

# Town of Taylorsville Land Development Plan



Adopted  
February, 2009

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
Why Is A Land Development Plan Needed? .....	1
The Planning Process .....	1
The Approval Process .....	1
Acknowledgments .....	1
<b>Demographic Profile</b> .....	2
Regional Setting .....	2
Educational Attainment and Earning Potential .....	4
<b>Transportation</b> .....	5
Roads and Highways .....	5
Sidewalks and Trails .....	7
Transit System .....	7
Passenger Rail .....	8
Transportation Policies .....	9
Roads & Highways .....	9
Other Types of Transportation .....	9
Transportation Strategies .....	10
<b>Land Use</b> .....	11
Current Conditions and Trends .....	11
Zoning .....	11
Residential .....	12
Commercial / Industrial .....	13
Downtown .....	13
Future Land Use .....	13
Land Use Policies .....	14
Land Use Strategies .....	15
Residential .....	15
Downtown .....	16
Commercial / Industrial .....	16
<b>Economic Development</b> .....	18
Regional Trends .....	18
New Educational Opportunities .....	18
Alexander County Economic Development Commission .....	19
Economic Development Policies .....	20
Economic Development Strategies .....	21
<b>Public Facilities</b> .....	22
Public Safety .....	22
Buildings .....	22

Recreation .....	23
Schools .....	23

**List of Maps**

*Following Page*

1. Town of Taylorsville Regional Setting .....	2
2. Town of Taylorsville Transportation .....	7
3. Town of Taylorsville Sidewalk Map .....	7
4. Town of Taylorsville Proposed Greenway .....	7
5. Town of Taylorsville Current Land Use .....	11
6. Town of Taylorsville Current Zoning .....	11
7. Town of Taylorsville Future Land Use.....	13
8. Town of Taylorsville Public Facilities.....	22

## **Introduction**

### **Why Is A Land Development Plan Needed?**

According to North Carolina General Statutes, every local government must base their zoning decisions on a long-range plan which describes policies for land-use and growth management issues. These decisions range from rezoning decisions to transportation regulations to policies governing the uses and subdivision of land. The last Land Development Plan written and adopted by the Town of Taylorsville was 1965. This “plan” simply did not reflect land-use and growth patterns of today and a new plan was needed. The Taylorsville Town Council set the process in motion by contracting with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments in January 2008 to work with the Taylorsville Planning Board in developing such a plan.

### **The Planning Process**

The *Taylorsville Land Development Plan* was drafted by the Taylorsville Planning Board. The Board underwent an intense 10-month process of education, discussion and strategic thinking to develop a draft plan for presentation to the Town Council. The heart of the *Plan* is a series of recommended growth management strategies in the areas of land use and growth management, transportation and economic development. If the *Plan* is adopted by the Town Council, the Planning Board and Town Planner will be charged with prioritizing and implementing the strategies proposed in the *Taylorsville Land Development Plan*.

### **The Approval Process**

*[The Planning Board and the Town Council held a joint work session on January 22, 2009 to discuss the plan recommendations in detail. At this meeting, the Planning Board recommended the plan to the Town Council for its discussion and decision on February 3, 2009.]*

### **Acknowledgments**

The Taylorsville Planning Board was assisted in drafting the *Land Development Plan* by members of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Planning staff: Current Taylorsville Town Planner Jon Pilkenton provided technical assistance in developing the plan and GIS Technician Allison Suggs produced the maps in the document.

# Demographic Profile

## Regional Setting

Centrally located in Alexander County, the Town of Taylorsville was incorporated in 1887. The land for the town was donated by J.M. Bogle who gave 22 acres, William Matheson who gave 13 acres and James James who gave 11.75 acres for a total of 46.75 acres. Most of the land was woodland and the road from Statesville to Morganton passed to the South of town. A commission of Alexander C. McIntosh, R.L. Steel, Sion Harrington, J.H. Newland, and George Swain, treasurer, were appointed to layout the town of Taylorsville and sell lots to raise money for the building of a courthouse and jail. An auction of lots was held August 11, 1847 and 47 lots were sold. The second sale was November 30, 1847 and 10 lots were sold. At a third auction on March 8, 1848, five lots were sold.

Consisting of approximately 2.82 square miles, Taylorsville is the only municipality in Alexander County and is among the smallest in the Unifour (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties). See *Map 1: Taylorsville Regional Setting*.

The Town of Taylorsville was home to approximately 5.3% percent of Alexander County's population or 1,920 persons in 2006, according to official estimates by the North Carolina State Demographer. For comparison purposes and to analyze population change over time, this analysis relies largely upon the figures compiled by the US Census Bureau during the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. Figure 1 shows that from 1980 to 2006, the town's population grew nearly fifty seven (57) percent from 1,103 to 1,920.

**Figure 1.**  
**Population 1980-2006**

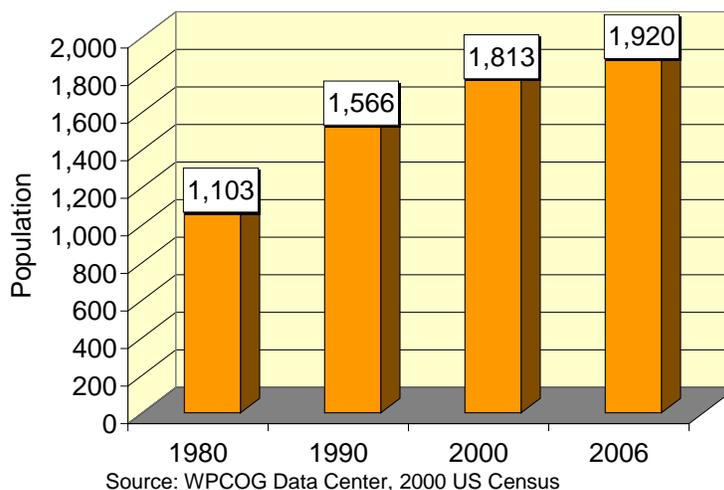
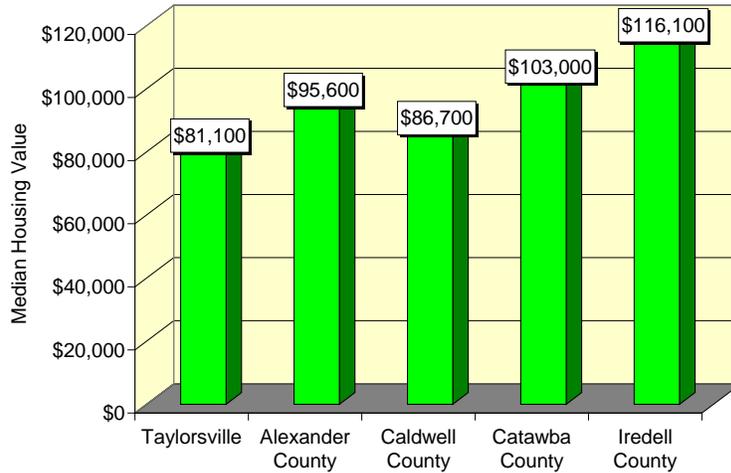


Figure 2 shows the age distribution from the year 2000. Almost one half of the total population is between the ages of 45 and 65+. This data is a contributing factor as to why median household income is lower than other towns of comparable size as most in this age group are near or already retired.

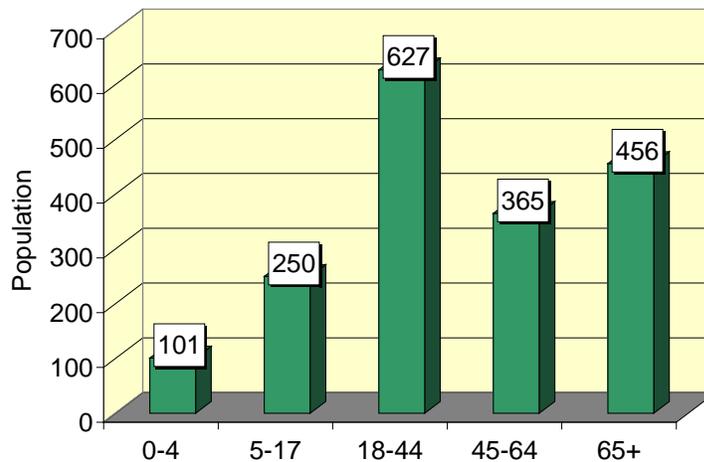
**Figure 2.  
Population Age Group, 2000**



Source: WPCOG Data Center

According to the 2000 Census, the Median Housing Value for Taylorsville was \$81,000. Figure 3 compares Taylorsville to Alexander, Caldwell, Catawba and Iredell County. Taylorsville’s median housing value is \$14,500 less than Alexander County as a whole; some of this discrepancy can be attributed to residential development along Lake Hickory in the Bethlehem and Wittenburg communities. This data shows that Taylorsville’s tax revenue is significantly impacted by lower housing values as compared to other surrounding counties.

**Figure 3.  
Median Housing Value**



Source: WPCOG Data Center

## Educational Attainment and Earning Potential

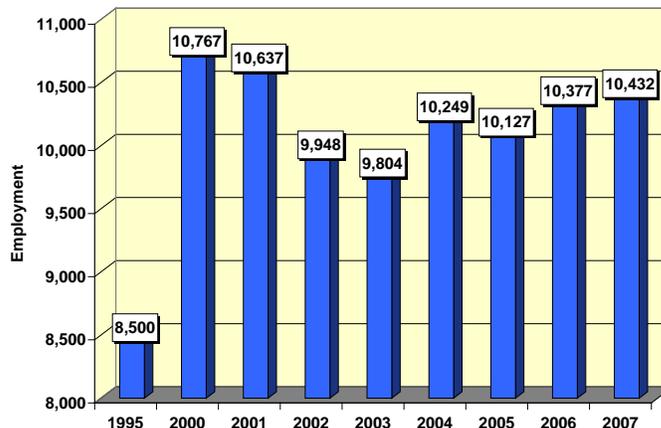
The income level and educational attainment of a community's residents are often used as a common indicator of how robust and dynamic a community will become. According to Table 1, Taylorsville's population over age twenty-five has nearly sixty-three percent high school graduates which are slightly lower than Alexander County at almost sixty-nine percent. Nearly fourteen percent of Taylorsville residents hold a Bachelors degree or higher, compared with ten percent in Alexander County. Conversely 37.5% of the workforce has less than a high school education. This is only slightly higher than Alexander County at 31.3% but significantly higher than the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA (29.7%).

<b>Table 1. Educational Attainment (Percent), 2000</b>			
	<b>Less than High School</b>	<b>High School Graduate or More</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree or More</b>
<b>Taylorsville</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>62.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>
Alexander County	31.3	68.7	9.7
Hickory MSA	29.7	70.3	13.6
North Carolina	21.9	78.1	22.5

Source: 2000 US Census

Figure 4 shows that Alexander County's employment numbers have been on the rise since 2005. This figure shows that in 2003 unemployment in the County was the highest with only 9,804 persons employed. The data also shows that Alexander County has rebounded from significant job losses and the employment numbers are stabilizing.

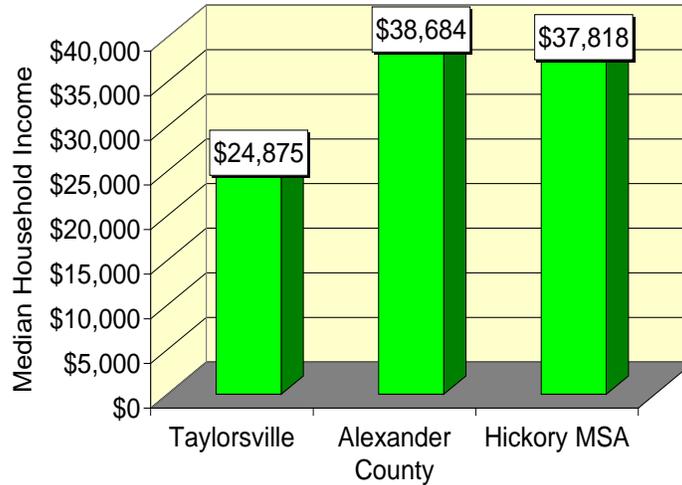
**Figure 4.  
Employment 1996-2007**



Source: WPCOG Data Center

Figure 5 shows that in 2000 the median household income was \$24,875. This is significantly less than Alexander County as a whole (\$38,684). These numbers show that Taylorsville residents are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to purchasing power. According to 2000 Census numbers nearly 25% percent of the population was age 65+; this is a significant contributing factor to the lower median household income as most of these persons are retired and on a fixed income.

**Figure 5.**  
**Median Household Income, 2000**



Source: 2000 US Census

## **Transportation**

Taylorsville is a part of the Unifour Rural Planning Organization (URPO). As a member of the URPO, Taylorsville's transportation planning is primarily provided by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Taylorsville is the only municipality in the four county area that was not included in the new urbanized area that was delineated after the 2000 US Census.

The RPO transportation planning process provides Taylorsville the opportunity to have its transportation projects overseen by transportation professionals and ultimately recommended for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP plan covers a seven-year period and is updated every two years. All major transportation projects for an area are detailed in this plan.

The transportation network within Taylorsville consists of approximately 20 miles town maintained streets and NCDOT major thoroughfares. The major roadways through Taylorsville are US Highway 64/ NC Highway 90 East and West and NC Highway 16 North and South.

### **Roads and Highways**

Transportation planners at Western Piedmont Council of Governments are currently developing a 4-county Comprehensive Transportation Plan which encompasses all earlier Thoroughfare Plans and expands the proposals to include all modes of transportation.

Two major road projects in Alexander County are currently listed in the Draft 2009-2015 Transportation Improvement Program. These projects involve major upgrades and pavement widening to NC127 and NC 16, both unfunded at this time.

- NC 127. Upgrade two-lane and provide some five-lane curb and gutter from SR 1400 (Cloninger Mill Road) in Catawba County to US 64-NC 90 in Alexander County (R-3603) (Unfunded).
- NC 16. Upgrade two-lane roadway from the Catawba River to the Wilkes County line (R-2403) (Unfunded).

Table 2 lists actual traffic counts from 1997 and 2005 along major thoroughfares in Taylorsville together with traffic projections for the year 2020.

<b>Table 2.</b>				
<b>Average Daily Traffic Counts 1994-2025</b>				
	<b>NC Hwy 16 @ Macedonia Church Rd.</b>	<b>NC Hwy 16 @ Town Limits</b>	<b>US 64 @ Hwy 90W</b>	<b>NC 90 E @ Boston Rd.</b>
<b>1997</b>	9,600	7,500	3,500	8,900
<b>2005</b>	13,000	8,800	5,700	8,400
<b>2020</b>	15,000	13,700	12,000	12,000

Source: NCDOT AADT maps, 1997-2005 and NCDOT Thoroughfare Plan Technical Report for the Town of Taylorsville.

*Map 2 : Town of Taylorsville Transportation* shows Gateway points and Gateway corridors proposed in this *Plan*. Gateway points or entrances are specific locations along major thoroughfares at or near the Taylorsville town limits where welcome signs or art displays that inform the public they are entering the Town. Gateway corridors are major thoroughfares through the Town. The *Plan* recommends that development surrounding the Gateway points and along Gateway corridors have higher standards for appearance, landscaping, signage, utilities and pedestrian facilities to appeal to citizens and visitors.

## Sidewalks and Trails

*Map 3: Town of Taylorsville Sidewalk Map* shows that the Town currently maintains approximately six miles of sidewalks with the bulk of the system being located in the downtown area heading south along South Center Street. The last major expansion of the sidewalk network took place in 2006 when a new sidewalk was constructed at the entrance of Alexander Central High School and extended from School Drive across Liledoun Road and connected with an existing sidewalk at Taylorsville Elementary School.

The Town's trail system is currently a ½ mile loop around Matheson Park. *Map 4: Pedestrian Map* shows a proposed Greenway that would begin at the future YMCA site and continue south along existing sewer easements before ending at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SE. The Greenway would then begin at Liledoun Road just north of School Drive and follow existing sewer easements to West Jay Drive.

## Transit System

Officials in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties along with the municipalities of Hickory, Newton and Conover recently passed resolutions creating a regional transit authority. Called Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority, the organization is the first regional public transportation authority with consolidated urban-rural transit service in North Carolina. This system will be

designed to address current and future public transportation needs in the four-county region.

The transit authority will assumed the operations of the rural and urban transit systems in the four-county Unifour region on July 1, 2008. The following four service providers were consolidated:

- Alexander County community transportation provided by Alexander County Transportation, a county-operated system;
- Burke County community transportation provided by Burke County Transit Administration Inc., a nonprofit agency;
- Caldwell County community transportation provided by Caldwell County Area Transit System Inc., a nonprofit agency, and
- Catawba County Piedmont Wagon Transit System, operated by the City of Hickory, which provides community transportation to Catawba County residents and fixed-route service for the cities of Hickory, Newton and Conover.

Federal funding paved the way for the multi-year effort to consolidate the four separate systems, including US, NC and local funding to conduct a feasibility study. A full-time regional transit director has been hired to implement the new system. Currently, new routes are being evaluated and implementation could begin as early as July 1, 2009.

## **Passenger Rail**

The NCDOT has determined that the next major expansion of passenger rail service in the State will be in Western North Carolina. Plans are underway to initiate service between Raleigh and Asheville with stops in downtown Hickory and Morganton. This service may be operational by 2012.

# **Transportation Policies**

## **Roads & Highways**

- Coordinate transportation policies with land use policies.
- Anticipate and plan for growth resulting from road improvements and widening.
- Conduct congestion mitigation activities to alleviate traffic safety problems and congestion on major highways.
- Minimize speeding through enforcement and traffic calming measures.
- Preserve efficient and well-maintained roads and areas of low traffic.
- Adopt transportation policies that do not negatively impact air quality.
- Provide for better connectivity of road systems.
- Maintain and improve communication between the North Carolina Department of Transportation and citizens when transportation plans are developed and implemented.

## **Other Types of Transportation**

- Encourage the increased use of alternate types of transportation, such as walking, bicycles, buses and railroads.
- Provide safe pedestrian access along sidewalks, trails and bicycle routes.
- Improve connectivity between recreation facilities and other points of interest such as schools, downtown and shopping areas.

## **Transportation Strategies**

- Identify gateways into the Town where higher standards for appearance, landscaping, signage, utilities and pedestrian facilities will be required. Suggested gateways:
  - Hwy 90W @ US 64
  - Hwy 16 @ US 64/90
  - Hwy 90E @ Boston Rd.
  - Hwy 16N @ Terrace Lawn Ct.
  
- Identify important corridors through the Town where higher standards for appearance, landscaping, signage, utilities and pedestrian facilities will be required. Suggested corridors:
  - US Hwy 64/90
  - NC Hwy 16S
  - NC Hwy 16N
  - Old Wilkesboro Rd.
  - Liledoun Rd.
  - Paul Payne Store Rd.
  
- Encourage connectivity between subdivisions by limiting the length of cul-de-sacs and requiring stub-out streets to adjacent vacant properties.
  
- Develop a Pedestrian, Greenway and Bicycle Plan that includes an inventory of existing facilities and prioritizes future projects.
  
- Promote the expansion of the sidewalk network in town by 1) requiring all businesses to install sidewalks in areas that are reasonably expected to attract pedestrian traffic; 2) requiring sidewalks and/or greenways in new major subdivisions; 3) promoting connections of existing sidewalks through the Pedestrian, Greenway and Bicycle Plan.
  
- Develop greenways, trails and bicycle routes that connect with existing commercial areas and schools
  
- Require sidewalks in new major subdivisions.
  
- Explore possibilities for alternative fuels for public transportation and Town-owned vehicles.
  
- Require an engineer-certified Traffic Impact Analysis for large commercial, industrial, mixed-use developments or redevelopments and large subdivisions.
  
- Require non-residential developments to stub-out streets to adjacent vacant properties in order to provide internal access wherever feasible.

# Land Use

## Current Conditions

The Town of Taylorsville and its extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) encompass square 8.65 square miles. Taylorsville’s ETJ includes approximately 6.3 square miles of unincorporated area adjacent to the Town limits, over which Taylorsville has planning and zoning jurisdiction. While ETJ property owners do not pay Town taxes or receive municipal services, they are represented by proportionate seats on the Taylorsville Planning Board. Most of the land in the ETJ is used for low-density residential purposes.

Similarly, residential uses occupy most of the land within the Taylorsville town limits and ETJ. As Table 3 shows, 39.3% of the land is used for single-family residential purposes. Another .09% is dedicated to multi-family residential uses such as apartment complexes, townhouses and condominiums.

Commercial activities occupy only 5.6% of the land while industrial uses occupies 3.5%. Institutional uses at 4.1% include government facilities as well as churches and schools. Agricultural encompasses 5.4% of the total land area; the majority of the agricultural land is located outside the town limits in the ETJ. (see *Map 5: Town of Taylorsville Current Land Use*).

<b>Table 3. Taylorsville Land Use Distribution Town Limits and ETJ, 2008.</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single-family Residential	1959.1	39.3
Multi-family Residential	46.3	.09
Commercial	277.97	5.6
Institutional	206.7	4.1
Industrial	174.2	3.5
Agricultural	269.8	5.4
Mobile Home Park	36.2	.07
Vacant	2011.3	40.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4981.57</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Source: WPCOG GIS/Data Center

## Zoning

Taylorsville currently has nine zoning districts allowing different types of development in the town limits and ETJ (see *Map 6: Town of Taylorsville Current Zoning*). Each zoning district includes a list of permitted uses, minimum lot sizes and intensity of development. Conditional uses are permitted in Taylorsville to allow certain uses that are only appropriate in a zoning district if specific conditions are met. Examples of conditional use permits allowed in some of the

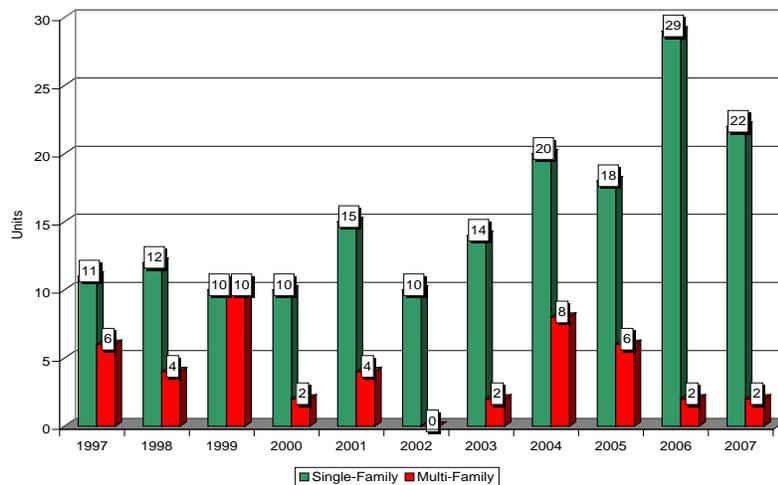
residential zoning districts include Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and Home Occupations.

## Residential

Residential zoning districts vary mainly regarding lot size, but some types of residential structures are restricted to certain zones. Duplexes and multi-family units, for example, are currently permitted uses only in the Town’s R-2, and R-3 districts. The R-1 zoning districts are reserved primarily for single-family homes with some other uses allowed through the conditional use permit process. The R-2 and R-3 zoning districts are the only districts that allow manufactured housing. These land classifications exist primarily in the ETJ.

Alexander County issues building permits for all new construction. Figure 6 shows the total number of building permits issued from 1997 through 2007 for single-family and multi-family dwelling units, excluding manufactured homes. During this time, permits for one hundred seventy-one single-family homes and forty-six multi-family developments were issued. Since the data does not identify type of multi-family developments permitted (duplex, triplex, apartment complex, etc.), it is difficult to assess the precise number of dwelling units added to the market during this period.

**Figure 6.**  
**Building Permits 1997-2007**



Source: WPCOG Data Center

Since 1997, an average of fifteen single-family homes and three multi-family buildings were constructed each year in Taylorsville. In 2006, Taylorsville saw the most significant increase in single family housing units with twenty-nine. In 1999, Taylorsville added ten multi-family developments, the highest number between 1997 and 2007.

## **Commercial / Industrial**

A large percentage of the commercial development in Taylorsville is concentrated along NC Highway 16 and in Downtown. Naturally, increased commercial activity generates additional traffic which may lead to a visually “cluttered” atmosphere. For these reasons, the *Land Use Strategies* recommend sidewalks and shared parking areas and driveways to minimize traffic congestion. The *Strategies* also suggest heightened architectural standards for new and redeveloping businesses to preserve the visual attractiveness of these important commercial areas.

## **Downtown**

A significant portion of local businesses are located in or near downtown Taylorsville. As with most communities the downtown has been affected by urban sprawl of commercial development. Given this situation, the *Land Use Strategies* have suggested specific guidelines for development and redevelopment in the downtown to help revitalize a once thriving economy.

## **Future Land Use**

Considering the large amount of vacant and underdeveloped land available in Taylorsville that could be used for commercial or residential purposes, the *Land Use Strategies* propose that new commercial development be complimented with well articulated landscaped areas and increased architectural standards. Pedestrian amenities such as connected streets, sidewalks and open space should be required in new major subdivisions. Requiring these amenities will create more vibrant communities and enable residents to walk to nearby destinations without having to drive. *Map 7: Town of Taylorsville Future Land Use* depicts some of the areas where additional land use patterns are most appropriate in the coming decade.

## **Land Use Policies**

- Develop progressive and sound land use strategies to ensure that Taylorsville grows fairly, effectively and efficiently.
- Adopt sensible, straightforward zoning standards and procedures that are easily understood by developers and the general public.
- Foster distinctive, attractive neighborhoods with a strong sense of place.
- Preserve open space, natural beauty and critical environmental areas in the Town.
- Develop walkable, aesthetically-pleasing communities.
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
- Protect the distinctive residential character of Taylorsville's neighborhoods from the encroachment of inappropriate non-residential development.
- Increase requirements for landscaping and open space areas in new developments.
- Develop residential design qualities that do not negatively impact air quality, including pedestrian options such as sidewalks, walking trails and bike paths.
- Promote affordable housing for people in all stages of life.
- Encourage industrial development in appropriate areas with adequate infrastructure and access to major highways.
- Encourage industrial development that is sensitive to environmental issues such as air and water quality.

# **Land Use Strategies**

## **Residential**

- Streamline the review process for new developments.
- Require new subdivisions to be designed as walkable neighborhoods, which include the following pedestrian amenities:
  - Connected streets: Encourage connectivity between subdivisions by limiting the length of cul-de-sacs and requiring stub-out streets to adjacent vacant properties. Stub-outs should have signage to inform residents that the dead end is not permanent.
  - Pedestrian connections to commercial, recreational and mixed-use destinations
  - Sidewalks
  - Street trees
  - Planting strips ( at subdivision entrances)
  - Adequate street and decorative lighting should be encouraged
  - Neighborhood parks and open spaces:
    - Provide 20% common open space in major single-family residential subdivisions that is accessible and usable for recreation.
    - Stormwater retention areas should be designed as community amenities such as a park or as part of an open space area. Encourage tree preservation by prohibiting clear-cutting during construction and requiring cut trees to be replaced.
- Encourage homebuilders to use a variety of housing designs that remain compatible throughout the neighborhood.
- Establish a high-density zoning district that allows stick-built or modular homes exclusively.
- Require multiple entrances for large subdivisions to improve safety and traffic congestion.
- Investigate options and techniques to reduce speeding in new and existing neighborhoods. Develop a formal process for citizens and neighborhoods to request traffic calming features such as speed reductions and road humps.
- The land currently zoned to allow manufactured homes is more than adequate.

## **Downtown**

- Encourage redevelopment of existing, vacant commercial sites.
- Allow density bonuses that encourage commercial and office development to locate in planned and mixed-use developments so as to minimize the proliferation of strip development.
- The Town should:
  - Require façade improvements for redeveloped buildings.
  - Consider installing underground utilities along Main Street.
  - Consider an “alleyway” Plan for parcels of land fronting Main Street.
- Require landscaped areas along road frontages, entrances to large developments and interior roads. All loading, storage, refuse and maintenance areas should be heavily landscaped and located at the rear of buildings.
- Promote the expansion of the sidewalk network in Taylorsville by 1) requiring all businesses to install sidewalks in areas that are reasonably expected to attract pedestrian traffic; 2) requiring sidewalks and/or greenways in new major subdivisions; 3) promoting connections of existing sidewalks through a Pedestrian, Greenway and Bicycle Plan.
- Consider participation in the “Main Street” program.

## **Commercial / Industrial**

- Encourage redevelopment of existing, vacant commercial and industrial sites.
- Increase design standards for new commercial and industrial development and redevelopment. Building facades should be well-articulated and blank walls should be avoided.
- Commercial and industrial developers should consider the existing topography to avoid unnecessary grading or filling.
- Allow density bonuses that encourage commercial and office development to locate in planned and mixed-use developments so as to minimize the proliferation of strip development.

- Bring commercial buildings closer to the street in high-density areas and put parking on the side or rear of the buildings.
- Require landscaped areas along road frontages, entrances to large developments and interior roads. All loading, storage, refuse and maintenance areas should be heavily landscaped and located at the rear of buildings.
- Require landscaped islands in parking areas to prohibit large expanses of uninterrupted “seas” of asphalt. Reduce the number of required parking spaces by basing those spaces on the actual square footage used by customers.
- Promote the expansion of the sidewalk network in Taylorsville by 1) requiring all businesses to install sidewalks in areas that are reasonably expected to attract pedestrian traffic; 2) promoting connections of existing sidewalks through a Pedestrian, Greenway and Bicycle Plan.
- New cell towers should be located on existing facilities such as water towers, flag poles, etc. Require cell phone companies to co-locate rather than build new towers and post a financial bond to remove the tower if it is no longer in use.
- Lighting at all commercial or mixed-use developments should be angled downward and shielded to avoid illuminating the night sky and be less distracting to drivers.
- Low-lying development should be engineered with retention ponds and other methods to control stormwater runoff and minimize downstream flooding.
- Stormwater retention areas should be designed to enhance the landscaping and appearance of commercial and industrial properties.

# **Economic Development**

## **Regional Trends**

Alexander County has experienced a substantial increase in unemployment in recent years. With the loss of thousands of manufacturing jobs and several small businesses that provided support services to the furniture industry, Lenoir has also been significantly affected by this trend. Economic stagnation and instability precludes active land development and robust growth. Many planners and economists envision an economic vitality for the region that transcends the recent downturn, promises a brighter future and is based on a set of realistic goals. A 12-county economic development project called Future Forward developed a series of strategies that articulate these goals:

- Improvement of the education and skills of available workforce.
- A renewed sense of entrepreneurship and innovation among area businesses.
- Development and concurrent protection of both urban and outdoor amenities to promote a high quality of life.
- Advancements in cooperation among local governments and governmental agencies.
- A more diversified economy that places more emphasis on retail, tourism, health care, education, retirement services, and a globally competitive manufacturing sector.

*Source: Future Forward Economic Alliance, 2002*

## **New Educational Opportunities**

Signs already exist that this vision is beginning to take shape. Training and educational opportunities are abundant for people who have lost their manufacturing jobs and are interested in learning new skills to earn a living. Community leaders and County officials are working diligently to attract high-tech industries conducive to success in the new economy.

The Future Forward Economic Alliance established the Engineering Technology Center in Hickory to provide education and training opportunities to better prepare workers for a more diverse workforce and economy. The ownership of the facility has recently been deeded to Appalachian State University. Other educational programs involve innovative partnerships between local community colleges and the UNC system.

All three local community colleges – Catawba Valley Community College with a new classroom building in Taylorsville as well as a main campus on Hickory, Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute in Hudson and Boone, and Western Piedmont Community College in Morganton – have collaborated with NC state supported universities to offer new educational and training opportunities to local residents.

The Hickory Metro Higher Education Center focuses on degree-completion offerings, ranging from education and medical fields to 4-year and Masters

programs offered locally by ten colleges and universities. Such ventures allow students to begin course work at a local community college and complete a four-year degree without leaving the Hickory Metro region.

In 2005 CCC&TI in partnership with Caldwell County Schools established the Early College and Career Center curriculum. The Early College curriculum will allow students to enroll at CCC&TI as high school freshman and within five years graduate from the College with an Associates Degree. In 2006 the Early College was officially established as a four-year program which allows high school students to enter the College during their junior year and after four years receive both a high school diploma and certification in one of four technology related fields (construction technology, information technology, electrical technology and plumbing) from the Community College. Although this region is currently a difficult transition from an economy based largely on manufacturing to a new, more diversified economy less susceptible to global forces, the area is positioned for future economic success and growth.

### **Alexander County Economic Development Commission**

The Alexander County Economic Development Commission has recently been reorganized as a 501c (3) non-profit organization with a five-member Board of Directors. The Board consists of four representatives from County industries and the County Manager. EDC staff are Alexander County employees and staff and operations are funded mainly by the County.

Successful economic development hinges on the ability to recruit new businesses, retain existing companies and encourage direct investment in the community and other economic development projects, EDC officials note. A major focus of the Alexander EDC is extending water and sewer lines to serve existing and potential manufacturing industries in the County. Alexander EDC describes its special interest in a training program to help young workers understand the positive options offered by employment in the furniture industry. The EDC actively recruits new industries to the Alexander Industrial Park, a 60-acre facility with complete infrastructure on the rail line. The EDC also is working to diversify its manufacturing employers by pursuing green energy projects, plastics-based manufacturers and metal fabrication industries. Its website, [www.alexanderedc.org](http://www.alexanderedc.org), lists available properties in the County.

## **Economic Development Policies**

- Direct new industrial development to areas with appropriate infrastructure.
- Support development of an “urgent care” facility in the County, open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
- Develop policies for extending utilities to potential industrial and commercial sites, recognizing that such extensions will also directly affect residential development.
- Develop policies to encourage more aesthetically-pleasing commercial, industrial and mixed-use developments.
- Facilitate and encourage new, community-focused economic development policies.
- Assist workforce officials, schools and the community college to focus on ways to improve the skill sets of existing workers for new types of manufacturing or service sector jobs.

## **Economic Development Strategies**

- Work with the Alexander County EDC and Chamber of Commerce to help residents understand the importance of service sectors jobs in areas such as tourism, retirement communities and the medical field.
- The Town should consider incentives for new commercial and industrial development.
- The Town should consider developing an incentive package to encourage residential developers to provide amenities such as; sidewalks, curb and gutter and decorative street lighting.
- The Town should consider creating its own Downtown Development department to develop and coordinate Town events and work in conjunction with the Alexander County EDC and Chamber of Commerce.

## **Public Facilities**

Unlike many small towns in this region, Taylorsville owns and operates its own water and sewer lines and police department. The Town and its ETJ are serviced by the Taylorsville Volunteer Fire Department and the Alexander County Emergency Medical Service (EMS). Taylorsville is home to three education facilities which see an average of two thousand students each year. *Map 8: Public Facilities* shows the location of these facilities.

### **Public Safety**

- Police- The Taylorsville Police Department is staffed by 11 full time officers, this includes a Chief, Detective and nine patrol officers. The department also employs seven part-time officers that work when needed. There are always 2 officers on patrol during shift hours.
- Fire- The Central Alexander Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1924 and services all of Taylorsville and its ETJ. The CAVFD currently has 40 active volunteers along with three engines, two tankers and a tower truck at its disposal.
- EMS- Alexander County EMS employs 29 full-time employees and a number of part-time employees and provides service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. EMS has two bases located in Alexander County, the main base is located on Highway 90 East just outside Taylorsville and the second base is located on Highway 127 in Bethlehem.
- Alexander County Rescue Squad- Established in 1959, the Alexander Rescue Squad has 38 volunteer members who provide emergency rescues service throughout Alexander County. They currently have one base of operation located beside the Central Alexander Fire Department.

### **Buildings**

- Town Hall- Town Hall is located on Main Avenue Drive and is home to the administrative functions of the Town those include the Town Manager's office, tax collection/finance and planning.
- Public Works- The Public Works facility is located on June Bug Loop. The building is home to the public works department with six full time employees; the department provides street maintenance, meter reading (water), water and sewer maintenance and seasonal leaf and refuse collection.

## **Recreation**

- **Matheson Park**- Opened in the summer of 1998, this seven-acre family park is complete with swings and play equipment for the children, cookout facilities & sheltered eating areas, restrooms, volleyball area and ½ mile walking trail.
- **Town Park**- Town Park is located behind Taylorsville Town Hall on Main Avenue Drive. It is home to one baseball field that is utilized by the Alexander County Recreation Department for youth softball and baseball. The Apple Festival Committee utilizes this area for a kid's playground during the Apple Festival in October of each year.

## **Schools**

- **CVCC Alexander Campus**-CVCC in Alexander County began in 1980. Classes were held wherever space could be found, such as the library and local classrooms. In 1990 CVCC moved into its first permanent location, the old Duke Power building. This facility provided enough space to accommodate three classrooms at one time. In 1994 the center was able to move into the old Lewittes Office Building, after outgrowing that building, the CVCC Alexander Campus was moved into a building donated by Apparel Technologies. This campus is located at 345 Industrial Blvd, just off of Hwy. 16 South across from WalMart. CVCC Alexander Campus held an Open House and Ribbon Cutting on September 25, 2003 to celebrate the opening of the Alexander Campus of Catawba Valley Community College.
- **Alexander Central High School**- Centrally located in Taylorsville, ACHS is home to approximately 1600 students grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and is the only high school in Alexander County.
- **Taylorsville Elementary School**- Located along 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Taylorsville Elementary School is one of seven elementary schools in the county and is the smallest of the elementary schools with approximately 260 students.

## **Community Facilities**

- **Alexander Central High School Auditorium**- Completed in September 2005, the auditorium features a performance-sized stage and a state of the art sound system. The auditorium is used for school productions, community events, visiting artists and professional performances and plays. This facility is located on the campus of Alexander Central High School.
- **Alexander County Senior Center**- Located on 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, the Alexander Senior Center has been providing opportunities for the older adults in Alexander County to get together for better health and cultural, educational and recreational enrichment since October, 1992.