

CATAWBA SMALL AREA PLAN

PLAN AS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE

Following are the complete recommendations from the Catawba Small Area Plan identified by issue. Maps referred to are available for viewing on the County's web page at:

http://www.catawbacountync.gov/depts/planning/small_area/catawba/

or the Planning Department.

SECTION I: LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Balance growth with the community's rural character
- P-2 Organize and plan residential development
- P-3 Encourage aesthetically pleasing subdivision design
- P-4 Promote affordable housing for people in all stages of life
- P-5 Reserve open space in new subdivisions
- P-6 Target commercial growth to appropriate areas
- P-7 Pursue incentives to encourage quality, community-oriented businesses
- P-8 Require more aesthetically pleasing designs for commercial uses
- P-9 Buffer residential areas from commercial uses
- P-10 Encourage quality mixed-use development on appropriate sites
- P-11 As with commercial uses, require more aesthetically pleasing designs and buffers from residential areas
- P-12 Target industrial growth within the study area to specific, appropriate sites
- P-13 Preserve open space, pastures and scenic views
- P-14 Support and encourage agricultural uses
- P-15 Protect natural resources

Recommendations

- LU-1 Designate residential density districts, as shown on *Map 5, Catawba SAP Residential Density Recommendations*. The densities indicated are average densities and are not minimum lot sizes.
 - .1 The lower density district requires an average of 1 home per 2 acres.
 - .2 The medium density district requires an average of 1 home per acre.
 - .3 The higher density district requires an average density of 1 home per acre if county/municipal water and sewer is not available. If county/municipal water is used then the average density would be 1

home per 3/4 acre. If both water and sewer are used then the average density would be 1 home per 1/2 acre.

- LU-2 Designate an area within 435 feet from the Catawba River as the Catawba River Corridor, as shown on Map 5.
- LU-3 Development in the Catawba River Corridor should adhere to the following design concepts:
 - .1 Cluster development option is available; however, no single lot should be less than .75 acres;
 - .2 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - .3 Any water front lot should have a minimum width of 100 feet.
- LU-4 It is recommended that school capacity no longer be a consideration regarding minimum lot sizes for new developments.
- LU-5 New residential subdivisions should incorporate the following additional design criteria:
 - .1 Landscaping/buffering – perimeter, entry, 30 foot buffer on road frontage; the purpose of this buffer is to help preserve the rural character of the Catawba community.
 - .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged. Clustering preserves open space and rural character.
 - .3 All major subdivisions should provide 5-15% open space that is easily accessible and is usable for recreation; some of the required open space should be located outside the 100 year floodplain. The exact percentage of open space should be determined through the development of the Unified Development Ordinance.
 - .4 Limit driveway cuts on major roads (see Transportation Recommendations).
 - .5 Encourage traditional neighborhood design with rear alley entrances.
- LU-6 Include office and institutional uses in Neighborhood and Community Center nodes.
- LU-7 Establish a community or regional gateway entrance with an attractive sign at the Interstate 40 interchange near Oxford School Road.
- LU-8 Businesses 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 that parking areas be located to the rear of buildings;

- .3 Encourage mixed-use development at commercial nodes - This includes allowing residential and commercial uses in the same building;
- .4 Commercial development should be aesthetically pleasing, walkable pedestrian scale, and should be a desirable destination point not just another commercial site.
- .5 Require sidewalks at the community commercial site and the proposed business/light industrial park.

LU-9 Neighborhood commercial nodes should be designated at the following intersections:

- .1 Balls Creek Road and NC Hwy 10
- .2 Bethany Church Road and NC Hwy 10
- .3 Mt. Olive Church Road and NC Hwy 10
- .4 Old Catawba Road and B&B Road

See Map 6, Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations.

LU-10 Neighborhood commercial nodes 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.

LU-11 A “Community Center” commercial node is recommended for the intersection of Interstate 40 and Oxford School Road/NC Highway 10. This mixed-use center should serve as a “Gateway” to Catawba County and to the Greater Hickory region and might contain unique design concepts and attractions to introduce visitors to the features of the region and the County. It should be designed to encourage mixed uses with open space and landscaped internal access. This development should be walkable, pleasant for area residents and visitors alike and a destination as well as a stop-over for through travelers.

- .1 This Community Center commercial node should include regional commercial and mixed uses with a total area of 20 to 40 acres per node and a maximum gross leasable area of 100,000 square feet per lot. Businesses in this area should buffer structures and parking from I40. Architectural controls and landscaping for parking areas should be required at this Community Center development.

See Map 6, Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations.

LU-12 Pursue a high-quality, attractive business and light industrial park along Interstate 40 east of Oxford School Road/NC Highway 10 to the Catawba River and west of this road to Stagecoach Road and continuing west to the City of Conover ETJ (see *Map 6, “Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations”*).

- .1 In this complex, allow a mixture of commercial, office and institutional and light industrial uses in a campus-like setting.
- .2 This development should observe the following appearance and design criteria:
 - a. Landscaped areas along road frontage,
 - b. Limitations on size of signs,
 - c. Internal streets in this area would be required as well as interconnectivity among the several businesses and industries,
 - d. Access management.
- .3 The County should coordinate with the municipalities of Claremont and Catawba concerning the development of the proposed Regional Business/Light Industrial Park.

LU-13 Open space of 5-15% of total acreage should be required in single-family subdivisions, which may be located within the development as community-use, open-space along the perimeters of the development as well as a required 30-foot buffer along road frontage. The exact percentage of open space should be determined through the development of the Unified Development Ordinance. (Existing vegetation should be allowed to provide this open-space buffer if deemed adequate).

SECTION II: TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Encourage better communication between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and citizens when transportation plans are developed and implemented.
- P-2 Alleviate traffic safety problems and congestion on major highways.
- P-3 Anticipate and plan for growth that will result from road improvements and widening.
- P-4 Minimize speeding.
- P-5 Preserve good roads, areas of low traffic and scenic drives.
- P-6 Maintain adequate stormwater drainage systems.
- P-7 Coordinate transportation policies with land use policies.
- P-8 Encourage alternate modes of transportation.
- P-9 Provide for better connectivity of road systems.
- P-10 Provide safe alternatives for pedestrians.
- P-11 Provide safe options for bicyclists.
- P-12 Increase opportunities to link with existing transit routes.
- P-13 Study connections, via the Piedmont Wagon Transit System, with the Western North Carolina Passenger Rail Service.

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 7, Catawba SAP Transportation Recommendations*.

- T-1 Establish a regional or county gateway, with a welcoming or historical slogan, at the intersection of Interstate 40 and Oxford School Road.
- T-2 Complete the Claremont Loop from Centennial Blvd to Old Catawba Road and on to Boggs Road at Cinderella Lane. This will alleviate and prevent additional traffic congestion in downtown Claremont.
- T-3 Explore possible local scenic highway designation for the following roads:
 - .1 Oxford School Road (NC 10) from I-40 into the Town of Catawba and on Highway 10 southwest of the Catawba Town limits to Murrays Mill Road.
 - .2 US Highway 70 between the City of Claremont and Town of Catawba

Request from NCDOT District Office:

- T-4 Improve warning signal timing at N.C. Highway 10 and Boggs Road and request a study for possible traffic signalization.
- T-5 Install turn lanes with turn signals at the following intersections:
 - .1 N.C. Highway 10 and Bethany Church Road.
 - .2 N.C. Highway 10 and Mt. Olive Church Road.
- T-6 Improve the following roads to enhance safety:
 - .1 Bethany Church Road curve near Boggs Road. Reduce radii of curves and improve degree of banking. A caution light for the curve should be installed until the improvement is made.
 - .2 Bethany Church Road curve just south of Melinda Lane. Reduce radii of curves and improve degree of banking. A caution light for the curve should be installed until the improvement is made.
 - .3 Replace bridge on Boggs Road with wider bridge. This project is listed in the State TIP for construction in Fiscal Year 2005-06. This plan supports the bridge replacement project.
 - .4 Replace bridge on Bethany Church Road south of Kelly Blvd with wider bridge.
 - .5 Widen Boggs Road 1-2 feet in each travel lane to enhance vehicle and bicyclist safety.
 - .6 Widen travel lanes on Emmanuel Church Road from Bush Road (Stonehaven MHP) to N.C. Highway 10.

Add to the Unifour MPO Thoroughfare Plan:

- T-7 Connect Hewitt Road to B&B Road to provide an additional north/south route. When this road is constructed, request a traffic signal to be installed at the intersection of Hewitt Road and NC Highway 10.
- T-8 Create a service road along the south side of Interstate 40 from N.C. Highway 10 (Oxford School Road) to Centennial Blvd, possibly via Stagecoach Road

(Please note that the proposed road locations shown on Map 7 are conceptual; the actual locations would be determined by NCDOT).

Amend the County Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to:

- T-9 Establish that all new residential driveways connecting to arterial and collector streets must be at least 12 feet wide for the first 20 feet of length with a minimum 3-foot turn radii. This includes Bethany Church Road, N.C. Highway 10, U.S. Highway 70, Old Catawba Road, and Emmanuel Church Road.
- T-10 Establish that driveway access on major and minor thoroughfares is not automatic. Driveways along thoroughfares should be minimized by requiring service roads for non-residential development. In addition, alleyways should be encouraged for major subdivision lots that abut thoroughfares. By encouraging alleyways, driveway cuts will be reduced and double frontage lots may be avoided. These steps will improve not only the appearance of the streetscape, but will improve traffic efficiency and safety. In cases where NCDOT or a municipality will not maintain the service road or alley, the property owner or a homeowners association should be responsible for continued maintenance.
- T-11 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge to the rest area on Interstate 40 (see Map 7).
- T-12 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge along Lyle Creek to the Town of Catawba Park, continuing through the Town to the Catawba River (see Map 7). This will require coordination with the Town of Catawba as well as their consent.
- T-13 Require sidewalks at the community commercial site and the proposed business/light industrial park.
- T-14 The Catawba SAP supports the bicycle routes that have been submitted to NCDOT for approval. However, due to safety concerns, the bicycle route along Boggs Road should not be designated until the travel lanes are widened. The

bicycle route for B&B Road/Hewitt Road would not be designated until the connector road is constructed.

- T-15 Increase pavement width to the maximum extent feasible along the designated bicycle routes.
- 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 Catawba SAP community.
- T-18 Encourage Piedmont Wagon to schedule trips to coordinate with the Western North Carolina passenger rail service.
- T-19 Determine feasibility of creating a light rail passenger service along the existing rail corridor from Catawba to Hickory with stops at urban centers.

SECTION III: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Plan to accommodate student enrollment growth.
- P-2 Plan for community-based schools.
- P-3 Provide adequate recreational activities for all segments of the population.
- P-4 Provide adequate open space and recreational facilities on a neighborhood basis.
- P-5 Maintain adequate level of library services for the community.
- P-6 Encourage continued cooperation with municipalities.
- P-7 Provide water and sewer services in higher density areas.
- P-8 Take a cooperative regional approach to planning of future water and sewer infrastructure.
- P-9 Maintain and expand existing levels of service.

Recommendations

- CF-1 Continue to use school facilities for public recreation activities.
- CF-2 The County should remove school capacity as a factor in determining residential density for new developments when the Catawba Small Area Plan land use and housing recommendations are adopted.

- CF-3 School planners should use the future residential density recommendations made by the Catawba Small Area Planning Committee when identifying school expansion needs.
- CF-4 Explore funding options for construction of school facilities, which may include impact fees.
- CF-5 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge to the rest area on Interstate 40 (see Map 7).
- CF-6 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge along Lyle Creek to the Town of Catawba Park, continuing through the Town to the Catawba River (see Map 7). This will require coordination with the Town of Catawba as well as their consent.
- CF-7 Open space of 5-15% of total acreage should be required in single-family subdivisions, which may be located within the development as community-use, open-space along the perimeters of the development as well as a required 30-foot buffer along road frontage. The exact percentage of open space should be determined thorough the development of the Unified Development Ordinance. (Existing vegetation should be allowed to provide this open-space buffer if deemed adequate).
- CF-8 Encourage and possibly create public-private partnerships to develop parks and recreation facilities that meet the needs of all population segments.
- CF-9 Work with municipalities, YMCA, or churches to develop after school and summer programs with transportation for children.
- CF-10 Continue cooperation with municipalities in providing library service.
- CF-11 Maintain existing levels of library service and increase as needed.
- CF-12 Major utility expansions in high-density areas, as indicated on Map 5, should have a priority.
- CF-13 Partner with municipalities to provide utilities that are consistent with adopted land use plans.
- CF-14 Continue to pursue Community Development Block Grants for the expansion of utilities.
- CF-15 Extend water and sewer service to the Fox Hollow and Farmwood Subdivisions located on Old Catawba Road.
- CF-16 Areas with septic failures should be considered for public sewer service.

CF-17 Maintain existing levels of service.

CF-18 Continue to support and develop measures to reduce medical response times.

SECTION IV: HOUSING

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Encourage aesthetically-pleasing subdivision design.
- P-2 Encourage the preservation of open spaces as development increases.
- P-3 Encourage a diverse range of housing densities and types that will meet the needs of all segments of the population, household types and income levels.
- P-4 Encourage the construction of multi-family housing as an affordable housing option.
- P-5 Development of multi-family housing should occur where appropriate infrastructure and services exist.
- P-6 Provide for the equitable location of manufactured housing that meets the housing needs of the population while maintaining the character of the community.
- P-7 Promote low maintenance, alternative housing opportunities for seniors.

Recommendations

- H-1 The Catawba 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 Designate residential density districts, as shown on *Map 5, Catawba SAP Residential Density Recommendations*. The densities indicated are average densities and are not minimum lot sizes.
 - .1 The lower density district requires an average of 1 home per 2 acres.
 - .2 The medium density district requires an average of 1 home per acre.
 - .3 The higher density district requires an average density of 1 home per acre if county/municipal water and sewer is not available. If county/municipal water is used then the average density would be 1 home per 3/4 acre. If both water and sewer are used then the average density would be 1 home per 1/2 acre.

- H-3 Designate an area within 435 feet from the Catawba River as the Catawba River Corridor, as shown on Map 5.
- H-4 Development in the Catawba River Corridor should adhere to the following design concepts:
- .1 Cluster development option is available; however, no single lot should be less than .75 acres;
 - .2 Single-family homes should be developed at a maximum density of 1 unit per acre;
 - .3 Any water front lot should have a minimum width of 100 feet.
- H-5 It is recommended that school capacity no longer be a consideration regarding the minimum lot sizes for new developments.
- H-6 New residential subdivisions should incorporate the following additional design criteria:
- .1 Landscaping/buffering – perimeter, entry, 30 foot buffer on road frontage; the purpose of this buffer is to help preserve the rural character of the Catawba community.
 - .2 Cluster subdivision design is encouraged. Clustering preserves open space and rural character.
 - .3 All major subdivisions should provide 5-15% open space that is easily accessible and is usable for recreation; some of the required open space should be located outside the 100-year floodplain. The exact percentage of open space should be determined during the development of the Unified Development Ordinance.
 - .4 Limit driveway cuts on major roads (see Transportation Recommendations).
 - .5 Encourage traditional neighborhood design with rear alley entrances.
- H-7 Development of higher density single-family housing should occur where appropriate infrastructure and services exist or are planned.
- H-8 Multi-family housing development should be limited to areas where both county/municipal water and sewer are available or are planned in the immediate future.
- H-9 Duplex or two-family homes should continue to be allowed as a permitted use in all residential districts regardless of the availability of water or sewer infrastructure.
- H-10 Rezone the areas shown on *Map 8, "Catawba SAP Proposed Zoning Map Amendments."* About 79.8% of the land in the Catawba SAP is proposed for rezoning to R-1 (which allows stick-built or modular homes). Proposed for

rezoning to R-3 (which allows double-wide manufactured homes, modular homes and site-built homes) is another 17.6% of the land in the Catawba SAP area. The basis for this proposed rezoning is to preserve the rural character of the community with its larger tracts, and scenic views such as along Highway 70. This proposal will also reflect the changing pattern of residential housing in the community as manufactured housing decreased from 98% of new homes in 1996 to 33% in 2002 (0% for single-wide homes in 2002).

- H-11 The replacement of single-wide and double-wide manufactured homes in manufactured home parks should be permitted even when located in a zoning district that does not permit manufactured homes.
- H-12 Single-wide and double-wide manufactured homes should be permitted in existing subdivisions where other manufactured homes already exist even when located in a zoning district that does not permit manufactured homes. This would accommodate subdivisions affected by the proposed rezonings that contain manufactured homes. This should only apply to lots of record and not lots with preliminary approval only.
- H-13 Options for retirement living are suggested in the Oxford School Road/I-40 area where a mix of uses is proposed. Retirement housing would also be an alternative at the other recommended commercial nodes if the appropriate infrastructure is available.

SECTION V: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Facilitate and encourage new, community-focused economic development in the Catawba area.
- P-2 Create more aesthetically pleasing commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments.
- P-3 Industrial areas should be directed to areas with appropriate infrastructure.
- P-4 Encourage limited commercial and office-institutional development, which observes established development standards, to provide additional retail opportunities for Catawba area residents closer to home. These areas should be adjacent to similar commercial developments along NC Highway 10 in the Balls Creek community.

Recommendations

- ED-1 Pursue a high-quality, attractive business and light industrial park along Interstate 40 east of Oxford School Road/NC Highway 10 to the Catawba River

and west of this road to Stagecoach Road and continuing west to the City of Conover ETJ (see *Map 6, "Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations"*).

- .1 In this complex, allow a mixture of commercial, office and institutional and light industrial uses in a campus-like setting.
- .2 This development should observe the following appearance and design criteria:
 - a. Landscaped areas along road frontage,
 - b. Limitations on size of signs,
 - c. Internal streets in this area would be required as well as interconnectivity among the several businesses and industries,
 - d. Design standards and other access management methods that will control traffic movement and driveway connections from major roads.
 - e. Require sidewalks at the proposed business/light industrial park.
- .3 The County should coordinate with the municipalities of Claremont and Catawba concerning the development of the proposed Regional Business/Light Industrial Park.

ED-2 A "Community Center" commercial node is recommended for the intersection of Interstate 40 and Oxford School Road/NC Highway 10. This mixed-use center should serve as a "Gateway" to Catawba County and to the Greater Hickory region and might contain unique design concepts and attractions to introduce visitors to the features of the region and the County. It should be designed to encourage mixed uses with open space and landscaped internal access. This development should be walkable, pleasant for area residents and visitors alike and a destination as well as a stop-over for through travelers.

- .1 This Community Center commercial node should include regional commercial and mixed uses with a total area of 20 to 40 acres per node and a maximum gross leasable area of 100,000 square feet per lot. Businesses in this area should buffer structures and parking from 40. Architectural controls and landscaping for parking areas should be required at this Community Center development (see *Map 6, Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations*).

ED-3 "Neighborhood" commercial nodes are proposed for these intersections:

- .1 Mt. Olive Church Road and NC Highway 10
- .2 Bethany Church Road and NC Highway 10
- .3 Boggs Road/Balls Creek Road and Highway 10
- .4 Old Catawba Road and B & B Road.

These neighborhood commercial nodes 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 (see *Map 6, Catawba SAP Future Land Use Recommendations*).

SECTION VI: NATURAL/ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Guiding Principles

- P-1 The quality of water is a vital concern for the public and should be protected.
- P-2 Provide adequate recreational opportunities, both active and passive, for all segments of the population.
- P-3 Maintain the rural character of the Catawba community.
- P-4 Preserve ample open space for future generations.
- P-5 Protect scenic views and corridors as well as wildlife corridors.

Recommendations

- NR-1 Preserve the community's open spaces through density controls and zoning and subdivision regulations which establish three density areas, high density (3/4 acres per dwelling unit with public water), medium density (one acre per housing unit), and low density (2 acres per dwelling) (see *Map 5, "Catawba SAP Proposed Density Districts"*).
- NR-2 Open space of 5% -15% of total acreage should be required in single-family subdivisions, which may be located within the development as community-use open space, along the perimeters of the development as well as contained in a required 30-foot buffer along road frontage. The exact percentage of open space should be determined during the development of the Unified Development Ordinance. (Existing vegetation is allowed to provide this open-space buffer if deemed adequate.)
- NR-3 Encourage residential subdivisions to follow design criteria for preserving trees within subdivisions.
- NR-4 Consider requesting NC legislative authority 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 Catawba community.
- NR-5 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge to the rest area on Interstate 40 (see Map 9).
- NR-6 Determine feasibility of a greenway from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge along Lyle Creek to the Town of Catawba Park, continuing through the Town to the

Catawba River (see Map 9). This will require coordination with the Town of Catawba as well as their consent.

- NR-7 Conduct a study to determine the safety of the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge. Specifically, determine if the bridge is susceptible to flood damage. If necessary, steps should be taken to protect the bridge from damage or destruction.
- NR-8 Implement and encourage the expansion of the Voluntary Agricultural District Program.
- NR-9 Consider changing the Water Supply Watershed Ordinance to incorporate the 10/70 provision for WS-IV protected areas.

SECTION VII: CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Guiding Principles

- P-1 Identify, recognize and protect significant cultural and historical sites.
- P-2 Encourage further education of the public concerning the history and cultural attributes of the Catawba community.

Recommendations

- CR-1 Encourage the Catawba County Historical Association to increase public educational efforts for those sites of County, state and national significance in the Catawba area, especially the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge.
- CR-2 Conduct a study to determine the safety of the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge. Specifically, determine if the bridge is susceptible to flood damage. If necessary, steps should be taken to protect the bridge from damage or destruction.
- CR-3 Identify additional historical sites in the Catawba community which may qualify for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
- CR-4 Promote the preservation and adaptive re-use of the historic Perkins property as a potential economic development opportunity.