth management system.

## NEED FOR THIS PLAN

Communities seldom stand still; they are continually growing, changing, and evolving as places of human interchange and investment. Summerfield is no exception. This Comprehensive Plan, therefore, addresses a number of pressing issues facing the town that require considerable attention and concerted action. Among these issues are:

### Sample Growth Issues

- **Allowing the appropriate level of COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT to serve the needs of Town residents.**
- **Responding to strong citizen interest in making Summerfield more WALKABLE AND BIKEABLE.**
- **Preserving the RURAL CHARACTER of the community with emphasis on open spaces and tree preservation.**
- **Mitigating the NEGATIVE IMPACTS of the new I-73 CONNECTOR and the widening of US 220 as they pass through and divide Summerfield. Creating a connected network of local town streets.**
- **Ensuring a reliable supply of POTABLE WATER for residents and business over the long term. Protecting the GROUNDWATER AQUIFER.**
- **Maintaining a high quality of residential development while allowing for a VARIETY OF SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING TYPES to meet the needs of empty nesters, senior citizens, and young families.**
- **Providing for adequate PARK AND RECREATION improvements commensurate with the demands of the Summerfield community.**
- **Maintaining and promoting a community that presents an ATTRACTIVE APPEARANCE AND HIGH QUALITY IMAGE.**
- **Working with the County to provide for EXCELLENT SCHOOLS while serving as true community centers, accessible and well-utilized by the citizenry.**
- **Planning carefully for the future of the SUMMERFIELD ROAD focus area. Working closely with property owners, residents, and businesses on a plan agreeable to all.**
- **Striking a balance between preserving the HISTORIC CHARACTER of older properties, while allowing owners the latitude to make good use of their asset.**
- **Maintaining town government as small, accessible, and citizen-engaged, with LIMITED SERVICES and low taxes.**

### Where Addressed in the Plan

- ▶ Policy Area 1: Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development
- ▶ Policy Area 2: Sidewalk, Bikeway, and Trail System
- ▶ Policy Area 3: Community Character Preservation
- ▶ Policy Area 4: Transportation Improvements
- ▶ Policy Area 5: Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Options
- ▶ Policy Area 6: Appropriate Housing and Residential Development
- ▶ Policy Area 7: Park and Recreation Improvements
- ▶ Policy Area 8: Attractive Community Appearance
- ▶ Policy Area 9: Quality School Facilities
- ▶ Policy Area 10: Summerfield Road Focus Area
- ▶ Policy Area 11: Historic Preservation
- ▶ Policy Area 12: Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Preparation of this plan involved an informed and active group of citizens, the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Appointed by the Town Council in June 2007, this 20+ member committee represented a broad cross section of Summerfield's citizens. Through the efforts of the Steering Committee, every objective, policy statement, and implementation action considered for this plan was reviewed and discussed, endorsed, set aside, or improved. In addition, the Plan Steering Committee received considerable support from the staff and consultant to the Plan, and input from the many civic leaders, board members, and citizens who were interviewed or attended meetings held for the plan.



*Back Row: Ken Dunham, Randy Tinsley, Jeff Johnson, Jeff Chalmers, Dwayne Crawford, Al Colanero  
Middle Row: Nancy Hess, Alicia Flowers, Paul Milam, Doug Canavello, Charlie Chappell, Terry McLean  
Front Row: Linda Southard, Mia Malesovas, Anne Nusskern, Ernie Showfety, David Layton  
Current Members Not Pictured: Bill Gordon, Lewis Nash, Alice Patterson*

*The Steering Committee would also like to acknowledge the service of the following former members:  
Addison "Dail" Perry Jr, David Shaw, Dawn Ford, Erin McLean, Gary Ajemian, Mitchell Fahrer, Parker Jackson, Peggy McPartlan, Steven Pierotti, William (Bill) True, Matt Devaney, Kim Parker*

## COMMUNITY INPUT GUIDED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In July 2008, work began in earnest on the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan. The Steering Committee held a joint kick off meeting with the Town Council and the Town Zoning Board. Plans were set in motion immediately for the three groups to host a special town meeting for the plan.



In September of 2008, some 170 town residents crowded into the Summerfield Elementary School cafeteria and voiced hundreds of concerns, hopes, and ideas for the future of their town. As a result of that town meeting, a number of priority topics were identified for use in drafting a new Comprehensive Plan for Summerfield.

Over the ensuing months, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee reviewed the many growth issues identified by the public and also evaluated growth factors associated with the Town's development. The results of the Committee's work are presented in three parts: Common Objectives, Policies, and Actions.

This Comprehensive Plan represents an important new benchmark in planning for the future of Summerfield. The intent of the plan is to create a shared vision for the Town to preserve its natural and cultural heritage, and to give appropriate direction for desirable growth and development. In completing this plan, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee has fulfilled its charge of recommending a new long range plan for consideration of adoption by the Town Council of Summerfield.

### COMMON OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS— WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

*As noted above, this plan contains three different types of statements, each serving a special purpose:*

1. **COMMON OBJECTIVES** describe a **desirable condition** for the Town the way we would like to see it. They are the foundation for Policies and Actions. One of the best ways to evaluate the Policies and Actions is to understand the intent of each Common Objective and see whether the Policies and Actions will help make it happen.
2. **POLICIES** are **officially adopted positions** of Town government with regard to preferred or required courses of action. Their primary purpose is to provide guidance to decisions and actions today. When a policy is applied, it does not go away. Policies can and should be used over and over again in support of the Common Objectives. There are normally several policies

lending support to each Common Objective. While policies may be amended, such changes should be infrequent to provide for consistent, predictable decision-making over a several year period.

3. **ACTIONS (Under Separate Cover) are a to-do-list** of things that could be done in support of the Common Objectives and Policies. Unlike an objective or policy, once an action is completed, it goes away; it gets checked off the list. The Town may consider actions as potential work program items for implementation in subsequent fiscal years. It should not be expected that all or even most implementation items could be completed in any one fiscal year. Priorities must be chosen. Actions should also be updated each year in concert with the Town's work program and budget process.

## HOW TO USE THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan have been designed for regular use to (1) guide public decisions at the Town level, (2) coordinate actions at the county, regional, state, and federal levels, and (3) provide information for private sector decisions. As officially adopted policies of the Town, they are to be used primarily in managing growth and development and as a foundation for decisions on Town facilities and services. The following paragraphs detail how various parties involved in decision-making may use the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***As Used by the Town Staff***

Reviewing Development Proposals--Town staff should consult the Common Objectives and Policies in reviewing development proposals. Such development proposals would typically include rezoning requests, (see section below entitled **Zoning Amendments and Consistency...**) subdivision reviews, site plan reviews, driveway permits, special use permits, sign permits, and the like. All Policies are given a unique identification number allowing them to be referenced by "chapter and verse" in staff recommendations to Town boards.

Suggesting Changes in Town Services-- Town staff should consult the Common Objectives and Policies before making recommendations about changes in Town facilities and services. Recommendations to be presented to the Town Council should first be evaluated according to their consistency with the adopted policy positions of the Comprehensive Plan. Town staff should have a thorough knowledge of the Common Objectives and Policies, and be able to draw upon them routinely. This is especially important during preparation of the annual work program and proposed budget.

- ***As Used by Appointed Boards and Committees***

Before their regular meetings, members of appointed boards and committees of the Town should review proposed agenda items in light of the Town's adopted policies. The Town Zoning Board, for example, should review development proposals with regard to how well they match up with the Town's policies on transportation, housing, community appearance, and so forth. The Town's Parks and Recreation Committee will want to review the plan as it applies to park and recreation improvements in the town. Town Staff should assist various Town Boards and Committees, as appropriate, by pointing out policies applicable to each agenda item. Board and committee

members should then draw their own conclusions as to the consistency of a particular agenda item with the Town's adopted Comprehensive Plan Policies.

- ***As Used by Summerfield Town Council***

In their authority to rezone properties, approve proposed developments as well as changes in Town facilities and services, the Town Council has the final word on the actions of Summerfield government. As customary, Council should take into account and weigh the interpretation of Policy as provided by all interested parties, the Town staff, and advisory boards and committees. Decisions on programs and capital improvement expenditures are also made with greater confidence when they can be evaluated for consistency with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Over time, a track record of policy interpretation forms a reliable foundation for decision-making.



- ***As Used by Other Local, Regional, State, and Federal Government Authorities***

The Town should make an effort to make public officials in nearby municipalities, as well as those of Guilford County and the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, aware of the Comprehensive Plan. They should be encouraged to consult the plan when considering plans and projects under their authority. Decisions by municipalities concerning water and sewer extensions, transportation, and land use planning, in particular, should be done, to the extent possible, in concert with the policies of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Similarly, the Town should call the Plan to the attention of State and Federal officials, particularly with regard to transportation investments, growth management policies, and economic development initiatives under the authority of those governments.

- ***As Used by Development Interests***

Developers, property owners, builders, and others involved in the development community should consult the Common Objectives and Policies

when formulating their own development plans. By making their plans consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan Policies, the chances of development plan approval should increase, thereby saving guesswork, time, and money. The quality of development proposals drawn up for review may also improve if the developer knows that the effort put into the design is more apt to receive a favorable response.

- **As Used by the General Public**

Residents of Summerfield can and should reference specific Comprehensive Plan Common Objectives and Policies, when speaking in favor or in opposition to a particular proposal before the Town Council or other appointed Town boards and committees.

## **ZONING CHANGES AND CONSISTENCY WITH THE TOWN'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

North Carolina General Statute 160A-383 requires that "*prior to adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment*" each local governing board "*shall adopt a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and explaining why the board considers the action taken to be reasonable and in the public interest*". For the purposes of this statute, this document constitutes Summerfield's *comprehensive plan*.

The above referenced law requires that the Town Zoning Board review of proposed zoning amendments include written comments on the consistency of the proposed amendment with the *comprehensive plan* and any other relevant plans (such as a small area plan, a corridor plan, or a transportation plan) that have been adopted by the Town. Further, the Town Council is also required to adopt a statement on plan consistency before adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment. These written comments are required, but do not limit Council's discretionary power to adopt or not adopt zoning amendments.

In other words, Town Council retains the power to approve a zoning amendment that, on its face, is not consistent with the *comprehensive plan*. At the same time, Council's decision to approve an "inconsistent" zoning amendment must not be taken lightly; Council's approval must be justified by reasons written into the permanent record as to why a zoning amendment found to be inconsistent nonetheless warrants approval. In these situations, there may be fundamentally sound reasons why a particular zoning amendment should be approved.

## **AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Comprehensive Plan is the policy foundation for guiding zoning decisions, as well as a broad range of other decisions of Town government. The plan's essential elements—the Common Objectives and Policies—are intended to remain substantially unchanged during the plan's tenure. Frequent changes to these elements would undermine the plan's effectiveness in directing a steady course for the Town's growth and development over the long haul. Nevertheless, future circumstances may warrant amendment of the plan. Consult the Town Planner for procedures involved for consideration of an amendment to the Plan.

### KEY WORDS OFTEN USED IN POLICIES (GLOSSARY)

As the plan is used over time by the various parties identified above, a consistent decision-making pattern will evolve. Also, users of the plan will find it helpful if they employ a consistent vocabulary when interpreting the meaning of the policy statements. Certain key words are used frequently in policy statements. The glossary below conveys the specific meaning of these key words as used in Policy Statements for the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan.

1. **adequate**: sufficient to achieve the intended purpose or prevent harm
2. **allow, authorize, permit**: official action to let something happen
3. **control**: to regulate or direct
4. **discourage**: to not favor; to dissuade
5. **encourage**: to favor or foster (also see support)
6. **may**: provides the option, but not required; permissive
7. **preferred**: the favored course among alternatives but does not preclude other options
8. **prohibit**: not allowed, period; to totally prevent
9. **promote**: to proactively encourage, to take positive steps
10. **reasonable**: practical, sufficient to do the job; not extreme
11. **require**: to mandate something
12. **shall**: mandatory, not optional; a more formal term for “will”
13. **should**: preferred or recommended but not mandatory in all cases
14. **significant**: important; determined by quantity, quality or relative impact
15. **support**: to foster; may imply financial support

The Common Objectives and Policies of the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan begin on the following page.

# Twelve Common Objectives



The following Twelve Common Objectives are based on public input received at a special Town Meeting held on September 29, 2008. During the meeting, some 170 residents of Summerfield identified over 600 concerns and ideas for the future of their community. After the meeting, all the ideas were reviewed for common themes. The following objectives emerged from those common themes.



## 1. 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.



## 2. Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System

The Town of Summerfield shall strive to become a walkable and bikeable community. Working in cooperation with private sector interests, the Town shall pursue a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods and other destinations in town such as schools, parks, and shopping. A well-integrated network of streets, sidewalks, bikeways, hiking trails, and horseback riding trails will provide for a multitude of driving, walking, and bicycling alternatives.



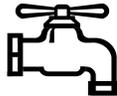
## 3. Community Character Preservation

The Town of Summerfield shall work to preserve a natural and built environment that honors the rural, small town heritage of the community. The Town shall set itself apart from other typical suburban bedroom communities by promoting diverse park and open space assets, "green" highway corridors, protected environmentally sensitive lands, and viable small family farms and equine facilities. New development shall preserve tree cover while avoiding "Anywhere USA" formulaic commercial architecture.



#### **4. Transportation Improvements**

The Town of Summerfield shall work proactively with the State DOT toward an efficient system of transportation, including thoroughfares, local roads, sidewalks, and trails. Advanced planning and follow-through shall be employed to create a functional system of streets and highways. New developments shall exhibit an inter-connected network of streets, sidewalks, trails, and bike paths to foster the continued evolution of Summerfield toward a more walkable and bikeable community. The Town will cooperate with efforts to provide public transit service between Summerfield and other areas.



#### **5. Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Options**

The Town of Summerfield recognizes the singular importance of plentiful, safe, potable water to present and future residents and businesses. To preserve the availability of this resource, the Town shall make water supply, water conservation and groundwater recharge very high priorities and shall encourage its citizens to do likewise. Wastewater treatment technologies shall be employed to work in harmony with growth and development policies to conserve open space and rural character, and to return water to the groundwater system, while protecting the quality of the groundwater to meet all state standards.



#### **6. Appropriate Housing and Residential Development**

Summerfield's appealing residential areas, exemplified by neighborhoods set among expanses of open space, woodlands, and pastures, shall continue to be a defining attribute of the community. To accommodate housing for younger families and senior citizens while promoting and protecting rural character, the inclusion in residential development of smaller single family detached homes shall be encouraged over twin and other multi-unit residential buildings. Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods will be favored. An open system of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets should work together with a network of greenway trails to connect neighborhoods with each other and with the rest of the town.



#### **7. Parks and Recreation Improvements**

Summerfield values its open space and park and recreation facilities, which help define the community's image and quality of life. To serve the increasing numbers of children, families, senior citizens, and others calling Summerfield home, the Town shall provide quality parks and recreation facilities and services commensurate with community needs. Smaller parks should continue to be provided by private developments at the neighborhood level. Larger parks should be provided as a result of advanced planning and development by the Town. An extensive system of open space and greenway trails should be developed to connect large and small park areas and to serve as natural corridors for the movement of wildlife.



## 8. Attractive Community Appearance

Community appearance can create a positive town image and sets the tone for all development to follow. An attractive community enhances the quality of life of town residents, and attracts visitors and businesses to the area that share the same values of quality and sustainability. Community appearance deals largely with what can be seen from the public roadway. Appearance issues deserving of public policy and action include exterior lighting, junked vehicles, preservation of tree cover, the presence or absence of street trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, architectural design and building form, public and private outdoor displays, the presence or absence of overhead wires, the design and location of communication towers, and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land.



## 9. Quality School Facilities

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to work closely with Guilford County Schools and local public and private school leaders to support the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of high quality schools serving the community. Schools should be located and designed to be accessible to the neighborhoods around them. Access to such schools by walking and biking should be encouraged, provided that safety and security issues are addressed. Rather than functioning as single purpose “factories to educate children”, schools in Summerfield should serve as true community centers, providing meeting space for community gatherings, recreational events, and other functions. Mobile classrooms should be avoided.



## 10. Summerfield Road Focus Area

The Summerfield Road Focus Area shall be supported as the historic and cultural center of the Summerfield community. The heart of this area should remain a varied, yet compatible, mix of residential and non-residential uses. A fire station, elementary school, community park, day care center, post office, eye doctor, feed mill, specialty auto dealership, and real estate office are representative of the non-residential uses that, together with a variety of single family homes, should continue to make up this important part of Summerfield. The Town shall also support preservation efforts associated with the National Register Historic District, and the desirability of a neighborhood level service area that includes Town Hall. Going forward, the Summerfield Road Focus Area should continue to be a natural location for community gatherings as well as basic services for local residents. Whatever uses go into this area, it is important that they be compatible, in both appearance and function, with uses on surrounding properties.



### **11. Historic Preservation**

The Town of Summerfield will strive to preserve the rural and small town heritage of the community. The Town and its Boards and Committees will continue to work with property owners toward the identification, designation, restoration, and preservation of individual buildings, sites, and areas that contribute to the historic foundations and quality of life in the town. In addition to buildings and sites, the Town will also support efforts to document and share the unique cultural history of the area.



### **12. Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government**

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to control its own destiny—the Town shall remain an independent community, carefully managing its own finances and its own growth and development. Town government should be small and accessible, citizen-engaged, with services limited and taxes kept low. Town government should continue to focus on the highest priorities of area residents—managing growth and preserving and enhancing the area's quality of life.

## 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.

One study 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.

*Source: Civic Economics*

## Policy Area 2: Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System



### Key Words and Phrases:

From Town Meeting:

#### DESIRED FUTURE

- Bike lanes along major connectors
- Hiking trail along old railroad bed to Stokesdale & along Haw River
- Connecting greenways for recreation and transportation
- Bike lanes on road
- Connect community areas and parks
- Horseback riding trails/agritourism
- Bike lanes (150, Pleasant Ridge)
- Lighted, paved sidewalks along Old Summerfield Rd & bike lanes
- Greener method of moving around town (walking, biking, etc) safely - & park & ride facilities
- Parking at Strawberry Rd walking trails
- Walking trails to connect TC shopping & other trails
- Several parks joined by hiking/biking trails
- Bike lanes Lake Brandt

*Single function land use zoning at a scale and density that eliminates the pedestrian has been the norm for so long that Americans have forgotten that walking can be a part of their daily lives.*

**Peter Calthorpe**  
1989

## UNWANTED FUTURE

*Note: No citizen comments concerning this subject were a significant element of the Unwanted Future.*

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

- Trails (walking & bicycle), paths that connect to greenways, leading into our town
  - Trail system development and connectivity
    - Design trail system to be used as transportation and recreation connecting people to town core



The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board and (3) 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 Walking, Hiking, and Biking**.



### Common Objective for Sidewalk, Bikeway, and Trail System

The Town of Summerfield shall strive to become a walkable and bikeable community. Working in cooperation with private sector interests, the Town shall pursue a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods and other destinations in town such as schools, parks, and shopping. A well-integrated network of streets, sidewalks, bikeways, hiking trails, and horseback riding trails will provide for a multitude of driving, walking, bicycling, and riding alternatives.

### Policies for Sidewalk, Bikeway, and Trail System

**Policy 2.1: SIDEWALKS, BIKEWAYS, and TRAILS** should be provided on a priority basis to connect residential areas to non-residential destinations, such as schools, parks, libraries, shopping centers or similar facilities.

**Policy 2.2:** The use of (1) **NATURAL GREENWAY CORRIDORS** such as streams and floodplains, and (2) **MAN-MADE GREENWAY CORRIDORS** such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements, should be secured as the backbone of the Town's off-road trail system.

**Policy 2.3: PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY UNDERPASSES, BRIDGES, and other crossing features should be constructed where necessary to maintain a continuous system of trails and bikeways.**

**Policy 2.4: STRIPED BICYCLE LANES and appropriate signage should be required ALONG NEW OR IMPROVED COLLECTOR OR HIGHER LEVEL STREETS. Bicycle lanes and signage may also be required along other streets, to be determined on a case by case basis.**

**Policy 2.5: PUBLIC BIKEWAY AND WALKWAY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NEW AND EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS should be encouraged. Local streets or connecting paths should be used as necessary to promote a town-wide network for pedestrian and bicycle travel. Public access to existing private sidewalk and trail systems shall be encouraged, especially when such trails serve as a critical link between destinations.**

**Policy 2.6: All FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND SITE PLANS should be examined for pedestrian and bicycle compatibility. Bikeway and pedestrian routes passing through or adjacent to new developments should be identified and planned for in the construction of such developments.**

**Policy 2.7: All new public and private non-residential developments should be encouraged to provide for BICYCLE PARKING and ACCESS if the development is within about 1000 feet of an existing or funded bikeway.**

**Policy 2.8: All future ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS should be examined for bikeway feasibility. In addition to the Summerfield Trail Plan, consideration should be given to state and regional hiking and biking initiatives such as the State Mountains to Sea Trail and the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bi-Ped Plan.**

**Policy 2.9: Bicycle facilities and their impacts should be included in TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSES for new developments, if such impact analysis is required.**

**Policy 2.10: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FRIENDLY SCHOOL ZONES should be established and implemented around all schools. Consider sidewalks as a priority near schools.**

**Policy 2.11: Trails and bicycle-related improvements and maintenance should be an integral component of the Town's ANNUAL BUDGET for public infrastructure. Appropriations toward the creation of a community-wide trail system shall be considered in the context of other Town budget priorities.**



## Notes and Commentary

### Walking and Hiking

Nearly all of the comments received from area citizens and Town leaders concerning walking and hiking in Summerfield emphasized *off-street trails*, as opposed to traditional *sidewalks within a street right of way*. Therefore, the bulk of the comments following address the development of off-street trails, particularly as located in greenway corridors<sup>1</sup>.



Greenway corridors use largely natural features such as river and creek floodplains to create linear parks and locations for off-road trails. These natural corridors are supplemented, as opportunities allow, by man-made corridors such as utility and transportation rights of way. Together, these two types of corridors can provide for a complete, interconnected system of linear park spaces and trails within a community. The Town of Summerfield is blessed with a pattern of development, stream configuration, and even a rail corridor that offers good opportunities for greenway and related trail development.

The kinds of separated off-street trails found in greenways have the advantage of totally removing the pedestrian and the cyclist from congested streets where potential sideswipes or other accidents with cars are more likely. Obviously, greenway trails may also provide for a more pleasant walk or ride in a natural setting than might be found along a high speed roadway.

One disadvantage of the off-street trail is that it tends to be viewed more as a recreational opportunity than as a serious transportation facility. Off-street trails may also be so remote from activity centers and destinations that they have little utility for commuting or running errands. Therefore, such trails should, whenever possible, connect with sidewalks and bikeway facilities to gain access to places of employment, shopping, and gathering.



### Bicycling

Unlike hiking trails, which may involve more undulating terrain found in off-street locations, most comments received concerning bicycling in Summerfield referred to the desire for on-street bike lanes. Therefore, the following comments place bikeways in a largely on-street context.

Roughly 100 years ago, bicycles came into their own as a very popular form of transportation. Despite the predominance of dirt roads in many communities, bicycles were used for commuting to work, running errands, and for pleasure (a la "A Bicycle Built for Two"-- written in 1892). It is no surprise that the success

<sup>1</sup> Note: This narrative section addresses the development of greenway trails in their role as a pedestrian travel option within the Town of Summerfield. The other aspect of greenways as part of the town's open space system will be addressed elsewhere in this plan under the policy section on Park and Recreation Improvements.

of a bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio allowed its two owners to build and fly the world's first working airplane at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Bicycles were then a big business and an important transportation option for many people.<sup>2</sup>

A century later, there are two major problems confronting the widespread use of bicycles in Summerfield. The first is the perception of bicycling as primarily a recreational pursuit. The second, more significant problem is a street system that forces all travelers, including bicyclists, onto a limited number of high traffic, high speed roadways that are not designed to accommodate bicycles. The first problem is actually a function of the second, in that until Summerfield's road system is properly configured to accommodate bicycles, thereby increasing the number of bicyclists on the street, bicycling will continue to be viewed primarily as a recreational outlet.

Listed below are the four basic types of bikeways available for application along most streets and roadways in Summerfield:



◀ **Shared roadway with regular lane width.**

Bicyclists share the existing road with other vehicle traffic (the majority of road mileage in the United States falls into this category)

▶ **Wide curb lane**

Bicyclists share a wide outside (curb) lane with other vehicle traffic



◀ **Bike lane.**

Bicyclists have dedicated road space that is adjacent to but separated from other vehicle traffic lanes

▶ **Separated path or lane**

Bicyclists have dedicated paths and trails (or sometimes very wide lanes) that offer significant separation from other vehicle traffic.



All photos on this page  
courtesy of  
[www.pedbikeimages.org](http://www.pedbikeimages.org)

<sup>2</sup> It wasn't until Henry Ford started mass production of automobiles in the 1910's that cars came into more common use.

There is currently no national standard for choosing the appropriate type of bikeway for use with a particular roadway type. Usually, the type of bicycle facility recommended depends upon a number of variables including the traffic volume and speed of the roadway, right of way width, shoulder width, stormwater drains, frequency of driveways and intersections, and presence or absence of turning lanes. A final and oftentimes controlling variable is the availability of funds.

The least costly and perhaps safest way to develop bikeways is to employ a network of appropriate, interconnected local streets. No extra expense is involved because no extra right of way, paving or signage is required. Unfortunately, the use of interconnected local streets in Summerfield has been hampered by subdivisions and developments that do not connect with one another, but rather empty out onto the closest major road.



One of the simplest and most effective actions that the Town can take in providing for bikeways is to require that new developments connect their streets (or at least provide a connecting bike *path*) to adjacent developments. This would allow bicyclists to travel along the interior streets of neighborhoods, without having to pedal along heavily trafficked roads. This objective can be accomplished simply by intelligent planning in the layout of new neighborhoods.

Regarding an existing neighborhood that lacks a street connection to an adjoining neighborhood, a good option is to pursue the pedestrian and bicycle path option, linking one neighborhood to another. Obviously, any

retrofitting of pedestrian and bicycle connections between existing neighborhoods would require a full consultation with neighborhood residents. Hopefully, with attitudes changing about health and obesity, access to schools, parks, and other destinations, and enhanced real estate values, some existing neighborhoods will see the advantages of having access to a community-wide bikeway system.

### **Equestrian Trails**

Guilford County reportedly has among the largest, if not the largest, per capita horse populations in the State of North Carolina. Consider the following *excerpts* from a communication received concerning the issue of horse trails in Guilford County:

*“Keep in mind that as the human population increases, the horse population generally does too, particularly in the exurban areas like Summerfield. More than 50% of those horses are on farms with 5 head or less, which represents the typical hobbyist owner, not professional boarding/training/breeding (though Guilford Co does have several of those, too).”*

*Generally speaking, a trail system of 5 miles or less in a park is going to attract local riders looking for nice short day ride. You won't have people trailering in from much more than an hour away. As*

*mileage and variety increases, the attraction will increase for riders from further away. For any trail system, regardless of mileage, adequate parking for multiple trailers is critical because the majority of people will have to transport their horses, even if they are local. Planning for manure management, water, toilets, etc are also important. And, last but not least is planning for the trail experience and types of users, whether the trail will be shared use; all horse trails do not have to be 8 foot wide packed screenings greenways - with appropriate careful trail design up front, native surface trail can be created and maintained sustainably.*

In 1996, Guilford County had the highest horse population in the entire state -- 5,600 horses. Between 1996 and 2008, it was estimated that the horse population in North Carolina nearly doubled; if Guilford County followed that trend, the local count of horses would be nearing 10,000.

Source: American Horse Council

*A shining example of a local regional trails system. . . is the FETA system (Foothills Equestrian Trails Association) in Polk County. Google FETA trails and see their website. It is a very carefully managed trail system with over 100 miles of trails, almost entirely on private property, using hundreds of easements and access agreements. Access is limited to County tax payers. It is a HUGE property value incentive - people want to buy into that system and pay a premium to be on it. And what I really like is that it decentralizes access and traffic, lowering capital and maintenance cost. Most people directly access it from their property or neighborhoods, reducing the need for large centralized parking areas - there are a few much smaller trailheads where people can park a couple trailers as needed. The wear and tear on the trails is much less because users are so dispersed. There are strict rules about safety and not riding when it's wet. People are much more invested in volunteering on work days because it is their backyard. But, the big hurdle is getting around the NIMBY attitudes that many property owners have – Polk Co was fortunate that a critical mass of property owners "got it" and saw the future value of such a system."<sup>3</sup>*



Of note, the FETA horse trails system referenced above is located on numerous private properties whereby land owners in Polk County have agreed to come together to create a “cooperative” trails system for the exclusive use of horses. If given a choice, equestrians would naturally prefer that trails for horses not be shared with bicyclists or even hikers.

<sup>3</sup> E-Mail Communication from Barbara Oslund to Carrie Spencer dated February 15, 2009.

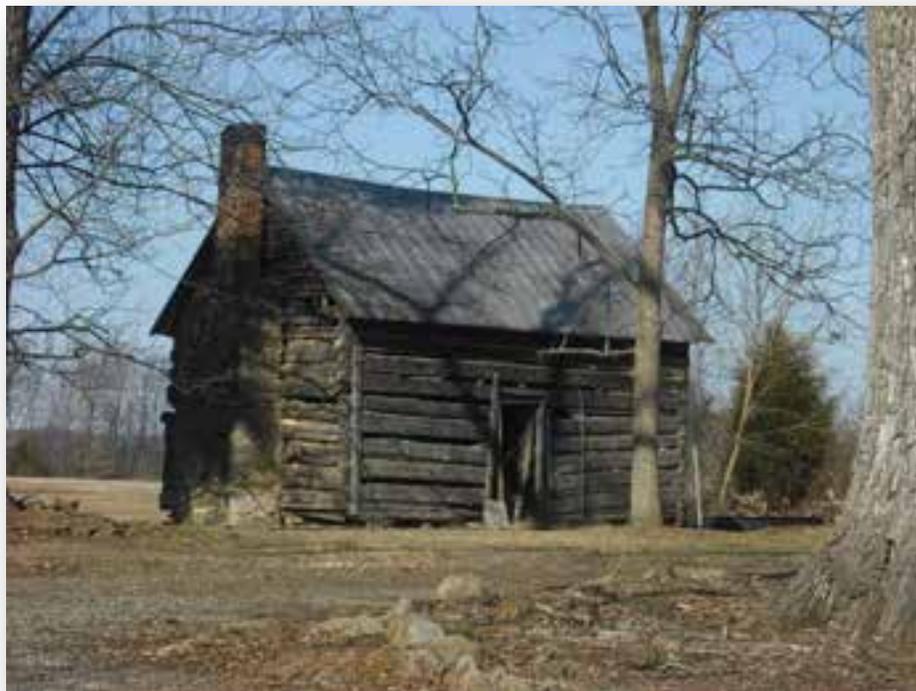
Bicyclists, in particular, can sometimes “spook” a horse, causing potentially dangerous situations.



While it may be possible for private property owners and horse riding advocates to do something similar in Summerfield, this is not the prerogative of the Town or this Community Plan in particular. In a rapidly growing and relatively small community like Summerfield, paths paid for with public funds would more likely be multi-use facilities rather than trails for the exclusive use of horses. Stated another way, Town funding for the designation and construction of off-road trails is more likely to receive broad voter approval if such trails are

open to a variety of users. One way to avoid possible conflicts between equestrians and other user groups is to designate time of day or day of week use restrictions. Posting such information at trail heads can inform users of such restrictions at various points of access to the trail system.

## Policy Area 3: Community Character Preservation



*As no two individuals should be alike, neither should any two places be alike. Yet, for the last 50 years there has been a steady homogenization of our communities, and a steady rise in dissatisfaction with our quality of life. What can we do to manage change so as to prevent our communities from becoming ANYPLACE!*

**"Avoiding the Anyplace Syndrome",**  
February 1992,  
Boulder, CO

### Key Words and Phrases:

*Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):*

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### Rural Character Preservation

- Maintain open spaces & rural atmosphere
- Rural character preservation
- Incentives for maintaining rural/agric
- Farmland preservation

##### Small Town Character

- Stay as is. Rural small community
- Small town character preserved
- Small town ambiance & character
- Retain rural character & small town atmosphere

##### Open Space Preservation

- Buying development rights by town-partnership-private
- Lots of parks & open space
- Open areas, woods, farms, meadows, etc

In 2000, there were 7 acres of land for every house in Summerfield, compared to just 2 acres per house in Guilford County as a whole.

Source:  
U.S. Census

Webster's dictionary defines rural as "relating to or characteristic of the country." Other words such as pastoral or bucolic are often used to describe rural character. The problem lies in the fact that such a simple concept is enormously difficult to define.

Fred Hyer  
1990

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### Pressure on Farm Activities and Farmland

- Unreasonable restriction of farm animals
- Housing developments in every field

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

#### Agree on Community Identity and How Rural Character is Defined

- Keeping hometown character—controlled growth—preserve farmland
- Signage/billboard standards
- Define uniqueness of Summerfield (i.e. horse farms, park, rural vistas, etc)
- Growth balanced with rural charm
- Developing a sense of community
- Increasing population past small town look and feel
- Define who we are as a town. What does it mean to be —*rural*—?
- Figuring out our identity, community, ways to connect so we're not a bedroom community



#### Preserve Open Space

- Maintaining appropriate open space so SFD doesn't lose its rural character
- Preserving abundant open space
- How to keep open space for public use

#### Protect Natural Resources, Especially Water Resources and Trees

- Protect natural resources – ground water, creeks, streams, etc
- Save trees and don't deforest – have ordinance: protect habitat
- Encourage green building practices

The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Preserving Community Character**.

## Common Objective for Preserving Community Character

The Town of Summerfield shall work to preserve a natural and built environment that honors the rural, small town heritage of the community. The Town shall set itself apart from other typical suburban bedroom communities by promoting diverse park and open space assets, “green” highway corridors, protected environmentally sensitive lands, and viable small family farms and equine facilities. New development shall preserve tree cover while avoiding “Anywhere USA” formulaic commercial architecture.



## Policies for Preserving Community Character

**Policy 3.1: EXISTING, DESIRABLE LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS**, whether natural or man-made, should continue to be incorporated into the thematic design of new developments.

**Policy 3.2: LARGE TREES, PONDS, CREEKS, OR OTHER NATURAL FEATURES** of the landscape should be saved when locating new streets, buildings, parking lots, etc.

**Policy 3.3: FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, STEEP SLOPES, and OTHER LANDS** that are typically not suitable for development, should be retained as permanent open space.

**Policy 3.4:** As some land is developed and other land is set aside in permanent open space, opportunities to **CONNECT OPEN SPACE AREAS AND CORRIDORS** shall be considered.

**Policy 3.5: CLEARCUTTING OF TREES AND WOODLAND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT** shall be avoided. Rather, new development should incorporate significant clusters of trees into the functional layout of new residential and commercial areas.

**Policy 3.6: .COMPATIBLE FARMLAND ACTIVITIES** and the **KEEPING OF HORSES OR OTHER SUITABLE LIVESTOCK** shall generally be encouraged as part of the thematic and functional design of new residential areas.

**Policy 3.7: TO HELP KEEP SMALL FAMILY FARMS VIABLE**, agri-tourism, such as that associated with horseback riding, small produce stands (produce grown on site), corn mazes (no man-made amusements), hay-rides, farm-oriented children’s camps, and similar activities of an acceptable scale and intensity, shall generally be supported.

**Policy 3.8:** An **OPEN SPACE AQUISITION PROGRAM** shall be employed to acquire open spaces for the enjoyment of the public and for the long term quality of the community. A variety of mechanisms for open space acquisition (e.g. land dedication, conservation easements, etc.) shall be considered, in addition to fee simple purchases.

*What makes a city special—gives it a feel that is different from any other place? In lucky cities, the answer to that question involves trees. Like other enduring features such as rivers, hills and massive building centers, trees are in place for the long haul.*

**Sara Ebenreck**  
1989

**Policy 3.9: GREEN SPACE BUFFER STRIPS**, preserved along of edges of primary and secondary roadways in Summerfield, shall be a distinguishing feature and hallmark of the community. Clusters of trees shall be preserved or planted in informal, randomly spaced intervals as opposed to the uniformly spaced patterns often found in a more urban area. Walled off communities are not desired.

**Policy 3.10: WATER QUALITY AND OPEN SPACE BUFFER STRIPS** shall be preserved adjoining all perennial streams.

**Policy 3.11: BUILDING ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING MATERIALS, SIGNAGE, AND SITE DESIGN** that are compatible with Summerfield's rural heritage (rather than a suburban, "Anywhere USA" formula), shall be encouraged. (In particular, see Policy Area 1: Commercial Development and Policy Area 6: Housing and Residential Development)

**Policy 3.12: BILLBOARDS** shall be prohibited throughout the Town of Summerfield.

## Notes and Commentary:

### *Descriptors of Community Character*

Preserving community character in a rural area that is undergoing pressures for change can mean different things to different people. Here are a few *descriptors* of community character:



Farming Preserved: This perspective acknowledges the authentic nature of the rural landscape characterized largely by mainstream farming. Non-farm residents must be willing to accept both the desirable and less desirable aspects of farming. Less desirable aspects can include, for example, farm equipment and trucks parked in yards or impeding traffic on area roadways. It might also include the odor of manure on area farm fields, the dust kicked up from row crops in a windstorm, or the drifting of airborne herbicides and pesticides beyond the farm's borders.

Open Space Preserved: This is often the perspective of new residents who have moved to a rural area to escape the congestion of the city and who would like to see the open spaces around them remain undeveloped. These individuals would prefer to see land stay in farms and fields, despite the march of development into the area, of which they are a part.

Woodlands Preserved: Similar in nature to preserving open space, this perspective holds that existing woodlands should be preserved. This can occur at two levels: (1) total preservation, where whole areas of woodlands remain untouched and (2) partial preservation where development is allowed to occur in and among existing tree cover. Under the second option, buffers of trees may also be preserved between developments and along roadways to create the illusion of a wooded landscape.

History Preserved: Historic preservation most often involves the preservation of historic buildings, neighborhoods, and commercial areas, but it can also include important sites and place names. Frequently, new development may be required to emulate or at least be compatible with the architecture and design of a community's historic assets. For the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan, a separate policy area has been set aside for historic preservation.

Culture Preserved: This type of preservation involves people and activities more so than land and buildings. Included, for example, might be an annual festival, parade or other community event. It may entail a community organization, or any number of social service organizations. It may acknowledge yard displays or small businesses unique only to the community.



### ***The Economics of Community Character Preservation***

The preservation of community character brings significant benefits to an area. Foremost among them is the uniqueness that can differentiate a town like Summerfield from other similarly situated suburban areas. This uniqueness can draw new residents to the area who value the community's heritage and the quality of the natural, built and cultural environment. Preserving the character of a community can also be a source of pride for both existing residents and newcomers. It can be a unifying force that brings people from different backgrounds together for a common cause.

At the same, preserving a community's character does not come without cost. Farmers and other landowners who forego opportunities to develop their pastures and woodlands oftentimes must be provided with fair compensation. Owners of historic buildings must oftentimes be given tax incentives to restore their buildings rather than tearing them down to build anew. Developers must be able to satisfy the community's design standards while still making a reasonable return on their investment and risk.



Summerfield must therefore chart a careful course that respects private property rights while creating a community of quality and character that will stand the test of time for many generations to come.

## Policy Area 4: Transportation Improvements



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### Transportation, Generally

- Improve the flow of traffic 220, 150, Summerfield Rd, Pleasant Ridge Rd
- Encourage completion of Northern Belt Loop

##### Transportation, Route 150

- Stoplight at Strawberry & 150
- Traffic/stop light at Strawberry/150

##### Transportation, Route 220

- Bridge over 220 to 150 & beautify area
- Widen Hwy 220 to Hwy 68

##### Transportation, Mass Transit

- Mass transit connection to Greensboro
- Bus service to Greensboro

##### Transportation, Pleasant Ridge Rd

- Stop light – Pleasant Ridge & SFD Rd
- Traffic circle SFD Rd & Pleasant Ridge

*You can have nice streets, and you can put trees back on them, and you can make beautiful buildings with front porches again, but if the only place it leads is out to the [major road], then we are going to have the same (disconnected, unlivable) environment all over again.*

**Peter Calthorpe**  
Time Magazine  
May 20, 1991

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### Traffic Congestion and Inadequate Roads

- Unmanaged traffic 150, Pleasant Ridge, 220, SFD Rd
- Roadways not being upgraded
- Traffic that does not move on highways
- Over crowded roads

### Traffic Lights Poorly Designed or Unwanted

- No traffic lights without turn lanes

### Adverse Impacts of Major Roads Like I-73

- No noisy I-73 that divides the town. Should be below grade. Don't repeat the Southern Loop
- No commercial development at interstate intersections
- No noise from expanding 220 & I-73
- Unnecessarily noisy, over traveled connector for I-73
- Bypass road through town
- Roads should not split town

### Parking on Greenlawn is unwanted & dangerous

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

#### Address Interstate 73 Impacts on the Town

- Identify and manage the effects of I-73
- I-73 division of town
- Fear of the unknown of I-73 – will it cut the town in half or not?

#### Address Traffic and Transportation Issues

- Expansion, updating, and realignment of existing major roadways
- Try to connect neighborhoods – EMS and neighbors
- Traffic leaving/getting into Summerfield at 7-8 am and 5-6 pm

The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Transportation Improvements**



## Common Objective for Transportation Improvements

The Town of Summerfield shall work proactively with the State DOT toward an efficient system of transportation, including thoroughfares, local roads, sidewalks, and trails. Advanced planning and follow-through shall be employed to create a functional system of streets and highways. New developments shall exhibit an inter-connected network of streets, sidewalks, trails, and bike paths to foster the continued evolution of Summerfield toward a more walkable and bikeable community. The Town will cooperate with efforts to provide public transit service between Summerfield and other areas.

### *Policies for Transportation Improvements*

**Policy 4.1: INTERSTATE 73** should be designed to minimize negative impacts on the town. Noise abatement and effective screening should be used where necessary to buffer properties adjoining the interstate. Underpasses and overpasses should be employed to maintain pedestrian and bicycle linkages between areas on opposite sides of the highway. Special highway corridor development standards, including a community-wide ban on billboards, should be established to maintain a high quality image for Summerfield. (Also see Policy Area 8 Community Appearance Policies.)

**Policy 4.2: PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY FACILITIES** shall be encouraged as energy-efficient, healthful, and environmentally sound alternatives to the automobile. All future road construction and expansion within the town shall consider opportunities for bikeways and pedestrian ways within the project.

**Policy 4.3: ACCESS TO MAJOR ROADS** should generally be from intersecting minor roads, rather than private driveways. Minimum lot frontages, service roads, central medians, and other methods may also be employed to facilitate traffic movement and protect taxpayer dollars invested to build the facility.

**Policy 4.4: So as to minimize unnecessary and unsafe turning movements on to and off of major roads, the Town shall require CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKING LOTS OF ADJOINING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.**

**Policy 4.5: So as to (1) minimize the use of major roadways for purely local trips, (2) allow for public safety access, and (3) facilitate the development of Summerfield as a walkable and bikeable community, the Town shall encourage STREET CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL AREAS,** provided that the street layout discourages cut through traffic through established residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 4.6: As new neighborhoods are developed, AT LEAST TWO POINTS OF ACCESS/EGRESS** to through streets should be planned for or provided for larger developments. The secondary access/egress may be gated with a breakaway wall for emergency services, but should allow for passage of pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Policy 4.7: ACCESS TO HIGHER INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT** shall generally not be permitted through an area of lower intensity development. For example, access to a multi-family development, major park facility or large traffic generator shall not be permitted through a single-family residential neighborhood.

**Policy 4.8: To help avoid heavy traffic loads on local streets, MAJOR TRAFFIC GENERATORS** such as major shopping centers, large retailers, major institutional centers, and other large non-residential developments should be located only at or near the intersection of two or more major roadways where extensive acreage is available. For Summerfield, this means the intersection of I-73 AND HIGHWAY 220.

*Motorcar manufacturers look forward confidently to the time when every family will have two, if not three, cars.*

Lewis Mumford  
April 1958

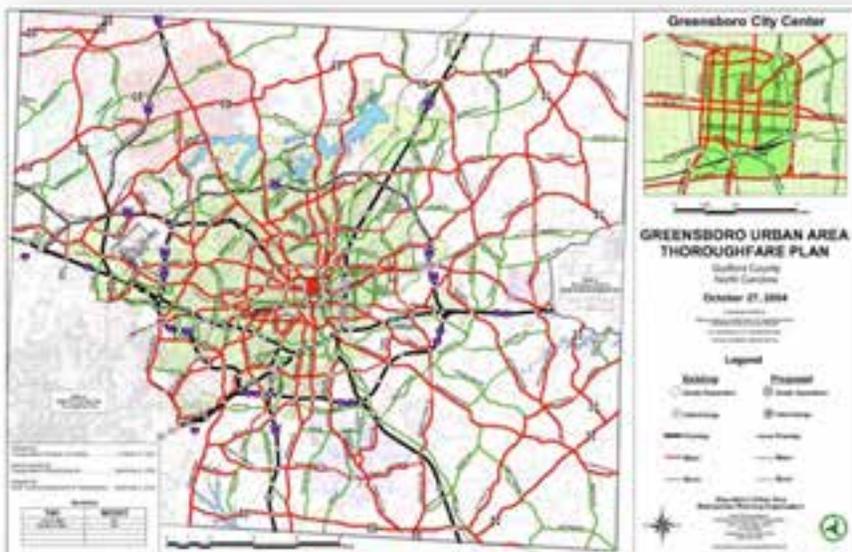
**Policy 4.9: New developments shall be required to MITIGATE THEIR TRAFFIC IMPACTS** so as to preserve the traffic carrying capacity of public roadways.

**Policy 4.10: PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS** should be provided through commercial parking areas and from the public street right of way to the building(s).

### Notes and Commentary:

#### *New Interstate 73 Through Summerfield*

The planned construction of I-73 through Summerfield has many area residents concerned about the new interstate's impact on the community. Concerns voiced by citizens at both the *leadership kick-off meeting* and the *first special town meeting* were much the same:



- Will this new limited access highway divide the town—both physically and socially?
  - Will the volume of traffic on the highway create noise and visual impacts for the properties near the planned corridor?
    - Will the highway corridor generate undesirable forms of commercial development at each interchange along its path?
      - What can be done to minimize these impacts?

Experience with communities facing similar major highway development suggests that the Town should stay in close communication with transportation officials throughout the planning and construction period. While actual construction of I-73 through Summerfield is not likely to occur until sometime after 2013, some planning and right of way acquisition activities are already underway. At the time of this writing, joint federal and state permitting activities have also begun, particularly with regard to the environmental impacts of stream crossings.

Another significant issue for the Town to monitor will be planned points of passage under or over the roadway-- for automobiles, bicyclists, pedestrians, and horses. In reviewing the preliminary route proposed for the interstate, opportunities for such crossings could exist at up to six different locations in Summerfield. Four would be in conjunction with a road crossing, one at a stream crossing and one in association with an abandoned railroad bed. All should be given due consideration for without these important connections,

Summerfield is more apt to become two communities separated by the interstate.

Finally, the Town needs to take the lead in establishing special highway corridor development standards to address land use, signage, landscaping and buffering, parking, and other issues typical of major transportation corridors. Standards for constructing such improvements within the highway corridor are best if adopted *before* the road is completed.

### ***Federal and State Policy Concerning Noise Abatement Walls and Other Similar Features***

Whenever a major new highway is built in or near an existing developed area, roadway noise and light issues can become important. Sound and light abatement measures are often necessary to protect the livability of properties adjoining the highway. Of note, Federal and State policy concerning the inclusion of such mitigation measures in road construction projects was significantly changed in the mid 1990's--noise and light buffers are no longer guaranteed along federally funded highways. Specifically, homes whose construction permits were issued after the "public knowledge date" announcing plans for the highway are no longer guaranteed protection from noise, light, and other impacts. Under this policy, it is especially incumbent upon real estate professionals to make this policy known to buyers of properties near planned highway corridors. In light of this policy, highway planners suggest that homeowners with property in "vulnerable" locations take action well in advance of highway construction to plant evergreen trees and other types of screening.



Federal and State policy concerning the inclusion of sound and light mitigation measures in road construction projects was significantly changed in the mid 1990's--noise and light buffers are no longer guaranteed along federally funded highways.

### ***US Route 220 Widening, Roadway Character, and Trail Crossing***

US Route 220 is currently a divided highway north of the NC 68 / US 220 interchange in Rockingham County. Plans to widen US 220 through Summerfield have been in the works for many years. The first section scheduled for widening will be from the NC 68 intersection south to the planned interchange of 220 with the new section of I-73 in Summerfield. (I-73 and US 220 will run together from this point north.) This will bring the US 220 four-lane south to a point across the Haw River in Summerfield. The US 220 corridor north of the Haw River will have sufficient right of way to accommodate service roads.

Upon completion of the upgrade, US 220 through Summerfield will be a four lane divided highway with partial controlled access and a depressed median with guard rails if needed. U-turns will be allowed. Right of way acquisition for the road widening is underway and will bring the highway closer to existing homes along its path. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2010 and take up to 3 years, provided that the current fiscal crisis does not prompt a postponement. Significantly, plans for the widening of US 220 call for a trail crossing under the roadway near the present intersection of Old Summerfield Road. Preliminary plans call for a box culvert about 16 feet wide and 8 to 10 feet tall. (The height of the box will have a significant impact on the ability of riders on horseback to pass through without dismounting.) This crossing would be a critical central feature of any trail system in the town. An NC DOT-town agreement calls for Summerfield to pay for 10 to 20% of the construction cost, and to maintain the crossing facility after completion.

### **Possible Extension and Realignment of NC 150**

Currently, commuters traveling through Summerfield from southwest to northeast frequently take Hamburg Mill Road east to its intersection with US 220, then turn north on 220 for a short distance to Strawberry Road. Once US 220 is widened and improved, commuters will no longer be able to make the left hand turn from Hamburg Mill Road onto 220 north, thereby taking away this popular route.

One alternative under consideration is to extend NC 150 due west from its present intersection with US 220 at Auburn Road and the Food Lion shopping center. The proposed NC 150 extension would take in Auburn Road and then cut a new path west to Brookbank Road just east of the planned intersection of Brookbank and Interstate 73. Along the way, the 150 extension would intersect with Pleasant Ridge Road, thereby reestablishing a desirable southwest to northeast route through Summerfield. Of note, while the NC 150 extension is identified in the 30 year (2035) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), it is not included in the 7 year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Thus, it is not a current priority.

One transportation improvement under consideration is to extend NC 150 west from its present intersection with US 220 at Auburn Road. The proposed NC 150 extension would take in Auburn Road and then cut a new path west to Brookbank Road just east of the planned intersection of Brookbank and Interstate 73.

### **Possible Transfer of Local Road Maintenance from NC DOT to Local Governments**

No discussion of current transportation issues would be complete without mentioning on-going discussions at the state level about turning responsibility for local roads over to local governments who do not currently have such responsibility (e.g. the Town of Summerfield). Generally, under the proposal, larger roads would continue to be maintained by the State, while all local roads (except private) would be turned over to towns and counties. More specifically, the State classifies all roads as (1) Statewide (between major regions), (2) Regional (between localities or smaller regions) and (3) Sub-Regional (within localities or regions). Under the new arrangement, county governments would take over responsibility for Sub-Regional Roads in unincorporated areas, and municipalities would be responsible for in-town streets. Currently, most larger cities employ Powell Bill monies, funded by the State gas tax, to maintain city streets. Streets in many smaller towns, such as Summerfield, are maintained by the State DOT. If implemented, the proposed change in street construction and maintenance responsibilities could have many more small towns dipping into the same pot of Powell Bill monies that are now being used by a smaller number of municipalities. This would have enormous political, administrative, and financial implications. It will be further discussed under Policy Area 12: *–Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government–*.

### **Public Transit**

While Summerfield currently has no public transit services within the community or available to commuters, examples of such services exist within the region. Twice daily bus service is available between Mount Airy and Winston-Salem, a distance of some 37 miles. Park and ride lots are located in Pilot Mountain. Pleasant Garden and Forest Oakes may soon have a transit service. Transit officials are also considering a service from Rockingham County to Greensboro; for that service, a logical “catchment area” would place one or more park and ride lots in Summerfield. (The construction of parking areas serving the new town ballfields on the north side of town may present an opportunity for same. Another possibility would be the soon to be built parking area at the A and Y Greenway trailhead.)

## Policy Area 5: Water Supply and Sewage Treatment



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting  
(literal, unedited):

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### Water and Sewer, Centralized

- City water & sewer
- Protected/adequate water
- Municipal water & sewer

##### Water and Sewer, Wells

- Protect wells & water supply
- Remain rural, keep wells,  
no city water, no sewer

##### Water and Sewer, Choice of Options

- Give choice to citizens to  
keep well water

#### UNWANTED FUTURE

##### Centralized Water System

- Mandatory connection to town water
- Public water or sewer (don't want)
- No city water/sewer
- Public sewer system

##### Lack of Water Management/ Protecting Wells

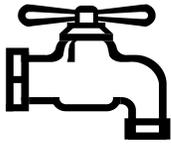
- Lack of water management

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

##### Consider Future Water Supplies and Sewage Treatment Needs

- Water / waste water – reliable, long term
- Viable sustainability of well & septic vs. potential need for surface water solution
- Water conservation and water use. Short term & long term needs & assessments: possible ordinances

The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Water Supply and Sewage Treatment**



## Common Objective for Water Supply and Sewage Treatment

The Town of Summerfield recognizes the singular importance of plentiful, safe, potable water to present and future residents and businesses. To preserve the availability of this resource, the Town shall make water supply, water conservation, and groundwater recharge very high priorities and shall encourage its citizens to do likewise. Wastewater treatment technologies shall be employed to work in harmony with growth and development policies to conserve open space and rural character, and to return water to the groundwater system, while protecting the quality of the

## Policies for Water Supply and Sewage Treatment

**Policy 5.1:** The Town should work regionally on a broad range of WATER SUPPLY OPTIONS AND APPROACHES for the long term.

**Policy 5.2:** To improve short and long-range water supply projections, the Town shall support voluntary as well as institutional efforts to MONITOR GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES underlying the Summerfield community.

**Policy 5.3:** Recognizing that water and sewer services have a POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, the Town of Summerfield shall require that the design and location of water supply and sewage treatment facilities promote desirable development density and growth patterns.

**Policy 5.4:** To preserve and protect recharge to the groundwater system, and to balance supply and demand, the Town shall facilitate development forms and domestic wastewater systems that maximize the RETURN OF WATER TO THE GROUNDWATER SYSTEM. Generally, this means encouraging greenspace<sup>1</sup> developments, and on-site disposal or land application for treated wastewater.

**Policy 5.5:** The Town shall encourage site designs that FACILITATE RECHARGE TO THE GROUNDWATER SYSTEM, including but not limited to: (1) the conservation and addition of tree cover and associated forest floor debris, (2) the avoidance of curb and gutter in favor of roadside swales and retention areas (3) the preservation of open space (3) and the design of parking areas and other paved surfaces to encourage stormwater infiltration.

**Policy 5.6:** To conserve water supplies, developers, as well as area residents, are encouraged to plant TRADITIONAL PLANTS NATIVE TO THE AREA as well as DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPE MATERIALS.



<sup>1</sup> For this plan, *greenspace development* is synonymous with *cluster development*, meaning that homes are brought together in neighborhood clusters with extensive greenspace located and permanently dedicated around such clusters.

**Policy 5.7: Construction of NATURAL AND MAN-MADE RAINWATER RETENTION SYSTEMS IS ENCOURAGED.** Such systems should include but not be limited to rain gardens, bio-retention areas, green roofs, cisterns, and rain barrels.

**Policy 5.8: New developments may be required to size and design water retention facilities to serve as WATER RESERVOIRS TO ENHANCE NEARBY FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITIES.**

**Policy 5.9: WATER SAVING DEVICES** are encouraged in new and existing homes and businesses. Such water saving devices include but are not limited to: low-flow shower heads; high efficiency clothes washing machines and dish washers; and, high-efficiency toilets.

**Policy 5.10: The Town shall favor TWO TYPES OF DOMESTIC SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPERSAL:** (1) individual, on-site septic systems in large lot, low density areas, and (2) cluster or decentralized wastewater treatment systems serving multiple homes where a combination of open space and cluster development is necessary or preferred.

**Policy 5.11: CLUSTER OR DECENTRALIZED DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS,** when employed, shall direct development to areas best suited for growth and away from areas best suited for open space and/or environmental conservation.

**Policy 5.12: EFFLUENT FROM CLUSTER OR DECENTRALIZED DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS** shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner and location.

**Policy 5.13: The Town shall encourage the development of domestic sewer services that employ WATER REUSE TECHNOLOGIES** for appropriate application of treated effluent in open spaces, golf courses and other areas.

**Policy 5.14: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER treatment and disposal** shall be in accordance with state permitting standards, including applicable watershed regulations.

*The new creek bed is ditched straight as a ruler; it has been „uncurled“ by the county engineer to hurry the runoff. On the hill in the background are contoured strip crops; they’ve been „curled“ by the erosion engineer to retard the runoff. The water must be confused by so much advice.*

*--Aldo Leopold  
A Sand County  
Almanac, 1949*

## Notes and Commentary:

### WATER SUPPLY OPTIONS

#### Summary Statement about Water Supply Options for Summerfield

Since its incorporation, the Town of Summerfield has, from time to time, explored various options for securing a permanent and reliable source of potable water for the community. Currently, all residential and commercial water users in Summerfield rely upon groundwater resources, whether from individual or community wells. The Town does not have a convenient surface water source of the magnitude necessary to establish its own water plant, nor does the community’s “charter” as a limited services local government advocate for such a facility. If a centralized water distribution system were to be pursued, the most likely option would be to purchase water wholesale from a nearby supplier and resell it to customers in Summerfield. It remains to be seen

whether such action will be necessary, or whether the community can continue to rely upon groundwater resources for the foreseeable future.

### *Increased Reliance on Groundwater Supplies*

*In 1990, some 74,460 Guilford County residents used groundwater for their domestic water supplies. By 2006, this number had increased to 135,000 residents. This trend is expected to continue.*

*Source: US Census and Guilford County Health Department.*

In 2007, the Guilford County Department of Public Health issued a report calling for a groundwater monitoring system in the county. As justification for such a system, the report offered the following findings with regard to the area's growing reliance on groundwater resources, particularly in rural parts of the county:

*...In 1990, the population of Guilford County was 347,420 and approximately 74,460 residents used groundwater from wells tapping the fractured crystalline rock aquifer system underlying the county for their domestic water supplies (US Bureau of the Census, 1992). It is estimated that the population of the county in 2006 was approximately 452,000. Approximately 135,000 residents or 30 percent of the population in the county use groundwater for domestic use. The number of residents depending upon groundwater for potable supplies has doubled in the last 15 years and will continue to increase with population growth in the county.*

*...With the steady population growth in the county, the demand for groundwater has increased. In the last few years, many community wells with daily usage of more than 10,000 gallons have been installed in many new developments in the county, particularly in the northwestern part of the county including Summerfield, Oak Ridge, and Stokesdale areas. Because the amount of groundwater in the bedrock aquifers available in the county for potable water is largely unknown, the availability of groundwater as a present and future resource has been a concern for the water supplies in the suburban communities...<sup>2</sup>*

Thus, the report offered two important insights into the situation that residents and business owners in the Summerfield area face with regard to their water supply:

- (1) Reliance upon groundwater is increasing all the time, and
- (2) The amount of groundwater available is unknown.

These two findings are at the heart of the issue with regard to future water supplies within the Town of Summerfield.

### *The Groundwater Resource Under Summerfield*

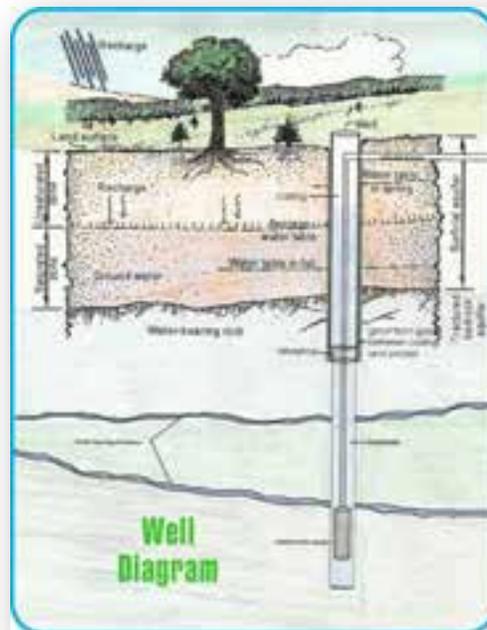
Several studies have been conducted concerning the nature of the groundwater resources of (1) the Piedmont of North Carolina, (2) Guilford County and the Triad, and (3) northwest Guilford County and the Summerfield area. Most agree on the general nature of the groundwater resource. Hydrogeologist Harry LeGrand describes the geology of the groundwater resource in the Piedmont of North Carolina as follows<sup>3</sup>:

<sup>2</sup> Excerpts from **Guilford County Groundwater Monitoring Network, Status Report**, HERA Team, Division of Environmental Health, Department of Public Health, June 2007

<sup>3</sup> Excerpts from **A Master Conceptual Model for Hydrogeological Site Characterization in the Piedmont and Mountain Region of North Carolina**, A Guidance Manual, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality, Groundwater Section, Prepared for the Groundwater Section by Harry E. LeGrand, Sr. Independent Hydrogeologist, 2004

### Hydrogeology

...The groundwater system in the region is essentially a two-part system comprised of the regolith and the underlying bedrock. The regolith, which may have a porosity ranging from 35 to 55 percent (Heath, 1980), serves as the principal storage reservoir for the underlying bedrock. Precipitation infiltrates the regolith until it reaches the saturated zone, typically in saprolite, where it is stored as groundwater in inter-granular pore spaces. Where saprolite is very thin, the saturated zone may be entirely contained in fractured bedrock. In many locations, the regolith includes a transition zone between saprolite and fractured bedrock. The transition zone consists of coarse fragments of partially weathered bedrock and lesser amounts of saprolite (Daniel and Dahlen, 2002). Some groundwater moves through the regolith and into interconnected fractures in the underlying bedrock while another component flows through the regolith parallel to the bedrock surface. The destination of both components is an area where groundwater discharges as seepage into streams, lakes, or other surface water bodies, and also as evapotranspiration in lowland areas.



### Groundwater Occurrence

...The soil saprolite zone is capable of storing water readily, but transmits it slowly. In contrast, the bedrock fracture system has a relatively low storage capacity but is capable of transmitting water readily where interconnecting fractures occur.<sup>4</sup>

### Predictability of Well Yield

The yield of individual wells varies greatly and cannot be predicted within a narrow range of certainty...Wells located in draws where the soil-saprolite zone is thick are likely to have high yields; conversely, wells located on ridges underlain by a very thin soil-saprolite zone are likely to have low yields. Other types of topographic locations and places of intermediate soil-saprolite thickness are likely to have moderate yields...

### Large Water Supply System in the Piedmont Relying Upon Groundwater is Unlikely

The Piedmont Triad Council of Governments published a study in 2004 that produced this finding<sup>5</sup>:

*The region's underlying crystalline bedrock aquifer has relatively little storage capacity and well yields are not enough to support a large public water supply system. For that reason, the public drinking water systems in the Piedmont Triad rely primarily on surface water as their supply source.*

<sup>4</sup> According to Jim Beeson, a local water and sewer system consultant/designer/contractor, the average depth to bedrock in Summerfield is 90 to 130 feet. The depth to the water table is about 40 feet. Mr. Beeson cites a USGS finding that there are 1 million gallons of water, on average, under every acre in the saprolite under Summerfield. But because the movement of water in the saprolite is slow, a good well needs to go into the bedrock and hit a fracture.

<sup>5</sup> **Water Supply and Wastewater Capacity Assessment for the PTCOG Region**, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, March 2004

This finding substantiates LeGrand's observations above that the bedrock fracture system underlying the Piedmont region has a "relatively low storage capacity..." Thus, while water stored in fractured bedrock can supply the needs of a smaller well and pump, it is not as suitable for providing the large quantities of water needed to supply a large well and pump system on a continuing basis, such as that associated with a town-wide, centralized water treatment plant.

### *Development Density and Groundwater Recharge*

Daniel and Harned<sup>6</sup> prepared a special groundwater study for Guilford County that is frequently cited as the basis for setting forth a maximum development density in areas of the county dependent upon groundwater for their potable water needs. Specifically, the study concluded that to maintain adequate recharge to the groundwater system of northwest Guilford County (including Summerfield), there should be no less than 60,000 square feet of land area allocated for each housing unit built.



Based on the Daniel/Harned USGS study, this ratio of housing unit to land area allocation was eventually codified into the Town Zoning Ordinance and has been the standard for development density in Summerfield for the past decade. Significantly, in making their calculations, the authors assumed that water drawn from the aquifer would not be returned to the ground (e.g. via septic systems) but rather be transferred out of the groundwater system (e.g. as if collected in a piped network and deposited in a stream outside the watershed). This has drawn some questions about the report with regard to the basis used for the acreage ratio suggested. Regardless of the assumptions made, and from a practical standpoint, an aquifer cannot have too much recharge area available; in contrast, an aquifer can have too little recharge area if intense urban development creates too many roof tops and too much paved area.<sup>7</sup>

### *Maximizing Groundwater Recharge*

In addition to controlling development density and paved areas, there are three things that are best not done if recharge to the groundwater system is to be maximized:

1. Do not remove tree cover and forest floor debris (i.e. leaves, sticks, fungus, decaying detritus materials). Tree cover diminishes evapotranspiration while ground debris soaks up enormous amounts of rainfall, thereby minimizing runoff to streams and maximizing recharge. Do not replace in-ground or land application sewage disposal with a

<sup>6</sup> United States Geological Survey, Groundwater Recharge to and Storage in the Regolith-Fractured Crystalline Rock Aquifer System, Guilford County, North Carolina U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Investigations Report 97-4140 Prepared in Cooperation with Guilford County Health Department and Guilford Soil and Water Conservation District, By Charles C. Daniel III, and Douglas A Harned.

<sup>7</sup> Groundwater recharge issues aside, large lot sizes might otherwise be justified simply by the will of the people and the desire of the community to maintain its rural character. (Also see Policy Area 6: Housing and Residential Development)

piped sewage collection system and sewer outfall. A piped sewage system does not return water to the groundwater system, but rather delivers it directly to a treatment plant, and then into a stream, thereby eliminating any possibility of groundwater recharge.

2. Do not employ curb and gutter; rather use —naturalized” roadside swales. Curb and gutter collects rainwater from the road surface and directs it to catch basins. After entering the catch basin, the water then enters a piped or ditched system of conveyance to the closest water body. Roadside swales allow street runoff to collect at the roadside and slowly seep back into the groundwater system.

### **Potential Surface Water Sources for Summerfield<sup>8</sup>**

Regardless of whether Summerfield goes into the water business or not, most studies recommend that communities develop backup systems to meet their water needs in times of crisis. For communities that have a centralized water system already in place, this means tying into another community’s system as a backup. For communities that are dependent upon groundwater, it means investigating the availability of a backup surface water source. In the case of Summerfield, a community with no access to a surface water source of sufficient volume, the most likely option is to find a nearby system with surplus capacity that is interested in selling water to offset its operating and maintenance costs.

Most studies recommend that communities develop backup systems to meet their water needs in times of crisis. In the case of Summerfield, a community with no access to a surface water source of sufficient volume, the most likely option is to find a nearby system with surplus capacity that is interested in selling water to offset its operating and maintenance costs.

There are several water supply systems within a serviceable distance of Summerfield. These include Winston-Salem, Rockingham County (from Madison) and Greensboro. While Greensboro has indicated in the past that it would not supply Summerfield with water, this situation could change as water from Randleman Dam comes on line serving the Triad region. Winston-Salem is reportedly 10 years ahead in their design and capacity. Summerfield could buy water from Rockingham County, and tie into Stokesdale (from Winston-Salem) as an emergency connection. Thus there is more than one option available and Summerfield could shop around for the best deal.

### **Can a Water Distribution System Be Built Within Summerfield Incrementally?**

In the mid to late 1990’s the Summerfield area began to see a shift from homes with individual wells to larger planned subdivisions with shared community well systems. Examples of this transition included Henson Farms in Summerfield and Ridgewood, just outside Summerfield at Lake Brandt Road. These are managed as private utilities but, from a regulatory standpoint, fall under special permitting rules as a public utility<sup>9</sup>. The question might be asked: —As more community well systems come on-line in the future, could they be designed for eventual combination into a larger, centralized system?” Officials at the State level suggest that while it may be possible, it would be difficult at best and unlikely. They cite, for example, that the pipe sizes for a small community system are much smaller than for those of a centralized public system. Firefighting employing fire hydrants requires much larger flows and therefore

<sup>8</sup>Much of the information on potential surface water sources came from an interview with representatives of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Water Quality, Winston-Salem Office. (Interview with Corey Basinger and Lee Spencer, April 7, 2009)

<sup>9</sup> Water supply systems serving 25 or more people (e.g. a daycare) or 15 or more homes must be permitted under special public water supply rules.

much larger pipes. If these bigger pipes are initially part of only a small community water system, a big issue arises concerning adequate flow within supply lines to prevent the buildup of carcinogens in stagnant water. To address this problem, water would have to be flushed from the bigger pipes on a routine basis, a waste of large amounts of water that may not be acceptable. Finally, while it is possible to design such a system, it would require a significant engineering effort and overall master plan with which the various community systems would have to conform.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT OPTIONS<sup>10</sup>

Summerfield has developed at a density too low to support a community-wide, centralized sewage treatment system. Wastewater treatment options should therefore focus on a combination of (1) individual, on-site septic systems in large lot, low density areas, and (2) decentralized wastewater treatment systems serving multiple homes in areas where open space and cluster development is necessary or preferred.

### Summary Statement about Sewage Treatment Options for Summerfield

To date, the Town of Summerfield has developed at an overall density too low to support the development of a community-wide, centralized sewage collection and treatment system. Community sentiment about future growth also supports a continuation of current low-density development patterns. Even if this sentiment were to change, the costs of centralized systems have become prohibitive, and Federal and State construction grants for such “big pipe” sewer systems no longer exist. Therefore, this plan suggests that wastewater treatment options in Summerfield should focus on a combination of (1) individual, on-site septic systems in large lot, low density areas, and (2) decentralized wastewater treatment systems serving multiple homes in areas where open space and cluster development is necessary or preferred.

### Decentralized or Cluster Systems Match Summerfield’s Growth Objectives

Until recently, communities had only two options available to meet their wastewater management needs:

1. Continue using traditional, on-site septic systems with in-ground disposal.
2. Install an extensive, large pipe network carrying sewage to one or more centralized sewage treatment plants, with discharge to an area stream.

Option 1 mostly promotes large lot sprawl while option 2 promotes high density development to pay for the construction and maintenance of these large, piped systems. Today, with advanced technologies, there is a third option that is particularly well-suited for a community with growth objectives like those of Summerfield: decentralized or cluster wastewater systems.<sup>11</sup> These systems offer the promise that Summerfield can accommodate new growth while preserving an image that suggests a rural character. The best way to accomplish this, without denying the right of property owners to develop their land, will be to cluster homes on appropriate sites, thereby clearing less land, while preserving generous open spaces along roads and taking in important environmental features between such clusters.

<sup>10</sup> Much of the information discussed in this section on wastewater treatment options came from a booklet entitled **Choices for Communities: Wastewater Management Options for Rural Areas**, published by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University, March, 2009. Local insights were also obtained from

<sup>11</sup> In 1997, the U.S. EPA reported to the Congress that “Adequately managed decentralized wastewater systems are a cost-effective and long term option for meeting public health and water quality goals, particularly in less densely populated areas.” (Ref: EPA 832-R-97-001b)

### Decentralized or Cluster Wastewater Systems Described

*“Cluster systems use small collection networks to bring wastewater from a limited number of homes (usually 5 to 100) to a common treatment and disposal area. Cluster systems utilize alternative collection networks such as small diameter gravity sewers and pressure sewer systems that are less expensive to install than the large pipes used in the centralized approach. Wastewater from a cluster system is pretreated and discharged either into a communal subsurface drainfield or into a land application system that uses irrigation.”<sup>12</sup>*

### Annual Operating Costs for On-Site, Decentralized and Centralized Treatment Systems

Experts in sewage treatment technologies emphasize the importance of a regular management program for the proper operation and management of the system. This holds true for all three types of systems--centralized systems, cluster systems and on-site systems. A recent study<sup>13</sup> comparing the average annual operation and maintenance costs of the three basic technologies found that developments at densities of 1 home per 1 to 2 acres (i.e. the development density limits set forth in the Summerfield development ordinance) cluster systems can often be the least costly technology. These new cluster systems have technologies that do not require operators to be on-site every day. Weekly or even monthly inspection intervals are adequate for many sites. Further, as cluster systems become more prevalent within the same community, operation and maintenance costs (provided by qualified, circuit-riding maintenance personnel) become even lower.



### Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems and Development Density

It is well known that traditional centralized sewage treatment systems promote greater development density as necessary to pay for the expensive big pipe collection network and the operationally intensive sewage treatment plant. But is the same true of decentralized systems? The answer is no. Decentralized systems create no overwhelming force to increase development densities. Once a decentralized system is in place, expansion to accommodate higher densities is not as simple as extending a collection pipe to a central sewer plant. Limited economies of scale and land availability for wastewater dispersal place practical limits on the potential for decentralized sewer to foster extensive urban type densities. At the same time, they can provide great flexibility as to where density is best located on a given site. As a practical matter, decentralized sewer systems application requires careful upfront planning to define and lock-in the system capacity for wastewater management.

### Decentralized Systems and Aquifer Recharge

The primary domestic water supply in many rural communities, including Summerfield, is from underlying aquifers. If Summerfield were to join a centralized sewage collection and treatment system, the water drawn from the aquifer would be used and then dumped into the piped system, treated and

For developments with densities of 1 home per 1 to 2 acres (i.e. the development density limits set forth in the Summerfield development ordinance) cluster sewage treatment systems can often be the most cost efficient technology to operate and maintain.

<sup>12</sup> **Choices for Communities: Wastewater Management Options for Rural Areas**, published by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University. March, 2009, page 9

<sup>13</sup> —Sustainability Measured, Part 1—Operation and Management” by Craig Goodwin and Anish Jantrania, as reprinted in **Choices for Communities...**, March 2009

released into a surface stream—perhaps even into a different watershed. There would be no opportunity for the used groundwater to recharge the aquifer. Under a decentralized or cluster system, treated wastewater is re-applied to the land through drip or spray irrigation, thereby returning water to the groundwater system.

### **Decentralized Systems and Affordable Housing**

Citizens attending the first Town Meeting for this Comprehensive Plan expressed differing views concerning affordable housing. There were some who felt that Summerfield was becoming too dominated by high end (\$300,000+ cost) only homes. Others called for phasing out mobile homes and for prohibiting multi-family housing altogether. An outright prohibition of affordable housing may not be a realistic policy, given the fact that people of modest incomes (e.g. school teachers, firemen, store clerks, etc.) also need a place to live.

One of the biggest challenges to affordable housing in Summerfield, as in many popular places, is the contributing high cost of land relative to total housing costs. One solution is to provide incentives to developers to add a small amount of affordable housing to each clustered subdivision. In other words, no single zoning district would be set aside just for affordable housing; rather, existing low density zoning districts would incorporate a provision to allow a small percentage (say 15%) of the total housing units to be placed on less land per unit. Decentralized sewage treatment makes this possible.

*Note: See Policy Area 6: Housing and Residential Development for additional discussion of the affordable housing issue.*



### **Water Reuse Potential in Summerfield**

Water reuse is the big topic on the horizon in wastewater and water conservation circles. The so-called “purple pipe” systems take wastewater that has been treated to an appropriate standard and reuse it for non-potable purposes. Water reuse systems require that an additional distribution network of pipes be installed parallel to the potable water system. Advanced dual water distribution systems in new building construction allow reused water to flush toilets inside the home. Since

Summerfield has no plans to have a centralized wastewater collection and

treatment system, it is unlikely that the town would ever have an advanced, community-wide water reuse system. At a lesser scale, however, spray application of wastewater treated in cluster or decentralized sewage treatment systems offers the potential to achieve the same purpose. As technologies continue to improve, wastewater effluent from decentralized treatment plants should gain broader acceptance and use to water lawns, golf courses, public parks, etc. In Summerfield, water reuse technologies associated with decentralized sewage treatment facilities will allow a limited resource (groundwater) to be used twice before returning to the groundwater system for yet additional use.

## Policy Area 6: Appropriate Housing and Residential Development



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### A Mix of Housing Types

- Mixed style of housing with single, townhomes, and apartments
- Affordable twin or patio home construction
- Limit condo/multifamily developments
- Different type of housing (ex-patio homes)

##### Low Density, Single Family Development

- Retain low-density housing

##### Affordable Housing

- More affordable housing <300k!

*Both in town and site planning it is important to prevent the complete separation of different classes of people which is such a feature of the... modern town. Mrs. Barnett in her writings has laid special emphasis on this point and has referred to the many evils which result from large areas being inhabited entirely by people of one limited class.*

**Sir Raymond  
Unwin  
1909**

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### High-Density Multifamily Housing

- Multifamily residential
- Multifamily dwellings
- Duplexes nor higher density housing
- No apartments or townhouses

### Lack of Affordable Housing

- No low income housing – need to invite developers

### Tract Housing on Small Lots

- Tract housing/small lots
- No big houses on tiny lots

### Mobile Home Parks

- Phase out mobile home parks

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



### Vary Development Densities and Products

- More variety in housing product
- Lack of affordable or moderately sized housing

The preceding *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. *This Policy Area also took into consideration the strong desire of Town residents to preserve open spaces and rural character.* These key words and phrases, and the concern for open space,

were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Housing and Residential Development**



### Common Objective for Appropriate Housing and Residential Development

Summerfield's appealing residential areas, exemplified by neighborhoods set among expanses of open space, woodlands, and pastures, shall continue to be a defining attribute of the community. To accommodate housing for younger families and senior citizens while promoting and protecting rural character, the inclusion in residential development of smaller single family detached homes shall be encouraged over twin and other multi-unit residential buildings. Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods will be favored. An open system of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets should work together with a network of greenway trails to connect neighborhoods with each other and with the rest of the town.

## Policies for Appropriate Housing and Residential Development

**Policy 6.1:** Residential development in Summerfield should remain mostly **LOW DENSITY, SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOUSING**. Appropriate instances for other housing forms, such as **SMALL ATTACHED AND ACCESSORY HOUSING** should also be fostered to meet a variety of housing needs.

**Policy 6.2:** A **VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES AND SIZES** should be provided within the general bounds of large developments.

**Policy 6.3:** Architecturally compatible and integrated **ACCESSORY HOUSING**, such as mother-in-law suites, carriage houses, and granny flats, are encouraged to improve housing affordability and allow for extended family care, especially for senior citizens.

**Policy 6.4:** **OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**, also known as **GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT**, shall be preferred as environmentally sound and economically cost effective. **LARGE LOT DEVELOPMENT** may occur when greenspace development is not feasible or appropriate to the site.

**Policy 6.5:** **OPEN SPACE DEDICATION** requirements should be applied equitably to all residential developments regardless of the number of planned housing units. If a development is not appropriate to set aside useful open space, a **FEE IN LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION** may be collected to help provide for future open space acquisition. (Also see Policy 7.3)

**Policy 6.6:** **OPEN SPACE CREDITS** will continue to be offered for the provision of **SIDEWALKS, BIKEWAYS, and TRAILS** in new developments.

**Policy 6.7:** The Town should allow for some land development for **MODERATELY PRICED HOUSING** consistent with Policy 6.1.

**Policy 6.8:** **NEW INFILL HOUSING** should be architecturally compatible with existing structures, landscape features, and the streetscape within its vicinity.

**Policy 6.9:** So as to maintain the traffic moving function of the Town's primary roads, prevent traffic accidents, and avoid land locking interior land parcels, **RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STRIP DEVELOPMENT** should be discouraged.

**Policy 6.10:** **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT**, meaning a combination of commercial and compatible institutional (e.g. assisted living facilities) and residential development, may be encouraged at appropriate locations to reduce automobile dependency and provide for housing alternatives, and to accommodate an aging population.

**Subdivision** *n.* A tract of land divided into smaller lots

**Neighborhood** *n.* An area defined by the commonality of its inhabitants or other characteristics.

**American Heritage Dictionary**

*"All we do here is wait for each other to die. And each time we ask ourselves: Who will be next? What we want is a touch of life. I wish we were near the shops..., where we could see things."*

**Retirement Home Resident, 1956**

## Notes and Commentary:

### Current Zoning Districts

Residential development in Summerfield generally occurs as permitted in one of several residential or agricultural zoning districts.<sup>1</sup> The general descriptions of these districts, listed below, have been excerpted from Article 4: Zoning of the Town's Development Ordinance:

#### AG AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

The AG, Agricultural District, is primarily intended to accommodate uses of an agricultural nature, including farm residences and farm tenant housing. It also accommodates scattered non-farm residences on large tracts of land. It is not intended for major residential subdivisions. The overall gross density in AG areas will be 0.36 units per acre, with a minimum lot size of 120,000 square feet.

#### RR RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The Rural Residential District is established to accommodate minor subdivisions of fewer than five lots. It accommodates scattered non-farm residences on tracts of land that are no longer being used for agricultural purposes. The overall gross density in RR areas will typically be 0.73 units per acre or less, with a minimum lot size of 60,000 square feet.

#### RS-40 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-40, Residential Single-Family District is primarily intended to accommodate single-family detached dwellings on large lots in areas without access to public water and wastewater services. The district is established to promote single-family detached residences where environmental features, public service capacities, or soil characteristics necessitate very low-density single-family development. Development within this district requires Open Space dedication. The overall gross density in RS-40 areas will typically be 0.73 units per acre or less, with a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet.

#### RS-30 RESIDENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICT

The RS-30, Residential Single – Family District is primarily intended to accommodate low density single-family detached dwellings on lots in areas without access to public water and wastewater services. Development within this district requires Open Space dedication. The overall gross density in RS-30 areas will typically be 0.73 units per acre or less, with a minimum lot size of 30,000 square feet. The RS-30 zoning district is referenced in the Development Ordinance for the sole purpose of defining permitted uses and dimensional standards within the district for those areas identified as RS-30 on the Official Zoning Map. No property shall be rezoned to the RS-30 district after May 4, 1999.

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<sup>1</sup> While residential development is also permitted in several non-residential/mixed use districts (i.e. LO Limited Office, NB Neighborhood Business, and the TCD Town Core Districts), this commentary focuses on those districts where residential development is most apt to take place.)

### OSRD OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT

The Open Space Residential District is primarily intended to accommodate rural developments designed to preserve rural character, significant man-made features, and environmentally sensitive areas. The district permits open space, recreational, agricultural, and residential uses that are part of a unified design. The district encourages compact residential growth while maintaining average house densities similar to those in other residential districts. The overall gross density in OSRD areas will typically be 0.73 units per acre or less.



In practice, the Agricultural District and the Rural Residential District each accommodate very few new residences, while the RS-30 District is no longer available for new development. Thus, the vast majority of all new housing built in recent years has occurred in just two of the districts: RS-40 and OSRD. The balance of these notes will focus on these two districts.

### How the Town Density Standards Were Developed

The Town's current development standards call for an average development density of 0.73 units per acre. This number was derived from a U.S.G.S. report on ground water prepared in 1997<sup>2</sup> that recommended that there be no more than one housing unit per 60,000 square feet of land in the Summerfield area. The report held that development built out at a density greater than this would not allow sufficient recharge to sustain the groundwater aquifer. Since the report was prepared, some of its assumptions have been questioned<sup>3</sup>. Regardless, if the citizens of Summerfield wish to maintain their town as a low density community, they can do so without relying upon groundwater studies for support.

The Town's current development standards call for an average development density of 0.73 units per acre. This number was derived from a U.S.G.S. report on ground water prepared in 1997 that recommended that there be no more than one housing unit per 60,000 square feet of land in the Summerfield area.

### RS-40 Residential Single-Family District

The RS-40 District is intended for application on land tracts that are predominantly free of environmental constraints. A typical example would be a former farm that is not dissected by numerous stream sections and does not have extensive areas of steep slopes, floodprone areas, woodlands, and the like. The overall density of 0.73 units per acre remains the same however. Thus, development density calculations for three RS-40 subdivisions of 4, 50, and 70 acres would look like this:

<sup>2</sup> United States Geological Survey, **Groundwater Recharge to and Storage in the Regolith-Fractured Crystalline Rock Aquifer System, Guilford County, North Carolina** U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Investigations Report 97-4140 Prepared in Cooperation with Guilford County Health Department and Guilford Soil and Water Conservation District, By Charles C. Daniel III, and Douglas A Harned.

<sup>3</sup> The report assumed, for example, that groundwater pulled from the aquifer beneath Summerfield would not be returned to the ground via septic tanks; rather the calculations *effectively* placed all used water into a theoretical pipe and transported it out of the area without opportunity to recharge the groundwater.

5 acres x .73 = 4 building lots  
 50 acres x .73 = 37 building lots  
 75 acres x .73 = 55 building lots

The Town's current requirements for open space dedication, as set forth in the development ordinance, are preferential to smaller developments with fewer lots.

For the RS-40 District open space acreage is calculated on a sliding scale as follows.

<u># of lots:</u>	<u>% of total acreage to be set aside</u>
Less than 5	0%
5-24	10%
25-50	15%
More than 50	25%

Using the percentages above, and the number of lots previously calculated, the required open space for the three examples given would look like this:

5 acres x 0% = 0 acres in open space  
 50 acres x 15% = 7.5 acres in open space  
 75 acres x 25% = 18.75 acres in open space

Thus, while the 75 acre development is 50% larger than the 50 acre development, the 75 acre development must set aside more than twice as much land in open space. Note also that a development yielding less than 5 lots is not required to dedicate any open space whatsoever.<sup>4</sup> To sum up, the open space dedication requirements of the zoning ordinance favor smaller developments with fewer lots, at least in terms of the open space required to be set aside. These requirements may warrant further examination when the Town's development ordinance is next updated.

### **OSRD Open Space Residential District**

The Open Space Residential District is intended for application on land tracts that have a significant amount of area constrained by environmental features. This district allows homes to be placed on those parts of the property most suited for development while preserving areas of steep slopes, flooding, wetlands, and stream sections for open space. Unlike the RS-40 District that permits only single family detached residences, the OSRD District also allows 2 family dwellings and possibly townhouses<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the numbers that follow refer to *housing units* rather than *building lots*. For a 50 acre tract of land the calculations would look like this:

50 acres x .73 units/acre = 37 housing units.

For the OSRD District, open space acreage is calculated at a flat 50% as follows:

50 acres x 50% open space = 25 acres available for development and 25 acres in open space.

<sup>4</sup> The logic behind not requiring any open space for very small developments (i.e. less than 5 lots) is that the amount of open space to be set aside is so small to be of little value. One way to correct for this inequality with larger developments is for the Town to collect a fee in lieu of land dedication, the proceeds of which would be placed in a capital reserve account for the future purchases of open space.

<sup>5</sup> The permitted use table in the Town's zoning does not list townhouses as a permitted use in the OSRD district but the text of the ordinance describing the OSRD does. This should be corrected for clarification.

Lots for single family detached homes in the OSRD district can be as small as 15,000 square feet, and as little as 10,000 square feet for duplexes. . The least amount of acreage consumed by a 37 unit development could theoretically be as follows:

37 single family housing units x 15,000 sq. ft. / 43,560 sq. ft. per acre = 12.7 acres

or

18 duplexes x 10,000 sq. ft. per duplex / 43,560 sq. ft. per acre = 4.1 acres

In reality, many OSRD developments encounter (1) land with septic or well constraints or (2) housing market forces that that will cause these numbers to vary considerably from those shown.

### **Summerfield: A Place for Affordable Housing?<sup>6</sup>**

There are clearly mixed views in Summerfield concerning the need for affordable housing and where, if anywhere, to locate it. One perspective holds that any form of housing other than single family, stick-built homes on large lots is not wanted in Summerfield. This perspective may be unrealistic, in that not all families in a community like Summerfield can afford to live in homes costing \$300,000 or more. There is also a need for housing for young families, school teachers, firemen, store clerks, waitresses and a host of other people with modest incomes. This latter perspective holds that Summerfield is in need of greater diversity in its housing stock, at least in terms of affordability.

### **Can Housing “Affordability” Be Determined for Summerfield?**

Housing is generally accepted as being “unaffordable” when monthly costs exceed 30% of a household’s monthly income. Issues of housing cost arise when they exceed this 30% figure. Housing costs most often affect low to moderate income households.

Households incomes falling into the low to moderate range may be divided into four categories: *Extremely Low Income*, making less than 30% of the median income; *Very Low Income*, making 30% to 50% of the median; *Low Income*, making 50% to 80% of the median, and *Moderate Income* making 80% to 120% of the median income for the area under study. *Workforce housing* is a term that describes housing for those that fall within the *Moderate Income* category.

With the 2010 US Census rapidly approaching, accurate household income figures are a decade out of date, but nonetheless serve to illustrate relative degrees of housing affordability. Based on the 2000 Census, the median household income for Summerfield in 1999 was \$71,738. The median income for Northwest Guilford County in the same year was \$67,940.<sup>7</sup>

The following two charts present calculations of housing affordability based on low to moderate household incomes for the Town and region.

<sup>6</sup> Some of this material on affordable housing is also covered in the policy section on Water Supply and Sewage Treatment.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Anne Edwards, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments

<b>Town of Summerfield</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>House Value</b>
<b>Extremely Low Income</b>	\$21,521	\$1793	\$538/Mo	\$67,000
<b>Very Low Income</b>	\$21,521 to \$35,869	\$1793 \$2989	\$538/Mo \$897/Mo	\$67,000 \$111,676
<b>Low Income</b>	\$35,869 to \$57,390	\$2989 \$4783	\$897/Mo \$1435/Mo	\$111,676 \$178,682
<b>Moderate Income</b>	\$57,390 to \$86,085	\$4783 \$7174	\$1435/Mo \$2152/Mo	\$178,682 \$268,023

<b>NW Guilford County</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Rent</b>	<b>House Value</b>
<b>Extremely Low Income</b>	\$20,382	\$1699	\$509/Mo	\$63,458
<b>Very Low Income</b>	\$20,382 to \$33,970	\$1699 \$2831	\$509/Mo \$849/Mo	\$63,458 \$105,764
<b>Low Income</b>	\$33,970 to \$54,352	\$2831 \$4529	\$849/Mo \$1359/Mo	\$105,764 \$169,222
<b>Moderate Income</b>	\$54,352 to \$81,528	\$4529 \$6794	\$1359/Mo \$2038/Mo	\$169,222 \$253,833

From the income and house value information presented here, it is apparent that for any "moderately affordable" housing initiative in Summerfield to be effective, the purchase price of some homes must not be greater than about \$250,000.

*Notes:* Annual household income is the appropriate percentage of the area's median income. Monthly income is 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the annual household income. Rent is the monthly income multiplied by 0.30. Suggested house value is calculated using the Yahoo! Real Estate website calculator, assuming the above annual household income, no other financial obligations, 6% interest on a 30-year loan. Since no other financial obligations are factored in, (e.g. car payment) these home values are therefore at the high end of affordability.

*Additional Note:* While the dollar amount of household incomes increased by about 10% between 1999 and 2009, the actual buying power of low to moderate income households, based on the consumer price index, actually fell by nearly 10% over the decade. Thus, from the information presented in the above table, it is apparent that for any "moderately affordable" housing initiative in Summerfield to be effective, the purchase price of some homes must be brought down to a number no greater than approximately \$250,000.

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGIES**

In Summerfield, as in any community, housing prices are greatly influenced by land costs. Summerfield's very low density of development and large lots are not conducive to affordable land costs. Therefore, the following strategies focus mainly on ways of reducing land costs per housing unit.

#### **Affordable Housing Strategy 1: Accommodate Some Smaller Lots**

One solution is to amend the Town development ordinance to provide incentives to developers to add a small amount of affordable housing (i.e. smaller lots) to new residential developments. In other words, no single development would be set aside exclusively for so-called "high end" housing or "affordable" housing; rather, new developments would include a small percentage (say 15%) of their total housing units to be built as affordable housing. The numbers could look like this for a 50 acre tract of land in Summerfield:

#### High End Housing (Under current OSRD district standards)

- 50 acre tract of land
- .73 units per acre (by ordinance) x 50 acres = 37 “high end” housing units
- 37 high end housing units x 25,000 square ft lots = 21.2 acres in housing sites
- 50 acres of land – 21.2 acres in housing sites = 28.8 acres (57.6%) residual land available for open space

#### 15% Affordable Housing Incentive

- 37 high end housing units x 15% = 6 affordable housing units allowed
- 6 affordable housing units x 20,000 square ft lots = approx. 2.8 acres needed (The smaller lot sizes would be made possible by employing cluster sewage treatment technologies.)
- 28.8 acres residual land – 2.8 acres for affordable housing = approx. 26 acres (52%) of the total development in open space

Under this incentive system, several desirable things happen:

- (1) There are no land costs associated with the affordable housing units because the developer is given a 6 unit bonus for building affordable housing. The developer is able to sell these housing units at more affordable price points and still make a profit.
- (2) The Town achieves its objective of encouraging the provision of affordable housing, while still exceeding the 50% open space provision of the ordinance.
- (3) Residents of more modest incomes are able to call Summerfield home.
- (4) The community is not “overridden” with affordable housing; rather it is parceled out carefully in small percentages of the total new housing stock, in accordance with a master plan.
- (5) The one modification that this incentive system would engender is that the overall development density on the 50 acre tract of land would increase modestly from .73 units per acre to .86 units per acre.

#### **Affordable Housing Strategy 2: Place Affordable Housing in Mixed Use Development**

Historically, good community planning calls for affordable, attached housing such as apartments and townhouses to be located within walking distance of job centers and services or with convenient access to public transit. Since public transit within the sparsely developed Summerfield community is unlikely, one option is to provide for affordable housing as part of a mixed use development, where housing and urban services are designed to co-exist. Since land costs are dramatically reduced under such an arrangement, a good quality of housing can often be produced at lower price points. This plan therefore suggests that any new commercial or service center planned for Summerfield give consideration to the marketability of affordable housing as an integral part of the development. Currently, the Town’s NB Neighborhood Business zoning district allows up to 2 housing units to be built above a ground floor business. Further, the LO Limited Office district allows an accessory dwelling unit to be built within an office building (more on accessory housing in the next section). The Town is to be commended for including such provisions in these two districts; it should look to further expand such mixed use capabilities into other commercial zoning districts.

*Many people would find their own family life replenished if the grandparents, though no under their feet, were near at hand; and above all, the young would be gainers from this; for there are special bonds of sympathy between them and their grandparent's generation, through its very detachment, which often makes them far more ready to heed their advice than that of their own parents. Who can say how much delinquency and brutalized mischief in our American towns may not be due to the absence of a warm loving reciprocal intercourse between the three generations?*

**Lewis Mumford**  
May 1958

### ***Affordable Housing Strategy 3: Employ Accessory Housing (Carriage Houses, Mother-In-Law Suites)***

Accessory housing units are normally smaller housing units either within, attached to or on the same lot as a larger principal housing unit. Mother-in-law suites, carriage houses, garage apartments, and back yard granny flats, to name a few, are all forms of accessory housing. The principal advantage of accessory housing is that there are no land costs or additional infrastructure needed (streets, water, sewer, etc.).

Accessory housing may be one answer to housing the aging baby boom generation. Baby boomers will eventually be unable to drive and it will not be possible or affordable to institutionalize this entire generation in assisted living facilities. Even now, as the country is experiencing a severe economic downturn, some extended families are moving in together to share housing costs.

Under Summerfield's large lot zoning standards, home sites often have ample lot area to accommodate a carriage house or other accessory housing unit.

Obstacles to accessory housing include a building industry pattern of restrictive covenants that allow only one housing unit per lot. Also, after decades of large lot, single family development, much of the American public sees accessory housing as a threat, rather an opportunity to reduce their own mortgage payments and reconnect the generations. Education and perceptions will have to change if future subdivisions are not to be bound by such restrictions. Like so many other societal norms, it may take several successful examples to demonstrate how such development can be beneficial and well done.



The Summerfield zoning ordinance allows accessory dwelling units in all residential zoning districts except the OSRD district. They would also be allowed in the Town Core

districts as presently written—if that feature were ever to become reality. The Town should consider permitting accessory housing in the OSRD as well.

### ***Conservation or Creation of Open Space Buffers in Residential Developments Along Major Highways.***

As was made evident during the first town meeting held for this plan, citizens are most concerned about preserving the rural image of Summerfield, especially as seen from the major roadways in the community. This plan recommends that buffer strips with frequent, random clusters of trees be retained along both sides of most US and NC designated roadside corridors throughout much of Summerfield. The practical implication of this policy is that some of the open space required to be set aside within new developments may need to be directed to these buffer strips adjoining the highway.<sup>8</sup> The form of development occurring off the highway will then become less critical, so long as the overall development density remains low.

<sup>8</sup> Land immediately adjoining a highway should be included among the list of features designated as Secondary Conservation Areas in the zoning ordinance.

## Policy Area 7: Park and Recreation Improvements



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

### DESIRED FUTURE

#### Parks and Recreation, Summerfield Community Park

- Complete park w/lots of walking trails, fishing piers/access, special event area
- Completion of amphitheater
- Park facilities with handicap access. Fishing pier, amphitheater
- Continue growth of SFD park & more community parks
- Further dev on SFD park

#### Parks and Recreation, Ballfields

- Finish ball park

### Parks and Recreation, Generally

- Natural passive parks
- Swimming pool (indoor or outdoor) sponsor it with memberships if not done as a community pool

### UNWANTED FUTURE

#### Failure to Complete Phase 2 of Summerfield Community Park

- Fail to complete Phase 2 of the park as planned
- Changes to park plan

#### Miscellaneous Parks Facilities Unwanted

- No “overflow” park & parking in neighborhoods
- Amphitheater

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

#### Plan for Parks and Recreation

- Lack of parks & recreation



The preceding *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Parks and Recreation**.

## **Common Objective for Park and Recreation Improvements**

Summerfield values its open space and park and recreation facilities, which help define the community's image and quality of life. To serve the increasing numbers of children, families, senior citizens, and others calling Summerfield home, the Town shall provide quality parks and recreation facilities and services commensurate with community needs. Smaller parks should continue to be provided by private developments at the neighborhood level. Larger parks should be provided as a result of advanced planning and development by the Town. An extensive system of open space and greenway trails should be developed to connect large and small park areas and to serve as natural corridors for the movement of wildlife.



## **Policies for Park and Recreation Improvements<sup>9</sup>**

**Policy 7.1:** In determining **SITES FOR PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE AREAS**, multiple objectives for natural area conservation, open space connectivity, visual impacts, preservation of cultural and historic assets, watershed enhancement and flood prone area protection shall be considered.

**Policy 7.2:** **LAND FOR PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES** should be acquired in advance of development pressures, if possible, to achieve desirable locations at cost effective levels, park development should be commensurate with identified community needs.

**Policy 7.3:** **NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHALL PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE** or, alternatively, fees placed in an open space trust fund, in proportion to the demand created by the development. This may be determined, for example, by the number of dwelling units in the development and/or by a percentage of the total acreage or square footage in the development. (Also see Policy 6.5)

**Policy 7.4:** The Town supports the **CO-LOCATION, JOINT DEVELOPMENT, and SHARED USE** of park, open space, and recreation facilities in cooperation with institutions and organizations such as public schools, utility companies, and federal, state, and local government agencies.

**Policy 7.5:** The Town supports the planning and development of a system of open space **GREENWAYS AND HIKING TRAILS** that connect parks and recreation facilities throughout the community and connecting to other trail systems and parks beyond the Town limits.

**Policy 7.6:** The Town shall work proactively with other local and state governments, utility companies, and other major landowners in the development of **WALKING AND BICYCLING TRAILS** for the public.

**Policy 7.7:** The Town shall proactively work with organizations that provide **RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING** to Summerfield residents to meet the recreational needs of the community.

<sup>9</sup> Given the close relationship between (1) parks and recreation and (2) trails and greenways, the reader is also referred to the policies previously set forth in **Policy Area 2: Sidewalks, Bikeways, and Trails**.

## Notes and Commentary:

### PARKS AND RECREATION AS A QUALITY OF LIFE PRIORITY

Parks and recreation facilities are one of the key features that separate communities with a high quality of life from those that claim to have such but do not. In some communities, parks, open space, and recreation are viewed as features that are nice to have, but are clearly of secondary importance when compared to other services seen as *essential*, such as law enforcement, fire protection, public works, etc. This is not the case for the Town of Summerfield, where families with children have moved to the area in large numbers in search of organized outdoor activities like little league baseball, soccer, horseback riding, and cycling.<sup>10</sup>



In keeping with the heavy family orientation of the community, the Town places a high priority on parks and recreation services. The most tangible evidence of this commitment can be seen in the Town's budget, where parks and recreation is the largest line item (about \$2.0 million), amounting to about 50% of the total operating budget of the Town. Many other traditional services, on the other hand, such as public safety, utilities, street maintenance, etc. are handled by Guilford County or the State of North Carolina.

### ORGANIZATION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

#### *Town Parks and Recreation Committee*

*"The Parks and Recreation Committee is responsible for supporting Town Council's efforts in enlightening and enriching the lives of citizens and working towards the preservation of the environment by providing quality parks, facilities, and services designed for people of all ages and abilities."*<sup>11</sup> Until recently, the Town also had a Conservation Council whose charge was to promote the conservation of open space, greenways (and associated trails) and other desirable features that make Summerfield unique. Due to common goals and interests, the Conservation Council was re-organized as a sub-committee of the Parks and Recreation Committee. The P and R Committee recently provided oversight for phase II of the Summerfield Community Park. They will also play an important role as other park plans are developed and implemented. In addition, the SPARC Committee is heavily involved in the planning for special events such as "Movies in the Park", outdoor theater productions, and musical events.

#### *Town Athletic Advisory Committee*

Town Council established the Summerfield Athletic Advisory Committee in 2008, shortly after plans were set in motion for the development of a master plan for the 28+ acre site for the Summerfield Athletic Park. Since that time, the Athletic Advisory Committee has provided guidance and oversight to the preparation of the master plan. At the time of this writing, the master plan is complete and has

<sup>10</sup> Population figures presented in the *Growth Factors Analysis* for this plan indicate that, for the 2000 U.S. Census, the population age groups most apt to be in families (adults aged 30 to 49 years and children from birth to 19 years of age) make up about two-thirds of the total population of Summerfield. This percentage is significantly higher than the average community in the State.

<sup>11</sup> Parks and Recreation Committee Mission Statement as repeated on the Town website: [www.summerfieldgov.com/content/view/38/111](http://www.summerfieldgov.com/content/view/38/111)

been put out to bid. Construction is underway with a planned completion for the Fall of 2010.

### ***Town Parks and Recreation Supervisor***

The Town employs one full time parks and recreation supervisor whose duties focus primarily on operation, maintenance, and replacement of park equipment and facilities. In addition, the supervisor is responsible for managing various parks and recreation construction projects and serves as staff liaison to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

### ***Summerfield Recreation Association***

The Town of Summerfield has no formal in-house recreation programming staff or function. This is not unusual for a small town or rural county. Instead, the community relies upon the Summerfield Recreation Association (SRA), “a volunteer based organization whose success comes from dedicated parents and local businesses that recognize the value of our community’s youth participating in sports.”<sup>12</sup> According to the SRA website, the organization currently offers cheerleading, softball, basketball, and baseball programs (using whatever fields and facilities may be available in the community).

### ***Other Recreational Organizations Serving Summerfield residents***

While the SRA is the most active recreation organization serving Summerfield residents, several other organizations provide recreational services to residents in the area. Examples are Greensboro Parks and Recreation, several youth sports leagues, equestrian clubs, local churches, and the YMCA.

## **EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

### ***Summerfield Community Park***

Summerfield Community Park opened in September 2006. This 50 acre park is located off Centerfield Road, generally behind Summerfield Elementary School. The park design includes a playground, restroom facilities, picnic areas and shelters, an amphitheater, and over a mile of paved and unpaved trails leading around School House Lake. In addition to the public facilities, the Summerfield Community Center Inc. maintains a special events building that may be rented for a fee.

### ***Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway Trail***

The Atlantic and Yadkin Greenway Trail connects Summerfield to Greensboro’s Lake Brandt Greenway. It begins at a trailhead located on Strawberry Road approximately 1000 feet north of US 220. The trail follows the course of the old Southern Railroad bed north for ¼ mile before becoming an unpaved trail to Toscana Drive in the Vineyard Neighborhood. Trail users can also go south from the trailhead along the Lake Brandt Greenway to Bur-Mil Park and points beyond.

*Conventionally, neighborhood parks or park-like open spaces are considered boons conferred on the deprived population of cities. Let us turn this thought around, and consider parks deprived places that need the boon of life and appreciation conferred on them. This is more nearly in accord with reality, for people do confer use on parks and make them successes—or else withhold use and doom parks to rejection and failure.*

**Jane Jacobs**  
1961



<sup>12</sup> Excerpted from the SRA website: [www.summerfieldrec.org](http://www.summerfieldrec.org)

### ***Ballfields at Summerfield Elementary School***

The ballfields at Summerfield Elementary School, owned by Guilford County Schools, have served the Summerfield community for many years. As the population of Summerfield has grown, however, demand for playing time on the elementary school fields has outstripped the available hours for use. Further, heavy use of these fields has often presented other issues, including parking problems as teams, coaches, and fans have parked their vehicles along the shoulders of nearby residential streets.



### **PLANNED PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

#### ***Future Summerfield Athletic Park***

In 2007, in response to the growing pressure on the ballfields at Summerfield Elementary School, as well as other identified needs, Town Council authorized an initiative to locate and purchase a site for a major new park in Summerfield. Late that same year, a 28+ acre site was purchased off US 220 about one half mile north of the NC 150

intersection. A master plan for the park,

completed in 2009, calls for development in phases. Phase 1 will include a large multipurpose field with perimeter walking track, two baseball/softball fields, a restroom and concessions facility, parking for 140+ vehicles, and appropriate lighting, irrigation, landscaping, and signage. Future phases will include additional lighted baseball or multi-purpose fields, as well as necessary parking, restrooms, and support facilities. Costs for Phase 1 improvements have been estimated at \$1.3 to \$1.5 million. Construction of future phases would be on the order of \$1.5 to \$1.8 million in 2009 dollars. Park designers have recommended a 20% contingency for all phases of development.

#### ***Future Town Park at Armfield***

Summerfield Properties LLC, the developers of the 500 acre Armfield neighborhood, dedicated over 30 acres of property along both sides of Brookbank Road near Banning Road for a Town park. Plans for this parkland have not yet been developed, and the site is not currently open to the public. Under provisions for land dedication set forth in the Summerfield Development Ordinance, the Town must begin the preparation of a master plan within two years of acceptance of the property. The Town has therefore scheduled the development of such a plan during the 2009-10 fiscal year.

### Future Trail Development

As noted in the Policy Area 2 on **Sidewalks, Bikeways, and Trails**, Summerfield residents have voiced considerable support for the development of an extensive walking and trail system throughout the community. Consistent with this desire, there are ample possibilities in the town to pursue the development of such a system. Major opportunities include the existing railroad bed that runs through the heart of the community, the Mountains to the Sea Trail, the Haw River Trail, and the Piedmont Regional Greenway. In addition, the Town's development ordinance, emphasizing open space preservation and land dedication, is a significant tool for setting aside substantial greenway and trail corridors.

### FEE IN LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

A century ago, it was quite common for developers to include parks and open space as a routine part of any new neighborhood. Real estate advertisements of the period often made note of recreation amenities planned and built into these relatively compact neighborhoods with modest sized lots. This form of enlightened self interest helped sell lots to a buying public which sought the "fresh air and open spaces" of the suburbs, while still being part of a walkable community. Unfortunately, this balanced approach to community building was not to last. After the Second World War, many "subdividers" discontinued the practice of setting aside common open space in compact, walkable neighborhoods, preferring to create larger individual lots.

Since at least the 1970's, North Carolina state law has allowed cities and counties to require new subdivisions to set aside or "dedicate" a certain proportion of a subdivision for open space and recreation.

To help deal with the loss of common open space and recreation opportunities in these new neighborhoods, many states, including North Carolina, passed enabling legislation to restore the practice of preserving open space as part of the development process. Since at least the 1970's, North Carolina state law has allowed cities and counties to require new subdivisions to set aside or "dedicate" a certain proportion of a subdivision for open space and recreation.

The Town of Summerfield has embraced this state enabling legislation in a significant way, requiring that new developments set aside substantial amounts of open space under provisions of the Town's development ordinance. The Town uses a sliding scale to determine how much land should be set aside. Under this system, the Town actually exempts subdivisions of 5 lots or less from any open space dedications. The theory behind this exemption is that small subdivisions will not yield sufficient open space (as a percentage of total land area) to be useful for meaningful recreation. Numerous small acreages would also create maintenance difficulties. Either the open space would have to be maintained by just a few homeowners, or the Town would have to spend an inordinate amount



*The movement to create greenways is one excellent way to bring nature to the city. Greenways bring a wealth of space and a mix of natural resources into the city all at one time. The strings that hold the web of life together in a natural area are left intact when long corridors are allowed to survive. The threads give strength and depth to the urban forest. There are opportunities for trails and waterways, room for wildlife, space for trees and shrubs to thrive.*

**Gary Moll**  
1989

*Small parks, if they are popular, knit together their neighborhoods from different sides, and mingle the people from them.*

**Jane Jacobs**  
1961

of time traveling to and maintaining a large number of very small parks. Even so, this arrangement has the effect of requiring larger developments set aside land while smaller developments have no similar “burden” imposed on them.

One way to correct for this apparent unequal burden is to establish a “*fee in lieu of land dedication*”. Under this method, also authorized by State enabling legislation, fees paid by the developer are deposited into a special trust fund set up by the Town specifically for parks, open space, and recreation. Further, larger towns may set up more than one trust fund corresponding to the specific geographic area of the community within which the funds are collected. In this way, monies available for park development and open space acquisition are commensurate with the level of demand created by new development in each part of the town. Thus, the *fee in lieu of dedication* option also ensures that the small subdivision, not just the larger ones, will provide for a proportionate (even if small) share of the open space needs of area residents.



Summerfield currently has no provision in its subdivision regulations regarding *fees in lieu of land dedication*. After the economy has recovered from the current recession, Summerfield will likely see a renewed resurgence of interest in the community, along with significant population growth and subdivision activity. Now may therefore be the best time to consider establishing such a provision in the Summerfield Development Ordinance.

## Policy Area 8: **Attractive Community Appearance**



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

### DESIRED FUTURE

#### Community Appearance, Generally

- Preserve community appearance-through implementation of code enforcement & legislation of municipal codes & ordinances
- Ordinance that does not allow abandoned buildings
- Higher minimum requirements for new construction landscaping

#### Community Appearance, Tree Planting and Preservation

- Preserve trees by preventing clear cutting of lots
- Look of neighborhood-trees, grassy areas
- Line the streets with trees
- Restrictions on taking down trees

#### Community Appearance, Underground Utilities

- Mandated underground power lines

#### Community Appearance, Entryway Corridors

- Develop scenic corridors along major highways
- Welcome to SFD signs
- New welcome signs on side of road for Summerfield
- Beautify entrances to town – flowers, signage

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### Unkempt Homes and Yards

- Littered (unkempt) homes
- Junk littering Summerfield Rd

### Bright Lights

- Excessive lighting
- Bright lights
- Anything that increases sky lights-light pollution

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

#### Appearance

- Signage/billboard standards

#### Prepare for Plan Implementation and Possible Ordinance Changes

- Successful implementation of new Comp Plan and required ordinance changes
- Are our ordinances still effective?
- Ordinances that are flexible to react to changing economic environments

The preceding *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Community Appearance**.



### Common Objective for Attractive Community Appearance

Community appearance can create a positive town image and sets the tone for all development to follow. An attractive community enhances the quality of life of town residents, and attracts visitors and businesses to the area that share the same values of quality and sustainability. Community appearance deals largely with what can be seen from the public roadway. Appearance issues deserving of public policy and action include exterior lighting, junked vehicles, preservation of tree cover, the presence or absence of street trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, architectural design and building form, public and private outdoor displays, the presence or absence of overhead wires, the design and location of communication towers, and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land.

### Policies for Attractive Community Appearance

**Policy 8.1: EXTERIOR LIGHTING** should be attractive, functional, and safety conscious, and shall be designed and shielded to avoid negative impacts on the night sky visibility of Summerfield.

**Policy 8.2: LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING AND NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**, particularly as related to breaking up and softening the appearance of expansive parking areas, shall be encouraged.

**Policy 8.3: UTILITIES** should be placed underground in all new residential and non-residential developments. Individual and other smaller scale developments along a road where overhead utilities are the norm may be exempted from this requirement until such time as overhead to underground conversion is to be completed over the larger area involved.

**Policy 8.4:** While **WIRELESS SERVICE** technology should be facilitated as a significant benefit to the town and its residents, Town approval of necessary **TOWERS** (or existing structures retrofitted for same) shall take the public health, safety, and welfare of area residents, as well as the visual quality of the town landscape into consideration.

**Policy 8.5: DESIGN STANDARDS** should be employed so that development and redevelopment is consistent with the architectural context, community character, economic attractiveness, and livability of Summerfield. (Also see Policy Area 3: Community Character Preservation, for policies concerning tree preservation.)

**Policy 8.6:** The important economic and community image benefits of attractive **MAJOR TRAVEL CORRIDORS** through the town shall be recognized. Such entryway corridors shall receive priority attention for improved appearance and development standards, including screening, landscaping, signage, tree preservation, and underground utilities.

**Policy 8.7: PARKING AREAS** adjoining major roads should be generally screened from view using appropriate design elements, topographic features, and/or plantings. Plants should be tall enough at maturity to obscure views of parked cars without jeopardizing traffic safety. Service, loading, and trash dumpster areas should be completely screened.

**Policy 8.8: SPECIAL ROADWAY OVERLAY ZONING** should be employed to help implement roadway corridor plans, particularly with regard to development standards for buildings, signage, and parking areas within sight of the roadway.

**Policy 8.9:** Proper code enforcement shall be employed to deal with the public health, safety, and appearance issues of **ABANDONED AND NEGLECTED PROPERTIES**, as well as general trash and debris.

**Policy 8.10: BILLBOARDS** shall be prohibited throughout the Town of Summerfield.

**Policy 8.11: UNLICENSED VEHICLES** shall not be permitted to remain in locations visible from any public right of way, except as may be specifically permitted within an approved junkyard. Unlicensed farm vehicles, parked on farm property, should be exempt from this policy.

*Properly placing trees in new construction (should be) as much a part of the cost of buildings as pouring concrete and putting in sewers.*

**Gary Moll**  
1989

*It costs about one cent to reduce peak-load energy demands one kilowatt-hour by planting trees, whereas savings from improving the efficiency of appliances would cost about 2.5 cents and improving electrical supply energy would cost 10 cents.*

**Sara Ebenreck**  
1989  
Citing research by the Lawrence Berkley Lab

## Notes and Commentary:

### *Special Highway Travel Corridors*

Public attitudes about community appearance, as expressed during the first town meeting held for the Comprehensive Plan, showed good support for maintaining and improving appearances, particularly along the town's major roadways. State enabling legislation allows local governments in North Carolina to establish special controls and incentives for development along special highways of the community's choosing. In the case of Summerfield, those highways deserving of special treatment include, particularly, US 220, NC 150, Old Summerfield Road, and the planned Interstate 73 connector.



In this regard, a Scenic Corridor Overlay District has been created within the Town of Summerfield Development Ordinance. The Overlay District applies to two highway corridors, each encompassing fifteen hundred (1,500) feet on either side of the centerlines of US 220 and NC 150. Special development standards included in the two overlay areas include controls over the placement of additional manufactured homes, screening of outdoor storage and activities, requirements for non-residential building materials and building design, and standards for signage, fences, and landscaped parking areas.

This plan recommends that the future I-73 Connector also receive protection through the application of a Scenic Corridor Overlay District II. This new overlay district will be required due to the limited access nature of the interstate, high traffic speeds, potential noise issues, and other characteristics that will make it quite different than either US 220 or NC 150. Specifically, the Town should consider requiring a naturalized buffer of trees and other vegetation adjoining both sides of the right of way for a distance of about 100 feet. The buffer would be designed to help protect properties near the interstate from the likely noise, air, and light pollution associated with this major new roadway. It would also help preserve the rural character of Summerfield for visitors passing through and provide a desirable image to prospective future residents and business owners

### *Commercial Development Standards Generally*

In addition to implementing scenic highway controls only along specially designated highways in Summerfield, the Town may wish to revisit its general development standards that apply to non-residential development anywhere in the community. Such general standards might include building design, parking lot location, landscaping, signage, and other features.

Committee members noted that a few commercial buildings in the town need to improve their overall appearance, largely in the area of upkeep. While North Carolina state enabling legislation limits the degree to which local governments can control building architecture (appearance not structure), other communities have found incentive based awards and community service programs to be effective in encouraging property owners to keep up their premises.

## Policy Area 9: **Quality School Facilities**



### Key Words and Phrases:

*Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):*

### DESIRED FUTURE

#### Quality Schools

- Be sure schools are not overcrowded
- Protect Laughlin & SFD Elementary schools
- Attractive schools without mobile classrooms
- Continued good schools

### UNWANTED FUTURE

#### Overcrowded, Substandard Schools

- Overcrowded schools
- Do not abandon Laughlin Primary
- Poor school facilities
- Decline in quality of public schools
- Over populated schools

Town Council/Zoning Board Comments From Joint Kick Off Meeting:**Plan Ahead for Infrastructure and Service Needs**

- Growing up too fast without keeping up with fire safety and school already at capacity
- Schools too small for growth
- Worry about divisions: new roads, schools (4), geographic size

The preceding *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. In addition, these key words and phrases were supplemented by an interview with representatives from the Guilford County School System, including local staff and volunteers directly involved with Summerfield Elementary school. This information was employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Quality School Facilities**.



### Common Objective for Quality School Facilities

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to work closely with Guilford County Schools and local public and private school leaders to support the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of high quality schools serving the community. Schools should be located and designed to be accessible to the neighborhoods around them. Access to such schools by walking and biking should be encouraged, provided that safety and security issues are addressed. Rather than functioning as single purpose “factories to educate children”, schools in Summerfield should serve as true community centers, providing meeting space for community gatherings, recreational events, and other functions. Mobile classrooms should be avoided.

### Policies for Quality School Facilities

**Policy 9.1: ADVANCED PLANNING FOR THE LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS** serving Summerfield should be a joint effort between the Guilford County School Board and the Town. The Town shall work proactively to engender a close working relationship between the two governmental authorities.

**Policy 9.2: New and rehabilitated schools in Summerfield should be integrated with the DESIGN OF THE COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS** around them.

**Policy 9.3: Site planning for TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT** in the vicinity of schools, including **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY**, shall be given careful attention. On-street and off street travel corridors within walking distance of all schools should be a priority for construction of sidewalks, bike paths, and pedestrian trails.

**Policy 9.4:** The Town, through its development review process, and in coordination with the County, shall encourage OFFERS OF LAND for the siting of new public schools, particularly in conjunction with the development of nearby neighborhoods. Acceptance of such offers shall depend upon location criteria and other factors.

**Policy 9.5:** The CO-LOCATION AND JOINT DEVELOPMENT of public parks and recreation facilities in conjunction with public schools shall be encouraged.

**Policy 9.6:** School design and access should give a high priority to SECURITY CONCERNS, during both school hours and after hours activities.

**Policy 9.7:** Schools should be viewed as a social and cultural cornerstone of the community they are intended to serve. FUNCTIONS DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS might include, for example, senior activities, fitness classes, youth recreation, and clubs.

## Notes and Commentary:

### *Schools as Infrastructure-- Their Influence on Growth*

When discussing how infrastructure influences growth and development, roads, and utilities such as water and sewer lines typically come to mind. Yet schools have been shown to be just as important in influencing growth as pipes in the ground or pavement on the street. Public schools are now and will continue to be an important consideration in planning for infrastructure and growth patterns in the Summerfield area.

Research has shown that building new schools on large sites far removed from existing town centers, called “school sprawl” or “school giantism” can have far-reaching impacts on school children, school districts, and the larger community. The following paragraphs are excerpted from a paper prepared by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation that explains this view<sup>13</sup>:

*“Educators and parents express concern that large schools reduce educational outcomes, particularly for at-risk youth. Schools that are more distant can diminish student participation in extra-curricular activities, parental involvement, and taxpayer support. Students are walking and cycling to school less, which contributes to alarming rates of childhood obesity. Many suggest that the growing physical disconnect between schools and community helps create a level of student anonymity and social alienation that sets the stage for tragic events like Columbine.*

*Smart growth groups, which traditionally have not weighed in on educational matters, are now questioning the same trend. Rather than build shopping mall schools at the edge of town, smart growth advocates*

*In 1969, 41 percent of school transportation in the United States meant walking or biking. By 2001, this number declined to 13 percent. Over the same time period, children being driven or driving themselves to school rose from less than 20 percent to 55 percent.*

**When Biking and Walking Are Better For Kids, Why Do Parents Drive Children to School?**

Fall 2009 CURS Update, UNC-Chapel Hill, Noreen McDonald, Author

<sup>13</sup> “Education and Smart Growth: Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities”, Sam Passmore, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, published by the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, 2002.

*encourage the continued use of existing schools and the construction of new schools on infill sites within existing neighborhoods.*

*Smart growth advocates' interest in neighborhood schools dovetails with education reformers' interest in small schools, presenting an important opportunity for collaboration. Scattered efforts are underway across the country addressing the shared interests of educators and smart growth advocates. Much remains to be done, and funders and leaders from all sectors have an important role to play.” (from the abstract)*

Further, the same paper notes the strong influence of a “good quality” school on growth and development around it:

*“...It is well understood that school quality determines where many families will choose to locate within a region...Even families without school age children are impacted as school quality has a significant influence on residential property values.” (page 3)*

Thus, in much the same way that a new sewer line can have a major influence on the location of growth in an area, so too can actions taken by a school board concerning the location of new schools play a significant role in the decisions of developers and homebuyers as to where to construct their homes. Further, the size and degree to which the school is physically connected to the community around it can have a major influence on the educational environment and culture of the school.



Fortunately for Summerfield, the Guilford County School Board concluded long ago that Summerfield Elementary School is deserving of renovation and improvement, rather than demolition and relocation. Plans are underway for a major updating and addition to the school facility. A Building Advisory Team is working closely with the architect selected for the project; the objective is to help see that the renovation is attuned to local area needs. The design of the addition provides access to the media center and cafeteria/auditorium for community events and accommodates after hours parking for community activities at the school, park, and baseball fields.

## North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program

According to information compiled by the North Carolina Safe Routes to School Program, only 15 percent of children living near a school walk or bike to that school today. This compares with nearly 90 percent a generation ago. As a result, about 25 percent of morning peak hour traffic is made up of parents driving students to school. The percentage of vehicles on the road becomes even higher the closer you are to a school, with lengthy traffic tie-ups at school entrances the norm in many places. By motivating students to walk or bike to class, and by providing safe, off-street facilities to accommodate them, traffic congestion can be reduced, air quality improved, and rates of childhood obesity eased.<sup>14</sup>

Under the NC Safe Routes to School Program, grants are available to municipalities like Summerfield in four categories<sup>15</sup>:

### Action Plan Service Awards

*Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Action Plans are intended as a beginning point for a Safe Routes to School program. By developing an Action Plan, a local group of individuals become committed to making the changes required to get more children walking and biking to school. The Action Plan provides a framework through which obstacles to safe travel can be systematically identified, and then solutions and implementation actions may be prioritized. Perhaps most importantly, the Action Plan provides the structure needed to keep an SRTS program going, even as members of the original SRTS School Team move on.*

### Infrastructure Grant Reimbursement Program Overview

*Infrastructure grants provide funds for planning, design, and construction. Any agency that is willing and able to enter into a reimbursement agreement with NCDOT and has the authority to construct and/or install and maintain infrastructure is eligible to apply. Funding requests may range from \$100,000 to \$300,000 per project. \$3.5 million is set aside to fund SRTS infrastructure projects*

### Non-Infrastructure Grant Reimbursement Program Overview

*Non-infrastructure grants provide funds for education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation programs and activities. Any state, local or regional agency, tribal government, school or school district, or non-profit organization is eligible to apply. Funding requests may range from \$10,000 to \$50,000. \$400,000 is set aside to fund Non-infrastructure projects.*

### NCDOT Highway Division Funds

*A portion of SRTS funds have been allocated to each of NCDOT's 14 Highway Divisions to fund infrastructure projects on state-maintained roads. Projects must be within 2 miles of a school serving grades K-8 to be eligible. These funds are primarily intended for safety improvements ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000, and must improve conditions for walking and biking to school. Projects that only improve motor vehicle or bus access are not eligible for this or Infrastructure Grant funding.*

*Schools that are more distant can diminish student participation in extra-curricular activities, parental involvement and taxpayer support. Students are walking and cycling to school less, which contributes to alarming rates of childhood obesity. Many suggest that the growing physical disconnect between schools and community helps create a level of student anonymity and social alienation that sets the stage for tragic events like Columbine.*

**Sam Passmore  
Charles Stewart  
Mott Foundation  
2002**

<sup>14</sup> Press release quoting Leza Wright Mundt, the NCDOT Safe Routes to School coordinator.

"NCDOT AWARDS ITS FIRST SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL FUNDS", Friday May 16, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Funding categories and descriptions provided here have been excerpted and/or paraphrased from the NC Safe Routes to School website:

[http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs\\_initiatives/Safe\\_Routes.html](http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/Safe_Routes.html)

### ***What is the Future for Laughlin Primary School?***

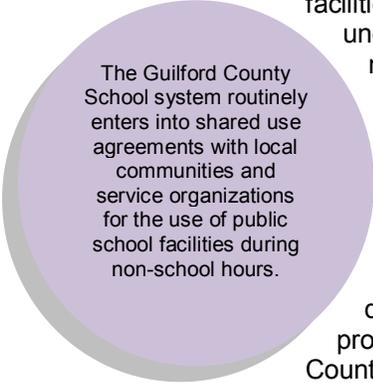
Laughlin Primary School is located off Summerfield Road about 2000 feet north of Town Hall. Originally built as a “school for negroes” during the days of segregation, Laughlin School has in recent years served in a supplementary capacity to relieve overcrowding at Summerfield Elementary. Currently, the school serves kindergarten and first grade students, allowing Summerfield Elementary to accommodate second through fifth graders. With renovations soon to be underway at Summerfield Elementary, Laughlin will likely take on yet another role as various parts of the elementary school are vacated for construction. That is, as different sections of Summerfield Elementary undergo rehabilitation, Laughlin may be expected to accept the lower grades for a time, and then switch to accommodating the upper grades.

After the renovation of Summerfield Elementary is complete, it remains uncertain as to what will become of Laughlin Primary School. The School Board has closed the school at least once before, only to reopen it to accommodate growing numbers of students in the Summerfield area. Located on an 11-acre site, the property is of sufficient size and location to be attractive for several alternative public uses. (e.g. town hall, library, community center, senior center, etc.) The Town of Summerfield Town Council went on record in 2003 with a formal notice of interest in acquiring the property from the School Board upon final closure of the school.

### ***Shared Use of School Facilities***

The Guilford County School system routinely enters into shared use agreements with local communities and service organizations for the use of public school facilities during non-school hours. Parts of school facilities that typically come under such agreements may include outdoor athletic fields, gymnasiums, and media centers (i.e. libraries). Issues that may arise as a result of such after-hours use include energy costs (lighting and HVAC systems), bathroom use, janitorial service, and security concerns. As new schools are built and older ones are renovated, many of these issues are being addressed through zoned heating and cooling systems and zoned security areas.

This type of shared use involving County school properties is highly desirable in that it maximizes the use of publicly-owned facilities, and provides for community based activities at very cost effective levels to the County's taxpayers.



The Guilford County School system routinely enters into shared use agreements with local communities and service organizations for the use of public school facilities during non-school hours.

## Policy Area 10: Summerfield Road Focus Area



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### A Town Core

- Limit commercial develop of town core
- Install sidewalks in historical/town core area
- Create a town core
- Historical town center – place to go and reason to go there

#### UNWANTED FUTURE

##### Good Restaurants Not Available

- Lack of restaurant options
- To continue to have no restaurants in town core (lack of)

##### Vacant Commercial Buildings

- No vacant commercial buildings (Old Food Lion, etc)
- Dollar General & empty store fronts

##### An Ugly Extension of —20” Style Development

- No more business along 220 town core

Town Council/Zoning Board Comments From Joint Kick Off Meeting:**Provide for Sidewalks and Trails, Especially Leading to and Within the Town Core**

- Trails (walking & bicycle), paths that connect to greenways, leading into our town
- Trail system development and connectivity
- Design trail system to be used as transportation and recreation connecting people to town core
- Town core sidewalks – Summerfield too spread out

**Enhance the Town Core**

- Need downtown shopping area to reflect historic community
- Develop town core to provide services

The preceding *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan and (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for the Summerfield Road Focus Area**.

**Common Objective for the Summerfield Road Focus Area**

The Summerfield Road Focus Area shall be supported as the historic and cultural center of the Summerfield community. The heart of this area should remain a varied, yet compatible, mix of residential and non-residential uses. A fire station, elementary school, community park, day care center, post office, eye doctor, feed mill, specialty auto dealership, and real estate office are representative of the non-residential uses that, together with a variety of single family homes, should continue to make up this important part of Summerfield. The Town shall also support preservation efforts associated with the National Register Historic District, and the desirability of a neighborhood level service area that includes Town Hall. Going forward, the Summerfield Road Focus Area should continue to be a natural location for community gatherings as well as basic services for local residents. Whatever uses go into this area, it is important that they be compatible, in both appearance and function, with uses on surrounding properties.

**Policies for the Summerfield Road Focus Area**

**Policy 10.1:** Various sections of Summerfield Road should be treated according to their **UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS**; policies and related ordinances should respect and reinforce the “natural leanings” of each road section. Specifically, the following areas and characteristics may be described:

- A. A MIXED USE NODE AT THE INTERSECTION OF NC 150 AND SUMMERFIELD ROAD (near Town Hall)—for local, neighborhood-oriented services convenient to town residents. With meaningful input and guidance from property owners, there also exists the potential to extend this node to the north and east toward US 220, thereby creating a gateway corridor to the heart of the community.**
- B. RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT on both sides of Summerfield Road south of Town Hall to Medaris Street, and a few lots west along Oak Ridge Road—respecting the architectural character and heritage of the buildings found there. (See *Policy Area 11: Historic Preservation* for detailed land use and design policies pertaining to this area.)**
- C. A CENTRAL MIXED USE AREA ALONG SUMMERFIELD ROAD extending from Centerfield Drive at the Elementary School south to Auburn Road—for low impact non-residential uses that are able to co-exist with nearby residences. (See Policy 10.2 Below)**
- D. The balance of the Summerfield Road Focus Area should be for residential uses.<sup>1</sup>**

**Policy 10.2: BUSINESSES LOCATED IN THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE SUMMERFIELD ROAD FOCUS AREA should ...**

- be of a **RESIDENTIAL SCALE AND DESIGN** character.
- have a **MARKET AREA** serving primarily a local clientele.
- have no **OUTSIDE LIGHTING** beyond that associated with a residence.
- have understated **SIGNAGE** with low level lighting.
- have **OPERATING HOURS** compatible with a residential area.
- be of a type that generates low **TRAFFIC COUNTS**
- limit the **RATIO OF FLOOR AREA TO LOT AREA** to that of nearby residential uses.
- retain **TREES** and provide **LANDSCAPED BUFFER STRIPS** when adjoining a residential use or district and offer substantial buffering within one or two growing seasons.
- provide parking lot and site **LANDSCAPING** greater than that associated with a typical commercial use.
- provide **STORMWATER RETENTION** and release to match pre-development/redevelopment conditions.
- carefully control service and customer **VEHICULAR ACCESS** to minimize light and noise impacts.

**Policy 10.3: Summerfield’s off-road TRAIL AND SIDEWALK NETWORK should lead to and from the Summerfield Road Focus Area as the hub of a community-wide pedestrian system. Sidewalks and bikeways should also be required for any future development or redevelopment within the area. (Also see Policy Area 2)**

*But even in districts, suburbs, parishes, and wards it is desirable that there should be some centre. There should be some place where the minor buildings of the district may be grouped and where a definite central effect on a minor scale may be produced.*

**Sir Raymond Unwin,**  
1909

<sup>1</sup> Those sections of Summerfield Road and US 220 south of Auburn Road are not included in the Summerfield Road Focus Area and are addressed under **Policy Area 1: Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development.**

*All community building that retains staying power after its novelty has gone, and that preserves the freedom of the streets and upholds citizens' self management... requires a myriad of gradual constant close-grained changes.*

**Jane Jacobs**  
1961

## Notes and Commentary:

Introducing new development into a community is always a challenge because it presents change to existing residents, and change is often unwanted or even threatening. A new development or subdivision just down the road promises heavier traffic and changes in the landscape, loss of open space and tree cover, and other impacts. Those impacts are threatening enough—but when new development is proposed not for a single, raw land tract —own the road” but rather for potentially dozens of infill developments to be placed among existing homes and businesses, the perceived threat level from such change becomes far more personal and therefore much greater. Such is the case with the history of planning attempts for what has become known as Summerfield’s —own Core”.

Beginning in 1998 with the Guilford County Northwest Area Plan, numerous plans and studies have explored the idea of creating a —own Core” for Summerfield. All studies have focused primarily on Summerfield Road, as it extends between its southern and northern intersections with US 220, and including the land area between the two parallel roadways. Summerfield Town Council has gone so far as to adopt a formal resolution limiting commercial zoning and development actions along Summerfield Road and US 220 between its intersections with NC 150 east and NC 150 west.



As recently as 2005, a council appointed —own Core Committee”, made up of a capable group of citizen volunteers, met for over a year to develop and propose a number of detailed recommendations, all with the objective of establishing a workable Town Core for Summerfield.

In addition, it should be noted that at the special *town meeting* held for this Comprehensive Plan, a *Town Core* was among the top twelve issues identified by many citizens as an element of Summerfield’s —Desired Future”. Those in support of the Town Core idea often cite the need for a community gathering place. Others note the desirability of having more local businesses, particularly one or more quality restaurants. Even so, interest in the Town Core is not uniform throughout the community, and there are some residents who are vehemently opposed to the whole idea. Opposition to the Town Core concept has not been formally surveyed but likely stems from the fear of commercial

encroachment near existing homes, from the prospect of higher density single and multi-family housing, and even from the notion of “quaint, (but unwanted) boutique type shopping”. These perspectives are summarized in the following excerpt from a Town memorandum dated September 15, 2005:

*—Reaction from the public at two major public meetings we held in January, along with our display at Founder’s Day and anecdotal comments I have received over the past several months, has generally been the same—enthusiastic support from a certain segment of the Town (primarily those who live outside the Town Core or those with financial interests or other investments in the town core), but skepticism from those who actually live in the Town Core, especially older residents. A third group of citizens seems to generally support the idea of a Town Core, but has more or less adopted a “take it or leave it” attitude.” (Memorandum from Town Planner Bill Bruce to Town Council, 9-15-05 re: Planning Department Discussion)*

Opposition to the Town Core concept has not been formally surveyed but likely stems from the fear of commercial encroachment near existing homes, from the prospect of higher density single and multi-family housing, and even from the notion of “quaint, (but unwanted) boutique type shopping”.

Thus, after many years of study, and despite good efforts to develop and communicate a non-threatening plan, the prospect of a Town Core for Summerfield is no closer to reality than it was in 1998. Further, the term “Town Core” appears to have become value laden to the degree that the mere mention of the name brings forth opposition from some residents of the Summerfield Road Focus Area. Further, opposition to the Town Core concept is not just to the name but also to several substantive ideas that have been put forth. Therefore, this Comprehensive Plan suggests a new direction for the “Town Core”, suggesting substantive changes to some of the previous recommendations and a name change that reflects this new direction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*Note: Because of the special nature of the Summerfield Road Focus Area, and the history of planning for this area, this “Notes and Commentary” takes on a different format than the Notes and Commentary for other plan sections. Recommendations are offered in some detail that can then be translated into policies and actions elsewhere in this section.*

### **Recommendation 1: Change the name of the study area from “Town Core” to the “Summerfield Road Focus Area”.**

Changing the name from the “Town Core” to the “Summerfield Road Focus Area” isn’t going to alter the substance of the arguments for and against previous plans and studies. Substantive changes will still have to be made. Regardless, a name change has merit for several reasons. The term Town Core, as it has come to be known over the past decade, now carries baggage (whether true or simply perceived) associated with the fear of higher development density, commercial encroachment, and other issues of land use compatibility. The term “Summerfield Road Focus Area”, on the other hand, is not value laden—Summerfield Road is what it is and what it will continue to be, regardless of what direction it takes. While Summerfield Road is clearly at the *heart* of the community, it does not need to be labeled as such. Thus, when making recommendations for the future of the *Summerfield Road Focus Area*, concepts and ideas can be presented without the coloration or influence of a pre-destined, new image that some may associate with the term “Town Core”.

**Recommendation 2: Take the best ideas from previous plans and carry them forward. Leave behind those recommendations that create unnecessary controversy and opposition.**

Previous planning efforts, particularly the 2004/2005 Summerfield Town Core Committee effort, have much to offer. That study made especially good progress in analyzing and identifying the various sections of Summerfield Road according to their unique characteristics. Thus, the following areas and summary descriptions are offered as foundational elements of a Small Area Plan for the Summerfield Road Focus Area:<sup>2</sup>



- A mixed use “node” of modest size at the intersection of NC 150 and Summerfield Road (near Town Hall)—a location appropriate for local, neighborhood-oriented services convenient to nearby residential areas

- Recognition of the National Register Historic District on both sides of Summerfield Road south of Town Hall to Medaris Street, and a few lots west along Oak Ridge Road—an area where special care should be taken to preserve the architectural character of the buildings found there

- A second mixed use area along Summerfield Road extending from Centerfield Drive at the Elementary School south to Auburn Road—an area of special concern where only certain types of low impact non-residential uses ought to be permitted, so as to co-exist with nearby residences.

- The balance of the Summerfield Road Focus Area to be designated for residential use only. (For the time being, it would be wise to leave unanswered the questions regarding townhouses and duplexes in this area until these housing concepts can be fully examined during a small area planning process—see Recommendation 4 following.)

<sup>2</sup> The following areas, previously included in the Town Core planning initiative, are now suggested to be addressed under Policy Area 1--**Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development**:

- An area of general commercial use along Summerfield Road and US 220 extending about 1500 feet south of Auburn Road. This area, which includes the old Dollar General Shopping Center, is ripe for a better quality of general commercial use.
- A second area of general commercial use starting at the south intersection of Summerfield Road and US 220 and extending north about 1000 feet along Summerfield Road and about 2000 feet along US 220—again appropriate for a high quality of non-strip commercial uses.

**Recommendation 3: For the mixed use area from the elementary school south, develop performance standards in the zoning ordinance that allow only those non-residential uses that are wholly compatible with nearby residences.**

Examples of performance standards for land uses in this section of Summerfield Road could include, for example:

- No outside lights beyond that associated with a residence.
- Strict limits on the total area of a business sign, as well as how it is lit.
- Permitted uses which do not have evening or nighttime hours.
- Permitted uses which generate only low traffic volumes (Employ trip generation numbers from the Institute for Transportation Engineers Manual to screen out traffic generators.)
- Architecture, (whether of new construction or of rehabilitation) that is of a scale and design sympathetic to a residential area.
- New or rehabilitated uses shall not increase in the ratio of floor area to lot area (floor area ratio), beyond that allowed for residential use.
- Retention of trees and provision of mandatory landscaped buffer strips when adjoining a residential use or district. Such landscape plantings would have to be of sufficient size at planting to offer substantial buffering within one or two growing seasons.
- Heavily landscaped parking areas.
- Stormwater retention and release to match pre-development/redevelopment conditions.
- Carefully controlled vehicular access.

Note: The above performance standards, when fully fleshed out, could also apply to land uses fronting on US 220 where the proximity of existing homes to the widened highway may make a compatible non-residential option a necessity.

**Recommendation 4: Follow through on the 2005 Town Core Committee recommendation that a Small Area Planning process be initiated for the Summerfield Road Focus Area.**

While the preceding recommendations have been set forth to suggest some ways that the current impasse might be broken, they too will go nowhere without the support of the residents and business owners within the Summerfield Road Focus Area. While this Comprehensive Plan can set forth some broad policies and a new direction for the area, it is not the appropriate vehicle to resolve the issues and garner support for their resolution. It is important that no detailed recommendations (e.g. creation of a new zoning district) be brought forward to Town Council from this plan or any other plan without the active involvement and support from the residents and businesses located within the study area. In that regard, the 2005 Town Core Committee Report offered an appropriate next step. The applicable excerpt from the Committee report is repeated here for emphasis:

It is important that no detailed recommendations (e.g. creation of a new zoning district) be brought forward to Town Council from this plan or any other plan without the active involvement and support from the residents and businesses located within the Summerfield Road Focus Area.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

—...~~Set~~ a new approach to the Town Core Plan by creating a larger committee that can initiate a Small Area Plan for the district. The Small Area Plan process is a —~~people up~~” method of planning, that includes public meetings and charrettes and makes citizens of the town part of the process.

*The ultimate goal of the Town Core Small Area Plan is to thoroughly document a grassroots Town Core vision, to identify goals and objectives toward making that vision a reality, to identify challenges in implementation (i.e. water, sewer, stormwater, traffic, etc.) and then recommendations on how to address these challenges.” (Summerfield Town Core Committee, Findings and Recommendations to the Summerfield Town Council, January 2005.)*

From a planning standpoint, the Summerfield Road Focus Area presents an example of the type of planning problem that is tailor made for a small area planning process. The issues: (1) are largely localized to the area under study, (2) are perceived by existing residents to be clearly “in my back yard”, (3) will require active, meaningful citizen participation for their resolution, (4) are unlikely to garner action from town leaders without citizen support from within the area.

## Policy Area 11: Historic Preservation



### Key Words and Phrases:

Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):

#### DESIRED FUTURE

##### Historic Preservation

- Historic preservation
- Preserve Saunders Inn & historical places
- Encourage historic preservation
- Preserve/rebuild historical buildings

#### UNWANTED FUTURE

##### Destruction of Historic Landmarks

- Destruction of historic landmarks

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

##### Preserve Historic Assets

- Protect historic district and build on it to share with others
- Preserving & protecting historical areas & buildings



- Preserve local history

The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Historic Preservation**.



### Common Objective for Historic Preservation

The Town of Summerfield will strive to preserve the rural and small town heritage of the community. The Town and its Boards and Committees will continue to work with property owners toward the identification, designation, restoration and preservation of individual buildings, sites and areas that contribute to the historic foundations and quality of life in the town. In addition to buildings and sites, the Town will also support efforts to document and share the unique cultural history of the area.

### Policies for Historic Preservation

**Policy 11.1:** The identification, restoration, and active use of structures, buildings, monuments, landmarks, sites, and neighborhoods of **HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** should be encouraged to safeguard the heritage of the town, and to enhance their educational, economic, and cultural value to the community and state.

**Policy 11.2:** The **DESTRUCTION OF ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES** of the Summerfield community should be strongly discouraged.

**Policy 11.3:** **MULTIPLE AND ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES** should be encouraged. Examples include the conversion of an historic building to a restaurant or coffee house, small retail shops, office space or a bed and breakfast. The new use should be appropriate to the location.

**Policy 11.4:** Appropriate development of the town's **ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC, SCENIC, and NATURAL RESOURCES** should be encouraged.

**Policy 11.5:** New development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of structures and sites should occur in a manner that is consistent with the **NEIGHBORHOOD AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT** of the immediate area and supportive of Summerfield's rural, small town heritage.

**Policy 11.6:** Owners of historic properties should be encouraged to take advantage of **STATE AND FEDERAL TAX CREDITS** when restoring their properties.

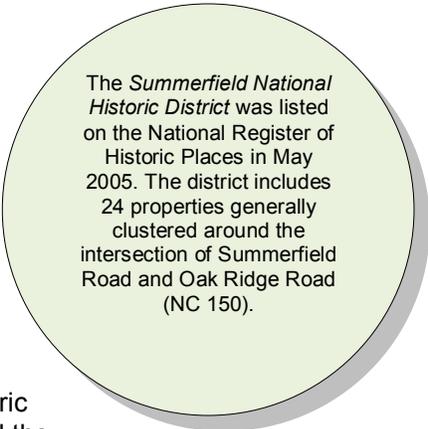
**Policy 11.7:** Local efforts to document and share the unique **CULTURAL HISTORY** of Summerfield should be supported and encouraged.



## Notes and Commentary:

### ***Historic Preservation in Summerfield***

Summerfield's Town Council-appointed *Historic Committee* was established in 2001, just five years after the Town was incorporated. In doing so, community leaders recognized the significance of preserving the Town's historic architectural resources as a vital community asset and barometer of the town's future image and quality of life. In May 2005, after much work by the Historic Committee<sup>3</sup> and others in the community, the US Department of the Interior, National Park Service approved the Town's request for the establishment of the *Summerfield National Historic District* by listing the district on the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes 24 properties generally clustered around the intersection of Old Summerfield Road and Oak Ridge Road (NC 150). The official map of the district shows 33 contributing buildings and 17 non-contributing buildings. Most of the non-contributing structures are small outbuildings.



The *Summerfield National Historic District* was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in May 2005. The district includes 24 properties generally clustered around the intersection of Summerfield Road and Oak Ridge Road (NC 150).

### ***What is the difference between a National Historic District and a Local Historic District?***

While Summerfield's Historic District has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it has not been designated a Local District. What is the difference? Generally, properties listed on the National Register are eligible for Federal and State tax credits, if restored according to rehabilitation standards set forth by the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. If a *national district* is also designated a *local district*, then the district property owners have sought after and endorsed the establishment of a special historic district that protects the neighborhood from inappropriate or intrusive buildings, alterations and additions. This usually involves the appointment of a local *Historic District Commission* whose primary job is to review proposed building changes (exterior, not interior) in accordance with a set of locally approved historic district design guidelines. If the proposed addition or alteration is found to be in accordance with the design guidelines, then a "Certificate of Appropriateness" is issued.

### ***Is there a less restrictive way to protect the architectural character of a neighborhood without the type of board reviews and approvals associated with a local historic district?***

A planning tool that is becoming more common as a way to protect the essential character of a neighborhood without the detailed reviews of a local historic district is the *neighborhood conservation district*. A *neighborhood conservation district* works to protect neighborhood character by ensuring that new buildings or additions are compatible with the existing neighborhood at a broad level. A conservation district is often an overlay district that works with the underlying zoning to make sure that major features of any new construction match up well with surrounding properties. While some conservation districts employ a design review board (similar to an historic district commission) this plan recommends

<sup>3</sup> The Town's 2009-2010 Budget makes note of the following additional activities undertaken by the Summerfield Historical Committee:

- continuing work on exhibits for the museum at Town Hall
- actively participating in Founders' Day
- pursuing a nomination of the Stone Gym for the National Register of Historic Places
- developing a Highway Markers program, when funded
- cataloging museum collection items.

that, if such a strategy were employed in Summerfield, a simple checklist of “yes or no” design features be developed for use at the staff level. This simpler approach is consistent with the Town of Summerfield’s position as a limited services local government with limited staff resources. It is also consistent with the idea that design approvals should be straightforward and objective rather than potentially onerous and subjective.

Some of the towns and cities in North Carolina known to employ neighborhood conservation districts include Apex, Boone, Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro<sup>4</sup>, and Winston-Salem. While the conservation districts in these communities operate with some differences, most of the basics are very similar. The property



owners in a proposed district come together, usually with technical assistance from the Town, to identify building and site features that are common elements of their neighborhood character that they wish to carry forward. These common features are normally less specific than those employed in an historic district but more descriptive than those used in a simple zoning district.

Examples of conservation district design features include house size, roof form (gabled or hip), presence or absence of porches, presence or absence walkways to the street, attached or detached garages, types of fences, trees preserved, etc. Each conservation

district is tailored to fit the character of the neighborhood, making it a useful way for property owners of existing neighborhoods to have a level of protection similar to that available to new neighborhoods with restrictive covenants. And, in much the same way that restrictive covenants are created for new neighborhoods, neighborhood conservation districts can be made available to all existing neighborhoods, regardless of style or historic status.

Of note, compared to an historic district, a neighborhood conservation district will typically regulate fewer features and will focus more on significant, character-defining features. Unlike historic districts, conservation districts rarely consider minor design features, such as the type of windows and doors, paint colors, trimwork, and decorative details. In neighborhood conservation districts, the property owners are primarily interested in getting the “big picture” features of a new building or major addition right. Finally, most conservation districts do not include demolition delays, a tool utilized in historic districts.

For all of the above reasons, this Comprehensive Plan recommends that the property owners of homes and businesses in the Summerfield Historic District work with the Town to explore whether a neighborhood conservation district might be a useful way to protect the very reasons why they choose to live in an historic neighborhood in the first place.

<sup>4</sup> (A nearby example is the Westridge Road Neighborhood Conservation District in Greensboro)

## Policy Area 12: Summerfield as a **Limited Services** Local **Government**



*A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned - this is the sum of good government.*

**Thomas Jefferson**

### **Key Words and Phrases:**

*Citizen Comments from Town Meeting (literal, unedited):*

### **DESIRED FUTURE**

#### **Town Finances**

- Low taxes
- Keep taxes low
- Closer relationship with NCDOT-including town funding

#### **Limited Services Government**

- Continue small gov't and staff – no bureaucracy
- Small town gov't (simple/effective)

## UNWANTED FUTURE

### Higher Taxes, Especially Property Taxes

- Significant property tax increases
- Tax rates of larger town

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

While there were no comments pertaining to the topic of Limited Services offered at the joint kick-off meeting, the Town Council has adopted a Vision Statement for the community as follows:

#### Town Council Adopted Vision Statement

**Summerfield is a Town that respects the history of the community and balances growth with the preservation and utilization of our natural, cultural, fiscal, and citizen resources to enhance our quality of life and our small town identity (May 2008)**

The above *key words and phrases* were gleaned from (1) the Town Meeting for the Comprehensive Plan (2) the Joint Kick-Off Meeting of the Town Council and Zoning Board, and (3) the Town Council adopted vision statement. These key words and phrases were employed to generate the following **Common Objective** and related **Policies for Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government**.



### Common Objective for Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to control its own destiny—the Town shall remain an independent community, carefully managing its own finances and its own growth and development. Town government should be small and accessible, citizen-engaged, with services limited and taxes kept low. Town government should continue to focus on the highest priorities of area residents—managing growth and preserving and enhancing the area’s quality of life.

### Policies for Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government

**Policy 12.1:** The Town should continue to employ a **MULTIPLE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE** to advise the Town Council and to constructively engage citizen volunteers in the governance of their community.

**Policy 12.2:** The Town should continue to employ **CONTRACTED SERVICES** as an efficient way to hold down fixed costs and overhead, and to direct resources to service areas where most needed at any given time.

**Policy 12.3: ADDITIONS TO THE TOWN STAFF** should be considered when it can be shown that the on-going, regular demand for a particular service becomes so great as to make contracted services more costly to Town taxpayers and/or less effective than if it were handled in-house.

**Policy 12.4: The Town should minimize municipal OWNERSHIP OF INFRASTRUCTURE** (e.g. water and sewer systems) not identified as a priority by the citizens or mandated by the county or state government.<sup>5</sup>

**Policy 12.5: Carefully BALANCE CITIZEN PRIORITIES** for enhanced quality of life, with concept of limited services and low taxes. Continue to make budget process transparent to community and use as a tool to prioritize efforts to implement the Comprehensive Plan and goals of the Town Council.

### Notes and Commentary:

In some respects, it is fitting that the Policy Area on *Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government* is the concluding section of this Comprehensive Plan. The town's government provides the vehicle through which the plan will be carried out, and its framework should support the rest of the policy's underlying principals. Throughout this document, the drafting of numerous policies and action items have been influenced by the idea that Summerfield was originally incorporated, and to date has remained, a *limited services local government*. But what exactly does that mean? At the time of the Town's incorporation in 1996, the state of North Carolina required municipalities to provide only one service to satisfy the General Statute requirements for incorporated towns: building inspections. Latitude is provided even in this regard, in that small towns like Summerfield often enter into an agreement with the County or a nearby municipality to provide building inspection services on a contracted basis.<sup>6</sup>

In 1999 the state changed the incorporation statutes (GS- 120-158 through 174) to require that a new municipality must have an ad valorem tax rate of at least 5 cents, and within three years provide four of the following (i) police protection; (ii) fire protection; (iii) solid waste collection or disposal; (iv) water distribution; (v) street maintenance; (vi) street construction or right-of-way acquisition; (vii) street lighting; and (viii) zoning. Summerfield is currently not subject to the 1999 change in the General Statutes.

However, as a practical matter, all governments require some level of staffing to perform the day-to-day operations of governing a community. Summerfield has increased staff levels in response to the needs of the community. The Town Clerk position was originally a volunteer position that evolved over time to a part-time, and now a full-time position. In 2003, a full-time Town

*For fiscal year 2008-2009 the Town of Summerfield had a tax rate of 3.5 cents per hundred, among the lowest property tax rates in Guilford County. For 2009-2010, Summerfield's Town Council voted to have a tax rate of ~~zero~~, meaning that town government would be run using cash reserves collected in previous years.*

<sup>5</sup> One exception, for example, is a quality open space, park and trail system that the citizens have identified as a defining attribute to set Summerfield apart and to enhance the area's quality of life.

<sup>6</sup> In the case of Summerfield, the Town contracts with Guilford County for building inspection services.

Administrator was hired<sup>7</sup>; in 2004 the town was not satisfied with the contract work provided by Guilford County Planning and created their own 2-staff Planning Department. In 2007, the position of Parks and Recreation Supervisor was created to oversee the construction and maintenance of town parks and facilities.

Currently, the Town of Summerfield has five paid employees, all of which wear multiple hats and have a variety of responsibilities within Town government:

- Town Manager
- Town Clerk
- Town Planner
- Planning Technician
- Parks and Recreation Supervisor

More will be said about these five positions in the pages that follow as the various services of town government are discussed.

### How Services Are Provided

While there is no definition or strict litmus test as to what constitutes a *limited services local government*, there are certain common principles that become apparent to the extent that “you know it when you see it.” In keeping with this concept, these notes and commentary describe how various types of local government services, oftentimes provided by permanent staff within municipal government, are instead provided to the residents of Summerfield by alternative means. The following analysis reveals that, regardless of how small a municipal government may be, there are nonetheless a wide range of government functions that must still be addressed. Most are required by State law and Summerfield is not exempt.

- **Law Enforcement—Sherriff’s Office**

Instead of having its own police force, the Town is served by the Guilford County Sheriff’s Department. A new —District 1” Sheriff’s Department substation opened just off US 220 in 2008, serving those portions of Guilford County outside the City of Greensboro north of I-40 and east to US 29. According to representatives of the Department, Summerfield has a very low crime rate

which does not necessitate —enhanced service”, for which the Town would be charged a fee. (The Town of Stokesdale, for example, pays an annual fee for the services of a deputy who is dedicated to that Town’s jurisdiction for enhanced law enforcement services.)



- **Fire Protection--  
Summerfield Fire and Rescue.**

Instead of having its own fire department, fire protection services within the Town of Summerfield are provided by the independently operated *Summerfield Fire and*

<sup>7</sup> By voter referendum the Town now operates under a Council-Manager form of government, so the position is now Town Manager.

*Rescue* via three fire stations. A special fire district tax generates most of the revenue to pay for the paid firemen, equipment, and fire stations. A non-profit board of directors guides the services provided. The service area extends beyond Summerfield's boundaries. Currently, Summerfield Fire and Rescue is looking at sites for a fourth fire station.

- *Street Maintenance—North Carolina Department of Transportation*

Instead of maintaining its own streets department, maintenance of public streets in Summerfield is coordinated, paid for, and implemented by the NCDOT District 7 Office located in Greensboro. While many municipalities in the state employ Powell Bill<sup>8</sup> monies, property taxes, and other funding sources to maintain their own streets, the Town of Summerfield has never assumed responsibility in this area. This non-involvement may be about to change, however. There are growing signs that NC DOT may no longer be able to continue to accept responsibility for road maintenance in small towns like Summerfield, as well as in most unincorporated areas in the state. Discussions are now underway in the State Capitol that, if brought to fruition, would transfer responsibility for most local roads to towns and counties whether they choose to do so or not. Under the new arrangement, the state would be responsible only for major roads. As a result, the Town of Summerfield could be required to maintain all public streets in the community except for US 220, NC 150 and the planned I-73 connector. This will have major implications for the Town's finances.

There are growing signs that NC DOT may no longer be able to continue to accept responsibility for road maintenance in small towns like Summerfield, as well as in most unincorporated areas in the state. Discussions are now underway in the State Capitol that, if brought to fruition, would transfer responsibility for most local roads to towns and counties whether they choose to do so or not.

- *Public Works—Contracted Landscape Maintenance Services plus the Parks Supervisor*

Instead of having an in-house public works operation, the Town contracts out for landscape maintenance services at the Community Park and elsewhere. These routine services are supplemented by special projects undertaken by the Town's Park Supervisor. With the new Town ballfields facility coming on-line in the very near future, the Town has begun the process of evaluating the overall need for additional park maintenance services. Included, for example, might be utilities and lighting maintenance, parking, and road maintenance, solid waste management, building and grounds upkeep, etc.

- *Garbage (Solid Waste) Collection and Disposal—Contracted Out*

Instead of having its own sanitation department, the Town contracts with a private hauler, Republic Waste Services, for garbage collection, recycling, and disposal. While Republic has an exclusive franchise within the Town, residents of the Town may choose whether or not to use the service<sup>9</sup>. Those residents that do use the service, however, receive a discounted rate over what the hauler normally charges to individual customers. While the Town has discussed making universal trash collection a requirement, it has never been

<sup>8</sup> Under North Carolina's Powell Bill legislation, participating local governments receive money from the state for road construction and maintenance—which can include sidewalks and bikeways within the public right of way. Revenue is raised by a 1 and 3/4 cent tax on every gallon of gas sold and allocated to communities around the state based on the centerline mileage of streets for which each community is responsible. The City of Greensboro, for example, might typically receive between \$5 and \$7 million in Powell Bill monies annually. This is not enough to cover the City's transportation improvement needs.

<sup>9</sup> Some studies have shown that non-mandatory service can lead to illegal dumping and burning of garbage by those who do not sign up, though this has reportedly not been a major problem in Summerfield.

adopted by Town Council. With the growing interest in environmental quality issues nationally, it remains to be seen whether the State or Guilford County will pass a law requiring municipalities to implement mandatory trash collection and disposal.

- *Drinking Water Supply—No Centralized System*

While the Town has, at various times, entered into discussions concerning a centralized water system for Summerfield, no formal action has been taken in this regard. Currently, water supplies are known to be available from sources in Rockingham County (Madison) and the City of Greensboro (Randleman Lake/Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority). Even if a water supply source were to become available, the low density of development in the Town, combined with the need to upgrade/replace piped community water systems already in place, might make the construction of such a system cost prohibitive on a town-wide basis.

Due to the spread out nature of development in Summerfield (very large lots, generous open space allowances), there is currently no opportunity for a cost effective centralized sewage treatment system serving the whole community. In the future, there may be opportunities for smaller sewer systems serving pockets of development.

- *Sewage Collection and Treatment— No Centralized System*

Due to the spread out nature of development in Summerfield (very large lots, generous open space allowances), there is currently no opportunity for a cost effective centralized sewage treatment system serving the whole community. (The cost effectiveness of a piped, centralized sewer system is even more sensitive to the density of development than is a water supply system.) In the future, there may be opportunities for smaller sewer systems serving pockets of development, an idea which should be evaluated during a (periodic) review of priorities.

- *Planning Department—Current Planning Handled In-House*

The growth of Summerfield over the past fifteen years has required that planning be an area of high concern to the community. The community's close proximity to Greensboro, PTIA Airport, I-40, and US 220, and high-quality schools, have made Summerfield an attractive location for higher-end residential development. As is evidenced in the permitting and census data, hundreds of new residences were built over the past ten to fifteen years. This growth in residential development has led to increased pressure to preserve the remaining undeveloped land, and has created pressure to develop commercial retail businesses. All of this has kept planning issues at the forefront of concern, which led to the creation of a town planning department. The main focus of staff is —current planning”: rezoning petitions, subdivision and site plan reviews, special use permits, signage requests, address assignments, and road renaming, floodplain information, etc. Support to Town boards, attention to detail, due process, and accurate record keeping are essential to a current planning function. In addition, staff is responsible for overseeing other areas of planning including watershed protection, code enforcement, transportation, and long-range planning. All of these areas demand regular attention regardless of the level of immediate new development requests.

- *Building Inspections-- Guilford County*

Instead of having its own building inspections department, the Town of Summerfield contracts with Guilford County for building inspection services within the town limits. This is a direct bill service, meaning that the County bills and receives payment for permits and inspection services directly from the applicant, with no intervention by the Town. The Town does provide a —Development Clearance Certificate” to the applicant and the County, verifying

that the applicant's plans conform with all Town zoning and other development ordinance provisions.

- *Code Enforcement—Contracted Out*

Instead of having a code enforcement officer in-house, the Town contracts with a private firm for code enforcement services. This is an area of municipal government that, from the perspective of the Town's administration, is best handled by persons outside the organization. Code enforcement often requires telling a property owner to clean up a violation, or face a penalty. Given a small staff, the Town's few employees would undoubtedly find it difficult to be both a "good cop" and a "bad cop", while remaining in the good graces of the Town's citizenry. At the same time, code enforcement is an important function that must be carried out for the benefit of the vast majority of citizens and property owners that abide by the rules and wish to see their town present a respectable image and adequate concerns for safety.

- *Long Range and Special Area Planning—Contracted Out*

Instead of having an in-house long range planning function, the Town contracts with consultants for long range and special area planning. Long range and special area planning, involves targeted research, policy writing, action planning, committee work, and meaningful community involvement. For a small community like Summerfield, the ability of a consultant to provide an unbiased opinion and the necessary dedication of time and expertise for a limited time, makes more fiscal/operational sense than a dedicated full-time Long Range Planner.

- *Human Resources/Personnel—Handled by Town Manager*

Instead of having a personnel director or human resource manager, the Town Manager is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, firing, conducting employee performance appraisals, etc. Paperwork for new hires, including documentation of time off, benefits, paychecks, etc. is handled by the contracted Finance Officer. Recent effort by Town Council to place many of the town committees directly under the authority of the Manager will greatly increase the time the Manager will need to dedicate to "personnel" issues of volunteers.



Instead of having a personnel director or human resource manager, the Town Manager is responsible for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, firing, conducting employee performance appraisals, etc.

- *Town Finance Function—Contracted Finance Officer, working with Town Clerk & Manager*

Instead of having an in-house finance director, the Town contracts with an independent Finance Officer. The Finance Officer cuts all checks, working in conjunction with the Town Clerk, who keeps track of receivables and payables. The Manager and Finance Officer work closely with the Town Finance Committee. The Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and the Chair of the Finance Committee, also have signing authority for check disbursements.

- *Budget Director – Handled by Town Manager*

Instead of having a Budget Director on staff, The Town Manager assumes responsibility for formulating the Town budget each year. Working with the Town Finance Officer and Finance Committee, the Town manager prepares a proposed budget for public input and Town Council review and approval, based in large measure on budget requests and needs identified by the Town's various committees. This annual process is a significant task that takes place over a several month period in the late winter and spring of each year.

- *Public Information Officer/Website Manager – Handled by Town Staff*

Instead of having a Public Information Officer and Website Manager, members of the Town Staff respond to information requests and update the Town's website as time and opportunity allows. These responsibilities are an example of a day to day task that is not typically accounted for as part of a job description but consume a significant part of the staff's time over the course of a year.

- *Legal Services –Contracted Out*

Instead of having a Town attorney on staff, The Town contracts with a private attorney for legal services. The contracted Town Attorney attends meetings of the Town Council, Zoning Board, and Board of Adjustment on an as needed basis.

The entire Town of Summerfield is located within a controlled watershed area; either Reedy Fork Creek (Greensboro Watershed), or Jordan Lake. The new rules promulgated by the State for Jordan Lake supersede local rules and will require re-writing ordinances and creating new enforcement procedures.

- *Watershed Protection/Regulation—Contracted Out*

This is a rapidly growing area of responsibility for local governments around the country and particularly in North Carolina. The entire Town is now located within a controlled watershed area; either Reedy Fork Creek (Greensboro Watershed), or Jordan Lake. The new rules promulgated by the State for Jordan Lake supersede local rules and will require re-writing ordinances and creating new enforcement procedures. The Town contracts for engineering services primarily to review stormwater management plans, subdivision activity and other development located within a controlled watershed area. Other state-mandated requirements include an educational effort and the retrofitting of existing neighborhoods (currently delayed under the Jordan Lake rules).

*We cannot avoid stream pollution by keeping everyone out of the watershed, for all land is watershed and there is no place else to live and work.*

**Marion Clawson**  
1972



- *Recreation Programming—Summerfield Recreation Association and the Town Parks and Recreation Committee*

Instead of having an in-house Recreation Director, the Town relies upon two volunteer groups to handle this function: (1) the non-profit Summerfield

Recreation Association (SRA) organizes and supervises a number of recreation programs in the community. SRA, which is not affiliated with Town government, currently offers cheerleading, softball, basketball, and baseball programs. SRA relies on individuals and business sponsors to fund these sports programs. and (2) the Summerfield Parks and Recreation Committee--in addition to its park development oversight duties--also develops plans for occasional special events such as —Arts in the Park”, —Music in the Park”, Ice Cream Socials, etc.

### Customary Boards and Committees

*Note: The Town Council, Zoning Board and Board of Adjustment are customary municipal boards that operate in Summerfield in a manner typical of such boards throughout the State of North Carolina. The Town Staff provides support to these boards in preparing agendas, publicizing meetings, keeping minutes, and documenting decisions made.*

- **Town Council**

The Town Council meets once per month and as needed. The Town Council is the duly elected governing body of the Town of Summerfield. The Town Council is responsible for making Town policy and approving the Town budget. The Town Council also has final approval over many types of development proposals. The Town Council directs the Town Manager in establishing priorities in need of action.

- **Town Zoning Board**

The Summerfield Zoning Board meets once per month. This five-member volunteer board is appointed by the Town Council. The Zoning Board reviews and recommends upon rezoning petitions. It approves major subdivisions (i.e. more than 5 lots), commercial site plans, watershed boundary modifications, non-residential landscaping plans, and proposed projects within the Town’s Scenic Overlays and Town Core Overlay, among other things. As noted above, the Town provides staff support to the Zoning Board—accepting and reviewing applications, assembling agenda packets, attending meetings, recording and producing minutes, maintaining permanent files, issuing public notices, and a host of other related activities.

- **Board of Adjustment**

The Board of Adjustment meets monthly to review requests for variances, special use permits, and appeals of the enforcement officer regarding development ordinance interpretations. This five-member volunteer board is appointed by the Town Council. The Board acts in a *quasi-judicial* manner in that the board sits in judgment when reviewing cases and must determine specific facts in relation to the case. The Town staff must keep careful records of all testimony and proceedings of the Board of Adjustment.

### Special Boards and Committees

*Note: The Town Council of Summerfield has established several advisory boards and committees to assist in the governance of the community. Each board or committee advises on a particular area of Town government and*

receives guidance and support from the Town's staff according to need. There are over 80 volunteers serving on the following committees<sup>10</sup>:



The Athletic Advisory Committee was created to oversee the planning and construction of the Summerfield Athletic Park. The committee advises staff and Town Council on the types of active recreational facilities that are needed, and helps to develop the plan for implementation on property owned by the Town.

oversee the planning and construction of the Summerfield Athletic Park. The committee advises staff and Town Council on the types of active recreational facilities that are needed, and helps to develop the plan for implementation on property owned by the Town. The Athletic Park is under construction at this time and is slated to be finished in mid-spring 2010. The Committee will then decide to continue to exist or disband- having accomplished their mission of developing the park. The Parks and Recreation Supervisor and Town Manager are staff liaison to this committee.

- **Summerfield Parks and Recreation Committee**

The Summerfield Parks and Recreation Committee meets once per month. The Committee oversees work on major park improvements such as the Summerfield Community Park. As noted previously, the Committee also develops plans for special events such as Movies in the Park, "Touch-a-Truck", Fishing Rodeo, etc. The Parks and Recreation Supervisor is the staff liaison to this committee.

- **Athletic Advisory Committee**

The Athletic Advisory Committee was created to

- **Historical Committee**

The Historical Committee also meets once per month. The Committee's purpose is to identify, locate, list, and record, with photographs and written descriptions, historical structures in Summerfield, and to share that information with the public. The Committee was instrumental in designating the town's National Register Historic District along portions of Oak Ridge and Summerfield Roads. It has also developed historic building plaques and pole banners and provides oversight to the Town Hall Museum of local history. The Town Manager is the staff liaison to this committee.

- **Founders' Day Committee**

The Founders' Day Committee meets once per month or as needed during the majority of the year, with responsibilities reaching a peak during the last few months leading up to the annual Founders' Day Parade and Celebration held each May. The Planning Technician and Town Manager are the liaison, but during the weeks leading up to the event all of the staff are involved in the event preparations.

<sup>10</sup> Much of the information concerning these various boards and committees was gleaned from the Town's website at <http://www.summerfieldgov.com/content/view/57/85/>

- *Public Safety Committee*

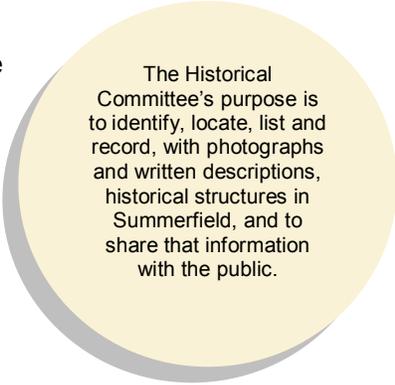
The Public Safety Committee meets as needed to review and investigate citizen concerns regarding safety issues. The committee is also responsible for ensuring the emergency preparedness of the Town by maintaining the town generator and emergency supplies and equipment, and by providing training and staff for the Town's two designated Red Cross emergency shelters. Senior Resources activities and programs are a sub-committee of the Public Safety Committee. The Town Manager is the staff liaison to the committee.

- *Finance Committee*

The Finance Committee provides oversight concerning the assets of the Town of Summerfield. Specifically, the Committee 1) serves as a liaison between committees and the Town Council in the provision of financial support services, 2) provides a collaborative effort in the accomplishment of Town goals, 3) lends expertise, provides advice, and makes recommendations to other committees, staff, and Town Council, 4) provides support in the creation of the Town budget, 5) provides review and recommendations for the expenditure of Town funds as requested by committees and community-based non-profits, and 6) maintains fiscal responsibility in all actions. The Town Manager and Finance Officer serve as members of this committee.

- *Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee*

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee meets monthly to provide guidance to the development of a long-range plan for the Town of Summerfield. Working with a planning consultant and the Town staff, the Committee reviews proposed Town policies and actions dealing with transportation issues, residential and commercial development, community appearance, greenways and trails, parks development, and many other growth issues that Summerfield will face over the next 10-15 years. Over the course of preparing the plan, the Committee also hosts special town meetings to invite public input to the process. The Town Planner, Planning Technician, and Manager all work with this committee.



The Historical Committee's purpose is to identify, locate, list and record, with photographs and written descriptions, historical structures in Summerfield, and to share that information with the public.

## Biographical References for All Persons Quoted in This Plan

**Russell Baker** is an American Pulitzer Prize-winning writer known for his satirical commentary and self-critical prose, as well as for his autobiography, *Growing Up*.

**Sir Raymond Unwin** (1863–1940) was a prominent and influential English urban planner. Author of *Town Planning in Practice* (1909).

**Lewis Mumford** (1895–1990) was an American historian and philosopher of technology and science who was particularly noted for his study of cities and urban architecture.

**Peter Calthorpe** is an architect and urban planner, and a founding member of the Congress for New Urbanism.

**Fred Hyer** is an urban planner and author of Planning Advisory Service Report 429: *Preserving Rural Character*, December (1990).

**Sara Ebenreck**, former executive editor of American Land Forum, is a Maryland writer, editor, and teacher.

**Aldo Leopold** (1887–1948) was an American ecologist, forester, and environmentalist. Best known as author of *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), now viewed as a classic series of essays on nature and ecology.

**Jane Jacobs** (1916–2006) was an American-born Canadian urbanist, writer and activist. She is best known for *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), a powerful critique of the urban renewal policies of the 1950s in the United States.

**Gary Moll** is Senior Vice President of AMERICAN FORESTS and director of the Urban Ecosystems Center.

**Samuel B. Passmore**, is Environment Program Director, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

**Thomas Jefferson** (1743–1826) was the third President of the United States (1801–1809), the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776), and one of the most influential Founding Fathers.

**Marion Clawson** was an environmental economist best known for his work in and influence on forestry and forest policy.



## Special Thanks

*The Steering Committee wishes to thank the following individuals who agreed to be interviewed in their particular areas of interest or expertise. Their valuable input and insights were most helpful in framing the plan's policies and actions.*

### Walking, Hiking, Biking

Tempe Bennett, Area Riding Instructor  
Cinda Whicker, Biking Enthusiast, Purgason's Tack Shop, Town Core Business and Property Owner  
NC Horse Council (via email)  
Trudy Whitacre, Riding & Hiking Enthusiast, Guilford County Open Space Committee Member  
Jane Doggett, Farm Owner, Parks & Rec, Former Council Member, Horseback Rider  
John Bates, Hiking Enthusiast, Former Summerfield Conservation Committee  
Rod Brown, Business Owner Summerfield Family Chiropractic, NW Merchants Assoc, Biking Enthusiast  
Mike Simpson, Greensboro Watershed Trails Coordinator

### Community Character/Open Space

Trudy Whitacre  
John Bates

### Transportation

Craig McKinney, Greensboro Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Lane Hall, NC DOT  
Brent McKinney, Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation

### Water/Sewer

Heath Ward, Guilford County Environmental Health  
Lee G. Spencer, P.E. DENR Regional Engineer Public Water Supply Section  
Corey Basinger DENR Division of Water Quality  
Jim Beeson, Soil Scientist, Soil and Environmental Consultants

### Appropriate Housing and Residential Development

Billy Tesh, Local Resident and Business Owner, Active Participant TRIBEC  
John Turner, Local Builder, Turner Homes  
Kathy Dumas, Local Builder, R&K Construction

### Schools

Andy LaRowe, Executive Director Facilities and New Construction  
Donna Bell, Director of Facilities Planning  
Darlene Garrett, Board of Education District Representative  
Kelly Langston, Summerfield Elementary PTA  
Ketura Marvin Summerfield Elementary PTA  
Jill Walsh, Principal Summerfield Elementary School

### Summerfield Road Focus Area

Paul Lambrecht  
Peggy McPartlan

### Town Council Members

Dena Barnes, Mayor Pro Tem  
Bob Williams, Councilman  
John Wray, Councilman

### Park and Recreation Improvements

Sue Beeson, Summerfield Parks & Rec Committee Chair  
Sherry Joseph, Summerfield Parks & Rec Committee  
Dale Wyrick, President Summerfield Recreation Association

### Attractive Community Appearance

Steve May, Benchmark Code Enforcement

### Historic Preservation

Bill Gordon  
Linda Southard, Historical Committee Chair

### Limited Services Local Government

Chief Chris Johnson, Summerfield Fire Department  
Captain Bob Gordon, Guilford County Sheriff, District 1

*The Committee is also indebted to the many citizens of Summerfield who attended the special town meetings held for the plan. The Citizen-Driven Policy Areas set forth in this document were determined by their input.*

# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan **Our Town Our Plan**



Town of Summerfield  
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# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Growth Factors Analysis



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010

Our Town  
Our Plan



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



# Growth Factors Analysis

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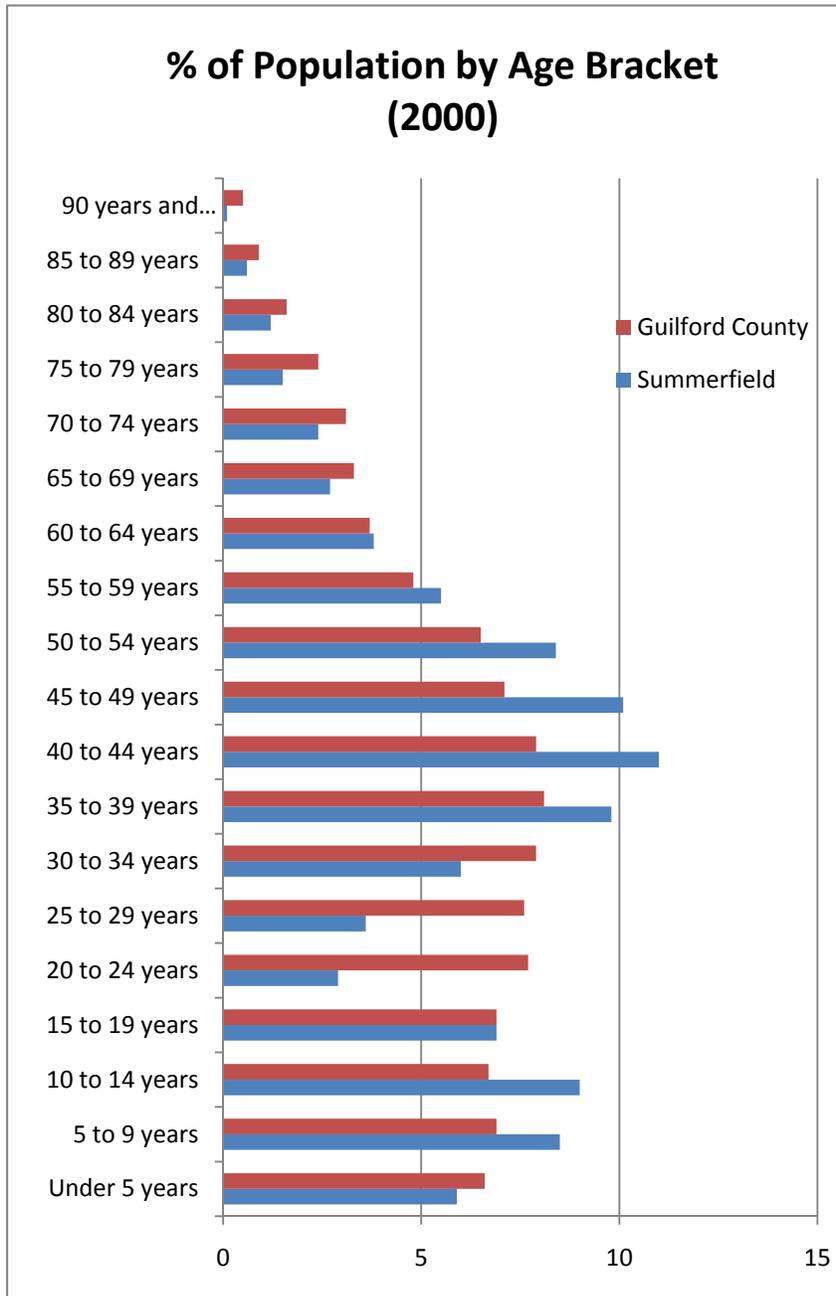
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*Introduction*

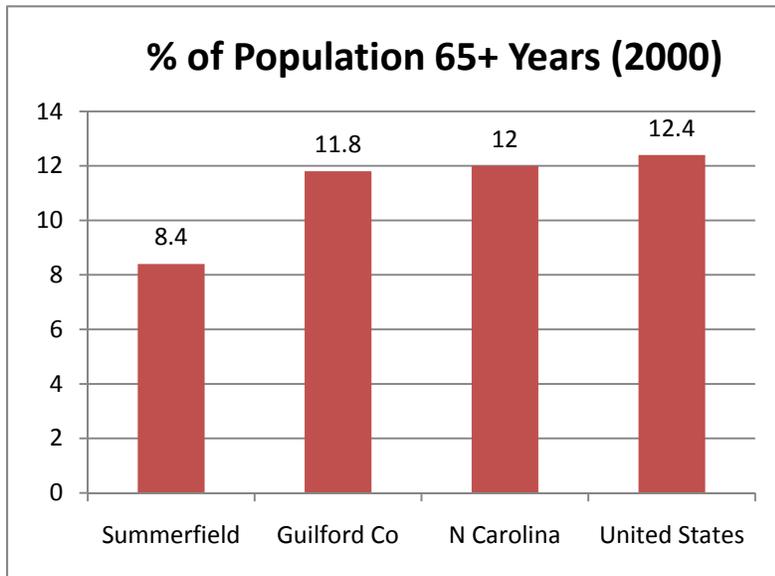
This Growth Factors Analysis includes statistical measures concerning Summerfield's population, housing, and local economy. The purpose of the Growth Factors Analysis is to provide a factual basis for understanding primarily the demographic and economic context for growth and development in Summerfield.

## Measures of Population Composition and Change



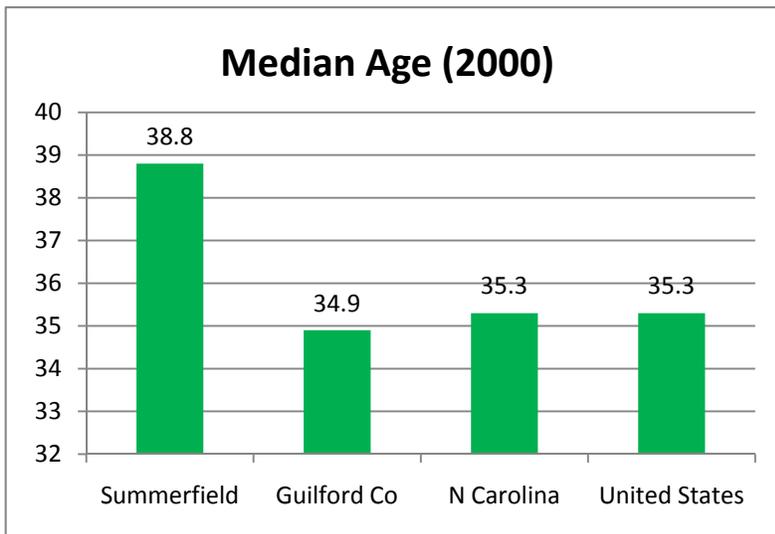
At the time of the 2000 Census, persons in their prime earning years (i.e. 35 to 59 years of age) were predominant in Summerfield's population. Of the 19 five-year age cohorts which made up the total population of the town, these five cohorts represented about 45% of the town's entire population. Contrast this with the age distribution of Guilford County, in which these same five cohorts (35 to 59 years) made up only about a third of the County's total population. Summerfield's population also had significantly more school-age children (proportionately) than Guilford County as a whole. Finally, observe that Summerfield had very few residents, proportionately, in the young adult age cohorts from 20 to 29 years of age.

Source: US Census 2000



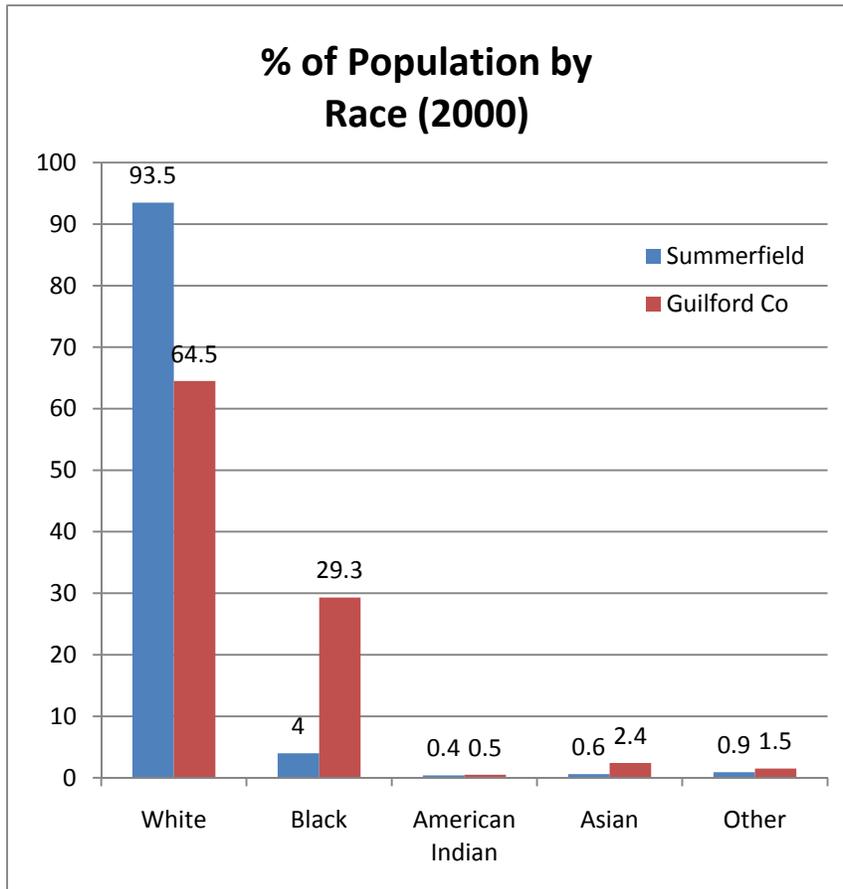
Guilford County, North Carolina and the United States each had about 12% of their population 65 years of age or older in 2000. Summerfield, on the other hand, had only about 8% of its population over 65 years of age. This may be attributed to the size of homes and “cost of entry” into the community—factors that are more consistent with families headed by high wage earners than with retirees and smaller households supported by fixed incomes.

Source: US Census 2000



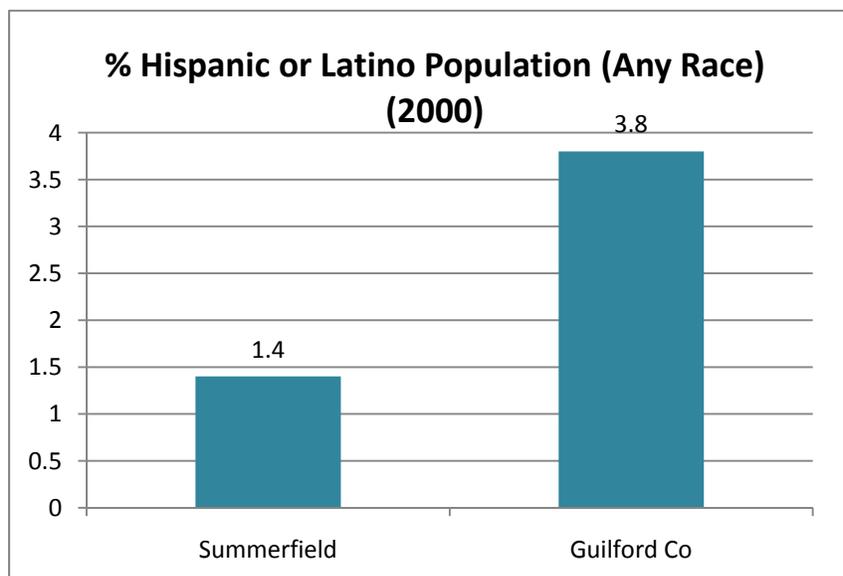
Even though Summerfield had far fewer senior citizens among its ranks than the County, State and nation, the median age of town residents was significantly higher than that of these much larger geographic areas. This is further evidence of the dominance of the 35 to 59 year old age cohorts and the dearth of 20 to 34 year olds among the town’s population.

Source: US Census 2000



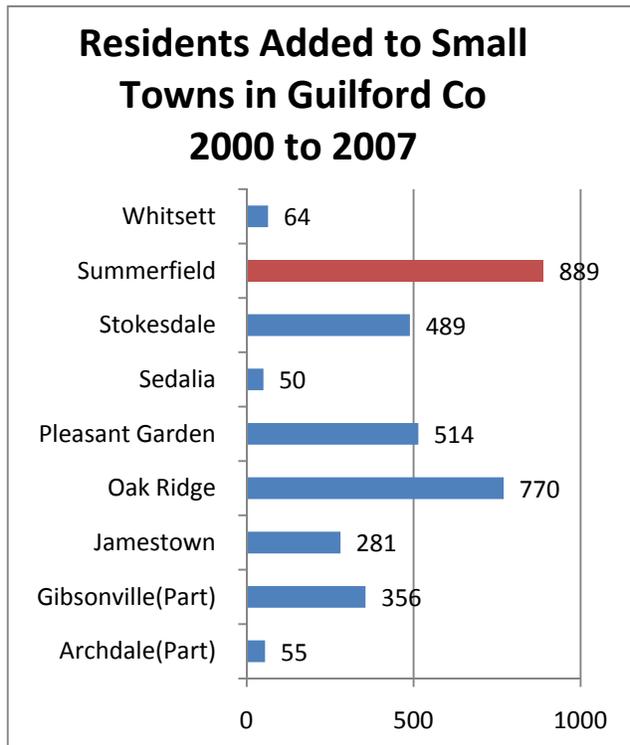
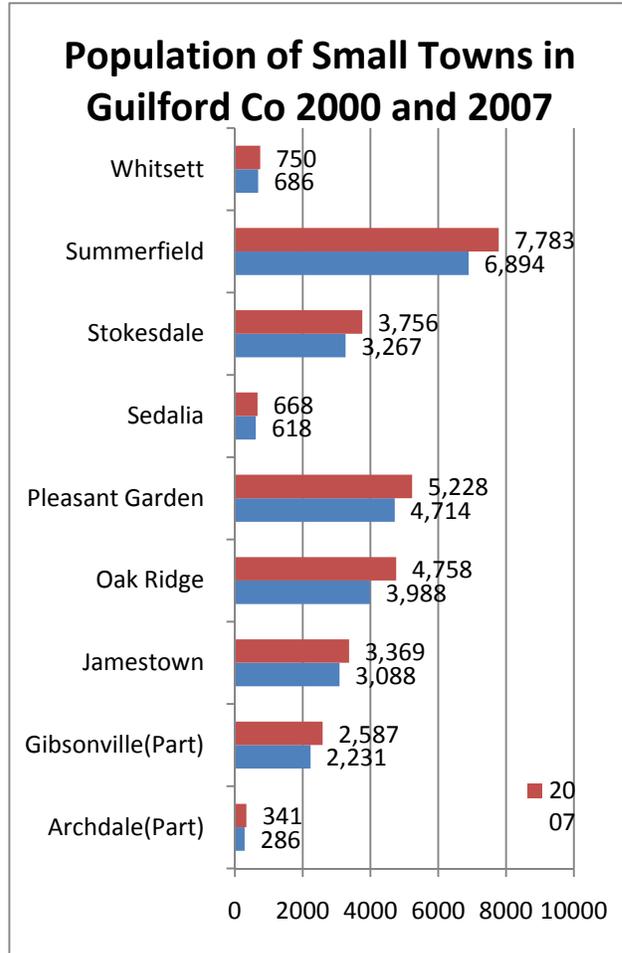
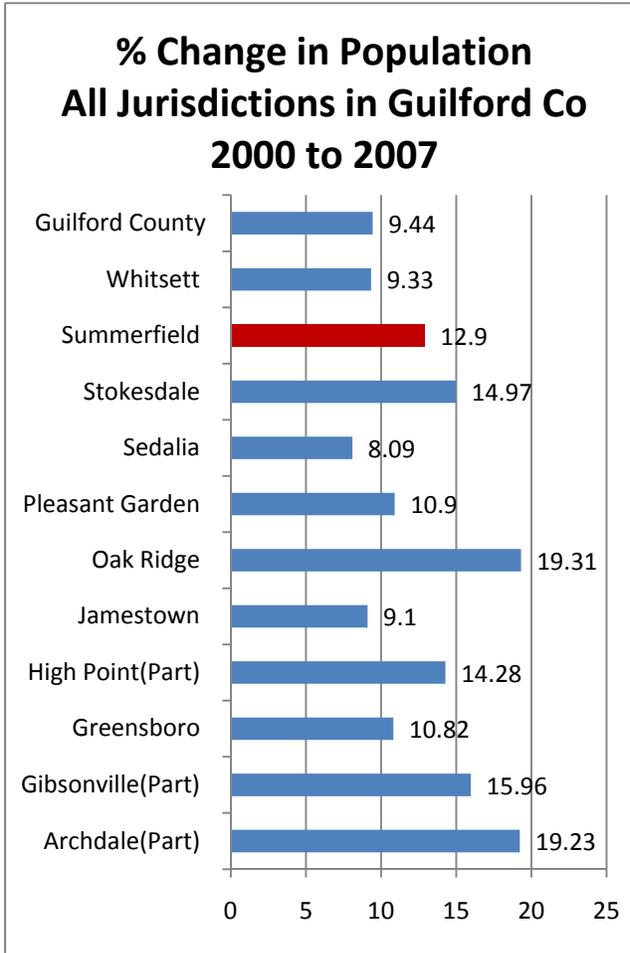
At the time of the 2000 Census, about 94% of Summerfield’s population was White, 4% was Black and 2% was of some other race. In contrast, Guilford County’s population was about 65% White, 30% Black and 5% Other.

Source: US Census 2000



At the time of the 2000 Census, 1.4% of Summerfield’s population was of Hispanic or Latino origin, while Guilford County’s population was 3.8% Hispanic or Latino. Both these numbers would likely be higher today, especially in the case of Guilford County.

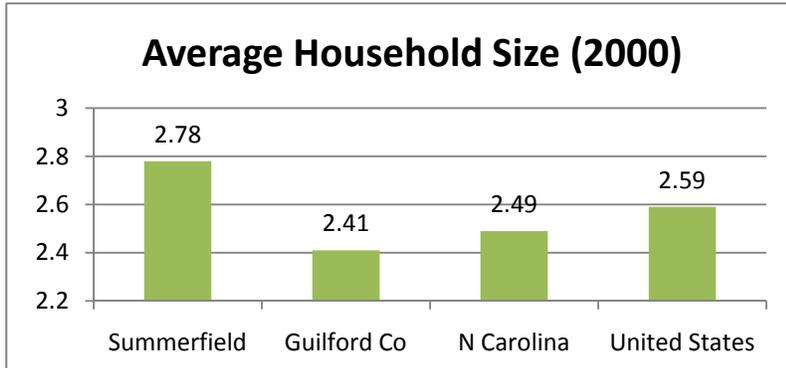
Source: US Census 2000



There has been only one decennial Census taken since Summerfield was incorporated in 1996. The three charts on this page employ population estimates provided by the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management as of July 2007. Among all small towns in Guilford County (excludes Greensboro and High Point) Summerfield is the largest at an estimated 7,800 residents in 2007. Summerfield also added the most new residents (889) between 2000 and 2007. Percentage-wise, Summerfield was the sixth fastest growing area among all jurisdictions in Guilford County, having increased its population by 13% during the 7 year period of study.

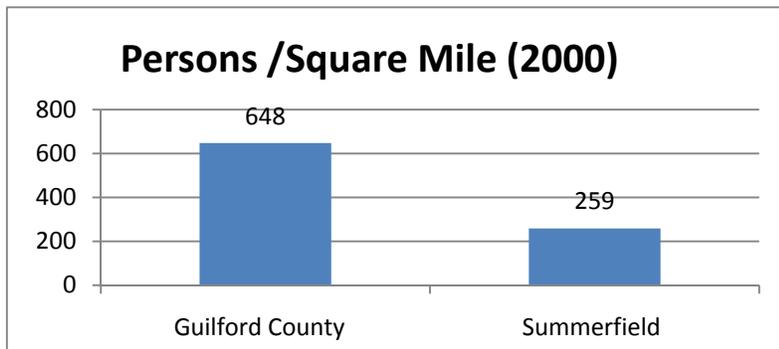
Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management

## Measures of Housing Type, Tenure, and Cost



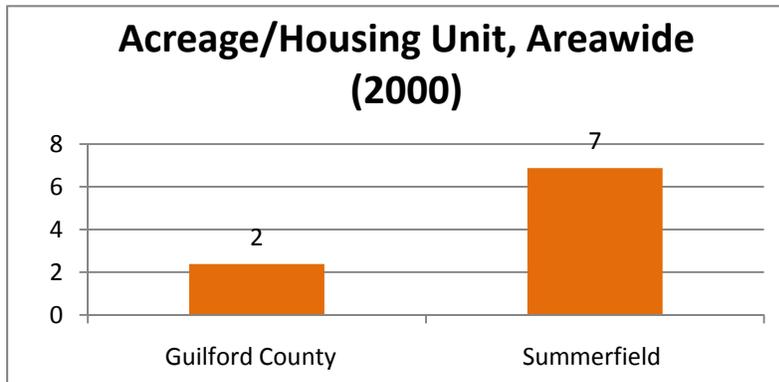
The predominance of traditional families over young singles, young couples and retirees is evident in Summerfield's significantly larger average household size.

Source: US Census 2000



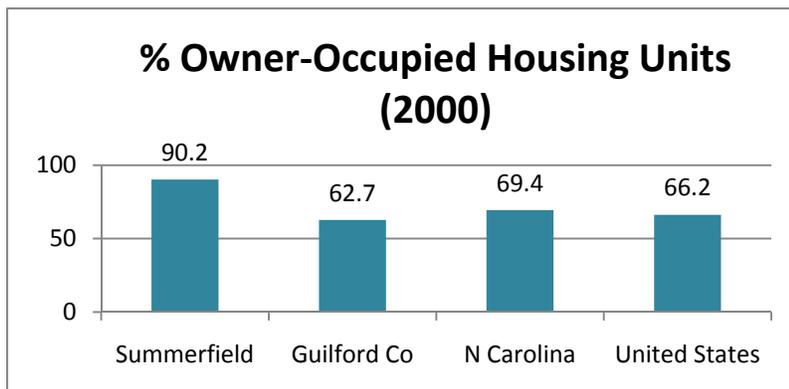
Guilford County's much higher population density is heavily influenced by the urbanized areas of Greensboro and High Point.

Source: US Census 2000



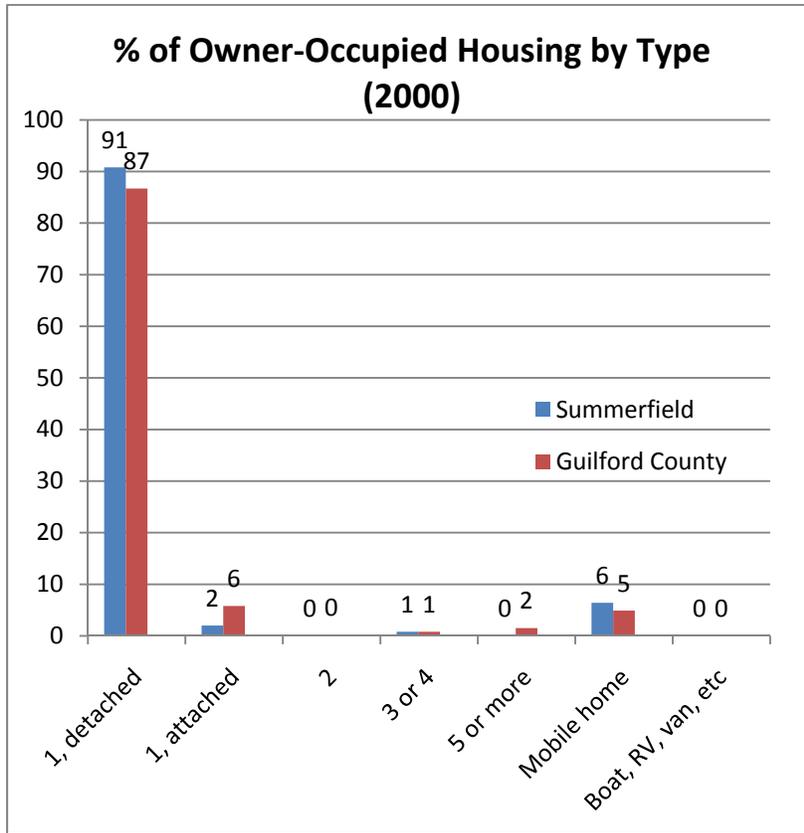
Summerfield's development density is low (7 acres/unit) when farmland, woodland, and other open spaces are included in the total. Of course, this number does not include acreage in roadways and non-residential development, but these areas account for only a small percentage of land in the community.

Source: US Census 2000 and Glenn Harbeck Associates, Inc.



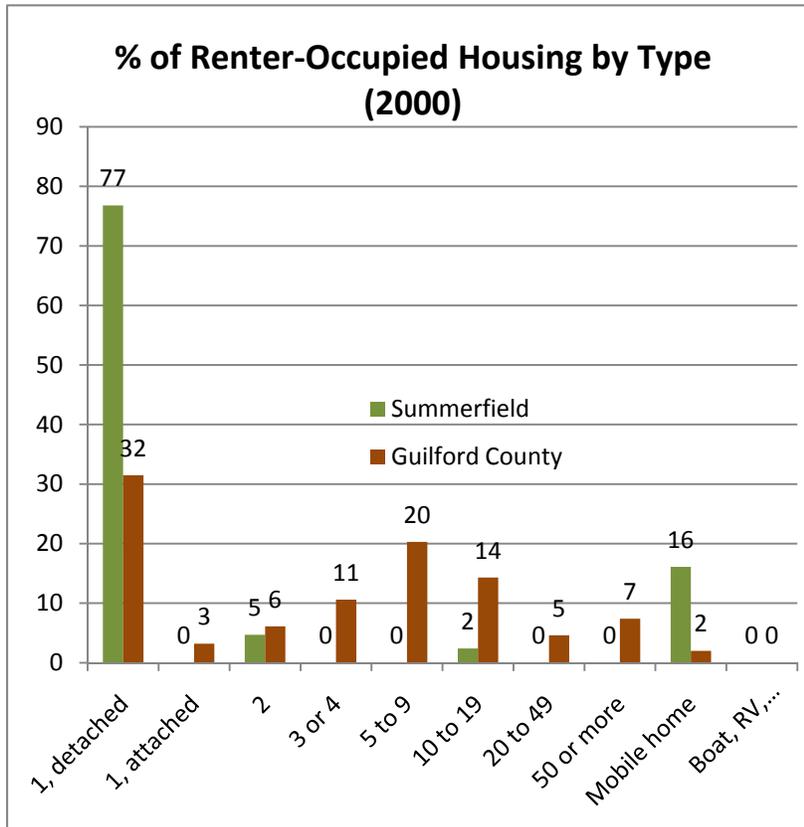
Compared to Guilford County, the state of North Carolina, and the country as a whole, Summerfield is dominated by owner-occupied housing.

Source: US Census 2000



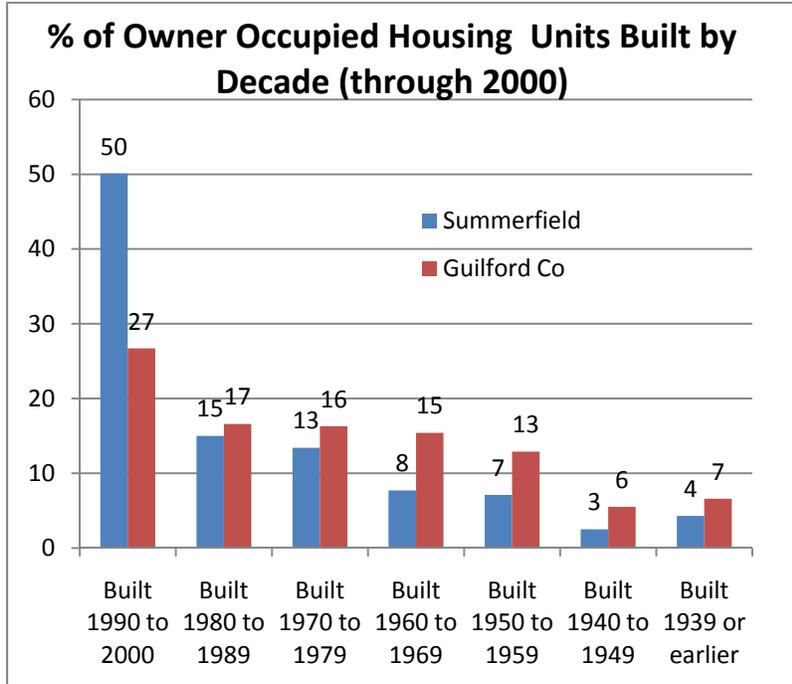
About 90% of Summerfield's and Guilford County's owner-occupied housing is single family, detached. In 2000, mobile homes made up about 6% of the Town's and 5% of the County's owner-occupied housing stock.

Source: US Census 2000



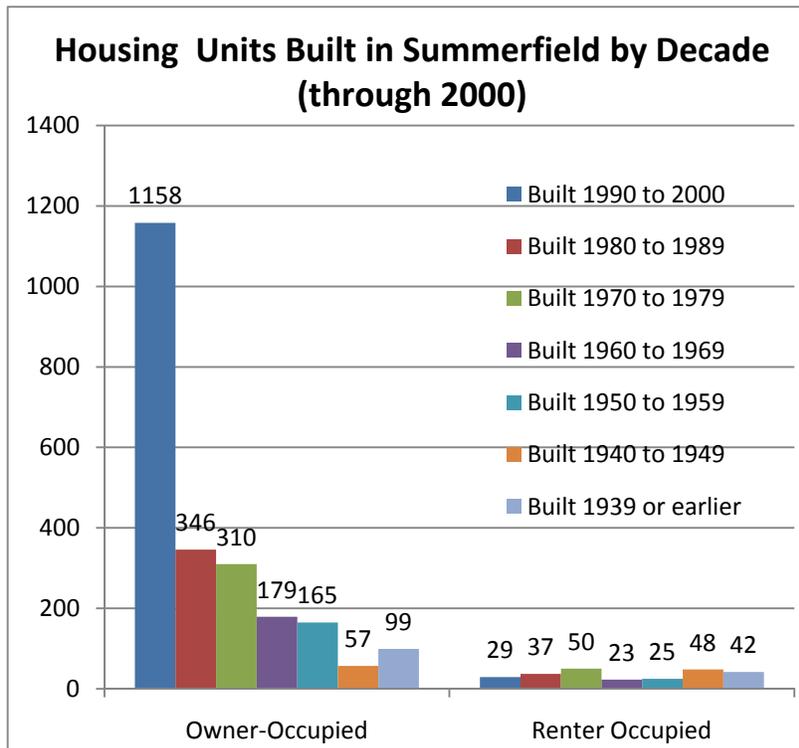
Over three-fourths of Summerfield's renter-occupied housing is single family detached. This compares with less than one-third of the County's. Stated another way, about two-thirds of the County's rental housing is in multi-family structures. Also, some 16% of Summerfield's mobile homes are renter occupied compared to just 2% of the County's. Even so, recall that over 90% of Summerfield's housing is owner occupied, so these numbers are small.

Source: US Census 2000



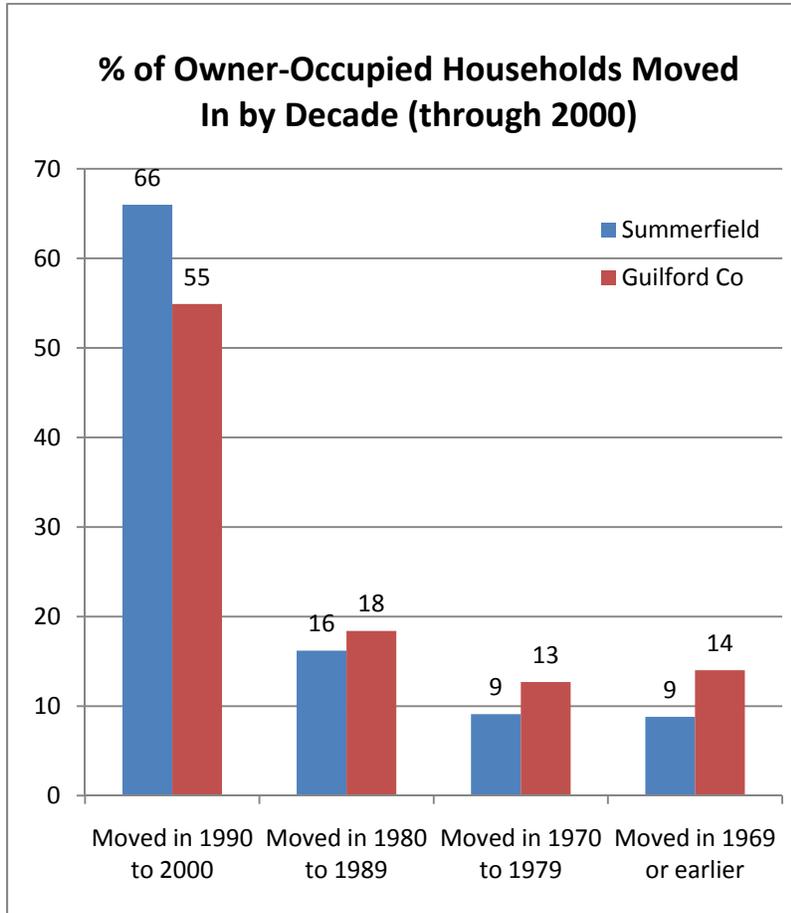
By 2000, fully one half of all housing ever built in Summerfield was constructed during the 1990's.

Source: US Census 2000



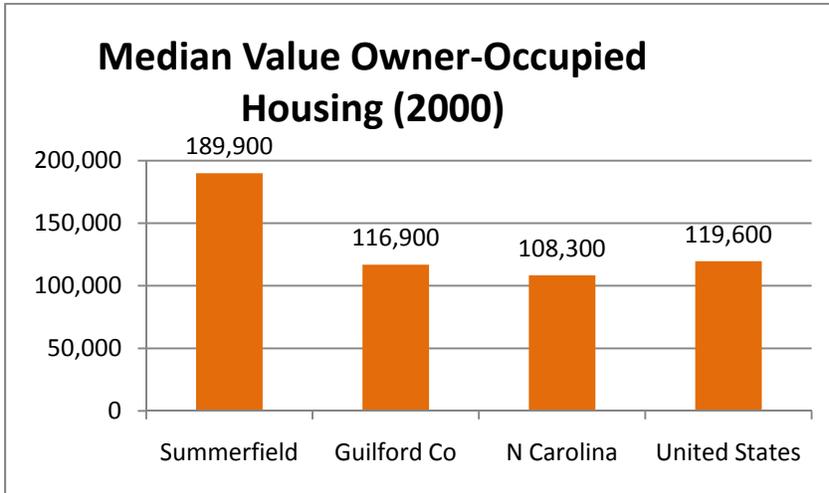
In the decades after World War II, numbers of owner-occupied housing units constructed in Summerfield proceeded at a modest but steadily increasing rate—residential development then exploded in volume during the 1990's. Housing units occupied by renters in 2000 represented a very small proportion of the total housing stock in Summerfield. No single decade was responsible for producing a sizable number of housing units now occupied by renters.

Source: US Census 2000



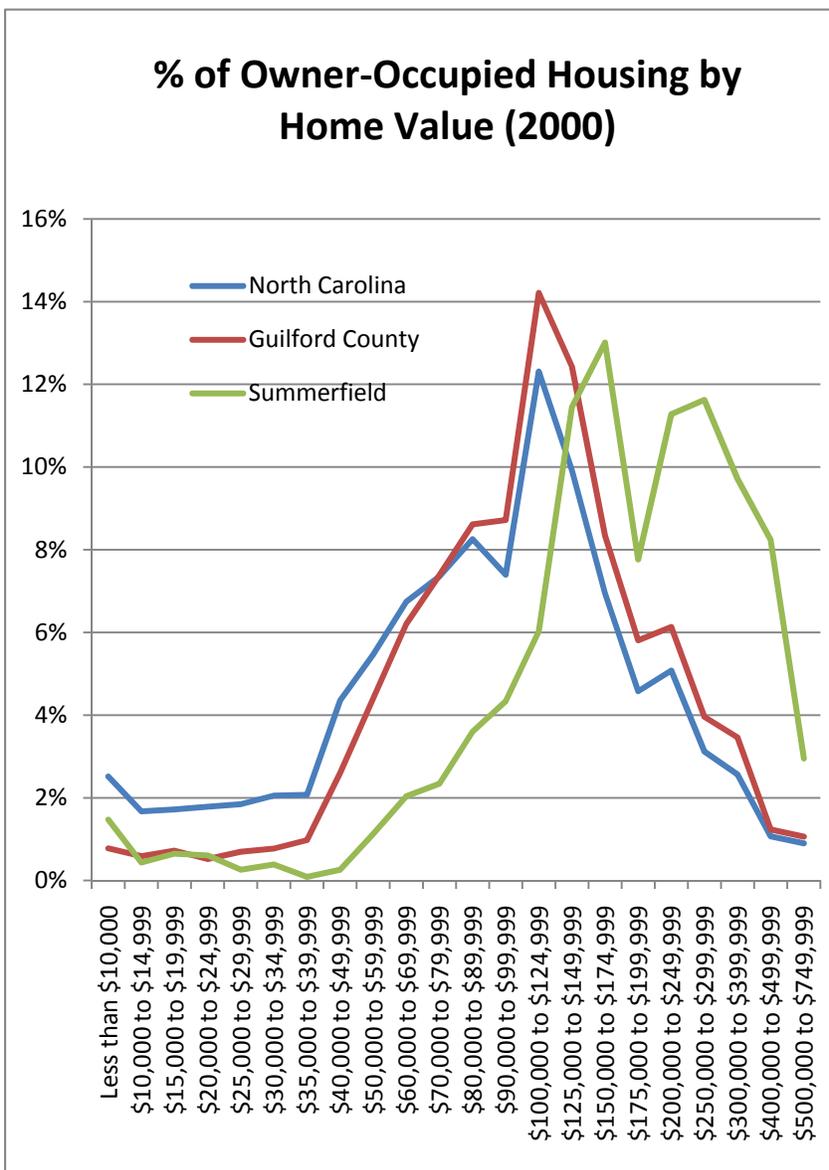
About two-thirds of all Summerfield households living in owner occupied housing moved into their homes during the 1990's. At the time of the 2000 Census, many neighbors in Summerfield were just getting to know one another.

Source: US Census 2000



At the time of the 2000 Census, half of all homes in Summerfield were valued at less than \$190,000 and half were valued more. This median value was substantially higher than the same measures of home value for the county, state, and nation.

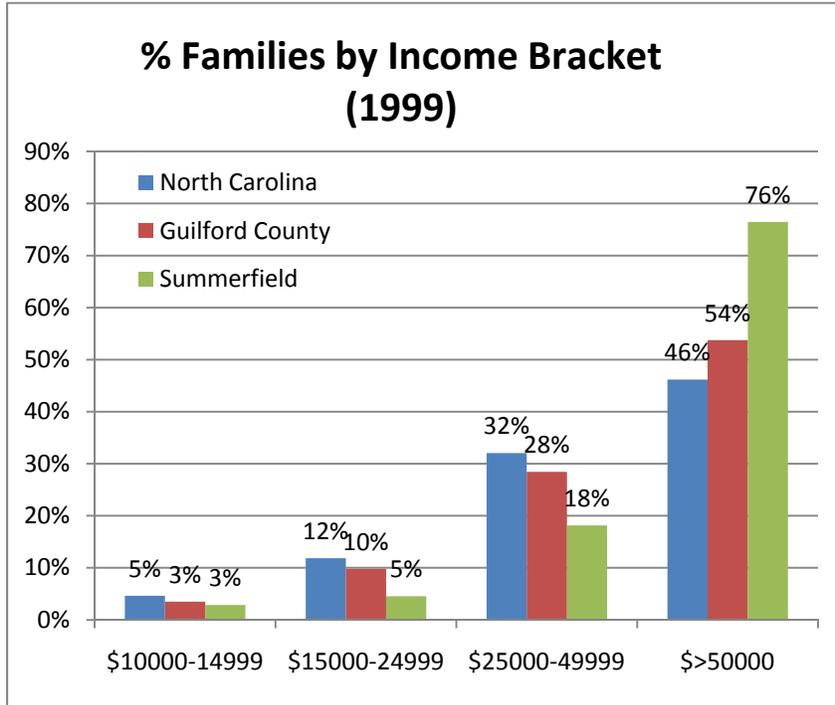
Source: US Census 2000



Home values in Guilford County closely parallel home values statewide. A decade ago (at the time of the 2000 Census), only about 18% of all owner-occupied homes in the County and State were valued at over \$175,000. In contrast, over half of all owner-occupied homes in Summerfield were valued at over \$175,000 in 2000. Nearly one third of all owner-occupied homes in Summerfield were worth over \$250,000. Note also that while nearly 60% of all homes in Guilford County were valued at less than \$125,000, only 22% of Summerfield homes were under \$125,000 in 2000.

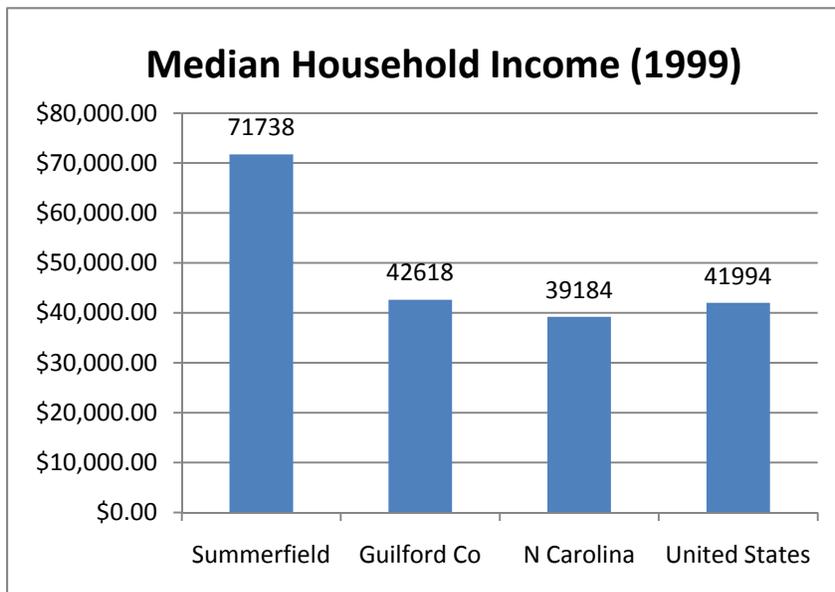
Source: US Census and Glenn Harbeck Associates, Inc.

## Measures of Local Economic Conditions



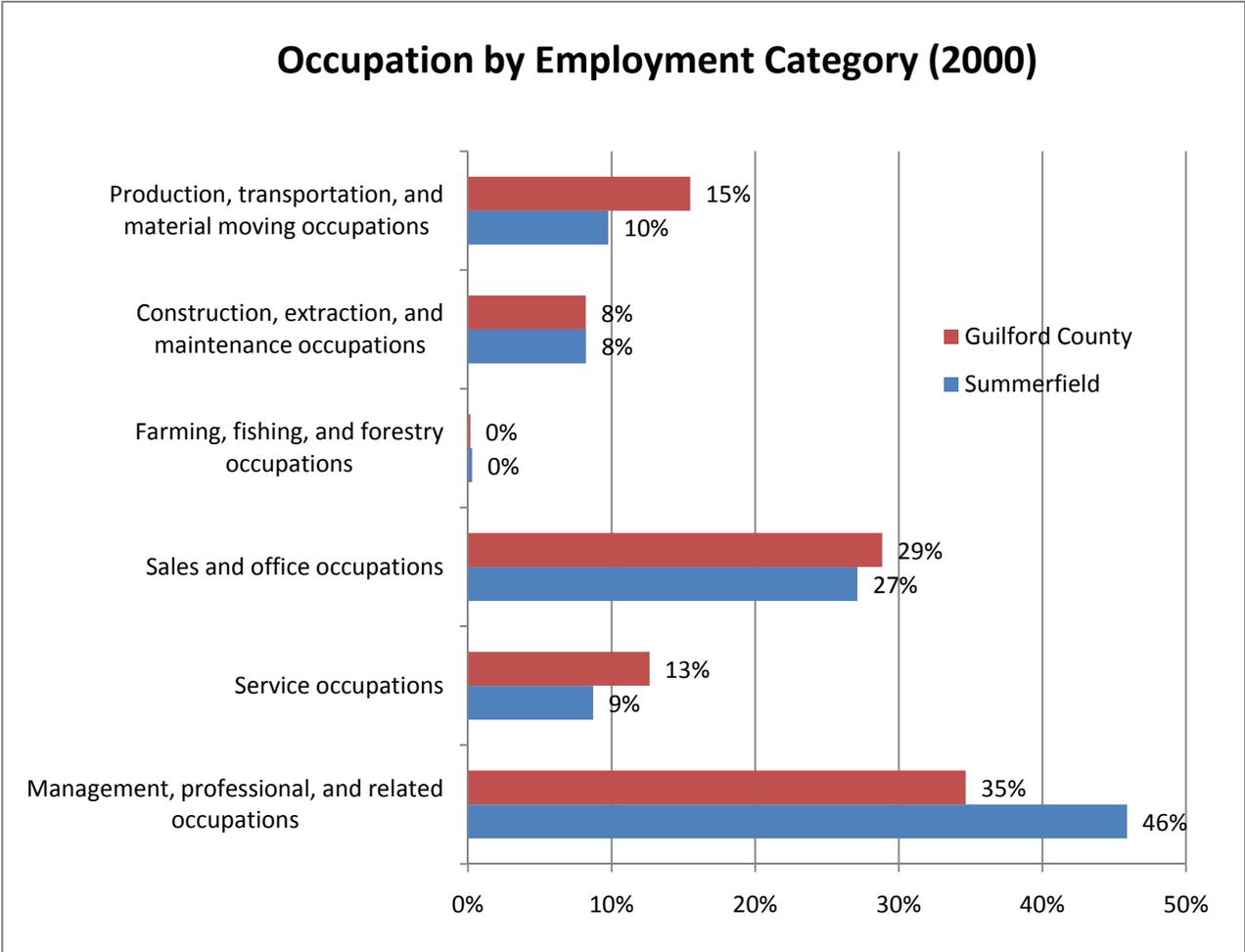
At the time of the 2000 US Census, slightly over 75% of all families in Summerfield had incomes in excess of \$50, 000. By comparison, less than 50% of North Carolina’s families had incomes over that amount. Low to moderate income families were under-represented in Summerfield compared to county and state averages..

Source: US Census

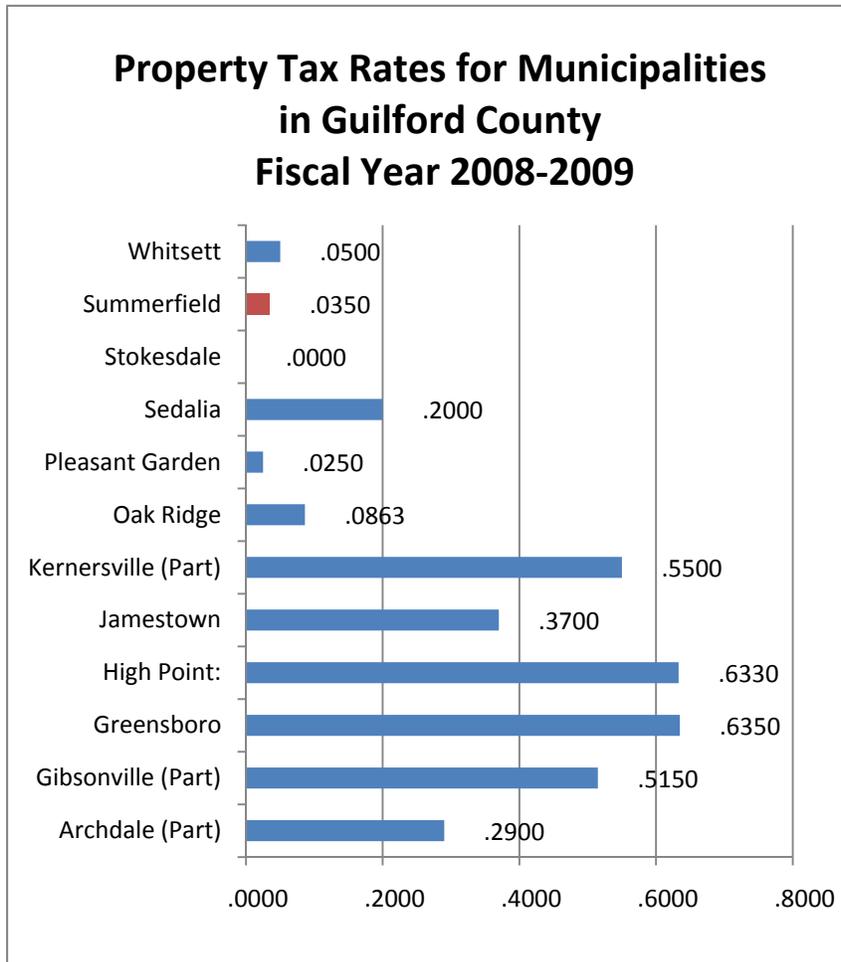


For Summerfield in 1999, \$71, 738 was the income level at which one-half of the community’s households fell above and one half fell below that number. Median household income in Summerfield exceeded county, state and national median incomes by a wide margin.

Source: US Census

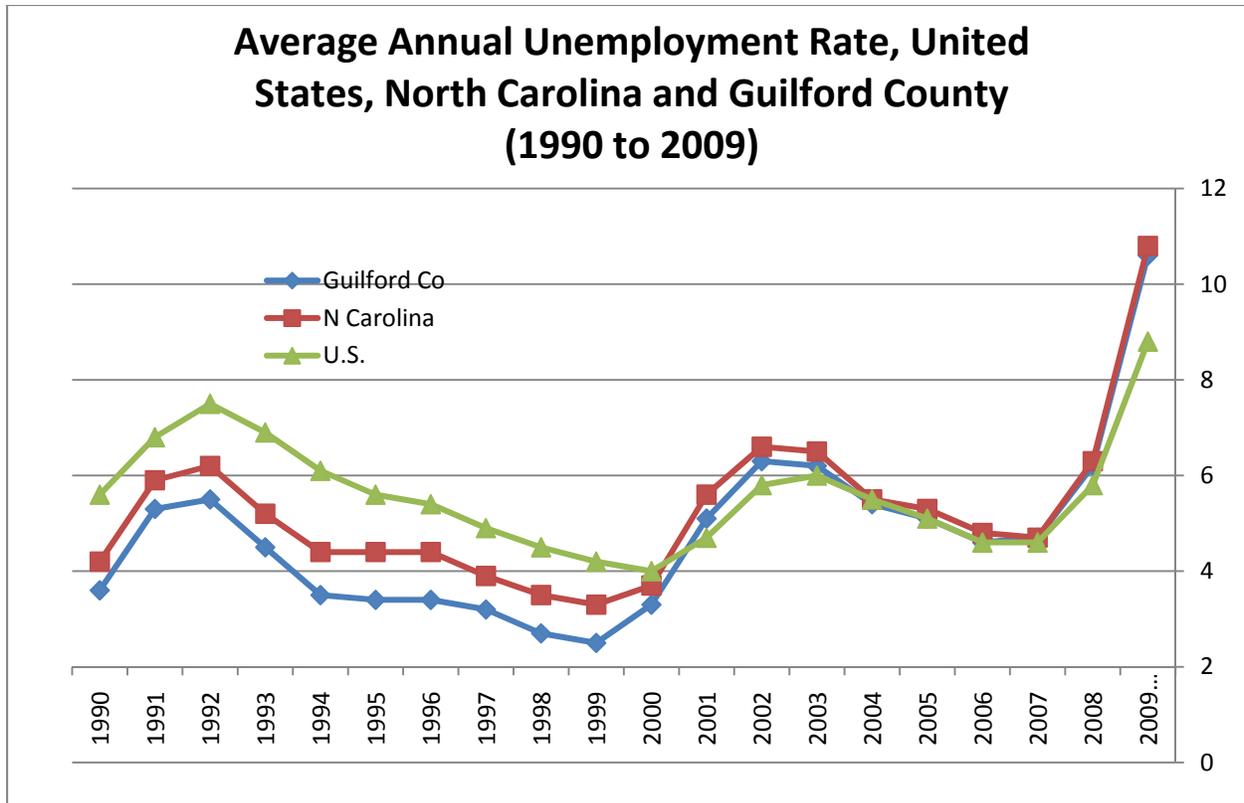


As might be expected, *Management, Professional and Related Occupations* make up a substantially greater percentage of workers in Summerfield than in Guilford County as a whole. Workers in *Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations* (including manufacturing) are less well represented in Summerfield when compared to Guilford County.



According to the most recent report from the North Carolina Department of Revenue, property tax rates for municipalities located (in whole or in part) in Guilford County range from a high of 63½ cents per hundred dollars to 0 cents per hundred. At 3½ cents per hundred, Summerfield was near the bottom of the range for fiscal year 2008-2009.

*Source: Property Tax Rates for North Carolina Municipalities, NC Department of Revenue, June 2009.*



	Guilford Co	N Carolina	US
2009 YTD	10.6	10.8	8.8
2008	6.2	6.3	5.8
2007	4.7	4.7	4.6
2006	4.6	4.8	4.6
2005	5.1	5.3	5.1
2004	5.4	5.5	5.5
2003	6.2	6.5	6.0
2002	6.3	6.6	5.8
2001	5.1	5.6	4.7
2000	3.3	3.7	4.0
1999	2.5	3.3	4.2
1998	2.7	3.5	4.5
1997	3.2	3.9	4.9
1996	3.4	4.4	5.4
1995	3.4	4.4	5.6
1994	3.5	4.4	6.1
1993	4.5	5.2	6.9
1992	5.5	6.2	7.5
1991	5.3	5.9	6.8
1990	3.6	4.2	5.6

The table and graph show the average annual unemployment rates for Guilford County, the state of North Carolina and the United States for the period from 1990 through May of 2009. During the 1990's, Guilford County and North Carolina had unemployment rates consistently lower than the nation as a whole. Starting around 2000, however, this relationship reversed with the County and State experiencing nearly identical unemployment rates-- higher than the national average. This difference has been especially pronounced during the first half of 2009, with the County and State showing unemployment rates about 2 percentage points higher than the nation as a whole.

Source: NC Employment Security Commission



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



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[www.summerfieldgov.com](http://www.summerfieldgov.com)

# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Map Atlas



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010

Our Town  
Our Plan



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



## Map Atlas

### *Introduction*

The following maps are included for reference for various key aspects of the plan:

- Base Map with Summerfield Road Focus Area detail
- Trails and Open Space
- Watershed and Floodplain
- MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) Transportation Plan
- Generalized Soils Map
- Homes Built in Summerfield

The **Base Map** shows localized points of interest, general road network, future I-73, and major water bodies and rivers. It also includes a detail aerial inset map of the Summerfield Road Focus Area.

The **Trails and Open Space** map shows local, regional and state trails (both existing and proposed), local, regional and state parks, and public and private open space.

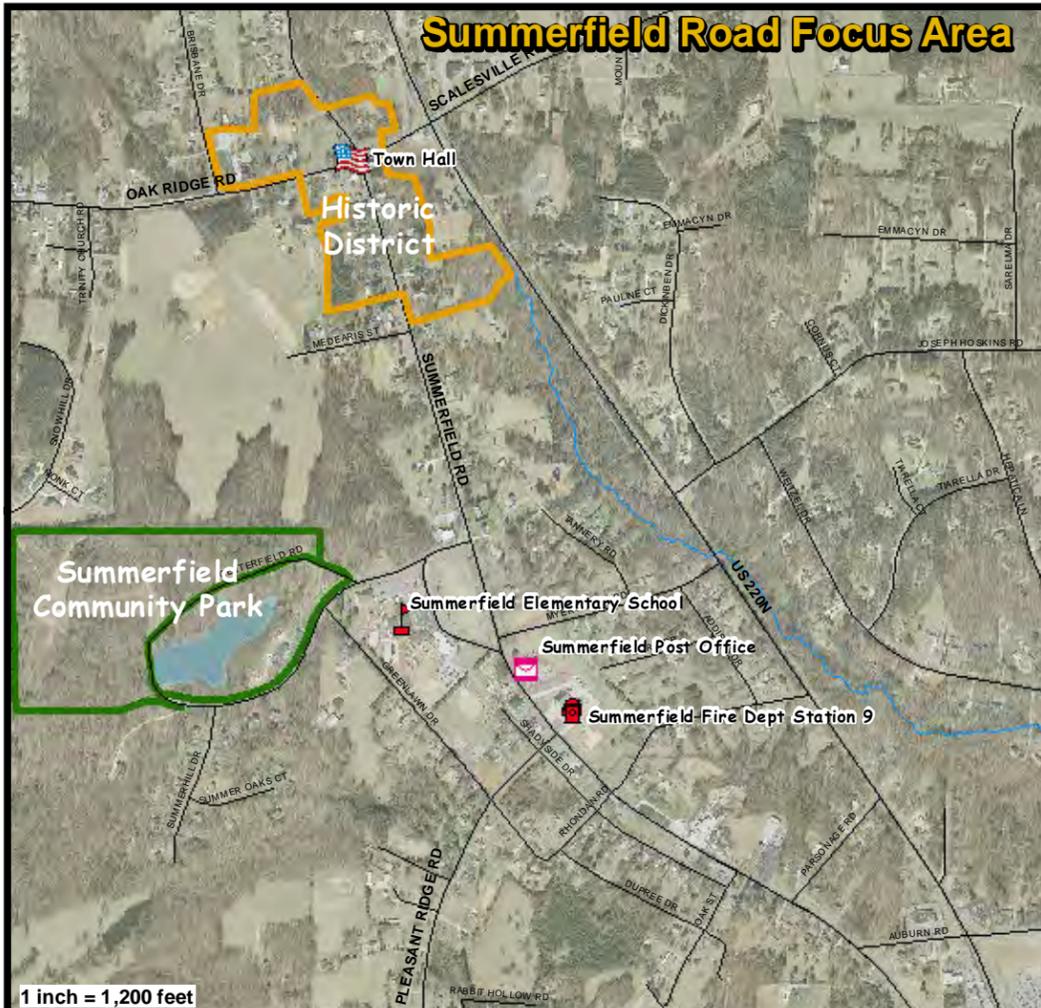
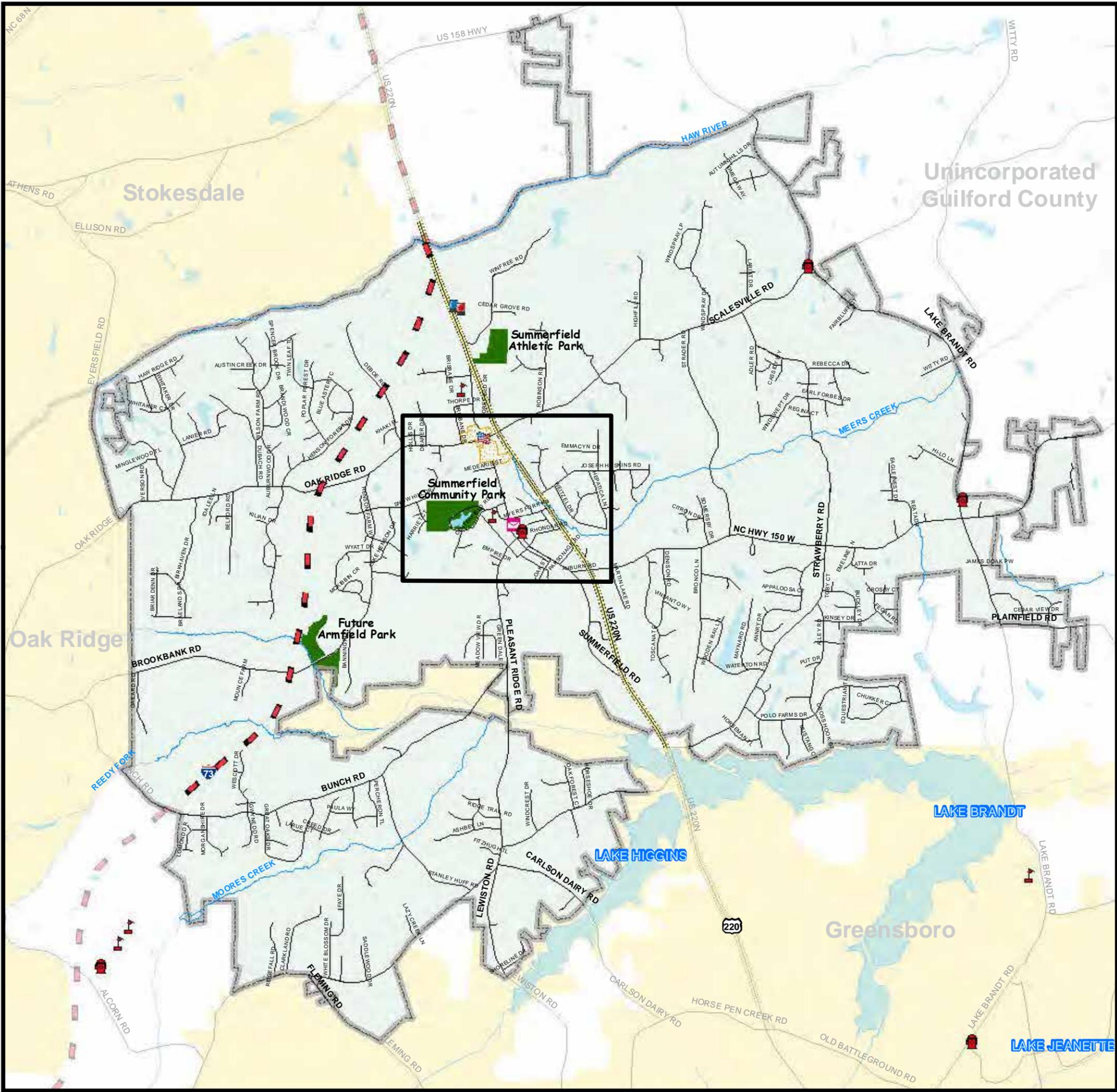
The **Watershed and Floodplain** map shows local and nearby General Watershed boundaries, local Critical Watershed boundary, and floodplain.

The **MPO Transportation Plan** map shows existing and proposed freeways, thoroughfares, and collector roads. It also shows the proposed widening of Hwy 220N through the town.

The **Generalized Soils Map** shows key soil types and slopes as well as floodplain.

The **Homes Built in Summerfield** map shows homes, permitted in Summerfield by year, through 2008.

Data is taken from Guilford County, City of Greensboro, FEMA, and the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and is subject to the accuracy of those records.

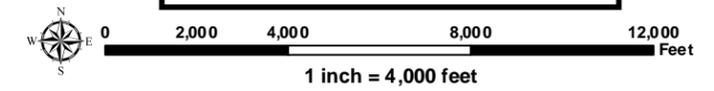


1 inch = 1,200 feet

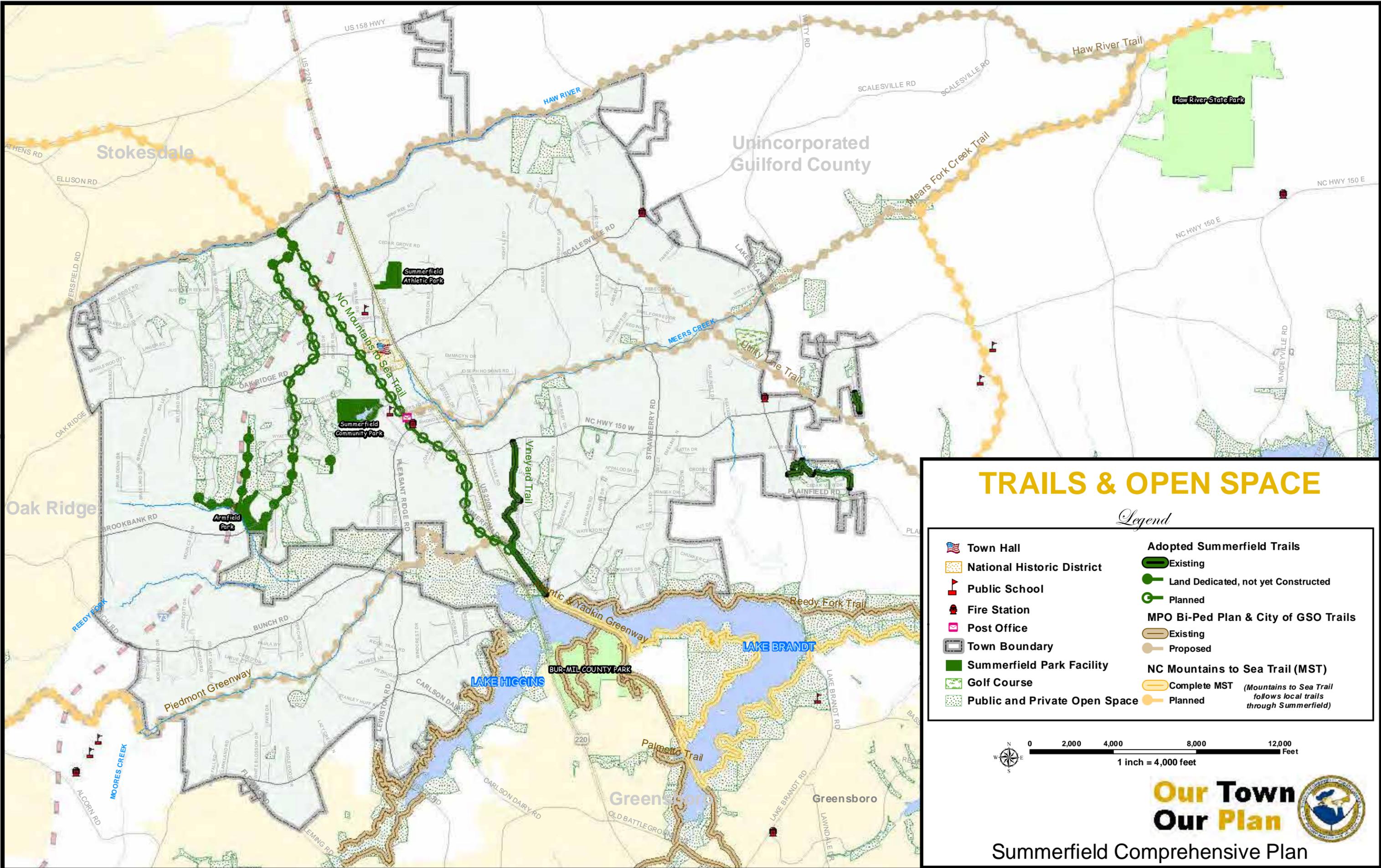
## BASE MAP

### Legend

-  Town Hall
-  Summerfield Park Facility
-  National Historic District
-  Public School
-  Fire Station
-  Post Office
-  District 1 Sheriff
-  Future I-73
-  Town Boundary



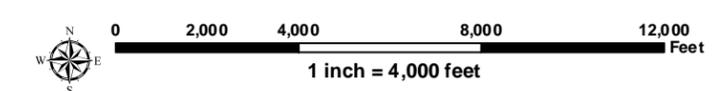
## Summerfield Comprehensive Plan



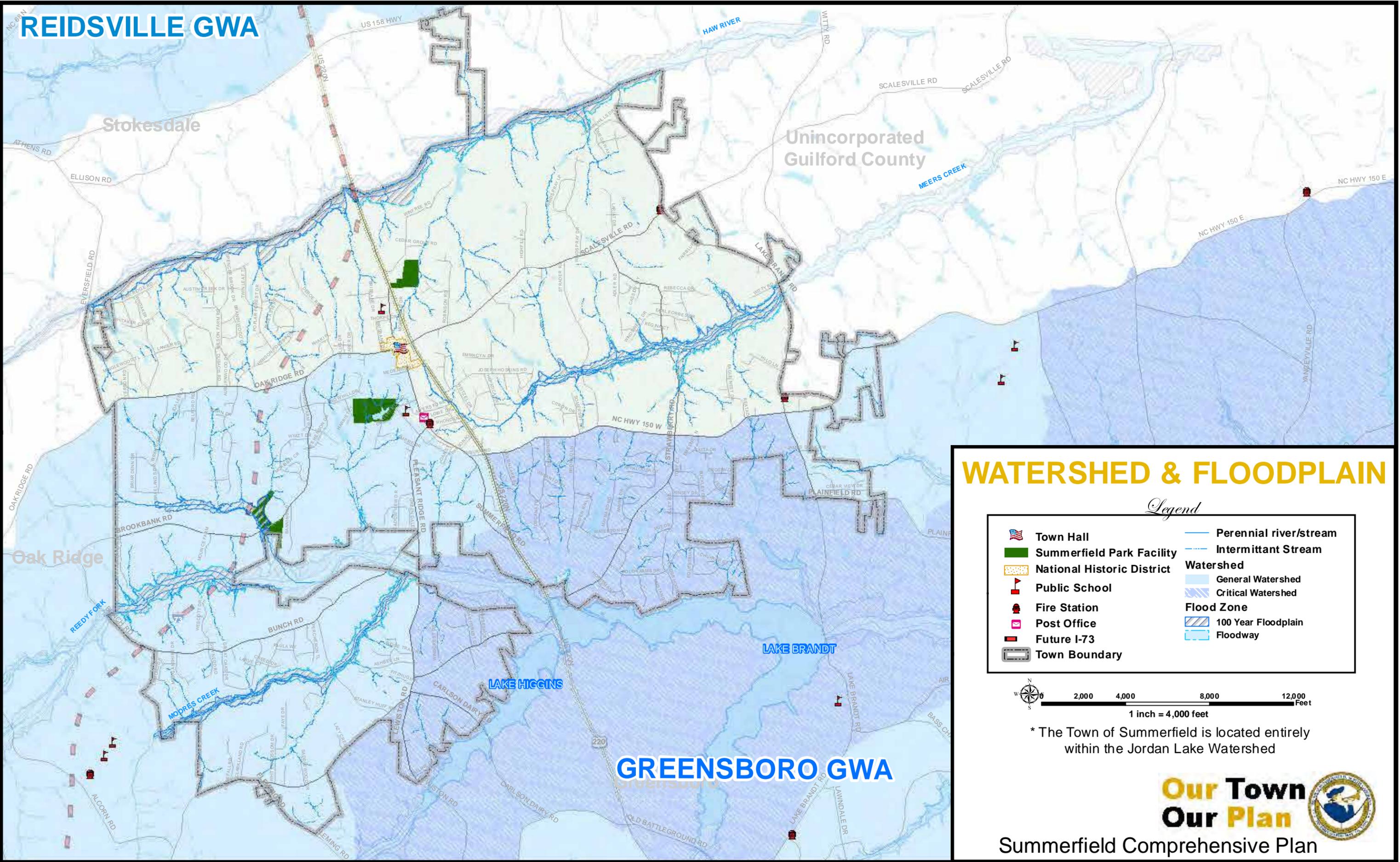
# TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

## Legend

Town Hall	Adopted Summerfield Trails
National Historic District	Existing
Public School	Land Dedicated, not yet Constructed
Fire Station	Planned
Post Office	MPO Bi-Ped Plan & City of GSO Trails
Town Boundary	Existing
Summerfield Park Facility	Proposed
Golf Course	NC Mountains to Sea Trail (MST)
Public and Private Open Space	Complete MST (Mountains to Sea Trail follows local trails through Summerfield)
	Planned



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan



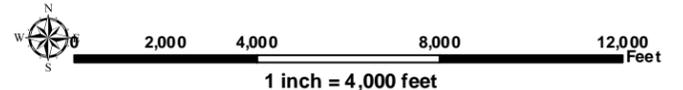
**REIDSVILLE GWA**

**GREENSBORO GWA**

**WATERSHED & FLOODPLAIN**

*Legend*

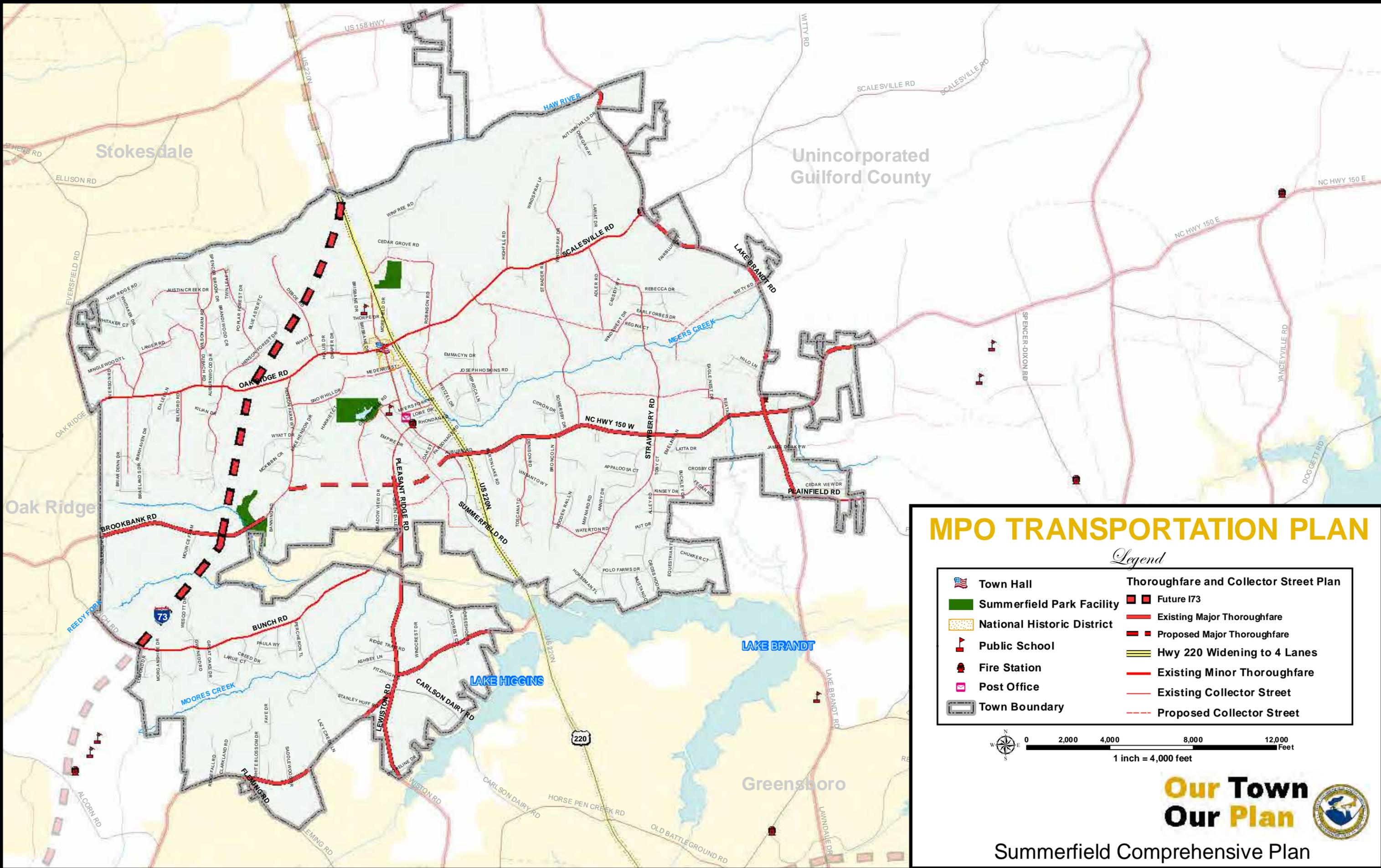
- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Town Hall                  | Perennial river/stream |
| Summerfield Park Facility  | Intermittant Stream    |
| National Historic District | <b>Watershed</b>       |
| Public School              | General Watershed      |
| Fire Station               | Critical Watershed     |
| Post Office                | <b>Flood Zone</b>      |
| Future I-73                | 100 Year Floodplain    |
| Town Boundary              | Floodway               |



\* The Town of Summerfield is located entirely within the Jordan Lake Watershed



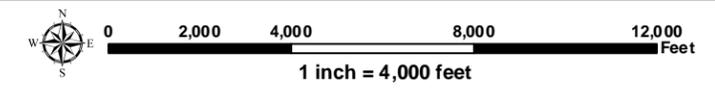
Summerfield Comprehensive Plan



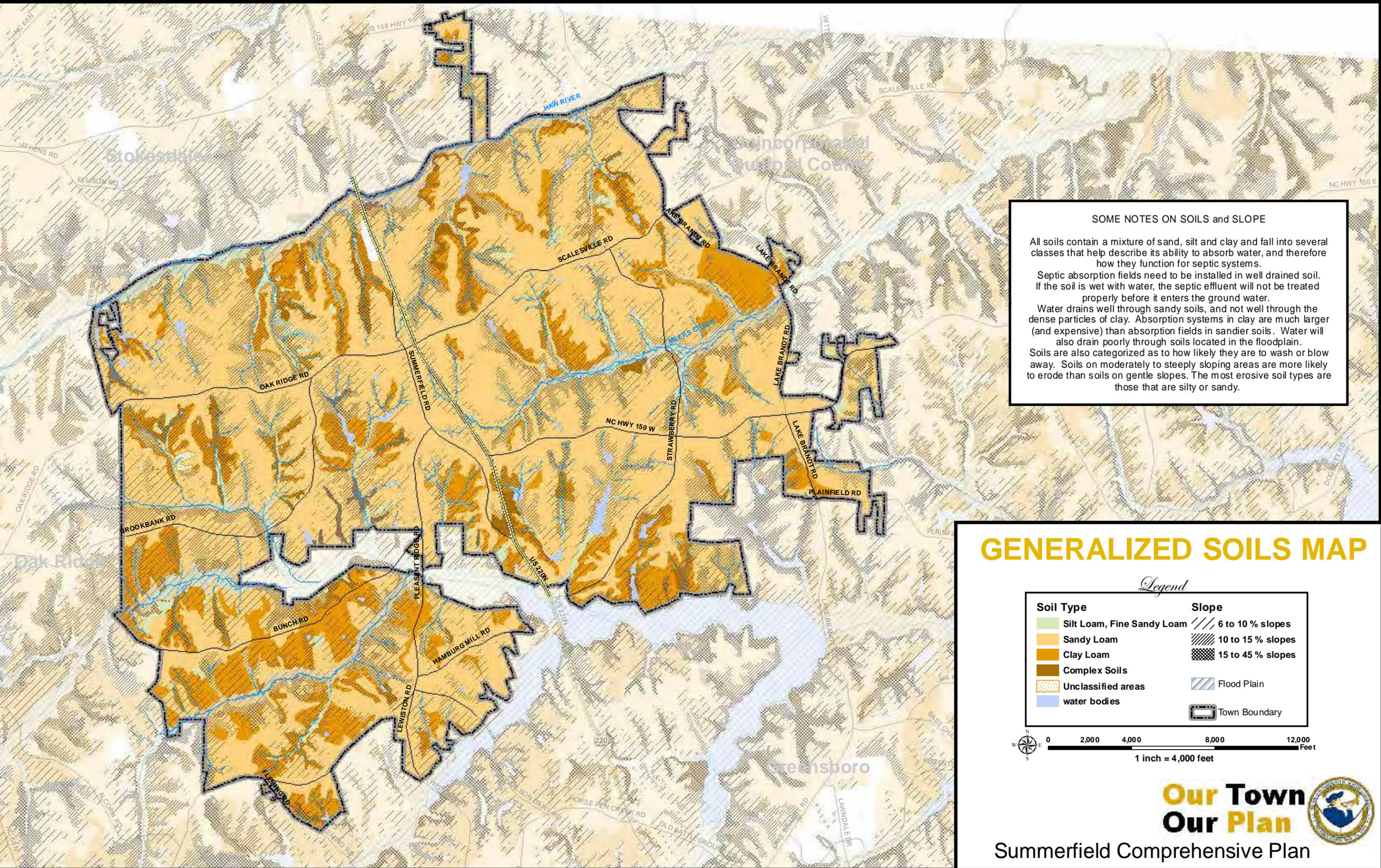
# MPO TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## Legend

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Town Hall                  | Thoroughfare and Collector Street Plan |
| Summerfield Park Facility  | Future I73                             |
| National Historic District | Existing Major Thoroughfare            |
| Public School              | Proposed Major Thoroughfare            |
| Fire Station               | Hwy 220 Widening to 4 Lanes            |
| Post Office                | Existing Minor Thoroughfare            |
| Town Boundary              | Existing Collector Street              |
|                            | Proposed Collector Street              |



## Summerfield Comprehensive Plan



**SOME NOTES ON SOILS and SLOPE**

All soils contain a mixture of sand, silt and clay and fall into several classes that help describe its ability to absorb water, and therefore how they function for septic systems.

Septic absorption fields need to be installed in well drained soil. If the soil is wet with water, the septic effluent will not be treated properly before it enters the ground water.

Water drains well through sandy soils, and not well through the dense particles of clay. Absorption systems in clay are much larger (and expensive) than absorption fields in sandier soils. Water will also drain poorly through soils located in the floodplain.

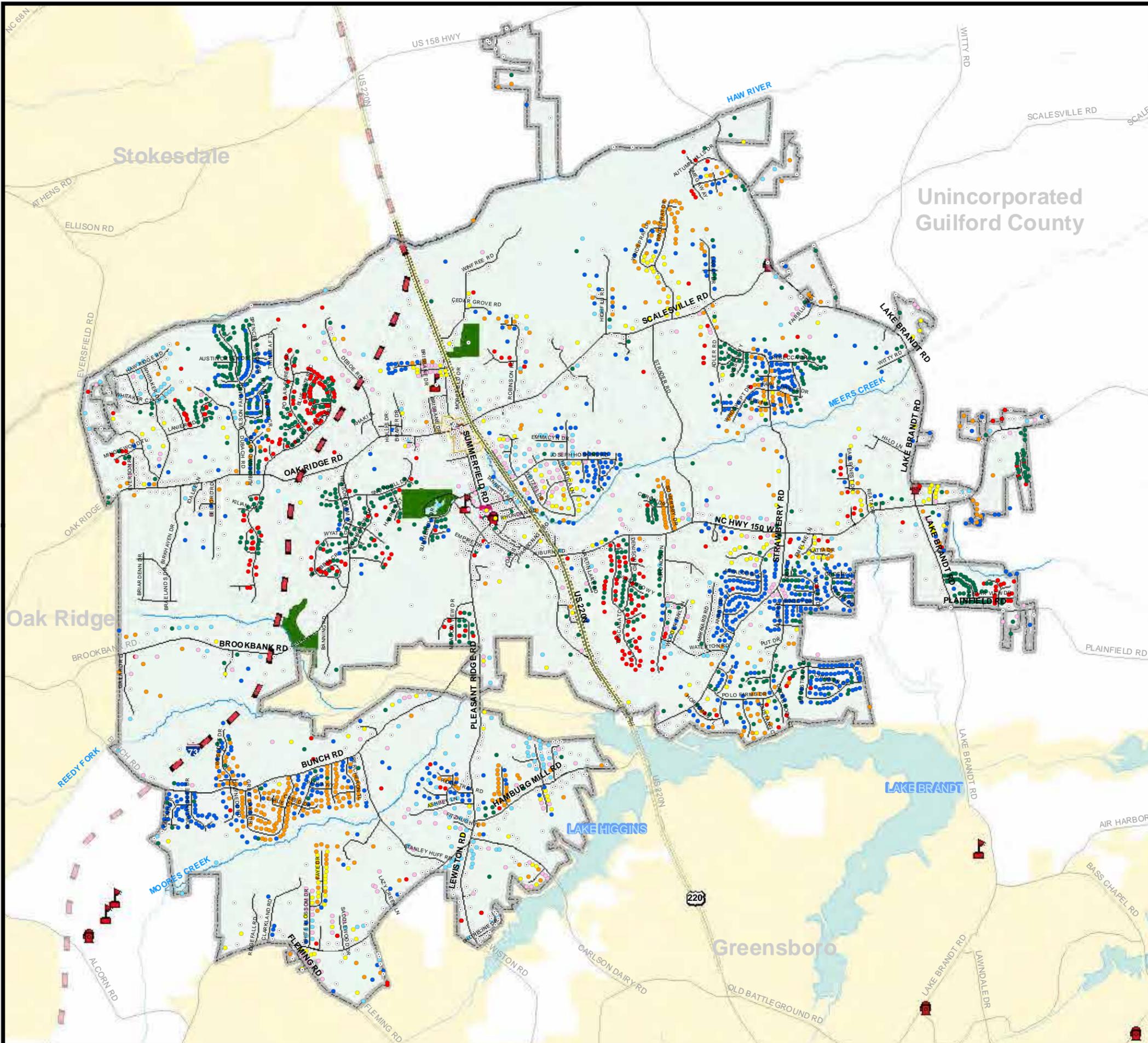
Soils are also categorized as to how likely they are to wash or blow away. Soils on moderately to steeply sloping areas are more likely to erode than soils on gentle slopes. The most erosive soil types are those that are silty or sandy.

## GENERALIZED SOILS MAP

*Legend*

Soil Type	Slope
Silt Loam, Fine Sandy Loam	6 to 10 % slopes
Sandy Loam	10 to 15 % slopes
Clay Loam	15 to 45 % slopes
Complex Soils	Flood Plain
Unclassified areas	Town Boundary
water bodies	

0 2,000 4,000 8,000 12,000 Feet  
 1 inch = 4,000 feet

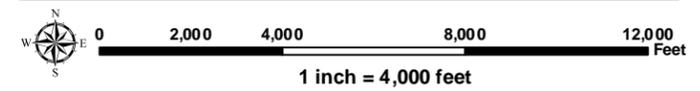


# HOMES BUILT IN SUMMERFIELD

Data is taken from Guilford County tax records through 2008 and is subject to the accuracy of those records.

## Legend

Year Built		Landmarks	
•	up to 1975		Town Hall
•	1976 - 1980		Summerfield Park Facility
•	1981 - 1985		National Historic District
•	1986 - 1990		Public School
•	1991 - 1995		Fire Station
•	1996 - 2000		Post Office
•	2001 - 2005		Future I-73
•	2006 - 2008		Town Boundary



## Summerfield Comprehensive Plan

# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Action Agenda



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010

Our Town  
Our Plan



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



# Action Agenda

**Beginning With Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

Introduction to the Action Agenda .....	1
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2. Actions for Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System .....	3
3. Actions for Community Character Preservation .....	4
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6. Actions for Appropriate Housing & Residential Development .....	7
7. Actions for Park and Recreation Improvements .....	8
8. Actions for Attractive Community Appearance .....	9
9. Actions for Quality School Facilities .....	10
10. Actions for Summerfield Road Focus Area .....	11
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12. Actions for Limited Services Local Government .....	13



## INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION AGENDA

The Summerfield Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to Town decision-making through three types of statements: Common Objectives, Policies and Actions. The purpose of each is described below

### Common Objectives, Policies and Actions— What's the Difference?

1. **COMMON OBJECTIVES** describe a desirable condition for the Town the way we would like to see it. They are the foundation for Policies and Actions. One of the best ways to evaluate the Policies and Actions is to understand the intent of each Common Objective and see whether the Policies and Actions will help make it happen.
2. **POLICIES** are officially adopted positions of Town government with regard to preferred or required courses of action. Their primary purpose is to provide guidance to decisions and actions today. When a policy is applied, it does not go away. Policies can and should be used over and over again in support of the Common Objectives. There are normally several policies lending support to each Common Objective. While policies may be amended, such changes should be infrequent to provide for consistent, predictable decision-making over a several year period.
3. **ACTIONS** are a to-do-list of things that could be done in support of the Common Objectives and Policies. Unlike an objective or policy, once an action is completed, it goes away; it gets checked off the list. The Town may consider actions as potential work program items for implementation in subsequent fiscal years. It should not be expected that all or even most implementation items could be completed in any one fiscal year. Priorities must be chosen. Actions should also be updated each year in concert with the Town's work program and budget process.

*By publishing the proposed actions of the Comprehensive Plan in this separate booklet, they may be updated annually without affecting the Objectives and Policies of the Plan.*

**Action Items for****Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development**

Action 1.1: Establish improved location criteria and appearance standards for commercial development in the Town Development ordinance.

Action 1.2: Identify one or more target areas for shared sewage treatment facilities in which to direct clusters of new commercial development. Make these areas consistent with any special area plans that may be prepared.

Action 1.3: Establish a minimum building code for commercial buildings in Summerfield.

Action 1.4: Employ the Town development ordinance to direct large-scale commercial/office and manufacturing to properties near the intersection of 220 and new I-73 connector.

Action 1.5: When preparing staff recommendations for Town Board decisions, employ the Commercial Policies of Policy Area 1 of the new Comprehensive Plan in place of the previously employed Commercial Needs Assessment.



## Action Items for **Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System**

Action 2.1: Prepare a detailed bicycle/pedestrian/horseback riding plan for the Town, in cooperation with residents and property owners. Apply for state or federal grant funding that may be available to develop such a plan. Consider acquiring public access rights to critical links occupied by private trails or other properties.

Action 2.2: After completing the above-referenced bicycle/pedestrian/horseback riding plan, prepare a five year capital improvement plan (CIP) to fund and construct the plan's highest priority recommendations. Update the CIP annually.

Action 2.3: Amend the Town development ordinance to incorporate provisions concerning sidewalk, bikeway and greenway improvements. Address applicable design standards as well as site plan review procedures.

Action 2.4: Continue to press for necessary pedestrian/bicycle underpasses in Summerfield, such as under U.S. 220 (upon its widening) and the new I-73 Connector (upon its construction).

Action 2.5: Step up efforts to secure the use of the abandoned railroad bed for a non-motorized, multi-use trail.

Action 2.6: Initiate a formal review and resolution by the Town Board with regard to a preferred route for the Mountains to the Sea Trail as it is proposed to pass through Summerfield.

Action 2.7: Actively participate in plans to implement the Piedmont Regional Greenway, (i.e. the section from Summerfield to Winston-Salem).

Action 2.8: Prepare a long term management plan for Town-owned sidewalk, bikeway and trail system facilities. Include maintenance requirements and future facility enhancements.



### Action Items for

## Preserving Community Character

Action 3.1: Establish or improve upon standards in the Town's development regulations for preserving:

- Desirable natural and existing man made elements
- Large trees, ponds, creeks and other natural features
- Floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and other generally undevelopable land areas

Action 3.2: Review Town policy concerning acceptance of dedicated floodplain and open space properties.

Action 3.3: Implement or support standards in the Town's development regulations for preventing clear-cutting of woodlands and for promoting tree preservation. Examine the standards of nearby communities who have had some success in this area.

Action 3.4: Implement standards in the Town's development regulations for permitting certain types of appropriately scaled and operated agri-tourism activities.

Action 3.5: Establish a formal Town Parkland Acquisition Program.

Action 3.6: Establish standards in the Town's development regulations (e.g. in Article 7) for preserving a greenspace buffer along the Town's primary and secondary roadways. Establish criteria for determining (1) specific roadways and roadway sections that would come under this requirement and (2) exemptions from the requirement for pre-existing development. Specify random clustering of trees and the avoidance of walls and stockade style fences which serve to wall off areas of the community.

Action 3.7: Review Town standards for stream buffers adjoining perennial streams with the intent of bringing such buffers in line with State standards. (See Article 7, Section 1.8 of the Town's development regulations.)

Action 3.8: Establish improved location criteria and design standards in the Town's development regulations for promoting commercial development that is compatible with Summerfield's rural heritage.

Action 3.9: Conduct an evaluation of off-road motorized vehicles within the Town limits with regard to their proper operation and areas of use.

Action 3.10: Amend the development ordinance as needed to ban billboards throughout Summerfield. (Same as Action 8.10)

**Action Items for****Transportation Improvements**

Action 4.1: Work closely with State and Federal transportation officials on the planning and design for the new section of Interstate 73 and improvements to Route 220 through Summerfield. Maintain state and town commitment to pedestrian crossovers and underpasses, including but not limited to (1) I-73 at Armfield stream, at Deboe Road, and at the abandoned rail line and (2) US 220, also where the rail line passes under the road.

Action 4.2: Through site plan review, require parking lot connections and shared driveway access for adjoining commercial developments whenever possible.

Action 4.3: Through site plan review, require pedestrian walkways through commercial parking areas and from the public street right of way to the building(s).

Action 4.4: Review and revise parking requirements in the Town development ordinance, with the intent of reducing the amount of asphalt and promoting the capture and slow release of stormwater runoff.

Action 4.5: Through the subdivision review process, require that large subdivisions (whole or total of smaller sections) provide for (1) connections with adjoining residential areas and (2) have at least two points of access (for emergency services).

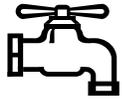
Action 4.6: Through project site plan review and traffic impact analysis, identify and require the installation of transportation system improvements necessary to preserve the traffic carrying capacity of area roadways.

Action 4.7: As demand may warrant, identify and facilitate the provision of one or more locations for a park and ride lot for public transit services between Summerfield and Greensboro.

Action 4.8: Begin contingency planning now for the possible transfer of road maintenance responsibilities for local roads in Summerfield from the NC DOT to Town government.

Action 4.9: Working with NC DOT and adjacent property owners, prepare a special highway corridor plan and scenic corridor zoning overlay district for I-73. (Also see Policy Area 8 Community Appearance, Action 8.6.)

Action 4.10: Establish criteria for transportation impact studies for rezoning cases, major site plans, and large subdivision developments; to be included as a requirement of development review.



### Action Items for

## Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Options

Action 5.1: Re-initiate discussions with water suppliers and other utility providers who may have an interest in supplying water to the Town of Summerfield. Stay abreast of regional water supply issues and maintain contacts in the region.

Action 5.2: Continue to support and encourage volunteer and institutional groundwater monitoring. Ensure that any formal monitoring studies are performed by qualified personnel.

Action 5.3: Use development regulations to facilitate and/or require cluster or greenspace development and create generous open space, thereby conserving groundwater recharge.

Action 5.4: Review and revise the Town's development standards, with the intent of preserving natural tree cover, avoiding curb and gutter, and reducing stormwater runoff from parking lots and other paved areas.

Action 5.5: Prepare or obtain a brochure or booklet illustrating steps that homeowner's can take to conserve water inside and outside the home. (water conservation devices inside the home, water capture and landscaping techniques outside the home) Increase awareness that groundwater is a limited resource and water use by one ultimately affects long term water availability for all.

Action 5.6: To protect water quality, provide for public education about the proper use of chemicals and disposal of polluting substances (e.g. not dumping oil or paints into catch basins, or toilets, washing the car on lawn area rather than on the driveway, not over-fertilizing lawns, shrubs and crops, properly disposing of pet waste, etc.).

Action 5.7: Review and revise Town development regulations as necessary to enable the strategic use of cluster or decentralized domestic wastewater treatment systems that promote open space conservation.

Action 5.8: Stay abreast of water reuse technologies for application in Summerfield.

Action 5.9: To better define the particular limits of the groundwater resource under Summerfield, commission a safe yield study for the aquifer underlying the town.

Action 5.10: Offer to co-host a hazardous substance drop off and disposal day in Summerfield, in cooperation with Guilford County.

Action 5.11: Establish a new zoning district in the Town's Development Ordinance, entitled Utility Conditional Use District, for the purpose of identifying well fields, wastewater disposal sites, electrical substations and other similar uses. The *conditional use* aspect of the district is to assure that use of the property is for the designated use only and cannot be converted, for example, from a wastewater disposal site to an electrical substation without review and approval.



Action Items for

## Appropriate Housing & Residential Development

Action 6.1: Amend the permitted use table in the development ordinance to allow accessory housing in OSRD zoned developments (with development standards), as is the case with all other residential districts.

Action 6.2: Amend the development ordinance to establish a fee in lieu provision for developments that are not appropriate to dedicate useful open space.

Action 6.3: Amend the development ordinance to encourage connectivity for street, sidewalk, bikeway and/or trail connections between adjoining developments and land tracts, unless specifically exempted by the zoning board.

Action 6.4: Review and revise the sliding scale for open space dedication in the RS-40 district of the Town development ordinance, to make it more equitable to developments of all size.

Action 6.5: Look at the ways in which the Town could encourage affordable housing in the community.

Action 6.6: Encourage developers to give greater consideration to mixed use developments containing both commercial and residential uses. Examine the development ordinance to remove potential deterrents, if any, to appropriate mixed use development.

Action 6.7: Consider allowing mixed use development in most of the Town's commercial zoning districts, just as it is currently allowed in the NB Neighborhood Business district.

Action 6.8: Amend the open space dedication criteria of the development ordinance to include treed buffers along US and NC highways as Secondary Conservation areas.



### Action Items for

## Park and Recreation Improvements

Action 7.1: Prepare a long term management plan for each town park and recreation facility that includes maintenance requirements, future facility and landscape enhancement, and potential community events and activities available at each park.

Action 7.2: Prepare a master plan for the development of Armfield Park.

Action 7.3: Prepare a Long Range Master Parks and Recreation Plan, to include a section on an acquisition program for additional parkland and future needs.

Action 7.4: Amend the development ordinance to establish a fee in lieu provision for developments that are not appropriate to dedicate useful open space.

Action 7.5: Continue to seek grants for parks and recreation development as appropriate.

Action 7.6: Amend the development ordinance so that regional overhead utility corridors may not be credited as meeting the Town's dedicated open space requirement.



## Actions Items for Attractive Community Appearance

Action 8.1: Working in cooperation with gateway corridor property owners, prepare corridor plans and make corresponding revisions to the Town's development ordinance for design and streetscape standards for the existing US 220 and NC 150 gateway corridors. Include signage standards.

Action 8.2: As an adjunct to the preparation of gateway corridor plans, initiate voluntary gateway enhancement programs for the existing US 220 and NC 150 corridors in cooperation with gateway corridor property owners.

Action 8.3: Amend the Town development ordinance to require tree preservation and planting adjoining road rights of way, in association with new development abutting public roads. (See also Policy 3.4 and Action 3.2 in the Community Character section of this plan.)

Action 8.4: Prepare or update a landscape ordinance and design guidelines setting forth rules for tree removal and tree preservation, planting and maintenance. Set forth rules to address clear cutting in different land use activities.

Action 8.5: Review the code enforcement system and adjust staff, budget and other tools as needed to address priority appearance issues.

Action 8.6: Create and apply a new Scenic Corridor Overlay District II within the Town Development Ordinance for the future I-73 Connector, said district to include a naturalized buffer of trees and other vegetation adjoining both sides of the right of way, as well as standards for signage, landscaping, exterior lighting, and building forms.

Action 8.7: Amend the development ordinance to include design standards for development and redevelopment that is consistent with the architectural context, community character, economic attractiveness and livability of Summerfield.

Action 8.8: Organize a community wide "white and brown goods disposal day", where the Town's contracted waste management company would receive these items (i.e. major kitchen appliances, old couches, carpets, et.) at a central location. Call for volunteers to help those who do not have an appropriate vehicle to move the material.

Action 8.9: Pass an ordinance prohibiting routine parking of tractor trailers and portable, on-demand storage units on public roads.

Action 8.10: Amend the development ordinance as needed to ban billboards throughout Summerfield.



## Action Items for Quality School Facilities

Action 9.1: As part of the Town's routine budget process, annually appropriate funding for the construction and maintenance of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within walking distance of schools, where appropriate. (e.g. Summerfield Elementary).

Action 9.2: Apply for a Safe Routes to School Grant through the North Carolina Department of Transportation. These Federal funds, administered by the State, may be used to plan for, identify, and construct new bike lanes, pathways, and sidewalks, as well as to launch Safe Routes education and promotional campaigns in elementary and middle schools.

Action 9.3: In cooperation with Guilford County Schools, prepare site and location criteria for the placement and development of community-oriented schools, to include priorities for safe pedestrian and bicycle access, neighborhood connectivity, security, infrastructure availability, and environmental compatibility.

Action 9.4: The Town should maintain its interest in future plans for the Laughlin School property whether for cultural uses, as a school, or for some other potential use.

Action 9.5: Explore the creation of a shared use agreement between the Guilford County School Board (for Summerfield area schools) and the Town for use of land and facilities on adjoining properties. (e.g. Community Park, trails, and school facilities)



## Action Items for the **Summerfield Road Focus Area**

Action 10.1: Substitute the term "Summerfield Road Focus Area" for "Town Core" in all future planning for the area.

Action 10.2 Authorize the preparation of a Special Area Plan for the Summerfield Road Focus Area, to fully engage study area residents and business owners in the development of a closely tailored plan that can be broadly supported.

Action 10.3: As part of the Special Area Plan, work with study area residents and business owners to flesh out performance standards for the area to be included in the Town's development ordinance, as generally identified in Policy 10.2 above.

Action 10.4: Involve the community in identifying the highest priority locations in the town for pedestrian, bikeway and trail improvements, with the idea of eventually tying the town-wide system together in the Summerfield Road Focus Area. Appropriate money to a capital reserve trust fund for such improvements in accordance with the priorities identified. (Also see Policy 2.11 and Action 2.2.)



## Action Items for Historic Preservation

Action 11.1: Continue to support the work of the Town Council-appointed Historical Committee as it seeks to (1) identify, locate list and record historical structures in Summerfield (2) promote the restoration and preservation of historical structures and (3) document, display and educate the community as to the history of Summerfield through the collection, display and dissemination of artifacts, photos and other documentation.

Action 11.2: Working closely with area property owners, seek to identify and describe those major architectural and site development features that are common to the buildings and properties located in the Town's National Register Historic District.

Action 11.3: Using the information compiled under Action 11.2, create a neighborhood conservation district for the Town's National Register Historic District to acknowledge and reinforce those major features that property owners would like to see preserved in their neighborhood. The outcome should be in the form of clear and objective performance standards (i.e. a checklist) rather than design features subject to interpretation or board review.

Action 11.4: The establishment of non-profit preservation society separate from Town government should be encouraged. (i.e. Historic Summerfield Preservation Society)



## Action Items for **Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government**

Action 12.1: Periodically evaluate the proper roles and responsibilities of the Town's various committees, so as to maximize the benefit of these volunteers to town governance. Involve committee members in the evaluation.

Action 12.2: Periodically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of employing contracted services for various municipal service functions.

Action 12.3: Stay abreast of discussions and proposals at the county and state level concerning the proposed transfer of street maintenance responsibilities from the State to local governments, including Summerfield. Prepare for the administrative and financial impacts.

Action 12.4 Stay abreast of discussions and proposals at the county and state level with potential to increase administrative responsibilities (e.g. monitoring new mandates for watershed rules) to evaluate the impacts on the staff and budget.

Action 12.5 Stay abreast of changing state requirements (e.g. accounting procedures, watershed standards, funding for transportation improvements, etc.) due to population changes, especially as a result of the 2010 Census<sup>1</sup>.

Action 12.6 Continue to improve the use of a periodic newsletter/town meetings/website feedback to keep citizens engaged and stay abreast of citizen priorities. Consider "branding" campaign that will establish a clear focus toward community pride and an enhanced quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Many state requirements placed upon local governments change when a municipality reaches 10,000 residents, Summerfield's 2008 population estimate was over 8,500.

Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



Town of Summerfield  
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PO Box 970  
Summerfield NC 27358  
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[www.summerfieldgov.com](http://www.summerfieldgov.com)

# Summerfield Comprehensive Plan Executive Summary



Town of Summerfield, NC  
Adopted May 11, 2010

Our Town  
Our Plan



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#### TOWN COUNCIL

Mark E. Brown, Mayor  
Dena Barnes, Mayor Pro Tem  
Alicia Flowers  
Dianne Laughlin  
Robert "Bob" Williams  
John Wray

#### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Mia Malesovas, Co Chair  
Randy Tinsley, Co-Chair  
Doug Canavello  
Jeff Chalmers  
Charlie Chappell  
Al Colanero  
Dwayne Crawford  
Kenneth Dunham  
Alicia Flowers  
Bill Gordon  
Nancy Hess  
Jeffrey Johnson  
David Layton  
Terry McLean  
Paul Milam  
Lewis Nash  
Anne Nusskern  
Alice Patterson  
Ernie Showfety  
Linda Southard

#### TOWN STAFF

Michael Brandt, Town Manager  
Chris Anderson, Town Planner  
Valorie Halvorsen, Town Clerk  
Carrie Spencer, Planning Technician  
George Holub, Parks and Recreation Supervisor

#### CONSULTING PLANNER

Glenn R. Harbeck, AICP  
Glenn Harbeck Associates, Inc.  
Community Planning and Public Involvement

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## Summerfield Comprehensive Plan

# Our Town Our Plan

### NEED FOR THIS PLAN

During the 1990's and most of the 2000's the newly incorporated Town of Summerfield (1996) grew rapidly. The attractiveness of the community's pastoral setting, combined with a mild, four-season climate, proximity to a variety of services in Greensboro, small town character, low taxes, good schools, and overall quality of life, have made Summerfield a highly desirable place in which to live.

As more people have moved to the area, however, emerging growth issues must be faced, including:

- pressure for more commercial development
- loss of small town character
- declines in farmland and wooded acreage
- concerns about long term water supplies
- need for more parkland and open spaces and
- traffic on roads into and through the town.

In response to these concerns, the Town Council of Summerfield in 2007 authorized the preparation of a new *Comprehensive Plan* for the community.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

To help guide the preparation of the plan, a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee was appointed, made up of area residents representing a broad cross section of Summerfield's citizens. Assisting the Steering Committee in preparing the plan was the Town Staff and a community planning consultant, Glenn R. Harbeck. In addition, considerable input was received from the many citizens who were interviewed or attended special town meetings held for the plan.



#### Steering Committee

Back Row:  
Ken Dunham  
Randy Tinsley  
Jeff Johnson  
Jeff Chalmers  
Dwayne Crawford  
Al Colanero

Middle Row:  
Nancy Hess  
Alicia Flowers  
Paul Milam  
Doug Canavello  
Charlie Chappell  
Terry McLean

Front Row:  
Linda Southard  
Mia Malesovas  
Anne Nusskern  
Ernie Showfety  
David Layton

Not Pictured:  
Bill Gordon  
Lewis Nash  
Alice Patterson

## COMMUNITY INPUT GUIDED POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In July 2008, work began in earnest on the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan. The Steering Committee held a joint kick off meeting with the Town Council and the Town Zoning Board. Plans were set in motion immediately for the three groups to host a special town meeting for the plan.

In September of 2008, some 170 town residents crowded into the Summerfield Elementary School cafeteria and voiced hundreds of concerns, hopes, and ideas for the future of their town. As a result of that town meeting, several priority topics were identified for use in drafting a new Comprehensive Plan for Summerfield.



Over the ensuing months, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee reviewed the many growth issues identified by the public and also evaluated growth factors associated with the Town's development. Their work resulted in the development of 12 common objectives and over 100 policies in the following categories:

1. **Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development**
2. **Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System**
3. **Community Character Preservation**
4. **Transportation Improvements**
5. **Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Options**
6. **Appropriate Housing & Residential Development**
7. **Park and Recreation Improvements**
8. **Attractive Community Appearance**
9. **Quality Schools**
10. **Summerfield Road Focus Area**
11. **Historic Preservation**
12. **Limited Services Local Government**

*Executive Summary*

On January 26, 2010, the Committee's work was presented for public review and comment at an Open House held in the Rock Gymnasium. Once again, the turnout was excellent with between 150 and 200 citizens participating.



Significantly, of the over 100 policies statements presented in a "walk-around survey", all but 7 received overwhelming votes of support from the public. Those 7 were subsequently revised by the committee or removed from the plan.

On March 18, 2010, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee met in a joint work session with the Town Council and Town Zoning Board to formally deliver the plan to the Town Council of Summerfield for consideration of adoption.

On May 11, 2010, the Summerfield Town Council held a public hearing to invite final public comment on the plan. The Summerfield Comprehensive plan was then adopted at the same meeting.

## COMMON OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND ACTIONS—WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

*This plan contains three different types of statements, each serving a special purpose:*

1. **COMMON OBJECTIVES** describe a **desirable condition** for our Town the way we would like to see it. They are the foundation for Policies and Actions.
2. **POLICIES** are **officially adopted positions** of Town government with regard to preferred or required courses of action. Their primary purpose is to provide guidance to decisions and actions today.
3. **ACTIONS** (Under Separate Cover) are a **to-do-list** of things that could be done in support of the Common Objectives and Policies. Unlike an objective or policy, once an action is completed, it goes away; it gets checked off the list.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan have been designed for regular use to (1) guide public decisions at the Town level, (2) coordinate actions at the county, regional, state, and federal levels, and (3) provide information for private sector decisions. As officially adopted policies of the Town, they are to be used primarily in managing growth and development and as a foundation for decisions on Town facilities and services. The following paragraphs detail how various parties involved in decision-making may use the policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

- **As Used by the Town Staff**

Reviewing Development Proposals--Town staff should consult the Common Objectives and Policies in reviewing and making recommendations concerning rezoning requests, subdivision reviews, site plan reviews, driveway permits, special use permits, sign permits, etc.

Suggesting Changes in Town Services-- Town staff should consult the Common Objectives and Policies before making recommendations about changes in Town facilities and services. This is especially important during preparation of the annual work program and proposed budget.

- **As Used by Boards and Committees**

Before their regular meetings, members of appointed boards and committees of the Town should review proposed agenda items in light of the Town's adopted policies. Town Staff should assist Town Boards and Committees, as appropriate, by pointing out policies applicable to each agenda item..

- **As Used by Summerfield Town Council**

In their authority to rezone properties, approve proposed developments and changes in Town facilities and services, the Town Council has the final word on the actions of Summerfield government. As customary, Council should take into account and weigh the interpretation of Policy as provided by all interested parties, the Town staff, and advisory boards and committees.



- **As Used by Other Local, Regional, State, and Federal Government Authorities**

The Town should make public officials in nearby municipalities, as well as those of Guilford County, the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments, and state and Federal agencies, aware of the Comprehensive Plan. Other governments should be encouraged to consult the plan when considering such things as water and sewer extensions, transportation, and land use planning, in particular,

- **As Used by Development Interests**

Developers, property owners, builders, and others involved in the development community should consult the Common Objectives and Policies when formulating their own development plans. By making their plans consistent with the Town's

Comprehensive Plan Policies, the chances of development plan approval should increase, thereby saving guesswork, time, and money.

- **As Used by the General Public**

Residents of Summerfield can and should reference specific Comprehensive Plan Common Objectives and Policies, when speaking in favor or in opposition to a particular proposal before the Town Council or other appointed Town boards and committees.

### KEY WORDS OFTEN USED IN POLICIES (GLOSSARY)

As the plan is used over time by the various parties identified above, a consistent decision-making pattern will evolve. Also, users of the plan will find it helpful if they employ a consistent vocabulary when interpreting the meaning of the policy statements. Certain key words are used frequently in policy statements. The glossary below conveys the specific meaning of these key words as used in Policy Statements for the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan.

1. **adequate:** sufficient to achieve the intended purpose or prevent harm
2. **allow, authorize, permit:** official action to let something happen
3. **control:** to regulate or direct
4. **discourage:** to not favor; to dissuade
5. **encourage:** to favor or foster (also see support)
6. **may:** provides the option, but not required; permissive
7. **preferred:** the favored course among alternatives but does not preclude other options
8. **prohibit:** not allowed, period; to totally prevent
9. **promote:** to proactively encourage, to take positive steps
10. **reasonable:** practical, sufficient to do the job; not extreme
11. **require:** to mandate something
12. **shall:** mandatory, not optional; a more formal term for “will”
13. **should:** preferred or recommended but not mandatory in all cases
14. **significant:** important; determined by quantity, quality or relative impact
15. **support:** to foster; may imply financial support

### ZONING CHANGES AND CONSISTENCY WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

North Carolina GS 160A-383 requires that “*prior to adopting or rejecting any zoning amendment*” each local governing board “*shall adopt a statement describing whether its action is consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan and explaining why the board considers the action taken to be reasonable and in the public interest*”. For the purposes of this statute, this document constitutes Summerfield’s *comprehensive plan*.

Town Council retains the power to approve a zoning amendment that, on its face, is not consistent with the *comprehensive plan*. At the same time, Council’s decision to approve an “inconsistent” zoning amendment must not be taken lightly; Council’s approval must be justified by reasons written into the permanent record as to why a zoning amendment found to be inconsistent nonetheless warrants approval

### AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is the policy foundation for guiding zoning decisions, as well as a broad range of other decisions of Town government. The plan’s essential elements—the Common Objectives and Policies—are intended to remain substantially unchanged during the plan’s tenure. Frequent changes to these elements would undermine the plan’s effectiveness in directing a steady course for the Town’s growth and development over the long haul. Nevertheless, future circumstances may warrant amendment of the plan. Consult the Town Planner for procedures involved for consideration of an amendment to the Plan.

### INTENT OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan represents an important new benchmark in planning for the future of Summerfield. The intent of the plan is to create a shared vision for the Town to preserve its natural and cultural heritage, and to give appropriate direction for desirable growth and development.

The Common Objectives and Policies of the Summerfield Comprehensive Plan begin on the following page.

## Policy Area 1: Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development



### Common Objective

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.

### Commercial Development Policies

**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.

**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.

## Policy Area 2: Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail System



### Common Objective

The Town of Summerfield shall strive to become a walkable and bikeable community. Working in cooperation with private sector interests, the Town shall pursue a high level of connectivity between neighborhoods and other destinations in town such as schools, parks, and shopping. A well-integrated network of streets, sidewalks, bikeways, hiking trails, and horseback riding trails will provide for a multitude of driving, walking, bicycling, and riding alternatives.

### Sidewalk, Bikeway and Trail Policies

**Policy 2.1: SIDEWALKS, BIKEWAYS, and TRAILS** should be provided on a priority basis to connect residential areas to non-residential destinations, such as schools, parks, libraries, shopping centers or similar facilities.

**Policy 2.2:** The use of (1) **NATURAL GREENWAY CORRIDORS** such as streams and floodplains, and (2) **MAN-MADE GREENWAY CORRIDORS** such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements, should be secured as the backbone of the Town's off-road trail system.

**Policy 2.3: PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY UNDERPASSES, BRIDGES,** and other crossing features should be constructed where necessary to maintain a continuous system of trails and bikeways.

**Policy 2.4: STRIPED BICYCLE LANES** and appropriate signage should be required **ALONG NEW OR IMPROVED COLLECTOR OR HIGHER LEVEL STREETS.** Bicycle lanes and signage may also be required along other streets, to be determined on a case by case basis.

**Policy 2.5: PUBLIC BIKEWAY AND WALKWAY CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NEW AND EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS** should be encouraged. Local streets or connecting paths should be used as necessary to promote a town-wide network for pedestrian and bicycle travel. Public access to existing private sidewalk and trail systems shall be encouraged, especially when such trails serve as a critical link between destinations.

**Policy 2.6: All FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND SITE PLANS** should be examined for pedestrian and bicycle compatibility. Bikeway and pedestrian routes passing through or adjacent to new developments should be identified and planned for in the construction of such developments.

**Policy 2.7:** All new public and private non-residential developments should be encouraged to provide for **BICYCLE PARKING** and **ACCESS** if the development is within about 1000 feet of an existing or funded bikeway.

**Policy 2.8:** All future **ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS** should be examined for bikeway feasibility. In addition to the Summerfield Trail Plan, consideration should be given to state and regional hiking and biking initiatives such as the State Mountains to Sea Trail and the Greensboro Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Bi-Ped Plan.

**Policy 2.9:** Bicycle facilities and their impacts should be included in **TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSES** for new developments, if such impact analysis is required.

**Policy 2.10: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE FRIENDLY SCHOOL ZONES** should be established and implemented around all schools. Consider sidewalks as a priority near schools.

**Policy 2.11:** Trails and bicycle-related improvements and maintenance should be an integral component of the Town’s ANNUAL BUDGET for public infrastructure. Appropriations toward the creation of a community-wide trail system shall be considered in the context of other Town budget priorities.

avoiding “Anywhere USA” formulaic commercial architecture.

**Community Character Preservation Policies**

**Policy 3.1: EXISTING, DESIRABLE LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS**, whether natural or man-made, should continue to be incorporated into the thematic design of new developments.

**Policy 3.2: LARGE TREES, PONDS, CREEKS, OR OTHER NATURAL FEATURES** of the landscape should be saved when locating new streets, buildings, parking lots, etc.

**Policy 3.3: FLOODPLAINS, WETLANDS, STEEP SLOPES, and OTHER LANDS** that are typically not suitable for development, should be retained as permanent open space.

**Policy 3.4:** As some land is developed and other land is set aside in permanent open space, opportunities to **CONNECT OPEN SPACE AREAS AND CORRIDORS** shall be considered.

**Policy 3.5: CLEARCUTTING OF TREES AND WOODLAND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT** shall be avoided. Rather, new development should incorporate significant clusters of trees into the functional layout of new residential and commercial areas.

**Policy 3.6: COMPATIBLE FARMLAND ACTIVITIES** and the **KEEPING OF HORSES OR OTHER SUITABLE LIVESTOCK** shall generally be encouraged as part of the thematic and functional design of new residential areas.

**Policy 3.7: TO HELP KEEP SMALL FAMILY FARMS VIABLE**, agri-tourism, such as that associated with horseback riding, small produce stands (produce grown on site), corn mazes (no man-made amusements), hay-rides, farm-oriented children’s camps, and similar activities of an acceptable scale and intensity, shall generally be supported.

**Policy 3.8:** An **OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION PROGRAM** shall be employed to acquire open spaces for the enjoyment of the public and for the long term quality of the

Policy Area 3:  
**Community Character Preservation**



**Common Objective**

The Town of Summerfield shall work to preserve a natural and built environment that honors the rural, small town heritage of the community. The Town shall set itself apart from other typical suburban bedroom communities by promoting diverse park and open space assets, “green” highway corridors, protected environmentally sensitive lands, and viable small family farms and equine facilities. New development shall preserve tree cover while

community. A variety of mechanisms for open space acquisition (e.g. land dedication, conservation easements, etc.) shall be considered, in addition to fee simple purchases.

**Policy 3.9: GREEN SPACE BUFFER STRIPS**, preserved along of edges of primary and secondary roadways in Summerfield, shall be a distinguishing feature and hallmark of the community. Clusters of trees shall be preserved or planted in informal, randomly spaced intervals as opposed to the uniformly spaced patterns often found in a more urban area. Walled off communities are not desired.

**Policy 3.10: WATER QUALITY AND OPEN SPACE BUFFER STRIPS** shall be preserved adjoining all perennial streams.

**Policy 3.11: BUILDING ARCHITECTURE, BUILDING MATERIALS, SIGNAGE, AND SITE DESIGN** that are compatible with Summerfield's rural heritage (rather than a suburban, "Anywhere USA" formula), shall be encouraged. (In particular, see Policy Area 1: Commercial Development and Policy Area 6: Housing and Residential Development)

**Policy 3.12: BILLBOARDS** shall be prohibited throughout the Town of Summerfield.



## Policy Area 4: Transportation Improvements



### Common Objective

The Town of Summerfield shall work proactively with the State DOT toward an efficient system of transportation, including thoroughfares, local roads, sidewalks, and trails. Advanced planning and follow-through shall be employed to create a functional system of streets and highways. New developments shall exhibit an inter-connected network of streets, sidewalks, trails, and bike paths to foster the continued evolution of Summerfield toward a more walkable and bikeable community. The Town will cooperate with efforts to provide public transit service between Summerfield and other areas.

### Transportation Improvement Policies

**Policy 4.1: INTERSTATE 73** should be designed to minimize negative impacts on the town. Noise abatement and effective screening should be used where necessary to buffer properties adjoining the interstate. Underpasses and overpasses should be employed to maintain pedestrian and bicycle linkages between areas on opposite sides of the highway. Special highway corridor development standards, including a community-wide ban on billboards, should be established to maintain a high quality image for Summerfield. (Also see Policy Area 8 Community Appearance Policies.)

**Policy 4.2: PEDESTRIAN AND BIKEWAY FACILITIES** shall be encouraged as energy-efficient, healthful, and environmentally sound alternatives to the automobile. All future road construction and expansion within the town shall consider opportunities for bikeways and pedestrian ways within the project.

**Policy 4.3: ACCESS TO MAJOR ROADS** should generally be from intersecting minor roads, rather than private driveways. Minimum lot frontages, service roads, central medians, and other methods may also be employed to facilitate traffic movement and protect taxpayer dollars invested to build the facility.

**Policy 4.4: So as to minimize unnecessary and unsafe turning movements on to and off of major roads, the Town shall require CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKING LOTS OF ADJOINING COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.**

**Policy 4.5: So as to (1) minimize the use of major roadways for purely local trips, (2) allow for public safety access, and (3) facilitate the development of Summerfield as a walkable and bikeable community, the Town shall encourage STREET CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ADJOINING RESIDENTIAL AREAS,**—provided that the street layout discourages cut through traffic through established residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 4.6: As new neighborhoods are developed, AT LEAST TWO POINTS OF ACCESS/EGRESS** to through streets should be planned for or provided for larger developments. The secondary access/egress may be gated with a breakaway wall for emergency services, but should allow for passage of pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Policy 4.7: ACCESS TO HIGHER INTENSITY DEVELOPMENT** shall generally not be permitted through an area of lower intensity development. For example, access to a multi-family development, major park facility or large traffic generator shall not be permitted through a single-family residential neighborhood.

**Policy 4.8: To help avoid heavy traffic loads on local streets, MAJOR TRAFFIC GENERATORS** such as major shopping centers, large retailers, major institutional centers, and other large non-residential developments should be located only at or near the intersection of two

or more major roadways where extensive acreage is available. For Summerfield, this means the intersection of I-73 AND HIGHWAY 220.

**Policy 4.9: New developments shall be required to MITIGATE THEIR TRAFFIC IMPACTS** so as to preserve the traffic carrying capacity of public roadways.

**Policy 4.10: PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS** should be provided through commercial parking areas and from the public street right of way to the building(s).

## Policy Area 5: Water Supply and Sewage Treatment



### Common Objective

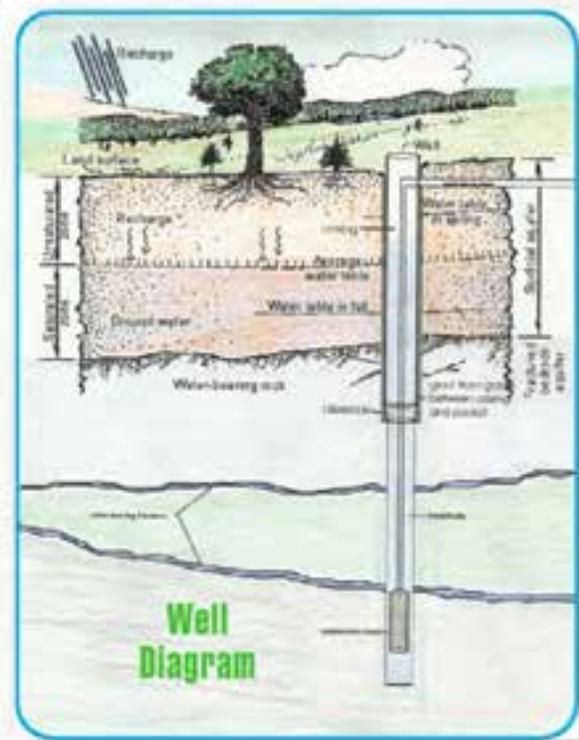
The Town of Summerfield recognizes the singular importance of plentiful, safe, potable water to present and future residents and businesses. To preserve the availability of this resource, the Town shall make water supply, water conservation, and groundwater

recharge very high priorities and shall encourage its citizens to do likewise. Wastewater treatment technologies shall be employed to work in harmony with growth and development policies to conserve open space and rural character, and to return water to the groundwater system, while protecting the quality of the groundwater to meet all state standards.

**Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Policies**

**Policy 5.1:** The Town should work regionally on a broad range of WATER SUPPLY OPTIONS AND APPROACHES for the long term.

**Policy 5.2:** To improve short and long-range water supply projections, the Town shall support voluntary as well as institutional efforts to MONITOR GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES underlying the Summerfield community.



**Policy 5.3:** Recognizing that water and sewer services have a POWERFUL INFLUENCE ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, the Town of Summerfield shall require that the design and location of water supply and sewage

treatment facilities promote desirable development density and growth patterns.

**Policy 5.4:** To preserve and protect recharge to the groundwater system, and to balance supply and demand, the Town shall facilitate development forms and domestic wastewater systems that maximize the RETURN OF WATER TO THE GROUNDWATER SYSTEM. Generally, this means encouraging greenspace<sup>1</sup> developments, and on-site disposal or land application for treated wastewater.

**Policy 5.5:** The Town shall encourage site designs that FACILITATE RECHARGE TO THE GROUNDWATER SYSTEM, including but not limited to: (1) the conservation and addition of tree cover and associated forest floor debris, (2) the avoidance of curb and gutter in favor of roadside swales and retention areas (3) the preservation of open space (3) and the design of parking areas and other paved surfaces to encourage stormwater infiltration.

**Policy 5.6:** To conserve water supplies, developers, as well as area residents, are encouraged to plant TRADITIONAL PLANTS NATIVE TO THE AREA as well as DROUGHT TOLERANT LANDSCAPE MATERIALS.

**Policy 5.7:** Construction of NATURAL AND MAN-MADE RAINWATER RETENTION SYSTEMS IS ENCOURAGED. Such systems should include but not be limited to rain gardens, bio-retention areas, green roofs, cisterns, and rain barrels.

**Policy 5.8:** New developments may be required to size and design water retention facilities to serve as WATER RESERVOIRS TO ENHANCE NEARBY FIRE FIGHTING CAPABILITIES.

**Policy 5.9:** WATER SAVING DEVICES are encouraged in new and existing homes and businesses. Such water saving devices include but are not limited to: low-flow shower heads; high efficiency clothes washing machines and dish washers; and, high-efficiency toilets.

<sup>1</sup> For this plan, *greenspace development* is synonymous with *cluster development*, meaning that homes are brought together in neighborhood clusters with extensive greenspace located and permanently dedicated around such clusters.

**Policy 5.10: The Town shall favor TWO TYPES OF DOMESTIC SEWAGE TREATMENT AND DISPERSAL: (1) individual, on-site septic systems in large lot, low density areas, and (2) cluster or decentralized wastewater treatment systems serving multiple homes where a combination of open space and cluster development is necessary or preferred.**

**Policy 5.11: CLUSTER OR DECENTRALIZED DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS, when employed, shall direct development to areas best suited for growth and away from areas best suited for open space and/or environmental conservation.**

**Policy 5.12: EFFLUENT FROM CLUSTER OR DECENTRALIZED DOMESTIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS shall be disposed of in an environmentally appropriate manner and location.**

**Policy 5.13: The Town shall encourage the development of domestic sewer services that employ WATER REUSE TECHNOLOGIES for appropriate application of treated effluent in open spaces, golf courses and other areas.**



**Policy 5.14: COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER treatment and disposal shall be in accordance with state permitting standards, including applicable watershed regulations.**

## Policy Area 6: Appropriate Housing and Residential Development



### Common Objective

Summerfield's appealing residential areas, exemplified by neighborhoods set among expanses of open space, woodlands, and pastures, shall continue to be a defining attribute of the community. To accommodate housing for younger families and senior citizens while promoting and protecting rural character, the inclusion in residential development of smaller single family detached homes shall be encouraged over twin and other multi-unit residential buildings. Walkable, bikeable neighborhoods will be favored. An open system of pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets should work together with a network of greenway trails to connect neighborhoods with each other and with the rest of the town.

### Housing and Residential Development Policies

**Policy 6.1: Residential development in Summerfield should remain mostly LOW DENSITY, SINGLE-FAMILY DETACHED HOUSING. Appropriate instances for other housing forms, such as SMALL ATTACHED AND ACCESSORY HOUSING should also be fostered to meet a variety of housing needs.**

**Policy 6.2: A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES AND SIZES should be provided within the general bounds of large developments.**

**Policy 6.3:** Architecturally compatible and integrated **ACCESSORY HOUSING**, such as mother-in-law suites, carriage houses, and granny flats, are encouraged to improve housing affordability and allow for extended family care, especially for senior citizens.

**Policy 6.4:** **OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**, also known as **GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT**, shall be preferred as environmentally sound and economically cost effective. **LARGE LOT DEVELOPMENT** may occur when greenspace development is not feasible or appropriate to the site.

**Policy 6.5:** **OPEN SPACE DEDICATION** requirements should be applied equitably to all residential developments regardless of the number of planned housing units. If a development is not appropriate to set aside useful open space, a **FEE IN LIEU OF LAND DEDICATION** may be collected to help provide for future open space acquisition. (See 7.3)

**Policy 6.6:** **OPEN SPACE CREDITS** will continue to be offered for the provision of **SIDEWALKS, BIKEWAYS, and TRAILS** in new developments.

**Policy 6.7:** The Town should allow for some land development for **MODERATELY PRICED HOUSING** consistent with Policy 6.1.

**Policy 6.8:** **NEW INFILL HOUSING** should be architecturally compatible with existing structures, landscape features, and the streetscape within its vicinity.

**Policy 6.9:** So as to maintain the traffic moving function of the Town's primary roads, prevent traffic accidents, and avoid land locking interior land parcels, **RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STRIP DEVELOPMENT** should be discouraged.

**Policy 6.10:** **MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT**, meaning a combination of commercial and compatible institutional (e.g. assisted living facilities) and residential development, may be encouraged at appropriate locations to reduce automobile dependency and provide for housing alternatives, and to accommodate an aging population.

## Policy Area 7: Park and Recreation Improvements



### Common Objective

Summerfield values its open space and park and recreation facilities, which help define the community's image and quality of life. To serve the increasing numbers of children, families, senior citizens, and others calling Summerfield home, the Town shall provide quality parks and recreation facilities and services commensurate with community needs. Smaller parks should continue to be provided by private developments at the neighborhood level. Larger parks should be provided as a result of advanced planning and development by the Town. An extensive system of open space and greenway trails should be developed to connect large and small park areas and to serve as natural corridors for the movement of wildlife.

### Park and Recreation Improvement Policies<sup>2</sup>

**Policy 7.1:** In determining **SITES FOR PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE AREAS**, multiple objectives for natural area

<sup>2</sup> Given the close relationship between (1) parks and recreation and (2) trails and greenways, the reader is also referred to the policies previously set forth in **Policy Area 2: Sidewalks, Bikeways, and Trails**.

conservation, open space connectivity, visual impacts, preservation of cultural and historic assets, watershed enhancement and flood prone area protection shall be considered.

**Policy 7.2: LAND FOR PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES** should be acquired in advance of development pressures, if possible, to achieve desirable locations at cost effective levels, park development should be commensurate with identified community needs.

**Policy 7.3: NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHALL PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE** or, alternatively, fees placed in an open space trust fund, in proportion to the demand created by the development. This may be determined, for example, by the number of dwelling units in the development and/or by a percentage of the total acreage or square footage in the development. (Also see Policy 6.5)

**Policy 7.4: The Town supports the CO-LOCATION, JOINT DEVELOPMENT, and SHARED USE** of park, open space, and recreation facilities in cooperation with institutions and organizations such as public schools, utility companies, and federal, state, and local government agencies.

**Policy 7.5: The Town supports the planning and development of a system of open space GREENWAYS AND HIKING TRAILS** that connect parks and recreation facilities throughout the community and connecting to other trail systems and parks beyond the Town limits.

**Policy 7.6: The Town shall work proactively with other local and state governments, utility companies, and other major landowners in the development of WALKING AND BICYCLING TRAILS** for the public.

**Policy 7.7: The Town shall proactively work with organizations that provide RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING** to Summerfield residents to meet the recreational needs of the community.

## Policy Area 8: Attractive Community Appearance



### Common Objective

Community appearance can create a positive town image and sets the tone for all development to follow. An attractive community enhances the quality of life of town residents, and attracts visitors and businesses to the area that share the same values of quality and sustainability. Community appearance deals largely with what can be seen from the public roadway. Appearance issues deserving of public policy and action include exterior lighting, junked vehicles, preservation of tree cover, the presence or absence of street trees, the appearance of public and private signage, streetscape conditions, parking lot landscaping, architectural design and building form, public and private outdoor displays, the presence or absence of overhead wires, the design and location of communication towers, and the way in which local development practices seek to preserve the natural features of land.

### Community Appearance Policies

**Policy 8.1: EXTERIOR LIGHTING** should be attractive, functional, and safety conscious, and shall be designed and shielded to avoid negative impacts on the night sky visibility of Summerfield.

**Policy 8.2: LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING AND NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**, particularly as related to breaking up and softening the appearance of expansive parking areas, shall be encouraged.

**Policy 8.3: UTILITIES** should be placed underground in all new residential and non-residential developments. Individual and other smaller scale developments along a road where overhead utilities are the norm may be exempted from this requirement until such time as overhead to underground conversion is to be completed over the larger area involved.

**Policy 8.4: While WIRELESS SERVICE** technology should be facilitated as a significant benefit to the town and its residents, Town approval of necessary **TOWERS** (or existing structures retrofitted for same) shall take the public health, safety, and welfare of area residents, as well as the visual quality of the town landscape into consideration.

**Policy 8.5: DESIGN STANDARDS** should be employed so that development and redevelopment is consistent with the architectural context, community character, economic attractiveness, and livability of Summerfield. (Also see Policy Area 3: Community Character Preservation, for policies concerning tree preservation.)

**Policy 8.6: The important economic and community image benefits of attractive MAJOR TRAVEL CORRIDORS** through the town shall be recognized. Such entryway corridors shall receive priority attention for improved appearance and development standards, including screening, landscaping, signage, tree preservation, and underground utilities.

**Policy 8.7: PARKING AREAS** adjoining major roads should be generally screened from view using appropriate design elements, topographic features, and/or plantings. Plants should be tall enough at maturity to obscure views of parked cars without jeopardizing traffic safety. Service, loading, and trash dumpster areas should be completely screened.

**Policy 8.8: SPECIAL ROADWAY OVERLAY ZONING** should be employed to help implement roadway corridor plans, particularly with regard to development standards for buildings, signage, and parking areas within sight of the roadway.

**Policy 8.9: Proper code enforcement** shall be employed to deal with the public health, safety, and appearance issues of **ABANDONED AND NEGLECTED PROPERTIES**, as well as general trash and debris.

**Policy 8.10: BILLBOARDS** shall be prohibited throughout the Town of Summerfield.

**Policy 8.11: UNLICENSED VEHICLES** shall not be permitted to remain in locations visible from any public right of way, except as may be specifically permitted within an approved junkyard. Unlicensed farm vehicles, parked on farm property, should be exempt from this policy.



## Policy Area 9: Quality School Facilities



### Common Objective

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to work closely with Guilford County Schools and local public and private school leaders to support the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of high quality schools serving the community. Schools should be located and designed to be accessible to the neighborhoods around them. Access to such schools by walking and biking should be encouraged, provided that safety and security issues are addressed. Rather than functioning as single purpose “factories to educate children”, schools in Summerfield should serve as true community centers, providing meeting space for community gatherings, recreational events, and other functions. Mobile classrooms should be avoided.

### School Facility Policies

**Policy 9.1: ADVANCED PLANNING FOR THE LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS** serving Summerfield should be a joint effort between the Guilford County School Board and the Town. The Town shall work proactively to engender a close working relationship between the two governmental authorities.

**Policy 9.2: New and rehabilitated schools in Summerfield** should be integrated with the

**DESIGN OF THE COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS** around them.

**Policy 9.3: Site planning for TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT** in the vicinity of schools, including **PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY**, shall be given careful attention. On-street and off street travel corridors within walking distance of all schools should be a priority for construction of sidewalks, bike paths, and pedestrian trails.

**Policy 9.4: The Town**, through its development review process, and in coordination with the County, shall encourage **OFFERS OF LAND** for the siting of new public schools, particularly in conjunction with the development of nearby neighborhoods. Acceptance of such offers shall depend upon location criteria and other factors.

**Policy 9.5: The CO-LOCATION AND JOINT DEVELOPMENT** of public parks and recreation facilities in conjunction with public schools shall be encouraged.

**Policy 9.6: School design and access** should give a high priority to **SECURITY CONCERNS**, during both school hours and after hours activities.

**Policy 9.7: Schools** should be viewed as a social and cultural cornerstone of the community they are intended to serve. **FUNCTIONS DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS** might include, for example, senior activities, fitness classes, youth recreation, and clubs.



## Policy Area 10: Summerfield Road Focus Area



### Common Objective

The Summerfield Road Focus Area shall be supported as the historic and cultural center of the Summerfield community. The heart of this area should remain a varied, yet compatible, mix of residential and non-residential uses. A fire station, elementary school, community park, day care center, post office, eye doctor, feed mill, specialty auto dealership, and real estate office are representative of the non-residential uses that, together with a variety of single family homes, should continue to make up this important part of Summerfield. The Town shall also support preservation efforts associated with the National Register Historic District, and the desirability of a neighborhood level service area that includes Town Hall. Going forward, the Summerfield Road Focus Area should continue to be a natural location for community gatherings as well as basic services for local residents. Whatever uses go into this area, it is important that they be compatible, in both appearance and function, with uses on surrounding properties.

### Summerfield Road Focus Area Policies

**Policy 10.1:** Various sections of Summerfield Road should be treated according to their **UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS**; policies and related ordinances should respect and reinforce the “natural leanings” of each road section. Specifically, the following areas and characteristics may be described:

- A. A MIXED USE NODE AT THE INTERSECTION OF NC 150 AND SUMMERFIELD ROAD (near Town Hall)—**for local, neighborhood-oriented services convenient to town residents. With meaningful input and guidance from property owners, there also exists the potential to extend this node to the north and east toward US 220, thereby creating a gateway corridor to the heart of the community.



- B. RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT** on both sides of Summerfield Road south of Town Hall to Medaris Street, and a few lots west along Oak Ridge Road—respecting the architectural character and heritage of the buildings found there. (See *Policy Area 11: Historic Preservation* for detailed land use and design policies pertaining to this area.)
- C. A CENTRAL MIXED USE AREA ALONG SUMMERFIELD ROAD** extending from Centerfield Drive at the Elementary School south to Auburn Road—for low impact non-residential uses that are able to co-exist with nearby residences. (See Policy 10.2 Below)

D. The balance of the Summerfield Road Focus Area should be for residential uses.<sup>3</sup>

**Policy 10.2: BUSINESSES LOCATED IN THE CENTRAL SECTION OF THE SUMMERFIELD ROAD FOCUS AREA should ...**

- be of a **RESIDENTIAL SCALE AND DESIGN** character.
- have a **MARKET AREA** serving primarily a local clientele.
- have no **OUTSIDE LIGHTING** beyond that associated with a residence.
- have understated **SIGNAGE** with low level lighting.
- have **OPERATING HOURS** compatible with a residential area.
- be of a type that generates low **TRAFFIC COUNTS**
- limit the **RATIO OF FLOOR AREA TO LOT AREA** to that of nearby residential uses.
- retain **TREES** and provide **LANDSCAPED BUFFER STRIPS** when adjoining a residential use or district and offer substantial buffering within one or two growing seasons.
- provide parking lot and site **LANDSCAPING** greater than that associated with a typical commercial use.
- provide **STORMWATER RETENTION** and release to match pre-development/redevelopment conditions.
- carefully control service and customer **VEHICULAR ACCESS** to minimize light and noise impacts.

**Policy 10.3: Summerfield's off-road TRAIL AND SIDEWALK NETWORK** should lead to and from the Summerfield Road Focus Area as the hub of a community-wide pedestrian system. Sidewalks and bikeways should also be required for any future development or redevelopment within the area. (Also see Policy Area 2)

<sup>3</sup> Those sections of Summerfield Road and US 220 south of Auburn Road are not included in the Summerfield Road Focus Area and are addressed under **Policy Area 1: Appropriate, Limited Commercial Development**.

## Policy Area 11: Historic Preservation



### Common Objective

The Town of Summerfield will strive to preserve the rural and small town heritage of the community. The Town and its Boards and Committees will continue to work with property owners toward the identification, designation, restoration and preservation of individual buildings, sites and areas that contribute to the historic foundations and quality of life in the town. In addition to buildings and sites, the Town will also support efforts to document and share the unique cultural history of the area.

### Historic Preservation Policies

**Policy 11.1: The identification, restoration, and active use of structures, buildings, monuments, landmarks, sites, and neighborhoods of HISTORIC OR ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** should be encouraged to safeguard the heritage of the town, and to enhance their educational, economic, and cultural value to the community and state.

**Policy 11.2: The DESTRUCTION OF ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES** of the Summerfield community should be strongly discouraged.

**Policy 11.3: MULTIPLE AND ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES** should be encouraged. Examples include the conversion of an historic building to a restaurant or coffee house, small retail shops, office space or a bed and breakfast. The new use should be appropriate to the location.

**Policy 11.4: Appropriate development of the town’s ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORIC, SCENIC, and NATURAL RESOURCES** should be encouraged.

**Policy 11.5: New development, redevelopment, and rehabilitation of structures and sites** should occur in a manner that is consistent with the **NEIGHBORHOOD AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT** of the immediate area and supportive of Summerfield’s rural, small town heritage.

**Policy 11.6: Owners of historic properties** should be encouraged to take advantage of **STATE AND FEDERAL TAX CREDITS** when restoring their properties.

**Policy 11.7: Local efforts to document and share the unique CULTURAL HISTORY** of Summerfield should be supported and encouraged.

## Policy Area 12: Summerfield as a Limited Services Local Government



### Common Objective

The Town of Summerfield shall continue to control its own destiny—the Town shall remain an independent community, carefully managing its own finances and its own growth and development. Town government should be small and accessible, citizen-engaged, with services limited and taxes kept low. Town government should continue to focus on the highest priorities of area residents—managing growth and preserving and enhancing the area’s quality of life.



Summerfield Comprehensive Plan  
Our **Town** Our **Plan**



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