

City and Town Centers

Goal: *A vibrant city center which is the focus of the economic and social life of our community, a center of civic, entertainment and cultural activities and a symbol of community identity.*

Before World War II, downtown Winston-Salem was the commercial and social hub of our community. In the past four decades competition from suburban development has caused downtown to decline.

More recently there have been signs of a renaissance in downtown Winston-Salem. That is encouraging because downtown is a symbol of community economic health, local quality of life, pride, and community history. It is our statement to visitors, prospective investors and our citizens about our confidence and pride in the future. Downtown is a centerpiece that creates an image, good or bad, of who we are and these are factors in industrial, commercial and professional recruitment county wide.

The rebirth of downtown will require that it transform itself and become economically competitive with suburban Activity Centers by changing and expanding to include new diversified functions and activities. New anchors of development such as entertainment, cultural arts, tourism and technology-based businesses will have to emerge to complement current banking, government and convention activities. With vision, good planning, energy and commitment, downtown Winston-Salem will be the vibrant economic, social and cultural center of our community.

Key Recommendations

Downtown Design and Aesthetics

- Prepare an urban design plan for downtown Winston-Salem that builds on the existing physical assets and special historic character and enhances the visual quality.
- Develop an arts/entertainment center or other distinctive feature to create a special place that attracts more people to the area.

Historic Preservation

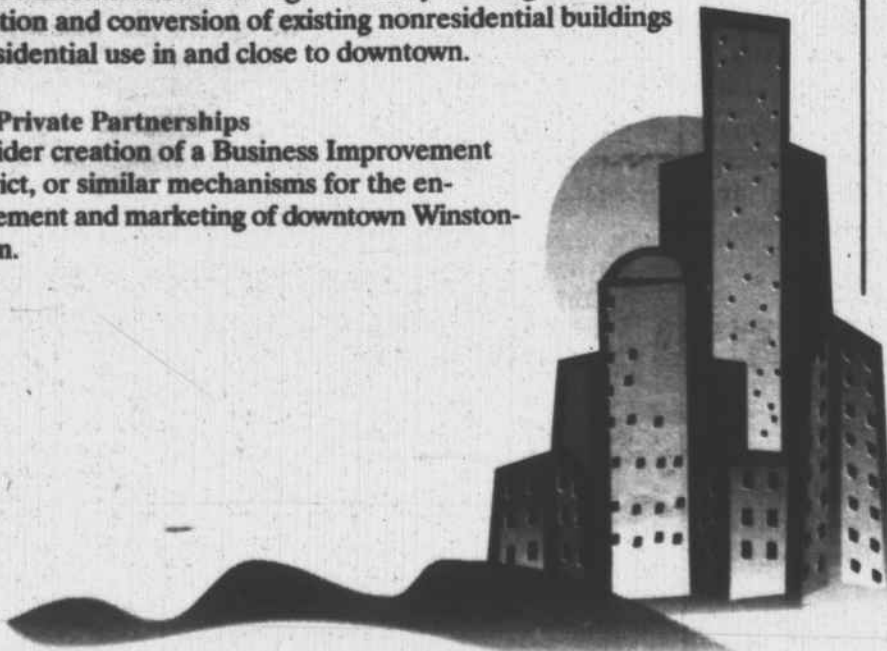
- Consider establishing a National Register of Historic Places district in downtown Winston-Salem.

Downtown Housing

- Provide incentives for new higher density housing and rehabilitation and conversion of existing nonresidential buildings to residential use in and close to downtown.

Public/Private Partnerships

- Consider creation of a Business Improvement District, or similar mechanisms for the enhancement and marketing of downtown Winston-Salem.



Building Better Neighborhoods

Goal: *New and revitalized neighborhoods that offer a variety of quality housing types, convenience to services and shopping, and foster a strong sense of community.*

The character of residential neighborhoods in Forsyth County has undergone a radical change in recent decades. The trend has been away from the close-in compact, self-sufficient, mixed use neighborhoods of an earlier time. In their place we have been building large-lot subdivisions and strip commercial corridors on the suburban fringe. This development pattern has resulted in neighborhoods that are separated from jobs and shopping, and almost totally dependent on the automobile. Walled and gated communities are becoming more common. It is hard to find sites for affordable housing options such as multifamily and manufactured housing due to neighborhood opposition. Housing that is affordable to lower income people, including public housing developments, is scarce and concentrated in a few areas of our community, dividing us by class and income.

In other communities, dissatisfaction with suburban development patterns has spawned a new trend in planning called traditional neighborhood development. Traditional neighborhood development is based on a return to the town designs existing before World War II. It tries to reduce the role of the automobile in neighborhood design and to incorporate convenience, walkability, aesthetics, livability, environmental sensitivity and a sense of belonging back into new neighborhoods. It is becoming a viable, marketable alternative to suburban sprawl.



Key Recommendations

New Designs for Neighborhoods

- Develop traditional neighborhood design standards for inclusion in the *Unified Development Ordinances* that provide choice and an alternative to current suburban-oriented subdivision regulations.
- Work with the Winston-Salem Department of Transportation and the NC Department of Transportation to develop street and sidewalk standards for traditional neighborhood development and revised requirements for standard subdivisions.

Preserve and Revitalize Existing Neighborhoods

- Protect existing neighborhoods through the creation of opportunities and incentives for their rehabilitation, redevelopment, and revitalization.

Affordable Housing

- Create well designed manufactured, rental and public housing developments that showcase the positive aspects of these housing types.