



Looking back....Looking Forward

A review of 2010 in Planning and What's Ahead in 2011



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As the 2010 calendar year draws to a close and the new year is upon us, it's a good time to "look out from the balcony" at what has happened and what to look

forward to. Despite a slow economy, the City-County Planning Board and staff have been quite busy preparing for the increased activity that will surely be coming!

2010: A lot of planning activities!

Most activities in 2010 can be grouped into the categories of Area Plans, Studies and Reports, Census 2010 activities, Historic Preservation, Community Appearance, and Development Review and *Unified Development Ordinance* (UDO) amendments.

Area Plans. 2010 saw a heavy amount of activity with Area Plans. The *Northeast Suburban Area Plan* was completed with the help of a number of citizens in the area, was recommended by the City-County Planning Board, and is pending approval by the City Council and County Commissioners. The *South Suburban Area Plan* was likewise completed, and is pending review by the two elected bodies. Two new plans were started in the fall of 2010, the *Rural Hall Area Plan* and the *West Suburban Area Plan*, and the *Northwest Area Plan* process is scheduled to begin in the early part of 2011. With the completion of these three plans around mid-2011, all Forsyth County except for the outlying rural areas will be covered by an adopted area plan for the first time!

Also, a major regional cooperative effort to prepare a collaborative vision for the area in the center of the Piedmont Triad culminated in the completion and adoption by seven local governments of the *Heart of the Triad Plan*. The Plan maps out a collective vision for economic development, residential development, needed services, transportation facilities, open space, and farmland preservation in the broad area between Union Cross Road in Forsyth County and the area just west of the Piedmont Triad International Airport in Guilford County.

Special Studies and Reports.

A variety of special studies and reports were prepared by the Planning staff this past year. For the upcoming *Legacy* update, Planning staff has been doing a combination of map review and field work so that for the first time ever, an existing land use map of the entire county can be published.

Additionally, at the request of the County Commissioners, staff is completing a study of development trends, constraints and issues in the western rural area of the county. The City Council requested an update to the Revitalizing Urban Commercial Areas (RUCA) study that had been done previously as the Council considered whether and how to expand the funding of the program. The Council also requested mapping of multifamily residential zoning patterns, which revealed how such zoning is scattered among the different areas of the city.

In order to better prepare for future industrial economic development, Planning staff updated a study done many years ago of existing and potential industrial zoning so that the city and county can maintain an adequate supply

of land well-suited for future economic opportunities. An updated *Trends Report* was also prepared and published, reflecting changes in population, development and economic activity for the area and its peer regions in North Carolina and the Southeast.



2010 Census Complete Count efforts.

Planning staff coordinated the efforts of community leaders in public outreach efforts concerning the 2010 Census. At stake are many millions of federal and state dollars that are provided to local communities each year based on population numbers to help provide essential public services to citizens in the community. Winston-Salem and Forsyth County ended up with one of the higher rates of response for larger communities in the state, thanks to the efforts which were made. We will learn the results from the 2010 Census in the first quarter of 2011.

Historic Preservation. Planning staff prepared for review by affected property owners and the Historic Resources Commission a draft update of the design guidelines for the Old Salem and Bethabara Local Historic Districts.

The new guidelines, once adopted, will provide better guidance to future preservation efforts for properties in those two unique districts. Phase III of the Forsyth County Architectural Inventory was completed, providing an expanded

database both geographically and chronologically, of historic resources in the city and county. Additionally, three additional local historic markers were placed during 2010 at Odd Fellows Cemetery, Carver High School, and the Sawtooth Center.

Community Appearance. The annual Community Roots Day was conducted this October in the Happy Hill neighborhood, making good use of hundreds of volunteers of all ages to plant trees along the streets and public spaces. Additionally, the Community Appearance Commission (CAC) sponsored five free seminars to the public offering training and education concerning topics ranging from proper tree pruning to holiday wreath making.



Development Review and UDO Amendments. In addition to the 43 rezoning cases processed in 2010, planning staff coordinated the review of 11 Planning Board site plan reviews, 3 preliminary subdivision plans, and 164 plats. The staff also increased its efforts to engage the community in the rezoning process by increasing the amount of signage on and around sites proposed for rezoning, listing proposed rezoning cases on TV 13, and sending letters to over 120 known neighborhood organizations urging them to monitor the proposed zoning cases posted each month on the City-County Planning web site. UDO amendments completed and adopted during 2010 included the new Winston Overlay District guiding elements of downtown building design and placement; provisions to encourage and guide commercial urban infill development; and consolidating some use classifications in the UDO to make changes of use easier for businesses and Inspections staff.



2011: Getting ready for 120,000 more people over the next 20 years!

A key work item for both the Planning Board and staff in 2011 will be updating the *Legacy Comprehensive Plan* for the city and county to extend to the year 2030. By that date, the State Demographer projects that Forsyth County will grow to almost half a million people! How can we provide for 120,000 additional residents and 60,000 additional jobs in a way that will still preserve and maintain the quality living environment that people here have come to expect? How can we take advantage of the trends that have begun to emerge in terms of the attractiveness of urban living, the advantages of having local agriculture, the changes in our demographics that are demanding more variety in housing

options, the desire for more active living and recreational environments, and more sustainable and affordable transportation options? The *Legacy* update is intended to take the very relevant principles of sustainability in the current *Legacy* plan and project them out 20 years so that development patterns, the design of our neighborhoods, and our public infrastructure all work together to make our community livable and affordable well into the future! As the Planning staff and Board develop the background information for this effort, several opportunities for the community to offer ideas and input will be offered.

Other planning efforts in 2011 will include an examination of transit “people-mover” options for the expected growth in jobs, residents, students and tourists in the central city area, an update of the Downtown Plan as well the completion of the three Area Plans currently underway, work with the Atkins Community Development Corporation concerning the future of development in the Martin Luther King Jr. Drive corridor, completion of procedures and policies for street naming, renaming and addressing, and examination of the preliminary results of the 2010 Census when the data is released for our community in 2011.

So, as we take a breath at the holidays from the busy year of planning activities in 2010, we look forward to working with the community as we plan for the future in 2011! Happy New Year!

Want more information?

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The Planning Board is funded jointly by the Winston-Salem City Council and the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners.

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