

PLATEAU SMALL AREA PLAN

Background and Recommendations

In September 1999, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to begin the process of developing small area plans (SAP), as identified in the County's Strategic Growth Plan. A citizen-based committee for the Plateau area, consisting of twelve members, was appointed by the Board of Commissioners in July 2004. The committee met monthly to develop a plan which addresses the following seven issues: 1) land use and community design; 2) transportation; 3) community facilities and public services; 4) housing; 5) economic development; 6) natural resources; and 7) cultural resources.

In order to obtain input on these issues, the committee sponsored a community meeting in November 2004. Nearly one-hundred (100) citizens attended this meeting held at the Banoak Elementary School. The main issues presented at this meeting included traffic on Hwy. 10, loss of farmland/open space to residential development and balancing pressures for growth with rural qualities.

Following are highlights of the Plateau Area Plan:

- Extensive residential rezonings – the committee is recommending the rezoning of all the residential-zoned property within their district. Approximately 30% of the land is proposed to be rezoned to R-1 which would not allow any type of manufactured home. Around 70% is proposed to be rezoned to R-3, which allows for doublewide manufactured homes and stick-built homes (no singlewide manufactured homes.) The basis for the recommendation is to preserve the rural highway corridors and communities of Cooksville and Plateau.
- High residential density is recommended for a corridor along Hwy. 10 from the district's eastern border at Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy. to Propst Crossroads (Hwy. 127). High density would allow three houses per acre with public water, which is available along Hwy. 10.
- Medium residential density is proposed along Hwy. 10 west of the Propst Crossroads to Cat Square Road. This would allow one house per acre with connection to public water available along Hwy. 10.
- Low residential density with two-acre lot sizes is proposed for the remainder of the area to preserve the rural character of the Plateau district.
- Commercial uses would be allowed in the rural and neighborhood commercial nodes. Rural nodes are recommended around Honey's Supermarket on Hwy. 10 at the western-most border of the district and the intersections of Hwy. 10/Cat Square Rd. and Hwy. 10/Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy. A higher-level neighborhood commercial node is recommended at Hwy. 18 at Willis Road. Commercial standards recommended are: landscaped areas along the road frontage and within parking lots, encouraging parking in the rear and downward shielded lighting to minimize light pollution.
- The committee recommends several safety improvements which includes the completion of Hwy. 10 road widening and intersection improvements from the NC Moving Ahead initiative, reduction of speed limits on Hwy. 10 and caution lights at the intersections of Hwy. 10 with Providence Church Road and Old Shelby Road.

- The plan encourages working with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacobs Fork River. This may include conservation easements or acquisition of land for canoe access sites at bridge locations.
- The committee would like partnership opportunities established between the schools and community groups, such as the Banoak Community Center, to provide community-based recreational activities.
- The plan encourages the creation of a “pottery trail” to promote the area’s unique pottery tradition. This trail could extend from Plateau Road into Lincoln County and loop back to Cat Square Road and Hwy. 10. Also, the committee would like to gauge interest from the pottery community to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.

Note: The recommendations, in their entirety, are included in a second handout. Maps referenced in the handout are available for viewing on the County’s web site or at the Planning Department.

The draft plan was then presented to the public at a community meeting held in August 2005. The committee reviewed comments received from this meeting and made amendments to the plan. These changes included restricting singlewides from the district by recommending rezoning the area to R-1 and R-3 and recommending to NCDOT a 45 m.p.h. speed limit on Old Shelby Road and widening the shoulders on Plateau Road.

In mid-October 2005, the Board of Commissioners reviewed the plan recommendations in detail. The Board’s comments were reviewed by the committee at its October 25, 2005 meeting where the committee recommended the plan as amended.

On November 1, 2005, the Plateau committee met jointly with the Planning Board in a work session to review the plan recommendations in detail. A minor amendment was made to the Natural Resources section to establish partnerships with the Foothills Conservancy to preserve and protect the Jacob Fork River for recreation opportunities, conservation areas and as a drinking water supply.

The Planning Board conducted its public hearing on the plan at its November 28, 2005 meeting. The Board recommended the plan as submitted by the committee with a minor amendment to support the Startown SAP recommendation for an interchange at Hwy. 321 and Rocky Ford Road.

The Board of Commissioners will conduct its public hearing on December 19, 2005 and accept your comments on the plan. Upon receiving public comments, the Board may decide to adopt the plan as presented, adopt an amended plan or request additional information prior to adoption.

Should you have any questions regarding the Plateau Small Area Plan, you may contact Mary K. George, County Planner, at (828) 465-8264.