

GUIDING PRINCIPLES, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Guiding Principle 1

Infrastructure Shall Direct Growth in Lincoln County

Overview - Lincoln County is largely responsible for providing public water and sanitary sewer services in unincorporated portions of the County. The County has adopted a plan for expansion of these services based upon efficient use of public investment and projected need, as well as the provision of supporting major transportation infrastructure. Additionally, in partnership with the Lincoln County Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the County cooperates in the provision of public schools and major transportation infrastructure. Public water, sanitary sewer, schools, and major transportation infrastructure are all facilities that both direct and support growth.

In keeping with the County's interest in maximizing the return on public investment, growth requiring access to public water and/or sewer will be restricted to those locations where the infrastructure is planned or in place to support it. Further, it is in keeping with the County's interest to support strategic expansions of both public utilities and transportation infrastructure in the most efficient manner possible, which would tend to support land use regulations that call for orderly, more compact development patterns in such areas. Such an approach is deemed to be in the County's long-term best interest, as it will maximize the efficiency of public expenditures necessary to support a growing population and will ensure that growth does not outstrip the County's ability to provide needed facilities in a timely manner.

Objective 1.1: The County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is used as the primary guide for both future utility and other public infrastructure improvements and future development.

Strategy 1.1.1: Identify existing, planned and "expansion" areas where public utilities will be provided by the County or other responsible partnership agency.

Strategy 1.1.2: Review the County's standards for mandated connections to public utility systems.

Objective 1.2: Include consideration of major transportation infrastructure in land use planning decisions and ensure that provisions are in place that both support the continued functionality of the core transportation network and the addition of population to the County.

Strategy 1.2.1: Consider NCDOT's Strategic Transportation Corridors as major people and freight movers and use them as a secondary factor in directing development.

Strategy 1.2.2: Ensure the development of a local transportation network that facilitates local traffic flow and thereby supports the maintenance of the Strategic Transportation Corridors for their primary functions.

Objective 1.3: Promote denser development (i.e., residential development greater than 2 units per acre, employment centers, activity centers, etc.) in areas and in forms that support existing or planned transportation and public utility infrastructure, with adequate capacity.

Strategy 1.3.1: Locate denser development in areas where it will be supported by existing public utility and transportation infrastructure with adequate capacity (or where the local transportation infrastructure can be provided through the development process), or where such adequate infrastructure will be developed concurrently.

Strategy 1.3.2: Where infrastructure is expanded to support new development (public utilities and local road networks), require that such expansion be done in a manner that will support the later redevelopment of the area in a denser manner without requiring major infrastructure changes.

Objective 1.4: Require County departments to review on new development and quantify the impact of the development proposal on the services that they provide.

Strategy 1.4.1: Departments will evaluate the impact of each new land use decision that is to come before the Board of County Commissioners as well as by right development. These assessments should be cumulative and a way to track the impact of growth should be developed along with departmental specific metrics to objectively measure the impact.

Strategy 1.4.2: An update to the County's 2012 Cost of Community Services analysis should be completed once the next property revaluation is completed. This update will help to identify the impact of the provision of community services.

Guiding Principle 2

Provide for an Adequate Transportation Infrastructure to Serve Current and Future Populations

Overview - Lincoln County has recognized that an adequate transportation system is a critical part of the infrastructure needed to support growth. However, since counties in North Carolina do not build or maintain roads, Lincoln County must either request projects from NCDOT, or ensure that adequate facilities are provided as a part of the development process. Furthermore, the County recognizes that a transportation system is inclusive of more than just roads—it may also include transit, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities. All transportation facilities must be matched appropriately with land uses and development patterns to ensure that the transportation facilities maintain their functionality and that the land uses and development patterns make it easy for people and goods to use the various facilities to get where they need to go. Lincoln County has identified a number of tools and strategies that will work toward the adequacy of the transportation infrastructure, even in the absence of road-building ability.

Objective 2.1: Ensure that transportation facilities are adequately provided for in the development of new projects, both in terms of planning and construction and that the facilities are appropriately matched to the proposed development patterns.

Strategy 2.1.1: Develop a land use and transportation policy based on best practices that can be used to guide and help evaluate the appropriateness of particular land development and transportation pairings in new developments and developments undergoing significant renewal.

Strategy 2.1.2: Strengthen access management standards in the County's Unified Development Ordinance especially in the Eastern Lincoln Development District.

Strategy 2.1.3: Coordinate with the NCDOT and other local and regional partner agencies (e.g., Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO) in the development of capital improvement programs and road plans sufficient to address projected growth in the County.

Strategy 2.1.4: The County should consider set aside funds in each budget cycle that can be used to help match funding supplied by NCDOT or the private sector in order to accelerate low cost, high impact transportation improvements.

Objective 2.2: Maintain Strategic Transportation Corridors and other NC routes as fully functional "distance" movers of people and goods, so that those facilities maintain their functionality for longer trips, thus maximizing the benefit of the public investment in their improvement.

Strategy 2.2.1: Apply access management standards referenced in Strategy 2.1.2 more stringently to Strategic Transportation Corridors (for example, requiring a second access/egress point on a side road).

Strategy 2.2.2: Ensure that an adequate, hierarchical and connected road network for local traffic is established through the development process to remove excessive local traffic from major numbered highways (see Strategy 1.2.2).

Objective 2.3: Plan for pedestrian facilities and bikeways as referenced in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and other officially adopted plans. Where such facilities are adjacent to or traverse a proposed development, require implementation as a part of new development.

Strategy 2.3.1: Plan for pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, trails, and greenways) in new residential developments in a manner that will attract walkers for transportation and recreation purposes, and ensure connection with compatible land uses.

Strategy 2.3.2: Ensure that commercial and mixed-use nodes are connected by and well served with safe and attractive pedestrian facilities.

Strategy 2.3.3: Provide bicycle and pedestrian amenities in subdivisions and other proposed developments, as well as along the frontage of existing roads, consistent with NCDOT policies and approved bicycle plans. Provide for connectivity among compatible land uses as identified in Strategy 2.1.1 and with the bicycle routes identified on the Lake Norman Bicycle Route, where they exist.

Strategy 2.3.4: Identify funding for the construction of sidewalk networks in previously developed areas of the County that see or are likely to experience pedestrian traffic if improvements are installed.

Objective 2.4: Take steps to ensure that rights-of-way are provided and protected to facilitate logical transportation connections.

Strategy 2.4.1: Connectivity and subdivision road standards should be codified to facilitate collector road networks as a part of new development and to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles.

Strategy 2.4.2: Site development standards should preserve rights-of-way for roads proposed in the current Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

Strategy 2.4.3: New developments shall be required dedicate right of way and construct transportation facilities that are in compliance with the proposed cross section of the affected roadways in accordance with the Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Objective 2.5: Adequately position the County to maintain transit opportunities into and of Charlotte.

Strategy 2.5.1: Work to preserve the CSX rail corridor for future transit opportunities.

Strategy 2.5.2: Identify the location of a future rail station in eastern Lincoln County.

Strategy 2.5.3: Work with CATS to promote carpool, vanpool, express bus and bus rapid transit opportunities throughout the County.

Objective 2.6: Identify funding to improve substandard subdivision roads in the County.

Guiding Principle 3

Community Facilities (including schools, libraries and parks) Shall Be Considered When Making Land Use Decisions

Overview - Community facilities represent a form of public investment to provide necessary services or quality of life amenities to the community. Key facilities must be provided as new growth occurs, including law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical services, parks and recreation facilities, schools, libraries, and other government services. As public investments, it is intended that they receive full use so that they can be of maximum benefit. Their location is often a stimulant to development. Consequently, no community facility functions effectively in a vacuum, or without due consideration having been given to its impact on the surrounding area. In order to gain maximum benefit and minimum negative consequences from the location of community facilities, Lincoln County's best interests are served by ensuring that community facilities locations are considered in the land use planning and development process.

Objective 3.1: Integrate community facilities into the planning process for new and expanded residential, commercial, and industrial developments in Lincoln County.

Strategy 3.1.1: Regularly update the identified proposed locations of public facilities.

Strategy 3.1.2: Allow for higher residential densities and encourage connectivity in areas in close proximity to appropriate current and future community facilities to encourage usage.

Strategy 3.1.3: Require pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and accessibility to appropriate community uses.

Strategy 3.1.4: Encourage dedication or preservation of land for such sites, should the development impact potential sites for community facilities.

Strategy 3.1.5: Coordinate with the other partner agencies in the development of capital improvement programs sufficient to address projected growth in the County.

Objective 3.2: Determine one or more appropriate sites for the location a new sanitary landfill and for a construction and demolition (i.e., C and D) landfill.

Strategy 3.2.1: Given the extraordinary amount of growth taking place in Lincoln County, the County will need to begin looking at a new site for a landfill. The County's current landfill, located on Crouse Road in western Lincoln County, is anticipated to reach capacity within the next 20-25 years. Criteria that the County should use in locating a new facility are as follows:

- Size – 300 to 400 acres or more (NOTE: The County's current landfill is approximately 300 acres in area.)
- Accessibility – The site should have good accessibility for heavy truck traffic, which would likely also give the public good accessibility.
- Topography- Low-lying land that could be filled without building a mountain is preferred.
- Waterways- The site should not be near or adjacent to any sensitive waterways, creeks or rivers.
- Soils - There should be plenty of cover dirt on site or at least nearby. The site should have suitable soils (i.e., soils with low permeability) for permitting of landfill. Groundwater at the site should be at a level such that it would not be a permitting issue.
- Existing Development- The site should not be near existing neighborhoods. Site considerations should define compatible adjacent land uses for a landfill. The site should also be centrally located to the County's population, as this will cut down on travel time, vehicle miles traveled, and the cost of bringing the majority of the waste generated in the County to the site.

Guiding Principle 4

Economic Development Opportunities Shall be Encouraged In Targeted Areas of the County

Overview - It is in Lincoln County's best interest to retain a healthy mix of residential and economic (job-creating) development. No county can financially afford to simply be developed as solely a "bedroom community," and the vitality of the County in the long term requires planning now for sustaining a strong economic base. A part of that planning involves how and where job-creating land uses should be located and how they should relate to adjacent uses. Furthermore, it is in the County's interest to seek to locate and provide those locations for industry that are most environmentally appropriate and that mesh with the other Guiding Principles listed in this Plan.

Objective 4.1: Designate areas of the County for the siting of future economic development sites.

Strategy 4.1.1: Identify the location of future prime industrial/manufacturing/distribution employment centers.

Strategy 4.1.2: Promote the inclusion of appropriate job-creating uses both in mixed-use areas and adjacent to larger residential areas to provide the potential of shorter commute times/reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Strategy 4.1.3: Create criteria for stand-alone industrial type uses to develop in designated areas in the County without being subject to “spot zoning” considerations.

Objective 4.2: Update the County’s land use regulations to help foster desired economic growth.

Strategy 4.2.1: Review land use regulations to ensure that desired (and undesired) industrial-type uses are properly addressed in the County’s land use regulations.

Strategy 4.2.2: Promote Conditional Zoning as a tool for rezoning for land uses that may have significant impact on neighboring land uses.

Objective 4.3: Make adequate provision for additional major retail development to support the growing population.

Strategy 4.3.1: Identify locations where major retail development is appropriate and/or desired.

Strategy 4.3.2: Create guidelines for major retail development that ensure:

- Appropriate connectivity and access management
- Reuse potential
- Contextual appropriateness

Strategy 4.3.3: Modify parking standards to reduce the amount of off-street parking, prohibit or discourage large expanses of parking lots, particularly between buildings and the road, and increase aesthetics within parking lots.

Strategy 4.3.4: Apply urban design and development standards to those areas that currently are or are anticipated to be urban in nature.

Strategy 4.3.5: Concentrate major retail developments in Walkable Activity Centers that provide for a mixture of and an integration of uses.

Guiding Principle 5

The County’s Natural Beauty and Resources Shall be Preserved

Overview - Lincoln County’s rolling countryside stretches from Lake Norman and Mountain Island Lake in the east to the foothills of the South Mountains in the west. Within the County are greenways, protected species, historic buildings and locations, as well as a population with a strong appreciation of the County’s natural resources and heritage. As the County grows, development should occur in a

manner that not only protects the County's natural and historic assets, but also wherever possible, enhances them.

Objective 5.1: Preserve viewsheds along the County's road network, especially in those portions of the County that are most likely to retain a rural character.

Strategy 5.1.1: Establish a "Scenic Byways" road network in Lincoln County as a means of promoting both tourism and the County's rural character. Roads that should be considered by NCDOT for Scenic Byway status include:

- Portions of Killian and Reepsville Roads
- NC 182
- Portions of Old Plank, Beth Haven Church and Ingleside Farm Roads

Strategy 5.1.2: Require subdivisions on rural roads that are not designated as "scenic byways" to have a conservation buffer along the road to preserve the viewshed.

Objective 5.2: Expand the network of parks, greenways and trails in the County.

Strategy 5.2.1: Work towards implementation of the City-County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Strategy 5.2.2: Work in concert with Lincolnton and the adjoining local governments to expand current greenways and recreational facilities in greater Lincolnton and beyond.

Objective 5.3: Preserve open space areas in the County

Strategy 5.3.1: Provide options in subdivision development (e.g., traditional, cluster-conservation, rural.)

Strategy 5.3.2: Amend land use regulations in a manner that promotes the preservation of the County's tree canopy.

Strategy 5.3.3: Higher density development should be limited to areas with water and/or sewer service. Adhering to this strategy will ensure that that sprawl will not progress into more rural areas of the County.

Objective 5.4: Ensure that the County's water resources, including Lake Norman, Mountain Island Lake and the South Fork of the Catawba River, are not negatively impacted as a result of development occurring in the County.

Strategy 5.4.1: Review buffer yard and setback standards for effectiveness in maintaining water quality.

Strategy 5.4.2: Monitor the effectiveness of the County's Sedimentation and Erosion Control Ordinance and Streamside Buffer Regulations. If the effectiveness of these regulations is falling short of what is desired consider strengthening them.

Strategy 5.4.2: Review the need for stormwater regulations in the urbanizing portions of the County.

Objective 5.5: Ensure that the integrity of the County’s historic buildings are maintained as growth and development occur.

Strategy 5.5.1: Ensure that new development in proximity to sites on the local and national Historic Registers does not deter from the viability and aesthetics of such sites.

Objective 5.6 Preserve the County’s agricultural heritage.

Strategy 5.6.1: Maintain larger minimum lot sizes in areas with high concentrations of agricultural activity. Larger minimum lot sizes can keep sprawling development patterns at bay.

Strategy 5.6.2: Development buffers should be established by uses that abut agricultural operations.

Strategy 5.6.3: Lobby the North Carolina General Assembly to legalize the Transfer of Development Rights. The Transfer of Development rights can protect farmland, provide for orderly growth, provide equity to rural areas without development, and is market driven.

Guiding Principle 6

Provide for Well-Designed and Well-Integrated Developments Throughout Lincoln County

Overview - With Lincoln County’s population projected to continue to dramatically increase, and its interest in maintaining a balance between residential and commercial development, considerable commercial growth is likely. If this growth were to be “spread out” along corridors in a single–depth “strip,” as has often been the case in the past in Lincoln County and elsewhere, it would consume a majority of the road frontage and would result in a repeat of the traffic problems on existing NC 16 Business on many more roads. For this reason, Lincoln County considers it to be in its best interest to focus such development at a limited number of intersections and along a limited number of roads, in a form that fosters internal and external connectivity and that is integrated with surrounding land uses.

Objective 6.1: Identify nodes and road corridors where more intense development should occur.

Strategy 6.1.1: Reexamine the County’s zoning policies and focus future commercial development in nodes and development areas so designated on the Future Land Use Plan Map.

Strategy 6.1.2: Promote the “transect” concept radiating from the larger nodal developments to include multi-family, denser single-family, and then less-dense single-family developments, to create a small community center concept surrounded by connected neighborhoods.

Objective 6.2: Develop design criteria to ensure that new multi-family, mixed-use and non-residential developments are well-integrated with their surroundings.

Strategy 6.2.1: Require developments to access and integrate with each other, both between adjoining tracts and within master planned developments.

Strategy 6.2.2: Provide alternatives to suburban-type commercial development (i.e., developments designed primarily for the automobile, rather than the pedestrian, in mind) at targeted locations. Identify those areas of the County where mixed-use type development is encouraged and establish an appropriate set of guidelines in the County's land use regulations.

Strategy 6.2.3: Multi-family and higher density developments to should be located proximate to commercial nodes.

Strategy 6.2.4: Limit the height of structures to the maximum height that can be reached by the main responding fire department.

Objective 6.3: Identify development strategies and guidelines for the placement of isolated developments that are away from identified nodes and development growth areas.

Strategy 6.3.1: Develop criteria for the placement of new isolated, small-scale non-residential uses that would otherwise require rezoning to a non-residential zoning district. A scorecard could be developed containing criteria that would be used to evaluate these requests. Such criteria include:

- **Size of Tract:** A minimum size tract size should be established for rezoning. The larger the tract size, the less of a "spot" that is potentially created. One neighboring jurisdiction, for example, has a minimum tract area of two (2) acres. Once this threshold is established, any tract smaller than that cannot be considered for rezoning.
- **Road Location:** Is the tract in question along a heavily traveled road as opposed to a local road that receives less traffic volumes?
- **Proximity to Other Non-Residential Zones:** Strategy 6.1.1 calls for the establishment of commercial zoning nodes in all areas of the County to address the future growth and development. Is the site being considered in close proximity to an existing node? Would the proposed site be creating a "strip" along the highways?
- **Type of Zoning Needed/Uses Required:** It is recommended that any such rezoning be through the Conditional Use District or Conditional Zoning methods. In either case, the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners would be able to see the types of uses being requested and determine if they are appropriate for the area in question.
- **Proximity/Accessibility to Neighboring Residential Uses:** How close to an existing residential development is the proposed site? Would the site be readily accessible to those residents? Are the site and its proposed uses of a nature that nearby residents would benefit from?

Objective 6.4: Provide land-use regulations that promote the redevelopment and/or re-use of older/abandoned properties.

Strategy 6.4.1: Proactively enforce State Building Code regulations on substandard buildings in the County.

Objective 6.5: Maintain and improve the economic viability of NC 16 Business by directing commercial uses to defined nodes.

Strategy 6.5.1: Limit commercial development along NC 16 and preserve mobility along feeder roads that connect to NC 16 Business to preserve access to businesses located there.

Objective 6.6: Develop and incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) criteria to ensure reduction in opportunities for crime that may be inherent in the design of structures or in the design of neighborhoods.

Strategy 6.6.1: Encourage involvement of CPTED trained professionals in the planning, development and design review of community projects to maximize natural access control, natural surveillance and territorial reinforcement. This is accomplished by establishing policy and regulatory framework for physical design which can include but is not limited to:

- Landscape plans
- Street lighting plans
- Access controls
- Street design plans
- Traffic controls
- Demolition of abandoned/dilapidated structures
- Lot clearing
- Sidewalk improvements
- Beautification projects
- Parks improvement
- Community clean-ups
- Traffic calming implementation
- Maintenance plans

Guiding Principle 7

Allow for Mixed-use Development to Occur In Order to Promote the Integration of Land Uses, Pedestrian Accessibility and to Reduce Vehicle Usage in the County

Overview - Lincoln County has some areas, chiefly in the eastern part of the County, where mixed-use development is a viable alternative. It is the County's goal to establish standards to foster mixed use development that is aesthetically pleasing.

Objective 7.1: Develop appropriate standards and guidelines for mixed-use developments.

Strategy 7.1.1: Identify criteria for the placement of mixed-use developments in urban/urbanizing areas and elsewhere in the County. Such criteria include:

- Compatibility of Development With Adjoining Land Uses- Current Lincoln County land use regulations put the maximum building height at thirty-five (35) feet in most zoning districts. Placing caps on buildings to allow for preferred types of mid-rise developments may be in order. If higher-story developments can be built, regulations will be needed to ensure compatibility and adequate transition with existing nearby uses.
- Internal Integration of Residential and Non-residential Development: In order for a mixed-use development to be successful, its uses must be internally integrated giving residents an opportunity to have easy access to nonresidential uses within the development.
- Treatment of Viewsheds Along External Roads- A mixed-use development, if visible from an external public road, must have "eye appeal." Thus, viewshed treatment is an

important element for both residents of the development, adjoining and nearby property owners, and the County as a whole.

- **Internal Connectivity** - One of the benefits of having a mixed-use development is that it gives its residents the ability to live, work and shop without having to get into a car and commute to one or more other locations. Thus, the development should be laid out so that residents (and outside visitors) can easily get from Point “A” to Point “B” within the development. Moreover, the development should be pedestrian and bicycle friendly to maximize transportation options for residents and visitors.
- **External Connectivity** - A mixed-use area should also be connected with other compatible adjacent uses, particularly in urban/urbanizing areas, so that both internal and external uses are accessible by pedestrian means and not solely via the automobile.
- **Adequate green infrastructure** - It is important that mixed-use developments include sufficient “green space” and trees.

Strategy 7.1.2: Provide preferences/incentives in the County’s land use regulations for mixed-use development where targeted in the County.

Strategy 7.1.3: Encourage the integration of residential land uses by allowing more variety of land uses in the different residentially-oriented zoning districts.

Strategy 7.1.4: Areas designated as Walkable Neighborhoods or Walkable Activity Centers each have different and defining characteristics. A more focused planning effort should be initiated in each of these areas. Small Area Plans should be developed for each occurrence of these Community Types.

Objective 7.2: Allow for a variety of residential type developments.

Strategy 7.2.1: Allow for density variations within individual zoning districts based on a variety of factors including: availability of utilities; location along major or minor corridors; distance from identified nodes or corridors, mix of uses, etc.

Strategy 7.2.2: Encourage residential development that incorporates features of the most “durable” neighborhoods in terms of economic value and adaptability to change.

Strategy 7.2.3: Allow for more “urban” forms of residential development in areas that currently are or are anticipated to be urban in nature. These forms would include Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs), townhomes, etc.

Guiding Principle 8

Ensure that Lincoln County Remains an “Affordable” Place in Which to Build and Live

Overview - Lincoln County wants to be a place where all its citizens—schoolteachers, firefighters, utility workers, as well as higher-paid executives—can find a quality home. A number of the strategies already included in this Plan provide openings that can be used to promote affordable housing. These include

ensuring a mix of housing types, lot sizes, and densities and promoting mixed use development (so that persons can live, shop and work in the same neighborhood). This section will address additional strategies and tools that can promote affordable housing.

Objective 8.1: Ensure that viable housing choices exist in the County for persons from a broad range of income groups.

Strategy 8.1.1: Encourage denser development and the inclusion of affordable housing within walking distance of express bus service or locations otherwise convenient to employment or easily served by vanpools or carpools.

Strategy 8.1.2: Maintain the County's policies regarding the placement of manufactured homes in most, but not all, portions of the County.

Guiding Principle 9

The Land Use Plan Shall be Kept Current and Guide and Direct Zoning and Growth Decisions

Strategy 9.1.1: Use the Future Land Use Plan (text and map) and other officially adopted planning documents when making all zoning and permit approval decisions.

Strategy 9.1.2: Monitor the Plan's usefulness after six months and one year.

Strategy 9.1.3: Make incremental changes to the Plan, as needed.

Strategy 9.1.4: The community should be continually and actively engaged regarding the Plan and updates to the plan. All comments received as a part of community involvement whether directly related to plan updates or received as general comments should be retained and considered as input for future updates.

Strategy 9.1.5: The future land use plan map was developed to use property lines as well as other natural and physical boundaries to function as breaks between community type designations. These divides, most notably property lines, can often be rigid divides. Where appropriate the board should consider expansion of community types to include adjacent parcels where the spirit of the future land use plan map and the guiding principles are upheld by the expansion of the boundary. The inverse can also be true; where the community type designation is too large, the board should proactively retract community type designation boundaries when their size and location does not meet the spirit of the plan and fit with the character of the community.