Aggregate Constrained Lands (Minus Overlap):
9,707 Acres out of 13,926 Total Acres

Percent of Study Area Constrained to Development: 69.70%
Percent of Study Area Available to Development: 30.10%
5.0 Market Study

Retail Demand

Planning Area: By 2017, the retail spending potential of the Beatties Ford Road Corridor Study Planning Area households could reach a level to support an estimated 711,000 square feet. This spending could occur throughout Mecklenburg and adjacent counties. However, a significant share of the Planning Area’s retail expenditures would be captured in rapidly developing north Mecklenburg centers.

Beatties Ford/Hambright roads: Based on household expenditure potential, site capture rates, inflow factors, and industry average sales per square foot, the supportable retail space at the Beatties Ford Road/Hambright Road intersection could reach nearly 107,000 square feet by 2017. The largest component is supermarkets and bakeries at 47,938 square feet (45% of the total).

Beatties Ford Road/NC 73 (without Hambright): If no retail center is constructed at the Beatties Ford Road/Hambright Road intersection, the NC 73 site could support a total of 113,243 square feet of retail by 2017, including 55,143 square feet of supermarket demand.

Beatties Ford Road/NC 73 (with Hambright): If the approved 99,800-square foot Latta Village or a comparable supermarket-anchored center is constructed at the Beatties Ford Road/Hambright Road intersection, it would have a measurable but minor impact on retail sales potential at NC 73. The 2017 demand could reach 102,591 square feet, with a 45,881-square foot grocery store.
Office Demand

The Planning Area could support about 97,000 square feet of multi-tenant office space over the next ten years. Almost 50,000 square feet could be located at NC 73/Beatties Ford Road, with nearly 30,000 square feet supportable at Hambright/Beatties Ford roads. The remaining 17,000 square feet would be dispersed throughout the Planning Area.

Summary

In total, 135,910 square feet of retail and office space could be supported by 2017 at the Beatties Ford and Hambright roads intersection. The NC 73/Beatties Ford Road intersection could support between 151,073 and 161,725 square feet of retail and office space, depending upon the presence of those uses at Hambright Road.

Supportable Retail and Office Square Feet, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hambright Road</td>
<td>106,821</td>
<td>29,089</td>
<td>135,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC-73 (without Hambright)</td>
<td>113,243</td>
<td>48,482</td>
<td>161,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC-73 (with Hambright)</td>
<td>102,591</td>
<td>48,482</td>
<td>151,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Warren & Associates
6.0 Small Area Plan

6.1 Planning and Design Goals

In response to public input and in the context of opportunities and constraints identified during the planning process, the following planning and design goals were developed to define the direction of future development within the BFR study area, consistent with the established goals and values of the Town of Huntersville.

Each of these goals must be incorporated into the design of place, which, in turn, must guide implementation of the small area plan. The small area plan must be sufficiently prescriptive to assure the Town that the design intent of traditional town planning is the end result, but flexible enough to encourage design and technological innovation. A more specific application of these goals must be completed as development or redevelopment areas become more defined and the small area plan evolves.
These goals include:

**Preserve the existing rural character:** The study area will continue to develop as a low density, predominantly residential district, as established by the Town’s overall planning framework. Future commercial development within the study area should be focused at NC 73 and at Mount Holly – Huntersville Road, with an additional center at the intersection of Hambright Road with BFR. In conjunction with development of the Vance Road Extension, additional commercial development along Vance Road should be given consideration, primarily at the intersection of Vance Road with existing cross streets.

**Preservation and Open Space Character:** The predominant open space character and preservation of natural areas should continue and be enhanced through the provision of broad buffers along Beatties Ford Road, and acquisition of critical land parcels where possible.

**Beatties Ford Road Identity:** The Beatties Ford Road Protection/Enhancement Strategy, January 2004 provides specific recommendations for the preservation of the cultural significance of Beatties Ford Road. The proposed expansion of Vance Road from Mt. Holly Huntersville Road north to NC 73 will provide additional system linkages and north-south parallel capacity to the Towns transportation network; therefore encourage, plan the identity of Beatties Ford Road to remain a two lane scenic byway traversing northern Mecklenburg rural landscape fabric.

**Mixed-Use/Hamlet Centers:** In an effort to preserve its small town quality, the Town of Huntersville has been among the most progressive municipalities in incorporating traditional Town Planning design standards into its ordinances. This plan calls for mixed-use/hamlet centers at the commercial nodes identified in this plan in order to provide a social and economic focus that fosters a discernible sense of place. A more thorough discussion of Mixed Use Centers is found in Section 6.4.

**Open Space Preservation:** Preserving land protects municipal resources both directly and indirectly. A park or preserve may protect an aquifer or a plant or animal species and, by saving land from development, reduces demand on the community’s resources. The predominant image of open space character and natural areas preservation should continue and be enhanced through the provision of broad buffers along Beatties Ford Road. Identify partnerships with non profit organizations, park and recreation service providers, property owners and land trusts in the purchase and planning of open space systems.

**Pedestrian Access:** Design for pedestrian dimensions and distances through compact form, layout, and streetscape characteristics.

**Transportation:** Recognize roads as the framework for improved community livability. Roads offer an opportunity to enhance a community’s attractiveness, build its local economy, preserve its character and provide for the mobility, comfort and safety of its inhabitants.
6.2 Transportation Framework

The streets, sidewalks, and bikeways within a community determine, in large part, the urban form and mobility of the area. In fact, in many towns, the right of way utilized by streets represents the largest area of publicly owned land. Streets, sidewalks, and bikeways provide critical connections between homes, jobs, schools, restaurants, parks, shops, and many other destinations. As the primary means of moving goods, services, and people between destinations within the public right of way, streets, sidewalks and bike paths/lanes are a tangible reflection of how a community invests in mobility options for its residents.

The existing transportation network in the Beatties Ford Road Corridor Study Area continues to be strained as new residents move into the area in ever-increasing numbers. Prior to the widespread introduction of the automobile in the early part of the 20th century, streets formed interconnected grid patterns in the urban core and rural routes evolved from farm to market corridors to primarily commuter corridors. Typically, as the population increases from rural to suburban densities and alternate routes are not added, improvements to the capacity of existing roadways are required. In lieu of widening valued scenic or historic corridors, some communities have elected to construct alternative routes that bypass these scenic corridors. These alternative routes improve access to adjacent land, which in turn enhances the area’s attractiveness for development. With this new development comes increased congestion and the assumption that wider or alternative routes are needed. This cyclical pattern is repeated until the effectiveness of the transportation network begins to deteriorate, resulting in the need for significant network improvements.

An efficient transportation system connects neighborhoods and activity centers via a network of streets, paths, and trails that are safe and supportive of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit patrons, cars, and trucks. Such a system offers choice for short and long trips alike and promotes convenient movement of people and goods.

The vision for the Beatties Ford Road Corridor recognizes that as the area transitions from agrarian/rural character to suburban densities, there will be a need for additional transportation facilities. This vision includes an interconnected network of community-friendly streets that provides for the safe, effective, and efficient movement of all modes of travel including walking, cycling, riding, and driving. All new and improved transportation options should respect the relationship between land use and transportation by supporting established neighborhoods while anticipating new growth and changing travel patterns. In addition, the community has clearly stated its desire to preserve the rural character of Beatties Ford Road and the study area.

6.2.1 Vision for a New Transportation System

Complete Streets: The elements that encompass great streets are similar to the features found on streets built at the turn of
the 20th Century. These “complete streets” have balanced land use development with transportation facilities to create a safe, efficient, walkable, and interconnected transportation network. The logic behind complete streets extends beyond the edge of the pavement to encompass the sidewalk, buildings, and everything in between. Complete streets shift the focus from the movement of vehicles to the movement of people, in turn balancing the use of the travelway with the use of the pedestrian realm within the intended framework of the street’s context:

- The travelway encompasses that portion of the public right of way between the curbs/ that is dedicated partially or exclusively to travel. The travelway incorporates the main travel lanes, auxiliary turn lanes, bike lanes, bus lanes and stops, parking lanes and roadway shoulders.
- The pedestrian realm is the space that extends between the building face, or front of the private property, and the travelway.
- The context of a street includes the buildings and sites adjacent to the street, or right of way. This area is described in terms of land use, physical form, and intensity.

These factors fundamentally shape the context zone, both in terms of how people use the street and how travelers perceive the street.

Transportation Planning for Rural Preservation Areas: Transportation improvements in rural areas that are undergoing transition require a new way of thinking. It is generally accepted that the movement of commuters to and from work is important along with the provision of efficient traffic routes that lead into the center city from outlying areas. However, when these same streets pass through special areas of our communities (i.e. those that include cultural, historic and environmentally sensitive features), it is important that their design reflect the balanced needs and vision for the area. The paramount goal in transportation planning should not be simply “getting there faster”. Likewise, the construction or expansion of streets such as Vance Road Extension and Hugh Torance Parkway are intended to provide relief to increasing congestion by providing routes that pass near, but not through, the preservation areas of the study area. By carefully locating and designing these alternative routes, traffic volumes will likely be displaced from preservation roadways such as Beatties Ford Road.

The Vance Road Extension and NC 73 are intended to carry the predominant volume of future traffic within the study area. The presence of these streets will make a significant contribution to moving traffic through the area. Importantly, however, these roads must also insulate,
to the greatest extent possible, local and collector streets from the rising burden of peak hour commuter traffic. Therefore, the combination of appropriate roadway design, effective roadway alignments, and access management will play a vital role in preserving the character of the Beatties Ford Road study area.

The recommended facilities and policies that follow represent the collective vision of a context sensitive transportation system which equally balances all modes of transportation for the study area. With this plan must come the understanding that implementation will be challenging and time-consuming and will require long-term support by residents, business owners, local staff, MUMPO and NCDOT.

6.2.2 Roadway Recommendations

Connectivity: In a rural preservation area such as the Beatties Ford Road Study Area, connectivity plays an important role and is best achieved through a combination of small and large streets. Street connectivity refers to the directness of routes and...
the density of connections within a transportation system. As connectivity increases, travel distances decrease and route options increase, allowing the transportation system to be used more efficiently by pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and automobiles. Connectivity improves circulation and allows for street designs that can be responsive to the practical needs of an area.

Rather than widening valued streets like Beatties Ford Road, the construction of larger streets such as Vance Road Extension and Hugh Torance Parkway can satisfy the capacity and mobility needs of the region without compromising scenic corridors. The construction of these larger streets may likewise assume a more suburban form with multiple lanes, no parking, and dedicated turn-lanes. At the same time, Beatties Ford Road and other farm-to-market routes can maintain their rural two-lane section with accommodations for cyclists and pedestrians either on multi-use paths or on-road, consistent with the Town of Huntersville Greenway, Trails, and Bike Master Plan.

Against this backdrop, revisions to the planned thoroughfare alignments were discussed and evaluated during the BFRCSAP charrette. Collaboration with NCDOT, MUMPO, and Town officials, resulted in proposed revisions to the existing Thoroughfare Plan for the northern part of the study area. In essence, any potential revision to the current Thoroughfare Plan alignments should accomplish the following:

(a) Provide regional connections that encourage commuters to divert to a new Vance Road Extension;
(b) Encourage the preservation of Beatties Ford Road from further through trip impacts, thereby lessening the need for capacity improvements;
(c) Maintain a NC 73 direct alignment with interchange access to I-77
(d) Minimize impacts to the Beard family property.

Consideration of the previous criteria in conjunction with data related to physical constraints (streams, topography, utilities, etc) led to recommendations for the following roadway facilities: Beatties Ford Road, Vance Road Extension, and
Hugh Torance Parkway. The following pages describe the existing and proposed recommendations for each of these corridors.

**Collector Street Planning:** The primary purpose of the collector street system is to collect traffic from neighborhoods and distribute it to the system of major and minor thoroughfares throughout an area. In general, collector streets have two lanes and often have exclusive left-turn lanes at intersections with major and minor thoroughfares and less frequently at intersections with other collectors. Collector streets rarely are constructed and funded by the state. Responsibility for collector streets usually falls to the local government and developers for funding, design, and construction.

**Assessment of Collector Street Spacing Needs:** Different spacing standards for collector streets are necessary for different development types and intensities. Understanding this reality, a theoretical model largely influenced by land use intensity ranges developed by Kimley-Horn shows the desired collector street spacing for different land use intensities.

An appropriate set of collector street spacing guidelines is needed to be determined for the BFRC SAP area. A distance of 1,500 to 3,000 feet between collector streets is appropriate in a suburban setting, while unincorporated and incorporated areas tend to have different development potential, mostly incumbent upon environmental constraints and the availability of municipal water and sewer service.

**Study and Results:** The results show that a 3,000’ grid is typically the most appropriate for the mixed suburban and rural development pattern that prevails in the small town and rural areas of Mecklenburg County. For more intense development, a 750’ grid proves optimal, but this is independent of the costs that would be incurred to build a network of such intensity.

**Recommendations for Local Streets:** One connection along a collector should be in place every 750-1,500 feet. There are cases that will necessitate a variation in this guideline. Approval for these cases will be the responsibility of the Town Engineer and State Division Engineer who will consider traffic impacts, land access, property rights, and environmental conditions.

**Recommendations for Collector Streets:** One public street intersection along a collector or an arterial should be in place every 1,200 to 2,000 feet in a suburban context and every 500 feet to 1,000 feet in the context of heavily developed areas or the central business district. As determined by the Town Engineer, variations in spacing requirements will depend on traffic impacts, land access, property rights, and environmental conditions.

**Identifying Future Collector Street Connectors:** The following guidelines are used to developing the draft collector street network:

- Avoid steep slopes and otherwise unsuitable topography
- Minimize impact to the built environment
- Avoid FEMA designated floodplains
- Minimize the number of wetland (National Wetland Inventory) impacts
- Minimize the amount of each wetland impact (i.e., don’t cross a wide wetland when a narrower one can be crossed)
- Minimize the frequency of stream crossings
- Minimize the number of high-quality (larger) stream crossings
- Minimize the length of stream crossings
- Minimize school impacts
• Minimize the number and size of each impact to other environmental features such as historic features and districts, threatened and endangered species, hazardous waste sites, and superfund sites

• Avoid impacts to parks and designated open spaces

• Minimize the number of new facilities in critical watershed areas

• Be responsive to existing and planned development patterns

• Look for existing stub streets

• Develop feasible connections (A to B)

• Consider Land Use Plan goals for area development

• Consider land use potential and plan collectors according to established spacing guidelines.

Design Guidelines: Designing a street with appropriate horizontal and vertical alignment is important. The following horizontal and vertical design features – based on standards published by A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, 2001, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) – are recommended for the design of future collector streets. Design speed should be 35 miles per hour, and the maximum recommended grade is 8%. The maximum degree of horizontal curvature is 10 degrees (Rmin = 573 feet).

General Connectivity: The Town’s current policy is to require (or reserve the option) connectivity between adjoining parcels, as development occurs. This policy should be continued consistent with the planning, transportation and design goals included in this plan.

Future Collector Street Network: Utilizing the tools discussed above, a future collector street network was developed. This future network is shown in the Proposed Transportation System Map on page 34. In comparison to the existing network (shown on page 19) the future collector street network is intended to improve transportation mobility options within the study area. Key outcome goals of this plan include improving accessibility to higher intensity residential areas and activity centers and avoiding or minimizing impacts to sensitive areas for the preservation of the natural environment. Ultimately, the future collector street network will provide a greater level of connectivity and mobility to the residents of Huntersville by reducing the travel time between local streets and arterial streets.

LANDSCAPING FOR WATER QUALITY IN TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

The study area has valuable environmental resources. It is in critical proximity to the Mountain Island Lake watershed, natural preserves, and delicate plant and animal species. Protection of water quality along Beatties Ford, particularly in the wake of new development factors is important to the health of the corridor.

USE OF RAIN GARDENS

Rain gardens are landscape features in which the land is shaped like a basin, aiding in capturing storm water. The area is planted with appropriate plant species to aid in filtration of runoff.

• Rain gardens filter run off pollution
• Recharge ground water
• Improve water quality
• Reduce mosquito breeding
• Create habitat for birds and butterflies
• Enhance and beautify the landscape
• May be used in residential settings, roadside and in parking lots

6.2.2.1 Beatties Ford Road Corridor Profile

Beatties Ford Road is a minor thoroughfare between Mt. Holly–Huntersville Road and Gilead Road that measures approximately 6.35 miles in length. The typical section includes two eleven-foot travel lanes with no accommodations for pedestrians or bicyclists. The posted speed limit for the entire corridor is 45 miles per hour. Drainage reflects development intensities: open swale in rural areas and curb-and-gutter near newer subdivisions, and center left turn lanes exist (or are planned) to serve adjacent schools and the new regional park. Right of way within the corridor varies between 50 – 70 feet; however, the area of influence for the corridor is between 250 – 270 feet because of the Town’s policy to preserve a 100-foot buffer on each side of the corridor.

Corridor Vision: Beatties Ford Road is the signature north-south corridor within the study area, which serves a dual role as minor thoroughfare moving traffic through the region and gateway corridor to the rural area of western Huntersville. Public sentiment expressed during the charrette suggests that the corridor should be preserved as a two-lane, country road that reinforces the rural character of the area.

Recommended Plan: The illustration on the following page represents the preferred cross section recommended for Beatties Ford Road. This typical cross section should be considered for more detailed planning studies that result in conceptual design plans and a design palette for streetscape improvements. Its application to specific locations will depend largely on driveway locations, intersection treatments, existing development, and adjacent land uses.

The entire length maintains a two-lane, undivided rural cross section with 11-foot travel lanes, 5-foot paved shoulders, and 7-foot grass shoulders, along with the Town required double-row of street trees. Open drainage, a meandering 10-foot multi-use path, and wide landscape buffers are provided along both sides of

QUICK FACTS
Beatties Ford Road

Length = 6.35 miles
ROW = 50 – 70 ft. (250 – 270 ft. Area of Influence)
Existing Traffic Volume = 8,275 AADT (2005)
Posted Speed Limit = 45 MPH
the street. The posted speed limit remains at 45 miles per hour.

Access Management: The two-lane, undivided cross section recommended for Beatties Ford Road limits the application of access management. Two applications that should be considered to safeguard mobility include: (1) regulating the number, location, and spacing of driveways; and (2) restricting left turn movements for certain properties along the corridor based on development intensity or safety concerns. Restriction of turning movements along the corridor should be reinforced with physical barriers, such as a raised island for right-in/right-out driveways.

Intersection Treatment: Intersection treatments along the corridor may include two-way stop control, traffic signals, or roundabouts. More detailed study should be performed for the following intersections with Beatties Ford Road to determine appropriate intersection treatments: Gilead Road, Bud Henderson Road, McIlwaine Road, Hambright Road and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. Additional studies leading to recommended treatments will involve public input, travel demand forecasting, traffic modeling and simulation, and functional design.

Land Use Considerations: Town officials should consider adopting a special overlay district for the Beatties Ford Road corridor that codifies the 100-foot preservation buffer requirement. More detailed study should also be performed to develop design guidelines for protecting the historic corridor as an efficient, two-lane facility.
6.2.2.2 Future Vance Road Extension Corridor Profile

Vance Road is a planned major thoroughfare between Mt. Holly - Huntersville Road and NC Highway 73 that measures approximately 10.48 miles in length. This project is included in the Mecklenburg-Union County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) Long Range Transportation and Thoroughfare Plans as an unfunded priority. The entire corridor will accommodate four lanes of travel and a 45 mile per hour posted speed limit. The typical section right of way is 100 feet.

Corridor Vision: Vance Road provides additional north-south connectivity to the regional transportation system and helps preserve the rural character of Beatties Ford Road by providing a quicker, more direct route between NC Highway 73 and Mt. Holly - Huntersville Road. The corridor should emphasize safety, mobility, and aesthetic elements consistent with the intent of the gateway corridor.

Recommended Plan: The illustration on the following page represents the typical cross section developed for Vance Road in the previously approved Vance Road Thoroughfare Study. Application of this cross section to specific locations will depend largely on driveway locations, intersection treatments, and adjacent land uses.

The recommended cross section for Vance Road maintains four lanes of travel and a 45 mile per hour posted speed limit. This cross section calls for a four-lane, median divided facility with 11-foot inside travel lanes and 14-foot wide outside travel lanes (to accommodate bicyclists). Curb-and-gutter is provided at both the center median (1 ½ feet) and outside pavement edge (2 ½ feet). Street trees are planted in the center median with opportunities for

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**QUICK FACTS**

**Future Vance Road**

- Length = 10.48 miles
- ROW = 100 ft.
- Existing Traffic Volume = N/A (New Planned Road)
- Posted Speed Limit = 45 MPH
left turn lanes at key locations. Street trees and sidewalks are also provided along both sides of the street. The posted speed limit is recommended at 45 miles per hour.

Access Management: The four-lane, divided median cross section recommended for Vance Road reinforces safety and mobility in the corridor with access management. The center median increases safety and vehicle capacity by separating opposing vehicle flows and restricting turning movements to locations with dedicated left turn lanes. Restrictions on the number, location, and spacing of driveways along the corridor minimizes congestion and collisions. More detailed study and recommendations for site-specific access management treatments should complement previous studies for the corridor completed by the Town of Huntersville.

Intersection Treatments: Intersection treatments along the corridor may include traffic signals or roundabouts. More detailed study should be performed for the following intersections with Vance Road to determine appropriate intersection treatments: NC Highway 73, Gilead Road, McIlwaine Road, Hambright Road, McCoy Road and Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. Additional studies leading to recommended treatments will involve public input, travel demand forecasting, traffic modeling and simulation, and functional design.

Land Use Considerations: Town officials will need to balance development along the new corridor with its purpose to serve regional mobility. More detailed study should be completed to identify a future land use plan that identifies preferred land use types and development patterns for the corridor.
6.2.2.3 Hugh Torance Parkway Extension Corridor Profile

Hugh Torance Parkway Extension is a planned minor thoroughfare between NC Highway 73 and the western terminus of existing Hugh Torance Parkway that measures approximately 1.99 miles in length. This project is included in the Mecklenburg-Union County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO) Long Range Transportation and Thoroughfare Plans as an unfunded priority. The entire corridor will accommodate four lanes of travel and a 35 mile per hour posted speed limit. The typical section includes on-street parking and a planned median. Right of way within the corridor is planned to be 100 feet.

Corridor Vision: The extension of Hugh Torance Parkway, westward from Wynfield Creek Parkway, is included in both the MUMPO Long Range Transportation Plan and Thoroughfare Plan. Construction of the road’s extension should reinforce the context of surrounding neighborhoods and the community’s desire not to create another “suburban-scale” through street. Treatments included in the cross section should incorporate the principles of complete street design.

Recommended Plan: The illustration on the following page represents the typical cross section recommended for the extension of Hugh Torance Parkway. This typical cross section should be considered for more detailed planning studies that result in conceptual design plans and a design palette for streetscape improvements. Its application to specific locations will depend largely on driveway locations, intersection treatments, and adjacent land uses.

The entire length maintains a two-lane, cross section with 11-foot travel lanes and 5’ bike lanes. Curb-and-gutter is provided at the outside pavement edge (2 ½ feet). This section includes opportunities for left turn lanes at key locations. Street trees and sidewalks are also provided along both sides of the street. The recommended posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

Access Management: The two-lane cross section recommended for Hugh Torance Parkway Extension

Length = 1.99 miles
ROW = 100 ft.
Existing Traffic Volume = N/A (New Planned Road)
Posted Speed Limit = 35 MPH
Torrance Parkway reinforces safety and mobility in the corridor by providing access management and by restricting turning movements to locations with dedicated left turn lanes. Restrictions on the number, location, and spacing of driveways along the corridor minimizes congestion and collisions. More detailed study and recommendations for site-specific access management treatments should complement previous studies for the corridor completed by the Town of Huntersville.

**Intersection Treatments:** Intersection treatments along the corridor may include two-way stop control, traffic signals, or roundabouts. More detailed study should be performed for the following intersections with Beatties Ford Road to determine appropriate intersection treatments: Oliver Hager Road and NC Highway 73. Additional studies leading to recommended treatments will involve public input, travel demand forecasting, traffic modeling and simulation, and functional design.

![Hugh Torance Typical Cross Section](image)
The subjects of land use, growth management and preservation have been topics of significant discussion in Huntersville. The challenge facing the Town is how to continue building consensus on a vision that balances the need to accommodate development and the reality of the market place with preservation of the Town’s natural and cultural resources.

Over the last seven years the study area has been growing at a rapid rate. The study area is estimated to contain 8,666 residents, a 183% increase from 3,063 residents in the year 2000. As the study area continues to develop and expand, valuable natural and cultural resources could be lost, affecting the overall quality of life in the western part of the Town of Huntersville infrastructure and land use development are inextricable. New interstate highways, rail transit lines and water and sewer services increase both accessibility and land values. No growth polices and moratoria are only temporary solutions. Instead, the Town's efforts should be focused on devising effective growth management strategies. The Town's adoption of its Strategic Land Plan and performance based zoning code with traditional town planning standards was the first step towards a growth management strategy.

One such strategy that the Town is currently pursuing is the adoption of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), which matches the available capital facilities for the delivery of Police, Fire and Parks & Recreation services with the demand for those facilities.

With the use of GIS based software various maps were presented during a three day charrette to bring focus on growth management issues within the study area. Based upon existing, approved and pending developments, land use and zoning were mapped along with the extensive land areas that present constraints to development. As a result of this analysis, it became clear that the study area’s community design and land use framework would have at its core a strategic open space and land preservation initiative.

### 6.3.1 Design Guidelines

The following community design and land use elements are recommended for the study area:

**Neo-Traditional Pattern:** Continue to strengthen neo-traditional development standards. The neo-traditional pattern maintains the traditional town development pattern, yet responds to today’s market demands. The neo-traditional pattern requires that each community village have a retail core, a base of commercial space to address some if not all of the commercial demand of its residents. Each time residents are able to access these amenities in close proximity to their homes, the number of vehicle trips are reduced, traffic congestion is mitigated and a greater sense of community develops.
Focused Growth Corridors and Nodes: Future growth within the study area should be directed to areas with existing infrastructure capacity or locations where infrastructure extensions or improvements can be made most logically and economically. These locations include:

- Vance Road Corridor Extension
- Long Creek Community (as specified by the Beatties Ford / Mt. Holly-Huntersville Small Area Plan)
- NC 73 Corridor

Open Space Preservation: The character of the built environment and its relationship to the natural landscape forms the image and identity of Huntersville. The Town is at a critical juncture regarding the need to develop a Comprehensive Open Space and Protection Strategy. Growth within the study area is occurring at rapid levels. As land development continues to encroach on previously undeveloped land areas within the Beatties Ford Corridor Study Area, the supply of existing open space is reduced. This condition increases the need to preserve open space, while at the same time making open space protection more expensive due to rising land values resulting from this increased demand for land development.

Six of Mecklenburg County’s fourteen nature preserves are located within the study area. Yet there is no strategic guidance for open space conservation on a regional level. The Open Space Framework and Implementation section of this report provides specific recommendations and approaches to this issue.

Mixed and Multiple Uses: A mixture of land uses, housing, jobs and incomes creates a more balanced community, reduces traffic and creates a better fiscal balance. Use of a village land use classification pattern that reduces reliance on the automobile by allowing a variety of land uses is also a valuable tool in promoting this type of community. The building blocks of a village are neighborhoods which incorporate housing, shops, employment, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of residents.

New mixed-use retail and office centers should be located at the north (NC 73) and south (Mt. Holly - Huntersville Road) ends of the corridor in “hamlet” centers. A hamlet can be defined as a discernible place with a focal point and boundary that maintains and fosters primarily residential, institutional (i.e. places of worship, schools) or recreational activities. 50% or more of its land is dedicated to open space (either a preserve or reserve). It is organized in accordance with a pedestrian scale. Its boundary is typically an agricultural or natural area.

There are a number of uses that are compatible within the neighborhood core as permitted in the Town's Neighborhood Residential (NR) District zoning classification. To enhance these neighborhoods, a percentage of retail in the neighborhood core should be prescribed within the zoning code. Design elements and standards should also be established to ensure retail viability of the core.

Design elements should include:

- Architectural detailing of storefronts
  - Main street shops
  - On street parking
- Building heights two- four stories
- Streetscapes with human and architectural interest
- Mixed use: residential or office over retail
- Site planning for new commercial and mixed-use development is to employ a village-grid development pattern that can easily be adapted or transition between residential, open space, mixed-use and civic uses over time.
- Public/civic open space with green linkages to adjacent neighborhood and parks
6.3.2 Architectural Framework for Community Design

Design standards for commercial development are to reference the rural and historical features of the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. New commercial and civic structures are recommended to be composed of brick and employ Neoclassical/Palladian details in the style reminiscent of Federalist civic architecture, such as that of the historic churches in the area. Regional precedents of Federalist civic buildings (or older Georgian Colonial precedents) are to be found throughout Virginia and the Carolinas, and it is worth mentioning those structures that have been preserved in downtown Alexandria, Virginia, Old Salem in Winston-Salem, and Edenton, N.C. (a fine example is St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Edenton, the oldest brick church in use in North Carolina). The buildings defining the

William J. Bowman Square in Vermillion are contemporary examples in Huntersville that incorporate references to Federalist architecture. The Hopewell Presbyterian Church will serve as the precedent for Federalist period architecture in the study area. Like many of the historic, rural homes in the area, this architecture emphasizes the human scale and exhibits stately restraint in building massing and in the handling of architectural elements and ornamental details.

In order to honor the historic heritage of the Corridor, building elements shall employ the following features and physical guidelines:

- Signage, lighting, and awnings are to be integrated into frieze band above the first story
- Primary building materials are to be masonry, wood, and/or fiber cement board
- Building elements such as frieze, cornice, and columns are to have architecturally correct proportions
- Wood frame windows & mullions
- Significant buildings are to be emphasized by unique architectural features such as towers, clerestory windows, pyramid roofs, and deep overhangs
- Tower elements, either freestanding

SUGGESTED ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALS

Material used for future enhancements of BFR Corridor should reflect the rich historical heritage of the region. Natural materials such as brick, stone, and wood should be used as they reflect a continuity with the historical framework of the area.
or part of a larger building, are located to terminate street vistas, emphasize significant street intersections, and highlight major open spaces

- Masonry details, such as rowlock sills, reveals, stretcher coursing, and corbels, are used to highlighting major building elements

- Traditional storefronts with wood mullions, solid or glass transom, and wood or masonry base

- Entrances are to be defined by features such as awnings, overhangs, lintels, pediments, porches, and recessed facades

- Wide (10’) sidewalks with textured bands and joint spacing to relate to the building’s column/bay spacing

- Split rail wood fencing with stone columns to reflect local historic features (example of a gateway pillar illustrated at right)
At the May 10th open house, public consensus favored the adoption of a mixed-use/hamlet center development concept for those areas designated as appropriate locations for commercial uses. A mixed-use/hamlet center development pattern would require that the following issues be addressed:

- Density/scale
- Land use pattern
- Functional relationships
- Overall image and identity
- Green space system
- Transportation

A "hamlet" can be defined as a discernible place with a focal point and boundary that maintains and fosters residential, commercial, institutional (i.e. places of worship, schools) or recreational uses and activities. It is organized in accordance with a pedestrian scale to permit and encourage non-vehicular transportation options (i.e. walking and biking).
6.4.1 Beatties Ford Road/Highway 73 Development

A mixed use commercial center containing retail, multi-family residential, and civic uses is proposed at the northern end of the study area where Beatties Ford Road, Vance Road and NC 73 intersect. The location and composition of this center will be subject to final determination of the road network recommended by this plan by MUMPO and the Town.

6.4.2 Latta Village:

On January 16, 2007, the Town Board approved a commercial center with approximately 100,000 square feet on 23 acres. The approved plan is anchored by a 55,600 square feet grocery store. An internal grid pattern has been established with the introduction of public streets that provides connections to the Hopewell High School property and Hambright Road.

6.4.3 Long Creek Community:

In 2005, The Town of Huntersville retained the services of Gemini Studios, Warren Associates and the Littlejohn Group to prepare a market based vision for the intersection of Mt. Holly-Huntersville and Beatties Ford Road. The focus of the plan was to create a new “urban village” centered on the Long Creek Elementary School. The plan identified a number of initiatives that are relevant to The Beatties Ford Road Corridor Small Area Plan, including:

- Focusing retail development on Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road (25,000 – 50,000 square feet demand by the year 2015)
- Making the Long Creek Elementary School the focal point of the future Long Creek hamlet center
- Increasing residential development
- Developing a roundabout at McCoy and Beatties Ford Road

The Long Creek Elementary School reconstruction provides significant opportunity for redevelopment of the Long Creek area. Residential uses will be single-family, with a future potential for some attached housing in response to changes in the market. The following sketches and plans support the recommended initiatives of the Mt. Holly-Huntersville/Beatties Ford Road Small Area Plan for residential and commercial uses.
6.5 Open Space and Preservation

During the public participation process for the BFRCSAP, preservation of the historic, rural heritage of the Corridor was a primary concern raised by stakeholders and the public. Continuing preservation of the natural lands and farms of the Corridor will not only preserve the qualities that make the Corridor distinct, protecting the quality of life for the Town of Huntersville, but also serve the greater region through recreation, education, and the continued conservation of the region’s air and water quality, local wildlife and ecological diversity. Conservation planning presents physical solutions and policies for smart growth that should not be misconstrued as “anti-growth”. Conservation strategies are necessary mechanisms of responsible civic management and planning to sustain the economy, resources, public health and future growth of the region. To help gather public support and resources to implement a conservation vision, this plan proposes an open space framework for the BFR Corridor with two primary aims: (1) to designate specific areas for preservation and (2) to build a cohesive open space network, presenting a conceptual framework for integrating these pristine areas with the community. The following framework will highlight and strengthen community assets that the Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg County and their citizens can support and protect for generations.

6.5.1 Open Space Preservation

The primary goal of this plan is to create a preservation vision for the BFR Corridor. Preservation of the area’s historic and rural lands is not only important for preserving the character and quality of life of the Corridor, it is necessary for the preservation of regional assets, namely, the distinct natural communities that still exist in these lands and the critical watersheds, aquatic and riparian habitats that convey and filter water to the inlet of the drinking water supply system for the Town of Huntersville and other communities served by Mountain Island Lake.

Six of the fourteen nature preserves in Mecklenburg County are located within the study area. A number of natural heritage sites are located both inside and outside the County owned nature preserves. Added to these protected areas is a Duke Energy facility just south of NC 73 and adjacent to the Catawba River, which provides conservation areas that function as a waterfowl refuge along the river. These nature preserves form an almost unbroken string of preservation lands along the Catawba River, creating a dominant green border of natural open space to permanently encompass most of the meandering western edge of the study area. With the exception of a few subdivisions, farm house clusters and the CMUD Waste Water Treatment Plant,
the area between the “green border” and Beatties Ford Road is still largely rural, comprised of farms and large private properties that retain scenic pastures. This rural zone is strongly segmented between the rural roads that serve it, and all but one of the roads dead-end without allowing public access to the river, contributing to the inaccessible character of the area. The main public open space facilities serving the western portion of the study area are the Latta Plantation Nature Preserve, the Public Boat Access south of the Auten Nature Preserve, a small observation and picnic facility in the Cowans Ford Wildlife Refuge, and the Richard Barry Memorial Park Athletic Fields Facility now being constructed opposite the BFR and Bud Henderson intersection. Outside of these facilities, the area lacks the accessible, interconnected open space network to link its natural assets to the community. While pursuit of these links is advised (as discussed in Section 6.5.3 following), the focus of new initiatives in lands west of BFR should be to retain preservation goals and to limit recreational use to those areas where preservation interests can support them. An emphasis must be placed on passive and low-impact uses, such as hiking trails, observation decks, boardwalks and similar uses, that minimally impact the environment and allow users to safely enjoy the area’s natural environment.

The areas east of BFR still contain many rural properties, but the prevalence of new subdivision development is greater, especially between Bud Henderson and Hambright Roads, giving the area a predominantly suburban character. The area above Bud Henderson (with the exception of the Beard Family properties on the northern end) is anticipated to become further developed as well. Subdivision development south of Hambright Road will become more limited due to the critical watershed and constraint conditions discussed above and because of the need to keep sufficient buffers around the Piedmont Natural Gas Facility. This area is therefore anticipated to retain its rural character in the long term. The exception will be the residential development that is anticipated to encompass the hamlet center at Beatties Ford and Mount Holly-Huntersville Roads.

For purposes of preservation, the BFRCSAP recommends that the existing Rural zoning be maintained. Development must also be consistent with water quality standards as specified by the Mountain Island Lake Watershed Ordinance. Furthermore, this plan recommends development standards that emphasize conservation of natural lands and existing viewsheds. The Town of Huntersville is encouraged to pursue options for obtaining conservation easements in parcels where farm use is threatened.

6.5.2 Open Space Uses

6.5.2.1 Open Space Districts

Beatties Ford Road (above Hambright Road) is conceptually the boundary between the “residential” section of the Corridor and the “farm/preservation” section west of BFR and below Hambright. In the west, the focus on preservation will create passive areas of natural and scenic beauty for public enjoyment. In the east, the greenways and pedestrian/bikeway networks that are currently being planned for the BFR Corridor will help unify the open space network of the eastern communities of the study area, creating an accessible and cohesive system of recreational spaces. Most new subdivision development in the eastern half of the study area has been exceptional from a public realm standpoint, both in terms of creating integral open space amenities as well as realizing well-linked, walkable street networks that serve the greater community and have the potential
Vulnerable Viewsheds Map

The Vulnerable Viewsheds map highlights the properties with scenic open fields that are currently unconstrained to future development. As shown, these properties are mainly concentrated in the northern part of the study area along Jim Kidd Road, Stephens Road, Cashion Road and Linderman Road (a close-up of the area is shown left). A cluster of vulnerable properties is also concentrated in the southern part of the study area, but most of these fields are in the Critical Watershed areas, which will serve to preclude high-impact development in these areas. A further inventory analysis is recommended to identify strategic focus areas for preservation, based upon the areas identified in this plan.