

Minutes  
 Catawba County Board of Commissioners  
 Regular Session, Monday, December 19, 2005, 7:00 p.m.

**Appointments**

Criminal Partnership Advisory Board	156	12/19/05
Newton-Conover Auditorium Authority	156	12/19/05
Equalization and Review Board	156	12/19/05
Claremont Planning and Adjustment Board	156	12/19/05

**Benefits**

Flexible Spending Account	156	12/19/05
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**Board of Elections**

Voting Equipment	158	12/19/05
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**Centro**

Incentives	158	12/19/05
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**Closed Session**

Attorney/client Privilege	159	12/19/05
Business Expansion/Location	159	12/19/05

**Crescent Resources**

Attorney	160	12/19/05
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**Grants**

State Criminal Alien Assistance Program	156	12/19/05
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**Incentives**

Centro	158	12/19/05
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**Jail**

State Criminal Alien Assistance Program	156	12/19/05
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**Map Review Officers**

City of Hickory	156	12/19/05
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**Personnel**

Flexible Spending Account	156	12/19/05
New Position Titles - Chief Information Officer and Public Health Preparedness Coordinator	156	12/19/05

**Prescription Drug Discount Program**

Social Services	156	12/19/05
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**Presentations**

4-H Contest Winners	145	12/19/05
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**Public Hearings**

Plateau Small Area Plan	145	12/19/05
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**Small Area Plan**

Plateau Small Area Plan	145	12/19/05
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**Social Services**

Prescription Drug Discount Program	156	12/19/05
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, December 19, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the 1924 Courthouse, Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker, Commissioners Glenn E. Barger, Lynn M. Lail and Barbara G. Beatty.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Joellen Daley, Assistant County Manager Lee Worsley, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, Attorney Debra Bechtel and County Clerk Barbara E. Morris.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Commissioner Barbara G. Beatty led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. The Invocation was offered by Chair Barnes.
4. Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular and Closed Session meetings of December 5, 2005. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests.  
Chair Barnes welcomed the 4-H members.
6. Public Comment for Items not on the agenda. None.
7. Presentations:  
Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker presented Certificates of Commendations to 4-H National Contest Winners Tom Devine and Lisa Baxter. Contest Winner Casey Wentz and Coach Debbie Wentz were unable to attend this meeting.
8. Public Hearings:  
Mary George, Senior Planner, came forward to present the Plateau Area Plan for Board approval. Donna Cullum, Vice-Chair, Plateau Small Area Plan Committee presented the details of the plan after Mary gave a general overview of the plan.

In September 1999, the Board of Commissioners directed staff to begin the process of developing small area plans (SAP), as identified in the County's Strategic Growth Plan. A Plateau area citizen-based committee, consisting of twelve members, was appointed by the Board of Commissioners in July 2004 and began its work in August 2004. The committee held a community input meeting on November 4, 2004, which nearly one hundred (100) people attended. The main issues presented at this meeting included traffic on Hwy. 10, loss of farmland/open space to residential development and balancing pressures for growth with rural qualities.

For the next year, the committee developed its plan recommendations to address seven issues: 1) land use and community design; 2) transportation; 3) community facilities and public services; 4) housing; 5) economic development; 6) natural resources; and 7) cultural resources. The draft plan was then presented to the public at a community meeting held in August 2005, which was attended by forty people. The committee reviewed comments received from this meeting and made some minor amendments to the plan. These changes included amending the residential rezoning map to further limit manufactured housing in the district and recommendations to the North Carolina Department of Transportation to reduce the speed limit on Old Shelby Road and widen the shoulders on Plateau Road.

Following are highlights of the Plateau Small Area Plan:

- Extensive residential rezonings – the committee is recommending the rezoning of all the residential-zoned property within their district. Approximately 30% of the land is proposed to be rezoned to R-1 which would not allow any type of manufactured home. Around 70% is proposed to be rezoned to R-3, which allows for doublewide manufactured homes and stick-built homes (no

singlewide manufactured homes.) The basis for the recommendation is to preserve the rural highway corridors and communities of Cooksville and Plateau.

- High residential density is recommended for a corridor along Hwy. 10 from the district's eastern border at Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy. to Propst Crossroads (Hwy. 127). High density would allow three houses per acre with public water, which is available along Hwy. 10.
- Medium residential density is proposed along Hwy. 10 west of the Propst Crossroads to Cat Square Road. This would allow one house per acre with connection to public water available along Hwy. 10.
- Low residential density with two-acre lot sizes is proposed for the remainder of the area to preserve the rural character of the Plateau district.
- Commercial uses would be allowed in the rural and neighborhood commercial nodes. Rural nodes are recommended around Honey's Supermarket on Hwy. 10 at the western-most border of the district and the intersections of Hwy. 10/Cat Square Rd. and Hwy. 10/Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy. A higher-level neighborhood commercial node is recommended at Hwy. 18 at Willis Road. Commercial standards recommended are: landscaped areas along the road frontage and within parking lots, encouraging parking in the rear and downward shielded lighting to minimize light pollution.
- The committee recommends several safety improvements which includes the completion of Hwy. 10 road widening and intersection improvements from the NC Moving Ahead initiative, reduction of speed limits on Hwy. 10 and caution lights at the intersections of Hwy. 10 with Providence Church Road and Old Shelby Road.
- The plan encourages working with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacobs Fork River. This may include conservation easements or acquisition of land for canoe access sites at bridge locations.
- The committee would like partnership opportunities established between the schools and community groups, such as the Banoak Community Center, to provide community-based recreational activities.
- The plan encourages the creation of a "pottery trail" to promote the area's unique pottery tradition. This trail could extend from Plateau Road into Lincoln County and loop back to Cat Square Road and Hwy. 10. Also, the committee would like to gauge interest from the pottery community to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.

In October 2005, the individual members of the Board of Commissioners reviewed the plan recommendations in detail. Individually the members suggested that the committee review its residential rezoning map based on input from the community and discuss specific duplex design criteria for incorporation into the Unified Development Ordinance. These comments were reviewed by the committee at its October 25, 2005 meeting. Based on comments received from the public to increase the area limiting manufactured housing and the smaller acreage proposed in comparison to other small area plans, the committee recommended to rezone its entire district to either R-1 or R-3, which restricts singlewide manufactured homes.

On November 1, 2005, the Plateau committee met jointly with the Planning Board in a work session to review the plan recommendations in detail. A minor amendment was made to the Natural Resources section to establish partnerships with the Foothills Conservancy to preserve and protect the Jacob Fork River for recreation opportunities, conservation areas and as a drinking water supply.

The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on the Plateau Small Area Plan at its November 28, 2005 meeting. Five (5) people were in attendance with three individuals formally speaking during the public hearing portion of the meeting. Mr. Gerald Bennett expressed his concern about prohibiting singlewides from the district. He also wanted the speed limit enforced on Plateau Road and Grace Church Road. Coleman and Elouise Farley also expressed their concern over speed limit enforcement in the area. In addition, these individuals indicated that they were not aware of the previous community meetings.

Planning Board member Steve Von Drehle expressed his concern over Mtn. View being the receiving area for singlewides since Plateau and Startown were recommending against singlewides. He made a motion to accept the plan with an amendment to the Residential Rezoning map to include areas for R-2 zoning. His motion died for lack of a second.

Board member Rusty Lutz asked the committee and Planning Board to consider adding support for the Startown plan's recommendation of a new interchange at Hwy. 321 and Rocky Ford Road. He noted that this would help alleviate industrial traffic on Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy.

Al King made a motion to recommend the Plateau plan with a minor amendment to support the Hwy. 321/Rocky Ford Road interchange. Ed Neill seconded the motion and it carried with a vote of 7-1. Steve Von Drehle cast the dissenting vote.

The proposed Plateau Small Area Plan read as follows:

**PLATEAU SMALL AREA PLAN  
ACCEPTED BY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**SECTION I: LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS**

RESIDENTIAL

LU-1 Designate residential density districts, as shown on *Map 5, "Plateau SAP Future Land Use Recommendations."* The densities indicated are average densities and are not minimum lot sizes.

LU-2 Higher-density residential development, shown in yellow on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile south of NC Highway 10 from Hickory-Lincolnton Highway to the Plateau planning boundary east of Propst Crossroads. This density matches the recommendations from the Mountain View SAP on the north side of NC Highway 10.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 0.34 acres, since the County requires connection to public water wherever service is available.
- .2 Cluster subdivision is encouraged to preserve the rural character of the area.

LU-3 Medium-density residential development, shown in blue on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile on both sides of NC Highway 10 from the Plateau planning boundary west of Propst Crossroads to Cat Square Road.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 1 acre. This density is recommended to take advantage of the available public water without significantly adding to the congestion on NC Highway 10.
- .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged to preserve the rural character of the area.

LU-4 Lower-density residential development, shown in green on *Map 5*, should be located ¼ mile north of NC Highway 10 to the northern planning boundary and ¼ mile south of NC Highway 10 to the Lincoln County border. Lower-density development should also occur west of Cat Square Road.

Residential development in this area should adhere to the following design concepts:

- .1 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per 2 acres.
- .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged.

LU-5 All major residential subdivisions in the Plateau planning area should incorporate the following additional design criteria:

- .1 Require cluster subdivisions to maintain a 30-foot landscaped buffer around the perimeter of the subdivision.
- .2 Provide 30% common open space that is easily accessible and usable for recreation.
- .3 Encourage traditional neighborhood design by adopting techniques such as pedestrian-accessible and walkable neighborhoods through connected streets (including stub-outs instead of cul-de-sacs to encourage

future connectivity), greenways or trails, street trees and community amenities such as neighborhood parks. Neighborhoods should also provide a variety of housing types and sizes.

.4 Limit access in new subdivisions to interior roads and networks (see Transportation Recommendations). This requirement would improve safety and maintain the rural appearance of the area.

LU-6 It is recommended that school capacity no longer be a consideration regarding minimum lot sizes for new developments.

## COMMERCIAL

LU-7 Commercial businesses in the Plateau planning area should adhere to the following appearance and design criteria:

- .1 Require landscaped areas along road frontages and within parking areas located in front or side yards.
- .2 Encourage parking areas to be located to the side or rear of buildings.
- .3 Encourage mixed-use development at commercial nodes. (This concept allows residential and commercial uses in the same building.)
- .4 Commercial development should be aesthetically pleasing, designed at a walkable pedestrian scale and create a desirable destination point.
- .5 Abundant landscaping should be provided at site entrances, in public areas and adjacent to buildings. All loading, storage and maintenance areas should also be heavily landscaped.
- .6 Lighting at all commercial or mixed-use development be angled downward and shielded to avoid illuminating the night sky.

LU-8 A Rural Commercial Node should be designated at the following intersections:

- .1 Honey's Supermarket
- .2 NC Highway 10 at Cat Square Road – the intersection should be redesigned to accommodate increased traffic.
- .3 NC Highway 10 at Hickory-Lincolnton Highway – the intersection should be redesigned to accommodate increased traffic.

The Rural Commercial Node should serve residents of the immediate neighborhood with maximum site area of 10 acres and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot. Re-examination of the Rural Commercial Nodes should occur within five years or when transportation funding through NC Moving Ahead becomes available to determine whether the area available for commercial development is sufficient or if a Neighborhood Commercial designation is warranted.

LU-9 A Neighborhood Commercial Node should be designated at the following intersection :

- .1 NC Highway 18 at Willis Road

The Neighborhood Commercial Node should include a mix of commercial, office- institutional, and residential uses with a site area of 10 to 25 acres and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot.

LU-10 In addition to the commercial nodes proposed above, the Committee recognizes that other commercial, industrial and/or office-institutional development opportunities exist at the Neighborhood Commercial Node designated on NC Highway 127 at Propst Crossroads immediately north of the planning area and in the ED-I zoning district east of Hickory-Lincolnton Highway.

## OFFICE-INSTITUTIONAL

LU-11 Office and institutional uses should be allowed within the Rural and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. Otherwise, the Committee believes that the land currently zoned for office and institutional purposes is adequate.

LU-12 Redevelopment of office and institutional uses should strive to preserve the rural viewshed by adhering to the design standards recommended for commercial development.

LU-13 Abundant landscaping should be provided to screen parking, loading, storage and maintenance areas.

## INDUSTRIAL

LU-14 The land currently zoned for industrial uses is adequate. The Committee is concerned that the road systems in the Plateau planning area cannot handle the increased traffic (especially large trucks) associated with additional industrial uses.

LU-15 Nonconforming industrial uses should not be rezoned to allow expansion.

LU-16 Redevelopment of industrial zoned property should strive to preserve the rural viewshed by adhering to the design standards recommended for commercial development.

LU-17 Abundant landscaping should be provided to screen parking, loading, storage and maintenance areas.

## OPEN SPACE

LU-18 Thirty (30) percent of total acreage in single-family subdivisions should be required to be dedicated as common open space, which may be located within the development for community use, natural areas or along the perimeters of the development. Existing vegetation should be allowed to provide this open-space buffer if deemed adequate.

LU-19 Preserve green space specifically for passive recreational uses, including hiking trails, primitive camping areas, canoe access, etc.

## SECTION II: TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Catawba County does not maintain roads and therefore the following recommendations will be forwarded to NCDOT or used in areawide thoroughfare planning. Note: For the following recommendations, refer to *Map 6, "Plateau SAP Transportation Recommendations."*

## ROADS & HIGHWAYS

### Request from NCDOT District Office:

T-1 Improve communication by transportation officials when advertising public hearings for new roads, road changes, etc., which may include individual notification to affected property owners.

T-2 Evaluate traffic engineering at all schools. Turn lanes should be mandatory when new schools are built. Roads at existing schools should be retrofitted with turn lanes and caution lights should be added.

.1 At Banoak Elementary School, a caution light on the west side should be installed before the crest of the hill to warn drivers of the school.

T-3 Install caution lights or similar devices at:

.1 NC Highway 10 at Providence Church Road – a left turn lane is also recommended for traffic heading east on NC Highway 10

.2 NC Highway 10 at Old Shelby Road – a left turn lane is also recommended for traffic heading east on NC Highway 10

- T-4 Redesign intersections at:
- .1 NC Highway 10 and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway – Add protected left turn arrows.
  - .2 Rocky Ford Road and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway. – Many GDS trucks use this route to get to the landfill and there have been several serious accidents at this intersection.
  - .3 NC Highway 10 and NC Highway 127 – Add protected left turn movements to improve traffic and safety near Fred T. Foard High School.
  - .4 NC Highway 10 at Blackburn Elementary School – The Committee supports the *NC Moving Ahead* project to redesign this intersection.
  - .5 Banoak Road and Lefevers Road at Banoak Elementary School – Most school traffic exits onto NC Highway 10 via this intersection.
  - .6 NC Highway 10 at Cat Square Road.
  - .7 Old Shelby Road at Rhoney Farm Road – Sight distances are very limited for northbound drivers on Rhoney Farm Road.
  - .8 Old Shelby Road at Cooksville Road – Consider adding a left turn lane into the Cooksville Grill on Old Shelby Road.
- T-5 Reduce the speed limit on the following roads:
- .1 NC Highway 10 between Willis' Package Store and the Lincoln County line – The Committee recommends reducing the speed from 55 to 45 mph because of sharp curves and traffic around Honey's Supermarket.
  - .2 NC Highway 10 from Propst Crossroads to Providence Church Road – reduce speed limit to 45 mph.
  - .3 Old Shelby Road – reduce speed limit to 45 mph.
- T-6 Improve the following roads for safety purposes:
- .1 When *NC Moving Ahead* funding is available, recommend straightening curves on Plateau Road.
  - .2 When *NC Moving Ahead* funding is available, recommend straightening sharp curves on Old Shelby Road before the Burke County line.
  - .3 Improve visibility at the steep embankment on Providence Church Road at NC Highway 10.
  - .4 Widen bridge on Old Shelby Road south of Greedy Highway.
  - .5 Widen Cat Square Road.
  - .6 Widen shoulders on Plateau Road between Grace Church Road and Scronce Road to provide additional safety margin on curvy section of road.
- T-7 Explore possible local scenic highway designation for the following road(s):
- .1 Old Shelby Road
  - .2 Greedy Highway
  - .3 Hickory-Lincolnton Highway
  - .4 Create a "Pottery Trail" extending down Plateau Rd. from the intersection of Propst Crossroads to Burts Road into Lincoln County where it becomes Zur Leonard Road to Cat Square Road and north on NC Highway 10 in order to introduce visitors to the local pottery tradition.

Revisions to the Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan:

- T-8 Add an extra 1-2 feet of asphalt to Old Shelby Road when repaving.
- T-9 Add an extra 1-2 feet of asphalt to Plateau Road when repaving.
- T-10 Recommend a new interchange on US Hwy. 321 at Rocky Ford Road to help alleviate industrial truck traffic, especially trucks from Blackburn Landfill, on Hickory-Lincolnton Hwy.

Amend the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to:

- T-11 Minimize driveways along thoroughfares by encouraging service roads for residential and non-residential development.

- T-12 Establish regulations that all new residential driveways connecting to major and minor collector streets must be at least 12 feet wide for the first 20 feet of length with a minimum 3-foot turn radii. In the Plateau planning area, these roads include NC Highway 10, NC Highway 18, Hickory-Lincolnton Highway, Plateau Road, Cat Square Road, Rhoney Farm Road, and Old Shelby Road.

**PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM**

- T-13 When Banoak Elementary School expands, add a pedestrian crosswalk across Lefevers Road to Ritchie Field.

**BICYCLE SYSTEM**

- T-14 The Plateau SAP supports the bicycle routes previously submitted to NCDOT for approval.
- T-15 Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along the designated bicycle routes for increased safety.

**TRANSIT SYSTEM**

- T-16 Enhance Piedmont Wagon routes to provide increased service for the elderly.
- T-17 Request Catawba County to initiate a feasibility study for expanding the Piedmont Wagon route into the Plateau community.

**PASSENGER RAIL**

- T-18 Encourage Piedmont Wagon to schedule trips to coordinate with the Western North Carolina passenger rail service.

***SECTION III: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES  
RECOMMENDATIONS***

**SCHOOLS**

- CF-1 Recommend that the Catawba County Board of Education accelerate funding for the planned additions to Banoak Elementary School to ease projected overcrowding. These renovations are essential to the continued success of the school and should be completed as soon as possible.
- CF-2 Establish partnership opportunities between the schools and other community groups to enhance the use of local facilities, such as the Banoak Community Center, for community and recreational activities.
- CF-3 The County should remove school capacity as a factor in determining residential density for new developments when the Plateau Small Area Plan land use and housing recommendations are adopted.
- CF-4 School planners should use the future residential density recommendations made by the Plateau Small Area Planning Committee when identifying school expansion needs.

**PARKS AND GREENWAYS**

- CF-5 Work with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacob Fork River. Explore the possibility of developing formal public canoe access, which would alleviate landowners' concerns about trespassing, boater safety and parking access.

- CF-6 Explore the adaptive reuse of the southern portion of the Blackburn landfill site for recreational activities, such as a golf course or putt-putt course, hiking, biking and walking trails, picnic areas, a ropes course, an educational forest, a swimming pool or a community meeting facility.

**LIBRARIES**

- CF-7 Maintain existing levels of library service and increase as needed. Explore options for locating public library facilities on school sites.

D.

**E. WATER/SEWER SERVICES**

- CF-8 Partner with municipalities to provide utilities that are consistent with adopted land use plans, "smart growth" principles and higher-density development areas.

- CF-9 Continue to pursue Community Development Block Grants for the expansion of utilities.

- CF-10 Expand availability of public funding for failing septic systems.

F.

**G. EMERGENCY SERVICES**

- CF-11 Maintain existing levels of service.

- CF-12 Continue to support and develop measures to reduce medical response times.

**SECTION IV: HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS**

**H. ALL RESIDENTIAL USES**

I.

- J. **H-1The Plateau Small Area Plan Committee recommends the Planning Board and staff investigate the possibility of developing a County-wide minimum housing standard. It should apply to single-family, multi-family housing and rental housing, with standards limiting the number of individuals inhabiting a single dwelling unit.**

- H-2 Where possible, landscaping and buffering should be done with native vegetation. Native plants generally survive better and require less maintenance than non-native species.

**K. SINGLE-FAMILY**

- H-3 Residential subdivisions should incorporate the following additional design criteria:

- .1 Require cluster subdivisions to maintain at 30-foot landscaped buffer around the perimeter of the subdivision.
- .2 Provide thirty (30) percent common open space that is easily accessible and usable for recreation.
- .3 Encourage traditional neighborhood design by adopting techniques such as pedestrian-accessible and walkable neighborhoods through connected streets (including stub-outs instead of cul-de-sacs to encourage future connectivity), greenways or trails, street trees and community amenities such as neighborhood parks. Neighborhoods should also provide a variety of housing types and sizes.
- .4 Limit access in new subdivisions to interior roads and networks (see Transportation Recommendations). This requirement would improve safety and maintain the rural appearance of the area.
- .5 Develop higher-density single-family housing where appropriate infrastructures and services exist or are planned.

**L. MANUFACTURED HOMES**

- H-4 Rezone the areas shown on *Map 7, Plateau SAP Proposed Zoning Map Amendments*.

- .1 Approximately 30% of the land in the Plateau SAP is proposed for rezoning to R-1 (which allows stick-built or modular homes). The basis for this rezoning is to preserve the appearance and character of the higher-density area along NC Highway 10. R-1 is also proposed along the NC Highway 18 corridor to preserve views along the major rural highway. The "Cooksville" and "Plateau" areas are also proposed to be R-1 because they are established communities with few existing manufactured homes.
- .2 Approximately 70% percent of the land in the Plateau SAP is proposed for rezoning to R-3 (which allows double-wide manufactured homes, modular homes and site-built homes). The basis for this rezoning is to preserve the rural views as well as property values in the Plateau community.

H-5 Allow existing manufactured homes in the R-1 and R-3 zoning district to be replaced with manufactured homes based on their nonconforming status.

**M. MULTI-FAMILY**

H-6 Lack of public water and sewer service limits the feasibility of large-scale multi-family developments in the Plateau planning area. To accommodate affordable housing needs, duplexes should continue to be allowed on individual lots and in residential subdivisions, provided that the following criteria have been met:

- .1 Duplexes should be required to have 1.5 times the land area required for single-family homes.
- .2 Duplexes are encouraged to blend in with the character of surrounding individual homes through shared driveways and design of the front entrances.

H-7 Multi-family housing should be permitted as part of a mixed-use development in the Neighborhood Commercial Node (see Land Use Recommendations).

**RETIREMENT**

H-8 As with multi-family housing, lack of public water and sewer service limits the feasibility of retirement communities in the Plateau area. Homebuilders should consider the needs of seniors when designing new homes.

**SECTION V: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

ED-1 Explore the interest of the local pottery community in working together to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.

ED-2 A Neighborhood Commercial Node is proposed for the intersection of NC Highway 18 and Willis Road in the southwest corner of the Plateau area. This node should include a mix of commercial and residential uses with a site area of 10 to 25 acres and maximum gross leasable area of 50,000 square feet per lot.

ED-3 Three Rural Commercial Nodes are proposed for the Plateau area. The Rural Commercial Nodes should serve residents of the immediate neighborhood with maximum site area of 10 acres and a maximum gross leasable area of 15,000 square feet per lot. They are recommended for the following intersections:

- .1 NC Highway 10 and Hickory-Lincolnton Highway. This node borders the Startown and Mountain View planning areas and would provide supporting retail development for the industrial activities that may occur north of the landfill.
- .2 NC Highway 10 and Rhoney Farm/Cat Square Roads. This node is designed to allow some expansion of the small commercial area already existing at this intersection.

- .3 NC Highway 10 at Honey's Supermarket near the Lincoln County border. The node allows limited expansion of the commercial area already existing at this location.

## SECTION VI: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

### **N. NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE**

- NC-1 Encourage open space preservation by seeking opportunities for conservation easements, wetland mitigation and educational programs for farmers. One available option is offered by the North Carolina Division of Natural Resources' Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP), which identifies opportunities for stream mitigation in targeted watersheds to mitigate NCDOT construction projects elsewhere.
- NC-2 Evaluate conservation opportunities to preserve the unique characteristics of the Jacobs Fork River in the vicinity of the Catawba Valley Wildlife Club.
- NC-3 Support the continuation of agricultural and farming activities, including related activities such as roadside stands.
- NC-4 Preserve the community's open spaces through density controls, zoning and subdivision regulations which establish higher-density and lower-density residential districts (see *Map 5, "Plateau SAP Future Land Use Recommendations"*).
- NC-5 Thirty percent of total acreage should be required as open space in single-family subdivisions, which may be located within the development as community-use open space, along the perimeters of the development and/or contained in the 30-foot buffer along road frontage required in cluster subdivisions.
- NC-6 Consider requesting the North Carolina legislative authority, if necessary, to allow Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), which would encourage development in areas with adequate infrastructure and preserve open space in more rural parts of the county like the Plateau community.
- NC-7 Establish partnership opportunities with the Foothills Conservancy to preserve and protect segments of the Jacob Fork River for recreation opportunities, conservation areas and as a drinking water supply.

### **O. RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES**

- NC-8 Work with landowners and local conservancies to establish passive recreational uses on the Jacob Fork River. Explore the possibility of developing formal public canoe access, which would alleviate landowners' concerns about trespassing, boater safety and parking access.
- NC-9 Establish partnership opportunities between the schools and other community groups to enhance the use of local facilities, such as the Banoak Community Center, for community and recreational activities.
- NC-10 Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along designated bicycle routes for increased safety.
- NC-11 Explore the adaptive reuse of the southern portion of the Blackburn landfill site for recreational activities, such as a golf course or putt-putt course, hiking, biking and walking trails, picnic areas, a ropes course, an educational forest, a swimming pool or a community meeting facility.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

- NC-12 In order to introduce visitors to the local pottery tradition, create a "Pottery Trail" extending down Plateau Rd. from the intersection of Propst Crossroads to Burts Road into Lincoln County where it becomes Zur Leonard Road to Cat Square Road and north on NC Highway 10 back to Propst Crossroads.

- NC-13 Explore the interest of the local pottery community in working together to improve marketing and visibility of pottery sales.
- NC-14 Encourage the continued preservation of Hart Square.
- NC-15 Encourage the application of adaptive reuse techniques for historic properties in the Plateau area.

Commissioner Beatty asked Ms. George if letters had been written to the DOT requesting assistance with roads and Ms. George said the committee did so.

Chair Barnes then opened the public hearing for comments on the proposed plan and noted the comments would be limited to five minutes per person.

Gerald Bennett who lives in the Grace Church area came forward. He asked that the plan be put on hold until further public input could be submitted. He pointed out that the plan eliminates R2 housing and a lot of the area is currently R2 housing. He said the County has suffered severely on job loss – 22, 000 people in the last five years and people cannot afford \$150,000 houses and can only afford a \$80,000 doublewide or a \$20,000 singlewide. Mr. Bennett said money is the main issue in this plan. He noted there was no state money for the necessary road improvements and some comments by the Planning Board members were very offensive and these members acted snobbishly toward people who live in the Plateau community and voiced his concerns over discrimination based on income and housing.

David Hood, from Cooksville on Old Shelby Road, came forward and urged adoption of the plan. He said he believed it was in the best interest of the community. He commended the committee for their hard work, foresight and concern for the community.

Chair Barnes asked for any further comments, and hearing and seeing no one, she closed the public hearing and asked for deliberation by the Commissioners. Chair Barnes noted that the small area plan process began in 1999 and this was the 7<sup>th</sup> area plan and the process had been very valuable to the Commissioners and the community because it gave them the opportunity to revisit the zoning and many of the codes of the County and will be useful in the development of the Unified Development Ordinance for the entire county.

Commissioner Barger said when they reviewed the plan with the committee chairman the residential zoning had been well debated, discussed and the recommendations remained the same. He noted that the issue of singlewides was a tough when looking at affordable housing but the future growth of this area of county had to be guided by what the citizens want. Commissioner Barger stated he was in favor of passing the plan as presented and Commissioner Lynn Lail agreed with Commissioner Barger.

Chair Barnes noted the concern of the entire Board regarding affordable housing but stated she believed the County could have affordable housing within this plan. Vice-Chair Hunsucker agreed the committee had worked very hard and also that the County was making every effort to protect affordable housing.

Commissioner Glenn Barger made a motion to adopt the Plateau Small Area Plan as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

- 9. Appointments:  
Vice-Chair Hunsucker recommended the appointment of Angie Bass to replace Joe Hatley on the Criminal Partnership Advisory Board and the appointment of Ann Gaither to replace Rowena Hodge on the Newton-Conover Auditorium Authority Board of Directors. Commissioner Lynn Lail recommended the reappointment of Charles Preston to the Equalization and Review Board and Elizabeth Ann Smyre to the Claremont Planning and Adjustment Board. These recommendations came in the form of a motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- 10. County Manager J. Thomas Lundy presented four items on the consent agenda:

- a. Request to receive \$7,605 in funds from the U.S. Department of Justice for a State Criminal Alien Assistance Program and which was based on the number of undocumented criminal aliens that were held at both the Newton and the joint jail facility in Burke County. The County received approximately \$6000 last year that the Board approved spending for additional help for the medical program and the recommendation was to apply these current funds in the same fashion.
- b. Request to create two new position titles, which are usually done at budget but these have come to light after the budget adoption. The first was to change the Technology Director position to a Chief Information Officer and the second was to change a Bioterrorism Coordinator in Public Health to Public Health Preparedness Coordinator. Funds are in the budget for both positions so it was a request to correct position titles.
- c. Request to amend the County's Flexible Spending Account Plan which mirrors action by the IRS. This amendment would allow the use it or lose it deadline to be extended from December 31 to March 15.
- d. Request to update the list of Map Review Officers which are authorized in the County. This request concerned the City of Hickory, to remove Keith Staley, who is no longer employed by the City and to add Brian Fraiser, Donna Cullum, Brendon Prichard and John Furmage as Review Officers.

Chair Barnes asked the Board if there were any items they wished to have broken out of the consent agenda. No requests were made. Vice-Chair Hunsucker made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

11. Departmental Reports.

a. Social Services:

Jo Sloan, Family Support Program Manager, presented the Prescription Drug Discount Program.

The National Association of Counties (NACO) has developed a Prescription Drug Discount Program available to citizens of counties that are members of NACO. There is no cost for the program and no eligibility determination required. A participating county enters into a contract with NACO and Advance PCS (managed pharmacy benefit service). Advance PCS is a division of Caremark, Rx.

The plan is not an insurance plan. The cards provide immediate discounts at *participating* pharmacies for all uninsured and underinsured family members. Upon presenting the card to the pharmacist, the customer will pay the lower of a discounted price or the pharmacy's regular retail price. Currently, there are 41 participating pharmacies located in Catawba County. There are no claim forms to fill out and no limit to the number of times the card can be used. The card cannot be used in conjunction with other prescription cards. However, the customer may use the card to purchase prescriptions not covered by their own insurance plan.

Catawba County, through its membership with the National Association of Counties will offer a prescription drug discount card to help consumers cope with the high price of prescription drugs. With this plan, Catawba County is making a free prescription drug discount card available to local citizens. The card may be used by any county resident regardless of age, income or existing health coverage. There are no enrollment fees and no eligibility determination. The citizen can expect to save 15-20% on the cost of their prescriptions.

Information regarding the prescription drug program was presented to Department Heads, Commissioners' sub-committee, a few pharmacists, and Catawba County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber had considered their own discount prescription drug program but decided to support NACO's plan as there were more local drug stores accepting the Caremark Plan.

Initially, cards will be available at the following locations: Catawba County Social Services, Catawba County Health Department, Catawba County Public Libraries, Catawba County Nutrition Sites, West Hickory Senior Citizens Center, the Cooperative Christian Ministry of Hickory, the Eastern Catawba County Christian Ministry, the Salvation Army. The Catawba County Chamber of Commerce will offer cards to its members. In time, the cards will be made available to all Hospitals and medical offices in the county for distribution. Cards can be made available to Personnel and Human Resource staff at local industries. Cards will be made available to church groups through the Faith Community Task Force on Poverty.

**Summary of the program:**

- Caremark was chosen as the program provider after a two-year process that involved the NACo Membership Committee, a consulting firm and a special evaluation committee appointed by the NACo president.
- The Caremark program was chosen not only for its price savings, but also for its ease of use and understanding.
- The program provides great flexibility for participating counties. The discount cards can be used by anyone: senior citizens, the elderly, or the uninsured. Some counties may use the cards for their jail populations or their employees if they do not have a prescription drug insurance program.
- There is no cost to NACo, no cost to the counties participating in the program and no cost to the citizens using the discount card.
- Citizens do not have to fill out any forms to participate and, therefore, the counties do not have to maintain any database of who has the cards. The card will be given to citizens with a brochure and can be used immediately by anyone who needs it.
- The discount cards are accepted at more than 57,000 pharmacies nationwide. The overall average savings is about 15-20 percent.
- Only NACo member counties can participate.

Chair Barnes said she had talked with other commissioners from other areas in the State regarding this plan and everyone had very positive comments. Commissioner Beatty said she thought it was a very positive thing learned at the NACo conference and she is very excited about what it will save for Catawba County citizens and appreciated the staff's investigation of the program. Commissioner Barger asked if there was any cost to the County and Ms. Sloan said there was no cost to the County. County Manager Lundy asked the effective date of this plan and Jo thought that it might be up and running on February 1. Commissioner Barger asked the impact on the Medicaid Prescription plan and Ms. Sloan said she thought these plans would have to work side by side as in using this plan for prescriptions that are not covered under Medicaid. Commissioner Lail asked if there were any drugs that were not covered by this plan and Ms. Sloan said she didn't think there was any plan that covered all drugs but this plan seemed to cover most drugs. She said they would be getting periodic reports of the savings resulting from the program and would keep the Board advised.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to adopt this drug plan program. The motion carried unanimously.

12. Other items of business.

- a. Scott Millar came forward to present the Board with proposed incentives for Centro. The proposed agreement was the formalization of the process to encourage Centro Plastics to expand production of its rotational molding lines making parts for John Deere, Caterpillar, by adding 49,500 s.f. and creating 30-50 new jobs.

The expansion includes doubling the current size of the facility: an attractive, all brick facility currently employing about 130 people. The \$5mm project located here in 1998; the County did not give incentives for the initial project (the City of Claremont agreed to several incentives, including a five year delay of annexation and participated in a CDBG grant enabling the project).

Centro has asked for assistance for this expansion from the City, County, and State.

The promised jobs and the industry sector qualify as a "most favored" sector under the WPCOG Industry Targeting analysis under FORESIGHT and the regional Future Forward analysis. Under NAICS Code 32612, Plastics Pipe, Fittings & Profile Shapes, the industry weekly average wage is 120.8% of the MSA manufacturing wage and is projected to grow 1.9% through 2010.

Claremont is participating in incentives for the project. The Company will be participating in EDA and CDBG grants facilitating a \$800,000 water tank (\$400,000 EDA, \$300,000, and the City is matching \$100,000). The State is putting in approximately \$167,300 in Grants and Credits.

**Catawba County Incentive Analysis**

	Proposed	Existing Total	
Building	\$1,750,000	\$1,865,000	
Equipment	<u>\$ 750,000</u>	<u>\$1,000,000</u>	
Total	<u>\$2,500,000</u>	<u>\$2,865,000</u>	\$5,365,000

Total County Receipts over Five Years (\$5.365mm x \$0.0049 x 5 yrs.) = \$131,443.

Projected new receipts for the expansion (\$2,500,000 x \$0.0049 x 5 yrs.) = \$ 61,250  
 Grant proposed = \$8,040/yr. X 3 yrs for a maximum of \$24,120.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve an economic grant based upon the creation of at least 30 net new jobs at above the average manufacturing wage with an investment of \$2.5 million. The grant will be paid to the company in installments over three years and used to reimburse Company expenditures as eligible under North Carolina General Statute 158-7.1(a). The Board also directed the County to execute a contract between the Company and the County under these terms and conditions. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Assistant County Manager Lee Worsley came forward to update the Board on the status of the County's efforts to meet a new State law regarding voting equipment. Senate Bill 223 changed the way vote tabulators are selected in the State of North Carolina. The State Board of Elections conducted a bidding process under which vendors were given the opportunity to submit their tabulators for certification. The company which makes the tabulators used now in Catawba County, Hart Intercivic, made an initial business decision not to submit their tabulators for consideration by the State Board of Elections. The Hart tabulators currently being used by Catawba County are fully compliant with the Federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, or HAVA, and with the Americans with Disabilities Act. State Senate Bill 223 requires that all tabulators used in the State of North Carolina produce a voter-verifiable paper trail of ballots cast. The Hart tabulators can easily be upgraded to provide this paper trail, through the use of printers.

Staff is currently working on proposals to address the two provisions in the new State law which are of concern to Hart, a required performance bond and the escrow of the source code for the tabulators, with the intent of addressing Hart's concerns and bringing the Hart tabulators into full compliance and certification under the new State law. One proposal is for the State to post the \$7.5 million performance bond and charge the vendors proportionately for the number of counties in which they do business or by the number of registered voters using the equipment. Another proposal is to narrow the guidelines for who has access to the source code for the tabulators by eliminating the access by designees.

There is a recommendation by the State that counties should make decisions on buying voting equipment by January 20, 2006 in order to guarantee they will be in place in time for the primary. This may be difficult when there are currently only two companies that are certified – ES&S and DeBoe.

Mr. Worsley said the County has three options should the County's current equipment not be certified. These options are: (The County is eligible for approximately \$551,000 in grant funds to purchase certified machines)

1. DRE Machine – similar to current machines. The approximate cost is \$1.7 million (shortage of \$1.2 million);
2. Optical Scan – the County had this type of machine prior to the purchase of the Hart equipment. The approximate cost is \$830,000 (shortage of \$279,000);
3. Paper – in order to be AVA compliance, the County would have to buy AVA compliant machines for each precinct with an approximate cost of \$240,000.

A public demonstration of the optical scan and DRE Machine has been tentatively scheduled for January 3 from 4-8 p.m. at the Library in Newton.

The Board was requested to give County staff a broad authority to prepare an appeal of the State's decision to decertify the County's existing tabulators to the Wake County Superior Court, as is allowed under the State statutes.

Vice-Chair Hunsucker asked that if the County decided on a machine, could the vendor supply enough and quickly enough to be ready for the primary. Mr. Worsley said vendors have assured him they could supply the necessary equipment in a timely manner but his concern was time for the necessary training and the possible decrease in public confidence. Commissioner Beatty asked if there were counties that were interested in purchasing the County's current equipment and Mr. Worsley said they had been contacting other counties (not in NC) who might be interested in the equipment (over 200 flyers had been sent out) and have received at least 6 or 7 interested responses. Chair Barnes asked if the vendors had indicated their ability to provide staff training on this equipment and Lee said he had inquired about this and he said he was assured that type of training would be provided but he did not get a feeling the one-on-one training was truly going to be available.

Commissioner Barger said the bottom line was that the County was going to have to comply and made a motion to give staff permission to pursue the appeal or any other necessary avenue. Commissioner Beatty asked when the legislature comes back in session and Mr. Worsley said that they had asked for a special session to try and address this or possibly get the primary delayed. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Attorneys' Report.

14. Manager's Report.

County Manager Lundy asked the Board to consider a closed session under General Statute 143.318.11 for two purposes – one to consult with an attorney to preserve the attorney/client privilege and the other to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or future businesses and he anticipated brief action at the conclusion of the closed session.

Vice-Chair Dan Hunsucker made a motion to move into closed session. The motion carried unanimously. The Board went into closed session at 8:33 p.m.

The Board returned to Open Session at 9:47 p.m. County Attorney Robert O. Eades reported that the County anticipates receiving several rezoning request from Crescent Resources in the future, regarding land in southeastern Catawba County, but he does not know the exact timing of when those requests may be received. One of the Crescent properties involved adjoins land owned by Mr. Eades's father and brother, so he asked the Board to excuse him from providing legal counsel in any matters involving those parcels, to avoid any potential for conflict of interest.

Mr. Eades reported that the Board had asked him to recommend legal counsel to serve the Board on this matter. He said he and county staff interviewed representatives from three firms: 1) Brough Law Firm of Chapel Hill, NC; 2) Helms, Mullis and Wicker of Raleigh, NC; and 3) Smith Moore LLP of Greensboro.

Mr. Eades recommended the Board contract with Attorneys Thomas E. Terrell, Jr. and Beth Trahos of Smith Moore LLP of Greensboro, NC, on this matter. Commissioner Glenn Barger made a motion to approve both his request to be excused from providing legal counsel on this matter and his recommendation on the attorneys to be contracted for legal counsel on matters regarding this parcel. The motion carried unanimously.

14. Adjournment.

Commissioner Barbara Beatty made a motion to adjourn at 9:55 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Katherine W. Barnes, Chair  
Board of Commissioners

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Barbara E. Morris, County Clerk