Town of Garner, NC

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN

September 2006

GARNER

A Great Place to Be

TOWN OF GARNER

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN

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TOWN OF GARNER

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN

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TOWN OF GARNER

COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** for the Town of Garner is intended to provide a long-range vision for land development and redevelopment opportunities, community infrastructure decisions, and community image. The plan is an update of the previous comprehensive plan, the *Centennial Long Range Plan, 2005,* that was adopted in 1989. This plan is a comprehensive update and it still maintains the use of the nodal theory of urban development as the primary land use model for guiding future growth. The earlier plan provided a good tool for planning and decision-making for some time, changes in the rate and patterns of growth have necessitated an update take place.

Located in Wake County, the Town of Garner is immediately south of the City of Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. Garner is located near the Town of Clayton to the east, Fuquay-Varina to the southwest and Raleigh to the north. With close proximity to the Research Triangle Park, Garner has good access to excellent educational and business opportunities in the larger region. The location of Garner influences its growth and development. Interstate 40 which passes through the eastern portion of Garner, offers regional access and new development opportunities.

Garner is most popularly known for its small, hometown setting. The Town encompasses a total of 14 square miles within its boundary. Three major highways, U.S. 70, Interstate 40 and U.S. 401 provide major connections to surrounding towns and cities. The North Carolina Railroad runs through the Town, north of U.S. 70, through downtown Garner. The project area for the new **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** includes the Town of Garner, its Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) and the Urban Service Area. The area of the Town of Garner and its ETJ is approximately 29.35 square miles. The area of the Urban Service Area (future growth area) s 45.29 square miles.

This comprehensive plan report presents recommendations and strategies for the future development of Garner. The Appendix at the end of the Plan document contains an overview of existing conditions within Garner.

PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to develop the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** was community driven. The plan is intended to be a reflection of the citizens of Garner values and visions for the future. The plan was prepared in a multi-step process that relied on input from the general public as well as the steering committee. The members of the steering committee were chosen based on their commitment and position within the community. The goal was to have a diverse committee that would represent all aspects of Garner in the decision-making processes.

The first step in the process was to define the existing trends, opportunities, and constraints within the community. This was accomplished through a community survey, stakeholder interviews, a thorough analysis of existing conditions, and a Town Workshop Meeting. The issues, ideas, concepts, and desires that came out of this process form the framework for specific recommendations that are included in the plan.

Map 1

Vicinity Map

Comprehensive Growth Plan
Town of Garner, North Carolina

PLAN VISION

The Town of Garner Steering Committee took the lead in developing a Vision Statement for the community. This vision statement forms the basis for the planning process and guidance for the plan's recommendations.

*The Town of Garner is a **"Community of Choice"** for residents and businesses that maximize the desirability of its existing built environment while encouraging new economic, environmental, and cultural opportunities through well planned growth with appropriate infrastructure. This is being accomplished by:*

- *continuing to strive for high quality economic and community development and redevelopment, including attracting larger corporations that gainfully employ local residents;*
- *more diverse and upscale commercial businesses locating in Garner;*
- *current trends continuing towards more quality housing;*
- *schools acting as a magnet for growth, attracting new residents to the Town and enhancing housing values;*
- *Garner's transportation system moving people and goods efficiently by providing a selection of viable multi-modal options including safe, aesthetic pedestrian linkages;*
- *the Town's overall image continuing to be enhanced through beautification of its major transportation corridors and its public spaces; and*
- *the efficient administration of Garner's resources and the effective partnership between the Town's public and private sectors.*

PURPOSE OF PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to update and replace the 1989 Centennial Long Range Plan. The new plan identifies and guides desired growth through a well thought-out set of land use and development plans and policies. The plan provides a framework for making land development and zoning decisions, promoting orderly land use, implementing public improvements, and generating private investment. In addition, the plan outlines the vision of what the residents of Garner want their community to be in the future and provides a detailed strategy to achieve that vision.

The new **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** provides a long-range vision for development to guide the Town's growth into the year 2020. Last year, Garner celebrated its one hundred years of incorporation, and its next century begins with this plan.

This plan is intended to be a tool in making development related decisions within the Town, ETJ and the designated growth areas. Although the Plan is an officially adopted policy document, it is not a development control ordinance. It provides flexibility as development requests are submitted for review, but also establishes firm

recommendations as to how and where development should occur with sensitivity to the established pattern and natural resources. It provides the background for making zoning decisions, development ordinance revisions, implementation for public improvements, and encouragement for private investment regarding the development and redevelopment of properties in the Town of Garner. It provides guidance for the citizens to determine a predictable pattern of development in relationship to their property and what they want their community to become in the future. It is based on sound planning principles and practices. To this resolve, the plan is conceptual and is not intended to dictate an exact development pattern.

The **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** presents ideas and strategies to be used in the evaluation of future development plans and outlines specific strategies in the following categories:

1. Population
2. Housing
3. Commercial and Business Development
4. Open Space
5. Economic Development
6. Community Image
7. Land Use
8. Transportation
9. Implementation Strategies

The recommendations presented in this plan link the community functions, needs and development locations for growth on a policy level. These become a coordinated effort with responsibilities for all within the town. In order for this to occur, the recommendations of the Plan should be implemented and the policies applied in the review of ordinances and development plans.

BACKGROUND

In 1989, the Town of Garner adopted *The Centennial Long Range Plan*, which was intended to guide the growth and development to the Centennial Celebration in 2005. That plan has served the Town well over the past sixteen years, and those policies outlined have contributed greatly in the development within Garner. However the 1989 plan needed to be updated to take into account growth, services, new priorities and issues not anticipated or known at that time. Therefore, the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** serves as an update to the *Centennial Plan* where certain practices are carried over and refined to fit in today's environment.

The nodal concept adopted in the 1989 Plan is recognized as the preferred pattern of land development for Garner. Those principles have been retained, refined and expanded to the changing environment for the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN."**

Prior to the preparation of the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN,"** the Small Area Plan for North Garner, which includes the traditional downtown area, was written and adopted in October 2004. That plan is a more detailed or specific look at the Town north of US 70. It examines individual tracts and schematic development designs for redevelopment in downtown, historic and neighborhood preservation, open space and the potential location for the regional rail transit station. Elements of the North Garner Plan are incorporated by reference as a part of this **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN."**

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, FINDINGS, AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

As is found in the Vision Statement, the policies, guidelines, and recommendations for this Plan come from the community. Involvement in the planning process on the part of community leaders, business owners and residents of Garner occurred at multiple levels. The Steering Committee, made up of residents, community leaders, and business owners, was engaged in a number of meetings. The role of the steering committee is to represent a broad base of interests in guiding the planning process and land use planning framework. The public was engaged through a random Community Survey and several Town Meetings including an "Open House."

A number of key issues that impact the quality of life in Garner were identified during the data collection process and public meetings. These issues identified specific concerns of the community and presented opportunities for the future. They were analyzed against the community background information on community growth, services, transportation, land use, natural resources and demographics.

The following is a summary of the key issues and comments raised during the public involvement process. The public had the opportunity to provide input during stakeholder interviews, a public survey, and several public meetings prior to Plan adoption.

Growth and Development

Garner has a positive attitude toward growth and development so long as the growth does not compromise the positive aspects of the community. Residents of the Town would like to see several specific businesses in their Town (i.e. bookstore, more family restaurants, grocery stores, etc.), they feel that Garner lacks variety in its housing stock, and additional health care facilities are also needed in Garner.

Specific issues include:

- Need to preserve Garner's small town atmosphere.
- Good business climate in Garner, many opportunities for commercial development.
- Need to expand the non-residential tax base.
- Consider incentives for development to attract appropriate growth in Garner.
- Town needs to be competitive with other communities in attracting quality jobs for citizens.
- Need a variety of housing alternatives in Garner, i.e. townhomes, patio homes, retirement communities, and high-end residential.
- Growth in Garner needs to be controlled, quality growth is better than quantity.
- Improve shopping and industrial areas on U.S. Highway 401.
- Consider developing more commercial uses on U. S. Highway 70, utilizing Garner's historic downtown area.
- Appropriate redevelopment should be encouraged at the same time as new development.

Community Image and Design

Many residents of Garner fear the negative impact of rapid growth and development; they do not want to lose the quality community and positive reputation they currently enjoy. They are concerned about the results/consequences of too much growth (i.e. increased traffic congestion, higher taxes, and overcrowded schools).

Specific issues include:

- Garner has a small, hometown feel with a reputation for quality.
- Town needs a "historical and cultural centerpiece."
- Residential homeowners should be encouraged to maintain their properties; poorly maintained properties are creating a negative image for the Town.
- Downtown Garner lacks a "sense of place." This historic area should be utilized for commercial development as other areas of the Town are developed.

Community Facilities

Community facilities are the buildings or infrastructure generally used by the public and funded by the town, county or state, which include schools, libraries, town hall, recreation facilities, police and fire stations and similar types of uses . Schools and educational quality are among the greatest concerns among residents of Garner. Residents are also concerned with the higher rates for water and sewer usage. While residents are happy to receive this service from the City of Raleigh, they are concerned about the high cost.

Specific issues include:

- Garner needs to encourage more alternatives in schools and education (i.e. year round schools, magnet schools).
- Garner schools need to work on improving test scores.
- Water and sewer rates are too high in the Town.
- Is there sufficient utility capacity for future growth?
- Garner lacks a community center for families, i.e. YMCA.

Parks and Recreation

Garner residents place a high value on quality parks and recreation opportunities. There may be additional opportunity to enhance the options available to residents.

Specific issues include:

- Increase recreation opportunities at Lake Benson.
- Garner needs to increase recreational venues, particularly for children and teenagers.
- Garner needs more greenways, biking trails and walking trails.
- Incorporate greenways into residential neighborhoods.
- Not enough athletic fields in Garner, specifically baseball fields and basketball courts.

Transportation

Residents feel that several areas of Garner need transportation improvements, especially in light of additional growth. Many residents feel Garner needs to improve on the Town's public transportation, particularly the bus system. Many older and retired residents need alternatives to go shopping, to doctor visits, etc. The issues were also discussed in the 1999 Transportation Plan. There is a need for the Transportation Plan to be updated in the next term.

Specific issues include:

- Commercial development on US 401 and US 70 is creating traffic congestion in these areas.
- White Oak area is detached from Garner—Timber Drive needs to be extended.
- Garner needs more East/West connectors.

Summary

A complete discussion of the existing conditions in Garner is provided in the Appendix at the end of this document. This discussion included a more in depth analysis of the community demographics, housing, development trends, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, infrastructure, economic development, transportation, land use and zoning along with a summary of the community involvement. Some of the major issues and opportunities are illustrated on Map 2 on the following page.

The Town of Garner

Town of Garner

Comprehensive Growth Plan

Map 2
Issues and Opportunities

Legend

- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Railroad
- Bikeway
- Roads
- Parcels
- Wetlands
- Swiftcreek Protection Area
- Lake Benson Protection Area
- Existing Freeways/ Interstates
- Existing Major Thoroughfares
- Existing Minor Thoroughfares
- Non Jurisdictional
- Proposed Freeways/ Interstates
- Proposed Major Thoroughfares
- Proposed Minor Thoroughfares
- Transportation Ops
- Commercial Development Opportunity
- Redevelopment Opportunity
- Residential Development Opportunity
- Commercial Development Node

N

0 800 1,600 3,200 4,800 6,400 Feet

POPULATION

Table 1: Population Comparison

Population in Garner has been steadily growing for several decades. In 1940, there were 768 residents, which rose to 17,787 in the 2000 Census. The growth rate from 1990 to 2000 was substantially lower (19%) compared to the other smaller communities surrounding the City of Raleigh.

The North Carolina Office of Budget and Management provide annual population estimates for all counties and cities in the state. The 2003 state estimate for Garner is 21,804, in 2004 it is 21,941 and for 2005 is 23,320. The June 1, 2006 population is estimated to be 23,700. Based on this data and the rate of development and permitting, a population of 28,502 for Garner is projected in 2010. The population breakdown by age for 1990 and 2000 is shown in Table 1. Throughout the decade, the largest age group is the 25 to 44 year olds with thirty-four percent (34%) of Garner's population. The largest increase between the two decades occurred in the 75+ year olds, with a one hundred percent (100%) increase in population between 1990 and 2000.

Table 2: Town of Garner, Population Breakdown by Age

	Under 5	5-19	20-24	25-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
1990	1,037	3,145	936	5,658	1,692	641	620	809	429
% of Population	7%	21%	6%	38%	12%	4%	4%	5%	3%
2000	1,198	3,630	1,019	5,970	2,505	784	717	1,075	859
% of Population	7%	20%	6%	34%	14%	4%	4%	6%	5%
% Change	16%	15%	9%	6%	48%	22%	16%	33%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 1.

The trend of an increasing older population mirrors the national demographic in the aging baby boomer generation. The percentage of only two groups dropped (5-19 and 25-44 year olds); while three others (45-54, 65-74 and 75+) increased, leaving the remaining four groups unchanged. However it is important to understand that the percentage of Garner residents by age group has stayed relatively constant.

Table 3: Population Projections

Many factors can enter into development and growth projections that can not be foreseen. In two varying instances, a large industry could be built requiring many employees, which in turn brings a boom of housing. In contrast, a natural event could take place that requires population to disperse, lowering the growth rate. Additionally, the longer the time period to

predict, the wider the gap in projections. In projecting future the population, a growth rate of 4% was used, which is the same as used to project the 2010 population discussed above. In this scenario, future populations in Garner are projected to be 33,406 in 2015, 40,644 in 2020 and 49,449 in 2025. However, assuming a steady or average growth rate twenty years in the future usually does not predict a true number. A potentially more accurate method of projecting future population may be to use the Town's WastewaterAllocation Policy. In this scenario, a lower growth rate is projected based on sewer capacity which results in 31,712 residents in 2015, 35,990 in 2020, and 40,952 in 2025. **Table 3 on the preceding page depicts population projections for the Town of Garner through 2025.**

Growth is predicted to continue and with this exercise in population projections, this plan takes into account the development needs represented by a potential number of residents. Exactly what that number of new residents will be can not be precisely determined. Therefore this plan allocates areas for development of residential sites that not only fit a land use policy using smart growth techniques that factors existing development and natural features, but has sufficient acreage to support an increased population based on the information gathered. Secondly, levels are not capped in lower, medium, and higher density description, which are intended to offer a range as development options come forward.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Planning Principles form the framework of the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN."** Each element of study, as shown in the Purpose of the Plan section, is reviewed with Background—an overview of history and pertinent information; Issues—based on community input, the main issues addressed in the Plan; Principles—the broad goals which gives direction to the needs of the community; Strategies—specific objectives or policies which are the basis for the implementation of this Plan. With this, the information is arranged in logic progression so one understands why and how implementation can be achieved.

Housing

Background

The Town of Garner had been known as a bedroom community of Raleigh providing affordable housing close to the Capital city. However over the last couple of decades, a broad range of services and development has changed that conception, and today Garner is a more balanced community. Residential development is still an important element of future development with a wide variety of housing opportunities are starting to emerge—townhomes, patio homes, affordable housing, retirement communities and high-end residential—to create a fully sustainable population.

In concert with the economic development goal to increase the percentage of non-residential development, residential units must also continue to be built. There has been a sixteen percent (16%) increase in the total number of households over the previous five years; a total of 955 single family units and 1,030 multiple family units were approved. A stated goal in the previous Centennial Long Range Plan, 2005 is a 34%/66% split between the numbers of multiple family households versus single family

households. Information in the 2000 Census now reflects a 25%/75% split and that goal has not been achieved.

The median house value in Garner according to the 2000 Census was approximately $120,000 compared to $147,000 for the Raleigh-Durham Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and $163,000 Wake County **(see Table 4 below).** Therefore, the need to promote construction of larger homes has been deemed vital by community leaders to provide a complete range of housing options.

Table 4: Median Cost of Housing

	1990	2000	% Change
Town of Garner	$78,100	$119,600	53
Raleigh-Durham MSA	$92,400	$146,800	59
Wake County	$96,800	$162,900	68
North Carolina	$65,300	$108,300	66

In 2000 (amended in 2003 and 2005), the Town adopted a Wastewater Allocation Policy that had two stated goals. First is to "build a reserve capacity" and second is "to provide a full range of housing options." The sewer allocation policy affects residential development by committing a larger percentage of capacity to larger sized homes (over 2,200 square feet with certain features) and projects that fill desirable, upscale developments with functional amenities (i.e. golf course community). However, providing a wider range of housing options for a broad range of the population base will also greatly enhance Garner's position as a community of choice in the future.

Issues

One of the most significant housing issues identified is the continued emphasis to encourage larger, higher-end housing and build a diversified housing base. Residential growth must be controlled and reviewed carefully to ensure quality growth and development over quantity. In general, the key issues are:

- A variety of residential options to include all segments of housing types
- Infill development preferred, where possible, over sprawling growth
- Cluster higher density housing close to commercial nodes and uses
- Encourage quality, upscale residential developments with recreational amenities

Housing Principles

Encourage a range of housing options. Many towns across country have experienced a significant out-migration of residents to unincorporated areas. Although there has been development of subdivisions outside of Garner's incorporated limits, there has been a demand for home construction in the Town. Based on the income and median cost of housing data, the housing stock is defined to be in the affordable and mid-income ranges. It is common to find residents which left Garner when they needed larger homes or "empty nester" homes. To be sustainable and have a full complement of residents, this should be addressed by having sufficient locations for such and policies to attract developers for this type of housing.

Focus higher density residential uses in areas adjacent concentrations of commercial activities or employment. The plan framework organizes higher density housing close to the commercial core areas which in turn promotes pedestrian options. This allows a larger number of residents to walk to work or to shop without requiring a driving trip. Higher density housing close to smaller businesses in the core areas helps those stores be successful with a needed population base close by with good transportation access.

Encourage higher quality residential developments; especially larger upscale housing with recreational amenities. To provide a full complement of housing includes the higher end market. Many of these communities built in today's environment also include amenities such as pools and clubhouses for the residents of the neighborhood. This offers a recreational facility near the home where families and children can walk or ride bike to play. At present, this available option is the Eagle Ridge Country Club with a golf course. However such amenities are not always that substantial and can include nature areas, bike trails and parks as a key feature. The Town can establish policies to allocate land specific to this use which benefit the developer and town.

Foster and support residential "infill development" opportunities. The common trend for development has been "Greenfield" or outlying sites with the extension of roads, water, sewer and associated infrastructure. This can often lead to increased traffic congestion, a strain on services and increase in municipal expenses. There are many opportunities to redevelop underutilized and vacant sites within close proximity to the existing town services. Development of these sites use existing infrastructure, add value to underdeveloped or non-maintained sites and less expensive to develop. These valuable sites should be identified, promoted and encouraged by the Town to be developed. This development should be compatible and respect the existing surrounding neighborhood character.

Preserve and maintain existing housing stock in older neighborhoods through active enforcement measures such as minimum housing enforcement and other appropriate treatments. As with existing businesses, maintaining the existing housing stock fosters reinvestment and attracts new housing into developed areas. Properties which are neglected and not maintained generate a negative image of the community as a whole. By bringing attention to these issues to the property owners, a number of maintenance issues can be addressed. In other cases, more persuasive measures should take place through code enforcement with civil citations being used when necessary.

Housing Strategies

Fill the housing market gaps with appropriate development. Provide a base guide of housing needs within the Town and meet with developers to encourage building of the market needs for houses of $250,000 and above. Show that this type of housing is underutilized in Garner and there is a need for this product. Being able to plan for the range of housing types and densities within each neighborhood and community center, provides options throughout the town to accommodate a complete range of housing options for all citizens in Garner.

Provide home ownership options including condominiums, senior housing, patio homes. As the population ages and people tend to have less time or desire to maintain large yards, a housing segment of maintenance free homes is emerging. Over the past several years, the market demand for one-story homes or homes with master suites on the first level has increased substantially. Ownership, rather than rental, has become the preference with this segment as well, which allows people to adapt or renovate their homes to accommodate their needs and lifestyle. A study of potential options or incentives available should be considered by the Town of Garner to establish a means to encourage ownership and/or conversion from rental to ownership units.

Provide transitions from higher intensity uses such as retail or business parks to single family residential uses. The plan framework provides mechanisms to easily transition from the core areas, with a mix non-residential development and higher density residential, to the outer areas of the centers, with lower density residential development. The mixed use and higher density developments are an appropriate transition between the commercial core area and the balance of the housing in the neighborhood, whether it is medium or lower density. This transition will ensure that the current residential character of the surrounding housing will be maintained.

Commercial and Business Development

Background

While there are similar issues between the Economic Development and the Commercial/Business Development sections, there are also distinct differences. *The primary focus in this section is non-residential development and how Garner can continue to recruit, retain and increase those opportunities for the residents.* Approximately fifteen years ago, town officials recognized that Garner was essentially a bedroom community to Raleigh and the cost of providing basic municipal services at a reasonable rate was fast becoming a concern. A policy was adopted that emphasizes the goal to broaden and diversify the tax base distribution to a more balanced growth percentage between residential and non-residential. The Town's Economic Development Policy establishes an instrument to be used as an incentive to attract non-residential development.

In the 1989 plan, the land use goal was for Garner to develop in a 'nodal' conceptual development pattern, consisting of Regional, Community, Neighborhood, and Convenience focus areas. In following that concept, a diverse hierarchy of commercial activity centers was established with support areas designed to address the various needs of community residents. There are several advantages to this land development scenario in that it promotes walking for everyday or convenience goods, promotes a balanced disbursement of services, and reduces traffic congestion just to name a few.

Commercial development in Garner has increased significantly over the past ten years. Recently, the addition of the White Oak Retail Center increased the area of commercial land to seven percent (7%) of Garner's developed land. The eastern portion of Garner located at U.S. 70 and I-40 serves as a new regional center and is continuing to help reach the balanced development land use goal in the Town.

Issues

Certainly diversification of the town's commercial and industrial mix strengthens the long term economic viability for the Town and provides the residents in the community with a well balanced variety of services. Local retail stores bring substantial reinvestment into the community while national franchises bring a larger assortment of goods and products. The location and design of neighborhood stores should stress both pedestrian and vehicular access in order support the local area. Regional centers should take advantage of the transportation system available, yet also enhance the sustainable non-residential mix.

There are several specific issues that became apparent during the process of developing the new Comprehensive Growth Plan. Future development should be appropriate in scale/design for its location, be reasonably compact, be easily accessible by all modes of transportation while minimizing traffic congestion, provide benefits to citizens, and not be detrimental to the community. The key issues include:

- Preserve Garner's small town image and maintain a good business climate.
- Continue to expand the non-residential tax base for each service area.
- Improve the existing shopping areas within the historic downtown area, and along US70 and US401.
- Encourage business retention and redevelopment as well as new quality development.
- Develop appropriate multi-modal access to each commercial and employment area.
- Identify available land for neighborhood, community, and regional centers.
- Careful study of the impacts of "big box" style development and infrastructure problems associated with sprawl is recommended.

Commercial and Business Development Principles

Garner's commercial retail economy has changed significantly from the days when the Town's population was smaller. Trends in the size and location requirements have changed, and the focus of commercial retail development has shifted from the downtown area to various locations along U.S. 70, to neighborhoods, and most recently to the White Oak area near I-40. These businesses have served a variety of purposes from a regional perspective down to the neighborhood level. Critical to the development of future commercial uses is the integration of these uses into the overall fabric of the community in an economically sustainable manner.

Key to the diversification of Garner's tax base is the continued development of small business development, office and light industrial uses. These uses provide jobs; create a sustainable mix of retail and business establishments to serve the needs for town residents and regional customers as well as tax base benefits. Manufacturing, research and development, and other industries and businesses are typically dependent on a good transportation system to get goods and employees in and out of the site.

Create a sustainable mix of retail establishments to serve the needs of town residents, as well as regional customers. A complete mix of commercial establishments is important to serve the resident's needs. By providing smaller stores and offices in the neighborhood cores, those residents have a convenient and accessible place to purchase daily goods or services without having to drive extended distances. These smaller local stores become meeting places for friends and neighbors, enhancing community values and communication. Larger stores, such as full service grocery, are then located in the community cores to serve the residents with the needs on a weekly/biweekly basis. Larger regional outlets are important to the residents to serve those particular needs and attract shoppers for a larger area serving their needs. This mix provides a diverse and practical means for the residents (and regional customers) to purchase goods and support local businesses and national chains.

Promote commercial areas that balance the needs of pedestrians and vehicles. Pedestrian connections are becoming more prevalent in commercial design and connection to the neighborhoods they serve. In the neighborhood cores, commercial design should incorporate pedestrian features as the predominant mode of access to make those feel safe and convenient for the residents to walk. Within the community core and mixed use areas, vehicle accessibility should be accounted for and be on equal balance with transit and pedestrians, serving all and recognizing the importance of each. Improvements such as sidewalks, plazas, sitting areas and dispersed parking areas add to the safety and pleasing environment to promote walking between neighborhoods to shopping and between the stores themselves. Having safe refuges for the pedestrians adds to the attraction of the shopping area to the residents, in particular families with small children. Additionally, by distributing the stores in appropriate areas, transportation choices can be made and thoroughfares are used only when necessary and minimized congestion on those roads.

Locate business parks in areas with good regional vehicular access. Business parks offer a large area for employment opportunities and production. They bring in employees from a large surrounding area and goods are distributed to regional markets. These uses require good accessibility for the number of vehicles that come in and leave daily, with employee access limited to at certain times, while distribution is ongoing in vehicles from small cars to large trucks. This continual movement of vehicles requires a transportation system to accommodate the amount of traffic with quick access to a regional system for distribution.

Commercial/Business Development Strategies

Establish a hierarchy of neighborhood, community, and regional commercial areas. The plan framework provides for multiple commercial areas to support the variety of different needs for the residents of Garner. The neighborhood core areas are designed to provide locally based shopping for daily goods to serve surrounding neighborhoods and provide office space for supportive services. Community core areas are designed to provide goods and services for a larger population base incorporating convenient access to several surrounding neighborhoods. Regional core areas are designed to offer larger department or discount stores and entertainment activities which serve a large area of Garner, but also have a regional draw for residents outside its jurisdictional boundaries.

Concentrate commercial uses within specific defined areas to specific portions of the community and to reduce vehicle miles traveled. The commercial core areas of each type of activity center are concentrated at intersecting major thoroughfares. This results in the designation of the commercial uses within the Town to key locations in areas as defined by the plan framework. This distribution establishes commercial core areas throughout the Town that are appropriately linked to neighborhoods and transportation systems in close proximity to residents where live.

Provide commercial areas that are scaled appropriately in relation to the surrounding area with appropriate vehicular access. The plan framework establishes patterns and scale of non-residential development in relationship to the areas served. For example, the neighborhood core are should be smaller and designed to the pedestrian scale with limited parking to encourage walking with vehicular access from minor thoroughfares. Community core areas are larger, but are still built to a pedestrian scale for walking access across the core area and vehicular access from major thoroughfares and transit. Regional centers are large in scale with more emphasis on vehicular access and are generally located where access to freeway interchanges, major thoroughfares and transit opportunities is possible.

Provide opportunities for residents of surrounding neighborhoods to access retail shops by walking, biking, or driving a car. All development with the Town should be designed to connect to each other in a variety of transportation modes. Walking, biking, vehicle and transit should all be accommodated where possible based on the scale and nature of it use. Convenient interconnected network of roads and sidewalks must be a key feature in any development plan and should be designed accordingly.

Provide road connections and circulation options so that residents can access neighborhood and community commercial areas without having to drive on high volume roadways. An interconnected transportation network provides multiple points of access and all development should include several connection points. Having internal connections between residents and shopping keeps vehicles off the major thoroughfares and relieves congestion along those roadways. This provides for a safer traffic network for residents by dispersing traffic rather than concentrating it on major roads.

Establish design guidelines for commercial centers so that they relate to the neighborhoods as well as the street or highway. Commercial centers should be developed with the dual interests of serving the neighborhood with convenient and safe access for pedestrian and vehicles. In order to do such effectively, the buildings should relate to the street with sidewalks, on-street parallel parking and subsequent parking located to the side and rear of the buildings. This gives the site highway access and convenient (and seen) parking yet provides a safe accessible pedestrian access from the neighborhood.

Utilize the available land in the existing business parks. By encouraging additional construction in existing developments with adequate infrastructure in place saves construction, utility fees and does not impact other sites unnecessarily. As with infill residential development, underutilized sites are then fully used adding tax revenue without adding to the Town's cost of service.

Open Space

Background

The Town of Garner Parks Maintenance & Development Division is responsible for the maintenance of parks and athletic facilities. While there are several parks and private (i.e. home owner association owned) open spaces within the Town, the distribution is not equal. These natural areas are more that just amenities and through the development regulations in place today, more land is being preserved and linkages are becoming more of a possibility. In stakeholder meetings it was mentioned that new developments should include more parks, which is now a requirement in the development ordinances, and greenways.

Athletic fields and structures are offered in the Town, but are overused and have limited availability. These facilities are an important factor in the overall quality of life and attraction for families. In collaboration with athletic leagues and organizations, land should be targeted and acquired for additional play space.

Lake Benson is a significant natural resource for the town: a wildlife habitat, a water resource, a recreational area. There are countless examples where a body of water serves as a public gathering place and revered as an icon for the Town. In contrast, where a similar body of water has been cutoff from the public, it becomes a restricted amenity for few. Development along the northern shore is regulated by the "Lake Benson Conservation District" standards. Public access/ownership of the lakeshore is paramount for the enjoyment of all citizens and the protection from over-development.

Issues

Garner residents place a high value on quality parks and recreation activities. There may be future opportunities to add to the options available to residents. For example, Lake Benson may be under utilized. The Town might consider more activities at the lake (i.e. non-motored boating, lake-side concerts, etc.) but understand that it is a water supply source, therefore is restricted in terms of water related activities and should be protected as best as possible.

Specific issues include:

- Increase passive recreation opportunities at Lake Benson.
- Garner needs to increase recreational venues, particularly for children and teenagers.
- Garner needs more greenways, biking trails and walking trails.
- Incorporate greenways into residential neighborhoods.
- Not enough athletic fields in Garner, specifically baseball fields and basketball courts.

Ensuring plenty of open space and natural resources is important for environmental, recreational, aesthetic and quality of life reasons. From large natural areas to neighborhood parks, a town needs a full array of these facilities to properly serve the different needs of the residents. Neighborhood parks allow kids to be more active in their own neighborhood. Isolated recreational areas, also important, require children (and adults) to be driven to the site generally for programmed events. Providing an

ample mix of these resources is imperative for the town to prosper. With a good inventory of parks and open spaces, Garner adopted the Open Space and Greenway Plan in 2002 (see Map 3 on the following page). There are factors which need to be addressed to give residents the full compliment of environmental, open areas and recreational assets.

Open Space Principles

Provide ample and accessible public open space within Garner. A fully sustainable town has an array of open spaces for their residents to use, enjoy and maintain a high quality of life. These features include formal places, such as greens or commons, recreational fields, such as athletic fields, and informal or natural areas, such as greenways and nature preserves; all of which are important and serve separate needs. The Town has multiple opportunities and should continue to plan and develop parks and facilities. Neighborhood scaled open spaces are required as part of new development. These areas should be coordinated and designed with an overall purpose and connectivity in mind. All open spaces should be easily accessible and have facilities necessary to support the intended use of the area.

Continue to protect floodplain areas from encroachment of development and use for greenway linkages. Floodplain areas are a significant resource which should be preserved for their natural use for flood control, but also to develop greenway linkages along the stream corridors. A system of natural trails offers an alternative to sidewalks and bikeways along roadways and provides for a safe, quiet and natural area. Moreover, development in floodplains should be prohibited. Allowing these spaces to be developed increases the flooding hazard to adjacent areas and increases the potential for property damage and loss of life. As the amount of developed land increases, the natural areas to absorb stormwater decreases. The floodplain corridors serve as buffers to filter runoff to the streams, opportunities for a passive greenway system and wildlife habitat. This all serve as benefits to the Town's ecosystem and reduces the impacts of flooding in development areas to the residents.

Provide sufficient athletic facilities to serve the needs of all residents. As the number of athletic participants increases with adult and children leagues, so too does the demand for facilities on which to play. As the leagues become regional in nature, the demand for facilities becomes an even larger issue. It is important to provide access to these resources in a manner that does not degrade their qualities.

Open Space Strategies

Continue to increase active and passive recreational opportunities distributed throughout the town. Through development requirements, open space and neighborhood parks are being preserved. That alone does not provide sufficient recreational facilities, and land should be acquired when possible in significant areas to fulfill the needs of open spaces. Land should be targeted for acquisition in areas first where facilities are lacking. These spaces should be spread throughout the town to provide access and opportunities to all residents.

Map 3
Open Space and Greenways Master Plan

Respect Lake Benson as a significant resource for recreation and nature. Lake Benson is a significant natural resource and public access should be protected from development. It offers areas for wildlife habitat, preservation, passive recreation and gatherings. As the only large body of water in Garner, it becomes a prominent resource and landmark offering the residents valuable opportunities for use of the community and not private development.

Promote donation of undeveloped lands for future parkland sites. With limited resources available from the Town to acquire land, alternative methods need to be explored. Open space is already required as a part of new developments, but some cases residents will donate unused parcels for recreational purposes. This can provide many benefits; one of which is the recognition of the person(s) donating the property, such as the naming of the park after those making the donation or a tax deduction for the value of the land given. Civic minded individuals also recognize the need for this type of resource within the Town and will assist in working with others to increase the land area or contribute for the improvements.

Open space required as part of development should be properly useable and include both recreation and conservation lands. Garner needs more greenways, biking trails and walking trails which are incorporated into residential neighborhood development as public and/or private open spaces. As neighborhoods are diverse, so to are the needs for their particular open space. Conservation designs, where natural lands are preserved, provide needed land for informal space. Recreational fields are an important resource for organized play.

Parks should be properly designed and located to be part of the overall parks plan. However the design and usefulness should be a key factor in the Town accepting the land. Often times, developers will choose to reserve the land which is "left over" once the subdivision is divided and could include unusable land such as steep slopes. Therefore, the Town should work with developers during the design process to identify how the opportunities within the subdivision fit with an overall recreation plan for the Town.

Start to build a greenway system to serve as trails for recreation and connectivity. More land is being preserved and linkages are becoming more of a possibility. These trails can link various recreational and parks land creating a green pedestrian circulation system throughout the Town. Further linking the greenway system to schools enhances the quality of the overall network and increases accessibility to neighborhoods.

Encourage the use of conservation developments to preserve natural features and green space. Subdivision development and design should utilize conservation subdivision design principles where appropriate to conserve open space and natural features. This type of design identifies significant features on the land, whether natural (rock outcroppings or habitat) or cultural (historic features) resources and reserves those areas from development. With the remaining land, housing sites are located to maximize views, access and minimize environmental impacts. Next, locate the street network for best connection to the lots, conservation areas and the surrounding area. This step also takes into account the placement of bikeways, greenways and similar paths for pedestrian connectivity. Lastly, complete the design with the actual lot line for the individual parcels and the conservation area. As a benefit to this design, many

studies have shown that people will pay a premium for lots with exceptional features and parkland as a part of their neighborhood. The return is greater for the developer and the community retains large areas of significant cultural and/or natural spaces.

Increase the number of recreational facilities and fields for athletic events. The recreation facilities and fields are limited in the number and should be expanded to accommodate the amount of use scheduled. In order to do this in a feasible manner, the 2002 Parks Plan should be updated to identify the actual need and the amount of recreation facilities. This plan would include and overall plan for all types of parkland needs throughout the Town including, neighborhood, community, recreation, passive and natural areas to preserve.

Partner with athletic leagues to maintain and expand athletic fields. While the Town has worked in partnership to have available land for various leagues and groups to use, the need continues to rise. A large amount of time and money is spent on continual maintenance and general upkeep of the play fields, which increase as new areas are added. Therefore in partnership with the organizations who generally use the fields, maintenance agreements can be arranged in lieu of or reduction in league and registration fees. This allows the Town to stretch those limited funds for expansion and widen the range of uses, while allowing the leagues to pay particular attention to their home field with increased mowing or painting.

Economic Development

Background

The Town of Garner's current Economic Development Policy emphasizes the goal to broaden the tax base distribution to a more balanced growth between residential and non-residential uses. Achieving a balanced tax base is essential for the town to provide basic municipal services at a reasonable cost to its citizens. The initial goal for a more balanced mix of 60% residential/40% non-residential mix development was reached in FY 2002, and a new goal of a 50% residential/50% non-residential mix has been set. The policy also establishes a fund to be used as an incentive to attract non-residential development and is often a factor when a company looks at locating in a particular area.

Source: Town of Garner 2005 Annual Growth and Development Report

Since 1999, total assessed value increased 58% in actual dollars (45% adjusted for inflation) and an average of $51.6 million per year of new investment in Garner *(See Appendix)*. Although the number of unemployed grew slightly over the past decade, development continued to be strong/stable bringing the potential for new employment opportunities.

There are certain primary or major factors that are noted which influence economic development efforts. These are divided into those factors that encourage economic growth and development and those that need to be addressed and overcome. Encouraging factors include having direct access to the interstate, being located in the "Triangle Region," and the availability of municipal services. Factors which need to be addressed include improving the transportation system, adding new interchange at White Oak Road and Interstate 40, and revitalization of the US 70 Corridor.

Issues

From the community surveys, stakeholder interviews and steering committee input, it was noted that Garner will support growth and development as long as it does not compromise the positive aspects of the community. With the development that has occurred over the last five years, Garner has created a good climate to attract and support new commercial, industrial, and residential growth. Key issues identified are:

- Define and market areas for development (residential and non-residential)
- Sustain a diversified tax base essential for balanced growth and a strong local economy
- Establish regional development locations and opportunities
- Refine local business retention policies and practices
- Develop "Action Plan" with defined policies and roles to address key economic issues
- Continue to attract a full-range of housing options

A variety of factors establish the economic development context within which Garner operates. These include the mix of existing businesses in the community, the housing stock, the local schools, and the Town's role in the regional economy. Responding to these factors and operating within the local development climate, the following goals and strategies begin to establish an overall direction for economic development activity. They focus on being prepared for opportunities, reaching for the optimum balance of uses, and promoting growth in new and existing businesses.

Ensuring the economic vitality of the Town is of key importance. A diversified commercial/non-residential base brings stability, employment options and goods to the residents. Regional access is excellent and will continue to attract development opportunities and the expansion of the tax base. Overall the Town enjoys a good business climate and is supportive of growth, but not to the extent that allows any development. Development should be sustainable and be quality built for continued success.

Economic Development Principles

Provide a variety of economic development opportunities in Garner. In any community, reliance on a single industry leaves the town vulnerable to severe economic hardship should that industry close. By the town providing development options of parcel size, location and type (industrial, commercial and office), potential businesses are able to locate and develop according to their needs. This also provides the town a diversified industrial/commercial tax base and consumer market.

Maintain an appropriate balance between residential uses and industrial/commercial uses. When a town is predominately residential, it results in a higher tax burden on residents, longer travel for goods and services, and fewer opportunities for employment. Conversely, if the commercial/industrial uses became disproportionately larger than the resident population could sustain, this could lead to increased traffic congestion, a decrease in air quality and blighted tracts of land where businesses fail. Therefore, balanced development is important to the health and sustainability of the Town between all categories to fully achieve the preferred outcome.

Capitalize on Garner's proximity to the regional transportation system. Interstate 40 and US 70 offer direct access to the Town. The proposed Outer Loop (Interstate 540) will further enhance the regional access for Garner and should be programmed in the NCDOT TIP. These major roadways are able to bring in commuters without overloading the collector and local. The framework of this plan concentrates large scale

development at key locations on these corridors where the regional access provides a distinct advantage.

Assure that a strong business retention program is in place within Garner. Existing businesses provide stability and reinvestment into the community. Business retention is one of the leading indicators that measure progress toward a sustainable economy, society and environment. Existing business are important because they create the majority of jobs and if successful, will attract new investment and development.

Participate fully in regional economic development initiatives. In order for any town to be successful, they must participate fully in regional initiatives where the overall region provides a healthy and sound business environment. An individual town cannot feasibly provide all the needs of the residents. Cultural amenities, recreation, employment, and utilities for example are better provided for by a larger number of people being able to build access and maintain them. The health of the region has an effect on the health of the surrounding towns and cities. The Town has prospered with the success of the Triangle region, Wake County and the City of Raleigh. Regional unity is an asset in the global marketplace. Garner should continue to be an active participant in regional initiatives and build on that success.

Economic Development Strategies

Encourage business parks that provide flexibility in parcel sizes and amenities in order to accommodate changing market conditions and allow for quick responses to opportunities. The needs of businesses are different based on the goods and/or services they provide. Being able to provide a range of parcel sizes, access and amenities, allowing recruitment of various industries and commercial, is essential.

Provide an appropriate mix of non-residential development opportunities. A diversified economic base provides a more sustainable economy and a range of consumer goods for residents. Different areas of town require services that are appropriate for that area. A store in the Neighborhood Core is not appropriate in the Regional Center and providing the separate areas for non-residential development helps to locate the those uses closer to the citizens who use them.

Encourage a higher percentage of business uses within the community. While Garner has increased the non-residential development percentage over the last decade, a higher percentage will bring the town closer to a true balanced community in land use and tax base distribution. This helps the Town to maintain an acceptable tax rate for residents and businesses.

Take an economic development approach that generates a higher percentage of office and light industrial uses related to retail uses. A full-service based economy does not adequately provide the necessary incomes for a well-balanced community. Typically, professional offices and light industrial uses bring a range of higher paying jobs and provide necessary services to the residents. Offices can also be easily integrated into smaller commercial areas and assist to establish pedestrian scale.

Allocate appropriate available land near connections to the regional roadway system for business park/light industrial development. The Town should designate sufficient land to recruit and develop business parks and light manufacturing facilities along the Interstate 40/US 70/White Oak area. This allows easy access for employees and regional consumers. Coming from the coast and the seaports in Wilmington, Garner is the first community in the Triangle region on Interstate 40. This could offer distinct advantages which provide easy access to Raleigh without the congestion related of a large city.

Maintain regular contact with city businesses, both one-on-one and through business organizations. The Town should use the information gathered from the existing businesses to assist in their needs for continued success and fully understand the issues to recruit new businesses. More often than not, if the Town understands a specific issue, there may be grants or others resources that can be obtained to offset and reduce financial impacts. Small issues can sometimes easily be resolved and can make the difference between expanding or closing. Being able to talk with business owners on a personal level often reveals information not gained from surveys. Business organization and Chamber of Commerce information gives a broader view of the business climate. Both facets of this information are important to gain a complete understanding.

Develop a priority system for use of incentives that maximizes leverage of private investment. Being able to assist businesses to remain successful with incentives provides advantages to the Town, the business community and its residents. However financial resources are limited and a ranking system should be established to make sure the incentives are distributed equitably. This system should be developed with an understanding of what types of businesses the Town desires, providing for the needs of the residents and the amount of assistance and/or match is required.

Market the community within the region. Each community within the region offers its own unique opportunities to the Triangle. Garner should make its own effort to market its advantages in location, access and available development opportunities to attract new business. Keeping a small town feel while being tied to a metropolitan region is an advantage in quality of life studies, and businesses understand a superior location has distinct advantages.

Participate on the boards and committees of regional economic development organizations to insure that the best interests of Garner are incorporated. Part of the responsibilities of being a member of a regional organization is one must participate in the boards and committees. This not only allows participating members insight and input, it also offers a better understanding of the regional issues and prospects which could lead to opportunities to serve a niche which is underserved. Growth in the region is affected by policies implemented in Garner. In turn, growth in Garner is affected by the policies and actions in other cities and the metropolitan area.

Community Image

Background

As a part of the public involvement process of the Comprehensive Growth Plan, a visual preference survey was employed to determine the type and direction Garner residents want to grow. Survey results indicated that the highly rated images exhibited common elements. In general, the preferred images presented significant amounts of landscaping and a higher level of streetscape/building aesthetics. Images that depicted or included open space were among the highest scoring images. The participants seem to prefer developments that have open and well landscaped site layouts, include buildings with architectural details, and allow for pedestrian as well as vehicular circulation. Survey participants very clearly indicated that they do not like strip commercial development characterized by wide roads, lack of pedestrian orientation, excessive signage, and general visual clutter.

Future growth should not compromise the positive aspects of Garner today. Residents like the small town feel of the community, but the town lacks an identifying place or historical /cultural center. Another issue discussed was the image of the community being affected by the poor maintenance of properties, both residential and commercial properties.

Overall, the town is encouraged to bring in quaint settings that do not look like strip or "cookie-cutter" developments and upgrade/control the physical appearance with landscaping and architectural details.

Issues

Many residents of Garner fear the negative impact of rapid growth and development (like the larger jurisdictions in Wake County) and they do not want to lose the quality community and reputation they have. They are concerned about the results/ consequences of too much growth (i.e. increased traffic congestion, higher taxes, and overcrowded schools). The following were identified as key issues:

- Garner has a small, hometown feel with a reputation for quality.
- Town needs a "historical and cultural centerpiece."
- Residential homeowners should be encouraged to maintain their properties; poorly maintained properties are creating a negative image for the Town.
- Downtown Garner lacks a "sense of place." Commercial development in the historic area should be a high priority and utilized in conjunction with other areas of the Town are developed.

Community Image Principles

The thoughtful attention to public spaces and sensitive design of new development will play a large role in sustaining and improving the community image of Garner. The Town and the local development community of Garner can help improve community image on two fronts: through exacting rational design standards on private development and by creating positive elements of design in the public realm.

Promote quality design in new construction. General design standards can be a part of the Town's Unified Development Ordinance. This is not meant to dictate style or architectural expression, but rather to visually improve the overall public image of Garner. An example of which can include facing a garage door to the side yard or setback further than the front façade of the house. Other examples include identification of certain prohibited building materials, avoiding blank walls without windows, and requiring landscaping.

Improve the quality and appearance of public spaces within Garner. The Town should set the example of quality spaces and good maintenance for public enjoyment. Park equipment and athletics fields all should be designed and built with durable and maintenance free products so they can withstand constant use. Open space areas and parkland should be designed to be easily maintained and not place a burden on the recreation budgets. Improvements should be scheduled on a consistent basis so that these public spaces are continually evolving and have something new for the public.

Community Image Strategies

Preserve Garner's small town atmosphere as new development occurs. All new development should be designed to embrace the small town characteristics that make Garner a desirable place. Street connections, sidewalks, community parks, are examples of elements which echo the older sections of Town and should be part of new development. Overall, the Town will gain economically when it preserves the natural resources and is developed in a well planned manner, combining public benefit with the best interests of the individual.

Ensure that there are appropriate land use controls and design review procedures that reflect the desires of the residents of Garner. New development should incorporate a design that embraces community and neighborhood design. This involves subdivisions that have interconnected streets with parks or similar greenspaces incorporated as part of the development layout. As part of the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** the Town should develop and adopt general design guidelines. The UDO should be reviewed and updated to enact general design guidelines for new development. These guidelines should reflect the desired appearance standards shown in the visual survey and reflect the established quality vernacular of Garner.

Establish a community focal point. Garner has community places and focal points, such as the high school or the town hall complex, but none are celebrated or prominent to act as the icon that identifies Garner. Certainly the high school is an icon, but it is not the "community focal point" in the true sense because of its use. A formal downtown park with gazebo and band shell (as discussed in the North Garner Small Area Plan) is just one example of what could become a community focal point—an icon for Garner.

Improve roadway aesthetics on US 70 and US 401. The vast majority of people not living in the Town only view Garner by what they encounter along these two corridors. Therefore it is imperative that this view be as inviting, pleasurable and yet functional to all. Landscaping requirements, building design guidelines, parking aesthetics and sign standards are the most prominent features and establish a redevelopment vision for these corridors. The Town has adopted an overlay district to address appearance and design issues.

Improve the streetscape and upgrade the utilities the Garner Road Corridor. This corridor provides access to historic downtown Garner and should be improved in that sense. As discussed in the North Garner Small Area Plan, infrastructure improvements should be scheduled and completed over a period of time. Improvements should take place on a block by block basis and as new development occurs. Town can finance the improvements over a period of time and the businesses are not severely impacted by the entire area being under construction at one time, which creates many access and convenience issues. This process has the multiple benefits to the Town's budget, the business community and the public, ultimately resulting in a well planned, coordinated, phased implementation.

FUTURE LAND USE

As mentioned earlier, the *1989 Centennial Long Range Plan* adopted the node concept for new growth and development. That plan states land uses are *"most intense near existing and planned intersections of major streets, water lines, sewer lines, etc., with decreasing intensity as one moves away from the center."* Nodes create a network of neighborhoods, parks, and schools connected to a core area of shops, offices, civic uses and employment. This concept is well established in Garner and provides a series of neighborhood and community centers throughout the town.

The philosophy of this approach is that a neighborhood is focused on an identified functional center that is convenient to services. In a pure residential neighborhood, the center might be a community park, church or school. In the classic form, a neighborhood center could be a cluster of stores providing services to the surrounding residential areas, surrounded higher density housing, transitioning out to lower density residential.

Transportation plays a considerable role in the location of certain land uses. For example, commercial nodes tend to gravitate to key street intersections for better access and visibility. Residential properties locate in areas with lower traffic volumes and noise levels. The tie between land use and transportation is almost incontrovertible, where it's sometimes difficult to determine which influences the other. When dealing with existing infrastructure, changing land use patterns can become an even more daunting task. However, using the framework of sound planning principles together with an integrated transportation network as outlined in this Plan can provide an orderly growth for the community.

Overriding Planning Principles

Using neighborhood and community core areas (or nodes), development is focused on an identified neighborhood center with the surrounding development transitioning to lower density and massing as you move away from that center. The identified center should be a mix of high density uses, then as one moves from the center, the development becomes less intense. Generally these neighborhood centers extend up to a half-mile, usually based on how far a person can comfortably walk in 10-15 minutes.

Figure 1: Node Development Theory

The mixed use core in the neighborhood center contains the most intensive land uses and density and concentrates development at the intersections of major roads. The next development ring out from the core is designated for higher density residential development. Further removed from the core is the area reserved lower density residential development, where nodes do not intersect, the areas between or gaps are preserved for very low intensity development, rural development and/or conservation zones. This concept provides neighborhoods with a concentrated center of activity and discourages sprawling development along corridors. This results in Garner having a number activity centers

distributed throughout the town which will reduce the distance residents will need to drive for goods and services. With this distribution and the core areas proximity to residents, the opportunity for walking and bicycling as alternate modes of transportation increases.

This development pattern establishes a more sustainable community with less traffic congestion and more transportation choices. It reinforces the connection between residents and their daily needs in shopping, service and employment. The opportunity for a mixture of uses in closer relationship to one another with connected streets and sidewalks allows Garner residents choices to walk, bicycle, or drive without always being forced on major thoroughfares. The buildings and connections should be built to a pedestrian scale providing safe options from home to destination. The resulting network of neighborhoods and commercial cores are then connected by major thoroughfares and further enhance the economic sustainability by providing opportunities between the neighborhoods and use of transit for travel. The public transit then links the employment areas, regional shopping cores and adjacent cities for commuters. Overall, this encourages a blend of commercial, institutional, civic and residential development. By building offices and homes near restaurants and businesses, walking, instead of driving is encouraged, convenience is maximized, traffic congestion decreases and citizens feel more connected to their community.

The Comprehensive Plan Framework

For the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN",** the continued use of a node concept coupled with elements of the Transect is recommended *(see page 33)*. This hybrid approach works to integrate existing development and greenfield development without completely discarding the land use model recommended in the 1989 Centennial Plan. From conversations with the public and the steering committee, it appears that Garner does not want to have strip commercial development land use patterns in the community. The steering committee also indicated that the nodal land use model from the *1989 Centennial Plan* stills holds merit, but needs to be updated. Therefore an updated land use model that fosters diversity, pedestrian scale, neighborhood identity, and transportation linkages is the preferred method. A land use model focused on "Community Centers" and "Neighborhood Centers" meets this intent, with the "Regional Centers" located on major arterials and freeways, serving the needs of the larger population, and employments centers, which serve as areas for larger commercial and industrial uses.

By establishing a land development pattern in this manner, the Town will benefit by:

- Reducing sprawl and strip commercial development.
- Reducing the number and length of vehicle trips and a more efficient land use by providing goods in close proximity to residents.
- Offering transportation alternatives with a network of connected streets, sidewalks and trails.
- Placement of higher density housing closer to the core within the centers, transitioning to lower density housing at the edges, therefore reducing land use conflicts.

The Neighborhood Center

The elements of the Neighborhood Center are based on serving the daily needs of the surrounding residential population. These centers are pedestrian scaled with a limited mixed use area at the center.

At the core, generally located at the intersection of minor arterials, is an area of mixed-use development with neighborhood scaled convenience retail/service, schools, professional offices, churches, civic functions, formal open spaces and higher density residential.

Figure 2: Neighborhood Center

Using the "Transect" approach (see page 35), this will include design standards with buildings close to the street and any necessary off-street parking in the rear of the lot served by lanes or similar access. The core area often will incorporate or become the identity of the neighborhood. An example is the location of a park with a church and small-scale store as the landmark for the surrounding area.

From the core, the next area serves as the primary residential area and contains medium density residential with playgrounds, greenways and trails. This area provides a needed concentration of population to help sustain the core area, which is accessible by sidewalks and trails. In this area, the design guidelines follow the standards includes small to average lot sizes for single family residential with duplexes or triplexes in various locations in small scale condominiums and townhomes designed to in balance with single family homes.

The outer ring of the Neighborhood Center is reserved for lower density residential and parks, greenways and less formal open spaces as parkland. This can be up to a mile away from the core and still close enough to access by foot or bicycle.

In the North Garner Plan, the elements of the Neighborhood Core are recommended. The historic downtown (rehabilitation) serves as the core aera, next to the core a mixed use area proposed along Rand Mill Road. In the next "ring" in the Griffin and Bagwell streets area, a medium density area is proposed. If the rail transit is developed, a second core in the North Garner plan centered on the proposed transit station site which includes mixed use retail. In this, higher density residential surrounds the core, then transitioned to medium density.

The Community Center

The Community Center serves a larger population area and is generally located at the intersection of major arterials. This provides an opportunity for the residents to travel short distances to patronize larger scale retail uses. These districts incorporate pedestrian and vehicular connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods and serve a larger population base with higher volumes of traffic.

Figure 3: Community Center

At the core of the Community Center is a concentration of commercial/retail, professional offices, schools and churches, civic functions, upper level residential and formal open spaces such as greens, squares and plazas. These services are not used on a daily basis by each resident, but would include uses such as a grocery or clothing stores and is considered more of an urban core. The next level of uses includes smaller scale non-residential uses and higher density residential uses. In this scenario, the population concentration in the higher density housing has easy access to the core promoting shops and employment opportunities within walking distance to the core.

The Primary Residential area includes medium density to lower density residential uses that follow outward from the core. As previously described, these areas offer an orderly and functional transition in residential types and density.

The Relationship Between Community and Neighborhood Centers

The principles associated with both types of centers are similar, with the exception that the Community Center serves a larger area and multiple Neighborhood Centers. Also, the primary difference is the core area of the Community Center where concentrations of larger scale non-residential uses serves the needs of a larger population base and are spaced more appropriately throughout the town.

Figure 4: Conceptual Node Development

Now that the two primary types of activity centers have been identified, we should examine how these pieces fit together in the context of Garner. The spatial relationship between the two types of activity centers becomes apparent once the centers are identified and mapped. Spacing between the centers is important to avoid the creation of strip development along the arterials. Additionally, this promotes convenience to serve the residential development with goods and services in close proximity. With connected streets within the neighborhoods, residents have options to conveniently access one or more Neighborhood and Community Centers.

The **diagram above** shows how the Neighborhood Center and Community Center relate with each other. Overlap in the lower density residential area of the two centers is the transition between the two types of centers and as one gets closer to each of the separate cores. This in turn leads to providing a difference in land use along the arterial promoting a distinct identity between the centers and eliminating strip commercial development. As these centers are enhanced or developed, the town will be organized around neighborhoods that provide a full range of housing types, income levels, and services.

Regional Centers

Since Garner is a part of a larger regional area and is bisected by US 70 and Interstate 40, the town also serves regional markets. To fully develop areas and attract customers from both within the town limits and regional residents, two primary Regional Centers are proposed. This decision is based on the location of the transportation infrastructure. The two locations are US 70/US 401 intersection and the areas around the I-40 interchange at US 70.

In these areas, the land uses are primarily non-residential which incorporates large areas of retail, such as a regional mall or "big-box" centers, and large office buildings. However the development of higher density residential (apartments) is often incorporated in these centers and provides housing options close to employment with direct access to the freeway. These centers also include park or natural areas for general public use and to mitigate the impacts of intensive development.

Because these commercial areas generate large amounts of traffic, methods to mitigate vehicle circulation impacts are vital. Minimizing driveway access points and providing improved internal vehicle and pedestrian circulation could reduce the number of automobile trips within and around these commercial areas. Better circulation and drop-off sites for transit will also improve traffic flow.

Buildings should be arranged in these centers to form an enclosure or defined space. The buildings placed along the street frontage define the roadway and should not be placed behind large expanses of parking that fronts the street. Larger buildings (over 140,000 square feet) can be placed with the side fronting the street leaving the parking area at the front door. Outparcel development require buildings fronting the street and parking to the side and rear. All buildings within the development should be of the same architectural character and integrated in the overall design. Sidewalks connect buildings instead of being separated by large parking areas.

This development pattern reduces the impact of large parking areas along the street, creates a defined space, buildings become more visible along the street, the need for large signage is reduced, and promotes a minimum level of pedestrian movement.

Special Transportation Corridors

These corridors are by nature linear areas located on either side of a major road that connect different activity centers. The area between the activity centers is referred as transition areas which require specific design principles to guide new development or redevelopment in these areas. Whereas existing land uses dominate the character of the area today, future development and redevelopment will encourage office and high density residential uses that will substantially change the character and visual appearance of these corridors.

Office and high density residential buildings can have a similar footprint. In this regard, the development characteristics are the same. As with the Regional Centers, buildings should be placed along the frontage to define the street edge with parking to the side or rear of the development. Driveway access points should be kept to a minimum with internal traffic flow providing individual building access with sidewalks providing direct connection between buildings.

Employment Centers

A town is not fully sustainable unless it provides employment opportunities such as production, distribution and warehouse facilities. The industrial uses for the town are located within the Employment Centers and include business and office parks sufficient for larger firms and buildings. These areas are established near major transportation routes at US 70/US 401 and Interstate 40/US 70.

As with all other areas of town, a connected road network and integrated parks are required. The buildings should relate to one another and to the public streets with all shipping and support to the rear of the parcel. Typical uses include large office buildings, distribution, warehousing, assembly, flex-space and light manufacturing. Generally, as with Regional Centers, this area requires large parcels of land with good access and close proximity to the interstate and infrastructure to meet the demand of service.

Applying the Transect

With the new **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN,"** the concept of the "Transect" planning has been applied. The Transect focuses on form based development with applied design guidelines for building placement, parcel, land use, density, park design, and street pattern. It illustrates the seamless transition from urban to rural development patterns and how they are connected within the town's environs; it defines the urban intensity of development. It emphasizes the fact that neighborhoods do relate to one another and should not be walled off or separated mono-cultural subdivisions.

Figure 5: Transect Diagram

TRANSECT DIAGRAM *Courtesy of the Congress for the New Urbanism*

The Transect is a system of land use and design classification developed to describe the seamless transition uses in an urbanized environment, from a small village to large city. In conventional development patterns, differing land uses are built in pods and separated by buffers and/or access. This pattern has been found to promote sprawl, traffic congestion and reduction of quality of life issues (air quality for example). The advantage of the Transect is that is educates the residents and elected officials of how differing land uses can relate to each other and transition from non-residential to higher density residential to lower without being separated by large buffers and lack of access. Another advantage is the graphic representation of design standards, such as the

placement of streets and alleys, parking areas, building placement, setbacks, general lot sizes, landscaping, and parks. As an example, in the less dense areas of town (T3 and T2), the setbacks and lots tend to be larger, whereas in the more dense areas (T5 and T6), the setbacks are limited and the lots are typically close in size to the building/parking area.

In the truest extent of the Transect, it is a zoning and development system that outlines the regulations for each "T" zone and all components are described. For the Garner Framework, it is proposed to be used to depict design standards, extracting the elements that best illustrate the desired direction of development. This too has been done in several cases such as streetscape diagrams and cross-sections. The **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** applies an updated version of the nodal concept from the 1989 Centennial Plan with the design elements of the Transect. ***The Land Use and Design Matrix on the next page identifies the correlation between the Transect Zone and the elements of the development centers in the Garner Comprehensive Growth Plan Framework.***

Table 6. LAND USE & DESIGN MATRIX

Land Use Area	Location Criteria	Uses	Zoning Districts	Size	Open Space Character	Design Character (See Transect)	Residential Density	Street Type
Neighborhood Core	1/8 Mile Radius from Major / Minor Thoroughfare Intersection	Neighborhood-scale retail services, including professional offices, that support the daily needs of the surrounding neighborhood; schools; high density residential	CBD, NC, O&I, NO, MF2, MF1, MXD, TND, PUD,R9	Approximately 40 acres. 50% of Total Core Area is Non-Residential (25% Commercial and 25% Office / Institutional)	Formal Greenspace	Urban Center	Up to 9 dwelling units per acre	Major Thoroughfares, Minor Thoroughfares, Boulevards, Mixed Use
Neighborhood Primary Residential	3/8 Mile Radius from Neighborhood Core (1/2 Mile from intersection)	High to medium density residential with limited office uses serving as a transition from the heavier intense uses of the core to the medium intense uses of the Primary Residential area; schools; limited retail allowable with PUD developments	NO, MF1, R9, R12, TND, PRD, PUD	Approximately 500 acres	Parks and Recreation	General Urban	3 to 9 dwelling units per acre	Minor Streets, Mixed Use, Residential
Neighborhood Secondary Residential	1/2 Mile Radius from Neighborhood Core (1 mile from intersection)	Lower density residential.	R12, R15, R20, R40, RMH	Approximately 1500 acres	Parks, Recreation, Greenways	Suburban	1 to 3 dwelling units per acre	Minor Street, Cul-de-sac, Residential, Lane
Community Core	1/4 Mile Radius from Major / Major Thoroughfare Intersection	Community-scale retail services needed less frequently than on a daily basis; high density residential	NC, O&I, NO, MXD, CR, MF 1, MF2, PUD, SB-CUD (outdoor storage restricted)	Approximately 140 acres. 50% of Total Core Area is non-residential	Formal Greenspace	Urban Core	10+ dwelling units per acre	Major Thoroughfares, Boulevards, Mixed Use
Community Mixed Use	¼ Mile Radius from Community Core (1/2 mile from intersection)	Neighborhood retail and service supporting the daily needs of the surrounding community; higher density residential (apartments)	NC, O&I, NO, MF2, MF1, MXD, TND, PUD	Approximately 400 acres, 20 acres total non-residential	Parks	Urban Center	6 to 10 dwelling units per acre	Minor Thoroughfares, Mixed Use, Residential
Community Primary Residential	½ Mile Radius from Community Core (1 mile from intersection)	Medium density residential (Single family townhouse and condominium)	MF2, MF1, R9, R12, R15, TND, PUD	Approximately 1500 acres	Parks and Recreation	General Urban	2.5 to 6 dwelling units per acre	Minor Streets, Mixed Use, Residential
Community Secondary Residential	1 Mile Radius from Community Core (2 miles from intersection)	Lower density residential	R15, R20, R40, TND, PRD	Approximately 6000 acres	Parks, Recreation, Greenways	Suburban	1 to 2.5 dwelling units per acre	Minor Streets, Cul-de-sac, Residential, Lane
Regional Center	Between White Oak Road and I-40; From US 70/401 to US 70/Timber Drive	Large-scale retail, office, and services targeting a regional population; high density residential	O&I, PUD, SB, CR, MXD, MF2	White Oak is Approximately 1200 acres; US70 is Approximately 600 acres	Formal Greenspace	Urban Core	13+ dwelling units per acre	Major Thoroughfares, Boulevards, Mixed Use
Employment Center	Junction Boulevard/ Withers Road; Jones Sausage Road; and between I-40 and Raynor Road	Large-scale industrial and commercial centers and business parks with large numbers of employees; generally the majority of parking spaces are for employees	SB, I1, I2, MXD	Withers Road is Approximately 300 acres; Jones Sausage Road is Approximately 110 acres; Raynor Road is Approximately 1000 acres	Parks, Recreation, Greenways	Specialty	13+ dwelling units per acre	Major Thoroughfares, Minor Thoroughfares. Mixed Use
Special Transportation Corridor	Properties Along US70 and US401 Corridors	Highway corridors through Garner with a mixture of office and commercial uses; developments should be aesthetically pleasing, orderly, and access points should be limited	O&I, CR, SB-CUD (open storage restricted), MF2	as designated	Formal Greenspace	Specialty	13+ dwelling units per acre	Major Thoroughfares, Boulevards, Mixed Use
Conservation Area	Environmentally sensitive areas; areas near natural features (lakes, streams, rivers) ; areas where development could have adverse impacts to the environment	Low density residential comprised of large lots and low impervious surface areas	R40	n/a	Parks, Recreation, Greenways	Rural / Natural	Up to 1 dwelling unit per acre	Minor Streets, Cul-de-sac, Residential (w/o on-street parking)

The Conceptual Garner Framework

As these activity centers are applied to into a comprehensive land use model, they come together to form the elements of the town. The diagram below shows the Neighborhood, Community, Regional and Employments Centers and how they relate to one another. Here you can see the overlap of the low density residential areas which provide transition between the neighborhoods. There is a gap shown between the neighborhoods which become a rural or conservation area (T1 or T2 in the Transect) for very low density or cluster development. This often incorporates sensitive areas such as wetlands or lakes to be preserved or restricted development.

Figure 6:Conceptual Garner Framework

Development Principles

When applying development standards to a built environment, certain distinctions must be made between the existing (built) centers and the proposed (greenfield) centers. In the case of existing development, the main emphasis is to improve the character and incorporate the missing elements of the plan framework. In these centers, it is recommended that when infill development or redevelopment is proposed, that negotiations include consideration for the construction of sidewalks, plazas, or street connections and that new structures should built according to adopted design guidelines for the new development. As the existing centers are improved, over time they will be converted to meet the new development approach. Greenfield development will incorporate the standards for development as they are built. In this mode, being able to plan and design from the beginning allows all required plan elements to be met.

Core Development Standards

As shown on the "COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN" Map on the next page, Community and Neighborhood Cores make up the primary land use framework for the plan. The inner most ring of the core areas are referred to as the neighborhood core and community core and provide the most intense level of development for each node designation. The core areas allow for the concentration of commercial, office, mixed use and higher density residential which results in a integrated land use pattern. This should be done with a fully connected network of pedestrian and vehicular access.

Unlike the idealized symmetrical circles shown on the plan, the actual shapes of the cores will be irregular based on street pattern, sidewalks and greenways, parcel lines, topography, et cetera. Therefore providing flexibility in the core delineation is necessary and is provided by this Plan. It is the intent of this document to allow the prescribed uses to spillover or extend beyond the designated areas by no more than twenty-percent (20%) of the total net area of the use, but not exceeding the total allowable non-residential development acreage. This permits flexibility for development to fit to the features of a particular site and prevent the possibility of sprawl or strip development outside of the cores.

In order to calculate the non-residential development areas within the cores, the following method is established. The land area of the core is the area delineated shown on the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** Map. In standard development practice, twenty-percent (20%) of the gross land area is devoted to public infrastructure such as streets and right-of-ways. The non-residential development acreage amount is then calculated as fifty-percent (50%) of the gross developable area in the core. A building square footage maximum is not prescribed by this plan for the core since multi-story buildings with a mix of uses are encouraged. As an incentive for mixed use development, a ten-percent (10%) acreage bonus could be granted for those developments with true mixed use buildings (i.e. retail or office on the first floor, with residential use for the upper floors). This incentive will require an amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance and should be considered as a possibility.

Comprehensive Growth Plan
Town of Garner, NC
September 2006

Downtown Core
North Garner Plan

Raleigh Employment Center

Raleigh Village Center

Garner/Raleigh
Annexation Boundary

Lake Benson

Wake County Protected
Watershed Area
(not in Garner's Growth Plan)

PROPOSED 540 OUTERLOOP

N
W E
S

0 1 2 Miles

2006 Comprehensive Growth Plan

- Areas from Raleigh Plan
- Future Community Center (County Plan)
- Future Regional Center (County Plan)
- Garner ETJ
- Garner Urban Services Area
- Proposed Open Space Areas
- Employment Center
- Future Employment Center
- Regional Center
- Downtown Core
- 1/4 Mile Community (Focus)
- 1/2 Mile Community (Mixed Use)
- 1 Mile Community (Primary Residential)
- 2 Mile Community (Secondary Residential)
- 1/8th Mile Neighborhood Focus
- 1/2 Mile Neighborhood (Primary Residential)
- 1 Mile Neighborhood (Secondary Residential)

FEMA Flood

- 1pct annual chance
- 100-Year (Zone A)
- 100-Year (Zone AE)
- Floodway (Zone AEFW)

THOROUGHFARE PLAN

- Proposed Freeways/Interstates
- Existing Major Thoroughfares
- Proposed Major Thoroughfare
- Existing Minor Thoroughfares
- Proposed Minor Thoroughfare
- Non Jurisdictional
- Existing Interchange
- Proposed Interchange
- Proposed Clayton Bypass

Mixed Use Example:
Retail on ground floor with apartments above with single family homes adjacent along the street

The Neighborhood Core

The Neighborhood Center Core permits a mix of commercial and service establishments, such as convenience and/or pharmacy stores, a small restaurant, coffee shop, schools, office or church as the principal use and should support the daily needs of the surrounding community. These key elements can provide a landmark or serve as to identify the neighborhood. It is not intended that the core be fully developed with non-residential development; it should contain a mix of uses.

As the map indicates, the core area extends 1/8 of a mile from the center of the main intersection and contains approximately forty (40) acres gross area. With that in mind (and based on the formula described above), a limit in the amount of non-residential development is prescribed at twenty (20) acres. Commercial development in non-residential portion of the neighborhood core is capped at a maximum of 25%. All non-residential development should be built at a neighborhood scale with pedestrian access taking precedent over vehicles. The remainder of the core area will be devoted to higher density residential uses, civic, and open space. This encourages a mix of uses within the core and is important for a viable neighborhood. According to the ULI Shopping Center Development Handbook, a single neighborhood center sizes range from three (3) to ten (10) acres in land area.

The Community Core

The Community Center Core permits a broader range of uses and a larger total area than a Neighborhood Core. It is intended to serve a wider area and provide goods and services to a large portion of the community. Typical uses in this core area include large scale grocery stores, specialty retail (such as appliance and clothing), restaurants, movie

theatres, schools, offices, discount stores, or large scale church. This core area provides for more non-residential development opportunities, but also encourages a mixture of uses. Residential uses would be higher density such as apartments above first floor commercial uses, lofts, or townhomes.

The core area extends 1/4 of a mile from the center of the main intersection and contains approximately one hundred forty (140) acres gross area. A limit in the amount of non-residential development is prescribed at seventy (70) acres. All non-residential development should be built to an appropriate scale with pedestrian access with equal importance to vehicular access. The remainder of the core area will be devoted to higher density residential uses, schools, institutional, civic, church and open space. A mix of uses within this core is important for a sustainable service area linked to several neighborhoods. According to the ULI Shopping Center Development Handbook, a single community center sizes range from ten (10) to thirty (30) acres in land area.

The Community Center Mixed Use Tier

The next level out form the Community Core is the Mixed Use Tier. This level is similar in the scale of buildings to the Neighborhood Core, but more predominately residential element to support the commercial and service uses within the core area. Small scale offices, churches, schools, recreation, and civic uses are components, along with medium and higher density residential development—about 6 to 10 dwelling units per acre—in this tier. As in the Neighborhood Core, all buildings should be built to a neighborhood scale with pedestrian access and connections.

Garner Land Use and Design Matrix

The Land Use and Design Matrix lists the specific uses and criteria required for core areas and tiers within each type of node classification. The Matrix prescribes the maximum area within the core area and their support areas and with the appropriate land use classifications identified. This blends the land uses within the core areas to help create mixed use developments, bringing about true neighborhood and community cores. To assist in matching the provisions of the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** to the existing development code, the Zoning Districts are listed which are applicable to each tier category. Residential density, open space, design characters (Transect elements) and street type needed to serve these areas are also identified to further support the design parameters associated with each tier. The Garner Land Use and Design Matrix is shown on page 37.

Garner Targeted Growth Areas

Garner has designated six targeted growth areas and has defined an appropriate mix of uses for each area. These areas were selected based on infrastructure availability, natural features, availability to provide for growth, and the relationship to the developed areas of Garner and the surrounding environs. The six areas are: White Oak, Mahler Creek, US 70/Outer Loop, North Garner, South Garner, and Town Core and are shown on the following page (**Map 5 Targeted Growth Areas)**.

Town of Garner Comprehensive Plan

MAP 5
Targeted Growth Areas

White Oak

The White Oak area is a regional commercial area with access from major arterials and visibility to Interstate 40. This area incorporates the land between US 70 and White Oak Road along the western side of Interstate 40 and the northside of the proposed White Oak/Interstate 40 interchange. The White Oak area provides growth and development for large scale commercial projects, office and business parks, higher density residential and mixed use developments. The Town has been making infrastructure improvements over the past several years to support this new commercial/high density residential area. Additionally, the Timber Drive East Extension (NCDOT TIP U-4703) transportation project will bring increased access to the area and provide an additional east/west connection through Garner.

Mahler's Creek Basin

To the south and west of the White Oak growth area is the Mahler Creek area. This area is proposed primarily for new residential growth area with access provided by NC 50, New Bethel Church Road and White Oak Road. New infrastructure development and capacity, along with close access to Interstate 40, regional and employment center areas, and with Lake Benson Park and Centennial Park to the west makes this area a prime opportunity for residential growth. At present, this area is mostly rural in character. Three neighborhood centers have been designated at key intersections for mixed used developments and provides for daily goods and services convenient to the new residences. A community center is also designated at the proposed interchange at White Oak Road and Interstate 40.

US70/Outer Loop

This area, east of Interstate 40 and along the US 70 corridor, is a large community center based on the proximity of regional transportation links: US 70 and the proposed Outer Loop. This area is centered around two primary intersections; the US 70 and Raynor Road (which is existing) and the US 70 and Outer Loop interchange (which is proposed). The development of the center should begin at the Raynor Road intersections with road improvements for the future interchange to be part of any development. This area is targeted then to expand and future development permitted once the Outer Loop is constructed. The City of Raleigh has designated a village center north of US 70 near in the intersection of Rock Quarry Road and Auburn Knightdale Road area as part of its Comprehensive Plan. Discussions between the jurisdictions should take place for a coordinated planning effort in the growth areas.

North Garner

The North Garner area was the focus of a small area plan just prior to the start of the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN."** It centers on the historic downtown and the area of Garner north of US 70. The major component of that plan are the historic downtown and revitalization of that core, the proposed transit station for a potential transit stop, both pedestrian and vehicular connectivity, parks and neighborhoods and a safe connection between the two, roadway aesthetics, and the development of the vacant properties. This area also has land suitable for redevelopment. By reference, the recommendations of the North Garner Plan are incorporated within this **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN."**

South Garner

South Garner is located south of Lake Benson, where infrastructure is available north of Ten-Ten Road. This area is impacted by environmental and conservation issues associated with the Lake and should be reserved for large lot or conservation designed development. Several neighborhood centers are located at the secondary intersections along Ten-Ten Road including one at the intersection with US 50. South of Ten-Ten Road where the future Outer Loop runs parallel with said road there is a lack of public water and sewer infrastructure. This area is reserved for future development and discussions with Wake County should take place about the future growth for this area. The County Plan also designates an "Activity Center" at the intersection of the Outer Loop and US 401. Although outside of the Garner Planning Area, discussion between all applicable jurisdictions should take place for a coordinated planning effort along US 401.

Town Core

The existing built core of Garner is an area targeted for infill development and has many potential redevelopment sites. This is the area primarily south of US 70, west of NC 50, north of Lake Benson and east of US 401 where the town has developed over the past several decades. Infill sites should be considered as a valuable asset with infrastructure and transportation links already in place. Because of this, vacant sites and underutilized sites are encouraged as a first option for development to generate a higher return on the property, without expansion of services by the Town. Redevelopment recommendations for the Town Core can be found in detail within the North Garner Small Area Plan.

TRANSPORTATION

Background

The transportation system in Garner has become more congested over the last several years. Current system designs require that most drivers use a limited number of major arterials; therefore a high volume of traffic is concentrated on those roads. Whereas streets can be widened to accommodate the ever-increasing volume of traffic, it will require substantial funds, private land acquisition and ultimately not address the long-term transportation needs. The 1999 Transportation Plan addresses several issues, of which the identification of system deficiencies and alternative designs/access were paramount.

Implementation of land development regulations requiring sidewalks for streets in new subdivisions and a proposed bicycle route within the town core are positive steps and start to add access options for transportation. Connectivity, requiring internal street and pedestrian connections between developments, provides multiple alternative routes for travel. This is in contrast to the contemporary practice of single access developments from arterials. Land development patterns play a key role in the type of travel in the community. The residents and visitors to Garner desire a more pedestrian friendly environment to their neighborhoods and town, with better connections between those neighborhoods, parks, schools and commercial areas.

The need to widen/extend major arterials is also necessary. An east/west connection is crucial to move traffic through Garner. Timber Drive needs to be extended east for better access between the community and the emerging regional center at White Oak. Other needs include Ackerman Road extension to NC 50 and the construction of the Southern Outer Loop. The town needs to continue to work with NCDOT to get the two projects listed in the TIP funded and keep them on track for future construction. Access to transit is presently limited and expanded service and park-n-ride options should be available within the next few years. In the long-term, the commuter rail service in the region may be needed and coordination with appropriate transportation entities to properly plan for successful implementation of this mode of transportation is important.

Issues

Transportation is important to the economic health of businesses in Garner and the quality of life to the residents. Traffic congestion along the major arterials needs to be reduced through widening, extension and connectivity road projects where possible. Pedestrian and bicycle access facilities continue to be needed, and service gaps should be eliminated in order to develop alternate modes of transportation. Transit, both present and future opportunities, will provide a more complete transportation system to move in and around the town.

The key issues identified are:

- Pedestrian access must be built to enhance access and health.
- Sidewalks should be safe, enjoyable to use and convenient.
- Alternative connections between neighborhoods and land uses are needed for access options and to reduce congestion.

- Arterial widening and extensions are needed to adequately move traffic.
- Land development patterns should encourage compact and mixed use developments.
- Transit should be expanded for present day and future needs.
- Need to update 1999 Transportation Plan and include a collector street element.

Every aspect of our daily lives is influenced by and adapted to our means of transportation, the quality of the roads, and the available modes of transportation. As a consequence to transportation, the volume of traffic will also have a tremendous impact on our daily commutes, as well as on the level of safety we experience as we travel the street system. The condition of transportation facilities heavily influences the overall desirability of a community as a place to live and work. Additionally, economic development is equally dependent on an adequate traffic circulation system, and the proper relationships of those facilities are essential to the development and use of the land. Land use and design is inextricably linked to transportation facilities. Thus, considering all of this, as well as the tremendous costs associated with street, sidewalk and multi-modal construction, it is important that Garner plan for a logical road pattern that serves a functional purpose.

Transportation is important to the economic health of businesses in Garner and the quality of life to the residents. Garner's businesses need an efficient transportation system to move goods to local, regional, national and international markets. Their employees need safe and efficient means of travel to their place of employment. The residents and visitors to Garner also desire a more pedestrian friendly environment to their neighborhoods and town, with better connections between those neighborhoods, parks, schools and commercial areas.

Planning Principles

Garner has an excellent network of streets and good connections to the regional roadway system. While the *1999 Transportation Plan* lays out the framework for future roadway projects in Garner, care needs to be taken so that the future vision outlined in the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"** can be supported by the transportation system. Additionally, balancing vehicular and pedestrian needs can aid in traffic management as well as contribute to community character.

Provide a variety of connections between residential areas, employment centers, commercial areas, and other amenities such as parks and schools. Increased connections throughout the town will provide the opportunity for citizens to walk, safely bike or drive between the various uses in their daily activities. Establishing vehicular and pedestrian connections will offer more options for people, giving them the opportunity to reduce the length of their trip and reduce congestion on the thoroughfares. Pedestrian connections will offer an alternative for people not have to drive their automobiles between different land uses.

Promote measures to reduce congestion and the amount of vehicle miles traveled in Garner. As Garner continues to grow and develop, there is a corresponding increase in traffic on the major thoroughfares. Regional growth also increases the distance many people travel to work, to shop and to other activities. Establishing a development pattern that reduces the distance between home, schools, recreation, work, and shopping is the emphasis of the plan framework associated with the **"COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN"**.

By maximizing these opportunities, congestion and long distances of commuter travel can be reduced.

Preserve opportunities for transit. The automobile is the primary transportation option in Garner. Whereas transit is available in a limited fashion, it is localized and does not serve the region in an efficient manner. Regional travel by light rail is being studied for the Triangle region; Garner supports the endeavor and could be well served in terms of potential future commuter service along existing rail lines. Transit is an additional alternative option that is needed for well-coordinated transportation system in order to provide efficient access across the region.

Transportation Strategies

Increase pedestrian activity through proper street section design with sidewalks and street trees. This is accomplished by several means, such as traffic calming measures, but ultimately the pedestrian should feel safe and comfortable while walking. Street cross-section should be pedestrian oriented with sidewalks separated from the curb by a landscaping strip adequate for street trees to grow and provide shade. Parallel on-street parking should be incorporated where appropriate with medians designed to provide safe refuge while crossing streets. These types of separations provide a safe environment as a barrier from fast moving vehicles. An updated sidewalk plan and an updated transportation plan, which incorporates these ideas, should be programmed to be completed in the near future.

Promote street and road connections between existing and future developments. New development should have road and sidewalk connections to give motorists additional options for travel between neighborhoods and nearby shopping. Bikeways should be constructed as part of new road construction and improvements to existing roads. Providing connections between development gives motorists a variety of travel options and so they are not forced exclusively onto thoroughfares, this ultimately reduces congestion and travel distances.

Provide improved east/west connections through Garner. While there are multiple north/south connections through the Town, US 70 is the only primary east/west access. When completed the Timber Drive East extension will help in this circulation. Efforts should also be made for NCDOT to provide funding for the project (TIP U-4703). As US 70 provides east/west access along the northern portion of town, the Southern Outer Loop will provide this access in the southern portion of Garner. This corridor in important to the region and proper NCDOT funding for the project should be lobbied by all affected jurisdictions and CAMPO to accelerate the construction schedule.

Establish a development pattern that reduces the distance between home, schools, work, shopping, and recreation. New land use decisions need to reflect the desire to have neighborhoods in closer proximity to employment, shopping, parks and other activities. The plan framework pattern and proximity encourages people to walk or bike to their destinations, and if one chooses to drive, that trip distance is reduced.

Integrate the recommendations of the North Garner Plan's Transit Station Concept into the "COMPREHENSIVE GROWTH PLAN." Establishing the site for the future station will establish Garner's commitment and overall support to transit and potential light rail. This will be a hub of activity and provide a central point for regional access. It provides an economic development tool for new energy to revitalize and redevelop within the traditional downtown area in the near future as implementation for the overall system progresses. This brings people to downtown and becomes a major entrance to Garner.

Roadway System

The streets and roads in Garner serve different functions depending on their location and surrounding land use. There is a hierarchy ranging from local traffic to regional travel with traffic volume associated directly to each type. This section describes the existing condition of Garner's transportation facilities, system, and capabilities. Background information is reviewed on the traffic circulation system and its functional design, which provides an understanding of the purpose of the system and its characteristics. The 1*999 Garner Transportation Plan* identified various street classifications. Their primary functions are listed below and are shown on **Map 6** on the following page.

- **Roads (Minor Streets)—**Local access and collector streets serving direct access to property abutting the roads and linking to the transportation corridors. They are intended to serve as access within residential neighborhoods, serve as a medium for short-distance travel and not designed for heavy volumes of traffic. Examples of such are the numerous neighborhoods streets in subdivisions. These include Residential Streets and Lanes.

- **Minor Thoroughfares—**The primary purpose of this type of roadway is to collect and distribute traffic between the local road and major thoroughfares. Also, this type of road serves major intra-city/county travel corridors to supplement the major thoroughfares and facilitate traffic movement. These provide access and connection to the overall roadway system. Minor thoroughfares include Aversboro Road, Auburn Church Road, Raynor Road, and Rand Road. These include Residential Boulevards and Mixed Use Streets.

- **Major Thoroughfares—**The major thoroughfare serves as the main transportation artery for the town. It is designed for relatively free movement that serves urbanized area travel purposes. This should be a multi-lane roadway and be designed with bike lanes. These roads range from two-lane roadways to multi-lane (four and sometimes six-lane) streets carrying high traffic volumes for citywide and regional access. Major thoroughfares in Garner are Timber Drive, Jones Sausage Road, Ten-Ten Road, and US 70. These include Mixed Use Boulevards and Mixed Use Streets.

- **Freeway—**These are multi-lane, divided highways that allow an uninterrupted flow of high volume traffic on an inter- and intra-state basis. For safety reasons, these roads have controlled access, no driveways or intersections, which interfere with traffic flow. The example for Garner is Interstate 40 and the proposed Outer Loop.

MAP 6

NOTES:
Amended May 3, 2004
Portion of Ackerman Road removed
All of Yeargan Road removed

N
W E
S

0 1 2 Miles

Garner Urban Services Area
Garner Town Limits

Thoroughfares

TYPE

- Existing Freeways/Interstates
- Proposed Freeways/Interstates
- Existing Major Thoroughfares
- Proposed Major Thoroughfare
- Existing Minor Thoroughfares
- Proposed Minor Thoroughfare
- Non Jurisdictional
- Clayton Bypass

Interchanges

- Existing Interchange
- Proposed Interchange

November 16, 1999

Thoroughfare Plan for the Town of Garner

Wake County
North Carolina

Street Design Guidelines

The following sections outline possible street design guidelines for new streets that are part of redeveloped sites, neighborhoods, or corridors. Since the Town of Garner is urban, the outlined thoroughfare options follow design principles for urban locations. Within the Town of Garner Unified Development Ordinance, minimum streets standards are set and require certain right-of-way and pavement widths. Below are design guidelines which are recommended to be studied and evaluated in the update of the town's Transportation Plan and potentially to guide decisions in future development. These standards support the free flow of traffic, provide safe pedestrian movement and will enhance the aesthetics of the town and serve only as information in this plan.

Residential Boulevard

A residential boulevard is a long distance, free movement thoroughfare traversing an urbanized area. In this case, a boulevard is flanked by residential uses. The design includes sidewalks, median, and planting strip with street trees. On-street parking could be added if desired, but only if the redesign retains the planting strip and sidewalks.

This street type is recommended for minor thoroughfares within the designated residential areas. It will define the major traffic movement and add character to the neighborhoods. With two lanes traveling in each way, bicycle traffic is intended to use the roadway. However, pavement width can be increased by six feet in each direction to incorporate a dedicated bicycle lane. Pedestrians are protected from vehicles by the landscaped planting strip.

Figure 7: Residential Boulevard

Rear Lane

A rear lane is a vehicular access located to the rear of lots providing access to garages and parking areas. Lanes are usually paved to driveway standards. Use of rear lanes can divert some local traffic to the rear (accessing garages) making the streets more aesthetically pleasing. In addition, utilities and other services can be provided in the rear rather than front.

Presently, alleys or lanes are only permitted within commercial and industrial areas. Traditional neighborhood and similar smart growth development options recommend the use of alleys in higher density single family development. This option will also help to achieve the Town's goal to provide a complete range of housing options.

Figure 8: Rear Lane

Lane
24' Right-of-Way - 8' Pavement Width

Road Design Parameters

Type	Lane
Movement	Yield Movement
Design Speed	15 MPH
R.O.W. Width	24 ft.
Pavement Width	8-12 ft.
Traffic Flow	Two Way
Number of Parking Lanes	None
Curb Type	Swale
Curb Radius	15 ft. max.
Planter Width	N/A
Planter Type	Continuous
Planting Pattern	None
Tree Type	N/A
Bike Way Type	Bike Route
Bike Way Width	N/A
Sidewalks	None
Sidewalk Width	N/A

Mixed-Use Boulevard

A mixed-use boulevard is a long-distance, free-movement thoroughfare traversing an urbanized area. In this case, a boulevard is flanked by a mixture of uses including offices, retail, and residential uses. The design includes four lanes of through traffic and two lanes of local traffic with on-street parking (one lane each direction) separated from the through traffic by a median; sidewalks, median, and planting strip with street trees. This type of boulevard provides excellent access to properties fronting high volume roads and greatly enhances traffic flow.

The use of a major thoroughfare within commercial and mixed use districts provides large volume access required for the businesses. In smart growth development practices, buildings are brought to the street edge which eliminates or reduces the amount of parking in front, but gives the building prominence and defines the street edge. Providing on-street parking along major thoroughfares is difficult and dangerous if not protected from high speed traffic. By providing an internal access lane with parking eliminates these issues and enhances access. It also provides the pedestrian with a more pleasing environment between stores, protected safe movement and can further define the character of the area.

Figure 9: Mixed-Use Boulevard

Road Design Parameters

Type	Mixed Use Boulevard
Movement	Medium Speed
Design Speed	35 ft.
R.O.W. Width	124 ft.
Pavement Width	44 ft.
Traffic Flow	Two Lanes Each Way
Number of Parking Lanes	N/A
Curb Type	Raised
Curb Radius	15 ft.
Planter Width	N/A
Planter Type	Continuous
Planting Pattern	Allie 30 ft. on center
Tree Type	N/A
Bike Way Type	N/A
Bike Way Width	N/A
Sidewalks	Both Sides
Sidewalk Width	5 ft.

Mixed-Use Street

A mixed-use street is a local, free-movement thoroughfare that provides frontage for higher-density mixed-use areas. It is more urban in character with raised curbs, closed drainage, wide sidewalks, parallel on-street parking, and street trees.

When traffic volumes and speed are lower long minor thoroughfares, the Mixed-Use street provides the advantages of on-street parking and safe pedestrian movement within the commercial and mixed use districts. This street type is predictably found in downtown and neighborhood core areas and is encouraged to be developed in those districts.

Figure 10: Mixed-Use Street

Road Design Parameters

Type	Commercial and Residential Street
Movement	Slow
Design Speed	20 MPH
R.O.W. Width	58 ft. min.
Pavement Width	32 ft.
Traffic Flow	Two Ways
Number of Parking Lanes	Both Sides
Curb Type	Raised
Curb Radius	15 ft. max.
Planter Width	7 ft.
Planter Type	Continuous
Planting Pattern	Allee 30 ft. o.c.
Tree Type	N/A
Bike Way Type	Bike Lane
Bike Way Width	4 ft.
Sidewalks	Both Sides
Sidewalk Width	5 ft.

Residential Street

A residential street is a local, free-movement thoroughfare that provides frontage for higher-density residential areas. A residential street in an area that is urban in character should have raised curbs, closed drainage, parallel on-street parking, sidewalks, and street trees in a planting strip between the sidewalk and curb. These standards could be used today in Planned Residential Developments (PRD). Sidewalks and curbing may not be necessary in the residential areas located in the less urban areas having larger lot sizes, which are not adjacent to or near significant concentrations of commercial or civic activity. The majority of roads in Garner fall within this category.

Permitting on-street parking in residential areas provides direct access and reduces vehicle speeds within neighborhoods. This example shows the minimum pavement required to accommodate parking and traffic movement which is recommended to examine in Garner on low volume streets. The present Garner code requires 27 feet of pavement, which will accommodate on-street parking on one side with ample dual lane width for the free flow of traffic, rather than the yield movement as shown in this example.

Figure 11: Residential Street

Road Design Parameters

Type	Residential Street
Movement	Yield Movement
Design Speed	15 MPH
R.O.W. Width	52 ft. min.
Pavement Width	26 ft.
Traffic Flow	Two Ways
Number of Parking Lanes	Both Sides
Curb Type	Raised
Curb Radius	15 ft. max.
Planter Width	7 ft.
Planter Type	Continuous
Planting Pattern	Alice 30 ft. o.c.
Tree Type	N/A
Bike Way Type	Bike Lane
Bike Way Width	4 ft.
Sidewalks	Both Sides
Sidewalk Width	5 ft.

Pedestrian and Bicycle System

Pedestrian linkages—sidewalks—are limited in Garner. Timber Drive is the best example of a thoroughfare with pedestrian connections. A few local, or neighborhood streets have sidewalks, but these are widely dispersed and serve limited area(s). Most of the development along the main roads were constructed without sidewalk requirements and thought not to be necessary at the time. This misconception was commonplace in the majority of communities over the last several decades and certainly not limited to Garner.

Greenways in the Town are limited to the Lake Benson Area; one within Lake Benson Park and the other along the lake itself near Buffaloe Road. These do not serve as linkages, but rather as nature trails at the lake. Potentially, greenways could serve multiple purposes of linking sidewalks, as an alternate to sidewalks, and nature walks as well.

Currently, there is a designated bicycle path along Old Garner Road, with spurs branching out within the center of the town. This is a very positive mobility alternative with direct access to East Garner Middle and Creech Elementary schools, the Police Sub-Station, and Garner Recreation Park. Other public facilities and schools are near the bicycle path network and expansion will continue to link those and others in the future. Bicycles also travel along the roadways, but unless the cyclist feels comfortable in doing so along side of heavy traffic, trips are usually limited to the local areas or neighborhoods.

Today however, sidewalks, greenways and bicycle paths are considered to be an integral part of the transportation system and insisted by the residents. The need and use for such improvements are essential in achieving alternatives to automobile use for trips in close proximity to the home. One should refer to the North Garner Small Area Plan for more detailed information on greenway development in that area. The *1999 Garner Transportation Plan* outlines the locations and recommendations for each element.

Transit

The Town is served by the Capital Area Transit system (or CATs) which operates bus service and makes two stops in Garner at major shopping centers. The Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) operates a vanpool service which serves a limited number of riders from Garner to the State Government complex in Raleigh and ridership could increase with expanded service to the Research Triangle Park for example. Other expansions of service, both within Garner, to regional destinations, and designated Park-N-Ride lot(s) are necessary as many citizens cite the need for an improved public transportation system so many elderly and retired residents will have alternatives for mobility.

A feasibility study is underway to determine if commuter rail service is a possibility in the future. The planned service line would link Clayton, Garner and Raleigh and initially run during peak times, but so far has not been shown to be implemented in the near future. A proposed transit station has been examined in two locations in Garner which meet the specified criteria. There is a concern from the residents about the impacts a

station would bring with its location and use. As with any development, and even more so with this type, the impact to the surrounding area can be detrimental if not planned and constructed without the community in mind. There are many examples where commuter rail transit stops become an even more vibrant and prosperous area with additional shopping, services and living options available to the citizens and those should be the focus.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose of design guidelines is to offer general guidance for the built environment in Garner. The prevailing concept in developing these guidelines is to create a network of neighborhoods with housing, parks and schools placed within walking distance of shops, civic services, and employment. The rationale behind these guidelines is to produce some design principles to assist Garner maintain and enhance its existing "small town" visual appeal. It is understood that some of the guidelines may not be practical in all cases and creative development alternatives are welcomed provided the intent and spirit of these guidelines are met.

New development patterns should reinforce the connection between retail, mixed use and neighborhoods. These connections should be more pedestrian in scale and safe. The networks of neighborhoods will be centered on commercial cores that provide shopping, offices, civic spaces, and services along thoroughfares. These thoroughfares connect each of the cores to enhance the economic sustainability and further provide opportunities for access between neighborhoods and regional and employment centers.

Buildings should define space and generally front main roads within each area. Also, buildings should relate to one another within individual site development and not be isolated or cutoff either architecturally, visually, or physically. Even across streets, buildings should be placed in relation to each other to further define the streetscape.

This built pattern is based on the Transect as described earlier in the document. Based upon these principles, the design guidelines define the general appearance and site design of buildings, landscaping, parking, streets, and sidewalks. The implementation of these design guidelines will require amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance and should be considered.

Building and Site Development

General Design Themes

- All buildings in core areas should be in close proximity to each other as practical and are well connected with sidewalks or walkways and not separated from one another by large parking areas.
- Infill development sites should generally conform to the established predominate building lines in the surrounding area. Building mass/scale/height must be compatible with surrounding development patterns.
- Building design and landscaping within neighborhoods should be compatible.
- Planned developments within core and mixed use areas must have unity of development guidelines that demonstrate "unifying" elements regarding architecture, building materials and colors, site lighting, signage, and landscaping.
- Pedestrian oriented outdoor public spaces should be integrated into the overall design of development in core areas including the use of street furniture, lighting and small landscape features.
- Development should conform to the natural terrain to the extent possible, but not at the expense that compromises other major design criteria. Mass grading should be avoided except where specifically authorized by the Town.

- Adverse visual impacts from new or expanded developments to adjoining properties should be avoided or mitigated through the use of compatible architecture, building mass height and orientation, and landscape buffers.
- Street connectivity between developments should occur in a manner that results in a well connected town-wide street network. Development where the street network is isolated from adjoining properties is strongly discouraged.
- The street network within core areas should connect directly with surrounding neighborhoods in order to provide multiple points for access to and through the core areas.
- Adjoining outparcels within planned developments shall have points of internal access between them.
- Buildings should implement "Green Building Design" principles found in the LEED requirements for added energy efficiency and site development design principles from the LID requirements for improved land stewardship. The rationale for such is to enhance the quality of life for Garner citizens with reduced energy consumption and long term cost savings.

Community Core Area

The Community Center Core is the hub for a large service area of the town and developed at the intersection of major thoroughfares. It is based on the Urban Core section of the Transect and promotes buildings brought to the street with interior parking courts.

Design Parameters:

- Utilizes themes from the "Urban Core" element of the Transect.
- Buildings are built with minimal setback to the street so that they frame and define fronting streets in order to delineate the building form to streets and sidewalk areas.
- Buildings should have an entrance fronting the street.
- Building design and appearance generally should be in context with the surrounding area.
- Planned developments with outparcel buildings should be architecturally integrated (building materials, colors, etc.).
- Building footprints should be compact and the design should be pedestrian in scale (buildings do not dwarf people, materials, details and building design together should form an appropriate streetscape).
- Plazas or similar public outdoor space treatments can be used to help building define entrances.
- Four to five story maximum height with taller buildings at the center of the core with transition to lower heights at the core edge.
- Buildings at the core edge should have comparable heights, scale and mass with nearby neighborhoods.
- Large expanses of parking areas should not separate buildings from fronting streets; the use of interior parking courts or other designs that provide convenient pedestrian access is strongly encouraged.
- Interior connection to adjacent property strongly encouraged.
- "Landmark" or building with strong architectural character on corner.
- On-street parking should be considered on minor streets where appropriate.

Community Core

Figure 12: Community Core

Community Mixed Use Area

The next area from the core is the Mixed-use area. This section serves as a transition from commercial activity to residential development. It allows multiple uses on an individual tract and higher density residential development. The Urban Center principles of the Transect provide the development characteristics for this level.

Design Parameters:

- Utilizes themes from the "Urban Center" element of the Transect.
- Buildings are built with minimal setback to the street so that they frame and define fronting streets in order to delineate form to streets and sidewalk areas.
- Buildings should have an entrance fronting street.
- Building design should be in context with the surrounding area.
- Building footprints should be compact and the design should be pedestrian in scale.
- Three to four story maximum height.
- Large expanses of parking areas should not separate buildings from fronting streets; the use interior parking courts or other designs that provide convenient pedestrian access is strongly encouraged.
- Defined entrance to development with anchor tenants.
- Mixed uses are strongly encouraged, including multi-family, within the same block and should be connected with overall design.
- On-street parking should be considered on minor streets where appropriate.

Community Mixed Use

Figure 13: Community Mixed-Use

Neighborhood Core Area

The Neighborhood Core area is similar in nature to both the Community Core and Mixed-use areas but at a lower level of intensity. The neighborhood core serves as the hub to the individual neighborhood areas centered at the intersections of major and minor arterials. However it allows a mixed-use development pattern to integrate with the neighborhood development. The Neighborhood Core typically follows the development principles of the Urban Center and General Urban sections of the Transect for somewhat dense residential projects and lower intensity neighborhood commercial services.

Design Parameters:

- Utilizes themes from the "Urban Center" and "General Urban" Transect elements.
- Buildings are built with minimal setback to the street so that they frame and define fronting streets in order to delineate form to streets and sidewalk areas.
- Buildings should have an entrance fronting street.
- Buildings design should be in context with the surrounding area.
- Planned developments with outparcel buildings should be architecturally integrated (building materials, colors, etc.)
- Buildings entrances have a pedestrian or human scale.
- Three story maximum height.
- Large expanses of parking areas should not separate buildings from fronting streets; interior parking courts or other designs that provide convenient pedestrian access.
- Plazas or green spaces should be used to define building entrances.
- Larger building should anchor corner locations.
- Sidewalk connections throughout development.
- On-street parking should be considered on minor streets where appropriate.
- Seamless transition into residential.

Neighborhood Core

Figure 14: Neighborhood Core

Regional Center

The Regional Center provides goods and services for a large multi-jurisdictional area. It provides areas for large retail and office developments and higher density residential. These centers are concentrated near major thoroughfares and freeways for regional accessibility. The development characteristics for the Urban Core Transect section can be applied here, but more often are associated with the "Specialty" element of the Transect based on large building footprints designed for a specific use.

North Hills Retail Center, Raleigh, North Carolina

Southpoint Mall in Durham, North Carolina

Employment Center

All towns and cities have industrial and business areas to support its growth and sustainability. Employment Centers fulfill this need and are located in areas with good regional access. Because these buildings are designed more for a specific use and are difficult to provide a generalized placement, the "Specialty" element of the Transect provides guidance to this center with larger building footprints and distribution service areas.

Both the Regional and Employment centers are specialized places due to their type of buildings and service area. However there are certain design parameters, similar to the Community Core, which can be incorporated so that these large-scale places suit the overall image of the Town.

Oak Hill Business Park, Charlotte, North Carolina

Design Parameters:

- Buildings front on the main streets with parking on interior.
- Building details on pedestrian scale.
- Four story maximum height with taller buildings at the center and lower heights comparable to the surrounding area.
- Interior parking court.
- On-street parking should be considered on minor streets where appropriate.
- Interior streets, sidewalks and outdoor areas (i.e. plazas) should connect all areas within the development and those adjacent.
- Plazas, greens and similar formal parks to define spaces within center, conservation areas to be part of overall plan.
- Interior connection to adjacent property.
- "Landmark" or feature building on corner.

Special Transportation Corridor

Along the major thoroughfares, Special Transportation Corridors provides links between the various cores. These areas in built environments tend to have been developed with typical commercial stand-alone developments, such as gas stations and franchise restaurants. However, the redevelopment and infill development of these areas can be achieved with a mixture of uses for better transition and linkage. The principles of the "Urban Core" and "Urban Center" elements of the Transect are applied along the corridors.

Open Space

The design principles for open space are based on its location within the town. Urban parks are more formal spaces while on the other end of the spectrum, conservation areas which are generally informal or more natural spaces.

Open spaces should provide a focal point for the neighborhood and designed based on their location within the neighborhood. More urban locations should have plazas and squares, while fewer urban locations should have greens, parks, and greenways. Passive or more rural open spaces and preserves should be part of a conservation system, located on the edge of the urban area, adjacent to environmentally sensitive lands or between neighborhoods.

Urban open space shall be planned, improved, accessible and usable by persons living nearby. Improved open spaces may contain landscaping, walls, fences, walks, statues, fountains, ball fields, and/or playground equipment. Walls and fences shall be made of brick, stone, wrought iron, or wood, and should not exceed 3.5 feet in height.

At least one open space should be designed and included within 1200 feet of every residential unit. Each open space, except for rural preserves or conservation areas, should have 50 percent of its perimeter fronting a thoroughfare.

Plaza

A plaza is an open area adjacent to a civic or commercial building. Plazas should only be used in very dense redevelopment settings. Plazas function as gathering places and may incorporate a variety of non-permanent activities such as vendors and display stands. Plazas are always paved in brick, stone or other similar type of paver and should be level or gently sloping.

The typical minimum size preferred is 600 square feet and the maximum size preferred is 25,000 square feet. Plazas may be left unplanted. If planted, trees should form the geometric frame of the plaza space.

Figure 15: Plaza

Forecourt or Close

Forecourts or closes are open space areas that act as buffers between residential buildings and non-residential buildings or streets. Forecourts are entirely bounded by streets and the internal street section should be smaller in scale and be a one way street. If planted, trees should form the geometric frame of the space.

Figure 16: Forecourt or Close

Squares and Greens

Squares and greens are areas for passive recreational use. Squares are for more urban locations and greens are for less urban locations. Both shall be bounded by streets on a minimum of 75 percent of their perimeter. The minimum size shall be approximately 500 square feet and the maximum size of one acre. Squares may be entirely paved in crushed gravel, brick, stone or similar paver material; or they may be partially paved and partially soft grass.

Figure 17: Square or Green

Parks

Parks may be designed for passive or recreational use. Parks shall be bounded by streets on a minimum of 50 percent of their perimeter and are encouraged to be enclosed by streets on all sides. Parks shall be a minimum of one acre and a maximum of three acres in size. Parks may exceed three acres in size if through design, the park creates a central open space that serves an entire neighborhood or group of neighborhoods; or incorporates physical features that are an asset to the community (lake, high ground, vista, or woodlands).

Figure 18: Park

Conservation Areas or Greenways

Conservation Areas and Greenways run along the perimeter of a neighborhood or between neighborhoods and serve to buffer a neighborhood from incompatible uses such as a highway or industrial area. They provide a buffer area between developed areas and environmentally sensitive areas. These areas are left natural but may include walking trails. In addition, schools located adjacent to these areas can provide all recreational and athletic fields.

Figure 19: Conservation Area or Greenway

IMPLEMENTATION

This Implementation Matrix outlines the strategies, responsibilities, timeframe, action, and funding source needed to fulfill the goals of the "Comprehensive Growth Plan." Included are policy recommendations regarding land development, ordinance amendments, studies which analyze the opportunities and needs of the community, along with specific actions to put the plan in action **(see Table 7).**

The Town of Garner has a strong history of following plan recommendations and this continues with the "Comprehensive Growth Plan." It is recommended that these Implementation Strategies be prioritized and a review scheme for an annual audit or report card be developed for easy understanding of what has been completed, what is being worked on and what is left to do.

Timeframe Categories for the terms listed below are as follows:

Immediate Term …… 1 to 2 years;
Near Term …… 3 to 5 years;
Long Term …… 5 to 15 years;
Future Term …… more than 15 years.

Table 7: Implementation

Implementation Item (Strategy)	Who Is Responsible	Timeframe	What Needs to Happen	Funding Source
HO-1: Fill the housing market gaps with appropriate development.	Planning Department and Development Community	Immediate Term; this is an on-going effort.	Provide a base guide of housing needs within the Town and meet with developers to encourage building of the market needs for houses of $250,000 and above. Show that this type of housing does not exist in Garner and there is a need and units will be profitable.	General Fund Budget: Marketing Study or Special Study as needed
HO-2: Provide home ownership options including condominiums, senior housing, patio homes.	Planning Department and Development Community	Immediate Term; this is an on-going effort.	Provide a base guide of housing needs within the Town and meet with developers to encourage building of the market needs for these housing options. Assist developers to understand the requirements.	General Fund Budget: Marketing Study or Specials Study as needed
HO-3: Provide transitions from higher intensity uses such as retail or business parks to single family residential uses.	Town Board and Planning Department	Near Term	Develop appropriate code revisions to strengthen the development transition. Initially the Design Guidelines in the Plan will provide guidance	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CB-1: Establish a hierarchy of neighborhood, community, and regional commercial areas.	Town Board and Planning Department	Near Term	Develop appropriate code revisions to strengthen the development transition.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CB-2: Concentrate commercial uses	Town Board, Planning Department,	Near Term	Proactively zone areas designated for commercial	General Fund Budget: Staff Time

Table 7: Implementation

Implementation Item (Strategy)	Who Is Responsible	Timeframe	What Needs to Happen	Funding Source
within specific defined areas to specific portions of the community and to reduce vehicle miles traveled.	Development Community and Property Owners		use as needed and market areas to developers for construction.	
CB-3: Require commercial areas that are scaled appropriately in relation to the surrounding area and vehicular access.	Planning Department and Development Community	Near Term	Develop appropriate code revisions to strengthen the development transition. Initially the Design Guidelines in the Plan will provide guidance and examples of preferred development.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CB-4: Encourage opportunities for residents of surrounding neighborhoods to access retail shops by walking, biking, or driving a car.	Planning and Engineering Departments and Development Community	Near Term	Develop Town-wide Alternative Transportation and Access Plan; Update the Master Sidewalk Plan. Town should develop priority system and build sidewalks accordingly.	General Fund and Powell Bill Funds: Staff Time for Design and/or Construction Management.
CB-5: Establish design guidelines for commercial centers so that they relate to the neighborhoods as well as the highway.	Planning Department	Immediate Term	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CB-6: Utilize the available land in the existing business parks.	Planning Department and Development Community	Immediate Term; this is an on-going effort.	Identify and map available land, meet with developers to encourage land development.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
OS -1: Continue to increase active and passive recreational opportunities distributed throughout the town.	Town Board and Recreation Department	Near Term	Develop detailed Master Park Plan.	General Fund Budget and Recreation Grants: Plan Development
OS-2: Respect Lake Benson as a significant resource for recreation and nature.	Parks & Recreation Department	Near Term	Develop detailed Conservation and/or Small Area Plan.	General Fund Budget, Recreation Grants, Clean Water Trust Fund and similar grants:
OS-3: Open space required as part of development should be properly useable for common use.	Planning and Parks & Recreation Departments	Immediate Term	Revise Unified Development Code as necessary.	General Obligation Budget: Staff Time
OS-4: Parks should be properly designed and located to be part of the overall parks plan.	Planning and Recreation Departments	Immediate Term	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
OS-5: Start to build a greenway system to serve as trails for	Engineering and Parks & Recreation Departments and	Near Term; this is an on-going effort.	Identify and Map opportunities and desired location as part of an Open	General Fund Budget: Staff Time

Table 7: Implementation

Implementation Item (Strategy)	Who Is Responsible	Timeframe	What Needs to Happen	Funding Source
recreation and connectivity.	Development Community		Space Plan. Assist developers to understand the requirements.	
OS-6: Encourage the use of conservation developments to preserve natural features and green space.	Planning Department	Near Term	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions or Conditional Use.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-1: Encourage business parks that provide flexibility in parcel sizes and amenities in order to accommodate changing market conditions and allow for quick responses to opportunities.	Town Board, Planning Department and Development Community	Near Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan, meet with developers to encourage land development.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-2: Provide an appropriate mix of non-residential development opportunities.	Town Board, Planning Department and Development Community	Near Term	Provide a base guide of development needs within the Town and meet with developers to encourage construction options. Assist developers to understand the requirements.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-3: Encourage a higher percentage of business uses within the community.	Town Board and Chamber of Commerce	Near Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Meet with Chamber and discuss means to encourage business development.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-4: Take an economic development approach that generates a higher percentage of office and light industrial uses related to retail uses.	Town Board	Near Term	Develop and refine policies which will encourage preferred development. Develop Market Study.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Plan Development
ED-5: Allocate appropriate available land near connections to the regional roadway system for business park/light industrial development.	Planning Department	Near Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Proactively zone areas designated for commercial use and market areas to developers for construction.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-6: Maintain regular contact with city businesses, both one-on-one and through business organizations.	Town Board, Main Street Director, Planning Department and Chamber of Commerce	Immediate Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Develop "Meet and Greet" policy for elected officials, staff and Chamber to meet with business owners on a semi-regular basis through workshops and site visits.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-7: Develop a priority system for use of incentives that maximizes leverage of private investment.	Town Board and Town Manager	Immediate Term	Develop/refine policy which directs in-kind and other incentives to recruit and retain businesses.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
ED-8: Market the community within the region	Town Board, Town Manager and Chamber of Commerce	Immediate Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Develop a marketing concept to recruit new business and residents.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Marketing Information

Table 7: Implementation

Implementation Item (Strategy)	Who Is Responsible	Timeframe	What Needs to Happen	Funding Source
ED-9: Participate on the boards and committees of regional economic development organizations to insure that the best interests of Garner are incorporated.	Town Board and Town Manager	Immediate Term	All elected officials should be placed and serve on regional development and policy boards.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CI-1: Preserve Garner's small town atmosphere as new development occurs.	Planning Department and Development Community	Near Term	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CI-2: Ensure that there are appropriate land use controls and design review procedures that reflect the desires of the residents of Garner.	Planning Department	Near Term	Revise Unified Development Code as necessary.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
CI-3: Establish a community focal point.	Town Board, Town Manager, Planning and Engineering Departments	Immediate Term	Identify potential community landmark and develop plans and construct.	General Fund Budget: Plan Development and Construction.
CI-4: Continue to improve roadway aesthetics on US 70 and US 401.	Planning and Engineering Departments	Immediate Term; this is an ongoing effort.	Revise Unified Development Code as necessary. Develop Streetscape Plan.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Plan Development
CI-5: Improve the streetscape and infrastructure in the Garner Road Corridor.	Engineering Department and Main Street Director	Immediate Term	Develop Streetscape Plan and infrastructure study.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Plan Development
TR-1: Increase pedestrian activity through proper street section design standards.	Planning and Engineering Departments	Near Term	Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
TR-2: Promote street and road connections between existing and future developments.	Town Board, Engineering Department and Development Community	Near Term	Update Transportation Plan. Develop appropriate code revisions	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Road Construction
TR-3: Provide improved east/west transportation corridors through Garner.	Town Board, NCDOT, Planning and Engineering Departments	Near Term	Continued work with NCDOT to plan, fund and construct main connections. Work with developers to build portions as development occurs.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time and Road Construction
TR-4: Establish a development pattern that reduces the distance between home, schools, work,	Town Board, Planning Department and Development Community	Long Term	Revise Unified Development Code as necessary. Develop detailed guidelines based on the information with this Plan.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time

Table 7: Implementation

Implementation Item (Strategy)	Who Is Responsible	Timeframe	What Needs to Happen	Funding Source
shopping, and recreation.				
TR-5: Integrate the recommendations of the North Garner Plan's Transit Station Concept into the "Comprehensive Plan."	Planning Department and Main Street Director	Future Term	This is done as a part of the Plan. However, Staff should continue to work with region and TTA or entities to plan site development for future station.	General Fund Budget: Staff Time
TR-6: Provide road connections and circulation options so that residents can access neighborhood and community commercial areas without having to drive on high volume roadways.	Planning and Engineering Departments, NCDOT and Development Community	Long Term	Update Transportation Plan.	General Fund Budget: Hire Consultant to Develop Plan

Amending the Comprehensive Growth Plan

BACKGROUND

The *Comprehensive Growth Plan* is intended to be a tool in making development related decisions within the Town, ETJ and the designated growth areas into the year 2020. Although the Plan is an officially adopted policy document, it is not a development control ordinance. It provides flexibility as development requests are submitted for review, but also establishes firm recommendations as to how and where development should occur with sensitivity to the established pattern and natural resources. It provides the background for making zoning decisions, development ordinance revisions, implementation for public improvements, and encouragement for private investment regarding the development and redevelopment of properties in the Town of Garner. It provides guidance for the citizens to determine a predictable pattern of development in relationship to their property and what they want their community to become in the future. It is based on sound planning principles and practices. To this resolve, the plan is conceptual and is not intended to dictate an exact development pattern.

NEED FOR AMENDMENTS

From time to time, it may be necessary to amend the Plan to refine the community's vision, to reflect changes in development patterns, to respond to new information, or react to emerging trends or development pressures. Plan amendments may be requested by the Board of Aldermen, the Planning Commission, Town departments, or private citizens. The process for amending the Plan requires that the Planning Commission review the request and make a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen. The Board of Aldermen must hold a public hearing and adopt an ordinance to amend the Plan. The amendment process is discussed in more detail below.

TYPES OF AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the Plan may be either map changes or text changes.

Most map amendments are associated with a development request or application. Map amendments are pre-requisites for rezoning requests that conflict with the land-use intensity recommendations of the Plan. Map amendments can involve moving or shifting the boundary of an existing Core or Center, inserting a new Core or Center area not previously mapped, or upgrading a Core's intensity (from neighborhood to community).

Text amendments involve the modification of goals, policies, objectives, procedures, or data related to map changes or may be precipitated by need to update the written plan itself.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The map designates specific areas to be developed at different intensities. More intense development is recommended within the various cores and centers. Less intense uses are recommended outside of these areas. Increasing or reducing an intensity area requires thorough study by Planning staff and review by the Planning Commission and the Board of Aldermen. The requested change should be in harmony with the Plan's vision statement and with the various objectives, principles, and strategies outlined in the Plan. Other issues that will be considered in reviewing an amendment are the demands for the proposed uses, the availability of utilities and infrastructure, and the impacts to adjacent land-uses and established neighborhoods.

PROCEDURES

Any interested individual can submit a Plan amendment application. The process typically takes 8 to 10 weeks from the date of submission, but some requests may require additional time for staff analysis. Applications are due the first working day each month. The amendment procedures are as follows.

1. A pre-application meeting with the Planning Director is required to discuss the issues and determine the complexity of the request. This meeting must be held prior to the monthly submittal deadline which is the first working day of each month.
2. A *Comprehensive Growth Plan* application and filing fee of $100 must be filed with the Director of Planning at Town Hall. The application must be complete with supporting documentation and maps; the applicant's signature is required in addition to a detailed description of the request and reason for the proposed amendment. The application form is available from the Planning Department in Building B at Town Hall.
3. Upon receipt of the application, a legal notice is written and meeting dates are set. Notice of the public hearing shall be in a newspaper of general circulation in the area at least 10 days and not more than 25 days prior to the date of the hearing.
4. The Planning Department staff shall review all proposals for amendment and prepare an analysis and summary of the request for submittal to the Board of Aldermen and Planning Commission.
5. The public hearing is held with the Board of Aldermen. Comments for or against can be presented at this time. The application is referred to the Planning Commission for review and a recommendation.

6. At the next scheduled meeting, the Planning Commission reviews the amendment request for its compliance with Town regulations and policies. Planning staff will summarize the analysis, and the applicant may be called on to answer questions. The Commission will make a recommendation of approval or denial. This recommendation will be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen for consideration.
7. At the final meeting, the Board of Aldermen makes a decision to approve or deny the request. Notification of the decision will be sent to the applicant.
8. Approved map amendments are updated on the "Comprehensive Growth Plan" map. Approved text amendments are updated in the *Comprehensive Growth Plan* document.

   NOTE: If the Comprehensive Plan amendment is part of a Conditional Use Rezoning change, then the amendment will follow the same schedule as the rezoning. If this is the case, the application will go to the Planning Commission first and then the Board of Aldermen for a public hearing and a decision.

TOWN OF GARNER
APPENDIX

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

History

The earliest records of settlement in the Garner area date back to 1756 and are related to a church located south of Garner in the Panther Branch Township. Other records indicate that King George of England granted the Rand family a 3,000-acre tract of land in 1759. A portion of this land would later become the site of the community known as Rand's Mill. The pond at Rand's Mill was eventually expanded and became known as Lake Benson. While no one knows for sure how Garner received its name, the village of Garner's Station was chartered in 1883. The first post office was established by 1878. Garner's Station had its charter repealed in 1891 and an application was made in 1905 for its reinstatement as the Town of Garner. Garner was granted its charter in 1905 as part of St. Mary's township.

Garner was established along the Southern Railroad. The main source of income for the early settlers of Garner was farming with cotton as the primary crop. A wood shop owned by Henry Fort was said to have been the first business in Garner. Early businesses in and around Garner were mostly concentrated in general stores and cotton gins; however, other businesses thrived that served the local farming community

An important factor that historically affected Garner's growth is its location along US 70. Also known as Central Highway, US 70 was an aggressive effort on the part of the State of North Carolina to construct a paved road from "the mountains to the sea." In 1910 the route was established, in 1911 the project commenced, and the portion of the highway between Raleigh and Garner was paved by 1917. Central Highway would become one of the oldest and longest traveled corridors in North Carolina. Today's Garner road is the original route of Central Highway. Easy access to Raleigh and a highway system paved in the early 1900's greatly assisted Garner's future development.

Demographic Overview

Population

The population of Garner has increased gradually over its first few decades of existence. In 1940, the town had a modest population of 768 persons. Over the next 50 years, the population of Garner almost doubled each decade. Population grew from 14,967 in 1990 to 17,787 is 2000, representing a nineteen percent (19%) increase over the decade. This is a substantially slower growth rate compared to the surrounding towns of Apex, Fuquay-Varina and Wake Forrest (see Table 1).

Table 1: Population Growth 1990 through 2000

Garner had an estimated population of 21,941 in 2005 and is expected to grow another thirty-one percent (31%) by 2010; an additional 7,000 people within the Town's limits (see Table 2). This table shows a twenty-three percent (23%) increase in the Town's population over the past three years and an overall increase of fifty-three percent (53%) since 1980.

Table 2: Town of Garner, Population 1980 through 2010

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010
Town of Garner	10,182	14,967	17,787	21,941	28,502
% Chance	—	47%	19%	23%	31%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Town of Garner.

Table 3 shows the population breakdown by age for 1990 and 2000. Throughout the decade, the largest age group is the 25-44 year olds with thirty-four percent (34%) of Garner's population. The largest increase between the two decades occurred in the 75+ year olds, with a one hundred percent (100%) increase in population between 1990 and 2000.

Table 3: Town of Garner, Population Breakdown by Age

	Under 5	5-19	20-24	25-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
1990	1,037	3,145	936	5,658	1,692	641	620	809	429
% of Population	7%	21%	6%	38%	12%	4%	4%	5%	3%
2000	1,198	3,630	1,019	5,970	2,505	784	717	1,075	859
% of Population	7%	20%	6%	34%	14%	4%	4%	6%	5%
% Change	16%	15%	9%	6%	48%	22%	16%	33%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 1.

Table 4 shows that twenty-five percent (25%) of Garner's population twenty-five years or older had a high school diploma in 2000, a slight decrease from thirty-one percent (31%) of the population in 1990. Garner did experience an increase of fifty-one percent (51%) in population with a graduate or professional degree from 1990 to 2000. Garner overall experienced an increase in population with college degrees, bachelor, graduate and professional degrees.

Table 4: Town of Garner, Educational Attainment

	<9th Grade	9th-12th Grade, No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College No Degree	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Professional Degree
1990	675	823	3,101	1,960	1,001	1,788	527
% of Population 25 Years and Over	7%	8%	31%	20%	10%	18%	5%
2000	495	1,135	2,954	2,989	947	2,551	796
% of Population 25 years and Over	4%	10%	25%	25%	8%	21%	7%
% Change	-26%	38%	-5%	53%	-5%	43%	51%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

Housing

Residential is the largest single land use in the Town of Garner. A comparison between the land area of residential and non-residential can be seen in the Existing Land Use section. Below is a discussion of housing characteristics related to residential land use.

Table 5 compares the increase in the total number of households between Garner, the Raleigh-Durham Metropolitan Statistical Area, Wake County, and the State of North Carolina. Garner experienced a sixteen percent (16%) increase in the total number of households between 1990 and 2000. Compared to region-wide statistics, Garner grew at a much more moderate pace.

Table 5: Total Number of Households

	1990	2000	% Change
Town of Garner	5,764	6,950	16%
Raleigh-Durham MSA	287,647	461,097	60%
Wake County	165,743	242,040	46%
North Carolina	2,517,026	3,132,013	24%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 1.

Compared to the average price of housing in the region, the cost of housing in Garner is relatively inexpensive (see Table 6). The Median house value in Garner is approximately $120,000 compared to $147,000 for the Raleigh-Durham MSA and $163,000 Wake County.

Table 6: Median Cost of Housing

	1990	2000	% Change
Town of Garner	$78,100	$119,600	53%
Raleigh-Durham MSA	$92,400	$146,800	59%
Wake County	$96,800	$162,900	68%
North Carolina	$65,300	$108,300	66%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

The trend in rental housing in Garner is slightly different than that of owner-occupied housing (see Table 7). The median rent in Garner, at $595, is higher than the Raleigh-Durham MSA, but lower than Wake County.

Table 7: Median Rent

	1990	2000	% Change
Town of Garner	$498	$595	20%
Raleigh-Durham MSA	$467	$588	26%
Wake County	$480	$631	31%
North Carolina	$382	$431	13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

Table 8 below shows the number of housing units available within given ranges of house values and rental prices.

Table 8: Cost of Housing

	1990	2000
Cost of Owner-Occupied Housing		
Less than $50,000	228	57
$50,000 to $99,999	2,676	1,101
$100,000 to $149,999	494	2,441
$150,000 to $199,999	129	643
$200,000 to $299,999	14	317
$300,000 or More	11	40
Cost of Renter-Occupied Housing (Per Month)		
Less than $250	118	106
$250 to $499	1,506	495
$500 to $749	274	1,114
$750 to $999	8	271
$1,000 or More	2	28

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

A stated goal in *The Centennial Long Range Plan, 2005* is a 34%/66% split between the number of multiple family households versus single family households. As of the 1990 Census, the split was 29%/71%. By the 2000 Census, the split changed to 25%/75%. Table 9 shows the number of Renter Occupied and Owner Occupied housing units in Garner. The relationship between Renter Occupied and Owner Occupied housing is similar to the relationship between multiple family and single family households. Generally, occupants of multiple family housing pay rents and occupants of single family housing own their house. However there are some instances where multiple family residences are owned as condominiums and single family houses are rented.

Table 9: Housing Tenure

Development Trends

In addition to population, the growth of Garner can be observed through construction data. The Town of Garner Planning Department tracks construction and development data and publishes an annual Growth and Development Report. Tables 10 and 11 present excerpts from the reports over the last five years.

Table 10: Residential Units Approved

Residential Units Approved shows the number of single family and multiple family dwelling units approved for construction. Garner experienced it's most significant residential growth in 1999 with an almost equal number of single family and multiple family units approved. 2000 saw a significant decrease with only 29 single family units approved; however, this matched a national trend of decreasing housing starts. In the years 2001 through 2003, the number of starts was relatively consistent with a general trend of single family and multiple family alternating as the dominant form of residences approved. Over the five years a total of 955 single family units and 1,030 multiple family units were approved.

Number of Building Starts shows the total number of non-residential new buildings and major construction projects. As opposed to residential starts, non-residential starts remained fairly consistent over the five years. A slight drop occurred in building starts between 1999 and 2000 (-40%), but nowhere near the significance of the drop in residential starts over the same period (-97%). Of a total of 115 non-residential building starts over the 5 years, 52 were Commercial. Flex, Industrial, and Office saw 23, 23, and 17 building starts respectively.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

Natural Resources

Natural Resources are those elements of nature which survive in between built environment and are often necessary to the proper function as well as the aesthetics of a community. The Town of Garner is rich in natural resources compared to other built environments and its citizens pride themselves on the resources they have been able to preserve. An illustration of Garner's Natural Resources can be seen in Figure 2.

Ground Water/Surface Water—Over 90% of Garner lies in the Swift Creek watershed. The remainder of Town lies in the Walnut Creek watershed and White Oak Creek watershed. Garner Road runs along the ridge that forms the boundary between the Swift Creek and Walnut Creek watersheds. The Swift Creek watershed is south of Garner Road and Walnut Creek watershed is north of Garner Road. The White Oak Creek watershed is located east of Hwy 2547. Swift Creek feeds Lake Benson, which is the source of Garner's drinking water. Swift Creek and a portion of its watershed are designated protection areas. Development and other activities are subject to more stringent regulations to restrict storm water runoff and to protect the quality of water in Swift Creek and Lake Benson. Water quality regulations include limits on residential density, impervious surface limitations, and storm water retention requirements.

Floodplains—A surface waterway is delineated by its floodway and floodplain. Floodway is defined as that portion of a stream or river that cannot be obstructed without causing an increase in the elevation of the 100-year floodplain. Floodplain, also referred to as the 100-year floodplain, is the elevation the water level of a stream or river will reach as the result of storm (inches of rain per hour) that has a 1% chance of happening in any given year. The majority of floodplain areas in Garner and its ETJ lie along Swift Creek and its tributaries in southern parts of Garner. Smaller portions of the total floodplain area are located along a tributary of Walnut Creek to the north, and White Oak Creek to the east. Floodplains make up 8.6% of the total land area of the Town of Garner and 7.8% the total area of the ETJ. Generally, development has been kept out of floodplains. Garner's Unified Development Ordinance strictly prohibits construction of any structure in designated floodways or the100-year floodplain. Fill is allowed in floodplains only if the material does not raise the 100-year floodplain elevation upstream.

Potential Wetlands—Wetlands are defined as land with the following three characteristics: 1. supports aquatic organisms, 2. contains undrained hydric soils, and 3. soil is saturated or covered by shallow water at sometime during the growing season. Wetland areas are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identifies areas that possibly meet the characteristics stated above; however, areas of concern must be independently surveyed to assess the quality of a wetland. Areas in the Town of Garner identified in the NWI as wetlands are primarily located in the floodplains listed above and the built storm water detention areas found throughout town.

Wildlife Habitat—Two broad categories of wildlife are defined in the Garner Open Space and Greenway Plan. The first is "edge" species, defined as wildlife that has adapted to the built environment and lives in close relationship to urban residents. The second is "interior" species, defined as wildlife requiring undisturbed forest environments to survive. Due to the fact that most interior forest tracts have been removed from Wake County, the majority of wildlife consists of edge species. Wetlands and floodplains in Garner act as habitat and migration corridors for both categories of wildlife species. The Open Space and Greenway Plan also states that, "approximately 80% of all wildlife depend on riparian corridors for survival. Therefore, the protection of floodplains is crucial to sustaining a diverse wildlife population in Garner." Two endangered species found in the Garner vicinity are the bald eagle at Yates Mill Pond, Lake Wheeler, and Lake Benson and the lamp mussel in Swift Creek south of Benson Road. Due to the conservation buffers established around the lakes and Garner's floodplain restrictions, the habitats of these endangered species is not at risk.

The Town of Garner

Town of Garner

Figure 2
Natural Resources

Cultural Resources

National Register—The Downtown Garner Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on December 21, 1989. The Wake County Historic Preservation Commission lists Garner High School, the Banks House, the Train Depot, and several Downtown Buildings as Wake County landmarks. Edenwood and the Wayland Poole House are in the vicinity of Garner are also on the National Register.

Community Facilities

Community Facilities refer to structures, services, and activities provided to the residents of Garner by the Town, County, State, or independent taxing authority. Community Facilities are subdivided into two groups: Public Facilities/Services and Infrastructure. The location of Public Facilities can be seen in Figure 3.

Public Facilities/Services

The Parks Maintenance & Development Division of the Town of Garner is responsible for providing safe parks and athletic facilities that will result in enjoyable and rewarding recreation experiences for the public. This Division maintains the Town's parks and athletic fields; supports other Departmental activities; and manages the Town Hall campus, school fields used by the Recreation Division, the Town Welcome signs, highway median plant beds, and other properties as assigned. All Town landscaping and seasonal color programs are handled by this Division as well as the maintenance of Lake Benson Park, Thompson Road Park, and landscape plant beds on Timber Drive, Highway 70, and Main Street.

The Solid Waste Division contributes to the community by providing a safe, attractive, and environmentally sound method for the collection and disposal of residential refuse. Contracted collection service began in October of 1990, and has continued since that time. Services currently offered include weekly curbside collection of garbage, trash, and prepared yard waste; bi-weekly curbside collection of recyclables; periodic "unprepared" trash and yard waste collections; and collection of loose leaves from November through February.

The following list provides all the parks and shelters within the Town of Garner, which are available to the public:

- **Cloverdale Park—**Located in the Cloverdale subdivision off Cranston Road at 1603 Meadowbrook Drive.
- **Greenbrier Park—**Located in the Greenbrier subdivision at 613 Winterlochen Drive, this neighborhood park offers a tennis court, play equipment and a picnic shelter.
- **Jaycee Park—**Located at 1300 Vandora Springs Road in the Forest Hills Subdivision, this park features a family picnic area with grills and a shelter, as well as a tot lot and other play equipment.
- **Lake Benson Park—**Located at 921 Buffaloe Road, this spacious park includes a walking trail, and accommodates a variety of activities from family gatherings at the four picnic shelters to Town wide special events. In warm weather, fishing and boat rentals are also available at the Lake Benson Boat House, which is located at 975 Buffaloe Road, from sunrise to thirty minutes prior to sunset on Wednesdays through Sundays.
- **Rand Mill Park—**Located at 508 Rand Mill Road (on the corner of Rand Mill Road and Smith Drive), this park attracts many neighborhood residents with its ball field, play equipment and picnic shelter.

The Town of Garner

Town of Garner

Comprehensive Growth Plan

Figure 3
Community Facilities

Legend

- Schools
- Bikeway
- Roads
- Public
- Parks
- Town Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Parcels

N

0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

- **South Garner Park—**Located in Heather Hills at 1210 Poole Drive, this park has something for everyone. The park features three softball fields, a multipurpose field, tennis courts, a hiking trail and a large playground.

- **Thompson Road Park—**Located at 550 Thompson Road, this provides practice facilities for a variety of athletic teams.

- **Avery Street Recreation Center and Park—**Located on the Old Garner Elementary School campus, at 125 Avery Street, this Recreation Center offers a gymnasium that serves as a base for after-school program and summer day camp. The park also features a play field and North Garner baseball field which are operated by the Town.

- **Garner Historic Auditorium—**Located at 742 West Garner Road, the restored 512-seat auditorium is host to many performances and events. The elegant lobby can be leased for special occasions and acts as an art gallery.

- **Garner Recreational Park—**Located in the Historic Garner District at 213 East Garner Road, this park features two ball fields and a playground. In the Creech Road section of the park, at 190 Creech Road, there are lighted tennis courts.

- **Garner Senior Center—**Located at 205 East Garner Road, the center is a focal point for senior adult programs and has received statewide recognition for quality services.

- **Creech Road Elementary School Park—**Creech Road Elementary School Park, is located at 400 Creech Road, adjacent to Creech Road Elementary School. This park features adult softball field, football field, a walking track, natural areas and a picnic shelter with restrooms.

- **White Deer Park—**Located at 2400 Aversboro Road, temporary soccer practice fields are located in this otherwise undeveloped property.

Schools

Schools are located throughout the Town of Garner and include a total nine of schools within the Town limits. These schools include the following elementary, middle and high schools:

- Aversboro Elementary School
- Creech Elementary School
- Rand Road Elementary School
- Smith Elementary School
- Timber Drive Elementary School
- Vandora Springs Elementary
- East Garner Middle School *
- North Garner Middle School *
- Garner Senior High School *

** Designated as a future Magnet School*

The school system in Garner received much attention during the public input process. Residents believe that the perception of Garner's schools is less than adequate based on students' performance. Test scores have been increasing recently, but the negative perception of the school system remains.

Infrastructure

There is a direction relationship between utility location and future growth. A town must have infrastructure in place or planned with available capacity in order to accommodate growth.

Compact and orderly growth is beneficial by accessing utilities which are already in place and serving a larger number of customers. Growth, however, in a sprawling fashion can create an inefficient utility system by a relatively low number of customers connecting to the infrastructure. Garner has positioned itself well serving the incorporated limits of the Town with water and sewer services. The inventory of infrastructure, service area and relative capacity of the system will give officials direct information for future expansion decisions to adequately serve locations for new growth and development recommendations. The existing water and sanitary sewer system is shown in Figure 4.

Water Distribution

Through consolidation in 2001, the City of Raleigh supplies the Town with water. Prior to the consolidation, Garner was receiving the potable water supply from Raleigh through and agreement of service. The City of Raleigh obtains water from Falls Lake and is presently building a new water treatment plant on Lake Benson, south of Garner. As a part of the consolidation agreement and treatment plant construction, Garner will supply water to areas outside the town as it develops.

Water service is available throughout the town limits and along US 401, Old Stage Road, White Oak Road, Jones Sausage Road, and developments south of Town. At the community meetings, residents and stakeholders suggested that water rates charged for service were high; however, the infrastructure was very good and serves as an opportunity for growth.

Sanitary Sewer Service

As with the water distribution system in Garner, the City of Raleigh supplies the Town with wastewater treatment as part of the 2001 consolidation. As a part of the Centennial Plan, written in 1989, the Town estimated the wastewater treatments needs in 2005 to be 7.56 million gallons per day (mgd) capacity. Raleigh's Neuse River Wastewater Treatment Plant will increase to 60 mgd; however, upgrades will need to be made prior to 2025 to increase capacity to 80 mgd.

Wake County has designated Urban Service Areas (USAs) and Garner is within the Fuquay-Varina/Garner USA. This is a designated area which estimates what Garner will need to sewer in the future with a consolidated system. However, it seems that full implementation of the USAs is beyond the horizon of this plan.

Future sewer capacity is a concern within the Town. In 2000 (and amended in 2003), the Board of Alderman adopted a Sewer Allocation Policy which was set to accomplish two specific goals. First was to build a water and sewer allocation reserve for desirable projects; and second to continue to provide a full range of housing prices and sizes. This policy affects residential projects only. Non-residential projects are only limited to 37,500 mgd maximum annual allocation. The allocation policy furthers the goal within prior planning documents to encourage non-residential development in order to achieve a 60/40 tax split (60% residential / 40% non-residential, a desired percentage split of tax base and services). This directs land use intensity and promotes more balanced growth of housing types and encourages non-residential projects.

The Garner Sewer Allocation Policy impacts growth for the Town in different manners. As the first goal states, the policy actually reserves sewer allocation if a developer brings a project that is considered one that fills the preferred or development needs. In reserving sewer treatment capacity for this type of development, the Town eliminates a potential issue of new development. The second goal actually takes steps to direct the type and value of residential growth needed in the Town. A balanced inventory of housing types and value is healthy for the Town's economy and quality of life. This is a very important principle in developing sustainable neighborhoods and towns.

The Town of Garner

Town of Garner

Comprehensive Growth Plan

Figure 4
Utility Features

Legend
- Roads
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
- Parcels
- Water Lines
- Water Tower
- Forcemain
- Sewer Lines

N

0 850 1,700 3,400 5,100 6,800 Feet

Furthermore, the policy also limits growth in such a manner that a finite number of residential units can be built in a given year. By some this is viewed as a “no-growth” or “slow-growth” scenario. On the other hand, it also allows the Town to review and adequately provide services as Garner grows. For example, if a major production builder brought a proposal to build 1,000 residential units over a two or three year period, the Town would need to potentially add personnel to provide basic municipal services, such as police, fire or sanitation.

As a part of the community meetings, concern focus primarily on future capacity and the dynamics of the allocation policy. It is apparent in both cases of water distribution and sewer capacity that there must be adequate capacity for future growth and investment in infrastructure to serve the Town and its environs. In today’s development atmosphere and fiscal times, water and sewer service must be a coordinated regional effort.

Economic Development

In this section, an overview of the Garner economic base and development program is presented. This overview will serve as a basis for recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan update. The assessment included in this section will primarily cover these topics:

- Current economic development policy and activities.
- Economic issues and opportunities as identified during community meetings.
- An evaluation of existing factors influencing economic development.

Economic Development Background

Garner is located in the North Carolina region known as the “Triangle” and to the south of Raleigh; one of the fastest growing regions in the state in both population and business growth. Population rose from 13,958 in 1990 to 17,787 in 2000 and estimated to be 21,804 in 2003 by the State. Therefore, the Town grew by slightly more people in the three years (2000 – 2003) than it did over the ten year period between the federal census years. Non-residential uses generally follow residential growth and development. This places Garner in a good climate to attract and support new business and industry growth. In one stakeholder meeting, it was noted that eighty new businesses had located in Garner in the first ten months of 2004. Development trends for all uses were outlined previously in this chapter. Those figures show a steady pace of construction and development with spikes attributed to major projects.

- Economic Development is defined as “the process of creating wealth through mobilization of human, financial, capital, physical and natural resources to generate marketable goods and services, resulting in benefits to the community through expanding job opportunities and the tax base”.

Cost of Construction

Cost of Construction is defined below. This gives us an idea of the status of the assessed value of the buildings in Garner constructed before 1999. After extracting the Cost of Construction from the Total Assessed Value, the assessed value of the rest of Garner increased an average of 10% per year. Over the same time span, average inflation was 2.45%. Independent of new construction, property in the Town of Garner is appreciating at a rate 4 times that of inflation.

Cost of Construction is the total estimated construction cost for all new buildings and major projects as reported on permit applications. Minor additions and modifications to existing buildings are not included. There has been an average of $51.6 million per year of new investment in Garner.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate in Garner, as well as across the region, have increased over the last decade. Generally this trend is true across the state and nation as well due to the economic factors of the day.

Table 14: Unemployment Rate

	1990	2000	% Change
Town of Garner	2.9%	4.9%	+2%
Raleigh-Durham MSA	3.7%	4.1%	+.4%
Wake County	3.4%	3.9%	+.5%
North Carolina	4.6%	5.2%	+.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

The Town's unemployment rate increased 2% from 1990 to 2000, as shown in the table below with the region, county and state. In this day of regional factors playing an increasing role in a local economy, no town is able separate this data as independent information. Although the number of unemployed grew, development is still occurring bringing the potential for new employment opportunities.

Economic Policy and Activity

The Town of Garner's current Economic Development Policy was adopted by the Board of Alderman in 1994. This policy emphasizes the goal to broaden the tax base distribution to a more balanced growth percentage of 60% residential and 40% non-residential, which was reached in FY 2001-02. Achieving a balanced tax base is essential for the town to provide basic municipal services at a reasonable cost to its citizens. Having the majority of revenue reliant on the residential base overburdens the ability to provide service for a practical fee.

Garner is looking to expand its commercial base, since the use typically pay more property taxes and less municipal services needs than residential use; they also provide services to residents. Industrial growth is a necessary component for any growing and thriving city, such as Garner. Attracting industrial businesses provides economic assets for the city. Not only do new industries mean additional jobs for residents, the property taxes these businesses pay contribute a significant portion to the overall tax base. As an example of the non-residential advantage, with the current tax rate at 56 cents per 100-dollar valuation, a $150,000 home

would pay $840, compared to $11,200 for a two million-dollar industry. However, to be fair, one must consider the additional acreage required for an industry. Assuming an 8-acre industrial site is equivalent to 16 homes, with an average value of $150,000, the homes' total property taxes would be $13,440. However, those homes also represent a potential 16 service calls, additional streets and infrastructure maintenance; whereas the industry can account for only one. This in turn reduces the need for a large number of employees for the city, including police, fire and public works personnel to adequately response to calls and provides services in a timely manner. In addition, the city's gain on personal property taxes is much higher for industry due to equipment and inventory.

The Action Plan by the GMAC provides focus for economic development efforts. It gives direction to establish or revise policy statements, determines type(s) of companies for recruitment, and the standard of balanced growth for a sustainable community. The Economic Development Policy establishes a fund to be used as an incentive to attract non-residential development and defray the costs of fees, utility extensions, or similar activities associated with development. The incentive cannot be greater than an amount equal to three years tax revenue generated by the new development (exclusive of land value). There are certain thresholds that must be met as well, including a $1.5 million minimum investment and quantity of sewer use. This economic development tool is often a factor when a company looks at locating in a particular area.

Economic Issues and Opportunities

Non-residential development in Garner has set pace over the last decade, increasing to 40% of the tax base and a balanced factor in land use. In 1992, the Town's development was predominately residential and serving as a bedroom community to Raleigh and surrounding communities. Less than one-third of land use in Garner was office, commercial or industrial use. This presented several issues, including a higher tax burden on residents, longer travel for goods and services, and fewer opportunities for employment. Thus, the Board of Alderman realizing this issue and the increasing strain on local resources, enacted a goal to become a more balanced community. Since that time, the goal of 40% use being non-residential has been reached and is reinforced as a necessary growth and development principle. The FY 2003 – 04 Economic Development Action Plan sets a new goal of 50% split between uses in three years.

The commercial and other non-residential tax base needs continued diversification. As with the idea of residential land use being over dominant, others issues become apparent when one sector of non-residential use become dominant. If the commercial/retail use became disproportionately larger than the resident population could sustain, more roads and other transportation outlets would need to be built for regional influx of customers. This in turn could lead to increased traffic congestion, a decrease in air quality and blighted tracts of land where businesses fail. Therefore, while non-residential development is important to the health and sustainability of the Town, development must be balanced between categories or retail, office, institutional and industrial uses to fully achieve the preferred outcome.

Concerns were raised during the community meetings that "big box" chain developments do not reinvest in the community. As a standard development practice, this type of store generally locates at the edge of town which can draw traffic away from the downtown area. Moreover, due to the size and nature of the store, their construction on a major thoroughfare with a prosaic façade behind a large parking area further support the auto-oriented dominated landscape associated with sprawl. Their investment in the community is minimal and can be detrimental if not properly balanced with the local businesses. Many communities have taken steps to minimize the known impacts associated with big box development with regulations enacted that require certain design, color and building placement. Other examples have included bonding for building reuse or demolition when the store moves to their next location, square footage limitations, fees for future roadways improvements (both on-site and off-site), and additional landscaping or open space.

Conversely, other communities have taken the view that big box development does foster economic development and that the community must accept growth. Local governments have given incentives or subsidized big box development with infrastructure expansion as an economic development tool. This philosophy only facilitates a sprawl development pattern, leaving underutilized or blighted commercial areas and can advance local business failures. Local businesses tend to respond and support the community more with a higher percentage of local reinvestment through jobs, service, business enterprise and donations which keeps money in the local economy. Supporting existing businesses and increasing the number of times a dollar is spent in the community makes a more efficient, self-reliant, economically resilient community. Careful study should take place and policy adopted to solidify the community's reaction to this type of development.

Another related issue was discussed during the community workshops were that businesses attract customers outside of Garner and regional retail attractions can be an opportunity to foster development. As studied the North Garner Small Area Plan (2003), "the Garner retail environment is healthy" and "appears to be a substantial amount of consumer traffic within the Town, as well as consumers migrating from other market areas." There are a few examples to study within the Triangle pertaining to regional retail areas and their impact on the local economy. The Streets at Southpoint, south of Durham and built by the Rouse Company, is one of the most recent regional examples built. This "lifestyle center" as it is known, combines a portion of an enclosed mall, with a main street themed shopping area and cinema. Adjacent development includes multi-family residential and other service / retail centers. The development is located on Interstate 40 and accessed by a six-lane road with multiple turn lanes. Regional retail development can be an opportunity if built to accommodate the large numbers of customers. There are several factors which must be considered when a regional facility is built. Proper access and traffic flow is a prime concern so it does not create traffic problems. Sales and property tax revenue must be greater than costs of providing municipal services and, as with big box stores, the impact to local stores should be understood.

Factors Influencing Economic Development

As part of the assessment of the Town of Garner and the adjacent areas, certain primary or major factors were noted that influence economic development efforts, either in a positive or unconstructive manner. These major factors are divided into those that encourage economic growth and development and those that need to be addressed and overcome.

Factors Encouraging Economic Development

The following competitive advantages were identified as those that encourage the economic development efforts of the community:

- **Direct Access to the Interstate System—**On the eastern boundary of Garner is Interstate 40, a primary east / west corridor through the country. There are two existing interchanges at Jones Sausage Road and US 70. Secondly, in close proximity just to the north of Town is Interstate 440, or the "Beltline" as it encircles the City of Raleigh. Business and industries cite access as a key factor in choosing a new development location.

- **Location within the "Triangle Region" of North Carolina—**Garner is located in a major metropolitan region of North Carolina. "The most promising corner of the Triangle" as the Town is known, offers quick access to the region's nationally known universities, The Research Triangle Park area, professional and college sporting events, recreational and cultural activities. Keeping a small town fell while being tied to a metropolitan region is an advantage in quality of life studies and business feel a superior location has distinct advantages.

- **Municipal Services—**The Board of Alderman have put into place policies with achievable goals which foster economic development. These create strategies to encourage industrial

and commercial development. The Town has services, available land and utilities to meet the industries needs. This too is a key advantage.

Factors which Need to be Addressed to Encourage Economic Development

The following constraints were identified as those that need to be addressed to continue the economic development efforts of the community:

- **Improvements to the Surface Transportation System—**Growth and development brings increased traffic and congestion to the local street network. Vandora Springs Road, US 401 & 70, NC 50 and Old Stage Road are identified as congested along with several intersections. There are identified connections and extensions which must be made to improve the traffic flow, particularly in the east / west direction. Although direct access to an interstate is a distinct advantage, overcrowded local streets as access through town can discourage business locations.

- **An Additional Interchange on Interstate 40 at White Oak Road—**Additional interchanges increase accessibility to the region. The new interchange at White Oak Road is needed to open development opportunities in the southeast area of Garner. White Oak will also serve as access and a parallel corridor between the proposed interchange and US 70, providing an alternate route.

- **US 70 Business Revitalization—**During the community meetings, it was suggested that incentives be offered for businesses along US 70 to fix up and rehabilitate their structures. Areas seen as blighted or underutilized can be a detrimental factor when businesses are looking to locate in the community. A potential redevelopment program should be reviewed as a catalyst for revitalization, but do not limit ideas to incentives. Other activities such as streetscape improvements, code enforcement or creation of a merchants association of those businesses and others should also be reviewed.

The Economic Development overview provides an inventory of policies, issues and specific local factors that serves as a basis for recommendations included in the Comprehensive Plan update. This will also help to identify long-range land use and development goals for the community and determine specific end results in coordination with the GMAC and Board of Alderman that support Garner's economic development activities. The recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan will identify development sites and necessary infrastructure needed to support this type of development.

Existing Land Use

The Town of Garner encompasses a total of 11,436 acres (17.87 square miles) within the town limits and a total of 16,929 acres (26.45 square miles) within the boundary of the ETJ. The following analysis of land use takes into consideration the area that is within the Town's ETJ. The Town has approximately 12,500 acres of developed land within the ETJ and 4,200 acres of undeveloped land. For the purposes of this analysis, land use percentages were calculated excluding undeveloped land. Existing Land Use in Garner is shown in Figure 5.

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Figure 5
Existing Land Use

Historically, Garner was developed as a residential community. According to the 1989 Long Range Plan, Garner was developed with sixty-eight percent (68%) residential and thirty-two percent (32%) non-residential. These numbers have changed significantly over the years. Currently the Town contains forty percent (31%) residential and sixty percent (69%) non-residential. Table 15 displays the specific distribution of Garner's land uses.

Table 15: Land Use Distribution Analysis

Land Use	Acres	% Change
Single-Family Residential	4,857	30%
Multiple-Family Residential	187	1%
Commercial	1,190	7%
Industrial	719	4%
Vacant	3,853	23%
Other (Agriculture, Forest, and Institutional)	5,311	32%
Park/ Recreation	488	3%
Total	**12,641**	**100%**

Source: Town of Garner, GIS.

Long-Range Plan

According to the Long Range Plan of 1989, Garner's land use goal was to develop the Town using the 'nodal' concept of urban development. This concept calls for land uses which are most intense near existing and planned intersections with decreasing intensity as one moves away from the center. With this concept, four focus areas were created to support the plan's intentions. These areas include Regional, Community, Neighborhood and Convenience focuses. The Regional focus is applied to the center of an area, assuming the highest intensity at the intersection of major roads. This focus area has a 'regional' market. The Community focus is applied to the center of an area, assuming high intensity at the intersection of major roads. This focus area has a 'town-wide' market. The Neighborhood focus is applied to the center of an area, assuming moderate intensity at the intersection of major roads. This focus area has a "town-wide" market serving a major subsection of the community. The Convenience focus is applied to a small commercial area of low intensity. The primary market in this focus area is within walking distance.

Residential

As noted above, residential development has been and continues to be the primary land use in Garner. There are approximately 5,000 acres of land developed with residential uses. These uses vary, including low, medium and high densities, single and multiple families, mobile homes and estates. The largest residential use in Garner is medium density (12,000-15,000 square foot lots). These residential developments a focused just south of U.S. 70 between Aversboro Road and Timber Drive. More recently, these developments have expanded west of Timber Drive and north of Garner Road.

Multi Family residential is not as prevalent as single family residential in Garner. There is approximately 200 acres or two percent (2%) of land developed with multiple family residential. Large multiple family residential developments are located off Seventh Avenue between Vandora Springs Road and Aversboro Road, along Spring Road adjacent to Garner Senior High School, north Interstate 70 between Aversboro Road and NC 50, west of NC 50 south of Lakeside Drive, and at US 401 and Pinewoods Drive.

Commercial

Commercial development in Garner has increased significantly over the past years. Recently, the addition of the White Oak Shopping Center increased the area of commercial land to approximately 1,200 acres, now totaling four percent (7%) of Garner's developed land. This development is located in the eastern portion of Garner at the intersection of U.S. 70 and Interstate 40 and is approximately one hundred acres of commercial use. Developments like

White Oak are slowly changing the land use structure to one that is less dependent on residential uses.

Industrial/Business Park

Industrial development in Garner is primarily located along U.S. 70. These developments comprise 719 acres of land in Garner, approximately nine percent (4%) of the Town's developed land. Industrial parks are located north and south of US 70 east of Interstate 40, north of Garner Road and east of Interstate 40, between Interstate 40 and Jones Sausage Road, south of US 70 along Raynor Road, west US 401 along Garner's Station Boulevard and Purser Drive, and north of BUS 70 along Bobbitt Drive and Mechanical Boulevard.

Institutional/Public

Institutional and public land includes schools, churches and other institutions in Garner. Combined, these uses comprise approximately 490 acres of land or four percent (4%) of developed land. These uses are scattered across the community.

Agricultural

The largest use of land in Garner is agricultural land. This includes forested, cropland and horticulture land. There is approximately 4,500 acres or thirty-six percent (36%) of agricultural land in Garner. A total of sixty percent of that total is cropland. Cropland is primarily located on the southeast side of Garner, east of Benson Road.

Parks/Recreation

Recreation in Garner is located primarily around Lake Benson on the south side of town. There is approximately 500 acres or five percent (3%) of recreation land in Garner. This includes town parks, recreation, greenways, and golf courses.

The Town of Garner offers a variety of parks for its residents. Lake Benson also offers recreational opportunities for Town residents and is located on the southwest side of Garner. For a complete list of parks, see Public Facilities section.

The Town of Garner is also part of Wake County's greenway planning process.

Zoning

The Town of Garner adopted a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) in 2003. The UDO effectively combined the original Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance into one document. The UDO defines nine residential districts, six commercial districts, two industrial districts, four floating planned development districts, and five overlay districts. Zoning patterns in Garner are similar to the land use patterns discussed above. Approximately seventy percent (70%) of Garner is zoned residential. The remaining thirty percent is divided among commercial, industrial and mixed use districts. Table 16 displays the specific distribution of zoning in Garner.

Table 16: Zoning Distribution

Zone	Acres	% of Land
CB	776	5%
CBD	8	0%
I-1	389	2%
I-2	920	5%
MF1	471	3%
MF2	251	1%
MR1	304	2%
MXD1	991	6%
NB	23	0%
O&I	558	3%
R12	1,838	11%
R12-PR	881	5%
R15	767	5%
R20	2,583	15%
R40	4,235	25%
R3	355	2%
R9	524	3%
RCD3	27	0%
SB	1,122	7%
Total	**17,023**	**100%**

Source: Town of Garner, GIS, 2004.

Transportation

The Town of Garner has been growing steadily over the past several years. With that growth comes added congestion to the roadways and the need for mobility alternatives to the automobile. Road expansions, extensions, sidewalk construction, bikeway designation and expansion to the mass transit service are all identified needs for the town to undertake and limited resources play a key factor in providing these needs.

Congested roads are attributed to high volume, current design and intersection bottlenecks. Major arterials of US 401, NC 50, Old Stage Road and Vandora Springs Road are identified as congested. Five intersections were identified in the 1999 study with an unacceptable level of service. If no improvements were made, fourteen intersections were identified as operating below an acceptable level of service by 2025. This trend is a direct result of increased volumes that comes with growth and development. However, if the growth pattern is channeled in such a way to promote orderly development and connectivity between uses, more alternates would then become available. Even though there is a continued increase in traffic volume, the impact would be reduced as the traffic would not be forced only onto arterials roadways.

With the increase in traffic volume, the number of traffic accidents will increase. The most congested streets often have the most accidents and this is true in Garner. Vandora Springs Road, US 70 and US 401 are three of the top four accident prone streets in the Town, while Aversboro Road being the fourth.

There are traffic circulation deficiencies that need to be addressed in Garner. The lack of an east/west corridor was identified as a critical need and shown in the 1999 Plan on the north and south sides of US 70. The extension of Timber Drive, in combination with Greenfield Parkway and Vandora Springs Road (from Old Stage Road to Lake Wheeler Road) on the south side of US 70; while on the north side of US 70, Yeargan Road extension will alleviate a portion of need. North/south corridors are well served by NC 401 and NC 50. Additionally there are identified needs for widening projects along these major corridors.

The State of North Carolina is responsible for major regional roadway construction projects, which are funded by the NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program. Currently there are three projects list in the TIP within the Garner area. The only project funded for construction by NCDOT is TIP#R-2552 Clayton Bypass, with design and right-of-way acquisition underway and scheduled to begin construction in FY 2005/06. This project only effects property east of Interstate 40 and while it helps with the regional access, it does benefit the traffic congestion within the Town. The other two TIP projects, U-3607 New Rand Road widening and U-4703 Timber Drive extension, would immediately impact the traffic issues within Garner. Requests were made to the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to add five road projects to the 2006 – 2012 Transportation Improvement Program and include: Timber Drive East extension; Vandora Springs Road widening; Garner Road widening; Timber Drive / Jones Sausage Road connector; and Old Stage Road widening. Although these projects have not received funding as of yet, they are identified as future need. This is important in that these projects are identified and potentially next in line for funding. Also it will allow the Town is reserve right-of-way when development is planned within the proposed road corridor.

Garner has taken positives steps in providing additional transportation facilities. The bicycle route within the core of the Town is an example and provides safe accommodation for cycling and encourages its residents to bike for transportation and recreation. The subdivision and land regulations now require sidewalks for new development. With this, a network of walkable areas will be built and the city will need to step in to connect the gaps. This makes it easy to have direct connections on foot with traffic calming devices to slow automobile traffic and maintain a safe walking environment.

Land development patterns play a key role in the type of travel in the community. This will be a long term ideal that is examined with each new development project. Future growth will only continue this trend of congestion if mobility alternatives and growth patterns are not addressed. And whereas Garner has not been impacted by this issue to the degree as some surrounding communities, what is acceptable by the residents and an attraction to the community for new growth and development is at issue.

During the public input meetings during 2004 for this plan, a number of issues were raised pertaining to traffic and transportation issues. The issues discussed ranged from very general in nature to quite specific and gave insight to how important transportation and mobility issues are to the citizens in Garner and their affect on the Town. The following is a listing of the identified issues broken into three main categories; Streets, Mass Transit, Alternate Mode:

- Streets:
  - Need an east/west corridor
  - Widen Vandora Springs Road and extend to Lake Wheeler Road
  - Timber Drive is congested and portions are viewed as an eyesore. Widen and improve the intersection of Timber Drive with US 70.
  - US 70 is congested and portions are viewed as an eyesore. Widen and improve the intersection of US 70 with Timber Drive.
  - NC 50 is viewed as an eyesore. The road needs to be widened.
  - Widen US 401 and connect with Vandora Springs Road.
  - Yeargan Road is viewed as an eyesore.
  - Old Garner Road needs to widened.
  - Street improvements planned through the NCDOT TIP include construction of the Clayton Bypass, widening of New Rand Road, and extension of Timber Drive
- Mass Transit:
  - Bus System needs expanded service and Park-N-Ride options.
  - A commuter rail is a future need.
  - There are mixed Emotions on the impact of mass transit on property values.

- Alternate Mode:
  - Sidewalks and general walk-ability in general needs to improved throughout town.
  - More bike trails are needed.

The 1999 Garner Transportation Plan

The Town of Garner has addressed their transportation issues recently with analysis and implementation of recommendations in the 1999 Garner Transportation Plan. That plan identified the existing traffic situation, projected future conditions to 2025 and made recommendations to respond to the future transportation needs. As quoted from the plan "an important conclusion from the Transportation Study is that Garner will need more than roadways, it will take a concerted effort to build sidewalks and bikeways and to expand bus service in Garner and eventually extend passenger rail service to the community." The Town has done an excellent job beginning the bicycle route designations within the core of Garner. Similar efforts of implementation by the Town and others, including the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO), North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Capital Area Transit System (CATs), and Triangle Transit Authority (TTA) as examples, will continue to address the efficient movement of traffic. Implementation recommendations from the 1999 Plan are as follows:

- Short Term (0-2 Years):
  - Fully adopt the Plan.
  - Add Greenfield Parkway extension, White Oak Road /I-40 Interchange, Ackerman Road extension, and delete Lakeside Drive and Broughton Street from Thoroughfare Plan.
  - Conduct Interchange Justification Study for White Oak Road / I-40 Interchange.
  - Submit safety improvements requests to NCDOT for Aversboro Road / Lakeside Drive and Vandora Springs Road / Buffaloe Road.
  - Restripe Vandora Springs Road for designated turn lanes.
  - Continue discussions with TTA concerning regional bus and rail services and CATs for expanded bus service.
  - Prioritize transportation improvements with CAMPO and work to place projects on NCDOT TIP.
  - Require new developments that abut thoroughfares to build necessary roadway improvements.

- Mid Term (2-10 Years):
  - Prepare functional design plans for high priority transportation improvements.
  - Reserve corridor right-of-way for high priority transportation improvements.
  - Prepare environmental clearance, permit approvals and right-of-way acquisitions for high priority transportation improvements.
  - Initiate discussions with NCDOT Rail Division to begin "sealed corridor" study for passenger train service.
  - Work with TTA to conduct all necessary studies and approvals, including land acquisition, for preferred rail station site.
  - Update local ordinances to incorporate access management land use controls along congested corridors.
  - Prepare follow up Bicycle Study.

Transportation is important to the economic health of businesses in Garner and the quality of life to the residents. Garner's businesses need an efficient transportation system to move goods to local, regional, national and international markets. Their employees need safe and efficient means of travel to their place of employment. The residents and visitors to Garner also desire a more pedestrian friendly environment to their neighborhoods and town, with better connections between those neighborhoods, parks, schools and commercial areas.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Involvement in the planning process on the part of community leaders, business owners and residents of Garner occurred at multiple levels. The Steering Committee, made up of community leaders and business owners, was engaged in a number of meetings. The public was engaged through a random survey and a Town Meeting. Following is a summary of findings from the meetings with the Steering Committee, the residents, and survey.

SWOT Analysis

At the August 25th and October 18th Steering Committee Meetings, the Committee went through an exercise to identify what they felt are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Garner. Following is a summary of the results of that discussion.

- Strengths:
  - Small town feel
  - Town board in touch
  - Good network of major roads
  - Good location (Raleigh and I-40)
  - Room to grow (in their control)
  - Schools doing better
  - Improving schools
  - Good YMCA program in Wake County
  - Nationally accredited police, fire and EMS department
  - Volunteerism still good
  - Consistent water and sewer
  - Tremendous opportunity from all boundaries (room to grow)
  - Building public and private partnerships
  - Park and recreation facilities
  - Good population of young people
- Weaknesses:
  - Concern of the Town image
  - School image
  - Lack of sidewalks
  - Lack of strong enforcers
  - No Town square
  - Not enough east and west corridors
  - Lack of upscale retirement housing
- Opportunities:
  - Create a new Town identity (physical structure/ what type of community)
  - Capacity to attract consumers
  - Regional retail attractions
  - Regional events (i.e. 4th of July)
  - Heavy growth
  - Great railroad
  - Bulk electric
  - Good infrastructure
  - Good labor supply
  - Community college system
  - Small town environment

- Threats:
  - Lack of money
  - Negative attitudes
  - Lack of sewer capacity
  - Storm water
  - Lack of communication between County and City

Community Image

Community Image can be broken down into three categories: Community Identity, Quality of Design, and Community Pride. The first category, *Community Identity*, encompasses elements of the built environment that distinguish one community from the next. Many communities do not have distinctive skylines or landmarks that act as identifying elements. The Town must create its own identity in other ways, such as gateways, monuments, street signs, notable institutional buildings, parks, and open space.

As opposed to addressing Community Image through Community Identity and public projects, *Quality of Design* can be used to improve Community Image through private development. Quality of Design encompasses residential, commercial, and industrial development. Through plan approval and other mechanisms, the Town can encourage or require developers to build high quality and desirable homes, shopping centers, and employment centers.

Community Pride is an intangible that results from having strong Community Identity and a high Quality of Design. You cannot require or legislate Community Pride, but a town can advance it by creating positive, distinguishable elements of identity and holding out for quality, private developments.

Each person in the community has a sense of what they like. When planners use words like mixed-use or pedestrian oriented, they only partly portray an idea of what that might look like. For that reason a Community Image Survey was conducted as part of the public input process. The survey is a process by which the community at large can participate in evaluating its environment and begin to develop a common vision for the future. The underlying premise is that to create a credible, responsive plan, the residents of the community need to see, participate in, and understand the vision.

The Community Image Survey consisted of presenting the residents of Garner a series of 40 photographs depicting a variety of development types. The attendees were instructed to rank their preference for each photograph on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being “A planning and design failure” and 10 “A great place.” Table 17 summarizes the discussion of the two top and bottom ranked images.

Table 17: Community Image Survey

Image Presented	Comments
Top Scoring Image	
	▪ Nice landscaping ▪ Not boxy ▪ Underground utilities ▪ Sidewalks present ▪ Open lots
Second Scoring Image	
	▪ Peaceful ▪ Inviting ▪ Relaxing ▪ Water oriented ▪ No ducks ▪ Sidewalks ▪ Well-maintained
Second from Lowest Scoring Image	
	▪ No trees ▪ Bad signage ▪ Sidewalk to nowhere ▪ Flat ▪ Too much concrete
Lowest Scoring Image	
	▪ Drab ▪ Boxy ▪ Above ground utilities ▪ No curb and gutter ▪ Dirty

Community Image Survey Results

The pictures presented in the Image Survey can be grouped according to the following types of development: single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, office, light industrial, mixed use, civic, streetscape, and open space. The highest and lowest scoring images for each development type are show in Table 18.

Table 18. Community Image Survey Results

Single-Family Residential

Most Positive—Score: 9.3

Most Negative—Score: 4.9

Multi-Family Residential

Most Positive—Score: 7.4

Most Negative—Score: 3.8

Commercial

Most Positive—Score: 7.6

Most Negative—Score 3.2

Office

Most Positive—Score: 7.7

Most Negative—Score: 6.3

Table 18. Community Image Survey Results

Light Industrial

Most Positive—Score: 6.7

Most Negative—Score: 2.3

Mixed-Use

Most Positive—Score: 5.7

Most Negative—Score: 4.1

Civic

Most Positive—Score: 8.6

Most Negative—Score: 4.7

Streetscape

Most Positive—Score: 8.1

Most Negative—Score: 2.7

Table 18. Community Image Survey Results

Open Space

Most Positive—Score 9.1

Most Negative—Score 6.9

Participants in the survey indicated that the highly rated images exhibited common elements. In general, the preferred images presented significant amounts of landscaping and a higher level of streetscape/building aesthetics. Images that depicted or included open space were among the highest scoring images. The residents seem to prefer developments that: have open and well landscaped site layouts, include buildings with architectural details, and allow for pedestrian as well as vehicular circulation. The ranking of a single-family residential image at the top of the survey indicates a desire for additional high-end residential development.

The survey participants very clearly indicated that they do not like strip commercial development characterized by wide roads, lack of pedestrian orientation, excessive signage, and general visual clutter. Also their standards for the quality of industrial/commercial development are higher than what was depicted in the low scoring images.

Summary of Public Comments

The following is a summary of comments raised during the public involvement process. The public had the opportunity to provide input during stakeholder interviews, a public survey, and a public meeting.

Community Image

- Garner is conveniently located within the Triangle region with good access to the highway system.
- Future residential, commercial, and industrial growth does not compromise positive aspects of the community.
- Garner still has a small town feel. Residents have easy access to local services, traffic congestion is not as much of a problem as in other parts of the region, community involvement is high, and the public has confidence in the government.
- Negative Image may result from low high school test scores, poorly maintained residential properties, and lack of a historical or cultural centerpiece.

Residential Development

- Ideal locations for residential development include south and east of Hwy. 50; south of the White Oak area; south of Lake Benson from Old Stage to 1010 South and east to Hwy. 50; between Hwy 50 (New Bethel Church) back towards White Oak area; area around 401

corridor; Thompson Road area; pockets north of Garner Road and west of Creech; the 40E corridor.

- Single-family homes are the preferred type of residential development. Homes should vary in size and offer a variety of moderate and more expensive priced models.
- Residents see a need for senior living, townhomes, condos, and cluster home communities, but emphasis should be put on single family homes.
- There are enough apartments in town.
- Developments should include parks, greenways, and trails.

Commercial Development

- Need to expand non-residential tax base.
- Cluster commercial growth on major corridors.
- Reuse existing commercial spaces
- Finish out White Oak and US 70; finish out Greenfield and Craig Davis; finish small retail and office along Timber Drive East; on US 401 at Farm Road; Greenfield; down 401 corridor; near 40/70 interchange.
- Control appearances to protect image. Would help image if we put “classy” retail on the major thoroughfares-people brand us on what they see. What could we offer that would make people want to come to Garner?
- Some favor mall with big box retailers others think there are enough big box retailers. There is a concern over the negative impact associated with big-box development. Those in favor think a mall should include stores such as Belk, Dillard’s Penney’s, and Sears, but would like to have the outside have walkability with trees.
- More restaurants with outside seating; small businesses grouped together in a quaint setting that does not look like a strip mall; trees and bricks. Design should be high quality.
- Future commercial growth should support the retirement community, grow in proportion to population, be coordinated with infrastructure/utility service, offer a diversity of shopping and dining,

Business/Industrial Development

- Business/industrial development is best opportunity for job growth and expanding the tax base. Town needs to be competitive with other communities in providing quality jobs.
- Development should coincide with infrastructure.
- Proper locations include existing industrial parks and where adequate transportation and utility access already exist.
- Try to recruit businesses with large number of employees.
- Preferred design includes large setbacks, landscaping, clustered buildings, and 4 stories maximum height.

Composite Issues and Opportunities

Input regarding the Garner Comprehensive Plan has been obtained from a variety of sources. These include collection and analysis of existing conditions data, the community survey, stakeholder interviews, the Town Meeting, and Steering Committee input. The following is a summary of the issues and opportunities.

Development

Garner has a positive attitude toward growth and development so long as the growth does not compromise the positive aspects of the community. Residents of the Town would like to see several specific businesses in their Town (i.e. bookstore, more family restaurants, grocery store, etc.), they feel that Garner lacks variety in its housing stock, and additional health care facilities are also needed in Garner.

Specific issues include:

- Need to preserve Garner's small town atmosphere.
- Good business climate in Garner, many opportunities for commercial development.
- Need to expand the non-residential tax base (55% residential/ 45% commercial).
- Consider giving incentives for developers in order to attract growth in Garner.
- Town needs to be competitive with other communities in providing quality jobs for citizens.
- Need a variety of housing alternatives in Garner, i.e. townhomes, patio homes, affordable housing opportunities, retirement communities, and high-end residential.
- Growth in Garner needs to be controlled, quality growth is better than quantity.
- Improve shopping and industrial area on highway 401.
- Consider developing commercial on highway 70, utilizing Garner's historic downtown area.
- Appropriate redevelopment should be encouraged at the same time as new development.

Community Image and Design

Many residents of Garner fear the negative impact of rapid growth and development (like Cary and Raleigh); they do not want to lose the quality community and reputation they have. They are concerned about the results/ consequences of too much growth (i.e. increased traffic congestion, higher taxes, and overcrowded schools).

Specific issues include:

- Garner has a small, hometown feel with a reputation for quality.
- Town needs a "historical and cultural centerpiece."
- Residential homeowners should be encouraged to maintain their properties; poorly maintained properties are creating a negative image for the Town.
- Downtown Garner lacks a "sense of place." This historic area should be utilized for commercial development before other areas of the Town are developed.

Community Facilities

Schools and educational quality are among the greatest concerns among residents of Garner. Residents feel that this is a major determinant for people when moving to a new location and the image of schools in Garner is noted as a weakness. Residents are also concerned with the higher rates for water and sewer. While residents are happy to receive this service from the City of Raleigh, they are concerned about the high cost.

Specific issues include:

- Garner needs to consider more alternatives in schools and education (i.e. year round schools, magnet schools).
- Garner schools needs to work on improving test scores.
- Water and sewer rates are too high in the Town.
- Is there sufficient utility capacity for future growth?
- Garner lacks a community center for families, i.e. YMCA.

Parks and Recreation

Garner residents place a high value on quality parks and recreation opportunities. There may be opportunity to add to the options available to residents. For example, Lake Benson may not be utilized sufficiently. The Town might consider more activities at the lake (i.e. boating, concerts, etc.).

Specific issues include:

- Increase recreation opportunities at Lake Benson.
- Garner needs to increase recreational venues, particularly for children and teenagers.
- Garner needs more greenways, biking trails and walking trails.
- Incorporate greenways into residential neighborhoods.
- Not enough athletic fields in Garner, specifically baseball fields and basketball courts.

Transportation

Resident feel that several areas of Garner need transportation improvements, especially in light of additional growth. Many residents feel Garner needs to improve on the Town's public transportation, particularly the bussing system. Many older and retired residents need alternatives to go shopping, to doctor visits, etc.

Specific issues include:

- Commercial development on US 401 and US 70 is creating traffic congestion in these areas.
- White Oak is cut off from Garner - Timber Drive needs to be extended.
- Garner needs more East/ West connectors.

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