Transportation in 2030

In 2030, the Town of Huntersville envisions a transportation system that supports the multi-modal travel demand of its residents, while reinforcing a sustainable land use pattern that focuses higher intensity development generally within two miles of I-77 and at identified mixed-use village centers. Vehicles (including mass transit), pedestrians and bicyclists will be accommodated within an integrated transportation system that provides connectivity between commercial and residential uses. Transportation policies will support these goals and include a prioritized capital improvement program for both the maintenance of existing travel routes and the development of new ones. Finally, the transportation system will incorporate appropriate landscaping, lighting and pedestrian safety features to reinforce and complement the Town’s desired land use development pattern.
FOCUS AREA: TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The transportation system within the Town of Huntersville has historically played (and will continue to play) a central role in defining the character of the Town. This “system” has provided the framework for how the community has developed over time and will continue to develop in the future. The components of this system, as well as their integration with the existing land use pattern, will play a significant role in defining the town’s built environment through 2030.

The rapid growth of Huntersville over the past 20 years and the likely continuation of this growth pattern highlight the need for a renewed emphasis on long-range transportation planning and system development through 2030.

Finally, recent statewide and regional analyses have served to highlight the large disparity between transportation needs and the resources to meet these needs. Land use patterns and transportation investments must be subjected to a rigorous strategic analysis and prioritization process, in order for the Town to retain its economic vitality.

2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Huntersville has long recognized both the need for and value of long-range transportation planning and improvements to the local transportation system. Initial transportation investment began prior to the Civil War with the Atlantic, Tennessee, and Ohio rail line from Charlotte to Statesville with reconstruction in 1871. Subsequent investments occurred through the North Carolina Highway Department in the 1920’s and after County roads were turned over to the State in 1931.

Citizen Survey: 95% of residents surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed with the need to “Plan, prioritize and fund needed road improvements”.

While development of the transportation network in Huntersville has occurred over the past 100 years, many of the significant road improvements have occurred since 1970, including construction of Interstate – 77 (and interchanges at Gilead Rd. – Exit 23 and Sam Furr Rd. – Exit 25), I-485 from I-85 South to I-77 North, Sam Furr Rd (NC 73), and numerous local streets.
Along with development of the local transportation network has come the challenge to fund and maintain this network to accommodate the travel demands placed upon it. Over the next 20 years, the ability to pay for needed transportation system improvements that reflect the community vision will continue to dominate the discussion regarding not only how to meet the mobility needs of those who currently use the system, but also for those who will use the system in 2030. The success with which this challenge is met will in large part define the quality of life and economic vitality of the Town of Huntersville.

Prior to 2003, all transportation investments in the Town’s sphere were controlled and funded by either NCDOT or the private sector. The Town’s citizens began to invest directly in their transportation system with the approval of an $8.5 million bond package for transportation in 2003. In 2007, a $20 per vehicle fee was enacted to create a Transportation Reserve Fund for smaller, high impact projects and debt service. Partnerships are being crafted to leverage these funds and deliver projects.

3.0 REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Town of Huntersville is located within the Charlotte metropolitan region, one of the fastest growing areas in the United States. Few physical or resource barriers to regional expansion have existed.

Thus, similar to much of the Sun Belt experience, population and job growth over the past 20 years has been accompanied by an even greater increase in vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Sprawl and segregated land use patterns have resulted in the automobile becoming essential to all but a few to achieve a full life and economic opportunity.

4.0 LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PHILOSOPHY

The Town’s transportation philosophy includes a number of elements:

- Strategic coordination of land use and transportation
- A multi-modal system, coordinated regionally
- All streets are public and designed with intentional provision for all modes
- Provisions for local and regional travel shall be incorporated
- Connectivity, both internal and external to developments is essential
- Maintain and efficiently operate existing systems
- Strategic prioritization of investments
- Ensure adequacy of transportation infrastructure when approving developments
5.0 TRANSPORTATION POLICY
OVERVIEW

Development of new, and the expansion/maintenance of the Town’s existing transportation network is guided by a number of local, county, state and federal policies, ordinances and regulations.

Federal:
Federal regulations mandate that any area wishing to receive Federal funds participate in a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) planning process with all jurisdictions in the urbanized area. That process is implemented through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO’s). In addition, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Clean Air Act of 1970 guide both the planning and implementation of transportation investments.

State:
The North Carolina Department of Transportation maintains and constructs all public streets outside of municipalities and many of the major roadways within incorporated areas.

State laws (the “Equity Formula”) govern the geographic distribution of almost all Federal and State roadway funds. There is no ongoing State funding mechanism for transit projects. A major chasm between transportation needs and anticipated revenues is leading to a new strategic approach to selecting projects to move forward.

The NCDOT has traditionally been a highway organization focused on motorized vehicular needs. Beginning in 2009 with the adoption of a “Complete Streets” policy, NCDOT is identifying policies to incorporate multi-modal elements into their roadway projects. Transit and rail freight needs are acknowledged with the creation of the “Congestion Relief and 21st Century Intermodal Fund.” The “Mobility Fund” has been created to deal with projects of statewide significance.

Regional:
The Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) serves as the federally mandated 3C implementing body for our region. It is composed of members from each governing board in Mecklenburg County and most of Union County and will almost certainly expand into southern Iredell County in 2012. MUMPO adopts a Long Range Transportation Plan that includes a fiscally constrained project list that will allow the region to maintain conformity with its air quality plan. It approves alignments for future thoroughfares. The use of any Federal transportation funds must be approved by MUMPO.

The Metropolitan Transit Commission is composed of members from each governing board in Mecklenburg County and is tasked with setting policy and funding priorities for the Charlotte Area Transit System. A countywide dedicated half cent sales tax is the primary source of revenue for this effort.
County:

As a result of the Great Depression, in 1931 counties were stripped of their ability to build and maintain roads. In 2007, without any county requesting the legislation, the General Assembly returned this capability to them. Counties also provide significant transportation services to the disadvantaged populations through their social service functions.

Local

The following excerpt from the “Huntersville Zoning Ordinance” provides the principal regulatory framework for development of the Town’s transportation network:

“Streets in Huntersville are to be inviting public space and integral components of community design. A hierarchical street network should have a rich variety of types, including bicycle, pedestrian, and transit routes. All streets should connect to help create a comprehensive network of public areas to allow free movement of automobiles, bicyclists and pedestrians. In order for this street network to be safe for motorists and pedestrians, all design elements must consistently be applied to calm automobile traffic.” (Article 5)

The essential components of the Ordinance relative to the local street system are summarized below:

- **Interconnectivity** – Street connections (or stubs) are required between new development and adjoining property or developments.
- **Pedestrian Scale** – Be designed to accommodate the pedestrian.
- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalks are required on both sides of all new streets, with the exception of rural roads, lanes, alleys and along the undeveloped edge of neighborhood parkways.
- **Street Trees** – Trees are required on both sides of all new streets, with the exception of rural roads, lanes, alleys and along the undeveloped edge of neighborhood parkways.
- **Public** – All streets in new developments must be public (any street proposed to be “private” must be built to public street standards).
- **Focal Point** – Generally, all buildings are required to front on public streets.

In addition to these requirements, the Town is in the process of preparing “Street Design Guidelines” to provide guidance regarding the appropriate street cross-section(s) to be utilized in various development scenarios.
In 2007, the Town adopted policies and funding apportionment parameters to guide its investment in transportation infrastructure. Effective implementation of these policies and parameters will require continuous refinement, supported by the accurate collection and analysis of traffic and other relevant data.

6.0 TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM FUNDING

It is important to recognize that the majority of the community’s transportation system has been provided through private investment. Almost all of the Town-maintained 164 mile system was built by the private sector. These roads provide a vital distribution web for motorized and non-motorized movement, essential as a supplement to the major roadway network. Thus, it is crucial that these investments are guided by policies that contribute to the community’s vision.

Transportation system funding for larger projects is prioritized through the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), under the direction and guidance of MUMPO. The LRTP looks 25 years into the future, is updated every four years and includes an estimate of probable revenues compared to a prioritized list of major transportation projects within the MUMPO jurisdiction.

All regional and statewide plans have identified an extraordinary gap between desired projects and resources to deliver them.

For example, a 2010 statewide analysis identified a list of $54 billion worth of transportation projects for the period of 2015-20 and for which $10.5 billion in resources are identified.

Major projects are funded through one of three mechanisms. The North Carolina DOT produces bi-annually a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), where funding has been identified for specific projects within a seven-year time frame. Geographic distribution of projects is tied to a funding formula known as the Equity Formula. The first five years of that document constitute a Work Program for which the DOT has a goal of delivering 95% of the projects within the described time frame.

In recognition of the gap between needs and state resources, many municipalities undertake significant transportation investment programs. The Town of Huntersville voters authorized the issuance of $8.5 million worth of transportation bonds in 2003. These funds are being used for the widening of Sam Furr Road and the extension of Verhoeff Drive into the Commerce Station development. Since January 2007, the Town has collected $20 per registered vehicle which is deposited into a Transportation Reserve Fund to be used for debt service on transportation bonds and to fund small transportation capital improvement projects.
7.0 COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Since the 1970’s the primary method for organizing the framework for the region’s transportation system has been through the development and updating of “Thoroughfare Plans.” Map T-1 shows the existing MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan as it applies to Huntersville.

In 2009, NC General Assembly made a policy decision to replace the existing process for thoroughfare planning with the “Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).” The CTP will be prepared under the direction and guidance of the appropriate regional transportation planning organization (RPO) or metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for a jurisdiction.

Map T-1
MUMPO Thoroughfare Plan

The CTP is intended to be a multi-modal document that is not constrained by time or funding. It will show the transportation network anticipated to serve the region’s major travel needs. The CTP will serve as the initial source document for the selection of projects to be considered for the LRTP as well as the basis for right-of-way protection efforts.

The CTP will include maps for the major roadway system, transit routes, and bicycle provisions. The manner of portraying the pedestrian network is yet to be determined. The final CTP will reflect reconciliation with NCDOT’s Complete Streets policy initiative, scheduled for a Fall 2011 completion. Finally, appendices with more detailed description of desired cross-sections for each roadway segment will be developed.
8.0 RECENT & PLANNED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Since 2005, a number of road improvements have been undertaken in Huntersville. Projects completed or underway include the following:

- NC 73 Widening (US 21 to NC 115) - 2012 scheduled completion
- Gilead Road/Huntersville-Concord Road intersection improvements
- McCord Road/NC 115 – Signal and turn lanes
- Ramah Church Road/NC 115 – Signal and turn lanes
- Verhoeff/NC 115 – Bridge construction and turn lanes – 2012 scheduled completion
- Stumptown Road Extension/Ramah Church Road Roundabout
- Gilead Road/Ranson Road – Signal and turn lanes

Taken together, these roadway projects offer significant improvements to the existing transportation system. Some of these projects have been funded entirely by the Town, private developers, the State or a combination of one or more groups.

9.0 TRAFFIC GROWTH & MODELING

Among its responsibilities, MUMPO is charged with preparation of a “Regional Travel Demand Model,” which is used for a variety of purposes, including identifying the need for future road projects based upon population and employment projections. This data underlies all elements of the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The City of Charlotte DOT maintains the Travel Demand Model for MUMPO.

The model provides information used in determining that transportation plans and investments within MUMPO conform to the air quality plans for the area. This determines “conformity” with Federal air quality guidelines.

Conformity with these guidelines is necessary in order for the region to qualify for Federal transportation funding, as well as other funding from the State. Detailed information on the model, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the air quality conformity analysis can be viewed on MUMPO’s website, www.mumpo.org.

Typical Residential Street in Huntersville
10.0 TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS (TIA)

In January 2008, the Town of Huntersville adopted a “Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) Ordinance.” The purpose of this ordinance was to establish “Levels of Service” (LOS) standards for state and local roads and to require that all development generating 50 or more peak hour trips, or 500 or more daily vehicle trips, meet these LOS standards, including any required mitigation measures to achieve them.

11.0 COMPLETE STREETS

In July of 2009, the NCDOT Board of Transportation adopted a “Complete Streets Policy.” The definition of this policy is as follows:

“Complete Streets is North Carolina’s approach to independent, multi-modal transportation networks that safely accommodates access and travel for all users.” Past NCDOT policies have primarily focused on accommodating motorized vehicles with very limited support or consideration for other modes of travel.

Furthermore: “This policy sets forth the protocol for the development of transportation networks that encourage non-vehicular travel without compromising the safety, efficiency, or function of the facility. The purpose of this policy is to guide existing decision-making and design processes to ensure that all users are routinely considered during the planning, design, construction, funding and operation of North Carolina’s transportation network.

This policy requires that NCDOT’s planners and designers will consider and incorporate multi-modal alternatives in the design and improvement of all appropriate transportation projects within a growth area of a town or city unless exceptional circumstances exist.” Finally, “Notwithstanding the exceptions stated… all transportation facilities within a growth area of a town or city funded by or through NCDOT, and planned, designed, or constructed on state maintained facilities, must adhere to this policy”.

The Complete Streets Policy is included in Appendix 3 of this plan.

A working group was formed by the Board of Transportation to oversee the preparation of detailed rules and guidelines to guide existing and future NCDOT design and decision making processes.

Fast Facts: Road Miles in Huntersville’s Town Limits
172 miles - Town-owned streets
134 miles - State-owned streets
See map CD3, page 85

The Town of Huntersville has long embraced the concept of complete streets. The Town’s development regulations promote streets that accommodate all users, especially emphasizing the pedestrian realm. In addition, the Zoning Ordinance tailors the relationships of buildings to the street based on the building type.
Town departments collaborate on the review of developments to ensure that proper street design is chosen and that buildings are situated in a compatible fashion. Additional efforts are underway to refine this decision-making process.

12.0 PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE CIRCULATION

It is the policy of the Town of Huntersville that pedestrians and bicyclists be accommodated in addition to automobiles and other forms of motorized transportation. As previously noted, with certain exceptions, sidewalks are required on all new (public) streets as well as along the frontage of existing streets where redevelopment occurs.

As the community grows, relatively short block lengths and high levels of connectivity afford many pedestrian routes and fairly direct connections to activity centers. Map T-2 shows an inventory of all existing sidewalks within the town limits.

Intentional bicycle accommodations (wide outside lane, bike lane or bike paths) are required on all thoroughfares. MUMPO’s LRTP calls for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on all designated major and minor thoroughfares.

Finally, the connectivity of Town streets allows the bicyclist low volume and low speed routes that do not need additional accommodation.

Map T-2
Existing Sidewalk Locations
13.0 GREENWAYS AND BIKEWAYS

Greenway trails consistently rank high on the list of amenities that the public would like to see to enhance mobility options. In 2007, the Town of Huntersville adopted a “Greenway and Bikeway Master Plan.” This plan included an overview of greenways, trails and bikeways, an inventory and analysis of these facilities, as well as an action plan and implementation strategies. The greenway and bikeway routes are classified by two tiers of importance to help develop a capital improvement plan for the most critical pieces of the network (Map T-3).

Currently there are two public greenway trails within the Town. The Torrence Creek Greenway, located in the Cedarfield neighborhood, is a ten-foot wide paved path measuring 1.1 miles in length. The second, Upper McDowell Greenway, is also a ten-foot wide paved path measuring .5 miles in length and extends into the Town of Cornelius intersection with Westmoreland Road. Both trails were built and are maintained by Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation and are part of a county-wide greenway trail system plan that includes additional trail sections in Huntersville.

A planned extension of the Torrence Creek Greenway, west to Beatties Ford Road and east to Rosedale Village, is planned for completion in the fall of 2011. Map T-4 shows existing and planned public greenway trails located within the Town.
For new development, reservation, dedication or construction of greenway trails is required by the Town’s land use regulations. The latter option (i.e. construction) may be needed to meet the “Urban Open Space,” or “Open Space” requirements for a particular development proposal.

### 13.1 Carolina Thread Trail

The Carolina Thread Trail (CTT), also known as The Thread, is a regional trail network that will ultimately reach 15 counties and more than 2.3 million people. More than a hiking trail, more than a bike path, the Thread preserves our natural areas and is a place for exploration of nature, culture, science and history, for family adventures and celebrations of friendship.

The Thread arose from a discovery process started in 2005 when the Foundation For the Carolinas convened more than 40 regional leaders and organizations to determine the region’s most pressing environmental needs and concerns. From that process, open space preservation surfaced as the number one priority. The Carolina Thread Trail was successfully launched in 2007 as a project focused on preserving natural corridors and connecting people to nature through a network of connected trails.
Under the leadership of Catawba Lands Conservancy and many local partners, the Carolina Thread Trail strengthens the region and promotes economic development, education, better health and land conservation by connecting people, businesses and communities of diverse backgrounds and interests.

While not every local trail will be part of the Carolina Thread Trail system, The Thread is linking regionally significant trails and many regional attractions. Think of it as a “green interstate system” of major trails and conservation lands created through local efforts throughout the region. The Thread will emerge over time as communities work together to plan and build trails reflecting community character, aspirations and priorities.

Map T-5 depicts The Thread Trail, including the portion to be located in Huntersville. In several locations, the CTT overlays either designated county or town greenway trails.

Citizen Survey: 91% of survey respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the town should “Combine sidewalks, bike lanes and greenways where appropriate for efficiency.”
Public transportation within the Town of Huntersville and throughout Mecklenburg County is provided by the “Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS).” CATS service is based upon a nationally recognized ground breaking plan completed in 1998, the 2025 Integrated Transit/Land Use Plan.

This plan identified a desired land use pattern for future anticipated growth and proposed an extensive investment in a rapid and bus transit system to guide that development future. **Map T-6** shows this plan.

Formed in 1998, CATS is funded in part by a half cent sales tax on all non-food retail transactions within Mecklenburg County.
Policy and programmatic oversight of CATS is provided by the “Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC),” a board made up of the chief elected officials and chief administrative officials from the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the Towns of Matthews, Mint Hill, Pineville, Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson. The NC Board of Transportation also has a representative on the MTC.

Adjacent communities may have non-voting representation at the discretion of the MTC.

Bus transit service is provided under a Countywide Transit Service Plan, updated every five years. Express buses and one local, fixed route bus (known as the Village Rider) serves Huntersville along with a neighborhood circulator system.

CATS’ service is provided under the framework of the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, adopted by the MTC in 2007 (see Map T-7). The 2030 Transit System Plan includes five rail corridor rapid transit projects, Center City projects, and additional transit system improvements designed to weave together the five corridors into an integrated system in Center City Charlotte.

As part of the 2030 Transit System Plan, Huntersville is proposed to be served by the North Corridor Commuter Rail Line. The proposed North Corridor Commuter Rail or Red Line as it is referred to, is a new 25-mile commuter rail system operating over existing tracks owned by the Norfolk Southern Corporation (NS) between downtown Charlotte and Mount Mourne, an area immediately south of downtown Mooresville, North Carolina (see Map T-8).

The rail line runs through the centers of downtown Huntersville, Cornelius, and Davidson. Improvements to the rail line would include replacement of ties and rail, signalization, protection of at-grade crossings, and construction of up to 12 stations and a vehicle maintenance facility (VMF). As of 2009, design and engineering of the rail line and crossings is 90% complete, with station designs at 30% completion.

As currently envisioned, trains would run every 20-30 minutes during the morning and afternoon rush hour period and hourly during the remainder of the day. The new service is projected to have some 5,000 commuters ride the trains daily to or from Charlotte by 2030.

The vast majority of these commuters currently travel by single-occupancy vehicle along I-77 and/or NC 115 (Old Statesville Road) or US 21 (Statesville Road). The South Corridor Light Rail Line (Lynx) is the only one of the five corridors that currently features active passenger rail service. Opened in 2007, average weekday ridership for the 9.6 mile Lynx system was initially projected at 8,500 passengers, gradually increasing to 18,100 by 2025. According to the American Public Transit Association, average daily ridership figures for the second quarter of 2010 were 21,600.
Estimates show that the Blue Line has spurred over $1 billion in new development in proximity to the line and within the station areas serving the line. An extension of that operation into the University area (the Northeast corridor) is currently in planning and design, and federal funding is anticipated.

Currently, a task force is identifying funding options and is expected to make a final recommendation to the MTC by December 2011. Based on a decision to proceed within implementation of the North Corridor, service could commence by 2017.

Map T-7
2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, adopted by the MTC in 2007
15.0 TRANSPORTATION POLICIES AND ACTION ITEMS

Policy T-1: Apportionment of Transportation Funds
Maintain and refine Town Board adopted policy to apportion transportation system funding for local transportation projects (e.g. capital, maintenance and system operation).

Action T-1.1: Analysis Based Decision-making
Implement data gathering and analysis programs necessary to reach data-driven decisions on funding transportation projects.

Action T-1.2: Funding Policy
Review transportation funding policy on regular basis and revise to reflect transportation system priorities.

Policy T-2: Public/Private Partnerships (PPP)
Support innovative and alternative funding efforts (including public/private and public/public partnerships) to increase the number of transportation projects that can be implemented by 2030.
Policy T-3: Local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
Create and maintain local “Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)” for projects to be funded primarily by local revenue and incorporated in the five year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Policy T-5: Context-sensitive Design of Streets
Continue to support “context-sensitive” design of streets and the selection of appropriate street section designs for residential, commercial and industrial developments applications.

Action T-3.1: Implement Low Cost/High Benefit Projects
Identify and prioritize high benefit, lower cost roadway projects for funding and implementation on an annual basis.

Action T-5.1: Street Design Guidelines
Finalize “Town of Huntersville Street Design Guidelines Plan,” to include recommended street sections accommodating all modes of transportation and a selection process for determining appropriate sections for new and existing streets.

Action T-3.2: Apportionment of Staff Resources
Determine appropriate staff resources and private sector support necessary to plan and implement selected transportation projects.

Action T-5.2: Way Finding Signage Plan
Prepare a uniform “Way Finding” signage plan for the Town of Huntersville with special attention on Downtown.

Policy T-4: Complete Streets Policy
Support NCDOT “Complete Streets Policy,” as adopted by the NC State Board of Transportation.

Policy T-6: Pedestrian Connections
Support the installation of sidewalks, bikeways and greenway trails connecting residential, commercial, employment, recreational and institutional uses.

Action T-4.1: Develop Procedures for Complete Streets
Provide support to NCDOT work group that is developing implementation procedures for “Complete Streets Policy.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action T-6.1: Pedestrian Master Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare “Pedestrian Master Plan” for Town, including inventory of existing sidewalks and a prioritized implementation schedule for enhancement and expansion of the existing pedestrian transportation network through public and private (in coordination with new development) funding.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action T-6.2: Greenways and Bikeways</th>
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<tr>
<td>Implement “Greenway and Bikeway Master Plan,” including the prioritization and funding of greenway trails and bikeways through a combination of public and private funding.</td>
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<th>Action T-6.3: Comprehensive Transportation Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Utilize Complete Streets concepts in creation of “Comprehensive Transportation Plan.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy T-7: Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinance (TIAO)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to apply requirements of “Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA)” Ordinance, including Level of Service (LOS) and mitigation of impacts generated by new development.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action T-7.1: Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinance - Levels of Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Level of Service requirements in TIA Ordinance on annual basis and adjust as necessary to achieve desired land use pattern reflected in 2030 Community Plan.</td>
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<th>Policy T-8: Street Connectivity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Promote and require street connectivity in the Town of Huntersville among residential, commercial, employment, recreational and institutional uses.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action T-8.1: Connectivity Master Plan</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare “Connectivity Master Plan” identifying recommended vehicular, pedestrian and bikeway connections between existing and proposed streets.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Action T-8.2: Connectivity Ordinance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare and adopt Ordinance amendments necessary to implement “Connectivity Master Plan.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy T-9: State Transportation Equity Formula</th>
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<tr>
<td>Support efforts to revise NCDOT “Equity Formula” for funding transportation projects.</td>
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**Action T-9.1: Revise Equity Formula**
Support and actively participate in legislative study committees to revise the Equity Formula.

**Policy T-10: Regional Cooperation**
Participate in organizations such as the “Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO),” “Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC),” “Lake Norman Transportation Commission (LNTC),” and Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) to maintain Town’s role in regional transportation efforts.

**Action T-10.1: Coordination of Town Participation in Regional Organizations**
Coordinate among Town Board representatives to various regional transportation organizations, to ensure that Huntersville receives fair and equitable treatment.

**Policy T-11: Commuter Rail**
Advocate for implementation of North Corridor Commuter Rail line, consistent with MTC efforts.

**Action T-11.1: Transit Oriented Development**
Support “Red Line Task Force” efforts to advance North Corridor, including dedication of local share of taxes generated by “Transit-Oriented Development.”
**Economic Development in 2030**

In 2030, Huntersville will have a diverse and sustainable economic base built upon:
1. A commitment to help expand existing business and industry.
2. A proactive search for opportunities and encouragement of investment by new business and industry.
3. A spirit of cooperation between business, government, schools and the community.

**Commercial Development in 2030**

In 2030, commercial development in Huntersville will exemplify the highest possible integration of land use and transportation planning. Commercial development will follow a “mixed-use” center land use pattern that, to the greatest extent possible, meets the demand for a variety of commercial services at identifiable nodes and centers. Commercial development will reflect the highest quality architectural standards, consistent with the surrounding built and natural environment, and be located in areas where adequate public infrastructure exists to support this development. Commercial development will be designed and function in the framework of a multi-modal integrated street network, minimizing traffic impacts and promoting a sustainable land use pattern.
1.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Regional Economy & Demographics

Huntersville is a part of the Charlotte metropolitan region – one of the fastest growing areas in the U.S. Since 2000, Mecklenburg County has grown from a population of 695,454 to a total of 919,628 in 2010, representing an increase of approximately 32%. The NC State Demographic projections show that Mecklenburg County will continue its upward growth rate, with a projected 2030 population of 1,458,192.

The regional presence of Fortune 500 companies is a significant indicator of the area’s economic strength and stability. Mecklenburg County is home to seven Fortune 500 headquarters, ranking it 8th in the country.

Table ED-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Revenue ($ billions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bank of America</td>
<td>150.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Lowe’s</td>
<td>47.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>181</td>
<td>Duke Energy</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<td>206</td>
<td>Nucor</td>
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<td>305</td>
<td>Family Dollar</td>
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<td>334</td>
<td>Goodrich Corp.</td>
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<td>343</td>
<td>Sonic Automotive</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>427</td>
<td>SPX</td>
<td>4.9</td>
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</table>

Source: Charlotte Chamber of Commerce

1.2 Local Economy

Prior to 2003, Huntersville did not take an active role in promoting economic development. Job creation and development of business parks were the result of private sector investments. With Huntersville’s prime location just north of Charlotte along the I-77 corridor, that investment was substantial, most notably the Park Huntersville, a 400 plus acre business park owned by the Bank of America’s pension fund.

However, after completion of the Leak-Goforth study in 2002, sponsored by the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce, the Towns of Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson took a more active role in charting the economic future of North Mecklenburg. The study looked at economic development prospects and opportunities and recommended an action-oriented strategy to position the area as a viable location for business and industry. The most notable outcome of that study was the creation in 2003 of the Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation (LNREDC) in 2003.
LNREDC is funded by the three towns and private investors, and is tasked with expanding North Mecklenburg’s economic base.

In addition to recommending the establishment of an economic development organization, the Leak-Goforth Study identified several areas that were well suited for job creation but were zoned residential. To reserve these areas for future economic development, the Town of Huntersville rezoned just over 1,000 acres from Residential to Corporate Business in three large-scale rezoning requests. **Map ED-1** shows the location of those three rezoning areas (R03-09; R06-07 and North Meck Industrial Park, now Commerce Station) as well as significant recently approved, yet un-built commercial and office development in Huntersville. **Map ED-2** shows major employment areas in Huntersville.

It is important to note that some utilities are currently not available to all of the major employment areas noted on this map. Therefore, it is important that Huntersville work closely with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities to time planned utility extensions with economic development projects within these areas.

In 2009, Forbes Magazine identified Huntersville as the number two most popular destination to move in the U.S. According to Forbes, this designation was due primarily to the presence of employment opportunities. Huntersville’s location immediately north of Charlotte places the town in a very advantageous position for those who wish to live near where they work.

**Map ED-1:**
Large-Scale Re-zonings & Major Employment Areas
From an economic development standpoint, these factors have helped to draw a number of national and multi-national corporations to Huntersville since the early 1990’s. **Table ED-2** lists some of the major employers within the Town as of May 2010.

Economic Development encompasses more than industries located in business parks. It includes the travel and tourism industry as well as large and small commercial and office areas located throughout the community. Since 1996, Huntersville has encouraged mixed-use development allowing people to live, work, shop and recreate in one location. Commercial development is discussed further in Section 6.0.

### 1.3 Regional Initiatives

The Town of Huntersville is an active participant in a number of regional initiatives that have resulted in a positive impact on the town’s local (and regional) economy. In 2005, the Towns of Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson entered into a unique joint venture to develop an industrial park for light industrial tenants in order to maximize local employment opportunities and allow the sharing of the tax base between all three communities. Commerce Station, a master-planned industrial park, is the result of that joint venture.
In 2005, the three towns purchased 126 acres located on NC 115 in Huntersville and were successful in attracting its first tenant, originally Prairie Packaging but now Pactiv Corporation, which opened for business in 2006. In 2010, ABB, a Swedish based manufacturer of high voltage energy transmission cables, announced plans to locate in Commerce Station. ABB will make an initial investment of $90 million, and employ over 100 at this facility. Commerce Station Business Park is ultimately planned to encompass 350 acres, with the inclusion of adjoining parcels in private ownership.

As previously noted, Huntersville is a member of the Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation (LNREDC), made up of the Towns of Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson as well as private sector investors. The Town is also active with the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce (LNC) and Visit Lake Norman (VLN) in promoting the travel and tourism industry in Huntersville.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company/Institution</th>
<th>Product/Service</th>
<th>Approximate Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke Energy Corporation</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Hospital Huntersville</td>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrolina Greenshouse Inc.</td>
<td>Plant Wholesale</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newell Rubbermaid</td>
<td>Product Development</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Gibbs Racing</td>
<td>NASCAR</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pactiv Corporation</td>
<td>Company/Institution</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCredit Financial Service, Inc.</td>
<td>Financial Services</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbo Siegling, LLC</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Tire Distributors, Inc.</td>
<td>Automotive Distribution</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABIC Innovative Plastics</td>
<td>Plastics Manufacturing</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Huntersville</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAERTEX USA, LLC</td>
<td>Manufacturing - Composite Textiles</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Daetwyler</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Company Data
Another regional initiative that the Town is involved in is the Lake Norman Transportation Commission (LNTC). Formed in 2009, LNTC’s members include the towns of Huntersville, Cornelius, Davidson and Mooresville. LNTC’s mission is to promote transportation solutions for the Lake Norman area, a critical component to the success of recruiting new businesses and expanding existing businesses.

In 2010, LNTC sponsored an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Advisory Services Panel to assess and offer advice and recommendations regarding the economic development potential within the area encompassing the I-77 corridor and North Corridor commuter rail line. The report issued by the ULI Panel contained a number of recommendations, including the following:

- Reiterate the validity of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg 2025 Transit/Land Use Plan for the region, which calls for focusing development in five corridors radiating out from Charlotte, including the North Corridor.
- Ensure that transit supports the Transit/Land Use Plan’s strategy for mobility.
- Understand and develop the potential for transit oriented development (TOD).
- Engage with Charlotte and Mecklenburg County regarding the positive economic development that is possible in the Lake Norman area with and without the commuter rail.
- Analyze, develop, and promote regional benefits of transportation capacity investments in the North Main Line.

Another example of regional cooperation to promote economic development is the construction of the Verhoeff Drive Bridge over NC 115. This $6.4 million project is a joint effort of the towns of Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson and will provide direct access from Commerce Station to the regional road network, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of Commerce Station to prospective tenants. Regional cooperation will continue to be an essential strategy for the Town of Huntersville to follow as it plans for economic growth and development through 2030.

2.0 PREVIOUS PLANS & STUDIES

There have been several recent economic development related plans and studies undertaken which serve to frame the policies for economic growth and development for the Town of Huntersville. These plans are identified on the following page:


• NC 73 Land Use and Economic Development Small Area Plan (2005): Prepared by the Design Collective for Huntersville, Davidson, Concord, Kannapolis and Cabarrus County where the jurisdictions meet at the intersection of NC and Poplar Tent Road in the upper northeast quadrant of Huntersville.

Example of Office-Flex Space in Huntersville

3.0 FUTURE LAND USE

3.1 Strategic Economic Development Plan

The “North Mecklenburg County Economic Development Strategy” and the “Town of Cornelius and Huntersville and the Lake Norman Region Strategic Economic Development Plan” have provided the foundation for economic development activity in Huntersville since 2003. Since these plans focus on regional economic development, they do not address the specific economic development needs of Huntersville (e.g. type of development and uses Huntersville official’s would like to target). Therefore, the creation of a strategic economic development plan for Huntersville would allow the Town to better address its unique economic development needs and would also assist the Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation in focusing on business recruitment and expansion appropriate for Huntersville.

A major component to any successful economic development program is the availability of suitable land. Previous studies have stressed the need to protect sites with characteristics suitable for business recruitment (significant acreage, easy access to major roads, relatively flat, etc.). Accordingly, Huntersville has rezoned several areas (encompassing over 1,000 acres) to Corporate Business (CB) for that purpose (see Map ED-1). However, the Town needs to continually assess opportunities for additional land, in response to changes in economic conditions.
3.2 Utilities and Infrastructure

A well developed infrastructure and utility system is foundational to a thriving local economy. The provision of adequate infrastructure is essential to a sound economic development program for Huntersville. It is important to note that some utilities are currently not available to all of the rezoned areas noted on Map ED-1. Therefore, it is important that Huntersville work closely with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMUD) to time planned utility extensions with economic development projects within these areas.

3.3 Retention and Expansion of Existing Business

Promoting the retention and expansion of businesses currently located in Huntersville is a key to job growth. The LNREDC has a program to meet with existing businesses in order to determine what their needs are and what can be done to assist with their continued success and the expansion of their operations. In turn, the LNREDC informs agencies (i.e. town, county, NCDOT, etc.) about those needs and works proactively to address them where feasible.

To successfully compete against other locations in recruiting businesses, incentives can be an effective tool to assist in attracting new business and in retaining existing ones. Incentives can take many forms including tax rebates, streamlined permitting, job training, and infrastructure installation.

While quality of life is an important consideration for new businesses considering relocation, incentives can certainly play a role in this decision making process and should be carefully weighed in regard to the benefits that may result to the Town.

3.4 Workforce Development

The availability of a well trained workforce is one of the most important considerations for businesses looking to relocate or expand. Huntersville is fortunate to have a Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) campus within its jurisdiction. CPCC has a long history of providing training for industry, which will serve the community well in the future. Continued cooperation among the public, private and educational institutions will be essential to ensure that Huntersville maintains its reputation as a prime location for skilled workers.

3.5 Culture, Hospitality and Tourism

The tourism and hospitality industry is an important component of the local economy. Economic activity generated by visitors to Huntersville not only supports local business owners, but also enhances the local tax base. In addition, a vibrant local hospitality and tourism economy serves to improve the Town’s reputation regionally, nationally and internationally as a good place to live and do business.
4.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & ACTION ITEMS

Policy ED-1: Diversify Tax Base
Continue to look for ways to expand and diversify the employment base in Huntersville.

Policy ED-2: Preservation of Land Area for Non-Residential Development
Preserve areas suitable for business and industrial development, along with a mixture of support uses, to ensure an adequate inventory of land for future growth and development, with increases to this inventory as required.

Action ED-1.1: Strategic Economic Development (SED) Plan
Prepare a “Strategic Economic Development (SED) Plan” for the Town of Huntersville using previous studies as a foundation. This plan should address the following elements:
- Demographic & economic/market profile and analysis
- Inventory and analysis of existing businesses and industry
- Analysis of competitive advantage for Huntersville
- Identification of target areas for new development
- Strategies for increasing percentage of employees who live and work in Town
- Downtown redevelopment strategy

Action ED-2.1: Identify Land Area Suitable for Non-Residential Development
Prepare GIS map displaying land area available and required for future office, commercial and industrial growth and development that is consistent with recommendations for targeted industry and business in SED Plan for Huntersville.

Policy ED-3: Economic Development Competitive Advantage
Target recruitment of business and industry for which Huntersville has a “competitive advantage” as identified in a Town SED Plan or other applicable plan.

Action ED-1.2: Economic Development Committee
Consider creation of local economic development committee to oversee preparation of SED Plan for Huntersville.
Policy ED-4: Growth Sector Business and Industry
Support the attraction of business and industry as identified by NC Department of Commerce as emerging growth sectors (e.g. renewable energy, pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing) for the Charlotte region.

Policy ED-5: North Corridor Commuter Rail Line
Support development of the North Corridor Commuter Rail line as a tool to promote economic development.

Policy ED-6: Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation (LNREDC)
Continue participation with Lake Norman Regional Economic Development Corporation (LNREDC) and on joint economic development efforts with Cornelius and Davidson.

Policy ED-7: Regional Cooperation
Develop closer working relationship with the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and surrounding counties on areas of mutual interest, such as workforce development and training and North Corridor commuter rail line.

Policy ED-8: Lake Norman Transportation Commission (LNTC)
Continue participation with Lake Norman Transportation Commission (LNTC) to promote regional transportation (roads & rail) improvements to the Lake Norman area.

Policy ED-9: Economic Development/Hospitality and Tourism
The Town of Huntersville will promote economic development, hospitality and tourism initiatives and partner with other agencies, such as the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce (LNC), visit Lake Norman (VLN) and the Huntersville Connection (HC).

Policy ED-10: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities Department (CMUD)
Continue to work closely with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities (CMUD) in preparation of five and ten year Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) for water and sewer line extensions to serve new development, as well as existing development not currently served.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action ED-10.1: Water and Sewer Lines</th>
<th>Action ED-11.2: North Corridor Commuter Rail Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare map of proposed water and sewer line locations and line capacities to assist in strategic planning for business expansion and recruitment.</td>
<td>Continue to work with CATS, Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Mooresville, Mecklenburg County, Iredell County, LNTC, LNREDC and other pertinent organizations to advance North Corridor commuter rail line.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide CMUD with annual list of targeted areas for needed water and sewer line extensions to assist in CIP process.</td>
<td>Support “Business Retention &amp; Expansion (BRE)” program of LNREDC.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Policy ED-11: Utility and Transportation Infrastructure</th>
<th>Action ED-12.1: Expand BRE Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to invest in utility and transportation infrastructure to serve and support targeted growth areas.</td>
<td>Work with LNREDC to enhance BRE program, targeting business and industry either currently not being served or underserved.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with the Federal Highway Administration (FHA), NCDOT, MUMPO, City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and LNTC members to widen I-77 to exit 36.</td>
<td>Continue Business Incentive Program (BIP) for the creation of new jobs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Action ED-13.1: Business Expansion | |
|-----------------------------------| |
| Utilize BIP for existing business expansion. | |
Policy ED-14: Development Review Process
Support efforts to improve efficiency and responsiveness of development review process for development proposals.

Action ED-14.1: County/Town Cooperation – Development Review Process
Continue to work with Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Administration (LUESA) and Department of Building Standards to streamline development review and approval process and to develop strategies to make process more user-friendly.

Policy ED-15: Workforce Training
Support current efforts of Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC), Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and others to train and develop skilled workforce to meet labor demands for local business and industry.

Action ED-15.1: Public/Private Partnerships – Workforce Training
Convene roundtable meetings between LNREDC, NC Department of Commerce, CPCC, area universities, CMS, Mecklenburg County and local business leaders to enhance existing workforce training and identify new training strategies to serve local business and industry.

Action ED-15.2: Job Training/Retraining
Work with State and County officials, LNC and LNREDC to identify resources to provide job training and education for residents who are either unemployed and/or who need to retrain for new jobs.

Policy ED-16: Tourism
The Town will support local tourism efforts and partner with other agencies such as “Visit Lake Norman” and “Huntersville Connection,” as appropriate.

Action ED-16.1: Enhance Tourism Opportunities
Identify new opportunities for tourism.

Policy ED-17: Recreation Tournaments/Events
Support continued efforts of Parks & Recreation Department and Huntersville Family Fitness and Aquatics Center (HFFA) to attract national, state and regional amateur recreational and sports tournament and events.
4.0 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

The rapid population growth that has occurred within the Town of Huntersville since 1990 has been matched by a similar pattern of commercial development which includes retail, service businesses and offices. Predictably, this commercial development has been focused at the Town’s two Interstate interchanges (Gilead Road/Exit 23 & Sam Furr/Exit 25) and along the Town’s major thoroughfares (e.g. US 21, NC 115, Gilead Road and NC 73).

Map CD-1 identifies the location of commercial as well as manufacturing areas (shown in grey and purple color) located within Huntersville.

Map CD-1 Commercial Areas

Major transportation routes have historically been location magnets for non-residential development, generating significant traffic impacts in the process. Since the adoption of revised land development regulations in 1996, commercial development in Huntersville has followed a mixed-use development pattern, focused at the intersection of major thoroughfares.

This development pattern has also been guided by a concerted effort to integrate land use and transportation planning. To this end, for almost 15 years, the Town of Huntersville has deliberately fostered development which encourages multi-modal travel, reducing the need for single occupant vehicles, yet facilitating that use when necessary by integrating land use and transportation.
5.0 Land Use/Transportation Integration

The origin of integrated transportation and land use planning efforts in Huntersville can be traced back to 1994 and the formation of a committee of citizens to lead a strategic update of the 1989 Huntersville Community Plan. The committee completed its work in June 1995 with a plan that included a future vision statement for Huntersville and a series of strategies to implement the goals of the plan. Recommendations from the 1995 Community Plan set the stage for the complete re-writing of the Huntersville Zoning & Subdivision Ordinances, adopted in 1996, that reflect the principles and practices of “Traditional Town Planning.”

Unlike conventional zoning where land uses are separated into distinct districts and dimensional regulations (i.e. height, setbacks) govern the placement of buildings, Traditional Town Planning promotes a mixture of land uses (e.g. residential, commercial, office), the provision of functional open space, interconnected streets, and emphasizes the “form” of structures and how they integrate with one another.

By allowing a mixture of land uses and establishing a network of connected streets, it becomes possible to significantly increase the efficiency of the transportation network.

Acknowledging that streets are the most prevalent public spaces in Huntersville, the Zoning Ordinance requires they be inviting areas and integral components of community design. Key elements of the Ordinance are:

- Streets are to be the focus of buildings and all buildings will generally front a public street.
- Commercial on-site parking is to be located to the side and rear of buildings. On street parking is desirable on public streets.
- Streets will be lined on both sides with trees and sidewalks.
- Streets are to be interconnected within developments and with adjoining development to form a network.
- As the most prevalent public space, streets are scaled to the pedestrian.

6.0 A NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The revised ordinances dramatically changed the pattern of commercial development in Huntersville. The two most notable examples are Birkdale Village and Rosedale Shopping Center; both mixed-use developments that were designed under the post 1996 ordinance. Figure CD-1 below illustrates how Rosedale Shopping Center embodies the principles of Traditional Town Planning. Rosedale, along with Birkdale Village, serve as the new standard for commercial development in Huntersville.
Nothing has had a greater impact on changing the commercial development pattern within Huntersville than the requirement that buildings front a public street. Streets make shopping centers more pedestrian friendly, provide better access for public safety officials and allow redevelopment to occur more easily.

As a result, shopping centers can be modified to respond to challenges such as a changing economy, shifting demographics, changing consumer demands and additional competition. In the absence of an established public street system, shopping centers that become outdated (Figure CD-2), typically in a 15-30 year time span, face the prospect of a lengthy decline as one tenant after another leaves the center, creating a cascading effect, until eventually the shopping center is vacant.

Redevelopment of the entire shopping center is then required which is costly, time consuming and creates an abundance of legal complexities, particularly when multiple property owners are involved.

Conversely, where a public street system exists within a shopping center, changes can occur incrementally on a lot-by-lot or building-by-building basis, thereby allowing the shopping center operators to respond to changing market conditions in a timely manner.

Figure CD-1 Rosedale Shopping Center Key Design Features
In 2005, The Town retained a consultant to prepare a long-range land use and transportation plan for the area surrounding the I-77/NC 73 interchange. This plan, known as the “NC 73(Sam Furr Road)/US-21 Transportation and Land Use Vision Small Area Plan,” recommended “retrofitting” the existing Northcross Shopping Center (located in the northeast quadrant of the US 21/NC 73 intersection), developed prior to adoption of the 1996 codes, with a public street grid system. Figures CD-3 & CD-4 illustrate the recommendations for this street system. The plan recommends transforming the shopping center from one single super block to several smaller urban blocks, with commercial buildings fronting on each of these streets.

**Figure CD-2**

Conventional declining shopping center.

**Figure CD-3**

Northcross Shopping Center with Streets

**Figure CD-4**

Aerial Perspective of Northcross Shopping Center Retrofit

Aerial perspective of Northcross illustrating existing driveways and circulation converting to public streets to maintain its competitiveness while diversifying its offerings.
To date, the owner/developer of this shopping center, recognizing the value of such an investment, has worked with the Town to prepare revised plans to integrate such a street system into the site. Further improvements to the adjoining state roads (NC 73 & US 21) will complement these planned improvements.

A similar plan was prepared by the same consultant for the area surrounding the I-77/Gilead Road interchange, including the introduction of a public street system that would provide improved access to, from and within the site.

Several signature mixed-use developments have been built since 2000 (Birkdale Village and Rosedale Village). In addition to these mixed-use developments, the Town has also approved a number of commercial and office/employment developments since 2000. **Map ED-2** shows the location of these approved but un-built and partially built commercial and office developments. Once built, these developments will contribute to the economic vitality and well-being of Huntersville.

### 7.0 PREVIOUS PLANS & STUDIES

In 1992, the greater Charlotte area began an intense examination of the growth of the metropolitan area and how that growth could best be accommodated.

In October 1994, the regional “Committee of 100” produced a visionary work that endorsed a “centers and corridors” strategy to focus development along five radial corridors emanating outward from central Charlotte along existing rail and highway routes. The Committee’s vision hinged on major transit investments in these corridors to help guide a mixed-use development pattern that better integrated land use and transportation. Further, the Committee encouraged local governments to produce their own plans built upon the centers and corridors framework.

In 1998, the seminal “2025 Transit/Land Use Plan” was produced. This plan laid out a detailed vision for each of five radial corridors extending out from Charlotte. The significance of this plan was based on the fact that, for the first time, a transit system was intended to reinforce a desired development pattern and community design for the Charlotte metro area.

Consistent with the 2025 Transit/Land Use Plan, a number of recent long-range studies in Huntersville have served both to define and reinforce the integration of land use and transportation, providing a solid foundation for the Town’s future development, as well as offering guidance for current planning efforts.
NC 73 Transportation and Land Use Corridor Plan

This is perhaps the signature plan for the Huntersville area in terms of setting forth a clear vision for the integration of land use and transportation planning. This plan was a landmark effort, involving three counties, five municipalities, three chambers of commerce, two metropolitan organizations, one rural planning organization and the North Carolina Department of Transportation and covered the entire 32 mile length of NC 73, a strategic NC highway, from Lincolnton in the west to Concord in the east. The plan was the first of its kind in North Carolina and created a vision for how this road should develop in a manner that addressed both land use and transportation issues.

The integration of land use and transportation planning are also reflected in the following long-range plans:

- Beatties Ford Road Corridor Small Area Plan (Adopted September 2007)
- Beatties Ford – Mt. Holly Huntersville Road Small Area Plan (Adopted October 2005)
- Davidson – Concord Road/NC 73 Area Plan (Accepted December 2008)
- Downtown Master Plan (Adopted February 2006)
- East Huntersville Area Development Plan (Adopted April 2007)
- Gilead Road/US 21 Small Area Plan (Approved December 2005)
- NC 73 (Sam Furr Road)/US 21 Small Area Plan (Approved December 2005)
- NC 73 Small Area Land Use & Economic Development Plan (Adopted June 2006)

8.0 KEY ISSUES

A number of key issues define the challenge for Huntersville as the town looks to promote commercial development that reflects the integration of land use and transportation planning. The extent to which the Town is successful in addressing these key issues will define the form and function of commercial development over the next 20 years.

- Continued promotion of a “mixed-use” land development pattern. 74% of residents surveyed either agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement that the Town should “Encourage mixed-use centers (i.e. residential, commercial and employment) over ‘strip' commercial areas.” Since adoption of the Town’s new Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances in 1996, Huntersville has been largely successful in avoiding strip commercial development within its borders. Continued adherence to the principles in these ordinances will enable the Town to continue this practice and build upon the successes already achieved (see Figure CD-5).
• **Focusing future development within mixed-use “nodes.”** In the long-range land use and transportation plans adopted since 2004, the Town has embraced a “node-centric” mixed-use development pattern. Generally, this pattern of development calls for higher-intensity development at the center (or core) of the node, with decreasing intensity at its outer boundaries. A good example of this node pattern of development is found in the Beatties Ford Road Corridor Small Area Plan, where the plan calls for three mixed-use nodes: southern, central and northern (Map CD-2).

Adherence to this node-centric pattern of development will be essential in reinforcing the mixed-use development pattern desired by Huntersville residents, and called for by the Town’s land development regulations.

• **Rezoning of future nodes.** Consistent with the land development pattern outlined above, it is essential that future nodes should not be rezoned for mixed-use purposes unless:

1. A small area plan is prepared first allowing ample public input.
2. Development is truly of a mixed-use nature with commercial, residential, office and perhaps civic uses and not solely for commercial development.
3. The node is small in size with commercial serving local needs. Commercial floor area should generally not exceed 40,000 sq. ft. as there are numerous areas in close proximity to serve more regional shopping needs (i.e. 70,000 sq. ft. plus shopping areas).
4. Rezoning should not occur until the infrastructure is available to support the mixed use. It is not intended for rezoning to be speculative, but instead occur to serve an existing need.
• **Reconcile “local” and “regional” functions of road corridors containing commercial development.** Virtually every major road corridor within Huntersville is state maintained (Map CD-3). Roads such as NC 73, NC 115, US 21 and Gilead Road serve a regional transportation function and are also the location for much of the Town’s commercial development. The continuing challenge for managing each of these roads is how best to reconcile the regional function of these roads to move traffic, with the role of accommodating local transportation needs, particularly related to commercial activity.

Ongoing cooperation between the Town, State and Federal government will be required to ensure that both of these legitimate roles are addressed. Further, appropriate road design techniques, such as strategically placed vehicular access and interconnecting streets with surrounding properties, are essential in order to maximize the efficiency of existing road systems, where funding for future improvements is limited.

Map CD-2
Mixed-Use Nodes
• Identifying adequate sources for long-term maintenance and capital costs. The absence of direct control over the vast majority of existing and planned State roads within Huntersville represents a challenge to meet and manage local transportation demands. The projected growth of Huntersville by 32,000 residents between 2010 and 2030 will only exacerbate the need for local transportation improvement funding for both maintenance of existing transportation facilities and the construction of new ones. The absence of adequate funding sources for these improvements will require innovative approaches to ensure that corridors are adequate to meet traffic demand.

The Town’s Traffic Impact Analysis Ordinance (TIAO), which requires the mitigation of development related traffic impacts, offers one alternative for funding, but is not likely to fully address the need for funding existing or planned future roads. Other examples of innovative funding strategies are joint public/private partnerships for the widening of NC 73 from US 21 to NC 115 and between Huntersville, Mecklenburg County and private developers for road and rail improvements associated with the Bryton development located at the intersection of NC 115 and Alexanderana Road.
• **Complete Streets.** In June of 2009, the NCDOT Board of Transportation adopted a policy which embraces “Complete Streets” as the model for state roads. Complete streets are streets which adequately address the needs of all modes of transportation including autos, bicycles, pedestrians and mass transit and which reinforce the desired land development pattern along them. While many of the principles represented by the Complete Streets concept are reflected in the Town’s land development codes, continued adherence to this policy will be essential during the next 20 years.

• **Aesthetic Considerations.** At their most basic level, roads serving commercial development must be designed to accommodate multi-modal transportation needs (see Figure CD-6). However, this basic function needs to be balanced against the need to build roads designed in a manner which reflects the community’s character and reinforce the desired land use pattern. Landscaping, lighting and signage are all important elements of a successful commercial development. Beyond simply aesthetic benefits, the sum total of these features can have a beneficial effect on traffic safety, as well as “place-making.”

The Town’s efforts in this regard since 1995 are notable and should serve as the model for future commercial development.

**Figure CD-6**

Office buildings in proximity to restaurants and shopping with pedestrian access provided over a creek/greenway.
Policy CD-1: Land Use/Transportation Integration
Continue the integration of land use and transportation elements for development that occurs within commercial corridors, nodes and centers. Consistency with the Town’s Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances and adopted long-range plans shall be the foundation for this development.

Policy CD-2: Commercial Development Pattern
Promote a mixed-use development pattern that focuses higher intensity development generally within two miles of the I-77/NC-115 core. Outside the core area, this more intense commercial development pattern shall be focused in identified nodes and centers.

Policy CD-3: Commercial Development Principles
Encourage mixed-use development pattern at key nodes as identified in Small Area Plans, ensuring an appropriate mix of residential, commercial and employment uses to maximize land use and transportation efficiencies, while minimizing environmental impacts.

Policy CD-4: Multi-Modal Transportation Network
Continue to pursue development of a multi-modal integrated transportation system in a manner that facilitates the efficient movement of vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians and is less reliant on single-occupant vehicles and single purpose trips, in support of a sustainable land development pattern.

Policy CD-5: Infrastructure
Continue to require that adequate public infrastructure (roads, utilities, etc) either exist or will be made available to support all new development.

Policy CD-6: Architecture and Place Making
Consistent with Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances (as well as “Town of Huntersville Design Manual”) maintain high design standards for development.

Policy CD-7: Corridor Landscaping & Lighting
Continue to promote corridor landscaping that enhances commercial development, consistent with Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. Coordinate with NCDOT to ensure that landscaping and lighting is “context sensitive” for the location and adjoining uses.

Action CD-3.1: Small Area Plans
Prepare Small Area Plans (if one does not exist) in sections of the community that are or will be experiencing development pressure.