

Community Character

Goals: *A distinctive image that makes the communities within Forsyth County unique and special places.*

To provide for the identification, protection, and promotion of historic resources as an integral component of quality growth in Forsyth County.

As Forsyth County grows and becomes more urban, the special character of our towns and rural areas is slowly disappearing. Development is expanding into rural areas, replacing woodlands, farmland and open space with look-a-like strip malls and subdivisions and undermining the special character of our community. Increasingly, people are dissatisfied with the quality of our current development patterns and their effect on our character and identity. Is this the best we can do? Can't new development fit in better and build on our distinctive character? Can't we grow and at the same time retain what is beautiful and distinctive about our community?

The answer is that we can grow without destroying the things we love. We can have quality growth by retaining trees, open space, parks and greenways, protecting our historic resources, creating attractive community gateways, building boulevards instead of roads, controlling signs and billboards, and demanding high standards in the aesthetics of public and private development projects. We can build upon our rich Moravian heritage to create a community with a special character and identity. We can do it, and we should do it not only because beauty in our environment fulfills a basic human need in all of us, but also because increasingly it is good for business.

Key Recommendations

Quality Design

- Show our pride in our community and educational system by setting high standards of architectural design and landscape architectural design for public buildings and new schools.
- Adopt a policy to earmark a percentage of the cost of new local public buildings and places to be used for public art within

the project.

- Encourage private developers to have their projects reviewed by local appearance groups.

Attractive Roadways

- Continue to design and build attractive landscaped entryways into our county, city, and small towns. Incorporate gateway art, signage, and lighting as appropriate.
- Encourage new multilane thoroughfares and major connector roads to have a "boulevard" appearance with landscaped medians, ample street trees, bike lanes, sidewalks and where appropriate, the placement of utility lines underground.
 - Adopt a policy to earmark funds to purchase and remove nonconforming billboard along Business 40 and US Highway 52.

Design/Development Guidelines

- Seek Tree City, USA designation and consider adoption of tree ordinances county wide.

Protect Historic Resources

- Establish additional National Register of Historic Places Districts and locally zoned historic districts.

Community Awareness

- Study the feasibility of establishing a county wide nonprofit historic preservation organization that will maintain a dynamic, broad-based membership and serve as a primary advocate for historic preservation issues.

Incentives and Funding

- Establish a financial package to encourage the preservation of historic resources centered around existing state and federal tax credits and including local tax incentives, special loan programs, grants and easements.
- Initiate a local revolving fund for the purchase, mothballing, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of historic properties.

Organizational Relationships

- Investigate the merger of the Historic District and Historic Properties Commissions into one joint Historic Resources Commission.



Environmental Quality

Goal: *The preservation and enhancement of our environmental resources resulting in a high quality of life for Forsyth County residents.*

Environmental quality and economic development are sometimes viewed as mutually exclusive goals. The result often has been either development that degrades the natural environment upon which it depends or environmental preservation and protection that ignores people's need for economic opportunity. Too often it's been either jobs or conservation. Fortunately, everyone involved is increasingly recognizing the need to balance and integrate these two equally important goals. The idea of promoting economic opportunity while at the same time protecting and restoring the natural environment upon which community well-being depends has become a national movement called sustainable development. Locally, we have envisioned a future in which we conserve, protect, manage and enhance our water, air and sensitive environmental lands while promoting economic development to produce quality growth.

Key Recommendations

Air Quality

- Create land use patterns that reduce vehicle miles traveled.
- Promote carpooling and transit use including rail, buses and vanpooling.
- Recruit clean industries.

Water Quality

- Implement a county wide stormwater management program that addresses the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff including the consideration of regional detention ponds.

Solid Waste Management

- Expand existing recycling programs and target recycling efforts particularly at private commercial and industrial businesses.



Environmentally Sensitive Development

- Consider the adoption of guidelines and/or regulations, as necessary, to manage development in environmentally sensitive areas.

Natural Heritage Inventory

- Identify sources of funding for purchase of conservation easements and acquisition of environmentally sensitive sites.