

Next Steps and Guiding Principles

THE SMALL AREA PLAN presents an integrated long-term transportation and land use vision for the Gilead Road/US-21 study area. This vision is built upon a framework of well-connected, pedestrian friendly and publicly inviting streets and open space, which in turn will attract high quality mixed-use development. As the main entrance into downtown Huntersville, Gilead Road is both a key transportation corridor, as well as a gateway to and from

Huntersville. US 21 is an important north south thoroughfare, providing a local alternative to travel on I-77, and a growing commercial corridor. As with the Sam Furr/US 21 Small Area Plan, the overarching goal of this plan is to integrate land use and transportation planning in a manner which will guide the community in finding a balance between regional transportation needs and development of the study area, while preserving and enhancing the Town's heritage.

Like any plan, successful implementation will require the commitment and concerted efforts of Town leaders, landowners, residents, County and State government officials, and other interested stakeholders. To achieve the plan's vision, the following next steps and guiding principles are recommended.

PLANNING

1. Adopt the Plan

The Town Board should adopt this small area Plan as an official planning document, thereby signaling its commitment to the vision and specific recommendations set forth in the Plan. Adoption of this Plan will also serve to provide clear guidance to current and future landowners and developers regarding the manner of development envisioned for this area



2. Rely on Plan to guide future development

The plan, as a companion to the Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances, should serve as a guiding document for future decisions related to transportation and land use in the study area.

3. Modify existing regulations as needed for consistency with the Plan
Modifications to existing land use regulations should be made on an as needed basis, consistent with the content and recommendations of the plan.

LAND USE

1. Allow rezoning consistent with plan vision

Requests to rezone property should be consistent with the transportation and land use vision and recommendations contained in this plan.

2. Focus development at the Gilead Road/US 21 intersection

To the greatest extent possible, development should be concentrated at the intersection of Gilead Road/US 21 and along the network of streets proposed by this plan.

3. Encourage re-development of the existing retail centers at the intersection of Gilead Road and US 21

The plan calls for the redevelopment of two (2) older retail centers east of US 21, within the framework of a new block structure, with buildings fronting on public streets, with parking situated to the rear and side. This type of development pattern will bring commercial land use on the east side of US 21 into conformity with the Town's vision as reflected in those centers located along Gilead Road to the west of US 21 and I-77 (e.g. Rosedale) and provide an important connection between the two areas.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Pursue recommended network improvements

The development of new street network (including the proposed new access points from the I-77 off ramps) in the study area is a central component needed to insure the transition of this area to a pedestrian friendly commercial center with a variety of travel options.

2. Package transportation system improvements for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The network improvements recommended as part of this plan should be packaged for consideration by the NCDOT as a multi-year TIP project. The implementation of network improvements/additions over time will allow for the road system to expand in a proportionate manner to allow for future growth and traffic associated with that growth.

3. Investigate alternative non-public revenue sources to fund network improvements

The Town should investigate various alternatives to the financing of transportation improvements solely through public funding. The use of both public and non-public funding would permit the apportionment of capital costs for transportation network improvements, based upon a formula that would assign a share of these costs to those who would benefit directly from these improvements. Alternative sources of transportation system funding would benefit the public in several respects. Road network improvements could be accelerated through the use of private funds, resulting in greater connectivity and increase road capacity. Non-public funding would also reduce the tax burden required to build these network improvements, freeing up public resources for other needs. From a fairness perspective, the use of non-public funding would permit the allocation of a portion of transportation improvement costs to those who would benefit most from these improvements, rather than total reliance upon public funding.

4. Require new street network to conform to plan recommendations
As development occurs within the study area, require the construction and dedication of new public streets in conformance with the transportation framework presented in this plan.

5. Promote Expansion of Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes

The Plan calls for the expansion in the number of bicycle paths and lanes, as well as sidewalk connections between residential and commercial areas within the study area. In tandem with the improved street network and additional greenways, bike and Pedestrian connections are vital components for a truly integrated transportation system, which provides Town residents with a variety of options for a movement between residential areas of business, work and recreation.

OPEN SPACE

1. Extend Torrance Creek Tributary Greenway

The planned extension of the Torrance Creek Tributary #2 from Cedarfields to Rosedale and through to NC 115, should be implemented by the Town. This greenway will provide an important connection between residential, commercial and civic uses located west and east of I-77.

2. Connecting existing greenways and open space

In coordination with the County and under the guidance of the Town Greenway Advisory Committee, the Town should seek to add links to the existing greenway/trails and open space system, with the goal of providing a network of open space that is both comprehensive and an integral part of the Town's non-vehicular transportation network.