

# PLATEAU SMALL AREA PLAN

## PLAN AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING BOARD

Following are the complete recommendations from the Plateau Small Area Plan identified by issue. Maps referred to are available on the County's web page at:

[http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/planning/small\\_area/plateau/](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/planning/small_area/plateau/)

or the Planning Department.

### ***SECTION I: LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS***

#### **RESIDENTIAL**

LU-1 Designate residential density districts, as shown on *Map 5, "Plateau SAP Future Land Use Recommendations."* The densities indicated are average densities and are not minimum lot sizes.

LU-2 Higher-density residential development, shown in yellow on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile south of NC Highway 10 from Hickory-Lincolnton Highway to the Plateau planning boundary east of Propst Crossroads. This density matches the recommendations from the Mountain View SAP on the north side of NC Highway 10.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 0.34 acres, since the County requires connection to public water wherever service is available.
- .2 Cluster subdivision is encouraged to preserve the rural character of the area.

LU-3 Medium-density residential development, shown in blue on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile on both sides of NC Highway 10 from the Plateau planning boundary west of Propst Crossroads to Cat Square Road.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 1 acre. This density is recommended to take advantage of the

available public water without significantly adding to the congestion on NC Highway 10.

- .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged to preserve the rural character of the area.

LU-4 Lower-density residential development, shown in green on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile north of NC Highway 10 to the northern planning boundary and ¼ mile south of NC Highway 10 to the Lincoln County border. Lower-density development should also occur west of Cat Square Road.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 2 acres.
- .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged.

LU-5 All major residential subdivisions in the Plateau planning area should incorporate the following additional design criteria:

- .1 Require cluster subdivisions to maintain a 30-foot landscaped buffer around the perimeter of the subdivision.
- .2 Provide 30% common open space that is easily accessible and usable for recreation.
- .3 Encourage traditional neighborhood design by adopting techniques such as pedestrian-accessible and walkable neighborhoods through connected streets (including stub-outs instead of cul-de-sacs to encourage future connectivity), greenways or trails, street trees and community amenities such as neighborhood parks. Neighborhoods should also provide a variety of housing types and sizes.
- .4 Limit access in new subdivisions to interior roads and networks (see Transportation Recommendations). This requirement would improve safety and maintain the rural appearance of the area.

LU-6 It is recommended that school capacity no longer be a consideration regarding minimum lot sizes for new developments.

## COMMERCIAL

LU-7 Commercial businesses in the Plateau planning area should adhere to the following appearance and design criteria:

- .1 Require landscaped areas along road frontages and within parking areas located in front or side yards.
- .2 Encourage parking areas to be located to the side or rear of buildings.

- .3 Encourage mixed-use development at commercial nodes. (This concept allows residential and commercial uses in the same building.)
- .4 Commercial development should be aesthetically pleasing, designed at a walkable pedestrian scale and create a desirable destination point.
- .5 Abundant landscaping should be provided at site entrances, in public areas and adjacent to buildings. All loading, storage and maintenance areas should also be heavily landscaped.
- .6 Lighting at all commercial or mixed-use development be angled downward and shielded to avoid illuminating the night sky.

LU-8 A Rural Commercial Node should be designated at the following intersections (see *Map 5*):

- .1 Honey's Supermarket
- .2 NC Highway 10 at Cat Square Road – the intersection should be redesigned to accommodate increased traffic.
- .3 NC Highway 10 at Hickory-Lincolnton Highway – the intersection should be redesigned to accommodate increased traffic.

The Rural Commercial Node should serve residents of the immediate neighborhood with maximum site area of 10 acres and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot. Re-examination of the Rural Commercial Nodes should occur within five years or when transportation funding through NC Moving Ahead becomes available to determine whether the area available for commercial development is sufficient or if a Neighborhood Commercial designation is warranted.

LU-9 A Neighborhood Commercial Node should be designated at the following intersection (see *Map 5*):

- .1 NC Highway 18 at Willis Road

The Neighborhood Commercial Node should include a mix of commercial, office-institutional, and residential uses with a site area of 10 to 25 acres and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot.

LU-10 In addition to the commercial nodes proposed above, the Committee recognizes that other commercial, industrial and/or office-institutional development opportunities exist at the Neighborhood Commercial Node designated on NC Highway 127 at Propst Crossroads immediately north of the planning area and in the ED-I zoning district east of Hickory-Lincolnton Highway.

## OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL

LU-11 Office and institutional uses should be allowed within the Rural and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Otherwise, the Committee believes that the land currently zoned for office and institutional purposes is adequate.

LU-12 Redevelopment of office and institutional uses should strive to preserve the rural viewshed by adhering to the design standards recommended for commercial development.

LU-13 Abundant landscaping should be provided to screen parking, loading, storage and maintenance areas.

## INDUSTRIAL

LU-14 The land currently zoned for industrial uses is adequate. The Committee is concerned that the road systems in the Plateau planning area cannot handle the increased traffic (especially large trucks) associated with additional industrial uses.

LU-15 Nonconforming industrial uses should not be rezoned to allow expansion.

LU-16 Redevelopment of industrial zoned property should strive to preserve the rural viewshed by adhering to the design standards recommended for commercial development.

LU-17 Abundant landscaping should be provided to screen parking, loading, storage and maintenance areas.

## OPEN SPACE

LU-18 Thirty (30) percent of total acreage in single-family subdivisions should be required to be dedicated as common open space, which may be located within the development for community use, natural areas or along the perimeters of the development. Existing vegetation should be allowed to provide this open-space buffer if deemed adequate.

LU-19 Preserve green space specifically for passive recreational uses, including hiking trails, primitive camping areas, canoe access, etc.

## **SECTION II: TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Catawba County does not maintain roads and therefore the following recommendations will be forwarded to NCDOT or used in areawide thoroughfare planning. Note: For the following recommendations, refer to *Map 6, "Plateau SAP Transportation Recommendations."*

## ROADS & HIGHWAYS

### Request from NCDOT District Office:

- T-1 Improve communication by transportation officials when advertising public hearings for new roads, road changes, etc., which may include individual notification to affected property owners.
- T-2 Evaluate traffic engineering at all schools. Turn lanes should be mandatory when new schools are built. Roads at existing schools should be retrofitted with turn lanes and caution lights should be added.
- .1 At Banoak Elementary School, a caution light on the west side should be installed before the crest of the hill to warn drivers of the school.
- T-3 Install caution lights or similar devices at:
- .1 NC Highway 10 at Providence Church Road – a left turn lane is also recommended for traffic heading east on NC Highway 10
  - .2 NC Highway 10 at Old Shelby Road – a left turn lane is also recommended for traffic heading east on NC Highway 10
- T-4 Redesign intersections at:
- .1 NC Highway 10 and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway – Add protected left turn arrows.
  - .2 Rocky Ford Road and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway. – Many GDS trucks use this route to get to the landfill and there have been several serious accidents at this intersection.
  - .3 NC Highway 10 and NC Highway 127 – Add protected left turn movements to improve traffic and safety near Fred T. Foard High School.
  - .4 NC Highway 10 at Blackburn Elementary School – The Committee supports the *NC Moving Ahead* project to redesign this intersection.
  - .5 Banoak Road and Lefevers Road at Banoak Elementary School – Most school traffic exits onto NC Highway 10 via this intersection.
  - .6 NC Highway 10 at Cat Square Road.
  - .7 Old Shelby Road at Rhoney Farm Road – Sight distances are very limited for northbound drivers on Rhoney Farm Road.
  - .8 Old Shelby Road at Cooksville Road – Consider adding a left turn lane into the Cooksville Grill on Old Shelby Road.
- T-5 Reduce the speed limit on the following roads:
- .1 NC Highway 10 between Willis' Package Store and the Lincoln County line – The Committee recommends reducing the speed from 55 to 45 mph because of sharp curves and traffic around Honey's Supermarket.
  - .2 NC Highway 10 from Propst Crossroads to Providence Church Road – reduce speed limit to 45 mph.
  - .3 Old Shelby Road – reduce speed limit to 45 mph.

- T-6 Improve the following roads for safety purposes:
- .1 When *NC Moving Ahead* funding is available, recommend straightening curves on Plateau Road.
  - .2 When *NC Moving Ahead* funding is available, recommend straightening sharp curves on Old Shelby Road before the Burke County line.
  - .3 Improve visibility at the steep embankment on Providence Church Road at NC Highway 10.
  - .4 Widen bridge on Old Shelby Road south of Greedy Highway.
  - .5 Widen Cat Square Road.
  - .6 Widen shoulders on Plateau Road between Grace Church Road and Scronce Road to provide additional safety margin on curvy section of road.
- T-7 Explore possible local scenic highway designation for the following road(s):
- .1 Old Shelby Road
  - .2 Greedy Highway
  - .3 Hickory-Lincolnton Highway
  - .4 Create a "Pottery Trail" extending down Plateau Rd. from the intersection of Propst Crossroads to Burts Road into Lincoln County where it becomes Zur Leonard Road to Cat Square Road and north on NC Highway 10 in order to introduce visitors to the local pottery tradition.

*Revisions to the Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan:*

- T-8 Add an extra 1-2 feet of asphalt to Old Shelby Road when repaving.
- T-9 Add an extra 1-2 feet of asphalt to Plateau Road when repaving.
- T-10 Recommend a new interchange on US Hwy. 321 at Rocky Ford Road to help alleviate industrial truck traffic, especially trucks from Blackburn Landfill, on Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy.

*Amend the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to:*

- T-11 Minimize driveways along thoroughfares by encouraging service roads for residential and non-residential development.
- T-12 Establish regulations that all new residential driveways connecting to major and minor collector streets must be at least 12 feet wide for the first 20 feet of length with a minimum 3-foot turn radii. In the Plateau planning area, these roads include NC Highway 10, NC Highway 18, Hickory-Lincolnton Highway, Plateau Road, Cat Square Road, Rhoney Farm Road, and Old Shelby Road (see *Map 6*).

## PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

T-13 When Banoak Elementary School expands, add a pedestrian crosswalk across Lefevers Road to Ritchie Field.

## BICYCLE SYSTEM

T-14 The Plateau SAP supports the bicycle routes previously submitted to NCDOT for approval (see *Map 6*).

T-15 Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along the designated bicycle routes for increased safety.

## TRANSIT SYSTEM

T-16 Enhance Piedmont Wagon routes to provide increased service for the elderly.

T-17 Request Catawba County to initiate a feasibility study for expanding the Piedmont Wagon route into the Plateau community.

## PASSENGER RAIL

T-18 Encourage Piedmont Wagon to schedule trips to coordinate with the Western North Carolina passenger rail service.

# **SECTION III: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES RECOMMENDATIONS**

## SCHOOLS

CF-1 Recommend that the Catawba County Board of Education accelerate funding for the planned additions to Banoak Elementary School to ease projected overcrowding. These renovations are essential to the continued success of the school and should be completed as soon as possible.

CF-2 Establish partnership opportunities between the schools and other community groups to enhance the use of local facilities, such as the Banoak Community Center, for community and recreational activities.

CF-3 The County should remove school capacity as a factor in determining residential density for new developments when the Plateau Small Area Plan land use and housing recommendations are adopted.

CF-4 School planners should use the future residential density recommendations made by the Plateau Small Area Planning Committee when identifying school expansion needs.

### PARKS AND GREENWAYS

CF-5 Work with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacob Fork River. Explore the possibility of developing formal public canoe access, which would alleviate landowners' concerns about trespassing, boater safety and parking access.

CF-6 Explore the adaptive reuse of the southern portion of the Blackburn landfill site for recreational activities, such as a golf course or putt-putt course, hiking, biking and walking trails, picnic areas, a ropes course, an educational forest, a swimming pool or a community meeting facility.

### LIBRARIES

CF-7 Maintain existing levels of library service and increase as needed. Explore options for locating public library facilities on school sites.

### WATER/SEWER SERVICES

CF-8 Partner with municipalities to provide utilities that are consistent with adopted land use plans, "smart growth" principles and higher-density development areas.

CF-9 Continue to pursue Community Development Block Grants for the expansion of utilities.

CF-10 Expand availability of public funding for failing septic systems.

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

CF-11 Maintain existing levels of service.

CF-12 Continue to support and develop measures to reduce medical response times.

## ***SECTION IV: HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS***

### **ALL RESIDENTIAL USES**

- H-1 The Plateau Small Area Plan Committee recommends the Planning Board and staff investigate the possibility of developing a County-wide minimum housing standard. It should apply to single-family, multi-family housing and rental housing, with standards limiting the number of individuals inhabiting a single dwelling unit.
- H-2 Where possible, landscaping and buffering should be done with native vegetation. Native plants generally survive better and require less maintenance than non-native species.

### **SINGLE-FAMILY**

- H-3 Residential subdivisions should incorporate the following additional design criteria:
- .1 Require cluster subdivisions to maintain at 30-foot landscaped buffer around the perimeter of the subdivision.
  - .2 Provide thirty (30) percent common open space that is easily accessible and usable for recreation.
  - .3 Encourage traditional neighborhood design by adopting techniques such as pedestrian-accessible and walkable neighborhoods through connected streets (including stub-outs instead of cul-de-sacs to encourage future connectivity), greenways or trails, street trees and community amenities such as neighborhood parks. Neighborhoods should also provide a variety of housing types and sizes.
  - .4 Limit access in new subdivisions to interior roads and networks (see Transportation Recommendations). This requirement would improve safety and maintain the rural appearance of the area.
  - .5 Develop higher-density single-family housing where appropriate infrastructures and services exist or are planned.

### **MANUFACTURED HOMES**

- H-4 Rezone the areas shown on *Map 7, Plateau SAP Proposed Zoning Map Amendments*.
- .1 Approximately 30% of the land in the Plateau SAP is proposed for rezoning to R-1 (which allows stick-built or modular homes). The basis for this rezoning is to preserve the appearance and character of the higher-density area along NC Highway 10. R-1 is also proposed along the NC Highway 18 corridor to preserve views along the major rural highway. The

“Cooksville” and “Plateau” areas are also proposed to be R-1 because they are established communities with few existing manufactured homes.

- .2 Approximately 70% percent of the land in the Plateau SAP is proposed for rezoning to R-3 (which allows double-wide manufactured homes, modular homes and site-built homes). The basis for this rezoning is to preserve the rural views as well as property values in the Plateau community.

H-5 Allow existing manufactured homes in the R-1 and R-3 zoning district to be replaced with manufactured homes based on their nonconforming status.

### MULTI-FAMILY

H-6 Lack of public water and sewer service limits the feasibility of large-scale multi-family developments in the Plateau planning area. To accommodate affordable housing needs, duplexes should continue to be allowed on individual lots and in residential subdivisions, provided that the following criteria have been met:

- .1 Duplexes should be required to have 1.5 times the land area required for single-family homes.
- .2 Duplexes are encouraged to blend in with the character of surrounding individual homes through shared driveways and design of the front entrances.

H-7 Multi-family housing should be permitted as part of a mixed-use development in the Neighborhood Commercial Node (see Land Use Recommendations).

### RETIREMENT

H-8 As with multi-family housing, lack of public water and sewer service limits the feasibility of retirement communities in the Plateau area. Homebuilders should consider the needs of seniors when designing new homes.

## ***SECTION V: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS***

ED-1 Explore the interest of the local pottery community in working together to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.

ED-2 A Neighborhood Commercial Node is proposed for the intersection of NC Highway 18 and Willis Road in the southwest corner of the Plateau area. See *Map 5, “Plateau SAP Future Land Use Recommendations.”* This node should include a mix of commercial and residential uses with a site area of 10 to 25 acres and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot.

ED-3 Three Rural Commercial Nodes are proposed for the Plateau area. The Rural Commercial Nodes should serve residents of the immediate neighborhood with maximum site area of 10 acres and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot. They are recommended for the following intersections (see *Map 5*):

- .1 NC Highway 10 and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway. This node borders the Startown and Mountain View planning areas and would provide supporting retail development for the industrial activities that may occur north of the landfill.
- .2 NC Highway 10 and Rhoney Farm/Cat Square Roads. This node is designed to allow some expansion of the small commercial area already existing at this intersection.
- .3 NC Highway 10 at Honey's Supermarket near the Lincoln County border. The node allows limited expansion of the commercial area already existing at this location.

## **SECTION VI: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS**

### NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

- NC-1 Encourage open space preservation by seeking opportunities for conservation easements, wetland mitigation and educational programs for farmers. One available option is offered by the North Carolina Division of Natural Resources' Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP), which identifies opportunities for stream mitigation in targeted watersheds to mitigate NCDOT construction projects elsewhere.
- NC-2 Evaluate conservation opportunities to preserve the unique characteristics of the Jacobs Fork River in the vicinity of the Catawba Valley Wildlife Club.
- NC-3 Support the continuation of agricultural and farming activities, including related activities such as roadside stands.
- NC-4 Preserve the community's open spaces through density controls, zoning and subdivision regulations which establish higher-density and lower-density residential districts (see *Map 5, "Plateau SAP Future Land Use Recommendations"*).
- NC-5 Thirty percent of total acreage should be required as open space in single-family subdivisions, which may be located within the development as community-use

open space, along the perimeters of the development and/or contained in the 30-foot buffer along road frontage required in cluster subdivisions.

NC-6 Consider requesting the North Carolina legislative authority, if necessary, to allow Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), which would encourage development in areas with adequate infrastructure and preserve open space in more rural parts of the county like the Plateau community.

NC-7 Establish partnership opportunities with the Foothills Conservancy to preserve and protect segments of the Jacob Fork River for recreation opportunities, conservation areas and as a drinking water supply.

#### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

NC-8 Work with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacob Fork River. Explore the possibility of developing formal public canoe access, which would alleviate landowners' concerns about trespassing, boater safety and parking access.

NC-9 Establish partnership opportunities between the schools and other community groups to enhance the use of local facilities, such as the Banoak Community Center, for community and recreational activities.

NC-10 Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along designated bicycle routes for increased safety.

NC-11 Explore the adaptive reuse of the southern portion of the Blackburn landfill site for recreational activities, such as a golf course or putt-putt course, hiking, biking and walking trails, picnic areas, a ropes course, an educational forest, a swimming pool or a community meeting facility.

#### CULTURAL RESOURCES

NC-12 In order to introduce visitors to the local pottery tradition, create a "Pottery Trail" extending down Plateau Rd. from the intersection of Propst Crossroads to Burts Road into Lincoln County where it becomes Zur Leonard Road to Cat Square Road and north on NC Highway 10 back to Propst Crossroads.

NC-13 Explore the interest of the local pottery community in working together to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.

NC-14 Encourage the continued preservation of Hart Square.

NC-15 Encourage the application of adaptive reuse techniques for historic properties in the Plateau area.