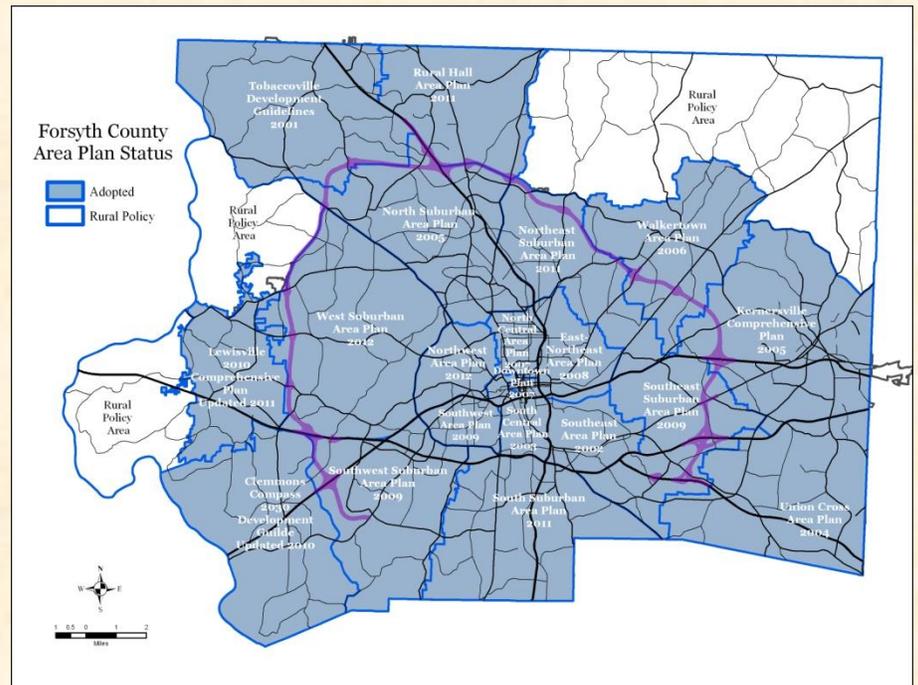


# The Area Planning Process: General Questions and Answers

## The Legacy Toolkit

**What is an Area Plan?** *Legacy*, the comprehensive plan for Forsyth County, presents the big picture for future development of the community. The Area Plan program uses the planning concepts found in *Legacy* to make specific planning recommendations on a community and neighborhood level. The City-County Planning Board has divided Forsyth County into twenty Planning Areas with Area Plans scheduled to be updated on a rotating basis. Each Area Plan contains information about an area's existing conditions as well as recommendations for guiding future growth and development. The Plans are adopted by the City-County Planning Board and appropriate elected officials including the City Council, County Commissioners, or small town councils depending on the jurisdictions effected.



**How can citizens get involved in Area Planning?** Citizen participation is a crucial part of the Area Plan process. There are a number of ways citizens can have input into the process:

- Public meetings are held throughout the area planning process. All interested citizens are invited to participate as we generate solutions to future development issues and other planning concerns.
- Information relating to the plan will be kept on our website throughout the planning process.
- Citizens may also speak at Planning Board and elected body public hearings during Plan adoption. This is a chance for citizens to support the Plan or discuss recommendations in the Plan they do not agree with.

**How are recommendations made for an Area Plan?** A number of sources are used in developing Area Plan recommendations. With input from local citizens, planning staff formulates recommendations concerning future land use, transportation, community facilities, historic preservation, housing, design and appearance, economic development and the environment.

It should be noted that other adopted long-range plans, especially adopted road and highway plans from both the North Carolina and Winston-Salem Departments of Transportation, provide many of the recommendations that are proposed in an Area Plan. Long-range (topical) plans that are consulted for each Area Plan include the Parks and Open Space Plan, the Greenway Plan, the Sidewalk and Pedestrian Plan, the Bicycle Plan, utility plans and the Long-Range Transportation Plan (all for Forsyth County). Staff from other City and County departments also give input into plan recommendations.

The Proposed Land Use Plan for the Planning Area is typically the centerpiece of each Area Plan and is developed using citizen recommendations and planning principles described in *Legacy*. When making land use recommendations, the following factors are considered for each property/area: accessibility to roads, sewer availability, public transportation, future new roads, historic resources, topography, zoning, the need for local services, and the availability of vacant land. Existing land use patterns are particularly important, both in terms of new development being compatible with existing development as well as how older commercial/industrial uses impact older neighborhoods. In some instances, the recommendations spell out specific conditions for development of sensitive areas or nonconforming businesses.

# The Area Planning Process: General Questions and Answers

## *The Legacy Toolkit*

**How does a land use plan relate to zoning?** The Land Use Plan contained in each Area Plan is different than zoning. All property in Forsyth County is zoned for a particular land use ranging from residential districts defined by density to nonresidential districts defined by specific uses such as Industrial or Office. The Proposed Land Use Plan does not rezone property; it reflects the vision of the community for land use in the future. Land owners wanting to change the use of their property must still bring it through the rezoning process. Zoning requests that are in line with an adopted Area Plan have a better chance of support from staff and boards.

**What topics are not covered by Area Plans?** Area Plans deal with the physical development of a community. Issues such as crime, schools, utilities, housing and business regulations/inspections and city permitting issues are sometimes brought up as issues in Area Plan meetings, but are not dealt with in Area Plans. Planning staff is happy to document any problems and suggestions and forward them to the appropriate agencies and departments. Additionally, recommendations relating to new roads, greenways, sidewalks, and similar community facilities are not developed as part of the Area Plan process. These recommendations are taken out of existing topical plan documents and are simply included in Area Plans to aid in the development of land use recommendations.

**How is an Area Plan used?** The Plan contains recommendations to help the Planning Board, governing bodies, community leaders, and neighborhoods of Forsyth County make decisions on zoning, public investment, and private initiatives. An implementation table with recommended actions and projects is developed for each Area Plan. Inclusion of a recommended project in the Area Plan does not mean the recommended project has funding, but the recommendations are prioritized and considered along with other projects/programs by various City/County departments and the elected officials. Government projects are funded in a variety of ways including bonds, bond referendums, transportation funds (federal, state, local), stimulus funding, general government funds, the Motor Vehicle tax, Capital Improvements, and Community Development Block Grants.

**How do I learn more about Area Plans?** Go to [www.cityofws.org/planning](http://www.cityofws.org/planning) and click on “Area Plans” in the left-hand column. There is a general discussion on Area Plans, as well as a page for each individual Plan which covers the status of the Plan, upcoming meetings, and other information.

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**The Planning Board is funded jointly by the Winston-Salem City Council and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.** Contact the City-County Planning Board at 336.727.8000 or visit our web site at [www.cityofws.org/planning](http://www.cityofws.org/planning).

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